

# The Eastleigh Rambler October 2006

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

We appear at the moment to be having an 'Indian Summer', ideal weather for walking.

In July some of us contributed to an 'American Supper Evening', organised by Chris Bond. We also had a slide show on Hampshire water/wind mills.

Later in August, about fifty of us enjoyed walking the 'River Parrett Trail' in Somerset. Short walks were possible, allowing visits to a Craft Centre in Bower Hinton, the Willow & Wetland Centre in Stoke Gregory and a Sunday stroll around Bridgewater. The teashops were as popular as the pubs! Thanks once again to Lynne and Dave Shepherd, for a well-organised trip.

The final 'Cranborne Chase Path' finishes in October and has been well supported.

Similarly, Marcia's Alphabet walks appear to be nearing their end, with Xbury in October. I wonder what Z will be? On a sad note, in August one of our members, Paul Deering, was tragically killed in a road accident. Many of us remember walking with Paul and Sylvia and we will miss him.

Wednesday walkers will perhaps remember Lilian Merryweather, who recently died at the age of 90.

The 18th Annual General Meeting of Eastleigh R.A. will take place on Wednesday November 8th, at St Boniface Church Hall, Hursley Road Chandlers Ford, 7.30 p.m. until 10.00 p.m.

We have vacancies for Treasurer, Countryside Secretary and the Committee. Please let Pat Beazley (Secretary) know if you are willing to volunteer for these positions and if you have any ideas for future events in 2007.

See you at the A.G.M!

*Eve Peckham (Chairperson) 23 September 2006*

### THE WYSIS WAY 2006

We started in April with a short walk through grey slate houses in Monmouth, Wales. We walked down, across the River Wye, then up through bare hazel trees with violets, wood-sorrel, cowslips and primroses, plus pink milkmaids in damp grass. From our picnic site on the Kymin we had superb views over the Forest of Dean. After this we walked along hilly tracks in mixed woods, with huge pudding stones, mosses, male, hard and heart's tongue ferns with some blackthorn and cherry blossoms.

In May we walked in trees with light green new leaves, interspersed with white may and golden gorse bushes, with

hedge-parsley, rape, crosswort and buttercup yellows, and campion and clover along the way. Tracks took us past stone houses into woodlands carpeted with bluebells, lined with stitchwort plus yellow stars of wood pimpernel underfoot. The industrial history was shown at old mine shafts or railways now disused. We ate our picnic under trees near old slag heaps now kindly coated with ferns, loose rocks and fallen trees covered in huge fungi.

In June the trail took us past stonewalls and cottages, to dry cracked arable fields in hot weather. We became tired up May Hill so we were glad to stop for lunch with views to different counties and the Severn Estuary, under cool shady pines. A gentle walk down brought us to a fishing lake surrounded by handsome bulrushes and spotted orchids up to 3 feet high! Then deep blue alkanet and golden St John's-wort were growing in tall vegetation, while further on banks of foxgloves were in full bloom by woodland tracks.

July was hot and humid as we started along a disused rail track, between lush growths of pink musk mallow, marjoram, basil, huge burdock plants, purple knapweed and teasels. Later canal waterside plants included deep red betony, orange tansy and purple vetch. We crossed the River Severn and admired Telford's Bridge and walked in head high willow herbs, purple loosestrife and yellow fleabane. With booming thunder, under black clouds we saw Gloucester Cathedral, but walked through the City in a confusion of traffic and funfair crowds in the dry, out to a quieter Robinswood Hill in sunshine.

The early September walk was 8.5 miles. But we had four steep ridges (to the equivalent of up and down Snowdon!) – in gorgeous Cotswold lumpy green meadows, on a mercifully cool and dull day, and had many stops. Again superb views (e.g. of Gloucester) lots of charming cows in fields, and a scattering of blues and purples of scabious, harebell, campanula and knapweed flowers. The coach just scraped through Bisley to start out for home.

Later in September we had a misty start, but the rain had stopped. We walked through Bisley with Cotswold stone buildings, and along hedges red with bryony berries and ripening hawthorn, with frantic house martins, swifts and swallows overhead feeding on insects before migrating, and we now saw more red ploughed fields. The disused Thames to Severn canal had deep-cut sections, locks and impressive arches into Sapperton Tunnel, while we walked above with air vents, which looked like trees on hillocks. We passed two round houses after the tunnel and reached the Thames' source. We followed the dry ditch, filled with forget-me-nots and saw a very rare and poisonous thorn-apple in the meadow before we caught the coach home.

