



# Area News

South Yorkshire and North-East  
Derbyshire Area

[www.synedramblers.org.uk](http://www.synedramblers.org.uk)  
Winter 2013/14

## ramblers

at the heart of walking

### Annual Report and AGM

#### Annual General Meeting – 25<sup>th</sup> January 2013

This year the AGM will be hosted by Sheffield Group. The venue is the **Woodland Discovery Centre**, Ecclesall Wood, Abbey Lane, Sheffield S7 2QZ (between Abbeydale Road South and Ecclesall Road South). **The morning walk will start at the Centre at 10.30.am.** There is limited car parking on site, but there is off road parking and buses 97 and 98 run along Abbeydale Road South (alight at Abbey lane and walk up to the Centre). **The AGM starts at 2.00.pm prompt.** The speaker will be Des Garrahan, trustee. Des will be able to talk about the Ramblers achievements over the last year, and will also outline what the Trustees hope we will achieve over the next year.

#### Chair's Report - Allen Pestell

##### *Area Chair*

I hope that all SYNED members have had as successful a year of rambling as I have. This year I have revisited many much-loved walks and found a few new ones. It is worth bearing in mind that our membership fees go in some way to protecting our countryside and our rights of way network.

When the definitive maps were originally drawn up, some footpaths were omitted. Many are still shown on maps as a black dotted line or a white lane. In a few years the Government will stop any revisions of the definitive maps, so it is important that we attempt to discover as many of these lost ways as we can as soon as possible. We need the support of our local press to publicise cases of lost historical routes: we also need to put pressure on our local councils to make them legally defined. Area council has asked local groups to set up sub-groups to this end. Can you help? If so, please contact your group secretary if you think you can spare a little time.

Local groups are an important part of the ramblers, but often struggle to get members to take office. With this in mind, our national office is looking to help groups that are struggling. Too late, I am sorry to say to help our Bolsover Group, which has only been able to continue over the last few years through the dedication of a few members who now want to step down. Without volunteers, they have had no choice but to dissolve. Our thanks go to Rita, Arthur and Jane, for all the work that they have done. Fortunately, Chesterfield is inviting all Bolsover members to join them.

May I end by thanking the members of Area Council for their work over the past year and passing on the hope that next year will be as good for walking as this year has been. I also hope that the Ramblers are able to regain some of our lost members, to help us retain our position as the premier organisation for walking and the environment.

On behalf of all the Area council members may I hope all SYNED members enjoy some excellent walking over the Christmas period and in 2014.

## **Area Access Officer's Report - Les Seaman** ***Access Officer***

This last year has seen the Eastern Moors Partnership (EMP) incorporated into the Sheffield Moors Partnership (SMP), now we have a coordinated policy of land management and a recreational strategy for all the moors between Wyming Brook and Clod Hall Moor. It is proposed to have a new network of bridleways across Big Moor linking up to the National Trust properties at Longshaw Estate then onto the Burbage Valley. These proposals for concessionary bridleways, which is part of the Master Plan, have been put out for consultation to all landowners, including the National Trust (NT), Sheffield City Council (SCC) and the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA), as well as the general public as users of these footpaths and open access areas.

The PDNPA is deciding the future of the North Lees Estate (NLE), which contains a large proportion of Stanage Edge and the surrounding moorland. The PDNPA is short of money and wants to generate more income from NLE. There is major concern that the PDNPA will put commercial interests above conservation and freedom of access.

Stanage was all but given to the PDNPA in the early 1970s by General Sir Hugh Beach on the understanding the estate would always be somewhere everyone could enjoy quiet recreation.

In April 2014 the Sprit of Kinder event will be held in Sheffield, this will be a celebration the achievements of the access movement as well as looking forward to the future, and how we can involve and inspire the next generation of ramblers, by using the knowledge and successes of the present generation of activists to create a better future.

## **Membership - Jenny Matkin** ***Membership Secretary***

Unfortunately last year's increase in membership has not continued during 2012/13. There has been a 6% drop in numbers from 2611 at the end of last financial year to 2455 in this. Most of the losses occurred during winter and spring. Rotherham, Dearne, Sheffield 20s and Sheffield 40s have either remained stable or increased their membership. All other groups are suffering steady losses.

On a more positive note Head Office has continued to improve reports dissemination with the aim of reducing delays and postal costs. Since April all

group monthly reports including membership lists, mailing lists and administrative reports have been e-mailed direct to group membership secretaries instead of via post and via SYNED. This really does help to provide a better service.

This will be my final report as I am stepping down from the role.

## **Treasurer's Report - Gavin Johns**

### ***Hon. Area Treasurer***

I am pleased to present the accounts of the Area for the year ending 30th September 2013. During the year the Area received £9,500 from Central Office and distributed £8,540 to Groups in the Area.

