



**ramblers**  
at the heart of walking

# Barnard Castle Group

# NEWSLETTER

*Spring 2014*

## **Barnard Castle Group AGM 2013**

The AGM, held in November, was a momentous occasion as Ian Martin, our chairman for 26 years, stood down and John Bird, formerly Footpaths Secretary, was elected as our new chairman. The full committee with roles, or tasks carried out, is as follows:

Chairman	John Bird
Deputy Chairman	Jenny Selley
RA Secretary	Pauline Fawcett
Membership Secretary	Joan Martin
Treasurer	Judith Baker
Minutes Secretary	Frances Walker
Programme Secretary	Richard Hughes
Newsletter Coordinator	Jo Bird
Email distribution	Richard Hughes
Postal distribution	Maureen Raw
Posters	Jo Bird
Website Manager	Maggie Donnelly
Footpaths Officer	Allan Rayner
Assistant Footpaths Officers	John Bird, Richard Hughes, Tom Vlaming
Access Officer and Countryside Officer	Jo Bird
Area Representatives on Area Council	John Bird, Frances Walker
Committee members	Ian Martin, Lynda Bares

At the Groups' Christmas lunch at the end of November, a presentation was made by Richard on behalf of the Group to Ian and Joan, in recognition of their dedication to the group over the years. An Amazon voucher for £100.00 was presented to Ian as retiring chairman and former Footpaths Secretary, and a Christmas hamper to Joan for her support in many roles over the years. Richard commended Joan and Ian who have walked an estimated 12,500 miles on more than 1,500 walks with Barnard Castle Ramblers; have maintained a consistently high membership and a high profile of the Ramblers in the area, and Ian for having chaired over 100 committee meetings.

### *A thank you from Ian*

*A big thank you to all who gave so much money plus a signed card to mark the end of my 26 years as chairman, also a large hamper as a present for Joan for her many years on the committee in various roles.*

*The presentation at the Xmas lunch came as a great surprise and a very pleasant one.*

*So once again many thanks from both of us.*

*Regards, Ian*

## **North Yorks & South Durham Area AGM**

The 72<sup>nd</sup> AGM of the Area will take place on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March at the United Reformed Church Hall, Barnard Castle, starting at 2pm. Mike Church, a trustee of the Ramblers, will give a talk and answer questions, after which the meeting will take place. This will be

followed by tea and time for informal chat. There will be a walk in the morning, full details in the programme, after which the hall will be open to provide a comfortable place for enjoying your packed lunch with fellow Ramblers.

### **Big Spring Clean - Jo**

The group has agreed that we should take part again in this annual event to be held from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April and Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May. Organisation is at a preliminary stage and we have not yet chosen a location or possible dates, but if anyone is interested in helping, please let me know (contact details below). Last year we spent a worthwhile couple of hours clearing Town Pasture Lane (Gypsy Lane) and were rewarded afterwards with cups of tea and coffee by the Jersey Farm Hotel where we parked our cars, and had enhanced their exit into the lane. Publicity for taking part lets the public know that we don't just enjoy walking, but also take an active part in caring for the environment.

### **Coastal Access – Jo**

The Durham stretch of the English coastal path is expected to be opened officially around April this year. It is partly in our own North Yorks & South Durham Area, and partly in Northumbria Area. Nuala Wright of that Area, who co-ordinated the preliminary survey work for the Ramblers, is starting to plan a publicity event for the occasion, which will include a walk. Anyone who is interested in taking part please let me know and I will advise the date when known, and all other relevant information. (Contact details below.)

### **Easter Saturday April 19<sup>th</sup> - Special event for the group in upper Teesdale - Joan**

There will be 2 walks in the morning from Bowlees. These will be followed by a meal in Newbiggin Village Hall at approx 1pm to be provided by members of Newbiggin W.I. The cost of the meal is £9 each. The menu is Shepherds Pie with vegetables. (There will be a Vegetarian option if required). The choice of sweets is Trifle or Fruit Crumble and will be followed by coffee/tea and home-made biscuits. Booking for the meal with choice of sweet, or if a Vegetarian option required, please contact Joan on 01833 637825 before April 12<sup>th</sup>. We have the use of the room for the rest of the afternoon when we hope it will be a social afternoon of enjoying each others' company. Also the group scrap books will be available for people to look at. These give an insight into the things the group has done in the past and to remember people who are no longer walking with us. Please join us for one of the walks, or the meal, or the nostalgia afternoon or all three. More details of the day contact Joan on 01833 637825.

### **Slide Shows in 2014 - Judith**

Once again, there will be four slideshows this year and our thanks go to the speakers, who will be:

April 2<sup>nd</sup>-Dave Williams  
June 4<sup>th</sup>-Jenny and Gordon Selley  
August 6<sup>th</sup>- David Selby  
October 1<sup>st</sup>-Joan and Ian Martin

We will be using a different room this year in the church, due to pressure on bookings. This is comfortable accommodation with a refreshment bar in the room itself, which is accessed via the main door of the church, rather than the side door previously used. There is disabled access if necessary. We will have to see how things work in practice but I think this may be better than the parlour we have used for many years.

