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MAGAZINE AND WALKING PROGRAMME SPRING AND SUMMER 2025



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RAMBLERS

IVEL VALLEY WALKERS

Bob's Corner

by Bob Wallace, Chair of IVW Ramblers Group



Summer is just around the corner (I hope!) and the

spring sunshine and less muddy paths to walk are welcome. New 'things' are with us:-

- We have a new website – view it at www.ivelvalleywalkers.co.uk. Thanks Sarah
- An expanded Facebook presence. In addition to our current members only page, we're introducing a public page viewable by anyone

on Facebook which will allow us to share information about the group and upcoming walks with a wider audience.

- Our first European Group holiday to the Calvados region of France in May
- and our first 'Mountaineering Expedition' with an ascent and descent of the Millennium Dome in North Greenwich in June!

I look forward to seeing you on our walks and events throughout the Summer.



Dawn Chorus Walk Saturday 3rd May 5am

Our two bird experts John Bowler and Roy Dunham have planned a 4-5mile walk around Priory Lake then through the finger lakes and on to the banks of the Great Ouse circuiting Meadow Lane lakes.

We're hoping for up to nine different species of warblers plus various tits, finches, cuckoo and hirundines, etc. Then there's sights and sounds of various wildfowl, waders, egrets and raptors and always the possibility of an otter! Remember your binoculars or telescope.

Breakfast at the Beefeater afterwards?

Give John or Roy a call by 30th April.

Roy
07713 464 510
roydunham10@gmail.com

John
07763 003 306
john.bowler1812@ntlworld.com

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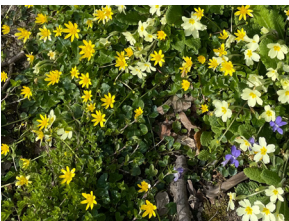
PAST (RECENT)... PRESENT (OR SOON)... AND FUTURE

Sevenoaks, Calvados and Anglesey

by Roger McLeod



As seems commonplace now with trains, the 08:18 train from Bedford to London Bridge, was cancelled, leaving us to catch the next one and causing some confusion for those joining the train en-route. In true Ivel Valley style a sprint from one platform to another at London Bridge put us back on schedule for our day around Sevenoaks.



Welcomed on a perfect day with spring flowers and trees in blossom we strolled from the station through the town and into Knole Park, a deer park, then Knole House, a most magnificent building. Construction started in 1456 by Thomas Bouchier, Archbishop of Canterbury and over the centuries it has grown considerably, now known as a 'Calendar' house with 365 rooms, 52 staircases, 7 courtyards and 12 entrances. Park and house are all now in the care of the

National Trust. From Knole we continued towards Ightham on a route that straddles the Kentish Greensand Way, through open grassland, old woodland and with views across the Kentish Weald and North Downs. Lunch was at Ightham Mote, a medieval, timbered property set in wonderful woodlands and far more



modest than Knole. Our return, more northerly, passed through Knole again where we made our way through a herd of fallow deer, then back into town to catch our train back to Bedford.



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Normandy is many a OUI

by Carolyn and Mark Lightfoot

Having done a feasibility study in April 2024, Ivel Valley Walkers put their trust in us and signed off a walking holiday in the Calvados area

of Normandy in 2025. And we've just returned from a recce of the trip. Yes the cider tasting places will be open. Yes they're stocking up with extra ice cream, yes there's so much to see.... and yes there've been problems to solve, tweaks to make. Do we want to walk through 50 metres or so of swamp?

Do we want to scale the Omaha beach cliffs only to be faced with a locked gate on the marked pathway? No problem to the soldiers in '44 but, well, we hadn't brought that sort of gear. A huge fallen tree across a narrow path with no way round it? Looks like a Ripple job...who has the chainsaw?

Best laid plans... the recce for Anglesey

by Roy Carter

We sat in the car, having driven 230 miles to Menai Bridge and looked at prices to park on the first planned walk. "That's too expensive". It was cheaper to park in town at £4 a day than at the beach which is typically £12 a day so we amended plans to find suitable parking spaces in towns from now on.

Next day Tom checked the seats on a bus and a

sign indicated 29 seated plus 17 standing. But there's 50 of us. More changes then since not all the group could travel by bus although they may not want to anyway at £4 a ride. Nope, your English bus pass is no good here, it's better to obtain a weekly bus pass from Arriva at £17pp.

The planned coastal walks were lovely and the sunny weather helped. But walks inland became difficult and was where we encountered several problems. Like a farm road which never legally joined the footpath away from the farm on the other side. Like the kissing gate blocked by cattle

feed buckets – possibly closed for lambing? Like the footpath that existed on a map but not on the ground and the reverse where a path on the ground did not exist on the map. More route changes were needed. Then of course ideas for managing all 50 of us on short, medium and long walks; taking folks either clockwise or anticlockwise or making it a linear walk with the bus back.....

So problems identified with me sorting more different routes, Tom finding a dog and the other Roy trying to find a Welsh beer. All in a week's recce I guess.

A brief History of the Ordnance Survey

by Graham Fletcher

Most of us regularly use the services of the Ordnance Survey by using an app or physical map but how many of us know the origins of the organisation and its history? It may surprise you to know that the OS is getting on for 250 years old. What's the story then?

1745 The second Jacobite rebellion demonstrated how little the English knew about the topography of the Scottish Highlands so the army sent William Roy to map the entire region. Having successfully done so within 8 years, he returned with a vision to map all of the UK.

1784 The Royal Society asked him to take on that task so he promptly ordered a 3ft theodolite (it took three years to build) and also explored the use of barometers to measure height. Snowdon came in at 3568 ft, only 8 ft higher than the established height today. Unfortunately he didn't quite live to see his dream start, dying in 1790.

1791 The Royal Society refused to buy a second theodolite since the price had gone up so the Board of Ordnance, the equivalent of today's Ministry of Defence, bought it to continue the map



making. This is recognised as the start of the Ordnance Survey and hence the name we all know.