The Area spent approx. £1,000 during the year on administering the Area, including production of the Area News.

£750 was paid to Rotherham Group for the Heron Way leaflets and £75 for the VIP Group for a Guiding Course from the Herbert Proctor (deceased) legacy, leaving £1,457 balance.

The Groups have asked the Area for approx. £7,957 for the coming year.

We will be contributing £1,404 from our own funds in line with The Rambler's Reserve policy towards our budget of £9,404 and will therefore be asking Head Office for £8,000 compared to £9,500 this year.

*Our thanks are due to our independent examiner,  
Mr Andrew Milne*

## **Barnsley & Penistone Group - Carol Wood**

### ***Secretary***

The group continues to provide weekly walks on a Saturday and Sunday, some easier than others as we aim to accommodate the abilities of all members of the group.

We have had several successful weekends away exploring North Yorkshire and other parts of the country. Also a group of members enjoyed a weekend tackling the Welsh hills.

A small group of our members successfully walked The Dalesway, despite nearly being washed away by the horizontal Lake District rain yet again!

Water - lots of it - seems to have been with us this year. A coachload of us thought it would be 'interesting' to walk with a qualified leader across Morecambe Bay. The day dawned bright and cold. By the time we started on our trek across the bay the wind had whipped up and the rain was a deluge - but there was no turning back. We pressed on despite having to wade through a channel of thigh deep (I kid you not....) water and finally finished in ankle deep sea. Then we had to negotiate some mud flats to finally get back to our coach. 'Interesting' experience - definitely. Will we do again - probably not!

Our membership continues to be much the same year on year. We have tried various means of increasing this to no avail. However, our regular walk membership on a weekly basis is around 15, which we feel is good in these austere financial times.

We also have regular open social events to which partners and family members of the group attend along with our New Year Dinner, which is always well attended.

Our thanks go to all the walk leaders and members of the Committee for their hard work and dedication in providing an interesting programme of walks and events every year.

### **Barnsley 20's to 40's Walking Group - Helen McDowall** *Membership Secretary*

We've had another great year, providing walks every other weekend, plus a good six months of weekly evening walks.

We are just heading into our fourth year and numbers are steadily increasing with five new members this year, taking us up to forty with continued enquiries from new people.

We have enjoyed three weekends away which have proved popular, and more so when the weather is kind to us. The last of these took place at the end of September when fourteen of us completed the Yorkshire Three Peaks. So here's looking forward to 2014 and another successful year.

### **Chesterfield and North-East Derbyshire Group** **John Preston**

Group Membership now stands at 511 having reduced slightly over the year in line with national trends. Welcome to those who have joined us this year.

The group continued to grow the number of published walks available during this last year to almost 400 walks, with as many as possible reported on in the Derbyshire Times. Although the Family Walks programme ended, the ever popular Wednesday walks programme continues to expand in this its' 30th year of operation! There are now short, medium and longer car based walks to compliment the short and longer bus rambles. The lack of helper guides for the visually impaired walks on a Saturday each month is of concern, as without helpers the group cannot continue. If you can help do contact the organisers.

More help is always needed to volunteer with the Footpath Team on a Thursday; they are always ready to welcome anyone who can put their skills to repairing gates, stiles or steps, general footpath reclaiming and clearing, or

just surveying a local footpath. This year the Team completed one man short of 1000 hours of voluntary labour for Derbyshire County Council. Could you be the one to volunteer and make it 1000hours+ next year? Almost 400 miles of footpaths were surveyed in the 24 Parishes in North East Derbyshire this year.

The Footpath team is also working with both Derbyshire CC and Chesterfield BC to ensure the accuracy of their Definitive Maps of the Public Rights of Way. The number of obstructed paths, either temporary due to crops etc. or more permanent due to physical barriers, remains a concern, as is damage to ROW by off-road vehicles. Work is on-going to respond to the challenges set by the proposed HS2 Rail Route to some of our footpaths. The 34-mile Chesterfield Round Walk was also re-surveyed and work completed to clean or replace en-route information boards.

## **Dearne Valley Ramblers**

**Sue Haywood (*Secretary*) & Paul Smeaton (*Chairman*)**

Once again we start with the numbers of people turning up for our walks. Our previous record of 40 walkers was broken last December when 44 seasonally dressed walkers headed out from Langsett Barn on a cold and frosty morning for a short walk, which included carol singing and Christmas tree decoration. Our membership numbers hover around the 100 mark and we are delighted to welcome several members of other local Ramblers' groups who choose to walk with us. We continue to attract a lot of dog owners into our membership and provided that the owners act responsibly and the dogs are well behaved, they are extremely welcome.

