

Stile

Journal of the Ramblers
Hertfordshire & North Middlesex Area

Issue 68 December 2025



RAMBLERS

**Hertfordshire &
North Middlesex**

**2025
Walks Fest**
Knebworth event recap

**Annual
Reports**
from across our Area

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About Stile

Stile is the journal of the Hertfordshire and North Middlesex Area of the Ramblers.

Articles printed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of the Area or the Ramblers.

Moving home?

Please **do not write to the Editor**. Just inform Central Office via **www.ramblers.org.uk** using the link in the Members Area, or write to:

The Ramblers, 13 Dirty Lane, London SE1 9PA

Say which Group you wish to belong to: you'll receive the right Group/Area news.

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Editorial

Thank you, Claire

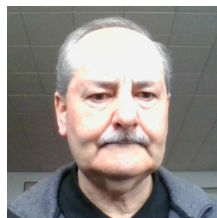
After four years as Area Chair, Claire Wainwright is standing down at the AGM in January after moving to another county. The Area has seen interesting developments during her time. Committee members, Group representatives and members of affiliated organisations will remember her unique, personal style and her ability to get things done. Readers of *Stile* will miss Claire's regular contributions, covering many subjects and always lively. This issue is no exception—see pages 7, 9, 12 and 23.

We thank Claire most warmly for all she has done for the Area, and wish her and her family much happiness in their new home.

Subject to voting at the AGM, Claire will be succeeded by Al Maceachern of Stag Walkers. Al has proven his worth as Area Secretary, and I personally believe he will be equally good as Area Chair.

As I write, we are looking for a capable person to take over as Area Secretary. If

you are well organised, methodical and with appropriate experience and think you can help, please get in touch with Claire or Al (see the ad on page 23).

**Winds of change**

Ramblers is comprehensively reviewing its governance, covering almost every aspect of the way it is run.

Decisions on most aspects should be taken in April. The ones that affect us most directly—the future of Areas and the role of Groups—have been delayed pending further discussion in 2026. We are therefore awaiting developments before publishing any briefing or inviting comments in *Stile*.

My new contact details

Please see below for your Editor's **new contact details**. I'm getting rid of my landline, and the 'alpenstock' email has become unreliable.

Justin Lumley

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As a member of Herts and North Middlesex Area Ramblers, you will always receive *Walk* magazine and *Stile*.

You must **opt in** to receive email information. Preferences can be changed by registering or logging in at <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/>

Stile is also available in **PDF** form on our website (see below).

If you would prefer to receive *Stile* **by email** please contact the Area Membership Secretary at hnmmembership@btinternet.com

www.hnmramblers.org.uk

Area news

Hertfordshire & North London Walks Fest 2025

Al Maceachern, member of the organising committee

2025 saw the fourth edition of our annual Hertfordshire & North London Walks Fest, following events in Wheathampstead, Watton-at-Stone and Digswell since its rebranding from Area Walks Day. The formula is now well-established: group walks of different lengths set off throughout the day, followed by cream teas for all participants at a village hall in the afternoon.

For this year's event we used Knebworth Village Hall, conveniently located close to Knebworth railway station. Walks on offer ranged from 5 to 12.5 miles, most routes visiting nearby Knebworth Park. Walkers were able to enjoy views of Knebworth House and the Park's resident deer, along with early autumn colour in the local woods. Though the sky was overcast,

thankfully the weather was dry after a wet afternoon at last year's Walks Fest. Everyone returned to Knebworth between around 3pm and 4.30; we aimed to stagger the return of each group to avoid long queues for refreshments and hired our hall for an extra hour this year.

Six volunteers from five of the nine Groups in our Area led the walks (a lower number than in previous years) with a combined attendance of 127 people (just 11 fewer than in 2024). The turnout for each walk varied from a good 16-17 for the mid-length walks to a hardy 30 tackling the longest route.

One of the aims of the day is to encourage members from different Ramblers Groups to walk and talk with one another, which was achieved to some extent, with leaders remarking



An 8.5 mile walk was led by Roger Bangs through Knebworth Park, woods and open country. Photo by Michael Gilbert



Visit the Area **Facebook** page:

www.facebook.com/hnmramblers

To see updates from the Area and its nine Ramblers Groups, please 'follow' the page

how they were joined by many members they had not met before. A number of walkers travelled from London.

Another ambition of the event is to inspire new walkers to give the Ramblers a try, and in this we were successful: 24 non-members came along. Several of these said they had heard of the Walks Fest through our paid advertising on Facebook.

Many thanks to our outgoing Area Chair Claire, a member of the Walks Fest subcommittee since the event's rebranding, who each year has helped with the online advertisement, distributed flyers in local libraries and outdoors shops, and organised the much-appreciated cream teas.

Further thanks are due to the walk leaders and their invaluable backmarkers, and to the volunteers who helped with the catering and cleaning up—including the large group from Stag Walkers who stayed to put away chairs and tables before adjourning to the Station pub. Excellent teamwork!

So, where to next? We are keen to continue holding the Walks Fest in villages with good public transport

links and a variety of walking routes nearby, at a fairly central location in the county and preferably somewhere the event has not yet visited. If you know of anywhere suitable with a good-sized hall for hire, please let us know.

And should we add anything more to the traditional schedule of walks followed by refreshments? Everyone seems to enjoy the social atmosphere of the event and each year we attract new walkers who might then become Ramblers members, but is there more we could do to fulfil our charitable aims, e.g. by offering any different types of walks, such as more family-friendly options; arranging discussions on topics such as footpath matters; or setting up a stand where potential members can find out more about what we do?

Please get in touch via hertswalksfest@gmail.com if you have any thoughts about future Walks Fest locations or activities, or if you'd like to volunteer to join the organising subcommittee, help with publicity, lead a walk or lend a hand at next year's venue.

Stag Walkers on the Hertfordshire Way

Al Maceachern

Over the last few years, Stag Walkers has completed a series of long-distance trails in sections: the 50-mile Lea Valley Walk in 2022, the 110-mile Icknield Way Path in 2023, and from January 2024 to October 2025 the 195-mile Hertfordshire Way.

Our Hertfordshire Way walks took place on the first Saturday of each month. This schedule allowed members to plan ahead if keen to attend and Saturday was chosen due to better availability of public transport.

Almost all walks were made accessible by public transport; this meant modifying several sections of the Way to start and finish at the nearest settlement with a railway station or

good bus links. For example, while the official Leg 1 begins in Royston town centre and ends in the village of Wallington, we extended this part of the trail to and from the railway stations at Royston and Baldock. Planning these walks involved spending a lot of time on the plotaroute.com and traveline.info websites!

Adding the extra mileage needed to reach public transport links, the total distance completed by the group on Hertfordshire Way walks was closer to 230 miles than the official 195 miles. Also, the Way was broken into 22 sections rather than the official 16, with the length of each leg determined by the availability of public transport, the



Stag Walkers on the Hertfordshire Way between Kings Langley and Radlett. Photo by Greg Readings.

hours of daylight at the time of year and the desire to keep each walk to a distance deemed reasonable to members (due to popular demand we split the official 15.4-mile Leg 7 from Tring to Kings Langley into two walks of around 9 miles, incorporating an extension to Hemel Hempstead railway station).

Walk leaders were invited to volunteer for the separate sections of the trail, with 11 members coming forward, including two new leaders. It was thought that providing potential new leaders with a predetermined route waymarked on the ground would make it easier for volunteers to lead a walk for the first time.

Several members endeavoured to complete the trail and enjoyed catching up with other regulars each month. One member managed to attend all 22 Hertfordshire Way walks, while four others caught up in their own time on sections they had missed due to other commitments. Completing a long-

distance trail such as this gives a great sense of achievement.

