



March/April Newsletter



An encounter with Welsh Sheep on the Barmouth weekend.

Shy Sheep

Sheep seem shy to me.

**They leave their yard, wander freely in the field,
always with someone watching, except they don't know or care.
They have one thing in their heads and that is to graze on grass.**

James George

Chairperson's Report

With the start of British Summer Time and more evening daylight, I'm sure we all had hopes of better weather, but Storm Kathleen delayed that prospect for a while. However, we have some good walks planned for the next couple of months, including the coach walks to Coalbrookdale and Much Wenlock. Text Tony Power on 07759300856 to book your place on the coach if you haven't already done so.

Walks Programme Our February walks went ahead with only one cancellation due to bad weather, but planned routes on some walks had to be changed because of conditions underfoot. Andy led his walk on higher ground avoiding flooding in the Blithfield Reservoir area; he will lead the full walk on 19th May. John C and Chris successfully led a second attempt at their Shenstone walk which everyone enjoyed. Colin and Christine took us on a tour of the Arden villages; Anita and Barbara's walk explored Chasewater and its excellent station café; Mike had to change plans and put on an urban walk in Edgbaston and Harborne. We were fortunate with sunny weather for Barbara and John's Hartlebury Common and Stourport-on-Severn walk; June led an Easter Sunday walk in Sutton Park along the Seven Pools route and Jeanie took us around less-visited areas of Lichfield, including the partly-restored Lichfield Canal. Thank you to all walk leaders for planning and adapting routes to avoid challenging ground conditions. Details of John and Marcia's popular evening pub walks, starting next month, are now on the website - take a look.

Barmouth Weekend Many thanks to Jenny and Chris for arranging the spring break to Barmouth. Whilst windy weather produced some dramatic seascapes, walks were able to go ahead, with enjoyable evening entertainment to follow.

Basic Navigation Skills Training The workshop was well-received by participants; there are plans to hold practical follow-up sessions for those interested in further developing their navigation skills. Thanks to Andy for organising the workshop, and to Julie, Sharon, Rosie and Tony for assisting. As was mentioned in the last newsletter, Ramblers have a range of online resources which are well-worth investigating; ramblers.org.uk/go-walking-hub/beginners-guide-navigation

Forthcoming Events There are two social events on the calendar: a Skittles Evening with Supper on Thursday 9th May and the visit to Highbury Little Theatre on 19th June, arranged by Rosie. We also have a provisional booking at HF Bourton-on-the-Water 11-14th April, 2025. Please contact Rosie if you are interested in going.

Footpath Working Party will soon begin work on clearing footpaths and repairing stiles in the Shenstone area, supported by the Staffordshire County Council Ranger Service. If you would like to help with this work in keeping footpaths accessible, please let me

know. It offers fresh air, exercise and usually drinks afterwards! No previous experience needed.

We have a variety of activities to look forward to and I hope many of you will take part in some of the walks and social events in the coming months.

With best wishes to all,

Barbara

Barmouth Spring Break

38 intrepid ramblers enjoyed another successful weekend in Barmouth, with many thanks for excellent organisation by Jenny and Chris. We stayed for the second time at Myn y Mor Hotel - the last occasion was in October 2018. We were well looked after and well fed, perhaps a little too well!

There were dire predictions for weather, but these proved largely inaccurate. There was certainly a stiff breeze, producing spectacular waves crashing on the beach, but despite a few near misses nobody lost their hat. Saturday was fine and warm with only the odd spot of rain, and on Sunday there were only a few showers. However no attempt was made on the highest ground.

A variety of walks were led by Rosie and Tony, June and Jill, Chris and Jenny, Kay and John, Tom, and Mike, and enjoyed by all. There were no adventures with helicopters this time.

Evening entertainment was provided by Phil with his quiz, Liz with her dingbats, and picture puzzles by John Collins, John and Kay, and Jenny and Chris, together with a numbers game by Rosie and Tony. Medals were presented to Liz and to Phil in recognition of their many years as "Quizmasters Extraordinaires".

We look forward to the next weekend!

Rosie



Walk Programme 2024

Check out more pictures on facebook.com/suttoncoldfieldramblers and suttoncoldfieldramblersphotos



Avoiding the flooding at Blithfield Reservoir.



Revisiting Shenstone and the work of the Footpath Working Party.



Spring sunshine for the Three Arden Villages walk.



Winter walks at Chasewater;
and Edgbaston Reservoir and the Harborne Walkway.



A largely mud-free walk at Hartlebury Common and Stourport-on-Severn.



Easter walk in Sutton Park;
and around Lichfield with the partly-restored Lichfield Canal.

Future Walks

Details of future walks can be found at suttoncoldfieldramblers.org.uk/walks/

This includes the first Coach Walk of the year to Coalbrookdale and Much Wenlock on April 28th, leaving Wyndley at 8.30am cost £10 per person. There are two organised walks of 8.7 miles and 7.4 miles, in addition members are welcome to book a seat on the coach and plan their own shorter walks or just spend time in picturesque Much Wenlock. Message Tony Power on 07759300856 to book.

