



The Disabled Rambler

The Newsletter of the Disabled Ramblers

January 2007

A charitable company : Registered Charity No. 1103508

“ILLEGAL: BRITAIN’S 250,000 MOBILITY SCOOTERS !!”

Headline from
Daily Mail,
25th November,
2006



So that’s it – we power wheelchair and scooter users are not only a danger to the public (“machines, which have caused a spate of accidents involving pedestrians and shoppers” – quote from same Daily Mail article) but we are breaking the law by failing to register our vehicles with the DVLA in Swansea !

Clearly the Daily Mail believes that we “cause mayhem on pavements and shopping centres” (– a further quote). What is our response? Perhaps we should meekly go home, dispose of our machines and do what disabled people have always done – sit in our living rooms and avoid being a nuisance to able bodied people... ! ! ? ?

The Daily Mail article just about trawls the gutter of sensationalized journalism, but, amazingly, at least some of the sentiments were apparently echoed by Ray Hodgkinson, director general of the industry regulatory body, the BHTA (British Healthcare Trades Association) who allegedly said: “They should be licensed just like any other vehicle under the Road Traffic Acts”. (– a further quote from the Daily Mail article). I assume that Mr Hodgkinson would fervently campaign for all bicycles also to be registered, after all they are road using vehicles with many accidents – why not issue driving licences to all cyclists? Maybe MP’s like Bob Russell, in his zeal for health and safety, might even consider further safety measures? How about licences for old people to allow entry to their kitchens – to combat the menace of kitchen fires, or falls. Surely we must strive to eliminate all risks, however slight ?

I have had regular contact with the DfT (Department

for Transport), for many years, and their attitude is usually to be very wary over the introduction of new regulations, unless an overwhelming need can be shown. A few years ago they commissioned a review of Class 2 and 3 Powered wheelchairs and scooters. This was started in 2003, and the final report published this year, in February 2006. The first stage consisted of research into existing legislation, looked at usage levels and surveyed evidence of accidents. (Accidents do occur but at a generally very low level). The second stage consisted of a consultation exercise, involving a number of Focus Groups and a wider paper consultation with people like ourselves.

The final report recognizes that Class 2 and 3 vehicles are not motor vehicles in the accepted sense, though they need to conform to vehicle regulations in matters like lights, indicators, rear view mirrors, if used on the Highway. However, the law governing ‘Invalid Carriages’ does not distinguish adequately between true road vehicles and pavement scooters and power wheelchairs, leading to a theoretical need to register such vehicles with the DVLA. If registration is carried out, an automatic Excise Duty exemption is issued, no number plates are required, and no revenue is generated. In these circumstances, compulsory registration has never been pursued as it would be seen to be bureaucratic and serve little real purpose.



The recommendations from the report, based on the findings of the consultations are broadly as follows:

Possible new requirements supported widely were:

1. To improve the advice and training provided for purchasers of powered wheelchair and scooters

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Letter from Mike Bruton, Chairman of the Disabled Ramblers

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year to you. I hope you enjoyed the usual Christmas and New Year celebrations and are looking forward to 2007 with all its possibilities and challenges. You will find among the articles in this Newsletter, some preliminary information about next Summer's Rambles programme. I read with considerable interest the substantial number of completed survey forms sent in by you, giving your views about last year's programme. Most comments were very favourable, continuing to show us how much you enjoy the exhilaration and the freedom of the open air and the excitement of exploring new places! Some particularly praised the new Lancashire rambles as great successes. In fact, the only very mild complaint was over a day in the New Forest which was felt to be too enclosed and offering few open views. You will be pleased to know that another trip to Lancashire has been included in the 2007 draft programme, with our friend Tony Lund keen to build on last year's events. We are also planning first visits to some new places, including Dartmoor and new parts of Dorset..