We found walking the trail to be an excellent way to see some highlights of Hertfordshire, along with lesser-visited locations; the Way took Stag Walkers to parts of the county we had rarely or never been to previously, as well as to more familiar sights like the Ashridge Estate, the River Lea, St Albans and Therfield Heath. Some memorable moments include: constructing a makeshift bridge over a flooded path in Gorhambury; wonderful views over the Gade Valley; autumn leaves in Broxbourne Woods; the walk between Hertford and Ware along the river on a misty morning; the view across the plain from Reed towards Cambridge; and the bar snacks at the Catherine Wheel pub near Patmore Heath!

You can read more about our progress at:

stagwalkers.org.uk/walks/hertfordshire-way

River Ver footpath reopened after major repairs

Claire Wainwright

Ramblers in West Hertfordshire will be pleased to hear that a key footpath by the River Ver in St Albans has reopened after major repairs were completed along a scenic stretch popular with walkers.

Part of the trail, between Cottonmill Lane and Sopwell Mill open space had become badly eroded and had collapsed into the river, closing the footpath under an old railway bridge below the Alban Way.

With the help of funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the local council has built a new path with a retaining wall constructed beside the river. Planting designed to strengthen and protect the riverside was also undertaken. Readers may be interested to see leaflets available on the Ver Valley Society's website showing fabulous walks along the river Ver, available at: www.riverver.co.uk/walks.

Helping Herts: Great Big Walk raises £120,000

Justin Lumley

The Friends of the Hertfordshire Way were once again active on 27 September in the Helping Herts Great Big Walk, a set of charity walks in aid of small charities across the county and taking in many sections of the Hertfordshire Way. Over 350 took part in 12 13-mile walks. There was a wide age range and strong corporate support: local firms supplied walkers as well as financial support.

According to Jim Tatchell, a Co-Founder of Helping Herts, 'This year's walk was our biggest yet—raising over £120,000 will make a real difference'. HH works with 12 charities aiming to improve the lives of children and young people.

Gordon Morrison, another HH Co-Founder, added: 'This walk shows the best of Hertfordshire—generosity, community spirit, and a commitment to brighter futures'.



A grassy approach to Tonwell. Photo by John Pickett



A party from Coram Life Education starting out from Hartham Common, Hertford, on a 13-mile circular walk taking in Tonwell, Wadesmill and a canalside stretch.

Photo by John Pickett

Beating the Bounds

Claire Wainwright

The ancient custom of Beating the Bounds is a walk around the historic boundaries of the City of St Albans held in early May.

Residents and visitors of all ages take part in the annual walk which always starts at the giant puddingstone in front of Kingsbury Mill in St Michael's Village.

The traditional ceremony dates back almost 700 years to 1327 and involves walking the 4.5-mile boundary of the City. During the event, wands made of willow are used to beat the ground at significant locations.

In the past, the ceremony was used for people to pass on knowledge of where the City's boundaries lay and assert their rights as citizens.

The annual walk, which is led by the Mayor of the City and District of St Albans, takes around two hours and everyone who completes it is given a special Beating the Bounds certificate.

The ceremony has its roots in a rebellion in medieval times against the authority of the established church. Following a riot by the townspeople against the Abbot, 24 citizens walked around the town in 1327 to lay down its boundaries. They declared their rights and freedoms within this area should be respected and their action has been celebrated since with the Beating the Bounds ceremony.

Keep your eye out for news of next year's Beating the Bounds which will be posted in early May at:

www.stalbans.gov.uk.



*Preparing to Beat the Bounds, starting at the puddingstone in St Michael's.
Photo – St Albans City & District Council.*

Countryside protection and the 'grey belt'

Abby Coften, Chief Executive, CPRE Hertfordshire

CPRE Hertfordshire, the countryside charity, has for over 90 years defended Hertfordshire's green belt, representing local voices and standing up for our countryside against inappropriate development. Our goal, as always, has been to influence positive change, encouraging brownfield over greenfield development, rooftop solar over solar farms on our green spaces, and 'affordable' housing with the right infrastructure in place over large executive dwellings.

With the changes in the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published last December, CPRE Hertfordshire's role in countryside protection has become even more significant. The new NPPF outlined a number of troubling implications for the countryside including the new concept of grey belt within the Green Belt. Initially 'grey belt' was described as poor-quality Green Belt land like disused car parks. But the actual 'grey belt' definition in the recently revised NPPF is so broad that it could include almost any Green Belt land. This is because the NPPF Glossary defines 'grey belt' in such a way as to undermine two of the five Green Belt purposes: c) safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and e) assisting in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

What does this mean for our countryside?

CPRE Hertfordshire's recent petition,

which hit national media and secured over 38,000 signatures across England, called on the Government to review the grey belt definition in the NPPF. Despite the huge support for the petition from the public and local MPs, the Government refused to contemplate any review of the inconsistencies held in the NPPF which weakens Green Belt protections. The result: an even larger increase in developers submitting speculative planning applications on Green Belt sites with the knowledge they can argue it is 'grey belt'. And because the Government has kept the so called 'viability loophole' in its planning policy, developers will seek to maximise their profits on these sites by building large executive dwellings rather than the truly affordable homes local people need.

Some areas of Hertfordshire will be hit more than most. Our analysis shows that 302.45 hectares of open countryside within the Green Belt in Hertsmeres Borough, the equivalent of approximately 470 football pitches, is now under threat of development as 'grey belt'. A similar picture is developing across Hertfordshire's boroughs.

There has also been a number of speculative planning applications impacting our popular walking trails across Hertfordshire including the Hertfordshire Chain Walk at Ponsbourne House, The Hertfordshire Way with a proposed development east of Tring, and the London Loop east of Bushey Heath.

What's next for our countryside?

Although CPRE Hertfordshire's petition has now expired, their next

step will be to lobby local MPs to request a debate on the 'grey belt' and encourage as many of the public as possible to write to their local MP requesting their support on this matter. A template for writing to your local MP

can be found on the CPRE Hertfordshire website at:

<https://tinyurl.com/2s37bu68>

We hope that Ramblers will join with us to urge the Government to reconsider their response on the 'grey belt' definition.

The Open Spaces Society: 160 this year

Justin Lumley

On 19 July the Open Spaces Society (OSS) celebrated its 160th anniversary. It is Britain's oldest national body dedicated to conservation. The Commons Preservation Society, as it was first called, initially concentrated on the steadily expanding London metropolis, saving (among other open spaces) Epping Forest, Hampstead Heath and Wimbledon Common.

The OSS was soon reaching right across the country. There can now be few parts that have not benefited from

its determined work, which often involves years of campaigning, mobilising local action groups and going to court.

Hertfordshire and neighbouring counties are no exception. The OSS was partly responsible for preserving Berkhamsted Common (1866), Hudnall Common (1936) and Burnham Beeches (1880) as well as 35 paths and bridleways on Chequers Estate (1902). More recently there were important gains at Wildhill Road, Hudnall Common and Bury Wood, all in one year (see *Stile*, December 2023).



Highams Park Lake, Epping Forest: safe for all time. Photo by Justin Lumley

Ramblers welcomes new report on inequality in access to the outdoors

Claire Wainwright

A new report from the UK Government's All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Outdoor Recreation and Access to Nature has been welcomed by local Ramblers.

Published in mid-September, *Outdoors For All: Recommendations for Government on Access to Nature* provides practical advice to the Government, outlining policy and legislative options to achieve inclusive access for more people.

The report, which gathered views from over 750 organisations and individuals, highlights that much of England's countryside remains inaccessible, with 20 million people not living within 15

minutes' walk of green or blue spaces.

