

PATHWAY

Issue no 70 winter/spring 2022 Newsletter for Wycombe District Ramblers

Welcome



Maybe by the time you receive this newsletter we will all know a little more clearly where we are going, or not going, but writing this mid-December I am puzzling just where our paths will lead us in 2022. I appear not to be alone, young and old alike, and those in between are consistently voicing, after the most unusual two years imaginable, an inner struggle to galvanise their usually busy minds and bodies into rejoining activities and hobbies that in the past they fully encompassed. It is hard to find positivity. So let's find some

At the November AGM **Jeff Smith** stood down from the committee which he has served on since 1986, for many years taking on the role of Footpath Supervisor. I will leave you to do the maths but that is some dedication to duty, making him I am sure the longest serving committee member in the group's 37 year history, although he is closely rivalled by Ron Sims and John Esselmont. Jeff in his time has walked over 450 walks, regularly leading and in fitter days made many attempts on the annual May Bank Holiday "100 miler in 48 hours" organised by the LDWA. We also lost the Secretarial services of **Mick Magdeburg** after 6 years in the role. His quiet steadying presence around the table will be missed and we extend our heartfelt thanks to him and to Jeff for giving their time and knowledge without which the group would not function.

That may not sound very positive, but we have new blood which is: **Sally McEvoy** is our new secretary and Mick has passed the baton to able hands for sure and **Brian Greenow**, already our Web Master, has agreed to step into Jeff's shoes in a non-committee capacity to keep an eye on footpath issues along with his team of footpath checkers who get out there with notepad and secateurs.

The walks programme is looking pretty healthy as well, as are the numbers attending. Our first post lockdown programme (Sept. 2021), had plenty of gaps initially but as time has gone by these were largely filled to produce a creditable flow of available opportunities to get out into the countryside. As someone whose walking record has slumped alarmingly I cannot tell you how uplifting it is to occasionally turn up and relish muddy footfall and the chance to catch up with good friends. We have our email grapevine so please help if you can with the current new programme; **Angela Vasylenko** would love to hear from you.

Whatever the New Year has brought, the committee wish you all good health and strength to get outside and enjoy doing what we do best.

Angela Shipley, membership secretary (for the committee)

AGM

The **AGM** took place on Sat. 20th November 2021 at 2.00pm in Lane End village hall and was quorate and well attended. It was preceded by our traditional morning walk, self – prepared packed lunches eaten in the hall before the meeting and then refreshments and cakes when the business had been concluded. Thanks to those people who facilitated this and provided bakery goods!

Any papers, including the Treasurer's report, are available on request. Other matters of note are reported in this issue.

... New members since the last edition of Pathway....

A warm welcome to Fiona Kennedy who has recently joined the group and has joined us on some walks



Short-changed

A recent warning circulated by a walks' leader noted a high stile en route which proved a struggle for his 5ft 4 ins companion, who only just got over the top step on a couple of stiles without having to climb the rails. This prompted me to check the Buckinghamshire Council website which says stiles “*..are no longer authorised by the Council due to the need to improve the accessibility of the public rights of way network. Any new stile structure installed will be considered an obstruction to the highway and appropriate legal action will be taken.*” Furthermore, “*To improve access we will seek through negotiation with landowners, by replacing existing stiles with pedestrian gates and kissing gates.*”

So at least time will hopefully eradicate such obstacles for those of us of average women's height– although there is evidence that humans are still growing taller, so it maybe high stiles won't be a problem for future generations?!

Sheila Draper

Walks' awards

Congratulations to the following who have gained certificates

Cumulative number of walks

100 - Ian Roxburgh
Bruni Thesing-Kessel
Pat Evans
250 - Lindsay Vale
500 - Angela Vasylenko

Top Ten walkers 2020/21

1. Michael Symmonds - 73
2. Angela Vasylenko - 46
3. Gina Capron - 31
4. David Hawkins - 29
5. Alison Hales - 21
6. Pat Allen - 20
6. Mick Magdeburg - 20
8. Linda Nobbs (& Yarla) - 19
9. Christine Powell - 18
9. Angela Shipley - 18

The saving of Wycombe Rye



Fifty years ago, a battle was raging to save Wycombe Rye from destruction by a road scheme.

