

**A sign of
the times!**

No. 22

**February
2025**



Welcome to the first newsletter of 2025

A Message from our Chair



Welcome to the February newsletter! We have had a fantastic start to 2025 so far with Winter Walking Festival walks led by Leon, Steve, and Anne and Richard. Thanks to them and as always to Sarah for organising such an excellent walks programme. We have many exciting events coming up in the first half of 2025 at which I hope to see many of you, as well as on some of the great walks we have planned so far. As always, I encourage anyone considering leading a walk to take the plunge and offer one up this year. If you have concerns or questions then I'm a phone call or email away!

I attended my first coffee morning this week and it was fantastic to meet some members that I hadn't met before. I will be attending the Devon Area AGM on February 22nd which will be a chance to meet with other groups, discuss issues affecting the wider area and learn more from those present. If you have any thoughts about any issues that you'd like me to raise at this AGM then please get in touch.

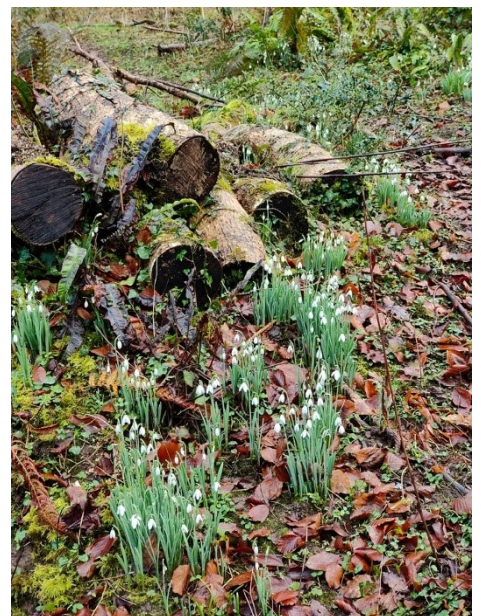
I look forward to seeing you all on an upcoming walk or at an event. And if I can do anything to make your experience of walking with NDR more enjoyable then please do reach out! ...Gemma

Walks Programme Secretary

We really, really need someone to be the new walks programme secretary, when Sarah finishes the role later this year. She has written a "Job Description" below, but says that as long as the Ramblers requirements are met, the new secretary can make the role their own. Ideally please come forward soon, so that you can work alongside Sarah preparing a programme and uploading the information and become familiar with the process.

The job description is [HERE](#).

Sarah's notes on what is involved to do the job are [HERE](#).



Upcoming Events



Leon is hosting a games night on Friday 21st February at The Corner House pub in Boutport Street, Barnstaple, at 7pm. There is an option to order food from The Catch, fish and chip restaurant nearby, and drinks can be bought from the pub.

Leon proposes having 5 games – Connect 4, Whist, Draughts, Rummikub and Poker, with more games available depending on the number of people present. There will be a simple game structure, with the emphasis on having a fun and sociable evening. This is a first venture, but could be repeated if it proves popular. So let's all support Leon by turning up on the night, prepared to have a great time (and win all the prizes of course!!) So that Leon can plan the event please let him know if you are planning to attend.

If you would like to pre-order food take a look at the menu, [HERE](#), and let Leon have your order by mid-day on the 21st. Please bring the correct money on the night to settle your bill.

Leon's email is leondz@wepl.co.uk

Annual Lunch

Come and join us for the Annual Lunch, at 12.30 on 9/3/2025 at The Pier House in Westward Ho! They have a popular Carvery - £9.50 small, £14.95 standard, or you can choose from the menu. (We might need to pre-order if lots of people want to choose from the menu.)

Please book a place with Lynne Clement **07757 384893**, lynneclément@hotmail.com, letting her know whether you would like the carvery or the menu option.

