

The Waymarker

December 2021

Dover & Thanet Rights of Way Society



Current Chairman Jerry Swallow presenting retiring Chairman Stella Playforth with flowers and a token.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Once again and despite the difficulties DATROWS has met the challenge of providing an excellent walking programme for its members, and I especially thank Steve and Jan for organising the walks under changing circumstances. Soon they will issue our next walks programme covering up to end of June next year. Wow. Angela arranged our Warner's break this year to Gunton Hall which was thoroughly enjoyed by all, good walking, good food and good entertainment. Our membership has taken a small hit during lockdown, but we have several new members who have recently joined, Stella arranged the History walk around Deal where we learnt about the Fougasse system emanating from the Clarendon Hotel.

Thanks to Mike for looking after the finances and the new insurance arrangements. And of course, Roger who continues to monitor the PROW situation providing valuable feedback. It was great to see Les Oliver at the recent committee meeting.

During the year we said a sad goodbye to Darryl and Monica who have organised several walks for us including some abroad. We are arranging for a memorial walk in their honour next year. And goodbye to Keith Bryan, a long-standing member.

Last Sunday we presented Stella with some flowers and a voucher for Mountain Warehouse, to recognise her valuable contribution as chairperson over the past 6 years.

In the words of strictly – Keep Walking.

Jerry

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

It has come to that time when I must put together the report from the membership list.

It's been a strange year with regard to all the regular things that we all do. But gradually, thankfully we are more or less back to normal with regard to the activities we all enjoy so much.

We have however lost a few members as some have not renewed their membership.

Approximately 16 on the membership list of last year have not renewed. On the other hand, we have welcomed to the society several new faces. Our walks continue well supported and, as long as leaders are keen to lead I feel members are as keen as ever to be out there in the beautiful Kentish countryside.

The holiday to Gunton Hall, near to Lowestoft was enjoyed by 19 DATROWS members. I shall put forward ideas for next year's holiday at the Spring AGM.

Meanwhile let us continue to enjoy this mild Autumn weather and get out there and walk together. See you soon on another Sunday jaunt!

Angela

TREASURER'S REPORT

The time of the year has arrived when subscriptions are due [as from 1st January]. We are holding the subscription at £5 per family membership. I ask that members pay their subscriptions promptly to negate the need to send out reminders. Postage is expensive, and members are asked when paying money to the Society by cheque if they could remember to make cheques out to DATROW Society. With new technology where cheques are image cleared, we have had problems when paying in a few cheques made out to The Dover & Thanet Rights of Way Society, where the machines have thrown the cheques out and refused payment because of the length of our Society's title. They call this progress! You can also pay your subscriptions by bank transfer. For this our banks details are as follows:

Account in the name of: DATROW

Sort code: 77-63-20

Bank account number: 80464668.

However, if you pay by bank transfer could you please send me an email when you have done it so that records can be kept up to date.

[weston71dover@gmail.com]

To try to keep costs down, communications are so much cheaper by email than by post. Therefore, I urge members who can and are willing, to opt to have everything sent to them by email. Obviously, we will still send out hard copies of the newsletter and walks lists to those who do not wish to have them sent by email.

Mike Weston, Treasurer

WALKS SECRETARIES' REPORT November 2021

When lockdown restrictions ended, we restarted DATROWS weekly walks. There has been a walk every week from the beginning of April 2021. Nearly 450 walkers have joined in. Standard walks have averaged 14 people per walk, leisure walks have averaged 13 people per walk, and the three Saturday walks have averaged 7 people per walk.

We were concerned that there had been a considerable reduction in the number of walk leaders. However, we're delighted to report that three new leaders have come forward. So, special thanks go to Dave, Jenny and Lynn. Of course, we are always grateful to those club members who consistently lead walks whatever the weather. We couldn't do without you.

Jan & Steve Tebbett

DATROWS Mini Break: Warner's Gunton Hall, Nr Lowestoft.

19 Datrowsians had a wonderful time at the Warner's resort at Gunton Hall, near Lowestoft, again initiated and arranged by Angela Whelan. The formula seems to suit us well, a package of cost-effective accommodation, great food and stimulating entertainment, with wonderful walks organised by us.

