

Tameside Ramblers - Issue 19 - June 2019

Chair Talk

It has been an eventful few months since our last newsletter; many of us were eagerly anticipating the Kinder Night Walk in early March, but severe weather caused that to be cancelled – hopefully to be reinstated later in the year. Our weekend away at Hadrian's Wall was a great success and there is a write-up about it in this newsletter. Ramblers annual General Council was held in central Manchester over the weekend of April 13th/14th; the weather was good which showed the city at its best and the Ramblers Chair said that of the 37 General Councils she had attended over the years, this one was the best yet!

We also held two navigation training days, more of that below. We have already had what felt like an early summer, complete with moorland fires, but that was quickly replaced by cold and wet weather.

Our July to October walks programme contains many new walks and some old favourites plus the next weekend away in October. Our AGM is also in October – traditionally AGMs are not well attended but they offer the opportunity to hear the annual reports from the committee members, and to ask questions, put forward ideas etc. So, please try to attend if you can.

Stewart Ramsden—Chairman

Heading in the right direction

Nineteen of our members benefitted from attending one of our two 'Back to Basics' navigation training days which were at the end of April and beginning of May. The training was delivered by our own Jason Johnson, who is a qualified Mountain Leader and holder of the National Navigation Award Scheme's (NNAS) Gold Award, and assisted by Steve Mosley, who also holds the NNAS Gold award and is currently training as a Hill and Moorland Leader. The training covered the essential elements of map reading and the use of a compass and included half bearings, full bearings, pacing, timing, maps and map scales, identifying features on the ground from the map symbols, tick offs, overshoots and leap-frogging (but not the kind you did in the school playground). All of this was done outdoors, on the slopes of Bleaklow, following tracks up to Cock Hill and beyond and finished with following a bearing across open moorland to locate an objective.

All the participants enjoyed the day and were presented with a certificate.



Annual General Meeting - Official Notice

AGM to be held at 1.30pm on Saturday 19th October 2019 at St. JOHN's CHURCH CENTRE, Vicarage Drive, Dukinfield SK16 5HZ. The main agenda items will be—Delivery of Annual Report; Election of Committee; Opportunity for questions.

Tea and biscuits from 1.00pm (bring your own sandwiches). The meeting will commence at 1.30pm and will end no later than 3.00pm. **There will be an optional short walk commencing at the Church Centre at 11.00am.** (Car parking available at the Church Centre)

Anyone wishing to stand for a particular position on the committee should inform Prue Ramsden, Group Secretary, in writing by post or email by NO LATER THAN MONDAY 30th SEPTEMBER 2019.

The Key to Layering

The traditional layering system comprises several layers which can be worn separately or in combination to allow you to regulate your comfort when the weather or how hard you're working changes. Several thin layers offer greater flexibility than a few thick bulky ones and each layer within the system serves a specific purpose, meaning when combined they will keep you warm dry and comfortable in even the worst mountain weather.

Base Layers

The base layer is there primarily to manage moisture; wicking sweat away from your skin is key to staying warm and dry in the mountains, as this maintains a layer of warm air close to the body.



Mid Layers

Mid Layers are there to trap your body heat whilst still allowing moisture from sweat to move through the system, as such they should be warm yet breathable.



Insulation

The insulation layer is your booster layer to trap heat whilst in-active such as at a lunch stop, or whilst on the go when the mercury plummets. Your main choice here is between down or synthetic insulation.

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Shell

Your Shell layer is there to protect your inner layers from wind, rain and snow. Whether you choose a Hard or Soft Shell layer is largely down to conditions on the day.



On the Social Side

New Year meal:

16 people went to Umeeds in Stalybridge for our post Christmas meal in January. The feedback was that the food was enjoyed by everyone and the service and venue were good. There was also the advantage of being able to take our own alcoholic drinks.

Trip to Stockport:

On 16th February about 20 of us had a day out in Stockport, starting with a linear walk from Debdale Park, followed by afternoon tea at the Plaza. There were plenty of sandwiches and drinks available, plus delicious scones in an art deco setting. After the tea, some people enjoyed a visit to the air raid shelters whilst a few others enjoyed a drink at the Remedy bar near the market.

Weekend away:

This was on the weekend of 5th to 7th April at Sill Discovery Centre at Once Brewed near to Hadrian's Wall. A total of 34 people descended on the hostel and nearby pub; three more walkers joined us on the Saturday walk.

Where am I ?

