

# Bristol HF Rambling Club

Affiliated to HF Holidays

## Summer 2023 Newsletter



### Welcome

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter! And what a summer it has been so far! A sweltering June, followed by a very damp July, then a very mixed August. I judge the state of the weather by the state of my walking boots – they were spotless throughout the earlier part of the summer, but since then the mud has been building up and a spot of cleaning has been required from time to time.

Another tell-tale sign of the weather has been the state of the garden. By the end of June, the grass was a sea of brown and some of the plants had perished in the intense heat, despite our efforts at watering. Now, everything has gone mad, with the combination of rain and sunshine being the dream ticket for most of the plants.



Of course, with the right 'gear', walking is one activity that can continue whatever the weather, although I'm a bit reluctant to venture out in a severe thunderstorm, having experienced a couple of 'near misses' that scared the pants off me!

Like most people, I like to have a moan when it's raining a lot, but when I see on the News that the forests are burning in so many places around the globe, I am very thankful that, at least for the moment, we generally have our fair share of wet weather here.

There is no longer any doubt that climate change is happening, and at an increasingly rapid rate. Sue and I recently did a trip to Switzerland (we used the trains as much as possible) and it was shocking to see how much some of the major glaciers have receded. And most of the change has taken place over the last fifty years, so well within my lifetime!



Doing anything to alleviate climate change is a daunting task and it is nearly impossible to see how anything we do as individuals can make any difference. But of course it is the collective effect of a myriad of very small contributions that will bring about change, and we should take encouragement from that thought.

Drinking in the sheer beauty of our countryside is probably my main reason for donning my walking boots and I just hope that people will be able to continue enjoying our wonders of nature into the dim and distant future. I'm looking forward to making the most of what remains of our summer and then I will be ready to revel in the colours and the 'mellow fruitfulness' of autumn.

*Roger Guck*

## Chairperson's Message

Hello folks. As always, the year is whistling by and your committee is already planning for our next AGM in November. Members will be receiving a separate communication about the AGM, and we hope to see you there.

All our active walking groups are still going strong, although a couple of Saturday Hill Walks have had to be cancelled, due to severe weather forecasts. Just recently, Saturdays seem to be attracting particularly inclement weather!

One such Saturday was the day of the annual Garden Party. Our garden would have been looking pretty good had the sun been shining, but instead the wet and windy conditions forced us inside. Anyway, there was a very good attendance despite the weather, and the various tasty dishes that were brought constituted a delicious spread that helped to dispel the wet weather blues. Let's hope that next year's garden party will actually take place in the garden!



Our first map-reading session has recently taken place. About half a dozen members met to discuss various aspects of map and compass use, along with a look at one of the popular mobile phone Apps that can be used to plot and track walking routes. All the participants seemed to find it a worthwhile exercise, so we will look at running another session in the future.

Another imminent event is the next in the series of Posh Nosh lunches, this time at the Miller & Carter Steakhouse at the Marriott Hotel, College Green. Taking part in these mealtime events is a very good way of experiencing a variety of restaurants around the town.



The Walking Weekend that was proposed in the last Newsletter was unfortunately unable to proceed as too few members were able to make it. The date proposed was a popular time for late summer holidays and many people had already made plans to go away then. So, we're going to try again, allowing a lot more notice, and you will see a separate announcement about this under 'Social Events'.

The improvement of the Club's website continues. Tom Logan has done a great job of streamlining our current site, and work is now underway with the help of a website designer to develop a new-look site that we hope to launch in the Autumn.

Finally, you will hopefully have seen my recent email about the need for new committee members when a number of existing long-serving members retire at this year's AGM. A functioning committee is vital to the Club's future; we meet just three times a year, so it's not a big commitment. Please consider helping out, to ensure that our lovely Club continues to thrive into its second century!

