



DORSET FOOTNOTES

Newsletter of the Dorset Area of the Ramblers Association

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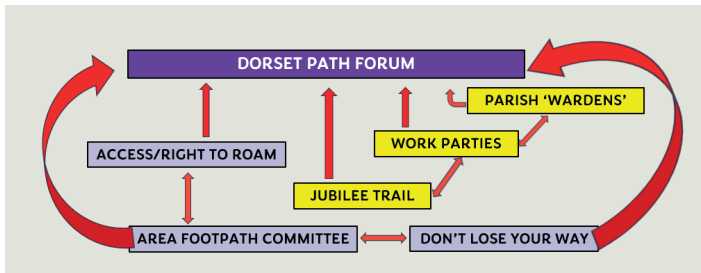
DORSET AREA PATH/ACCESS FORUM

A less formal way of being part of Ramblers

At the 49th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Dorset Area of the Ramblers, the Motion ‘*That Dorset Area seeks to establish a Path/Access Forum*’ was carried, and therefore the wheels (or boots) will be set in motion over the next few months.

We know that there are many Ramblers members in Dorset who do not walk with groups, but given the opportunity would like to become involved in the core aims of the Ramblers. Even though the ‘Welcome’ page of the Ramblers website focuses on walking, there is far more to our Charity! Our objects are to “*promote, encourage or assist in the provision and protection of footpaths and other ways over which the public have a right of way or access on foot, including the prevention of obstruction of public rights of way; the protection and enhancement for the benefit of the public of the beauty of the countryside and other areas by such lawful means as the trustees think fit, including by encouraging the provision, preservation and extension of public access to land on foot;*”

The ‘forum’ would be for those with mutual interests which would function **outside** of groups’ confines, towards a common goal/objective, and **without** having to be based on a formal committee structure (other than the existing Area Footpath Committee).



The above is a schematic illustration of a possible working structure – very fluid at this stage. I plan to hold a preliminary Zoom meeting for those interested: the yellow highlighted boxes are those for which a ‘lead’ is required. The Jubilee Trail has its full quota of Monitors but does need an overall coordinator: we would be looking for volunteers to lead on the work parties and Parish ‘wardens’ once parameters have been agreed.

The various groups would be able to feed into each other’s work: for example, a Parish warden could report to the AFC, the JT monitor (if applicable) and/or the Work Party. There will be the opportunity to work and collaborate with other volunteers, and the amount of time spent on each volunteer’s particular role will be up to the individual and/or circumstances. As this is a new concept, we have no guidelines, but we need YOU!

Please contact me, Jan Wardell, preferably by e-mail, stating which topic(s) interest you and if you would be willing to join a Zoom meeting for a fuller exploration.

THANK YOU – and I look forward to hearing from you.

Jan Wardell jan@janwardell.plus.com

Challenges on Footpaths

A Growing Concern for Walkers Across England and Wales

In a concerning revelation, a recent BBC investigation has revealed that walkers seeking to enjoy the picturesque footpaths across the British countryside face obstacles and blockages in nearly 32,000 locations across England and Wales. The findings indicate a substantial increase in access issues on public rights of way, with councils reporting 4,000 more problems in 2023 than the previous year. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-67937253>

This surge in hindrances points to what campaigners call a "growing abuse and neglect" of the footpath network, a sentiment echoed by Kate Ashbrook, the General Secretary of the Open Spaces Society. Kate emphasised that local authorities are failing to fulfil their statutory duty to assert and protect the public's right to enjoy these pathways and showed "a shocking and growing abuse and neglect of our public path network". She added that local authorities were "failing to carry out their legal duties to assert and protect the public's rights to enjoy these public highways".



The responsibility for maintaining clear paths lies with landowners, but the ultimate obligation rests with local highway authorities, typically county or unitary councils or national park authorities. Despite this duty, councils have cited funding constraints as a limiting factor in addressing the growing number of obstacles.



The BBC's inquiry involved reaching out to 118 local authorities outside of London and national park authorities, revealing a startling 31,816 recorded obstructions on October 31, 2023—an increase from 27,696 at the end of 2022. These obstructions ranged from overgrown vegetation to paths deliberately fenced off, hindering walkers' access.

