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

## NEWSLETTER No. 119 - DECEMBER 2015



**The Committee wish all Members and Associates and their families a Very Happy Christmas, a Healthy and Prosperous New Year and more superb walking in 2016**

### EBR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Group was held at Claires Court School on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015. This year 70 members signed in and 9 members sent their apologies – 79 in total representing 18% of our full membership. The Committee is very grateful to all who attended or who sent in their apologies.

There were some changes to the Committee. Steve Gillions was appointed Footpath Secretary, Liz Richardson was appointed Group Secretary and Rosemary Davies was appointed an Ordinary Committee member ("member without portfolio" !). Jean Todd retired from the Committee after five years in the role of Shorter Walks Co-ordinator. Viv Williams has assumed the role of Shorter Walks Co-ordinator but did not wish to become a Committee member. Instead Frank Bush was appointed to the Committee as Shorter Walks Representative. There are currently no vacancies on the Committee. Your Committee for 2015/16 is therefore, as follows:

Chairman, Publicity Officer, Area Rep & UK Autumn Holiday Organiser	<b>David Bailey</b>	01628 634561
Group Treasurer	<b>Alan Harding</b>	01628 673607
Vice Chairman/Planning & Countryside Officer and Footpath Warden Co-ordinator	<b>Gordon Marrs</b>	01628 629155
Group Secretary	<b>Liz Richardson</b>	01628 625171
Membership Secretary & Recruitment Contact	<b>Neil Adamson</b>	01753 776627
Footpath Secretary	<b>Steve Gillions</b>	01753 851077
Walks Organiser & Longer Walks Coordinator	<b>Pera Marrs</b>	01628 629155
Shorter Walks Representative	<b>Frank Bush</b>	01753 867090
Shows Organiser/publications and Coach Trip Organiser	<b>Evelyn Norton</b>	01628 622279
Social Secretary	<b>Pauline Thompson</b>	01753 548185
Webmaster	<b>Mike Taylor</b>	01628 662808
UK Spring Holiday Organiser	<b>Arthur Holland</b>	01753 547512
Newsletter Editor	<b>Eileen Dorney</b>	01628 620012
Committee Member	<b>Rosemary Davies</b>	01344 422707

### **CHAIRMAN's REPORT**

#### ***David Bailey's Report to the Annual General Meeting***

This is my third Annual Report and covers the 12 months from November 21<sup>st</sup> last year.

**Committee.** At last year's AGM no-one came forward to take on the very important roles of Group Secretary and Footpath Secretary which were left vacant by the retirement of Gerald Barnett and Phil Smith respectively. So the early part of the year was not an easy one for the committee.

However, some months into the year two willing volunteers emerged and were co-opted on to the committee – Liz Richardson to the post of Group Secretary and Steve Gillions as Footpath Secretary. It's no exaggeration to say that both have very quickly immersed themselves in their respective jobs and are already making a tremendous contribution

to the work of both the committee and the Group itself. So I, and I believe the rest of the committee, are very much hoping that these co-options will be confirmed by your formal election of Liz and Steve later this evening. We also co-opted, during the course of the year, Rosemary Davies, who is acting as what I think in Cabinet circles would be called "Member without Portfolio". Again, this was a step which has proved well worth taking. Rosemary has shown herself to be a hard-working and very useful addition to the committee, so we hope you will confirm her election too, at the appropriate time.

**Membership** of the group has stabilised at around 430. Central Office reports that nationally too, membership has stabilised, so we're not out of line, and I'm not unhappy with the position. Every Newsletter we publish seems to list a fairly substantial number of new members, recruited over the previous four months, so I think what we're experiencing is just a natural turnover. We'll keep up our recruitment efforts and try to ensure that numbers don't start to fall again. Thank you Neil for maintaining our membership records and for the work I know you're doing to try to follow-up the reasons some members fail to renew their membership.

**Walking Activities.** Well, what can I say? Pera and Jean between them have once again come up with a fantastic programme of walks throughout the whole year - 221 in total I made it. Long, short, moderate, leisurely, mainly Sundays and Wednesdays with usually a choice of at least two walks, but with occasionally a Saturday walk as well. (An increased number of Saturday walks this year as these are becoming more popular and attract newcomers as well as existing members who don't find our traditional walking days of Wednesday and Sunday particularly convenient.) Two or three short evening walks in the summer as well – and of course a new introduction this year, at John's instigation (John Vint) the Strollathons, aimed primarily at the Group's more senior members who are perhaps finding our other walks just a bit too much these days! Thank you again Pera and Jean. And John. And of course, thank you to all our walks leaders.

