

## Wokingham Health Walks

**Welcome to the winter edition of the Wokingham Walking for Health newsletter.**

Another year has flown by. I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the steady growth of the Walking for Health programme in Wokingham and it has been great to see so many new walkers join the programme and increase their levels of physical activity. The winter can be a challenging time for many people in our community however I continue to hear wonderful stories of social engagement and how the walking programme has helped so many people at risk of isolation. Long may it continue!

As usual, the newsletter has been very enjoyable to put together and I thank those people who have contributed to it. The newsletter has a very 'social' feel to it as we look to celebrate the achievements of individuals along with sharing the memories of the past year.

I am incredibly grateful to Brian Wooldridge, the Wokingham Walk coordinators and Janet Stephens who have all contributed to helping to make the programme such a success and by assisting me with the day-to-day running of the scheme.

In this edition, we discover how Walk Leader Maureen Boyington got into leading, find out all the gossip from our recent social events and celebrate one man's special recognition at the recent Wokingham Borough Sports Council Awards.

Enjoy the newsletter and have a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year.

Happy walking

*Glenn*

Wokingham Walking for Health



## Spotlight on..... Maureen Boyington

### ***How did you first become involved in the Walking for Health Programme?***

I became involved with the Health Walks after a friend suggested joining a walking group because I explained how vulnerable I felt walking alone exploring different routes in my 'Walking Round Reading' book. The first walk I joined was the walk at Tesco on Saturdays led by Keith Jennings Frisby.

### ***When did you become a Walk Leader and what walks do you lead?***

Keith persuaded me to become a leader and he explained the responsibilities that were required in leading a walk, and those that were required as a backmarker. I became a walk leader shortly after and I lead the walks on the Tuesdays and Fridays at Cantley Park and at Redlands Farm Car Park on Mondays.

### ***What make leading the walks so rewarding for you?***

I can encourage other people to walk regularly too and therefore to enjoy better health. I can say how impressed I am with the training days for Leaders as it was full of very useful information, but was fun too. As a retired nurse, I also welcomed the First Aid Training offered and I enjoyed the Resuscitation Training on Rescue Annie.

I think that all leaders would agree that the organisation of the walks is now on a sound footing, both financial and in the organisation. The Coordinators and Leaders won an award last year for service to the community. On these occasions, if a walker has arrived just after the Walking group have left, the late Walker will be seen coming towards us in the opposite direction. Both the late Walker and the group find this very funny.

### ***What interest do you have outside of walking?***

When I am not walking, I enjoy gardening, going to concerts, and visiting the theatre and cinema. I love all activities involving being with my family. In October my daughters, Claire and Caroline did a tandem parachute jump to raise money for Research for Multiple Myeloma - the disease that killed their father. As a family we hope to raise more money in the future.

### ***Have you ever met anyone famous?***

I am afraid that I have not met any famous people except that many years ago while on holiday in Austria, we almost bumped into Arnie Schwarzenegger at a music festival in Salzburg. "I'll be back"



Supporting you to  
get active and stay active

Together the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support run Walking for Health, helping more people – including those affected by cancer – discover the joys and health benefits of walking.

The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity (England & Wales no. 1093577, Scotland no. SC039799) [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)  
Macmillan Cancer Support is a registered charity (England and Wales no. 261017, Scotland no. SC039907, Isle of Man no. 604) [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

# walk this way



## Social News

### **“Swing Your Partner”**

If anybody needed proof that walking keeps you fit then they should have been at the Health Walkers Barn Dance on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October.

A total of 68 keen revellers spent a very enjoyable evening at Hurst Village Hall swinging their partners, promenading around the square and doing a “dos-a- dos” with anyone who was in reach!

The arrival of some excellent fish and chips at 8.30 pm (followed by macaroons) gave an opportunity for a much-needed rest before the music started up again and we were back on the dance floor.

Thanks were given at the end to Valerie Astill and the rest of the Social Events Committee for all their work in getting the event organised and to many others for helping on the night. We also gave a well-deserved round of applause to Ivan and his band (J.I.P.) for the superb music, calling, humour ---- and patience!!

As one keen participant put it at the end of the evening “Our feet ached from dancing and our stomachs ached from laughing”.

### **Annual Dinner Dance**

On Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December ninety health walkers swapped their fleeces and boots for posh frocks, suits and shiny shoes. Why? Well it was the night of the annual dinner dance at the Sonning Golf Club. A great night was had by all --- good food and wine, good music and lots of dancing.

Kevin Meager (also known as “Smooth Nights”) provided just the right mix of music and the dance floor was soon full. It was clear that the Health Walks (and the Barn Dance in October!!) had helped people build up the stamina to keep going till the last dance just before midnight.

Brian Hughes, Chairman of the Social Events Committee, gave a short speech thanking the committee for all their work in 2017 and encouraged people to come to the events planned for 2018. A table showing the dates of these is included below. There are 2 new events which he hoped would prove popular.







FRIENDS

LOOKING BACK ON 2017

FUN!



Supporting you to get active and stay active

Together the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support run Walking for Health, helping more people – including those affected by cancer – discover the joys and health benefits of walking.

The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity (England & Wales no. 1093577, Scotland no. SC039799) [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)  
 Macmillan Cancer Support is a registered charity (England and Wales no. 261017, Scotland no. SC039907, Isle of Man no. 604) [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

## Walk Leaders Desperately Required

The Wokingham Walk for Health programme relies heavily on the goodwill and service from a number of committed volunteers. Without their commitment, many of the walks would not take place or they would need to be scaled down. Whether you are an experienced walker or new to the programme, we are always on the lookout for new volunteer walk leaders and back markers.

