

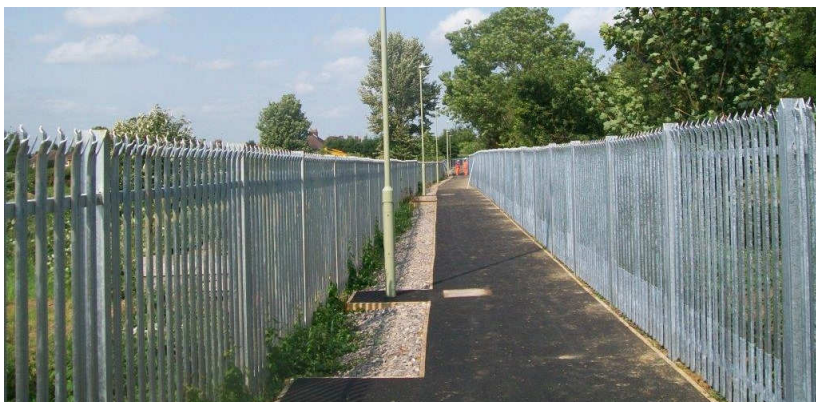


Britain's *Walking* Charity  
in Gloucestershire Area

# Gloucestershire Area

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013

ACCOUNTS for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013



The Ramblers with the Tredworth residents negotiated with Network Rail to obtain this replacement footpath to the closed pedestrian crossing over the railway lines. It runs from the point the path used to cross the railway line to an existing footbridge (ZGL/143/1).

The Ramblers' Association is a company limited by guarantee,  
registered in England & Wales, Registration No 4458492  
And a registered charity in England & Wales No. 1093577, registered in Scotland, No SC039799,  
Registered Office: 2nd Floor, Camelford House, 87-90 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TW

# Ramblers' Association—Gloucestershire Area

## OFFICERS, COUNCIL MEMBERS AND DELEGATES

### AREA OFFICERS

<b>Chairman</b>	Richard Davis	<b>President</b>	Frank Wragg
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	Bernard Gill	<b>Footpath Secretary</b>	Jill Byrne
<b>Secretary</b>	Ray Chaney	<b>Countryside Secretary</b>	Mavis Rear
<b>Treasurer</b>	Geoff Smithdale	<b>Publicity Officer</b>	Bernard Gill
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Mike Gardner	<b>Area Walks Co-ord.</b>	Suzanne Zamze
<b>Area News Editor</b>	Angela Marks	<b>Area Webmaster</b>	Nichola Goodliffe

### Area Council Members

#### GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

Cirencester	Phil Gearing, Jenny Baker, Coralie Dustin	Glos Walking Group	Nichola Goodliffe
Cleeve	Les Fulford, Les Green, Brian Payne, Diana Terry, Colin Wood	Mid Gloucester	Doug Houston
Forest of Dean	Sheila Constable, Alan Fisher, Barbara Fisher	North Cotswold	Sue Salmon, Tony Salmon, Leonie Spencer
Gloucester	Roy Oakley, John Street	South Cotswold	Penny Fernando

### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Coralie Dustin

Colin Isted	Gloucestershire Mountaineering Club
Penny Fernando	Stroud Rambling Club

### AREA REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

CPRE Gloucester Branch	Mavis Rear
RA Welsh Council	Jill Byrne
GENERAL COUNCIL DELEGATES	Richard Davis & Jill Byrne
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	John Street

## GROUP OFFICERS

Group	Chairman	Vice Chairman	Secretary	Treasurer	Footpath Sec
<b>Cirencester</b>	Phil Gearing		Pat Beckley	Alan Cook	Richard Holmes
<b>Cleeve</b>	Brian Payne		Di Terry	John Hughes	Martin Thornley
<b>Forest of Dean</b>	Alan Fisher	Rod Goodman	June Burden	David Jeans	Sheila Constable
<b>Gloucester</b>	John Street		David Sanderson	Ron Slim	John Street
<b>Glos Walking GP</b>	Geoffrey Cochran		Geoffrey Cochran	Nicky Wood	Paul Lowe
<b>Mid Glos</b>	Des Smyth		Geoff Smithdale	Jennie Dolphin	Doug Houston
<b>North Cotswold</b>	Tony Salmon		Sue Salmon	Leonie Spencer	Mary Hamilton
<b>South Cotswold</b>	Richard Davis	Mike Garner	Bernard Smith	Brian Witcombe	Bob Frewin



