

Essex Area Update

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Although, because of your life-style, your visits to the doctor may be rare it would be worth saving copies of the national magazine for the event.

walk is now such a high standard publication that it would undoubtedly provide more interest that many of the magazines that are currently available in these venues.

Area Council date change—the meeting will now be held on Monday 4th July

Area Council Meets in Spite of Snow, Hail and Ice

The February meeting was extraordinarily well attended considering the foul weather and the fact that the Secretary has originally circulated the incorrect venue. 15 delegates attended and another 3 had a wasted evening because they hadn't been informed of the correct meeting place.

As this was the first meeting of the cycle, the main job was to elect an executive which would get on with putting into operation the decisions of the Council. Besides the Officers: Dave Cullington*, Andy Sheff, John Dowding* and Len Banister* the following were elected: Kevin Ascott, Dave Hitchman, Colin Jacob*, Hazel Jarrold* and Ann McLaren (* will be going to the General Council in Nottingham).

Note: the next meeting of the Area Council will be on Monday 4th

July (not 6th as previously announced)

At its first meeting the Executive made some inroads into its work plan. It is reviving work on the coastal path project, supporting the St Peter's Way initiative (see later) and hoping to produce a summary of path diversions for circulation to Groups.

Although it was decided that no change would be made to the annual allocation of funding to Groups they were to be encouraged to make bids for additional funding based on a clear budget plan. The Treasurer will be writing to his colleagues to explain this.

The Chair, Dave Cullington, expanded on his desire to make the Area organization more relevant to Groups. He and Len are spending a day at the national headquarters to get advice on how best to go

about this.

St Peter's Way

We, the Area, have completed the survey of the path, one of the most interesting in Essex. Altogether we need to install or replace about 100 way-marker posts and fix 600 newly designed directional discs together with some gates and a bridge repair or two.

There are some disagreements about the route which are going to take the Council some time to iron out so the new guide to the way will not appear this year. However, we do not want to lose momentum on this and want to get on with the business of clearing and furnishing the 95% of the path which is agreed as soon as possible. For this we need working parties the most convenient way forward would be for Groups to volunteer working parties by contacting the Secretary.

Fred Matthews uncovers some Bureaucracy

Organisers of the annual Two Steeples walk around Wigston were asked to fill in a two-page questionnaire by their local authority. The questions which formed what was called a 'Health and Safety Risk Assessment' included the following:

- Traffic – does your walk involve crossing a busy road?

- Electricity—are there any electric fences on the walk?

- Weather—would adverse weather conditions make this walk hazardous?

- Slips, trips and falls—do you advise people on sensible footwear/clothing?

- Are there likely to be any—rabbit holes, overhanging branches, barbed wire fences, slippery surfaces when wet, stiles/steps which could be slippery?

- Water—does your walk involve walking on a canal towpath, near a river or lake?

News from the Groups

Redbridge have once again been able to keep to their policy of limiting the holding of all offices to a period of three years. This has the advantage of ensuring that there are always new people with new ideas on the committee each year. One of the highlights of their programme is a 7 mile walk which incorporates a Maldon Brewery visit. (11 June—contact Roger Young 020 8989 5116 for further details). The group is also combining with **West Essex** to, once again, hold the highly successful Jazz Band

Christmas Ball on 10 December— the event which has been a complete sell-out for two years running will be held at Theydon Bois village hall.

A third of their membership turned out for **Lea valley Friends'** third anniversary walk.

The **West Essex Group** (writes Fred Matthews) are putting 2 or 3 walks from their programme into the Walk your Paths week and have also arranged a working party on one day which I understand will be on the route

of one of the walks so walkers can get an idea of what we actually do besides walk. There is still time to win the competition with Surrey to see who can be the first area to recruit 10,000 members. The National Office will be offering the normal discount arrangements for any new members who join during the week so look out for the special membership forms.

**Next Area
Council is on
Monday 4th
July, 7.30, at
the Friends'
Meeting House
Chelmsford**

Chelmer & Blackwater Group hosted the Annual Quiz at Sandon village hall on Saturday 5th March. There were 10 teams and six of them were Group teams up for the Area Shield. The host team, having won the old one outright, put up a magnificent carved replacement for last year's competition and promptly won it! The winners this year however, are **Maldon & Dengie Hundred Group** with a score of 108

from a possible 160 and they will now host the event in 2006.

