



MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No. 131 - December 2019

The EBR Committee wish all members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,
and we hope to see you on some of the walks in 2020.

The **Walks Programme** for **January-April 2020** is included with this newsletter
The EBR website www.eastberksramblers.org contains the latest information about the walks in the
programme. Check this before turning up at a walk, in case anything has changed.

New Members

A very warm welcome to our new Members:

Douglas Neal Madeleine Watters Mr & Mrs J R Simpson Angela Quinby
John MacDermott Linda Phillips Andy Rickford Georgeanne Lamont

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

Vacancy for Chairman

Phil Smith retired at the 2019 AGM on 8 November. The Group is looking for a successor. Details of the role of Chairman can be found at <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/support-and-development/volunteer-toolkits-alphabetically-sorted/volunteer-role-descriptions.aspx> in the Volunteer Zone on the Ramblers website.

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

Countryside Matters *writes Gordon Marrs*

Path Warden Activities

The path wardens did a grand job completing the Spring (Summer!) Survey in good time for my report to RBWM. They carried out over 200 hours of work on the survey and travelled over 300 miles in the process. I should like to register my thanks to everyone involved. Especial thanks to Norman and Dianne Iley, who, after many years of looking after Datchet and Windsor parishes for us, have decided to call it a day. I am pleased to report that their replacements have already been recruited: Arthur Holland has agreed to look after Datchet and Old Windsor, and Ian lent has volunteered to be the warden for Windsor. They are ideal replacements since they live in the respective parishes.

Planning Issues

I continue to monitor all planning applications on a weekly basis. The planning application 19/00972, for the change of use for Battlemead Common, was withdrawn, after there were many objections (including one from me).

Public Access

Battlemead Common – Steve Gillions and I have between us covered all of the Sub Groups formed to make recommendations for actions to the next plenary session of the Friends of Battlemead Common, in January . We are championing the cause of public access.

I took part in a site survey recently with the members of the White Brook group. We recommended doing some work to clear a channel in the middle of the stream, to see if this would improve the flow downstream. The experts from the Environmental Agency agreed to the suggestion of dredging a narrow channel, as an experiment, to then monitor flow and measure any adverse affect on the marginal flooded areas. These “wet lands” are deemed to be of ecological value.

From the Footpath Secretary *writes Steve Gillions*

Battlemead Common

Gordon and I continue to represent EBR on the Friends of Battlemead Common group and its various sub groups. There are still strongly held views as to whether the Causeway Path should be opened up. The next key point will be when we have the results of the over-wintering bird survey in early 2020, when the Royal Borough are expected to take a decision on the path. This may be the time when letters to your local councillor and MP might be very helpful. I'll let you know when all this happens.

EBR Fiftieth Anniversary

Yes, this will be in 2020! By way of celebration we think it would be great to produce a set of 50 walks of varying lengths and difficulty from all parts of our patch. I hope you agree.

Gordon, Phil, Liz and I will be coordinating the work but can't undertake all of it – and, in any event, it needs to involve contributions from the whole membership. So, we need to hear from every one of you.

- **What are your favourite walks (they don't need to be new, they can be from the green and blue books)?**
- **Are there any particular areas that you think should be included?**
- **And we will need people to help check out and write up the walks. If you just want to sit down with one of us and talk through your walk, that's fine too.**

So please get in touch with me by email footpaths@eastberksramblers.org or via the website page.

Millenium Walk

Whilst on the subject of anniversaries, 2020 will be the twentieth anniversary of the walk created by Margaret and others. There will be a celebratory walk from Pinkneys Green to the Thames Path, crossing Battlemead Common in May. It will be on Sunday, 24th May 2020. It will be included in the walks programme.

North Downs Way – October 2019 *writes Nigel Roper*

Our final stretch of the North Downs Way was on 9th October. Owing to coach company changes we were unable to book our transport for the normal first Wednesday in the month. Regrettably, a number of our regular walkers had other commitments and were unable to join us. We were down to 19 ramblers and were able to fit, cosily, into a smaller coach.

We picked up the NDW at Titsey Hill and, after an undulating walk for the first 4 miles, slowly descended to the village of Otford, some 10.5 miles from the start.

With blue skies, good visibility and a gentle following wind we enjoyed fine walking conditions with many opportunities to see distant hills.





