



# East Cheshire Ramblers Newsletter

Summer 2014

Editorial

Ralph  
Atherton

Sadly, the costs of commercial printing and posting of newsletters and walks programmes are no longer sustainable. As our Chairman recently explained, they have risen to the extent that it would now cost twice as much to produce a programme and Newsletter as we receive in funding from Ramblers Head Office. Our preferred strategy is to spend our limited resources on the maintenance and development of footpaths (*pp 3-4*) rather than printing and postage.

I have decided that the next edition of the newsletter, when I will have been your editor for 16 editions over eight years, will be my last. I feel it is time for a fresh approach for informing members, perhaps more fully exploiting our website and Facebook pages and recognising the increasing use of tablets and smart phones by our members. Do send me your comments and ideas so they can be aired at the next AGM and published in my last newsletter.

For several years we have been collecting statistics of the numbers of people attending our walks and I have produced a table and conclusions covering 2010-13 (*p 12*). Of course, to do all this walking we need footpaths and that is why the work of footpath inspectors and the projects team are so important see (*pp 3-4 and 8-9*). While we are walking we should learn to keep our eyes open (*pp 6-7*).

You will also find accounts, sometimes rather imaginative (!), of the coach trip to Ilkley (*pp 10-11*), the weekend away in Kirkby Lonsdale (*pp 16-17*) and the visit to the Tour de France (*pp 14-15*). As regards individual members, I report both sad (*p 5*) and happy events (*p 9*), in addition to other items from members (*pp 2, 13,14*).

This edition carries a montage of press cuttings about ECR walks from the Wilmslow Express and the Macclesfield Express (*pp 18-19*). Contrary to national trends, this has helped provide a small yet welcome increase in membership in recent months and may be why we are not shedding numbers at the same rate as some other Ramblers groups. It is important that we members play our part - see the discussion on the next page.

## From your Chairman

David  
Gylee

I write my last Newsletter contribution as Chairman as I do not intend to stand at the AGM in November. By then I will have been Chairman for three years and it is, I feel, appropriate both for myself to “move on” and for a fresh person with new ideas to take over. At the moment we do not have a “Chairman in Waiting” so to speak, so if you were thinking that now is the time, please step forward!

There have been changes during my time as Chairman and I would like to think that progress has been made; both in the walks programme management as well as the significant project work to maintain and improve footpaths. I think particularly of the concessionary footpath opened last year, near Charles Head, as well as the good work undertaken by Brian Richardson and his many volunteers during this year.

Of course, our Ramblers Group continues to be very active with our walking programme, the footpath inspection and maintenance programme and of course the social and “special” activities. These events continue to be very well supported and I know that many members would like to see more of the same, particularly coach trips. Well, the answer lies in members picking up the baton and offering to organise an outing. Helpful advice and guidance are never very far away, just contact any committee member.

Roger Norton, our publicity officer, continues to provide excellent features that give us significant publicity in the local press, as evident in both the Macclesfield and Wilmslow Express (*see pp 18-19*). Such coverage does not happen by accident but relies increasingly on us sending Roger write-ups and photographs for publication. Roger is always willing to give advice and edit contributions where necessary. Indeed, this excellent coverage cannot continue without our active participation. Please lend him your support.

Ramblers Head Office is also very keen to publicise the excellent work of the Group, particularly regarding footpath improvements. Watch out for this information appearing soon on the Ramblers website (*I wonder if Ian Mabon’s article on pp 8-9 is relevant?*).

Finally, do please note the AGM on 15<sup>th</sup> November at Macclesfield Tennis Club – following a similar format as last year, but more details will be available nearer the time. I do urge all members to make an effort to attend, and to offer to take on a role, possibly even as the next Chairman!

## Wilmslow Guild Birdwatching Group

Jenny  
Irwin

New members welcome. Enrolment is from September 8th 2014 at the Guild, Bourne Street, Wilmslow. See [atwgbwcopy.wikidot.com/wgbg](http://atwgbwcopy.wikidot.com/wgbg) to find out more about the group and the activities on offer.

In recent years our county authority, like most around the nation, has been strapped for cash to spend on maintaining our footpaths in a pleasantly walkable condition. There is an increasing need for volunteers to carry out infrastructure maintenance and vegetation clearance work, and I volunteered to coordinate a team and its work and was labelled Footpath Projects Coordinator. I was taken for ‘inspection’ to Cheshire East Council’s Public Rights of Way team at Crewe, and a scope for voluntary work was agreed, requiring approval and coordination of our proposals with CEC PRoW; and works to be carried out, generally unsupervised by PRoW, to their satisfaction.

A welcome donation from Prestbury Parish Council, and generous grant from Ramblers HQ for this type of work was duly tapped, and tools purchased. I have attended training for underground cable detection as required by CEC PRoW team and purchased the required detection tool for our team’s use. Over 20 volunteers form the core of the Projects Team.