The overall winners, with a score of 115, were the No 2 team from **North West Group** who's " Official team" came in at third place. The lowest score recorded was 79. The venue is so central it may well be used again. **KA Brentwood's** First Aid course was so successful that they are planning another in the near future. This group seems to be the

Essex Area's centre for innovation at the moment—it has negotiated a wide range of discounts for its members and has just purchased some high-visibility vests to be available for leaders and back markers for use when walking along some 'dodgy' stretches of road.

Walks & Campaigns

Stour Valley Path Walks 2005, 22-28 April

We are planning a series of walks covering the 60 mile Stour Valley Path between Newmarket to Cattawade on the dates shown below. Members of Ramblers' Association are welcome to join us on all or any of the walks, but numbers are limited, so please let us know in advance if you want to join us. We must emphasise that this is a private event for which no insurance cover is provided in the event

of any accident or mishap, so walkers join us at their own risk. Bring sufficient food and drink for the whole day – we can't guarantee pubs or shops on some stages. Sorry, no dogs. (For further information—contact 01473 726649) **The Outcome** of the Judicial Review on Stansted is not the end by any means, writes Michael Cullen, I wonder what support there would be for the Maplin idea to be resurrected and linked

with a port and flood prevention barrier - needed to make the present Thames barrier and Thames Riverside walls adequate after 2030. A major rail link from Europe northwards could be included. Please let me have any views? on such ideas for a comprehensive national project.

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**ESSEX AREA
RAMBLERS—
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See EAU in dazzling
colour on the
Colchester web site:
[www.colchester-
ramblers.com.co.uk](http://www.colchester-ramblers.com.co.uk)

Update

Whilst we are encouraging members to receive **EAU** by e-mail (see below), there are still many who do not have access to the internet. Please send me your address if this is the case—in fact, because of the difficulties which have arisen as a result of the handover I would be glad if everyone, other than Group Secretaries and Area Officers, who want to receive paper copies would get in touch with me.

Just as we are reducing the paper **EAUs**, so we are cutting down on paper in other ways by sending out minutes of meetings and conducting most of our correspondence by email. We are also asking Officers to produce shorter, more focused reports so that meetings can become hopefully more interesting and certainly more efficient.

The RA have produced a new booklet **Walking for You** this 16 page publication is ideal for introducing people to Walking in particular and the Ramblers in particular. I can supply any number of this and a companion booklet **take 30**, biased towards walking for health. Groups might consider distributing them with their next programme, handing them out at shopping malls, leaving supplies of them in libraries and surgeries.

Diary Dates

8-10 April—General Council , Nottingham University

18 May— Executive Committee Meeting

17-19 June— Urban Escapes Active Leisure Show, Lee Valley Showground, Waltham Abbey

18-24 June— Use Your Paths Week

26 June—Stop Stansted Expansion Ramble

4 July— Area Council Meeting

20 July—Executive Committee Meeting

14 Aug-SE Essex 13 mile Challenge Walk

3-11 Sept-Essex Hundred

17-25 Sept— Welcome to Walking Week

18 Sept— National Walking Day, in conjunction with ITV

22 Sept— In Town without my Car Day (part of WWW)

15 Oct— Ann McLarens's 30th Anniversary walk

26 Dec-2 Jan— Festival of Winter Walks

4 Feb—Essex Area AGM

About the Essex Area Update

Currently it costs about 50p to supply a single copy of **EAU** by post. For this reason we are trying to encourage as many people as possible to receive **EAU** by e-mail which costs us nothing..

Each Group can help by advertising the fact that the e-mail version is available to **all members** and does provide an up-to-date account of what is happening in the Area.

To receive the e-mail version of the Essex Area Update send an email request to

talkingwalking@aol.com

In order to receive the **EAU**

By e-mail we will , from this month, introduce some formatting so that it avoids some

of the crazier variations in type which have characterized it in the past.

Remember that you can still see the flashier version on the Colchester Website. If you look at www.colchester-ramblers.com.co.uk you'll see much more via the links from the home page to all sorts of tide tables to help you plan your coastal walks and the do-it-yourself walk section giving you various walks including route for the 25 mile walk around Colchester - the Camulodunum.

Area Walks

Full details of the Area Walks programme will appear in the May edition of **EAU**

ADVERTISE- MENT

If your group has an event which it would like to publicise to others, send in copy or e-mail and get the publicity out completely free.