

Taunton Deane Ramblers



SUMMER NEWSLETTER



1st August 2020

This Newsletter can also be found on our website

www.tauntonramblers.org.uk

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SUMMER NEWSLETTER

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Chairman's Chat

After those life changing moves by the government back in March, I truly hope this finds you virus free, healthy, and above all, still walking!

With restrictions now being gradually eased we have waited it seems a long time for Head Office to make up its mind to allow us again to walk as a larger group. Whilst the restriction last month to six in a group was welcome, it just was not feasible to arrange group walks just yet, but, we hope very soon.

When we are able to meet and walk again in numbers, we are rather anxiously waiting for you to come up with offers of walks. Naturally a number of you have been hesitant to commit a date for a walk with the restrictions for Covid-19 still in place but, with clear guidelines now coming from Head Office, these will help to persuade you that we all should be able to walk safely, and you will contact our various walk secretaries....please !

During this period of lockdown, we were saddened to hear of the death of former chairman, Jim Hurst who contributed much to the life of TDR during the early years of the group's foundation. Sad news also reached us about the poor health of veteran walker John Lowe. He suffered a bad stroke in July

Coming up to date, our thanks go out to member Wendy Morrison for her efforts to keep us in touch through the Zoom programme. This has proved a valuable lifeline during these troubled times.

Looking back, it is sad to reflect that our Spring/Summer programme had to be cancelled. During that time we were going to look into the possibility of another coach outing this year, and considered

Swanage as a definite possibility. Older members might recall that we celebrated the group's 7th anniversary with a trip there back in 2000.

After the 2001 Foot and Mouth Epidemic all footpaths in Somerset were closed for around three months with inevitable ensuing problems. With SCC and Parish Councils not undertaking their usual cut backs over the last few months you may already be encountering overgrown sections on lesser used paths, so it would be advisable to carry a pair of secateurs and stick or walking pole with you on your walks.

In conclusion I would like to remind members that we are still one member short on our committee. We were fortunate in persuading Joy Williams to step into Andrew Norris's shoes when he found it difficult to continue, but we do need a full committee to function efficiently so, if you would like to get more involved following these months of isolation, please do contact me or Lynda. We would both love to hear from you.

Happy walking

John

Words of rambling advice from above

Anticipating the resumption of group walking again in the near future, Head Office has issued some cautionary advice for walk leaders to follow. We have looked at this with some interest, and feel you should be aware of certain things.

For insurance purposes all walk leaders will be registered as volunteers, and we will do this for you all when we are able to issue a programme and when group walking resumes. As we already hold details of members so will just need your authorisation to provide these to Ramblers.

They recommend we, as walk leaders keep a register of walkers on our led walk(s). This was introduced some years ago, but never caught on as a practice, but now feel it has more relevance. So the walk leader will need to record all names and contact details at the start of the walk.

It is also a requirement of our insurers that we complete a risk assessment for the walks we lead. The purpose of the risk assessment is to ensure our walks comply with Covid-19 guidance as well as highlighting any potential hazards on our planned walk route.

Further details are provided in the next section.

John

As a walk leader why do I need to complete a risk assessment?

It's important to understand the risks on your walk, and take any steps that you can to reduce them – to keep yourself and everyone in the group safe.

The Ramblers have put together a short risk assessment checklist to use as part of your normal walk planning and recce to include risks arising from coronavirus. The risk assessment checklist for group walks can be accessed from this section of the Ramblers website under the Activity Guides. <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/coronavirus/volunteering.aspx>

You must complete a risk assessment for every walk that you lead and keep a copy (either as a paper or electronic copy) for 1 year. If there's an incident on your walk and an insurance claim is made, the Ramblers' insurers might ask to see the risk assessment. It is recommended to recce the route as close to the date of the walk as possible, to make a note of hazards and plan any adjustments.

This is probably no different to what most of us have been doing previously but we are not used to recording it in this way. Some of us used the checklist on a recent recce and found it really helpful in identifying potential hazards and I also found taking photos of these was useful to jog my memory.

A reminder about the government guidelines, including on travel and transport, will be included as part of the next TDR walk programme and can also be found on the Ramblers website.

Please don't let these changes stop you from offering to lead a walk. Why not recce a favourite walk and try the risk assessment checklist for yourself. If you have any questions please email me at lynda.kearn@outlook.com and I will do my best to help.

Lynda

A Lockdown Odyssey

When Boris's decree came then into place,
Like you I was far from happy-no smile on my face!
I thought: establish a routine, but one with variety
Exercise when I can, but not in society.

I first struggled up Maundown in the warm bright sun
But I rather puffed and panted-it wasn't much fun.
But the celandines shone like bright yellow stars
And wasn't it good with the absence of cars!

Down to the young Tone from above Langley next I did try
The blackthorn was heavenly and primroses everywhere....I might lie
(a bit)!

