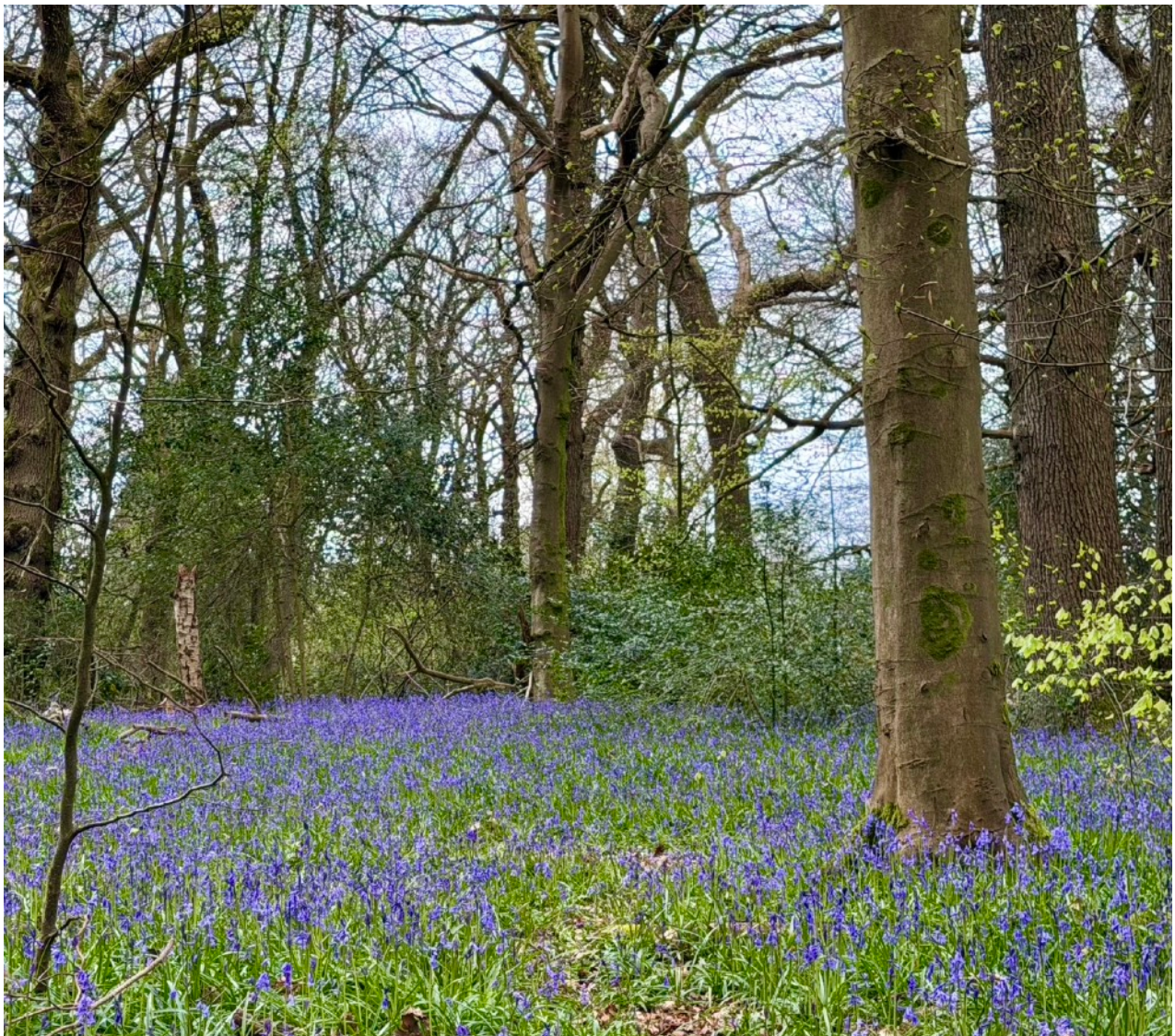




**Sutton
Coldfield**

March/April 2026 Newsletter



Bluebells on the Lickey Hills

There is a silent eloquence
In every wild bluebell
That fills my softened heart with bliss
That words could never tell

From Anne Bronte's The Bluebell

Chairperson's Report

Fine, warm spring weather has resulted in good walking conditions, with the majority of footpaths now firm underfoot. This should please everyone!

