



Step Out



Staffordshire Area
www.staffordshireramblers.org
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STAFFORDSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS

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Editorial

Much to my, and everyone else's, surprise, there is a lot of snow for the end of March. In fact it was quite exciting walking in my local Country Park where one minute I was walking on bare ground and the next knee, or even waist deep in snow. In fact I saw two six foot drifts and all this within the city limits of Stoke on Trent. Once again it shows that you do not have to go far away to have a good walk.

Personally I think we are very lucky in our county as we have almost everything from high moors to gentle lowlands, forests to fields and miles of canals. Something for everybody. However it does not mean that we should be complacent about our walking. In Stoke on Trent there are many different walking clubs and sadly, few, appreciate the problems in keeping our rights of way open and accessible. As last year, this edition is a reflection of the work done behind the scenes both by our Area and Group volunteers. Without them, many of our walks would simply become unwalkable.

Full Circle.

I wrote an article for this Area magazine in 1994 when I was Area Chairman. Part of what I said then was:

“Staffordshire County Council is currently legally responsible for ensuring that our footpath network is maintained in good condition. But footpath work is allocated only a low priority and a small budget by the County Council and its officers are expected to carry out the work under the burden of some very restrictive rules. If only our local farming community was more socially responsible, showed more consideration for legitimate footpath users, and carried out the duties of footpath maintenance and stewardship laid down by Parliament, the County Council might yet attain the Countryside Commission's target and have all rights of way in good order by the year 2000.”

During the last nineteen years, great progress has been made and the path network is considerably better than it was then; thanks largely to the work of the Rights of Way section of Staffs County Council and our much respected Group-based Ramblers' path maintenance teams.

Unfortunately, in recent months our County Council Rights of Way section has lost the services of several of its very experienced staff and has no plans to replace them in the immediate future. There is little that we can do about this; Andrew McCloy, in his recent article in *Walk*, drew attention to the fact that more than 40% of local

authorities had cut their footpath budgets by a fifth and 11% by more than half. Lincolnshire had dispensed with the services of 14 rights of way staff.

Here are my thoughts on what we, as Ramblers, can do to ease the problems that lie ahead.

- Please continue, in the difficult times ahead, to report to the County Council any footpath problems that you meet within the County. The following webpage can be used for this: <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/eLand/RightsOfWay/PublicPathObstruction.aspx>
- Please give some thought to volunteering your services and to joining a local footpath working group; I still enjoy the feeling I get when I cross a stile or a footbridge that I helped to install, perhaps twenty years earlier.
- Please carry a pair of secateurs in your rucksack pocket, and use them to trim intrusive hedges from stiles and fingerposts as you pass.
- Please, when a County Council election candidate comes knocking on your door, let them know how you feel about Public Rights of Way.

Geoff Loadwick, Area President

Chairman's Remarks.

I wish to thank the Walsall group for organising a most successful Area AGM. The high standards of the venue, the walk and the refreshments were remarked upon by all present. It was Dick Turton (Walsall Chairman) who suggested that Benedict Southworth be invited as guest speaker and his decision to 'aim high' paid off. The Ramblers CEO gave an informative and interesting account of his first year in post and then took questions from the floor. The questions posed were all probing and relevant and the answers given by Benedict were straightforward and to the point. I was left feeling that he understood the concerns of the rank and file membership.

Footpath matters are at the core of all that the RA seeks to achieve and an active membership has never been more necessary. HS2 is a long term issue whose effects will be felt by future generations of walkers. It is our duty to do all that we can to protect the affected rights of way. Harry Scott and David Hewett represent Staffordshire Area in all consultations with the HS2 Company. They have already identified all the paths affected by the proposed route. If you need further information please contact them. I also ask groups to refer any

requests by local press for comments on the HS2 route to Harry or David as they will have the best grasp of the overall picture and the most up to date information.

Of more immediate interest is the County Council's proposal to prioritise footpath work by placing problems into 3 categories of importance. The final details of this scheme have yet to be published. The Area Footpath Secretary has been consulted by the County Council and is in regular contact with them over this and all other footpath matters.

The 2013 General Council meets in April. It will be interesting to hear how other delegates view Benedict Southworth's first year in office and to see if fences have been mended with Ramblers Holidays.

