

Avon

Produced and Edited by Jill Fysh

Area

February 2011

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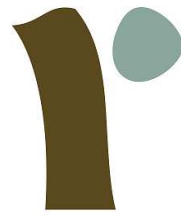
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ramblers
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<http://www.avon-ramblers.org.uk>



Dear Member

I would like to invite you to Avon Area Ramblers 36th Annual General Meeting on the 12 February 2011 at The Village Hall, Easter Compton (next to the Fox pub). BS35 5SJ. Doors open at 12:30, when a light lunch will be provided for the Attendees of the AGM The meeting will commence At 13:30. The AGM is your chance to have your say, ask questions or express any concerns you have.

There will be a local walk of 5 miles before the AGM starting from Easter Compton Village Hall at 10:00 hrs. This will be lead by Steve McNeill, tel. 01454 633001.

Tom Franklin the Cheif Executive of the Ramblers will be ourGuest Speaker and this is a good opportunity to put your questions and concerns to him. Tom is also hoping to be on the morning walk, this will be a good time to get to know him and for him to get to know us.

In line with the democracy of the Ramblers all committee members will retire at the AGM and a committee will be elected by the delegates of the AGM, although some committee members stand for re-election you can still put you name forward for any position on the committee, or just stand as a committee members with no specific position, full descriptions of all the volunteer roles are available <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer> where the committee positions are listed on the right of the page, click your choice, then choose Area under the heading Role Descriptions.

If you would like to put your name forward please email me jillfysh@aol.com or tele phone me on 01454633001.

Kind Regards

Jill Fysh

Editorial: Creating the AAN for the past three years has been a rewarding experience for me, gathering articles and bits of news that I think you will be interested in, then editing and putting it together, then seeing it as a small printed magazine is very rewarding.

I am now looking for someone to take this over from me and put breath some new life into it, perhaps a new style, and a new look. I will be prepared to help and support whoever takes this over until they are comfortable with doing it on their own.

You will need to have Broadband

If you are interested please email me jillfysh@aol.com

Valedictory

This is the last piece I shall write for the News as Chairman. I am strongly of the view that, for the sake of the democratic health of our organisation, the Chairmanship should change on a regular basis; I have been Chairman for three years; this seems to be regarded by most people as about the right stint to do; so I shall stand down at the AGM and look forward to working with a new person in my place.

I enjoyed it, so thank you all very much for letting me have a go. The job came to me without warning, purely because I was the slowest person to duck, so I cannot now pretend to have had any high aspirations or plans for change against which to assess my success or failure. I simply reacted as best I could to circumstances as they presented themselves. The upheavals at central office certainly gave much occasion for reaction! Happily, under Rodney's leadership things at Camelford House seem to be settling down and moving in the right direction and I hope we can look forward now to a period of consolidation and effective action towards achieving the aims of the Association.

Considering our own local affairs, I hope at least that we are more open to new blood and new ideas than we were, with a number of our younger folk coming forward to take a share in our leadership. I hope also we have been able to polish up a bit our own action in support of the Association's aims; continuing the already effective prosecution of footpath work under Peter Gould's command, and establishing a presence in the field of planning and countryside protection which at least enables us to formulate clearly the RA's position and put it across so it cannot be ignored. It was a particular pleasure to me to be able to witness Jill Fysh declaring open the new footpath along the top of Lansdown, and to work with Susan Carter and Bob Hall to tackle the various problems thrown up by the political contortions arising from the change of government. It looks as if we lost out in the case of parking on Bristol Downs (but at least we were seen to fight) but we are deep into the discussion about Bristol green spaces and the management of the Severn and housing developments north of Bristol.

Looking ahead, growing our media profile and expanding our local membership are obviously going to be important tasks. Given the huge cut-backs by government in funding for rights of way work, I think we shall have to look very carefully at what we can do to help the local authorities by way of volunteer work. We already have a good record in this regard with South Glos but elsewhere, particularly in BANES, we have a long way to go. There is a lot to do! I look forward to working with whomsoever takes the Chair to help achieve some of it.

David Waterstone

From the Access Officer

I am going to tell you a story. It has not got much of a plot. Now I think of it, it does not have an ending. So perhaps it is not a story at all. It ends with a question. So concentrate! Enjoy!

