

Loddon Valley Ramblers Committee Members

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How far is that in kilometres?

Miles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Km	1.6	3.2	4.8	6.4	8.0	9.7	11.3	12.9	14.5	16.1	17.7	19.3	20.9	22.5	24.1

LODDON VALLEY RAMBLERS' NEWSLETTER

January to April 2019

I am starting with my thanks to Elaine Holloway & Shirley Chesterman for organising our AGM with a team that produced an excellent buffet and a Halloween theme with pumpkins.

There were some changes to your Committee. Kath Parker has stepped down as Treasurer after 20 years of dedicated service to the Group, preparing accounts, transferring funds for our weekends and purchasing gates, just a few of her tasks. Our thanks were expressed by some gifts from the Group. Alan Drabble has stepped forward as Treasurer, having previously fulfilled that role for another society. Graham Smith, David Turner & Sue Gatenby have also stepped down and we thanked them for their time on the Committee. Mike Evans has joined the Committee as Ex-Officio Officer.

Our weekend to Lulworth Cove enjoyed perfect weather with enjoyable walks & accommodation organised by Carmel Hearn, Grant Kelly & assisted by Richard Hatton.

Nick Johnson & Richard Hatton continue to produce a programme of varied walks researched, pre-walked and led by our Leaders. In recognition of the time spent providing these walks, we have a subsidised Leaders' Dinner Dance on 18th January 2019, organised by Martin Labram.

After completing the replacement of 4 stiles in Hurst Ray Sharp's team have just tackled 3 stiles being replaced by galvanised steel kissing gates on the Barkham Way. These gates were agreed after negotiation with Wokingham Rights of Way Team and their farmer following proposals from our Footpaths Officer Steve Vale. The gates were kindly funded by WBC, Barkham Parish Council & Ramblers Area.

Following the success of our Barn Dance, Mary Childs has organised a band & caller for a Ceilidh (dance) in Finchampstead Memorial Hall on Friday 15th March, with a chilli prepared by Nick Johnson.

The Spring Weekend to Dovedale, put together by Ellen Holmes & David Bromley, is fully subscribed, with a waiting list.

Barbara Curtis has prepared a week in the French Alps at Bellevaux in June.

We have organised a Hog Roast at Barkham Village Hall field in July. A flyer will be included in the April Newsletter.

Linda Ashwell gave a short presentation on the Autumn Weekend at Kingcombe Centre Dorset during the AGM, with a flyer within this newsletter.

Please try and join my first Chairman's Mince Pie & Mulled Wine Walk along the River Loddon on Sunday 16th December.

David Moffett
Chairman

Membership changes

Welcome to: Mr Jianbo M and Mrs Xuesong T, Richard I, Mrs Sunita K, Richard D, Alan and Jacqui R, Anne and Kevin L.

Email

You are receiving this communication as a member of Loddon Valley group and you have previously asked to be kept informed of the Ramblers work by post. If you no longer wish to receive communications like this please update your mailing preferences at www.ramblers.org.uk/my-account.

We maintain a list of the email addresses of our members. This is used to inform them about last-minute changes to walks, additional walks and events, or unusual weather conditions. We will keep your details confidential and won't share them with anyone else. If you haven't yet done so please visit the *Latest News* page on the website www.lvra.org.uk and send us your email address via the link. This is required even if you supplied an email address when you joined Ramblers, since no permission for us to use it was given then.

Email derekalansmith@virginmedia.com to be removed from the list, or send an alert to everyone on it. You should also contact him if you would prefer to receive your newsletter by email.

Walking partnerships

Loddon Valley are proud to be affiliated to the Walking Partnership. Help support our group by booking your walking holidays with Ramblers Walking Holidays, Chapters Experience Holidays, Adagio or Load off your back and nominate Loddon Valley Ramblers when booking to ensure we

receive vital funds through the walking partnership. See www.thewalkingpartnership.org.uk for details.

Facebook

Loddon Valley Ramblers Facebook page is now available for news of walks, weekends etc. Follow www.facebook.com/groups/623821047752746/ to access it, or search Facebook for "Loddon Valley Ramblers".

First Aid

The following First Aid course has been arranged with St John Ambulance for 2019:

- Day time course at the St John Ambulance Centre, Maidenhead Road, Windsor, SL4 5EY (10am to 1pm) on Thursday 21st March.

