



ramblers
at the heart of walking

Ramblers Association Suffolk Area

Autumn 2017

NATIONAL TRAIL



**From little acorns
mighty oak trees grow**

Newsletter & Annual Report

Issue 44

A well known Suffolk Venue, but where is it?





ramblers
at the heart of walking

RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION

Suffolk Area

Annual General Meeting

Date: 3rd February 2018

Hosts: Newmarket Group

Kedington Community Centre,

Arms Lane, Kedington CB9 7QQ

(Pub: Barnardiston Arms - next door)

Grid Ref. TL705 464

10.00am for 10.30am START

Ramblers Association – Suffolk Area

Chairman	Roley Wilson Email – roleywilson@hotmail.com	01449 672945
Vice Chairman	Position Vacant	
Secretary	Jan Palmer Email – walkingtog@yahoo.com	01449 723997
Treasurer	David Holmes Email – cdholmes15@btinternet.com	01728 454146
Footpath Secretary	Jim Richards Email – suffolkramblersafps@gmail.com	01728 453746
Countryside Officer	Position Vacant	
Membership Secretary	Ralph Brighton Email – ralphbrighton@hotmail.com	01284 703969
Recruitment Officer	Position Vacant	
Access Officer	Position Vacant	
News Editor	David Harmer Email – master003point49@aol.com	01502 475188
Website Manager	Dave Hodgkinson	01824 761239
Rights of Way Advisor	Nigel Meadows Email – nigel.ramblers@yahoo.co.uk	01728 746698
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Editorial

In the last edition I stated that I would probably be too old to walk ALL of the Round England Coast Path. However, this year I have walked all of the Norfolk stretch. Hopton on Sea to Cromer is very well waymarked. The stretch from Cromer to Kings Lynn is walkable, but not, as yet, designated as part of the English Coastal Path. On reflection, although again as yet not designated as such, I have also walked the Suffolk section-Felixstow to Lowestoft. In addition, last year I walked the Cleveland Way part of which-Saltburn by the Sea to Filey is incorporated into the round England Coast Path. Having walked the South Downs Way and parts of the Jurassic coast, I have, perhaps, in bits and pieces, walked approximately one quarter of the Round England Coast Path. Happily, as I understand it, the whole of the path is still on course for completion by 2020.

Network Rail with their plans for level crossing closures-initially in East Anglia-currently represent possibly the greatest challenge to the Ramblers Association since the mass trespass of Kinder Scout. Although there are now many walking groups, the Ramblers Association are still the GUARDIANS OF THE FOOTPATHS.

Although the Ramblers Association alone have some 105,000+ members nationally, it must be conceded that the populace at large are probably not too concerned about these closures. That is, if the result is a better and more reliable rail service than exists presently. However, one of the aspects that Network Rail are preaching over these closures is safety. It is blatantly obvious that the real reason is for commercial purposes. Besides, isn't it somewhat hypocritical of Network Rail to preach safety, and then attempt to divert walkers; cyclists; horse riders etc. onto potentially busy roads?!

Ultimately the case for these proposed closures may well go to a public enquiry; where the main people to benefit will be those in the legal profession.

For myself, I have written to my local M.P. the Secretary of State for Transport; the Secretary of State for the Environment and JUSTICE; and representatives of Suffolk County Council. Basically the theme of my narrative to them has been that ANY closures of level crossings should be compensated for by the construction of overpasses or underpasses. Such bridges or subways should be suitable for wheelchair uses, and where appropriate, cyclists; horses; livestock etc.

As individual members, [and I hope that you all signed the Ramblers online petition which is now closed], I would urge you all to similarly contact your own M.P.s regarding this matter. To borrow a phrase from Tesco-EVERY LITTLE HELPS.

Happy walking to you all.
David Harmer (Editor)

RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION SUFFOLK AREA

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Saturday 4 February 2017, 10.30 a.m

at Community Centre

Hillside, Stowmarket, Suffolk

hosted by Stowmarket Group

1 Welcome and Apologies for absence

Roley Wilson welcomed 35 people, including our guest speaker Des Garrahan from Central Office to our meeting, which he then Chaired as Area Chair.

Apologies were received from Dot Richards, Ray Palmer, Bill and Daphne Baldry, Nigel Meadows, Hillary Thomas.

2 Minutes of the Annual General meeting held on Saturday 6 February 2016

Acceptance of Minutes proposed by David Harmer, Waveney and Seconded by Jenny Bradin, Bury.

3 Matters Arising

None

4 Presentation and Acceptance of Annual Reports

4.1 Chair's Report: The Chair confirmed his report is contained in the last issue of the Area News and provided the following updates.

A lot has been happening since our last meeting and my thanks to everyone for the time and effort that has gone into responding to the many calls for action.

NETWORK RAIL Network Rail continues to dominate. We must not forget that like everything with Network Rail nothing is certain. Nationally I am pleased to see how the issue is being taken forward and we are being kept informed of their actions. We must always be realistic about what is achievable and it is us who will need to put in the responses from the ground. We should encourage everyone to sign the National Petition and it is important to remember they do not have to be a member of the Ramblers to do so.

My thanks to Jim and the team of Footpath Secretaries. I have seen one of the letters which Jim suggested went out from the Footpath Secretaries to our local M.P's. I am sure the professional way that was done will carry weight.

We are not alone in facing up to Network Rail. I have attended meetings with SLAF and I am a part of the sub-group they have set up to consider the SLAF response. I have also had an opportunity through that sub-group to liaise with Suffolk County Council.

ROWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) Consultation has taken place and six key themes have emerged.

- 1) Increasing community and volunteer engagement
- 2) Enhancing health and wellbeing
- 3) Planning for sustainable communities
- 4) Supporting growth and economic prosperity
- 5) Protecting, maintaining and enhancing the Infrastructure including the Definitive Map
- 6) Inclusive promotion and marketing

Timescales have slipped and publication of the ROWIP 2 is now likely to be in March 2017.

I am sure you will agree with me these are all issues that mirror many of our own objectives and are ones we would want to work in partnership with the County to deliver.

