



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 220.

PROGRAMME DEADLINE

- **March – June 2015 programme.**
e-mail: walks@fodramblers.org.uk

Details of walks for the next programme should be submitted no later than **7 February**, 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 Group AGM will be held at 7 for 7.30 pm on Friday 7 November 2014 at the Catholic Church Hall in Coleford. Many of our office bearers have said that they intend to step down this year, so we are urgently looking for new Committee members. **Without a Committee the Group can no longer function, which means that there will be no walks programme! So please consider nominating for one of the positions.** The names of the nominee, the person nominating him or her, and the position, should be given to a Committee member before the AGM. There will be the usual 'bring-and-share' supper after the meeting, so please bring along a plate of sweet or savoury goodies. Hot and cold drinks will be provided. Once the business is out of the way, the AGM provides a good opportunity to socialise with fellow members. It is also an opportunity for members to express their views about Group activities and discuss them with the Committee. Please do come along.

SPRING HOLIDAY: APRIL 2014

Our Group holiday next spring will be in the attractive and historic village of Dunster, near the West Somerset coast and on the edge of Exmoor National Park. Exmoor offers walkers a varied landscape of wild moorland and verdant valleys, as described in R D Blackmore's romantic novel *Lorna Doone*. This contrasts with some spectacular coastal scenery: the South West Coast Path starts a few miles from our hotel. If this is not enough, the Quantock Hills are also close by. Dunster Castle, which dominates the village, is well worth a visit, as is the heritage West Somerset Railway which has a station at Dunster. The West Somerset Railway is holding its Spring Steam Gala from Thursday 26 to Sunday 29 March and we may well be able to organise a 'walk out and chuff back' (or vice versa).

Our hotel is the *Yarn Market Hotel*, right in the centre of Dunster, close to shops, tea rooms, and pubs. The cost for 4 nights half board will be £225 per person, and there is no single supplement. All rooms are en-suite, and dogs are welcome by arrangement. There is a drying and boot room. There is public parking outside the hotel and a free pass to a car park 200 metres away is available. The hotel website is <http://www.yarnmarkethotel.co.uk/>

We plan to arrive on Sunday 29 March and depart on Thursday 2 April. Sunday 29th is the start of British Summer Time, giving lighter evenings. Thursday 2nd is the day before Good Friday. We hope to

offer two walks on each of the three full days of our stay. We will also offer a shorter walk on each of the arrival and departure days. In order to provide a good variety of walks, we will encourage members to research and lead their own walks for the group. To give a flavour of what is available, here are a few we could choose from:

http://www.walkingbritain.co.uk/walks/walks/walk_a/1822/ a 5.8-mile easy/moderate walk in the Quantocks;

http://www.walkingbritain.co.uk/walks/walks/walk_a/1262/ a 10.5-mile moderate/hard coastal and moorland walk from Lynmouth;

http://www.walkscene.co.uk/description_12/Bossington_Hurlston_aNd_Selworthy.html a 4.7-mile moderate coastal and moorland walk;

<http://www.westcountrywalks.com/exmoor-wsomerset/exmoor/chetsfordwater/chetsfordwater-01.php> a 10-mile strenuous moorland walk

Booking. Please book directly by calling the Yarn Market Hotel on **01643 821425** quoting 'Forest of Dean Ramblers Group Booking 29th March'. To confirm your booking the hotel requires a non-refundable deposit of £10 per person per night, i.e., £40 per person for the holiday, payable by credit or debit card over the phone, or they will accept a cheque by post. If you wish to bring your dog, please tell the hotel when you book so they can allocate one of their dog-friendly rooms to you. Dogs are not permitted in the restaurant. If you wish to extend your stay, the hotel offers extra nights at £50 per person per night B&B or £75 DB&B.

Could you please let me know when you have booked by e-mailing me with your e-mail and phone contact details. Please also contact me if you would like any more information about the holiday.

Mike Ingleby

(01594 562341; mikeingleby@btinternet.com)

SOCIAL EVENTS

Another of Henry's famous quiz nights took place at The Rising Sun at Moseley Green on Friday 20 June. As usual, this was well attended and enjoyed by all. The supper which followed was also most enjoyable. We hope to organise another such event in the future.

On Thursday 2 October Sarah Sawyer of the Wye Valley AONB gave a most interesting talk on the work and objectives of the AONB, also at The Rising Sun. It was also followed by supper. Unfortunately, this was rather less well attended, with 23 members. As the AONB had requested a donation, it was agreed that the raffle money from the quiz night, plus a little extra from funds to make it up to £40, would be an acceptable sum.

Clearly, some social events are more popular than others. The talk last January by a representative of HF Holidays was particularly poorly attended, in spite of the attraction of free wine! This was a pity, as I gather from people who did attend that it was an interesting talk.

So what sort of social events do members want? Quiz nights have always proved popular, as have skittles nights, although the latter have been victims of their own success, in that with too many people, the skittle matches have tended to become somewhat irrelevant. Talks on various subjects have had variable success, although I'm not aware of any complaints from people who have been able to attend. At one time there was an annual slide show, generally given by a Group member. Group holidays have generally been quite successful and enjoyed by participants. In recent years these have mostly been short breaks, as opposed to week holidays. June has been trying to organise a short break for some time now, but it has not been easy to come up with a holiday that pleases

everyone and is reasonably priced. However, we now have a definite proposal for the spring, which Mike Ingleby has kindly agreed to organise (see above).

