

Avon Area News



www.avon-ramblers.org.uk

February 2020

Dear members

Happy New Year to you all. As the weather improves which we hope it does walking in our wonderful countryside will become a pleasure once again.

I am very pleased with my new Muck Boots as I trudge through the mud on my dog walks.

Thank you to the contributors to this edition and as I finally complete it and despatch it to the printers I can sit back and relax.

We at Somer Valley Ramblers look forward to greeting you at the AGM on Saturday 22nd February, until then.

With Best Wishes

Kathy Thomas - Editor

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Woodborough Lake, Peasedown St John, the PROW lies close to the lake which was formed by damming the water from the springs in the early 20th century to produce hydro electric power for Woodborough House (demolished) Kathy Thomas

Kingswood Group

We held our AGM in November and welcomed 3 new committee members, bringing the total number up to 10. Although we have been without a Chair or Footpath Officer for a number of years now, we seem to manage pretty well, with everyone sharing responsibility for keeping the group active.



We continue to repair and replace stiles with kissing gates on a fortnightly basis, and the footpath clearance team goes out every month, recently opening up a path in Longwell Green which had become completely impassable.

In October Kingswood hosted and provided refreshments for the annual footpath volunteers' get-together, as in previous years. This was a great opportunity to meet the various groups and individuals involved, to discuss the achievements and challenges of keeping our local area accessible for all to enjoy.

Our Wednesday evening programme ended with a celebratory end of season meal, and will start up again in April. The Sunday walkers also enjoyed a pub lunch at the Beaufort Arms in Hawkesbury Upton in November.

Mince Pie Bake Off

Our Sunday walk on 8th December in the Mendips was the date of our annual mince pie bake-off; and the judges' decision to award 1st place to Sue Kelland was unanimous. The entries made a welcome accompaniment to our coffee break.



Themed Walk—Kingswood

It was our turn to provide a themed walk in December and we took a tour of 'historic Bristol', visiting some of the famous as well as the lesser known sites within the city. Three members from the Bath group also joined us for this interesting and enjoyable walk.



Photographs and article from Julia King-Kingswood Ramblers

Avon Area Ramblers AGM

SATURDAY 22ND FEBRUARY 2020

Members of the Somer Valley Ramblers are looking forward to hosting the AGM

A morning walk starting at approx.10.00am

Buffet lunch from 1.00pm

Followed by the business meeting

Speaker— Ramblers Trustee Aynsley Jardin

Camerton Community Hall

MEADGATE BA2 0NL

Grid Ref: ST 679 585

Meadgate is between Timsbury and Camerton and although a good venue it is not well served by public transport.

However the bus service from Bath to Radstock is excellent I have printed off 2 walking options but there are others routes from the A367. Alighting from the bus at Dunkerton Bridge the Limestone link is reached by crossing the road and the bridge and taking the steep steps down to the river. The path will be mucky and there are a couple of places where the river bank has become very overgrown and has slipped but the walk around is fairly obvious. If the river walk does not appeal then you could make your way up to Tunley and walk along the road.

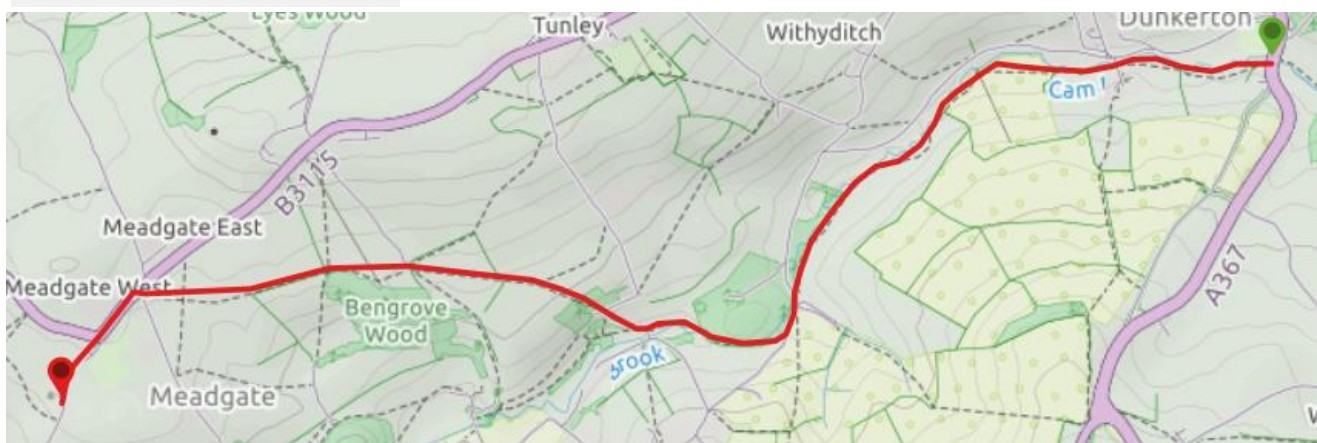
If a walk is not for you please email me before the 20th of February and I will arrange a lift from the nearest bus stop. kathythomas3@btinternet.com

