



EAST BERKS RAMBLERS

Berkshire Area

Group website: www.eastberksramblers.org

Ramblers website: www.ramblers.org.uk

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No. 137 - December 2021

We have prepared a Walks programme for January -April 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 note that this version reflects only the status at the time of printing. Walk details can be changed, walks cancelled, and new walks added. All updates will be made to the details on the website

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:

Dawn and Timothy Davies Debbie Channer Sheridan Carr & Clayton Thornton
Lauren Ayres Ginnie and Barry Thorpe Lin Tandy Blanca Gilhome
Jennie Falconer Susan and Michael Nuth Kerri and David Hepworth
Susan Friend Robyn and Derek Hall Deborah Boles Chris Grant

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 by Steve Gillions

Welcome to the latest edition of what's going on in East Berks Ramblers. I was delighted to be elected as Chair at our AGM in November and look forward to working with the committee and all of you to take us forward after the trials and tribulations of the last two years.

What we Ramblers do above all else is go walking and it's good to see that the walks programme is now recovering well. Since August most walks have been unlimited although there have been some gaps. After many years Alma has stood down from compiling the Walks Reports and I was pleased to present her with a small token of our appreciation at the AGM. I'm glad to report that Kaye Carver has agreed to take over from Alma in the New Year: many thanks Kaye.



We have an excellent walks programme, thanks to the efforts of Pera and all walk leaders. However, if we are going to run a full programme next year we do need more walks leaders at all levels, as Pera pointed out in her recent email to all members. So if you enjoy walking, please get in touch with her and put your name forward. I appreciate it can be a bit daunting to lead, and maybe buddying up with someone else for your first few walks can help. Many thanks to Julie and Dawn, who decided to do just that at the AGM and will be leading their first walk in the New Year. This group is a very active one and much depends on the often unseen contributions from members volunteering their time and efforts. Thanks to the Path Wardens who completed two full surveys in 2020, bringing much-needed income

from the Council and to all others who have helped to make things happen. But if we are to carry on with weekend coach trips, social events and the like we need more of you to pitch in and help. So I would ask you all to spend a few minutes over the holiday season thinking about what you would like to see your Ramblers branch doing more of – or even less of – and what you personally can do to make it happen.

The committee has decided to send out a questionnaire to all members in January asking you to tell us what you think. There are about 350 of you out there and we want to hear from everybody. Until you tell us, we don't know what's most important to you or what you would like us to focus on. This will be your chance to do just that, so please take it.

As I write this I'm hearing about another Covid variant that has appeared. I imagine this is going to be part of all our lives for a while yet, possibly for the foreseeable future. But the last two years have shown how resilient as a group we are, and how walking and taking time to appreciate the countryside around us can help us get through difficult times.

Finally, a very merry Christmas and best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous New Year to all of you and yours. Let's all stay safe and enjoy our walking.

Countryside Matters *writes Gordon Marrs*

Path Warden Activity

I have handed over the role of Footpath Warden Coordinator to Ian Ient after we completed the Autumn Survey together.

Planning

The planning application submitted by Mr Copas to divert and part extinguish rights of way in Cookham came before the Rights of Way & Highways Panel last month. The Officers recommended the application be refused, but regrettably the panel voted (by the casting vote of the Chairman) to allow the application. Since there are many objectors the council will have to refer the application to the Secretary of State, which will lead to a public inquiry.

Cala Homes have resubmitted their proposal to build 80 homes on the site south of Ray Mead Road East. A footpath, Maidenhead 7, crosses the site and will be retained, together with new public access.

Claire's Court (Ridgeway) have put in an application for a change of use from agriculture to sports pitches, on land west of Cannon Lane. The area is to the south of Cox Green 3 so I see no reason to oppose it.

Battlemead Common

A meeting of the Cabinet ratified the decision to open the causeway path from April to October, beginning next year, 2022. This is a great result, thanks are due to Steve and Maidenhead Civic Society for their perseverance.

Battlemead Common *writes Steve Gillions*

The long running saga of access to the East Field of Battlemead Common is over at last. We heard in October that the Royal Borough has finally agreed that the Causeway Path will be open from April to September every year. The footpath will be constructed over the winter and new signage installed. It will run from the Causeway bridge to the Thames Path. As can be seen from the photo, it will be fenced and is some 3 metres wide.

