

PATHWAY

Issue no 75 autumn 2023 Newsletter for Wycombe District Ramblers

The dictionary definition of "Achievement" states it is "Something that has been gained by effort or hard work". We all like to have a few under our belts during our lifetime, some achieve more than others and have high ambition from the get go or if like me, a Miss Average grammar school girl from the 60s we are content with our lot providing we feel we have put our backs into our tasks. As a Wycombe Ramblers member, there are targets to gain in the shape of those coveted certificates so, we set the targets; you go for the achievement. I mention



all this because we have cause to celebrate a special one. **John Esslemont** has become only the second person to reach 2000 walks in our 38 year history. He initiated the scheme way back when and he deserves our acknowledgement and congratulations on reaching the goal on May 24th. If statistics blow your mind, here are a few and a tribute to each and every one of those who have one of those certificates pinned on their toilet wall. Records go back to 1990 when Rosemary Weston was the first to reach 100 and she remains the unchallenged champion with a total of 2299 when she finally put her boots on the shelf for the last time. So, John has much to play for and so do the rest of you. To date (get your head round this) – 185 people are in possession of a 100 certificate, 81 at 250, 28 at 500, 8 at 1000 and 3 at 1500. I should be next for 2000 but with 300 still to go and the dismal total of 2 this year it looks unlikely but "hare and tortoise" springs to mind and of those still walking the likely challengers are way back at 800. Maybe I should not be such a pessimist.

Hamish obviously likes stats too, so look further down this newsletter for his take on John's achievement and more mind boggling facts. A worthy tribute to John if ever there was one! Thanks Hamish. That too took some effort.

We have an encouraging number of new members (see the latest list further on in here – is there anyone you know?). Many 2022-23 new members haven't yet joined a walk and a few discontinued their membership before even trying us out. Why is this? Well, it may just be that the post Covid or New Year resolutions didn't translate into any action, some join just to support a cause but others may feel intimidated or insecure at joining a new activity and meeting new people. Jenny Simnett has offered to trial a "Buddying System" whereby she would meet and stick with a new member if they wish on their first walk. It may in practice be difficult to match people on a mutually agreed walk but Jenny is willing to give it a go and obviously the more people involved the more likely it is to work. So, if any of you feel you could help by being a buddy please get in touch and I will work out a system to put the two in touch. I would not be giving your details out to strangers but would act as a go between by getting their permission to allow you to contact them through the membership secretary.

Finally, please read and note the preliminary info about the date and new venue for the Group AGM in November, from Secretary Sally.

Angela Shipley, Membership Secretary

Committee Information

AGM – Advance notice for your diaries.



Our AGM is on **Saturday 18th November**. Please note that there is a change of venue. This year the meeting will be held in **Hazlemere at The Cedar Barn**, Barn Lane, Hazlemere HP15 7BQ. There is some parking at the hall and plenty of parking in nearby streets. As usual we will plan a walk in the morning starting from Cedar Barn and there will be a shared lunch at the hall after the walk and before the meeting.

Full details will be circulated nearer the time.

Please do come along and share your ideas, your views and of course spend some time catching up with friends. If you have any issues you would like discussed at your AGM, please do let Sally know. It is really helpful to add items to the Agenda, so that everyone has advance notice of what will be discussed.

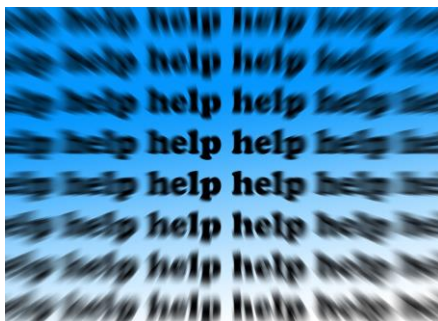
Christmas / Mid-Winter event - an appeal.

Very sadly, Alan Williams will no longer be continuing as a Committee member from this year's AGM. He has served us extremely well for many years, both as Treasurer and as Events Secretary. We will miss his contributions greatly.

As a consequence, we have at present no one who is able to plan and organise our usual Christmas meal together. So we are putting out an appeal.