Richard Davis (our retiring Chairman) in his element at last year's AGM with Mavis Rear

## AREA CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

My three year term as Area Chairman is coming to an end and it has certainly been an eventful three years for our organisation. It started as we continued to drag ourselves out of serious financial difficulty, compounded by falling membership, and made the steep learning curve of my first year even more challenging. We at last seem to be taking more control of our finances and while membership numbers are still down we have been told that in the last financial year we will have met our targets.

In the three years I have also seen a subtle change in the role of Area, as we move away slightly from the position of acting as a conduit between Central Office and Groups, to become more of a think tank, enabling the individual groups to exchange information and ideas rather than operate in splendid isolation. Area is there to facilitate the development of groups rather than control their operations, a view which may not be universal but is certainly held by a number of Area Chairs I have spoken to over the last year. In this respect a number of meetings have been held between Benedict Southworth, Jonathan Kipling and Area Chairmen to obtain their views on Ramblers and to plan the way ahead. I attended a meeting in Bristol with six other Area chairs and our own Secretary. The last meeting is in November and, hopefully by the new year, a report will have been produced detailing their findings.

So what of the way ahead? Our Groups all provide a walking programme and we must always be alert to possible improvements and changes which can be made to meet the requirements of existing members and to attract new members. As you know Ramblers recently became the national host of Walking for Health and have since been looking at ways of attracting new members to Ramblers through our involvement. Obviously we would not want to, and indeed cannot, compel health walkers to switch to Ramblers but there must be scope for those who are looking for more demanding exercise to come out with us. A number of alternatives are being investigated including a series of online workshops for Groups interested in working with their local health walk schemes. You can register your interest by emailing [des.demoor@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:des.demoor@ramblers.org.uk). You can also make contact with your local health walks scheme but in any case watch out for new announcements which are to be made in January.

Our footpath committees continue with their sterling work encouraged and assisted by Area Footpath Secretary Jill Byrne. A number of successes and skirmishes have been reported elsewhere but they are all to be congratulated on their efforts. However this side of our activities has been clouded to a certain extent by the proposed outsourcing of PROW work. We had a number of concerns with these proposals but most of them have been answered in the last week or so. It seems that four tenders have been received for the work and the successful contractor will be appointed towards the end of November. GCC will retain its statutory duties and will manage the contract and community engagement. The contractors will not be paid for any work undertaken by volunteers and will be incentivised to encourage volunteering. Existing PROW staff will be transferred to the contractor. Obviously we will still be keeping an eye on events but hopefully these arrangements will provide a satisfactory base for the maintenance of our footpaths.

An aspect of our work which is often overlooked is that of protectors of the countryside. We not only monitor our footpaths but we are concerned to ensure that the countryside itself provides an attractive background in which to walk. We have already objected to a number of inappropriate housing developments in our area and we must also watch out for proposals for wind and solar farms. With Government continuing to relax planning regulations these aspects are becoming increasingly worrying. Mavis is coming to the end of her term of office as Countryside Officer. Thanks to her for all her hard work over the years. If anybody is interested in the post and wants to find out more please contact myself or Mavis.

On a personal note I would like to thank all Area Officers and members of Area Council for their help and support over the last three years. I have already mentioned Mavis who is stepping down as Countryside Officer. I don't think we have seen the last of her and in any case her knowledge of all things Ramblers has always been invaluable. I must also mention Mike Gamer who is stepping down as Area Membership Secretary. He stepped into the breach over four years ago at a time when things were in a bit of a mess with the CRM data base and has skilfully guided Area through the vagaries of the new system to achieve the more acceptable product which we have today. I also wish to thank Nichola Goodliffe for being our Webmaster for the last four years.

All in all I think things are looking brighter for Ramblers with many exciting challenges facing us. We can't meet these challenges without volunteers and I hope that many of you will feel inspired to expand your volunteering roles whether with the Area or your local Group.

