

PATHWAY

Issue no 69 autumn 2021: Newsletter for Wycombe District Ramblers



Welcome

Welcome to the latest issue. *Pathway* is produced three times a year and distributed along with our 4-month Walks Program; we are not able to give you the Oct. 2021 to Jan. 2022 Walks' schedule right now, but rest assured, it is being compiled and will be issued at the end of Sept.

Since the re-start of Ramblers' official walks on 29 March a small group of leaders have been offering walks. It's been handled piecemeal as Ramblers did not want us to produce a full-length program in case the Covid situation changed, hence the numerous emails sent out to our membership with spreadsheets of a few walks only. I hope you are all using our website, as the walks and their details are published there and walks can be booked (if required) through the links shown. (<https://www.wycomberamblers.org.uk/>).

From July 19 most Government laws on Covid-related restrictions were removed and we can now walk with an unlimited number of people and do not need to social distance. A booking system is no longer necessary, though recommended by Ramblers. A number of our leaders are retaining this system as they consider it very useful to know who will be attending a walk and to keep numbers to a manageable and socially enjoyable level. Others have opted to offer their walks with no bookings and no maximum numbers. So please double-check the Walk Description to see if you need to pre book or not.

The Ramblers Association still require leaders to complete the 2-page Risk Assessment form (not required pre-Covid) which I hope will not be required by Ramblers in the longer term. The Walk Registers (which we've always done for our walk certificates), still also need to include contact numbers for as long as NHS Track and Trace continues. Some of our leaders, active pre-pandemic, have not yet returned to volunteer for a variety of reasons, but I look forward to welcoming back more leaders as time goes by.

I think that a positive vibe has been building in our Group over the last few months since we re-started. We have lots of new members, quite a few of whom are participating in our walks regularly. Apart from our small but stalwart band of long-term active leaders, we have a number of people who have taken up the role of leading this year, for which many thanks. Our new leaders in 2020/21 to date are: Helen Laughton, Alan and Stella Marsh, Paul Nye, Jonathan Osborne and Juliet Weale. If you are interested in leading a walk, please contact me, as the "more the merrier".

I'm sure you have all enjoyed walking throughout the summer with our wonderfully varied weather patterns. It's a jungle out there at the moment isn't it – I can't believe how tall bracken and nettles can grow. Please continue to walk with us and revel in the autumn colours to come.

Angela Vasylenko, Walks coordinator

Seasonal musings



During the first week in August I spotted the first ripe blackberry on the way to my local village shops and it took me back for a split second; I don't get out much these days and it was a shocking indication that this mediocre summer would end soon and yet another chilly, dark autumn would be upon us.

In spite of our new found freedom to make our own choices in what we do, our rambling seems to be getting off to a slow start, fewer leaders coming forward and reduced numbers on walks. For some, personal circumstances have changed in 18 months, confidence lost or a sense of separation from the tight knit group we were pre Covid. Whatever the reasons, there is a dedicated nucleus of leaders who are giving life to our activities and are providing the bricks and mortar to build on. The committee are indeed very grateful to the dozen or so who have been repeatedly putting on walks during recent months, several of them friends from other groups. We may not have produced a formal programme but nearly **100** walks have been offered since the pandemic, not forgetting the numerous unofficial walks that took place during the restricted months between friends. They have all gone the extra mile but the lynchpin is of course Michael, who has led around 30 of those walks since last October, kicking off with 6 between lockdowns in last year and 12 weekly evening walks throughout this summer. Thank you is not enough to all of you.

If you do lead walks, then I rely on you to email me the participants in my absence. Most of you do but the points' totals this year will not be as accurate as usual as I have some gaps in my records. I repeat again, I am not going to prompt you but I would appreciate it if you can find a few minutes after your walks to just let me know who came with you. It could mean the difference of a year in someone getting one of those all-important certificates!!

On a personal note, for those of you who don't know, John was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer in the spring and together with his other health issues a suitable treatment was not a straightforward choice. His recovery is an ongoing struggle which prevents not only him, but me also, from joining any walks, leaving a huge gap in our social and physical activities. I know we are not the only ones amongst us who have had serious health issues to deal with over the past year, some similar to ours, others due to joint problems etc. It has not been a good time to be ill and we may feel lost and unheard behind the all-consuming Covid related deaths and cases. I would like to extend my best wishes to all of you who at the moment are unable to do what we do best, and hope that our feet can step back on to the paths we love in due course. **Recover, Rebuild, Return.**

Angela Shipley



I The next Chilterns Walking Festival will take place 16 - 31 October, see <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](#). The next issue will be compiled in December 2021 ready for the New Year.