Would you miss such a get together? Do you have the time to organise an event? Knowing how quickly pubs and restaurants get booked up at that time of year we would need someone to come forward to undertake the task now, rather than wait until after the AGM. Even if you do not feel able to commit to being on the Committee, perhaps you feel able to undertake organising the meal as a one off event. Please have a think and if you would like to volunteer, please contact Sally on either 07979860472 or mcevoysally@gmail.com

Committee Vacancies



Your Committee will be down to just 4 members following Alan's departure. This is the number needed for a quorum, so if any member is unable to attend a meeting, the meeting cannot go ahead. It also means that we only have the capacity to undertake the essential tasks to ensure the group continues, namely, Walks Programme manager, Membership Secretary, Treasurer and Secretary. The current incumbents of those roles do not have the capacity to take on other tasks. A bigger Committee would mean perhaps, greater activity within the group and more social events.

In particular, we are currently in need of volunteers to fill the following roles:-

Chairperson
Publicity officer
Events organiser

Please consider joining the Committee. We really are a friendly bunch with the best interests of Wycombe Ramblers at heart!

Sally McEvoy, Secretary

In memorium for Rosemary

An announcement has been found in a local newspaper of the death in July of Rosemary Weston at the age of 88 years of age.

She was, without a doubt, the matriarch of the Wycombe District Ramblers Group; -founder member, long standing committee member, faithful walks leader, dedicated tea maker for AGMs and collector of all those coveted walks points for many years. She joined the group in April 1987 only two years after the group was formed and is still the holder of prime position for possessing the most for all time with 2299 group walks under her belt, of which she led 178, when she had to stop walking due to failing health a few years back.



We are left with the privilege of memories to cherish and there are many for those of us who knew her over the years from regular group walks, holidays and ramblers weekends away and of the stoicism and inspiration she showed us during those dark days when she lost her daughter, Sarah, in 2013 aged 50 (also a ramblers member) and not long before that her beloved teenage grandson.

Obviously her son Jason was not able to contact any of us and I was personally bereft to find out the news on August 4th only to discover that I had missed her funeral by two hours. Rosemary; it is hard not to have said goodbye but there are many friends here who would have been there for you had we known.

Angela Shipley (with thanks to Joy Payne who alerted me)

John Esslemont – 2,000+ walks with Wycombe Ramblers

As mentioned in the Welcome note above, John has completed more than 2,000 walks with Wycombe Ramblers over a 30 year period.

In addition to his walks with Ramblers John has done non-organised walks, recces, walks with LDWA, challenge events, Munro bagging, walked to the start and from finish points of walks etc. These walks are equally impressive and probably would double or triple the miles walked with the Wycombe Ramblers. For the measures below I have excluded all of the above walks.

Being of a mathematical mind and trying to put this achievement in perspective in a fun way I note below what the bare statistics could translate into.

I have assumed that each walk has averaged 10 miles with an ascent of 1,000 ft to give a cumulative distance of **20,000 miles** and ascent of **2 million feet**.



The distance covered would be equivalent to walking The South West Coast Path, 32 times (630 miles), from Lands' End to John O Groats, 23 times (874 miles), the Trans Canada Trail 1.1 times (17,400 miles), the Longest walkable road from Magadan, Siberia to Cape Town, South Africa 1.4 times (14,200 miles).

Other measures include circuits of a standard athletics track, 800,000 times (0.25 miles), circumnavigation of planet Earth, 0.8 times (24,901 miles) and crossing the Atlantic Ocean, 8.3 times (average width 2,400 miles).

The ascent is equivalent to the following mountain ascents from sea level. Mount Everest 69 times (29,032 ft), Ben Nevis 453 times (4,413 ft). In relation to buildings the ascent would be equivalent to climbing to the top of Burj Kalifa Tower 736 times (2,717 ft).

And of course, this achievement would represent walking 400 times with The Proclaimers (500 miles) and more! *Hamish Ross*

Being a walk leader: talk the walk & walk the talk

Lindsay Vale gave a lovely and positive view of being a walk leader in the previous edition of *Pathway*. This is an alternative, perhaps slightly, but only slightly, tongue in cheek, view.

- 1) Don't show any signs of weakness, the group will scatter or attack.
- 2) Don't admit to being lost. Strictly speaking this comes under rule 1 but it has the even worse outcome that they might try and help you. As a rule I only trust directions from John Esslelmont. And the Marshes if we're in the west of our area.
- 3) Lindsay suggested that the walkers are all adults and can be trusted. This is a mistake. Herding kittens is easier than getting them to follow your instructions.
- 4) Always have a backmarker even with a small group. That way you can always blame the backmarker if anyone gets lost.
- 5) It is probably best to have a male backmarker as he is unlikely to admit to making a mistake. You can then exchange knowing glances with the women at the front on how men will not admit to going wrong.
- 6) Enjoy the recce. It is the only time you will get any peace.
- 7) And remember, always fill in the risk assessment form.