*Richard Davis—Gloucestershire Area Chairman*  
October 2013

## **AREA SECRETARY'S REPORT**

**Annual General Meeting.** 60 members attended the AGM on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2012 hosted by Gloucester Walking Group, at the Village Hall, Swindon Village, Cheltenham. Apologies from 16 members were received. Benedict Southwood, CEO of the Ramblers' Association gave an inspiring address covering his activities to date. There was sufficient volunteers to take up the vacant officer posts, to which the Chairman was very thankful of the volunteers so that the work of the Area could continue on a strong footing.

**General Council** was held at Warwick University at Leicester. Jill Byrne and Richard Davis attended as delegates and Ray Chaney and Sheila Constable attend as visitors. Unlike last year there was nothing contentious was discussed. Along side the debates workshops were run. These were reasonably well attended and CEO thought that they had been very successful.

**Area Council** had met four times through the year. The Council composes of the elected officers, two representatives from the groups appointed by at the Group's AGM within the Area, (substitution of the representatives is very welcome if the representative cannot attend) and up to eight individual members appointed annually at the Area AGM. The Area meetings are open to all Rambler members as observers. The role of the Area council is to monitor the groups but more importantly act as a forum to discuss successes and problems within each group so that the whole area benefits from the knowledge of the individual groups. Of course footpath problems are at the heart of our discussions.

This year was unusual in that thanks to Mavis the Area organised a Memorial Day to Tony Drake. The day consisted of several led walks taking different routes to the field in Painswick where a memorial was erected to Tony Drake. Kate Ashbrook (President of Ramblers) unveiled the memorial, and several speakers gave tribute to Tony. (To see the memorial walk the Cotswold Way in Painswick).

The Groups within the Area, as usual, have been busy in not only leading walks and doing repairs, they have organised social events, lasting only a few hours to several days. The majority of the events were very successful and included quizzes, skittles, strawberry teas, barbeques and a cruise on the Sharpness Canal; away holidays including Dartmoor, Exmoor, Weymouth and the Lake District; and all Groups organised Christmas lunches in one case much delayed to bad weather on the original set date. In terms of Publicity it is bit mixed some groups getting their organised walk mentioned in their local papers and others not.

One of the important tasks groups undertake is the discussion with the Public Rights of Way Department footpath closures and their reinstatement. The front cover photograph shows a success where The Ramblers' were involved in getting a replacement footpath to a closed footpath crossing over a railway line in Gloucester. Ramblers are still in discussion with the department about other closed footpaths including the one at Bowmoor Lake.

**Countryside Matters.** Usually our local Area the Ramblers' does not get involved too much with the general protection of rural England. In our Area we have Councils for the Protection of the Countryside (CPRE). It is these bodies that overlook planning applications, and inform us about the contentious ones. Over the last year Mavis Rear has been the secretary to the Gloucestershire based CPRE. Through Mavis the Area Council has been well informed about those planning applications that have caused CPRE concern. Now that Mavis has resigned we are looking for someone to take over this important role. I have formed an unofficial link to the Stroud CPRE, and I am being informed about planning applications in the Stroud area. From the press you have probably heard about the rejection of a wind farm in the Vale. However, the Vale has a couple of large solar farms and several large housing development applications.

Finally I along with the other Area Council Members I would like to thank Richard Davis as he comes to the end of his three year tenure as Area Chairman. He has worked hard behind the scenes to keep the Area Council working and as he leaves his post it is on a reasonably strong footing. I expect to see Richard at the next Area Council meeting representing his Group—South Cotswold. I would also like to thank for all their hard work the other retiring Officers: Nichola Goodliffe, Mike Garner and Mavis Rear.

*Ray Chaney—Gloucestershire Area Secretary*  
October 2013

## AREA MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Membership Totals as of the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 (compared with 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012)

Organisations	14 (15)
Life members	50 (46)
Individual members	598 (631)
Joint membership	573 (606)
Concessionary rate	184 (212)
Joint Concessionary Reduced rate	217 (226)
<b>Total (excluding Organisations)</b>	<b>1622 (1721)</b>

(Note we have 5 individual members who are classified as joint).

