WALKING WEEKEND - LLANGOLLEN
28th April – 1st May 2017

On a drizzly Friday, 24 members gathered at Ty Mawr Country Park, about 7 miles from Llangollen. The rain stopped just in time for our 4.5 mile walk, the highlight of which was our passage along the spectacular Pontcysyllte Aqueduct that carries the Llangollen canal 126 feet above the valley of the River Dee. On Day 2 we set off along the canal to reach the Horseshoe Falls, a picturesque semi-circular weir designed by Thomas Telford. There followed a steep ascent to the 1054ft summit of a hill bearing the ruins of Castle Dinas Bran. Our exertions were rewarded with magnificent views in all directions. The descent back to Llangollen completed our 7 mile walk.

For our Sunday excursion we travelled on a steam train from Llangollen to Corwen and completed a 5 mile circular walk following the River Dee, then across pasture land to the Rhug Estate Farm. We saw their herd of bison and some members sampled a bison burger for lunch. The weather had been kind to us so far but the drizzle and mist returned for our final day. Nevertheless, 13 of us set off on a short walk to climb a steep hill overlooking Llangollen. We are grateful to Geoff Marlow for organising the trip and leading us on such interesting walks.

SOUTH DEVON WALKING WEEKEND
22nd - 25th September 2017

All places on this holiday, based in Torquay, are now taken. Any outstanding payments should reach David Threlkeld by 23rd July at the latest.

BEER & SKITTLES EVENING

Please note that the date for this popular event at The Rose Inn, Baxterley has been changed. It will now be held on Friday 10th November 2017.

CHRISTMAS MEAL 2017

This year’s Christmas Lunch will be on Sunday 17th December. Further details to follow.

WINTER 2017-18 WALKS PROGRAMME

We will soon be planning the walks programme for the period October 2017- March 2018. Watch the website for the appearance of the blank timetable on which you can sign up to lead a walk. The earlier you sign up, the greater choice of dates and walk locations you will have. If you have not yet led a walk but would like to do so, be assured that there are experienced leaders who would be happy to offer advice and assistance.
SPRING 2018 WALKING HOLIDAY

We are proposing to venture further afield for next year’s spring walking break. The Mediterranean island of Malta offers excellent opportunities for walking and sightseeing.

Dates are 15th- 22nd April 2018. The estimated cost is £459 which covers half-board accommodation and flights. Please let David know if you may be interested.

AUTUMN 2018 WALKING WEEKEND

The location for the September 2018 walking weekend will be the Wye Valley. Dates and details are yet to be decided.

COACH TRIP

For this year’s coach trip on 20th August we are joining together with Sutton Coldfield Ramblers. We’ll be travelling to Biddulph in the Staffordshire Moorlands, where there will be two walks on offer, 7 miles and 10 miles. Cost will be £10. Coach boarding will be in Sutton Coldfield at 8 a.m. To reserve a place please contact Gwen Franklin on 07855 695324 before 22nd July.

Here’s a link to the Rambler’s website showing full details.

LEARN WITH SIMON KING

Want to improve your navigation skills? In association with the Ordnance Survey, Simon King has produced some short videos presented in a very accessible way. Click on the links below to take you to his You Tube videos.

MORE LEARNING - STINGING NETTLES

The stinging nettle, *Urtica dioica*, is no friend of the rambler. If you brush against its hairs, called trichomes, their fragile silica tips break off to release a cocktail of chemicals, which cause the sting. Chemists used to believe that formic acid, the compound in ant venom, caused the sting, but now they think that other chemicals in the plant's venom are the culprits — specifically, histamine, acetylcholine, and serotonin. It has long been claimed that a dock leaf's sap is alkaline to neutralise acidic compounds in the nettle sting, but scientific studies have shown that only antihistamine or corticosteroid creams have a beneficial effect - unless you know better.

SOCIAL EVENING & CBR AGM

This event will be held in the Windsor Room at Arden Hall on 17th October 2017. There will be a bar, a buffet and a speaker, John Whitehead, who will entertain us with a highly recommended talk on Ernest Shackleton, polar explorer and leader of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition. The evening will conclude with a short AGM when you will have an opportunity to give your views about the club and to elect members of the committee.

WHAT TYPE OF SOCIAL EVENT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BRIGHTEN A DARK FEBRUARY EVENING? WE ARE PLANNING TO HOLD A SOCIAL EVENT FOR THE GROUP NEXT YEAR BUT ARE LOOKING FOR HELP FROM MEMBERS WITH BRIGHT IDEAS AND/OR WILLINGNESS TO HELP WITH THE ORGANISATION. PLEASE SPEAK TO ANY MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE IF YOU HAVE A GOOD IDEA.

MORE LEARNING

- Understanding grid references
- Know your compass
- How to use a compass
- Understanding map symbols
- Be prepared for your walk
- Learn about contour lines
- How to choose the right OS map

FEBRUARY 2018 SOCIAL EVENT

The stinging nettle, *Urtica dioica*, is no friend of the rambler. If you brush against its hairs, called trichomes, their fragile silica tips break off to release a cocktail of chemicals, which cause the sting. Chemists used to believe that formic acid, the compound in ant venom, caused the sting, but now they think that other chemicals in the plant's venom are the culprits — specifically, histamine, acetylcholine, and serotonin. It has long been claimed that a dock leaf's sap is alkaline to neutralise acidic compounds in the nettle sting, but scientific studies have shown that only antihistamine or corticosteroid creams have a beneficial effect - unless you know better.

FEBRUARY 2018 SOCIAL EVENT

What type of social event would you like to brighten a dark February evening? We are planning to hold a social event for the group next year but are looking for help from members with bright ideas and/or willingness to help with the organisation. Please speak to any member of the committee if you have a good idea.

Here’s a link to the Rambler’s website showing full details.

Link to Biddulph walk details
Our walks over the winter and during the spring inspired two of our poets to put pen to paper.

The Third Month

This, the month of Red Nose mirth, when life returns to Mother Earth.

Daffs and narcissi, gold and cream wave their heads against field of green.

Tall pointed conifers loom up so high – dark green rockets in blue-grey sky.

Named after the Roman God of War.
The warm sun teases, then chill winds roar.

Season of lambs; ‘Beware the Ides’;
Madness of hares;
Very high tides.

Our walk numbers continue to grow, as through fields and woods we go.

Then, shortly after the Equinox, an hour is stolen from our clocks, and into Summer Time… we March.

The Babbs Mill Bard
March 2017
Inspired by narcissi growing on Collector Road

TREACHEROUS MUD

The earth of the tracks, so firm, well-trod,
Begs for an answer from any rain God,
That soil of field and pasture, is waiting to mix,
Devilment with water, mud’s back to its tricks.
That treacherous mud whose only desire,
Is to bring one down into its mire.
That treacherous mud that hides all the roots,
Waiting to suck and de sole your boots.
That treacherous mud, who laughs at the rain,
Refreshing its power, ready to ambush again.
That treacherous mud whose jesting, will be curtailed soon,
By the vernal equinox and the phase of the moon.

Poet in hiding
March 2017

If you puzzled over Duncan’s crossword in the previous newsletter – here are the answers.