



The Disabled Rambler

The Newsletter of the Disabled Ramblers

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Hello again everyone

I hope you had an enjoyable Christmas, which seems a long time ago now, and I wish you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

As you will see from the Programme there are more rambles this year than in 2016, so I am looking forward to meeting up with many more of you this year, both old and new members.

During May, Bernard and myself will be leading our first rambles since joining the D R, so it would be great if we have good weather in Derbyshire, and of course that you will be joining us.

This first Newsletter for 2017 is not as long as the last one but I am sure that you will find it just as interesting and I wish to thank all those who sent in articles.

As you will see on page 3, the Committee have decided to start a regular information page to keep everyone up to date with what is going on behind the scenes, and if you wish to contact them you can.

As I am starting this Newsletter the final arrangements are being put together for the AGM on Saturday 1st April. I look forward to seeing many of you there and on the rambles during the following 2 days.

The deadline for the next newsletter is **2nd June 2017**.

Judy Cunningham

Snowdonia Rambles - Part Two by L & P with Trampers TWS's

The Tougher rambles:

Drum mountain (Terrys challenge from 2013) - our motors/brakes overheated on the first attempt but we succeeded on the second achieving the summit at 2,550ft above sea level, a slow climb of 1,889ft over 3.25 miles Cat 4 linear. 360° views at the summit.

Newborough Forest and Llanddwyn Island on Anglesea was a beautiful day where we watched a 4x4 John Deere Gator get stuck in the sand whilst we were waiting for the tide to recede enough for us to safely cross to the island, where we had spectacular 360° degree views up by the cross ascending from the further side. You need to be aware of the tide times to cross to the island approx. 2 hours after high tide is best. Cat 2+

Beddgelert Forest a revisit to explore further, achieving a height of 1,478ft above sea level with wonderful views of Snowdon ('with his table cloth on' i.e. in cloud) and covering 12.5 miles Cat 3.

Snowdon – Miners Track, one of the popular routes up Snowdon. We achieved 2 miles of this route up to where it leaves Llyn Llydaw (1550ft above sea level) with very rough enormous cobbles forcing us to return, on a beautiful but cold day in brilliant sunshine, Snowdon looked very majestic. Cat 3.

Snowdon – Watkins Path was our most challenging and mad ramble but also the most rewarding in scenery as it goes up the Cwm Llan valley beside a river with beautiful waterfalls up to the Gladstone Rock and just beyond (2 miles 1,000ft above sea level) to achieve wonderful views of Snowdon. It was large rough cobble steps that stopped us. It runs beside the river with a steep incline down to it from the track and because the very rough track kept deflecting the front wheel towards the incline it's not to be recommended to anyone not as mad as us so Cat 4+.

Parys Mountain on Anglesea was amazing with all the different colours of metal in the rocks. It's an old copper mine with a circular route with many linear dead ends to explore. Although we only did 3.80 miles this day it was well worth it, with more to explore. Cat 3 only because of some of the steep gradients.

Rhyd Ddu towards Snowdon (which I've nicknamed 'Terrys Flying Trumper' ramble, remember 2013?) was another climb of 2 miles to 1460ft above sea level where we had lunch by some old mine workings and a lovely waterfall into a crevice. This track has been badly eroded so definitely a Cat 4.

Never did our lithium batteries get below 66% on any of the rambles that gave us confidence and security, our own internal batteries ran out first.

There are more suggested routes we never got around to such as in the forest above and below Betws-y-Coed, Penmachno forest, Lôn Effion from Canaerfon, Llyn Eigiau and Melynlyn, Llyn Anafon, Aber Falls, South Stack and Porth-y-felin Breakwater on Anglesea (might be gated), back of café Siabod nr Capel Curig to name a few. We just ran out of time. We'll be back.

Thanks to everyone who suggested routes especially Terry Taylor and his friend Mal, Val Rawlings and all the people we chatted to on routes giving us suggestions.

Note: Lôn means Lane and Las means blue in Welsh.

oOo

The other day we discovered a shop down this way is owned by the same company as owns Cotswolds, it's called Snow + Rock. www.snowandrock.com I'm thinking another opportunity for member discount. I achieved discount with my Ramblers life membership card. Cotswolds actually sent us there when they didn't have what we were looking for. Hope this can help some members. L&P

Reply from John Cuthbertson - They have given us 15% discount at Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock, Runners Need and Cycle Surgery. However, the discount is only 10% off cycles. I'll add this to the web

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Inside the Disabled Ramblers by Jan Kemp

The Disabled Ramblers is run by volunteers for its members, and we on the committee want to make it easier for everyone to be able to reach and talk to each other if they want to – and for us to be able to talk to them. Facebook and the Friendship List are two ways of doing that, and are beginning to make a difference – but we thought that as the Newsletter becomes more frequent and regular it can be a way of making sure that all members are in touch with what's happening in DR – both inside the committee and amongst individual members.

