

ESSEX AREA UPDATE



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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RAMBLERS'
ASSOCIATION — ESSEX AREA

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 7

November 2006

ESSEX AREA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 3rd February 2007

St Bartholomew's Church Hall, Church Rd, Wickham Bishops

(TL 837 120)

***The meeting will be addressed at some point by Kate Conto
Head of the RA's Freedom to Roam Team, who will discuss Coastal Access***

The meeting will run from 10am to 1pm with a break for refreshments

After lunch, participants are invited to join one of two walks

organised by members of our host Group:

Maldon and Dengie Hundred

A simplified agenda is given below:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Minutes | 6. Election Group Representatives for Area Council |
| 2. Address by Kate Conto, RA | 7. Election of Delegates to General Council |
| 3. Treasurer's & Secretaries' reports | 8. Election of Auditor |
| 4. Reports from Officers (reception of written reports) | 9. The Constitution |
| 5. Election of Officers | 10. Motions from Groups or Individuals |

All Groups should be starting to think about the **AGM**. We really do need some new blood on the Executive and the Area Council and hope that we get many more nominations in February. We particularly want the Groups to make nominations for Delegates to the General Council in Reading.

A full agenda will appear in the January edition of **EAU** and each group will be sent 5 copies of the complete agenda papers in early January. Group Secretaries can order additional copies by 1st January 2007.

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

talkingwalking@aol.com

Contact:

Len Banister

41 Gordon Avenue, London E4 9QT

Phone: 020 8527 8158

JOHN DOWDING reports from the ESSEX CC RIGHTS OF WAY USER GROUP

This group, consisting of one representative from each user organisation, meets with county officers at three monthly intervals. It is interesting to meet with the horses, bicycles and motor cycles as well as carriage drivers and helps you understand their different problems.

It enables county officers to explain what they have been doing and why other things have not been done. Special presentations are made such as in June on the headland management scheme, a trial to see if it is practical to get farmers to grass cut on headlands. It worked and will probably eventually go county wide. A condition is that other paths must be in good nick!

Other topics have included the Parish Paths Partnership involving parish councils and other organisations, including the odd RA Group. The consultation process for the RoW Improvement Plan is going well - it is certainly better than that in Suffolk!

The 20% rolling programme to look at problems [and solve most of them!] is now in its second year. Problems were experienced in year 1 especially as it coincided with staff shortages and a ban on recruiting, but it is hoped to get a bit more money and catch up in this year. We will see!!

These meetings also provide an opportunity for a quiet chat afterwards and I was able to have words on two of our current problems in Tendring - the four temporary closures over the railway at Ardleigh and the tall turnstile gates on the Essex Way sea wall at Wrabness. With Wally Webb, they are also in the hands of our Central Office.

TED WOLTON'S RAMBLER FRIENDLY PUBS – Update

| | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Tel number: | Rose & Crown, Ashton | 01799 584337 |
| New Name: | The Fleece, Coggeshall | 01376 561412 |
| New Name: | The White Hart, Gt. Saling | 01371 850341 |
| New Name: | The Three Pidgeons, Halstead | 01787 472336 |
| Confirmed: | The Swan, Lt. Totham | 01621892689 |
| New Name: | The Hope Inn, Tollesbury | 01621 868317 |
| New Name: | The Rayleigh Arms, Terling | 01245 233228 |

Remember you can obtain the complete list from:
talkingwalking@aol.com

LEA VALLEY FRIENDS — come into line

The youngest **Friends Group** now has enough walk leaders volunteering to enable it to move from a three-month to a four-month programme.

After an intermediate adjustment their new schedule will start from March 2007.

LOCALLY SOURCED SOCIAL SUPPER

On the 23rd September 2006, 50 members of The Chelmer & Blackwater Social Club ran a Treasure Hunt followed by a Harvest Supper in Purleigh Village Hall. Nothing remarkable about that you might think? This evening however, proved to be something rather special. Apart from the tea, sugar, coffee and biscuits, all the ingredients were locally sourced!

A main course of gourmet sausages, local potatoes and onions from Writtle College was accompanied by home-made chutney. This was followed by an apple and blackberry crumble topped with local goats milk ice-cream and the meal rounded off with various goats cheeses and again, local apples. Even the beer had been sourced from a local micro-brewery in Maldon and the cider and apple juice from Chelmsford. The participants probably clocked up more road miles than the ingredients!

