

England Access Forum

Brief biographies of members @ April 2009

North East

Steve Scoffin

Chair of the Tees Valley LAF and member of County Durham LAF. Works for Northumberland Wildlife Trust as Druridge Bay Development Manager (on behalf of the Druridge Bay Partnership) developing projects that conserve built and natural landscape features, and increase community participation through access to and learning about the landscape. Also a Secretary of State appointed Member of the North York Moors National Park Authority. Both of these involve social inclusion, recreation and access, biodiversity, archaeology and cultural heritage and supporting the rural economy. Outside of work interests include dogs, mountain and hill-walking, photography, orienteering, canoeing, and assessing expeditions for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award on Dartmoor and the North York Moors.

Pam Brooks

Retired teacher & OFSTED Inspector. Areas of interest include: long distance walking, horse riding, cycling, access for those with disabilities and conservation issues. Memberships include: Ramblers, LDWA, RSPB, BHS, Wildlife Trusts, Bat Conservation. Represents "other interests" on a joint LAF.

Yorkshire & Humberside

Hazel Armstrong

Walks, cycles and horserides. Currently Chair of East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull joint LAF and a member of North Lincolnshire LAF. Interested in and involved in access to the countryside for over 35 years. Main concerns are in getting more people, especially the young, disabled disadvantaged and ethnic communities to enjoy free fresh air and exercise in a non threatening environment whilst enjoying the scenery and improving inclusivity. Main hopes for a way forward would be the development of a truly cohesive network for all non motorised users and green traffic-free links between settlements to assist with the reduction of carbon emissions. Only when there is this web will people be physically able to get out of their cars.

Richard Holmes

Background in local authority and social services. Member of Wakefield LAF since July 2003 and a member of the Ramblers and National Trust. An active interest in rights of way as a walker and promoter of improved access for all providing opportunities for exercise and improved health and well being. Enjoys the 'great outdoors' through countryside and hill walking, cycling and camping. Working knowledge of disabilities and other barriers to access. Understands the importance of balancing the needs of individuals, businesses and organisations when access is being considered. Interested in helping to move forward the LAF agenda.

North West

Duncan Graham CBE

Since retiring from a career in local and national government has chaired voluntary bodies including Eden Rivers Trust. There, after a successful pollution compensation claim, was involved in habitat restoration, conservation of salmon and trout stocks, and the economic regeneration of the Eden Valley. In 2003 elected Chair of Cumbria LAF, which persuaded a then reluctant County Council to establish a brand new Countryside Access Team, appoint rangers, and recruit an enthusiastic team of volunteer wardens. During a spell tending black face sheep in Arran in the 1950s, established an enduring interest in the countryside, specifically the environment, health and recreation, rural transport, and rural deprivation.

Active interests embrace walking cycling, motor-cycling, fly-fishing and a garden railway. With others, campaigned to have the voice of LAFs heard at national level and for a closer working relationship with Natural England, culminating in the establishment of the England Access Forum

Edgar Erstbrunner

Chair of Wigan LAF, member of Stockport LAF. Member of all currently existing Rights of Way forums in Greater Manchester. Footpath Co-ordinator for the Ramblers (Manchester & High Peak Area) since 2002 and in that capacity working with (and occasionally opposing) all the Greater Manchester Highway Authorities, to protect the public rights of way network.

East Midlands

Andrew McCloy

Chair of Peak District LA F, one of the first to be established in England. A writer and journalist, specialising in walking and outdoor recreation; author of 18 books and numerous magazine and newspaper articles. A former information officer for the Ramblers, and also an occasional consultant on issues surrounding recreational access and sustainable communities, as well as serving as a Parish and District Councillor for Derbyshire village of Youlgrave.

(second rep is rotating)

West Midlands

Edgar Powell

Vice President of Open Spaces Society for the last 2 years and Chair of Worcestershire LAF for 5 years. A founder member of the Worcestershire Rights of Way and Access Liaison group and of the Herefordshire Rights of Way Liaison Group. Has walked approximately 14,000 miles on countryside public paths since 1978, the longest walk being 22 miles. Interested in common land, countryside access and village greens.