Before Christmas, teams of up to six members have spent either Mondays or Fridays clearing footpaths of heavily overgrown (obstructing) branches from trees and bushes, dug up encroaching saplings and brambles to clear the paths; occasionally repaired stair railings, and made slippery stiles and wood steps safer by embedding a pattern of staples on their treads. We have targeted three footpaths (Prestbury 26 – Withinlee Road, Prestbury 33A – Dunbar Hollow Silk Rd, and Wilmslow 23 – The Carrs), but shall spread our wings wider over Cheshire East in future. Further footpath vegetation clearance this spring is in abeyance until after the bird nesting season. As a team we have attended on nine days and carried out 160 man hours of project fieldwork (-excluding lunch breaks!). I particularly want to thank everyone who supported this first year’s start-up - in first name order: Andy Davies, Barbara Hare, Brian Griffiths, Ian Black, Ian Wasson, Janet Allan, Ken Hobbs, Lynda Shaw, Mike Bull, Mike Collins, Nick Wild, Phil Hodgkinson, Steve Osborne, and Sue Dale; all of whom worked intensively and effectively.

For 2014, I am following up ECR FP inspector’s annual reports by viewing sites to prepare a schedule for replacement of fallen and rotten way-marker posts and to place additional WPs where a need has been identified. This requires liaison with land-owners and CEC PRoW team to gain their approval, before posts can be collected from CEC’s depot at Nantwich and fieldwork can begin. A team diary will be issued.

For our first major project, our FP Committee have requested that drainage is improved at the southern end of the Todd Brook Watershed concessionary path, near Charles Head, established by Alan Catherall’s and John Goodman’s paired endeavours (*see article and photographs in the last newsletter*). Negotiations are progressing towards commencing this work by our Projects Team some time later this summer.

*Brian sent me the Dropbox links to many photos of the team hard at work. Here are just a few of them. The photos below all show work at The Carrs except where stated otherwise.*



*Sue Dale, Ian Black, Barbara Hare, Mike Bull, Phil Hodgkinson off Withinlee Road (Prestbury 26)*



*Sue Dale and Mike Bull at Dunbar Hollow (Prestbury 33A)*



*Andy Davies and Mike Collins*



*Ken Hobbs*



*Janet Allen*



*Steve Osborne*

## Farewell to Helena Walker (1945 - 2014)

To celebrate the life of  
**Helena Walker**

19th October 1945 - 4th March 2014



Service held at Stockport Crematorium, Rowan Chapel  
on Friday 14th March 2014 at 11:30am

Officiating: Rev David Parker

Several of us attended the funeral of Helena on 14 March. Only a year ago we were rejoicing that she was in remission but sadly her cancer returned. Our deepest sympathy to Derek and to both of their families. Helena is greatly missed on our walks.

In the Winter 2009/2010 newsletter (page 11) you will see a photograph of Helena taken near Robin Hood's stride.

## An urban walk on the wildside Roger Norton John Handley

Each summer the East Cheshire ramblers programme features an ‘ecological ramble’, led by our member Professor John Handley, in which the landscape itself is the main feature of the walk. This year’s walk on Saturday, May 10 explored the river valleys around Wilmslow and Handforth. The theme in this urbanised location was human ecology – the way that people have shaped the landscape and continue to influence it for good and ill.



*Roger Norton took these two photographs.*

More than 20 stalwarts braved a blustery day to join a circular eight mile walk which linked the valleys of the Bollin and Dean. We headed upstream from the Carrs car park, along the footpath and cycleway out of town, pausing *en route* to question why the riverside walk could not have been retained alongside new development at the Riverside Business Park. We picked up traces of a mill leat which once fed Wilmslow’s historic town centre corn mill and reconstructed a medieval landscape of carr woodland, water meadows and strip fields in the valley beyond Vardon bridge.

Today the Bollin valley is still home to longhorn cattle and on riverside cliffs the nest burrows of sand martins, arriving here each Spring from West Africa. We heard positive stories of range-expanding butterflies and the arrival of salmon and sea trout in the much improved River Bollin. The new fish pass at Styal Mill will also permit the movement of eels – fitting for the Bollin whose name means ‘torrent of the eels’.

By contrast, we saw an attractive riverside alder coppice being invaded by Himalayan Balsam and heard about the Bollin Partnership’s BEACON project with its ambitious goal of ‘a river catchment free from invasive species where our natural wildlife thrives’. Elsewhere we saw plants from casual disposal of garden waste invading ancient

woodland and learned that even our much loved bluebell is in some jeopardy from climate change and hybridisation.

Close to the Wilmslow boundary we turned north over the watershed to the River Dean. Much of the route here was also through fields and copses. Indeed there was surprisingly little road walking throughout given the proximity of the by-pass, railways, housing and Handforth Dean business Park.