As many readers of Pathway know, the Rye is a magnificent stretch of public open space on the east side of High Wycombe, extending alongside the River Wye. On its southern boundary is an attractive tree-lined watercourse, the Dyke, with the backdrop

of a wooded hillside, the grounds of Wycombe Abbey public school. To the north is the busy A40 London Road, the main route through High Wycombe. The Rye is a treasured spot, 68 acres of land vested in Wycombe District Council and its predecessor body, High Wycombe Borough Council, since 1927.

In 1962, the Rye was threatened with a compulsory purchase order, to enable the inner-relief road to be built across it. The bureaucrats considered that the A40 was unable to accommodate the necessary traffic. Despite a campaign led by local schoolmaster Jack Scruton, secretary of the newly-formed High Wycombe Rye Protection Society, the road was approved following a public inquiry.

Because it was proposed to appropriate 2.4 acres of open space, there had to be a further public inquiry. However, on the inspector's recommendation, the minister confirmed the appropriation order, under the Acquisition of Land (Authorisation Procedure) Act 1946, on 5 February 1965. It was fortunate for the objectors that no land was offered in exchange as this meant that the order was subject to special parliamentary procedure (SPP). The objectors could petition parliament and present their case to a joint committee of both houses.



The joint committee heard the evidence in June 1965. The Wycombe Rye Society told the committee that 'the Rye is a broad meadow, green and unspoiled, and at present preserved as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of members of the public, and protected by a natural boundary of the River Wye which provides a barrier from the hurly-burly of the town. It is an ideal place of recreation for children.'



The committee ruled that the orders be annulled. Thus, the Rye has remained intact to this day, saved by legislation which gave parliament the final say on the theft of open space where no suitable alternative is provided.

Sadly, that legislation was swept away by the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013. Despite strong opposition, the government amended the law designed to protect open space. Now the Secretary of State for Levelling Up,

Housing and Communities can waive the requirement for SPP for open space where there is no suitable exchange land, or the exchange land is deemed too expensive. In such cases, parliament no longer has the final say, and our open spaces are at severe risk. Had that law pertained in the 1960s the Rye might well have been lost.

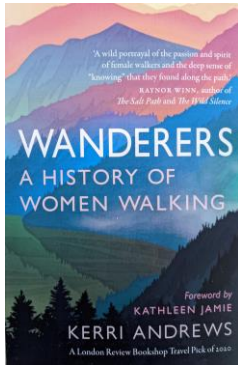
So next time you walk on the Rye, salute the brave campaigners from 50 years ago who saved this splendid space for the people of High Wycombe.

Kate Ashbrook, former President, Ramblers Association & local member

Springing forward

After a 2 year absence of our annual walking holidays, Alan Williams, our Events Organiser, made a reservation in November last year with HF Holidays to stay at Selworthy in Somerset from Friday 22nd April - to Monday 25th April 2022. If you want to contact him directly to discuss this then please contact him direct. [I think it is currently full as details were emailed to members some time ago, but there might be a reserve list.] *Sheila Draper*

Reading matter(s)



I wanted to share the title of a new book I received for Xmas as I hadn't seen it reviewed anywhere, even in Ramblers' publications: it is called **Wanderers: A History of Women Walking** by Kerri Andrews and was only published in paperback in July last year. I haven't read it yet, but it looks at ten women writers over the past three hundred years who have found walking essential to their lives, work and selves. It is not exclusively for women of course!

If anyone has any other Ramblers' relevant titles to share, then please send me your contributions by 1/8/22 i.e. plenty of time for reading.

Sheila Draper, editor

Wycombe & District Committee for Nov 2021-Nov 2022

For contact details see <https://wycomberamblers.org.uk/contacts.html>

Chair	VACANT
Secretary:	Sally McEvoy
Treasurer:	Hamish Ross
Events Organiser:	Alan Williams
Membership:	Angela Shipley
Walks:	Angela Vasylenko

Non- committee roles:

Website Manager & Footpaths Supervisor (combining the virtual and the real with digital and muddy footprints!): **Brian Greenow**

Editor, Pathway: *Sheila Draper*