



MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No. 141 - April 2023

We have prepared a **Walks Programme** for **May - August 2023**. A printed copy of the programme accompanies this newsletter. Details of all the EBR walks can be found on the [Walks page of the EBR website](#).

New Members

A very warm welcome to our new Members:

Lisa Rock Trude Braenna Martin and Stella Parsons Melanie Goodman
Amanda Parry Sarah Hill Christopher Price Riyad Tibi Helen Sparks
Carmelina Scozzari Vanda Hawkes Jessie Bhangoo

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 *Steve Gillions*

When the daffodils and crocuses appeared in my garden and it was still light at 5 pm I thought I'd be sitting here writing a piece about how spring was just around the corner. Instead I'm reading a weather warning that says tomorrow will likely be the coldest day of the year after being driven in from the garden by a sleet shower. Ah well, I'm sure it will have cleared up by the time you're reading this.

On the brighter side the walks programme is holding up well thanks to the efforts of Pera and our walks leaders. Many thanks to all. I finally took the plunge and signed up for a coach walk along part of the Oxfordshire Way and really enjoyed myself in excellent company. I also saw how much organisation a coach walk needs and thanks to Peter and Lesley for doing a superb job. It was also good to see some Ramblers from Amersham with us on the walk.

On the admin front I've had some input to Head Office discussions about how to improve the risk assessment arrangement and Alan and I are still pushing to get a date from HO to talk about the management of the endowment fund we set up with them using the profits from the Rambling for Pleasure publications. We will let you know as soon as we get some news about how HO are proposing to use 'our' money to the benefit of Ramblers as a whole.

More productively, the joint project with Maidenhead Civic Society to waymark the Millennium Walk is well under way. Many thanks to Ian and Malcolm for all their work on this. We have now surveyed the whole route and are drawing up a shopping list of the signage needed. We've had good support from the Local Access Forum and Berkshire College of Agriculture, who have agreed to install a new waymarker post on the permitted path across their land. You'll probably remember that the purchase of Battlemead Common meant we could fill in one of the missing links on the walk. There is another from Switchback Road across Cemetery Field and I've had a meeting with Brendan Monaghan who is researching the possibility of claiming it under the Don't Lose Your Way initiative. He and Heather Brown from the Windsor group have undertaken a huge amount of work on this and other routes and deserve our thanks for all their efforts.

In advance of tomorrow's poor weather I'm just back from a walk with my dog in the sunshine around the Great Park. We took in Queen Anne's Ride and Ranger's Lodge where we had a chat with a group of volunteers who were re-laying the hawthorn hedge along the track from Russel's Pond. They do a lot of work in the area and it's encouraging to see traditional crafts still thriving on our patch.

I think that's it for now: happy rambling!

Planning and Countryside *Ian lent*

An outline planning application has been submitted for a large film studio to be built near Holyport. If approved, this would impact a number of paths between Fifield and Holyport. Accordingly, we registered our objection along with many other organisations and individuals. A decision on whether the application can proceed to the next stage is expected to be made in the next few weeks.

Path Wardens *Ian lent*

Early in the New Year the Autumn path survey was completed by the Path Wardens. This was later than usual because RBWM were late getting the survey to us as they were bedding in a new computer system. The Spring Survey will commence in April so this should get us back on track with the seasons.



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

The Path Wardens continue to identify issues with the path network which they either address themselves (such as by cutting back overgrown paths) or pass to The Royal Borough to address (such as fallen trees). This work plays an important role in maintaining the quality of our paths network.

If you are interested in becoming a Path Warden, or would like to find out more about the role, please get in touch with

me. committee5@eastberksramblers.org

Booking a trip with Ramblers Holidays?

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.

Four Walk the Offa's Dyke Path *Graham Sexton*

Last August four members of the group set off from the Severn Estuary near Chepstow to start walking the Offa's Dyke Path. The path runs for 177 miles roughly along the English-Welsh border to finish at Prestatyn. That is around two weeks' walking at 12-13 miles per day. However, we were all so busy, mostly with other holidays, that the plan was to do it in several short sections.

