



**Sutton
Coldfield**

January/February 2025 Newsletter



A spring-like day at Longdon Green in February

**No winter lasts forever;
No spring skips its turn.**

Hal Borland

Chairperson's Report

January 2025 marked the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Ramblers. The winter (digital) edition of the Walk magazine gave an extensive overview of the growth and development of the Ramblers during that time. It was fitting, therefore, that immediately after Christmas the government committed to lifting the deadline for all rights of way in England to be mapped on the official 'definitive map'. (Provision for Scotland and Wales was already in place.) The previous deadline was 2031 which would have been extremely difficult for local councils to meet, with the inevitable loss of historic rights of way.

Walks Programme I'm sure that walkers everywhere will be hoping for drier and calmer weather conditions than those experienced in January. There have been promising signs of spring on some of our walks: particularly on Rosie and Tony's Longdon Green walk where we basked in welcome sunshine at lunchtime, and some lovely displays of snowdrops and early daffodils were spotted on other walks. The first walks of this year have been across three counties with excellent numbers, in excess of thirty on some Sunday walks. John and Marcia started off the year with a large turnout for the Thursday Whittington walk through a varied landscape. Barbara and John led a group, travelling to Bournville by train, around the interesting features in the 'garden village', returning to the city centre along the Worcester & Birmingham canal towpath. John C's Shenstone walk saw Ramblers enjoy views of the icy Staffordshire countryside. No llamas sighted this time – they were probably keeping warm inside.

Ynyr led an excellent first walk for us, with a large group, starting from Newton Regis and incorporating the villages of Austrey and Appleby Parva. There was lots of history to explore on Barbara and John's Arrow Valley walk where we passed the ruined Bordesley Abbey to reach our comfortable coffee stop at the Forge Mill Museum – a reminder that at one time, ninety percent of the world's needles were manufactured in Redditch! A bright, crisp morning was perfect to appreciate the tranquil surroundings of Sandwell Valley Country Park on John and Marcia's Thursday walk. The large group included several guests who enjoyed their first walk with us. Despite damp, gloomy conditions, Andy led an enjoyable walk around Barr Beacon, maintaining a good pace which kept us warm and in good spirits. Thanks, as always, to our walk leaders for an interesting variety of walks.

Warwickshire Area AGM This was hosted by Southam Ramblers and proved to be an interesting and informative occasion. Thank you to those who represented our group at the meeting. (More details in separate item.)

Curry Night Thanks to Tony for arranging the sociable event at Zaazi at The Lodge which was a great success. The food and service were excellent and we were entertained after the meal with a hearty rendition of 'I'm a Rambler' by Dave R

(instigated by Josephine!). Next month we have a Backstage Tour of the Symphony Hall and lunch, kindly organised by Sue H, which will give a fascinating insight into the workings of this wonderful concert venue.

Spring Coach Walk Sunday 30th March: two walks of around 9 miles and 6-7 miles in the Peak District. Details are on the website. Please make a note of the date in your diary.

Emergency contact details Thanks to everyone for carrying their ICE card on walks. You may have seen that Ramblers are redesigning the card which will be available later in the year. It is also recommended that you add emergency contact details to your phone.

Lastly congratulations to Ranjit on completing both the trek to Everest Base Camp and the ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro - see later item.

I look forward to seeing you on a walk soon – minus the mud! With best wishes to all,

Barbara

Ramblers' Footpath Working Party

For many years, Sutton Ramblers have been responsible for the maintenance of footpaths and stiles in Shenstone Parish. This involves a monthly working party meeting from May until September/October clearing mainly enclosed footpaths of overgrowth and carrying out repairs to stiles where needed. We have help from the Staffordshire County Council Ranger Service where mowing of paths is needed. Ramblers' Central Office provided funding for power tools – a hedge cutter and trimmers – which are a big help, otherwise we use our own hand tools.



We usually meet on the third Thursday of the month (to avoid clashing with walks) at 10am and work until around midday. As we park at the Toby Carvery or the Holly Bush pub, there is the opportunity for a sociable coffee or cold drink (depending on the weather) afterwards.

In the next few weeks an email will go out asking anyone who is interested in being involved to contact me. It's important work keeping footpaths open and in use, and offers the benefits of exercise, fresh air and good company in lovely surroundings. I hope you'll be able to join us.

Barbara

Warwickshire Area AGM - Saturday February 8th

This year's Warwickshire Area AGM, hosted by Southam Group, took place at Long Itchington Community Centre. Sutton Coldfield Group was represented by 9 members out of a total attendance of around 100. We were welcomed with tea, coffee and an array of delicious home-made cakes and biscuits while we viewed an excellent display of photographs taken over the 40 years since the formation of the Southam Group.

The meeting commenced with the customary welcome from the Chairman, Dr Peter Rookes, assisted by Secretary Janet Lockett and Treasurer Ann Hebden. Dr Rookes referred to the challenges the area faces due to the considerable disruption caused by the HS2 works but extolled the virtue of the Millennium Way and its 44 circular walks which passes through our area, and the 36 Rail Trails in Warwickshire which were compiled by the Heart of England Community Rail Partnership. He paid tribute to Michael Bird for his diligent and skilful participation in planning consultations and was pleased to note that the deadline for registering lost paths under the '*Don't Lose Your Way*' initiative has been lifted. All other committee members were thanked for their continued hard work over the past year and all were re-elected unanimously.

