



Southam and District Group News and Views

Issue 94

March 2023

Summer Strollers

Seven, fortnightly, Summer Strolls have been arranged, as usual for this year and as per the programme circulated on 28 February by Nigel. Thank you to all who have agreed to lead strolls.

The first will be to Southam Holt on Thursday 12 April. Details will be posted on Southam News and Views each week, as well as on our website.

For anyone who hasn't tried our Summer Strolls before, six of these range in distance from 3 to 5 miles with a 7 pm start.

The exception is the 6-mile Blue Lias walk on 29 June, which includes a short break for a drink at the Blue Lias, which starts at 6.30 pm.

All Strolls start and finish at Wood St car park.

Richard Clarke

Publicity

Di Weaver does an excellent job on publishing our activities in the Southam free papers and Richard Clarke is up to date with the activities of the Southam Community Group Alliance.

I am trying to compile a list of contacts for the village magazines and newsletters, in order to send them information occasionally.

Any information on this will be gratefully received.

Ann Forgan

Chairman's Report

Feedback from Warwickshire Area Council Meeting 04 March

There are 2,974 members in the area, with 145 new members and 151 leavers. The main reason given for not renewing after year one is time constraints, although people who have friends, or make friends, in the group tend to stay.

The meeting felt that more information in circulation about the people and services in the central office would be useful, for example there are legal experts.

There was discussion about using the Ramblers' app to register people onto walks. However, we register onto a proforma and retain the information.

Feedback from the area AGM included that some groups are using their own websites and not putting their walks on the Group Works Event Manager, on the national website. Southam Ramblers does do this, in fact putting them directly onto the national site, which then transfers them back to the Southam Ramblers' site.

The Warwickshire Area Group Footpath Secretary and Planning Area Representative is retiring soon. This role could be divided into two roles, Footpaths and Planning. Mike Bird has been excellent and very busy on the areas' behalf and would like to spend time sharing experience with the new person or people, before he leaves the role. Planning is more about the Highway Authorities and Public Right of Way issues, the footpaths role is more about local councils and planning authorities. At the next Area AGM in February 2024, the area will need a new Chairman and a new Treasurer, as well as a new Footpath Secretary.

Risk Assessments of walks are still required and must highlight any key issues. They only need to be kept for a maximum of three months, except when an incident occurs. Next year's Warwickshire Area AGM is to be organised and hosted by the Coventry Ramblers and in 2025 it will be Southam Ramblers.

Dates to note: Ramblers General Council Meeting on 01 April 2023 at the NEC.

The area sends representatives, but the meeting is open to any members.

See section on Dates for Diary for area meetings.

Gordon Smith

Editor's note

Our youngest rambler is taking a break from our rambles, as mum is working. I thought I should note how much we have all enjoyed his company, as well as the reduction in our average age! Hope to see you soon Alfie.

Walk leaders, please note the new grading system for walks, with details on the Ramblers' website – we do know that your walk descriptions are better information, but the grading is now a requirement.

Ann Forgan

Webmaster's Report

Ramblers Head Office has been attempting to update the Group Walks Event Manager facility on the national web site for a couple of years now. The update is now nearly complete and will be renamed the Walks Manager. Fortunately, as our website is hosted by Derby Ramblers the update will automatically be updated on to the Southam Ramblers' site.

Until the launch of the new Walks Manager it is difficult to see the advantages for us, but the main aim was to provide a more user-friendly interface, so that all walk leaders could input details of their walk on to the website and be able to update with any changes prior to the walk.

The committee are discussing ways to make more use of the Southam Ramblers' site, as there are a lot of facilities for walks that people could use. For instance, the ability to plot walks and print them using OS maps, downloading previous walks, and getting links to other sites offering facilities and information of interest to walkers. The site is also used to promote the Harry Green Way and provides a gallery of pictures from our walks.

The first page of our website has been the same for over twelve months, so we are looking to update.

Eric Forgan

Dates for Diaries

Southam Ramblers AGM, provisional date and place is Thursday 9 November 2023 at 8.00 at the Nelson Club, Stockton.

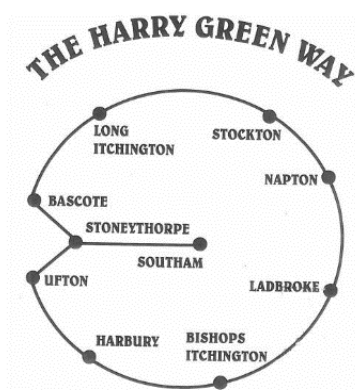
Area Quarterly Meetings

03 June 2023

02 September 2023

25 November 2023

Friends of the Harry Green Way



The Harry Green Way is a long-distance path around Southam, devised by Harry Green, a former chairman of Southam Ramblers, in 1988. Southam Ramblers members ensure that it is cleared and waymarked.

