

# KENDAL GROUP COMMITTEE REPORTS TO 2016 AGM

## Chairman's Report – John Watson

A strong and active committee has supported a very successful year for the Group.

A holiday for group members in Galloway in April was well attended and enjoyed by all.

The Group ran a Publicity Day at Kendal Town Hall on 30 July and took a stand at the Westmorland County Show on 13 September. Both days were well attended by possible new members.

Membership has continued to drop slightly during the year and it is too early to see how much of this effort translates into actual new memberships.

The Chairman and the Minutes and Membership Secretaries attended the Ramblers Northern Volunteer Development day in Durham on 17 September which offered sessions on Recruitment, Rights of Way and Lost Ways.

Contact has been made with U3A to try to identify areas for greater cooperation between the various walking groups in the area.

A meeting took place on 1 October to inject greater urgency into the capture of Lost Ways.

A contribution of £3000 was made from Group funds to enable the early repair of Miller Bridge at Ambleside after the floods. The Group's financial position remains very healthy.

The Group held a Supper & Quiz on 21 October in aid of Mountain Rescue.

The two walks each week – some easy and some more difficult – continue to be well supported. Shorter Pub Walks are popular.

## Programme Secretaries Report – Jill Hayes & John Fairhurst

The tradition of offering two walks per week was maintained thanks to our willing leaders. We welcomed some new leaders during the year and hope that they will continue to offer their own choice of walks, giving us the opportunity to visit new places or look at the familiar from different paths and viewpoints. Leaders have responded to the request for some easier walks, suited to the abilities of our more senior members. It is difficult to balance the needs of all our members. Those around 10km with only 200m or so of climbing have been very popular but we still have a demand for long, high and strenuous walks. Numbers on walks have varied tremendously but without obvious reasons. Our fears that we might be losing members to other groups may have been premature.

Walks at the beginning of the year were seriously affected by flooding and the damage caused. For about two months, walks had to be re-routed, changed because start points were not accessible or replaced by a completely different walk. An example of the problems was the need for a diversion to avoid 'Dry Lane' which was under half a metre of water. In some cases, leaders were personally affected by flood damage and we are grateful to all the leaders who persevered or who 'stepped in' with a replacement walk. Despite the money reportedly made available for flood repairs, work does not appear to have started on the path along the River Lune, the Lune Valley Ramble, which is severed in at least two places.

During the year, Geoff helped us establish an on-line diary for the next group of walks to be programmed. This enables leaders to check which dates are free and the locality and nature of walks already offered. We hope it has been helpful to leaders. It has certainly eliminated the reiterative process that resulted from leaders submitting walks on the paper-forms without knowing which dates and localities were already taken and our then having to go back to them for other suggestions. Dropbox has had problems arising from the miss-use of this facility, not by us, and it is to be withdrawn but Geoff has been working hard on a solution. Presently, it will require accessing a 'cloud-based' site, probably Dropbox, using a link like the one currently in use. The difference will be that, once there, the file will have to be down-loaded to your own computer, where it will need to be opened for viewing. If this can be simplified, it will be. Please do not let this hiccup deter you from submitting walks you are willing to lead from January to April 2017. **WE NEED THEM NOW.**

## Footpaths CCC outside LDNP - Ernie Robin

### Footpath Complaints/Enquiries

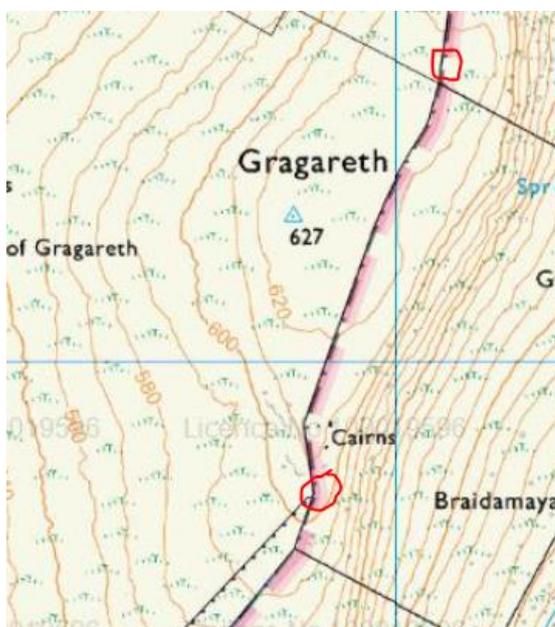
Apart from reports of bridge and flooding problems there have been very few reports from members.