The French Revolution meant England was expecting an attack from France and so the first maps were of the south coast. Kent in 1801, Essex in 1805, drawn to a scale of 1 inch to the mile, selling at a staggering 3 guineas each

1810 The first map to have Ordnance Survey printed on it was published

1824 The start of mapping of Ireland. Taxes were based on information collected in the mid-1600s, now inaccurate and deemed unfair. The maps, at 6 inches to a mile, were completed by 1846, important historically as one of the most accurate records of Ireland from before the famine.

Full triangulation of the UK and Ireland took some 50 years to complete.

Heights are of course important. Theodolites and barometers could provide some indication but a reference point was necessary. Measurements were conducted using a level instrument on a bench then an arrow mark put underneath to indicate where it was. Hence a benchmark.

1841 The benchmark at St Johns Church tower in Liverpool was decided upon and sea level declared at 100 ft below this mark. This was wrong and after various measurements a new reference point at Newlyn harbour was decided upon, in 1920, which is still in place today.

Government Acts, the rush of the railway era, towns starting to put sewage systems and better water supplies in place all meant that more detail and accuracy was required so OS undertook mapping at 5ft to the mile (1:1056) for towns with populations above 4000 . Only two were produced in 4 years (Windsor, at the request of Prince Albert and Southampton, used as a training tool) before a move to the largest scale ever made - 10ft to the mile (1:528). Imagine now folding one of those up for a day's walking ! These were to be paid for by the local authority so only those where the money was received were produced. 35 were made before the government decided to fund them and another 440 were produced at a scale of 1:500. Details included coal bunkers, wash

taps, privies, lampposts, fountains and even the number of seats in public buildings.

An interesting project coming from the success of these maps was the request to survey Jerusalem to enable better sanitation. It also gave the War Office a chance to get great detail of an area that had always been in contention and that it might have to revisit in different circumstances in the future.

1854 A scale of 1:2500 was adopted for all "cultivated" towns. I'll leave you to debate that definition but the scale resulted in a square inch representing close to one acre- a very convenient measure.

1890s Improvements included differentiating between metalled and non-metalled roads and single and double track railways. Field names were no longer included and individual trees in hedges were omitted.

1898. Colour arrived

Maps for wars have always proved vital and as a military and mapping agency OS has played a major role in many wars. They produced maps of South Africa during the Boer war. All soldiers sent were given a map although many of them used them to line their jackets in the cold weather.

And so to the 20th Century and the Great War... but that and beyond is for next time.

Music memories of our (not so) Little Drummer Boy

Tom Collier, Ivel Valley Rambler of note

We lived in a flat in West Gorton, the heart of Manchester ahop and skip from Belle Vue, the home of the speedway, a boating lake and a ballroom. Cars parked in Forbes Street to gain access to such amenities and Johnny Roberts helped park the cars. Sometimes I would help him to 'advance his business' directing them to park safely on the cobbled street and my older brother would also help. Money changed handsbut I don't remember getting paid ! Mind you I almost got caught snogging on the stairs with Johnny's sister Ann, the love of my life. I must have been at least 3 years old.

The lure of better work prospects and a company house hooked my parents into a move from the cobbled streets of Manchester to the cornfields of Luton. Bagshaw's Mechanical Handling Co. had caught their fish...dad, mum and three boys. Sunday dinner was spent listening to the Billy Cotton Band Show on the radiogram with a glass of brown ale shandy (mainly lemonade) then dad would play his records - Nat King Cole and Eartha Kit being his favourites. Not mine but I could appreciate their talent. Then the world changed.

For many youngsters The Beatles exploding onto the scene changed everything and music was now in the house proper; my older brother got an Elvis plastic guitar for Christmas, me a set of drums. I was on my way. We visited several youth clubs (remember them?), got a band together with a few mates from school and we'd practice at The Halfway House as we knew the chef. One Saturday their booked band was not very good, were cancelled and said chef said he knew someone. So Concrete Rainbow had their first gig. The caretaker had a Landrover to take all our gear and we set up in the main ballroom. Our playlist was rather small to say the least but I remember three that we played twice - House of the Rising Sun, Green Onions and Baby Come Back. The applause was amazing. And we got paid !

Life was good in the 60s and 70s. I was in several bands but never really made it and I was being pushed to get married as my parents were going to move to South Africa. Not for me thanks. So marriage it was ...it didn't last long. Music kept me going and oh, the memories. On one occasion travelling up the M1 to a gig in Nottingham, six of us in a Rover were passed by a wheel going at speed. It eventually stopped and so did we. because the wheel was from our Rover. Luckily we found all of the wheel nuts and were soon back on our way. Nottingham was happy to see us too.



Our agent at the time would just book you on hearsay but one night he oversold us. We struggled to find the venue, were late and decided to start with a new number. The singer counted us in but it was an off-beat song. We were stopped and told to try another song. Then we were asked to leave, not the best experience. Soon after we had a similar experience a London club with a pool! We set up, played the first number.... and

were stopped. Not again we thought, but no, they were happy with the sound they just wanted a delay until the placed fill up a bit more. No problem since the benefit of having a pool was the bikini-clad ladies surrounding it.

Yes, even being in an unknown band there was and probably is always female attention and opportunities happen even in the snow!!! Another story.

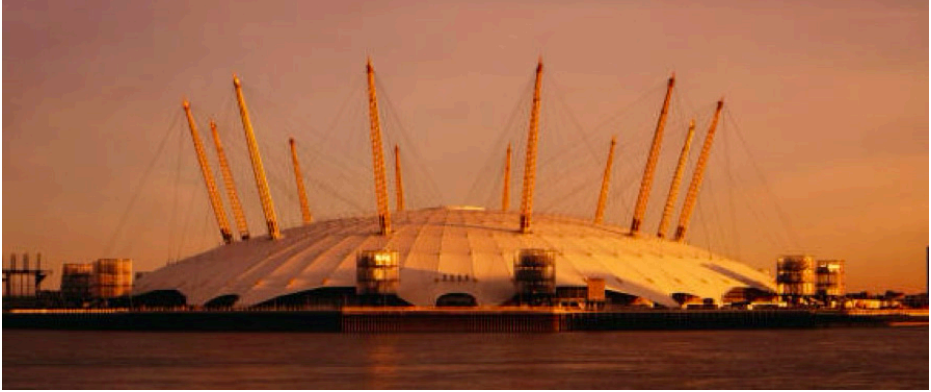
Then there was the time when, after the gig, I caught the train from Bedford to Kettering but woke to find myself in Derby with no trains back until 5 am.

