

Community

Wander over one Peak

THE British Red Cross is looking for people from Nottinghamshire to rise and take on its first sponsored event of the year, the 6.5 mile, 2,276 foot high peak of Pen-y-ghent in the beautiful Yorkshire Dales.

The One Peak Wander will take place on Saturday, April 10, to raise money to help the Red Cross continue its vital work, supporting vulnerable people throughout Nottinghamshire and the UK, as well as overseas.

Pen-y-ghent is a traditional part of the Yorkshire Three Peaks. This round walk commands stunning views of the surrounding countryside.

A reasonable level of fitness is required to complete this challenge, although it is suitable for all the family. If you're feeling energetic, you might even want to run it!

The event is organised by Max Newton, who was born and raised in Rise Park, Nottingham, and is now Senior Fundraiser at the Red Cross. Max said: 'If you want a challenging walk, an energetic run or just want stunning views and a taste of the Yorkshire Dales, this event is perfect for you. I walked it last year and it's a fabulous walk not to be missed – well worth the trip up north. If you sign up now, you'll have first pick of the lovely local accommodation!

And as well as challenging yourself, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that the money you raise will help save lives.'

The Red Cross asks that walkers raise at least £75 and pay a registration fee of £10. Red Cross fundraising experts, based in Yorkshire, will offer extensive fundraising and walking support and provide a fundraising pack with hints and tips. All proceeds will support the work of the Red Cross.

For more information and to sign up, contact Max on (0114) 242 7379.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

An A – Z of Fitness: X is for Cross Training

CROSS training is pretty much about getting the runners to do some weight training and the weight trainers to do something aerobic! If your core activity is somewhat straightforward, then a cross training activity could be chosen for its skill factor.

A couple of fitness components which might be missing from ones' current workout are muscular endurance, often provided by circuit training, and power often improved by plyometrics. It's a matter of analysing your current activity, seeking out the missing factor and finding an activity to complement but contrast.

For example, it might be tempting for runners to decide to do more sprints for power if their usual routine is for long distance – but it's still running and the potential for overuse and repetitive strain injuries loom large.

Weight trainers usually have to lift their own weights. Should they decide to lift

lighter weights and perform more repetitions in an effort to improve muscular endurance, they continue to use the movements that their bodies have, over time, made more efficient. The benefit is thus limited compared to being barked at in a circuit training class. For both types of trainer, the boredom factor may well kick in.

When injured, cross training activities may well allow some continuity in training – you can't run but you can perhaps pedal a bike. These alternative activities can produce better all round conditioning, targeting muscles which might otherwise not get a look-in. This in turn produces a more balanced physique, and prevents the type of injury produced by over-development of one muscle group at the expense of the antagonist.

Cross training also allows for multiple training sessions within a day/week, which would normally be a recipe for burn out. It's a flexible

approach, which copes well with facility closures, equipment failures etc.

However, if the cross training activity is not chosen with care it could rob you of the specific benefits you might want or need for sporting endeavour. If one undertakes it assuming fitness in one activity will automatically carry you through another, you may be heading for a fall. (Quite literally, if the new activity has a high skill quota).

Cross training can't just be 'shoe horned' into an already full and strenuous regime. Be cautious about adding high impact/risk activity just for the hell of it.

Remember that some gyms have 'cross training' machines. These provide an upper/lower body workout of a low impact type, often utilising a skiing type action. Whether they provide the 'cross training' outlined previously will depend on what you usually do.

Joint Effort Fitness

Wildlife Watching

Local news and views of the natural world

IT appears that, as reported in *The Beeston Express* a few weeks ago, the construction of the new Tesco store is under way although only a little work has been done so far.

In the time that the site has been undeveloped, repeated cutting and excavations have reduced its potential as a wildlife habitat. While few would argue that leaving it to 'go wild' is the ideal long term use for the site, more may prefer this to the new store which is likely to dominate Beeston both physically and commercially.

As least the loss of this site to wildlife was pretty much expected. This was certainly not the case with the recent clearance of woodland at Toton sidings. The controversy over this rages on and now locals are finding that, as well as

providing a wildlife habitat, this woodland was also a barrier to the noise from work at the sidings. No wonder they are angry!

In the post mortem to this incident, the identity of the new owners of the land that was cleared has still not emerged but it seems they may intend to, in effect, mine the site for coal and ballast – itself a potentially noisy, dirty and environmentally damaging operation. What is clear is that there was no legal impediment to them clearing the site in the manner that they did. Network Rail may feel that, having sold the land, they can wash their hands of the incident – but would this woodland have fared any better had it remained in their ownership?

Network Rail has a huge amount of wildlife-

rich property under its control and, like many organisations, is keen to trumpet its biodiversity and wildlife credentials. Until it was withdrawn in 2008, it ran a 'Biodiversity Protection Award' for the best work in support of biodiversity on its land.

Were it to run an award an award for the worst work in support of biodiversity on its land, Network Rail would have to nominate itself many times.

There has been outcry from all around the country about Network Rail itself destroying wildlife habitats on its land. Much, though not all, of this has been due to their 'aggressive vegetation management' policy which aims to remove all vegetation, including trees, within 15 feet of the track on 12 percent of its network over

a 5-10 year period. It has been estimated that this will lead the loss of 30 square miles of potential wildlife habitats – an area equivalent to the size of the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire.

The operation of this policy has certainly been aggressive. Concerned groups and individuals all over the country have found it impossible to stop or delay these clearances and contractors have even been threatened with arrest for disturbing nesting birds by felling trees and shrubs in early summer! An example of this type of clearance can be found locally at Colwick.

The reason given for this policy is safety (the possibility of branches falling onto the track) and the dreaded 'leaves on the line'. Pruning trees rather than clear felling could resolve both of these

issues and neither of them require the removal of all vegetation. The way that Network Rail has and is conducting this campaign all but destroys the credibility of any claim that they are guardians of biodiversity.

As far as Toton is concerned, the damage is now done and while the local MP, Nick Palmer, has received praise for his involvement and representations there is nothing he can do to repair it. Rather than becoming bogged down in a futile inquest, he might do better by working to protect other wildlife-rich areas controlled by Network Rail in his constituency, of which there are many, to avoid them suffering the same fate as Toton and Colwick.

In what will be an

election year, it would be interesting to learn of his views on this as well as his position on open cast coal mining in general and at the Robinetts site near Cossall in particular.

Opposition to both of these was part of his original election campaign in 1997 as well as in subsequent elections. The vultures of opencasting are once again circling Robinetts – does he continue to oppose opencast mining here?

The incident at Toton illustrates how vulnerable wildlife areas such as this can be. Measures to protect them need to be proactive and should begin well before anyone has the idea that destroying them would be to their financial advantage.

*Jack Smith
Local ecologist*