



SOMERSET RAMBLER



Ramblers has been busy working on the **Ramblers App** for all our members. It is now available and includes:

- A searchable library of **thousands of led-walks** across Great Britain
- A **digital version of your membership card**
- Access to the **latest members' offers**
- Interesting **features and articles**
- A **new and improved walk register**
- Ability to submit photos to help **promote your walks**

You can try out the new App by downloading it from the App Store or Google Play (search for "Ramblers"). You will need your membership number (from your membership card) when you sign up for the first time plus an email address that is already registered with Ramblers.

Any questions? Let us know by contacting our membership team at membership@ramblers.zendesk.com



Congratulations to the recipients of the national Volunteer Awards. These awards recognise special volunteers, or groups of volunteers, for their outstanding contributions. The winners

were Graham Allan (Penrith), Maggie Hems (Merseyside & W. Cheshire, Morna McLean (Tayside Young Walkers), Peter Seed (Sussex), James Williams (Lampeter) and **the North Somerset Ramblers Walking for Health Team.**

The Capital Ring

The Capital Ring, a 75-mile circular walk around London staying within 10 miles of Big Ben, opened in 2005. It crosses the Thames at Richmond in the West and Woolwich in the East, and takes in many of the city's open spaces. The idea for walking the ring came during a trip in 2017 to the Olympic Stadium in

Stratford to see Mo Farrah run the 5,000 m. After a very enjoyable evening we stayed in London giving us the following day free. Iva, my wife, comes from East Ham and had not been to the area for some years, so we decided to take a look at changes and see the development of the West Hams Boleyn Ground on Green Street. We walked from the old ground to the new ground at the Olympic Stadium using public footpaths and noticed signs for The Capital Ring. We decided to challenge ourselves to walk *around the city in which Iva was born. We completed the walk, over a couple of years with three trips to London.*

The first leg took place in November 2017. We were hoping to walk from North Woolwich, under the Thames to Woolwich and on to Crystal Palace over a couple of days but the weather prevented this as it snowed. We did manage to get as far as Charlton. The next day was wet so we decided to walk the ring around Docklands and back to the Olympic Stadium.

Our next trip was in January 2019 when we walked from Osterley Lock, just north of the M4, to the Olympic Park over three days. This was a superb walk along the Brent River, Grand Union Canal and Harrow School. We were surprised how much of the walk was in quiet open countryside. The view of Wembley Stadium from Barn Hill was a highlight. Even in the densely populated area of Finsbury Park and Stamford Hill we could enjoy enormous parks and reservoirs. A very interesting section was walking through Stoke Newington Cemetery followed by the open spaces of Walthamstow and Hackney Marshes then on by the River Lea and the sight of the Olympic Stadium. Having enjoyed the walk in January so much, we decided to complete the ring in May by walking from Osterley Lock to Charlton via Richmond Park, Wimbledon Common, Crystal Palace, Beckenham and Eltham Palaces. We were amazed at the size of Richmond Park: it looked bigger than Frome. The route through Wimbledon Common was a maze of woodland paths and took us all around Crystal Palace including the site of the old crystal palace and the dinosaur park created in 1853. As we approached Eltham Palace, we were able to see the whole city of London to our left – Canary Wharf, the Shard, The Gherkin, Wembley Arch and the Post Office Tower.

We would recommend this walk to people of all abilities as you can walk as far or as little as you want in a day as you are never far from London's superb public transport system. Also there is much less mud and no problems with livestock!

Les Stather

If you have any news that you feel would be of interest to Somerset members or would like to comment on any current issue then please send them to me. Entries for the next issue should be sent by 15th October 2019 to email: mavis@monahan.co.uk

GROUP REPORTS

South Somerset Group

After many years as Footpath Secretary for our South Area, Paul Cullen-James has reluctantly stood down. We are fortunate that Peter Milligan has come forward to take on this role.