Never the Big Time then but I have supported several bigger acts. Love Sculpture with Dave Edmunds, Circus, a Midlands rock band, an early Roxy music, and Rudi and the Blue Notes, a Jamaican band. I once played on a demo disc called " Too far to the nearest station". It went nowhere.

I still have a drum kitso let me know if you need help with a rhythm section.

IVEL VALLEY MOUNTAINEERING

Proudly present a climb over the roof of the Millennium Dome
Saturday 21st June, from 11.15am (Meet 10:45 at Climb Entrance)



You are invited to join an intrepid band of fellow members in the ascent and descent of the Millennium Dome in North Greenwich. It's claimed that on a clear day a view of 15miles is possible.

Booking tickets is the responsibility of the individual member, booking is through www.upattheo2.co.uk

The cost is £42.00 per person for a named individual and is not transferable or refundable.

Climbing parties set off every 15 minutes, so should the 11.15am be fully booked, try the 11.30am, 11.45am & 12.00pm, after which time we will be starting our walk.

How to get there. North Greenwich is on the Jubilee Line which, if using Bedford Thameslink, can be accessed from West Hampstead or London Bridge. If taking a different route, the meeting point is 10.45am at the Millennium Dome Climb entrance.

For those who wish, the climb will be followed by a 5-6 mile walk, ending at Falconwood Railway Station, where we will catch a train back to London Bridge.

Once you have booked your ticket, please let Roger know on rogermcleod@hotmail.com or Tel: 07989 307 046

RECOVERING from brain surgery through walking

Israr's powerful story of healing through nature



I'm from Bedford and occasionally walk with Ivel Valley. I now live just outside Southampton, am a lecturer in the business school at Chichester University and have

two sons, aged 18 and 20. My husband and I have always enjoyed walking and we've explored lots of places through walking. When the boys were young, we would take them walking as well.

A LIFE-CHANGING DIAGNOSIS

About two and a half years ago, I started experiencing severe back pains and some loss of movement in my left leg. It was affecting the left side of my face too. I'd been to the doctor's several times and they sent me to various chiropractors. But I just knew it was something different so decided to seek advice via private healthcare. It was the best £200 I've ever spent. They diagnosed that I had a massive tumour, called Petroclival Meningioma, and it was growing very fast. Only 2% of tumours are of this type and they told me mine was sitting in quite a dangerous place, near important cranial nerves and on the brain stem. They gave me seven months to live.

I made it through a very intense operation but they couldn't remove all of the tumour. Some of my nerves have been severed, so I can't see in my left eye, it affects my memory, and I get chronic fatigue. I still

have regular checkups, and MRI scans for the part of the tumour that's remaining, but for the time being, I've recovered, and I've got all my movement back.

RECOVERING IN NATURE

Post op I was in bed for quite a few months and I couldn't even stand up. When I did start moving I needed a walking frame and eventually managed to do a lap of our small garden. Hard work. Gradually I worked up to several laps, then started venturing out further. Initially I could only walk for about 10 minutes, still using the frame but gradually increasing the time. To be honest I was really embarrassed at using the frame so we would always go places where no one would see me. I was such an active person before, one eye was shut, and I just didn't look or feel like myself. I didn't want to be seen seen.

On my left side I have lots of metal inside my head and I get lots of noises. It's like washing sounds and when I'm anxious or getting lots of external neurostimulation these sounds increase but decrease when walking in the natural world.

As I became more mobile and didn't need the frame anymore, I wanted a return to walking but needed to be with someone as I couldn't get out by myself. My husband, friends and neighbours were all busy or working so it was quite isolating.

FIRST STEPS WITH THE RAMBLERS

I remembered that a good family friend is a member of the Ramblers, so I looked it up and hadn't realised it was such a huge organisation with groups all over the country, including several close to me. I rang a couple of groups, and explained that I was learning to walk again and asked if I would be able to join a group walk and whether there would be anyone who would be able to support me.

I spoke to a lovely man at the Ramblers Hampshire 40+ Walking Group who explained that it wasn't the norm but he'd be happy to walk with me. That first walk I think was a five-miler, something I'd never done post-surgery. I managed about a mile, was absolutely exhausted, but he was with me the whole time and then he rang my husband to collect me. It was great but I decided not to go again until I was stronger because I didn't want to be a burden.

So I just went out walking in the woods until I was able to walk for about four miles and I called him again to say I thought I was ready to walk longer distances. Those first walks with the Ramblers were very challenging. But the people were so nice, so encouraging. And although their speed was much faster than mine, they started adapting the routes so that I would find it easier. I was so touched by how caring they were.

After my operation, I had to re-learn everything, from swallowing and moving my arms to walking. Going through this process I came to realise how much your environment impacts on your body and your wellbeing. I realised, when I was outdoors in the countryside, the noises in my head reduced. It felt very different from when I was by a road with cars going past or back at home with artificial



lighting. I was going out walking with the Ramblers group twice a week and I noticed I was started feeling a bit better in myself. I realised that being out in nature with these lovely people was healing me. I was taking lots of medicines to suppress the pain in my head, but this was a different type of healing that was going on. I could feel it on a different level. I was starting to feel a little bit more 'me'.

I joined Meon Ramblers who are absolutely amazing. They've been a lifeline to me. Our friendship and spending time outdoors has brought us all close together. And for me it's been a healing process. I'm getting exercise, I'm getting friendship and I'm getting lots of different stimulation. It's so much more than 'just a walk'.

