



EAST BERKS RAMBLERS

Berkshire Area

Group website: www.eastberksramblers.org
Ramblers website: www.ramblers.org.uk

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No. 144 - October 2024

We have prepared a **Walks Programme** for **November-December 2024**. Details of all the EBR walks can be found on the **Walks page of the EBR website**. You can also download the Walks programme for printing.

New Members

A very warm welcome to our new Members:

Norman Graham Caroline & Lawrence Brown Tracy Reynolds
David & Lynne Field Matthew Sharp Andrew & Nancy Nash
Madelene Larkin June & Alistair Cadden Elaine & Richard Roberts
Jeffrey & Barbara Simpson Phil Massey Shrutii Aythora Lita Huckle
Gavin Mathieson Janet Pullen GT Massey Su Massey

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

The position of Chair remains vacant so we are again missing our regular **Chairman's Chat** in this issue! Here instead are some thoughts by the retiring Vice-Chair.

30 years of EBR - Thoughts on retirement from the Committee *Pera Marrs*

At this year's AGM in November, I shall retire from the EBR committee and will no longer be involved in the day-to-day running of our Group. In the 30 years since Gordon and I joined, EBR has given us so much pleasure, so many good friends and many, many glorious walks. Here are some memories to share with you.

Where to start? How about holidays? We have been on 25 spring holidays at 14 different HF houses. I am amazed that it is so many. The first was in 1996, Newton Grange, Tissington in Derbyshire, organised by the Shillabeer's and Welch's. We walked across snow covered fields to Thorpe Cloud, followed by a Sunday walk where the fog was so thick that we walked 3 miles along the Tissington Trail, then turned round and walked back. Not all weekends were as memorable!

Two years later, Gerald Barnett took over holidays, and for another 13 years added new hotel venues for autumn holidays, still with the traditional quizzes, indoor games and country dancing to aid digestion in the evenings. Sheila worked hard to find suitable hotels and devised the fiendish picture quizzes. Crudwell was special. Fantastic hotel but no footpaths, just walls of 6-foot-high nettles. I could not even find the path out of the churchyard. Our 4-mile stroll turned into a 6-mile slog, including hoisting the magnificent John Vint over a locked 5 bar gate.

We joined three holidays in Europe and the one we enjoyed most was in Slovenia. Amazing mountains, alpine flowers and such a welcoming, family run hotel, with the cheapest wine bill ever.

From 2008 – 2014, I joined Gerry and Roy leading the HF EBR holiday walks. We explored so many delightful areas and shared our passion for walking, admiring views, wildflowers, birds and so much more.



leg of the Macmillan Way in a snowstorm.

In 2007 Gordon and I took over from Mac Gollifer, leading the coach walks and set off on the Diamond Way. An excellent starter which I still think is a great trail, even if all the distances were wrong so the total walk came out at 70 miles! We followed that with (in no particular order) Greensands Way, Macmillan Way, Wayfarer's Way, Cotswold Way, Palladian Way, Thames Path, Clarendon Way and Avon Valley Path. The paths were generally well signed so, with a little concentration, we did not lose our way often. We had great teamwork with Gordon reading the instructions and me "looking at the pictures" (the map), and the ever-efficient John driving the bus. After ten years, we finished in Bath in June 2017 before handing over the baton. We enjoyed nearly every one of those long miles and each walk had its own atmosphere and memories, like finishing the first

One of the great glories of EBR is its ability to provide a superb walk programme. When I started there was a 4 – 6 mile walk every week on Wednesday and Sunday, then some of our older walkers started to organise separate slower walks. After negotiations, Alex Goodlet rejoined the fold and both a short and long walk was offered, where possible. Later when JV could not manage the short walks, I introduced the Strollathon, and our offer was nearly complete. Recently an extra 10-mile Wednesday walk in the summer months has been added.

I organised the walk programme from 2012, taking over from Eve, until last year. Another 10-year job. The walk leaders made the job workable with their generous offers of walks and flexibility, as I pulled the programme together. The late great David Bailey would always come up with a last-minute fill in, or swap round, on top of already offering 5 or 6 walks. Thanks to Linda Francis for taking over and flourishing. Please keep responding to Linda, as without your walks we are nothing.