Pheasants were out in number and scurried away as we disturbed them. From the ridge above Westerham Wood we were able to see the beaters at work and observe the odd gun being fired.

We were never far from the M26. It made us wonder about the times we drive motorways oblivious to the beautiful countryside either side of us.

Upon our return to Braywick we were greeted by Chris (sadly unable to join us on the walk due to recovering from shingles) with cake in hand. Chris thanked John, our driver for the past 10+ years, for looking after us and presented him with a Ramblers polo shirt and a donation collected from coach walk ramblers.

Chris and I will be passing on the mantle. We have enjoyed leading these walks but are planning to go on more travels, in our new campervan, during 2020. Thanks to all who have supported us over the past 2 ½ years and here's to adventures new with Richard and John.

NEW MONTHLY COACH WALK FOR 2020

Three Castles Path *write Richard Falconer and John Harden*

For the 2020 series of monthly coach walks we will be walking the [3 Castles Path](#) which is about 60 miles long and largely follows a route that King John is known to have travelled. We will be walking the path from April to September in stretches of approximately 10 miles each. The path is roughly a straight line from Windsor Castle to Winchester Castle via the ruins of Odiham castle. There are a few steep hills and stiles to negotiate. The route goes through parkland and forest, over heaths and downland beside quiet streams and through some picturesque villages.

The highest point on the path is about 520 feet above sea level, Windsor is about 80 feet above sea level.

Windsor Castle has been a Royal residence for about 900 years. The "long walk" from the castle to the copper horse was laid in 1682 and originally had a double row of elm trees, some of which survived until 1940! The planting was renewed in 1945 with a double row of Horse Chestnuts and London planes.

Odiham Castle was built between 1207 and 1214 and cost the enormous sum of £1,100 to build. The modern equivalent is £36.0m based on average incomes. It had an unusual octagonal design and flint walls 10 feet thick. Henry III (King John's son) was born in the castle on 1st October 1207 and was crowned in 1216 and reigned for 56 years. During his reign he spent one Christmas here.

Anyone who completes the walk can have a "Seal of Arrival" at the Great Hall of Winchester Castle. A mile further along the path we will go to St Cross to claim "wayfarers dole". This was originally a horn of ale and some bread. You can still knock on the door and presumably the modern equivalent is now sold.

2019 Group Autumn Break in Malvern *writes Eve Norton*

We arrived in Great Malvern on a sunny afternoon and were unexpectedly entertained in the nearby park by a Youth Jazz Orchestra.

Next day was overcast and we had a damp ascent to the Hills behind the Abbey hotel. We climbed to the Beacon, the highest point in Worcestershire at 1395 feet. The views to the west were good and we followed the ridge to the Geopark Visitor Centre. We then descended to the foot of the hill and walked to the beginning of the path to British Camp, a Neolithic hill fort. A kiosk selling delicious lemon-drizzle cake did a good trade. The group 5 walkers ascended the hill in the rain while we circled back to Malvern on a lower path.

The second day was much brighter and we had an easier walk along the Geopark trail. We passed pretty cottages, sheep, churches and inspected an ancient ale house being used by a film company. The cast were being "made-up" to look rather gruesome for a horror video about "Forgiveness", filmed in the church. We followed the trail through many apple orchards and sampled some windfalls. The walk ended in historic Ledbury from where we caught the train back to Great Malvern.

Our final day was in glorious sunshine which gave us opportunities to appreciate the fine views from the several hills

which both groups climbed. Group 3 went up to British Camp and along to Hollybush. Group 5 ascended Obelisk hill, Whiteleaves Hill and Chase End hill via the Eastnor Castle estate. The views of the countryside and farmland were lovely and worth the effort. After crossing a ford we all met up in an olde world country pub, and the coach then took us back to Malvern.



The Abbey Hotel staff were very nice and the meals were excellent with a wide choice on the menus.

Very many thanks to Ramblers holidays, our lovely leaders, Claire and Peter and also to David Bailey for choosing the venue and organising it.

East Berks Ramblers Spring Break 2020
arriving Monday, 20 April, departing Friday, 24 April 2020
HF House “[Craflwyn Hall](#)” at Beddgelert in North Wales

As at the end of November 2019 the holiday is fully booked but if you would like to be put on the waiting list (there are often cancellations) please contact Arthur Holland at committee2@eastberksramblers.org.