In Handforth we picked up each end of the very attractive wooded valley of the River Dean through the town and recognised the huge potential to open up a route for people as well as wildlife along this remarkable ecological corridor. We then followed the river out into the country and through attractive meadows, along the well-screened fringes of Styal prison and Wilmslow sewage works to rejoin the Bollin at Twinnies Bridge, and back via the newly created multi-user path through the Carrs to our starting point. Graham Beech, who played such a prominent role in securing the funding for this, talked us through the project and Brian Richardson showed us something of the connecting footpath improvement work by our hard working group of East Cheshire Rambler's volunteers (*see page 3*)



*Roger Norton took this photograph of Pauline Handley doing her celebrated Angel of the North impression, while the rest of the group pays close attention to her husband's words. The other photographs were taken by your editor including this one of John showing Pauline how to deal with the paparazzi.*



*Ian Mabon and Graham Beech concentrate on John's words.*



## Look who has won an award!

Ian  
Mabon

When June was chairman of ECG ( a lo-o-o-ng time ago) she was highly impressed by the work of the footpath team then under the stewardship of Harry Hadfield and Peter Cummins. I had to listen to all this in detail after committee meetings so it is burned into my memory.

After she stepped down from the chair, June had some time on her hands (Oh! happy days!). She wanted to do something on footpaths but East Cheshire's patch was some distance away from our home near Trafford which is why we also walk with Manchester Area. June asked their committee if she could invite their members to volunteer to join a team inspecting footpaths within Trafford (using the ECG team as a model). This led eventually to a team of about 30 volunteers in Trafford.

Manchester Area realised that with the success of June's team, there were enough Ramblers members in Trafford to support a Group. June was asked with the help of Area to try to form a Trafford Group. This happened to coincide with the 21st anniversary of the Trans Pennine Trail, a major route within Trafford, so it was possible to attract publicity for this new group on the basis of a commemorative walk. (A rumour went round ECG at that time that June was forming a 'rival' walking group to ECG which caused us some amusement!)

Meanwhile June's footpath team had always been keen to do more than inspection of paths - " If there is a problem we can fix, why don't we?" So June started to find out what was involved in maintenance. Answer "A lot of paperwork!"



But if I have learned one thing about June it is that when she starts something she finishes it and after much anguish the maintenance team got going. This year the Ramblers Trafford Group proposed the team for a RA award "Protecting where we walk – 2014"

Harry Hadfield once warned June, "Beware, if you get started on footpath work you will find it is addictive". OK Harry, WHAT IS THE CURE?

The photograph shows June with the Ramblers President's Award trophy which she collected on behalf of the Trafford Team at Ramblers 2014 General Council in March this year.

Editor: Subsequently to Ian submitting his article to me, the Summer 2014 edition of “Walk” magazine appeared which carries an article about the Path Teams initiative and the Awards. More than 150 of these teams now operate across Britain. The headline to the article is a quote by June “Half of us focus in inspecting the condition of the paths, while the other half remove the obstructions and organise permissions from local authorities.” There is a photograph of June and eight of her team colleagues.

I would add that the article describes how Ramblers launched the Path Teams initiative in 2012 but June’s Trafford initiative was a long time before that! (It is not unusual for groups to be more “on the ball” than HQ!)

Of course, ECG has been a leader in footpath inspection for most of its history (see the regular reports in the newsletters and the article by Dave Barraclough in the last edition). Footpath inspection is an essential prerequisite for the work of footpath projects teams described in the reports by Brian Richardson. I would hope and expect that our committee will be nominating Brian’s team for a future award. I would also remind you all of the hard work of Alan Catherall and John Goodman in establishing the new permissive path (*see page three of this newsletter and pages 8-10 of the last one*)

## Alan’s big(gish) birthday

Peter and Georgie and Everson led 23 of us on Alan’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday (no, I can’t believe it either) celebratory 12-mile (very muddy) walk on 28 January from Blaze Farm via Dane Bridge and Gradbach. Back at Blaze Farm, Alan treated us all to tea and scones. My photographs of the proceedings in the tea room are useless, but luckily on the walk, Roger Fielding’s camera very cleverly, and all by itself, took this photograph. For new members, Alan is the man at the front, Georgie is behind the triangular rock, Peter is just visible in the middle, and Roger Fielding is in the back row diagonally to the right of Georgie. Your editor is third from the right.



A coach load of 57 of us set off for Ilkley on 31st May, on what proved to be an ideal day for walking. The 27 short walkers, led by John Irwin, were dropped off near Silsden and walked along the moor edge to The Cow and Calf Rocks, *en route* taking in the Swastika Stone and White Wells.

