

Observations from the Chair

I want to start the introduction to this Newsletter with praise for our Emergency Services. They are often criticised for failings and not often given credit for the jobs they do daily. I write in particular of Police Scotland and HM Coastguard.

On my recent TGO (The Great Outdoors) crossing of Scotland I was witness to a medical emergency conducted in a most professional way by both Police Scotland and the Coastguard. A party of 3 Americans were participating in the TGO Challenge. They happened to be in their mid-sixties on their first crossing – all well experience distance walkers but unfortunately experienced a health problem that could not have been anticipated. One of them fell seriously ill in remote mountainous country west of Aviemore.

A Dutch challenger with some medical knowledge suspected that the patient was suffering from pneumonia and needed emergency help, so he and another challenger rushed ahead until they could transmit an emergency call. Police Scotland received the call and with the information given decided to call out the Coastguard. As I arrived at the bothy a red and white helicopter appeared, circled and landed. One of the party said that she had expected a van to come along the very rough track to pick up the patient! After half an hour the helicopter took off and flew the patient with his wife to Inverness hospital. I later learned that the patient did indeed have pneumonia at “2 levels under Severe.” He was released later that night bunged full of antibiotics!

Police Scotland worked out where the bothy was and took the decision to call the Coastguard out. They also informed Challenge Control of what was going on, told them they had called the Coastguard and then reported to Challenge Control every move, such as the helicopter leaving Lossiemouth, landing at the bothy, waiting and then flying to Inverness. Thank you to the emergency services who answer similar calls every day of the year.

As you will gather I was very impressed – the efficiency, the camaraderie and support of TGO challengers. On the TGO you can feel relatively safe in the remote hills of Scotland.

It brings me to my next point – our own walking safety. You will see further in this newsletter that there is a “Recommended Personal Kit List”. As you may be aware, your committee at its last meeting decided that all walk leaders and potential ones should attend an up-to-date walk leaders’ course. This was led by Adam from the Kingsway Adventure Centre and was very good and thought provoking. As a result the recommended kit list is compiled from various sources. Ramblers do say that each walker is responsible for their own safety and so this is a “recommended” list. It is comprehensive for all seasons and so obviously some items do not need to be carried all year round. However please do bear in mind that the area we live in has potentially some of the severest weather in the country and I include Scotland in that.

We have included suggestions for a basic 1st Aid kit. And I can testify to the need for lots of tape and lint on my TGO crossing this year!

At the last committee meeting it was decided to ask Caroline and June if they would be willing to join the committee. We are delighted to welcome them to the committee and look forward to their contributions.

As you know we would welcome new walk leaders – from what I hear there are one or two budding ones. Please watch the walks programme and let’s enjoy this summer. You might also look at the Ramblers website for information on courses for 1st Aid training and, if you are interested, Walk Leadership training. Have a good summer whatever you may be doing.

Some RA Information from the Secretary

1st Aid Training

The RA website has been updated with advice from St John Ambulance. Training sessions will be available in a variety of locations from July. The sessions are free due to support from the Post Code Lottery. Individuals interested in taking part should check out the RA website where details will be available from the middle of June.

Ramblers App

If you've received your copy of 'Walk' magazine you will have information about the Ramblers App and how to download it. Using it will enable you to find group walks in England, Scotland and Wales, read campaign updates, the latest clothes/gear offers. On a personal level I've downloaded the app but can't seem to log in yet – help is available at membership@ramblers.zendesk.com

Walk Leadership Training

A new programme of Walk Leadership Training is due to begin in October. Details of where, when and how to book will be available in the August newsletter. Some members of our group have attended these training sessions in the past and found them very worthwhile.

Amazon

AmazonSmile, a website operated by Amazon has the same products/prices as Amazon.com but if you shop on this website 0.5% of the purchase price (on eligible products) will be donated to a charity of your choice.

Pauline (Secretary)

Durham Road Weather Cameras

Getting ready for a walk up the dale? Sun shining in Darlington or Barney? Not sure what to wear? Wish you could SEE what the weather's like in Stanhope or at Langdon Beck? Well, you can.

Durham County Council has Road Weather Station Cameras in Upper Teesdale, Upper Weardale and near Tow Law, which are updated every ten minutes. They tell you the air temperature, the road temperature (very important in winter), the wind direction and wind speed, but above all you can SEE if there's snow or a white frost or the road's wet.

Google : durham.gov.uk/weathercameras There are nine locations across County Durham with a map of their locations. The most useful for our walks in the North Pennines are the following:

B6277 Forest in Teesdale - the camera is located just before Hanging Shaw, looking east.

A689 Lanehead – in upper Weardale 8 miles from Alston, looking west.

A68 Tow Law - 2 miles north of Tow Law, looking north.

Dates for your diary

Saturday 9th November – Barnard Castle Ramblers Group AGM at Romalldkirk

Saturday 7th December – Christmas Lunch

Looking forward to seeing you all at our summer walks and events.

Recommended Personal Kit List

Clothing

Comfortable pair of boots/ shoes
Comfortable walking socks (wool or woollen mix)
Quick dry trousers (preferably windproof) (not jeans or heavy cotton)
Quick dry shirt or blouse
Rainproof jacket
Waterproof trousers
Extra body layers: either more base layers or fleece (up to 3 base layers may be required)
Down jacket is useful in extreme cold
Gloves; pair for most cool conditions, liner pair and insulated layer and waterproof pair
Hat: sun hat and woollen or fleece hat, possibly also waterproof hat

Other items

Map with waterproof case
Compass
Whistle
Torch or Head torch with extra batteries
ICE card
Mobile phone (fully charged)
Watch
Pencil and/or waterproof writing pen and paper.
Emergency bivi bag
Extra boot laces
Waterproof bags to keep your kit dry

Sufficient food for the day and extra items:

Useful slow release carbs: banana and energy bars with oats in.
Drinks: cold/warm weather drinks. Salt (Packet of Crisps) in case of cramp.
Extra water (in very warm weather may need up to 4 litres, normally 2 litres sufficient)

Desirable items

Extra pair of socks
GPS
Penknife
Duck tape (Tenacious Tape is much better)
Sun block in hot weather

Basic First Aid Kit:

Triangular bandage or cloth carpet tape
Wound dressing (medium or large) – for stopping bleeding.
Crepe bandage – for holding on dressings (bleeding), support and/or immobilisation of fractures, strains and sprains.
A roll of general purpose medical tape.
A selection of sticky plasters – a long strip which can be cut to suit is good
Aspirin, Paracetamol and Ibuprofen (for own use only)
Sharp scissors – useful for trimming bandages and cutting away clothing.
A supply of various sized safety pins.
A pair of rubber or plastic gloves – must be used every time you deal with loss of body fluids. (Note: Some people have a Latex allergy. ASK first!)
Compeed/blister pads/micropore. Tape with lanolin.
Sanitising wipes
Ankle or knee support for sprain injuries.