Jack Cornish, head of paths for The Ramblers, Britain's walking charity, suggested that the actual scale of blockages and obstructions might be higher, as the public often lacks awareness of how and where to report such problems. Local councils attribute their limitations to "funding constraints," emphasising that long-term, consistent funding would enable better planning for footpath maintenance.

In response to the growing issue, the government has announced new funding incentives for farmers in the coming year to encourage the creation, maintenance, and upgrading of footpaths. As walkers continue to face challenges on footpaths, the call for concerted efforts from local authorities, landowners, and government bodies to ensure unobstructed access to the countryside becomes ever more urgent.

Doug Pigg

How to eat in 2024: 7 essential strategies

[How to eat in 2024: 7 essential strategies | Prof Tim Spector and Dr Sarah Berry \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGY05t_slmc)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGY05t_slmc



The data clearly shows that if you got everyone to improve their diet to the top 10%, you would eliminate 60 or 70 per cent of all common diseases. It doesn't matter when you start. New data is showing that if, at age 40, even if you've had a terrible diet, if you shift yourself to the optimum diet of the top 10 per cent of people, you're going to gain an extra ten years of life.

I was impressed with the above Podcast by top scientists from Kings College, London. If you have an hour and a quarter to spare, you might also find it interesting and informative. **Doug**

A Dorset and East Devon National and Marine Park

In a significant move to support the conservation and enhancement of natural landscapes, the government has announced plans to establish a new English national park, marking a positive step towards the protection and accessibility of the country's countryside. The initiative, part of a set of "nature pledges," is geared towards offering greater access to nature while enhancing the conservation efforts essential for maintaining ecological diversity. The potential sites under consideration include the Chilterns, the Cotswolds, and our very own Dorset.

The Importance of National Parks

National parks safeguard ecological diversity, support the economy, and contribute to cultural education and preservation. Beyond their environmental significance, national parks offer many outdoor adventure and recreation opportunities. They provide an escape from the urban hustle and bustle, allowing individuals to immerse themselves in the serenity of nature.

Additionally, national parks help nature recovery and resilience in the face of climate change, playing a pivotal role in protecting unique wildlife that may face threats in other environments.

The Advocacy for New National Parks

Julian Glover, the author of the Landscapes Review, had previously called for the creation of three new national parks in the Chilterns, Cotswolds, and Dorset. With the recent announcement, he expressed his enthusiasm for the progress made, accompanied by additional funding to empower national landscapes and parks to do more for both people and nature. These areas, Glover emphasised, are not only beautiful but also integral to the well-being of the nation.

While the news of a new national park is welcomed, some environmentalists have expressed cautious optimism due to concerns about reduced government funding for existing national parks. The decline in real terms funding has led to service and staff cuts, posing challenges to effective park management. The success of these initiatives relies on adequate financial support to ensure the continued preservation of these natural wonders.

A Vision for the Future: Dorset and East Devon National and Marine Park

One of the proposed national parks, the Dorset and East Devon National and Marine Park, aims to be the UK's first to connect on-shore, coastal, and offshore ecosystems. This ambitious project seeks to address the connected challenges facing these diverse environments in an integrated manner and through partnership working. The proposed park would also double the currently under-represented coastline in English National Parks, catering to the preferences of younger generations with a distinct affinity for coastal areas.

The park is envisioned as an opportunity to raise awareness and understanding of nature, offering onshore, coastal and marine environments. Drawing inspiration from the success of the South Downs National Park, the Dorset and East Devon National and Marine Park aims to elevate the engagement, relevance, performance, and achievement of the entire National Park family.

Conclusion

The creation of a new national park in England represents a significant commitment to preserving natural beauty, fostering environmental sustainability, and providing accessible spaces for recreation. While challenges such as funding constraints need to be addressed, the vision for a Dorset and East Devon National and Marine Park sets an ambitious precedent for the integration of diverse ecosystems. As England embarks on this new chapter, the hope is that these initiatives will inspire a greater understanding of and appreciation for nature, ensuring that these national treasures thrive for future generations.