The 14 medium walkers, led by Roger Norton, set off from Ilkley along the Dalesway before climbing southwards onto Ilkley Moor, while the 14 long walkers, led by me, climbed straight up to the Cow and Calf Rocks before following the Dales High Way westwards, also taking in White Wells and the Swastika Stone, and then dropping down to Addingham, up to Beamish and along to Middleton Woods.

The Swastika Stone is an early bronze age carving, meaning unknown, and also found in Sweden. White Wells was built in the 18th century, and has a plunge pool for visitors, including one Charles Darwin, to take the waters. (*Your editor tried hard but failed to persuade Brian to take the plunge.*)

As the long walkers dropped down into Addingham the footpath went through the local cricket ground. Just as we arrived a batsman was clean bowled, meaning we could continue walking without disturbing play. However, we hadn't allowed for three laggards who arrived just as the new batsman took the crease. Ambling along, oblivious to the cricketers, it took a loud cry from the wicket keeper of "**COME ON YOU WALKERS**" to get them to get a spurt on. One can only imagine what he was muttering under his breath. Then blow me if the three of them didn't stop for an ice cream as we were crossing the footbridge over the River Wharfe! I couldn't possibly name the ringleader, but he did complain several times that I was going too fast to allow him time to collect beetles from under the moor's stones.

Totally unplanned, all three groups coincidentally met up at the Swastika Stone at midday.

*Photograph by courtesy of Roger Norton who submitted it to the local press with an article about this trip.*



*In his article, Brian omitted to mention how he too had recently become a beetle fanatic. He will go to any length to collect rare specimens. He shinned up a rock in pursuit of the very rare *Ilkleyi morbartatii* (only found on Ilkley Moor and last seen over 100 years ago) only to see it fly back down to the ground. Somewhat less elegantly, he descended the rock and was very excited when he found it again. Pointing it out to Roger Norton, in his exuberance he accidentally squashed it with his stick.*



## Keith's Sherry Walk

Our now traditional New Year's Day sherry walk, pioneered and led for many years by Keith Hartley, was once more led by Lorraine and Melanie, with Barry and Jake as the sherry and mince pie porters. The wind and rain were braved by 25 of us.



*As you can see, Keith Hartley was not going to miss "his walk" (he is the one in red in front of the left hand group). Despite the conditions we all masochistically enjoyed ourselves! It is always good to be with friends, whatever the weather.*

## Walk numbers statistics 2010 - 2013

The table compares the average numbers of walkers on weekend, midweek and summer midweek evening walks for the years 2010 - 2013. The numbers include those on weekends and midweeks away, coach trips and members of ECR on Bollington Walking Festival walks.

Although the numbers of people on walks in each box of the table often cover ranges between 1 or 2 and 30 or more, the averages are more meaningful than might be expected because high and low “outliers” tend to cancel each other out. We can conclude the following:

1. Midweek walks are generally better attended than weekend walks.
2. Short walkers consistently lead the weekend league table.
3. The introduction of Thursday medium walks in 2011 has been well supported by members with the result that medium walkers lead the midweek league table (there may be some double counting as some may have attended both midweek medium walks).
4. In 2013 all medium walks and the summer evening walks achieved their best ever averages. Short walk numbers continue to be remarkably consistent and long walk numbers are reasonably constant.

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>WEEKEND</b>				
S	14.3	14.5	15.0	14.7
M	11.6	10.5	11.4	12.3
L	12.0	11.1	12.0	12.3
<b>MIDWEEK</b>				
S	17.2	17.3	17.2	17.4
M (Tue/Wed)	17.5	14.9	12.4	16.4
M (Thursday)	na	9.1	10.7	12.0
<i>M (TOTAL)</i>	<i>17.5</i>	<i>24.0</i>	<i>23.1</i>	<i>26.4</i>
L	14.7	13.9	11.9	13.3
<b>EVENING</b>	na	11.1	10.8	14.1

## Why do I enjoy hill walking?

Tony  
Walker

I asked Maureen recently what would be her “Perfect Day?”. She replied:

- Two cups of tea, served in bed, watching breakfast TV.
- Normal breakfast.
- Good walk in the hills with the Ramblers (or others) without rain or high winds.
- Watch England play and win rugby in the six nations championship.
- Followed by M & S, two dinners and bottle of wine for £10.
- Watch good golf match on Sky TV, like from Augusta.

Which made me think about what are the ingredients of a quality life, and there were three things that jumped out at me:-

Good health, people and walking.

I Googled “walking and good health” and loads of sites came up and the first one I opened summarised walking as:-

Walking can improve your health and fitness by helping you lose body fat, improve your fitness and avoid heart disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and some cancers. Try to walk briskly for at least 30 minutes most days of the week. Walking with others can turn exercising into an enjoyable social occasion.

Being a member of The Ramblers gives us the opportunity to enjoy walking safely and at a very low cost.