Our volunteers are fully supported and you can volunteer to lead one walk a month to as many as you want. The choice is yours. Leaders and backmarkers will find the Walking for Health programme very flexible and if you are unable to make your rostered walk, you can often swap with other walk leaders.

You will receive full in-house training and be rewarded with a first aid qualification. (To be completed after the one day training). The programme has an experienced walk coordinator who designs the rota for the walks and you will be fully supported by Wokingham Borough Council Walking for Health coordinator.

Walk leaders (and back markers) receive a uniform and the satisfaction of contributing to the success of the programme.

**For more details contact Glenn at [Healthwalks@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Healthwalks@wokingham.gov.uk) or contact 0118 974 3729**

## Walking & Wellbeing

The criteria for 'health' walking as opposed to, say, rambling or strolling, is that you become a little sweaty, your heartbeat be slightly raised, and you should be a tad out of breath but still able to talk. The physical benefits of health walking are well recognised but the therapeutic value of talking is rarely emphasised.

A long time ago a lady, who had recently been bereaved, said to me that meeting up with friends at ten o'clock each morning and talking and walking in beautiful locations, gave her a reason to get up in the morning and had helped her through a dark time in her life.

The social aspect of the health walking group is a major factor. Mental health, happiness and a sense of well-being is just as important as maintaining a healthy body. Walking and chatting with like-minded friends can lift depression and promote a sense of peace and harmony and break the circle of stress that can be a feature of modern day life. So, next time you walk, be sure to talk.

We invite you to join in all the various functions, make new friends, and take part and enjoy the social life offered by the Health Walking Group.

Jean Hill  
Secretary  
Health Walkers Social Events Group



Supporting you to  
get active and stay active

Together the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support run Walking for Health, helping more people – including those affected by cancer – discover the joys and health benefits of walking.

The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity (England & Wales no. 1093577, Scotland no. SC039799) [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)  
Macmillan Cancer Support is a registered charity (England and Wales no. 261017, Scotland no. SC039907, Isle of Man no. 604) [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)



## Congratulations Brian



Photo courtesy of Stewart Turkington

The Wokingham Borough Sports Council celebrated the achievements of athletes, coaches and volunteers at the recent Sports Awards evening at Bulmershe School. GB Olympic Skeet Shooter Amber Hill was the main guest and she presented a host of awards recognising individual and team contributions to sports throughout the year.

Over 100 people attended the event supported by Wokingham Borough Council which has grown from a small gathering in a Hurst village hall into an annual gathering attended by several hundred people.

Individuals and teams are nominated from groups and organisations across the borough and Wokingham Walking for Health volunteer, Brian Wooldridge was nominated for the Individual Service to Sport award. Brian was nominated for his tireless work coordinating the health walks and his work promoting the health walks in the wider community. Trinity Mirror Sports reporter David Wright presented Brian with his award as he impressed the panel with his efforts.

Congratulations to the walk coordinators who were also nominated for an award to add to last year's achievements but they just missed out on collecting another award for their achievements.



Supporting you to  
get active and stay active

Together the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support run Walking for Health, helping more people – including those affected by cancer – discover the joys and health benefits of walking.

The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity (England & Wales no. 1093577, Scotland no. SC039799) [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)  
Macmillan Cancer Support is a registered charity (England and Wales no. 261017, Scotland no. SC039907, Isle of Man no. 604) [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

HEALTH WALKS PROGRAMME OF SOCIAL EVENTS FOR 2018		
EVENT	DATE AND TIME	VENUE
Breakfast Walk	To be arranged in March	Henry Street Garden Centre
Walk and Garden Party with Cream Tea	Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> April 2:00 pm	Arborfield
Spring Walk, Quiz and Buffet Lunch	Saturday 19 <sup>th</sup> May 10.00 am	Barkham Village Hall
Summer Walk and Hog Roast	Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> June 6:00 pm	Barkham Village Hall
Skittles Evening with Fish & Chips Supper	Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> October 7:00 pm	Barkham Village Hall
Christmas Dinner and Dance	Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> December 7:00 pm	Sonning Golf Club
<b>Booking Forms available from Walk Leaders or on <a href="http://www.healthwalks.org.uk">www.healthwalks.org.uk</a></b>		

## Spring 2018 Newsletter

Please feel free to submit articles and news to [Healthwalks@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Healthwalks@wokingham.gov.uk)

We are always on the lookout for interesting content and photos.

## Thanks

On a personal note, I would like to take the opportunity to thank a team of people who make the Health Walk programme such a joy to coordinate and manage. Thanks to the walk coordinators, Keith Shepherd, Peter Astill, Sue Barton, Richard Wombwell, David Bentley, Maureen Boyington and Elaine Hayes for their help and support. Big thanks to Brian Wooldridge who supports the leader rota and for his efforts and congratulations on your awards. Thanks to Janet Stephens who has supported the administrative side and taken on board collating mountains of data. To the entire group of walk leaders who brave all environments to led the walks. I thank you for your efforts and hard work. A big thank you must also go to the social committee for all their efforts in providing fun & engaging social opportunities. All of these people offer up their time, knowledge and expertise on a volunteer basis and you have been brilliant.

Thank you to all the walkers who attend each week and continue to support the Walking for Health programme in Wokingham.



Supporting you to  
get active and stay active

Together the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support run Walking for Health, helping more people – including those affected by cancer – discover the joys and health benefits of walking.

The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity (England & Wales no. 1093577, Scotland no. SC039799) [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)  
Macmillan Cancer Support is a registered charity (England and Wales no. 261017, Scotland no. SC039907, Isle of Man no. 604) [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)