

PATHWAY

Issue no 73 winter 2023 Newsletter for Wycombe District Ramblers

Welcome

Once again we are changing an old year for new, the relentless progress of time, out of 2022 and into 2023. New Year's Eve is always represented in my mind as a blank sheet of paper, unsullied, unspoiled as the bells strike midnight but then I turn on the news and find that the blots are already spreading as the paper soaks up the drips and spills of the past year and off we go into another 365 days of the same. This is especially true of the last few years and even this last post pandemic year has brought forth more worldwide and national problems than we could ever have imagined, leaving us all a bit flat and insecure.



We have a new programme circulating, rather sparse as yet held together by the dedication of Angela Vasylenko and the stalwart efforts of a few determined leaders who stick to their guns and keep us up and running. It doesn't need to be spelled out that we need new leaders and the return of previous ones and recognise that it will take many months/years to restore our walking lives to their former glory.

However, we do have new members and that in itself is new, an unprecedented 26 of you since the beginning of September making our group, according to the Area Membership Secretary, top of the leader board in the Area. Thank you John Esselmont for that bit of encouraging news! Where have you all sprung from making one Membership Secretary delighted even if a little overworked? We haven't yet persuaded many of you out on the footpaths but when you do please be assured of a warm welcome. Just turn up and join in.

Every day is a new-born opportunity, and we walk in all weathers, literally and figuratively, the countryside remains loyal and constant so whether you can still march along or have to reduce your parameters to suit the limitation of age and illness, it always has something to offer.

I am sure I speak for all of you in wishing each other a Happy New Year; committee to member, walker to walker, friend to friend.

Angela Shipley, Membership Secretary

Snowdrop walks



St Mary's Church, Radnage, HP14 4DU is holding Snowdrop Teas (where toilets, tea/coffee & cakes are available) on Sun 5th & 12th Feb 2023, 2-4pm if any walkers would like to take advantage of refreshments.

There are no Wycombe walks planned for the relevant days (but do check the website for any new additions), but if members are walking in the area at the time, they might like to take a break and enjoy the refreshments. *Sally McEvoy, Secretary*

Membership News

New members: 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:



Trev Allen

Sheila Ashmore

Anne Belk

David and Valerie Bishop

Al & Sally Dutton

Val Evans

Mary Hilder

David Killick

David Loader

Jonathan & Jackie Melsom

Sarah Mir

Velma Noel

Miwako Oliver

Jackie Roaffe

Dinah Roberts

Cheryl Turnbull

Kath Waddlow

Kate Walker

Judi Wood

David Yates

Welcome back to Martin Cannell : **Special welcome** to Alan and Stella Marsh who have transferred to the Wycombe group

Angela Shipley, Membership Secretary

AGM

The AGM took place in November as usual. [If you have any queries or issues following on, then please contact Sally McEvoy, Secretary.] Certificates were awarded to the following people:

Certificates

100 walks completed- Juliet Weale & Alan Marsh

250 walks completed- Mick Magdeburg

500 walks completed– Sue Broadway

With thanks to Michael Symmonds who has now led 100 walks.

Top Ten Walkers 2021/2

Michael Symmonds – 98

Angela Vasylenko – 83

Tony Price – 61

Gina Capron – 48

Norma Fazey – 43

John Esslemont 39

Angela Shipley 39

Sue Broadway – 38

Brian Greenow – 36

Alison Hales – 33

Angela Shipley, Membership Secretary

First Aid Events - Emergency Text SMS Service

Editor's note: Following on from Sally's article last issue around health and safety, Malcolm sent in some notes about the Emergency Text SMS service. I investigated this service which primarily lets deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired and sight-impaired people in the UK send an SMS text message to the UK 999 service provided they register. See further: <https://www.emergencysms.net/> and there is a leaflet at https://www.emergencysms.net/files/3649_esms_6.pdf

Malcolm's notes are below: and he says they concern the situation when there is no phone signal and you have an injured walker.

There is an **Emergency Text SMS** service for contacting 999, which you can use if you have registered for the service. How to register your phone for text SMS: Simply text 'Register' to 999. Wait for the reply so you know you are registered, usually you are asked to confirm that you'd like to register and the original message wasn't sent by mistake. It is that simple. Register your mobile phone with the service before an emergency happens. The service advises only to use SMS to contact the emergency services if you have no other option. What information should an emergency text message contain? Create an SMS message containing the following details: **Which service?** Need Ambulance, Coastguard, Fire Rescue, or Police; **What?** Briefly describe the problem; **Where?** Be as accurate as possible when giving the location. The better your information is the faster the emergency services will be able to send help. Using the App What3Words is a very easy and useful way to give your location, particularly in rural areas. Alternatively, the OSLocate app provides an immediate grid reference and is another valuable resource.

