

# HUMBLEDON OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION



**Providing challenging activities for people with disabilities**

**Twelfth Edition**

# Welcome to our 12th HOAA Magazine

## Reports on the programme of activities

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## Editorial

### Lockdown restrictions are now being eased

February 2020 marked the start of a prolonged and worrying period in HOAA's thirty five year history. We had faced many big problems previously and had always succeeded in delivering our annual programme of activities. But not this time. Covid arrived from nowhere and our 100% activity record was forced into a complete halt.

A pandemic totally beyond our control has prevented nearly all HOAA activities since then. Almost all our members are in the "extremely vulnerable" category and have been confined to their residential bubbles for well over a year. All the regular activities that used to enrich their lives by providing stimulation and friendships have been shut down.

We have only been able to organise two outdoor events - a maintenance camp at Grosmont and a canoe orienteering event at York. Sadly the social distancing requirements made it impossible for any people with disabilities to be involved. Our only ongoing success is that we have maintained regular regular minibus outings for members at Leechmere Road, one of the larger group homes in Sunderland.

HOAA is concerned about the harmful impact this long period of inactivity has had on the lives of our members with disabilities. Many rely on HOAA activities for their happiness and wellbeing. The restrictions have excluded them from their few precious opportunities for exercise and socialisation.

Happily we anticipate that better times are now much closer. All our members have had at least 1 job and the successful vaccination programme has given everybody hope that all the restrictions on group activities will soon be removed.

To add to the good news we have used this lockdown period to produce a new magazine. Our main message is that the commitment of the HOAA committee and helpers remains high. We look forward to restarting activities just as soon as the official restrictions have been lifted.



YORK CANOE RACE: One of many events cancelled in 2020 & 2021 because of the Covid pandemic

# HOAA could not do it without your help

## Thanks to all our Supporters

The Association receives an enormous amount of assistance from many sectors of the community. Without this generous practical help and financial support we could not sustain our programme of activities. Sincere thanks to all who have helped us.

### Practical Support

Our volunteer team of instructors and helpers

York Canoe Club

Eborienteers

The Ward family, Cragg Farm

Monkwearmouth Academy

The Marine Activities Centre

Springboard, Sunderland

Durham Amateur Rowing Club

New Bridge Academy

Steve Whitehead

Rachel Yale and her mother

Lady Taverners

### Financial Support

Lightfoot Family Charitable Trust

Tyne & Wear Community Foundation

Wearside Mobility

Greggs Foundation

Solar Solve Marine

Keith Whickham

Gate 7

Sir James Knott Trust

Sir John Priestman Charity Trust

Sunderland Symphony Orchestra

York Canoe Race Association

Peter Roberts

Lion's Club of Sunderland

National Lottery Community Fund

Hetton Lions Club

Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust

Ingham Street Masons, South Shields

Rotary Club of Houghton-le-Spring

Claremont Road House

Persimmon Community Champions



#### TOP MAP-MAKER:

Peter Roberts, a nationally renowned map maker, drew the map for the first Canoe-O event at York in 2019. Canoe-O has become one of HOAA's annual events.

## News from the Committee

### Annual meetings now held at spring camp



WINNER: Robert Gibbons was presented with the Endeavour Trophy at the AGM

In recent years the Annual Meeting has become an important part of the spring residential weekend. It was first held at the 2018 camp at Beamsley and was an immediate success with 45 members and friends attending. The following year at Coniston the attendance had risen to 55.

At camp the AGM fills the gap between the completion of the day's activities and the preparation of the evening meal. Members look forward to it as an opportunity to meet, talk together and to relax. On residential weekends they have plenty of time to discuss current topics and express enthusiasm for their favourite activities.

The climax of the meeting is the award of the Endeavour Trophy to the outstanding member of the year. Nobody has any idea who might win until the choice is made and explained by Dave Thompson. Recent winners have been Adam Collins, Justin Clarke and Robert Gibbons.

The Committee sends sincere thanks and best wishes to Brian and Alice Arrowsmith who have had to resign as trustees because of declining health. We are also delighted to welcome Geoff Pratt as our newest trustee. Geoff has already proved himself a huge help with canoeing, residential activities, driving and fundraising.

Paul Skinner is now well established as only our second treasurer. He took over from Chris May who had held the post ever

since HOAA was formed. Recently Chris and Paul were interviewed by the Tyne and Wear Community Foundation about HOAA's use of grant funds. The official report, written by Jon Goodwin, their Senior Advisor was very positive stating: "It was a successful and well managed grant award".

The Committee have continued to hold planning meetings throughout the Covid restrictions by Zoom. The main agenda item is always to consider if and when HOAA activities will be able to start up again.



CAMP VISIT: Geoff Pratt with Stephen Mewes and Wayne Collier at the Police Museum, Ripon

## HOAA now based at the Marine Activities Centre

### Third change of premises in two years

We hoped that our search for a permanent base might be over when New Bridge Academy offered HOAA a home after we had been evicted out of the garages. Unfortunately our stay at their school turned out to be very short indeed. Just a year later we were informed that the school themselves were having to move away.

We were again left to face the extremely difficult problem of finding new premises in only a few weeks. Incredibly another kind rescuer came to our aid. In response to our plight Pat Murray (manager of the Marine Activities Centre) offered HOAA space at their Roker Harbour compound. He also made a storage cage available for our kayaks at their sea front site.

Fortunately HOAA and MAC had worked well together for a long time. The HOAA bell boat had been on permanent loan to MAC for over 20 years. In return MAC have always provided practical support to HOAA whenever we requested it. We are especially grateful to their former manager Pat Murray for welcoming the opportunity to help a charity in the special needs sector.



