



# SHEFFIELD RAMBLERS

Annual Report November 2017

## Chair's Report

Sheffield Group continues to be proactive on all matters walking. We fully support the initiative "Sheffield the Outdoor City" and are part of their 100 Group.

As the main contributors to Sheffield Walking Forum we contribute much to the very successful "Sheffield Walking Festival". We have the footpath "Fix it " team where our members carry out footpath repair work in conjunction with the Public Rights of Way team. Whenever we are asked to contribute to the various matters to do with walking in the City we willingly contribute. I like to think and believe we have made a difference to walking opportunities for everyone in the City. Our programme of walks on Tuesday, Wednesday, Sunday with the occasional Thursday and Saturday offers some thing for everyone.

The difficult issue of bus time and service changes continues to be addressed by the online system of notification. Although not suitable for everyone, for those few who are not online do receive notification by an "old method". The system is working well.

Although Group membership continues to slide slightly, this is not a cause of major concern as the other two Sheffield Group's membership continue to rise. We now have a working relationship with these Groups and are gradually "releasing" Rambler's work to them.

Leader Training is part of our programme and we continue to monitor and improve on our responsibilities as walk leaders.

Over the years the Group has done much work for rambling, its members and the City, and I am proud to be part of a team of people who carry out this work. From the humble backmarkers to the Executive Officers, they all deserve a big "thank you". Nevertheless, the work does go on. However, our reward is knowing that it is for everyone.

On the horizon are challenges, which may affect our enjoyment of the countryside. Some of these may be political and we cannot ignore them. Are we ready?

***Terry Howard***

## Area Access Officer's Report

When the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is replaced by a United Kingdom agricultural policy, the safeguards now in place will need to be secured. We shall have to ensure that the hard fought for rights and freedoms are not eroded away on the transfer of powers from the EU to the UK. During this transfer of powers there will be vested interest groups trying to take the opportunity to remove these rights, and put the access to the countryside back to a time of conflict and restrictions.

On a more positive note the change of ownership of the Moscar & Derwent moors, has not made any significant differences to access, only the normal moor management closures were implemented.

A recent incident on TPT (Plank Gate) through Wharnccliffe Wood meant a temporary closure of this concessionary bridleway by the Forestry Commission. Although this is a footpath matter, it did have implications on freedom to roam in Wharnccliffe Wood and access routes to the crags. This goes to show how actions of a very small number of people can have an adverse effect on the many.

The Access movement over the years has been written about in dozens, if not hundreds of articles and books, including the ultimate success in the Freedom to Roam. The Crow Act 2000 was the result of all this hard work by many thousands of ramblers over a hundred years or so. The National Trust is looking to have a permanent exhibition and research facility at Longshaw Lodge. This facility is financially supported by SYNED Area Ramblers, which is much appreciated by the National Trust and likewise fellow ramblers.

Longshaw Lodge is well fitted for such a valuable asset – a centre for all the diverse information and memorabilia - as the Longshaw Estate was the place that the Ramblers Association was formed. The adjacent moorlands, purchased by public subscription, were the start of free public access to Blacka Moor and the surrounding moorlands, an appropriate inspiration to the access movement.

*Good Roaming **Les Seaman***

## Coach Rambles

This year we have had 4 successful coach rambles. The first went to Shropshire where the walks along and around Wenlock Edge explored an area new to many of us and were completed in glorious sunshine. The second trip took us to the east coast for coastal walks to Bridlington from Brampton cliffs and North Landing at a time when there were many nesting birds to see. The coach was full on the June Tuesday trip for walks from Howarth home of the Brontes up to High Withens - thought to be the location of "Wuthering Heights". The final trip of the year visited Settle in the Yorkshire Dales for walks up Pen-y-Ghent and to Attermire Scar, Cattrigg Force and the caves. Unfortunately, rain and mist obscured what would

have been great views but the waterfalls were at their best and we had an excellent day.

The coach rambles just about broke even this year with prices kept at £11 and 91% of seats occupied. Thank you to all who have supported the coach rambles and a big thank you to the leaders for all their hard work. Next year's coach rambles are at the planning stage and suggestions for future trips are always welcome.

**Liz Savage**

## Rambler's 'FIXIT' News

### *Sheffield Ramblers Rights of Way & Path Maintenance Volunteers*

The Fixit group are now in their 4th/5th year. We have a working party on the 1st Monday of the month and our success is due to the loyal consistency of workforce, who unfailingly turn up and work hard to enable walkers to use the Rights of Way without encountering problems and safety issues on their route.

