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Peak District
Green Lanes Alliance

October 2014 Newsletter

Route of the month – Swan Rake, Hollinsclough

Swan Rake, Hollinsclough is one of the worst eroded “green lanes” in the Peak District. The ORPA (Other Route with Public Access) starts from Hollinsclough village at SK065665 and climbs steeply up the hill that overshadows Hollinsclough to meet a minor road at SK062663.



*The deeply eroded section below the junction with Limer Rake looking towards Hollinsclough village.
October 2014*



Climbing out of Hollinsclough village. The route is sunken and narrow making it hard for users to get out of the way of a 4x4. October 2014

The surface of the route suffers from three problems. Firstly run-off water after heavy rain flows straight down the Rake. The part of the route below the junction with Limer Rake is particularly badly eroded because of a wash-out some years ago from Limer Rake. Secondly, off-roading has increased erosion of the route. The steps (known locally as the Devil's Steps) have always been there but are now so marked that the route will only be negotiable by specialist 4x4 vehicles. And finally, Staffordshire County Council says there is no money for repairs.

The steps on the route are so bad that many vehicles can only get up the route by winching. Local people have seen the telegraph poles and trees being used as winch points. We suspect that only fit and agile walkers can now use the route. Local horse riders no longer use Swan Rake.



The tallest of the steps. October 2014



Note how the route is sunken and narrow which can make it difficult for users to get out of the way of vehicles. October 2014

Of course, the visible damage is the first thing noted when walking Swan Rake. But there are other issues. The narrow width and sunken nature of the Rake in places, means problems if any other user meets a 4x4. Perceived danger can deter some users from using a route. Speed can be a problem if faster moving trail bikes don't consider the possibility of others on the route. The noise of trail bikes is particularly intrusive in quiet rural areas. Many people walking, cycling or horse riding, come to the countryside to escape the intrusions of modern life such as noise and fumes from vehicles. Official publications describe this as "quiet enjoyment of the countryside." Our concerns about recreational motor vehicles using "green lanes" are not only with damage, but with these other issues too.

The views from Swan Rake looking East over towards Chrome Hill and Parkhouse Hill are spectacular and if the route were in good condition it would be a great amenity for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.



Even when flattening out, the Rake is still narrow. October 2014



The view towards Parkhouse Hill on a dull October day.

Although the route is on the PDNPA Priority List the only action that has been taken that we are aware of is the erection of square wooden posts (offering

advice to drivers) and arranging a visit to the route by the Local Access Forum (LAF).

Subscriptions

ALL membership subscriptions are due on or before the 30th November 2014, with the exception of new members who have joined within the last six months.

Subscriptions are £10.00 for individuals £15.00 for families and groups.

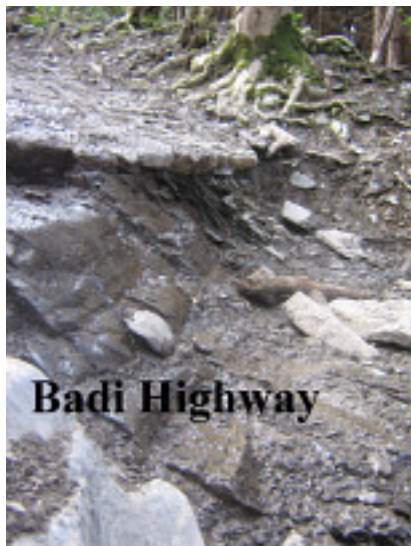
1. Membership is payable either by:-By cheque to PDGLA, PO Box 7976, Great Longstone, Bakewell, DE45 9AY; or

2. Using the PayPal link at <http://pdgla.org.uk/join-the-pdgla/> by clicking on the “select” button; or

3. Using BAC's (best used if you are renewing your membership as we already have your contact details). You require an account with on-line banking facilities. The PDGLA account is sort code 60-01-33, account no. 51111470. Enter your name in the reference field.

Other areas have problems too:

Link with group opposing off-roading in Llangollen, North Wales



*A route SE of Llangollen.
Photograph 2014*

Save our Paths (SOPS) is a group of people living in and around the town of Llangollen who have been having problems with motorbike and 4x4 use of four local green lanes for many years. These problems include damage to the lanes (in some parts the former grassy surface has disappeared), damage to moorland accessed from the lanes, noise pollution, the danger to other users and anti-social behaviour.

Denbighshire County Council has carried out repairs but these have not lasted. SOPS organised an open meeting on 2 October 2014 to discuss the increasing level of use and how to remedy the problems. Because Llangollen's problems are shared with Glyn Ceiriog (the valley to the south), with other parts of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), SOPS invited representatives from the relevant county

councils, the local MP and Welsh Assembly Members, the police, Forestry Commission and AONB to the meeting.

SOPS has been a member of YDGLA (Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Alliance – our sister organisation in the Yorkshire Dales) for some time and has recently joined PDGLA; and so invited a YDGLA/PDGLA representative to its open meeting. Her impression was that the county councils in the area are very reluctant to make permanent traffic regulation orders (even though these may be the only solution for most of the local green lanes) because of misunderstandings about the law and the potential risk of legal action by off-roading organisations. The owner of a local trail-riding business spoke about how much his clients put

into the local economy but local people feel that this is outweighed by the deterrent effect of off-roading on non-motorised visitors to the AONB and the costs to farmers from damage to their property. SOPS Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/Saveourpathsllangollen>



The Green Mountain. Photograph 2014



A spot known locally as Three Trees Corner. Photograph 2014

Many thanks to SOPS for providing pictures for the newsletter.

On line petition

Some of you may already have seen or heard of the on-line petition at <http://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/stop-peak-district-footpaths-being-upgraded-for-4x4-use>

We share the sentiments of the sponsor of this petition. PDGLA is actively campaigning to reduce the impact of off-roading in the Peak District and welcomes all initiatives that will help to achieve this aim.

However, the law on rights of way is complex and the petition shows a lack of understanding of this. In many cases, DCC will have no choice about whether it should upgrade a route to BOAT status. If the law requires them to do that, officers have to make such a recommendation to councillors. We believe that rights of way law requires a change nationally (and we are campaigning for this). We also believe that Local Authorities (and PDNPA) should use their powers to make Traffic Regulation Orders to protect “green lanes”.

However if you want to demonstrate concern about off-roading by signing the petition, please follow the link above.

Update on Chapel Gate, Edale

The “no motor vehicle” signs are all in place but are being ignored by some recreational motor vehicle users. One September weekend, two lots of motorised vehicles were reported to the Police. Local farmers have had to return a gate to its hinges which was removed.