We quickly organised a fund raising campaign and raised £2,500 to buy the large shipping container needed to house our equipment securely. Then Chris May had the big task of organising the moving of all our canoes, trailers and equipment from the school into the MAC compound.

Afterwards Chris reported: "The actual move from the school to MAC was completed in just one day. Many thanks to Charles, Dave, David and Paul who did the work. Everyone worked hard and got the job done despite heavy traffic that got progressively worse as the day went on".

Of course that was just the start of the removal work. The container needed fitting out with canoe racks and hanging rails - another job completed by Chris.

Pat Murray has since retired but Paul Willett is now in charge at MAC and has been equally helpful to HOAA. Despite some access problems due to the lockdown we are hoping that our stay at MAC will be a long and happy one.

OUR NEW STORE:  
A container at MAC has been fitted out to store canoes and equipment

# Transport Matters

## Minibus provides a lifeline for residents during lockdown

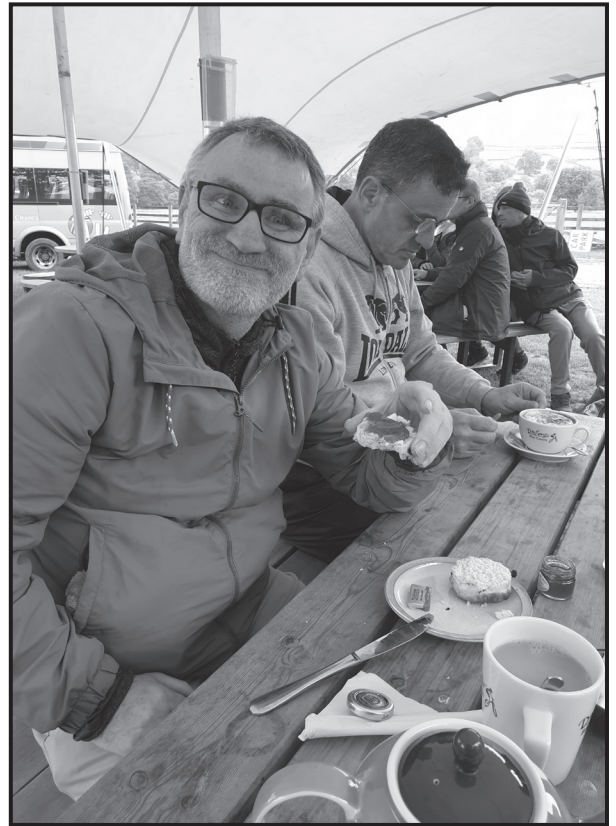
Disabled people have been amongst those hardest hit by the pandemic. However for eight members and their staff at Leechmere Road Centre the HOAA minibus has provided a means of escape during their lockdown period.

Leechmere provides supported accommodation for a group of people with learning disabilities. They are all in the same “bubble” and Dave Thompson and his staff have still been able to take them out and about locally on regular “bus-walks”. Dave’s account of their outings follows below.

“We did our best to keep the group happy indoors with art and crafts as well as with garden events when the weather was good. We played games like boules and skittles and now and again had a barbeque. But it was the minibus that was key in keeping everyone’s mental and physical health in a good place. It meant we could continue with regular trips out and enjoy fresh air and exercise together.

“We went to Marsden Grotto several times and then walked to South Shields in small groups of 2 or 3, keeping everyone socially distanced. We did the same at Hartlepool Marina and walked around the bay. Some groups even walked all the way to Seaton Carew and back again. We also went to Tunstall Hill, Penshaw Monument, Herrington Country Park, Seaburn and to the Sunderland Glass Centre.

“These outings have been very important in keeping everyone happy and healthy during lockdown. I mean this for the staff team as well as the residents we support. The whole group looks forward to these organised



ESCAPING FROM LOCKDOWN: Weekly bus-walks helped to keep the residents happy and healthy

walks especially when the reward for their effort is a coffee and a cake at a café. We hope to keep these trips going as a regular activity even when the restrictions are finally lifted”.

Unfortunately the minibus failed its MOT recently and has needed over £800 of repairs. This is forcing the committee to consider the option of hiring buses rather than the convenience of owning our own. Hiring would be much more economical in running costs and volunteer time. The downside is that the bus would no longer be available to help with the great work being done by special groups like Leechmere.

SO GOOD TO BE OUTSIDE: These walkers are enjoying being in lovely countryside



# Swimming Club

## Swimmers look forward to their club re-opening

Weekly swimming lessons provide one of the best opportunities for people with a disability to improve their physical and mental health. The downside is that swimming requires expensive facilities, special transport and above all keen and committed volunteers. It is a source of pride that HOAA had kept their weekly swimming club running from 1985 until the enforced Corona lockdown in 2020.

Dave Thompson has organised the swimming club at Monkwearmouth School for much of this period. His report follows on below:

“Our swimming afternoon usually starts with a 1-2 mile walk as a group. We stop at Sue’s café at Roker for drinks and refreshments before moving onto the pool. Liz, our instructor is always there waiting for us with a smile”.

“In the pool we use many different activities. Non-swimmers try water exercises, use large and small play equipment and take part in group games. The swimmers practice improving their floating, strokes and diving and enjoy racing each other”.

“The main attraction of the club is the social interaction both during the walk and in the pool. Everyone enjoys each other’s company. People from different centres eagerly look forward to the club as an opportunity of meeting up with good friends”.

At the time the pool was shut down there were around ten swimmers taking part plus supporting staff. The swimmers included: Lauren Richardson, Matthew Turner, Chris Smith, Andrew Tufton, Derick Barnfather, Wayne Collier, Johnny Reed, John Anderson, Jamie Bell, Tony Hilton, Justin Clark, Gary Harm, Colin Campbell.