EBR is not just a walking group we have social events too, though some of these have faded away. We used to celebrate around Christmas 3 times. First there was the "Christmas Party" at a local village hall. 2 or 3 members cooked a main course while the rest of us brought puddings and salads. Quizzes were stuck on the wall and after eating, the tables were pushed back and Gerald "called" country dancing, in his own inimitable way. Di Adamson and I catered for a few years, following on from Cynthia and Margaret's amazing Jerk chicken. (It stuck to the pan like...), then passed the job on to Arthur H. It seems rather dated now, but well run it was good fun and true to the Ramblers ethos of inclusivity.

Next tradition is the pre-Christmas walk and lunch, held on the last Wednesday before Christmas Day. This is still organised on the longer walk and recently we have been getting a great meal at the Dashwood Roadhouse, but maybe it is time for a new venue. Another job I am glad to pass on.

The 3rd celebration is the "New Year Lunch" normally held on the middle Sunday in January, when everyone is back home and a bit low. Initially we used the Bull in Bisham, tight seating, expensive wine and a sweet trolley to die for before moving on to a couple of years at Norden Farm, (difficult to find a local walk), then the Fifield Arms and, finally, Winter Hill Golf Club, where it stuck. Being great value and service. Alma took over for a few years, then the club was sold and no longer available. Dawn and Julie tried the Cricketers, Littlewick Green this year.

Add to all that, I have run 3 map reading courses (with Gerry and Steve Gillions); 2 garden parties to thank Path Wardens; catered for numerous AGMs, often at Claires Court, where I worked for 17 years. Finally, most recently I have served as Vice Chairman.

It has been a busy 30 years.

I hope this trawl through my times of involvement stir up memories good and bad of my past 30 years with EBR. Just in case you think this is my obituary, think on. Gordon and I are still walking, but mainly with the shorter walkers, some of whom we are leading astray to the pub for lunch.

Planning and Countryside *Ian lent*

As you may have seen in the Advertiser, several major applications are moving slowly through the planning process. These include plans for; 200 houses in Cookham; 1200 homes on Maidenhead Golf Course; and 225 homes at Woodlands Park (Lillibrooke).

The outline plans for Lillibrooke have now been approved and we await the submission of more detailed plans.

The council claim that there is nothing they can do to stop the development at Maidenhead Golf Course. Reportedly they need to receive £105million from Cala Homes to balance their budget - after they have paid the golf club £15.9m million to move off the land early.

Worryingly, there is a growing trend for developers to lodge appeals to central government if the planning application is rejected by the council. Such appeals have been lodged for major developments at Holyport Film Studios, the Marlow Film Studios and for a distribution centre at Littlewick Green. The new government seems to have invited such appeals should housing plans be rejected, so we expect to see more.

We continue to monitor planning applications and object/comment if they adversely impact the path network.

Path Wardens *Ian lent*

The Spring survey was successfully completed in May and we are expecting to commence the Autumn survey in the next few weeks.

Three of our longest standing path wardens have recently stepped down. David and Barbara Layzell have retired after more than 20 years service as Path Wardens for Cookham East. Gordon Marrs has also retired as Path Warden for Bray West after many years of service including time spent as the Path Warden Co-ordinator. Our thanks go to each of them for their time and effort spent protecting our path network.

Two new path wardens have joined the team. Colin Robinson has kindly agreed to take over Cookham East and Linda Hing has taken on Bray West.

We are always on the lookout for new Path Wardens. The valuable work done by our dedicated path warden team generates the main source of income for EBR. More importantly, it is instrumental in ensuring that our path network remains in good shape for everyone to enjoy. The role requires a few hours work twice a year to complete path surveys plus whatever time you'd like to donate to monitor part of the path network.

Please speak to Ian or any of the other Path Wardens if you would like to find out more.

Booking a trip with Ramble Worldwide?

The world is just a step away.

Where will you ramble next?

Whether you enjoy classic trails or a more relaxed tempo, our new Collections make it easier than ever to choose from a range of fantastic walking holidays perfectly suited to your tastes and preferences.

classic discover adagio self-guided

Four Collections. Made by us, created for you.

RAMBLERS

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.

ABTA

Which?
Recommended Provider
WALKING TOURS

01707 537960
rambleworldwide.co.uk/TWP

ramble
worldwide
The world is more beautiful on foot.

