

Ramblers Association Suffolk Area

**Annual General Meeting – Saturday
6th February 2010**

At 10am for 10.30am

To be held at:

**The Burton Room
Needham Market Community Centre**

School Street, Needham Market
Suffolk, IP6 8BB

Programme for the day

- 10:00 Assemble [Coffee and Tea available]
- 10:30 Annual General Meeting
- 12.15 Lunch – Bring packed lunch; coffee and tea available
- 13.00 Walk lead by Stowmarket Group

Ramblers' Association

Suffolk Area

Annual General Meeting – Saturday 6th February 2010

Agenda

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 21st March 2009
3. Matters arising from the minutes.
4. Presentation and acceptance of the Annual Report.
5. Presentation and acceptance of the Accounts for the previous year.
6. Election of Chairman^o
7. Election of Officers¹
8. Election of Representatives of the Affiliated Societies²
9. Appointment of Independent Examiner³
10. Consideration of motions for Area Council; notice of which shall have been given by the Secretary.
11. Recommendations to Area Council or Groups and motions for next General Council.
12. Any other business (time permitting)

Following the meeting there will be an address by Andrew Woodin who is the Countryside Access Leader for Suffolk County Council.

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

¹ The following officers do not wish to stand for re-election:

Secretary Philip Snelling
Footpath Secretary Gordon Leverett

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

² There 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.

³ Mr John Cresswell is the current Independent Examiner.

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RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION SUFFOLK AREA

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Saturday 21st March 2009 at 10.30am at The Village Hall, Assington, Sudbury, Suffolk hosted by Sudbury and District Group

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence

Sudbury Group Chairman, Philip Snelling welcomed 41 members, including guest speaker and Ramblers' chief executive Tom Franklin, to the 2009 Annual General Meeting, which was then chaired by Suffolk Area Chairman, Jim Richards.

Apologies for absence were received from Norman Hammond, Roger and Stella Wolfe, Birt Green, Harley Green, Janice and Tim Cavell, Tony Buck, Wilfred George, Nigel Meadows, John and Margaret King, Phil and Sue Prigg, Brian Milner and Diana Snelling.

2. Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Saturday 15th March 2008

There were no amendments raised and acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Iain Taylor (Sudbury), seconded by Neil Mahler (Alde Valley) and approved as a true record of the 2008 AGM.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Presentation of the Annual Report

Members were presented with and discussed the Annual Report.

Chairman Jim Richards also reported on the following additional items.

Suffolk CC has approved the beginnings of the Ipswich definitive map with several paths in the docks area but this may go to an inquiry.

The Highways Agency has agreed to provide pedestrian access to cross the road near the monument as part of the A11 road improvement scheme.

Ipswich members Dick Leech, Doug Hart and John Gibb have been awarded certificates of achievement for long service to the RA

Access Officer Richard Tyson referred to the progress of the proposed coastal access bill which it was hoped would receive approval soon though access along estuaries seemed to be the current issue.

Adoption of the Annual report was proposed by Ralph Brighton, seconded by Geoff Knight and approved.

5. Presentation of the Accounts for the year ending 30th September 2008

Area Treasurer Geoff Knight highlighted matters of interest to members in the annual statement of account and referred to the on-going policy of reducing Area and Group balances.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Cyril Francis (Stowmarket), seconded by Frank Connelly (Sudbury) and approved by the membership.

6. Election of Chairman

Area Secretary Philip Snelling reminded the meeting that no chairman had been elected at the previous year's AGM, but that during the course of the year Jim Richards had volunteered to take on the role and had duly been co-opted by the Area Committee. Philip congratulated Jim on his chairmanship of the committee and proposed that he continue for the coming year. Ralph Brighton seconded this, Jim accepted the nomination and was duly elected chairman for 2009/10.

7. Election of Officers

There was only one nomination for each position on the Area Executive Committee which is to be renamed Area Council, for the year 2009/10, as listed below. Election of all nominations was proposed by Iain Taylor (Sudbury) and seconded by Jennifer Tyson (Alde Valley) and approved by the meeting and duly elected.

Secretary	Philip Snelling
Treasurer	Geoff Knight
Area Footpaths Secretary	Gordon Leverett
Countryside Officer	Neil Mahler
Membership Secretary	Dick Leech
Access Officer	Richard Tyson
Publicity and Media Contact	vacant
Area News Editor	Tim Cavell
Area Website manager	Dave Hodgkinson

8. Election of Representatives of the Affiliated Societies

There were no nominations from affiliated societies Suffolk Rambling Group, Saxmundham Rambling Group or Ipswich Natural History Group to sit on the Area Council, although Meg and Malcolm Knott of Saxmundham Rambling group were in attendance at this AGM.

