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The curse of barbed wire

One of the most discouraging and offensive aspects of some PRowWs is the often intrusive presence of barbed wire. This is found widely in Cumbria, sometimes in LDNP and certainly in YDNP

Barbed wire was "invented" in USA in 1867 and was instrumental in livestock control enabling ranching to develop. It has also featured prominently in the protection of high security sites, prisons particularly prisoner of war camps and in trench warfare. Its purpose is to manage animals and to be hostile to humans, particularly enemies and criminals.

Very many of our public rights of way are flanked or even obstructed with barbed wire. Flanking paths restricts the usable width (generally considered to be an absolute minimum of 1 metre for some of the oldest paths but a minimum of 1.8metres latterly for newer ones) often preventing users from passing and exposing them to risk of injury to themselves and to damage to clothes. This is in spite of a specific provision in the Highways Act 1980 s164, which many Highway Authorities choose to ignore. It is also perhaps of note that the BS5709 specifies that there should be no barbed wire within 1 metre (of stile etc)

I believe it is time for user organisations to make a bid to stop this abuse by landowners who are thus showing their contempt for users, treating them as enemies, criminals or animals, particularly as it contravenes the law.

It is perhaps worth noting that when works such as road-building (e.g. upgrading of

A1 to motorway) is underway, fencing is wooden and not barbed - a welcome sign that it is not a national policy to use offensive and unnecessary barbed wire.

While it is recognised that barbed wire may be used for livestock control, it can be used in such a way that users of public rights of way do not run the risk of stumbling or being blown onto barbs. In most cases there need not be any barbed wire at all, and where it is necessary for the control of animals it should be placed on the animal side of a fence entirely free of barbs. The Highway Authority should ensure that no new barbed wire is used and to press for its removal from any path or highway where it is unnecessary and a threat of any kind.

Ernie Robin

Penrith Group

The Penrith group continues its full and varied walks programme. The existing four main groups which walk on a Wednesday are 'topped up' once a month by a group known as the BC group, which aims to offer walks in between B and C grade. The Strollers group, introduced in the New Year, walks on Wednesdays as well and is proving extremely successful. The Sunday 'Eden Wheel' walks have been very popular again, with high and low level alternatives being offered on most trips, and attract regulars from as far away as Glasgow. In addition the Thursday evening group is well under way and Saturday walks continue.

The walking weekend in Alnmouth, held in April, was one of the most successful to date, with 30 people from different groups attending.

In addition a most interesting and informative visit to Appleby Castle was held in June.

Our website is becoming more and more useful to members and visitors alike.

Finally we have a thriving Facebook page where group members can display photos taken on walks.

"Walking Partnership"

Readers will be interested to know that Ramblers Groups can join the "Walking Partnership". This initiative, supported by Ramblers Worldwide Holidays, aims to provide direct financial support to the grass roots of the walking community in the UK through local walking clubs and societies. Here's how it works:

- the Ramblers Group will receive a financial contribution from the Partnership if a Group member books a holiday with Ramblers Worldwide Holidays. In order to qualify, they must nominate the Group before travel. Note that they can do this even for holidays already booked, provided the nomination is made before travelling.

- the contribution will be (per person booked) £10 for UK holidays, £20 for Short haul holidays and £30 for Long haul holidays.

David Johnson

Restoring The Lost Ways

We've no immediate plans to run any more Wadey and Bucks events this year with specific Ramblers sponsorship but they have taken on a life of their own and there is now a list of events on the *Restoring the Record* website: <http://www.restoringtherecord.org.uk/> (then go to the training tab). Anyone can sign up for these. I see that there are a couple of events in Yorkshire which conceivably people from LD area could get to.

However, we are planning a seminar specifically for Ramblers volunteers on 5 October in Birmingham when we want to find out what Ramblers volunteers are doing and what more support they need. That may well determine what other training we offer in the future. Details of that event to follow.

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