

FOOTPRINT

The Bi-Monthly Magazine of the Notts Derby Walking Group (NDWG)

June 2006

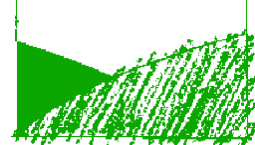
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The Ramblers



WRITE UP: WEEKEND AWAY - GRASMERE,
BROADRAYNE FARM,
28th APR – 1st MAY 2006

Wendy Ferguson



It's steeper than it looks! The long walk group on Sharp Edge heading to up to Blencathra on route to Skiddaw in the Lakes. Pic: Mark Evans.

Lake District. Bank Holiday. End of April. Bound to be wind and rain, if not snow and ice. Booking on the Grasmere weekend is asking for trouble. But what's this? After a cold spring and a fairly lacklustre Easter, things weather-wise are looking up. Friday dawns bright and sunny, and after a good drive up, the sun is still shining in the Lakes. On reaching the fabulous Broadrayne Farm hostel, we sit in the sun with a cup of tea, enjoying our first views of those mountains waiting to be conquered.

Broadrayne Farm hostel is indeed fabulous. We had it to ourselves, which avoids the morning dance with other people and their kids around the kitchen. The showers are hot, strong and plentiful. The kitchen is well-equipped, and there's a common room upstairs to die for – comfy chairs, TV, and a fabulous round window through which we can watch the sun go down over the hills, and the stars fill the night sky (no light pollution here).

But a NDWG weekend isn't just about the hostel; we're a walking group for goodness sake. So walking we did. But first, whilst the shadows lengthened on the Friday night, we fired up the barbeque (well, Andy H fired it up – barbecuing being a man's work, of course), and sat outside, charcoaling various bits of meat, drinking alcohol and unwinding from the week's stresses and strains.

Saturday dawned bright and early. A few hours later we got up, breakfasted, packed and were ready for action. Some of the boys went off with Phil to do some male-bonding on the Helvellyn Range (taking in Dollywagon Pike, Nethermost Pike, Helvellyn, White Side, Raise, Stybarrow Dodd, Great Dodd with Swirral and Striding Edges thrown in for good measure). The rest of us milled around in a confused fashion for a while, before getting into cars and driving over to Langdale. The sun shone, the sky was blue, and it was a great day for a walk covering the Langdale Pikes and Crinkle Crags, led ably by Don W. The highlights were the ascents, including an interesting scramble up Jacks Rake; the lowlights were the descents, including a nasty prolonged drop back to the valley floor at the end of the day. Only the thought of a pint in the Stickle tarn Inn at the end kept the wobbly legs going.

Long walks on Saturday meant a late return to the hostel for our group meals. Sarah R cooked up a mean Thai green curry for the veggies, which was ready a full hour before Andy H's extremely professional-looking Herdwick lamb curry. The meat-eaters were just starting to gnaw the table legs, when master chef Holbrook served up. The meals were rounded off with cakes and candles to help Gary D celebrate his significant birthday.

Sunday – would we be lucky again with the weather? Could we be lucky again? Yes. Once again, shorts were the order, as we split into two walks. Those who fancied a lie-in tackled Helvellyn via Striding Edge lead by Neil T, whilst early-risers set off to tackle Blencathra on a Phil S make-it-up-as-you-go-along walk. We romped up Sharp Edge (well, following two kids not long out of nappies up the rocks, there could be no chickening out!) We stopped a while on top of Blencathra, and then headed off-piste to tackle Skiddaw. This is where the wisdom of wearing shorts was questioned, as Phil led us through the most leg-scratching gorse and heather I have ever known. Blood was drawn. Nevertheless, we topped Skiddaw (with a comedy run up Skiddaw Little Man for some real 'enthusiasts'), and eventually staggered down into Keswick. A really great walk and full marks to those stubborn enough to refuse to don trousers in the freezing cold wind and cloud atop Skiddaw.

Sunday night saw a trip to the local pub for many, to sooth aching limbs and create aching heads for the next day. Fun and games continued until the early hours in the common room in typical NDWG style.

On Monday our sixpences in the weather-fairy's meter ran out. We woke to low cloud and drizzle. Nevertheless some people did a short hangover-clearing walk, calling into Grasmere for the inevitable gingerbread. Others headed off to renew acquaintance with the M6.

Another legendary NDWG weekend in the Lakes. Big, big thanks to Robyn for organising the weekend, to Don, Neil and Phil for leading walks, to Sarah and Andy for cooking great meals, and to everyone else for being great company. Wendy.

