

Lancaster RA Guide for Leaders



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1. Introduction

Welcome to the Lancaster RA Leader's Guide, version 2a, Jan 2018. It is designed to draw together information useful to leaders and should be especially useful for new leaders and those considering leading walks in the future. Much of the information is taken from the national RA website (<http://www.ramblers.org.uk>), policy, advice and volunteer sections and existing documents pertaining to Lancaster ramblers. The website is useful for additional information. The pack is complemented by the small pocket leaflet "Walk Leader's Checklist", copies of which are also available within the Group. The Guide brings together many aspects of walking and leading.

Good leaders are key to our enjoyment of group walks and the Guide we hope will help us to develop as leaders. It is seen as an active document that will develop with time and input from experienced leaders. It is by no means cast in stone and should be thought of as a communal document to which we can all add with our ongoing experience.

Much of the document may already be familiar to you but aspiring leaders should find plenty of interest to them. The Additional Comments section we see as a common repository for snippets of information and thoughts gleaned through experiences that we can all share.

Much of the information is general and applicable to led walkers as well as leaders but the walkers always expect the leader to know these things! The RA run Volunteer courses on many topics in various parts of the country including ones on planning and leading walks – see the RA website for further details.

2. The Role of the Leader

The role of the leader may be summed up as sharing your enthusiasm and passion for walking by leading people on group walks in a welcoming, safe, responsible and enjoyable way.

The following skills and experience are useful:-

- Passion for walking and an empathy with all the charitable aims of the Ramblers.
- Previous experience of walking your local area/community.
- Good communication skills and a friendly nature.
- Leadership abilities to keep a group together and remain calm during unforeseen circumstances.

The duties of the leader in planning the walk, at the start, during and after the walk are discussed in the following two sections.

3. Planning a Walk



General Information

There are several stages in planning a walk.

- How long the walk is to be, how many miles?

The length of the walk is intimately connected with the amount of climbing, time available and the terrain.

Think about how far you are able to walk in the time you have. The average walker takes an hour to walk 3 miles, and around an extra 30 minutes to climb 300 metres (1000ft) (Naismith's rule), but you should adjust this depending on your fitness levels. It isn't just hills that will slow you down; mud, uneven path surfaces, stiles, high winds and poor weather will have an impact. A group of walkers is often slower.

- How long is the walk to be? How many hours? How Fast?

Lancaster Wednesday day walks / evening walks and afternoon walks typically average around 2 – 2.5 mph walking speed, excluding pauses at stiles, gates etc and coffee, lunch and other planned stops, and around 1.5 – 2 mph including these stops. Saturday walks are at a similar walking pace but the conditions are typically rougher. Typical distance and times are given on the next page.

It's important to plan time for rests, breaks and any sightseeing, so that you don't feel rushed.

Don't forget to include extra time for a change of plan, or unexpected problems such as bad weather, tiredness or injury, or a blocked path. Plan in 'escape routes' and always check the weather forecast on the day. Could there be any difficult stream crossings if it rains all day? Changes of plan are minimized by first recceing the walk but things can change on the day. Preparation of a route card on the recce is useful for the walk itself so that one can keep track of progress and time (see below).

- What time of the year the walk is to be led?

The same walk on a nice summer's day is very different to it on a wet, windy and cold winter's day. Is there enough daylight in winter for the walk especially if there is a last minute change of route.

- Which area have you chosen for the walk?

This will determine the terrain and type of path – fields, moorland, mountain, woodland, farm tracks, narrow lanes etc.

- Climbing and terrain

Once you have decided on the place, you should consider the type of terrain that would suit you and your group's fitness best and how long you want your walk to be.

- Check for suitable car parking, public transport options, refreshments and toilet facilities
- Is there a special reason to visit at a specific time?

For instance, propensity of daffodils, bluebells etc or to coincide with a special event of interest to ramblers.

- Try to ensure an interesting walk with a varied selection of terrain and features and a minimum of road walking.

- Unless the route is very familiar to you in a recent time frame, always recce the route first. Note any critical navigation points, hazards or potential problems, adjusting as necessary. If you have a GPS, the Tracking facility may be found useful on the day of the walk if it is the same as the route of the recce. It is often worth examining these on a large scale map – typically on-line using MARIO for Lancashire (<http://mario.lancashire.gov.uk/agsmario/>) or the Cumbria Definitive map (http://hims.cumbria.gov.uk/wip3_no_login/map.aspx?cg=prow) or the North Yorkshire Definitive map (http://maps.northyorks.gov.uk/connect/analyst/?mapcfg=Out_and_About). In this way routes through farms etc may be more clearly checked. The use of the OS website ([www. Ordnancesurvey.co.uk/maps](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/maps)) for members is also useful for printing fully up-to-date 1:25,000 maps in a larger size ("Fit map to page") for easy use on a walk. The only down side is that 6-10 A4 sheets may be required but clarity is much improved.

- Check timings, rest and toilet points, escape or alternative routes and mobile phone coverage.

- Route cards

Most walks can be memorized or highlighted on a map but, especially if you are undertaking a more demanding walk, consider making your own route card. You can note the location of checkpoints along the way (features or grid references), times before checkpoints, bearings and 'escape routes' in the event of an accident or poor weather. Route cards have the added advantage of letting you know whether you are up or down on time throughout the walk. Always add more information than you think you might need rather than insufficient.

- If using Access Land, check temporary closure information – fire, shooting etc. Check the Natural England website at <https://www.gov.uk/right-of-way-open-access-land/use-your-right-to-roam>

- It is often desirable to have an easy end section to a walk – a stiff climb at the end of the day may not go down well!

With reference to **Lancaster RA walks**, the following details should be noted and considered:

- Typically:
 - Mid-week full day walks – 6-8 miles (4 – 5 hours)
 - Weekend, full day walks – 7-12 miles (5 - 7 hours)
 - Sunday, afternoon walks – 4-5 miles (2-3 hours)
 - Evening Walks – 3-4 miles (1.5 – 2.5 hours)
- As shown in the Lancaster RA walk programme, climbing grades are as follows;

1 – 2000/3000 ft.;	2 – 1500/2000 ft.;	3 – 1000/1500 ft.
4 – 500/1000 ft.;	5 < 500 ft.;	6 – fairly flat.
- Degrees of terrain difficulty are as follows:
 - A – Very strenuous walking, including scrambling or very rough moorland
 - B – Strenuous walking, possibly steep or rough moorland
 - C – Moderate walking, possibly including some climbing
 - D – Easy walk (with respect to terrain)
- For the range of walks we do, combined with the mileage, the following grades pertain to the walks as follows:
 - Mid-week full day walks – 6-8 miles, grades – C4 to D6 typically (up to C3)
 - Weekend, full day walks – 7-12 miles – A1 to C4 typically
 - Sunday, afternoon walks – 4-5 miles – D5 to D6 typically
 - Evening Walks – 3-4 miles – D5 to D6 typically
- Areas:- LD – Lake District; L – Local; B – Bowland; YD – Yorkshire Dales
HENP – Howgills, Eden, North Pennines; RV – Ribble Valley
- Liaise with the Group's Walks Co-ordinator (2017/8: Libby Hacking) and choose a walk that is suitable for the programme and that complements other walks in the programme.
- Everyone under 18 must be accompanied by an adult with parental responsibility. In all cases leaders must be satisfied that the person under 18 and the responsible adult fulfil the other requirements for suitability to walk. Young children should only be allowed on the walk if it is suitable for them.
- People with special needs must be accompanied by someone responsible for their direct care (who needn't be a Ramblers member).
- We regret that only registered assistance dogs are allowed on the walks.
- Smoking is not permitted on Lancaster RA walks in any form.
- The minimum number of walkers on an official Lancaster RA walk is 3 fit, adult persons. To be covered by Ramblers Insurance, a walk must be a recognised Ramblers activity, i.e. in the Walks Programme or on the web site.

