



**Sutton
Coldfield**

September/October 2025 Newsletter



Autumnal woodland - Brocton

Autumn Resignation

**Listen! The wind is rising, and the air is wild with leaves,
We have had our summer evenings, now for October eves!**

Humbert Wolfe

Chairperson's Report

Walking at this time of year is particularly enjoyable because of the wonderful variety of autumnal colour in the landscape. The weather has been mostly dry for our walks with footpaths still in good condition after the dry summer.

Walks Programme

We have had a good variety of walks in September and October: Thursday walks started with an interesting change – a linear walk from Lichfield City Station to Shenstone, with an unforgettable potato field near the end; skirting the golf club at Druid's Heath; a walk in the Lichfield area and Alrewas/Wychnor, without flood water this time! Sunday walks, of varying length, included Shustoke, Branston and the National Forest, Carsington Water, Chaddesley Corbett, Coughton, Hammerwich, Ridge Lane circular and Bednall and Acton Trussell. Thank you, as always, to our leaders: Ynyr, Ann, Barbara, Pat, Andy and Mike.

Walk Leader Training

You will be aware in communications from Ramblers' Central Office, that there is an updated approach to walk leader training, with all walk leaders – new and experienced – having either to record their experience with Ramblers or complete online training modules by the end of this year. This requirement has had the effect of reducing our pool of walk leaders unless more members are willing to take part in training. There are links to the training on the Ramblers' website at www.ramblers.org.uk/walk-leadership. Online training materials aren't appropriate for everyone, therefore if there is sufficient interest, we can offer a group training session in an informal setting (with refreshments), and an opportunity to discuss the materials and learn more about what is involved in leading a walk for our group. If this is something you would like to take part in, please contact Andy for further information andyaddison11@hotmail.com

Mumbles Holiday

A sincere thank you to John and Marcia for all their work in organising an excellent experience at the Norton House Hotel, and to everyone who contributed by leading walks, providing evening entertainment and generally enjoying themselves. (See separate report.)

AGM

You will have had notice of our AGM to be held on Wednesday 19th November 7.30pm at Four Oaks Saints' Cricket Club, Clarence Road, B74 4LS. Following the business meeting, there is a free buffet, bar and the opportunity to socialise with walking friends. I hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend. There is no need to book a place at the AGM.

Christmas Walks & Meal 7th December 2025

Rosie has sent out menus for the meal. Please make your choices as soon as possible, letting her know of any dietary requirements you may have, and transfer payment. Details of costs and method of payment were included in the email. The coach fare of

£10 is payable in cash on the day. Ludlow is a new area for the group which should provide excellent walking.

Members

Several of our members have recently undergone surgery, hospital treatment or are recovering from accidents. We send best wishes for their return to good health and full mobility.

Looking forward to seeing you at the AGM,

Barbara

Dates for the Diary 2025

SCR AGM

This will be held on November 19th at 19.30pm at the Four Oaks Cricket Club on Clarence Road, Sutton Coldfield - this is the same venue as last year. All SCR members are invited to attend. Following the AGM there will be a free buffet and the opportunity to socialise and catch up with fellow ramblers.

Formal documents for the AGM were sent in the emails of October 5th and further supporting documents on October 28th.

Christmas Walk and Meal

This will be on Sunday December 7th with a three course meal at Fishmore Hall near Ludlow, and a choice of two walks beforehand. Details and menu were given in the email of October 19th. Cost of the meal is £30 to be paid to SCR at time of booking, coach cost of £10 to be paid on the day.

Please contact Rosie to book with menu choices rosiempower@gmail.com by November 10th.

Sunday Mince Pie Walks

As in previous years there will be two walks in Sutton Park on the Sunday before Christmas (December 21st) with included mince pies! Further details will be given on the website.

New Members

A warm welcome to our new members;

David Abrahams, David Atkinson, Jill Evans,
Gary Mills and Roger Needle.

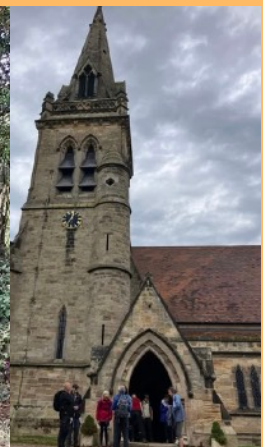


Walk Programme 2025

Our walks for September and October - an interesting variety of destinations.



Thursday walks in September - a linear route from Lichfield to Shenstone; and Druids's Heath skirting the golf course and with coffee stop in Aldridge.



