



EAST BERKS RAMBLERS Berkshire Area

Group_website: www.eastberksramblers.org

Ramblers website: www.ramblers.org.uk

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No. 139 - August 2022

We have prepared a **Walks Programme** for **September-December 2022**. Details of all the EBR walks can be found on the [Walks page of the EBR website](#). A printed version is enclosed with this newsletter.

Please visit the Ramblers website for the current Coronavirus status: www.ramblers.org.uk/coronavirus.

New Members

A very warm welcome to our new Members:

Solvita Pavasare Linda Davies Paul & Alison Henderson Sue Henry
Ruth Hill Paul Matthews David Nicoll Camilla Price Elizabeth Warren

You have joined a very friendly and sociable Group and we look forward to welcoming you on our walks. We hope you will enjoy your membership on walks, at our social events, and by volunteering. But even if you play a more passive role thank you for giving your support to the Ramblers, the national Association for walkers and for the protection of our rights of way heritage.

For membership enquiries contact Malcolm Stone

Email: membership@eastberksramblers.org

From the Chair *writes Steve Gillions*

I'm writing this in the relative cool of the post heatwave days and hope you all managed to get through without too much discomfort. One casualty of the weather was the planned joint walk across Battlemead Common to celebrate the opening of the Causeway Path but that will be re-arranged for another day. I did carry out the walk recce before the really hot weather hit and thought the path fencing was blending comfortably into the landscape and wasn't the eyesore that I feared it might be.



Whilst on the subject of Battlemead, the Borough's Countryside Officer recently reported that independent ecological studies have showed that opening the path had no adverse impact on spring nesting birds. It is reassuring to know that our arguments for a balanced approach between people and wildlife were well-founded.

A lot of my Ramblers time has recently been taken up with external matters, with meetings of both the Ramblers area committee and the Local Access Forum happening in July. At the last Area meeting we looked to broaden the agenda beyond the usual admin stuff and had some good discussions about approaching the Crown Estate to see if they would consider designating any of their land as Access Land and how

Ramblers in Berkshire might look to recruit younger people.

I've spent a little time recently reflecting on how precious our access to the countryside is and on what a fine balance it sometimes hangs. The heatwave itself has led to wildfires and damage to wildlife that didn't seem possible even a few years ago. I'm still coming across areas of the country where access to open space has been restricted because of damage caused during lockdown and I have had to change some of my plans for August because of access limitations imposed in parts of Scotland due to the virulent impact of avian flu on breeding seabirds. Closer to home, I sense our rights of way network is under increasing pressure. I know you all appreciate the importance of what we have and I know from working with other organisations on our Local Access Forum that others do too. Let's carry on making sure that our message gets out and that we continue to work with other like-minded and motivated organisations. And let's remember what Ramblers stand for and not be shy of having our say when it comes under challenge.



Countryside Matters *writes Gordon Marrs*

No Planning Gain!

My report in the April Newsletter about a possible new footpath extension to the Green Way, as far as Bray Marina, proved premature. The landowner, Mr Prior, has refused access over his land, so the project is dead in the water. It is a disappointment, the path was a long sought after project; however he may have a change of heart.

Planning

Large scale housing developments have been in the news as a consequence of the publication of the recently adopted Local Plan. Putting about 2,000 dwellings on land occupied by Maidenhead golf course has aroused a lot of local fury but will probably go ahead.

On a smaller scale, the plan by Cala Homes to build 80 houses on land south of Ray Mill Road East, was refused and went to Appeal. However, the Appeal has recently been withdrawn.

Outline planning permission has been sought to build 29 dwellings in Oakley Green on the site of the mushroom farm. A public right of way, Bray FP 52, would need a minor diversion and a new access point, which would not be a problem. The site is designated for redevelopment in the Local Plan, so permission is likely.

Path Wardens Activity *writes Ian Ient*

This has been a busy period for the team of Path Wardens. We have recently completed the Spring path survey for RBWM which was late this year so it was really a summer survey! The wardens spent a total of 227 hours and drove 389 vehicle miles in carrying out the survey and in helping to maintain the path network.

Our two new wardens took part in the survey for the first time: Dawn Davies in Hurley South and Richard Whetton in Bray East.

The EBR committee were going to host a tea party in Pera and Gordon Marrs' garden for the Path Wardens to thank them for their efforts and support in keeping the paths in East Berks in good condition. However, due to the extremely hot weather, this event has now been postponed to September – fingers crossed it won't be raining.

