

Avon Area News



www.avon-ramblers.org.uk

June 2019

Dear Fellow Rambler,

These lovely spring days with lengthening evenings are encouraging me to spend as much time as possible out of doors.

One of my responsibilities is checking on a 3 mile stretch of the Limestone Link. Bristol Ramblers are involved with the Samaritan's Way.

As Ramblers we contribute so much to the care of our Rights of Way. Footpath teams are very much appreciated by the local authorities.

Walking is just part of what we do.

Best wishes

Kathy Thomas

Editor

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Farmborough Common near Bath



Bath Ramblers

Bath Group continues to offer a varied programme of walks which are generally well supported by our members. Some walks are now also advertised on the Brunel Plus website and we have been pleased to welcome new walkers from that group.

We have been blessed with good weather so far this year.

Mary Young



**This picture is of
Nunney Brook
taken on a recent
walk**

Somer Valley Ramblers

We were delighted to receive notification from Jeff Rowland that Ramblers Head Office had approved the name change from Norton Radstock Ramblers to Somer Valley Ramblers with immediate effect.

It is not just a matter of changing the name but coincides with a realignment of boundaries. What does this mean? Norton Radstock now Somer Valley, Clevedon, Bath and Bristol Ramblers have been reviewing the geographical and civil parish area of their groups. It was agreed that for Bristol and Clevedon there would be no change. However the newly established Somer Valley Ramblers will include most of Northeast Somerset as defined by authority

boundaries leaving Bath Ramblers to be centred on the city with a few parishes such as Wellow and Shoscombe.

No existing members will be affected but new members will be encouraged to join a group that is convenient to them.

Mary Young (Bath Ramblers) writes “I am sure that whichever group they choose to join and walk with they will find as warm a welcome as now.



Members can, of course, walk with any group and Bath will be happy to welcome Somer Valley members if they want to join us”.

Equally Somer Valley will offer Bath members a warm welcome on their walks. It will

take a few months for all the IT systems to be updated to reflect the changes.

Limestone Link at Camerton

Kathy Thomas – Chair of Somer Valley Ramblers

Themed Walks

These walks continue to be popular however some groups find the organisation quite challenging. Jeff Rowland has agreed to help with the organisation of the events.

Severnside

Sunday 28th July, this themed 9 mile “Rock and Stroll” walk is moderate/energetic, including rocky outcrops which offer great views across the Forest of Dean. Near the end of the walk, there’s a steady climb back to the car park, but no rock climbing is required!

Walk starts 10.15 am from outside the toilets at Symonds Yat Rock car park, GL16 7NZ. There is a Pay and Display pay point next to the toilets – coins essential to pay the £5 parking charge. Please be ready to start walking at 10.15 am. Full details will be on Walks Finder nearer the time. Walk Leader: Chris B - Map Series: OL14

Clevedon

Clevedon Group's Chair Sue, supported by other Clevedon members led the March themed walk for Avon Area Ramblers, we had decided to return to Newent for our ever popular Daffodil walk. The walk follows part of the disused Hereford & Gloucester Canal near Oxenhall, before heading on towards the woods where we saw carpets of wild daffodils in near perfect condition before heading back towards Newent via Gorsley and Kilcot. The good weather just prior to the walk date had clearly helped with the daffodils development. The walk received good support from members of several other Avon Area Groups with good weather adding further to the days enjoyment.



Lynda Brine

Kingwood's Themed Walk was:

The Incredible Hulks

It was Kingswood's turn to put on a themed walk in April and we walked along a stretch of the Gloucester and Sharpness canal near Purton where over a period of seventy years in the last century 81 boats, trows and barges were beached to protect the banks of the canal. There were 28 walkers in all, from a number of different Ramblers groups, who joined us at Berkeley for the walk to the canal. Each vessel has a plaque detailing a brief history and we spent some time inspecting this fascinating area.



On returning to Berkeley a number of us had tea and cake in the local Tea Rooms. This made a pleasant end to a very interesting walk.

A trow was a type of cargo boat found in the past on the rivers Severn and Wye in Great Britain and used to transport goods.

Kingswood's Annual Weekend Away

In March twenty of our group returned to Swanage for the third year in a row. Two years ago we couldn't see the sea or the paths due to thick fog. Last year we were more lucky, as we just missed the Beast from the East.



This year we started the weekend with a walk from Bere Regis, which was Kingsbere In Thomas Hardy's 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles', then on the Saturday we took on Storm Hannah. Whether we chose the shorter walk around Studland, or the longer one over Ballard Down there was no escaping the storm force winds that either sand blasted those on the beach, or nearly blew us over,



on the Down. Sunday saw the sun rising over the sea, and a decrease in the wind, so a walk along the coastal path to Houns Tout cliff from Kingston was not a problem.



