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# Health & Well-being

Sometimes we feel under the weather or have bad luck with some virus attack, cancer or physical decline. These are trials thrown at us through life that we have to contend with. Most important it is to have strength of mind over matter and the willpower to face up to and improve your lot.

Getting into the right shape at any time is important for your physical and mental wellbeing. One of the best activities for this is getting out to observe nature with friends.

We in the Northampton U3A have three walking and luncheon groups. These support people with a range of physical capabilities, from those who are fit to those who just want to get out and join with others in the country air without having rigorous exercise.

We call these three groups: The Striders who do between 10km and 14km; The Ramblers who do between 7km and 9km; and The Strollers who do no more than 4km with preferably no stiles to contend with. All take approximately the same time to complete, which reflects the differences in walking speed.

However, we do have people who can't do as much as even the Strollers and they plan their own walks or activity from the agreed venue and meet up with others for lunch.

The walking groups are not just about being physically active but are more concerned about mental well-being. They allow us to connect with others, to help other people out in times of difficulty and to arrange new areas of discovery by volunteering to lead a group walk.

There is always something new to discover, such as hidden village gems, a new wild flower or a bird and so on. Nature and the landscape stimulate us to take notice, to be curious and to



**Grounds of the Barley Mow Cosgrove**

keep learning. It provides food for thought and an impetus to personal creativity. To be motivated is all part of feeling healthier and happier and hopefully by enabling you to live longer with enjoyment of life.

The luncheon element to the groups is important too. It allows us to sit down together and talk about the activity of the day, or other subjects, during a relaxed period of drink and food. It permits another highlight to the day's outing.

In our Northampton group we have people in their 90s still taking part in these groups who have been active participants for many years.