
Tameside Ramblers - January 2024



Hi,

We have a bumper edition for you this time and thank you to all the contributors !

It looks like a great time in 2023 and look forward to many more good times in 2024.

As always—any contributions for future editions are always most welcome !

Alan

“Editor”

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Contents :

Chairman's Update	Page 2
Greater Manchester Ringway	Page 3
PNFS & AGM	Pages 4&5
Conwy weekend	Pages 6—9
Frodsham Walk	Pages 10 & 11
Saying safe & Ramblers hand-book	Page 12 & 13
An Austrian Trip	Page 14 & 15
Hartington weekend	Page 16 & 17
Whats App Groups	Page 18
Using Google Maps	Pages 18
Contacting your Committee	Page 19

Chair Talk

We are only a couple of weeks into 2024 and we have already experienced plenty of rain, mud, strong winds, bright sunshine, blue skies and snow! But the walks are enjoyable, regardless of the weather and this is due in no small part to the camaraderie engendered by walking in a group of generally like-minded people.

We start 2024 with a newly-elected committee, containing some familiar faces but also four new faces and we are looking forward to bringing you a great programme of walks and events throughout the year. A report on the 2023 AGM and the elections to the committee, is to be found further into this newsletter.

This year will see the launch of Ramblers refreshed 10-year strategy (the previous one was in 2014) which aims to (quote): “place a stronger emphasis on those aspects of Ramblers work that create the most positive impact for those people and communities who face the least access and most barriers to walking outdoors in nature”.

Surveys have shown that most members of the public do not realise that Ramblers is a charity, nor that it does things other than lead groups on walks. The refreshed strategy is designed to change that perception. We are told that there will be no direct impact on the way we operate as walking groups. No doubt we shall receive more information from Ramblers in due course.

By the time you are reading this, we shall already have had the first few walks of 2024, with many more to come during the year.....but only if we have sufficient walk leaders. At the present time, the group is relying mostly on the same few walk leaders each month.

This situation is not unique to Tameside Ramblers; other groups are also experiencing a shortage of active walk leaders. So, if you are one of our walk leaders who has not led any walks for some time, please consider returning to leading again; if you can only manage one or two walks, they all help. If you are an experienced walker

and think you would like to have a go at leading a walk for our group, then please have a word with one of our Walk Programme Coordinators, Cathryn or Karen, or any of our regular walk leaders.

Walks do not need to be hard or long (shorter walks are very popular) and you will get plenty of help and advice, so please think about having a go.

Stewart Ramsden

Chairman

Pub Walk



On Wed 26th July , eleven of us enjoyed a 5 mile local walk led by Eddie, ending up for a great meal at the Waggon & Horses in Mottram.

Great to see people out for the walk & meal that we've not seen for a few months

The Greater Manchester Ringway



The Greater Manchester Ringway is a 200-mile walking trail encircling Greater Manchester, passing through all ten boroughs of the City Region and comprising 20 stages with the start and finish point of each stage accessible by public transport.

The route was the brainchild of Dr Andrew Read, who is a Ramblers member. Funding for the project comes from the National Heritage Fund and the project is supported by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and the Greater Manchester & High Peak Area of Ramblers.

The GM Ringway visits historic canals, the Peak District National Park, the South and west Pennines and the 'Flashes of Wigan and Leigh' National Nature Reserve; it passes more than 40 Grade I and II listed buildings, 13 accredited museums, and 14 scheduled ancient monuments, all within the Greater Manchester boundary.

Two of the twenty stages pass through Tameside: Stage 7 Marple to Broadbot-

tom, approx. 8 miles and Stage 8 Broadbottom to Greenfield, approx. 12 miles.

During the next few months, the route will be fully waymarked;

Stage 8 (Broadbottom to Greenfield) was recently waymarked by two members of Tameside Ramblers together with a Trustee of CPRE and a photographer. The waymark direction arrows contain a QR code which links to the GM Ringway website.

There is also an excellent App for downloading onto smartphones, giving turn by turn directions for the whole of the GM Ringway, with both photographs and a map. The App is called '**Go Jauntly**' and it contains other walks in addition to the GM Ringway.