So this is the first of what we hope will be a regular feature in the Newsletter. It's a small beginning but as time goes by we'll be able to cover more and more topics.

There'll be lots of new beginnings in 2017, with, (if the AGM votes them in), John taking over as Chair and Rhiannon as Treasurer. Rhiannon will continue to do Bookings but Judy, in addition to editing the Newsletter, will take over distributing the Joining Instructions and Leader's Information for each ramble. Judy is also one of the people towing the MSU so she's well placed to pick up ideas on just what we need to make the beginning, middle and end of each ramble run smoothly and safely. Please talk to her (on rambles or by email) if you've any good ideas yourself – then she'll be able to take as much as possible into account when we have to start making decisions.

You'll have noticed a larger than usual number of rambles on the programme this year. That's partly because John Cuthbertson and Arthur Lee have been trying hard to interest the Ramblers in working with us, and some of this year's rambles are being run jointly with them. We want to show how easy it would be for them to include us on local rambles if they'd just avoid things like bad cambers, stiles and kissing gates - so please try to come on the joint rambles and show them how enjoyable our outings can be. If the Ramblers begin influencing local authorities and landowners to make their gates and stiles accessible, it could make a difference all over the country.

The most important point in writing this kind of article is that we know that Disabled Ramblers is full of very able people! And we want to make it possible for all members to contribute if they want to.

Lots of people work alongside the Committee to do specialist bits of work – Ron Lyon produces our publicity leaflets "Let's Go Rambling", "Rambling on Wheels" and "Choosing a Scooter" which is a guide to people new to off-road rambling. Eileen Tomlinson manages the Facebook Closed Group.

Then there are the people who tow the MSU for us and make sure the loan scooters and field toilet are ready for the start of every ramble – Veronica Jones has done that for a long time and now Judy & Bernard Cunningham, Brian Ulyett & Bill Harman have joined in. You don't have to be that heroic though – many members contribute by carrying a radio, acting as back-marker, helping put up and take down the tent or rallying to sort things out when someone has trouble with their scooter.

Inside the Disabled Ramblers by Jan Kemp cont...

We are very grateful to those members who run our National Rambles as without them there would be no rambles. This year they are being run by Judy & Bernard Cunningham, Di Pettit, Ian Lawson, James Babbington Smith, Jill & Hugh Williamson, Arthur Lee, Andy Jaynes, Val Rawlings & Bob McLellan and John Cuthbertson.

We are very keen to expand on our Extra, or Regional, Rambles. These are organised at relatively short notice and publicised to the membership on the web and by email. Recently Andy and John in the Midlands and Val & Bob in the South have run some but there is a great demand for local rambles which we can't meet without more leaders. If you would like to run a local ramble please get in touch with John Cuthbertson who is very willing to help you get started.

If you'd like to get involved in helping the Disabled Ramblers in any way please just talk to or email a Committee member, or reach us on the Contact Us page on the website. We would really value any help you can give.

The Scooter Assessment - Bernard Cunningham

If you are a new member of the Disabled Ramblers, and wish to hire one of our loan scooters, then you will be given an assessment/controls lesson by one of our nominated members, of which I am one. There is nothing too onerous about this as I will explain. The assessment is in three parts - Medical, Practical and General.



In the Medical section you will be asked a few questions on how your condition may effect your control of the mobility scooter and if you are able to read a car number plate at approx. 40ft.

The Practical—On this section you will be shown how to operate the controls, where they are and how to operate them. Then you will be asked to drive forward, reverse, demonstrate a figure of 8 and do an emergency stop.

General—This is where you can tell us of any special needs eg are you sensitive to touch. Following the assessment you will be asked to sign and date the form which will be kept securely in our records. Then off to enjoy your rambles with other members, and volunteers, in the sunshine or the rain.

Happy Rambling.....



This sign was spotted during a visit to Leamington Spa and I thought I would share it with you. Judy

'A Life of Fun'.