A word quiz helped to fill the idle moment and that was won with a score of 86 out of a hundred points available. Nothing was left to chance by the ladies who organised this exceptional event. The Hall was decorated with hedge-row berries and the sausages provided had been the subject of a test-tasting from the several outlets now available in the County!

The effort that goes in to Social events is always considerable and appreciated, but this one was historic.

KEVIN ASCOTT

Dear Editor....

I have just completed the pre-print production of *Jonathon's Journey*, a 72 miles long walking route from Leigh-on-Sea across corduroy hillocks to Ipswich.

In 1970, when Jim King phoned me to suggest I should enter the Create an Essex Way competition, I asked what the parameters were. When he said "Devise a walking route from Epping to Dedham", I inwardly bridled. Nobody tells me where to walk. I make those decisions, so I replied politely to Jim, the kind messenger, "a better route would be across the Essex watersheds, from Hadleigh on the Thames to t'other Hadleigh just over t'Suffolk border". And that finished that.

36 years later, the effort goes to the printer, and when it comes back I wish to donate a copy to the Library in Barking where Jim worked. He was chuffed when I told him of my intention to dedicate the work to him, and I ain't letting his memory down, even after nearly four decades.

Does anyone remember where Jim worked for wages when he was not being a great servant to the Essex Footpath Network? I would appreciate details of the postal address. Telephone 01206-570168 or Email mapjog@ntlworld.com or contact me via our Editor.

With thanks, Keep Happy Feet. **Derek Keeble**

Thank you for the Essex Area Update. As one who has done plenty of paths clearing, I have to tell you that I do not agree with it in principle.

A public right of way is a highway, which local authorities have a statutory duty to keep in good repair. We are not expected to level our pavements or spread tarmac on our roads, so why the exception for rights of way? Time and time again the public steps in with support of a service, which has already been paid for in taxes and national health insurance contributions. Hospices, vital as they are, survive on public fund raising. Essex air ambulance, which is needed because of the closure of local hospitals and ought to be funded by the State, relies on fund raising.

For so long as we are prepared to do Government work for free, Government will be happy to let us do it. I submit that the job of the RA is to insist that local authorities fulfil their obligations. **John Mountain**

Some time ago, you wrote to all members about 'Use Your Paths' week and improving communications. As part of that letter, you requested suggestions for ways to further encourage walking / involvement / other services. With that in mind, I enclose a copy of Mister Blister, a book I wrote about a 3 week walk on the South West Coast Path.

I wondered whether you would be interested in arranging a special discounted price for members of the association? As you will see, RRP is £9.99, but I would be prepared to supply signed copies, postage paid, for £5.00.

Hope you enjoy the read. Cheers!

John Rayment

Contact: John Rayment,
7 Platford Green, Hornchurch, Essex.
RM11 2TA

10TH FOUNDERS' CHALLENGE - SUNDAY 22ND OCTOBER 2006

Organised by **London LDWA**, 26 miles in 9.5 hours in the Surrey hills from *Peaslake Memorial Hall*, GR 085446, on good footpaths & tracks.

Route includes places associated with the LDWA founders - Blatchford Down, Steers Field, Tanners Hatch YH, the Toposcope on Pitch Hill & the Old Peaslake PO.

Start 9am (10.30am runners/joggers). Entry £4, £4.50 non-LDWA, and £5 on day includes some special items to celebrate this 10th event, plus drinks and food at CPs and light hot meal at finish, cert and results (SAE or email needed).

SAE: to **Peter Saw**, at:

15 Wolverton Avenue, Kingston on Thames, Surrey, KT2 7QF
Tel: 020 8549 7793, before 9pm, or
at www.ldwa.org.uk/london

Continuing his account of

LONG DISTANCE ROUTES IN ESSEX

prolific Author and Rambler, *Derek Keeble*, describes some of his own projects

ABOUNDING ESSEX A 4504 miles around the edge of Essex from Southend pier, including one of the longest English county coastlines.