Finally, if you want to become a path warden we have one vacancy at present for Sunninghill parish. Please contact me if you would like to discuss taking on this role. committee5@eastberksramblers.org / 07802 794483



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EBR are affiliated to the Walking Partnership. If you book a holiday with Ramblers Walking Holidays please remember to nominate East Berkshire Ramblers when you do your booking to ensure we receive funds. For UK holidays - £10.00 per person, European/short haul it is £20.00 per person and Worldwide it is £30.00 per person.

Please note the nomination must be done before the holiday and cannot be done retrospectively. For details please go to www.thewalkingpartnership.org.uk.

Walking the Snowdonia Way *writes Graham Sexton*

Like many regular hillwalkers I have visited Snowdonia many times. I can't remember how many times I've been to the top of Snowdon (there are six different routes to choose from) and, yes, I have had a view. I've scrambled up the side of Tryfan and admired the rock formations on the top of the Glyderau more than once. I've also walked in the other major range of mountains in Snowdonia which is the Carneddau. These have the largest continuous

area of land over 3,000 feet in England and Wales and are a good place to get lost (sorry, I mean practise your map and compass skills in the mist).

However, I realised that there were still large areas of the Snowdonia National Park that I had never visited or only briefly passed through and for this reason I was attracted to the Snowdonia Way. This is a continuous route approximately south to north across the park, starting in Machynlleth and ending in Conwy. It is similar in some ways to the Coast to Coast walk across northern England insofar as it aims to pass through the spectacular scenery rather than "bag" peaks. Alfred Wainwright wrote his guide to the Coast to Coast in 1973 and over the years it has become the most popular long-distance walk in the UK. It is well-signposted on the ground and there are finally plans to turn it into a National Trail. By contrast the guidebook for the Snowdonia Way was only published in 2017 and, as yet, there is no specific signposting (although the entire route is on rights-of-way).

The trip was arranged by a company called Thistle Trekking who booked the accommodation (mostly B&Bs), transported the luggage and arranged minibus transfers to and from the day's walking. So all we had to do was walk! The route is 97 miles in total which was to be completed over seven days. Nearly 14 miles a day in hilly country (even if the tops are avoided) is no doddle. The longest day was 18.5 miles.

Was it worth it? I was certainly impressed with the variety of scenery, from the wooded valleys of the south, through the big mountains in the middle to the rounded grassy hills of the north (with excellent views over the coast).



The route has been carefully put together to avoid any remotely dangerous stretches of road walking but there are some significant stretches on tarmac (mostly very minor roads) which were a bit hard on the feet. We were reasonably lucky with the weather (showery for the first half and then mostly dry with sunny spells); some of the days could have been tough in continuous rain. But I would happily do other trips of this type interspersed between my regular "peak bagging" expeditions.

The photo, if you haven't worked it out yet, is a distant view of Snowdon and you can pick out all the peaks of the famous "Snowdon Horseshoe".

The Oxfordshire Way EBR Coach Walk

The first leg of the Oxfordshire Way monthly coach walk took place at the beginning of August, starting from Bourton-on-the-Water and ended at Shipton-under-Wychwood. There will be two more legs this year, on Wednesday 7 September and again on Wednesday 5 October.

The Oxfordshire Way starts in Bourton-on-the-Water in Gloucestershire and winds through to the banks of the River Thames in Henley. The route passes through a mosaic of contrasting landscapes and settlements including two areas of outstanding natural beauty; the pretty rolling Cotswold Hills and the Chilterns; plus some fascinating countryside in-between.

Graham Sexton and John Payne have stepped in to lead the walks this year and Pera Marrs will handle the administration.

For more information please check out the Walks Programme page on the EBR website www.eastberksramblers.org and the entry on the Events Calendar in the Members Section.

Links for more information on Oxfordshire Way: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk, ldwa.org.uk.

Saturday Coach Walks

In the January member survey 70% of respondees said they would be interested in Saturday coach walks. In order for these to happen we need someone to organise the events! In the past, two walks were held each summer.

If you wish to have a chat about what is involved then please don't hesitate to contact any committee member and I am sure those who have previously organised these trips will be very happy to offer any advice/guidance.