EBR are affiliated to the **Walking Partnership**. If you book a holiday with Ramble Worldwide 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.

The Footpath Secretary's Job *Graham Sexton*

One of the main tasks of the footpath secretary is to investigate proposed diversions of public rights-of-way (PROWs). RBWM strongly encourages the landowner to contact me in advance of making a formal application for the diversion, so that the reasons can be discussed and possibly changes made. This can often reduce the need for expensive legal processes later.

There are a variety of circumstances that can give rise to applications to divert. Sometimes a new development will result in obvious health and safety issues, or security concerns, with the route of an existing PROW. Or the footprint of a new building may simply cover the line of the path. As a group, we monitor planning applications and will object if we feel that they adversely PROWs. But in major decisions this is unlikely to be uppermost in the minds of the planning authority, so some diversions become inevitable, and it is then my job to ensure that the diverted route is the best that can be obtained. As an example, Summerlease already have planning permission to extend their gravel workings north of Maidenhead and the current line of Maidenhead FP19 will eventually disappear beneath a gravel pit. They have made a proposal about how to divert the path and, in this case, it seems reasonable.

Another common reason for applying for diversions is privacy concerns. This is altogether a trickier area. I wouldn't like a footpath running through my back garden but, if there were a footpath there, I wouldn't have bought the property in the first place. In other words, there is always a counterargument that the footpath (and we are usually talking footpaths rather than other PROWs in these cases) was there before the current occupant of the property. However recent guidance to local authorities has encouraged them to approve diversions which take PROWs away from enclosed spaces like gardens or farmyards (with the latter there can also be health and safety issues). This guidance does not supersede the existing tests that the diversion should be "substantially as convenient" (i.e. not much farther to walk) and "preserve amenity value" (i.e. be as nice to walk), it just operates alongside them. Some inexperienced walkers lack the confidence to use paths that go through apparently private areas, so a well-constructed, well-signposted diversion around the periphery of the space can be a sensible compromise, hence we try to treat these cases on their merits. I'm currently looking into an example of this type of proposed diversion in Cookham.

I had hoped by now to have some news for you about Temple footbridge. There was a brief moment of hope when the Environment Agency scheduled some detailed survey work for July, but this was subsequently postponed to September. It might therefore have taken place in the last few weeks, but I haven't heard anything about the outcome.

Walks Programme *Linda Francis*

First of all, thank you to everyone who has led walks and contributed to our full and varied programme - without you it would not happen.

We have again enjoyed a variety of walks, including our favourite haunts in the Chilterns and by the river, as well as around Waltham and Pinkneys Green. Martin Cox led a fabulous walk from the Elizabeth Line in July. We started from Bond Street and walked to Paddington, via several parks and monuments, and then took the train to Canary Wharf where we had our picnic lunches in the roof garden. After this we walked to Greenwich, through dockland which was fascinating, and returned via the DLR.



I am delighted that, for the first time on my watch, we have at least one walk planned on every Wednesday and Sunday in September and October, as well as fortnightly Strollathons - thanks to the dedication of our leaders.

We always need more people to lead walks. We have a wonderful band of leaders, but we have lost a few due to age and health. Please consider having a go - it's satisfying to see people enjoying your walk and fun to plan

and recce the walks beforehand. Since May, new leaders are required to complete training online, this is not difficult and will make you feel more confident. Feel free to talk to me, Malcolm Stone or any of the other leaders about how to go about becoming a leader.

Can I remind you to check online before you set out to join a walk? Especially as we come into winter, walks may have to be cancelled due to poor weather. I will ring the few people who do not have access to the internet if there are any changes.

I'm looking forward to autumn colours and crisp, frosty winter walks - just hope we don't get so much rain and mud this year!

Brenda Parker Way Coach Walks May, June and July 2024

Julie Maidment/Dawn Davies

Back in May, we continued along the Brenda Parker Way on the North Hampshire Downs, through the Highclere Estate, glimpsing views of this very magnificent and famous house. Joining the Wayfarer's Walk for a short way (which runs from Emsworth to Inkpen Beacon) we paused to look north over the four counties of Wiltshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Bucks. We passed Pilot Hill, Hampshire's highest point (some of us nearly reached the top of this hill as Julie had forgotten to turn off the path!!), getting fabulous views of the surrounding countryside until reaching Sidley Bottom, on the outskirts of Esseborne Manor.



