

Open Space

Spring 2016

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 Open
Spaces
Society

Campaigning since
1865

Open Space

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Cover story

The four-metre-high Sheffield City Giants lead the procession across Nottingham forest recreation ground to celebrate its 150th anniversary last October. In the year of the society's foundation, 1865, the Mayor of Nottingham planted the first inclosure oak to mark the grant of 122 acres of Sherwood Forest as open space. Our general secretary planted the second oak 150 years later. Photo: Kate Ashbrook.



Park sharks

As I walked through Battersea Park in the February sunshine I found it hard to imagine what it would be like here in July. Then the quiet roads around the park will be converted into a motor-race track for the international Formula E event and most of the park will be closed to the public.

Formula E is not the only threat to London's parks: Ealing Council is backing a boozy Oktoberfest on Acton Green common, and last year Lambeth allowed a festival on Clapham Common, converting a green space into a mudbath.

Such events are in breach of the Greater London Parks and Open Spaces Order 1967 which outlaws certain activities on London's commons and in its parks and requires ministerial consent for any works, including temporary ones, on the commons. But the London Boroughs of Wandsworth, Ealing and Lambeth, and possibly others, don't seem to care.

Big business

It's all about attracting big business and commercial sponsorship at the expense of quiet enjoyment. Many parks were created in Victorian times to satisfy the human need for fresh air and tranquillity in an increasingly dense urban area. That need is greater now than ever.

Of course local authorities are strapped for cash. Of course they must find savings and generate income. But they should not do so in ways which conflict with the ethos of those far-sighted people—some

of them our founders—who secured these open spaces in the first place.

Lambeth Council has the effrontery to propose guidance for increased sound levels at outdoor events on open spaces. It has rejected the current sound-limits because they 'will not enable Lambeth to attract or retain major commercial events ... and achieve the income required for reinvestment'. Money has more decibels than peace and quiet.

Tested

A recent report, *Learning to Rethink Parks*, by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery Fund and NESTA (National Endowment for Science Technology and Arts) found new ways to raise income and reduce costs for public parks in the face of budget cuts.

Their recommendations include greater involvement of park users, local businesses and residents in the design and delivery of ideas; encouragement of innovation; collaboration across sectors, and testing ideas with small-scale prototypes. Despite the management speak, this is common sense.

The report does *not* propose sacrificing the parks to international motor-races, or noisy, muddy 'festivals'.

There is massive evidence that green spaces are essential for people's health and well-being. Local authorities should stop trying to sell off or exploit their parks and instead work with residents and others to make them better. **KJA**

Our 150TH anniversary year

Last year we celebrated our 150th anniversary. Here is a round-up of the main events.

Every day in 2015 we celebrated an event from our 150 years with our 'tweet of the day'.

We published two books, *Saving Open Spaces* and *Common Land*. Our photo competition attracted 2,000 entries (see pages 8-9) and our anniversary was much fêted in all media.

In March we joined the People's Anniversary Walk, organised by our member the Friends of Panshanger Park who were lobbying for greater access to this historic park between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City in Hertfordshire.

In June our general secretary spoke at the AGM of the Heath and Hampstead Society, recalling the society's nineteenth-century role in saving Hampstead Heath from exploitation.

She also gave the keynote speech at the *View of the city of London from Hampstead Heath*.

AGM of the Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England, highlighting our concern at Surrey County Council's plans to make the countryside 'self funding'.

Our anniversary day was 19 July and Kate had a live, 20-minute interview on BBC Radio Oxford with Bill Heine. A month later we joined the High Wycombe Society for the Big Picnic on Wycombe Rye, to celebrate 50 years since this splendid open space was saved from a devastating road-proposal.

In September, with Warwick District Council and the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, we unveiled a new interpretation board on our land at Parliament Piece in Kenilworth.

Also in September, in Kington Walkers Are Welcome town in Herefordshire, our general secretary cut the ribbon to open the Wyche Way, the long-distance path





*Opening the Wyche Way at Kington.
Photo: Barrie Trumper.*

which runs between Kington and Broadway in next-door Worcestershire.

We celebrated joint anniversaries with the Vanguard's Rambling Club (which was 50) with a walk on the southernmost leg of the Vanguard Way, from Berwick Station to Newhaven in East Sussex.

