

**A sign of
the times!**

No. 24

**August
2025**



Welcome to the our Summer Newsletter

A Message from our Chair



Welcome to the Summer edition of our Newsletter and what a rambling-filled one it has been! We have had many fantastic opportunities for our members in the last few months including some fantastic walks combined with garden visits to Plaz Metaxu and an ecclesiastical history lesson on the Trio of Churches Walk. Summer evening Time Out Tuesday walks have proved a hit and the Dartmoor Way is complete, with Janice breathing a sigh of relief, I am sure! We have lots to look forward to in the latter part of the year with the Devon Area Day, Lorna Doone Walking Festival and the Opening of a new long-distance footpath, the South Hams Way. We also have our AGM coming up and look forward to seeing you there for the all-important coffee and cake (and maybe a little bit of talk about the boring stuff). As always, if you have any thoughts, doubts, comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to give me a call, drop me an email or chat to me on a walk. ... Gemma

!! We Need a New Walks Programme Secretary !!

We are starting to get really concerned about this, as unfortunately no-one has expressed any interest in taking on the role when Sarah steps down at the AGM in November. We know she'll be a hard act to follow, but the next person(s) can shape the role in their own way. There is a facility for walk leaders to put their own walks on the internet, but it really helps to have someone whose responsibility it is to do this, to check the grid references to ensure we all get to the correct start point, and who chases up the walk leaders to ensure that they get their walks in. Many of us have good intentions "I must sort out and submit a walk soon..." and then life gets busy and we forget. Reminder emails do what they say – remind us to get on with it.

Please, please have a think about coming forward for this. The role could easily be shared. Perhaps you could do the IT side? or the emailing? You don't need to have IT skills for the role if it is shared so please don't let this put you off!



Dartmoor Way - Janice Style

After 5 years, (with postponements due to Covid) and many enjoyable and varied walks, and 2 weekends of back to back walking, North Devon Ramblers has now completed the northern loop and high moor link of the Dartmoor Way. Nearly 100 miles of the Way, but we walked much further than that as most of the sections were circular. We are so very grateful to Janice for all her planning, reccying and walk leading, guiding us all safely along the way, and giving us nuggets of information about the history, flora, fauna and many interesting buildings we encountered. It has been a real project for the group, and a wonderful achievement. Here's what some of the walkers thought of it.



Its all been so Interesting - I've walked on Dartmoor for years and never visited many of the places before



Thoroughly enjoyed every section - Different to what I expected. I thought Dartmoor would be bleak moorland, but we've seen so much more than that. Lots of interesting villages around the edge of Dartmoor. I particularly liked the Haytor tramway.



Enjoyed the history and information - Janice has put a lot of time into researching things, and sharing her knowledge.



I've absolutely loved it - It wasn't just moorland. All the old buildings, churches, green lanes and little roads. It shows Dartmoor as it must have been 100 years ago and before. My favourite was the Throwleigh area, I remember really noticing, and being very taken with, all the beautiful moss covered granite stones and rocks. And since then, I notice them on all Dartmoor walks.



Thank you Janice - I am not confident to walk by myself, and especially on Dartmoor. It's been wonderful to be led, and enjoy the company of the group, whilst discovering so many lovely and interesting places.



My favourite section was from South Zeal - wonderful moorland, and a very interesting village, especially the standing stones in the pub (originally a manor house).



It's the variety - Climbing a high tor one minute, and down a green lane to a river the next. Scenery is my thing, and it's all been stunning. So varied, especially as we've walked during different seasons and in different weathers! I hadn't walked on Dartmoor before, and didn't know how amazing and varied it was - but I do now!



Delightful - My favourite section was the last one as it was so varied. Climbing high up to Haytor, following the tramway. Finding Haytor quarry, which seemed like an oasis, sheltered from the wind, and so beautiful with water lilies on the lake. Then the dramatic views from Haytor itself - we could see rain showers in the valley below, and beyond to the coast. That was followed by some path finding through heavy bracken, taller than ourselves. But we made it through! Then further down onto quiet roads, green lanes and tracks, and lastly a pretty river valley into Ashburton.

