



Ramble On

Exeter and District Ramblers Group News – July 2026

Event Diary Summer 2026

Event Diary

Notes from the Chair

Where are the Sunday buses?

Spring 26

Future Walking Holidays

Tribute to Mandy Bottomly

Event	Date	Time	Venue	Contact
Walk library meeting	Friday 12th June	10.30am	Exeter	Gill Macphail*
Dartmoor Outdoor Festival	Friday 28th August - Friday 4th September	Various	Across Dartmoor. Festival Hub at Princetown.	Programme online
Sidmouth & East Devon Walking Festival. Organised by East Devon Ramblers.	Saturday 12th September- Friday 18th September	Various	Various	Sidmouth Tourist Information Centre **
Walking Holiday	Friday 9th- Monday 12th October	3 nights	HF Holnicote House, Selworthy	Phil Wales ***
Devon Area Members Day	Saturday 17th October	TBC	TBC	South Hams Group
Group AGM	Wednesday 4th November	7.00pm for 7.30pm	Clyst St George Village Hall	Ian Wroe****

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** Sidmouth Tourist Information Centre, tic@sidmouth.gov.uk

***Phil Wales, pwales@fastmail.net

****Ian Wroe, ian.wroe@outlook.com

Notes from the Chair

We have enjoyed plenty of very good walking during the winter and spring' despite some cancellations. As I write this it looks like summer weather may at last be arriving.

Our second pop up holiday this April was based on Swanage. 13 members participated and the weather was kind to us. Good company, spectacular landscape, beautiful flora & fauna, a steam train and not least great walks combined to make it another very successful holiday. There is plenty of enthusiasm for another pop-up holiday next year although as yet we have no agreed date or destination. Your ideas are invited especially if you have knowledge of a particular area and can help with the organisation.



Two Moors Way 50th Anniversary Walk – Holne, Venford Reservoir, led by Les, walkers enjoying the cooling waters of Chalk Ford. 25 04 2026

The group is supporting the Two Moors Way Association's celebration of the 50th anniversary of this amazing route. By the time the celebrations finish we will have been involved in leading eight walks and in the special celebration event at Morchard Bishop.

We will also be participating in the Dartmoor Outdoor Festival at the end of August/beginning of September. This year Princetown will be the Festival Hub. Look out for publicity about the events!

Ian Wroe

Where are the Sunday buses on Dartmoor and Exmoor?

The Campaign for National Parks (CNP) has started a campaign highlighting the lack of bus services, particularly on Sunday's, providing green access to Dartmoor and Exmoor National parks. The lack of bus services is a particular feature over access to these national parks. For example, you cannot get to Moretonhampstead, Chagford or Castle Drogo (NT) from Exeter. The lack of services can be seen in the two maps shown in the attached link.

<https://www.cnp.org.uk/support/campaigns/where-are-the-sunday-buses/>

In my role as Dartmoor Preservation Association Chair of trustees, we as a charity have been supporting this campaign and have provided CNP with some blogposts from local access users in support of the campaign. With rising fuel prices due to the war in the Middle East, then looking at more sustainable walks in the future is something the group may have to consider. This could mean more walks in the programme using rail or bus services locally.

CNP are looking for people to support and help them develop the campaign for more Sunday buses services. Working with the Naturesave Trust, they have a short survey to collect more information from the public. It would be useful if you could complete the survey, it should not take more than five minutes to complete, and the link is shown above.

John Howell

Spring 2026

In previous editions of *Ramble On* I have commented on the extremes of weather which condition our planned walks, resulting sometimes in cancellation! This period from March to June not only had a great deal of rain causing the mud and water wading but on at least two recent walks led by John Howell from Simonsbath (TMW 50th Anniversary Walk) and Hazel Pond starting at Scorhill we have endured stinging hail.