Route Information...

Length:

2.79 miles

A walk from Dunkerton along the Limestone Link and footpaths to Meadgate



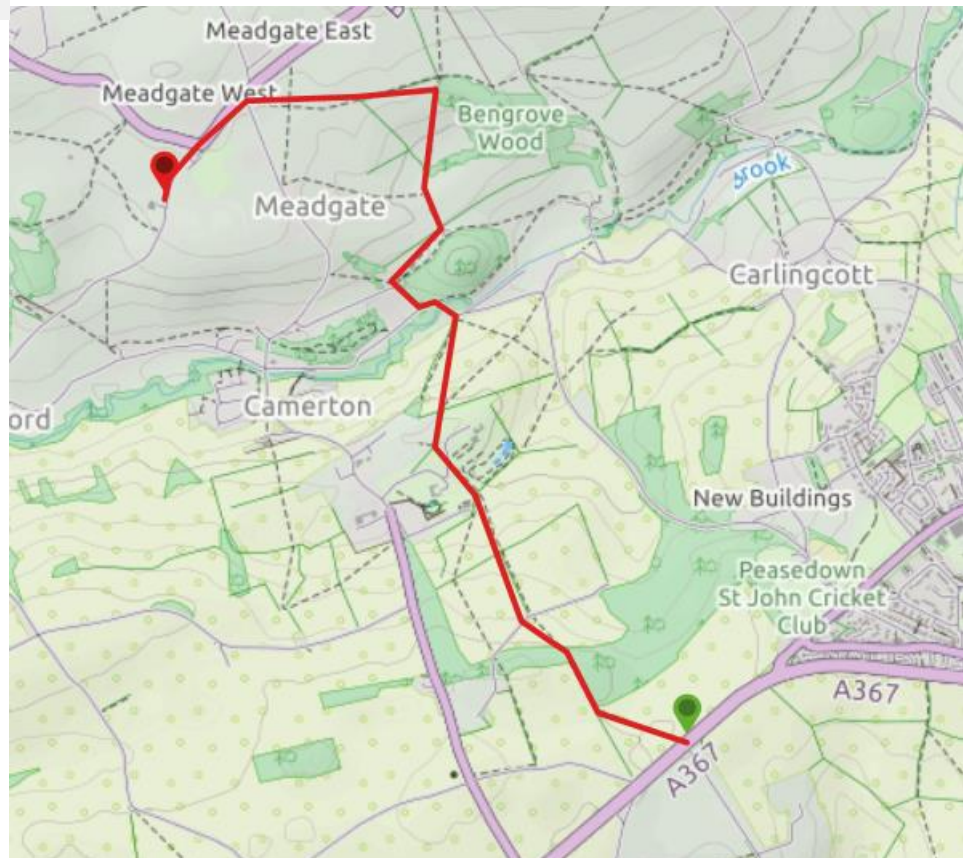
Option 2

A walk from the A367 just after Peasedown St John along footpaths to Meadgate

Route Information...

Length:

2.15 miles



Take the bus from Bath after leaving Peasedown St John as the bus joins the bypass ring the bell and get off at the next stop.

Footpaths will be muddy in places, when you reach Camerton Church you could walk through the churchyard and out onto Skinners Hill to continue on the road, the middle section does not have a pavement so take care.