The Treasurer remarked on the fact that Area funds had increased substantially over the past year so no funding was claimed from Central Office for the current financial year. There was then a discussion regarding the training, first aid and navigational skills for potential walk leaders and it was agreed to bring this up at Area Council.

There followed a captivating presentation by local resident of Napton on the Hill Tom Heap, best known as a presenter on BBC's *Countryfile*, in which he shared his passion for the importance of sustainability and protection of the environment as witnessed in his two books "Land Smart" and "39 Ways to Save the Planet" of which he was happy to sell signed copies. He spoke about his BBC career, particularly in the Department of Rural Affairs, about climate change and the problems associated with 'bringing wild land under the plough and cow'. It continued with a lively question and answer session covering subjects ranging from solar panels, bio fuels and behavioural changes to the amount of overseas land required to feed us in the UK.

Afterwards, Lucy Robinson Chair of Ramblers Trustees spoke about Governance issues and the 10 year strategy of charitable objectives. Following the meeting we enjoyed a delicious lunch (of quiche, hot buttered potatoes, green, tomato and mozzarella salads and garnishes with crusty bread) followed by more home-made cakes, before embarking on a choice of 3 and 5 mile walks.

Colin Little

Walk Programme 2025

Our first walks for 2025.....



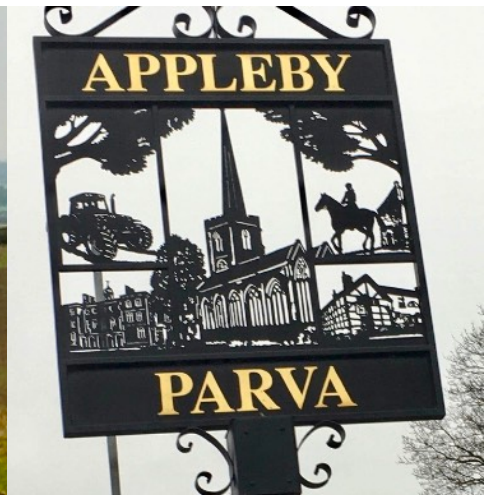
A sunny first walk of the year at Whittington.



More sunshine at Bournville.



Shenstone and the Shining Stone.



Extensive views at Newton Regis.



Historic buildings and early snowdrops at Arrow Valley.



35 walkers on a spring-like day at Longdon Green enjoying quiet lanes and post walk refreshments at the Red Lion.



Two local walks - Sandwell Valley and Barr Beacon.

Check out more pictures and walk details on facebook.com/suttoncoldfieldramblers

Past Walk Details

After each walk we save photos and other details of the walk on our website. Gradually we are building up a library of walks which will be useful in the future for anyone planning to lead a walk. If you haven't explored this part of the website, click on *Walks and Walking* and follow the tabs (or the orange arrow if using your mobile) to Sunday or Thursday walks. You can see details of walks, photos and the route maps if the GPX data was recorded.

Photos - following the walk, photos can be sent to Rob Halley for uploading to our website. Rob advises that if your camera is set at very high resolution photos will be resized to approximately 1000 x 600 pixels so if possible set your camera to a more moderate resolution setting. Also, if you can set the format to JPG rather than JPEG or any other format, that helps. Ideally landscape format (unedited) is better. In that way all the photos will be the same size on the website.

Tracking Routes - there are several apps available to record routes in a format called GPX – GPS Exchange Format. One of the simplest to use is the Mapy App - other apps are available. Mapy is a Czech app and so appears as mapy.cz. It's an online mapping service which provides detailed maps of the whole world (especially Czechia and Slovakia!) and includes features focussed on different activities – walking, hiking, running etc.

The free version of Mapy.cz is perfectly adequate for recording GPX data. It can be downloaded from the appropriate app store. Look for the icon.



To record GPX data - open Mapy – tap on the three bars at the bottom – click on ‘start tracker.’ As you walk Mapy will record the data for your route. When stopping for a break Mapy stops and starts again when it senses movement. When the walk is finished, click on ‘Save Data.’ You can create a folder for the walk and share it via email. It’s as simple as that! If you record the route, please send it to Rob Halley so that it can be added to the website.

You can also try the *Plot your own Routes* facility on our website under the *Walks and Walking* tab. This enables you to plot a route and then export the GPX data. You could then import the data into Mapy (or any other suitable app) and use it on a walk to see where you are, or where you should be! To get started with *Plot your own Routes* try exploring it with the Help menu.

If you need any help, ask Rob or Tom Halstead on the next walk or send an email.

