

East Yorkshire and Derwent Ramblers AREA NEWSLETTER Autumn 2025



Western NY Moors with Rosebery Topping in the background, August 2025

Hi Members

Welcome to the Autumn 2025 issue of Area Newsletter. We've enjoyed the warmest summer on record for the UK but also suffered a huge fire on the North York Moors which seems to be under control now. Covered in this issue are important changes to walks leader training and proposed changes to the Ramblers AGM and General Council. We also report on events that have taken place over the summer, including the Area Camp in Muker, the East Yorkshire Walking Festival and a report on the York Group day out in Kettlewell. Sadly, we include an appreciation of two women who have died recently, Ann Holt and Vera Silberburg who in their respective ways, were giants in the Ramblers. We also sadly report on the end of an era for the Howden and Goole Group. Finally, we take an informal look at the Pocklington Group. As always, please send any material for the next edition (Spring 2026, to be sent out in April 2026) to me at garymalcolm@garymalcolm.plus.com

Gary Malcolm
Editor
30th September 2025

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1. Ramblers Updated Approach to Walk Leader Training

In the Volunteer Update of 2nd July and expanded upon in an email to volunteers dated 9th July 2025, the Ramblers issued an updated approach to walk leader training. All leaders must now do online training , unless:

a) they have led 12 walks over the last three years for Ramblers and/or Ramblers Wellbeing walks

OR

b) Have a qualification from the Mountain Training Association (Lowland Leader Award, Hill & Moorland Leader Award or Mountain Leader Award)

Leaders have until 31st December 2025 to have either completed the training or submitted their experience or qualifications. If not, they will be unable to lead walks after that date.

Once leaders have completed the training or confirmed their experience or qualifications, their walk leading ‘certificate’ will last three years. It is not quite clear what leaders will need to do to refresh their ability to lead walks after that period of three years has elapsed.

The training consists of reading the walk leaders handbook and viewing two online modules as follows:

- a) Walk leadership foundations (approx 90 minutes to view)
- b) Preventing and Managing Incidents (approx 60 minutes to view)

Here at Scarborough Group, we have encouraged all leaders to do the training, regardless of whether they may have an exemption and the response has generally been positive

Gary Malcolm
September 2025

2. New Governance Proposals

Major Review of how the Ramblers are Organised now at its final Consultation Stage

The Board of Trustees are undertaking a major review of how the Ramblers are organised, they have been looking for feedback from volunteers, Groups & Areas at every stage of this review which has been in progress for 2 years. Their aim is to modernise how the Ramblers are governed; they are seeking more involvement and engagement with members. After further feedback and amendments, these proposals will be voted on at an Extraordinary General Meeting of General Council on 6th December.

Members have the right to Vote at Ramblers AGM's and elect Trustees

Under the current system two Group or Area officers volunteer to attend the General Council, which is the Ramblers AGM (one day meeting in Birmingham NEC). This means only two members are representing the wishes of the 1,500 members of East Yorkshire & Derwent Area. They vote to elect members of the Board of Trustees, listen to the report of Ramblers' annual activities and discuss finances. This is followed by the submission of several Motions from Areas/Groups to direct the future policy of the Ramblers; these are discussed in detail and then voted on. Motions receiving a majority vote become Rambler's policy.

General Council itself found this format to be undemocratic and it is proposed to change to a system where all paid up members of one or more years' standing have the right to attend the AGM and vote in the election of trustees. It is proposed that the format of the AGM will focus only on those aspects required by Company Law- the Annual Report and finance; to enable maximum participation, the AGM will normally be held on-line.

The composition of the Board of Trustees has been reviewed

It is recommended that there should be a maximum of 12 trustees. Two trustees – the Chair and Honorary Treasurer would be selected by the Board following a formal process to assess their capabilities; four Trustees would be elected by members. One trustee would be elected from Scotland and one from Wales. Up to four trustees could be elected by the Board following a formal assessment process. Appointments would be for 3 years with possible re-election for a further 3 years.

Recommendations - Member & Volunteer Gatherings

Gatherings would be held at least annually with members and volunteers and would be attended by trustees to enable discussion and debate on key issues and engagement with the Board. The exact format could develop overtime but it could be built on the current cluster model of four English Regions- south, southwest, midlands and north of England, with separate gatherings for Scotland & Wales. The current motion process which takes place at General Council would be replaced by a new formalised process of discussions and debates in these gatherings.