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.

EBR Autumn Holiday 2020
Friday 11 – Friday 18 September 2020 (7 Nights)
HF [Nether Grange](#), Alnmouth,
Northumberland *writes Gail Cullen*

31 people are booked onto the Autumn Holiday 2020 at the HF House in Alnmouth. This is a mixture of people from East Berkshire and South East Berkshire Ramblers. Final payment for the holiday will be due in July 2020. I will advise all participants when I receive the corrected final invoice from HF and issue a reminder nearer the time.



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ramblersholidays.co.uk
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Walking holiday partner

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ramblers at the heart of walking

Ramblers Walking Holidays

Anyone wishing for more information or would like to join us for a shorter period of time (3 nights starting on Friday, 11 September or 4 nights starting on Monday, 14 September) or to be added to a waiting list please get in touch. autumnbreak@eastberksramblers.org

Saturday Coach Walks 2020

A big thank you to **Eve Norton** who has volunteered to organise two Saturday coach trips next year and to **Shelagh Whitehouse** who will assist Eve with collecting the money etc. The proposed trips are as follows:

Saturday, 13 June

Penshurst Place and Hever Castle with a 7 mile walk from Cowden Station, part of the Tudor Way and seen on the 'Walking through History' television programme. Anyone not wishing to do the walk can visit the historic houses and gardens and the coach will pick everyone up from either Hever or Penshurst for the drive home.

Saturday, 15 August

Arundel to Littlehampton with an 8 mile walk along the Arun and then the coast via Climping and Atherington. Non-walkers can spend the day at Littlehampton.

Contact Eve on 01628 622279 or evemail@nortonrl.plus.com to reserve your place on the coach. Shelagh's contact details are net@Shelaghwhitehouse.co.uk or 01753 516502. The price will be announced as soon as coach bookings have been confirmed. All cheques and money will be collected on the coach.

First Aid Courses

First Aid for Ramblers courses cover the basics and the scenarios that are most likely to arise on a group walk.

For more information please contact the Ramblers delivery team via 020 3961 3180 or <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/support-and-development/first-aid/first-aid-training.aspx>.

This website will give you more information on upcoming dates and locations for courses.

Tick Update

Public Health England (PHE) has confirmed cases of tick-borne encephalitis virus in ticks from two parts of England - Thetford Forest and an area on the Hampshire-Dorset border. PHE says the risk to people is still "very low" and is monitoring the situation.

What should I do?

- To reduce the risk of being bitten, cover your skin, tuck your trousers into your socks, use insect repellent and stick to paths
- If you are bitten, remove the tick with fine-tipped tweezers or a tick-removal tool.
- Clean the bite with antiseptic or soap and water
- Go to your GP if you think you may have been bitten by a tick in the past month and develop flu-like symptoms or a circular red rash



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Ticks feed on the blood of animals and people. They cannot jump or fly but live in vegetation and wait for a passing animal or human to climb on to.

Obituaries

Doreen Wright

Doreen Wright sadly passed away on Thursday 3rd October after a long illness. Before her illness Doreen and her husband, Brian, were regular members of EBR and enjoyed taking part in the group holidays and the EBR golf days.

Helen Woodason

Helen Woodason, a long-term member of EBR, sadly passed away on Sunday 15th September after a lengthy illness. Although not so active with the group of late, Helen had most recently been seen on one of our Saturday coach walks. Hitherto, although very much involved with Windsor group, she was regularly seen on many EBR walks, and attended many of our group holidays.

David Bounds

David Bounds' funeral took place at Easthampstead Park Crematorium, Wokingham on 11th November. Following on from the footpath working parties organised by the late Peter Nevell between 1972 and 1988, for more recent members David's presence would have been felt by the Group as the author of some of the most successful guidebooks ever produced in this part of the Country certainly - the 'Rambling for Pleasure' series, with sales reaching well over a hundred thousand.

In Memory of David Bounds 1932 - 2019 *written by Dave Ramm*

It might be difficult to believe it now, but when the East Berkshire Ramblers was formed in the early 1970s many of the paths in the local countryside simply did not exist on the ground. Sure, they had been put on the map in the 1950s but many were overgrown and could not be used - even if you could find them. In fact Berkshire CC considered that they should be extinguished as they were no longer needed for public use!