David Bowen

Awaiting information

East

Liddy Lawrence

One of two LAF representatives from Eastern Region on the England Access Forum. Chair of Hertfordshire LAF since its establishment some 4 years ago. Tries to ensure that the agenda covers all the areas of interest or concern to LAF members and members of the public who communicate with the LAF, as well as its statutory obligations. Hopes to encourage more members of the public to join the discussion by attending meetings or communicating via letters/e-mail/website. An interest in walking (a member of the Ramblers), and off -road cycling. Particularly interested in helping to make the countryside more accessible to people who may not normally consider visiting it; would like people to feel more confident about going into the countryside near their homes or for days out, and to have access to reliable information about where to go and how to get there. Gets great pleasure gardening and her allotment. Walks and cycles regularly.

Bob Smith

Awaiting information

South East

Alan Marlow

A member of the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum since its foundation 6 years ago, and just re-appointed for a further 3 years. Main area of representation is walking, but over the years has had active experience as a user in the countryside of motor vehicles and as a cyclist. Has lived in Hampshire almost all his life. An active member of the Ramblers both locally and at a county committee level; has worked pro-actively on members' behalf to improve access. A regular walk leader involved in all aspects of the Ramblers' activities. Walks extensively in spare time, both across the UK and abroad. Also, regularly involved in training and assessing youngsters in countryside and expedition skills for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Matthew Balfour

Born and brought up on a farm in Kent. A Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, first working in the rural sector in England and Scotland. Later, also worked with commercial and leisure property and in development before returning to rural estate management. A borough councillor in Kent, with particular responsibility for planning and transport, and involved in both Kent county wide and South East Regional matters. Chair of the Kent Countryside Access Forum.

South West

Ray Newbigin

Chairman of the Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire since 2006 and was previously Vice-Chairman from its inception in 2003.

His membership category is "other interests" and he is keen to increase the demand for outdoor recreation, especially for those living in urban areas. It is his belief that greater and consistent use of Public Rights of Way and of Access Land will increase the nation's health and well being.

While a student he cycled around Europe twice but now restricts himself to walking in Wales, England, Spain and Italy. He has just given up beekeeping after 33 years and has been a Vice President of the Llanthony Valley and District Show in the Brecon Beacons National Park for 20 years.

He worked mostly in industry and commerce and was a management consultant for some years. He became a Director of a public limited company in Bristol and was non-executive Chairman of a number of subsidiary companies. While working, he was a governor of the Bath Technical College for 16 years and Chairman for 9 years. He was Chairman of his Residents' Association for 17 years.

On retirement he became a mentor for the Prince of Wales Trust and helped some young disadvantaged people to start their own businesses.

Paul Heal

Vice Chairman and Chairman elect of Somerset LAF, Paul has recently retired having been a Partner in PricewaterhouseCoopers, the global accounting and business advisory firm. He is a Chartered Accountant and was a Partner for 20 years in the Bristol office but most recently has just spent 1 year in the New York office. He has been a member of Somerset LAF for 4 years and Vice-Chair for 3, often standing in for the Chair at regional and local meetings. He has lived for the last 22 years in East Pennard, near Shepton Mallet, Somerset where he and his wife have a smallholding, breeding pedigree Jacob sheep and a motley collection of rare breeds of chickens. He is Treasurer of the East Pennard PCC and his wife is organist and Church Warden. His interests are wide and varied, in addition to the smallholding Paul actively partakes in:

Walking... he has been a member of a Bristol based walking group for more than 20 years "Solvitur Ambulando" who meet with their dogs to walk 12/15 miles once a month with the occasional weekend walk

Motorsport... Paul is active as a competitor and organiser in classic car rallying and has been involved in competitions across the world including classic car rallies in South America, the Sahara, Eastern Europe and many local club events.

Business interests... He works on a part time basis with some of his former clients and he is a non executive director and Chairman of the Audit Committee of a public company listed on the Stock Exchange and Director and member of the Finance Committee of The Theatre Royal, Bath and Director and member of the Audit Committee of The Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.