This year's Summer Supper will be held at The Quarry Inn, Keinton Mandeville on 11 July where we look forward to enjoying a two course evening meal. A walk beforehand will be lead by Phil Bradshaw.

Once again John Oliver organised a successful walking holiday with Saga in Menorca where 11 of our members enjoyed a series of varied walks.

Carl Earl has volunteered to lead the Working Parties and also represent us at Area.

We continue to maintain a full programme of walks with a short and medium walk on Thursdays and a longer walk on Sundays.

At our last Committee Meeting the Secretary was able to announce an increase in membership of 2 to 260. Whilst this is good news we also notice a number of our long standing members are hanging up their boots.

Linda Fawthrop

The Somerset Walking Group

In April 34 of us enjoyed an energetic weekend in Pembrokeshire, staying near Milford Haven and walking some of the Welsh Coast path. Weather was extremely windy on the Saturday, making it difficult to even stand up, but we still managed about 7 miles from Dale before heading to the tea shop. The reward was stunning views in the bright sunlight. Sunday was calmer and 11 of us covered about 12 miles from St Brides to Newgale. The photos show some of us at Dale and some of the scenery along the way.

We have enjoyed a varied programme of full and half-day winter/spring walks, with only one cancellation due to icy roads. Primroses and bluebells came early and seemed particularly prolific this year. Walks

included some challenging Exmoor territory (over the highest point, Dunkery Beacon, twice in one day!), Quantocks and Taunton Vale. One memorable walk took us from Lynmouth up through the fascinating Valley of Rocks, England's highest sea cliffs. In our summer programme we aim to cover the East Devon Way over two weekends.

For more information on walks through the summer and to view a gallery of photos from all our walks, please visit our website www.somersetwalkingclub.co.uk or our [Facebook page](#).

Cherry Bird, Programme Secretary



Sedgemoor Group Area Report

Our membership has dropped to 131 as compared to 142 last year.

Our walking programme has run well since the New Year with our weekly Sunday, twice monthly Saturday and (from mid-April) weekly evening walks. The walks have been interesting and varied and have included a trip to Plymouth to walk around the harbour.

In early May 22 members travelled to Staffordshire for a 4 day break in the Peak District. It was organised by Jenny who took us to Gradbach Mill, a wonderful place to stay. From there we did a series of walks which included the Roaches, Dovedale and the Monsal Trail. We were blessed by perfect sunny weather and a very memorable and enjoyable time was had by all.

A group of 12 members are due to depart on 10th June for a weeks' walking in the Isle of Man. A summer outing to Swanage is booking up well. At the end of June the group joins Stowey Walking and leads 2 walks for their walking festival from Nether Stowey.

Our footpath working party have continued to meet monthly and have worked on a number of paths as allocated by Somerset County Council for whom we have also continued to survey footpaths on a quarterly basis. To try and keep interest going throughout the summer and beyond, we have added another holiday in September visiting Eastbourne for a week. We will also be going to Ross-on-Wye at the end of September to participate in a number of walks in their walking festival.

Edward Levy, Chair

Taunton Deane Group

The Group has maintained its traditional programme of four walks per week - on Wednesday afternoons, Friday evenings and Sundays (all day and half day). As intimated in previous reports, some new ideas are being tried out to sustain interest and hopefully encourage new walkers. On Sunday afternoons, a staged walk of the England Coast path between Minehead and Steart is currently being offered, led by Judi Townsend. Stages so far covered have been between Minehead and Blue Anchor, and Blue Anchor to Doniford, using the West Somerset Railway to return. Further stages are on 26th June and 17th July, with the date of the final stage, from Lillstock to Steart, yet to be arranged. Also on Sundays, the Group has commenced staged walking of the Templar Way, which extends between Haytor and Teignmouth. The first stage,

between Haytor and Stover Country Park, took place on Sunday 26th May, and was very successful. As well as Taunton Deane members, ramblers from Plymouth also joined the walk. The second and third stages are on 7th July and 15th September respectively. Thanks are due to Janice and Alan Cockett for organising this.