Steve led us in the walk planning; we put forward our ideas at a meeting in the Coach and Horses, 2 walks on each of three days was agreed. One led by Steve to Lowestoft via the shore to view the Banksy? Memorial, one by Jan and Barbara around Somerleyton. Angela led a walk to Corton also via the shore, and

Steve took the bird watchers on a tour of Oulton Marsh, where a bittern was seen but not heard. Jerry led a walk along the side of Breydon Water starting at the Roman shore fort of Burgh Castle. A fort just like Richborough, in size, its planning and construction, but at the opposite end of the defence line.

The Warner's entertainment was much appreciated, comprising their in-house group of musicians and vocalists to which some of us boogied the evening away, and not just the younger ones! Memorable was the illusionist who enclosed a pretty lady in a box and then poked knives through the sides. "How do they do that?" Plus, a magician who had the usual card tricks and rabbits appearing from a top hat, or not.

The journey to Lowestoft was memorable for its delays, closure of both the Dartford and Blackwall tunnels extended our journey times by 2-3 hours...a long day, best forgotten.

Once again, the weather was in our favour.

So finally thank you so much to Angela for arranging the trip and to Steve and Jan for leading on the walks programme.

See you all next time?

Jerry Swallow

**Gunton Hall:
and lows of**



**the highs
having a**

good time

Can there be lows on a great time? Well, the journey there was only relieved by being able to WhatsApp others who were sharing the pain. As I observed to Jan, there didn't seem to be a shortage of lorry drivers on the M2, who managed to block three of the four lanes near us. But how long did it take us tired mortals to recover? In my case it was only until mealtime on the first night. The next low was the global failure of WhatsApp, which had proved invaluable to us chalet-dwellers on previous Warner's holidays.

The following morning everything was so much brighter. WhatsApp had revived overnight, there was a hearty breakfast, and the weather forecast changed from rain to possible rain. A brisk walk along the seafront into Lowestoft under rainless scudding skies blew all cobwebs away and set us up for three days of enjoyment.

Those days were not without incident. Our search for the abandoned post office in Somerleyton threatened the start of day two's longer walk – but the walk itself was superb. We were puzzled by Suffolk folk names – staring uncomprehendingly at a Loke (a small cul-de-sac in that part of the world), waddled up Waddling Lane, and by-passed the estate of the man who introduced steam trains to Suffolk. We longer walkers arrived back on day two to be told that some members of Angela's walk narrowly escaped death by drowning, saved by Stella's quick thinking. I wanted to do both walks on day three. This presented a difficulty. Jerry's walk had every ingredient of a perfect stroll – old castle, churches, lakes, trees, views, pubs. But I was leading a walk around a nature reserve, with rare birds and spiders. We all thought that the tractor that haunted Sheila on day two had travelled a few miles to chase her around the reserve as we huddled into the edge of the path, mercifully missing us all by a whisker. The group never realised how nearly I led them into a bog, and Jan still doesn't believe that I was the only one to see the bitter.

And then, there was the journey home in which Dave and Ros's car didn't want to come back from Suffolk. But all in all, the holiday was good for the soul. We all had a great time.

Steve Tebbett

DATROWS Walking holiday 2021

The Walks Part 1 – Coast and Culture

The Tebbetts had a hand in 3 of the walks on the Datrows holiday in Suffolk. On the first day of walking, 17 walkers set out to walk from the holiday village into Lowestoft along the coast road. Steve had mapped out the route with able assistance, or interference(!) from Jan who wanted to discover where the Banksy murals were situated in the town. It was a mild and breezy morning when we set out, quickly finding the route along the coastal path. Along the way we could see the Lowestoft lighthouse set back from the seafront, clearly next to the coastline from much earlier times. By the path we saw reproductions of Turner paintings of the lighthouse and coast as it was in the 19th century. We arrived at Ness Point, the most easterly point in the UK and the site of ‘Gulliver’, the tallest wind turbine in the UK, where we stopped for a photo opportunity.

On we went into Lowestoft, where we stopped for lunch in a café where the waitress looked stunned to see so many of us but rose magnificently to the occasion. Then the group split up, some to return to the holiday village by bus, others to take a different walk back to base and the remainder to seek out Banksy. Thanks to some local businessmen we found our first artwork, the mural of a child with a crowbar by a sandcastle. Encouraged we headed back along the coast. The weather was glorious, and it felt wonderful to be by the sea. Just as we were about to turn inland back to the holiday village, we found our second Banksy. Sadly, it had been defaced but it was possible to make out the rat sitting in a deckchair drinking a cocktail. By this time, we had walked about 7 miles and we were ready to return to base to put our feet up before enjoying a good dinner and glass of wine.

