

RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION BARNARD CASTLE GROUP NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2010

Footpaths Secretary to stand down

It is with huge regret that we announce that Ian Martin will be standing down as Footpaths Secretary at the Group's AGM in November. We offer our sincere thanks to Ian for all of his conscientious work over the many years he has held this post and we will sorely miss his expertise in this area. Would members please consider whether they would like to be nominated for this post at the forthcoming AGM.

Group trip to DALEGARTH (Monday 11th to Friday 15th October)

Please contact **Lis on 01833 650192 or 07769 723509 for further details.**

Open Studios – Art Rambles

(Please see Programme for details of the walks, which have been organised by Teesdale Artists' Network and Barnard Castle Vision in conjunction with Barnard Castle Ramblers Group and will be led by Ramblers leaders.) New for 2010, we have developed two 'art' rambles to make the perfect day out in Teesdale - one around Barnard Castle and the other a circular walk along the Tees from Cotherstone to Romaldkirk and Eggleston. These walks will combine the beautiful countryside with the opportunity to drop in on **Open Studios**. Leave the car behind and have a healthy stroll. Bring your own lunch and refreshments. Booking is required as numbers will be limited to 10-20 people per walk. Please book early to avoid disappointment. Walks will be around 6-8 miles maximum. Cost: Adults £5.00 and Children £2.50.

Book a place by telephoning Annalisa on 07928 901621

Full instructions for parking, all equipment required and other arrangements will be issued with booking confirmation. Walks are not suitable for wheelchair users or prams. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. The organisers reserve the right to postpone the walk due to inclement weather.

Ramblers' Association 75th Anniversary – Baton Walk



We celebrated this landmark for the Ramblers' Association with a memorable walk in Teesdale from Bowlees via Ettersgill. Members carried the (inflatable) Baton for the entire journey. The day was rounded off with a lovely meal in Newbiggin Village Hall, prepared for us by the WI. Happy 75th Anniversary Ramblers!
(Donna)

Coach trip to Arnside

Well the Limestone Link Coach Trip on September 11th was a huge success. We had 32 people on a 33 seat coach, which meant we were able to refund £1 each to those who had paid the full £11 fare. (It's not a lot, but every little helps as they say). After a very unpromising start weatherwise, the day improved and by mid afternoon we had a beautiful day. The A and B parties were almost equal and the A party lead by Tom and Lis set off from Kirkby Lonsdale for the 13 miles to Arnside. The B party lead by Joan and Ian continued to Milnthorpe for the 8 mile walk into Arnside. Both groups went via the 'Fairy Steps', the highlight of the walk. Some ventured down them while others took the permissive route. Three people on the B party took a shorter route into Arnside and the rest did an amended route so that they could climb Arnside Knott. The rewards were great as the views were magnificent. It was nice to meet our two ladies who like to 'do their own thing' sitting at the top who were able to join the group down into Arnside. One other lady with a bad knee was able to take advantage of the train and go into Grange-over-Sands for the day. It's always nice to be able to 'mix and match', giving members various options. Everyone met up at the pub for the meal before returning home. Everyone seemed to enjoy the meal, although I think the Fish and Chips were a little disappointing. Unfortunately this can be a problem with group catering.

By popular request, I have said I will try and book a coach trip for next year to do the Morecambe Bay crossing. As Cedric Robinson, the Queen's Guide to the Sands, is now in his 80's, I have no idea how many more years he will be leading these walks. I am not sure whether anyone is even going to take over from him, so this may be our last chance. I should know in early January if we have been successful in securing a place for the group.

I have also said that this will be my 'swan song' for organising coach trips. We have an excellent committee and I am sure that one or two can put their thinking caps on and organise another coach trip somewhere interesting in a different area. (Joan)

Posting of Newsletters and Programmes

For more years than I care to remember I have been getting the Programmes and Newsletters photocopied and delivered/posted out to our members. After this current edition I intend passing this job on to someone else. Fortunately because we have over 50% of members now getting them by email it is not such an onerous task. From approx 120 we are now down to just under 40. (I realise that we still have members without computers, but I still think we could have more members on email, which makes life a lot easier and cheaper). However the person who takes the job on does not have to be a regular walker. I will remain as Membership Secretary (unless anyone would like this job) and would print out the labels which would only need sticking on the envelopes. I will still be around to give advice if required. If you can't deliver any, well they will all just have to go in the post. Please think about it before the AGM in November.

If any more members feel they can join the email list, please email me their email address: ijmar8@tiscali.co.uk
Just a reminder that they go out as 'blind carbon copies', so only Donna who sends them out and myself will know your email address. (Joan)

Walk reports for Teesdale Mercury

Many thanks to all the leaders who now do reports for the Teesdale Mercury. We don't officially have a Publicity Officer for the group, but I try my best to keep us in the 'public eye'. It is nice when others write reports as we all have a different style of writing and it's amazing the number of people who tell us they like reading the reports, even though they don't ramble. (Joan)

Lost property

Ian and I have decided that our house must be a 'clearing house' for lost property. What with lost jackets and lost purses it seems we are so well known in the North East everyone rings us first if they want any information. Ian says it's like running a telephone exchange here sometimes!! I am pleased to be able to tell you that the walking jacket left on the coach after the 'Limestone Link' has now been reunited with its owner. (Joan)

Photographs for Joan's scrapbook

Please remember to send Joan copies of any photographs from walks for entry into the Scrapbooks. Hard copies would be much appreciated, where possible, or email to: ijmar8@tiscali.co.uk. Many thanks. (Donna)

Footpaths and access

Threat to rights of way - your help needed urgently, please!