Staying safe *writes Malcolm Stone*

The Windsor group recently had a serious issue on one of its walks when a member was taken critically ill, and the group struggled to find her *In Case of Emergency* contact details. They finally did and help was summoned but it is a timely reminder for everyone to always carry their emergency contact key fobs with them on walks. You know it makes sense. If you don't have a fob, or have lost it, please contact me either by telephone or by email, including your address if sending an email.

Mobile: 07733 426699 E-mail:
membership@eastberksramblers.org



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Final Stage Of Three Castles Path

writes John Harden

Wednesday 1st June was gloriously sunny. We made our way by coach to Abbotstone via the M4 to the service station at Junction 12 for a comfort break and I gave a brief synopsis of the walk. The coach dropped us at Abbotstone and we then walked to Itchen Abbas stopping at St. John's churchyard for a banana break. We followed the River Itchen passing through Chilland and Martyr Worthy, crossing the river to reach Easton where we had lunch at St. Mary's churchyard.

We proceeded to Winchester passing under the M3 and A34, arriving at the Old Mill on the River Itchen at 2:30pm.



I showed the group where the coach would meet us on the Broadway by King Alfred's statue. We followed the footpath along the river passing the house where Jane Austen died. We went through St Swithuns gate into the cathedral grounds where I pointed out the grave dedicated to the soldier who died drinking too much beer. We passed through "The Square" to the High Street walking under the "Curfew Clock" up the hill to the Castle. Unlike 5 years ago when entry was free there is now a £12 entrance fee so no one chose to go in to see King Alfred's Round Table. John Payne collected stickers for "The Great Hall and Round Table". It is said that King Arthur's image bears a remarkable resemblance to Henry VIII. We then returned to the Broadway where the coach collected us at 4:30pm and returned us to Braywick.

As Richard (Falconer) was not free to join this last leg of the walk John Payne and Margaret Carlyle kindly assisted me as they had previously walked the route.

APP Corner *from Ian Ient*

Ramblers Pathwatch App

In this this issue of App Corner I will be looking at a potentially useful app from the Ramblers. I say 'potentially' as I can't say that I have used it very often, but it does seem to be useful.



Pathwatch is a free app available for both Android and Apple phones.

The app's main use is as a convenient tool for reporting path problems to the relevant local authority - whether it's locked gates, rampant overgrowth or missing signs. The clever part is that you don't need to know which local authority is responsible for the section of path you are on - the Pathwatch app and Ramblers sort that out for you (in England and Wales only).



If you are walking within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead then any path problems that you encounter can be reported using the RBWM Public Rights of Way online reporting facility. However, we frequently walk beyond the bounds of the Royal Borough, and you may well not know which authority's area you are currently in.

Pathwatch uses GPS and your phone signal to locate you on OS maps and will allow you to report the problems you have encountered with the press of a few buttons. You can report positive and negative features, upload relevant photos and even share your discoveries via social media.

Path problems reported through Pathwatch will be automatically passed to the relevant local highway authority. Pathwatch is not currently supported in Scotland, but you can still report any problems by emailing pathwatch@ramblers.zendesk.com and they'll be passed to the Ramblers Scotland office.



East Berkshire Group AGM - Friday, 18th November 2022

The AGM will be held on Friday, 18th November 2022 at **7.30pm in the Dining Hall of Claires Court School, Ray Mill Road East, Maidenhead (Grid Ref: 898 822)**. The meeting will last for approximately one hour and will be followed by cheese and wine. In addition to reports from the Chair and the Treasurer, there will be election of Officers of the Group.

Gordon Marrs (Planning/Countryside Officer) and **Arthur Holland** (UK Spring break and shows organiser) will not be offering themselves for re-election. All other Committee members are willing to stand for re-election for another year. If any other member wishes to put themselves forward for election to the Committee, then such nominations should be submitted to the Group Secretary **by Friday, 4th November**, using the Nomination Form at the end of this newsletter. At the AGM there will be opportunities to discuss topics of interest with members of the Committee and to socialise over cheese and wine. If you have a subject for discussion, please submit it on the Nomination Form. The meeting should end by 10.15pm. Please note that a report on last year's AGM was given in the December 2021 Newsletter and the 2021 AGM Minutes are available on the Group website under the Members' Section/AGM documents.

This is your chance to put forward your views and to question the Committee so please do try to make the effort to attend this very important event in the Group's calendar.