- Be prepared with alternative walks for the cases of bad weather or insufficient cars for transport.
- Check the fitness and equipment of walkers and be prepared to turn inadequately equipped walkers away.
- Be prepared to answer queries from potential attendees.
- We are encouraging all of our walkers to carry a laminated tag or equivalent which gives information for an emergency; contact telephone number and any critical medical conditions. Tags can be obtained from Brian Jones (b.jones@physics.org or 01524 732305). See also At the Meeting Point.
- Costs of making a 'recce' are chargeable. There is an expense claim form on the Group Web Site, <http://www.lancasterramblers.org.uk/Volunteer%20expenses%20form.pdf> . Just claim from the Treasurer. David Todd, (d131todd@yahoo.co.uk).
- Lancaster RA walkers currently meet at Kingsway Retail Park (Pizza Hut etc) car park (the departure time is given in the programme, please meet at least 10 minutes prior to this time) and depart at the designated time using the minimum number of cars. Normally this means leading a circular walk. Use of public transport, entirely or in part, means you can also walk a "linear" route from A to B rather than having to end up where you started from, just to return to your car. Don't forget to check public transport times (and any disruptions to services) before you head out if public transport is used. Don't forget any bus passes or rail cards.

4. Leading the Walk

- The leader is in charge and is responsible for the safety and enjoyment of the party.
- Leaders are covered under the RA group insurance for any accidents as long as they are formal RA walks, the leader is a member of the RA and the cause of the accident is not down to gross negligence on the part of the leader. Details are available on the RA website (from Home, search Insurance matters).
- Your regular car insurance is not compromised by accepting donations as long as it is not for profit. The suggested donation complies with this ruling.
- Check the weather for the day for the locality of the walk the day before the walk.

Before the Walk

- Prepare copies of written, unambiguous instructions to the starting place for drivers
- Depending on the details of the walk, consider seriously taking the following items:
 - Map, compass, flashlight, mobile phone, GPS (if available), whistle, first aid kit, bivvi bag and perhaps extra water.

At the Meeting Point

- On the day, at the meeting point, meet and greet members, especially new people. Check their membership status. Non-members can join the walks on 2/3 occasions after which they are expected to join.
- For new walkers, tactfully check their ability, gear, food and drink. Do not let them compromise the party. If in doubt, the offer of an emergency details tag may enable information to be obtained in a discrete way.
- We are encouraging all of our walkers to carry a laminated tag, or equivalent, which gives information for an emergency; contact telephone number and any critical medical conditions. Any new group members should be issued with a tag by the leader.
- Those with mobile phones are encouraged to use the ICE facility.
- Arrange travel into cars and consider return groupings.
- Since free, all-day parking is not possible at the Kingsway Retail Park, car drivers not using their cars need to park elsewhere. The location will be suggested by the leader but typically for trips north we use the Aqueduct car park, trips east we use the Aqueduct or Bull Beck Picnic site near Caton and for trips south we use Barton Road.
- Make sure that each car knows the start location and the route to the start.
- Anyone wishing to go directly to the start of the walk should contact the leader in advance. They are warned that the party may not set out so they go at their own risk. Take their mobile number so that they can be contacted. Also consider the amount of parking at the start, cars departing from the meeting point should have priority. Have a back-up plan if parking is tight.

At the Start of the Walk

- If any visitors meet at the start tactfully check their ability, gear, food and drink at the outset. Do not let them compromise the party. If in doubt, the offer of an emergency details tag may enable information to be obtained in a discrete way.
- For large groups, eg 10 or more, always appoint a strong walker as back-marker and keep in contact with him/her throughout the walk. Ideally they should have a map/compass or map GPS and be familiar with the route, if necessary, via a briefing.
- Give the group a brief summary of the walk and an expected return time.
- Do a head count, check the time and after walking a few yards check that everyone is following. Do this after each major stop.
- Note that groups of people in general, and walkers are no exception, feel safe in a group and are often less safety conscious, especially with regard to road traffic. Leaders should be aware of this.

On the Walk

- When on the walk, lead from the front but keep the backmarker in sight so that the party does not become strung out. Set a pace to suit the capabilities of the party and the advertised walk grade.
- Do not let fellow walkers distract you from accurate navigation – it is all too easy to miss a fork in the path, or stile in a wall, when chatting.
- Stop after stiles (or group of stiles) to check that everyone is over safely. Do not pressurize the party to get over quickly, slipping can cause nasty bruising and scarfing of the legs.
- Stop at all junctions to ensure no-one goes the wrong way.
- Regularly check the route using a map / compass as necessary.
- Monitor the condition of all walkers, especially the slower ones.
- If a member of the party starts to lag they may get discouraged which will make the situation worse. Another member of the party, as well as the backmarker, should be asked to walk with them.
- Ensure everyone behaves responsibly – leaves gates as found (usually shut), single file through crops, climb gates (only if you have to) at the hinge end. Do not allow anyone to climb walls and stick to the PRoWs.
- Do not allow anyone in the group to leave the party and find their own route. They may not meet up with the main group where they expect to and this will cause many problems. This may be relaxed in the case of medical problems and their route is wholly along a road or obvious track.
- Be alert – escape or alternative routes, weather, time, party condition. **Do not hesitate to turn back or change the route if necessary.**
- Watch out for hazards – cows, calves, bulls and bullocks (see later), slippery downhill slopes, stream crossings, roads..
- Be aware of walkers getting ahead of the leader – they would then dictate the pace and maybe the route! This can be relaxed when ascending a hill but make sure everyone knows to wait at the top. In the same vein, do not stop to talk in the middle of the party.
- Deal with any questions and issues with good humour and patience.
- Emergencies – see later. Phone 999 or preferably, from a mobile, 112. Police / Mountain rescue.

After the Walk

- Settle up the travel donation with the car drivers
- Make sure everyone has returned and leaves at the end of the walk – don't leave anyone behind!
- Arrange to meet at the tea shop if desired. On mid-week walks especially, the leader should suggest a tea shop but go with the flow if an alternative is generally preferred.

- Report any incidents or accidents to the Group Secretary (2017/8: David Johnson) who will help you to fill out a form. If it is of a serious nature requiring outside assistance then the report has to be compiled in more detail.
- Report any footpath defects to the Footpath Secretary (2017/8: Neil Herbert).
- Review the success of the walk at the end of the day – could any improvements be made or lessons learned for next time?
- If you or anyone on your walk enjoys taking photographs you can send some (showing walkers plus scenery) to photos@lancasterramblers.org.uk for publication on our web site and social media.
- We would like to get reports of our activities into the Lancaster Guardian ‘Social Scene’. These are only short items of 100 words or so. If you, or someone on your walk, can draft a suitable interesting description of your walk please send it to the Press Officer (2017/8: Joy Greenwood) There is a Tuesday deadline for the Thursday paper.