I couldn't see in my left eye and I have problems with my right eye, so I have no perception of depth. I don't see things in 3D, everything looks flat. For example I can't see steps unless they are visibly marked and although I was using 2 sticks, I would trip and fall a lot. But I've learnt coping mechanisms. I look for shapes and I watch the people walking in front of allowing me to tell if they're stepping down or if they're stepping over something that I can't see. And if the ground is really flat I can tell because their pace changes and the movement of their body changes.

LONG DISTANCE CHALLENGES

Last year I walked the Isle of Wight 106km Ultramarathon right around the island. I have to thank Astrid, a volunteer who helped me on the last leg of the challenge. At that point I was feeling very ill and I couldn't see properly but she got me through it. I was the last person to finish the challenge and I was about two hours over the time limit. But Astrid called the organisers, explained my situation and they waited for me and cheered me over the line.

There are quite a few people who have helped me with my walking. There's my husband Richard of course, whose support during my recovery has been crucial and who has also been pivotal in helping me with my walking. My friends Claire and Helen from Meon Ramblers helped me with the training for the Isle of Wight walk and this year they're supporting me in doing the 100-mile South Downs Walk in stages across 3 days. Plus Astrid is going to join us for the final section of the walk. I also wouldn't be able to walk with the Ramblers, had it not been for another Richard, one of the walk leaders, who lives nearby and gives me lifts to and from the walks.

In addition to the Ramblers, I'm very grateful to the other charities that have supported my recovery. The Brain Tumour Charity helped me with counselling and I'm hopeful that one day Brain Tumour Research's work will mean the remainder of mine can be zapped for good.

If you are recovering from an illness or an operation and would like to get out walking, check out Ramblers Wellbeing Walks. These are free, short walks designed to help you take the first steps towards better health, wellbeing and happiness.



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Today I am delighted to talk to Barry, the doppelgänger of Barry and former (He has been an active member for 26 years)

WHAT DOES IVW MEAN TO YOU?

Rambling is one of the few activities where you can meet people from many different walks of life. It is also great for your general health, fitness and well-being.

'LOVE EVERY DROP'

Following my move to Bedford in 1973, having previously worked in Coventry, Maidstone, Aylesbury and London, I joined the Anglian Water Authority as the chemist and bacteriologist for North Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire. I was responsible for the water quality for over a quarter of a million consumers and that is why I had a sign on my desk which said, 'All water in this region has been passed by me!'

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

I became interested in Family History thanks to my wife! My research has been primarily through archival records. With the advent of affordable DNA analysis, I now know on my father's side, I have a link with Oliver Cromwell's army in Ireland in 1649 and on my mother's side a strong Scandinavian association. One of the interesting branches of my family is concerned with illegitimacy, destitution,

the workhouse and a murder! (Watch this space!). I enjoy all aspects of family history and have worked both with individuals directly and others at Family History Fairs, County Archives and study centres with their research.

HOW HAS THE IVW PROGRAMME EVOLVED OVER THE LAST 25 YEARS?

Walks were on Sundays and Wednesdays with some evening walks in the summer. As the weekday numbers grew, we realised that there was a need for members who wanted a slower pace and distance, so the ambles were started. This also led to the Tuesday walks for those wanting a longer walk and were prepared to travel further to the starting point.

I HEAR YOU ARE A BIT OF AN 'ENIGMA' BRIAN?

I have an interest in computers and code breaking. I emphasise this is purely recreational and not for profit! Some people like doing crossword puzzles while I enjoy solving mathematical conundrums. Pre-Covid I could usually be found in the National Museum of Computing at Bletchley Park explaining to visitors how Hitler communicated with

Brian Gubbins, Chair of IVW. ears.

his High Command using the very secure and secret Lorenz machine which was more complicated and sophisticated than Enigma.

'FRIENDS, ROMANS, COUNTRYMEN...'

I also have an interest in archaeology and particularly the Roman period in Britain. The highlight of my involvement was to be invited to go on a pilgrimage to Hadrian's Wall in 2019. This was the 14th pilgrimage, which started in 1848, as they only occur every ten years. We travelled the whole length of the wall from North Shields to Maryport (135 miles), studying recent discoveries. The paperweight in my office is a piece of flue pipe from the underfloor heating of a Roman villa in Silchester, Hampshire. How sad is that?

Tack Brian. Adjo!

In the groove at our 70-80's Disco

by Roger McLeod



Walking past Bedford Rowing Club and seeing that it could be hired, it set my mind in motion, allowing the idea of an Ivel Valley Disco to creep into my thinking. In the past we've held barn dances in village halls, but this would be a revolutionary step for us. Could it work?

Tom Collier, our ex-drummer with various bands, volunteered to comper and his sister, Tracy, was enlisted as DJ. On the night, many of the party goers came dressed in 70-80's style, such a contrast to the very dull bobble hats, anoraks, waterproof trousers and gaiters, that is the usual attire I see them in.

Once the music started, earlier misgivings evaporated. Those people that I know and walk with discussing grandchildren, next holidays, queuing behind to clamber over stiles etc, were immediately transported to earlier times in their lives, a moment of "All our yesterdays" descended. The dance floor exploded in a sea of rhythmic movement, not an arthritic whimper or creaking joint to be heard. The dance floor full, seats and tables empty.

There was a short interval for a quiz, partly compiled by Mark and Carolyn, answered by some contestants with incredible memories. The break also allowed oxygen levels to be regenerated in preparation for the concluding dance session and lesson from Tom.

This was a risky venture for Ivel Valley to put on, will we do it again? Yes, we will, it was such fun!



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KNOW YOUR PUB

by Graham Fletcher



Each time we go walking we may well encounter a pub. It might be at the start / finish or a handy lunchtime stop for topping up refreshments and of

course a loo stop. We identify it by its name and hanging outside is the pub sign but how many of us ever consider where the name comes from?

Alcohol has been made and consumed for millennia and if sold it needed to be signposted in some way. When the Romans came to Britain, they set up tabernae on the roadside and if they had wine for sale, they would hang a bunch of grapes or bough of vine leaves outside so people knew. In Saxon times there was usually one house in the village that brewed the ale and when it was ready to drink, they would fix a green bush outside. Signs then became pictorial because of the low level of literacy and also easy to remember - The Plough, The Star, The George and Dragon, Star and Garter.....