**Coach Walks.** Those on the long-distance Wednesday coach-walk this year did the Thames Path, from source to Pangbourne, in eight roughly 10, 11 or 12 mile stretches. Many thanks to Gordon and Pera for organising this venture for us.

There were two Saturday coach trips, organised by Eve Norton, each offering a variety of opportunities to suit a wide range of walking abilities. Sheffield Park and the Bluebell Railway in West Sussex in May, and then Beaulieu, Buckler's Hard and Exbury Gardens in Hampshire in August. Both well supported and very successful. Thank you Eve.

**Group Holidays.** Three Group holidays again this year. Our Spring break was to HF's Peveril of the Peak in Derbyshire. 37 members enjoyed this four-night break organised by Arthur Holland. The walks – a choice of three each day – were led by Arthur, Roy Gardiner, Pera and Gordon Marrs, and Ken Tarrant. Thanks to all of them.

Following the success of the Austria trip in 2014, the Group's second venture abroad was to Slovenia for a week at the end of June this year. 19 members went on the holiday which was arranged through Secret Hills, all the work at this end being done for us by John Payne. It must have been a success because John is already setting up another foreign holiday for the Group next year. So thank you very much John.

Finally, September saw 33 of us in Shropshire, once more with Secret Hills, for a four-night break based in Shrewsbury. Our walks took us to the Long Mynd, Stiperstones, and Ironbridge areas and again, I think the holiday was a success.

**Shows and Events.** Once again Eve and her dedicated team of helpers have taken our Ramblers' publicity stand to half-a-dozen or so local events – but 2015 saw a couple of changes to our usual "circuit". For a variety of reasons we dropped, or had to drop, our visits to the Maidenhead Duck Derby, the Windsor Midsummer Fair, and the Hurley Regatta. Instead, this year for the first time we attended the Datchet Village Fair in July and the Eton Charity Fair in September. I believe we benefitted by varying our consumer-base in this way, and certainly at the events which I attended, in addition to selling a fair number of our books and maps, we spoke to quite a lot of people who showed genuine interest in Ramblers and who – hopefully – we might have persuaded to join. Well done Eve for organising our attendance at these events – and for not being afraid to try out some new venues.

Our programme of **Social Events** this year – masterminded as ever by Pauline Thompson – has included the Christmas Social, with splendid food laid on by Arthur and Veronica Holland (thank you very much to them), a Skittles Evening, an evening walk around historical Windsor in May, a mid-summer picnic-in-the-park at Braywick, a visit to Combermere Barracks, Windsor last month, and an evening concert at the Mill-at-Sonning just two weeks ago. Thanks Pauline. In addition of course we had our New Year Lunch, held at Winter Hill Golf Club, and organised for us very successfully for the second year running by Alma Richardson. Thank you Alma.

The **EBR Golf Society** I'm told had a good year. Two fun events, and then a third event played for the Claret Jug which was won by Geoff Matthews with Pera Marrs as the winning lady. Meg Knight asks me to make a plea for more people to join the Society – she knows there are plenty more golfers out there amongst the Group's membership. Thanks to Meg for her first year in charge.

Now, the Chairman's Report generally makes only the very briefest mention of Financial and Footpath matters as these are dealt with in more detail in your Treasurer's and Footpath Secretary's Reports, which will follow. However, this year there have been three significant issues which I feel bound to make reference to here.

Firstly, the Thames Path "Missing Link" at Bridge View. Early last year this came to the forefront of the Council's agenda. At a meeting in March 2014, RBWM's RoW and Highways Licensing Panel reached a unanimous decision that a riverside path at this point should be constructed. We were ecstatic. For a few months. The decision was subsequently over-ruled by the Council Cabinet. Now I know that in some people's minds this raised questions about transparency, the democratic process, and the way our Council operates, but this is neither the time nor place to go into that. The fact is that what **was** eventually agreed, in February this year, was a roadside footpath for the necessary 30 metres, which would provide a safe passage for pedestrians at this point, avoiding the need to either cross the very busy road twice or indeed to walk in the road itself. The work was carried out very quickly and the new footpath was in use by the end of March.

After much discussion and deliberation, your committee was of the unanimous view that this was a very significant improvement for walkers, most importantly from the safety point of view. We felt that – for the time being at least – we could live with this, whilst continuing to maintain our long-term objective that the ideal solution is still a riverside path. To this end we are ensuring that a riverside route remains in the Borough's 10-Year RoW Improvement Plan, and we stand ready to take up this campaign again as soon as any opportunity arises – for example when Bridge View comes up for re-development.