Our next leg in June crossed chalk downland through woodland and farmland, the village of Binley and followed a footpath known as 'Long Hedge Drove'. This led to a quiet road alongside the Bourne Rivulet, a lovely clear chalk stream, which feeds a large commercial watercress bed further downstream, and eventually to St Mary Bourne, a quaint village where we stopped for our banana break. Many of us treated ourselves to delicious cakes and ice creams!! Immediately after our break, we had to negotiate a short, sharp hill (not too bad) into woodland, briefly following the Portway Roman Road that runs from Silchester to Old Sarum. We followed the Test Way for a while, walking through Rag Copse, down Devil's Ditch and finally reaching Wildhern, our pick-up point.

The final leg in July saw us starting slightly off the Brenda Parker Way at Hurstbourne Tarrant in order to stretch the mileage to approximately 10 miles. We gave our walkers a choice of negotiating the steep ascent out of the village or being dropped off at the top of the hill and joining us after our 'warm up climb'; both groups had good views from the top, but some were more sweaty than others!! We walked through Wildhern again (where we ended Leg 7), continued along the Hungerford Lane Roman Road, skirting the village of Hatherden and eventually arriving at the pretty village of Penton Mewsey. We briefly walked along the Harrow or Tin Way which stretches from Kent to Cornwall and is believed to date back to Neolithic times making it probably the oldest road in England. The Harrow Way became primarily a trading route and pilgrims used it to get to Canterbury to visit the remains of Thomas Becket.



Nearing Andover, we walked through the Anton Lake Nature Reserve which provides habitats

Coach walkers on arrival in Andover

for a wide range of water birds, as well as water voles and many species of butterflies. After just over 10.5 miles, we reached Andover, a market town dating back to Saxon times, founded on milling and sheep farming. Today's military connections began with the arrival of the RAF during the First World War at the airfield and in the Second World War, it saw action in the Battle of Britain. Some of the Hawker Siddeley Harrier vertical take-off jet trials also took place here.

The Brenda Parker Way was officially opened in April 2011 as a memorial to the life of Brenda Parker who helped set up the North East Hants Group and dedicated her spare time to the Ramblers. In 2008 she was nominated for Lifetime Honorary Membership of the Ramblers' Association in recognition of her work for the Ramblers and Hampshire's rights of way network, one of the many projects she worked on.

We are now looking at trails for next year's coach walks and a decision will be made by February 2025 when we will be in touch again. I hope you will join us.

The Future of Coach Walks

Many thanks to all those who completed the recent Coach Walk survey; it gave very interesting and positive reading.

As a reminder, the reason we were asked to conduct the survey was to establish the level of support for the coach walks and whether they would be financially sustainable in the future. The Brenda Parker Trail (our last coach walk) was successful but at £20pp, overall we unfortunately didn't break even.

The results of the survey are now known and we are greatly encouraged by the number and the positive nature of the responses. The following were of particular note:

- Of the 67 people who replied, 43 were interested in attending future coach walks and 24 were not.
- Of these 43 positive responses, only 2 were not prepared to pay £25 (and one of these said they would be prepared to pay £25 if they could come along).
- All 24 people who were not interested in participating gave genuine reasons for not doing so, such as work, Wednesdays not being a good day, length of walk and health reasons. No one appeared to be opposed to the idea of coach walks and several were very supportive.
- Several people wondered if shorter, 4-5 mile walks could be offered alongside the longer 10 milers. We will take this into consideration and make every effort to include these whenever it is viable to do so.

As a result of the encouraging survey, the Committee has given us the green light for coach walks to continue into 2025, initially for April to June. After this time, the situation will be reviewed to see whether they are viable.

With this in mind, Dawn, Lesley, Peter K and Julie are keen to take this on as a group. The walks will continue to take place on the first Wednesday of the month initially from April to June, with collection from the **Shire Horse** pub on the A4 at 9am. For those who are interested, please, please save **2nd April, 1st May and 4th June 2025** in your busy diaries!

