

talking walking

Oxfordshire Ramblers Issue 59, Winter 2024



January. "In the bleak midwinter" as Christina Rossetti began her poem, published in January 1872. Christmas ("Bah humbug" opined E. Scrouge Esq.) is over. At least in February we can look forward to spring, the dawning of renewal, only a few weeks away. January? Not so much. Fear not, I am here to help. Autumn was truly wonderful this year, very colourful, the weather mild. Some of our members captured and bottled it during their walks, putting their photos on Facebook. So, to take away the starkness of January, have a look at some of their shots that I have reproduced here. Revel in them.

Start place

Photo Dave
Cavanagh

Cover photo:
Dave Cavanagh

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Unless otherwise stated, items were written by the editor.
Back issues www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk/magazine.html



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Fungi photos. Clockwise from top left: Jan Knight, Sandra Newton, Sandra Newton and Gill Hawkins,

Oxfordshire Ramblers

AGM

The Oxfordshire Ramblers Annual General Meeting will be on Saturday 20 January 2024 in Charlbury War Memorial Hall, Brown's Lane, Charlbury, Oxon OX7 3QW, hosted by West Oxfordshire Group.

1030 A 5-mile Leisurely walk starting from the Spendlove Centre car park in Charlbury (SP357196, OX7 3PQ).

1300 Bring your own picnic to eat in the hall

1330 AGM

The AGM will start with a presentation by Ross Maloney, Ramblers Chief Executive. The AGM will be followed by tea, coffee and cakes.

Parking/Hall

The hall will be open from 10 am. Car parking in Charlbury is limited, please use the train or bus service if possible. There is limited parking for the disabled, so one is recommended to park near the Co-op in Brown's Lane (the Spendlove Centre) approximately 200 m from the War Memorial Hall.

Public transport options include S3 bus from Oxford Station or Paddington train via Reading and Oxford.

The main purpose of the AGM is to accept the Annual Report and to elect members of the Area Council for the forthcoming year. David Godfrey, our Area Footpath Secretary, and Wendy Mannix, our Area Membership Secretary, are stepping down at the AGM and so we currently have the following vacancies (right):

Area Footpath Secretary for South Oxfordshire
Area Membership Secretary
Area Publicity Officer
Member without portfolio

Please consider whether you would be able to volunteer for one of these roles (the procedure for nominations to Area Council is shown below).

Constitution and Standing Orders

Please note the following requirements from our Constitution and Standing Orders:

Motions or Proposals for consideration at the AGM

Motions or Proposals for consideration must be submitted in writing to the Area General Secretary oxford.ramblers@gmail.com before the meeting.

Procedure for nominations and elections to Area Council

An Area officer or Members' Representative who is already on Area Council and who is prepared to serve for another year should inform the Area General Secretary of their willingness to do so.

Procedure for nominations and elections to Area Council

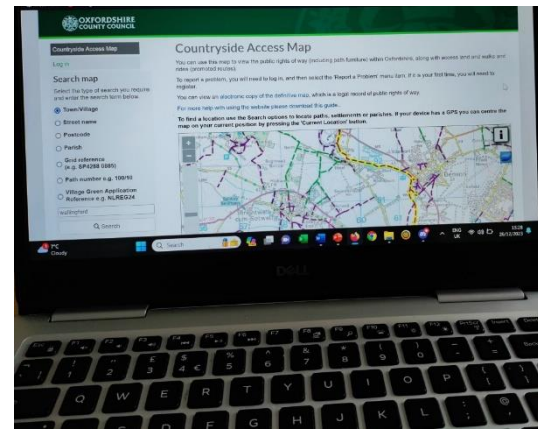
Any member not already on Area wishing to stand for election to an Area officer post or as a Members' Representative should inform the Area General Secretary of this and be proposed and seconded by two other members at least seven days before the AGM. This procedure also applies to a member who is on Area Council and who wishes to take on a different or additional role. In the event of more nominations being received than there are places, an election will be held at the AGM. The potential representatives will each have two minutes to address the meeting and will then be asked to leave the room, and a show of hands will be taken with the candidates being outside the room. The number of votes cast for each candidate will be recorded and the result announced after the candidates have returned to the room.



**Top left and above photos by
Wendy Naisbit Basson. Below
by Dave Cavanagh**



A most important job: Oxfordshire Ramblers Footpath Secretary for the south of the county



Do you value our Oxfordshire public rights of way (PRoW) enough to give some of your time to protecting them against closure and poor diversions? This is an extremely valuable job that can be very satisfying. It will suit someone who pays attention to detail and who can keep a number of balls in the air at the one time.

Our current Oxfordshire Ramblers Footpath Secretary (FPS; by tradition referred to as the Area FPS, to distinguish from Group FP officers) is David Godfrey. He has been the stand-out champion of our county's PRoW for several decades and is retiring this year. To help his successor the role has been divided in two: one person for the north part of the county, one for the south. Terry Pollard has taken on the mantle for the north, so we are seeking someone to look after the south.

