



South Cheshire Group

Newsletter No: 37
June 2013

Website: <http://www.ramblerssouthcheshire.org.uk>

Chairman's Chat Phil Guest

This is my first opportunity to thank the recently elected new officers of the group. All of them have taken to their tasks with enthusiasm and have integrated with the members most successfully.

I often look at how this group of ours has changed and evolved. We now have 'new' walk leaders who are into their third year of leading and others who are about to lead for the first time. Our group relies on its leaders and I think it is a tribute to the group that we can continuously find from our new members some who are prepared to give leading a try. For those who have not yet been tempted, I can tell you that it can be very rewarding and fun!

The year to date has included some notable events. The walk at Wildboughclough in deep snow was a real challenge, I have never been so cold on one of our walks. We were most grateful to David Rowland and his wife for that walk and I believe they have been repaid by members support for their charity walk over the Bickerton hills.

Now that the summer has come, members of the group have enjoyed the sunshine of Skipton, soon we will encounter the joys of our promising new programme and with the help of David Vernon, good walking and company at Plas Tan y Bwlch in the autumn.

Happy walking!

Thanks to all who have provided new items over the past 6 months. Items are always welcome and if received before the next Newsletter is due for publication, will appear on the website, under the News page.

Please submit articles to: Bev Brady, e-mail: john@giovannis-crewe.fsnet.co.uk

Committee

Chairman - Phil Guest
Tel: 07918 687683

Secretary - Kevin White
Tel: 07922 147135

Treasurer – Ian Mottram
Tel: 01270 623926

Membership – Eileen Dorman
Tel: 07846 464736

**Programme Secretary –
Kath Adlard**
Tel: 07999 562912

**Footpath Secretary –
Graham Taylor**
Tel: 07810 766094

**Website Editor –
Joanne Sharpes**
Tel: 07932 690394

Newsletter Editor – Bev Brady

Publicity – Paul Boniface

Committee Members: David Smith, Phil Keogh, Diane Birkenhead, Carole Bentley, David Vernon

Thursday Evening Walks

David Vernon

During the summer months the group endeavours to provide approximately 12 walks as above. Briefly these start from a pub at 1900hrs, are about 4 miles easy and are within half an hour's drive from Crewe and Nantwich.

They are an ideal opportunity for any member who may wish a gentle introduction into leading walks for the group.

I coordinate these walks and am happy to help anyone with the planning and execution, if they wish to give it a try. Contact me on: 01270 569039

Is the walk on next Sunday? - January 2013

Phil Guest

Simon from Leek club rang in the week, 'Remember me Phil? I and a few others from Leek did your Chrome Hill walk last year and would like to come on Sunday to join you for Wildboardclough'. Don't worry Simon we will be there, just call me around 9am Sunday when we are assembling.

The walk has me down as leader only because Dave Rowlands, who has offered to lead a walk for us, isn't a member of the Ramblers.

It started to snow on Friday morning, quite a lot for round here, so I knew there would be a number of callers wanting to know if the walk was on. The calls started that evening. Saturday arrived with snow all around so I knew that we would have to time the decision with care. Spoke to Dave, he would have a friend from Congleton check out the roads later in the day but his wife Lesley had noted that Ceefax had the A54 closed from Bosley crossroads. Simon rang wanting to know the score. Had a good idea' why not ring the Crag, they should know if the road is accessible'. I rang 'Yes its fine, how many of you are coming, will you want to eat?' Ceefax says the A54 has been cleared, so the walk is on!

Sunday, we gather, meet Dave and Lesley, agree the route there and set off. Some who said they were coming are either late or have given up. Park up at Clough Farm, not many cars before us, no sign of Leek but the Chester ladies have made it. Dave explains that he is running the sponsored charity walk at Buwardsley on 24th March for Cancer Research. We all agree to support it.



Off we go, into the white. Surprised at how much snow there is compared to Crewe. Also amazed to find trail and mountain bilkers coming up the path behind us. Then Leek turn up so we are now 20 in number but all getting much colder than we have in a long time. Lesley leads, at times she is knee deep in drifting snow. I hope she really knows the way as any signage for paths have been covered by the snow. We stop for coffee at a point where paths meet, we could be close to the Cat and Fiddle but by golly it's cold in the wind. I think I have frostbite coming and have to somehow get my warm breath to the tip of my nose to relieve the pain.

On we go, we cross the A54, ah, I know where we are now, we will take the valley path to Three Shires Head, but no we don't, we are going back onto the moor and into the wind and the cold again. We stop in the lee of a farm barn and someone suggests we take the opportunity of lunch, but no we will continue onto Three Shires Head in the hope we can find some shelter from the wind. There was no shelter so it was a short lunch. Finally we re-cross the A54 and I know we are close to the cars again and the opportunity of thanking the staff at the Crag for their advice the previous day and to Dave and Lesley for the walk. What a joy, a nice warm pub. It was a brilliant walk and well worth finding out if it was on.

