

Summer 2014

A message from our Chairman, John Bird

Walks Leaders

Now that the weather is improving and summer is on the way it is additionally encouraging to see that the group, despite some difficulty, is managing to put on a walk a week and sometimes more.

For a variety of reasons some of our leaders are not in a position to lead walks at the moment and it would be advantageous if some other members would come forward to offer to lead on occasion. If you have not done this before it is reasonably straightforward; guidance will be given by established leaders, the Ramblers website has a section on walks leading which will help*, and you do not have to start with a summit bid for Blencathra !

Richard compiles the walks programme on a quarterly basis so there is plenty of time to select and "recce" a route before you need to commit yourself to a particular date.

If you would like to "have a go" please get in touch if you would like to talk things over or have a chat with one of the group's leaders next time you are out.

* <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/volunteer-toolkits/walk-leader-good-practice.aspx>

Annual BBQ - John Bird

Nearly upon us, just to remind everyone that we do need to know numbers for catering so please tell us by Thursday July 10th evening. We had a record 28 last year and we need to ensure we have enough sausages for all! Details in the programme.

The list is open and names are already down!

Ticks and Tick-Borne Encephalitis – but don't panic

Pauline, our secretary, kindly sent a web link, (www.tickalert.org) about this risk in 27 countries where TBE is endemic. It shows how the disease is contracted, explains the serious symptoms that can arise and what to do to protect against TBE, which is a viral disease transmitted within minutes from the bite of an infected tick. Every year there are 10,000-12,000 cases reported. TBE attacks the nervous system and can lead to severe meningitis, encephalitis and even death.

For those not able to access the information, if you are travelling abroad, either ask for information from the tour organiser or speak to your doctor.

[Note from Jo, having conducted a bit of research: There has been concern for a few years about Lyme Disease in this country, also contracted through tick bites. Advice is to try to avoid places where ticks are known to be, or likely to be, such as bracken and places where there are deer, and to wear long trousers. If a tick does attach to a human or dog, they should be removed as soon as possible, and with care so as not to leave any part of the tick attached to the body, and to avoid the tick injecting its infected saliva. For that reason ordinary tweezers are not advised, nor is holding a lighted match close to it, nor covering it with oil to try to suffocate it, as it will inject more of its saliva into the body. Special tweezers with a bulge to accommodate the tick or a 'tick removal tool' which is a piece of plastic with a V-shape cut into it are available from pet shops, or from a vet, and can just as well be used on humans, and probably cost less than a cup of coffee.]

Coastal Access – Jo and Judith

The Durham Coast Path was officially opened on Saturday 12th April, and was celebrated on Tuesday 15th April by the Ramblers, both to mark the opening and to publicise the Ramblers' successful role in lobbying for the national path. The Durham section extends from North Gare to Sunderland, and is one of the earliest stretches to be designated as part of the National Coastal Path.

Six walks had been arranged to converge on the Seaham Hall Hotel where, according to Judith Baker our treasurer, who joined a walk through Seaham to Hawthorn Dene via Noses Point, a very good tea was served by friendly staff.

While there has been a coast path, the new coastal access offers not only an enhanced route, but in some cases a choice of routes, such as north from Seaham where there is a choice of the beach, seafront or cliff-top path, and in other places lots of spreading room for picnics, kite flying and suchlike as well as walking.

Kate Ashbrook, Ramblers President, joined one of the walks and cut a ribbon to mark the opening. She spoke of the natural beauty of the Durham coastline which had exceeded all her expectations - it was her first visit and she didn't expect it to be the last.

The MP for Easington spoke about the importance of walking to the local economy and keeping people healthy.

Judith says that representatives of all Durham groups and areas attended; the day was sunny and breezy; the magnesian limestone cliffs looked magnificent and the beaches, long despoiled by mining waste, looked very clean. Judith adds that very informative information boards have been put up along the path to help visitors understand the history of the area. Colleagues in North Yorks and South Durham and East Riding Areas are now considering options for the next stage southwards from North Gare to Filey Brigg. Much of this cliff-top section is very prone to erosion, and the advantage of the new access rights is that if the cliff crumbles away the path will automatically be realigned to a safe distance inland, without the need for any legal processes to take place, or the risk of loss of the path.

A message from the Membership Secretary - Joan

This is a message to all those members who still get their Programmes and Newsletters as a printed copy either by post or hand delivered. In these days of advanced technology, it is not necessary to have a computer to have access to emails or the internet. A lot of hand held gadgets and modern mobile phones give access to the internet. I would therefore ask anyone out there who now has an email facility, would they please go on to our email list. Once again I stress that they go out as a blind carbon copies so no-one except Richard and myself will have access to your email address. Having copies printed out and posted or hand delivered, costs the group time and money. So please think about it and email me at ijmar8@tiscali.co.uk I appreciate that there are still people who do not have email so they will continue to have a printed copy as in the past.

