

NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2022



MESSAGE FROM JOHN PYE

The year 2022 has got off to a great start with some wonderful Group Walks that have been well supported. The weather has been kind and at times more like late spring than early January, although it has been a bit muddy in places, as my gaiters bear testament.

It has really been good to see the numbers on Group Walks increasing and attended by people who, for one reason or another, seem to have just got out of the habit, so hadn't been for a while.

Group Walks are undoubtedly a key aspect of White Cliffs Ramblers, and I would like to personally thank all Walk Leaders and Back Markers for the time and commitment they make to our wide-ranging programme. Also, special thanks go to Tony and Anne, our Walks Co-ordinators, who take the time to ensure the programme is comprehensive and varied as possible, and that the necessary details for each walk are accurate.

As we move towards living with Covid and with the threat from the latest variant declining it is hoped to get back to our full walking programme, with at least one walk on a weekday (usually Thursday) and two (one short and one long) on a Sunday. To fulfil this, we are dependent on sufficient numbers of Walk Leaders offering to lead walks.

Although we have quite a number of leaders, we need to continually bring new ones along to replace those who, for whatever reason, are no longer able to lead walks. Leading a walk is not complicated, it just needs a bit of organisation, self-confidence and can be both rewarding and great fun. So, if there is anyone, or two people jointly, who fancy having a go at leading a walk please contact Tony or Anne (at.bristow@gmail.com or anne.hickey1@gmail.com). There are plenty of resources, including support from existing Walk Leaders, to help you if needed.

A very Happy Rambling in 2022 to everyone.

WALK LEADER RESOURCES

If you would like to know more about what it takes to be a walk leader, why not sign up for one of the 'Walk Leader Conversations' hosted by staff from Ramblers' head office. There are two themes to these conversations:

- An introduction to walk leadership; and
- Planning your first walk

Beginning later this month, you can book a place on one of these online sessions at:
[Ramblers Events | Eventbrite](#)

Each of these sessions are being repeated over the course of the Spring / Summer.

More locally, several of the guides and information leaflets on the White Cliffs website have recently been updated, including:

- Walkers Guide
- Walk Leaders Guide,
- Reporting of Footpath Problems
- Ramblers Insurance Guide
- PROW Vegetation Clearance Guide
- Footpath Observers and Rights of Way Information
- WCR Navigation Guide

These can be found in the Download section of the website: [White Cliffs Ramblers Downloads](#)

GROUP WALKS – SOME RECENT LESSONS

As the pandemic restrictions have been lifted, and our led walks are attracting greater numbers, here are a few reminders based on recent events.

Changes to walks: Our walks programme currently covers a two-month period. We know that some of you like to print a copy of the programme for ease of reference. However, from the time that the programme is published to the walk taking place things can change. This might be due to an issue encountered during the walk leader's recce, or as in a recent case two walk leaders swapping the dates for their walks.

When we receive notification of changes to a walk, we:

- Circulate details of the change via an email sent from our Membership Secretary;
- Update the listing on the website; and
- Post a notification on the Group's Facebook page.

Taking a few minutes to check these messages / listings may save you both time and inconvenience.

Crossing cropped fields: Although farmers are meant to re-instate a cropped field within 14 days, not all do. This may result in the line of the footpath being unclear. A footpath that crosses a field is only required to be 1 metre wide. Therefore, in such circumstances please walk in single file behind the walk leader, and NOT three or four abreast.

Walk leaders, if you know that you will be crossing a field where the line of the path is unclear, please give a reminder during your start of walk briefing.

Other users: We recently received a complaint from someone who clearly felt uncomfortable when one of our group walks was heading towards them. This was exacerbated by the fact that we were on a narrow footpath between two houses. If you are on a narrow path, and see someone heading towards the group, slow down, keep to one side of the path, and if they stop to let us pass, offer a word of thanks.

ISLE OF WIGHT HOLIDAY 15 May to 21 May 2022

At the time of writing, there is still one twin room available. If there are any couples wanting to book a room, or individuals willing to share please contact Jim Bushnell, by 25th February, on 07948 149938 or email jim@bushnell.me.co.uk for full details.

