



Waveney go to Provence



Sudbury members on their trip to Denmark



Stour Valley Members



Alde Valley members watching for otters at Westwood Marshes; none seen!



Ipswich members Dick Leech, Doug Hart & John Gibbs: being presented with the RA's Certificate of Achievement. They have 85 years service between them.



Bury members at Crowfield Church in November



Waveney members on a footpath survey have found a 'dodgy' bridge.



Newmarket Group at Ashley on their Anniversary Walk



Cannon ball lodged in a wall in Copenhagen, a memento of British landing in 1807; taken by Iain Taylor during Sudbury's trip to Denmark

Ramblers Association

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Ramblers Association Suffolk Area

Annual General Meeting – Saturday 21st March 2009
At 10am for 10.30am

To be held at

The Village Hall, Assington
Sudbury

Assington is off the A134 about 5 miles south of Sudbury. The village Hall is situated on The Street in Assington

Explorer 196 - Grid Reference 934376

Coffee and tea will be available from 10am prior to the commencement of the meeting at 10.30am.

Following the meeting there will be a talk by **Tom Franklin**, RA Chief Executive who will be giving an insight into the running of the Ramblers Association and his vision of the future.

In the afternoon David Taylor will lead a walk from the Hall. If you are staying for the walk you are advised to bring a packed lunch.

Ramblers Association – Suffolk Area

Annual General Meeting to be held on Saturday 21st March 2009

AGENDA

1. Welcome and apologies for absence
2. Minutes of AGM held on 15th March 2008
3. Matters arising from minutes
4. Presentation of Annual Report
5. Presentation and acceptance of the examined accounts for the previous year
6. Election of Chairman¹
7. Election of the other honorary Area officers²
8. Election of Representative of the affiliated local organisations³
9. Appointment of Independent Examiner⁴
10. Discussion and consideration of motions, notice of which shall have been given in writing to the Secretary.
11. Making recommendations to the Area Executive Committee, or any local group of the Area, or considering motions for submission to the next General Council (if so desired).
12. Vote on a proposal to amend the constitution in accordance with clause 18 of the existing constitution.⁵

Though not part of the prescribed agenda, time permitting and at the discretion of those present, other matters may briefly be discussed.

¹ The current Chairman , Jim Richards is willing to stand for re-election.

²The following current officers are also willing to stand for re-election:

Secretary	Philip Snelling
Treasurer	Geoff Knight
Area Footpaths Secretary	Gordon Leverett
Area Countryside Officer	Neil Mahler
Area Access Officer	Richard Tyson
Membership Secretary	Dick Leech
Newsletter Editor	Tim Cavell
Website manager	Dave Hodgkinson

The office of Recruitment and Media Contact is unfilled at the time of going to press.

³There is provision for one representative to represent all such organisations. Currently there is only one affiliated organisation, the Stour Walking Group. There is currently no representative.

⁴Mr John Cresswell is the current Independent Examiner.

⁵Areas have been strongly encouraged to adopt constitutions which follow the revised model forms prescribed by the Board of Trustees in 2007. A new constitution following the model has been drawn up and has been approved by your Area Executive and by the Board of Trustees. A copy of it may be viewed on the Area web site:-

<http://www.suffolkramblers.org.uk/>

copies will be distributed at the AGM.

Introducing our New Chairman

Those who came to the last Area AGM at Woodbridge may remember that there was no nominee for the position of Chairman. For the time being Area Executive Committee decided to appoint someone ad hoc to act at each meeting until the next one. I took a turn and you can guess the rest.

I'm not naturally comfortable as a front man, preferring 'back-room' roles but will give this my best shot. Having lived in the County for only seven years, I'm not yet greatly familiar with it. I've been a member of the RA for much longer than that but only became active on arriving in the Alde Valley Group Territory when I took on the role of Treasurer and started going on and leading a few walks. Ramblers seem to fall into two main categories: group walkers and campaign supporters. On balance I tend to fall into the second category. In the New Year I will start my fifth year as local footpaths secretary for the northern part of Suffolk Coastal District. This is interesting work and the legal aspects of it suit me nicely as a retired local government lawyer. I also derive great satisfaction from belonging to our group practical working party. Through my position on AEC, I've also enjoyed very much being a Suffolk delegate at RA General Councils held at Exeter, Nottingham and Keele.

As one of my first duties to the general Suffolk membership, I should like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Ralph Brighton from the Newmarket Group. Ralph took over the Chair about four years ago at the same time I first started going to AEC as an Alde Valley delegate. I immediately found the meetings friendly and interesting, helped in no small way by Ralph's convivial but business-like approach. If I do half as well as him I shall regard that as a success.

I mentioned working parties and am pleased to see that SCC is launching a new scheme called 'Access Suffolk' through which a Community Involvement Officer will guide, advise and support registered groups with practical work. This should help overcome the problems with insurance that some of our groups' have met and enable them to resume the great work done in the past through their working parties. May I wish you all a happy year's rambling.

JIM RICHARDS – Chairman Suffolk Area of the Ramblers Association

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009

Your Area Executive Committee continues to meet bi-monthly at Stowmarket where representatives from all of our groups convene to discuss current issues.

One of the biggest issues facing us in Suffolk is the lack of progress with the Definitive Map and Statement for Ipswich Borough. Because Ipswich was a County Borough it was excluded from the legislation of 1949 and the obligation to create the Map and Statement did not arise until 1983. Little or no progress was made for some 25 years by the surveying authority and more action is now required. Senior staff from Central Office have promised to assist us with furthering the work that the Ipswich & District volunteers have already done and it is to be hoped that this will help us considerably in pushing for routes to be recorded. You may have read in the autumn edition of the Walk magazine that there was until recently a similar problem in Birmingham.