WALKERS ARE WELCOME Suffolk County Council continues to promote the national 'Walkers are Welcome' scheme. In Suffolk, Shotley, Woodbridge, Hadleigh, Sudbury and Clare have all expressed an interest. It is an ideal way to promote local walks and as Ramblers something we must welcome, as what gets walked is more likely to be well signed and maintained and the more partners we have to make that happen the better.

SIZEWELL PROPOSALS I continue to be involved as the walker's representative in respect of the proposed Sizewell Power Station expansion. I will be attending a briefing by the developer's team to SLAF on Thursday. We are currently at stage 2 and it is at stage 3 that more detailed information will be available.

PROMOTING WALKING The Suffolk Walking Festival goes from strength to strength and its format is now well worked. This year Mid Suffolk will be holding their own mini Festival in the run up to the County organised event. Since last year all Walk Leaders for the County event must hold a current first aid certificate. Very few of our leaders have a current first aid certificate and despite my explaining how we operate our walks, I was unable to persuade them to accept any contribution from us without a leader who held a certificate. In contrast Mid Suffolk want to make it clear they are separate from the County and their walks may be led by any competent Walk Leader. Suffolk Walking Festival are providing training for prospective Walk Leaders for their Festival, but accept our leaders who follow our national guidelines will be fully equipped in knowledge already. We should acknowledge that anything that gets more people out walking is a good thing and Walking Festivals are one very good way of promoting walking. The Ramblers will appear as a link from the Festivals for anyone wishing to continue their walking.

I am often contacted to give a 'Walkers View' by the media. I was recently contacted by Rachael Sloane, formally of Radio Suffolk. She now works freelance. I was asked to contribute an article on autumn walking which appeared in 'Suffolk Norfolk Life' magazine. It appeared alongside another article contributed by one of our members in Norfolk. We therefore had a double opportunity to get our name out there again.

Post Christmas I was asked by BBC Radio Suffolk if I would appear live on air to talk about the Ramblers and the health benefits of walking. Having agreed in advance what we would talk about, I was more than happy to oblige. We are rightly now seen as the organisation to speak to. If it is walking, it is the Ramblers.

I continue to be involved in the delivery of the Suffolk Walking Strategy devised by the Health Authority and Suffolk County Council. 2016/2017 is designated as the Year of Walking during which a range of events are being promoted throughout the county.

Walking has never been more popular and its health benefits are regularly promoted. There are great opportunities for the Ramblers to continue to make a real difference. We know we are not just another walking group we are the 'Ramblers' that is the message we all must continue to deliver during 2017.

Ramblers' Communications

A display board (which could be seen in the hall) has been purchased by the Area for all Groups to use. It is currently with Sudbury Group for their event.

4.2 Area Footpath Secretary's Report

Jim Richards advised his report appears in the Area News and the Chair had already provided a number of updates. Jim advised with the retirement of Alan Corden an opportunity has been taken to look at the Footpath boundaries with a view to bringing them in line with Group boundaries. Bury are the only group to have two Footpath Secretaries and part of their responsibilities include an area in Stowmarket, which they may wish to take back. It is also proposed that in future the selection of a Group Footpath Secretary is approved at group level and not Area. This will necessitate changes to the Area Constitution, which will be discussed later in the meeting.

Inclosure Awards. Following his success in the Court of Appeal in 2015, John Andrews, despite his now living in Scotland, is now starting to prepare applications for DMMOs for other routes based on inclosure awards.

Sizewell C - The Stage 2 pre-application consultation has just closed. The Alde Valley Group have made a further submission and will continue to press for rights of way improvements in the general area by way of s. 106 agreements, should the matter proceed.

4.3 Membership Secretary's Report

Jan Palmer advised we have seen a slight decreased of approximately 2% in our membership numbers 2015 vs 2016, which is in line with the national average. The information from Central Office is not always thought to be accurate, but if any anomalies continue to recur please report them for investigation.

Adoption of reports was proposed by Rosie Perham, Bury and seconded by David Harmer, Waveney.

5 Presentation and acceptance of Accounts for previous year and Appointment of Independent Examiner

David Holmes ran through the figures and advised that our reserve is roughly 60% of expenditure, which is in line with Central Office directive. Geoff Knight will continue as Independent Examiner. Formal acceptance of Accounts was proposed by Richard Stammers, Bury and seconded by Anne Hubert-Chibnall, Alde Valley.

6 Amendments to Area Constitution

Jim Richards ran through the proposed changes to the Area Constitution in respect of Footpath Secretaries, which have resulted from the way we are reorganising boundaries. These proposed changes have already been approved by the Board of Trustees and they recommended certain other changes in order to conform with current prescribed model form and the wish to use more gender-neutral language.

A two thirds majority would be needed to put these changes through. Proposed Jenny Bradin, Bury, Seconded Julia Bradbury, Bury. All approved.

7 Election of Officers

Jim Richards took over proceedings to elect the Chair. Jim asked for candidates. Roley Wilson was the only name put forward. Proposed David Harmer, Waveney, Seconded Ann Hubert-Chibnall, Alde Valley. Resuming the Chair, Roley advised that, with the exception of Richard Tyson, the Committee were prepared to stand again.

Roley also once again drew attention to the current vacancies and reinforced the need for a Publicity and Media Officer, together with that of Vice Chair.

There were no elections received for Representatives of Affiliated Societies and Individual Members

The Area Council Officers were therefore elected as follows:

Chair	Roley Wilson
Footpath Secretary	Jim Richards
Secretary and Membership Secretary	Jan Palmer
Treasurer	David Holmes
Costal Access Officer	Nigel Meadows
News Letter Editor	David Harmer
Area Website Manager	Dave Hodgkinson
Vice Chair	Vacant
Publicity and Media Contact	Vacant
Access Officer	Vacant
Countryside Officer	Vacant

8 Delegates to General Council

At the Area Meeting two people were put forward to attend the General Council. Roley Wilson as Chair and Isla Clough, Ipswich Group. No other names were put forward. All approved.

9 Motion for Area Council

None received.