Stage 7 Marple to Broadbottom, will feature on a Saturday, in the January walks programme and will be repeated on a Wednesday in a couple of months' time. It is hoped that other walk leaders will be able to lead other stages in the future.



Stewart & Ed helping to sign post the walk

Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

We are subscribed to the PFNS who cover the area below;



Peak & Northern Footpaths Society (PNFS) is a community of individuals and organisations committed to protecting your right to access the outdoors.

They do this by monitoring, protecting and improving public rights of way such as footpaths and bridleways.

Since 1894, PNFS has defended the rights of everyone to use these routes and held land-owners and councils to account in their duty to maintain them

They publish news letters, some up to a very comprehensive 32 pages.

For more details see their web site at ;

<https://www.peakandnorthern.org.uk/>



From the Chair

Spring is well under way; some days are quite warm and getting out to walk is a pleasure. As a society our focus is preserving and improving public rights of way and over the past few weeks, we have been working hard to maximise our impact.

To help cover the many paths in the multiple parishes across our geography we have over 180 footpath inspectors. They are vital to our work, and we have a steady number of new inspectors joining us. However, we have not been able to hold a training event in person since 2019. Online training has been available and is of excellent quality, but there is nothing quite like meeting together and sharing knowledge and questions. It was brilliant to hold a training day at Taylor House on 25 March. Thanks to David Gosling, Linda Smith and Andrew Harter who provided expert guidance for over twenty footpath inspectors with a mixture of talks, demonstrations and question and answer sessions. Despite the rather cramped room, everyone enjoyed themselves and we all learnt from each other. We plan to do more sessions so that we can ensure new inspectors get the chance to attend soon after appointment.

Our Courts and Inquiries (C&I) meeting, which takes place bimonthly is the place where the most difficult and intransigent faults are discussed. At times we can feel that little progress is being made and results can be slow. However, we have had several

successes recently which provides some encouragement. Often the faults have been present for a long time and it is only the determination and persistence of a C&I officer which leads to a breakthrough. Their detailed knowledge of the law relating to PROWs is amazing. Finding people with these skills and knowledge, or an interest in developing them is one of the challenges we face. So, if you have had previous experience, perhaps in a Highway Authority or as a lawyer, could you consider training for the role?

We run a walks programme as you will be aware. Several of us recently met at Taylor house to discuss the organisation of the varied programme of walks. There are organisers for long walks and shorter walks which take place on Wednesdays and a variety of walks on a Saturday, expanding the options for access. Our discussion related to the way we organise our communications on our website and in Signpost, so hopefully you will notice the difference. I am going to lead a walk myself in September, a great way to meet members.

Having mentioned the website I wanted to highlight that our much-advertised new website is up and running. Several Trustees and others have worked hard over a number of months to make this possible. I would like to thank Mel Bale and Suzanne Longworth in particular, though others have been involved of course. If you can feedback your views on the new layout and functionality, that would be very helpful.

Our next major event is the AGM so by the time you read this we will have held it in Stockport, I am looking forward to seeing you there.

Kathy Mclean, Chair



Tameside Ramblers 2023 Annual General

Our 11th AGM, was held on the 11th November at the Priory Tennis Club, in Stalybridge, preceded by a walk in glorious sunny weather, and led by Eddie Clift.

The meeting was attended by 19 members, which is fewer than previous occasions, and there were 13 apologies.

This year, for the first time at our AGMs, we had a guest speaker; Diane Simcoe, Ramblers Regional Engagement Officer (North), gave us an overview of a refreshed strategy that was being developed by Ramblers.

The basis of the strategy is to have greater emphasis on outreach to those parts of the community that do not currently engage with Ramblers activities and working in partnership with other organisations to advocate at a local and national level to remove barriers to walking. She stressed that none of this need have a direct impact on the operation of local groups. More detail is to be published to members in 2024.

Another first for our AGMs was that our Annual Report was sent to members by email, two weeks in advance of the meeting. Members of the committee presented their reports and took questions from the floor.

Then followed the election of the committee, for which there were several vacancies. Members will be aware that committee members are elected to serve a term of one year following which they have to stand down but with the option to stand for re-election if they wish.