HAPPY SWIMMERS: Colin Campbell and Derick Barnfather



SWIMMING THROUGH HOOPS: A popular group activity



FLOATING THE EASY WAY: Wayne enjoying himself at the swimming club



# Durham Canoe Races

## Canoeists still enjoying 'hare and hound' chases



PROUD WINNER: Adam Collins with his trophy

The chasing format of our annual Winter/Spring series of canoe races at Durham is still successful after 30 years of competition. Slowest boats go off first and the fastest last with individual start times given to everyone. Trying to give all crews a fair chance is always a guessing game but somehow it usually works well.

The desire of all competitors to “stay out in front” or “to catch the others up” remains a strong incentive. Every race seems to result in individual battles going on throughout the course. Race organiser and handicapper David Mills reflected ruefully: “My carefully planned tight finishes rarely materialise since the paddlers are always determined to prove the handicapper wrong. But the racing is always keen”.

Race records show that the highest number of competitors occurred in February 1992 with 42 canoes. In recent years the number of entries have rarely exceeded 12 and most of these came from HOAA members and their supporters paddling two-man canadian canoes. All HOAA canoeists wish to express their appreciation of the enthusiasm and committed support given by their volunteer instructors.

### Canoe Race Winners

To actually win a HOAA canoe race is still a memorable achievement.

The following is a list of our most recent winning crews:

John Adamson & Brian Arrowsmith

Justin Clarke & Darren Fazakerly

Tony Hilton & Dave Thompson

Kevin Ward & Dave Thompson

Justin Clarke & Chris May



THE CHAMPION: Andrew McNally receives the canoe race cup from Keith Whickham

# Durham to Finchale Canoe Race

## Cancelled through Covid but it will be back

The Covid pandemic early in 2020 forced our 33rd annual Durham to Finchale Abbey canoe race into its first ever cancellation. Restrictions are now being relaxed and organiser David Mills is still hoping to be able to hold it on the August bank holiday Monday.

We are determined that this race will continue because it is such a memorable canoeing course. It flows through a steep, thickly wooded and very remote valley. The river is fast and exciting all the way through a series of safe and shallow rapids.

The 5 mile course is challenging for HOAA crews who do not get much practice on moving water. The members volunteer in numbers to take part in the race. It is much more difficult to find enough experienced helmsmen to steer the canoes through the tricky rapids. The essential skill is being able to slow the boat down and keep in the deepest channel so as not to get stuck on the continuing menace of submerged rocks.

Competitors have come from as far away as Blyth, York, Bradford and Teesside to take part. The largest number of participants was in 2010 when there were 94 finishers.

Chris May, who has the difficult job of selecting the HOAA crews, wishes to thank the team of volunteer instructors. Their commitment makes it possible to get up to six HOAA canadian crews taking part in the race every time.

### Best HOAA crews on moving water

The latest race showed that the best HOAA crews on moving water were:

- 1st Tony Hilton & Chris May (8th)
- 2nd Jamie Bell & Dan Raine (14th)
- 3rd Kevin Ward & Dave Thompson (17th)



PRESENTATION TIME: Enthusiastic applause is given to all canoe race trophy winners

# York Canoe Race

## HOAA is top team in the short course

This Canoe Race is organised by a local York committee but this is still a distinctly HOAA event. It is our biggest canoeing event of the year with competitors coming from all parts of the country. HOAA paddlers always do extremely well here, mainly due to the strong support they get from their very capable instructors from York.

The HOAA team arrive with large numbers, usually in two full minibuses and several cars. The presence of our happy, friendly members, always eager to meet up with their distant friends, adds hugely to the special atmosphere at the event.

The results of the last race shows just how dominant HOAA have become in the short course race. HOAA had 13 out of 21 boats. Tony Hilton supported by Adi Carlin was our top performer with an excellent second position. Another

activity group for disabled people - "You-Can" from Manchester - have been equally successful in the medium race, winning the team trophy for several successive years from 2010 onwards.

14 <sup>th</sup> ANNUAL YORK CANOE RACE - SHORT COURSE RESULTS				
Pos	Competitors	Kayak / Canoe	HOAA paddlers	Time
1	Andrew Laister	single kayak		19:15
2	Tony Hilton & Adi Carlin	double kayak	HOAA	20:10
3	Matthew Barwick	single kayak		20:42
4	Orna & Art O'Toole	double kayak	HOAA	21:03
5	Belinda Martiner & Dave Thompson	canadian crew	HOAA	21:41
6	Kevin Ward & Chris May	canadian crew	HOAA	22:09
7	Fionn O'Toole	single kayak	HOAA	22:17
8	Jamie Bell & Dan Raine	canadian crew	HOAA	22:27
9	Justin Clarke & Gee Carlin	double kayak	HOAA	22:27
10	Eric Cox	canadian solo		23:01
11	Tickle family (Lewis, Alice, Tilly, Barney)	canadian crew	HOAA	23:59
12	Windass family (Steve, Sarah & Ester)	canadian crew		24:56
13	David Wilson & Tim Allsopp	canadian crew	HOAA	25:19
14	Lou Hodgson	single kayak		25:45
15	Stephen Mewes & Geoff Pratt	canadian crew	HOAA	26:46
16	Abigail Clarke & Tyler Walker	canadian crew		27:51
17	Adam Collins & Darren Fazakerly	canadian crew	HOAA	28:09
18	Clare Parkin	single kayak	HOAA	28:18
19	Johnny Reed & Brian Arrowsmith	canadian crew	HOAA	29:00
20	Ben Lawn	single kayak		DNF
21	Ben Johnson	single kayak		DNF



TOP TEAM: You-Can paddlers have won the medium race team trophy many times

# Canoe Orienteering

## New event goes ahead with social distancing

Canoe “O” showed that HOAA is still able to organise a new event enjoyed by all ages and abilities. The first Canoe “O” was held on September 19th 2019. Afterwards Richard Ollerenshaw, a participating canoeist, sent back this appreciative Email:

“I turned up yesterday to try and combine kayaking and orienteering which was great. However what stood out was seeing people of all abilities included and fully engaged. Simply fantastic”. Further encouraging feedback comments from participants included: “It was much more interesting than just paddling”. “Our paddlers enjoyed looking for the flags, shouting the numbers out and even writing them down”.

