



White Cliffs Ramblers – News, December 2020

2020 – THE YEAR OF...

If twelve months ago someone had told me that we would be cancelling over five months' worth of walks due to some unseen threat to our health I might have questioned their sanity. Yet as 2020 draws to a close, restrictions on our daily activities have become a fact of life. One thing that has not changed, are the benefits that walking brings to both our physical and emotional well-being. It is also evident that many of us have missed the social aspect of group walks. Therefore, it is to be hoped that the vaccines that are starting to become available enable us to enjoy the company of fellow walkers once again on the footpaths of Kent and beyond.

So, on behalf of the White Cliffs Ramblers Committee we would wish you a peaceful Christmas and a healthy New Year.

WCR COMMITTEE 2020 – 2021

At our AGM at the beginning of November, two long standing members of the Committee stood down from their respective roles. After almost thirty-two years, founding member Graham Smith relinquished his post as Press and Publicity Officer pending his move to Scotland. We wish Graham and Sarah every happiness in their new home.

Graham has been replaced by Lee Pickup (pictured right), one of our walk leaders and a member of the Festival Committee.



Also standing down as Group Treasurer was Margaret Milsted – Williamson, although she will continue to offer her experience to the Committee as a co-opted member.

Taking over the responsibility of looking after the Group's finances is John Shale (pictured left).

We still have a vacancy for the post of Vegetation Clearance Co-ordinator. Liaising with the PROW Team at KCC this person works with local volunteers to clear footpaths of soft vegetation and small branches. For more information about this post please contact Helena Trevelyan (Group Secretary) – helena.trevelyan@gmail.com

Whilst talking about vacancies, there are a number of parishes in our patch that are not covered by a Local Footpath Officer (LFO). The primary function of the LFO is to monitor proposed changes to rights

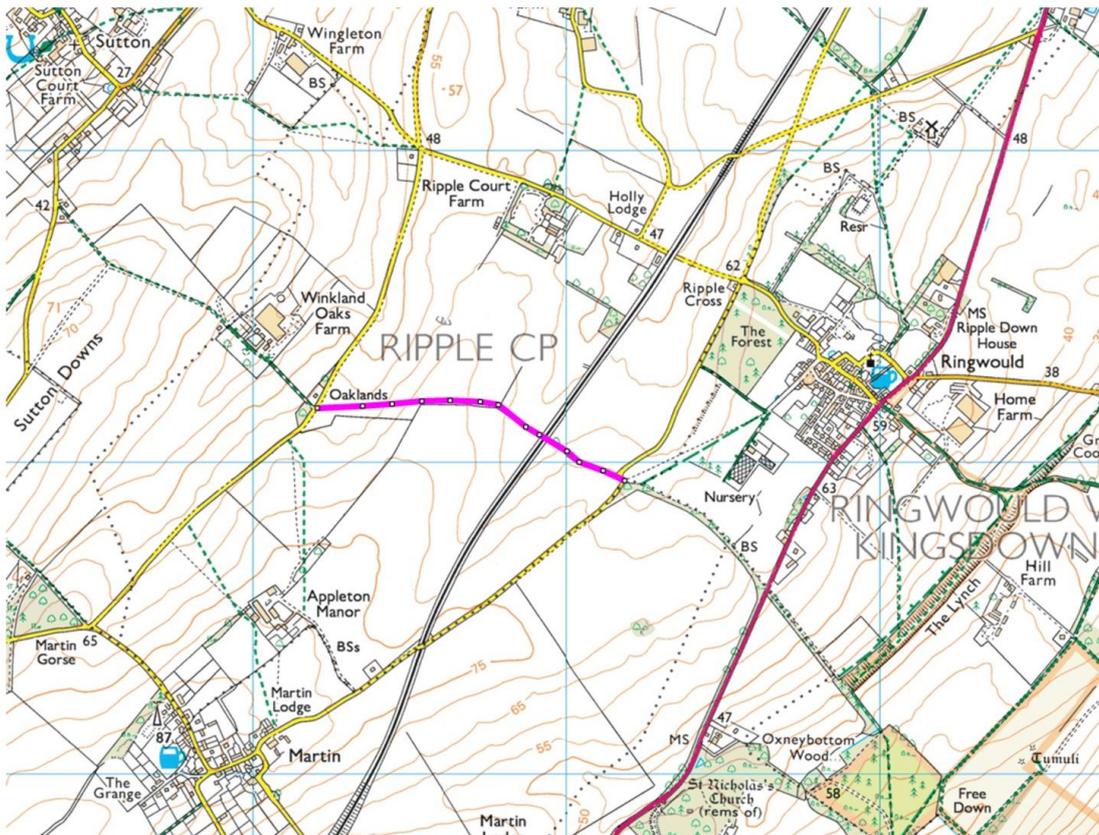
of way – diversions, extinguishments, creations etc. – and reply on behalf of the Ramblers at the consultation stage. We have vacancies for the following parishes: Deal, Dover town, Eastry, Eythorne, Goodnestone, Great Mongeham, Guston, Langdon, Nonington, Northbourne, Ringwold with Kingsdown, Ripple, River, St Margaret's, Shepherdswell, Sholden, Sutton, Temple Ewell, Tilmanstone, Walmer, Whitfield.

If you would like to put your name forward or require more information please contact Roger King (Sector Co-ordinator) on 01304 362730 or roger.rambler89@outlook.com

FOOTPATH EE451 – CHANGE OF STATUS

One thing that has not stopped during the pandemic is changes to the local footpath network.

