



RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION PRESTON GROUP

January 2009

2008 AGM

The Preston group held their combined walk, hotpot, AGM and slide show on Saturday 22th November 2008 at Grim-sargh village Hall. 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 with 25 members present. The chairman Bob Singleton made comments on that although no additional volunteers had come forward the group was functioning satisfactorily. Thanked all the committee members, Footpath walkers and walk leaders for all their work over the past year

The secretary Andrew Manzie reported on that mailing had reduced from central office as they now produce a 3 monthly newsletter. The central office have been putting more efforts into supporting volunteers and retaining our current membership. Information on the access points have improved a little with the additions on the LCC website Mario. But it only gives them at one scale and only one small piece at a time.

Current membership has been around the 260 level for most of this year, although nationally we have dropped. The change over to the new membership system has caused numerous problems. Leading to the fact we do not know accurately what our membership number is.

On the walks front the Wednesday walks and the long Sundays are well supported. The short Sunday program has only one leader, namely Andy Manzie. Gaps have appeared in the programme of late as is not always available. The immediate future for the walks is in doubt as is currently injured.

He also said that that after 15 years this is the last year that he is standing.

The treasurer Barry Rutledge presented copies of the balance sheet for the Year ending Oct 2008. The balance was currently 2208.15.

The footpath secretaries reported during the year 43 complaints have been sent to LCC and 40 clearances have been notified. Thirteen complaints were carried forward from last year, which means that there are 16 outstanding complaints

Footpaths under threat include those that surround or cross the Bradley Sand Pit complex where development plans include a 9 hole golf course with club house. The proposed Guild Wheel cycleway around the city still poses a "change of use" threat to some footpaths but revision to the route has

reduced the number of footpaths affected.

There have been no proposals to divert footpaths this year. Whilst there have been no permanent closure notices there have been several temporary closures.

Footpath walkers: Each year a few members walk selected footpaths to ensure that any problems are brought to the attention of LCC. This year all the footpaths in Barton, Broughton and Fulwood have been walked and footpaths in Lea are currently being tackled

The Group organised a very successful parish walk in Woodplumpton, followed by refreshments and a display promoting the work of the RA as part of the national "Use Your Path" campaign.

The countryside secretary had considered over 1,000 planning applications to see if they affected a PROW. 80 reports had required further checking. Six or seven visits to the Planning Office had been needed to establish details.

Andy Manzie commented that he covered the publicity role in a limit role. Mainly to ensure that the walks were distributed out. This needs a full time person.

The election of officers were
Chairman - David Thompson,
Vice Chairman - Catherine Osbaldeston
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 Eileen Bates and Bob Singleton were re-elected

The Area Secretary David Kelly then spoke on the progress of coastal access, update on quiet lanes and ongoing issues of getting information on access points.

This was followed by a very interesting presentation on trekking in Nepal given by Les Green, with contributions by the other three stars of the show. The vote of thanks was given by Bob Singleton .

Membership

Apologies to new members in the past year. Ongoing issues with our new membership system means that I have not been notified of all the people joining our group. So you have not received the customer welcome pack.

Walks Programme

Enclosed is the walks programme from January to May 2009. There is no short Sunday programme as the only leader is out with an injury. We need leaders for this type of walk as they are the ones people who start walking come on. So talk to Andy Manzie on 01772 736467 if you are willing to help.

Footpath News

The Group currently has 11 footpath reports lodged with Lancashire County Council the lowest figure ever and evidence that our programme of walking footpaths parish by parish is a successful and worthwhile activity. It's also a good way to get to know your local area. At present we have volunteers walking in Lea, Houghton and Whittingham parishes and plan to tackle the former Preston Borough area next. The borough has a network of over 60 footpaths and extra help to walk these would be appreciated. Contact Brian Dearnaley (01772-691421) if you can help.

Across Lancashire as a whole there are 931 outstanding complaints with stiles topping the problem list. As mentioned last time there is now a British Standard for gaps, gates and stiles which requires that the *least restrictive option* should be used. Lancashire County Council has already replaced some broken or poorly constructed stiles with gates.

