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

NEWSLETTER No. 122 - DECEMBER 2016



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 2017

EBR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 46th Annual General Meeting of the Group was held at Claires Court School on Friday, 11th November 2016. This year 61 members signed in and 9 members sent their apologies. The Committee is very grateful to all who attended or who sent in their apologies.

There are some changes to the Committee. Eve Norton retired from the Committee after seven years serving in various roles, latterly as Shows Organiser and Saturday Coach Trip Organiser. Peter Griffiths was appointed a General Committee member. Your Committee for 2016/17 is therefore, as follows:

Chairman, Publicity Officer, Area Rep. & UK Autumn Holiday Organiser	David Bailey	01628-634561
Group Treasurer	Alan Harding	01628-673607
Vice Chairman, Planning/Countryside Officer, and Footpath Warden Co-ordinator	Gordon Marrs	01628-629155
Group Secretary	Liz Richardson	01628-625171
Membership Secretary/Recruitment Contact	Neil Adamson	01753-776627
Footpath Secretary	Steve Gillions	01753-851077
Walks Organiser and Longer Walks Co-ordinator	Pera Marrs	01628-629155
Shorter Walks Representative	Frank Bush	01753-867090
Social Secretary	Pauline Thompson	01753-548185
Webmaster	Mike Taylor	01628-662808
UK Spring Holiday Organiser	Arthur Holland	01753-547512
Newsletter Editor	Eileen Dorney	01628-620012
Committee member	Rosemary Davies	01344-422707
Committee member	Peter Griffiths	01628-638847

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, NOVEMBER 2016

The Group Chairman, David Bailey, opened the meeting by advising members of the recent, unexpected death of Margaret Bowdery, Life President and founder of East Berkshire Ramblers (EBR). No details of funeral arrangements were yet available but these would be posted to the EBR website in due course. A minute's silence was held in memory of Margaret and in recognition of all her work for the Group and The Ramblers in general over very many years.

This is my fourth Annual Report as EBR Chairman – it covers the twelve months November 2015 to November 2016. Following the usual pattern it will start with a few words about the committee, and Group membership, and will then skim through the Group's various activities throughout the year.

Firstly then, **the Committee**. There were a number of changes at last year's AGM and I'm pleased to say that things have remained stable since then, no-one having left mid-stream and no need for any co-options. Every year, when I present the Annual Report, and particularly when talking about the different Group activities, I find myself thanking a lot of individual people. But I'm not sure that I've previously put enough emphasis on the importance of the input made by all members of the committee collectively; that's to say the importance of them working well together as a team. I think this Group does exceptionally well at this and I'm sure it's a major factor in East Berks having again had a very successful year in all areas of our activities. So I'd like to include in this year's Annual Report a personal thank you to all my committee colleagues.

Group Membership. I reported last year that membership had stabilized at around 430. Well, again it's not changed much in the past 12 months. We're not out of step with the national trend, and certainly not with our neighbouring local groups. I think the important thing is that we are continuing to attract new members – we see this every four months when the Group Newsletter invariably shows a dozen or so new names – but obviously a similar number must be dropping off at the other end. Of course there will be unavoidable reasons for some of those we are losing. For others, I know that Neil is working hard to follow up on those who don't automatically re-new their memberships annually. Thank you, Neil. But of course we can all help with this effort to keep membership levels up. When talking with your friends, family, neighbours, talk to them about the enjoyment *you* get out of Ramblers, and try to encourage them to join. Even if they wouldn't choose to walk with us themselves – wouldn't they want to support the work that Ramblers does, and what the Ramblers stands for?

That brings me neatly on to our **Walking** and other **Activities**. Again, well over 200 walks this year, with the now usual range of longer and shorter, moderate and leisurely. Walks on Sundays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, plus the increasingly popular strollathons – usually on a Thursday. A very big thank you to Pera and Viv for putting our programmes together. And of course these programmes couldn't be put together if it weren't for our walks leaders. So thank you very much indeed to them as well. Now, I'm told that Pera and Viv are frequently asked why there aren't more leisurely-paced walks on the programmes. Well, of course they'll put as many walks of any description on the programme as you like, but they can only do this if they have volunteers to lead them. So, if you want more leisurely walks – I'm afraid that's the only way you're going to get them, volunteer to lead 'em!

