

ESSEX AREA UPDATE



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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RAMBLERS'
ASSOCIATION — ESSEX AREA

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COASTING ALONG!

The RA has galloped over the first hurdle to achieving realistic Coastal Access as the following press release demonstrates:

Walkers welcome brave proposals for coastal access

The Ramblers' Association (RA) today (21 February 2007) welcomed Natural England's wide-ranging proposals for improving access to the English coast but questions the wisdom of relying on local authorities to make it a reality.

The proposals give a central role to local authorities to deliver the new access on the ground but many local authorities have

a poor record on ensuring footpaths are unobstructed even though it is their legal duty. The national walking charity fears that a reliance on local authorities will result in inconsistent improvements which could take decades to secure.

Also at the heart of Natural England's recommendations is a coastal corridor that will enable the general public to walk in a continuous line all the way round the coast, an impossible feat at present. Currently access to the coast is patchy at best and many walking routes are diverted inland either because of coastal erosion or development.

Natural England is advising the government to introduce legislation to make the new access a reality. The RA believes that anything short

of national legislation would merely be a continuation of the present situation whereby the availability and quality of access along the coast is variable.

Kate Ashbrook, chairman, RA said: "The recommendations are encouraging and will go a long way to providing public benefit but legislation is essential for ensuring that this generation can for the first time walk around the English coast without impediment".

The RA, the national walking charity, wants the new coastal corridor to be broad and to include provisions for the protection of privacy and the enhancement of biodiversity. The access rights should also be flexible and capable of being realigned with erosion.

INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE APPOINTED:

Paul Wilkinson, who has worked for the RA for four years currently as Development Manager, has been appointed.

Inside this issue:

Your friends & colleagues can get this version simply by emailing:

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We were sorry to hear of the death of John Barnard,

Derek Keeble, Kevin Ascott and John Dowding pay tribute

JOHN REGINALD BARNARD, *former Essex Area Countryside Chair*

Probe down to the very soles of Rambling to find it is a simple exercise. All you need to do is saunter in the countryside, free and easy; left right, left right, one foot, then the other.

No need to be a member of anything. Get details of organised rambles off the web-site, then you are free to add the important social dimension to the lovely exercise. Don't bother to take a turn leading a caravan of other ramblers; nor to organise a pub visit, or arrange for car-parking; nor even to file a report on path conditions. Others can do all that.

This code of conduct was most definitely not John Barnard's way: he would regard it more careless than carefree. And John Barnard took great care.

Rambling is not a simple exercise:

If you go about sustaining a Parish Footpath Preservation Society;

if you go around seeking clues with which to formulate quizzes-on-the-hoof;

if you become an Area Footpath Secretary allocated to your local Group and organise parish path surveys, and follow-up the results;

if you strive hard to keep your local Ramblers' Association Group focussed on RA footpath lines instead of being off-railed by popular social activity;

if you study all the complicated laws pertaining to Highways and stay updated to their Local Governmental procedures,

and if you then become an acknowledged expert in the matter, recognised as such by ramblers, local government officers and land-owning leaders alike.

Rambling surely ain't simple!

John Barnard did all these in Great Tey, Colchester District and Essex County, and much more. Obviously his rucksack was loaded with finely interesting hobbies, and he looked forward to expressing himself more fully when retired. Alas, shortly after his full-time career at British Telecommunications ceased, he injured his back and was in hospital for too long. Soon afterwards he was enforced to retire hurt from rambling.

But he never gave up working for others. Indeed, with Barbara's support (she pre-deceased him by a few weeks), he spread his wings and became involved with Open Space Society campaigns, coupling these tasks with a large role as Essex Countryside Officer within the Ramblers' Association, retiring only when close to his eightieth birthday.

Has such a paragon really existed amid our ranks these last three decades? Yes. But you may not have noticed him, mainly because he has not been able to ramble much these last two decades, and you may have been absent when he was addressing Meetings. But the results of his endeavours in our local countryside remain for us all to enjoy and to guard for our (including John and Barbara's) successors' recreation.