In October, the City of London Corporation hosted an open day for our members on Ashtead Common in Surrey, a splendidly peaceful and unspoilt open space close to the conurbation.

Our general secretary planted the second inclosure oak on the forest recreation
Visit to Ashtead Common.



ground in Nottingham. In the year of our foundation the Mayor of Nottingham planted the first inclosure oak, to celebrate the grant of 122 acres of Sherwood Forest as open space in the 1845 Inclosure Act. In 1992 we helped local organisations to save the forest recreation ground from a rapid-transit system.

Our vice-chairman, Phil Wadey, gave a talk to the Gatliff Trust on recording lost ways and the need to get involved in research to ensure the definitive maps of rights of way are up to date before the 2026 cut off.

Landscapes

At the AGM of the Cambrian Mountains Society we pledged support for that society's long campaign to designate this magnificent countryside as an area of outstanding natural beauty.

The National Trust staged an exhibition, the Battle of Berkhamsted Common, to run until 31 March 2016 at its Ashridge visitor-centre in Hertfordshire. This celebrates the 150th anniversary of the direct action organised by the society on 6 March 1866 to free the common from unlawful fencing. □

June Perry of Nottingham's Friends of the Forest, a tireless defender of the open space, throws earth on the inclosure oak.



Getting the buzz

The society has long opposed fencing on commons, and we are pleased that an alternative is being developed.

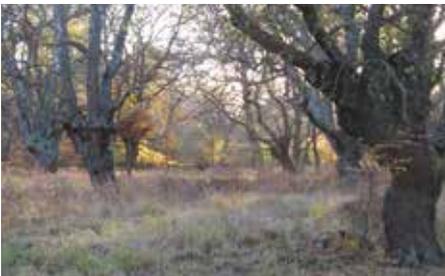
Last November we joined a group of commons practitioners on a visit to Epping Forest, to learn about the use of invisible fencing to contain stock.

Epping Forest is a 12-mile-long stretch of ancient woodland straddling the boundaries of Essex and the London Boroughs of Redbridge and Waltham Forest. It is surrounded by urban areas and busy roads, including the M25; and has 4.5 million visits a year. Yet it survives as a site of special scientific interest and a special area of conservation, a top European designation.

The forest relies on traditional extensive grazing to maintain its ancient wood-pasture and trees. Since animals and busy roads do not mix well the City of London Corporation, which owns the forest, is exploring the use of invisible fencing to avoid unsightly barriers.

This requires a generator with a rechargeable battery housed in a small chamber to keep them dry. From this a cable is run about 15 centimetres under the ground to make a loop. The cattle are equipped with collars (costing about £270 each). When the animals are within six metres of the cable they get a buzz, and within one metre a shock. They quickly learn to turn back at the buzz. Currently the system allows for only two kilometres of cable, making 'enclosures' of about 100 hectares; the manufacturers, Lacmé, are working on greater lengths of cable and larger enclosures. Essex

Deershelter Plain is grazed using invisible fencing.



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Redpolls wearing collars. Photo: Jeremy Dagley.

County Council's highways department has been helpful in allowing the cable under the roads so that it acts as a cattle-grid. The number of grids in the forest has been reduced from 13 to four.

Invisible fencing is still not sufficiently reliable alongside busy roads. If cattle are frightened by dogs, they may ignore the buzz and shock and cross the line with dangerous consequences. But the invisible fencing does avoid the need for paddocks within the forest so that the extensive open stretches are retained.

Grazing has led to the return of low-growing flowering plants such as lousewort, tormentil and heather. □



Highways under threat

In the third of a series about preserving unrecorded rights of way from extinguishment on the cut-off day, 1 January 2026, our vice-chairman Phil Wadey looks at the use of tithe and inclosure records as evidence of highway status.

We saw last time (*OS autumn 2015 page 8*) how to be systematic in examining the 1910 Inland Revenue (IR) valuation-maps and related records in order to extract the most information from them. The aim was to look at each document just once (and photograph it) and to record each feature that might or could assist in proving a highway (footpath, bridleway or byway).

The method can be applied to other documents. After the IR documents the next most useful are the records relating to tithes and inclosures. These documents often reveal footpaths and bridleways as well as roads, whereas the IR documents might not show the exact routes of footpaths and bridleways for which tax deductions were claimed.