Our social activities have continued throughout the year with forty members enjoying a wonderful Christmas meal last December at the Manvers Arms, Adwick-on-Deerne. The event was such a success that we plan to return there this December and places have been going like hot cakes. On New Year's Eve 28 members celebrated with a meal at a local Indian Restaurant, moving on to our secretary's home to let in the New Year with a drink and the London fireworks on TV. Our coach trip in May to the north east coast where we offered two options to walk from Robin Hood's Bay to Whitby was very popular with only a couple of spare seats on the 52-seater coach. In December we have a coach trip to York where different walk options will be available as well as time to enjoy the St Nicholas Christmas Market – again almost a sell-out as this piece is being written in October.

We have also had quite a few meals out to celebrate members' birthdays, as well as various themed events including a Titanic Evening, A Eurovision night, drinks in the garden after a summer's evening walk and weekday walk, lunch and ice cream get-togethers. Many thanks to Phil, Linda, Nigel, Christine, Martin and Sue who have organised these events.

Getting back to walking, our first walk for Doncaster Council's Get Walking Festival was a great success with Chris leading and several potential new members picked up along the way. Our Footpath's Officer, Phil, has done sterling work linking with our three local authorities to resolve issues and once

again, thanks to Diane, we have received excellent coverage in the local press throughout the year.

## **Doncaster Ramblers - David Gadd** ***Chairman***

The various walks offered by the Group continue to attract healthy numbers and, sometimes, to introduce walking to new people. The walks offered on these two days every week continue to vary from the local area to Derbyshire, North Notts, West Yorkshire, etc. The latest programme also included beautiful walks in Staffordshire and North Yorkshire. Meanwhile the fortnightly Thursday walks of about 6-7 miles continued, attracting an average of about 20 people, using public transport to get to the walks. The summer Wednesday evening walks also attract an average of about 20 people. The annual weekend away in September was to the Lake District. Sixteen members enjoyed a choice of two walks on the Saturday in magnificent weather.

The Group continue to submit walks to DMBC's Get Doncaster Walking programme. This programme aims to encourage non-walkers to try a few walks and thereby to improve their fitness and health. The walks we submit are sometimes part of our normal Wednesday evening or Saturday programme.

The Rights of Way sub-committee has continued to work closely with DMBC's Rights of Way Department and make a major contribution to the department by agreeing to monitor every right of way in the borough. This is done by having members responsible for checking each 5km by 5km square. The response from the RoW Dept. has been very positive and there is little doubt that the involvement of our volunteers has led to significant improvements in the condition of our local footpaths. The September update from the Rights of Way Dept. reports the following: Works completed 21, orders raised for more works 14, outstanding works to be done 46. Some of the outstanding works were reported in 2012 and underlines the pressure that DMBC are under.

In order to help with the upkeep of all of our footpaths we have a team of volunteers who help DMBC with some of the maintenance and clearance work. Since the last AGM the volunteers have been out on 6 occasions and cut new steps down steep inclines in three different parishes, put in and replaced numerous finger posts, and cleared many overgrown paths and bridle ways.

Completion of the nine short circular walks based on the 30 mile Heron Way linear walk was finally achieved this year, and sets of the nine walks have been passed to Doncaster's Tourist Information Office. These are on sale at £2 for the set. We were delighted that local MP Ed Miliband came to launch the walks in May.

Membership numbers continue to decline, with 238 members as at 1st October 2013, about 25 fewer than a year previously. Membership nationally has been declining for a few years. However, the numbers walking with the Group, on Tuesdays, Saturdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, has remained

roughly the same, which leads one to suppose that the decline in numbers is mainly among members who feel that their walking days are over.

## **Rotherham Metro - Ivor Wilson**

### ***Chairman***

The weather has been a big factor in this year's Metro walks. The heavy snow in January and March led to a number of walks being cancelled, but the walks that did go ahead were well supported.

The weather forecast for the Keswick weekend in June was very poor, but the gods smiled on us. Apart from the first hour of rain we were able to walk free from waterproofs, and were able to enjoy fantastic views from Blencathra on the Saturday, and Cat Bells and Latrigg on the Sunday. Many thanks to everyone who made the weekend a great success. We are already looking forward to visiting the Isle of Wight in March next year.

We have had a full programme of walks on Wednesdays and Saturdays. This year we have significantly increased the number of short walks on Saturdays, and these have been very well supported. We are currently compiling the programme for next year, and we look forward to a wide range of interesting walks.

Similarly the bi-monthly Social Programme has continued to attract much support, and again we are looking forward to next year's events.

