

Lake District Area News

No. 222: March 2017

RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION LAKE DISTRICT AREA

Views expressed in this publication are those of the contributors, and not necessarily those of the Ramblers.

Lake District Area web pages

The Lake District Area has its own set of web pages containing useful Area-wide information, for example:

- Group walks for all Groups in the Area
- all about the Chalet
- the Cumbria Way
- Affiliated Clubs
- Documents from Area meetings
- some walks leaflets for download

Go to www.ramblers.org.uk/lake-district and take a look. If you have any suggestions for other information to include please contact me at secretary@lancasterramblers.org.uk

David Johnson

The Gordon Walker Chalet

The Gordon Walker Chalet provides self-catering accommodation in the Newlands Valley. It caters for 16 people in two bedrooms, each with four double bunks. Toilets and showers are en suite, and there is an excellent drying room, a fully equipped kitchen, a pantry with fridge/freezer, and plenty of hot water. It is open only to members of the Ramblers and affiliated organisations. No pets are allowed.

Charges

£10 per night for members of the Ramblers' Association

£20 per night for members of affiliated clubs

For further information and for reservations, contact Denise Copson (telephone: 01524-847868).

Countryside Matters

- Network Rail are basically intending to close nearly all footpath level crossings. Ramblers nationwide are working to ensure the best re-routes etc.
- Following Brexit, The CEO fears that Wildlife and Environment will take preference over access in future funding for the countryside.
- The English Coastal path may be in danger in some areas but not Cumbria where it is too far on.

Other items

Area is working on footpath and pylon issues relating to the New Moorside power station and the new water pipe from Thirlmere to west Cumbria.

Integrating the extensions to both National Parks

Footpath maintenance is suffering due to concentration on flood repairs

Penrith Group

The Penrith group continues with its programme of walks. Walks coordinators have been monitoring numbers on walks and it would seem that nothing deters the most intrepid members from going onto the Fells. The Strollers group is now more fully integrated into our activities and is proving very popular indeed, with an average of over 19 participants each week.

We are pursuing a project of training courses, with a Leaders course this month followed by a map Reading and Navigation course and a Safety on the Fells Evening to follow in the summer.

A large group of members will be travelling to Church Stretton next month to enjoy a walking break and our new social secretaries have several plans to keep us occupied later in the year.

New partners – and “the law’s delay”

The Ramblers “Lake District Area” covers the whole of the Lake District National Park and part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Both of these Parks have for many years had a “Delegation Agreement” with Cumbria County Council, by which responsibility for Rights of Way (footpaths, bridleways and byways) in their area is delegated by Cumbria CC as Highway Authority to the National Park Authority. This greatly benefits walkers because national parks have a statutory purpose to promote the enjoyment of their area, and they have always recognised that a right of way network in good condition is one of the primary ways of fulfilling this. Cumbria CC on the other hand, while it has done good work at times, has many other responsibilities; political pressures and financial difficulties have meant that the amount of attention and resources given to the RoW network has varied over the years. At present, for instance, unless really urgent problems have to be addressed, Cumbria works on a six-year cycle of inspecting and repairing/upgrading rights of way in a parish – whereas Yorkshire Dales NPA inspects every path each year and carries out necessary repairs within a short time. Ramblers therefore welcomed the extension of the areas of the two National Parks which came into effect on 1 August 2016.

Sadly, however, we are still (in mid-March 2017) waiting for things to start happening on the ground. It took until late October 2016 for Cumbria CC in full session to agree to the delegation. The NPAs then allocated staff and resources to deal with the new areas. The Yorkshire Dales NP now has a new “Western Area” team (Area Manager, Area Ranger and 2.4 Access Rangers) with a base at Orton, set up to cover both old and new parts of Cumbria now in the Park (the Lune Valley, Northern Howgills, Mallerstang and the Orton Fells were added to Sedbergh, Garsdale and Dent) - and raring to go with a backlog of works on the rights of way in the new areas. But the legal team at Cumbria CC are still poring over the details of the delegation agreements with the two parks – and until they sign them off, the Rangers cannot mend a single broken stile or clear a fallen tree. The latest date we have been given to expect the agreement to have been signed is the end of March 2017
Malcolm Petyt, Area Chairman

Resurrection

of Summit Good Ramblers

At the beginning of 2016, arranged walks were at an all-time low with few, if any, attendees. The group was at a risk of ceasing meaning that Ramblers wouldn't be offering a group specific to walkers in their 20's, 30's and 40's in Cumbria. I am pleased to say that the group has done a complete turn around and things continue to be on the up.

