

**EAST KENT RAMBLING CLUB**  
**NEWSLETTER**  
**February 2021**

President	Gordon Sencicle	01304 366878
Chairman	Derek Ames	01303 265343
Vice Chairman	Freda Bean	01843 863381
Treasurer and Membership Secretary	Sue Slater	01227 455750
Secretary	Rosemary Burton	01227 765188
Rambles Secretary	Jenny Hardy	01843 221780
Committee Member	Malcolm Attwood	01304 364794
Committee Member	Peter Basford	01843 604655
Committee Member	Chris Bilyard	01227 766793
Committee Member	John Burton	01227 765188
Club Website	<a href="http://www.eastkentramblingclub.com">www.eastkentramblingclub.com</a>	
Email Address	<a href="mailto:ekramblers@gmail.com">ekramblers@gmail.com</a>	

Hello, Everyone.

Although our walking programme is currently suspended, here is a Club Update.

### **President's Report.**

I did say last year, that if elected for a further year at the AGM, it would be my last year as President. We didn't have an AGM due to Covid-19, so the committee continued as caretakers. However, as we approach the next AGM in March, my final year will be up.

As a founder member of EKRC, now 63 years, it was an honour to be asked by Roger King to become President, the only President in the history of the club who has been a fighter for Rights of Way, during the last 33 years at least.

I first became involved by supporting David Pennington and Roger King when they were involved in objecting to a package of diversions at Staple, The farmer was only being charged £140 by DDC for a package of diversions, this was later changed when KCC took over, to £1,500 for each individual path, and no longer for multiple paths.

At that time, Pat Wilson, having been involved with the Staple Public Inquiry, was the Area Footpath officer for Kent RA, and not wishing to lose sight of a possible recruit, she persuaded me to become a Local Footpath Officer. I took on 17 parishes in the Dover area, a title I held for 25 years, to scrutinise all path orders for diversions, closures, and to object if they were unacceptable. It is then up to the council to proceed with the order or not, If they did proceed, a Public Inquiry follows.

I was expected to walk all the paths at least once a year to report any obstructions to KCC.

I have attended twice yearly meetings at area footpath meetings at Maidstone, and 17 Public Inquiries, giving evidence at most, The most notable was Howletts, when we stopped a diversion which would have involved walking along the road between Bekesbourne and Littlebourne. The bridges erected by the owners on the original path, were actually obstructions. I was filmed by Meridian before the P.I. and interviewed by Radio Kent after we had won.

When KCC wanted to close the cliff path at Capel and divert the path along a cycle track, five of us gave evidence against closure to Judge Adele Williams at Canterbury Crown Court . Mike Godfrey and his neighbour, went out beforehand to dig out the path, so that the judge had a clear path on which to walk, which may have affected her decision?. This cycle path only touched the coast at one spot, before diving back inland The path we saved is now part of the coastal path around England, has fine views over the channel, out towards Dungeness and the Romney Marsh, something I remember from the early days on a walk, just after the club was formed.

Ecotricity appealed against Dover District's refusal to grant permission to erect four enormous Wind Turbines at Langdon, which would have been visible from the Saxon Shore Way on one side and the North Downs Way on the other. Somebody estimated that if one turbine had been erected on Dover seafront, it would have been as high as the castle.

DDC were supported by CPRE, The Dover Society, three local parish councils, as well as Manston airport, which was operational at that time. I objected as RA Local Footpath Officer for those parishes I represented,

the only RA person attending, There were three barristers giving evidence. The Inspector dismissed the appeal, saying "It was some of the finest coastal area in the country" and the future Wind Farms later, went out to sea.

In addition I have submitted two written objections, against a diversion at Shephedswell, and another supporting the inclusion of the steps at Ramsgate as a Right of Way.

An attendance at a hearing, on behalf of The Open Spaces, to include Richborough Port as part of Coastal Access, not yet resolved, the owners of the adjacent site have argued the wharf is necessary for the storage of cars only appearing there when Natural England applied for Coastal Access.

I have attended Kent Area RA meetings 4 times a year representing the EKRC for 15 years, attended various RA meetings at Lenham, Detling, Wye, Headcorn, and Kent Area AGMs from Littlebourne to as far afield as Bexley, Shorne, Headcorn and Hawkhurst.

I attended meetings with KCC at Dover and now Brabourne, also Roger's meetings at Canterbury, both now suspended due to Covid-19.

With Kath Gill, we were asked by Kent RA to organise a rally alongside the A2 at Kingston, for a safe crossing for walkers, which was eventually built. I gave an interview to Meridian and we were filmed by BBC when starting off, this was later shown on local news.

We are waiting for details of the P.I .resulting from objections to equestrian use at Hangman's Lane, Ripple. More when we have details.

Stay safe  
Gordon Sencicle  
January 2021

### **Message from our Chairman, Derek.**

I hope you are all safe and well and, like me, looking forward to normal service being resumed. However, in light of the current situation which is very volatile to say the least I do not think it sensible to plan anything for the time being.

We do have a new walk programme in progress but will await clear guidelines from the Government as to what we can do and when we can do it. Hopefully this will be sometime in the Spring.

