

Newsletter of the Waveney & District Group of the Ramblers

Number 87: March 2022

Editorial

The last few months have seen our walks almost back to normal with numbers attending most walks noticeably higher than much of last year. The latest government plans suggest that will not change and we can continue without too many Covid-19 precautions to take into account.

The new programme includes a number of fairly familiar walks together with some new ones. With the continuing problem of too few walk leaders it is inevitable that some walks will repeat a little more frequently than we would all like. So, contact Roger if you are thinking of putting on a walk and if you want to do it as a joint walk with a colleague, that's fine. Also, if you need some help or advice again call Roger who will put you in contact with one of the 'regulars' who will be pleased to help out.

Apart from the new walk programme, you will find within this newsletter details of a walking holiday in Wiltshire being organised by Neil in mid-September; nine days of walking, ranging from 6.5 to 8.5 miles each day. Please contact him directly if interested.

A reminder that, when buying walking gear, most suppliers offer discounts of 10-15% when you show your Ramblers card.

Enjoy this Spring/Summer programme of walks - soon the hour will change and the thick fleeces and down jackets can be left at home!

Tony Langford



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My thoughts on 'Written Risk Assessments'

After 15+ years of leading walks and organising group walking holidays, I think that it is fair to say, with no false modesty, that I am an experienced walk leader. However, due in the main to what I consider to be a dictatorial piece of bureaucratic buffoonery. I am, of course, referring to written risk assessments for every walk and, furthermore, to have to keep these written risk assessments for three years, is somewhat draconian.

Obviously, there will be many who do not agree with me. Conversely, there will be many who agree wholeheartedly with my thoughts. Thank God that we live in a democratic society.

For the 15+ years of being a walk leader, my idea of a risk assessment is to have a pre-walk talk (i.e. a verbal risk assessment), stating such things as: if using a metalled road, to ADVISE single file; if whilst leading, call back to ADVISE of any trip hazard, such as tree roots etc.; if walking in marshy terrain, try not to get bogged down (joke? well, nearly).

My contention is that one can fill in ten, one hundred, or one thousand pieces of paper but if an accident/incident is going to happen, then no amount of paperwork is going to stop this accident/incident from happening.

The first group walking holiday that I organised and led was in Scotland, possibly some of you will remember the CATERAN Trail. Was I supposed to go some 3- or 4-hundred miles to recce this walk? Then, perhaps, do the group holiday a week or so later? Sounds ludicrous to me. Is it not appreciated that conditions, especially weather, can change from day to day, and thus putting a different perspective on any WRITTEN RISK ASSESSMENT.

To have to keep a WRITTEN RISK ASSESSMENT for three years, surely a walk leader, for each walk undertaken, will have to keep a register of names and contact details! If a Mr A makes a claim after two years and ten months for example, without one having recorded details, who will remember if in fact Mr A was actually on that walk

As a life member of the Ramblers Association (a wonderful organization), I do not lay blame at their door for this dictatorial bureaucratic buffoonery. Cynical though it may sound, I think that this is just another way for an insurance company to get more wriggle room for getting out of any potential claim. For myself, I believe in the old adage: 'Don't mend a thing that is not broken.'

David Harmer, ex-walk leader and ex-Chair of Waveney Ramblers

Christmas Lunch & Walk

It was good to see so many old and new members of Waveney Ramblers attending the Christmas lunch at the Barnby Swan. Some even managed the walk beforehand!

Many thanks to Roger & Sue, who organised everything. It was clearly a success, if judged on the noise level alone; the food and company gave a great party feel. They have agreed to organise next year's as well.

Placed on each table, by Sue, were various cards with quotations of relevance to a walking group and, as no one saw them all, they are reprinted here:

"Now, shall I walk or shall I ride? 'Ride' pleasure said; 'Walk' Joy replied." – **W.H.Davies**

"The true charm of pedestrianism does not lie in the walking, or in the scenery, but in the talking. The walking is good to time the movement of the tongue by, and to keep the blood and brain stirred up and alive; the scenery and woodsy smells are good to bear in upon a man an unconscious and unobtrusive charm and solace to eye and souls and sense; but the supreme pleasure comes from the talk." – **Mark Twain**

"My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was sixty. She's ninety-seven now and we don't know where the heck she is." – **Ellen Degeneres**

"If we were meant to stay in one place we would have roots instead of feet." - **Rachel Wolchin**

"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks." – **John Muir**

"Walking is man's best medicine." – **Hippocrates**

"Not all who wander are lost." – **J.R.R.Tolkien** (depends on the walk leader!)

"There is nothing like walking to get the feel of a country. A fine landscape is like a piece of music; it must be taken at the right tempo. Even a bicycle goes too fast." – **Paul Scott Wower**

"An engineer and an anti-vaxxer were walking through the woods when they came upon a bridge across a crocodile-infested river. The anti-vaxxer asked the engineer: 'What are the odds of us making it across that bridge safely?' The engineer took out his calculator and his tape measure, did a structural analysis and said: 'There is a 99.97% chance we'll make it across that bridge safely.' The anti-vaxxer responded, without even thinking: 'Forget that, I'm swimming!' - **unattributable**

Christmas lunch
at Barnby Swan





A very Merry Xmas Lunch enjoyed by all

Wiltshire Group Holiday
see website

January walk at Westleton



Wiltshire Group Holiday 2022

Nine days walking from Saturday 17th to Sunday 25th September. The terrain includes hills from 300 to 670 feet ascent and descent. Please book your own accommodation in the area. There is no obligation to attend all nine walks. Arrive and depart when you like, to suit your commitments.

