

*Dear friends,!*

We have another ambitious and varied programme of walks on offer, thanks to our dedicated walk leaders. We are always on the lookout for new leaders. If you would like to try your hand at leading, please talk to one of the committee or walk coordinators. Also, consider attending our annual Map and Compass course to sharpen up your map reading skills.

For many years Peter Jones led some wonderful walks over the South Downs. He is no longer able to do so but I am delighted to see that Mary and Tony Holcroft will be leading a walk there in this programme. I very much hope this will, once again, become a regular feature in our summer programmes.

We hope to see many of you at our annual picnic on 7<sup>th</sup> June and, perhaps, more amblers who have been under-represented in previous years. Here, I would like to thank Richard Wilkes who led so many well attended ambles in our last programme and who will be leading the amble at the picnic. Thanks must also go to Maureen and Jim Carroll for organising such a splendid group holiday in Shropshire, on which we hope to report in our next newsletter. *Stuart*



*Sunday walkers enjoying the apple blossom.*

#### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**Annual Group Picnic: Wed 7<sup>th</sup> June, Cudham Shaws, 10am** – a choice of three walks (see programme) followed by a picnic. Bring your own food, drink and something to sit on. A hut is available if it rains. Meet up with old and new members, even if only for a cup of tea. Due to changes in the way Cudham Shaws operates, The Girl Guide Association charge us for use of the site. To recoup costs, car parking is £2/car and there will be a charge of £1.50 for tea and cake. If anyone would like to bring a cake to share, it would be appreciated.

**Open Garden Festival Sun 25<sup>th</sup> June** Following a morning walk (see programme) there will be a chance to visit the Open Garden Festival around Greenwich from 2 -5.30pm. Tickets cost £10 for entrance to all eleven gardens and are available from any of the gardens. All proceeds will go to Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice. More information can be found at [communityhospice.org.uk](http://communityhospice.org.uk)

**AGM.** This will take place on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November at the Hurst Community Centre starting at 7.30pm.

**Christmas Lunch** This year the Group Christmas lunch will be on **Wed 13 December** and, by popular demand, we are returning to The Plough at Leigh. Details will be in the next newsletter, but to reserve a place, please contact Carole Flowerday on 020-8852-4897 or [flowerdayc@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:flowerdayc@tiscali.co.uk)

#### **HOLIDAYS**

As this goes to press we will just be returning from our Shropshire holiday. Nevertheless it is time to plan next year's group holiday! HF have offered us a week at Nether Grange, Alnmouth in Northumberland. At the present I have provisionally booked for around 20. The date will be **Fri 4<sup>th</sup> May till Fri 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018** and the cost will be **£719 p** which includes all meals and the services of a walk leader but it does not include transport. We have 6 single rooms and 5 twin rooms available at this price. We also have the offer of a further 4 single rooms but they are Premium rooms and incur an additional charge of £10 per night or £70 for the week. There are no further single supplements. (Note: we'll get one free place with every 15 bookings). I will need to pay a holding deposit by the end of May with individual deposits of £75 payable by mid July. If you would like to go on the holiday, please email me your requests asap at [maureen-carroll@sky.com](mailto:maureen-carroll@sky.com) but by **18<sup>th</sup> June** at the latest. Maureen Carroll (01322 436684).



## SNIPPETS

**Ramblers Walking Holidays.** If you are booking a holiday with RWH please remember to nominate North West Kent Ramblers. We receive a payment for every holiday booked which we use to build up the funds to purchase and install kissing gates where they are needed. This year we have received £170 from RWH.

**Leaders be aware!** The Ramblers' policy on safeguarding has changed. Written authority will no longer be acceptable should a young person under 18 or a vulnerable adult (defined as someone 18 or over unable to care independently for themselves) seek to join a walk. They must be accompanied by a parent, guardian or carer as the case may be. If not, arrangements should be made for their safe return home. Should this not be possible, they should be closely supervised throughout the walk. Google "Ramblers' safeguarding policy" for a fuller explanation, or contact the group chairman.

**Pub Watch** Sadly, "The Greyhound" at Charcott is no longer open during lunchtimes; "The George" at Egerton is renamed and has gone upmarket and no longer appears suitable for walkers as has the "The Three Compasses" at Crundale. "The Woodman" at Whitley Row has closed but, hopefully, only temporarily: the proprietor has downsized to the "the Cock Inn" at Ide Hill. However, the good news is that "The Hook and Hatchet" at Hucking has reopened. "The Cock Horse" on London Road, Hildenborough, is reported as serving delicious food and being cheaper than most pubs and the recently re-discovered "Rose & Crown" at Mundy Bois comes with a strong recommendation for its good food and friendly service; but, sadly, the "Crown Point Inn" now provides a carvery only at weekends.

**First Aid:** we are hoping to arrange another first aid course, following the success of the last one, which will be open to all members, with priority given to walk leaders. If interested, please contact Stuart (020 8467 9419) as soon as possible.

### Map and Compass Course

North West Kent Ramblers held their sixth annual map and compass awareness course on Saturday, 8th April. We had 13 people attending from North West Kent, Dartford, Bromley, Erith Veterans, Coulsden and elsewhere, bringing the total over the 6 years to in excess of 70. Many thanks to Gareth Hughes and Richard Wilkes for their knowledgeable talks on GPS and Public footpaths. We continue to be indebted to Anne Sadlier at the Grasshopper on the Green in Westerham for the freely-given space in the upstairs restaurant, where we shift the furniture about to suit our course and have lunch there afterwards. The three mile walk in the afternoon is much appreciated by those attending.

**Vegetation Clearance** With nettles and other vegetation growing rapidly this is peak season for clearance teams, to keep paths clear for people to use. Unfortunately, for the time being, Bob Tolson is unable to coordinate our clearance team. We are looking for somebody to take over for the short term, so that we can continue to help make a difference to our paths. Interested? Please talk to a member of the committee, if you can help.

**New President.** Stuart Maconie, author and broadcaster, keen walker and advocate of walkers rights, has recently been elected as President of Ramblers.

### Where was this photo taken?

On one of our walks, we came across this caravan parked on a pontoon, floating in the water. But where were we? Answers in next newsletter.



**Post script.....** A salutary tale....one of our leaders was walking out a route in preparation for a walk he was leading. Whilst following a woodland path, closely studying his map, he failed to notice the large branch ahead of him, which struck him squarely on the bridge of his nose causing a substantial amount of bleeding. Ouch! He managed to sort himself out and proceed BUT the incident served as a timely reminder of two pieces of advice we give to leaders – when doing a walkout, you are strongly advised not to walk alone.; and, when you want to look at the map, STOP! (This also applies to looking at mobile phones or just looking at the view).

**....and finally, for up-to-date news:-**

NWK website: [www.nwkrampers.btck.co.uk](http://www.nwkrampers.btck.co.uk)

RAMBLERS' website – [www.rampers.org.uk](http://www.rampers.org.uk)

Kent Area's website – [www.kentramblers.org.uk](http://www.kentramblers.org.uk)

Contributions for the newsletter to Mike Hickie ([mikehickie48@gmail.com](mailto:mikehickie48@gmail.com))