EAST KENT RAMBLING CLUB NEWSLETTER November 2021 to February 2022

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PRESIDENT'S FINAL REPORT

63 years with East Kent Rambling Club

In this report I propose to relate to events that I have experienced and been instrumental in accomplishing over 63 year as a member of EKRC.

On the first walk led by Harry Walder, the founder and RA member, we rambled from the paper mills in Dover up to Ewell Minnis, the pub is now closed, before returning via Lydden and Temple Ewell back to the paper mills. I think there were 15 walkers on the first walk, the club then having a membership of around 50. All the members worked and walks were on Sundays every fortnight.

I helped set up White Cliffs RA group in 1989, attending the meeting in St. Leonard's Church Hall, Upper Deal, leading walks for them on every programme on Thursdays and Sundays, as did some of our members, Barbara Seed and Hazel Johnson, a former EKRC secretary, both names appearing on an early White Cliffs programme, which was produced as part of their 30 year celebrations. I have attended all of their AGMs, up to Covid, and will attend once more this November.

I was invited to lead White Cliffs 10th anniversary walk, having been on the first.

I served as a committee member for both clubs and I was RA Local Footpath Officer for 17 parishes in Dover, from 1986 up to 2013. It was in their interest to report on such matters on path closures and diversions during this time.

I have been present at Public Inquiries over 35 years, giving evidence as an objector, saying why the path should not be closed or diverted. These were at Sholden, Worth, Kingsdown, Tilmanstone (twice), Deal, Shepherdswell, (this time, a written submission). I was present, representing the Open Spaces Society at the hearing in front of an Inspector, supporting that the Coastal path should go along Richborough Wharf. The Inspector's decision has not been implemented by Natural England who have put it on hold for another 6 years, 11 years in all, so forcing walkers to go along the busy A256 instead of the wharf. Giving further evidence at other Public Inquiries, helping to save the Howletts Zoo path, which would have gone along three sides of a square, including walking along the Bekesbourne Littlebourne road, instead of going over the two bridges on the existing path. I gave an interview on Meridian TV before the P.I. and after we had won, on Radio Kent. Others were at Capel, Newington (Shepway), Adisham, (twice), giving evidence here at one, and supporting the objectors at another, appearing at Folkestone Magistrates Court, objecting to closing an alleyway in Cheriton, (unfortunately we lost).

Probably the most important was giving evidence at Canterbury Crown Court, objecting, to KCC's attempt to close the cliff path at Capel Le Ferne.

Fortunately for walkers, Judge Adele Williams agreed that the path was worth saving, which is now part of the Coastal path around England. If we had lost this path, walkers would be dodging bikes on a cycle route, that only touched the cliff at one point before diving back again inland.

Representing the RA as Local Footpath officer, I gave evidence when Dover District Council refused

permission for four giant wind turbines at East Langdon. Someone estimated that if these were erected on Dover seafront, they would be as tall as the castle. Others opposing the turbines were the Council for the Protection of Rural England, The Dover Society, the parishes of Langdon and Guston, who employed their own barristers, Manston airport, which was operational at the time and where the turbines caused flutter on the radar, they said, and a lady who was campaigning for road safety on the A258,

The Inspector refused the appeal by Ecotricity, saying the coast was some of the finest in the country, and these turbines would dominate the coastal strip. During the Inquiry, one of Ecotricity's turbines in Lincolnshire lost one of it's blades, and this was reported in the national press. In the case of Langdon, this could have been disastrous for anyone on a footpath walking there. Subsequent turbines have been erected out to sea. All applications on land for wind turbines should be treated on their impact on the landscape, and where they are situated.

I have suggested, through the local press, for solar panels to go onto roofs of factories, barns, stores, and Leisure Centres, massive distribution centres and not on agricultural land that can provide food. Other methods need to be investigated for the generation of electricity.

Through the local press, I referred to the inconvenience to walkers and other users of Network Rail's massive attempts to close rail crossings in East Anglia, then eventually to us in East Kent, writing to five local MPs, Charlie Elphicke, then my own M.P., who wrote to Network Rail, Sir Roger Gale, who said each one should be taken on it's merit, and Rosie Duffield, who said that if given the opportunity, she would speak on the matter in the "House", Damian Collins, who did not reply, and Damian Green, as did Craig McKinley, both saying I had to write to my own M.P. which I had of course.

