



SOMERSET RAMBLER



Ramblers website upgrade

As part of the continuous data quality programme Ramblers' has deleted website accounts which have not been used for 24 months. This is in line with our data security and privacy policies. This means that if you are trying to log in to an online account you have not used for over 24 months, you will have to create a new account first.

Please share your stories of walking with children

Walk magazine will be including a feature in Autumn 2020 about walking with children – and we'd like your help! We would love to hear your top tips and hints on getting little people out on walks – plus any nice images of Ramblers Groups out walking with children, babies or teenagers. We'll be approaching the dedicated family groups that we know about too. Please email walkmag@ramblers.org.uk

New volunteer fundraising volunteer role - please contact us if you are interested...



As part of our ambition to sustain, diversify and grow Ramblers' charitable income, we will be launching a new volunteer fundraiser role in 2020. We wish to recruit volunteers who are interested in local fundraising within your community. As this is a brand-new role, we will be piloting the recruitment in a few Areas first to test and refine our approach and hear your ideas and feedback.

We'll be in touch with Area chairs shortly, to discuss this new role with them, and find out which areas might be interested in being involved in the pilot. If you have any questions or would like to register potential interest in this new role, please contact Jade Deeley on fundraising@ramblers.org.uk.

Write your Will for Free

With a gift in your Will to the Ramblers, you'll always be with us as we protect the places we love to walk. And now you can write your Will for free, just enter RAMBLERS5 at checkout. There is no obligation to leave a gift to the Ramblers but if you do, you'll be leaving a lasting footprint that will help people experience the power of walking for generations to come.

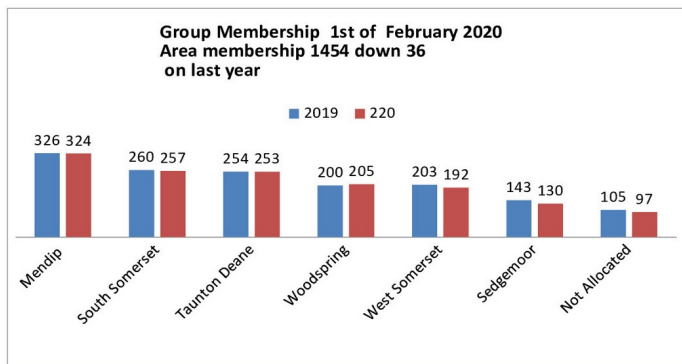
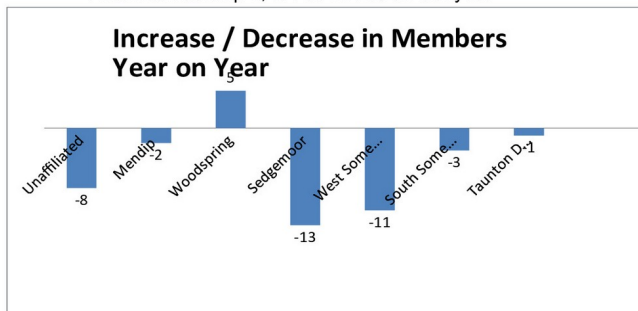
Membership Report February 2020

1st February 2020

Ramblers Membership 101,588

Down 1% from Last year

Area Membership 1,454 down 2% on last year



application being withdrawn), to suggest alternatives that can be put to the applicant. A recent case in S. Somerset resulted in improving the access and line of route. Government proposals to simplify the legal procedure for making changes (on hold for work on Brexit) have still not been formalised.

New Claims – the County Council is steadily working through outstanding claims to alter the definitive map and has been using consultants to accelerate the process. Many of these claims for new routes are from the Bridleways Assoc. and I have been in regular contact with their representative to give appropriate support to the claim. There are a small number of potential claims for unrecorded footpaths that I am currently working on and Group FPSs have been asked if they can identify any in their area. Claiming footpaths on historic grounds is much more difficult than claims for higher rights of way.