Janice has put access to all her walks on to the website
in case anybody feels inspired to walk themselves.

[Self Guided Walks](http://www.dartmoorway.co.uk)





Dartmoor Way - The Last Leg

Some photos taken during the last weekend of the Dartmoor Way odyssey



The amazing [granite tramway](#)

North Devon Ramblers holiday to the Black Mountains - April 2025

25 intrepid Ramblers made their way to Crickhowell, Wales, for a 4 night holiday. The Manor Hotel fitted our bill very nicely, with wonderful views over the Usk Valley, and a leisure suite with pool and jacuzzi – just great after a long walk. We all turned up laden with hats and layers, having been warned by those who reccied the walks a month earlier, how cold it was up the top of the mountains. But actually, we had the most delightful sunny weather and any breeze at the top of the hills was most welcome to cool us down! (we don't believe it rains in Wales!!)

Each of the 3 days, we had the choice of an easier or harder walk.

- Day 1 - we explored either the Usk Valley with wonderful views towards Table Mountain and Sugarloaf, and which included an impromptu and delightful canal-side café visit requiring a boat shuttle. Or we walked up to The Lonely Shepherd – a very picturesque rock formation overlooking hills and valleys galore.
- Day 2 - we went to Sugarloaf Mountain. The easier walk explored the lower slopes and valleys with far reaching views, and including some welcome shady woods for lunch. And the harder walk ascended to the top of Sugarloaf with its 360' views, (just magic) before, quite by chance, meeting up with the other group in the woods for lunch.
- Day 3 - we walked up to Table Mountain – a distinctive flat-topped hill, behind the hotel, with the most wonderful views over Crickhowell and the Usk Valley. The harder walk ascended Pen Cerrig Calch, at 701m (2300 feet) before descending via Table Mountain. We were able to have long (and very welcome) breaks in the sunshine to take in the glorious scenery, including towards Pen y Fan, further west in the Brecon Beacons.



Ramblers holidays are not just about walking. There is a lot of talking and socialising too. Pre dinner drinks on the hotel terrace, chatting about our day; walk briefings to discuss the next day's walk choices; sociable breakfasts and dinners on large tables so no-one gets left out; car sharing to get to and from the walks; and the option of dinner at a nearby Indian restaurant one night, which was really delicious. Quite a few Crickhowell cafes and pubs were also explored for tea and cake or a refreshing pint after a walk. If you would like any recommendations – just ask!

Huge thanks to Janice, for her brilliant holiday organisation. And to Bridget, Gemma and Clarice for their assistance in reccying and walk leading.

Finding Clicket!



If thinking about a deserted medieval village on Exmoor, understandably the first name that comes to mind would probably be Badgworthy and its association with Lorna Doone. However, there is another deserted village - Clicket. This little hamlet is far less known and more difficult to find, tucked away at the bottom of a steep-sided valley between Timberscombe and Churchtown.



Clicket is not marked on Google maps, but clearly identified, but not necessarily easy to find, on OS maps. Whichever way you approach the village there are numerous finger posts guiding you, but nothing to tell you 'this is Clicket'. Winter is the best time to visit, with less vegetation it is easier to identify the ruins as Mother Nature strips back the trees and bushes to reveal the crumbling ruins.

Very little is known about the community and the families that once chose to live in this rural part of Somerset but thanks to the dedication of some local experts, some of Clicket's lost history is rising to the surface.

Early official records for Clicket are almost non-existent, due to the area being economically deprived, but a medieval lay subsidy dates one farm building, Thorn Farm and a mill building, back to the 14th Century and it is shown as a small settlement on the Tithe Map of 1844. The records then go quiet until the early 1840s when school, tax and church documents can officially place families living in Clicket.

Up until the end of the 19th Century it was a thriving community. It had a corn mill that serviced local farms, a chapel and several quarries that provided lime. These lime quarries were situated on what is now Allercott Farm and two lime kilns still survive. One in good condition, one poor. The kiln was served by a tramway which terminated at the kiln head. Some rusting sections of rail can still be seen at the top of the kiln. Typically a kiln took a day to load, three days to fire, two days to cool and a day to unload.

