

Autumn 2014

Chairman, John Bird writes:

Our AGM this year will be held at the United Reformed Church, Queen Street, Barnard Castle at 2pm on Saturday November 8th. Any nominations for officers or committee members should please be sent to the secretary, Pauline Fawcett, bcramblers@gmail.com or 07794 810893. In particular we shall be looking for a new Membership Secretary to replace Joan, who is standing down after holding this post for many years. Joan would be more than happy for anyone interested in taking on this role to contact her to find out what it involves.

There will be a presentation by John Musham, Invasive Non-Native Species Coordinator for the Tees River Trust and the meeting will conclude with tea and cakes and the chance for informal chat. We look forward to seeing you there.

There will be a morning walk of 5.5 miles prior to the AGM starting at 10.00 from the Health Centre, full details in the programme or on the website. The walk will finish in good time for lunch in the hall, which will be open from 12 noon onwards.

As a group we are indeed fortunate that we do have a number of leaders who provide a wide range of walks for the group. As you know we walk at least once per week. Ian and Joan have put on a few mid week walks this year and Jenny and Gordon have led various "Short Walks For Busy People". No doubt we can build on this sound base for the future. Based here in reasonably sunny Teesdale we are surrounded by National Parks, the AONB - and the bits in between are not too bad - so there is plenty of scope for walks of all grades. As mentioned previously new leaders are most welcome however, although not wishing to lead yourself, you may have some ideas for a route that you would like to do. If so please let us know, all suggestions are welcome, although (having done it 14 times) Wild Boar Fell may not feature on my "to do" list for a few months.

We are also fortunate in the provision of other activities, slide shows are a regular feature and again if you have any ideas please do get in touch. For example there are various shows, walking / mountaineering/ outdoor weekend events that could feature on the programme but we do need to have some indication if these would be attractive to group members.

A very early date for the 2015 diary is Saturday July 4th for the annual Barbeque at Cotherstone. Details will be on the programme in due course.

More Forthcoming Events

Christmas lunch on Saturday, December 6th 2014 at the Red Well Inn in Barnard Castle - Joan M

The meal will be at 1pm after a short morning walk (details in the programme).

Members can just come along for the meal if they wish. **The cost of the 2 course meal is £15 per person. This is followed by tea/coffee and mints which I have negotiated as a free addition.** Please note:- The normal Sunday lunch at the Red Well is £15 for 2 courses and their special Christmas menu for 2 courses is £16.90, so we have got a "good deal".

The menu choices are as follows:

Main course:

Turkey with all the trimmings; Roast Beef or Roast Pork. These will all be served with seasonal vegetables. (If not many people choose Pork, they may have to have Turkey or Beef).

Sweets:

Christmas Pudding with Brandy Cream; Chocolate Tart with Praline Cream or Rum and Raisin Crème Brulee with Brandy Snaps.

This of course is to be followed by our free Tea/Coffee and Mints.

Please can I have names and your choice of menu before Saturday November 29th.

Any special requests should be asked for at time of booking as they cannot be guaranteed if requested on the day. (I have already had one or two names, but can you let me have your choice of meal again in case you have changed your mind, now we have the full choice of sweets). Please ring 01833-637825 or email ijmar8@tiscali.co.uk .

Festival of Winter Walks

This takes place from Saturday 20th December to Sunday 4th January. While our group has walks during this period, it does not have walks specifically designated as part of the festival, but there may be other groups who will have walks in or near our territory. Also anyone going away for the Christmas and New Year period may wish to find a Ramblers group offering walks as part of the Festival. Members with access to it can find group walks on the Ramblers website www.ramblers.org.uk and click on Go Walking. Anyone, whether going away or staying at home who would like to walk a tried and tested route independently, can find a selection via www.ramblersroutes.org .

North Yorks & South Durham Area Secretary - Jo

David Leyshon, who has been Area Secretary for some years, advised at this year's Area AGM in March that he would be standing down at the 2015 AGM. It is important that a replacement is found for David as Area Secretary. (He has also been Area Treasurer for some time but will be standing for that role again.) The role of Area Secretary is predominantly administrative, since Area Council does its business via email, and the only occasion when minutes are taken is at the AGM. While information on the role can be found on the Ramblers' website, a more accurate description of it as carried out in our Area, is best obtained from David. Contact him on 01642-553796 or email david.leyshon1@ntlworld.com . The post holder does not need to have served on a Ramblers' committee before. The main requirement is an interest in the task and ensuring communication with groups.

