

PATHWAY

Issue no 68 Summer 2021: Newsletter for Wycombe District Ramblers

Welcome

Welcome to our spring/summer issue of Pathway, although at the time of going to print we still feel in the grasp of a cold spring; hard overnight frosts, flurries of snow - result – dead magnolia & camellia adorning our gardens. This time last year we were just entering a harsh, closed down world which to some extent we have come to see as normal and maybe even somewhat comfortable but we have to learn to fly again and the difference is that we are now emerging out of restrictions so can begin to take some tentative steps into forming a walking programme again, see Angela Vasylenko piece on that.



Sadly, our Selworthy Spring weekend away had to be shelved for the second year running, but please note Alan's request for your ideas for next time.

The revamped web site is up and running; – colourful, eye catching and full of local content. Take a look at <https://wycomberamblers.org.uk/>

We are indebted to our new webmaster, Brian Greenow for all his hard work and expertise in making this happen, also to Angela V for her wise head and support. We are pleased to announce that she has agreed to be co-opted onto the committee, thank you, Angela, for filling another seat around the table.

Walking is what we do and we will start slowly as leaders test the temperature of the water but meanwhile, some members have shared their favourite lockdown walks in this issue to tempt us back.

“Any potential new leaders out there. Yes please!”

Angela Shipley, for the committee



The Chiltern Walking Festival details are available at <https://www.visitchilterns.co.uk/walkingfest.html>

Pathway – articles wanted

As ever, it would be good to have content from members in *Pathway*. Please let me have your suggestions or articles to sheila.draper@btinternet.com or by post, see the committee list below for my postal address. We produce three newsletters per year and the next one will be in **the autumn** 2021. **Contributions before the August bank holiday please.**



Welcome

New group members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined since our last newsletter. We are sorry we have been unable to offer little in the way of a walks programme but hope that they feel comfortable to join any of our formal or informal walks which will be emailed out as they crop up/ are permitted. They can also apply to join walks from other groups which appear on the RA website.

Richard Birkley
Vicky Burley
Marcus George
Graham Lock

And new to our area, but already Rambler members ...

Bill O'Kelly
Jill O'Kelly
Keith Osborne
John Ratcliff

New Leader

Helen Laughton

Walking as a leader

I recently took the Ramblers Assoc Online Walking Leadership Foundations course. I did the course on my smartphone for the convenience of dipping in and out whenever I wanted. Usually this was with a cup of coffee in the garden on the warmer days. I subsequently repeated the course on my desktop which I found easier to use.

The course takes between one hour and 1½ hours to complete. This allows for time to go back over any of the six modules or to retake the Knowledge Check questions at the end of each module.

I have used online learning before and found the course clear to follow. You do not need any high level of technical expertise.

The course structure employs a mixture of techniques from video clips, narrative and various situation scenarios with different courses of action. At the end of each module there are some questions and answers to test your understanding.

Although the course is designed for walkers new to leading it can also be taken by experienced walk leaders. I have led Ramblers walks for around 8 years and found the course useful to refresh my own knowledge and to learn some new things.

I would recommend all current walk leaders to take the course and would encourage those who have not yet led walks to try the course to see whether you could become a walk leader.

Our seasoned leaders are always happy to support and encourage new leaders by helping them on planning their first walk, jointly doing the recces, generally sharing their own experiences and joining them for moral support on their first walks as leaders. *Hamish Ross*

My favourite/ first led walk

My first experience of leading a Ramblers walk was on 11th November 2012, Remembrance Sunday. I had been walking with the group for about a year when Inge, who was the long Sunday walk coordinator at the time, asked me if I would like to lead a walk. I recced the planned walk several times so was comfortable that I knew the route. We stopped for a minutes silence at 11.00 am as the church bells rang out. The walk went to plan.

I have walked the route several times each year since then preferring the clockwise route with the long climb up Shirburn Hill to finish.

Thinking back I have many memories of incidents that happened, for example:

- Meeting Jeremy Paxman and his two chocolate Labradors and having an interesting conversation with him about the interview he had done on Newsnight the previous week with Alex Salmond. He said that it was always an intellectual challenge to interview Mr Salmond. He also offered his opinion on his character which was not flattering.
- Descending out of CowLeaze Wood on a bright summer day to be greeted by 8 or so red kites soaring above me with the sun glistening on their plumage.
- Promising my daughter, on a very cold January day, a hot chocolate at the Fox and Hounds pub in Christmas Common only to fail her when we found it closed as the new owners were moving in that day.
- Resting my eyes a bit longer than planned during a rest stop on Shirburn Hill and getting sunburnt.
- Coming across a scaled version of Stonhenge being prepared as a film set.
- Watching lambs gambolling, coming across deer, crossing a poppy filled field, meeting other ramblers and dog walkers etc.,

It was a great feeling at the finish first led walk. Especially at the headcount when I had the same numbers as I started with.

If you have not led a Ramblers walk then I would encourage you to do so. The first one is daunting, but you will have the support and encouragement of others in the group.

