



Rambling On

AUTUMN EDITION

August - October 2021

Interesting, informative and fun – walk reports, articles, club news, quizzes and great pictures

Chairman's Message

Do you know your EU from your D'Eu? This is a bumper edition, freeing us from the confines of covid (although it did not cramp our style, just controlled our walking). Our urge to walk was not compromised, so we have here an eclectic range of topics about neglected footpaths, butterflies, bees and fungi of the fields and meadows of the High Weald AONB, art installations that are popping up and surprising us in woodlands, and matters with an historical bias.

There are stories of treasure hunts locally, walks past the modest Long Man (at least compared with Cerne Abbas), historical walkways in the Ashburnham area, and a connection with elephants and the coppicing of woodlands that we see all around us. Rambles are described in Highwoods, reminisces of a countryside officer, Friday evening walks, Bank Holiday rambles and pub lunches. We are all out and about again and enjoying it.

John Feltwell

Someone's walking over my grave, but I am watching them!

01 August 2021
Wilmington walk
A. Longman writes ...

I have lain on this hillside (positioned so that my proportions are correct when viewed from below) for many years. I am not sure how many. The first drawing of me is 1710 and archaeologists believe I was formed shortly before this. The faithful still insist that I am Neolithic or iron age and I have received many makeovers. My own memory was erased by that unfortunate incident with the students in 2010 (look it up). No matter, I am digressing from my tale:

On 1 August 2021, it being Lammas day (or Lughnasadh, as they have it), one of the eight sacred pagan festivals of the year, I was expecting my usual early pilgrimage of strange exotics and I was not

disappointed. However, a little later a new tribe filled my car park and, eavesdropping, I discovered they termed themselves "Battle Ramblers" and were perturbed by the absence of their arch Druid. They set off en masse in a flanking movement and I determined to keep a wary eye as to their motives while they climbed and circled behind me. I need not have worried for, whatever their intentions, they were too exhausted on reaching the summit to action anything.

I watched as they meandered to Jevington church where they paused to conduct the ritual of the flask and sausage roll and thence onward to Folkington church to pay homage at the grave of Elizabeth David, which I assumed referenced the sausage roll rituals. The interest shown in my statue avatars behind the church discomfited me again as to their motives in visiting my domain even though I had seen no hostile intent. Accordingly, I summoned a sharp shower as they

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completed their circumnavigation in an attempt to dampen spirits and discourage any return visit.

They departed without incident but I had found the unexpected intrusion discombobulating. I am something of a stick in the mud and am happy with my usual pagans. I am in no need of a fresh coterie. I remain concerned that they may return on 21 September for the next sacred festival of Mabon, as I heard the name mentioned with regard to joining the coven. At the very least, I hope things settle down soon and we can all have a normal happy Beltane.

15 August 2021
Arlington Reservoir walk
Report by Peter B

A SUNDAY WALK, WITH A PUB LUNCH AT THE END OF IT; WHAT BETTER WAY TO DO A WALK IN MIDSUMMER?

The walk was well attended and had an absence of stiles (hurray)! Although it could have just been a 2.5k walk around the lake, once we had walked alongside the reservoir from leaving the car park, I added extra distance on, it then veered off into some lovely

countryside, before looping back up a gentle slope to the edge of the reservoir once again, some two hours later. The wind was so strong it blew my cap off a couple of times and I had to walk holding it (my cap that is). After a short walk along the reservoir edge, we saw the wild geese that hang around there in gangs of 30 upwards and then we stopped for a spot of lunch and admired the variety of green foliage in a spot just behind where we sat. We then carried on the rest of the walk, starting up a wooded lane at a leisurely pace, before eventually winding back into the reservoir park. We rounded the day off with a lovely large lunch and a beer in the canvas marquee in the pub garden, that I had arranged.

29 August 2021
Pett walk
Report by Peter L

SOME CALLED IT A RAMBLE, OTHERS CALLED IT A WORK OUT!

Going for the record number of stiles on one walk, with two fairly challenging uphill gradients and a couple of lesser ones, just to keep the interest, the Lyons were hoping that they won with the walk we did on a beautiful August bank holiday.

Starting at the delightful village of Pett, about 5 miles east of Hastings, we rambled through woods and fields with many a stile, the number still to be confirmed!



There were fields of sheep and cows and, in places, wonderful panoramic views of the countryside. Our break stop also had far reaching views overlooking Camber Sands and as we neared the end of the walk, Dungeness Lighthouse could also be seen.

On returning to the car park, the pub next to it, was in full swing with the clientele enjoying their al fresco lunches with a very loud live band celebrating. For once, a sunny Bank holiday.