Cropping of Paths – It is worth reminding all that at the start of the growing season, if a cross-field Right of Way is found to be cropped, it is important to report it to the Highway Authority (Somerset County or North Somerset). Walk leaders are especially asked to report any cropping to the relevant Footpath Secretary or directly on-line in the case of Somerset paths. The previous provision to report it to the Rural Payments Agency under EU rules still applies until the new Agriculture Bill is made law and can continue to be used. Ramblers is hoping that the replacement agricultural grants scheme, included in the Agriculture Bill, will provide similar opportunity to report such obstructions, but we still await details of the new arrangements.

A303/A358 Dualling – The Sparkford – Podimore scheme has now been approved with reasonable provision for crossing the new road safely and it is due to go out to tender once the new government gives the formal consent to proceed. We now await the detailed proposals for the A358 dualling before we can make proposals on the RoW affected. Both Taunton Deane and S. Somerset group FPSs will be involved.

Long Standing Obstructions – Despite the meeting Les Stather (as Area Chair) and I had with the Head of RoW on 5th June last year and a promise of action, we have so far, received no confirmation of action. I recommend that the Area Chair write formally to the Head of RoW asking for a report on the issues raised at that meeting.

Annual Meeting of Group FPSs – this year's meeting will be arranged in May or June and is an opportunity for group FPSs to discuss matters of common interest and be up-dated on developments.

Carl Earl Area Footpath Secretary

Share the power of walking

If you are planning to shop on Amazon this season, please support the Ramblers by shopping at smile.amazon.co.uk.

You can support us every time you shop and help to protect walkers' rights, our glorious countryside and access to open green spaces for everyone.

App upgrades

We've made several recent improvements to the Ramblers app, which now includes 3,000 routes for you to explore. You can follow routes with descriptions and photos, search for routes and group walks more easily, and save routes to come back to later. Download it from [Apple's App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) by searching for 'Ramblers'.

Walk leadership

Finally, a quick reminder that we are running a series of Walk Leader Essentials courses across England, Wales and Scotland. Please encourage current and future Walk Leaders to book onto these courses - and get in touch if you are interested in a hosting a course closer to you. volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com



Don't Lose Your Way Campaign An estimated 10,000 miles of paths across England and Wales could be lost forever, unless we come together to save them.

On 11 February the 'Don't Lose Your Way' mapping tool was launched, making it really easy to find, map and save lost paths and we'll need your help.

Group Reports

The Somerset Walking Club

Despite a particularly wet and muddy autumn, attendance on our varied programme of walks has held up well. At the end of September, we organised a successful weekend away for 44 members, based at a delightful hotel in Porth, just outside Newquay. The spectacular coast path walking between Port Isaac and Newquay was made all the more dramatic by extremely high winds, which actually blew a couple of our smaller ladies over. Fortunately, the wind was coming onshore so we didn't lose anyone!



In October we completed the final two days of the East Devon Way, from Sidbury to Exmouth, with 7 of us having managed all 4 days (covering over 40 miles). We passed through several interesting nature reserves and arrived at the estuary as the late afternoon sun was reflecting off the water.

Our AGM with bring and share lunch took place at Crowcombe, preceded by a beautiful Quantock walk, with clear views from the ridge, though made more challenging by the very high levels of water in the streams running along the combes, many of which were above walking boot level. In December 28 of us enjoyed Christmas lunch at Ralegh's Cross, preceded of course by a very muddy Brendon Hills walk.

For more information on walks through the rest of the winter and spring, and to view our gallery of photos, please visit our website www.somersetwalkingclub.co.uk or [Facebook page](#).

Cherry Bird - Programme Secretary

West Somerset Group

Our walking programme continues to be well supported as does our social events.

Walking Weekend: We are looking forward to eight walks over four days based at Paignton 27 - 29 March with three levels of walk now planned that include Berry Head, Brixham, Totnes and on Dartmoor.

Day Coach Outings Although it was a fine day for our October coach trip to Killerton House it proved to be adventurous as the River Exe was in flood and an unexpected diversion was needed to get us out of deep water.



Our next coach trip on 16 May will be to Bradford-on-Avon taking in two aqueducts on the walk from Limpley Stoke. The long walk will include Iford Manor and the Farleigh Hungerford Castle.