Recommended Changes: Groups & Areas still under consideration:

Because some Areas are no longer functioning, changes to groups and areas are being recommended; however, because of the complexities of these changes, discussion has been postponed until next year to give more time to consider options in detail.

It is being recommended that groups become the primary organising unit of the Ramblers, with simplified requirements for group constitution, officer roles and group AGMs. Group funding will come directly from Ramblers central funds, not via their area treasurer as at present. Areas will transition over time to more flexible networking hubs as best suits local requirements.

Marian Thomas
Area Secretary
3rd October 2025

3. Midlife Hikers – the first year

It's hard to believe, writing this in mid-September, that it's less than 9 months since Midlife Hikers held its inaugural walk on a misty January day at Hutton-le-Hole. We've now got 45 walks under our boots and we're not looking back! From a start when we had just 10 members, all of us long-standing members of Get Your Boots On, we're now up to nearly 90 members, most of whom are completely new to Ramblers. Two of those new members have already led their first walks for us, and we've got others lining up to lead a walk before the end of the year!

We are delighted with how our first year is going, and the many positive and appreciative comments we received on our recent members' survey, and the smiles and happy faces from the many people who have started out as first-timers, newbies and quickly progressed to regular and established members. We look forward to seeing more members grow in confidence, start leading walks and getting involved with running the group over the coming years!

Stephen Down



Midlife hikers at the Wain Stones, NY Moors

4. Report on the York group day out in Kettlewell

We had a very enjoyable coach Ramble, with an almost full coach, on a lovely sunny day. The three walks finished at Kettlewell. The A walk, 12 miles, led by Paul Shepherd, started at Grassington, and reached Great Whernside. The B walk, led by Anne Kennedy, 9 miles, started at Buckden and went up Buckden Pike. The C walk, 7 miles, which I led, started at Grassington, following the Dales Way to Kettlewell.

Ian Revell

York Group

5. Demise of the Howden and Goole group



Sadly the group will close by the end of September, with one walk leader and now only two committee members, it is time to call a halt. The group was founded in 2003 by past Area chair Chris Bush. After Covid, the number of walk leaders declined due to health issues and the last couple of years have been a struggle.

Marian Thomas

6. East Yorkshire Walking Festival

This year our Ramblers Groups have again provided a great range and diversity of walks that were included in the Annual Walking East Yorkshire Festival. Together we have provided a total of 10 walks that were included in the festival. In total they attracted a total of 199 walkers, of which 115 were Ramblers members and 84 members of the Public.

Grateful thanks to the five groups who provided walks for the festival (Monday Afternoon Group, Midlife Hikers, Hull and Holderness, Howden and Goole, and Pocklington). And a special mention to the walk leaders who provided such a diverse and exceptional range of walks, with descriptive wording that Wordsworth would have been proud of. The feedback from non-members on the walks was very good, and the interest in joining the Ramblers was very good (I personally gave out a lot of membership leaflets to many on each walk that I led). Hopefully Ramblers groups across the UK will derive a few new members from our involvement in the festival (a good number of those attending were out of our area, including one guy from America who had flown from Kansas just for this event!)

Martin Hill
Pocklington Ramblers



Hull and Holderness decided to support the East Yorkshire Walking Festival by leading three walks along parts of the King Charles 111 England Coast Path. The walks were at Flamborough, Hull old town and Kilnsea. Two thirds of the participants were not Ramblers Members and there was interest among some in joining more of our walks in future. Many thanks to John Medland, Elaine Tague, Jo Bell and Eric Wright for leading, backmarking and generally herding the sometimes large groups.

Steve Lack, Chair of Hull and Holderness

7. Report on the Area Camp Muker June 2025



River Swale



BBQ on Sunday evening

The annual camp this year was held in Muker, Swaledale on the weekend of 27th to 30th June 2025. Thirteen walkers met in Muker on the Friday afternoon after driving towards the rain which continued until late Saturday night. Norman led a wet walk up Muker Side down to Scar House Force, finishing at Kearthons tea shop in Thwaite. People returning to their wet tents must have questioned the wisdom of their decision. There was more rain to come. On Saturday, John led 9 walkers along the Swale to Gunnerside visiting Ivelet Bridge, while Norman's group climbed onto Ivelet Moor before descending Gunnerside Gill. By this time, it wasn't possible to get any wetter, but the thought of the meal kept our spirits up. The new owners of Kearthons in Thwaite did us proud. A good meal, chance to dry out and relax and for some, no need to go anywhere else. The planning to keep things local was paying off. It had stopped raining when I walked back to the campsite at 10pm.