During the initial months of 2016, it saw a gradual increase in regular walkers attending the walks which then led to an increase in members. Walks were arranged for most weekends but there weren't many Walk Leaders. Over the months, more volunteers were coming forward to try their hand at leading walks with great success.

A change in Committee members in September showed more people willing to get involved and a new generation of committee members were unleashed!!! Walk programmes were put in place making sure that there were walks on almost every weekend as well as weekend programmes put on with a great response including a weekend at the Ramblers chalet at Stair. Socials were incorporated after walks giving people the chance to experience the fantastic food and drink on offer in the local pubs. It has been noticed that members have become more involved in the group with the increase in events which has led to a lot of ideas being brought up and considered.

Publicity was a key factor with raising the awareness of the group. Posters were put up in outdoor shops, supermarkets and cafes. Press releases were sent to the local newspapers informing them of a series of walks for people new to walking. Adverts and links were posted free of charge on national walking website pages. Members were sharing upcoming walks on their own Facebook pages to spread the word amongst friends and further afield. The word was well and truly being spread about the group!!!

At the end of 2016, a Summit Good calendar was created using member's photos, with the proceeds of the sales going to the group's bank account. Money in the group bank account has been earmarked for two 2-day outdoor first aid courses for two new Walk Leaders to deliver any first aid on walks if needed. Any remaining funds will be used towards navigation courses to increase the confidence of Walk Leaders.

A new website is currently in the process of being set up to bring the group up to date with technology and moving with the times of the younger generation. The website will be set out better and look more inviting and exciting than our current blogspot website. Articles will be written informing people of outdoor safety, current projects by Ramblers and other applicable areas of interest.

This has led to a huge increase in members in the group. In December 2015 there were 24 members. As of March 2017 that has jumped to 46, almost double!!! The results speak for themselves. A lot of work has been put into the resurrection of the group but it has been worth it when members say how much they have enjoyed themselves during our walks.

We are adopting an onwards and upwards approach to the group, hoping to increase member numbers with further publicity and providing more walks including mid-week walks after work times, more walking weekends and more socials.

*I am appealing for groups to support the Area News by providing copy for me to publish. At present only two or three groups are doing so.
Thank you, David Dixon*

Area contacts

Area Secretary Charlie Shepherd, Low Outwood, Arthur Street, Penrith, CA11 7TX
01768840227 charlieshepherd@talk21.com

Carlisle Hazel Welsh, 219 Green Lane, Belle Vue, Carlisle. CA2 7RA

01228 380416, welshhazel@gmail.com

Furness Trish Casey, 8 Bideford Gardens, Barrow-in-Furness, LA4 4HX

01229-830155, derek.casey@virgin.net

Grange Alec Bottomley
Tetley Cottage, Allithwaite Road
Cartmel, LA11 7SB
015395 – 36455 alec@abtecltd.co.uk

Kendal Margaret Pook, 5 Robby Lea Drive, Natland, Kendal, LA9 7QP

015395-60249, dmpook@btinternet.com

Lancaster David Johnson, 52 School House Lane, Halton, Lancaster, LA2 6QX

01524-811366,
secretary@lancasterramblers.org.uk

Penrith Sue Marshall, Stone Croft, South Dyke, Penrith, CA11 9LL

01768 897159,
susanmarshall47@hotmail.co.uk

Summitt Good Katie Bailey,
summittgoodrambling@gmail.com

Gordon Walker Chalet (bookings) Denise Copson, 18 Westham Street,

Lancaster, LA1 3AU

01524-847868, denisecopson@hotmail.com

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Editor David Dixon (01768 863155
david Dixon1939@gmail.com)