Derek Keeble. February 07.

John Barnard, who died on Monday February 12th, 2007, had been active in the RA at Group, Area and National levels.

He first appeared in Southern Area days, in 1982 when he came as footpath secretary for Colchester to informal meetings of footpath secretaries within Essex. He continued in that post with the formation of Essex Area and remained there until 1997 when he passed the Colchester job over to Mags Hobby while he became Area Countryside Officer.

In that post, he had the ability to always see the broad picture when looking at large planning issues and yet was approachable when asked for advice on local matters by the District Countryside officers.

He held the Countryside post until retirement from it last year. He had still kept his hand in on footpaths however, as a volunteer with the Open Spaces Society.

He also served for a number of years on the Agenda Committee of R.A. National [as it was then] Council which automatically gave him a seat on National Council itself, each year.

Kevin Ascott, John Dowding

ESSEX AREA WALKS - SPRINGTIME 2007

SATURDAY 5TH MAY TO SUNDAY 13TH MAY 2007

Following the pleas issued to all our local groups late last year and contained within the Essex Area Update December 2006 issue and more recent contact with the Groups, we are pleased that we now have sufficient responses to set out below the planned programme of Circular and Figure of Eight Walks for SPRINGTIME 2007. We hope that this information will be available on the Essex Area Website as well as those of our groups who have the technology and we will provide details of any amendments that may be necessary there and on the usual telephone and e-mail contact points.

DAY DATE	TIME DISTANCE	GRID REF	MEETING POINT AND DETAILS
Saturday 5 th	10AM 11 miles	TL 872 069	Heybridge Basin, Daisy Lane Car Park A Circular Walk with South East Essex Lunch at the Queen Victoria Pub, Woodham Walter
Sunday 6 th	10AM 10 miles (5 + 5)	TQ 898 875	Garons Park, Southend Leisure Centre A Figure of Eight Walk with South East Essex Lunch at the Leisure Centre or nearby
Monday 7 th	10.30AM 10 miles (5 + 5)	TL 551 026	Chipping Ongar, Car and Lorry Park A Figure of Eight Walk with West Essex Lunch at a choice of Pubs and Cafes nearby
Tuesday 8 th	10.30AM 10 miles	TQ 435 995	Epping Forest, Jack's Hill Car Park A Circular Walk with Redbridge Lunch at the Three Horseshoes, Upshire
Wednesday 9 th	10AM 11 miles (6 + 5)	TQ 811 876	Hadleigh John Burrows Recreatn Ground Car Park A Figure of Eight Walk with Rochford & Castle Point Lunch at a choice of Pubs and Cafes nearby
Thursday 10 th	10AM 11 miles (6 + 5)	TQ 682 868	Langdon Hills, Westley Heights Country Park A Figure of Eight Walk with Greenway Lunch at The Crown Harvester Pub next to Car Park
Friday 11 th	10AM 9 miles (5 + 4)	TQ 695 991	Stock, Village Hall Car Park (50p Parking Charge) A Figure of Eight Walk with Greenway Lunch at a choice of Pubs nearby
Saturday 12 th	10AM 12 miles (6 + 6)	TL 661 143	Pleshey, Village Hall Car Park A Figure of Eight Walk with Essex Area Walks Lunch at the White Horse or Leather Bottle Pubs
Sunday 13 th	10AM 10 miles (5 + 5)	TM 036 216	Wivenhoe Railway Station (£1 Parking Charge) A Figure of Eight Walk with Colchester Lunch at the Rose & Crown Pub, The Quay

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ESSEX AREA WALKS WORKING PARTY

SUCCESSION PLANNING AND CONTINUAL RECRUITMENT

Finding volunteers to become office holders can too easily be left to reach a crisis at the AGM. Thinking more regularly about succession and ways to encourage it may help to avoid the crisis.

Succession could be a topic best avoided. History has bequeathed us a remarkable back-catalogue of succession conflicts and intrigues based on struggles to control power.

One advantage of democracy is that it takes away the need to worry about succession, replacing faction with the voice of the people.

