

PATHWAY

Issue no 72 autumn 2022 Newsletter for Wycombe District Ramblers

Welcome



This introductory welcome is, unusually, by the Pathway editor this time – and what a time! As I write we are officially hotter than Cairo! There is controversy as to whether it was hotter in 1976, but for me at least there is no contest. Who knew how the weather would turn out when, as a student, I got a summer job in an ancient commercial laundry in the North West – our work thermometer shattered at 104 degrees Fahrenheit! But by the time this issue comes out inevitably it will be cooler and our thoughts will turn to autumn once again AND we still have no Chairman. Whilst it is clear that the Committee are doing a great job, now seems to be the time to see again if anyone will step up in time for the Nov AGM? Please contact someone from the current committee to discuss options – or maybe you could find someone to be joint chair with you?

Sheila Draper

AGM: Date for your diary

This year's AGM will be held on **Saturday 26th November** at 2pm, once again at Lane End Village Hall. Formal notification, with the Agenda and details of the lunch arrangements will be sent out at a later date. There will be a 5 mile, leisurely, undulating walk, put on by Angela Vasylenko, commencing at 10am from the Hall prior to the meeting (see the forthcoming walks' programme for details).



Sally McEvoy, Secretary

New members & leaders

It is always a pleasure to welcome new members (and returnees). 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.

Angela Shipley, membership secretary



New members

Sarah Aggarwell
Trevor and Rosalind Mayhew
Derek Needham
Philip and Nicola Raw
Gillian Rumble
Cheryl Sylvester

Paul Szefer

Welcome Back

Elaine Hunt
Roberta Wilson

New Leader

Sally McEvoy

Walks' challenges

I am not usually lost for words, as you know, but I have to confess to having dried up where remotely intelligent comment on our walking activities is concerned on this occasion. I could pontificate on the heatwave and lack of rain of summer but by the time you get this hopefully it will be old news. So, apart from urging you to make a note of the AGM, this time with the soup reinstated (thank you, Margaret and Douglas) and to remind you of the autumn weekend at the end of October (enquiries to Alan) I am, instead, going to tell you a story. Oh, goodness, that really reminds me of "Listen with Mother" on the radio in the fifties, a nostalgic memory of childhood, before telly, internet or anything you might recharge, turned children into couch potatoes. Anyway, take a comfy seat and I will begin.

With only one evening walk on the programme this year, I decided to lead a couple and with energy-saving frugality I hitched them to two easy paced ones. From a navigational point of view I didn't need to recce them as they were both on my doorstep and I walked them endlessly during lockdown. However, as regulations now require, I set out from Gt Kingshill to seek out the hazards and tick the boxes for the first one on a dry bog-standard summer morning and found 2 awkward stiles, 3 trees down from the February storms, 3 docile horses stood in the corner of a field and the next field empty. There was also, more annoying than dangerous, a field edge of ultra-long grass to wade through and a familiar muddy patch by Peterley Farm shop, which in winter is impassable but now with just a soggy middle.

The Evening Walk fell on 30th June; it started raining at 4pm (I know, now I have lost my plausibility but it was the last rain to fall for many weeks) and was still tipping it down at 6.40pm when I set off on foot and John in the car. No self-respecting Wycombe Rambler is going to turn out in the evening in these conditions so we were confident we would be back for coffee by 7pm and to a man none of you did but the affable Vito from Henley and Goring group did, so glancing at the sky for a patch of optimism we duly prepared to set off. On cue at 6.58, the rain stopped and blue patches appeared among the grey blanket, the conversation was lively and we began to enjoy ourselves but (see above) the 2 stiles remained awkward, 2 trees had been cleared so only one to clamber over and the 3 horses were now blocking our way by the stile but were still docile and let us pass. However, in the next previously empty field stood a large horse wearing one of those fly nets rendering it, no doubt, partially sighted. It made straight for us as we climbed the stile poking its massive head into ours and as we hurried away it followed. I didn't dare look back but could hear its thumping hooves and feel it aggressively nudging my back. John is very wary of horses so I had put him in front, he is also not known for his speed but he was nowhere to be seen - way ahead charging towards the safety of the next stile, some way away. Vito and I stuck together refusing to be intimidated but then I saw the horse take a couple of nips at Vito's sleeve and I lost my rag and turned and shouted and clapped my hands in fury and the horse thankfully decided it had met its match and galloped back to the stile to await another harmless and unsuspecting human being, but it was a real scary moment and although we all remained calm, my heart rate was raised in readiness for flight. Needless to add, Vito, in shorts, also got soaked up to his thighs in the long grass verge and we all had to wade through the mud bath at the end, over our boots if not in them.

