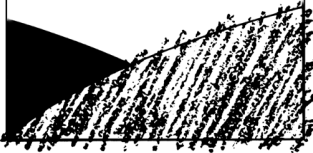


The Ramblers



RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION PRESTON GROUP

January 2008

2007 AGM

The Preston group held their combined walk, hotpot, AGM and slide show on Saturday 17th November 2007 at Cottam Hall Community Centre, Haydocks Lane, Cottam. When the walkers returned we all enjoyed our lunch provided by Hotpot Supper Company. Our thanks to all members for helping to setup tables and chairs etc. and especially the ladies manning the kitchen.

The AGM commenced at 2.20pm with 32 members present. The chairman Bob Singleton made comments on that although no additional volunteers had come forward the group was functioning satisfactorily, many people are unaware of the charitable aims of the RA and thanks to Joe & Marie Howard for hosting the committee meetings.

The secretary Andrew Manzie reported on that mailing had reduced from central office as they now produce a 3 monthly newsletter. Our new chief executive Christine Elliott only lasted 6 months and has just been replaced by Tom Franklin. The central office have been putting more efforts into supporting volunteers and retaining our current membership. Overall it does not seem to have helped the number of volunteers or our membership numbers. Information on the access points have improved a little, but you still have to search around for it.

Current membership has been around the 260 level for most of this year, although nationally we have dropped. Attempts by the committee to increase our numbers have had little success. The Web site was 10 years old on 23/2/07 and has had a steady stream of inquiries. The web is becoming very important for recruits as more than half join via the web.

On the walks front the Wednesday walks and the long Sundays are well supported. The short Sunday program has only one leader, namely me. This cannot continue on much longer. Before long there will be gaps in the programme on these short Sunday walks.

We have only attended a couple of events this past year as it is getting enough notice of the events to arrange for people to attend. The 2 events were the Grimsargh field day in May and the Preston hobbies fair in November.

The treasurer Barry Rutledge presented copies of the balance sheet for the Year ending Nov 2007. The balance was currently £1,976.65 of which £444 is from donations for Preston Group only.

The footpath secretaries Brian Dearnaley and Joe Howard reported according to LCC we have 185 miles of PROW in our area and their annual survey shows that only 70% of these PROW are "easy to use".

Lea footpath number 4, which runs from Hoyles Lane to Cottam Way and is part of the Round Preston Walk, continues to be a concern. A diversion to the southern end of this footpath has been agreed whilst the proposal to divert the northern end has, for the time being at least, been defeated. However, the owner at the northern end (227 Hoyles Lane) has put the property up for sale and it remains to be seen what stance any new owner will take. I would urge anyone who can to walk this footpath and let me know the outcome.

A footpath, also on the Round -Preston-Walk, which left the Longridge Road just before the Church in Grimsargh was causing some concern for the local residents because a rumour of its closure had been spreading. At the Grimsargh Summer Fair, last year, I was able to reassure them that a closure was not planned.

There have been several proposals to divert footpaths in the area, mostly in connection with the James Hall development on Bluebell Way. No objections have been made to any of the proposals as the developers have amended their plans in the light of our comments.

It was mentioned in their reports that these are only few aspects of footpath work to show you that a lot of work goes on behind the scenes to keep the countryside open to us all.

Brian continues to sit on the Lancashire Footpath and Access Council, which is a meeting of all RA footpath secretaries in Lancashire to share experiences, debate the footpath network in Lancashire and provide one voice when dealing with common problems.

The meeting also receives a statement concerning the

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overall state of the public rights of way in Lancashire. You maybe interested to know that currently 787 complaints are lodged with LCC. Obstructions head the list (246) followed by missing signposts (112) and stiles (89).

The countryside secretary Eric Masterton had no formal report. As his role was in "paper filtering" to sift out those planning applications which affected footpaths and extracting other information about footpaths.

Andrew Manzie has been carrying out the press & publicity role in a limited way, producing posters and distributing them. But it needs someone with some spare time who can talk to the press to ensure that any events we do are reported or to find other places to advertise ourselves.

The election of officers were
 Chairman - Bob Singleton,
 Secretary - Andy Manzie,
 Treasurer - Barry Rutledge,
 Footpath Secretary - Brian Dearnaley & Joe Howard
 Countryside Secretary - Eric Masterton
 Minutes secretary - Marie Howard
 In the election of the committee Catherine Osbaldeston was re-elected and 2 new members were elected Eileen Bates and David Thompson.

