

NORTHUMBRIA GROUP LDWA
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015
SECRETARY'S REPORT

This was my first year as Group Secretary and it has been quite eventful.

Group members have been active in a wide range of Challenge Walks including the Annual 100 and, as usual, we manned a checkpoint on the Valleys100. The Valleys 100 was also notable for Len Fallick completing 33 out of the 41 LDWA one hundred mile walks. He is one of a select group of 10 people who have completed more than 30 of these demanding events and a major achievement in the monsoon conditions of the Welsh Valleys in July.

As well as that we have managed to provide a full programme of social walks and the 25th Durham Dales was a great success, despite some more atrocious weather on the 53 mile event. However, Chris made it clear at an early stage that 2014 was going to be her swansong. She has given me a lot of support over the last 12 months while I found my feet and it is largely due to her efforts that the group is in the healthy state that it is.

In 2014 we were joined by 34 new members and the group reached a peak of 312 members on our books. However, the Membership Secretary has had a sort out and now only lists currently paid up members. At the end of December we were down to 217 members in the group. This is still a healthy number even if we only see about a quarter of you at our social walks and meetings

Finding a new organiser for the Durham Dales Challenge for 2015 was an unexpectedly fraught experience and the emotions generated threatened to seriously damage the Group. Several people decided that they did not want to continue as part of the Committee. Some resigned at once, others decided not to seek re-election. However, John Stewart has stepped into the breach and next years event is well on track

It became apparent during this period that the Committee did not always reflect the views of the wider group membership and this is one of the reasons why I want to have a discussion about communication and group meetings at the AGM. I think that it is important that the business of the group should be conducted in a transparent and democratic fashion with input from any member who wants to have a say and the new committee want to find a way to do this

I also believe that the workload of running the group should be spread wider and I would like to thank everybody who has come forward to lead a walk this year. There is a lot more work in leading a group walk than there is in just going out on your own. Not only do you have to plan a route with suitable places to stop for breaks, you have to get out there and walk it to make sure that it works. Its no good finding that the bridge you rely on to get back to the car park was washed away last year

On the subject of Group Walks, Diane Smith has decided that she had had enough of the thankless task of being Walks Secretary, particularly as she is no longer able to do much walking herself

The upshot of all this is that instead of the usual procedure of re-electing the same old faces, at this years AGM we will need to find a new Treasurer, a new Walks Secretary and at least 2 new committee members. Luckily we have at least one nomination for each position but if you want to put your name forward, I am sure that we will find something for you to do

Bill Milbourne
Group Secretary
January 2015