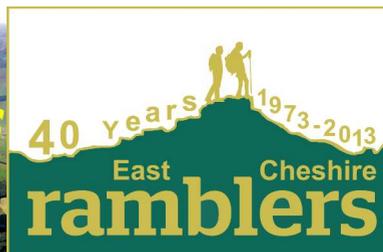


East Cheshire Ramblers Newsletter



Winter 2013/14

Editorial

Ralph
Atherton

This is the third and last time the newsletter displays the 40 year anniversary logo on its front page banner. Our anniversary celebratory year has been a great success as you will see from this issue (25 pages, the biggest ever) and on the website. It demonstrates what an active club we are, with so many hardworking members. The unveiling of the Joyce Blanchard Memorial Plaque in January is covered in the last issue and on the website. The website also covers the highly successful anniversary dinner in June and the launch of the "Walkers are Welcome" initiative in Bollington (p23). Brian Griffiths organised four 40th anniversary walks on the Gritstone Trail as well as decent weather (pp 14-15) and a coach trip to Hawes (p 22). The hard work of John Goodman and Alan Catherall culminated in the establishment of an important new permissive path (pp 8-12). We had a cream tea canal boat cruise from Whaley Bridge (Mike Bull) in September, a barn dance in November (Tony Battilana and Ann Thompson), and a highly successful weekend away in Patterdale (pp 18-21, but also see my comments in "Photographs from members" on p 24). In his AGM report, David Bates gave the fascinating results of the September walker survey (p 13) which sadly I could not fit in the first few pages. Half of the 8-page printed section and four of the 17 website-only pages are devoted to footpath matters. I make no apology as footpaths are vital to us. I also recommend that you read Norman Ridley's letter about the club's early days (p 17), and longstanding members will be sad to learn of the death of Eric Mountain (p25).

Note that there will be no printed programme of weekend walks for Jan-Jun 2014 (I recommend that you read the AGM report - and my footnote - on page 2). This situation arose because leaders are increasingly reluctant to commit themselves many weeks in advance to more "adventurous" walks in winter months in case the weather causes problems. We have even had problems with local walks due to snow and ice preventing access to starting points. Thus, we will now organise weekend winter walks in a way more akin to the midweek programme where leaders do not need to post walk details on the website Forum (and the members' emailing system) until a few days before the walk. I think this is very sensible.

Our AGM at Macclesfield Tennis Club on Saturday 9 November was attended by 38 members. The preceding 5 mile walk from Gawsorth was enjoyed by 26 people.

The Chairman thanked all the many members involved in the running of East Cheshire Ramblers Group for providing a first class service that benefits everyone.

The position of Footpath Secretary remains vacant, but to date no one has volunteered. Meanwhile, a contingency plan is in operation to cover the role.

Ken Hobbs, Treasurer; Brian Griffiths, Membership Secretary, and Alan Catherall, all retired from the committee. The Chairman thanked them for their invaluable services.

We elected and welcomed the following new members to the committee: Colin Finlayson as Treasurer; Mike Bull as Membership Secretary, Sue Munslow and Andy Davies.

Next Year's Budget awaits approval by Central Office although the first fund instalment has been received. Similar to this year, expenditure will be towards new and existing footpath projects. Brian Richardson is making very good progress in recruiting members to a project team to undertake various tasks to help keep paths in good condition (*see Brian's article on pages 6-7*). Membership has declined slightly, but there has been a net increase of nine over the last three months.

There were two motions raised, the first proposing that the weekend walks programme be posted on the Forum, similar to the format for mid-week walks. There were two amendments to the motion, one being a change in dates when this new format would be used from December - February to January - March. The other being a change in wording from that proposed to "The weekend programme of walks for the winter months of January, February, and March operates with leaders putting their walk details on the Forum." Both amendments were accepted by a majority vote after spirited debate and the amended option was carried 24:4*. The second motion promoting the reclassification of the lengths of short, medium and long walks was rejected by a large majority 4:24 after vigorous debate.

For the month of September 2013, we undertook a survey of walkers involved in our walks. (*Editor: Very briefly, 192 different people - 159 of them ECR members - participated in 31 walks. The interesting detailed results of the survey are on page 13.*) An enjoyable day; the interesting topics raised gave us all much to think about. Many thanks to Jane Gay for organising the venue and refreshments and leading the walk.

**Editor: Accordingly, no programme of weekend walks covering the period Jan-Mar 2014 will be printed. Walks will be posted on the website Forum. Members will receive by email a programme listing dates and walk leaders' names (similar to our practice with midweek walks). I understand that the committee will be considering the implications for the summer programme (April - September 2014) and that for next winter (October 2014 - March 2015) and how the membership will be consulted, as these matters need to be decided early in the New Year.*



The new committee photographed by Michael Murphy
From L to R: Colin Finlayson (treasurer), Sue Munslow, David Gylee (chairman), Andy Davies, Jane Gay, David Bates (secretary). Mike Bull our new membership secretary was unable to attend but has managed to sneak into the photograph at bottom right.

From your Chairman

David
Gylee

First of all my thanks go to all who took the time and trouble to attend the AGM. The attendance was higher than it has been in previous years; I trust that it was interesting, informative and that everyone had an opportunity to speak and make their views known.

While we have said “Goodbye” to Ken Hobbs, Brian Griffiths, Alan Catherall and Roger Norton, we say “Hello” to Colin Finlayson, Mike Bull (new role), Sue Munslow and Andy Davies. It is a sign of a healthy Group that we are able to change personnel and that we have willing volunteers. I am personally very pleased that we have these new members joining our Committee.