Unfortunately, having received so much flack over East Anglia, Network Rail are now closing them one at a time, already done at Westbere, Whitstable, Chartham, and two new proposals in Swale, which are being fiercely contested.

I was involved in attending all the meetings when South East England Development Agency, (SEEDA) were planning a Country Park on the old Betteshanger coal tip. as a means of regenerating the former mining areas, with other potential users, in my case, representing ramblers and was part of a Steering Group that chose one of three applicants to open the park.

I asked that representatives from White Cliffs and DATROW should be allowed a preview before the opening date, and this did take place.

On the opening day, RA members came down by coach from all over Kent. We had been asked to lead a walk. Ted Roach met the coach on Deal seafront, and I started at Deal railway station, both groups meeting at one of the five bridges we built, at Southwall Road, Deal, before crossing over a bridge onto the park. I had successfully campaigned through the local papers for access to the park from Deal, where the majority of people lived, and was allowed to speak at a DDC planning meeting, when the item was discussed. Hadlow College took over the park from SEEDA and tried to close this bridge. It was quoted in the local paper, "Gordon Sencicle, who campaigned for a bridge said, if they try this, they will have a fight on their hands"

After building a replacement for the old doctor's surgery, that SEEDA had obtained cheaply, to house the mining exhibits, changing rooms and small cafe, it was eventually replaced by a building as long as the Chard is high, with a Conference Centre.

Hadlow College had money problems and the site was taken over by Quinn Estates. Their latest proposal is for a water theme park, a 5-star 56 bedroom hotel, with outdoor swimming pool. The entrance bridge from Deal now has a notice saying, "This gate closes at 4pm", preventing anyone wishing to enter on a summer evening for a stroll after work.

The former colliery pit head is to have Quinn houses and associated shops, to the detriment of rare species, including a rare poly grass, only found here in Kent, turtle doves, grey partridges great crested newts and others. Quinn say these can be easily transported onto Betteshanger Park, if this was possible, only to be moved again by developments in the park.

Stop press. It looks like Quality Court, Margate High Street, has had the path rebuilt. This is good news as it is not an official PROW but is to be claimed. However, when I asked the KCC East Kent Rights of Way Manager on the 8th, at Brabourne, if Albert Terrace to Margate High street, closed for seven years, which is a PROW, for any progress here, was told none.

The steps at Harbour Parade at Ramsgate however, again after seven years, are now cleared of tables and chairs, having recently been completely obstructing the paved area. I rather think after I had complained, this is more to someone in TDC finding that all the cafes are exceeding their permitted areas in front of the cafes, so not KCC PROW after all!

Roger, David Pennington, the Chairman of DATROW, now deceased, and I went to various village halls, from

the mid eighties, to discuss matters with the Rights of Way officer, finally now at Brabourne with greater numbers attending.

I represented EKRC four times a year for 15 years, at Kent Area RA Executive meetings at Maidstone. During that time, Kath Gill and I were asked by KARA, to plan a walk for a safe crossing over the A2 at Kingston.

On the day of the event, Ken Wright, the Area Footpath Officer gave an interview in Kingston Village Hall car park to the BBC and we were then filmed walking up to the A2, and on arrival at the A2, three of us gave an interview to Meridian TV, both filmed sequences, BBC and ITV were shown on the evening local news

I was the co-ordinator with KCC who provided the material for the building of 5 bridges, the first with White Cliffs volunteers, the remaining 4 with EKRC members, some of whom were RA members, and walked with White Cliffs as well as EKRC.

I cleared paths with EKRC members for 25 years, the first after the 1987 Hurricane, from alongside Denton Village Hall up through the wood which we cleared one Sunday morning, the last with DATROW, was a bridle path adjacent to Betteshanger prep school in 2012.

Dedications to:-

Ken Wright, former Kent Area ROW Manager, who took KCC to the Crown Court, and gave evidence, sadly deceased.

Grahan Smith, who also gave evidence, and was responsible for publishing my letters in his paper, placing all our walks in his Mercury and other Kent Messenger papers, and also last year clearing the path on Hangman's Lane with Ted Roach, where the equestrians are campaigning to claim a bridleway over the railway.