10 AOB - Recognition Award

Des Garrahan presented a Recognition Award for Richard Tyson to his wife Jenny, in his absence. Des explained this was Certificate number 59 which indicates this is something not given readily. Jim Richards took the opportunity to thank Richard for his invaluable contribution to the Ramblers over the years at both a local and national level. Jim will present the award to Richard personally in the near future.

11 Closure of formal Business and Guest Speaker

The guest speaker, Des Garrahan, Chair of the Board of Trustees, gave an update from Central office and also engaged with the audience to gain their views on areas such as health and safety on walks. Safeguarding in place for children and vulnerable adults. Favourite walks . How to encourage new members and promote the Ramblers. Des also advised that it is very likely that Network Rail will feature as one, possibly two, motions at the General Council, which tells us the importance of this issue nationwide.

Roley Wilson closed the meeting and invited the Group to join a walk from the Community Centre.

Alde Valley Group

In March, we were greatly saddened to lose one of our keenest stalwarts, Richard Tyson. Richard was a regular walker with the Group for many years and led many walks. He joined the Group Committee in October 1999 and served as Local Access Officer from April 2001 to Nov 2016, leading the surveying of all potential areas of open access in the Alde valley Territory for the CROW Act. He was our Group Chair from November 2005 to November 2012 and Group Delegate on Suffolk Area Council 2006-2017. He was a founder member of the Alde Valley Footpath Working Party Group in October 1999 and was a regular participant with his tools and boy-scout skills. Above all, he was a friend who will be greatly missed.



At Area level, at the AGM in 2006, Richard took over from Geoff Pratt, the role of Area Access Officer and held that position right up to this year. He also twice attended General Council as Suffolk Area delegate. He took part in Ramblers' seminars for the early discussions concerning Coastal Access, using his extensive knowledge of the Deben Estuary and the coast of the Bawdsey area and the coast generally, being a native of Woodbridge.

Richard wrote and illustrated, with photographs, 67 monthly walks for the Saturday supplement of the East Anglian Daily Times since 2011 and 43 bi-monthly walks for Let's Talk magazine, starting in 2009. These always championed the Ramblers.

Earlier he wrote several walks for the national Great Outdoors Magazine, mostly in Cheshire and Shropshire.

Quite apart from his career as a research scientist (he held a doctorate in chemistry), Richard had a summer job for twenty years leading holidays for Waymark Holidays in The Alps, France and Greece, being an accomplished linguist.

Richard was not well enough to attend this year's Area AGM but his wife, Jennifer, was there to receive from our National Chair, Des Garrahan, a certificate in recognition of his outstanding contribution to walking.

Richard's keenness, good humour, local knowledge and eccentricity enthused all those who walked with him. His funeral at Sweffling was well attended by group members. Two years ago he initiated the idea of a mid-summer evening walk followed by a pub supper and we repeated that walk this year in memory of him. We are pleased that Jennifer continues to be a very active member of the group.

Our mid-week walks are now taking-off as a regular and popular feature of our programme, attracting more walkers. Our Christmas lunch, held at the Friston Old Chequers, was a great success, attracting a record 34 diners.

The working party led by Nigel Meadows has done some fine work including some step-building and is continuing its surveys to assist Natural England in establishing the best route and spreading room for the English Coastal Trail to be established under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

Our group AGM is scheduled for Wednesday 15 November at 7.30 in Leiston. Full details of venue on our web site nearer the time. All welcome.

Jim Richards, Chairman, Alde Valley Group
<http://aldevalleyramblers.onesuffolk.net/aldevalleyramblers@gmail.com>

Bury St Edmunds Group

Bury Ramblers 40th Anniversary Year got off to a wonderful start with our Late New Year Lunch in January attended by just on a hundred of us, and we were delighted that John Andrews was able to be with us during a rare visit from Scotland, sharing memories of his early experiences of Suffolk footpath issues – and it was lovely that he was also able to join us a few days later for our Tuesday morning walk led by Jenny Bradin, one of our Local Footpath Secretaries, which by a happy coincidence started from Shelterhouse Corner, Elveden, an area with which John has had a long “footpath history” - !

For our April Break this year we were in Torquay where the Corbyn Head Hotel provided an excellent base from which to enjoy part of the South West Coastal Path, Dartmoor and the beautiful Dart Valley.

We are now looking forward to our “Wolf 2 Wolf Walk!” - our annual long distance led walk for this year has been devised especially in celebration of Bury St Edmunds Ramblers, starting at Hunstanton where Edmund first came ashore, taking in some of the Peddars Way, before we continue to his final resting place in Bury – about 70 miles over 5 days – and we have completed the first day just in time to include a group photo at the start of the walk, at the little ruined chapel guarded by a carved wolf. Legend has it that a wolf guarded St Edmund’s head after he had been martyred for refusing to give up his Christian faith, and both our towns have a number of lupine artefacts.



*Bury Ramblers at St Edmund's Chapel on the cliffs at Hunstanton
preparing to start our "Wolf2Wolf Walk"*



Bury Ramblers and Wolf at Hunstanton living up to its accolade of “Sunny Hunny” - !

Nearer to home we are looking forward to the imminent installation of a bridge over a difficult to negotiate ditch at High Green, Nowton, which has created difficulties for walkers on an otherwise good local walking circuit. This eagerly awaited footpath improvement follows helpful collaboration between Bury Ramblers, SCC Rights of Way team and the farmer concerned, and will enhance walking opportunities for the local community, including Health Walks in that area which members of our group lead and support.

We continue to be indebted to all who “go the extra mile” in so many different ways on behalf of Ramblers, both at Group and at Area level, and special thanks also to those who are unable to actively participate but support the work of Ramblers through your membership, it really is appreciated.

Rosie Perham, Chairman Bury Ramblers

Ipswich & District Group

As I write this 22 of the Ipswich and District group are looking forward to their holiday in Royal Tunbridge Wells at the end of June, only 14 more sleeps! Those not going may be looking forward to a few quiet walks without us?!

After a successful trip to Bakewell last year we decided to head to Kent this year. Walks planned include a historic tour around the town and a steam train ride to Groombridge on the Spa Valley Railway, walking back along part of the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk. We are lucky that one of the group has a local contact who is going to lead a day walks with a pub stop for lunch, you can't beat local knowledge!

