

SPRING 2026



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Welcome everyone, on a wet and windy day, to our latest Newsletter. January has whizzed by and our evenings are slowly getting a little lighter; we have already spotted snowdrops in the woods and the big fat tree buds are not far behind. We have managed to get in some long walks already, including Ashmansworth, Burghclere, Alderbury and Quarley Hill as well as shorter walks around local villages. The going has been hard in places with ice, snow and thick mud; a few of our brave walkers fell at a fence but were not deterred. Thanks as ever to our wonderful walk leaders, without whom there would be no walks.

Last November was our AGM with the usual pre-walk followed by lunch followed by the AGM then Walk Leader training. This event turned out to be not quite as dry as I feared – we all stayed awake and some members were even heard laughing. We all left the session feeling much enlightened! During the AGM, Mike Parkinson volunteered to be our new Walking Environment Secretary, but we are still on the lookout for a volunteer to be our Group's Footpath Secretary. Please contact me for more details.

Our next social event will be a Quiz Night on Saturday 21st February at Penton Village Hall – 7pm for 7.30, tables of four - six. Members are asked to bring their own refreshments if required and, to save washing and clearing up time, you are kindly asked to bring your own plates, glasses and cutlery. Tickets are five pounds each, to cover the cost of hiring the hall, pay on the night (cash). The Quiz Master is a member of the Dogs' Trust and would welcome donations. Members' spouses/partners welcome, but please contact Yvonne if you wish to attend, by 16th February 2026.

I'm already looking forward to the warmer days ahead, in particular our Group holiday to the Lake District in early June. I'm told we already have 26 attendees - contact Ash Pocock if you want to be added to the list. Planned walks will include boat trips and an exciting walk along Morecambe Bay.

Our walk leaders are already planning their Spring walks and I hope many of you will be able to join them.

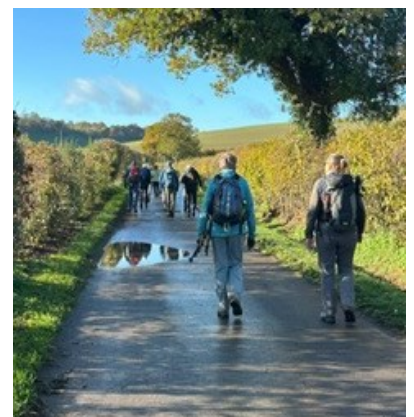
Hoping to see you out and about very soon.

Happy walking

Mike Peacock



Leading the way.....



OUR MEETING PLACES

We are very grateful to Stannah for allowing us to use their car park at **Stannah Parking Bays, Anton Mill Road, Andover, SP10 2NQ** so that we can meet in town and leave our cars there. This is the meet point for all the Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday evening walks unless stated on the walks programme on the website. **Stannah have asked that any cars left there should display an "Andover Ramblers" notice on the dashboard.** Stannah Parking Bays can be found a little further along Anton Mill Road from Keens House, on the right hand side (there is a one-way system, with the entrance being the 2nd opening, and the exit being the 1st opening, as the parking bays are at an angle to the road).

The meet point for mid week daytime walks is at the car park used by **The Salto Centre behind the Tesco store on Charlton Road.**

Our normal policy is to encourage car sharing to ease pressure on car parking at the start point. **Car sharing is at the discretion of individual members and no-one, including the walk leader, should feel pressurised to either give or accept a lift.** If you do **accept a lift** to the start point, please note that drivers often appreciate the offer of some contribution towards fuel. Naturally the amount should be agreed between the driver and passenger, and should reflect the length of the journey.

We have a WhatsApp group which is ideal for informing members of last-minute changes to walks – please contact our publicity officer to be added to the group.

If you do not have access to our WhatsApp group, and /or you are intending to join a walk at the start point, it is recommended that you check with the walk leader, especially in the event of inclement weather, to make sure the walk will go ahead, and leave him / her your contact details in the event of a last-minute cancellation due to bad weather or illness.

OUR COMMITTEE

Chairman	Mike Peacock mike.peacock@yahoo.co.uk
Secretary	Pat Peacock patricia_peacock2000@yahoo.co.uk
Treasurer	Tony Wardley tony.wardley340@icloud.com
Membership secretary	Jane Jacobs janejacobs@btinternet.com
Walk co-ordinator	Howard Kelly rambwalkprog@gmail.com
Webmaster	Tony Nancarrow tony.nancarrow@outlook.com
Newsletter Editor	Brenda Adams adamsb21@outlook.com
Footpath Secretary	VACANCY
Walking Environment	Mike Parkinson michael.parkinson30@ntlworld.com
Publicity	Sharon Love sharonlove@ntlworld.com
Social	Yvonne West yvonne.west.sunset@gmail.com

IMPORTANT ADVICE FOR WALKERS

Please make sure that you are fit enough to undertake the walk you intend to join. If you're unsure of your fitness level, try a short and easy walk first: it's much better to find a walk a little too slow and easy than to make yourself miserable and exhausted.