Jim Richards clarified Stour Walking Group's status as a full constituent group of the Suffolk Area and not an affiliated group.

9. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Geoff Knight reported that Mr John Cresswell is willing to continue in this role and members approved his continuing appointment.

10. Discussion and consideration of Motions

Chairman Jim Richards, introduced a motion proposed by Norman Jennings (Sudbury) as follows;

“The Ramblers’ Association Suffolk Area calls upon Suffolk County Council as the highway authority, to make the strategically important Footpath 14 Clare accessible by means of (i) a public path creation order to connect its northern end to the rest of the ROW network and (ii) a bridge over the ford to provide safe access at its southern end, so that the public can use this path instead of the busy B1063 road when walking between Chilton Street and Hundon or Poslingford.”

The motion was seconded by Philip Snelling (Sudbury). Mr Jennings gave a resume of the history of this path and the research and lobbying of parish and county councils that he had undertaken to date and the support he had received from RA Central Office. The merits of the path, likely usage, it's ranking in the Area's priority list for ROW improvements, possible diversion of the path were all debated with contributions from a number of members. After a final summing up by Mr Jennings a vote was taken and the motion was lost by 20 votes to 11.

11. Recommendations to Area Executive Committee, local groups, or Motions for General Council

There were no recommendations or motions proposed.

12. New Area Constitution Jim Richards explained the reasons that Areas were being requested to adopt new constitutions generally in the model form prescribed by the Articles of Association.

It was noted that the new constitution would clearly give the Area the responsibility for appointing local footpaths secretaries (LFPs). This

was because the geographical areas for which the nine LFPs were responsible differed from those of the seven geographical local groups. After further discussion Jim recommended adoption of the constitution to the membership. Adoption was proposed Gordon Leverett (Ipswich), seconded by Ralph Brighton (Newmarket) and approved by the membership.

13. Any Other Business

No matters raised

Following the business part of the meeting, Ramblers Chief Executive Tom Franklin, presented a talk on the aims of the organisation, changes at Central Office, and his vision of the future. There then followed a question and answer session.

Signed – Jim Richards, Chairman

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Chairman's Report - Spring 2010

I reported last time about the financial difficulties the Ramblers' are in. I continue to receive regular up-dates from the member of the Board of Trustees who has been assigned to liaise with our Area, Len Bannister. I routinely pass information on to some of our key volunteers, i.e. our Area Councillors, Group Chairs and Secretaries and Local Footpaths Secretaries, as I do the missives that come down from Rodney Whittaker, our national chairman and Tom Franklin, the Chief Executive. If anyone else would like to be copied into these, please let me know.

There have been severe cuts in the staffing at Central Office and in the Scottish and Welsh Regions. Volunteers will have noticed that the deluge of paper circulars has stopped. We are now expected to keep ourselves up-to-date by looking regularly at the volunteering section of the national website. You can elect to be alerted to new features appearing on this through something called an "RSS feed" which I believe is quite simple to do.

Normal running of the groups in our Area should not be affected too much. We have not been ordered (although we have been encouraged) to discontinue with our paper newsletters and programmes. That would not be fair to those who have no wish to grapple with computer technology and I for one would rather read my Area News on the sofa than at the computer desk. The option is there though for members who would be happy with only electronic versions. Our Area News has for some while been viewable on the Suffolk Ramblers' site - <http://www.suffolkramblers.org.uk/> and our walks should all be on the Walksfinder section of the national website.

For any of you who wish to be kept up to date with the way Ramblers' are feeling nationally, there is an internet forum called Ramblers-Net <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Ramblers-Net/>. It costs nothing to join and you're not obliged to add to the lively discussions. All members of the ramblers' are eligible to join the forum. You may also know that criticisms of the way our organisation is run have been made through the medium of "Concerned Ramblers" who held their first meeting in Leeds back in September. A summary of their concerns has been posted on Ramblers-Net. The Board of trustees has promised to consider the criticisms made, perhaps averting the call for an Extraordinary General Council meeting.

It's surprising (or maybe not) that none of these troubles have been mentioned in Walk magazine. Good though the magazine is, it does seem increasingly aimed at walkers in general rather than our membership.

Perhaps that all sounds rather depressing but, on the positive side, the Marine and Coastal Access Bill received the Royal Assent recently. It promises us an accessible coastal corridor to walk.