Cam Valley with the tree covered spoil tip from Camerton New Pit visible to the left of the picture.

Look out for evidence of coal mining in the area.

Kathy Thomas

Chair Somer Valley Ramblers

REPORTING PATH ISSUES

The Avon Ramblers Path Volunteer Teams are able to fix many issues that are reported to the Public Rights of Way teams by members of the public.

If you find a problem when you are out on a walk, such as a broken stile or an impassably overgrown footpath, there are a number of ways to report it, for further details refer to the article that Keith Weller wrote for the previous AAN which can be found on the Avon Area Website

The more times people report the problems on the paths the more likely they are to be fixed and the more likely it is that the paths will stay open and accessible.

Please bear in mind that some problems may be more difficult to fix than others (for example, legal issues). The Authorities will usually check out reported problems fairly promptly and fix them (or ask Volunteers to fix them) as soon as possible, sometimes prioritised by the "importance" of the route or the amount of use it gets. **(from Keith Weller's previous article)**

Keith Weller sent these pictures and wrote:

The BRAM Team of Path Volunteers recently completed several tasks at Clutton on and near the Three Peaks Walk. Concrete steps were cleared and the landing was improved. Brambles were cut back on the path leading to the road. Other wooden steps were improved and widened and nearby a stile was changed to a kissing gate. The team received a "Thank you" from Philip Edwards, who acts as path ranger for Clutton Parish Council. Philip caught up with the Team when they adjourned to The Railway (pub) afterwards for further celebration of their year's work.

Philip posted photos of the work and the team on this Clutton Parish Council Facebook link..... https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2608457612718274&id=1570716119825767

On behalf of Clutton PC, Philip said "It was great to meet you and the team today, thanks for all your hard work, we really appreciate it."

Keith is also pleased to be able to report that his team's volunteering has been recognised and that BRAM and BRAM SandS Team Members are invited to a "Civic Reception" as a "Thank You" for the work that they do in B&NES. The reception is in January to be hosted by the Mayor of Bath in the Mayor's Parlour at the Guildhall in Bath. This event was proposed by Councillor Joanna Wright, the Joint Cabinet Member for Transport Issues at BathNES Council, who came to our "get-together" evening in October.

Look out for pictures in the next edition.

Keith reminds us that "we call ourselves Bath Ramblers Maintenance Team (BRAM Team) and --ditto-- Shears and Secateurs Team (BRAM SandS Team)".



A dodgy stile at White Ox Mead



Clevedon Group



Clevedon Ramblers out enjoying a walk before their AGM

Don't Lose Your Way

Quite a few of the Area members will have attended the Area AGM in February 2019, the Clevedon committee members along with many others we were fascinated by the speaker Jack Cornish and his talk titled 'Don't loose your way'. Richard our programme Secretary subsequently suggested that we investigate if Jack could come and repeat his talk at the Clevedon Group AGM, Richard made contact with Jack resulting in him being able to come to Clevedon and join us for the pre-AGM walk and later tell our members about investigating lost rights of way prior to our AGM. This was particularly interesting to many members attending as one of the local examples used by Jack was around Kingston Seymour where we had only a few weeks earlier had a group walk. During this walk we were unable to keep to some footpaths as the way was impassable Jack demonstrated how many 'old' paths were not now showing on maps although some are still walked. Our members thoroughly enjoyed Jack's talk wishing it could have been longer.

Our Christmas meal is typically held early in December in Clevedon following a day walk, in 2019 Sue our Chair had decided it was time for a change of venue. In December 2019 we moved to a restaurant in Portishead which meant a move to a mid-afternoon meal. The members were very supportive of the changes with 34 members and partners joining us, although as a group we were ready for a change of venue the success of the event exceeded all of our expectations and we are already booked up for 2020.

Our recent walks have met with some extremely muddy paths following the recent wet weather, we have also enjoyed those odd mild sunny days when all the extra layers of clothing were unnecessary. We have had walks all around the local areas within around an hour's travelling time from Clevedon for both our shorter Saturday and longer Sunday walks. Numbers attending have been lower than we would like to see but we believe that is mainly due to the time of year, we are currently working on our next programme when we hope to be introducing a few new ideas to grow membership numbers and walk attendance.

