

**A sign of
the times!**

No. 26

**March
2026**



Welcome to the our Winter Newsletter

A Message from our Chair



It has been an extraordinarily rainy start to the year with some fantastically muddy and drizzly walks having taken place, and we are surely looking forward to some spring sunshine and the longer days! We had the first of the year's social activities, a delicious annual lunch at the Park Hotel in Barnstaple, capably organised by Bridget, with 28 group members in attendance. Thank you Bridget, and we were sad to not have you there! Lots more to come on the social calendar this year with the upcoming skittles evening, group holiday and lots more! Hope to see you there! We also have our International Women's Day walk on 8th March led by Mo and Clarice and I really recommend checking out Mo's fantastic North Devon Gazette article on the History of Women Walkers. Myself and Trudy have been working on some small changes to the way in which we present our walks to try to be more descriptive and ensure that walkers know what to expect on any given walk, more info to follow over the next few months! I'm looking forward to starting up again with Time Out Tuesday, bigger and better than ever with 5 months worth of summer evening walks expanding to Braunton and Ilfracombe alongside Bideford and Barnstaple, make sure you're there and let anyone you feel might be interested know! As always, you can catch me on a walk or contact me by email or phone if there's anything you want to discuss! ... *Gemma*

Publicity

Mo and Hils are doing a really great job with publicity. They are regularly submitting our walks to the local magazines, and have some excellent ideas for the monthly articles in the Gazette, as well as writing short pieces on Facebook before and after walks. It is always fun to read about and reflect on our lovely walks – have a look and see! The more people that look and click “like” on our Facebook page, the more our online presence grows, and the more people will discover us and see what a brilliant walking group we are. We have include a couple of recent articles in this newsletter .

[Searching for Water Buffalo](#)

[Celebrating International Women's Day](#)



We are on Meetup, click on the icon to see our upcoming events. If you click on the “ATTEND” button it will help to raise our profile and more people will hear about our events.

Searching for Water Buffalo on Exmoor

Thirteen Ramblers set off on the first 'long but slow walk' designed to appreciate the varied views we have in North Devon. The added bonus of this walk was the chance of spotting the six water buffalo recently introduced to Tattiscombe on Exmoor with the intention of restoring agricultural land to its original state.

We started off along the SWCP with good views along the coast towards Peter Rock before walking across Trentishoe Down and enjoying the winter colours.

We were looking across towards Tattiscombe in the distance, but without any real anticipation of seeing the water buffalo in this area. Suddenly, just before we entered the wood, a sharp-eyed Rambler spotted water buffalo. Not one, not two but all six!



They were in a field just below the footpath and close to the field boundary, so we had a clear view.

After coffee we continued along the lane enjoying the sound of running water. Whilst looking at Trentishoe Water, a donkey in the field was spotted.

Lunch was spent above Tattiscombe Farm with binoculars scouring the landscape over the valley looking for more sightings. We returned along the SWCP around Holdstone Down and heard about this 'holy mountain' with its history of spaceships and extra-terrestrial forces from one of the group. Good views of Sherrycombe & an atmospheric Great Hangman with mist hovering below the top provide a good end to an enjoyable walk..



Ramblers Walking for International Women's Day (IWD)

IWD originated from early 20th-century labour movements in North America and Europe. The first official IWD was marked in 1911. The UN officially recognized it in 1975, transforming it into a globally celebrated day aiming to increase gender equality. In the 21st century it is still a day of celebration.

Everyone, everywhere can play a part in helping forge and improve gender equality. Walking is one activity that can ameliorate some gender inequality issues.

Historically this has not been the case. The perception was that walking was a male prerogative. Women were considered the weaker sex and unlikely to have the stamina for walking. Fashion styles were prohibitive with regard to outside activities. Societal constraints were considerable. It just wasn't a seemingly activity for women. There were, nonetheless, some amazing groundbreaking women who were determined to challenge societal authoritarianism.

- ◆ Women such as:-Elizabeth Carter (1717–1806): An 18th-century poet and scholar who was a pioneer of walking for pleasure.
- ◆ Dorothy Wordsworth (1771–1855): Diarist and poet was a dedicated long-distance Lakeland explorer, and made one of the first recorded ascents of Scafell Pike.
- ◆ Ellen Weeton (1776–1849): A 19th-century governess known for her notable solo ascent of Snowdon.
- ◆ Sarah Stoddart Hazlitt (d. 1822): Took several extraordinary, long-distance tours of the Scottish Highlands.
- ◆ Harriet Martineau (1802–1876): A novelist and sociologist who walked extensively to explore the Lake District.
- ◆ Virginia Woolf (1882–1941): Used her walks to inspire her writing.