Your memories of last summer might be dominated by the intense heat. If you were fortunate you were able to spend those days sitting in the shade with a long cold drink. Unfortunately we were walking Offa's Dyke, not on the day when the all-time temperature record was broken but about two weeks later when there were four consecutive days all around 33-35C. Everything was booked including accommodation, taxis and luggage transfers so we went ahead despite the forecast.

It only takes a couple of hours to drive to Chepstow so we planned a circular walk on the afternoon of our arrival day that took in the first few miles of the path, thereby shortening the distance required on the first full day. At the start there are some good views of the Severn Road Bridge (the original one) and then some attractive sections just above the lower reaches of the Wye but also some slightly boring bits through the suburbs of Chepstow.

Having stayed overnight at a rather swish golf club, we set off the next morning for the stretch to Redbrook. It was hot, but maybe not quite as hot as we had feared because this section is mostly in the shade of delightful old woodland on the steep banks of the Wye. The highlight was the Devil's Pulpit, where there is a spectacular viewpoint overlooking Tintern Abbey. What has the devil got to do with it? Good question. Legend has it that the devil preached to the monks below, tempting them to desert their orders.



The next day was the most punishing of the lot. It was slightly longer and mostly through farmland, so much less shade. While there weren't any long steep hills there were enough "inclines" to really take a toll in the heat. That night we stayed in a pleasant rural B&B and were warmly welcomed in the local pub for dinner. It was an old building with thick stone walls which kept the inside pleasantly cool.



It was therefore with some trepidation that we set out on the final day. This included climbing up to the Hatterall Ridge which includes the highest point on Offa's Dyke path. In fact, I didn't find this quite as hard as the previous day. At least once we had gained height, we kept it and there was just slightly more breeze up high. Nevertheless, we were pleased to see the sign for Longtown which was where we were to spend our final night at "The Crown".

Not put off by the experience, the four of us have booked the next section for this summer, starting where we finished last year and walking to Knighton, which is generally regarded as the half-way point.

Accommodation, luggage movements, taxi transfers when needed, maps, guide book arranged through Contours Holidays.

EBR Group Holidays in 2023 and 2024 *Pera Marrs*

Selworthy – June 2023

The group has booked an HF Holidays 4-night walking break at [Holnicote House](#), Selworthy from **12th – 16th June 2023**.

The House gives us access to Exmoor, Selworthy Beacon, the Brendon Hills, Dunster and many other delights. There will be 3 walks every day, so you can find a distance and difficulty to suit your need.

We have 26 members on this holiday, and if you would like to join us, please get in touch with me and we can sort out a room for you.



There are more details available on the HF website:

<https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/country-houses/locations/selworthy-exmoor>

Spring 2024: I have negotiated a group rate of £579 per person at **HF Dolserau Hall, Dolgellau**, Mid Wales for 4 nights from Monday, 20 May, departing Friday, 24 May 2024. Here we may explore Cader Idris, and fantastic inland and coastal walks.

<https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/country-houses/locations/dolgellau-snowdonia>.

It would be helpful to get an idea who might be interested. You can look online for more details. If we can get about 30 people we get better discounts.

Please message me, Pera Marrs, if you are interested using my personal email if you have it or longerwalks@eastberksramblers.org.

Autumn 2024: Gail is looking into a Ramblers 5-day break around **Ironbridge** staying at Valley Hotel run by Best Western, during September 2024.