Clicket had no church, shop or school and residents would have travelled to nearby Timberscombe or Luxborough for church services. A large house in Clicket was reputed to have been used for meetings, religious or otherwise. A Christians' magazine mentions a congregation of 70 at one gathering.



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School children had a difficult walk through the valley to Timberscombe, sometimes in poor weather. In snow, travel must have been arduous, and possibly dangerous. Attendance of some of the children at school was sporadic, especially at harvest time when they would have been expected to help out.



ONLY KNOWN PHOTOGRAPH OF CLICKET RESIDENTS, c1875

Towards the end of the 19th century economic changes affected many rural communities. Competition from more efficient mills making use of mechanisation, coupled with Clicket's poor access without carts, meant that the mill was abandoned by 1900. By the start of the 20th Century it had been all but abandoned and there were just three people living there, with the rest of the villagers having already left to seek a better life elsewhere. The coming of the railway to Somerset in the late c19 gave people choice.

The last people to live in Clicket, albeit unofficially after it had been deserted, were an elderly couple. Desperate to avoid going to a poorhouse after being evicted from their cottage, they moved into the derelict mill despite it having no windows or doors. It is thought that the woman had no choice but to go to the poorhouse when her husband died about a year later.

There are occasional guided walks to Clicket, check out Exmoor National Park, Exmoor Society and local rambling groups for upcoming events.

Lundy Trip

“Didn’t we have a lovely time, the day we went to Lundy...” ! The weather was perfect, the sea was calm, and we had the exceptional treat of a cruise around the Island. Seeing the cliffs on the west side really brought it home, how rugged, and steep they are. To think there used to be a landing place there is a bit mind boggling – how on earth did they manage to climb up?! We had great views of the seabirds – puffins, razorbills and guillemots flying out and back from their nests on the cliffs.

There is so much to see on Lundy, and a wealth of history to explore. Apart from the many birds, we saw deer, ponies, sheep and seals, as well as a wonderful variety of wild flowers. This was a Devon Birds organised trip, open to all, and we can recommend it for next year. The passenger numbers were limited and there was more room than usual to move around the boat and get a good view.



Visiting Ramblers group

Deeside Ramblers visited Ilfracombe in June, and asked us to lead some walks for them. Many thanks to Ruth, Steve and Clarice for leading walks on 3 consecutive days. I think we showed them an excellent range of walks – Malmsmead, Lynton and the coast path to Combe Martin, and the visitors expressed their grateful thanks. I wonder if they realise how lucky they were when Steve “arranged” a rare sighting of The Waverley paddle steamer out at sea? Perhaps you can do that again on your next walk for the group, Steve??

PLAZ METAXU GARDENS ... Mo

By chance the television was switched on to one of Monty Don's gardening programmes. That week outstanding gardens from the south west were featured. Monty moved on from the Lost Gardens of Heligan to an 'unnamed location' in north Devon. He described it as a jewel of a garden, nestling in a valley between two combes. A perfect description, but where is it?

A Google search also placed it, equally vaguely, as somewhere in North Devon. However, because of the outstanding nature of Plaz Metaxu it was considered to be worthy of inclusion in the Devon Local Register of Parks and Gardens. Ah ha- at last a clue!

The register provides an OS grid reference for its listings. This revealed Combe House in Witheridge to be the location. A seed was sown (No pun intended 😊). Would the gardens make a possible venue for Ramblers when combined with a short, local walk? The rest is history.

More than 20 of us gathered in Witheridge Square and walked the short distance to Combe House. The owner, Alasdair Forbes, was a charming host and passionate about his achievements that have taken more than 30 years to create. In the most perfect weather he gently walked us through 32 acres of wonderment.

Plaz Metaxu translates as the 'The Place Between'between the two combes. His particularly interest in 'Greek mythology, poetry and post-Jungian psychology' inspired this garden design.

