



FOREST NEWS

Editor: John Sheraton

Forest of Dean
Group

NEW MEMBERS



A very warm welcome to new members who have joined the Group since the last Forest News.

Membership is now 217.

PROGRAMME DEADLINE

- **July – October 2014 programme.**
e-mail: walks@fodramblers.org.uk

Details of walks for the next programme should be submitted no later than **7 June**, directly onto the Group website if possible (www.fodramblers.org.uk), or to the walks co-ordinator. Any member, whether old or new, is welcome to lead a walk. Anyone who wants to borrow books of walks or who needs help to organise a walk, please contact any Committee member.

Many thanks to anyone who has led a walk since the last newsletter.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 35th Group AGM was held on Friday 8 November 2013 at the Catholic Church Hall in Coleford. Three new members were welcomed onto the Committee, which now consists of: **Alan Fisher** (chairman), **June Burden** (secretary), **Rod Goodman** (treasurer), **Babs Jones** (membership secretary), **Maurice Cullis** (walks co-ordinator), **Sheila Constable** (footpath secretary), **Barbara Fisher** (publicity officer), **Malcolm Shergold** (webmaster), **Ian Walding**, **John Bevan**, and **Jackie Huck**. The Footpath Committee consists of **Sheila Constable**, **Roger Cox**, and **David Street**. I will continue to edit the Newsletter.

Full details of the meeting can be seen in the AGM Minutes. There was the usual 'bring-and-share' supper afterwards.

AUTUMN HOLIDAY: SEPTEMBER 2014

I have organised a short break at the Elan Valley Lodge in Rhayader from Thursday 18 September until Sunday 21 September, 2014. You can check out their website at elanvalleylodge.co.uk. The accommodation will be on a full-board basis, including a DIY packed lunch (you make your own sandwiches from food provided, grab a piece of cake, etc.), tea and cake after the walks, and a three course dinner. All rooms are en-suite, dogs are allowed, and there is NO single supplement. Prices are £230 per person for the three nights. A deposit of £25 per person is required, with the balance being paid when you leave the Lodge. We plan to arrive on Thursday afternoon in time for a short walk. There will be two longer walks on Friday and Saturday, and another short walk before we leave on Sunday. All walks to be led by a local guide. They are only holding the rooms for two weeks, so if you'd like to go please let me know AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Would walk leaders please tell as many of our members as you can. (**June, 01531 820354**)

SPRING HOLIDAY: APRIL 2014

The spring break at Aberystwyth from 6–10 April is now fully booked. However, people to lead walks are still urgently needed. So if you plan to go and would be prepared to lead a walk, either long or short, in the area, please contact **Alan Fisher** on **01989 770976**. He will be very pleased to hear from you.

WYE VALLEY WALK 2014

The continuing mission is to walk the Wye Valley Walk from the source near Plynlimon to the sea, well Chepstow Castle actually. The third section this year is to cover 31.5 miles from Trerickett Mill to Breinton Village Hall, as follows.

Thursday 1 May. Trerickett Mill (SO113414) to Hay-on-Wye, main car park (SO229422): 11 miles.

Friday 2 May. Hay-on-Wye (SO229422) to Bredwardine Church (SO335445): 9.5 miles.

Saturday 3 May. Bredwardine Church (SO335445) to Breinton Village Hall (SO466403): 11 miles.

You can travel home on either Saturday or Sunday.

These details are provisional, but please let me know if you are interested in joining me for the full three days or for just one or two. Day ramblers are welcome, but you will need to book a seat on the minibus (only 16 seats available). (**Ronnie Walker, 01594 845225**)

SOCIAL EVENING

The next of Henry's famous quiz nights has been arranged at the Rising Sun at Moseley Green (note change of venue) on Friday 20 June, 2014, starting at 7pm. There will be a hot supper at £6 per head. Bookings to **Henry** on **01531 820354**.

