



EAST BERKS RAMBLERS

Berkshire Area

Group website: www.eastberksramblers.org

Ramblers website: www.ramblers.org.uk

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No. 138 - April 2022

We have prepared a **Walks Programme** for **May-August 2022**. Details of all the EBR walks can be found on the [Walks page of the EBR website](#). A printed copy of the programme is included 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:

Rebecca Pilbeam Richard and Miranda Whetton Sarah Knight Carol Huntington
Janet Weeks Andrew and Florence Pritchard Deirdre White Beverly Eastwood
Terrie & Colin Robinson Hazel MacLaren Chas Watson

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've spent the last week telling myself that I still have lots of time to write my piece for the Newsletter. But after a very enjoyable stroll around Runnymede this morning and a long sit in the garden admiring the daffodils in the sunshine I have finally decided I must put pen to paper before the Editors come knocking on my door.



North Town Moor Pond

It's been a very busy start to the year, what with the member survey results to analyse and the proposed Cookham Footpath diversions getting to the official decision stage. There are detailed reports on both of these items in the Newsletter so I won't dwell on them except to thank everyone for their support, comments and offers to help. I suspect this is not the last we will hear from Copas Farms about diverting cross field paths.

We can look forward to the Causeway Path across the East Field of Battlemead being open from 1 April until September and I am intending to include it as part of a longer walk in July. I think some members of the Maidenhead Civic Society may wish to join us on the day. The Rotary Club will be holding their annual Boundary Walk on Sunday 2 October and the Royal Borough has already agreed the Path will be open for this.

I have been nominated as one of the two Berkshire Area representatives to attend the Ramblers General Council in April. This is the Ramblers national AGM and conference at which all areas in the country are represented. The Walk Leaders among you will know about the written Risk Assessment requirement that Head Office has imposed and I hope they will be pleased to know that the Berkshire and Merseyside/West Cheshire areas have put forward a motion to do away with the present process. Some other areas have indicated their support so let's hope we can get it through.

Well, I think that's about it. As ever, if you have any suggestions as to how we might do things better or issues you think we should take up, please talk to any committee member. In the meantime, enjoy your walking and the fine weather: I hope it is as good when you read this as it is right now. Do you know, I think I might just go for an evening stroll in the Great Park ...

EBR Member Survey Results

We asked, you responded, we are taking action

The committee thank all those members who responded to the survey that was issued in January. We had an overwhelming response with 92 returns which represents over 31% of our membership – a great result! Thank you too to all those who have volunteered their services for leading walks, path maintenance/path wardens, assistance at shows – your offer of help is much appreciated. If you haven't already heard from a committee member then someone will be in contact very soon!

A summary of the results was sent out in February but here are some more details of what you, the members, said together with what we plan for the future.

Responses - general

- Good balance of responses representing all types of walks offered.
- 75% of responders are regular walkers (at least monthly), of which some 15% are new members.
- All new members felt they had been welcomed to the group.
- Many responses from members who have now stopped walking with some thoughtful comments showing continuing goodwill to EBR.
- Responses indicate that belonging to EBR is not just about walking.

Walks

- Over 90% are happy with the current walks offered in the programme.
 - 95% mid-week walks were about right
 - 90% weekend walks were about right
 - 87% strollathons were about right
- Significant interest (>50%) was expressed for longer, all-day walks (10-12 miles).
- Over 60% are interested in long-distance trail coach walks.
- Over 70% expressed interest in weekend coach walks.

Priorities / Non-walking activities

- All EBR's non-walking roles were strongly supported.
- Over 90% felt Path maintenance / path wardens were very important.
- Over 80% felt campaigning was important.
- Low demand for more social events with >50% thinking the current level was about right.

