

# The Ranger Era

?

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Volume 1, Issue 1

April 2007

## ERA's first newsletter

Well here it is then, our first newsletter. This is another landmark occasion for the ERA. With a website up and running, the E group getting more subscribers every week, and now a newsletter we can truly say that ERA is up and running.

We plan to produce a newsletter up to four times a year, but this will depend upon you the

member. The more information, sharing of experience, opinions and views you send us the more often we can produce this newsletter.

So this is a challenge to you, we want your input, if the newsletter is going to serve you properly then we need to know what you want in

**YOUR** newsletter

This first edition, has a bit of a 'southern' bias, but that's only because the initial 30 or so members of ERA were primarily from the south of England.

However during March and April the membership has taken on a much stronger northern influence, so we are expect to have more of a northern accent to ISSUE 2.

## English Ranger Association launched January 2007

After several months of planning and a number of meetings The English Ranger Association was finally launched on the 1st January 2007.

With a remit to represent Rangers, Wardens and those Volunteering in these roles, the ERA will seek to raise the profile of those good people who dedicate themselves to the protection of the environment and wildlife.

The ERA will also act as a network to allow people to exchange information, views and best practice.

This will be achieved through this newsletter, a website ([www.englishranger.co.uk](http://www.englishranger.co.uk)),

an Egroup (<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/englishrangers>) and site study visits.

What makes ERA different from other professional membership organizations is that it

is subscription free. All the work is being carried out by Volunteers and every effort is being made to keep costs very low.

Steve Peach ERA Secretary said 'We will finance ourselves through sponsorship and donations, but in the main we will rely on our members to facilitate meetings, study visits and training'

Another major difference that the ERA is keen to point out is the fact that ERA represents field level staff. 'Whilst we welcome anyone who supports our aims, we will seek to represent and serve those people who are still actually doing the job in the field' said Adam Green the ERA's study visits coordinator.

Rangers from across the country have been quick to sign up and ERA's management committee have been encouraged by the numbers signing and the

geographic spread. Chairman Declan Keiley explained that if the ERA is to become a truly National Organisation, then we need to keep building the membership numbers. 'So far we are well ahead of the targets we set ourselves, but it will require all members to try and recruit their colleagues to ensure we become the leading Ranger organisation in England'

ERA will also try to play its part on the international Ranger stage as well. It will be applying for membership of the International Ranger Federation and ERA members are already involved in helping to organise an European Ranger Conference.

With the support of its members ERA will become a major force in the countryside management industry.

## Equipment Review— Rapid Euro Hydrostat Pedestrian Tractor

**Hampshire County Council Rangers share their experience in buying a pedestrian tractor.**

Most rangers will have hand cut scrub at some time. It soon loses its attraction as a task and the urge to use a mechanical method becomes very strong. Brushcutters are ok but have you considered a pedestrian tractor.

There were various versions on the market SCAG, BCS and the Rapid Euro and have their good and bad points,

The key things to consider is the ease of use (especially as it needed to be useable by Volunteers, with perhaps less experience), the type of terrain we you need to use the machine on and the ongoing maintenance.

The easiest way to compare like for like if to get each of the suppliers out and get them to demonstrate on site exactly what their bit of kit can do.

You should indulge in a mini machine fest. WE DID!

The BCS is a tried and trusted tool and can be found on many sites across the country and it didn't disappoint.

We try it on Rank grassland, 10 year old Bramble scrub and small hawthorn trees. It had very few problems, neither did the SCAG.

Whilst of the aforementioned machines were capable of doing the job, the Rapid Euro was our preferred option, based upon the simple design, attachments were shaft driven, so no belts to contend with and coming with a 16hp Briggs & Statton engine it was certainly powerful enough to cope with anything we wanted to throw at it.. In our opinion it also offered the best compromise between quality and cost.

We also purchased a 135cm Flail made by Inter-

mac and a Rapid cutter bar.

Later we also purchased a specially made collar that allows us to connect implements designed for the BCS.

