



OXFORD FIELDPATHS SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Issue 28: September 2022

Ringling the changes with our Presidency

OUT with our (not so old) but long-standing President



Sir Hugo Brunner stepped down as our President, a post he agreed to hold for three years. That was in June 2013 and he has served as our figurehead ever since. Our thanks to him for the support he has given us during this period, but this is not goodbye as we hope he will continue to walk with us in the future.

And **IN** with a warm welcome, our new President

Lady Jay, or Sylvia as she would like to be called, was elected as our new President; many of you will have met her on our walks. A very accomplished person I feel sure her input will be invaluable.



From the Chairman, Jenny Byrne.

We've emerged from the cloud of the Covid restrictions and as confidence has built we are getting out and about pounding Oxfordshire's footpaths. It is a joy to rediscover the delights of seeing the first swallow, hearing the cuckoo and the uplifting of spirits by the sight of carpets of bluebells, snowdrops, buttercups and a host of other wildflowers. Less so the brambles and stinging nettles!

Janice Ure has given an account of a special Summer Gathering held in September with walks followed by a delicious tea in Tiddington. It was good to see everyone, and we looked forward to having a repeat in April for our first AGM in two years. The AGM saw major changes, namely a change of President and Chairman followed by a reshuffle of the Executive Committee. Lesley Frazer has written a very entertaining piece on this event.

Our thanks go to Liz Adams who, after a longer than normal stint relinquished the post as Chairman. She has steered the Committee through some very trying times – Zoom meetings were not without problems. Her organizational skills were excellent and she had a capability to understand and deal with any situation. Liz has set a high standard and I will strive to rise to her example.

It is with sadness that we have said goodbye to two members of the Committee, both resigning due to health issues. They have made vital, behind the scenes contributions, and will be greatly missed. Our thanks, thoughts and best wishes go to them both.



Gwyneth Tyson has not walked with us for years so some of you may not know her. She has served as our Membership Secretary for many years coping admirably with the twice-yearly mailing of walks programmes and newsletters to as many as two hundred and seventy members. Gwyneth is suffering life changing injuries sustained in a car accident Christmas 2020.

WANTED - another Adam Willet, not for his sheep-charming but his IT skills.

We are struggling to replace the expertise of Adam, our IT person. Hence our web site has been a bit shaky of late.



Adam's cancer is forcing him to spend long periods in hospital which has made passing information a problem. He has done his best to keep the events page up to date but other changes are not being made. He has produced a step-by-step guide to our website management but, it proved too technical for us, so we are having to use the services of a professional.

If any of you have expertise in this field, please step forward – your Society needs you.

We welcome Marsaleete Anderson and Roger Smith to the Committee.

The threat of increasing fuel prices has put more emphasis on using public transport and car-sharing for walks. Climate change is also having effect on

weather, causing last minute cancellations, as has been the case this summer. To facilitate contact between members a WhatsApp group has been formed. Please see article for further information.

We have several new members join this year. It would seem Internet searches for walking groups do not list Oxford Field Paths. OFS comes up as Office For Students! This is a big problem and needs to be resolved – who knows how many potential walkers are missing both the opportunity and pleasure of joining us.

There have been several requests for Stile replacements. An annual allowance has been allocated from our funds to finance as many gates as possible. It is important to keep mobile and I for one am experiencing difficulties with stiles so let's pursue our goal of making the countryside accessible for all.

WE MAY HAVE TO CHANGE OUR LOGO!

Compiling the Walks Programme by Liz Adams

Compiling the walks programme is a bit like doing a jigsaw puzzle but done twice a year. In January and June, I send out begging emails to leaders asking for walks for the next programme and then wait with bated breath for the returns. Like a jigsaw getting the edges in place first – the months and dates and then fill in the centre – the walks as I receive them. It is important to try each month to be walking in different parts of the county which gives members who are not city based, the opportunity not to have to travel too far. The recent rise in the cost of living has made bus friendly walks seem a sensible proposition and car sharing is another alternative to save money on petrol, as well as needing fewer car parking spaces at the start point. Once all the walks are in, usually with some gentle reminders, the process of transferring from completed sheet to the typed programme begins. Not being trained in secretarial skills this takes some time, checking grid references from a master list and having OS maps spread across the floor if a new venue has been suggested to check the start points. The entire programme is then sent to all the leaders to check their entries and if possible, the whole document. It is interesting that different people see different mistakes and not all of them the same. Once the final corrections are made, I print off a copy as my reference and then send it to Clive at Dataprint who does the final setting out so that you receive a new programme for the following six months. Obviously, the programme cannot be made without the sterling efforts of all the leaders who contribute their time and energy in leading the walks and it is an opportunity to thank them here. New leaders are always welcome and if you have a favourite walk then offer it to be enjoyed by all members. New walks are always very welcome, despite the same walk looking different in different season, their popularity wanes so new places to walk adds new views to be enjoyed and new perspectives experienced.