Moving on swiftly. The long-distance coach-walk this year has been the Cotswold Way, and very successful it's been too. And it's not finished yet. We do this on the first Wednesday of each month during the summer season, so we called a halt after the October leg and will be starting up again in April where we left off, with 3 (or 4) more stages to go. Thanks Pera and Gordon for all the work that goes into organising this.

Saturday Coach Trips. Many thanks again to Eve for organizing the two Saturday coach trips this year, the first to Petworth in June, the other to Arundel in August. Both very successful. I think these trips are extremely valuable events to have in our programme as they provide not only an opportunity for our regular walkers to be able to walk in a slightly different bit of countryside than on our usual weekly walks, but also because of the chance they give for some of our less active members to still get out with the Group, with all the social benefits that brings, and hopefully spend a relaxing day at an interesting NT location or other place of interest.

Other Walking Activities. In concluding what I'd wanted to say about the Group's walking activities can I just add that I believe we've contributed to Central Office's various "festival" type events this year, that is the Festival of Winter Walking and the Walk About Festival in September. In addition, we were involved by contributing walks to the RBWM's programmes of "Fit for Life" activities – a very worthwhile initiative, I think, aimed at getting those residents of the borough leading a more sedentary-type lifestyle, more active. And, importantly this year, we volunteered our services by joining in and indeed leading the Thames Path Baton Relay when it passed through our patch between Marlow and Windsor on 18th July celebrating the 20th anniversary of the 1996 opening of the Thames Path National Trail.

Group Holidays. Three Group holidays again this year. 38 members went for four nights to the HF House at Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, at the end of April. This differed from the Group's recent HF holidays in that we hired HF leaders rather than use our own members to lead the walks. This was mainly because we now have fewer members who feel able to commit to being able to lead; but also – isn't it only fair that all our people should be entitled to enjoy their break like the rest of us, rather than have to work and take on this very considerable responsibility, whilst they're on holiday? 18 went to Schladming in Austria for a week with Secret Hills in July, and then 34 spent four nights in Sidmouth, again with Secret Hills in mid-September. All three holidays were reported to have been a great success so a big thank you to the organizers, Arthur Holland (Bourton), John Payne (Schladming) – I can't remember who organised the Sidmouth trip!

Just one other thing to mention on the Bourton trip. A number of questions I believe have been asked about the calculation of the refunds which were made for those on this holiday. If you still have questions, Arthur is the person who can provide the answers.

Moving on to the **Shows and Events** we've attended this year. We've taken our Publicity Stand to the Nicholson's Shopping Centre in Maidenhead, to Hurley Regatta, Datchet Fair, the Littlewick Show, Cookham Regatta, Eton Fair, and the Combined Charities Fair, at all of which Eve and her loyal team of volunteer helpers have done a tremendous job in talking to the public about the health and social benefits of walking and – perhaps more specifically – the benefits of joining Ramblers. They also sold quite a lot of our books and maps – but more about our publications later.

The Shows and Events are, I suppose, the main thrust of our **Publicity** activity, so linked to that I'd just like to mention something else we've done this year, which I don't think we've done before, at least not in recent years – we've given a couple of talks about the Ramblers and what Ramblers do. The first was to a meeting of the Bisham Parish Council, and the second was to one of the social groups linked to the Maidenhead United Reform Church (for those that don't know, our link with the URC is that we use a room in their premises for our bi-monthly committee meetings.) Thank you Pera for your help on both those occasions.

Social Events this year, for which we again have to thank Pauline Thompson have included the traditional pre-Christmas Party, a Skittles Evening in February (and thanks also to Jean for her support with that, as it coincided with Pauline's indisposition), a mid-summer evening picnic in Braywick Park, and a return visit to Combermere Barracks in October. All very successful, thank you Pauline. And of course we mustn't forget the also very successful New Year Lunch at Winter Hill Golf Club which Alma organised once again. Thanks Alma. (Cue for a commercial – tickets for the Christmas Social and for the NY Lunch will be available at the back of the hall later.)