We all know that there are to be cuts in public spending, but we don't know yet by how much and in what ways. But we do know that rights of way may be seen as one of the targets for cuts, and in some parts of the country there is talk of cutting *all* such funding. Already Durham County Council has a rights of way post that is not being filled, and staff are already under pressure to cope with their workload, without facing any further cuts. We cannot just stand by and hope, when there is a way of influencing the funding decisions by writing to a councillor with influence. Cllr Neil Foster is on the Local Access Forum and as a Cabinet member is therefore a key decision maker. Please write to him as soon as you can and urge him to give due weight to access and rights of way work. Some of the things to mention are:

- The importance of rights of way and access for walking - recreation for all ages and abilities; maintaining good health and prevention of all sorts of medical conditions; tourism which is currently a priority for DCC, and when fewer people are likely to go abroad for holidays; sustainable transport; education and the local economy - remember the effects of 'closing the countryside' for foot and mouth disease.
- The good work already done – path problems resolved; the digital definitive map; promotion of particular routes with leaflets, and help given to parishes through the Parish Paths Partnership, and the countywide programme of led walks.
- The need for ongoing funding for work as paths will not stay in good order without the constant attention currently given. Stiles, gates, bridges and signposts can all fall out of repair, paths can become blocked by overgrowth and undergrowth, and land managers can all too easily overlook paths crossing their land unless given reminders from officers to keep them clear of crops and defined on the ground.

Please write in your own words, expanding on any aspect you like, and ask your friends to write too. Send your letter as soon as possible to: Cllr Neil Foster, 51 Keswick Drive, Spennymoor. The more letters he receives the more he will be influenced to give due funding for access and rights of way. Thank you!

Access Land Restrictions

Natural England has almost completed its review of access restrictions in the North Pennines in relation to conservation issues. Some restrictions have been relaxed between 1st April and the end of August, the nesting season. It was perhaps surprising that October to March is the time when black grouse are more prone to disturbance on their regular feeding grounds than the hens are while nesting. But restrictions remain for dogs (except on rights of way) as all ground nesting birds are particularly prone to disturbance by dogs. To view open access maps go to www.naturalengland.org.uk/openaccess and follow the links.

Landscape Partnership

I have now attended three meetings and a small public meeting of the partnership. Two people have been employed, one with the role of working up plans with a Steering Group to apply for funds for years 2 – 5 of the project, the other to engage local landowners. The whole team will be working to involve the local community as a whole, in as many ways as possible. Publicity will soon be given and involvement invited from anyone who has ideas and projects to propose. The project should be a real community effort and benefit, and there should be ways that the Ramblers can be involved. Funds could also benefit rights of way and production of new walks leaflets for Teesdale walks, a benefit which in the current climate cannot be undervalued.

‘There’s no such thing as the Dog Poo Fairy’

Durham County Council is to be involved in this new anti dog dirt campaign in conjunction with Keep Britain Tidy, to deal with this perennial problem, particularly on the edge of the town and villages, ie the routes popular with dog walkers.

Scar Top in Barnard Castle has been chosen as a particular target, having received the highest number of complaints in the last 18 months, but complaints about any fouling problems can be reported by anyone in any of the following ways:

- by speaking to a Neighbourhood Warden in the street
- by calling in to any of the Council’s offices
- by calling **0300 1237070**
- by logging on to www.durham.gov.uk/dogpoo fairy

Countryside Officer ‘out’, Walking Environment Officer ‘in’

For some time it has been considered that the title of Countryside Officer is no longer appropriate, since many of our paths are not in the countryside, and there are issues for walkers in built up areas. Three of the items in my report have relevance to town and village walking as well as in the countryside, and many people use paths in built up areas to reach the countryside. The whole walking environment should be cared for and enjoyed.

(Jo Bird, Access and Walking Environment Officer)

Christmas lunch – Saturday 4th December at 1:00 pm

Christmas lunch will be at the Farmhouse Kitchen, Low Way Farm, Holwick (01833-640506) – Cost £13.00 per person, including coffee and mince pies. All meals must be pre-ordered at least 48 hours prior to our arrival, so please contact Lis (01833 650192) with names and choice of meal **by Wednesday 1st December, please.** Please note that the Farmhouse Kitchen is not licensed for alcohol, so it’s bring-your-own for beer and wine. There will be a charge for wine corkage of £3 per bottle, potentially less for a large number of bottles. Soft drinks are available.

Menu:

1. Roast turkey with all the traditional trimmings
 2. Roast pork with apple sauce and stuffing
 3. Baked cod with tomato and mozzarella sauce
 4. Creamy broccoli and potato bake
- (All served with roast and mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables)

Sweets:

1. Christmas pudding and rum sauce
 2. Meringue with bananas and hot toffee sauce
 3. Baileys creme brulee
- (Followed by coffee, mints and mince pies)

Date for your diary 2011

BBQ for Group members - Saturday July 2nd 2011 in Cotherstone (John and Linda).

www.barnardcastleramblers.org.uk

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