Coach Walk Our spring coach to the Shropshire Hills and Church Stretton was very successful with an almost-full coach. We welcomed a good number of guests who, along with members, enjoyed an exhilarating day with fine views. Thank you to the organisers and leaders: Ynyr, John C, Tony P and Rob. Look out for details of our summer coach walk to Welshpool on Sunday 26th July.

Walks Programme Walking more locally, our first Sunday walk in March was in Kinver, led by Pat, where we enjoyed the dramatic sandstone caves, including Nanny's rock and the NT Rock Houses. We explored Hurley Common and other nearby Warwickshire villages, and in April, again in Warwickshire: Ansley, Church End, Arley and others. Both walks led by Ynyr. For Sharon's Worcestershire walk, we travelled by train to Alvechurch to walk through delightful countryside including the Lickey Hills Country Park, Cofton Hackett and Withybed Green with superb views. Judy W and Barbara T's walk started from Gentleshaw, with its iconic windmill, following part of the Two Saints' Way route. Thursday walks were generally closer to home, visiting Rushall and the Arboretum with Barbara T; Chorley and nearby villages with Stephen; Hints and Weeford with Ynyr and a longer walk, led by Jeanie, starting from Lichfield City railway station following part of the Erasmus Darwin Walk route. The time spent by leaders recceing and leading walks is greatly appreciated.

Chris & Jenny's Amble Many thanks to both for this initiative – putting on a shorter, slower-paced amble along canal towpaths from Alrewas. There was an excellent response from members. It would be a real boost to the walks programme if some of those who enjoyed it, (including several who have led walks in the past), would offer to lead a similar amble. As is often pointed out, there is support for this available by contacting either Ynyr or myself via the website.

Evening Pub Walks The dates for John & Marcia's summer pub walks are now on the website. Please put them in your diary.

Footpath Working Party commences footpath clearance mid-May. Please see separate notice about volunteering for this activity

Social Activities Coming up on 6th May is the visit to Sutton Arts Theatre, organised by Ynyr, to see the production of 'Same time Next Year' which promises to be an entertaining evening, along with the free drink on offer! Looking ahead to September, our holiday to Dolgellau is fully-booked and should be a wonderful experience staying in the

newly-renovated HF property surrounded by spectacular scenic views in southern Eyrí (Snowdonia).

Camino Portugese Wishing our group of 'pilgrims': Anita M, John, Mike, Sharon, Rob and friends, safe travels and great walking in Portugal and Spain. Looking forward to hearing your travellers' tales. (See separate report.)

We have a varied programme of walks planned for May – do have a look at the website. I hope to see you on some of them.

With best wishes to all

Barbara

Thank you to Andy Addison

Andy Addison, our Sunday Walks Coordinator, has decided to stand down after over six years in the role. Ynyr Owen has kindly agreed to take over. We thank Andy for his hard work, commitment and generous support of our Ramblers' group. We look forward to seeing him on Sunday walks in the future.

Barbara and the SCR Committee

Footpath Working Party

It's that time of year, with rapid spring growth, to organise our footpath maintenance work in the Shenstone area. New volunteers, as well as existing members, are welcome to be part of the working party. No particular experience is needed: just bring shears or secateurs and wear protective clothing (long-sleeved tops and trousers) gardening gloves and strong footwear (walking boots advised).

We usually meet on the third Thursday of the month (apart from in May when we'll meet on Friday 15th) starting at 10am and finishing around midday. We are a sociable group and if we are working with a pub or cafe nearby we have refreshments afterwards. If you would like to be involved and support this important work, please email me - barbara.twort@yahoo.com

Barbara



Walk Programme 2026

Our March and April walks have offered great variety.....



Good turnout for the first Thursday walk in March; a Walsall walk from Rushall with the Arboretum and the impressive St Michael's Church.