In 1393 a law was passed telling all landlords (as they'd become) that they must identify their premises with a sign so the royal tasters could inspect the quality of the ale and, of course most importantly, collect the taxes. The penalty for not doing so was forfeiture of his ale.

Nobility's coats of arms were used by pubs on their lands, examples being The Red Lion (John of Gaunt, Royal Arms of Scotland), The White Hart (Richard II), The Bear and Ragged Staff (Earls of

Warwick). Others chose a name to reflect their loyalty - The Kings Arms, Queens Head, The Crown etc or to reflect historic events - Rose and Crown (Edward III, his descendants and the Tudors), Royal Oak (future Charles II and the tree at Boscobel) and the Saracens Head (Crusades).

Names with 'three' in them often refer to Worshipful Companies- The Three Castles (Masons), The Three Horseshoes (Farriers), The Three Tuns (Brewers and Vintners). Eventually The Worshipful Company of Innholders was established in 1514 and it still exists today.

People and places have always proved popular with most having a story behind them. Can you think of any you've encountered...and do you know the story?

Currently, the top five most common names across the UK are - The Red Lion, Royal Oak, Crown, White Hart and Rose and Crown. Are you wondering about the shortest name....and the longest?

Oddly enough they're both in Stalybridge, just west of Manchester:- Q being the shortest and The Old Thirteenth Cheshire Astley Volunteer Rifleman Corps Inn being the longest

Remember those for future family and pub quizzes.

In the 16th Century there were about 16,000 pubs, inns and taverns equivalent to 1 for every 187 people. Nowadays there are about 40,000 but with the population increase this equates to 1 in 1500. So use 'em while you can!

IVEL VALLEY LIVING THE BOATING LIFE: A journey of simplicity, adventure, and self discovery

by Tony Dolphin, member of Ivel Valley Ramblers



Life on a boat carries an undeniable sense of freedom, adventure, and a connection to the horizon. For me, it wasn't an escape, but rather a mixture of curiosity, practicality, and inspiration from people like Robin Knox-Johnston. And so, my journey began.

MY FLOATING SANCTUARY

My 50-foot narrowboat is just seven feet wide, designed perfectly for life on water. It's beautifully lined with ash timber, giving it warmth and character. The engine has leaked oil since day one but beyond that ongoing issue, the boat remains a reliable, beautiful companion.

THE JOURNEY: A TEST OF PATIENCE AND FRIENDSHIP

The most memorable journey was bringing the boat home, starting on a Sunday at Roydon and ending in Rickmansworth on the Thursday. We spent about 10 hours a day on the move, slowly making our way and enjoying the views of London. My neighbour, who like me, had never done anything like this before, joined me. It was exhausting but transformative, as we learned together and strengthened our bond while navigating the waters.

CONTINUOUS CRUISER LIFE: MINIMAL FOOTPRINT, MAXIMUM FREEDOM

As a 'continuous cruiser', I have to move the boat every 14 days. While not always convenient, it keeps me connected to nature and reduces my environmental footprint. Each location feels temporary yet rich with experiences and memories.

SECURITY: NAVIGATING RISKS AND BUILDING TRUST

Boat life has risks, including a troubling theft of thousands of pounds worth of new boat gear. Though unsettling, I've learned that security is about balancing vigilance with trust. The small community of boaters looks out for each other, building a sense of camaraderie and trust.

THE CHALLENGES OF OFF-GRID LIVING: A MINDSET OF PROBLEM-SOLVING

Living off-grid forces creativity, from generating power to managing water. I rely on solar panels and a wind turbine which gives me a 12-volt system that produces 240 volts. Though challenging at times, it's satisfying to minimise reliance on external sources.

A few months ago, redundancy accelerated my early retirement plans. While financial uncertainty could've been overwhelming, the state pension provides comfort. The boat life has taught me that simplicity often brings greater fulfilment than the distractions of modern life.

The Plough

BOLNHURST



ATMOSPHERE, SERVICE & SUMPTUOUS FOOD THE PLOUGH HAS IT ALL

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OPEN: 12.00PM TO 4.00PM KITCHEN: 12.00PM TO 1.45PM

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SATURDAY

OPEN: 12.00PM TO 4.00PM KITCHEN: 12.00PM TO 1.45PM

OPEN: 6.30PM TO 11.00PM KITCHEN: 6.30PM TO 8.45PM

SUNDAY

OPEN: 12.30PM TO 4.00PM KITCHEN: 12.30PM TO 2.00PM

WHATEVER THE OCCASION

Excellent food, wine and beer with an efficient and friendly service in the relaxed and informal atmosphere of an old English pub

**The Plough, Kimbolton Road, Bolnhurst,
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Interested and new to Ramblers? Well, how about some Q & A's?

Q Okay, I'm interested. What next?

- A** Have a look at the programme, choose a day, a walk, a distance to suit. Note the starting point/meeting place which will always be clear and easy to find and then just turn up. For most walks you don't need to book, just turn up. However, some leaders do ask you to book by phone or email.

Q What do I wear and what to bring?

- A** From the bottom upwards we'd suggest walking boots /shoes or other strong footwear since most of the time will be in countryside of various types. Then it's dress for the weather be it hot, cool, wet or windy including hats where appropriate, suncream, waterproofs etc as per the weather forecast. Shorter walks will stop for a coffee break and longer walks will stop for lunch, often a picnic somewhere or perhaps at a pub/cafe, and also coffee breaks. So bring a flask, water and whatever you fancy to eat.

Q Start time?

- A** The programme specifies the start time plus other important details. We leave promptly so arrive in good time and we're ready to hit the road!

Q What about the weather? Do you walk if it's raining?

- A** Hey, this is the UK! We might cancel in extreme conditions but otherwise we go come rain, hail or shine. There's no bad weather, just the wrong clothes.

Q To get started then, all I need do is turn up and follow the leader?

- A** You've got it!

Q Any paperwork, forms etc to bring or fill in?

- A** No. We're not great fans of this.