With our substantial length of coast, we were pleased to see the inclusion of the Marine Bill in the Queen's Speech. Our local volunteers will again be very busy identifying areas for open access.

We have another challenge on our hands with the proposed dualling of the A11 threatening the severance of 3 ROWs. We are engaging some professional help with this.

The Executive Committee has been working on a new Area constitution to conform to the new national model. This comes up on the AGM agenda.

From the Board of Trustees we have a new National strategy called Fresh Air, Firm Ground. This promises to increase general support from Central Office but we may lose their help on specific issues. We will look forward with interest to see the ramifications of this re-focussing of the RA's work.

We remain grateful to all of the volunteers at Area and Group level for their fine efforts and may these continue for the future.

The Area Executive Committee has lost two of its long standing members over the year. Tony Eden has stood down as Recruitment and Publicity Officer due to poor health although it is good to see he is starting to lead some shorter walks for Waveney Group again. Also of Waveney Group, Brenda Le Grys has discontinued her representation at AEC. Our thanks go to both of them.

Jim Richards – Chairman, Suffolk Area, Ramblers Association
RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION SUFFOLK AREA

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Saturday 15th March 2008 at 10.30am
at Woodbridge Community Centre, Woodbridge, Suffolk

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence

Ipswich Group Chair, Gareth Evans welcomed 54 members, including guest speaker Jo Bird, to the 2008 Annual General Meeting., which was then chaired by Suffolk Area Chairman, Ralph Brighton. Ralph extended special welcomes to Jim Richards who is recovering from serious accident and Tony Eden, who is recovering from a long term illness.

Apologies for absence were received from Dick Leach, Ingrid Kay, Diana Bramer, John Dowding, Trevor Arbon, Rosie Perham, Allan and Liz Jones, Susan Hodger, Richard Tyson, Tim and Janice Cavell

2. Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Saturday 17th March 2007

There were no amendments raised and acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Iain Taylor, seconded by Geoff Knight and approved as a true record of the 2007 AGM.

3. Matters Arising

1. From minute 3, item 3, Suffolk RA is now affiliated to the Open Spaces Society.
2. From minute 10.1, group websites are now linked to area website.
3. From minute 10.2, Ralph Brighton endorsed the use of public transport in connection with group walks

4. Presentation of the Annual Report

Members were presented with and discussed the Annual Report.

Adoption of the Chairman's report was proposed by Philip Snelling, seconded by Cyril Francis and approved.

Adoption of the Access Officer's report was proposed by Iain Taylor, seconded by David Taylor and approved.

Adoption of the Membership Secretary's report was proposed by David Chandler, seconded by Ian Dolby and approved.

Adoption of the Area Footpath Secretary's report was proposed by Brenda le Grys, seconded by David Crisp and approved.

5. Presentation of the Accounts for the year ending 30th September 2007

Area Treasurer Geoff Knight highlighted matters of interest to members in the annual statement of account. Area had failed in its aim to reduce its yearend balance by making a surplus of £1,228 in the year. £820 is designated to be donated to RAHQ.

Also some spending on footpath improvements

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Ian Dolby (Ipswich), seconded by Caroline Harvey (Ipswich) and approved by the membership.

6. Election of Chairman

Area Secretary Philip Snelling informed the meeting that retiring chairman Ralph Brighton did not wish to seek re-election and thanked Ralph for his leadership and hard work over the past four years.

There had been no nominations for the position of chairman and none was offered from the floor. Iain Taylor (Sudbury) expressed disappointment that no one from the membership was willing to volunteer. Caroline Harvey responded that many members volunteered within the RA in other ways but did not feel able to take on such a role.

Iain proposed that the Area Executive Committee should endeavour to find a chairman from within their ranks at the next committee meeting. This was seconded by Gordon Leverett and approved.

7. Election of Officers

There was only one nomination for each position on the Area Executive Committee for the year 2008/09 as listed below. Election of all nominations was proposed by Jim Richards (Alde Valley) and seconded by Tony Buck (Stowmarket) and approved by the meeting and duly elected.

Chairman elected by Area Committee]	vacant	[Jim Richards subsequently
Secretary	Philip Snelling	
Treasurer	Geoff Knight	
Footpath Secretary	Gordon Leverett	
Countryside Officer elected by Area Committee]	vacant	[Neil Mahler subsequently
Membership Secretary	Dick Leech	
Publicity and Media Contact	Tony Eden	
Access Officer	Richard Tyson	
Area News Editor	Tim Cavell	
Area Website manager	Dave Hodgkinson	

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.

10. Any Other Business

Ipswich Definitive Map (IDM)

Geoff Knight reported on the slow progress of the IDM. This is being worked on by Ipswich group footpath subcommittee. A wide ranging discussion followed with contributions from a number of members on the problems encountered in pursuing claimed ROWs with SCC, the types of evidence required, etc. Peter Turtill (Ipswich) addressed the meeting, giving a summary of the work he has been doing on the IDM. A vote of thanks to Peter Turtill was proposed by Tony Eden and seconded by Wilfred George and endorsed by the meeting.

