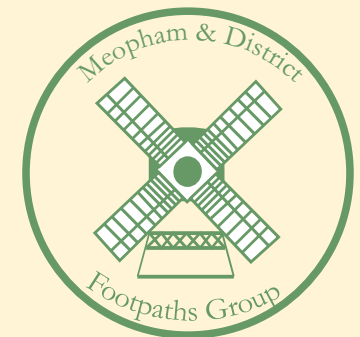




Meopham & District Footpaths Group
50 Golden Years
1962 to 2012



On line Version Part 2
History

Meopham & District Footpaths Group 50th Anniversary.

As part of the events to mark the Anniversary an exhibition of the Group's history and activities was displayed at Meopham Library, Town Centric Gravesend and at the Group's social events during the year.

It would not be practical to include all the achievements and activities attributable to the Group over the 50 years. Nor would it be possible to name all the people who have made valuable contributions to the Group's success.

The time line from the exhibition is shown here as a permanent record . The other elements of the exhibition showed the Group's activities, these are illustrated in much more detail in the preceding pages of this booklet.

Index to the Group's History

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Page 25	Appendix 1, a chronology of Group's legal cases together with their outcome.

Metsons

Chartered Accountants

We offer assistance to individuals & businesses.

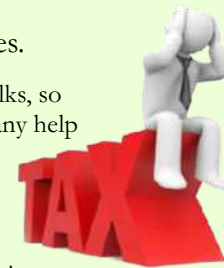
Our services include:

- Personal Tax
- Accounts
- Payroll
- Buy to let properties
- Capital Gains Tax

Adrian & Sara are often on our walks, so come and find us if you would like any help

1st Floor, Conningsby House,
Wrotham Road, Meopham,
above Ward & Partners

01474 815567 adrian@metsons.co.uk
www.metsons.co.uk



The illegal closure of Footpath NS232 with ByWay NS287 at Priestwood (known locally as "Scratch Arse Corner") stimulates the interest in Rights of way and leads to Mrs Pat Wilson Founding the Footpaths Group

Formation of the Meopham & District Footpaths Group

Three Footpath Groups launched, Harvel, Culvestone & Meopham.

Amalgamated to form Meopham Footpaths Group in 1962. At this time Kenneth Fairfax Q.C. was instrumental in drawing up the Group's constitution, which stands almost unchanged today.

Extract From the Group's Constitution

The objects of the Group are:

- To assert and protect the rights of the Public to the use and enjoyment of footpaths, bridleways and byways in the Parish of Meopham and elsewhere.
- To prevent, by making representations to the appropriate Public Authorities or by any other lawful means, the obstruction of public paths.
- To ensure that public paths are adequately signposted and waymarked and that stiles and gates are satisfactorily maintained.
- To resist proposals for the extinguishment or diversion of rights of way whenever, in the opinion of the Group, they would be contrary to the public interest .
- To press for the creation of new public rights of way.
- To support all measures for the conservation of rural amenities.
- To organise walks and encourage the use of public paths in the parish of Meopham and neighbouring districts. To support, and where appropriate affiliate to, other organisations which share the objects of the group.

The story continues

These principles still form the basis of the Group's constitution today. All members agree to support them when they join the group. This has proved invaluable when representing the Group interest in Public Rights of Way.

Over the years the group has fought many battles to protect rights of way and other rural amenities. These are included in the following history and are shown in **green text**. A full list of all the cases is given in appendix 1 on page 25.

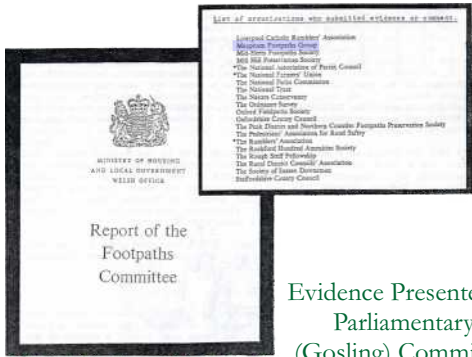
The first decade.
Sign stones point the way

1962

Title Changed to
Meopham & District
Footpaths Group

Diversion of FPs
268/274 HopeHill/
Leylands

Side shows
at Parish
Fetes



Evidence Presented to
Parliamentary
(Gosling) Committee

The findings of the Gosling Committee led to the
Countryside Act 1986. Arthur Skeffington
M.P. Barrister and local resident was one of the
proponents of the bill. He was also an active
supporter of the Group.