On the plus side this machine is very robust, is simple to use and has proved a reliable tool.

The only real negative point we would mention is the fact that people with small hands might struggle with some of the controls.

With hindsight we might have gone for a smaller flail especially for use on slopes and we seldom use the cutter bar. But if you have scrub invading your grassland and want a sensible alternative to hours of brush cutter work then the Euro will not disappoint.

One word of caution though. We were so busy concentrating on the purchasing the right tool for the job, we didn't think about how we would transport it around the site and had to go searching for more funding to buy a big enough trailer.

Hey, we all make mistakes!

### The Technical bit

#### **Rapid Euro 3**

Is powered by a

Briggs & Statton OHV 16hp

4-cycle 2 cylinder Petrol engine

Weight approx 220kg

Tyres 23x8.50-12 AS

Has a twist grip throttle also acts the forward and reverse controls

Hydrostatic drive

There are two drive shaft speeds for attachments. (600 & 800RPM)

Our machine was supplied by Rekord Sales who are based in Warwickshire

[www.rekord.com](http://www.rekord.com)

01827 712424

Email [rekord@rekord.com](mailto:rekord@rekord.com)



**Rapid**  
**EURO**

The new Euro generation from Rapid:  
now lighter, more powerful,  
more convenient,  
unmatched in price and  
performance.

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## Featured site — Catherington Down Local Nature Reserve

Owned by Hampshire County Council's Countryside Service  
run by Horndean Parish Council's Countryside Team

### The Problems -

It is a SSSI because of its chalk Downland plant communities.

It is as a small Reserve, of about 9 hectares.

It has high archaeological value as there are a series of medieval strip lynchets traversing the site.

It has been estimated that over 60,000 visits per year is made to the Reserve,

Research has shown that 95% of these visits are dog walkers

The same research showed that 95% of the people do not visit the site because of the dog walkers.

It is an 'island' site surrounded by farmland and an ever increasing number of horse paddocks.

There is a never ending stream of housing developments in the area

How do we keep the nature conservation interest viable in the face of this onslaught?

### What are the solutions?

This is the scenario facing the County Council Rangers that managed Catherington Down Local Nature Reserve. The site was given to Council by a local benefactor, explicitly for the local people to enjoy its natural beauty and wildlife.

With a budget that had seen no increase for over a decade and increasingly one dimensional visitors, it was time for a quite radical (at least from the Council's perspective) solution.

We decided to hand over the day to day management to the local Parish Council. 'What a cop out' I hear you cry.

But before you turn the page in indignation, let me explain.

Horndean Parish Council runs its own small Countryside Team. It manages a number of open spaces and a two nature reserves.

It was in fact partly responsible for the rise in dog numbers at Catherington Down.

As the Horndean team increased its nature conservation work and as other local Parish Councils started to get tough over dog fouling, more and more dog walkers found their way on to our nature reserve.

This produced 4 main problems.

1. The sheer amount of dog-fouling (60,000 dog visits on 9 hectares, work it out for yourself)
2. The dog fouling and the trampling of so many people on such a small site has a negative impact on the botanical interest.
3. The fact that this number of dogs tend to drive the livestock to the corners of the site and therefore reduce the impact of the livestock
4. The fact that one type of user (i.e.: dog walkers) had driven away all other users of the site.

The issue we had as County Council Rangers working in an area team was that this site was not considered as such a high priority as our main Country Park or National Nature Reserve,

The dog walkers tended to view us negatively (we represent the County Council and told them that they couldn't let their dogs run riot)

We couldn't always offer a daily presence on the site, so this restricted our ability to form a proper relationship with the sites users.

This also meant that we were normally only on site when there was a problem.

With no chance of increase in the site budget and even the possibility of losing the site on a permanent basis looming it became obvious that we had to find another way of delivering the management of the site.

And so the partnership with Horndean Parish Council was born.

We wrote a site management plan,

that aimed to deliver the nature conservation objectives and gave the Parish some simple targets. The Parish's Countryside Team added our reserve to its suite of sites, and instantly we had a more local approach to what is a local community issue.