February will see our Area AGM at Needham and I hope a good number of you come along. Two of our stalwart volunteers have announced their intention not to stand again for re-election. They are Phil Snelling, Area Secretary and Gordon Leverett, Area Footpaths Secretary. They have both served the Area well and unfailingly. Our grateful thanks go to you both of them.

Jim Richards – Chairman, Suffolk Area, Ramblers Association

ACCESS OFFICERS REPORT

Readers of Walk Magazine will have noted the good news that proposals to create a path round the English coast have passed through parliament. Natural England intend to start work soon on the first section from Weymouth to Lulworth called The Olympian Way (sic) for completion in 2012. Suffolk is not included in the next four of the 16 coastal counties for attention (Norfolk is one of the four) so readers will have to wait. However I have written to Ramblers enquiring if it is feasible to make rights of way on some gaps in the coastal route which could be walked now but are not rights of way. As far as paths round the estuaries are concerned the coastal path will, it is stated, go up to the first “convenient” bridge or ferry. This will cause a problem in some Suffolk estuaries where the ferries are

seasonal – waiting from November to April for the next boat might not be “convenient”!

On open access heathland restrictions requested by the RSPB, etc for nesting birds will continue much as before. Our Countryside Officer has mentioned problems with unleashed dogs on access land; I understand that SCC are discussing the possibility of dog wardens for busy areas of access land.

During the summer I located an area of open access land at Outney Common near Bungay which is only reached by permissive paths. As the paths could be closed at any time leaving an inaccessible “access island” I have alerted SCC to the matter; it is possible for an authority to create a right of way in such a case.

Richard Tyson

Area Membership Report

The membership of the Suffolk Area had 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 2134, down 14 since 2004 but up 39 on last year.

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

Alde Valley	155(147)	Bury	379(377)
Ipswich	581(586)	Newmarket	180(177)
Stowmarket	212(195)	Sudbury	253(241)
Waveney	342(335)	Stour	24(28)
Not allotted to any group			8(9)

At the time of preparing this report no up to date figures were available from Head Office due to ongoing problems with the new data base. Last year the figures were :- 137,883 down 1834.

Dick Leech – Area Membership Secretary

Suffolk Area RA Treasurer's Report for 2008-2009

As can be seen from the Accounts, groups requested £800 less than the previous year and Area a further £1800 less, making the total sum received from Central Office £2600 lower in total. Expenditure for Area was, nonetheless, higher by £340. This is due to the footbridge Donation, designated in earlier accounts and also to the ROW Training. Thus area reserves are significantly less and we are only able to sustain a more modest deficit in the near future.

Our other expenses depend on the level of activity of the Footpath Workers, the attendance of Area Council Members and Area News, all of which are an integral part of our activities.

Geoff Knight - Treasurer, Suffolk Area, Ramblers Association

Observations

Walking it is said is a therapy; it focuses the senses and improves wellbeing whilst aiding decision making. This prognosis does come with a dire warning as it could result in many years of wedlock. The sinews are stretched, the equilibrium is balanced and the world appears to be a good place to dwell. Many great pearls of wisdom are divulged during the long slog; in fact the world is saved many times over by constructive and positive thought. A rambler is always close to nature; he will have a weather eye open, a walking barometer, he will detect if a change is imminent and issue his companions with regular reports during the trek. Viewing the emergence of new growth and wildlife becomes a study of keen observation. A blur of movement captures the peripheral vision; brown and white shapes running swiftly from the undergrowth; a herd of fallow deer race diagonally

away to the horizon these creatures are inherently reclusive and shy.

A flock of pigeon flap aloft; perhaps the carrier pigeon could return as a new superfast courier service. Genetic engineering could create a new super sized bird, he could carry a larger payload and help conserve energy and he would only require a diet of maple peas as fuel. Large backpacks could be modified to fit his increased girth; your new walking boots would be delivered the same day by pigeon but don't look up as he prepares his descent into your back yard!

Glimmering and simmering in the distance, the sunlight glints upon our parked metal transporters which are waiting to return us to the litter boxes of suburbia. We bid farewell to the big sky until our next foray into the great outdoors.

Greg Walker

Newmarket Group Report.

This report sees the end of an eventful year. I will be standing down as Chairperson and looking forward to supporting the next person in post. Besides the chairperson standing down The Newmarket Group will be losing valuable committee members this time round. I must thank Celia for her commitment over the years as Secretary and say that she will be much missed we wish her well with her move. John will be standing down as social secretary and his organising skills will be much missed. Our thoughts are with John as I believe he may be in hospital at the moment. Elaine will also be standing down due to work and life commitments and will also be much missed. I would like to thank all the committee members for their continued support of the group.

