

A Wednesday Walk in November.

Rambling away on a lovely Autumn day, the sun was shining, the sky was blue and the ground under our feet was not too bad at all. Mike had put together a really pleasant five mile walk; ideal for walking off the turkey after Christmas. We parked on the Cropredy/Williamscot Road, North of Banbury. Walking back to the Oxford canal, we went South past lots of boats that are permanent homes, along to a bridge that had a large brick, barn-like structure to the right. (I did note the bridge number, but sadly my brain did not retain the information) We crossed the canal and followed a long track to a farm, going around the farm house to the right, bearing left around the back of the house and through a rather messy gateway. We proceeded across the fields past the site of a old mill towards the A361 and Williamscot Hill. Before getting to the road, we turned East, walking uphill through lovely grass fields, to rest at the top and look over the lovely Oxford and Warwickshire countryside. Following the footpath signs, we arrived at the hamlet of Williamscot, with its lovely old stone houses. Hitting the Cropredy road, we turned right going uphill to a right handed bend (beware the traffic). At said bend, go left along the track with the hedge on your right; there is a stile in the corner. Do a right handed dog leg to a stile on the A361. When the gentlemen pre-walked this walk, it was covered in overgrowth, taking them a good 20 minutes to clear the path. Thanks Mike, John and Richard. The A361 is a busy road – be aware. Turning left a few hundred yards, take the small road to Upper Wardington. Going along here we could see the wireless mast by Edgecote. Coming to a barn on the right, take the footpath to the left that will take you to the village over two fields. Passing the old cottages and a grand church, we again hit the A361. Travelling North, we took the footpath to the left of the lovely stone archway to Wardington House. Passing through a mini industrial estate with Porsche sports cars and modern hen-houses, we went North-West, downhill with lovely views, turning left at the bridle road along the bottom of the valley. Keeping West, we arrived at Prescote Manor, once the home of a Labour MP, but now undergoing renovations. Here we took the road back through the village, although you could go along the tow path again to Cropredy Bridge, the site of a battle in Cromwell's day, and back to the cars. Twenty four of us had a very pleasant few hours and a few stayed to enjoy lunch in one or other of the two pubs in the village.

Di Weaver



"Yes, I *KNOW* it's a frosty morning, but I still think you should go and see your Doctor!"

Mike has something interesting to show Di on the walk described above.



Southam and District Group News and Views

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Editorial

Our Group AGM was held on 26 Nov 2010 and was attended by 26 members. We were pleased to welcome our Area Secretary, Ian Wilkinson and his wife, Lesley together with Area Chairman, Michael Bird. Michael and Harry Green were especially close and each worked hard in establishing the Southam and District Group. Michael's continued support and Ian's current support are much appreciated. After Colin's introduction, Alban Wincott gave us an illustrated talk about the wildlife of Brandon Marsh. It was fascinating to see the huge variety of birds, mammals, plant life and insects that can be seen at Brandon. On a personal level, I was interested in Alban's brief description of the camera equipment that he used to capture and present the images, as I am thinking of upgrading my little digital camera. However when he said that his large telephoto lens alone, cost £1500, I realised that I will have to modify my ambitions very seriously. The meeting continued with Colin presenting his annual **Chairman's Report** as follows:

How the past 12 months(ish) has flown by since our last AGM (and this report), when I merely changed hats from the previous two years as stand-in Chairman to taking on the actual position (the pay rise came in useful). Also at the same meeting, John Maughan was welcomed onto the Committee as our Footpath Secretary, a position he has settled into very well.

Our walks organisers, Isobel and Richard, have arranged a full and varied programme for our Sunday and Wednesday walks. Albeit, the numbers on Sundays have been disappointing, with a low of 3 and a maximum of 12; a little disconcerting, considering the time and effort put in by the walks' organisers; a sign of the times, maybe, who knows? Fortunately, the Wednesday walks are better supported with an average turn-out of 21, the lowest being 10 for Richard Lillystone's walk on an extremely wet day.

Bob Dodd again organised the Thursday Strollers, whose numbers dropped considerably, with an average of 8 to 10 attending. Fortunately, Bob is willing to organise the walks for the ensuing year. Also, Bob will be arranging the "Harry

Green Way" walk on two Sundays within the Sunday walks programme next year, instead of over one week-end, as in the past.