Tithes

From the ninth century tithes were paid in kind by parishioners and landowners to support the church and the parish priest. The tithe was 10 per cent of the produce of the land (for example, crops, animals and wool). In the nineteenth century, there was a move to make this easier to handle, and the rector or vicar preferred money to goods.

Once the procedures in the Tithe Act 1836 had been followed, all remaining tithe charges were commuted, and the

church received money instead.

As part of the process, the land in the parish or tithe district was mapped. Each land parcel was given a number, and the use of the parcel and its acreage are listed in the apportionment document that accompanies the map.

Land that was not subject to tithes was generally accepted to be public or owned by the church or crown estate. Such land would not have an apportionment number on it. Public roads were also exempt from tithes (unless a crop could be taken) and so were often unnumbered. In many cases, highways were coloured in sienna (light brown), but this is not universal.

Apportionment

For our purposes, it is good to check each tithe map for its highways. These are frequently roads but sometimes bridleways. If there is doubt, other evidence will be needed to help determine which they are. The apportionment should be checked as this will often list the routes as roads so helping to determine status at the time.

For each untithed route, check whether it is a public road today, and if not, whether it is shown on the definitive map. Any missing or under-recorded routes should be added to your index of paths under investigation.

Do remember to take photographs of the whole of the tithe map and apportionment once it has been obtained from the archive, so that you need not look at it again. Take close-up photographs of routes that have been added to the index of paths and of any key to the map.



Part of the 1844 tithe map of Buckland, five miles south of Royston in Hertfordshire. The route A-B is today recorded as a footpath. B-C-D is unrecorded. Both have now been applied for at restricted byway status. Supporting evidence included the route's depiction on pre-1835 maps which were sold to the travelling public, and the fact that it was unvalued on the IR survey. Credit: Karin Frapporti.

Inclosures

Inclosure records were compiled when a few landowners grouped together to combine and reallocate lands in order to improve methods of agriculture and their profits. This process reduced the common-grazing areas. The landowners would apply to parliament for an inclosure act to be passed, after which commissioners were appointed to carry out their survey, prepare map(s), make the distribution or award and set out the new road network and land ownership allocations. Inclosure affected especially the Midlands, Lincolnshire, the East Riding and Norfolk.

The most important point here is that new highways were set out, and some old highways were left in place. As it was a process conducted under an act of parliament, and had to be agreed by the majority of landowners affected, it has high evidential value.

Each inclosure map should be examined for the presence of highways. For each one, check whether it is a public road today, and if not, check whether it is shown on the definitive map. Any missing or under-recorded routes should be added to the index of paths under investigation.

The map alone is not sufficient. It is always necessary to read the award in which the commissioners described what was being set out; this should reveal whether a route on the map was a new highway or an existing one, and whether a new highway was a road or just a bridleway. The act of parliament that authorised the particular inclosure should also be read in case there are provisions that affect the setting out or retention of highways.

Project work

The nature of these documents lends itself to project work that various people could undertake. Examination of all tithes in a county would be an enormous piece of work for an individual, but if it is shared among a research team, with results sent back to a co-ordinator, the workload becomes manageable. Volunteer helpers, once familiar with what is needed, can examine each document, extracting the relevant information for use, with corroborating evidence in definitive map modification order applications.

Further information on locating and interpreting tithe and inclosure documents can be found in *Rights of Way: Restoring the Record* by Sarah Bucks and Phil Wadey. OSS members get a 10 per cent discount on purchases direct from the publishers (<http://www.restoringtherecord.org.uk>). □

Award

We are pleased that our general secretary, Kate Ashbrook, has won *The Great Outdoors* magazine's Outdoor Personality of the Year award 2015.

Manifesto for Wales

Our action plan for the Welsh Assembly election in May calls for a better deal for commons, green spaces and paths.

We have urged all candidates to back our proposals, summarised below.