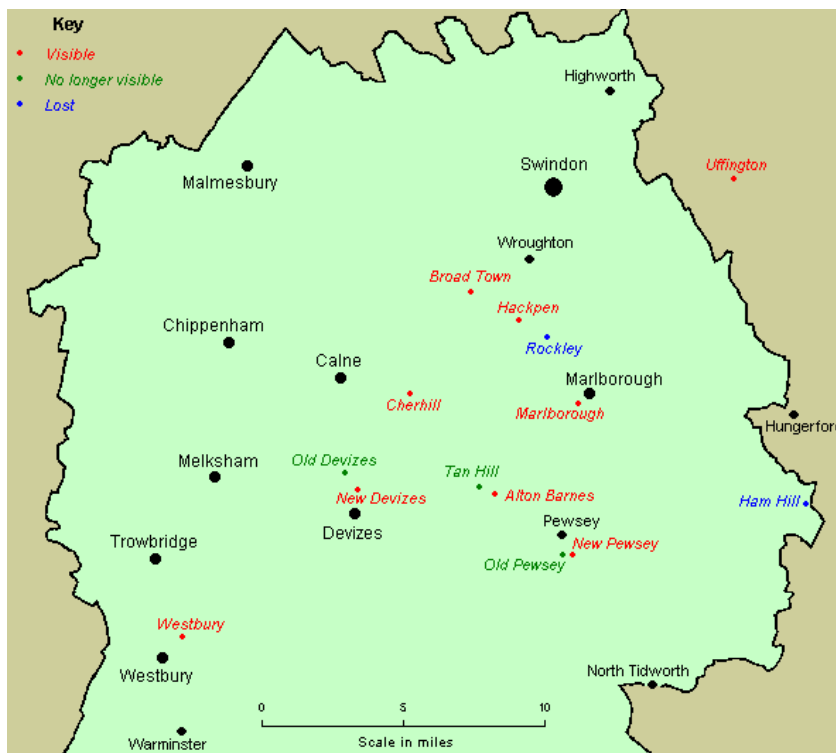
The White Horse Trail *Dawn Davies*

The **White Horse Trail** is a circular route covering 94 miles and passing the 8 remaining white horses of Wiltshire. It crosses and follows other long distance paths such as the **Ridgeway**, the **Wansdyke Path** and the **Pewsey Avon Trail**. Some stretches of it also follow the **Kennet & Avon Canal**.

The majority of the route lies within the [North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#) characterised by chalk downlands, mostly used for farming, and the bare uplands of the surrounding downs, which afford panoramic views. The route passes through ancient towns and villages, such as Bratton, Steeple Ashton, Devizes, Marlborough and Pewsey, and goes past many prehistoric hill forts, barrows, mounds and other earthworks.



If you would like to walk the White Horse Trail (WHT) then please join the next series of coach walks with the East Berkshire Ramblers, after the excellent Oxfordshire Way walks finishes. We have split the walk into ten sections of 10-12 miles each, starting with the first one on **Wednesday 5th July 2023**. Legs 2, 3 and 4 will continue on the first Wednesday of each month up to and including October 2023. There will be a break over the winter months and we will re-start the programme on the first Wednesday of March 2024. Please check the **Walks Programme** for further details of each section.



Further information on the White Horse Trail can be found on the [LDWA's website](#) and the [Visit Wiltshire](#) website. Excellent route directions have been created by Tim Lewis of the Wiltshire Ramblers, also available on the LDWA's website, which have helped enormously in plotting each section of the route. Thank you Tim.

NB: The coach will leave Braywick Leisure Centre at 8 a.m. on Wednesday 5th July 2023. If you would like to join this walk, please book your place in advance by contacting Julie Maidment or Dawn Davies (contact details in walk programme). Please include your **name, phone number and email address**. The coach fare will be £20.00 and payment will be taken on the day, preferably by card or otherwise by cheque made payable to East Berkshire Ramblers. Please arrive early so that all payments can be processed before we set off at 8 a.m.

Walking the Oxfordshire Way 2023 *Peter Koklitis & Lesley Winch*

Last year the first three legs of the Oxfordshire Way, which in total is 68 miles between Bourton on the Water and Henley, were completed and the remaining four legs are scheduled in the 2023 EBR coach walk programme to be led by Peter and Lesley. Legs #4 and #5 were completed in March and April respectively and on both occasions, an en route stop at Oxford Services provided an opportunity to relax, stretch the legs, purchase refreshments and change into walking boots.

The fourth leg in March started at Weston on the Green and finished near Hells Coppice at the Menmarsh Guide Point. It was encouraging to have 32 ramblers on this first coach trip of the year and the weather behaved itself, allowing splendid views throughout the day. Some rain fell as we crossed the Oxford to Bicester railway line heading flat south to Islip for our first break. Lunch was later taken at the tiny church at Noke dating from the early thirteenth century.

