

East Kent Rambling Club

Newsletter - June 2019

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As Chris Bilyard, our Newsletter Editor, is away travelling the world, I am filling the void and hope you find this temporary, revised format, interesting - John Burton.

President's Report.

It was nice to see that two East Kent members had their names on the first White Cliffs Rambling Club programme, reproduced from 30 years ago, Barbara Seed and Hazel Johnson, Barbara led walks up to recent years, and Hazel was the secretary for EKRC at that time.

Many of us also led mid-week and Sunday walks for White Cliffs as well as for East Kent from that time.

A large 3,700 town development is proposed for land between Eastry, Northbourne and Ham. This will affect the countryside and the paths we walk.

A further development has been re submitted with a slightly reduced number of houses at Farthinglow Dover, some on AONB land. CPRE, had objected to the previous proposal and won their case. It remains to see what happens here.

KCC, have published on their website, their proposals for mineral extraction and waste disposal. A waste disposal site is to be near Canterbury.

A national newspaper recently gave a list of solar farms across the country with the cost to the taxpayer. One near Herne Bay they alleged cost the taxpayer 1.5 million more than the electricity it produced.

A newspaper reporter has asked me for details of a closed path between Albert Terrace, and Margate High Street. This is an important short cut between the sea front via the steps to

Albert Terrace car park, and to the High Street. I have asked KCC for an update as this has been going on too long.

Gordon Sencicle

Impressions of my first holiday with EKRC, May 2019.

We set out on a slightly drizzly Saturday morning but for the rest of the week we were blessed with glorious sunshine and perfect walking weather. Every morning we looked out to see dazzling seas and every evening we watched a spectacular sunset where the sun gradually dropped behind the horizon, turning the sky and the sea red.

Weston-super-Mare is much as I remember it from my childhood. A very wide, flat, open bay with a tide that goes out almost as far as the eye can see, leaving acres of mud. Its pier is very much in evidence and appears well looked after, and there are still donkey rides on the sand.

Our hotel was situated on a quiet headland at the far end, and those of us fortunate enough to have a sea facing room, could wake every morning to the sound of the waves on the shore.

We arrived and the hotel receptionist came on board to give us some housekeeping information. Having got this out of the way, he excitedly said "who LOVES Bingo" – the answering silence was deafening! He tried again "who LIKES Bingo" – again, he was met with silence. Bingo was then cancelled for the following three nights!

Sunday saw us heading to the other end of the bay so that those doing the long walks could start their three days of hiking along the West Mendip Way. Those doing the short walks

carried on to the headland known as Brean Down. This is owned by the National Trust and is covered in wild flowers, including a large number of cowslips. Despite some steep climbs, everyone felt the effort was well worth it as we had panoramic views across to the North Devon Coast, across to Wales, inland across the Somerset Levels, and in the distance, Glastonbury Tor.

Monday was another 8 miles or so of the West Mendip Way for some, ending in Cheddar Gorge, whilst we 'short' walkers visited Cheddar for a coffee stop (a pre-requisite for short walkers) before a walk round Cheddar reservoir.

Tuesday was the final phase of the West Mendip Way and declared by all to have been a lovely walk along the top of the Mendips, up-hill and down dale, with lush countryside all around and spectacular views – and the odd field of inquisitive cows. In the meantime, the rest of us continued to Wells for sightseeing or a short circular walk. Wells is a really lovely, quiet, compact city with a Cathedral and Bishop's Palace and well worth looking round. Wednesday was our 'coachless' day and we all set out from the hotel to walk over the headland to the next bay. It was hot and we were glad of the shade of the woodland we walked through, and the 'short walkers' were particularly glad of the café at the turnaround point, although it lacked our promised cake! Other walkers continued on to visit Woodspring Priory before heading back to base. On arrival back at the hotel, we found a fire engine outside the hotel and four burly firemen inside. The lift had become stuck with one of the receptionists inside, but he was quickly freed.

Thursday should have been our visit to Bath, but we discovered that the M5 was closed due to an accident and therefore it was impossible to drive anywhere north. After various suggestions for alternative visits/walks, Dunster was agreed on and a 4-mile walk downloaded from the internet and enjoyed by all.

On Friday, we managed to get to Bath, and whilst some did 8 miles on the Bath Skyline Walk, others looked around the City or climbed up to a National Trust view point.

So, my impressions of my first EKRC holiday? Loved it. The hotel had everything we needed, the staff were great, the food piping hot, the weather could not have been better and, of

course, the countryside was just made for walking.

A very big 'thank you' to Maggie and Reg for all their hard work and to all my walking companions for making it such an enjoyable week. Oh, and of course, not forgetting Frank our driver, who enjoyed himself so much that he would like to come with us again.