Gordon Leverett (Area Footpath Sec) invited members who were not footpath secretaries to attend footpath committee meetings. Iain Taylor (Sudbury) suggested that Ipswich group could arrange a walk around the borough's footpaths and invite council members to attend. A provisional date for next AGM of 21st March 2009, was set, to be hosted by Sudbury group. There being no further business Chairman Ralph Brighton thanked Ipswich Group for hosting the AGM and declared the meeting closed.

Following the meeting guest speaker Jo Bird, a volunteer board member of the RA addressed the meeting, giving members an update on the activities of the association over the past year including Discovering lost Ways, new edition of the Blue Book on ROW law, Use your Footpaths challenge, Suffolk Area's success at RAF Lakenheath, Coastal Access Bill, campaign for South Downs National Park, arrival of new chief executive Tom Franklin.

There then followed a question and answer session.

Signed James Richards, Chairman

AREA MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The membership of the Suffolk Area has increased steadily through the years since its formation in 1977 to a high of 2148 in 2004. Since then it has fluctuated slightly each year to the current figure of 2095, down 53 since 2004 but up 21 on last year.

The table below shows the figures for the eight groups in the Suffolk Area. In brackets are figures for the previous year.

Alde Valley	147(151)	Bury	377(353)
Ipswich	586(595)	Newmarket	177(167)
Stowmarket	195(195)	Sudbury	241(249)
Waveney	335(332)	Stour	28 (27)
Not allocated to any Group			9 (5)

At the time of preparing this report no up to date National figures were available from Head Office due to ongoing problems with the new database. Last years figures were 137,883 down 1834

Dick Leech, Area Membership Secretary

Access Officers Report

Activity recently has been outdoor rather than indoor! The Queen's Speech to Parliament on December 4th announced that "a Bill will be introduced ---- to create a new right of public access to the coastline". Good news, but there are still going to be difficulties along the Suffolk estuaries. Jim, Neil and myself attended a meeting of the Alde and Ore Estuarine Partnership in Sudbourne on the 14th of November where it emerged that the right of access to estuary banks may only extend as far as the first ferry crossing rather than the first pedestrian bridge. Details are awaited. However it might be possible to extend riverside access under "Right of Way Improvement Plans"

I attended a Natural England meeting in Cambridge on December 3rd which reviewed restrictions on CROW land for the benefit of breeding Stone Curlew. By law restrictions should be "minimal". There will be no additional restrictions in Breckland or elsewhere in Suffolk during the coming year.

Richard Tyson.

AREA COUNTRYSIDE OFFICERS REPORT.

I wonder how many members are aware of Local Access Forums (LAF's). Very few I would imagine, as every Parish or Town councillor I have put this question to have no idea LAF's existed.

Well the answer is they are a statutory body set up to advise the County Council (as the local highways authority) on all matters to do with strategic access and recreation issues in Suffolk. Every County has one and also areas like the Norfolk & Suffolk Broads and the Lake District.

Each forum should represent those involved in access to the countryside, including landowners, users and conservation interests. The Suffolk LAF held its first meeting July 7th 2003 and since then has had at least 4 meetings every year. Members of the public are allowed to attend these meetings and at the end of each meeting, are allowed to put any relevant question to the Chairman.

Since the first inaugural meeting, as a member of the public, I believe I have only missed 3 meetings. At present, nobody from the Ramblers is on the Forum, and with a full quota of members, and the County Council wanting to reduce numbers, the situation is unlikely to change in the near future.

Last September the Ramblers held a seminar at Hope in Derbyshire for members with a place on their LAF and also those hoping to become a member such as myself. Its purpose was to train members so the Ramblers get maximum benefit out of the forums.

What did emerge though was that nearly every attendee agreed their LAF did not make itself known to the public sufficiently. Obviously this would make things run smoother as there would be fewer members of the public to ask awkward questions at the end of each meeting, which often ran well into the evening.

However anybody may send written questions to the forum simply by obtaining the address from the County Councils web site.

Overall, I am happy with the way the Suffolk LAF is run, especially with their stance on the recent Highly Bends issue and now the proposed A11 'improvements' at Avedon, which will become, in effect, a 'Berlin Wall' to non motorised members of the public and I believe Suffolk Ramblers should give our Local Access Forum our full support.

Neil Mahler – Area Countryside Officer.

Treasurers Annual Report of
the Suffolk Area
of the Ramblers' Association
2007-08

The Income of £5641 reflected our lower demand from Headquarters as Area's attempt to reduce the Bank Balance.

Expenditure of £6419 includes £1000 donation to HO in appreciation of their work particularly in Legal Expenses over ROW cases initiated in Suffolk.

Allocations to Groups were £3000, but may be larger next year.

Unexpected Group Costs, for which Area keeps a reserve, were minimal.

Area News, cost somewhat less than last year.

Footpath Workers costs and Committee Members expenses were relatively modest and much related to transport.

Presented to Executive Committee by Geoff Knight

Agreed by Executive - date: 4/12/08

See over for Income & Expenditure and Balance Sheet

Alde Valley Group News

We were pleased to welcome a total of forty-seven different people on our Area summer walks programme, the average being eleven. We continue in the winter on alternate Sundays (please note we are now starting at ten o'clock) all in our Alde and Blyth area.

Currently our footpath improvement group are doing clearing, etc at such locations as: Rendham, Wenhaston, Snape and Badingham. A new initiative by Suffolk CC called "Access Suffolk" may be of help to this group.

Richard Tyson.

