



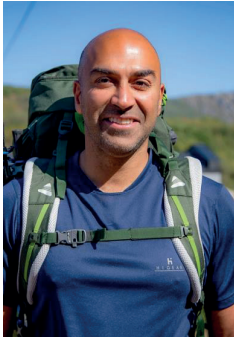
# DORSET FOOTNOTES

Newsletter of the Dorset Area of the Ramblers Association

ISSUE NO. 95

AUTUMN 2023

## Amar Latif



Amar Latif is the new President of the Ramblers. Well-known to TV audiences as The Blind Adventurer, Amar was appointed president of the Ramblers in April.

Many notable people have become the President of the Ramblers over many years. Still, the organisation does not seem to use the President to promote the charity, its aims, or its campaigns.

Looking back to previous Presidents, only Janet Street-Porter, who was regularly on radio and television, actively promoted the benefits of walking and the benefits of being a member of the Ramblers.

Catch-up time - there is an article on Amar Latif in the Autumn issue of the Walk magazine, and I recommend the article to you.

To help you, here is the link to the article:

[www.ramblers.org.uk/walk-talk-amar-latif](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/walk-talk-amar-latif)

Mike Heckford

## Urgent Appeal for Volunteers for 2024

### The Future of the Purbeck Plod Hangs in the Balance"

The 2023 Purbeck Plod, a popular annual event, took place on June 25th and owes its success to the dedication of numerous volunteers. This year, 88 participants embarked on the adventure, choosing from three routes spanning 25, 16, and 12 miles, making it an event to remember.

The event's smooth running was thanks to the commitment of our volunteers, many of whom generously took multiple roles to ensure everyone's safety. **However, the future of the Purbeck Plod, scheduled for June 23, 2024, is now in jeopardy.** Several volunteers have expressed doubts about their availability for next year's event. The spectre of ageing looms over us, making attracting fresh faces to carry on this time-honoured tradition imperative.

The Purbeck Plod holds a unique distinction among Ramblers events in Dorset: it is open to the public, in alignment with the Ramblers charity's mission. Nevertheless, we have observed a conspicuous absence of Ramblers members among the participants. While disinclined to join the walk, many generously volunteered their time to oversee the event's coordination.



Our call for help is pressing, and the reasons are compelling. The Purbeck Plod has been an enduring fixture for over half a century, founded by a dedicated Ramblers member. It would be a heartrending loss if, after all these years, this beloved event was to end.

In light of these challenges, the East Dorset Group is extending a hand to other Dorset Ramblers Groups, inviting them to join and support us on this important day. If you believe you can contribute but require further information, please visit the East Dorset Group website, or contact Gill, the East Dorset Group Secretary.

The Purbeck Plod is more than just a walk; it's a tradition, a testament to community spirit, and a celebration of the breathtaking coastal landscape of Dorset. Your involvement can ensure that this event endures for many years to come. We ask you to step forward, become a part of this remarkable journey, and help us keep the Purbeck Plod alive.

**Mike Heckford**

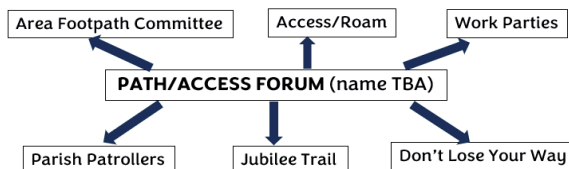
## RAMBLERS DORSET AREA 49<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**will be held at 11.00 am on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2023  
at Broadmayne Village Hall, Cowleaze Road, Broadmayne, DT2 8EW  
OS Grid Reference SY 730 864**

- 1 Welcome, apologies for absence.
- 2 Minutes of the 48<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting
- 3 Annual Report and Statement of Accounts – Area Report and Financial Report  
Request approval of Accounts
- 4 Elections
  - a) Chair\*, Secretary++, Treasurer\*, Vice Chair++, Footpath Secretary\*, Countryside Secretary\*, Publicity Officer++, Membership Secretary\*, Newsletter Editor\* (Dorset Footnotes), Coastal Access Officer\*, Web Master++, Individual Members\* (3)  
\* Indicates current holder willing to stand again ++ indicates role currently vacant
  - b) Representative of the Affiliated Clubs
  - c) Area Delegates to General Council 2024
- 5 Appointments
  - a) Independent Examiner
  - b) President and Vice Presidents
- 6 Discussion of Motion: *'That Dorset Area seeks to establish a Path/Access Forum'* Proposed by Jan Wardell, Area Footpath Secretary (see notes below).
- 7 The guest speakers:
  - a) Speaker from Ramblers Central Office – Kate Conto, Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer
  - b) Dorset Climate Action Network (CAN) – Great Big Dorset Hedge (GBDH) Representatives
- 8 Questions
- 9 Thanks to the guest speakers.
- 10 Thanks to the AGM organisers.

