

Hi everyone and welcome to the first newsletter of the year

North Devon Ramblers needs a new Chair and a new Secretary

No doubt you have all heard the news that both Janice and Clarice intend to step down from the roles of Secretary and Chair respectively, at the next AGM in November. To some, this may sound scary. But to others it will sound like an opportunity. Are you ready to take up this opportunity? Clarice says "As most of you know, I volunteered to be Chair at a particularly difficult time for the group, and I didn't have much of a clue about what I was supposed to do. But I had wonderful support from the committee, and the group members, and somehow, we have muddled through together. There is huge enthusiasm and a wealth of life experience within North Devon Ramblers and many people are willing to help – it is just taking that final step to take on a role. It really isn't as scary as it sounds. It's actually quite exciting and interesting being involved in decision making for the group, and knowing more about the wider Ramblers issues. And you don't have to do it alone – we have a great teamwork approach. Why not have a chat with me about what's involved? Or come along to a committee meeting and see what we do and how we make decisions? If I can do it, anyone can!"

If you have good organisational skills, you might be more interested in being Group Secretary. Have a chat with Janice to see what is involved. You would have a clear path to follow, and Janice would be able to support a new secretary until they are confident.

It would be so much better for the next Chair and Secretary to have had time to get to know the role before taking it on.



Featured articles

- ◆ [Devon Area Meet-Up](#)
- ◆ [Walking the Porlock Pilgrims' Way](#)
- ◆ [A Day Trip to Lundy](#)
- ◆ [Funding for Path Improvements](#)
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Keep an eye on our walks programme online or on the website, for some additional pop-up walks!

Devon Area Day

You are invited to a Devon Area Members Day on Saturday 13 April 2004, based at Wheddon Cross, where walkers from all Devon Ramblers groups can choose from 3 walks and enjoy talking and walking together. The theme for the day is to celebrate the Beauty of our two local national parks, Dartmoor and Exmoor. 2024 marks the 75th anniversary of the 1949 legislation which created National Parks, and the 70th anniversary of Exmoor National Park.

The plan is to meet at the Rest and Be Thankful pub, where we will be able to purchase tea/coffee from 10.00am before the walks start. (see walk details below)

On our return we will have access to the pub skittle alley to meet and chat until walkers from all of the walks have returned. We plan to have some quizzes or other activities to fill the afternoon.

We will be able to purchase tea/coffee and cake and the prize for the Devon Area Photographic competition will be awarded.

We are offering 3 walks on Sat 13th April from the village of Wheddon Cross, the highest village on Exmoor. Walks are of varying length and route. Walkers should note the local landscape is hilly with steep valleys, woodland, open moor, streams and farmland. All walks are graded moderate.

Car parking will be at Wheddon Cross car park, behind the Rest & Be Thankful Inn. If this car park is full, walkers should park at the huge Cattle Market car park a few hundred yards along the B3224 towards Exford (what3words portfolio.groom.feeds) and walk back to the pub car park.

ALL WALKS WILL START FROM THE PUB CAR PARK AND WILL LEAVE PROMPTLY AT THE TIMES

SHOWN. Walks will depart with a 15 min gap between each. Walkers are advised not to be late as walk leaders won't be checking the loos or pub or car parks for latecomers.

- **WALK 1 around 5.5 miles. Walk Leader : Sarah. LEAVE CAR PARK AT 11am**
- **WALK 2 around 7.5 miles. Walk Leaders: Janice & Clarice LEAVE CAR PARK AT 10.45am**
- **WALK 3 around 10 miles Walk Leaders: Richard & Anne LEAVE CAR PARK AT 10.30am**

See the website for full details

Please note – The B3224 between Exford and Wheddon Cross is closed, and likely to remain closed until May. Please find an alternative route. (e.g. via Withypool and Winsford)