Affiliation to Ramblers
&
Open Spaces Society

Regular Sunday
Walks Began

First Parish
Council Grant

Regular Clearance
Work began

KCC gave us first 6
signstones in Kent, for
the Group to erect

Evening walks
began

Memorial Signstone
erected to late John
Phillip, the Group's first
Chairman, on FP252 at
Camer.



One of the
original sign stones.
Price 52/6d



Pushchair walks for
Mothers/toddlers.

First "6 walks" from
Meopham Green, proof
walked & sold

Diversion of FP 253
Meopham Junior School

Representation Hall
Wood

Liaison with parish Council
over 1970 Definitive Map
Review

Footpaths maps
posted at Harvel,
Meopham Station &
Culverstone

1972

North Downs Way walk/
National Footpaths Day

Memorial Lime tree planted on
A227 to late member Arthur
Skeffington M.P. and barrister. He
successfully represented the Group
at its first public inquiry.

Evidence presented to
Public Enquiry Rugby
Portland Cement Cuxton
/North Downs Way

1972

KCC issued first Yellow FP Waymarks for Group to erect.

Opposition to Meopham Western Bypass

Marshalling for Christian Aid walks.



The 70s.
Build not on our Right of Way

First section of Weald Way proof walked. This was another of Jim Carley's major projects.

Protest walk through half built house on FP 300 Vigo

Diversion FP 185 at Black horse Cottage Round Street

Diversion FP 227 Luddesdown Court

Membership of newly formed Gravesham Rights of Way (liaison) Committee

First Nightingale walk



Jim Carley standing on FP 300 in the doorway of No 5 the Paddock, Vigo
note improvised FP sign.



Diversion BR 246 Leywood School



The tree today

Enlisted help of Venture Scouts for stile erection

Hosted visits for walking group from Gravesham's twin town Neumünster

Diversion FP 229 Great Buckland

Memorial Chestnut Tree planted on Meopham Green to the late Charles Kentish. A champion for our Public Rights of Way.

Enlisted help of RA Commando Group for clearance work

Hearing into FP/BW 285 Happy Valley

Exhibition at Anglesea Centre and Woodville halls for National Footpath Heritage Week

1982



Members of the Neumünster Naturfreunde enjoy a walk on Henley Down

1982

KCC Issued Blue (BR) and Red (BW) waymarks

Sale of Sweatshirts and T shirts

The 80s
Celebrating the Group's 30th year

Supported Luddesdown Parish Council v M.O.D. Proposed mine laying school.

Diversion FP 246 Ash-cum-Ridley at Malthouse.

6 Walks re-issued as 5 cards for sale

Diversion BR 246 Harvel Green



The Luddesdown Valley remains as unspoilt farm land today



First map reading course

First aid course for walks leaders

Diversion FP 185 Copt Hall

Fund raising for Charities: Lions Hospice & Kent Air Ambulance.

Wainscott ByPass and battle for Park Pale Bridge

All FP signstones re-painted yellow.

Diversion FP 161 See Ho Shorne

Meopham Library Exhibition.

Objection to proposed development Meopham 2000

Park Pale bridge provides a tranquil crossing of this busy junction on the A2

30th Year Anniversary Celebrations Dinner & Buffet Lunch

Specially commissioned greetings cards

1992



1992

The next millennium.
Our President is appointed

Midweek morning
Walks began

Diversion FPs
230 & 230A
Ham Farm

Liaison with North-
West Kent
Countryside project

Diversion FP
134 Southfleet

Evidence to KCC re. dogs
on FP232 at Woodhill
(High Court)

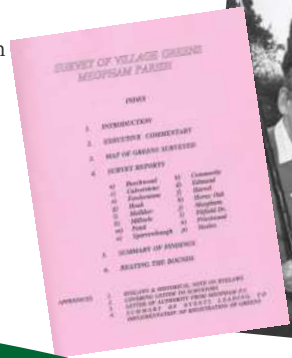
Hot pot
suppers

Glow Worm
Walks began

Group surveys
all 16
Registered
Greens for the
Parish Council

Beating the Bounds
part of the Meopham
Parish Centenary
celebrations 1994

Meopham Parish Centenary
1894-1994



To mark the
Millennium.
The President's Seat is
placed on Priestwood
Green.
President's Tea Party



Parish Council Centenary
Walk organised by Group -
"Walker Miles" Route of 100
years ago