It was a haven of tranquillity and beauty. There were water features; familiar and very unfamiliar trees alongside the woodland; stone features; modern sculptures; a walled flower garden; a restored cobbled courtyard; unrestored farm buildings complete with cider press....and so the list goes on.

We were allowed our picnic lunch under the shade of the trees. Some walked back to their cars, the rest did a short walk to complete the day.

In the words of Barbara H. ***'Wouldn't it be lovely to visit in another season?'*** or in other words , perhaps another visit could be arranged, hint, hint?

Alistair Forbes allowed us to take personal photos, but asked us not to share them publicly. As this newsletter does have public access, we have significantly curtailed the photos displayed here. The gardens are very beautiful, and they are definitely worth a visit to take your own pictures.



Mystery at Coldridge Church

King or Commoner?

Coldridge, a quintessential English village in mid-Devon. There's thatched cottages, a village green and a fascinating church which dates back to the C12th. This church could hold the key to the mystery of the 'Princes in the Tower'.



King Richard III was widely believed to have had his two nephews, Edward V (12) and Richard (9), murdered, so he could claim the English throne in 1483. He imprisoned the young heirs to the House of York in the Tower of London, but their bodies were never found. Historians have spent centuries trying to prove whether they did indeed die or somehow survived.

Coldridge is being studied as part of the Missing Princes Project. Historians, such as Philippa Langley of Richard III fame, have been working on the project. They want to establish the true identity of John Evans, medieval Lord of the Manor and Deer Park at Coldridge. There is a theory that he was the missing Prince, Edward V, who may have been moved to Coldridge following a possible deal with Richard III.

The church contains a rare stained-glass portrait of Edward, which was installed by John Evans and has a crown above it. There are a number of other clues in the church, including on John Evans' tomb, on the floor tiles (Barnstaple tiles, by the way) and on the roof bosses. There is also a family connection to the church, the princes' half-brother Thomas Grey owned land in Devon, including Coldridge.

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Their mother, Elizabeth Woodville, made a deal with Richard III and left the sanctuary of Westminster Abbey in 1484 with her daughters. Two days later Robert Markenfield, an ally of King Richard III, was sent down to Coldridge from Yorkshire. Could he have been given the task of overseeing the young Edward?

To have all these symbolic details in such a remote and inaccessible church, which in 1500 would have only been accessed by cart track, and is right in the centre of rural Devon, suggests the presence of a person of importance.

Was this person Prince Edward V?

To end the speculation surely a simple resolve would be to DNA test the presumed remains of the Princes, interred in an urn in Westminster Abbey. The remains were last examined in the 1930s. The science has moved on, Richard III's DNA has been authenticated and could be used to provide a definitive answer. However, therein lies another problem. To test the interred remains requires royal assent. That this hasn't happened in itself generates more speculation.

There are frequent monthly tours which coincide with the community lunch day. Glorious food and fascinating history in the most unlikely of places. Well worth a visit. ...Mo





Gemma has been leading a series of evening walks with optional pub visit afterwards, alternating between Bideford and Barnstaple, and named "Time out Tuesdays" which has proved to be very successful, attracting 18-29 walkers a time, with a good mix of members and new walkers – many of whom are coming regularly, and some of whom have now become members! These have been so successful, that Gemma extended them a further 4 weeks, with the last one on August 19th in Barnstaple. The plan is to repeat Time Out Tuesdays again next year! Hoorah!

And... hoping to keep the motivation going for Time Out Tuesday walkers, Gemma has submitted a number of shorter weekend walks in the Autumn programme – have a look and see!



2026 Group Holiday

Shropshire Hills

Hopefully you are now very aware that Janet has reserved a 4 night holiday for our group, guided walking with HF Holidays, at their Church Stretton house, starting Monday 16th March 2026. We need to pay the deposit by end of August. Please contact Janet ASAP if you are interested in going, and for further information.



Southern Spain

Leon is looking at the feasibility of a 7-day walking holiday in Southern Spain. Nothing definite yet but please let him know if the following is of interest so that this might be taken forward.