Blown Off Jacob's Ladder - February 2013

Julie Houghton

The first time leading a walk after being bullied into it by Phil Guest and Kevin White was a pretty hairy experience.

Firstly I was really amazed at the turnout of 18 willing and able bodies especially as the weather was pretty dismal and unbeknown to us the wind was to reach gale force later on, also the fact that there was a ladder in the title of the walk (ladders and mountains are not popular according to the gospel of David Vernon)!

Onwards and upwards we went on into the mist in search of the Woolpacks, eventually scrambling over these wonderful rock formations and seeking shelter for lunch out of the ever increasing wind.

By the time we'd all gathered around in what little shelter there was and had a body count we'd managed to lose two ramblers, oh my goodness!, (not mentioning any names but one of them is very small with blond hair). To the rescue came Angela who fortunately had a mobile number, seems these two renegades had taken the path up to Kinder Scout!

Reunited half an hour later they were put under armed guard and escorted the rest of the way back.

How some of us managed to stay upright and not be blown off the top was a miracle, it was a crying shame not to be able to see the wonderful views I knew were only yards away - but we saw nothing in the mist and as we descended - steeply - to shorten the walk slightly, over went Eileen and sprained her ankle! oh my goodness what next?.



Finally in the comfort of the Ramblers Inn in Edale, well deserved pints, etc were downed and I have to say to my surprise spirits were really and the group were full of fun, I nearly fell off my seat when I heard a request or two for a repeat performance in the summer!

Thanks to all, not one moan or groan – you made my first leading experience a really enjoyable one.

Foot soon recovered Julie – I for one would like to do this walk again when we can enjoy the scenery! - Eileen

Every Picture Tells a Story

If you like the photographs in the Newsletter, there is a photographic record of the group walks and events on flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/southcheshireramblers/sets>

There is a link to this on the Home Page of South Cheshire Ramblers website.

MAPS: The Grid Reference (G.R.) System

David Vernon

For the purposes of this illustration I have used the group's meeting point at Acton, Nantwich and Map O.S. Explorer 257, Crewe and Nantwich. (please be aware organisations other than Ordnance Survey (O.S.) produce maps.

Ordnance Survey (O.S.) have divided the whole of Great Britain into squares of 100km each and for the purpose of mapping each square is given 2 letters. This is the National Grid.

These 2 letters can be found printed in faint blue capitals on O.S. maps and in the maps key will be a diagram showing which lettered square or squares the map is part of.

Obviously maps are scaled down and each faint blue square on O.S. maps is 1 km square. Across the top and bottom and up and down the sides of the map are a series of numbers and these are used initially to find the 1km square in which the meeting point lies. The numbers across the top and bottom are "eastings" and up and down the sides "northings".

To obtain the four figure G.R. in which the meeting point lies, it is necessary to use one pair of "eastings" and one pair of "northings"; using the "easting" first (a handy way to remember this sequence is "into the house → and up the stairs ^") So the 1km square is 6353.

Now to be more accurate (ie. To the nearest 100m) it is necessary to picture the blue square divided horizontally and vertically into tenths and these tenths being added individually to the "eastings" and "northings"; this then makes the meeting point 63.2 53.0, we leave out the decimal point and spaces and the six digit G.R. becomes 632530.

When the six digit G.R. is quoted it is IMPERATIVE that the 2 letters of the area are placed before the numbers to avoid doubt and confusion, in this case the meeting point becomes SJ632530 (without the letters the numeric reference would be repeated in every 100km square in Great Britain).

Should it be necessary to summon help at a G.R. additional information could be very useful.

I see the meeting point as ;--the public car park opposite the Star Inn, Chester Road, Acton, Nantwich CW5 8LD -- G.R. SJ632530 O.S.Explorer 257 Crewe & Nantwich

Membership

Eileen Dorman

Did you know that as a member of Ramblers you are part of Britain's biggest walking community. ? That being said, as a member of South Cheshire Ramblers you belong to a group of almost of 200 members.

Around 40 of you walk regularly with the group, either at weekends or on the Thursday morning or evening pub walks. We hope that the programme provides a variety of walks and events to suit everyone at some time during the year. Your suggestions and comments would be welcome.

Please make sure that your personal information is up to date with Ramblers, there is a link to do this on the main website <http://ramblers.org.uk/members-area.aspx>. You will also receive regular information about the group's activities if we can contact you by e-mail rather than the twice yearly mailings.

News from the Bramble Patch

Graham Taylor

PROW Report Review

On 12th February I had a meeting with Steve Jones, Public Rights of Way (PROW) Cheshire East (CE), to review the action on problems we had reported via the CE.

The team had surveyed 56 footpaths between May 2011 and March 2012 and reported on 23 problems.