2024 Evening Pub Walks start on May 22nd with a walk from the Toby Carvery at Shenstone Wood End.

Please check both the website and emails for walk updates in case it has been necessary to amend/cancel walks at short notice due to weather conditions.

Car sharing to walks

Ramblers are encouraged where possible to car share to the walk start. If you do plan to travel directly to the walk start, please remember to text the walk leader of your intention to do this.

Check the Weather Outlook

bbc.co.uk/weather/outlook

New Walk Leaders

For a full and varied programme of walks more leaders are needed. To add a walk to the programme;

Check the walks programme at suttoncoldfieldramblers.org.uk/walks/

Pick a date.

Contact our Walk Coordinators (Andy for Sunday walks andyaddison11@hotmail.com 07565153649 or Julie for Thursday walks hamblen74@gmail.com 078717151165) to pencil in the date in the programme and for further support.

Research for walk ideas. A starting point might be the Ramblers website, you will need to log in to access the route details <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/>

All sorts of walks from local short walks to walks further afield are welcomed. Walks ranging from 4 or 5 miles up to 9 miles are the usual. It also doesn't matter if we have recently walked in an area.

Organise a recce.

Contact Andy or Julie with further details.

Andy and Julie can provide further support for new walk leaders.

Local Walking Festivals

May is National Walking Month, an annual reminder of the benefits of walking and spending time outdoors. It is also a popular time for Walking Festivals, with three events in the Midlands.

Staffordshire Moorlands Walking Festivals 26th April to 6th May

Offering a variety of walks to suit various abilities and interests, mostly free. Details can be found at staffsmoorlandswalkingfestival.co.uk/

The National Forest Walking Festival 18th May to 30th May

Exploring the rich and varied heritage of the National Forest. Majority of walks are free and booking not required. Details can be found at nationalforest.org/visit/national-forest-walking-festival

Malvern Walking Festival 25th May to 2nd June

A long established festival, details of walks and bookings at malvernwalking.uk/



National walking month



Camino Frances Update - the final stage

This year a group of SCR Ramblers will be undertaking the final stage of the Camino Frances, having completed the first stage in 2022 and the middle stage in 2023. John Twort below provides an update on their plans.

Getting to Spain

Many of us will have persevered with Ryanair over the years solely for the cheap flights - I should be struggling to find any other reason except perhaps for the proximity of Birmingham Airport. The logistics of planning this stage from Astorga to Santiago de Compostela were hit by a double whammy from Ryanair, as both initial flights were cancelled. This resulted in us having to fly out two days earlier - not too onerous as a full day in Astorga is something to enjoy, especially for our new Pelegrinos - and our return flight is now much earlier on the same day. My main concern was getting us all aboard on both flights - the challenges and joys of organising independent travel!

Who's going?

The usual suspects: Tom, Rob, Mike and myself, plus five first time Pelegrinos: our very own Christina and four Solihull ramblers; Richard, Ray, Myra and Val. The connection came about as Val is both secretary of Solihull Ramblers and an ex-colleague of mine.

The Walking

The distance is 262km or 135 miles - 13 stages passing through some memorable towns, climbing up a couple of mountains (slowly) and enjoying beautiful scenery, all hopefully in fine weather - though we should be prepared for a spot of rain. On a practical level, all the accommodation was booked last year, as June is a popular month on all the Caminos. We will be staying in a variety of places en route with our luggage transported daily by the Spanish Post Office - THE CORREOS.

Some of the Highlights

Astorga - Museo de Chocolate, Palace of Gaudi and the Maragato cuisine.

The Cruz de Ferro at Monte Irago (1505 metres).

Molinaseca - riverside town, possibility of a dip!

Castillo de Los Templarios - Ponferrada.

Villafranca del Bierzo - pretty little town with glass balconies.

The climb up to O Cebreiro - you'll feel like you're on top of the world (1330 metres).

Triacastela - though nothing of the three 10th century castles remain.

Sarria - starting point for many pilgrims with sufficient mileage to get a Compostela.

It will be exactly 20 years since I began my first Camino here.

Portomarin with its dramatic approach over the high bridge.

Castro de Castromaior - 2,400 year old settlement with 360 degree mountain views.

Melide - to sample Galicia's most lauded culinary delight - octopus in paprika.

Arzua - La Tierra de Queso - the land of cheese and a gregarious community.

Monte del Gozo - 380 metres historic hill with first view of the Cathedral.

Santiago de Compostela- <https://followthecamino.com/en/blog/top-10-things-to-do-and-see-in-santiago-de-compostela/> A free day here.

Having first time Pelegrinos in the group will be a refreshing factor, I am sure, and a special achievement for them as they, hopefully, receive their Compostelas in Santiago - this is the certificate of completion for which you need two stamps a day in your pilgrim passport. These "Sellos" are easily obtained in churches, bars, restaurants etc - I got one from a fire station once.

Ultreia y Suseia for the hills and Buen Camino todos.