And whilst I'm talking about social events this is perhaps an appropriate point to mention the Garden Party which the committee hosted in July for our very hard-working team of footpath wardens to say a big "thank you" to them for all they do.

The **EBR Golf Society** (submitted by Meg Knight) has had a really good year, with four meetings and no rain! 12 members enjoyed a team Scramble at Farnham Park in April, and we had a turnout of 12 again for our second fixture at Billingbear in June. Our third day was at Bird Hills in August followed by Richings Park in September where 16 of us played for the various club trophies. The winner of the Claret Jug was Alan Harding. Hilde Jackson was the first lady and won the Shirley Morgan Cup. The Rumblers trophy was won by Peter London.

(Meg adds) I hope to organize similar dates next year but will vary the days as Fridays do not suit everyone. As always we would really welcome more members of any standard. Anyone interested should e-mail me on megknight08@gmail.com

Conclusion So, as you'll have gathered, and as I said at the beginning of this report, another successful year for EBR. But apart from what I've talked about there has also been a lot of "behind the scenes" work going on this year – much of it related to what you'll remember we discussed at last year's AGM, particularly the RfP publications, and also the work to try to put to good use the very significant accumulated funds we hold, both locally and in our Endowment Fund at Central Office. Funds largely generated over the years from the sale of these publications.

RfP In East Berkshire (the green book) has been completely updated by a dedicated team of volunteers from within the Group, following a thorough checking of every word, map, comma and hyphen, and is on the point of being re-printed and re-published. We had hoped the new edition would have been ready for a launch tonight, but unfortunately a last minute delay at the printers has made this impossible. However, work is already well in hand to do the same for the blue book – RfP Along the Thames. Thanks to all those who have put, and are putting so much work into these mammoth tasks – especially to Steve Gillions who has been co-ordinating everybody's efforts as well as undertaking a huge chunk of the work himself.

So hopefully we will continue to retain a steady income from the sale of these excellent publications. Meetings and on-going communications have been taking place throughout the year with Ramblers Central Office, with our partner groups in Berkshire Area, and with other bodies concerning the uses to which these accumulated funds can most appropriately and beneficially be put. We'll keep you updated on all of this, but you've heard enough from me for now. I'm going to stop there and I'll leave you to hear more about this in the reports which will follow from your Treasurer, Alan Harding, and Footpath Secretary, Steve Gillions.

Finally, yes finally, you'll have gathered from the length of this report that the Group has had an extremely busy and active year – but I'm sure that, like me, you will all consider by far the most significant event of EBR's year has to be the very sad loss just seven days ago of our Group's Life President, Margaret Bowdery.

Thank you everyone.

David Bailey

GROUP TREASURER'S REPORT

Alan Harding reported as follows:

The Treasurer had circulated a copy of the 2015/16 accounts with the AGM Agenda. Noteworthy matters were as follows:

- Income from publications was down on 2015 because some titles are not available; some receipts from shows -£500- had come in after yearend; and the wholesaler was a quarter behind in reporting sales. These were not of concern. The value of stock was further reduced.
- Footpath work costs are accelerating as the RBWM tackle the 'gates for stiles' list which EBR is supporting at 50% of cost
- Self-funded activities had been properly self-financing
- The deficit increased to £1616 but given the above explanations this is acceptable.
- The cash balance is a very healthy £28,206

In answer to questions, the Treasurer explained:

- the Rambling for Pleasure series will in future be published by our wholesaler, not by EBR; he will be printing the titles and pay a commission to the EBR. When EBR require stocks – for example to sell on the stall – they will be bought at wholesale price.
- the EBR Endowment Fund held at Central Office has been increased to £42,000 with the addition of accumulated interest and it will be spent on projects, not administrative costs, and only after agreement from EBR.

FOOTPATH SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary read Steve Gillions report as follows:

Due to a long-standing prior engagement I am unfortunately unable to attend the AGM this year, so to all of you I offer my apologies and to Liz I offer my thanks for reading out my report. If you have any questions at all you would like to raise directly with me, please don't hesitate to get in touch by phone or email.

