

EAST KENT RAMBLING CLUB
NEWSLETTER
July 2020 to October 2020

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As all the EKRC activities have been forced to cease until further notice, this Newsletter will be short! However, here follows updates on local issues, together with current advice from the Ramblers Association.

President's Report

I hope everyone is managing to have some fresh air during lock down with some short walks? Nothing shuts down as far as paths are concerned however.

I was consulted by PC Cy Walker, concerning an obstructed path adjacent to Broadstairs cricket club. I gave him all the legal reasons about blocking PROWs and was also consulted by a resident, telling me about this obstruction and that the local people were upset not being able to use the path. Some trees had also been cut down which the landowner claimed were unsafe. He said he had consulted a former tree warden about this, who had worked in the past for Thanet council.

I asked Andy Hutchinson, the KCC Manager at Brabourne if he knew anything about it and he said that he was taking legal action to open up the path. Heather Waller, an officer at Brabourne, asked me if she could forward my name to one of the residents, and I agreed. She told me that PC Cy Walker was not representing the objectors, but the landowner, who complained that the residents had removed his fences, and so in fact the owner had shot himself in the foot by complaining to the police in the first place.

I later heard the owner had in fact cut down 41 trees. I suggested to the man who had contacted me to contact the Forestry Commission to see if the owner had got permission to cut the trees. I later heard it was for only one. The Forestry Commission will take action if the council do not, but council have more powers. I am grateful to Colin Bridge's input here in visiting the site and taking photos.

I was also notified by another resident, this time from Ramsgate, that the people owning, where I understand, there had been a house destroyed by a fire, opposite the Coastguard cottages at Pegwell, were claiming extra land alongside the coastal path saying this was their land. I am told they have planning permission to rebuild the house and put up a fence on the seaward side of the site. The residents in the cottages are claiming the fence would block their views. Checking with Heather Waller at Brabourne, it appears the owners claim for the land is justified. I have passed this information onto the resident who first contacted me. It is now up to locals and others to check the plans, the land registry and to see if the fence has been approved. Legally you can erect a fence up to 2m. in height without planning permission.

There are claims from the British Horse Society for bridle paths, some going onto footpaths, meaning these will be shared by equestrians and cyclists. Others being new routes, like the one through Knowlton that we used to use, but were eventually prevented from doing so, as the path did not continue beyond the boundary. All these claims can be viewed on:-

<http://www.craddock.co.uk/apps/inbox.htm> Hugh Craddock's investigations are historical, extensive and comprehensive. Please look and see where these are.

Hugh, who is the legal expert for the Open Spaces, has advised me several times on legal matters concerning Rights of Way.

One application for a bridlepath worries me, and I have told Hugh and the officer at KCC I will oppose it. At this point in time, it is at the consultation stage only but better to express concerns now. I have suggested an alternative route while retaining the existing path for walkers. People on horse back can see over hedges for oncoming cars on country lanes, while walkers can not, if Network Rail subsequently apply for a diversion. The claim as it stands, goes from Sutton to Ringwoud over the railway line. There are stiles either side of the line, at the railway, with stop, look and listen signs. It has a clear view, Walmer station being visible one way, with a clear view the other way towards Martin Mill. Drivers have whistle boards either side of the crossing to warn walkers.

Fearing what went on in East Anglia, where Network rail have put in numerous closure proposals and diversions, I feel allowing horses to cross electrified railway lines is madness, and will give Network rail more ammunition when our turn comes, to close and divert this path onto country lanes, with greater distances for walkers to rejoin their route with increased danger. This path has been one of my favorite walks, first discovered having seen the stiles when travelling to work by train. I later consulted the OS map and found it was a PROW. It is called Hangmans Lane and has historical significance. Evidence could well have been for horses in the past but before the railway came into existence. The last section across fields to Ringwold is already a bridlepath.

All the claims can be seen on the website above. Individual representations can be made to KCC and the contact officer dealing with this can be obtained from Roger or me.

Hugh gave me advice on the path between Albert Terrace and Margate High street, closed under an incorrect legal procedure. Unfortunately this closure has been extended for another 6 months with a long diversion around by the clock tower.

The Cleve Hill Solar Array is to go ahead and has been approved by the Secretary of State. We shall have to see if this was a good move or would have been better to have crops there.

While it is urgent that we need greener energy, would it have been better to use factory, supermarket, leisure centres, doctors surgeries, barns, village hall roofs, more expensive though!

Gordon Sencicle.
June 2020

Group walking.

The current Coronavirus advice concerning meeting up with others from the Ramblers is thus -

As of 1 June: (quote)

“The easing of lockdown measures allows more freedom for walkers. However, the advice remains to **limit your contact with others.**

At this stage, **all Ramblers group walks and activities remain suspended.**

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Rules for contact with others have recently been updated.....

People in England can exercise with **up to five others from different households** provided strict physical distancing guidelines are followed.”

You can find more details under “**Our advice to walkers**” and “**Know where you can walk**” on the Ramblers website – www.ramblers.org.uk.

We, as a walking group, should adhere to this advice.

Walks Programme.

There is obviously no Walks Programme to circulate at this point in time. However, there are plenty of opportunities to try out new routes.

