



Newsletter May/June 2021

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Long, long, too long

A month is a long time in politics. A still-longer-time, for long-delayed, Beachy Head walks. Four weeks ago we were still ankle deep in clayey mud. Today paths are baked hard. The blackthorn blossom has popped and is disappearing. The screamingly-acid-green oak buds are just appearing. Sticky chestnut tips have poked their heads out -and their timid leaves are wondering if it's frost-safe before hazarding further growth. Despite inadequate rain there are buds and blossoms aplenty. There are cowslips. There are primroses. Vivid dog violets have replaced the smaller sweet violets. And in the woods there are anemones and the faint purplish haze which marks the beginnings of what promises to be a spectacular bluebell season.

The days are warm, if you are out of the cruel, northerly and easterly breezes. However, over-night there are still frosts and chills. So, the main problem for walkers is how many layers to put on. However, there is much to look forward to. There is a full walks programme. So please sign up for walks. Please enjoy the wonderful Sussex landscape in the most beautiful of seasons.

New “Normal” Walks Leading

An experienced Walk Leader takes us through his experience of Covid walks

All members have to log in. So, I make a note of names and mobile numbers in my diary. I send an acknowledgement to welcome them on the walk. The risk assessment is not really a daunting document. As a leader one has to be aware of the assessment -but a lot of the strictures are not particularly relevant or are common sense. Basically, you have a list of walkers, their contact numbers and

some common-sense Health and Safety precautions. Personally, I restrict numbers to a maximum of 10, that way social distancing is easier for the group to maintain.

At the meeting place, one has to introduce oneself to the group. I describe the walk, -and tell people how I will lead the group. Personally, I do not lead from the front. I let the group decide the pace which is most comfortable for everyone. I also inform the group that I carry antibacterial hand Gel, should anyone wish to use it.

My only function then is to guide, when necessary, and to prevent the members becoming too strung out, The prime requirement is to know the route. I suggest all leaders should walk (at least) the majority of the intended route during the previous week.

With best wishes, hope to see you soon, either as a Leader or a participant.
Richard

Walker of the Downs

Who could resist a Sussex poet with the last name of Walker? First name Ted. (No. Not that one). I fear he is little known -and even less read today. But, he is a far more astute and poignant poet of landscape than, the much better known, Ted Hughes.

Ted Walker has a wonderfully spare, economic style. He knows the resonance of landscape and has the precise vocabulary to accurately spear a sentiment, describe a shape, or summon a feeling.

Ted was born in Lancing, west Sussex, the son of a Birmingham-born carpenter who had found work in the 1930's south-coast construction industry. Educated at Steyning grammar school and St John's College, Cambridge, where he read modern languages. On graduation, he became a teacher in London.

Success as a poet came early to Ted Walker, and he and wife Lorna were able to move to Hunston, in his beloved Sussex. Characterised as a nature poet, in his sharp-focussed depictions of the natural world he utilised nature to place human concerns in their proper perspective. Accruing major awards in his 20s, he had published five collections of poetry by his early 40s and then, as he put it in a poem, "My muse went AWOL." "I haven't had a poem in years," he would say. Fifteen years in the end.

Then, moving into his 60s, he began again - short poems of breathtaking fluency and economy, many devastating in their insight, the most delicate and difficult concerning his love of two women - Lorna, his childhood sweetheart and mother of his four children, who died prematurely yet tragically slowly of a disfiguring cancer, and Audrey, Lorna's close friend, who, widowed herself, became his second wife. Collected in the volume *Mangoes On The Moon* (1999), these poems represent a man who, ever mindful of his own and others' dignity, always had the courage to wear his heart on his sleeve.

In the 1960s, Ted's short stories began to appear in The New Yorker, which paid well. With a young family, and living on a teacher's salary, he found this arrangement a godsend. "I could sit down of an evening when the kids were in bed and literally write them new winter coats or even a second-hand family car," he said. Those stories and others came together in two books: You've Never Heard Me Sing (1985) and He Danced With A Chair (2001).

It is not surprising that his most substantial works are his autobiographical volumes: The High Path (1983) and The Last Of England. The first vividly evokes the wartime childhood of one (in George MacBeth's phrase) "too young to fight and too old to forget". The second is a profoundly confessional account of his first wife's illness and his coming to terms with her loss.