Roger King, who organised many path clearances, gave evidence in the Crown Court, and built 4 bridges. and organised French exchange visits for many years.

Mike Godfrey from DATROW gave evidence in the Crown Court and dug out the cliff path with a local resident so that the Judge had a clear path to walk on. He is also an RA, LFPO.

Les Preston and Kath Gill, who gave support by attending the Crown Court. Kath for preparing with me, the opening event for the bridge at Kingston. Les Preston, who sadly died recently from Covid, for planning the Kearsney Loop walk, his tireless effort in getting access with Graham Smith onto a hill used by the military, near Folkestone and his persistence in overcoming the blocking of Access Land at Capel. Not to mention the holidays he and Diana arranged abroad.

All the people who have cleared paths, built the bridges, led walks, organised holidays, dinners, dances, quizzes, prepared the website, other people who also arranged the French exchanges, committee members of which there are many in 63 years,, and remembering those who have died this year, Sylvia Tuff, a founder member, Marion Brisley aged 90, also a founder member, we did still exchange Christmas cards up to a few years ago, and Dorothy Woodtli, such a kind lady who we all miss so very much. All the best and happy walking.

Gordon Sencicle October 2021

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Firstly, congratulations to all those who found fuel to attend the AGM.

Unfortunately, Hythe was dry and then the bus failed to arrive. Anyway, I have heard that all went well which obviously pleased me.

I do want to thank Gordon, Rosemary and John who have retired after serving the Club so well. We are <u>VERY</u> lucky to have people like them and also the other Officers and leaders, who give their time so willingly.

The past 18 months or so have been a very difficult period but I feel we have coped well. Let us hope that calmer waters lay ahead so that we can continue doing what we love.

Derek

AGM OCTOBER 2021

At last! After postponement in 2020, 44 members attended the AGM at Blean Village Hall. We were unable to begin the proceedings with the now customary Bring and Share Lunch – hopefully next

year.

It was good to catch up with friends after so long. Derek, as Chairman, was sorely missed, but Freda stepped into the breach and the business of the afternoon ran smoothly.

You will notice from the heading to this Newsletter that the Committee has seen changes.

Firstly our thanks to Gordon.

He has served as President of the club for many years and his contribution and knowledge given to the committee has been invaluable. He will be missed.

Following the retirement from the committee of Rosemary, who had served as Secretary for 10 years, and of John, who had also been on the committee for 10 years, 5 as Treasurer, a new committee was voted into office.

Carol Barrett is taking on the role of Secretary, and Tracey Reed joins as a new recruit.

ANNOUCEMENTS MADE AT THE AGM

AUTUMN LUNCH AT STELLING MINNIS

Lesley Attwood explained that she is unable to organise this popular event for this coming November, as previously hoped.

Stewart, the proprietor of the Rose and Crown, Stelling Minnis, has been very ill over the last year. He is on the mend now, but at present is not taking on bookings for meals.

Hopefully, when Stewart has recovered fully, Lesley will make arrangements for a Spring Lunch in 2022.

NEW YEAR LUNCH: 12TH JANUARY 2022

The New Year Lunch will be held at Canterbury Golf Club on 12th January.

Full details are attached at the end of this Newsletter.

You will find the full menu and booking instructions, with menu choice slip and payment information. (for those receiving this via email, please print off the necessary page)

A Big Thank You to Brenda Cardwell and Malcolm Atwood for arranging this popular event.

Results of the Club Questionnaire - from John Burton

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS RECEIVED

Thank you to the 60 members who submitted replies to me. Your responses have all been tabulated and anonymised results, along with my conclusions and possible future actions, have been reported to the committee. At our recent AGM, I outlined my conclusions and a course of possible actions, as follows.

CONCLUSIONS

Only 44 members (out of 60 replies) have indicated that they feel we should be actively recruiting new members, so it is far from a universally held view.

Only 47 members indicated they are entirely happy with the present pattern of walks.

If we wish to attract younger members, they will probably be at work during the week, so only weekend walks are likely to be attractive to them.

We have about 43 members walking at least once per month and about 31 who walk on average at least twice per month. People envisage continuing to walk at the same frequency in the future.

Whereas 38 people have tended to do longer walks, this falls to 28 in the future. For shorter walks, the reverse seems to be the case, 34 in the past rising to 38 in the future.