I must first thank all the volunteers who keep a watchful eye on our footpaths and other rights of way, and especially the Footpath Wardens who also carry out the twice yearly footpath surveys. The Big Pathwatch survey, of which more later, showed that the rights of way network in the Borough is in a good state of repair and this is due in large part to the efforts and vigilance of our members.

A significant development during the year was the Borough's decision to gate part of Eton FP 51 as a result of pressure from a residents group concerning late night anti-social behaviour. East Berks Ramblers, Windsor Ramblers and others objected to the closure, particularly since FP 51 was established as part of the planning permission for the riverside residential accommodation where the complainants live. Although the hours of closure are limited – between 10pm and 5am – and only a very short stretch of path is affected, this is an unfortunate precedent and we should be very wary of similar approaches from other occupants of 'gated communities' who seek to limit public facilities for their own convenience.

There have been a number of other specific rights of way issues.

A minor diversion to Hurley FP 18 where it passes through Berkshire College of Agriculture has been formally agreed. We supported the proposal as we think it provides an improved route and better views than the original line. BCA has agreed to ensure clear signage.

Last year I reported that changes to the footpath network between Mount Farm and Malders Lane (Cookham FP's 17, 21 and 19) had been proposed by the landowner. We and others, including Cookham Parish Council and the Cookham Society, objected to the changes but they remain on the table at the time of writing. We will continue to argue for the status quo.

We understand informally that a diversion of part of Maidenhead FP 19 may be sought by the landowner. The path is part of the Green Way East in North Maidenhead and we will keep a close watching brief on this in view of past difficulties in this area and the need to safeguard the Green Way itself.

A number of complaints were received in respect of footpath issues, and the Borough's Rights of Way team generally responded well. Cox Green FP 10 south of Thrift Wood was perhaps the most significant where the path was made impassable due to turf cutting and subsequent flooding. The Borough agreed a recovery plan with the landowner and an action plan to prevent any recurrence.

The Big Pathwatch exercise organised nationally by the Ramblers finished in December last year. Many thanks to those of you who submitted returns on the footpaths on our patch. Our results were very good, and the Ramblers decided to use the Borough as a national case study. In total, 87% of our grid squares were checked, and 79% of them were considered to be well-kept. This was considerably better than the South East as a whole. We received some good

publicity on this in the Maidenhead Advertiser. The Ramblers intend to publish their Pathwatch national action plan shortly.

I have continued to represent East Berks Ramblers on the Thames Flood Relief Discussion Forum and this year have become a member of the Local Access Forum alongside Gordon Marrs.

Many of you will be familiar with the 'Green' and 'Blue' Rambling for Pleasure books devised and written by Dave Ramm and David Bounds. They generously bequeathed the copyright on these to East Berks Ramblers and we have profited considerably over the years from the excellent sales figures. Stocks are now very low and over the last year we have been revising and updating both books. The Green Book is now with the printers and should be available very soon. Work on the Blue Book is well advanced and I am hopeful of publishing early in the New Year, subject to the printer's schedule.

My thanks to all those who have checked out the walks – in all weathers. And to all of you here who are going to buy the books as soon as they are available.

Finally, my thanks to all committee members for their advice, support and patience throughout the year. And yes, the date of next year's AGM is already inked in my diary!

MARGARET BOWDERY

I am sure that by now most of our members will have heard the sad news that Margaret Bowdery, our Group's Life President, passed away on 4th November.

In 1970 Margaret was a founder member of what is now known as the East Berks Ramblers Group. She first became involved in footpath work when she moved to Maidenhead in 1964 and found it impossible to use many of the local paths. She became well-known across Berkshire, and indeed nationally, for her tenacious approach and has been described as one of the country's most respected champions of rights-of-way.