Our 40th Anniversary year has been lively, interesting and rewarding. Perhaps the most satisfying achievement of this anniversary year has been the opening of the new Permissive footpath between Charles Head and Broad Moss, thanks to the vision, perseverance and patience of John Goodman and Alan Catherall. From our early days as a Group we were fundamentally involved in the inspection, maintenance and preservation of footpaths, something which continues to occupy a large number of our members. To have, therefore, a footpath added to our network in this our anniversary

year has to be a significant milestone. We are all indebted to John, to Alan and to the kind permission of the landowners in allowing access to such beautiful and uplifting countryside.

I am very pleased that Brian Richardson has had success in recruiting volunteers to help with the new Footpath project work. It is so very important that we have a good network of footpaths in our area; without them where would we walk? I know that Brian has plenty of good ideas, has equipment ready to use, and will soon be putting members and machinery to constructive use.

Next year will be another busy year with a variety of the usual and possibly unusual special events to look forward to. I know that already we have planned two week-ends away, a coach trip, a curry night and (very exciting) there will be the possibility of going up, up and away with Roger Fielding. Please do keep focused on the website where all of the advance information will be published.

My personal thanks go to all who have helped out during our 40th Anniversary year. It has been very memorable. I know that I have said it before, but I believe that this is an excellent Ramblers Group and it is a privilege to be a member and Chairman.

Membership Matters **Brian Griffiths**

Membership continues to decline, and currently stands at 629 (660 last year and 748 two years before that). It is small consolation to know that this is in line with trends throughout the country for clubs and societies.

One or two members have recently been recorded by Central Office as having allowed their membership to lapse, despite being on direct debit. Should this happen to you please inform my successor, Mike Bull, to have it rectified.

Footpath Matters **Dave Barraclough**
KEEPING YOUR WALKS ENJOYABLE – THE EFFORTS OF THE EAST CHESHIRE RAMBLERS FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE

What makes a walk enjoyable? Or put another way – what can spoil a walk ? You are most likely to recall the weather or the fine views you were able to see. In our East Cheshire area we are relatively lucky with both of these. The UK weather is often criticised – if all you want to do is sunbathe – but for walking it is often ideal, not too hot and not too cold. We can walk in all four seasons even if you always need to carry some waterproof gear. The landscape in our area includes wonderful parts of the Peak District and our walking programme regularly includes walks to other National Parks such as the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales and Snowdonia.

However, at the end of a day's walking you might give a thought to the quality of the footpaths you have used. You will probably have taken this for granted but you might be aggrieved if you have been forced into lengthy detours caused by path obstructions, such as a locked gate, the planting of crops across a path, barbed wire or an electric fence, flooding or farm slurry, or a dangerous stile. Even the absence of waymarks or fingerposts to point you in the right direction can spoil a good walk.

It is the legal duty of the highway authority to maintain adequate standards on the footpath network – or 'Public Rights Of Way' to give them their official name (along with bridleways and some other classes of 'byways'). Highway Authorities generally carry this out through a Public Rights of Way (PROW) Unit and all our area is covered by the Cheshire East Council. A key feature of the Ramblers across the country is to act as the 'eyes and ears' of the footpath network. This may be at national level – to campaign for new long distance paths or to campaign against budget cuts – or at local level to co-operate with the highway authority PROW Department to help to maintain the high standard of paths that we are blessed with in Cheshire East and the Peak District. This work is a key advantage of membership of the Ramblers compared with many other walking groups that are available.

We have a constructive relationship with the Cheshire East PROW Unit and the generally high standard of the County's paths is reflected in the fact that the Authority is not highlighted in the recent Ramblers campaign 'Paths in Crisis'. In contrast Staffordshire has a poorer standard of path maintenance and it is highlighted in the campaign as experiencing budget cuts of over £100,000 and many overdue path mapping modifications.

(Editor: Dave next considers how our cooperation with the PROW unit is achieved and describes nine tasks that the Footpath Committee routinely undertakes (see pages 15 - 16). I hope you will read this in the full version of this newsletter on our website - it is important.)

We hope that your walks in Cheshire East can generally be trouble free in terms of path quality. If there is a problem, please report it on the appropriate 'Path Problem Report Forms'. The first action should be to report it to the Highway Authority http://forms.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ShowForm.aspx?form=~sitecollection/FormServerTemplates/CE_PROW_Path_Problem.xsn&redirect=www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/system_pages/acknowledgement/CE_PROW_Path_Problem.aspx but the Ramblers Footpath Committee remains available to help in cases of difficulty via their Form <http://eastcheshirepaths.org.uk/tinc?key=uWtbs9hc>

So please give a thought during your walks to the effort that has gone into the establishment and maintenance of the network of footpaths that we enjoy in the United Kingdom.....and of course we would always welcome any new volunteers to assist us with this work. It can be strangely satisfying!!

Happy walking!

Footpath Projects Team

Brian
Richardson

Your East Cheshire Group footpaths committee is seeking to establish a Footpath Projects Team from volunteers to repair, maintain and improve the public footpaths in East Cheshire Area.

Such a team has become necessary because the resources of Cheshire East Council (CEC) Public Rights of Way (PROW) Officers are limited by the current economic climate, and the circumstances required for them to give significant support on the ground in future are unlikely to improve. Therefore, in general, ‘our’ footpaths are suffering from neglect.

I have been appointed by our committee as a Footpath Projects Coordinator to form a team of volunteers to address many of the faults reported by our ECR Footpath Inspectors. CEC PROW has acknowledged the need for this team and welcomes ECR FP Committee’s proposal to carry out footpath improvements.

The new Footpath Projects Team will progressively address:

1. Vegetation clearance and restoring wayward paths to their legally defined route.
2. Way-marker post installations, and where requested by Footpath Inspectors, to assist in fixing way-marker discs.
3. Gate and stile repairs and replacements.
4. Steps, where appropriate, on particularly steep and accident-prone sections of paths.
5. Footpath drainage.
6. Footpath surface repairs and improvements.
7. Small stream crossings – bridges and stepping stones.

