



RAMBLERS

Brentwood

Newsletter

December 2025 - March 2026

Chair's Notes

Hi everyone, it's soon AGM time again. When you read this Newsletter, the Committee will be preparing for the 2025 AGM again at Blackmore Village Hall on Saturday 29 November, which we hope will be attended by all members. I intend to lead the morning walk beforehand, as I did last year, with the hope that the path is not partially blocked, as it was last year, even though cleared the previous week by our path clearing team.

The AGM, starting after lunch, will be my last as Chair because my 3-year term comes to a close this year. Fortunately, we have a candidate for the Chair to replace me and therefore, if elected, Brentwood Ramblers will continue to be a major group in Essex. Our Treasurer Pat Woods is retiring after 18 years of excellent service and I'm sure, like me, you all wish to thank her and wish her the best for the future; thank you Pat.

Our current leaders have risen to the challenge of new guidelines set by the RA either to self-certify as a leader (if they've led 12 walks in the last 3 years); or to complete some on-line training. If you'd like some help with the latter, please let me know.

Members' First Aid courses are in the pipeline for anyone interested and help to login to complete the Leaders Certification will continue if needed.

Finally, I wish to thank all the Committee for their continued hard work in producing the group holidays and the Newsletters and Walks Programmes, along with a safe and organised path clearing team. It takes many hours of input to maintain the high standards of walks etc that the group has come to expect over the years. With that in mind, enjoy and cherish the walks arranged by your Committee Walk Secretaries and the certified leaders.

Brian Scroggs

News and Views

John's Jaunts

I have always loved the West Country ever since childhood holidays there. The idea of walking the whole of the 630-mile South-West Coast path from Minehead to Poole felt out of reach when I was working, so when I retired I started thinking about it and in 2021 I decided I'd go for it. I booked a mobile home in North Devon for the September and told friends about it, asking whether anyone would be interested in sharing the accommodation and meeting up in the evenings. Every trip, I've had someone come with me who didn't mind doing their own thing during the day; I think I've had 6 different friends share the various weeks with me. I didn't want to stay in a different place each night and have luggage transported, as it's expensive and, if the weather is bad, you'd have to either lose a day or get drenched. Self-catering is very flexible but using

my car and buses to get around takes a bit of planning such as where you are going to park each day and looking at bus timetables. However, it all worked out! If possible, I'd park near to the end of the walk and get the bus as near as I could to the start point. Sometimes it had to be the other way round, and it does mean you tend to walk more miles than if you stayed at B&Bs each night and simply carried on each day. On a few stretches there is no public transport, so I had to either walk a section there and back, or do a circular walk.

Out of the many walking days on the path, there were 2 scary incidents, both in the same week! On the St Ives to Zennor stretch I witnessed an accident on the path. An inexperienced older lady fell and rolled into a very muddy ditch. In the commotion she took my mobile out of my hand and it ended up in the ditch with her! She looked like a mud wrestler! She'd cut her head a bit, but seemed to be fine, just a bit shaken up. Luckily, she was with a friend and a group of people came from the other direction and helped her back to St. Ives. (Fortunately, my mobile did dry out later and started working again . . . phew!!)

Three days later, the weather forecast was totally wrong. A promising day turned wet about a third of the way round from Porthcurno to Penzance, on what is probably the most difficult section of the whole 630 miles! I was almost rock climbing a number of times and in the rain too, plus no-one around. It was scary. (And I was bitten by a wasp on the way there too!) I was so glad to finally reach the road outside Penzance.

Four years and 10 trips later, on 1 October 2025 I reached the finish line near Poole. Six hundred and thirty miles behind me, and lots of long hard days, but it has been well worth it. I've loved every section and now really have a taste for doing more long-distance paths in the future.

Camino anyone??

John Gregory

Car Sharing

It's been brought to my attention that we all could be helping to save the planet by offering more car sharing. Not only is it more economic and sustainable but it's also more user-friendly and you have a chat on the way to the walk! Some start points are a bit tight on space, so it makes more sense to reduce the number of cars. As a passenger, it is expected that you make a contribution to petrol please.

Give it a try!! Many thanks

Dianne Ingram

Footpath Working Party - The Brentwood Bramblers

Hi All

This year at the time of writing we have worked a total of 23 days, completing so far this year:

19 x Footpath clearances

3 x Fitted new way marker posts

4 x Serviced way marker posts

2 x Bridge repairs

1 x Boardwalk repair

2 x Removed tree obstructions

I would like to thank all the team (except one) for their hard work this year. We are often complimented by the public and the PROW officer for our work, and it's nice to be appreciated.

It's interesting what you find; recently, as pictured, we came across this empty skull (I mean the Muntjak not Mark).

Photo: Don Clark



Don Clark

Past Events

The Nelson Mandela Way

The Nelson Mandela Way, now known as the Gerald Colton Way in honour of a founder member of Hampstead Ramblers, is a 66-mile long-distance walk, which starts from outside the Festival Hall on the South Bank in London, finishing at Wendover in Buckinghamshire.