Secondly, consequent upon this development, it soon became apparent – certainly to our Treasurer who very properly alerted the committee – that we needed to do something about the quite substantial financial reserves which the Group was holding. This amount, some £20K (this is not the East Berks Endowment Fund which is held by Central Office) had been regarded as something we should retain against the possibility of a need arising for heavy expenditure – for example on legal battles – connected with the Missing Link. We realised that, with the pressure off, as it were, the Thames Path, we could well be challenged on the need to hold on to such a significant amount of reserves. We agreed that it would be prudent to have in place a solid plan for the use of these funds if we were not, under Ramblers' rules (and probably Charity Commission rules as well), to be forced to relinquish them. I can tell you that we *have* drawn up such a plan, and that this has already been put in place. It involves an agreement with our Local Authority and also with the Berkshire Area (Ramblers) for an urgent programme of footpath improvement work, primarily within the Royal Borough, but with the possibility of appropriate work being done elsewhere in the county as well. Alan and Steve may wish to expand upon these matters in their reports.

Finally, the third issue which I mentioned concerns the plans we have for the future management of the EBR publications. This I will leave to my Treasurer to deal with in his report. Thank you.

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## **GROUP TREASURER'S REPORT**

*Alan Harding reported as follows:*

Reference was made to the 2014/15 accounts that had been made available to Members at the Meeting. He reminded members that receipts and payments were split into "Main" (eg/ publications, footpath work, admin) and "Self-funded" (eg. holidays/social events) called "Other activities" by Central Office.

### **Main:**

Publication sales had run at around £3.7k, much the same as in the previous year. A few years ago this had been £5-£6k pa but sales still provided healthy numbers. Grants for footpath work in the previous year showed £2k but £0 in 2014/15. This was not a concern. RBWM pay EBR £1k a year but, due to the timing of their payment, two years' payments had been made in the previous year with nothing in the current year. On the costs side, the publication of the walks programmes and newsletters had been around £1,300 in 2014/15. This higher figure than the previous year was again because of timing and costs had not increased. The current accounts showed payments for two distributions in 2014/15 and one from the previous year. The Treasurer reminded members that EBR did not take a grant from Central Office.

### **Self funded:**

Receipts/payments had just about broken even.

Surplus/deficit: as shown, nearly £4k income for publications had been generated resulting in a cost of sales from stock of around £1k. Some titles do not sell very well and EBR has been holding stocks at steadily lower valuations. A further reduction in the value of stock in 2014/15 had been recorded. Nevertheless 2014/15 had been a very good year.

The balance sheet showed just over £30k in total, of which £1,700 was stock of books and £28.5k cash. This was a lot of money to have in a current account, held through Unity Trust being the bank which Central Office asks EBR to use. This does not generate much interest given current interest rates.

The Treasurer went on to expand upon the remarks made by the Chairman on the subject of Finance. He reported as follows:

"It is a Central Office rule that a local Group can hold a significant amount of reserves only if it has designated projects which will use those reserves. I think this is very reasonable. This Group had designated funds to assist in the resolution of the Thames Path Missing Link problem but in the short to medium term, this is now not needed.

You can see in the accounts that we have accumulated over £25,000 at the bank. Last spring, David and I consulted some former Committee members, our 'Senior Ramblers' and the present Committee; the feedback was broadly in favour of spending this money on footpaths, specifically to replace stiles with kissing gates, something which this local authority had lamentably failed to tackle. There were no other suggestions for substantial outlays. Therefore £20,000 has been designated for Footpath Improvement, with £15,000 in the RBWM and £5,000 in the rest of Berks. I expect that Central Office will accept this designation; and we are already working with RBWM to make it happen.

Next I want to explain why there's so much money there.....it's because of publications. What I have learned is that over the last 20 plus years, and through the publication of the Rambling for Pleasure (RfP) series, this Group has made a lot of profit.

Firstly, about £35,000 of that profit was transferred to Central Office in 2002 and is called the EBR Endowment Fund. The capital is still there, untouched. The interest it has earned is paid to Central Office and presumably used by them. By the way, the 'Endowment Fund' is not in any of my figures.

And secondly, a further £25,000 is the reserves in the EBR accounts; I have just been describing how we will spend some of that money. So publications have made well in excess of £50,000, probably £60,000. What an incredible project they have been, with great credit to Dave Ramm, David Bounds and the committees who supported them.

So, regarding Publications, what happens next? We are now down to very low stocks on the most popular titles and all titles need rigorous updating. The world has changed since the RfP idea was launched: we have the internet and mobile phones, GPS, an app from OS maps, etc. Books have changed!