The Parish's Countryside Team suddenly had access to the support of a much larger 'Area' based team. The sharing of equipment and resources between teams has become common place.

Catherington Down is now seen as part of an overall Parish led approach to recreation and conservation and so any future changes or restrictions in the way the Nature Reserve is used will be seen as being locally generated and for benefit of the local community.

Whilst the issues of Dog walkers has not gone away, it would be true to say that a dialogue has started with the 'regulars'. And we already started to see an improvement in behaviour, such as more people clearing up after their dogs.

Now, if we could only deal with the local horse owners!!

Steve Peach & Phil Weiss

[www.horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk](http://www.horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk)



## ‘Help the English Ranger Association To Help You’

One of the core functions of ERA is to help all members, Whether you are a student, volunteer or ranger, develop and share information, experiences, views and the best practice that will help you develop and deliver your needs and that of your organisation Perhaps one of the best ways of delivering this is through networking with like minded individuals who have experienced the ups and downs of the industry and have somehow managed to survived or even excelled in certain areas!

So, how can ERA help with this?

What we are hoping to do is appeal to your sense of pride, vanity and camaraderie to help those who may have gaps in there knowledge or are starting out in the industry (after all, if I can still remember what it was like being a student I'm sure you all can). You can do this by letting us at ERA know about the projects you have completed or are currently undertaking, that your are particularly proud of, or you may even consider yourself to be the bees knees at filling DEFRA HLS forms in, for example and can offer some advice to the rest of us poor tortured soles.

Perhaps there were times when it all went wrong for some reason, (we've all

been there I'm sure) and you can share the experience with us all and perhaps prevent it happening again.

Or you're maybe looking for advice a need to discuss your problems with people who have been through the same situation.

You can do this either by using this Forum to put your questions to the ERA members or get in touch with the details of your particular experience or project and provided you are happy to be contacted, we will list your project on the ERA website.

Please remember we are an inclusive organisation and will welcome all topics whatever level they may be.

To prevent you getting overrun with enquiries, Members who express an interest in your project or experience will contact us at ERA who will then approach you on their behalf with their questions.

These we can then publish on the ERA website for all of our benefits.

So get writing! I can be contacted via [ranger@englishranger.co.uk](mailto:ranger@englishranger.co.uk), **be part of the solution.**

**Adam Green ERA Study trips & Training coordinator**

**‘ERA has an egroup which you can use to discuss issues, exchange best practice ideas and keep in contact with each other’**

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/englishrangers>

## European Ranger Conference 2007

The European members of the International Ranger Federation is planning to organise a European Ranger Conference in September 2007.

The conference is will take place at the Retezat National Park, Romania.

There will be three core themes to the conference,

1. Education and interpretation in the Rausor,
2. Management of Biodiversity Conservation in Germele Scientific Reservation
3. Tourism Management in the central areas of the Park.

This conference will be aimed at field level staff and our Romanian Ranger colleagues have promised a 'maximum amount of time out in the field, Retezat is good a Park to spend time indoors'

The final day of the conference will dedicated to IRF business and looking at the Ranger work across Europe.

Traditional Music and Dance at Hunedoara Castle will close the event

The Proposed dates are

Monday 17th to Friday 21st September.

Key watch on the IRF Website for further details

[www.int-ranger.org](http://www.int-ranger.org)

**ERA** will also keep its members up to date with conference details as they develop

**Steve Peach ERA Secretary is part of the European Ranger Conference organizing committee**

## An Association in need of a logo ?

You will have noticed the large question mark in the top right hand corner on page 1.

Now whilst the ERA's organising committee has done very well in setting up the ERA, sorting out a website and getting an Egroup started, it has failed miserably in sorting out a logo for our new Association.

So this is where you come in. We need a logo ! And we are sure that someone out there must be able to think of an appropriately clever idea.

It must be simple to reproduce, representative of Rangers, Wardens and Volunteers it could also have a trace of England in it as well.

Easy then ???

