

**BBC Rambling Group Christmas Mudfax
December 2023**



Merry Christmas to all our members.

Breaking News!

We have a new website and email address.

John Ramsden has been busy designing a new website to replace Mudweb, which is 24 years old, and starting to show its age. The new website is called Ariel Ramblers and can be found here:

www.arielramblers.org.uk

Some sections of the site are only available to members, using a password. I will forward this password to all members in an email. Please do not pass it on to anyone who is not a member, as it will allow you access to walk details which contain personal information.

The site is a work in progress, as not all the information that is contained in Mudweb has been uploaded to the new site, but it is hoped that the Archive section of the site will be populated with more information over the coming months.

We also have a new email address which is arielramblers@gmail.com

From January 2024, please use the new website to obtain any information about the group, and use the new email address to contact us. The website also gives contact details for officers of the group, so if you need to contact the Chairman, for example, you can use the specific email address to be found under Contacts. Cora will be sending out walk details from both the brambl and arielramblers emails for a while to make sure that everyone is receiving communications from the new email address. Once we are sure that everyone can receive emails from the new address, we will stop using brambl.

Many thanks to John for working so hard on getting the website and email up and running, and to Pete Ashford who designed the original Mudweb site and has kept it going for the past 24 years.

2023 Round up

2023 saw us out on rambles all around the Home Counties from Kent to Hampshire and Buckinghamshire to Surrey and all places in between. We managed to maintain a full programme despite the efforts of the rail unions to scupper our plans.

We had some eventful moments, including a member being overcome by the heat, and another having their sandwich stolen by a red kite on my walk in Saunderton, and a blustery walk through

Knole Park, led by Bob, where the café for the afternoon tea stop was just closing as we got there because of the high winds, but they kindly let us get a takeaway coffee which we drank in the picnic area, where we were treated to the unexpected sight of an albino deer in the park.



Thank you to all the walk leaders for taking us on some lovely walks. The group could not continue without your efforts, which are greatly appreciated by me and all those who come along.

I am always on the lookout for more volunteers to lead walks, so if you are interested in putting on a walk, please contact me.

We also had a weekend away in Alton arranged by Cora Flynn. This was a flexible weekend, based on a Jane Austen theme, where people could come for all or part of the weekend. We had a 7 mile walk on the Saturday led by Cora and Paula in the countryside around Alton, and on the Sunday a short walk around Chawton, with the opportunity in the afternoon to visit either the Jane Austen Museum or Chawton House. Cora also arranged for us to have a lovely meal in an Italian restaurant on the Friday evening. This weekend was originally suggested 3 years ago, but Covid got in the way, so thank you Cora for finally putting this on. Everyone enjoyed the walking and cultural aspects of the weekend.

Some members also ventured further afield this year to Sicily on a Ramblers Adagio holiday, which was a mixture of walking and sightseeing based on the locations to be found in the tv series "Inspector Montalbano". We stayed in the beautiful town of Ragusa, and visited Modica, where we went to a chocolate making demonstration, Punta Secca, the home of Inspector Montalbano, Noto, Scicli where the town hall masquerades as Montalbano's police headquarters, Syracuse to see the Greek and Roman ruins and walk along the beautiful coastline where there were crystal clear waters, and finally to the Vendicari Nature Reserve, where we spotted flamingos, and which served as another location in the Montalbano series. The weather, hotel, food and walk leader were all excellent, and everyone who came had a great time. Many thanks to John & Liz Ramsden for suggesting the holiday and contacting Ramblers to arrange it.



Ragusa



Ramblers in Modica



Punta Secca

In June Paula arranged a visit to The Globe to see “The Comedy of Errors”, on a blazing hot day, where the only one to be mad enough to stand out in the midday sun (Paula), didn’t even have the excuse of being English! This was followed by a meal at Tas Pide.

In September we had our annual barbecue, hosted by John & Liz Ramsden in their garden. It was a lovely day, and we were very glad of the awnings they had put up to shade us from the sun. Many thanks John & Liz for your wonderful hospitality.

Our Christmas meal and ramble took place in Horsham this year, organised by Marion Baker. As is usual on a Marion walk, there was evidence of mud! The meal in an Italian restaurant was excellent. Everyone who came had a wonderful time. Many thanks Marion for organising this outing.

And to round off the year Paula led a walk around central London to see the Christmas lights. We had a lovely crisp evening, and an added bonus of being serenaded by the West End Musicals Choir in Trafalgar Square.