FOOTPATH MATTERS BY DAVID GODFREY

Diversions, etc.

The list of modification orders is now 64 outstanding cases. Of these four are awaiting an order, two are under appeal against refusal to make an order, ten have objections outstanding, five have been confirmed and one case has been closed because the claimed path has been dedicated. Seven cases are awaiting determination. Twelve are being investigated, leaving 23 yet to be started.

There are 34 outstanding diversion cases. Of these two have been confirmed; fourteen have had orders made (seven with objections), and a further seven have been consulted on.

At Coldron Mill near Spelsbury we are objecting to a potential tunnel path which gives an inferior view of the house and omits the north-south path, leaving the path to Charlbury to go round two sides of the triangle. On Noke BR10 we are trying to get a better crossing of the Green Belt Way; the latest consultation includes a possible extension. At Waterstock FP6 the works associated with the diversion include replacement of a near-impossible stile with a gate. The diversion order for Tadmarton BR12, is to the used line rather than down the steep kink in the original consultation, to which we (and a neighbour) objected. The order for Caversfield FP1 will divert the path to the used line, instead of trying to scale an impassable

MoD fence (the houses were originally built for RAF Bicester); works include the repair of a collapsing fence alongside the path.

The stiles on Tetsworth FP65, which I mentioned in the last issue (one is actually on Lewknor FP1) have been repaired, but there is a new fence completely blocking a gate at the farm access on Lewknor FP1.

Work is starting at Warren Crescent; we await the dedication when the work is complete.

Other Matters

Work on the closed paths at Sunningwell FP8 (the quarry) and Marcham BR17 (Marcham Mill bridge) is due to start, but the latter may be held up by legal problems. The path from the A34 bridge at Sunningwell (FP12, part of the Green Belt Way) had been improved. The proposed caravan site at Britchcombe Farm next to the White Horse and the proposed warehouses at Waterstock have attracted strong local opposition.

The operation to remove accumulated silt from the Blenheim Park lakes has caused the paths at the north end of the Queen Pool to be diverted so that the path into Woodstock now leads right in front of Blenheim Palace. The photos show views not normally obtainable without a pass.

In my footpath work I often have to get over stiles that wobble like jelly in an earthquake, or were obviously designed for Goliath (but I am only David). It is fortunate that I can still get my knees up to my nose if necessary (see photo, taken while getting over the stile on Tiddington FP6 at the old railway). I will be **80** in February and would like to be able to hand over my

role as Secretary while I can still do so and can still accompany my successor on site visits where necessary. The job also involves compiling the Annual Report. I definitely do not intend to carry on beyond the AGM in 2024.



At least the knees are still functioning!



Account of the Summer Gathering by Janice Ure

September 25th. 2021. Our wonderful walking group, the OFS had been unable to meet and have their AGM during this awful year. So, it was decided by the Committee to have a Summer Gathering when large groups could meet up again. This would also enable us to meet our President-elect, Sylvia Jay.

Luckily for us on a good weather day, 38 of us met at Tiddington Village Hall at 1.30.p.m. It was good to see so many of our walking friends again after our restricted year, and to catch up with some who can no longer join us on walks. Walkers were split into 2 groups of 13 people each, one led by Jenny Byrne and the other by Julia Dobson. Cleverly each group set off in opposite directions, so we passed each other with greetings halfway

round. The walks were well guided and very enjoyable with good views across the countryside. The walk was new to me and many others. Especially interesting was the privately owned lake, which Jenny had gained permission for us to walk round, from the farmer Mr. Hedges.

On our return we were treated to the always delicious tea produced and masterminded by Alison Broadridge, helped by Anne Partridge and some members from our group who had kindly volunteered to miss the walk. At teatime we had lots of chat together, and a speech from Hugo Brunner, and Jim, who gave thanks for his outgoing Presidency, and an introduction to our President-elect Sylvia Jay. All in all I think that it was a great day & reunited us.

September

Lo! A ripe sheaf of many golden days
Gleaned by the year in Autumn's harvest ways,
With here and there, blood-tinted as an ember,
Some crimson poppy of a late delight,
Atoning in its splendour for the flight
Of summer blooms & joys.

This is September

Lucy Maud Montgomery [1874-1942. Wrote Anne of Green Gables]

OFS AGM. SATURDAY, 9TH APRIL, 2022. TIDDINGTON VILLAGE HALL.

Sunshine; no chilling blasts; gentle walks; afternoon tea! Oxford Fieldpaths Society knows how to organise an AGM, the first since lockdown.