- 1 Resources to sustain commons, greens, open spaces and public paths.
- 2 Full recognition and protection of urban back-lanes and alleyways, tracks and open space as assets for town and city-dwellers.
- 3 Implementation of the Commons Act 2006 without delay, providing for updating of the registers and the formation of commons councils.
- 4 Public maps showing farms in the Glastir agri-environment scheme; use of Glastir to secure better management of common land, and strict enforcement of conditions requiring public paths to be in good order.
- 5 Local authority duty to take action against unlawful works on common land.
- 6 Speed limit of 20mph on all unfenced roads across commons.
- 7 A right to ride horses on all commons.
- 8 Common land and town and village greens within or adjacent to proposed development to be a material planning-consideration.
- 9 A right of appeal, and a requirement to provide suitable alternative land, before public open space is taken for another purpose.
- 10 Communities empowered to register local open spaces as community assets to secure their long-term protection.
- 11 Greater rights of public access to land—but with no downgrading of the status, protection and recognition of public paths.
- 12 All public paths in Wales recorded, open and easy to use, with all public highways included on the definitive map of rights of way. Revocation of the law which will, on 1 January 2026, close definitive maps to claims based on historic evidence alone.

Panorama from Pumlumon, central Wales. There is already a right to ride horses here; we want such a right on all commons in Wales. Photo: Liz Fleming-Williams.





Our 150th anniversary photo competition





We were delighted and overwhelmed to receive nearly 2,000 entries for our photo competition; they were of a high standard and made a daunting task for our panel of independent judges. We present the winners of some of the categories here, and will include the remainder in future issues of *Open Space*.

Top left: overall winner and winner of ‘commons’, Ceri Jones, *New Forest Dawn—New Forest moorlands near Burley*. **Bottom left:** winner of ‘greens’, Clive Ormonde, *Sunday afternoon village cricket at Greys Green, Oxfordshire*. **Above:** winner of ‘open’, Peter Murrell, *A winter walk*. **Below:** winner of ‘landscape’, Dave Shandley, *Frosty Higger Tor, Peak District*.





Bill for London's spaces

The City of London Corporation (CLC) is promoting a private bill, the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Bill. It is for the open spaces outside the City which the corporation (CLC) manages under various local acts and instruments.

These open spaces are still run under nineteenth-century legislation. The bill clarifies existing powers and grants new ones, including stronger enforcement powers.

There is a welcome statement on the face of the bill setting out the key objectives and protection of the various open spaces in current legislation.

An express power is included to enable active management of the spaces in order

will embrace the character and local environment of the open space, the need to avoid material injury to the amenity, or significant impairment to public enjoyment, of the space, and the location, frequency and duration of events.

We are pleased that our concerns have been addressed and shall follow the bill to ensure that CLC does not deviate from its duty to manage its magnificent open spaces for the benefit of the public.

Ministry of Injustice

In 2013 the government introduced rules for environmental court-cases. These limited the financial liability of those involved in legal action in such cases and thus enabled individuals and organisations to seek relief in the courts on environmental issues.

In September 2015 this protection was threatened by proposals from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to change the rules for environmental judicial reviews (JR).

Costs protection would only apply once claimants have obtained permission for JR, thus exposing them to expensive legal fees while they explore the options. The current caps would be doubled. Claimants must submit a schedule of their financial resources and defendants may challenge the cap on a claimant's costs if they believe the claimant can afford to pay more. In other words, legal action will be means-tested.

On behalf of 18 organisations including

New book on greens

We have published *Village Greens*, the third book in our current series, by chairman Graham Bathe. It is available from the office for £5 (see inside back cover).

to preserve their characteristics and appearance, but it is not to be used to the detriment of commoners' rights in Epping Forest, the only CLC space where these survive.

Before the bill was lodged in parliament we raised a number of concerns particularly about the use of open spaces for events which might conflict with public enjoyment. CLC has assured us that such use must not materially harm the amenity of the open space and that events will be subject to a policy prepared in consultation with appropriate bodies including ourselves. The policy

What comes now?

Thanks to your generosity our *What comes now?* appeal stands at more than £9,000, a splendid result.

OSS, the Wildlife and Countryside Link Legal Strategy Group has responded to MoJ opposing these plans which could prevent individuals and organisations from challenging environmental wrongs in the courts.

Defending the commons

A strip of the ancient Beverley Westwood Common in East Yorkshire is to become a cycle track; the land offered in exchange was already used by the public and we objected but without success.