An Area FPS is the key point of contact with their county council's countryside access department. In our case once an FPS has made him or herself known to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), the latter will inform them by email of actions that have a bearing on our PRoW (excluding planning applications). This is to elicit the opinion of Oxfordshire Ramblers, which will be taken on board by OCC when they make a decision on how to act to e.g. a request from a landowner to close or divert a PRoW. A FPS will also be informed when OCC proposes to implement a temporary or

permanent Traffic Regulation Order e.g. to close a PRoW temporarily whilst remedial work is done, or to ban recreational vehicles for all or part of the year from a byway.

The FPS then considers how to respond to OCC. This might involve just a 'desk exercise' using online maps, visiting the PRoW in question or getting someone else to do so. In the latter case the first port of call might be the footpath officer of the Ramblers Group where the issue is. We now have something that David Godfrey did not have at his disposal when he started the job, namely the Oxfordshire Ramblers Parish Path Warden (PPW) Network. There are PPWs in some 80% of our parishes. The network is managed by David Tole. He is assisted by Ramblers PPW coordinators distributed around the county, each of whom is in contact with a number of PPWs. These people know their local patch well. One of these might offer to be the eyes on the ground for the FPS if asked.

If you would like to know more about the role, first contact Area Chair Richard Birch. David Godfrey is very willing to answer your questions and to advise during the early phase of a new FPS's tenure. And, of course, the new FPS for the south can confer with Terry Pollard, to mutual advantage.

At the end of the day, it is an Area FPS who decides how much time and effort they put in.

Contact details

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David Godfrey dgodfrey929@btinternet.com



Photo John Gordon



From Bicester & North Oxfordshire Group's Facebook page



Re-instatement of Banbury & North Oxfordshire Group's footpath maintenance team

John Gregory recently became the Parish Path Warden Coordinator for B&NO Ramblers. John writes "This role has led me to reinstate a work party which had disbanded a few years ago. We had our first outing on Monday 4th December to FP7 in Shenington with Alkerton, which our local Oxfordshire Country Access Officer, Tracy Sutton, had suggested needed attention."

Six volunteers took part. "I will be arranging further meetings to clear areas identified by Tracy and the Ramblers in 2024 and hope to increase the volunteer numbers as we go forward and may attempt larger tasks as we progress." said John.





Between January and November Henley & Goring Group completed the 78 miles circuit of London called the Capital Ring. Joan Clark said “I think we were all surprised and delighted at how much there is to see and enjoy along this route and we were all sad to have finished it.” Joan has written an article on it for the next issue of *South East Walker*. Chris Rickard has produced a video of a section of their walk, which you can find on YouTube, including by scanning this QR code.



photos Inge Mikkelsen



For decades the Oxford Group has had a short, leisurely walk each Wednesday with a pub stop during, or at the end, of the walk. These walks have always been very well attended and have attracted walkers and leaders from several nearby Groups. This group of walkers usually refer to themselves as the 'Wednesday Walkers'.

Although the walks have appeared under the Oxford Group walks programme the majority of the walkers and walk leaders are now from other Groups (mainly Didcot & Wallingford and Vale of White Horse) and few of the walks are within the Oxford Group's geographical area i.e. Oxford city. The Wednesday Walkers have also organised their own social activities, for example they have an annual lunch, to which the regular walkers plus past walkers are invited.

As the Wednesday Walkers had been operating more or less independently of Oxford Group they asked whether they could form their own Group. The fact that their regular members are from several groups, plus the fact that they meet together for a specific activity i.e. short, very leisurely walks each Wednesday somewhere in Oxfordshire usually followed by a lunch, means that the Wednesday Walkers were ideal candidates to form a Ramblers Flexi-Group.

A Flexi-Group has a named contact and sometimes a small co-ordination team. It has no elected committees; no annual general meeting, does not hold any funds.

The Group chose the name 'Oxfordshire Strollers'. The Oxfordshire Strollers now have webpages on the national Ramblers website and on the Oxfordshire Ramblers website. Their leisurely walks, which are usually four to five miles long, appear with the acronym 'OS' at the start of the title. If you enjoy walking and nature, whilst chatting with like-minded people, then come and join them on a led walk through the Oxfordshire countryside.

Richard Birch

Chair, Oxfordshire Ramblers



Photo Gill Hawkins



**Seen on the
Oxford Canal.
Photo Wendy
Naisbit Basson**



Photo Kerry Forkner



Photo John Gordon



Photo Kerry Forkner

Rest stop



Seen near Bablock Hythe. Photo Dave Cavanagh

Husband: Is there anything you'd like for Christmas?

Wife: Yes, a divorce.

Husband: Ah, I hadn't thought of spending that much.

The 1964 Disney musical film Mary Poppins is well known for various things, including the song Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious, sung by Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke. Everyone knows that Celtic are one of the biggest and most successful football clubs in Scotland. Far fewer had heard of Inverness Caledonian Thistle until the evening of 8 February 2000, when 'Caley' beat Celtic 3-1 at Celtic Park in the Scottish Cup. This led to one of the best sports headlines of all time, by Paul Hickson of The Sun: Super Caley Go Ballistic, Celtic Are Atrocious.