A good variety of all-day walks have also been taking place, featuring some parts of Somerset further away from Taunton, as well as ventures into Devon and Dorset.

After some years with no activity of this type, the Group has recommenced working parties, initially clearing paths under the guidance of Somerset County Council. The first task was on

30th April, cutting back some vegetation on a footpath near Trull. It is hoped that this work continues.

The Group is planning a coach trip to Exmouth in August, with a variety of short, medium and longer walks being offered as part of the day. Previous outings of this kind have been well supported. Watch the Group's website for further details as they become available.

Philip Bisatt, Secretary

Woodspring Group

The group has grown from just below 200 to 209 this month. We are also seeing more members from other groups both within Somerset and outside joining us on our walks. This reflects on the Ramblers website which is being used more now. It also goes without saying, what a splendid group Woodspring is.

The programme of walks remains full. It is still difficult to get newer members to take the plunge and lead a walk but we continue to encourage them. A total of 86 members actually walk fairly regularly and I believe this to be on par with the national average. What is surprising, and good to see, is over 40 of these walkers actually lead walks. So, perhaps the issue of walk leaders isn't so bad but we always like to see some fresh faces up front.

Our footpath maintenance team continues with a very high rate of pedestrian, kissing and Bristol gate installations and bridge repairs. The team averages 11 members each month who are split into three or four groups, all able to install up to 9 gates in the one day thanks to our footpath manager,

David, having obtained 3 complete sets of tools so teams can work independently.

The group had a very enjoyable weekend in St. Ives in March. Walks were provided for each of the 4 days. Thanks to Robin for organising and leading walks and to Mavis for the Monday walk at Castle Drogo. We are now looking forward to a weekend in the Cotswolds. We will be staying at the Fire Service College in Moreton in Marsh for the weekend. A strange place but we have received good reports from other groups regarding the venue. Walks will be held each of the four days.

In September we plan to go to Windermere for a week. If anyone is interested, please check for details and availability with David at: Meadowbank.dp77@btinternet.com The group will be going to Austria for one or two weeks next Summer. Plans are well ahead with this. Once again, should anyone wish to join us please contact me as above.

David Thompson, Chair

Mendip Group

At the 1st of May our membership is 327; down 8 from this time last year. The working party remains very active and is out virtually every week.. Although there was some concern that the SCC cut-backs would reduce the amount of furniture they would be buying, it seems that this should not reduce the work we will be able to do this year.

This years Walking Festival will be held at the Leisure Centre, Shepton Mallet 24th to 26th August

We had a coach holiday to Eastbourne and walked part of the South Downs Way and Beachy Head. Bob and Rosemary organised a week walking the Usk Valley Way from Caerleon to Brecon.

We are supporting Frome Walkers are Welcome's new route (Saxon Kings Way) from Frome Cheesed and Grain to Bath Abbey. This route can be found on Ramblers Routes and our web site. It links the East Mendip Way to the Cotswolds way.

Les Stather, Chair

West Somerset Group

Despite the loss of some members the West Somerset Group remains at 200 due to equal numbers joining. Our walking programme and social evnts continue to be well supported.

The long weekend at Brecon with HF Holidays in March was a great success with delightfully fine weather and splendid walks. Our 2020 weekend away will now be at Paignton for three nights 27 - 29 March and include walks along the SWCP and on Dartmoor.

We have a well booked coach for a day's walking in the Woolacombe / Ilfracombe area on 12 June and our autumn coach trip on 12 October will finish at the NT's Killerton House.

Following the success of our 40th Anniversary Tea party last year we intend to repeat this with a Tea at Allerford Village Hall on Saturday 31 August. There will be both short and long walks finishing at the Hall but we are sure to be joined by many of our older members who are no longer able to manage longer walks.