Here is a link to a BBC radio programme about Ted Walker. Walker of the Downs. Listen and prepare to be amazed: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000tfcp>

Latch on to Lichens

https://www.instagram.com/p/CJ_eRFsKfWI/?igshid=onsyy0jtkdo6

There are more than 1,800 lichen species in Britain alone. Many are sensitive to atmospheric pollution, making them valuable indicators of local air quality. The photo above was taken at Old Lodge by Andrew Holloway and sent to Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Lichens are all around us. And we (pun intended) overlook them. They encrust about 8 per cent of our planet's surface. This is a larger area than that covered by the tropical rain forests. They clad rocks, enrobe trees, fences, roofs, cliffs and deserts. Some are drab. Others bile green, putrid pink or shock yellow. Some look like stains, others like small shrubs, still more look like antlers. Some even blow around -and don't live on anything in particular.

And if it wasn't for lichens we wouldn't have soil. Lichens have a remarkable capacity to soften, to eat rock rock. The residents of Easter Island have launched a campaign to scrub off the lichens, which threaten to dissolve their famous lugubrious statues.

Litchens weather rocks by breaking up their surface. They also digest rock with a formidable array of acids and mineral binding compounds. Then they die and decompose -and this combination of detritus and compounds provides us with the soils in which plant life can flourish. Lichens are the bridge between life and non-life.

The Old Way. Sanctuary, Sanctuary, needed

https://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_name=Old+Way

The Old Way from Southampton to Canterbury is a lost pilgrimage route. To find out more click on the link above. The Pilgrimage Route was rediscovered from Britain's oldest road map - the Gough map, dated c1360. For over two centuries, this was the most accurate map of Britain. Other contemporary maps (in the cartographic style of the times) had Jerusalem at the centre, with Britain as an amorphous lump

on the edge of the world, marked with at best, one or two towns. The Gough map, by comparison, is remarkably accurate. It is the oldest map of Britain that shows overland routes - thin red lines like the Great North Road (the A1). But in nearly 3000 miles of roads, the Gough map only shows one path to Canterbury. And it is not the one you might think.

Nicky Wilson (Nicky Wilson Area Support Officer –South. The Ramblers. 07824 352 071 Nicky.Wilson@ramblers.org.uk) would like to publicise the route. And would like your help. Nicky has had an inquiry from an Observer journalist who would like to walk the route, in the style of a latter-day pilgrim. So, the journalist would prefer to stay with local people along the route. If you are interested in getting involved, or giving sanctuary to a latter-day pilgrim, please contact Nicky, details above.

The Newsletter would like to know: How much local Ramblers groups know about the Old Way (which apparently isn't yet signposted?), and whether we've been involved at all?

Further, if local Ramblers groups in the South East, want to find out anything about -or to get involved with the Sanctuary Project. <https://britishpilgrimage.org/download-routes/?d=3284> The Sanctuary Project is (amongst other things) a scheme to accommodate walkers of the Old Way, in private homes along the route --just as happened centuries ago, when pilgrims were making the trip. If you want to get involved or to download some of their UK Pilgrimage routes just click on the link.

A Caring Conversation Can Help Save a Life

Suicide is a confronting subject, yet most of us have been touched by it in some way. In 2018, sixty people took their own lives at Beachy Head. But the encouraging news is approximately 550 were prevented from taking their own lives by timely intervention.

Grassroots is an organisation that helps give basic training (in conjunction with the BeachyHead Chaplaincy team) in knowing what to do and say if you come across a person who is having suicidal thoughts. They are looking for volunteers, such as Ramblers, to undertake this one day course which is currently being delivered via zoom.

If you're like me, you shy away from such things, thinking what if I say the wrong thing, I could make matters worse. But Elaine Saunders and David Fry attended the course and they found that by just talking to someone who is at such a crisis point, for between 5 and 30 minutes, there's a very good chance you will get through to them -and save their life.

So why not give it a go? If you're interested in finding out more then please contact David at dfry.architects@gmail.com

Thank you

Elaine Saunders and David Fry

Eastbourne Walking Festival 2021

The dates for the 2021 Festival have now been confirmed as Sept 17-26 Inc. More information when we get it.

Eastbourne, Don't Lose your Ways and paths,

For every ten who watch, only one comes forward to help. Being a volunteer is a demanding task, so Beachy Head Ramblers wants to say a special “thank you” to Richard Stenson for contributing so much of his time, energy, and efforts to this campaign.