Most Ramblers' walks are off-road in rural areas. Please have suitable footwear and clothing for the walk you intend to join, and bring some food and drink, even if the walk includes a pub or café break. Leaders may refuse to accept participants who in their opinion are inadequately equipped or unfit. When in doubt, contact the organisers or the walk leader in advance.

For your own and others' safety please read and abide by any advice and guidelines issued by the organisers, and the instructions of the walk leader. Though walking is inherently one of the safest outdoor activities, no activity is completely without risk and it is your responsibility to behave sensibly and to minimise the potential for accidents to occur.

FOOD & DRINK

Walking is a healthy physical exercise and it is important to have sufficient food and drink to keep the energy levels up. This is especially so in hot weather. For the shorter day walks generally one break is taken and two breaks on the longer walks.

Please ensure you have plenty of food and water with you as the majority of walks do not pass shops or facilities to top up supplies.

WALKING WITH DOGS

The law says that dog owners are responsible for ensuring that their dogs are kept under control at all times even "well behaved" dogs. In particular, dogs must be kept on a lead when walking in fields containing livestock.

It is advisable to contact the walk leader in advance to ascertain the walk's suitability for dogs.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Quiz Night—21st February 2026

Get your thinking caps on!

We are holding a quiz night at Penton Mewsey Village Hall (SP11 0RA) on Saturday 21st February, 7.00pm for 7.30pm start — 10.00pm approx. finish. Cost £5 per head (cash on the day, please). Bring your own drinks and nibbles, also crockery and cutlery to save time clearing up. Tables of 4 — 6 people. Members' spouses / partners welcome.

Contact Yvonne West yvonne.west.sunset@gmail.com by Monday 16th February please

Extra donations welcomed in aid of The Dogs' Trust

The Lakes '26' - 6th—13th

June 2026

It's time to start booking your accommodation in or around Keswick for the 2026 Andover Ramblers 'Grand Outing' to the Lake District. The dates are: Saturday 6th June through to the following Saturday 13th June 2026, with a mix of easy/moderate/strenuous walks proposed for each day throughout the week. Evening venues have been 'checked out', and alternative 'relaxation' events being explored..... more on that later. Walk leaders and walk suggestions welcome. A WhatsApp group will be set-up in the New Year to keep everyone up to date on latest developments. Please contact: Ash at ashpocock1@gmail.com for more details.



Arnside to Grange Over Sands walk June 7th 2026.

I am very pleased to report that we have twenty two people and two dogs taking part in this special walk. We are very lucky because we managed to book two more people on to the walk at the last minute, to be told that the walk was now closed and fully booked.

Details are a bit vague at the moment the only definite information we have is that the walk starts at 10 am and we have to be there an hour before to book in. Booking in is held outside The Albion Pub, which is easy to find. As this is a public organised walk please be advised it is very well supervised and marshalled by the team involved. It is a regular event so nobody should be concerned with regard to safety etc. I have warned most people, you will have to be prepared to wade, so a change of clothes would be a good idea.

As we will have to undertake a long drive in the morning timing will be very important. I have checked the timing to drive from Keswick to Arnside and it is showing apx. 75 minutes. That was via Penrith and the M6. It looks like an early start from Booths, probably about 7-30am?

With regard to parking and how we return to get our cars we will have to let you know nearer the time. There is a train that runs between Grange Over Sands and Arnside it runs every hour but as far as I can remember it has only two carriages, which may be a bit of a push to carry every one on the walk. It only takes three minutes. (Train fare £3.30 or £2.15 with a Senior Railcard).

Nearer the time more details will be published on Face Book, which Ash is keeping an eye out for. Once we have more information we will update you all.

Roger Shoulders

Andover Ramblers Footpath Work in 2025

The table below shows the volunteer hours Andover Ramblers have contributed to improving and keeping our Public Right of Way (PROW) network open. This article explains in more detail the facts behind the figures.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Q4</u>	<u>2025 Total</u>
Vegetation Clearance	18	109
Path Furniture & Surface Work	4	16
Waymarking	3	6
Path Inspections	80	435
BVPI (survey and recording)	42	117
Lost Ways and Claims	21	274
Planning Applications	27	111
Representing Ramblers on other bodies	0	0
Other (incl. Gen. Admin	10	34
England Coast Path	0	0
TOTAL	205	1102

Andover Ramblers' main contribution is being the eyes and ears for HCC regarding the state of the footpaths. We do this through **Inspections** where problems are either addressed on the spot or reported to HCC for their action. We have a team of Footpath Wardens that are responsible for each of the 28 parishes we look after. This is a team effort as Footpath Wardens also report inspections if they walk paths not in the parish they are responsible for. This ensures a good coverage of paths during the year. In 2025 we inspected 524 paths, 93% of the total paths we are responsible for. In addition, a small team also undertook more detailed BVPI inspections in Tangley, Monxton and Vernham Dean that report against national standards. During these BVPI inspections we also conducted a furniture survey on behalf of HCC where all furniture (stiles waymarker posts, bridges, gates etc were recorded and inspected. We have a vacancy for a Footpath Warden in Tangley if anyone wants to volunteer (see advert below).

