



EAST BERKS RAMBLERS Berkshire Area

Group website: www.eastberksramblers.org

Ramblers website: www.ramblers.org.uk

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No. 135 - April 2021

We are pleased to say that **Ramblers Group Walks** restarted from 29th March. Our top priority is protecting the health of our members and volunteers – and given the latest government guidance, we want to do our part to help suppress the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Our Walks Coordinator has prepared a limited Walks Programme for EBR starting **April 18th**, which is subject to the restrictions and regulations currently in effect. Details of all the EBR walks are published on the [Walks page of the EBR website](#). We aren't issuing a print version of this Walks programme.

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

New Members

A very warm welcome to our new Members:

Jane Stone Mr & Mrs Robert Austen James Forte & Linda Dale
Anita Donley Mark Smith

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

Editorial *write Rosemary Davies and Peter Griffiths*

We hope you and your families are well and coping with the stresses and strains presented by Covid 19. Spring is here and seeing the flowers coming out and trees turning green, listening to the birds, all help to bring smiles to our faces. The winter months seemed to last longer this year and we have become quite familiar with coping with various restrictions. What is life going to be like after lockdown?

We are delighted that **Ramblers organised group walks in England** re-started from 29 March subject to following Covid-secure guidance. See more from Pera in this newsletter and for latest updates on the walks programme check out the [EBR website](#).

Most of us have been out walking regularly over the last few months even though it was the muddiest winter for many years – not only because of the rains but so many people have been using the paths, bridleways etc for walking, running, cycling and horse riding. When did our boots last need to be cleaned so frequently?!

One of the highlights was when the invitations arrived for our first vaccination – big excitement all round! The vaccination programme has gone really well and it is one thing that the UK has got right – vaccinating over a million people in one weekend is quite phenomenal and is something that we can all feel proud about. The current hot topic of discussion has moved on to getting an appointment at the hairdresser!

Lots of us like to go on walking holidays and trying to make plans has been pretty challenging. Quite a few holidays were cancelled in 2020 and the same goes for the first few months of 2021. Doubtless many of us have holidays booked and wondering whether or not they will go ahead – we will just have to wait and see!

Take good care and look forward to seeing you on a walk in the near future.

Path Warden Activity

We carried out the Winter 2020 survey of the rights of way for RBWM. There were no major problems to report and the path wardens were probably grateful for an excuse to get out and about for a useful purpose. Anyway, they undertook a total of about 200 hours doing the survey, easily justifying our small payment from the Parish Paths Initiative.

One of the longest serving wardens, Rosemary Swaine, has retired and I would like to express my thanks and appreciation for all her dedicated work, and wish her well in the future. Arthur Holland has agreed to take over the baton for her patch, Sunningdale, in addition to his duties looking after Datchet. This means I still have all parishes covered for the moment.

Planning

There is an application pending for the diversion and part extinguishing of two footpaths on Mount farm in Cookham. The landowner, Mr T Copas, wants to divert a cross field path to around the edge of a large field onto a surfaced track. This track is multi-purposed, used by farm traffic, cyclists and probably, at some time in the future, by horses. He also wishes to extinguish the paths which form a much used circuit linking Beeching Grove wood to Malders Lane restricted byway.

I have submitted an objection to the Borough, on behalf of East Berks Ramblers. The official notices have not at this moment been posted on site or in print. When they are in place it would be a great help, if some of our members who are residents, write personally to RBWM to object. The Council does take note of letters from the public and they get attached to the planning application documents.

Battlemead Common

Steve and I are still fighting for public access and for designated right of way to provide a route for the Millenium Walk and the Boundary Walk. We are assisted by Ann Darracott of the Maidenhead Civic Society and matters are coming to a head. Please read Steve's article for the details.

From the Footpath Secretary *writes Steve Gillions*

Many of you will have walked the permissive path that runs from the top of Prospect Hill above Hurley to the Temple Golf Club. It is a very enjoyable route with some fine views which links two public rights of way and forms part of the Millennium Walk. It crosses Berkshire College of Agriculture land and was agreed for a period of 10 years in 2011. I have been in contact with BCA and they have kindly agreed to extend the agreement for another 10 years so we will all be able to enjoy the walk for a good while yet.

