STAR LETTER



Festival walks took Judith to her namesake village and the famous Box Hill stepping stones

The best fest

Browsing walking festivals online, I stumbled across what turned out to be a gem: Mole Valley Ramblers Spring Walks Festival. New to walking festivals, but a keen walker and Ramblers member, on 26 April I set off for a 10-day holiday in the Surrey Hills with trepidation and my tent. I arrived to such a warm welcome, my fears and apprehensions instantly evaporated. We headed out for a 16km/10-mile walk up Leith Hill, through beautiful rhododendron and bluebell woods, and by the end I'd been made an honorary Mole with a member's badge.

The rest of the programme had something for everyone, from leisurely 5.5km/3½-mile strolls to 26km/16-mile strenuous walks, and even evening walks with head torches. The week culminated on the bank holiday Monday when four groups of walkers converged in Holmbury St Mary for live music, cake, Morris dancers, more cake, awards and even more cake, followed by fond farewells to new friends. Joining this festival was one of the best decisions I've ever made, walking over 240km/150 miles and climbing 4,600m/15,000ft, laughing like I've never laughed before, making lifelong friends and having the holiday of a lifetime. What a wonderful way for a Ramblers group to showcase their area. A huge thank you (especially to festival organiser Henri) from your 'Honorary Mole'.

Judith Wotton, Suffolk