These 3-hour courses have been tailored for Ramblers and cover CPR and how to deal with chest pains, choking, severe bleeding, sprains and strains, bites and stings, foreign objects, asthma etc. After attending the course you will get an Essential First Aid Certificate which is valid for **three** years.

The courses are being subsidised and the cost to the individual is £15. If, however, you are a current Loddon Valley walk leader there will be no charge.

To book a place please contact David Turner (turnerd2@btinternet.com, 0118 977 4184).

Those of you who have been on a previous course should remember that the certificate you received is valid for only **three** years, so contact David to arrange a refresher.

Advice on Insects, and ticks in particular

Insects on walks at best are an irritation, but can also be carriers of deadly diseases, even in the UK. Scottish midges can make a walk in the glens very unpleasant, but a tick bite can lead to Lyme Disease and other dangerous infections. The Ramblers' website gives some sensible advice at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/safety/insects.aspx>, with a helpful link to the Lyme Disease Society. There is also a good fact sheet at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tick-bite-risks-and-prevention-of-lyme-disease>.

The basic advice is to be vigilant, starting with prevention by assessing how likely you are to encounter insects on a particular walk and protecting yourself by covering up appropriately and/or using insect repellent. Then after a walk, check yourself (and any pets) for ticks, carefully

remove any you find and if you show any symptoms seek medical advice.

Forthcoming events

- ★ **LEADERS' DINNER Friday 18th January**
- ★ **BARN DANCE Saturday 15th March**
See enclosed flyer.
- ★ **DOVEDALE WEEKEND 5-8th April**
Fully booked.
- ★ **MAY FAYRE Monday 6th May**
- ★ **BELLEVAUX HOLIDAY 12-19th June**
Fully booked.
- ★ **HOG ROAST Saturday 6th July**
The flyer will appear with the next newsletter.
- ★ **KINGCOMBE WEEKEND 13-16th September**
See enclosed flyer.
- ★ **YORKSHIRE DALES WEEKEND 24-27th April 2020**
Based in Ilkley & walking in the Yorkshire Dales.
- ★ **MADEIRA HOLIDAY September 2020**

Footpaths

Set out below is an abridged version of my report to the AGM on 31st October 2018.

I took over as Footpath Officer in January of this year, and it is fair to say I inherited a healthy legacy. First, because of the excellent work of my predecessor, Ray Sharp, and second because Wokingham Council takes its rights of way responsibilities seriously, and has retained a dedicated rights of way manager.

The result is that, by and large (and with a few notable exceptions), the footpath network in Wokingham Borough is well signposted, in good condition and trouble-free. Over 60% of the issues we have reported to the Council since the start of 2018 have been rectified – albeit with some chasing up by me.

My day to day role has been to follow up on the footpath issues as they have occurred: fallen trees, broken or missing signs, broken stiles, rotting footbridges and handrails, paths becoming overgrown and the like. I have an excellent team of 13 parish Footpath Wardens to support me.

There are however some bigger issues that need to be addressed.

Starting with the successes, we have made major progress with the installation of gates, to replace stiles and make access to the footpath network easier for all. In 2018, 4 new gates have been installed in Hurst and another 3 have been installed

in Barkham. 6 more gates are planned for next year. The credit for the work goes to our Chairman and to Ray Sharp, rather than me. Credit is also due to the LVR members who helped with the installations, the landowners for giving permission, and to Berkshire Area Ramblers, Wokingham Council and Hurst and Barkham Parish Councils for helping fund the costs.

There is, of course, a huge amount of housing development in Wokingham Borough at the moment. LVR tries to remain neutral on whether such development should or should not take place, and to confine itself to ensuring that public rights of way are retained. I feel that we are having some success with this aim, and that developers have got the message. To give 2 examples, routes have been maintained across the large Shinfield Meadows site whilst construction takes place and the planning application for houses on the land between Cutbush Lane and the Shinfield by-pass includes retention and enhancement of existing footpath routes.

New roads can have a major impact on rights of way but, again, we have been successful in preserving them. For example, the footpath from Winnersh to Sindlesham has been well restored following the completion of Phase 1 of the Winnersh Relief Road. However, we will need to remain vigilant as more major roads are in the pipeline – the northern and southern distribution roads in Wokingham and the East Reading Mass Transit scheme.

