

Northamptonshire Area

Newsletter August 2010

"The Ramblers' Association promotes rambling, protects rights of way, campaigns for access to open country and defends the beauty of the countryside."

Daventry, Kettering, Northampton, Wellingborough & 20s/30s Groups

Welcome to the August Newsletter. Thanks to everyone who has contributed by word or photograph to this Newsletter, unfortunately due to lack of space, I have had to trim/not use some items.

Report on Lilford Area Rally - Wednesday 9 June 2010

Over 60 of you turned out for this event on a day when rain was forecast but instead we enjoyed very pleasant weather. Such excellent support gives strength and credibility to our campaign. Most of the walkers went on the two longest walks and therefore experienced how bad the existing route of the Nene Way is between Barnwell Country Park and Lilford, and how dangerous. Those who did the longest and shortest routes also walked the 'missing link' through the lovely, peaceful countryside and were able to compare the difference.



We were supported on the day by Kate Ashbrook, a trustee and former Chairman of The Ramblers and Keith Roberts, Director of Campaigns and Policy. Afterwards Kate said that having experienced for herself the dangers involved she realized how crucial it is that NCC now gives top priority to dealing with our Application for the 'missing link' to be added to the official map of rights of way, known as the Definitive Map. We are continuing our efforts to persuade NCC to do just that. Many thanks to everyone who helped on the day, the leaders and backmarkers, the photographers, the display organisers and the refreshments providers. David Craddock

General Council - April 2010

Sue Alcock, Joanne Hammond and me attended on behalf of our Area. The National Chairman, Rodney Whittaker, advised that income is now in line with predicted expenditure based on anticipated membership figures, and less reliance is now being placed on legacies which are an unreliable source of income.

As you may have read Julia Bradbury was elected as our President, a popular choice which seems to have been very well received.

I reported in the December Newsletter that a group of 'concerned ramblers' proposed submitting critical and probing motions to this year's General Council and this they did, as well as having a display stand and putting forward three candidates for election to the Board of Trustees. One of the motions, which amounted to a vote of no confidence in The Ramblers senior management and Board of Trustees, was lost by just one vote. Three others aimed at re-shaping national policy were amended by varying degrees before being adopted but largely succeeded in achieving their objectives. Two of the three 'concerned ramblers' nominees were elected. Two Trustees standing for re-election, including the Vice Chairman, were unsuccessful.

If you wish to know more about the 'concerned ramblers' and their future plans their website address is www.concernedramblers.web.officelive.com whilst a short summary of General Council, including information about who was elected and motions passed, can be found on the volunteer news section of The Ramblers national website. David Craddock

Report on Around Corby Walking Festival - Sat 1 May - Mon 3 May

Sadly the open day on the Saturday, at which we had a display stand, was poorly attended but over 300 people took part in the walks programme, double last year's figure. Very many thanks to Chris Eilbeck and Peter Keeble who led two of the three walks we put on, one each day, and to Maurice Tebbutt, Gwilym and Marilyn Thomas, Chris Eilbeck and Peter Keeble who staffed our display which was set up in a gazebo kindly loaned by David Gardiner. The event will be held next year over the same Bank Holiday weekend and we are again represented on the organising Committee.

From Your President.

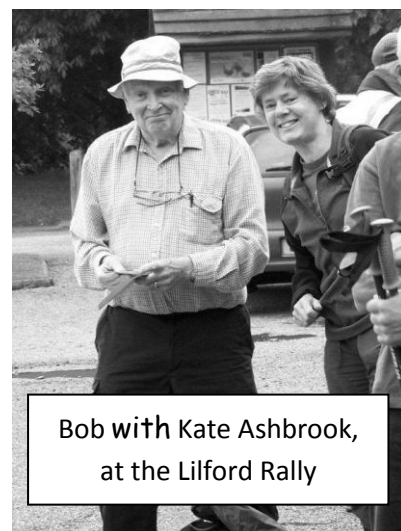
Dear Members, Friends and Colleagues

At the last Area Annual General Meeting I was elected President of Northamptonshire R.A.

Having been a member for over 35 years I believe there to have been only one previous County President and that was Dennis Nightingale who soon after the Second World War on returning from active service joined the County Council. He was asked by a senior staff member if he would take on the very complicated and somewhat onerous task of consulting all of the Parish & Town Councils in Northamptonshire to ascertain the number and location of every footpath, bridleway and byway in their Parish which the Public had used and enjoyed for generations.

Such was his knowledge, expertise and care for the countryside; our Area Executive at that time decided to ask him to become our first President and as it turned out the only one until the present. Sadly, Dennis died prematurely. We still use the gavel and stand, he turned on his lathe and presented to Northamptonshire R.A.

Therefore I was able to accept the position of President with a mixture of pride and humility and a determination to carry out my role to the best of my ability.



Bob with Kate Ashbrook,
at the Lilford Rally

I have already attended two Executive meetings and the highly successful Rally at Lilford. Walkers will note that due to my two year absence from regular walking, I opted for the 41/2 mile walk and acted as backmarker (a first for me). All in all a great day in superb surroundings along with likeminded colleagues.

