

Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting

7 November 2019

Bill Pease offered a big "THANK YOU" to the committee and the others in the group who contribute to its smooth running. In particular, he thanked Nigel and Kath for carrying on organizing the Wednesday walks during what has been a difficult year for them.

He was pleased to announce that all current committee members had agreed to carry on – subject to voting by the twenty members of Southam Ramblers present. All of the committee work behind the scenes quietly and efficiently to ensure the smooth running of the group.

Summer Strollers were successful and attracted 75% non-ramblers.

Eric has continued to look after the website for us, which is lucky for us as no one else has a clue what goes on in that area. Ann has agreed to take over from John as Newsletter Editor and plans the first issue early next month, to be distributed with the Warwickshire Annual Report.

The elected committee members for 2019 to 2020 are

Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer
Footpath Secretary
Membership Secretary
Wednesday Walks Committee
Summer Strollers

Non-Committee Roles

Publicity
Newsletter
Web Master

Bill Pease
Margaret McAulley
Ann Hayes
John Maughan
Kath Chapman
Nigel Chapman
Janet Green
Bill Pease

Di Weaver
Ann Forgan
Eric Forgan

Editor's note

The reports of various items discussed at the Annual General Meeting are from notes taken at the time and not the official minutes of the meeting.

It was good to hear at the AGM that the previous editor of the Newsletter, John Bushnell, is doing well after his operation. Everyone wishes you a speedy recovery John and we hope to see you out walking soon.



Treasurer's Report to the Annual General Meeting

Ann Hayes reported on the printed summary of the accounts. In the main account £176.18 had been received as group allowances from the national association with £280.64 in expenditure, with an excess of expenditure over income of £104.46.

The biggest expense is walk leaders' expenses and more people had claimed the funding for walk leaders to pre-walk their walks. This is paid at 35 pence per mile. 21 people had made claims, which means that some people are still not putting claims in. There is £236.69 in the bank on the main account and £1.23 cash in hand.

The Social Account has not been used over the last year.



Webmaster's Report to the Annual General Meeting

Eric Forgan said that all of the walks for the year and for previous year are available on the Southam Ramblers' website to download or to print at home, for anyone with a walking application on their PC or Smart Phone. The idea is to allow ramblers to enjoy the walk again or take friends and family for a stroll at another time. Eric has a comprehensive folder of all walks and would be happy to copy these for members who do not have access to the appropriate software.

The Southam Ramblers' website has also been kept up to date with walking schedules and the details of our walks have been published on the Ramblers' national web site, so that other ramblers can join us on our walks.

Please note – be careful to print items only for your own use.

Annual Walks

It was proposed at the AGM and supported by a majority vote of the Southam Ramblers members present, that we choose six of our favourite walks, in order to include them as annual walks, to be reviewed at the next A.G.M. This takes a bit of pressure off finding enough walk leaders and enables us to re-visit walks we enjoy.

The idea is to make these walks 'off the shelf' in that details of them, both maps and directions, will be readily available, so that a range of people could lead them.

We are going to try to spread these walks out across the year and focus on different features, such as bluebell woods, waterways and hills.

Ann Forgan will send out voting slips by e-mail and bring paper copies to upcoming walks – in order for people to choose three walks by the end of the year.

From the returns, the six most popular will be chosen and democracy will rule!

Details of all of the walks of the last three years are on our web site and in hard copy in a file, which Eric brings to walks.



Publicity and Newsletter



We continue to publicise our regular Wednesday Walks and Summer Strollers in local publications. Articles about the walks and the Ramblers' Association are put in the District Advertiser regularly by Di Weaver.

Our walks are included in the Southam section of the Leamington Courier. Bill writes articles for the Southam Town Council Newsletter and there will be an article in the next Newsletter. There was an article plus an advert in Southam Town Council Newsletter about the Summer Strollers' programme. Details of all of the walks we have done in the last three years are on the Southam Ramblers' Website and Ann is producing the Newsletter, with a summary of this year's events and walks planned for the next few months.



Footpath Report to the Annual General Meeting

John Maughan reported on new housing developments, which are checked to see if any footpaths are involved. He reported that 100 houses are proposed for by the canal by Napton Brickworks, although they are not approved yet. The path to Wolfamcote has proposed changes, not yet on the definitive map. Forty pounds has been paid to service and repair the group's satnav, which has been worthwhile.