Re-elected to their original positions were:

- Prue Ramsden – Group Secretary and Membership Secretary
- Jo Manning – Treasurer
- Alan James – Webmaster
- Cathryn McDowell – Joint Walks Programme Coordinator
- Stewart Ramsden – Chair

New appointees:

- Cathryn - Joint Social Secretary - she had been acting Social Secretary since June 2023
- Margaret Sever – Joint Social Secretary
- Karen Wang – Joint Walks Programme Coordinator
- Chris Eckersall – Committee Member

Prior to the AGM, there were no applicants for the post of Footpaths Officer but subsequent to the meeting, Ed Stacey put himself forward and has now been co-opted onto the committee. Another member also declared interest in the role and it is hoped they will join Ed in the near future.

The date and venue for the 2024 AGM have yet to be decided although it is likely to again be held in November.

Conwy Weekend

**The last News Letter got so large—we had to carry some content forward.
So apologies for leaving it out last time**



Weekend Away – Spring 2023

For our weekend away, April 1st/2nd we returned to Conwy, where we had previously stayed in October 2016. Most people stayed in the youth hostel, just a short walk from the town, whilst a few stayed in local B&Bs.

This year, there were two walks on offer on the Saturday: the main walk, led by Pete, was in the Frodsham area and a shorter walk, led by Janet and Geoff, was in the Conwy area. A couple of people spent Saturday in Llandudno and three visited the Conwy RSPB Reserve. The Sunday walk, led by Stewart, started and finished at the youth hostel.

Everyone arrived at the hostel during Saturday afternoon and after settling in to our allocated rooms and dormitories, different groups went exploring, although many got no further than the excellent Albion pub which served a variety of local ales.

Saturday Frodsham Walk (written up by Gary):

Nine excited Ramblers met at Helsby quarry for Pete's Helsby and Frodsham 7-mile walk through varied and challenging muddy conditions along Sand-stone ridge overlooking the Dee and Mersey valleys. We were rewarded with brilliant views of River Mersey and Liverpool from Frodsham hill, a perfect lunch stop.

Colleen (aka Kate Bush - running up that hill) im-pressed everybody with her enthusiasm to tackle any inclines, even though the route was downhill.

We even had time to walk around a farmer's field before heading back to Helsby quarry for our on-ward journey to meet up for dinner with the other ramblers at Conwy youth hostel.

Saturday Conwy Walk (written up by Geoff):

Janet and myself led a walk in Conwy on the Saturday, for people who had travelled over on Friday. There were eight of us, and we set off in good spirits, and that mood continued throughout the walk.

We started out to the south of Conwy, climbing through fields and a wood, until we reached the communications tower, and the nearby trig point, which obviously pleased Ken.

The hills were alive with the sound of Alina, and her rendition of "The Tameside Rambler" - if Ew-an MacColl were alive today, he'd be turning in his grave! (Only joking, Alina).

Following the route correctly, relied on teamwork; Janet had worked out a route for

Conwy Weekend

me to navigate, and I was glad of some assistance from Ken.

We could have followed a lane for a while, but everyone agreed to try a foot-path, even though it meant a further short climb, but it provided some excellent views.

We then descended below Conwy Mountain, and headed directly to the pub at the marina, for some well-deserved refreshment. Following this we walked along the estuary, and past the smallest house in Britain to another pub.

Next stop was the Albion in the centre of Conwy, where we met up with most of the other Ramblers.

Altogether an enjoyable day's walking.

Saturday evening:

Everyone, including those staying in B&Bs, gathered at the hostel for the evening meal followed by a hilarious and at times chaotic game called 'Harry', which was initiated by Colleen. Everyone playing was named Harry, until a mistake was made when they were re-named 'one-spot', then 'two-spots' after the second mistake until, having made five mistakes and gained five spots, you were eliminated. It was great fun. It is suspected that some gained their five spots very quickly in order to return to the pub!

Sunday Conwy Mountain Walk (written up by Jo):

Whilst congregating at the YHA prior to the walk, Anne gave some of us a

demonstration of the 'Boot Buddy', (which prompted a number of us to purchase one on our return home). Twenty-two walkers set off and Stewart set a leisurely pace up the Conwy Mountain – Mynydd y Dref, which translates as Mountain of the town.