Walking from Branston Water Park following the Trent & Mersey Canal and the 'Monks and Moorings' route, through Tatenhill and Dunstall.



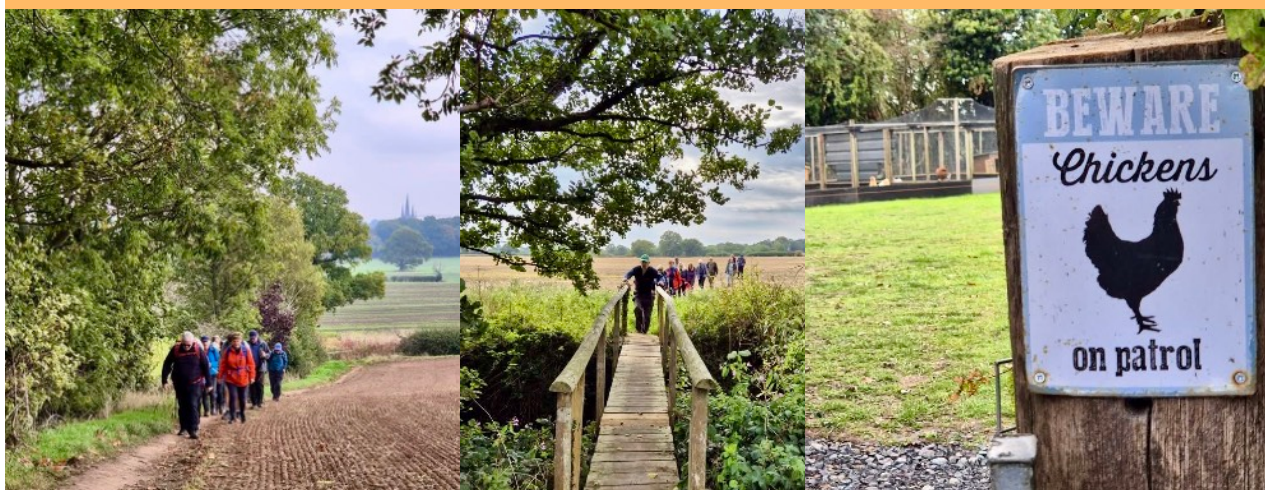
A misty start to a walk around Carsington Water.



A sunny day for the Chaddesley Corbett walk through woodlands and a section of the Monarch's Way.



More sunshine for the Coughton walk giving fine views across the countryside, following sections of the Arden Way and Millennium Way. Post walk refreshments at the Throckmorton Arms.



A Thursday walk from the Three Tuns in Lichfield to Pipe Grange and Jubilee Woods.



Walking in the Staffordshire countryside from Hammerwich over to Pipe Grange and Jubilee Woods.



A figure of eight walk from Alrewas following the Trent & Mersey Canal to Wychnor and returning via woodland and the Millennium Way to rejoin the canal.



Starting from the Church End Brewery in Ridge Lane, an undulating walk through woodland and up to a fine view point at Hartshill Country Park, then following the Centenary Way to return to the welcoming pub just as the heavy rain started!

A varied circular walk from Bednall with the attractive village of Acton Trussel, autumnal woodland, open fields and a section of the Worcestershire & Staffordshire Canal.



Check out more pictures and walk details on facebook.com/suttoncoldfieldramblers and on 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 the walks, photos and the route maps if the GPX data was recorded.

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.

Walk Leaders

To continue to provide a varied programme of walks, offers of both longer and shorter walks are welcomed. Our Walk Coordinators are now looking for walks for the start of 2026. Training and support is available for new walk leaders. If you would like to offer a walk please get in contact with;

Sunday Walks - Andy Addison andyaddison11@hotmail.com 07565153649

Thursday Walks - Julie Hamblen hamblen74@gmail.com 07817151165

Coach Walks

SCR's next planned coach walk will be the Christmas trip to Ludlow on December 7th. Leaders for 2026 coach walks are needed, if you have ideas of possible destinations and walks, and/or interested in leading, have a conversation with Tony P.

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

Autumn Break to Mumbles and the Gower

Our group enjoyed a three night autumn break arranged by John and Marcia staying at the very welcoming Norton House Hotel in Mumbles. The location offered easy access to the Wales Coast Path and the Gower Peninsula.



The group had a good choice of walks with three options on both days. On Monday June B led a linear 4 mile walk from Caswell Bay along the coast path to Langland Bay and back. John and Marcia's group walked from the hotel on a 7 mile circular route taking in Oystermouth Castle and the coast path between Mumbles and Caswell Bay, and returning to the hotel along the promenade. The longest walk of 10.4 miles was led by Mike F, a circular route from Oxwich crossing the bay and up to a view point near Penmaen to join the Gower Way.