Quote by a forest ranger at Yosemite National Park on why it is hard to design the perfect garbage bin to keep bears from breaking into it: "There is a considerable overlap between the intelligence of the smartest bears and the dumbest tourists."



Bicester & Kidlington Group. Who else could it be?
Photo Gill Hawkins

On the side of a van in Scotland

Painter & Decorator

Interior & Exterior Finishes

New York, Paris, Madrid

but Mostly Glasgow Area



Photo Dave Cavanagh



Photo Wendy Thomas

Marcham Bridge

re-opened after ten years

Those of you with long memories may recall that there used to be a popular Vale of White Horse walk from Abingdon along the Ock to Mill Road and New Cut Mill, then heading towards Drayton before crossing the A34 and heading for Marcham where we entered past Marcham Mill and another Mill Road. A walk of two mills.

At the end of the walk one could enjoy a pint in the Crown before taking the bus back to Abingdon. Ten years ago the listed bridge over the River Ock at Marcham Mill was damaged and has been closed ever since, amid disputes over repairs. A few years ago the Crown pub in Marcham was also closed. The good news is that the bridge has finally been repaired and

reopened. On Friday 10th November a number of Vale Group members attended an official opening with OCC, various councillors, the architect, and Historic England. Locals held their own unofficial celebrations a couple of weeks earlier. Coincidentally, the Crown also reopened this autumn so we had a pint there afterwards. The [Abingdon Blog](#) reported the event.



Photo John Gordon

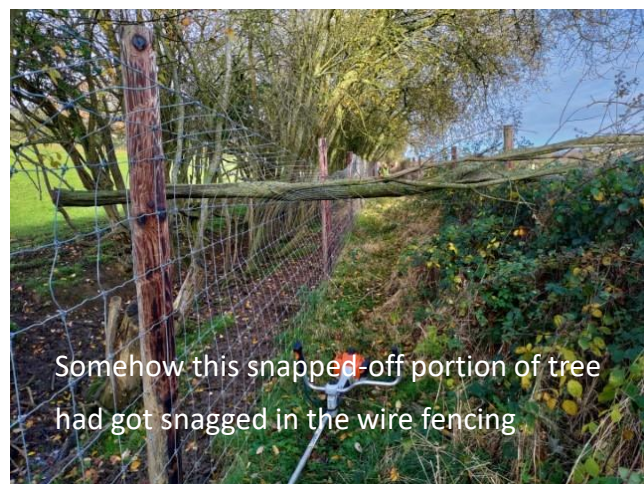
Bayworth footpath 8 re-opens through the quarry with great new steps

Another long-awaited footpath re-opening in the Vale of White Horse is in the parish of Bayworth, adjacent to Sunningwell.

This footpath has been closed for many years because of unsafe access along the line of the path at Bayworth Quarry. Member Bob Evans and colleagues on the parish councils have campaigned long and hard for a resolution. The county's Countryside Access Team have now installed a wonderful flight of steps.



Vale group's Vale Path Volunteers cleared the footpath in November.



Somehow this snapped-off portion of tree had got snagged in the wire fencing



Pat starting to saw



Going ...



... gone



Bicester & Kidlington Ramblers (B&K)

Gill Hawkins · 27 November at 12:57 · 🌤️



Blitz and Klean were out near Wendlebury this morning
A bit drizzly but we were pleased with our efforts.



Another improbable Facebook group



BATHTUBS IN FIELDS APPRECIATION GROUP · [Join](#)

Suggested for you · Chris James · 6 d · 🌤️



At basecamp. Hoping the weather holds for tomorrow's attempt on the summit.



BATHTUBS IN FIELDS APPRECIATION GROUP · [Join](#)

Suggested for you · Jacqui Ramm · 19 November at 19:11 · 🌤️

Fletchwood Lane, New Forest. A Hampshire Blue, striking a pose, in a junk-filled corner of a small holding



👍🏻 You and 403 others

55 comments · 2 shares



Photo Dave Cavanagh



Photo Leonor Barroca



**Photos clockwise from top left:
Pam Wheeler, Gill Hawkins,
Fiona Hitchcock**



Feet up



Those were the days. On the wall of the *Horse and Groom* pub, Linby, Nottinghamshire. Photo Dave Cavanagh

A guy spots a sign outside a house that reads “Talking Dog for Sale.” Intrigued, he walks in.

“So what have you done with your life?” he asks the dog.

“I’ve led a very full life,” says the dog. “I lived in the Alps rescuing avalanche victims. Then I served my country in Iraq. And now I spend my days reading to the residents of a retirement home.”

The guy is flabbergasted. He asks the dog’s owner, “Why on earth would you want to get rid of an incredible dog like that?”

The owner says, “Because he’s a liar! He never did any of those things!”

Helvetica walks into a bar. The barman says “We don’t serve your type”.

Kenneth Williams “I can’t stand innuendo. If I see one in a script I whip it out immediately.”