



ramblers
at the heart of walking

Northumbria Area

The 71st Annual General Meeting,
will be held on Saturday 30th January 2010
at 2.00pm at Jubilee Hall, Rothbury.

Agenda

Annual Report
&
Accounts

For the year ending 30th September 2009

NORTHUMBRIA AREA OF THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION

**The 71st Annual General Meeting
will be held on Saturday 30th January 2010
at Jubilee Hall, Rothbury**

AGENDA

1. Welcome from the Chairman of the Northumbria Short Circuits Walking Group
2. Chairman's Introduction
3. Apologies
4. Minutes of 70th AGM
5. Matters arising from the Minutes
6. Adoption of the Annual Report
7. Adoption of the Actual Accounts
8. Appointment of auditors
9. Election of Officers
10. Election of six members to Area Council for a term of one year
11. General Council 2009
12. AOB
13. Date and Venue of AGM 2011
14. Address by Jo Bird, member of the Ramblers Board of Trustees

There will be a short walk led by members of the Northumbria Short Circuits Walking Group.

**NORTHUMBRIA AREA OF THE RAMBLERS'
ASSOCIATION**
The 70th Annual General Meeting
held on Saturday, 24th January, 2009
in Lanchester Community Centre, County Durham.

The meeting was attended by 38 members of the Ramblers' Association

- 1. Welcome:** The Chairman of Derwentside welcomed the members attending the meeting.
- 2. Chairman's introduction:** Ken Hughes, the retiring chairman, spoke of the two main issues which he felt raised serious concern.
 - Loss of RA membership which could be due to excess administration required by Central Office. Account keeping, in particular, was perceived to be too complex. Such perceptions contributed to a loss of volunteers.
 - Too many campaigns initiated without clearly defined outcomes and directed from Central Office. The essence of the RA is walking. Any activity associated with walking and campaigning should be at local level directed by local members.
- 3. Apologies:** Jonne Robinson
- 4. Minutes of the 69th AGM:** These were accepted as a correct record.
- 5.** There were no matters arising
- 6. Adoption of the Annual Report:** Terry Pollard asked to add to his report by thanking all volunteers for the contributions they had made. A vote of thanks

was recorded to Terry for his work in Northumbria Area. The report was then adopted.

Proposed: Terry Pollard. Seconded: Mavis Harris.

7. Adoption of the Annual Accounts:

7.1 Arthur Quick reported that the Area had made losses of £1000 during the past two years, the objective being to reduce the reserves to a minimum level, with no surplus cash. This was in accordance with Head Office guidelines. As from October 2008 we would aim to break even each year, and have in fact budgeted accordingly. The new basis of accounting still allowed for additional funding to be claimed in an emergency.

7.2 There was pressure from Central Office to trim surplus cash savings around the country and the process was already happening locally. Nationwide large sums of money were still held in local accounts and therefore not being used to further RA objectives.

7.3 The accounts were adopted. Proposed: Stan Tait. Seconded: Terry Pollard.

8. Appointment of auditors: Kathryn Howard was proposed by Dave Turnbull, seconded by Mark Nugent.

9. Election of officers:

9.1 Resignations had been noted from Ken Hughes as Chairman and Rachel Orange as Area Secretary. Kathy Pickering had resigned as Walks Programme compiler.

9.2 Dave Turnbull was proposed as Chairman. Proposed: Terry Pollard. Seconded: Nuala Wright.

9.3 The Area Secretary's role has been split into 3 separate jobs.

9.4 Officers for 2009 - 2010

Chairman	Dave Turnbull
Vice-Chairman	Ann Key
Treasurer	Arthur Quick
Secretary	Vacancy
Access Officer	Nuala Wright
Rights of Way Coordinator	Terry Pollard
Publicity and Literature Officer	Ann Key
Membership and IT Officer	Bob Newmark
Walk Northumbria Editor	Pat Jackson
Countryside Officer	Vacancy
Media Officer	Dave Turnbull
Minutes Secretary	Pauline Hawdon

10. Election of 6 members to Area Council for a term of one year:

John Blacklock had resigned. Bill Gallon, Richard Fletcher and Judith Taylor agreed to continue as individual members. Mark Nugent was adopted as an individual member. Proposed: Terry Pollard. Seconded: Nuala Wright. There are vacancies for 2 further members.