The committee has continued to take the group activities forward and has achieved its usual high standard of walks and social activities; our thanks go to Sue and Phil for putting together a comprehensive and interesting walks programme. We enjoyed a full social program thanks to John and the teams organising skills. I will not say anything about those activities as the appropriate officers will report at the AGM. The trip to France in May was very successful and I hope that we will continue to support the work of the Newmarket Twinning Association by joining with them to organise walking activities. Ted has joined the committee during the year in order to coordinate the trip to Yorkshire next year. I would urge members to support this event as this represents a lot of work on Ted's part. I would also like to say a special thanks to all our walks leaders as without them we would have no program. More leaders are always most welcome. Ralph's map reading course was well attended and was an interesting and fun day. He also talked about the duties of a walk leader and I hope it may have encouraged a few more of our walkers to come forward and become leaders.

I must apologise for not being visible since June of this year. Tim and I have been very busy with family matters this year. All that remains for me now is to thank Ralph, John, Brian, Jane, Jenny, Sue, Phil, Celia, Elaine, Geoff, Tim and Ted for all their help and support and look forward to next year as a committee member.

Why not join the Newmarket Group on a late Spring Holiday?

Monday 31st May to Friday 4th June 2010.

Ted Messider is organising this holiday in conjunction with Newmarket Gardening Club. We have a provisional booking with The English Rose Hotels Group to stay 4 nights at one of their Scarborough Hotels. The holiday will include coach travel, 4 nights en-suite acc, 3 course dinner and full English breakfast. Proposed programme.

Monday: - Possible trip to Normanby Hall Country Park en-route. Evening town walk at Olivers mount.

Tuesday: - Options. 8 mile circular walk Robins Hood Bay to Ravenscar. Or visit Robins Hood Bay and Whitby.

Wednesday: - Harrogate and Harlow Carr Gardens with possible 2 mile walk.

Thursday: - North York Moors Railway and walking or possible visit to York.

Friday: - Home via the Humber Bridge with time to walk over the bridge.

Check out www.northlines.gov.uk/normanby www.rhs.org.uk/harlowcarr
www.nymr.co.uk

Cost £250 per person (possible single supplement) In the event of cancellation we will endeavour to return payment but please have own insurance in place. 6 payment dates to spread the cost.

Contact Ted for more information 01638 750401

Hurry as over half the places are already gone!

ALDE VALLEY GROUP NEWS

At our AGM on November 25th we were pleased to note that the Group membership has increased slightly. Our walking programme and footpath group have continued their activities thanks to the teamwork of new and old volunteers who share organising and leading responsibilities.

During the summer two short walks were included in the programme and attracted a number of fresh participants; another short walk is planned on Sunday afternoon 28th February as well as the usual programme. In the summer we ranged as far as Trimley and Worlingworth as well as covering the Alde region.

The footpath workers recently cleared a heavily overgrown path at Aldringham Common and the improvements near Framlingham are in progress. We also surveyed paths at Earl Soham and Friston and intend to visit Benhall, Hacheston and Middleton

Richard Tyson

Waveney Group

In the autumn edition of the Area News I wrote about our publications department in Waveney, with specific reference to our latest booklet of walks 'Rural Rambles Round Halesworth'. Our booklets contain 24 pages of walk descriptions, sketch maps, line drawings and photos. We are very fortunate in having a retired printer, Lionel Hardy, in our group, and he is responsible for design, layout, sketch maps and 'setting up' the booklets for the printer. We also have several artists who contribute pen and ink sketches of local scenes to enhance the publications.

However, despite all these advantages, there are problems in devising the text. How much detail to put in the route description or what to omit. Too much information and the walker can get overburdened and confused; too little and the walker can be hesitant about the correct route. Do you refer to house names, trees, barns, ponds and hedges? I usually do, although I am well aware that names can change. For example, in our Beccles booklet, we have often referred to an old cottage in Barsham called 'Yellow Place'. A few years ago new owners renamed the house 'Orchard Place'. O.S. hasn't caught up with the change yet, and on the latest Explorer map still refers to the old name! And of course, trees fall down, barns get demolished or converted, ponds get filled in and hedges are ripped out. We try to cover ourselves by explaining in the booklets that we have walked out the route in the past 12 months, and warn that the countryside is forever changing.