*Roger Guck*

## A lovely walk in the Berkeley area

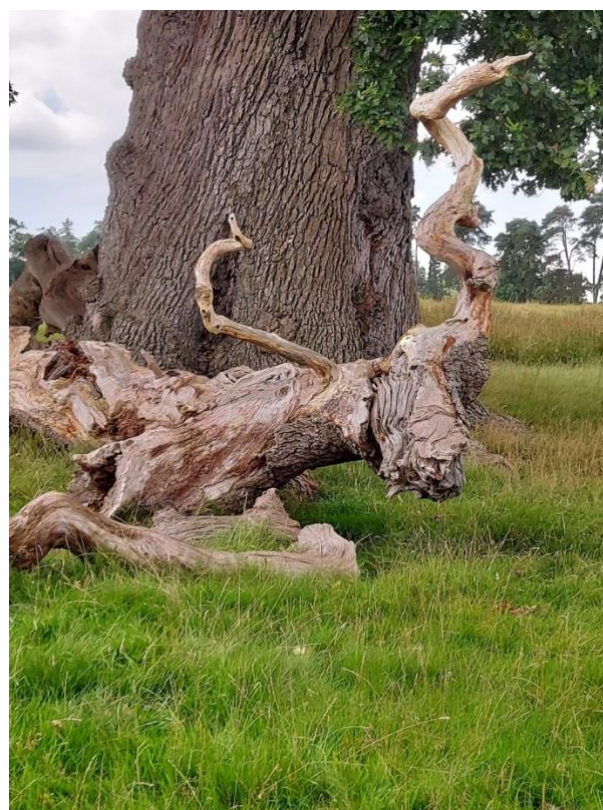
On 15th August, 9 walkers set off from the village of Woodford on a dry, sunny day that was perfect for walking, with Ann Mitchell leading us. Our walk took us across fields in gently rolling Gloucestershire countryside, at times following the Little Avon river until we could see in the distance the impressive Berkeley Castle. The river banks were full of Purple Loosestrife and the not so welcome Himalayan Balsam, and dragonflies and the Beautiful Demoiselle accompanied our meanderings.



When we reached the outskirts of the castle grounds we stopped for coffee looking toward the castle and watched sheep grazing. It was a very lovely pastoral scene. At this point we were joined by Stella who had missed the start of the walk but managed to catch us up in time for coffee.



After coffee we walked to the outskirts of Berkeley village and then headed toward Whitcliff Deer Park which is part of the Berkeley Castle estate. There was a bit of a climb up to the top of the escarpment through extensive parkland, and lots to see in the way of ancient trees, lovely views across the Severn Vale, plenty of bird life including Green Woodpecker, Buzzard, and many Swallows darting around high in the sky catching insects and butterflies. At the top of the ridge we stopped for lunch and admired the view on both sides of the ridge. Sadly very few deer were in sight apart from a small herd in the distance.



The final stretch of the walk took us across fields and more gently undulating countryside and back toward Stone and Woodford. It was a very pleasant walk in an area that I personally don't visit very often so I really appreciated exploring a new bit of countryside. Thanks to Ann for leading.

*Linda Moysey*

## Website

As mentioned in the Chairperson's Report, the Club's website is getting a new look. We have engaged a website designer and the aim is to make the website more attractive, more informative and easier to navigate. We hope that members will find it more enjoyable and useful, and that it will attract new walkers to join our friendly Club.

The cost of the make-over is being met from existing funds, so it will not affect the cost of membership.

## Newsletter Editor

The club continues to seek someone to act as Newsletter Editor, for a limited period, or even to look after a one-off edition. The Newsletter comes out three times a year and provides an important means of communication about the club's activities. The last three Newsletters have been edited by the immediate-past and the current chairpersons, but it would be good if one of or more of our members could have a go! Please contact the club secretary on [bristolhframblers@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bristolhframblers@yahoo.co.uk) if you would be willing to help.