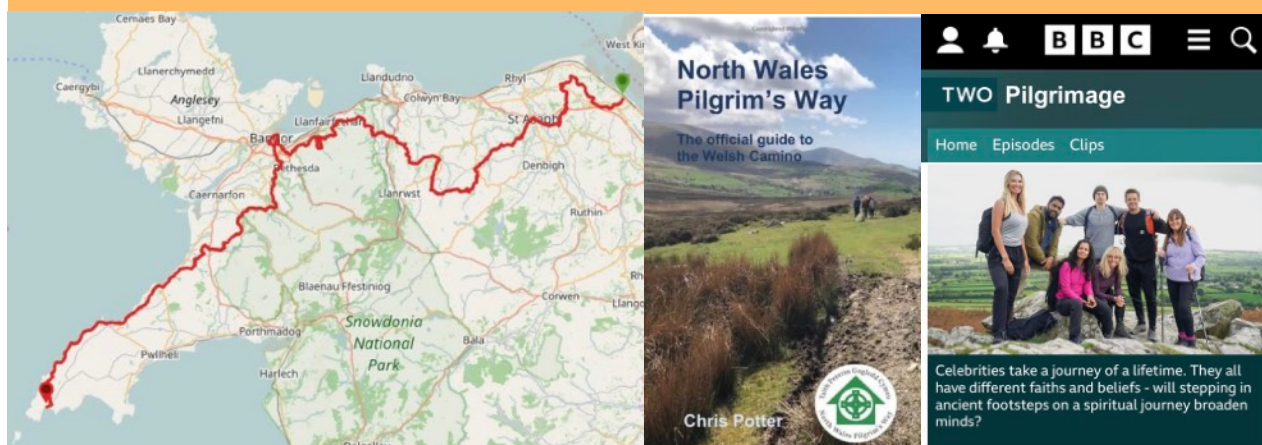
John Twort

A Welsh Camino

Closer to home is the North Wales Pilgrim's Way badged as the Welsh Camino (Taith Pererin Gogledd Cymru). This features in the sixth series of the BBC programme Pilgrimage - currently available on the BBC iPlayer.

The 130 mile route starts from Basingwerk Abbey, linking ancient churches and sites dedicated to Celtic saints, and finishes at Bardsey Island - Ynys Enlli. Centuries ago this was the destination for thousand of pilgrims drawn there by stories of the special peace to be found at what they thought was the edge of the Western world.

Like the various Caminos to Santiago de Compostela, the North Wales Pilgrim's Way has it's own passport and completion certificate. Full details of the route can be found at pilgrims-way-north-wales.org - it looks like a fantastic challenge and experience.



News from the Ramblers

Launch of the Ramblers' Strategy

The next Members Newsletter from the Ramblers will include details of their revised strategy ***Opening the Way: The Ramblers' Strategic Ambition 2024 and beyond***. In essence the Strategy aims to bring the benefits and enjoyment of walking outdoors in nature to many more people.

cdn.ramblers.org.uk/media/files/ramblers-opening-way.pdf?



Ramble Worldwide

If you arrange a holiday with Ramble Worldwide (the new brand name for Ramblers Holidays) www.rambleworldwide.co.uk SCR will receive a financial contribution if you nominate the group at the point of booking. This is part of ***The Walking Partnership*** which provides direct funding to grassroots walking groups.

www.rambleworldwide.co.uk/responsible-tourism/the-walking-partnership

Ramblers Members Benefits

Check out the benefits provided by your Ramblers membership.

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

Members News

New Members

A warm welcome to members who have recently joined SCR - Raj Bagga, Patricia Chare, Yasmine Clarke, Phil Colis, Susan McAleese, Gurjit Nijjar and Gerry Veart.

Karen's Walking Challenge for the Samaritans

Congratulations to Karen Swingler on completing her walking challenge in support of the Samaritans [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)



Karen exceeded her targets for both walking miles and fundraising - walking 202 miles and raising just over £400. The Challenge has also been an opportunity to raise the profile of the Samaritans where Karen is a Listening Volunteer.

Karen would like to thank her fellow Ramblers for their generous support.



Dates for the Diary

Spring Coach Walk to Coalbrookdale and Much Wenlock on April 28th.

Skittles Evening with Supper on May 9th arranged by Tony. Numbers limited due to size of room.

First Evening Pub Walk on May 22nd.

Visit to Highbury Little Theatre on June 19th arranged by Rosie.

Christmas Meal Coach Walk 2024 will be held at the Cleobury Golf Club, Cleobury Mortimer on December 1st.

Spring Break 2025 a provisional booking has been made by Rosie for April 11th-14th at HF Bourton-on-the-Water. Full details are on the website.

From the Archives

Photo from September 2019 of SCR on Camino.

This was at Sigueiro, Spain - the penultimate stop on the Camino Ingles before reaching Santiago de Compostela.



Thank you

.....to all who contributed to the newsletter. Contributions are invited for the next Newsletter - please send these to sharonfreedman04@gmail.com by June 10th.