Many years ago when even Access Officers were young (we are talking 1998) the National Countryside Access Forum met under the auspices of the Countryside Commission and then, after a re-organisation, under the Countryside Agency (CA). One of its roles was to advise the Agency on the mapping of access land which was to become law in the year 2000. The Agency did a “so-so” job of mapping, rather less than so-so in our part of the world. But at least we got our access land and we are pleased to have it.

Members of the public could attend National Countryside Access Forum meetings. Attendees were almost invariably Ramblers and I joined them in the public seats for a couple of meetings. The Forum itself seemed to consist of just about anyone who had ever stuck their nose outside the backdoor. The meeting seemed to be held primarily to give an opportunity for speakers to berate CA managers for not doing what they said they would do.

Time passed and another re-organisation created Natural England out of English Nature and parts of the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Agency. The new body struck a blow for civil servants everywhere by abolishing the National Countryside Access Forum. Out of the chaos of re-organisation Natural England produced a document notable mainly for the lack of balance between the needs of amphibians and the lesser needs of people. But their Corporate Plan of 2008 redressed the balance and in April of this year we had a document entitled “Inspiring People”.

Balance seemed to have been established.

Meanwhile in the undergrowth of civil society a new creature had evolved, partly formed, out of CRoW (the Countryside and Rights of Way Act) – this was the Local Access Forum (LAF). LAFs spread rapidly across the country. Ours is a Joint LAF which exactly mirrors the Ramblers’ Avon Area. LAFs exist (among other things) to advise their Local Authorities on improving access to the countryside. But as they were consulted more and more on national issues it seemed sensible to have a means of talking to Government via Natural England. Not an original idea but could we possibly have some sort of National Forum? The England Access Forum met in May 2008 and the LAF representatives and Natural England managers identified a string of items for discussion/action. But the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, who would have the last word, always seem to have been equivocal about its existence.

Then, you may remember, we had an election, a bonfire of the quangos and a promise of the “Big Society”. LAFs survived the bonfire. Their members being volunteers LAFs do not actually cost anything much more than a few bus fares and a meeting room. Natural England have not been so lucky. What will remain after the “Cuts” we have yet to find out. We do know that policy will be in the hands of those backroom toilers in Whitehall – about as far removed as can be imagined from the countryside and those who work and walk in it.

So my question is this: When the Government has finished re-engineering society and we emerge blinking into the sunny uplands of the Big Society, and assuming the England Access Forum still exists, will it have anyone to talk to?

Ron Phelps December 2010

TALES FROM THE RIVERBANK

Sometimes, I may have given the impression that Bristol City Council always gets things wrong; that the mission statement is “if you can’t gate a footpath, tar it”. This is unfair. Recently, BCC has stated that the towpath at Conham will be consolidated in this financial year. (If you wonder why a towpath in South Glos is the responsibility of Bristol, the answer is the 1830 something Docks Act)

But legally enforceable liability on this stretch of path is not the whole story – though I have promised to do some legalistic enforcing to support one section of BCC against some others. Never afraid to recycle a jibe, I’ll repeat “Gandalf was never as Grey as fourth tier management”. Now for the congratulations and fireworks: lengths of the Severn Way Link and the Monarch’s Way have been dedicated as Public Rights of Way. BCC Public Rights of Way section has negotiated with the landowners and achieved a signed and sealed document. There is work to be done on the ground (which we should help with) and more work to be done on paper to complete these routes, but this is a huge achievement for which BCC, especially its PRoW team and the councillors who back them, deserves acclaim. Likewise, the policy to preserve a waterside walk as the docks were developed has been honoured for decades.

Never mind the Evening Post, Avon Area News says **Bristol City Council is getting somethings right!** Water really inspires them.....Peter Gould

WESSEX WANDERER RAIL WALKS (WWW) 2010/2011

Whilst the numbers of those attending the walks were slightly down on last year, the walks continued to attract many ‘regulars’ as well as those new to these rail walks (forty-seven to be exact) and non members, many of whom have since joined the Ramblers. Our fame is spreading too - that I know of one couple travelled from the North of England to go on a walk in Dorset (not a day trip I hasten to add, but the reason they specifically travelled to Dorset) and another couple travelled from Pontypridd to join us for a days walking also in Dorset

Statistics show that five hundred and nine people joined in the walks but of course this was not five hundred and nine *different* people. Likewise three hundred and seventy-two people used the train, either both ways or in one direction, or indeed if you count each way separately the total number of journeys made was six hundred and ninety-eight, plus pre-walking journeys – numbers unknown! Anyway whichever way you look at it despite a slight drop in attendance on the walks, the numbers using the train increased by 2% and we are happy to have contributed to the growing numbers using the Bristol/Weymouth railway (although when the trains are particularly overcrowded my fellow WWW walkers may not agree with me!)