Heather Gilbert

Up and coming events.

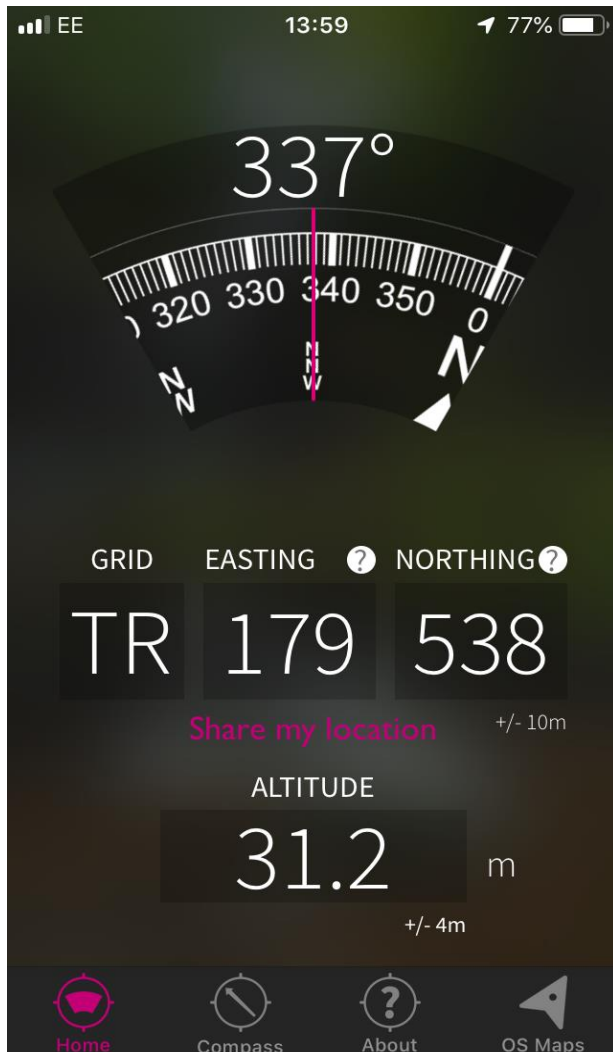
- 7 July, coach trip to Chartwell
- 11 July, Skittles at Chance Inn, Guston
- New Year Lunch, 8 January 2020, this is just a reminder, full details and booking form will be included with the next Newsletter

News from the club committee.

- The club's funding of a new gate near Bridge has been well received. If you can suggest a location where another gate, to replace a stile, would be of benefit, please advise Derek Ames.
- Sue Slater will lead one short 'evening walk' in the next programme to assess the level of support for such walks.
- Proposed club holiday details for 2020 were agreed and will be circulated to members prior to the circulation of this Newsletter. Rosemary was thanked for offering to organise the holiday.
- All club members are welcome to attend committee meetings if they wish, however please inform the Secretary in advance, if you plan to do so. The next committee meeting will be held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday 17th September. Also, if you wish the committee to consider a specific item, please advise the Secretary in advance.
- At the present time, **approximately 60 members have not renewed their membership**. If this includes **YOU**, don't worry, but please pay Sue, our Treasurer, as soon as possible.
- The committee decided not to pursue the suggestion of recognising farmers' who adopt exceptionally good standards of path maintenance. It was felt that this was too difficult.

How to know where you are.

We recently learned of a group of local walkers who needed to summon an ambulance but could not adequately describe their location. As previously reported in this newsletter, if you install the OS Locate 'app' on your phone, it will show your location in the form of a 6-digit map reference which the emergency services can use to locate you. Why not download it now?



Canterbury Rings walks, 3rd and 10th July

John and Rosemary are leading members on the recently developed, Outer Ring walk, split over 2 successive Wednesdays. In each case, it is suggested that members park in the usual location at Bridge by the Recreation Field and walk to meet the group by the Canterbury-bound bus stop alongside Bridge Dental Practice, 78 High Street. We will change buses at Canterbury Bus Station and travel out to Blean School, (arriving at approximately 10.45) where the walk commences.

From Blean, on our first walk back to Bridge, we travel in a clockwise direction, on a mainly flat, stile-free route arriving around 4.15. Our second walk is anti-clockwise, undulating and with several stiles. We hope to complete this walk at around 4.00

If you wish to join the group at Blean, please bear in mind that parking may be a problem and you will need to make travel arrangements back from Bridge. Also, please let us know that you expect to join us at Blean.

Roger King's RIGHTS OF WAY REPORT.