Welcome
New since the last edition....
Group members

We are pleased to welcome so many new members this year and have enjoyed the company of quite a few of you on our walks, some joining us regularly. This is what the group is all about and we are delighted to have you as part of our friendly band of walkers enjoying the Chilterns as we always have.

Sheila Edgerton
Deborah Gould
Alison Hales
Susan Hill
Jenny Madden
Dawn Segrue
Peter and Jane Towersey

New Leaders
Alan and Stella Marsh
Paul Nye

A week of guided walking from HF Selworthy

On the last day in July, I travelled to HF Selworthy in Somerset and what a journey I had: I made a mental note to not book a holiday during the school holidays again. I stopped in the village of Nether Stowey, to visit the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Cottage, a National Trust site.

At HF Selworthy, the meal sitting arrangements were back to normal. For the first four days including the free day, the weather was fine, with the last two days having intermittent showers. The first day of walking was on the Sunday which was my 70th birthday. During the week I went on a mixture of medium and one hard walk. We used coach transport to the start, for three of the walks and visited Selworthy, Dunkery Beacons and North Hill on separate days. On Exmoor, the vivid purple heather was in full bloom and where there was yellow gorse mixed in, it looked marvellous. One day we had a coastal path walk to Lynmouth, passing the Valley of Rocks. The highlight was a trip on the water-powered funicular down the cliffside of Lynmouth.

There was a singing group on holiday, who gave a concert one evening of early English music, including madrigals, which were popular in the 16th and 17th centuries. On the free day, I visited a nearby village museum in the morning, and in the afternoon visited Dunster Castle another National Trust property, and the village of Dunster.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dunster-castle-and-watermill>

It was pleasing to get a full week's holiday in at HF, as there have been reports of people being asked to change to a four nights' holiday, due to staff shortages, and the need to give the staff some rest. HF Selworthy was my fifteenth UK House, so three to go, being Abingworth in September, Coniston Water next July and Church Stretton still to be booked.

Malcolm Stone

Ridgeway rambles

I and three friends walked the Ridgeway this summer in 11 stages. We started at Ivinghoe Beacon, (see photo), at the beginning of May in a howling gale and finished at Overton hill near Avesbury in the July heatwave. The first half of the walk is through the Chilterns and regular walkers with our group will have done quite a lot of it (for example, Wendover to Prince



Risborough via Whiteleaf is along the Ridgeway as is Swyncombe church). The Chilterns were lovely as always as we were walking though it at bluebell and new beech leaf time.



Then we crossed the Thames at Goring and the character of the path changed completely. We walked up onto the Wessex Downs, see photo, where there is hardly any cover and hardly any civilisation. From there to the end you are up on top of the hills with fantastic views across the Oxfordshire and then Wiltshire plains (you have to cross the A34 and the M4 but apart from that...). In this section

there are also a lot of archaeological remains (hill forts, the original white horse, burial chambers).

The Ridgeway is 87 miles long but we did 92.8 miles. At the start the stages were about 6-7 miles in length and we got about by transferring cars from one end of the stage to the other but by the end we were doing 10 miles at a go and we stayed at a b & b in Ogborne St George for the last three stages and they moved us around.



I think we are lucky to be able to walk in the Chilterns but it's nice to get to walk somewhere different for a change, and the Wessex downs are certainly different.

Brian Greenow

The story of our donated gates

The Chiltern Society's Donate-A-Gate scheme was launched in December 2005 with the intention of improving access for all users, particularly those finding stiles difficult. How it works: when a gate is ordered it takes about a year to the actual installation. An application is submitted to Bucks County Council, several possible sites are considered, then approval of site and gate type is sought and gained from the landowner. Installation is carried out by CS's Path Maintenance volunteers at the request of BCC's Rights of Way officers. The landowner is responsible for upkeep of the gate and the donor for the plaque with inscription.