Q How much?

- A** The walks are free, but if you walk regularly with us and like what you find we'd like you to join the Ramblers Association. Ramblers membership is the best way to support the work done for walkers across Britain.

Please visit www.ramblers.org.uk or telephone: 020 3961 3300 and nominate Ivel Valley Walkers as your local group

Q How much to join?

- A** The good news is that we don't want your money. Not yet anyway. We suggest you try before you buy. Have a look at the programme in this brochure, find something that suits you, turn up on the day and walk with us for a few times. You'll be made very welcome, there's no charge, no commitment, not even any paperwork. If you like what you find, join us. We want Rambling to be available as widely as possible. It's only £43 for one adult for one year and an unbelievable £58 for two adults.

YOMP, CHOMP AND ROLLUP

on Wednesday 23rd July



Yes, it's Bernard's annual multi - faceted gathering where a morning walk is offered, then a bbq lunch followed by an opportunity to test your flat green bowling skills in the afternoon. Details are in this programme and online and the price is only £11 each.

The Bedfordshire Festival of Autumn Walks

Offers a great opportunity for those new to walking to try it, get to know new people, become fitter and enjoy our countryside. What's not to like? This year Festival runs from 6th to 14th September 2025 so why not look at the detailed walks programme, choose at least one that appeals and come along. In addition we're proud to be asked again to organise "The Greensand Ridge Challenge" over the 13th and 14th September at a cost of £22 each, this to cover transport costs to Ampthill on both days plus a completion certificate.



Ivel Valley Walks Programme

Summer 2025

Top Tip: check Ivel Valley website, Facebook and also bulletin for possible programme changes.

For a full list of walks in the Bedfordshire Festival of Walks go to www.bedswalkfest.co.uk

Denotes festival of walks

Thu 01 May	10:00	Great Barford Outside Golden Cross Restaurant. MK44 3JD (TL 127 524). Jan W 07895 045410	4.5 miles
Sat 03 May	05:00	Dawn Chorus Walk Priory Marina Bedford Priory Park Visitor Centre, off Barkers Lane. MK41 9DJ (TL 072 495). John B & Roy D 07763 003306 or 07713 464510	4-5 miles
Sun 04 May	10:00	<i>No Walk listed currently, please check websites, FaceBook and Bulletin for possible updates</i>	7 miles
Sun 04 May	13:30	<i>No Walk listed currently, please check websites, FaceBook and Bulletin for possible updates</i>	5 miles
Tue 06 May	10:00	<i>No Walk listed currently, please check websites, FaceBook and Bulletin for possible updates</i>	12 miles
Wed 07 May	10:00	Marston Thrift St. Peter and St. Paul Church Cranfield. MK43 ODR (SP 955 420). Colin B 07787 413957	7 miles
Sun 11 May	10:00	Barkway Parking Opposite Village Hall on B1368. SG8 8BS (TL 385 360). Marcus K 07754 100266 on the day	12 miles
Wed 14 May	10:00	Sundon Hills Country Park CP on Harlington Road. LU3 3PQ (TL 047 286). Ian J 07866 389443	7 miles
Thu 15 May	10:00	Maulden Woods Park in layby off A6 north of Clophill. MK45 3UZ (TL 073 394). Liz W 07762 430385	4.5 miles
Sun 18 May	10:00	Tring Reservoir CP pay and display lies immediately next to the Grand Union Canal and Startops End Reservoir. HP23 4LJ (SP 920 141). Tony D 07427 395334	7 miles
Sun 18 May	13:30	Tring Reservoir CP pay and display lies immediately next to the Grand Union Canal and Startops End Reservoir. HP23 4LJ (SP 920 141). Tony D 07427 395334	5 miles
Tue 20 May	10:00	Sundon Hills Country Park CP on Harlington Road. LU3 3PQ (TL 047 286). Tom C 07743 128645	12 miles

Wed 21 May	10:00	Luton Inspire: Luton Sports Village, Butterfield Green Road. LU2 8DD (TL 105 243). Brian R 07779 833586	7 miles
Fri 23 May	09:25	Bus Walk Flitwick to Flitton Bedford Bus Station, stand A for the 44 bus to Flitwick at 9:35. Alight at stop adj. Ivel Way, Flitwick at 10:32 (MK45 1ER/TL 040 350). MK40 1LT (TL 047 499). Antony C 07857 890829	8 miles
Sun 25 May	08:30	Capital Ring Wimbledon Park to Boston Manor Meet at Bedford Railway Station 8.47 train to Blackfriars, change to District line to Wimbledon Park. Railcard/Group Saver £19.70, for those wishing to join at Wimbledon Park Station, please let Tony know. The walk can be left after 6 miles at Richmond. MK40 1DS (TL 041 497). Tony S 07745 655938 on the day	11 miles
Wed 28 May	10:00	Woburn CP opposite St Mary's church. MK17 9PG (SP 951 331). Phil C 07747 655557	7 miles
Thu 29 May	10:00	Woburn Car park opposite St Mary's church. MK17 9PG (SP 951 331). Jan W 07895 045410	4.5 miles
Sun 01Jun	10:00	Bow Brickhill Pavilion Car Park, Rushmere Close. MK17 9JB (SP 905 348). Sandra A 07789 777060	7 miles
Sun 01 Jun	13:30	Bow Brickhill Pavilion Car Park, Rushmere Close. MK17 9JB (SP 905 348). Sandra A 07789 777060	5 miles
Tue 03 Jun	10:00	Steppingley Meet outside Steppingley church. Park in Church End or Rectory Rd. MK45 5AU (TL 011 354). Tony & Karen A 07875 210926	12 miles
Wed 04 Jun	10:00	Ickleford Ickleford Sports and Social Club, Chambers Lane. SG5 3YA (TL 180 318). John N 07950 708087	7 miles
Sun 08 Jun	10:00	Codicote Parking John Clements Playing Field, opposite Church Bury Rd off Hight St. SG4 8XY (TL 218 187). Marcus K 07754 100266 on the day	12 miles
Wed 11 Jun	10:00	Olney Long Stay CP. East St. parallel to High St. MK46 4DH (SP 891 516). Dave B 07796 178659	7 miles
Thu 12 Jun	10:00	Harrold Odell Country Park Meet in the CP. MK43 7DS (SP 956 566). Nick M 07803 125876	5 miles
Sun 15 Jun	10:00	St Neots Riverside CP. PE19 7SA (TL 179 460). Roy C 07784 208997 on the day	7 miles