Richard and Vib have reported a problem on the path to Southam Holt. 120 houses are awaiting planning permission in Harbury, which are not in the recently approved neighbourhood plan, although no paths are involved. Ufton Refuse Tip has a pre-settlement and restoration package in place. The footpath will be retained.

Michael Ray met Bill and John in June and it was a very constructive meeting. The Southam Town Council site is informative.

Path SN33 is overgrown and has been cleared by builders.

Members of the public have complained about the unsightly high fence at Napton Reservoir. There is now a fence ringing the water, because there are otters. Although it seems a drastic measure, work has been carried out sympathetically.

A locked gate on a footpath was reported on Peter and Jay's walk near New Zealand Farm. A Napton resident, doing renovations, also closed a footpath, but now, following lots of complaints, will provide a temporary path.

Dallas Burston has applied for permission to develop a 43-bed hotel and spa, but this does not affect the footpath.

ICE in case of emergency cards and Walk Leader Checklists

Nigel and Kath have copies, but they are also available now as digital copies in the Walk Leader toolkit on the national Ramblers' Association site.

www.ramblers.org.uk

If you would like to request durable, waterproof and pocket-sized ones, get in touch by phone on 020 7339 8500 or e-mail

volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com

John Whittaker

It was with sadness that we learnt of the death of John Whittaker, who had been a loyal member of this group for many years, until illness prevented him walking.

The Chairman wrote to Isobel expressing our condolences and received a card from her asking him to pass on to Southam Ramblers her appreciation of the kind expressions of sympathy and thanking those who attended the funeral and the wake.

The Chairman was pleased that many Southam Ramblers, past and present, had been able to attend John's funeral.

Key Dates and Contacts

Southam Ramblers' Annual Meal Out

Last year's meal out was a very successful event so we are returning to the same venue and format.

Venue – The Bell in Ladbroke

Date – 12 March 2020

Forms will be distributed so that you can inform Margaret McAulley if you wish to attend.

The Southam Ramblers Annual General Meeting

Date Thursday 12 November 2020 at 8.00.
Place Southam Sports and Social Club, School Street, Southam

Our web site is at

www.ramblers.org.uk/Southam

As well as all of the maps for walk routes, it has details of upcoming walks and Summer Strollers and back copies of newsletters.

If you have any items of interest for the next

Newsletter please give them to Ann Forgan or forward to ann@4gan.com

Area Meeting Dates

7 December 2019
7 March 2020

Area AGM

1 February 2020
Please contact Bill or Margaret for further information, if you wish to attend.

Thank You

A big thank you to Bill Pease and the members of the committee and non-committee role holders, as well as walk leaders, for their strong contributions to keeping the walks and social events programmes so well organized and enjoyable.

The Wednesday Walks Programme for the next few weeks



Date	Leader	Location	Mileage	Phone	E-mail
27 th Nov	Peter and Jay Webster	Broadwell		01926 814063	peterandjay@btinternet.com
11 th Dec	Ann and Eric Forgan	Leek Wootton	4.5	01926 642334	eric@4gan.com ann@4gan.com
18 th Dec	Bob McAulley	Sherry Walk from Grandborough		01788 817136	cymac50@hotmail.com
8 th Jan	John Maughan	Wardington		07790 170 905	
22 nd Jan	Ann and Eric Forgan	Upper Boddington	4.5	01926 642334	eric@4gan.com ann@4gan.com
5 th Feb	Jeff Round	Charwelton	4.9	01926 817734	jiround77@gmail.com
19 th Feb	Di Weaver	Flecknoe		01788 890383	

Walks Programme Co-Ordinator Nigel Chapman, Tel 01926 813765

All walks begin in Wood Street Car Park at 9.30 a.m.

All members of the Ramblers' Association are welcome and potential members may attend for two walks, before they join.

Registered guide dogs may attend rambles, but not other animals.

Any last-minute walk changes are notified by e-mail. Phone Nigel for updates, if you cannot access e-mail.

Leaders should assume control of their walks and are responsible for associated arrangements.

Wednesday Walks Report to the Annual General Meeting

Nigel Chapman reported that Wednesday walks have been well attended with numbers in the 20s usual, even high 20s sometimes.

The Leaders have done a good job in providing well – planned walks in varied locations. We need more leaders with walks for early 2020.

The Summer Strollers were well coordinated with mainly non-ramblers attending, but ramblers supporting each walk.