County Durham Big Spring Clean - Jo

Sadly, due to my not being well and unable to organise it, we did not take part this year.

A Message from the Website Manager - Maggie

For a rich resource of scrapbook pictures, walk reports and walk routes, as well as info on upcoming walks, go to <http://www.barnardcastleramblers.org.uk/> The scrapbooks go back over 10 years. There are also some jokes.

It would be appreciated if people could share photographs by sending them please, to bc.ramblers@yahoo.co.uk especially when I am not on the walk. Also a reminder to walk leaders – please cc. Maggie (same address) into reports sent to the Teesdale Mercury, so that they can also be posted on the website. Any feedback/suggestions regarding the website are appreciated.

A little snippet from Joan

I heard on the grapevine that some people think that Ian and I don't want people to visit us anymore. I am not sure where this came from, but it certainly isn't true. When you came back to our house in February, near to Ian's birthday, I did say that maybe it would be the last time I would be inviting people back to the house after a walk. Perhaps people are not aware of how much work goes into having a crowd of over 20 people back for tea and cakes. I spend the whole of the day before baking. We then have to re-arrange the furniture so that we can get as many seats in the room as possible. I find now that after an 8 mile walk, all I want to do is sag! I have loved doing it and Ian and I love people coming back. However, unfortunately age catches up with you eventually and, after I can't remember how many years, I think if we want to continue with this tradition, we will have to look at some of our younger members. (I see that John and Julie have taken on the challenge, so thanks in advance). Having said all this, if anyone is passing please call (we may be out of course)!

I also heard that people aren't interested in the scrap books any more. This is why I cancelled the meal at Newbiggin Village Hall. Fair enough, I have been called a dinosaur, but I don't mind. I love doing them and they are in fact a history of Barnard Castle Ramblers. It's funny that people will look at reports and photo's on the web site. I wonder what will take over from computers and ipads etc?

Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership - Jo

More path work has been done in the Partnership territory, including in Flatts Wood, and replacement of stiles with gates on the Teesdale Way between Barnard Castle and Whorlton. Footpaths Secretary, Allan Rayner, has been involved as one of the many volunteers. He has helped replace steps in Flatts Wood on the path that runs from the main path up to the end of Raby Avenue, and has helped to restore the natural environment by removal of invasive species: Himalayan balsam (not a tree, as the Mercury reports, but a flowering plant about 3 – 4ft high!) from Cotherstone Hagg and The Bandstand (an open area adjacent to where Percy Beck flows into the Tees, where the town band once stood to perform); and rhododendron from the woodland where the Teesdale Way runs past the Fairy Cupboards just upstream from Woden Croft between Cotherstone and Romaldekirk. (The Woodland Trust says of rhododendron "removal is vital as they emit toxins which poison the soil to other plants and they act as a haven for some damaging tree diseases". More of this work is planned, which should enhance the countryside for walkers.

The Partnership is involved with a huge range of projects numbering 75 in total, some of them complete, and others ongoing until March 2016

Allan has also been involved with checking routes of 12 walks and the production of new leaflets, which are revisions of leaflets formerly available from the old TIC. The revised walks will all start from the Witham Hall. Some new walking routes with leaflets are currently being planned by Heart of Teesdale. For information about other projects, many of which are relevant to access and the countryside, go to heartofteesdale@durham.gov.uk

Planning Application for Housing at Green Lane, Barnard Castle

The committee accepted the recommendation to object to this application for 64 new houses, on the grounds that the proposal is on current green belt land in a location with a very rural feel. The meadows are crossed by two public paths and while these would be maintained roughly on their current lines, they would become more like pavements than country paths, and would be detrimental to the enjoyment of walkers. There have been many objections from the public on matters other than 'countryside' and 'rights of way' matters, and a decision on the application is awaited. If approved, any changes to the line of the public paths will be considered by our Footpaths Secretary and the committee, and comments submitted as appropriate.

North Yorks & South Durham Area AGM

David Leyhson, who has been secretary of the Area for some years, agreed at the AGM hosted by our group in March, to continue for one more year, after which he has stated he will stand down. This means that the Area needs to find someone to replace him in the role which now consists mainly of circulating electronic papers, from Central Office to officers in the groups, and group meeting minutes to the other groups, and occasionally items from a group officer for circulation to the other groups. He has also serviced the AGM. We hope he will continue to serve as Area Treasurer.

North Pennines Walking Festival: Great walking country ... Great food

This year's walking festival runs from Saturday 27th September to Sunday 5th October. It will celebrate the best local produce the hills and dales have to offer, with a packed programme of walks and evening events right across the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Whether it's a long hike or a short family ramble, the second North Pennines Walking Festival promises something for everyone.

The programme is currently being finalised. To receive a copy of the programme and booking form please email fotnp@hotmail.co.uk or phone Diana Denbury on 07816 123841.

Thank you to all who have sent contributions for this newsletter. Contributions for the next issue will be welcomed at any time before the end of September please, to jobird9@tiscali.co.uk