

ROCK AND ROWEL RISK ASSESSMENT

ver 2.01

(updated June 2014 to reflect 2014 route revisions)

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

The Rock and Rowel is an LDWA (Long Distances Walkers Association) Challenge Walk which will take place from Dacre Banks village hall on 26th July 2014, It consists of a single circular route of 26.5 miles starting at 08.30 am to be completed in no more than 12 hours.

The Marshalls walk which is held a week a prior to the main walk is subject to the same terms and conditions and is used to prove the route and route description fit for the main walk. In addition it allows personnel to participate in the Challenge Walk who are otherwise engaged on the day of the main walk.

OVERALL CONSIDERATIONS

The walk will take place on public footpaths and bridleways which includes part of 2 Long Distance Footpath (The Ripon Rowel, and the Nidderdale Way), public roads, other routes with public access and paths and tracks on access Land. It will also pass through Brimham Rocks, with full permission of the National Trust

All runners and walkers, referred to hereafter as participants are provided with a written route description which includes warnings of potential hazards. This route description is to be used in conjunction with an appropriate map of the area.

All participants are required to carry the following minimum equipment:
Suitable map of the route (OS Map 298 is suggested), Compass, Whistle, Suitable Footwear, Waterproofs and other clothing fit for weather conditions at this time of year.

All starters are provided with a unique numbered tally card during the registration process prior to the start. This number co-relates to participant's entry form details for contact purposes.

Interconnected radio control points are located at principal checkpoints and a roaming radio connection with the sweep team. The start point acts as the overall control base for both radio and participant administration.

To ensure that all participants pass through certain points; thereby eliminating short cuts and to aid the location of any lost or injured participant should they occur, 7 manned checkpoints are located throughout the route. At each checkpoint all participants passing through are identified by their tally number and their time is recorded. A sweep team follows shortly behind the last participant on the route.

Principal Checkpoints will record participant's arrival times on a Checkpoint Control Form which contains a definitive list of participant status, i.e. on the walk, a non-starter, or retired. Early Checkpoints will use a Bingo Card arrangement to record numbers only and participant administration will take place after checkpoint closure at the control base

Participants are required to retire from the walk at manned checkpoints only and to inform the checkpoint marshal accordingly and by definition cease to take part in the walk. The participants tally card will be retained by the checkpoint marshal who will update the Checkpoint Control Form and inform the control base (by radio or telephone) to transport the participant back to the start.

After the last participant and the sweep team have passed through the checkpoint, numbers are checked with the Checkpoint Control Form thereby double checking the number and names of the participants. This number is relayed to later checkpoints with radio control so that at each principal checkpoint there is a check that all participants have passed through. . No closed checkpoint will return to base until confirmation that the last participant has arrived at the following checkpoint.

In order to ensure participants have a high probability to finish within the 12 hour time limit, Drift Lane, 9 miles from the finish, will act as a cut-off point. If in the opinion of the checkpoint marshal any participant will exceed the time limit they will be advised to retire from the walk

Finally all participants have to register their tally at the finish to record their completion time and update participant administration

As there are some checkpoints without radio contact, the numbers of participants passing through cannot be checked against those passing through the previous checkpoint. This has not proved to be a difficulty in previous similar events, as the average distance between checkpoints is only 4 miles.

SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

The use of public roads in general as well as 4 specific locations on the route has been identified as being potentially hazardous.

1. The crossing of the B6165 at Summerbridge GR SE 202 624 outward from start

ISSUE: Participants in potential conflict with fast moving traffic

CONSIDERATION: This location is 0.25 miles from the start and participants will be grouped at this point. The road junction is in a 30mph speed restricted area with reasonable visibility and it should be noted that the rules of entry to the walk state that all participants under 18 years be accompanied by an adult.

All participants will be verbally warned of this hazard immediately before the start of the event, and a Marshal will be stationed at the crossing point to ensure their safety/

Taking these matters into consideration it is concluded that the risk of accident is concluded to be low and therefore the route is acceptable.