The path will complete one of the 'missing links' in the Millennium Walk created by East Berks Ramblers and Maidenhead Civic Society back in 2000 and enable walkers to take a circular route around Battlemead that includes part of the Thames Path as well as affording very fine views of Cliveden.



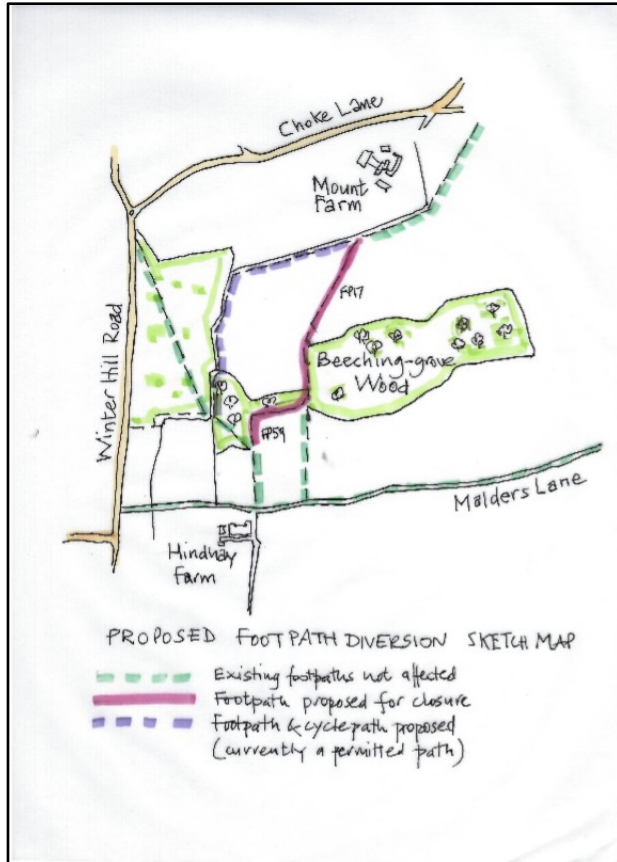
Looking towards the Thames along the line of the Causeway Path

Visitors to Battlemead will be able to enjoy looking over the wetland areas, although the reason for winter closure is to give protection to over-wintering birds. Future plans include creating more wetlands away from the path. Overall, Battlemead is a fine addition to the footpath network in the Borough and the final plan is a good balance between the wildlife and access considerations.

Cross field path at risk *from Steve Gillions*

Proposed Diversion of Footpaths 17 and 59 between Mount Farm and Malders Lane, Cookham

Footpath 17 is a cross field path that runs downhill from Mount Farm on Choke Lane, through Beeching-grove Wood and on to Malders Lane. It has been shown on maps since the 19th century. The path gives very fine countryside views, especially to the east. For some years Copas Farms have been seeking to divert the path to surfaced field edge paths, which are also to be used by off-road cyclists, that are longer and have poor views. They recently submitted a formal application for a diversion to these paths and for the closure of the cross field path. Legislation requires that any proposed footpath diversion must not be substantially less convenient to the public and must have regard to the effect that the diversion would have on public enjoyment of the path as a whole. We and many other



members of the public feel that this legislative requirement has not been met.

Nor did the Royal Borough's Public Rights of Way team. In October the proposal was submitted to the Rights of Way Panel, which is made up of elected Councillors, with a recommendation from the Council officers that it be refused. Despite the recommendation from professional officers and representations from others – including East Berks Ramblers and the Cookham Society – the Panel agreed to the Copas Farms diversion.

The Council will now go on to make the Diversion Order. However, all is not yet lost. If there are still objections – and there will be – when the Order is made the matter must be considered by an independent Public Enquiry before the Diversion Order can be implemented. We will continue to object to the proposal on the grounds already stated but there is also a wider consideration to be borne in mind. Cross field paths are a valuable part of the rights of way network and provide opportunities to walk responsibly and safely across farmland and enjoy the peace and quiet of the countryside. If this one is lost others may well follow.

We will continue to seek to have the Diversion Order withdrawn. The field edge path alternative is already a permitted path and we fully support it continuing to be so. But not at the expense of the cross field path.

Path Wardens *from Ian Ient*

After many years Gordon Marrs has stepped down as Path Warden Co-ordinator. We all join in thanking Gordon for his tremendous efforts in setting up and running the path warden community. His role has now been taken on by Ian Ient.

