

# The Sheffield Rambler

## The BIG Pathwatch has arrived: Step up and Join the Campaign



The Ramblers Big Pathwatch aims to survey every right of way in England and Wales. The survey will give Ramblers the comprehensive overview of the entire network of footpaths that is needed to identify and solve problems. The problem, for example, could be a wonky bridge or a locked gate, a broken stile, a flooded path or a fallen tree. It is also the intention that the Big Pathwatch will celebrate the things that make walking great, such as beautiful scenery. We are all being called upon to help protect the places where we enjoy walking.

### How do you take part?

- Download a free Big Pathwatch app onto your smart phone
- Pick one or more 1km grid squares to survey from a digital OS Explorer map of England and Wales
- Walk every right of way in this grid square identifying any problems, taking pictures and highlighting best aspects of the walk.
- When you have walked all the paths in your grid square, follow the app instructions to submit your findings.

If you don't have a smartphone, visit the Big Pathwatch website to find out how to print off a map and take part: -

[www.ramblers.org.uk/BigPathwatch](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/BigPathwatch)

### To find out more about the Big Pathwatch:-

Visit the above website

See the article in the Summer edition of 'Walk' magazine.

Val Coleman, Secretary



## New footpath suggestions

Apart from getting involved in the "Big Path-watch", you might also want to take the opportunity to make suggestions for public footpaths on green open spaces across the city. Local authorities are currently being pushed to release land for building and if we don't act now, local walks could be lost under housing. We already have an arrangement with the City Council to suggest new footpaths on City Council-owned farm land when such farms are considered for sale or lease and extra footpaths on green open spaces might be considered if they are identified. (Please note that this does not include parkland unless it is "threatened" with development.) This is our

last opportunity to create new public footpaths - and it WILL be the last: claims for paths based on historical evidence (Enclosure Awards etc.) need to be made before 2026 or they will be gone forever. (We are still considering how we should move on this.) Please let us know of your suggestions for paths on green open spaces and City Council-owned farmland.

One other opportunity which is starting to appear is that Yorkshire Water are wanting to be more "user friendly" and are looking for ideas and suggestions for improving public access to their land. We will keep you posted on this.

## Current claims for rights of way

Some of you may have already made a claim for a right of way which may be many years old. Unfortunately, there is a backlog of such claims which have not been processed because of the lack of resources and staff at the Rights of Way Unit. We continue to raise this with the City Council on every opportunity but there is no quick fix for this in the current political climate. Although there is a "bleakness" as regards the future of our rights of way, given the budget cuts and reduced staff, we should still look out for and take all opportunities when they arise for new rights of way on Council-owned land.



## Public access and Sheffield City Council

I would like to let you know that Sheffield City Council have agreed to show all their woodlands on Ordnance Survey maps as "Public Access Land". We would have preferred that they were all Dedicated under Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, but we recognise the reasons for not doing so. However, it is still a major "plus" with all our adjacent local authorities considering doing something similar.

**Terry Howard**  
Chairperson



## Next year's walks programme

As you will have noted in recent years, changes to bus times and routes are becoming increasingly frequent. This means that a 12 months walks programme soon becomes out of date. Already this year we have had to make 45 changes out of 143 walks and later in the year there will be changes to about 75% of the walks. Although some of these changes are updates to existing walks or new walks people have entered, most are the result of alterations to bus times and routes.

For this reason the printed programme for next year will only include walks for 3 months from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016. (It starts from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 to include final details of Xmas meals.)

## How can you find out about walks after that?

### If you have access to email and the web

A current list of walks is always available on our web site and is the most up to date information we have.

- Sign up for our Walks Updates emails (see the Walks Changes web page). We will change this service next year so that details about all walks are sent out each week.
- You can also check the walks programme on-line and download a printable list of walks at any time.
- We will email the 3 monthly walks list (see below) to Walks Updates subscribers.

### If you don't have access to email or the web

As we are no longer printing a list of walks for a whole year, we have been looking at a method of getting better information to members without web access.

- We can send a printed list of walks to you every three months if you need it. This will mean quite a lot of work printing and mailing, as well as postage costs, so could you please only ask for this if you cannot use the web. This list will be accurate at the time of printing.
- We send a list of walks for each week to the Star and Telegraph which they usually publish, although there have been one or two occasions when they haven't. These lists will include all but last minute changes to walks.
- Check with fellow ramblers who have web access to find out about forthcoming walks, especially if you are relying on the 3 month printed list.

There will be full information about the changes to the programme and how to sign up for email and paper updates in next year's programme.

**Judy Gathercole**



## Leaders' Training

At our last Leaders' Event it was decided to provide some extra training for our walks' leaders. Three possibilities were mentioned and are now being planned.