What happens now? Plus some responses to some of the comments raised

Walks

- There will sometimes be a 10-12 mile on the third Wednesday of every month in addition to the 6-8 mile walk. The mid-week long distance trail coach walk during the summer months will be around 10 miles.
- In response to request for more varieties of locations, some of the longer walks will start from further away.
- Pace – There were a couple of comments about the pace of some walks with some occasionally finding them too brisk. This is a difficult issue as a pace that is too fast for one person may be perfect for others and possibly a bit slow for some. We feel that it is important that members understand the pace expected and are

able to choose the walk that is best suited for them. To assist this the website has been updated to include a description of the types of walk currently on offer. These include:

- **Strollathon:** Under 2 miles, with café stop.
Speed: Easy, strolling pace, mainly flat and on firm surfaces, no stiles.
- **Short Walks:** 3 – 5 miles, mainly flat or undulating, may have stiles and a hill.
Speed: Moderate (2.0 – 2.2 mph) or Leisurely (1.5 -2.0 mph).*
- **Long walk:** 6 -8 miles (occasionally 10 -12 miles), usually with several hills and stiles
Speed: 2.5 – 2.8 mph.*

* "Speed" is an indication of the average speed walked and will vary between leaders and terrain.

- For walks on different days of the week –Ramblers main website gives details of other Ramblers groups who offer walks on various days of the week and start from similar locations to those offered in EBR programme. <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/find-a-walk-or-route.aspx?layer=routes,walks&placename=Berkshire>. There are currently no specific plans to change the days of the week or the start times that EBR offer in the walks programme.

Coach walks

We need volunteers to come forward to lead coach walks, if we are going to offer these in the programme. If you are in the 70% that would like to go on a weekend coach walk and happy to organize, perhaps jointly with another member, then PLEASE CONTACT ANY MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS. In the past there have been two Saturday coach walks per year which took place during the summer months.

Walk Leaders/Path maintenance/Path Wardens/Assistance at shows

We look forward to welcoming new volunteers and thank you again for your offer of help.

Thank You!

Countryside Matters *writes Gordon Marrs*

Planning Gain!

When the Maidenhead Waterways Project was at the planning stage, we lobbied for a continuous new footpath from the town centre to Bray Marina. Now that the scheme is up and running there is a proposal to fulfil the promise of a new right of way on the agenda. The path will start alongside the Cut in Braywick Park, running parallel to the Green Way, which it joins on leaving the Park. Both paths follow the causeway to Bray, where the Green Way currently ends.

The new path will then follow a new route to join the Bray Cut, crossing it via a new bridge then continuing along the river bank. The final stretch follows the Cut under the Motorway to join the Thames at Bray Marina. It seems logical to make the new path an extension of the Green Way, and this will be discussed at the next meeting of the Green Way Working Group.

There is a suggestion to name the new footpath "Parky's Parade", in honour of our distinguished resident, Michael Parkinson.

The Life of a New Footpath Secretary *by Graham Sexton*

As you might know, I became your new Footpath Secretary at the last AGM. I have been walking for many years but, while I have been aware of the Ramblers' objective to preserve and protect our rights of way network, I have never been directly involved in this before. In the main I imagine this objective is largely achieved through persuasion and the "nudging" of local authorities, parish councils, public bodies and landowners to consider the interests of walkers. But my first experience has been of the more formal process that follows when a landowner wishes to divert a public right of way.

The case in point was at Manor Farm just on the north side of Maidenhead. The landowner here has been seeking to divert a cross-field path to a track around the edge of the field (and also make some other changes). Now I should state at the start that most of the work on this has been done by Gordon and chairman Steve who have much more experience in this area than me. I have largely been an observer on this one but, as someone new to the process, I hope that makes my observations of some interest.

The first thing I noted is that the process has some similarities to, but also some important differences from, the planning application process. The application is considered by the local Rights of Way panel which is composed of local councillors; the panel is advised by council officers but does not have to accept their

recommendations. Members of the public are allowed to speak at the panel meetings. Now while the planning process seems biased towards developers who usually get most of what they want through repeated applications and appeals, there seems to be more protection for the status quo when it comes to rights of way. For a start, the Rights of Way panel considers the diversion twice. They discuss it in principle and, in the case of the Manor Farm diversion, they agreed to it at this stage despite their officers recommending against. Then the process goes to a public consultation, which includes official signs being placed around the footpath in question. The panel then considers the application again, in the light of comments received. At this stage, in the Manor Farm case, they reversed their decision and decided not to proceed with the diversion.