Dr Elizabeth Adams (known to all as 'Liz') retired as chairman, typically starting briskly and promptly giving an account of the OFS Committee's successful survival techniques over a challenging period, whilst maintaining a calendar of permitted walks and the continuation of the charitable work in improving footpaths and donating gates throughout the county. This 'annual' report was approved and adopted together with the Accounts, for which there were grateful thanks to Joyce Dawson, our perennial Scrutineer.

Then it came time to say, regretfully, a farewell to Sir Hugo, our amicable, much appreciated and supportive President for the past nine years. Liz presented him with a painting reminiscent of many glorious walks, the work of Jenny Byrne. What talents there are among us! Sir Hugo quoted Charles Dickens – *"You know I*

shall explode; I shall perish if I can't walk." promising to join us on walks in the future.

Happily, we were able to welcome Lady Sylvia Jay as our new President; even more talent coming into our fold! We look forward to many happy walks in her company as well as the support she is anxious to give to all our work.

Gwyneth Tyson, our Membership Secretary for 13 years, and Adam Willett, who has developed our website, are both retiring. What a loss! But Joe Coulson will endeavour to continue his brilliant work and Sue Crisp has valiantly volunteered to take over Gwyneth's role with assistance from Patricia Lilly.

Inevitably, there was a plea for more leaders – with all the support on offer it is not a fearsome task to plan and lead one walk per season. Neither is being a committee member a gruesome responsibility. In fact it's rather interesting. It is also a case of keeping up the excellent

standards which the society has maintained over many years.

Jenny Byrne was enthusiastically accepted as the new Chairman and Marsaleete Anderson was co-opted onto the Committee.

All this was followed by a truly fascinating talk on The Thames Path, its history and management. At 232miles, ending at the Isle of Grain, it is the third longest National Trail in England and Wales. Who has the longest section of the Thames? No, not London; it's Oxfordshire. Steve Tabbitt lucidly explained the complicated history and procedures involved in

establishing the path that we may enjoy today, and Hannah Gutteridge engaged us all with the on-going challenges of enhancing and maintaining the route.

Tea-time! Alison Broadbridge, ably assisted by Anne Partridge, excelled herself, even by her own standards. Could this be a reason why so many came? It was a lovely, sociable finale to a really worthwhile day...

LESLEY FRAZER

Publicizing our Society

Mike at Headington Festival and the gang of three at The Wychwood Fair





December 2021.
Michael's
mulled wine and
mince pie walk





New Year's Day 2022 at Cornbury Park

NEW: the [OFS WhatsApp group](#).

Thanks to Marion Hanbury Brown we now have this very useful method of communication.

It is specifically for OFS matters where members can make contact about car-sharing, last minute changes to the walks programme and requests for walking buddies.

If you would like to join, please contact:

Marion 07765127316;

Marsaleete 07835863063;

Jenny 07460381826

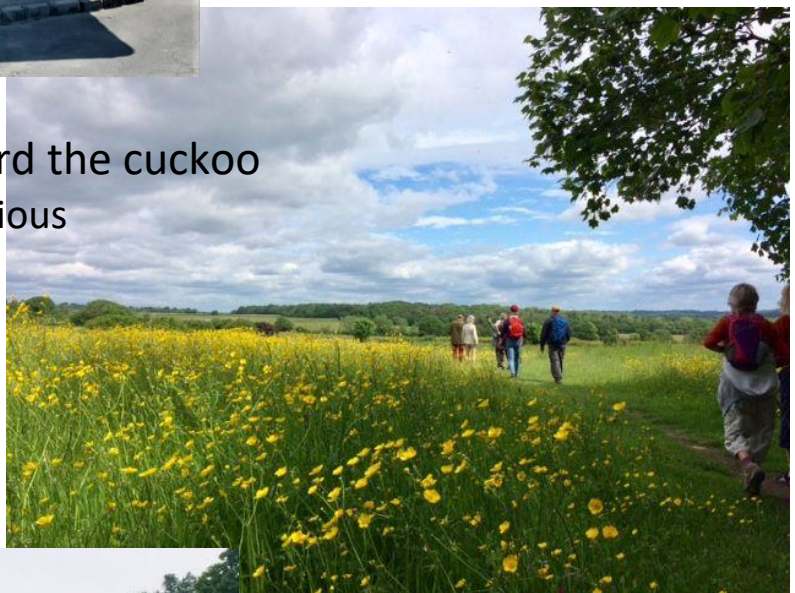
From **Winter 2021** to **Summer 2022** with another of Janice's quotes.

Oak before the Ash, we're in for a splash.
Ash before the Oak, we're in for soak. 🌧️

April. Quainton – The first swallow



May. Forest Hill – We heard the cuckoo
and the buttercups were glorious



JULY. Sezincote House –
We walked in the rain.