It has to be said that, despite some disruption this year, First Great Western’s service has improved greatly since they took over the route several years ago. And whilst there is still plenty of room for improvement better timekeeping, fewer cancellations and additional carriages at some busier times have been appreciated. We were also grateful for FGW’s continued support of our walks by supplying leaders

and back-makers with passes to cover pre-walking and leading

Financial assistance from the four Ramblers' Areas involved (Avon, Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire) plus a grant from the Community Rail Partnership has ensured that the programme of walks will continue for the time being at least, although how the threat of above inflation, and some more, increases in fares will affect future attendance on our walks remains to be seen

Walk Leaders continued to find a variation of routes even though we have been leading walks from the twenty stations along the line for many years. It is always a challenge when devising new linear walks in particular and also having to take into account the times of both the up and down trains and the possibility of trains not running to time

Twelve Leaders met in Yeovil in November for what is now an annual 'ad hoc' meeting to review the season and to plan for the following year. Ann Light (Avon Area) took over the role of Walks Co-Ordinator from Susan Blake (Dorset Area) and immediately started getting together the 2011 programme

Several ideas for varying the programme were tabled at the meeting including walks on different days of the week as well as the usual Wednesdays and Saturdays, the suggested days being Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. In line with the 2010 programme some high summer dates when the trains tend to be *very* busy will be omitted. *So it will be well worth taking a few moments to study the programme to make sure you travel on the correct days!*

At the time of writing details of the complete programme were not available but the 2011 season will commence on Saturday 14 May with a walk led by Peter Gould and finish on Saturday 8 October with a walk led by Ann Light

Full details of the walks will appear in future editions of Area News, on the Avon Area website, Ramblers' Walksfinder and selected ones will appear in some Group programmes.

However, as the publication dates of Area News are changing the walks will already have commenced before the next edition, so if anyone would like a copy of the full 2011 programme due to be published in April and do not wish to refer to the website, you can obtain one by sending a stamped addressed envelope to The Walks Co-Ordinator, 133 Conygre Grove, Filton, Bristol BS34 7HX

Wishing you all a good 2011. Once again you are invited to join us on a rail walk and enjoy a great sociable day out

Sylvia Popham
Vice President - Avon Area

Wanted Volunteers for the Area Committee

We are looking for:

Media officer(s)

Publicity is essential to make the public aware of the aims and achievements of the Ramblers, and to encourage new members.

This Position can be done by one person or shared.

Would you like to take on this challenge either on your own or get a small committee together to take it on?

Membership Secretary

This Position involves receiving reports electronically from Central Office and monitoring the Area membership, distributing reports to the Groups in the area and reporting to the Area council.

If you are interested in either of the above posts or any other position on the Area committee please contact me jillfysh@aol.com

(All walks are on Wednesdays)

AVON AREA MID-WEEK WALKS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>10am start at</u>	<u>OS Map</u>	<u>Grid Ref</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Leader</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Notes</u>
9.2.11	Clutton	Church Park in village	Exp 141/142	623589	5/6 m	S. Dixon	01275 859758	Pub rolls
9.2.11	Nailsea	Old Barn Inn or park in lay-by	Exp 154	483716	8 m	M. Marsh	0117 986 5559	Picnic lunch – Pub at end
23.2.11	Keynsham	Lock-keeper Pub	Exp 155	661691	5.m	M. Starbuck	01225 333295	Pub lunch
23.2.11	Farmborough	Butchers Arms Park by road	Exp 155	664607	5/6 m	R. Franklin	0117 956 7224	Pub lunch
9.3.11	Hawkesbury Upton	Village Hall	Exp 167	777870	6 m	Jill	0117 968 4260	Pub lunch
9.3.11	Long Ashton Park in village	Angel Inn	Exp 154	552710	5 m	David Evans	01454 613912	Pub lunch
23.3.11	Hillesley	Fleece Inn	Exp 167	769898	5/6 m	S. Pearce	0117 924 3316	Pub lunch Bus from Bristol 9.20
23.3.11	Pensford Park in village	Outside Rising Sun	Exp 155	618638	5.5 m	B. Butlin	0117 986 1915	Pub stop at end Bus 635 at 10.40 from Bristol, Colston Street, Bus stop Cc. Walk starts at Boyd Bridge at 11.20
13.4.11	Monarch's Way 2	Wick to Keynsham 11.20	Exp 155	702727	10 m	G. Harris	01275 842093	Pub stop
13.4.11	Bristol Airport	Church at Felton	Exp 154	513658	5/6 m	B. Roberts	0117 986 2468	Pub lunch
27.4.11	Ashton Court	C.P. adjacent to Dove Cote Inn	Exp 155	557713	8 m	M. Lambert	0117 960 7266	Picnic or pub lunch
11.5.11	To Dyrham & back	<u>9.30</u> Almhouses in Marshfield High Street	Exp 155	775738	5/6 m	J. Langdon	01225 471936	Pub lunch
25.5.11	Southstoke	Cross Keys Pub	Exp 155	748620				

