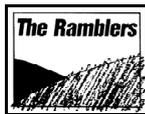


**THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM GROUP**

Registered Charity No. 1093577

Autumn 2007
Issue No. 51



Footnotes



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM GROUP
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: FRIDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2007, 7.30PM**

We hereby give notice to members that the Annual General Meeting of the City of Birmingham Group, the Ramblers' Association, will be held in the Grimshaw Room, St Chad's Cathedral, Queensway, Birmingham on Friday 16 November 2007, at 7.30pm.

Nominations for Officers and Committee Members and any matters for discussion should reach the Secretary by Friday 19 October.

Our customary excellent Cheese and Wine Buffet will follow the proceedings.

Muddy Meanderings

Inside this issue:

Social Scene	2
Maps, compasses & walk planning	3
Committee Quarter	5
A Time to Remember	6

Editorial by David Sutton

One of the enduring aspects of this summer (as I write, in the thick of it!) is the appallingly wet weather. We shall all remember the flooding that has afflicted our region and those around it. Indeed, the unsettled conditions are one of the reasons why our Sunday coach rambles have seen a drop in attendances. Yet (and it shouldn't surprise anyone) it's



quite often been the case that the Sunday walks have been blessed with fine weather for walking when the forecast has been pretty gloomy. One recent example – Hathersage to Ladybower in the Peaks. Despite days of torrential rain, or on-off sun and heavy rain, this walk was blessed with a sky of sunshine and cloud, which gave us near perfect

(Continued on page 4)

Millets

Social Scene 2007

From our Social Secretary, Derek Garfield

Our ANNUAL DAY OUT on 7th July saw us heading out east to the fair City of Cambridge. Miraculously in the midst of our soggy summer, the sun beamed down benevolently on our large party and we were able to appreciate Cambridge to the full. Punting took place on the Cam and a little wine was consumed as is required. Nobody got lost or drowned; may I thank all concerned for being in the right place at the right time and Ceri in particular for her usual sound help and advice.

Booking Forms are now available for our next WALK DAY OUT and you will see from your Programme that we are going to The Museum of Mechanical Music in the Cotswolds which is a lot more fun than it sounds – and it certainly sounds! The date is Saturday 15th September and early booking is advised.

On 5th October, we are having a backstage tour of the ALEXANDRA



THEATRE for which booking is required as numbers are strictly limited. Details on the coach soon and initially at least, places will be available to members only.

Almost as exciting will be our visit to Millets in Union St for a 20% off SOCIAL EVENING on 16th October when you can purchase any last minute requirements for our Lake District Weekend at the end of October. I mean, give your custom to our Sponsors, never mind the shops in Keswick! Don't forget, you can call in at any time during the day and mention that you are from the Birmingham Ramblers but it is nice to see you in the evening for a swift half afterwards.

And finally, finally I am pleased to tell you that following overwhelming demand, we are booked in for our ANNUAL DINNER again at Edgbaston Golf Club on 29th February 2008.

Socially yours, Derek Garfield. ■

Heard on rambles...

On a Sunday ramble, the 'B' party overheard a comment from the child of a passing family: "Is that the rest of *her* family?" Hmm... our lady leader must be a very proud (and productive) mum!



A conversation for computer geeks...
Dave: "I must get some memory, my PC is running really slowly."
Steve: "I meant to get some memory, but I forgot."

Maps, Compasses, Walk Planning and Leading: Part 6—Preparing a Walk

Roger Gibbs

Readers of this page should by now be comfortable with a map and able to set the compass from the map or from the ground. If not, ask around unless you can refer to back copies of Footnotes. We'll now go into how to use the map to prepare a walk, and a compass to help follow it.

Ideas for a walk come from various sources such as books of walks and magazines (e.g. "Country Walking").

Even if accompanied by a good sketch, these sources usually refer to the appropriate OS map number and the map's use is usually recommended. In the absence of such a guide, it is always possible to design a walk from the map in the area that you would like to explore.

Studying the map will provide clues on where the best walking opportunities exist. Footpaths and bridleways are clearly a good start, and areas of woodland, water, open country, hills, viewpoints, features of interest, etc. will suggest possible routes. Consider the sort of walk you want.

- Is the walk to be circular, or can use be made of public transport to make it a linear walk?
- How far do you want to walk?
- Is parking available when and where necessary?
- Do you want to stop at a pub?
- How much climbing are you happy to do?