A small number of the Group joined with other groups to celebrate the 75th. Anniversary of the RA, with a picnic on the Wellcombe Hills Country Park on a particularly hot Sunday in May. This was well supported with 240 in attendance. Di Weaver, in conjunction with Ann Hayes, is again organising our Christmas Luncheon for Sunday 14th. November at the Stoneleigh Deer Park Golf Club, for which we are very grateful. Hopefully the 21 members who have booked to date, will have enjoyed both good food and company by the time that this report is circulated. Maybe, because of the difficulties in booking a date close to Christmas, we should start calling it our Annual Luncheon?

The Group is still with out a Social Secretary, so maybe it is a case of disinterest in social functions or simply sitting back and waiting for something to happen. Our membership numbers appear to have dropped slightly. I say appear, because Janet Green, along with other membership secretaries, are having great difficulty in discerning the information churned out through modern technology from Head Office. Hopefully, they will soon sort things out.

It's difficult for any group or society to keep in touch with its members and as we are not all computer conversant, with e-mails, etc., we are extremely grateful for our newsletters, which necessitates time and effort from someone and, in our instance, can I say a big thank you, on behalf of everyone in the Group, to John Bushnell for his excellent publications, which although only issued 4 times a year, I think you will agree, are very informative and chatty, making them enjoyable reading. I am sure that John would still appreciate any snippets for future editions.

My thanks go to all Committee members and walks organisers for their input over the past year; to John and Isobel for editing the programmes and publishing them with the newsletters and to the regular walkers who support the walks.

I would be very interested to hear (by letter if possible) from those members of our Group who, for whatever reason, do not or cannot attend our walks, regarding their reasons why and suggestions, to see if there is anything that we could do to enable them to walk or generally provide benefit for the Group.

Colin Haywood. Group Chairman

Colin then reported that Isobel and John Whittaker would no longer be printing the walks programme and that he had also received notification that a number of members would not be walking with the Group on Sundays, although Bob Dodd would still organise the Thursday Strollers programme.

It was agreed that, because of the low attendance on Sundays, it just wasn't worth the effort in organising the programme and that it would be discontinued after the walk on 19th. Dec. 2010. The Wednesday and the Thursday programmes will continue and will be published as part of the appropriate News Letter.

We received the reports from Ann Hayes, Treasurer, John Maughan, Footpath Secretary, and Di Weaver, Publicity Officer.

In the absence of any nominations for Social Secretary, Di Weaver said that she would be prepared to organise next year's Annual Lunch and asked the members for suggestions for an alternative venue, which should have the capability of catering for about 45 diners. She would like these suggestions before September, otherwise it would become difficult to make a reservation for anywhere near Christmas.

The remaining committee members and officers have agreed to continue carrying out their tasks and were re-elected.

Officers and Committee Members.

Charman / Secretary	Colin Haywood, 44, Pendicke St., Southam, Warks. CV47 1PF	01926 812820
Treasurer	Ann Hayes	01926 813036
Footpath Sec	John Maughan	01926 612901
Publicity	Di Weaver	01788 890383
Membership Sec	Janet Green	01926 814669
Social Sec	<i>Position Vacant</i>	
Wednesday Walks	Richard Lillystone	01926 817529
Thursday Strollers	Bob Dodd*	01926 812381
Area Council Rep	Mike Ridley	01295 770764

* Not Committee Member

Michael Bird gave a short talk regarding the problems we would encounter as a result of the budget cuts. They will affect the Council's continued installation of kissing gates and the general maintenance of the rights of way. The proposed high speed rail link, HST 2, will cut many rights of way and Michael suggested that we write letters of objection to your area MP

Soups and Puds Walk – 27th. Oct 2010

36 members set off from Birdingbury to walk to Long Itchington and back, to then partake of the delicious range of soups and puds, prepared by Jackie. If you still had room, you could finish off with cheese and biscuits and coffee. Our thanks go to Isobel for arranging the walk and to Jackie for providing the food. I'm sure that we all agree that it was a grand day out!

Annual (Christmas?) Lunch.

25 members had a very pleasant lunch at the Stoneleigh Deer Park Golf Club on 14th. November 2010. Pam Miller entertained us afterwards with humorous anecdotes and jokes. So, good food, good laugh, good company; thanks Pam, thanks Di; I look forward to next year.



Ray, Janet and Di relaxing between courses

Southam Christmas Tree Festival.

Southam Group provided a tree again this year. The festival was held in St. James's Church over the week end of 11th. to 12th. December 2010. Our thanks go to Alison Cragg, Isobel Whittaker and helpers for organising and decorating the tree.