It was gratifying to find that all the reports submitted had been entered on the CE Geographic Information System (GIS) and that action had been taken on all of them.

Of particular interest were:

Lea FP2,

The path through Lea Forge which is a wilderness of abandoned machinery. This has been diverted and signed.

Hough FP12,

The path near the quarantined dog's home. This is now the subject of a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) and whilst still disputed will be enforced.

Many thanks to the team variously consisting of David, Chris, Kevin, Vicky, Mary, Rob, Phil and others. You were not scratched and stung in vain.

New Footpaths

The Connect2 bridleway and footpath is now open between the Barony and Crewe Queens Park.

The missing section of the Wybunbury Moss circular walk running behind the houses between Kiln Lane and the church is in the final stages of ratification. No doubt the scaffolding obstructing the path will also eventually come down.

The path West of Kiln Lane running between the houses and the Natural England Land is to be widened and surfaced.

The path, which everyone uses behind the Shroppie Fly in Audlem which goes up the steps and across the playing field to the village hall, has been applied for.

PROW Liaison Meeting

I attended this meeting with CE officials and other interested parties on 14th May.

Mike Taylor Greenspace Manager presided with his team.

Of interest was:

- The OS have agreed to show footpaths across roads. At present footpaths which cross say the A500 are shown with a gap (on the grounds that the road is a PROW anyway). Don't get too excited this will take forever to implement.
- CE will become a Commissioning Authority of 500 souls who will dole out money to private enterprise companies (including the hived off PROW section).
- By taking money from the capital budget and calling it revenue spend, the spend on the network stayed much the same last year. I think most of us agreed that we hadn't seen much impact of the cuts.
- I always press CE to say how many PROWs are subject to temporary closure. This time he said 4. None in our areas.
- Six volunteers working for Genni Butler have surveyed 0.5% of the 1900 km network. This paper chase is about disabled access and, no doubt, claiming grants.
- The Highways Authority are obliged to act when eroding river banks gobble up the path, but don't worry you have the right to paddle, swim or walk on water where the path once was.
- Water and feed troughs plonked on the footpath are an obstruction and CE will serve notice.

Finally the CE website <http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/> has a link to the PROW section where, along with the definitive map and reporting form, you will find lots of good stuff.

A weekend in sunny Skipton

David Roberts

What a wonderful weekend in every way! The weather, the walks, the accommodation and the food were far better than could have been anticipated. However, none of this would have been possible without the hard work and imagination of all those who were involved in the planning and organisation of this weekend. A heartfelt thank you, to you on behalf of us all.

One element of this weekend which will remain with me longer than any other was the fellowship and fun we shared as a group. The weekend started with a meeting fronted by Robert and Judith, Carole and Graham. They described the walk they had planned for us, to give us an opportunity to make choices about which walk we would like to do, as some were more demanding than others. Carole's description was so detailed and dramatic that following her delivery you felt that you had already completed the walk.

Following the meeting we went for our evening meal in the "Baby Swan Restaurant" After the meal we all thought what excellent value the accommodation was going to be. But as we soon discovered, it was even better value for some of the group, when we heard about a four poster bed with a flat screen TV integrated into the bottom of the bed, extensive luxury bathrooms, jacuzzi baths, fluffy robes and sitting rooms. As the evening wore on it became obvious that some of the group had taken a shine to Black Sheep.

The next morning we awoke to a day of beautiful weather. Following a hearty breakfast we assembled in the car park for the start of our first days walking when we discovered some of the group had been to Skipton hunting down bathing costumes, which were a rare commodity in Skipton. The Charity Shop came to the rescue.



Some of the group set off in cars to reach the starting point of Graham's more strenuous walk, which we had viewed on an impressive piece of software which showed a three dimensional moving image of Graham's walk.

The rest of us set off from the hotel car park, in glorious sunshine, under the leadership of Robert and Judith for a walk taking us over the canal and through beautiful landscapes with magnificent far reaching views of the surrounding countryside. It was the perfect walk for all "stileologists", as the variety had to be experienced to be believed. Indeed the rare "squeeze and step style " was to be observed. The coffee stop was in the shade of the trees of a small copse where we were surrounded by a beautiful display of bluebells.



Continuing the botanical theme, further into the walk, we saw some rare wild orchids. Judith and Graham's "recce" the weekend before certainly paid off, as it was a wonderful circular walk returning to the hotel. I'm just sorry they had such contrasting weather to us, the weekend before.

Sunny Skipton continued....

The following morning we assembled in the car park to drive to Malham to start Carole and Rae's walk. The walk was a wonderful opportunity to see the whole range of topography and geology that the area has to offer, this included magnificent waterfalls, Malham Tarn and Cove, limestone paving and gorges.



However, the most lasting memory of the walk was to see the Fearless Four, Graham, Kevin, Diane and Vicky scale the waterfall. I am sure they are rightly proud of their achievement.