Now what caused the good councillors to change their mind? We'll never know for sure. There certainly was some discussion around the legal criteria for diverting a path. The diversion needs to be "substantially as convenient" as the original path. The amenity value of the original and diverted path needs to be considered, so this would include the quality of the views (which was an important consideration at Manor Farm). But I suspect it was public opinion that mattered most. In the public consultation there were far more who were opposed to the diversion than supported it. Had the councillors decided to press ahead regardless, the final stage would have been an inquiry by a government inspector and this would have involved a more rigorous investigation of whether the council's decision conformed with the relevant legislation.



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.

Visit ramblersholidays.co.uk

Shows to be Attended by EBR

by Arthur Holland

I currently expect EBR to be present at the following shows:

Saturday 4th June - **Datchet Jubilee celebration**,

Definitely organised but booking not yet confirmed

Monday 29th August - **Littlewick Show**,

Not yet confirmed as taking place

3rd September - **Cookham Regatta**,

Definitely being organised, booking not yet confirmed

Mid September - **Eton Action fair**,

Not yet confirmed as taking place

More details will be posted on the EBR website in due course.

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.

Walking with EBR through the Summer *by Pera Marrs*

The next walks programme comes out with this Newsletter, with a new type of walk on offer. In response to the survey we carried out in the winter, we have added 4 long walks (10-12 miles) on the middle Wednesday of each month. These are marked as strenuous. If they prove to be popular, then we will try to continue to offer them. There will be a 6-7 mile walk as well that day for those who want a less taxing walk.

The Coach walk will be continuing on the first Wednesday of the month, with a new trail once the 3 Castles Way is finished in June. Details will be posted on the website once confirmed.

One of our most popular "walks" is still the Strollathon, but even here it is difficult to find leaders. There will be 7 spread through the months, but keep an eye on the web site for late entries.

Unfortunately we are still not able to offer a full programme of walks, with Sundays being the most difficult to fill on both the short and long walks, about half the dates are unfilled. If you can offer a walk, then get in touch with me on longerwalks@eastberksramblers.org and your walk can be entered. We have members who do not go online and may miss out on these late entries. If you think a friend is offline please tell them about extra walks.

My thanks, as always, go to everyone who leads walks for our Group, but especially to Alma, David B, Keith, Malcom and Simon who all offer 4 or more walks every time. Without them our programme would be very sparse. Also thanks to Kaye who has taken over from Alma the task of keeping a record of the numbers walking and the irritating Risk Assessment forms that Ramblers insist that we keep.

Finally let's hope for a sunny, mud and Covid free summer to get out there in "nature" and enjoy each other's company.

Reminder to walkers *by Pera Marrs, Walks Programme Co-ordinator*

Walker's Responsibilities

Please ensure that you are fit enough and have suitable footwear, clothing, food and drink for the walk you intend to join. Leaders may refuse to accept participants who in their opinion are inadequately equipped or unfit.

For your own safety please abide by the advice and guidelines issued by organisers and the instructions of the walk leader. Be aware that you walk at your own risk, and that it is your responsibility to behave sensibly and minimise the potential for accidents to occur. Please carry an emergency phone number. Also carry some basic first aid for yourself.

If the weather is / has been bad, please check the [Walk entry](#) on the EBR or Ramblers website to see if the walk has been cancelled or amended.

If you have a medical condition that may affect your ability to walk, please inform the leader before the walk starts and make sure you have any medication or supplements that you may need, (eg Ventolin, glucose etc.)