Photograph and article from Lynda Brine

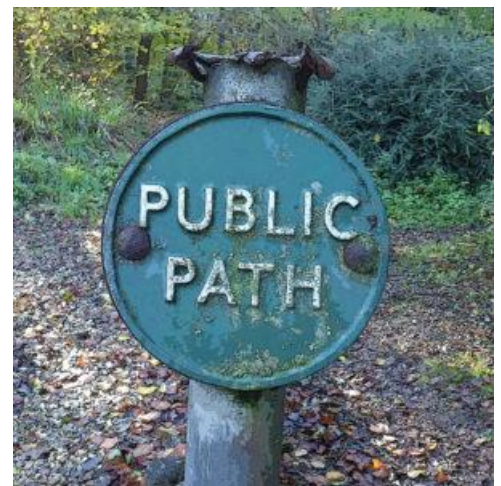
Bath Ramblers



Bath Group held its AGM which was preceded by a walk around Bathford and lunch. The AGM ended with us being without a Secretary as Marilyn retired after 15 years service. Following the meeting Brian Wilson gave a very informative presentation on Rights of Way which was appreciated by all.

We also had a very enjoyable Christmas Lunch after what was - by all accounts - a very muddy walk.

Several members of the group attended the Ramblers Roadshow in Cirencester which was a very informative day and much appreciated.



Mary continues "we continue to run a good programme of walks which are generally well supported. A recent walk from Winsley revealed two rather old fashioned signs - as shown in the photographs taken by Angela Fernihough".

Livestock on Public Rights of Way

Tessa Wyatt has been dealing with a local farmer who has been ignoring the legislation, and running a prohibited bull in a field with a PROW. She thinks that the situation has been resolved. The field in question is close to her home so it was possible to monitor the situation without too much effort. Well done Tessa.

Tessa is particularly interested in access to the country side and has volunteered to attend future meetings of the SW Counties Access and Livestock Group and will report back to the area committee. The next meeting is in March.

Photographs and article from Mary Young - Bath Ramblers



Continuing on the same theme how many of us would recognise a bull defined in Section 59 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as of a recognised dairy breed that should **not** be kept in a field with a public right of way. There are exceptions but here are the recognised dairy breeds:

Ayrshire, Friesian, Holstein, Dairy Shorthorn, Guernsey, Jersey and Kerry.

Kathy Thomas - Editor photograph on the Cotswold Way (this lot were not moving for anyone)

Bristol

Unfortunately I have been out of the walking loop for most of the current programme, on seeking anecdotes I might use for this piece, my sources indicated that most of them were not suitable for print. This possibly confirms the exciting times Bristol Group has on its walks. Although we have struggled to keep the programme full, new walk leaders are coming forward and offering innovative walks, sometimes in little-walked areas offering little gems of surprise, quite a challenge when some of our members have been walking with the Group for 25 years plus.

Now that the majority of our Group appear to be retirees, it is often difficult for this busy generation committing a walk to a programme which is to occur four months' hence. However, recently we have had quite an increase in 'late offerings' - walks that fill in the gaps at short notice, and indeed provide 'extra' walks. These are advertised via the website, Mailchimp and WhatsApp groups. This is very encouraging and seems to be working well for leaders and walkers alike. Long may the late offerings and 'extras' keep rolling in, thank goodness for technology.



On the social side, in early October Ikuko Wilson arranged a 'meet-up' at the new café at St George's. It was a very relaxed gathering over coffee and cakes. A number of 'old timers' attending with plenty of anecdotal evidence (also unprintable) plus hard copy (programmes going back 30 years) of the Group's past activities. Bristol was a vibrant group then, and it is now. We are working on keeping it that way.

The committee is always open to new ideas.

Following feedback we are looking to introduce the occasional 'expert' walk, i.e. informal walks led or co-led by a person with a particular interest or knowledge in flora, fauna, geology, landscape, etc., that could be enlarged upon at points along the way. We already have an offer of a led walk along the Broomway off the Essex coast, if not the 'deadliest' path in England, certainly 'the unearthliest'. This year we intend to run a litter picking walk and of course are looking forward to hosting the National AGM in April, and supporting the Bristol WalkFest for the month of May.