Once you have considered these points, connect up chosen rights of way using roads, tracks, and any open country to form a walk of approximately the right length. You may want to mark arrows in pencil on the map to remind you of the route. Remember to take account of contours to check what climbs are there, assess how long it is, and work out how long it will take to complete. Take account of any refreshment stops planned, including lunchtime pubs, etc? If necessary, are there any escape routes to shorten it?

Make adjustments to suit all the above, and then enjoy the walk. Make your way to the planned starting point, and find the first footpath that you have decided to use. This is where problems often start. Unless you are 100% sure of the path, check it out by taking a compass bearing to confirm the direction. Paths *should be* waymarked from the road and be in a useable condition. If the path doesn't seem to be there, double check your location and starting direction. You may have to make some changes, but report genuine obstructions to the RA and the local highway authority.

Once you have started the walk, keep track of where you have reached on the map and that you are heading in the right direction. Be on the lookout for clues as to where you have reached. It is always reassuring to confirm your position,

especially when approaching a junction. If the worst should happen and you think you are lost, retrace your steps until confident of your position, and make the appropriate adjustments. Once completed, review the walk and, if intending a repeat, how it could be improved. Once you are happy with a walk, there is a lot to be gained from sharing it with others. The best way to do this is by putting it on the programme! More on that next time. ■

A Sad Month

July brought sad news for our Group.

Jean Groves. We were saddened by the death in hospital of Jean Groves, one of the longest serving members of our Group. Jean was a regular walker on our Sunday rambles for many years and led for us on numerous occasions. She was very well liked by all who met her, and everyone had the greatest respect for her gentle manner and wide range of interests. Jean loved to meet new people, and was always interested in talking to her fellow ramblers.

Our thoughts go out to her family, who were very close, and especially to her husband Peter, who many will know from his continuing close association with the Group, in

particular his publishing of our various books, and until recently the programme and Footnotes.

Jean had a woodland burial at Westall Park, Holberrow Green, just south of Redditch. It's in a beautiful setting which Ramblers' are invited to visit.

Gladys Willits. Although never a walking member, Gladys always enjoyed our social occasions with her brother Fred, (who everyone must know or have heard of).

Gladys died in July in the nursing home where she quietly spent her last few months. Previously Gladys had looked after Fred at their home in Castle Vale.

Our thoughts go out to Fred and to the others of Gladys's family. ■

(Continued from page 1)

walking conditions. When the heat of the day built up, we were all able to lose the wet and wind weather gear we had donned as a precaution! And as for the views – well across the peaks, the moors, woodland and pasture and down to Ladybower reservoir we had splendid sights to give the day that extra special quality. We also had three levels of walk on that Sunday, and so catered for all abilities. Which is all to say that forecasted bad weather is sometimes only in the mind of the weather forecasters! ■

Committee Quarter

Pat Bird—Birmingham RA Membership Secretary talks to Footnotes.

Pat Bird is our membership secretary and organises the midweek walks. A society's membership secretary sounds a straightforward enough of a job, doesn't it? Keep records of new members, update addresses and provide them for mailing publications. But there's a bit more to it than that.

Readers of *Footnotes* may be interested in what data you supply about membership statistics to the monthly committee meetings? And how this might help keep the group plan its activities?

"Recently our membership figures have shown a downwards trend. This is due to transfers to other Areas or Groups, resignations, non-renewal of membership, deaths and a failure to attract enough new members. A welcoming letter together with our Area and Group Newsletters and programme is sent to all new members listed. Generally we have already met most of the new members who wish to walk with us as they will have already been out on three rambles before joining, however we do have new members each month who join presumably to

support the Ramblers' Association, who we never see".

In your other role as midweek walks programme organiser, how time consuming is arranging the dates and leaders for the weekday walks? Do you struggle to obtain sufficient leaders in time for the programme print deadline?

"So far people have been very helpful with offers to lead Wednesday walks and we have had little trouble in meeting the programme deadline. While we may not have sufficient leaders of our own we are fortunate that our Wednesday walks attract members from other groups who have always been willing to take their turn at leading".

One of your other roles is to maintain data about the Sunday coach rambles. Sunday attendances have taken a bit of a battering recently, partly due no doubt to the bad weather. But have you noticed any other trends in attendance on our Sundays coach walks?