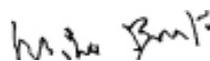
Other articles in the Newsletter include one dealing with changes we are making to our Rambles Grading. We felt that the 'challenging' category was too off-putting, as many walks in this category are not difficult for users of heavy duty buggies. We have therefore introduced a fourth category to cover really tricky routes, and, at the same time, have gone over to a system of numbers for our grades, removing the previous descriptive names, due to their tendency to be misleading!

An article on studies into category 2 and 3 'invalid carriages' (we prefer to call them 'mobility' or 'pavement' vehicles) is a warning that we may need to be on our guard. A report published on behalf of the DfT last February talked of possible measures to tighten the regulations governing use of our scooters, wheelchairs and buggies. Since then a small, but very vocal, lobby has appeared which seeks new regulations (in the cause of protecting us from ourselves !). I have now learnt that the DfT is likely to issue a statement soon outlining a way forward with possible new measures and new consultations. We must be prepared to fight our corner if new and unnecessary restrictions are to be proposed limiting our freedom and potentially damaging our already limited mobility.

Well, friends, I wish you all well and look forward to

yet another season of disabled rambles !

Signed



Mike Bruton
Chairman,
The Disabled Ramblers
Charity no: 1103508
Web-site: www.disabledramblers.co.uk



PS We very much want to hear from YOU, members and friends. As well as sending us views about the Rambles programme, please write or email us with articles of interest for publication, with your views and queries. Do include photographs whenever possible. These ventures are for you, and we need your contributions!

Please email to: chairman@disabledramblers.co.uk or write to: The Disabled Ramblers, 14 Belmont Park Road, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 6HT. You can also phone Mike Bruton on: 01628 621414.

Holidays Abroad

The Island of Crete

The hotel my wife and I stayed at during a recent holiday in Crete may be of interest: it is for disabled people and their companions only. It is a four star hotel at Maleme, near Chania, on the north coast at the west end of the island. Its name? The Eria. We took a package provided by Access Travel but we were told by other guests that if you fix your flight and the hotel yourself (and possibly the transport from airport to hotel - although the hotel may do that for you) the holiday will be a good deal cheaper. The Eria's phone no. is +30 28210 62790. We flew from Gatwick.

If anybody would like to hear more about Crete, the holiday or the hotel they should contact my wife on 01883 717946 (or me, but my speech is difficult to understand) or either of us at johnsmythson@aol.com or Claremont, Holland Lane, Hurst Green, Oxted, Surrey RH8 9AS.

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2. Requirement for users of the vehicles to have Third Party Insurance (NB the Disabled Ramblers recommend this practice but feel it should be voluntary, not compulsory)

3. Requirement for Class 2 vehicles to have equipment comparable to Class 3 existing requirements (lights, indicators etc)

Other possible changes discussed, but much less firmly supported included:

4. Consider possible design requirements allowing safe carriage of a small child, accompanying parent or guardian

5. Keep under review possible carriage of 2 adults, but take no action at present.

6. Keep 4mph as current maximum speed in pedestrian environments

7. Keep Class 3 maximum at 8 mph on roads – but keep under review (NB Disabled Ramblers have noticed that there is a hybrid power kit add on to manual wheelchairs which provides for max 15 mph. This is an interpretation of the rules for electrical bicycles: legal status of the slow 4mph and fast 15mph mix – unknown?)

8. Work to define a simple fitness to drive assessment to include an eyesight test., ability to control the vehicle and a measure of cognitive judgement (NB the Disabled Ramblers feel such a test should be optional, not compulsory)

9. Current regulation about users permitted to drive to remain as now, subject to the issue of cognitive impairment

10. Road Traffic rules regarding drink driving and mobile phone use should apply to Class 2 and 3 users.

11. Research should be conducted over possible use of bus lanes and cycleways

12. Exemption from VED should continue, but the unobserved legal requirement to register and display a certificate to be re-examined and possibly removed or applied

13. No action over possible use of hybrid/petrol engines, but concern was felt over possible use in pedestrian environments

14. There may be a case for a new classification of ‘off-road’ vehicles (NB the Disabled Ramblers feel the present rules are generally satisfactory)

15. An appropriate body eg BHTA to advise buyers in researching best value for money

Next Steps: the DfT team that checks on regulations for Blue Badges is expected to issue some policy guidance in all these areas. The Disabled Ramblers feel that a statement of possible future direction is needed, particularly with so much hostility from quarters like

the Daily Mail based largely on hysteria and misinformation.