We have a couple of long distance trails in mind which we would like to research before confirming. Look out for further information in February 2025

EBR Endowment Fund *Liz Richardson*

As you will have seen from the front page of the latest SE Walker, the monies held in the **EBR Endowment Fund** are now being used to fund, or partially fund, projects for FP improvements in a number of locations. One has already been completed – the installation of an accessible boardwalk over a particularly boggy stretch of path in Elkstone, Gloucestershire. This work means the path is now accessible in Winter as well as Summer and has had the unexpected effect of galvanising action from others – one landowner has agreed to permissive paths to allow for circular walks and Cotswold Warden volunteers have agreed to help with vegetation clearance, waymark installation and a replacement ditch crossing to improve the path even further. Two other projects for footpath improvement work at an RSPB site in Radipole and at Biggleswade in Bedfordshire should be underway shortly with completion expected by mid-November. The project at Dartmoor has encountered a small problem as it has been identified that the installation of a gate unexpectedly requires planning permission. This is expected to be a formality but has delayed progress temporarily.

We are very pleased with this collaboration with Ramblers CO and how things have progressed quickly.

In mid-September Ramblers emailed members advising the opening of the next period for groups to apply for funding through the Ramblers' Path Accessibility Fund for projects in their locality. The EBR Endowment Fund may help with funding further projects resulting from this new round of applications.



Ramblers funded boardwalk improvement

Louisa Rankin from Gloucestershire County Council sent the report and photos:

Before: A marshy bog completely obstructed the path in the winter and even in the summer you sometimes ended up with wet feet. There was no way round the area and it was dangerous to try and find alternative routes. Although it looks quite tame the farmer had lost a cow in there in the past!

After: Thanks to the East Berkshire Ramblers Funding we have been able to install an accessible boardwalk making the path safe, accessible, and pleasant to use. We have had very positive feedback including the fact that people can now actually pause and enjoy the

dragonflies rather than concentrate on every step they take.

The boardwalk has greatly increased the usability of the path and the local landowners have been very receptive for further improvements with one landowner permitting permissive paths to allow circular walks. The Cotswold Warden volunteers have also agreed to help with vegetation clearance, waymark installation and a replacement ditch crossing, so this installation has set the ball rolling for more improvements along the route.

Thank you for helping make a positive change, making a difficult to use path accessible.



EBR Break – Dolgellau – June 2024

32 people joined the EBR break at Dolserau Hall in Snowdonia for four nights at the beginning of June. En route to the HF House quite a few took the opportunity to stop off at Powis Castle, a National Trust property, to look around the medieval castle and the beautiful gardens and dramatic terraces - it was fun meeting up with others as we walked around and a good start to the holiday.

The weather was reasonably kind. The first day was wet and damp but after that we were lucky to have clear weather to enjoy the beautiful panoramas of the Snowdonia range. We had three excellent HF leaders who mixed and matched with leading the walks up mountains, round lakes, through deer parks all of which provided us with stunning views. Some members in the group opted to do their own thing and it was good to share news of their visits to places such as Portmeirion, the Welsh village created by architect Clough Williams-Ellis featuring Italianate buildings and gardens, and which provided the backdrop for *The Prisoner*, the Dyfi Osprey chicks at the Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve, etc.



One group of walkers reached the top of Cader Idris.

The atmosphere in the evening was always very sociable with lots of chatter on what had happened during the day and plans for what was to come. The post-dinner entertainment included the usual HF quiz and a game of skittles.

We had a very happy and successful trip and we all left with smiles on our faces after a fun time together. In September HF announced that Dolserau Hall was going up for sale at the end of this year and so we visited just in time !

EBR Break – Mid-2026 *Rosemary Davies*

Note for your diary for the year after next!! I have registered interest with HF for an EBR Group holiday at Thorns Hall, Grade II-listed manor house in Sedbergh in the Yorkshire Dales for beginning June **2026**. I do not expect to receive any information from HF until March 2025 but wanted you to know what we are planning! Once we have more information we will be in contact with details for guided/self-guided holiday.

East Berkshire Group AGM - Friday, 15th November 2024

NB: change of venue

The AGM will be held on Friday, 15th November 2024 at **7.30pm at the Holyport War Memorial Hall, Moneyrow Green, Holyport, Maidenhead SL6 2NA**. The meeting will last for approximately one hour and will be followed by refreshments. In addition to reports from the Chair, Footpath Secretary and the Treasurer, there will be the election[/re-election of Officers of the Group. A formal Agenda for the meeting will be posted on the website the week before the meeting.