We have welcomed 163 new members in the year, but here has been a net fall of 99 members.

As well as the eight groups, we have two other categories:

Gloucestershire Area Membership GR96 (16 members) and

Gloucestershire Non-Group Member GR98 ( 4 members).

What's the difference – still not sure! Anyway I send them Area News copies. But they are nothing to do with the Area Walks Programme – this is not a Group as such, but people from all over the Area who like to walk together socially. There is no committee.

### NEWS

Central Office (CO) are continuing to update Group Membership Secretaries on email every Thursday with new and reinstated members as well as me, and these reports I print out and pass on to any groups not on email. They are now also sending monthly updates to those secretaries on email. At the moment there are 2 group secretaries not on email. When I finish in December, someone else will need to print out all reports from CO and post them to these two people, assuming they are still doing the job next year. If no new Area Membership Secretary is forthcoming, it may be that CO will do this printing and posting. May I suggest that it would be handy for someone in Area to receive the Area Reports nevertheless, so that statistics can be gathered for Area purposes.

As you know, I am retiring from this post at the next AGM after nearly four years. Over this period Central Office has got its act together with the CRM system (the membership database), whereas 4 years ago we received little or no information from them. So the job is more routine and less of a problem solving exercise these days.

*Mike Garner*

*Gloucestershire Area Membership Secretary*

October 2013

## Area Treasurer's Report

As last year there was once again a small deficit on the accounts of some £225. This is mainly attributable to our increased emphasis on Publicity, where unbudgeted sums totalling £200 were spent on the memorial plaque to Tony Drake at Painswick; room hire for a special meeting of Group Publicity Officers; and a Ramblers' stall at Frampton Fair. Nevertheless the balance of £2953 is healthy enough and I have requested a budget payment from Central Office of £3800 for 2013/14 which will include £2067 for Group Funding.

Lilian's Legacy remains at present intact at £4000 plus interest, but it has been agreed to allocate £500 to Cirencester Group to cover the provision and installation of a kissing gate to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Group. We are seeking new projects on which to spend the remainder of the legacy and any bids or ideas would be greatly appreciated.

*Geoff Smithdale - Gloucestershire Area Treasurer*  
October 2013

## **GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA** **ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2013**

INCOME & EXPENDITURE	2012/13	2011/12	NOTES
<b>INCOME</b>			
Budget Funding from Central Office	£3,900.00	£4,000.00	
Donations	£17.00	£31.50	
Deposit interest	£3.44	£5.71	
Advertising Sales	£0.00	£160.00	
Misc Income	£0.00	£0.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>£3,920.44</u>	<u>£4,197.21</u>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Group Funding			
Cirencester	£252.00	£298.00	
Cleeve	£325.00	£227.00	
Forest of Dean	£278.00	£300.00	
Gloucester	£303.00	£305.00	
Mid-Glos	£324.00	£294.00	
North Cotswold	£185.00	£164.00	
South Cotswold	£446.00	£405.00	
GWG	£0.00	£147.00	
Campaigns/casework			
Footpath work	£206.94	£212.54	
Countryside protection	£22.44	£73.18	
Tony Drake archive	£0.00	£500.00	

Walks programme	£14.40	£16.00	
Newsletter/Publicity			
Website	£43.06	£55.07	
Area News production	£312.14	£207.20	1
Tony Drake plaque	£50.00	£0.00	2
Publicity meeting	£30.00	£0.00	3
Stall at Frampton Fair	£120.00	£0.00	
Meetings			
AGM papers printing	£181.38	£312.34	4
AGM papers distribution	£298.63	£228.96	
AGM room hire & peripherals	£85.00	£106.35	
Area Council room hire	£120.00	£78.00	
Travel	£109.18	£79.75	
General Council visitors	£296.00	£242.00	5
Welsh Council visitors	£32.82	£0.00	
Miscellaneous	£0.00	£0.00	
Admin			
Postage	£83.37	£32.81	
Telephone	£13.88	£44.13	
Stationery	£14.18	£31.87	
Travel	£0.00	£90.18	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b><u>£4,146.42</u></b>	<b><u>£4,450.38</u></b>	
<b>Surplus/deficit</b>	<b>-£225.98</b>	<b>-£253.17</b>	

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

- 1 Re-imbursement to Groups for cost of printing Area News for members not receiving copies on line.
- 2 Cost of purchase and engraving of plaque for memorial to Tony Drake at Painswick.
- 3 Room hire for meeting of Group publicity officers.
- 4 Cost of printing AGM papers and Annual Report.
- 5 Cost of sponsoring two visitors to General Council.