The DfT team is then believed to be thinking of issuing a further discussion document in the Spring, setting out clear options and ideas for future action.

The Disabled Ramblers will be watching very carefully and would expect to take a significant role in any future new direction – after all, our very existence and practice could be affected by any new legislation!

Mike Bruton

WANTED !!



Does anyone have a Tramerper trailer for sale? If so, please contact Brian Milner with details on: 01342 850468

Crossing the Channel by Ferry A Cautionary Tale !

In order to obtain the lowest fare for an October return crossing between Dover and Calais, one of our members booked (and paid for) his ticket with P&O in the early summer. On the day of departure for France, the BBC weather forecast predicted 60 miles per hour winds in the Dover area at the time of the ferry crossing and, rather than risk the possibility of being unable to get into port on the other side of the channel, he decided that it would be prudent to catch an earlier ferry. Before leaving, he checked the P&O website to verify the fares in operation that day - and, on arrival in Dover, he expected to pay a small surcharge because this was not the ferry that he had originally booked - **but was staggered when he was asked to pay an additional £95 !**

He was given the choice of either waiting for the ferry that he had booked, or paying the surcharge ! He paid up, because the storm was getting worse all the time, and boarded a far-from-full ferry for a very rough crossing to Calais. When asked for an explanation for the surcharge, P&O responded by saying “The more that people want to use our ferries, the more we will charge them.”

Members are advised to read the Terms and Conditions very carefully when booking with P&O !

Everybody's South West Coast Path

The South West Coast Path is the perfect place to get away from the crowds. Fresh air, stunning sea views, maybe even a quiet beach are on offer just a short stroll away from our busy coastal resorts and villages. But what about families with pushchairs, people with walking or breathing problems, or those in wheelchairs or mobility scooters? To help them find some Coast Path magic, a new feature has been added to the official South West Coast Path website, www.nationaltrail.co.uk/southwestcoastpath.

Descriptions of easy-going sections of the Coast Path likely to be suitable for most, if not all users are now available in the online Coast Path walks library. This can be found by clicking on the flashing acorn on the Coast Path signpost on the home page. So far nine easy-access walks have been added covering all areas of the Coast Path and more will be added in future. Already, less able users can choose from walks at Lynton and Baggly Point in North Devon, North Cliffs and Godrevy in North Cornwall, Bolberry Down, Berry Head and Budleigh Salterton in South and East Devon and Lulworth and Studland in Dorset. All of these walks are along fairly flat paths that are at least 850mm (2'6") wide, have a minimal cross camber, and no steps or stiles.

A detailed map and description of each one with photographs illustrating the nature of the walk can be printed from the website. Variations in gradients, camber and path surface, as well as the width of any gates are all noted so that people can make their own minds up about whether the walk is suitable for them. The walk descriptions have been developed by the South West Coast Path team, led by Adrian Roper who said 'I am delighted that we have been able to provide this information for those people who may not find it easy to use all parts of the Coast Path.. I hope that the easy-access walks will help and encourage many more people to discover the stunning coastline of the south west. These are Coast Path walks that people of all abilities can enjoy together.'

The easy-access walks are an addition to the existing online library of over 50 Coast Path walks of varying length and difficulty in all parts of the region.

The varied terrain of the Coast Path means that much of it cannot be made accessible to everyone. But nearly 100 of its 630 miles either are suitable or can be made so by removing physical barriers such as stiles, gates and uneven surfaces. This work is in progress as part of the ongoing maintenance of the Coast Path, and as

new sections become suitable, more easy access walks will appear on the official Coast Path website.



