The Hyndman Centre

From Ralph Brighton, Suffolk Area Executive Committee Chairman

This is your newsletter!

I made an appeal in the last issue of this newsletter for contributions from any members in Suffolk. Writing this just before Christmas, I do not know how successful this will have been but I feel it does no harm to encourage again all Suffolk members to let us have your thoughts, ideas, anecdotes on any aspect of our common interest – walking in and enjoying our delightful countryside and promoting this wonderful pastime for the benefit of all, members and non-members alike.

Area website

I reported in the last issue the setting up of a new website for Suffolk Area (www.suffolkramblers.org.uk) and I am pleased to report that this has now been extensively expanded thanks to a lot of hard work and the expertise of Dave Hodgkinson from the Bury Group.

The site now includes all of the Suffolk Groups' walks programmes, with links to their individual websites, and very useful information on Rights of Way - with 'frequently asked questions'.

Of great interest are a number of paths and bridleways (with detailed maps) recently placed on the Definitive map, but not yet reflected on Ordnance Survey maps, and these may well provide ideas for new walks in the your area. Many of these are ancient routes reclaimed as Rights of Way thanks to the tremendous perseverance of John Andrews from Bury, who for over 25 years has been a leading campaigner for The Ramblers' Association both locally and nationally.

I believe that members will welcome this website as a valuable addition to The Ramblers Association's publicity and I recommend your looking at this site. Any constructive feedback will be most welcomed.

Geoff Pratt, Area Access Officer

Geoff Pratt from the Ipswich group is yet another member who has served unstintingly as an officer in several capacities both for his Group and the Area for probably over forty years. He is also well known as the author of several booklets on Pub Walks (still in print and widely available locally). Records indicate that Geoff served as Area Secretary from 1978 to 1982 and again from 1988 to 2001 which must make him the Area's longest serving Secretary! In the last five years he has devoted countless hours as Area Access Officer taking on the onerous work involved in overseeing the mapping of open country and common land in Suffolk and making numerous representations on behalf of the Ramblers' Association, following the passing of The Countryside and Rights Of Way Act in 2000.

At the end of October 2005 the East of England became the last region to get Open Access, so that "26,111 hectares of open country and registered common land are now available for people to walk on" (ref. www.countryside.gov.uk). Geoff has therefore decided that this is an appropriate time for him to pass on the task of monitoring Access to someone else and he will not therefore be continuing his role after the forthcoming Area AGM early in March. He is rightly commended for the tremendous knowledge and experience he has always employed and in particular for the non-confrontational way he has always conducted himself, to his great credit. I know Geoff will still continue to contribute his best efforts for the benefit of all Ramblers in Suffolk.

Officers for Area Committee

Whilst I am pleased to report that a candidate for Area Access Officer

has agreed to accept a nomination, we have not been able to fill the vacancy for another important role.

Area Countryside Officer

The RA's concerns extend beyond our organising walks programmes and our interest in the condition and availability of public rights of way. The Association has an important and on-going involvement with the care and protection of the countryside in which we spend so much of our time. We try to make our views known when we hear of plans for inappropriate development in rural areas or schemes which will have a damaging impact on the natural environment.

We could do this much more effectively if we could find a volunteer to co-ordinate this part of our activities across the County by, for example, keeping an 'ear to the ground' to learn of worrying large-scale planning applications, keeping in contact with the local group committees to see if support is needed in making representations on any single proposal, being the information channel between Area Committee and RA Central Office.

If you think you might be able to contribute to this work in any way - even if only on a partial basis - we'd be delighted to hear from you.

Area Annual General Meeting

We are fortunate to have secured Peter Ayling as Guest Speaker for the Area AGM in Bury St Edmunds on 4th March. Peter has been an RA member since 1973 and has taken on many roles at local, area and national levels. He has a broad range of interests in many of the Association's objectives, including legal matters, Right of Way, encouraging the 'walking for health' initiatives, recruitment, conservation and protection of the countryside. I am looking forward to listening to him and I hope that as many Suffolk members as possible will be able to come along, and to join us on the short walk afterwards, led by a member of the Bury group.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the Area Executive Committee for the invaluable work they constantly undertake behind the scenes for the benefit of us all and for their input and support at our bi-monthly meetings.

Ralph Brighton

Ramblers Association – Suffolk Area

Annual General Meeting Saturday 4th March 2006 at 10.30am
To be held at the Hyndman Centre, Bury St Edmunds

AGENDA

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of AGM held on 26th February 2005
3. Matters arising from minutes.
4. Presentation of the Annual report.
5. Presentation and acceptance of the Accounts for the year ending 30th September 2005
6. Election of Chairman.
7. Election of Officers.
8. Election of Representatives of the Affiliated Societies.
9. Appointment of the Independent Examiner.
10. Any other business.

Following the meeting there will be a talk by Peter Ayling.

In the afternoon there will be a short walk led by a member of the Bury Group.

RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION SUFFOLK AREA

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Saturday 26th February 2005 at 10 30am
at the Riverside Centre, Stratford St Andrew
hosted by Alde Valley Group

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence
Alde Valley Group Chair, Wendy Robinson, welcomed thirty-one members and guests, including guest speaker Kate Ashbrook, from Ramblers' Association Headquarters, to the 2005 Annual Meeting., which was then chaired by Suffolk Area Chairman Ralph Brighton
Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Woodin Countryside Access Leader, Tony Buck, Roger Wolfe, Iain Taylor, Ingrid Kay, John Haseltine, Trevor Arbon, Rosie Perham, Dave Chandler, Philip Prigg, Laurie Burroughs, Diana Bramer, Doug Hart.

2. Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Saturday 6th March 2004
- The minutes were considered to be an accurate record of the 2004 AGM and their adoption was proposed by Ralph Brighton, seconded by Philip Snelling and carried unanimously.

3. Matters Arising – There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Presentation of the Annual Report
Memebers were presented with copies of the report. Geoff Pratt, Area Access Officer, commented on his report and brought members up to date, stating that there had now been 24 appeals against the provisional map. The RA had made representations against 3 sites that had been excluded from the map.
Adoption of the annual report was proposed by Geoff Knight, seconded by Wilfred George and approved unanimously.
Ralph Brighton proposed a vote of thanks to retiring Newsletter editor John Hasletine for his hard work over the years in producing the biannual newsletter. Ralph asked for future contributions to be sent to group secretaries until a new editor is appointed, and for the scope of

contributions to be widened to include walking items of general interest in addition to the usual group activity reports.

5. Presentation of the Accounts for the year ending 30th September 2004
Area Treasurer Geoff Knight highlighted matters of interest to members in the annual statement of account. £500 contribution had been made towards the cost of publishing the Railway Walks leaflet. Again there was an excess surplus and so a donation had been made to RAHQ. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Ralph Brighton, seconded by Dick Leech and approved by the members.

6. Election of Chairman
The present chairman Ralph Brighton was proposed for re-election by John Andrews, seconded by Iain Taylor and duly elected unanimously for the coming year.

7. Election of Chairman and Officers
The nominations for the officers of the Suffolk Area Executive Committee for the year 2005/6 are recorded on the attachment to these minutes. There was only one nomination for each position and all were elected to stand for the year.

8.Election of Representatives of the Affiliated Societies
No nominations had been received.

9. Appointment of Independent Examiner
Geoff Knight reported that Mr John Cresswell is willing to continue in this role.

Any Other Business
The Chairman thanked Alde Valley Group for hosting the AGM.

Tony Eden, media contact and recruitment officer, addressed the meeting on the work done by footpath working parties. He highlighted

the position regarding personal injury to workers, clarifying that personal injury is not covered by RA's insurance, but is available to individuals from the insurance market.
He further explained how RA members had been trained in the use of hand operated power tools, but that much more of this work is now carried out by the council's contractors.

Area footpath secretary John Andrews advised that he now holds CD roms of OS maps of Suffolk on behalf of the Area. They were available for use by members. Notes and amendments can be added to the maps.

Neil Mahler reported that the recently opened old railway footpath from Aldeburgh to Thorpeness was in a bad condition. This was noted and it was recommended that it be taken up with the local group.

John Dowding asked if Suffolk had submitted a motion to General Council. Ralph Brighton replied that the committee had not felt it necessary this year.

The meeting closed at 11.20am

Address by Kate Ashbrooke
Following the AGM , Kate Ashbrook gave an interesting presentation covering issues at national level including, the CRoW act, which had been a great achievement for the RA., although she was disappointed with the amount of land not included on provisional maps.
The next step would be to obtain greater access to the coastlines and the RA was looking for easier ways of defining access land this time.
Rights of way issues were discussed along with the role of countryside officers.

A vote of thanks to Kate was given by Jim Richards.

Treasurer's Report 2004-05

Our income this year was £9184, of which only £300 was **not** from Head Office. The interest from the Unity Trust was £168.

We have expended just over £8071, leaving a surplus of approx. £1113. Expenditure includes donations amounting to £2000 to Head Office.

Allocations to groups have been increased by almost 12% to £3513.
Costs of the Officers and Committee, at the lower figure of £445, include a reasonable sum for travelling from all parts of the county.
Footpath work, including necessary maps and legal information, have this year cost just less than £1300.
Our printing / publicity costs of £691 do not include costs of local distribution.

Our Balance Sheet still shows £500 designated to provisional costs of a footpath creation scheme.

Payments to Groups will follow a different pattern in the forthcoming year. Groups are being asked to prepare Budgets of predicted Income and Expenditure taking into account any changes sought in their Reserves. It is hoped that Area and Group Reserves will be set at a realistic, but not over-cautious rate, bearing in mind that Area and Head Office will have the resources to supplement funds for necessary but unplanned costs.

To this end Area will request a sum to adjust [i.e. reduce] its Reserves to ensure that their level is justifiable in the context of our needs and of the recommendations of the Charity Commission. You will see that currently they stand at about one year's outgoings.

I should like to thank our local treasurers and also the examiner of accounts.
I am always prepared to answer questions from members, though it is of course the Executive Committee who decide how our money is spent.

Geoff Knight, Area Treasurer 13th October 2005

Ramblers Association Suffolk Area

Income & Expenditure Account 2004-05 for year to 30/9/04

2003-04		2004-05			
	Income				
7381	Head Office Allocation	8884.80			
181	Donations & other income	106.04			
123	Bank Interest	167.81			
0		0.00			
0	Advert	25.00			
7685	TOTAL	9183.65			
	Expenditure				
3137	Allocations to Groups	3513.00			
70	Special Grants	23.49			
	Exec. Committee :				
	Room Hir	30.60			
35	Travel	272.50			
386	Officers	141.51	444.61		
489	ROW expenses				
	Area	841.85			
670	Local FS	446.90			
736	Other	0	1288.75		
0	Other - Leaflet		0.00		
	285 Publicity / Conferences		121.75		
	521 Printing [Area News]		569.25		
	700 Donation to HO		2000.00		
	0 Don [Prom. Wlkg]		30.00		
	67 AGM		80.00		
7322	TOTAL		8070.85		
363.27	Surplus/deficit		1112.80		

Balance Sheet as at 30/9/05

2003-04		2004-05
6717.21	Accumulated Fund	7080.48
363.27	Surplus/Deficit for year	1112.80
7080.48	Balance at year end [30th September]	8193.28 #
	Represented by:-	
5480.67	Bank Balance	6342.81
1599.81	Unity Trust	1850.47
7080.48	add: debtors & pre-payments	8193.28
0	less: creditors	0.00
7080.48	TOTAL	8193.28 #
	[u/pr chs. £264.68]	

#Of this sum £500 still remains designated for a footpath creation scheme, as yet unfinalized, leaving free reserves of £7693.

