



TAUNTON DEANE RAMBLERS NEWSLETTER 16

ROGER'S RAMBLINGS

SPRING/SUMMER 2008.

After one of the wettest Januarys on record and writing this with the rain running down my window, makes me think that February will be similar; so it is difficult to think of summer. However, by the time you read this Newsletter the days will have lengthened and a rich 4 months of walking is in prospect, including the ever popular Friday evening programme, which has such a strong following and delicious pub suppers at the end of the walks.

The programme has its usual mix of attractions and there is also the second summer long project for Sunday half days, this time to walk the Coleridge Way (more about this elsewhere in the Newsletter)

The RA is going through another structural change and there are new constitutions in place for Areas and Groups, although Taunton Deane has not adopted the 'model constitution' suggested by HQ as we only revised ours a year or so ago. The National RA has amended its M&As and has published a 5 year Strategic Plan. This proposal has not been well received in many Areas, not least in Somerset, where such comments as 'political aspirational clap-trap' were heard at the last Area Council meeting; a very lively debate is expected at the National Conference in Winchester in April. A report will appear in the next Newsletter.

I have continued to 'bat for the walkers' at the Somerset Local Access Forum and also at Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee. These are both statutory advisory committees to the County Council with limited walker representation, but what we lack in numbers we are making up by contribution.

As always, I offer my heart felt '**thank you**' to all walk leaders; for without you, there wouldn't be any walks. There is always room for new leaders, just give Joan a call and there is plenty of help available for anyone thinking of leading. I also wish to thank all of you who helped with the 'Walk your paths' challenge. We didn't quite finish all our squares, but I hope that we can achieve the remainder during the spring and summer. Paul Wright (667554) has all the details

Wassail **Roger**

COLERIDGE WAY

This is a 36 mile (58km) walk that starts from Nether Stowey and finishes at Porlock. The path takes in Holford, West Quantoxhead and Bicknoller on the Quantocks, before crossing to the Brendons, reaching Exmoor by way of Monksilver, Roadwater and Luxborough. On Exmoor the route is over to Wheddon Cross, Brockwell and Webbers Post with the final section down through Horner Woods and into Porlock.

The proposal is to walk the route in a number of ½ day legs of about 5 miles each, with transport laid on to get you from the finishing point to the start point each time (*there will be a small charge to cover the cost of this, and you must book with the leader in advance*) and the programme will run on Sundays from March to September 2008 (*see programme for dates*). All those that complete the route will receive the formal Certificate from the scheme organisers. There is a special website (www.coleridge-way.co.uk) for the walk, with detailed maps. Contact Roger (270754) for more details.

CHRISTMAS DINNER 2008

An early notice for your diary. **Friday 12th December 2008 at Halsway Manor** – 7pm for 7.30pm – 3 courses plus coffee & mince pies. - £18.75. After dinner dancing to the music and calling of 'Penn ha Bed' and en-suite B&B available at £35 per person. Also a 6 mile morning walk on Saturday 13th December.

Group Holiday – Anglesey Coast Path 21-28th June

12 members are signed up for the week staying in self-catering apartments just outside Beaumaris. Other members who will be staying for a shorter time or prefer B&B have booked in Beaumaris or nearby. We plan to walk as much or as little of the path as we like and a coach will pick up everyone at the start of the day to take them to the start point. It is hoped there will be two groups - those who like to take their time and prefer a shorter distance will be collected when they have come to the end of their walk, walkers who prefer to walk further and faster will be collected separately. Both groups will be self-guided but as long as you keep the sea on your right and the land on your left you can't go far wrong! Maps and guidebooks available. Interested? Contact Joan on 01823 490201 for details on how to join the holiday.

Working Parties

Since early Autumn 2007 Somerset County Council has organised work for the group on the last Tuesday of the month. Generally it has been the replacement of stiles and members have learnt aspects of the technique involved. Sites visited have been at Wiveliscombe, West Monkton and Pyleigh. Unfortunately there was an extended break over the Christmas period when the group were offered work checking up on reported faults. Work resumed at the end of February reclaiming an overgrown footpath that was by-passed on a recent Sunday walk. As the year progresses we hope to expand the work and look for volunteers to spare a little time to help improve the footpath network in Taunton Deane. Please contact John Ollerenshaw for details 01984 624477.

Channel to Channel

Three out of the four sections have been walked with a coach-full of participants each time and even some desiring of a seat being turned away! The weather has not always been kind, the first leg started wet, dried up for the lunch break and ended after the group encountered a raging river that had flooded the roadway. Back at the coach in the gloaming it was hard to locate individual boot bags and some inadvertent swapping of footwear occurred! The second leg was brighter and drier and ended just above Taunton on the Blackdown Hills. The weather forecast for part three included the words 'lashing rain the afternoon' but someone up there was kind to us and a brief shower while sheltering for lunch in Vivary Park was all we got and walking through Taunton was greener than some had imagined. We just have the Quantocks to the sea to do and everyone would like to thank John Lowe for his organisation, multiple spreadsheets, getting us to the Crescent for 8.30am on a Sunday, and his irrepressible good humour!

The South West Coast Path – weekends or more

Would you be interested in a few long weekends to walk some of the special parts of the coast path? A short series of long weekends comprising travel on Thursday evening, walking on Friday, Saturday and half of Sunday and staying in B&Bs are suggested. Or would you like to walk the whole thing? Contact John Lowe on 01823 490400 to express interest.

Walks Book

The plan to develop a more comprehensive book of Somerset Walks was circulated to Area groups last Autumn and a sub-committee has been formed to oversee the project. In January a strategy memorandum was produced and circulated to these groups with the view to achieving a publication date of Eater 2009.

You can play your part in various ways. If you have time to write a walk description of a favourite walk, not so far in print, with a rough sketch map or copy of a marked up OS map it would be much appreciated. We are also looking for checkers for walks, so if you can spare some time to help, please contact John Ollerenshaw 01984 624477 who will be pleased to receive your call.