John & Rosie Norris pass the Crowns Mine

Last week a group from the Disabled Ramblers' Association rounded off a visit to Cornwall with an invigorating day exploring a section of the Coast Path between Geevor mine and Kenidjack, passing the famous Crowns engine house and visiting the restored Levant mine. Mark Owen of the South West Coast Path Team who accompanied them, was impressed at how easily their 'Tramper' all-terrain mobility scooters coped with rough tracks and allowed them to reach places that would not normally be thought of as being wheelchair-accessible. Over lunch the group looked at the new easy-access walks on the web site and Rosie Norris, the secretary of the Disabled Ramblers said "The way the web site walks are set out is really good – its great to be able to have so much clear information to judge how accessible a walk is before you leave home, and we will definitely be trying some of them out soon."

Photographs of members of the Disabled Ramblers passing the famous Crowns mine are available on request from the South West Coast Path Team – 01392 383560 or swcpteam@devon.gov.uk

For further information about the South West Coast Path Easy Access Walks contact:

Mark Owen, Path Development Officer,
South West Coast Path Team – 01392 382557 or
swcpteam@devon.gov.uk

Website

<http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/southwestcoastpath>

CHOOSING A SCOOTER OR POWERCHAIR; TIPS AND HINTS

Individual disabled people often approach members of the Executive Committee of the Disabled Ramblers seeking advice on what type of mobility machine to acquire for countryside use. The answer must always be 'it depends...'. In practice the solutions always involve assessing the specific needs and aspirations of the disabled user, including physical needs, money resources and transporting issues. We do however, as a start, usually base our advice on firmly recommending a machine that comes within the special categories recognized widely as 'pavement vehicles' but known as 'invalid carriages' in legal terms. These subdivide into manually powered wheelchairs, powerchairs and scooters/buggies. These are split into 3 categories: manual wheelchairs fall within type 1, whereas powerchairs scooters and buggies are classified as type 2 or type 3 vehicles. It is important to recognize that all these vehicle categories, designed for exclusive use by disabled people, give certain basic rights, which are fundamental for disabled access to the countryside. Only users of these categories of vehicle have a right to go anywhere a pedestrian can go, with the sole constraint of physical practicality familiar to us all, as access is so frequently barred by barriers of all kinds!

Some of our members prefer to use manual wheelchairs, but riders of these require either quite exceptional upper body strength to self-propel, or rely upon strong able bodied pushers. Most of our members use powered pavement vehicles.

When choosing a powered pavement vehicle for use in the countryside, our general advice is to go for medium or heavy duty machines. Very small, lightweight machines are available, but usually such machines are unsuited to rougher going, are limited on hills and have very short ranges due to small batteries fitted. Batteries of a minimum 50 ampere hour capacity are recommended, preferably 60 ah or even bigger, plus 'chunky' wheels.

For reasons that will become clear later in this article, scooters and buggies have considerable advantages over most powerchairs, fundamentally because of their steering mechanisms. In general terms scooters and buggies are handlebar equipped and steered, and this means steering is separated from drive motors, giving a firm, direct steering system and easy control. We also recommend four wheel scooters and buggies, while recognizing the great capability of a small number of larger three wheeled scooters. Our advice to scooter and

buggy owners is that most machines, unless very tiny, are fine for use on our easy rambles (category 1). Medium size and larger machines are usually quite satisfactory on our moderate (category 2) rambles, but heavy duty scooters and buggies are required on harder routes (category 3 and 4).



The new Mk. II Tramper with joystick control

Powerchairs have no handlebars, and are usually steered via the electric motors which drive two wheels, situated most often at the rear of the chair, although some are front wheel driven. Steering is effected via a joystick control, which provides for differential power to be provided to each driven wheel, causing them to go at different speeds for cornering. Stability is maintained by two free swinging castor wheels, which can rotate completely round a full circle. This method of steering minimizes the chair's turning circle, making most highly manoeuvrable, able to turn on a metaphorical 'sixpence', ideal for indoor use or in crowded shopping malls.