For Ramblers Areas and Groups with our democratic structure and annual AGM elections, why worry about succession? Hopeful candidates will present themselves and the most appropriate voted in.

If only this dream scenario were the case. Despite our efforts to make volunteer roles manageable and rewarding, we know that the clamour for election to an office position remains a distant vision.

So while our Areas and Groups are democratic in theory, in practice they are hybrid entities somewhere between democracy and oligarchy. Good or bad, this phenomenon is widespread across thousands of similar organisations and it can help us to focus on the importance of succession planning for volunteers.

The framework of democracy can lead us into a trap of assuming that the time to recruit office holders is once a year at the AGM. This approach is rarely fruitful and transforms the AGM into a volunteer pressure point instead, keeping those wary of the hard sell and the pregnant pause at bay.

We can expect the recruitment of office holders to be a more lengthy process and one to be regularly on the radar of each Group and Area committee.

Identifying suitable people is key to this process, but there are two further twin elements: Offering a way in, and letting go.

A good way to discover if something is right for you is to give it a go and get a taste. For potential office

holders, it's important to consider how they can get some early involvement. Becoming a deputy is one option – certainly the office of vice chair is common. Splitting up a role and delegating some bits is another. More tricky to arrange, but possibly more powerful is a system to shadow or to work in tandem.

Trying a role for size doesn't need to stop once voted in. An outgoing officer who is available to give support can be useful for the transition and also give reassurance to a prospective volunteer considering taking on a role.

Allowing people to get involved does, of course, rely on making room for them. For our own enjoyment of a role we need to be able to make a mark, not forced to copy our predecessor.

Enforce resignations for committee members by imposing limited periods in office can be a powerful way to make room. Three years has been a norm adopted by some Groups.

Taking this bold step can have the potential to encourage fresh ideas and diversity, and to ensure that ways of working do not become entrenched. It also demonstrates that joining the committee need not be a life sentence. This is all good for encouraging volunteers.

Time limits, too, can be an effective way to force the issue of succession onto the agenda. The whole committee is forced to remain alert to the need to recruit replacements. Opportunities arise each year to share responsibilities and office holders know that they will pass on the baton after a certain time.

Whatever arrangement works for each Group, is it worth placing succession planning as a regular feature on the committee agenda?

***Andrew Chadwick,
Volunteer Development Manager***

Hi FELLOW RAMBLER,

We have taken over the **Walkers Hostel in Ulverston** and just like our predecessors Jena and Steve are welcoming walkers, cyclists and fellow hostellers to try our accommodation for group visits and individuals.

We have a large selection of walks which are suitable for all ages and abilities with a free car park only 1 minute from Booths supermarket and 10 minutes from the lovely town centre of Ulverston. Major upgrades have been done but a large revamp is due in the winter period, although we intend to stay open all year.

Jan has recently undertaken the 'Welcome Walkers and Cyclists course' and the hostel is based ideally in the position of the Cumbria Way, a 70 mile long distance walk from Ulverston to Carlisle.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on 01229 585588 or email: jannicholson496@btinternet.com . We look forward to hearing from you or alternatively visit our website www.walkershostel.co.uk

Regards, ***Jan and Kristina***

From Essex Record Office's recent UPDATE –

FINANCE ACT MAPS ADD UP

Work on the conservation of the Finance Act maps has recently been completed.

This was a huge undertaking by the Essex Records Office dedicated Conservation team.

The maps had been stored in rolled bundles which meant that they were subject to wear and rubbing. Each map was cleaned and old patches that had been used to try and mend previous damage were removed. Modern techniques were used to fill in and repair any holes or tears. Finally, a hanger was attached, so that the maps can now be hung, rather than stored in rolls.

Some amazing statistics have been generated by the Conservation's team hard work.

The project took 13 months to complete, with one conservator working full-time on the project; 1,115 maps were conserved, which is an average of 85 per month. Some 7,805 old patches were removed from the maps. A little over £7,000 was spent on materials, which included almost one kilometre of archival cloth used to strengthen the maps.