Path wardens monitor the state of the RBWM path network, report issues that need addressing and carry out minor maintenance. As a group, we carry out two surveys per year for RBWM, spring and autumn. This work earns EBR £1000 per year and, more importantly, ensures the quality of the paths we enjoy.

If you are interested in becoming a path warden please contact Ian at committee5@eastberksramblers.org. We currently have a vacancy for Sunninghill but all expressions of interest are welcome.

EBR Walks for the Spring *writes Pera Marrs, Walks Programme Co-ordinator*

It has been a difficult year to provide a Walk Programme with all the changes in Government and Ramblers rules. Hopefully that is all behind us now. Through the summer we had a fairly full programme available with 2 walks on Wednesdays and Sundays and several Strollathons. However we do not have as many members who are willing to lead as we did before the lockdowns so there have been gaps in what has been on offer. From mid-April to mid-November, there have been 40 days that we have not had 2 walks. Short walks on Wednesdays and longer walks on Sundays are difficult to fill.

At this point I would like to thank **Alma Richardson, David Bailey, Malcolm Stone** and **Simon Collett-Jones**, who have provided the backbone of our programme, leading at least once a month, every month. Thank you.

We are making progress, with numbers of members out on our walks steadily increasing. We are now back to the numbers we averaged before lockdown. You should receive our new programme, January – April 2022, with this Newsletter. I expect there will be gaps in it. If so they may be filled during the following months, so keep an eye on the website, and don't take your paper copy as gospel.

If you have never led, but want to give it a try, we will help you take those first steps. It is often a good idea to work with a friend to sort your first lead. You can talk to me (Pera), Steve, or any walk leader or Committee member for help and advice. Choose a walk you know and like, then **Go For It**.



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Choose any of our holidays and we'll contribute funds through The Walking Partnership to your group. Just tell us their name when you book.

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Booking a trip with Ramblers Holidays?

Did you know that EBR are affiliated to the Walking Partnership? If you book a holiday with Ramblers Walking Holidays, Cruise and Walk or Adagio and nominate East Berkshire Ramblers as your Ramblers group when you do your booking then EBR will receive financial credit.

Please note the nomination must be done before the holiday and cannot be done retrospectively.

For details please go to www.thewalkingpartnership.org.uk.

2022 New Year Lunch

from Alma Richardson

In view of the ongoing Covid situation, we have decided not to make any plans for a New Year Lunch in early 2022. When the situation improves then we shall look at the possibility of organizing a social occasion next year.

EBR Group holiday, September 2021 *from Eleanor Griffiths*

Twenty-four of us arrived at the HF house in Abingworth on Monday 20th September, to be greeted with a cream tea, served in the comfortable conservatory. This set the tone for an enjoyable four-night stay, with three days of walking, exploring Sussex East and West. Apart from our EBR group there were a dozen or so additional guests and take-up of the guided walks (long, medium and short) was fairly evenly spread, with the three friendly and experienced leaders changing group each day.

On day one we were taken by coach to Devil's Dyke, where morning mist unfortunately obscured the promised far-reaching views to the North. The dyke itself however, a natural valley, was very impressive, and we set off along routes of varying length along the South Downs Way, to eventually reach Ditchling and the coach for the return journey. On the second day we had no transport, doing circular routes from the house, taking in an RSPB reserve, a Roman causeway, vineyards and picturesque villages. No time for wine-tasting, alas!

The final day saw us back in the coach for a walk which Gail, who organised our trip, had insisted upon – rightly so, as it was splendid! The 'long' group started from Eastbourne, the 'medium' from close to Beachy Head and the group doing the shortest walk started from near Birling Gap, but we all walked along the clifftops of the Seven Sisters, in glorious sunshine and an exhilarating breeze.

That evening we were given a free drink by the HF manager, possibly because there had been some plumbing problems earlier in our stay. I think we all came away with good memories of the trip and a big thank you to Gail for having organised it so efficiently.



EBR Spring Break, 5 Nights 23 – 28 May 2022 *from Arthur Holland* **Hassness House, Buttermere**

I have made a booking for next year's Spring Break with Ramblers Holidays at Hassness House, Buttermere in the Lake District. We will have sole occupancy and I am hoping that we will have 3 leaders to provide a choice of 3 grades of walk on each walking day, this has not yet been confirmed but we will certainly have at least 2 leaders.

