

Chairman's chat (last one I promise!)

At the beginning of 2009, I had completed the self inflicted task of building a garden at Warmingham and at the suggestion of Mags I took the plunge of joining the Ramblers. Looking back, I felt I needed to train before I would be able to join a walking group so had spent many days pacing up and down the canal footpaths in the area until I felt comfortable doing a 'ten'.

My first Ramble was led by Sue Sharpe. I arrived at Nantwich lake, found Sue and she offered me a lift in her car. We were going on a 7 mile leisurely and this I thought would suit me fine. To my surprise the group was almost 40 strong and I met a fellow walker who I knew from when I worked. Things haven't changed as clearly this being the first walk of the year, many were new year enthusiasts and like my friend I never have never seen him since!

Sue Sharpe was a committee member and was in a small party led by Frank Jones that tackled Sharp edge on Blencathra, my first 'strenuous' and my goodness it was, as that edge has experienced many fatalities. I remember this 'walk' as it was Sue's birthday and in the party was this slightly deranged guy to whom the edge and any tricky part seemed to be a breeze, that was my first meeting with Phil Keogh. We all thought he must work as a roofer as he showed no fear, we weren't far wrong.

Later that year, another strenuous; Helvellyn via striding edge, led by Frank Jones. This was the walk when I learnt about mountains and clothing. In the valley before the start, the sun was out and it was a bright and sunny morning. Half way up the weather changed and not only did I need more outer clothing but also gloves and a warm hat. By the time we got to the top and after the excitement of the edge I was frozen. I haven't forgotten that day for either the fun or the lessons I learnt.

Looking through the programme for 2009 I find that there are only 5 leaders still providing walks for the group, thank goodness we can still find the volunteers without whom, we would not have any group walks.

Group holidays have been a highlight of my enjoyment from joining the Ramblers. I have been to Eskdale, Patterdale, Plas Tan y Bwlch three times, Scotland twice, Guernsey and Jersey and many Magna Longa's in and around Ludlow. These holidays, for those who take them are a great way to get to know your fellow members and experience walking in areas outside our usual haunts.

Certainly, visiting Scotland, Wales and the lakes has provided more challenging and therefore more enjoyable walks than one gets from our walking programme, I strongly recommend these and hope that members will continue to work hard to provide these group breaks.

I became the chair within 8 months of joining the group only to find that I had to chair the area AGM a week later as it was our groups 'turn' that year. This year I have been area chair again and I know that the coming AGM will cover so much more than it did in 2009. When I joined Ramblers we were all left to our own devices, the only contact was to ask for annual funding and to make sure it was paid. Today, we have an organisation sitting in London that increasingly wants us all to follow the same 'paths' and behave accordingly. I have attended the Ramblers annual council twice and if you get the opportunity to attend, grab it as the experience of seeing what goes on at centre will be a big surprise.

I have enjoyed being chair of our group, on election it was a big surprise and challenge as the committee included ex chairs and some very experienced walk leaders and long time members. I wish my successor Trevor the same enjoyment and education I have had and am sure he will do a great job. I will continue to lead walks and give support where needed. It has been fun!

Joining Ramblers and going out on group walks provides so much more than simply being a walker. Without the groups activity I would not have visited so many interesting places seen incredible sights and landscapes and had the pleasure of meeting so many people who over time have become firm friends. Its worth it!

Hello,

I would like to take the opportunity in this news letter of introducing myself to those who do not know me.

My name is Trevor Park and I have taken over the role of Chairman South Cheshire Ramblers from the illustrious Phil Guest.

I joined the Ramblers in mid 2016 and hence am a relative novice.

The friendliness of the group was immediate and also the effort and care put into the walk programme was very apparent.

The weekly walks soon became an important part of my life both for the walks and the comradeship within the group.

Hence I was keen to contribute to the continuing success of the group and will support the committee the best I can.

Next year I will be leading a couple of walks myself with support from fellow ramblers and working with others to maintain a vibrant walk programme.

Regards



Committee

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The walks programme January- to November 2018

Thanks to all those who have led walks this year- the walks have again been varied and interesting ranging from short, local ones on the first Sunday of each month, summer walks on a Tuesday evening, mid-week walks with a lunch option to longer walks further afield. One walk had to be cancelled due to adverse weather. A very successful Spring Break was held at Plas -Tan-y- Bwlch between the 26th - 30th March where a number of excellent walks were enjoyed.

Thanks also for texting or emailing your walk numbers into us promptly. It is a big help to have these as we can use the data to help identify trends and preferences which will enable better planning of the group's future programmes.

Our numbers are slightly down in all our walk categories this year with the overall number walking with the group averaging 14 people per walk compared to an average of 16 in the previous year (2017). See graph (left) for individual walk categories.

Our current walk programme has, to the end of December 2018, 103 scheduled walks over the twelve months. This compares favourably with recent years but more pleasingly more walk leaders have come forward after the Chairman's appeal in last November's Newsletter (see graph below)

Furthermore, we have three new walk leaders organising weekend walks on the next programme - January 2019- when we have 53 walks scheduled for the first six months of the year. These are encouraging developments but we mustn't rest on our walking poles!