A recent example springs to mind. One walk at Westhall contained a path that crossed an arable field, and had done so for 27 years in my experience. Naturally, in the walk description, I referred to the path as crossing an arable field. When I walked the route again, just after publication of the Halesworth booklet, I was amazed to find the field had been converted to grass.

Terminology in walk booklets can be tricky. Take the use of the word 'lane'. What does it mean to you? My dictionary says 'a narrow, often rural, road, street or path'. I suggest there is a big difference between a road and a path! Near where I live there is a Cutthroat Lane,

which is a hedged footpath. There is also a Poll's Lane, which is a tarmacked road. Then there is a School Lane, Which is a stony track. All this makes it problematic when attempting to write a description that will be understood by all and easy to follow.

Ramblers tend to talk about walks in miles. Some new books refer to metric measure. After all, OS maps are all metric now. So what is the writer to do on this one? I use imperial measurements, and this is a pattern we have followed in all our walk booklets. However, I have seen some other booklets that refer to walks in miles but in the same description make reference to metres. Confusing?

Some of my colleagues in Waveney Group make reference to compass directions in their walks description. For example, one might write ... 'head in a northerly direction down the lane'. I avoid this approach because I am not convinced that all users of our booklets have a clear idea of compass directions.

Some writers take the view that descriptions should only include details of the route and not extraneous material like churches, places of refreshment, wildlife and soon. However, I think that this sort of information can enhance a walk and make it more interesting, so I include it wherever possible. If it encourages walkers to support the rural facilities then that is a welcome boost to the rural economy.

Here in Waveney we have had some very positive comments about our booklets over the years. A real delight is when we are out walking (Group or not) and we meet people undertaking a walk using one of our guide books. Occasionally we receive helpful suggestions about a route and we take note of them in readiness for a revised edition later. The Beccles booklet is on its tenth update and the Southwold guide, our biggest seller by far, is in its seventh edition. The new Halesworth booklet will probably need a revision soon as there have been some changes on the ground already. These changes should keep our writers on their toes for years to come.

Peter Westmacott

Sudbury Group - Annual Walks Programme Report 2009

During the year 51 walks totalling 278 miles (or 447 Kilometres – sounds better!) were organised and led by 18 members. Half were on a Sunday and the remainder on a Wednesday. We also had 2 Wednesday evening walks

followed by pub suppers. As food is involved these walks are always well attended – 24 and 30 walkers. The average attendance for the year was 20, similar to last year. Most of our walks were in south Suffolk where we continue to keep an eye on the footpaths in our area. A few were in north Essex, one of which was cancelled due very heavy rain, but not all was lost as the nine members who turned up retreated to a nearby garden centre coffee house for suitable refreshments. This was only the second walk cancelled since June 2004.

In addition we had two coach outings, the first at the end of May when 30 of us walked a 10 mile section of the London Outer Orbital Path (LOOP). (Reported in the last Area News). On the second trip, 33 went to Norfolk where we had two walks, both arranged by Lesley Pilbrow. The longer walk, 10 miles, was from Mundesley then inland to the Paston Way and back to the coast at Overstrand and finishing at Cromer. The shorter walk, an 8 mile circular, started at Cromer and went inland to North Repps, on to Overstrand and along the coast to the finish at Cromer.

At a weekend in September we hosted members from the Danish Walking group that we have had contact with over the past two/three years. On the afternoon of their arrival we led a walk around the Sudbury meadows and on the Saturday a group of us took them to Cambridge where we had a guided walk around the historic area. The Sunday of their departure took us to Alpheton where after 6 mile walk we had lunch at the village hall. After lunch the mini coach came to take them to Stansted Airport but due to a misunderstanding the driver thought he was taking them to Stanstead village, about 3 miles away! Fortunately, a number of passengers speaking in a foreign language and our treasurer John, who questioned why the cost of the return trip was a lot less than the outward journey, alerted the driver before departure and the matter resolved – they arrived at the airport in time for their flight home.

David Taylor – Walk Programme Organise

Bury St Edmunds

It doesn't seem five minutes ago that I was writing against the clock to complete our report for the autumn Area News and now suddenly it's that time of year again – foreshortened by the new need for earlier publication in relation to earlier Area AGM in February. This now puts us under increased pressure to complete our Summer programme which we put out in the same mailing. For walks leaders in the midst of Christmas commitments it's not the best time to be finalising details of walks which seem such a long way off! January has always previously given us that bit of lee-way to focus on the year ahead once we were actually into the new year!