WRITE UP: WEEKEND AWAY – ULLAPOOL,
SCOTLAND,
APRIL 2006

Helen Watson and Mark Evans



It's not often that bad language passes my lips, so it's a testament to the wonders of the Scottish landscape that by the time we reached our destination, the car was awash with my profanities. Luckily both Pete Wilson and DJ Millington understood my excitement and ignored my suggestions for sexual intercourse and comments regarding divinely ordained pooh. To be fair though, An Teallach was a f..king awesome sight.

There was no time for idylling at twee Ullapool, we had mountains to climb and our first destination Stac Pollaidh didn't disappoint: a cheeky upstart of a hill and an eye opening introduction to the surrounding moonscape, sporadically punctuated by vertiginous pinnacles of mountain. As seen from Stac Polly, the destination for the following day, Ben Mòr Coigach, was an ominous wall of cliff, jagged ridge and death. Luckily for my underwear, on top the drops weren't as evident, however hard JC tried to find, and fall off them. An occasional clearing in the weather, combined with a satisfyingly gentle ridge walk topped off a satisfying days rambling rewarded later by fab tucker prepared by Jo and Mrs Gillaspsy (top marks must also go to the swath of cakes supplied by Jo amongst others).

While, this was all awesome stuff, I had more egotistical needs, namely to put to bed my Munro virginity. Alan Billington, AKA Bionic Billy was the man with the plan, Gazza, the man with the chocolate (but where was the Guinness?). The weather looked bad, but neither veteran cared, tree felling winds and white outs were not going to stop them shepherding the

rest of us up to glory. Two thirds of the way up the weather turned bitchy and even Alan, now wounded from a gash in his leg, and had to use my cowardice as an excuse not to add on another two Munros via a ridge that looked, as he put it, like one giant cornice. This also gave Gazza the chance to put his feet where his mouth was and don crampons, albeit until they fell apart 10 metres later, but at least that gave the rest of the group a chance to enjoy the scenery. Having followed the bloody trail left by Alan as he expertly led us via white, white and more white we reached the top for snaps, our grins frozen into place. We ventured homeward, glad of our recent ice axe training on the way up, both rejoicing the metre deep snow, then cursing it as we disappeared up to our chests.

We again rallied around our fearless leader for an 18 mile jaunt to Beinn Dearg Mhòr, believing the weather couldn't hold out on us. Spirits were high, even higher after we almost lost Charlotte during our first river crossing, and higher still when we glimpsed her snazzy striped leggings she changed into. Having been in a state of confusion all day the weather finally made up its mind that it was going to pee all over us and shroud the views in mist, which made the long steep slog up the side of the mountain all the more joyous. Having ascended 500 metres in about half an hour four of us collapsed at the bowl marking the final ascent, while Alan admitted to 'almost getting a little out of breath at one point'. Yet again we found ourselves struggling against a toppling wind in a world of white, every so often checking behind like a loyal dog just to see that my master hadn't abandoned us. Within 20 metres of the peak, Barbara's chanting to the Sun god finally came up trumps, and the mist cleared for top notch views of the surrounding valley all the way to the sea, with only the shy An Teallach remaining the little teasing minx. Descending via what seemed like an age of treacherous heather we eagerly strove towards our return trial by water. We dispatched the third river crossing like pros, however, given more rain, the forth crossing turned out to be a little tricky. Forgetting our GCSE Physics, we decided that holding hands in a crumpled pentagon formation was the way forward and only just managed to abort this foolish endeavour preventing what would have been an unceremonious return to the sea. After that excitement we only had another 7 miles to go! Pete Wilson's splendid meal beckoned...

The last day was a cool down, but spectacular nonetheless, led by our superb weekend and walks leader Johnny, who had tirelessly managed to keep us occupied throughout our Ullapool break. Circling around to Glas Bheinn via the tallest waterfall in the UK (not that anyone was going to peer over too far to see the bottom), the peak provided smashing views over the terrain that had been our play pen for the 4 days previous. A smattering of snow ball fights later and we were on our way back allowing just enough time for Charlotte to make up for Gazza's absence by having a dip in the local tarn. Refreshing she called it; surprisingly everyone else seemed happy to stay weary and grubby. Mark Evans

The Highlands - by Helen Watson

I've always wanted to visit the Highlands in Scotland. I had a deep longing for the space, dramatic mountains, wildlife and fresh air. So, when I saw that NDWG were heading in that direction I jumped to it!