Peter London, ex-Treasurer as well as Chairman, advised me that reprinting further editions should be only undertaken with great care because we would be spending EBR money without being confident, as we used to be in the past, that sales will follow. Presently our titles are sold at shows etc by Eve Norton and helpers. They are also distributed to bookshops by a company called PML which trades as Heron Maps; therefore we are discussing with Heron that they should become the publisher of the RfP series (which means that the risk of the outlay for printing lies with them.) The books will recognise EBR on the back cover as presently. This negotiation is not complete. Also, Dave Ramm, who tells us that he is not getting any younger, will be closely involved in the updating of the books.

What this means is that the RfP books will be modernised and available; we will not print and own them but our name will still be associated with them.

All this is a long way from explaining the accounts, but I wanted to share these money matters with all of you at the AGM."

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## **FOOTPATH SECRETARY'S REPORT**

*Steve Gillions reported as follows:*

"I must first thank all of our volunteers who monitor and maintain the footpaths throughout the Borough, and especially the footpath wardens who carry out the twice yearly footpath surveys. We do have two vacancies - one for Eton and the other for the Thames Path. If you can help, please contact Gordon Marrs. The rights of way network in the Borough is in a relatively good state of repair and the Borough takes its responsibilities more seriously than many: this is in large part due to the efforts of our members.

A significant development in the year was the improvement to the Missing Link in the Thames Path north of Bridge Gardens. The Chairman has dealt with this fully in his report so I will not dwell further except to say that there is still a commitment to a "continuous riverside path" and that this will be included in the next 10 year Public Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan.

There has been some progress on a number of issues noted in last year's report. The proposal to replace a network of paths (Cookham FP's 17, 21 and 59) between Mount Farm and Malders Lane was modified but on careful reflection we decided that the new arrangements have less amenity value and have formally objected to the proposed change. No response has yet been received from the Borough. Nearby, BR 19 has been resurfaced with limestone chippings. This is the path in Sir Stanley Spencer's painting "The Bridle Path, Cookham" and there were some concerns that the resurfacing would considerably harm the view. It is to be hoped that with weathering the new surface will blend to the general landscape.

An agreed, diversion to Hurley FP25 was implemented in 2014 and I am pleased to report that, after some prompting, the path has now been properly surfaced.: it is no longer a mudslide in wet weather!

Some minor improvements have been made to Bisham FP20 after a number of complaints. Some building rubble has been removed and an additional waymarker sign affixed so as to make the path direction clearer.

Berkshire College of Agriculture has suggested a diversion to Hurley FP 18 where it passes through the college campus. The change is not significant, and may even be said to improve the walk, and the Local Access Forum has formally agreed it has no objection. A formal request from BCA to divert the path can now be expected.

On the wider front, I have attended a Workshop set up by the Environment Agency to consultation on the first phase of the Thames Flood Relief Scheme which will run from Datchet to Bell Weir. This is very early days and further workshops are planned for 2016. It is encouraging that the EA are consulting at an early stage. Consultees will be able to influence landscaping and the character of the channel and surrounding areas; types of use and possible locations; and specific projects and partnerships. At the workshop there was widespread support for a good public rights of way network and for wildlife areas.

Members will be aware of the Big Pathwatch initiative launched nationally by the Ramblers. The information gathered in the survey will be of invaluable help to the Ramblers in campaigning for more and better public rights of way and any contribution that individuals can make will be appreciated. Details can be found on the Ramblers' national website or there is a link on our own website. The survey allows walkers to report positive and negative features whilst walking public rights of way and it is interesting to note that from the results to date, those in the Borough are considerably better than the national average.

The Chairman has mentioned in his report that we have substantial reserve funds that we need to use if we are to avoid the risk of losing them. We had already drawn up a "Stile Replacement Programme - List of Priorities" with the Borough and feel that the stile replacement programme would be a suitable use for some of the available funds. We do however believe that the Borough should make a clear budget commitment to the programme and have therefore said we will fully fund a third gate (up to maximum of five) for every two gates installed by the Borough. The estimated cost to us would be £3000 per annum.

I would like to finish on a personal note. I was asked, much to my surprise, to take on the role of Footpath Secretary in February. I must particularly thank my predecessor Phil Smith, David Bailey and Gordon Marrs for their encouragement and support to me on what has been a fast learning curve. I have enjoyed taking on the job and hope to continue in it.