In response we planned a second Canoe “O” for September 2020. Ominously Covid had arrived everywhere then putting the event in serious doubt. However by putting social distancing precautions in place the event was able to proceed with a reduced entry of 15 canoes. All competitors were given individual start times and a separate carpark was arranged for the participants.

Unfortunately none of our members were able to take part because of being in the “highly vulnerable” category. However HOAA helpers did excellently with Ian Puckrin and Art O’Toole winning the event in 46.17, Chris May and Sarah Benson taking 3rd place in 55.34 and David Mills also finding all 24 controls in 8th place.

The waterproof maps were drawn and supplied by Peter Roberts. The event was supported by Eborienteers who loaned their timing equipment free of charge.



PHEW, IT WENT WELL: Members of the Canoe “O” organising team after the event

# Bishopthorpe Canoe-O 2019

25 individuals, pairs and trios took part in this event on Saturday 21st September organised and planned by EBORs Phil Puckrin M75. He comments, "We were delighted with our first Canoe-O. There was a very wide range of ages taking part (6 – 80+ years) and it was great to have two paddle boarders as well as all types of kayaks and canoes. Everyone stayed focussed from start to finish and everyone paddled as if they were really enjoying the event. The event was a financial as well as a sporting success and

raised over £120.00 to help fund HOAA's next residential outdoor activity weekend at Askrigg in October. The charity thanks all the entrants and helpers for their support. We would like to have a similar event next year." Paul Lister & Teejae cleared all 23 controls in 38 minutes to

win by 10 minutes. First Solo paddler was Duncan Birtwistle OD in 7<sup>th</sup>. Peter Roberts EBOR was drafted in to make the map having made an Urban map which included the river last year. Event insurance was through the charity. Results can be found at [www.eborienteers.org.uk](http://www.eborienteers.org.uk)



Start & Finish at the same place.

## York Canoe -O- Event 21.09.2019

60 Minute Score format.

10 points for each control recorded with penalty of 5 points per minute late.

Bishopthorpe Canoe Course  
Scale 1:5000, 2.5m  
Survey & cartography by Peter Roberts. Riverbank survey by Steve Whitehead.  
© EBOR

Scale 1:5000  
0m 150m

## Organised Walks

### Alice hangs up her walking boots

Group walks with between ten and thirty participants have consistently been HOAA's most popular activity. Walks are organised in conjunction with every canoe event and are programmed daily during all residential camps to provide a choice of activities.

The essential requirement for every walk is a committed leader, able to plan good routes and make sure everyone remains happy and safe. After twenty years of leading HOAA walks, Alice Arrowsmith has decided it is now time to pass this task onto someone else. Alice outlines her way of running a successful walking programme below:

"There is always a walk held on HOAA activity days because hardly any get cancelled because of the weather. We just put on our waterproofs and strong shoes and head out. Our aim is to promote health and wellbeing and we always return feeling invigorated".

"The walks are of a suitable length to fit in with the accompanying canoeing event and usually start from the same place in Durham or in York. Both these cities are very attractive and give several possibilities for interesting walks. The facilities at Durham Canoe Club are always welcoming and provide an excellent starting off point. Although we are always very close to cities, the aim is to make the walks as rural as possible, avoiding distractions such as cafés and shops".

"We try to vary the routes as much as possible, taking into account the weather, the terrain and accessibility for people in wheelchairs. In addition to the leader we have back markers and plenty of accompanying carers to



SHORT AND SWEET: These walkers made good friends with a miniature pony



POPULAR ACTIVITY: HOAA walks are nearly always well attended

support and encourage any walkers who like to take their time".

"Our groups are always of very varied ability. The more able are allowed to stride out but know that they must be willing to wait from time to time to allow slower participants to catch up. We mostly stay together but occasionally split into faster and slower groups. Then the leader sometimes has to put a spurt on to catch up those in front".

"Although participants vary greatly in age and ability the enthusiasm of all is obvious in the two questions they always ask: "Where are we walking to" and "When is the next walk"?"

HOAA send thanks to Alice for giving them so many opportunities for enjoyable walks in lovely countryside.

# Camping at Low Bank Activity Centre, Coniston

## Lakeside location with excellent facilities

This centre has nearly everything keen campers could wish for. Situated on the shore of Lake Coniston, surrounded by mountains and with spectacular canoeing and walking straight from the centre. It has accessible facilities making it easy for us to include Kevin and Burrell and their wheelchairs.

HOAA has held two memorable four day camps here, with a third fully booked but having to be cancelled due to the corona virus. Attendances have been high with age ranges varying from 9 – 74 years. 14 members and 20 helpers attended the first camp and 18 campers and 28 helpers on the second.

Our canoeists had the perfect destination - a café on the opposite side of the lake. Everyone could see where there were heading but it was still a day's paddle to get there and back. Instructors Lew, Tim and Ady made sure that every paddle was full of interest with frequent stops for skill practices.

The walkers, led by Simon, Adrian and Jill, were equally happy exploring the wheelchair accessible paths around Tarn Hows and parts of the Cumbrian Way. Stephen Mewes and Jamie Bell particularly enjoyed taking Lew's dog Sky on their walks and took very good care of him.