Last year we were fortunate to get a donation of a heavy duty DeWalt Strimmer and a DeWalt Hedge Trimmer. These will be tremendously useful to the HGW Volunteers to keep their part of the walk in a good condition.

As more and more metal gates are being installed on the walk, we have now purchased adhesive HGW signs, which can be attached to the gates. HS2 continues to affect the route and further changes have been made to the route where HS2 crosses the path on the way between Napton and Ladbroke.

The friends of the Harry Green Way who have volunteered to "adopt" a walk are:

Southam to Bascote
Bascote to Long Itchington
Long Itchington to Stockton
Stockton to Napton Folly
Napton Folly to Welsh Road
Welsh Road to Ladbroke
Ladbroke to Bishops Itchington
Bishops Itchington to Harbury
Harbury to Ufton
Ufton to Southam

Richard and Vib Clark
Peter and Jay Webster
Jeff Round
Don and Reine-Marie Bates
John Gymer
Bob and Margaret McAulley
Gordon and Dawn Smith
Bob Middlemas
John Maughan
Ann and Eric Forgan



Will anyone who walks any section of the Harry Green Way please advise Eric Forgan at southamramblers@gmail.com with any problems relating to the condition of the stiles, signage, or routing of the path.

The Slow Ways Project

The project continues to progress and so far, 700 volunteers have created 8,752 routes linking all of Britain's towns and cities. These routes are now being walked and reviewed to verify that they are feasible walks and are suitable for all walkers.

There are 6 walks centred on Southam, to Byfield, Daventry, Leamington, Whitnash, Kineton and Rugby. So far only two have been walked and none have been walked the three times necessary to be approved. This may be something the Southam Ramblers could help with, as an addition to our existing walks?

Eric Forgan

Information about the project at: <https://ravenellison.com/portfolio/slow-ways/>

The elected committee members for 2022 to 2023 are:

Chairman

Gordon Smith

Secretary

Margaret McAulley

Treasurer

Jeff Round

Footpath Secretary

John Maughan

Membership Secretary

Kath Chapman

Wednesday Walks

Nigel Chapman

Summer Strollers

Richard Clarke

Newsletter

Ann Forgan

Webmaster

Eric Forgan

Publicity

Di Weaver

Committee Member

Janet Green



Wednesday Walks Report

Our programme is full until 29th June. As usual, thanks to the walk leaders for regularly coming forward to organise walks. Sometimes we reach the stage where we only have 3 or 4 walks on the programme, but this is always addressed by our regular leaders.

The locations of walks have been varied, with local ones close to Southam and some further afield, for example, in Leamington, Edgehill, Chipping Warden, Rowington, Flecknoe and so on, which gives a good variety.

Summer Strollers, organized by Richard Clarke, have been added to the calendar, so it looks pretty full at present.

It would be helpful if the number of volunteers to be walk leaders was increased. This would not only take the pressure off the usual leaders, but would also lead to more new walks being added to the list.

We have been instructed by the Ramblers Association to grade each of our walks in the future from Easy to Technical, although most of ours will be Easy, or Leisurely. Walk leaders need to specify the grade when booking their slot.

Nigel Chapman

For booking a walk slot in the programme
nigel.chapman@hotmail.co.uk



The Wednesday Walks Programme

Also lists Thursday Strollers and Special Walks

Date	Leader	Location	Distance in miles	Tel No	Email
29 th Mar	John Maughan	Chipping Warden		612901	
12 th Apr	Richard Clarke and Vib	Southam Holt	4.5	07969 960968	richvib@hotmail.co.uk
19 th April	John Gymer	Leamington tbc	Special walk	813646	john.gymer@outlook.com
26 th Apr	Kath Chapman	Bluebell Walk at Badby		813765	kathchapman@hotmail.co.uk
10 th May	Gordon Smith	Ashorne		07596 798233	Gordonsmith2311@gmail.com
18 th May	Richard Clarke	Southam Holt	3 Strollers	07969 960968	richvib@hotmail.co.uk
24 th May	Alan White	Norton		941729	alan.lynne.white@gmail.com
1 st June	Annie and Roger Lane	Ufton Woods	4 Strollers	813075	anne.lane21@btinternet.com
7 th June	Di Weaver	Flecknoe and Shuckburgh	5 Picnic	01788 890 383	
15 th June	Kath Chapman	Bascote	4 Strollers	813765	kathchapman@hotmail.co.uk
21 st June	Gordon Smith	Compton Verney		07596 798233	Gordonsmith2311@gmail.com
29 th June	Bob McAulley	Stockton Blue Lias 6.30 start	6 Strollers	01788 817136	cymac50@hotmail.com
12 July	Jeff Round	Cotswolds tbc	Special walk	07799 771778	Jiround77@gmail.com
13 July	Eric and Ann Forgan	Lower Fields Farm	5 Strollers	07775 860693	eric@4gan.com
27 July	Tba	New Zealand Farm Stockton	4 Strollers		
10 August	John Gymer	Stoneythorpe Estate	3 Strollers	813646	John.gymer@outlook.com

