

Ramblers Volunteer Section Round-Up

13 April 2010 - 5 May 2010



This round-up contains the text of all items posted on the Ramblers Web site Volunteer Section since the 13th May. Some of the items had deadlines which have now passed. These are included for interest only.

In some items as originally posted, web site hyperlinks gave access to more information. Where possible, we have included the full linked text. Where this is not possible we have provided the full link location.

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General

Tom's Blog May '10

Thoughts and reflections from the Chief Executive (News - posted 28th April 2010)

Well done, Greater Manchester and High Peak Ramblers, and Get Walking, Keep Walking. There have been some fantastic 75th anniversary baton walks taking place across the country since the start of our anniversary year. In March, it was the turn of Wales, with a thumping 83% of Ramblers Groups putting on baton walks. Last Saturday, I attended the special baton walk to the top of Kinder Scout, organised by the Groups in Greater Manchester and High Peak Area, together with our Get Walking, Keep Walking scheme, on the anniversary of the 1932 Kinder mass trespass. A short video of the event is below. It was a brilliant event, and received some great publicity, including in the Manchester Evening News.

To me, it highlighted one of the benefits of doing Get Walking, Keep Walking-style schemes to introduce new people to walking. I lost count of the number of people on Saturday who told me that Get Walking, Keep Walking had inspired them to take up walking. It was moving to see experienced Ramblers members supporting and encouraging those who were attempting such a strenuous walk for the first time - and you could see in those newcomers' faces the sense of achievement when they succeeded. And the people on the walk were a reflection of society as it is today: young and old; white, black and asian; men and women. The event on Saturday showed why we must never stop reaching out to new people.

I feel sure that, 78 years on, those who took part in that Kinder Scout trespass would have felt pride in that Ramblers walk - mixed, welcoming, and positive. Congratulations to all the many volunteers who put the event on.

624 and rising....That's the number of Parliamentary Candidates who have now signed up to our manifesto, thanks to the huge effort from Areas and Groups, and our non-Area and Group volunteers too. 35 of them are specific 'targets' - in other words, candidates who we have identified as having no prior contact with the Ramblers and yet likely (well...on paper likely!) to win their seat - and thus potential MPs we can cultivate a relationship with.

So more than one in four of all candidates standing have now signed up to the manifesto. Our biggest 'catch' so far is none other than Nick Clegg. If we want to get one in three signed up we need to reach 712 candidates - so if you haven't done so already, go to <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Campaigns+Policy/Current+Campaigns.htm> to e-mail your candidate. It's the last opportunity to do so.

By the way, I'm a fan of us using social networking media like Facebook and Twitter to help with our campaigning (something else which isn't popular with everyone - but I think is essential if we

are to engage younger people). Through the Ramblers Facebook page and website, we've had 675 people helping to get candidates signed up - many of them have not been involved in Ramblers campaigning before.

If you're a member of Facebook, why not join the Ramblers Facebook Page? It's easy - go to <http://www.facebook.com/login.php>. If you're not a member of Facebook, then why not join up (it's free) and then join our Facebook page?

Membership applications and renewals

As of last Friday, the central office membership team were processing all membership applications and renewals, and responding to all post and emails, within 10 working days of receipt (the target) - and most were much quicker than this.

This is a major improvement. Not that long ago, whichever Ramblers Area or Group I was visiting, the biggest issue that volunteers would be concerned about would be membership processing and the CRM system. That is rarely the case these days.

It has been a very long journey, and I know there are still some issues, but the situation is now far better, and continuing to improve.

We are this year going to commission a short review, looking at the lessons of what went wrong, to help with next time a major project like this is undertaken. In the meantime, now that membership processing is working, I'd like to see the focus for the coming year being to boost membership - to finish the year with more members than we started. If we achieved this, it would be the about the first time in a decade! Areas and Groups are vitally important in boosting membership, and you may want to look at the information we've published at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/increasingmembershipgroups.htm> about groups - showing the range in size and activities. We want to know more about why some groups are growing, while others are shrinking.

Celebrating our unsung volunteer heroes

I often mention the Ramblers unsung volunteer heroes in my blog. But I know there are other volunteers, who I don't know about, doing amazing things for the Ramblers. On 1st June, as part of our 75th anniversary celebrations, we are launching our Volunteer Awards. There are lots of categories, and we're looking for nominations for people in traditional roles - such as protecting footpaths - to new roles - such as web masters. Details, and the nomination form, will be published in the June edition of Walk Magazine and also online.