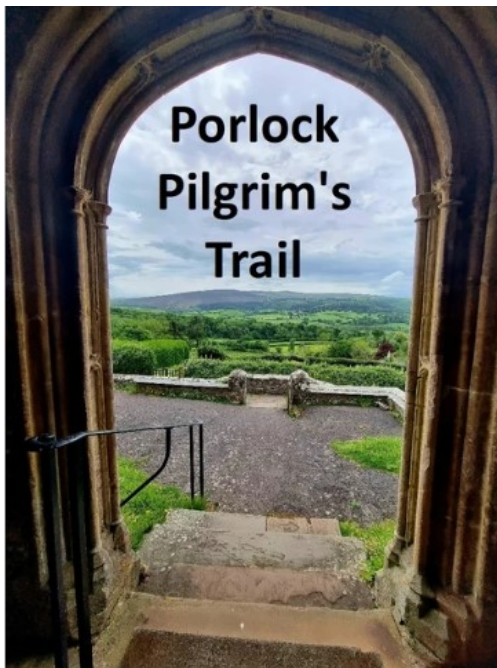
Devon Area Photographic Competition

A competition has been organised by the Ramblers Devon Area team. The theme is 'Highlighting the Pleasures of Walking on Exmoor or Dartmoor'. A cash prize of £25 will be awarded for the best photo taken by a Ramblers member, between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024. Entries by email, to John Howell – john.owl@btopenworld.com, with photos attached, details of when and where taken, and why you think the photo is special. An independent person will judge the photos.

Please join us for what should be should be a great day!

Welcoming members from across the county to a beautiful part of Exmoor.

Fingers crossed that we are blessed with blue skies and sunshine!



Pilgrims Are You Ready? ... Mo Bennett

Maybe you've done it, or maybe it's on your ever deepening bucket list? Walking the Camino de Santiago Compostela that is. There are lots of reasons to prevaricate - how to get there; which route; weather; trail length and of course the much reported epidemic of bed bugs enroute. Never fear, an alternative is at hand....drum roll....**The Porlock Pilgrims' Trail** with not a hint of a bed bug, but maybe a sly tick lurking in the undergrowth ready to pounce on unsuspecting walkers.

This route is a relatively new inclusion to the plethora of walking opportunities that our beloved Moor has to offer and has been devised by the Porlock Benefice. It is a linear route that extends for almost 30 miles and takes in 9 churches and chapels.

Do I hear a sharp intake of breath? *"30 miles, they're having a laugh! You can count me out!!"*

Our thoughts precisely. So, in the summer of 2022 three Ramblers/Wannabe Pilgrims sat down, poured over maps, discussed, planned and eventually came up with 3 circular walks. Backpacks at the ready, phones charged, plenty of food and drink and off we set armed with our trusty guide book, walking paths that have been ridden and walked by clergy and parishioners for hundreds of years.

The plan was for inclusion in the summer programme of 2023, but in the adapted words of Robert Burns 'The best laid plans of mice and women often go awry' They really did go awry and were postponed to 2024.



These three walks have been scheduled for April, May and June. There will be ascents and descents; groans and moans; laughter and pleasure hopefully. But this is what we do to appreciate the high moorlands, ancient oak woodlands, grassy slopes and Exmoor's tiny hamlets. No pain, no gain could be a very appropriate motto for Ramblers.

Please do join us, explore the gorgeous Exmoor on our doorstep and learn a little bit of the history of these ancient places of worship. Take a look at the following, little bite sized bits of information to tempt you further.

Some Highlights along the Pilgrims' Trail

- Culbone with its lepers' squint and a place of pilgrimage for more than a 1,000 years
- West Porlock's flat packed 'tin tabernacle'
- Porlock with its truncated spire - legend has it that a giant carried it off and placed it neatly atop Culbone church.
- Stoke Pero with its candle-lit services and Hope Bourne's picture of Zulu, the donkey



- Luccombe's ancient churchyard cross, decapitated by Cromwell's soldiers
- Tivington - truly the jewel in the crown, with its thatched roof



There is yet more to tell, hopefully your appetite has been whetted and remember, the definition of a pilgrim might be applied to ourselves -

“Any wanderer who is able to gain strength, hope and a sense of well-being from their walking “

Committee Meetings

We love it when members come along to a committee meeting, and join in the discussions and give their opinions on topics. Having more, and different views on things, really helps us make decisions about what the majority of the group might like or want. And yes, we are definitely looking for new committee members, (especially some who would be willing to take on the Chair and Secretary roles in the future!), but we promise not to nag you into these. If you would just like to come to a meeting to see what we do, and join in the discussions on an ad hoc basis, then you would be very welcome. Several members have come along in the last couple of years, and we really appreciate their time and interest. Why not try it and see? Next meeting is on Thursday 11th April at the Castle Centre in Barnstaple, 7pm for 2 hours. (The time passes quickly - honest)