Now, I have a dilemma. What do I do about the easy paced walk scheduled for two week later as there is no way I am risking that horse again, that would indeed be negligent, but as we have seen, conditions change all the time and the horse could have moved on. We shall never know and I didn't have time to recce again and even if I did it could still change again on the day. So, 16th July, heat wave ramping up 9 of us set off more slowly but in equally good company on the same walk with a diversion, (not recc'd) missing out on the 2 awkward stiles, 1 fallen tree, the long grass and the horse, and adding a little extra loop (also not recc'd) on the end to make up the distance and not one of us came to any harm.

There has to be a moral* to this story but I am darned if I can quite work it out.

Angela Shipley, membership secretary

Walking with weather in Scotland

The morning started so well with a fabulous sunrise slithering over the ridge. After setting off around 9.00 am I walked in bright sunshine until mid-morning break when the mist started to descend the glen before turning to smirr and then quickly escalating to cats and dogs.

Walking around a lochan the spendrift was flying off the water surface courtesy of the gentle breeze.

By the time I reached the ridge it was blowing a hoolie with rain worsening from smirr to yillen and on to daggle. I got absolutely drookit.

On the summit the weather deteriorated with bullet staines stoating on my head followed by flaggies (one of 421 words in the Scots language for snow) in my eyes. The temperature dropped to pure jeelit levels.

On the descent it started off dreich but after a couple of hours the sun came out and a watergaw appeared across the other side of the glen to brighten the day.

At gloaming the night sky started to darken and stars appeared.

So that was a short ramble in Scotland with four seasons in one day with repeats and combinations to add to the variety. For anybody needing a translation there are several Scots Dictionary available as well as the internet.

Hamish Ross

Simply the Best: Congratulations



On the recent 20th anniversary of Simply Walks Colin Kennedy was recognised with a certificate for being a founder member and his contribution of 20 years leading walks for them. Well done, Colin.

David and Elaine Hawkins

Editor's note: if you want to get involved, either as a walker or a volunteer leader, please contact Colin or go to

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/cycling-and-walking/simply-walk/>

Chiltern Walking Festival



The next Walking Festival will take place between 15th-30th October and details can be found at <https://www.visitchilterns.co.uk/walkingfest.html>

Health and Safety – no groans please!

As part of my role as group secretary, I must inform Ramblers HQ of any incidents that occur on our walks, both those that involve injury and those that involve third party property damage. As far as I am aware, incidents involving injury on our walks are relatively rare, as we are all pretty good at looking out for each other, with shouts to warn of holes in the path, or tree roots etc. Our wonderful leaders are pretty good at advising on risks as well. However, there are occasions when something happens and a member is hurt. Once again, we are all very good at looking after each other and in this age of smart phones, help can be summoned quickly. Once the immediate situation is, hopefully resolved, please can members, particularly walk leaders, remember to notify me so I can complete the relevant forms.



Depending on the nature of the incident, I may need information from members who were direct witnesses, not just the walk leader, so please can you make sure that the walk leader has your name, if you were the witness, I can then make contact with you to obtain the necessary information.

Thank you for your help and let's continue to enjoy our beautiful Chiltern countryside in safety.

Sally McEvoy, Group Secretary

Ramblers Holidays - The Walking Partnership

If you nominate your group at the time of booking, not afterwards, then Ramblers will make a payment to Wycombe District Ramblers in respect of WDR members who have been on a Ramblers Holidays. The payments as at April 2022, are as follows:

UK Holidays £10 per person
European/Short haul £20 per person
Worldwide £30 per person
Malcolm Stone

Web: <https://ramblersholidays.co.uk/> Tel: 01707 818969 Email: info@ramblersholidays.co.uk

Book Review - The Salt Path by Raynor Winn

I came late to this book (it was published in March 2018), after many positive comments about it from fellow Ramblers. It is a true story of how a couple's life was turned upside down after a failed business investment. In the space of one week, they were evicted from their property, losing their holiday rental business, and Raynor's husband 'Moth' received a terminal diagnosis of a rare neurodegenerative disease. So, they decided to start walking the South West Coastal Path which is 630 miles long and runs from Minehead in North Somerset to Poole in Dorset. It has been calculated that the ascents along the Path equate to almost climbing Mount Everest four times!

The couple ignored the consultant's advice that Moth should take gentle strolls and avoid stairs and set off on the long walk, living day by day, wild camping. Initially, Moth was struggling physically, but after a while walking each day, his health started improving. It took them a year to complete the walk.