HAVE YOU SEEN ALL THE NEW ART INSTALLATIONS ON THE 1066 COUNTRY WALK YET?

News from our Roving Reporter



Thanks to a grant from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, our own national trail has been upgraded. There are now over 80 new wooden signs and information panels by the Sussex Sign Company. A local artist, Keith Pettit, has created 11 benches and 10 stunning sculptures.



Battle Ramblers and Battle Health Walkers were invited to the launch ceremony and turned out in force to cheer the cutting of the ribbon marking the official opening of the newly regenerated trail and to meet Keith Pettit.

A Walkers' Guide has been created to accompany the relaunch – [click here to link to the online version](#).

On 17 September 2021 the completion of the project was celebrated with Launch Events at Pevensey (the start of the walk), Battle Abbey and Rye (the end of the walk).

To mark the launch, Cirque Rum Baba, landed, in zere verry long boat to capture ze crown of 'Arold. Tant pis, zey 'ad eaten so much camembert, zey 'ad problems wiz ze, how you say, bollards, on ze Abbey Green, zey could only wave zer big clubs about and shout at us Saxons.



12 September 2021 Westfield circular walk Report by Rowly

The walk was also included in The High Weald Walking Festival and was well attended by Battle Ramblers and 4 guests. The start was delayed somewhat due to Ken being hit by a speeding car; luckily without damage to himself but fatal for his motor. So, once he had given a statement and the offending party had vacated the premises in the back of a police car, we made our start.

Initially following the 1066 Path past the on-going development in Westfield and out into the countryside. We stopped at the 'Henge' sculpture for a brief talk and then followed the Hastings Link Path, over the railway and had our stop just before Three Oaks.

The return passed a swampy section where some Konik ponies had previously been grazed, but unfortunately had now been moved on. Thence back to The Moor in Westfield.

19 September 2021

Brightling walk through High Weald woods

Report by John F and Simon

The walk starts at a particularly high point in the AONB in Brightling (at 188m) where we could see the steeple at Dallington to the south. Turning to the north we uniquely had both Burwash and Burwash Weald in view at the same time on a long ridge before us, the former with a spire.

Geology has a lot to do with the flora and fauna of the Willingford Meadows SSSI walk in the AONB. First, the walk skirts around the gypsum mines in Brightling, then parts of the walk go through fragments of SSSI which are designated for their flora growing on 'the only unimproved pastures on Jurassic limestone in the county'.



Enchanter's nightshade

There was a superb view over the typical AONB countryside with steep valleys, ghylls, old meadows, old woodlands typifying the High Weald, with precious few walkers about. Why do so few people enjoy the countryside? Back on the sticky clay, and following the river Dudwell, the woodlands were still sporting the old heads of bluebell and good

showings of enchanter's nightshade and wood sage. The ground was hard going because of the mud (early August!!) but we were compensated by the views and tranquillity. This was a great walk not only for the landscape but for the richness of the flora.

Geology detail: The Jurassic bedrock in this area occurs as 3 inliers (old rock surrounded by younger rocks) close to the axis (middle) of the Wealden anticline. It includes grey limestones that, along with



sub-cropping gypsum, represent the last marine influence in the area prior to the development of the massive Wealden sandstone and shale delta complex. The deltaic massive sandstones and minor shales of the delta were deposited in a lagoonal non-marine environment during the subsequent Lower Cretaceous period. The Jurassic rocks are of Purbeckian age (around 145 million years) and notably form the southern sea cliffs near Swanage in Dorset. The hyper saline lagoonal environment led to the deposition of the limestone by evaporation and ultimately 3 thick seams of gypsum which are currently mined. Historically the limestone was quarried in shallow pits for lime and building material.



Bird's foot trefoil



Waxcap

Wildflowers and fungi: Gypsum and limestone are alkaline which means that the wildflowers associations are different from the clayey Weald of our normal walks. Here we see lots of bird's foot trefoil, dwarf thistles, hawkbits, clovers, vetches and restharrow, all chalk-lovers (or calcicoles). The autumn speciality amongst fungi are a particularly rare group call waxcaps and they come in bright colours, like M&Ms. They are also characteristic of old pastures, churchyards and cemeteries.

The butterflies on our early August recce were an abundance of red admirals, peacocks and gatekeepers were on the swathes of hemp agrimony. Small copper was sucking the nutritious minerals from a cowpat. White butterflies (small white and large white) were about now, having been a little scarce earlier. Meadow browns were abundant in all the grassy fields as their larvae feed on grasses. A few specimens of the silver-washed fritillary were seen – distinctive along the woodland glades; their larvae feed on violets on the woodland floor from late spring onwards. We also saw common lizard.



