

DONCASTER RAMBLERS NEWSLETTER WINTER 2011

Submitted by: Kerry Forman

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Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the Doncaster Group is at the Finningley Village Hall at 7.00pm on Saturday, 15th October. It will be followed, at approximately 8.00, by a social evening. The social evening will consist of a buffet, prepared by our highly- trained chefs, and for your entertainment, a magician to puzzle and amuse you. The buffet will cost a non-profit-making £6pp, with bookings to Hilda on 07786 530460. Coffee and tea will be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own soft drinks or alcohol.

The AGM is the most important meeting of the year for the Group. Reports on the activities and finances of the past year are given and the committee is elected for the following year. This year Membership Secretary of six years, Catherine Palmer, is standing down. All committees need renewal and any members willing to serve would be very welcome. Just by being at the AGM you will be supporting the Group. Friends and relations are welcome, but obviously they cannot vote.

Rights of Way Committee

One of the key areas for the Ramblers nationally is the maintenance and extension of good footpaths, to allow and encourage the nation to walk freely; we are supporting that aim here in Doncaster.

The committee decided to have a sub group to address our local response to this matter in February, and some maintenance work was delivered both in February and March. At the August committee meeting it was decided that work on a much wider scale was needed, particularly the footpath walking, so the group was re-formed.

The group is working with DMBC Rights of Way department to help them fulfil part of their remit, and we will be working with them in three ways

1) Walk the footpaths once each year, noting the condition of each path and reporting on it using a recognised system. 2) Volunteer to assist DMBC with maintenance work. 3) Review and comment on new plans as they affect the Rights of Way, and progress any issues with DMBC

So far there have been two meetings with the RoW staff, they have given us a large map showing all the footpaths in the DMBC district. This map has been subdivided by grid lines into manageable squares which are enlarged for clarity. There are 24 full, or nearly full, and five small parts of squares, each mainly covering one parish with parts of other parishes also there. It is hoped that a member will take responsibility for walking the footpaths in that square once a year. DMBC guarantee that they will walk all of the footpaths in four years, however we all know what problems can be created by overgrowth, fallen trees, or human debris in a very short time, so we would prefer once every year.

DMBC RoW department have a very small number of staff and, at present, no access to a van and are therefore very limited in what they can achieve. By working together we can do more. Earlier this year there were two occasions when they could use a van to transport materials, so fingerposts and steps were repaired on two occasions. Currently volunteers have worked to clear undergrowth at Tilts, the transformation to the path is miraculous, and more is planned.

The committee comprises Alan Elvidge, Tony Marsh, Martin Wyman, Rob Harrison and Wendy Atkinson. Please talk with any of them to find out more about this important piece of work. Members can help with this venture by taking responsibility for a square and walking their footpaths, then reporting on their state, or helping another member to walk their footpaths, volunteering for maintenance work, or by reporting any problems encountered on a footpath to any of the five members of the RoW committee, by email, letter or in person. All of us want good footpaths and it is up to us all to help in keeping them in a good state.

Take Back the Tracks

..... is the slogan used by the Friends of the Peak District in their campaign against the inappropriate and irresponsible use of 4 by 4 vehicles, trail motorbikes and quad bikes on so-called green lanes. Since their campaign started other people who feel strongly about the matter have spoken up and the Peak District Green Lanes Alliance has been formed. The PDGLA consists of Friends of the Peak District, the Ramblers, horse-riding bodies, local parishes in Derbyshire, etc. A rally was held on Stanage Edge in July, just prior to a Peak District management committee meeting, to draw attention to the issue. Since that rally the PD management committee has said that it will review its policy towards the use of vehicles within the National Park. This could be a significant step forward, since their policy in the past has been to 'monitor the situation'. Additionally, while the campaign initially sought to stop only illegal vehicle use in the National Park – accepting the use of vehicles on Byways Open to All Traffic – demands are now being made to stop all vehicle use on green lanes in the NP (except farm vehicles of course). BOATs are a historical anachronism, a designation made when horses and carts were in use.

If you'd like to support the NPGLA please join them. A subscription of £10pa is surely worthwhile as a contribution towards stopping all vehicles using the green lanes of our National Parks. Joining forms will be available at the AGM.

Their website is: www.pd gla.org.uk **The Torne Bridge**

A happy group of Ramblers, in May this year, celebrated the replacement by DMBC of the bridge over the River Torne, between Rossington and Wadworth. Supports from the original bridge had been stolen a year previously.

A few months later, and some railings from the bridge have been cut off – a section from both ends. Did somebody want some gates? Never mind, our taxes will pay for the repair!

Cicerone

Cicerone publish brilliant guide books on the hill and mountain areas of the world. Members of the Doncaster Group only have to log-on to their website to get a discount of 20%. See www.cicerone.co.uk

Dales

More than five km of overhead power lines are being replaced with underground cables at the foot of Whernside in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

The scheme is part of a £5m partnership between the Yorkshire Electricity North West, United Utilities and other relevant organisations like the YDNPA. It uses an allowance from electricity regulator Ofgem that is set aside specifically to remove overhead wires in areas of high landscape value.

Some 63 separate spans of overhead line and 60 wooden poles will be removed between Twistleton Hall and Kingsdale Head near Whernside in the biggest scheme of its kind being undertaken by United Utilities.

Kinder Anniversary

Next year marks the 80th anniversary of the 1932 Kinder mass trespass. The event is being celebrated on Monday, 23rd April at the Edale Moorland Centre with a launch event for invited guests. There will be walks in the following week, led by Rangers from the National Park and the National Trust.

Mental Health Benefits of Walking

The following benefits to mental well-being have been established by research:

Regular walking improves mood, reduces anxiety, aids sleep and improves self-image.

Active people have a reduced risk of suffering clinical depression.

Regular physical activity is at least as effective as antidepressant drugs in treating mild and moderate depression.

Walking in a group is a sociable activity that can help improve mental

health and overcome feelings of isolation, a benefit that is highly valued by participants in group walks.

Spending time in the outdoors and in contact with the natural environment can have a positive effect on mental health.

www.doncasterramblers.org

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