Stowmarket Group

We were sad to learn of the death of Doug Brett, a long time member, and a past chairman of the group. He helped many members to enjoy walking, and encouraged me to lead walks and to join the committee, and, although unable to take an active role in recent years he will be missed. Our sympathy goes to Mary and their family.

Our programme has a good range of walks, thanks to the efforts of Tony Craighill, and the walk leaders. Attendances have continued to be good, and we have welcomed some new members, despite the weather not always being the best.

On the social front, we have held a Barn Dance, and a Ten Pin Bowling evening, and 40 members enjoyed a Christmas lunch at The Limes Hotel on the 21st December. Our thanks to Roger for arranging these events. The next group holiday will be at the end of April/ beginning of May.

We look forward to walking in 2009.

John Haseltine

Visit by Sudbury Ramblers to Fredensborg

19th- 21st September 2008

A bleary-eyed group of 11 from the Sudbury Group of The Ramblers' Association caught the early morning flight from Stansted on 19th September to be met at Copenhagen Airport by members of their sister organization the Dansk Vandrelaug from our twin town of Fredensborg. As this was Sudbury's second visit to Denmark, old friendships were renewed and new friendships started. After going by train into the centre of the city we were treated to both morning and afternoon walks around different parts of the city. For those who hadn't seen it, there was a visit included to the Little Mermaid. Interestingly we were then shown the site of Nelson's Battle of Copenhagen in 1801 and then a cannon ball lodged in the wall of a house from when the British Army landed in 1807 and bombarded the city centre destroying many old buildings.

Saturday involved an all day walk through parts of the north-eastern part of the municipality. Considering Sudbury's brick making past, it was interesting to be given a tour of a huge ring oven built in the 1860's that was used to make bricks, tiles, pipes and other ceramic items. This oven was in continuous use only shutting down after nearly 100 years and is now preserved by enthusiasts as an industrial museum. Sadly bricks are no longer made there but the legacy is a group of four large lakes created from the old clay pits. The walk then took us to the coast and to a smaller equivalent of Southwold with some very expensive houses and villas. In the evening we were treated a dinner at one of the local schools organized by Fredensborg's Sudbury Committee.

Sunday there was a visit to Helsingør, a busy ferry port where the ferries go between Denmark and Sweden every ten minutes, Hamlet's Castle, the Kronborg Castle. All too soon it was time to catch the train to the airport to pick up the Easyjet flight back to Stansted. The entire group agreed that, thanks to Anne-Lise Lemke of the Dansk Vandrelaug and fantastic sunshine everyone had had a wonderful time,. The Sudbury Group looks forward to hosting the Danes in 2009.

Iain Taylor – Sudbury Group

Waveney Group News

Looking back over the past year (Nov 2007 – Oct 2008) we can see that the Group has gone from strength to strength. Numerically we remain fairly static at around 340 members, but in most other respects the Group is thriving. During this period we staged 185 walks; an amazing average of about 3½ walks per week. We have now reached the stage where, generally, we expect to offer both a short and long walk at the weekends and during the week. This is quite an achievement and I am indebted to the many leaders who offer their services to the Group.

Outside the regular weekly fare, we have organised several different types of holidays for members. Twelve of us had a 75 mile backpack around the Peak District in April, overnighing at a variety of youth hostels. This was followed by a similar venture for ten in the Shropshire Hills in September, where we stayed in hostels, bunkhouses and even an hotel! This was meticulously planned and led by David Butcher and Brenda Le Grys. David also led us on a three day jaunt from Epping Forest Youth Hostel, off the M25, in March. Lionel and Kathy Hardy guided 20 members on a self-catering cottage holiday in the Yorkshire Dales in May and Gerald Jenkins took 20 to France for a splendid hotel based week in La Corniche des Maures. The ample fine food and wine did not seem to undermine the walking activity.

As is usual in the Group there were plenty of other social activities for members to gorge on. Lunch walks took place at Christmas and New Year, and Malvern Tipping introduced us to the delights of a St. Patricks Day walk and lunch at Weybread in March. Our long-established Rustic Supper and Walk, and the Annual Luncheon were a great success too.

Added to these were fascinating slide shows on Papua New Guinea by David Butcher and a well-compiled one from Gerald Jenkins on 'The Mystery of Colour in Nature and the Rainbow'. Both were well attended. A well supported coach walk to Holt and Mannington Hall in June was very welcome and in the same month the annual breakfast

walk (this time to Southwold), organised by Lionel Hardy for many years, was kept alive when Michael Farrow agreed to take it over. We also had train and bus walks, three footpath surveys, a bowls afternoon and several tea walks. One of these, held at Bob Flatt's in Alburgh, raised over £400 for Cancer Research. Well done Bob! The annual quiz (14th year) flourishes as ever; with over 40 participating.

An interesting new development this year has been the introduction of minibus walks devised by Chris Sharp and Brenda Le Grys. We have used these to widen our range of walks beyond Waveney Area, so far in both Suffolk and Norfolk. Numbers have been between 12-15, depending on the size of the minibus.

Our publication department continues to excel. We first published 'Rural Rambles Round Beccles' back in 1983 and this was followed by similar titles for Lowestoft and Southwold. With coastal and inland erosion leading to the loss of three walks in the Southwold area, we hurriedly produced three replacement walks for a revised edition in 2008. The Southwold booklet is easily our bestseller; tourists to the coastal resort get good value with 11 walks for £1.80! At present 'Rural Rambles Round Halesworth' is being researched and should be available in the shops in Spring 2009.