There will be the opportunity to talk to Area Officers over a shared lunch after the AGM (*please bring a plate of either savoury or sweet food for sharing*), followed by a short walk in the afternoon.

### Dorset Area seeks to establish a Path/Access Forum



We know that there are many Ramblers members (and volunteers) in Dorset who do not walk with groups but would like to become involved in the core aims of the Ramblers.

This would allow those with a mutual interest to work outside the groups' confines towards a common goal/objective without having to be on a committee (other than the existing Area Footpath Committee).

**CONTINUED**

If the motion is passed, there will be a Zoom meeting to gauge interest and support. The Area Footpath Committee (AFC) is already established and holds regular meetings (as constituted), and the Jubilee Trail has a full complement of Monitors but lacks a co-ordinator. Don't Lose Your Way (DLYW) is overseen by the Ramblers Central Office, but there is scope for volunteers to research and check. The other three categories are 'fluid,' we would be looking for a lead member for each of these once parameters have been agreed upon.



The 'groupings' would be able to feed into each other's work: for example, a Path Patroller could report to the AFC, the JT monitor (if applicable) and/or the Work Party. The time each person spends on their particular role would be up to the individual and circumstances.

**Jan Wardell** Dorset Area Footpath Secretary (Motion proposer)

### Ramblers Walking Holidays

This is just a reminder that Ramblers Walking Holidays is the sole sponsor of Footnotes, and as a thank-you, it seemed reasonable to introduce you to their Ramblers Private Group holidays.

Ramblers Walking Holidays recognises that every group is unique, with distinct preferences, needs, and requirements. Their Private Group holidays are designed to be flexible and customisable. Whether planning a family reunion, a corporate team-building excursion, or an adventure with friends, our experienced team will work closely with you to tailor the perfect itinerary that aligns with your group's interests and abilities.

They offer discounts for groups with a 5% discount for groups of 8 or more.

Click [here](#) for their new Private Groups webpage or more details or call their Private Groups team on 01707 386723. Choose a destination to explore, and they will take care of the rest you might need to pack!

Thank you, Ramblers Walking Holidays, for your long-term Footnotes sponsorship, **Doug Pigg**

### Anne of a Thousand Walks



Anne-Marie-Edwards, remembered as "Anne of a Thousand Walks", recently passed away at 90. She was a successful author and broadcaster who captivated walkers with her enchanting guides of the English countryside. Initially sharing her favourite trails with the public on a BBC Radio Solent program, they were so popular that they grew into a seven-year weekly slot.

Listeners were so enthralled by her paths that their requests for fact sheets outlining her routes began to strain the station's resources. This led the BBC to publish her first books, *New Forest Walks* (1975) and *More New Forest Walks* (1979), cleverly monetising her fame. In total, Edwards produced about 40 books, launching her own publishing imprint, Arcady Books, to ensure her work remained untouched by external publishers.

Her notable publication, *Pub Walks in Dorset* (2003), included varied routes from coastal to woodland walks, starting and ending at welcoming pubs. These paths spanned attractive villages and significant historical sites such as Sturt's Folly and Lawrence of Arabia's grave. Despite Edwards' demise, her legacy continues through her captivating books, guiding countryside walkers on picturesque and historic routes she loved.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/obituaries/2023/08/18/anne-marie-edwards-countryside-walks-books-died-obituary/> has a particularly good obituary. **Doug Pigg**

