

A Coventry Way Association – in lieu of an AGM - 4th March 2021

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Chairman's Report

Hello, I hope that you all have been able to remain well and stay safe.

The 2019 AGM held at King Henry VIII School in December (9th). There was good turn-out, with the membership taking the opportunity to catch up. Things were looking good for 2020.

At the meeting our new webmaster, Roger Ladbury, gave us an idea of what the new website would look like. The site had a softer feel and would adjust across various platforms. The Site went live early in 2020 to much acclaim. Thank you, Roger for that effort and for keeping the web-site current throughout.

At the AGM, it was thought that our constitution is a little out of date. There followed improvement work on the document by Trevor Cornfoot and Anne Wade. The changes to the constitution will be presented at the 2021 AGM for acceptance.

Early in 2020 the usual preparations were well under way for the April Challenge. The entry list of 250 was full, with a healthy waiting list.

Then the Coronavirus took over. John Aylmer, Ken Nicholas, Bob Carey, and I met in Anne Wade's kitchen on March 16th to discuss whether we could still go ahead with the 2020 Challenge that April. We quickly decided that we should not. The national lock-down later in the month overtook our decision. A certain amount of work ensued to roll over the Challenge to 2021. This was achieved with our partners agreeing to the roll-over without further cost to the event.

The postponement meant quite an amount of effort for Ken, our entries Secretary, who had to communicate to our participants. SIENTRIES the event entry company we use had processes in place to ease the burden, albeit they had many similar events to deal with. The majority chose to simply roll their entry over to April 2021 – it was the default option.

So that was Challenge 2020. A Coventry Way was not forgotten, parts were being used by many out on their 'daily exercise'.

Once the lockdown was eased Anne decided to mark her 60th birthday with a one and a half 'A Coventry Way' to make 60 miles. Starting at 05:02 from Meriden, Anne's running support through the day included daughter Hannah, friend Wendy and Aimee Morse. 40 miles after starting, Anne was leaving Meriden again at exactly 15:00. The 60-mile day ended at Bretford at 20:30. Fifteen and a half hours - Anne was "chuffed".

Anne's story can be read on the ACW website.

Then on 19th June, Andy Snow and Colin Bailey of Kenilworth runners completed a double 'A Coventry Way'. Andy wanted to get a high mileage run completed during lockdown, the route being only 300 from his Kenilworth home. He uses the course as a training route and gets round at least once most months! Andy and Colin started from Kenilworth at 16:06 on the Friday afternoon. At 00:55 that night they were setting off again from Kenilworth, ten minutes ahead of their schedule. Their time for the two circuits was 18hrs 7mins recording 82 miles. Calories expended were 10,664k and a total of 156,572 steps. Andy: "The line in the sand is now drawn, the gauntlet laid down".

Next month Mike Scandrett had the new 2xACW 80-mile record down to 15 hours 23 minutes and 50 seconds.

During the summer there were many reports and photos from our membership on the 'progress' of HS2, which was making a mess of ACW. Bob C and Anne spent many hours exploring the various footpath diversions which would suddenly appear.

As December 2020 approached there was discussion between the committee members on how to hold the AGM. The use of Zoom was not popular - it was decided to postpone the AGM to March 2021.

Early in 2021 the usual preparations were cautiously under way for the April Challenge. The entry list of 250 was full, with a healthy waiting list. However, it was soon felt by the Committee that we should defer again, this time to 3rd April 2022. And, again with our partners agreeing to the roll-over without further cost to the event.

Groundhog Day. More work for Ken, who reports that next year's Challenge is fully subscribed, so only waiting list applications will be accepted when entries open on 1st November 2021. There are already over 60 on the waiting list, who have all been transferred from this year's cancelled event.

Now it is March - what of the AGM? The use of Zoom is still not popular. The decision was taken to postpone the AGM to December 2021 and submit some reports in lieu.