It was originally called the Nelson Mandela Way because it links the statue of Nelson Mandela outside the Festival Hall to the monument on top of Coombe Hill which commemorates the men from Buckinghamshire who died in the Boer War.

Stage 1

On 2 February 2020 Colin Raven led a group of Brentwood Ramblers on the first stage of the Nelson Mandela Way. We walked through a number of London parks including Hyde Park, Regents Park and Hampstead Heath.

Stage 2

Covid lockdowns, rail engineering works and the weather all conspired against Colin and it wasn't until 19 March 2023 that he led us on the second stage of the walk from Hampstead Heath to Totteridge and Whetstone.

Stages 3-5

2024 saw Colin lead stages 3-5 from Totteridge and Whetstone into Hertfordshire finishing at Rickmansworth.

Stages 6-8

In 2025 Colin has continued the walk moving from Hertfordshire into Buckinghamshire and the Chilterns. We were treated to some beautiful scenery walking through lovely towns such as Old Amersham and its amazing memorial gardens, Little and Great Missenden and finally onto Coombe Hill, the highest viewpoint in the Chilterns where we had panoramic views of the Aylesbury Vale, despite the ongoing construction of HS2.

Little did any of us know when we started out in February 2020 that it wouldn't be until 20 September 2025 that Colin would lead us on the final leg of the walk.

A big thanks to Colin for leading this trail and persevering with it despite all the challenges he faced and to those who completed all 8 stages. And of course, for the celebratory Indian meals after each stage of the walk.

Paula Howard

Colin Raven's adventurous walk from Rise Park, Tuesday 16 September





Bookable and Forthcoming Events

AGM Saturday 29 November

Christmas Lunch - Friday 5 December

Pre-Christmas festive walk and social - Tuesday 16 December

Brentwood Ramblers Holiday to Newcastle 2026 (7 nights)

Visit to Old Amersham - September 2026

I'm planning to lead a Sunday in Old Amersham for half and full day walkers in September 2026. This is intended to be like a coach trip but to use a train instead.

Amersham is at the northern end of the Metropolitan Tube Line, within the Freedom Pass and Oyster Zones.

There is a lot to see in Old Amersham and the surrounding countryside is very scenic. Old Amersham has served as a picturesque filming location for Downton Abbey, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1, as well as the TV series Midsomer Murders. Further details will be published in the April to July Newsletter.

Colin Raven

Brentwood Ramblers Holiday to Scarborough 2026 (4 nights)

Webmaster's Notes

We are currently developing a new feature within our website: the home page is now linked to our Facebook. This enables people without a Facebook account to view Facebook information and pictures from our website <https://brentwoodramblers.org.uk/>

Barry Sharpen

Footpath Secretary

As you will have seen from recent emails, the Essex Area Hub is up and running and regular quarterly zoom meetings have been set up which are open to all Ramblers, particularly those interested in footpaths matters. At present we are getting to grips with understanding the scale and nature of footpath problems that exist across Essex by examining the records that are maintained by Essex Highways PROW team. So far, we have used the AI system, developed by Ian Glen, to identify the location and type of problems in 3 areas – Brentwood, Epping and Tendring. The aim is for volunteers to feed back to the PROW team the up-to-date status and agree on the next steps. It is still early days; the AI system is still a prototype, however it is encouraging to note footpath problems are being fixed, particularly those affecting safety. If you have concerns about an outstanding footpath problem that has been reported on Essex Highways Tell Us site, please let me know.

On other matters – the National Grid proposal to build 184 km of electricity transmission lines between Norwich and Tilbury, is at the Statutory Consultation stage. Although there are many objections, it is expected construction will commence in 2027. Footpaths in Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex (195 footpaths) will be impacted. Brentwood will be largely unaffected. Elsewhere, the Lower Thames project is in doubt over funding constraints.

Closer to home, Brentwood Borough Council has issued a report showing potential development sites in and around the district. Also, a planning application has been submitted for a large-scale solar farm of 95.35 hectares, on agricultural green belt land at Fitzwalters Farm, Roman Road, Shenfield. (The land is north of the A12 and to the east and west of Hall Lane.) I still have to review the submission for its impact, if any, on the path network. If you have comments on the proposal that affect the paths, please respond to Brentwood DC now and copy me in.

PLEASE NOTE! *In view of the fact that occasionally we have had to cancel walks through adverse weather conditions and move a start point of another walk for other reasons PLEASE note our advice at the beginning of the programme and phone the leader of the walk if you have any doubts about it taking place. We do try to warn you of any changes via email, on the website or by announcements on walks, but it is not always possible to ensure that all our members are informed. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.*

Change of Address

If you move home, please remember to let **Ramblers** know: 020 7339 8500
ramblers@london.ramblers.org.uk

Health and Safety

Please see link to the Ramblers website <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/advice-for-walkers/safety-and-equipment/personal-safety.aspx>