Bond Street



A pretty arcade

Weekly midweek walks

I am making an early New Year's resolution of taking a weekly walk in 2024 in and around London. I am planning to do parts of the Capital Ring, and also some central London walks. I will send out an email each week to say what I am intending to do, and if anyone would like to join me, they will be most welcome. This is a very informal affair; I will not be organising pub lunches or any other refreshments. If we happen to come across something en route and people want to have a break then that is fine. I advise bringing your own refreshments. Some of the walks will only be a couple of hours, others may be longer, but unlikely to be more than 7 miles. As I will not have walked out any of the routes beforehand, I can't guarantee that we won't get lost, but as we won't be in the depths of the countryside it shouldn't be a problem. If anyone else would like to put on short midweek walks do let me know, as it would be nice to provide more variety in our walking programme.

Walks Calendar 2024/2025

The walks calendar is now up on the Ariel Ramblers website. If anyone would like to lead a walk, please let Paula know. I will be sending out emails to current walk leaders soon, but if anyone else would like to volunteer to lead a walk I will be very happy to hear from you.

Committee members needed

Pete and Jane Ashford will be stepping down from the Committee at the next AGM, so we are looking for 2 volunteers to come onto the committee. It does not involve a lot of your time; we only have one committee meeting a year with a pub lunch and mince pies (after all this is the BBC

Rambling Group!!). We would welcome new ideas for what we can do as a group, and maybe someone would like to take on organising social events such as meals, pub quizzes etc? If you are interested, please do get in touch.

Holiday 2025

Hopefully you will have all received the email about a possible Ramblers Holiday to the Western Isles of Lewis and Harris, which has been suggested by Dave Heath for April 2025. If you are interested and haven't yet told Dave, please email him as soon as possible, as he will be contacting Ramblers soon to firm up possible dates and costs.

Thank you

I would like to thank everyone who sponsored me for my 26 mile walk for Alzheimer's Society. It took place in July in Whitby on a bit of a rainy day, and was very enjoyable if somewhat exhausting! Towards the end I was convinced that the mile posts were getting further apart, and my knees were complaining loudly. But I crossed the finish line and was rewarded for my efforts with a glass of bubbly. My final total of money raised was £1340 plus £235.50 gift aid, making a grand total of £1575.50. I couldn't have done it without all your support, so thank you. There were treks all over the country, and I got an email recently to say that the total raised from all the walks this year is over £4million which will go a long way to helping to fund research and supporting those with dementia and their carers.

Other walking trails

Tamara Coast to Coast Way

This year a new Coast to Coast path has been launched. Not the "famous" one in the north of England, but one in the South West, which runs along the Tamar Valley from Plymouth Sound to Morwenstow. It is 87 miles long and details can be found here:

<https://www.tamarvalley.org.uk/tamara-coast-to-coast-way/>

I have the guide book if anyone would like to see it.

Rail Trails in Worcester

Worcester Ramblers have developed a Rail Trail of nearly 96 miles, providing linear walking routes between 17 of the county's 18 rail stations. Details for the first 72 miles can be found here:

<https://wcrp.org.uk/rail-trails/>

It might be an idea for a walking weekend??

Wold Rangers Way

And for those who like Yorkshire, there is the Wold Rangers Way, a 44 miles circular trail through the Yorkshire Wolds, through chalk landscapes past vibrant market towns and ancient villages.

<https://woldrangersway.org/>

The Peak Way

This is a 155 miles circular route starting and ending in Stockport and takes in some of the best Peak District views as well as Chatsworth House, Lyme Hall and Magpie Mine. Details can be found here: <https://www.peakwaywalk.com/>

The Snowdonia Slate Trail

For those who like walking in Wales there is the 83 miles Snowdonia Slate Trail which runs through the UK's newest UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is a circular trail which starts and ends in Bangor.

<https://snowdoniaslatetrail.org/>

Glyme Valley Way

A bit closer to home is the 16 miles Glyme Valley Way from Chipping Norton to Woodstock. You can take the S3 bus from Oxford to get to Chipping Norton.

<https://explore.osmaps.com/route/6814303/country-walking-glyme-valley-oxfordshire-?lat=51.931734&lon=-1.523117&zoom=12.5269&style=Standard&type=2d>

The High Weald Landscape Trail

This trail runs 94 miles from Horsham to Rye and passes through hop gardens and orchards, woods, heath land and pastures. Most of the sections seem to start and end at rail stations. Details can be found here: <https://highweald.org/things-to-do/high-weald-landscape-trail/>

Public transport walks

If you want to find walks that are accessible by public transport here are some links to travel sites across the UK that might be of use:

<https://www.traveline.info/>

<https://www.railrambles.org/>

<https://walescoastpath.gov.uk/plan-your-visit?lang=en>

<https://www.southwestwales.co.uk/walks/>

<https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/walks/>

<https://www.scotrail.co.uk/blog/walking-routes-train>

<https://www.cnp.org.uk/blog/guide-visiting-uks-national-parks-public-transport>

I hope these may help you to get out and about in our beautiful countryside.

That's it folks! I have rambled on for long enough.

May I take this opportunity on behalf of the Rambling Committee to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

Paula Cowin

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