



**Len Banister:**

Former, Founder and then Chair of the Greater London Ramblers' Forum, Len Banister is a prolific route deviser and author of guides to walking routes.

Notes from the podcast interview by Andrew Stuck: Interviewed in October 2010, and published in June 2011 on <http://talkingwalking.net>

Greater London Ramblers' Forum: <http://www.rglf.org.uk/>

Walk London: <http://www.walklondon.org.uk/>

The Loop: <http://www.walklondon.org.uk/route.asp?R=5>

Is one of six strategic walking routes for London, the others being:

Capital Ring: <http://www.walklondon.org.uk/route.asp?R=1>

Thames Path: <http://www.walklondon.org.uk/route.asp?R=6>

Lea Valley Walk: <http://www.walklondon.org.uk/route.asp?R=4>

The Green Chain: <http://www.walklondon.org.uk/route.asp?R=2>

Jubilee Walkway: <http://www.walklondon.org.uk/route.asp?R=3>

Ramblers' 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary <http://www.ramblers75.org.uk/> – the Greater London Ramblers undertook to walk the London Loop.

Ramblers and the Olympics: <http://www.innerlondonramblers.org.uk/olympics.html>

Inner London Boroughs – definitive mapping of rights of way: <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Campaigns+Policy/maplondon+FAQs>

Walthamstow conservation area: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walthamstow\\_Village](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walthamstow_Village)

Ramblers already has many thousands of volunteers, many contribute to working parties, overseen by local councils, that maintain rights of way – why not join in: [http://www.ramblers.org.uk/rights\\_of\\_way/volunteer\\_opportunities/get\\_involved](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/rights_of_way/volunteer_opportunities/get_involved)

Len is a regular contributor of walking routes to Country Walking Magazine: <https://www.livefortheoutdoors.com/countrywalking/>

An example of one of Len's walks for Country Walking Magazine: <http://www.livefortheoutdoors.com/upload/pdf/Paglesham-Churchend.pdf>

He devises bespoke walking routes for example a heritage trail for Leighton Orient Football Club – the Orient Line: <https://www.leytonorient.com/news/2015/may/orient-line-heritage-walk-on-sunday/>

His books include:

Essex: A Dog walkers guide: <http://www.countrysidebooks.co.uk/book-catalogue-book-details.php?book=1851>

Drive & Stroll in Essex: <http://www.countrysidebooks.co.uk/book-catalogue-book-details.php?book=1743>

Essex Year-Round Walks: <https://countrysidebooks.co.uk/collections/essex-1/products/essex-year-round-walks-1?variant=34064993101>

**Len recommends these walks:**

The desolate coastline of Essex: a walk from Bradwell on Sea to Tillingham and beyond to St Chad's returning via the 13<sup>th</sup> century St Peter's Way: <http://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/EE-Ess/cms/pdf/Len%20Banister%20-%20Bradwell-on-Sea.pdf>



A walk through Essex villages, beginning at Chipping Ongar, through Greenstead Green and returning via Cripsey Brook. <http://www.westsexramblers.org.uk/General%20Images/0908%20Essex%20Areas%2025th%20-%202009.pdf>

When he walked the London Loop, Len encountered fabulous views of London from a vantage point close to Bromley and some unexpected views of the Queen Elizabeth Bridge as he came close to the end of the walk at Purfleet. The Loop: <http://www.walklondon.org.uk/route.asp?R=5>

# TALKING

## What has Len been doing since our interview:



# WALKING

"Since we last spoke, although I have continued writing walks – particularly for magazines, I have ceased working for the **Greater London Ramblers' Forum**. The **Ramblers'** work in London has become increasingly difficult for two reasons:

- The responsibility for the upkeep of the Strategic Paths has reverted to the Boroughs which results in the need for complex negotiation, time consuming monitoring, and the difficulty involved in the identification of anyone within the authority willing to take responsibility.
- The paradox that most Ramblers' organised walking in London is enjoyed by those on the periphery of the Capital whilst those members living centrally, because of better transport networks, tend to walk more regularly in the countryside.

I now give talks to other organisations on the history of the Ramblers and have responsibility for Rights of Way Liaison in Essex. In this latter role I have been setting up volunteer groups across the county which take responsibility for clearing, signing, and maintaining path furniture.

I've just had an experience which might be worth relating. At the very end of November, I entered hospital for open-heart surgery to replace a heart valve and insert two bi-passes. I am now back walking 5 or six miles a day with every prospect of returning to 12-mile outings in 2 or 3 months' time. My reason for mentioning this is that my consultant attributes my fast recovery to my walking history.

I've just written a walk over the Walthamstow Wetlands...it may yet appear in Country Walking Magazine."