The Footpath Committee has been very active again this year, and has been very well supported by the Footpath Working Group, which is now carrying out footpath maintenance work on a monthly basis. Their work has been publicised in the Autumn edition of walk magazine, helping to install steps and signposts and resurfacing the Meadowhall /Meadowbank path in Kimberworth. Many thanks to all those involved with the Footpath Committee and the Working Group for all their work during the last year.

My thanks go to all the members of the General Committee for their commitment to the Group and to the Ramblers cause; for taking on all sorts of tasks and giving up their time to make walking better for everyone.

## **Sheffield Ramblers Chairman's Report - Terry Howard**

### ***Chairman***

This year has seen the Group take several leaps forward particularly in the way we communicate with members and produce our walks programme. We have a current on-line newsletter produced several times a year and new electronic system of collecting and collating walks for inclusion in the walks programme. Both are simple to use and much quicker than how we used to do such things. Again we have a first class produced walking programme of varied walks. This, along with our "Walking Out" programme, offers a wide selection of walks catering for most people's needs. However this year has seen a drop of numbers of members of the public joining such walks but this is counter balanced with the increasing numbers of existing members enjoying them. A new feature has been the development of the "Fix it" group who have organized working parties to maintain our rights of way.

Our Group Committee members, who are a privilege to work with, continue to give an excellent service to our members. We are well represented on various bodies to do with walking, including rights of way, access, public transport and the wider promotion of walking across the City.

I am reminded that I am becoming one of the “veterans” of the Group having served twelve years as the Chairman and have seen many changes and developments within the Group. All of which have been positive. But there is one thing that is a challenge to us, the drop in membership. We continue to attract new members and with the large numbers of people on walks, more than ever before, one would think there is no issue. The average age of the Group seem mainly bus pass users and I don't believe we could do more than we already have done to reverse this situation. The “challenge” is not just ours as there are two other Ramblers Groups in Sheffield and their numbers appear to be growing. Together we must look at this challenge and see how all the Sheffield Ramblers Groups face the future of rambling in the City.

### **Sheffield 20s and 30s Walking Group - Peter Clayton** *Chair*

We've had a great year of walks every weekend and many during the generally pleasant summer weekday evenings. A large number of interesting socials have also been organised which keeps the group active and interested in other fun activities. Regular weekends away have also been enjoyed including Snowdonia, the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales. New members are welcome to join our new members' nights from 7- 8pm at Henry's Bar near John Lewis on the first Tuesday of every month, but see our dynamic and comprehensive website for more details on joining us - [www.sheffieldwalkinggroup.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldwalkinggroup.org.uk).

### **Sheffield 40s Walking Group - Sandra Knaggs** *Chairperson*

It is amazing to think that we have 202 members now as our 6th birthday approaches. As a group we support and uphold the Ramblers Association policies and continue our pledge to do what we can to help national issues. We refer members to the national website for guidance and policy-making. The group continues to attract members joining us from outside Sheffield area and they comment that they like the variety of walks.

A lot of hard work as gone on behind the scenes over the last year and massive thanks must be lavished on our family of fab walk leaders, volunteer social organisers - as well as the committee, of course. We have increased the number of walk leaders this year - **tick**. Flick'r now hosts our photos, and Facebook is beginning to gain momentum - **tick**. Most importantly we have had lots of laughs this year both on walks, socials and on weekends away - **tick**. In an idle moment we wondered how many miles a' rambler' might walk in a year if she/he went walking every Sunday for most of the year - a staggering 500 miles - **cue song!**

## **Area Information – Christine Whittaker**

The Ramblers Routes Training Workshop organised by SYNED in May this year was well attended and everyone seemed to enjoy it. We were hoping to organise another event for April 2014, but this time a full day, and at the weekend for the younger groups (the workers). However, the Ramblers, inform us that they propose to hold the Training Day in York, as this is more central to the area!!

Our secretary, David Gadd, is hoping to persuade them to re-consider, and has pointed out the advantages (population and rail links) of Doncaster as a suitable venue. We will keep you informed!

Managing the Area website this year has been quite enjoyable. In July a couple of ramblers (in their 70's) from Hereford, contacted us via the Area website, seeking advice on our local public transport for their visit to the area. They intended to walk the Howden-Flouch section of *The Great English Walk* (from Chepstow to Berwick).

Despite the poor transport links they completed their walk, and this was their verdict of their holiday in our area - '*Our first visit to the area and its gorgeous!!!*'. Well, I think we can all agree with that!

**WHATS GOING ON IN OUR AREA** - If you have any news or photographs that may be of interest to members of other groups, please send them to – **[synedramblers@gmail.com](mailto:synedramblers@gmail.com)**

**[www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)** for national information or **Membership Department**, the Ramblers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Camelford House, 87-90 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TW – Tel 0207 339 8500 - for membership information, changes of address, etc.

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