WALK!

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Ramblers
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Ramblers Membership March!

Ramblers Membership March

Great news! For every brand new direct debit member recruited by Groups in March 2011, we're passing on the entire first year's membership fee back to the Group! We hope that you will take part!

How will the scheme work?

When these application forms are processed, they will log that the member has been recruited as part of this campaign. At the end of the month, we'll count how many such application forms have been assigned to each Group and make payment to Areas who will then forward the relevant sum onto each Group.

Why is this scheme being launched?

The Ramblers has a big ambition to have more members at the end of the year than we did at the beginning. If we're to be successful, we need to encourage as many Groups as possible to get the message out there about our amazing variety of 28,000 led walks per year, brilliant member benefits and discretionary discounts, and our important work protecting footpaths for everyone. This one-off opportunity provides a direct financial incentive for Groups to do that.

Who is eligible?

Groups will receive the entire first year membership fee for any new direct debit joiner who uses one of the specially marked recruitment forms (available from the group membership secretary). Completed forms should be posted to us between 1st March and 31st March. We will accept all such completed forms that arrive at central office by 4th April 2010. The offer only applies to brand new members who are recruited. It does not apply to those who currently are, or who have previously been, members. We are only able to offer this incentive using paper leaflets.

What you can spend this extra money on?

The aim of helping Groups to raise more money through this promotion is that they spend it on activities that help their Group to grow and/or achieve the charitable objectives of the organisation.

There are lots of exciting ways to spend the extra funds you raise which could help your Group achieve further growth or help to achieve our charitable objectives. You might want to think about:

- recruitment materials, walk leader training, developing your website
- practical path work tool set or stile kit, first aid kits to share between leaders
- Get Walking* packs to give away at recruitment fairs (available from Central)

Essentially, Groups can use any extra money generated by this promotion in a way that will help the Group attract new members and/or directly fulfil our charitable objectives.

Tips on getting the message out there?

You can use posters, leaflets, your website, local paper or just plain old word of mouth. We've got some very powerful joining messages at the Ramblers and amongst the most powerful is your Group's walking and social programme. Think about the sorts of walks your Group leads – long, short, rural, urban, weekday, weekend – and tell people about them.

Perhaps you could lay on and publicise a special open walk to encourage potential members to come out with you on a taster walk?

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Although the christmas break is just finished it is a busy time for Ramblers work to safeguard rights of way. The [Vixen Tor](#) public inquiry is currently overrunning and The Ramblers is taking a lead role in this inquiries as part of our campaigning to keep rights of way open for use by the public.

Vixen Tor

Vixen Tor is one of Dartmoor's largest most striking natural features and until 2003 had been enjoyed by locals, walkers and climbers alike.

We believe that such a stunning wild place should be open to all and will not give up in trying to restore the open access we all once enjoyed. Thank you to everyone who submitted evidence forms to us, stating that they have visited the area. The public Inquiry into the case is happening in Princetown, Devon on 23 November 2010.

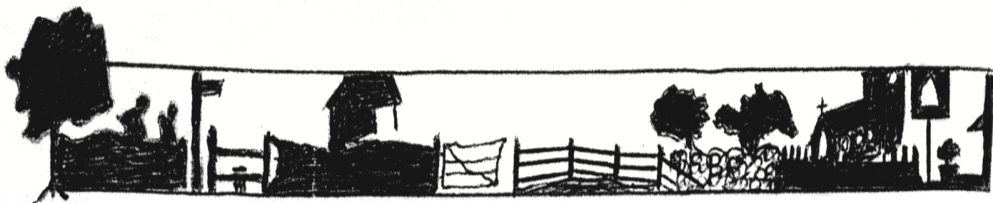
The History of the Tor

Today it sits behind barbed wire fences and has "Keep Out" painted in large letters on its majestic stone sides due to the present owners dislike of sharing the countryside with others.