######Presented by Geoff Knight, Area Treasurer

Independently examined by John Cresswell, CTA, MAAT

date:

Report from the Area Membership Secretary

Since the formation of the Suffolk Area in 1977 membership had steadily increased until 2005 when there was a slight decrease to the present figure of 2129, down 19 on last year.
The table below shows the figures for the eight groups in the Suffolk Area. Numbers in brackets are the figures for the previous year.

Alde Valley	161 (173)	Bury	369 (381)
Ipswich	605 (625)	Newmarket	166 (164)
Stowmarket	205 (205)	Sudbury	233 (228)
Waveney	355 (338)	Stour	29 (34)

The decline in the Suffolk Area figues would seem to be in line with the current national membership which is now 139,515 against last years figure of 142,085, down 2570. This is minus 1.8% compared with a budgeted increase of 5%.

Dick Leech
Area Membership Secretary

Access in Suffolk

The provisions in the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*, whereby the public have a right of access on Registered Common Land and Open Country, came into force in Suffolk on October 31st 2005

"Open Country" is Mountain, Moor, Heath and Down but in Suffolk there is no mountain, moor or down (as defined) and the Open Country to which Rights of Access apply is mostly heathland.

Members of the public may wander at will over Access Land for most recreational activities such as walking running, bird watching and sightseeing, but there are several restrictions that may apply from time to time.

Access land is signed by a silhouette man against a white background in a circular disc. And there are additional notices and information boards.

Where is the Access Land in Suffolk?

a) Registered Common.

There are several substantial areas of Common in the north of Suffolk at Stuston Common, Wortham Ling, Mellis Green, and Wortham Long Green, Burgate Great Green and Little Green. The north Suffolk fens at Hinderclay, Market Weston and Thelnetham also come into this category.

There are also large commons in the east of the county, in particular Sutton Common, Upper and Lower Hollesley Common, Rushmere Heath, Aldringham Common and Thorpeness Common, Tunstall Common and Blaxhall Heath

Elsewhere, apart from the extensive tract of heathland called Lakenheath Warren, the areas of common land are small and widely spread throughout Suffolk.

b) Open Country

Most of Suffolk's area is good agricultural land. Open Country (i.e. Heath) occurs almost entirely in either the eastern coastal strip, known as The Sandlings, or in the north west, known as The Brecks.

The main areas of open country in The Sandlings are:-

- Areas adjoining the commons at Sutton and Hollesley
- Snape Warren;
- Aldeburgh, North Warren;
- Aldringham, The Walks;
- Dunwich Heath and Westleton Walks
- Westleton Heath
- Walberswick, Tinkers Walks, East Sheep Walk and Walberswick Common.
- Blythburgh, Newdelights Walks, Lumphall Walks and Toby's Walks

The main areas of open country in Suffolk part of The Brecks are:-

- Berner's Heath, Deadman's Grave, Horn Heath and Icklingham Plains at Icklingham
- Cavenham and Tuddenham Heaths
- Foxhole Heath and Weather Heath at Eriswell
- Knettishall Heath
- Thetford Heath at Barnham

A large proportion of the Forestry Commission's land in the Brecks and near the coast has also now been dedicated as `open country'.

John Andrews

Sudbury and District Ramblers

The second half of 2005 saw us on over twenty walks in our neck of Suffolk and beyond. During July we had an all day's walk around Alton Water, sharing the path with cyclists and spotting many birds on the lake. We saw lovely views of Suffolk around Rattlesdon amid fields of ripening corn. We finished the month walking around

Dunwich Woods and Walberswick Bird reserve with a tea stop at Walberswick before the return to Dunwich along the shingle beach

Three walks in August. The first around the Cornards followed by tea and cakes at our Secretary's home in Great Cornard! The next was a walk along the River Stour in Constable Country at Stratford St Mary. We had a quick look at the soon-to-be restored Lock at Stratford. We finished the month with walking the quiet lanes and paths near the Television Towers around Assington, ending through the "Assington Thicks" woods.

We started September with a coach ride to the Norfolk Coast at Hunstanton. A hot and breezy day saw us split into two groups, both centred on the wide beaches and striped cliffs of Hunstanton. Our Town Walk was walked over the ancient town of Saffron Walden. We had a lovely Indian Summer's walk straying into Essex around Messing. We had lunch at the "Crown" there.

October saw us on a warm day on a figure of eight walk around Bildeston. As the leaves on the trees took on their beautiful colours we had another warm day for a walk around Stanstead and Melford. In contrast, it was a wet day for a walk around Dedham. We did take shelter for a while with a coffee at the National Trust tearoom at Flatford. The month finished on a sunny, but windy day around Brightlingsea.

During November, we walked around the village of Cavendish and had our Annual General Meeting (with an 8% membership turn out!) at St Gregory's Church Hall in Central Sudbury. This was followed by a good lunch at the nearby "Waggon and Horses" pub. A biting wind on a dry day saw us around Alpheton with spectacular wide Suffolk views. A more pleasant winter's day saw us around the high ground of Little Cornard with a walk through apple orchards where much rotting fruit was seen.

