

SUTTON AND WANDLE VALLEY NEWSLETTER

Members' Newsletter: Sept - Dec 2026



(Dancing Queens - Mid-Summer party)

Newsletter: September - December 2026

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter. I hope that members have had a good summer, and managed to enjoy the extraordinary and successive heatwaves the UK experienced. But there is no denying that the extreme weather definitely had an impact on our walks programme. Since May, I'm afraid 17 of our scheduled walks were cancelled. It was absolutely right that walks were cancelled as the temperature soared. It would have been dangerous to walk in those extremes. But it did mean that a lot of recces and other preparations on the part of our walk leaders were done in vain. And sadly our friends from London Blind Ramblers also cancelled their planned walk with us. They have to travel from all over London, and could not face London Transport in that heat! Hopefully, as we move into the cooler, autumnal weather, our members can get back out on the paths again. I know from talking to many members that they really missed the social interaction the walks offered and have welcome the return to a more active programme as autumn starts!

As a Group, we continue to attract new members. In January 2026 we had 420 members, at the end of August 2026 we had 431 members. Not all of our new members opt to walk with us. But we welcome those who do. And we still have 40 certified walk leaders, approved by Ramblers. Most of our walk leaders are now completely familiar with entering their walks on Walks Manager, and recently Ramblers have made one or two tweaks to the system, allowing walk leaders more autonomy and control over their walk entries. All our walk leaders now currently comply with the training requirements set by Ramblers (these will be re-visited again in 3 years). Meanwhile we still welcome new walk leaders and any members wanting to give leading a try are welcome to contact either a member of the committee or other walk leaders.

Committee members

Your committee remains the same as elected at the AGM in November. We still lack a Webmaster, and in November we will have other vacancies too (including Chair!). If anyone has the skills, and would like to volunteer, please do get in touch. Equally if you would like to volunteer as a walk leader, just talk to Barbara or any other committee member.

Chair	Barbara Pitts	07901 850918	chair@suttonwandleramblers.org.uk
Secretary	Liz Tadd	07905 827243	secretary@suttonwandleramblers.org.uk
Membership	Joya Cooke	07729 519971	membership@suttonwandleramblers.org.uk
Treasurer	Ian Heppell	07467 264617	treasurer@suttonwandleramblers.org.uk
Publicity	Mary Ward	07731 169318	publicity@suttonwandleramblers.org.uk
Footpaths	Sheelagh Donovan	07773 261875	footpaths@suttonwandleramblers.org.uk
Liaison	Jenny Kearney	07851 263949	updates@suttonwandleramblers.org.uk
Webmaster	Vacant		webmaster@suttonwandleramblers.org.uk
Social Sec	Jackie Deeks	07966 729802	social@suttonwandleramblers.org.uk
Member	Jan Recknell-Turner	8643 2400 078137 65439	janrt@suttonwandleramblers.org.uk recklessjan2@yahoo.com
Member	Alison Dines	8644 2250	alison@suttonwandleramblers.org.uk

DATES FOR DIARY 2026-2027

- 21 October:** Walk Leaders Meeting
- 26 November:** Tour of the Charterhouse
- 22 November:** Annual General Meeting
- 23 January:** New Year Lunch, Rubbing House
- 6 February:** Surrey Area AGM
- 16 March:** Tour with the Linnean Society of London
- 5 April:** Pewterer's Guildhall Visit

OUR PARTIES

As foretold in the last Newsletter, we held our Mid-Summer Party on 20 June. Marian and a small band of volunteers did a wonderful job in arranging it and it was a wonderful night. There was singing, **(some great dancing – see photo!)** a quiz, and lots of laughter and fun. And the food, provided on a bring and share basis by members, was, as ever, excellent. We hope to repeat it again next year if possible.



(Mid-Summer Party – photo by Barbara)

OUR SOCIAL EVENTS

We continue to host our monthly “Raves” at the “Old Bank” pub on the first Monday of every month. Plus, Jan continues to host her coffee mornings once a month at the Waterstone’s Café in Sutton. These are mainly aimed at our Members who are not walking as regularly with us anymore, but all are welcome. Please do come along if possible. They offer a good opportunity for catching up with old friends. Jenny continues to arrange some great outings for the Group (see Dates for Diaries). Our AGM is on 22 November with the option of lunch at the Robin Hood pub beforehand and we also plan to have our regular New Year Lunch at the Rubbing House on 23 January 2027.

COACH TRIPS

We have arranged two coach trips this year, Henley-on-Thames, and Eastbourne. Both were very popular. We do want to keep running the coach trips which we know are really enjoyed by many of our members. But we do sometimes struggle to find the walk leaders to take them on. We require 3 for each trip. If anyone would like to volunteer as a walk leader for the coach trips, please do talk to Jackie (it does mean you have to have the walk leader training). And a warning: we do need the coach trips to break even financially too. I'm afraid with what is happening to the price of fuel at the moment, we might have to increase prices next year.