Key recommendations from the report include expanding and extending existing access, improving public transport links, publishing a long-term strategy for improvement, and awareness and education measures.

The Ramblers is calling on the UK Government to introduce an ambitious Access to Nature Bill for England to support the creation of new opportunities to connect with nature, help the public make better use of the existing path network, and establish legally binding targets and investment plans to support public access over the long-term.

You can read the All-Party Parliamentary Group's report in full at: <https://tinyurl.com/49vurxh9>

Death of Quentin and Sue Keeling

Phil Escritt (text partly based on a message from David Hodges and information from Friends of the Hertfordshire Way)

It is with great sadness that we report that Quentin Keeling and his wife Sue have both died within a month of each other from different forms of cancer. They were both very keen walkers and active committee members of the St Albans and District Footpaths Society, a Ramblers affiliate; Sue was Secretary for some time.

Quentin was active in many sports and for several years represented the Society on Area Council. He was very effective in recruiting new members for various roles, and his attention to detail and record keeping were famed. With typical humour, he would conclude his

emails with the signature line 'Never knowingly simplified'.

He took an active interest in the many planning applications affecting the paths in St Albans and was the Society's surveyor for the paths in Colney Heath. These paths had become very neglected over time, but through his persistence they are now all at the same high standard as the Society's other parishes. Quentin and Sue will both be very much missed.

Their funerals took place in St Albans Abbey on 17 November. The ceremony was well attended, and there was no proof wanting of how widely known and respected they both were.

The Area Council and members offer sympathy to Quentin's and Sue's family, and to their many friends and colleagues.

Footpath work

Future arrangements for protecting the Rights of Way (RoW) network

Over the last year the Area's Footpath Wardens/Secretaries have considered future arrangements for protecting and improving the local walking environment.

We have recruited new Parish Footpath Wardens, and arranged monthly training sessions on Zoom offering guidance and answering questions. We have continued with our quarterly meetings where members can discuss the wider issues of access to the countryside and the issues affecting the existing RoW network. At our in-person summer meeting in Welwyn Garden City we met socially to discuss future arrangements and topical issues whilst making personal contact with other active members.

We have established a common email contact address:

hnmareafootpaths@gmail.com

and a library of Footpath Documents that can be viewed by interested members—email the address above if you would like a link.

Our Footpath protection work includes:

- Monitoring the condition of the path network and reporting faults. This is the key role for the Parish Footpath Wardens who attempt to walk the paths in their parish each year reporting problems to the county RoW team and possibly doing some minor maintenance.

- Responding to proposals to change the existing PROW (Public Rights of Way) network. This may be done by a Parish Footpath Warden working with the District Footpath Officer or another more experienced volunteer.
- Protecting paths and access threatened by development. This work is more likely to be done by the District Footpath Officer or a more experienced member.

We recognise the need to work together as a team, supporting each volunteer, offering guidance and organising training sessions.

In our Area we currently have over 50 volunteer Parish Footpath Wardens monitoring the condition of paths in some of the more than 170 parishes and boroughs. But we would like a Footpath Warden for every parish.

Another key role that we still need to fill is **Area RoW Coordinator**. We see this more as an administrative role, being able to keep records and liaise with all the Area, District and Parish volunteers. This person would arrange our various meetings, keep contact details for our footpath volunteers, helping us to work in a consistent and effective way. **Could you fill this role?**

If you are interested in any of these roles please contact your District Footpath Officer through:

hnmareafootpaths@gmail.com

or one of your Group/ Area Officers.

Please see next page for the parishes that currently need a Footpath Warden.

Your Area needs an Area Rights of Way Coordinator

to help manage the work of the Footpaths Subcommittee.

The role is primarily administrative, and includes:

- Keeping records
- Liaising with all Area, District and Parish Footpath Wardens
- Arranging meetings
- Keeping contact details for all footpath volunteers
- Helping us to work in a consistent and effective way.

If you care about Hertfordshire's footpaths and think you could take on this important role, please get in touch with the Footpaths Subcommittee at:

hnmareafootpaths@gmail.com

Become a Parish Footpath Warden!

YOU could make a real contribution to the Ramblers' work.

If you can:

- walk your local paths regularly,
 - report any problems to the Rights of Way Service at County Hall or the relevant London Borough and
 - react to any proposed path orders (but these are rare)
- then **your help is needed** to keep our rights of way open and in good order. You'll get maps and comprehensive guidance.

Parish Footpath Wardens are currently needed in:

Colney Heath	Bayford	Wyddial
Widford	Brickendon Liberty	Albury
Walkern	High Wych	Thorley
Sawbridgeworth	Little Berkhamsted	Eastwick & Gilston
Anstey	Great Munden	Little Munden
Buckland & Chipping	Hunsdon	Anstey
Tring Rural	Tring Town	

BUT... wherever you live or walk, your District or Borough Footpath Officer would like to hear from you. Do get in touch — see page 38 for contacts, or email:

hnmareafootpaths@gmail.com

Herts CC: Countryside & Rights of Way Service

Coming soon: new consolidated and republished
Definitive Map and Statement

Richard Cuthbert, Team Leader Definitive Map & Enforcement, Herts CC Countryside & Rights of Way Service

Shortly after you read this, Herts CC’s CRoW Service (specifically the Definitive Map & Enforcement Team within CRoWS) will be republishing the newly consolidated DM&S for Herts. This is no mean feat and used to be done every five years, but after an agreement with your good selves and other user groups we have reduced this burden to every 10 years, largely predicated on having the online ‘working copies’ of the legal documents so available publicly now.

Officially called ‘The Definitive Map & Statement of Public Rights of Way for Hertfordshire (you can see why we shorten it to ‘DM&S’!) it consists of 90 A1 map sheets, to cover the whole county, plus two well-stuffed lever arch folders full of the pages of the Definitive

Statements, for the 120+ towns and parishes in Herts.

In the good old days this would consist of printing up to 30 copies of those sheets and pages—imagine the truck it needed to deliver those from the printers! Nowadays we will print just two copies, one of which is sealed with the County Seal and locked away in the Registry Vault, in Legal. The other we will keep for inspection at our shiny new offices in Stevenage. Online data and geography will be updated (if not already) with all the changes to the RoW network that have happened over the last 10 years, since we published the 2015 DM&S—how time flies!

If you do spot any mistakes, keep them to yourselves... no, seriously, do let us know!

Herts CC: Definitive Map and Commons cases activity

Information supplied by Richard Cuthbert, (see above)

Date	Case	Reference	Type	Stage
07/11/2024	Sandridge 26 diversion	STA176	DIV	Sealed LEMO
20/11/2024	Biggin Hill footpath	EH364	MOD	Make Order Decision
05/11/2024	Kelshall Routes public inquiry	NH216, NH217, NH218	MOD	Inquiry/Hearing/Reps
06/12/2024	Great Munden 58	EH445	DIV	Confirmation
08/01/2025	Much Hadham 10 & 11	EH433	DIV	Confirmation
21/01/2025	Little Berkhamsted BR18	EH481	MOD	Inquiry/Hearing/Reps