## Melanie and Barry Davy’s Open Garden

Melanie writes:

Thank you to everyone who supported our Open Garden this year. We had a record 365 visitors (including six children) and raised £1,284.40 on the gate, which included some extra donations. Excluding 2012, when we had 350 visitors, we usually get an average of 200 visitors. Our full total will increase once we get a percentage from plant and tea sales. In addition to that, we have had seven groups by arrangement, which brings the total raised for charity so far to £1,579.40. Thank you all for your support.

*Editor: In April, Melanie wrote: “Our garden features as ‘Garden of the Week’ in this week’s ‘Garden News’, dated 26th April 2014, pages 6-10 with tips from that well known gardener, Barry Davy. How proud am I...? “*

## Tick alert

Richard Harrison of Tickalert [richard@tickalert.org](mailto:richard@tickalert.org) has asked me to publicise the following. As many of you know, I think walkers need to be made aware of tick hazards - and it isn't just Lyme Disease (which is bad enough). Richard says "There is a new download on the Tickalert.org website and I will be grateful if you are able to share this with your members."

Ramblers and group organisers can now access a quick presentation to inform members about the risk from ticks carrying a dangerous virus in Europe.

'Protect Yourself from Tick Borne Encephalitis in Europe' is available on the Tick Alert website ([www.tickalert.org](http://www.tickalert.org)) and focuses on travel between spring and early autumn to any of 27 countries where TBE is endemic.

It shows how the disease is contracted, explains the serious symptoms that can arise and what to do to protect against TBE, which is a viral disease transmitted within minutes from the bite of an infected tick. Every year there are 10,000-12,000 cases reported. TBE attacks the nervous system and can lead to severe meningitis, encephalitis and even death.

## Tour de France

Brian  
Griffiths

*Editor: Ever modest, Brian omits to mention that he was the organiser of this event.*

A right grand day out was enjoyed by 28 long walkers on Sunday 6 July as we walked from Cutthroat Bridge near Ladybower to High Bradfield, South Yorkshire, to watch the Tour de France.

A round trip of 12 miles, it proved a wise decision to walk as increasing numbers of cars, bikes and walkers were met on the country lanes approaching High Bradfield. The weather was glorious and the views spectacular, particularly near Bradfield ; little wonder the area is known as Little Switzerland. Dropping down from Ughill Moor a well deserved picnic was enjoyed overlooking the picturesque Dale Dyke Reservoir.

As one or two questions were put to Sue Thersby (a retired French teacher) about the Le Tour's terms she proceeded to give the leading walkers a French lesson. So if you're planning a holiday in the Dordogne you know who to walk with; monj toot! , as Del Boy would say.

Climbing up from the attractive village of Low Bradfield to High Bradfield we were greeted by the site of thousands of spectators making their way up the nearby road. The early start and arrival were well worth it just to see the extravagant floats of the

"caravan" pass through, throwing out goodies to the assembled throngs (*not to your editor*). The highlight, of course, was Le Tour itself as riders zoomed downhill into the village, slowing as they reached the bottom to take a sharp left turn uphill towards Sheffield.

Returning via Sugworth Hall, after five miles miles we met a monumental traffic jam as two queues of traffic tailing back to Bradfield met at a road junction. I quipped to some frustrated motorists who stood surveying the scene "You should have walked, like us!" (*Editor: Brian's jolly quip was not universally well received, well at least not by one of the motorists who was there by accident having been unaware of Le Tour!*)



*Photographs by Pat Scanlon of Brian's group assembling at Cut Throat Bridge (why am I not on this photo, I've a good mind not to publish it?!) and of the peloton racing through High Bradfield.*



## Kirkby Lonsdale weekend 6 - 8 June

Ann Thompson organised yet another brilliant weekend away, this time at Kirkby Lonsdale as well as leading both of the short walks. Brian Richardson led both long walks and the medium walks were led by Alan Catherall on Saturday and Helen Richardson on Sunday. It was rather wet on Saturday but Sunday was much better. We dined convivially at the Orange Tree in Friday evening, but the main and excellent group meal was at the Royal Hotel, an historic hotel which has recently been restored. It is well worth a visit when you are in Kirkby.

On Saturday, Alan Catherall (*the author of this paragraph*) led an enthusiastic group of 19 medium walkers. “We took the bus from KL to just beyond Nook where the sympathetic driver deposited us in a lay-by adjacent to the start point. Shortly after this,



*Photographs by Chris Munslow*

and in line with dire warnings from the forecasters, the rain began and there was (distant) thunder and lightning. Fortunately during the day this diminished and, much to the relief of the leader, all his research into what to do in a severe storm in the hills was not called upon. A quick break for coffee was taken in the shelter of an old bridge over the Lancaster Canal – watched by a swan guarding her cygnets nearby. The ascent of Farleton Fell and the Knott – normally noticed and wondered about on the right hand side while driving North to the Lakes – was tackled next with a narrow and wandering path amidst gorse bushes now no longer in blazing golden glory. Alert eyes revealed two youthful deer below. A final climb on the ridge led to the summit with panoramic but restricted views. The route then traversed the limestone features of Newbiggin Crags, with a bottle stop and a group photo sitting on boulders by a tree. Next we went down and up to Hutton Roof Crags again on access land with a maze of paths through tunnel-like openings with coppiced trees and limestone and pavement features. Happenstance, the short and medium groups met and had a communal lunch before continuing in slightly different ways via the Rakes climbing crags and Hutton Roof village across fields to various hostelryes at KL. The day proved to be a good start to the weekend with 1500 ft of ascent and nine miles.



