

### **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary awards**

We have already thanked those who nominated us for this award. We knew nothing about the nomination and were totally surprised and delighted when we got a letter just before Christmas to say we had won the "Media" award. There was then frenzied activity trying to locate photos and answer various questions for the article in the Spring edition of the walks magazine just before we went on holiday. We were thrilled to be invited as guests of the RA to Keble College in Oxford for the award ceremony. This took place after dinner on Saturday April 16<sup>th</sup> at RA National Council Meeting. We were astonished to find as honoured guests we were sitting at the "top table" along with the other award winners. The meal was in the huge panelled dining hall, the like of which we have only seen on films or TV plays. It was quite awe inspiring to be looking out at about 200 people. We were presented with a certificate signed by Julia Bradbury. It had been hoped that she would be able to do the presentations but sadly her TV commitments meant she couldn't attend. This would have been the icing on the cake. Still we had a fantastic time, so thanks again to all those involved. Incidentally, Ed Wilson who organised the whole affair came and spoke to us after the awards. He said that from the submissions sent in (we were nominated for each category, but could only win one), it was clear that we were very highly thought of by the group. So once again thank you all very much. (Joan and Ian)

### **Coach trip August 7<sup>th</sup>**

Everyone who has booked so far has been given details on what to wear etc. The walk starts at 11.15 so we will get to Arnside in plenty of time to have some Brunch and go to the loo. The walk will take about 3 hours so you need some food before we set off. Try not to drink too much as there is no chance of a comfort stop until we get to Grange-over-Sands. Having said this, take a bottle of water with you on the walk, especially if it's expected to be a hot day. You could always pop a biscuit in your pocket. The coach will pick us up at Kents Bank and take us straight to Grange-over-Sands. Here there will be time to stroll in the park or go to the shops. We hope to organise a short walk up to the Hospice on Hampsfell for the more energetic. Boots or walking shoes are required for this. Don't forget to bring a change of clothes as you will probably get wet. These can be left in the coach while we do the walk. The meal is booked at Butterfingers in Grange-over-Sands for 5.30. I must know everyone's choice of meal with £6 deposit before July 31<sup>st</sup>. If there is anything else you wish to ask, just ring Joan on 01833 637825.

### **Slide shows**

There will be the usual programme of four slide shows this year featuring:

- Wednesday 3 August – 'Kintyre, Arran and Bute - Three Scottish Walks' (Frances)
- Wednesday 7 September – 'Our Adventure in Nepal' (Joan and Ian)

Full details are in the programme and everyone, whether a member or not, is welcome. Proceeds go to Group funds. It's great to see a wider group of members giving shows.

**If you would like to give a show in the future yourself, please speak to me (Judith) when we're out walking.**

### **Xmas lunch and AGM**

Because we had to cancel the Xmas lunch last year due to bad weather, and the fact that winter seems to be starting earlier each year, it has been decided to change the date to November 19<sup>th</sup>. Instead of it being called a Xmas lunch it will be called **The Group Annual Lunch**. There will be the normal morning walk with lunch about 1pm. We will finish off the afternoon with the AGM over a relaxing coffee. More details of venue and price will be in the next programme and newsletter.

### **First Aid Training**

After many hours of debate, the committee has decided it would like as many of our leaders, and maybe some regular walkers, to have some basic first aid training. The group is hoping to arrange a course with the Red Cross. It is hoped that this would take place on their premises in Darlington. (Max number on the course would be 12). The course lasts approximately 2.5 hours. It has been decided that the group will fund most of the cost, but participants would be asked to pay £5 each. **Before we book anything, we need to know we have enough people interested. We must know this by June 30<sup>th</sup>.** Also, we need to know whether morning, afternoon or evening would be most suitable for everyone. Please let Pauline know by email [pvfawcett@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:pvfawcett@tiscali.co.uk) or by phone 01833 638020 for those who don't have a computer.

### **Forthcoming events**

- **BBQ** for Group members - Saturday July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2011 in Cotherstone (John and Linda).
- Keep a note in your diary for **Joan and Ian's Golden Wedding** walk on Saturday October 15<sup>th</sup>.

## 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: [jjmar8@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jjmar8@tiscali.co.uk).

## ACCESS AND WALKING ENVIRONMENT:

### Open access

With the proposed review of access land not taking place because of cuts to Natural England's budget, there is nothing new to report, but to find out about where you can go this summer see [www.naturalengland.org.uk/openaccess](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/openaccess) and follow the links. The draft proposals for **coastal access** and the 12-week web consultation should be available shortly. Ramblers' volunteers from NYSD and Northumbria Area have been working to ensure that assessments and proposals are consistent with other stretches of coast involved in the pilot scheme.

### Footpath surveys

Several people took part in the surveys of Boldron's paths, which included extensions beyond the parish boundary to ensure the condition of paths throughout their full length. These proved to be most enjoyable and worthwhile, and four people now feel confident to survey on their own, but are hoping for a further day to consolidate their learning. We also covered a circuit of paths in Egglestone Abbey parish. We would welcome others to join us: the days are arranged to suit those taking part, and are on an informal basis. Please contact Jo Bird on 01833-637756 or [jobird9@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jobird9@tiscali.co.uk) if you want to find out more or give it a try.

### Forestry Commission sales

While it is good news that the sales have been halted, it is worrying that staff are still being made redundant. We need to ensure the best outcome of the review that is currently taking place, with Ramblers' CEO Tom Franklin on the review panel. He is the only representative for access, including cyclists and riders as well as walkers, and the review will cover access to all woodland, not just FC land. Everyone can help by letting the panel know why they value woodland walking, whether or not in FC woods. Go to [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk) click on Campaigns and Policy, then on Take action, then on the woodlands link at the top of the list. Every contribution will help.

### Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership

Our suggestion for a footbridge over the Wilden Beck at Cotherstone has been included in the theme of enhancing the Teesdale Way as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage bid for Heritage Lottery Funding now being submitted. There has also been a suggestion that good replacement stepping stones should be considered, among a great many proposals from the community to improve the physical environment and appreciation of it. The outcome will be known in the autumn and work is expected to start on the projects in November. There is flexibility within the projects with potential for involvement to increase the local sense of pride and ownership of the landscape.

### Get Walking Keep Walking is doing just that!

Walks have been set up in Barnard Castle and Middleton in Teesdale, with more at West Auckland, Bishop Auckland, Wolsingham and Crook. These easy walks are helping people new to walking to discover places to walk close to where they live, and to meet new people to walk with. Being a Route Developer to devise short walks had benefits for me as I learnt new things about the locality that I wanted to share with others. I have also enjoyed assisting with leading some of the walks. Some of the helpers are trained non-members, others are from Northumbria Area. Further walks will be taking place at other towns in the western parts of the county, and new helpers are welcome. Contact the Ramblers' Project Co-ordinator, Marianne Patterson [marianne.patterson@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:marianne.patterson@ramblers.org.uk), who is based in Durham and can also be contacted on 07557-119497. Either she or her assistant, Filomena attend the walks.

### New threat from cuts

Very recently it was revealed that Durham County Council is still looking for ways to make spending cuts, and is considering abolishing the Rights of Way Section. This would mean only a proportion of staff being transferred to Highways, with the loss of three posts, including the Section Manager, Mike Ogden. This would considerably weaken the effectiveness of the team to manage the workload, including the maintenance of the network. We must hope that this does not become a firm proposal.

(Jo Bird, Access and Walking Environment Officer)

**[www.barnardcastleramblers.org.uk](http://www.barnardcastleramblers.org.uk)**

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