The **Battlemead** saga rumbles on. I attended the first meeting of the smaller Friends of Battlemead group last week. It was well chaired and the reduced numbers meant that it was possible to discuss things in some detail and have an open exchange of views. Access to the East Field was one of the key items on the agenda and I pressed our case for six monthly opening of the Causeway Path over the summer. Winter closure would give protection to over-wintering birds on the ponds. The Council officers have been tasked to look at this in detail and come back to the meeting with their findings. I hope this will be in the relatively near future and will keep my fingers crossed. In the meantime I hope you will visit Battlemead and enjoy the parts that are currently accessible.

I'm sure all of you, like me, are eagerly looking forward to the days when we are allowed out again. In my case that includes being able to return to my beloved Outer Hebrides so I'll finish with a photo of what passes for a crowded beach on North Uist.



When will we walk together again?

writes Pera Marrs, Walks Programme Co-ordinator

Ramblers Head Office announced on 25 March that **Ramblers organised group walks in England** were able to resume from Monday, 29 March, subject to following Covid-secure guidance. As we were previously led to believe that group walks would not start until after April 12th. I have prepared our programme to start on Sunday April 18th and do not propose changing that. You can currently walk in informal groups of 6.

To start with the programme will be only until mid-May. Hopefully we will go back to a "normal" programme by August. Walkers will need to pre-book on line, and obey Covid rules. There will be no printed copy issued for the next few months.

If you are willing to lead walks for the group now, or when things calm down, please contact Pera Marrs. We are especially in need of people willing to lead short walks of 4 or 5 miles and the Strollerthons.

At this point I would like to thank Viv Williams for all the work she has put into organising the shorter walks in the programme. She made my job so much easier and enjoyable.

If you would like to step into her shoes, we would all be grateful and Viv and I would help ease you into the role.



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Booking a trip with Ramblers Holidays?

EBR are affiliated to the Walking Partnership. If you book a holiday with Ramblers Walking Holidays, Cruise and Walk or Adagio then please remember to nominate East Berkshire Ramblers when you do your booking to ensure we receive funds. Please note the nomination must be done before the holiday and cannot be done retrospectively.

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

New opportunities to join the Committee of your Ramblers Walking Group

Would you like to be our new Chairman?

The Group is looking for a new Chairman and this is your opportunity to promote the aims of the Ramblers by ensuring that discussions and decision-making in the Group are conducted in an efficient, friendly and inclusive manner. We can guarantee that you will have the support of a well-established, friendly and supportive committee.

You are invited to join the committee as a General Member

Have you thought about joining the committee as a General Member – we have six meetings a year which last for 60-90 minutes.

Would you like to attend a committee meeting to see what we do?

The committee would like to extend an invitation to any member of the Group to come along to one of our meetings to see what we do with a view to joining as a general member. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 16 June.

If you would like to have an informal chat please don't hesitate to contact any committee member who will be pleased to help.

Commemorative bench for David Bounds *writes Gordon Marrs*

We have purchased a bench to be erected as a memorial to David Bounds who co-authored the Rambling for Pleasure guide books. The bench is made from environmentally friendly material, needs little maintenance and is vandal proof.

An attractive metal plaque has been attached, sourced by Dave Ramm (see the illustration). The plan is for the bench to be installed next to Remenham footpath 6, a favourite spot, on the Culden Faw estate. Loddon Valley group, of which David was a member, will do the job when the current lockdown restrictions are relaxed sufficiently for it to be undertaken. It may be possible to organise a small ceremony, sometime after the installation, when assemblies are permitted.



2021 EBR Group Holidays

Spring Break 2021 There is no Spring Break this year.

EBRA Autumn Holiday 2021 Monday 20 – Friday 24 September 2021 (4 Nights)

writes Gail Cullen

HF Abingworth Hall (South Downs), Storrington Road Thakenham West Sussex RH20 3EF

We have 19 people due to go on the EBRA autumn break 2021. If you are interested in joining us please get in touch with the organiser Gail via this generic email address: autumnbreak@eastberksramblers.org

I need to return unused rooms to HF soon. There is a lot of “pent up” interest in UK holidays as Covid restrictions are lifted over the coming months.

