

Hi everyone and welcome to another bumper newsletter celebrating all the great things the group has been getting up to

We had a fabulous holiday in the Wye Valley AONB in May, brilliantly organised by Janice, and you can read more about it in Mary's article.

Edna hosted a wonderful summer afternoon tea in May, with lots of lovely conversation, yummy food and cakes. Several party goers made use of Edna's pool – very refreshing on a hot summer's day, and a few practised their rusty skills at tennis – far too energetic on a hot summer's day! Huge thanks to Edna for hosting.



We have had a number of walks which included sections of the South West Coast Path, celebrating its 50th Anniversary. And we have some more walks planned for Autumn, especially the weekend of 7th and 8th of October. Have a look at the walks programme for details.

The group was asked to take part in some promotional filming of the Coast Path around Ilfracombe in June. Special thanks to Rachel (on her first walk as a leader) and all those walkers who took part on the day. The weather was kind, and the filming successful. We hope to have access to the resulting footage at the end of summer, once the commissioning body – Ilfracombe Tourist Information Centre, have seen and used the filming for their own purposes. Maybe keep an eye on their website and let us all know if you spot the group.

Sarah has put together another great walks programme for the 4 months September to December, and we are all very grateful for our wonderful walk leaders who have offered the walks. There are still some gaps, and we hope that some of these will be filled by "Pop-up" walks. Pop-up walks can be submitted with just 3 weeks notice. If you see a gap and can offer a walk, please contact Sarah.

On the subject of Walks Programmes – we are intending to have a Festival of Winter Walks this winter, over 4 days from Thursday 4th to Sunday 7th January 2024, with at least one walk each day. It would be great if we can put together walks of varied lengths and locations to showcase our beautiful area. Have a think 😊

The new Ramblers websites and Walks Manager system are fully up and running now, and although there are still some teething problems, they are steadily being sorted out.

Featured Articles

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- ◆ [Our group holiday](#) ... Mary
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Becoming a Walk Leader

... Rachel

Now this is something I never thought I'd do!

I can't even find my way around the countryside without the risk of getting lost, let alone plan and lead a group of fellow walkers? For those of you who read my article last year 'Becoming a Rambler', I quote, 'I could not have got it more wrong'.

I've been on many walks since joining ND Ramblers and there's not a single one I haven't enjoyed. They've all been very well organised, sociable, interesting and I've been to places right on my doorstep that I never knew were there.

On one walk Sarah was talking to me about how she is responsible for the walks diary, and how sometimes, it can be light on getting walks planned for the next programme. My good friends Mo and Clarice suggested I become a walk leader. I fell about laughing, this was most definitely not something I had ever considered. However, I did realise I was very good at turning up each week, having a great time, going home and patting myself on my back for getting to the end of the walk. The suggestion of me becoming a leader played on my mind as, without our walk leaders – the walks simply wouldn't happen. And maybe I should give something back for all the amazing walks I've been on. So, after endless what, when, why, who type of questions (thank you Clarice & Mo for being so patient) I thought I'd give it a go and Sarah registered me as a walk leader.

I attended some Leader training sessions online, these were really helpful and run by very experienced leaders, I and read the info sent to me. I felt a little more comfortable that I could lead a walk. So now to the planning stage. Clarice and I had done a walk earlier this year and I felt comfortable that I could lead a group around it, and I sent the details to Sarah to put into the programme. Clarice would be my Leader buddy on the walk which was very reassuring.

Over the following months I did the same walk 3 more times so I was familiar with it (there was still the risk of 'getting lost'!) On the last walk it was just me and my dog Ruby and I navigated the walk from memory, no map, no apps – just my sense of direction.

So, walk day arrives, Clarice calls me at 7:45am, me thinking it's to confirm travel plans to Ilfracombe. No – she's poorly and most apologetic that she can't come, she reassured me I'd be fine! Yikes – I'm now solely responsible for this walk, maybe there wouldn't be many turn up and I'd be OK.

Again, I couldn't have been more wrong!

