



SOMERSET RAMBLER



We extend our condolences to the family and friends of Lord Melchett - a true campaigner

Lord Melchett, a vice-president of the Ramblers, died aged only 70. He was our president from 1981 to 1984 and a great advocate for public access, both in the House of Lords of which he was a member, and among the farming community. He practised what he preached on his organic farm in north Norfolk; in 1982 he created three public footpaths which linked with existing routes to provide circular walks. A rebel, he was outspoken against unwelcoming landowners, and he encouraged The Ramblers to step up the campaign for access.

At the end of August Ramblers launched the '[Your Path Awaits](#)', Campaign to ensure the Agriculture Bill protects our ability - and of future generations - to access and enjoy the countryside. In September the Government published the Bill, and thanks to the ongoing efforts and support of Ramblers' members - it recognises the importance of public access to the countryside. We need the continued support of MPs as it makes its way through Parliament to ensure that public access continues to be championed and makes its way into legislation.

If you haven't done so already, please write to your MP - just [head over to our website](#), enter your postcode and with two clicks you can send our template letter to your MP. If you have written already, then share the action with family, friends and other walkers - the more that MPs hear about this issue, the more likely they are to act. We joined up with 55 organisations - including the National Trust, RSPB and the Campaign for National Parks - to sign an open letter that was sent to the Prime Minister ahead of the publication of the Bill. The letter welcomed the Government's commitment to develop new farming policies that provide public funds for farmers in return for the public good, such as public access, biodiversity and animal welfare, to create a farming sector fit for the future.

If you would like any further information about 'Your Path Awaits', please contact Olly on oliver.hicks-pattison@ramblers.org.uk

The Ramblers website can be found at: <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/>

Volunteer “Check In” - please look out for an email and login to review your information

It was promised that the **Volunteer Login** would go live in September but after testing it, it was realised that it needs a few more weeks to fine tune it. The updates to the My Profile section of the website will now go live week commencing 15 October. You will see a new section called My Volunteering Activities. You'll receive an email reminding you to login to check in throughout October and November. The Check In will be running until the end of November.

From mid-October, please also ask other Ramblers' volunteers to login and check their details are correct. By making sure your role details are correct, we'll be able to ensure you are receiving the right support and continue to build a better volunteer experience. If you need any further details, please contact the volunteer check-in coordinator on volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.org.uk or by phone on 020 3961 3188.

Data transformation The new mobile Walk Register pilot continues. So far 35 'Walk Registrars' (not always the walk leaders) have installed the app on their phones and have used it on 70 led walks, collectively registering about 1,000 walkers. The data this generates will be invaluable in helping us to create relevant walks for everyone. For more details, please see the [FAQs page](#).

We are also continuing to pilot the new Membership Secretaries reports within the Insight Hub. After collecting 'learnings' from our 30 membership trailblazers this month, we will make any required improvements and roll-out the new membership dashboard across the autumn. Early feedback has been extremely positive, and we are confident that this new approach will not only help us to comply with external GDPR requirements, but that it will significantly improve our data quality and our communication with our members overall.

In addition, planning work is just beginning to pull all our Ramblers Routes together into an incredible new 'Walk Library'. This will include upgrading our route developing tools - something which we know is long overdue - and which we are starting to look at in collaboration with some of you. For further information please contact trailblazers@ramblers.zendesk.com

Rights of way - please note this update on extinguishment and diversion of level crossing paths

Ramblers volunteers in East Anglia continue to be exercised by Network Rail's level crossing closure programme using powers to make large composite orders under the Transport and Works Act 1992. In January this year, a public inquiry was held concerning the Network Rail (Felixstowe Branch Line Improvements: Level Crossings Closure) order. Geoff Knight of Ipswich Ramblers, and other volunteers including Helen Howe, and Linda and John Knock, presented a good case for retaining six existing crossings. The Inspector's report and the Secretary of State's decision were issued on 14 August 2018. Disappointingly, the Secretary of State found that the closures were justified in terms of the legislation.

This decision highlights what our Essex and Hertfordshire volunteers will be up against in the inquiry due to resume on 25 September concerning the much larger Network Rail (Essex and Others Level Crossing Reduction) Order. We have instructed Counsel, Merrow Golden, of Francis Taylor Building Chambers, and have also obtained the services of a transport consultant, for this inquiry.

To find out more, please contact Eugene.Suggett@ramblers.org.uk.