Part 2 of Terry Taylor's story following on from Part 1 in previous Newsletter

Once it fully dawned on me, that I was going to survive, I thought, "I might as well give it a try. I then started exercising, in the Winford Orthopaedic Hospital, just outside Bristol, and later, at the Avon Gorge, in Bristol.

I resumed my life as a Climbing Instructor on my birthday, April 1, 1967, in Snowdonia. A cold and snowy day, but for me it was sunny. Life went on, I continued to climb all year round, and in Sept '68 I met Celia Scarff on a rock-climbing course, in the Lakes and we got married in March 1969.

In 1974, I put things 'on the line', by deciding I needed to become a member of the British Mountain Guides as Govt. Regulations began to tighten up, re working with inadequate qualifications. Having done this since 1965, I was terrified of 'failing' the tough examinations. I didn't fail, I was now a very proud member of the 'British Mountain Guides'. A 'real' Professional, at last and another crucial step in my 'Life as a Guide,' on a par with Guides elsewhere in Europe, as equal members of the International Union of Mountain Guides Associations. Thus started my Alpine Guiding career, which continued up to 2004. When serious knee problems, ending up with a knee replacement, 'forced' me to 'retire' as a Guide, after 39 fantastic years, though I did continue to 'climb for fun' with friends, and former clients.

My 'worst' and final blow came on New Year's Day, 2009, when I suffered a catastrophic stroke, 'out of the blue'. It didn't kill me, I'm now pleased to say. Yes, it has changed our lives completely, but I have discovered a 'New Life', which I can enjoy with the support of my 'True Friends.' I'd fully expected a 'record-breaking' **miracle** recovery, I **must** now admit, it didn't happen.

Here in 2016, I'm still 'broken'. I have made "incredible progress", according to my long-time physio-therapist-friend Hazel, of which I am **very** proud, naturally, but 'there are still so many things to do', in 'so little time' I fear.

I have climbed the Medieval stairways in Caernarfon Castle, to the highest Towers, and spiral columns with no safety rails (Marquis of Anglesey's Column, Llanfair-PG), crossed giant stepping-stones on the tidal Afon Braint, Anglesey and 'walked', (in instalments), to the summit of Moel Eilio (2,382ft) above Llanberis, and to the summit of Drum, in the Carneddau, when my Trammer 'ran out of power', 1 km from the summit at 770m, with Sam Roberts, Snowdonia Warden (retired).

Further afield I visited my beloved Alps again, Yellowstone National Park (without my wheel-chair) and walked extensively to various 'must-see' sites, such as Yellowstone Falls, I reached the Zug-Spitze summit (2962m), the highest in Germany and others, with the help of three 'cruel -to-be-kind' German-Guide-Friends in 2015.

I was also diagnosed with a melanoma on my right retina, but was very soon treated with NHS 'ultra-rapid 'brilliance' in Liverpool and Clatterbridge. All is well, at present, thank the Lord! For the time being, anyway!

What next? Who knows? I do have plans, though, never fear. What is **LIFE**, **with no plan of any sort?**

I enjoy **MY** Life very much **NOW**, I'm **very pleased to say**, after all my 'set-backs'. **AND**, it has **not been 'boring' by any stretch of the imagination**. My mantra for 'Life' (and future epitaph) is now. "I've had worse", which I feel 'well-justified' to say, perhaps you'll agree?



The Downs Link—Val Rawlings

The Downs link is 37 mile long disused railway line which runs from Martha's Hill in Surrey to Shoreham by Sea in West Sussex. Together with our DR member in Horsham, David, we have been reccyng the route doing a manageable section at a time, and this is the first section to be offered as a regional ramble. The route passes through a really varied vista of countryside and as it is on good tracks it is particularly suitable for a winter ramble.



We had 8 takers on this section and three walkers including our venerable newsletter Editor! It was a very nice winter's day, clouds, blue sky and watery sun much better than had been forecast. At West Grinstead station there was a railway carriage that is manned by volunteers on Sundays with plenty of info, plus a tea-room and restaurant set in a lovely old orchard. All that is left of the station is the platform and a signal that has been restored, but you can feel the atmosphere nonetheless.

We passed on through the tree lined paths on a carpet of fallen leaves, with views through the now bare branches out to the lovely West Sussex countryside, to Partridge Green, where we went to a super little cafe called Mike's Bike Shack, which is a little wooden cabin with picnic benches outside, there is a very good disabled loo as well and always a very friendly welcome. They make the most delicious latte's! Some of us went inside to warm up and eat and the rest of our group stayed out side with our sandwiches.

