



Wiltshire Walking for All Newsletter

Issue 7

July 2009

In this edition of the Wiltshire Walking for All newsletter read about:

- The exciting results of the 6-week walking programme in Calne,
- How 3 to 93 year olds proved that Age is no Barrier in Devizes, and
- Our new free of charge event pack to help you run your own treasure trail.

Walking for health with the Patford GP Surgery in Calne

In Issue 6 we outlined the preparation work that Trish Cowie, the Fit Together Co-ordinator for Age Concern Wiltshire, and Dot Williams had been doing in Calne to facilitate a 6-week walking programme designed to help overweight and physically inactive patients at the Patford GP Surgery, Calne, to improve their health and fitness.

On Thursday, 23rd April, we met with the group of walkers who had been referred by the practice nurses, for an introductory chat. We briefly walked the area of Castlefields that would form the basis of our weekly programme, taking a 'base-line' of the number of steps achieved in 12 minutes, for each patient, for comparison at the end of the course. Over the next 6 weeks we gradually increased the distance and complexity of the weekly walks introducing gradients, stiles and field walks but ensuring always that the quickest and slowest walkers were able to pace themselves and be supported.



At the end of the course all participants felt that the walking had significantly contributed to the interesting outcomes recorded below:

- The group had become close-knit, chatting happily and looking out for one another. Coffee (only!) sessions were taking place in a local café after the walks.
- All participants, without exception, said they'd had much more fun than they'd expected. (So much fun that many brought children and grandchildren along to join the session at half-term.)
- One lady reported her 'best ever' reduction in blood pressure, a loss of 13 inches overall (with 4" off her waist measurement), sugar levels were stable (diabetic), she could now walk up hills, and had gone down 2 dress sizes!
- 3 members of the group had each lost half-a-stone.

- One heavy smoker had reduced her daily number of cigarettes and she was thrilled that she could now walk up 3 flights of stairs (to her flat) without stopping or getting puffed out.
- Everyone increased the number of steps they could do in 12 minutes. Most increased by between 100 to 150 steps but one participant almost doubled their number of steps from 834 to over 1500.

And the biggest incentive of all to keep walking? The Pedometer!

The group found it inspired them to keep walking between the weekly Thursday sessions so that they could see the daily increase in the steps they were taking. So, our thanks to SILVA who kindly provided the pedometers free of charge in exchange for comments on their performance.

We had a really enjoyable final session which included a Treasure Trail to find stamp boxes and wild flowers, answer questions about the local area of Castlefields, its river and canal. The trail also provided a further 'bonding' session for the two groups who competed, who were christened the 'Calne Racers' and the 'Calne Ramblers'.



Trish and I are continuing to support the group for a further 6 weeks to monitor their desire to maintain all that has been achieved, and in the hope that at least one member of the group will take a Walking for Health Leader course and keep the group going in Calne.

How 3 to 93 year olds "rubbed along together" in Age No Barrier week in Devizes!

On Wednesday, participants with including 13 sixth set out in groups the rubbings Medieval Trail in was organised by of the 'Age No



23rd June, 30 game ages ranging from 3 to 93, formers from Devizes School, to follow the clues and collect from plaques along the Devizes. The treasure trail Age Concern Wiltshire as part Barrier' week of events.

It was a lovely day and, as the group's quotes (below) prove, walking with people of different ages gives each age-group a new perspective on the others:

- Had a lovely time, lots to talk about and a wonderful day (young person)
- Nice to meet people of another age group (older person)
- It helps to keep your mind active (older person)
- I have learned many things I was previously unaware of (young person)
- Very interesting. We think there are some very good youngsters. It was a pleasure to have their company (older person)

Special thanks go to the Tourist Information Centre in Devizes where Manager, Sarah Crook, found herself in charge of replacing plaque number 9 which had mysteriously disappeared from a property in Monday Market Street. It had been found on the far side of town and handed in to the TIC. Sarah found an innovative way to ensure the day wasn't spoiled by putting it on a planter!

Run your own treasure trail with the WWA free of charge event pack

The one-off treasure trails WWA trialled by providing a set of stamps and ink-pads, have been a huge success at getting people to do more walking (without thinking about it!). We can now offer, free of charge, a set for loan to organisations and individuals who might wish to develop their own treasure trail to encourage their friends and communities to have fun whilst walking.



If you would like to know more please email Dot Williams on d.williams88@btinternet.com and she will provide you with further information about how to run your event and arrange collection/delivery of the pack.

Found a problem on the public Rights of Way network?

If you are out walking (cycling or horse riding) and find that Rights of Way have been blocked or are not in a suitable condition for use for any reason, please report your problem via **Clarence** on **0800 232323** or **01225 777234**.

Find out more about the Wiltshire Walking for All project by emailing your contact details to Dot Williams (d.williams88@btinternet.com) so that she can add you to the mailing list for the next edition of the Wiltshire Walking for All newsletter.

The Wiltshire Walking For All initiative will offer walking opportunities to all, regardless of ability, language or culture, gender or age.



VISIT WILTSHIRE