Additional comments

- At most times there will be other experienced leaders on the walk to whom you can seek advice if necessary but you must be prepared to “go it alone” or take an experienced leader with you. Tailor the walk to suit your capabilities.
- No radios should be played on the walk or during breaks.
- Mobile phones – except on Footpath check walks – should be left on silent and social calls of a non RA nature should not be taken or made on the walk (unless made discretely, away from the group, typically, at breaks) or when travelling to or from the walk. If calls are necessary, they should be made discretely.
- How do I deal with obstructive/difficult behaviour on a walk?
Different types of people go on walks and difficult behaviour is rare but it can occur. As a walk leader it’s important that you feel confident in dealing with situations as they happen; after all, you’re responsible for the enjoyment of the overall group. Speak to the person in a calm and professional manner. Try not to be put blame on the person as other issues might be affecting their behaviour. Try to be open and listening but also being assertive that disruptive behaviour won’t be tolerated. If you feel that the situation isn’t being resolved, you have the option to tell the person to leave the group walk.
- How do I deal with someone showing inappropriate behaviour? The first thing to remember is that your group is there to support you. If a walker reports an incident to you, treat the incident as confidential and if deemed necessary report it to the proper officials but discuss with your group chair, or appropriate person, keeping confidentiality.

5. Public Rights of Way

In England and Wales we have over 140,000 miles of public rights of way, providing the ability to walk recreationally and to get from one place to another on foot, sometimes by using paths which have been walked for thousands of years. These public rights of way should be maintained by your local Highway Authority and are recorded on official maps (called definitive maps) in England and Wales. Public rights of way are not just footpaths - there are bridleways and byways which the public has a right to use. Unfortunately not all public rights of way are recorded on definitive maps or shown on the Ordnance Survey, and neither are other paths which are open by permission or under other arrangements. The Ramblers work to protect public rights of way and their Lost Ways project works to return these paths to the public domain.

Rights of way and cattle



The RA works to ensure that walkers are not exposed to unnecessary risks caused by cattle kept on land to which the public has access.

Farmers are allowed to keep cattle in fields with public access, but legislation bans the keeping of bulls in fields crossed by rights of way, unless they are less than 10 months old, or not of a recognized dairy breed. Beef bulls in such fields must be accompanied by cows or heifers

Whilst the law on bulls is specific, incidents in which members of the public are chased or injured by cattle are far more likely to involve cows with calves.

Walking near livestock

The countryside is an inspiring place to walk but it can also be little daunting when cows and bulls are grazing near your path.

However, the countryside is a working environment and it's important to be mindful and respectful of farms and farm animals, particularly during spring when cattle are rearing their young.

Dogs are a major annoyance to livestock. Although our Group walks do not allow dogs, be aware of other dogs nearby.

Here's some advice from the RA experts on what do when walking near cattle or other large farm animals:

Do

- Stop, look and listen on entering a field. Look out for any animals and watch how they are behaving, particularly bulls or cows with calves.
- Avoid getting between cows and their calves.
- Be prepared for cattle to react to your presence.
- Move quickly, calmly and quietly, keep together and if possible walk around the herd.
- If they try to get too close, clap your hands loudly.
- Remember to close gates behind you when walking through fields containing livestock.
- Report any frightening incidents or attacks to the landowner, the highway authority, the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), and also the police if it's of a serious nature.
- Keep the Lancaster RA committee informed of any problems you experience.

Don't

- Don't put yourself at risk by walking close to cattle.
- Don't startle them
- Don't panic or run – most cattle will stop before they reach you; if they follow just walk on quietly
- Don't try to stroke or feed them, they are not pets.
- Don't stop to rest in the field with cattle, especially bullocks, they can be very inquisitive

So what do you do when cattle are obstructing the path? Find another way, by going around the cattle. If cattle are blocking a path through a field, you're well within your rights to find a safe way, away from the path to avoid them. You should then re-join the footpath as soon as possible – and when you consider it safe to do so.

6. Report path or access problems



Can't walk where your map says you should be able to walk? When you're out walking you'll sometimes come across a broken stile or overgrown hedge obstructing a footpath. Or occasionally you might be blocked from walking on access land. By reporting these types of problems you'll be helping out the next walker that comes along.

Report the problem to the Footpath secretary at footpaths@lancasterramblers.org.uk or 'phone the current secretary (2017/8: Neil Herbert 01524 822553). Please state the following:-

- a. Accurate grid reference for the problem
- b. Location – to where is the problem close, eg farm, road etc
- c. Nature of the problem
- d. Photo of the problem if possible. This is very useful

The footpath secretary will typically add parish and footpath number to the report and send it to the local authority. Report problems in and out of our area. For problems outside the area, the issue will be sent to the local RA footpath secretary.

7. Navigation

Map Reading



Maps are simply an accurate picture of the ground as seen from above, scaled down from life size, and with symbols to show particular features and landmarks

The Basics

- On a 1:25 000 map, such as an OS Explorer, one unit of length on the map represents 25,000 units on the ground. So 1cm on the map represents 25,000cm or 250 metres on the ground. On a 1:50 000 map, 1cm on the map represents 500 metres on the ground.
- To find out what features the different symbols represent, for example buildings, different kinds of church, electricity pylons, roads and railways, woods, orchards, scrub or marsh and so on, consult the key shown on the map. The best way to learn these symbols is to relate them to the way they appear on the ground.
- Some map markings on the map do not show up on the ground, such as council boundaries, contours and grid lines.
- Rights of way marked on maps will often be visible as a distinct path or track on the ground with stiles, but in less well-walked areas the path may not be visible. Footpaths and bridleways are marked as green dashes on OS Explorer maps and magenta on OS Landranger maps. In some places arrow waymarks may be present.
- Do remember that, although a good map will remain useful for at least a few years, the landscape is ever-changing and you should not be surprised if some features on the ground do not agree with your map.
- The presence of a stile does not necessarily imply a PRoW, it may be just for farm use.

Calculating distance and height

To measure the approximate distance of your route, take a piece of thin string and lay it carefully along the exact route on the map, then lay it straight along the scale line on the map's margin. With practice, you'll soon learn to estimate the distances involved by eye, but don't forget the extra effort of climbing hills when calculating how long the route will take to walk.

Contours are lines connecting points of equal height above sea level that show the relief of the land. Together with spot heights, they portray the shape of the landscape, its height, the form taken by hills and valleys, the steepness of slopes, and so on. On OS Explorer maps, the interval between contours is five metres in lowland areas and 10 metres where mountainous. At random points along many of the contour lines a number is shown to indicate its height, always printed so that the top of the number points uphill. Every fifth contour line is printed more thickly than the others. The closer together contours are, the steeper the ascent or descent for the walker.

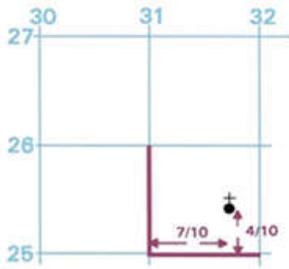
Spot heights – shown as a number beside a dot – appear at strategic points, including along roads where they level out at the top or foot of a hill. These can be a useful guide where there aren't many contour height numbers.

Grid references

All OS maps are criss-crossed by vertical and horizontal grid lines (coloured blue on OS Explorer maps) which are 4cm apart on 1:25,000 scale maps and 2cm apart on the 1:50,000 scale. A grid reference uses six figures to identify a particular spot on a map that is 100 metres square. The first three specify the vertical lines (the eastings) and the second three the horizontal (the northings).

So with the grid reference TQ303782, TQ indicates the 100 sq km of Britain designated by Ordnance Survey's National Grid as 'TQ', and the location is 30 squares and three tenths east and 78 squares and two tenths north. Sometimes four-figure grid references are used to give a rough location that covers the map grid square, not a specific point within it. GPS devices will often give a position to 10 figures (5 + 5), however the fifth position will probably fluctuate with signal strength.

How to take or locate a six-figure grid reference



What is the grid reference of the church in the example above?