Just to add some incentive to your creativity we

have a bottle of Whisky kindly donated by an ERA member just waiting to be claimed by whoever can come up with the best design.

So here is your chance to create a bit of history and put your mark forever on the English Ranger Association.

Remember we would also like your suggestions for a newsletter title as well

Send your entries to

Mark Havler Newsletter editor

ranger@englishranger.co.uk



**This Bottle of Whiskey awaits the winner our of ERA**

**Logo competition**  
(a substitute prize will be found if you are a non-drinker)

## ERA News

The next **organizing committee** meeting is on Thursday 26th April. At 8.00pm We will be meeting at the Hogs Lodge pub, just off the A3 4 miles south of Petersfield, Hants. All members are welcome to attend and contribute.

Items on the agenda will Recruitment, Study visits, Social events, Training and ERA Development. If you cannot make the meeting but have com-

ments of suggestions please contact the ERA Secretary.

### Study Visits

The next Study Visit will be on Friday 18th May. It will be held at Queen Elizabeth Country Park, in Hampshire.

The meeting will start at 1pm and will consist of a look at the management of this Country Park and National Nature Reserve and focus upon the question 'Do People and

Wildlife Conservation really mix'?

We will then retire to the local pub for beer and a discussion on the future of the ERA. ( And many other subjects no doubt)

Further details from Steve.peach@hants.gov.uk

For more information about Queen Elizabeth Country Park [www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/qecp](http://www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/qecp)

**Stop press .....**  
ERA now has its 100th member. Lisa Kersey, who is Head Ranger for Blackpool Council, has the honour of being forever known as member number 100.

Now, if we could only get to 150.....

## South Downs Youth Ranger Project

Following in the footsteps of a number of other Youth Ranger Projects, The South Downs Youth Ranger Project launched this year as a pilot project. Aimed particularly at 16-18 year olds, the project will seek to give young people a taste of what it takes to be a Ranger.

Working with South Downs Rangers and Volunteers, the Youth Rangers will undergo a ten-month course looking at Habitat and Species management, Wildlife law, People Management and Environmental interpretation.

Youth Rangers completing the course get a certificate of achievement and a perhaps a useful head start in a career as a ranger.

If the pilot is successful, it is hoped that in future years, young people from disadvantaged communities will be persuaded to take part .

The previous years participants will be encouraged to get involved as mentors the next year's recruits and this mentoring role is also something taken on by the Volunteer Rangers.

If you would like more information on this project

please contact Zehra Peermohamed Ranger & Volunteer Coordinator for the South Downs Joint Committee

(see contacts on back page)

**We would like to feature a Country Park from the North of England in the next issue**  
**Please contact Mark Havler**  
**If you would like to write about your site**



The IRF's flag is handed over to the Bolivian delegation, organisers of the next congress. It will be raised again in 2009. Will you be there?

**'You know this week at the IRF Congress has changed my life, I didn't realise there were other Rangers like me out there'**

**'A South American Ranger'**



The pins represent the home locations of the delegates

## The International Ranger Federation's 5th World Ranger Congress

held at Stirling University 2006

Steve Peach was lucky enough to participate in the IRF's 5th World Congress. This is his report originally made to Hampshire County Council's Ranger Group

### Introduction

The International Ranger Federation (IRF) is made up of member Ranger Associations from 52 countries and or States.

40 countries were represented at the 5th World Ranger Congress which was jointly hosted by the Scottish Countryside Ranger Association (SCRA), IRF and the Countryside Management Association (CMA). The main theme of the congress was People and Places, the Natural connection. With the main aim being to explore the ways in which Rangers from around the world protect the environment whilst keeping people and communities involved. The emphasis was very much on the sharing of experiences and knowledge. I was involved in the organising of the Congress on behalf of the IRF and CMA.