Sun 15 Jun	13:30	St Neots Riverside CP. PE19 7SA (TL 179 460). Roy C 07784 208997 on the day	5 miles
Tue 17 Jun	10:00	Weston (nr Baldock) Holy Trinity Church CP. SG4 7DJ (TL 266 299). Antony C 07857 890829 on the day only	12 miles
Wed 18 Jun	10:00	Milton Keynes Campbell Park Canalside CP. MK9 4AD (SP 867 399). Bob W 07474 303545	7 miles
Fri 20 Jun	09:30	Bus Walk Moggerhanger to Bedford Bedford Bus Station, for no. 73 bus. Alight at The Guinea, Moggerhanger at 9:57. Walk back to Bedford. MK40 1LT (TL 047 499). Jan W 07895 045410	7 miles
Sun 22 Jun	10:00	Stoke Hammond Three Locks Picnic Site. LU7 ODS (SP 893 283). Bob & Celia W 07474 303545	12 miles
Wed 25 Jun	10:00	Woburn CP opposite St Mary's church. MK17 9PG (SP 951 331). Jon L 07854 240366	7 miles
Thu 26 Jun	10:00	Kempston Mill Use the small CP or park considerately on nearby streets. MK42 7FB (TL 024 476) Stephanie W 07712 341582	4 miles
Sun 29 Jun	10:00	Anglesey Holidays	
Sun 29 Jun	13:30	Anglesey Holidays	
Tue 01 Jul	10:00	Silsoe Park Avenue, near Church. MK45 4EH (TL 082 356). Tony & Karen A 07875 210926	12 miles
Wed 02 Jul	10:00	Bedford Mowsbury Park CP, Kimbolton Road. MK41 8YR (TL 060 528). Dave B 07796 178659	7 miles
Sun 06 Jul	10:00	Barton Old Road, near Recreation Ground. MK45 4LD (TL 083 304). Tom C 07743 128 645	12 miles
Wed 09 Jul	10:00	St Ives Park & Ride CP, Meadow Lane. PE27 4LG (TL 319 709). Bridget C 07807 931274	7 miles
Thu 10 Jul	10:0	Milton Ernest Interest Walk Garden Centre, Park at the far end. (A 2 hour walk). MK44 1SH (TL 014 561). Barry I 07860 348347	3 miles
Sun 13 Jul	10:00	Leighton Buzzard Tiddenfoot Waterside CP. LU7 2AE (SP 912 239). Sandra A 077789 777060	7 miles
Sun 13 Jul	13:30	Leighton Buzzard Tiddenfoot Waterside CP. LU7 2AE (SP 912 239). Sandra A 077789 77706	5 miles
Tue 15 Jul	10:00	Wilstead CP in Whitworth Way. MK45 3JN (TL 066 435). Graham B 07399 881460	12 miles

Wed 16 Jul	10:00	Roe Green, near Sandon Rushden Road, south east from Cricket Pavilion. SG9 0QF (TL 314 336). Antony C 07857 890829	7 miles
Fri 18 Jul	08:45	Bus Walk NBHT Extension Harrold to Wymington Meet at Harrold Country Park CP. Catch the no.25 bus outside The Institute at 9:02 to Wymington. Walk back to Harrold via Farndish. Cafe stop at Podington. MK43 7DS (SP 956 566). Roy C 07784 208997	8 miles
Sun 20 Jul	10:00	Stotfold Riverside recreation ground CP, Malthouse Lane. SG5 4RY (TL 222 373). John N 07950 708087	12 miles
Wed 23 Jul	10:00	Langford Yomp, Chomp and Roll-up. Village Hall car park, Mill Lane. SG18 9QY (TL 184 412). Tony S 07745 655938	7 miles
Thu 24 Jul	10:00	Bromham Mill Mill car park. MK43 8LP (TL 010 507). Rachel B 07772 462803 on the day only	5 miles
Sun 27 Jul	10:00	Barton Old Road, near Recreation Ground. MK45 4LD (TL 083 304). Tom C 07743 128645	7 Miles
Sun 27 Jul	13:30	Barton Old Road, near Recreation Ground. MK45 4LD (TL 083 304). Tom C 07743 128645	5 miles
Tue 29 Jul	10:00	Letchworth Radwell Meadows Country Park CP, off Nortonbury Lane. SG6 1AN (TL 233 349). John N 07950 708087	12 miles
Wed 30 Jul	10:00	Ashridge Estate Visitor Centre, near Bridgewater Monument. HP4 1LT (SP 970 130). Jon L 07854 240366	7 miles
Fri 01 Aug	08:45	Bus Walk NBHT Ext Melchbourne to Wymington Meet at Harrold Country Park CP. Catch the no.25 bus outside The Institute at 9:02 to Melchbourne. Walk to Wymington via Knotting and Souldrop. Return to Harrold on no.25 bus at 14:50. MK43 7DS (SP 956 566). Roy C 07784 208997	7.5 miles
Sun 03 Aug	10:00	Woburn CP opposite St Mary's church. MK17 9PG (SP 950 332). Linda M 07885 181422	12 miles
Wed 06 Aug	10:00	Riseley Park near the Fox and Hounds PH. MK44 1DT (TL 039 626). Steve A 07802 279486	7 miles
Thu 07 Aug	10:00	Flitwick Moor Nature Reserve Park at end of bumpy track off Maulden Road, turn opposite 'Berry' factory. MK45 5BZ (TL 045 353). Antony C 07857 890829	4 miles
Sun 10 Aug	10:00	Aldbury Parking for Church Farm Cafe, Station Road. Please consider purchasing refreshments from the Cafe if you use the car park. HP23 5RS (SP 961 124). Sandra A 07789 777060	7 miles