Finally I wish to thank all the Area Council members, the Group Committees, and all those active volunteers who lead walks or undertake any number tasks related to our work; without your contribution the RA would achieve nothing.

George Greensides, Area Chairman.

Area Footpath Secretary Looks Back Over the Year 2012

Looking back over 2012 the year did not get off to a very good start with Staffordshire County Council making cuts to its Countryside budget. The cuts fell mainly on the Ranger service and on the amount of funding for projects, which suffered a reduction of 62%. However there was no loss of staff in the Rights of Way department. We continued to monitor planning applications, receiving 128 applications during 2012 from Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. All were investigated and commented on if footpaths were directly affected. The number of diversion consultations fell to 16 during 2012. I put this down mainly to the fees charged by the County Council. Only one proposed diversion was opposed, involving footpath 10 Sheen Parish in the Staffordshire Moorlands. The proposal was to close a section of footpath 10 through Pool Farm and create a new section of footpath some distance away. Currently we are still maintaining our objection.

We received 24 orders made by Staffordshire County Council and the District Councils. We objected to the order to divert footpath 1 Fradswell in Stafford Borough due to drafting errors which were later corrected. One bit of good news was the cancellation of an order made in 2011 to divert footpath 21 Warslow Parish, where the diversion

would have sent walkers up a 30% hillside. We objected to the order and maintained our objection. Staffordshire County Council decided to cancel the order and not take it to a Public Inquiry. I submitted 71 footpath complaints to Staffordshire County Council over the year all of which have been acknowledged. The County Council is generally resolving problems much more quickly. On the other hand Stoke on Trent can only be described as a black hole, I have had to resort to contacting City Councillors to get problems resolved.

Harry W Scott Area Footpath Secretary

Access Report

The government at last has announced that 'once and for all' there will be no sell off of public forests and that their aspiration is for the general public to have full access to all publicly owned forestry. Needless to say there are negotiations to be taken with various authorities and stakeholders before this comes into total fruition. But a step in the right direction. Still awaiting the 2010 access review!!

Locations of points of access to 'open access' areas could become a little more clearer if the PDNP people accept the project one of Biddulph members has initiated. Webmaster Eric Barker has taken on the task of mapping all the 'points of access' that Biddulph have collated so far in the Staffordshire Peak District. The map is on our website for anyone to open. This is a vast project to do, all the points need to be verified therefore will need support from members of all groups with recommendations and feedback to Eric. Contact can be made via our website and we will respond. This will become a very useful tool in recesses and walk organising in access areas ensuring where one can get in and then get out! Have a look what has been done so far, log on to :-www.biddulphramblers.org.uk and click on the 'access' link.

Eddie Dawson, AAO.

Cuts to Rights of Way

The Ramblers is increasingly concerned that cuts to funding for rights of way are damaging people's ability to enjoy the outdoors as well as having a negative impact upon tourism, the economy and the nation's physical and mental health. The charity used a freedom of information request¹ to research the exact scale of the cuts.

Main findings include: nearly 70% of councils have cut their rights of way budgets over the last 3 years, and 41% of councils have cut their budgets by more than 20%. We are perhaps lucky in Staffordshire that our County is not considered an area of concern ('Councils of Concern'

were selected by those councils which had a combination of the following: 1) the worst cuts by real amount 2) the worst percentage funding cuts 3) the biggest decrease in the number of staff working for a rights of way team 4) the biggest percentage decrease in staffing for a rights of way team). Though in percentage terms Staffordshire is fourth from the bottom of worst councils with a percentage cut of 67.14% but is not on any of the other lists.

In the current economic climate and knowing that government has reduced the central funding for local authorities by 10% over the last 3 years, it was not expected that rights of way would escape their fair share of funding cuts. However, these statistics provide proof that rights of way, and the teams which look after them, are being disproportionately affected by council funding cuts – with a large proportion of councils reducing funds for rights of way by more than 20%, and 11% of councils reducing funding by more than half.

Not only are these cuts having a negative impact upon recreation, health and the economy but the short-sighted nature of the cuts means that many councils will have to pay more in the long run. As paths become more impenetrable and stiles more overgrown, people will stop walking them and the lower foot-fall will exacerbate the problem. The eventual long-term clearance and maintenance bill will be far greater than the cost if these problems were tackled now.