Refreshed the group walked on to the village of Beckley, circumventing a section of Otmoor Nature Reserve, here taking a final break at the church, originally Norman and rebuilt in 14th century. A blue plaque indicated that Evelyn Waugh lived at the Abingdon Arms in Beckley. The fourth leg was completed by a flat section south of Horton-cum-Studley towards Menmarsh Guide Post where we were greeted by our friendly coach driver.



The fifth leg in April picked up at the previous drop off and the way continued flat, stopping for a breather at Drunkards Corner. On route a herd of deer crossed our paths, negotiating a barbed wire fencing used to partition this wooded area. Two hours in, we arrived at the now famous Waterperry Gardens with a 40min break allocation for early lunch, tea and cake from the café or perusal of the nearby historic church, museum and gift shop. Comfortable table and chairs and very nice cake too!



Refreshed, we walked on to Waterstock Mill, crossing the listed brick Bow Bridge over the River Thames. The water was high due to recent heavy rain. An opportunity was presented to enter the restored church at Waterstock, notable for its 15th century tower. The next destination stop for completing lunch and rest was at Albury church via Tiddington. The homeward route took in the rather splendid Rycote Manor House, which has in previous incarnations played host to four separate monarchs.

The Oxfordshire Way passed by the Rycote Chapel built in 1449 which remains virtually unaltered since then. The walk towards Tetsworth provided clear panoramic views from the Oxfordshire Golf course.

The forthcoming sixth and the final seventh legs are scheduled for May and June respectively – check out the [EBR walks programme](#) for joining details.

Oxfordshire County Council have developed excellent free downloadable maps and directions for the whole of the Oxfordshire Way, which can be found [here](#) on their website www.oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Oxfordshire Way photos by Ian Heath

Recent Walks

We have added a new tab to the [Walks web page](#) in which walk leaders can describe walks led recently, to show in more detail the type of walk and the countryside we walk in. Have a look at the entries on the tab, as a guide, we suggest one paragraph on the walk and no more than two or three photos.





Your committee needs YOU

We all enjoy walking in the countryside and are lucky enough to belong to a Ramblers group that has a large and varied walks programme. It is at the heart of what we do. We can do this thanks to the efforts put in by all committee members to make sure the programme is well organised and managed.

Pera Marrs, our **Walks Coordinator**, and Alan Harding, our **Treasurer**, are looking to stand down from their jobs after many years of work to the benefit of all of us. These are key jobs and we need people to step up into their shoes to help make sure that our group continues to be as active in the future.

The committee meets 6 times a year and works quite informally. We work as a team and you would not be short of help and support from the whole committee and especially Pera and Alan. You wouldn't be dropped in at the deep end and there would be a proper handover before you took over completely. No particular experience or qualification is needed for either job – a willingness to make a contribution is the main requirement.

There is an outline of each job below and if you think you would be interested do get in touch with Pera or Alan to learn more.

Walks Coordinator

We produce 3 walks programmes a year, each with about 80 walks. Pera initially contacts walk leaders to ask them to submit walks or reserve dates, and then sends out reminders as the programme builds up. When the diary is full, she checks the details for all walks are correct before finalising the programme.

It's then re-formatted and entered into the Ramblers master walk programme which then appears on our website.

The work is all done on-line, so you can fit it in around your normal activities. But don't worry, you don't need to be a technical expert to do it (Pera cheerfully admits she isn't!) as our friendly webmasters design all the forms we use and will help out whenever necessary.

Get in touch with Pera if you would like to know more - call on 01628 629155 or email longerwalks@eastberksramblers.org

Group Treasurer

The Treasurer makes sure that the income and expenditure is properly recorded. You will be working with the committee to outline the group's budget for the year; making sure that all income and expenditure is in line with policies and procedures; presenting information on the group's finances to the AGM; and providing an annual financial return to the Ramblers' HQ for audit.

It's advantageous if you are happy working with numbers and financial information, confident using email and internet banking, and can handle Ramblers' simple Excel spreadsheet. The Treasurer should be organised and able to keep on top of tasks. The funds involved are in the low £000's.

Alan commented "the Ramblers spreadsheet is -frankly- superb, it makes 'doing the books' really straightforward and the role has not been onerous. I'd be very happy to talk it through with anyone who'd like to know more, on a 'no obligation' basis" Call me on 01628 673607 or email treasurer@eastberksramblers.org.