WALK BEDFORDSHIRE AND BEYOND

Sun 10 Aug	13:30	Aldbury Parking for Church Farm Cafe, Station Road. Please consider purchasing refreshments from the Cafe if you use the car park. HP23 5RS (SP 961 124). Sandra A 07789 777060	5 miles
Tue 12 Aug	10:00	Flitwick Meet outside St Peter & Pauls Church, Church Rd. Park in Church Rd. MK45 1AE (TL 029 342). Tony & Karen A 07875 210926	12 miles
Wed 13 Aug	10:00	Turvey Layby on A428 north of river. MK43 8EW (SP 937 523). Sue T 07849 827049	7 Miles
Fri 15 Aug	09:00	Bus Walk NBHT Ext Riseley to Upper Dean Meet at Bedford Bus Station to catch bus no. 28 to Riseley at 9:10. Walk to Upper Dean via Melchbourne, Yelden and Shelton. Catch bus no. 28 at 13:49 to return to Bedford. MK40 1LT (TL 047 499). Roy C 07784 208997	7.5 Miles
Sun 17 Aug	10:00	Kimbolton High Street, near Church. PE28 0HN (TL 099 679). Mark & Carolyn L 07740 684923	12 miles
Wed 20 Aug	10:00	Ickleford CP by the entrance to Ickleford Sports & Social Club, Chambers Lane. SG5 3YA (TL 181 317). Antony C 07857 890829	7 miles
Thu 21 Aug	10:00	Bromham Chestnut Avenue car park. MK43 8HP (SP 996 513). Sue T 07849 827049	5 miles
Sun 24 Aug	10:00	Pegsdon Layby near gates to Hexton Manor. SG5 3JS (TL 118 302). Tom C 07743 128645	7 miles
Sun 24 Aug	13:30	Pegsdon Layby near gates to Hexton Manor. SG5 3JS (TL 118 302). Tom C 07743 128645	5 miles
Tue 26 Aug	10:00	Harrold Harrold Odell Country Park CP. MK43 7DS (SP 956 566). David R & Jack 07305 561430	12 miles
Wed 27 Aug	10:00	Rowney Warren Wood Car park at Sandy Lane, off A600 NW of Shefford. SG17 5QB (TL124 404). Marcus K 07754 100266	7 Miles
Fri 29 Aug	09:00	Bus Walk NBHT Ext Upper Dean to Little Staughton Meet at Bedford Bus Station to catch bus no. 28 to Upper Dean at 9:10. Walk to Little Staughton via Pertenhall. Return to Bedford on bus no.28A at 12:37. MK40 1LT (TL 047 499). Roy C 07784 208997	7.5 miles
Sun 31 Aug	10:00	Waterbeach-Ely Meet on Green opposite Chapel, Return Train £2.75 with card. CB25 9HR (TL 495 655). Roger M 07989 307046	12 miles
Wed 03 Sep	10:00	Sandy Town centre CP. SG19 1AG (TL 174 492). Colin B 07787 413957	7 miles

Thu 04 Sep	10:00	Dunton Near the church (parking also on Boot Lane). SG18 4RS (TL 237 442). Jan W 07895 045410	5 miles
Sun 07 Sep	10:00	Walking Festival Woburn CP opposite St Mary's church. MK17 9PG (SP 950 332). Sandra A 07789 777060	7 miles
Sun 07 Sep	13:30	Walking Festival Woburn CP opposite St Mary's church. MK17 9PG (SP 950 332). Sandra A 07789 777060	5 miles
Mon 08 Sep	10:00	Walking Festival Stewartby Interest Walk Village Hall (a 2.5 hour walk). MK43 9LU (TL 019 424). Barry I 07860 348347	3 miles
Tue 09 Sep	10:00	Walking Festival Barton Old Road, near Recreation Ground. MK45 4LD (TL 083 304). Tom C 07743 128645	12 miles
Wed 10 Sep	10:00	Walking Festival Ampthill Park West CP. MK45 2GU (TL 024 382). Colin B 07787 413957	7 miles
Thu 11 Sep	10:00	Walking Festival. Aspley Guise Recreation ground CP located immediately to the right of Woburn Sands Golf Club. MK17 8DX (SP 937 358). Nick M 07803 125876	5 miles
Fri 12 Sep	12.30	Walking Festival Bus Walk NBHT Ext Little Staughton to Roxton Meet at Bedford Bus Station, stand Q to catch bus no.28A to Little Staughton at 12.50. Walk to Roxton via Honeydon and Chawston. Return to Bedford on bus no. 905 at 17.43. MK40 1LT (TL 047 499). Tony S 07745 655938	7.5 Miles
Sat 13 Sep	07:45	Walking Festival Greensand Walk Challenge Meet at Ampthill Park West CP nearest A507. Board a coach or taxi to transfer to the start point near Tesco in Leighton Buzzard. MK45 2HX (TL 024 381). Roy C 07849 827049	19 miles
Sun 14 Sep	07:45	Walking Festival Greensand Walk Challenge Meet at Ampthill Park West CP nearest A507. Board a coach or taxi to transfer to the start point Gamlingay Cinqes. MK45 2HX (TL 024 381). Roy C 07743 128 645	21 miles
Sun 14 Sep	10:00	Walking Festival No Walk listed currently, please check websites, FaceBook and Bulletin for possible updates	miles
Sun 14 Sep	13:30	Walking Festival No Walk listed currently, please check websites, FaceBook and Bulletin for possible updates	miles

WE WALK ON:

Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays,
occasional Saturdays and Summer evenings.

New walkers are always made welcome

HOW TO BOOK IVW TRIPS...

To book and make payments to Ivel Valley please email the organiser and wait for confirmation before paying.

This avoids overbooking trips or events when we have limited numbers availability.

TO PAY

Bank: Unity Trust Bank
Account Payee: Ivel Valley Social Account
Sort code: 60-83-01
Account No: 20201274
Reference: Please give the name of the individual activity you are booking/paying for.



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