Alternative A12 Corridor Walk. 108 miles linear from the Capital (Bromley-by-Bow, Blackwall Tunnel, A12) to Ipswich. Links with other booklets to Lowestoft and to Great Yarmouth, the far end of the A12. Segmented into day walks calling at Barkingside, Harold Wood, Brentwood, Ingatestone, Chelmsford, Hatfield Peverel, Witham, Kelvedon, Marks Tey, Colchester, Manningtree and Ipswich.

BYRHOTH'S LAST ESSEX VISIT Ely to Battle of Maldon site. Details 49 miles in Essex from Great Chesterford to Northey Causeway.

The Vikings moored on Northey Island in the Blackwater estuary off Maldon in August 991. They were recovering from their pillage of Gippeswyke (Ipswich). Surely they would attack Maldon when refreshed? The good Saxons of Maldon sent messages to Ely for Byrhtnoth to come and help them fend off the foe. He accepted, and marched on Maldon, recruiting as he progressed. Which way did he travel? Perhaps via the Fen River to Cambridge and then by part of what is now the West Anglian Way along the Cam valley to Great Chesterford.

WALKING THE ESSEX COLNE ZONE. Cornish Hall End to Point Clear in 95 miles. Differs from the Colne Valley Path as it wends on contributory sources like the Brooks of Toppesfield, Pebmarsh and Bourne plus the Roman River.

CONSTABLE BEAT. 26 miles in Stourdale along the Essex border from Mistley via Lawford, Dedham, Wormingford, and the three settlements of Bures to Henny Street Lock. Created in 1705 this canal is probably the oldest in England.

JONATHON'S JOURNEY. A Barge Mate is Landlubber from Leigh-on-Sea to Ipswich in 75 miles across lowland watersheds from the Thames to the Orwell. Jonathon, like most in 1889, was semi-illiterate. He came from Ipswich and was a mate on a Thames sailing barge, trading up and down the eastern coast. At Leigh-on-Sea he fell out with his skipper, the only other crew - and was abandoned on dry land. He had heard tales of shang-hi-ing - kidnapping seamen for service on ships they might not volunteer to join, and feared it, although it was out of Long Distance Routes in Essex as known by Derek Keeble May 2006 page 4 of 4, practice in 1889. So he resolved to walk overland to Ipswich avoiding seaports. Also he had heard about the earthquake at Colchester in 1884 and thought that place was best avoided. So his journey took him from Thameside, over the shallow trough of the young Heach to the first bridge over the Crouch at Battlesbridge, a small port but without naval overtones. Then it was a climb over Danbury ridge to the Chelmer valley, followed by a lesser climb to the confluence of the Brain and Blackwater at Witham. Another shallow climb brought him to the Blackwater again at Coggeshall and then the landscape really ripples to the Stour, the Box, the Brett, the Gipping and so to his parent's and younger sibling's home on the Orwell estuary. Distance about 75 miles. How many did he do a day? Nobody knows.

How did he survive; did he live off the land? Not known. Did he get a lift on carrier's cart for the final journey into Ipswich? Maybe. We can conjecture that he saw an early bicycle and an experimental outdoor photographer along the way. We know there were hundreds of small retail outlets on his way; but did he leave his barge with his last pay packet intact?

MARIA MEHALAH MACABRE. Connects haunts of two reluctant C19th heroines with 26 miles of path from Polstead to St Edmunds Church, East Mersea Island, going through Britain's oldest recorded town. Links deaths of Maria Marten and Mehalah Sharland and with folk music and dancing and to the swash of marshland tidal movement.

MUCKING MESSING WAYS THROUGH UGLEY, ESSEX . Medieval town link of 125 miles calling at Orsett, Chipping Ongar, Great Hallingbury, Stanstead Mountfitchet, Ugley, Widdington, Thaxted, Great Bardfield, High Garrett, Stisted, Coggeshall, Messing, Tolleshunt Major, Maldon, Purleigh, Woodham Ferrers, Great Burstead, Stanford le Hope and Mucking - a very important place in the days of an East Saxon Kingdom.

WINSTREE MARATHON. A 26 + miles circuit in catchment of the Roman River. Laurence Taylor explores the old Winstree Hundred and concocts the best marathon route available from the remnant network of soft-surfaced highways. Thus his 26.3 miles looped continuum along Layer Brook and the Roman river valley to its confluence with the River Colne.