It's time for Dorset's National Park; check out the website, including the Team's latest input to Natural England www.dorsetnationalpark.com

Doug Pigg

New Year Resolutions

I'm talking Bananas



New Year resolutions date back to ancient Babylon around 4,000 years ago, where people made promises to the gods at the start of the year. The tradition evolved, with various cultures incorporating personal goals and self-improvement pledges. Today, it symbolises a fresh start and the pursuit of positive change.

Multiple studies show that health and happiness in later life are strongly correlated with a sense of purpose, and what is a New Year's Resolution, if not a sense of purpose, even a bizarre purpose? It might be a time to inject a dose of humour or quirkiness into your resolutions for the upcoming year; you won't be keeping them.

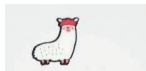
For Rambler seeking an offbeat New Year resolution, consider adding a touch of eccentricity to your walks. Here are some bizarre resolutions tailored for the avid countryside stroller:



- **Master the Art of Sheep Whistling:** Challenge yourself to communicate with sheep using the ancient and possibly fictional skill of sheep whistling. Your fellow walkers may be amused and impressed but unsure about the sheep.
- **Initiate a Banana Yoga stop:** Transform your peaceful walks into a spiritual journey by practising banana-stop yoga poses. Encourage fellow walkers to join in, and you might start a banana split yoga craze; the only requirement is a longer sit-on mat.
- **Become a Rock Balancing Artist:** Elevate your countryside walks by mastering the art of rock balancing. Leave behind gravity-defying sculptures at every rest stop as a testament to your newfound skill – I find a bit of contact adhesive works wonders; just don't sniff it!



- **Learn the Language of Trees:** Take the whimsy up a notch by resolving to learn the secret language of trees. Convince yourself that each rustle of leaves or creaking branch is a form of arboreal communication. Tell them that you know King Charles and don't forget the hug at the end.
- **Organize a Countryside Scavenger Hunt for Wildlife Selfies:** Turn your walks into a quest for elusive creatures. Create a scavenger hunt checklist for wildlife selfies to capture shots of birds, insects, and maybe even elusive woodland creatures – if you are unlucky, it might be 'The Wildman of Y'allam'.
- **Start a Collection of Unusual Walking Socks:** Turn the mundane task of sock shopping into a quirky resolution by aiming to amass a collection of the most eccentric and unusual walking socks available – darning adds texture.



- **Master the Art of Llama Grooming:** If llamas are your spirit animal, become a skilled llama groomer. This resolution combines a love for animals with an unusual and amusing skill, such as spinning a yarn.

These resolutions aim to infuse your countryside walks with a sense of nuttiness. Embrace the eccentricity and make your outdoor adventures a physical exercise and a source of light-hearted amusement. Resolutions should inspire joy and personal fulfilment, even if they involve mastering the art of sheep whistling and listening to trees.

Doug Pigg

For Your Diary:

The North Dorset Group will be walking the White Hart Link this year

(<https://www.whitehartlink.uk>), spread over seven months starting Wed 6th March from Gillingham to Shaftesbury and monthly after that. All are welcome; please see the Ramblers website for more details. The other dates are Wed 10th April, Sunday 5th May, Wed 5th June, Wed 3rd July, Wed 7th August, and Wed 5th September.

The Area Walks will be on Sunday, 14th July 2024, and the picnic meeting place will be at Hardy's Monument GR SY 613875.

The Enduring Allure of the Shipping Forecast

Humber, Thames, Dover, Wight, Portland, Plymouth, Sole

On 1 January 1924, the weather bulletin called Weather Shipping was first delivered. Although the Shipping Forecast officially came into existence in 1924, it was in October 1925 when it was first broadcast via the BBC.

The history of the forecast goes back to 1861 when Vice-Admiral Robert FitzRoy developed a telegraphic messaging system to issue weather warnings to ships following the loss of the steam clipper Royal Charter. The vessel foundered (sank) in a violent storm off the coast of Anglesey, with the loss of more than 450 lives, prompting FitzRoy's desire to prevent it happening again.

He was the main influence in the early development of the Met Office, which was then primarily intended to improve safety at sea. It has saved thousands, possibly even hundreds of thousands of lives. It is impossible to predict how many accurately, but it has been life-changing for seafarers.