CEC expects us to ‘cut our teeth’ on the first two types of tasks/projects, (of which there are many). The team will progress to the remaining, costlier types of project as we progress in developing experience and skills and prove a safety ethos essential for their successful conclusion. I, of course, will have prepared for the day by prioritising the list of tasks, preparing Health and Safety risk assessments, pre-visiting the site and meeting and advising the landowner(s) of our proposals, gaining the essential approval of CEC PROW to progress with the day’s tasks, preparing the tools, and organising materials etc. It will be up to the team to provide satisfactory workmanship to maintain CEC PROW’s on-going sanction and support for our tasks.

On this basis, I am seeking enough support to hold at least one and possibly two events each month from ladies and gentlemen of our membership who would like to give time, on either a regular or occasional basis, as part of the ECR Footpaths Projects Team.

Optimistically, I expect this team will accumulate enough members for one or two groups to be active ‘in the field’ on one, or two, Mondays and/or Fridays per month with a flexible source of volunteers according to the response to this appeal. A team will be flexibly formed as groups of three to five members to carry out types of work suited to members’ skills and interests; and to match their choice of attendance dates. A pattern of working, perhaps 2nd Monday and 3rd Friday in most months, may evolve.

Members would provide their own boots, hats and thick, gloves (preferably leather gardening-style), warm waterproof clothing or even sun-cream and sun hats etc. Hard hats will be provided if tree branches overhead are to be cut. Protective glasses can be provided for heavy brush clearance etc. Our Footpaths Projects Team will supply the tools, first aid etc.

I envisage the work group(s) will meet at the project site at 10 am, and we are on site until 2.30 or 3pm, to include a coffee and self-provided picnic lunch stop as on a day’s walk. I hope this appeal to ECR group’s large membership will attract members who may not, or may seldom, join the walks – as well as regular walkers. This project work should prove to be sociable and fun. I see my focus is to use our combined skills to fulfil the day’s tasks and to go home pleased with our results and the day’s companionship.

If you are interested or intrigued and willing to come along please email me at projects@eastcheshirepaths.org.uk .

I will be pleased to know what attendance you can offer in terms of Monday, Friday or both, and once, or twice a month, or on an occasional basis.

Please ring me on 01625 520486 if you have questions, and I will hope to answer them satisfactorily!

I shall keep a register and email contact list of interested members (with no obligation to commit), and prepare a priority list of tasks/projects identified with our FP Committee. According to the response I receive from you; I shall form a Diary of Project Days.

(Editor: Brian has also emailed: “... we have progressed a major task of restoring the ‘lost’ FP23 through the woods of The Carrs in Wilmslow, but more work needed. Dense hedgerow intrusion on FP26 off Withinlee Road, Prestbury is being removed but requires another visit. We have been very busy.” He also attached these three photos, showing FP23 with Andy Davies and Mike Collins, and two of FP26 with Phillip Hodgkinson, Sue Dale, Ian Black, Barbara Hare and Mike Bull.



New Permissive Footpath

John Goodman
Alan Catherall

The editor asked us to write about the new permissive footpath which was opened – and walked – by chairman David Gylee and the ECR committee in August. It formed part of the 15 mile long walk led by John in early September which attracted 28 members. We had to write this in two parts – the first part, on this page, to be included in the smaller (paper) edition posted to members, and the second, which describes some of the issues and challenges that arose during this unusual process, having to appear only in the longer website edition (*see pages 11-13*).

ECR is very active day by day in ensuring the conservation, maintenance and care of the existing network of footpaths in its area. It is pretty rare for ECR to be able to extend that network, especially when what is being sought is not the restoration of a former right of way which has fallen into disuse but the creation of a new path where none has ever existed. This is such a case - a completely new footpath, albeit a permissive footpath and not a permanent right of way, for a trial period of five years, subject to annual reviews with the landowners and tenants.

The new footpath is just over a mile long. It runs along a high level ridge, offering quite outstanding views on all sides. For much of its length the new path follows a dry stone wall which runs in a broadly north – south direction along the ridge. It is accessed at both ends from established rights of way footpaths, and so it can be incorporated into other walks from a variety of starting points, e.g., Bollington, Pott Shrigley or the car parks at Pym Chair or Lamaload Reservoir.

The northern end of the path leaves the approach lane to Charles Head Farm, which is a few yards south of the junction of Bakestonedale Road (from Pott Shrigley) and the B5470 between Kettleshulme and Rainow. The way-marked path has a fingerpost, notice and stile about 20 yards up the lane from the B5470. Similarly at the southern end, where the path leaves the existing footpath which crosses Broad Moss and starts to drop down to Summer Close Farm. The map references are 977 775 and 975 789.

Our greatest debt is to the landowners and tenants for their generosity in allowing us to walk over this delightful section of their land, despite having many natural doubts and fears – and receiving no material reward for their co-operation. There are, of course, conditions, such as walkers only and no dogs being allowed, even on leads, which is due to the shocking experience of one tenant farmer who has other footpaths on his land. The landowners can close the new footpath for one day each year and, with notice, for a longer period for agricultural purposes.

Considerable thanks are also due to David Gylee, Ken Hobbs (as Treasurer) and the ECR committee as a whole. As part of the annual budgeting process they successfully applied to Ramblers headquarters for money to pay for the new stiles, fingerposts etc, and also kept faith with us at times when the outcome of the negotiations appeared seriously doubtful at best. (*Photographs on pages 9-10*)



BEFORE (16 January 2013) John and Peak Park team member Neil Hanshaw and AFTER (2 August 2013). Photographed by Alan Catherall and Roger Norton respectively.