Walkers with a disability

Walkers with a disability are welcome, but you should be fit enough to complete the walk you have chosen. If you require assistance, you must be accompanied by an adult helper. You need to contact the walk organiser or walk leader before the walk to discuss whether it is suitable for you. If necessary a meeting should be arranged to discuss your options.

The leader may refuse access if he/she feels it is unsafe or that the risk is unacceptable.

EBR Holiday Breaks *by Arthur Holland*

The bookings for the Spring Break Holiday were much lower than anticipated which led to an increase in prices which led to a further reduction in numbers signing up for the holiday. However, a smaller number of us will still be going on the Ramblers Holiday at Hassness House in the Lake District from 23-28 May, should anybody wish to join us you can by booking direct with Ramblers Holidays, there are still rooms available at the time of writing. If you would like more information please send me an e-mail via committee2@eastberksramblers.org.

At its February meeting the EBR Committee concluded that the Autumn 2022 break would be abandoned. This

decision was taken because of the slow uptake for the Spring break and no firm plans had so far been made for the Autumn break and it was getting rather late in the day to organise.

We hope the holiday breaks will be back in 2023.

Don't Lose Your Way deadline set to be abolished

In February the UK Government announced that the 2026 deadline to register historic paths is to be abolished in England. The DEFRA statement said: *We will repeal the 2026 cut-off date for recording historic rights of way, as set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to allow more time for paths to be identified and added to the public rights of way network.*

Ramblers launched the Don't Lose Your Way campaign to search for lost paths, discovering over 49,000 miles of potential unrecorded rights of way in England and Wales. Any paths not applied for by 2026 would have been at risk of being lost forever.

The removal of deadline in England, which had already been announced for Wales back in 2018, gives more time save the most important and useful paths, ensuring they're added back to the map and protected for the future.



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.

Are you interested in a collection of old OS maps?

Ramblers member Jean Webster would like her collection of old OS maps covering various parts of the UK to go to a good home. If these are of interest to you please contact Jean on 01753 867737, evening only.



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Magical Dawn Walk

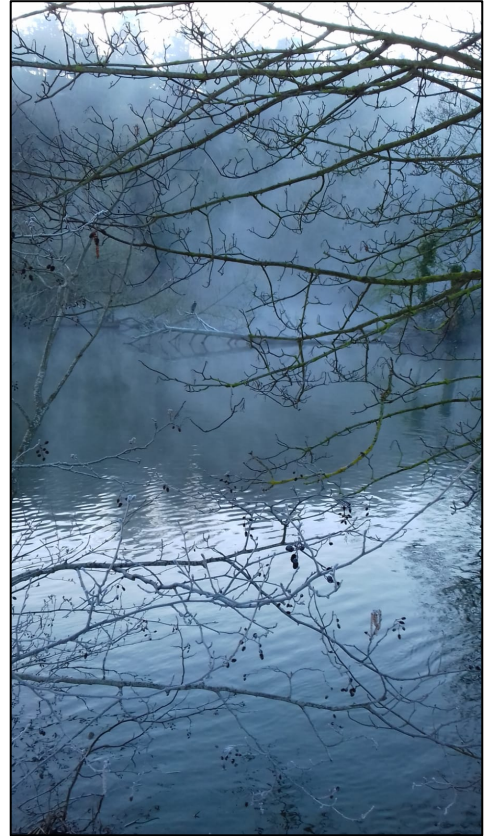
by Dotty Lindsay

Four ramblers and the leader assembled at 6.15am on Sunday 3 April for the 15th Dawn Walk. They all congratulated each other on getting out of bed so early in the morning and declared that it was worth it because, although it was cold and frosty, it promised to be a bright day when it was fully light.

The walk took us over North Town Moor, to Widbrook Common where we turned right by White Brook. We paused momentarily to take in the sight of the grasses covered in frost followed by the sight of a few shy deer running away and many waterfowl. We followed the brook and after crossing the road came to Battlemead Common where we walked down to Old Father Thames. At this point we turned right again and followed the River to Boulders Lock. It was still only 7.45am but already five or six skiffs were negotiating the lock.