The Sherry Walk was well attended and popular last December and will be led by Bob and Margaret again this year on 18 December.

The American Picnic walk was organized by Di and held on a lovely sunny day and there was a range of nice food to share.

Nigel reported that the walk then Soup and Puds was also on offer again this year on 13 November. This has now taken place with Alan leading and, since it was wet, much of it was planned as road walking. Thanks to Jackie Westcott and helpers for organizing the Soup and the Puds.

Nigel thanked everyone who has taken on the role of walk leadership this year.

Additional Walks longer walks to the Cotswolds and from Southam to Leamington were also popular and well attended. Thanks to the leaders of these too.

Thanks also to Linda Doyle, from Southam Heritage, for the interesting history talk around Edgehill.

First Aid Course

Alan White and Eric and Ann Forgan attended a First Aid course on 12th November. This was provided free by an arrangement between the Ramblers' Association and St John's Ambulance, funded by the People's Postcode Lottery.

The half day course was targeted at the kind of scenarios where ramblers may need to give first aid before walking people out, or before the emergency services arrive and it was to the point, inter-active and well presented by Carl Sprake.

It covered situations, such as dealing with a collapsed, non-responsive patient, right through to breaks, sprains and cuts. It also looked at items that should be in all walkers' first aid kits. We took detailed notes and were each given a First Aid Reference Guidebook. If anyone wants to see the book, just ask. All three of us would recommend that as many people as possible attend this course, if it becomes available again.

First Aid Course for Southam Ramblers, 2020

It has been suggested that an evening course, or half day course, is put on specifically for Southam Ramblers.

We need an idea of numbers interested in attending this.

Please contact Bill, Margaret or Ann if you are interested in attending.



The Public Rights of Way Group for Southam. A talk by Councillor Michael Ray, ProW Volunteers Co-Ordinator, to the AGM

A Public Rights of Way Group has been formed for Warwickshire County Council, after Michael was told that there has to be a group, in order to work on this issue.

The first route clearance was carried out last year in Southam and took three people, using tools provided by Warwickshire County Council. Also, a qualified first aider has to be on every route clearance task. Michael is now authorized to put up yellow way markers and the yellow plastic caps are very visible to everyone, including those with poor sight. The group also deals with posts which have fallen over and overgrown ground, with priority given to making sure that people know where to walk safely and to removing hazards to this. Since the group was formed, it has formed forty-two working parties of six to eight people. The work is hard and Michael sees it as a 'green gym'.

There are twenty active members, with six main people. The active members include one who has put in a hundred and twenty hours already, to someone who has just joined. If anyone is interested in joining, please contact Michael.

Examples of the work include the renovation of a double-planked bridge. Sometimes it is necessary to access on foot with heavy materials, as was the case in the bridge at Napton. Another example is the repair work to prevent flooding at the Holywell. A drainage channel has been put in. Also, kissing gates have been put in, the most recent being at Napton. Sometimes farmers help with transporting materials.

They are currently working with some people from Napton, to try to establish a group there. A Southam to Napton circular route of fourteen kilometers is being developed, the first of a few.

They are also trying to establish the line of responsibility for stiles along the Harry Green Way. Stiles should be replaced by more accessible kissing gates, provided animals cannot get out.

The Chairman thanked them for the work, a lot of which was seen by the Summer Strollers walkers.

michael_j_ray@icloud.com

Membership Report to the Annual



General Meeting

Kath Chapman said that the October report shows that membership of the Ramblers' Association – Southam and District Group stands at 72. It was formerly 84. Some of the people who have left were not active walkers, some have left for health linked reasons, some because of changes in circumstances and some are walking with other Ramblers' groups.

We have had discussions about recruitment, but felt that it was not needed, as most of our regular walks are well attended. About 50% of our membership group are active members, regularly attending walks and numbers attending our walks are up, although we have about 30 regular walkers, so the others must attend other groups, or walk on holiday.

The membership portal does show that most of our members are aged 60 plus, also two thirds are female. We have two new members, one already walking regularly and one very recent recruit.

Kath has a new set of membership forms, which just arrived and these will be available to encourage new walkers to join the Ramblers. Membership can also be completed on-line.

Kath also has copies of ICE cards. In Case of Emergency cards allow walkers to fill in their emergency contact details and important medical information. Walkers should keep ICE cards in an accessible place so that if something should happen on a walk, the walk leader, or emergency services, know about any medical conditions and contacts.