We have heard unofficially that the Somerset County Council is speaking with the chalet owners in order to resolve the closed Blue Anchor Bay footpath. Determination of this matter should be by 2 October 2019 but this date may be passed as the SCC has many outstanding footpath issues and few staff to tackle the problem.

Gerald Swayne, Chair

The Hebridean Way

My wife Sandy and I have just completed the Hebridean Way, a newly opened (2017) and signposted footpath taking in ten islands, six causeways and two ferries in the Outer Hebrides. It is the most splendid trail and certainly is likely to become more popular. The 156 miles from the island of Vatersay to Lewis Castle, Stornoway encounters many varieties of terrain from the almost flat machair (locally pronounced maka), through empty beaches of white sand and vivid blue sea to bouncy mattress bog. We chose to fly from Glasgow and land on the beach at Barra and with fine weather for the landing the walk start was delightful. Accommodation and bag carriers are in short supply but the people are very helpful and extremely friendly.

Gerald Swayne

The Virtue of the Group Coach Outing

Being associated with Taunton Deane Ramblers for well over twenty years now enables me to take a broad view of the pros and cons of private coach hire.

In the group's early years one or two outings were arranged to specific places to do particular walks but with only moderate success as I recall. Over the years our group has evolved with two notable walking factions: those that favour and only do all-day walks and the much larger faction that only turn out for the shorter half-day walk.

The question was how do you arrange something which has universal appeal ? A couple of years ago I came up with a plan: on the way to Lynmouth and a tea venue, the coach would drop off groups of walkers with a leader, of course, at specific points en route. The Two Moors Way had two convenient "entry" points for both long and medium walks, whilst Hillsford Bridge further on lent itself to an attractive walk downriver to Lynmouth. The plan attracted over fifty walkers and I even managed to fit in a quiz for the latter walk. Last year we chose Seaton as a venue, and I can personally vouch for Seaton Jurassic as an attractive ending point. Though the weather was unkind, we did manage the three (even four) walk formula again. We had planned for two sittings for tea but this proved unnecessary. With cancellations we still managed 48 on the day.

This year the plan is again to use part of the SWCP and the East Devon Way to converge on Exmouth for tea and maybe a swim too. May the weather be kind this year!

I can recommend this form of outing to group committees. By creating a number of walking options we are appealing to more of our membership. Do try it.

John Ollerenshaw, TDR Chairman

Report of Area Footpath Secretary

Changes to the definitive map – we continue to receive consultations on changes to RoW which are sent to the relevant Group FPS for consideration. This provides the opportunity, if we do not object to the proposal outright (which may result in the application being withdrawn), to suggest alternatives

which the Highways Authority can put to the applicant. In the case of a recent consultation on a bridleway in Winsham, South Somerset, which the last Area Council initially considered objecting to, it became apparent that bridleway interests supported the change. Following discussions with the landowner it was agreed to dedicate a new public footpath closer to the original alignment, but taking it away from proximity to the dwelling.

New Claims – the County Council has an enormous backlog of claims that await processing and which recent staff reductions have made worse. The Head of RoW has recently submitted some revised proposals on coping with the backlog. Les Stather and I will be discussing these with him at a meeting on 4th June. The government proposals to simplify the legal procedure, which were due over 12 months ago, have been put on hold by the work on Brexit

Cropping of Paths – At this early part of the growing season, if a cross-field Right of Way is found to be cropped, it is important to report it to the Highways Authority (Somerset County of North Somerset). Walk leaders are especially asked to report any cropping to the relevant Footpath Secretary or directly on-line in the case of Somerset paths. The previous provision to report it to the Rural Payments Agency under EU rules is still current but will lapse if and when Brexit occurs. Ramblers is hoping that the replacement agricultural grants scheme will provide similar opportunity to report such obstructions, but we await details of the new arrangements post-Brexit.