### **A very warm welcome to our new Members**

**Since the issue of the August Newsletter we are very pleased to welcome the following new Full Members to East Berkshire Group:-**

#### **Full Members**

Joy Mansfield, David Edwards, Ian Roxburgh, Gila Overton, Kathryn Payne, Val Eckett, Dianne Fletcher, Madelene Larkin and Barbara Carter

**We would like to assure you that you have joined a very friendly and sociable Group and we, your Committee, look forward to welcoming you on our walks. We hope that you will enjoy and thoroughly take advantage of your membership, both on walks and at our social events, as well as, perhaps, by volunteering. But even if you play a more passive role we sincerely 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 Neil Adamson  
Email: [membership@eastberksramblers.org](mailto:membership@eastberksramblers.org)**

### **GROUP BREAKS IN 2015 AND 2016**

#### **AUTUMN 2015:**

#### **WALKING IN THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS *writes Eileen Dorney***



Percy Thrower.

33 members joined us in mid-September at the old picturesque Lion Hotel in a beautiful part of Shrewsbury with its castle, cobbled streets and Georgian buildings surrounded by the River Severn.

On the afternoon of our arrival we were taken on a short walking tour of the town by Ian, one of our Secret Hills guides who had organised the holiday for us, along the riverside, past the impressive Shrewsbury School, across its grounds and through a local park with beautiful gardens created by

Monday dawned very overcast as we set out by coach to Church Stretton where we split into three groups. The first tackled a 10 mile walk over the top of Longmynd ascending 310 metres; the second 6 miles with a more gentle ascent



of 200 metres and the third a wander through Stretton Vale. Unfortunately the clouds descended upon us and the rains came heavily for several hours and we were delighted to find a cosy café followed by a nosey around some lovely shops and an antique centre in Church Stretton before returning to the coach.

On the Tuesday with much improved weather the coach delivered us to the Bog Visitor Centre and we again split into 3 groups, one for 9.5 miles including a lead mine and one of 6.5 miles, both ascending to Stiperstones ridge and returning via Tankerville and Pennerley. The third group visited the National England Nature Reserve and Shepherds Rock with a gentle ascent to and descent from Stiperstones ridge back to the Bog Centre, where all enjoyed the tea and cakes available in the old schoolhouse before our journey back to the hotel.

On Wednesday, the first group were dropped off at the foot of Wrekin Hill for a 10 mile walk into the Giant's footsteps, ascending to the top (where the Giant sleeps!), along the ridgeline to its North end then down the hill via woods and byways to Little Wenlock and Coalbrookdale before walking through woods and fields to Ironbridge. The other two groups were dropped off at the coach park in Ironbridge, the medium walk of 6.5 miles being along the gorge sides through steep woods past the three enormous power station chimneys (now fuelled by chopped wood from America as coal emissions are not allowed by the EU) followed by a pleasant walk across the iron bridge and up the other side of the valley. The shorter walk was from Coalbrookdale to Maws Tile works, Coalport China and Blists Hill museums and through Lloyds Coppice to the Bedlam furnace.

Thursday saw us returning home, having had a most enjoyable break in superb countryside.



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#### **SPRING 2016:**

*Arthur Holland reports* that he has 35 people booked for the break at Hf's Harrington House in Bourton-on-the-Water from 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> April.

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#### **SUMMER 2016:** *East Berks walking holiday to Schladming in Austria from 2nd to 9th July 2016*

John Payne so far has 16 people committed to the above holiday and deposits of £175 (including current flight supplement of £50) are now being collected. The basic price is £984 per person for half board including flights, plus any flight supplement now payable for bookings not already made. A single or larger room supplement is £10. Departure will be on a BA flight from Gatwick to Salzburg.

If anyone is interested in joining the group for some enjoyable walks in this area, he can accommodate just a few more. There will be 2 differing guided walks each day on excellent mountain paths.

Please email John at [johnfpayne001@googlemail.com](mailto:johnfpayne001@googlemail.com) for more details.

#### **AUTUMN 2016:** *A holiday on the South Devon Coast writes David Bailey.*

Arrangements have been made for the Group's Autumn break in 2016 to be at the Sidholme Hotel, Sidmouth, South Devon. Once again, the holiday is being arranged for us by Secret Hills Walking. It will be a four-night break from Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September to Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September.

A leader will be provided for a short, local walk on the Sunday afternoon and then three leaders on each of the

following days so that on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday there will be a choice of three walks. Two of these will be similar in length and pace to the Group's usual UK holidays, ie. one of about 9 or 10 miles taken at a moderate pace and the other of about 6 or 7 miles and at a slightly easier pace. The third option will be a walk of about 3 – 4 miles on easier terrain and allowing more time for sightseeing or exploring. There will be opportunities for both coastal walking and inland ventures.