On John's Two Moors Way on 11 04 26 particularly it would have been easier to walk backwards than have the torture from above obscuring the direction we were attempting on the way out. Heads down, hoods up was the only way to go! The icy storm eased eventually revealing the winding Barle and a hillside of deer silhouetted against the sky.



Jane Price text and photos

Possible Future Walking Holidays and the recent April 17-21 w/end stay over!

In contrast, the 4 day pop-up centred at Swanage, though with strong winds throughout the weekend was excellent walking weather. The local knowledge of Ian, Nikki and John enthusiastically shared meant a very enjoyable time out, given too the Jurassic Coast has some of the most spectacular scenery and coast path in England. These pop-ups come highly recommended as they are less onerous for those organising and planning the w/end as pop-uppers arrange their own travel and accommodation.

On Friday 17th April we were eased in at Worth Matravers with a circular walk of 5.5 miles led by Nikki & Ian, which broke the journey. Entertainingly Nikki guided us to fossilised dinosaur footprints at Keates Quarry, then continued the Priests Way onwards to reach the coast at Dancing Ledge, an unusual rock formation where once boats had anchored to take out Purbeck quarried stone. We followed the coast path west to Winspit Quarry, frequently used as a film set and returned north to Worth Matravers via Winspit Bottom.

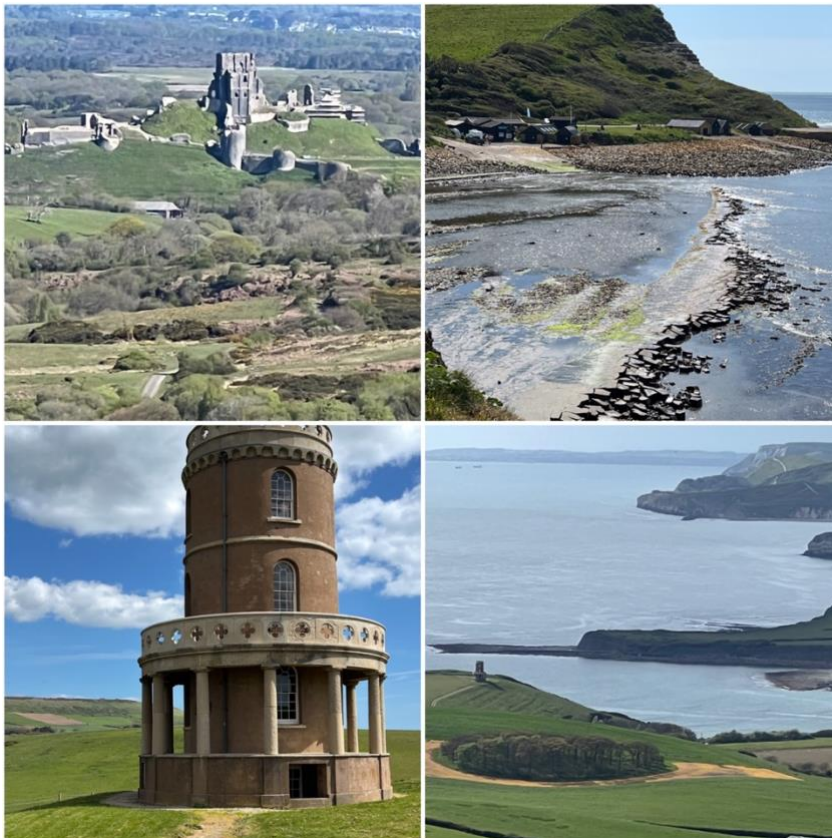


Saturday was a linear walk led by John, begun by climbing aboard a steam train at Swanage to Corfe Castle. The detail preserving an authentic atmosphere of Swanage Steam Railway Station and accurate homage to times past was extraordinary! Much physical effort was required to reach the projected obelisk at Nine Barrow Down leading to the bleached Old Harry Rocks, with fine views all the way with over to Poole, Bournemouth and the Isle of Wight. John then led us descending along the coast path back into Swanage.