WHITE CLIFFS WALKING FESTIVAL 2022



Planning for this year's Festival is now well underway. Running from 25th to 30th August the walks programme will offer a mixture of old favourites as well as several new walks. This year, for the first time, we will be offering a number of walks in the Thanet area. The Festival website is undergoing a transformation, and a small group of volunteers are working to publicise this highly successful event.

Watch out for future announcements, including how you might be able to become involved in contributing to the continuing success of the Festival.

CANTERBURY WALKING WEEK



Speaking of walking festivals, our friends and Ramblers neighbours in Canterbury are holding their second Walking Week during the last week of April (23rd – 30th).

With twenty-two walks planned across the week there is plenty of choice and variety. From a country walk, with the opportunity of catching a stunning display of spring wild flowers to shorter, guided history walks in the city of Canterbury itself.

Details of all the walks on offer, and how to book can be found at:

<http://www.kentramblers.org.uk/Canterbury/canterbury.html>

Then click on 'Events', towards the top of the page.

ELHAM VALLEY WALKING FESTIVAL

The Elham Valley walking Festival will be returning this year and will take place over the weekend of 28th and 29th May. There will be a limit on the number that can attend each walk, and a booking system will be in place. Once finalised, details of the festival walks will be posted online at: [Elham Valley Walkers](#)

KENT RAMBLERS AREA AGM

The Area AGM took place, via Zoom, on Saturday 5th February. Following a move to West Sussex, Robert Campbell stood down as Area Chairman after a 3-year stint in the post. During the AGM Colin Sefton (member of West Kent Walking Group) replaced Robert. Colin intends to retain his lead for the Lost Ways project in Kent. Tony Bristow (Vice Chairman); Hilary Adams (Area Treasurer) and Robert Peel (Area Secretary) were all re-elected to their respective posts. Several vacant posts remain, so if you are interested in becoming involved at a county-wide level, please email info@kentramblers.org.uk

The AGM approved a motion that is to be put to the next meeting of Ramblers General Council. The motion is critical of poor communication and the lack of meaningful consultation concerning a number of nationally driven initiatives and calls for improvements to be made in these areas.

Next year's Area AGM will take place on Saturday, 4th February at Headcorn Village Hall, Church Lane, TN27 9NR. Following the move of both the 2021 and 2022 AGMs to being online meetings, the Maidstone and Medway Groups will jointly host next year's event.

The Charles Wake bench

In early 1999, following the death of the Group's first chairman, Charles Wake, an appeal was launched to fund the installation of a wooden bench in his memory. Some eight months later the bench, at Hawkshill Down was officially dedicated.

Not surprisingly, after more than two decades the bench was in desperate need of some TLC. Thanks to Diana Backwell for alerting us to this sorry situation. Step forward Ted Roche and Len Jeavons. A close inspection revealed that the wood was still in good condition, but layers of varnish / paint had significantly deteriorated.

Over several trips, our intrepid duo began the painstaking task of sanding and rubbing down. The refurbishment was completed with the application of several coats of a specialist wood preservative oil. Their task complete, the bench is once again providing a spot to rest and take in views across the English Channel.

Anyone spotting Ted and Len in the Corner Café on Dover Road during recent months can rest assured that they were attending purely 'work events'!



JANE AND ALAN FORD

We recently heard from Jane and Alan that, as they were no longer able to take an active part in Ramblers activities, they would not be renewing their membership. However, as a parting gift they have made a very generous donation to the Group's funds for use in future projects. In thanking them for their generosity we wish them every happiness for the future.

This photo shows Jane and Alan at the opening of the Kearsney Loop in 2019, when they funded some of the essential works to take place. A day made more memorable for Alan, for he was asked to 'stand-in' for the Mayor of Dover and cut the tape to open the route!

JUDY COWAN

It is with sadness that we recently learnt of the death of White Cliffs member, Judy Cowan, and we extend our condolences to her family and friends. Her funeral took place on Friday 4th February and was attended by several members from the Group.