"We have always had a hard core of members who have supported our coach rambles through thick and thin but recently due to attrition for various reasons this core has

decreased. Unfortunately we are no longer seeing sufficient new members coming forward to replace this loss”.

Finally, have you a favourite walking area, in the UK or abroad?

“I have too many favourite

places in the British Isles to name one. My only criteria is that whether walking on hillside, moorland, coast or valley it must be ‘far from the madding crowd’ and have a real sense of the Great Outdoors”.

■

A time to remember

Pat Holmes

One of the City of Birmingham Group’s Sunday walks recently was in the little visited countryside between Shrewsbury and Wem, in north Shropshire. We were there to commemorate an event in the childhood of one of our long-term members, Joachim Auerbach, and to visit what is now a Special School and a Conference Centre - Trench Hall.

Some time ago, when we were remembering our ‘early walking experiences’ in *Footnotes*, Joachim Auerbach contributed an article about his early strolls with his parents around the countryside near Berlin. Then he went on to tell of his school days in England.

Joachim came to England during the troubled times of 1939 as a lad of eleven, with other German Jewish children, on trains specially commis-

sioned to bring children out of Germany. This scheme was known as Kinder Transport. Only children and organising adults were allowed on the trains, no parents. So Joe came and joined Bunce Court School in Kent.

Such was the situation in Germany even as early as 1933, that, after Hitler took over power on 1st April, 1933, the day that she was required to fly the swastika over Bunce Court School in southern Germany, the headmistress, Anna Essinger, and staff, evacuated the whole school to the safety of Kent. But, in 1940, Kent was designated a war zone so, with a week’s notice, the school was evacuated again, this time with young Joachim included, to Shropshire, where premises had been found at Trench Hall near Wem.

The building had been



Joe (front centre, under the welcome sign). Photo: Pat Holmes

empty for seven years so there was much clearing up to be done, but with local help, the energies of the staff and particularly Anna Essinger, a remarkable lady, and the children themselves, Trench Hall was made habitable. There were girls as well as boys and Christian as well as Jewish children, and local farmers' children attended as day pupils.

Money was short, so was domestic help, so the children helped in the kitchens and with growing produce. Academically they are recorded as having done very well.

Coincidentally, two weeks before we were due to walk past Trench. Hall, a ceremony was held to unveil a commemorative plaque to mark the years the German school was there, to which Joe was invited and, offering my services as driver, I

was able to attend too. It was a lovely sunny day and I found the ceremony quite moving. About ten or twelve 'Old Bunce Courtians' were able to attend, one even coming from America and one from Vienna, and shared their memories with us.

After all that rain at the end of May when we had our walks we were blessed with a fine day and, having warned the parties to expect marauding bullocks and manic sheep, they were absent too. Not so the knee-high grass and the fully blown rape. One area that is certainly worth a revisit is the Jurassic outcrop and atmospheric woods around Clive and Grinsill. Not to mention the Railway Inn at Yorton, which was having a 70-year celebration the lunchtime the 'B' party arrived. Free Beer!! Sorry A's and C's and absent friends! ■

EASTER YOUTH HOSTEL WEEKEND 2008

Next Year's Easter YHA will be at Cheddar Youth Hostel
(Phone No. 0870 770 5760).

The weekend dates are:

Good Friday, March 21st to Tuesday, March 25th (4 nights).

Please book individually direct with the hostel as soon as possible, to avoid disappointment. Once you have confirmed your booking, please let me know. If you decide to use a bed and breakfast place instead, would you please also let me know, so I have an accurate record of how many of us are going.

Steve Brittain 0121 749 1227

Millets

Millets have a super selection of clothing, equipment, footwear and accessories for all your needs for leisure, camping to trekking or travelling. Our staff are always on hand to help with your requirements. You can find us at:

35 Union Street, Birmingham B2 4SR

Tel: 0121 6431496

10% Discount

**for the Ramblers Association
City of Birmingham Group**

On full price merchandise on production of a valid club members card

Footnotes:

Articles, letters, 'Heard on rambles', poetry and other contributions are **most** welcome.

Please write to

David Sutton, 194 Station Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7TE.

(Phone: 0121 444 6188).

Email at: david.sutton986@btinternet.com.