The most disappointing feature of 2018 has been the recurrence of persistent problems with farmers cropping footpaths, so that they become unusable. It is clear that farmers are not permitted to do this, but remedial action can be difficult and slow to implement. LVR is determined to get Wokingham Council to take a tougher line and quicker action with recalcitrant farmers in 2019, and this will be at the top of my agenda when I meet the new Rights of Way manager at Wokingham Council later this year.

Wokingham Council's Rights of Way team
Rebecca Walkley, Rights of Way Manager at Wokingham Borough Council, retired from her job on 31st August 2018. In leaving she paid tribute to the work of Loddon Valley Ramblers in helping maintain and improve the footpath network, and particularly to my predecessor as Footpath Officer, Ray Sharp. LVR has covered its appreciation of

Rebecca's work over the years, and its best wishes for her future.

I am pleased to report that Wokingham Borough Council has appointed Andrew Fletcher to replace Rebecca from 1st November. I will be seeking an early meeting with Andrew, as soon as possible after he starts work.

Footpath Wardens

Janet Readings has agreed to take on the Footpath Warden's role for Finchampstead East. We are very grateful for her help. At the same time, Derek Johnson has indicated that he would like to retire from the warden role in Swallowfield. If anyone is interested in taking over from Derek, please get in touch with me.

Happy walking
Steve Vale

Weekend at West Lulworth, 28th Sep – 1st Oct 2018

Walk Leaders for the weekend were Carmel, Grant and Richard who had enjoyed a 2-day recce on the lead-up Wednesday and Thursday in very comforting 20-25 degree temperatures.

With 35 guests arriving to a warm sunshine welcome, Friday afternoon's short walk took us to Durdle Door, the natural limestone arch (owned by the Welds Family) just over a mile from our HF base, recently made famous in the 2016 Pyar Ki full video song 'Housefull 3' (Youtube).

From Bollywood to Yetminster we were entertained after dinner on Friday by Bonny Sartin, ex lead vocalist with the folk band The Yetties and his particular Dorset based song, poetry and story-telling.

Still enjoying warm weather and clear skies Saturday's shorter walk commenced at the National Trust Car Park at Ringstead, approximately 5 miles as the crow flies from HF West Lulworth. The 20-strong group followed a broadly circular walking route taking in the White Horse of Osmington, a creation from 1808 cut into the limestone of King George the third riding his horse, then the Village of Osmington itself before walking due South to our lunch stop at half walk distance on a grassy knoll on the South Coast Path where we overlooked a very peaceful Portland Bill and Weymouth. Then on to Osmington Mills where a small breakaway group could not resist the temptations of the Smugglers Inn (they know who they are). Then on through Ringstead Village before

the gentle climb back to our cars at Ringstead NT Car Park. Due to a navigational discrepancy adjacent the White Horse, our final route tally was 9 miles, a bonus for some over the target 8 miles.

Saturday's long walk from Lulworth/Corfe Castle had 12 of us pitched in for Richard's 11-12 mile walk. With excellent organisation, at 0915, 3 cars drove to the NT car park at Corfe Castle armed with NT passes; the car park was still quiet.

The sky was absolutely clear. The sun was shining strongly and the outlook was balmy for a perfect day's walk. Crossing the road, we walked around the base of this iconic castle marvelling that elements of it still stood after the ravages of the Civil War and the removal of tons of stone for building. We continued through the village's quaint 17th-century Purbeck stone houses and 21st-century 4x4s. A gentle climb south west took us to Kingston and with frequent backward glances to a diminishing castle, we paused to admire this lovely spot.

A clever route due south took us to Chapman's Pool, one of those quirky places of nature and so pretty. A clever route because Richard routed us in such a way that we avoided a very steep descent and an equally steep and long climb. Glorious clear weather and the high cliff edge path took us to St. Aldhelm's Head and today the chapel was open with very enthusiastic volunteer staff on site. The chaps in the volunteer Coastguard Watch station looked busy with their binoculars and radar screens. The undulating South West Coastal Path gave us beautiful 360° views, the shimmering sea and occasional power boat creaming through the sea and more sedate yachts sailing much further out.

Past West and East Man to the steep descent and of course steeper (?) ascent at Seacombe Cliff took us to a leisurely lunch near Dancing Ledge where the views continued to be stunning. There were plenty of gulls to be seen, a few hawks, even a skylark singing high above us. There were thousands of large silken brown moth caterpillar nests, warnings posted to avoid touching them as they are an unpleasant irritant.