## BALANCE SHEET

Assets as at	<b>30/09/2013</b>	<b>30/09/2012</b>
Unity Bank main account	£2,953.70	£3,179.68

## FINANCED BY

Capital account balance b/fwd	£3,179.68	£3,432.85
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	£0.00	-£253.17
	£3,179.68	£3,179.68

## LILIANS LEGACY (RESTRICTED) ACCOUNT

Brought forward	£4,002.57	
Legacy received from Lilian Wise estate.		£4,000.00
Deposit interest	£4.01	£2.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,006.58</b>	<b>£4,002.57</b>

G C Smithdale, Hon Treasurer

3rd October 2013

## Independent Examiners Statement

Having carried out procedures in accordance with the Area and Group Independent Examiner Guidelines, I consider the Gloucestershire Area Accounts have been properly prepared and give a true and fair view of the Area's finances for the year to 30th September 2013

J W Street Independent Examiner.

20th October 2013

The Knoll, Crifty Craft Lane, Churchdown, Gloucester

## Area Footpath Secretary's Report

This report comes at a time of considerable unrest in the county among footpath workers and volunteers as the Public Rights of Way Department as part of Highways is to be contracted out to a private company to start on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Several other counties have already gone down this route with varying reports of improvements or not. Locally the Cotswold Wardens are not happy about this as they do many hours of unpaid work in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) on the rights of way, repairing stiles and gates, building steps and putting in bridges.

### Footpath Secretaries' Meeting with Public Rights of Way Department (PROWD)

This meeting took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2013 and although it was held in the main building at Shire Hall it was a subdued affair. As in the past following the Area Footpath Secretaries' meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2013 questions were discussed to send to John Lane in advance of this meeting in order that he could reply to them. These included an offer to walk the 10% paths walked by PROWD each year to monitor the state of the paths. A request to be informed of temporary path closures and their current policy on cropping on footpaths. Unfortunately this did not happen as John Lane gave the opening talk and had to leave the meeting after the first hour and Mike Barton his 2<sup>nd</sup> in command, took the rest of the meeting.

### **Robinswood Railway Crossing Extinguishment Order, Gloucester.**

At last there is to be a result to this long standing problem. In November 2012 an order was published to construct a footpath on a narrow strip of land belonging to Network Rail beside the railway lines and next to the Tredworth Allotments. This was to pass over a badger earth and up to a footbridge over the railway line. We are still awaiting confirmation of this order but photographs of the path have been placed recently on Network Rail's website as publicity. Much of the early work on this closure was done by the Gloucester Group Footpath Secretary, Don Stockwell, who led for the Ramblers and helped the Tredworth Residents Association at the public inquiry held in 2008. It is replacing a closed right of way footpath across the railway lines in the city of Gloucester, which cut a large housing estate off from many of their facilities. Don Stockwell discovered that there was money available for a replacement footbridge but it needed applying for by November 2008. The bridge would have been very expensive and Network Rail and the local authorities were reluctant. The current Footpath is a stark looking but practical—see photograph on the front cover of this Annual Report. (Gloucestershire's PROW number for this footpath is ZGL/143/1).

### **Area and Group Footpath Committees.**

During this year there have been 16 Group Footpath Committee meetings spread over 4 groups and involving 21 members. Three groups have been working with their secretaries doing most of the work informally. They still monitor planning applications on the website of county and borough councils. As a county we receive many complaints about problems encountered on our rights of way sent on from Central Office to Area Footpath Secretary by members of the public and these are referred on to the Group Footpath Secretaries investigation. Some of these are known to the secretaries, but are replied to if there is an address, email address or telephone number. There have been 3 Area Footpath meetings this year when issues common to all groups were discussed. My attendance at most of the Group Footpath Committees is helpful in providing information on problems right round the county. I am grateful to the Group Footpath Secretaries for their hard work. Mavis Rear, Countryside Secretary is retiring at this year's AGM and I am grateful to her for her hard work and hope someone else will take her place. With planning applications for wind turbines and solar farms on the increase, and in places where they will be very visible from afar, protection of the countryside is becoming very important.

