

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016, Kentisbeare, Saint Hill, Hollis Green with Carole Steen**

***"A New Walk for the OVA, You May be Surprised"***

It was bank holiday Monday and a warm and sunny morning when an intrepid band of 12 set off from the thoughtfully provided car park beside Kentisbeare Village Hall.

Somewhat unseasonably our group included 2 Carols and an indeterminate number of wise men.

After deciding against the use of 2 pack mules tethered nearby for our convenience and unable to secure the services of a local guide for this risky venture, we set out alone. Before long the reassuring Church Tower and small cluster of villagers' dwellings were left behind and green lanes and field paths took us through Orway - an important staging post on our way to Base Camp 1 at the car park on the edge of Knowles Wood. Locals had warned us in grave tones, of the steep escarpment we must scale before we could break for coffee - but nothing had prepared us for the seeming diversion of all motorway traffic onto the road we had chosen to use.

So we were relieved therefore, when not one of our party was lost on these primary slopes and we slumped into the car park, carefully sharing out the first of our meagre rations. Once in Knowles Wood the going was a little easier and our spirits were lifted until the temporary loss of our intrepid leader (Mike Paddison) halted our steady progress. However, after his location by a search party (how grateful we were to Chris Buckland for so bravely volunteering!) we continued, skirting the edge of the impenetrable woodland while we headed for Base Camp 2 at Blackborough, on the very edge of the maps we carried.

And though this little hamlet had little to offer but a Maths Café and a public telephone, we were grateful enough to see signs of other human habitation. Resisting the temptation to do some long division over a cup of coffee, we headed South West across steppes and grasslands following tracks made by animals and the feet of native herdsmen. Here Chris became trapped in a grassy enclosure with an enormous male beast but his heart-rending cries touched our hearts and we opened the gate to let Chris out. The poor beast bellowed its thanks before galloping away.

On now towards Saints Hill, we came upon a herd of Llamas, [Note the banana shaped ears and not the pointed ears of the alpaca. Ed] and reared we assumed by villagers for their skins and meat. At Saints Hill we located the place where old tractors go when they die - we had heard travellers' tales of such places - and recorded its location for future explorers, should any ever find their way again to these undiscovered parts.

Our provisions running low, we were spurred on by the assurances of our inspirational leader that civilisation was not far away. And so it proved, for soon we found ourselves on more frequently used paths and a weary group of travellers returned to the wonderment and adulation of those in the public bar of the Kentisbeare Arms. Pausing only to

consume some locally brewed beverages and to purchase a few souvenirs, we made our way home to tell of our exploits to those who waited so anxiously for our return.

**Carole Steen**  
**30<sup>th</sup> May 2016**