11. General Council

Dave Turnbull and Terry Pollard will attend General Council as delegates. Proposed: Mary Moore. Seconded: Ann Key. Pat Jackson is to be asked to attend as a visitor. Proposed: Terry Pollard. Seconded: Nuala Wright.

12. AOB

12.1 Suggestion that groups should be asked to make voluntary collections in support of the air ambulance service.

12.2 Request that members contact Cllrs. J. Smith and J. Reed to protest individually about Northumberland County Council's current budget proposals. A letter on behalf of the Area and a press release are to be sent out to express concern about the detrimental effects of cuts in RoW staff.

12.3 A slide show on 'The Great South Island Adventure' is to be given by Terry Pollard in Brunswick Methodist Church.

12.4 A letter to the Ordnance Survey had been much appreciated. Suggestion that a similar letter could be sent on behalf of Northumbria Area.

12.5 Audrey Watson, the Led Walks Officer, spoke of her work. She is part of a team of two, not based in London, which acts as a point of contact for all who lead and prepare walks.

13. Date and Venue of AGM 2010: 30th January, 2010. NSC asked to host meeting.

14. Andrew Bibby, from the RA Board of Trustees addressed the meeting. He spoke of the 75th anniversary celebrations but also warned of the challenges that face the RA. In order to meet such challenges, change must be expected and accommodated.

Did you know that you can now download this Annual Report from the Northumbria Area website?

Go to:

www.ra-area.org.uk/northumbria/

Chairman's Introduction

This year has been in many ways very dramatic for the Ramblers not least at the national level. Serious financial problems led to a major reorganization with the loss of jobs in the Scottish and Welsh offices as well as in our national office in London. As an area we have had some cuts in our budget but we set the aim of protecting the individual group budgets. I understand that we have been successful in that.

In some ways the financial problems, which were also faced by many other national charities have initiated or brought forward a series of management and organizational changes that have the potential to deliver a much more effective and responsive organisation in the future. For example the Ramblers' national office now has an effective financial control system, which lets them know where they are month by month, and they are clearly very keen to explore ways to improve communication with the membership.

Efforts to improve communication have taken various strands. There is the move to an essentially email based system. The best example of this is the recent Volunteer Newsletter. This contained loads of good information, some 174 plus pages if you took the time to dive in, but it is not at all clear as to what was where and how you could find your way to info relevant to you. This move to greater use of modern email based systems should receive support: our area is making much more use of email. However, it should be remembered that we do not have email links to the majority of our members and any progress needs to be linked to an improved and efficient members' database. Our area will continue to use a printed newsletter.

The area has been selected to take part in the piloting of another element in the steps to improve communication. We now have a direct link to the Ramblers' Trustees via a nominated member, Jo Bird, and to the Senior Management team via John Wightman who is Head of Marketing. Although John's speciality is in marketing and fund raising he gives us a link across the office to senior management whereby they are aware of the issues we are facing as well as our successes, and we should be informed of national issues and developments. The contact with Jo has already proved useful and, should this way of working prove successful, it will be extended to other areas.

Following our initial positive response and that of the North of the Tyne Health Authority, we are being forwarded by the national office for a newly funded project. If successful, we will pilot in our area the establishment of a project to use walking as a way of encouraging people who are emerging from mental health problems to recover a sense of wellbeing and confidence. The project will take place over two years bringing in new additional funding to the Ramblers and a new strand to our walking programme.

