

PATHWAY

Issue no 71 summer 2022 Newsletter for Wycombe District Ramblers

Welcome



After a long, wild winter, I get my buzz from the inevitability of the seasons rolling; Spring melting into Summer etc. and I suppose at this time in my life, gratitude that I have lived to see again the tiny peaks of snowdrops poking upright through the lawn, followed by a rapid progression of spring flowers, far too hasty and a certain disappointment that the snowdrops are soon gone and the daffodils curly to a crisp, their job over and done with for another year so soon. I want to shout, "Stop, now." The speed at which time flies by as we age is apparently due to our horizons shrinking and as we become less involved with the world around us we have fewer events to hang memories on thus reducing the concept of time passing. Well that has certainly been true of the last two years and already it is tucked away in our brains as far less significant as the reality of living through it indeed was.

We haven't, however, forgotten how to walk, with a healthy programme and good numbers attending; however there is a shortfall of slower walks and in order to provide for our members who want a more leisurely pace I have restarted a series of "Easy on Yourself" walks and have been encouraged by a good start of 13 people on the first attempt. These are designed to run alongside the normal programme specifically for those who have not walked in a while and who feel intimidated within the normal pace and are open to all members who feel they are suited to less speed and more looking, although the route may have the usual Chiltern challenges. Brigid Farmer has also put some leisurely walks on the normal programme and we are grateful for these too, so hopefully there is something for everybody.

With the much debated extra work involved for leaders, your committee submitted a motion to General Council, via the Area AGM in February, identifying our concern that the "risk assessments" required and the need to keep paperwork for three years, is having a negative impact on the number of leaders we now have and to require them to find a solution that will provide adequate insurance cover without this bureaucracy. There is no evidence that ticking boxes on paper makes a walk safer and our question is just how many claims Ramblers put through the insurance company in a year that makes it such a dangerous sport. Amersham and Hillingdon Groups have put forward similar motions which are also supported by Aylesbury and Milton Keynes, along with several other Areas across the country.

We wish you contented walking days ahead and a plea that more leaders will come forward for next time to take some of the strain from the few who are currently holding our programme together.

Angela Shipley, membership secretary (for the committee)

Condolences

We wish to extend our condolences to Jeff Smith who unexpectedly lost his wife Anne in February. Jeff and Anne joined Wycombe Ramblers in 1982 and in her younger days Anne walked and led for the group, in addition to tolerating Jeff serving on the committee for over 30 years until our last AGM.



New members since the last edition of Pathway

It is always a pleasure to welcome new members especially as this time we have so many so to all those already walking, we hope you are enjoying our company and to those yet to take the plunge it is lovely to have you on board and hope to meet you soon.



Sonja Antell
Andy Gilroy
Rachel Harold
Jane King
Dylan and Ullrike Koener
Susan Mawson
Neil McGuinness
Aoife Nevin
Nick and Liz Powers
Tony Shaw

And a "welcome back" to Lee Harvey and a thanks to **New leader:** Alison Hales

Angela Shipley, membership secretary

The long and short of it?

Last issue (no 70) we ran a piece on stiles' height in which I noted that humans were generally getting taller. I had the following reply, for which my thanks (Sheila Draper):

Perhaps when humankind was lolloping across the tundra and savannah then long limbs were an evolutionary advantage, but now?

In a crowded world running out of materials, space, food, and water? Surely not. We need more *smaller people.

I wore children's clothes from C&A [saved VAT] all through college. I can curl up and sleep happily in economy on a plane. I use less shoe leather, [size 4] I eat smaller portions, accept cast off trousers from teenagers. I am economical of space, money, materials.

Research shows those with long thigh bones fracture hips more easily - bad news in an ageing population.

I and most of my relatives hope to clamber over stiles, run nimbly over moors and hills for many years to come.

Shakespeare, of Hermia... *'Though she be but little she is fierce'*

* The term short means lacking. Small is good.

Anne Hagyard

Away in: Madeira to Malham



To escape the winter chill, in February I went to Madeira for the first time. The Ramblers Holidays website says *"The pleasant climate, spectacular mountainous peaks and natural bathing pools make walking holidays in Madeira a tremendous experience. This remote island, which sits off the north west coast of Africa, is adored by avid walkers for its well-maintained footpaths, varied terrain and its*

multitude of scenic views. Choose from moderate walking to more energetic, challenging endeavours as you pass by strikingly beautiful, yet readily accessible scenery." I

wouldn't argue with that description & although I did not go with an organised holiday, it was relatively easy to navigate around. I did some walks alongside 'levadas' – irrigation channels. A coastal headland walk was wonderful too –

thankfully undertaken on a wind-free day, so close were we to precipitous drops.