**Please note that these events will be for potential new leaders as well as present leaders.**

### 1. Computerised mapping and using GPS.

This will be an 'in house' event held at Friends' Meeting House. They are currently closed for holidays but we hope to book in for Thursday October 29<sup>th</sup> so please pencil this in your diary. If we can't get that week it will probably be on one of the two previous Thursdays – we will confirm the date as soon as we know it.

Members who use these very useful modern aids to navigation and walk planning will demonstrate various products and their use and show how they can best be used to help us out on the hills.

This will be an open event with no need to book.

### 2. Safety on the Hills

Some of you will remember going to Edale Mountain Rescue some time ago for a very interesting talk and demonstration on this topic and many people have asked for a repeat. We hope to arrange this for mid to late November. Once again, we will let you have details as soon as we know them, as well as booking details.

### 3. Navigation Courses

We are arranging two full day navigation courses to be run by Rangers from the Peak District National Park.

The first will be a beginners' course for 10 people and will start with some indoor work before going outside for practice. This course will be on a Saturday, probably in early March.

The second course, probably mid April and also on a Saturday, will be for 20 people and will be more advanced and probably be useful revision for a lot of us even if we have done some of the work before!

The lady I'm in touch with at PDNP is now planning the days but she will have to wait until some staff get back from holidays before letting us have more information, probably in early September.

These courses are priced at £11.50 per person but are being funded by the group. However, in view of this, anyone attending a course will be expected to lead walks for the group later. For new leaders this would be with support from other leaders and would probably involve helping a leader on a pre-walk and back-marking on the day, for example, so you would not be thrown in at the deep end!

We hope as many of you as possible join in these events, We will let you have final details as soon as possible

**Rambles Committee**



## New Leaders?

We have now begun the process of adding walks to fill next year's programme. If any one who hasn't yet tried leading would like to add a walk, please get in touch with the Rambles Committee ([rambles@sheffieldramblers.org](mailto:rambles@sheffieldramblers.org)) to get a password etc. so you can enter your walks.



If it helps we would be only too pleased to set up a 'buddy' system to help you with your first few walks. See also 'Leaders Training' (page 4).



## To All Other Leaders

Please remember to add your walks as soon as possible!!

**Thanks in anticipation.**

## Walking Out - 2016

The Group has agreed to continue with the very successful "Walking Out" programme of shorter walks throughout 2016. We are intending to work more closely with Sheffield's Health Walks programme and, in so doing, give their participants the opportunity for longer and more varied walks. It also gives our members the opportunity to do slower and shorter walks if they so choose. We are wanting volunteers to be involved in leading and back marking these walks.

The walks should be about four or five miles in length with few stiles and only slight up-hill sections. We would like to have a programme up and ready to start in late February/early March and

have it go through to November. The starting place must be easily accessible and well known, eg. the Interchange, so that appropriate buses or trams can be reached easily and the meeting time should be 10.15am.

The days we are wanting volunteers for are one Thursday and one Saturday per month. If you are willing to be involved, leading or back marking, please let me know as soon as you can so I can draw up a programme of dates for you to choose from.

This initiative has been one of the most successful ventures we have undertaken giving more people the opportunity to discover the benefits and enjoyment of walking.

Please respond by email giving your postal address (just in case it is needed for me to send you dates and other information).

Very many thanks.

**Terry Howard**  
[chair@sheffieldramblers.org](mailto:chair@sheffieldramblers.org)





### Closed Railway Crossing near More Hall Bridge into Wharncliffe Wood

Some of you are aware of attempts by "whoever" to stop people using the track from off the Manchester Road near More Hall Bridge by putting up a "No public right of way" sign. As this route has been used well in excess of fifty years, at least, we asked our members to make a public footpath claim. Recently, Network Rail erected gates/barriers to stop people using the railway crossing from More Hall Bridge into Wharncliffe Wood. The Forestry Commission own the land either side of the crossing and, apparently, can use this crossing unlike walkers even though the woodland on either side of the crossing is public access land. Several organisations have asked Network Rail to reopen the crossing, which is a single track and used perhaps once in twenty four hours. Those involved are, the Ramblers, Peak and Northern Footpath Society, Bradfield "Walkers are Welcome", Sheffield Local Access Forum and Angela Smith MP. Unfortunately, I have been reliably informed, that we can't make rights of way claims on Forestry Commission and Network Rail land. We have attempted to involve the Ramblers Campaign Team in this, we await their response. The Forestry Commission seem reluctant to support our request to get the crossing opened up again for walkers. Where does this leave us at present? I can only ask you to lobby Network Rail, to ask the Forestry Commission to support our claim, to seek help and support from MPs and Councillors and in the meantime we will keep pushing Network Rail to reopen this popular crossing. (The nearest other crossings are at Deepcar or Oughtibridge, some three kilometres away).