Malcolm Stone

Book Reviews

"Thinking on my Feet." by Kate Humble

Kate Humble's delight in every detail of what nature has to offer is infectious and you can't help but be swept along by her champagne personality which bubbles throughout every one of the 300 pages in which she shares her walks and runs from her beloved farm above the Wye Valley. She takes the reader overseas as well, globetrotting in boots and running shoes in her role as a TV presenter and introduces generously her family and friends, not leaving out her precious three dogs, one or all always by her side.

There is science also between the pages, highlighting the proven psychological benefits of walking and the correlation between brain and feet, which while exercising one, the other is at work too, making the act of walking not just about putting one foot in front of the other.

A superb read, get it and enjoy. [It's available from Wycombe library.]

Angela Shipley

Walking Home by Simon Armitage

Stella and I have both read and enjoyed this book. Simon Armitage – now the poet laureate – decides to walk the Pennine Way (he is not a walker) in the reverse direction – north to south – holding poetry readings along the way in pubs, halls and houses to meet his costs. It is often funny and very real about the highs and lows of Pennine Way walking in the three National Parks and the weather!

Alan Marsh



Ramblers Walking Holidays



We receive a commission on all holidays booked with Ramblers Walking Holidays, including on its Adagio programme. You need to ensure that you advise RWH of your membership of Wycombe Group preferably at the time of booking but before the start date of the holiday. Our group earns £10 per person booked on UK holidays, £20 on short haul holidays and £30 on long haul holidays. This commission can be included in our "self-funded" funds. Recently we have discovered that due to an administration issue within RWH we have not received commission on all eligible holidays. [Could you please email me with details of new holidays booked with RWH](#) so that I can check the half yearly Statements from RWH in the future to ensure we receive all commissions due. Thank you. *Hamish Ross*

Open Access Land



I recently led walks for East Berks and Wycombe Ramblers over Open Access Land on Bledlow Ridge and have been asked to provide more information on the subject.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) provided for Open Access Land. The public have right of access to such land but it can be subject to restrictions. Ordnance Survey maps shade such land as yellow but, of course, old pre-2000 OS maps do not as it did not exist!

General information on such land can be found here:-

<https://www.gov.uk/right-of-way-open-access-land/use-your-right-to-roam>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-access-land-management-rights-and-responsibilities>

Information regarding general restrictions can be found here:-

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-access-land-and-the-coastal-margin-how-to-restrict-public-access>

Open Access land can be useful when designing a walk in providing for a missing link between Rights of Way. This was shown by the walks I recently led.

The government's adviser for the natural environment in England, Natural England, is the authority for Open Access Land. It maintains a database of maps and specific restrictions for open access land which can be accessed here-

<http://www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk/wps/portal/oasys/maps/MapSearch/>

For example, enter 'Chawley Manor' (without quotes!) into the Place Name box, click on 'search', and scroll to the bottom for links to maps and specific restrictions for the Bledlow Ridge land I walked on.

Finally, the local highway authority (Bucks CC for Bledlow Ridge) is the authority for access to Open Access Land.

Keith Dunford



Editor's note: my thanks for the above photos, which were taken by [Juliet Weale](#) on the walk which Keith led.

Pathcheck at Piddington

The Ramblers try to ensure that every path in our patch is walked at least once a year, and so we appoint path checkers who take on a particular parish. Mine is Piddington and Wheeler End, which I inherited from Rosemary Weston six years ago.

The parish extends from the village of Wheeler End, on top of the hill, northwards across the A40 at Piddington, and up the hill on the other side. There are 28 paths of varying lengths, mostly footpaths and a few bridleways.

It takes me about 12 hours in total to walk them all once a year and to report any problems to Buckinghamshire Council. I normally divide this over three visits, and plan these so I walk in circuits, sometimes straying outside the parish to avoid having to repeat stretches. The walks are varied, with woodland, arable, and uncultivated land, some on hilltops with extensive views, others in the valleys.

I enjoy seeing the paths gradually improve as a result of my efforts (and feel frustration when I see them deteriorate). I take secateurs to snip back the vegetation, but anything else I report online.

In 2016 I reported 25 problems, most of them bad stiles and missing waymarks. In 2022 I reported 12 problems, so there has been some improvement.