### Opening Ceremony

The Conference was opened by the Provost of Stirling and was attended by a number of local politicians and press. The venue was Stirling Castle and delegates were greeted by a local pipe band and a flag raising ceremony. A minutes silence was held in memory of those Rangers who had given their lives during the time

since the last Congress. It was a sobering thought to think that over 200 Rangers had been killed in the line of duty during the last 3 years. (These are just the ones we know about)

### People

**'Is anyone out there' - Why is the Natural World important to people?**

The first day of the congress looked at why people valued the natural world. We had speakers from around the world able to give us an international, national and local perspectives.

The morning speakers included Rhona Brankin Deputy Minister for Environment & Rural Affairs, David Shepherd responsible for IUCN's Protected Areas portfolio, Murray Ferguson from the Cairngorms National Park. The after session was based around workshop sessions.

The most compelling fact to come out of both the morning and afternoon sessions was that the connection people either felt or strive for was the same the world over. The sense of wanting to maintain that connections was paramount in most peoples minds. How people chose to utilise the natural world was were differences started to occur. The hunter in Africa shared the same amount of passion as the birdwatcher in Britain for the natural world. It was also clear that poverty was a major factor in the protection of most Parks and Reserves.

Poverty affected how much money could be spent on the research and protection of a site, but poverty also was the major influence on how local communities interacted with sites.

The poor and undervalued in society will not understand the resources going to protect Parks, if they have nothing themselves. They will not stop poaching if they are hungry. They cannot feel part of the natural environment if they are kept apart from it.

There were simple lessons to be learned from the sessions, and we saw a number of fine examples of community involvement from around the world. Many of the ideas and concepts crossed continents. Some of the solutions were inter-changeable from country to country.

During the evening we had a preview of the film 'Rangers round the World' the work of an Australian Ranger Sean Willmore, this independently produced film should be released during 2007.

### Landscape

**Landscape - sculpted by nature: shaped by people - 'What kind of shape are we leaving it in'**

The morning session was chaired by Sir Crispin Tickell, who talked about People and Rainforests. We also had contributions from Terry O' Regan using the title 'do you like your landscape with or without people?' Prof T C Smout spoke about 'four hundred years of Scottish landscape', Toby Clark of the John Muir Trust emphasis was upon making a difference to people and their relationship to wild places. Whilst the final speaker Jo Roberts struck a cord with most Rangers when she talked about the Wilderness Foundation and how it worked young people (particularly urban young people) and 're-introduced them to their unnatural environment'

The afternoon consisted of a series of local site visits to look at community based landscape initiatives.

The session ended with Q & As. Once again, as rangers from different continents stood up

## IRF in Scotland

### Connections

**'Heal the Land - Heal the People' - Re-establishing the natural connection**

Today was chaired by Prof Chris Baines (who is also a Patron of the CMA) Our first speaker was Hans Kampf Senior Policy Advisor to the Netherlands Government. Hans told of the Dutch experience and how nature conservation or nature development as they prefer to say was based upon a central policy known as Nature for People, People for Nature. All parts of national and local government and NGOs all worked to the core policy. His overriding message was that you had to think big and 'dare to do it'. Our second speaker was from the Black Environment Network and spoke about 'Engaging marginalised social groups imaginatively' and his sentiments were echoed by Barbara Mertons from Europarc's Junior Rangers initiative.

Bob Elliot looked closer to home when he talked about the new National Parks in Scotland and how they sought to engage local communities in the setting up of the Parks and now the future of them. The session was ended by a interesting presentation by Dr Ross Cameron from the University of Reading discussing the topic 'Biophilia and the therapeutic landscape'

The afternoon session was based around a series of case studies from around the world, with presentations from Australia, South Korea, England, America, Argentina, New Zealand, South Africa, Scotland.

### Delivery

**'Can Rangers deliver sustainable development and environmental protection?'**

This day was given over to workshop sessions with many different organisations and authorities taking part. The key speakers included Rangers from Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, USA, South Africa, England, Scotland, Mongolia, Australia, IUCN / WCPA, Greenspace, SNH, Bishopswood Centre, Danish Ranger Association, Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation,

The final day of the congress was given over to IRF business. The two main elements of this day was the discussion and passing of resolutions and regional sub-meetings.