The cost of the four night's accommodation, dinner, bed and breakfast, the services of the leaders, and transport costs to and from the start/finish points of the walks, where appropriate, on the three full days will be £384 pp. All rooms are en-suite, but the hotel has only a limited number of single rooms. There will be no single supplement for these, but when these have been taken there will be an additional charge for single occupancy of a twin/double room of £10 per night. Lunches are not included in the cost but there are shops close by or the hotel can provide a packed lunch.

Those members wishing to reserve a place should complete the booking form at the end of this Newsletter and return it, as soon as possible, to the address on the form, together with a cheque for £80pp made out to East Berks Ramblers as a deposit. The balance will be required by 1<sup>st</sup> August at the very latest, again by cheque to EBR (a reminder will appear in the April Newsletter). If there are any further questions please contact me on 01628-634561 or e-mail at [dbailey907@btinternet.com](mailto:dbailey907@btinternet.com).

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### SPRING BREAK CHANGES TO SUMMER BREAK IN 2017

\*\*\*\*\*ADVANCE NOTICE\*\*\*\*\*

The committee have made the decision to move the April Spring Break to June from 2017 onwards. The benefits of having a UK holiday in June will mean longer days and warmer weather (hopefully!). As many regular 'Spring-breakers' know we have had quite a few cool, wet holidays in April in recent years, and so we thought it would be a good idea to move the date forward a few weeks. The format will, as in the past, be a four-night stay at an HF venue within the UK.

We hope that you agree that this is a positive move.

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### EAST BERKS RAMBLERS GOLF SOCIETY



If you are interested in joining the Golf Society and you are not on our mailing list, please email Meg at [megknight08@gmail.com](mailto:megknight08@gmail.com) or if you do not have email (which is the preferred means of contact due to postage costs), telephone her on 01494 881825 to express your interest.

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### MONTHLY LONG DISTANCE COACH WALKS *report Gordon & Pera Marrs*



We completed this year's programme, The Thames Path in the Country, in October with a 12 mile stretch to Pangbourne. We recall standing on Whitchurch Bridge and looking back at the glorious view of the church, mill and cottages reflected in the water and thinking what a great place to finish a lovely walk and that it was worth pushing the stages up to 11-12 miles in order to get this far.

Next year's project is to be the Cotswold Way. This is a 102 mile (163km) National Trail that runs from Chipping Campden to Bath, following the beautiful Cotswold escarpment for much of its course. The group did this walk several years ago and I remember the lovely countryside and villages of honey coloured stone along the way. I also recall that it was quite a demanding walk with lots of hills (not surprisingly), so we aim to keep the length of the stages to no more than 10 miles.

The first leg will be on April 6<sup>th</sup>, and then on the first Wednesday in the month, as usual, until October. We will start from Chipping Campden, doing the walk in the traditional North to South direction, thus avoiding walking into north-easterlies, which can occur quite frequently in the Cotswolds. Although this will be into the sun, the walk has a lot of twists and turns so it should not be



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a problem. From Chipping Campden the walk ascends across farmland to Dover's Hill, affording the first of many superb views, and then on to Broadway and past the Broadway Tower to finish in the lovely village of Stanton.

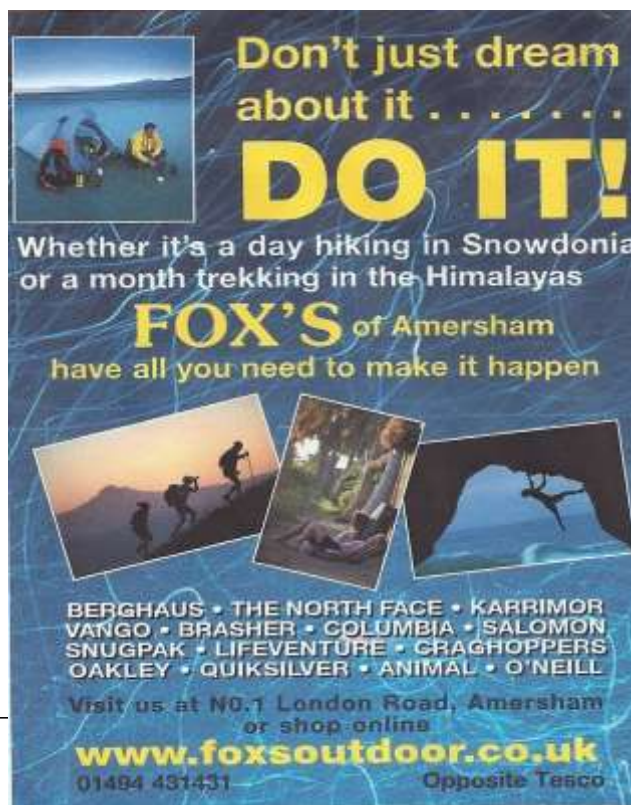
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### **SATURDAY COACH TRIPS** *from Eve Norton:*

The destinations for my two 2016 coach outings are Petworth and Arundel, both easily accessed at the weekend via Guildford and the beautiful Surrey and Sussex countryside.