A group of 18 eager walkers travelled up on the Thursday before Good Friday to embark on what would be an incredible walking adventure. Stopping on the way at New Lanark gave some relief to the body after a 5 hour journey. New Lanark in itself was pleasant and noticeably clean with a fabulous Chinese takeaway too! Its hostel is excellent – well organised, clean, spacious with ensuite rooms for 4 – quite a treat!

Good Friday – we drove another 5 hours to Ullapool – just north of the town in fact for our first walk – Stac Polly. An impressive (approx) 615m high – its serrated rocky ridge can be seen clearly from the car park below. The walk started with a fairly steep climb along a path, following the contours of the mountain. The ascent was hard after a long drive up, but the views magnificent and totally worthwhile at the summit. We could look out to Loch Lurgainn and the Coigach Hills, plus in the distance see Suilven, Ben Mor Coigach and Cul Mor. Thankfully a clear, sunny day favoured the views! There was some scrambling, which was good fun – and a few of us braved crossing a narrow edge to explore the rocky pinnacles of the summit.

Saturday's walk was hard. The weather conditions not ideal – only light rain, but the wind was quite strong. Scotland's terrain is challenging – boggy, uneven, and mossy too – but that is what makes Scotland walking exciting!

That Saturday evening – we all enjoyed the delights of Nic Gallaspy's cooking. We all sat down to enjoy her vegetable curry with rice, naan bread and spiced potato – yum-my. Group meals are a great way of bonding a group and also getting to know other members – some whose names you knew, but had never actually met.

Over the remaining days – there were a few different walks on offer. Alan and Teresa Billington each led different walks. I joined Jonny and a few others on one of the most enjoyable of the trip. Further south from Ullapool, the walk started along a coastal path with fabulous views of the Summer Isles ahead. In fact, it reminded me of New Zealand. Some scrambling took us higher onto a flatter plain with views of Beinn Ghobhlach ahead. As we climbed further we could see the many Lochans that surrounded this fabulous mountain. Fortunately, the weather was good to us – the odd hailstorm shower – which we could see sweep in from the sea, across the coast and head inland. A rocky and mossy ascent made walking hard – but with its impressive summit in view; this was all the more part of the challenge. Reaching the summit – wow! Panoramic views were simply superb.

Tuesday's walk was fantastic. We split us a group to vary the walks on offer. I joined Jonny's walk which was just south of the fishing village of Lochinver. An initial ominous, proud looking mountain – snow-capped and very majestic in its stature! Wow! The walk started with a wee river crossing, combined with rocky paths, marshy land and mud! LOVE IT! We had fabulous views leading right to the snowy summit – with panoramic views all round. On our way back, we saw a lot of wild deer and, what we now know as, a Sea Eagle.

All in all, the Highlands trip was excellent – well led and organised by Jonny Bramley and a good mix of lovely people who got on really well together. The Highlands has lots to offer for all levels of walkers and is definitely worth the long journey up.

I personally learnt how make walking more pleasurable by (1) drinking heaps before and during; (2) to best start a walk feeling cool and let the body warm up (because you soon do!) and (3) Green & Blacks chocolate works a treat for a energy and mental pick-me- up!! Helen Watson

**RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION GENERAL
COUNCIL MEETING 21st – 23rd APRIL 2006
KEELE UNIVERSITY**

Andy Holbrook

Good company, good conversation, late night drinking sessions, not to bed until ten-to-three in the morning. Sounds as if I'm describing a normal walking weekend away but no! In actual fact, this was GC 2006, held this year at Keele University, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire.

A quick explanation of what 'GC' is; The RA structure is Board of Trustees (who ultimately determine strategy), General Council, Areas and Groups. The Nott's-Derby Walking Group is one of several formally constituted 'walking groups' that make up the 'Nottinghamshire Area'. GC is a mandatory body and is made up of delegates from Areas. 'Mandatory' meaning that decisions made at GC are mandatory on the Board.

This year, the RA had decided to make available up to 80 non-voting places for members from 20-30 groups. About 35 groups were represented. The Council started on Saturday; the first session encompassed a speech by the two acting Chief Executives, the incoming Chief Executive and the RA president, Chris Smith.

Chris Smith's speech was quite inspirational and humorous too. To summarise he thought:

- Full implementation of the Countryside Rights of Way Act (CRoW/ 'Right to Roam') had been successful with many landowners conceding it had gone well. Consensus had been the key.
- Clarity was now required over the definition of 'downland, mountain and moorland' if access rights were not to be restricted in the future.
- Our next area of campaign should be access to woodlands, riverbanks and coastal areas.