However, at Lyde Green, near Pucklechurch, north-east of Bristol, we were relieved that NORFT Ltd has withdrawn its controversial plan to sacrifice part of the common. We had opposed the application to replace it with inferior land some distance away. There is massive development here and the new residents will need the common as a green lung.

The Welsh mining company Miller Argent wants to enclose parts of Gelligaer and Merthyr Common near Caerphilly, to dig six million tonnes of coal from the Nant Llesg mine. The proposals will have a devastating effect on the area.

Caerphilly Council has refused planning permission but Miller Argent has appealed, and the case will be heard, with the common-land application, at an inquiry later this year.

Merthyr Common rises above the town of Rhymney. Photo: Eddie Blanche.



Threatened space at Heol y Frenhines, Cefn Glas, Bridgend (see below).

Bridgend spaces in peril

We have objected to a string of planning applications from the housing association Valleys to Coast (V2C). Its proposals threaten to destroy many open spaces around Bridgend in south Wales.

For instance, within the estate at Cefn Glas, V2C intends to eliminate the existing, well-established open space.

Our local correspondent Jay Kynch says: 'It is sad that a housing association seeks to destroy the well-designed open spaces which have been used by local residents for 70 years. The landowner should instead dedicate these spaces as village greens.'

Whither the Commons Act?

It is ten years since the Commons Act 2006 provided for accurate and up-to-date registers of commons (part 1) and commons councils to manage the commons (part 2). Yet it is still not fully in force.

In Wales neither part has been implemented. In England we can only claim lost commons in nine registration-authority areas, in the remainder of England land can be removed from the register but not added. And there are still only two commons councils.

With so much still to be done it is disappointing that Grant McPhee, of

the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' commons, access and inland waterways team, left in December. He alone dealt with parts 1 and 2 of the act and with village greens. We have urged the environment minister, Rory Stewart, to ensure that commons are protected in the Defra spending cuts. We have received a non-committal reply.

Cissbury victory

Worthing Borough Council in West Sussex has dedicated its land at Mount Carvey and Tenants Hill for public access. This is close to the ancient Cissbury Ring above Worthing in the South Downs National Park.

The decision follows a six-year campaign led by the Worthing Downlanders. After a well-supported public rally in November 2009, at which our general secretary was one of the speakers, the campaigners persuaded the council to back down on the proposed sale of public downland and, eventually, to dedicate the land for access.

Circuit of Wales go-ahead

The Circuit of Wales motorsport development is set to destroy an extensive tract of moorland common in Blaenau Gwent. The common is to be 'exchanged' for seven scattered sites, including part of Wentwood Forest, 30 miles away, which is already enjoyed by the public. This is a public swindle.

We opposed the plans at the public inquiry in March 2015. The inspector, Emyr Jones, conceded that 'overall the proposal would be detrimental to the public interest in the protection of public rights of access', and that 'placing a development of the scale and nature represented by the Circuit of Wales in such a location would have a significant and irreversible detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the site itself and the surrounding area ... the Circuit would erode the sweeping grandeur and

sense of remoteness experienced within part of the [Brecon Beacons] National Park.'

However, despite these fine words, he concluded that the alleged socio-economic benefits of the proposal would 'outweigh the identified harm and failure to provide land of at least equal benefit'. This is a profoundly disturbing interpretation of the Commons Act and we predict that it could set a damaging precedent.

Battersea's battering

We have backed the Friends of Battersea Park in south London in their fight against the Formula E 140-mph race for electric cars. The event was held for the first time last year and we fear that its repetition could result in significant damage to this grade II*-listed Victorian park. The park would be closed in whole or part for many days in June and July. Works which were said to be temporary last year have not been removed.

The head of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Stuart Hobley, has raised concerns since HLF gave the park a grant of £7.5 million in 2004. We hope to persuade Wandsworth Council to drop the plans.

Booze and noise

Money-making from public open spaces continues apace. Clapham Common in Lambeth is regularly threatened with private events and a boozy Oktoberfest is planned on Acton Green common, Ealing.

Meanwhile, Lambeth Council has announced new guidance on sound at outdoor events, proposing 'the same sound levels as other places such as Hyde Park' even though its spaces are much smaller. It says that keeping the levels as they were is not an option because 'it will not enable Lambeth to attract or retain major commercial events ... and achieve the income required for reinvestment.'