South Somerset Ramblers

We now offer two walks on Thursday of medium and short lengths and a longer walk on Sunday. These are usually well attended and also attract walkers from other Areas.

Roger Cripps, after many years of sterling work, is stepping down as Working Party Organiser at our next AGM although he is still going to be organising surveys.

The clearance at Beercrocombe was successfully carried out and our next work party was on Wed 12 September.

45 members attended our Summer Supper held on 12th July at the new venue of the Lamb and Lark at Limington organised by Ruth Goodland. The evening was enjoyed by all. Les Stevens led an interesting walk around Yeovilton beforehand.



The Friends of Ham Hill have produced a set of four circular walks on Ham Hill, ranging from a one mile all-ability trail to a longer more challenging walk of over five miles covering the whole of the site. They have been compiled by John Day, a Volunteer Ranger at Ham Hill Country Park and a member of the South Somerset Ramblers Group. The design has been produced by Stable Design. The South Somerset Ramblers Group provided some of the funding. A launch day to promote the leaflets was held on 4th August when around 40 people of all ages were led on Walk 3 by John.

A successful Saga group walking holiday was organised by John Oliver to Denia on the Costa Blanca with 11 members meeting up with other enthusiastic walkers. John is intending to organise another walking holiday to Minorca for 2019.

Linda Fawthrop

Sedgemoor Group

It has been a splendid summer with walking in the Somerset countryside and beyond a pleasure even if somewhat too hot at times. We have had many interesting walks: the bluebells on the Dorset cliff tops were particularly memorable.

The holiday to Ireland was also blessed by warm sunny weather which made the wonderful area even more pleasurable. The summer outing to North Devon was well attended and the walks around the Taw Estuary and Devon coast were enjoyed by all. The one day we would have liked it to be fine and sunny, for our summer lunch, turned out to be wet and miserable. Never the less we all enjoyed ourselves and I am sure everyone who attended would again like to thank Tony and Jenny for their hospitality and for letting us spread ourselves around their home sheltering from the rain.

The footpath working party has continued to repair and improve paths on a monthly basis. We have again completed the survey of a number of footpaths for Somerset County Council. With several new members taking on the work of footpath surveys, we have arranged for some training by a Rights of Way Officer from the Council.

Edward Levy

The West Somerset Walking Group

From 14 starters, seven stalwarts completed the Two Moors Way, which we began on 1st July 2017 and finished exactly a year later, on 1st July 2018. We covered the total of 103 miles over 4 weekends (8 days), from Ivybridge across the dramatic heights of Dartmoor and Exmoor to the coastal resort of Lynmouth. Scenery was wonderfully varied and interesting. Even the middle part between the two moors



passes through attractive villages and lovely woodland. It is a walk well worth doing. Now we are planning another long-distance walk for summer 2019!

In April we enjoyed a very successful club weekend, with 45 of us staying at Mullion Cove on the Lizard. From our hotel we were able to step straight onto the South West Coast path. Keener members covered around 26 miles of dramatic coastline, with sightings of seals, over the two days. There were also options for shorter walks. Although winter storms had taken a toll on some sections of the path, clear diversions were in operation and the SW Coast Path Association is working on repairs.

Meanwhile we have provided a varied programme of full and half day walks over the summer, including the Dorset coast, tors of Dartmoor, combes of Exmoor, the Quantocks and Mendips, so hopefully there was something to suit all tastes. For more information on walks through the autumn and a gallery of photos from all our walks, please visit our website www.somersetwalkingclub.co.uk or our Facebook page.

Cherry Bird, Programme Secretary

West Somerset Group

The Group has been continuing with its 40th Anniversary Year of special events which has included a number of members 'favourite walks' and concludes with a coach visit to Tetbury and Westonbirt Arboretum on 20th October.

Thanks to one of our members, our usual twice weekly programme of walks has been increased to three during the summer months by short walks on Monday evenings. This is likely to continue next year.

Our now regular annual walking weekend will be March 2019 with a visit to Brecon. We will be using HF Holidays for walk leaders and have 29 members with us. We are now considering a four night weekday break in Derbyshire for 2020.

