



THE RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION - SHEFFIELD GROUP

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Chairman's Report

This year was the tenth year of the introduction of the "Right to Roam" in the Peak District National Park, perhaps something many ramblers take for granted. But it was the culmination of a campaign that ramblers had worked for, well in excess of one hundred years, and we were part of it. It is to be celebrated and not forgotten or taken for granted. Our group certainly enjoys this right with many walks organised over previously "forbidden" moorland.

Our walks programme has continued to be imaginative and inclusive with large attendances on most walks, a credit to the walks leaders. The "putting together" of the programme has again proven to be a winner and those members involved deserve our grateful thanks. Unfortunately, our "Walking Out" programme may well have run its course with both a fall in numbers attending and volunteers to lead walks. It has proven to be a highly successful initiative and has drawn in many new members, but this source of new members seems to have dried up. This may be due to the fact that we expected people who attended these walks regularly to consider being members. However, the new walks programme should include more shorter walks which again will be open to all walkers, members or not.

Membership - certainly those attending walks, seems to be mainly those with bus passes. This has to be a major concern, but the Group alone cannot address this when we have two other Groups in Sheffield of the none-pass age. However, we were younger once, and we were fully involved in the Ramblers campaigns. I have to ask, are there younger members who are prepared, and can carry on with present and future campaigns? I hope so.

We have now started with the "Lost Ways" project and we will be enlisting the support of all members to fill in footpath claim forms for all those paths which have not been recorded on OS maps. We have eleven years left to make these claims then after that those not claimed will have gone forever.

Over the years we have volunteered to do footpath work with varying degrees of success, but it was never long lasting. The new “Fix it” volunteers have done some excellent work on several paths around the City and hopefully will continue and attract new volunteers. The Public Rights of Way Unit has expressed their gratitude for the “professional” work this team of volunteers do.

Lastly, the Group Executive has worked extremely well over the last year and deserves our thanks. It is interesting to note that all decisions are made by consensus without the need to vote. Long may it continue.

Terry Howard

Access Report

Last year we reported the setting up of the Sheffield Moors Partnership and the land management of the moors from Wyming Brook to the Eastern Moors. These moors are currently undergoing changes both ecological and visual. The moors currently under change are the Sheffield Moors, Burbage, Houndkirk and Hathersage.

The most notable will be in the Burbage Valley, this scheme will involve the removal of the conifer plantation during the winter of 2014/15. During this period a temporary access road will be built from the Hathersage Road to the lower end of the plantation, and will be in use Monday to Friday, during felling and removal. So as not to reduce access to the valley, a temporary footpath diversion will be put in place at the lower end of the valley.

Other planned schemes are to reduce the number of grazing sheep on the moors, and also the introduction of cattle. As the whole of these moors already has perimeter stock fencing this will be made cattle secure and additional access points put in place. Additional tree planting of the native type will be introduced at several places, near Sheephill Road and near Millstone Edge. Tree thinning will take place in the Surprise View area and there will be additional native tree planting near Burbage edge.

The whole moorland scheme has been carefully planned to give these moors a pleasant visual aspect of open wild moors.

This year the National Trust has introduced concessionary bridleways within the Longshaw Estate. These will run from the Grindleford Road behind the Longshaw Lodge to the Wooden Pole path towards the Froggatt Road. The other route is in front of the Lodge and then onto the road just above the Grouse Public House. These are concessionary

bridleways, and as such will be subject to monitoring and review, and adjustments will be made as and when required.

The Long Causeway at Stanage has been repaired and made more accessible for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The Pack Horse paving is to be preserved as a feature, and once all the repair work is completed, the route from Dennis Knoll to Redmires via Stanage Pole will be closed to all motorised vehicles.

As you can see there are many changes taking place on our local moors and in the year of the 10th anniversary of the CROW Act in our region, we have much to celebrate, but we still have to be vigilant: making sure we can keep the hard won freedoms on our moors now and in the future. Good roaming to all.