<i>Date</i>	<i>Case</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Stage</i>
05/02/2025	Aldbury BOAT 71	DAC164	MOD	Make Order Decision
25/02/2025	Wigginton FP11	DAC134	MOD	Make Order Decision
03/02/2025	Hemel Hempstead 20	DAC179	MOD	Make Order Decision
03/02/2025	Hemel Hempstead 90	DAC180	MOD	Make Order Decision
11/03/2025	South Oxhey Playing Fields	VG063	Village Green	Amend Register
01/05/2025	Johnsons and Tednambury rail diversions	EH553	DIV	Sealed LEMO
02/05/2025	Ansley – Biggin Hill	EH364	MOD	Determination
08/05/2025	Stevenage BR90	STEV050	EXT	Make Order Decision
15/05/2025	Kings Langley FP17	DAC173	EXT-TCPA	Make Order Recommendation
20/05/2025	Bishop’s Stortford BR71 Birchwood School	EH507	DIV	Make Order Decision
23/05/2025	Lye Green Common, Sandon	CLP063A	Commons	Decision – refer to PINS
09/06/2025	Piccotts End Lane, Hemel Hempstead	DAC151	MOD	Make Order Decision
12/06/2025	Little Berkhamsted BR18	EH481	MOD	High Court – Decision
25/06/2025	Kinsbourne Green CL	CL028	Commons	Crown Court – Decision
01/07/2025	A602 improvements Watton to Tonwell	EH521	SRO	Sealed LEMO
14/08/2025	St Mary’s School, Cheshunt, BR	BRX037	DED+Appr	Sealed LEMO
17/09/2025	Ickleford Common, The Old George CL141	CLP066A	Commons	Amend Register
23/07/2025	Bishop’s Stortford 7	EH484	DIV	Make Order Decision
09/10/2025	North Mymms 28 downgrade	W+H45	MOD	No Order Decision
09/10/2025	North Mymms 52 (part) upgrade	W+H48	MOD	Make Order Decision
09/10/2025	Dellsome Lane	W+H83	MOD	Make Order Decision

Glossary to table above

DIV: diversion

EXT: extinguishment

LEMO: legal event modification order

MOD: modification

PINS: Planning Inspectorate

Reps: representations

T CPA: Town and Country Planning Act

Stile

Have a great idea for a news story?

If you have a brilliant idea for a newsworthy local story that might be of interest to our Herts media contacts, and will help attract new Ramblers members, please contact:

hnmmediacomms@gmail.com

News editors like to hear about stories that are timely, unique in content, interesting or quirky, and that have great images to go with them.

24 FOOTPATH WALKS IN HERTFORDSHIRE

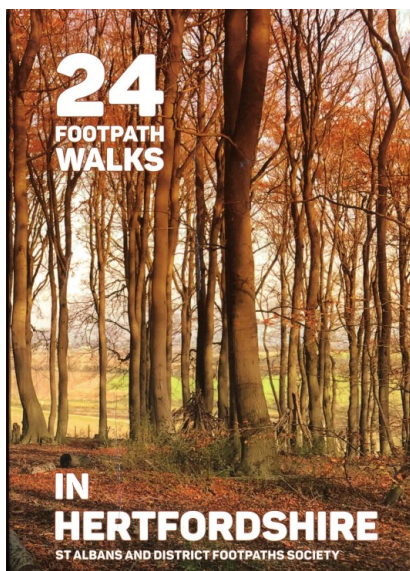
6th edition

St Albans and District Footpaths Society published a revised and updated edition of **24 Footpath Walks in Hertfordshire** (known as the 'brown book').

This edition, covering a wider area of Hertfordshire than previously, has 10 **NEW** walks and 14 with up to two alternative shorter routes. Several walks have more than one starting point, and **ALL** full colour maps were re-drawn. Information on local geology and landscape, land use and building materials has been added.

£7.20 from various outlets in St Albans, as well as Waterstones in St Albans and other major towns. In case of difficulty, please contact the distributor:

stalbansfootpathbooks@gmail.com





Have you seen the **Area website** yet? Visit:

www.hnmramblers.org.uk

You'll find:

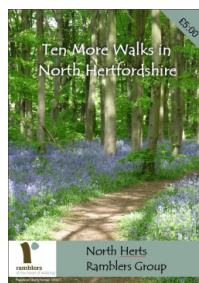
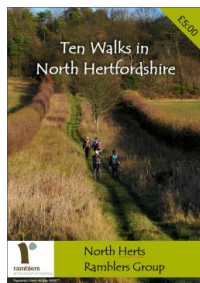
- ◆ a list and map of all the planned walks for our Area with an easy to use filter
- ◆ information about committee members and how to contact them
- ◆ a gallery of photos from previous annual Area walks
- ◆ how to report footpath problems, with contact details
- ◆ the Rights of Way work we do in the Area and how you could help
- ◆ Don't Lose Your Way campaign details
- ◆ links to our Groups and other organisations

Walks in North Hertfordshire

Each of the NHRG-produced guides describes 10 walks of around 6 miles, chosen to show off some of the best parts of North Herts. A clear full colour OS map is provided for each walk.

Ways to buy:

- Pay by BACS: £5 plus £1 p&p per book to account The Ramblers Association (HF3), account no 20115700, sort code 60-83-01 and email tenwalks@nhrg.org.uk giving your name, address and choice of book(s) and confirming you have made your BACS payment
- Mail your request to Harold Stokes, 15 Whitney Drive, Stevenage SG1 4BE with a cheque for £6 payable to The Ramblers Association (HF3)
- Buy on any North Herts Ramblers Group walk for £4
- Buy at Countryside Ski and Climb, 118-120 High Street, Stevenage SG1 3DW; or David's Bookshop, Eastcheap, Letchworth Garden City SG6 3DE (01462 684 631)



Hertfordshire and North Middlesex Ramblers**Annual General Meeting****Saturday 24 January 2026 at 1.30 pm**

Village Hall, Woolmer Green, Knebworth SG3 6XA.

Off the B197, between Welwyn and Knebworth (TL253185). Large car park. Bus 300 or 301.

Guest speakers: **Richard Cuthbert**, Team Leader Definitive Map & Enforcement, Herts CC Countryside & Rights of Way Service and a **Ramblers Trustee** — TBC.There will be a **walk** starting at **10 am**. For details please contact Al Maceachern on 078825 13720 or visit the Area website (see page 3).**Lunch 12.30—1.30:** Please bring a packed lunch and (if you wish) snacks to share.**AGM papers**All the papers for the AGM are in this issue of *Stile* (see pages 19 to 28), with the exception of minutes of the last AGM. These can be found on the Area website (see page 3) along with a copy of the other papers.**Advance voting**

For those unable to attend, we are keeping the option of voting in advance. The Area Chair will act as your proxy and vote on your behalf in the manner you request.

Please complete the online proxy form at **<https://tinyurl.com/47t2cz3x>** by **Saturday 17 January 2026**. If you don't have internet access, please fill in the paper form (pages 21-22) and return to the Secretary by the same date. **Please complete the form online if at all possible**. Any forms received after the deadline will be deemed invalid.

Please submit any matters arising from the previous year's meeting, and questions on any reports in advance, on the proxy form. Questions/comments submitted will be read out and answered at the meeting.

All members who have an email address registered on the central Ramblers system will be emailed two weeks before the AGM, with links to the minutes, papers and proxy voting form. If you have NOT already registered your email address, please provide it to the Ramblers by calling 020 3961 3232 or emailing:

support@ramblers.zendesk.com

Nominations for Area officer and committee posts

We warmly welcome nominations from members to stand on Area Council. All officers and committee members stand down each year, and although we have indicated where existing volunteers are willing to stand for re-election, please put yourself forward if you'd like to get involved. A list of positions is available on the Agenda.

Voting will take place at the meeting, in a block vote for those posts with only one nominee. Contested posts will require further voting.