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



Membership Report

As of the end of February 2023, we have 80 members, with four new members on the list. There is a new membership portal, which gives access to information and is updated regularly.

Walk Leaders who had not registered have now been added to our list of volunteers and we have 19 registered, with two more to add. Registration ensures that all leaders are covered by the Ramblers' insurance.

New members continue to be encouraged to join on-line. They receive a welcome message with details of the next walk.

Ramblers are continuing requesting that we take attendance lists and that Walk Leaders complete risk assessments.

Kath Chapman



Southam Community Group Alliance

This is an alliance of about 20 organisations in Southam that are run by, or rely on, help from volunteers. While Southam Ramblers in recent years has been well supported by walkers, we always welcome help from people who are prepared to lead walks or to assist with the organisation. This was a common theme for other organisations at the meeting.

Decisions taken at the meeting, as set out below in an extract from the minutes, were as follows:

- We should establish a single register/inventory of Southam's community groups based on the current listings on the Town Council web site. All groups to contribute text to fit in a template to be produced. This area of the web site could be made less corporate and more attractive. There may be options to render the information on other platforms.

- Organise a 'Community Groups' Fayre', where each group has a table/stall and people wander round and chat with people in the groups they like the look of.

- Publicise 1 and 2 with a full coverage leaflet drop to all letterboxes in Southam.

- The Town Council was requested to be the lead organisation to take the initiative forward.

Post Meeting Note: The Town Council passed a resolution agreeing to take on this role on 26th Jan.

As of 1 March, we await the template in which to set out what we have to offer and further information about the mailshot and Fayre. I will chase this up if nothing is heard by 14 March.

Richard Clarke



Footpath Secretary's Report Building Application

12 January. An application has been made for an extension at Marton Road Farm. Footpath. SM8 runs close to the building. Therefore, we have requested that any temporary closure notices must be clearly marked at both ends of the path.

Solar Farms

22 February. An application for a new Solar Farm off the B4100 on Jaguar Land Rover land at Gaydon has been made. No public right of way paths are affected and it is on a relatively small site. It is wedged between the JLR test areas and Gaydon village. There have been no objections from the Ramblers.

There has also been an application for a Solar Farm at Sherbourne, which is a resubmission of an earlier plan. Footpaths have been allowed for and consultation continues.

Feldon Vale -the application for the very large Solar Farm between Bishops Itchington and Knightcote has been rejected twice by Stratford District Council, but has now been allowed on appeal, as of 1st December 2022. Then on the 23rd of January 2023, the application was withdrawn.

HS2

We have been informed by Simon Davis from HS2 that the contractors EKFB have been commissioned by HS2 to undertake a Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Review, for the design proposals associated with the HS2 route from the North Portal of Chiltern Tunnels to Southam, to include a review of comments from relevant stakeholders, in order to ensure that facilities for these groups have been included, including changes to Public Rights of Way, integration with cycling networks and new highway proposals. For the design proposals associated with the infrastructure of HS2 in Warwickshire, they would like us to review their final designs. Although we thought the chances of influencing the design of HS2 remote, we have once again made the point that we would prefer a footbridge over HS2 on the Ladbroke/Southam footpath, rather than the diversion to the Banbury Road. We thanked Simon for the opportunity and he acknowledged our comments and forwarded a link to 'HS2 in your area', which enables us to search for details of work being carried out locally.

The link is www.hs2inyourarea.co.uk

John Maughan

Treasurer's Report

The transfer of authority from the previous Treasurer to me is now complete, but it has been more problematic than we anticipated, mainly because the Unity Bank operating system is quite complicated. The financial year is to stay as 1 October until 30 September and we receive two payments from the area group per year.

In summary, so far this year, we have spent £107.64 more than we have received in Group Allowances, to date £150.00. This is mainly because we have bought new stickers for the Harry Green Way, which attach to metal posts and gates. We have a balance of £126.92 in credit.

Walk leaders should continue to claim travel expenses for pre-walks. Forms have been changed so that people claim money, rather than miles, which then have to be converted to money. Please submit all claims on the new expense form and attach receipts, where possible.

Jeff Round