Pera Marrs, Vice Chair and **Rosemary Davies**, Joint Newsletter Editor will not be offering themselves for re-election and will stand down from the Committee at the conclusion of the AGM.

Richard Whetton was co-opted to the Committee in October as a General Committee member. A resolution for Richard's formal election to the Committee will be included in the Agenda. To date there is still no volunteer to assume the role of Chairman. All other Committee members are expected to stand for re-election. If any other member wishes to put themselves forward for election to the Committee, then such nominations should be submitted to the Group Secretary **by Friday, 1st November**, using the Nomination Form provided at the end of this Newsletter.

At the AGM there will be opportunities to discuss topics of interest with members of the Committee and to socialise over cheese and wine. If you have a subject for discussion, please submit it on the Nomination Form. The event should end by 10.00pm. Please note that the 2023 AGM Minutes are available on the Group website under the Members' Section/AGM documents.

This is your chance to put forward your views and to question the Committee so please do try to make the effort to attend this very important event in the Group's calendar.

Obituaries

David Bailey (1944-2024)

Our former Chairman, David Bailey passed away in June. In his youth, David was a keen cyclist but walking had always been a real passion. He had been on many walking holidays in his time. He just loved walking be it in the Chiltern Hills, on the Thames Path or in more adventurous climes such as the mountains of Nepal and the wilds of Patagonia.

David joined East Berks Ramblers in September 2002 and made a significant contribution to our group over more than 20 years. He joined the East Berks Committee in 2004 and served in



varying roles including Publications Marketing Officer, Shows Organiser, and latterly (2012-2017) as Chair. He also organised eight group UK Autumn holidays between 2012 and 2019 including visits to the Yorkshire Dales, Sidmouth, Llangollen and Malvern.

In addition to manning the Ramblers Gazebo at shows and regattas selling our “Rambling for Pleasure” books and encouraging people to try rambling, he was a prolific walks leader and continued leading walks until 2023. He led both longer and shorter walks and what we call “Strollathons”; anything to help fill the walks programme. He was always willing to swap dates to fit in with other leaders' demands. In recognition of his contribution and dedication in leading many hundreds of walks for our group, he was presented with a Long Service Walks Leader award at our AGM in November 2023. Last autumn he led one last walk, a favourite of his, from Maidensgrove Common, which was fittingly the first walk he ever led.

Despite his failing health, David continued walking with East Berks until only a few weeks before his death. He was a kindly, gentle man, always good for a friendly chat on our walks and in the pub afterwards! He was a very popular member of the group and will be much missed by all his friends in East Berks Ramblers.

Peter Shepherd

Peter was a long term member of EBR and passed away mid-summer. He was a regular leader of walks in the Chess Valley and Amersham area in the late 1990's/early 2000.

Cilla Taylor

Cilla was a long term member of EBR and passed away on 18 June. She walked regularly Pre-Covid, Cilla and her husband Mike were regulars on the Dawn Walks led by Mary Williams in early April. Cilla and Mike were active supporters of the coach walks and group holidays.

Photo courtesy of Clewer Leisure Painters



Offa's Dyke – Part 3 Graham Sexton

Regular readers of this publication will know that four members of the group (Rosemary, Liz, Linda H and myself) are walking the Offa's Dyke Path very slowly. No, that is not walking it at a very slow pace but completing just one three-day section each year. We are walking from south to north and this year we tackled the middle section from Knighton to Welshpool. Both places have railway stations, so we decided to travel by train rather than doing the two-car shuffle. Knighton is on the “Heart of Wales” line, a single-track railway that somehow managed to avoid the attentions of Dr Beeching and runs across south-east Wales from south of Shrewsbury towards Swansea. There is one train in each direction every three hours, so we were keen to avoid missing our connection. Fortunately, all was well and we arrived in Knighton at the expected time and after a short walk found ourselves at the “Horse & Jockey” inn, which is the same accommodation we used on our final night last year.

The section to the north of Knighton has a reputation as the hilliest of the entire path so our plans for the next two days were to do relatively short distances, about 8 miles each day. We soon concluded that the reputation of this section was justified and both days provided fulfilling walks through remote countryside. Typically, on the Offa's Dyke Path, you are ascending to around 400-500m, mostly on grassy hillsides, only to drop back down into a valley at around 200m. On this section we repeated this process many times.