Agenda and nominations

1. Welcome by the Chair
2. Apologies for absence (sent in advance to HNMSecretary@gmail.com or via the Proxy Form)
3. Approval of minutes of the 2025 AGM (on the Area website)
4. Matters arising
5. Consideration of officers' reports (comments and questions sent in advance)
 - Chair
 - Treasurer
 - Membership Secretary
 - Area RoW Coordinator
6. Approval of Treasurer's annual report and statement of accounts
7. Appointment of independent examiner for the accounts
8. Questions and observations on Group reports
9. Election of officers and committee members — current officers willing to stand for re-election are indicated with 'name'
 - Chair (**vacant**)
 - Vice-Chair (**vacant**)
 - Secretary (**vacant**)
- Treasurer (Noreen Dawes)
- Area Rights of Way Coordinator (**vacant**)
- Publicity and Media Contact (**vacant**)
- Membership Secretary (Dave Ashby)
- Assistant Membership Secretary (**vacant**)
- Minutes Secretary (Justin Lumley)
- Countryside Secretary (Roger Bangs)
- *Stile* Editor (Justin Lumley)
11. Election of Individual Members (5 max.)
12. Note of Group Representatives and representatives of affiliated groups
13. Nomination of representatives to General Council, date TBC: Al Maceachern and another (TBC)
14. Any other business (sent in advance)
15. Trustee update and questions
16. Guest speaker: Richard Cuthbert, Team Leader Definitive Map & Enforcement, Herts CC Countryside & Rights of Way Service

The Area is looking for an
Area Publicity & Media Contact
 to take over from Claire Wainwright

If you would like to join Area Council and are
 interested in this important role, please contact:

HNMChair@gmail.com

for further details about the post.

Ramblers Herts & North Middlesex Area AGM

Proxy Form

Please read the papers and explanatory notes in this issue of *Stile* before voting.

Complete the form **online** at: <https://tinyurl.com/47t2cz3x>

If you **don't have internet access**, please complete this **paper form** and send to:

The Ramblers HNM Area Secretary
66 Chaucer Way
Hitchin
Herts SG4 0NX

Forms **must arrive** by: **Saturday 17 January 2026**

I,(name)

with membership number

being a member of the Ramblers within the Area of Hertfordshire & North Middlesex and entitled to vote at the Area annual general meeting hereby appoint the chair of the meeting as my proxy to vote on my behalf. I request such proxy to vote in the manner indicated overleaf.

Signed:

Date:

- Apologies for absence: Will you attend the meeting? Yes No
- **Please vote individually for each item, placing an 'X' in the appropriate box.** An absence of a response will be deemed an abstention.

<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>Abstain</i>
3	Approval of minutes of 2025 AGM			
6	Approval of the Area Treasurer's annual report and statement of accounts			
13	Nomination of representatives to General Council, date TBC: Al Maceachern and another (TBC)			

On a **separate sheet**, please **add anything** you wish to say on the following:

- Matters arising
- Questions or comments for the Treasurer or other officers
- Questions to the Trustee
- Questions to guest speaker Richard Cuthbert
- Nomination for officer post or committee member position (self-nomination)
- Nomination for Individual Members (self-nomination) - **NOT** Area Representatives of Groups
- Nomination of Representative to General Council (date TBC) - self-nomination; please provide a statement outlining the reasons why you should be selected
- Any other business (AOB)

Chair's report

Claire Wainwright

With some of my volunteer colleagues, I have spent the last few months considering proposed Ramblers governance changes that will be considered further at a meeting of Council later in the year. While changes mooted for Areas and Groups — on which more in future editions of *Stile* — were not taken forward for further consideration at this point, it was good to be asked for our views in Hertfordshire and North Middlesex Area, and to be listened to.

It was clear that members active in local Groups feel passionately about protecting what is good about them and want the best for the Ramblers long term. For me that's all about making the Ramblers relevant to more people, and helping to solve some of our country's longstanding social ills. Having moved house recently to a village set in beautiful countryside outside an industrial town, I have been studying with fresh eyes the footpath networks linking the two. The village is awash with footpaths, but in the town it is another story. That is why the Ramblers Access to Nature Campaign (see page 12) is so necessary. The UK Government's All-Party Outdoor Recreation and Access to Nature Group's recent paper highlights 20

million people living further than 15 minutes' walk from green spaces or water, a sad state of affairs.

Extending existing access is a first step towards improvement and that is where we in the Ramblers can help, both practically through our volunteering work, and culturally through our desire to make positive change happen.

The governance changes are the first step in making the Ramblers fitter to tackle such challenges. My experience over the last few months has brought home to me the passion of our volunteers for the work they do. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their hard work and commitment. Anyone interested in getting more involved can check out the Ramblers volunteering webpage at: www.ramblers.org.uk/support-us/volunteer-opportunities.

We are also looking for volunteers locally, particularly footpath wardens (see page 14) and walk leaders (contact me at hnmchair@gmail.com for more details). We also have vacancies on our Area committee.



From January 2026 we need an

Area Secretary

to replace Al Maceachern, who is standing for another Area post.

The post would suit a capable and well-organised person, perhaps with experience as a Group Secretary and wanting to move up a level.

If you think you might be interested in this fulfilling and vital role, please contact Claire or Al at:

HNMChair@gmail.com or HNMSecretary@gmail.com

as soon as possible.

RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION — HERTFORDSHIRE AND NORTH MIDDLESEX AREA
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

	2025 £	2024 £	Notes
Income			
Central Office: Area	7,966.00	8,183.92	1
Central Office: Group	2,098.68	2,355.68	1
Donations	<u>90.00</u>	<u>130.00</u>	1
	10,154.68	10,669.60	
Expenditure			
Transfer to Local Groups	2,098.68	2,355.68	2
Stile Magazine	7,300.92	7,028.71	3
Don't Lose Your Way Project	149.82	0.00	4
Footpaths and Countryside Protection	33.00	33.00	5
Meetings incl AGM/Zoom	326.02	305.88	6
Mailchimp	565.91	43.08	7
Admin	19.80	0.00	8
Advertising	76.00	37.00	9
Subscriptions	45.00	45.00	10
Walks Fest	<u>459.06</u>	<u>116.59</u>	11
	11,074.21	9,964.94	
Surplus/(Deficit)	-919.53	704.66	12
Balance Sheet at year end			
Funds at start	6,593.76	5,889.10	
Surplus/Deficit for the year	<u>-919.53</u>	<u>704.66</u>	
Funds at end of year	5,674.23	6,593.76	
Analysis of bank balance			
Area funds carried forward	5,008.30	5,868.01	
Ring fenced funds:			
Herts Weekend Walkers	497.53	407.53	13
Don't Lose Your Way	<u>168.40</u>	<u>318.22</u>	4
Bank balance at year end	5,674.23	6,593.76	

Treasurer's report

Noreen Dawes

Thank you to all the Group Treasurers for their work throughout the year and for responding promptly to Area requests for information. Thank you also to Steve Carroll for his work as independent examiner of the accounts. The 2025 annual accounts are set out in the table opposite with comparison to the previous year. Meetings continue to take place online. The following notes highlight relevant points against the lines of the accounts.

1. This represents the funding from Central Office for both Area and the Groups. Central Office use a simple formula to decide how much each group and area receive based on number of members, with an option to request more funds for specific activities. Donations of £90 is RWH Travel on behalf of Herts Weekend Walkers
2. Transfers to Groups is slightly lower. Some Groups opted to use their reserves and not take their annual allowance.
3. We continue to publish *Stile* during the year; costs have risen by 4% due in part to a rise in the cost of postage.
4. Don't Lose Your Way costs. There are two years' expenses paid out this year due to an oversight last year.
5. One meeting of the Footpaths Subcommittee was held in person.
6. Area meetings were held via Zoom; cost is £155.88. Cost of the AGM is £120 and we have paid a deposit of £50 for the 2026 meeting.
7. We continue to use Mailchimp and Facebook for the circulation of newsletters and member publicity. The Mailchimp costs rose to £565.91 (£81 relates to the previous year and £235 relates to a 'pay as you go' system going forward).
8. There is a small cost of £19.80 for committee travel expenses.
9. Advertising. We printed a range of flyers to advertise the Area and Groups.
10. The cost of membership of the Open Spaces Society.
11. We have two years of Walks Fest costs. October 2024 was £147. 2025 is £312.06 but that includes a returnable deposit of £100 and a booking fee of £25 on the hall.
12. We showed a loss of £919.53 during the year. We decided to use some of our reserves as we had a large balance in the bank.
13. This figure represents funds held for Herts Weekend Walkers. They received a donation from Ramble Worldwide of £90 during the year.