Dalegarth in April - Judith

Our next visit to Dalegarth on the shores of Buttermere, Lake District, is provisionally booked for 20th to 24th April 2015. Please contact me (tel 01642 700062 or email j.baker574@btinternet.com) if you wish to go.

We always enjoy good walking and companionship in comfortable but reasonably priced accommodation.

James has been in touch to say that he's in the middle of re-negotiating his lease and will let me know promptly if any problems crop up.

Slide Shows - Judith

I'm starting to plan the slideshows for next year and would like to see more group members giving them. I know that many members go to interesting places, and support from those who have previously given slideshows is available.

Please contact me - don't waste those travel pics!

Barnard Castle Group 50th Anniversary – 2016 and the Teesdale Way - Joan M

May 2016 possibly seems a long way off, but time just seems to fly by. **May 16th 2016 is a significant date because it is the 50th anniversary of the formation of Barnard Castle Ramblers.** Because of this I hope to organise something "special" for the group with your help of course!!

2014 is the 10th anniversary of the opening of the "Teesdale Way". It was agreed that to celebrate this milestone the group would do the whole route in stages throughout 2014. Somehow this just never happened, but having talked to Jenny, we think it would be a worthwhile project to celebrate the Group's Golden Jubilee. The various sections will be worked out and hopefully we will have enough leaders to do all the sections in sequence, possibly one section per month. I am hoping that the section from Middleton to Barnard Castle could be done in the May, ending with a meal in Barnard Castle. This can all be organised in the coming months. I just wanted to draw your attention to this date and hopefully you will avoid booking holidays around that time.

Adder survey – Joan M

Durham Wildlife Trust have asked for our help in a survey they are doing of the Adder population in County Durham. The idea is to identify where they are overwintering. The data will be of use as the trust works with landowners and land managers to protect and enhance the adder population of Durham. The Trust does not particularly want people just to go out looking for adders. The idea is to just be more aware as you walk along. It seems that on a sunny day, adders will start to come out of hibernation from **January through to April**. Therefore this is the timescale they are looking at. They suggest that possible places to look would be south facing rocks, piles of boulders or wood, also around the base of trees or the edge of a wood. (In other words anywhere that is South facing). What to do. Make a note of where you saw the adder with a grid reference if possible, then report the sighting to Anne Porter at Durham Wildlife Trust. Phone her on 01388-5843112 or email aporter@durhamwt.co.uk. You could also write to her at Anne Porter, Project Officer, Heart of Durham Project, Low Barns, DL14 0AG. If you require any more information you can always contact her direct.

Short Walks for Busy People - Jenny

When we moved to this area, we noticed that the Barnard Castle Ramblers programme was primarily focussed on longer Saturday walks. While this is excellent, it has the disadvantage of appealing only to a narrow range of members. Since then, Joan and Ian have greatly extended the frequency of their shorter Wednesday walks, with considerable success. There is obviously a demand out there. We decided to see if there was interest in very much shorter and more gentle walks. Initially we tried these on a Tuesday morning but we quickly found that Barney is well served with other mid-week morning groups so there is less reason for Ramblers to try to duplicate services, even if it did extend our membership.

A chance conversation with a neighbour gave us the idea of running 3-4 mile walks on a Sunday afternoon. These were aimed for people who were perhaps still working, so not available during the week; people who would like to walk but had no time or lacked the expertise to sort out a route. We called them Short Walks for Busy People and we intended that they should be "proper walks", not just a stroll round a few streets and paths. They should get people out into our lovely countryside and shouldn't be shy of including the odd hill where relevant. A key feature was to be that the pace should be comfortable and unrushed - all participants should feel comfortable. They would be ideal for people who did not walk regularly but would quite like to walk more and who might be considering joining the Ramblers.