The list of Margaret's achievements is prodigious including the opening of Temple footbridge over the Thames near Hurley in 1989, in collaboration with the Maidenhead Civic Society; access over a new weir bridge to Sashes Island at Cookham in 1991; the re-opening of the towpath under Cookham Bridge in 2007 following a public inquiry; success at another public inquiry leading to the opening (by Theresa May) in 2005 of what is now known as the "Bowdery Arch" - a tunnel under the busy A404 at Bisham and significant improvements to the Thames Path National Trail in Maidenhead.

Margaret's name was synonymous with the protection of footpaths. The number of obstructions she resolved, and the number of paths she claimed, or re-claimed, was phenomenal.

She was awarded the MBE for services to rambling in 2006, and met Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh at a reception given at Windsor Castle in 2010 for those involved with work in rural communities.

Margaret's family have informed us that there will be a small (family only) committal at Amersham Crematorium on the morning of Friday 16th December. This will be followed by **a thanksgiving service at St Luke's Church in Maidenhead at 2.00pm in the afternoon to which all are welcome.**

David Bailey

COUNTRYSIDE MATTERS *reports Gordon Marrs*

Path Wardens

I await the last few returns from the path wardens for the Autumn Survey. Checking through all the reports received so far has shown only some minor problems relating to signage, path surfaces and overgrowth. When the exercise is complete I will draft a summary report for the RBWM rights of way team.

Our thanks are due to the team of volunteer wardens who help to keep our rights of way network in such good shape; my especial thanks to Dick Bedford and David Spencer who are retiring after many years in the role.

There is currently a vacancy for a warden to look after part of Bray parish, please contact me if you are interested in the job.

Planning Issues

1). The redevelopment of the old Stiefel Laboratories site on Lower Cookham road has given us the opportunity to address the long standing issue of the missing link in the Millennium Walk. Negotiations with interested parties, has

resulted in a promise to use Developer contribution money to create a new footpath, from Lower Cookham road to the Thames Path.

2). We have supported Cookham parish council in objecting to the proposed housing development on the site between Poundfield Lane and Terrys Lane, because it would have an adverse affect on two major footpaths.

EBR PATH IMPROVEMENTS *from Pera Marris*

Your path improvement subcommittee has been working hard to improve our local walks and utilising some of our funds.

Andrew Jeffery (Work Party Organiser), John Payne and Gordon Marris recently repaired the steps joining Hodgedale Lane to the Permitted path across Juddmonte Farm. Gordon was actually on the working party that built the original steps, quite a few years ago! Andrew had premeasured, treated, and cut all the pieces and the whole job went smoothly taking only a few hours.

We have also paid the Royal Borough to replace a swing gate on Cookham 27 and 4 stiles and a gate on Bray 54, 55, and 58)

Finally we are negotiating with Winter Hill Golf Club to realign footpath Cookham 37 and build a set of substantial steps down the bank to join footpath Cookham FP36 by the railway bridge.

If you spot any jobs that you think need doing, or stiles that need replacing or attention, please contact Pera or Gordon Marris.

PHOTOS OF STEPS up to Golf Club from Pera?

EBR GROUP BREAKS IN 2016 AND 2017

AUTUMN 2016 *reports Eileen Dorney*

34 members of EBR travelled independently to Sidmouth in Devon on 11th September for a 4 night stay at the Sidholme Hotel, a large Victorian mansion built for the Earl of Buckinghamshire in 1826 and a 10-minute walk up the hill from the small seaside town.

The holiday was organised for us by Secret Hills Walking Holidays, who were responsible for the accommodation, walk leaders and coach transport where required and 3 walks of between 3 and 10 miles with differing levels of difficulty each day. They were inland along the River Otter to Ottermouth with views over Budleigh Salterton, via the South West Coastal Path to Branscombe village (with the opportunity if preferred to visit the Donkey Sanctuary) and starting from the hotel to Sidford via Beacon Hill and the East Devon Way. Our thanks go to our leaders Alan, Paul, Lesley, Chris and Katie who did a great job but, they needed to be introduced to our "banana break" which was unheard of in Shropshire.

Apart from the Branscombe day, which was beset with thunderstorms and torrential rain so umbrellas came in very handy, we had good weather and fabulous views in an attractive part of the country. My own abiding memory is returning to my room in the turret after breakfast to find that a seagull had seen the lunch I had bought and put on the windowsill ready to pack and, through an opening of only a few inches in the sash window, had taken it all, packaging as well with not even a crumb left. Lesson learned!