An inspector for the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has now made a decision over the Blue Anchor Bay footpath closure. The Somerset County Council have been directed to determine the application by 2 October 2019. Our Footpath Secretary, Ivor Sutton, with a hundred plus of local residents are ever hopeful that this much locally publicised path will again be opened for all to use. Gerald Swayne Chair

A Note from the Editor

If you have any news or comments that you would like to contribute, please contact me at mavis@monahan.co.uk by 1st March 2019

Taunton Deane Group

The Group continues to offer four walks per week - on Wednesday afternoons, Friday evenings and Sundays (all day and half day). An increasing challenge has been to find suitable pubs for the post-walk meal on Fridays; so many having either closed or else moved up-market in an attempt to remain viable.

The Group's 'Open Afternoon' on Tuesday 17th July at Trull Church Community Centre went well, and some potential new members turned up to see what Ramblers' can offer. The event concluded with tea and cake (what else!) which went down very well. Thanks are owed to Dot McKay for arranging the proceedings and to John Ollerenshaw for a map-based quiz of walking venues in Somerset (the 'Trull Quiz') which formed part of it. The joint winners shared some of the aforementioned cake!

Following the success of its Lynton and Lynmouth venture in 2017, on 12th August the Group organised a coach outing to Seaton, with options of four different walks of varying lengths along the Jurassic Coast in the area west from Seaton to Sidmouth. For the intrepid walkers, tea was then arranged to conclude the day at Seaton Jurassic. The event was well-supported, and thanks are due in particular to Lynda Stewart for making the arrangements. Under the leadership of Judi Townsend, on 12th September the Group completed its series of staged walks of the West Deane Way, a designated route on the OS map which members re-waymarked some years ago. These attracted a good cross-section of membership, and given the summer conditions were mostly blessed with fine weather.

On 15th October, the Group was represented at the 'Life is for Living' event, at the Mecca in Corporation Street, Taunton. Aimed at anyone wishing to improve their mental physical or social well-being, rambling can claim to be a very good way of achieving all of these aims, and some useful publicity for Ramblers was gained.

The Groups AGM will be held on 23rd November in the Quaker Meeting House in Bath Place, Taunton – further details to be publicised in due course. Philip Bisatt

Mendip Group

At the 1st of October our **membership** is 333 up by 13 from this time last year

The **working party** remains very active and is out virtually every week. There is, however, some concern that the SCC cut-backs will reduce the amount of furniture they will be buying which will have a knock-on effect on the work we are able to do. Perhaps the team will be involved in more clearance work.

The **Ditchheat Walking Festival**, held over the August Bank Holiday, was another successful event with good attendance on the warm and dry Saturday and Monday. The wet Sunday affected the number of walkers and the afternoon short walk was cancelled as none, other than the leader & backmarker, turned up. 230 people in total walked and the two short walks held, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, each day were well attended by non- members of the Ramblers'. It is hoped that this has given them a taste for group walks and encourages them to become members.

Some of us have recently returned from a **week in Brittany** where we enjoyed wonderful weather, walking and food. Thanks to Tony and Jane for organising this. Our spring holiday next year is to Eastbourne. Les Stather, Chair

Woodspring Ramblers Group

28 members of the group went to St. Anton in Austria for our annual holiday and had an exceptionally good time. 9 members enjoyed a full 2 weeks, during which time the advance party reconnoitred a number of walks for the main group of 19 members arriving for the 2nd week. The Post Hotel in St. Anton was very good with fine dining and spacious rooms.

The Area website can be found at: www.somersetramblers.co.uk

St Anton is in a valley although still 4,000ft. up with all walks going up quite steeply from the town. A number of cable cars to higher parts were used to make steady descents on foot back to the hotel whilst other members took some very adventurous routes with ascents of 2,500 ft or more. I have a feeling there may be return trips to this wonderful area in the near future

As you know Somerset had the annual weekend holiday at Gwbert on the Ceredigion Coast just outside Cardigan. My thanks to Rod and Peggy for their organisation and to Les for managing the walks. 14 members from Woodspring attended the weekend with 4 of the group leading walk. Many thanks for all who helped make the weekend a success. In November Woodspring will be going to Exmoor for what has been an annual pilgrimage for quite a number of years. The Staghunters in Brendon is a very welcomeing Inn with fine dining and a good selection of ales. My thanks to Terry and Hazel for the splendid job they have done over the years to book the Inn and provide excellent walks. We are now discussing venues for 2019.