Regular short walks with a pub lunch have reasonable support (27) and this is also thought to be attractive to new recruits. This is likely to appeal to some, but not all of those who prefer a 'short' walk.

Social events do not get a lot of support, 15 rising to 18 in the future but again they are thought to help attract new recruits.

Themed walks generated slightly better support, 35, and again thought to help attract new recruits. Club holidays generated reasonable support, 31 in the past and in the future, and again thought to help attract new recruits. As we know that we have been getting 40+ bookings for recent holidays, it puts the low response rate for the questionnaire into perspective.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 1. Aim to recruit at least 15 new members per year. This should be promoted by personal contacts (e.g. bring a friend), placing adverts on community and supermarket notice boards and designing a specific page for the Website.
- 2. Appoint a few New Member Ambassadors to ensure that new recruits are made to feel welcome, answer queries and prevent them from 'drifting away'.
- 3. Maintain the current pattern of walks but try a few innovations such as short pub walks and themed walks to gauge the level of actual support.
- 4. Encourage informal car lift sharing arrangements.
- 5. Reduce the length of some of the longer walks to around 9 miles.
- 6. Note and maintain records of the number joining each walk so that popularity / demand can be assessed at each committee meeting. Also, recording the names (and contact details of any non-members) will comply with our Covid 19 Risk assessment.
- 7. Continue the Rose and Crown type walk / lunches, the coach trips and holidays.
- 8. Recruit new leaders by a personal approach / request. Offer a 'library' of walks the new leader (or others) can use and periodic 'planning sessions' with a small number of carefully selected 'mentors' who will offer support in both planning and leading walks.
- 9. Appoint someone to maintain, and make available, a 'library' of walks.

The committee can now consider the above and decide what actions, if any, it may wish to adopt. John Burton

Following on from the above suggested possible actions, Chris Bilyard will take on the challenge of collating the details of the weekly walks.

Please can each walk leader provide her with 1) number of people on the walk

1. a short description of the weather conditions on the day.

Contact details are shown on the Walks Programme.

EKRC Holiday 2021: DUNSTER, October '21.....at last!

On Sunday, 10th October, 37 of the East Kent Rambling Club set off for our much-delayed walking holiday to Dunster in Somerset (4 others made their own way). Our driver, Alan, took the scenic route via the A303, passing Stonehenge in glorious sunshine. We arrived at the comfortable Yarn Market Hotel in time for dinner

Monday – both groups started from the hotel and walked through the beautiful grounds of Dunster Castle and beyond. We were blessed with sunny weather and this set the trend for the whole week – not a drop of rain.

Tuesday – dawned bright and sunny and we all set off (courtesy of our bus passes) on the open top bus to Lynmouth. Some brave souls sat upstairs – well wrapped up – and were rewarded with wonderful views over Exmouth on one side and the Bristol Channel to Wales on the other. All credit to the driver for getting a full bus up the notorious Porlock Hill and through the tightest spaces in narrow villages. The scenery all around was stunning.

The long walkers were dropped off on Exmoor to start their walk to Lynmouth. The short walkers stayed on the bus to the town where they fortified themselves with a coffee break before heading up beside the stream to Watersmeet – not the easiest of climbs due to uneven ground and loose stones nearly all the way. Lunch was to be at the National Trust café but we learned early on that it was closed due to staff shortages. Lunch became a 'bring and share' with various items people had with them including a lovely lemon drizzle cake courtesy of Libby (one of three that she provided us with). As we finished, the long walkers arrived for their lunch break, before we all returned to Lynmouth for the bus back.

Wednesday – we woke to sun again. The short walkers walked the disused Mineral Line into Watchet – a pretty little harbour town. The weather was perfect and, as usual, we had a coffee break once there, enjoying views of the harbour and beyond. One of our members tried hard to recruit a local man into our group – or did she have an ulterior motive?? What happens in Watchet stays in Watchet! The group then caught the steam train to Blue Anchor and walked on the beach back to Dunster. In the meanwhile the long walkers had walked all the way to Watchet from Dunster before catching the train back.