One such change has resulted in a footpath in Ripple (highlighted on the map below) being redesignated as a bridleway. Although KCC have made an order to implement this change there is still an opportunity to object before the order is confirmed.



Having considered the matter, we will be lodging an objection on behalf to the Group. Whilst we are not disputing the substantial historical evidence that was submitted to KCC, much of this pre-dates the building of the Deal to Dover railway line in the late 19th century. No provision has been made for a crossing of the railway other than by foot. Without substantial (and costly) modifications this existing crossing is totally unsuitable for use by horse riders and cyclists. A significant stretch of the path either side of the railway is enclosed by mature trees and hedges. To create a bridleway of sufficient width and height would require much of this to be removed, destroying both a wildlife habitat and a pleasant, sheltered walking route. It is on these grounds that we will be objecting to the Order being confirmed.

Should you wish to submit your own individual objections this must be done before December 21st, 2020 and should be addressed to Ms. Melanie McNeir, preferably by email to melanie.mcneir@kent.gov.uk or alternatively by post to the PROW and Access Service, Kent County Council, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XX.

WHITE CLIFFS WALKS PROGRAMME

Despite the whole of Kent being in Tier 3 of the covid restrictions, we have been able to resume our led walks programme. Due to the uncertainty that lay ahead when we had to cancel all of November's walks, we had not initially planned to resume our programme until the new year. However, as it became clear that Ramblers groups would be able to offer led walks, several Committee members led by Andrew Swarbrick (Membership Secretary) came up with a list of walks for December.

As before, all these walks must meet the Covid secure protocols that had been put in place earlier in the year. This means that:

PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO JOIN ANY WALK IF:

- **You have had any of the following symptoms during the previous 7 days – a high temperature, a new continuous cough, the loss, or a change to your sense of smell or taste: OR**
- **If you have recently (within the previous 14 days) had contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid – 19**
- **If for any reason, you are required to self-isolate.**
- **You are not resident in Kent.**

On the walk

- The numbers attending each walk are restricted.
- Places must be booked in advance.
- Do not car share with someone that is not a member of your household.
- **The 2-metre rule still applies on all walks. Take care not to get closer to someone who is not a member of your household – they may not be comfortable with you encroaching into their safe space.**
- Be prepared to bring a picnic lunch with you for those longer walks where there is a planned mid-walk break. The 'rule of 6' will apply during these breaks.
- Where possible, avoid touching gates and path furniture. If you do – wash your hands as soon as possible. Carrying alcohol-based hand sanitiser is recommended.
- Do not share food & drink, or equipment such as walking poles.
- Walk responsibly. When other walkers are passing, remember to stand back and give way. Let the walk leader or backmarker know if you are having problems, feel unwell, or need to slow down or stop.

Details of December's walks can be found online at: [Find a walk or route - Ramblers](#) but places are going fast.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THE NATIONAL GUIDANCE COVERING OUR WALKS CAN CHANGE AT SHORT NOTICE. PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE – www.whitecliffsramblers.org.uk OR GROUP FACEBOOK PAGE FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION.

In the meantime, we are now planning the programme for January 2021, so if you have a walk that you can offer please contact either Anne or Tony, Walks Co-ordinators, either by email at:

anne.hickey1@gmail.com / at.bristow@gmail.com

or call 01304 372814

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Two long serving members of the White Cliffs Ramblers have received awards for 'outstanding contributions to walking'.

The awards for Les Preston and Graham Smith were made by national Ramblers' chair Kate Ashbrook, and announced at the group's annual general meeting.



Les receiving his award from Group Secretary, Helena Trevelyan

renamed as the East Kent Walking Group).

Les, who served in the Army for 34 years and was a major when he left in 1989, said: "Joining the White Cliffs Ramblers was the best thing I did when I left the Army. There is such comradeship in the group".

Sadly, shortly after this award was made Les' wife, Wendy, died. Our deepest condolences go to Les and his family.

Les, who joined the group in the late 1990s, has led hundreds of walks, joining the group's committee in 2003, as membership secretary and as member without portfolio; he has organised scores of map reading courses; and he has been a mainstay of the White Cliffs Walking Festival since the group started organising the event in 2014.

Les has also served as vice-chairman of Kent Ramblers, helping to set up the area website, and in 2019 he played a key role in launching the Kearsney Loop, a 2.6-mile, family friendly walking route in the Dover area.

He has also organised group holidays to Cyprus, Majorca, Morocco and Spain, and in 2002, he set up the Trailfinders Group, the first walking group in Kent targeted at people in their 20s-50s (since



Graham receiving his award from former chairman, Ted Roche

and the White Cliffs Ramblers is where it all started. It is a wonderful, friendly group."

(This article and photographs will hopefully be appearing in the next edition of South East Walker)

Graham, who is in the process of relocating from Deal in Kent to Tain, in the north of Scotland, with his wife, Sarah, joined the White Cliffs Ramblers when the group was founded in 1989, and has been publicity officer all that time.

He has served as media officer for Kent Ramblers; he has been one of the founders and organisers of the White Cliffs Walking Festival; and he helped secure Walkers Are Welcome status for Deal. Graham is also heavily involved with the Long Distance Walkers Association, having just stepped down as Kent group chairman, and has organised the 30 or 50 mile White Cliffs Challenge every year since 2005. He now edits the LDWA's magazine, Strider.

Graham said: "Walking is a huge part of my life,