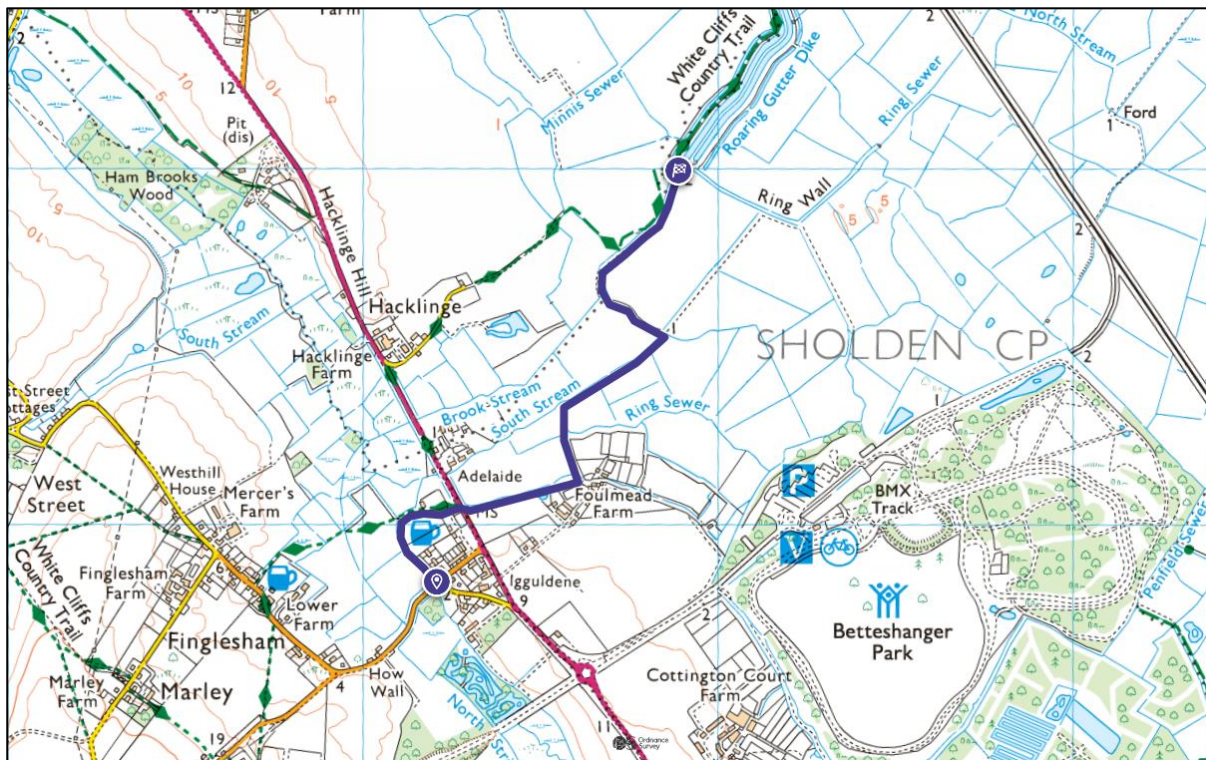
Judy spent her final days at The Pilgrims Hospice in Canterbury, and should you wish to make a donation you can do so via the hospice website: [Home - Pilgrims Hospices](#)

PROTECTING AND MAINTAINING OUR PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW)

Roger King's latest PROW ([White Cliffs Ramblers: Footpaths](#)) update notes that KCC are satisfied that evidence submitted supports the creation of this lengthy restricted byway. It would run from How Bridge at Finglesham alongside the watercourse to join with footpath EE365 (which would be upgraded); then along that path through to the Coach & Horses on the main A258. The new route would continue along the well-used track opposite the pub, all the way across the marsh to the pumping station at Roaring Gutter. Here there would be a connection with bridleway EE233.

Although not yet confirmed, this will be a valuable addition to the footpath network. It also highlights the extensive research undertaken by Hugh Craddock, on behalf of the British Horse Society. In his submission to KCC, Hugh claimed that the route was an ancient drove road, citing various sources, including one document dating back to 1738!

The map below shows the route of the proposed byway:



VEGETATION CLEARANCE TEAM – UNSUNG HEROES



These images highlight the significant benefits of having our own vegetation clearance team in action on a regular basis. The path, ER54A near Guston is notorious for getting seriously overgrown. It took three of the team over 6 hours to clear this section of path.

