

BARNARD CASTLE RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION
Group Newsletter: Spring 2012

Free Lunch and footpaths!

Three members of Ramblers' staff with expertise on rights of way are coming to Darlington on Thursday 23rd February, to share their knowledge with us. The programme runs from 9.30 – 4.00pm and a free lunch is included. You don't have to be a footpaths secretary to attend, as the day is open to anyone with an interest in finding out how the law works, and what can be done to help maintain and improve our paths. To attend, simply ring John Marshall, Area Footpaths Secretary on 01642 – 701960 to have your name added to the list. The venue is Darlington East End Working Mens' Club, St John's Place, off Neasham Road, just beyond the railway station. See <https://sites.google.com/site/nysdac/events> for details of the programme and map.

Short Walks

The short walks in our programme have recently been very well attended, including by some of the people who earlier attended the very short Get Walking Keep Walking walks. Particularly popular have been walks through the many yards in the town. GWKW has been very successful in all parts of the county where the project has been run, in providing for people new to walking. GWKW is continuing throughout the summer, and will be offering a range of walks linked to the Olympics, with routes being added to the Ramblers' website. There will also be short walks linked to Barnard Castle Meet and lots of other activities linked to the Olympics around the time the torch passes through Barnard Castle on Wednesday 20th June. Nationally the Ramblers are bidding to take over the running of the Walking for Health project that has been running for several years, which provides for people between the GWKW level and many of the usual group walks.

Footpath Surveys

Durham County Council is still working on some of the path reports submitted to them last summer, but improvements in Boldron parish have already been carried out, and 10 successes for paths opened up have been recorded at Central Office. If anyone would like to attend a path survey day to find out how we go about assessing problems and reporting them, please get in touch. Days are arranged to suit those wanting to attend. Contact me on 01833-637756 or jobird9@tiscali.co.uk for more information.

Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership

The official launch took place in the autumn and work is shortly to start on improving the paths in Flatts Wood. This will include attending to areas where drainage is poor, and levelling the section of path leading off from the main path towards the golf course, which currently has a slippery and rather steep sideways slope.

The Bowes Museum.

You may notice in the Walk Programme that we have a number of walk starting from and in conjunction with The Bowes Museum. The Museum really is "The Jewel in the Crown of Teesdale". With it's newly developed parkland and one of the most important collections of decorative arts in the North of England. Lockers are provided free of charge, so if you're going on one of walks from Barnard Castle why not deposit your muddy kit while you explore inside the museum and have refreshments in the excellent Café Bowes (entry to museum is not required for the café or to walk in the grounds, see website for current exhibitions and admission rates www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk)

Coastal Access

The public consultation on proposals for the stretch of coastal access in Co Durham is expected around April this year. Once approved and enacted, we will have the benefit of not just a path but spreading room to either side, and in the event of any erosion the path will be able to be moved inland without being subject to any consultations or legal processes. Find out more at

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourworking/enjoying/places/coastalaccess/durham/default.aspx.

Windy Bank Wind Farm

There were over 240 objections to the proposal for five enormous turbines near Hamsterley Forest, including ours. Officers at Durham County Council have reported that surveys for bats and birds are inadequate, and should be carried out in early summer. Without this the proposal is likely to be turned down.

Proposed Tees Bridge

A public consultation was held in the autumn when it was revealed that a steel suspension bridge, rather than a steel rope bridge, is now being considered above the site of the viaduct. There have been a number of criticisms, including parking issues and wildlife disturbance, and it is likely a planning application will be submitted in late summer. The intention is to attract 'discoverer' tourists, rather than 'traditional' tourists.

Forestry and Planning

The government is still to decide on its plans for Forestry, and is expected to make an announcement later this year. Likewise it is considering changes to planning law, and mentions 'sustainability' in instances where it is impossible to know exactly what this means in the contexts given, but could mean damage to the environment that the public would have no chance of preventing.

Barnard Castle Ramblers Website

Barnard Castle Rambler Website at barnardcastleramblers.org.uk has had a revamp by Maggie in order to tidy it up and make it easier to use and maintain or as they say in America:- "*An enhanced user experience*" ugh! .There is still more to come! Members who do not have internet access may use their local library to access the internet and get the latest information on the walk programme, view photos and reports from previous walks and browse the comprehensive collection of routes for somewhere to go for a bit of fresh air.

Survival Blankets.

The Committee has discussed this subject and is in agreement that they are an important item of equipment for all who venture onto the hills and moors.

There is always a possibility that someone may have a fall or become ill, and as a consequence be unable to continue walking. It is essential that a casualty be kept warm and dry. In cold or wet conditions this may well be difficult. Whilst Goretex is effective in two ways, namely, keeping out the wet and the wind, it does not prevent loss of body heat. The modern day Survival Blanket copes with all three problems.

Survival Blankets, sometimes known as Space Blankets, are widely used for emergencies nowadays. This is a material originally developed for the Apollo space program, and this is a spin off from it. It is a metallised (aluminised) polymer sheet which is wind and rain proof. The reflective nature of the sheet sends up to 80% of dissipated body heat back instead of letting it escape. They will protect a casualty and help to keep hypothermia at bay for some time. Just for how long depends on the casualty's

resistance to cold, and of course, the weather. They have been of immense help over the years, and have saved many lives.