The Area Secretary David Kelly then spoke on the ongoing issue of identifying access points to the new

Footpath News

This is the time of year for fresh starts and good intentions. So your Committee would like to suggest a (late) New Years resolution for you – every time you encounter a problem whilst out walking report it to your local footpath secretary. A brief note (eg foot-board missing from stile), details of the location and your contact details are all that is required.

Last year 43 problems were reported for our area (Barton, Broughton, Fulwood, Goosnargh, Grimsargh, Houghton, Lea, Preston (former CB), Whittingham and Woodplumpton. All these reports came from the Footpath Walking Team a small group of volunteers who follow a rolling programme of walking all the footpaths in the Preston area (556 paths and 160 miles) to ensure they are maintained to a reasonable standard. It normally takes around 2 years to complete the programme. There are currently 23 reports outstanding with stiles being the most commonly reported problem.

open countryside. Although LCC intended to add this information onto there MARIO system which is available to anyone with internet, this is still to appear. Last spring DEFRA put out a consultation paper on access to the coast. Awaiting DEFRA to decide how a Bill will be put to parliament.

Lost ways continues to make slow progress and its essential that old records are checked by 2026
 The quiet lanes fiasco continues with further parts of Lancashire being identified.

There then followed a very interesting presentation by David Slater of the Lancaster Canal Trust on the history of, and future plans for, the Lancaster Canal.

Walks Programme

Enclosed is the walks programme from January to May 2008. There is now unfortunately a big issue over leaders for the short Sunday walks. In the current programme we have one person leading all 4 walks. This cannot go on and if more leaders don't come forward then the programme will have to be cut. So talk to Andy Manzie on 01772 736467 if

Take Action

Want to know how to help the Ramblers association in their campaigns. Go to the main Ramblers website and sign up for their newsletter www.ramblers.org.uk/newsletter/. They could be asking for examples of problems, for you to write to support a campaign or just some information on an event. Please try and help these campaigns as the more voices the more chance of something being done.

Footpath diversions feature high on the footpath secretary's workload and much has been done to try and preserve the footpath network in the development area round Bluebell Way Fulwood. Footpath closure and creation orders are rare in our area and none have occurred in the last year.

2007 saw the first gating orders in Preston. Whilst these mainly affected alleyways in the urban districts one local resident successfully lobbied for part of Fulwood footpath number 53 (Cadley Causeway to Tulketh school playing fields) to be gated.

A new challenge for 2008 is the proposed Guild Wheel. This is a 20 plus mile cycle route round Preston that broadly follows our own long established Round Preston Walk. Whilst we would normally support this type of endeavour the problem with the Wheel is that the proposed route will entail surfacing a number of grassy footpaths.

The Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show NEC 14-16 March (<http://www.theoutdoorsshow.co.uk/>)

The OS Outdoors Show has loads of interactive features, all the latest kit for the new season, major sporting events, top outdoor speakers and approximately 500 exhibiting brands and organisations

World Theatre - A fantastic line-up of outdoor celebs, including Simon King, Julia Bradbury, Alan Hinkes, Brian Blessed will be giving presentations in a custom-built outdoors theater.

Workshops - On anything from GPS to photography. The fun starts from 9am and tickets cost on the day £16 for adults and £9 for 16 or under and 60+. Can also be purchased in advance on 0844 415 4418 for £12 adults and £7 for 16 or under and 60+. Or if there is a group you can get 4 tickets for the price of 3.

A Short history of the Ramblers Association

The RA have commissioned a 7 1/2 min video on a short history of the association. To view it go to the RA Walk magazine web site and click on walktv on left hand menu. www.walkmag.co.uk/walktv/

Cotswold Outdoor

This shop is located in Fishergate opposite Waterstones. They are offering Ramblers members a **15%** discount with the production of their membership card and quoting reference number **R2201** and Mid Lancs area.