- Identify the 1km square containing the church. Do this by selecting its left and bottom sides (imagine a letter 'L' bounds the square).
- Take the numbers on the edge of the map for the corner of these two sides (horizontal and then vertical). This gives: 31_25_ (Thus: 3125 is the four-figure grid reference of the square).
- Now an extra figure must be added to each pair of numbers to specify to the nearest 100m where the church lies within the square. Estimate, or measure, the number of tenths (100m) the church lies from the two sides, once again starting from the corner and working away. It is seven tenths from the corner horizontally and four tenths from the corner vertically, so the 6-figure grid reference is: 317254.

Note: Horizontal (eastings) numbers first then Vertical (northings) numbers second.

To find a point on a map using a six-figure grid reference, simply do the reverse. Remember to start with the eastings (the first three figures) and then move up the northings (the last three). **A helpful reminder is the saying: 'go along the corridor and then up the stairs'.**

- See more at: <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/navigation/map-reading>.

Types of maps



Ordnance Survey maps

The best and most comprehensive maps of Britain for walkers are Ordnance Survey (OS) Explorer maps at a scale of 1:25 000. These are divided into sheets covering the whole of Great Britain. See www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk.

They give a clear depiction of the physical landscape, detailing a range of geographical features, landmarks, field boundaries, valley contours, summit heights, rivers, roads, railways, villages and towns.

Most importantly, they also show public rights of way and open access land in England and Wales, 'core paths' in Scotland, many long-distance trails and off-road cycle ways.

They also contain lots of extra information for visitors, including information centres, pubs and tourist attractions.

OS also publishes another range of maps known as Landranger maps. At a scale of 1:50 000, these are less detailed than the Explorer maps. They have the advantage of covering a greater area on each sheet and some experienced navigators prefer them, but they may not give the all of the detailed information, such as field boundaries, that will help you on your walk. For leading walks an Explorer map, 1:25,000 is much preferred.

Digital maps

Ordnance Survey Explorer and Landranger maps, and some Harvey maps, are now available in digital form. There are also a number of websites which offer map extracts online. In our area the following are useful:

MARIO for Lancashire: <http://mario.lancashire.gov.uk/agsmario/>

Cumbria Definitive Map: Cumbria/Yorkshire Dales: http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/roads-transport/public-transport-road-safety/countryside-access/Definitive_Map/Definitive_Map.asp

With these, several maps can be printed if required, at large scale to show the paths around farms, correct side of walls etc. You may need to spend time studying them to understand and use the features, especially with MARIO.

Most commercial digital mapping packages allow you to:

- View and print maps flexibly to suit the needs of your walk. Manually marking grid lines on them can be useful when checking your location.
- Overlay your own route onto maps.
- Calculate route distances, changes in height and walking times.
- Integrate with commonly used GPS devices
- Upload and edit routes as traces recorded on a GPS. Upload and edit other people's routes, for example from online route libraries. (Most systems now support common formats for exchanging routes, like GPX).

For smartphone users there are an increasing number of apps which allow you to get high quality maps directly on your phone – though make sure that the system doesn't depend on your phone finding a high bandwidth signal, as coverage can be patchy in some rural areas.

Even if you are using a GPS device or smart phone to navigate your way, it's always best to pack a paper map too, particularly in remote areas, where signals may be a problem.

Harvey maps

No other map publisher covers all of Britain like Ordnance Survey (OS), but there are a few specialist publishers that produce maps specifically for walkers. The most important of these is Harvey, which makes original and detailed maps of popular upland areas and long-distance paths at 1:25 000 and 1:40 000 scales.

Using a compass



Learning how to use a compass is a skill that everyone who enjoys the outdoors will find useful and can be essential if you walk in isolated areas or in more challenging conditions.

To navigate successfully you will need to use your compass alongside a map – so first make sure you are comfortable with reading maps first. In urban areas and lowland countryside in good visibility, good map readers can navigate well without using a compass.

For walking an orienteering compass is recommended, eg Silva, with a rectangular base (like the below), which is marked with km/m scales that can be seen even in poor light.

Uses of a compass

A compass helps you to:

- Know which direction you are travelling in – this is called your heading
- Align or orientate your map with your surroundings – setting the map
- Work out which direction an object or destination is from you – its bearing
- Follow a straight line of travel – called following a bearing

Main features of a compass

- Baseplate - the plastic base
- Compass dial - also known as the compass wheel, with a mark every two degrees covering 360 degrees, and the four main compass points N-S-E-W
- Magnetic needle - red end for north, white for south
- Compass lines - on the bottom of the base. These are also called 'orienting lines'

- Orienting arrow - fixed and aligned to north within the dial
- Index line - extension of the direction of travel arrow
- Direction of travel arrow - the big arrow at the end of the baseplate
- Map scales 1:25 000, 1:50 000 and metric measurer (known as Romer scales)

Magnetic north

The key thing about the compass is that the needle always points to magnetic north. This is slightly different from grid north, and the difference between them varies in different areas of the world and over time. Information about this 'magnetic declination' is usually printed on walkers' maps. Over short distances it should make little difference to your navigation but if you are walking on a single bearing for a very long distance in open countryside you need to compensate for it in order to navigate accurately. For our area it is currently just over 1 degree W of N (2016).

Magnetic N, Grid N and True N information is printed on the bottom right of OS maps.

Checking your heading

- Hold the compass in front of you with the direction of travel arrow pointing in the direction you're walking
- Rotate the dial so that the N aligns with the red end of the compass needle
- The figure on the rim of the housing at the index line is your heading

Setting the map

An excellent use of a compass is to help you set the map, aligning it so that it corresponds to the surrounding landscape. This makes it much easier to relate the map to what you see on the ground.

- Put the map as flat as possible in front of you
- Put the compass anywhere on the map
- Turn the map and compass until the needle on the compass aligns with the north-south gridlines on the map, with the red needle pointing to the top of the map

Following a bearing

- Find a distant feature on the map that you want to walk towards
- Identify this feature on the ground
- Put the compass on the map so that orienting lines on the compass point line up with your route towards that feature, as it is shown on the map
- Without moving the map or compass, rotate the dial so that the orienting arrow points towards north on the map - the figure on the rim of the housing at the index line is the bearing you need to follow
- Take the compass off the map and hold it with the direction of travel arrow pointing straight ahead away from you
- Rotate your whole body, including the compass, until the red end of the needle lies parallel with the orienting arrow

- The direction of travel arrow should now point towards your distant feature
- Walk in the direction indicated by the direction of travel arrow until you reach your destination, checking your bearing along the way

The same technique can also be used to check the direction of a path on the ground after taking its bearing from the map.

Advanced techniques include using a map and compass with a pencil to locate your exact position by taking bearings from two or more distant landmarks, known as resectioning.

It is often best to document any important bearings at the time of the recce rather than on the walk itself. In many cases the bearing can be estimated from the map (N – 0, NE – 45, E – 90, etc) and it is a good idea to check that the path one is following does match the bearing you should take, especially at a fork in the path. In mountainous area bearings need to be taken more accurately especially when the path is indistinct and there is only one route down.

Remember, if there is an internal conflict between one’s brain or gut feeling and the map/compass, the latter is nearly always right.

More information

For further information try the RA article on navigation or check out the Ordnance Survey guide to using a compass.

Using a GPS device



A GPS (Global Positioning System) device is a hand-held receiver that picks up signals from satellites circling the earth, enabling you to locate your current position to an accuracy of 10-20m. Most modern GPS devices can then show that position on a map and, if you have stored a pre-programmed route, help you navigate along it.

GPS devices are similar to the SatNav devices now used by many drivers. However, while SatNavs use information about the road network to navigate step by step towards your destination, there is no equivalent “dataset” of information about off-road paths and access areas for walkers. So although the GPS can help you find your way, it won’t give step by step instructions like SatNavs. Many GPS Apps are available for Smart ‘phones.