Another walk around Flatford with a tea break again at the tearoom there on a foggy and frosty morning. Some of us stopped for the annual Ramblers and Cyclists carol service at Lawford Church in the afternoon. The Reverend Pat Presney was as energetic and enthusiastic as always! 2005 finished with a dry, cold and muddy walk

around Elmsett. The views from this part of high Suffolk were fabulous with grey lacquered skies.

Our contribution for the Festival of Winter Walks was over our home territory of Sudbury Meadows. This took in the Valley Trail (old Sudbury/Cambridge railway line) and the ancient flood meadows. This finished at the Scout Hut with welcome coffee and cakes made by 91 year old Ivy Green, a veteran walker of old. A photo of the group at Brundon Mill Bridge is shown.

Laurie Burroughs
Programme Organiser

Newmarket News

Writing this piece on a January morning in the depths of winter it seems strange to reflect back on the summer we have just had. It was a good one with a wide variety of walks on offer. Our thanks go to Sue and Phil Prigg who as programme secretaries organize the ideas put forward by walks leaders into a high quality walks programme. It was really well put together with most interests being met. Many thanks to our leaders and we look forward to a continuation of ideas for future walks programs. We are always looking for new leaders especially for the short walks. Experienced leaders (and I am not sure I fall into that category yet) are always available to mentor new leaders in order to support them with any concerns they may have.

The mid week walks continued through out the summer months and these continue to be very popular. This may have something to do with the distances being that bit shorter coupled with the fact that many conclude with a pub lunch.

Our social programme has been ably headed up by John Morris and the activities he organized were much appreciated and all were well attended. The coach trip to St Albans was superb, there was a choice of two walks: one of ten miles starting at Markyate and following the Hertfordshire Way another of five miles starting at Redbourne. It was a hot summers day but the walking was a real pleasure along a network of good paths through really picturesque countryside. A couple of us were really lucky to get a good sight of a pair of kingfishers. My husband Tim disgraced himself by wearing a knotted handkerchief on his head so found himself walking on his own! We arrived in St Albans in plenty of time to visit the cathedral and take in the Roman sights of interest. The hot day ensured the ice cream man did a good trade with us.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Geoff Gardener for his continuing support with footpath matters. I am mindful that one other group has raised a concern that the web based contact for reporting problems may be subject to a gremlin or two. If I could just remind the group that any problems found while walking in Suffolk can be reported

directly to the County Council. The contact details are as follows www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/e-and-t/countryside/rights/ofway/problem.html. It would be helpful if any response could be passed to Geoff Gardener via me.

The summer barbeque took place and a very god time was had by all who attended. Our thanks go to Kath, Olive and Pat for organizing the event so ably. Kath and Olive have made me aware that in future they would like to attend events and take a back seat on the organizing front so this is a chance for others to get involved in the social side of the group. I'm sure that we all understand that things don't happen by accident but a little bit of support can make all of the difference in the world and our social events are always really enjoyable. So give me a call or have a chat to John Morris or myself during one of our walks

It is with sadness that I have to report that Julie Turley is no longer able to serve on the committee. Many thanks to Julie for her help and we look forward to seeing her on future walks. Anyone interested in replacing Julie on the committee please contact me on 01359 250263 for more information. We meet every two months on a Monday evening and we are looking to relocate to more comfortable surroundings than the ones currently in use for these meetings!

I would like to mention the arrival of our French walkers from Maisons Laffitte.I have had contact with the group and they would like to arrive on the Friday at 8 pm as the Newmarket Twinning Association would like to organize something for them on the Saturday. I have managed to confirm that this is fine with some but not all of the hosts yet. I would be grateful if I have not contacted you in person to contact me on 01359-250263. More hosts are still being sought so please call me if you are interested. Although the week end events have yet to be finalized by the committee the weekend should go something like this:

Friday 28th April 8 pm	Walkers arrive. Collected by hosts.
Saturday 29th	Walkers will spend day with Newmarket Twinners so will need Breakfast and evening meal.
Sunday 30th am	Figure of eight at Laveham so will need breakfast and a sandwich for lunch.
Sunday 30th Evening	Annual Dinner at Newmarket Court Hotel.
Monday 1st May	Short walk before the walkers leave for home. so will need breakfast.

The anticipated return visit to France is in 2008 so please do not be concerned that taking part in this activity is going to impact on this bank holiday weekend from here on in.
Happy Rambling

Jan Cavell

Stowmarket Group News

Our AGM, which was changed to early September, proved to be a good move as we had our highest attendance for a number of years. We welcome Judy Thomson as our new secretary and say thanks to Brenda McKenzie who we are pleased is to carry on as social secretary.
Keith Ager has been busy organizing the group holiday which will be at Thwaite in the Yorkshire Dales during May. At the time of writing Keith had a double room left and he can be contacted on 01449-673411.
The footpath committee has been busy doing FP surveys at Kenton and Thorndon. We have been experiencing problems with the new SCC council system of reporting footpath problems, I hope it is just teething problems but I have my doubts. A public inquiry will be held in Stowmarket on the 24th January regarding FP 14 which is a rail crossing

path that is used by walkers and workers and it divides North and South Stowmarket. In an unusual move the inspector will consider all the evidence but the Secretary of State will make the final decision.
Les Gaskins blood pressure must have gone through the roof when thirty members turned up for the Lawford Carole Service walk as he had only ordered twenty meals at the Kings Arms. Thanks to the landlord we managed to juggle things so everybody managed to get served.
Tony Craighill led the Christmas lunch walk and once again thirty plus members attended on a glorious morning which was followed by a meal at Aislingham Six Bells. Thanks to Brenda for organizing the event.
With heavy snow falling on the 27th December Keith Ager took to a four wheel drive to lead the walk at Hollesley Heath. Seven Brave souls made the walk and were met by a sprinkling of snow and sunshine. How wrong can the weather man be?