His concerns included:

- Under a recent 'anti-terrorist' law, trespass becomes a criminal act (as opposed to civil) across sites that are specifically designated by government.
- Freezing of funds for National Park Authorities.
- RA membership is still not expanding.

The afternoon session was split into workshops to discuss specific issues. I attended a meeting on recruitment and retention. The RA has 140,000 members, a figure which has declined over the last few years. Comparable organisations like the RSPB and NT have up to 3 million members. If I took one central point out of the session it was that we all play a part in gaining and retaining members. Perhaps the next time you meet someone on a walk / social who is not yet a member, think about how you would like to be treated in a similar situation.

The evening meal was put on by the University and was a very 'chatty' affair, followed by live music or in my case, a trip to one of the student union bars with a group of members. Sunday morning continued with Council Motions. Motions are put to GC by Areas, debated and then voted on. Motions included climate change, coastal paths, signposts and YHA closures. There was a choice of walks in the afternoon.

In summing up, the main themes of this years GC were; the 'bedding in' of the far reaching constitutional changes made last year, coastal path access and building membership. Attending GC proved to be interesting, sociable and enjoyable. It's a chance to share ideas, influence policy makers, gain a greater understanding of issues affecting our enjoyment of the countryside.....and have a few beers!

The NDWG is assigned to the RA Nottinghamshire area and is one of 16 local groups. The Area has a total of 2957 members. This sounds good but is actually down by 92 members on the previous period.

Recruitment seems to be a reoccurring theme among all Groups. Lapses of membership appear to be the key issue. So, why is it that people fail to renew their membership?

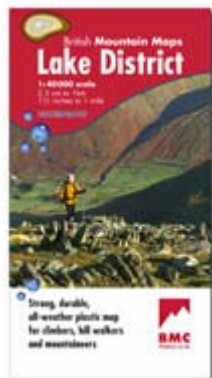
Currently, there is no feedback process. If you have allowed your membership to lapse, I guess you wouldn't be reading this. *However, if you are thinking of letting it lapse then could you please contact any one of the committee and share the reasons why. If we don't manage to stop you, at least we can begin to understand why!*

GEAR! HARVEY'S 1:40,000 COMPLETE LAKE DISTRICT MAP

Phil Storer – Footprint Editor and Harvey Disciple

For those (like me) who are fed up with the idea of needing 4 Ordnance Survey maps to cover the Lake District, map gurus Harvey in association with the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) have come up with the answer. After all, it's...

"...the best Lake District map I have ever seen. The 1:40,000 scale provides clear, detailed information to one of the most popular hill walking areas in Britain." Sir Chris Bonnington



The Lake District's famous mountains and fells on a SINGLE MAP!!

- Printed on plastic - durable, tear-resistant and 100% waterproof.
- Colour shading for easy identification of hills and valleys/
- Detailed crag information for climbers.
- Less than half the weight of a laminated map.
- Detailed 1:20,000 enlargements of Scafell, Gable, Bowfell, Langdale Pikes and Pillar.
- Geological map of the Lake District.
- Mountain incident and first aid advice.
- Tips on using your map and compass.
- Useful local phone numbers and websites.

Total genius and the best £12.95 I've ever spent. For more information including the Outdoor Atlas series (yet more genius) visit: <http://www.harveymaps.co.uk> or try your local gear shop....Phil.

FANCY A CHALLENGE?**RA USE YOUR PATHS CAMPAIGN**

A current major campaign of the RA is the 'Use Your Paths' Challenge. We are aiming to have walked and checked every path in England and Wales by September 2007 in order to raise awareness and stress the importance of paths as well as help to get path problems resolved.

So, what can you do?! Ordnance Survey [OS] maps divide the country into 1km x 1km squares. When you have walked all the paths in a particular square, let the RA know via www.useyourpaths.info and report any problems to the relevant highway authority [the address can be found on the aforementioned website]. The Public Rights of Way Officer at the relevant highway authority will be keen to know of problems and even keener to resolve them!

FORTHCOMING WEEKENDS AWAY

ndwg

- 16th-18th June: East Lakes Escape Weekend @ Kentmere with Don Wells. NDWG has sole use of a camping barn for 14 people. Escape the World Cup; bring your own food, wine and inner self! Spaces still available, only £16. Contact Don on 0115 9333597
- 23rd-25th June: Midhopstones, Dark Peaks, Camping Weekend @ Langsett Moors with Jenny Horsemann. An informal weekend [aren't they all?] at Jenny's parent's farm. Walks may include Black Hill or Holmfirth near Crowden [Last of the Summer Wine country] and Bradfield. Contact Jenny on 0781 6051382.
- 14th-16th July: Celtic History Weekend @ Oare near Pewsey, Wiltshire, Camping Weekend [with showers & pub ¼ mile away] with Andy Holbrook. Enjoy the expanse and history of Wiltshire. We shall be taking in Silbury Hill, West Kennet Long Barrow and Avebury Stone Circle. Appreciate the history of our forefathers and maybe even see one or two crop-circles! £20 per tent or £11 if sharing [you'll be so lucky Ed!]. Contact Andy on 01773 745658.