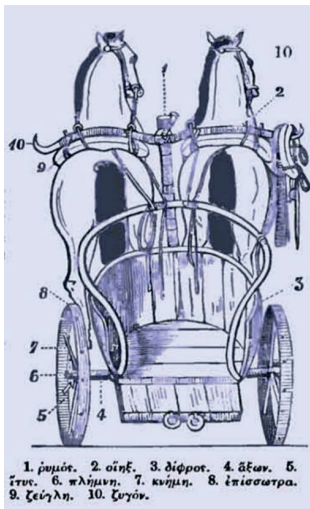
## The Whimsical History of the World's Standard Railroad Gauge

Ever wondered why all these old railway track walking routes that we all enjoy, the old railway bridges that we cross and the tunnels that we creep through are the size that they are? The answer is a bit of a bummer. All is about to be revealed as we discover how the world's standard railroad gauge came to be 4 feet, 8.5 inches – an oddity with its roots within the backside of a pair of horses, coals from Newcastle, steam engines, and the eternal groove of routine.

### The Roman Connection

The answer lies in the enduring legacy of Imperial Rome and their pioneering long-distance straight-as-a-dye roads, initially built for legion movement, which exists to this day. Those very ruts left by Roman chariots compelled subsequent generations to keep to the same wheel spacing. The wagon wheels' alignment with these ruts offered stability, no broken wheels or axles, paving the way for the 4 feet 8.5 inches gauge we know today.

The Romans were experts in road building, creating a network of over 50,000 miles of roads across their vast empire. These roads were primarily designed for military purposes, allowing rapid movement of troops and supplies. They were also used for trade, tax collection and communications, linking cities and provinces, a trade route legacy we all enjoy today.



The Roman chariots were the standard vehicles for travel and warfare. They were pulled by two or four horses and had a driver and a passenger. The chariots had wooden wheels with iron rims and a wooden axle that connected them. The axle was fixed to the chariot body, making it rigid and inflexible. The axle's width was determined by the width of two horses' backsides, about 4 feet.

The continuous 'procession' of chariots left deep ruts on the roads, especially in wet or muddy areas where they had to stay on the road. These ruts became the de facto standard for wheel spacing, as other vehicles had to follow them to speed up travel and avoid getting stuck or damaged. The ruts also influenced the design of bridges and gates to accommodate the width of the chariots.

The Roman roads and ruts survived centuries after the empire's fall, influencing Europe's transportation systems. The medieval wagons and carts that carried goods and people across the continent adopted the same wheel spacing as the Roman chariots, as did the coaches and carriages that followed them. The wheel spacing became a legal requirement in some countries, such as England,

where an act of parliament in 1758 specified that all wagons should have a width of 4 feet 8 inches. The coal wagonways of the Northeast were laid to 4ft 8.5 inches, setting the precedent for the Industrial Revolution infrastructure standards and the railway track gauge.

### The Legacy Lives On

But this tale isn't confined to the past. Enter the grand twist in this tale – the world's railway gauge is also linked to one of humanity's most outstanding achievements, space exploration. It turns out that the rockets that launched the first satellites and astronauts into orbit were transported by trains that ran on rails with a gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches. The rockets had to fit within the tunnels and bridges built for those trains. And those tunnels and bridges were built for wagons and coaches that followed the ruts of Roman chariots.

We come full circle in our whimsical journey through history, discovering how a seemingly arbitrary measurement has shaped our world in ways we never imagined. From coal mines to space stations, from chariots to rockets, from Rome to everywhere, we have traced the origins and impacts of the world's standard railroad gauge, 4 feet, 8.5 inches, an oddity determined by the size of two horses' derrieres and the advantages of staying in a rut. **Doug Pigg**

## Changes to Rights of Way in Dorset

Orders affecting changes to the following rights of way have been confirmed since DFN Issue 94. Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) and Public Path Orders (PPOs) are again being processed by Dorset Council and can be found at [www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/row-orders](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/row-orders)

### Confirmed Orders

- (# identifies any New Numbers)
- Fontmell Magna FP6 (part):** Diversion (T&CPAct 1990, S257)
- Gillingham FP34 (parts):** Diversion (T&CPA 1990, Section 257, Confirmed in July 2020, Certified operational June 2023)
- Gillingham FP73:** Diversion (S119, HA 1980)
- Marnhull FP111:** Modification to correct route (confirmed by Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)
- Shillingstone FP29 (part):** Diversion (S119, HA 1980)
- Wimborne FP22 (part):** Diversion (T & CPA 1990, Section 257)
- Woodlands FP17 (parts):** Modification to correct route.



