



NEWSLETTER July 2025

www.lancasterramblers.org.uk

contributions to Gareth Thomas
newsletter@lancasterramblers.org.uk

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The Lost Paths

I have just been reading a new book by Jack Cornish, who is The Ramblers Director for England and was the lead officer for the Lost Ways, or Don't Lose Your Way (DLYW), campaign nationally. The aim of the campaign is to claim historic paths so that they can be added to the Definitive Map of paths and go on OS maps.

This is a good account of the historical development of UK footways with some interesting personal input about his explorations and path walking. However, there is a concentration of the detail towards southern England. In the book we progress from trods on the ground, which are aligned to good river crossings and avoid steep slopes and wet areas, to the ancient long paths on upland ridges exemplified by the Roman road network. As well as local tracks, there are economic routes such as those for quarries and mineral and salt mines. Of course, there are also drove roads for taking animals long distances and very local routes to villages and churches. Other religious paths are the longer corpse roads and pilgrim routes.

With increase in travel, new routes were created when enclosures took place so that users could access the land. And then there were the

turnpikes. These were needed because tracks were historically maintained by local people but more general use meant upkeep needed to be paid for by the actual users so a toll system was needed. Here, the Lancaster Group Lost Ways team (Neil, Joy and me) is mentioned because of a visit Jack made to the Burton Roads and which resulted in an article in Country Living.

Naturally, there are sections on the outdoor movement and increased public use of footpaths for recreation. Here, there are descriptions of local footpath protection societies and large events aimed at claiming access to open land, such as the Kinder Scout campaign.

Brian Jones

Slow Ways Crowdfunding

Slow Ways has started a crowdfunding campaign to support extending its network, create a new website, and enable people to find, follow and share the best active routes.

The campaign is described at <https://buildstories.slowways.org/calling-everybody-who-walks-runs-wheels-or-rides/> and the crowdfunding page is <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/slowways>.

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

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)

The Healing Power of Nature

Saturday arrived ever-so suddenly! No time to think or procrastinate. I had signed up for the Sleddale/Swindale ramble, yet part of me wondered whether I was ready for this challenge.

It had only been five weeks since mum passed away and waves of grief continued to engulf me, coming without warning and from nowhere particular. As the wake-up call on my clock sounded, my emotional pain-body screamed “Don’t go, just stay cocooned under the covers” whilst my logical left-brain nudged “Go, connect with nature”. An hour later, I was sitting in my car with boots and rucksack – there was no turning back now.

I began the walk with six kind and compassionate Ramblers, all of whom were gentle, easy to be with and nice to talk to. My spirits lifted a little as I sensed it was okay; that conversation wasn’t compulsory or particularly necessary.

As we fell into step, the experience of large open spaces, big skies, cool breezes and fresh air was uplifting. There was sheer beauty in the nature surrounding us as we trekked through gates, up and down grassy (often boggy) paths, over bridges and across a river (off with my boots and socks!). With every step through the river, the cool water between my toes brought a little more lightness and a small shift in the ability to feel happy and to smile again.

We stopped for lunch beside an amazing waterfall which refreshed an inner connection with nature. Sometimes you need to connect with something greater than yourself and trust it to touch and heal your heart and spirit. It reminded me of how much mum loved waterfalls.



Crossing Mosedale Beck

Already on the return journey (where had the time gone?), as we headed back to our cars, I had the usual end-of-walk-tired-legs feeling, but more so an incredible sense of appreciation and gratitude that love is indeed eternal. It’s right here in nature, before we arrived and long after we’re gone.

Many thanks to our leader, Gareth, and to all the Ramblers on the walk today.

A member of Lancaster Ramblers



Swindale Beck Falls

Alan Jones 1951–2025

Alan Jones, a lively conversationalist and hugely active man and a keen participant in Lancaster Ramblers' Wednesday walks, has died suddenly.

Alan was born in Devon. His father was a civil engineer and moved about the country frequently, living in Suffolk and Birmingham among other places before settling down in Morecambe in 1970 with his family. Alan followed in his father's footsteps as a civil engineer and worked in many locations across Britain and the rest of the world. He laid claim to having visited 54 countries and his love for travel was only interrupted by his untimely death.

He met Barbara, his wife, in the Seychelles on one of his many stays abroad and they brought up their family, Richard and Daniel in Morecambe. He was at heart a family man and was regularly away with family, particularly caring for his grandchildren.



He managed to fit many interests into his life. His latest challenge was chess. He enjoyed a good night out listening to live music. He walked with many rambling groups all over the country and became one of our leaders. He will be particularly remembered by Lancaster Ramblers as a kind, thoughtful walking companion, who, because he used the footpath network, made sure to contribute by doing his share of path maintenance.

We have many reasons to miss him.

Don Walker

Saunterings: Walking in NW England

I have recently become aware of an interesting free website of walks in Lancashire and Cumbria: <https://www.drakkar.co.uk/Saunterings.html>. The site is by a local man from Caton who is an avid walker and wishes to share his explorations. There are currently more than 200 walks on the site, with probably more to come. I have found these very interesting and think they may provide inspiration to people who wish to go for a walk or lead a walk. A word of warning though, the first walk described, from Caton, uses a permissive path and tramper trail that is no longer accessible. I tried to use this "permissive path" from Caton Moor wind farm last year and found private signs so had to retreat. I used the path during the pandemic, probably illegally, but I would not want to take a group along it.

Mary Garner

A6 Closure at Shap

The A6 through Shap will be closed for part of July: www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3d1e13ln92o

Booking a Walking Holiday?