RAMBLERS BOOT CLINIC

Mike Bailey, of the Gloucestershire Area Ramblers, has negotiated a Ramblers-only evening at Cotswold Outdoor. This will feature a *free* footwear clinic for buying new boots or *resolving problems with your current boots*, as well as the opportunity to take a look at their latest spring/summer products. The event will take place between 6 and 8pm on Wednesday 12 March, 2014 at Cotswold Outdoor, Spine Road East, South Cerney, GL7 5TL. (Phone 01285 863930) (Babs Jones)

EMERGENCY FIRST-AID TRAINING

The Committee is looking into the possibility of organising a short first-aid course for members. A few Group members attended such a course with the North Dean Walking Group last October, and report that it was both informative and enjoyable. The course would be held over one evening, at a convenient location, such as Coleford or Mitcheldean. It would cover a wide range of incidents, including suffocation, shock, choking, bleeding, and falls, so it could be very useful in the event of a medical incident on one of our walks, or anywhere else for that matter. There would be a small charge (up to £10, depending on numbers), although it *may* be possible to cover this from Group funds.

In order that we can get an idea of numbers to see if such a course would be viable, please let **Ian Walding** on **01594 860904** know if you would be interested in attending. Ian can also give you more information about the content of the course.

HF HOLIDAYS PRESENTATION

On 22 January at Coleford Catholic Church Hall, Bill Chase, Walks Co-ordinator at HF Brecon, gave members a presentation and slide show on the history, approach, and background of HF. He gave an insight into the quality of the 19 British HF Houses, their worldwide holidays, and their leisure breaks. He also showed what they can offer us either individually or for Group holiday bookings. This was followed by complimentary wine and a bring-and-share buffet. Although the evening was well received and enjoyed by those present, unfortunately there was a poor turnout (*in spite of the free wine! Ed.*) (Alan Fisher)

AREA AND GROUP CHAIR FORUM

I was invited to attend this forum in Birmingham with Jonathan Kipling (Ramblers Chair) and Benedict Southworth (Chief Executive). The aim of the event was to discuss how best the Ramblers as a whole can work together to develop the organisation. Unfortunately, I could not attend at short notice, but may be invited to a later event. (Alan Fisher)

WANTED

We need volunteers to promote the FoD Ramblers at the Forest Activities Festival on Sunday 27 April at the Speech House Hotel. We have a pitch from 9.30am until 5pm and need members willing to talk to people about what we do, e.g., plan and enjoy walks, maintain and monitor footpaths, campaign for the countryside, etc.

If anyone has access to modern lightweight notice boards, could we borrow them please? If you can spare an hour or two on the day or have any photos for display, please contact **Barbara Fisher**: publicity@fodramblers.org.uk or telephone **01989 770976** saying when you are available. Many thanks.

WALK RESCHEDULED

Apart from continuing problems caused by the recent incessant rain –flooding, muddy or waterlogged paths, etc. – a different type of problem caused Ronnie’s walk from Speculation car park scheduled for Saturday 15 February to be postponed until the following day. This was because the area was closed to the public for safety reasons during the Wyedean Rally. I have also nearly been caught out by inadvertently programming a walk for the day of the Wyedean Rally, but fortunately my walk was not through any of the closed areas, although it was very close.

NEW YEAR WALK



Shimmering trees, their branches wreathed in sparkling diamonds (*i.e., it was raining. Ed.*), greeted 15 walkers as they assembled at the Speech House Woodland car park on New Year’s Day. We were well aware that an easy five-mile ramble is the perfect way to walk off the celebrations of Christmas and to start the New Year resolutions.

Ronnie took us on a route through the beautiful woods at Beechenhurst, before getting into our stride along the Cannop Ridge to New Fancy. There the group stopped to explore the history and current remediation work at New Fancy Colliery. It was opened in 1858 and when it closed in 1944 part of the beam engine was buried on-site. This was partly visible above ground and the plan is to display it on the site of the newly-capped main shaft. Following the history theme, we paused at a plaque in the Spruce Ride Woods. It told us about the visit of Admiral Nelson in 1802, sourcing wood for naval ships. An oak tree, planted just after Nelson’s visit, was harvested for the restoration of HMS Victory on the bicentenary of the battle of Trafalgar. The oak trees are an indication of the value to the country of the Forest of Dean.