Our committee visited the site on 2 August 2013 when David Gylee did the really hard work by formally unveiling the notice and cutting the ribbon under the watchful eyes of Alan and John (Photographs by Roger Norton)



Photograph by Roger Norton on 2 August of the new permissive footpath sign - note that dogs are banned even on a lead (and even Twice!)



Alan took this photograph on 26 June 2013 of cheerful Andy and Ellie of Peak Park Rangers who did most of the work on the site.



This photograph taken by Alan on 11 July 2013 shows a more detailed view of the two-tier stile and electric fence - the terrain on the other side of the wall is at a higher level and the cattle have to be deterred from leaping over.

Visit by 28 club members on a walk led by John and Alan on 4 September 2013 (Photograph by Roger Fielding)



Establishing the New Permissive Footpath: Some Insights into the Process by John Goodman and Alan Catherall

First, a few conundrums in the form of questions:

1. How do you find out who owns various tracts of land stretching over a mile?
2. If a landowner was to receive a letter or an email from the Ramblers asking for a new footpath across his/her land, on average how long would it take before the letter found its way into the wastepaper basket, or its email equivalent?
3. Did you know that land with a public footpath is worth significantly less than the same land without a footpath?
4. Given that fact, can the money to compensate for this be found, and if not, how can a landowner be persuaded to give “something for nothing”?
5. How can the inevitable and largely reasonable fears of landowners, such as legal disputes arising from interfaces between livestock and walkers, dogs and livestock, falls and other accidental injuries to walkers etc, be overcome?

(The answers to questions 4 and 5 turned out to be ‘with some difficulty, and a little persuasion and patience’).

The vision of, and subsequent ambition to establish, a route for walkers along the Broad Moss to Charles Head ridge arose from two aspirations. Living in Pott Shrigley and exploring the surrounding moorland and hills, John was surprised that there was no right of way to the Charles Head high point. The state of the dry stone walls on the ridge suggested that some walkers had not been deterred by this ‘technicality’. The profusion of barbed wire at various ‘natural’ wall climbing points underlined what looked like a cycle of challenge and response. Secondly, any longer walks, for example one aimed at circling the waters of Todd Brook whilst retaining height, which was already possible for most of its length, was frustrated in this area by an existing right of way descending to the valley before later rising again to meet the end of the ridge.

If we were to establish a footpath, the first hurdle was to find out who owned the land on or near the ridge. Public bodies were inhibited from disclosure by the strictures of the Data Protection Act. The Land Registry was the most likely source, but the route of the proposed footpath was not ‘set in stone’ with variants possible at various points. This gave some flexibility but greatly increased the search area – and associated costs. Also, unless there had been changes we knew that the Land Registry would not be able to answer our questions for all the land. The answer was found informally through John’s personal contacts in the area, which yielded the necessary details and helpful background information.

Next, what could we offer the landowners, apart from a possible nuisance they could well do without? June Mabon very helpfully referred us to a news item about a two-year

Government scheme, run for DEFRA by Natural England, called Paths for Communities (P4C) which offered grants for extensions to the rights of way network agreed with landowners. Forms were obtained and completed. The support of Cheshire East's Local Access Forum was sought and given enthusiastically. A land agent was consulted about the possibly appropriate levels of financial compensation for the different landowners through P4C, if successful. We visited Natural England in Leeds to 'talk turkey'.

We now knew who the relevant landowners were, and had a possible source of compensation to offer them. The next step was to approach them, but how? Letters from the Ramblers? Would they ever be answered? Cold telephone calls? Would they take the calls, or respond to messages left on ansaphones? We decided that our first approach had to be direct and personal, though this involved several wasted journeys knocking on doors. However it worked, and we were able to discuss possibilities and, crucially, to develop relationships.

The possibilities took various forms. Initially compensatory money from P4C seemed feasible, but a condition of the scheme was the creation of a permanent right of way which none of the landowners/tenants was prepared to contemplate for a moment. A second possibility, raised by one of them was to apply to Natural England, or failing them the Peak Park, to fund the re-building of the prominent but ineffective dry stone wall which runs along the ridge, whilst creating the new path alongside it. This could tick both the conservation and access boxes in any applications. Another suggestion, to avoid any interface of livestock and walkers, was to confine the footpath to the narrow and variable space between the failed dry stone wall and a very stout electric fence which had recently been erected parallel to it, or indeed to move the electric fence back a couple of feet. The footpath could only be permissive, with the landowners having the right to close it if there were problems, and other conditions to safeguard their interests. A permanent right of way, as a first stage, was 'beyond the pale'.

As the proposed footpath was within the Peak Park we also initiated consultations with them, which included consideration of the implications of there being a tumulus near the high point of the proposed path. Some sensitivity was necessary here as relationships between the National Park Authority and landowners, farmers and other businesses located within it are not always seen as positive by the latter groups. Also we kept the Cheshire East Council's Public Rights of Way section informed of our aim and progress throughout.

Our contacts with the landowners and tenants became more frequent, but the possibility of obtaining financial compensation for them in the near future had disappeared. We could indicate only that our proposal would not present any financial cost to them as the Ramblers had agreed to pay for the footpath furniture and its installation.

The breakthrough came at a meeting with the landowner of the largest piece of land, when – despite receiving no material reward - he agreed to "give it a trial". He did this in what can only be described, in its local context, as a public spirited way, if the neighbouring owners/tenants would do likewise. His family had farmed the land for generations and he appreciated the quality of the proposed route very much. John

promptly developed a draft written agreement, pointedly devoid of any legal language and accessible to all, on a single side of paper. The other landowners/tenants were consulted. Amendments were made and additional conditions included at their request, so that all involved could agree, and sign. A month after the final signature, the Peak Park maintenance team installed the footpath ‘furniture’, and two weeks later the path was formally walked (and opened) by the ECR Committee. It was 17 months after we had started our project, and 12 months after our first contact with individual landowners/tenants. Hopefully, the trial period will pass successfully, without incident or problem, and the path will continue to be available on a permissive basis into the future.