A303/A358 Dualling – final details of the Sparkford to Podimore scheme are due soon and we hope to have secured safe crossings of the new road, although some diversion will be necessary. We will need to wait for detailed proposals for the A358 dualling before we can make proposals on the RoW affected. Both Taunton Deane and S. Somerset group FPSs will be involved.

Long Standing Obstructions – Les Stather (as Area Chair) and I are meeting the Head of RoW on 5th June.

“Explore Somerset” web-site – the one missing feature on this excellent web-site is that closed paths are not shown, so that in walk planning you have to check on a separate web-site. This matter is also to be discussed with the head of RoW.

Annual Meeting of Group FPSs – this year’s meeting is scheduled for 5th June.

Carl Earl, Area Footpath Secretary

Research Project for a Volunteer

At a recent meeting with the County Council's Rights of Way team we discussed the large backlog in dealing with claims for unrecorded rights of way. One problem is that the Council's staff, which has been much reduced, have to spend time researching historic documents at the County's Archives Service. Particularly important are Inclosure Awards which can be very strong evidence to prove the existence of an unrecorded right of way.

One way this process could be considerably helped is if all the relevant Inclosure Awards were photographed and digitally archived for use by the County officers who have to prepare the case for altering the definitive map of rights of way. Copying these documents would be an ideal volunteer job, especially for someone interested in historic research or in photographing interesting historic documents.

There would be full training and guidance initially at the County Record Office for any volunteers, so is anyone interested in this key work to benefit our historic rights of way and ensuring they are rightly recorded? Contact Carl Earl if you would like more details on carlearl@btinternet.com or ring him on 01460 30163. Carl Earl, Area Footpath Secretary

MENDIP RAMBLERS' AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY FREE WALKING FESTIVAL: 24/25/26 August 2019

This year's festival is based in **Shepton Mallet** which offers excellent walking opportunities for all.

There will be 4 walks each day. The short morning walks (3/4 miles) can be extended after lunch with the short afternoon walks of similar length. The medium walks will be 7 miles and the long walks 11 miles.

We hope that the availability of two short walks will encourage walkers of all abilities to join us. Children with their families are especially welcome.

Morning walks start at 10.00am and the afternoon walk at 1.30pm.

As usual, tea and cake will be available at the end of each walk.

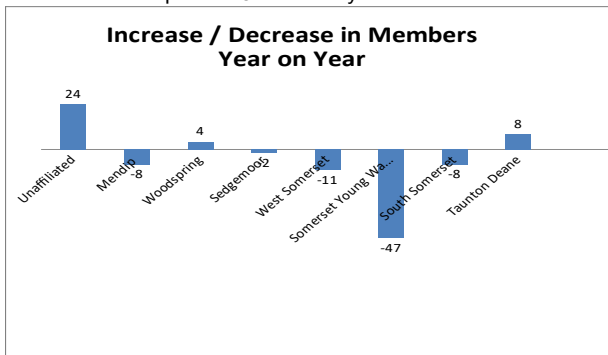
Walks will start from: Shepton Mallet Leisure Centre, 11 Charlton Rd, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 5PG. Word did not find any entries for your table of contents. For more information go to www.mendipramblers.co.uk or contact Kevin on 01749 672996

