

LANCASTER GROUP NEWSLETTER

www.lancasterramblers.org.uk

May 2020

contributions to Gareth Thomas 01524 68826

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Welcome to Your Summer Newsletter

Walk and trek reports, path news, personal news, and any other contributions to the next newsletter will be very welcome.

Gareth

Coronavirus

You will be aware that the Ramblers Association has suspended all volunteer activities until at least 31 May. This includes group led walks, all training, path maintenance working groups, coach trips and holidays, meetings, and group and social events. It follows, therefore, that all Lancaster Group programmed walks up to 31st May are cancelled.

As you know, our walks are more than just walks - they are physical exercise, social gatherings and the meeting of friends. Although their cancellation will be a significant loss to most of us, there are those who will feel increasingly isolated. Here are some things to consider:

- Keep in touch with people you usually walk with, especially those on their own or in vulnerable situations. If you don't know how to contact them, send your contact details to me and I will pass them on.
- Keep walking! There are many places to walk in the area, even without a car. If you walk with someone else keep within the current "social distancing" guidelines.

- If you want help to work out a walk from your location, contact me in the first instance and someone on the committee will try and help. We will also look at putting some walks on our website.
- Get hold of some local walking guides. Details of our own publications are on the website or contact me.

Feedback welcome. Thanks to the Group Committee for helping compile these notes, which are valid at the time of writing (18th March). Current advice and information about the Corona Virus outbreak will be posted on the national Ramblers website at www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/coronavirus.aspx. We will also put this link on our website at www.lancasterramblers.org.uk.

David Johnson (Secretary, Lancaster group)
secretary@lancasterramblers.org.uk

Liverpool Ramblers Visit

We will be hosting a visit from Liverpool Ramblers Group on Saturday, 1st August 2020. Details are not finalised yet but we will be running three walks of 4, 6 and 8 miles around Lancaster. We would encourage as many of our walkers as possible to join us on the walks and make our visitors feel welcome. Details as they become available will be posted on the website at www.lancasterramblers.org.uk.

David Johnson

Chalet Trek 2020

Our visit to the Ramblers Chalet at Stair will take place this year from 1st September to the 4th September.

Please contact Gill Gale if you are interested in coming.

Holiday 2021

I shall be hoping to book a holiday for Lancaster Ramblers for 2021 very soon. If you would like to come, could you let me know that you would be interested in coming on the holiday and I will send you details when available.

Gill Gale

Website

We are pleased to announce that our new group website is live (and well!). It is designed to overcome some of the limitations of the old system; in particular, it is:

multi-user: content can be managed by different people depending on their role;

responsive: the page layout adjusts to different screen sizes and orientation (e.g. mobile phones);

supported: the underlying software is fully supported by Ramblers centrally.

Currently the site more or less replicates the information available on the old site, but it will be expanded over time to offer more. If you have any comments or suggestions, please use the "Contact Us" item in the main menu.

David Johnson

2019 AGM

Our 2019 AGM was held on 19th November. You will find the minutes on our website. After the AGM business, we were treated to a presentation by Rick Emslie of the Rusland Horizons Trust.

Rusland Horizons was one of the first community-led Landscape Partnership Schemes to be funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Between 2016 and 2019 the scheme carried out a range of projects to revive traditional skills, and to learn about, enhance and enjoy the heritage, habitats and wildlife of this quiet and very special place. Rick gave us a glimpse into the work of the trust in investigating the origins of field and property names, using ancient and modern maps, other documents and word of mouth. The talk was very interesting and gave a real insight into the complexities and rewards of such historical research.

David Johnson

Mike Shearing

We are sorry to report the death of Mike Shearing. Mike was an active member of Lancaster Group for many years, and a competent and thoughtful walk leader until about 2009. He was also technically very able and was an early adopter of GPS to assist navigation. Joy recalls him leading a walk through high bracken because that's where the device told him the path went, but the path on the ground was obviously to one side! (Some things don't change.) He, together with David, Sandra and Joy, spent some time designing the content of our first website. He also assisted with map reading at Leaders' events. Mike had been ill for some time. We extend our sympathies to his family.