Our area has had another good year of offering and delivering a wide range of excellent walks, the planning and safe delivery of these only being possible because of the huge amount of work undertaken by the groups. Doubtlessly, the groups are the real strength of the Ramblers in this area.

It is very good news about the passing of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. This means that we will have the right of access to our truly wonderful coastline. This is important since I for one was not aware of how much of our current access was by allowance and not by right.

On the negative side we need to maintain our vigilance since we have recently been made aware of problems with a local gamekeeper, with mountain bikes on forest pathways and with off-road vehicles in the north and west of our area.

We expect that a key aspect of area work next year will be the delivery of a members' training programme. We have just begun advertising the availability of training and are getting a very positive response. The courses will cover navigation and use of GPS, walk leadership and First Aid. They have been developed in this area by the ex leader of a mountain rescue team and are particularly relevant to people walking in our landscape in day and night.

Next year the Ramblers' Association will celebrate its 75th anniversary; that will be the one with diamonds. There will be a series of events throughout the year, details of which are just beginning to appear but one event we are keen to link with is the baton passing. The idea is that across the year a baton will travel around the UK going up the west side and down the east. It is due to be in our area in June and members are already talking about how we can transport the baton across our area, make cross border links and one member suggested we marked places where we need new bridges by ceremonially hurling the baton across the river.

Dave Turnbull

Officers' Reports

Annual Report by Membership and Internet Secretary

Membership of Northumbria Area stands at 2793, which is 24 more than a year ago. This is the first time for several years that I can report an increase in membership, slight though it is. Unfortunately, it is impossible to compare this with national trends as Central Office, for reasons best known to themselves, no longer publish figures of RA membership as a whole.

It is now two years since Central Office introduced their new database, and though I have no reason to doubt the statistics they issue, some aspects remain problematical. The Area website, which contains a version of the programme booklet and "Walk Northumbria", has not presented any difficulties.

Bob Newmark

Access/Footpath Officer

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Work is ongoing commenting on restrictions proposed by landowners under the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. There are many restrictions banning dogs from grouse moors, and we still have a large number of restrictions on access to grouse moors during the breeding season (and sometimes covering almost all of the year!) Check on the current situation at:

www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/things_to_do/open_access/open_access_maps. Please note that none of these

restrictions applies to rights of way across these areas. A review of the CROW Act is due to take place next year.

Reports concerning any problems can be made on the Ramblers web site at:

www.ramblers.org.uk/freedom/restrictionsonCROWaccessland/problemreportform.htm or direct to the local authority whose access officers will follow up any issues.

Blanchland Moor is a continuing problem; hopefully problems here will be resolved shortly.

Marine and Coastal Access Campaign

During the past year, much progress has been made on the Marine Bill. (Now the **Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009** following Royal Assent on 12 November). There was much concern that the Bill could be dropped because of the pressure of parliamentary time for such legislation, but thanks to assistance from many members including letter writing and kite flying, pressure led to the eventual passing of this bill. Regulations are still being agreed which will create a duty to put in place a continuous coastal path around England which will join with the Welsh Coastal Path, due to be completed by 2012, and the existing rights of access in Scotland to give the public the right to walk around the entire British coast for the first time. Currently, nearly 50% of the English coast has no public right of way, and the public can only walk an average 1.9 miles on the coast on a 'secure or satisfactory path'.

The coastal path is expected to bring unprecedented access to millions and vitally boost the rural economy. Members might be interested to learn that some 33% of the northeast coast is currently not accessible by what is described as a 'satisfactory legally secure path', and this is not just the areas around ports and harbours. For example, the Northumberland Coast Path does a long inland diversion through Belford and over the Kyoel Hills! I hope that this situation will improve in the next 10 years! See Natural England's web site for a plan: www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/coastalaccess/englandscoastpath

Nuala Wright

Publicity, Information and Literature

The main publicity event this year has been the change of logo for the RA. Most people like it and feel that it is more modern and will attract younger members. Let's hope so. I went to a couple of workshops on using the new publicity surrounding the logo, one in Durham and one in London. They were good for exchanging ideas with other groups, but I have to say that, certainly on the London visit, I ended up amazing other areas of the country with the vast array of walks that our various groups put on in our area and the use of coaches in many cases.