The price paid will include all breakfasts, all lunches on walking days and a three course meal on all days except Tuesday when we will have to find our own meals outside the house (this is the kitchen staff's day off). I am assured that this should be reasonably easy. There is a bar although drinks are not included in the price.

The house has:

- 3 single rooms, all with shared facilities
- 4 twin bedded rooms, all with ensuite facilities
- 4 double rooms, 3 with ensuite facilities and 1 with shared facilities

The price will be **£499.00** per person for the **ensuite rooms** and **£449.00** per person in the rooms with shared facilities.

Please note this price is based on having 3 leaders and achieving full occupancy so there may be a small change, up or down.

If you wish to join this holiday then please first contact me, Arthur Holland, by phone 01753 547512 or by e-mail on **committee2@eastberksramblers.org** and I will confirm if we have the room(s) you are looking for or not. If we have, then I will send you an application form to fill in and return a.s.a.p. with a £100 per person deposit. (The balance will be due by 15 March, 2022).

If the accommodation you require is not available you will have the option of putting your name on the waiting list.

There is information to be found on Ramblers Holidays website regarding Hassness House and the surrounding area **<https://www.ramblersholidays.co.uk/experience/hassness-country-house>**. If you wish to find out more feel free to contact me with any questions about the holiday.

EBR Autumn Break 2022

We hope that the 2022 autumn break will take place but as we go to print this has yet to be confirmed. Once we know whether this is going ahead an email will be sent out to all members. If you are interested in helping with the arrangements for the holiday please send an email to **autumnbreak@eastberksramblers.org**.

Saturday Coach Walks

In the April newsletter we said that Eve Norton was waiting to see what happens with Covid before deciding whether or not to go ahead with organising Saturday coach walks. Eve has now decided it is time for someone else to take over this role and so this is your opportunity to come forward to organise the walks for 2022. If you wish to have a chat about what is involved then please don't hesitate to contact any of the committee and Eve will be very happy to offer any advice/guidance.

East Berkshire Group Annual General Meeting

The 51st Annual General Meeting of the Group was held at Claires Court School on Friday, 19th November 2021. This year 33 members attended and 9 members sent their apologies. The Committee is very grateful to all who attended or who sent in their apologies.

The following provides a summary of the proceedings. Steve Gillions took the Chair.

- The minutes of the 2020 AGM were approved.
- Annual reports were presented by the Chairman (including his Footpath Secretary's report) and the Treasurer.
- **The Chairman** commented on how EBR had coped during the pandemic with a shortened walks programme operating for much of the year with limits on numbers. Things were now getting back to normal but a shortage of members offering to lead walks had led to gaps in the programme. EBR needed more members to volunteer as leaders. The long-distance coach walk (Three Castles path) had begun and there had been an Autumn group holiday to Abingworth.

Final agreement to a path across the East Field of Battlemead Common had been given after prolonged resistance from some parties. During the campaign for this path, good relationships had been established with a number of organisations (Civic Society, Cookham Society and Open Spaces Society).

The proposal for a diversion of the crossfield paths between Mount Farm and Mulders Lane had been agreed by the Council contrary to their own Footpath team's advice. The diversion would result in a multi-user tarmacked path with cyclists, in particular, encouraged to use it. EBR had objected to the diversion and would continue to challenge this diversion through the relevant channels.

Membership had increased by over 40 in the last year which compensated for the fall in 2020.

Looking forward, members were advised that there were a number of vacancies for which volunteers were needed. The Committee needed more support and involvement from the membership to help with events or other general projects as needed.

To ensure the Committee focussed on the matters which members felt needed the most attention, a questionnaire would be sent to members in the New Year seeking views on what members really wanted from EBR.

The Chairman added that EBR's voice needed to be heard on a number of rights of way and other matters such as mounting pressure on footpaths (looking to be opened up to other users), increased bureaucracy coming from Ramblers' head office and concerns over landowners seeking path diversions.

- **The Treasurer** took the meeting through the 2020/21 accounts.

Receipts were straightforward, except that RBWM had been late in paying their grant to EBR meaning there would now be two included in the 2021/2 accounts. A small donation had been received in the year resulting from EBR being nominated as a charity to receive donations made by friends/family in memory of Patrick Bailey.

Payments had been largely routine other than £2,500 given to Area to support other groups in Berkshire in their stile replacement and payment for a bench near Remenham with a plaque to honour David Bounds.