Contributions from Kingswood by John and Monica Davis

Pictures:

Battling Storm Hannah, Coastal walks

Southwold Ramblers Report

We are currently without a chairman or vice-chairman; we have a Secretary and a Treasurer with lots of experience to support anybody putting themselves forward. We really need two volunteers to fill these roles to ensure smooth running of the group.

Southwold Ramblers have been keeping to their three walks a fortnight programme throughout the year, alternate Wednesday walks of 6 to 8 miles have had between 8 and 21 walkers, alternate Saturday walks of 6 to 8 miles have had between 7 to 24 walkers and the longer alternate Sunday walks of 10-12 miles have varied between 4 and 13 walkers. We start our Wednesday evening programme of walks on 29 May.

Southwold had another successful weekend away at Tenby. A few broke their journey to Tenby at Marros for the first walk. We would have had a spectacular show of gorse if the sun was shining. Unfortunately the promised rain spoilt this walk but we were more successful with the weather on the rest of the weekend. Our leaders put on long coastal walks ending at Kilegetty and a circular one taking in Amroth.

While the more leisurely walkers enjoyed inland walks using old miners trails. We explored the area around Creswell Quay which used to be a very busy port brings coal to Pembroke. There was an old pub that was very welcoming giving us the best roast potatoes we have ever sampled. On Sunday an extra walk was put on for the strollers amongst our group. They explored the historic Tenby enjoying the sunshine and other amenities! The sunshine on Monday encouraged many to explore Tenby before setting off for home. These weekends are always very well attended due to our leaders finding such interesting and varied walks for us to enjoy.

Our next holiday away is at the Imperial Hotel, Ilfracombe from 10-13 October which is nearly fully booked but we have a few places still available.

Tony Harris

Footpath maintenance

The Southwold Ramblers team of the Avon Ramblers Path Volunteers goes out on alternate Thursdays mainly replacing old or broken stiles with new kissing gates although we do sometimes install new Bristol gates (for those not in the know these are field gates with a separate pedestrian gate in them). So far this year we have installed 19 gates as well as repairing ditch crossings and clearing vegetation blocking access to stiles. Anyone interested in helping with this work please contact Tony Harris.



For **Kingswood** on a local walk members encountered some paths that had stiles in need of attention. On returning home a member went onto the Head Office website 'Report it' page. This is very easy to do, as you can drop the pin on the path that you are reporting, and also upload a photo if

you have taken one. Head Office then sends this on to the local authority. So in the end it came back to us, and our own footpath team did the work along with South Gloucestershire Council.

Where there was once a hedge the right of way is reinstated thank you Kingswood Ramblers.



The BRAMs team continues to do sterling work and Keith Weller reports on several clearance schemes one being at Bath City Farm. The path on the west side of City Farm was not picked up on the Bath Definitive Map Project although it appeared to be a Public Footpath. There was a difficult stile at one end of this path but replacement could not be funded by the Council as it was not a



recorded path. We are working with the tenant, landowner and PROW department towards getting this path recorded. However this has been

delayed by legislation which has been passed but not enacted due to the "Brexit workload". So, meanwhile, we agreed with the City Farm that we would donate a gate at this location to make it easier for the public walking through here.



City Farm is a charity which encourages people within the City to engage with nature and farming, providing education, inspiration and support. They welcome visitors and a walk through City Farm provides a real sense of being in the countryside whilst still in the heart of the City. In February Keith Weller led a Ramblers' walk which included passing through this gate and traversing the City Farm fields.

Keith Weller



Footpath Maintenance Award

Last autumn Tessa who has been very involved in setting up the scheme led a party of walkers who hiked their way to Wilmington Farm, to present the farmer, with a framed certificate to recognise the farmer's efforts in maintaining public rights of way over his land.



This photograph was taken near Peasedown St John a path that has been blocked by crops in previous years

Who will be awarded in 2019?

Kathy Thomas AAN Editor

Bristol Ramblers



Besides all the walks on offer, during the winter months there has been action behind the scenes:

This photo was taken on Easter Sunday on Patsy Hudson's Llandegfedd walk.

Samaritan's Way West

Keith Budd and his team have been busy ensuring the Samaritans Way West remains viable, clear and well signed. So far the section between Bristol and Bridgewater has been found to be in good condition with few obstructions, Keith reports it has been a very pleasant and interesting excursion. Extra

signage and a re-routing has been necessary for safety reasons from Long Ashton to A38, but otherwise the route is standing the test of time very well and remains a popular and lovely walk. A testament to Graham Hoyle, the walk's originator, who is involved in the ongoing project of checking the route.



This photo was taken on Easter Sunday on Nigel Andrews' Great Malvern walk.