Gazette Publicity Articles

Did you see the article about Ramblers, and our group, in the New Year issue of the North Devon Gazette just before our Festival of Winter Walks? Wasn't it great? One of their journalists is keen to promote walking and North Devon Ramblers on a regular basis, which is just brilliant. We are in contact with him to discuss details of what he would like (maybe up to a half page spread) and how often (maybe monthly) and how we can best manage this, although nothing is completely definite yet. Would you like to be involved in this? Liaising with the journalist, and providing articles and write-ups, and/or lists of upcoming walks with some photos? It would be great to have someone who could take this on. Please let Clarice or Janet know.

Festival of Winter Walks

We had a successful 4-day Festival of Winter Walks held in early January, and a number of new walkers came, some of whom have since joined our group. Many thanks to the walk leaders who lead such a wonderful variety of walks, showcasing our beautiful area.



Walk Leader Appeal

Thank you very much to the people who have come forward in the last few months to lead walks for the group. But in order to have a full programme of 2 walks a week, we still need some more walk leaders. Please can you help? If you could lead just one or 2 walks a year, it would make a big difference. You don't have to be a navigation wizard if you choose to lead a walk somewhere you know well. And remember – your local route which may seem tame to you, could be a voyage of discovery for others! There is lots of support available from Sarah, and other experienced walk leaders. Have a chat to one of us on a walk – it's easier than you think.

Rosemoor Hobby Weekend

Janet is looking for help with the Rosemoor Hobby weekend on Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th May. Could you come along for a morning or afternoon? Talking to the public about our group and the great walks we share. Free entry to Rosemoor is included, with time to look around the gardens and other stalls. Please let Janet know.

A Trip to Lundy



Following on from a suggestion at the AGM, we have a provisional group booking for a day trip to Lundy on Tuesday 11th June 2024. (Thank you Peter for investigating) Sailing from, and returning to, Bideford, at 9.30 am and 9.30 pm respectively, price £44.20 – the group rate if more than 10 people are going. We have reserved 25 places. **Please contact Clarice or Peter if you would like to join this trip.** We will need confirmed names and payments at least 4 weeks before sailing. (Payment details will be given to those interested.)

There will be a school trip to Lundy that day, and the Lundy Ambassadors will probably be busy with the children, but we can enquire again nearer the time to see if the Lundy Ambassadors may be able to talk or walk with us. There should be puffins, and many other birds to see. And no doubt, we will walk and explore the island. If you haven't been to Lundy before, it is well worth a visit. And if you have been to Lundy before – then I'm sure you would like to go again. Hope to see you there. 😊



Group Holiday

We are really looking forward to our group holiday to Sidmouth in May. What a gorgeous area to explore. We would like to offer a choice of 2 walks a day = 6 walks. And so far, we have 2 shorter and 2 longer walks on offer. Those of you who are coming – please ask yourself if you could lead a walk for the group? We have a number of walk routes you could choose to follow if you don't want to plan a route yourself. And you know that other walkers would be very supportive. Please can you help?