For more information please phone Roger on 01304 362730 or e-mail:

roger.rambler89@outlook.com

KCC General News

Firstly, the usual commercial – do please use KCC's *fault reporting website*, which generally works well these days, and provides automatic updates as matters (hopefully) progress. It can be found at:

<https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccescams/standardmap.aspx>

People certainly are making use of it, as a total of 4,092 issues were reported in east Kent during 2018, up slightly on 2017. These included: vegetation (940), enquiries, incl. planning issues (716), fingerposts (553), path obstructions (337), waymarking issues (335), crops (287), and stiles (254). A total of 3,698 east Kent issues were resolved, which leaves the backlog across the whole county at just over 7,000.

- *Enforcement Notices issued in east Kent during 2018:* - 41 in total, including 14 for crops, 12 physical obstructions, 4 stiles/gates, 3 ploughing/surfacing, and 2 trees/hedges. Direct Action by KCC to solve the problem was taken in 6 locations, including cutting the offending crops in Shepherdsweil and Guston.

- *Budgets 2019/20:* - The Capital Budget (signposts, bridges etc.) is set at £700K for the whole county, up from £680K last year. Meanwhile the Revenue Budget is broadly similar to the 2018/19 figure. So, no staffing changes are planned.

- *Replacing stiles:* approximately 5,000 of the original 12,000 stiles in place when KCC took over the PROW responsibility in the 1990s have now been replaced by gates or gaps.

Vegetation Clearance and Volunteer Activity

After the disasters with the original contractors in 2018, all is in place for a much better year. The number of paths to be cut will be slightly increased again, based on reports received during 2018 – so do let KCC know if you find an overgrown path. The first cuts (done over a period of 30 days) were due in May, with the second cut most likely in August. Only the NDW is guaranteed a third cut, but other routes may possibly be done. Meanwhile the Ramblers White Cliffs volunteers have not been idle in the non-growing season, with most of the emphasis being understandably on installing gates, steps etc. at various locations in east Kent.

England Coast Path

- *Ramsgate to Whitstable* – the planning/health & safety issue at Kingsgate by the North Foreland Golf Course is *still* unresolved, so no date as yet for the official opening except “this year”.
– *Whitstable to Iwade* – public consultation ended in August 2017, but we still await the Planning Inspectorate’s report on the route as originally proposed (which in fairness did contain a number of potentially contentious issues).
- *A virtual walk* - the Coast Path is to be Googletracked by Natural England to provide a virtual walk online along the open Kent sections of the Path - as was done with the North Downs Way in 2017.

A cautionary tale – Shepherdswell footpaths ER80/81/83

You will remember how last year the Inspector decided that the proposed diversions in this area just west of the Village Hall were not bad enough to be rejected. Unfortunately, most of what we predicted has come true. The new field edge route is starting to overgrow and is sown with crops, leaving little room to walk. The other path in the same field (ER83) is not restored – just like ER80/81 for so many years. After my representations, KCC are now on the case, but if such proposals come forward in the future, we must fight them even harder.

Some path change updates –

(1) Orders made:

- *EE488 Goodnestone/Eastry* – The issue I consulted members on 12 months ago.

Happily, KCC were convinced that enough evidence exists to (re)create a bridleway from Knowlton Court eastwards along Black Lane, crossing Thornton Lane, Venson Road, and eventually the A256 dual carriageway. This link would be of huge benefit to walkers.
– *EE487 Goodnestone* – KCC believe sufficient evidence also exists to create another footpath across the Knowlton Court estate. This would run from the Chillenden – Barfrestone road northwards through woods and then across meadows to the public road from Chillenden to Knowlton Court itself. However, the creations of both EE488 and EE487 are opposed by the Knowlton landowners, so the issues will almost certainly have to be decided by the Planning Inspectorate.

- *Station Road Walmer development* - very minor diversions – and in green corridors - of footpath ED36 and bridleway ED58 through the extensive new housing development from Station Road southwards towards Coldblow Woods and the railway crossing. Have developers got the message at last?

(2) Order confirmed:

- *EE353 (Tilmanstone parish) at Waldershare churchyard* – The definitive route used to pass through the grounds of the now privately-owned Old Rectory. The new route follows the hard paths through the churchyard, as used by the North Downs Way. An eminently sensible change.

And Finally....

For our IT savvy members, are you aware of The Ramblers App? The app is free (from Google Play and App Store) for all Ramblers members and is aimed to help them find, join and enjoy Ramblers group walks throughout the UK. This is helpful not only close to home but also if you are visiting other areas of the country.

Other benefits of the Ramblers App are

- Discovering thousands of walks
- Fascinating articles.
- Latest savings offers.
- Digital membership card.
- Digital walk register.