

MID LANCASHIRE AREA

NEWS – Early 2017



New Web Site

The Mid Lancs Area now has its own active website providing a range of services and covering all 8 of the groups in the Mid Lancs Area, namely Chorley, Fylde, Garstang, Preston, South Ribble, West Lancs, LWW and LYPWG.

The site can be found at:-

www.lancashire-ramblers.org.uk

Features include:-

- Ready access to the next few walks for our groups
- Headline news
- Complete walk programme for the Area in various forms;
A list, a map, a PDF
The list and map are interactive and are the most up to date information.
- Easy access to each group's Rambler site page
- List of other websites, Facebook pages or Meet Up sites for each group
- Walk Descriptions. A library of walk descriptions is being built.
- Information on Area or UK wide footpath issues.
- Contacts and Feedback

Please feel free to offer ways to improve or functions to add to the site.

Also, any contributions for descriptions of walks would be welcome.

We can accept simple descriptions and will try and convert them to a convenient format.

Text Service

If you haven't taken the opportunity to register with our text service which advises of late changes to walks, may we encourage you to do so. See the home page of the new web site.

Spitlers Edge

Some members may remember that I (David Kelly) wrote about Spitlers Edge in Summer 2016. I was not expecting to be writing about it again so soon.

About twenty years ago the northern section of Spitlers Edge was flagged, which was partly funded for using EU monies. These flags have stood the test of time, with only a small number sinking into the mud. The laying of flag stones is expensive, but it allows the vegetation to recover and the walkers benefit by being able to avoid the mud.

The expectation at that time was that the southern section of Spitlers Edge would be progressed the following year, but this was a time when the EU was being enlarged, which meant that the grant system was changed, with the result that this source of funding was no longer available for projects in Northern England.

In early 2016 a grant from the Lancashire Environmental Fund plus some money from United Utilities have allowed for some work to be done, but officially no figure for the money that was spent has been stated, but it is understood to be significantly less than the figure previously quoted of just over £100k to provide flag stones along the rest of the Edge.

The normal wisdom is that on deep peat that flag stones are laid, whilst on shallow peat soil inversion techniques are to be used. The latter has the considerable advantage of being relatively cheap to do. Some flag stones have been provided, which has allowed for part of the southern section of Spitlers Edge to be flagged, which will no doubt give decades of good service. On other parts of the path soil inversion methods are to be used.

In June 2016 I wrote a letter of thanks for the work that had been done on the southern part of Spilters Edge and added a caveat to the effect that only time will tell if the decision to attempt soil inversion techniques on deeper peat was a good idea or not. We are not against experiment to test new techniques or to extend existing techniques to new types of ground, but all experiments have a degree of risk associated with them.

In mid Dec I was walking along Spilters Edge when it was apparent that some of the soil inversion work was good but other parts were a cause for concern, for it appeared to be waterlogged. I was walking on one edge of the path, whilst a couple coming the opposite way were walking on the other edge of the path.

Going further along Spilters Edge some unknown person(s) had taken stones from a nearby derelict stone wall and had placed them on the footpath so that they could be used as 'stepping stones'. (Please do not remove any stones from a wall that is in good condition.)



This means that a job is now desired to provide some more flag stones on the wetter parts of the southern section of Spilters Edge or perhaps to do other remedial work, plus to correct a few flag stones on the northern section of Spilters Edge that are now starting to sink.

In the past such work would probably have been arranged with the assistance of the Ranger Service, but Lancashire County Council are seeking to cease the Ranger Service as part of measures needed as a result of the austerity being implemented by Whitehall. This effectively means that presently it is not possible to progress such a job. My expectation is that this is something we will need to mention in letters to LCC at regular intervals, in order to keep this and other matters on their agenda.

One of the functions of a good Ranger is to know what potential funding packages are available at any given time. Having identified a potential source of funding, then an application needs to be made for the funding, when the correct use of words can be important in making a successful application.

The landowner states that this is a path that is not a right of way, with the problems being caused by large numbers of the public using the route, which means they expect funding for such repairs to be paid for by the local authority and/or grants, the latter probably coming from Whitehall.

Any items for inclusion in the next Area News need to be with David Kelly by the 31st May.