Map and compass training

The Group runs periodic training courses for those interested in learning map and compass skills. In March John Wrigley and Carew Reynell led two well attended sessions. The first session ran by John was 'classroom' based, involving planning, preparing and leading walks together with the use of map and compass.

For the second session Carew let candidates loose, in pairs, on the Ashton Court orienteering course so that these skills could be put into practice. Assistance from Carew was readily at hand for those that needed support. There has been very positive feedback from participants, with a waiting list for the next session.

Wendy Britton - Chair Bristol Ramblers

Whatsapp

Whatsapp is yet another web based offering by which groups can keep in touch on specific topics, Wendy writes that Bristol are trialling it's use for some walks as a way for members to share information regarding late offerings of walks, lift sharing opportunities, and pre-walking buddying for would-be leaders.

There is a link on Bristol's web site for Bristol Ramblers who wish to join.

Somer Valley Ramblers have considered setting up a group but for now are happy to use emails. Are any other groups using Whatsapp?

Brunel Walking Group



Snowdonia. True to its name, when a group of Brunel members (and two dogs – Poppy and Escha) visited there this May bank holiday, the mountains did have snow on them and the nights were rather chilly to say the least, with some members sleeping in two sleeping bags as well as thermals to prevent shivering. But as spring had sprung, the valleys were a lush green and the

views were spectacular, whether from the valley vantage point or from one of the higher altitude walks, including Snowdonia's two highest mountain peaks, which were ascended that weekend: Snowdon at 1085m, via the Rhyd-Ddu path (950m ascent) descending via the Snowdon Ranger path and Carnedd Llewelyn at 1064m (979 metres of ascent) which included some scrambling, walking through snow and icy cold winds up in the swirl of mist. Other walks on offer were: in the Berwyn mountains with Cadair Bronwen, Cadair Berwyn and Moel Sych among the high points; a precipice walk starting in Dolgellau climbing up to the Llyn Tan-y-graig reservoir followed by views of the Barmouth estuary and Cadair Idris and a walk above the eastern side of Bala lake, with a return journey by steam locomotive!



The campsite was located on the Western end of Bala Lake, near the railway in the small village of Llanuwchllyn – I'm not sure if anyone actually mastered the pronunciation. Many pitched up by the stream and opposite, lambs could be seen (and heard) enjoying the spring sunshine when it appeared, with some blue skies and an array of spring flowers along embankments reminding us that it was May after all. In

terms of nourishment, a Brunel camp is not complete without the Brunel barbeque and hungry hikers were not disappointed with the delicious food on offer. Later, from a distance, the camp could have been mistaken for a small inferno as log burners were lit to keep campers warm. Though you could be forgiven for thinking it was a winter camp that night, the longer lighter evening signalled it was indeed British summer time and those who stayed up long enough for it to be really dark were rewarded with a magnificent starscape overhead.

Vanessa Adnitt

SOMER VALLEY WALKING FESTIVAL 2019

The Somer Valley Walking Festival enters its fourth year in 2019 with another full programme of events in the weekend 13th to 15th September. The Festival celebrates the attractive landscapes and industrial heritage of canals, railways and collieries in the area immediately south of Bath, including Peasedown St. John, Radstock, Timsbury and Paulton.

All events apart from the opening talk are free.

This year the Festival is launched with a presentation at the Radstock Museum on Wildlife in the Somer Valley on the evening of Friday 13th September. The following day sees shorter walks around



Paulton, Westfield, and Radstock town centre, together with a walk from Peasedown St John to the popular Priston folk music festival, allowing for about 3 hours to be spent at the Festival before returning to Peasedown.

On Sunday 15th a Nature Walk is planned together with a walk from Timsbury and some longer walks starting out from the Paulton Rovers ground, in Winterfield Road, Paulton. These will range between six and twelve miles and allow walkers to see the restoration work on the Somerset Coal Canal and walk into the Mendips.

For full details of the programme visit bathscapewalkingfestival.co.uk/somervalleywalkingfestival , or look out for our brochure to be published in July. We are also on Facebook and Twitter. - **John Bull**. Chair of SVWF

2019 General Council – Manchester – 13th and 14th April

We received a very warm Northern welcome at this year's General Council at Manchester, and I found the weekend a very enjoyable opportunity to share ideas with Ramblers members from England, Scotland, and Wales, and with Ramblers staff.

Greater Manchester and High Peak Ramblers were excellent hosts and, when I joined the walks they led around the historic city centre, I was delighted to discover that virtually the only traffic consisted of trams, buses, and taxis - making a very pleasant change from Bristol city centre!

During the business session on Saturday, we heard about the Ramblers membership growth plan, which our CEO Vanessa Griffiths gave more details about in her April Volunteer Newsletter.