Then it was about turn for the trip home. The thing about disused railway routes is that they are linear and some sections can be quite long due to trying to find suitable parking facilities, eg if it's a 6 mile route one way it makes it 12 miles altogether. Having said that it doesn't seem that long, and this particular route is exceptionally nice as it's not as closed in as some are. Bit tough on the walkers though! At Southwater Country Park there is a big lake and we always go to feed the swans on our return, they look forward to their chopped lettuce! A very nice day, and we hope to do another section before too long.



I wondered whether any of the Disabled Ramblers would be nterested to know that I am planning to put my disability adapted narrowboat on the market within the next few months. I did write an article about this boat for the newsletter many years ago. Details of the current modifications can be found at http://www.johnpowell.net/pages/fancy_free2005.htm. I thought I would mention this in time for inclusion in the Spring Newsletter

John Powell

Barriers to Disabled Access: by Arthur Lee.

Horse Stile on a Bridleway

You may well come across something like this when out rambling legally using a bridleway, thinking if the bridleway is OK for equestrian use, it will be OK on my Tramper or mobility scooter.

New horse stiles on Glyndwr's Way, Dyfnant forest. This picture and text was used to publicise "Preventing illegal motorbike use".



BUT:

It also prevents LEGAL wheelchair or buggy use by the disabled. How is this Fair?

We understand the difficulty of preventing a troublesome and problematic illegal use whilst not preventing legal use. This dilemma applies to many bridleways and sometimes paths around the country. The British Standard BS5709:2006 Section 4.7 Item h) suggests that "Access for other users shall be provided to the side of the horse stile, for example a kissing gate with RADAR lock facility".

What to do:

Report the problem to the District Council Public Rights of Way (PRoW) section and if the problem is on a National Trail report it to the National Trail Officer as well.

You can report it as an obstruction using a Section 130A notice under Highways Act 1980 asking the Highway Authority to remove the illegal obstruction.

Building Bridges—John Cuthbertson

Time after time I get emails from people who only want to ramble in their local area. Perhaps you would like more rambles to be held in your area too? Well we would if we could but there are too few ramble leaders in the Disabled Ramblers to make that happen.

For a long time now members of the Disabled Ramblers have been trying to include the Ramblers (the able-bodied group) in our outings and this year these two groups have come together to run some rambles jointly.

The first of these, on Thursday 25th May, is along a lovely stretch of the River Thames to Henley. This is a great chance to encourage the Ramblers, who have local groups all over the country, to make their own rambles more accessible - which would be wonderful for everyone.

Do come and join us and help us to build bridges between our organisations.



Warning to Owners of Mark 1 Trampers

Please ensure your that if you have a Mark 1 Tramper you have your scooter regularly serviced as this ensures that the chain is well maintained and in good condition.

Just before the start of one of the D R rambles during 2016 a member's Tramper had the chain snap which let the Tramper run away uncontrollably until it was stopped by running into a car.

John Cuthbertson

Worcestershire Beacon



Coming after a very cold spell and then a week of rain we were delighted to be rambling on the one sunny day of December so far – and it was reasonably mild too. After



negotiating some tricky sections of track we emerged into the sun at St Ann's Knoll for mince pies and coffee. A steep climb up the zig-zags followed leading us right to the top of Worcestershire Beacon, the highest point in Worcestershire. After drinking in the views for half an hour we made our way down to the col where we were sheltered from the breeze which we had on the top. The toilet tent was deployed and we settled down to have our lunch. As we had time in hand we deviated a little from our normal return route and went around Sugarloaf Hill. As we turned a corner and started heading back to Worcestershire Beacon some of the more aware members of the party said "hang on, we're going back the way we came" and sure enough we were soon back at our lunch stop. Carrying on down this time we were soon back at St Ann's Knoll and then carefully driving past the water-worn gullies cutting into the path before returning to our cars. A brilliant ramble with great company; thanks to all who came. John Cuthbertson

Westmancote to Bredon's Norton



A great Cat 3+ or 4 ramble. A rocky climb past the King & Queen stones, through the wood with all its tree roots and then, take a deep breath and over the edge on 45 degree slope to begin the descent. Lots of loose rocks to begin with then opening out to give stunning



views across the Severn Valley to the Malvern Hills and beyond into Shropshire and Wales. Thanks Andy. John Cuthbertson.

Long Causeway



A fantastic day - great weather, great views, great company, great ramble. Thanks to all at the Peak District National Park for making it possible.

John Cuthbertson