Report of independent examiner

Having carried out procedures in accordance with the Area and Group independent guidelines, I consider the Hertfordshire and North Middlesex Area Accounts to have been properly prepared and give a true and fair view of the Area's finances for the year ended 30 September 2025.

Steve Carroll Date: 26 October 2025

Membership Secretary's report

Dave Ashby

Membership is still above 3,000, sustained by a modest increase in overall numbers to 3,167 (Ramblers GB: 106,000).

Relative stability has resumed after the volatility introduced by COVID and the closure of the NW London Group. The last transfer-market blip was in August 2024 and rates sit at more usual single-figures/month level. The joiners are around 55/month but leavers are only 2-3 less, a tight margin (Fig 1), resulting in 700+ 'Welcome' mails to new and returning members.

There is an unhealthy growth in the 'unassigned' group (table 1) and selected non-group members were targeted to outline group joining options. However, this

'holding group' continues to increase (11% of membership) and it may be that Central Office is yet to realign postal code auto-allocations with NW London closure.

Individual Group performances are not well differentiated, but geographic groups held up better than previously, whereas non-geographic groups were less noticeable in creating and holding new members (table 1 and fig. 1).

The level of Volunteers remains stable, although there is some rebalancing between Groups (table 1). We are still well below the UK national average of 15.4%.

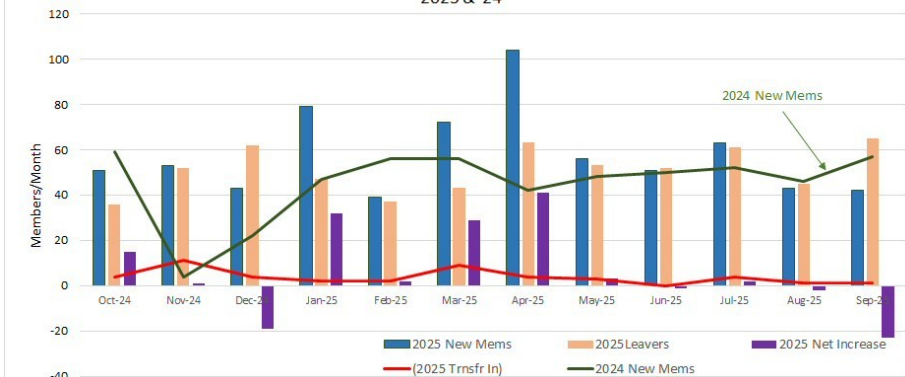
H&NM rate for members 'reachable by email' is unchanged at 81.2% (about 89% if joint membership is included). However those accepting all Ramblers digital communications has increased to 55%.

Table 1. **H&NM Net Membership Changes 2023-2025, & Volunteer Levels (Sep 2024-25)**

Group	West Herts	East Herts	North Herts	NLondon & SHerts	Royston	Watford 3 Rivers	Finchley & Hornsey	Herts Weekend	Stag Walkers	Un-assigned	Total H&NM
Sep/2023	443	258	438	520	139	308	397	163	142	182	2990
Sep/2024	421	235	422	521	130	312	376	174	164	275	3030
Oct/2025	417	230	434	531	135	323	377	180	190	350	3167
Net Change Sept 2023-24	-22	-23	-16	1	-9	4	-21	11	22	93	40
% Change Sept 2023-24	-5.0	-8.9	-3.7	0.2	-6.5	1.3	-5.3	6.7	15.5	51.1	1.3
Net Change Sept-2024-25	-4.0	-5.0	12.0	10.0	5.0	11.0	1.0	6.0	26.0	75.0	137.0
% Change Sept-2024-25	-1.0	-2.1	2.8	1.9	3.8	3.5	0.3	3.4	15.9	27.3	4.5
% Registered Volunteers 2024	9.7	8.5	14.2	11.9	26.2	11.9	8.8	19.5	23.8	1.8	12.2
% Registered Volunteers 2025	9.1	11.7	14.1	12.8	22.2	10.8	9.3	18.3	23.7	2.3	12.0

Fig. 1

H&NM New Membership Adds & Subtracts/Month
2025 & '24



Affiliated groups increased to 11 with the rejoining of BBC Ramblers.

Note: Please check your personal data. I am receiving increasing amounts of

Return to Sender for postal and email address errors.

All data sourced from Ramblers Insight Hub.

Area and Group main accounts: comparison

Compiled by Noreen Daves

	Area	W Herts	E Herts	N Herts	NL&SH	Royston	W&3 R	F&H	Stag W
Membership June 2024		426	237	418	495	126	306	373	156
MAIN	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income									
From Area/CO	7,966.00			700.00		228.56	419.38	490.38	230.36
Donations	90.00	180.00	20.00	140.00			50.00	230.00	17.00
Publications				43.00					
	8,056.00	180.00	20.00	883.00	0.00	228.56	469.38	720.38	277.36
Expenditure									
Newsletter/ publicity	7,300.92		20.00	28.99	343.89			170.55	88.20
Mailchimp	565.91								
DLYW	149.82								
Walks programme				92.16					
Walks related	535.06	21.75	128.29	50.00	36.00	54.00	100.50	49.08	
Publications				72.40					78.00
Campaigns	33.00			124.20			66.00		
Training		28.99				249.00	390.00	290.00	
Practical work								600.00	
Meetings incl. AGM	362.02	600.16	90.00	128.61		65.03		193.99	182.46
Admin	19.80			45.87					
Other	45.00			34.93					
	8,975.53	650.90	238.29	577.16	379.89	368.03	556.50	1,303.62	348.66
Main account									
Surplus/ Deficit	-919.53	-470.90	-218.29	305.84	-379.89	-139.47	-87.12	-583.24	-71.30
Opening bank	6,593.76	1,529.85	691.79	1,854.65	653.09	175.85	430.98	1,583.18	184.18
Closing bank	5,674.23	1058.95	473.50	2,160.49	273.20	36.38	343.86	999.94	112.88
Reserves %	63	163	10.7	97	72	10	62	77	32
Self funded									
Opening bank		3,649.18		1,753.52	3,856.78	739.55			183.87
Income		26,745.05		27,454.00	26,693.50	920.05			1,045.65
Expenditure		26,679.83		26,300.63	26,194.60	1,008.00			1,277.11
Closing bank		3,714.40		2,906.89	4,355.68	651.60			-47.59

Area Footpaths Subcommittee report

Roger Bangs, Phil Escritt, Lesley Abbiss, Anne Conchie, Libby Martin, Colin Knight (District and Borough Footpath Secretaries)

Our year began with the untimely death of Mark Westley, our Area Footpaths Secretary for many years (see *Stile*, June 2025).

Having no substitute for Mark, our only way to replace his expertise was to work together as a team to pool our knowledge and share the load. Two new District Footpaths Secretaries—Lesley Abbiss in East Herts and Anne Conchie in North Herts—are doing great work. The focus has been on recruiting new parish volunteers and providing training for new and existing Footpath Wardens. Our numbers dropped away to begin with, but there are now 53 volunteers covering most of Hertfordshire. A team of eight St Albans & District Footpaths Society volunteers are working closely with us. We still need a lot more help, particularly in East Herts District—see the list of vacancies on page 15.