The two coach walks had cost the group £200 as there had been insufficient support to cover the costs. The committee would consider whether EBR will continue to subsidise the walk.

In 2022 EBR will request its allocation of membership income from Ramblers since the group had experienced 2-3 years now of deficit. The bank balance had reduced but remained sufficient.

- **Election/re-election of Officers:** Steve Gillions and Gordon Marrs did not stand for re-election in their roles as Footpath Secretary and Footpath Warden Co-ordinator respectively. Nominations had been received for the roles of Chair (Steve Gillions), Footpath Secretary (Graham Sexton) and Footpath Warden Co-ordinator (Ian Ient). Other Committee members stood for re-election in their existing roles. Following the election/re-election of officers, your Committee for the next year will be as follows:

Chair	Steve Gillions
Planning/Countryside Officer	Gordon Marrs
Group Treasurer	Alan Harding
Group Secretary	Liz Richardson
Membership Secretary/Recruitment Contact	Malcolm Stone
Footpath Secretary	Graham Sexton
Footpath Warden Co-ordinator	Ian Ient
Walks Organiser and Longer Walks Co-ordinator	Pera Marrs
UK Spring Holiday Organiser and Shows Organiser	Arthur Holland
Joint newsletter editor	Rosemary Davies
Joint newsletter editor and website editor	Peter Griffiths

- Steve Gillions was appointed as the EBR group representative for Berkshire Area committee meetings.
- David Moore was re-appointed Independent Examiner to the group's accounts.
- The Chairman presented a gift to Alma Richardson for past service to EBR following her decision to step down from her roles as Walks Report co-ordinator and New Year lunch organiser.

The full minutes of the 2021 AGM (including the accounts for 2020/21) can be viewed on the EBR website in the Members Section under **AGM Documents**.

The Three Castles Path 2022 *from Richard Falconer and John Harden*



We have completed three stages of the path and there are three more stages to complete. The first three stages had an average attendance of about 30 while the breakeven point for coach hire is 38.

Stage 4 - we re-join the Basingstoke canal and call in at Odiham Castle. Half a mile past the castle the canal goes to the mouth of the collapsed Greywell tunnel. At Greywell there is the opportunity to take a short detour to the abandoned watermill. Beyond Greywell the path crosses the North Downs and descends to the village of Tunworth. The route continues via the highest point of the path (646 feet) to Ellisfield where this stage ends.

Stage 5 leaves Ellisfield and descends gently to Bradley then to Lower Wield and Upper Wield. The route proceeds through rolling countryside to Abbotstone Down where we join the Wayfarer's path to Abbotstone, which is the end of this stage. (12 miles)

The 6th and final stage takes us over Itchen Stoke Down (once the venue for cricket matches played for up to 1,000 guineas).

The path is mainly through open downland to Itchen Abbas. The path to Chilland is close to the river, and then turns away to Martyr Worthy and then to Easton. After Easton Down we cross the M3 and continue along a riverside path to go under the A33 (with limited headroom) before joining the riverside path into Winchester. The path finishes at the Great Hall. (8 miles). We will walk the optional extension to the Hospital of St Cross and Almhouse of Noble Poverty.

In 2022 we intend to ask regular walkers if they intend to join us on the walk. If we are not confident that we can reach the breakeven point we will have to look for a smaller, less expensive coach. At the same time we are looking at a village hall to try to find somewhere cheaper to park as several members have expressed concern about the cost of parking unless they intend to eat in the Toby Carvery Inn.

The Ramblers ‘Don’t Lose Your Way Project’ and EBR

In 2018, Ramblers carried out research throughout England and Wales and found over 49,000 miles of paths that could be lost forever, unless they are properly documented and registered to be saved. Identifying these lost paths is just the start of a long process to put them back on the map, and work is currently underway to prioritise, research and apply for the paths to be restored before 2026. Your committee agreed to allocate £10,500 from the EBR Endowment Fund to assist this special national project.

For more information go to <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/dont-lose-your-way-2026/how-the-ramblers-are-working-to-save-lost-paths.aspx>

Update on Car Park Charges in Areas where we walk

Car Park charges in Henley

Two short stay car parks that we use as start locations for our walks are no longer free on Sundays. These are:

Greys Road car park (S of town hall) (RG9 2AA 171 SU859826)

Kings Road car park behind Waitrose (RG9 2DQ 171 SU759829)

The fee for 3 hours is £1.80.