Bob.Brandon
4th February 2021

2020 ACWA Secretary's Report

Little to report from a Secretary point of view.

In the December issue of the LDWA Strider journal, ACW was showcased in two articles:

1. Written by Michael Jones as part of a series about long distance paths, which are not National Trails.
2. My 60@60 (can be viewed on the ACWA website).

We also have an article in the Spring 2021 edition of the Meriden Magazine (copy attached below).

In November, I updated our Challenge Event Safety Management Plan with Covid-19 risk mitigations and procedures. With the second deferment of the Challenge event, this will be updated again for 2022, depending on the circumstances at the time.

From a personal point of view, I am continuing to watch the progress of HS2 and its impact on our ACW route and circular walks. Latest updates (that I know of) are reported on the website. Our local footpaths are being very-well walked, so much so, that most are in an incredibly muddy, swamp-like state. At least it keeps the vegetation at bay! In a normal year, our working parties do a great job of looking after the ACW route. With the second deferment of the Challenge event, some preliminary path clearance and/or maintenance may be needed before 2022. Otherwise, there could be a lot of work to do in a short space of time.

The EBB100 has been deferred to 2023, though I am still working hard on various aspects of this event.

As this year's LDWA 100 has been cancelled completely (even though it was postponed from last year), the organisers are encouraging members to walk their own local 100-mile route non-stop over the same weekend (29th – 31st May 2021). 2½ times around ACW??!! Or we have 3 routes which fit the criteria: Heart of England Way (Milford to Bourton-on-the-Water), Centenary Way (Kingsbury Water Park to Quinton) and Millennium Way (Pershore to Middleton Cheney). Certain sections of these, we all know very well, and I have also completed the whole of the first 2 in sections on school walks. On balance, I am erring towards the Heart of England Way... Just hope the fields dry up by then!!!!

Anne Wade

February 2021

ACW Working party report 2020.

Because of the Covid virus, working parties during 2020 were very few. We have also unfortunately “lost” a few of our regular working party members. For various reasons, whereas a couple of years ago we used to be able to turn out as many as ten volunteers, we are now in a situation where I think we would be **very** lucky if we managed to get six at any one time. Six of course would be sufficient for any job, but to get those six out all on the same day would be most unlikely. However, it seems that Warwickshire CC no longer have the funds to supply us with gates or any other “furniture” as has been the case for at least two years now, and so we are left with just Solihull who we have good relations with to offer us work. But of course, during this Covid period that won’t be happening, and for the same reasons I am reluctant to go out looking for work.

In the early months of 2020, a small group of us, namely Bill Eve, Barry Swain and myself installed some new (reclaimed) way mark posts, and re-instated way mark posts that had fallen down at various places around the route of A Coventry Way. Plus improving the clarity of the route by adding new way mark signs. The sites for these improvements had been identified by Anne Wade who had covered the whole of the Challenge route. A very big thank you to Anne for that. I’m afraid that I can no longer cover the sort of mileage required to do that job, and so have to rely on her, and any other volunteers to let me know what is required. We were able to declare the Challenge route “fit for purpose”, but then, midway through March, because of the Covid situation we had to cancel the Challenge. The work was not wasted of course, and hopefully those way mark posts are all still in situ. During this period of time the Association purchased some new way mark signs, half of which were self adhesive which of course makes for easier signing in urban areas.

After March of 2020, we had for obvious reasons no more working parties. I suspect, after doing a few walks in the countryside recently, that there will be work to be done if only re installing way mark posts that I have come across lying on the ground. I have in only the past week been informed of the need to install kissing gates on a path in the Coventry area at Wall Hill Road, and a “high” stile on Bentons Green Lane. Neither of these of course are on paths they we try to look after, but in the case of the Coventry site it seems difficult to find who has replaced Simon Holloway (if at all), who would normally have asked if we could help. In the case of the stile at Bentons Green Lane, again, not “our” stile, but easily fixed by just one volunteer. But having spoken with Steve Hawley from Solihull CC, he is not keen to agree for us to do the job at the moment as he doesn’t have the required insurance in place.