#### Consultations: DMMOs

1. Kendal: Diversion/ realignment of FP at Carus Green where washed away by erosion. No Order yet.
2. Diversion of FP502002 Arnside Tower Farm proposed. Consultation response made. Highway Authority failed to notify Order, but only confirmation, thus preventing objection. *Ramblers* unwilling to refer to High Court. HA agreed to try to have flanking barbed wire removed.
3. **Claims for FPs**
  1. Arnside: FP claim for link from station to Arnside Knott; not yet being considered.
  2. Kendal and Helsington: 46 claims not yet considered. One additional claim in Kendal.Town Council is showing interest!
  3. Old Croft Millholme New Hutton. Shortly to go before CCC Highways committee, but further postponement and contentious issues

### Flood Damage

Progress good but still some bridges to repair. Little other work (Such as parish surveys) not continued with inevitable lack of maintenance and deterioration.



#### Restoring the Record/Lost Ways.

In progress, but help needed particularly to “walk” potential claims. Important revision meeting Oct 5<sup>th</sup> to evaluate costing. Successful meeting held October 1<sup>st</sup> (20 persons)

#### Big Path Watch

Proposed to extend this but July launch has been postponed until November on account of Brexit, new Prime Minister and political uncertainty filling the news and prejudicing publicity. This is an opportunity to involve members. No further communication from *Ramblers*

#### Ramblers' contribution for Path Improvements

Repair of Miller Bridge Ambleside now invoiced. Any further funding of projects must be improvements not repairs. Proposals needed. eg Ladder stiles at Cumbria/Lancashire boundary on Leck Fell at SD690795 and SD688787 with access to Marble Steps Hole and Turbary Road and Yordas cave

## Footpath Secretary (Lake District) – Dave Harrison

Members of our group joined in the RA project to survey every path in specified 1km squares on the OS maps.

The National Park's "Ease of Use" path surveys took place in November 2015 and May 2016. Our group has an excellent set of trained volunteers who carry out this work, and I would like to express my thanks to them all.

A number of footpath problems were reported to the National Park Authority. Many of these problems are alas somewhat trivial compared to the major damage inflicted on the path network by Storm Desmond.

### Dales Way report – Donald Holliday

Storm Desmond on 5th December 2015 and 2 more storms in December, including Boxing Day, have resulted in extensive damage to footpaths and bridges in South Cumbria, much of which has not yet been repaired. Burneside and Staveley were particularly badly affected.

**Burneside Flood Damage** Both the main road bridge at River Sprint and the nearby Sprint Mill Footbridge were declared unsafe after Storm Desmond and closed to all traffic. The road bridge is currently under repair and there is a

notice on the approach roads saying the following: **ROAD AHEAD CLOSED TO ALL TRAFFIC FOR A PERIOD OF 20 WEEKS WHILST ROAD BRIDGE IS REPAIRED PLEASE FOLLOW DIVERSION ROUTE.** Pedestrians are using an unofficial diversion route using a United Utilities pipe bridge 100m upstream of Sprint Mill. **Repairs currently programmed for completion end October.**

**Bowston to Hagg Foot alternative Route (East of River Kent)** This route is currently closed as an alternative because the bridge at Hagg Foot has been washed away in storm Desmond, and is now awaiting repair by the farmer who owns it.

**River Mint Bridge near Patton Bridge** The bridge over the River Mint near Patton Bridge at GR 562970 was declared dangerous after Storm Desmond and closed to the public pending repair. It is owned by the farmer and a temporary diversion was in place through Bracken Fold Farm, using an existing Right of Way which has been recently diverted away from his farmyard to reduce impact on him. Repairs, being crowd-funded through Friends of the Lake District are now complete.

**Green Head Farm** This work is still on the programme for repair by Cumbria County Council. The farmer has agreed to improve the high level lane east of the farm buildings with a few loads of concrete after grading out the low points. CCC have offered £1,000 and DWA have agreed to put match funding of £1,000 towards improving the surface and drainage of this lane. This work will now be programmed for spring 2017. Temporary footpath diversions will be in place during this work.

**Brigflatts Lost Link** As part of Ernie's Lost Ways initiative, the Dales Way Association are also following up a claim for reinstatement of a link between the Dales Way and the Quaker Meeting house at Brigflatts, near Sedbergh, which was definitely open when the Dales Way was opened 25 years ago and has been closed at some unknown date by the landowner. Anyone who can remember this link being open should please contact Donald Holliday initially to help us prepare our case.