[Abingworth Hall](#) is on the South Downs. The 4 night holiday starts on Monday 20 September 2021 with evening meal and finishes after breakfast on Friday 24 September 2021. This is a guided walking holiday using HF leaders. Offering a choice of three walks on each of the (3) walking days. At the time of writing (29 March 2021) walks will be from the house to avoid use of coaches. The total price for 2021 will be £475p per person, however if we have sufficient numbers to fill the house this price will fall. This price is for full board, including the famous HF packed lunches.

All bookings will be acknowledged by email.

Obituaries

Patrick Bailey died peacefully in hospital on Friday 19th February 2021 after a brief battle with Covid. He had an incredible team of medical staff caring for him and making sure he was in no pain till the end. He slipped away gently in his sleep. Throughout Patrick's time with Ramblers he enjoyed the company of many friends and looked forward to the organized walks and getting outside into the fresh air. He marvelled at the beauty of the surrounding landscape which he would then share with his family. Caroline Jarvis, Patrick's daughter, accompanied her father on an EBR walk near Dorney, and was happy to see him among many friends and fellow outdoor enthusiasts enjoying the outdoors together.

Caroline and her family will miss Patrick, but will hold on to the happier memories of him setting off on his rambling adventures. In Patrick's memory his family have asked that donations go, in part, to the East Berkshire Ramblers.

Jim Scott, who was over 90, died at Wexham Park Hospital on 19th February. Jim was a very long-term member of EBR and in recent years attended many Strollerthons.

Derek Johnson died on 16th December after complications following a stroke. Only 3 days before being admitted to hospital in November he had been out with Dave Ramm for a walk. Derek and his wife Barbara have been EBR members for approximately 50 years and many a Sunday afternoon he went out walking. Derek was an active walks leader and always made sure that he didn't go too fast so that no one got left behind. He was also a footpath warden and assisted in the compilation of the Three Castles book.

Derek will be remembered as a very thoughtful, quiet man who contributed greatly to the success of our walking group.

Donations, in memory of Derek, will be put towards replacing a stile with a gate to make paths more accessible for everyone. Derek's daughter Clare told us that her mother would love to meet up with fellow ramblers once the walks programme starts up again but as she has now lost her driver she will need to hitch a lift with someone.



The Three Castles Path *reports Richard Falconer*

The first leg of the much delayed Three Castles Path will be on **4th August** subject to enough members willing to travel on a coach where social distancing is not possible. Braywick Car Park have increased their car park charges to £10.00 per day and so alternative options are being investigated but so far we have not found anywhere suitable. If you have any thoughts/ideas on a car park with space and access for a coach pick-up I will be very pleased to hear from you.

The first leg is from Windsor to Martin's Heron, a distance of about 10 Miles and largely level.

The second leg will be on **Wednesday 1st September**.

Please contact me if you are planning to join us, (rfalconer43@gmail.com or 07764 538286).

What have you been doing during Lockdown?

Thank you to all members who responded to our request for information on what you have been during lockdown. Here are some of the responses:

Christmas Day 2020 *from Rosemary Davies*

Like many members arrangements for Christmas Day were dashed when Boris Johnson announced on 19 December that we were unable to continue with Christmas as planned.

Graham (Sexton) and I had to cancel the plans we had each made to meet up with friends and family and both found ourselves at a loose end and on our own so we decided we would meet up for a walk instead! We were blessed with blue skies and sunshine and had a splendid walk from Knowl Hill up to Crazies Hill, past Culham Court and down to the Thames where we enjoyed our picnic of turkey and cranberry sandwiches and mince pies on the riverside watching the ducks and birds. It was wonderful!

En route back to the cars we passed Medmenham Abbey, home of the notorious 'Hellfire Club'. Apparently history does not record a single event of interest that took place within the abbey walls while Cistercian monks inhabited Medmenham between 1204 and 1536. It's what happened to a woman around the time of its founding and to a man 200 years after its dissolution that spark interest and, in the case of what happened in the 18th century, a notoriety that lasts up to today!



I was thrilled to see a small clump of daffodils which helped make it a very different but very memorable Christmas Day which I don't think I will ever forget !