I propose (but not yet confirmed by the coach company) to go there on June 11th and August 6th respectively. There will be led walks of approx. 6 miles for those who enjoy rambling and plenty of interest at the venues for those who just enjoy exploring at their own pace. Petworth is a National Trust property and is free to members but you will have to pay to visit Arundel Castle. There is an interesting museum at Amberley which will be our first stop before Arundel and those wishing to spend time there can do so. A train ride to Arundel from Amberley is also possible and the old town of Arundel is in a lovely position by the River Arun.

Final details of both trips will be in the next newsletter but you can reserve your places on the coach by filling in the forms at the end of this newsletter and sending a cheque for £12 (Payable to EBR) to me.



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### **STROLLERTHONS/VETERANS' WALKS** *from John Vint*

This is a report on the first year's stroller walks. Numbers have varied from 29 on the first, 4 on the third (pouring rain) to 16 in October. However, I hope that the leaders this year will put in walks again and I would hope to do a ring-around of possible participants to help increase numbers. These walks are very dependent on the weather and the attractiveness of the area. Perhaps the numbers will never equal those of the other walks, but if they give pleasure to only a few, they are still worthwhile.

As these walks are a cross-over with the Social programme, Pauline Thompson will be doing some of the organising in the future. This will provide some degree of continuity.

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### **FIRST AID COURSES**

The next First Aid courses for walks leaders of Berkshire Ramblers Groups will be on:-

- |                                      |                                |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2016 | - a day-time course in Woodley |
| Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March      | - a day-time course in Windsor |
| Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> April        | - an evening course in Woodley |

These courses, run by St Johns Ambulance, last for three hours and are geared especially to Ramblers, covering the basics on how to dress wounds, resuscitation, and dealing with broken limbs, damaged muscles, choking, shock, heart attacks, etc. Those attending a course get an Essential First Aid Certificate, valid for three years. If you would like to attend a course (and this can include those needing a "refresher" if they have already attended one over three years ago) please get in touch with David Turner of Loddon Valley Group on 01189-784364 or by e-mail at [turnerd2@btinternet.com](mailto:turnerd2@btinternet.com) The cost of EBR members attending is covered by the East Berks Group.



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### **A RARE EVENT** *reports Mike Ashfield*

The Chilterns walk of the E Berks Ramblers on 27th October led by David Bailey was not only immensely enjoyable but also included the added interest of a wildlife rescue. Just as we were leaving Turville on the home stretch, a dead owl was spotted hanging from the pathside fence. One of the more observant ramblers in the group found that it was actually still alive. It seemed to have flown at the fence at high speed and trapped some feathers between twisted strands of wire then ripped its wing badly as it struggled. After much work Nigel managed to free the bird while I prevented it moving. Unfortunately the owl repaid Nigel's efforts by sinking its talons into his hands drawing blood in several places. A local householder was found who produced a cat basket and offered to take the owl to TiggyWinkles at Haddenham. Later Chris rang TiggyWinkles who said that the owl was in a bad way but resting

quietly. Hopefully it will live even if it does not fly again.



## SOCIAL EVENTS

*Pauline Thompson writes:*

12th December 2015 will be the EBR Christmas Social at Holyport War Memorial Hall at 7.00 for 7.30. There will be delicious food by Arthur and Veronica, a raffle, short quiz and some dancing with a caller on hand to take you through the steps. There are still a few tickets left. Please contact me on 07904 057850.

On 12th October a group of 18 visited Combermere Barracks in Windsor. The day began at 10.30 when we met in the Guards Room and were then escorted by our guide for the day, ex- soldier John, to the Household Cavalry Museum. We had a look around at the various items on display then joined him for an introductory talk.

A young soldier who had just returned from Afghanistan showed us his kit, also his camouflage uniform and helmet and a couple of guns too. We then went walkabout and saw young soldiers on drill training and visited the stables to see the horses - not as many as we hoped to see as a lot were just leaving to go to London for a State Visit Rehearsal. There were some lovely Drum horses, one of which was very interested in the mints that he knew John kept in his pocket! After that we saw a lot of Armoured Vehicles, very expensive and high tech!