Peter Westmacott – Programme Secretary

Bury St Edmunds Group

As I write this report, half-way between Christmas and New Year, we are in the middle of Ramblers 20th Festival of Winter Walks. It was lovely that Rachel Sloane in her Suffolk Radio programme early on 26th December had been 'inspired by Bury Ramblers' to make her theme 'the 12 walks of Boxing Day!' – when listeners were encouraged to phone in with their suggestions.

It was a super way to promote the joys of walking and good publicity for the Ramblers Association.

Chris Barker had been invited to take part in a live telephone interview with Rachel during the broadcast, prior to leading our Boxing Day walks – both much appreciated – and the cold but dazzlingly sunny day provided a perfect start for this special week of festival walks.

A concern for Chris, though, was the change in charging for car parking subsequent to our programme going to press, and this is a concern we share with other groups. Parking fees might not be high, although in some cases could be prohibitive in relation to a longer walk, but it is the unexpectedness for people who have not come prepared with the necessary coins. We encourage car-sharing of course, and the use of public transport, but this is not always viable. We're going to provide a warning on our future programmes to 'expect the unexpected', perhaps alongside our current reminder that the pub around which a walk has been planned might not actually be there on the day (and sadly we are seeing all too often some of our wonderful village pubs suddenly closing or going into 'interregnum' after years of hard work and commitment)

The very warm welcome at the Ten Bells at Stonham Aspal was very much appreciated on our All Saints Day walk which took in Crowfield Church. It takes a little bit of finding but is really worth a visit – and we had the bonus of being introduced to Geo-caching by Ron who discovered another 'hidden treasure' in a tree there!

Later in November we had our second AGM of the year! This was arranged to get us started with our change over from March to November when future AGMs will be held, in line perhaps with other groups. Instead of inviting a guest-speaker this time we held a social evening, following the meeting, which included a Suffolk quiz which had been specially compiled for the occasion. It was an interesting and enjoyable event, and a flavour of the picture round is printed in this issue – just for fun!

Rosie Perham Chairman Bury St Edmunds Group

Stour Walking Group

We are a small walking group set up in 2000 catering for people in their 20's and 30's with some members a little older. We come from all over Suffolk and North Essex and have a range of walks in Suffolk, North Essex and occasionally Norfolk or Cambridgeshire. Walks usually take place on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month and can be anything from 5 to 18 miles but normally about 8-10 miles.

Recently we have had a beautiful walk in the Orford and Snape locality but as it was a cold day were glad of the 2 welcoming tea shops which featured on the walk. Our Christmas walk was from Hadleigh followed by a delicious Festive meal at a local pub, *The George*. This year we have also had an interesting London walk, combined with sightseeing, and some of us followed this up with a trip to the theatre. In September we enjoyed a splendid weekend of walking, chatting and eating in the New Forest.

As well as enjoying a variety of walks we have occasional social gatherings and in the past these have included meals out, bowling, a theatre trip and Go Ape. We are a friendly group and are looking forward to the second wedding in our group in April 2009! Over the years many other friendships have developed through the walking group. Some people come on most walks and others just turn up now and again, when available.

We welcome new members and take on board fresh ideas for walks or social activities etc. Our web site is www.stourwalkinggroup.co.uk

Valerie Squires

Newmarket Report.

Writing this report post Christmas I am thinking that as times get tough the work of our groups is more important than ever. With the sad demise of Woolworth and concerns that institutions we have taken for granted appearing to be less than robust it is good to be able to meet friends with a common interest. At least the cost of fuel has come down so travelling to walks further afield is now a little less expensive. Likewise if the major supermarkets undertake to be more competitive our packed lunches should be cheaper as well; so perhaps the dark clouds have a silver lining.

The group committee continue to work hard on behalf of its members in order to ensure a comprehensive program of walks and social activities. The group AGM was held and the committee remain in place. I have to say at this point that I was disappointed with the small number of people who attended the AGM as this is the one way that members can show support to the committee who work on their behalf. At the next AGM I will not be seeking re-election; so a new Chairman will need to be found. This is not a difficult job; you just need to want to do it. Having been in the post for a while I feel that the group would benefit from a fresh perspective that a new person will bring. I will remain on the committee, but be sure that I do mean it this time. Also Celia is looking to stand down as Secretary. Celia has been secretary for a number of years now receiving post and circulating agendas. Celia is happy to work alongside another person until they feel confident in the role. Please contact me on 01359-250263 with your ideas. We were very pleased to welcome Jane onto the committee but would still like to see more new faces.

Newmarket Twinning Association are taking a bus to Maisons Lafitte the first bank holiday in May. Leaving on Fri 1st May and returning Mon 4th May. Guy, our contact in France, is proposing an interesting weekend of walks with opportunities to visit Paris.

The fare is expected to be between £60 and £70 and we will be staying with host families. Guy expects other expenses while in France to be in the order of about 50 Euros. At the time of writing all places have been taken but more host families may come forward or someone may drop out so it is still worth contacting me if you are interested in this trip.

Jan Cavell, Newmarket Group.

Obituary

Mr Edmund Hugh “Eddie” Tabraham.

It is with great sadness that I have to report the passing of Mr Edmund Tabraham. Mr. Tabraham died peacefully in his sleep on October the 8th 2008 aged 96.