To start with members did not walk, they worked - to clear and open the paths. That's when I first met David. He used to come on his bike so after a hard day's cutting and clearing, building stiles or a bridge, I would offer him and his bike a lift home.

It then became obvious that everyone should be invited to try these new paths so the Chairman Peter Nevell arranged for the Maidenhead Advertiser to publish the first of the circular walks and after they had accumulated he put 12 of them together and the first 'Rambling for Pleasure' guidebook appeared in 1975, price 30p.

I took over the maps from Peter Walker and, when Peter died in 1988, David, the text. That was to continue up until 2015 and included three new areas: Kennet Valley, the Chilterns and going into Hampshire with the Three Castles Path plus all the multiple revisions of the different titles - with the most recent being 'Along the Thames' now in its seventh edition.

David was a wordsmith. His clear directions were constantly praised by those we would meet and who could resist those lovely, tempting introductions that he was able to provide at the start of every ramble. And for those arriving after 60 miles at Winchester Cathedral - how's this for a finale:

This masterpiece of medieval masonry was moulded together in various architectural styles during the 450 years from 1079. King Henry III was baptised here, Richard the Lion Heart was crowned here, Queen Mary I was crowned here, Jane Austen and Izaak Walton were buried here. Truly a treasure house of English history.



Footpath worker, author, historian - oh yes, and for many years Footpath Secretary for the Loddon Valley Group.

PS: A footnote from Kate Ashbrook, Chair, Ramblers GB and general secretary of the Open Spaces Society

David was a really dedicated member of the Ramblers and did so much for us, he put his heart and soul into it. His lovely books are just one memorial to him. I know he carried out most of the roles in the Loddon Group, and could be depended on for his commitment to the cause. We could do with many more people like David!

East Berks Ramblers Golf Society *writes Meg Knight*

We had 2 great days of golf this year, Hennerton in April and Richings Park in September, both in good weather and enjoyed by 16 of us.

Next year is doubtful for me due to ill health. I may be able to organise something nearer the summer, if all goes well, or I should be glad to help if anyone would like to take it on.

If you are interested in organising golf days in 2020 please don't hesitate to contact any member of the committee.

Please call me on 07811 149789 or email me at golf@eastberksramblers.org.

East Berkshire Group Annual General Meeting

The 49th Annual General Meeting of the Group was held at Claires Court School on Friday, 8th November 2019. This year 62 members attended and 5 members sent their apologies. The Committee is very grateful to all who attended and those who sent their apologies.

The following provides a summary of the proceedings.

- The minutes of the 2019 AGM were approved.
- Annual reports were presented by the Chairman, the Treasurer and the Footpath Secretary.

The Chairman reported on the walks programme over the last year. Some 240 walks had been led with an average of 16 walkers on each walk. The situation remained, however, that, although about 60 different people/couples had led walks, there was a lack of leaders especially for the Wednesday short walks. The local footpath network was in a good state thanks to the Rights of Way team at the Royal Borough but mostly thanks to the work of EBR's path wardens. He advised the meeting that he would be standing down as Chairman at the end of the meeting and invited members to consider putting themselves forward to take on the role.

The Treasurer took the meeting through the 2018/9 accounts. EBR's main income (that from the principal charitable and official work of EBR) was relatively low as few books and maps had been sold in the year. EBR continued to receive a grant of £1,000 pa from RBWM for the footpath work carried out by path wardens. There had been little expenditure on the local footpath network although £2,055 had been paid to assist with projects in the general Berkshire Area. This led to a deficit of £1,770 on Main Activities. A small deficit had been made on self-funded activities (coach walks/holidays). Funds held at the bank (as cash and on deposit earning 1%) remained healthy. The Committee had agreed during the year that £10,000 could be used from the Endowment Fund held by Ramblers (from funds originally generated many years ago from the sale of EBR's publications) to support the national "Don't Lose your Way" project.

The Footpath (FP) Secretary thanked volunteer and footpath wardens for their work maintaining the footpath network. Key points from his report were:

Battlemead Common was an area of land purchased for public access by RBWM. A "Friends of Battlemead Common" had been formed of interested parties including EBR. Not all parties agreed on how the land should be used with conflict between access and conservation. The key objective for EBR remained a footpath across the East Field to complete the Millennium Walk.