That's all for now. I shall look forward to seeing many of you at the various special baton walks and Get Walking Day walks taking place during May.

Tom

Increasing membership, influence and reach of the Ramblers

Information for Areas on the current distribution of membership across Groups, and a call for innovative ideas and ways to grow membership through Groups and their walks programmes (News and Action Request - posted 27 April 2010).

We are currently consulting on priorities for the Business Plan next year - one of which is to increase membership. While the long term decline in membership appears to have slowed*, the organisation still needs more members, for income and for influence. With more than 5million leisure walkers in Britain, there is no reason why the Ramblers should not have a higher membership. To achieve membership growth, however, all parts of the organisation (whether Areas, Groups or Central Office) will need to be involved.

With recent improvements to CRM it has become possible to start looking at the distribution of Groups and members, and it is clear that there are significant geographical variations. Some more detailed information on the distribution of current Groups and their membership numbers is given in the PDF listed below.

Over the next year, we want to try out new techniques and learn from Areas and Groups where things have worked. For example:

Have you set up any new Groups recently (either geographically based or special groups based on age or interest) and has this had any effect on membership levels? Are you planning to set up any new Groups soon, or would your Area be interested in piloting new Groups? We are keen for Areas to try out different approaches – if you are interested, let us know using the feedback format <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/increasingmembership.htm>.

Have you found that taking leaflets along to Group walks has been helpful? One Group estimates that as many as 90 people may be walking regularly with their Group that aren't members. For membership leaflets contact publicity@ramblers.org.uk.

Have you ever promoted discounts to members? Groups that are organising a 2010 Get Walking Day walk (<5 miles) have been invited to offer up to 30 £1 memberships (per Group) on the day. For more information go to <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/£1+membership+trial+on+Get+Walking+Day.htm>.

Do you put on shorter walks, and are they helping to attract new members? Almost 20% of Group walks on the Group Walks Finder are 8km/5 miles or less. Groups using Walks Finder who organised at least one walk of 8km/5 miles or less during March 2010 on average have 80 more members than those that didn't. Walks Finder has recently been improved with new mapping and we are looking at the possibility of highlighting shorter walks listed on it in partnership with the Department of Health's Walk4Life campaign. Please list your Group's walks on the Group Walks Finder – for more information contact volunteer@ramblers.org.uk.

*Note: Recent figures show membership has increased slightly, from 122,000 on March 1st to 124,000 on April 1st 2010.

Download PDF at

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Resources/Ramblers%20Association/Website/Volunteering/Documents/groupsaper0410.pdf> containing the information above plus a more detailed breakdown of statistics on Groups and their membership.

feedback form

Please use this form to tell us briefly about innovative ways in which your Area and Group(s) have increased membership, or your ideas about how we could work with you to introduce new Groups and/or walks programmes aimed at broadening membership.

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Julia Bradbury: working with the new President

Information on contacting and working with the new President (News - posted 27th April 2010)

The Ramblers is delighted that Julia Bradbury is President of the Charity in its 75th year. Julia is very keen to help support and publicise Ramblers work throughout the year. This includes quotes, photo opportunities and occasionally attending launches, where it does not conflict with her role as a BBC presenter.

To contact Julia, e-mail the press office press@ramblers.org.uk or 0207 339 8531/32. Please put 'Julia Bradbury: request' in the subject title. We will pass the queries straight onto Julia's Manager, Gina.

Julia has a very busy schedule, and unfortunately won't be able to meet all requests. Because of the very high volume of correspondence that Julia and Gina receive, can we ask that all Ramblers contact go via the press office who is co-ordinating the Presidency.

Thanks
Ruth Somerville
Ramblers PR and Media Manager

30 Areas heed Board's call to send first timers to Ramblers General Council

More first timers and younger delegates this year - but more needed next year. (News - posted 26th April 2010)

Following a request from the Board of Trustees for Ramblers Areas to send at least one of their delegates to General Council (GC) who had not been before, 30 out of 54 Areas sent at least one delegate for their first time. However, the delegates from all of the other 24 Areas had all been the GC at least once before.

This is one of a number of findings from an analysis of GC delegates, undertaken to help the Ramblers reach out and involve new people, to match those with long experience. Of Area delegates, trustees, vice-presidents and agenda committee members (all of whom have a vote at GC), One third were attending GC for their first time

Half were attending for either their first or second time

Half were attending GC for their third or more time

The chart below shows the proportion of this year's delegates attending each of the past ten Gcs.

Voting delegates are also much more likely to be men than women - three quarters were men this year.