While the forecast has undoubtedly saved numerous lives, technological advancements in meteorology and satellite data have reduced its practical significance, with a reported accuracy of around 93%. Consequently, most of its 6.5 million listeners today are landlubbers, finding solace on dry land.

Over time, the Shipping Forecast has evolved into a cultural icon, reflecting national identity. The 00.48 edition, situated between moonlight and the dawn chorus, has become a nightly ritual for insomniacs, providing a soothing transition into the realm of sleep.

Despite its scientific origins, the forecast has acquired an artistic dimension akin to poetry. Renowned Irish poet Seamus Heaney has eulogised its exotic names, while musical bands like Radiohead and Blur have tapped into its natural lyricism for inspiration. King Charles reads Seamus Heaney's 'The Shipping Forecast' <https://nationalpoetryday.co.uk/blog/hrh-prince-charles-says-it-with-a-poem/>



The emotional resonance lies in the evocative place names—Rockall, Cromarty, Biscay, German Bight—which conjure a bygone era before the era of Google Maps. Sanna Nyqvist's essay, "Poetics of the Shipping Forecast," (a heavy read!) suggests that the science of cartography offers a means to navigate and reflect on our existence, providing a reassuring constant in a world undergoing rapid change. Despite the insularity of the shipping forecast as a cultural phenomenon, the "literature of the shipping forecast" is surprisingly similar in different countries, exploring the same themes of nostalgia, loss of significance, and definition of borders.

My connection to the forecast stems from where I've lived – Viking, Tyne, Humber, Wight and Portland. The insomnia of age and the nightly Shipping Forecast provided a comforting backdrop, connecting me back to those dramatic waters. The strange maritime waltz, "Sailing By," preceding the forecast, became a nightly lullaby, offering solace and kinship with others facing the unpredictable forces of nature. You can listen to the theme music 'Sailing' by Ronald Binge at <https://youtu.be/lc0mjPpCsk>.

Ultimately, with its timeless appeal, the Shipping Forecast transcends its utilitarian origins, weaving itself into the fabric of cultural consciousness and providing a unique and comforting connection to our nation's maritime past.

Doug Pigg

Changes to Rights of Way in Dorset

Orders affecting changes to the following rights of way have been confirmed since DFN Issue 95. Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) and Public Path Orders (PPOs) are again being processed by Dorset Council and can be found at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/rights-of-way/definitive-map-and-statement/current-definitive-map-modification-orders-and-public-path-orders>

Confirmed Orders

	(# identifies any New Numbers)
Bournemouth B20:	Diversion (T&CPA 1990, S257) (BCP Council)
Dorchester FP40(part):	Diversion (T&CPA 1990, S257)
Gillingham FP73:	Diversion (T&CPA 1990, S257)
Holt FP4 (part):	Diversion (HA 1980, S119)
Lytchett Matravers FP11 (part):	} Diversion (HA 1980, S119) (Order Made 2012)
Lytchett Matravers FP16 (parts):	
Marnhull FP111:	Modification
Sturminster Newton FP10(part):	} Diversions (T&CPA 1990, S257)
Sturminster Newton FP12(part):	
Thorncombe FP48(part):	Modification (Confirmed by PINS)
Weymouth FP79(part):	} Diversions (T&CPA 1990, S257)
Weymouth FP92(part):	



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.