Despite the continuous rain, everyone agreed the walk had been interesting as well as invigorating and a most enjoyable start to a happy and healthy New Year. (Barbara Fisher)

UPPER FORGE BRIDGE LATEST

With the bridge and associated walkway completed, the final bill from GCC for all the materials has been received. Dedication of the new footpath as a PROW continues slowly. After a satisfactory site meeting, Peter Maunder, the PROW Officer for FoD, said that he was “recommending acceptance of the route so the ongoing dedication process can move towards completion”. It appears that the hold-up is because it is uncertain whether the Lydney Park Estate or the Forestry Commission owns the land, and this needs to be resolved.

A joint project with the Dean Forest Railway to install three nearby kissing gates has been greatly helped by a grant of £1000 from Ramblers Head Office. This will cover nearly all of the cost of the gates (£390 each).

To celebrate completion of the bridge, I led walk number 2 (Norchard, Oldcroft and Pillowell) from our book on 21 November. We have received several enquiries about whether we would consider doing a second reprint of the book. However, with nearly 2000 copies sold, and with the inevitable decline in sales, we do not consider this to be a viable proposition. However, we would emphasise that we have now uploaded the complete book onto the Forest of Dean Ramblers website (www.fodramblers.org.uk), and that, for a fee, you can download the complete book, or any individual walk within it.

As I only returned home from Australia on 15 February, compiling this issue was a bit rushed. However, I thought you might enjoy the following, courtesy of *Harim Tok Tok*: Newsletter of the New Guinea & PNG Volunteer Rifles Ex-members Association (yes, really!).

1. A bicycle cannot stand alone; it is two tired.
2. A will is a dead giveaway.
3. Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana.
4. A backward poet writes inverse.
5. In a democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism, it's your Count that votes.
6. A chicken crossing the road: poultry in motion.
7. If you don't pay your exorcist you can get repossessed.
8. With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.
9. Show me a piano falling down a mine shaft and I'll show you A-flat miner.
10. When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
11. The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine was fully recovered.
12. A grenade fell onto a kitchen floor in France and resulted in Linoleum Blownapart.
13. You are stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
14. Local Area Network in Australia: The LAN down under.
15. A calendar's days are numbered.
16. A boiled egg is hard to beat.
17. He had a photographic memory which was never developed.
18. The short fortune teller who escaped from prison: a small medium at large.
19. Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.
20. When you've seen one shopping centre you've seen a mall.
21. If you jump off a Paris bridge, you are in Seine.
22. When she saw her first strands of grey hair, she thought she'd dye.
23. Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.
24. Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.
25. Acupuncture: a jab well done.
26. Marathon runners with bad shoes suffer the agony of de feet.
27. I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.
28. She was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.
29. A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class because it was a weapon of math disruption.

30. No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
31. A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
32. Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
33. A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.
34. Atheism is a non-prophet organization.
35. Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other: 'You stay here, I'll go on a head.'
36. I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.
37. A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab centre said: 'Keep off the Grass.'
38. The soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
39. When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.
40. Don't join dangerous cults: Practice safe sects.

CORRECTION

Apologies for mis-spelling Margaret's name in this last issue. It should, of course, have been Margaret Powles.

GROUP WEBSITE

This can be reached either via the national Ramblers site at www.ramblers.org.uk and searching groups, or directly at our own site www.fodramblers.org.uk

EDITORIAL CONTACTS

01594 531096 sheraton@stoneacre.orangehome.co.uk

Jean and I recently went to Australia to visit old friends. We arrived in Sydney at 7am, and, because it is best to stay up until the evening to beat jet lag, our friend Graham suggested we do a walk. We took a bus to the Spit Bridge (on the north side of Sydney Harbour) and walked about 6 miles from there along the shore through lovely bushland to Manly on the ocean. After refreshments, we took the famous Manly Ferry to Circular Quay, between the Opera House and Harbour Bridge, then another ferry under the bridge back to Graham's place. The transport costs were only \$2.50 for seniors. It would make a very different walk for the Group. A pity it's so far away.

The Editor