(Thanks to those members who contributed their memories of Mike)

David Johnson

First Aid on Walks

Ramblers recommend that every walker carries a first aid kit. A variety of kits are available on the High Street and online from organizations such as St John Ambulance. Specialist outdoor activity kits may contain items more appropriate for walkers, but in any case Ramblers recommend the following items be included:

- low adherent dressings/gauze swabs,
- triangular bandage(s),
- wound dressings (various sizes),
- woven bandage(s),
- latex free plasters,
- CPR disposable face shield,
- Compeed (or other) blister plasters,
- foil survival blanket,
- micropore tape,
- antiseptic wipes,
- nitrile or vinyl gloves,
- scissors,
- safety pins,
- burn dressing.

Ramblers also offer occasional first aid training courses, open to all members. Lancaster Group may also arrange training for our group members. Look out for updates or newsletter items.

David Johnson

Lost Ways Project Article

An article on the Lost Ways Project has been published in the March edition of 'Country Living' magazine, which is available in newsagents and on subscription. The article may become available online at www.countryliving.com/uk.

Brian Jones

Guides for Leaders and Walkers - 2020 Update

At the start of each year the Lancaster RA Guide for Leaders and Guide for Walkers are reviewed and updated as required. The Guide for Leaders is available online at

www.lancasterramblers.org.uk/images/Slideshows/Guides/Lancaster_RA_Guide_for_Leaders_v2a.pdf,

and the Guide for Walkers is available online at www.lancasterramblers.org.uk/images/PDFs/Lancaster_RA_Guide_for_Walkers_v2a.pdf or from the 'Information' tab on the Lancaster Ramblers website homepage www.lancasterramblers.org.uk.

In brief, for 2020, we have the following updates.

- 1 Leaders - updating of volunteering protocol.
- 2 Leaders - links for advice on walking on military land.
- 3 Leaders and Walkers - emergency sms. Discussed in the last Newsletter.
- 4 Leaders - add grid reference for the start point and your mobile number to the walk start instructions for drivers.
- 5 Leaders - at the end of the walk please make sure that all cars are able to depart before you leave.
- 6 Leaders - suggestions for passenger allocation for car drivers.
- 7 Leaders and Walkers - road walking update. From the 2020 Highway Code, www.thehighway-code.co.uk/highway/code/1-to-35/rules-for-pedestrians.html.

Rule 2

If there is no pavement, keep to the right-hand side of the road so that you can see oncoming traffic. You should take extra care and - be prepared to walk in single file, especially on narrow roads or in poor light - keep close to the side of the road. It may be safer to cross the road well before a sharp right-hand bend so that oncoming traffic has a better chance of seeing you. Cross back after the bend.

Rule 5

Organised walks. Large groups of people walking together should use a pavement if available; if one is not, they should keep to the left. Look-outs should be positioned at the front and back of the group, and they should wear fluorescent clothes in daylight and reflective clothes in the dark. At night, the look-out in front should show a white light and the one at the back a red light. People on the outside of large groups should also carry lights and wear reflective clothing."

This is an unclear area for our walks.

Obviously, where there is a pavement, on either side of the road, this should be used. Also, everyone in the group must use the same protocol. A single lane road needs more care than a two lane road. Our advice is to obey the Highway Code and take all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of the group. The leader is in charge. Stay alert to the dangers.

- 8 Walkers - use of walking sticks or poles. Please ensure that these are used safely and not pointing backwards.
- 9 Leaders and Walkers - leaving the party. If a walker needs to leave the party for any reason, typically medical, he/she must inform the leader in person. Walk members are not allowed to leave the party because they wish to pursue another route unless it is for safety or ability reasons. It should be made very clear that the individual is no longer a member of the party and the group has no further responsibility for them. They cannot assume they will have transport back to Lancaster.
- 10 Leaders - walk ideas. Additional web links for walk suggestions.
- 11 Leaders and Walkers - first aid. The Ramblers Association has recently formed a collaboration with St John Ambulance to offer first aid training courses. Information is available at www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/support-and-development/first-aid/first-aid-training.aspx.