A teacher of technical subjects at Soham Grammar School from 1947 to 1972, Eddie lived in the Newmarket area for 40 years until 1987, when he and his wife moved to Beccles. A man of many interests, he was Chairman of the Bury St Edmunds Group, from 1979 to 1982 and realizing that regular walkers with the group included members based in his home territory, Newmarket, chaired a steering committee which led to the formation of the Newmarket and District Group in March 1982. Eddie went on to chair the new group, which drew its members from both Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, retiring in 1985, when he became Honorary President. The gavel used at our AGMs note Edmund as the Chairman in 1982 but only a handful of our current members will remember Mr Tabraham.

I had the good fortune to meet Edmund in his retirement home in Loddon near Norwich. During a conversation Edmund explained that he had enjoyed walking during his lifetime and that along with a few others had set up the Newmarket group. Imagine his surprise when I explained that I had just taken on the role of Chairman of the group. From then on I would make a point of calling in when working in the area and update Edmund on what the group was up to and take a copy of the program with me. During one of my visits Edmund gave me some of his notes he had made about map reading and I remember him looking at me quite closely and saying “I hope you are not one of those groups who rush walks and never take the time to stand and look around you”. I must admit to a pang of guilt as I know I prefer a fairly fast pace. I replied that I hoped that we weren’t guilty of this and besides we can only go as fast as the slowest member of the group. I later noted that Edmund had this point in his notes.

Phil Prigg and Jan Cavell – Newmarket Group

Ipswich Group Report

The pleasant weather over the Christmas/New Year period contributed to the successful support we got for the RA Festival of Winter Walks, with 119 walkers turning out for the five walks we had organised over the seven days. Unfortunately only nine of these were first time walkers but we hope that we gave them enough encouragement to come out again.

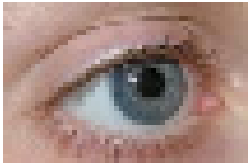
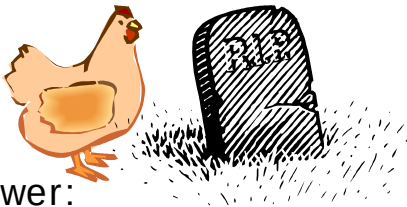
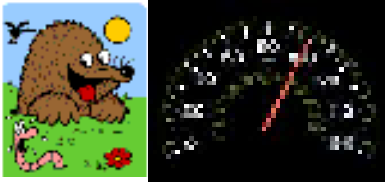
Prior to that, in the week leading up to Christmas, we managed to surprise many of the 20 walkers who were out that day by producing mulled wine, mince pies and shortbread from our rucksacks; which gave a variation on the normal *apple stop*.

Our AGM was attended by 39 members; not bad for a group with a membership of 600! However, after the business side was completed, we were entertained by Peter Webb, who runs a smallholding near Maldon, Essex and he told us of how he and his wife started to live *The Good Life*, in the style of that TV programme with Richard Briers and Felicity Kendall many years ago. His sense of humour in recalling their trials and tribulations from planting vegetables in their front garden to expanding to a smallholding and being self sufficient in all that they eat, had the audience chuckling. With the current economic downturn and peoples' thoughts turning to how they can save on food costs, the committee can claim great foresight in booking him some nine months earlier!

In the last few months we have been pleased to recognise the service given by Dick Leech, Doug Hart and John Gibbs by presenting them with the RA's Certificate of Achievement; between them they have given 85 years of service in various capacities.

Gareth Evans

Picture clues for 10 Places in Suffolk:
Have Fun !! w i t h t h a n k s t o R o s i e

1) Answer: 	2) Answer: 
3) Answer: 	4) Answer: 
5) Answer: 	6) Answer: 
7) Answer: 	8) Answer: 
9) Answer: 	10) Answer: 

Walks from Felixstowe and Trimley Stations

The East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership has been extended to include the Felixstowe branch, so another walks leaflet has been produced.

The 'station to station' formula in the previously published East Suffolk Line Walks doesn't work too well on this route, so we concentrated on the far end of the line, promoting Trimley to the centre of the earth!

Hopefully at least some of the walkers will come by train.

Copies of this leaflet; '*Walks from Felixstowe and Trimley Stations*', can be obtained FOC from:-

ESCRP

12, Kemp's Lane,

Beccles,

Suffolk

NR34 9XA

And local TICs, libraries, etc.

The picture on the front cover of this newsletter was taken one sunny January day on a walk to Felixstowe Ferry which is one of the walks included in this leaflet and was made all the more memorable by the plate of fish and chips in the cafe at Felixstowe Ferry.

Our thanks to Roger Wolfe for this information.

New and Improved Ramblers Website

The Ramblers has updated its website to give it a fresher look. The design and layout is much improved and it is far easier to navigate to sections of the site.

You can see for yourself at the usual address:-

www.ramblers.org.uk

RA Partnership with Cotswold Outdoor

The Ramblers Association has announced that it recently embarked on a partnership with the outdoor retailer 'Cotswold Outdoor'.

The aim of this partnership is to increase take up of Ramblers Association membership through various promotions in Cotswold Stores and other Cotswold communications such as their brochures, catalogues, website and e-newsletters. These promotions will include the sale of Ramblers membership, Walk magazine and Walk Britain.

Cotswold was specifically chosen as a partner because they are committed to supporting Ramblers Groups at a local level. Like us, they share a passion for the outdoors and their stores have strong links with local communities. Rather than adopting a 'pile high, sell it cheap' approach, they pride themselves on offering a high quality service with staff that are experts and understand the outdoors.

