

Footpath Matters

As the comprehensive survey conducted by Ryedale Group demonstrated, maintenance of local rights of way has been badly neglected by North Yorkshire County Council.

The survey has also provided a valuable baseline snapshot, and future reports by our newly-recruited footpath monitors and others will enable both Ramblers and the wider public to judge whether promised improvements are being reflected on the ground.

To illustrate the severity of some of the problems, I have been filming my efforts to follow appealing routes in the local countryside. You can view the results on line at bit.ly/ryed4A4. If you feel able to cope with a real show of horrors, I recommend in particular the first clip on that page, at Marton, as an illustration of the mountain of work required to restore our area's rights of way.

I am also a great believer in exercising a degree of self-help. If you are obstructed by a few stray brambles or tree shoots, do please consider snipping or breaking them off, rather than trying to dodge them or holding them aside. This would prevent them from becoming a more troublesome obstacle that in a few months made a path challenging or impossible to negotiate, and which required a report to the county council. Similarly, soft growth of vegetation can often be simply trodden down, providing an instant solution, and removing a deterrent to other walkers.

When possible, please also follow a right of way across a field, rather than unnecessarily diverting around the edge. The county council say they are taking a firm line against farmers who do not reinstate paths after ploughing or sowing, so if walkers keep to the legal line, deterring subsequent encroachment by vegetation, it is easier to maintain a complaint if crops overgrow the path.

I do want to be insistent and persistent in my dealings with County Hall, but I also want the rights of way staff to acknowledge that when we approach them, there is an unquestionable need for them to exercise their statutory powers or provide well-equipped manpower.

It's worth bearing in mind that in the past, many parish councils took pride in their footpaths, sometimes organising an annual walk around them. Parishes do have a variety of powers and responsibilities in respect of rights of way, so if you know a member of your local council, you might consider asking if they have a Footpaths Officer, or if they would consider appointing one, with whom we would be happy to cooperate.

We have taken advantage of a free facility provided by Central Office to provide a basic service on the internet at <http://www.ryedaleramblers.org.uk>. I am recording new reports about rights of way issues there, and I hope that by the time the newsletter appears, there will be a forum on which leaders can publish extra, or up-dated details about their coming walks, and footpath monitors can exchange information. Members will need to register before making postings, to avoid unwanted input from outside sources.

Harry Whitehouse



Ryedale Ramblers Spring Newsletter 2018

Local Footpath Monitors

In the last Newsletter, we explained the thinking behind our efforts to set up a network of Local Footpath Monitors – volunteers who would walk every path in a particular parish once a year and report any issues. Over recent months, work on the scheme has progressed: Harry, our Footpath Secretary, for example, has produced a web domain to support local footpath monitors (LFMs), a map of the parishes to be covered and a video on how to give grid references. The guidelines on the LFM role have been developed and these will be circulated at an inaugural meeting for volunteers. To date, sufficient monitors have come forward to keep an eye on about a quarter of the Ryedale parishes (88) that need to be done. Whilst this is a good start, clearly, we need more volunteers in order to bring all our district's parishes into the scheme. If, while walking your local paths, you feel you could help with the monitoring, please let a member of the committee know or contact Harry at hltw@peaksoft.co.uk or John at j.harland400@btinternet.com

2026 and investigating forgotten PROWs

Many footpaths and bridleways are at risk of being lost for good because they have never been recorded on the Definitive Map. In some cases, such paths are no longer obvious on the ground. However, if proof can be found of their one-time existence, it should be possible to reinstate them – and protect them for future generations. To do this, a nation-wide initiative has been launched to encourage as many of us as possible to research forgotten paths on maps and documents in the areas where we live and walk. The more people out there scouring libraries and public records offices for documentation, the more paths we can save before the 2026 deadline, after which pre-1949 public rights of way (PROWs) that haven't been claimed will be extinguished.

To help our Group get started in the initiative, four members of the committee attended a Training Day in Darlington last year. It was structured around the book '*Rights of Way - Restoring the Record*' and was delivered by its authors, Sarah Bucks and Phil Wadey. The book, copies of which have been obtained by the Group, provides an excellent guide to how to go about collecting evidence on the existence of unrecorded PROWs and how to submit an Application for a route to be added to the Definitive Map.

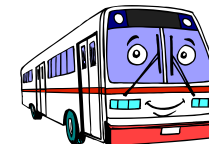
We have also set up a support group to help share experiences in researching and applying for forgotten paths in Ryedale. Whereas some volunteers are investigating the PROWs in whole parishes (e.g. Nunnington, Terrington and Sinnington), others are focusing on specific paths in a number of parishes. Members of the group have visited the County Records Office in Northallerton and the National Archives in London. Examples of the sources trawled include Enclosure Awards for parishes, the 1910 Inland Revenue Tax Assessment maps and field books, old maps and plans for railway lines that ran through the district.

Initial enquiries suggest that Ryedale has hundreds of forgotten PROWs that need re-claiming before the 2026 deadline. We clearly need more volunteers to help with this important task. No prior experience or knowledge are required and there is a wide variety of jobs to be done. If you feel you could offer some help, no matter how small, please could you get in touch with John Harland on 01751 269170 or j.harland400@btinternet.com

John Harland



Sunday 1st July 2018
Come on the Ryedale Coach Ramble!
In Wensleydale, ending in Hawes



There will be a choice of three rambles of varying lengths ending in Hawes.

Pick up times will be **8.00 am at Norton car park**, and **8.30 am at Clifton Moor** (Flying Legend pub car park). The **cost** is **£23** per person which includes a main course carvery meal at The Anchor Inn at Whixley on the way home. Desserts can be chosen and paid for on the day.

To book please complete and return the booking form together with a cheque for the appropriate amount, made payable to "**The Ramblers Association (ER04)**", to **Pat Donnor 2 Roxby Road, Thornton-le-Dale, Pickering YO18 7SX**.

Any queries, please phone Pat on 01751 474667 or email Pat at patrambling@talktalk.net Bookings **must** be returned by **Saturday 2nd June 2017**.

Please note that if there are insufficient numbers by this date, the coach ramble will be cancelled.

Please ring Pat on 07876025912 if you need to contact us on the morning of the coach ramble.

***N ~ Norton car park *CM ~ Clifton Moor (Flying Legend pub car park).**



Name	Tel. No.	Pickup Point	
		*N	*CM
Email ~			