Tony Buck. Chairman Stowmarket Group

Bury St. Edmunds Group.

After the changes on our committee the group once again has had a busy few months and were delighted to include another walk for the Millennium Farm Trust which supports people with leaning difficulties.

Then on a glorious evening in June the group celebrated the mid summer solstice with a short walk around Pakenham, followed by a bar-b-que at the Fox. Entertainment was provided by The Green Dragon and Friends Morris Dancers and the event was well supported and proved a great success.

Also in June the group walked the forth and final leg of the Stour Valley Path. Jointly organised and led by Rosie Perham and Dave Chandler. To mark reaching the end of the walk the group celebrated with a meal at the Crown Hotel in Manningtree.

Our coach outing this year took us to Sheringham, this proved to

be an excellent choice, while some of the group chose to walk in the scenic Norfolk countryside others let the train take the strain and travelled on the North Norfolk Railway to spend the day in the market town of Holt. Our thanks once again to Ed and Sue Wortley for all they put into the day.

On the 16th November, by the light of the full moon, we had an excellent turnout for the groups first ghost walk around the town.Stories were told of the Grey Lady, William Corder and even of a visit from the Devil himself to the town in 1328. No ghosts were seen on the walk and the only spirits were in bottles behind the bar at the Kings Arms where the group adjourned to later - but we did meet King Edmund a few days later at our walk at Hoxne (and if you don't believe us check out the web-site !!!)

The Group looks forward to hosting the Area AGM in March when we will be welcoming Peter Ayling who has been the RA's long-term representative on the European Ramblers Association.

Trevor Arbon

IPSWICH & DISTRICT HAVE A LAUGH !!

Fifty members of the Ipswich Group enjoyed the Suffolk Tales of Charlie Haylock (author of "Sloightly on th' Huh!") at their AGM in November, there was not a dry eye in the house when Charlie had finished telling us his tales of life in rural Suffolk in days gone by - a splendid evening !

The walking has been slendid too - with the summer programme containing 62 walks ranging from 4 - 5 miles in an evening to a little over 12 miles on a full day. Leaders are getting increasingly difficult to find (hint,hint!) but the quality of walks, all within easy reach of Ipswich remains good.

Ramblers packed the Melton Church Hall for the Spring "lunch walk" where two of our ladies had organised soup, rolls cheese etc - always a very popular event after the morning ramble, Ramblers have also been noted taking a lunch time refresher at various pubs in the

County, and have also been sighted devouring ice cream on the prom at Southwold and having an unhealthy "apple stop" at the Mere Cafe in Thorpeness.

Membership has fallen a little during the course of the Summer, but we have been very pleased to welcome a number of new faces on our walks and so numbers out each week remain fairly constant.
We are now half way through the Winter Programme, another successful "lunch walk" took place at Nacton in October, there were five walks over the Christmas holiday - more than 30 people turned up for the New Year walk and we are looking forward to another trip to the Northern Hills and Dales in March. We are also planning to have a stand at the Green Living Family Fun Days on 24th/25th June ... but more of that next time !

John A Laycock Secretary,
Ipswich & District Group.

Walking for Health from the Waveney Group

In March 2002 the Waveney Group was approached by Olive McManus who was Healthcare Project Officer for the Waveney Primary Care Trust. Her brief was to set up 'A Case for Developing an Exercise Referral Scheme in the Waveney Area.' The referrers being local GPs and various healthcare professionals in health centers.

A meeting was arranged with three members of the Waveney Group and Olive at Beccles Hospital. A fairly lengthy discussion took place, Olive outlined her plan for the scheme which covered gym-based exercises, swimming and walking. She was looking for a group of people who would be willing to undertake the walking side of the referral scheme. One of the three ramblers agreed to look into her project and report back if he thought the scheme was feasible. He was willing to plan a number of short walks in the Beccles area and, with Olive's help, to eventually produce a programme of walks suitable for

people with various ailments and disabilities, those who just need to take more exercise or for people living by themselves just to come along to enjoy the walk and socialize with other people.

Help was gained initially from a document supplied by Olive McManus entitled 'Practical Guidelines for Developing Walking for Health Schemes' and also information was gained from other groups around the country on the way their groups were run.

It soon became obvious that assistance would be required from other people to help lead these walks. An article was put into the local press and other members of the Waveney Group were approached with a view to giving up some of their time as volunteer walk leaders. A meeting was arranged and about sixteen people attended all showing an interest and willingness to take part. This was a very encouraging start.

A programme of walks was planned and, initially, walks of between three-quarters of a mile and three miles in the immediate Beccles area on Monday, Tuesday and Fridays at 10-30 am were arranged. The launch date was Monday 16th September 2002. The press was informed of the inaugural walk and over forty people turned up with nearly all the volunteer walk leaders. The programme covered two months. The leaders were a mixture of Waveney Ramblers and people interested in helping to lead walks but who were not serious walkers as such

On this very first walk one lady said to the leader, ''Excuse me, I don't do stiles!'' This lady still walks with us over three years later and in that time she must have climbed over a hundred stiles. People with heart bypasses, angina, new knees, new hips, MS, ME, asthmatics and over-weights have all come along. Friendships have been formed (even partnerships), the noise from chatterers on walks can be almost deafening. Ladies who live on their own in particular find the social side very welcoming. It was difficult three years ago to envisage just how successful and rewarding a Walking for Health group can be.