Full details are given in the respective manuals.

Much of the content of these Guides is taken from the Ramblers website and so can be used as a source of reference. If you have any questions, please let me know at footpaths@lancasterramblers.org.uk.

Neil Herbert

History of Footpath Protection in Lancaster

Interesting press cuttings about the work of the Lancaster Footpath Protection Society work in the 19th century and Lancaster Ramblers work in the 1930s and 1940s are available on the Lancaster Ramblers website at www.lancasterramblers.org.uk/images/PDFs/Lancaster_FPS.pdf or from the 'Historical Documents' page www.lancasterramblers.org.uk/information/historical-documents.html.

Brian Jones

English Coastal Path: Our Part in It

At last the long awaited plans for 'our' section of the English Coastal path have been published by Natural England.

Long ago, in 2009, a group of six explorers* from Lancaster Ramblers set off to investigate a route around our coast from Cocker Bridge in the south to the Cumbria border, the parish boundary between Silverdale and Arncliffe, in the north. They used the criteria set down by the Act and used by Natural England. These are very strict and say that the route must be close to the sea, available at all times and that all land to the seaward side will be access land unless specifically excepted.

This entailed many days of walking, making notes, taking photographs and discussion concerning the best route for the particular stretch under consideration. On occasion the way chosen might have deviated from Rights of Way to gain 'on the ground' knowledge. Eventually a satisfactory route evolved.

The details were submitted to our Chairman whose computer skills produced an excellent document full of maps and photographs in November 2011, 'The English Coastal Trail: a report on the recommended route through the Lancaster District in the County of Lancashire'. This was handed over to Natural England to inform their Project Officer.

Since 2016 there have been occasional meetings with Natural England and Ian Brodie who is responsible for the promotion of our and other Ramblers' Groups' preferences along the coast in the North West to Scotland. He also represents the Open Spaces Society.

In February this year our explorers group, now sadly reduced to three members, met to consider Natural England's report and comment on their decisions, which were arrived at after consultation with landowners, parish councils and other stakeholders, like ourselves. Naturally there are areas of disagreement which will need discussion during public enquiries, but other routes are to be welcomed.

We welcome the proposal to allow access along the embankment from Overton to Sunderland Point, which will provide wonderful views along the estuary without fear of being cut off by the tide, and the routing of the path through Heysham Nature Reserve to gain access to the coast from Ocean Edge to Half Moon Bay. However, there is concern over their suggested sections around Snatchems, Basil Point, RSPB Reserve and the former Leeds children's home in Silverdale, for example.

Presumably there will now be another long period of anticipation before the inevitable public enquiries, approval of the Secretary of State and the final enactments into law. Maybe a remnant of our original group will then be able to walk sections with the aid of walking frames!

*The original six explorers were Denise and Roy Copson, Pam Gorham, Lois Loudon, Hilary Bellis and Joy Greenwood

Joy Greenwood

The Search for the Source of the River Ribble, Saturday 7 March 2020

It was a cold, grey, misty Saturday morning at the beginning of March and the forecast for the day was none too bonny when the three Ramblers met up at the Lidl car park. No-one else there? Never mind, Gareth and Moira led by Judy, the three intrepids set off to discover the source of the River Ribble. Driving through watery sunshine, taking a wrong turn or two, they finally arrived at Gearstones.

Booted up they marched bravely up the old Roman road, to Cold Keld Gate (great name, eh?) on the Cam High Road. Huddled behind the walls, they downed hot coffee before turning onto the windswept moor. Battling through a few snow drifts, finally arriving at Gavel Gap. Judy cried out in dismay, "The rock where the spring emerges is covered in snow!". Were they defeated in their search for the source? Suddenly, Gareth pointed, "There's a load of water gushing out of that rock! Is that it?". Eureka!

The source was discovered!

Judy Steele



The source of the River Ribble