A blustery day for a walk around the attractive villages of Chorley, Farewell and Gentleshaw - with welcomed refreshments at the Malt Shovel.



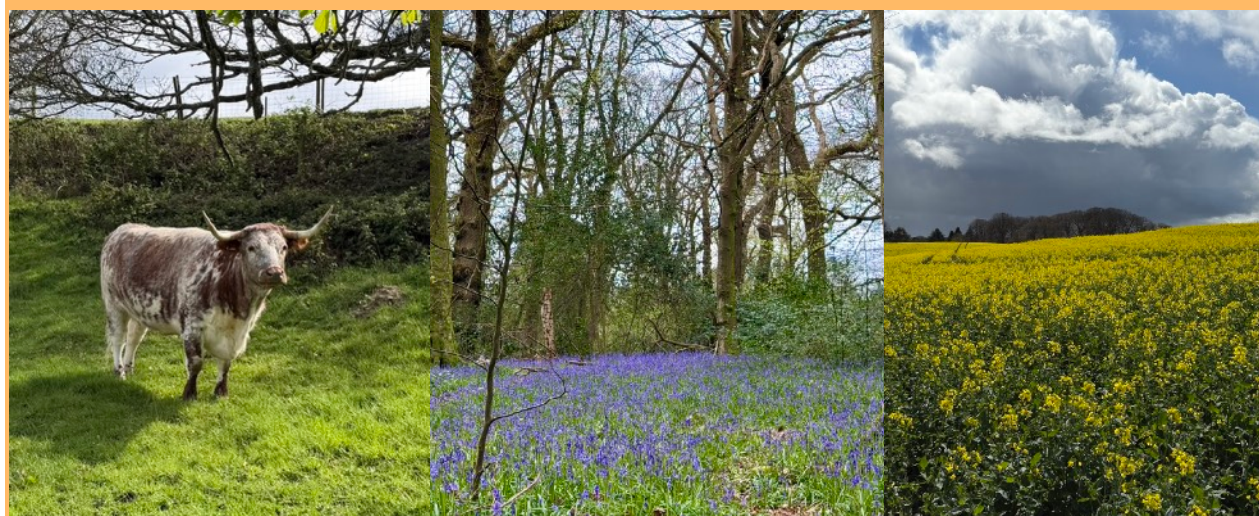
Kinver with its spectacular red sandstone caves.



Hurley Common with wonderful display of daffodils at Baxterley Church.



Thursday walks; from the Strawberry Cabin in Hints; and from Lichfield City Station to Pipe Green and Curborough using a section of the Erasmus Darwin Walk.



A walk using the train to Alvecurch taking in the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, the Bittell Rerservoirs and the Lickey Hills with displays of bluebells.



An amble at Alrewas using the Trent & Mersey Canal and the Coventry Canal.



A sunny walk from Ansley with fine views of the North Warwickshire countryside.



More sunshine with a walk from Gentleshaw.

Check out more pictures on the SCR website suttoncoldfieldramblers.org.uk and on the group Facebook page facebook.com/suttoncoldfieldramblers

Future Walks

Our programme for May and June offer a great variety of walks and locations. Details of future walks can be found on the SCR website suttoncoldfieldramblers.org.uk. This shows confirmed walks plus dates where walks are being planned but full details are not yet available. It is a good idea to regularly check the website for any changes and additions to the walk programme - sometimes these may be at short notice.

There are a few dates for Sundays still to be filled. Sunday walks can be long or short, and both distances could be offered on the same Sunday. If you are interested in offering a walk please contact Ynyr - ynyr.owen@hotmail.co.uk

Coach Walks Sunday July 26th

The summer coach walk will visit the Welsh border town of Welshpool. Located in the Severn valley, the area provides good walking opportunities, with the surrounding hills offering outstanding views. The aim is to offer three walks; a long walk of around 10 miles, a walk of around seven miles and a walk of around five miles. In addition there are a variety of tourist attractions including the National Trust Powys Castle, the Welshpool and Llanfair light railway and the Montgomery Canal. More details of the walks and coach booking will be put on the website closer to the date. If anyone is interested in helping with planning, taking part in the recce and leading a walk, please let Ynyr know.