Rae Davies and Carole Bentley

Walk Programme Coordinators



ANNIVERSARY WALKS

As part of the Group's 25th Anniversary celebrations it was suggested that we walk the South Cheshire Way or parts of it. I offered to lead 4 anniversary walks.

The first was on a sunny and hot Wednesday in July. Fifteen of us set off from the beginning of the South Cheshire Way at Grindley Brook. Our walk took us across fields and up a lovely green lane, passing Hinton Bank Farm and Old Hinton Hall to reach Wirswall. Here we left the S C W to walk along the Bishop Bennett Way back to Grindley Brook and a refreshing drink at The Horse and Jockey.

Later in July on a warm Thursday a group of 10 set off from The Cotton Arms at Wrenbury, having pre-ordered our meals, to walk up the road to join the S C W. We walked across fields heading for the railway crossing. One of these fields had tall maize in it with no clear path across it. I decided to go around the edge of the very large field. Big mistake!! It was fine until we came to an area that was overgrown and wet. Hazel chose to go one way whilst I went a different way. Needless to say mine was the more difficult and involved climbing up a bank onto the edge of the field. Once I'd got up I rejoined Hazel and those who'd sensibly followed her and we carried on along the S C W to Aston with no further problems. Shortly after passing the Bhurtpore Arms which wasn't open, we left the S C W to make our way back to Wrenbury and a lovely meal.

The short walk in September was also an anniversary walk. The afternoon was once again sunny and warm and 17 of us set off across fields from Wybunbury to Walgherton. Once across the A51 we made our way towards Hatherton crossing a field of tall maize. This time there was a clear path through it. Once out of it I climbed over a stile up into the next field and waited for everyone to emerge. It was impossible to see them until they actually came out. Nobody got lost in it so we all carried on down a lane past Hatherton Lodge to join the S C W to walk back towards Wybunbury. We left the S C W at Lea Forge to return to Wybunbury and The White Swan for a much needed drink.

The weather was very kind to me as on my final anniversary walk on a Wednesday in October it was once again warm and sunny. Ten of us left Audlem to walk along the Shropshire Union canal as far as Austin's Bridge. We joined the S C W after having a coffee break on the bridge. We walked across fields towards Hankelow, crossing the River Weaver just below the impressive Hankelow Hall. We made our way up to the main road and along Bridgemere Lane to Hunterson where we left the South Cheshire Way to return to Audlem, crossing fields that were once part of Brookfield Golf Course. Once back in the village we made for The Lord Combermere for a welcome drink.

Helen Lea

Coast to Coast Walk June 2018

The Coast to Coast is 190 miles of dramatic scenery starting at 'Mile Zero' at St Bees and ending at Robin Hoods Bay. Devised by Alfred Wainwright in the 1970's, it's not a national trail, but takes in three national parks along the way. I was lucky enough to walk it in June 2018 over 15 days and wise enough to have my bags carried by a Sherpa service and stay in lovely B&Bs with hot showers each night.

The weather was excellent, affording the opportunity to undertake the high level routes, with just one wet day which made taking all the wet weather gear worthwhile and added to the true C2C experience.

Without a doubt the hardest day was Day 2 taking in The Red Pike, High Stiles, High Crag and Haystacks, 15 miles and 5500 feet of ascent. After that, everything else seemed easier in comparison, even the very wet day at Kidsty Pike, the highest point of the trail at 784m.

There were many highlights along the way such as the magnificent views from St Sunday Crag towards Ullswater, sleeping in Wainwright's favourite bedroom at 'Old Water View' Guest House Patterdale, drivers tooting their horns in encouragement as I walked over the M6 bridge between Junction 39-40, the fighter plane pilot who dipped his wings when I waved to him at Nine Standards Rigg and wonderful cream tea & scones at the Ravenseat the home of the Yorkshire Shepherdess



Amanda Owen.

But the most outstanding memory was the camaraderie of the fellow walkers who were mostly from Australia, Canada and America and who were also bound for Robin Hoods Bay. I was definitely in a minority being British.

Seeing the North Sea for the first time at Great Fryup Dale was a cause for much cheering and hollering albeit another 24 hours to go.

After throwing my pebble, carried from St Bees, into the sea at Robins Hoods Bay, toasting my achievement in Wainwright's Bar at Bay Hotel, with a glass of Prosecco and signing the C2C register, I began to think about my next challenge....once my blisters had healed.

Sheila Shaw

Scramble on Bristley Ridge

We arrived at the car park by milestone buttress on the A5 near Llyn Ogwen at 09.30. The plan to circuit Lyn Bochlywd via Bristley Ridge and the Gribin Ridge.

The Bristley Ridge defines the left side of the north-west face of Glyder Fach and links Bwlch Tryfan with the Glyder Fach summit. The weather was overcast with no rain forecast, but an increasing wind gusting to 40 mph predicted during the afternoon, so we were conscious that we needed to complete the ridge and begin our descent by approximately noon.