SPRING BREAK IN WALES 12TH – 16TH JUNE 2017

Arthur

DOLOMITES JULY 2017 from John Payne

AUTUMN 2017 10th to 13th SEPTEMBER: *A holiday in Llangollen and the Dee Valley, somewhere the Group has not been before, writes David Bailey.*

Arrangements have been made for the Group's Autumn break in 2017 to be based in Llangollen, staying at the Hand Hotel. Once again, the holiday is being organised for us by Secret Hills Walking. It will be a four-night break, Sunday 10th to Wednesday 13th September inclusive.

Leaders will be provided for two short, local walks 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 between 9 and 11 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 4 miles on easier terrain and allowing more time for sightseeing or exploring. Areas covered will include the Berwyns, the Dee Valley, Offa's Dyke, and the spectacular Horseshoe Falls.

The cost of the four night en-suite 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 £372 pp. There will be a single supplement 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 payable to EBR as a deposit.

The balance will be required by 1st 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

EAST BERKSHIRE RAMBLERS WALK ALONG THE COTSWOLD WAY – 2016/2017 *reports Rpsmary Davies*

Pera and Gordon Marrs once again led the National Trail walk for EBR members and associates. The choice for 2016 was the Cotswold Way which runs for 102 miles. On the first Wednesday in April the coach set off from Maidenhead, full of happy walkers, for the historic market town of Chipping Campden, the start of the trail. The weather was mixed with the occasional rain shower but the group was in good mood except for one member who sadly left her sandwiches in a field when delving into her rucksack for her wet weather gear! All was not lost as the lunchstop was in the picturesque town of Broadway full of lovely tea shops with lots of delicious menu options – much nicer than a packed lunch!

The Cotswold Way was formally launched as a National Trail in May 2007 and runs for most of its length on the Cotswold escarpment with fantastic views. However, what makes it unique is its concentrated variety, diversity and hills. One minute we were walking through wildflower meadows, then through shaded beech woodlands rich with the colour of bluebells and the scent of wild garlic and another day we had the pleasure of passing through a wonderful vineyard.

We walked on the first Wednesday of every month from April through to October when we reached North Nibley, a Gloucestershire village a mile or so outside Wootton-under-Edge. We have covered just under 70 miles of magical walking and we look forward to setting off again from North Nibley in April 2017 to complete the remaining 30 miles or so of the trail.

Lost Glasses need to go home!

I have a pair of Specsavers Ladies glasses with light bronze finish to the frame and a pair of black chunky sunglasses. They were left on the coach after the October leg of the Cotswold Way. Surely you have missed them by now! Contact Pera Marrs on 01628 629155.

NEWSLETTER AND PROGRAMME DISTRIBUTION *write Gordon Marrs and Neil Adamson*

Those of you who do not receive your Newsletter and Walk Programme by email will have noticed a change this time. The Newsletter costs significantly more than the Walk Programme, due to the coloured front page. This was pretty, but the Committee decided to save money by printing the whole thing in black and white. Those who get it on line will still have colour.

We have been so successful in persuading members to receive them both on line that our postage bill has also fallen, and at the same time the number of envelopes for hand delivery has also plummeted. It is now not worth sending small numbers of envelopes out for hand delivery. The money saved by this printing change will cover the extra postage costs.

Your Committee would like to give **huge thanks** to those members who have walked the streets for years, hand delivering for EBR - Dick Bedford, Jenny Cooper, Roger & Judith Edward, Janet Goodlet, Carole Kemp, Dennis Lamb, Gordon Marrs, Gill Osbourne, Gill Powell our current postmen and women and to all of you who have delivered in the past.

SATURDAY COACH WALKS and SHOWS CO-ORDINATION

David Bailey writes:



Following the retirement of Eve Norton from the committee, members will be reassured to hear that Juliet Witcher and John Sainsbury (without wishing to join the committee) have agreed to take on the task of organising the Group's Saturday Coach Walks in future. We are extremely grateful to Juliet and John, and are confident that the excellent work done by Eve in arranging these trips over recent years will continue.