The size is around 4"x 4"x 1" (10cm x 10cm x 2.5cm). They weigh 2 or 3oz (60g to 90g). When opened up they are about 55"x 83" (140cm x 210cm).

One such blanket is the Lifesystems Thermal Blanket which retails at less than £5. It is the survival blanket which is recommended for The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. It is radar reflective. It is widely available.

The latest development is the Refexcell blanket which is far more effective than the standard type. It was originally developed for military use, and is used by British and US special forces, and is in the survival kits for RAF pilots. It is now very widely used in the civilian Search & Rescue field. RAF mountain rescue, and other professional rescue bodies use this new material.

This type uses 3 sheets of reflective plastic which are joined together to give a series of tubes (a sort of 'honeycomb' effect). All the tubes become filled with air, which acts as an insulator. The simplest description is, it is like double or triple glazing. Refexcell has been laboratory tested and gives a warmth factor of Tog 8. Roughly equal to a mid range bedroom duvet.

The Lifesystem Blizzard Blanket is available for £17 - £20. The size of the pack is 8"x 4.5"x 1.5" (20cm x 11cm x 4cm). The weight is 11oz (320gm). When opened the size is around 75"x 95" (190cm x 240cm).

Whilst the extra cost might well be a deterrent, for those who feel the cold badly it would be a good investment. Available on the Internet.

The blankets are radar reflective, which helps helicopters to locate casualties in bad weather.

The Walks Programme

For various reasons the pool of Leaders volunteering to lead walks seems to be diminishing. In an effort to improve the situation and prevent any further deterioration we aim to provide assistance to anyone who wishes to gain the experience of developing and hopefully leading walks.

1. Members may suggest and discuss a Walk with the Programme Coordinator (Richard email:BCRamblers@gmail.com tel:01833 660780)
2. The Coordinator will review the route and try to arrange someone to accompany the person on a 'reccy' of the walk if required.
3. The walk will be placed on the Walk Programme to be lead jointly by an experienced leader and the person whose walk it is.
4. If anybody is unable to think of a walk but would still like to lead, assistance can be given by allowing them to jointly develop and lead a walk which has already been scheduled.

There is also a wealth of information on Leading Walks on the RA Website. Please contact the Programme Coordinator if you do not have internet access and they will arrange for it to be sent to you.

OS Maps

If you are interested in maps: visit www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/getamap

You can view and print large scale maps (small fee or subscription for A4 printing) of the UK. It is possible to create and store routes with their distance and altitude or use it just to look up a grid reference on the walk programme. Durham County Council have a free GIS Digital Mapping System at gis.durham.gov.uk/website/interMAP/viewer.htm
Print outs have a watermark but are still impressive.

Contributions: Jo Bird, John Bird, Richard Hughes, Joan Martin, Walter Balderson

Forthcoming Events

NY/SD Area AGM

Access and Walking Environment Officer The South Durham/North Yorkshire Area Annual AGM is to take place at 2 pm on Saturday 24 March 2012 at DAWSON STREET METHODIST CHURCH, CROOK.

The arrangements for the walk before the meeting have been amended. It will start from the hall at **11 a.m.** and will be about 4 to 5 miles long arranged by Crook and Weardale Ramblers. The hall will be available from **12.30 p.m.** Parking is available in the nearby Market Place and in Dawson Street. There are plenty of refreshment dispensers nearby. Central Office have been asked to supply a speaker.

Group visit to Dalegarth, Buttermere.

The Spring trip to Dalegarth at the heart of the English Lakes is scheduled for Monday 23rd April – Friday 27th April. Places are still available. Booking via Maureen Tel:01833 637601. further info on Web Site when available.

Coach Trip to Malham

On Saturday 16th June a coach trip to Malham in the Yorkshire Dales is planned.

The coach will leave Barnard Castle 8:15 am arriving at Malham 10:30

Two panoramic walks::

A-Walk - Malham Cove – Settle 8 miles moderate, leaders: Joan and Ian

B-Walk - Malham – Goredale Scar – Malham Tarn – Settle. 12 miles hard. leader: Richard Non Walkers will have time for leisurely walk round Malham and be able to view one of the most spectacular natural rock formations in England (Malham Cove) before bus returns to Settle (at driver's discretion). B-Walk may change depending on the weather. 2 Hours in Settle before return to Barnard Castle ETA 8:30pm.

Booking via Maureen Tel:01833 637601 (£5 deposit required further info on Web Site when available):

Barnard Castle Ramblers Committee Members

(also see Notes for Walkers for telephone nos. and email addresses)

Chairman	Ian Martin
Deputy Chairman	Jo Bird
RA Secretary	Pauline Fawcett
Membership Secretary	Joan Martin
Treasurer	Judith Baker
Minutes Secretary	Frances Walker
Programme/Newsletter Coordinator	Richard Hughes
Deputy Programme Coordinator	Donna Harris
Programme/Newsletter Distribution	Richard Hughes (Donna Harris) – email Maureen Raw - post
Website Manager	Maggie Donnelly
Deputy Website Manager	Lynda Bares
Posters	Jo Bird
Footpaths Secretary	John Bird
Deputy Footpaths Secretaries	Tom Vlaming, Richard Hughes
Local Access / Countryside	Jo Bird
Area Representatives	John Bird, Frances Walker
Committee members	Walter Balderson, Lis Vlaming

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Take a look at our website www.barnardcastleramblers.org.uk for updates and photographs of walks over the years