I highly recommend this book, which shows the resilience of a couple who fell on hard times.

Malcolm Stone

Editor's note: Winn later wrote a follow-up book, called "The Wild Silence" and her newest book "Landlines", will be published this autumn.

10 days in Switzerland

Having, like Sheila Draper earlier in the year, enjoyed a week's walking in Madeira in May, Larry and I have recently enjoyed walking in Saas Fee. As the small town is already at 1800m, the walking was tougher, but considerably less scary than some of the Madeira walking! At the end of June, the flowers were stunning, plenty of orchids and, a first for me, wild edelweiss.

Included in the hotel price was a pass for all the cable cars and bus travel in the locality, which really helped with either that 900m upwards climb, or indeed its reverse! (The most upward we actually walked was 650m and the most down was 800m). We were lucky with only one day's rain, so the views were stunning.



I have to admit to uttering the words "this is killing me!" on one occasion, as we struggled up one of the very steep zig-zag paths. It can be quite annoying when your partner is so much fitter than you. All that

gasping for breath, made worse as we were over 2,500m, was most definitely worth it, especially when we got up close to glaciers. Mind you that was with the help of some cable cars.

Finally, we had some wonderful company on occasion.

I would highly recommend Saas Fee as a base for a wonderful walking holiday and with everything except drinks paid for before we left home, Swiss high prices were definitely manageable.

Sally McEvoy



Selworthy April 2022: “His and Her” weekend



Travelling down to Exmoor for our group’s walking weekend at the end of April, I realised it was almost two years to the day from the original planned break and reflected on what had happened in between. Thankfully we haven’t lost anyone to the dreaded Covid, as far as I know, but as a group, we have lost valued members and we have changed in our walking patterns, with fewer choosing the longer walks; I wondered how we’d find the Selworthy experience at Holnicote HF House this time.

As always, it was a friendly and lively group of present and past members, as well as walkers from other areas who were staying at the house at the same time. Some refurbishments had been carried out since we were last there and the staff were helpful and accommodating in enabling us to make the most of our stay. Entertainment was organised for two evenings: the first evening, a quiz and on the next, skittles, both of which were well supported.

The Exmoor coastal scenery was stunning in the glorious sunshine, which we were lucky to have on the Sunday, and the range of walks on offer gave us a chance to pick how challenged or not we wanted to be. Initially we walked directly from the house, but on the second day, a coach took us to the start of the walks: some walked on to Lynton and Lynmouth and the Valley of the Rocks, whilst others tackled stretches of the South West Coast path, including steep detours necessary due to landslips. I think many were pleased with what they achieved, and we all appreciated the beauty of this part of the South West.

Altogether, it was a very enjoyable and sociable first group holiday since 2019 and we can now look forward to others ahead.

Lindsay Vale



I am not a rambler but went with my wife to Selworthy. We parked in a space under high trees in the hotel garden and had afternoon tea with everybody. I got my head around the system of ‘choose your lunch and Saturday dinner- NOW! with some puzzlement.

On Saturday I went on the restored steam train from Minehead, the longest in the UK with a tall beautiful blonde non walking [for that day] rambler.

We ate our picnic lunches together on a magical trip along the coast; sea views, moors and cliffs. The engineering works in that terrain were impressive. The

volunteer railway enthusiasts pointed out the corridor carriages were like Harry Potter’s train to Hogwarts, a favourite with children and remembered fondly by most of us.

All walks on Sunday ended at Lynmouth, so I rode on the hydraulic cliff railway in the morning had an ice cream, and picnicked on the putting green by the harbour with my wife who had been walking over hill and dale with her group. Again a very sociable meal in the evening with ramblers who had been on the coastal path, or, like Anne, through the Doone valley.

Despite non-walking I was made very welcome and really enjoyed the weekend.

Paul Hagyard



These two photos were taken on the Selworthy trip and are courtesy of Gina Capron and Margaret Bourne.





My thanks to Juliet Weale, who sent this photo, taken on a recent walk past the Wormsley Estate, when her group happened upon the preparations for one of the estate's "Feast on Cloud 9" gourmet tasting evenings. I looked up the event and if anyone wants to know how reserve their balloon, the details are currently online at <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/feastevents/691168/>

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
Membership:	Angela Shipley
Walks:	Angela Vasylenko

Other roles: Brian Greenow, Footpaths and Web manager & Editor of *Pathway*, 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 **15/12/22**. Thanks.

Sheila Draper