We're still looking for someone to take on the job of co-ordinating our attendance at the half-dozen or so Shows/events we attend locally each year to promote the Ramblers. Any volunteers out there? For further information about what's involved, contact David Bailey on 01628 or dbailey907@btinternet.com or Eve on 01628 629155 or evemail@nortonrl.plus.com.

STROLLERTHONS/VETERANS' WALKS 2017

These seem to have established themselves with attendances reaching the levels of the older walks. Nevertheless they still operate from a narrow base of venues and leaders, the latter being a dedicated bunch that I thank very much and hope they will continue.

The March and April walks are being led by Alex and me. We now want Strollerthons for May to August in the Spring newsletter. Perhaps we could have two a month in high summer? March is rather different from usual as the walk will include a visit to the Heritage Centre of John Lewis. The numbers are restricted to 25, so on March 1st. I ask people to book a place with me on 01628 661590 or email - jcvint@aol.com. If necessary we can have a repeat later.

If you would like to lead a strollerthon the requirements are few. Not more than 2-3 miles, mainly flat and no stiles. Able to regulate speed to be good for all even the slowest. If possible a good refreshment facility, cafe and the like. Tuesdays and Thursdays are the best days.

If you would like to lead a Strollerthon the requirements are few. Not more than 2-3 miles, mainly flat and no stiles. Able to regulate speed to be good for all, even the slowest. If possible a good refreshment facility, cafe and the like. Tuesdays and Thursdays are the best days.

Let's have a good strolling year.

John Vint.



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 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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FIRST AID COURSES

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

Saturday 4th February 2017 - 10.00am to 1.00pm in Woodley
Monday 27th February 2017 - 10.00am to 1.00pm in Woodley

These courses, run by St Johns Ambulance, are geared especially to the needs of Ramblers, and cover CPR and how to deal with chest pains, choking, severe bleeding, sprains and strains, bites and stings, foreign objects, asthma, etc. Those attending a course get an Essential First Aid Certificate, valid for three years. If you would like to attend the above 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 01189-774184 or by e-mail at turnerd2@btinternet.com The cost of EBR members attending will be covered by the East Berks Group

MODERN TECHNOLOGY COMES TO THE RESCUE IN AN EMERGENCY! *Writes Chris Roper*

Following my recent attendance at a St. John Ambulance course for Ramblers, I'd like to share two useful items of information...

1. The 999 Text Service for Emergency Calls

If you are involved in an incident and need to call for assistance, but cannot make voice calls, you may now **contact 999 emergency services using an SMS text** (Short Messaging Service) from your mobile phone. This service was first introduced in 2009 to assist the hard of hearing and those who have a speech impediments. Due to its success in various areas, it has now been made available to anyone who needs to make an emergency call where contact would be difficult or impossible for the people involved

The service will assist those needing emergency assistance in remote places when mobile reception is poor and there is not enough signal to make a voice call. The benefit is that a text message can be composed and sent in a single operation. Register now ... don't wait for an emergency!!

To Register: Text the word 'register' to 999.

You will receive a reply and you need to follow the instructions you are sent - very simple operation! This will only take approx two minutes of your time and could be a life saver!

To Use: You should specify Emergency service required - information about your location - nature of the incident and those involved.

2. St John Ambulance First Aid App

This application is **FREE** and is available for IOS and Android.

The **App** includes the latest first aid advice and protocols for dealing with emergency and non-emergency situations. It is simple to follow with illustrated guides and voiced instructions.

RAMBLERS VOLUNTEER DAY IN NEWBURY, 29th January 2017

David Bailey writes:-

Ramblers Central Office is organising a series of Volunteer Days across the country and one of the first will be held at the Donnington Valley Hotel near Newbury on Sunday 29th January 2017. The plan is to have several workshops in the morning covering things like Ramblers Routes, Leadership, or Treasurers' training, aimed at those already involved in some way. Also there will be some skills workshops to try to get those not yet involved, more so (eg. first aid, what to take walking with you, etc.)