## **Countryside Officer** – Colin Boothman

Since taking on the role in 2015 I have been liaising with members on Countryside Planning matters of a strategic nature on behalf of the Kendal group. I have also been liaising with SLDC however I am still trying to understand the structure and lines of communication.

I check out the website for SLDC and the National Park for issues potentially affecting us in the South Lakes. For example in November 2015 SLDC gave notice of a proposed new local plan of a Development Management Policies – a Development Plan Document (DPD). I attended a Consultation event at the Town Hall in December and subsequently submitted formal comments on behalf of Ramblers suggesting there should be a Green Infrastructure Planning section incorporated.

I made an application for membership to the Lake District Local Access Forum in May and an acknowledgement was received from Caroline Barr, Chair of the LDLAF. The Cumbria LAF's are being reorganized and no decision as to the revised constitution has been announced to date.

As a general view our response has been that no changes should be made to access or rights of way. If changes are proposed are made by developers they should be considered as enhancements and not closure.

It is worth recapping that our role in respect of Countryside matters covers the following objectives:-

- Protect and enhance landscapes, ensuring new developments are sensitively located within the character of their surroundings.
- Improve access to the outdoors, protecting rights of way and securing more open access land for the benefits of the general public.
- Support sustainable development, in order to reduce our carbon footprint, adapt to a changing climate, and allow future generations to inherit a sustainable legacy.

## **Membership** - Geoff Brooks

Membership continues to fall and currently (1<sup>st</sup> September) stands at 317 compared with 340 at the last AGM; this is after gaining 19 new members during the year. There have been problems with email circulation during the year due to

ISP's changing their filters to avoid spam, hopefully these have now been resolved, but some members may well have received duplicate emails.

## **Publicity and Book Sales Report** - Polly Robin.

In addition to publishing our Walks Programme by having copies in Kendal Library, Kendal Hostel and Kendal Tourist Information Shop plus displaying posters of seasonal walks in other venues. We have presented ourselves at three events since the last AGM, December: Charities Fair at Holme Village, July: Publicity/Coffee morning at Kendal Town Hall. September: Westmorland Show.

The Westmorland Show is our "big" event. We sold our Kendal Ramblers Walks Books and Short Walks leaflet sets and this year, for the first time, Ramblers Christmas Cards. We were supplied with "freebies" from Ramblers Head Office and so gave out over 150 copies of Walk Magazine, (past copies some also provided by our members), bios, badges and balloons. We also gave away the excess single walks leaflets – I think they are called "overprinting" in the trade. We have added a sticker telling recipients that they are part of a set of Leaflets and also advertising our Walks in South Lakeland Books. The weather was awful but our pop up banners stood up to the deluge and the tents were a popular refuge from the heavy rain showers. A big thank you to Ernie, Alison, Colin, Hilary, Dorothy, John and Sheila for manning our stall.

**BOOK SALES.** Are steady but we still hold stock of (approx.) Walks in South Lakeland Book 2 (publ. 2009 x 1500) stock 327, Book 3 (Publ.2011 x 1500) stock x 562 Short Walks Around Kendal Leaflets (sets of 10) (Pub. 2012 x 1000) stock 169

I am very grateful to our members Alice, Eleanor and Terry who act as book agents supplying local outlets but we are just 4 in total. We need help!

## **Group Access Officer's Report** - David Staton

The Countryside Rights of Way Act was passed in 2000. Reviews should have been undertaken on a regular basis but so far this has not happened. However a review is expected by 2019. The intention is to produce new maps by this date and it is therefore important that we prepare for this by considering better ways of identifying open countryside and its accessibility. Since taking on the role of Group Access Officer I have looked at a number of Access Land areas where there are access issues. These can arise where the land is not crossed by a PRoW or there are adjacent areas of Access Land separated by fences or walls. There is no requirement under the Act to provide access points even from a public highway or between adjacent areas of open country.

Discussion have been held with the County Council over access to the North Eastern corner of The Helm and with the LDNP over improving access in Bannisdale and in particular to Whiteside Pike. These matters have so far not been resolved though a number of proposals are under consideration Also I am investigating ways of improving access to areas of Access Land in the Lyth valley area.

Finally a request has been made to the National Trust for a ladder stile to link 2 adjacent areas of Access Land on Holme Fell Park. This has now been agreed and the work will be carried out in the next few months.

It would be helpful if members could advise me of their experiences of walking on Access Land and of any problems they might have encountered. I am particularly interested in locations where for want of a stile, a wall or fence has been inadvertently damaged by walkers.