In the unfortunate event of an “incident” and you require to dial 999 for assistance, you will be asked “where are you” ?.

There is a risk that you won't know have a local postcode or you may even be on open moorland—thus presenting a serious issue for the emergency services to find you.

But help is at hand with an App from the OS called “OS Locate”.

It's available for both Android and Apple phones, from their respective on-line Stores.

The App converts GPS location readings from your mobile phone to Ordnance Survey National Grid references, enabling you to determine precisely where you are on an Ordnance Survey map.

No mobile signal? No problem; **OS Locate** does not require a mobile signal to function – the inbuilt GPS system can be relied upon, even in the most remote areas.



Future Social Events

BBQ:

Please see March to June Walk programme for details. Maximum of 16 members.

Canal Cruise:

On Sunday 21st July, we are planning to go on a ferry trip from Salford Quays to Liverpool via the Manchester Ship Canal and River Mersey. The cost of the trip will be £41, providing we get a group booking (20+) or £44 if less than 20. The arrangements are as follows:

1) Meet at the Imperial War Museum North for 10.30am start. There is paid car parking available nearby or, if travelling by tram, short walk from the Media City or Harbour City stops.

2) The cruise takes about 5 to 6 hours. Seating is first come, first served, but plenty seats are available. Facilities on board include a cafe and bar selling e.g. bacon, sausage barm's, sandwiches, soups, beers, wines etc. No dogs nor smoking allowed.

3) On arrival at Liverpool docks, there is 1.5 hours free time. There are a couple of museums in Albert Dock,

Liverpool 1 shopping centre is about 10 minutes walk from the docks, or there are a couple of pubs within 10 to 15 minutes.

4) Return to Manchester by coach is from Canada Boulevard near the Pier Head ferry terminal. The journey back takes about 1 hour and drop offs can be at Salford Quays or Piccadilly station. If people prefer to stay in Liverpool and return independently, the cost is £38 (group price) or £41.

Anyone interested, please contact Pete or Ruth Summers. Once 20+ people have expressed an interest, I will send out another e-mail confirming the booking and how you can make payment to the Rambler's account.

Please note, there are a lot of places still available on 21st July, so we may open up the trip to family and friends i.e. non Rambler members.

Weekend Away:

We are organising a weekend away at Malham youth hostel on the weekend of 26th and 27th October. Refer to the July to October walks programme; an e-mail has been sent round to members with details and prices

In August, a planned walk from Timperley to Manchester will be followed by a meal in Manchester; more details will be circulated about the venue nearer the time.

We are planning the pre Christmas get together for Thursday 12th December at Wetherspoon in Glossop; more details will be in the November to February walks programme and newsletter.

The post Christmas meal will probably be in Ashton on the 2nd Sunday of 2020. two venues have been put forward, Pinnochios and Zing and Zest. Any other suggestions will be welcome; obviously, we will have to do a recce of all suggested places to decide the best choice!

Sill Strolls

I joined The Ramblers in November 2018, to meet new people and learn new walks. I've been walking for years with a few friends, and I wasn't sure about how I'd take to walking with a big group. However, since then I've done dozens of walks with different groups, met loads of lovely people, discovered some beautiful new places, and feel fitter! What could be better? A weekend away doing more of the same!

I was a virgin weekender as I joined the trip to Hadrian's Wall in early April, just as spring tentatively peeked its head out. Things got off to a great start as I joined Cath, Mark and Colleen to share the journey up to the Great Wall. En route we got to know each other and enjoyed the banter, jelly babies, and anticipation. We also had some scenic diversions, including: afternoon tea near the daffodil fringed splendor of Ullswater; Kirkstone Pass (the highest pass in Cumbria) which was also being navigated by 90 vintage cars; Alston, vying for position with Buxton as the highest market town in England; and a lovely late lunch with splendid local beers at Hexham (though not for our conscientious driver of course)! When we arrived at Sill I felt like we'd already had a holiday, such is the joy of a road trip with people once strangers.

We had more fun with 'friends we'd not met yet' as we consumed a fantastic fuddle (Yorkshire speak for shared food), composed of the many offerings carried to the temple of the Youth Hostel. Ruth's splendid lemon drizzle cake and Carol's perfect scones were my highlights. Some of the hardier types trekked up to the local pub, or smuggled in their own secret stash (naming no names that begin with P***)! However I was tired and retreated to my up market dorm. It was a far cry from the hostels of my youth. Duvets supplied? En suite? Restaurant and bar? No chores? No curfew? Modern eco-friendly building? Surely this couldn't be a youth hostel? It had even won an architecture award for its innovative grass roofed design that blended so beautifully into the landscape. Graceful willow sculptures of deer, curlew, and fox (or was it a stoat?) were scattered about, alongside a fascinating visitor's centre packed with excellent interactive exhibits.