Q and A

Steve Gillions – Chairman, East Berkshire Ramblers

What walking snacks and emergency food do you take on a walk?

I know I should be talking about healthy food here but my go-to favourite has to be a Kit-Kat – dark chocolate of course. They can get very sticky in hot weather but a Tunnock's Caramel Wafer is a perfectly acceptable substitute.



Emergency food is more difficult in that if I take something I really like the chances are that I'll eat it during the day, thus rather destroying the point. Back in the day my great friend Jerry and I did some serious winter walking and climbing where benightment was a real risk. Our solution to the 'how do we make sure we don't scoff it all during the day' problem was to take a half pound pack of marzipan. Tasty stuff, high energy, long shelf life and crucially no-one could eat a whole bar in one go. We took turns to carry it and fortunately never had occasion to open it although we did get quite close a few times. Jerry had it last and for all I know it's still at the bottom of his rucksack.

Where is your favourite walk?

Wandering about in the hills and mountains has been an important part of my life for decades. The Lakes were my first love and I will never tire of going back there, but I moved on to Scotland where I discovered the delights of walking in wild places. Over the last fifteen years or so I've travelled alone more often and enjoy nothing more than settling into an area for a week or two or three after researching it thoroughly. I like to have lots of options but no set plans, preferring to be led by the weather and my mood. The Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland are special places with wonderful walks, scenery, history and atmosphere. As I've got older I've discovered wild areas to be places for reflection as well as the places for adventure that they were in earlier days. Mind you, I still enjoy being 'out there'. But somehow I know that in years to come I will want to spend more of my time in the quiet green of the Cotswolds and the Chilterns.

It's impossible to pick a favourite walk from all of that. But if I was allowed just one walk it would be in Windsor Great Park with my family and dog. I go there most days and enjoy it most when I get back home from my travels.

Are you an all-weather walker?

The honest answer these days is 'not intentionally'. When I was working and walking time was more limited I would go out and do something whatever the weather: these days I tend to study the weather forecast a bit more closely before deciding what to do, if anything. It is very satisfying to start out in indifferent weather and to finish the walk in brilliant sunshine and I've had my fair share of fortune in that respect.

On the other hand, I did learn the hard way that I needed a new cagoule. I had set out in reasonable weather to traverse the Thirlmere fells in the Lakes but the driving rain and wind came in and by the time I reached the aptly named Shivery Knott I was wet through to the skin. Luckily I had a complete change of clothes in the car.

But bad weather isn't always about rain. On a dry day the strong breeze in Mungrisdale turned into an out and out hoolie as I gained height. In consequence Souther Fell remains the only Wainwright summit where I have had to crawl to the top. To add insult to injury, the wind even blew my coffee out of the cup.

Obituary

Peggy Vint – widow of John Vint passed away on her birthday, 4 March 2023. Peggy had moved into a home in 2022. Attendees at her funeral were asked to wear 'a splash of red' as it was her favourite colour and she always wore it on special occasions. The family are supporting Childline in Peggy's memory and if you would like to make a donation please go to http://www.justgiving.com/Shivcronin?utm_id=124.



Q and A

Ian Ient – Footpath warden co-ordinator/Planning & Countryside Officer

Where is your favourite place to walk?

A tricky question to start with as I enjoy many different styles of walk. I remember a lovely cliff walk on Shetland a few years ago with great views and a glimpse of sea otters. I also remember a superb walk in Northumberland when we saw the ghostly shape of Dunstanburgh Castle emerge from the mist. Overall, I think the perfect walk should provide a variety of sights, terrain and memories. My favourite local walk therefore is one that delivers great variety. It commences in Henley, follows the Oxfordshire Way steeply uphill to the historic village of Fawley and then returns through woodland and along the Thames to Henley.

This walk encompasses: Chiltern hills, woodland, a pretty village, tremendous views and finally a sizeable dollop of riverside walking.

What is your favourite piece of walking kit?

The obvious answer is my boots. But, those aside, I'll say my penknife. My son bought me a wooden Swiss army knife a couple of years ago and I take it everywhere in my rucksack. It has a variety of tools and a myriad of uses. Apart from the blades, there is a corkscrew (always handy!) and a thing for getting stones out horses' hooves (or stones wedged in boots).