Annual Monitoring of
all Parish Rights of
Way began

Quiz Nights &
Tea Parties
began

Diversion FP 251
West Down

Ifield Road
(Meopham Green
to New Street)
Established as
Byway

Office of
President
created .
Pat Wilson
inaugurated
and presented
with a
Badge of Office



Secretary & Chairman
appointed as path
Wardens on Parish
Council



President's Dinner and
Auction in Aid of
Open Spaces Society

Diversions
FP 268 at Heron Hill
FP 275 at Beechwood
Farm

First group
Holiday
Abroad

2nd Group
Holiday
Abroad

Saxon Shore long
distance path walked
by group members

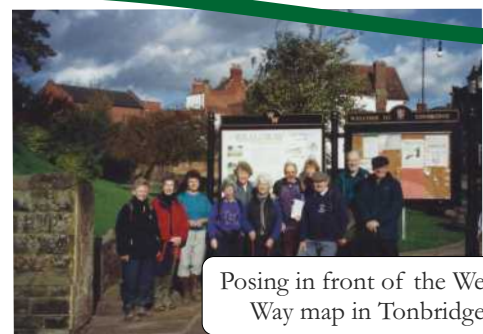


President's unique marquetry
Badge of Office created by local
craftsman Peter White

2002

40th Anniversary
Celebrations:
•Picnic On the Green
•Dinner

Group members
walk Wealdway
Long Distance
path



Posing in front of the Weald
Way map in Tonbridge

Response to
Government
Consultation
Documents

Walk Organised for
London group of
Blind Persons

2002

Gallops FP DR 21 & 143 - Public Inquiry held to stop riders using paths . Group successfully helped maintain FP status.

Our 50th year.
Steele's Lane becomes a Public Right of Way.

Holidays Abroad- Belgium, Italy & Madeira

Log seat erected by group

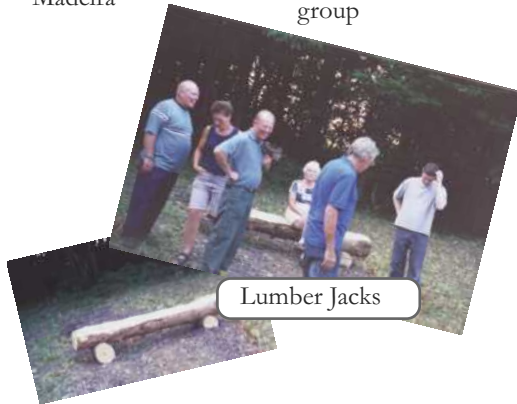
Long distance path - "Castles in Kent & East Sussex" devised by Nigel Ward

B.B.Q held at Hope Hill

40th Anniversary dinner

Position of Group Footpath Officer created

FP MR 329 at Shipbourne, Group members actively involved in Public Inquiry - Diversion subsequently not allowed



Lumber Jacks

Strawberry Fayre at Hope Hill

Short walks programme began

Further training given to members for use of brush cutters

President's 90th Birthday party held on Priestwood Green



Many News Letters now sent by Email



Steele's Lane put on definitive map. NS 360 created after Public inquiry

Footpath clearing work continues

Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Revision contribution from group.

Isle of Wight walking Holiday a great success.

Lottery funding for Kissing gates

Games Evening held in Village hall

FP 275 Harvel - opened after long period of closure

The group devises and leads A Diamond Jubilee Historical Walk around Meopham Parish, with commentary stopping points.

Walks for London Blind Club still led by the Group

James (Jim) Carley, stalwart and founder member of the group died.

Jim was one of the founding members of the group and author of all the original walks leaflets. For a long time he was one of the walks leaders.



Before

After

13 kissing gates replace stiles.

High Weald landscape walk completed

2012

A Series of walks totalling 50 miles devised by the Walks Secretary to celebrate the 50th year.



Acknowledgements

Pat Wilson.

Ken Dare.

Gillian Willsher.

Eve & John Tyler, Ken Dare & John Macknish.

Eve Tyler.

Metsons, Chartered Accountants.

Goacher's Fine Maidstone Ales.

Glover's Quality Meats.

For her encyclopaedic memory.

For editorial judgements and proof reading.

For trawling the Group's archives to produce the chronological history.

Photographs used in this publication.

For proof reading.

For their Generous Sponsorship of this Publication.

Graphic layout Mike Groom.

Cover image S.J.Spriggs.

Published By Meopham & District Footpaths Group 2013.

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