Evening Pub Walks

John and Marcia will again be leading a series of summer Wednesday evening Pub Walks. These will be easy walks of around 4 miles, and will start at 7.00pm returning to the pub by 9.00pm. Please meet in the car park of the pub at 6.45pm. The dates are May 20th from The Fox Walmley; June 17th from The Old Swan Stonnall; July 22nd from The Bull's Head Shenstone; and August 19th from Brown's in Sutton Park.

Amble Walks

Chris and Jenny are proposing to offer a series of Sunday Amble Walks; walks that are shorter (up to 5 miles) than typical Sunday walks, fairly flat and at a slower pace.

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.

Check the Weather Outlook

bbc.co.uk/weather/outlook

Shropshire Hills Coach Walks

On March 30th over 40 Ramblers headed by coach to the Shropshire Hills and Church Stretton with three walks on offer. It turned out to be a very blustery day on the hills and wet at times but all the three groups managed to have a good day out.

The longest walk at just over 10 miles was led by Ynyr. This set off from the Bridges Inn, heading up Golden Valley for a lunch stop below the brow of Haddon Hill. Encountering quite challenging weather conditions, the group continued up to Pole Bank, the highest point on the Long Myndd, with a group photo around the Toposcope. The drop down into Townbrook Valley gave some welcomed protection from the wind, with the walk finishing in relative calm weather in Church Stretton.

The second group's route of around 7 miles started from All Stretton led by Tony and John C. This headed north-west up the V-shaped gorge of Ashes Hollow to meet the Shropshire Way. At Pole Bank, in very blustery conditions, the group crossed the longer walkers heading in the opposite direction. From Pole Bank the group descended along Light Spout Hollow, with an exciting climb down the waterfalls to join Carding Mill Valley and into Church Stretton.

The third group led by Rob started in Church Stretton and followed the Cwms Circuit walk of around 5 miles - a circular valley walk skirting around the base of the big hills - Caer Caradoc and Hope Bowder Hill - it offered good views but without the climb!

Thanks to Tony, John, Ynyr and Rob.



The 2026 Camino - The Portuguese Camino May 2026

A group of eight - five ramblers, one sister and two friends - fly to Porto on May 14th from Birmingham - we are Sharon, Anita M, her sister Maggie who is joining us from Ireland, Mike, Rob and his friends Rita and Dave, plus myself. For Anita and Maggie it is their first Camino. I walked this Camino "solo" in September 2013 and met about six Pelegrinos during the 260 km or so to Santiago de Compostela. In 2025, the Portuguese Camino Coastal Route reached a record popularity, with approximately 85,651 to 90,000 pilgrims completing this path. It emerged as the third most popular route overall and the fastest-growing option, accounting for roughly 17% of all pilgrims arriving in Santiago de Compostela, which saw a record year exceeding 530,000 total walkers. Extraordinary stats.

Our flights, accommodations and luggage transfer were booked last September to ensure both some choice and being able to stay in the towns and villages which suited our itinerary. This is partly along the Coastal Camino in Portugal, switching to the Central route midway, crossing from Valença, Portugal to Tui, Spain, by traversing the River Minho on the INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE with no passport control! Then, we shall have 119 km left to walk in Galicia to reach Santiago de Compostela. Hopefully we shall enjoy walking alongside the Atlantic for most of the first week, including a "rest" day in Viana do Castelo, a beautiful town - the remainder being through the verdant, folkloric and memorable Galician countryside.

Lots of people say the camino is addictive - it is for me! Who doesn't hanker after freedom, good chat, fresh smiles from people you've just met, coffee at its best, glorious food, a sea breeze just enough to cool you down, a new view around every corner. Yes it's addictive all right. A break from a world in pain, rogue politicians, needless greed, wars, essentially evil deeds done making mother earth groan. It's in most peoples' nature to be kind, helpful, good. When else can you start the day, not having any real idea of where exactly you will be that night but feeling assured you are expected! Yes, the camino is addictive, it gives us what we need in troubled times.