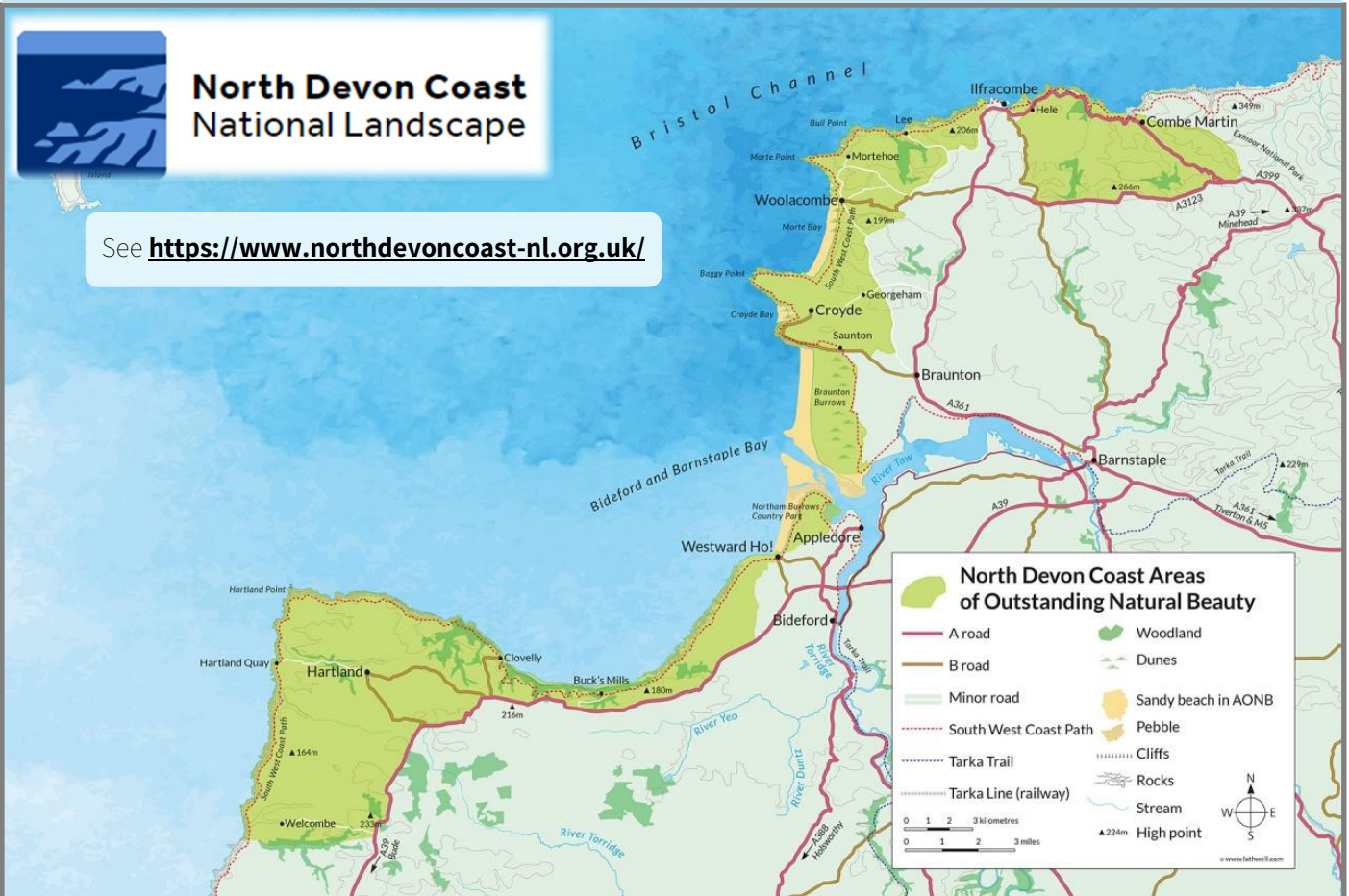


An idea we are looking into, is a summer afternoon/evening walk with food afterwards. Possibly Caribbean food, or maybe fish-n-chips. Watch this space! If you have any ideas of a suitable walk near Croyde Beach, then do let us know.



Funding for Footpath Improvements

It's great news that there is some extra money coming in April to be spent on improving access to footpaths. The newly rebranded National Landscapes, (which includes North Devon Coast AONB) have been tasked with carrying out these improvements, and our group has been asked to get involved in identifying places of need. We are asking all our members to look out for "locations in need" whilst they are out walking. See the map of the North Devon Coast areas below.



Note that the **National Parks** have also been allocated money for the same purposes. Particular things to look out for are – stiles that could be gates, better signage, and poor quality paths that could do with some major clearance or widening, patching up, or improved drainage. If you see somewhere like this – please take a photo, note the location, and let the Footpath Officers, or other committee members know.

Celebrating - The Doone Valley

The National Trust are looking to promote visitors and walking in the Doone Valley by having a mini festival in September with some guided walks, as well as updating their self-guided walks. They have asked our group (as well as other outdoor/history/nature groups) to get involved and lead walks or give talks. We think it's a great opportunity to be involved with the festival and publicise our wonderful group. What do you think? Could you lead a walk in the Doone Valley?