Walk, fish & chips and skittles Over forty members joined us in Minehead for an excellent social event on 29 January. The walk on North Hill was blessed by fine weather and views which has proved to be a rarity in January. It may well be repeated.

Looking Ahead We are now planning a weekend in the Elan Valley, Mid-Wales, in April 2021 and hope we will be well supported for this excursion.

Gerald Swayne - Chairman

Report of Area Footpath Secretary – January 2020

Changes to the definitive map – we continue to receive consultations on changes to RoW which are sent to the relevant Group FPS for consideration. Based on local knowledge the local FPS will advise me on whether the change is acceptable, whether we should suggest changes or oppose it. I can then respond accordingly to the Highway Authority. This provides the opportunity, if we do not object to the proposal outright (which may result in the

Taunton Deane Group

The Group continues to maintain its traditional programme of four walks per week - on Wednesday afternoons, Friday evenings and Sundays (all day and half day).

The AGM took place at the Friends' Meeting House, Bath Place, Taunton on Friday 29th November. After a number of years in post, Lynda Stewart and Dot McKay stood down as joint Secretaries at the meeting. Many thanks are due to them for their efforts over that period, not only in terms of administration, but also for their organisation of many of the Group's social activities. We were naturally very pleased that Lynda Kearn stepped forward to take on the role of our new Secretary, and feel that she will be a valuable addition to our Group's Committee.

A Walk Leadership Workshop was held on 24th January, which nine members attended. The evening started with some map reading exercises, and continued using a Tracklogs presentation of various walks using the group's projector. The evening continued with a presentation of good leadership practice where there was a useful discussion over a range of points. There was plenty of time finally for members to go through the group's walk book searching for new walks of interest. Each member departed with a pack of useful information points - Good Practice, Walk Start Points, Check Lists, etc.

A very successful Barn Dance was held at Trull Memorial Hall on 1st February - many thanks are due to Judi Townsend and Liz Ollerenshaw for making the arrangements.

After some delay in arranging more tasks owing, in part, to the departure of the previous County Council Volunteer Co-ordinator, a further path clearance session was scheduled at the time of writing for 18th February near Langford Budville.

Philip Bisatt, Area Rep

South Somerset Ramblers

We hold two walks on Thursdays of differing lengths and a longer walk on Sundays. Attendance in the winter months is often better than in summer with 24 on a C and 18 on a D the same day making 42 walkers out on one Thursday in winter. Average numbers attending C and D walks is 16. Membership remains constant at 261.

David Fawthrop announced he would stand down as Walks Coordinator. Martin Pakes has agreed to take on this role. Our annual summer supper is scheduled to be held at the The Quicksilver Mail, Yeovil on 9th July.

Roger Cripps, on behalf of Carl Earl, reported three working parties having taken place, mainly doing clearance work in Martock, Donyatt and Aller.

The Group held its annual Christmas Dinner on Thursday 12th December with 55 attending at the Muddled Man, East Chinnock, which has served us so well in the past. The walk beforehand was led by Daphne Denney and a small group of intrepid walkers braved the appalling weather conditions.

Our Group AGM was held on Saturday 2nd November at East Coker Village Hall. All serving committee members had agreed to stand again. This was a special AGM as we celebrated South Somerset Ramblers 50th Anniversary with champagne and a lovely variety of cakes. Unfortunately only 17 turned up to help us celebrate this event.

John Oliver, who has been a long-standing Committee member and walk leader, is hanging up his boots. As well as leading Thursday C walks, John organised the annual Group holiday, held in Menorca last year, which has seen the Group travel abroad in the last few years. His sterling efforts will be missed.

Linda Fawthrop, Joint Chairman

Mendip Group

At the 1st of February our membership is 324, down 2 from this time last year

Our Working Party has opened a couple of paths in the last few months that had been closed for years.

The 2020 walking festival will be held at Shipham Village Hall on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday of the August Bank Holiday Weekend –see below

Our Spring Holiday next year is at Lynton.