The footpath maintenance team continue to assist NSC to keep our footpaths open by removing old and sometimes dangerous stiles and replacing with splendid, user friendly, gates and kissing gates. They are also helping keep the vegetation down with the huge range of mechanical tools available.

Sadly, we are about to lose our footpath secretary, Pete Mason, who is in the process of selling and moving out of the area. Pete took on the post from Eddy last year and has continued with the very onerous work to ensure we in N Somerset keep our footpaths open against many diversion orders and potential loss. I take this opportunity to thank Pete for all he has done and wish him all the very best for the future. They say that every cloud has a silver lining and, on this occasion, I am pleased to say we have a volunteer to take over the post. I will say no more until after our AGM next month. Membership remains constant at approximately 200..

David Thompson, Chair

Report of Area Footpath Secretary

Blue Anchor Path Because of possible long delays in the appeal process Ramblers' Head Office was consulted and, with their help, an application was made to the Secretary of State to ask that he require the County to deal with the claim more expeditiously. Based, particularly on the safety aspects and the age of many of the claimants, the County has now been instructed to determine the application within 12 months. This means that our application must be dealt with by this time next year and we trust that the volume of evidence will convince the County to record this path as a public right of way.

(see W. Somerset report - Editor)

New 'Castle & Coast Way' With money from EDF, Sarah Littler from SCC has been improving the paths network in the area near Hinkley Point. To highlight the improvements she is intending to launch a new route entitled "Castle & Coast Way" next spring and has asked for Ramblers' support in its launch. Both Sedgemoor and West Somerset have been invited to take part and details will be announced nearer the time. The new route runs in a circular way from the Coleridge Trail at Nether Stowey Castle through Stogursey to the Coast Path, returning along a section of the coast path and to Nether Stowey. It will have publicity and some interpretation boards. Any stiles will be replaced with gates and it will be way-marked distinctively. A total length of about 15 miles can be walked as a whole or as shorter circular walks from Nether Stowey, Stogursey or the Coast car park near Listock. It also provides a connection for longer distance walks between the Coast Path and the Coleridge Way.

Problem of Maize It is important that you report any paths cropped with maize and not cleared as early as possible in the season so that the Highway Authority has no excuse for not acting on this obstruction before the path becomes impassable. Details of how to report a problem on-line are given on the Somerset Ramblers web-site with a link to the relevant site.

Guidance for Walk Leaders

It is important that Ramblers' walks follow the legal route of RoVWs, unless specific approval has been given by a landowner to walk elsewhere. The official line of rights of way is altered from time to time and it is important to realise that OS maps are not necessarily up-to-date on such changes. To be sure that the walk you are planning has not been legally altered it is important to check the relevant highway authority map of RoVWs. Our walks often take place in Devon, Dorset and Wilts, as well as Somerset and North Somerset. The maps are available on line and can be searched by "Rights of Way in ..." For Dorset and Somerset that will bring up a map that also shows any known problems on RoV.

A303/A358 Dualling The government's Highway Agency is currently working on a number of schemes. The first between Sparkford and Podimore is now being finalised and Ramblers' have been consulted on resulting changes to RoV. We have tried to ensure that, in future there will be safe crossings of the new road to link routes north and south of the A303 where currently no safe crossing exists. We will expect further consultation on the next

The Ramblers and its Organisation At the heart of everything are the members who support our values and deliver the vast majority of our work by volunteering their time and energy. At our AGM, (General Council) these volunteers elect a Board of Trustees who run the charity on their behalf. Formally, we were The Ramblers Association but we operate as The Ramblers.

Local Ramblers' Groups There are around five hundred groups in Britain. Groups are run entirely by volunteers. Depending on where they are and who's involved, groups will inspect paths, put on led walks, run local campaigns, organise group walking holidays or do practical work improving paths. They also have a strong social element with everything from afternoon teas to curry nights. To ensure that Ramblers' members have real ownership of what we do locally, each group is run by a committee that is elected annually.