Location - Arboleas, near Almeria

Proposed date - September or October 2026

Choice of walks on 5-days with 2-days to explore the area.

Hostal Meson Arboleas is first choice for accommodation

Recommend flying to **Alicante** from **Newquay**

Transport could be an issue , we will need sufficient drivers and hire cars

Fancy some autumn sun, good walking, tapas and wine then contact **Leon** on **07836 552280**

MEDIA & PUBLICITY



About Rambling Rogues

The group was started in December 2019 as an informal chat group for all things related to North Devon Ramblers. For example,

- ◆ Arrange lift shares,
- ◆ Ask questions about upcoming walks and activities,
- ◆ Share photos taken on the walks,
- ◆ Show our appreciation to our wonderful walk leaders.

If any member has concerns that a message which is not related to NDR has been missed by the admin then please advise any member of the committee.

To date posts are seen by 75 members. We kindly ask that posts are kept relevant to our walking group, its's walks and social activities.

If you wish to post holiday photos or other information please consider sending to individual members rather than to the group as a whole.

Disappearing messages are fixed at 90 days, this means that any media posted will not be automatically saved to your photos. But you can save photos, if you wish, by pressing on the photo and then press save from the option list.

Should you find that Rambling Rogues is not your thing you can of course remove yourself at any time.

Over the past five years Rambling Rogues has proved to be a real asset to North Devon Ramblers, our friendly group of walkers.

To join the group please message or call **Anne Hunnibell** on **07592 880760** with the following information

- ◆ **First name, Last Name**
- ◆ **Mobile phone number**
- ◆ **Ramblers Membership Number**
- ◆ **Please also indicate whether you already use WhatsApp**

How to stop those annoying Notifications every time a message arrives

Select the Rambling Rogues Group from your list of chats and click on the group name at the top of the screen.

- Click Notifications.
- Click Mute Notifications and select Always – this will mean that your phone will never chime when a new message is posted in the group but you will have a notification.
- Or Click Notify For and select Highlights – this will not prevent all notifications but will limit them significantly.

Janet continues to do a great job publicising our group walks in local magazines, and co-ordinating the monthly articles in the North Devon Gazette. Liz is also working hard to keep our Facebook page live and interesting, ably assisted by Mo, who often writes a short piece about a walk for Facebook, as well as longer articles for the Gazette. Please consider writing something yourself – either a few sentences about a walk you have enjoyed for Facebook, or a longer piece for the Gazette. It all helps to get the group noticed and encourages new people to come along.



Gemma is also working at getting North Devon Ramblers on Meet up



Our Instagram account is active and posts from Facebook can be shared to the new platform

NEWS IN BRIEF

Walk Leader Training

Have you noticed the news from Head Office that they are still tweaking the requirements for Walk Leader training? Please don't be alarmed. It really is quite straightforward, and just sounds more complicated than it is, and only affects all us "old" leaders, (who started leading before June 2024 when the new training began) All existing walk leaders will have received individual notification of any requirements they need to comply with, which boils down to either doing the online walk leader training – which is actually quite interesting, and can be done in a couple of hours, and doesn't include a test or anything. OR ticking a box to say you have led 12 walks in the last 3 years – i.e., their walk leading knowledge and skills are current. Good news, Ramblers has just released an in- person training course that will make this a whole lot easier, see below.

STOP PRESS

We are holding a Walk Leader social and training evening on Monday 13th October, 6.30 – 9.30 pm, at the Castle Centre in Barnstaple. We will work through the Walk Leader training course (whilst enjoying some refreshments and a chat!). We would love to have anyone along including anyone interested in becoming a walk leader (give the training a go, even if you're not sure about leading a walk yet and then you'll have it in the bag for when you're ready!) as well as current walk leaders that just want to update their skills despite having done the 12 required walks, or help others, or just want to chat and eat cake! However, if you do need to do the Walk Leader training in order to retain your Walk Leader status and you aren't confident with doing this by yourself, then this is your opportunity and we want to prioritise you!