Small copper

26 September 2021

South Wadhurst Park Circular

Report by Simon and John F



Over 15 people turned up for the walk, a great turnout for what is a relatively long distance from home. Luckily we all managed to park, though some lost traction on the wet verges trying to do so. It was good to see Brian Fitzgerald whom we haven't seen for a while. That is what is so good about Battle Ramblers, members can come and go when convenient. We are always glad to see you all.

The walk headed off, up the hill and we squeezed between Newbridge Wood and Batt's Wood along forestry tracks that are wide enough to allow woodland wildlife to thrive. When the sun shines these are sheltered spots for butterflies and birds. For the moment we said goodbye to the great view (behind us) over the tributary of the Rother which drains from Wadhurst and welcomed the more major tributary which runs down from Tidebrook, SW of Wadhurst, when we were over the hill.



We passed meadows that had been planted with wild flowers, but were now cut back for winter. The path took us down through typical Wealden woodland and then along the south side of Wadhurst Park lake, an artificial lake fed by the above tributary. Before we reached the fields a small party took a short cut back over the hill to the cars.

Crossing over meadows we walked briefly into the park and then down towards the stream and a planted wood of willows where we stopped for drinks. We noticed that the whole area had been trampled by deer, inside and outside the park. We understand that there are several scores of deer in this part of the AONB and they seem to have access to everywhere, including gardens where they cause havoc.

We next climbed up through Coombe Hill, leaving the wood onto what looks to be an old golf course with good views to the south out to Heathfield. The path descends through fields to Sharnden Old Manor Farm and then finally to the Rother Valley. The river is but a stream here, but gives rise to a glorious ancient river meadow. John explained how old anthills forming hummocks are typical for an old undisturbed meadow.

In summer the meadow is a great location to see butterflies, and during our recce John and I saw nine different species including the purple emperor which is often associated with the solitary grand oaks which occur along the river.



Red Admiral



Brimstone – wings cut like leaves



Brimstone close up



Peacock on Hemp Agrimony

The walk along the river was about 2 to 3 miles and after leaving the river we crossed a variety of valley fields on our way back to the cars.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Bernard Mabon

Some of our older members will recall that our one-time secretary Kathleen Honeysett (otherwise known as Honey) used to lead what she called “treasure hunts” around a town or village of her choice. These took place once a year on a Sunday during December and the pavements made a welcome change to walking muddy country paths.

Honey had a keen interest in history and aided by Margaret McCrorie, another keen historian, she would compile a quiz sheet that could be completed as one followed a route around the town. The quiz often used the names of buildings or information on wall plaques which supplied the answers to some of the questions. Finding the answers made you look for details, perhaps architectural, that you would probably not have noticed otherwise.

Lindsay has looked up past programmes and found that Honey did around 14 treasure hunts between 1990 and 2003, in towns and villages such as Lewes, Alfriston, Tenterden, Pevensey & Westham, Rye, Winchelsea, St Leonards, Old Hastings (several times), Battle and Robertsbridge. The quiz sheets would often be accompanied by notes about the town’s history, all typed out on Honey’s ancient typewriter (she refused to have anything to do with modern word processors and you dare not mention the word computer to her!)

Although sometimes freezing weather or rain made writing difficult these treasure hunts were quite popular and there would be small prizes at the finish for those who got all the answers right. I remember on one occasion, after a treasure hunt in Old Hastings, we finished off with fish and chips at Rock-a-Nore, which was very welcome.

Honey worked in Battle over many years and knew the town well. I still have some of the quiz sheets (though not all the answers!) and the following is an extract of the preface to the Battle treasure hunt:

“Before we move off on our ‘treasure hunt’ pause awhile – we’re standing on the site of Battle Market. King William 1st granted a charter for a weekly market in Battle which used to be held on the Green outside

the Abbey until moving to this site in the 19th century when market day was on a Monday. There are still those who remember the hustle and bustle of the cattle market when farming folk gathered to buy and sell, dashing to the call of the Auctioneers hand bell. In latter years the business was in the hands of James Woodhams – a tall handsome gentleman, who wore the largest most highly polished brown leather shoes ever seen – I’m glad that a ‘Close’ has been named after him among the new dwellings now built on the Market site.”

Other snippets of information emerged as we moved off to follow the route around the town. The Almonry, which we know as the property of the Town Council, was originally a medieval hall house with a 16th century extension. It was a farmhouse with 35 acres of land, sold from the Battle Abbey estate in 1928 into private ownership.