Highway authorities have a duty to maintain paths, and by making such drastic cuts they also risk landowners and users being forced to take costly legal action to solve the issues. Path problems will lead to people deviating round obstructions, as the law allows, walking where landowners may not wish and even losing their way; it will lead to people being discouraged from the healthy-lifestyle habit of walking; and it could lead to a potential increase in deaths on the roads as walkers are forced to walk more on roads which are increasingly unsafe for pedestrians. Keeping paths clear is a small cost compared to the huge benefits they can bring to tourism, the economy and the nation's health and happiness and it is vital that councils properly invest in them.

Extracted and modified from the RA website which will hopefully be of interest to those without internet access or simply missed it.

Report a path or access problem

Have you encountered a problem while out walking?

Have you been on a walk in England or Wales recently and encountered an overgrown path, broken stile or been stopped from using access land?

You can help resolve these sorts of problems in two ways:

- Report the problem to the local council - it is the responsibility of the council to make sure that paths and access land are easy to use
- Complete the form at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/what-we-do/protecting-where-we-walk/report-a-path-or-access-problem.aspx> and they will then send the details on to a local Ramblers volunteer who will investigate further and may also report the problem to the correct council department where appropriate
- Let your Group or Area Footpath Officer know

The RA solves over 600 path problems every year – by looking on the main RA website you will find more details and achievements.

Peter Matthews

Don't be Shocked by Live Wires.

It is quite a common occurrence these days when out walking to be confronted by an electric fence across the footpath. The legal position is that an electric fence across a public right of way constitutes an obstruction under Section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 and may be reported to the County Council.

This said, nowadays there seems to be a degree of tolerance towards farmers who use electric fencing as temporary fencing. This means fencing is only in place for a few weeks, usually to contain livestock in a field before being delivered to market, or ewes that are Lambing, or sometimes around silage fields before cutting. There is no need to turn back on a walk as some walkers do.

Farmers are required to provide a safe means of crossing an electric fence; this may mean a length of plastic or rubber tubing placed over the wire or a grab handle may be positioned close by. Often there are yellow notices on the wire. If none of these is provided there are several measures we can employ. The wires are usually carried through holes on a plastic stake stuck in the ground, so it is possible to pull out the stake and lay it flat on the ground to step over. Reposition the stake afterwards by pressing it in using the step provided on the bottom of the stake. If it is not possible to remove a stake then place a thick article like a wooden stick, a rucksack, map case or thick

jacket on top of the wire and press down while you get over. Never use anything made of carbon fibre as this conducts electricity. These measures have served me well over many years.



The worst case I ever encountered was in Blymhill Parish when a farmer connected an electric fence to a large metal field gate, rendering the whole thing live, impossible to open or climb over. In open hill country electric wires may be concealed behind walls to deter sheep from jumping over. In the Brecon Beacons I climbed over a wall with a hidden wire, got a shock and fell from the wall injuring my hand. So it always pays to check first.

It is also worth white carrying a length of plastic pipe insulation in your rucksack in case it is needed. With these simple measures an electric fence should never shock you or impede your walk.

Marjorie Cashmore

HS2 Update

Much has been happening recently on the political and media fronts with respect to plans for high speed rail. Many words have been spoken about the value to the economy, the reasons for increasing passenger capacity, the value or otherwise of savings on journey times and the environmental impacts. **I** do not propose to rehearse the arguments as I am sure you are heartily fed up with hearing them and anyway the situation is changing rapidly, so that by the time you read this my words will probably have limited relevance.

What I would like to do is to let members know how we, The Ramblers, stand in relation to the current situation with changes to rights of way, how we perceive the performance of HS2 in relation to their

promises to consult at all stages with users has panned out and to remind you of the time scale.