Many walkers find GPS devices a useful gadget but they aren’t a substitute for traditional maps and compasses in outdoor navigation. This is because:

- To use a GPS successfully you will already need to have a reasonable understanding and experience of map reading and navigation.
- GPS can't be relied upon, especially in remote areas where accurate navigation is safety critical. The signal may fail in particular conditions, the device may fail, or the batteries may run flat, particularly if you're unexpectedly delayed. Carry spare batteries.
- However they are very useful in confirming your exact position on the map from the 10 figure grid reference they display.

Walking guidebooks

Guidebooks have been around in some shape or form since antiquity. There are several guide books available from Lancaster booksellers detailing walks in our areas including some devised by Lancaster Ramblers. Contact the Lancaster RA Secretary for details.

In many cases these can form the basis of your planned walk but will often need modification to suit your requirements of length, grade etc.

8. Types of Paths in England and Wales



A right of way in England and Wales is a path that anyone has the legal right to use on foot, and sometimes using other modes of transport. Legally, a public right of way is part of the Queen's highway and subject to the same protection in law as all other highways, including trunk roads.

Footpath

- On a footpath, the right of way is on foot only.

Bridleway

- On a bridleway, the right of way is for walkers, and those travelling on horseback and on bicycle.

Byways open to all traffic (BOATs)

- You can walk, ride, cycle and drive vehicles, including motor vehicles, on these types of paths
- Although legally open to all types of vehicle, BOATs were defined by parliament as routes used mainly on foot or horseback, and it is this which distinguishes BOATs from unclassified roads

Restricted Byways

- Rights of way for those on foot, horseback, bike and horse-drawn carriage
- These routes cannot be used by motor vehicles

Green Lanes

- The term 'green lane' has no legal meaning, but is symbolic of the often ancient, unsurfaced tracks that form part of the rights of way network
- In law many green lanes are classed and recorded on the definitive map as BOATs, but some may be footpaths, bridleways or restricted byways

White roads and Other Routes with Public Access 'ORPAs'

- If you look closely at an Ordnance Survey (OS) map you will see lots of uncoloured tracks - these are sometimes referred to as white roads
- It's not always possible to tell whether white roads carry public rights - some white roads will be public and some private
- Those which are deemed public (because they are maintained by the highway authority) are shown on OS maps with green or red dots, and referred to in the key as an ORPAs (Other Routes with Public Access)
- It's not possible to tell if they have other rights, i.e. for users on horseback or in a vehicle but there will at least be a public right of way on foot

Permissive paths

- Permissive paths are not rights of way but paths which an owner has given the public permission to use
- The permission may be granted on a long-term basis but it can be withdrawn at any time

Towpaths

- These are paths which run alongside canals or navigable rivers, originally used by horses towing barges
- Whilst some are official rights of way, those that aren't are usually available for walkers to use

- Most towpaths are managed by the **Canal and River Trust** who encourage walkers to use them. The towpaths around Lancaster are referred to as “green corridors” and the public is encouraged to use them.

Cycle tracks

- These are usually specially created paths, over which there is a right of way on pedal cycle and possibly also on foot
- Off-road multi-user paths are also available to walkers - these often form part of local cycle networks or the National Cycle Network promoted by the charity **Sustrans**
- Legally they may be defined as public rights of way, roads from which motor traffic has been banned, or permissive paths
- Some local networks of multi-user routes are known as greenways and may combine off-road paths with sections of quiet or traffic-calmed roads
- These may not be marked as ProWs on Ordnance survey maps.

Know your signs



Here are some common signs you're likely to come across while out walking and what they mean:



Applies in England and Wales. Open to walkers only, waymarked with a yellow arrow.



Applies in England and Wales. Open to walkers, horse-riders and cyclists, waymarked with a blue arrow.



Applies in England and Wales. Open to walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and horse-drawn vehicles, waymarked with a plum coloured arrow.



Byway open to all traffic (BOAT)

Applies in England and Wales. Open to walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, horse-drawn vehicles and motor vehicles, waymarked with a red arrow.



National Trails

Identifies 15 long distance routes in England and Wales. All are open for walking and some trails are also suitable for cyclists, horse-riders and people with limited mobility.



Scotland's Great Trails

Identifies 26 long distance routes in Scotland. With the exception of the Great Glen Canoe Trail, all are open for walking and some trails are also suitable for cyclists, horse-riders and people with limited mobility.



Open Access land

Just over a million hectares of mountain, moorland, heathland, down land, common land and public-owned woodland in England and Wales is available to people to walk, run, explore, climb and watch wildlife, without having to stay on paths. Visit the **Natural England website** for maps and any current restrictions in place.



Negative access symbol

May be used to mark the end of area-wide access although other access rights may exist, for example public rights of way.



Home Zones

Home Zones – where roads and streets have been physically altered into more community-friendly spaces – give equal priority to drivers and people on foot or on bikes, with traffic-calming measures, very low traffic speeds and clear signs to alert and remind drivers to act with greater care.



Quiet Lanes

Local authorities can designate roads as Quiet Lanes to make them safer and more attractive to walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Quiet lanes are usually minor rural roads connecting local villages and communities – and often also footpaths and bridleways – where drivers are expected to adhere to lower speed limits.

Basics of rights of way law

Detailed information can be found in *Rights of Way: A guide to Law and Practice* (otherwise known as 'The Blue Book'), the definitive guide to rights of way law in England and Wales.

Am I trespassing?



Many of us will have come across a “No Trespassing” sign while out walking but what does it mean and what are the consequences of ignoring such a request?

Before the creation of access to open countryside in England and Wales, trespassing was a pretty straight forward matter to work out. If you strayed off a right of way or used it for reasons other than passing, you were trespassing. But thanks to years of campaigning we can now explore stunning landscapes off footpaths, providing they are mapped areas of open countryside - mountain, moor, heath, down and common land. This is open access land. On open access land you don't have to stick to any footpaths, trails or other rights of way; you can walk wherever you want.

So how do these new freedoms affect trespass laws? Below is a brief guide to how trespassing applies in England and Wales.

Can I walk wherever I want on open countryside without trespassing?

No, even with the new freedom to roam in open countryside there are restrictions. First of all to qualify the land must be uncultivated mountain, moor, heath, down and common land, which has been officially mapped. This land is shown in yellow on Ordnance Survey Explorer maps. If you stray off this into domestic spaces, farmland or gardens you are trespassing. Land managers also have the right to close off areas of land for 28 days.

Can you be imprisoned or prosecuted for trespassing?

That depends. In most circumstances trespassing is still a civil rather than a criminal matter. A landowner may use 'reasonable force' to encourage a trespasser to leave but not more than is reasonably necessary. Unless damage to the property can be proven, a landowner could probably only recover nominal damages by suing for trespass, although you might have to meet their legal costs.

A notice saying "Trespassers will be prosecuted" aimed at deterring people from using a private drive for instance is usually meaningless. Criminal prosecution could only arise if you trespass and damage property. Trespassing with the intent to reside may be a criminal offence under some circumstances. It is also a criminal offence to trespass on railway land and sometimes on military training land.

Right to roam & Open Access



In a nutshell, the right to roam is the freedom to walk on open countryside away from any paths. It means being able to walk freely, explore the natural environment and find your own way. The RA access guide gives more information, www.ramblers.org.uk/accessguide

Where can I walk?

In England and Wales, you can walk in areas that are defined as open access. When you're out walking, you'll see the open access sign, meaning you're free to roam.