- The jobs we tackle are Cutbacks to keep paths open.
- Plank Crossings of streams and Brooks, sometimes surfacing them with non-slip surfaces to give walker security.
- Drainage jobs where paths are flooding.
- Replacing Waymarks.
- Putting in steps on paths with an impossible slope, and fairly recently putting in 'gambions' (wire cages filled with stones) to reinforce riverbanks where the path is subsiding, and using 'revetements' to reduce the erosion of riverbanks.

### *OUR RECENT JOBS*

- **Porter Valley - Forge Dam** Putting in 'gambions' to reclaim a very popular path and erecting a barrier at the riverside where there was potential danger.
- **Sheffield Round Walk** Ringinglow - Limb Valley. Considerable drainage work to maintain the footpath.
- **Redmires end of Wyming Brook** - Reinforcing the riverbank with revetments and improving and levelling a footpath.
- **North Sheffield - Manor Lane**. Repairing and renewing wide steps and putting in a handrail.
- **Agden Reservoir** - Footpath up to Rocher Rocks cutting back to keep right of way open and re-establishing the waymark. We aim to re-build a bench here.

Occasional fund-raising events are organised to buy necessary tools, and after the December working party we have an annual Xmas lunch.

**A request for your help please** - we need some 'walking scouts' to feed us jobs so that we always have a worthwhile project to tackle.

**Jan Randall**

## Membership Secretary

The group membership at 31st August 2017 was 584 individuals, twenty-one members less than a year earlier. We had similar numbers in 1990.

Peak membership was 927 in 2006 with a steady decline since then. Members regularly transfer to us from the age-specific Ramblers Groups in Sheffield, but our annual losses exceed our new starters.”

***Malcolm MacKay***

## Rambles Report

Another good year of rambling has been had by all, we think, with some of our newer members starting to lead walks, which is very encouraging. It is also noticeable how many short walks are being put in on Thursdays and Saturdays. These have replaced any ‘official’ Walking Out programme and seem to have new people leading them. It is good that we have such a variety of walks in the group and people willing to lead the types of walks they want to see on the programme.

However, the main problem we highlighted last year is still on going – that of late entries for walks into the walks entry system. We totally understand that some people like to leave entering walks to nearer the time so they can fit in with their diaries – we do too sometimes – but there are two deadlines we would like people to be aware of. The first is that we send out a programme every 3 months to people who are not on line. If your walk is less than three and a half months ahead it will not appear on their programme. Even more important, probably, is to try to enter or update walks at least two weeks ahead so that they appear correctly in the local papers, so please check bus times etc. in good time to make any alterations if necessary.

Associated with this is the fact that two or three people who are willing to step into the breach at the last minute when there are gaps in the programme seem to be leading more than their fair share of walks. It would be good if we could all try to put in a ‘last minute’ walk occasionally to try to spread the load a little. Look out for the list, sent out each month, of empty dates up to three months ahead.

All that said, we thank all our leaders for the walks they put in, whether many or few. If everyone who walks with us just put in a couple of walks a year that would make a big difference. If you are nervous about this just ask a friend, or get in touch with the rambles Committee (**email [rambles@sheffieldramblers.org](mailto:rambles@sheffieldramblers.org)**) and we would find someone willing to help planning your walk and do a recce with you.

We’ve had some great walking in 2017 and we’re sure that will continue next year.

***The Rambles Committee***

## Rights of Way

Over the last twelve months we have continued our regular meetings with Sheffield City Council's rights of way officers. We have been consulted on all rights of way and access matters. Nevertheless, it is a matter of concern that the Rights of Way Unit as only one full time member of staff - most are now working two or three days a week.

On the closure of the path over the railway line at Wharncliffe Wood reported in previous years, there is total deadlock with Network Rail. However, there is now an alternative path using a bridge half a mile to the south which is accessed by walking through access land west of the railway. There is a walkable path on the ground which starts behind Holmes Farm (near the old bulldozer).

To make this way more secure, we are making a claim for a right of way from Manchester Road at More Hall Bridge SK29679554 to the access land at SK 29959552.

After many years of trying to get rights of way in Great Hollins Wood, we now have received confirmation that four of the five claims we made have been successful and are hopeful that we might get the fifth but it is more complicated because it involves a railway crossing.

If 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 or Email: PublicRightsofWay@sheffield.gov.uk** and please let me know you have done so.

***David Woodhead***

## Public Transport Report

Derbyshire County Council have wisely decided not to withdraw subsidy for all supported bus services in the county and have taken notice of the customer feedback which they received. However, some very lightly used services may be cut, and others will have amended timetables from October 2017. Although, at the time of writing this report, nothing had been implemented. I cannot see that the services into the Peak District from Sheffield should be affected very much by any changes. For the latest information visit **[www.derbyshire.gov.uk/buses](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/buses)**.