Survey of Walkers - September 2013 **David Bates**

For the month of September 2013 we took a survey of people on our walks by asking all leaders to make a register of names of their walkers. In that month there were 25 registered club walks on the website Forum plus two not on the Forum, plus 6 walks on the Patterdale weekend, which equates to a total of 33 walks. Of these, we received data for 31 walks, which is a very good response rate.

OVERVIEW OF WALKS IN SEPTEMBER 2013
(includes Patterdale weekend)

| Walk type | No. of walkers | No. of walks in survey | Total no.walkers recorded |
|--|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Long | 67 | 7 | 116 |
| Medium | 91 | 13 | 154 |
| Short | 83 | 11 | 137 |
| TOTAL | 241 | 31 | 407 |
| No. of walkers on more than one type of walk | 49 | | |
| Net actual no of individuals walking | 192 (of whom 159 were ECR members)* | | |

*The 192 different individuals were made up of 159 ECR members, 4 Stockport Ramblers, 1 Staffordshire Rambler, 1 potential member, 4 who may or may not have been members of Ramblers, and 23 non-members.

Editor: This is a fascinating result. I would not have guessed that we had at least 159 members actually attending our walks (the total number must be nearer 170 as some members were away or ill or injured in that month. I must add up how many members lead walks ,which will give we walk programme compilers an estimate of how many potential new leaders there are out there! Sadly, there are still some regular walkers who have walked with us frequently for a long time and who have never offered to lead a walk.

40th Anniversary Walks

On Saturday 8 June, 83 members joined four 40th anniversary celebration walks organised by Brian Griffiths and blessed with good weather. Being linear, the walks were coach-facilitated and covered the whole length (40 km = 25 miles with 10 walkers) of the Gritstone Trail or parts thereof (5.5 miles with 19 walkers, 10 miles (34) and 15 miles (20). For instance, your editor and the other 15-milers caught the coach from Bollington to Rushton Spencer so we could walk back to Bollington. At Teggs Nose (11 miles) we met the 25-milers who had started at Bramhall and were on their way to Rushton Spencer with 11 miles to go! Descending from Teggs Nose we met the 5.5-milers who had earlier crossed paths with the 10-milers. If we had known in advance that Jane Gay was going to provide a special cake and champagne for her walkers, we might all have gone on that one! A wonderful day, as the photographs show.



Those jammy 5.5-milers didn't save any of Jane's wonderful cake and champagne for me!



The 10-milers at White Nancy and the 15-milers somewhere or other...





...but pride of place must go to those who did the full 40 km celebratory distance. Here they are at the end of their trek at the Knott Inn, Rushton Spencer pretending they feel fit enough to do it all over again - some of them were already looking shattered when they arrived at Teggs Nose! (Look at the website photogallery to see them at the beginning of the walk.)

Footpath Committee Tasks Dave Barraclough

(From page 5) So how exactly is this co-operation with Cheshire East PROW achieved? Some of the tasks that the Footpath Committee routinely undertakes include:

- Organising the footpath inspection of all paths in our area, collating onto a web based database and analysis to identify problem footpaths. Our team of 38 inspectors in 2013 surveyed over 1250 paths in 33 parishes. The team has achieved almost 100% coverage for several years with the results entered onto an online database. The results can be analysed in various ways to identify any

trends in footpath problems. We are one of the few Ramblers Groups who manage to walk and report on all their paths each year.

- Carrying out minor routine maintenance tasks such as cutting back encroaching undergrowth or tree branches and replacing damaged or missing path-waymarks.
- Identifying the paths in poor condition and taking special action to co-operate with the Cheshire East Public Rights of Way (PROW) team to urge solutions. The annual footpath survey is invaluable in identifying new and old problems on the network and these are discussed at meetings with Cheshire East's network management staff which are held at 6-monthly intervals. In 2012, 18 newly obstructed paths were recorded and by early summer 2013, the problems on 16 of these paths had been resolved.
- Prioritising the longer term problems. The solution usually requires some form of legal intervention. Progress on these problems can be painfully slow as the Cheshire East Public Rights of Way Unit has limited resources to tackle this type of specialised work. We continue to “remind” them, and can report that three paths which had been obstructed for a number of years were re-opened in 2013. None of this progress would have been possible without the dedication and assistance of our team of inspectors who walk all their allotted paths on a regular basis.
- Receiving and offering views on various local authority footpath proposals for diversions, extinguishments, planning applications etc. Site visits are often required and the Footpaths Committee considers the proposals at each meeting.
- Receiving reports and investigation of ‘footpath problems’ via local East Cheshire Ramblers website or via Ramblers Central Office from other members as well as members of the public. We receive about 2 reports each month. Examples of recent problems include paths blocked by nettles, an impassable path due to maize planting and a path made difficult by ‘lively bullocks’!
- Attending Liaison Meetings and Consultative meetings with Cheshire East PROW Department and with other Ramblers Groups in the surrounding area.
- Working with the PROW Unit to keep the official ‘Definitive Maps’ up to date. These lead to changes to the Ordnance Survey maps – which are world leaders in giving us high quality maps to help our walks. If you have walked in some foreign countries you may have realised what a fantastic facility is offered by Ordnance Survey maps.
- Identifying path improvement tasks where support from East Cheshire Ramblers Group, both financial and manpower is utilised. This growing area has recently led to the formation of a separate ‘Projects Team’.

