

Community

Walkers wanted for the Yorkshire 3-Peaks Challenge

KEEN walkers are wanted to take part in the Yorkshire 3-Peak Challenge for the British Red Cross.

The challenge will take place on July 17, 2010, and the money raised from the sponsored event will go to the work of the Red Cross in the UK and overseas.

The 24.5 mile walk covers a variety of terrains, including some of the most breathtaking scenery in the country. Senior fundraiser Rachel Olney said: "This is a fantastic walk. Although

it's tough in places, it is really rewarding when you finish. The views from the top of each of the three peaks are absolutely stunning and not to be missed.

"Signing up today will give you plenty of time to train and something to focus on over the winter months. It will be a great day, and the money raised will make a real difference to peoples' lives."

Registration is £10 and participants will receive

all the help and support they need to reach and exceed the minimum sponsorship of £100.

For more information, contact Rachel Olney on tel: 0114 242 7381.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

An A – Z of Fitness: S is for Stretching, Swimming and Sauna

STRETCHING improves the elasticity of the muscles, and this aspect of fitness can be somewhat neglected. Many regular exercisers fail to stretch properly after their activities and only start to address the issue once injured. Meanwhile, most people accept their loss of flexibility as an inevitable cost of ageing.

Books, DVDs and internet pages, often with short clips, can help demonstrate stretches for different parts of the body or for the sport/fitness activity that you currently undertake. However, some specialist and effective methods need an instructor's guidance.

For those who weight train, an easy way of identifying which stretch to use for which body part is to remember the following:

The return to the starting point of any exercise (such as lowering the bar to your chest during the bench press, or letting the lat pulldown bar back up) is called the negative phase. That phase is the stretch for that particular muscle. So a perfectly reasonable stretch for the chest would be to press the elbows back behind you, gently squeezing the shoulder blades together, or indeed to reach for the sky to stretch the upper back. Hold for at least 30 seconds and try to relax the muscle.

Being warm helps, and talking of which, why not use the **Sauna**. It has many health benefits, but is not a cure for hangovers or an aid to weight loss (the losses are only water and the body will restore your fluid balance

from your food and drink).

The heat of the sauna will ease joint and muscle pain. It also lowers blood pressure and relaxes muscles. Sweating removes waste products from the body. The balance lies in the alternation of the heat of the cabin with cooler/cold showers. Those with heart and circulatory conditions or kidney problems should bathe only with their doctor's say-so.

Swimming is excellent for CV fitness and endurance, but gentle sculling won't do – get a little breathless! Swimming assists flexibility, with its range and diversity of strokes, and is a fun way to exercise. Don't forget the Government's initiative to provide free swimming for over 60's or 16's and under.

Joint Effort Fitness

Wildlife Watching

Local news and views of the natural world

HOT on the heels of the (now adjourned) public enquiry into the Rainworth incinerator scheme comes another public enquiry into another proposed project in Nottinghamshire, which could have a serious environmental impact – the widening of the A453 from the M1 to Clifton.

Beeston Express readers may recall the publication of a notice of this inquiry a couple of issues ago. This two-page spread contained details of the Highways Agency's preferred route as well as alternatives both to the details of the route and substantially different routes that have been proposed by objectors.

Most of these alternative routes involve new disturbance and potential environmental damage to the areas that they pass through. The objectors alternative route No 1 named, ironically, the 'Green Route' would involve the present road

diverting from its current course at Barton in Fabis and then running along the Trent Valley close to Brands Hill wood and Clifton Grove. A new bridge would be constructed to cross the Trent a couple of hundred yards downstream from Beeston weir and the road would continue across the weir fields to meet up with the ring road north of Clifton bridge. It is acknowledged that, because this route runs across the Trent flood plain, the road would have to be raised on embankments or viaducts to prevent it from being flooded.

Anyone who knows and loves this area will be horrified by this proposal. This area is a haven of peace and quiet in a crowded urban area. All of this would be lost if the 'green' route was adopted and the noise pollution would be worsened by the need for an elevated road, which would also increase the visual impact of the road.

This route would also either destroy or have a serious negative effect on wildlife habitats. On the route itself, the special wildlife interest of Holme Pit SSSI would be wiped out, whilst the land taken by the road and its associated works would be permanently lost to wildlife. The woodlands along the valley would also be affected, as would the Attenborough nature reserve – not least by the traffic noise, which would fill the valley. The operation of the road when opened would increase wildlife road kills and the runoff from the road could result in water pollution problems. To cap it all, the installation of extensive new earthworks in the valley might necessitate an urgent review of the data that was used to justify the flood bank that is currently being constructed!

The green route is, to all but most blinkered eyes, environmentally disastrous,

but do we need to worry that it will be recommended by the public inquiry? Fortunately the answer is – probably not.

This route was originally proposed (by a Mr J W Matthews – where are you now, sir?) to a previous inquiry into widening the A453 which was held in 1996 and which rejected this option. Although the present inquiry has a duty to re-examine the route, its potential environmental impact is certainly no less than in 1996 and is possibly greater.

We can, therefore, have a reasonable expectation that this inquiry will also reject the green route but, if it were to ignore the environmental damage that would result, it could theoretically recommend it – by most analyses this route would provide the most effective relief of traffic congestion on the A453.

The Highway Agency's

preferred option, along more or less the present route of the A453, seems to be the most likely recommendation. Although this looks to offer the least environmental damage, it still has a cost. Trees and hedgerows will be lost as well as farmland, much of which could have been avoided with a plan to concentrate on the areas where congestion currently occurs (which will have to be done anyway) before deciding whether the whole road needs to be turned into dual carriageway. If the proposed tram route to Clifton was already operational, extending it to an expanded park and ride facility at the new Parkway station and onwards to the airport could have been a serious option for reducing both the traffic on the road and its associated carbon emissions.

If the unthinkable does happen and the inquiry recommends the 'green

route' there is likely to be no shortage of Beestonians (and others) who are prepared to repel invaders at the weir fields rather than let their part of the Trent valley be ruined in order to allow motorists to get into Nottingham a few minutes earlier!

*Jack Smith
Local ecologist*

Answers to General Knowledge Quiz on page 15:

1. New York
2. Cornwall
3. Fourteen
4. Baroque
5. 221B Baker Street
6. Richard III