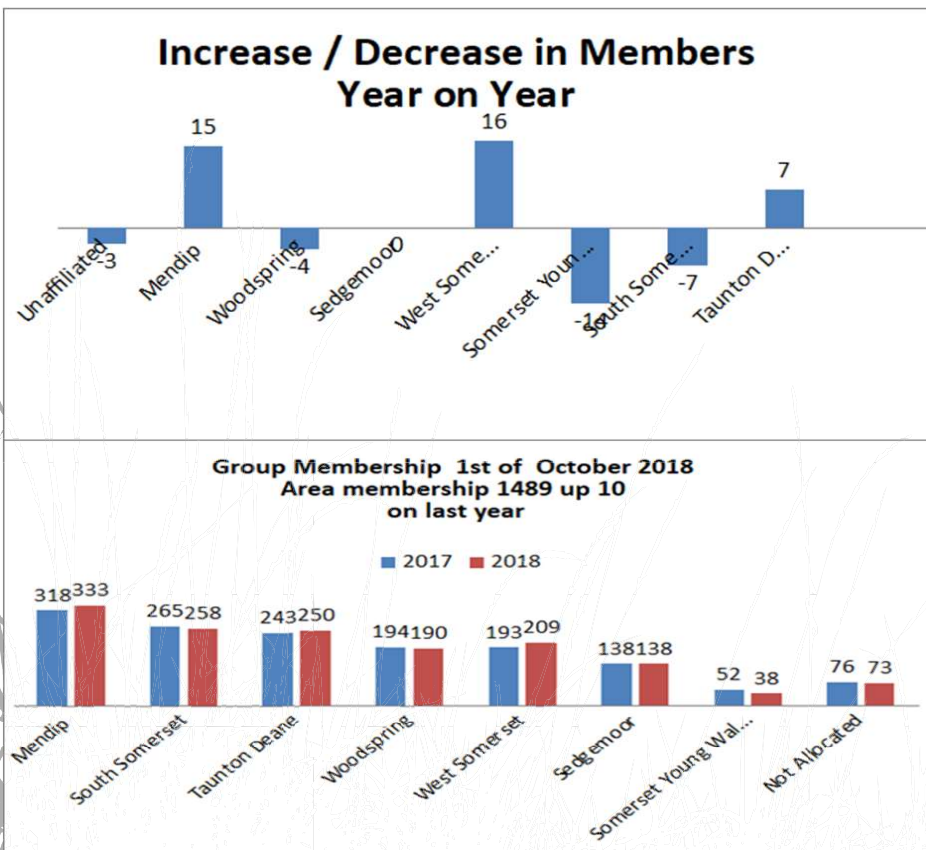
Regional Ramblers' Areas Our groups co-operate together as 'Areas'. We divide the country into over 50 Areas broadly coinciding with a county or regional boundary. Area volunteers help support and coordinate the work of the groups in delivering our mission. For example, they help identify what funds groups need and encourage groups to try out new things. Many area volunteers are delegates from the constituent groups which helps to make sure that groups feel part of the wider organisation. In England and Wales, Areas play a pivotal role in coordinating volunteers. For example, an Area will have volunteers inspecting footpaths in each parish and will then liaise with the relevant highway authority to get problems solved. They provide a first point of contact for The Ramblers with local government, other local charities and the local offices of national bodies such as Natural England.

General council and the Board of Trustees. Areas elect delegates to attend our Annual General Council, which in turn elects the Board of Trustees. General Council also holds the Trustees to account, approves the annual report and accounts and provides guidance. It is also the ultimate authority for changes to our Constitution. The Trustees are all volunteers. They steer the charity and guarantee its long term health and strength. They appoint and oversee the chief executive, approve the business plan and agree the annual budget. The minutes of board meetings are available so that all members can see what the board is doing on their behalf.

SOMERSET AREA WEEKENDS

2019 -Thursday 3rd to Sunday 6th October: Our annual get together is at the Sidholme (Christian Guild) Hotel in the delightful seaside town of Sidmouth. This majestic Georgian mansion, built in 1826 for the 6th Earl of Buckinghamshire, is situated in its own grounds and has a splendid music room for our social events and an indoor swimming pool to relax in after the day's walk! Chris hopes to hold a barn dance this time, if not, then a disco will be provided. Les will be sorting out our walks.

2020 – Friday 2nd to Monday 5th October: The Derbyshire Dales is our destination for 2020 and the village of Cromford near Matlock. The Willersley Castle (Christian Guild) Hotel, a late C18th country mansion, is a magnificent building, which stands in 60 acres of grounds, overlooking the river Derwent. This hotel also has a 15 m indoor swimming pool and a boules court. We shall be mailing out 2019 forms to those who have joined us for previous week-ends. Anyone wishing to join for the first time, please email Peggy pm.fortunati@outlook.com or phone Rod or Peggy on 01278 783270.



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