Letter to the Editor from Norman Ridley

I have just read David Gylee's interesting article in the Summer 2013 Newsletter on the early days of East Cheshire Group, and the information that you had obtained from the Chester Archives giving the date of our Group's inaugural meeting as 4th October, 1973.

However, I would like to confirm my earlier telephone comments with David about the meeting which led to the formation of the Macclesfield and District Group. This was held in the Martineaux Hall (long since gone but the site remains undeveloped) in Jordangate, Macclesfield, in the Spring of 1973 (probably about April). The meeting was publicised in the Macclesfield Express. The hall was quite full and the main speaker was Don Lee, a member of the Manchester RA, who subjected the audience to a fiery speech condemning land owners, particularly farmers, who obstructed ROW. A summary of the meeting, which supported the formation of a Macclesfield Group, was also again reported in the Macclesfield Express.

There was no indication after the meeting as to what the next move would be so several attendees got together to form a local action group. We met every few weeks at the home in Great King Street, Macclesfield, of one of the group whose name I have long since forgotten. I believe he was a vet with ICI. He agreed to Chair our meetings and the Secretary was a young lady called Pat Bowyer, who worked as a journalist. The group was mainly concerned with obstructed paths and we discussed these problems with two footpath men from Chester whose only concern were with the interests of the land owner. They looked terrified when we mentioned the name Don Lee.

However, the local group activities seemed to fizzle out when we were joined by several other walkers and this now appears to be at the time of the inaugural meeting of our current Group in 1973 which you have identified.

Regarding the early Committee meetings held in the upstairs room of the Nags Head which we got for free, these were open to all members. This wasn't a problem because the membership at the time wasn't great.

The main change in recent years is the age profile of the membership. In the early days of the Group most members worked, so walks were confined to weekends, with one Wednesday evening walk each month. Mid-week walking was started about 25 years ago by Bill Brown who would interview new potential mid-week walkers to make sure they were properly equipped before they could join these walks. Nowadays most walking is done on week days.

I think our declining membership merely reflects the large number of miscellaneous groups which have in recent years added walking to their activities, and who are almost certainly not aware that without the Ramblers there would be many fewer paths for them to walk on.

Trips 'n' Tramps (Patterdale) Alan Catherall Jane Gay

“When but a half-hour’s roam through such a place would leave behind a dance of images that shall break in upon one’s sleep for weeks.” - John Edwards’s quote of Wordsworth’s Prelude (Book 8)

A trip to the wonderful land of the English lakes is always keenly anticipated and may be enjoyed at any time of the year whatever – or even despite – the weather. When the elements are as harmonious as they were over the weekend of 27th – 28th of September this year, with glorious sunshine and crystal clear clarity for miles around, then the experience was sure to provide many happy memories for walkers and non-walkers alike. Thus it was that the 51 East Cheshire Ramblers who arrived by the shores of Ullswater on the Friday were not disappointed. All but two were guests of the Patterdale Hotel and 27 took the option of staying on an extra night until the Monday. The Hotel proved to be an excellent choice, flexible and efficient in planning beforehand, with helpful and friendly staff, good food with a varied menu we could chose from on the night.

A warm welcome was given to recently joined or potential members, Cindy from Colorado, Natasha from St. Petersburg (*see her letter on p21*) and two RA friends from Scotland.

The 4/5 non-walkers took the chance to sample some of the many attractions in the Lakes including visits to Larch Cottage Nursery (& restaurant), Melkinthorpe, and Acorn Bank, Temple Sowerby (NT) – or just to explore and enjoy the ambience of the countryside.

As usual, the walks were graded with three options each day all of which were well supported. The leaders, thoroughly prepared and flawless on the day, made use of the variety of walks possible straight from the Hotel – to include summits, valleys, the Lake shoreline paths and a boat trip! The leaders were – Graham Bothwell and Geoff Huddart (long); Malcolm Combey and Sue and Chris Munslow (medium); Bob and Pat Bland (short).

At the end of the day, all who wished took advantage of convivial conversation and refreshments served in the sun on the lawn fronting the hotel.

After the communal meal on Saturday night, Ian Mabon gave a hearty vote of thanks on behalf of all, to the leaders, to the Hotel staff and to Jane Gay and Alan Catherall who put the jigsaw together for a memorable weekend. One of our group subsequently wrote to say “Our thanks go to all those involved in the organisation, which was faultless, to the leaders for the time and effort they put into the planning and execution of the walks, and to the membership of the group who made us feel welcome on what turned out to be a lovely weekend in every respect.”

The walks are briefly described and illustrated in what follows.

Long Walk on Saturday

Graham Bothwell led a merry band of 18 or so on an 11 mile round with several summits – ultimately St. Sunday Crag (2756 ft) and well over 3000 ft of ascent on a gloriously sunny day. From the Hotel we proceeded to the South, crossed over Goldrill Beck to Rooking and took the path passing through Crookabeck Farm, where Mary Bell breeds Angora goats and weaves Angora and Herdwick wool into very desirable items. One of our group was comfortably walking in her Hellvellyn Angora socks! Continuing along the valley we walked close by Hartsop and crossed over to Cow Bridge and on to the re-surfaced path alongside a becalmed Brothers Water to Hartsop Hall and took the right fork by wooded areas, and past the remnants of a lead mining area on the way up Dovedale. The path steepened and became rocky with some minor scrambles until we reached a large erratic at which point a small group scrambled up to the Priest's Cave – largely invisible, high on Dove Crag. The book was signed, the carpet and emergency rations noted. The party re-united by Hart Crag where we met walkers on the Fairfield Horseshoe. The views all around, Hellvellyn included, were tremendous. On we went to Fairfield – without being blown over for once – a scramble up Corfa Pike down to Deepdale Hause and up the long haul to the summit of St Sunday Crag. The walk back down to the Hotel and welcome refreshment gave us stunning views of Ullswater and surrounding fells.