It's a partly self-organised trip, with ramblers booking their own accommodation and transport but with group evening meals planned at local restaurants. If the weather is kind to us again this year we can enjoy the local area with new walking routes and hopefully a good time will be had by all. If it's wet then I'm sure we will still have fun, even if we are a bit soggy, fingers crossed!

Jo Mann



Ipswich Group Members



Members of the Ipswich group off on holiday



Ipswich members enjoying a walk

Newmarket & District Group

This has been another enjoyable year for the group, with what has now become a fairly, well established pattern of walks and social events. Despite the inevitable panic twice a year when the new walk's programme is being put together, Phil Prigg, our Programme Secretary, manages to put together an excellent programme of walks, with a short walk of 5- 6½ miles every Wednesday and a long walk of 10-12 miles each Sunday. Short Sunday walks are popular when they appear on the programme, but finding people to lead these is difficult. Phil is always very grateful to those members who regularly offer two or three walks on each programme with little or no nagging. An autumn coach trip has been on the programme for many years and our trip to Kew Gardens last September proved to be very popular. The longer walkers were dropped off at Kingston Bridge, the short walkers at Richmond and those members who wanted a full day in the gardens were dropped off at the gates to Kew Gardens. Gone are the days when you could get in for 1 penny, now, the entrance ticket is about £13 but there was much to see and enjoy, including cricket and tea on Kew Green whilst waiting for the coach at the end of the afternoon. Everyone seemed to have a very good day out. Sadly, at the moment, we are struggling to fill a coach for this year's trip; a walk along the Kent coast and a visit to Dover Castle.

We avoid organising any events near Christmas, as everyone is always busy, but our January 'Sausage Lunch' has become a popular date in the programme. After the morning walk, everyone returns to Kirtling Village Hall for Newmarket sausages, beans and mash followed by homemade apple crumble and custard. A veritable feast! The afternoon entertainment varies from year to year but could be quizzes, a beetle drive or mini- Olympic games. Where else could you enjoy all this for £5 per head?

The Annual Dinner in April is another long- standing tradition and for the past three years members have been able to socialise and enjoy an excellent meal at the Newmarket golf-club. It's time to move on though as the chef is moving on too, so we need to find a new venue for 2018, so suggestions would be welcome.

Our group holiday in May saw 32 of us return to the Rendezvous Hotel in Skipton Yorkshire. This is an excellent hotel just south of Skipton on the Leeds-Liverpool canal with the great advantage of having an Aldi store almost opposite; ideal for pack-lunches! The weather was wonderful, shorts, hats and sun-cream appeared, and the walks over the undulating hills of Wharfedale tested our legs and lungs. Gentle Suffolk countryside doesn't prepare one for the 'ups and downs' of the Yorkshire dales. Those wanting a shorter walk had the opportunity to combine this with some sightseeing at Bolton Abbey and Grassington. Both groups sampled the delights of a variety of tea shops serving Yorkshire tea and an array of delicious cakes. The local pub down the road was also good for a post walk refresher. We have already booked next year's holiday and are off to Coombe Martin in Devon, with Exmoor, the Doone Valley and the Devon coast all within easy reach.



Only a few of our members can read a map so we recently put on a free Map and Compass workshop in an attempt to help members plan their own walks. Eight members attended and had a very good day but this was a disappointing turnout when we have about 170 members, 50 of whom walk on a regular basis. Maps are fascinating things and being able to read one with confidence, opens up a whole new world to the keen walker.

Our next social event at the beginning of July is a summer version of our Sausage Lunch and we always hope for a dry day. The morning walk is followed by a lunch of bread, cheese, quiche and salad then everyone moves outside to the recreation ground at the back of the hall to play garden bowls, croquet and petanque (boules). This is a fun day and gives members the opportunity to test their skill at different games and chat to people they may not see very often. The afternoon ends with the ever-important tea and home-made cakes!

Looking back over the year makes me realise what an excellent job the committee do in providing members with a very full programme of walks and social events.

Hilary Thomas (Chairman)

Sudbury & District Group

Here we are again – another year gone by in a flash due to keeping busy and going out and enjoying that wonderful pastime of ours that is walking. However, we all know that it is not just the walking, but the meeting with our like-minded friends who also find joy in walking. Not to mention the odd pub lunch!

Sudbury Group has enjoyed a full, interesting programme of walks this year and we also managed to squeeze in a display stand at the Sudbury-on-Show event in March. The idea of this was to try and attract new members and let people of Sudbury know we are here. The display stand we used (See photo below) was purchased by Area and is available for any of the Suffolk Area Groups to use.

The main event of the year was our Holiday to Harrogate in June which attracted 25 members this year, which is the largest number so far since restarting the trips in 2014. We had our annual Norfolk trip in September, which also attracted a high number. Coupled with several new faces on our walks, the Group is vibrant and looking to a great future.

The following is an abridged version of write-ups of our Harrogate Holiday. A full version together with photos are available on our website at www.sudburyramblers.org.uk



Lesley and Steve helping to man our stand



Harrogate Holiday

Before the weekend, some 13 of us took an extra day off and went up to Lincoln on the Thursday morning. Most of us met up after lunch at the Visitor Centre where we were taken on a tour of the Cathedral Quarter by Brian, an official Lincoln Guide. After that, and an ice cream, of course, we had a further look round and then made a visit inside the magnificent Cathedral. Being cheapskates as we are, we waited until 4.30pm when it was free to go in!

That evening we all gathered in Prezzo's, on the waterfront, for a meal together and after a stay-over in the local Premier Inn, we all set off on Friday morning to meet the rest of the gang for lunch at the RSPB reserve at Fairburn near Castleford.

We then had a 5 mile walk taking in part of the Reserve and the surrounding country – a haven of peace and quiet within view of the hustle and bustle of the A1 and Ferrybridge Power Station. Onward then to St. George's Hotel in Harrogate.