Please do let any committee member know what you would like, by way of both social events and short or longer breaks away. If you have any specific ideas, so much the better. One thing we have not held for some years is a Christmas get-together, usually a lunch.



Jackie and Jenny's Brecon Beacons walk on 20 August took us past the memorial to the crew of a Wellington bomber which crashed on 6 July 1942. The crew of five, all Canadians, were killed. Sadly, it seems that training flights could be almost as hazardous as operational ones. Near the end of the walk, we were surprised to see a Brecon Mountain Railway train arrive at Torpantau, the summit of the line. (Actually, I reckon I can beat that, as during my Cotswolds walk on 22 July we were treated to two flypasts by a pair of Spitfires! Ed.)



UPPER FORGE BRIDGE LATEST

We are still waiting for the dedication of the new footpath, including the bridge, as a PROW. Apparently this is dependent on the return of the dedication agreement from Lydney Park Estates. Hopefully, this will not be too long in coming, so that the bridge project can be satisfactorily completed.

EUROZONE CRISIS

I don't know why more economists can't explain financial matters as clearly as this. Credit Suisse quote: "The market is currently like a strapless bra; half of us are wondering what is holding it up and the other half are waiting for it to drop so they can grab the opportunity with both hands".

MALE SENSITIVITY

Men really are the sensitive, sympathetic, caring ones! The room was full of pregnant women with their partners. The class was in full swing. The instructor was teaching the women how to breathe properly and was telling the men how to give the necessary assurance to their partners at this stage of the pregnancy. She said "Ladies, remember that exercise is good for you. Walking is especially beneficial. It strengthens the pelvic muscles and will make delivery that much easier; just make several stops and stay on a soft surface like grass or a path." She looked at the men in the room, "and gentlemen, remember, you're in this together; it wouldn't hurt you to go walking with her". The room suddenly got very quiet as the men

absorbed this information. Then a man at the back of the room slowly raised his hand. "Yes?" answered the instructor. "I was just wondering if it would be all right if she carries a golf bag while we walk?"

This kind of sensitivity just can't be taught.

SISTER MARY ANN'S PETROL

Sister Mary Ann, who worked for a home health agency, was out making her rounds visiting home-bound patients when she ran out of petrol. As luck would have it, a petrol station was just a block away. She walked to the station to borrow a petrol can and buy some petrol. The attendant told her that the only petrol can he owned had been lent out, but she could wait until it was returned. Since Sister Mary Ann was on her way to see a patient, she decided not to wait and walked back to her car. She looked for something in her car that she could fill with petrol and spotted the bedpan she was taking to the patient. Always resourceful, Sister Mary Ann carried the bedpan to the station, filled it with petrol, and carried the full bedpan back to her car. As she was pouring the petrol into her tank, two Baptists watched from across the street. One turned to the other and said, "If it starts—I'm turning Catholic!"

IRISH JOKE

Two Irishmen flew to Canada on a hunting trip. They chartered a small plane to take them into the Rockies for a week hunting moose. They managed to bag six. As they were loading the plane to return, the pilot said the plane could only take four moose. The two lads objected strongly. "Last year we shot six. The pilot let us take them all and he had the same plane as yours." Reluctantly, the pilot gave in and all six were loaded. The plane took off. However, while attempting to cross some mountains even on full power, the plane couldn't handle the load and went down. Somehow, surrounded by the moose bodies, only Paddy and Mick survived the crash. After climbing out of the wreckage, Paddy asked Mick "Any idea where we are?" Mick replied "I think we're pretty close to where we crashed last year."

CHILDHOOD INNOCENCE

I was at a dinner party the other night for family and friends with about 20 people there. All during dinner my four-year old niece, sitting across from me, stared at me intently. She could hardly eat her food for staring. I checked my shirt for spots, felt my face for food, patted my hair into place. I tried to ignore her, but, finally it was too much for me, so I asked her "Why are you staring at me?" Everyone at the table had noticed her behaviour and the table went quiet. She replied "I'm just waiting to see how you drink like a fish".

(A few more space fillers from *Harim Tok Tok*.)

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

You may have noticed that access to the 'members' area on the home page of the website has been changed to read 'leaders'. This is because that particular section is mainly designed to allow walk leaders to enter their walk details onto the draft of the next programme. However, any other Group members who would like to look at the draft programme in advance can do so. Just contact our webmaster (Malcolm Shergold), who will give you a username and password (easily changed to a more memorable one) to allow you to log on. When you see how easy it is to enter walk details, you might even be persuaded to submit a walk yourself!

EDITORIAL CONTACTS

01594 531096 sheraton@stoneacre.orangehome.co.uk

The next walks programme (November to February) should now be available, and it is particularly pleasing to see that it includes no less than 35 walks (if I have counted correctly). Well done to all our leaders, and particularly to Maurice, for coming up with such an excellent programme. With such an active group, we have every opportunity to enjoy our walking.

The Editor