Parish Church of St. Mary in Hitcham, Burnham *from Mary Williams*

When walking recently in the Taplow area, I went down Hitcham Lane, and onto the graveyard in Hitcham Church. I had a recollection that there was an interesting grave there, but couldn't recall what or who it was. On returning home, I looked it up to discover that there is a large, flat tombstone with a weather-worn Coat of Arms which hides a romantic story. It is the final resting place of His Highness Prince Alexis Dolgorouck, who was secretary of state to Czar Alexander 11, and his wife Francis. They married when they were both 50. They entertained lavishly and commissioned Edward Lutyens to build Nashdom House. They had a two part wedding: in the Russian Embassy and St. Margaret's church, Westminster.

The Prince died in 1915. In 1928 Nashdom House was purchased by Anglican Monks, and in 1987 sold for flats. St. Marys has been used for the film Carry on Dick (Turpin).

For more information: <http://www.archaeologyinmarlow.org.uk/2011/01/in-an-english-country-churchyard/>

Dotty's still walking and still sewing *from Dotty Lindsay*

Well, it has gone on rather a long time – I am referring to the Covid pandemic.

I was very enthusiastic at the beginning and certain that I could stay motivated and find plenty to do. When it was summer, I could have all the windows open and then sit in the garden at lunchtime and later resume the sewing. Now it is winter the ambience is different. I have made over 200 scrubs in all sizes, colours and patterns, 50 hats, 75 masks and the last batch was for 30 shorts and tops for 9 year olds. This meant 90 buttons, 90 buttonholes, and 270 labels to be sewn on. I flagged a little.

I decided I would have to complete the last batch before starting a 1,000 piece jigsaw! I enjoy jigsaws – so that gave me the motivation that I needed.

Of course, I have been extremely fortunate in that I have been walking with "one other", namely Mary Williams, twice each week. That has really kept me sane! We have explored the parks, churches and graveyards (now full of snowdrops) locally, in order to avoid some of the mud. We have also walked by the River Thames, along to Bray or out to Cookham and many alleyways and hidden paths in the town of Maidenhead. The weekend when we had a snowfall was great fun. We walked on lanes near the old Brickworks and witnessed young and old enjoying snowballing and making snowmen.

Now I am hoping for a long, hot, relaxing Summer!



Still something new *from Eleanor Griffiths*

After almost a year of daily exercise we were thinking we must have covered all the paths close to home, until we scrutinised the map more carefully! It felt quite exciting to step out on a couple of fine mornings recently, to 'explore' two town footpaths and two country ones for the first time. Our rural walk brought us past Stubbings, where we saw snowdrops-a-plenty, sadly just past their best. I've tucked them away in my memory, to catch them next year, and am now impatiently remembering last year's cowslips on Maidenhead Thicket, hoping to see them reappear soon. We're looking forward now to rambling further afield again, but it has been good to really get to know our own neighbourhood in detail.

Some pictures taken on independent walks



'Golfers Nightmare' – as a non-golfer this picture taken on the official footpath crossing Maidenhead Golf Course is anything but my perception of a golfing putting green
by Malcolm Stone



Spring blossom seen while walking with Keith along the Thames Path in March 2021
by Malcolm Stone



St David's Day daffodils – 1 March 2021
by Rosemary Davies



Roadside daffodils
by Malcolm Stone



Rainbow over Windsor Castle
by Ian Ient



On a lovely sunny walk on 30 March Graham Sexton felt he had to go through the gate as described in the route notes even though there was no fence in sight !!

Walking In England

We received an email from John Harris giving details of his website which includes free walks to download plus details of walking clubs in the country and various other pieces of information. <https://www.walkinginengland.co.uk>

John is keen to create awareness of his site and asked us to let EBR members know of its existence so if you are looking for a walk then check out John's website and I am sure you will find something that will suit you. John's site is organised by County, and links to the walks in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire can be found on the [walks page](#) of the EBR website.

Saturday Coach Walks

Eve Norton has decided not to organise any coach walks this year as there are too many uncertainties re the price, availability and number of people willing to travel by coach. Eve will wait and see what the future holds before planning any more coach trips for next year.



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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 25th July 2021**.

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