On Tuesday John and Marcia led a circular 5 mile walk from Caswell Bay with a mix of woodland and coast path. Tony and Rosie led a 7.8 miles linear walk starting with a bus journey to Pennard and then picking up the coast path to return to Mumbles via Caswell Bay. Sharon led a longer walk of around 10 miles starting inland from Scurllage and heading towards the coast at Horton, continuing past Port Eynon Head - the Southern most tip of the Gower Peninsula - and along Overton Cliffs.



Following dinner there was evening entertainment coordinated by Mike. On the first night there was singing with Ken and his ukulele, and a game led by Pat called Majority Rules. On Tuesday evening Mike organised a quiz with Wales as the theme - it was a closely fought contest between the four teams! For the final night there was a mix of poems, verse and limericks read by Mike, Pat, Kay and Rosie. This was followed by a very funny recreation of Peter Cook and Alan Bennett's Great Train Robbery sketch from John C and Tom.

A big thank you to John and Marcia for their organisation and to all the walk leaders and contributors to the evening entertainment.

Sharon

The Time We Went to Mumbles - from Rosie

Didn't we have a lovely time, the time we went to Mumbles
 There were hardly any grumbles, the time we went to Mumbles
 What about the crumbles, the time we went to Mumbles
 And we're glad there were no tumbles, or stumbles, the time we went to Mumbles
 And hope there were no fumbles, the time we went to Mumbles
 So all praise to you John, though we know you are quite humble(s)

Stiles - and more stiles!

Often a topic of conversation on walks.....stiles have long been a feature of the countryside, coming in a variety of types, shapes and configurations; the simple step stile, squeeze stile, ladder stile, bridge stile and kissing gates. For new stiles and gates there is even a British Standard to ensure the 'safe and easy use for all people'.

Stiles are relatively unique to the United Kingdom and Ireland, reflecting our network of public footpaths criss-crossing private land, and so allowing walkers to cross fences while keeping livestock enclosed. The word itself is of Anglo Saxon origin from the Old English *stigel* meaning a structure for climbing over a fence or wall.

According to research by the Ramblers the public path network in England and Wales (which is around 140,000 miles) contains in the region of 140,000 stiles - so equating to a stile every mile! Of course this varies where you are walking and if historically and/or currently there is a need for stiles.

For some routes there has been significant investment in replacing stiles with gates - the 79 mile Yorkshire Wolds Way is the first national trail in England and Wales to be 'stile free' having previously boasted 120 stiles! The Ramblers' proposals for an Access to Nature Bill in England includes the removal of unnecessary barriers such as outdated stiles or creating a new access point if retaining a 'heritage' stile.

ramblers.org.uk/news/stile-outdated-barriers-countryside

Probably one of the biggest bug-bears for walkers is the condition of stiles. Like any issues on a public right of way these can be reported to the relevant Highway Authority ramblers.org.uk/go-walking-hub/dealing-problems-public-paths

To add to the challenge of a stile they are often magnets for mud and livestockas John found on a recent recce where he was 'welcomed' at the stile by a friendly horse.

If you enjoy a walk with many stiles I can recommend the area around Milwich and Sandon - where on a 10 mile route there are 40 plus stiles!



Ideas for Local Walks

Over the summer whilst on walks SCR members have been sharing their *favoured local walks* - places people return to regularly. Unsurprisingly Sutton Park was mentioned many times as a regular go-to for members living locally; a place to meet up to walk with fellow ramblers, friends and family.



Like many members *Judy M* is a regular user of the Park. Having lived in various locations around the town the Park has always been a feature of her life - she has fond memories of spending time there as a child - she was taken to see the World Scout Jamboree held in the Park in 1957. Knowing the Park so well makes it an enjoyable and easily accessed place to walk.

Margaret H describes Sutton Park as her favourite local walking place. "I feel very lucky to have a national nature reserve of over 2,000 acres almost on my doorstep. I visit the park almost daily, walking through to the town centre, meeting friends or just walking on my own. I never tire of seeing the Exmoor Ponies and cows, the rich variety of plant life, the pools and the diverse landscapes. With opportunities for easy tarmac walking and off road trails through woodlands and heathlands the park is a place for both a gentle amble or a more serious walk."

Another regular to Sutton Park is Sharon "I have a couple of places I regularly return to such as Hopwas, Shenstone and Middleton - locations that have multiple footpath options offering different routes and importantly where I can avoid any close encounters with livestock! However when I just want to stay local it's Sutton Park - just for an amble or a longer walk like linking the seven pools. Basically there is a walk in the Park to suit all moods whatever the season or weather....and the sight of the Exmoor ponies always makes me smile."