Sunday offered a circular walk from Kingston on to Kimmeridge and Kimmeridge Bay, then Swyre Head with 9 miles of moderate walking led by Nikki & Ian. This included an exceptionally beautiful section of the Hardy Way to Kimmeridge village, passing the tiny church and museum and then moving to the coast at Kimmeridge Bay. We climbed some 140 steps to the top of Hen cliff to visit Clavell tower and enjoyed the superb views over the bay before taking some 1.5 miles along the coast path. Turning inland we climbed gently on good paths at first and finally very steeply up a rough path to reach Swyre Head.

Finishing the exploratory weekend on Monday 20th April with a 6.5 miles circular walk starting at the completely unspoiled village of Abbotsbury led by John along the South Dorset Ridgeway to Abbotsbury Castle and then via East Bexington Farm to join the SW Coast Path at Chesil Beach, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This also made the journey home a shorter and more enjoyable one.



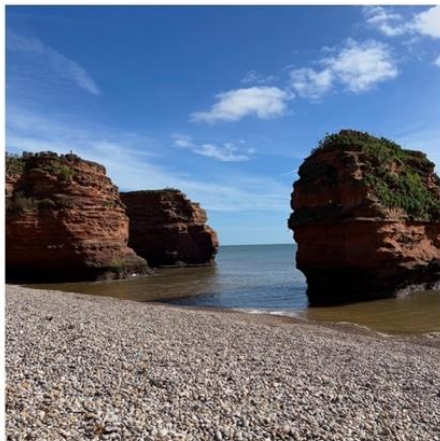
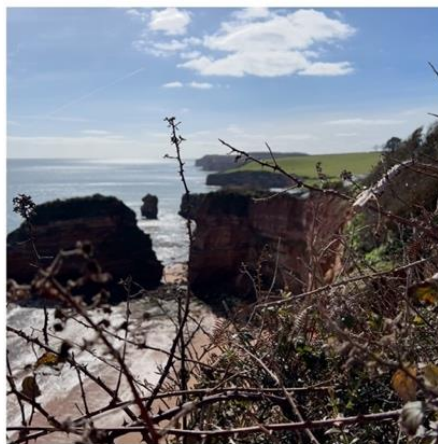
The E&D R group would like to do more of these pop-ups as mentioned by Ian in his notes as they are immensely rewarding, but they depend on the initiative of walk leaders being prepared to set up the where, when and content of walks for a 4 day weekend. Please do come with solid suggestions of venues suitable to be explored over 4 days, even if walkers only partially book in for some of the time. If the chosen town/area is not too far from 'home' ie. Exeter so much the better or can also be reached by train!

Tribute

It is with great sadness that I post this tribute to Mandy Bottomley my best friend and fellow Rambler who passed away peacefully in Exeter Hospice on the 8th May 2026

Mandy loved to walk and many of you will have walked with her over the years with the Exeter and District Ramblers. She loved the great outdoors and the social side of walking in a group, appreciated the natural world and like the rest of us loved a good view. Her favourite walk was the Budleigh Salterton high peak walk, which she led on occasions and we would walk regularly, I always think of it as Mandy's walk. To have had her in our lives is an honour, she will be sorely missed by all who knew her.

Chloe Doyle, (close friend of Mandy and Exeter and District Ramblers member)



Photos and walk description from the Editor who remembers this walk well as many of us do!

Mandy led a hugely enjoyable walk on Mother's Day 19 March 2023, she called it 'VIEWS GALORE - VICTORIAN COASTAL AND RIVER', she took us from Budleigh Salterton heading along the coastal path to Ladram Bay, we continued to High Peak, turned inland through East Devon countryside to the River Otter, and followed it to Otterton where she had arranged a 'Victorian' afternoon tea. She also led other walks, but this one was particularly memorable as Mandy was joined by her daughter and it was Mandy's favoured spot!

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