After arrival, we have a free day in Santiago de Compostela, a city I never tire of <http://ensuitepilgrim.blog/2026/04/13/santiago-de-compostela-what-shall-we-see-outstanding-universal-value/>

"You don't always notice when it begins. Somewhere between the first step and the many that follow, something settles. Your breathing finds rhythm. Your thoughts stop competing. The path doesn't change you. It clears space. And in that space, you recognize yourself again." Steven "Indiana" Huysseune

John Twort

St. Editha's Way - Polesworth Abbey to Lichfield Cathedral

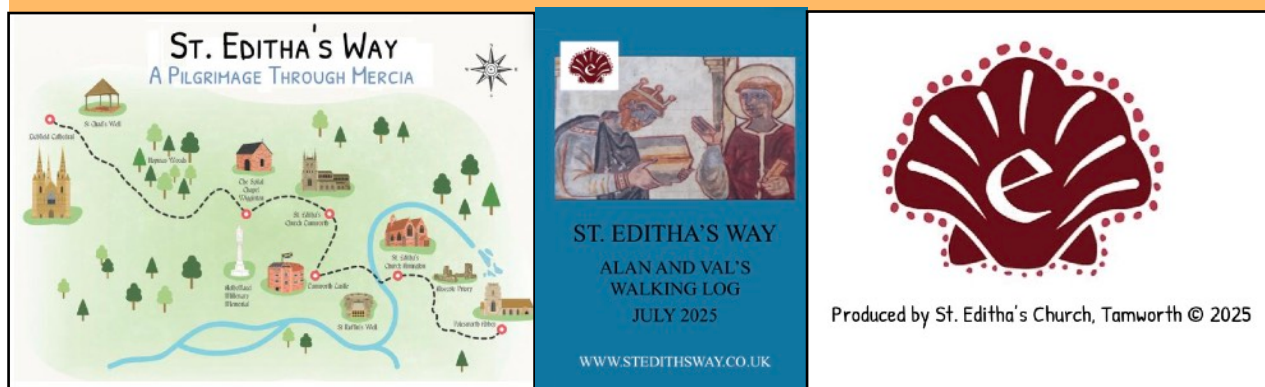
In July 2025 a new "pilgrimage route" St. Editha's Way was launched as part of the Athelstan 1100 celebrations held in Tamworth - it is thought that Athelstan the King of Mercia (of which Tamworth was the capital) was the first King of England, crowned in 925 AD. There is an old tradition of pilgrimage to Tamworth associated with Athelstan's sister St. Editha who was celebrated for her charity and good works, renouncing royal luxury for a holy life. The town's Church is named after her.

Several other churches in the area also share the name St. Editha, notably Polesworth Abbey. However it is not known if the St Editha, the patron of the Abbey is the same as the St Editha of Tamworth, or a different saint from an earlier period.

The route is not a marked trail but the opportunity to visit a number of notable and historic locations (Polesworth Abbey, St Editha's Amington, Tamworth Castle, St Editha's Tamworth, Spital Chapel Wigginton and Lichfield Cathedral) as part of a long linear walk or a series of shorter walks. An illustrated guide has been produced by local walkers Alan and Val Newbold www.stedithasway.co.uk

I recently followed their guide (also using the OS App and Google Maps) for the Polesworth to Tamworth section. Starting at Polesworth Abbey (reached by bus from Tamworth) I followed the Coventry Canal to access Pooley Country Park and the Alvecote Priory. From here I returned to the canal to visit Amington Parish Church (St Editha's). This was not open but I had seen its wonderful Burne-Jones stained glass windows on an earlier visit. Returning to the canal I headed towards Tamworth. Before picking up the path alongside the River Anker there was a considerable section of road walking - with more time I would have remained on the canal and taken a longer route into the town centre. Following the riverside path I headed for the Castle and then St Editha's Church. I finished with a refreshment stop before catching the bus home. I plan to do the second part of the route to coincide with dates that the Spital Chapel in Wigginton is open to the public.