Of The George Inn Honey says: “There’s nothing to indicate what a fine hostelry The George Inn once was. Inside, its Assembly Rooms have been converted into en suite bedrooms, outside its stables stand almost derelict. In its hey-day when the railway came to Battle it ran its own pony and trap to convey its customers to and from the Station, hosted the Hunt balls and was **the** hotel of the area. The Battle & Villages Lions Club still meets here on a regular basis.”

- There are now several shops on the site of what was once Tills the Ironmongers, said to be the oldest ironmongers in Britain until its closure around the turn of the century.
- Mention was also made of Thorpes shoe shop which up until then had been a shoe shop for approx. 180 years. This closed in recent years and is about to reopen as a wine bar.
- The Langton Hall was once the town poorhouse.
- St Mary’s Church was founded between 1107 and 1194 for the use of the townspeople to avoid them using the Abbey for worship. In the Churchyard is the grave of one Isaac Ingles who died at the age of 120.
- Lower Lake once had its own collection of convenient shops, all are now private dwellings. One has the name of ‘The Old Bake House’.

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- Battle was once famous for its manufacture of gunpowder, said by Daniel Defoe to be “The finest gunpowder and perhaps the best in Europe.”
- The hill leading from Lower Lake towards Hastings was known as Tanyard Hill where a tanyard occupied the site which is now a petrol filling station. Honey tells us “Tanning was a prosperous local industry – Battle Abbey records show that a tannery was in existence as early as the 14th century. An offshoot of the tannery was shoemaking, and handmade shoes were a local speciality. All I can remember is the dreadful smell.”
- Back to the High Street and The Bull Inn which is said to have been constructed from stone ‘salvaged’ from the Abbey Kitchen after the Dissolution of the monastery around 1539.

- Lastly the building which embraces the Nationwide Building Society, a shoe shop and a fashion house (now closed) was originally The Guildhall.

There are small numbered plaques on some of the buildings in the town which refer to points on the Battle Town Trail. This is a self-guided tour of the town described on a leaflet produced by Battle Town Council and available free from Battle Library. This provides an interesting snapshot into the town’s history and its intriguing architecture. Follow the trail to learn more about Battle, but best to choose a quiet time when the pavements are not crowded with people.

There were 50 questions on Honey’s Battle Treasure Hunt. I managed 45 correctly, so it cannot have been too difficult.

10 October 2021 HIGHWOODS WALK by Alison



It was a good turn out on a lovely bright autumn day. Julie joined us and was welcomed by the group. The paths weren't too muddy and are well marked in Highwoods. We followed the blue and then

the white paths with only a slight hesitation on my part and emerged opposite the pumping station. After a short walk along the field boundary the track was quite obvious across the field, despite the signpost having disappeared.

Having left the woods, we were better able to appreciate the sunshine and as we turned to walk across the fields towards Hooe there were good views to be seen, although not quite clear enough to see all the way to Eastbourne.

We stopped for our break at Hooe Common. A welcome bonus was Ann's Pudsey cakes which she had baked to raise money for the 'Children in Need' appeal.

The weather was clouding over a little as we set off to

circle across the fields, through Holmes Farm yard and out on to Whydown Road. After a short walk along the road, it was back in to the wood to pick up the blue route again to the car park.

Julie told me that she was pleased to have discovered some new paths in an area she knew quite well which is always one of the many pleasures of rambling.

I think there should also be a special mention for young Jed, Lois's border terrier, who had completed his longest ramble to date and was showing no signs of flagging.

Thank you!

The Countryfile Ramble to support 'BBC Children in Need' took part on Sunday 10th October. To celebrate this nationwide rambling event I made some cakes, decorated them with some Pudsey pics (edible) and had a collection on our lovely Sunday 10th October walk, led by Alison.



I cannot believe how generous everyone was, I collected £100.00. Huge thanks to everyone who gave so generously.

Ann Dedman

17 October 2021

Battle Mountfield circular walk

Report by Rowly

TWO WALKS OFFERED – A LONG WALK OF 7.5 MILES AND A SHORTER 4.5 MILE WALK. A TOTAL OF 29 RAMBLERS STARTED AND MOST RETURNED

Starting at Watch Oak we crossed to Ashes Wood via Beech Farm and then into Burnthouse Wood. The

short walkers(!?) headed back towards Beech Farm from the bottom of the wood, while the rest carried on towards Mountfield, stopping for a refreshment break just before the Gypsum road.

We then crossed the twenny-wun -'undred and followed the River Line before cutting off to the Whatlington Road via my favourite hill, which had just been harrowed allowing us to re-instate the footpath. Back to the start after a climb up to the windmill.

EVENING RAMBLERS PICTURE GALLERY



What do I like about Friday evening walks?

Well, it's a very friendly group and we natter our way around the delightful walks every week, taking photos at every opportunity!! (Well I do!)