The excellent comprehensive timetable books which Derbyshire produce for both the Peak District and North East Derbyshire (Price £2.5), can no longer be bought in Sheffield. South Yorkshire Transport Executive refuses to sell them in what now passes for Transport Information Offices in Sheffield (now staffed by a sub contractor called **Noonan**). The Sheffield City Council Information Centre on Surrey Street has also stopped selling them due to having stocks left of the old timetable books when the new Peak District book was published in June. They had not been promoted properly and so many people were not aware they were sold there. The books can be obtained at Chesterfield Bus Station, Bakewell and Matlock Tourist

Information Centres, or by post from Derbyshire County Council. However, the Derbyshire Wayfarer Tickets are still sold at the Sheffield Information Centre.

The rural services to the North West of Sheffield around Penistone were revised last year. This has been a cost cutting exercise to save money for the Transport Executive and the South Yorkshire Bus Partnerships. As a result, there are now no buses at all to Langsett (a popular starting point for walks) and the once useful 20 service to Penistone has been cut dramatically with most journeys which still run, starting at Chapeltown. In September this year Stagecoach have reduced the 57 service to Stocksbridge to run only hourly on weekdays and most journeys on Sundays have been withdrawn completely. A shuttle service has been put on for Sundays from Hillsborough Interchange to serve Oughtibridge and Worrall. The only timetable leaflet available for any of these services is for the 57. Visit [travelsouthyorkshire.com](http://travelsouthyorkshire.com) for timetable information.

The news from Sheffield and South Yorkshire is mainly doom and gloom. How much worse can it get?

***John Brightmore***

### Sheffield Visually Impaired Walking Group

SVIWG continues to thrive with a membership of 100 or so. About half are visually impaired although not all walk with us on a regular basis. Each month our programme continues to offer an easy walk of 4 to 5 miles, a couple of steady 6 to 7 milers and a longer and more challenging walk for those who want to push themselves that bit further. An annual coach ramble together with our friends in a hearing-impaired group has become a regular feature. May 2017 found us in Buxton for the day. In June We also take the group away on an annual walking holiday. Last September the holiday took us to Berwick upon Tweed and we have just returned from the 2017 holiday in Whitby. Local Ramblers are always very welcoming and helpful in advising on suitable walks and leading walks for us. The Group has attracted attention elsewhere. Back in March 2016 a photographer called Matt Writtle accompanied the Group on a Sunday walk. Matt's book "**Sunday: A portrait of 21<sup>st</sup> Century England**" has now been published. SVIWG feature as one of the chapters in the book. In addition, a couple of research workers have been out walking with us. One from Exeter University is engaged in a research project on visual impairment and the natural environment. The other is from Sheffield University is researching the use of Geographic Information Systems by visually impaired people.

Our fund-raising effort this year was the Sheffield Round Walk. On what was the hottest day of the year up to that point. 26 people including 9 VIPs set off from Hunters Bar. Not everyone tried to do the whole walk but everyone completed at least the distance they had set themselves to do. and some went further than they had thought possible. 22 people, including 7 VIPs, arrived back at Hunters Bar having walked 17 miles (measured on GPS) and raising over £3,000.00 for

ourselves and Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind to share. Our sincere thanks to all those who supported us in this event, as walk leaders and as sighted guides.

***Christine Hewitt***

## Treasurer's Report

### **Year ended 30th September 2017**

We received £1,000 from Area for the year. This has proved adequate for the groups needs and we end the year with a balance of £1,274 in the bank adjusted to £1,374 (Main Account £1,173 + Self Funded £201) once account is taken of outstanding receipts (an increase of £153 over the previous year - Main Account + £190 Self Funded £-37).

Total receipts were £2,672 and total payments were £2,519.

We spent £128 on producing and delivering the annual walks programme.

We spent £105 on walk recce costs.

Hire of rooms for Committee meetings including the 2016 AGM totalled £284.

Group administration costs including web hosting charges totalled £249.

Sales of Sheffield Country Walk booklets amounted to £313 for 217 booklets leaving a stock of 250 booklets.

We received £90 from Ramblers holidays in respect of member's bookings.

In the 2016/17 financial year we paid out £1,305 on 3 coach trips and received £1,268 in payments – so we did not quite cover our coach ramble costs directly in the year. The £37 deficit was covered by the balance in our self-funding pot which now stands at £201. (There was a 4th coach ramble at the beginning of the 2017/18 financial year which cost £435; £409 was received in payments so again we did not cover full costs by £26.)

We have submitted a request for funding of £1,000 from Area for 2017/18 – we are awaiting the outcome of this request.

***Jackie Knight October 2017***