The Tor was closed to the public in 2003 after more than thirty years of open access, it had been hoped that access would be restored under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act but after an appeal by the landowner it was decided at a public inquiry it should be removed from the new access maps.

Since then many attempts at negotiating permissive access have been tried and failed. The Dartmoor National Park Authority offered the landowner £1,500 a year for a permissive access agreement and former UN peace negotiator to Bosnia Colonel Bob Stewart, as part of Channel 5 TV programme, was brought to try and help, all to no avail and the Tor remains closed off to all but sheep.





By The Way

Five leaves: 3 – The Horse Chestnut

In recent years Health and Safety have on occasions decided to take drastic action over a tree which has probably been responsible for more bruised knuckles than any other one. Before the lovely glossy chestnuts became available when the tree was brought to Britain in the late sixteenth century, little boys (and presumably larger ones) had to play conkers with smaller cobnuts or even snail shells, not nearly so satisfying!

The tree provides an impressive flower display in parks, estates and avenues, and is often found in hedgerows. Its vast span offered shade from the sun and shelter from the rain in village centres before the car became dominant. The spreading chestnut under which Longfellow's village smithy stood was such specimen.



The chestnut grows to a height of 35 metres and has bright green leaves of 5-7 stalk less, ovoid leaflets and the white flowers open in May –June from upright 'candle' spikes ripening to a spiny green fruit enclosing the nuts.

Stella Seal – Peterbor-

Past Times – Gipsy Wisdom

I have noticed that Gipsies seldom camp under trees, (and I not infrequently see in my travels now where their camps have been made) the cause of which I was informed is that the trees in wet and moist weather drip so much that it is drier in the open air, a heavy shower with cessation being preferable to a continual dripping....

George James Dew – W 1st December, 1878



New Year Quiz

- From which bush do you get sloes?
- Name the gardener: Gertrude Bell, Gertrude Jekyll, Gertrude Lawrence.
- What is the country name for a mistle thrush?
- What should a regimental flag always be called?
- ‘Something there is that doesn’t like a wall,’. Name the poem and the author.
- How far can you walk into a wood?
- Who is president of our association?
- What is the country motto of Somerset?
- Which seaside town boasts of a Royal Military Canal?
- Who once lived at Number One, London?

From ‘Walk’ – Autumn 2010-12-02

‘A right of way, or right of access, is indeed a right. Any suggestion to the contrary is unhelpful to those fighting to preserve such rights.

Jon Zigmund – North Yorkshire

Quiz Answers: Blackthorn bush; Gertrude Jekyll; stormcock; A colour – hence The Trooping of the Colour; mending Wall; Robert Frost; Halfway; Julia Bradbury; Sumorset Falle – as in a version of the Old English Chronicle; Hyther, Kent; The Duke of Wellington – at Apsley House.



Members of Area Council

Elected at The Avon Area AGM

6th February 2010

Chairman	David Waterstone	01225-427346
Vice Chairman	Tom Elson	
Secretary	Jill Fysh	01454-633001
Minutes Secretary	Chris Gaymer	0117 9513319
Treasurer	Adrian Noyes	01225-460989
Foot paths Secretary Bristol	Peter Gould	
	PeterGould18@aol.com	
	B&NES David Waterstone	01225-427346
	S. Glos Ron Phelps	01179-858825
Access Officer	Ron Phelps	01179-858825
Environment and planning		
	BANES David Waterstone	01225-427346
	Bristol Susan Carter	0117 9247872
Information Officer	Maureen Johnson	
	maureenajohnson@hotmail.com	
Membership Secretary	Jean Aellen	01454 419274
Editor, Area News	Jill Fysh	01454-633001
	jillfysh@aol.com	
President	Peter Gould	
Vice Presidents	Sylvia Popham	
	Peter Mills	
	Marietta Starbuck	
	Kathleen Bullen	

**Articles for the June Issue of Area News are required by
25th April, please email copy to
info@avon-ramblers.org.uk.**

For Identification Please type in Subject
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