The forecast was rainy for Saturday so a change of plan meant that we all took the bus to Knaresborough to start a seven mile walk back to Harrogate through the Nidd Gorge. We narrowly missed the annual Knaresborough bed race, but saw some colourful characters getting ready for it. The walk was mostly wooded, we stopped for a picnic by the river, and then continued on to the 18th century pub, The Gardeners Arms, for another break and drinks, noting from the signs that swearing was not allowed! Back at the hotel some of the group discovered the swimming pool, sauna and spa while others recovered with hot showers or baths. The three-course evening meal offered plenty of choice and there was comfortable seating in the lounge and bar, enlivened by a wedding party taking place.

On Sunday there were two walks, Keith Brown's walk started with a bus ride to Darley then a seven mile walk at a leisurely pace in dappled sunlight along the gently flowing River Nidd then up over Heyshaw Moor before dropping down to Pateley Bridge. The sun shone and the views over the Yorkshire dales were spectacular with the dry stone walls, bright green meadows and isolated farm houses. We saw a farmer and his dog rounding up his sheep, newly shorn, a herd of young cattle, some alpacas but only a few other walkers. We arrived at Pateley Bridge with time to spare for cups of tea and cakes or crumpets before catching the bus back.

Lesley's walk on Sunday started by setting out in 4 cars to drive the 13 miles to the moorland village of Pateley Bridge. The walk began with an incline up the high street then continued with a steeper and yet steeper slope. A punishing start after our peaceful ramblings along the River Nidd the previous day. Nonetheless the views were well worth the climb – it was not called the Panoramic walk for no reason. We now had a gently undulating path with uninterrupted views over the moorland. There was plenty of interest with even better views promised from Blazefield Houses We passed a war graves cemetery and then came across a farm which had diversified into Llama trekking. These haughty creatures looked well prepared but unfortunately they were not for riding but only to take for a walk. We left them and were then warned about an irate farmer but luckily we did not encounter him. Another uphill climb and we reached Brimham Rocks. An extraordinary place with great granite outcrops of rock some with names and others perched at precarious angles. Here was lunch with picnic benches and a café. What luxury on a 9 mile walk. Suitably refreshed we headed down a narrow lane and with a large tractor travelling at speed bearing down on us showed our agility by jumping onto the verge! It was then a peaceful and pleasant walk to find our dear friend the River Nidd and walk along its banks back into Pateley Bridge. Needless to say we found a teashop before heading back to the hotel. Our final evening ended with a quiz hotly contested as Rambler's pens were the prize!



Our last day arrived only too quickly .Where does time go when you are enjoying yourself? Lesley once again took charge of a 4.5 mile walk from Ripley Castle. What the walk lacked in mileage it made up for in variety and interest. The village is fascinating as it was rebuilt in 1820 in the French style of Alsace-Lorraine. Again we soon found the River Nidd which we followed for a while before crossing it and coming over some fields into the village of Hampsthwaite. This led to an unexpected steep hill up to the delightful little village of Clint. Views here were extensive over the beautiful moorland countryside. Our leader put herself into the stocks by the village cross but we did welcome her back to finish the walk. Then down a leafy lane into the grounds of the castle where some tree felling was taking place. We watched in amazement as a “state of the art machine” felled and stripped a tree in the matter of minutes. Back in the castle village we had refreshments before saying our farewells and travelling off in various directions. It was a really good holiday with convivial company and excellent leadership.

My thanks to all our hard working and dedicated committee members who make the Group a success.

Keith Brown



Waveney Group News

Our group had their first meeting in March 1975. I hadn't realised this until at our recent Tea-Party, Peter Westmacott, one of our longer standing members, pointed out to me four of the founder members (see the attached photo). The Tea-Party was started three years ago, by Peter and his wife, Glenys, when it had the word "reunion" attached to it, the intention being to bring together members who, for various reasons, no longer participated in the walks. Amongst these people are a lot of past committee members, and post holders, to whom we owe a lot, and are still supporting the ethos behind the Ramblers Association, by paying their annual fees. Unfortunately, one person not there this year was Peter Lowe, a past chairman and leader of many walks. Now, the party is open to all our members, giving "old" and "new" a chance to exchange walking stories and experiences.



Thanks to an efficient Programme Secretary, Roger Moore, and a small dedicated team of walk leaders, the group puts on at least two varied walks every week. Frequently, we have a choice of two walks on the same day, sometimes even three. One motive behind the walks on this, and the next programme, is to walk the entire Norfolk Coastal Path in various stages, which have, so far, proved very enjoyable.

Two coach-walks are put on each year, the most recent being to the Cromer and Sheringham area, and a later one is planned to the Cavendish and Clare region. I hope that these will continue to be supported, so they don't disappear from the programme, as other social events have over the past few years.

This year we have one planned group holiday, but hopefully more will materialise for the future. Organising such an event takes time and effort, but the appreciation and enjoyment of the group make it worthwhile. Again, I hope this is not another group activity to cease.

Like many groups, we have annual angst about whether we will be able to produce a full committee at the AGM. Last November, we were fortunate that with a shuffle and recruitment of two new post holders we were able to carry on functioning. Although our membership numbers stay fairly constant, with a balance of resignations and new members, we are aware that, generally, we are an aging group. With that in mind, the Committee has agreed to trial involvement in social media for six months, which the Area Committee has kindly agreed to fund, with the intention of attracting more and younger members. If it is successful, then the intention is to carry on with it.

Our website continues to develop and flourish, through the much appreciated efforts of Neil Bauers, and is frequently mentioned as the initial source of information by new walkers and members. So, in this case, the Internet has proved to be beneficial.

Lastly, I would like to voice my support to all those actively involved in trying to prevent the closure of rail crossings. In our group, David Harmer is doing sterling work, and I hope between all of us we can put a stop to this flagrant disregard for historic rights of way.

Diana Covey (Chair)

Wiltshire in May

As group holidays go, this one was right up there with the best. It had just about everything; great location, great weather, great walks and, most important, great company (no offence to those who were unable to make it).

Converted farm buildings at Easton Royal, near Pewsey, accommodated all 15 of us comfortably in separate units, save for some occasional head-banging on sloping ceilings; plus there was a swimming pool which some enjoyed.

Mary and Diana gave us long and short walks: varying from the delights of Avebury, with its stone circle; parts of the Ridgeway, with buzzards and kites; and the canal tow paths of the Kennet and Avon canal, with an amazing array of locks and narrow boats.