Brian Greenow

Our holiday in Austria – 24th June to 1st July 2023

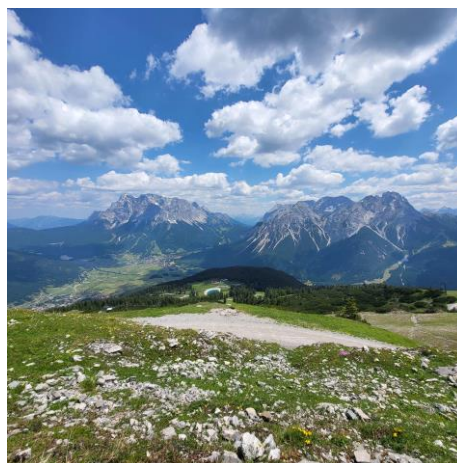
Having booked with Ramblers Adagio Plus holidays, for a week's walking and sightseeing in the Zugspitz Arena, we flew to Munich with British Airways from London Heathrow, where we encountered our leader, Lawrence Jones and several others in our group. More joined at Munich, making a total of 12 (plus Lawrence). They were a friendly group.

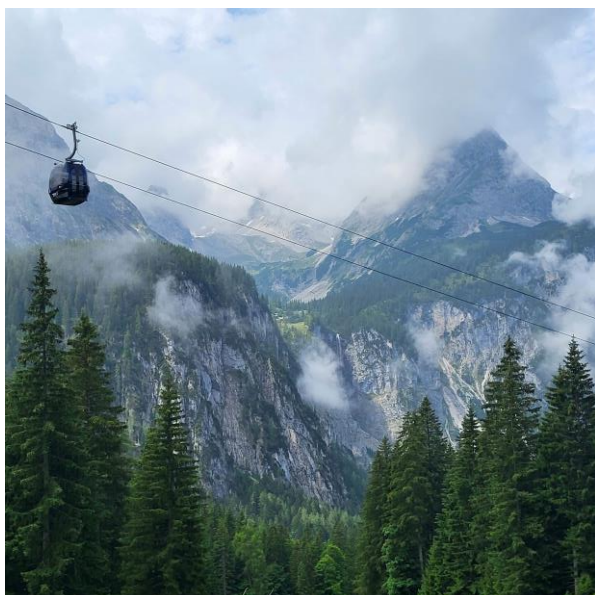
We then took a coach journey lasting approximately two hours to the small town of Ehrwald, located in the north west of Austria, close to Bavaria and the German border, and our hotel, Alpen Residence. Run by the Oberreiter family, we received a warm welcome, and after settling in we enjoyed an excellent buffet dinner. Our rooms were spacious and comfortable. In addition to attractive public rooms, the hotel offered a small swimming pool and spa, as well as a pretty terrace and garden where we could enjoy an aperitif before dinner. We found Ehrwald charming and peaceful, surrounded by lovely views of the mountains. [The first photo is a view from Sunnalm 1620m.]

Daytime temperatures were around 25C+, a little hot for pleasant walking but we did avoid the rain and storms, which conveniently occurred in the evening and overnight.

Our walks explored the villages around Ehrwald, and using gondolas and chairlifts, we visited the higher alpine meadows, filled with wildflowers and, of course, appreciated the amazing views. On one day we also saw deer running in the forests, and a hanging valley (see photo overleaf, including the gondola) and waterfall, evidence of the area's glacial past.

We took the cable car to the summit of the Zugspitze, at a height of 2,962 metres. [See the photo of the morning sun on the Zugspitze range, overleaf.]





The journey to the top was a bit scary but exciting too. Unfortunately, it was very cloudy which prevented us seeing what would have been stunning views. A second cable car took us down to the glacier, a chilly experience. We walked between Austria and Germany but without any obvious frontier. The Zugspitz Arena is a joint initiative to encourage tourism and conservation. With its cable cars and mountain top facilities, it is also an impressive feat of engineering.

On our day off we visited the Partnach Klamm, a stunning gorge and waterfall, on the outskirts of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, across the border in Germany, site of the 1936 Winter Olympics; the stadium and ski runs have been kept as an atmospheric reminder of the troubled Nazi past. The old town of Partenkirchen itself has retained its local alpine village ambience.