We walked on and then stopped for a hearty breakfast at Jenners. We were their first customers! We traversed the nearby roads and arrived back at our cars by 9am. This meant that the leader could then transfer to Skirmett to engage in a second walk of 4 miles and still be back home by 1pm for lunch!

Maybe next year a few more ramblers will join us for this slightly mad aberration!



Three Castles Path *by Richard Falconer and John Harden*

There was a good turn out of over 40 members on 6 April for the Three Castles Path from Odiham along the Basingstoke Canal through to Ellisfield.

The fifth leg will be on **WEDNESDAY, 4 MAY**. This is a particularly interesting section from Ellisfield through to Bradley where the manor was claimed by Charles 1 in settlement of a debt of £1,001 and 1 shilling. The occupier refused to hand over possession and eventually the manor house was destroyed by forces sent from London. The path continues on to Abbotstone Down where we finish our walk.

The sixth and final stage will be on **WEDNESDAY, 1 JUNE**. We will cross Itchen Stoke Down before reaching Itchen Abbas churchyard where we can see the grave of John Hughes (26) the last person to be hanged for stealing a horse. We continue along the River Itchen, through Easton before finally reaching the end of the path at the Great Hall at Winchester Castle.

Coach fare is £15.00, cash or cheque payable to EBR. Booking is required for all coach walks.

Please contact the leader to reserve your place on the coach by using the link in the walk entry in the walks programme. Coach departure will be from Braywick at 8.00am, however, please do check the website nearer the time to check on timing in case there are any changes.

Obituary

Dave Mackay *by Malcolm Stone*

I was saddened to read of my good friend's death on 16 December from cancer. Although he had moved to Brighton a couple of years ago to be with his fiancée, I kept in touch with him. I texted him on his seventieth birthday in September, and he telephoned me while he was in Brighton Hospital. In December, he told me that he was still not in the best of health, but the good news was he was marrying his fiancée Helen the following week. I am sure having met Helen myself, that his five years or so since he met her on a walking holiday abroad, were some of the happiest of his life.



Dave was a man of many parts, who in his earlier life was a Venture Scout leader. He told me he had been seriously walking since his teenage years. Later, he became a qualified local football referee and was still involved on the committee of a local league until very recently. He supported Tottenham Hotspur because his namesake was the captain of the club when it won the League and Cup double in 1961 and a Scotsman. He was a keen supporter of Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth in the UK. He was on the Royal Borough council as a Liberal Democrat councillor for the Belmont ward from 2003 to 2011. He worked for UK Customs at Heathrow Airport for many years.

Dave was a regular visitor to Tenerife where he often met up with Keith Dunford to go walking there. The photo attached to this obituary was supplied by Keith and is an excellent reminder of two of Dave's passions, walking and beer! It will come as no surprise to EBR members that Dave was a supporter of the Campaign for Real Ale. I still remember when I tipped off the pub landlord that we were back from a walk and the cook could start preparing our meals. This meant on one occasion Dave had not had his first of two pints (when I was driving us home) when the meals arrived. He was not best pleased.

In summary, despite having health issues throughout most of his adult life, this did not stop him from leading a full life. May he rest in peace.

APP Corner *by Ian Ient*

Woodland Trust's British Trees App

Welcome to the third article in this series I where I review smartphone apps which may make your walk a bit more enjoyable. This time, I will look at the **Woodland Trust's British Trees** app which is available free for both iPhone and Android.



British Trees is a great little app from Britain's largest woodland conservation charity, the Woodland Trust. It allows you, quickly and simply, to identify trees. This can be great to have when you're on a walk and come across an unusual tree.

To identify a tree, first find up to six features from the list below (you don't need all six, but the more you have the more certain will be the identification).