2. The crossing of Stile at GR SE 218 627

ISSUE: Worn Stone Stile with 2 metre drop on far side. May be slippery if wet

CONSIDERATION: This location is less than 3 miles from the start when people are still fresh. Long Distance event walkers are fit and experienced at crossing all manner of stiles. The stile is also on a public of right of way, and used without incident.

A "Steep Stile Take care" sign to be erected (and removed after the event)

Taking these matters into consideration it is concluded that the risk of accident is concluded to be low and therefore the route is acceptable.

3. 100 metres of Road Walking near Fountains Abbey GR 268 682

ISSUE: Relatively busy country lane due to visitors accessing fountains abbey

CONSIDERATION: This location is 13 miles into the route, so participants will no longer be in large groups and it should be noted that the rules of entry to the walk state that all participants under 18 years be accompanied by an adult.

This section of the walk follows the route of the commonly waked Ripon rowel Long Distance Trail so is regularly walked without incident.

Participants will be reminded to take care on road sections prior to start of event

Taking these matters into consideration it is concluded that the risk of accident is concluded to be low and therefore the route is acceptable.

4. Crossing the B6265 at GR SE 212 670 and proceeding along road to GR SE 212 661, and then again from Brimham Rocks entrance GR SE 209 645 to footpath at GR SE 206 631

ISSUE: Cars travelling at speed on B6265, followed by 900 metres of road walking along a road which can be busy with tourist traffic.

CONSIDERATION: Participant will have walked in excess of 20 miles to this point, and will be spread out and tired. The crossing has good visibility both ways as road is straight, and the road walking is on straight minor road with good visibility, with the exception of 100 metres immediately South of Brimham Rocks entrance. This section however is part of the widely walked Nidderdale Way, which is frequently walked without incident.

It should be noted that the rules of entry to the walk state that all participants under 18 years be accompanied by an adult. All participants will be reminded of the need to take care on roads at the start

Taking these matters into consideration it is concluded that the risk of accident is concluded to be low and therefore the route is acceptable.

5. The crossing of the B6165 at Low Laithe GR SE 191 639

ISSUE: Participants in potential conflict with fast moving traffic

CONSIDERATION: This location is 2.0 miles from the finish and participants will be tired at this point. The road is 30mph speed restricted area with reasonable visibility and it should be noted that the rules of entry to the walk state that all participants under 18 years be accompanied by an adult.

All participants will be verbally warned of this hazard immediately before the start of the event/

Taking these matters into consideration it is concluded that the risk of accident is concluded to be low and therefore the route is acceptable.

6. Stepping Stone across River Skell at GR 223 690

ISSUES: These may become impassible at times of flood. Some Participants are phobic regarding stepping stones

CONSIDERATION: All participants are made aware of Stepping Stones on entry, and informed that an alternative route is available. Should the Skell be in flood at the time of the event this alternative route will be substituted for the route planned

Taking these matters into consideration it is concluded that the risk of accident is concluded to be low and therefore the route is acceptable.

7. The public roads used, with the exception of those referred to in 1) 3) 4) and 5) above minor routes carrying little traffic.

ISSUE: The use of the minor roads generally.

CONSIDERATION: it is considered that these roads constitute a low risk due to the very small volumes of traffic on them.

Taking these matters into consideration the risk of accident on these minor roads is concluded to be low and therefore the route is acceptable.

8. Climatic conditions during the event

ISSUE: Should the weather be hot and sunny competitors may become dehydrated through insufficient provision of fluid

CONSIDERATION: Checkpoints are generally no more than 5 miles apart, and fluid is provided at all of them. Should the weather forecast be for temperatures of greater than 27°C (80°F) extra water stations at Eavestone and the B6265 crossing will be provided

Taking these matters into consideration the risk of accident on these minor roads is concluded to be low and therefore the route is acceptable.

Taking all these issues into consideration the risk of accidents is concluded to be low and therefore the route is acceptable for use on the Rock and Rowel Challenge Walk

Steph Carter (Rock and Rowel event organiser)

29th June 2014