The partnership will launch in March 2009 and will run for 5 years, with a review at year 2. From the launch, Cotswold will be offering all Rambler members 20% discount on Cotswold gear for a limited 3 month period. Details of how to redeem this discount will be promoted in the spring issue of Walk magazine. After the 3 month period, members will be offered a discount of 10% on an ongoing basis. All discounts are at the discretion of Cotswold. A percentage of all sales will come to the Ramblers Association, so we will be encouraging our members this facility.

Cotswold Outdoor was voted best online retailer by Ramblers members in our Walk Reader Awards, so we are delighted that they will use their online expertise to launch a jointly branded Ramblers/Cotswold online gear shop where Ramblers members can take advantage of discounts, so we encourage all members to use this facility. Cotswold is keen to seek opinions from Ramblers members about what they would like to see as part of an online shop. If you have provided us with an email address, you'll receive an invitation to share your views in the next 2-3 weeks.

In recognition of this partnership and their reputation as an expert retailer of outdoor gear, Cotswold are now listed as a 'Ramblers Recommended Retailer' and their discount will be promoted via the Ramblers website, membership cards and Walk magazine in 2009.

By arrangement with store managers, Cotswold Outdoor has agreed that Ramblers Areas and Groups can use stores for special events such as AGMs, speakers and presentations, and special shopping evenings. Some may offer the opportunity to promote your group via their in store notice board. Areas and Groups are encouraged to contact their local Cotswold store.

Cotswold currently has 35 stores from Plymouth to Glasgow, they are planning to expand over the next 12 months but wherever they are members can enjoy discounts by going to our jointly branded online shop at www.ramblers.org.uk/gearshop when it launches in March 2009. Shopping online via this site generates income for the Ramblers Association. Your local stores are:-

Norwich – 1, Theatre Street. Tel: 01603 – 232223

Bury St Edmunds - 56, Abbeygate Street (opening 16th January 2009)
The store manager is Mark Woods and has sent an invitation to Suffolk Ramblers to pay him a visit.

Image of the Ramblers Association

Mary Elliot has written from Bury St Edmunds in response to an item in Gordon Leveret's report on the RA General Council Meeting where it was suggested by some that the low membership of the RA was due to their bad image and it was suggested by some at the meeting that we are a 'white, middleclass, bobble-hatted, arrogant and aggressive organisation.' Mary thinks there may be a simpler solution to problem.

In the Autumn Newsletter I was struck by the item 'The Image of the RA' in Gordon Leveret's report on the RA General Council Meeting. Maybe I could think aloud as a rather soft-centred Rambler in the Bury Group. You need nothing except your membership card to enjoy NT properties; if you are a member of the RSPB and want to watch birds you only need a pair of binoculars and a bird book.

A townie like myself who spent a large part of her life happily wearing business suits with tights and smart shoes, and carrying a handbag, has

had to make quite an outlay in order to put one foot before the other in approved RA fashion. Boots, socks, a small backpack and gaiters. I had a suitable 40-year-old quilted jacket, but that was all. Not even a bobble hat! And there is the pressure from ads in Walk magazine to invest in walking poles etc.

Current prices at Millets:

cheapest rucksack £18

cheapest jacket £18

cheapest boots £45

specialized trousers £35-37

Grand total - £116-£118

I wonder if the expense of all this special equipment, which may not be used that often because of other commitments or bad weather, may put some people off, when all they want to do is to explore the countryside in the safety of numbers.

The advertisements in Walk may also deter the less hardy. Walkers are almost always shown in inhospitable terrain. We know that Suffolk has a gentler landscape, but the idea may have lodged in people's minds that walking is always, well, rugged. So I don't think the comparatively low membership and poor image of the RA is altogether to do with being white and middle class, if at all. I shall leave the 'arrogant and aggressive organization' [sic] to be discussed by others!

Mary Elliot – Bury St Edmunds

Can anyone else suggest a solution to the lack of walkers applying for membership of the RA. We have 149,000 members but it is known that millions of people enjoy walking. This subject is often discussed at area meetings but it would be interesting to hear from readers of this newsletter. So let me know what you think in time for the next edition.

Editor

Travels in Greece – Part IV

The Great White Mountains rise up impressively in the west, known locally as the Lefka Ori. This remote and challenging terrain will test even the most powerful Rambler. Plunging valleys lead us to the dramatic Samaria Gorge 16 kilometres of descent down to the Libyan Sea. Massive boulders sit perched all around, this is a most memorable trek; a walk on the wild side. The trail twists and snakes ever down, at one point it narrows so that it is possible to reach out and touch either side of this deep rocky gorge. Many walkers arrive to take up the gauntlet scrambling and fumbling up and over the well worn and rounded stones; a forbidding place.

Upon reaching the sea we are rewarded with a swim in the surprisingly cold sea and a traditional Greek meal in a remote tavern. Soon we board our ferry; the deck rails are blisteringly hot. We cruise back to the Port of Hora Sfakion where the coach awaits our return to Rethimon. The mighty Venetian Fortress glowers protectively over the harbour; proud, majestic and menacing with its giant ramparts.

The Ida Mountains stretch out lazily into the hazy horizon, perhaps another stimulating and challenging walk awaits our eager stride. Looking up I notice a foreboding darkening of the sky, it is a Gratian squall a regular feature in the Southern Aegean.

