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- **Arrow Valley Trail Walk.**
Thanks to Sue Nesbit for reporting on a 35+ mile 'stroll' crossing the Welsh border.
- **Out and About.**
Jan Meacham describes things to see and do at Slimbridge and in the Clee Hills
- **Notice Board.**
June and July attendance figures.

Luckily Dad had a built-in GPS- Good Pub Sensor.



We're back!

After a short break for the month of July, the Newsletter returns with our usual 'Out and About' feature and an article, including photographs, from one of our walkers who took part in the Arrow Valley Trail Walk. A good number of the Stride and Stroll walkers took part and it seems that a great time was had by all, including **Marie Bourne** who sent this message:

'I wish to express my thanks to Sue & Alan Humphries, Kathy Brown and Mike Jewkes for their excellent planning of the walking holiday. The accommodation, meals and walks were all first class. Their efforts were appreciated and thoroughly enjoyed.'

Let everyone know about your best walks by sending text and/or photographs (with descriptions) for inclusion in the Newsletter. All will be gratefully received. The picture to the left was my Father's day card - I thought it was worth sharing.

The AB group organised a 4 day walk called the **River Arrow Valley trail**. I thought this would be a nice stroll along the river bank!!

We were based at The Burton Hotel Kington for the 35 mile linear walk.



After dropping our belongings off at the hotel we set off in cars to the starting point of the walk over the Welsh border at Gwauncestre. Just as we left the cars, the heavens opened. Off we set up hills to find the source of the River Arrow; once found we headed over the moorland towards Newchurch, our end point for the day. At the church in the village tea/coffee/squash and biscuits were advertised for walkers, a welcome end to our walk.

Next day we returned to Newchurch but not having tea/coffee in the church as we were keen to get on with our walk. The walk started up another big hill, the path being part of Offa's Dyke. Once at the top we were rewarded with a 360 degree view of the Brecon Beacons, Hay Bluff and Clee Hill. We continued up and down through fields and hamlets, getting glimpses of the river now and then, and finishing the day in Kington.



Next morning raring to go we started from the hotel crossing the River Arrow, walking along an old drover's road and railway line. We saw quite a bit of the river this day and ended up in a lovely black and white village in Herefordshire - Pembridge.

After changing our footwear we staggered to the tearoom and were greeted by a lovely choice of cakes. Someone who shall remain nameless - (see picture) had an iced coffee too.



Our last day started from Pembridge, following the river across fields to another black and white village, Eardisland where the villagers were doing their weekly tidy up of the village flower borders, very picturesque. We continued through fields, one in particular having some very inquisitive cattle who were gently herded away from our stile. We stopped for lunch under the shade of a very large oak tree to eat our sandwiches which were prepared by a shop in Kington called 'Grumpy Grampies'. He wasn't grumpy at all but very accommodating and I can thoroughly recommend the shop. A short stroll found us arriving in Monkland for a cuppa in the Cheese Café. From here we crossed the busy A44 into a farm where we were greeted by a very friendly cocker spaniel who now became our leader. He directed us over several fields locating the gates for us to pass through or stiles to cross and at a bridge across the River Arrow he said goodbye and scampered back across the fields to his home. Only a few miles were left to the end point in Leominster where the River Arrow joined the River Lugg. We said our goodbyes and headed home.

The walk was advertised in the trail book as 35 miles but one of our group tracked our walk and calculated we had walked 38 miles.

On behalf of the walkers I would like to thank the Fab Four walk leaders, Sue, Alan, Mike and Kathy for all the hard work that they put into the planning and pre-walks so that we could all have an enjoyable time.



The Hotel was wonderful too, very nice rooms, a great choice of food at breakfast and dinner, use of the facilities was included - swimming pool, jacuzzi, steam and sauna.

Some of us even had a go at the local quoits game but we could not quite get to grips with the scoring.

Editor's note

Thanks to Sue Nesbit for describing The Arrow Valley Trail walk and to Sue Humphries for providing most of the pictures.

RB





Out and About



WHERE TO GO WILD IN AUGUST

LOCATION

Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust [WWT]
Slimbridge
Gloucestershire GL2 7BT

WHY VISIT?

As well as their collection of ducks, geese and swans, visiting in August, is an opportunity to set yourself up in a hide and look for passage migrant birds. These are wild birds, which stop somewhere for a short time, during their seasonal migration. The stop, enables them to rest and feed, ready for the next stage of their journey.

Use a field guide to look for the following wading birds which are passage migrants:



GREEN SANDPIPER

Breeds in wooded areas of Scandinavia through to eastern Europe.

Usually does not build a nest, but uses the old nest of another bird, for example Jay or Wood Pigeon; may even use an old squirrel drey.

Some remain in the UK during the winter, others move further south to Portugal and Africa.



RUFF

Breeds in low-lying grassy marshes of northern Europe. Adult males in their breeding plumage, have a ruff of feathers around their neck and head tufts, which vary in colour and pattern.

Adult females [Reeves], lack a ruff and head tufts. The majority of adult males, lose their breeding plumage when migrating and resemble the adult females. Some remain in the UK during the winter, others move to the Mediterranean and Africa.