Bryanston FP3:	From GR ST 878 057 to ST 992 057, from 01.01.24 for 26 weeks. To allow development to take place. Alt route.
Corfe Castle FP42:	(Chapmans Pool) From GR SY 954 774 to SY 955 777 from 29.12.23 EMERGENCY CLOSURE due to landslip. NO ALTERNATIVE.
Corfe Castle FP43:	(SWCP- Hounstout) From GR SY 950 117 to SY 954 477, from 29.12.23. EMERGENCY CLOSURE due to landslip. Alternative route through Kingston.
Gillingham FP61:	2nd extension to 27.04.24. To allow demolition and erection of a replacement outbuilding. Alternative route.
Gillingham FP50 (part):	From GR ST 802 259 to ST 805 262 } Extension to 1st April 2024.
East Stour FP1 (part):	From GR ST 810 251 to ST 811 252 } To enable Wessex Water to construct a new water main and new foul rising main for the housing development at Ham Farm. Alternative routes.
Gillingham FP57 (part):	From GR ST 796 259 to ST 796 250, from 18.01.24 for 26 weeks initially, to allow development. Alternative route.
Marnhull FP91 (part):	From GR ST 780 191 to ST 778 193 from 02.10.23 for 26 weeks initially. To allow development. No alternative.
Owermoigne FP19 (part):	extension to 27.01.24 To allow works on caravan site. (Ringstead). Alternative route.
Verwood BR16:	From GR SU 089 060 to SU 089 055 from 18.01.24 for 26 weeks initially. To replace dangerous bridge. Alternative route.
West Parley FP7:	From GR SZ 084 975 to SZ 086 975 extended to 16.06.24. To allow development. Alternative route.
Winfrith Newburgh BR9 (part):	} From GR SY 817 848 to SY 832 848 from 09.10.23 for 6 months. Extreme Health and Safety Risk from expansion of dairy, and slurry lagoon. Alternative route signed.
Coombe Keynes FP5 (part):	

(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

Slow Walks Through Otherwise Inaccessible Landscapes With the Great Big Dorset Hedge Volunteers

The Great Big Dorset Hedge is a Dorset Climate Action Network [Home | DCAN \(dorsetcan.org\)](https://www.dorsetcan.org) project that facilitates the restoration and planting of hedges across Dorset. We believe this is one of the surest ways of improving connectivity and increasing biodiversity in the farmed landscape without losing agricultural land. These surveys are designed to increase the adoption of new government incentives on hedgerows.



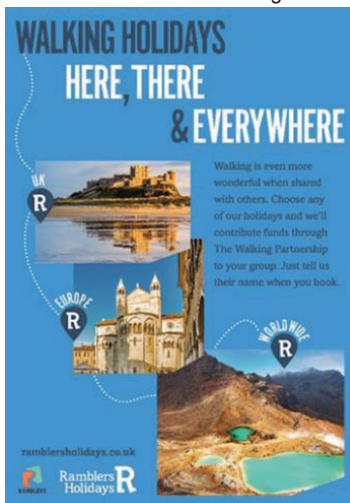
GBDH Surveyors at Luccas Farm Powerstock

We still walk the public rights of way, but farmers are increasingly asking us to survey across their farms, which takes us where the trails do not go. It's always a slow walk – we might only cover 3 km of hedges in a half-day session, but it is absorbing stuff. We take in the salient details of the hedge structure and assess its condition. We note the species and help each other when, after leaf-fall, it gets that little bit harder. We count and admire the in-hedge trees. Dimensions are assessed, and someone gets the job of uploading the data that evening.

The momentum of the Great Big Dorset Hedge project continues to grow. The process has not changed much, but these days, we tend to make a bigger event of each survey. We still survey in crews of 3 or 4 but it is now commonplace to have three survey crews addressing different parts of the farm in parallel and then we converge to chat and to pool our results. We are enjoying the company, we are enjoying the landscape, and we can enjoy the justified expectation that we are making a difference that will be a lasting one.



A GBDH Survey Crew, work done



**WALKING HOLIDAYS
HERE, THERE
& EVERYWHERE**

Walking is even more wonderful when shared with others. Choose any of our holidays and we'll contribute funds through The Walking Partnership to your group. Just tell us their name when you book.

UK R
EUROPE R
WORLD WIDE R

ramblersholidays.co.uk
Rambler's Holidays R

More biodiversity is assured, better corridor continuity will be established, more carbon is to be captured, and the experience has been shared with new friends. What's not to like?

All our new volunteers go out on their first survey accompanied by well-seasoned GBDH surveyors, and during that first survey, they will be shown the ropes. Almost without exception, they will want to come out again to continue their learning, to meet more like-minded people and to rejoice in the Dorset landscape. If you want to hear from our volunteers, just watch the video. It was recorded last summer at Powerstock. https://youtu.be/P-qGoGxL_Qs?feature=shared

I do hope you are tempted to join us.

John Calder – GBDH Project Manager, Dorset Climate Action Network