

● **LODDON VALLEY RAMBLERS' NEWSLETTER**
May to August 2022

Looking at past chairman's reports, they all seem so up lifting, so optimistic, but now.

Can you believe Covid has been around for so long, I feel as if I have just been marking time?

26 months ago all we could talk about was Brexit and for 2 years it has been Covid, Covid, Covid, but for the last month it has hardly been in the media at all, although we all know only too well how prevalent it is.

There is now something far worse to discuss, a war in Europe and with it has come bigger fuel bills and inflation .

But I will now try and be a little more up beat.

Since the beginning of the year we have had a couple of events:

- An informal get-together for walk leaders and the committee as a small thank-you It gave everyone a chance to air their views and chat and although we all stood in our coats, a pleasant enough evening. We also circulated some ideas for future social events and, although not very scientific, here are the main results:
 - The Sunday Coach trip was high on the list to be resumed and you will be pleased to know one is planned for July and details should be out by the end of the month.
 - Also evening walks followed by a pub visit for a drink/meal. This could be organised at short notice dependent on weather and interest, so walk leaders please give it some thought.
 - The suggestion for a grandparents and grandchildren walk was met with a thumbs down.

More details from the poll will be forthcoming.

- The other event was The Barn Dance which was a lot of fun and it was obvious how much

the band appreciated it as well. Big thanks to all who helped organise it and to everyone who came and danced.

We are also trying to finalise a walk and tea to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee on Thursday 2nd June which is an extra Bank Holiday.

Our walks go from strength to strength, but as I am sure you know our Fantastic Walks Organiser Nick Johnson is stepping down at the AGM. There is plenty of help behind the scenes to organise walks but we really need someone to come onto the committee to co-ordinate **PLEASE**.

Christine Harvey
Chair

New members

Welcome to: Ms Janice K, Mrs Paula B, Mr David R, Mrs Margaret R, Mrs Heather M, Mr Philip W, Mrs Teresa W, Ms Caroline T, Mrs Dawn R, Ms Catherine L, Mr Jonathan B, Mr Tony T, Mrs Rebecca H, Mr John G, Mr Andrew H, Mrs Jeanette B, Mr Stuart Y.

Email

You are receiving this communication because we believe that it would be of interest to you as a member of Loddon Valley group and you have previously asked to be kept informed of the Ramblers work. If you no longer wish to receive communications like this please let us know. You can email ramblers@ramblers.org.uk, change your preferences online at ramblers.org.uk/myaccount or call (0)20 3961 3300.

Very occasionally it is necessary to add a walk or cancel one or change the meeting place arrangements, and we notify all our mailing list members when that happens. Please join our mailing list. We'll only write to you when necessary, won't send out weekly or monthly emails and won't

share your address with anyone else. Sign up here: <http://eepurl.com/XGC4P> or unsubscribe from the link in any of our occasional messages. The signup link is also on the News page of our website. 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.

Refunds

In general our policy is that, for trips and events, deposits and payments are not refundable.

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".

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

- ★ **HOPE COVE WEEKEND 22nd-25th April**
Fully booked.
- ★ **MAY FAYRE Monday 2nd May**
Further details nearer the time.
- ★ **Platinum Jubilee walk Thursday 2nd June**
A walk and subsequent social event; see the walks programme.
- ★ **Copy date for next newsletter Friday 3rd June**
- ★ **LAKES (HF Derwent Bank) 17th-24th June**
Fully booked. Why not consider organising a holiday for 2023?
- ★ **SUMMER SOCIAL Saturday 9th July**
Flyer to follow.
- ★ **COACH TRIP Sunday 31st July**
Flyer to follow.
- ★ **YORKSHIRE DALES WEEKEND 23-26 September**
We will be staying in the recently refurbished Craiglands Hotel situated in the spar town of Ilkley, recently voted the best place to live in the UK.
Members of Lower Wharfedale Ramblers with their vast knowledge of the area will be leading long, medium and short walks on Saturday and Sunday. In addition, for those arriving on the Friday, there will be a 6-mile afternoon walk to the famous Cow and Calf rock formation on Ilkley Moor.
If you fancy a break from walking, there's a pool and lido, riverside gardens and the famous Betty's tea room.
The weekend is fully booked, but if you would like to be placed on a waiting list please get in touch with me at anushka.howell@gmail.com.

Wokingham May Fayre Monday 2nd May

HELP NEEDED PLEASE!

Loddon Valley Ramblers will, once again, be having a stall at the Wokingham May Fayre in the town centre. If you could help man the stall for an hour at some time throughout the day please contact me by email. If you're visiting the May Fayre please stop by and say hello!

Thanks
Boddi Ginty
Publicity Officer

Footpaths

The Government published a **new version of the Countryside Code** in February 2022. From the point of view of walkers, the most significant change

from previous versions is the advice to landowners and land managers:

Access on your land should be easy for visitors with different abilities and needs. Create gaps or put up accessible self-closing gates instead of stiles where there is public access, if possible. You should follow the British Standard BS5709 for gates gaps and stiles.

This creates a much stronger expectation in favour of removing stiles.