CARSHALTON ECOFAIR



(Our stall at the Carshalton ECOFair = photo by Barbara)

We held our usual stall at the Carshalton ECOFair in August and a rota of members manned it throughout the day. We host the stand primarily to publicise Ramblers, but also to promote the benefits of walking generally. We also distribute a range of pamphlets from other organisations publicising walk routes. We certainly get a number of visitors interested in the literature. Whether this ever leads to new members for Ramblers, we never really know. But it's a fun thing to do!

Walkers

It is your responsibility to make sure you are fit enough for the walks. Please note that the descriptions of “Easy”, “Leisurely” and “Moderate” do NOT denote the **pace** of a walk! Check with the leader before if you are unsure. On a walk, alert the leader if you need to stop for a drink/rest. Do not lose sight of your leader. If you go ahead, the leader is not responsible for you. Note that on some walks the leaders still require you to book in advance to join a walk or eat in a pub. Check the walk description and contact the leader as requested. Do carry water and snacks, even if a pub lunch is planned. And please do not eat your own food in a pub or a café unless you have express permission to do so.

Also, please note that following our Walk Leaders Meeting in September 2025, when the Ramblers “Leaders’ Handbook” was discussed by leaders, it was decided that walk participants would be asked to provide their names and their contact details to the leader at the start of the walk. This was so that if a participant went missing during a walk, the leader could contact them to find out if they had simply dropped out, or if they were in difficulty. The lists will be destroyed at the end of the walk.

And finally, a request that all walkers turn up on time at the start of a walk and do not delay the leader. This is a courtesy to all our volunteer walk leaders and it is especially importantly nowadays as so many pubs require a leader to book for a pub lunch and state a time. Any delay impacts the leader on his scheduled time of arrival at a pub.

And do carry your ICE card. New, pocket-sized ICE cards are now available. Ask walk leaders or contact your Chair or Membership Secretary.

Walk Leaders

Prior to the actual walk, leaders are asked to put as much information as possible, as early as possible, on Walks Manager, and to check that there is no clash with other, similar walks.

And a reminder that **Risk Assessments** (to be shared with walkers) are still necessary, even though written risk registers no longer need to be completed and kept.

And finally, a reminder that all new walk leaders must now undertake online training (provided by Ramblers) before they can lead walks. The online training (comprising two online modules) is very straightforward and easy. It is not a test. And please do remember to send your walk numbers to Barbara.

**IT IS UP TO YOU TO ENSURE YOU ARE FIT FOR THE WALK(S)
YOU ATTEND AS DESCRIBED BELOW!
DESCRIPTIONS DO NOT DENOTE PACE!**

EASY – walks for anyone who does not have a mobility difficulty or specific health problem or is seriously unfit.

LEISURELY – walks for reasonably fit people with a little country walking experience.

MODERATE – walks for people with country walking experience and a good level of fitness. May include some steep paths and may be at a brisk pace.

[1] Very important. Grades are provided as a general guide only; if you have any doubt about your ability for a particular walk, please contact the leader in advance. You should also consider the distance of the walk, the terrain and the possibility of bad weather, which can make a walk more difficult than planned. If you're unsure of your fitness level, try a short and easy walk first. Leaders may refuse to accept participants who, in their opinion, are inadequately equipped or unfit.

[2] For your own and others' safety please follow any instructions from walks leaders. Though walking is inherently one of the safest outdoor activities, no activity is completely without risk, and it is your responsibility to behave sensibly and to minimise the potential for accidents to occur.

[3] Where a public house is used, walkers should not consume their own food and drink on the premises, unless the landlord has given express permission. Please remove or cover muddy boots when going into a pub.

[4] Meeting points for car sharing are shown for the majority of walks not using public transport. This is either Belmont Bus Terminus (BBT) which is situated at the junction of Downs Road and Commonsides Close, Belmont,. Those without cars can usually be picked up here, but we regret that this cannot be guaranteed as we do not know who is attending a walk. When car sharing, drivers often appreciate a voluntary contribution from passengers. As a guide, 15 pence per mile per passenger is generally considered reasonable. **Please cover or remove & stow muddy boots in cars!**

[5] Dogs must be kept under control and must be kept on a lead across farmland and whenever requested by the leader. Please also do not pet or feed any animals you may encounter e.g. when crossing farmland. Best to keep well away from them!

[6] In really bad weather, or when the forecast is poor, e.g. fog, ice, snow, high wind and torrential rain, etc., the leader should be contacted to see if the walk is taking place.

[7] Please check the train times if you use the train to a walk (08457 484950)

[8] Picnic denoted in the walk details indicates that a pub might not be available. Pub means there may not be a suitable place to eat your own food. Pub/picnic means that you should have a choice.