May 01 2019

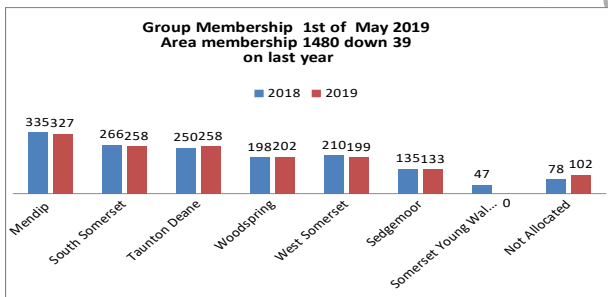
Ramblers Membership 102,057

Down 2% from Last year

Area Membership down 3% on last year



Somerset Young Walkers folded and numbers moved to Unaffiliated

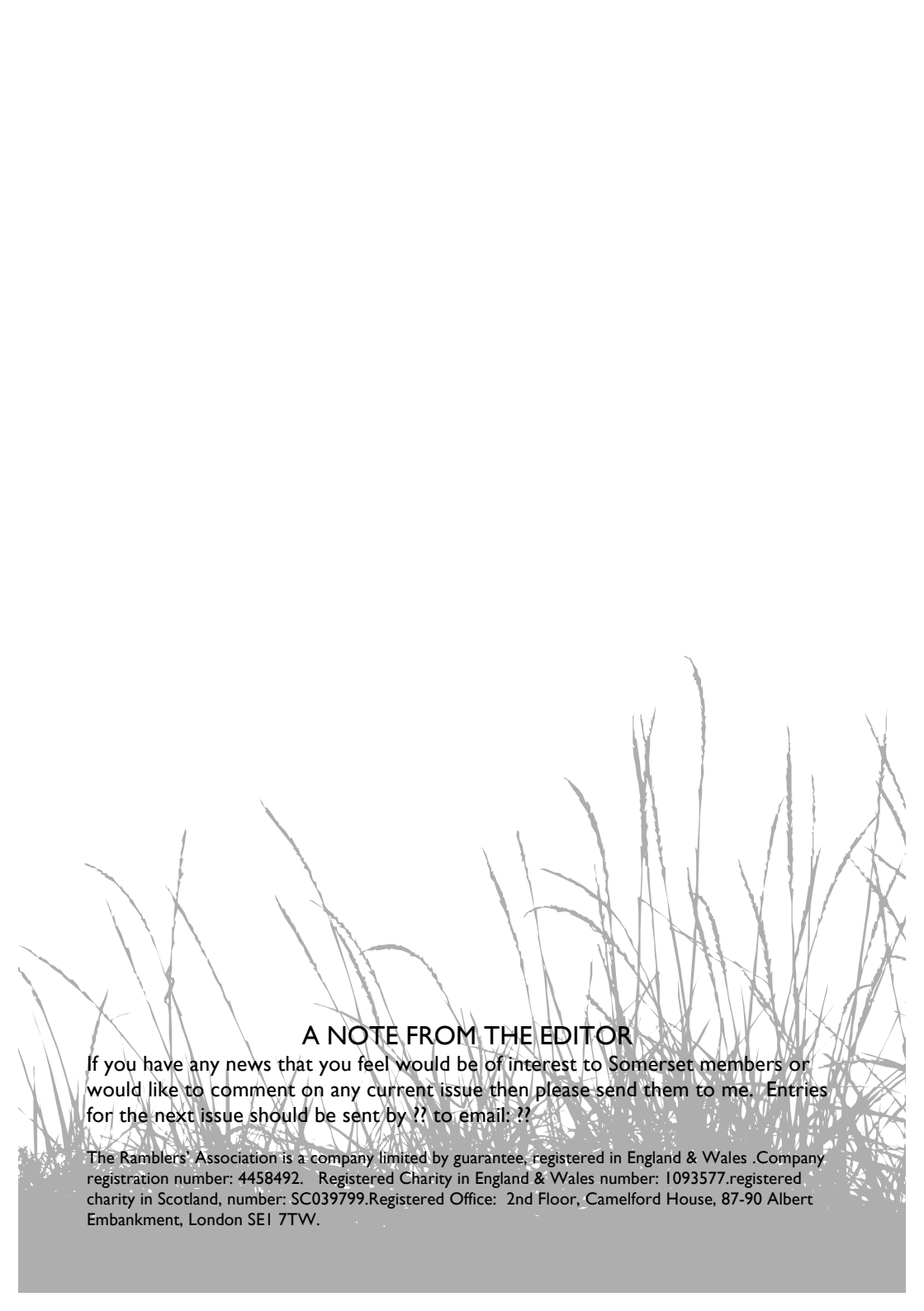


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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

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