Hamish Ross



Obituary

We are sorry to hear of the death of Rita Reay, an Amersham group member who we knew well. She died on April 11th in Stoke Mandeville Hospital from COVID 19 secondary to another condition. She lived in Beaconsfield with her husband, David who died in 2004 and walked with us often from 1990, accumulating 193 points and joining us on some of our Spring Weekend breaks. Some colourful memories will be revived by those of us who are long standing members. *Angela Shipley*

A walk I didn't do this year

When I joined the Wycombe group, about 10 years ago, Barbara Brookshank used to lead a walk to see the snowdrops at Swyncombe church from Ewelme. Ewelme is a bit of a journey for me but I like snowdrops so I went and was entranced. I went every year that she led it. After she died, I decided to carry on the walk and led it every year until this.



Swyncombe church is more or less due east of Ewelme in a natural basin and there are two paths to get to it. I initially used the northern route as it's a proper walk. Up the ridge to, in February anyway, a wind-swept heath, up again, down a steep slope and up again to the church. Then back down the valley to Ewelme. After the second time, when it was treacherous to get there, I decided that this route rather defeated the point of the walk, which was to see the snowdrops. So from then on I took the south route. Across Cow Common, up Ewelme Downs with a lovely view of Oxfordshire, past Ewelme house, across the (still unfixed), rickety stile and around the basin looking down on the house and church. Then back down the valley. An altogether more pleasant walk and a mile

shorter.

I couldn't lead it this year and as Ewelme is certainly not local for me, I couldn't even do it myself. But, hopefully, I will lead it, or at least walk it next year. It really is the best snowdrop church in the area. *Brian Greenow*

A walk we did frequently this year

John and I have lost count of how many times we have done versions of this walk over the last year. We walk it from home but it can be done from Gt Missenden, Link Rd car park, (free on Sundays or park on road by Missenden Abbey.) It can be tracked on OS map 181. The Misbourne has been up for much of the year and tumbling over the weir at the Abbey, quite lovely. This walk can be anything from 3-6 miles following the Misbourne from back of car park to source at Blackhorse pub, under the railway where there are three choices for distance, which all end up on the Rignall road and up to Prestwood and back via either Angling Spring Wood (favourite of Roald Dahl) or to extend to Hobshill Wood or Sedges Farm to Gt Missenden, finally crossing the weir at the Abbey, (no need to get your feet wet any more as they have mended the bridge) and back to car park from the church. *Angela Shipley*



Editor's note: there are more "favourite walks" online at <https://wycomberamblers.org.uk/group-matters/favourite-walks.html>

Future Group Holidays and Events

As many of you will know, we had our walking holiday at an HF house in April cancelled for the second year running and we have been unable to hold any social events this past year. We are all in very different circumstances now and as we come out of lockdown and plan future holidays and events, your input as a member of the group would be helpful.

For many years we have had a long weekend break in the spring at an HF or other country house and often our group would be large enough for us to have sole use of the venue. Would you support a similar holiday in spring 2022?

Members of the group have sometimes organised a holiday abroad for some winter sun walking - usually in the Mediterranean area or the Canary Islands. Would you find this attractive?

In recent years we have organised a summer barbecue at a pub that would take place after a weekend walk. We cannot be certain this will be possible yet for this summer but would you support it if we can put one on in late summer? Does anyone know of good barbecue venues?

Other events might be possible e.g. a walk followed by a trip on the Thames. Do you have suggestions for walk related trips or events?

We need your help so please take a few minutes to contact me with your thoughts and suggestions. Many events require a deposit up front and we need to be confident they would be supported. Alan Williams, alanwilliams41@gmail.com

Recognise these two?



Chris and Chris Wells (Mr Chris was our Secretary for a few years; the Chris family were the first people to sit on this new bench newly erected in memory of David Bounds, East Berks Group. Angela Shipley

OUR WALKS

From 29th March the Ramblers Association allowed us to offer "Covid-secure" Ramblers walks with up to 30 people. Also, from that date, the Rule of 6 has applied, so "unofficial" small group walks could go ahead.

Covid-secure walks do involve some paperwork (a Risk Assessment and a Walks Register) and requires a booking process, all of which has to be managed by the Leader. The leader can set a maximum number of people and currently ours range from 10 to 15.

We already have a number of these walks available which can be viewed (and booked) on our website www.wycomberamblers.org.uk - or go to the Ramblers main website, find the walk, and email the Leader/'Contact'.

The Ramblers Association do not want us to plan too far ahead, so programs of 3-6 months cannot be produced or circulated currently. As the Government Road Map continues, with further easing of restrictions over the coming months, there will come a time when we can produce a full 4-month walks program again. Until then, keep checking our website for more walks as they are offered. Angela Shipley is happy to circulate information regarding "unofficial" small group walk details when she is notified.

As we look ahead to preparing our next walks program, can we kindly ask for new leaders to add to our stalwart band of regulars? If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the Walks Program Coordinator through our website. *Angela Vasylenko, Walks Program Coordinator*

Your Committee for Nov 2020-21

CHAIR	VACANT
Secretary (committee)	Mick Magdeburg
Treasurer (committee)	Hamish Ross
Events Manager (committee)	Alan Williams
Footpaths (committee)	Jeff Smith

Membership (committee)	Angela Shipley
Walks	Angela Vasylenko
+Not on the committee.... Newsletter Website	Sheila Draper Brian Greenow

To contact any of these people, please go to the website
<https://wycomberamblers.org.uk/contacts.html>