In the past four years, no less than 35 requests to landowners by LVR to remove stiles or replace them with gates have been refused (or simply ignored) by local landowners. The new Countryside Code gives us an opportunity to approach these landowners again, in the hope that they will now change their minds.

One result of the large amount of housing development in Wokingham Borough in recent years has been the proliferation of **Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace** areas (known by the unattractive acronym of SANGs). Most of these feature walking routes with gravelled paths. Some of these are self-contained within a particular SANG area, but others connect up to other walking routes and public rights of way.

With one notable exception (Shinfield Parish), little or no attempt has been made to map or signpost these paths through SANGs. This would be a valuable exercise, but it is not clear how it could best be led or coordinated. It is unlikely that the Borough Council would have the resources to do it. It is also true that the Parish Councils where the SANGs are situated will have received substantial funds via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) imposed on related housing developments. These funds could be used to support mapping and signposting. But my guess is that it would still require groups of volunteers to help prepare maps, design signage etc. If anyone is keen to get something off the ground in, say, Arborfield or Winnersh, please get in touch.

Readers may have seen press articles reporting that the 2026 deadline for adding lost paths to the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way has been

abolished. This means that the **Ramblers' Don't Lose Your Way** project (which aims to identify historic paths that have fallen into disuse and to reinstate them as public rights of way) can proceed with a more relaxed timescale. However, the local Don't Lose Your Way group in Berkshire has decided to press on with the process of identifying lost paths as quickly as possible.

The Berkshire group has already looked at all the lost paths in Wokingham Borough, and has begun to prioritise them in terms of which ones should be researched to provide the historic evidence required to get them restored to the definitive map (many of the paths identified have been overtaken by development, which renders them impossible to restore, but there are many others which would constitute a useful addition to the current network). You can see the work undertaken to date by visiting the Don't Lose Your Way section of the Ramblers website (<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/dont-lose-your-way-2026.aspx>), and signing up to see the map of lost paths. You can then navigate on the map to Wokingham (or your own neighbourhood). Once there, you can see the potential lost paths, and, by clicking on them, you can suggest whether they should be seen as a priority for further research, with a view to being added to the definitive map in the future.

One route which shows up on the map of lost paths is **Chestnut Avenue**, on the Wokingham/ Winnersh border. Confirming the public right of way status of this route all the way from Reading Road to Bearwood Road has been a long-held ambition of LVR, and, with the help of a few LVR members and local residents, we have now put in a claim to have it added to the definitive map of rights of way. Our claim will be determined in about 12 months time. Thanks are due to the LVR members and others who have helped with the claim.

The route is, of course, open and walkable in any case, but its addition to the map of Public Rights of Way will protect it and keep it open in perpetuity.

Happy walking
Steve Vale

Walks and Events Programme May – August 2022

- *Our walks are on the web site; see www.lvra.org.uk/Webpages/walks.html.*
- *Members and walkers are reminded that they attend walks in this programme at their own risk and that they are responsible for their own personal safety.*

- We welcome children and young people under 18 on our walks but they must be accompanied by an adult who holds parental responsibility, such as a parent, legal guardian, carer, teacher or youth worker.
- Please make sure that you are fit enough to undertake the walk you intend to join. If you're unsure of your fitness level, try a short and easy walk first: it's much better to find a walk a little too slow and easy than to make yourself miserable and exhausted.
- Most Ramblers' walks are off-road in rural areas. Please have suitable footwear and clothing for the walk you intend to join, and bring some food and drink, even if the walk includes a pub or café break. Leaders may refuse to accept participants who in their opinion are inadequately equipped or unfit. When in doubt, contact the organisers or the walk leader in advance.
- For your own and others' safety please read and abide by any advice and guidelines issued by the organisers, and the instructions of the walk leader. Though walking is inherently one of the safest outdoor activities, no activity is completely without risk and it is your responsibility to behave sensibly and to minimise the potential for accidents.
- We occasionally have some easier walks in our programme; look for the .
- We occasionally have some joint walks with other Ramblers groups in our programme; look for the .
- We occasionally have some walks in our programme which are accessible by public transport; look for the .
- Walks which are shown as Strenuous in the Ramblers' Walk Finder are marked with . People in doubt about their fitness should contact the leader in advance.
- Please travel to the walk start in sufficient time to put on boots & waterproof clothing etc. We aim to start our walks promptly at the time in the programme.
- Although we may break near a pub we cannot guarantee it and they are often busy at lunchtime on Sundays. It is therefore advisable to bring a packed lunch on longer walks. Please do not park in pub car parks unless you are using the pub, or the walk instructions say you may, in which case the leader will have obtained permission.
- If you are a dog owner, please see our policy on [Dogs on Walks](#).
- If you're looking for a led walk in another area or on another day, try the [Ramblers' Walk Finder](#).

We hope you enjoy our walks. We need more volunteers to lead. We will help you plan your first walk and would love to welcome you to the team. Give me a call – I look forward to hearing from you.

Nick Johnson

0118 932 8758 nickjohnson@hotmail.co.uk



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

A moment to pause. Breathing in clear air. Sharing interests and conversations as you ponder the hills ahead. We have your passion for exploring worldwide and in the UK.

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