While we were getting wet on Alan's walk, on Brian's long walk, Helen Richardson found three new men friends - they don't seem to be very good at keeping her dry.

On Sunday, brilliant sunshine greeted we medium walkers (*paragraph by the leader Helen Richardson*) as we set off from Barbon Church to Pencil Brow. Soon we were in woodland with purple-flowered rhododendrons and bird song, as we headed east along picturesque Barbon Beck, tumbling westward towards the Lune. After our coffee-stop on moorland looking towards Barbon High Fell and Crag Hill (see us on [ECR Face-book](#)), and a short road slog from Bullpot Farm, we were soon back on access land with a steepish haul to Brownthwaite summit (437 m) rewarded by excellent panoramic views. Continuing sunny weather contributed to enjoyment of a leisurely lunch break on the way into Casterton. There we paused to see the school, church and war memorial, before crossing the disused railway and undulating fields. Just west of Whelprigg, we encountered a chained gate with a prominent 'bull in field' sign beside a difficult stile. However, reassured by the recce, these 'obstacles' proved insufficient to deter our 24 intrepid walkers from this public footpath! We were soon safely through the field, and back in Barbon, we rounded off the day with tea at '[Churchmouse Cheeses](#)'.

Meanwhile, Nick Wilde writes that Brian's long walk on Sunday was also blessed with sunny weather in contrast to Saturday, although, as he says, it is the company and views that make the walk rather than the weather. It started from Barbon climbing up to 2000 ft with stunning views over to Morecambe Bay. The views kept coming and we did see the medium walk group on the other hill side climbing up by the side of a gauge. We reached the trig point before lunch. We met Two walkers and dogs coming the other way, which was rather more than we saw on Saturday's walk. Dropping down to the River Lune we spotted a pair of oyster catchers and some of us saw an owl. We joined the other groups for tea at Churchmouse Cheeses.



Over the last three months ECR walks have featured almost weekly in local editions of the Express newspaper as this selection of press cuttings show. A big thank you then to budding reporters and cameramen who responded to ECR publicity officer Roger Norton's plea for contributions. Perhaps a recent increase in membership is more than just a coincidence?

## EAST CHESHIRE RAMBLERS

### Walkers trace history of landscape

The East Cheshire Ramblers heard a fascinating account of the ecology of Willmslow and district recently from fellow member John Handley.

John is a professor emeritus of landscape and environmental planning at the University of Manchester.

More than 20 stabs were braved a wet and blustery day to join an eight-mile circular walk which linked the valleys of the Bollin and the Dean, heading out of town from the Carrs car park.

Along the way, John pointed out traces of a mill leat that once fed Willmslow's historic corn mill, and Vardon Bridge, a reconstructed medieval landscape of woodland, water meadow and strip

fields. The Bollin Valley is still home to long horn cattle, and sand martins continue to arrive here each spring from west

Africa to nest in the river banks. John explained that an expanding range of turbuttles was also a positive development



● The East Cheshire Ramblers with John Handley

along with, thanks to improved water quality, the renewed presence in the river of sea trout and salmon.

Indeed, he pointed out that it was fitting that the passage of eels will be aided by a new fish pass at Syal, because the name Bollin means 'torrent of eels'.

By contrast, the walking party also saw how an alder copse was being invaded by Himalayan

Balsam and how cultivated plants were escaping into the wild from people's gardens.

Even the much-loved English bluebell is now threatened by climate change and hybridisation," John added.

Close to the Willmslow boundary, the route turned north to reach the River Dean, before returning to the Carrs via Handforth.

There was surprisingly little road walking on this part of the walk, through what John termed 'a remarkable ecological corridor' despite the proximity of the by-pass, the railway line, housing and Handforth Dean retail park.



● The ramblers on the banks of the Bollin

For details of future East Cheshire Ramblers walks, visit [ramblerses.cheshire.org.uk](http://ramblerses.cheshire.org.uk)

### Group takes in historic sites and views in a figure-of-eight walk

East Cheshire Ramblers ventured into west Cheshire recently for a 10-mile, figure-of-eight walk from historic Beeston Castle.