Do you prefer leading a walk, or being led?

A bit of both really. It's a lot of fun leading, particularly if you have found a great walk that you want to share with the group. However, it takes a bit of effort to decide on a walk, do the recce, organise lunch etc - so I'd not want to do it every week. Of course, one of the best things about the Ramblers is that you can go on a super walk for minimal effort with someone else leading!

Map Reading Skills Course *Pera Marrs*

Are you worried that your map reading skills might let you down just when you need them most?

Steve Gillions and I will be running a Map Reading and Leadership Course in the early summer for members of EBR.

This short course should help to improve your OS map reading and compass work and it will also cover basic leadership. Even if you don't currently lead walks, this course should make you confident to read a local map, and find your way in normal weather conditions. We do not propose to teach you how to walk across Dartmoor in a fog!



There will be 2 indoor sessions, in the evening (7.00 – 9.00 pm) and one all day practical session, dates and venue to be confirmed.

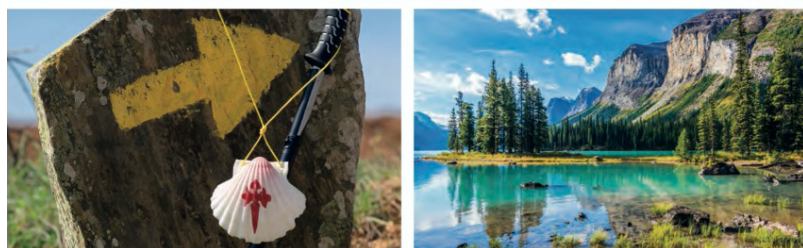
You will also need a local OS map and a compass, preferably De Silva Expedition 4-360. (Or a compass with swivelling, clear Perspex base plate)

If you are interested please contact me on 01628 629155 or longerwalks@eastberksramblers.org.

Berghaus Repairhaus

Did you know that Berghaus offer free repairs on all their kit, with very few exceptions? All you have to pay is for the cost of delivering the item back to them and no matter how worn or weathered your kit is, they undertake to repair it for free, if they possibly can, as many times as you need them to.

<https://www.berghaus.com/repairs.list>



We know all the ingredients for a perfect hike. Discover extraordinary walking routes with comfortable stays in outstanding locations. Enjoy full-day walks alongside like-minded people and leave all the planning and navigation to us. It's what we do best.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK
VISIT: [HFHOLIDAYS.CO.UK/WALKING-CLUB](https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/walking-club)
CALL: 020 8732 1260

Book and travel with confidence. Please go online for our most up-to-date offers and prices plus full details: [hfholidays.co.uk](https://www.hfholidays.co.uk)



**21 committed members turned up for
a cold and snowy walk from
Maidensgrove on 8 March**

Photo by Richard Whetton



Safety on Walks

One of the main requirements for a Ramblers walk is that it is safe and that everyone on the walk has confidence in those leading it. Whilst the walk leader takes the major role in designing and leading a walk the role of backmarker is an important one and should not be undertaken lightly. So many thanks to those who take it on, and a reminder to all of what is involved. And, as ever, a plea for others to step forward as both leaders and back markers.

Here are a few reminders for everyone who walks with our Group:

Being a Responsible Walker

- Before the walk, ensure that you are fit enough to complete the walk at the pace advertised in the walks programme.
- On the walk, be aware of walkers around you.
- If a gap opens in front of you try to catch up by increasing your pace slightly.
- If there is a gap behind you then make sure the walkers stay in sight, and if they drop back too far, stop and alert the leader.
- If the walk takes a sharp turning off the path, check the walkers behind are able to see where you have gone.
- If you need to leave the group, for a comfort stop, to readjust your clothing, boots, etc make sure the leader or the backmarker are aware and know that you have rejoined and caught up with the group.

By working as a group we can make our walks safe and more enjoyable for all of us.