The ancient oak-tree in Bradgate Park, Charnwood Forest. Photo: Chris Peat.

New linkages in Charnwood

Our member Chris Peat represents us on the stakeholder group which advises on the future of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park in Leicestershire.

This is a distinctive upland to the north-west of Leicester, valued for its geology, biodiversity, landscape, history and recreation.

There are few attractive walking routes connecting the surrounding urban areas to the forest, which means that most walkers drive to and park in the forest. Also, there are not many good circular walks in the forest so that the majority of recreational visitors go to the honeypot sites, resulting in crowds and erosion.

An aim of the regional park is to create new linkages and spread the visitors; we support this intention.

Designated landscapes

The good news is that funding for national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs) and coastal access in England will be maintained over the next four years, despite the squeeze on Defra. However, the bad news is that the three Welsh national parks face a cut of more than five per cent, despite their

major contribution to the nation's economy.

In 2014 the Welsh Government set up a designated landscapes review panel to 'ensure that our designated landscapes are best equipped to meet current and future challenges while building upon their internationally-recognised status', and to consider the governance and management arrangements of the national parks and AONBs.

The distinguished panel, chaired by Professor Terry Marsden, with John Lloyd Jones and Ruth Williams, carried out a thorough and sensitive review and produced a comprehensive set of recommendations, to be taken as a package. They enthusiastically support the designated landscapes which they recognise as national assets, contributing massively to Wales's health and well-being.

It is sad and worrying that the Welsh Government has ignored this excellent report and instead set up yet another review, led by Plaid Cymru Assembly Member Dafydd Elis-Thomas. The outcome is uncertain, and will be largely dependent on whatever changes the Welsh Assembly elections bring in May. ◻

Path Issues

End of pioneer path-scheme

After 25 years the pioneering Kington Footpath Scheme in Herefordshire has come to an end.

The scheme was invented and run by Peter Newman, our trustee and north-west Herefordshire local correspondent, in collaboration with Herefordshire Council and the Hereford Probation Service.

Offenders on Community Payback worked with Peter and the council to install about 800 stiles and gates, waymarks and fingerposts, and many notice-boards and footbridges. They have maintained countless footpaths, bridleways and byways in 16 parishes in north-west Herefordshire including parts of Offa's Dyke National Trail and the Mortimer Trail.

The scheme had its final day on Sunday 31 January when the workers erected a notice-board at Bollingham, three miles

south of Kington, to hold a map of the area's public paths. This is at the entrance to a green lane which was recently added to the definitive map and reopened thanks to Peter's efforts. The route is part of an ancient ridgeway which it is believed was used to convey greenstone axes from Wales to the Midlands.

Welcome

Kington is one of 100 Walkers Are Welcome Towns in Great Britain. Thanks to Peter's scheme the paths round about are in good condition and really do welcome walkers and riders.

Says Will Steel, Network Regulation Manager for Balfour Beatty (which undertakes public-path maintenance for Herefordshire Council): 'The Kington Footpath Scheme has been an amazing achievement. It has delivered huge improvements to the condition of public rights of way. Peter's consistent endeavour to improve the local area for

Left: Peter finishing off a signpost. Right: Peter and Maurice Clother with the newly-erected notice-board. Photos: Barrie Trumper.





Crossing over Shore Road at Poole, which links Alington footpath 85 with the Harbour Promenade to Sandbanks. This was won by our local correspondents Harry and Aimée Alexander, after a ten-year campaign. They had already secured three other crossings over this busy road.

residents and visitors is truly commendable.'

Adds Maurice Clothier, supervisor of the probation workers: 'Generations of offenders have reopened overgrown green lanes, footpaths and bridleways. They have built bridges and stiles and maintained these routes. In fact their work has substantially helped to put Kington firmly on the tourist map, as a centre for walking. Peter has given up his Sundays throughout this time and worked alongside the supervisors and offenders to achieve all this.'

Peter has ended the scheme because he is moving to Powys. The county council had better be on its guard because Peter will shortly become our Powys correspondent.