### **Local Access Forum.**

The LAFs were formed in 2003 and Ramblers have had members on the Gloucestershire LAF for most of this time. Earlier this year Richard Holmes applied for a place on our forum and was accepted. He had been on his LAF in Yorkshire before he moved to Gloucestershire. The forum acts as a focus for the County Council's carrying out of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It enables a closer scrutiny of country side users and holding interests then is possible through the normal council channels. The members represent particular interests and not actual organisations. The forum is weak on representatives of interests of ethnic minorities and conservation, as required by the regulations.

### **Bradbury Bequest.**

This bequest was left in 1959 by a tailor to the Open Spaces Society for sign posts within a 6 mile radius of Cheltenham Post Office. The secretary of this Society is Kate Ashbrook and Tony Drake managed the practical aspect of this fund. This fund has still not been spent, but it is now in the care of John Lane and the PROWD to spend on signs as intended. Douglas Houston, Mid Glos Group Footpath Secretary, will be taking photographs of the signs and will send them on to Kate Ashbrook as they are done. It is hoped that the fund will be spent in the near future.

### **Footpath Working Parties.**

Most of this is being done by local Group members. One of the active Group Secretaries is Richard Holmes from Cirencester. He has started work parties in the last year. He also has members walking whole parish footpaths and reporting on them. This has led to quite a lot of interest locally and has been well publicized. The Forest of Dean and South Cotswold Groups have also been active clearing paths.

*Jill Bryne—Gloucestershire Area Footpath Secretary. October 2013*

## AREA WEBMASTER'S REPORT

The Gloucestershire Area Ramblers website has been in operation for 4 years now and has proved to be a valuable resource in promoting walking within the county of Gloucestershire. The table below illustrates the website's performance over the last 4 years.

	2013	2012	2011	2010
Number of unique visitors	4,998 (+1,207)	3,791	3,080	2,728
Number of visits	6,394 (+1,598)	4,796	3,818	3,652
Visits / visitor	1.3 (+0.04)	1.26	1.23	1.33
Number of pages	15,294 (1,376)	13,918	12,469	14,574
Pages / visitor	2.4 (-0.5)	2.9	3.26	3.99
Number of hits	74,573 (+15,192)	59,381	49,709	56,761
Hits / visitor	11.7 (-0.68)	12.38	13.01	15.54
Duration of visits:				
0 to 30 seconds	82% (+2%)	80%	77%	70%
30 seconds to 2 minutes	10% (-1%)	11%	14%	15%
2 minutes plus	8% (-1%)	9%	9%	15%
Connect to site from:				
Via a search engine	27% (+1%)	26%	22%	15%
Google	83% (-1%)	84%	87%	78%
External pages	9% (-1%)	10%	15%	18%
Ramblers website	22% (+3%)	19%	34%	33%

Unfortunately I will not be able to seek re-election at the AGM due to increasing work commitments and I have been unable to spend as much time as I would have liked into maintaining the Area website as I would have liked.

*Nichola Goodliffe* October 2013

## Area Countryside Secretary's Report

Over the years Group Footpath Committees have borne the brunt of considering planning applications which might affect walkers' enjoyment of the places where we walk. This system has worked quite well because pressure on the Gloucestershire countryside has been at a fairly low level though there has been awareness that recent changes to government planning guidelines could bring sweeping changes and significantly increase pressure for development.

There have been some sharp shocks as local authorities have not been fully prepared for the huge numbers of houses which the government had asked them to accommodate had not been the subject of full consultation, always in the hope that the government had got the numbers wrong and that battenning down the hatches would be an effective strategy in stopping huge housing developments. Belatedly Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury local authorities have put together a Joint Core Strategy which is only now out for consultation. Meanwhile their appeals against large housing developments have been over-ridden by the government minister when in one case the Council took the last resort step of going to judicial review. Any hope of halting these sizeable housing developments until the Core Strategy is in place seems doomed to failure.