The Hybrid Bill to give the legal framework for the project to go ahead is expected to go before parliament this year. Royal Assent should follow in 2015 and work should commence on Phase 1 in 2017, taking the line from London to Birmingham, with the line to the north feeding past Lichfield to join the west coast main line at Armitage/Handsacre. This route is now decided and work has commenced on examining the detail of the changes to the highway infrastructure which will result. Despite making contact with HS2 personnel at a Stafford Seminar and the Lichfield roadshow, local Ramblers volunteers have not been approached and the proposed changes to the footpath network in Staffordshire have been presented to the Joint Access Forum and reported on by the County Council without details having been submitted to Ramblers London Office (or if they have they got no further) or to Area volunteers. We are actively trying to remedy this situation. Fortunately, with help from others we have obtained the maps and other details so are aware of what is being proposed. It does seem that HS2 are attempting to keep local activists at arms length until they are ready to make orders.

Having observed the above, I can report that the proposals for Staffordshire as far as Lichfield seem to bear out the stated intention to handle changes to the network sympathetically. Parts of some footpaths will inevitably disappear, but the question of keeping the network connected without making diversions too devious has been addressed. Footbridges (which ain't cheap) and underpasses are there in plenty. Of the eighteen paths we listed in Lichfield District, only a couple need a re-think and Staffordshire County Council has already highlighted these to HS2.

It is difficult to comment on the environmental impact of the construction and operational periods. Some areas where we love to walk will never be the same again. Harry Scott and I walked in Hints recently and tried to visualise the post-HS2 landscape. The picture was not a pretty one. Of the rest of the county, more later: as you will know, the provisional routes to the north are published and many favourite spots will be affected. Harry and I will be doing our best to ensure that the positive approach to rights of way continues.

David Hewitt

Roaches update

May 1 is the official handover date to the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust - Simon King will be attending to celebrate this very special day. The award-winning wildlife cameraman and TV naturalist, best known for his gentle whispering commentary on shows such as *BBC Springwatch*, will be appearing in a special one-off talk, *An Evening with Simon King*. As well as being entertaining with his tales of his amazing wildlife encounters around the world, Simon will be helping to raise funds and increase awareness of the Trust's forthcoming work on the Roaches.

An Audience with Simon King will take place on May 1 at 7.30pm at the Best Western Stoke-on-Trent Moat House Hotel on Festival Park, Stoke-on-Trent. Tickets start from just £15 and can be booked by emailing simonking@staffs-wildlife.org.uk or calling 01889 880100. It promises to be a fascinating and inspiring event for all the family - and there will be a chance to grab an autograph from Simon after the show too!



The SWT will soon be starting to carry out a survey of the moorland birds of the Roaches, and if you're a keen bird-watcher, you could get involved. In April, the Trust will be going out onto the Roaches to start collecting records of 17 different species of moorland birds, such as red grouse and stonechat. This work will help them to begin building up a comprehensive picture of some of the wildlife living on the Roaches, and the results will be used to inform future conservation work.

Peter Matthews

Rambling Reporters

While thinking about the wonderful photographs that were submitted for the calendar I realised just what a range hobbies get talked about while we walk. Then I heard Claire Balding's "Ramblings" programme on Radio 4 about how walking can be used for self improvement groups like reading circles or travel forums. Our walks often have pockets of enlightening and entertaining conversation. Music seems to feature highly, with members who seem to be interested in opera, folk, jazz and rock. Travel adventures both in Britain and abroad, are often shared by walkers. Sport, especially football, with supporters of Burton Albion, Derby County, Stoke City, Manchester United and West Bromwich Albion all having their own biased view of their sport.

Other sports enjoyed by our group include archery, cycling, golf and tennis. Arts and Craft are another feature with members who enjoy patchwork quilting and bag making and stick whittling . We have caravanners, campers, motor homers in the group. Then the dancers who enjoy ballroom, sequence, ceroc, salsa and zumba. Not surprisingly national organisation are well represented with the National Trust, RSPB ,English Heritage, The WI and CAMRA all having representation in our ranks. The gardeners of all varieties are well represented, often swapping tips and advice as are avid book readers and theatre goers.

I am sure there are many other hobbies and pastimes that I haven't heard talked about yet. What an amazing group we are and what fun you can have finding out who does what and perhaps being very surprised at who shares your interests or is willing to tell you about a potential new one. Perhaps East Staffs Ramblers qualifies as a self improvement group!

Jane King

From the Groups,

Walsall's Voluntary Maintenance Programme, (VMP).