Being Backmarker

- We are obliged by Ramblers Central Office to have a backmarker on every walk.
- The primary duty is to make sure that no one is left behind to get lost.
- The leader must give the backmarker a copy of the walk and roughly explain the route.
- Please do not volunteer to backmark if you need glasses to read the map but do not have them with you!
- The backmarker needs to be able to contact the leader, in case of an accident or the tail being "left behind". Contact should be made either by using a whistle (have you got one?), phone (there may be no phone signal) or a shouting runner.
- The leader should be aware if the backmarker is falling too far behind and call a catch up stop.
- The backmarker should encourage the group to stay together and try to prevent a long gap to form.
- Please don't volunteer to back mark just "because I will be at the back anyway".

It would be great if everyone took a turn at back marking during the year.

Campervanning *Eve Norton*

This is a huge subject but first I would say that it does not suit everyone. "Try before you buy" is a good idea and there are many companies who offer hire vans for short periods.

We started camping in the 1970`s with tents and caravans so a campervan was the next step in 2005. We enjoy the freedom to go anywhere we fancy and change our minds if the situation doesn't suit us. We have been to many countries in Europe and explored some off-the-beaten-track areas.

Our 2 campervans – we purchased our second campervan in 2013 - have been the same make. The Autosleeper Symbol is the smallest van in which you can comfortably stand up in. It is a 2-berth, with an on-board shower room

and flush toilet, it has a fridge, oven, gas hob, central heating, television and drinks cupboard plus many storage areas for food and other stuff. We have a roll-out awning and a bike rack on the back. The first van only had a 1.9 litre engine which was not suitable when going over mountain passes in France and Switzerland but our present van is 2.2 litres. Campervans are heavy - 3.5 tons - and so a bigger engine makes sense.

We have always taken our dog on our campervan trips to Europe but as Brexit has made it more difficult we have stayed in England. We have enjoyed visits to Cornwall, Dorset and Sussex but need the benefit of dry sunny weather to enjoy the holiday. Our little van is too cramped to stay indoors for too long and so we have also rented cottages for the last couple of years. My brother and his wife also have a campervan- a 40 year-old Hymer- and we meet up in Sussex and Kent for short breaks when the weather looks o.k. We also use the van to visit my daughter, now relocated to Hamble in Hampshire. There is a campsite nearby and we meet up with them for boat trips and barbecues. Roll on the Summer when we can have some more great trips into our lovely countryside.

Book Review *Malcolm Stone*

Walking Home by Simon Armitage

Travels with a troubadour on the Pennine Way

Simon Armitage is our current Poet Laureate who lives in a small village called Marsden, up above Huddersfield. In his childhood, Simon remembers each year in May, seeing groups of often bedraggled walkers appear in the evening, having walked the twenty seven miles over the bleak moors from Edale, the start of the Pennine Way. However, Simon decides to do the 268 mile walk the opposite way, from Kirk Yetholm just over the border in Scotland to Edale, passing through Marsden, hence the title of the book. In relation to the sub-title, Simon just had the money to get to Kirk Yetholm, over the border in Scotland, his starting point. Thereafter, he planned to have a poetry reading each night after completing the day's walk, to provide funds for necessities. On the walk itself, there is the varied cast of characters who decide to accompany Simon on sections of the Way, including Slug, Simon's friend from his University days. Then there are the communities who welcomed him each night at his poetry readings and his host/s for the night. There is also a twist at the end of the book. Well worth a read.

Distribution of Newsletter and Walks Programme

From 2023 the newsletter will be issued twice a year, in April and October and the walks programme will be issued three times a year, in April, August and December.

At the AGM in November 2022 a member asked why EBR spent so much money on printing and posting the newsletter and walks programme when it was sent electronically. The Treasurer replied that not all members accepted e-communications so some hard copy documents were still printed and posted out.

A review was subsequently carried out and just over 3% of membership have asked to receive printed copies. This was discussed at a committee meeting and it was agreed that the newsletter will continue to be printed for those members who have asked for it in hard copy. However, the walks programme will, in future, only be available online. If anyone does not have any online access then please contact the **Walks Programme Administrator** longerwalks@eastberksramblers.org who will arrange for you to be sent a printed copy.

The online walks programme provides flexibility for adding new walks and making changes to walks arranged etc.

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 **Friday 29th September 2023**.

Editors: Rosemary Davies Tel: 01344 422707 Email: committee1@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.