BYWAY 32 - PURLEIGH

CLOSURE

This closure is for **ALL TRAFFIC** which *includes* horse-riders, cyclists and pedestrians.

As the Order says, this is 'in the interest of safety to the public and the workforce whilst maintenance and remedial works are undertaken'.

For your information, and apologies if I hadn't told you before, these works include re-surfacing, drainage, replacing the small bridge at its junction with FP 31, replacing the stile with a kissing gate at this location and re-signing where necessary.

And a request from John...

Does anyone perchance have copies of:

- a] OS 1" 5th Ed sheet 97 Maldon or
- b] 2½" OS 1st Ed blue cover TL 80

My only copy of the latter is from my predecessor Jim King, heavily marked for RoW info.

Is there any road colouring on either?

Either of these maps might have a clue in the "where the public road ended" saga.

If anyone with either map could contact me, namely to see if there is a coloured road to the mill stream. or any sign of a gate before the millstream.

Thanks JND

Mike Whiteley, West Essex Secretary writes...

The withdrawal by **RA HQ** of support for the **WELCOME TO WALKING WEEK** doesn't necessarily mean that Group members are faced with a reduced walking programme. At least that's the message from the innovative West Essex Rambles Secretary, **John Francis**. He plans to replace the September walks week with seven days of walking starting from places accessible by public transport. I wonder if the **Area Council** would be willing to support this kind of initiative throughout the County?

Help is at Hand

Derek Keeble writes to say that one of the many artists, raconteurs, and walks writers of the MAPJOG stable, **Roy Tover**, has developed a system of supplements designed to provide new members who do not have an O.S. map with a means of finding starting points of walks.

His aim is to make a venue approachable from a given numbered road and to provide a little sketch showing parking and gathering features.

The really good news is that Derek tells us Roy will write and provide a master supplement to any Group which provides the necessary information. Contact Derek for a sample and more details:

01206 570168; mapjog@ntlworld.com; 9 Shelley Road Colchester CO3 4JN.

LONDON FORUM

The Ramblers Greater London Forum is now a reality

On 20th February the first official meeting occurred and a Constitution was agreed. The Forum which will meet two or three times a year will be concerned with promoting policy and looking after RA interests in the Greater London Area.

Obviously the whole of the Essex Area will benefit to some extent from our involvement in this work but those of our members in Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest have the most to gain.

Essex is currently represented by Len Banister and Colin Jacob. Colin's enthusiasm has helped tremendously in the initial stages but he, understandably thinks that someone from the London Boroughs should take over his position. All the appropriate Secretaries are asked to consider whether they or one of their senior members would be prepared to take over the role at this exciting stage.

In addition to membership of the Forum itself, we will want volunteers to sit on some of the committees which are currently dealing with such subjects as:

- Future walking and transport strategies for London
- The impact of the 2012 Games on walking
- Legible London (mapping and signing)

If you feel that you could make a contribution to this work, please contact **Len Banister**.

2007 ESSEX FESTIVAL OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

to be launched by Professor Germaine Greer

A celebration of Essex rural events will get off to a flying start on 17th April 2007 at **RHS Garden, Hyde Hall** when Germaine Greer launches the 2007 Essex Festival of the Countryside.

The Essex Festival of the Countryside has become an established part of the Real Essex campaign which sets out to promote the county to visitors and local residents. This year's guide is bigger and better than ever and features over 220 events ranging from kite festivals to country shows.

At a special event to launch the 2007 programme, Germaine Greer will also scatter the first poppy seeds that will help signify the transition from formal garden to rolling countryside at the RHS Garden, Hyde Hall. In 2002 the poppy was chosen (in a competition run by the wildflower charity Plantlife) as the flower to represent Essex. To celebrate this, the 2007 Festival of the Countryside front cover design incorporates the flower and commemorative packs of poppy seeds are being made available.