There were also plenty of options for evening entertainment: board games, night rambles, even a singsong around a lakeshore camp fire led by Chris Milner on his guitar. As well as all this there were Lew and Adrian's super camp meals to be enjoyed. What a great camp!



END OF A GOOD DAY:  
Having a singsong around the campfire before bed time



CANOING ON CONISTON: The canoeists paddled from their centre to a café on the far shore

# Camping at Low Mill Activity Centre, Askrigg

## Highest camp attendance



MAKING FACES IS FUN: This group are hard at work carving pumpkin faces

Our two autumn weekends here were extremely popular. On the first, 17 members and 20 helpers attended. On the second visit in October 2019, the number of campers had risen to 22 members and 28 helpers – a record attendance for any HOAA camp.

One noticeable absentee though was camp leader Lew Tickle who had to miss his first HOAA camp in 20 years. Fortunately a team of volunteers were ready to cover his many roles and they all did brilliant jobs. Adrian and Jill organised the cooking. Tim and Alette supervised the canoeists and took them on a river trip and a paddle on Lake Semer Water. The walkers were well looked after by Simon who gave

them a close-up look at the spectacular Aysgarth Falls during a riverside ramble.

A completely new and very successful evening activity was making pumpkin lanterns. First the campers cut out scary faces and the results were fantastically good. The pumpkins were then lit up inside with electric night lights and there was a competition for whose was the best. To make the night walk doubly enjoyable the instructors then laid a surprise pumpkin trail. The result was high excitement as the campers encountered each one lit up in the dark.

Other camp highlights included a ride on the Settle – Carlisle steam railway and a visit to the Police and Workhouse Museum at Ripon.

Amongst the feedback comments Saira seemed to speak for all the campers when she wrote: “Thanks for inviting us to be part of such a wonderful residential. It is such a happy and rewarding weekend. I am looking forward to the next one”.



BUT THEN CAME THE GHOST WALK: One of the scary faces lit up at night



# Camping at Beamsley Outdoor Centre

## Our first camp wedding



A HAPPY COUPLE: Andrew dressed the part for a photo with the bride

Beamsley is our most used outdoor centre with six HOAA camps to date. The latest one will always be remembered as our first camp to have had a wedding as one of the activities. Saira, one of our keenest instructors, arranged her marriage to Graham on the actual camp weekend. She bravely invited all 40 HOAA campers to her wedding reception at Bolton Abbey which included a spectacular firework display. The wedding was the highlight of the camp for Andrew and he arrived appropriately dressed for the occasion.

There was still time for the usual walking and canoeing activities. The canoeists had a long paddle along the Leeds Liverpool canal. The walkers were taken through the Beamsley Abbey Estate following a colourful trail of Easter Bunnies.

Sixteen members took part in the camp including Kevin in his wheelchair. Our team of helpers included some very young helpers - Gee, Charlie and Fionn who have been on several HOAA camps already. They have all made themselves into invaluable members of the camp organising team.

Afterwards Chris May thanked all the instructors and helpers on behalf of HOAA: "Thanks for another excellent camp and a relaxed and happy time. Thanks especially to Saira and Graham for sharing their wedding celebration with us".



EASTER HIKE: The campers followed a long trail of Easter Bunnies to Bolton Abbey

## Camping at Pinecroft Activity Centre, Ingleton

### Full of activity, surprises and fun

Our fourth camp here took place with 16 campers and 16 helpers. As usual the main activity options were walking and canoeing. The canoeists enjoyed two full day paddles both full of interest and impressive scenery. The first was five miles down the River Lune. This was thanks to Gressingham Anglers who were kind enough to give the necessary permission for us to paddle it.

The second paddle was a section of Lake Windermere starting from Fell Foot. This was very different canoeing being far out from the shore on exposed water. Fionn demonstrated impressive water confidence when he capsized and nonchalantly swam his kayak to the nearest canadian without appearing the least bit concerned.



GOING UNDERGROUND: The campers at the entrance to Ingleton Cave

The walkers found two wheelchair accessible paths so that Kevin and Stephen from ESPA could take part. Most of the group also took part in a night walk between Austwick and Clapham. Mysterious pumpkin lanterns kept appearing very spookily along the route.

The last activity of the camp for the whole group was another highlight - an underground tour around Ingleborough Cave. Afterwards Chris summarised the weekend: "This was another happy, problem free camp. Everything went smoothly. Well done organisers for all your planning, preparation, ideas and enthusiasm".



DINNER TIME: The campers enjoying their evening meal at Pinecroft Activity Centre

## Grosmont, just the place for wild camping.

### Cabin exterior gets a brush-up



ROOF SWEEPER: Art was the only one light enough to go on top of the cabin

HOAA has been camping at Grosmont since 1988. Our members and friends love going there because of the remote location and the unspoiled countryside. We no longer use it for large camps because the washing and toilet facilities are primitive by modern standards. However it remains very useful for wild camping.

Grosmont camps are always popular with children and adults who enjoy the experience of camping out of doors. Here everyone lives close to nature and quickly learns the importance of doing things for themselves, working together and helping others. Lots of work gets done on the site but it is always accompanied with plenty of fun activity and exploration of the surrounding woodlands.

Several groups of outdoor activity instructors have received very useful training here and maintenance camps are organised every year. Phil, Chris, Geoff Pratt and Chris Milner camped during a sunny weekend in June. They cleared several trees overhanging the cabin and unblocked the spring water supply. In August, Phil, Chris, Sarah and Brian had a busy day painting the exterior of the cabin. They were closely followed by two family camping groups: Ian, Fionn, Art, Roy, Amy, Lockie and Rhianna. They had a few walks, finished painting the cabin and fixed a new bench outside.