Lundy

After last year's successful trip to Lundy, and feedback at the AGM, the committee is proposing another trip to Lundy this year, but in a different format. Devon Birds have arranged a trip on Sunday 18th May, price £45 per adult. This will include the opportunity to sail around the west side of the Island, to watch the seabirds on the cliffs from a different angle. If you don't want to do the extra sailing, there will be more time to explore the Island. Bookings are open to non Devon Birds members [HERE](#) on a first come, first served basis.

If you wish to join this Lundy trip, you need to book yourself as an individual. Please let Gemma know when you have booked a place as we may be able to arrange a group walking opportunity for those that don't want to do the extra birdwatching. If you feel able to lead a walk on the Island, do let us know.





Dartmoor Way 2025



Come and finish our Dartmoor Way challenge during 2025

All are welcome whether you have walked any of the previous sections or not. The Dartmoor Way is a 108-mile circular long-distance path which goes around the edge of Dartmoor. Most of our walks have been circular which also takes us across the open moor.

The next 2 walks are:

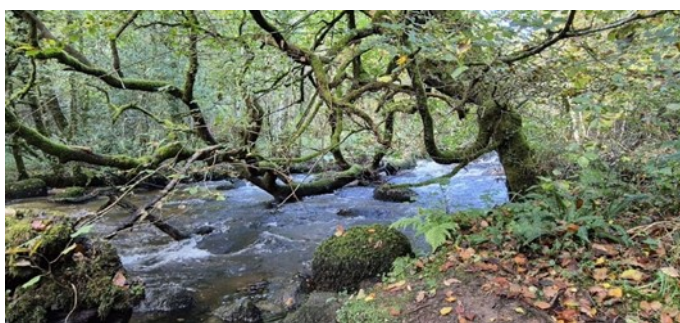
- Saturday 15th March – DW anti-clockwise 2 - North Bovey to Sharpitor & Water – 10 miles
- Sunday 6th April – DW anti-clockwise 3 – Parke to Water – 10.5 miles

The grand finale will be over two weekends in the Summer programme. We will return to Princetown to continue the High Moor Route. You can choose to walk on either one or both days and you might choose to stay over in the area. There are many pubs, hotels & B&Bs in the area, though they will need to be booked in advance.

- Saturday 10th May - Dartmoor Way 10 – Princetown to Hexworthy – 11.5 miles
- Sunday 11th May - Dartmoor Way 11 – Hexworthy to Dartmeet & Holne – 11.5 miles
- Saturday 19th July - Dartmoor Way 12 – Ashburton to Buckfastleigh & Holne – 10.5 miles
- Sunday 20th July - Dartmoor Way 13 – Reddaford Water to Ashburton via Hay Tor (Linear) – 11.5 miles



Any questions, please contact Janice on
janicehurdle24@outlook.com



Photocards and my Fundraising for North Devon Hospice

I have been a member of the North Devon Ramblers' group for about 6 years, joining after I retired from work. Over the years I have grown in my love for walking, enjoying socialising with strangers who have become friends, and my fitness has improved! I've appreciated all our wonderful leaders, who take me to areas I've often never been to before and would not go to on my own.

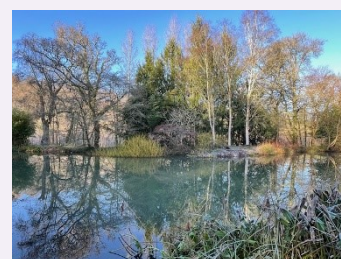
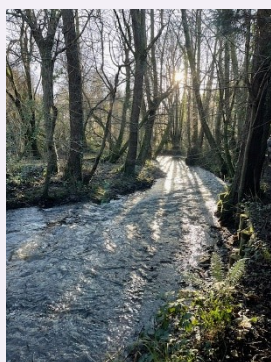
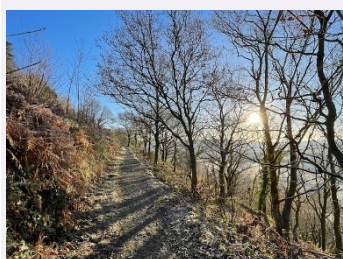
This developing enjoyment of walking and seeing God's wonderful creation all around, causes me to take photos on the way. I'm well known in the group for stopping and capturing the scenery and then hurriedly catch up with the group!!! Sometimes people even point out potential photo opportunities to me! These photos were mainly for my own pleasure (although I do share some on our WhatsApp Group after a walk). Last November: After having had a photocard for my birthday from a fellow Rambler, I had the idea of creating some cards to donate to the North Devon Hospice for them to use and raise funds. These photocards are blank inside and can be used for any occasion. Having donated the cards to the Hospice, a few days later I decided to order more cards to try and raise some money myself through my friends and contacts and I also had a stall at the Christian Christmas Craft Fair at Trinity Church in Barnstaple.