Perhaps because our current programme has offered a record choice of walks we're concerned not to compromise on the next one, but nor do we want to put unrealistic expectations on those who put so much into the programme to whom, as always, we are indebted. We would be interested to know what other groups do to meet these differing needs, perhaps at the AGM.

It could seem invidious to mention one or two walks amongst the many delightful sorties we have enjoyed in different directions, but a recent special highlight was our walk at Wickhambrook with the Millennium Farm Trust, a local charity set up to provide training and work opportunities in farming, conservation and rural skills, for people with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Chris Barker of Bury Ramblers and Bernadette Shrubshall, who had mainly been responsible for setting up MFT, had devised a walk that suited all abilities and was wheel-chair friendly – and Farmer Robert Fearnley and his son Sam gave generously of their time to introduce us to and tell us about their Lincoln sheep – and a great time was had by all! We really value our special relationship with this wonderful group, and thank them again for their lovely hospitality on the day.

It has become a very nice way to express Ramblers recognition to those who have made a special contribution over the years, by presenting a certificate of appreciation – and we were so pleased to be able to thank one of our octogenarians Beryl Duncan in this way, on the occasion of her retirement from leading walks (although we look forward to her walking with the group still and continuing to be an inspiration to us all!)

May I complete my report with good wishes to Les and Maureen Dickinson following their move to Norfolk (perhaps a joint walk with Norwich group is now in the offing?!) and to Brian Milner as he takes up chairmanship of Newmarket group.

Rosie Perham Chairman Bury St Edmunds Group



Bury Members make friends with Sam the Sheep.
(see Bury report).

Stour Walking Group

2009 has proven an interesting and varied year for the Stour Walking Group. One of the highlights was our weekend away in the Cotswolds in September where we enjoyed walking in beautiful scenery, eating in varied restaurants and teashops and browsing around the picture postcard town of Chipping Campden where we were based.

Our short Sunday afternoon walks have proven popular whilst at the same time a few of us like the more challenging walks. This included a 16 mile linear walk on the Stour path from Nayland to Long Melford and the annual 25 mile Orwell sponsored walk,

Food is also important for the group and fish and chips on the beach in Aldeburgh were enjoyed one July evening after an 11 mile walk and tasted better for the exercise. On many walks we find time to stop at a teashop or even two.

We had our 3rd London walk this year and had wonderful urban views as we passed through Wapping, Canary Wharf and Greenwich. Some of us took the opportunity to make a full day of it and went afterwards for a meal and theatre trip.

For one walk from Castle Hedingham we joined up with the Hike Essex Group (20`s & 30`s group) and hope to do this again.

Social events have also featured with some of us attending the wedding of two members in April. A boat trip from Sudbury followed by a pub meal and short walk, to round the afternoon off, was enjoyed by a few of us on a bright August day.

We are grateful for all the hard work of our outgoing committee and welcome our new one. We are particularly looking forward to celebrating our 10 th anniversary in 2010.

Valerie Squires

The Ramblers' Hymn

(Our thanks to Sue and Phil Prigg of Newmarket Group)

O God our help in ages Past,
We need Thy help right now.
Our waypoints are completely lost,
The footpath's under plough!

Before, the hills in order stood
And walls and gates weren't there,
Our fathers wandered where they would,
And no-one much would care.

Today, we follow lines on maps,
Which we keep up to date,
Lest farmers, yea, such cheerful chaps
Might get a touch irate!

But we've no notion where to go,
We have great need of Thee,
The fog and rain have blocked our view;
Our path we cannot see.

The path diverted through a field –
A bull, with utmost glee,
Made it quite clear he would not yield,
We had to turn and flee.

We had to go right through a bog,
Of mud and stinking ooze,
We thank you, Lord, that we were shod,
In proper walking shoes.

Our path is blocked by wiry bards,
By thorns our way is closed,
We seek elusive yellow marks
So we don't tear our clothes.

New Walks Leaders Checklist

**Check out the new Walks Leaders checklist.
(New resource – posted 7th September 2009)**

The Led Walks team has just produced the new Walks Leader's checklist, a handy A6 pocket sized laminated card for leaders (and others) to carry with them. The card is a quick and easy guide for walk leaders – old and new – on what to do before, during and after a walk. The guide also incorporates a new section on what to do in an incident, with basic first aid and advice on contacting the emergency services, should you ever be unfortunate enough to have to call them out. Colourful, waterproof and full of invaluable advice, the checklist is available by emailing:-

ramblers@ramblers.org.uk

or by phoning 020 7339 8500

GET YOURS NOW!