On the day off, the Iron Age hill fort and site of a later castle for William the Conqueror at Old Sarum provided an interesting attraction. So too did nearby Salisbury, especially the cathedral whose 332 steps some of us ascended to view the city and its surroundings from atop the tower on three sides; the other side being occupied by the peregrine falcons that were stars of BBC's SpringWatch programme.

A last night group meal, at the Royal Oak in Marlborough, sealed the week with some really good food. Thanks from all who attended go to Mary and Diana, not forgetting the support of Barry and Parvez, for a brilliant week.

Roger



Climbing up to get the view



Diana leads the pack at Avebury



The Waveney Group members Wiltshire Holiday - Kennet & Avon Canal

A Coast To Coast Walk

My wife and I recently walked the famous Coast to Coast footpath that runs from St Bees on the Cumbrian coast to Robin Hood's Bay on the Yorkshire coast. We took the 193 miles route over a leisurely 17 days. We decided not to carry our packs and made use of one of the long distance carriers to transport our load. The route, devised by the walking enthusiast Alfred Wainwright, has quickly become the most popular long-distance walk in Britain and, according to a recent survey, the second best in the world after the Milford Track in New Zealand. Yet, surprisingly, it has not been designated as a National Trail.

It is not difficult to see why the path is so well walked. It passes through three of our best-loved National Parks and some stunning scenery – dramatic mountains, glistening lakes and rivers, beautiful woods, bleak open moors and some delightful villages. It is a challenging route, with some very steep climbs and descents, and you need to be quite fit to complete it. A lot of stamina and determination are useful too!

Yes, we enjoyed the beautiful scenery and the challenge of the walk, but our greatest pleasure derived from the camaraderie we experienced among our fellow walkers, all in it together. Time and again we got into conversations with these complete strangers, everyone concerned for each others' welfare, progress and experiences. Help and advice were forthcoming daily and any directional problems were soon resolved. We thus felt safe and secure in this caring environment.

One morning, whilst breakfasting in our hotel, we listened in to a conversation between a group of six young Australians, discussing the day ahead. As we left the room we chatted to the group and gave them a small piece of advice for the route. Disbelieving silence followed as they all realised that we, a couple in their 70s, were also doing the walk. The look on their faces was one of the week's highlights! We heard later that the group had got lost near Great Gable, but a few days on we were relieved to learn that they were back on course. Some of our best moments were shared with a couple from Alaska and another from North Carolina, USA. We shared several meals with them over the walk and one clever bit of route finding on a very misty mountain top.

The middle section of the walk was over the flat plain of the Vale of Mowbray. Wainwright's view was that you hurried through it as quickly as possible as it is the least attractive section of the entire walk. As the section was 23 miles we decided against rushing it and so we split it into two – 14 miles and a 9.

Approaching our base for the night at Ingleby Cross, we had the life-threatening experience of crossing the dual carriageway of the incredibly busy A19. It took us 5 minutes to find a gap in the traffic and then we had to run to the central reservation and then on to the other side. We agreed, without any hesitation, that this was the worst part of the whole walk. If the route had been a National Trail it would have to be bridged, that's for certain.

Overall the weather was good. We had the odd light snow shower but, amazingly, no rain at all. How often can you say that on a walking holiday in the north of England?

On reaching Robin Hood's Bay we felt elated and relieved to have completed the walk, but also sad that the next day we would not be walking on for another day.

*Peter Westmacott,
Waveney Ramblers*

Chairman's Report 2017

This year is truly proving to be one of the most challenging for Ramblers for some time. We are faced with post Brexit uncertainty about how our environment is going to be protected and the future of farm subsidies that have been a positive incentive for landowners to provide access.

Cuts to local government are set to continue with the inevitable results upon Rights of Way staff and resources throughout the country.

As if that was not enough to contend with Network Rail seem intent upon closing crossings using the Transport Act which allows for less detailed scrutiny of each crossing and leaves a politician, the Secretary of State, with the decision.

Rest assured both nationally and locally every effort is being made to represent walker's rights and interests. Keep abreast of what is going on by signing up to the national volunteer newsletter. It is ironic that at the very time that nearly everybody is recognising the huge health benefits both physically and mentally of walking that our rights of way should be threatened in this way.

We are a membership organisation which has at its heart the protection and enhancement of public rights of ways. Your Group and Area committee members are active in delivering this mission but we could always do with more help. You already help by just being a member of the Ramblers, but if you could spare just a little of your time to help us please speak to any members of your Group or Area Committee about the volunteering opportunities that are available.

Whatever you do as a Rambler keep spreading the message 'We are not just another walking group we are the Ramblers, working to protect and promote public rights of way for all to enjoy.'

*Enjoy your walking
Roley Wilson
Chair Ramblers Council*

Suffolk Area Membership

Ramblers Association – Suffolk Area. *Membership as at June 2017

Alde Valley	96	last year 94	up 2
Bury St Edmunds	335	last year 343	down 8
Ipswich	268	last year 276	up 8
Newmarket	136	last year 138	down 2
Stowmarket	95	last year 106	down 11
Sudbury	131	last year 131	no change
Waveney	184	last year 188	down 4
Others	35	last year 29	up 6

NB. Figures based on address labels as sent from Ramblers Association Head Office.

Area Footpaths Secretary's Report

Owing to difficulties in finding a replacement for Alan Corden, who retired last year as one of the Local Footpaths Secretaries, we have altered the structure of how we administer path work. Instead of nine *Local* Footpaths Secretaries, we now have eight *Group* Footpaths Secretaries. Our constitution has been altered so that these positions are now appointed by the Groups rather than by Area Council. It also means that the Footpaths Secretaries' patches are more in line with Group territories, which seems to make more sense. Because the Bury Group Territory is so large, they now have two Group Footpaths Secretaries, one of whom, by agreement, deals with some of the parishes in the west of the Stowmarket Group territory.

Since the rearrangement, there has been a further change in the Ramblers' Suffolk Area Footpath Committee over the last year. We welcome Robert Newell who has taken over from Pat Harrington as the Waveney Group Footpaths Secretary. Many thanks to Pat and to Alan Corden for all the work they did over their years in post.