I am so glad I managed all of this trail of varied habitats and wildlife, in different seasons, with interesting history and buildings. A huge thank you to the leaders Richard and Tracey.

*Carol Bradbeer*

# THE LIMESTONE LINK 2007

## FROM THE COTSWOLDS TO THE MENDIPS THROUGH NORTH SOMERSET

A route devised by the Yatton Ramblers of Yatton near Bristol. First published in 1989 their book on the walk has seen a second edition in 1994 and reprints in 1995 and 1998. It is almost fully waymarked and generally in good condition. The route is supposed to have been 36 miles but we made it 44.5 with the GPS. The route connects the Cotswold Way at Cold Ashton with the West Mendip Way at Shipham. Each day is about 11 miles and there is a wide variety of stunning scenery.

**Saturday 21 April 2007** Walk One will be from Cold Ashton high up on the Cotswolds about five miles north east of Bath. Dropping almost immediately into a hidden valley the route follows the St Catherine's Brook to Batheaston for picnic or pub lunch. The Brook joins the River Avon and the river is followed west to Bedhampton Mill and then south to pick up the Kennet and Avon Canal, which is followed for four miles to the Dundas Viaduct.

**Saturday 19 May 2007** Walk Two follows broadly the route of the Somerset Coal Canal and the railway that was built along the same valley of the River Cam, which was used in the filming of the Titfield Thunderbolt with a picnic or pub lunch at Combe Hay.

**Saturday 9 June 2007** Walk Three is over the North Somerset hills that surround the springs at the head of the River Cam with excellent views and finally descending to the valley of the River Chew, which is crossed just east of the reservoir to West Harptree. Picnic or pub lunch again at Hinton Blewitt.

**Saturday 14 July 2007** Walk Four is along the North side of the Mendip Hills through a wide variety of landscapes including some large tracks of open moorland with extensive views. Picnic lunch only this time although we will get a celebratory drink at Shipham before returning.

**HOW TO BOOK** The price of £13 per trip (or £48 if you book all four in advance) includes travel by coach from pickup points in Bishops Waltham and Eastleigh Borough to the start of the walk and the return travel from the end of the section to the same points. To book please send a cheque made payable to "Walk the World Limited" at 2 Pavilion Close, Fair Oak, Hampshire SO50 7PS. No refunds will be possible. Subject to seat availability bookings will be accepted up to the day prior to departure. The published itinerary is subject to change if there is bad weather or travel delay. Participants must be equipped with normal rambling wet and cold weather clothing. You can e-mail the Company on [WalktheWorld@aol.com](mailto:WalktheWorld@aol.com) (Company Registration No. 3847752). Telephone 02380693655 See also our web site on [www.walktheworld.freemove.co.uk](http://www.walktheworld.freemove.co.uk)

**REMEMBER TO PROVIDE YOUR NAME(S) ADDRESS POSTCODE TELEPHONE NUMBER AND E-MAIL ADDRESS AND INDICATE THE TRIP YOU ARE BOOKING FOR.** (If applicable) please indicate whether you are a member of a Group of the Ramblers' Association. 5% of the price will be offered to the Ramblers' Association through advertising

The coach will pick up at 7.20 Outside Brijan Tours Coach depot at Abbey Mill, Bishops Waltham; 7.27 Bus stop near church at Botley called "Botley C of E School" Bus Stop - westbound side; 7.32 Westbound bus lay-by in Lower Northam Road, Hedge End opposite Cotswold Camping; 7.41 Northbound side of road outside Southampton Parkway Station (rail connection); 7.45 Eastleigh Bus Station -coach pickup point (for those who need to use a bus or rail to join us); 7.49 Leigh Road - bus stop near Civic Offices; 7.53 Bus stop on Northbound side of Bournemouth Road, Chandlers Ford just north of junction with Leigh Road; 7.56 Northbound at Fryern Arcade, Chandlers Ford; 8.01 Allbrook Hill at southbound lay-by at southern end of link from M3; Then it is onto the M3 and on to our destination.

See also <http://www.hants.org.uk/eastleighramblers> **THE EASTLEIGH RAMBLER** is produced, published and distributed by the Eastleigh Group of the Ramblers' Association to all members and affiliated members. All contributions are welcome and should be sent to Richard Kenchington, 2 Pavilion Close, Fair Oak SO50 7PS. Internet: - [Richkench@aol.com](mailto:Richkench@aol.com) Tel: 023 80693655. The Ramblers' Association is a Registered Charity (Number 1093577) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (Company Registration Number 4458492).