To these women, and many more besides, we owe our thanks. They paved the way for our 21st century walking freedom. For those that lack confidence to walk alone, or prefer to walk in company, there are many local walking groups, North Devon Ramblers being one of them.

On March 8th, in celebration of IWD, North Devon Ramblers were out walking, with both men and women. This walk was on Exmoor and as a small tribute to IWD it will incorporated Ladies Mile.



SOCIAL EVENTS

At the AGM, members asked for and suggested that the group has more **social occasions** – games night, lunches, quiz, treasure hunt etc - the first step is the idea, thank you. But the next step needs people to be willing to organise. How about it? Could You organise something? Perhaps you could link with a friend to share the organising.

Are you a budding quizmaster? Might you fancy quizzing us all? Or do you know a suitable venue for a quiz? Do let us know.

Another suggestion was for short walks with pub lunch after. How lovely would that be! There are many places we thought of with a good pub to eat in. Liaise with the pub and you could probably park there for a walk, pre-order food at the start of the walk to save time afterwards. How about Georgeham, Landkey, Blackmore Gate, Hunter's Inn x2, Forest Inn, Westleigh Inn, Swimbridge, Westward Ho! Golf Club, to name a few. Have a think – could you organise a walk and lunch like this?

Or maybe you have a different idea for a social occasion? Do let us know!

THEMED WALKS

At the AGM, members said they very much appreciated all the walk and thanked the walk leaders for leading them. There was a suggestion that we might have more themed walks with a particular bit of local interest. Looking some of the upcoming walks there is a lot to look forward to with a great variety of walks.

- ◆ Janice has a series of “long and slow” walks for those who can do the distance but not a fast pace, or who want to take more time to appreciate the scenery and views. The first of these walks was much enjoyed – especially when they saw the water buffalo! (See Mo's write up earlier in this Newsletter)
- ◆ Mo will start her series of shorter, leisurely paced walks with a coffee shop in April.
- ◆ And watch out for a Mo walk with a definite and fascinating bit of local history coming up in May!
- ◆ Also in April, Gemma restarts a series of her fabulous and popular Time out Tuesday walks in the evenings on, yes – you guessed it. Tuesdays!
- ◆ And there's a hint that someone is putting together a series of walks (of 8 – 12 miles) loosely following the Archangel's Way on Dartmoor visiting several churches and chapels along the way.

If you have an idea for a walk, please do think about leading it, or sharing it with a walk leader who may be willing to lead it with/for you.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Walks and walk leading

At the recent committee meeting, the ideas from the AGM about walks and walk leading were discussed at length, and some areas are still being looked at – watch this space! But some of the positive changes that have already been decided on, are:-

Trudy is going to trial a 3-monthly walks programme, so that walk leaders don't have to commit so far in advance.

AND – Trudy has reduced the necessary time for submitting a pop-up walk to 10 days. (For Ramblers insurance, walks need to be advertised on Walks Finder for at least 7 days.)

So calling all walk leaders – if you fancy leading a walk in 10+ days time – just pop it in to Trudy: put a message on Rambling Rogues: Let Mo know and she can promote the walk on Facebook: and away we go!

Regarding walk leading... we always need more walk leaders to come forward to lead walks. If anybody has even the smallest inkling to do this – please just ask or have a chat with someone about it. All our walk leaders are willing to talk about walk leading and share their experiences, most would be willing to “buddy” with you, help choose a route, plan, reccy and lead. If you're worried about map reading – choose an easier rather than harder walk, in an area you know quite well and not too far from civilisation. And start looking at gaining some map-reading skills as above.

SKITTLES EVENING - 2026



What a night to remember! More than 20 Ramblers turned out on a dark winter's evening to make this a memorable event.

Two big thank yous: Richard and Anne, we do appreciate your hard work in setting this up for us.

Map Reading Skills

We are looking into the cost and practicalities of getting some professional map-reading tuition. It's quite a big topic, so we would start with basic map reading, and if it is successful, we could think about repeating the course and/or extending the skills. Once you have some basic map reading skills, using the OS app makes more sense – honest!