Pay by cash or card or by telephone.

Car park charges at Watlington Hill National Trust Car park

This has become a pay and display car park for non NT members.

Parking charges apply from 9am to 7pm, £1 an hour or £3 for the day. Recommended to download Pay By Phone or mobile app.

Car park charges at Burnham Beeches

The system is cashless, accepting payments through RingGo or by card.

- Monday - Friday (excluding bank/public holidays): up to 2 hours £1.50; over 2 hours £3
- Weekends and bank/public holidays: £3 per day
- Coaches and minibuses (17 seats or more): £18 per day at all times
- Free for Blue Badge holders clearly displaying a valid badge AND registering their vehicle via [email](mailto:bluebadge@cityoflondon.gov.uk) or telephone (01785 336780).
- Payment is accepted through the [RingGo](https://www.ringgo.com/) car park system.

For more details please refer to the Burnham Beeches website:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/burnham-beeches-and-stoke-common/car-parking-at-burnham-beeches>

Car park charges at Hambleden and Mill End

Both are operated by “[JustPark](https://www.justpark.co.uk/)” and you can pay by cash, through the App, by text, by contactless.

The tariff in both cases is:

Up to 1 hour	£1
Up to 2 hours	£2
Up to 4 hours	£3
Up to 6 hours	£4
Up to 24 hours	£5
1 week	£20

If you are visiting the Stag & Huntsman you can get a 2 hour free permit but that only caters for those going straight into the pub for a meal and then leaving.

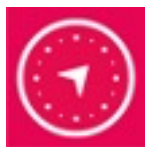
Car park charges at West Wycombe

West Wycombe garden centre car park, is now a Pay and Display. Charges are - Up to 1 hour free, 1-2 hours £2.50, over 2 hours £4.

APP Corner *from Ian lent*

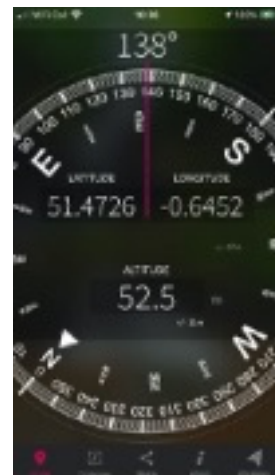
Ordnance Survey Apps: OS Locate and OS Maps

This is the second article looking at smartphone apps which may make your walk a bit more enjoyable. This issue, will look at two related apps from Ordnance Survey. Both are available for iPhone and Android.



OS Locate - this is a free app. It is a fast and accurate way of finding your position, even in the middle of nowhere.

The app shows a compass together with your latitude and longitude. It uses your phone's inbuilt GPS function to find your position so it should work in remote areas with no phone signal. It also includes a "Share" feature which enables you to let others know where you are, which might be helpful in an emergency or if you become detached from a group.



The OS Locate 'compass'



OS Maps - There are two options for this app: **Basic**, which is free; or **Premium** which requires a subscription of £2.99 per month or £23.99 per year. I would suggest that you start off with the free Basic version then move to Premium only if you like the app and see benefits for yourself.

The Basic version allows you to show digital versions of OS maps on your phone. Maps that you have purchased can be stored on the phone and accessed offline. (When you buy an OS Map there is a security code on the inside cover, this enables you to download a digital version of the map to your phone). Working offline is good as it's faster, doesn't use your phone's data and works in areas with poor signal. Your current position is highlighted on the map so you can see exactly where you are. You can also record routes that you are walking. However, with the basic version, you cannot share your route with others nor can you print or import routes.

The Premium version has a number of additional features, the most useful of which are the ability to share, import and print routes. Walk leaders can easily share routes and a nice consequence is that walks included in the online version of the Ramblers Walk Magazine can be downloaded and shown in the OS Maps app.



The OS Maps showing a route

Two Bank Holidays in August?? *from Dotty Lindsay*

Well, I was convinced that was the case so for the first one on Monday 2nd August, I sorted out a project to start on. I spent a quiet day sewing. By the next day I had completed a design for the "Tree of Life" in patchwork style, adding in a leaf to represent the Scrubs I had sewn previously. This is to be added to a wallhanging with 15 other squares made by the Maidenhead and Windsor Multi-cultural Ladies Group and is to be hung in the Town Hall or Library. It is

to represent and celebrate the fact that the Group has been in existence for 40 years. A tree has been planted at Burchetts Green Agricultural College to commemorate this, so giving me the idea of using the "Tree of Life."