Plans are afoot to celebrate 75 years of the RA next year, so if you have any ideas about how we can do something special for this milestone do let me know. Perhaps 2010 can be the year we do something other than walk! Five years ago we planted a forest for Joe. What can we do next? Ideas to me please! That's all at present on ideas. I still hold a substantial map library- there to be borrowed- I would like to see it used more.

The area is planning some First Aid courses as well as ones on navigation and leadership skills. Watch out for details in the Newsletter. Cuts in our funding mean that we have to make savings elsewhere, so there will be a Newsletter a year less and we will be returning to the routine of stuffing our own envelopes and putting the labels on rather than using a mailing service. Keep walking, bring new members in and spread the news that walking is a great activity for health, social life and the environment.

Ann Key

Rights of Way Co-ordinator

This my final report before leaving the area. Because of changing personal circumstances I have not given the amount of time and commitment to the post as I would have wished during the past year for which I apologise. At the time of writing, a replacement has not been found.

Firstly I express my considerable thanks to all group footpath secretaries for the important work they do in dealing with the various rights of way problems that occur. Their input is invaluable. It is unfortunate that currently we have no-one covering the Morpeth area.

Working with other organisations has proved beneficial. There are also considerable advantages in attending liaison meetings at Northumberland and Durham County Councils. The Ramblers are also represented at the Gateshead Council liaison meetings.

There has been good progress on improvements to Salters' Road. The first phase from Alnham to High Bleakhope was completed during the spring. Unfortunately some of the good work was damaged by heavy rain near the end of July. This included the washing away of the footbridge across the burn west of High Bleakhope. Work is currently in progress on the forestry section of the route.

Progress has been slow on establishing the bridges data base. There is, however, good news that Tarsset bridge is repaired and that work has begun on the reinstatement of Brandon Bridge across the River Breamish.

We have supported the CTC in their campaign to install a gate to replace a stile on the Pennine Way, south of Hareshaw House, by Hazel Burn (ref: NY845871). The PW at that point is a bridle way so a stile presented an

illegal obstacle to cyclists and horse riders. A bridge has also been built across Hazel Burn.

Finally I would like to thank all of you who have contributed to our rights of way work, including reporting problems to the appropriate Local Authorities, as it helps considerably to ensure we have a good quality RoW network for all walkers and other users.

Terry Pollard

Walk Northumbria Editor

Doesn't time fly when you are having a good time? It is about two years now that I have been editor of Walk Northumbria and I have to say that, in the main, I have enjoyed the experience. There have been some really wonderful contributions and some sad ones too. I seem to have a core of contributors who send me such interesting articles and photographs.

Often I find myself fretting that I will not have enough material to fill the magazine and, on occasions, I have had to resort to writing something myself as a filler. Mostly, however, members turn up trumps and I heave a sigh of relief.

I would like more feedback. I would like the opinions of readers on the content of WN, is it what you want to read, what improvements could I make, indeed, would you like a different editor? I know it is hard to maintain continuity and have written debates when a publication appears infrequently but I would love to hear from more of the members.

In addition, perhaps it is time for an update in the design and layout in which case, I may need help!! One of my daughters says that the age of technology has passed me by! I think she is right

Pat Jackson

Area Secretary

Following the resignation of Northumbria Area's previous Area Secretary, the decision was taken to split the work involved into 3 separate roles. These are the Area Liaison Officer, the Meetings Administrator and the Annual Report Editor.

At present Dave Turnbull is covering the Liaison Officer post as he felt that much of this role was consistent with that of Area Chair and presented the opportunity to learn about the different groups in the area and the volunteers whose stalwart work ensures that these groups run smoothly. The responsibility of the Annual Report Editor has been undertaken by Paul Roberts and the role of Meetings Administrator is yet to be filled.