DOWNLOAD

http://waveneyramblers.org.uk/download/guides/Guide_Wiltshire.pdf

Neil will be leading the walks but you can "go it alone". All the walks in this guide have been shared on Wikiloc and can be followed using their smartphone app. For this guide, Neil has not produced turn by turn instructions. Please get the app!

<https://www.wikiloc.com/outdoor-navigation-app>

Many handheld satnav devices, like the Garmin eTrex 20, allow GPX file uploads. These are available on the website.

http://waveneyramblers.org.uk/rr_guide/Wiltshire

THE WALKS

10 a.m. starts. 6.5 to 8.5 mile walks.

- 1) Sat: Great Bedwyn and Crofton Pumping Station, Canal and Rail - 7.7 miles.
- 2) Sun: Calne and Bowood Lake - 8.4 miles.
- 3) Mon: Avebury, Silbury and West Kennett - 8 miles.
- 4) Tue: Pewsey Downs and the White Horse Trail - 7.5 miles.
- 5) Wed: Amesbury and Stonehenge - 8.5 miles.
- 6) Thur: Calstone Down. A faded white horse. Shorter but hilly - 6.5 miles.
- 7) Fri: Savernake Ancient Forest - 7 miles.
- 8) Sat: Devizes, The canal and another white horse - 7.5 miles.
- 9) Sun: West Woods - 7 miles.

The photos in this guide (*see picture on opposite page*) were taken in late November. Everything should be greener when we visit! The walks ascend and descend from 300 to 670 feet. For comparison, a typical Suffolk walk might have 150 feet of ascent and descent.

WHEN AND WHERE TO STAY

Most of the walks are near the old A4, between and include Calne and Marlborough. Also try Devizes or a boat on the Kennet and Avon canal. Please book your own accommodation. Neil will be camping. Visit for all nine walks or just come for a few days.

Thanks and regards, Neil.



Thorndon Black Horse refreshes a few weary ramblers

Ditchingham & Broome in December



Ellough walk in January

"Angles Way"

From March, Neil will be leading walks along the Angles Way from Thetford to Great Yarmouth. This ties-in with the Waveney River walks we did in 2021. These will not be repeated but we will fill the gap, where we could not complete the flooded walk. And we'll re-try the one that got cancelled when Neil had a nasty cold. Walks 1 to 7 are new. Then we'll skip the legs completed in 2021.

When the Angles Way booklet is completed, it will replace the Waveney River booklet because they duplicate each other.

The walks are documented here:

http://waveneyramblers.org.uk/rr_guide/Angles_Way

And there is a Rural Rambles guide under construction here:

http://waveneyramblers.org.uk/guides/Guide_Angles_Way.pdf

The OS maps are here:

http://waveneyramblers.org.uk/map_bing_os/Guide_Angles_Way.kml

**Attractive
viewpoint
on Emma's
Hogs Grove
Walk**



Dunwich beach start in January

The need for risk assessments

Firstly, to quote from the Suffolk Area News (Footprint) of October 2021, sent out to members on October 26th:

“Ramblers Central Office: A new walk leader check list and risk assessment has been introduced which has raised a number of queries and concerns. On average we experience a low number of incidents each year, with only a few resulting in an insurance claim. However, where there is a claim, our insurers have been very clear that having a written record of risks, and our action before and during an incident, is vital to demonstrate that we have acted responsibly. Risk assessments must be kept for three years and should not take a lot of time to complete. This message will also be published on Assemble to give all volunteers the opportunity to read it in full.”

The details of insurance were emailed to the Group on January 12th. If anyone would like a re-send of these two emails, or didn't get them in the first instance, please let me know.

It's fair to say that a number of us have been quite 'vocal' to Ramblers because what appears to be a further burden on walk leaders, and Neil has discussed simplifying the RA form with them. No doubt there will be further conversations on the subject with Ramblers. Meanwhile, the form itself should not be too much of a worry to leaders. Only the relevant boxes require ticking and writing down additional concerns should be minimal; after all, if there were to be serious problems on a walk, it is unlikely that the leader would want to go ahead with it.

Part of leaders' concerns are undoubtedly dealing with the technological side of things: whether the smartphone has the ability to receive and send the RA form; is the tablet or iPad in use able to handle and send the file; or is it preferred to fill in a paper copy instead. Whichever is the case, I will help whenever I can and I'm sure that Neil, being the wizard that he is, can solve most, if not all the problems that we throw at him. So, don't think that you are on your own, at least not until we have had a chance to help. After all is said and done, walk leaders are the life-blood of Ramblers and we are forever looking for new leaders to put on a few walks.

Roger Moore - Waveney Ramblers' Programme Secretary



John Smith

It is sad to have to report the passing of John Smith, aged 93, who was Programme Secretary from 1993 to 2005; the longest serving in that role so far.

He was also a walk leader and his last walk was on Good Friday in 1997, sometime after which he had the stroke which then limited his activities.

Michael

finally, don't forget . . .

Contributions for next edition of *The Waveney Rambler* (Newsletter) should be sent, by **22nd May, 2022**, to: **Tony Langford**, 16 Holton Road, Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 8HF (tel. 01986 875694) or email to: **langfordajs@hotmail.com**. Please note that articles ought not exceed **350 words**, unless approved by the editor. **Your photos are always welcome - the more the merrier.**