Les Stather –Area Rep

MENDIP RAMBLERS FREE WALKING FESTIVAL

SHIPHAM AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND 29/30/31st August

On each of the 3 days there will be 3 morning walks, ranging from 3/4 to 1 1/2 miles, starting at 10.00am, and 1 shorter walk, 3/4 miles, starting at 1.30pm. Walks will start from: Shipham Village Hall, New Road, Shipham, Winscombe, Somerset BS25 1SG

We are again offering our popular two short walks on each day. Somerset Ramblers, new and inexperienced walkers, non-Ramblers, visitors to the area, and children with their families are all welcome. Please see the website for detailed information. Tea and cake will be available after each walk. Please make a donation! All details at www.mendipramblers.co.uk
Any questions? Call Kevin on 01749 672996

Woodspring Ramblers

Despite the continuous wet weather and atrocious ground conditions along our footpaths over the last four months Woodspring has continued to fulfil all but one walk on the programme. There does not appear to be any let up in the very disappointing conditions but it isn't putting our walkers off. In fact, the group has seen a further increase in membership since last reporting. The recent figures give an overall increase of two. It is really very satisfying to see not only new members out but many members from other groups in the area joining us on our walks.

Sedgemoor Group Report

Our membership as compared with January 2019 has remained static at 131.

Our walking programme has continued to run well over the winter period. With the wet weather that has predominated throughout the period, flooded paths and mud has become a great problem but with a few deviations our leaders have managed to find a way through.

The Christmas meal took place at Enmore Golf Club in December. This was the last event to be organised by Jenny, our social secretary who stood down after a number of years, at our AGM in October. No one came forward to replace her so social events are likely to be very limited in the current year. We do, however, have plans in place to continue with our 2 main annual events of Summer Lunch and Christmas meal.

Our footpath working party has continued to meet monthly and have done maintenance work on a number of paths as allocated by Somerset County Council. One of the jobs we have taken on is the clearance of debris from a footbridge in Holford Glen. The bridge spans a deep gorge and is surrounded by trees. Their leaves lie in a wet, sticky mess on the bridge and, if left, cause the bridge to rot and deteriorate. The bridge was erected by Royal Marines in 1987 and Somerset County Council were employing contractors to clear the bridge bi-annually at a cost in excess of £1000. We have also continued to survey footpaths on a quarterly basis, again as allocated by Somerset County Council.

A party of members are booked for a week's holiday to Guernsey in May. Our summer outing has also been planned and the coach booked for a day out to Abergavenny where there will be a choice of 3 walks on the surrounding hills and along the banks of the Usk and the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal.

Edward Levy, Chairman

is now a member of our social committee. June Ballinger has had to stand down from the social committee due to declining health. I wish to thank our outgoing committee members for all they have done to help Woodspring be the great walking and social group we are. I also welcome our new members of both committees.

We had our annual mince pie walk which had an incident at one point in the walk. Just before we were about to stop and have our mince pies and mulled wine, we had a runaway horse which had thrown the rider and had bolted. It was really very lucky that no-one was seriously injured or even killed. A few seconds later and the front walkers would have been in a position where they could not have moved out of the way of the horse. The horse was not stopping. Luckily no one was injured and the horse was recovered later on. The group managed to have the mince pies and copious mulled wine without further incident.

The group are now looking forward to the first of three holidays this year. We are hoping for much improved weather in March at Ilfracombe.

David Thompson – Chairman

The deadline for submissions for the next Somerset Rambler will be 10th June 2020. Any items of general interest would be most welcome.
mavis@monahan.co.uk



Manoeuvring around a fallen tree on a winter walk.

Our social activities have also been attracting new members which is very nice to see. We welcome them all along. Total membership now stands at 214. Our footpath maintenance team continues with a very high rate of pedestrian gate, kissing gate, Bristol gate installations, bridge repairs and of course, vegetation clearance. The team very often succeed in the installation of 6 gates at each session. Despite the very poor weather and sometimes challenging ground conditions they have not missed a single session.

At our last AGM in November we had a few changes to our main committee and social committee members. Pat Hicks stood down as social secretary after two long terms in office. Our previous chair, Marion Davies, has taken on this very valuable post. Martin Raines' post as footpath secretary has been taken on by Paul Spears. Reg Young was a committee member and area rep. His post has been taken over by Jan Horn. And finally, Hazel Crandon