The Area Meetings Administrator plays a vital part in the effective running of area meetings thus enabling the sharing of information and expertise, and the exchange of ideas between all attending members. It would be ideal to have this role filled as soon as possible.

Judith Taylor

Group Reports

Alnwick and District Group

The year just gone is one where members bemoaned the fact that their luck (in previous years) had run out where the weather was concerned. One unlucky member was compelled to cancel two walks due to actual or impending torrential rain. It is a concern to the author when such weather threatens walks in the Ingram Valley since we are not just in danger of becoming very wet but of being trapped at Hartside by the likelihood of the River Breamish flooding the road. Most walks have been fairly well attended nonetheless and we also had a good turnout on our annual coach-trip to Hole of Horcum – again, rain was in the offing but kept at bay by the Chairman donning his waterproof trousers for the complete walk; when back at the coach, he removed them at which point the heavens opened!

We have been pleased to welcome new members who have shown a willingness to take on the task of leading future walks. Advertising our walks programme in the Northumberland Gazette, Alnwick Library and Information Centre has resulted in around 6 or 7 people joining us on our walks.

Tony Law

Berwick Group

The Group has had a lively session, welcoming visitors from the Durham Ramblers, South Northumberland and the Longridge Towers School German exchange programme.

The group was involved in the Riding of the Berwick Bounds (on foot!), leading walks on the Golden Age of

Northumbria project, and organising easier walks under the Get Walking Day project, as well as a weekly walk, normally on Sunday. The walks included a four stage perambulation of the coastal footpath from Berwick to North Berwick.

The Walks Secretary produced a historical statistical breakdown for the Calendar year 2008, including such data as a walkers/mileage scattergram!

The group operates with the following guidelines,

1. a central meeting point in Berwick so transport can be pooled,
2. a charge of £3.50 per passenger made,
3. linear routes to use public transport wherever possible (this often means using Saturdays),
4. encouraging all members to act as leaders, involving 'reccing' the route beforehand,
5. the leader writing up the walk for publication in the local paper, the Berwick Advertiser, for the forthcoming Thursday.

At the AGM in May, we had an interesting presentation from Mel Nicholls, Officer of the Northumberland Coast AONB, as well as meeting Dave Turnbull, the new Northumbria Area Ramblers Chair. Socially, the group met for Christmas dinner and also for a walk followed by a meal in July. In October, the Ramblers long weekend was taken in Callendar by the Trossachs and was blessed by fair weather.

Arthur Wood, a founder of the branch, published a book on the green roads, "The Streets of the Cheviots", which was recently launched in Berwick.

Nigel Sumerling

Chester-le-Street

Chester-le-Street Ramblers has once again had a busy and successful year with a full and varied programme of walks. We have also increased the number of bus trips that are also proving popular.

Most walks have consistently been well attended, despite the weather. Our membership base has remained constantly around the 108 mark, which could be higher if HQ would sort out its National Database.

In November we are taking a full bus to Scotland, Loch Lomond, for 5 days' and Tinsel', with hopefully some local walking.

There is also a full social programme ranging from St George's Night Dinner to crown pin bowls , fish and chip walks, and illustrated talks.

Our AGM is on Wed. Jan.20th 2010 at Chester-le-Street golf club at 7.30 pm.

Bryan Stout

Derwentside Group

Currently we have 96 members, although very few of those actually walk with us. I wrote to them all in August to find out whether they need lifts etc, but only 6 replied. We think some of them walk with other Rambler groups and some with other organisations. Some are disabled or have retired from walking but are still supporting us financially, so we cannot complain.