There are over 3 million acres of land in England and Wales that are open access, meaning walkers can enjoy these areas on foot unhindered. On open access land you don't have to stick to any footpaths, trails or other rights of way; you can walk wherever you want. However, there are specific access entry points and access points across walls / fences. See MARIO in Lancashire. You should not climb over walls, cross only at stiles / gates.

Find open access places

The simplest way to find open access land is to get hold of a map. All **Ordnance Survey** Explorer maps show access land in yellow wash.

The first thing you'll notice is that there's a mixture of large and small patches all over England and Wales. You can also view **Natural England's** Access Maps, where you can also find out about any temporarily closures, for example to protect ground nesting birds (<https://www.gov.uk/right-of-way-open-access-land/use-your-right-to-roam>).

What type of land is included?

Most mountain, moor, heath, down and common land in England and Wales is open access.

Mountain is land over 600m/1,969ft above sea level and other upland areas of rough, steep land with crags, scree, bare rock and associated vegetation.

Moor is unenclosed areas of semi-natural vegetation, including bog, rough acid grassland and calcareous grassland.

Heath is unenclosed areas of nutrient-poor soils that support acid-loving plants such as heather, gorse, bilberry and bracken.

Down is semi-natural, unimproved grasslands in chalk or limestone areas, perhaps also supporting scattered scrub.

Common land is land registered as common under the Commons Registration Act 1965.

Since being introduced it has also been extended to include most woodland managed by the Forestry Commission and National Nature Reserves managed by Natural England.

9. Countryside Code for the public

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Respect other people

Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors.

- Respect the needs of local people and visitors alike – for example, don't block gateways, driveways or other paths with your vehicle.
- When riding a bike or driving a vehicle, slow down or stop for horses, walkers and farm animals and give them plenty of room. By law, cyclists must give way to walkers and horse-riders on bridleways.
- Co-operate with people at work in the countryside. For example, keep out of the way when farm animals are being gathered or moved and follow directions from the farmer.
- Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available.
- A farmer will normally close gates to keep farm animals in, but may sometimes leave them open so the animals can reach food and water. Leave gates as you find them or follow instructions on signs. When in a group, make sure the last person knows how to leave the gates.
- Follow paths unless wider access is available, such as in open country or registered common land (known as "**Open Access**" land).
- If you think a sign is illegal or misleading such as a 'Private – No Entry' sign on a public path, contact the Footpath Secretary.
- Leave machinery and farm animals alone – as a general rule, don't interfere with animals even if you think they're in distress. Try to alert the farmer instead.
- Use gates, stiles or gaps in field boundaries if you can – climbing over walls, hedges and fences can damage them and increase the risk of farm animals escaping.
- Our heritage matters to all of us – be careful not to disturb ruins and historic sites.

Protect the natural environment

Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home

- Protecting the natural environment means taking special care not to damage, destroy or remove features such as rocks, plants and trees. They provide homes and food for wildlife, and add to everybody's enjoyment of the countryside.
- Litter and leftover food doesn't just spoil the beauty of the countryside, it can be dangerous to wildlife and farm animals – so take your litter home with you. Dropping litter and dumping rubbish are criminal offences.
- Fires can be as devastating to wildlife and habitats as they are to people and property – so be careful with naked flames at any time of the year. Smoking is not permitted on Lancaster RA walks. Sometimes, controlled fires are used to manage vegetation, particularly on heaths and moors between 1st October and 15th April, but if a fire appears to be unattended then report it by calling 999 / 112. Some areas can be closed to the public if there is an extreme fire risk.

Enjoy the outdoors

Plan ahead and be prepared

- You're responsible for your own safety and for others in your care – especially children – so be prepared for natural hazards, changes in weather and other events. Wild animals, farm animals and horses can behave unpredictably if you get too close, especially if they're with their young – so give them plenty of space.
- Check weather forecasts before you leave. Conditions can change rapidly especially on mountains and along the coast, so don't be afraid to turn back. When visiting the coast check for **tide times** don't risk getting cut off by rising tides and take care on slippery rocks and sea-weed.
- Part of the appeal of the countryside is that you can get away from it all. You may not see anyone for hours, and there are many places without clear mobile phone signals, so let someone else know where you're going and when you expect to return if you are receiving a walk.

Highway Code for walkers



As well as the **Countryside Code**, parts of the Highway Code – which applies to road users in England, Scotland and Wales – are also relevant for walkers.

Pedestrians are the most vulnerable road users along with cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders. It is as important for walkers to be familiar with the rules of the Highway Code, and therefore not put themselves at unnecessary risk, as it is for car and other vehicle drivers to be considerate of those on foot.

Except for motorways and slip roads (which should only be used in an emergency), all public roads are open to walkers. Even if you plan on walking off-road though, many walking routes will include at least some road walking if only to link between footpaths or areas of open access so it's important to take care, especially on country roads with no pavements where traffic could be moving very fast.

Key points to remember:

- Use the pavement (including any path along the side of the road) where there is one

- Cross together and use safe crossings, where possible, and follow the Green Cross Code. Cross at a place with good visibility and take care that all cross safely with minimum risk to all road users.
- Help others to see you by wearing or carrying something bright or fluorescent
- Use reflective materials at night such as armbands, sashes or jackets
- Take special care with young children, pushchairs and non-powered wheelchairs

What do when there is no pavement available

Different rules for walkers apply when there is no pavement depending on the size of your group. Small groups should keep to the right-hand side of the road so you can see oncoming traffic. Keep close to the side of the road and be prepared to walk in single file. If you come across a sharp right-hand bend it may be safer to cross to the left-hand side of the road and cross back after the bend.

Very large groups on organized walks (larger than our group walks) should keep to the left when no pavement is available. There should be a look-out at the front and back of the group wearing fluorescent clothes in daylight and reflective clothes in the dark. At night, the front look-out should have a white light and the rear look-out a red light. People on the outside of large groups should also carry lights and wear reflective clothing.

Level Crossings

If walking in a group, don't just follow the person in front. Ensure the person in front of you has cleared the crossing area and is over any stiles or through gates at the crossing before you start to cross. The leader should manage the group by acting as, or delegating, a watcher who looks and listens for trains and ensures that all individual walkers cross and leave the railway safely. Everyone is responsible for their own safety and should always stop, look and listen before crossing. No one should ever stop on a crossing.

10. Personal safety



General safety rules

Walking isn't without risk, but statistics show it's safer walking in the countryside than on a city street. Personal attacks and assaults from strangers are rare, however you should take care and follow these basic rules to keep safe.

- Make sure you've got plenty of food and drink and wear suitable clothing

- Check the weather forecast before you set out, take a waterproof and keep an eye on the sky
- Don't take risks by attempting long or difficult routes without preparation
- Take a map and know how to read it
- Be aware of any 'escape routes' if you're walking long-distance paths and need to cut the walk short
- Tell someone when you expect to be back

Mobile phones

It's always a good idea to carry a mobile with you, which you should fully charge before setting out. If you have to call the emergency services, make sure you keep your mobile on, so they can call you back. However remember that there may be no coverage in some hilly and remote areas.

Group walking

When you walk in a group, don't just follow the person in front - try to look around you and be aware of what's going on. It's important to take responsibility for your own safety.

Mountain and hill walking



This section is of general interest regarding most Lancaster RA walks but may be useful if you are on a strenuous walking holiday.

If you're walking in mountainous regions, like North Wales, the Lake District, the Pennines or the Scottish Highlands, be prepared for more challenging weather - especially in winter. It is important to be properly equipped as conditions can vary dramatically from valley to mountaintop, regardless of the season. Walking on an exposed mountainside, you can quickly become susceptible to wind chill. The combination of high winds and cold air can dramatically lower your body temperature to potentially fatal levels of hypothermia.