Phil also had an opportunity to visit the new land owners Rachel and Stuart Ward, to tell them how appreciative we are for the use of the site.



PAINT GANG: Brian, Sarah, Chris and Phil gave the cabin a fresh coat of paint

## Blind and striving for the mountain tops

### Ian's on the lookout for new challenges

Ian Wood, aged 42 from York, has been registered blind since he was five years old. He also suffers from mitochondria, a muscle wasting disease which has caused him to use a wheelchair since 2008. But Ian's own priority is: "To get as much physical activity into my life while I am still able".

He certainly lives up to this. The number of very tough outdoor challenges that he has undertaken is astounding. It includes 2 triathlons, 3 sky dives, 2 bungee jumps, a wing walk and numerous sailing and skiing trips. He said: "I think I am more sensible these days, I don't go on white water any more. But no one else believes me."

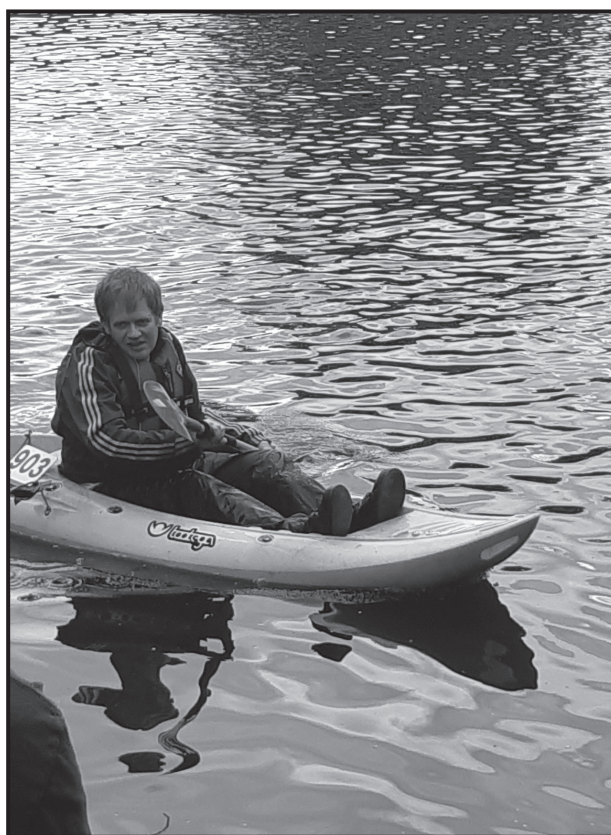
Ian has been a member of York Canoe Club for over 20 years. He can't see what is coming up on the river and requires a guide to shadow him and keep shouting out steering directions. Nevertheless he paddled his kayak independently in the medium course of the York Canoe Race and also took part in the Canoe "O" event.

Like all people with severe disabilities Ian has suffered greatly through the Covid restrictions. They have put a stop on all the physical activities that mean so much to him. In desperation he asked Phil to help him find a new challenge that he could look forward to in 2021. Ian's request stated: "I would love to get to the top of one of the Yorkshire 3 peaks and I thought you might have contacts who could help. I would need to do it in my wheelchair but I can walk a few steps if I am holding on to someone."

Phil passed on his plea to Yorkshire Fell and Cave Rescue teams but secretary, Brian Cowie replied: "We have found it takes a lot of effort, manpower and resources to get someone in a wheelchair up any of the three peaks. Under the present Covid restrictions, all activities deemed non-essential are banned."

Rather than being discouraged by this setback Ian just set himself a new challenge of pushing his own wheelchair independently 10K at York. He used the push to raise funds for the Lily Foundation, a charity that helps people with mitochondrial disease.

HOAA says: "Well done and keep on setting yourself challenges. We know Ian will succeed at everything he sets his mind to do".



CANOEING BLIND: Ian Wood paddling the kayak he used for the York Canoe Race



A HEAD FOR HEIGHTS: Ian has completed a wing walk, 2 bungee jumps and 3 sky dives

## Keith scores top marks for encouraging canoeing

### Gate 7 sponsors the Durham Canoe Races

HOAA has been doubly blessed to find a sponsor who is also keen to take part in their activities. Keith Whickham has been a regular competitor in the HOAA canoe races since they were moved to Durham over 20 years ago. He always races to win even when he starts as the back marker.

Keith contracted polio as a youngster which seriously affected his mobility. He did not let his disability stop him from winning national honours in the BCU slalom championships. Now in later life he remains ever ready for a challenge on the water. In 2015, when HOAA was in need of financial support for their annual Durham to Finchale Race, he volunteered his own firm, Gate 7, as the sponsor. Since then he has done everything he can to keep all the HOAA canoe races at Durham running successfully.

Every year Gate 7 provides a huge array of trophies and medals for the competitors at the Durham to Finchale Canoe Race. In his recent response to David Mills, HOAA's canoe race organiser, Keith wrote: "Good luck with your ambitions for your Durham to Finchale Event. Please rely on whatever support Gate 7 can give".



There are prizes for almost every type of canoe, for school pupils of all ages and for HOAA members. Gate 7 has also donated three sets of new numbers to renew the race bibs which suffer from heavy wear and tear. Gate 7's latest initiative to boost the entries was their most generous yet - they offered to pay the race entry fees for everyone who took part in the annual race.

Keith's whole family have all been successful athletes and high achievers and are always supportive towards HOAA. His wife Audrey often attends the canoe races. Oliver, his son held the fastest individual race time for many years. In 2020, his daughter Kate was awarded an MBE for Services to Export for her work with Gate 7.

HOAA says: "Our sincere thanks for the tremendous help that Keith, his family and Gate 7 have given us over many, many years of organising canoe races".