The "Walk Your Paths" initiative in Woodplumpton parish was attended by 32 people and a follow up walk between Christmas and New Year attracted 14 people. Good links were forged with Woodplumpton Parish Council and St. Annes Church and your committee now wants to build on these successes. A further walk of around 4 miles has therefore been planned for Saturday 30th May 2009 to link in with the RA's "Get Walking Day". Parking will be available in the church car park and the meeting room will be open from 9.30 for a 10am start. Refreshments (tea, scones etc) will be available free of charge after the walk in the meeting room where maps of the area and other walking literature will be on display – put the date in your diary now! The next edition of Walk Magazine will have an article promoting the hopes and aspirations of Get Walking Day but basically we (Preston Group Committee) want to see you there to help and encourage others to GET WALKING.

The Ancient Tree Hunt challenge does not appear to have appealed to members as no reports of tree hugging have been received. If you couldn't find an ancient tree and still want to see one Bank Hall Action Group (local charity) has open days on 8th, 15th, 22nd February and 1st March. These days are themed around the hall's renowned display of snowdrops but as you wander through the woodland ancient yews (400+ years) and some impressive redwoods planted as specimen trees back in the 1800s are there to be admired (and hugged)!! Bank Hall is located on the A59 (T) just before the road turns sharply right to go over River Douglas at Bretherton. A public footpath runs alongside the grounds if you want to explore the area further. Further information on

Bank Hall can be found at www.bankhall.org.uk

Water Vole Project: The Wildlife Trust is hoping to save "Ratty" in the Northwest and have set up a project to survey and monitor water vole populations. If you want to get involved or would like to know more about water voles get in touch with Helen Laycock, Northwest Lowlands Water Vole Project Officer at hlaycock@lancswt.org.uk or 07740 419176.

Brain Dearnley

Obituaries

We regret to inform the membership that in the past few weeks we have lost 2 long standing former committee members.

Fred Coulthurst

Died last December and had been in a nursing home for several years. Fred held a number of positions within the committee, and for a number of years all at the same time. He was Chairman (87-98), Footpath Secretary (82-98) and Secretary (91-92 & 94). He also led a considerable number of walks, the last when he was 81 (6 miles). Some of his committee meetings were legendary as they would last over 4 hours. Happily these days they never last more than 2 hours.

Gordon McNamara

Died on the 17th January at Bury Hospital and his funeral will take place shortly. Gordon was on the committee from 1982 till 2004, but was active with the RA from the mid 60's. Although he did not have a specific role in the Preston Committee. He was along with his wife Ruth the area Footpath Secretaries. In that role you cannot praise them enough as they dealt with all planning applications, Footpath diversions & closures and Footpath Claims for the whole area. This work has largely been devolved back to the groups.

Vacancies

As seen in the AGM report, Andy Manzie is to step down at the next AGM. He currently does 5 jobs within the group and in future these should not be done by the same person. At the end of this newsletter is a list of the jobs and description of what they cover. There is a fuller description of the jobs along with interviews with people currently doing the role on the RA web site (www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer/roles/)

Without people in these role the group will cease to function. These roles are available now. This would allow a smooth transition over to the person taking on the role. There is training available. With Press & Publicity having a session in Manchester in June.

Apart from Secretary, the jobs only require a small amount of your time from time to time. If you are interested in any the roles, please contact Andy Manzie on 01772 736467

The Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show NEC 27-29 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 £17 for adults and £11 for 16 or under and 60+. Can also be purchased in advance on 0844 415 4418 or via the website for £13 adults and £8 for 16 or under and 60+.

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.

Footpath claims.

How many times have you used a footpath that is not on the map as a "definitive path"?

This means that there is a path there, for the public to use, but has not been given a description and a statement to make it an official footpath that is recognised legally, and so may not be on an Ordnance Survey map.

It also means that the path could be closed if the landowner so decided. This sometimes happens if the ownership of the

land changes or if a development or change of use is planned.

There are various paths in the Preston Area which have been claimed in the past and now are in regular use and cannot be closed; this does not mean that landowners cannot make it uncomfortable for walkers to use. Have you ever been confronted by dogs running loose in a farmyard or by barbed wire across the line of a footpath or tried to climb an unsafe stile? If any of the above situations occurs on your walk, or any other type of obstruction, we need to know, so that L.C.C. can be informed and hopefully take action to have the situation rectified.