A public-spirited act

Wayware Ltd of Southrepps Hall has dedicated a 1,055-metre public byway in the parishes of Sustead, Aldborough and Thurgarton in North Norfolk. This provides walkers, riders, cyclists and carriage drivers with a pleasant short cut away from traffic. Our local correspondent for Norfolk, Ian Witham,

had been researching evidence for the inclusion of this route on the definitive map. He is delighted that the landowner has volunteered to dedicate the path, thereby avoiding a time-consuming and costly claim. If only all landowners were so public-spirited.

New laws for paths

The changes to rights-of-way law in the Deregulation Act are likely to take effect this summer. The detailed regulations and guidance are being drafted in consultation with the Rights of Way Stakeholder Group on Unrecorded Ways, of which our general secretary is a member.

Invite a friend

We depend on members for our survival. Please invite your friends to join us and support our cause. They can join via our website at www.oss.org.uk/membership/.

Wenvoe win

We have helped our member, the Wenvoe Residents' Action Group, to save the lovely footpath 21 at Wenvoe in the Vale of Glamorgan. The path is affected by development.

We objected to the plan to divert this historic route, which runs across open fields with fine views over the Bristol Channel, to a line next to new development. As a result the council now proposes to move only those sections of path within the development itself.

Fine views from Wenvoe footpath 21.



Reviews



The Walker's Handbook (fifth edition) by Hugh Westacott (Footpath Publications, £19.99) is a comprehensive guide to all one needs to know when walking in the British Isles.

Written as a manual it does not go into detail about everything but points you to further information. The section on the law of paths and access in England and Wales is merely an overview (no mention that unauthorised stiles and gates are obstructions or that they must be to British Standard), but it directs you to other volumes, such as our own Blue Book.

There are chapters on clothing, maps and how to read them, leading walks, walking with children and much more. The chapter on the global navigation satellite system was unfamiliar ground to me and I was pleased that Hugh emphasises the importance of frequent reference to a map

when using a satnav. There are also many helpful lists and a good index.

Hugh begins by saying that he has confined himself to facts. Not so, he ventures into some personal opinions—but no harm in that. It is a useful book.

A William Condry Reader edited by Jim Perrin (Gomer Press, £14.99) is a selection of the brilliant writings of naturalist Bill Condry.

Bill was a regular contributor to *The Guardian's* 'Country Diary', and his words about nature and his surroundings, closely and calmly observed, are a joy to read. It is a good collection.

He persuaded the RSPB to buy the Ynys-Hir estate on the Dovey Estuary in Ceredigion; we are told how this came about to ensure that this special place is now well-protected and loved. Bill has left a wonderful legacy. **KA**

Come to our AGM

on Thursday 7 July 2015 at 11 am

Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

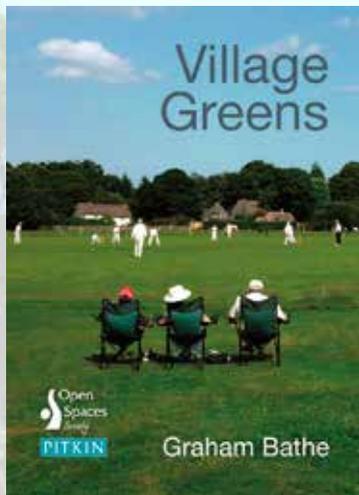
If you would like to submit a motion to the AGM, it must reach us, bearing your signature, by midnight on Wednesday 25 May.

If you wish to stand for election as a trustee, we need your nomination, proposed and seconded in writing by members of the society and bearing your written consent, by midnight on Wednesday 25 May. Candidates must have been individual members of the society since 25 May 2015. The trustees meet in London four times a year.

If you cannot attend the meeting you can vote by proxy. Details will be included with the next *Open Space*.

If you would like more information, please contact the office: telephone 01491 573535, email hq@oss.org.uk.

NEW BOOK ON VILLAGE GREENS



VILLAGE GREENS

In this profusely-illustrated guide, Graham Bathe looks at the origin, history, diversity and wildlife of greens, their role during celebrations and period of unrest, and their ongoing importance today.

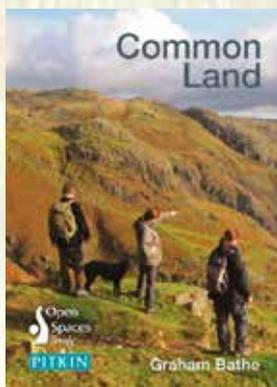
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