We had spectacular views of Conwy Bay to the north and to the south, the foothills of the Carneddau mountain range. The footpaths were great, allowing us to take in the views up to the summit, where Stewart informed us that we were stood on the site of an iron age hillfort.

We began our gradual descent and walked via the Sychnant Pass, before stopping for lunch at a small lake. We passed some unusual and interesting properties on the way back, one had two enormous swan pedalos in the grounds, which Margaret recognised from Alton Towers! The walk finished back at the YHA. A truly lovely walk.

We are grateful to Pete and Ruth for again organising the weekend away which, in the words of one of the group, was "*....another fabulous weekend away with the Ramblers*".

As is customary for our group, Pete and Ruth were later given a small gift, as a thank you.

Conwy



Conwy



Frodsham Walk



On the way down to Conwy, some Ramblers stopped off at Frodsham for a 7 mile walk led by Peter & Ruth (See Conwy write up for more details).



Frodsham Walk



Seven top tips to stay safe in a thunderstorm



Thunderstorms are a natural hazard that can happen at any time of the year in Great Britain. So it's good to know what to do if you encounter a thunder and lightning whilst out walking.

You can reduce the risk of harm to yourself and others by following these tips.

1. Plan ahead

Always check the weather forecast before starting a walk via a service such as the Met Office or the Mountain Weather Information Service. If storms are forecast, consider cancelling your walk.

Or chose a route with low elevation on less exposed ground. Be especially cautious of potential storms in the summer months which can involve hail, gusty winds and torrential downpours.

2. Monitor the weather

Even the best weather may not accurately predict the exact time and place a storm will hit. Keep an eye on the build-up of clouds. If the clouds start to become menacing, it's time to review your plans. On warm days the danger will increase as the heat builds through the day.

3. Check the distance

As a storm approaches, you can estimate its distance from your location by measuring the time between lightning flashes and the rumble of thunder.

Lighting appears almost simultaneously, while thunder travels at 1 km per 3 seconds. So, a three-second delay between lightning and thunder means that the storm is about 1 km away; a six-second delay means that the storm is about 2 km away.

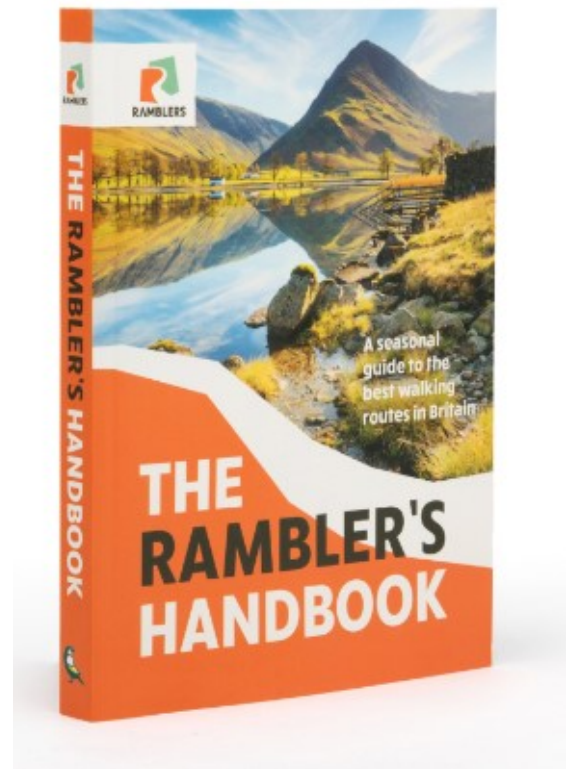
4. Get to low ground

If you get caught in a storm, try to put higher ground between you and the storm. Lightning strikes are more frequent on summits because lightning takes the shortest route to earth. The higher and more exposed you are, the greater the danger.

Only descend if it's safe to do so; scrambling quickly on uneven terrain can be particularly hazardous in rainfall.