You may be lucky to see an adult male still in breeding plumage, when on migration.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER



RINGED PLOVER



Know the difference between the Ringed Plover and Little Ringed Plover:

Ringed Plover - larger than the Little Ringed Plover, with orange-yellow legs, an orange bill with a black tip and no yellow eye ring.

Little Ringed Plover - smaller, with flesh-coloured legs, a mainly black bill and a yellow eye ring.

British bred Ringed Plovers, usually stay in the UK during the winter or are short-distance migrants. Most Little Ringed Plovers move to Africa, spending the UK winter, between the Sahara Desert and the Equator.

Slimbridge has many perching birds [Passerines], which nest on site. Look out for the Reed Warbler and Sedge Warbler, which are summer visitors to the UK. Both birds build their nest close to water, in reed beds or vegetation adjacent to water; they spend the UK winter in tropical Africa and will be preparing for the journey in August.

Use a Field Guide to identify the Reed and Sedge Warblers, noting that their song is distinctive:
Reed Warbler---repetitive chrr chrr chrr; - Sedge Warbler-----rasping/grating tchrrrr.

Sedge Warblers feed intensively before migrating, storing energy as fat. They consume large quantities of aphids, doubling their mass, so that they can migrate to tropical Africa in one single flight.



Reed Warblers do not show such a large pre-migration gain in mass, as they have a fuelling stop in Iberia, before crossing the Mediterranean and Sahara to tropical Africa.





Out and About (continued)



LOCATION

Clee Hills
Shropshire

Parking for Titterstone Clee: Viewpoint/picnic site alongside A4177 at eastern end of Clee Hill village
Grid Ref: SO594753 Nearest Postcode: SY8 3QE

Old quarry at the end of Dhustone Lane, turning off the A4177 on Angelbank
Grid Ref: SO594776 Nearest Postcode: SY8 3PW

Parking for the Brown Clee: Alongside the minor road, signed Abdon/Tugford, turning off the B4364
[Cleobury North] for Ditton Priors.
Grid Ref: SO607873 Nearest Postcode: WV16 6TB

Titterstone Clee [1749 feet/533m] is capped by the igneous rock Dolerite, which is quarried to be used as aggregate. The Carboniferous Limestone, clays, ironstone and coal deposits of the Clee Hills, have also been exploited.

Brown Clee is located approximately 5 miles north of Titterstone Clee and shares the same geology.



Former Quarry workings on Titterstone Clee



Trig point at the summit of Brown Clee

Brown Clee consists of:
Clee Burf [1675 feet/510m] and
Abdon Burf [1770 feet/540m]
The latter is the highest point in Shropshire.

WHY VISIT?

There are many footpaths on the Clee Hills, including the Shropshire Way. Walking from late July into August, is an opportunity to see the flowering display of Heathers and fruiting Bilberry.



Ling Heather [*Calluna vulgaris*]- small, bell-shaped, purple flowers in spikes.

The leaves are small and overlapping in opposite rows



Bell Heather [*Erica cinerea*] - larger flowers than Ling Heather, reddish-purple, sac like flowers in clusters.

The small, narrow leaves, have inrolled margins.



Cross-Leaved Heath [*Erica tetralix*]

Similar to Bell Heather but has greyish leaves which are paler beneath, fringed with hairs; there are whorls of four leaves around the stem [leaves wrap around the stem].



Fruiting Bilberry [*Vaccinium myrtillus*]

A member of the Heather family of plants, known by many names: in Scotland the Blaeberry; Wales the Whimberry and in some parts of England as the Whortleberry. A low growing plant, with spherical, blue-black edible berries.

Other places to see flowering wild Heathers and fruiting Bilberries:

Long Mynd---Church Stretton area of Shropshire;
Stiperstones National Nature Reserve and SSSI---parking at the Bog Visitor Centre Grid Ref: SO356979
Nearest Postcode: SY5 0NG



Notice Board

June and July attendances

Saturday walk date	Thursday numbers		June 2016					Saturday Totals	Weekly Totals
			A	AB	B	C	D		
04/06/16	43	Saturday	10	14	14	13	18	69	112
11/06/16	44	Saturday	11	18	6	9	20	64	108
18/06/16	28	Saturday	13	19	10	15	15	72	100
25/06/16	37	Saturday	16	13	15	10	21	75	112
	18							0	18
Totals	170		50	64	45	47	74	280	450
Average miles per person	0.5		7.0	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.0	Saturday Mileage	1282.5
Mileage per Group	85.0		350.0	320.0	202.5	188.0	222.0	Month's total Mileage	1367.5

Saturday walk date	Thursday numbers		July 2016					Saturday Totals	Weekly Totals
			A	AB	B	C	D		
02/07/16		Saturday	11	15	15	16	17	74	74
09/07/16	46	Saturday	10	16	8	17	13	64	110
16/07/16	53	Saturday	15	22	22	13	12	84	137
23/07/16	38	Saturday	13	11	14	12	25	75	113
30/07/16	41	Saturday	20	23	23	18	41	125	166
Totals	178		69	87	82	76	108	422	600
Average miles per person	0.5		7.0	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.0	Saturday Mileage	1915.0
Mileage per Group	89.0		483.0	435.0	369.0	304.0	324.0	Month's total Mileage	2004.0