*Descent of St Sunday Crag with view of Ullswater (by Alan Catherall)
and Hart Crag summit (by Ian Mabon)*

Medium Walk on Saturday

Malcolm Combey led a dozen on this walk of 8 miles which had three aspects to it. At first the path was followed to the East of Goldrill Beck along the pleasant valley to Hartsop Village and then past the remains of former lead mining activity towards Hayswater. A coffee stop was taken on the way up to the reservoir where amusement was caused by a cow who showed undue interest in Malcolm's rucksack! The route crossed over Hayswater Gill and ascended to just below the summit of the Knott at 1850 ft. for lunch with fabulous views. Entertainment here was provided by a farmer on a



quad bike with his dog rounding up sheep. Return was ‘downhill all the way’ via a peaceful and blue-looking Angle Tarn, Stony Rigg and Boredale Hause back to the Hotel for refreshment.

Angle Tarn photographed by Natasha Taylor

Short Walk on Saturday

Bob Bland led a 7 mile walk and he writes: “A jolly set of intrepid sailors set off early from the hotel in glorious weather and after a brisk walk to Glenridding embarked by steamer, taking in the fabulous views and arriving at Howtown 45 minutes later. The walk followed the eastern shore of Ullswater, regarded as one of the finest paths in Lakeland. We skirted Hallin Fell and the north west slopes of Place Fell, taking refreshment perched on a convenient log near Sandwick Bay. After negotiating some tough walking over roots and rough boulder-strewn paths we took lunch on a large rocky outcrop at Silver Point and afternoon tea at Side Farm with a short stroll over Goldrill Beck back to the Hotel.”



Long Walk on Sunday

Geoff Huddart led a group of 15 hardy folk on an 11 mile clockwise traverse beginning with an ascent of Boredale Hause and then on by Angle Tarn Pikes and the scenic Tarn itself for a coffee stop. The sky by us was overcast with a cool breeze as we looked to the west where Helvellyn and all the peaks to the far distance were in bright sun. Before long and for the rest of the day the sun did shine for us. Next was the Knott and its summit (for some) and we joined High Street with tantalising views of Haweswater and arrived at Thornthwaite Crag (2572 ft.) for lunch. From there we found our way down the valley by Threshthwaite Cove and by Pasture Beck where, after a tea stop, some paddling in the stream, and a relaxing break in the warmth of the sun, we continued our way home via Hartsop and Goldrill Beck.



Thornthwaite Crag (left) and approaching Pasture Beck (photos by Graham Beech - or at least his camera - and Alan Catherall respectively)





Medium Walk on Sunday

Sue and Chris Munslow led this 7½ mile walk from the Hotel along the lake shore of Ullswater with great views throughout and sometimes of the whole length of the lake, towards Pooley Bridge. To be seen also were sailors, canoeists and trippers on the ferry all enjoying the September sun and calm conditions. The shoreline path led to

Scalehow Wood near Sandwick, and turned South to follow the line of the Beck on good paths to Low Moss and Hart Crag and up to the summit of Place Fell (2,155 ft). Here there were wonderful views all round including Fairfield, Helvellyn, the Pikes, Martindale area and High Street. The path descended via Steel Edge and Boredale Hause to welcome refreshments in the grounds of the Hotel.

Short Walk on Sunday

Ably led by Pat Bland this 6 mile walk took the path from the rear of the Hotel which contoured round the Northern flank of St Sunday Crag, and crossed into the Grisedale Valley before climbing steeply to Lanty's Tarn for a coffee stop. From there the path went NW to the old lead mine workings where lunch was taken by the stream at the halfway point. The Beck was crossed before going down the valley beneath Sheffield Pike, and crossed again, on the way to Glenridding village by the river where afternoon tea was enjoyed before the return to Patterdale along the roadside path.

Letter to the Editor from Natasha Taylor

This was my first weekend away with the Ramblers and my expectations were not only realised, but exceeded! The walks were really well planned and lead, and the beautiful locations were simply breathtaking.

I don't consider myself to be a good photographer, but the scenery in the Lake District is so wonderful, that even someone like me can produce such memorable photos.

I found the group members to be very welcoming and extremely friendly. I have lots of happy memories, so much that when my sister and brother-in-law came to visit us from St Petersburg in Russia, the following week, we returned to Ullswater to share with them the wonderful times we had experienced with the Ramblers. They were so impressed with the natural beauty of the Lake District, that they couldn't stop talking about their visit to their friends.

Looking forward to the next Ramblers week end away next year!

Trips 'n' Tramps (Hawes Coach Trip)

About 50 of us enjoyed a coach trip to Hawes on Saturday 3 August organised by Brian Griffiths, The short, medium and long walks were led by Mike Bull, Ken Hobbs and Brian Griffiths. We all had a super day but your editor cannot resist mentioning that Hawes is very popular tourist destination with a large coach and car park which is a walk from the town. There are good toilets here, so when people get back to their vehicles what do they expect to be able to do before they board the coach? Hard luck - they shut at 4 pm even in midsummer! "Luckily" one of our members had a disabled toilet key! I have to relate another sad story. One of our party lost his boots. After a long search, Brian found them - they had been nicked by the local footpaths team.



*The medium walkers at Askrigg
photographed by Roger Norton*

Tour de France 2014

On Sunday 6th July 2014 Brian Griffiths will be organising a walk from Cutthroat Bridge to High Bradfield to watch the Tour De France as it comes to the closing stages of the 2nd day in Yorkshire. It will be a moderate walk of about 13 miles in total, but with a planned break of 1.5 hours at Bradfield to await the riders and enjoy refreshments, it will be well within the capabilities of most medium walkers as well as long walkers.