CHAMPION CANOEIST:  
Keith Whickham paddling on the Olympic Slalom Course in London

# Treasurer's Travels

## Paul's on the lookout for orchids



BEE ORCHID: This rare wild flower grows in Fulwell quarries

HOAA treasurer Paul Skinner enjoys walking and cycling throughout the year. He recommends everyone to take a daily walk, especially during this covid period when our lives have been so restricted. He points out that we don't have to go far to find pleasant paths to walk and explore. The fresh air and exercise will be good for us and there are always enjoyable and relaxing things to see.

Amongst Paul's favourite places to walk are Fulwell quarries, the cliff top paths, the old Marsden quarry and around Souter lighthouse. He finds that the local cliffs and countryside are always alive with flowers and bird life. While he is walking he keeps looking for how many different flowers and birds he can spot. Paul particularly likes to stop and watch the kestrels that nest on the old lime kilns at Marsden.

Whatever the time of year he finds it a joy to discover how many different flowers grow on Sunderland's limestone cliffs. In the short winter days the early snowdrops never fail to lift our spirits. Not many weeks later will come a host of cheerful spring flowers such as daffodils, crocuses and primroses.

Paul likes to go there and look for the rare bee orchid, so called because it has flowers that look like a bee. Paul says this is not an easy flower to find but we might spot the yellow centaury that often grow in the same places. These flowers look like bright stars.

Paul reminds us that some of the summer wild flowers that grow in Fulwell quarries are very special indeed. From May to July he

Paul also recommends Fulwell Windmill as a great place to walk to. This mill is in full working order and its sails still turn. He works there as a volunteer and can arrange to show groups around the mill if they are fit enough to climb the steep stairs. And it has its own café, another good reason for a visit.



YELLOW CENTAURY: These flowers look like bright stars



FULWELL WINDMILL: Its sails still turn

# The Tyne & Wear Heritage Way

## Stay local and get the most out of a long walk

Chris and Ruth May like to challenge themselves to complete a multi-day long distance walk every year. This year strict Government guidance for everyone was stay local so their trek had to be the Tyne and Wear Heritage Way. The route is: Seaburn, Roker, Washington Village, Beamish, Causey Arch (the world's first single span railway bridge), Wylam, Ponteland, Seaton Sluice and down the coast and back to Seaburn via the ferry.

It is normally an 80 mile walk spit up into 9 sections but because they could not use public transport they had to change this into a series of circular walks. In the end they did about 160 miles and it took them 15 walking days. They discovered that it required lots of creative planning in order to complete their challenge under the on-going restrictions. Chris's account follows below:

“The idea of the trail is to explore the history and heritage of the north east. Much of it follows the wagonways, later railways, that linked the many, many coal mines to the rivers and the coast where the coal was loaded onto boats. The north east led the world in those days – full of inventiveness and the will to make things happen”.

“Something that we did not know about before was about the Battle of Newburn Ford which took place in 1640. Apparently, you could walk across the Tyne at low tide then. It was a battle between the English, on the north side surprisingly and the Scots on the south side. The Scots won 10 nil and went on to occupy Newcastle in the next round - and the rest as they say is history”!

“It was a very enjoyable walk through the wonderful and very varied north east countryside and coastal paths. Different flowers appeared week by week. Perhaps the prettiest countryside was either side of Wylam”.



THEY DID IT: Chris and Ruth May at the end of another long walk

## Brian and Alice bow out as trustees

### Outstanding HOAA service

For over 25 years Alice and Brian Arrowsmith have thrown themselves enthusiastically into every aspect of HOAA life. As helpers, activity leaders, committee members and trustees they have been totally dependable and ever willing to take on responsibilities with confidence and good humour.

Brian started as a swimming club helper and it wasn't long before he had taken charge of the deep end swimming group. Then he was asked to help in a canoe event by helping one of our Canadian crews. Typically he has paddled in almost every one of our canoe events ever since.

They both volunteered to help with one of our early special sports days. Within a few years Brian had taken on responsibility for co-ordinating both the Washington and the Hetton Sports Days. These were very large annual events with hundreds of participants and required wide-ranging programmes of activities to be organised.

In addition Brian has been on most of our residential visits as a volunteer instructor. The list of his "behind the scenes" work is just as extensive including campsite and equipment maintenance, grass cutting at Grosmont, driving the minibus; loading and unloading the canoe trailer and any other jobs that Chris has needed help with.

It has been a very similar story with Alice. She started as a helper on our walks and then took over as the walking leader to replace Pat Skinner. She has helped with most activities, followed Brian on to our committee and readily volunteered to become a trustee.

Brian and Alice have also succeeded brilliantly in involving their children and their partners as HOAA helpers. Richard, Kiera, James, Geoff and David have all been dependable and enthusiastic helpers at our canoe and walking events.

Sadly Brian has developed Alzheimer's disease and they both have to slow down now. HOAA thanks Brian and Alice for their immense contributions and hope they will continue to be part of our Association for a long time to come. We are sure that the whole Arrowsmith family will retain happy memories about their HOAA exploits.



BRIAN AND ALICE ARROWSMITH: Gave outstanding service to HOAA



## Lyke Wake Memories

### Long distance walk 33 years ago marked the formation of HOAA

In 2020 the Sunderland Echo published a series of old photos celebrating local walking groups. What a surprise to see one showing a group from Humbledon Special School plus some friends and supporters dated March 1988. This was the year in which HOAA became officially formed as an independent association. A copy of the original press story is printed below. Observant readers might recognise two existing HOAA members in the photo.