Being somewhat of a Christmas 'refusnik' this year I decided to host a walk on Christmas Day with a social at my home afterwards. As it turned out, I couldn't put on the walk I had planned from Selsey, but instead organised a local walk starting and finishing at my home. We were blessed with perfect weather and the later start (10:30 a.m.) encouraged more takers. Twelve of us enjoyed a seven mile walk, mulled wine and Christmas goodies at chez nous afterwards. I have received positive feedback - it might start a trend!

Wendy Britton - Chair, Bristol

Photographs and article from Wendy Britton



Christmas Day morning walk

Wendy has sent this programme of social events and weekend trips.

SOCIAL EVENTS

- Sat 15 Feb WINE AND CHEESE PARTY. Ida Burley, 25 Hill View, Henleaze. 69512. 8 pm. Please bring food and wine. Members only.
- Sat 15 March JUMBLE SALE, Bishopston Parish Hall, Pigsty Hill, Gloucester Road. Help will be needed from 11 am. Committee members will be delighted to accept jumble for storage.
- Sat 22 March SKITTLES AND QUIZ, Kings Arms, Blackboy Hill. 7.30. 25p.
- Tue 22 April COMPASS LESSONS around Long Ashton. Meet at Victoria Rooms 6.30.
- Tue 20 May TREASURE HUNT. Meet outside Hippodrome. 7-7.30. 25p.
- Sat 14 June BARBECUE, Woodbridge Farm, Ubley. Glyn and Tania England, 97-62479. Please bring food and wine. 6.30 Anchor Road.

WEEKENDS

Bookings will only be accepted from current RA members who send cash. (Cheques payable to Ramblers' Association, Bristol Local Group.) Late bookings will not be accepted from anybody.

February 21/3

SOUTH DOWNS WAY. Book with Jean Holemans, 12 Cowper Road, Redland, Bristol 6 by 9th Feb. Arundel Hostel. £6.20.

Easter CORNWALL. Bookings closed.

May 2/5 PEMBROKE COAST. Book with Peter Gould by 23rd March. Marloes Hostel. £7.00.

May 23/6

GOWER. Book with Peter Gould by 13th April. Port Eynon Hostel. £9.85.

June 7/9

WYE VALLEY. Leader Cyril Trenfield, 564987. Book with Peter Gould by 15th May. Glaschw Hostel. £4.70.

July 18/20

WELSH MARCHES. Book with Jean Waller, c/o 18 Hampton Park, Redland, Bristol BS6 6LH, by 8th June. Knighton Hostel. £6.60.

August Bank Holiday

ROOF OF DARTMOOR. Leader John Coop. Book with Peter Gould by 13th July. £9.85.

Wessex Wanderer Railway Walks - based on the Bristol to Weymouth (Heart of Wessex) Railway Line

There were thirty-four walks on the 2019 programme with the average numbers slightly up on the previous year despite extremes of weather which ranged from too hot to too wet. The total number of walkers was four-hundred and thirty, mostly travelling by train which is the primary aim of these walks



Needless to say a comprehensive programme relies on Leaders and Co-Leaders. These come from the Ramblers Areas along the line, and we are very lucky in that we retain many of these as well as attracting new Leaders and Co-Leaders. A wholehearted Thanks goes to all involved

We are also indebted to Great Western Railway (GWR), the Heart of Wessex Community Rail Partnership (CRP) and the four Areas involved (Avon, Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset) for their continued support which, because we are not a Group we rely on.

Because the Heart of Wessex CRP Officer retired earlier in the year the usual Bristol to Weymouth line guide wasn't published. It was sorely missed although passengers who had retained previous relevant copies were using them. However, the if the changes in the new winter timetables are anything to go by, whilst GWR consider 'slight' are to us significant if they are going to be reflected in the summer timetable

I have been promised that I will be sent a copy of the 2020 summer timetable before we publish the 2020 WWW programme and I have my fingers crossed that this promise is kept so that the timings in the programme are correct

GWR have unsurprisingly concentrated on revamping the main line services but to the detriment of some branch lines and their advice is to check the timetables before travelling *anywhere* on their services