FORTHCOMING SOCIALS**Nottingham and Derby**

- Wednesday 7th June from 8pm onwards: New Members Pub Night at Tonics, Friar Gate, Derby
- Thursday 15th June from 8pm onwards: Members pub meet at The Canal House, Nottingham
- Thursday 20th July from 8pm onwards: Members pub meet at The Canal House, Nottingham
- Saturday 24th June 2006. Doug's Mansfield Road pub crawl
6pm - The Forest Tavern
7pm - The Nags Head
8pm - The Lincolnshire Poacher
9pm - The Golden Fleece
10pm - The Peacock

Late night venue to be decided on the night....for further details contact Doug on 07746237403

- Saturday 22nd July – 7.30pm – 1am : Helen Watson is organising a “singles night” at Nottingham & Union Rowing Club, Trent Side, Trent Bridge, Nottingham. Ticket entry only. Tickets will be sold in pairs. Price to be confirmed.
Contact Helen on 07905 765891 or email holistichelen@hotmail.com

ROUNDERS!

Peter Wilson

We will be organising a game of rounders in Wollaton Park on Saturday July 22nd starting at 2pm. We will meet in the main car park on wollaton road and then find a suitable space to play. We will have a break for a snack/ or a picnic and a drink (beer) then another game or two. There is the option then to have a stroll around the lake after. Car parking is £2 for the day and is a pay and display.

Busses from Nottingham go from Milton street No 30 and go past the car park entrance and go 10 past, Half past and 10 too the hour.

Derby busses stop at QMC and you will enter the park on Middleton Boulevard and walk right across the park. Approx 3/4 mile. Don't be put off, we are a walking group.

I need to know the week before if you intend to come along and join in. This is to give us an idea of numbers. Contact details: p.wilson37@ntlworld.com or 07803935282 or 01476 408256

I will send out a digest nearer the time to remind you all. Peter Wilson

NOTE: PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE AND LATEST DIGEST E-MAILS FOR THE LATEST UPDATES TO THE SOCIAL CALENDER

VOLUNTEERS WANTED re: SOCIALS

Diane Hennessy (Social Secretary)

I am looking for more volunteers to lead socials for the summer period. If you have an idea you want to share but are not quite sure how to go about arranging it, you are welcome to contact me so we can get the ball rolling.

The socials we've had recently are largely pub crawls but the group would welcome meals out, trips to the theatre, "go ape" in Sherwood Forest or anything we haven't thought of before.

For those who are not familiar, the procedure is that you come up with an idea and a possible date in mind and then you contact me to confirm there are no clashes with the date, in which case I will offer you another.

I would be happy to support members, new or old, on any social they have in mind. My number is 07813 654 845. This group is only as good as the people that are in it so I look forward to your call!

RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION

ACCESS NEWS

Forthcoming local and national dates

- 24 June – 2 July – National 'Use Your Paths' week (to raise awareness of the importance and value of local rights of way).

- 16-24 September – Welcome to Walking Week
- 17 September – National Walking Day
- 22 September – ‘In Town without my Car’ day.

CONTACTS: THE NDWG COMMITTEE

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20% OFF - COTSWOLD OUTDOOR SUMMER DISCOUNT NIGHT
15th JUNE 2006. 9.30am – 8.00pm

The Cotswold Outdoor store on Castle Boulevard is again holding a special Summer Discount Day with 20% off the price of all clothing and equipment*.

All the summer ranges will be in store including tents and camping gear. Remember to bring your **RA membership card** and quote code N2051 to receive the special discount. For a sample of what's of offer go to www.cotswoldoutdoor.com

**Note: This offer excludes books, maps and GPS and is not available in conjunction with any other offers and discounts.*

FEEDBACK

CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME!! GET TYPING.....

YOUR contributions are always welcome. Regardless, of the length of time you have been with the group, we're sure you'll have something to say, a question which could be asked or a piece of constructive criticism. If interested, please forward your contributions to either myself or Andy Holbrook.

Thanks for reading and happy walking!