The following day, our guided walk took us to the lakes of Heiterwang and Plansee. After our walk around the lakes we took a boat for the return journey. On a hot day, it was relaxing and refreshing.

On a final note, we must mention the 'kuchen', delicious cakes served every afternoon in the Alpen Residence, and free of charge to residents. An apple cake eaten at our coffee break, high up on the Ehrwalder Alm, on our last day, was another tasty treat (see photo).

All in all, an amazing holiday, with happy memories (apart from the queues in Passport Control at Munich airport, which we will forget!)

Alison Hales, Anne Hagyard, Norma Fazey & Shelagh Wells



From the archives: 10 years ago

Pathway Autumn 2013: then and now...

- John Esselmont: Congratulations then were given to John for the number of walks he had done; now we are celebrating more miles in this issue in 2023!
- Walks' leaders: there was a request for more volunteers – plus ça change in 2023?

- HS2 news: 10 years ago *Pathway* reported the Court of Appeal's ruling that HS2 wouldn't be halted; now the Infrastructure and Projects Authority Annual Report 2022-23 published in July this year is noting the first 2 stages as "unachievable".
- A report was published about the Wycombe Ramblers May 2013 walking holiday in Crete, but 2023 found us nearer to Ironbridge Gorge than Somaria Gorge.

Sheila Draper

The Nidderdale Way Trail

In late July, I travelled to Harrogate in North Yorkshire, where the Ramblers holiday was based. Harrogate has a history of being the English Spa town in the Georgian era, when the wealthy but sickly would visit to 'take the waters'.

There were twelve of us who walked the trail including the leader. The trail is officially 53 miles long and was covered over five days of walking between 10 and 12 miles daily. It started and finished at Brimham Rocks, a collection of gritstone rocks formed over 300 million years ago. The waymark discs have the image of a curlew wading bird on them, as the symbol for the trail.

On the first day we passed through Pateley Bridge which is popular with tourists. During the day we followed the River Nidd, hence the name of the trail. We also passed by Gouthwaite Reservoir. It was mixed weather with rain at times.

The second day (1 August) happened to be Yorkshire Day, which was invented after I was born in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. It proved to be a mainly dry day. We passed by Scar House Reservoir, which was the largest dam in Britain when built in 1936.

Day three was very wet, for the most challenging walk of the week. We followed a valley to Ramsgill and climbed up to see the now disused lead mines. The walk was shortened, cutting out the climb to Nought Moor.

On the fourth day, which was dry, we started with the climb up to Nought Moor. At the top there are two stone pillars (originally there were three) called Yorke's Folly, built in 1779. Actually, it was a philanthropic act by John Yorke, who gave unemployed men work which paid 4d a day plus a loaf of bread. Following the River Nidd, we visited Birstwith and finished in Hampsthwaite, where we enjoyed drinks in the garden, at Sophie's Café. *Cont.*

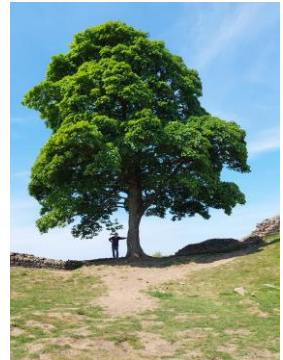


A nice touch back at the hotel for the final review meeting -we all received a metal 'Nidderdale Way completed' pin badge. Despite the weather, I enjoyed my first trail walk. A good leader and friendly group of like-minded walkers makes all the difference.

Malcolm Stone

Walking (the other half of) the Hadrian's Wall path

My friend and I decided to finish the path this year and we set off in early-June with the aim of avoiding the heat. That didn't work out. The first day was spent catching up on the things we didn't finish last year. We visited Vindolanda, a Roman fort which had active excavations on the original wooden fort taking place when we visited. The lead professor of the dig was quite happy to stop and answer questions. Then we caught the bus to Housesteads and walked back to our lodgings at Twice Brewed via the trail and the sycamore gap, which is famous for appearing in the film, 'Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves'. This section of the path is up and down and steep. The path down often consists of large boulders which you have to step to and from. In the wet it would be quite tricky.