This has been my first year as Secretary after taking over from Sheila Jeffries. Sheila will be 80 on January 13th next year and we are celebrating with a short walk and lunch at Whitworth Hall Hotel near Spennymoor. In February, we did the Red Kite walk in the Derwent Walk Country Park

and had 30 walkers, probably a record for our group. And in September we did a very interesting and well-attended walk on Cockfield Fell. We were accompanied by 82 year-old Harry Peart, who kindly acted as a guide to the history of the area where he was born and bred. I would also like to thank Kath Mair, who is a member of Gateshead Group but has always supported our group and has led many walks. Our small numbers are compensated for by dedication and enthusiasm, and we do seem to attract walkers from other areas.

Vaughan Davidson

Durham Group

Attendance at the walks has kept up during the year. The Group has continued to organise walks on Sundays every fortnight and Wednesdays at the same interval. The Wednesday walks have alternated between moderately long walks and morning walks with lunch at a suitable public house. A selection of Monday evening walks was also organised in the summer. As an experiment, walking with another group was tried. This had the advantage that the walk could be a significant distance from Durham without the problem of the leader making several trips to the area to prospect a walk. The Group had a very enjoyable walk with the Berwick Group in the foothills of the Cheviots.

Roger Cornwell, the Group's footpath officer, has been keeping a watch on the footpaths in what was the Durham District. Some important footpaths beside the River Wear near Durham City have been closed due to erosion of the bank during the recent flooding. A major one is the footpath near Maiden Castle. This is being made good, but requires considerable expense to make sure that it does not occur again. There are still some problems with

footpaths near Finchale Abby. The owner of the land has tried to close the footbridge over the Wear after 6.00 p.m., and there is still no agreed route for walkers to connect that area with other footpaths beside the river. This is part of the Weardale Way consequently has significant usage.

About the same number of social events were organised as last year but with more luck with the weather this time.

Cliff Ludman

Gateshead Group

The Gateshead Ramblers Group has maintained a steady membership this year with approximately 180 to 190 members, around 40 to 50 of these members are regular walkers with the group. On average 18 members set out each Saturday to enjoy walking together through a variety of locations in the Durham/Northumberland countryside. This year our walks have taken members up into the high moors, along river valleys, across farmland, on coastal paths and into urban areas. While one walk was abandoned owing to extremely strong winds and incessant lashing rain, we do class ourselves as 'all weather' walkers. Sometimes a visit to a warm, cosy tea room at the end of a walk is especially welcome, after experiencing particularly 'robust' weather. Last year 18 different members led walks for the group which is perhaps reflected in the wide variety of walks enjoyed by Gateshead Ramblers.

On many of our walks we have been joined by prospective members, new members and members from other groups. All have commented on the friendliness of our members and the pleasure to be found in walking with us. We are proud of our reputation as a very caring, friendly group of walkers. We do a lot of SHARING on our walks. First and

foremost of these is 'sharing' friendship, followed by 'sharing' knowledge of the flora and fauna of the countryside as well as 'sharing' information of the economic and social history of the locality and 'sharing' memories. This year we have SHARED with each other a lot of produce from our gardens, allotments, greenhouses and kitchens during our coffee breaks, adding to the general enjoyment of our weekly walks.

A small group of our members enjoyed a walking holiday in Austria while another group sampled the delights of the Lake District. Other members of the group spent holidays walking in a wide variety of locations in the British Isles and much further afield, Cuba and New Zealand being just two such destinations.

In 2009 seven of our regular walkers were 70, with at least two others becoming 70 early next year, so in August about forty members of the group dined at the Bluebell Inn to celebrate all these special birthdays.

Val Horsler

Hexham Group

We have continued with two weekly A and B walks on Sundays, which have had variable attendance. Some of our older members are no longer happy to drive long distances to a venue. We have been happy to welcome some enthusiastic new walkers to the Group.

This summer we have offered some Saturday walks as an alternative, but on the whole these have been poorly supported.

Our hard working Footpaths Secretary continues to monitor Tynedale paths having good liaison with the NCC Highways Department. Concern continues with Byway use around Slaley by mechanically propelled vehicles

demolishing tracks in wet weather. In Kielder Forest the Forestry Commission are encouraging mountain bike events, in places at some danger to walkers.

