



Walking London's green pathways

Local resident Tony Roberts and a colleague completed the 78 miles of the Capital Ring in January this year, having previously completed the London LOOP (London Outer Orbital Pathway). He writes:

The characters of the two walks are quite different. As well as being only half the length of the LOOP, the Ring is significantly more urban and there are many more points where it is easy to join the route or have lunch.

The south-western part of the route is the most 'rural' as it passes through Wimbledon Common, Richmond Park, Isleworth and Syon Park before taking the Grand Union Canal tow path northward.

South-eastern parts of the route are rural too, sharing the way with parts of the Green Chain Walk, a source of confusion (we went wrong twice).

The East Finchley stretch is fairly tranquil, following the Mutton Brook through Lyttleton Field and then through Hampstead Garden Suburb and Cherry Tree Wood to Highgate Wood.

Anyone planning to do the walk should consider buying the paperback *Recreational Path Guide, The Capital Ring*, Aurum Press £12.99, available from Stanfords and other large book shops. It contains detailed maps. There is a similar book for the London LOOP too.



Official opening in Highgate Wood of the Capital Ring. Photo by Sheila Armstrong

Opening the Ring around London

By Daphne Chamberlain

London's green walk, The Capital Ring, is officially opened, and at least four stalwart walkers have certificates to prove it.

At the end of September assorted VIPs, including Jenny Jones from the Greater London Authority, Capital Ring manager Colin Saunders, and what Mr Saunders called "a chain-gang of mayors" assembled in Highgate Wood.

By a miracle of timing (and probably mobile phones), four groups of walkers also arrived from different parts of London at the same time. Their convergence point was the signpost outside Highgate Wood café, where a tape was later ceremonially cut.

The Capital Ring is a 78-mile walk along footpaths through inner London's parks, woodlands and nature reserves. Our immediate section runs through Queen's

Wood, Highgate Wood, Cherry Tree Wood and Lyttelton Playing Fields. Accompanying leaflets for all 15 stages of the Ring give information about the terrain, transport links, cafés and toilets.

Disabled Ramblers

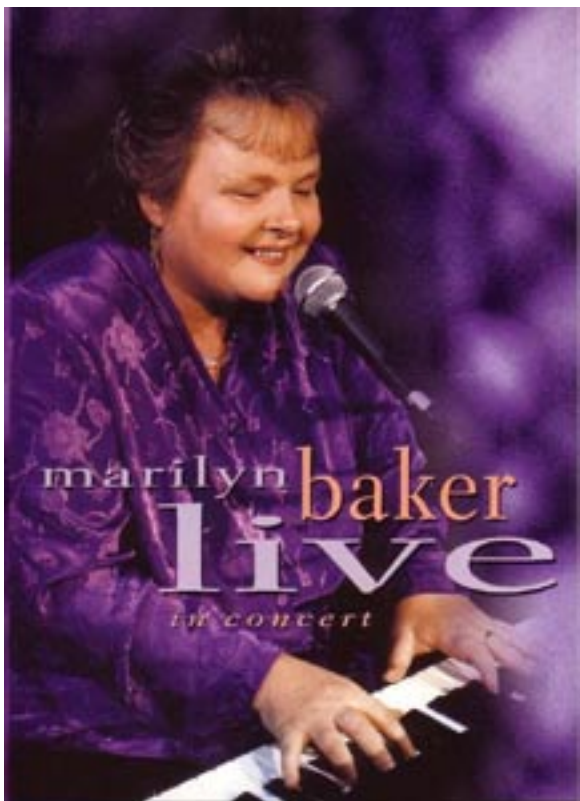
By Daphne Chamberlain
Dr. Mike Bruton founded Disabled Ramblers after travelling 50 miles in a rickshaw to raise money for charity. It now campaigns for easier access to the countryside for people with mobility problems, arranging rambles of around eight miles across England and Wales, including the Thames Path, with a sister group in Scotland.

As very few members can walk more than a few yards, buggies, scooters, power-chairs, manually-operated wheelchairs, friends, families and volunteer helpers are all par for the course. Routes vary from easy (on the level) to challenging (uneven, steep or rocky).

Dr. Bruton formed the association as the Countryside Access Group (subsidiary to the Disabled Drivers' Association) before registering it as a national charity under the name of Disabled Ramblers. The aim is to make rambling safe and easier for the disabled, while preserving the character of the countryside.

Bookings are available now for 2006. For further information, contact www.disabledramblers.co.uk or write to Robin Helby, Membership Secretary, Disabled Ramblers, Little Croft, Guildford Road, Shamley Green, GU5 0RT.

Finchley Christian Fellowship (An Elim Pentecostal Church) 'A Church for EVERYONE'



This is a golden opportunity to hear this amazing blind Singer/Songwriter in Concert Sunday 13th November - 11:00am The Finchley Youth Theatre 142 High Road, East Finchley, London N2

Changing face of the cemetery

By Ann Bronkhorst

Since June 2004, East Finchley's Islington and St. Pancras cemetery, the largest in London, has been managed entirely by Islington Council. Many changes have taken place, and more are planned when there is enough money.

The merged management is housed in the Islington office on Church Road North; this winter the old Camden office at the main gate will become the new reception centre. Near the Coppetts Road gate, a large area has been cleared of trees and scrub to create a new burial site. Next year, funding permitting, other parts of the cemetery may also be landscaped. Improvements have been made to the crematorium and its garden of remembrance, to some of the roads and even to the visitors' toilets.

Combating crime

The new entry barriers and the closure of the gates at Exit Road and Coppetts Road have not pleased everyone. More effective control of one main gate, and the installation of CCTV cameras at each gate, has increased security, however. Small-scale vandalism remains a problem but there is less vehicle crime and fly-tipping, and a more visible police presence inside the cemetery.

Inevitably, with such a

vast acreage, there are boundary issues of various kinds. Recently, a fire in the Fuel Lands allotments scorched mature trees in the cemetery; luckily, wet weather prevented further damage. The eastern fence adjoining Coldfall Wood and the playing field has never been secure but the battle against fly-tipping along that boundary is having some success.

A lung for Barnet

Islington's Councillor Fox, executive member for sustainability, thinks the present management plan will benefit wildlife. "To many, a cemetery is an unlikely 'public space', however it has clear potential to contribute to Barnet's green space," she said.

Walkers, bird-watchers and other local visitors to the cemetery will welcome the continuation of previous Camden and Islington conservation policies - for example, the bat and bird boxes. The popular wildlife walks are to return but only with clear guidelines on safety and control for group visits.