There are some situations where paths have been accidentally left off the map but are legally definitive footpaths which need claiming to make it possible to use freely. When claiming a path we need to be able to say that, in the past, the route has been used by members of the public. This proof of use, backed up by the definitive path description, is one means of making sure that a footpath is included on the map as a usable path that is legally available for use without any obstructions.

You can help with footpath claims; when we need evidence of use, we will ask you to fill in the appropriate forms, to say you have used the path, and we can then put them in, together with the submission, to start the claim to L.C.C. Please enjoy your walking, but always try to help to maintain the footpath network by responding to requests about their management and access.

Joe Howard

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

Garstang Walking Festival 9 - 17 May 2009

(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 2009 festival offers a wide variety of events to suit all ages and abilities.

For further information Tel 01995 602125 or e-mail countryside@wyrebc.gov.uk

Newton Stewart Walking Festival 8 - 14 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 25 April—4 May

(<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 22 - 25 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. For more information contact Nina: 01554 810979

UPCOMING VACANCIES

(full job descriptions at www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer/roles/)

Secretary

To take the leading role in promoting the charitable work of the Ramblers at Group level. This is done by working with the committee to ensure a clearly defined role for the Area and by identifying priorities and opportunities for the Area where it can best contribute and make a difference to the local walking environment.

Duties

- Arrange Group meetings and the AGM as required by the constitution.
- Act as primary point of contact with central office, receiving regular monthly mailings and with general public/ other organisations.
- Maintain up-to-date records of Group Office Holders and submit to the Area Secretary regularly as necessary.
- Gather together relevant documents from members (eg. previous meetings minutes, reports from Office Holders, bulletins from central office) and circulate to members in time for meetings.
- Monitor the actions agreed at the last meeting to ensure that progress is being made
- Communicate regularly with other Group officers (particularly the Chair) to keep the committee business going well.

Membership Secretary

• The main purpose is to ensure that new or prospective members are given a warm welcome to the Group and are aware of the opportunities to get involved. They also have a role in encouraging the Group to carry out activities and events that may promote membership. However, actually carrying out promotional activities does not need to be part of the role

Duties

- Receive the monthly list of new members from the Area Membership Secretary and ensure that they receive an up-to-date welcome letter that explains the activities of the Group and where it fits within the broader Ramblers' Association.
- Take an active interest in the membership growth rate for the Group, ensure that membership development features on the agenda for the Group committee at regular intervals (eg, once every 6 months), and that the discussion involves actions that the Group could take to promote membership growth.

Publicity Secretary

To enable the Ramblers to grow by attracting new members and supporters. To enable your Group to flourish and grow by attracting new members.

Duties

To promote your Group and its activities to non-members in and around your Group's patch. This might be done, for instance, by

- Producing publicity material about your Group (e.g. posters, leaflets, displays) and arranging their distribution in suitable local locations
- Keeping the local media informed about your Group's activities through articles, regular features or advertisements.
- Organising publicity stands at local fairs or public places (e.g. market places, popular walking locations)
- Setting up a Group website and keeping this updated regularly with upcoming walks, local campaigning work and information about your Group

Newsletter Editor

To communicate and promote the work of the Ramblers in the Group in print to all the Group membership. By doing this, the aim is to inform members of the concerns facing walkers locally and valuable work of the Group to address them.

Duties

To produce an attractive and accessible Group newsletter on a regular basis (normally 3 times a year) and ensure that it is distributed amongst all the members of the Group

Walks Co-ordinator

To co-ordinate the compilation of a varied programme of Led Walks on behalf of the Group. The programme should contain sufficient variety in order to be attractive and accessible to all types of people at all stages of life.

Duties

- Compile and publish a rolling programme of Group walks, normally 3 times a year
- Maintain a contact list of Walk Leaders and periodically inform the Led Walks Team.
- Encourage walkers to become Walk Leaders
- Ensure that walks are entered onto the Ramblers Walks-finder, so that potential members have a full range of walks to choose from

Website Editor

To communicate and promote the work of the Ramblers in the Group using the internet to the Group membership and beyond to the wider public. By doing this, the aim is to inform people of the concerns facing walkers locally and the valuable work of the Group to address them.

Duties

- To maintain a Group website updated both in content and the structure.
- To gather information from office holders, local groups or central office communications which can be made interesting or relevant reading for members and non-members.