I'm delighted to say that I raised £430 in 6 weeks to the end of 2024 and have just recently handed over my cheque to the N D Hospice. I have supported them over many years and am personally grateful to the dedicated staff for their wonderful care of my late husband as a patient, and for the support extended to myself and my family.

A **HUGE** thank you to all those who have supported this 'growing project' of mine. I never would have dreamt of raising this amountencouraged to continue into this new year, I have some new designs for 2025 which I am happy to show anyone - just ask!

I look forward to many more Ramblers' walks scheduled in our new programme. ... Bridget

Some examples of recent photos.



NORTH DEVON Gazette

As you may know, our group has been submitting a monthly article for the North Devon Gazette for the last year. Although the distribution of the Gazette is not as wide as it used to be, it is still a wonderful opportunity to showcase our group, and the benefits of walking. We have had some great articles on many aspects of walking, celebrating festivals, individual stories, reporting footpath problems etc and we have received some very positive comments about the articles. We would like the articles to continue monthly, but we could do with some help. Could you write something? It can be about anything to do with walking. How and why did you become a member? What do you get out of the group? Is there somewhere you went to on a walk that you really liked? Do you know of an event/festival/celebration/challenge coming up this year that could be promoted? What about the wider aspects of being a member of Ramblers - Campaigning for the maintenance of footpaths, access to open spaces, the "Don't Lose Your Way" project? You could write a poem about walking or being outdoors or the scenery. Are you walking or have you completed a long distance footpath that you could write a small piece about? Please have a think and let Janet know if you can help. All ideas welcome



Have you heard of Meetup? Or are you thinking, what is that? "Meetup" is a social networking site that helps people find and join groups and events based on their interests.

Meetup could be used to promote and advertise our walks to a wider audience, younger people in particular. And Gemma is going to look into setting this up for the group.

!!Bad Weather!!

With the increase in the number, and severity of winter storms we are having, we have had to cancel a number of walks recently. It is not something we do lightly. But safety has to come first. We would always try and give notice of cancellations by using all means of communication including our Rambling Rogues WhatsApp group, Facebook, website, walks manager, phone calls and word of mouth. But when the cancellation is literally on the day due to something like a sudden main road closure due to black ice, we can only do our best to alert people who may already be enroute via different roads. Rambling Rogues is the most up to date communication format, as all participants are able to write a message. Notifications on Walks Manager, our website and Facebook rely on specific people being available to upload messages, which is not always possible.

When there is particularly bad weather, with weather warnings issued by the Met Office, before you leave home, **PLEASE** check the communication avenues listed above, and/or contact the Walk Leader, to confirm that the walk is going ahead. Walk Leader contact details are included in the walk listings either online or in the printed programme.

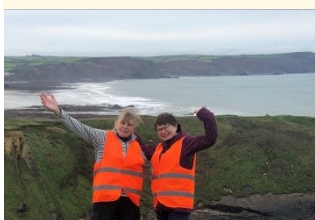


Not bothered by a bit of mud!