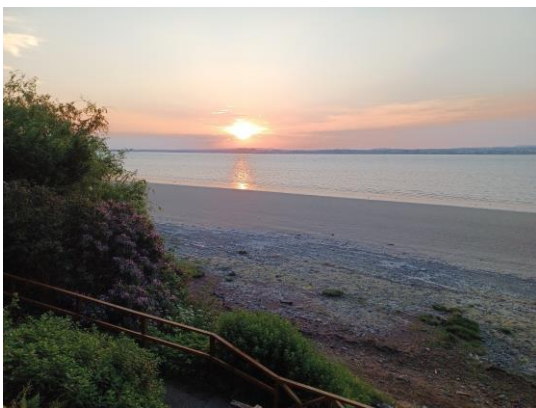


The second day we headed off from Twice Brewed (the beer is really nice) west along the path. This was the hardest day as it was the longest and the steepest (I didn't plan this part well). Towards the end we agreed that we could just walk behind the ridge and didn't actually have to go up and down the actual trail. On both these days there was quite a brisk easterly wind so we didn't get too hot. The wall is visible for quite a large part of the central section and there were turrets and mile forts aplenty. The path and the hills are quite high here and the surrounding land is just moorland with lots of sheep but it is very scenic, the views are lovely and the wall rolls up and down the hills keeping to the edge of the Whin sill.

The third day was less hilly but it was now getting hot. And appearances of the wall were becoming less frequent. [See the photo of the last view we had.] It was more like walking through normal countryside. We finished at a local brewery (beer not that great) and got a taxi to our b&b as there was no accommodation on the path nearby. A bit of a tedious day.



The last day was hot. I had forgotten to pack my light trousers so we, fortunately as it turned out, had to skip a bit of the path to go into Carlisle to buy a pair which I walked out wearing from the shop (I had paid). This part of the path has no trace of the wall. It runs along the edge of the Solway Firth and while quite flat is quite scenic. We reached the end at Bowness, the sign for this is a little underwhelming and I was expecting a brass band for all those completing it. And then went to the pub for a drink (beer good this time).



We met and chatted to quite a lot of walkers doing the path and in the pubs and saw the same groups several times. It is a cottage industry in these parts supporting taxis, b&bs and pubs. There are honesty boxes filled with chocolates and cold drinks. We met a group who intended to walk the path dressed as Romans collecting money for Alzheimer's, another who intended to carry their tents and clothes and complete it in 5 days (they were about 50 and didn't look that fit), two quarrelling brothers and a hypoglycaemic attack in a pub. Lots really. One moment of kindness stands out. On the last day, even though we had cut down our distance we had assumed we could

stop at a pub which according to our maps and google was open during the day to provide drinks for

walkers. I was basing my water consumption on this pub. When we got there it was a shell. A woman left a nearby house on her bike and I stopped her and asked about the pub and she said it had been closed for several years and really should be taken off the maps. As I was out almost out of water I asked if she could do me a favour and fill up my water bottle. She cycled back to her friend's house and returned with a bottle of cold water.

And as to why we walked east to west, see the picture of the sunset.

Brian Greenow

Long weekend at Longmynd



Fifteen Wycombe Group members enjoyed a really good weekend at this HF in Church Stretton on 14-17 April. Although the drive there was arduous (wind, rain, traffic, etc.), the weather had improved by Saturday morning. We participated in a variety of walks (3 walks of different levels offered on both days) along with other walkers staying there. The enormous mansion that is Longmynd House was impressive, but had been undergoing major refurbishment, so that some scaffolding and plastic sheeting was still around the building, thus obscuring views from some of the bedrooms, which was disappointing. However, that did not deter

us from appreciating the purpose of our stay - the walking! Rolling countryside, some very steep climbs, breath-taking views, historic sites - and of course the social interaction during the whole stay. Thanks to Alan Williams for organising this. *Angela Vasylenko*

Membership News

New members: We would like to welcome the following members who have joined us in the past four months, some of whom are walking regularly.

Agneszka Bogucka
Mike Collier
Gabrielle Cowdry
Lynne Ing

Lynne Patrick
Bronwen Taylor
Mike Taylor
Micael Teweldemedhin

Mark Tosh
Jim Thorn
Antoinette Westwood

Also some familiar faces have come on board, so a warm welcome to them too:

Martin Cave
Marian Dobrin

Mahaela Matei
Juliet Weale

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,

End word – Hitherto my chosen colourway in each edition has tended to reflect the season, but this time there's no autumn tints as I am hoping for a dry, warm September with blue

skies and sunshine! *The editor*