I have particularly liked recent walks with the darker evenings, sometimes finishing with our torches on! Great fun!!

Maria



REPORTING NEGLECTED FOOTPATHS

– a handy how-to guide

We all enjoy exploring our countryside but sometimes it can be hard work trying to navigate a dangerous stile, a jungle of overgrowth, a blocked path or some other hazard or obstacle.

Here in East Sussex, the body responsible for maintaining public rights of way and keeping them free of obstructions is East Sussex County Council (ESCC).

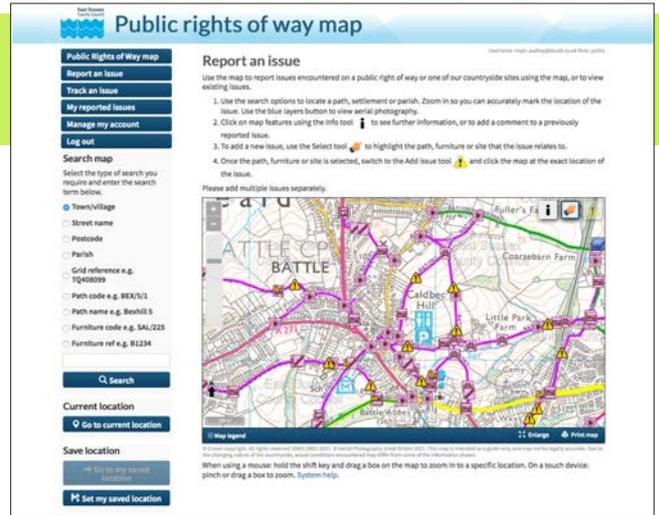
It's important that we all, individually, report the problems we encounter to ESCC – it's the only way the problem will ever get fixed.

It is very easy to report problems to ESSC via the new online reporting system at:

<https://row.eastsussex.gov.uk/standardmap.aspx>

To use this system, you'll need to register as a user and create a password, but once you've done that, you'll be able to report issues online. If you use your mobile phone, you can report as you go, in real time. You can upload photos and even let the system "locate" you, so you don't need to remember grid references. It is well worth registering and looking round the site before heading out.

If you prefer, you can contact the rights of way team by



email to rightsofway@eastsussex.gov.uk or phone on 0345 6080 193.

You'll need the grid reference to give precise location details.

Battle Ramblers have an important role here too, so if the problem is in the Battle area, please always copy your report or send a note to Bev, our Footpath Warden, to bevm@hollyblue.net (If you're not sure whether the problem is in the Battle area, send the copy to Bev and he'll forward it if necessary.)

By understanding where the worst and most commonly reported problems are in our area, we can take a view on priorities for action, which problems we need to escalate and make sure we monitor remedial works.

31 October 2021
Burwash circular walk
Pictures tell the story –
thanks to Lynne G and Peter B



RAMBLINGS OF A COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER

Article by John Harmer

In my last two contributions, I told of my experiences as a Local Footpath Warden (LFW); some of which were rather mundane and others quite amusing. In this article, I tell of my activities in my other Ramblers' volunteer role as East Sussex Countryside Officer.

Whilst Ramblers rightly prioritise the protection and promotion of rights-of-way, another important concern is protecting the countryside in which we walk. I volunteered for the role at the beginning of 2013, as it had been vacant for a few years. In addition to a long-held interest in countryside issues, I had the advantage of being a founder member of the High Weald Network a few years earlier and many years of contact with the Sussex branch of Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). However, I still had much learning to do on the job.

Most development in the countryside requires planning permission, which involves Planning Applications (PAs) being submitted to Local Authorities for public consultation before a decision is made. This is when I (on behalf of Sussex Ramblers), and anyone else who wishes to, can make a comment, which is available for public inspection. In order to have any real influence it is necessary to state reasons for either objecting to or supporting the PA. It is not a referendum; otherwise objectors would win every time!

East Sussex has an advantage in there being large areas within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the South Downs National Park (SDNP) where certain restrictions apply. However, developers often try 'pushing the boundaries', either by claiming they can mitigate any damage or by proposing development just outside the protected landscape; sometimes immediately adjacent to the boundary line. Therefore, the following in particular have been targeted with unwelcome proposed housing development: Fairlight, Catsfield, Ninfield, Horam and the outskirts of Lewes.

We have to accept there is a need for more housing; this is to be expected within and on the outskirts of towns (preferably on brownfield sites) but, in some cases, this is spilling over into neighbouring rural parishes, e.g. Hellingly from Hailsham; Framfield from

Uckfield and Westham from Eastbourne. Another worrying situation is the large housing development proposed for north Burgess Hill (where I liaise with my West Sussex counterpart) as this may extend into the East Sussex rural parish of Wivelsfield.

When Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) are approved, this gives local people a say as to where, and where not, development can take place. However, in the very lengthy process of getting NPs approved, developers take the advantage of picking their preferred sites. Where this is the case, Planning Committees often seem reluctant to refuse a PA for fear of a costly appeal

Battle now has a NP, but this did not stop a very controversial housing development on a greenfield site at the back of Tollgates, off North Trade Road (see pic below). However, AONB and NP will hopefully prevent any further attempts to build on high ground at Caldbec Hill and near Darvel Down, Netherfield.



In Rother District, north Bexhill is taking most of the new housing development on land made available by new roads linking with Combe Valley Way. However, there has been a very controversial and unwelcome housing development approved on a greenfield site west of Cooden, almost bordering on Hooe Level. This also affects a footpath which crosses the site, so when this occurs I liaise with the Area Footpath Officer and/or Local Footpath Warden to consider whether we make joint or separate responses.

To be continued in the next edition of Rambling On

CLUB NEWS

BATTLE RAMBLERS AGM 2021

Report by Anne H

Being fairly new to the Ramblers, this was my first AGM, and I was pleased I had attended. The venue was the Emmanuel centre in Battle, which is a nice bright building with plenty of free parking.

We sat downstairs, initially, whilst waiting for everyone to arrive ready for the 2.30 start. The AGM was held upstairs in another large, bright, room with plenty of seating – to allow for Covid distancing if desired. Some members chose to distance and to wear a mask which, at least for now, is a personal choice. It was nice to see so many members had come along, especially as it wasn't possible to meet last year.

The Chairman, Dr John Feltwell, was MC and did a good job of describing what has obviously been a pretty difficult and strange time for so many organisations – including the Ramblers. Allowing for Covid last year, and this year also, there wasn't too much to report in terms of activity and finances, but both were admirably reported by Simon and June.

There was a discussion about Areas of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) and tree preservation in relation to ramblers and the countryside; which is vital to us all in

terms of enjoyment and benefits to health and so on. Bev led the discussion.

Any Other Business (AOB) didn't take long, with not much to report due to Covid, and just one or two questions from the audience. Therefore, at around 3pm the AGM was declared over. It was then time to return downstairs to be greeted by a long table bulging with an array of cakes, sandwiches and other delights – plus another large table full of raffle prizes – kindly donated by various Battle Ramblers.

Many of us purchased raffle tickets – and made a mental note of which prize we'd choose if we were lucky enough to win. Whilst we were all sitting and chatting over tea/coffee and delicious sandwiches and cake, John began reading out the winning raffle ticket numbers.

It should be said the raffle took quite a while because of the number of lovely prizes! I have to admit to holding 3 winning raffle tickets myself and – on June's insistence – I accepted two of them. There were plenty of happy people clutching their prizes and, eventually, they had all been chosen.

It was then time to depart. I left with a smile on my face thinking that Battle Ramblers AGM's seem a lot less of an endurance than most AGM's I've attended – not least because most do not hold a raffle afterwards!

NOTICES

FAREWELL TO TWO OF OUR FORMER MEMBERS

We regret to announce the deaths of two former members of Battle Ramblers.

JOHN CHITTENDEN passed away on September 11th at the age of 76 after a brave fight against Covid 19 and pneumonia. John was the husband of Vivien Chittenden, who was our Walks Programme Secretary for a few years and also edited *Rambling On* when Honey was no longer able to do it.

RON STREET, a long-standing member of Battle Ramblers until a few years ago, died last year at the age of 92.

Ron was also a keen cyclist as well as an enthusiastic Rambler, who, even in his eighties, would undertake our walks regardless of their length. I am indebted to Bernard, who recently encountered Ron's daughter, for the information of his passing.

My abiding memory of Ron is during a dangerous icy walk on Boxing Day a few years ago. A tall man, he still came on the walk despite the risk of losing his footing on the frozen pavements.

David H.

THANK ELEPHANTS FOR OUR COPPICE WOODLANDS!

Article by John F

When Trafalgar Square was constructed in the 19th century they found bones of hippos, elephants and lions all deposited in the Thames river gravels. Some of these large animals are still around today in Africa, but it is believed that they, particularly elephants, had a significant effect on evolving the tree species that we see today in the Weald.



Elephants break off foliage, limbs and trunks of trees on which they graze. Through time tree species have evolved a way of survival by sprouting new shoots. When we cut trees off at ground level, called coppicing, we rely on the trees' fast recovery to grow new shoots. Ecologists now believe that we must thank elephants for

stimulating trees to respond to this persistent attack from grazers by sprouting.