As previously mentioned, 2020 heralds the twenty-fifth anniversary of the start of the Wessex Wanderer Walks. The ambitious plans include a recreation of the first walk (which was simply in Bristol Group's programme), walks from each station along the line, publishing a special souvenir programme, inscribed pens showing the celebratory logo (the design of which was paid for by GWR), to have a social event for new and past Leaders, to advertise more widely to include posters and flyers at stations etc. We also hope to promote the programme at Ramblers' General Council in Bristol in April and to lead a walk in the name of the WWWs at this event

We would also like to hold celebratory events at some of the stations along the line although this will mostly depend on 'Friends of the Stations' arranging and managing them

There is still no news on how the Community Rail Partnerships in our area are going to be split up and so where to apply for funding from the CRP/s is still in question. However it is hoped that grants will still be available from whatever replaces the HoW CRP. The Severnside Community CRP and the Association of Train Operators (ACoRP) have also promised to support us

We may get further news about the future of local CRPs at the Heart of Wessex Working Party meeting in February

The annual Winter Get Together was arranged for Saturday 29 February 2020 at the Swan Hotel in Bradford-on-Avon, returning there by popular request

The latest information with regards to the WWWs can be found on the WWW website www.wessexrailwaywalks.org.uk

Happy Walking in 2020

Sylvia Popham **Article from Sylvia Popham**

Come along to a Ramblers national event in Bristol

Many thanks to everyone who's volunteered to help when the national Ramblers' AGM (General Council) comes to Bristol on Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th April.

It's a chance for around 25 Avon Ramblers to hear some interesting and inspiring speakers, and enjoy meeting, and walking with, Ramblers staff and members from throughout England, Scotland, and Wales.



Thank you to Geoff Keogh for this picture which shows Castle Bridge and (far right) Bristol Bridge

The event takes place at the Marriott Hotel, (the one opposite Castle Park), and we can send four or five delegates and observers for the whole weekend, including staying at the hotel on Saturday night. Another 20 or so volunteers will be leading short city walks from the hotel, or spending a few hours welcoming our visitors at the registration desk, or assisting at one of the General Council sessions, by counting votes, or acting as timekeepers.

Our delegates, observers, and volunteers will be invited to the dinner at the hotel on Saturday evening and, when not 'on duty', volunteers can find out what's happening in the Ramblers nationally, by popping in to listen to one or two General Council sessions.

If you're interested in attending as a delegate or observer, or in assisting for part of the weekend, please contact me, so I can add you to my list, and advise you which roles we need extra help with.

Jeff - Avon Ramblers Area Chair

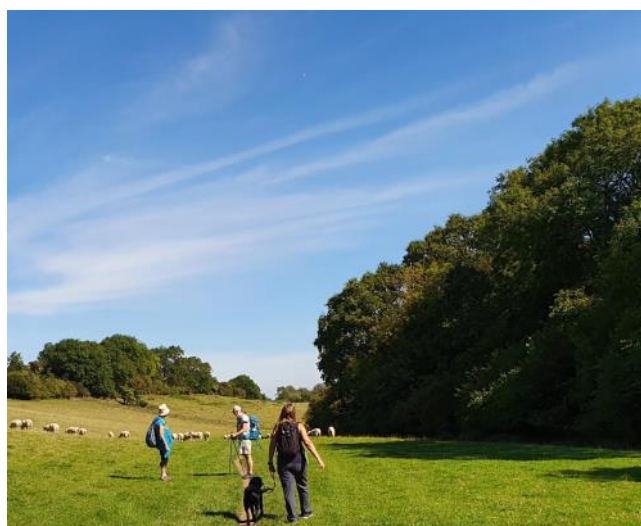
mobile: 07985 024650

email: area-chair@avon-ramblers.org.uk

Somer Valley Walking Festival

Since the last edition of AAN the Somer Valley Ramblers were involved in the 3rd Annual Somer Valley Walking Festival. It was a great success with Ramblers leading many of the walks and unusually for us short 2-3 mile walks which proved to be very popular. The picture below is of Rose, one of our leaders, ready to set off on a Sunday afternoon walk around the village of Paulton. In 2019 the festival most of the walks were from Paulton Rovers Football Club, hence the game in the background.