Please note that unless otherwise stated, the above Orders are also made/confirmed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(Section 53A (2)).

**Long Term Temporary Closures/Diversions** under Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984: Section 14(1) or 14/2 (unless otherwise stated) all are needed to comply with H&S Regulations.

- Beaminster FP71: }** Extension: granted by SoS for Transport, now until 01.01.2025.
- Beaminster FP72: }** To allow construction.
- Burton Bradstock FP12: }** From 24.07.23 for 5 weeks, but in force for 26 weeks. To allow replacement of footbridge. No alternative, but W7/12 and the southern section of W7/27, will remain open on a slightly diverted alignment around the works area.
- Burton Bradstock FP27: }** From 23.08.23 for 26 weeks. From GR SY 414 933 to SY 417 933, to allow construction works. No alternative.
- Chideock FP38:** From 10.07.23 for 26 weeks, from GR ST 8655 1674 to ST 8617 1644, to allow Wessex Water to construct sewage pipes. Alternative route.
- Fontmell Magna FP6:** From GR ST 818 250 to ST 818 252 From 26.06.2023 - 26 weeks
- Gillingham FP33: }** From GR ST 815 255 to ST 817 255, to allow housing development construction. Alternative routes.
- Gillingham FP34: }**
- Kington Magna FP33:** From 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023, at GR ST 7516 2210, for a period of 26 weeks. To install new bridge. Anticipated completion 21 Aug 2023.
- Kington Magna FPs 29,31 & 32:** From 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023, at GR ST 7485 2246 for a period of 26 weeks. Install new bridge. Anticipated completion 21 August 2023.
- Owermoigne FP19:** Extension: From 27 Jan 2023 until 1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2023. From GR SY 752 813 to SY 754 814 To allow works on caravan site (Ringstead). Alternative route.
- South Perrott BR4:** From 21 August 2023 for 26 weeks, from GR ST 476 064 to ST 478 064, to allow Environment Agency Reservoirs Project works to take place. Pedestrian alternative only.
- Studland FP1:** From 8 June 2023 for 26 weeks, from GR SZ 036 828 to SZ 036 830, due to Cliff edge erosion. Alternative route.
- Symondsburys FPs 2,3,4,5,6 & 7: }** From 01 August 2023, for 26 weeks. To allow
- Allington FP9: }** Vearse Farm development. No alternatives.
- West Parley FP7 (part of SVW):** From 16 June 2023 for 26 weeks, from GR SZ 0841 9759 to SZ 0860 9751, to allow housing construction. Alternative route.
- Wimborne Minster FP22:** Extension: From 14 January 2023 to 13 January 2025, or until completion of works, whichever is earlier. To allow construction. Alternative route.

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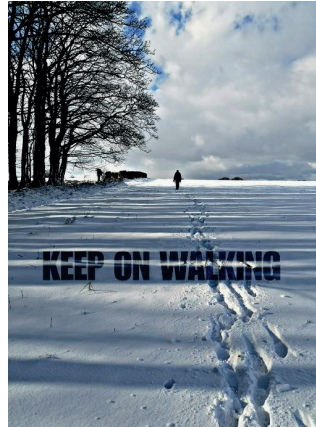
(Please Note: All the above closures are for Health and Safety reasons. Any person who uses or permits the use of the footpaths in contravention of any of the above orders will be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1,000.) **Jan Wardell**

## Don't Let Past Effort Steer your Today's Decisions The Sunk Cost Fallacy – The Economics of Walking

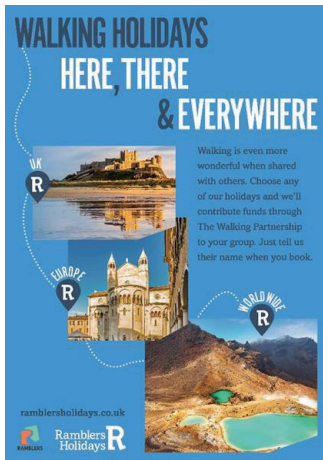
When we go on a long walk, we commit to more than just the routine of physically moving on a guided walk. In the perceived 'excitement' of exploring on a long walk, we have to balance the emotion with the physical reality of bogs, hills and distance; and we have to be aware that many of us aren't as young as we were or would like to be!