As well as checking the current condition of paths, we are continuing to

fight to protect rights of way, including against the new threats of solar farms and data centres. If you know of a development near where you live that could affect footpaths, please send us an email (see below). We don't always get notified. Development can be an opportunity to improve the Rights of Way network, as we hope to do near Potters Bar data centre.

The reorganisation of Hertfordshire County Council into two, three or four Unitary Authorities hangs over us. Our existing footpaths support structure mirrors the current county structure, with a Footpath Officer for each District or Borough. However it changes, the result will be fewer, larger units—two, three or four new counties. Will these be served by the existing Herts CRoW team, or will that too be split up? The Ramblers' proposed change in governance structure is another uncertainty ahead.

For now, we are continuing with our present structure, with a team acting as 'Area Footpaths Secretary'. This cooperative way of working could well make us stronger in the long run. Please come and join us! Contact: hnmareafootpaths@gmail.com

Could you be part of **Stile** and the Area website?

The **Area Editorial Team** is a small, friendly subcommittee that decides the content of *Stile* and the Area website.

We are looking for an **extra member** who can (for example) help with production generally, write an article or two, provide photos and come up with new ideas.

Meetings currently take place four times a year by Zoom.

If you would like to know more, please email the Editor (see page 3).

Group reports 2025

East Herts*John Milton*

2025 has seen another successful and fulfilling year for East Herts Ramblers. Membership has remained stable and we have had several new walk leaders establish themselves, allowing us to organise two walks per week. The number of people participating in our walks has increased from last year too.

Much of this is down to the hard work and encouragement of Sarah Lea, the group's Walks Coordinator for the last two years. Sarah has now passed on her responsibilities to John Collins and Rona Grace who become joint Walks Coordinators. Some of our newer members were active in organising a week's walking around Rye in Sussex during the summer which was well



East Herts members taking a break in Brent Pelham. Photo by Sarah Lea



Finchley & Hornsey couldn't resist the Bubbleton teasop, a little way off the coastal path near Tenby. Photo by Jean Wong

supported. Further trips away are being planned over the next year.

Kevin McAuliffe stepped down as General Secretary and Membership Secretary with Shirley Barker now our General Secretary and Mike Dean taking over as Membership Secretary.

Regrettably, 2025 recorded a sad occasion for our group. We lost another valued and hugely experienced member, Mark Westley, who died on 11 February. Mark's wealth of knowledge and presence will be sorely missed.

Finchley & Hornsey

Justin Lumley

Finchley & Hornsey has enjoyed another fulfilling year, keeping to the basic pattern of one Sunday walk (sometimes Saturday, for those who can't make Sundays) supplemented by shorter weekday walks. A project to

complete the Capital Ring has proved popular. We often manage to attract new and potential members, many of whom have become regular participants, enriching the whole experience.

Successful trips to Canterbury and Tenby were organised, a few members seeing both for the first time. The traditional Solstice walk/picnics also took/are taking place, along with a short walk and Christmas lunch in Radlett. A seminar and social was held in November for leaders needing to complete training

The Group combines stability with openness to change. The present committee was once a new team, but most have now served for several years. We welcome new talent and ideas. I have been well supported by both officers and independent members, as

well as the small but dedicated team of leaders and other organisers; not forgetting the longstanding members who can no longer walk far but still offer friendship, ideas and advice. My warm thanks to all of them.

Herts Weekend Walkers

Jacky McMahon

Now in our 12th year, Herts Weekend Walkers continues to be a thriving group walking throughout Hertfordshire, usually on Saturday afternoons. This year we have offered 51 walks, totalling 359 miles. Our walks have ranged from four to nine miles, averaging around seven miles and often finish at a nearby pub so we can relax together over a drink. This year we have stepped up our social media

activity and welcomed 37 new members, making our total membership 179. We are a dog-friendly group which adds extra enjoyment to the walk for many of our members.

We organise regular weekends away. This year members have enjoyed Malham in Yorkshire and the North Surrey Downs. Our annual 20-mile challenge day on 3 May 2025 was well attended with a total of 50 walkers across the four loops. This included eight members from other Areas and six walkers trying Ramblers for the first time. This year saw nine walkers complete all four loops in and around Rabley Heath before many of us retired to the local pub for a well earned meal.



Herts Weekend Walkers on an early autumn trip to the North Downs, with Shoreham Gap in the background. Photo by Andy Caisey



North Herts members at Aldburch beach in Suffolk. Photo by Leon Fotiadis

North Herts

Sally Cannon

Thanks to longstanding regular leaders, and new leaders who have undertaken the leader training, we were able to put on an extensive programme offering walks on Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday and dog walks on Saturday. We also introduced additional Sunday short walks to attract new walkers, those returning from a break and those no longer wishing to undertake a long walk.

Social events included trips to Barnsdale Gardens and a Falconry Centre, a garden party by the river and two train trips to London with one for a clues walk around King's Cross. In

December a walk was followed by buffet lunch and festive entertainment. Our main walking holiday, and dog walking holiday, was at a delightfully located hotel in Suffolk with beautiful walks along the coast.

We helped organise, distribute the publicity and led walks for the Stevenage Walking Festival. We led several walks for the Bedfordshire Walking Festival and the Hertfordshire and North London Walks Festival.

With Stag Walkers we had stands at the Stevenage Health Fair and the Hitchin Health and Wellbeing Day. Our main publicity was a monthly leaflet setting out the details of the walks and distributed via libraries, information

centres and appropriate shops in the area.

We look forward to a full programme of walking, social events and holidays next year.

North London & South Herts

Lucy Welch

During the year we ran 117 walks ranging from 1.5 to 14 miles in length including seven walks on the London Countryway and four on the St Albans Way. This also includes three Gentle Walks of about 1.5 miles in an hour followed by a visit to a café. We operate a rolling online programme and walks

are also published on WhatsApp Group 'NLSH Walks' and a Group Facebook page. The Group Walks Library with over 230 walks is available for walk leaders and group members to borrow.

Social events included a Christmas lunch (preceded by the AGM), Spring dinner, Autumn dinner, and Volunteers' lunch as well as two walking day trips by train to Windsor/Eton and Downe Village.

During the year Group members enjoyed a four day walking holiday based in Caernarfon and led by Clwydian Holidays, a week in the Sierra de Grazalema organised by Ramble Worldwide and a second four



NL&SH members all set for a day in North Wales. Photo by Celtic Royal Hotel staff member using Vini Chowdhary's phone



The Royston party at the end of the Stour Valley Way. Photo by Nick Everington

day walking holiday led by Clwydian Holidays in the Trough of Bowland.

The Group ended the year with 530 members.

A big thank you to all the leaders and volunteers who have supported the Group

Royston

Ian Thomas

Royston's Tuesday and Thursday morning walks continue to be popular with an average attendance of about 20 walkers. Shorter summer evening walks are offered on an ad hoc basis and are greatly enjoyed. The all day Sunday walks that used to be a regular feature are now in abeyance with few members able to devote the time ahead of other

commitments, but we will explore options for Sunday walking in the future.

The desire for longer walks that used to be met on a Sunday is now satisfied by the trail or long distance walks. This year we walked the Stour Valley Way and the Angles Way with groups of 10 to 16 walkers doing daily distances up to 18 miles. We have experimented with walking on either one or two days each week, finding the former was a little better for many of us with the longer recovery time.

The annual coach trip was to Colchester and featured several local walks with the main theme being the riverside stretches upstream and downstream of the city.