However, there is a serious downside to this technique when negotiating country paths. Powerchairs are very prone to erratic steering on irregular ground. The following major problems can occur:

1. the drive wheels can skid easily and differentially. If one of the drive wheels loses traction, the chair will veer off a straight line. In extreme cases the chair can then end up facing across a track, rather than along it.
2. if the track surface slopes sideways, the castor system will tend to cause the chair to go down the camber, rather than along the trail. Attempts to correct the directional veer can then easily cause one of the drive wheels to skid, and all control can be lost, particularly for rear wheel drive chairs if the track is also going downhill.

This can be hazardous. If the track surface is rutted or too irregular, one of the castor wheels can easily rise

off the ground momentarily. This can itself be hazardous, as the castor may angle round, and face the wrong way when hitting the ground again. This can damage the castor, or even rip off the smaller, solid type castor wheel tyre!.

Clearly, scooters and buggies have a considerable advantage over most powerchairs for use in the Countryside. To some extent, the innate disadvantages of the powerchair can be reduced if larger, robust models are chosen. Such machines typically have larger castor wheels with inflatable tyres and chunky drive wheels. Such machines reduce drive wheel slip, and the castor wheels are less likely to be damaged when returning to ground after being momentarily airborne on an irregular surface. The Disabled Ramblers recognize differing capabilities of different pavement vehicles including the inherent instability of powerchairs in our ramble categorization. We advise powerchair users to restrict themselves to our easier ramble category (category 1). However, users of heavy duty powerchairs may choose to enter our moderate category rambles (category 2) provided they are accompanied by an able bodied walker able to stabilize the power chair on rough stretches, on cambers and downhill.

The Permobil
'Trax'



The discussion so far in this article leaves one very important question unanswered. This concerns an important group of disabled people who have severe arm strength or dexterity problems. It is all very well recommending handlebar steered scooters and buggies, but many users can only manage a joystick control and this is usually only available on powerchairs. Because of the steering instabilities of powerchairs, some disabled ramblers want the best of both worlds, i.e the direct positive steering of scooters and buggies together with the easy control offered through the joystick.

Although such machines are quite scarce, the Disabled Ramblers has some experience of a few such machines.

Two are essentially modified buggies, These are the Beamer Tramper with joystick control and the Permobil 'Trax.'

The companies supplying these can be contacted as follows:

Beamer Ltd, based at Whiteparish, near Salisbury. Phone: 08456 588 699 Web-site: www.tramper.co.uk
Permobil, based in Brighouse, West Yorkshire. Phone: 01484 722 888 Web-site: www.permobil.com

Other companies marketing machines of this type are believed to exist. Do contact us if you have any knowledge or experience of such machines, with supplier contact details.

Mike Bruton

GRADING OF RAMBLES: NEW THINKING

Members who have joined us on our rambles will be familiar with our system of grading them, currently into 3 categories. Up to now these have been given the names 'easy', 'moderate' or 'challenging' The purpose is to give members some feeling for the degree of difficulty of the rambles organized or co-ordinated by the Company.

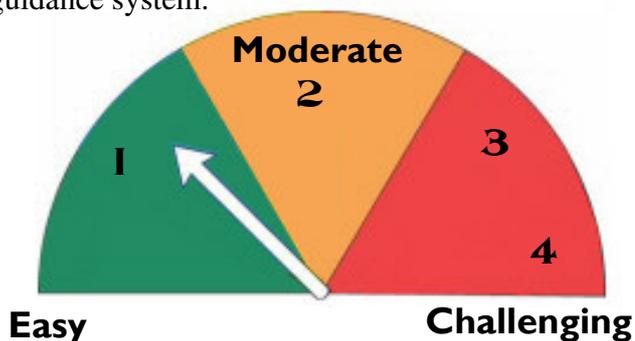
After some debate, your Executive Committee has decided to change this grading system slightly, to try to present greater clarity, particularly when categorising rambles at the more demanding end of the spectrum. In particular it was felt that the 'challenging' category was not sufficiently refined, and was putting off some members who could quite safely take on this type of event.