The group meandered through lush pastures and sleepy country lanes, before ascending Bulkeley Hill to reach the Sandstone Trail with its panoramic views of the Cheshire plain, the Welsh hills and the Mersey valley.

Perched on a prominent crag 107m (350ft) above the eponymous village, Beeston was built by the Earl of Chester on his

best worked for copper as far back as the Bronze Age.

It is also said that treasure belonging to Richard II lies buried in the ruins, although numerous searches over the years have yielded nothing.

In 1645 during the civil war, the Royalists were besieged here for 12 months until they were forced to surrender for fear of starvation, following which the Roundheads partially demolished it.

On a neighbouring hill stands Peckforton Castle, the 19th century family

After leaving the dairy farms and big shooting estates below the ridge, the route mapped out by East Cheshire Ramblers' leader Peter Attwell continued to Burwardsley and past the popular Pheasant Inn for a lunch stop beside the trig point at Flaw Head, the highest point on the Sandstone Trail at 227m (749ft).

The return journey took the ramblers along the ridge above Droppington Well, crossed the outward route at Higher Burwardsley and completed the final segment of the figure-of-eight by traversing the

WILMSLOW EXPRESS THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2014

## RAMBLERS



● Coffee break at White Edge for the East Cheshire Ramblers on their latest walk

### Ramblers enjoy spot of Peaks sun on eight-mile walk

ROGER NORTON

THIRTEEN members of the East Cheshire Ramblers were rewarded with clear blue skies and brilliant sunshine when they did an eight-mile walk along three craggy ridges of the Peak District.

Starting from a car park on Carbar Edge above the village of Calver, the group made its way across the moors and on to White Edge, where they started a pair of magpie foraging in

descending to the National Trust's Langshaw Hill estate, the former 19th century shooting lodge of the Duke of Rutland with its rough sheep pastures, wooded gorges and sunbathing streams.

After a break for a hunch in the shade of a leafy woodland dell, the party climbed up through the trees to emerge on Froggie Edge overlooking the River Derwent.

One of the country's with more than 650 members, the East Cheshires operate up to 350 walks each year to suit all levels of ability, including weekend and midweek excursions, coach trips and weekends away.

Further details including forthcoming outings to Kerridge (5.5 miles, moderate), Ladybowser (nine miles, medium) and Longdendale (14 miles, strenuous) can be found at [www.ramblerses.cheshire.org.uk](http://www.ramblerses.cheshire.org.uk)

THE East Cheshire Ramblers completed two walks which demonstrated the diversity of the Peak District this month...

The Peak District's rich and varied scenery was amply demonstrated recently by two walks on opposite sides of the national park organised by East Cheshire Ramblers.

The first was along leafy limestone dales and a disused railway line in the White Peak, and the second over wild gritstone moor high above Glosop in the Dark Peak.

Built by the Midland Railway in 1863, the former Manchester - London line was closed in 1988 and remained neglected and unused for many years until it was eventually taken over by the National Park authority and renamed

the Monsal Trail.

The trail is now a scenic walking track running 8.5 miles from Jopley Fife near Bolton, out through Wyedale to Coombs viaduct near Bolewold.

At first the trail had to be diverted around a succession of old railway tunnels.

These were finally re-opened in 2011 with help from the European Union as part of a £2.5 million project to create a multi-purpose walking, cycling and horse riding track.

The track is now widely regarded as one of the most spectacular recreational routes of its kind in Britain. The Monsal Trail formed the centre-piece of a 12-mile walk led by Audrey Sheen, which attracted 18 East Cheshire Ramblers members - just a few more than the Dark Peak walk led by Colin

Park.

Colin's walk was of similar length and departed from Glosop railway station followed by a steep climb up Cock Hill.

It went on to Glosop Low, before turning east across desolate, open moorland to Torside Castle to join the Pennine Way and return to Glosop via the Longdendale Trail.



● Clough Edge above Longdendale

### Ramblers experience Dark Peak's diversity

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● Clough Edge above Longdendale

## MACCLESFIELD EXPRESS

25th June 2014

THE region's industrial heritage figured on a recent 6.5-mile long outing for East Cheshire Ramblers to explore the old Peak Forest Tramway. The tramway was once a vital freight route, but is now a haven for walkers and wildlife, as well as canal boat enthusiasts.

It was opened in 1796 to carry limestone in horse-drawn wagons from local quarries to the canal at Bugsworth Basin for onward distribution into Cheshire and Lancashire via the Peak Forest and Ashton canals.

A scheduled ancient monument, the basin has been extensively restored in recent years to become a popular mooring for long boats and create a fascinating reminder of the industrial revolution graphically explained in illustrated signs and visitor information.

Starting from the wharf at Whaley Bridge, rambling leader Ann Thompson and the group of 10 ascended 625 metres (1,000 ft) into the hills above the town.