Ros Blaylock

Morpeth

We continue to walk twice a month and try to vary the terrain, hills, moorland, coast, fields, even some town walks! The average number of walkers over the year has been 12.

This year we've had two weekends away at Scarborough and Whitby and have now completed the Cleveland Way. Our thanks to Jenny Ellis for organising these.

For our Christmas dinner we went to the Holiday Inn and had a very enjoyable evening dancing the night away. We also had a very pleasant evening in the summer at the Sun Inn at Morpeth. Our thanks to Diana Aynsley for arranging these.

Margaret Siggins

Northumbria Short Circuits

We have continued with our programme of walks every two weeks which has taken us to many beautiful and interesting places around the area. Unfortunately, ill health has afflicted some of our most active members, including some who led many of our walks. However, we have been very fortunate in that others have stepped into the breach to organize and carry on with our programme. What has become a yearly event, an Autumn walking trip to the Western Lakes, organised by members with extensive knowledge of the area and great enthusiasm, was again very popular and enjoyed by all participants.

We have been pleased to welcome new members who are keen participants in our activities.

Jonne Robinson

Northumbria Family Walking Group

The group is still very active, with a successful weekend away last summer and a very full programme for the winter. All new walkers are very welcome.

Robert Cooper

Northumbria Walking Group (20s and 30s Group)

The Northumbria Walking Group has had a good year with continued strong support from existing members. In addition we have welcomed a number of new members, many of whom have made a valuable contribution to group activities. The group continues to offer walks on most Sundays. A relatively new addition to this is a short walks programme on Saturdays, aimed at new members who are nervous about venturing on longer walks, but open to all. Several weekends away and one or two longer holidays have been arranged by group members and were well attended. In addition, the group continues to have a busy social programme, with regular pub nights, meals out and outings to opera, theatre and cinema. To try to tackle the challenge of an ageing group and concerns that this may discourage younger members, we have started an under 35's mailing list as a focus for the younger members, although all activities remain open to all members.

Claire Rose-Innes

Ponteland Group

The usual pattern of Sunday and Wednesday walks has continued. The Sunday walking group is a little weaker in numbers but has a good core of stalwarts. Unusually we cancelled the walk on 1st November because the weather was so foul. The Wednesday group, organised by John LeRoland, continues strong in numbers.

The annual dinner this year on 29th January 2010 will be at Ponteland Golf Club, courtesy of our Chairwoman Marjory Scarlett.

The usual number of Diversion proposals have been inspected and commented on to the County Footpath officers. A significant proposal this year related to the new golf course proposed for Close House, which is crossed by a well used footpath. Our initial objections caused some alarm and a site meeting was organised. After discussion one hole was realigned and the line of the proposed diversion altered on safety grounds. The final alignment gives a better view over the Tyne valley than the old route.

Colin Braithwaite

Sunderland Group

We continue with our Wednesday and Sunday walks, with midweek being the more popular. Members from other groups, such as Chester le Street and Darlington, regularly join us on Wednesdays so that we are averaging about 35 per walk, with low 40s, (numbers that is, not ages!) being the norm.

While it is good to see so many enthusiasts, our success brings its own little problems. There have been suggestions that we should have two leaders for each walk however it is difficult to find two leaders per midweek

walk, 52 weeks per year. There will be a solution to our problem which we will discuss at our forthcoming AGM.

In addition to our planned programme this year, many of us also joined The Northumbrian Association for their annual St Cuthberts Day walk on 20th March, when we walked from Chester le Street to Durham, part of the route taken by the monks carrying the body of St Cuthbert. The weather was very kind and we enjoyed lunch (provided Northumbrian Water) outdoors in the lovely setting of Finchale Priory.