I am sure all members would like to join me in thanking those volunteers who give up their own time to keep our footpaths open.

Volunteer Wanted to help keep our paths open.



There is a vacancy for a Footpath Warden in the parish of Tangle. This involves simply walking the paths and reporting problems. The minimum time involved is about the equivalent of a day a year with timings arranged to suit you. Anybody who is interested or wants more information should email me at:

footpaths@andoverramblers.org.uk

David Clark

Vegetation clearance involves clearing paths that have become overgrown. Most of the 2025 hours were spent clearing a new path in Upper Clatford next to the A303. However, a small number of Footpath Wardens also routinely go out and clear paths within their parish. Unfortunately, this task is hindered by there not being a Footpath Maintenance Coordinator at present. If you are interested in undertaking this coordination role, please let me know.

Path furniture includes repairs to stiles, bridges etc and the erection of fingerposts and waymarker posts. The 2025 activity included putting up 2 waymarker posts on the new Upper Clatford path and the removal of 2 stiles in Grateley.

Waymarking takes place where waymarking disks go missing or need replacing. Most new waymarkers are put up during the BVPI surveys.

Lost way claims covers the work done by Paul Howland in identifying paths that legally should be PROWs on the map but are mistakenly missing. He produces a very detailed claim and submits it to HCC. During 2025 Paul submitted 9 such claims totalling 6.4 miles. Paul is making claims on behalf of Hampshire Ramblers. None of the claims made this year were in our area.

Planning covers 2 activities. The first is reviewing all local planning applications to see whether they have an impact on our PROW network. If they do, then Ramblers can raise objections. Unfortunately, we did not have a local volunteer to cover this activity in 2025 the work being undertaken by an Area representatives on our behalf. At the AGM, Mike Parkinson volunteered to do this volunteer work in the future. The second activity concerns the processing of Path Orders which I undertake. Path Orders are needed for any change to the PROW network - new paths, diversions, closures and changes to path designations (e.g. a change from footpath to bridleway). Currently there are 9 active Path Order cases: 3 diversions, 1 change of designation and 5 new paths. 3 Path Orders were approved in 2025: 1 diversion in Hurstbourne Tarrant and 2 new paths in Upper Clatford and Hurstbourne Tarrant.

Other Admin covers footpath admin work undertaken that does not fall into the other categories. Writing this report is an example.

David Clark

Inspection and Path Order Coordinator (**footpaths@andoverramblers.org.uk**)

Committee Vacancy

Ramblers is far more than a walking club. We also work to keep our footpaths open and clear and accessible to everyone. As part of this effort, we have the following vacancy:

Path Maintenance Coordinator.

Andover Ramblers has a team of willing volunteers prepared to give up some of their time to clear rights of way in our area that have become overgrown or otherwise difficult for walkers to use. We are looking for a volunteer to act as a liaison with local authorities to identify work that needs to be done, then organise suitable volunteer work parties.

This is an important role that should involve no more than a few hours a week and would interest someone (not necessarily a walker) who is looking to do something positive that will benefit our local community.

If this is you, please contact Mike Peacock mike.peacock@yahoo.co.uk

RAMBLERS WALKING HOLIDAYS

If anyone books a Ramblers Walking Holiday, please make sure you nominate your group—Andover Ramblers, on your booking, as the Club receives commission on each holiday.



Andover Ramblers WhatsApp Group

We have a WhatsApp group that is used for notifying any last-minute changes, cancellations due to weather, etc. It's also a useful tool for thanking a walk leader after a walk (as well as in person, of course!), and sharing any photos you have taken during the walk.

If you are not on the WhatsApp group and would like to join, please contact Sharon Love with your mobile no., and she will add you to the group: sharonlove@ntlworld.com

Thanks go to all whose photos have been used in this newsletter

Inexpensive self-catering cottage, sleeps 4

N Wales, Close to Llyn Coastal Path,
short drive from Snowdonia—Many available dates.

Contact Pat Williams

williamspat359@gmail.com

Location Llanbedrog, Gwynedd.

Try post code LL53 7PE in google Earth to get a flavour of the area—and see photo (right)



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