

## A Resumé of the History of the U3A Striders Group

An inaugural meeting for the Group was held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014. Our first walk was held on 14<sup>th</sup> May and it was 6.45 miles long. It started from The George at Tiffield but because there was another party booked in to The George that day we could not eat there so it didn't pan out so well for our first walk. Some of us went to the Bell Plantation for eats and a chat. We did not keep a register to begin with but I noted that there were 10 of us a sufficient number to decide that there was enough interest to continue the Group. Strangely, this photo which I believe was taken on that first walk as you can see Eastcote in the background which was our destination only shows six of us plus the photographer, Peter C, that makes 7 – a mystery.



Only 3 of us walked the Stride in October starting from Boddington. Indeed numbers in this first year did drop down to single figures on a number of occasions.

That first year we completed eight Strides (Note they are now called Strides not “walks this was Peter C’s idea when he sent me details of his Stride. I cottoned on to it and adopted it for all subsequent notifications, after all the Group is called The Striders.) all led by different members of the Group. Our first annual get-together was held at Geoff and Steph’s, so a repeat of this Year.

In 2015 we did a Stride in every month of that year. The picture below shows us on the Stride in January led by Geoff and Steph. Pat Conlon second from left has since left the Group.



The Stride that stands out in my memory was the first section of the Jurassic Way from Middleton Cheney (not the official start which is Banbury but we decided to miss out the boring bit) to Woodford Halse. We parked some of our cars in Woodford and then drove the others to Middleton and vice versa at the end of the walk. Twelve of us did this first section and thoroughly enjoyed it. In October we did the second section from Woodford Halse to Braunston but only 4 of us turned up (see the next paragraph). The get-together for the year was held here at Malthouse Court and we did a semi-urban walk around and about Towcester.

In 2016 again we did a full programme of Strides but one was cancelled in March because of flooding. In February we did something different. We went to West London where I led a walk around Bedford Park a Victorian garden suburb for which I had been responsible when the Conservation Officer at the London Borough of Ealing. After lunch we walked along the Thames through Chiswick village and then caught the train back. In May we did a re-run of the second section of the Jurassic Way. This time it was a great success. On 10<sup>th</sup> August we tackled the third section of the Jurassic Way from Braunston to Winwick – 9 miles. This time, however we used the SNVB mini-bus which picked us up in Towcester,



dropped us at Braunston and then picked us up in Winwick at the end of the walk. This saved the time of travelling about in cars and made for a more enjoyable day. As you can see from the photo below the Group continued to attract new members.



In 2017 the Group continued to enjoy good Strides and the number of members attending were good. On some Strides the number was 8 but on others the number went up to 12. There are 20 members on the Group register including our newest members - Ken Greenhall, Anne Jelfs and Tim Hughes. We continued to Stride along the Jurassic Way. In May we walked from Winwick to Sibbertoft; in August from Sibbertoft to Stoke Albany and in September from Stoke Albany to Gretton an average of nearly 11 miles. Believe it or not the last picture was taken in May. And no we don't know what Eric was up to.

I think the Group established in 2014 has grown to be a friendly Group providing an alternative to the Rambling Groups. Apart from the increased lengths of the walks I think we have offered something different in the types of walk we do.



For the future the Group is to operate in a different way. I will continue as co-ordinator

but each month the leader will issue the details of the Stride without first passing them to me. Consequently the leader will be the point of contact for that Stride. This leaves the co-ordinator to be the point of contact for the Group for new members, leader in the annual get to-gether to plan the programme and the person who puts the fire out if there is any problem!

Peter Warden

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