The key resolutions items were IRF World Conservation membership and the reaffirming of the original IRF Zakopone declaration and the Losehill Hall principles.

The regional meetings took place in the afternoon with the European Delegates agreeing to try and put on a euro-Irf congress in 2007 or 2008. The likely venue to be the Czech Republic or Romania. The theme of this Euro-IRF Congress would be Conservation Management and would be a 'hands on' event. With opportunity to take part in a conservation project.

Overall this congress was deemed to be the most successful yet, with a great many positive outcomes.

If you would like more information on this or future IRF Congress's please feel free to contact me. There is also a full report due

to be published in 2007.

The Next Congress will take place in Santa Cruz, Bolivia March 2009

Further details will be made available on the IRF's website

**'RANGERS ARE THE THIN GREEN LINE'**

**Dr Ian Player  
IRF 3rd World  
Congress  
Kruger, South Africa**



'Smile please' Some of the 200+ Rangers in pose mode



Jobogo Mirindi from DRC talking about the protection of Gorillas in Virungu National Park. The shirt he is wearing has been made by the dependants of Rangers killed in the line of duty. These shirts are available in the UK priced at £20 all the proceeds go to the dependants fund. Contact Steve Peach or Linda Nunn (who run gearing up for gorillas) for more details

# ENGLISH RANGER ASSOCIATION

## Newsletter Editor

Mark Havler

With a little help from  
Adam Green and Steve Peach

*Your Contributions, thoughts and  
suggestions about the newsletter  
are most welcome*

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**We are on the web**  
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## ERA

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## The Back Page Rant - Your chance to get it off your chest!

### Access at all costs?

Now, I need to say from the outset that I am not against access or the public. Access to countryside is the cornerstone of our industry and many people have dedicated their lives to protecting the rights of people to roam the hills and mountains of England.

But am I alone in thinking that things might just be going to far?

Many local authorities and some of the wildlife charities have entered a 'twilight zone' where access at all costs has become their raison d'etre. The justification is always that 'people' is our core business, or people pay taxes and therefore our wages. And of course there is some truth in this. However access had also become the popularists agenda, it has become the excuse to give up on conservation, it is now a euphemism for income generation.

It seems that visiting the countryside, as it, unadulterated, in the raw, is now no longer an option. Instead we are seeing an increasing number of 'Access Plans' led initiatives, infrastructure development and theme-park styled promotions.

This would be alright in we all had huge budgets, and could afford the luxury of a large mainly office based work force and people all behaved responsibly. But they do not.

Times is hard and as the numbers of people visiting the ever dwindling green spaces increase, then the need for more Rangers on ground becomes even more apparent.

The pressure on wildlife resource is beginning to threaten the very thing access is supposed to be about.

We need some expenditure on putting in the checks and balances that ensures we increase access responsibly, that can measure the true environmental impact of access and that allows access to be ecologically sustainable.

If we do address these issues soon, then walking in the countryside will become a crowded wildlife sterile experience.

Steve Peach - Ranger ( perhaps 25 years is too long in one job)

### And Finally ..... Help the RANGERS of Virunga National Park

If you have looked at the ERA website you might have seen a paragraph about buying a shirt to help the families of Rangers killed defending the Gorillas of Virunga National Park in the Democratic of Congo.

Shirts and Dresses are sold by Rangers around the world and the money sent out to Jobogo Mirindi (Senior Ranger) who ensures it gets to the dependant relatives.

Despite the risks, to them and their families these Rangers continue the fight protect the Gorillas and other wildlife in this dangerous, but beautiful part of Africa.

The shirts and dresses come in a variety of designs and are best described as 'Africa meets Hawaii'.

The shirts appear to be one size, large. The dresses are sort of size 12 perhaps 14.



**They all sell for a donation of £20 each**

**Contact Steve Peach if you would like to purchase a shirt and support our Ranger colleagues in Virunga.**

You can experience the day to day exploits of the Rangers by going to; [www.wildlifedirect.org](http://www.wildlifedirect.org)