Essential equipment

Warm and waterproof clothing, a map, compass and good navigation skills are essential, and in addition to the **standard equipment** for country walks, you should also carry:

- A survival bag - a heavy-duty bag that keeps your body insulated from the cold in an emergency.
- A torch and spare batteries
- A whistle (six blasts of a whistle or six flashes of a torch is the international distress signal)
- Additional warm clothing (including hat and gloves)
- High-energy rations (such as mint cake, chocolate, or dried fruit)
- Water purification tablets
- A **first aid kit**
- An ice axe and crampons when there is snow or ice on the hills

Sensible precautions

Be sensible about not over-reaching yourself on a mountain hike. Don't push yourself or your party beyond your limits, and cut your walk short if you are tiring or the weather is worsening and you are not confident of your skills or equipment.

Leave a **route card** or other indication of your likely location with a responsible person, and notify this person immediately of your safe return.

If a real emergency occurs, the international distress signal is a group of six loud blasts of a whistle, to be repeated at one-minute intervals. The emergency number in the UK is 999 / 112 (112 is preferable for mobile phones) and you should ask for the police who will notify the mountain rescue.

Additional equipment

If you're likely to meet heavy snow or ice you should wear a pair of heavy-duty winter walking boots that can be fitted with crampons. These are metal spike attachments that give a better grip in icy conditions and not all boots are suitable for them. You should also carry and know how to use an ice axe.

You'll need to learn how to use axes and crampons properly - in the hands of a novice they can cause rather than prevent accidents.

Many hill walkers also carry a kisu shelter, or bothy bag. This is rather like a tent without poles, made of lightweight waterproof nylon that's big enough to sit inside. See an example of an **8-10 person kisu shelter** and a **bothy bag** on the Cotswolds Outdoor website. They're available in a range of sizes and you should carry one that's adequate for the size of your party. When used by two people or more they have the advantage of allowing you to share body heat and can warm up very quickly.

Food and drink



Keeping your energy levels up

It's important to take plenty of food and water with you when out walking to keep hydrated and keep your energy levels up, especially on longer walks.

Being prepared will help make your walk more enjoyable so here are few handy tips:

- Carbohydrate-rich foods, fats, and healthy sugars are a good source of energy and will help you keep the pace and prevent exhaustion from setting in.
- Go for foods that provide long-lasting energy, rather than a short-term sugar-rush. A Trail mix, which combines nuts and dried fruits, or energy bars are an excellent, high energy snack.
- Fresh fruit also has a high water content so can help to keep you hydrated. Bananas are high in potassium and natural sugars and harder fruit like apples and pears are compact and easy to pack. Pack softer fruit with care at the top of your rucksack to avoid it getting squashed and take plastic bags to avoid anything leaking into your kit. Chocolate gives you a good boost of energy so it's always handy to keep a couple of bars on you.
- If you're going on a longer walk, it's better to snack on small amounts throughout the day rather than eating one big meal. This will help you keep your blood sugar levels up and avoid painful cramps.
- Adapt to suit any personal medical issues.

It's important to remember to take all your litter away with you – including fruit peels, skins and cores - to avoid spoiling the beauty of the countryside, and causing unnecessary harm to wildlife and farm animals.

Staying hydrated

Staying hydrated is one of the most important things to do when going walking.

Dehydration can lead to tiredness, cramps and headaches and could be dangerous, so take plenty of water with you, particularly if you're going on a long walk or are walking in remote areas.

A few helpful tips:

- The Department of Health recommends that we should drink about 1.2 litres of fluids a day. If you're exercising you may need more, particularly in warm weather. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink, as this is one of the first signs of dehydration. Rather take regular sips as you go along.

- Plain tap or still mineral water is your best option. Fizzy drinks are not good for quenching thirst as they are difficult to drink quickly. Fruit juice and non-diet soft drinks contain sugar which will boost your energy but aren't as effective as water at keeping you hydrated.
- Isotonic and sports drinks are formulated to improve the rate at which water is absorbed, but water is still the healthiest option and best way to rehydrate.
- Avoid drinking unboiled or unpurified water from streams. Bring plenty of water with you.

Thunder and Lightning

Thunder and lightning shouldn't be taken lightly when walking outdoors. Always check the weather forecast before starting your walk. If you do find yourself in a thunder and lightning storm whilst outdoors, try to follow these safety tips.

- If you hear thunder, see lightning or if your hair stands on end, postpone activities even if the sky looks blue and clear. Lightning will strike as far as 10 miles (15kms) away from any rainfall.
- Lightning can strike the same place repeatedly, especially tall, pointed, isolated objects, so avoid being the tallest point.
- Seek shelter inside a completely enclosed building or a hard-topped all-metal vehicle. Avoid fences or exposed metal sheds.
- Abandon exposed pointed metal items like umbrellas, tools, walking sticks or rucksacks.
- If there is no shelter you should keep moving. If you become the tallest object, crouch in the open twice as far away from the nearest pointed object as it is tall. Make yourself as small as possible, stay on your toes and keep your heels together as it will allow electricity to go up one foot, through the heels and back into the ground through the other.
- Avoid standing in water, even if wearing rubber boots (they offer no protection).
- If in a group move several yards away from each other.
- It is safe to touch someone who has been struck by lightning and provide them with **CPR and First Aid**.
- The standard lightning safety guide is the 30-30 rule. The first 30 represents 30 seconds. If the time between when you see the flash and hear the thunder is 30 seconds or less, the lightning is close enough to hit you. After the last flash of lightning, wait 30 minutes (the second 30) before leaving your shelter.

Insects



With over 20,000 different species of insect in the UK, it is important to know which ones can harm you and how best to deal with any potential bites or stings.

Ticks

Ticks are tiny blood-sucking arachnids which can be found in areas of dense vegetation, such as long grass or bracken. They can attach themselves to you and feed on your blood by biting through your skin. Ticks are known to carry a variety of diseases. The most serious of these is Lyme disease, which can be transmitted through the bite of an infected deer tick.

If you are planning to go walking in an area of dense vegetation, consider taking the following precautions:

- Wear trousers and long-sleeved shirts and keep cuffs fastened and trousers tucked into socks.
- Wear shoes or boots rather than open sandals.
- Use insect repellent: DEET or Permethrin can protect against ticks for several hours.
- If you find a tick, remove it quickly, preferably with a specially-designed tick removal tool. These are better than tweezers as they avoid the risk of squashing the tick and releasing fluids into your skin. In an emergency you can use a thread of cotton looped around the tick's mouthparts, which you then pull steadily upwards.
- After your walk, carefully brush all clothing and examine yourself for ticks. Pay special attention to their favorite feeding places: the backs of knees, around the groin, under the arms and the scalp.

If part of the tick breaks off or you think any part of it may be left in your skin, consult your doctor immediately. If possible, take the tick with you folded in sticky tape so that it can be sent for analysis. If you feel ill after a walk remember to tell the doctor that you may have been bitten.

Mosquitoes, midges and gnats

Bites from mosquitoes, midges and gnats will often cause small itchy bumps on your skin.

There are many over-the-counter treatments available, which can be used to alleviate the itching. These include Benadryl tablets and antihistamine creams that can be directly applied to the bite. Tea tree oil can also be an effective anti-inflammatory.

Insect repellents containing DEET are good for discouraging most types of biting insect and are a good idea if you're walking in areas where midges are likely to be a particular problem.

Horseflies

Horsefly bites often result in a painful welt which can itch for a few days. Horseflies cut the skin when they bite, rather than piercing it like a mosquito. Make sure you keep the bite clean while it heals in order to prevent infection.