George Monbiot, in his 2013 book called 'Feral', states that, quoting one other, the famous Oliver Rackham – an expert on the vegetation of Britain – that this elephant effect has evolved in oak, ash, beech, lime, sycamore, field maple, sweet chestnut, hazel and alder in this way. I would also add that two of these sycamore and sweet chestnut would have been affected elsewhere in Europe by elephants as elephants would have roamed widely over the continent. Sweet chestnut probably came into Britain by the Romans, and sycamore in the 16th century, both way after elephants roamed Sussex.

Who would know that all those people who worked the Sussex and Kent woodlands, with coppicing, and pollarding, were in some way reliant on the effects of elephants for producing such useful and compliant timbers.

FAMOUS BRITISH WRITERS ANAGRAM FROM JUNE

- 1) CHASED CRINKLES
- 2) GATECRASH HAITI
- 3) NEW MANIAC
- 4) DOLLAR HAD
- 5) HYDRO ASTHMA
- 6) RETIE GOOGLE
- 7) BATTIER EXPORT
- 8) TIMID HAZES
- 9) SLUSH MARINADE
- 10) SCROLL WAILER

A 9ER PUZZLE FROM 'MABEL AT THE TABLE'

Remember her from 'Have a Go' on the radio, with Wilfred Pickles? She used to give the money out (give 'em the money Mabel) but she has now upgraded to do a quiz of her own!

The instructions are:

Each number corresponds to a letter. Solve the clues and complete the grid to find a 9 letter word.

- 7298345: where to get your fresh air
- 8726: something warming after a winter walk
- 89568: 10,000 of these a day please
- 12589: try a walk as one of these before you join

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

(See last page for the answers)

THE ASHBURNHAM ESTATE: A TALE OF JOHNS (MAINLY)

Article by Terry Milford

PART 1: EARLY DAYS

Prior to 1066, Ashburnham was part of the domain of the Saxon nobleman Seward. It was extensively ransacked and virtually laid to waste by the Norman invaders before being gifted by William to the minor Norman aristocrat the Count D'Eu.

This was no great favour given the condition of the Estate and it is likely that D'Eu had played only a small part in William's triumph. The Domesday Book in 1086 valued the Estate at £8. Note that we are talking about actual weight, in pounds, of silver, rather than note or coin. This equates to roughly £200,000 today.

But this is pretty much meaningless as land was not bought and sold in those days. It was held by feudal lords at the behest of the monarch, to do as they wished as long as they paid their taxes and supplied men for the forces when required. Rather, the valuation is a measure of the wealth the land produced and is of most worth in showing how the fortunes changed as valuations varied.

The Domesday Book put the value of the Estate at £1 when granted to D'Eu after it had been ravaged and at an estimated £6 before the invasion. D'Eu clearly did a good job restoring it. As for the value placed on other things, it is interesting that a knight's battle sword cost the equivalent of approx. £25,000 at today's prices.

The new lords of the manor seem to have made a good job of assimilating. Unlike some other parts of the country where civil strife continued, it seems that though the Normans were clearly in control and took the spoils, life otherwise continued much as before in the sparsely populated iron working forests of the weald and ordinary Saxons probably noticed little difference other than new masters. Relations were smoothed by the economic boost provided by the construction of the vast Battle Abbey complex.

It was at this time that the old Roman track was improved and became the north trade road. This track originally connected the Roman iron bloomery at Beauport to a small port on the, then navigable Wallers Haven, at Boreham Street. The port was used to trade

in salt, refined from the Pevensy marshes and to ship some iron from nearby fields rather than transporting it by road. The port may well have been where the A271 now bridges the Haven but given that the watercourse immediately narrows to the north and streams change course over time, it is interesting that ¼ mile south of Boreham Street, on Boreham Lane and at sea level, there is a hamlet called Puddledock.

The Roman track was little used before the Normans as the Anderida forest was difficult to navigate and there was scant local demand for goods. What was traded, was generally moved by water. However, there was now the workforce and all the supporting activities at Battle. Material for the construction and various supplies were now brought to Battle from the north along the trade road.

The entrance to the Ashburnham's property was originally off this road, where the main entrance to Ashburnham Place is now. South Lodge is now at this entrance. There was no formal entrance for many years as this was no grand estate but more a large farmstead. There have been other main entrances at different times.

By the early 12th century, Jean D'Eu had become John Ashburnham esquire. The Saxons had not used surnames but patronymics (as is still the case in Iceland and one or two other countries). Children took the name of the father so, King Harold was Harold Godwinson, i.e. Harold Son of Godwin, and so on.