Commenting on their endeavours, team member Andrew Searle said:

“The paths that we clear have varied between popular walks which have become muddy, damaged or restricted because of the combination of encroaching vegetation and heavy footfall (e.g. the Coast Path near Kingsdown) to paths that appear unused or hardly ever used. In the latter case it is sometimes difficult to know whether it's 'chicken or egg' i.e. is the path overgrown because no-one uses it or do walkers not use it because it has become so overgrown...”

“As a new group we have taken the positive view of clearing almost every rural path that we are asked to (and are able to) clear. For example, ER54A may not be heavily used now but, with Whitfield's new housing development and the upcoming Fastrack bus link to/from Dover, we can imagine that the path should become much more popular in a couple of years' time as it connects Whitfield to The North Downs Way.”

“Our tasks generally come from issues reported by the public to KCC using their excellent interactive PROW map. These are filtered by our contact at KCC (Public Rights of Way Officer, Heather Waller) who liaises with John Shale (The team's coordinator).”

“We are also keen to hear from the Ramblers Walk Leaders and the Parish Footpath Observers about any path maintenance issues that they come across.”

As we emerge from winter, and the growing season begins, it is likely that the demand for the team's services will increase. If you would like to become involved in this important work please contact John Shale: j_shale@live.com In the meantime if you come across an overgrown footpath or other problem on a public right of way please report it at: [Report a problem on a right of way - Kent County Council](#)

FOOTPATH NUMBERS

Every public right of way footpath in Kent has been assigned a unique number. Indeed, the most recent articles in this Newsletter have made use of this numbering system, with references to EE365; EE233; and ER54A. But have you ever read a report referring to a numbered footpath and wondered where there might be?

The simple answer to check out KCC's online Public Rights of Way map at: [Public Rights of Way - Public Rights of Way Map \(kent.gov.uk\)](https://www.kent.gov.uk/public-rights-of-way-map) and you find yourself on this page:

Public Rights of Way Map

Track a Fault

Log in

Search Map

search

☐ Town/Village

☐ Street Name

☐ Postcode

☐ Parish

☐ Grid Reference e.g. TQ765555

☒ Path code e.g. CB422

Search

Current Location

Go to Current Location

Save Location

Go to My Saved Location

Set My Saved Location

Public Rights of Way Map

The map shows all of the public rights of way in the county. To report a fault, firstly log in, then select the 'Report a Fault' menu item.

To find a location use the Search options to locate paths, settlements or parishes. If your device has a GPS you can centre the map on your current position by pressing the 'Current Location' button.

To zoom into a specific area when using a mouse: hold the shift key and drag a box to zoom in. When using a touch device: pinch or drag a box to zoom in.



Map Legend

Enlarge

Print Map

Please note: this map is not the legal record of the alignment, status or existence of a Public Right of Way. © Crown Copyright and database rights 2017, OS licence number 100019238. Use of this data is subject to terms and conditions which can be found [here](#).

Type in the path number in this box, then click 'Search'. Simple!!!

THE LES PRESTON MEMORIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

In recognition of how avid a photographer Les had become on group walks we are holding an annual photographic competition in his memory. Our panel of judges, Lee Pickup, John Shale and Margaret Milsted – Williamson will be regularly choosing their favourite photographs posted on either the Groups' website or Facebook page. From this shortlist the overall winner will be chosen and announced at our Annual General Meeting in November. To borrow a phrase – you've got to be in it to win it!

OUTDOORACTIVE

Our Group has been given a free 12-month subscription to the mapping and route planning app OutdoorActive. Previous users of ViewRanger will know this as the organisation that has taken over this company. We have been given this subscription to allow WCR members to evaluate this tool and provide feedback to the company.

In the first instance, we are looking for a small group of volunteers who would be willing to give this app a try and give feedback on their experience. If you are interested, please contact Lee Pickup (leepickup@icloud.com).

If you have an article or photograph that you would like to be included in the next Newsletter, please email it to Tony Bristow (at.bristow@gmail.com) by 31st March 2022.