The path to Bwlch Tryfan is for the most part good and easy to follow. After 1½ hours we reached our objective and stopped for a break. Graham studied his guide 'Scrambles in Swondonia' by Steve Ashton which describes the onward route as a 'remotely situated and exhilarating scramble'.

We made towards an obvious pinnacled buttress and exited over a man-made wall to the foot of a more imposing 'Sinister Gully', continuing to a narrow ridge and the prominent notch of Great Pinnacle Gap and onto the main body of the ridge and easier ground. Finally making a short detour to the Cantilever and onto the summit of Glyder Fach.

The wind speeds were now increasing so after a short lunch break we headed south-west to the promontory above the Gribin Ridge. The Ridge is described by Ashton as a 'popular scrambly walk but with the possibility to increase scrambling interest and restore concentration with exposure to the drop to Cwm Bochlywd'. There were good views of the Glyders to the south although by now starting to gather cloud. To the north the Ogwen valley and Nant Francon pass. Also some interesting columnar basalt was seen.

We had a great day in the Welsh mountains and were pleased to reach the car at approximately 16:30 and begin our journey home.

Jim Eckersley and Graham Taylor

Graham on the Cantilever



Buen Camino

During the first week of October this year, four South Cheshire Ramblers walked 118 km through Galicia from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela in Northern Spain. There are many routes or caminos from different parts of the world all leading to the beautiful cathedral at Santiago. Our section was the final distance required to qualify for a Pilgrim Passport Credencial. We had our camino passports stamped at bars, cafes, hotels and churches along the way. Trevor and Paul got two of the best plush red seal stamps at a stall that Anne and I walked right past. Anyway, we now all have impressive decorative certificates written in Latin confirming that we have completed the walk.

The place name of Santiago refers to the Spanish version of the name St James. While there is no historical evidence to support the view that the apostle St James ever preached in Galicia, there are some anecdotal references that he did preach the gospel there before returning to Jerusalem where he was martyred. There are many myths about the bones of St James which were allegedly transported to Galicia where they were later discovered by a shepherd. Many European churches were competing for the best relics and so Galician King Alfonso 11 had a small chapel built, which eventually grew enormously and became a popular pilgrimage site attracting pilgrims to make the long journey to Santiago de Compostela. Apart from the religious aspect, the development of the pilgrimage was also important from a political point of view as the many Christians travelling and settling in Northern Spain strengthened links with the rest of Europe and was a powerful strategy to keep the Moors away. The earliest recorded pilgrims visited the shrine at Santiago in the middle of the 11th century, but it seems that it was not until a century later that large numbers of pilgrims from abroad were regularly journeying there. But later the numbers started to decline due to the Black Death, the Protestant Reformation and political unrest. The number of pilgrims has fluctuated over the centuries but since the 1970's there has been a resurgence of interest and from a few hundred at that time to approximately 300,000 a year in 2017.

A pilgrimage can be experienced on many different levels, whether religious, spiritual or other personal motives but whatever the reason it is very satisfying to travel with the bare necessities, get up each day and just walk to the next destination despite fatigue and sore feet, taking in the scenery and looking forward to the next *café con leche* along the way. It is a wonderful opportunity to slow down and reflect on whatever comes to mind; to take a break from the hectic pace of life and experience something very different. We enjoyed meeting other pilgrims with interesting stories but we also had extended periods of silence to think.

One of the characters we met was Joshua from Canada wearing a cotton walking kilt who told us about his job in a travelling circus working on rigging the equipment for acrobatic acts. Then there was the group of three generations of Australian women who often stayed in the same places as we did. However, our most special sight was the little, old French couple who walked hand in hand the whole way. Even though they walked very slowly, they often appeared ahead of us. We looked forward to spotting them every day.

It would be difficult to get lost on this section as there is very clear way marking with the distinctive Camino emblem guiding the pilgrim and giving the remaining distance. The terrain is varied and the route goes along woodland paths, gravel tracks, skirting farms and fields through medieval village and towns. There are some hills but nothing too difficult.

After a rest and shower, we met up each evening to sample Spanish food and drink. The typical three course peregrino meal costs about £10. We also tried pimiento padron pimiento, paella, pulpo (octopus) as well as Sangria, local wines, brandy and beer.

We found the weather to be very pleasant in October with only some light rain on one day. A good opportunity to wear the waterproof jackets we had lugged along.

The film, *The Way* (2010) with Martin Sheen as well the more recent celebrity documentary both give a good idea of the longer Camino Frances which starts in From St Jean Pied de Port in France. If anyone is interested in walking a section of the Camino, Macs Travel is highly recommended to arrange a pilgrimage over the preferred number of days and distances each day. Accommodation can be booked and luggage transferred to the next hotel/guest house allowing you to travel light with a day pack.

www.macsadventure.com

Maggie Ashley, Ann Holroyd, Trevor Park and Paul Boniface



Members attending the Cheshire East AGM 16th november 2018



(at the Hawk Inn Haslington)