Of this year's delegates, about 5% were from 20s-30s groups (believed to be an increase on previous years).

We did not monitor the ethnic mix of delegates this year, but may do so in the future, as we work to involve a broader mix of people within the Ramblers.

Tom Franklin, Chief Executive, commented, *"The Ramblers is for everyone who walks - young or old, male or female, black or white. We're working hard to increase the appeal of the Ramblers, so that more people see it as an organisation they want to be part of. I'm very keen that all parts of the Ramblers consider how to break down the barriers to people getting involved with us."*

The Board's Strategy and Governance Committee has decided to again encourage Areas to send at least one of their delegates who has not been to GC before.

In the feedback from delegates to GC received so far:

More than three quarters of those attending the 'good ideas' sessions, to share ideas between volunteers, thought they were good or satisfactory.

Three quarters thought the debates, and the hustings for trustee elections, were good or very good.

85% thought the event overall, the information packs, and the organisation of the event were good or very good. All but one person ranked staff helpfulness as good or very good.

Volunteer podcast

Find out about the Godalming and Haslemere Ramblers group with Damian and Richard in their podcast (News - posted 21 April 2010).

Here is a podcast of an interview with Damian and Richard from the Godalming and Haslemere Ramblers group. The group organises walks in Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Buckinghamshire and occasionally London throughout the year. There are coach trips further afield with a choice of walks and visits to places of interest. The group also organises holidays in the UK and Europe, social evenings, quiz nights and theatre visits.

The podcast contains information about the group's walks, volunteering and social activities. (length 8 mins 47 secs) and can be found at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/Volunteerpodcast>.

For more details you can visit the Godalming and Haslemere website at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/Volunteerpodcast>.

Lincolnshire Wolds Walking Festival Project Officer

Lincolnshire Wolds Walking Festival are looking to appoint a part time project officer to manage and develop the festival (News - 16 April 2010).

The Lincolnshire Wolds Walking Festival are looking to appoint a Part Time Project Officer. The post holder will manage and develop the festival to ensure its long term future. Local Ramblers Groups will play a major role in the festival, leading 30 out of the 84 walks.

For further information you can have a look at the job advert at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Resources/Ramblers%20Association/LWWF%20Project%20Officer%20Job%20ad.pdf> or contact Sue Smith by e-mail at sue.smith@lincsheritage.org.

Leading walks with children and vulnerable adults

New government rules that will start to take effect from July 2010 (News - posted 14 April 2010)

This briefing note sets out the approach which the Ramblers will be taking to the government's new Vetting and Barring Scheme. The great majority of walk leaders will not be affected. Go to <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/AreaGroup/Basics/ChildVulnerableAdults.htm> for more information and scroll to the bottom of the page.

Volunteer Resources

Latest Incident Analysis Report

The latest Led Walks Incident Analysis report covering the period from October 09 to March 10 is now available on the Incident Analysis Page at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/AreaGroup/Resources/Incident+Analysis.htm>.

Find or promote a walker friendly accommodation in the UK!

The Ramblers online accommodation finder provides a useful list of walker friendly accommodation including B&B, self catering, hostels and holiday cottages in the most beautiful walking destinations in the UK. Search along 100 of Britain's favourite long distance paths, or by national park, county, town, place and postcode. You can then pinpoint your chosen accommodation with our online mapping service! (request for action posted - 4 May)

Whatever kind of accommodation you are looking for, you can find the perfect place to stay at accomadation finder.

On the other hand if you own or run a walker's friendly establishment; you could use this space to advertise your business. With 5 million hits and over 100,000 individual visitors to our website every month, there is no better way to promote your establishment to walkers all over the UK.

You can also create your own advert on the site at

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/info/accommodation/>.

Want to know more contact us at by e-mail at accommodation@ramblers.org.uk.

Publication of a new Campaigns factsheet

New factsheet published by the Walking Enviroment team on the induction and training of new volunteers (New Resource - posted 28 April 2010).

The latest in a series of factsheets, produced by the Walking Environment team, can now be downloaded. The factsheet, based around the induction and training of new volunteers, can be found on the Factsheet Catalogue at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/Factsheets.htm>. There will be another 4 factsheets produced by the Walking Environment team by the middle of autumn 2010.

New Factsheets available to support walks finder

A new series of 4 factsheets is now available to offer advice on the use of walks finder (resource - published 19 April 2010).

A new set of 4 Factsheets, to guide you through uploading and editing your Group's walks on Walks Finder, is now available from the factsheet library.