The plan for our third walking day was for a significantly longer walk of about 14 miles, but the first half of this was a flat section through the Vale of Montgomery. The path goes close to but not through the town of Montgomery which I thought was a missed opportunity as there is some historical interest there. During the second half of the final day, we found a few hills culminating in an ascent of Beacon Hill (how many of those are there in the country?). On this section we had the best weather of the trip and excellent visibility from the top of the hill.



With linear walks of this type, there is always a variety of accommodation. After our first night in a busy inn, our second and third nights were spent in a modern detached house in a rural setting that was very comfortable but lacking a bit in character. For our final night near Welshpool, we were in a large old farmhouse where we also enjoyed an excellent dinner. We are hoping to go back there for our first night next year!



It was interesting talking to the proprietor who had started his working life as a farmer but had now leased all his agricultural land to tenants and was running a hospitality business. In addition to offering rooms and meals in the farmhouse, several of the outbuildings had been converted to self-catering accommodation.

Our next mission, should we choose to accept it, will be to walk from Welshpool to Llangollen. As the path approaches Llangollen, there are two alternative routes, one of which passes over the famous Pontcysyllte (yes, I have checked the spelling) Aqueduct. As far as I know, all

the participants have a head for heights!

Our holiday, including accommodation and luggage transfers, was arranged by Contours.

Trig Points *Rosemary Davies*

When I started walking holidays around the UK almost ten years ago I became fascinated by trig points and, as anyone who accompanies me on walks will know, if we pass a trig point we **have** to stop for a photograph.

The trig pillar made its first appearance back in April 1936 to separate Great Britain into a network of triangles and accurately map the land. Around 6500 were built and they are typically four foot tall with a large part of the pillar buried below the surface. The solid design provides a solid base for theodolites – a precision instrument used by survey teams to improve the accuracy of the readings. Trig pillars helped to map Great Britain and enabled Ordnance Survey to produce paper maps. With the introduction of drones, aerial images, satellites and so forth trig pillars are now almost obsolete.

However, I am delighted they remain as not only do they frequently offer great views but also bring a smile to my face and have provided endless photo opportunities and hopefully more to come!



Bagging a Walking Festival *Linda Francis*

In early September I spent a very enjoyable few days at the Vale of Glamorgan Walking Festival. I was made very welcome and gained some fame as the 'lady camper from Berkshire'.

This festival is organised by Valeways which is a charity that promotes health and wellbeing through walking, improves safe access to the Vale's countryside and provides guided and self-guided walks for all ages and abilities. It boasts fifty or so walks over a ten day period, ranging from 13 miles to 1.5 miles and including history and geology walks as well as reflecting their commitment to inclusion with walks for people living with cancer and wellbeing walks.

I joined three walks, two inland and one coastal trail. They were all very pleasurable and I met some lovely people who were able to share local knowledge and insights. On the last walk, I met some ladies who asked me if I was a Walking Festival Bagger. They had, like me, enjoyed walking festivals in different parts of the country. I was able to tell them that I have been to festivals in Otley, Malvern and Llangollen.



Most of the festivals I have joined have charged a booking fee of around £5 per walk, to cover their admin costs. Usually you have to book in advance. The organisers rope in experts so that some of the walks will be of special interest. One walk in Otley was led by a local historian who had studied in depth the very colourful life of a local dignitary. We were shown where he was born and where his various ladies lived, public buildings he had commissioned etc. On another walk in Worcester, we were shown the fish race where the salmon can pass the weir on the Severn safely and we were able to see them swim past through a glass window.

I like to camp when I go to festivals, not least because it is inexpensive, but also because I like being outdoors and doing my 'own thing'. My fellow baggers in Glamorgan were staying in a Premier Inn and one in Otley was staying in AirBnB. Either way, it makes for a congenial (and relatively affordable) walking holiday.

Walking festivals for 2025 (not an exhaustive list):

Crickhowell 8 - 16 March
Coleford 10 - 18 May
Isle of Wight 11 - 19 May and 5 - 13 October
Malvern 24 May - 1 June
Herefordshire 14 - 22 June
Evesham 25 - 29 June
Suffolk - dates to be announced.