Les Seaman

Coach Rambles

As I write we are still to go on the last coach ramble of the year to the Hambleton Hills. In early April we were in the South Pennines. Hebden Bridge was our centre. The A Party visited Stoodley Pike. The B Party walked an area north of Hebden Bridge visiting Hardcastle Crag. A month later we were walking in the Pateley Bridge area of Lower Nidderdale. The destination for the Tuesday coach ramble was Ilkley and Saltaire. As far as I know all walks took place in dry conditions. So far the coaches have been reasonably well filled and people appeared to enjoy the destinations. My thanks go to the walk leaders: Jan Randall, David Goodchild, Judy Gathercole, John and Joan Taylor, Janice Burton, Val Coleman, Cath and Malcolm MacKay and Neil and Margaret Barthorpe. I must also thank a friend of Neil's who is going to help lead the A Party on October 5th.

After the last ramble I am stepping down from organising the coach rambles. My place is going to be taken by Liz Savage.

Susan Rushworth

IT and Web administrator report

Whilst there have been no major changes this year I have added a couple of features that I think are useful. Emails are now automatically sent each week to the Star and Telegraph with details of forthcoming walks. I hope that this will be especially useful for members without internet access because the walk details include the latest changes to bus times etc. Walk Update emails are also sent straight from our database which save some work for the Rambles Committee.

The Next Walks list on the web site now displays a list generated from our database which is quicker to load and always up to date. The Ramblers Walks Finder is still accessible from the Walks page.

The list of walks for the Walks Programme has once again been generated from our database, using the details entered by walks leaders, and sent to the printers.

There are no major changes planned for next year.

Dave Jefferies

Membership

The group membership at 31st August 2014 was 669 individuals, just 4 less than a year earlier. This is good news considering that in the year to August 2013 we suffered a net loss of 79 members. There is room for cautious optimism that the long-term decline in membership may be slowing, but it must be remembered that a rise in membership in the year to 2012 was followed by a big fall the next year. Few potential new members are enquiring by email or telephone, suggesting that most are using the local and national web sites for information.

Malcolm MacKay

Rambles Report

We have had another good year of walking during 2014 and numbers seem to be staying much the same except on Tuesdays, which seem to be growing to catch up with, or overtake, the other days. It's good to have new walkers joining us - and we have had some on Wednesdays and Sundays too!

2014 is the first year that walk leaders entered their own walks for the printed programme. After tutoring from Dave about the system, it all seemed to go smoothly and saved any one person having to fill in 150 walks. During the year the system has been invaluable for making updates when buses, or occasionally leaders, change and these changes are then easily forwarded to members who have 'signed up' for the emails, thus keeping everyone up to date.

Good use has also been made of the system to add extra walks to fill gaps or, for example, to put an easier walk in when there is a strenuous one or vice versa. It is good to have all the leaders involved in this way and many thanks must go to Dave for writing, setting up and maintaining the system.

The programme for next year has just gone to the printers as I write this. It will run from this December (2014) to the end of November 2015. This gives us a chance to show the Christmas lunches and dinner as well as other walks added for December. Also, there have been fewer walks put in for the end of next year – I think people are taking advantage of being able to add walks later and not going so far ahead. There are several other walks empty during the year but I'm sure they will be filled, as the time gets closer.

Many thanks are due to all our leaders who give us such a varied programme of walks – especially in a time of ever decreasing bus services. People are finding ways of getting out – even doing the whole of the Derwent Valley Heritage Way by public transport!

Thanks, too, to all our walkers (most of whom are leaders, too) for the support given to leaders. May everyone enjoy their walking just as much in 2015.

Judy Gathercole – Rambles Committee

Rights of Way

Over the last twelve months we have continued our regular meetings with the officers in the Sheffield City Council Rights of Way Unit. There are positive signs that the meetings have been worthwhile. We have been consulted on all rights of way and access matters.

We have been asked to choose three priority areas for footpath claims in the next year and we have chosen the following:

1. All the paths in Great Hollins Wood
2. The path from More Hall Bridge to Wharncliffe Lodge
3. Ringwood Lane and Cow Gap Lane at Dungworth

We still need more evidence forms filling in for these paths and hope members will be able to help out with this.

We also want to collect evidence for the top of Bents Lane, Dungworth, the path between Penistone Road and Woodend at Grenoside. a section of Thickwoods Lane at Upper Midhope, and the path along the top of Wharncliffe Crags.

We attended a meeting to discuss future plans for the footpath network in Greno Woods and also a display and site visit on the future of Parkwood Springs, now the landfill site is closed. Although it is

disappointing that on the proposed timetable for opening up the site, most of us will not live to see the project completed!