The factsheets are:

Using Walks Finder - Getting Started

Using Walks Finder - Uploading a Single Walk

Using Walks Finder -Uploading Multiple Walks

Using Walks Finder - Creating Your Group Programme for Web and Printing

To access the factsheets go to the factsheet catalogue at

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/Factsheets.htm> or for further details you can contact the led walks team at volunteer@ramblers.org.uk.

Volunteer Opportunities

New Route Assistant Volunteering Opportunities with the Get Walking Keep Walking Campaign

The Get Walking Keep Walking Team are looking to recruit three new route assistant volunteers to the campaign. The roles are Route Assistant - Editor, Route Assistant - Web Walks, Route Assistant - Copy Writer (volunteer opportunity - 5 May 2010).

Get Walking Keep Walking is an urban walking project, managed by the Ramblers; Britain's walking charity. The project is funded until December 2011, and is part of a wider active leisure/transport programme, funded by Big Lottery through six agencies. We are currently encouraging inactive people to explore their local community and become more active by walking, with short programmes which aim to get people taking independent exercise.

We are currently looking for 3 new volunteers to support the Campaign centrally. The Roles are:

Route Assistant - Editor

This role would suit an organised individual who has an eye for eye for design, layout and detail and enjoys working in a team with office staff and volunteers. It would also suit someone looking to gain office or editorial experience.

Route Assistant - Web Walks

This role would suit an individual with good computer skills and creativity, who would enjoy learning new software, writing short web articles, sourcing images and preparing information and maps for a public audience.

Route Assistant - Copy Writer

This role would suit an individual with a good eye for good writing and detail, who enjoys editing and proof-reading. Working from home is possible if the volunteer has own PC and internet connection.

For further information about the roles you can view the role descriptions at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/GWKW-volunteer+Role> or if you have any questions you can get in touch with the Get Walking Keep Walking Team by e-mail at Getwalking@ramblers.org.uk.

Volunteer Co-ordinator for Get Walking for the Olympics

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games aren't just a festival of elite sport they're also a once in a lifetime event giving everyone a great opportunity to get more active, through everyday physical activity such as walking as well as through sport (volunteer opportunity posted - 4 May.)

Launching in July 2010, Get Walking for the Games will see Ramblers Groups and Areas across England creating and leading inspirational short, easy and accessible walks with links to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. These walks will be taking place all over Great Britain, not just in London, including some of the lesser-known Olympic venues outside London, the various cities hosting national teams' training and Cultural Olympiad and "live sites". The walks form a part of the Active Travel Programme being coordinated by the London 2012 team.

We are asking Ramblers volunteers living in the South East to act as early adopters for Get Walking for the Games, creating programmes that will inspire volunteers across the country to get involved. Anyone anywhere is welcome to volunteer and get involved and we will be holding a volunteers support afternoon so you can get a better idea of what's involved and share your ideas and inspiration.

So thinking caps on, what links does your local area have with the Olympics? Do you live in Chigwell, the birth place of Sally Gunnell? Could you have a walking Greek language lesson? Are you able to visit one of the 31 pre-Olympic training sites in Kent?

We're also looking for a volunteer project coordinator to work centrally with local volunteers on coordinating the project, encouraging and assisting Areas and Groups across the country to participate and ensuring the walks are promoted. The volunteer will be based at Ramblers main office in Vauxhall, London, but may also be opportunities to work from home, and agreed expenses will be refunded.

If you are interested in getting involved please email Tom Moulton by e-mail at Thomas.moulton@ramblers.org.uk.

Call to England volunteers for expressions of interest to sit on devolution working party

Board is seeking two volunteers to sit on a small working party, to review options and develop detailed proposals for devolution requirements. (Information - posted 29th April 2010)

Following a motion proposed by the Board of Trustees, and agreed at General Council 2010, the Board is to set up a small working party to review the workings of devolution within the Ramblers. The Board is seeking expressions of interest from two volunteers in England to sit on the working party (which will also consist of two volunteers each from Wales and Scotland, selected by their respective executive committees, together with the Chair and Honorary Treasurer from the Board of Trustees).

It is envisaged that the working party will meet three to four times during the course of the year, sometimes via telephone conference, and that it will report to the Board, Welsh Council Executive Committee and Scottish Council Executive Committee, with options and proposals in February 2011. Brief expressions of interest should be in writing, to Jo Smith, Executive Officer (jo.smith@ramblers.org.uk), by Monday 10th May 2010, setting out the reasons why you are interested, and the skills and experience you would bring to the working party.

A decision is likely to be taken at the Board of Trustees meeting on 22nd May.