



LANCASTER GROUP NEWSLETTER

www.lancasterramblers.org.uk

contributions to Gareth Thomas

newsletter@lancasterramblers.org.uk

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Autumn Newsletter

The newsletter is available at www.lancasterramblers.org.uk/information/group/newsletter.

Please send walk and trek reports, path news, personal news, and any other contributions (with photographs if possible) for the next newsletter to Gareth (newsletter@lancasterramblers.org.uk)

Annual General Meeting

Notice of the 2021 AGM

The Group AGM will take place at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 23rd November 2021, at Trinity United Reformed Church, Bowerham Road (Ulster Road), Lancaster LA1 4AH. Note the change of venue. All members are welcome. Items to be included in the agenda should reach me by 1st November 2021.

This is an important event and we hope as many members as possible will attend. After the formal meeting, there will be a short presentation from some Group members illustrating the work that Lancaster Group carries out in order to support The Ramblers aims.

Refreshments will be available. This important event should be an enjoyable and interesting evening and we hope you will be able to join us.

David Johnson

secretary@lancasterramblers.org.uk

Help to keep us walking

You may have noticed a few blank dates recently in our walks programme. This is because our dedicated but limited number of walks leaders is insufficient to fill the programme. Worse, we are relying on those leaders that do lead walks to offer even more.

Leading a walk is a rewarding experience, not as difficult as you may think, and there is lots of help available locally and on-line.

Interested? Just curious? Why not come along to our "Help to keep us walking" event on 15th January 2022? It will be held at a local venue. All members are welcome, including existing leaders who can share their experiences and perhaps offer assistance. A light lunch will be provided. We may be able to slip in a walk as well! Simply book your place by contacting me at secretary@lancasterramblers.org.uk. I look forward to hearing from you!

David Johnson

Lancaster Ramblers Holidays

Many of you will have enjoyed going on one or more of our Ramblers holidays, which are always very well organised by Gill. You may be aware that Gill also organises other events, like our Chalet and other "Treks". All this is a lot of work for one person, so we are appealing for someone who can assist her. Any sort of help will be welcome - the details can be worked out with Gill. If you think you can help, please contact Gill.

Thank you

David

Ticks

Ticks are small biting arachnids that lurk in tall grass and bracken. Most of our local paths and access areas are very luxuriant in late summer and early autumn so there is a good chance of these nasty arachnids jumping on to you as you brush past. Our local hills are good hunting grounds for them.

As well as a very sharp bite they can carry a particularly bad disease called Lyme Disease. The bite is more painful than most insect stings and bites and the disease brings on a severe fever. If you suspect Lyme disease, get medical help.

To reduce the risk of ticks, try to avoid going through long vegetation and wear long sleeves and trousers well tucked in. After a walk check the usual spots such as your ankles and behind the knees and elbows.

If you find a tick, which is very small, it must be removed. The head and claws are a strange shape so there are many weird suggestions of how to remove it. But cheap extractors are readily available at your friendly local chemist and in sports shops. One should be carried in your first aid kit.

The Ramblers have an information sheet www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/safety/insects.aspx.

Brian Jones

Footpath Check walks

Our group has restarted regular footpath check walks as part of our walks programme. These have a different format to our usual group walks. I plan 3 routes each time in the same local area. On the day we divide into groups of 3 or more and each group walks one of the planned routes noting any problems on the Public Rights of Way. Problems encountered may include missing signs at the road, broken stiles, locked gates or paths blocked in some way.

Public Rights of Way are the responsibility of the County Council and Neil will report the more serious problems to the relevant officer. We try to provide Neil with as much detail as possible including grid references for each problem. Photos are especially useful and probably essential.

We also bring our secateurs and cut back round overgrown signs, stiles and gates to make footpaths and bridleways more accessible to walkers.



Stile with missing steps noted on a footpath check walk

If this sounds too much like work rest assured. We aim to have a pleasant walk, often on paths we've not personally walked before, in good company. Naturally there are coffee and picnic lunch breaks with an optional cafe stop at the end of the walk.

Newcomers are always welcome and you'll be with others who have been on footpath check walks before and hopefully know the ropes. It's an ideal way to improve map reading skills and feel you're helping to keep paths easier to walk.

Jean Walker

New Countryside Code

The countryside code has been updated and republicised. The main change seems to be the addition of “Be nice, say hello, share the space”.

More information is available at:

www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/visiting/countryside-code and www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code-advice-for-countryside-visitors

Slow Ways Project

In the Spring Newsletter I wrote a short article on the Slow Ways project (www.slowways.org). Since then, Joy Greenwood, Pam Gorham and myself have walked 5 routes from Lancaster to Carnforth (verified 4 of them) and verified the route from Lancaster to Garstang. My wife Hilary and I have verified the Lancaster to Morecambe and Morecambe to Heysham routes. I also surveyed all these 7 routes.