We are moving to a system based on numbers, moving away from descriptions. From this season onwards we will define four numbered categories:

- 1.) Broadly equivalent to the previous 'easy' category
- 2.) Broadly equivalent to the previous 'moderate' category
- 3.) These two categories broadly replace the
- 4.) previous 'challenging' description

As before, these definitions are for guidance only, and cannot be regarded as definitive. *They take into account path surfaces and general quality of the going and a view of the gradients and cambers likely to be encountered. Very broadly these categories map on to the Zone definitions described in the Countryside Agency

publication: 'By All Reasonable Means', although our detailed dimensions vary somewhat, based upon our experience of scooter/wheelchair use. Category 1 maps to Zone A, Category 2 maps to Zone B, Category 3 maps to Zone C. Category 4 goes beyond the CA Zone guidance system.



CATEGORY 1 implies generally high quality surfaces along the route, for the most part, smooth and all weather. This means tarmac or good quality crushed stone will predominate. However, there may occasionally be short stretches of rougher seasonal surfaces such as grass or compressed earth. There will be no hills greater than 1 in 10 gradient, and very shallow cross-slopes. Total significant height climbed during the ramble will not exceed 30 metres.

This ramble category is designed for most scooters and buggies, and many power-chairs. Users of manual chairs may manage the routes provided the rider is either powerfully built with plenty of upper body strength, or is assisted by able bodied pushers. The distance travelled in a day will usually be 6 to 8 miles.

CATEGORY 2 expects generally good surfaces, but allows longer stretches of stony going (stones up to 40mm) beaten earth or grass track-way, The path will be adequately wide. Small steps not bigger than 40mm may be encountered. Cross slopes will generally be very small, but very short sections involving cambers, say up to 1 in 8 may occur. Small stretches of soft going or involving ruts (up to 40mm) will occasionally be encountered, but usually these may be bypassed. Hills will generally be no more than 1 in 10, with occasional steeper stretches up to 1 in 8. Total significant height climbed may be up to 150 metres in a day.

Category 2 rambles are considered generally suitable for many scooters and buggies, particularly those with medium size, or large, wheels and adequate batteries (at least 50ah capacity, or preferably 60ah). Four wheel machines are recommended, although some larger 3 wheelers are acceptable, if driven with care. Some heavy duty power chairs may be used, if adequately supported by an able bodied helper who must be prepared to steady the machine downhill or on cross cambers. Occasionally users of manual chairs will take

part, provided the rider is exceptionally strong in the upper body, and/or has at least one strong fully able bodied helper. Maximum distance up to 8 miles, but may be longer in special circumstances

CATEGORY 3 means longer stretches of rough going with side slopes and some ruts (max depth 100mm). The paths may well be stony tracks with quite large stones (some stones max 100mm),, or there may be very wet and soft sections. Occasional steps up to 100mm may be encountered). Cambers may also be correspondingly steeper, sometimes in excess of 1 in 8. Hills may be long and steep, with some stretches even up to 1 in 5, or very occasionally 1 in 4. Total significant height climbed during a day may be up to 300 metres. Rambles in this category are designed for users of very heavy and powerful scooters or buggies only. The distance covered may be highly variable – from 5 miles if along a very hilly route with long steep climbs, up to 12 or 14 miles along more level routes. Category 3 routes will present few problems to experienced users of heavy duty buggies.

CATEGORY 4 covers paths and trails outside of the three categories defined above. Detailed descriptions will be provided in all cases.

This category is only for adventurous users of heavy duty buggies, prepared to try routes that may prove impassable. Participation in rambles of this nature will be on an 'invitation only' basis.

NOTES

- a) The 'significant height climbed' assessment used in route classifications is based upon clearly identifiable and sustained hills along the route. Normal small ups and downs encountered on any ramble are discounted. The purpose of this assessment is based upon recognizing the impact of hills on battery capacity and the heating and possible safety cutouts of small electric motors over sustained climbs
- b) The distance planned for each day's ramble will be clearly presented as part of the joining instructions issued to each participant
- c) Participants in our rambles programme must make up their own minds over which type of ramble they wish to undertake. the above information is for general guidance only and cannot take account of the capability either of particular individuals or their equipment. Ramble entrants take part in any of our organised rambles at their own risk.

