

MID LANCASHIRE AREA

NEWS – Mid 2018



Ramblers CEO visits Lancashire to look at the poor state of footpaths

On Friday (25th May) Vanessa Griffiths, the Ramblers CEO (Chief Executive Officer) was in Lancashire in order to look at local issues as part her policy to meet members and to discuss problems. The meeting took place in Inskip. The visit started with a walk using some of the public footpaths near Inskip, which included the Common to the east of the village. A footpath runs across the common, but the bridge crossing the ditch on the Common has been closed for it is in need of repair, thus splitting the Common in two.



Footbridge photo in March and then in May with Vanessa and Brian Dearnaley (Area Chair) and Joe Howard.

Vanessa stated that the Rambler's opinion is that money spent on maintaining footpaths is money well spent, for it enables people to take exercise and to relax, but we fear that this could become a more difficult thing to do. Additionally, money spent sooner rather than later would be cost-effective in maintaining the system and our heritage of paths. We appreciate that Lancashire County Council is resource limited in this period of austerity, but the long term picture is important.

After the walk lunch was eaten in the Community Centre in Inskip. The event ended with a discussion session, when the topics mentioned included – led walks, GDPR (general data protection regulations), how to raise the profile of footpath issues and membership recruitment.

The Area Web this Period

Recent changes to the site at www.lancashire-ramblers.org.uk include:-

- 100+ books and maps that are available free. See the site.
- Easy Mobile access to next few walks. On your mobile use www.lancashire-ramblers.org.uk/next

GDPR Some Clarification About What Area & Groups Can Send To You

- email you ONLY IF you have set Email as a Yes permission.
- post to you with Walk Programmes, newsletters, AGM notices regardless of permission .(groups may respect a NO post for walk programmes, newsletters etc. but send AGM notices.)

If you have email, please let us use it. It is our best way of communicating with you.

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MARIO (Maps and Related Information Online)

MARIO is a system operated by Lancashire County Council, which can be found at – <http://mario.lancashire.gov.uk/agsmario/>

It was created for the staff in local government, but parts of it are available in a system that the public can use, which contains good maps between the scales of 1:1,000 and 1:10,000, which group footpath secretaries find to be very useful, for it shows a lot of detail. However, most users of the system consider it to be semi user friendly.

One aspect that has confused a few members is the grid references. If you zoom in to Bamber Bridge Railway Station and place the cursor at the western end of the northern platform it will show –

Easting 356403, Northing 425823

This is the format that is preferred by the computing industry and the co-ordinates are correct to one metre. The location 000000, 000000 is somewhere beyond the Isles of Scilly. The grid square SD corresponds to 3xxxxx, 4xxxxx. In order to quote the normal six figure grid reference, which is correct to 100 metres, simply take the second, third and fourth digits, of each part, so for Bamber Bridge Railway Station it will become – SD564258.

Similarly to quote an eight figure grid reference, which will be correct to 10 metres, take the second, third, fourth and fifth digits, of each part, so for Bamber Bridge Railway Station it will become SD56402582.

MARIO contains good footpath information, which can be displayed by clicking on 'Maps', then 'Countryside Environment and Waste' and then 'Public Rights of Way'. (You need to have zoomed in to a location before this facility will work.) A series of purple dashed lines will then be displayed, with a label like '7-9-FP58'. The first character is the district number, which in this case is '7', that corresponds to 'South Ribble'. The next character is the parish number, which in this case is '9', which corresponds to 'Penwortham' and the last part is the footpath number in that parish. This means it is the footpath 'Penwortham number 58'. Regular users of the system will get to know the parish numbers of where they regularly walk.

For occasional users of MARIO click on 'Maps' again, followed by 'Countryside Environment and Way' and then the 'i' to the right of 'Public Rights of Way', which will result in a red square being shown around the 'i'. Then click on the footpath concerned, which will then result in a box being displayed, which contains various items of information including that in this case it is 'Penwortham Footpath 58'.

Going back a few years MARIO was more useful than it is now, but it is thought that LCC are trying to save money by having fewer licences. The result is that contour information is no longer displayed and that maps at a scale of 1:25,000 are no longer available. On the system are maps at scales of 1:15,000 and 1:30,000 but these have a grey fuzziness about them, which means that detail cannot be observed.

Footpath faults can be reported in many different ways. One option is to use LCC's Highways web site. If you report a pot hole or perhaps a faulty lamp the system will display a red triangle. When the fault is cleared the triangle will change colour to blue. Once the triangle has changed colour to blue, it will remain on the system for a further month.

LCC's Highway Web Site will also accept reports in respect of Public Footpaths, but the system does not allow for digital photographs to be uploaded. The system will show a red triangle, but because of computing issues within County Hall, the red triangle simply stays on the system for 12 months, and at the end of that time the red triangle is simply removed be it the fault has been cleared or not. Staff in LCC would prefer that Footpath Reports are made by email, for a good digital photograph will save time by not requiring an initial site visit to evaluate the report.

In order for the Ramblers to be able to campaign effectively about the state of Public Footpaths information is needed about when reports are made. For places that you regularly walk, a record (either an electronic spreadsheet or a card index system) should be kept of date, parish, footpath number, grid reference and description of the fault. This needs to be updated when the footpath is walked again.

If details of a report are made known to the group footpath secretary then the Ramblers will then have a record of the report, for good information is going to be essential in the campaign for better paths.

Items for the next Area News need to be with David Kelly by the end of August.