The proposed dates are the weekend of 14th and 15th September for guided walks, and during the following week a series of self-guided walks will be published online. All weekend walks will start and finish at Malmsmead – they have parking for up to 100 cars. Maximum 2 walks each day lead by us – one longer and one shorter. Longer walks of – say, 8 – 9 miles? Have a think if you would like to be involved with this. Date confirmation and more details to follow

Ramblers – Safety on Group Walks (Update)

As reported in the last newsletter, Ramblers are in the process of writing new guidance for walk leaders, with an emphasis on safety on group walks. The first draft was sent out to walk leaders 2 months ago for comment, and a new guidance document has been written, taking into consideration the feedback received. The new guidance is not being sent out for comment, but there are some online introduction and discussion sessions happening in the next few months – look out for an invitation on the Ramblers update emails. For those of you that read the first draft, please be assured that the new version is much better – it is shorter, sensible, and has a much more flexible sounding approach. The intention is for it to be reassuring for experienced walk leaders, and informative and helpful to new walk leaders. There will be an overall reference document available online, and some “pocket sized” guides for walk leaders to keep.

ICE? ICE? What is it about ICE? Can I have some for my G&T??

With safety in mind, and following discussion at the January committee meeting, the North Devon Ramblers Committee are strongly recommending that all those who walk with our group carry an ICE (In Case of Emergency) card, in their rucksack or on their person.

Please can all members ensure that they have this emergency contact information somewhere accessible. Please ask Janice, or walk leaders, for an ICE card.

And walk leaders – please ask Janice for a few ICE cards to keep handy. **And** -please start mentioning ICE cards (as a polite reminder) at the start of walks. We can't “force” people to comply, and if anyone seriously objects – give them Clarice's contact details.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CARD
PLEASE CARRY ON ALL WALKS

Personal Details

Name

Address

Contact number

Date of birth

Medical Information

Medical Conditions & Allergies

Medication

Primary Emergency Contact

Name

Relationship

Contact number

Secondary Emergency Contact

Name

Relationship

Contact number

Contacting the emergency services

With a phone signal
Dial 999 or 112 and ask for Police/Mountain rescue. It will pick up any available network.

With a reduced phone signal
Try to use Emergency SMS to text an emergency message to 999 or 112. Register your phone in advance at www.emergencysms.org.uk

Any emergency message should contain:
Your location (ideally terrain plus grid reference), name, gender and age of casualty, nature of injuries or incident, any known medical conditions, number of people in the party, the colour of your clothing/equipment, your mobile number.

If you can't get any message through, the International Distress Signal is 6 blasts on a whistle or 6 torch flashes – at 1 minute intervals.


ramblers
at the heart of walking

SEPT 2017

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. Next meeting is 7th March.



- **11th April** – Committee meeting 7pm at The Castle Centre, Barnstaple. All welcome
- **13th April** – Area Meet up day, with 3 walks from Wheddon Cross
- **4th and 5th May** – Table at RHS Rosemoor, Great Hobby Weekend
- **14th – 18th May** – Group Holiday at Sidmouth
- **11th June** – Day trip to Lundy. Interested? Let Clarice or Peter know

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair	Clarice Harwood	07972 510 903	email Clarice
Secretary	Janice Hurdle	07765 091 260	email Janice
Membership Secretary	Dune Simpson	07379 498 808	email Dune
Treasurer	Ruth Rouxel	07895 547 009	email Ruth
Footpath Officer (North Devon)	Jon Bennett	01271 375 906	email Jon
Footpath Officer (Torridge)	Mike Kelly	07495 048 339	email Mike
Walks Programme Secretary	Sarah McRae	07889 489 366	email Sarah
Minute Secretary	Lynne Clement	07757 384 893	email Lynne
Media & Publicity Officer	Janet Ellis	07599 093 973	email Janet
IT & Web Editor	Peter Loombe	07453 194 985	email Peter
WhatsApp Manager	Anne Hunnibell	07592 880 760	

Route Plotting Tool

Did you know you can plot your own routes on our website.? Take a look at the App by following this link <https://www.northdevonramblers.org.uk/walks/plot-your-own-walking-routes.html>

You Can

- upload a route using a GPX file
- create a new route
- edit the route
- see the elevation profile
- delete points in the route
- simplify the route (reduce number of points)
- reverse the route
- download/save the route as a GPX route
- choose between Open Street Map or OS mapping

Let Peter know how you get on and we will share some tips in the next newsletter 😊

Thanks to all of our contributors