When we decide to go on this long walk, possibly a national trail, we are not only physically moving, but we also have the emotional driver of exploring, the excitement of being independent and demonstrating a perception of mental and physical fitness topped up with perseverance. This kind of activity tends to captivate those of us beyond the first flush of 'youth.' However, people often fall victim to a decision-making trap known in economics as the sunk cost fallacy.

The sunk cost fallacy is a common mistake in our thinking process where we let the energy, time, and resources that we possessed in the past influence our current decisions instead of current objectivity; that's a big word for those of us in advancing years, considering the present situation or future outcomes. It presents a scenario where the more we have invested in something, the harder it is to let go, even when things aren't promising. See what's around the next corner rather than cut to the nearby bus stop? Turn around? OR keep on exploring?



Imagine an elderly person who has planned an adventurous walk for the day. As they keep walking, they are not only getting closer to their endpoint but further away from the starting point – pure logic but what has that to do with emotion and adventure? When fatigue sets in, the sensible thing would be to stop and take a ride home. Still, too often, the thought of the effort, time, and energy spent so far tricks them into pushing onward. Recognise the dilemma? It can be critical in a mountain scenario where the summit is so close but in terms of energy, so far.



This is the sunk cost fallacy at play. The more mature person values the time and effort lost (sunk costs) more than their current physical condition or potential risks. They feel like stopping would mean all the effort was in vain.

However, it's important to note that the energy expended so far can't be reversed, whether they continue or not. The best decision requires an assessment of the present situation, like how tired they are or what the weather forecast is. This can become a problem, chiefly for the motivated retired, as pushing the body too far might lead to injuries or serious health emergencies. It's therefore important to TRY and put health and safety first, even while enjoying the manageable challenge.

Mitigating the sunk cost fallacy requires awareness of this mental trap and being objective about your current circumstances. 'Wake up and smell the coffee' reminds us of the reality of life; sit down and have one while you think about it.

**Doug Pigg, A Young Senior**

## Polishing Portland's Secrets

Portland has many secrets that 'a hurry through which known and strange things pass' will remain undiscovered. Two of Portland's secrets are continuing their journey of discovery: The High Angle Battery and Eden Portland.



### The High Angle Battery (Ghost Tunnels)

The High Angle Battery is a former 19th-century gun battery on the Isle of Portland in Dorset, England. It was built at the end of the 19th century as part of the sea defences to protect Portland Harbour. The six guns were designed to fire shells at a "high angle" into the air and over the cliffs onto the decks of enemy vessels. The battery is located on the crown of the island of Portland and represents an integral part of Portland's more comprehensive military history.

The High Angle Battery site is important to the Portland community for many reasons. It symbolises the community's military heritage, character, and sense of place. The Isle of Portland's complex community history helps maintain that pride among its residents and visitors. The hidden nature of the High Angle Battery site also gives it a sense of mystery to the community, walkers, and visitors. It is used by the community as a creativity-based festival/event site, especially where the magic and mystery help to energise young people.

The Project, locally known as The Ghost tunnels, will preserve this important local historic site, which serves as a reminder of the unique aspects that make Portland different, some would say 'weird.' It is the only publicly accessible core element of the **immediate historic surroundings** comprising The Verne Prison, the D-Day Bunker Complex, and the prisoner-built Portland Harbour Walls quarrying infrastructure.

### Eden Portland (4 miles of Tunnel)

Eden Portland is located on the World Heritage Jurassic Coast, famous for fossils of extinct species. It combines The Mass Extinction Memorial Observatory with what Eden Project founder Sir Tim Smit describes as the "challenge of telling the story of evolution, extinction and human hope" in a Portland stone mine setting to create "a cathedral to the creativity of humankind".



### The Mass Extinction Memorial Observatory (MEMO)

MEMO will be built of white Portland stone blocks, each carved to depict 850 species lost since 1662 when the last dodo was seen. It takes the form of a circular enclosure open to the sky; it would function as an 'observatory' to ongoing extinction, with each new extinct species requiring a new block and carving.

Doug Pigg



## For Your Diary

### 2023 Dorset Area AGM – Morning of 18 November 2023 – Page 2

The Dorset Area AGM will be held on the morning of November 18, 2023.

### 2024 Purbeck Plod – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 - It's in the Balance – Page 1