WHAMBLAB EXTRAVAGANZA. Links eight Roding valley parishes in a loop including the eight with Roding in their name. 22 miles.

TAKE ACTION! ENCOURAGEMENT FROM CENTRAL OFFICE

MPs are back at Westminster this month. Why not welcome your MP back from summer recess with a letter to say that you support a legal right to walk along the coast in England?

We know that with the government consultation coming up early next year, the issue of coastal access will be an important one in the next Parliamentary session. So this is a good time to write to your MP to show your support for a legal right to walk on beaches, foreshore and cliffs (subject to safeguards for wildlife and privacy), and to ask for their views on the coast.

It is very important that the Minister knows there is public support for a legal right of access too. So when you write to your MP, ask them to send a copy of your letter to Barry Gardiner (MP, Minister for Biodiversity, Landscape and Rural Affairs).

Please write (as an individual) to:

your MP at The House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

If you require any assistance please contact Rob at RA central office.

Many thanks to those who have already written.

CENTRAL OFFICE HAS PRODUCED A COASTAL ACCESS FLYER...

...to help encourage other supporters to write to their MP on this issue.

Access Officers will receive copies of this flyer as a circular, but the flyers are also available from Central Office directly. If you would like copies to distribute on walks or at RA meetings, please contact Rob in the freedom to roam team: roberc@ramblers.org.uk

Those of you who have already requested flyers need not reapply; your names are on a list!

FESTIVAL OF WINTER WALKS: 26TH DEC - 2ND JAN

This centrally organised Festival is the most popular and most successful of all the Ramblers' Association's National events. We gain more new members from this than all the other initiatives put together, possibly because it combines the notions of exercise, goodwill and resolutions.

Groups are urged to make a real effort to plaster their areas with posters advertising their special walks.

You can have any number of posters printed on special Festival backings with your own wording and sent to you free of charge if you contact Len. All he wants is:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. the wording | He will look after the design, printing and posting. |
| 2. the quantity | All he asks is that the wording should be typed or emailed so that he saves time setting it up on his computer. |
| 3. the mailing address | |

VOLUNTEER SURVEY REPORT

The detailed report of the highly successful *RA survey of voluntary work* is available to read and download at:

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/walking/policy/aandgpwreport0406edit.pdf>

RA

News

CLIMATE CHAOS

**A major national
event**

calling for political
action to tackle
climate change, has
been called for

Saturday

4th November

in London's
Trafalgar Square

For more
information visit
www.icount.org.uk

or contact
RA Central Office

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION — ESSEX AREA

Blacks

Ramblers Groups are invited by *Blacks* to an **OPEN EVENING** in their *new store* at

Unit 6A, The Brewery, Romford

**On Wednesday 29th November
from 8.00pm**

(Viewing prior to store closing at 8.00pm)

They will provide time to browse
expert advice

a 'fantastic' range of products
unbeatable prices

even free refreshments!

At the **OPEN EVENING**, they are offering
discounts on full prices:

Spend up to £50, receive 10% off

Spend over £50, receive 15% off

Spend over £500, receive 20% off

So remember to bring your RA membership
card with you!

For more details you can phone **Andy or
Tracy on 01708 748345** at the store
or Wendy on 01708 456771

DIARY DATES

2006

15 Nov: Footpaths Committee 7.30pm
28 Nov: Executive Committee 7.30pm
26 Dec - 2 Jan: Festival of Winter Walks

2007

15 Jan: Area Council 7.30pm
30 Jan: Executive Committee 7.30pm
3 Feb: Essex Area AGM
30 Mar - 1 Apr: General Council -
Reading University
4 Apr: Footpaths Committee 7.30pm
17 Apr: Executive Committee 7.30pm
14 May: Area Council 7.30pm
9 Jul: Executive Committee 7.30pm
15 Aug: Footpaths Committee 7.30pm
17 Sept: Area Council 7.30pm
27 Nov: Executive Committee 7.30pm
5 Dec: Footpaths Committee 7.30pm

2008

7 Jan: Area Council 7.30pm

Please note:

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

CONTACTS: Len Banister, 41 Gordon Avenue, London E4 9QT

Phone: 020 8527 8158, Email : talkingwalking@aol.com