The new bridleway in Wigtwizzle Wood is now open.

When members find a blocked path within the Sheffield boundary, we ask them to report the matter directly to the **Rights of Way Unit Tel: 0114 273 4448** and please let me know you have done so.

David Woodhead

Public Transport Report

From 1st April 2014, the South Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority, which also ceased to exist from the same day, decided they could no longer fund local rail travel for people holding Senior Citizen or Disabled passes due to harsh cuts in grants they receive from Central Government. They also cut back use of the passes to the national scheme to the hours of 9.30 to 11 PM on Monday to Fridays.

After many protests disabled people won back all the concessions, and senior citizens can now travel half price on local rail services in South Yorkshire, but not Leeds and Huddersfield as previously. The restriction in use of the passes after 11pm seems unfair as senior citizens in all the other Metropolitan areas, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire Mersyside and Tyne and Wear can all use their passes after 11 pm, so why not in South Yorkshire? It is to be hoped that this can be looked into by the new Regional Authority, which took over from the ITA on 1st April, and by whatever government we have after next year's General Election.

A welcome event this year has been the re-introduction of the 240 bus service to Bakewell by the First Bus Co. and the 244 service to Bamford on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. These services ran from 10th July to 25th October and hopefully will have helped to alleviate the overcrowding experienced on TM Travel's 215 and 218 services to Bakewell and Matlock, which has generated many complaints over the last few years. I hope First will be able to run these services daily next year.

John Brightmore – Transport Representative

Sheffield Visually Impaired Walking Group

In July 2014 I was able to report to our own AGM that the Sheffield Visually Impaired Walking Group had been out on some 42 walks during the year plus a coach ramble to Saltaire with our friends in the Hearing

Impaired Walking Group and a walk on Blaca Moor with Sheffield Wildlife Trust. That amounted to nearly 300 miles of walking – quite an achievement. Our new shorter, easier, walks on the first Tuesday of every month have proved very popular and are now a well established element of our programme. In addition to all this local walking we enjoyed a Group holiday in Grassington in September 2013 and another in Llandudno in September 2014. In both cases members of the local Ramblers Groups organised and lead local walks for us. Finally 4 visually impaired and 10 sighted guides stepped up to the plate to climb Scafell Pike at the end of September to raise money for Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind.

We have been trying to recruit more members, both visually impaired and sighted guides. Currently our membership stands at 111, 40 of whom are visually impaired. The rest are guides. So if you are aware of visually impaired walkers who do not know about the group – please tell them about us and give them my phone number 0114 2366685.

We continue to rely heavily on Ramblers Sheffield Group for leaders for our walks and as sighted guides and we are very grateful for all the support the Group gives us. We thank you all sincerely for your continued support. Yet again John Bater will soon be putting together the programme for next year 2015. If you think you can lead just one walk for us, on either a Wednesday or a Sunday during 2015, please contact him on 0114 2334080.

Christine Hewitt – Chair

Treasurers Report - year ended 30th September 2014

We received only £600 from Area for the year due to our relatively strong financial position. We transferred £500 from our healthy self - funded balance into our main account to support on-going running costs and production of the annual walks programme. This has proved to be adequate for the groups needs but we end the year with an overall much reduced balance of £1,556 in the bank adjusted to £1,450 once account is taken of outstanding cheques.

Area made a contribution of £1,277 towards the printing of 2,000 new Sheffield Country Walk booklets; the total cost was £2,277. Sales of the booklets have so far amounted to £408.

We spent £833 on producing and delivering the annual walks programme and £315 on a short walks leaflet. Hire of meeting rooms and refreshments totalled £333 and group administration costs including web hosting charges totalled £163.

We received £150 from Ramblers holidays this year in respect of member's bookings.

We paid out £1,353 on coach trips and coach walk recce costs and received £1,564 in payments (to end September) – however the £400 cost of the last trip of the season (5/10/14) will be paid in 2014/15 so taking account of this we will not have covered our costs directly this year. However we agreed that the cost of every trip should be subsidised for 2013/14 at £10 per person with free seats for walk leaders and back markers so the deficit is covered by the healthy balance we had in our self-funding pot.

We have submitted a request for funding of £2,035 from Area for 2014/15 – we are awaiting the outcome of this request.

Jackie Knight October 2014

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www.sheffieldramblers.org