Lunch was in the Soldiers' canteen - a main course, drink and a dessert for £3. The Officers Mess was our next stop and we were able to have a look around. John told us amusing anecdotes of Army life and we could purchase Port or Wine with a Household Cavalry label. Clinking our bottles we made our way back to the museum for a talk on the Ceremonial aspect of the regiment. This allowed for a dressing up session - photos are on the website! Jackboots, tunics and bearskins, metal helmets, we tried them all! Tom impressed us by playing a few notes on a trumpet too and the day finished at 3.30pm.

All in all, an interesting day out. For all those who missed it this time round I will hopefully do it again next year if there is interest from 20 people.

On Sunday 8th November 11 members enjoyed an evening meal and concert at The Mill at Sonning Theatre featuring Buddy Holly's Winter Dance Party. As well as "Buddy", we had The Crickets, The Big Bopper and Ricky Valance. The music was good - all the old songs and we even remembered the words to sing along!

### Looking forward to 2016:

A **SKITTLES** evening will be held on Saturday 20th February at The New Windsor Community Centre in Hanover Way, off Vale Road. This has proved to be a popular venue with ample parking. Tickets will be £8.50 to include a fish and chip supper from Scotts of Windsor.

Please use the booking slip attached at the end of the newsletter or send same details to me at the address given.

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### NEW YEAR LUNCH – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2016 – Winter Hill Golf Club *from Alma Richardson*

I should be grateful if those people who have not given me their menu choices could do so as soon as possible please at [richardsonalma@gmail.com](mailto:richardsonalma@gmail.com) or 01628 781827. As last year, the dining room will be open seating. Name place cards will be set 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.

There may be cancellations so if you wish to be put on a waiting list, then please let me know. We look forward to a most enjoyable New Year walk and lunch.

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The views or opinions expressed by individuals in this *Newsletter* are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Committee. The Editor welcomes letters and articles from members but reserves 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 Editor (address below) as soon as possible and **no later than Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016**.

Editor: Eileen Dorney, Gaymead Cottage, Peters Lane, Holyport, Berks SL6 2HW (Tel: 01628 620012, E-mail: [eileendorney@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:eileendorney@dsl.pipex.com))

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## APPLICATION FORM FOR SKITTLES EVENING

**Saturday, 8th February 2016 at New Windsor Community Association, Hanover Way, Windsor  
7.00pm for 7.30pm**

I enclose a cheque for £.....for ..... places at a cost of £8.50 per person made payable to EBR.

NAME(S): ..... Telephone: .....

Email: .....

I/we would like to book \_\_\_\_place(s) for the SKITTLES evening on Saturday 20th February 2016 7.00 for 7.30pm at the New Windsor Community Centre Hanover Way Windsor (off Vale Road).

Tel: .....Email .....

Cheques made payable to EBR (cost £8.50 per person)

Please send to Pauline Thompson Westfield Cottage 44 Eton Road Datchet Berkshire SL3 9AY by 31st Jan

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### **EBR COACH TRIP TO PETWORTH**

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

To: Eve Norton , 97 Farm Road, Maidenhead ,Berks SL6 5JQ.

I/We enclose a cheque for £12 each for the coach fare.

Names;.....

Tel. No..... Email.....

Tel. No..... Email.....

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### **EBR COACH TRIP TO ARUNDEL**

**Saturday 6<sup>TH</sup> August 2016**

To: Eve Norton , 97 Farm Road, Maidenhead ,Berks SL6 5JQ.

I/We enclose a cheque for £12 each for the coach fare.

Names;.....

Tel. No..... Email.....

Tel. No..... Email.....

# **EAST BERKS GROUP AUTUMN BREAK AT SIDMOUTH**

## **Sunday 11th September to Wednesday 14th September 2016**

To:- David Bailey, 1 Fernley Court, Maidenhead, SL6 7NZ

*I/We* would like to join the Group Break and enclose a cheque for £..... (made payable to East Berks Ramblers) at the rate of £80 per person as a deposit for a *Twin/Double/Single* en suite room.

[*Singles only*: In the event of insufficient single rooms being available, *I am/am not* prepared to share a Twin room. *I would prefer to share a Twin room with* .....

Alternatively, after the five single rooms have been taken, are you prepared to take a twin/double (for sole occupancy) for the £10 per night supplement? **Yes/No**

From:.....  
.....  
.....Postcode.....  
E-Mail.....

*I am/We are/not* Full members of East Berks Ramblers

*I am/We are Associate Member(s) of East Berks Ramblers and understand that I/We may initially be placed on a Reserve List.*

Details of any medical conditions that may affect your accommodation requirements, and any dietary or other specific needs should be made known to Secret Hills Walking following receipt of their detailed holiday literature.

*Please complete and delete where applicable.*

Date received by David Bailey .....