16 of you wonderful people turned up, and this alone filled me with confidence that you'd put your trust in me. We had a great day, the weather was perfect, coffee and lunch stops as planned. I left with 16 walkers and returned with 16 – result. What was so humbling is the thanks I received at the end of the walk, something I always do myself, but now I was on the receiving end of it, and it felt good.

I would encourage anyone to consider being a walk leader, it's so rewarding and nowhere as daunting as I'd first thought. There is so much support available, from our own walk leaders and the Ramblers Association. Walks can be shorter or longer, midweek or weekend. They can be anywhere you choose, villages and lanes, coastal, moorland the choice is entirely up to you. I am now planning another walk for the Autumn programme as I want to give something back to our group for all the enjoyment I've had since joining. I feel if I only lead one walk in each programme, it's one more for you all to enjoy and makes for a fuller programme.

Can you imagine how full the programme would be and the choice we'd all have if we just had more leaders?



Media and Publicity



WhatsApp

Thank you for keeping Rambling Rogues full of walk information and photos of the beautiful area we walk in. Thanks also to the walk leaders for making it all possible. In our busy world sometimes it's easy to be overwhelmed by information therefore here is a respectful request for Rambling Rogues WhatsApp users. The main aims of Rambling Rogues are to facilitate communication between group members and to promote our group walks in great company.

Please keep to information related to North Devon Ramblers

Remember every post or reply is potentially a 'ding' on someone's phone... and there are over 50 members.

If you find Rambling Rogues messages are too many for you but don't wish to leave the group, you can put it into Archive on your phone and then access it when you want. Or you can put Rambling Rogues on mute, you still get the news but you won't get the 'dings'!

If you have any questions, please contact Anne our WhatsApp manager

Upcoming Publicity Events - Volunteers Needed



After the North Devon Show, the next big publicity event is the Rosemoor "The Great Hobby Weekend" on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th September, where we have a stall (indoors). Janet is coordinating this, and would greatly appreciate some help. Could you spare a few hours between 10am and 5pm on one of those days? Entry to Rosemoor will be free for our (named) volunteers, and you'll have plenty of time to look around the gardens too. Please contact Janet if you can help.



The group Facebook page is back up and running again, thanks to Peter and Janet. Are you a Facebook aficionado who just loves posting pics and messages? We are hoping for one more person to be a Facebook Editor, to share posting photos, messages and notices for the group. If you could help with this, have a chat with Janet or Peter, or contact any committee member.

We are Getting Noticed

Have you seen the article about North Devon Ramblers in your local magazine recently? Isn't it good! Janet wrote and submitted it to several local magazines in the North Devon area, and we hope it will lead to more people finding us.

Email Changes

Peter has also been working on changes to how the group sends emails to members, and we hope to streamline these very soon, and bring them more in line with the lists of permissions that Ramblers Head Office keep. We intend to use the Mailchimp system. For most members, this will be an automatic transfer and you won't need to do anything. However, if you, or you hear of someone else who does not receive emails from the North Devon group in future, please could you contact Peter, Clarice or any committee member and we can liaise with you to sort it out.

More Than Just Walking? ... Mo Bennett

About a decade ago or so I can remember reading the North Devon Journal and spotting an upcoming walk with North Devon Ramblers.

“From Braunton, about 6 miles, led by someone called Joan.”

I decided to give it a go and with a certain amount of trepidation went along. The group were easily recognisable - a certain rustic sartorial elegance gave the game away.

I was made welcome and off we set, hoping that I could keep up. The pace was very leisurely with a lovely cup of tea at the end. A kind man called Harry offered to drop me home - the infamous Harry and his clarion call of ‘C... A....R’ will never be forgotten.

In time, absolute strangers became friends, very good friends in some cases. These enduring friendships extended beyond walking - theatre, cinema, quizzes, bingo, meals in, meals out, holidays, cycling, swimming, Edna's afternoon tea and so on. Others have formed a book club, play table tennis or tenpin bowling and many other pursuits - often through the local U3As. Ramblers is an organisation that keeps on giving, but you have to be receptive and be prepared to reciprocate.