Bees, Wasps and Hornets

Being stung by a wasp or hornet can be painful and cause unpleasant swelling that should go down within a few hours. Do not antagonize these insects since they will often just go away.

If you are stung by a bee then the stinger may remain in your skin. The safest way to remove it is by scraping something hard, like a credit card, over the skin. Do not attempt to pinch it out as this can squeeze more venom into your skin.

Emergencies and First Aid

If an emergency occurs, the international distress signal is six loud blasts of a whistle, or flashes of a torch, to be repeated at one minute intervals.

Summoning help: Call 999 / 112 and ask for the Police, letting them know your location. They will contact mountain rescue and ambulance services for you as appropriate. The ambulance service usually uses post codes and will not go off-road so only ask for Ambulance if you are on, or very close to, a road. The location stated should take this into account. Send others (two recommended) for help if there is no mobile signal. Remember, even if your mobile phone has no signal make the call to the emergency services as other networks may transmit the call. Post watchers at suitable points and make yourself visible for the rescue party.

When calling the emergency services remember: Stay calm; Describe the nature of the emergency; State the location accurately, preferably with a grid reference; Answer any questions clearly; be patient – your call will be prioritized and handled as quickly as possible. When the situation is under control ensure the casualty is kept warm, dry and comfortable as far as practical.

All members of the group should keep dry. In an emergency situation the victim and all the rest of the group will be stopped and not generating heat so wet weather and warm gear may be necessary.

First Aid

Produced by the Ramblers and the British Red Cross

If an emergency requiring first aid arises, ask the group if there is a qualified medical person or first aider present. If so, let them take charge of the situation. The Lancaster Ramblers Secretary (2016: David Johnson) can give details of a suitable First Aid course for Ramblers.

Dealing with emergencies:

When dealing with an emergency it is important to try and remain calm and look out for any dangers to yourself, the injured walker and the remainder of the group. There are three conditions that immediately threaten life: Breathing problems; Heart problems; Serious Bleeding problems.

If there is more than one injured person, go to the quiet one first, they may be unconscious and need immediate attention.

Summon Help if required – as above.

Do not forget about the rest of the group as they need looking after too. Think about the arrival of the emergency services, if called, and plan accordingly, for example by being visible and posting watchers. Remember to ensure the scene is left clean and tidy. Also think about how you, or others, might have been affected. It is a good idea to follow the casualty's recovery. -

Introduction to first aid:

Walking is a relatively low-risk activity, but you should expect the unexpected and ensure at least one person in your walking group has a basic knowledge of first aid in case someone falls ill or is injured. This is particularly important if you plan on walking in remote areas – particularly on hills and mountains where there can be a risk of hypothermia. -

First aid tips for walkers

How to treat injuries. Produced on behalf of the Ramblers by the British Red Cross. See also the pocket guide leaflet. Carry it on the walk.

What to do in specific situations

If this becomes necessary, ask the group if there is a first aider present or anyone with first aid or medical knowledge.

Strains and Sprains: Strains and sprains should be treated initially by the 'RICE' procedure. R – rest the injured part I – apply ice or a cold compression C – comfortably support E – elevate the injured part This treatment may be sufficient to relieve the symptoms, but if you don't know how severe the injury is, treat as a fracture and seek medical advice.

Bleeding: Blood loss can be serious and should be treated as quickly as possible. Your main aim is to stem the flow of blood.

1. Press on the wound with whatever is available to stop or slow down the flow of blood.
2. Check whether there is an object embedded in the wound.
3. If there is an object embedded in the wound, take care not to press on the object, instead press firmly on either side of the object and build up padding around it before bandaging to avoid putting pressure on the object itself.
4. As soon as possible call 999 (or 112) or get someone else to do it.
5. Keep pressure on the wound until help arrives.

Fractures: A fracture is a break or crack in the bone.

1. Immobilize the injured part.
2. Try to support the injury with items of clothing to prevent unnecessary movement.
3. As soon as possible call 999 (or 112).
4. For upper arm injuries encourage them to support the limb with their hand.

Heart attack

A heart attack is one of the most common life-threatening heart conditions in the UK.

1. Ensure they are sitting e.g. leaning against a tree or the legs or back of another walker and dial 999 (or 112)
2. Offer them aspirin (300mg) to chew slowly
3. Give constant reassurance to the person whilst waiting for the ambulance

The person may have persistent vice-like chest pain, this pain may spread to their arms, neck, jaw, back or stomach.

Shock

The most common cause of shock is **severe blood loss**. This life threatening condition occurs when vital organs do not get enough oxygen due to reduced blood circulation.

Signs and symptoms:

- A rapid pulse
- Pale grey skin, especially inside the lips
- Sweating and cold clammy skin

Treatment:

1. Treat the cause (i.e. if due to severe blood loss apply pressure on the wound)
2. Help them lie down

3. Raise and support the legs
4. Loosen any tight clothing
5. Reassure them, but do not give anything to eat or drink
6. Call 999 (or 112) and prepare to resuscitate if necessary

Hypothermia

Hypothermia develops when the environment is cold and the body temperature drops below 35 degrees centigrade.

1. Call 999 (or 112)
2. Your aim is to warm them up gradually
3. Take them to a sheltered place, remove and replace any wet clothing and keep them dry.
4. Wrap them in an emergency blanket or use any other insulating material, dry leaves, heather, remember to cover their head and put insulating items underneath them
5. Give them warm drinks and high energy foods

Heat exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is caused by an abnormal loss of salt and water from the body. It is more likely to affect people who are not used to hot and humid conditions and those who are already ill.

1. Call 999 (or 112) or get someone else to do it
2. Help them into a cool place in the shade, get them to lie down and raise their legs
3. Give water in small amounts frequently until they recover

Resuscitation (adult)

1. If the person is not breathing normally, you must call 999 (or 112) or get someone else to do it. To check if someone is breathing normally tip their head backwards and look, listen and feel for breaths.
2. Give chest compressions. Push in the middle of the chest so it goes inwards and then release. Push at a regular rate. Continue until emergency services arrive, or you become exhausted (when someone should take over if possible) or the person shows signs of regaining consciousness, such as coughing, opening their eyes, speaking or moving purposefully and starting to breathe normally.

Recovery Position

If an adult or a child is unconscious but breathing normally, place them in their side in the recovery position.

1. Place them on their side with their head tilted back
2. If an infant is unconscious but breathing, hold them on their side, head tilted, as if you were giving them a cuddle, with their head lower than their tummy
3. Dial 999 (or 112)

11. Profile and RA Leader's File

Since membership of the Ramblers Association and hence attendance on the walks is open to the general public, the committee has a duty of care and responsibility to ensure they are confident in the ability of our leaders to lead walks enjoyably and safely whilst upholding the values of the RA.

In order to accomplish this, it is proposed that the committee should have an experience file on each leader, completed by the individuals themselves. This is especially true for new and prospective leaders but, as this is a new scheme, we need to play catch-up and ask all current leaders to complete the form. The form merely documents the current situation and a positive response to all questions is not typically expected, for instance, not many, if any at all, of us have a nationally recognized Mountain Leadership qualification. In the skills section, the answers pertain to the type of walk being chosen to lead as indicated in the section following. The emphasis is on safety and well-being. It is not our intention to put off current or new leaders – far from it – but, if necessary, to provide any extra tuition the leader or prospective leader may request.

Completed forms will be kept on file by the Group Secretary, copy with the individual. It may be updated at any time. Your understanding is requested.

Details of the form are shown below. Copies for completion may be obtained from the Secretary (2017/8 David Johnson.).