In the meantime I wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year.

### **Walks Programmes.**

The Walks Programme, which planned to run through October to the end of January, began with great enthusiasm and good weather!

Meeting up in groups of 6, the October walks were very well supported, with those involved successfully followed "the booking rules".

However along came more Covid restrictions and the walks had to stop during November. Once into December, both the walks on 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> went ahead, but after Christmas we had to suspend the programme once again!

Which brings up to date, here as we approach February.

The next programme has been drawn up, with at least one walk every Wednesday up until the end of May. As we are still unable to meet up, even as small groups of 6, the programme has not accompanied this newsletter. However, as soon as restrictions are eased, please be assured that it will be winging its way in your direction. We will be guided by the advice given by the Ramblers Association.

Thank you to the 8 members, who have submitted walks for the intended new list and have between them covered all the dates.

Even during these grey afternoons we could be thinking about Spring and Summer walks.

Please have walk ideas and plans ready for when we can resume- the June to September Programme will need to be filled! The more the merrier.

## **Membership.**

Over the last 18 months we have welcomed new members. We all look forward to meeting you properly when walks resume and at social occasions soon.

During 2020 several members have decided not to rejoin, many having been members for many years. We wish them all well.

One such member is Barbara Seed. Barbara has been a keen leader over a goodly number of years. She served as a member of the Club committee, and many of you will recall joining her on walks, and enjoying her chosen routes, especially in the Deal and Walmer area.

## **AGM.**

The club AGM is normally held in March, always well attended with a bring and share lunch, and the opportunity to pay the subscriptions for the forthcoming year. This March? At present a big gathering is very doubtful. Other arrangements will have to be put in place. Watch this space.....

## **Club Holiday ~~2020~~ 2021**

### **Exmoor – a walker's paradise**

Yes, that's what all the Guide Books say. It has moorland, forest-lined rivers, rugged coastline and wonderful views of land, sea and sky. There are 258 miles of footpaths to explore including several long-distance paths. And we hope to explore lots of them.

We will walk over moorland tops, perhaps the autumn colours will just be appearing. I wonder if we will see any Exmoor Ponies? They all look remarkably similar – short and hairy with brown bodies that are dark on top and lighter underneath, dark legs and hooves with a characteristic oatmeal colour over their muzzles and round their eyes. Apparently white markings are not permitted on registered Exmoor ponies.

Perhaps we will see some red deer. The stags can be nearly four feet high at the shoulder making it the largest native British mammal. Red deer have lived on Exmoor since prehistoric times and the current population, about 3,000, is thought to be one of the last truly indigenous populations in the British Isles.

Maybe we will be guided up the path to the top of Dunkery Beacon, at 1,703 feet, the highest point on Exmoor. Alas we will have missed the glory of the heather in bloom in this most beautiful heathland. On a clear day (which it obviously will be for us!) you can see the mountains of Wales and a glorious seascape view.

We will walk through leafy valleys to hidden villages, with a quaint local pub selling fine ales and great lunchtime food or snacks. We might explore ancient woodland and hop over the Tarr Steps.

And where the moor meets the sea there are hidden coves, sandy beaches and coastal villages.

There will be ancient remains, literary legends and Devon traditions. We may even explore some of these places. In particular Oare Church immortalised in Lorna Doone. Some may have read the book and will bring it to life for us. Perhaps you could search out a copy to read before the holiday.

Maybe the clear dark skies will entice some of us to see if we can spot the Milky Way or even just the Plough and the North Star.

As the 38 members of the Club, who are lucky enough to have secured a place, will know we will be staying at the Yarn Market Hotel in Dunster, a village on the eastern edges of Exmoor. It is one of the best-preserved medieval villages in England with a backdrop of a splendid castle and a folly topped mound at Conygar Wood.

The hotel is able to offer an inclusive package of Dinner, Bed and Breakfast, coach transport from

Broadstairs, Canterbury Park and Ride and Medway Services to the hotel and return at the end of the holiday, local transport as required for the walks and Walking Guides (Leaders) for 6 days of walks (2 different length walks each day). I have requested long walks of 9 – 12 miles with up to 600m of ascent and short walks of 5 – 7 miles with up to 250m of ascent.

The cost of the holiday is £720 per person in a double/twin room. There is **very limited availability** so contact me if you would like to join us on what we hope will be a most enjoyable and memorable holiday.

The holiday is from Sunday 10 to Sunday 17 October 2021.

As the hotel is arranging the walks, guides and coaches it will not be possible to arrange a non-walking programme.

For more information on the hotel visit: [www.yarnmarkethotel.co.uk](http://www.yarnmarkethotel.co.uk)

There is a non-returnable deposit of £70 per person.

I have written this article in anticipation and hope. Hope that this holiday will take place without restrictions on social distancing and mask wearing. Hope the vaccine will keep us safe. Hope that what I have said we will do, we will actually do (but will depend on the guides leading us).

But without hope, where would we be.