For many years the Walsall Group had been seeking to offer their assistance to Walsall MBC in helping to keep local footpaths and other ROWs in a tidy and 'walk-able' condition.

Walsall Council had no experience of volunteers acting in this way and until 18 months ago had no visibility as to what could be done and what could ultimately be achieved.

Like many types of council in a similar position, the funding of Walsall's ROW maintenance was gradually reducing and prioritisation of budgets for major projects had meant that minor footpath repairs and enhancements would either never reach the top of the list and even if they did it was unlikely any funding would remain to implement them.

With the threat of budgetary restrictions escalating and the ROW Team under restructuring, the Walsall Group approached the ROW Team Leader and proposed a plan to allow volunteers from the Group to undertake work on the footpath network. Although well received, progress was slow and to expedite matters we consulted an expert in such matters, i.e. Harry Scott, (Area Footpath Secretary), who was able to provide information and contacts to help us out.

This resulted in a meeting being arranged in July 2011 by the Walsall Group between representatives of Walsall Council, South Staffordshire Council, Harry Scott, and Ed Wilson from Central Office. The aim of this was for the representatives of South Staffs to explain their extensive use of volunteers in their area and the benefits of doing this so that the Walsall delegates could more fully understand the advantages.

This meeting went well and the Walsall ROW Team agreed to pull together a proposal to put before senior directors of the Council based on what they had learned and the existing situation in Walsall Borough.

It has to be said that this process did seem to take an extraordinarily long time, but coupled with ongoing financial and personnel reductions that was always going to be the case. By the following March outline approval had been achieved and the gathering of materials, equipment, tools, etc. had commenced, followed by

meetings with local landowners on whose property many of the target footpaths resided.

Further delays were encountered throughout the 'Summer' of 2012, but we finally started work in the Autumn on a project to replace stiles and clear away overgrowth along a stretch of path that would form part of the walks planned for the 2012 Staffs Area AGM. After a brief break over Christmas we're back out once again surveying routes, doing some early cutting back and reinstalling markers ready for the Spring.

It's taken a while to get this far, but we remain hopeful that we can develop this work across the Borough over the coming months. Our thanks to all those who take part and to those who helped us get to where we are today.

Dick Turton, Chairman, Walsall Group of the Ramblers.

Badge

The front cover of the Annual Report displayed an old badge that one of our members had. At the AGM enquiries suggested that perhaps the badge had been a special one to celebrate a particular time in the Ramblers History. However further information has now come to light. Early this year I received an e mail from a Stone member who told me the following; "It has taken me some time to find the box in which I stored such things when I moved to Stone 4 years ago. (It turned up in the loft!) I wanted to check that my badge was identical to the one depicted - and it is.

Luckily I can date its acquisition very accurately.

Starting with my teenage YH days, I became something of a badge Anorak (appropriately enough for a cyclist/rambler!), so when I joined any new outdoor organisation I usually bought its



metal & cloth badges. Although I had been a keen cyclist since 1949, I didn't become involved in regular walking until I moved to Leics. in 1960 – and it was in the summer of 1961 that I at last joined the RA and bought this badge.

So it was simply the standard RA badge on sale to members at that time – NOT one produced for a special occasion. Some years later the RA updated the badge: the later version showed a rucksack. I must have one somewhere, so will continue to look.

The centre of the old badge is a particularly bright orange. It looks almost like a football, but close examination suggests that it's no more than the heart of the flower – the significance of which isn't clear. A *Rambler Rose*, perhaps ?”

So the mystery is solved.

A Thank You

Last year I received a lovely letter from Richard Aldred which I would like to share as it reflects the feelings of many of us, I am sure and shows that those who work behind the scenes are recognised.

I have been reading with interest both Stepout and the Annual Report. Please let your Chairman and others know of my appreciation. I do not have a computer and so write by hand, also from choice. I am always grateful for the reports and am aware of the time it takes to send a letter.

I myself belong to the main Ramblers organisation and also to a local ramblers' group. I joined 'by accident' following in the footsteps of my wife. Although the local rambles take place 4 times a week and numbers are solid – 30+ on Tuesdays, 40 to 50 on Wednesdays, I have to say we do nothing to help maintain paths etc.