## AGM

Just a quick reminder that our next AGM will be held on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November, 6.30pm at the Henleaze Bowling Club. Pop it in your diary and we look forward to seeing you there.

Please read the separate message from the Chairperson regarding the forthcoming retirement of committee members.

## A Touch of Humour.....

*Did you hear about the claustrophobic astronaut?  
He just needed a little more space.*



*What sits at the bottom of the sea and twitches?  
A nervous wreck.*

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*How does Moses make tea?  
He Brews.*



*What do you call a parade of rabbits hopping backwards?  
A receding hare line.*

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*Why should the number 288 never be mentioned?  
Because it's two gross.*

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*Did you hear about the two people who stole a calendar?  
They each got six months.*

## Social Events

### Christmas Lunch

This year's Christmas lunch will be held at Bristol Golf Club, Blackhorse Hill, Almondsbury, Bristol BS10 7TP <https://www.bristolgolfclub.co.uk/> on Wednesday 6th December from 12.00 - 2.30 pm.

The lunch will include a choice of 2 or 3 courses followed by coffee and mince pies. You will be receiving separately a Booking Form for the lunch, which will give all the details, menu choices, costs etc. We hope that as many members as possible will be able to join us.

*Linda Moysey*



### Walking Weekend

Although a number of people signed up for our 2023 September Walking Weekend, there were not quite enough to make it worthwhile, so unfortunately it will not be going ahead. The good news is that we will be running a Walking Weekend next year and this time we are giving much more advance notice. So, here are the details of our 2024 Walking Weekend :

Dates : Friday 20th - Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September  
Location : Lynton

We will meet up on Friday lunchtime, then do a short afternoon walk of around 4 miles. On Saturday and Sunday, we will do walks of around 8 – 9 miles.

On Monday there will be a slightly shorter walk, to allow time in the afternoon for the return to Bristol, or you may wish to head back on Sunday evening or Monday morning.

You will need to make your own arrangements for bed and breakfast accommodation and for transport to and from Lynton. We will try to arrange car-sharing where possible.

There is a choice of B&B establishments in Lynton and the surrounding area.

You will also need to provide your own packed lunches for the walks. There are shops in Lynton to buy sandwiches etc.

We will arrange a meet-up in a local pub or restaurant each evening, but of course you will be free to make your own arrangements. For anyone not familiar with the countryside around Lynton, the coastline is stunning and Exmoor is blessed with over 1000km of footpaths and bridleways, through oak woodlands, alongside tumbling rivers and across open heather-covered moorland.



All the walks will be done at a moderate pace – we will not be rushing around, but enjoying the lovely surroundings!

To register your interest, please email [rogerguck@me.com](mailto:rogerguck@me.com) as soon as possible, so that we can get an idea of numbers. We look forward to hearing from you!

*Roger Guck*

## Walk Groups – Reports from Coordinators

### Tuesday 'A' Group

We have had a wonderful variety of walks this summer including outings to the Wye valley, the Mendips, South Gloucestershire and Bitton, with 8 to 15 walkers attending. We cover about 7 - 9 miles and there are usually plenty of ups and downs to enjoy. All thanks to our leaders of course.

*Sue Finney*

### Tuesday 'B' Group

The 'B' Walkers are continuing to enjoy a variety of walks including ones from Tidenham Chase and Wellow. Thanks to all walk leaders for their support.

*Vanessa Pinnegar*

### Saturday Group

The number of walkers out on a Saturday continues to be quite small and absences due to holidays, family commitments and so on tend to have a disproportionate effect on the programme, so it's always a particular pleasure to welcome new members.

Geoff Blowfield, who joined the Club last year has already led several walks for us.

He recently led us on an 8 mile walk starting from the northern edge of Cheddar Reservoir, then (unusually for us) walking southwards across a section of the Somerset Levels and up on to a ridge along Brinscombe Hill giving us superb views of Cheddar Gorge, Crook Peak and Wavering Down from a less familiar angle, as well as a bird's eye view over the rhynes.