Bob Carey – Working Parties Coordinator – February 2021

Below is Anne’s contribution to the Meriden magazine.



WALKING PAGE



For the residents of Meriden, the tangible existence of A Coventry Way probably only manifests itself during the day of the annual challenge event, usually held in April. The atmosphere buzzes with excitement and adrenaline as up to 250 participants leave The Queens Head to embark on the 40-mile countryside route encircling the city of Coventry, some returning in as little as 6 hours, whilst others return after considerably more than twice this long!

A Coventry Way is primarily the result of one person's endeavours: Cyril Bean, who studied the layout of the footpaths in the surrounding countryside and proposed that they could be joined to form a continuous loop. In 1974 he became the first person to walk the route in its entirety. He spent the following decades promoting it, eventually succeeding in gaining official recognition for it as a Long Distance Trail designated on Ordnance Survey maps. Since his death in 2012, the annual challenge event has been named in his honour. A memorial gate in Meriden churchyard dubs him "Mr A Coventry Way". A noticeboard outside The Queens Head displays a map of the route and locals will be familiar with the 'Three Spires' waymarks appearing on gates and stiles. A Coventry Way Association continues to promote the route, holds regular working parties to clear overgrown footpaths, install and maintain kissing gates, footbridges and way-mark posts, as well as organising the challenge event.

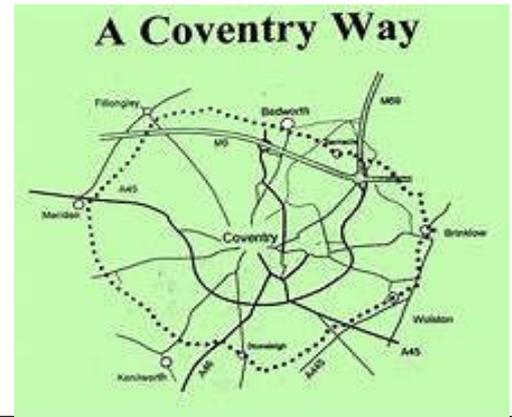
For updated information, please visit the website:

www.aconventryway.org.uk.

There are 2 publications available to download as pdf files: the 'Green Book', which details maps and directions for the entire A Coventry Way route; and the '21 Circular Walks' book, which details maps and directions for 21 walks linked to the Way. These walks range from 2.5 to 12 miles in length and can all be accessed using public transport. Very interesting environmental and historical information is also available on the website. In addition, there are GPX files available to download to your GPS device and/or Ordnance Survey mapping software.

Both local walkers and those from further afield are always pleasantly surprised by the beautiful countryside on our doorstep. There is significant variety to be enjoyed, including the Rivers Avon and Sowe, Oxford Canal towpath, Kenilworth Greenway, Brinklow Motte and Bailey, ancient lanes, packhorse bridges, plenty of open fields and, in season, Meriden Shafts are stunningly carpeted with bluebells. Fans of church architecture will have particular reason to linger, as the route takes in the parish churches of Meriden, Stoneleigh, Bubbenhall, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Brinklow and Ansty, while it is only a short detour to Kenilworth Castle and Abbey Fields. A Coventry Way truly showcases both wonderful walking and wonderful views on well-maintained paths. Enjoy!!

Anne Wade (January 2021)



Some countryside views below from A Coventry Way.



Approaching Hill House Farm, Berkswell



River Sowe through Stoneleigh Meadow

Above photos taken in Spring 2000 by Duncan Bean. Lots more on the website – go have a look – it's great.

Correction to Millison's Wood Circular walk in the Winter edition. Please note that there is no official access to the public footpaths from Millison's Wood as shown. You should exit the wood from the east side instead, as shown on the OS map.

Carol Lindeque. Moat House Farm, Church Lane.

Editor's note - Many thanks to Anne for this lovely article.