Rosemary

[Rosemary.burton14@btinternet.com](mailto:Rosemary.burton14@btinternet.com)

## **Roger King's Public Rights of Way Report.**

For more information please phone Roger on 01304 362730 or e-mail [roger.rambler89@outlook.com](mailto:roger.rambler89@outlook.com)

## **KCC General News**

---

Probably more path issues were reported in 2020 than ever before, as people have used their local path network more than usual during the continuing lockdowns and restrictions. Unfortunately this has coincided with a freeze on filling vacant posts because of the financial uncertainty, effectively leading to a 35% reduction in staff resource at the Brabourne PROW Office. So not surprisingly there has been a fall in the proportion of reported issues resolved, and response times have been lengthening. We are currently promised "a response within 20 days". But we should still report problems to KCC, so that they are recorded for the future, on their website at <https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccesscams/standardmap.aspx>

Meanwhile, you may have seen that on the outskirts of Ashford, KCC successfully prosecuted a developer who had obstructed a right of way (Sevington AE350), giving the lie to people who say they have no teeth. <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/ashford/news/developer-fined-for-blocking-path-despite-warnings-238104/#comments>

## **Vegetation Clearance and Path Improvements**

---

On a more positive note, works on the ground have still been taking place despite the virus and staff reductions. The vegetation clearance contracts started more or less on time this summer, and ran smoothly (for the first time in three years in the Dover DC area!). Several larger scale surfacing works have been delivered, (e.g. the Hougham cliff-top restricted byway ER225) and also some bridge replacements, most notably that on Hythe bridleway HB36, across the stream at the southern end of Brockhill Country Park. But one area that has suffered a little is "small works", such as signposts, sleeper bridges etc.

## **"Don't Lose Your Way" Initiative – claiming new paths before the 2026 cut-off :**

In addition to the Ramblers' Kent Area work previously mentioned, you may well be aware of their national campaign to find and record as many routes not currently on the Definitive Map (i.e. not having legal status) before the cut-off date of 1 January 2026 – just 5 years away now. Having asked volunteers to compare historic and current maps to discover what may have been lost over the years, it is claimed that over 49,000 miles of such routes exist. I have to say that I am very sceptical about this figure having looked at the map of

routes identified, but I still think that a significant mileage is well worth pursuing. If you would like to look at the map, go to this page (you will need to be registered with and sign into the Ramblers website).

[https://dontloseyourway.ramblers.org.uk/?mc\\_cid=94d93ba71c&mc\\_eid=9e9b4bf86a](https://dontloseyourway.ramblers.org.uk/?mc_cid=94d93ba71c&mc_eid=9e9b4bf86a)

### **Path change news – main issues of the last few months**

A very encouraging crop of actual and potential path *creations* is the headline news over the last six months. And there are several more to come, (details of these when they have progressed further) - good news.

#### **– (1) Recently confirmed orders**

- *Goodnestone & Eastry EE488* – Excellent news! An Inspector has confirmed the creation of a new 1.8 mile bridleway running east from Knowlton Court along the whole of Black Lane, including the existing public footpath ER261, across Thornton Lane, and down to and across Pike Road, Venson. This is a route we used on club walks in the 1980s, believing it to be a right of way, until warned off by the landowners in the 90s. It will open up an extremely valuable connection, with new links from Chillenden to the villages of Eastry and Tilmanstone in particular. The order also creates a further bridleway up to and across the A256, and as far as the road to Betteshanger church. A very valuable addition to the PROW network

- *Goodnestone EE487* – First consulted on back in 2017, this creation of this footpath has at last been confirmed by an Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate. It runs south from Knowlton Court across the meadow and through woods to the Chillenden to Elvington road. A very useful link is thus created between footpath EE309, running from the Sandwich road north of Nonington, and then onwards beyond Knowlton Court (via footpath EE260) towards Heronden and Eastry.

– *Birchington TM35/TM35A* - An order was made in December 2018 to divert these routes away from the house and outbuildings of Great Brooksend Farm, SW of Birchington village and on the way to St Nicholas. The new single route here (designated footpath TM35) runs in the field immediately to the north of the farm, and will have a "hard surface". Also, a section of nearby footpath TM32, to the south of the farm, will be upgraded to a bridleway, and renumbered TM35A, as a quid pro quo for local riders. However, the value of this new bridleway is limited – it being a cul-de-sac!

#### **- (2) In the pipeline**

– *Ripple EE451 Hangman's Lane* - KCC decided that the historical evidence is strong enough to upgrade EE451 from footpath to bridleway status, and an order to this effect has been made. It runs from the Ripple-Martin road near Winkland Oaks, via the Hangman's Lane track to Ringwould Road, SW of Ringwould village. BUT this section includes an at-grade railway crossing, and widening the route for horses would damage what is in places an old green lane. Concern over these issues has led a number of people (including myself) to object. So it's likely that this one will be decided by the Planning Inspectorate.

#### **- (3) Faversham Reach – the new creekside England Coastal Path finally decided**

- *Faversham ZF5* - local residents had applied to KCC claiming that the creation of the creekside route for the Coastal Path, approved by an Inspector in 2018, was an error. KCC disagreed. So the residents appealed. But the Planning Inspectorate has now rejected this appeal, giving the final go-ahead for the Coastal Path to be routed along the banks of the Creek.