The walk was joined by local people many of whom were surprised at the opportunities for walking that lay on their "doorsteps".



A seven mile round walk from Peasedown St John on Saturday to Priston Festival with 3 hours at Priston near Bath before returning home was another good experience.



Pictures, approaching Priston and the entrance to Priston Church - Kathy Thomas

Somer Valley Ramblers



We are still getting used to our new name but hope that it will resonate with the local population as there are numerous other groups such as Somer Valley FM, Cycling Club and the Food Bank all of which identify with the Somer Valley.

The workings of the North Somerset Coalfield dominated much of the area in the early 20th century, all mines are now closed but occasionally there is a stark reminder of the past.

Tessa Wyatt writes

A wedge shaped hole has appeared on a footpath at Farmborough and the footpath has been closed with immediate effect to prevent any danger of people disappearing down the hole. The hole is potentially an opening to an 800 metre+ shaft to an old coal mine. The shape of the subsidence suggests it is extremely dangerous. It has been temporarily covered, but the ground area around it will still be unstable. Expect it may be closed a while.

Location: ST 655 598 Footpath No CL 9/22 south of Mount Pleasant Farm, Hobb's Wall, Farmborough.

A memorial to the colliers of the North Somerset Coalfield close to the point of capping off of mine shafts near Camerton Old and New Pits

Kathy Thomas

Brunel Walking Group and Somer Valley Collaboration

Somer Valley Ramblers and the Brunel walking group will soon be sharing walks between Bath, Bristol and the surrounding area. Both groups have walks for 20s and 30s in this area and we have decided to trial putting some walks on both websites.

Hopefully this will let more people see the lovely views and villages of the area and get people from both groups walking together.

Edward Lifton

Brunel Walking Group



Ramblers Charity England & Wales No: 1093577 Scotland No: SC039799

TOGETHER

A moment to pause. Breathing in clear air. Sharing interests and conversations as you ponder the hills ahead. We have your passion for exploring worldwide and in the UK.

Choose any of our holidays and we'll contribute funds through **The Walking Partnership** to your group. Just tell us their name when you book.

Book a great value holiday:
ramblersholidays.co.uk
 or call **01707 386804**



Walking holiday partner



Do remember to mention the name of your group when you book a Ramblers Holiday so that your group receives a contribution from The Walking Partnership .

Your Membership Card
is valuable

Cotswold Outdoors

and other stores will give a discount to members of Ramblers

Membership

As your membership secretary I can report that at the time of writing the membership stands at 2055.

Each month some members decide not to rejoin and others resign. Sadly there are other members who die.

Although I often hear Ramblers say that the numbers of leavers is due to the ageing membership this is not borne out by the statistics. Consistently the largest number of people who either resign or lapse are new members who have stayed in membership for just 1 year.

Nationally Ramblers devote a significant effort into retention. Members who have not renewed are followed up by head office. As active members of Ramblers we should do all we can to reduce the number of people who decide not to renew their membership.

Campaigning (from the Ramblers web site)

It is easy to forget that Ramblers has achieved many successes over many years and 2019 was the 70th anniversary of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, legislation that led to the creation of National Parks, AONBs, National Trails, the definitive map in both England and Wales, and National Nature Reserves across Great Britain.

The act was achieved thanks to tireless campaigning from the Ramblers, like-minded organisations, and individuals such as our President Tom Stephenson, who passionately believed access to open and wild places would benefit us all.

With growing issues around mental health, well-being, loneliness and obesity, our ability to access nature, and open, wild spaces is more important than ever.



Kathy Thomas - Membership Secretary

Picture South Downs Way

The Ramblers Association is a registered charity
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Registered office: 2nd floor, Camelford House,
87-90 Albert Embankment,

Avon Area Ramblers

For details of the officers and walking groups please use the links on the web site.

www.avon-ramblers.org.uk

Walks Finder

Walks Finder is also to be found on the web site, you can walk with any of the groups so if you see a walk that appeals to you please go along and take the opportunity to meet new people.



Stoneage Lane looking across the Cam Valley towards Tunley.

The Limestone Link runs through the valley.

Picture Kathy Thomas



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