In December the Ramblers Association asked for our help in comparing the urban paths that people use in Eastbourne to those which were showing on the Definitive Rights of Way map. Richard has been working closely with Don't lose Your Way by researching this and other relevant old maps of the Eastbourne area, with the aim of adding 'lost' urban paths to the Council's Definitive Map. He has done such an excellent job in prioritising those which can be saved, that we can move forward to the next stage of collecting “user evidence” and making applications for these “lost paths” to be saved. Richard your efforts are greatly appreciated. We applaud you.

Meanwhile, if anyone is interested in helping with the next stage of distributing forms to houses and collecting them then please let Elaine Saunders know: (esaunders21@hotmail.co.uk) The more people we can get involved, then the more evidence we collect -and the more paths we can save!

Elaine Saunders

The Vanguards of the Vanguard Way

The Vanguard Way –40 Anniversary.

The route was formally launched 3 May 1981 -and is 66 miles (107 km) of beautiful scenery. It stretches from East Croydon on the southern outskirts of London to Newhaven in East Sussex. Vanguard Way can easily be covered within a week or less (or spread out over a couple of weekends if you prefer!).

Our intrepid group of Beachy Head Ramblers split it into four sections in Summer/Autumn 2020:

East Croydon station to Moorhouse Sand Pits (13 miles); Moorhouse to Newbridge (18 miles); Newbridge to Berwick station (22 miles) and Berwick to Newhaven Harbour station (13 miles).

Route highlights include the lovely Ashdown Forest, the White Horse near Alfriston

and the wonderful final coastal stretch that gives views of the Seven Sisters Cliffs and Tide Mills beach. The path also passes through the beautiful Cuckmere Valley with splendid views of Cuckmere River and Cuckmere Haven to enjoy. So if you want to stretch your legs after an incredible lockdown, then why not give it a go, I promise you that you won't be disappointed.

Elaine Saunders.

Save a Footpath

Dear members of Beachy Head Ramblers. You are possibly aware that Ramblers Central Office has now published a map of the paths identified as potential lost rights of way. It is at: <https://dontloseyourway.ramblers.org.uk/>.

You will need your email address and password (the same as for Ramblers website, Assemble, etc.) to log in. The map was drawn up by comparing an Ordnance Survey map of around 1900 and a Bartholomew map of around the same year. The routes that were shown as bridleways, footpaths or roads on the old maps but are not shown on the Definitive Maps as rights of way today are marked with **blue** dashes. Our little group of lost ways activists at Sussex "Don't Lose Your Way" (DLYW) will not be able to research all of the routes on the map in the time available before 2026 so we need help to decide which ones are really worth following up.

As you are the expert on paths in your patch, could you identify those routes that would be a really useful addition to the rights of way network in the parish(es) that you cover? You can probably exclude any path that more or less duplicates a nearby path, but sometimes even a very short path will be vital.

Please don't exclude paths just because you think that they may have been blocked up or diverted, unless you are absolutely sure that they have been diverted recently. DLYW will be checking diversion orders later.

The best way for you to reply is to cut and paste an image of the route in question into a Word or similar document. You can do this using Windows tools "Snipping tool" or "snip and sketch" and there are similar tools on the Mac. Failing this the grid references will do.

If you have any questions about how to do it -or if you don't know about the DLYW project, please contact Malcolm McDonnell at DLYW.

Walking in the High Weald

High Weald Walking Festival 2021 is a fantastic opportunity to get off the beaten track, discover some hidden gems and explore the beautiful High Weald landscape safely. To get involved: Visit the Festival website – which will introduce you to a walks list and interactive map: www.highwealdwalks.org

Cornovirus Injection Alert

If you have had any problematic, or long term reactions to any of the injections or Covid 19 treatments please report them so that the vaccines can be improved.

A number of vaccines have been developed against coronavirus (COVID-19) and are currently being rolled out. Several treatments authorised for other diseases, including severe respiratory illnesses, are being used in patients with COVID-19. This also includes medicines and medical devices used to treat the symptoms of coronavirus, provide supportive care, or to suppress virus reproduction in some cases.

We still do not know how COVID-19 interacts and behaves with medicines or medical devices used for existing conditions. By reporting through this site, patients and health care professionals can help gather valuable evidence to inform decisions on the safe and effective use of medicines, vaccines and medical devices as the pandemic evolves.

<https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>