Now we are going into our fourth year and the interest is not diminishing. Yes, many of the faces have changed and we now cover a much wider area for our walks – over to Southwold, Dunwich and Walberswick, up to Fritton, Bungay, Charlton Marshes and Lowestoft. In the summer we have picnic walks and the occasional evening walk.

In October we invited the Norwich Fringe Walking for Health Group down to Beccles for a joint walk. Over fifty people turned out on the walk (yes, probably a little over the top).

To start a Walking for Health Scheme you do need the backing of your local Primary Care Trust or some such body who have the finance and facilities to enable programmes to be produced and the goodwill of many people to lead walks. In this Waveney is very, very fortunate. The effort put in to start the group is more than rewarded by the gratitude shown by the participants.

Lowestoft has a group who walks on Mondays and Tuesdays, and is very successful. Much depends on the voluntary help forthcoming. Many people can only walk on certain days due to other commitments. We were lucky and started with three days a week and have managed to maintain this level of commitment. There are groups, who only walk one day a week, and this is a start, but in doing so you may prevent some people from taking part.

Our attendance figures vary and can be as little as three or four, but on picnic walks as many as twenty five to thirty . Weather, time of the year, school holidays, all influence turnouts to some extent. Some people cannot bother to support the very short walks, whereas others are not able to walk longer distances. Pace is usually the average of the group, occasionally stopping to allow slower walkers to catch up, especially on a walk with frequent twists and turns. It wouldn't do to lose anyone! Common sense is the name of the game very much as it is on our Waveney rambles.

In the first few months of our scheme we had a walks leader training day. This was carried out by a lady who came up from the London area and was arranged by Olive McManus. One of the main aspects of this training was the issue of insurance. This was particularly useful for the non- ramblers (there is not much you can tell ramblers about leading walks). Yes, it is essential you are covered for third party insurance. Once some leaders have taken part in the training day, a certificate is issued and the insurance cover is obtained. This training is backed by the British Heart Foundation, The Countryside Agency and Kia Cars. In October 2005 we had another training day which was taken by Paul Brice from the Great Yarmouth NHS Teaching Primary Care

Trust and three more walks leaders gained their certificates. Twice, in 2002 and earlier this year, we have had the Heartstart First-Aid Course which has given confidence and information to walk leaders and also participants on the walks regarding what to do in the event of someone giving a heart-related problem on the walk. We did have three people stung by wasps on a recent walk, one quite seriously. WE do carry small first-aid packs which can cover minor problems.

If any group feels they would like more information don't hesitate to contact me. I will help if I can, or maybe point you I the right direction but I am quite busy and cannot really visit other areas to advise. My contact details are:

Lionel Hardy, 24 Meadow Gardens, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 9PA. Telephone 01502 716253

Alde Valley Group

The group's events have been overshadowed by the loss of one of our most enthusiastic stalwarts, Molly Catchpole. She was one of the founders of our group. Our sympathy goes out to Maurice. An obituary appears elsewhere in this edition.

We have enjoyed the usual full walks programme and the footpath working party continues with its good work.

Our AGM in November saw a few changes on the committee. Anne Hubert-Chibnall is our new secretary in place of Mary Perry. Neil Mahler comes in to fill the vacant seat of Countryside Secretary. Richard Tyson takes over from Wendy Robinson as Chair and we also welcome to the committee Karen Mountford who has agreed to take over publicity from Anne.

We will meet at the Crown, Great Glemham at midday on Saturday 4th February to plan our next walks and working party programmes. All welcome. Potential new walks leaders please contact Wendy on 01728 453437.

Jim Richards

Thoughts from John Andrews

Occasionally, when I sit down to write something for `Area News', I recall the heartfelt plea of a former editor : " Please, John, no more legal stuff !". I had obviously gone a bit over the top in my attempt to explain how some particularly difficult or unusual case had developed. I think it must be partly because most of our walking takes place on a network of what are known as `rights of way' that a knowledge of some areas of the law has from time to time been an invaluable aid and I don't think there can be many other recreational bodies which have considered it essential to provide its local representatives with a 700-page legal handbook. However, for the most part we are content to know that things happen, situations change, life moves on etc.- without necessarily needing or wanting a blow by blow account of every detail of the processes involved

Nonetheless, I think it is right that we should be aware that the Ramblers' Association continues to chalk up an impressive range of successes in our ongoing campaign to improve and increase our walking opportunities and I suspect that the majority of members would be surprised to discover just how much of what we have achieved at a local level has depended in varying degrees on the expertise and information provided by the support team at RA Central Office.

There is no doubt that the Association has made a valuable contribution to the preservation and protection of our historic rights of way network by becoming directly involved in the procedures which led to the creation of our Definitive Map of public rights of way. I was very interested to discover recently from papers in the County archives in Ipswich that local RA members were part of the special committee set up by the former East Suffolk CC in the early 1950s which was responsible for making sure that all that County's historic rights of way were included in its first Definitive Map. I'm sure it is no coincidence that East Suffolk produced a far better Map than the lamentably inadequate product of the old West Suffolk CC, which seems to have been intent on preserving as few rights of way as it could get away with. As a result of that neglect, we have had much to do in the past couple of decades to remedy the position. In 1985 the present County Council

started to investigate claims for rights of way which were still missing from its Map and I have just made a count of the total number of the paths which have been `rescued' in this way mostly by the work of Suffolk RA. At the end of 2005 we can say that approximately 135 of them - having a total length of about 110 miles - have been added to the Map largely or entirely as a result of our activities - and a lot of the effort would have been in vain if we had not taken the trouble to learn about and make use of the relevant aspects of the law !