Thursday – dawned bright and sunny yet again. Both groups set off together on the open top bus to Allerford. We were told that we would all climb a hill together before separating. No-one said the climb was two miles long!!! However, the view from Selworthy Beacon was breath-taking with 360-degree views taking in Exmore, farmland and the Bristol Channel looking over to the Welsh coast. Those of us in the short walking group then descended to the pretty NT hamlet of Selworthy for tea and refreshments in the garden and a look round the church. The long walkers walked all the way back to base along the coastal path via Wetherspoons in Minehead.

Friday – We were all taken to the pretty little port of Porlock Weir where the short walkers sat in the sun and had a coffee break in the harbour area before setting off for Porlock and Bossington. The long walkers were taken on to Porlock for their 10 mile walk back to Dunster. This included the steepest hill of the week (and there were many) but everyone managed to get to the top. Many of us finished with a cream tea in Dunster.

Saturday – Another perfect sunny day with both groups heading to Blue Anchor Bay by different routes. The short walkers walked along the beach and reached Blue Anchor in time for a coffee break before heading inland across fields to Carhampton where we visited the church and a local Apple Festive. The return journey was through a pretty village, fields with Exmoor ponies, and culminated in the tea garden in Dunster – 7 miles. The long walkers did the reverse journey but slightly extended to 11 ½ miles.

The hotel — you could describe the hotel as quirky with character in that the owner, Antony, started off 30 years ago with a small hotel, then over the years bought the house next door, then the next one and then another and joined them all together. Consequently, there are many landings, stairs, and doors to go through and areas most of us never discovered — a map would be useful. Evidently one wall is so old it is made of wattle and daub.

And now a note about our hotelier, Antony, and his hardworking staff. Nothing was too much trouble and you only had to ask. Antony always went the extra mile and took time to drive down to Lynmouth on our day there to make sure no-one missed the bus back and was always available to sort problems or pick us up.

We were led on our walks by Kathy and Pam, organised by the hotel, along with Jo the spaniel whose tail was constantly wagging with pleasure as he ran to and fro, disappearing from sight, chasing goodness knows what, and covering many, many miles more than us.

In summary, the long walkers averaged 9/10 miles a day and the short walkers averaged two coffee stops. The scenery everywhere was green and stunning (and NO litter), the weather was great (was this really autumn?), we had great walking, great hospitality and great company. Thank you Rosemary and John.

Heather

ROGER KING'S RIGHTS OF WAY REPORT

For more information please phone Roger on 01304 362730 or e-mail roger.rambler89@outlook.com

KCC General News

Sizeable budget increases in 21/22 to cover COVID related issues, effectively doubling the revenue budget (which covers things like "repairs"), but with no extra staff. So resources had to be diverted from protection and enforcement to maintenance type issues. This meant that things like surfacing were tackled effectively, but "customer service", response to many reported issues and general communication suffered rather, as we saw. Also there has been no Cropping Campaign in either 2020 or 2021, and only three enforcement notices for crop obstruction were issued this summer, instead of the normal 15 or so. But we should still report problems to KCC, so that they are recorded for the future, on their website at https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccesscams/standardmap.aspx

Meanwhile, two new officers (they were 20% down on staffing in 20/21) have been appointed locally. One to identify and deal with COVID recovery issues. And one (with 60% European funding) to work on an improvement project in the Kent Downs AONB. So hopefully the picture should be improving, after the lockdowns and shortages took their toll.

Vegetation Clearance and Path Improvements

The vegetation clearance contracts generally worked well this summer, although in Canterbury, Thanet and Dover Districts there were some delays due to difficulty in recruiting seasonal labour. Contractors are required to issue weekly progress reports, and chased if they don't. Meanwhile the Ramblers White Cliffs clearance group has started work again after a couple of years' break. Currently they are awaiting KCC's promised power tool training so that they can tackle bigger jobs.

Large Local "Projects"

- England Coastal Path will progress in 2022, with money allocated for "works" on the Whitstable to Iwade section prior to its opening. But ongoing problems on the Ramsgate to Whitstable section remain unresolved.
- Cleve Hill Solar Farm: lots going on behind the scenes but no major announcements recently. Construction should begin next year.
- Guston Inland Border Facility: Much amended formal proposal due about now, with construction beginning 2022. The NDW will be subject to a diversion but less significant since most development as now proposed sits west of the Roman Road. A feeling that the NDW should be rerouted onto a better alignment than now.
- Little Mongeham Airfield proposal: Still not timetabled to go before Dover DC Planning Committee, but considerable opposition. Discovered that apparently a 500 ft rule applies whereby aircraft are not permitted to fly within 500 ft of any person by distance but not by height!