Germaine Greer, a resident of Essex, is delighted to support the 2007 Festival of the Countryside. "Contrary to most perceptions, Essex is actually one of the most rural of English counties and in the spring and summer months offers an unrivalled diversity of things to see, do and celebrate. I have always supported the fact that the poppy was chosen to represent Essex – it has a vibrancy and strength about it that to me epitomises much of our beautiful county and its people and I am especially pleased that poppies will have pride of place in the new garden for wildlife at the RHS Garden."

Councillor Peter Martin, Deputy Leader of Essex County Council and Cabinet Member for Planning, Environment and Culture commented: "The Real Essex campaign is all about changing perceptions of the county and the Essex Festival of the Countryside is a key part of our annual marketing strategy. Where else can you enjoy such a fantastic range of diverse and exciting events in such beautiful settings?"

Hyde Hall's Curator, Ian LeGros said: "Here at Hyde Hall we have wonderful panoramic views of the rolling Essex countryside and the addition of the poppy will only add to this spectacular vista. It will also provide the perfect link to the wooded areas that sit on the boundaries of our 360 acre estate."

The 2007 Festival of the Countryside lists events in the county from May to September and is available free of charge from all Tourist Information Centres and Essex libraries. Copies are also available from www.realessex.co.uk or by telephoning 0845 600 7373.

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION — ESSEX AREA

AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

Those who were present at the AGM will recall that the Chair was bemoaning the fact that, although we are the second largest Area in the country, we have been unsuccessful in ever electing a member of ours to the National Executive, or what is now known as the Board of Trustees.

John Dowding said that no-one, with the possible exception of himself, is well known enough at national level to stand a chance of being successful at an election. You will know that, this year we tried, without success, to get a younger member to stand for General Council. The hope was that we could start the grooming process for National Office.

Well, for all those shrinking violets, we have another opportunity. The Board of Trustees is inviting a number of visitors (max 5) to attend part of a routine Board meeting on any one of the following weekends: 18&19 May; 6&7 July; 12&13 October.

All expenses are paid. You meet up with the Trustees on the Friday and join them for supper. You stay the night where the meeting is being held and sit through all the business on the Saturday, leaving at about 5pm.

You need to be nominated by the Area and although we would prefer people who were considering becoming a Trustee, we are willing to nominate anyone who is interested.

Please contact **Len Banister** for more information.

MAJOR ERRORS IN UPDATE - AN APOLOGY

I'm very sorry about all the trouble I caused, especially to our non-broadband readers, for the time the March issue took to download. I mistakenly included a piece of pure scan material which took up much too much memory and therefore was impossible for some people to download. It was entirely my fault. I should have taken the time to re-type it.

Please don't let this put you off contributing. The easiest way is to email me with your contribution as an attachment. Straight emails are OK, but we have to re-format them.

Typed pieces sent in the post can successfully transferred by scanning but we cannot deal with spreadsheets without re-typing. We will, of course be glad to have hand-written material and phone calls as well.

During this Oscar Season, I also managed to miss out a major star: the asterisk which should have denoted our Countryside Officer, Terry Foster's membership of the Executive Committee went missing for some reason.

LB.

I'm sorry too! **wr.**

DIARY DATES

2007

- 16 to 18 Mar: Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show (Birmingham NEC)
24 Mar: Countryside Secretaries Meeting
30 Mar - 1 Apr: General Council - Reading University
4 Apr: Footpaths Committee 7.30pm
17 Apr: Executive Committee 7.30pm
13 May: Chelmer Hike
14 May: Area Council 7.30pm
23 Jun—1 Jul: Use Your Paths Week
9 Jul: Executive Committee 7.30pm
15 Aug: Footpaths Committee 7.30pm
11th - 19 Aug: FEAST
1st - 9 Sep: Essex Hundred
15 Sep: Runway Ramble
16 Sep: National Day of Walking
22 Sep: In Town Without My Car Day
17 Sep: Area Council 7.30pm
27 Nov: Executive Committee 7.30pm
5 Dec: Footpaths Committee 7.30pm
26 Dec—2 Jan: Festival of Winter Walks

2008

- 7 Jan: Area Council 7.30pm

Please note:

All meetings are held at the Friends' Meeting House, Chelmsford unless stated otherwise.

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