So pencil it in your diaries for a once in a lifetime experience. Starting time to be announced.

"Walkers are Welcome" comes to Bollington

Sandra Edwards

Bollington Walking Festival was a great success this year in spite of the mixed weather which presented a splendid challenge throughout the week. This year however we beat all records with 47 walkers on one of the East Cheshire Ramblers 10 mile explorations of the local hills.

Friday morning saw a very special event take place when David Rutley MP congratulated Ivor Williams, Chair of Destination Bollington Forum, on getting Bollington the first accreditation as a "Walkers are Welcome" town in the whole of Cheshire.



and our chairman David Gylee took the opportunity of presenting his MP with our 40th anniversary badge (photographed by Roger Norton)



Two of our regular ECR walkers, Chris Brear and Sandra Edwards, had organised the 400 strong Petition and Letters of Support from community groups that had convinced "Walkers are Welcome" that Bollington was serious about supporting walking.

"Walkers are Welcome" is a special group of Towns and Villages who have through community action designated walks in their area for a wide variety of purposes, brought together many community groups to organise events celebrating walking, like the Bollington Walking Festival now in its fourth year and best of all persuaded local business that walking is an important activity and walkers are welcome on their premises.

If walkers come to Bollington they have numerous walk descriptions to suit all tastes from a quiet stroll in the local woods, a walk up to White Nancy, an historical walk around the town's iconic mills or a really stretching ramble out in our lovely local hills. Then back to a welcoming café, pub or restaurant in the town.

The East Cheshire Ramblers are supporting this initiative along with Bridgend Community Centre and Bollington Civic Society. As usual Bollington Town Council chips in to support community volunteers and provided the £50 registration fee.

Go on to the Walkers are Welcome website and you will be introduced to wonderful places to visit to enjoy our favourite outdoor activity. And look out for the new logos in Bollington venues.

Harry Hadfield receives Civic Award



Every year Poynton's Town Council recognises just a handful of people who have made, in the opinion of those who nominate them, a "sustained or significant contribution to the community of Poynton". A recipient this year is Harry Hadfield - "for the dedication shown over many years in establishing or safeguarding local footpaths". The award was presented by the Town Mayor, Councillor Gabor Bartos at a Civic Awards ceremony the Civic Hall. (*Editor: Over many years Harry has been an indefatigable footpath officer for East Cheshire Ramblers. You have to have been on the club committee or footpath committee to even begin to form an insight into how much work Harry did for us cooperating and where necessary battling with local authorities and landowners.*)

Photographs from members

Although I have always been delighted to receive photographs from members for inclusion in the Newsletter, we need to bear in mind that webmaster Graham Beech also welcomes them for the website photogallery. I am mindful that this edition of the Newsletter is the longest ever and some of you may say "too long". Accordingly I have decided that I will no longer include photographs taken on regular club walks, unless they are amusingly quirky or portray a newsworthy circumstance. We do still want to see walks photographs but the website photogallery is the best place for them.

On the other hand, I have considered it appropriate, in the Trips 'n' Tramps and 40th anniversary walks articles, to duplicate some photographs on the website. Photographs are essential in such articles as without them the newsletter would be very off-putting and fewer people (one or two of you might say, *even fewer*) would read it.



Anyway, here is a quirky photograph for you (by Roger Norton) - a trig point in a garden in Buxton which Colin Park showed us on his walk on 14 September.

Eric Mountain (1929-2013)

June
Mabon

Eric was an enthusiastic member of the East Cheshire Group for many years as a walks leader, walks supporter and a fine raconteur of many a good tale. His business and organisational experience came to the fore in 1998 (*Editor: June was then Group Chairman*) when he masterminded the Group's 25th anniversary dinner. The Group's Committee had booked the Hunting Lodge at Adlington Hall for the dinner but the detail of who, what, when and how still had to be addressed – enter Eric. A top table worthy of the 25 year old Group had to be thought through, as many members as possible had to be accommodated, the evening had to have just the right balance of formality and informality and have an “East Cheshire Ramblers” theme. With enviable panache, and with the support of wife Jacqui, Eric soon had the Adlington Hall management organised, Ramblers President Kate Ashbrook accepted an invitation to be the Anniversary Dinner guest (by the date of the dinner Kate had handed over to Janet Street-Porter and so had more time to support Group dinners), the Group's “choir” under the baton of John Edwards, provided the after-dinner entertainment. At the end of the memorable evening a justifiably proud Eric Mountain smiled quietly as congratulations were heaped upon him. Every Group needs an “Eric Mountain”, and our Group is very lucky that Eric chose us as his retirement interest.

Editor: Eric died in hospital on 20th July 2013 aged 83.

The Roych - Traffic Regulation Order

Email from Sue Smith, Rights of Way Officer for PDNPA. As most of us know, The Roych runs from the A625 at the western end of Rushup Edge, past South Head and on towards Hayfield. This is a welcome outcome to the consultation process in which many of us took part.

Please note that the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) is intending to make a replacement TRO on the Roych which supersedes and replaces the one dated 5 September 2013. This replacement order will be made to have regard to the proposed works by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) as the Highway Authority and which are to be implemented from October. The replacement PDNPA order prohibiting all mechanically propelled vehicles at all times will therefore be made and take effect following completion of DCC's works. Whilst DCC's closure is in force, mechanically propelled vehicles (mpvs) will be prohibited from the Roych Clough section of the road only. Thereafter, as provided for in an order made by the PDNPA, mpvs will be prohibited from the entire length of the Roych.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to all those who have contributed to the newsletter and to volunteer proof-reader June Mabon. If there are any typos or errors, blame me, as they will be in the bits I added or revised after June saw it.