SCR will be returning to the Park for the Mince Pie Walks on December 21st.

Other popular routes mentioned nearby; Newhall Valley, a linear or circular route with plenty of wildlife to spot; the Ashfurlong/Chase Farm/High Heath walk with its elevated views, the Bishop Vesey cottage and sturdy stiles and gates, plus good coffee options; easy walking at Kingsbury Water Park; and over towards Aldridge, walks at Park Lime Pits, Cuckoo's Nook and the Dingle, particularly popular when the wild garlic is out.



Maybe a less well-known walking route from the Aldridge area is from Sue Wood. "My local walk from Shelfield lends itself to a variety of options, and is a surprisingly green ramble through farmland, a small privately managed wood, an open common up to Ryders Hayes Mere, and a disused railway line. There is also an option of canal walking. The history of this area is one of industry, coal and limestone workings, which accounts for the railway line, known as the McClean Way. Prior to its development as a walking and cycling corridor, it was part of the South Staffordshire Railway network, developed by engineer and railway pioneer John Robinson McClean.

One route is via a footpath from Stubbers Green Road to the Daw End Canal, heading left until Black Cock Bridge. A former pub also bears this name. Heading left down Green Lane, the entrance to Coppice Wood is on the right-hand side and is a tranquil space to take a circular diversion, returning to the entrance and following a pathway adjacent to Green Lane towards Clayhanger Common and the distinctive Lightning

Tree, which needs little explanation. Deer are often grazing in the nearby fields. Cross the Common and Ford Brook, over a stile to a path which can be very muddy in winter months. To the right is a wetland area, where several water fowl can be spotted. After a few minutes, Ryders Hayes Mere can be seen on the left. From here there are various options including paths to the McClean Way. Turning left is the return towards Shelfield, turning right will take you further along the McClean Way towards Brownhills.”

The McClean Way was opened in 2017 as an unsurfaced greenway. On-going improvements (it is now a hard surface route) have been developed by Sustrans (recently rebadged as the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust) in conjunction with the ‘Back the Track’ initiative involving significant volunteer input. The recent opening of the continuation of the McClean Way to Lichfield has attracted a lot of local media and community interest.

The route can be walked (or cycled) as a linear trail from Walsall through to Lichfield, in shorter sections using the various access points along the route, or as a series of circular walks. Information can be found on the McClean Way at walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/news/discovering-history-on-two-wheels-the-mcclean-way-reborn/ and the Facebook pages for the ‘Friends of the McClean Way’ and ‘Back The Track’.



Further afield, Rosie and Tony like to head to the Peak District seeking walks with great views and a good refreshment stop to finish. Sherston recommends Shipley Country Park (just outside Ilkeston) with its large lake, many paths and cafe. The Peak District is also a favoured destination for Julie - particularly the calmness of Carsington Water. Dave R regularly returns to the Arley/Bewdley area - again a location with multiple walks, fine river views and many refreshment options.

As winter approaches and people like to walk closer to home, it is good to know that we have such a great variety of walks in our local area.

Ramblers '90 years of rambling'



Sutton Coldfield Ramblers

Whilst the Ramblers' Association is marking its 90th birthday, the Sutton Coldfield Ramblers group is a mere 34 years old! The group was founded in 1991 by the Warwickshire Ramblers Area Committee - they placed a notice in a newspaper inviting interested people to a meeting in Sutton Library. The group's first AGM was held in October 1991.

This year's AGM is being held on November 19th at the Four Oaks Cricket Club - all SCR members are invited. Check the details in the email of October 5th.

Thank you to all who contributed to the newsletter. Contributions are invited for the next Newsletter, please send these to suttoncoldfieldramblers-sharon-freedman by December 18th.

WALK YOUR WAY

WALKING & SPECIAL INTEREST HOLIDAYS
UK, EUROPE & WORLDWIDE 2023

hf holidays

Which?

The world is just a step away.

Where will you ramble next?

Whether you enjoy classic trails or a more relaxed tempo, our new Collections make it easier than ever to choose from a range of fantastic walking holidays perfectly suited to your tastes and preferences.

classic discover odyssey self-guided

Four Collections. Made by us, created for you.

Choose any of our holidays and we'll contribute funds through The Walking Partnership to your group. Just tell us their name when you book.

ABTA

ramble
worldwide
The world is more beautiful on foot.

01707 537960
rambleworldwide.co.uk/TWP