Finally I think we need to keep up with our pressure on the Highways Authority to protect and improve our precious, beautiful countryside. These times of financial cuts and restraint, should never be an excuse for failing to keep clear and safe those routes which many of our forebears used on a daily basis. I look forward to working with you.

Happy Walking, Bob Coles, President.

Area Footpath Committee

The Committee was sorry to lose a long standing member recently-Mrs. Joan Perkins, who had been a local footpath secretary since the formation of the Northants Area -nearly 25 years ago. Not only did she look after a huge number of rural parishes but also Northampton Borough area where there has been expansion on a grand scale. The Area is much indebted to Jean for all her work, and on behalf of the Area as a whole may I say a big "Thank you" and wish Jean good health and more time to enjoy our lovely countryside.

What does a footpath secretary do?

- Each local footpath secretary keeps an eye on rights of way in a specified number of parishes and deals with many problems that may arise. These maybe planning applications, proposed diversions/extinguishments of existing rights of way, obstructions etc.
- The Area footpath committee meetings held on the first Thursday of each month in a pub at Earls Barton. Each member reports briefly on their area. If you are interested please get in touch with me on 01604-643352 when I shall be pleased to offer more information.

Maurice Tebbutt-Area Footpath Secretary

The Ramblers 75th Anniversary Celebrations - Baton Walk through Northamptonshire

To celebrate 75 years of campaigning and walking The Ramblers national office invited Areas and Groups to organise Baton Walks around the nation. We in this Area are playing our part in **September**. Many thanks are due to Gwilym Thomas of the Wellingborough Group who has devised a 75 mile route through the county from Souldern, which is just over the county boundary in Oxfordshire, to Tinwell which is just into Rutland. The route divides comfortably into six sections and our Groups have agreed to provide leaders as detailed below:-

Tuesday 21 - Souldern church to Weedon Lois church - 13 miles. Daventry Group, Leader David.

Wednesday 22 - Weedon Lois church to Harpole church - 12 miles. Northampton Group, Leader Joanne.

Thursday 23 - Harpole church to Old church - 14 miles. Wellingborough Group, Leader Andrew.

Friday 24 - Old church to Geddington church - 13 miles. Northampton Group, Leader David.

Saturday 25 - Geddington church to Bulwick church - 11.5 miles. Kettering Group, Leader Bob.

Sunday 26 - Bulwick church - Tinwell church - 11.5 miles. 20s / 30s Group, Leader John.

Groups will be including full details of their own walks in their programmes but we have collated this information to enable anyone who wishes to walk a number of the sections to do so. If you are intending to do this it is essential, please, that you contact the respective leaders beforehand to

obtain details of walk start times and transport arrangements. Don't forget to keep this item handy for future reference. This is a unique and exciting event and congratulations go to the Groups for making it happen. We hope as many of you as possible will give your support. Thank you.

Area Website

Sylvia Lilley set up our website at a time when such a task was truly 'pioneering' work and continued to maintain it for us until just recently. But she has now handed over the reins to Paul Waterton who in a short time has made considerable changes, giving us a different look, style and content, all of which is still evolving. We are very fortunate that volunteers with the required skills are willing to come forward to take on such jobs.

So a big thank you to Sylvia for all her hard work over the years and a welcome and thank you to new webmaster Paul. The site has a new address www.northantsramblers.org.uk and Paul is keeping it as up to date as he can so please pay a visit.

Area Quiz

I am sorry to report that Quizmaster Nick Price and his team have stood down as hosts for this annual event. They have done a fantastic job for us for a number of years and the quiz has become a very enjoyable event in our calendar. Unfortunately it will now come to an end unless someone out there is able to take over. So if you can step in as a replacement, or know of anyone else who might be prepared to give of their time and expertise on a voluntary basis, please get in touch. Thank you.
David Craddock

Area Executive - Forthcoming Vacancies

Pauline Riley, our Minutes Secretary, has already helped us out enormously by staying on a year longer than she really wanted to but is definitely standing down at the next AGM. As its title suggests the role entails taking notes and writing up the Minutes of the four Executive Committee Meetings held each year in February, May, August and November, plus the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting.

Also due to stand down is our General Secretary Roy Talbot. Full information on this role can be obtained by visiting the national website and following the links but in essence it includes attendance at Committee Meetings and the AGM, helping to ensure the smooth running of the Committee by maintaining up-to-date records of office holders and keeping central office advised, circulating agendas and reports, compiling the Annual Report and dealing with enquiries from the public. Being comfortable with a computer and the internet and access to email are these days of course pre-requisites of both these jobs.

If you think you may be interested or would like further information please contact me (or Roy or Pauline as applicable). Thank you. David Craddock

!!! Important dates !!!!

Baton walks 21-26 September

Area AGM date Sunday 23 January 2011,
hosted by Wellingborough group, details to
follow

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Items for the next Newsletter to the Editor by 15 October please.