Perhaps, though depending upon where one lives, renewable energy projects might be seen as less damaging developments. Wind turbine planning applications have continued to be submitted, but during the past year solar farms have seemed more attractive to would be developers. They at least do not move and they are not built on the skyline. How they compare with poly tunnels in impact on the places where we walk is a subject of debate.

Central Office now has dedicated staff dealing with countryside matters and is less inclined to leave these things to our sister Association, CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of the English Countryside). CPRE have dealt magnificently with this in the past and we should not lose sight of their professionalism and support. I am standing down as Countryside Secretary at the AGM and whilst for me it has been a relative sinecure, this is going to be an increasingly important role for the Area in the future, working with the Footpath Secretary's though in due course it is not impossible that Groups will need to consider appointing a Countryside Secretary to work in a similar way to that of the Group FP Secretary. Some Areas already do this.

I have enjoyed representing Area on the Gloucestershire CPRE Executive Committee but I am standing down as your representative at the AGM. This is a splendid opportunity for someone with experience or an interest in planning.

*Mavis Rear—Gloucestershire Area Countryside Secretary    October 2013*

## **Cotswold Way National Trail—an uncertain future**

Rumours had been in circulation for some time but during the year they ceased to be rumours and became reality. Drastic cuts by the government to funding for the family of National Trails caused huge consternation for Ramblers, not excepting our Cotswold Way. This is an unfolding story but we do know that the contract for publicity for the Cotswold Way was awarded to Walk England, subsequently renamed Walk Unlimited. James Blockley is still in post as National Trail Officer but he has additional responsibilities so has less time for the Cotswold Way. With reduced funding, there is concern that there will be degradation of the Way. We know that as the newest National Trail it is deemed to be in the best condition and therefore best able to cope with reduced funding. Time will tell but it is something of a guinea pig in the process I believe.

Prompted by this uncertainty a new voluntary body which I have been invited to join as a Ramblers representative is starting to come into being: the Cotswolds Trails and Access Partnership, though its name might change. This something of an ad hoc body made up of representatives of various interested parties led by the Cotswold Conservation Board. Unfortunately I was not able to attend the inaugural meeting in September, but a proposal emerged

from that meeting that the Ramblers and the Cotswold Wardens might work together to form a new body, the Cotswold Way Association. Several National Trails already have such a body, for instance the South West Coast Path and Offa's Dyke, so this would not be an untried experiment. The idea was put to Area Council at the October 2013 meeting and arrangements are in hand to meet with representatives of the Cotswold Wardens to make a start on setting up this new Association. The Cotswold Way is our flagship footpath and its future would seem to be more in our hands than it has been for many years.

*Mavis Rear—Gloucestershire Area Ramblers Representative*

## Memorial to Tony Drake

The Tony Drake Memorial Event organised by Mavis Rear on behalf of Tony's executors and the Area on 22 May 2013 attracted a huge gathering of Gloucestershire Ramblers at the Cotswold Way site at Painswick.

A series of led walks from different starting points converged from several directions at Hambutts Field for a big picnic prior to the start of formalities. RA President Kate Ashbrook unveiled the memorial witnessed by Benedict Southworth, RA Chief Executive, Dave Morris Director Scotland and Angela Charlton Director Wales, two former RA Chairmen, representatives from Gloucestershire CPRE, the YHA, James Blockley Cotswold Way National Trail Officer, Glos County Council Public Rights of Way officers, Painswick Parish Council and Trustees of the Hambutts Field Trust as well as several older members, some in wheelchairs, all determined to be part of the day and members of Tony's family.

In addition to an address by Benedict Southworth, Janet Davis who, at Central Office had worked with Tony for many years as Gloucestershire Area Footpath Secretary and Board of Trustees member (then the Executive Committee), spoke eloquently and knowingly of him and his achievements. Mark Richards, the well known author of Cotswold Way and other walks books, a long standing family friend, paid a personal tribute. Peter Drake, Tony's cousin gave thanks on behalf of the family to us for hosting the event.