Sunday dawned bright. Brilliant sunshine as 19 people joined Norman for a walk from Thwaite to Angram, Ravenseat and Keld. John led 5 walkers from Muker to Keld to explore the waterfalls. Both walks were spectacular. The recent rain had brought out the greenery of the landscape, streams and rivers were in full spate. Ewes and lambs frolicked in the fields – there were scenes from a Yorkshire Dales calendar. We returned feeling uplifted and refreshed. Those on and near the campsite enjoyed an outdoor barbecue which would have been unimaginable the day before.

Monday saw a few people return home, but everybody else (16 of us) joined John for a walk over Reeth Swing Bridge, upto Maiden Castle and back to Reeth via Grinton.

So now the leaders' thoughts turn to Area Camp 2026. We want your ideas, suggestions and offers of help. We need to attract more people. We need to build on the tradition. We'll see you on Area Camp 2026 – bring your friends and family.

John Motley
(co-leader of the camp with Norman Barclay and Rachel Carlin)

8. Focus on Pocklington Group

The group was formed relatively recently, in 2003, following a public meeting at Burnby Hall. Credit for the new group was mainly down to Monica Isle(who became the groups first Ramblers Secretary and then took on publicity and membership) , Ray Wallis and Peter Ayling . The group's inaugural walk was from Warter on Sunday 2nd March 2003 with 48 people on the walk.

Since 2003, the group has continued to be successful with a full programme of walks , social events and walking holidays.

Richard Primmer , the secretary, describes the present committee in his inimitable style:

Chair

For the past 5-years Kate has managed to keep her committee under a reasonable degree of control. Some may say by using her charm and sense of humour, some may say by scaring them into submission. Whatever it is she has continued to drive the Group forward to even greater success. Sadly, she has announced that she is standing down in November, and possibly even leaving the committee. Kate will still be involved with organising the annual holiday and potentially special projects. She will be missed, particularly by those who enjoy winding her up !

Treasurer

You know what they say, if you've got two accountants on the committee you had better appoint a large animal vet as treasurer. Keith has been in this role for several years, having been 'promoted' from being an ordinary member. Not only has he kept us on the straight and narrow by restricting some of the wilder ideas for spending funds but he is also very useful on walks for calming recalcitrant livestock and has almost become our go-to person for back marking, where he is frequently joined by a succession of our lady members who are charmed by his company.

Walks Secretary

Despite having been walks secretary for many years, and previously Chair, Tony has managed to maintain both his sense of humour and his ability to 'encourage' walk leaders to fill the programme with at least two walks a week, sometimes more. His speciality which makes leaders want to help is his ability to look like a whipped puppy if rejected, sad soulful eyes and a whimper, being his two main tricks.

Membership Secretary

Another of the committee who has also served his time as Chair, Martin is constantly attempting to pass on this role to others 'once he has got Ramblers central office sorted'. For some reason this never seems to happen, indeed when one issue is resolved another one seems to leap up to cause problems. In addition to his main role Martin has also organised the long-distance coach rambles for several years and is 'rented out' to the Council to help organise the annual walking festival raising much appreciated funds for the group.

Secretary

Our Secretary, Richard, frequently amuses himself, (but not necessarily the rest of the committee), by producing the notice of meetings using A.I., occasionally in the style of Shakespeare, occasionally in the style of Socialist Worker. It is also rumoured that he writes the minutes before each meeting which may explain some of the errors. The committee have managed to get their revenge by requiring at least one meeting a year to be peripatetic, in other words conducting the business whilst wandering the Wolds. This makes taking the minutes loads of fun !