My main successes have been the replacement of dreadful stiles with gates. In 2020 Bucks Council at last replaced five stiles with gates on footpath 24, which runs NE up the hill from Ham Farm on the A40.

Footpath 25: before and after



Footpath 12: before and after



Kate Ashbook

Walking the Nidderdale Way

Having a limited six day window available I decided to walk the Nidderdale Way at short notice with a friend who also had blank spaces in his diary. The weather forecasts in the week prior to the start were not encouraging. We chose to do the 54 mile trail over 4 days although it can be broken into 5 sections. We were based in Pately Bridge which meant the trail was effectively a large figure of eight. The first two days were the longest and with the most ascent so we were delighted to walk them both in dry, sunny, cool and windless days. The highlights of day one were the views across Gouthwaite Reservoir, the birdlife and the quiet especially up on the remote moors.



Day two started at the magnificent St Chad Church at Middlesmoor. We were reminded of how harsh life was in earlier times by the information on childhood and young mothers' deaths on the large gravestones. Shortly after leaving the church you pass alongside the spectacular How Stean Gorge.

Our third day started with a steep ascent up to Guise Cliff and then on to Yorke's Folly finishing at Ripley Castle. Our final day included a short detour to the Brimham Rocks where after an hour's explore of the area we had a well-deserved cream tea. There are various options on doing this trail but we found that being based at Pately Bridge, with a taxi arrangement for drop off and pick and self-guided up worked.

Hamish Ross

Walking (half of) the Hadrian's Wall path



My walking friend and I have quite taken to point to point walks and so we thought we would walk the Hadrian's Wall path. We only had time to do half and we bought a package from a firm that provided accommodation and luggage transfer. We walked east to west as I had visions of eventually walking into the sunset at Bowness (the western end).

We started at Wallsend, on the banks of the River Tyne, where unfortunately the fort and museum were closed. The wall doesn't really exist anymore between Wallsend and Haddon on the wall, so the walk goes along the River Tyne through Newcastle. Newcastle is a delight. It has fine old buildings, lots of bars and restaurants and a lovely riverside walk with lots of bridges. We walked through and carried along the riverbank with lots of interesting industrial history until we reached Newburn where we stayed overnight (approx. 12 miles).

The next day we turned inland to reach the wall at Heddon-on-the-Wall. This is the first significant section of wall we saw and is really interesting and informative about how they built it. At this point it has to be said the walk got worse. The wall for the next ten miles was removed in the 1700s and used as foundations for a straight, military road with the Roman ditch besides it; you often

walk in the ditch and can't see much. What you can see is rolling countryside. Our hotel was not on the wall so when we reached the agreed point, East Wallhouses, (approx. 10 miles) we transferred by taxi to the hotel.

As we couldn't face another 5 miles of walking in a ditch the next day we asked the taxi driver taking us back to the wall to move us 5 miles down the road to the edge of the valley of the North Tyne where things became more interesting as the remains of the wall returned. We walked on to the Roman cavalry fort of Chesters with a nice museum (approx. 8 miles).

The next day we skipped more walking in a ditch and got a taxi to take us to a temple of Mithras about 4 miles along the wall. (As the taxi driver said, 'I'd only walk the middle myself'.) Here the walk became more like you imagine. Hills, scarps, the wall on the edge of a sheer cliff face, moorland, sheep, the wall cresting ridges in the distance. We finished at Housesteads Roman fort (approx. 7 miles), then got a taxi back to a railway station and back to Newcastle.

We are going to finish it off next year. Although we might miss a few miles of walking in a ditch.



Brian Greenow



Walking in the Peloponnese on mainland Greece

In September, Stella and I flew to Kalamata and explored the Peloponnese – both walking and swimming. The best base for walking is around Kardamili – home of Patrick Leigh Fermor. We used the Sunflower book for our walks but this area has a very good walking map – Anavisi - and the paths - sometimes old mule tracks- are well marked.

The walking is varied – often with good views of the sea and the mountains. There are gorges, caves, castles and many churches/chapels. A car is helpful as the buses are infrequent and erratic – be aware that the roads are very twisty. There is a very good ancient site near Kalamata called Ancient Messini described as “Olympia without the tourists” and this was well worth a visit. Also we visited the Diros Caves described as the most impressive limnetic sea caves of the whole world.

Alan Marsh



Wycombe & District Committee for Nov 2022-Nov 2023

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

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

Other roles: Brian Greenow, Footpaths and Web manager & Sheila Draper, Editor of *Pathway*,