Walking News

New Walk Leaders

We are always hopeful that more members will come forward to lead walks. We are really grateful to those who have come forward in the last year, and of course, to those who have been leading walks for longer. There is always room for more walk leaders though! We have nearly 300 members, but fewer than 30 walk leaders, and we've been trying to work out why. From feedback at the AGM, it seems that the online training and worrying about the responsibility of being a walk leader are some of the main concerns. At the Committee meeting, we talked about how we could help with this, and have come up with an idea! How about organising some small group sessions – perhaps 2-4 people, with an experienced walk leader, somewhere with WIFI. Bring your laptop/tablet/whatever. And there will be lots of opportunities to talk through walk leading responsibilities and how to pick a good walk, as well as the training process. And you'll be able to ask questions about anything you're not sure about. What do you think? Is this a good idea? Is it something you might be interested in? Please do let Gemma, Sarah or any of the committee members know.



Hi Vis waistcoats

After only positive (and no negative) comments, we have purchased more of these with the intention of all walk leaders having 2 to keep – one for themselves, and one for their backmarker

Different paced walks

We would still like to try these. Gemma has a couple of walks in the Spring programme, which are listed as “brisker paced”. And there is nothing to stop walk leaders putting in walks listed as “gentle paced” as well. Ideally we would have about one walk a month listed at a specified pace, still keeping most of the walks “as usual”.

Ilfracombe

We have been asked to lead some walks for a visiting Ramblers group on 5th 6th 7th June. They are staying in Ilfracombe, and have a coach at their disposal, so linear walks are a possibility. Could you lead a walk of 6-7 miles? Please let Gemma know.

Summer socialising ideas

Could you lead a shortish walk one summer's evening to include a fish n chips supper, or a drink at a pub? This proved another popular idea at the AGM, but of course it depends on someone (or two or three people) to come forward with a walk. Have a think. It could be a great evening!



This May, June and July Cornwall South and West Ramblers are organising 8 day-walks along the Tamara trail and have extended an invitation for us to join them. For more information follow go to this link [S & W Cornwall Group](#)

SKITTLES EVENING - 2025



What a night to remember! More than 20 Ramblers turned out on a dark winter's evening to make this a memorable event. The company was excellent across the age ranges, from two very young guest skittlers, to us older folk who really aren't prepared to discuss any age over 50.

The first round was won by 17 year old Norbert, he literally smashed it! The skittles trembled in fear at the strength of his throws and literally fell over in submission. Not bad for a guy who's never seen, let alone played skittles before.

Half time was called. Last year we enjoyed fish and chips, this year something different - a bring and share supper. So much food, such variety for sharing - an absolute feast was enjoyed by all.

Then came the killer....tension built, confidence waned, skittle hands were trembling... Except for Killer Queen, Liz Roberts. Well done Liz, what a way to go on your first Ramblers' skittles evening.

Two big thank yous: Richard and Anne, we do appreciate your hard work in setting this up for us. Thank you also to the Mariners' Arms for hosting us and allowing us to bring our own food.

2026?.....Bring it on! ... **Mo**



How about playing Skittles at a different venue next time?

Any suggestions gratefully received!

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 6th March.



- **Friday 21st February** - Games night, 7pm at The Corner House pub, Barnstaple.
- **Saturday 22nd February** - Devon Area Ramblers AGM, Chudleigh, see below.
- **Sunday 9th March** - Annual Group Lunch, The Pier House, Westward Ho! Book with Lynne.
- **Sunday 27th April** – Group Holiday to the Black Mountains.
- **Sunday 18th May** – Lundy trip with Devon Birds. Individual booking.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Devon Area AGM

All members are invited to attend the Devon Area AGM which is taking place in Chudleigh Town Hall on 22nd February starting at 10:00. There will be a talk by Lucy Robinson (Chair of Ramblers Trustees), a 5-mile walk from the town and a workshop on supporting Walk Leaders . Details are on the [Area Website](#).

Thanks to all of our contributors