Other members

One of the reasons for the success of the Group are the presence of 'members without portfolio' who undertake many of the one-off tasks, support the officers in their roles and provide sound advice in the meetings. They are (in alphabetical order): -

Andrea Hutchinson

An occasionally fiery person from Newcastle, Andrea is an enthusiastic helper at many events, with especial ability to move large quantities of furniture for the AGM, as well as being a demon in the kitchen quenching the thirst of gasping Ramblers without fluster. She is also noted for regularly turning up at walks with a new car, seemingly changing them more often than some folks change their socks.

Gill Bradish

Gill is a valuable foil when various proposals are being discussed and has a great ability to see the weaknesses of some of the wilder ideas that are put forward. Also, as an ex infant schoolteacher, she is able to keep the elderly male members of the committee from misbehaving with a stern look.

Sarah Anderson

Sarah's gentle Scottish accent hides a steely determination to move the group forward and her previous experience with handling recalcitrant horses supports Gill in keeping the 'chaps' from descending into even more childlike behaviour. As Membership Secretary, (designate), Sarah is looking forward to the challenges imposed by central office.

9. Ann Holt: Obituary

We are sad to report that Ann Holt, a Vice-President and former President of the Area has died.

Kate Ashbrook, General Secretary of the Open Spaces Society writes;

Ann was a quiet and studious person, and her output for the Ramblers was significant. She wrote about many of our people, and aspects of our work, providing valuable research for our campaigns. Her paper on the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 was a useful stepping-stone in our fight for greater access in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Her booklets about GHB Ward and his lifelong campaign for access to the countryside, and Wally Smith our former treasurer, ensure that their work is remembered. She edited Tom Stephenson's *Forbidden Land*, and our golden jubilee publication, *Making Tracks*, both of which provide useful records of our movement's history.

Her 524-page magnum opus, *Taking a Walk*, published only last year *, is a thorough investigation of all aspects of walking through history. It is dedicated to her late husband, David Rubinstein who was also a figure in the Ramblers, serving as chairman (1984-87). Ann leaves us a great legacy of writing and research, and we shall miss her clear expositions of matters related to walking and the Ramblers.

* See the Summer 2024 Area News for a full page article by Ann of how she came to write this book

10. Vera Silberberg: Obituary

Vera Silberberg, a long-standing member of York Ramblers has died following a tragic accident.

Vera's life was a testament to her adventurous spirit and sharp intellect. She was born in 1940 in what would later become Palestine, to Jewish parents, Harry and Babette, who had fled Nazi Germany. Her father was in the British army, and this meant that the family moved around a lot, spending some time in Malaysia. After the end of WW2, the family moved, in 1947, to Bulawayo, in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). In 1957, Vera came to England to study chemistry at the University of Manchester. After graduating, she obtained a PhD in physical inorganic chemistry at the University of Toronto. It was there, in the early 1960s, that she befriended Lizz and Carole, who, at her funeral, provided an account of Vera's early life.

After Canada, Vera lived in Southern Rhodesia for seven years, teaching at a girls' secondary school before returning, stateless, to England. Here she taught at Queen Margaret's School, the independent boarding and day school for girls in Escrick and settled in North Parade in York and became a British citizen.

Vera probably converted to Christianity during her time in Africa, but she did not disclose this openly until her parents died in 1987. Once in York, she joined the congregation of St Olave's Church, became a tertiary at the Sisters of the Holy Paraclete, which is based at St Hilda's priory in Whitby, and later an oblate of the Sisters of the Love of God centred in Oxford.

Vera's passion for community and the outdoors defined her life in York. Her commitment to service was varied; she helped out at Oxfam, rang bells, played bridge, led tours on the city walls, joined archaeological digs, and was a volunteer ranger for the North York Moors National Park. Of all her pursuits, however, it was her love for walking that was perhaps her greatest.

For nearly two decades, Vera served as the York Ramblers group secretary, a role she held until 2016. She was, as Area Chairman and one time bridge partner Sam Borman recalls, "a lively, unapologetically direct character. She spoke her mind with clarity and conviction, and that honesty drew admiration from many. Her absence leaves a real void and her wit, her candour, and the spark that she brought to every room she entered, will be missed. Vera was truly one of a kind." Peter Ayling, Area President, also remembers her as "a formidable member of any meeting."

Vera died of pneumonia following multiple injuries sustained in a head-on collision with an HGV on the A19 at Tollerton in June 2025.

Tom Halstead