Future Walks

Details of future walks can be found on the website suttoncoldfieldramblers.org.uk. This shows confirmed walks plus provisional dates where walks are proposed but the recce has not yet been undertaken. If you would like to offer a walk please get in contact with the relevant Walk Coordinator;

Sunday Walks - Andy Addison andyaddison11@hotmail.com 07565153649

Thursday Walks - Julie Hamblen hamblen74@gmail.com 07817151165

Next Coach Walk

Our coach walk for March 30th will be to the Peak District. Two walks have been planned: the B walk will be from Earl Sterndale to Hartington and for the C walk a circular route from Hartington. To book a place text Tony Power on [07759300856](tel:07759300856). Coach fare of £10 will be payable on the day. The coach will leave Wyndley car park at 8.30am.

Car sharing to walks

Ramblers are encouraged where possible to car share to the walk start. Please text the walk leader if you plan to go directly there.

Checking for Walk Updates

In case walks have to be amended/cancelled at short notice please check both the website and emails for walk updates.

Check the Weather Outlook

bbc.co.uk/weather/outlook

News from the Ramblers



Historic Paths

The Government has announced that it plans to repeal a cut-off date for registering more than 40,000 unregistered footpaths on the Definitive Map. Defra said local authorities had struggled under the burden of recording historic rights of way before the (current) 2031 cut-off date. Ross Maloney, CE of the Ramblers, said the Government's decision to end the threat to thousands of historic right of ways in England is a fantastic step forward in making sure everyone can enjoy the benefits of walking in nature.

The Ramblers ***Don't Lose Your Way Campaign*** was launched in 2020 and asked members and the wider public to find 'lost' footpaths - rights of way not recorded on definitive maps. Find out more at ramblers.org.uk/support-us/dont-lose-your-way

An Access to Nature Bill

The Ramblers will continue to push for government to introduce a transformational new Access to Nature Bill for England in order to break down all barriers so that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, can enjoy the benefits of walking in nature. More details can be found at ramblers.org.uk/media/ramblers-case-support

ICE - In Case of Emergency Cards

The Ramblers advise that following a review of the ICE card and members comments there will be a redesign for release later this year. This is likely to include making the card the same size as a credit card and also waterproof. The Ramblers also recommend adding emergency contact details in your phone. There are numerous videos on YouTube showing how to set up ICE details on both iPhones and Android phones.

Ramble Worldwide

If you are thinking of arranging a holiday with Ramble Worldwide (the brand name for Ramblers Holidays) don't forget that if you nominate SCR at the time of booking the group will receive a financial contribution as part of *The Walking Partnership* which provides direct funding to grassroots walking groups.

www.rambleworldwide.co.uk

Ramblers Members Benefits

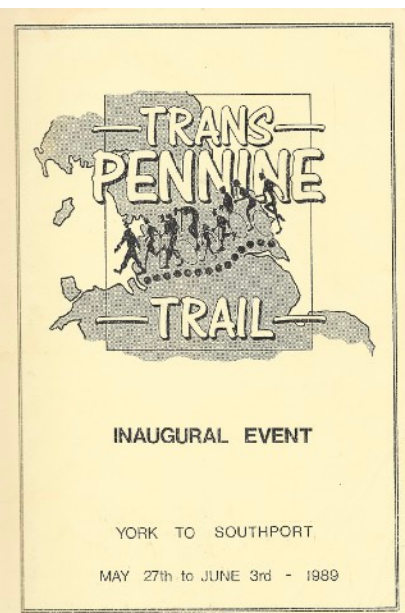
Check out the benefits provided by your Ramblers membership.

ramblers.org.uk/support-us/my-benefits

Ramblers '90 years of rambling'

After the recent article about the 90th anniversary of the Ramblers, I thought I would share my own connection to walking in the UK. Back in May 1989 my dad, Dave Addison, was one of the main instigators in the inaugural event to celebrate the opening of the Trans Pennine Trail. The walk started in the historic city of York (see photo) passing through the Pennines and finished in my hometown Southport on the Lancashire coast. The trail now runs from coast-to-coast between Southport and Hornsea and is 215 miles (346km) long, with a spur to York and Kirkburton. More information about the trail can be found on the their website www.transpenninetrail.org.uk

Andy Addison



Members News

Ranjit summits Mount Kilimanjaro

Congratulations to SCR member Ranjit Bindarh who in January successfully made the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro - the highest mountain in Africa.

Leading up to this achievement Ranjit had a busy 2024 in which he completed the UK National 3 Peaks in June, the Lake District 24 Peaks in August, Mount Toukbal in September and Everest Base Camp in November.

Hopefully Ranjit is taking a rest but no doubt is thinking of future adventures.



New Members;

A warm welcome to our new members;

Annette Baker, Robin Baker, Elaine Benson, Richard Benson, Jeanette Boland, Jasbinder Kaur and Tom Tomes.

Dates for the Diary 2025

Coach Walk March 30th - check email from Rob Halley for booking details.

Spring Break - booking has been made by Rosie for April 11th to 14th at HF Bourton-on-the-Water.

Autumn Holiday - booking has been made by John H for September 28th to October 1st at the Norton House Hotel, Mumbles Swansea.

Christmas Walk and Meal - Rosie has booked with Fishmore Hall near Ludlow for December 7th.

Thank you to all who contributed to the newsletter. Contributions are invited for the next Newsletter, please send these to sharonfreedman04@gmail.com by April 7th.



hf holidays

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