Our first Wycombe & District dedicated gate was named for **Colin Kennedy**. He was Chairman of our Group for 15 years, standing down at the 2011 AGM. It was decided by the committee to donate a gate as a leaving gift to mark his long service. The cost of the gate was funded by members and installed in 2012. It is situated on the bend in the road from Fingest to the defunct Peacock Inn at Bolter End, map/GR 171

SU788914. At this time there was a Buy-one-get-one-free offer, so a second gate was also put up, same map reference. This second gate has now been removed and the track fenced.



The next year two more gates were put in near Lane End, with plaques saying "Ramblers Walking Partnership/ Wycombe Group /2014", map/GRs 172 SU820925 and SU822925. (The BOGOF deal finished in 2015).

We donated more gates while the BOGOF deal continued. In 2013 two gates were installed, but not dedicated, just labelled "Wycombe District Ramblers/2013". Both are in Lacey Green, map/GRs 181 SP830014 and SP829014.





Our second dedicated gate is that of **John Esslemont**, An RA Life Member, has given over 30 years of service, both on our Group committee (including roles of Secretary for 21 years and Membership Secretary for 18 years) and in various positions at Area level. He certainly merited a gate and one was installed in 2016 in Wheeler End, map/GR 172 SU806929 (footpath PWE/7/1).

Joy Payne relinquished her role as Walks Organiser in September 2015. She performed this task for over 10 years and was on the committee for even longer. Her gate was installed in 2017 in Little Kingshill, map/GR 172 SU894988.



Two gates stand at the end of Church Path, by Millfield Farm, Terriers, within a few yards of each other. One gate, installed in 2017, is dedicated to **Ron Sims** (see photo left, of Helen Laughton opening it). Ron was a Life Member who served on



our committee for 30 years, ten of them as Treasurer (he passed away last year). Map/GR 172 SU874957 (footpath HUG/72/1). The other gate, put in place in 2019, is for **Jeff Smith**. Jeff has also been on our committee for over 30 years and is our Footpath Secretary. Map/GR 172 SU873956 (footpath HUG/71/1).

In late 2019 a gate for **Angela and John Shipley** was established at the bottom of Spring Coppice Lane in Speen. Map/GR 172 SU846997. John was Secretary of the Group for 5 years, then Chairman for 4 (taking over from Colin). Angela joined the committee in 2004 as Membership Secretary and is ongoing in that position 17 years later.

After our first donated gate for Colin, all subsequent gates have been funded by money from The Ramblers Walking Partnership Scheme. We receive money from them if a member has a holiday with Ramblers Walking Holidays/Adagio and nominates our Group when booking. Our latest gate cost £250. Unfortunately COVID restrictions on holidays over the last 18 months will undoubtedly mean limited further funding for a while.



N.B. I'd like to thank Angela and both Johns for help compiling this article and John E for some of the photos; if there are any discrepancies in this article, please let me know and corrections can be given in the next issue of Pathway.

Angela Vasylenko

This time 20 years ago...and now?

Pathway, no 7, September 2001 recorded the following – if only we all had 20:20 vision?!

Then		Now
Ted Swan described a summer tour of Chequers, after which he led a walk, on Cherie Blair's behalf, and also met Tony Blair and their young son, Leo.		...the newish young son, Wilfred, of the current Prime Minister & wife Carrie is now also a sometime resident at Chequers; this summer the PM self-isolated there under the NHS Track and Trace programme.
John Esselmont reported on an initiative to restart a South Bucks Group (to reflect the district council of Burnham, Beaconsfield and Farnham Common).		That DC, was abolished on 31 March 2020 and its area is now administered by the unitary Buckinghamshire Council.
Colin described the newly-established Walking project, set up to promote walking as a healthy activity.		...Simply Walk is now a countywide programme of free, volunteer - led walks https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/environment/exploring-the-countryside/simply-walk/

Diary note: AGM

Our AGM is scheduled for Saturday 20th November 2021 at 2.00pm in Lane End village hall. Inevitably the time, date and location are to be confirmed. *Mick Magdeburg*

Wycombe & District Committee for Nov 2020-21

The contact details are on our website at: <https://www.wycomberamblers.org.uk/contacts.html>

Chair	Vacant
Secretary (committee)	Mick Magdeburg
Treasurer (committee)	Hamish Ross
Events Manager (committee)	Alan Williams
Footpaths (committee)	Jeff Smith
Membership (committee)	Angela Shipley
Walks' Programme Coordinator (committee)	Angela Vasylenko
Pathway Editor	Sheila Draper
Website	Brian Greenow