Disability Ambassador Programme

We have been asked to become a Disability Ambassador group. This initiative aims to help people with disabilities and long-term health conditions feel welcomed, confident, and supported to join our activities. Disabilities and long-term health conditions come in many forms, often unseen. We might support someone recovering from illness or injury, looking to rebuild confidence after time away from social activities. This is about helping people take positive steps back into community life.

So we are looking for someone that might be interested in taking the lead on this and becoming our Disability Ambassador. There is some training involved but it is minimal and over the course of a year.

You provide a friendly face for the first couple of sessions, just helping them settle in and feel welcome.

You are not expected to be an enabler; this is about helping people feel comfortable joining independently.

If this is something that you would want to do, or if you'd like more information, please contact Gemma.

"Calling all walk leaders - current and potential" PLEASE can you help fill a gap in the Autumn Walks programme? Maybe you have a local route that you walk often - it isn't local to everyone, and many members will be glad to walk it, so that they get out on a walk and meet up with others. Or, if you really can't see yourself as a leader, do you know of a walk somewhere that would be suitable, or an area that we haven't been to for a while? Talk to one of the walk leaders about it, as they may well be glad of a different idea, and be willing to lead it for you.

Upcoming Events

Devon Area Day – Saturday 20th September

Remember last year, we hosted a Devon Area Day from Wheddon Cross, inviting all Devon Ramblers to attend, and offering 3 walks? This year, Exeter Ramblers are hosting, and have chosen The London Inn, in Okehampton as the base.

They are offering a choice of 3 walks, followed by (optional) refreshments and socialising in the pub afterwards. It would be great if our group can support this, in the same way as other groups supported us last year. There will also be a Photographic Competition which will be judged independently, for which there will be a £25.00 prize. The theme for this year's competition is 'What makes Devon a special place to walk'. Photos to be taken between 1 September 2024 and 1 September 2025, maximum of three entries per person. The result will be announced at 10.15am before the walks start. So cameras at the ready and see if you can follow in Mo's winning footsteps from last year, or maybe she's on a winning streak! Please email entries to John.owl@btopenworld.com

Lorna Doone Valley walking festival - 8th to 14th September

The National Trust are hosting a week-long festival of walks this year, and have asked us to be involved in leading some walks again. Our group has 2 walks, on Monday 8th, and Thursday 11th. (See walks programme for details.) The walks are open to the public, and it would be great if lots of our members can come on these walks too, to support the walk leaders, and chat to potential new members and let them know how wonderful the group is! There are walks on other days too, led by other groups – see the NT website for details of those.

South Hams Way - Launch Day

South Hams Ramblers have created a 100 mile walking route circumnavigating the South Hams area using existing paths, tracks and lanes. They are having a celebratory launch day on 14th September 2025, when South Hams Ramblers will lead a number of walks on the same day. Our group are supporting this and the details of the event are in the Walks Programme.

For more information about the new route visit the [South Hams Way website](#).



Annual General Meeting

This year the group AGM is on Saturday 15th November, 2pm at Weare Giffard Village Hall. Similar format, with a choice of 2 morning walks, "bring your own lunch" at the hall (tea and coffee available), AGM meeting at 2pm, followed by tea and cakes. Donations of cakes, and help sorting the kitchen and making tea, 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 on the Strand in Barnstaple. Next meeting is 4th September.



- **Monday 8th to Sunday 14th September** - National Trust Lorna Doone Walking Festival.
- **Sunday 14th September** – Launch of South Hams Way.
- **Saturday 20th September** – Devon Area Day. Okehampton. See above.
- **Monday 13th October** – Walk Leader training meet-up. 6.30 – 9.30 pm at the Castle Centre, Barnstaple.
- **Tuesday 21st October** – Committee meeting, 7pm – 9pm at The Castle Centre, Barnstaple. All welcome.
- **Saturday 15th November** – Group AGM 2pm at Weare Giffard Village Hall. With a choice of 2 morning walks – see programme for details.
- **Monday 16th to Friday 20th March** – Group Holiday to the Shropshire Hills.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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