The wide range of tropical fruits were a taste sensation and the famous botanical gardens were lush even at that time of the year. I am not a fan of the traditional, very sweet Madeira

called "Malmsey", but at a tasting I discovered the chilled, dry "Sercial" and they produce some lovely red wine too.



March saw me at a large family gathering in Skipton, N Yorks. Some of our group were in shorts in the unexpected mid-March heat blaze of a Saturday at Bolton Abbey.

By the latter end of the week I was in thick anorak & thermals, hunkering down against the snow in a bookshop- cum- cafe in Grassington. Island weather again!



Mid-week walks around Malham Cove, Gorsedale Scar and Janet's Fosse and the waterfalls at Ingleton proves that the UK can always more than hold its own for scenery & flowers (000s of daffodils) - and tasty food & drink, albeit the more calorific but award-winning meat pies and real ale.

Sheila Draper

Away in: Exmoor National Park



Those who signed up to the Wycombe & District spring long weekend break will be walking in and around Selworthy in Somerset from Friday 22nd April - to Monday 25th April 2022. Hopefully there will be a report in the next issue.....

The January Man

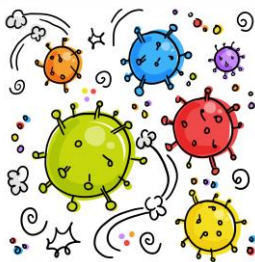
Following the template of an insightful folk poem/song written by Dave Goulder, Christopher Somerville, in his 60s, sets out to walk a section of Britain every month recalling his carefree 50s childhood, paying homage to his barely understood father and with an exceptional talent for detailing the wonders of nature around him as he progresses. Every word in **The January Man** is relevant and it is your loss if you allow your eye to speed read without careful pause at each one. I closed the last page wiser for our folk tales, colourful and oft bloody history and the intricate detail of how our flora and fauna go about their business. Borrowing it from Wycombe library I reluctantly had to give it back but one read isn't enough and it is going on my birthday list.



Angela Shipley

Note: reading matter(s): Please do send me a review of any books of relevance to walkers that you have enjoyed reading this summer by 10/8/22 for inclusion in the next issue: *Sheila Draper*

Ramblers Meal



In the depths of an English winter 16 intrepid ramblers set off for their annual festive meal at the pub, *The Hit or Miss*, relieved that the dire warnings earlier in the day of heavy snow showers had come to nothing. Their journey to this point had been hazardous: Many had to get themselves used to actually meeting up socially again, all watched while Omicron gave the government another headache and threatened their festivities. Others tried in vain to get testing kits, your scribe pondered on the prospects of the pub staff avoiding the pesky virus and making it into work and would they have food to cook that had overcome supply chain difficulties?



We need not have worried and we all made it! The meal was spot on, the staff very accommodating and everyone had a good time. Long may it continue.

Alan Williams

The right to roam 90 years on?



Ramblers' history is well known in respect of the Kinder Scout Trespass which took place on 24th April 1932; see <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/past-campaigns/kinder-80.aspx>

The Association has some events planned to mark the ninetieth anniversary.

Meantime, a recent article in the weekend magazine of a well-known newspaper said

that despite the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 establishing a partial right to roam in England and Wales, that right only covered 8% of England, which of course leaves 92% out of bounds to the public. It also said that we have 144,000 miles of footpath to walk in England and Wales – less than half of a percent of its landmass. It makes the need for path checking, see below, all the more important doesn't it?

For those of you of a rebellious nature, a new book by Nick Hayes, called *The Trespasser's Companion*, has just been published, see

<https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/trespassers-companion-9781526646446/>

Sheila Draper



Path Checking



One of the tasks that all ramblers groups do is to check the paths in the parishes it covers. Wycombe is no exception and we have a small group of members, plus others, who do this. What the checker does is walk the paths in the given parish and report any issues to Bucks county council on their website. In September, they also report the % of paths walked and how much time they took to the district footpath secretary, currently me.

The checker is provided with a pdf or printed map of the parish and is left to get on with it. It isn't necessary to check all the paths each year and as some parishes are large, possibly not possible.

If you are interested in doing this contact me via the website (Contacts/Footpath Management) or ring me on 07981 257381.

Brian Greenow



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 Manager:	Alan Williams
Footpaths:	Brian Greenow
Membership:	Angela Shipley
Web manager:	Brian Greenow
Walks:	Angela Vasylenko
Non committee roles: Editor of <i>Pathway</i> , Sheila Draper	

Last word

Please consider contributing to [Pathway](#). The greater the variety of articles and contributors, then the more interesting it will be. The deadline for the next issue is 10/8/22. Thanks.