A working party of the Local Access Forum was looking at how to improve access to the footpath network for disabled people. Two pilot surveys on Battlemead and the Green Way were being carried out to see how things might be improved for less able people.

The Environment Agency had given the go-ahead for a new flood relief channel between Datchet and Chertsey so, subject to funding, some activity should be expected in the next year. This provided great potential for adding to the rights of way network.

Members' help was requested with three specific matters:

Battlemead Common: there might be times when letters to the press, council and local MP might help resolve issues. If so, this would be publicised to members through the newsletter/email or on walks. Strength in numbers through a write-in could prove useful.

EBR's 50th anniversary in 2020: the Committee had decided to publish a set of 50 local walks of varying length and

difficulty. While some walks would be taken from the existing RfP books, some new routes would be needed. Members were invited to volunteer to help with this process.

20th anniversary of the Millennium Walk in 2020: a celebratory walk would be held on Sunday, 24th May (changed from 17th May as advised at the AGM) from Pinkneys Green to the Thames Path crossing Battlemead Common where EBR and others wanted there to be a path. A request was made for as many members as possible to join the walk.

Mr Gillions finished by saying that 2020 would be probably his last as Footpath Secretary and he would be very happy to talk to any member who might consider the job and possibly shadow him during the coming year.

- Malcolm Stone was formally elected by members as Membership Secretary having been co-opted in March 2019 on the retirement of Neil Adamson from this role. Phil Smith retired as Chairman and did not seek re-election. No nominations were received for the position of Chairman which remains vacant. Your Committee for 2019/20 is, therefore, as follows:

Chairman	Position vacant
Vice Chairman, Planning/Countryside Officer, and Footpath Warden Co-ordinator	Gordon Marrs
Group Treasurer	Alan Harding
Group Secretary	Liz Richardson
Membership Secretary/Recruitment Contact	Malcolm Stone
Footpath Secretary	Steve Gillions
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

- Any Committee member was authorised to act as group representative at the Berkshire Area committee meetings.
- David Moore was re-appointed Independent Examiner to the group's accounts.
- Presentations for past service to EBR were made as follows: David Bailey (Autumn Spring breaks), Neil Adamson (long service on the Committee latterly as Membership Secretary), Nigel & Chris Roper (leading the long distance coach walks), John Sainsbury & Juliet Witcher (leading the Saturday coach walks) and Andrew Jeffery for his work as Working Party organiser.

The full minutes of the 2019 AGM can be viewed on the EBR website in the Members Section under EBR Group Documents.

Situations Vacant - Committee

Chairman - mentioned earlier.

Footpath Secretary – to shadow Steve Gillions who is current Footpath Secretary. Steve announced at the 2019 AGM on 8 November that he will probably step down from the role at the 2020 AGM.

Situations Vacant - Non-Committee positions

Working Party Organiser – to replace Andrew Jeffery who stepped down at the 2019 AGM on 8 November.

Golf Society – to take over from Meg Knight who has organised golf events for EBR members for a number of years. Dates and venues to be decided by the organiser. Meg will be very pleased to assist anyone who wishes to take on this job.

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

Cheques *writes Alan Harding*

I know that cheques are declining in popularity and I have been asked whether BACS payments could be used instead. I regret to advise **no** BACS payments, only cash or cheques. The reason is simply because trying to reconcile the bank account with a BACS payment would be extremely complex and difficult to identify for the event organisers and the treasurer.

New Year Lunch – 19th January 2020 – Winter Hill Golf Club

writes Alma Richardson

This event is now fully booked but there may be cancellations nearer the time, so if you would like to join us then please contact Alma on 07817 607261 who can let you know the current status.

As last year the dining room will be open seating. Name place cards will be set out on a table at the entrance to the dining area and so should be picked up and taken with you to your seat. This then enables the waiting staff to see at a glance your menu choice (indicated on the back of your name card).

Changing rooms will be available to wash and brush up after the morning walk. Drinks can be purchased from the bar beforehand but please be aware that Golf Club members will be also be using the bar area.

We look forward to a most enjoyable New Year walk and lunch.

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 our stand at local Shows or from the **Group Secretary**.

Send your details to groupsecretary@eastberksramblers.org.

Please add £1.00 per copy for guidebooks and 50p 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 1 and 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 29th March 2020**.

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