

At this month's meeting we dealt with the annual business for Bosham WI's next twelve months. Julia was elected to be our President and the Committee was elected 'en bloc'. Further business matters resulted in Bosham WI voting to support the 'Dental Health Matters' resolution for the National Federation's new 2024 campaign.

Time then for our speaker and Helen Poole who took us through Charles II's escape through Sussex known as **The Monarch's Way**.

The Monarch's Way is one of the longest of all English long-distance footpaths. The Monarch's Way follows the path taken by Charles II as he fled to France following the sound thrashing of his army at the Battle of Worcester, thus ending the English Civil War. 1642- 1651.

Very early in his journey Charles evaded capture by famously hiding in an oak tree at Boscobel House in south-east Shropshire. His 615 mile journey runs from Worcester via Bristol and Yeovil to finish up here in West Sussex at the port of Shoreham-by-Sea.



The meandering and slightly random path taken by the Monarch's Way reflects the precarious situation the future King found himself in. His father Charles I had been executed two years earlier and so the journey was a very dangerous one indeed, with every twist and turn potentially a matter of life and death. Living off his wits, in various disguises and in search of a cunning plan to get him out of harm's way.

The Monarch's Way - West Sussex. Two of our members have almost completed the Sussex section with only two 5 mile sections to complete!

The King's passage through West Sussex and passage to France was masterminded by Colonel Gunter of Racton, west of Chichester, who made arrangements for the King to be smuggled to France in a coal ship via the port at Shoreham-by-Sea.

King Charles arrived in Sussex near Stansted Park. The Monarch's Way goes from here across Kingley Vale, along the southern slopes of the South Downs around West Dean and the Lavant Valley, over Trundle Hill to Earham and then down to Arundel. From Arundel the route passes along the South Downs Way above Storrington, overshoots Shoreham by heading to Steyning and then proceeds towards Brighton, where the King was recognised by an over-excited pub landlord. However, Charles escaped just in time. The Monarch's Way then doubles back towards Shoreham, where Charles II embarked for France narrowly avoiding capture by the Parliamentarians. Six weeks travel, just walking is a challenge but to be pursued and fearful adds jeopardy to this intrepid trek.

He returned to England nine years later, having passed his time in exile in France and Holland, being crowned Charles II on 23 April 1661.

Next month on 6th March, as ever at 2.30pm in the Village Hall, we celebrate dear Rita's 100th birthday with some special entertainments and tea - boshamwi.co.uk

Diana Beck