Path change news – main issues of the last few months, involving paths we are more likely to use

- (1) Confirmed orders

- Selling ZR661 From Stone Stile Lane, opposite the BR to Chilham at GR 058 553, NW through to the lane to Perry Woods. Path diverted round the edge of these fields due to the planting of a new vineyard. Selling ZR408 Path diverted further north to emerge on the lane just north of Shepherd's Hill Farm at GR 033 559. Issue decided by Planning Inspectorate.
- Kingsdown ER273 Another Inspector's decision. Footpath moved out of a field with horses onto an adjacent enclosed path already used by the public. Lies immediately SW of the bend in Bayview Road (GR 375 475), and close to East Bottom Farm.
- Eastry EE491 a new 1200 yd bridleway has been created from Thornton Lane (GR 299 540) south-east across Pike Road to meet the recently-created bridleway EE488 just east of Fairview, Venson (GR 305 531).

- (2) Orders made

- Sutton EE427 - on appeal, KCC were instructed to make an order to upgrade this FP to bridleway status. It runs from just SW of Sutton village through to the Ripple-Martin road near Winkland Oaks at GR 342 482.

- (3) Orders objected to: but all progress delayed by the backlog at the Planning Inspectorate

Caught in the jam are: upgrading to bridleway status of Ripple EE451 Hangman's Lane (NB railway crossing) and Woodnesborough EE226 from the Sandwich bypass west to Foxborough Road at GR 309 561. Also orders to create new paths: inside the boundaries of Coldblow Woods, between Walmer station and Ripple Mill, and a 200 yard bridleway running from Middle Heronden Farm SE to Thornton Lane, in Eastry.

East Kent Rambling Club

Tel: 01795 539812

Brenda Cardwell 23 Cambridge Road Faversham Kent ME13 8RW

November 2021

Dear Member

Brenda Cardwell

New Year Annual Lunch, Wednesday 12 January 2022 Canterbury Golf Club, Scotland Hills Littlebourne Road, Canterbury CT1 1TW

| with tea or coffee to follow the meal. This price includes a tip for the waiting staff. |
|---|
| We hope to see you at the lunch. |
| Best wishes |
| |

See overleaf (page below if received by e-mail)

Make your menu choices

Cut off the reply form

Return to Brenda Cardwell by 1 December at the latest Cheques payable to: East Kent Rambling Club East Kent Rambling Club

New Year Lunch 2022

Wednesday 12 January 2022

12.30 for 1pm

Canterbury Golf Club, Scotland Hills, Littlebourne Road, Canterbury CT1 1TW

Complete the form below and send to:
Brenda Cardwell, 23 Cambridge Road, Faversham,
Kent. ME13 8RW Tel: 01795 539812
Cheques payable to East Kent Rambling Club

Main Course

Slow Roast Leg of Lamb

Nut Roast in roasted Pepper & Butternut Squash puree (Veg option)

Steamed Salmon Fillet with Prawn Sauce Seasonal Vegetables on Spices and Saffron Rice

All served with Gratin Dauphinoise Potatoes And Seasonal Vegetables

Dessert

Lemon Roulade with Red Fruit Coulis

Profiteroles and Hot Chocolate Sauce

Cheese and Biscuit Selection

Tea/ Coffee and Mints

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Name: | | |
| Main Course Slow Roast Lamb | Dessert Lemon Roulade | |
| Nut roast | Profiteroles | |
| Steamed Salmon | Cheese and Biscuits | |
| Name: | | |
| Main Course | Dessert | |
| Slow Roast Lamb | Lemon Roulade | |
| Nut Roast | Profiteroles | |
| Steamed Salmon | Cheese and Biscuits | |

Choose your menu, and send with your cheque to Brenda Cardwell (address as above) asap, but no later than 1 December 2021.

Make cheques payable to East Kent Rambling Club (NOT Brenda Cardwell)

The Golf Club wish to seat people in groups of 8. Please indicate whom you wish to sit with, in a group of 8? If you cannot do this, no worries, we will sort ourselves out nearer the time! (this is to aid the serving staff)