Frank Wragg, Gloucestershire Area President, dwarfed by the Memorial

The Memorial, originally commissioned in 1980 by the then Gloucestershire Area Chairman Roger Lane and Tony, as the Footpaths Heritage Trophy which was awarded annually, for a number of years, to the parish which did the most during the year to improve its footpaths. Due to lack of entries the competition ceased several years ago and the trophy was put in store. When planning a memorial, and bearing in mind its previous role, it seemed appropriate to refurbish this handsome ironwork structure and to place it at a site on the Cotswold Way as a permanent memorial to Tony, a principal creator of the Way in his home county of Gloucestershire.

*Mavis Rear—A Tony Drake Executor October 2013*

## Publicity Officer's Report

6th March meeting of Groups' publicity officers  
4th May Cirencester Cotswold outdoor show South Cerney  
17-19th May Winchcombe Walking Festival  
22nd May Tony Drake Memorial Event  
13th July Cirencester ITV Saturday Farm  
26th August Cleeve at Winchcombe Country Show  
1st September Cirencester began London Mayors Source to Sea Festival  
8th September Gloucester Group Frampton Country Fair  
29th September Cleeve with other Countryside groups on BBC Radio Gloucestershire

It's been a good year for Publicity across the region with many events listed above.

The most prominent national event must be when ITV contacted Central Office who asked us if any groups were interested in appearing on TV. Cirencester picked up the challenge and it was indeed a challenging wet day- typical!

The most prominent rambling event would be in memory of Tony Drake. Mavis Rear organised this in honour of someone who has done a huge amount not only for Gloucestershire, not only for Ramblers, but anyone seeking access to the outdoors. Tony's legacy can partly be seen on any OS map as red and green dashes and dots.

The event saw ramblers from far and wide converge on Painswick as well as relatives and friends over the years.

However it's the local events that let local people know of our work and we're there trying to keep their footpath open. As well as the festivals above, our usual publicity continues with advertising local led walks in libraries, local press where possible and local walks guides.

Finally in the face of Network rail trying to close as many footpath crossings as it feels necessary and as mentioned elsewhere Don Stockwell of Gloucester Group helped Robinswood and Tredworth residents secure a replacement path to a footbridge

Bernard Gill—Gloucestershire Area Publicity Officer  
October 2013

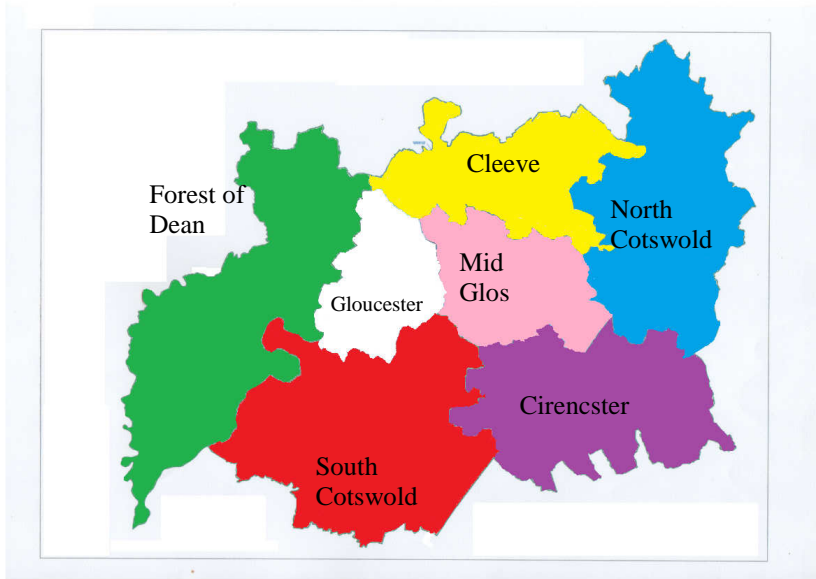


Ramblers getting wet on behalf of the TV.



Aerial view of ZGL/143/1

## Ramblers—Gloucestershire Area Group Map



Gloucestershire Walking Group and Mid Week Walkers do not have geographically defined areas.

**Finally** some unfinished business (PROW: BLE/44)