A good start and looking forward to another day’s walking tomorrow.

The Walks Part 2 – a Countryside Ramble

Whilst Angela took her intrepid band of walkers towards Corton, Barbara Harrod-Green and Jan gathered the remaining 13 to head off to Somerleyton, a little village in the depths of the Suffolk countryside. The walk was supposed to start outside the village stores and post office, according to the walk description. But we couldn’t find this landmark anywhere, until a helpful local told us that the stores were closed and had become a cycle shop. An interesting start, but we found the shop and set

off past some delightful cottages with red brick and thatch, looking chocolate-box pretty. The walk took us through woods and fields, timeless Suffolk countryside. We saw an extraordinary church, in the middle of nowhere with a round tower and a thatched roof. At the edge of the churchyard was a memorial to American airmen who died in the Second World War as a result of a flare accidentally igniting inside their plane, causing it to crash.

After a brief stop for lunch with take-away coffees and snacks from a village café, we carried on through the fields. At one point we heard the sound of a huge tractor behind us, and we turned to see Sheila trying desperately to get out of its way with nowhere to go due to high hedges and muddy puddles in the way. Uncharitably, we all found this very funny (including Sheila, after she managed to find a safe place to let it go by) – sorry, Sheila! The last part of the walk took us through the woods and onto a track called Waddling Lane. This was supposedly named from the flocks of geese which were herded along the route to London's Smithfield Market. The geese wore booties made from felt to protect their feet. At last, as it was raining by now, we arrived back at the starting point and piled into our cars to return to the holiday village for a warm drink and a rest.

The Walks Part 3 – Birds, dragonflies, cows – and another tractor

Steve was really keen to lead a walk on the Suffolk Wildlife Trust nature reserve at Carlton Marshes, so 9 of us set off armed with binoculars and an RSPB book of birds. It was a beautiful mild and sunny day and although the nature reserve was on the edge of the town it was so peaceful. We made our way into a hide by a lake where we could see mallards, moorhens, and a little egret. There were scores of dragonflies, some blue and some copper-coloured. Local farmers were allowed to graze a few cattle on the reserve, and they eyed us calmly as we walked past them. To our delight a heron took to flight in the field next to our path. At one point we heard a large tractor behind us – Sheila seems to attract them! – and we pressed ourselves into hedges to let it go by. We walked past waterways and fields, looking out for interesting birdlife. Steve was in front and at one point he stopped suddenly, whispering to us that he had seen a bittern. Well, this was a rare find, but by the time we had caught him up it was nowhere to be seen or heard. All we could see was a partridge scurrying along the path ahead of us. Only Steve saw the bittern.... I say no more.

After a couple of hours walking, we arrived back at the visitor centre which was very well supplied with a café, a shop, and all necessary amenities. It was mild enough for us to have a pleasant lunch outside at the picnic tables, and the very friendly reserve staff kindly took photos of the group for the Waymarker magazine.

A lovely peaceful walk in a wonderful setting finished our series of Suffolk walks, and what a good time we had shared.

Jan Tebbett

DATROW'S Historic Walking Tour

Friday 10th September saw the first DATROWS walking history tour of Deal. A quite enigmatic young man, George, lead us around the fascinating old parts of the seafront, Middle Street, and plenty on the more nefarious activities.

Deal had as many pubs as for one each day of the year and many ladies of the night servicing thousands of seamen on ships berthed in the Downs, not having seen dry land for months. We learned about Queen Adelaide, wife of William IV, and why she liked Deal so. Apparently smuggling nearly collapsed the English economy in Tudor times, wine coming in and wool going out.

Ever heard of the flame Fougasse system designed to set alight the sea beach in the event of a German invasion? It was discovered in the 1960s during renovation of the Clarendon Hotel. Two large tanks were located in the cellar with pipes running out under the beach with the intent of pumping burning oil under the seabed creating an inferno close to the beach.

Henry VIII built the 3 castles interspersed by 2 bulwarks between each. Though not visible today they are the reason the road rises slightly near Dolphin Street.