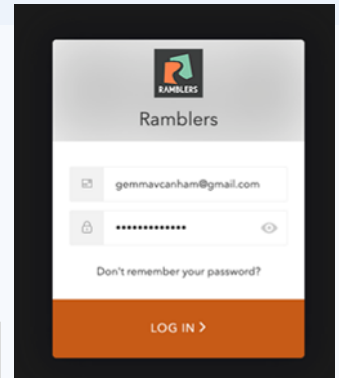
In the meantime – why not have a look at some map reading tuition online? The OS website has several free nuggets of map reading tuition in bite-size pieces. To access the article follow this link to

[Beginner Guides](#)

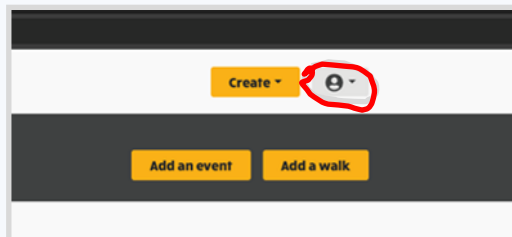
Walk Leaders Contact Preferences

Thanks to all those walk leaders who have updated their contact preferences on Walks Manager. It means that prospective walkers can contact you directly if they have a question about your upcoming walk, rather than go through one of the committee who don't know the walk details. If you haven't managed to do this yet, here are the instructions – it should be straightforward, and only takes a couple of minutes to do.

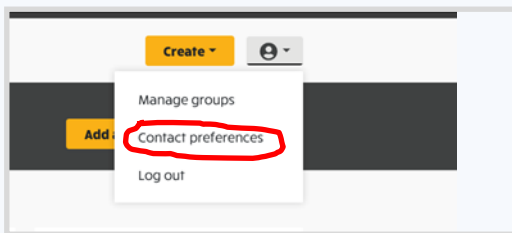
Step 1: Log in to Walks Manager at the following link: <https://walks-manager.ramblers.org.uk/walks-manager>



Step 2: At the top right of the page, click on the person button:



Step 3: Click Contact Preferences



Step 4: Update your permissions and click Save

rg.uk/user/contact-preferences

Use this form to manage how your display name (first name & initial) and contact information are shown on group walks you are leading. We recommend including your name and contact details so that walkers know who to ask if they have questions about the walk, or need to get in touch on the day.

Your display name

Gemma C.

Contact number

07305728883

Email address

gemmavcanham@gmail.com

To change your contact information, please go to My Account, then My Details.

Permission

- ☒ I give permission for my **display name** to be displayed on walks and events
- ☒ I give permission for my **email address** to be used to receive messages via the walks and events contact form
- ☒ I give permission for my **contact number** to be displayed on walks and events

Please note: if you share your display name or phone number, this information will be visible on group walks you are leading which are listed on the Ramblers website and app, or on some group/area websites. If you choose to receive messages to your email via the contact form, your email address will not be publicly shown.

If you choose not to give permission, a group contact number and/or email will be used on group walks you are leading.

Save

Please note, if you chose to not provide either your email or phone number, please let Trudy or Gemma know so that we can update our internal records. Please also let us know if you are doing so because you prefer not to receive communications by email or by phone so we can add these details to the walk information.

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.



- **16th - 20th March** – Group holiday to Shropshire.
- **30th May – 7th June** - Ilfracombe Coast Festival. Could you lead a walk?
- **TBD** Potential Group trip to Lundy
- **Various dates** celebrating 50 years of the Two Moor Way (See walks programme)

Lundy Last year, some members joined the Devon Birds Lundy trip which was brilliant. However tickets for this event are now sold out. If there is sufficient interest we plan to organise a NDR trip on one of the following dates.

- 6th June (9:30-9:30)
- 18th July (9:00-8:30)
- 15th August (8:30 - 7:30) or
- 29th August (8:00 - 6:30)

Please [email, Janet](#) ASAP to register your interest and preferred date.

Ilfracombe Tourist Information are having a coast festival from Sat 30th May – Sun 7th June, and have asked us to lead some walks from, near, or taking in, Ilfracombe. Gemma will lead a Time Out Tuesday walk from Ilfracombe that week, but it would be great to have some more. Could you lead a walk from here? These walks would be open to the public as well as Ramblers, and would be a great opportunity to promote our group.



Thanks to all of our contributors