Apparently, this is a very good year for blackberries and this area with its abundant water supply must take a pride of place for

picking; just a pity that we could only pause momentarily every now and then to grab and savour a luscious looking berry.

From here we wove our way through various little hamlets until reaching Stone Allerton where a friend of our leader had invited us to sit in her delightful cottage garden to eat our lunch while she provided us with tea and coffee.

This was a memorable day ending with a further welcome cup of tea when we arrived back in Axbridge.

*Muriel Reeves*

### Saturday Hill Walk Group

The monthly Hill Walks (held on the third Saturday of the month) continue to be well-supported.



In May, Janet led a walk over the Black Mountains, taking in Pen Twyn Glas and Pen Allt Mawr. In June, Markus led over Waun Fach and Grwyne Fawr, also in the Black Mountains.

Unfortunately, in July Tom's walk from Llantony had to be cancelled due to bad weather.

The August walk, led by Sue and Roger, was postponed at the last minute, again due to bad weather, but it did take place the following day in lovely weather!

## Tales of Urban Wildlife

When I moved to my bungalow nine years ago, the only visible signs of wildlife in the garden were crows, pigeons (because the previous owner fed them every day) and snails which “adorned” the Choisya shrub like baubles on a Christmas tree.

Over the next year or two, in response to more wildlife-friendly planting, there was a gradual increase in insects and then birds coming into the garden and for a couple of seasons a hedgehog became a regular visitor.

Earlier this year my front garden became a twitchers’ hotspot when a Siberian Yellow-Browed Warbler was spotted there. At about the same time a pair of bluetits took a liking to the new birdbox and on Easter Sunday morning were seen making their first inside inspection. They obviously liked what they saw and over the next two months I spent countless enjoyable hours watching their intensive activity; they really appreciated the down feathers from my old duvet.



However, there’s another aspect of life in my garden that I find rather less welcome, and that comes from the local foxes. Why is it they appear to prefer my tidy front garden to others in the neighbourhood that are, shall we say, less manicured?

The lawn is clearly a desirable spot for sunbathing and it would be a shame to deprive them of that pleasure, but it also appears to provide what we walkers would describe as a good comfort stop. Not what I really want!



Currently the foxes seem to have become even more at home by extending their territory and antics to the rear garden too. It was little short of amazing to witness one jumping onto my shed roof and then making an Olympian leap into the top of a 15 foot Leylandii hedge. Twice in recent days I’ve drawn back the curtains and found a young fox curled up asleep just outside the patio door - very cute, but again not what I really want.

And what’s more it seems foxes also have a penchant for walking boots. Earlier this week I put a pair of damp walking boots to dry in the sun only to find an hour or two later that one of the boots had been dragged across the garden and alongside it were two dismembered lengths of bootlace.

I confess that I really should have been wiser, because Rosemary Boulton told me a year or two ago how a fox had stepped into her kitchen and dragged her walking boots into the garden. I wonder if other Club members’ boots may have suffered a similar fate?

*Muriel Reeves*

## **In Memory of Pat Grenfell**

Pat and her late husband John were very keen and active members of the walking club for many years. It is difficult to write about Pat without remembering John as they very much came as a couple.

Pat served on the committee and also with John led many walks both for the 'A' and for the 'B' groups. They particularly liked leading in the Malvern Hills.

Pat was always cheerful and took any problems in her stride. She was always willing to give a helping hand on the walks, as well as providing lifts. Many members of the 'B' group will remember how she brought soup for us all on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday during a Tuesday walk.

Pat and John held the first club garden party in their lovely garden and it became a regular club event.

Pat enjoyed many interests including attending concerts, playing bridge and orienteering. She was a very caring medical specialist for many years. Pat was a very special person and a wonderful friend.

Jennifer Stirratt



## **2022/2023 COMMITTEE**

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