

EDITOR: David Shaw • LAY OUT: Astrid Rembold • email: ask@rugbyramblers.org.uk

Dear Members,

On the first day of Christmas... I hoped for inspiration to write, and found little forthcoming, which might not be a bad thing. But, Lo !... out of the blue we hear news of a possible 16th National Park loosely centred on Llangollen and the River Dee, and from first-hand experience we know what magnificent territory this is. Currently classified like the Cotswolds as a National Landscape, this would be a huge step skywards towards protecting this beautiful landscape; public consultations ended on December 16th so now we await the conclusions of a long drawn out process before a final decision is made. But what an inspiration! Change is a continuous process and we see this in our Group; below we can read of events past, present and future, not as ghostly forms but as firmly rooted facts, recollections and reflections, perhaps sad, often joyful. For us, inspiration is often creating new walks, resurrecting old favourites, daring to try something new. There are no prizes for guessing who is leading the way in promoting our walk programme, including the resurrection of a Boxing Day walk. We hope all members will find a way, however small, to contribute something to the group. 'Dare to fail' could well be our motto, keeping our 'feet on the ground but our eyes on the stars'.

Seasonal greetings to all ... and happy walking in 2025.

David Shaw - Chairperson

An Asian Flyer

For a change of scene in November, I would recommend this itinerary in Vietnam with Ramble Worldwide!

I spent nearly 3 weeks with four other grannies and a very good English guide. Mainly sightseeing but with some gentle walking, we had started off in Saigon then flew North to Hoi An and Hue, then on to Hanoi and Halong Bay, finishing at Sapa. Unfortunately it was too cloudy to even see Fanxipan! It is a pity that Mai Chau has been removed from the future programme.

Faith Boyers



WhatsApp initiative

Following the discussion at the AGM, Bill Stubbins offered to set up a WhatsApp group for Ramblers Car Sharing. The aim is to encourage more drivers to offer lifts and provide more certainty that car spaces will be available (or taken) at the meeting point. The system can be used before each walk by those seeking or offering a lift to the walk starting point (from the agreed meeting point). While 15 people joined almost immediately, this new group is still open for members to join. You can contact Bill via b_stubbins@msn.com or 07717 222154; do remember to provide name and mobile number.

Gallery

The Way of St. James

The final stretch of 120+ miles on the Camino Frances was the autumn goal for David and Ratree.

The Way thronged with 'pilgrims' over the last 100 km. into Santiago de Compostela, the reward a certificate of completion and a second one for trudging the extra 58 miles into Fisterra, the 'End of the World' at 0.0 km. A complex travel itinerary included a rail replacement bus ... in Spain ... and a delayed ferry departure out of Santander due to engine malfunction on Brittany Ferries' flagship.



Area Annual General Meeting

Hosted by Southam Group on 8/02, the venue will be Long Itchington Community Centre, Stockton Road, Long Itchington, CV47 9QP. The meeting will start at 10.30am – tea and coffee from 10 am. Please make every effort to support the event. Speakers will be Lucy Robinson (Chair of the Ramblers Trustees), and Tom Heap (broadcaster) – who will have some of his books for sale.

Lunch is likely to be a cold buffet. Please let the Area Secretary know - Janet Lockett at jdlockett01@btinternet.com if you intend to go, preferably by 24/01. There should be an opportunity to go for a walk after lunch.



Great Brinton on Aug 2024, amazing walk led by Kay & Richard

Final steps

Members who have recently taken part in Navigation Courses will be interested to know that Derek Jones has finally decided to retire ... at the age of 85.

A DAY AT IRON BRIDGE

Walk Three - Hurry along, we're getting soaked out here! This must have been thought, if not said. Torrential rain was bouncing off Barby Road at 7.30a.m. on September 22nd. but a full coach was finally loaded and off it set. Ramblers are not easily deterred and were rewarded. Rain had eased to slight drizzle at the booting-up stop near Telford.

The Severn Gorge area around Ironbridge is known as 'The Valley of Invention'. It's a UNESCO World Heritage Site famous for its craftsmanship and creativity in art and science. There's so much to see. Two groups left the coach early to do longer walks and make wider explorations of the area. A third group concentrated on some of the more central highlights. This group followed The Silkin Way to discover the impressive Hay Inclined Plane, the Tar Tunnel, then massive warehouses, the canal, duck houses, kilns and displays of Coalport china. A break was needed before heading off along

High Street to cross the Coalport Bridge. The first one was a wooden structure, later replaced by iron but soon overshadowed by Abraham Darby's famous Ironbridge completed in 1779. Both bridges are pre-dated by The Boat Inn which had a beginning in the 1600s. It was once a crucial hub in river trade and it still thrives although often flooded by the river.

Our group stopped outside to look at the panel showing high-water levels. Then came a lucky coincidence - a flurry of heavy rain and the opening of the pub door at 12noon! What to do but shelter and enjoy the atmosphere?

The return route continued past St Mary's church, built with all local materials, The Jackfield Tile Museum and The Maws Craft Centre. There was time then to study the famous bridge up close, visit an amazing secondhand bookshop, walk by the river and buy Eley's pork pies. Tea shops? Of course! Drizzle was not ideal but could not spoil a fascinating day. There wasn't time to see everything. It's worth noting that there's a splendid Youth Hostel in a converted warehouse. Perfect for another visit.

Janet Milwain



Rugby Ramblers at the top of the Rotunda in Ironbridge.

ROTUNDA CHALLENGE

Walk One - Ironbridge to Wellington.

Very tough, steep steps, 173 by my count, breathing heavily, the first of plentiful inclines up into Little Wenlock, but what reward as we gazed down into the Ironbridge Gorge from the top of the former Rotunda. Warm exercise too, layers reduced. Next stop awesome Coalbrookdale with its Darby Houses and Museum of Iron, perfect setting with useful benches for much needed respite and well earned coffee break. Next up, the Rope Walk, climbing ever higher. Heavy rain, anyone for the Wrekin? No, ok, on into ... ah, woods, a fallen tree, the joy of lunch break. Battening down the hatches, 13 pairs of legs inched into Wellington, on time for Chapel End collection, concluding a delightful 'Coach Trip'.

Vale Hargie

Key dates

Bannau Brycheiniog Residential Weekend - Friday April 11th - Monday 14th

FULLY BOOKED ... but spaces sometimes open up.

Roland has again undertaken to organise a walk programme, a huge commitment with a cottage booked in early March for recce exploration in a challenging landscape.

Rugby Round

Would You Like to Explore Around Rugby?

Janet Milwain has devised a 19 mile walking route all the way around Rugby. You do not have to do it all in one day!

For full details use the follow the internet link:

https://www.rugbyramblers.org.uk/downloads/Rugby_Round_Walk.pdf

Obituary

It is inevitable we lose members from time to time, sadly since our last publication:

Dave Tebbs, a member from 1983 over 4 decades as a walk leader, good company and very supportive of members trying to learn navigation skills. He was a member of the "Footpath Working Group" for several years.

John Unsworth was confined to St. Mary's Nursing Home with cancer before passing away, frequently visited by his friend Ying. He was a wonderful companion on walks, despite hearing impairment, though often his D.I.Y. domestic demands took priority.

Diana Nurcombe, member from August 1984, planned for 2025 even when very ill, such was her love of life and adventure. As well as Rugby Theatre, she was an active member of U3A.