I personally tend to walk alone or as back marker as I prefer to look around me rather than talk, because for many walking is a social event. I believe I am alone in being a member of the national ramblers, who have made possible the fact of most footpaths being well maintained.

So this letter comes as a thank you to all of you who work to keep our paths in good condition.

65 Staffordshire Summits.

There was an interesting feature in Stoke on Trent's local newspaper during the winter. Jeff Kent, a local walker says he was following in the footsteps of John and Anne Nutall, who compiled a list of all 443 hills in England of 2,000ft or above, which they called the Nuttalls. The summits included in his list are all natural features within the county boundaries of Staffordshire and are at least 1,000 feet above sea level. Of the 65 peaks, 38 are already named and he has given provisional names to the other 27 summits which he intends to use in his register, unless anyone can provide evidence of existing names.

He has decided to name 65 peaks collectively, the Staffordshire Kents, in honour of his parents, Cyril and Helen Kent, who loved the county's hills. He is now planning a book about the Staffordshire Kents, which he hopes to publish later this year.

Whilst the article listed the summits it sadly did not give the grid references. However out of interest I think I have been able to identify most of them with a grid reference and the list is reproduced below. I did, however, find a disparity between his height listings and those on the map in some cases, although I have kept his height listings for posterity.

1.	Cheeks Point), 1,705.38ft	SK 035705
2.	Oliver Hill, 1,681.43ft	SK 026676
3.	The Roaches. 1,659.78ft	SK 001639
4.	(Merryton Hill), 1,595.8ft a.	SK 041610
5.	Bareleg Hill, 1,561.68ft	SK 028641
6.	Brund Hill, 1,545.28ft	SK 028646
7.	(Morridge East Top), 1,531.5ft	SK 035590
8.	(Morridge West Top), 1,529.2ft	SK 033629
9.	Ramshaw Rocks, 1,512.14ft	SK 020625
10.	(East Roaches Ridge). 1,495.73ft	SK
11.	(Ann Roach), 1,482.61ft	SK
12.	Round Knowl, 1,449.15ft	SK 053624
13.	Turn Edge, 1,425.20ft	SK 012676
14.	Willshaw Hill. 1,398.95ft	SK 051665
15.	(Long Hill), 1,390.09ft	SK
16.	Gib Torr Rocks, 1,364.83ft	SK 021651

17. Hen Cloud, 1,328.41ft	SK	005615
18. Blackstone Edge, 1,315.29ft	SK	
19. Revidge, 1,315.29ft	SK	078599
20. Gradbach Hill, 1,309.06ft	SK	003653
21. Barrow Moor. 1,286.75ft	SK	055645
22. 1pstones Edge, 1,263.12ft	SK	050499
23. Gun, 1,250.98ft	SJ	970615
24. Sheen Hill, 1,233.92ft	SK	111625
25. Grindon Moor, 1,233.60ft	SK	072551
26. (Hays Hill), 1,219.82ft	SK	
27. Weaver Hills, 1,217.19ft	SK	095464
28. (Kent Hill), 1,214.24ft	SK	
29. Narrowdale Hill, 1,204.4ft	SK	123572
30. Ecton Hill, 1,200.79ft	SK	100580
31. Gratton Hill. 1,190.94ft	SK	132571
32. Longnor Edge, 1,189.63ft	SK	
33. (Ribden Hill), 1,189.3ft	SK	
34. The Hills, 1,183.73ft	SK	072639
35. Welton Hill, 1,174.21ft	SK	105563
36. (Musden Hill), 1,173.88ft	SK	118508
37. (Bell Hill), 1,168.31ft	SK	
38. Soles Hill, 1,154.86ft	SK	098525
39. Golden Hill. 1,151.57ft	SK	050565
40. (Slade Hill), 1,145.01ft	SK	
41. (Cart Hill), 1,144.36ft	SK	
42. (Lees Ridge), 1,139,76ft	SK	
43. (Oldfields Hill), 1,137.47ft	SK	
44. (Knowsley Cross Hill), 1,128.28ft	SK	
45. The Cloud, 1,120.73ft	SJ	905637
46. (Pea Hill). 1,118.77ft	SK	
47. Ilam Tops, 1,112.53ft	SK	136527
48. Lask Edge, 1,102.36ft	SJ	916595