Look out for more online and in Walk magazine!



Comfort Breaks

Many of us stop on a walk for a comfort break but two men in Hertfordshire were recently fined for 'littering' or, more precisely, for urinating in public. The penalty notices were issued by District Enforcement, a private company contracted by the local council. There are various discussions by the legal experts as to what constitutes littering but you may wish to take extra care when you next take a pit stop!

Website Update

A small team has been working on some changes to the EBR website to improve the layout and to eliminate unnecessary duplication. We plan to go live with the changes soon.

Happiness found Outdoors

Since 1913, HF Holidays has been catering for those leaning towards enriching and exciting adventures in stunning locations across the UK, Europe, and beyond. So with 110 years of experience, we know a thing or two about creating the perfect holiday; from guided or self-guided walking holidays, discovery tours, special interest breaks, and memorable trips for groups of all shapes and sizes.

- 110 years of experience
- Choice of walks
- Experienced leaders

Which?
Recommended Provider
WALKING TOURS

hf
holidays

hfholidays.co.uk
020 3974 8865

ABTOT
Member

COOP

Official
Walking
Partner

Linda Francis is new Joint Editor of the Newsletter *Rosemary Davies*

Linda Francis will take over as Joint Editor of the Newsletter after the AGM in November. After a number of years as Joint-Editor of I feel the time has come to handover the role and a BIG thank you to Linda Francis for stepping forward to take this on.

I would also like to thank everyone who has written articles and provided material for the newsletters over the years which has been very much appreciated. Thank you too to Peter Griffiths for his help and assistance with formatting both the online version and word document and doing all the hard work!

Newsletter Delivery *Malcolm Stone, Membership Secretary*

The Newsletter is sent to all members who have provided an email address. If you wish to receive the newsletter and have email, please ensure that we have your email address on file. Email me at membership@eastberksramblers.org. In addition, a copy of the Newsletter is available on our website, under the Members Section tab.

For those members without an email address and who cannot obtain a copy of the Newsletter from a friend, please write to me at 80 Bissley Drive, Maidenhead SL6 3UU.

Marlow FM (97.5) radio interview

On 5 August our Membership Secretary, Malcolm Stone, was interviewed on Marlow FM about the history of Ramblers, the work carried out on footpath maintenance and the benefits of membership. If you'd like to hear the interview, this is available in two parts available through a link on the home page of our website, www.eastberksramblers.org.

New Year Lunch 2025

We are urgently looking for someone to come forward to organise the New Year lunch in January 2025. The format is normally a walk of around 5-miles followed by lunch at a venue of your choice. If you don't wish to lead a walk then please choose somewhere that has a walk option nearby.

It is always a very enjoyable occasion to meet new walking friends or catch up with old friends once all the Christmas festivities are over. If you are interested please contact any committee member or if you would like to chat with Pera who has lots of experience of organising these lunches she will be pleased to help. pera.marrs@btinternet.com, 07769 952884/01628 629155.

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, 27 September 2024**.

Editors: Rosemary Davies Tel: 01344 422707 Email: committee1@eastberksramblers.org
Peter Griffiths Mob: 07765 232178 Email: committee4@eastberksramblers.org

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.

The Ramblers is a registered charity (England and Wales no. 1093577, Scotland no. SC039799 and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (no. 4458492).
Registered Office: 10 Queen St Place London EC4R 1BE

The Ramblers promotes rambling, protects rights of way, campaigns for access to open countryside and defends the beauty of the countryside.

AGM FRIDAY 15th NOVEMBER 2024
NOMINATION FORM
For the 2024/2025 Committee and other Group posts

Proposer's nameSignature
(in capitals please)

Seconder's name Signature
(in capitals please)

We, being fully paid up members of East Berkshire Ramblers, hereby nominate:-

Nominee's name (in capitals please)

Nominee's signature

.....

Who has volunteered to stand for election as:

I/We would like the following subject discussed at the Question and Answer session at the AGM:

.....

.....

.....

Please return this form **by 1st November** 2024 to:-

The Secretary, East Berks Ramblers, 6 Aldwick Drive, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 4JQ or by email
groupsecretary@eastberksramblers.org

Contact phone no: 07785 953751 (preferred)/01628 625171