Earlier in the year I was involved in a serious accident, and without my Ramblers' support network I don't know what I would have done. “Taxis” to medical appointments, meals delivered, food parcels, gifts of flowers and chocolates, get well cards, taken out for coffee, washing machine repair - unimaginable kindness from so many people. I couldn't have stayed in my own home without your (and my neighbours’) help. It was a tough few months, but recovery is coming along at a pace. Thank you one and all for everything.

And yes, Ramblers is definitely more than just walking!

Remembering Joan

Our longstanding chairman, Joan Long, passed away two years ago now and is fondly remembered and much missed. A collection was made in her memory and after discussion with her husband, Mike, it was decided to make a donation to CareMoor, Exmoor National Park, to sponsor a gate. A small plaque is placed on the gate which is located in a beautiful spot by Weir Water. (Grid reference SS 829 461) The remaining money was also donated to CareMoor for tree planting at Bye Wood.

Janice planned and led two lovely walks in July in memory of Joan, one shorter and one longer, so that members of all abilities could attend. Both walks were well attended and time was spent by the gate, enjoying the beautiful location by the stream, set in a valley in the heart of Exmoor. Exmoor was a place that Joan loved. She led many walks there, and she and Mike enjoyed many happy hours in its surroundings.

There are several pictures of the walks on WhatsApp, Rambling Rogues.

If anyone wants to visit just the gate, it can be reached from the car park at Robbers Bridge on a mostly level, circular walk of 1.5 miles, or a “there and back” walk of about 1 mile.



Our Holiday in the Wye Valley ...Mary

After what seemed like a long time since first booking in Summer 2022, twenty four keen ramblers gathered for our five days break in South Wales. We were based at The Old Court House Hotel, Whitchurch, near Symonds Yat. And yes it was a very old hotel some of the wood panelled rooms dating from the sixteenth century when it served as a court house. The property was apparently also owned by General John Sincoe who founded the city of Toronto, Canada in 1792. The family mausoleum is in the nearby St Dubricius church.

Anyway enough of the history.....a few of us arriving lunch time on Monday decided to stretch our legs and explore the adjoining Wye Valley. The appropriately named Wye Valley footpath runs alongside the river so we walked a few miles south to Biblins suspension bridge, passing the youth camp site and then we crossed to the opposite bank. A notice cautioned a maximum of twelve people on the bridge at any one time! As it was a Bank Holiday and by some miracle we had sunshine and warmth we passed many visitors walking, cycling and even a few canoeing along the slalom course on a short section of the river. Oh dear I thought this is just so busy as we sat with our reviving ice-creams outside a very busy pub.



Next morning dawned bright and sunny again but all the tourists seemed to have gone leaving us to enjoy the beauty and peace of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to give it the full designation.

Two of the three days walks were straight from the hotel. We saw areas of beautiful woodland, lush pastures, clear views from rocky ridges, industrial landmarks from the area's mining legacy, a lake, many birds and some tucked away villages and old churches. Both groups 'conquered' Symonds Yat, from where there were splendid views of the River Wye meandering peacefully way below. Several times on these walks we used the unique river crossing transport, a boat with the ferryman getting us across via a sort of rope pulley. A bargain at £2 per person, so long as the ferryman turned up!



Our Wednesday walk was slightly further afield in the Forest of Dean a few miles east. Once again, a beautiful walk through predominantly beech woods following for the main part the Beechenhurst Trail. The highlight at the finish of that day's walking was one of the more understandable Sculpture Trail pieces, a large rectangle of stained glass suspended between tall trees, depicting the woodland. The sun was shining through the glass as we arrived highlighting the multiple colours of the sculpture. Really beautiful.