If day one had been a fantastic start, it only got better with the fabulous walks, laughs, and chats we had over the next two days. On Saturday we headed off straight from the hostel for a conveniently situated walk going right along the wall. On Sunday we headed off straight from the hostel for a conveniently situated walk going left along the wall. Both walks featured quite different and opposing weather and features despite the common thread of THE wall. Day two was full of dry balmy breezes and historic highlights like Housesteads Museum, ably led by the fact-filled Stewart. Day three was full of foggy damp weather, undulating ups and downs, and historic quarry law thrown in for good measure, ably led by the jocular John. Stunning views peppered both routes along this incredible structure, which took six years to build and spans 73 miles, snaking from the North Sea to the Irish Sea. Impressed by my recall Stewart? Who needs The Great Wall of China when we have our own home grown version on our doorstep? Oh yes, Tameside Ramblers have rambled there too!

We declined the clubbing option on Saturday night, and instead celebrated Ken's XXth birthday with a splendid surprise cake. After all that cake eating we went for a well earned drink at the fabulous Twice Brewed pub a stone's throw away. Much sampling of the pub's brewed on the premises beer was done in our noble attempt to support the local economy. We played our part! It was amazing to think I hadn't known this crowd only a few days ago, and we created many lovely memories together.

One thing's for sure, I'd recommend a Tameside weekender to anyone and I want to thank all and sundry for making my first one so memorable.

Linda Boyles



Hutting in the Alps

Hutting is a great way to experience walking at high level in the Alps. The 'huts' (hutte in Germany and Austria, refuges in France, rifugio in Italy) are a bit like youth hostels and vary in size and style but they are mostly situated at a fairly high altitude, typically 1,500 to 2,500 metres / 5,000 to 8,000ft. in remote areas. This means that it is possible to walk up into the mountains and stay high, walking from hut to hut, and not drop below about 1,000 metres / 3,200ft until the end of the trek one or two weeks later.

Essential kit in summer includes clothing suitable for winter conditions - on a trek in the Stubai Alps in Austria one July, it snowed most days for two weeks – plus warm weather clothing. With careful selection, it is possible to pack everything into a 45 litre rucksack and keep the weight (excluding water) down to about 8kg. This includes a change of clothes for evenings, two changes of underwear and socks, trek towel, sheet sleeping bag, lightweight shoes for use in the huts, etc.

The walking itself is wonderful; waking each morning at altitude surrounded by mountains with the valleys below, it is truly magical. You do need a good head for heights as paths are often narrow, there is usually a section or two of scrambling each day and there sections with fixed ropes or ladders – and a lot of steep ups and downs.



With them I have been on several hutting treks in the Austrian Alps, and also in Germany, Italy, the Spanish Pyrenees and on the Tour du Mont Blanc whose 112 mile route passes through Switzerland, France and Italy and involves over 30,000 feet of ascent over two weeks.

At the end of each day, the hut is a welcome sight knowing that food and a bed await. Accommodation is in dormitories, usually mixed gender, and most people are tucked up in their bunks by 9.30pm. Breakfasts in the Austrian huts are not great – usually bread, jam, salamis, etc, but the evening meals are usually very generous. The best meals I have experienced have been in the Dolomites, in northern Italy. Most huts will have showers, and most showers will be warm, but not all. I tend to take socks, underwear and T-shirt into the shower with me so they get washed at the same time!

Hutting holidays are organised by several companies including the Austrian Alpine Club but I have always gone with Ramblers Walking Holidays whose groups comprise 12 people at most. With them I have been on several hutting treks in the Austrian Alps, and also in Germany, Italy, the Spanish Pyrenees and on the Tour du Mont Blanc whose 112 mile route passes through Switzerland, France and Italy and involves over 30,000 feet of ascent over two weeks.



China Trip

Last year (and reported in the previous new letter), a number of our Ramblers participated in a trip to China.

On the recent weekend away—Ken Sever provided a slide show on the Saturday evening which included many of the several thousand photos he took on the China trip, and was enjoyed by most of the group.

Anyone wishing a copy of the photo's—please contact Ken directly.



The Committee

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