Berkshire Area 2022 AGM - Saturday 26th November 2022

The Berkshire Area 2022 AGM meeting is being hosted by *Pang Valley Ramblers* (<https://www.pvramblers.org.uk>) at Purley Barn in Purley-on-Thames on **Saturday 26th November 2022 starting at 10.30am**. The address for the AGM is: **Purley Barn, Goosecroft Road, Purley-On-Thames, RG8 8BW**

The AGM will start off with a couple of short local walks in the morning:

Walk 1 - 6 Miles

Walk 2 - 3.5 miles

Following the walks will be lunch (please bring your own lunch). Tea and cakes and other refreshments will be provided. After lunch the AGM meeting will start with presentations, talks and election of the new committee for 22/23.

Further details of the AGM will be released soon and can be found on the Berkshire area website at <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/group-finder/areas/berkshire/berkshire-area-agm-meeting.aspx>

EBR members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Increasing our membership

writes Malcolm Stone, Membership Secretary

During the Covid lockdown we enjoyed a rise in membership as people discovered the pleasures of walking. These numbers have fallen off in 2022 and it looks as though we will have a net loss in membership by the end of the year.

I have noticed that some people joining us this year have mentioned that friends who were already Ramblers encouraged them to join. If any of you go walking with friends who aren't members could I ask that you talk to them about the benefits of joining the Ramblers and encourage them to join us. They can of course come along on some taster walks to try us out without any commitment.

Walk leader dazzled by a field of rape



Contributions to Future Newsletters and South East Walker

We are always looking for news stories, anecdotes, photographs for inclusion in the newsletter. If you have anything that you think will be of interest to EBR members then please send in your contributions. We look forward to hearing from you!

You are also invited to submit articles for printing in **South East Walker**, which is distributed several times a year to all Ramblers members in South East England.

Please send your entries for both publications to newsletter@eastberksramblers.org. Thank you.

Do you need to update your collection of the Group's *Rambling for Pleasure* walks guides and Parish Maps?

The books are available from Amazon and other book suppliers. They are also available from the **Group Secretary**.

Send your details to groupsecretary@eastberksramblers.org.

Please add £1.53 p&p per copy for guidebooks and £1 per copy for footpath maps.

Please make cheques payable to **EBR** or **East Berks Ramblers**.

Parish maps can now be downloaded from the [EBR website](#).

Books: *The Secrets of Countryside Access* £3; *The Three Castles Path* £7.99;

In East Berkshire £7.99; *Along the Thames*; *Around Reading Series 2*;

Kennet Valley and Watership Down (at £4.95 each).

Maps: *Windsor and the Great Park* (£1.50); Parish maps (see [EBR website](#) for list) (50p).

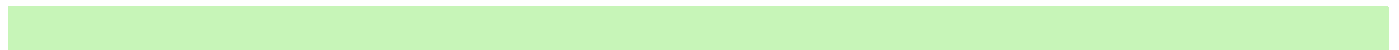
The views or opinions expressed by individuals in this Newsletter are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Committee. The Editors welcome letters and articles from members but reserve the right to reject or edit contributions. Would contributors please note that all items for inclusion in the next issue of the Newsletter should be submitted, preferably by email, to the Editors (address below) as soon as possible and no later than **Sunday 27th November 2022**.

Editors: Rosemary Davies Tel: 01344 422707 Email: committee1@eastberksramblers.org
Peter Griffiths Mob: 07765 232178 Email: committee4@eastberksramblers.org

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The Ramblers promotes rambling, protects rights of way, campaigns for access to open countryside and defends the beauty of the countryside.



AGM FRIDAY 18th NOVEMBER 2022

NOMINATION FORM

For the 2022/2023 Committee and other Group posts

Proposer's nameSignature
(in capitals please)

Seconder's name Signature
(in capitals please)

We, being fully paid up members of East Berkshire Ramblers, hereby nominate:-

Nominee's name (in capitals please)

Nominee's signature
.....

Who has volunteered to stand for election as:

I/We would like the following subject discussed at the Question and Answer session at the AGM:

.....
.....
.....

Please return this form by 4th November 2022 to:

**The Secretary, East Berks Ramblers, 6 Aldwick Drive, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 4JQ or by email
groupsecretary@eastberksramblers.org
Contact phone no: 07785 953751/01628 625171**