"They enjoyed the views from the edge of Eccles Pike looking out towards New Mills and Buxton Knoll before descending into Chapel-en-le-Frith to join the tramway back to Whaley Bridge.

Walking much of the way beside the River Goyt, the party passed through meadows garlanded with swathes of bright yellow buttercups interspersed with clumps of purple campanion and pink bistort, which was traditionally



● This old mill is a reminder of the Goyt Valley's industrial past

used to make a savoury dish known as Easter pudding.

In places, there is still evidence of long-forgotten cotton and paper mills that sprang up along the tramway as the area's industry developed.

Yet here too nature has reclaimed the valley for itself, including a family



● Descending towards Eccles Pike

# Visit to the moors to see Swastika Stone

ACCORDING to Yorkshire's unofficial anthem you should not venture onto Ilkley Moor 'bah' 'at' (without a hat) to ward off the wind. Fortunately, 55 members of the East Cheshire Ramblers were greeted with warm spring sunshine and barely a puff of wind when they visited

Yorkshire recently on a coach outing. The day was organised by Brian Griffiths and offered them a choice of three walks on Ilkley Moor, ranging from six and half miles, nine miles, or 12 miles long. The wild expanse of moor dominates the skyline to the south of the

town of Ilkley and its handsome Victorian buildings on the banks of the River Wharfe. Although Ilkley grew chiefly as a fashionable spa town during the 19th century, the Romans built a fort here beside the river in around 79AD, while nearby All Saints Church has the remains of three

Anglo-Saxon crosses. However, the group was interested to see that some of the area's most impressive archaeological features lie up on the moor itself. The moor has been continuously settled since at least the Bronze Age, including the mysterious Swastika Stone dating from 2000 BC.

The stone bears a replica carving of a swastika, with five curved arms enclosing 'cup-and-ring' marks similar to those found on other boulders spread across the moor.

All three rambling parties met up at the Swastika Stone at noon, before finishing up in Ilkley for afternoon tea and then boarding the coach back to Cheshire.

For details of future ECR walks, go to [www.ramblerseastcheshire.co.uk](http://www.ramblerseastcheshire.co.uk).



● The East Cheshire Ramblers gather at the Swastika Stone on Ilkley Moor, overlooking Ilkley

## EAST CHESHIRE RAMBLERS

● EAST Cheshire Ramblers were rewarded with extensive views across the Goyt Valley on one of the clearest and hottest days so far this summer.

They went on an 8.5-mile walk, led by Roger Norton, who pointed out historical features along the way. Starting close to the source of the River Goyt at

beside the trig point on Burbage Edge at 431 metres/1,422 feet, before descending to see the blocked-off tunnel where the railway once emerged on the other side of the ridge.

With clear blue skies all around, there were frequent pauses to enjoy the sight of Errwood and Fernilee reservoirs shimmering in the sunshine in the valley.

The return journey along the river passed other reminders of the Goyt's historic past, such as the Fernilee Gunpowder Works, which now lie at the bottom of the reservoir, the ruins of Errwood Hall, family seat of the Grimshaves who held sway there for nearly 100 years, and

Goytsclough Quarry where it is said that gritstone slabs were cut to make paving slabs for Regent Street in London.

For further information, visit [www.ramblerseastcheshire.org.uk](http://www.ramblerseastcheshire.org.uk)



● The infant River Goyt below Goytsclough quarry

# Fine views in Forest

ON a cloudy and damp morning on June 19, a group of walkers from East Cheshire Ramblers set out from Trentabank Reservoir Car Park for their walk through Macclesfield Forest.

After a steady climb on the forest track, they arrived at the summit of Nessitt Hill.

Fine views were admired there, looking towards Teggs Nose and further afield the Cheshire plain.

The route then took the walkers on through the forest to Standing Stone and more fine views going downhill towards Cough House.

After a morning stop for coffee, the group was off again to Wildboarclough. This was so-called because, according to legend, it is the place



● East Cheshire Ramblers on a walk in Macclesfield Forest

where the last wild boar in the country was captured and killed.

As the late morning progressed, the clouds began to clear and the group approached Greenway Bridge and a

very welcome break for lunch. Surely nothing could be finer than a picnic in the countryside, with a view of Shuttlesloe in the background and Oakencough in front.

It was in this direction

that the ramblers progressed after lunch, reaching the Hanging Gate pit (but not stopping) in the early afternoon.

Soon afterwards the Griststone Trail was reached. The ramblers then made a return to Macclesfield Forest and Trentabank, where they began.

All the walkers who took part agreed that it was a fine walk, although some discussion took place over the distance walked, depending of course, on which tracking device had been utilised.

A happy compromise was eventually reached and a distance of 10 miles agreed on.

For details of future East Cheshire Ramblers walks, visit the website [ramblers.eastcheshire.co.uk](http://ramblers.eastcheshire.co.uk).

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● The ramblers at Trig Point on Burbage Edge