Then next down the river and up Heydon's Hill
The beeches in young leaf and views quite a thrill.

Then the challenge of Oakhampton quarry was there,
A stony steep climb but much clean fresh air!
At last an easing of lockdown and some company allowed,
But the weather was changing with lots of grey cloud.

Off from Brompton Ralph strode Phil B and I
Up through the rain and parched grass, my I did sigh!
But chatting again helped the miles go past
'Til wet boots and stuff into boot I did cast.
Now with an aching knee out from Milverton my route did lead
Hedges adorned with foxgloves and that giant hogweed.

Sometimes it was hard to motivate and set out
As apart from a sore knee I'm quite stout!
But walking is walking and now quite a habit
And what's the alternative, sit home like a rabbit!

John O

Why it sometimes pays to lose your way...

Members will probably be aware of Ramblers' national campaign, 'Don't Lose Your Way', which seeks to ensure that any rights of way that are not currently shown on the definitive map are recorded by 2026. This is the date which was set in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 for adding paths using historical evidence (For more information, go to <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/dont-lose-your-way-2026.aspx>).

Like many of us during the restrictions on group activity arising from Covid-19, I have been walking individually or with fellow members of Ramblers. Hopefully, some of the walks I have undertaken will in due course appear in future Group programmes!

In early July, I went for a walk with a friend starting from Thurlbear church, heading towards West Hatch. Some of the paths on our route were clear and unobstructed, indicating continued regular use or upkeep, but others were rather less so, leaving us sometimes having to cut our way through vegetation, particularly at stiles.

In one extreme case, we found a path that simply ran out into an impassable mass of branches and brambles. Luckily, there was another path which intersected our route at this point, enabling us to continue our walk without too much inconvenience.

Even more fortunately, this 'new' path took us to the Farmers Arms – enabling us to enjoy a rest in the sunshine in the pub's beer garden, and partake of our first 'pub' pint since the closure of licensed premises in March. This didn't exactly make for the fastest five-mile walk on record... but hey...

Cheers!

A few of our walking photos are shown below.

Phil Bisatt



The Farmers' Arms at West Hatch



On the Quantocks near Triscombe



A footpath near Nynehead

[Short Routes - plotaroute.com](http://plotaroute.com)

As I record nearly all my walks, I put them onto that plotaroute site. As you can create a filter for a search, then the above link shows most of the ones I've done for Taunton Deane Ramblers.

It's a mixture of Friday evening and Sunday afternoon walks, so can start at pubs! However they can obviously start at anywhere along the route to suit parking etc.

The walks are all effectively public anyway, as I put them on that website, but the link is a quick way of looking at the ones under the TDR banner.

Some of them are linear, eg walk between rail stations on the West Somerset Railway and get the train back ... which isn't possible at the moment, but you can always walk back!

Andy Norris

Programme Secretary

Hello from me, your Programme Secretary! My role is normally to put all the walk details provided by the walk coordinators (Assistant Programme Secretaries) into a nice programme along with any other articles of interest. Unfortunately it hasn't quite worked out that way this time! Due to current restrictions on walking in groups of six Taunton Deane Ramblers have decided it is best to carry on with the current informal walk arrangements between those who want to do them.

Plea for walk offers!

As soon as we are allowed to get together in larger numbers we would like to have a provisional walk programme for Autumn to quickly send out. I know our walk coordinators for the Sunday, Wednesday and Friday walks have been working hard to try to fill the programme, but if you are willing/able to lead a walk – perhaps one of those from the

Spring/Summer programme which did not take place or a new walk – please contact Lynda Kearn for Wednesday walks, Janice Cockett for Sunday afternoon walks, Kathy Richardson for all day Sunday walks and Mike Whitmore for Friday evening walks. Or if you would like some walk routes or ideas contact John Ollerenshaw or Janice Cockett. They would all love to hear from you. All contact details can be found at the end of this Newsletter.

Thanks.

Joy

Somerset Rambler

The latest edition of the Somerset Rambler newsletter can be found at

<http://www.somersetramblers.co.uk>

and click on **Somerset Rambler**

or on our website in the **Publications** section

The Walking Partnership

Taunton Deane Ramblers are now a member of the Walking Partnership. As such every time one of us books a holiday and mentions at the time that they are a member of TDR, the group will receive a contribution of :-

£10 per person for UK holidays, £20 per person for short haul holidays, £30 per person for long haul holidays

This applies if you book with the following companies : Ramblers Walking Holidays, Ramblers Cruise & Walk or Adagio

For more information go to www.thewalkingpartnership.org.uk

Or ring 01707 331133

Thanks to everyone who has already used this service.

Your Committee and Officers © is Committee member

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Note due to print timing, posts above may have altered. Please check our website for up to date information