The rain stops, the clouds part, a spread of blue opens up like a fan, the sun shafts relentlessly down upon the hapless Rambler. Zeus has spared us this day from his lofty pinnacle in the Lecithin Range, all powerful, all knowing. The local men sit contently playing cards in the Kafeneions sipping coffee. All is peace in this tranquil environment. Night has fallen, street noise and voices vanish into the dark night, deep into the dark night I ponder my next excursion into the tapestry of Greece.

Greg Walker

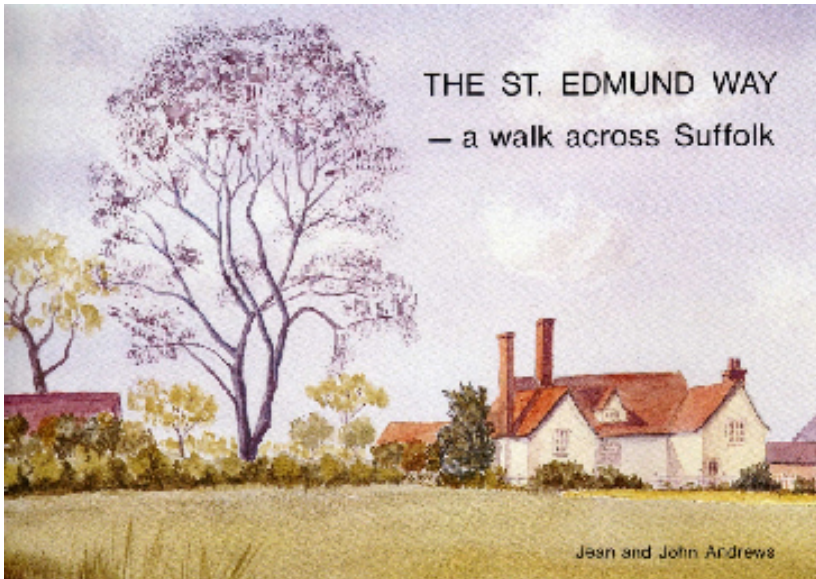
Leading a Wet Walk

The date was chosen months ago, but it is raining hard and the forecast for the day offers little chance of improvement. The first hope is that no-one turns up. Tradition demands that if anyone comes, the walk must take place. That hope of no-one is quickly shattered as car after car, all with rain spattered windscreens, arrive. Doors open, waterproofs, over-trousers, boots, gaiters - it is going to happen. The wind blows as we wait, the rain drives, umbrellas attempt to keep the worst off. There are twelve miles to do and after a very brief gathering, we set off. Fortunately the wind is behind us, so it doesn't seem too bad. After more than an hour we squelch through a very muddy farmyard and approach the ford. Fortunately it is still passable and we halt on the other side in the shelter of some trees for a drink of rapidly diluting coffee. "Would anyone like me to shorten the walk?" No reply. No-one wants to be the first to say so. I announce that there will be a decision point in about a mile. Now we cross a field of sugar beet into the teeth of the driving rain. We reach the church and a decision has to be made. Six decide to take the shortest route back to the cars. The rest of us carry on. It is for me to lead into the saturated chest high cow parsley. However, we soon abandon the overgrown footpath and take to the tramlines between the barley. Thank goodness my umbrella holds out as we head straight into the wind. The delightful lunch spot by a pond, chosen long ago for a sunny day with its dragonflies and varied insect life lies ahead. Not today. We settle for a dense spinney, eating our sandwiches standing up as near to the dripping tree trunks as we can. Ten minutes is plenty and we set off again. A moment of alarm. I forget to count everyone and it appears that someone is missing, a serious matter on a day like this. Fortunately it is a false alarm. Through another dripping wood, across a soaking meadow of long grass and then success in finding a sleeper bridge hidden in a bank of saturated nettles. Across another bridge and out on to a road. Just a couple of miles to go and the wind is now behind us. Cheerful smiles all round. The comradeship of misfortunes overcome. More footpaths and the village church comes into view and we know the cars are not far away. The rain does not ease but we ignore it and smile at each other. Leading a wet walk is not so bad after all. I might even do it again some day.

Gerald Jenkins - Waveney Ramblers

The St.Edmund Way

Further copies of this super little book by John Andrews, delightfully illustrated by his wife Jean, are available from Bury Ramblers as detailed. *Please note that there have been some footpath changes since publication and an addendum slip will be available to previous purchasers from our footpath secretary on request.*



To purchase a copy please send cheque for £3-66
(special price £3 plus 66p postary)
made payable to:-
Ramblers Association (Bury St Edmunds Group)
c/o Joy Bolwell Group Secretary
42, Cloverfields, Thurston, Bury St.Edmunds,
Suffolk IP31 3TJ

Front Cover – Felixstowe Ferry

This photo was taken one lovely sunny January day looking north towards Bawdsey. The day was made made perfect by a visit to the cafe for a plate of their scrumptious fish and chips.

This walk along the flood bank is one of those mentioned in '*Railway Walks from Felixstowe and Trimley Stations*' leaflet we are giving publicity in this newsletter.

My thanks to all who have contributed to this newsletter. For the next issue I would like to collect a list of unusual or quirky name that you come across on your walks. I notice for instance that Alde Valley sent a picture of a walk in Waddlegoose Lane for last spring's issue. It would be useful to have a photograph of the sign; I could use these to fill odd corners of the newsletter. See what you can find.

Good walking.

Tim - Editor

Items for the Autumn Newsletter should be sent to the editor please by the 30th June 2009

Email to:- cavell709@btinternet.com

Or post hardcopy to:-

Tim Cavell, The Maltings, Low Street, Bardwell, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. IP31 1AS