- Leaf or needle
- Leaf bud
- Flower
- Fruit
- Bark; and
- Twig / branch

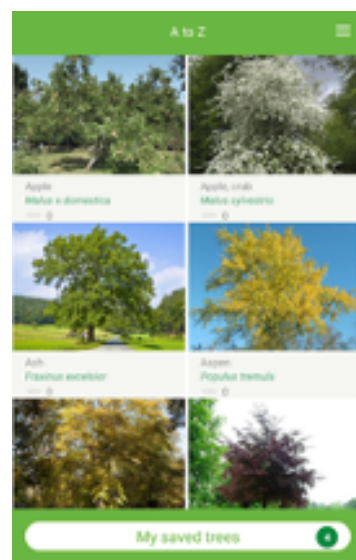
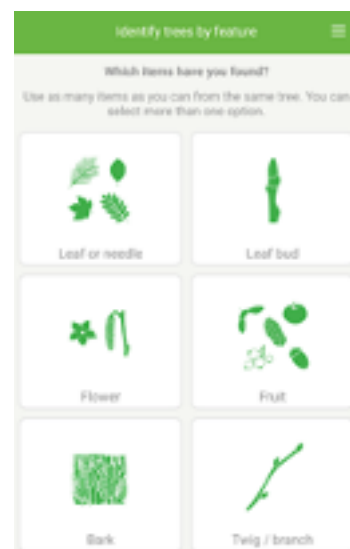
Once you have selected which features to use, the app will then present you with further options, diagrams and examples that will lead towards identification of the tree. For example, options for leaf types are:

- Simple
- Compound
- Needles
- Scales
- Needle-like.

Clear, simple illustrations help you to decide what type of leaf, or other feature, you have. Once you have described the features the app will tell you what sort of tree you are looking at.

The app also includes an A-Z of UK trees which gives you considerable information about all of the UK's native trees. It includes a number of photos of each type of tree which will enable you to be sure that your identification is correct.

Finally, the app also includes a Tree Map, which shows you where trees of each type have been spotted growing. This again, should help with identification as well as helping you to locate a specific type of tree.



2022 Millenium Walk Map

A revised version of the Millennium Walk map showing the seasonal path across Battlemead has now been published by Ramblers and the Maidenhead Civic Society. It is available on the East Berks Ramblers website. If you need a hard copy please contact the Group Secretary (groupsecretary@eastberksramblers.org). There is no charge for the map but we would ask for a contribution of £1 towards admin costs and postage.

Malcolm is planning to lead an end-to-end walk of the whole Millennium Walk soon, so look out for it in the next Walk Programme.



The Twisted Chimney. *by Malcolm Stone*



While out walking with the Wycombe District Ramblers we came across the unusual site of a 'twisted chimney'. I could not find any explanation as to why it was built in that style. It is in the grounds of the Royal Standard pub in Forty Green, Buckinghamshire, which is a hamlet near Beaconsfield.

The pub dates back over 950 years and is the Oldest Freehouse in England. The first reference to it was in 1213 as 'Se Scip' (The Ship). The name was changed to the Royal Standard of England after the restoration of Charles II in 1663, the inn having been a mustering place for Lord Westworth's Royalists before the Battle of Wycombe Rye in 1642.

The inn was located on an important trade route from Penn and Tylers Green down to the River Thames at Hedsor Wharf, used for transporting bricks and tiles. In the neighbouring village of Knotty Green, there is a pub called the Red Lion, which was the local for Enid Blyton the world famous author whose stories have sold over 600 million copies, and have been translated into 90 languages, making her the fourth most translated author.

First we had the storms





.....and then Spring arrived !



Contributions to Future Newsletters

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!

Please send your entries to newsletter@eastberksramblers.org or to the Editors at the address below. 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 24th July 2022**.

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You're receiving this communication because we believe that it would be of interest to you as a Ramblers member. If you'd rather not receive similar information in future, please let us know. You can email ramblers@ramblers.org.uk, change your preferences online at ramblers.org.uk/myaccount or call (0)20 3961 3300.

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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

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