I then found out that the Bank Holiday at the beginning of August was in Ireland - and that there was a REAL Bank Holiday here on 30th August, so I put my thinking cap on again and decided I would use the authentic day to walk out a walk from Maidensgrove, (one of my favourite places for scenery and the hills I love).

It was overcast that morning but, nevertheless, I assembled my maps and plotted what I thought would be a 6 mile walk. I set off, the day stayed dry, and I completed a very enjoyable hilly walk in record time. It transpired that the distance of the walk was only 3 ½ miles, hence my record time but, on returning home and looking at the map again I am sure I can add in some "loops," re-walk it and end up with a longer walk.

The wallhanging is now complete and is on display in the Maidenhead Library. If you enter by the side entrance and walk 50 paces straight forward you will be able to view the whole wallhanging.



Life as a 'Locky' from Martin Cox

For several years I have been a volunteer Lock Keeper on the River Thames at Cookham. I am asked to try and give one day a week from Easter to September and my role is to support the Resident Lock Keeper. So what do I do?? Well after a course on 'Working Safely near Water' which includes being shoved in a swimming pool to experience a buoyancy aid going off in your face, a practical test on operating a lock and six weeks tuition from the lock keeper I was declared competent to operate the lock on my own. This leaves the Resident Lock Keeper to cut the grass, do weir movements, issue boat licences, deal with mooring requests and make my tea!!! Here is my description of the role "press buttons, faff around with other people's expensive toys all day, have a lot of fun".

So what is the 'walking angle'?? Well there are over 150 volunteers supporting 45 locks on the Thames and to maintain interest one volunteer puts together monthly walks from October to February. The first this year was centred around Osney Lock, Oxford which involved a visit to the hydroelectric station powered by an Archimedes screw (plus some water!!). We finish with a meal at a local hostelry.

The November walk will be around Molesey Lock, passing through Hampton Court, Bushy Park plus crossing the river courtesy of a volunteer's boat. (Shades of the Maidenhead Boundary Walk.) Our Christmas walk is around Whitchurch Lock to include part of the Chilterns, Hartslock Nature

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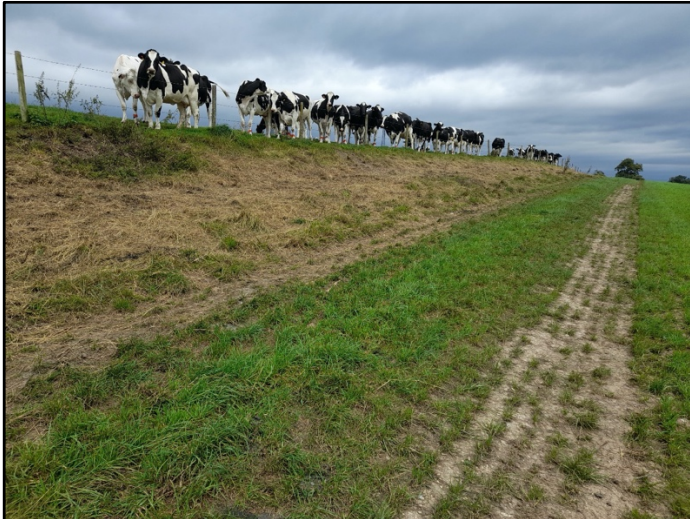
hf holidays
walking and activity holidays .co.uk

EXPERTS IN ADVENTURE
SINCE 1913
BRITAIN | EUROPE | WORLDWIDE

Reserve plus the river bank.

There are between 20 – 30 volunteers and their partners attending each walk - not bad when you think about the length of the river covered.

Some pictures taken by members on Group or other walks



Inquisitive Cows
by Malcolm Stone



Bromsden Farm, Bix – Horseman statue made from fibreglass for James Bond film Golden Eye
by Rosemary Davies



Ufton Court near the village of Ufton Nervet in West Berkshire, dates from the late 15th century when it was owned by the Perkins family. They were Catholic recusants who gave sanctuary to many priests in the days of Elizabeth 1
by Malcolm Stone



The remains of St Michael's Church in Sulhamstead Bannister Upper End. The porch is in the burial grounds and was left there to be used as a shelter for funeral mourners.
by Malcolm Stone

Ramblers App

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Autumn Colours *by Rosemary Davies*

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