The Lancaster to Carnforth walks did not require 5 complete trips of course. The original route went over Carlisle Bridge then along footpath 1-1-FP21 in Lancaster, between the railway and Rylands Estate, which is narrow and with stone walls and high steel fencing on either side. It had been subjected to fly-tipping and was an extremely unpleasant experience – no wonder Joy and Pam chose to bypass this section. I later found out it had the nickname “Khyber Pass”.



‘Khyber pass’

We failed the route, even though the rest of the walk, mostly on the canal towpath, was fine. After the walk, but before documenting our experiences on the website, I noticed another Slow Ways walker had rejected the route the day

before, for the same reason. It was not necessary to repeat sections, so our next walk, with previously walked sections, covered LanCar routes 2, 3 and 4, these utilizing Rylands Park (instead of the bad path) and the Millenium Bridge and a route for pushchairs on Lancaster roads and the canal towpath. All routes start from the railway station. Our fifth route, as an alternative to the canal towpath, follows the Lune, crosses the river at the aqueduct and passes east of Slyne and Bolton-le-Sands along tracks and quiet, narrow roads before joining the towpath at Crag Bank.



Part of the Lancaster–Morecambe cycleway

The Lancaster-Morecambe route followed the cycleway and Millenium Bridge and the Morecambe – Heysham route was along the promenade. Rather bizarrely there was a Heysham to Douglas (IoM) route but we decided the 60 miles of sea crossing would be too much for us! A s/w glitch, no doubt.

We shall be continuing our efforts over autumn and winter – weather permitting. If anyone is interested in the project, please check out the website above or let me know (footpaths@lancasterramblers.org.uk).

To the start of September, Slow Ways have 8000 walking routes across the country and there have been 25,000km of route reviews. A grant of £3 million has been awarded to Slow Ways over seven years from the National Lottery Community Fund’s ‘Growing Great Ideas’ programme. that “aims to offer long term, multi-year funding to initiatives we believe have the potential to achieve transformative and longer-term change”. The project certainly seems to be going places.

Neil Herbert

Scotforth Path Maintenance Project

In spring of this year, following encouragement by members of Scotforth parish council, Lancaster Ramblers applied to the Lancaster University Wind Turbine Community Benefits Fund for money to improve some of the footpaths in our booklet "Walks Round LANCASTER CITY", walks 3 and 4, Williamson Park to Blea Tarn and Bailrigg Lane to Aldcliffe. Since money would not be available to improve the whole route, we decided to concentrate on the Scotforth section and leave the rest for another application. The fund covers improvements and benefits to the local community and the environment but not maintenance. There was up to £20,000 on offer in total and typically around ten projects are chosen. Improvements to footpaths in the Lancaster-South Lune catchment area is one of the project areas considered suitable.



Stile in Bailrigg to be improved

Jean Walker, Joy Greenwood, Pam Gorham and myself did a recce of the route and noted areas



Middle field stile to be improved

for improvement and compared them with the parish council suggestions. They largely agreed. I contacted the Rights of Way department at Lancashire County Council to discuss our ideas and they were supportive. With assistance from the parish council, I identified landowners and discussed our proposals with them. Brian Jones and myself visited two landowners with a parish council member and I contacted others by e-mail. After gaining permissions, we then obtained estimated costs for the work involved which enabled us to complete the application form and submit it for approval – just in time.

Unofficially, we have heard that we have been largely successful in our bid, but the committee's decision has to be ratified by senior management and we have yet to be formally notified of the decision. Most of the work involves improvements to stiles and way-marking and most work will be done by authorized contractors. We are planning this and the work will start after formal notification – more information in the next issue!

Neil Herbert

Message from Helen and Martin Peel



To all our friends in Lancaster ramblers.

As we leave you once again for a while, we want to thank you for some fantastic walks together over these last months, chats shared, and the highs and lows of various grades of lockdown we have experienced together. Ramblers and your friendship and fellowship have truly been a lifeline at times.



We look forward to more times together when we are back with you. As you can see from the photos, we are already making the most of what Luxembourg has to offer those of us who like to be in the great outdoors. Beautiful green forests everywhere! Love to you all.

Helen and Martin XX

Art Inspired by Ramblers Walks



Experimental drawing inspired by a bull seen on a Ramblers walk. Ruth Joyce

It would be great if any other Ramblers have pictures of work inspired by walking for future newsletters. Please send them to newsletter@lancasterramblers.org.uk.