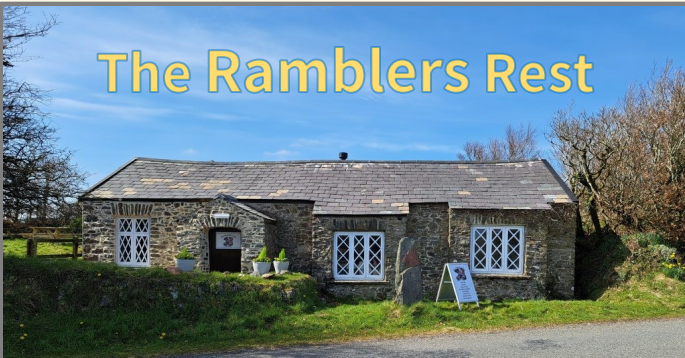


I think I speak for everyone who went on the holiday, that it was a very relaxing break, spending time doing what we all love - namely walking, and enjoying the countryside and nature. It was an opportunity for me to explore an area straddling the English/Welsh border that I had not visited for a long time, and to spend time chatting to fellow ramblers. The holiday was very efficiently organised by Janice with evening briefings and then the walks expertly led by her, Clarice, Peter and Helen. Thanks to them all for their hard work in making sure we were well fed and watered, and did not get lost! On the last point Janice discovered 'Woods of Whitchurch' who supplied us with delicious sandwiches each day.

I look forward with anticipation to another adventure in 2024..... And if you have not been on a North Devon Ramblers break before, I can certainly recommend putting it in your diary.

NEWS IN BRIEF

The Ramblers Rest



Antony & Jessica Chipperfield have opened a new tearoom at County Gate called 'The Ramblers Rest' on Good Friday and are offering a 10% discount to Ramblers members on production of a membership card. Their initial plan is for 24 spaces inside and 12 outside. It would be good to support their endeavour, and the car park at County Gate is a great place to start (and finish) a walk from.

AGM Notification

The 2023 Annual General Meeting for North Devon Ramblers will take place on Saturday 26th November at 2pm at Bishop's Nympton Parish Hall. We are keeping the same format as the previous 2 years, with a choice of 2 morning walks; bring your own lunch at the hall with teas and coffees provided; AGM for one hour followed by tea and cakes. (Donations of cakes gratefully received). The hall is modern and spacious, and there is a community shop next door. The annual reports will be available to read on the N Devon group website for at least a week before the meeting. Please do come along and support the committee and the membership, and share your views and ideas for the future of the group.

Committee Meetings

All group members are warmly invited to come along to a committee meeting and join in on the discussions and decision making for the group. It really does help us to have a fresh view on things, and you won't be "pushed" into taking on anything more than just giving your opinions. A big thank you to all those who have come along to a meeting already, and please come again sometime.

Committee meetings are held 3 monthly at The Castle Centre in Barnstaple at 7pm for a maximum of 2 hours. Next meeting is Thursday 19th October.



Did you see the local news on TV about the opening of The Tamara Way? It's an 87 mile path mostly following the Devon/Cornwall border along the Tamar Valley from Plymouth up to Marsland Mouth, then finishing at Morwenstow. For more information about the route visit the website [HERE](#)

Volunteer Needed !

Membership Secretary? Newsletter writer? Or how about Chair?

I (Clarice) have been asking, and hoping, for someone to take on the role of Membership Secretary, but alas, so far no-one has come forward. For the last two years, I have been the Memsec as well as the Chair, and the main writer for the newsletter. And at times, the combination kinda takes over my life! PLEASE have a think about whether the Memsec role is something you could do. It really is the least time consuming of the committee roles – involving one or two hours a month checking for new members and sending a welcome email; writing 5 very brief reports a year; and attending 5 meetings a year including the AGM.

Or if you don't fancy Memsec – how about writing, and gathering articles, for the newsletter? Release your inner journalistic ambitions.

Or perhaps you would like to be Chair?

Any of these roles are up for grabs as I cannot keep juggling them all.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



Coffee morning – It is great to see lots of people at the monthly coffee mornings. Do come and join us on the first Thursday of the month, 10.30 at Queen Anne's café in Barnstaple.



- **16/17th September** – Rosemoor Great Hobby Weekend
- **19th October** - Committee Meeting 7pm at The Castle Centre Barnstaple, all welcome
- **10th November** - Provisional date for Skittles evening ,
- **25th November** – AGM, 2pm at Bishop's Nympton Parish Hall
- **4th-7th January** - Festival of Winter Walks

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