The Ramblers

Handbook



5. Find a safe place

It's safest to find the lowest open ground rather than taking shelter in caves or under trees as the lightning takes the quickest route to the ground.

6. Minimise contact with the ground and any conducting objects

Crouch or sit on the ground, ideally on top of an insulating material such as a rucksack or sleeping mat. Put your hands on your knees rather than touching the ground.

Although they don't significantly increase the risk of attracting a strike, it's wise to lay metal items, like walking poles, aside until the storm passes. Stay clear of metal fences. If you are in a group, keep a space between you and others.

7. Help others

It is safe to touch someone who has been struck by lightning and provide them with CPR or First Aid if it is needed.

Anyone who is struck by lightning should always seek medical advice as soon as possible after the event.

We're delighted to announce the release of *The Ramblers Handbook*, a new guide to Britain's best walks. Gathering together 40 of our favourite routes around the UK, the guide is arranged by season, making it easy to find the perfect walk for every time of year.

There is no better way to enjoy the landscape, seasons and incredible diversity of our wildlife than to get out there and immerse yourself in nature. And there is no time like the present to start.

The book encompasses a varied selection of walks that cater for all levels of fitness and experience, from short country strolls to challenging hill hikes. So there are routes here for everyone to follow.

Buy from Amazon for £13.67

An Austrian Walk

Zell am See

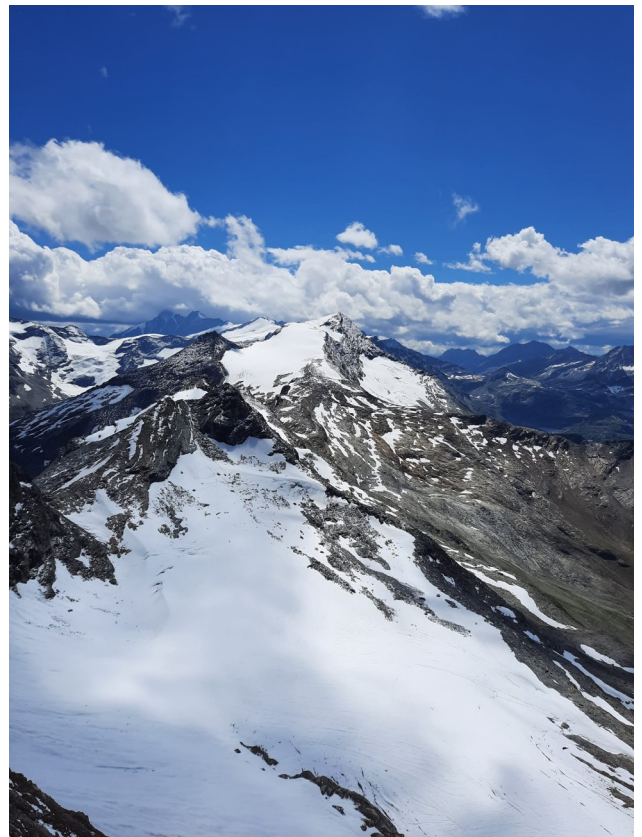
Zell am See is a small town in Austria, south of Salzburg, located by Lake Zell in the midst of the Kitzbuhel Alps. Prue and I spent a week there on an 'Adagio Plus' holiday, organised by *Ramblers Walking Holidays*.

Our accommodation was in a lovely 4-star hotel, dating back to the 15th century, but now extended and with all modern conveniences, including a spa with steam rooms and saunas and a swimming pool. The food is rather good, with a five- or six-course meal each evening – real luxury. But of course, we came for the walking: there were only nine of us, including the walk leader, so remembering names was not a problem and we were all like-minded so we got on very well.

One member of the group was a lady from Canberra: (on nearly all our *RWH* trips there has been one or more people who travelled from Australia, Canada or America, as those countries do not have the equivalent of *Ramblers Walking Holidays*). We were each given a Sommerkarte which allowed us free use of the local buses and cable cars, museums etc, and the water taxis on the lake.

Ramblers Walking Holidays have various grades from gentle walking up to full mountaineering, and between us Prue and I have experienced them all over many years. But being an 'Adagio' grade holiday, the walks were not too demanding, perhaps equivalent to Tameside Ramblers' C or C+ grades.