Walking Events (More on www.ramblers.org.uk/info/events/diary.html)

Garstang Walking Festival 3 - 11 May 2008

(www.wyrebc.gov.uk/Council_Services/Coast_and_Countryside_Services/Walking/)
The Garstang Walking Festival gives you the opportunity to explore one of North West England's best kept secrets - Garstang and the District's beautiful surrounding countryside. The 2008 festival offers a wide variety of events to suit all ages and abilities. For further information Tel 01995 602125 or e-mail lcs@wyrebc.gov.uk

Bowland Festival 1 - 8 June 2008

(www.bowlandfestival.com/)
Whether you're already familiar with the special qualities of the Forest of Bowland or are visiting for the first time, the Bowland Festival offers a unique opportunity to learn more about it's exceptional birds and wildlife, explore its heritage, enjoy its landscape and sample its delicious food and drink through a series of events and activities led by experts
Ring 01772 534140 for further details from March onwards.

Ullswater Walking Festival 2007 10th - 18th May 2008 (www.ullswater.co.uk/)

The programme will include about three fully guided walks every day, evening entertainment, equipment demonstrations and leaflets for walks without guides.

Newton Stewart Walking Festival 9 - 15 May

(www.newtonstewartwalkfest.com/)
WalkFest - the Newton Stewart Walking Festival - is now firmly established as the biggest walking festival in the South of Scotland. Galloway is a wonderful location for walking and whether you enjoy the challenge of our true hill walking experiences or our lower level themed routes. For more information contact Newton Stewart Walking Festival, c/o WRDC Business Centre, 6-8 Queen Street, Newton Stewart, DG8 6JL or Tel 01671 404500

Peak District Walking Festival 19 - 27 April 2008

(<http://www.visitpeakdistrict.com/>)
Set amid the spectacular Peak District scenery, the nine-day Walking Festival is host to a wide range of guided walks of varying grades, with local experts leading walks on themes such as food & drink, ghosts, heritage and geology. For more information contact helen.critchlow@derby.ac.uk

Llanelli Festival of Walks 23 - 26 May

(www.llanelliramblers.org.uk/)
Llanelli Ramblers organise and host the annual Llanelli Festival of Walks which is a three-day Spring Bank Holiday event that has attracted hundreds of visitors to the town since its beginnings in 1995 and has established Llanelli as a popular centre for walking [.uk](http://www.uk). For more information contact Nina: 01554 810979

The Ancient Tree Hunt

(www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk)

Ancient trees are living relics of incredible age that inspire in us feelings of awe and mystery. They have helped shape our history, and will help shape our future if we let them. Can you help us to reveal their secrets, discover the wildlife they sustain and unlock their stories gathered over centuries?

The Ancient Tree Hunt (ATH) involves thousands of people in finding and mapping all the fat, old trees across the UK and is right at the heart of the Woodland Trust's ancient tree conservation work. It will create a comprehensive living database of ancient trees and it's the first step towards cherishing and caring for them.

The ATH began in 2004, as a joint venture with the Tree Register of the British Isles and the Ancient Tree Forum, and has already collected more than 6,000 records. Now, thanks to additional funding from The Heritage Lottery Fund and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, it is stepping up a gear and, with your help and the assistance of many partner organisations, we aim to record at least 100,000 ancient trees throughout the UK by 2011.

This will give us a much better understanding of the number and size of ancient trees across the UK. You can also find details of ancient trees near where you live or places that you visit frequently.

The database will make it clear which of these trees you can easily visit. (For sites that are accessible, you may still need to enquire whether there are special opening times or entry charges.)

Ancient trees are found anywhere and everywhere – so this is a treasure hunt that everyone can take part in.

Take part in the Ancient Tree Hunt by finding, measuring and recording ancient trees – you can either spot them while you are out and about, or perhaps you already know about one in your local community, or even have one in your garden

Become an Ancient Tree Guardian to help us unlock matched funding from The Heritage Lottery Fund
Use the map to discover ancient trees near you

Local walking Guide Books / Leaflets

There are a number of local books / leaflets available for sale from various locations.

Garstang Tourist information point

Has a number single sheet walks available throughout their area ranging from 2 to 12 miles. Most of the walks are way marked and although the sheets have a map. It would be better if you take your own map as well. These are available for between 30 - 50p.

Rivington Ranger information point

Have a number of A3 size fold out leaflets walk information covering the local reservoirs and moors ranging from 2 - 10 miles. They are produced by both the West Pennine moors and United Utilites and cost from 30p to £1

Rivington Hall Barn café

Have a number of A5 booklets each containing 5 walks. The short circular walks range from 2 - 5 miles, while the half day walks go up to 8 miles. They all come with basic maps which are fine for the shorter walks, but I would take a map if going up on the moors. These cost £1.30 each