Us "wimps" went around it via the footpaths. When we met up, it was time for lunch at Malham Tarn. We sat looking down onto the tarn, a beautiful place to rest and eat another excellent lunch provided by the hotel.

Just as you would expect, everything was perfectly organised, including a conveniently placed ice-cream van.



After finishing our ice-cream we made our way along a "dry river bed", across the limestone paving down 412 steps to the cove and back to Malham where we stopped for refreshments. Once refreshed we returned to the cars and made our way back to the hotel. Unfortunately, our leaders had experienced horrendous weather conditions when they planned and walked the route the previous weekend but they and we had perfect weather for the real thing!

The evening was again was one where the "f" words were frequently used, food, fun, fellowship, friends and just for Carole football!

On Monday morning we went our separate ways, some going to Bolton Abbey for a walk, others went into Skipton and some set off home.

Once again, a big thank you to the organisers.

Peak-bagging and the Hill Walkers' Registers

Philip Lund

"Fancy a hill walking challenge? Fed up with climbing those same old favourite mountains? Ever thought that there are many more worthwhile peaks to climb out there? Are you keen to explore in depth the various mountain areas of Britain? Want more of a structure to your hillwalking days, a goal, a long-term aim? If the answer to any of these questions is "yes" then the LDWA's Hillwalkers' Register (HR) is for you."

This is the claim made on the Hillwalkers' Register page on the website of the Long Distance Walkers Association (LDWA). In fact this 'Register' is in reality a set of registers – of those who have recorded their completion of one of nine separate sets of hill summits in the UK. These registers are maintained by the HR Recorder, with lists of those completers (who have submitted a claim form) being shown on a website and lists of new completers being included, with commentary (and even some photographs – including one of yours truly!), in a 'hard copy' Annual Report. Probably the best known of the sets of summits / fells / mountain tops maintained in the HR is one of the 214 Lake District Fells described by A Wainwright in his famous seven Pictorial Guides to the Lakeland Fells. Linked to this is a register covering both these fells and also the 116 summits in AW's subsequent book on the Outlying Fells of Lakeland.

These sets are however unusual in that the selection of fells within them is idiosyncratic, being determined by one person and lacking any specific criteria for inclusion or otherwise. The other sets – for example of all the 2000 foot mountains in England & Wales, and (separately) in Ireland, or of all the county tops in these two sets of countries - are more objectively determined, though with the first of these there is the need for a criterion in respect of minimum all round drop from a summit in order to determine whether any apparent 'summit' should be recorded separately or regarded as part of an already recognized summit. On the basis of such criteria someone last year 'relativised' the Wainwrights, listing 217 Lakeland Fells which would have met the criteria of having a summit over 1000 feet and a minimum all-round prominence of 30 metres – this would mean deleting 50 'Wainwrongs' and adding 53 extra tops – which the proposer termed 'Wainlefts'.

Another problem - that of the accurate measurement of the heights of summits – has particularly affected another, and perhaps even more well-known, list – that of the Munros in Scotland. These are the mountains in Scotland with a height of 3000 feet or more. This set of mountains is named after Sir Hugh Munro who, in 1891, produced the first proper list of such. Prior to his researches the number of mountains in Scotland of this height had been variously enumerated as low as 31 or as high as 236. Munro's own tables listed 538 summits, of which 282 were regarded as separate mountains, with the remainder being known as 'tops'. However as Munro did not specify any criterion by which a peak should qualify as a separate mountain there has been much debate about how distinct two hills must be if they are to be counted as two separate mountains. Through time, and after re-surveying, the list has been subject to various amendments and the Scottish Mountaineering Club now lists 282 Munros and 227 subsidiary tops.

Ironically Munro never completed his own list of the mountains, missing out on two, one of which has since been down-graded to a 'top'. However, the number of persons (Munroists) who have recorded completion of the Munros far exceeds the number who have recorded completion of the Wainwrights (647 by end March 2013), with the number now being over 5,200. As for the original 214 Wainwrights, there are also records of the most completions of the Munros, the fastest completion and the youngest completer though not, to the best of my knowledge, the oldest completer. However I am resigned to being unable to complete the Munros and in fact have only reached the summits of perhaps the most famous two – Ben Nevis and Ben Lomond.

Of course some readers may be dismissive of the whole concept of 'peak-bagging', considering it – in words quoted from the Wikipedia page on the topic – to "devalue the experience of climbing in favour of the achievement of reaching an arbitrary point on a map; (to) reduce climbing to the status of stamp collecting or train spotting; (or to appear) as obsessive". For a reasoned defence of peak-bagging, and an interesting account of Lakeland peak-bagging, you may wish to turn to *The World of a Wainwright Bagger* by Chris Stanbury (Sigma Leisure, 2010).