On Sunday, it was interesting to hear candidates for vacancies on the Board of Trustees give presentations, and be interviewed, before myself and other delegates voted for our preferred candidates.

Apart from myself, Avon Area was also represented by Wendy Britton and Maureen Johnson from Bristol Ramblers, and Sylvia Popham was also there, in her capacity as a member of the committee which reviews General Council motions.

Everyone seemed pleased that the accommodation, meetings, and meals were all in a hotel, making things easier than the 2018 event, which was scattered across various university sites in Bangor, North Wales.

I'm looking forward to assisting with arrangements for next year's General Council, which will take place at the Bristol Marriot City Centre Hotel, (the hotel facing Castle Park), on Saturday 4th April and Sunday 5th April.

During that weekend, I hope a small number of Avon Ramblers will be willing to assist Ramblers staff in making the 2020 General Council enjoyable and successful. Further details about the roles we need volunteers for will be announced nearer the date.

Jeff Rowland Chair Avon Area Ramblers

Area AGM February 2019



Jeff presenting Wendy with flowers and thanking the Bristol Ramblers for hosting the AGM.

Once the business was completed the main speaker was Jack Cornish who delivered a lively presentation on “Don’t Lose Your Way”. For those who wish to investigate lost rights of way he has given us a link to useful guides.

A handy guide can be downloaded from www.Ramblers.org.uk

► **Get involved in Don’t Lose Your Way**

► **The guide to finding lost rights of way**

The [directory of online sources](#) – links to interesting sources, including some specific to Avon - when you get to the directory webpage, scroll down to *Local Sources*, click on the "+" then

click on your local authority name for links to local online sources such as the *Know Your Place* website

The 'Rights of Way - Restoring the Record' by Bucks & Wadey” is a useful source and can be purchased (price £32) via this link:

<https://www.britishhorse.com/products/rights-of-way---restoring-the-record--second-edition.html>

Taken from an email to groups from Jeff Rowland



**Tessa Wyatt retiring
chair of Avon Area
Ramblers with Peter
Carr, Ramblers Trustee**

Peter presented Tessa with a gift and flowers on behalf of Avon Area Ramblers for her commitment and work for Ramblers.

Peter updated the meeting on Ramblers Projects.

Wessex Wanderer Railway Walks -

If you have now received a copy of the 2019 programme you will have noticed that the programme has expanded to offer thirty-three walks. These range from four and a half miles to eleven miles and each station along the line is featured

In addition there are walks from two stations not included in the Heart of Wessex Line – a circular walk from Yate station and two Dursley Festival Walks from Cam and Dursley station. It's fingers crossed the weather will be kinder than it was last year for the Festival walks when it was rather wet which put many walkers off attending

The printed programme has now been distributed far and wide and it is to be hoped that many of the walks are included in local Group programmes

The latest information and any updates should be found on
www.wessexrailwaywalks.org.uk

It is a rather murky situation at the moment with regards to Community Rail Partnership Lines (of which the HoW line is one) but the Government is planning on making changes to how Community Rail Partnerships are run. This could mean that that funding we receive through the Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership at present might be affected in the future

Rumour has it that the Severnside Rail Partnership may extend down to Westbury (Wiltshire) thus leaving the Government funding match from Westbury down to Weymouth coming only from Somerset and Dorset CCs as far as the HoWRP is concerned. Only time will tell but as I have indicated it's just speculation at the moment

Plans to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the start of the WWWs next year are now in hand and we are grateful for the backing from Great Western Railway and their promised support for the design and implementation of a strap line/logo which would be used in all our publication material next year, including a souvenir programme

I do hope you will join in some of the WWWs this year –

Sylvia Popham

Articles for the October 2019 edition of AAN are required
by 24th August 2019 to the editor Kathy Thomas

If you have my email address please use that otherwise use the link
on www.avon-ramblers.org.uk but please do not send pictures by
that link.

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Sheep and lambs grazing peacefully at Priston, Near Bath

Unfortunately this is not always the case when dogs run amok in pastures and cause horrendous damage to sheep and lambs.



It is not just dogs attacking farm animals but to the concern of walkers there have been many accidents and even deaths by livestock of people using public rights of way.

According to the BHS statistics reveal that 8 people have died and many more injured. Incidents are believed to be much under reported as there is no national coherent reporting system.

There has been a trial project in Cornwall that looked into the practicalities of landowners/farmers creating **a temporary by-pass** in fields with public rights of way where they need to graze stock. Would we welcome such a plan?

Kathy Thomas – Editor AAN

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Avon Area Ramblers

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

Walks Finder

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

www.avon-ramblers.org.uk



Photograph from Vanessa Adnitt - Snowdonia

You are receiving this newslewtter as you are a member of Ramblers.