Continuing due East past the tall latticed measured mile masts, once used by warships to calculate their speeds along a parallel mile course, we dawdled at Anvil Point then North to the Tilly Whim Caves, sadly now shut to a curious public. The Safety Elf had struck again.

At Durlston Head we paused at the newish Heritage Centre. Ice creams bought. Water bottles recharged, it's an impressive centre with its famous globe and boundary markers from the City of London clearly showing the edges.

The weather continued its wonderful warm clarity and we continued North past Durlston Bay, the Nature Park and a hoppity skip down into Eastern Swanage. A gentle stroll through Swanage to the preserved railway and its Victorian station. A unanimous vote to go back to Corfe by steam train seemed to please every one. Richard really wanted us to come in via Peveril Point but two of us somehow cut the corner in our haste to the station. The rebuilding of the pier is lovely. Those who've contributed to the cost are remembered in brass plates set into the pier's planks. There are still traces of the old narrow gauge railway that took Purbeck stone from the quarries to ships on the old skeletal pier for building much of the London we know today.

The train was really full and hauled by a Standard Class 4 Brighton built tank, 80104, (Oxford comma Bill) and passing locos and stock from a bygone era, we returned to Corfe Castle. A further walk meant that we had walked just on 14 miles and climbed about 2000 feet. It was a glorious walk in just the best that the weather could give us.

I must congratulate Richard for his excellent planning and the sensible pace we went at and the opportunities to "stand and stare" which we so often omit in our regular rambles. Richard and Nick masterminded the transport and many thanks to the three drivers who made our day such a lovely memorable day.

Back at HF West Lulworth, Saturday evening's Quiz was a closely fought affair with Sheila and Adrian Gray's Team Table securing very credible first prizes awarded by Assistant House Manager Lisa Abbott.

With the sun still shining through a slightly cloudier sky, Sunday's shorter 9-mile walk commenced at Corfe Castle. With a depleted core of 11 walkers, we followed the Purbeck Way along the ridge walk, travelling east south east with exceptional views to Swanage directly ahead on the coast and Bournemouth, Poole and Brownsea Island and Sandbanks to the North. Dropping from the ridge at Ulwell, the group split at the starting point for the 210 steps to the Obelisk on North Hill with five of

the group choosing a more gentle climb beneath Ballard Down to the coast.

So Maureen, Kate, Mary, Roger and Carmel decided we did not need to climb 210 steps to prove how fit and intrepid we knew we were, so struck out towards the coast on the lower path. This path became so narrow and at times unrecognizable but as Roger had his trusty tracking gizmo we could not get lost. We sat down ready for our well deserved lunch and were rewarded with amazing views of Swanage Bay and beyond, then it was time to hit the trail again after phone calls from various partners asking our whereabouts. By now we could see other walkers far below as the designated coastal path came into view which we eventually joined to follow the steep descent into the town to regroup.

Return by steam express had us all in Corfe in no time then back by car to West Lulworth.

Sunday's longer walk of circa 11 miles left from Kimmeridge Bay Car Park, a short drive from West Lulworth, following a circular route combining coast path and challenging inland terrain. From Kimmeridge Bay as a 12-strong group, we had a steep climb to Clavell Tower, a Tuscan style tower which was moved 25m brick by brick in 2006 from

the disintegrating and unstable cliff edge. We continued past Clavells Hard and had a coffee stop at Rope Lake Head. There we witnessed the generally docile cattle being spooked by a dog / dog walker. After climbing Houns-tout Cliff we turned inland following a ridge overlooking Encombe House then through woods to Kingston for our lunch stop at The Scott Arms Hotel with its magnificent garden views towards Corfe Castle. Following lunch, we climbed again to our highest altitude of 626 feet at Swyre Head where we could see Portland Bill to the west and Poole Harbour, Bournemouth and the Isle of Wight to the east. From there, descent was along Hardy Way returning gently to Kimmeridge and sea level once again. Our energetic climbing had countered the effects of the slightly cooler afternoon air and we arrived back at West Lulworth ready for anything our chef could prepare for us.

Some of our guests made their own arrangements for walks notably on the Sunday venturing as far afield as Weymouth and Lyme Regis given the opportunity to explore the South Dorset Coastline.

Big thanks to Manager Mark Abbott and his Team at HF West Lulworth House for a seamless package and very enjoyable rain-free long weekend.

Grant Kelly



Ramblers Charity England & Wales No: 1093577 Scotland No: SC039799

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