Our 'splinter group', The Monday Strollers, also continues to enjoy their walks, with a nucleus of about 8-10 members. Some of them recently joined us for a social evening, when we had a little quiz and then a sing-song, with accompaniment provided by one of our Sunderland members and two of his friends on guitars and fiddle.

In this climate of change and belt-tightening, it is comforting to know that, whatever happens, we can still pull on our boots and go for a ramble!

Pat Jackson

Tyneside Group

The Tyneside Group has enjoyed another successful year. Total members allocated by the Ramblers' Association have remained at about 1100 and the Group continues to attract about 300 walkers each week to its Wednesday and Sunday coach trips. It is clear that the advent of free bus passes has had no measurable impact on our activities.

During the year, the managing committee of the Group reviewed the overall favourable financial position which had arisen from the weekly coach activities. It concluded that the Group was financially strong enough to make charitable donations. As a result, a total of £2000 will be

distributed to Northumbria Air Ambulance and Mountain Rescue, charities which have been called upon in the past to support ramblers not just in the Tyneside Group but those in general.

I am pleased to report that the Group's accident record over the past year has been very good. This, in spite of the large numbers venturing out each week in whatever weather prevails and frequently over rough terrain.

Finally, I will take this opportunity to thank the members of the committee and leaders who work so hard to ensure a safe and pleasurable experience for all the walking members – and do so week after week. The service of these unsung heroes is admirable.

Tom Barber

**RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION, NORTHUMBRIA AREA
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER 2009**

INCOME	2009	2008
	£	£
Central Office Allocation to Area	11,000	11,000
Current Account Interest	26	100
Investment Income:		
National Savings Investment Account	0	13
Book sales surplus	0	355
Sundry Income	4	0
Total income for the year	<u>11,030</u>	<u>11,468</u>
Less: EXPENDITURE		
Access	0	114
Rights of Way	364	703
Countryside Protection	0	0
Administration:- Officers' Expenses, Room Rents	167	471
Group Allocations	3,066	3,470
Printing and Postage of Programmes, Newsletters, Annual Report & Accounts	8,241	7,982
	<u>11,838</u>	<u>12,740</u>
Less Programme Advertising Income	-770	-850
	<u>11,068</u>	<u>11,890</u>
Subscriptions and Donations	86	97
Sundry Expenses (General Council)	0	509
Total Expenditure for the Year	<u>11,154</u>	<u>12,496</u>
Surplus, -Deficit for the Year	-124	-1,028

**RAMBLERS NORTHUMBRIA AREA
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30th SEPTEMBER 2009**

	2009	2008
	£	£
NET ASSETS		
Cash at bank - Unity current account	3,834	4,442
Add debtors (book publishing)	800	0
Less creditors	1,393	1,077
RESERVES, TOTAL NET ASSETS	<u>3,241</u>	<u>3,365</u>

AUDITOR'S STATEMENT

Having carried out procedures in accordance with Area and Group Independent Examiner's Guidelines, I consider the Northumbria Area Accounts to have been properly prepared and to give a true and fair view of the Area finances for the year ended September 30 2009.

Signed Kathryn Howard
Highbury, Jesmond. Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 3LN

Date November 2009

Honorary Area Officers 2009 – 2010

Chairman	Dave Turnbull
Vice-Chairman	Ann Key
Treasurer	Arthur Quick
Secretary (split post)	
Area Correspondence & Liaison Officer	Dave Turnbull
Council Meeting Administrator	Vacancy
Annual Report Editor	Paul Roberts
Access Officer	Nuala Wright
Rights of Way Coordinator	Terry Pollard
Publicity and Literature Officer	Ann Key
Membership and IT Officer	Bob Newmark
Walk Northumbria Editor	Pat Jackson
Countryside Officer	Vacancy
Media Officer	Dave Turnbull
Minutes Secretary	Pauline Hawdon

Individual Area Council Members

Mr. W. Gallon
Mr. R. Fletcher
Mr M Nugent
Ms J Taylor
2 Vacancies