We have put on a walk pretty much every month for the last 15 months, unless we have been out of the country. Our experience has been that there is interest out there. We have been as many as 9 and we have been as few as 2 - the latter on the occasion when we set the venue out at Hanging Shaws and that was clearly a bit too far for an afternoon stroll! However, interest has not been consistent. We haven't had a group of repeat walkers. This could be a case of once bitten, twice shy but that seems unlikely as folks have been enthusiastic. We suspect a large part of the problem is the lack of frequency. Once a month just isn't regular enough to pull in the punters. And, so far, we haven't had any interest in anyone else leading these jaunts. There are lots of 3 or 4 mile circuits in the area. So far we haven't repeated any of them! Gordon and I would be happy to suggest routes if anyone else feels they could help. We feel Ramblers shouldn't just be a group of Fell Yompers but we should be able to offer a wide range of walks to suit all abilities.

A thank you message from Joan Wakefield - Joan M

A few members of the group met Joan on Saturday September 27th. She went over to Joan and Mike's for tea and cake after the others had finished the walk. Joan would like to thank everyone who has sent her one of the many beautiful cards and letters, also those who made a donation in memory of Tony. This was donated to the Great North Air Ambulance. Joan did tell me how much the total was and as I didn't write it down I have forgotten (sorry Joan). However, I do know it was over £700 which is a fantastic amount. The drama group Tony was involved with at Hutton Rudby have recently had a production for a few evenings. One of the performances was dedicated to Tony with all profits to be given to charity in memory of him. Joan chose the local Search and Rescue team.

Footpaths and Access News - Jo

Flatts Wood. Many members will already have appreciated the improvements to the paths in Barnard Castle's Flatts Wood. All the paths, except for a short one from the main path leading up to Raby Avenue, are now designated as public rights of way, which will ensure their maintenance by Durham County Council and availability to the public for all time. Thanks to the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership for achieving this. The Partnership has continued its work in removal of invasive vegetation, and Footpaths Secretary Allan Rayner has continued in helping with this voluntary task. For more information about the work of the Partnership, go to heartofteesdale@durham.gov.uk

The planning application for housing at Green Lane, Barnard Castle was approved and it is proposed that the paths crossing the meadow site will lose their public rights of way status and become 'adopted highways', in effect pavements. While more or less following their current line, the character of the paths will, sadly, be greatly changed.

The planning application for four 125m wind turbines at Windy Bank, Woodland, to which we and many others had objected, has still to be determined.

A new deal for the Pennine Way

Simon Wilson, Project Development Officer for the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership, has kindly contributed this piece on National Trails, and the Pennine Way. (simon@northpenninesaonb.org.uk 01388-0528801).

The Pennine Way is arguably the most widely known long distance path in the nation. Opened in 1965, the route was the first of the 15 that now make up the National Trails of England and Wales. As we fast approach the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Pennine Way next year, changes are afoot in how all of the National Trails will be managed into the future.

Natural England, who are tasked by the nation to be the steward of **National Trails**, have recently reviewed the operational arrangements for all aspects of management of the network. That review has resulted in both challenging and exciting changes in how we look after, promote and take forward the National Trails. Building on best practice and going further, good progress is now being made towards all the trails being managed through individual partnerships. These partnerships are made up of Natural England and the authorities that have traditionally managed the physical upkeep of the routes, alongside other organisations with an operational interest. Each partnership has a lead organisation that facilitates the administration of investment in the trails and serves as a host. Perhaps the greatest change in the new arrangements is a consideration for community and economic aspects of National Trail management. Alongside these operational changes is the welcome development of a new interactive website, nationaltrail.co.uk, delivered through a unique partnership between Natural England and Walk Unlimited.

The Pennine Way and Pennine Bridleway National Trails are now managed by a single partnership led by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. Despite the obvious geographic challenges, the new partnership is working well towards full operation next financial year and early meetings have been very positive in establishing good working relationships and identifying a clear vision for the trails. Both Durham County Council and the North Pennines AONB Partnership are members of the group and it is likely that the existing North Pennines Access and Recreation Working Group will have a role in developing local management arrangements and engagement for the Pennine Way north from Tan Hill.

This new deal is not without its challenges - especially financial, but the partnerships that have been created represent a positive move in seeking to take our iconic and treasured national trails forward to fulfil their promise of providing unrivalled access for the next generations to our finest landscapes.

North Pennines Walking Festival - Jo

This year's festival is now drawing to a close, and next year's will have as its theme, (no surprise!), the Pennine Way. There should be plenty of opportunities for linear walks.

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 January please, to jobird9@tiscali.co.uk

www.barnardcastleramblers.org.uk