The Big Pathwatch Project/Problem Reporting - As reported last time, the initial project came to its conclusion at the beginning of 2016. It has now been revived on a rolling basis. You can submit problems (and pleasant features) on-line at: <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/pathwatch.aspx>

Whether or not you use Pathwatch, please report any footpath problems directly to the County Council. You will not be troubling them –that is what they are there for! Submit your problem through the SCC website:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/report-a-public-right-of-way-issue/>

If you can take a screenshot of your report before clicking the submit button and copy it to your Group Footpaths Secretary or to me, we can monitor the situation.

SCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan – At the time of writing, the new ROWIP does not seem to have appeared following the 10-year review. It should appear soon on the SCC's dedicated Rights of Way website:

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

There is lots of other information on that website about path issues and it is well worth a look.

Rail foot crossings – Last time, I mentioned Network Rail's heavy-handed approach regarding proposed closures using a Transport and Works Act order to cover many crossings. The Order has now been published. A few crossings have been removed from the scheme. Group Footpaths Secretaries for the Ipswich, Stowmarket, Bury and Newmarket Groups have been very busy preparing our comments and objections. Our Central Office has just produced a draft Statement of Case incorporating those, for submission to the Secretary of State in readiness for a Public Inquiry. There is a separate Transport and Works Act Order which would close five crossings at Trimley on the Felixstowe Branch and replace them with one bridleway bridge. The Ipswich Group is dealing with that one locally.

Thanks to those of you who have contacted your MPs and Councillors.

More info at:

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/network-rail.aspx>

The issue of the crossing at Gipsy Lane, Needham has still not been resolved.

Your group footpaths secretaries are Derek Fisher and Jenny Bradin (Bury Group), Robert Newell (Waveney Group), Phil Prigg (Newmarket Group), Geoff Knight (Ipswich Group), Bob Boardman (Stowmarket Group), Phil Snelling (Sudbury Group) and myself (Alde Valley Group). We are all contactable via the Suffolk Ramblers website.

Jim Richards

Area Footpaths Secretary
suffolkramblersafps@gmail.com

Coastal Access – latest situation as of June 2017

The latest contact I have had from Natural England was on 23 June from Sally Fishwick, who is the lead for East area.

She explained that they have been having more problems than anticipated with landowners and occupiers, as well as environmental issues, in both the sections from Cattawade to Shotley, and from Corton to Aldeburgh, and they are both over 6 months behind schedule. We produced detailed reports and recommendations for both these sections over a year ago. They do now plan to complete the development stage and print proposals for both sections this autumn.

They have however recently appointed officers for all the remaining sections in Suffolk, and have commenced preparation work on all three. The Felixstowe to Shotley Gate section is likely to be the first to be completed now, hopefully by the end of 2018, followed closely by the others in 2019.

I have already surveyed over half of the section from Aldeburgh to Bawdsey (Deben Estuary), with the help of Alde Valley working party group. I have also made a start on the section from Felixstowe to Shotley (Orwell Estuary), and plan to do more this year with the help of ramblers from Ipswich group and Felixstowe ramblers.

If anybody would like to help out with surveys or suggestions for areas near to them, please do contact me on nigelmeadows47@btinternet.com

Nigel Meadows

Suffolk Area Ramblers Coastal Access Officer

The Dangers of Walking in Roads

I mention in my AFPS report, the draft of the Statement of Case that we are submitting to the Secretary of State regarding the proposed rail crossing closures. Some of the diversions proposed would take walkers along roads with no footway. The draft has been prepared by Eugene Suggett at Central Office. It starts with a lot of information about the benefits of walking but also contains some horrifying accounts of people's (including those in authority) attitudes towards walkers. There seems to be a need for much better education of motorists. I thought you might be interested to see a few extracts that I have abridged slightly:

To our aims, the safety of pedestrians on roads is an overarching issue. 'Safety' encompasses three concerns. The first is that it is dangerous to walk on roads with no footway. The frequency of vehicles is unpredictable; so is the speed and care or recklessness of the drivers. Secondly, even if it could be guaranteed (which it cannot) that all the drivers on a particular stretch of road will go at a safe speed and treat vulnerable road users like pedestrians with care and respect, some pedestrians will not believe this will happen and so will abandon the idea of walking on that stretch. Thirdly, though pedestrians have a perfect right to walk in the roadway, equal to that of motorists to drive in it, most motorists evidently do not expect to find pedestrians on roads and some react with surprise, astonishment or anger at finding their progress incommoded by them. The occurrence or prospect of the occurrence is off-putting to pedestrians, whatever they know their rights to be. Some pedestrians feel awkward or embarrassed at making drivers slow down or stop; some feel threatened by the speeds or the demeanour of some of the motorists. Anyhow, being passed by vehicles going at speed only inches away in a narrow lane is unpleasant or alarming, by any measure.

The Kettering tragedy - At the Ramblers we have not forgotten the evening of Thursday 20 May 1976. That evening, 28 members of the Kettering Rambling Club made their way along a quiet country road towards the village of Rushton, in Northamptonshire. Taking part in a led walk organised by the association, they were walking tight in to the verge and correctly on the right hand side of the road to face on-coming traffic, in accordance with the Highway Code. Suddenly there came into view, over the brow of a hill, a Ford Cortina travelling at 55-70 mph. Perhaps its driver was forgetful of the Highway Code's Rule, 'Never drive so fast that you cannot stop well within the distance you can see to be clear.' At all events, while swerving to avoid an on-coming vehicle, it hit the walkers instead. The car killed five of our members on that quiet road..... Despite findings that it was the driver who was at fault and that the Ramblers were following the Highway Code, following this tragedy 'A police statement described organized walks on public roads as "downright dangerous" and were to be deplored, particularly if they were in country lanes.' The Ramblers tried to get Northamptonshire police to withdraw their statement. The police conceded that pedestrians had as much right as motorists to use a public highway; but beyond that they would not go. The coroner urged the jury to make a finding of accidental death and to make the recommendation that all ramblers, when walking on roads, should send someone ahead 'at blind corners' to warn motorists of the advancing party of walkers. Dutifully the jury did both things (without saying what protection there would be for the one who went ahead to give the warning, or for solitary walkers generally). Overall, the attitude of the authorities was that though the motorist was in the wrong, to some extent the ramblers had only themselves to blame for being the ones who were walking in the lane in the first place.