## Pupils do gruelling soft-shoe shuffle



Pupils and friends of Humbledon School who took part in the Lyke Wake Walk in March 1988, left to right: front, Ian Joyce, Desmond Tipling, Patrick Livingston and Mark Pollard. Back, Philip Puckrin (teacher), John Connolly (manager of the Sunderland Abbey National who walked with them) and John Adamson

Five handicapped youngsters set off with boots made for walking to do the Lyke Wake Walk and ended up finishing the 40-mile hike in training shoes!

When they camped out half-way in the frozen waste, they left their boots out in the snow - and they froze solid. The five, pupils of Humbledon School, Sunderland, couldn't get them back on again and had to do a soft shoe shuffle to complete the 40-mile journey. It took them over 29 hours.

"It was a big challenge for these teenagers," said teacher Philip Puckrin. "Only three of them finished but it was cold with temperatures well below freezing. Under the circumstances they all did very well".

"We left our boots outside the tents at the half-way mark and they were stiff as boards in the morning. So the youngsters had to put on training shoes to get them to the finish".

"The whole route was covered in deep snow and the support vehicle could not get to all the check points".

This was the first long-distance winter walk for the teenagers from the school which has pupils with severe learning difficulties.

## News about Members

### Members of all ages keep on challenging themselves

#### Cumbria Way

Two HOAA couples have walked this 75 mile walk from Ullverston to Carlisle. Chris and Ruth May completed it in 5 days. Brian and Sarah Benson took 6 days.

#### Three Peaks Walk

Fionn and Art O'Toole attempted their first Three Peaks walk as part of their family group. Fionn, aged 11 years completed this tough circuit in just over 12 hours. Art (aged 7 years) climbed two of the peaks and walked 19 miles. They were accompanied by their mother Orna and Aunty Sarah. Ian Puckrin and Brian Benson acted as the support crew.

#### Rotary Club Talk

Geoff Pratt gave an entertaining talk to Houghton Rotary Club about HOAA. It resulted in a £150 donation to the Association.

#### From swimming teacher to priest

Paul Kilduff was HOAA's popular swimming teacher for many years. He is now training to become a Catholic priest at Leeds University.

#### Orienteering training paying off for Art, Fionn and Phil

Art (aged 8 years) and Fionn O'Toole (11 years) were fed up of having to stay at home during the dismal winter lockdown weeks. When Phil Puckrin (their grandpa) offered to organise regular orienteering training for them they both jumped at the opportunity. Since Christmas Art and Fionn have been training hard twice a week concentrating on map reading and running. So far they have not missed a training session and Phil has been delighted with both their performances at recent orienteering events. He says: "I am at the stage now when competing myself is difficult. I'm finding training the boys much more enjoyable and rewarding".

#### Rebecca is HOAA's youngest canoeist

Rebecca Rudland had her first taste of canoeing in August 2020 thanks to parents Phil and Caroline. She was just one year old and she loved it. We hope this will be the start of a lifetime's love of the water.



THE RUDLAND FAMILY: Rebecca (aged 1 year old), Caroline, Joshua and Phil

## Farewell to Friends

**Sadly, since our last magazine we have been notified about illness and deaths of several former members and supporters. HOAA have warm memories of them all**

### **Paul Henderson**

Paul was one of the dwindling group of Humbledon School pupils that started the Association. After leaving school he remained one of our keenest and most popular members until over 50 years old. Now his disability has progressed so much that he is too weak to take part in any of our activities. He particularly enjoyed swimming, canoeing and camping activities including camping out in tents at Grosmont, Barrenthwaite Hall and York.

### **Craig Conlon**

Craig suddenly passed away aged under 30 years. HOAA camps and walks were highlights in his life. He particularly enjoyed the residential weekends.

### **Wendy Childs**

Wendy was another of the founding group of Humbledon School pupils. She was a keen walker and attended most HOAA residential camps. During free time at camps she could usually be found with a smiling face happily engaged in colouring intricate patterns into her art book.

### **Adrian Moore**

Adrian was chosen as the Endeavour Trophy winner in 2018 because of his hugely positive influence on HOAA members. He took part enthusiastically in every activity on offer and especially enjoyed camping and canoeing events.

### **Dave Crombie**

Dave was the parent of Neil Crombie, a Humbledon School pupil who had difficulty in walking due to cerebral palsy. Dave was always happy to accompany Neil on any activity to enable him to take part. He helped in the changing rooms at the swimming club, provided manual support for Neil on walks and drove the minibus to the drama club whenever we were short of drivers.

### **Joyce Ward**

Joyce became the new owner of our campsite at Grosmont a few years after we had had been invited there in 1985. She kindly permitted us to stay on and as a result HOAA continues to enjoy memorable camping experiences at Grosmont.

### **Penny Bell**

Penny and Jack Bell were our nearest neighbours at Grosmont and always proved to be dependable friends whenever we needed help or advice.

### **Colin Short**

A former Sunderland head teacher and school governor, Colin was a great help in finding new premises for HOAA at New Bridge Academy.



PAUL HENDERSON (centre):  
A founder member of HOAA and keen canoeist

# Annual Programme of Events



## Our Activities

**Thursday  
(weekly)**

**Swimming Club (4-5pm)  
Monkwearmouth School**

**January**

**Canoeing and Walking Durham**

**February**

**Canoeing and Walking Durham**

**March**

**Canoeing and Walking Durham**

**April**

**Canoeing and Walking Durham**

**April**

**Residential Weekend  
Outdoor Centre**

**June**

**Canoeing and Walking York**

**July**

**Camping in tents Grosmont**

**August**

**Canoeing and Walking Durham**

**September**

**Canoe "O" York**

**October**

**Residential Weekend  
Outdoor Centre**

**For information  
Tel: 01904 654 302**

**Providing activities and outdoor experiences  
for young people and adults with disabilities**