Our narrator was dressed in the manner of the soldier of the American War of Independence, constantly adjusting his bicorn hat. His talks were delivered clearly against the noise of today's Deal seafront on a Friday night. The tour was most enjoyable and informative even for history buffs. So, thank you Stella for organising a wonderful evening. Shall we do another next year.... Thanet or Broadstairs perhaps?

Jerry Swallow

LOCAL RIGHTS OF WAY NEWS from Roger King KCC General News

Budgets and performance

Sizeable budget increases in 21/22 to cover COVID related issues, effectively doubling the revenue budget (which covers things like “repairs”), but with no extra staff. So resources had to be diverted from protection and enforcement to maintenance type issues. This meant that things like surfacing were tackled effectively, but “customer service”, response to many reported issues and general communication suffered rather, as we saw. The backlog of outstanding issues has increased by 35% since the start of the pandemic. Also there has been no Cropping Campaign in either 2020 or 2021, and only three enforcement notices for crop obstruction were issued this summer, instead of the normal 15 or so. 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>

Staffing

Meanwhile, two new officers (they were 20% down on staffing in 20/21) have been appointed locally. One to identify and deal with COVID recovery issues. And one (with 60% European funding) to work on an improvement project in the Kent Downs AONB. So hopefully the picture should be improving, after the lockdowns and shortages took their toll.

Vegetation Clearance and Path Improvements

The vegetation clearance contracts generally worked well this summer, although in Thanet and Dover Districts there were some delays due to difficulty in recruiting seasonal labour. Contractors are required to issue weekly progress reports and chased if they don't. Good news: the Ramblers White Cliffs clearance group has started work again after a couple of year's break.

Guston Inland Border Facility

A much smaller formal proposal has been made and commented on. Construction is likely to begin next spring. The NDW will be diverted – but now less radically since most development will sit west of the Roman

Road. Representations have been about the need for a good surface and tree screening.

Little Mongeham Airfield Proposal

Still not timetabled to go before Dover DC Planning Committee, but there is very considerable opposition. We discovered that apparently a 500 ft rule applies whereby aircraft are not permitted to fly within 500 ft of any person by distance but not by height!

Path change news

Proposed diversion of Swingfield bridleway HE 181

A long diversion of the bridleway which leaves the Lydden to Swingfield road near the Commandery, away from the buildings of St John's Farm, and onto a straight-line route almost all the way to Swingfield church. This is a busy farm and having met the farmer, I am confident that he would keep the new route free of crops.

Order made to create new restricted byway: Eastry EE493.

This would create a new restricted by way of approx.0.6 miles from Northbourne Road by Updown Lodge (GR 313 537) south-south-west to the Straight Mile at GR 309 529 (just east of the A256). Most of the route is already walkable.

Order made to upgrade Sutton footpath EE427 to bridleway status

On appeal, KCC were instructed to make an order to upgrade this footpath. It runs from just SW of Sutton village through to the Ripple-Martin Road near Winkland Oaks at GR 342 482.

Beyond here lies EE451, including Hangman's Lane and the railway crossing, also in line for upgrading, but a decision on the objections has been caught in Planning Inspectorate's huge backlog.

Also caught in this backlog are three more orders to which various people have lodged objections:

- Upgrading to bridleway status of Woodnesborough EE226 from the Sandwich bypass west to Foxborough Road at GR 309 561.

New path creations:

- Inside the boundaries of Coldblow Woods, between Walmer station and

Ripple Mill.

A 200-yard bridleway running from Middle Heronden Farm south-east to Thornton Lane, in Eastry.

Temporary diversion of Worth bridleway EE 233

There are works until April on the definitive line of this BR on the Hacklinge marshes, from the pumping station at GR 349 550, northwards alongside the South Stream to “Roaring Gutter” at GR 351 556. We will now need to use the track on the opposite side of the Stream – actually a much easier walk in many respects.

EDITOR’S JOTTINGS

Many thanks to all contributors, for all your prompt and interesting articles. It is your magazine, and you make it.

Press date for June issue will be mid-May

Linda Halsall

DATROWS COMMITTEE:

Chairman:	Jerry Swallow
Members’ Secretary:	Angela Whelan
Walks Secretaries	Steve & Jan Tebbett
Minute Secretary:	Les Oliver
Footpaths Secretary:	Roger King
Treasurer:	Mike Weston
Social Secretary:	Stella Playforth
Editor of Waymarker	Linda Halsall