## **Coach Trip to the Lake District - Saturday June 7<sup>th</sup> - Joan**

A coach trip has been organised to go to Coniston in the Lake District. We plan to have 3 different walks. The "A+" party will climb to the top of Coniston Old Man at 2634ft or 803 metres (weather permitting). **Walkers who choose this option will need to be fit as a reasonable pace will have to be kept up, (Jenny's definition), in order to be back in time for the coach departure.** The "A" party will do a mid-level walk. The "B" party will do a circular walk via Tarn Hows. This gives plenty of options for walkers. For those wishing to have an easy day, there is the short walk to Coniston Water (or use the land train). There are 2 cruises on offer on the lake: one is in the Steam Yacht Gondola and the other is the Coniston Launch. Both have various cruises and both have a stop at Brantwood, where you can visit the home of John Ruskin (National Trust, which has a café). Both cruise companies offer a combined ticket for the cruise and the house. (The Steam Launch is owned by the National Trust, but Trust members must pay the full price). As the coach route is through Keswick, anyone wishing to spend the day in Keswick could do so. We intend going back to Keswick after the walks so that people can buy a meal of their own choice.

Cost of the coach will be approximately £10 per person, depending on numbers.

Booking is through Richard on 01833 660780. A £5 deposit is required when booking.

## **A Report on the Junipers in Upper Teesdale from Chris McCarty, Natural England**

As many will be aware, a fungus-like pathogen called *Phytophthora austrocedrae* was recently found to be causing dieback and mortality of juniper in Teesdale and other locations in northern Britain. Since identification of the disease in 2011 testing has been carried out at sites where junipers showed symptoms of the disease. Bushes at eighteen sites across northern Britain: the Highlands and Central belt of Scotland, Cumbria and Durham, were tested by scientists from Forest Research and found to be infected. It is now thought the disease presents a significant threat to juniper in Britain.

Genetic analysis showed that the strain of the disease in Britain actually differs very slightly from the strain originally identified in Patagonia, the only other place in the world that the disease is known. This suggests that the disease may be an exotic introduction to both the UK and Patagonia, and that its exact geographical origin is yet to be discovered.

To help safeguard juniper from this and other threats in future, last autumn juniper berries were collected from Teesdale as part of the UK National Tree Seed Project overseen by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The berries were surface sterilised and sent to the Millennium Seed Bank at Kew for conservation and further research.

With the help of wardens and volunteers, the programme of removal and burning infected bushes near High Force continues and 'fire-breaks' are being cut between infected and non-infected parts of the site. As with all disease control, bio-security measures are crucial, so thank you to those who use the foot-washing stations on the Pennine Way at High Force, and please explain to fellow walkers and visiting walking groups the importance of doing so. Indeed, given the prevalence of tree diseases cleaning of footwear between visits to the countryside is good practice generally.

For further information and updates please see the following: [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)  
[www.fera.defra.gov.uk/plants/plantHealth/](http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/plants/plantHealth/)      [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

## **Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership - Jo**

Background work for Flatts Wood is now complete and work on the bridges is imminent, during which the paths will remain open. One bridge is to be replaced, and the other five

improved, which will then enable machinery to be brought in for drainage improvement work where necessary, and new improved signposts will be installed. Some new and restored benches are already in place, with more to come, and new leaflets being produced will include general information.

Work will shortly start on improvements to the Teesdale Way between Whorlton and Cotherstone, following earlier surveys, and a new route is being planned from Barnard Castle following the Greta, to Scargill Moor and the Fryingpan Stone, into Arkengarthdale and down to Reeth, with funding from Paths for Communities.

For information about other projects, many of which are relevant to access and the countryside, go to [heartofteesdale@durham.gov.uk](mailto:heartofteesdale@durham.gov.uk)

### **Discover Lost Ways**

'Lost ways' is the term used for those paths shown on old maps or other documents that are not shown on the definitive map, the official record of public rights of way held by each local authority. If good evidence is found, and claims submitted and approved, these paths can be added to the map and used by the public, but only until 2026! Anyone who enjoys old records and research will find the splendid "Rights of Way: Restoring the Record" a very good guide on claiming such unrecorded paths. By Sarah Bucks and Phil Wadey, it covers clearly and simply everything about the kind of searches that need to be made. A copy is held by John Marshall, Area Footpaths Officer, for anyone interested to borrow. (Contact Jo Bird in the first instance – see below).

### **Good News - Joan**

At last some good news!! For all those who know David Race, we have just had some good news. After his latest tests, he has been told that he is now clear of Cancer. We wish him well and he hopes to see us on some of our short walks (as long as he can get to us by bus from Cockfield of course). Thought you would all like to know.

### **Holiday companion sought**

Allan Rayner, our new Footpaths Secretary, asks if anyone is interested in a caravanning/camping few days at Seahouses in Northumberland, in 2014. Anyone interested should ring Allan on 07833 921334.

### **Advance Notices**

#### Barbecue

The popular annual barbeque at John and Linda's house, with a 7 mile walk beforehand, will be on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> July. Full details will be in the next programme

#### North Pennines Walking Festival

The second annual festival takes place from Sat 27<sup>th</sup> September to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October, and will have as its theme "Great walking country – Great food". A range of walks is being planned to end where there is great local food, or where food is produced. There will be some linear walks with transport provided, cutting out the often clumsy car-shuttling arrangements that are required in the North Pennines. More details in the next newsletter.

**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 May please, to [jobird9@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jobird9@tiscali.co.uk)

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