Neither have we been reticent about taking on `authority' when we felt that it was in the wrong. During the past couple of years we have enjoyed two successes in the High Court. The first of these was when we believed that the Ministry of Defence had misused its powers in diverting two footpaths in the vicinity of the air bases at Lakenheath and Mildenhall - the effect of which we felt to be unacceptable. The other case concerned a decision by an independent inspector who had conducted an inquiry to decide the status of one of our `claimed' public footpaths at Haughley. We took the view that his subsequent decision to reject the claim arose from an incorrect application of the law.

In both cases we applied to the High Court for a judicial review and I feel it is a tribute to the quality of the RA's legal team that on both occasions the Government's lawyers decided not to fight the case, and settled out of court - paying all our expenses. No, of course we don't want to be bored by the `legal stuff', but we ought to appreciate that it has frequently to be relied on and is often used to good effect.

John Andrews

Here is the latest example of the work that John Andrews does on behalf of Ramblers in Suffolk.

A superb Christmas present

Public inquiry decision just received, confirming orders adding a group of historic green lanes byways - *Hundred Lane, Kiln Lane, Madge's Lane and Braziers Lane* – at Walsham-le-Willows, Badwell Ash, Great Ashfield, Westhorpe and Wyverstone to our Definitive Map. Although small parts of these lanes were already recorded as FPs, they were partly across arable land and thus susceptible to ploughing.

The total distance added to the Def Map is nearly five miles and the newly confirmed byways will connect a number of previously cul-de-sac paths thus bringing a range of new circular etc walks into being.

Those long-established Suffolk Area members with similarly long memories may possibly remember that we held one of the old 'Forbidden Britain' events in Wyverstone Village Hall many years ago to publicise the need for the CC to deal with claimed RoW more speedily.

Well, we got there eventually!

John Andrews

Dressing the Part

I had just moved to Woodbridge from London and was very anxious to see all it had to offer. A friend called to say 'There's a walk around Woodbridge on Thursday, do join us'. So of course I said 'Yes'.

So on a Thursday in November when it looked very glum and grey, I put on my long, high heeled black boots; a warm but 'towny' coat, all brass buttons and flaps; and a very smart fur hat. When I opened the door to my friend we were both taken aback by our respective outfits. She had on proper rambling gear – trousers, dark green shirt, heavy sweater, etc and I was in my best cold weather town outfit. Still, nothing was said as we set off to the appointed meeting place.

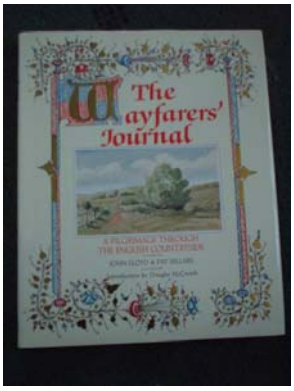
The appointed meeting place, to my horror, was outside the town across the river in a muddy field. A friendly group of ramblers greeted us, some looking a bit at my appearance but not in a nasty way. I must confess my head did sink a little when the leader in a rather military style (this was years ago, I am sure today it is much more free and easy) took out his watch and announced we would be doing a five mile walk along the river, across a farm and back through the outskirts of Woodbridge. He kindly suggested that I took up the rear with him so that I did not get left behind. The going was tough it was muddy and there were stiles to climb but I managed, chin up and all that. My high heeled boots obviously worried our leader as he occasionally suggested I could leave the ramble at any time and take a short cut back to Woodbridge! Pride (London?) kept me going. I did not falter, up and down I went keeping up with the others until at last we turned into a lane which led to (bliss) Woodbridge. I had made it. When we all dispersed the 'military' man shook my hand and said he didn't think I was going to make it.

Sad to say although I belong to the Ramblers, my rambling days never took off and I now walk with a stick – so happy memories of that one ramble in high heeled boots and of all the kind ramblers who took the towny under their wing

Marion Thomas

Highly recommended reading for all Ramblers

Confession time. I have recently become an addict – spending too much time scouring the online auction site "E-Bay". As a consequence I am a good deal poorer financially but, when I've read all the books I've bought, perhaps academically a little richer! My obsession centres on anything regarding "The Greatest Briton" - Winston Churchill – and nearly fifty books on the subject currently reside in my study (not all on shelves you understand – they're already full) and yes, I have probably read half of them to date!



I'll get to the point. Whilst viewing a particular seller's items for sale, a book entitled "The Wayfarers' Journal"* intrigued me. I decided to bid for it. Nobody else had taken any interest in it and my modest bid of £2 was the only bid with a few minutes to go to the end of the auction. Anyone familiar with this concept might understand that this is when the "buzz" comes in and the adrenalin flows. I was successful in my bid and a few days later the book arrived. I was not disappointed.

The book chronicles the adventures of a small group of walkers who started their journeys over many years with The Pilgrims Way, from Winchester to Canterbury, in 1953. Other walks featured include Roman Roads, The Norfolk Walk, The Chilterns, Exmoor and The Icknield Way gets a mention. The book is filled with beautiful 'illuminated' pages, such as seen in ancient manuscripts, meticulously hand-drawn maps, and numerous pages copied faithfully from the author's original text in superb calligraphy.

I don't think I have ever seen a book quite like it and it is inspirational. The Suffolk Library does hold a copy and I can highly recommend it to

all walkers looking forward to spring or perhaps reminiscing about walks they have done in the past.

* "The Wayfarers' Journal, A Pilgrimage through the English Countryside",
by John Lloyd & Pat Sellars with an Introduction by Douglas McCreath. 128 pages of magnificent illustrations in both Colour and Black & White. 23cm X 29cm
Published in 1991 by Webb & Bower ISBN 0-86350-431-0

Review by Ralph Brighton, Newmarket Group

Ramblers Association Launch New Website

www.suffolkramblers.org.uk

The Suffolk Area Website was launched on 15th October after much discussion and planning regarding the content. John Andrews and I have been working on this project for a few months now and hope that this website will be a valuable resource both to RA members and the walking public in Suffolk.