49. (Hazelton Hill), 1,099.08ft	SK	126499
50. Ossoms Hill, 1,096.13ft	SK	092554
51. Mere Hill, 1,089.57ft	SK	105526
52. Mow Cop, 1,086.29ft	SJ	858576
53. Sharpcliffe Rocks, 1,082.02ft	SK	018519
54. Bunster Hill, 1,079.07ft	SK	142517
55. (Bincliff Hill), 1,076.12ft	SK	
56. (Gateham Hill), 1,055.12ft	SK	
57. (Steep Hill), 1,054.13ft	SK	
58. (Bridestones Hill), 1,052.82ft	SJ	908617
59. (Wetton Low Hill), 1,052.82ft	SK	112547
60. Long Edge, 1,043,64ft	SK	
61. Cliff Top, 1,036.75ft	SK	136481
62. (Stanshope Hill), 1,025.92ft	SK	117541
63. (Paddock Hill), 1,023.95ft	SK	
64. Troughstone Hill, 1,016,73ft	SJ	906597
65. (Martin's Hill), 1,003.28ft	SK	136481

The names in brackets are those that are apparently unnamed but proposed by Jeff Kent who created the list and walked them all.

Peter Matthews

Area Walks Programme

Why not find out more about the walks organised by other groups and walk with them for a change? The information you require can be found on the Area Walks' Programme and a copy can be yours by sending a stamped addressed envelope to Peter Matthews (address on rear of Stepout). When you send your envelope please make sure that it is large enough to accommodate from between two and six sheets of A4. The minimum size should really be C5.

SANDWELL SIX TOWNS CHALLENGE WALK/RUN

Sunday 25 August 2013 – 26, 18 or 14 miles routes, plus a 5 miles led walk within Sandwell Valley

In conjunction with Sandwell MBC, Sandwell Ramblers are staging the fourth Six Towns Challenge event on Bank Holiday Sunday 25 August 2013, starting and finishing at the Sandwell Show in Sandwell Valley (OS 019915 Expl 220).



The routes include country parks and open spaces with minimal road walking and make extensive use of the canal system which was the lifeblood of the Black Country during its heyday. The 26 mile route visits each of Sandwell's Six Towns and includes the 1.75 miles of the famous Netherton Tunnel (**torch essential**), which is currently undergoing a four month restoration scheme by the Canal & River Trust at a reported cost of £1.5 million

Refreshments and snacks will be provided at checkpoints and the finish.

Start will be at 8.30am for 26 miles, 9am for 18 miles and 9.30am for 14 miles, both runners and walkers. All to finish by 8pm.

Two finishers from last years event. 10.30am

Certificates for all finishers.

Entrants under 18 to be accompanied by an adult.

The 2010, 2011 & 2012 events attracted entrants from far and wide including London, Lancashire, South Wales, Oxford, Cheltenham, Devon and a good number from the West Midlands. For details, see the "Notice Board" on www.sandwellramblers.org.uk

£5 entrance for 26,18 &14 miles routes and £2.00 for the 5 miles (free for accompanied children under 12), which includes free parking for pre entries. Entries on the day £6 for 26,18 & 14 miles, £3 for 5 miles, plus parking.

Applications for entry forms to Tony Potter, Events Manager,
Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69
3DE

Daytime phone 0121 569 4703. Email tony_potter@sandwell.gov.uk

To find out access restrictions in Access areas ring 0845 100 3298

Access points on Staffs Area Website
<http://www.staffordshireramblers.org/2012-04-19-14-03-09.html>



Fun on the day

A Tip for Winter

I am sure that most of you are aware of the various devices to put on your shoes/boots to grip in the snow. In the old days we used to put on crampons or the lighter instep crampons when going out in the mountains. Now thanks to companies like Yaktrack and Grivel, we have urban versions that fit over shoes, boots and even wellingtons. They really do work so if you haven't yet tried them then it's a tip for your next outing in the snow and ice. I have worn mine on pavements and in the countryside and never slipped once, yet those without them were sliding all over the place. The exception is slushy snow. My wife wears hers on wellingtons and I have used mine with all sorts of footwear. Even where there is bare road they are still comfortable so you needn't take

them off in clear areas. I can't praise them enough.

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Next Issue

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