DISABLED RAMBLES IN 2007: LOOKING AHEAD

Autumn and Winter are quiet for us on the actual rambling front, but busy on preparing and planning for the following Summer season ! We usually have a preliminary plan prepared by the end of each calendar year, but many last minute details need to be established to enable us to publish a definitive list in time for annual membership renewals during February.

The planning for next summer is once again following this pattern, but members and friends may like to see the progress so far made and the preliminary programme as it stands. But beware, changes in detail both of dates and route grading may still be needed before we publish our definitive list later next month. Indeed, some dates need to be fixed from the start. Sixteen separate events are in the pipeline, covering a total of 25 days, starting at the end of April and finishing mid to late September.

2007 Program Events Grade Outline information

1.	Sun 29 April	Margaret Ray Mem., London	1	Surrey wetlands and Putney
2.	Tue 15 May	Windsor Great Park	1	Valley Gardens in bloom
3..	Fri 8 Jun	Dartmoor	2	High on the moors
	Sat 9 Jun	ditto day 2	2	Railway Trail: Okehampton
4.	Sun 10 Jun	Dartmoor challenging day	3	Near Princeton
5	Late Jun?	North Downs	2	Walks with National Trust
	Late Jun?	ditto day 2	2	
6.	Early July	North Wales	2/3 ?	Alwen Reservoir Trail
	Early July	ditto day 2	2/3 ?	Beddgelert Forest
7 .	Sat 14 July	Lancashire rambles	2/3 ?	Two days at Arnside
	Sun 15 July	ditto day 2	2/3 ?	
8.	Tue 17 July	Peak District	2	Derwent Reservoir circuit
	Wed 18 July	ditto day 2	2/3	High Moors near Winnats
9.	Thu 19 July	Peak District challenging day	3	Remote moorland track
10.	Early Aug ?	Dorset	2 ?	Kingston Lacey NT ?
	Early Aug ?	ditto day 2	2/3 ?	Tyneham military range
11.	Mid Aug ?	Midlands	1	Northampton/Graffham ?
12.	Tue 21 Aug	Thames – Cookham/Marlow	2	Round walk 9m
	Wed 22 Aug	Chilterns – Phoenix Trail	2	Near Princes Risborough
13.	Thu 23 Aug ?	Chilterns – Ashridge	3	Explore extensive NT area
14.	Sat 1 Sep ?	Avon Gorge, Bristol	2/3	Woods and gorge ?
15.	Wed 12 Sep	Brecon Beacons	2	More in the National Park
	Thu 13 Sep	ditto day 2	2	
16	Sat 15 Sep	Valley Walking Festival	2	South Wales valleys
Sun	16 Sep	ditto day 2	2	

NOTE: we are using the new ramble gradings as described elsewhere in this Newsletter. We will again be using new routes in familiar areas, but readers will see some locations entirely new to us.

First we have Dartmoor. The rambles planned here look very promising, including two days near Okehampton. We aim to use old military roads high on the remote northern section of the Moor. Then we will visit another disused railway path. The Challenging day will be near Princeton in the middle of the Moor. Next we are looking at rambles with the National Trust on the North Downs. Thirdly, we are planning two days in North Wales, one using a newly constructed circuit of a reservoir, just east of Snowdonia, and the other in a forested area immediately opposite Snowdon. The fourth new area is in Dorset, including a day by the coast on the Tyneham military range around the deserted village of Tyneham Finally, we plan to join an existing programme of rambles planned in the Rhondda Cynon Taff area of the South Wales Valleys. These mine scarred landscapes have been massively restored after the end of the coal mining era and offer beautiful walks.

BUT NOTE – THE PROGRAMME IS NOT FINALISED YET! Wait 4 to 6 weeks for this to be done. Meanwhile, hopefully, the above list will serve to stimulate your interest and curiosity!