The road-holding capacity of cars has increased since that tragedy, and so have the speeds they travel at, in consequence. For a walker on any road now it is not uncommon to be passed by vehicles travelling at speeds in excess of 60 mph, worrying enough when on a

footway; but thousands of miles of country roads have no footways, and pedestrians must walk in the carriageway with cars inches away.

Even if it should be shown that figures for pedestrians being hit by vehicles on rural roads have decreased in recent years, we believe that this is attributable more than anything to people being deterred from walking on them in the first place, for fear for their safety. It remains an off-puttingly frightening experience for a pedestrian to be routinely passed on a country road by a car inches away going at 60 mph, and this arrangement needs to be ended if people are to be encouraged to walk.

The Ramblers is aware that there is much 'suppressed demand' for walking on rural roads. Above we have referred to the road-holding properties of modern cars which allow high speeds even on winding lanes. This, coupled with an increase in vehicular use (partly through the enticement by sat-nav of many more drivers on to country roads than ever went on them in the past) has left potential walkers fearful for their safety. The result is the suppression of a sustainable form of transport (as well as of recreational walking), and roads appear statistically safer than they are because people are afraid to walk on them. People are increasingly thinking that the only safe way to be on some rural roads is in a vehicle.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England's 1999 Rural Traffic Fear Survey showed that two-thirds of people feel threatened by motor traffic all or some of the time on rural roads. Small wonder CPRE coined the expression, 'traffic intimidation'—

'In [country] lanes cars seem to assume that no one else uses the road ... and so drive as if on an empty race track' (respondent from Surrey)

'It is dangerous to walk to neighbours or to the post box even in daylight' (respondent from Essex).

It concluded that

As well as the obvious implications for road safety (most fatal car accidents occur on rural roads) speeding traffic affects everyone's quality of life. The opportunities for people to walk, cycle or ride in the countryside are curtailed while dependency on the car for short trips is increased. The young and the old are particularly vulnerable.

That last observation points up the fundamental problem about the dynamic between drivers and pedestrians. The fundamental problem is that it is not widely understood among drivers that pedestrians have a right of way on roads and it is not subservient to any rights the motorists have. If you are on foot it is sensible to use the footway. Vehicles are forbidden to go on it, so pedestrians are generally safe when walking along a road if they remain on the footway.

Nobody likes walking on roads or lanes nowadays, but there is often no alternative. For a walker, whether a recreational walker using a stretch of carriageway because there is no off-road route or a country-dweller in an outlying house walking into the nearest village to buy a loaf of bread, it can be a frightening experience to be passed by vehicles travelling at 60mph only inches away.

But the issue is compounded by the fact that many drivers appear not to understand that people have the right to be on roads on foot as well as they have the right to be on them in

a vehicle. It is frequently nowadays the experience of walkers, whether solitary or in groups large or small, and though walking correctly on the right-hand side of the road facing the vehicular traffic, to have horns sounded at them in angry fashion or to receive gesticulated or verbal disapproval or abuse. It looks as if many motorists think that it is the duty of pedestrians to keep out of their way at all times, when in fact it is the duty of the driver to treat a pedestrian walking along the carriageway with no less consideration and courtesy and respect than as if it were another vehicle.

Here are a few small illustrations of the widespread misunderstanding in this matter on the part of drivers. On 9 May 2009 the publication of a Government consultation on road safety was reported in *The Times*; the paper had an online 'Have your say' site, to which was made the following contribution:

If you [as a pedestrian] are hit on the road, what on earth were you doing there?,

*which glaringly reflects the misunderstanding that pedestrians have no business on roads even though you have to walk on roads where there is no footway. So did the comment, in a similar web-article (*The Times*, 16 May 2008),*

What are pedestrians doing on the road to be hit by a car at any speed? Drivers hitting pedestrians on pavements, crossings, etc should be prosecuted to the limit of the law—agreed. Pedestrians being hit otherwise should be treated likewise, in the event of their survival.

*Not even elements of the motor-industry appreciate that pedestrians have rights on roads. On 27 June 2003 *The Times*, in an article entitled 'Car makers have blind spot for pedestrians', reported that a Toyota spokesman said that poor road design was to blame for many pedestrian casualties, adding: 'Pedestrian protection is very important to us, but we also need to educate pedestrians not to be in the road in the first place.' The Toyota spokesman did not explain how pedestrians are supposed to exercise their right to walk along the thousands of miles of rural roads with no footway. Neither did a subsequent correspondent, who wrote that:*

*the Toyota spokesman seems to have worked it out. Remove anyone from the roads who isn't in a car. Simple really. [*The Times*, debate@thetimes.co.uk, 2 July 2003].*

*If a spokesman for the motor-trade and the apparently-qualified drivers articulate and intelligent enough to get themselves on to the *Times* letters page cannot understand the law relating to pedestrian use of roads or that non-motorised users have rights, what a saturation of misunderstanding there must be among thousands of motorists on this point. Small wonder that people who try to walk on roads report intolerance and abuse from motorists.*

So, people are increasingly thinking that the only safe way to be on some rural roads is in a vehicle. We believe that this has led to fewer and fewer journeys in rural areas being taken on foot, more people considering it safer to drive for even short distances and for everyday errands and journeys than to walk. Any consequent reduction in casualty statistics may give the impression that the roads are somehow becoming safer, and that it is therefore acceptable to make people walk on them.

JR

Ipswich and District Group Proposal for a Suffolk Area First Aid Training Day

The Committee discussed how we should respond to a request made following our Walk Leaders Training Day. Many attendees thought we should offer some basic training to address what we should do responding to an incident requiring First Aid intervention, and of equal importance what we should not do.

I will bring the proposal to the Area Meeting on the 21st August so if Suffolk Area Ramblers members would like to submit ideas please email: islaclough@ntlworld.com.

Isla Clough, Chair



A well known Suffolk Landmark