Most of the walks were at an altitude of around 2,000 to 3,000 metres but we used cable cars and gondolas to reach those heights, rather than slogging for hours up steep mountainsides. On the first full day, we caught a local bus to one of the gondola stations and were whisked up to the summit of the Schmittenhöhe 1,965 metres.



At the top, there is a café and a viewing platform. From there we did an undulating walk of about 4 miles. We returned on the gondola, but only to the middle station, and walked down to the hotel from there. The following day we walked the 8-mile circuit of Lake Zell, passing through attractive hamlets and at one point climbing up through the woods which contained very interesting artworks and information boards about famous people who regularly stayed in

An Austrian Walk (cont)

the area, such as DH Lawrence and the von Trapp family.

One day we went to high-altitude reservoirs in the Hohe Tauern Mountains, which we reached by bus, cable car, a unique inclined elevator, and another cable car. We did a 5-mile walk, including the summit of the 2,108 metre Hohenburg, and it was the only time we needed to wear our waterproofs, as our weather was otherwise really good. The reservoirs were constructed mostly by forced labour of Russian prisoners of war.

Other walks included a 6-mile alpine trail at over 1,800 metres, stopping en-route for coffee at an alm, and another walk involved following a gorge along a wooden walkway projecting over the rushing torrent below. On the 'free' day, Prue and I explored the old town, had a coffee then took a boat across the lake to a restaurant for lunch and a visit to a sculpture park. We then returned across the lake and took the gondola back up to the Schmittenhohe for a quiet look around.

Each afternoon, on our return to the hotel, we could help ourselves to cakes which we took up to our rooms to enjoy on the balconies with a cup of tea or



coffee. On our final afternoon, we were all treated to a cake of our choice and a glass of wine or beer on the terrace of the nearby, aptly-named, Grand Hotel, overlooking the lake.

Stewart

Hartington Weekend

What would you think the weather would be in early October, especially after a week of rain, rain, and more rain?

Think again; it was glorious. The weather complimented the beautiful scenery of the Derbyshire Dales perfectly for our Autumn Weekend in Hartington.

Sadly, a few had to drop out for personal reasons, which left twelve of us for the whole weekend, with Eddie joining us on Saturday evening and Stewart joining us for the walk on Sunday.

Three walks were provided: each of them with different views, paths and scenery, ranging from 7 ½ miles to 8 ½ miles in length. Hazel kindly led the Friday walk from Hartington via Pilsbury Castle, with several early birds joining her. A chance to bag two Ethels and a Trig along the way.

Geoff led the walk on Saturday, from Hartington, joining the lovely paths of Biggin Dale and Wolfscote Dale. Janet led a shorter walk, after leaving us at the one steep climb, back to Hartington. We were rewarded for our effort with lunch at the top to enjoy the stunning landscape of the Dales, with climbs up to Caves and walking beside the River Dove.

We passed through the pretty village of Alstonefield on our way back to Hartington, with one of our members almost experiencing a 'Vicar of Dibley' moment in a large pool of slurry! As they were returning to Hartington in another's car, they were strongly advised to find an alternative, cleaner path!

Of course, after the walk, a trip to the pub for refreshments is pretty much mandatory, and the warm weather allowed us to sit outside the Devonshire Hotel, amongst a dapper

wedding party also enjoying the sunshine and warmth.

In the evening, a meal was booked at the Charles Cotton Hotel. A special mention to Jenny from the hotel who organised everything wonderfully, despite numerous emails changing arrangements. The food was particularly good, plenty of beer, wine and pots of tea flowed and it was a most enjoyable night.