Since we were all last on an organised Club Walk in March, it is hoped that many of our members have been able to enjoy some fabulous weather, especially in May, walking near to home.

Further advice could change, and perhaps quickly, so can we ask for members to volunteer to lead a walk, without a fixed date as yet, so that a Walks Programme might be drawn up swiftly whenever that opportunity arrives.

Club Holiday.

Rosemary is currently researching all aspects of the holiday arrangements, and she will be in touch with those booked to go on the September 2020 holiday in the very near future as to our position

Subscriptions for 2020 – 2021.

Thank you to all those members who have already forwarded their £6 to Sue for this year.

100 Year Birthday

Veteran East Kent Rambling Club member Sylvia Tuff recently celebrated her 100th birthday. Hazel Baldwin kindly organised a birthday bouquet on behalf of the Club and she tells us that Sylvia, who has been finding lockdown very difficult, was delighted to receive this.

LOCAL RIGHTS OF WAY NEWS from Roger King

Probably the strangest news update that I have ever done, as so much is on hold right now: most path changes, progress on the England Coast Path, "Don't Lose your Way" (claiming paths that were not recorded in the 1950s), KCC volunteer activity, and so much more. And it's also been decided that the 2020 White Cliffs Walking Festival, due for 27 Aug to 1 Sept, will now not take place

General News from KCC

Continue to Report Problems: Firstly, everyone out on a walk who notices a problem should report it in the usual way, preferably by using the website at <https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccesscams/standardmap.aspx> KCC are particularly interested in overgrown paths, and faulty path furniture, e.g. broken stiles, as these areas will get top priority when things return more to normal. New clearance contractors have been appointed for 2020, they should have been at work since late May.

Budgets: before the lockdown, the news was sounding very positive, with increases of the order of 10% overall being approved, and vacant posts filled. Fingers crossed for no change.

Current staff activity: at present, all the Brabourne staff are working from home, with site visits kept to a minimum. Certainly there are always plenty of planning applications to be looked at.

Upgrade to the "Old Folkestone Road" from Capel to Aycliffe

This track from the B road adjacent to Abbotscliff House at Capel, through to Aycliffe (not the cliff-edge route) has had a makeover. New surfacing – and wheelchair friendly, especially on restricted byway ER225 at the Abbotscliff end; and new fencing, and gates to the clifftop walks have been created. A great improvement.

More problems with the Access Land at Capel, just west of the Battle of Britain Memorial

Most people will remember the major problems KCC (with major support from volunteers) had during the years 2010-16 in trying to compel the landowner to grant proper access to this area of official Access Land, as required by the CROW Act 2000. Unfortunately he has taken advantage of the present situation to padlock the only gate at the eastern end of the site. This was reported to KCC in mid-April and hopefully they will be able to take action soon.

Decision on the Cleve Hill Solar Park – go ahead

The Secretary of State's final decision on this massive proposed development bordering the coast in the Faversham/Graveney area (and thus affecting the nature of both the Saxon Shore Way and the England Coast Path) was published at the end of May. In his view, the need for more green energy outweighed the environmental considerations in this case. But the opponents of the scheme have apparently not given up yet.

Path change news

An encouraging amount of what is live at the moment appears to be claims for new rights of way. One of the prime movers (ahead of the main Ramblers "Don't Lose Your Way" initiative) is one Hugh Craddock, who has vast experience of claiming new rights of way.

A look at his list of claims at the following web address may well surprise you:

<http://www.craddocks.co.uk/apps/index.htm>

Confirmed orders

Tilmanstone EE400/EE400A - Two paths used to cross busy Barville Road N to S within 70 yards of each other (approx. GR 301 504). EE400 heading southwards has now been diverted SE to meet parallel path EE401 and use *its* safer crossing point. This rendered EE400A (S of Barville Road) redundant, since EE401A (a hard-track southward continuation of EE401) runs just to the east. As a result, EE400A has been extinguished.

In the pipeline

Coldblow Woods, Ripple – you may have seen in the KM “Mercury” that the Planning Inspectorate had instructed KCC to make orders creating paths just *inside* the NE, SE and SW boundaries of the Woods. Expect to see these soon.

Goodnestone & Eastry EE488 – An order was made last year for the creation of new bridleway from Knowlton Court eastwards via Black Lane, and across Thornton Lane, Pike Road (Venson) to the A256. This would be a particularly valuable new route, and it is at present being decided by the Planning Inspectorate because of landowner objections. Expect a decision by autumn.

Goodnestone EE487 – this revised order, made in January, will create a footpath SW to NE from the Chillenden to Elvington road, through woods and across Knowlton Park, effectively joining footpath EE309 from Beech Grove with EE260 towards Eastry.

And out for first consultation:

Sutton & Ripple footpaths EE427 and EE451 – a claimed upgrading to bridleway status. This route runs from just west of Sutton village, via Winkland Oaks and across the railway (!) towards Ringwould.

Middle Heronden to Pike Road, Venson, in Eastry parish. The claim here is for a new route of bridleway status.

In conclusion

Hopefully, a Walks Programme can wing its way in your direction soon!

In the meantime, Stay Safe and Stay Alert.....enjoy rambling around our wonderful Kent Countryside.