Sharon



News from the Ramblers

Ramblers Celebrate the King Charles III England Coast Path

On March 19th the King Charles III England Coast Path was officially launched; a 2,700-mile trail. The path connects towns and iconic landscapes and gives the right to explore beaches, cliff tops and green spaces alongside the path, making it easier and more enjoyable for people to experience the English coast. In total 1,000 miles of new path is being created and 1,700 miles improved around the country along with new signage and infrastructure.

Following the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, work started in 2010 by Natural England on creating the trail - it will be the longest managed and way-marked coastal path in the world. The Ramblers have campaigned for many years for better access to the coastline, and Ramblers' volunteers have worked closely with Natural England to create the best possible route for walkers.

The Path links with the Wales Coast Path - an 870-mile route encircling the Welsh coastline. This was completed in 2012 and was the first path in the world to follow an entire national coastline. There is no single official coastal trail in Scotland, though much of the shoreline is accessible due to Scotland's 'right to roam' law.

One of the key features of the King Charles III England Coast Path is its ability to 'rollback' with coastal erosion. This means that the path can be easily moved inland to adapt to the changing shape of the coast and ensure access rights remain in place for the future.

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



Members' News

A warm welcome to our new members; Eric Blissett, Sue Dullea, Gina Eagles, Steven Finlay, Zita McDonald and Zahid Zafar.

Dates for the Diary 2026

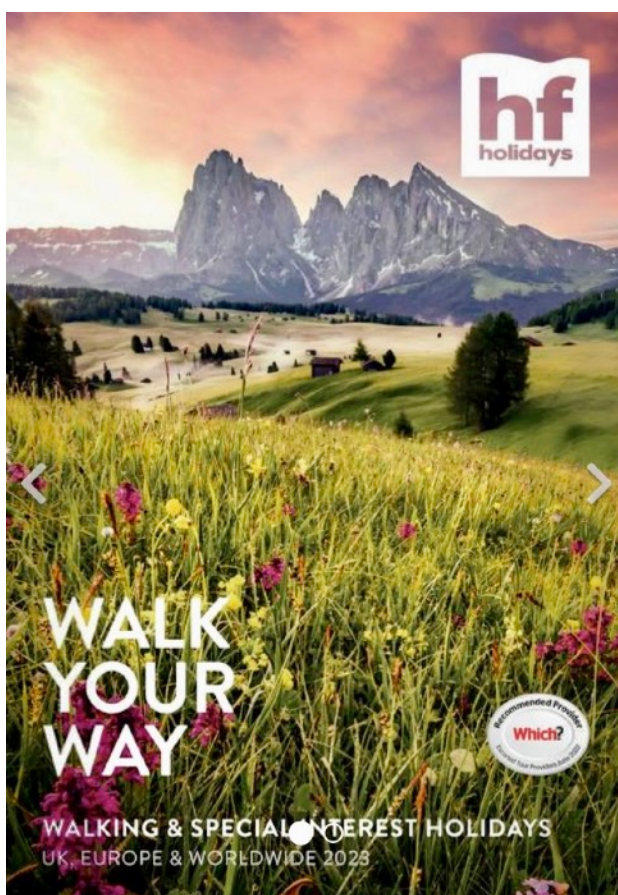
Visit to the Sutton Arts Theatre Wednesday May 6th: Ynyr has arranged a booking to see "Same Time Next Year" for SCR members who have paid for a ticket. If you have not booked but interested in going tickets may still be available.

Summer Coach Walk Sunday July 26th: This will be to the Welshpool area.

SCR Weekend Away September 25th: A three night weekend break to the HF House at Dolgellau has been arranged by Rosie. This is now fully booked.

Christmas Coach Walk: This is planned for Sunday December 6th to Ludlow.

Thank you to all who contributed to the newsletter. Please send contributions for the next Newsletter to suttoncoldfieldramblers-sharon-freedman by June 19th.



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