It provides information about rights of way, future routes for the less able as well as links to the group websites and group walks in Suffolk where more localized information may be found. Other links are to Suffolk County Council's 'Public Rights of Way' web-page, the Ramblers Association national website and the Ramblers Holiday website.

We need to keep the site up to date and relevant to the needs of the RA members in Suffolk so would value your feedback and suggestions for the website. Comments can be emailed to:

webfeedback@suffolkramblers.org.uk

Dave Hodgkinson

Ramblers Vegetable Risotto

Julia of Newmarket Group was seen eating this risotto on one of our walks and it looked so delicious she kindly agreed to share the recipe with us.

You will need

4 Tbspns oil	1 chopped onion
175g/6oz long grain brown rice	3 cloves crushed garlic
450ml/2 pints water	1 tsp salt
2 celery sticks, thinly sliced	1 red pepper, deseeded & diced
225g/8oz button mushrooms sliced	415g/14oz can or freshly soaked and cooked red kidney beans
3 tbspns chopped parsley	1 tbspn soy sauce
50g/2oz cashew nuts, roasted	Chopped parsley to garnish

Heat 2 tbspn of oil in pan and cook onion until soft, add rice and 2 cloves of garlic. Saute, stirring for 2 minutes. Pour in the water, add salt and bring to the boil. Cover and simmer gently for about 35 – 40 minutes, until all the water has been absorbed and the rice is tender.

Heat the remaining oil in a large frying pan, add the celery and red pepper and cook for 5 minutes until softened. Stir in the mushrooms and remaining garlic and sauté for 3 minutes. Add the cooked rice, drained kidney beans, parsley, soy sauce and nuts. Cook, stirring to mix, until the beans are heated through. Garnish with parsley and serve with a green salad.

Tip
It's worth preparing the fresh beans first for a fuller flavour. You don't need to wash cultivated mushrooms only wipe them. Light soy sauce is just as tasty and less salty for those watching their salt intake. This is a wholesome meal to eat the night before a ramble and tastes good cold as a snack during the ramble.

Obituary from Chairman of Alde Valley Group

MOLLY CATCHPOLE

Many Members, especially those of the Alde Valley and Waveney Groups will be saddened to learn of the death of Molly Catchpole on December 5th 2005. Originally in the Waveney Group, Molly was a founder member and enthusiastic supporter of the Alde Valley Group. Molly also ran a walking group in her home village of Westleton where she lived with her husband, Maurice.

She often led walks in the Alde Valley area where she had a detailed knowledge. A lady of strong opinions and forthright views, she promoted Ramblers' policies and frequently campaigned for local rights of way.

Friends of Molly will know of her career in nursing and her many other activities which included swimming, cookery and hospitality, W.I. markets and bed and breakfast. Molly was a devout Anglican and her full life was commemorated by the large congregation which completely filled Westleton Church for her funeral on December 12th.

Richard Tyson
Chairman Alde Valley Group

STOP PRESS!! SUFFOLK RAMBLERS CELEBRATE 'OPEN ACCESS'

On 8th January 2006 over 100 Ramblers - including RA members from all over Suffolk, others from Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, members of the general public, representatives from The Forestry Commission and RA headquarters, - gathered on the edge of the King's Forest, south of Brandon to celebrate the availability, since October 2005, of "open country" in the eastern region under the CROW Act 2000. Advance publicity had been provided by Radio Suffolk and an interviewer also came along to speak to several participants.

John Andrews, Suffolk Area Footpath Officer, had arranged a 5-mile walk to take us onto an area of heathland known as Berner's Heath, out of bounds to the public until last autumn. This land is part of Elveden Estates Farm - the largest lowland arable holding in England. It has been owned by the Guinness family since1894, and now run by Lord Iveagh. It was thanks to the cooperation of Estate Managers that the particular route taken was available to us.

After a short walk through the forest we gained access to the new area thanks to one of the gates erected by the Suffolk County Council since October – which, together with useful information boards, give physical confirmation of the much appreciated commitment by this Council to the implementation of the legislation.

John frequently stopped give both historical and up to date information as we went along and the representative from the Forestry Commission gave further good news that much of their land will this year be deemed 'dedicated land', securing the right of the general public to walk through majority of the forests 'in perpetuity'.

We were not alone on the heath; many of the Estate's young South Devon beef cattle came to give us a closer inquisitive look and gave a different perspective to the heather covered landscape and a reminder that this is still part of a working farm environment.

The weather was kind to us, the threatening rain holding off for the whole of the walk, ensuring that this memorable day was enjoyed by all.

Ralph Brighton, Suffolk Area Chairman

Here are some pictures of the event, are you in one?

Editors notes

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this edition of the newsletter. Also for all the interest in my visit to Australia, I had so many callers, people I have never met except on the phone, wishing me a good trip and inquiring how I enjoyed it, I don't know how you all knew I was going – news obviously travels fast around the footpaths of Suffolk. The answer is I had a wonderful time visiting my son, it was very hot and not at all like Christmas. For me a proper Christmas is indoors around a good fire.

I need to start collecting articles for the summer edition of the newsletter so have a think and see what you can come up with, first walk or memorable walk, memories of early walks, recipes suitable for walking snacks, jokes, photos etc.

Items for the Summer 2006 issue should be sent to the editor please by the **17th of June 2006.**

Email to: cavell709@btinternet.com or post floppy disc or hard copy to:

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