Lunch will be provided, then in the afternoon the aim is for further workshops, navigation practice, or a short walk.

Central Office would like the Berkshire Area to help staff the day. Costs will be covered. If you would like to help, let me know and I will channel your offer through the Area committee.

For further details about attending the event as a Ramblers member, and how to book, visit the Ramblers website at www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone Go to Ramblers Roadshow – Newbury (Berkshire). Tickets, Sunday 29th January 2017.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Pauline Thompson, our Social Secretary, writes:

To give others a chance to go following a successful visit last year, in October 15 members enjoyed a visit to Combermere Barracks in Windsor. It followed the same format as last year but this time we saw lots of horses, being put through their paces training with their riders, in the stables where we were able to stroke them (and give them mints!). A couple of Army farriers let us watch them shoe a lovely horse called Molly, who stood watching us patiently as the job got done, and they also gave us an insight into their work. A good day out!

On 13th November 6 members enjoyed an evening concert at The Mill at Sonning Theatre. We had a 2 course meal and then were entertained by a 10-piece group How Sweet it Is - 5 musicians and 5 singers who played and sung the music of Motown and great dancers they were too!

The next event will be the EBR CHRISTMAS SOCIAL on Saturday 10th December at Holyport War Memorial Hall 7.00 for 7.30. Delicious food provided as ever by Arthur and Veronica, plus dessert. Thank you very much to those who have offered desserts already - you know who you are and it is very much appreciated. If anyone else feels able to make a pudding for the night that would be great and if you let me know, that would help too.

After the meal there will be a raffle and then dancing with John the caller, who came last year and who was very good. **THERE ARE STILL 16 TICKETS AVAILABLE at £10 per person.** Please contact me as soon as possible and come and help to make the night a success.

If any men (or women) could commit to being at the hall at 6.15 to 6.30 to help put up the tables on the night, that would be great! Offers of help much appreciated, as I cannot do it all on my own!

Contact me at pauline.thompsonwestfield@gmail.com or on 01753 548185.

Looking forward to 2017: A **SKITTLES** evening will be held in February. Watch our website **Eastberksramblers.org** for more details in due course.

NEW YEAR LUNCH – 15th January 2017 – Winter Hill Golf Club

from Alma Richardson

The New Year lunch is now **fully booked**. However there may be some cancellations so those people who would like to be put on a waiting list should contact me (alma.richardson@btinternet.com or 01628 781827) and I can let you know if there are spaces.

The lunch will be preceded by a 4/5 mile walk led by Gordon and Pera Marrs starting at 10.15 am from the club car park (far end).

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.

Do you need to update your collection of the Group's <i>Rambling for Pleasure</i> walks guides and Parish Maps? They are available from David Bailey or from our stand at local Shows. They are also available by post from East Berks Ramblers Publications, 1 Fernley Court, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 7NZ. Please add £1.25 per copy P&P for <i>The Secrets of Countryside Access</i>, £1.00 per copy for guidebooks and 50p per copy for footpath maps. Please make cheques payable to East Berks Ramblers Publications. Parish maps can now be downloaded from the internet.
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Books: <i>The Secrets of Countryside Access</i> £2; <i>The Three Castles Path</i> £7.99; <i>In East Berkshire; Along the Thames; Around Reading Series 1 and Series 2; Kennet Valley and Watership Down</i> (at £4.95 each).
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Maps: Windsor and the Great Park (£1.50); Hurley and District (£1.00); Cookham and District (50p).
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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 22ND March 2017**.

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

EAST BERKS GROUP AUTUMN BREAK 2017, LLANGOLLEN

Sunday 10 September – Wednesday 13 September 2017 (4 nights)

To: David Bailey

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

Singles only: In the event of a single room being unavailable I **am/am not** prepared to share a twin room.

I would prefer to share a twin room with

From..... Telephone.....

Address

.....

Postcode..... Email.....

I am/We are/not Full members of East Berkshire Ramblers

I am/We are Associate members of EBR and understand that I/We may initially be put on a reserve list.

Please complete/delete where applicable.

Date received by David Bailey