



BIGGAR RAMBLERS

Walking in Clydesdale

www.biggarramblers.co.uk

NEWSLETTER June 2014

From the Chair

Welcome to the Summer Programme and I am writing this at the end of a great weekend walking in Oban. I would like to thank Isobel for the magnificent conscientious work which made it so successful. As we look forward to the Summer, there is, I hope, something for everyone, including some social events, but as I write this before the programme is finalised, I have to be slightly vague - no difference there I hear someone say! Anyway enjoy the Summer with us and I hope to see as many of you as possible over the coming months.

from Brian

The Summer Prog.

As usual, John has done a great job planning a really good schedule of walks, and thanks also to all our loyal walks leaders who give up their time to the cause. A good Munro, our favourite cream tea, some walking and talking, a bit of the John Muir Way and of course plenty of our good old Clydesdale hills. What's not to like? (*the weather - ed.*) And as a bonus, Brian will be holding a "map and compass" course on a walk in July, covering basic map reading and navigational skills. It will be held around the John Buchan Way near Broughton and will involve a walk to Stobo Hopehead and climbing (at your own pace) Hammer Head. Details are on the enclosed notice and reservations are essential. Note: GPS devices will be confiscated!

A Great Weekend in Oban

Nineteen happy ramblers enjoyed a weekend of warm sunny weather with only a slight shower on Saturday afternoon. The Columba Hotel on North Pier was very good value, comfortable, with good food, some excellent views from the rooms and a lift which was just a trifle "challenging".

Activities began with a town walk on Friday afternoon along the sea-front to the ferry/harbour area and up to the viewpoint on Pulpit Hill. We were rewarded with magnificent views of the islands of Kerrera, Lismore and Mull and to Ben Nevis.

On Saturday, most of the group took the short ferry crossing to Kerrera to walk to the tea garden for early lunch and then to the beach below Gylen Castle ruin. The walk continued round the headland and climbed a gorse-edged path to the far coast for some fine views of Mull. A drop of rain spoiled some of the views at this point, but the weather cleared for the walk above the coast and back down to the ferry. A fine 7-mile walk. In the evening some people attended a very enjoyable fiddle concert in the Corran Halls. With some players staying in the hotel we had extra free performances.

On Sunday there were three walks. The toughies climbed Beinn Fhionnlaidh at Glen Etive – at 3143 feet the 199th highest Munro. A gruelling ascent up a broad pathless ridge was rewarded by a panorama of snow-capped Ben Nevis, the Glencoe summits and Rannoch Moor and the Cruachan peaks. Lower down, the party enjoyed the displays of Spring flowers and the sight and sound of a cuckoo. Meanwhile, a larger party drove through Kilmartin Glen with its standing stones, then did a five mile walk along the Crinan Canal taking in Cruach Mor with its wonderful views of the Paps of Jura before visiting Crinan Harbour to see the "puffer", admire a sea-eagle and have a well earned cuppa. On the way back, some climbed up Dunadd to place their feet on the mark where the kings of Dalriada were crowned. The third party walked from the hotel along the coast to Ganavan then the beach route to visit Dunstaffnage Castle and the new Ocean Marine Centre before taking a higher route back above the cliffs. All parties were blessed with wall-to-wall sunshine and fabulous views.

On Monday morning most of the group tackled the steep steps to reach McCaig's Folly for a final look over the sea before leaving for home or, in some cases, continuing their holiday elsewhere.

All agreed that it was a super weekend, due mainly to Isobel who organised it all, and the other leaders who provided first class walks. And of course the sun always shines on the righteous! Brian has uploaded some excellent photos onto the Biggar Ramblers facebook site, or alternatively go to <http://bnkhenry.smugmug.com/Portfolio/Ramblers-Weekend-in-Oban-2014/>

Lynn's Well-Deserved 15 minutes of Fame

Many congratulations to Lynn who is one of those chosen to carry the Queen's Baton through Lanarkshire in the run-up to the Commonwealth Games. Lynn does a tremendous amount of work for the Guides Movement. When we find out her exact route, we will circulate all on our e-mail list and it should be on Biggar Ramblers facebook. Lesley did the same before the Olympics in 2012.

Health & Safety Notes

a) We're sorry to report that a number of the "emergency key-rings", recently distributed to walkers, have come open and the paper inserts lost. It is important to ensure that the plastic clip is fully clicked shut. It might be better to carry it in a pocket rather than attached to a belt or rucksack.

b) Your editor badly twisted his ankle recently on a hill walk. He was able to struggle bravely back to base under his own steam but it could easily have been more serious. Therefore a good time to remind people about the emergency number **112**. This can be dialled from any mobile, even if it's run out of charge or money or you don't know the password. It takes precedence over other calls and uses any network available. See the video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPZv_8dABfU.

c) Remember the stroke indicators: "FAST". **F**ace – can the person smile normally, **A**rms – can the person raise both arms, **S**peech – can the person speak normally, **T**ongue – can the person stick out their tongue without it twisting to one side. If any doubt, dial 112 immediately.

Walking News

There is an interesting Tweed Valley Walking Weekend planned for Friday 30th May to Sunday 1st June, based in the Peebles/Innerleithen area, and some of our members are helping to lead a walk. See www.tweedvalleywalking.com. You will need to reserve a place.

Details of the new John Muir Way between Dunbar and Helensburgh are now on the "Walk Highlands" website, with gradings, terrain, distances, times, public transport etc. Very useful.

Coalburn Community Greenways Trust are holding their annual Health & Fitness "Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Walk" on Sunday 1st June. From the car park at the Inns in Coalburn Road at 10.00.

Those of us who were on Jan's walk up Cardon Hill recently will recall the discussion with the land-owner about the use of the track leading to the hill. Brian wrote to the Access Officer for Scottish Borders Council and they have replied that they will contact the land-owner and explain the law relating to access to the countryside. It is surprising that people are still unaware of the 2003 Act.

On the Ramblers website, there is a new version of the Group Walks Finder and a better integration of Ramblers Routes. Each Ramblers Group will now have its own area on the website with its own web address and space for contact details and other information.

Inflation News

Further to the note in the February Newsletter, we have to report that the Ramblers Subs have gone up a wee bit. The annual cost is now £33 for individuals and £44 for couples. Also there is no longer a £10 reduction for new members. So please chuck away any old joining-forms. New ones will be available from Isobel. A serious blow to Britain's economic recovery!

Forthcoming Attractions

There has been no response to the note in the February Newsletter asking for views on a change of venue for the next Christmas dinner. The Committee discussed various alternatives but none have the facilities of the New Lanark hotel and it was decided to return there for the Christmas Carols evening on Thursday 18th December. This has always been popular with those attending.

The AGM this year will be in the Elphinstone starting at 7.00. Details in next Newsletter.

SLOAF

Your editor attended the meeting of the South Lanarkshire Open Access Forum in March. Matters discussed included new proposals for dealing with access disputes, latest developments at Whitelee windfarm, upgrading of the Old Wishaw Road near Carluke, how Community Payback works and access at Milton Lockhart estate. Google in: south lanarkshire open access forum

We hope you enjoyed the Newsletter. Note editor's new e-mail - mjheale22b@btinternet.com