The Normans with their passion for order, record keeping and taxing, found this unmanageable and decreed that all inhabitants must adopt a surname. The head of household was allowed to choose but thereafter the family had to stick with the chosen name.

This is the origin of most of our current surnames. Many people chose their occupations or geographical features or place names or even physical features (e.g. Small). It was only natural for the masters of Ashburnham to become the Ashburnhams.

NB: Further parts of this story will follow in future editions of Rambling On.

BATTLE RAMBLERS PICTURE GALLERY



Bull Whisperer



Giant Toadstool



June's Halloween Display

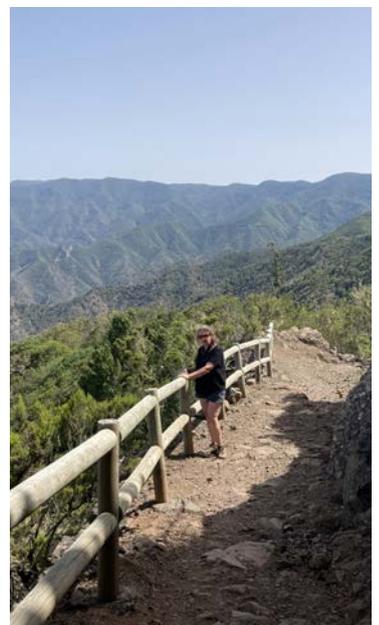


Overhead Swan



Peter & Julie had a lovely holiday in La Gomera – although there is the usual sun, sand and sea, we had more of a walkers holiday following a local map of the island where various numbered walks were listed and graded in terms of difficulty. Our first walk was difficult being down, around and up mountainous slopes on narrow tracks of loose shingle with 1000s of metres drop and no barrier; no edging in slowly there then!

We did four walks in all and only one of them was a moderate walk, the others were a bit scary at times but so worth it despite being in intense heat high up if only for the magnificent views and at times looking over the clouds not up at them. We'll be back, if only not to be defeated for not finding the walk listed as number 6 – this was meant to be our easy walk and we could only find walk number 4, another mountainous one the day after just finishing one similar. It was as much an adventure doing the walks as finding the start of them.



BACKPACK SNACKS

ONION BHAJIS

Bhajis make great snacks served with chutneys and yoghurt mixes i.e. cucumber raita. Be mindful that there are many variations of bhajis so it's important to play around with the ingredients to make it suitable for your own taste. Below is one basic recipe for onion bhajis and a few hints for alternatives.

Ingredients:

- 5/6 finely chopped onions
- 4 to 5 tablespoons of gram flour
- (Optional: 1 teaspoon of rice flour or 1 teaspoon of semolina to make crispier bhajis)
- 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda

Spices:

- 1 teaspoon of ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon of garam masala
- Add the following to your own taste:
- red chilies to taste
- black pepper and salt to taste
- Crushed garlic to taste
- Other options:
- 1 to 2 teaspoons fenugreek, chopped fresh coriander

Process:

In a bowl mix the sliced onions, gram flour, spice powders and salt. The mixture can be allowed to settle for 20-60 minutes to let the moisture from the onions bind the ingredients together more effectively. However, if it remains a little dry add small amounts of water (1 tsp) until everything stays sticky - if it is too moist at this stage the bhajis will be quite soggy.

In a pan heat oil to a high temperature. To check if the oil is ready, drop in a small piece of batter - If it rises back to the surface the oil is ready.

Make small balls and put in the fryer using a spoon. Fry for 4 minutes turning once.

Notes:

This recipe makes a small bowl of onion bhajis and can be time consuming to make, so once you have found your preferred recipe make a much larger batch and freeze.

For vegetable bhajis add a combination of potatoes, carrots, peppers, spinach.

Or as a treat make individual vegetable bhajis, dip individual vegetable in batter and cook i.e. carrot stick, cauliflower floret.

Contributed by Alaina

ANAGRAM ANSWERS

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1) CHARLES DICKENS | 6) GEORGE ELIOT |
| 2) AGATHA CHRISTIE | 7) BEATRIX POTTER |
| 3) IAN MCEWAN | 8) ZADIE SMITH |
| 4) RONALD DAHI | 9) SALMAN RUSHDIE |
| 5) THOMAS. HARDY | 10) LEWIS CARROLL |

9ER PUZZLE ANSWERS

- 7298345: OUTSIDE
- 8726: SOUP
- 89568: STEPS
- 12589: GUEST
- 9 letter word: **GUIDEPOST**

Our grateful thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition, either with a report, article or via some truly magnificent photography.

The Editorial Team (Brenda, Audrey and David)

Edited by David Hollamby – please send your walk reports and photos to David as soon as possible, after your walk, to: martlets68@btinternet.com

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