Stag Walkers

Dan and Elise Cornwell-Groves

Stag Walkers is a friendly and social walking group aimed at people in their 20s, 30s, and a bit beyond. 2025 has seen us continue to offer a range of walks—at least one every weekend—across Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and

Cambridgeshire.

This year we completed walking the Hertfordshire Way in October—a task started in January 2024, with one of 22 sections covered monthly (see page 6). We also launched the popular categories of Tearoom and Taproom Treks, where walkers can socialise over



Stag Walkers on a visit to Paris led by Patricia Segui. Photo by a Stag Walkers member



Watford & Three Rivers visiting the South Downs in May. Photo by Clare Bonnick

a cuppa or a pint, respectively, during or after the walk.

We've had a few weekends away, to North Devon and Winchester, and internationally to Paris! Our social events have also remained well-attended, including pool socials, roller disco, live music, and theatre events.

Our membership numbers have again hit an all-time high, reaching 185—maybe next year we'll pass 200! Several committee members stood down this year after making many valuable contributions to our Group, including our treasurer, social secretary, webmaster, and Area representatives (who welcomed a baby son and possible future Rambler into the world

in June). This means we welcomed some new committee members, including our revived role of weekends away coordinator, at our AGM at Stevenage Cinnabar in November.

Watford & Three Rivers

Clare Bonnick

Another year of walking has passed, and we have continued our programme of full day Saturday walks together with midweek walks once or twice a month, and some local evening walks in the summer months. However, we have had a couple of weekends where nobody has been able to lead and we are concerned that with the new walk leader training regime, we may lose some of our leaders who have not led

enough walks to qualify by experience and who are not prepared to undertake the training. We hope the navigation training day we've organised may motivate some new leaders to come forwards.

We returned to the South Downs this May for a long weekend of walking. The group has also just returned from a five-day trip to the Isle of Man and enjoyed excellent weather. We have just firmed up our booking for a long weekend in Swanage in May next year.

We also enjoyed a Christmas lunch at the Coach and Horses in Rickmansworth and are planning to return there this year.

Thanks as always to our leaders and our committee for all they do!

West Herts

Marion Adams

We continue to offer a varied walking programme in Herts, Beds, Bucks and London with walks on each Sunday and Tuesday and an Amble of shorter length once a month. All are well-attended. Our walk leaders strive to bring variety and added interest to our walks which take us into areas beyond our local area. In the spring we supported the Chilterns Walking Festival.

Membership numbers remain stable but we have welcomed a number of new and enthusiastic walkers this year.

There have been two successful and popular holidays this year—Harrogate in the spring and the New Forest in the autumn—both are great walking areas.

We also offered a coach walk to Ely with a choice of walks across the Fens and the historic centre of the city.

We have a number of walk leaders and as a Group we continue to offer training and support to existing and new leaders including training on the Ordnance Survey App. We cover the cost of their first subscription.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work, competence and enthusiasm of the Committee. With the changes to Area being considered next year, I would also like to recognise the role played by HNM Area in the running of the Group.



West Herts' spring trip to Harrogate included Brimham Rocks. Photo by Clive Sutton

Area information

Area officers

Chair	Claire Wainwright	HNMChair@gmail.com
Vice-Chair / Secretary	Al Maceachern	HNMSecretary@gmail.com
Treasurer	Noreen Dawes	HNMTreasurer@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Dave Ashby	hnmmembership@btinternet.com
Area RoW Coordinator	(Vacant)	hnmareafootpaths@gmail.com
Countryside Access	Roger Bangs	rambler130roger@gmail.com
Media & Publicity	Claire Wainwright	hnmmediacomms@gmail.com
Minutes Secretary	Justin Lumley	jrlumley1@outlook.com
Independent Members	Frank Warnock	webmasterhnm@gmail.com
	Libby Martin	hnm dontloseyourway@gmail.com
	Gemma Sweeney	
	Patricia Segui	SeguiEsPatricia@gmail.com

To contact the Area or a Group **by post** please write c/o: Ramblers Central Office, 13 Dirty Lane, London SE1 9PA marking 'Attention of [[Officer],Area/Group]'

Ramblers national website: www.ramblers.org.uk

Herts and North Middlesex Area: www.hnmramblers.org.uk

South East Walker: www.surreyramblers.org.uk/news/35-south-east-walker.html

Footpath problems (1) — see tinyurl.com/2j9kwbmj or contact the **local authority**:

Legal problems across Hertfordshire

Rights of Way Service
Hertfordshire County Council
0300 123 4047
row@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Maintenance or obstruction issues

(except Dacorum and Broxbourne):
tinyurl.com/6cud6m6s

Enfield Borough Council
Traffic and Transportation
020 8379 3565
highway.services@enfield.gov.uk
(RoW maintenance)
transportation@enfield.gov.uk
(other RoW issues)

Dacorum Borough Council
Clayton Rae
01442 228 356
clayton.rae@dacorum.gov.uk

Broxbourne Borough Council
Engineering and Surveying
01992 785 577
ess@broxbourne.gov.uk

Barnet Borough Council
Street Based Services
HighwaysCorrespondence@Barnet.gov.uk

Haringey Council
Frontline Business Support
020 8489 1335
frontline@haringey.gov.uk

Footpath problems (2) — contact one of the Footpath Secretaries:

North Herts District, Stevenage

Anne Conchie (temporary):
hnmnorthertsfootpaths@gmail.com

Hertsmere Borough, Welwyn Hatfield Borough

Ian Hardy: ian.hardy@btinternet.com

East Herts District: Lesley Abbiss

lesley.abbiss@btinternet.com

Broxbourne Borough

Sarah Lea: esarahlea@gmail.com

St Albans City & District

Phil Escritt: phil.escritt@gmail.com

Dacorum Borough

John Rowe: johnm.rowe@talktalk.net

Three Rivers District, Watford Borough

Colin Knight: knightcolin74@gmail.com

Enfield

Vacant. Temporary contact Libby Martin:
hnm dontloseyourway@gmail.com

Barnet

Libby Martin:
hnm dontloseyourway@gmail.com

Haringey

Chris Barker: chrisjbarker46@gmail.com

Group information

Summary information and published walks for all the Groups are on Area website: **www.hnmramblers.org.uk** Follow link 'Our Groups' to see location of each Group, types of walks and link to each Group website. Here are contacts for Groups in our Area. Almost all walks are listed on the Ramblers national website:

East Herts

John Milton
chair@easthertsramblers.co.uk
Facebook, Instagram: search East Herts Ramblers

Finchley & Hornsey

Liz Rowsell
fhmemsec@gmail.com
www.ramblers.org.uk/finchley-hornsey

Herts Weekend Walkers

Jacky McMahon
contact@hertswww.org.uk
www.hertswww.org.uk
www.facebook.com/groups/hertswww
An informal 'Flexigroup' aimed at working people wanting weekend walks

North Herts

Jo Lindridge
www.nhr.org.uk
secretary@nhr.org.uk

North London & South Herts

Lucy Welch
ramblersnlsh1@outlook.com
www.ramblers.org.uk/north-london-south-herts

Royston

Lesley Abbiss
royston.ramblers@yahoo.com
www.ramblers.org.uk/royston
Facebook: search Royston Ramblers

Stag Walkers

Al Maceachern
stagwalkers@gmail.com
www.stagwalkers.org.uk
www.facebook.com/groups/stagwalkers
A Group aimed mainly at people in their 20s and 30s and a bit beyond

Watford & Three Rivers

Info.wtrramblers@googlegmail.com
www.ramblers.org.uk/watford-three-rivers
www.facebook.com/WatfordAnd3RiversRamblers

West Herts

Lynda Abbott
secretary.westhertsramblers@gmail.com
www.westhertsramblers.org.uk
www.facebook.com/groups/WestHertsRamblers