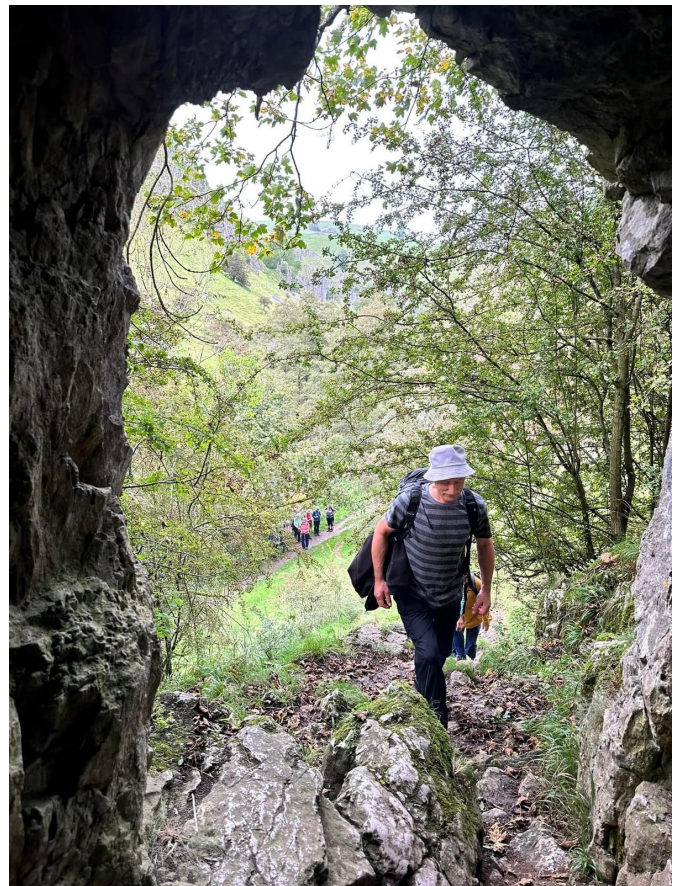
Sunday morning saw us all come together again, for the final walk of the weekend from Youlgreave (mentioned in the Domesday Book as 'Giolgrave' and belonging to Henry de Ferrers, a Norman rewarded with extensive lands in England after the 1066 Norman Conquest. It was worth sixteen shillings).

Part of the walk had featured in Karen's recent Birchover walk, but this did not stop some of us from acting like 'big kids', climbing up rocks etc,. The walk took in most of the Limestone Way over to Elton, where we stopped for lunch. Sadly, the pub was not open but we made up for that with a well-earned drink in The Farmyard Inn back at Youlgreave. It was a very warm sunny day, after the initial mist was burnt off, so as not to spoil the views.

A great weekend, with wonderful weather, wonderful company, and varied walks to suit everyone.

Thank you to everyone for their lovely comments and let us look forward to more weekends away.

Hartington Weekend continued



What's App Group



We have a further group for the sale etc of walking gear.

Ideally those selling equipment would make a contribution to the Groups funds (but this is NOT obligatory).

For those not currently subscribed then please let Alan or Stewart know so we can add you.

PS : Our other two WhatsApp Group—Tameside Ramblers & Ramblers Banter are still widely used.

Condolences

The Group was very sorry to hear of the passing of Peter Raffle's wife—Ann. She passed away at Dr. Kershaw's Hospice.

We have been in contact with Peter and we have sent him a sympathy card on behalf of the Group.

Walkers warned not to use Google Maps on their phone

"There is no substitute for a map and compass and being able to use them. They can save one's life."

People have been warned not to rely on smartphones for directions when out walking in the countryside after a man had to be rescued in the Lake District. More than 70 people were involved in a rescue operation after he became lost in treacherous conditions.

The mountain rescue team said the walker was "very, very fortunate" to survive. He got into trouble on the ridge between Scafell Pike and Great End.

Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team was called in by Cumbria Police and made contact with him despite a weak mobile phone signal. They advised him to stay where he was and shelter from the wind.

However when they were unable to find him at that location a wider search was "mounted in incredibly difficult conditions". It had to be called off in the early hours, with the search resuming at first light.

WMRT said: "We rarely comment on a rescue, but in this case we would like to say he was very, very fortunate to have survived. We also have to say that Google Maps on smartphones are not suitable for navigating on the hills.

"They lack detail and of course will not work with a flat battery. There is no substitute for a map and compass and being able to use them. They can save one's life."

It said wet and misty weather made ground searches "very challenging". It meant helicopter support could not be brought in, the search team added.

The Committee

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Any thoughts or proposed contributions for the
next news letter should be sent to Alan at ;

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