

POSITIVE STEPS



The Ramblers' Association Impact Report



OUR TOP FIVE ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2007



People in inner cities began to benefit from our four-year Get Walking Keep Walking project, which will encourage 12,000 people to take up regular walking in Birmingham, East London, South London, Manchester and Sheffield.

A wider range of walks were set up by our Groups, with more 20s-30s Groups being established, 393 walks as part of our Festival of Winter Walks, and new short-walks programmes.

We won the famous 'Dorset' case in the House of Lords, which will mean that from now on actions to stop paths being recognised as public rights of way will have to be transparent.

The government committed itself to bring forward legislation to secure a continuous access corridor around our coastline.

211 volunteer walks leaders were trained in Wales as part of our commitment to support our network of local volunteers.

70

YEARS OF HELPING PEOPLE
ENJOY WALKING



Our ambition is for a
‘walking Britain’ –
a place where people
choose to go walking,
where it is easy and
enjoyable to do so.



For more than 70 years, the Ramblers' Association has worked to make it easier and more enjoyable for people to walk, and to promote the benefits of walking. Millions of people have benefited from our work. This report sets out the latest chapter in a history of considerable success. We have some fantastic achievements to our name this year – including the start of a new project to encourage people in inner-city areas to take up regular walking; an increasingly varied programme of led walks across Britain; and a major legal victory in the House of Lords which will help protect rights of way for future generations.

We are aware that the future holds new challenges: how to encourage an increasingly sedentary population to become more active; how to combat the increases in preventable conditions such as obesity and diabetes; how to strengthen community life so that people benefit from a sense of belonging; and how to help people de-stress from the pressures of modern living. We believe that walking is part of the answer to many of these challenges, and that the Ramblers' Association is well-placed to help provide the solutions.

This year, we've begun the process of reviewing our work so that we're ready to take on these new challenges. We've been consulting our members and other partners on a new strategy, with new priorities, for the next five years. That strategy has at its core the belief that walking should be a positive and popular choice – whether for relaxation or getting to work, in the countryside or in the heart of our towns and cities, or whether the walk is for fifteen miles or fifteen minutes.

In carrying out our duties visiting different parts of Britain, we see the enormous difference the Ramblers' Association makes to people's lives. The many thousands of volunteers, who give up their spare time to contribute to our work, are the ones who achieve this change. They deserve special recognition and thanks. We would also like to thank our staff for their enormous contribution. Finally, our thanks goes to those who support our work through their generous donations and grants, and who work in partnership with us in local authorities, government and other charities and groups. We look forward to working together to create a 'walking Britain'.

Kate Ashbrook
Chairman

Tom Franklin
Chief Executive

WE PROMOTE WALKING FOR EVERYONE



The Ramblers' Association promotes walking to everyone, especially the health and environmental benefits, so that all walkers can enjoy our wonderful heritage.

We recognise the need to connect with the emerging agenda in the wider world that sees walking as not only a popular leisure activity, but also the most accessible form of everyday exercise and an important mode of local transport, and therefore a key means of tackling two of the great issues of the early 21st century: climate change and the obesity crisis.

Walking for Health

Our first priority is to bring the walking message to people who can most benefit – those who aren't already active enough for good health, including people in deprived urban areas, black and minority ethnic communities, families with young children and other groups we have previously found hard to reach.

This relatively recent emphasis for our work was rewarded in 2007. After successfully piloting the Get Walking Keep Walking project in south Birmingham and South London earlier in the year, we were granted £3.5million from the Big Lottery Fund's Well-Being programme to launch the Get Walking project in five deprived areas of England over the next four years.

The project works at a community level to promote regular everyday walking close to home, with the aim of achieving the government's guideline of at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week. The project recognises the mental as well as physical benefits of walking, and includes a strand targeted at people with mental health problems.

We have also established the Forth Valley Street Sport Hill Walking project in Scotland, which is similar to Get Walking, and gives marginalised sections of society the opportunity to experience the physical and mental health benefits of walking through a programme of sport, education and health activities.

And in Wales our Cerrig Camu/Stepping Stones project has trained over 200 volunteer walks leaders, and enabled nearly 8,000 people to kick-start a programme of regular physical activity by taking part in over 500 short, easy led walks.

‘Our promoting walking work places the public benefit of walking at its heart, with a vision of halting, and ultimately reversing, the overall decline in walking in Britain over the next 20 years.’



Campaigning for Change

We have also continued to demonstrate the benefits of walking and to argue the case for better resources for walking among decision makers.

We met with the minister of transport responsible for walking and cycling, the Scottish Executive and Welsh Assembly Government, and sat on the Mayor of London's Walking Advisory Panel. We responded to government consultations on planning, a European Union consultation on physical activity and health, and to the development of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)'s guidance on creating a healthy built environment, and Natural England's Outdoors for All Diversity Action Plan.

We fed into walking NGO walk21's International Charter for Walking, aimed at governments and local authorities, and were invited to present two papers on Get Walking Keep Walking at the 2007 walk21 conference in Toronto, attended by walking professionals and campaigners from around the world.

Sustainable Transport

Walking is, of course, the most sustainable form of transport. This year our participation in the London 2012 Active Travel Advisory Group helped ensure a much improved profile for walking in the Olympic Transport Plan and looks set to pay dividends not only in encouraging people to walk to venues, but also to promote walking as everyday exercise to the wider community in connection with the event. And we worked with the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games Bid Team on proposals for promoting walking in the lead up to the Games.

In addition, we have continued our support and involvement in the Transport Activists Round Table, the Campaign for Better Transport (formerly Transport2000), and TRANSform Scotland; worked with other non-motorised user groups, such as Sustrans, CTC, Cycling Scotland, BHS, Living Streets, and Paths for All; and begun developing Rail Rambles across Wales to deliver a full programme of rail and bus-based walks.

£3.5

MILLION OF THE BIG LOTTERY FUND'S WELL-BEING PROGRAMME GIVEN TO THE GET WALKING KEEP WALKING PROJECT

‘Thanks to the success of the ‘**Dorset**’ case in the **House of Lords** from now on actions to stop paths being recognised as public rights of way will have to be transparent.’

WE SAFEGUARD PATHS

Britain’s unique network of public paths is all too often illegally blocked and overgrown. The Ramblers’ Association campaigns for local authorities to keep paths open and make them a pleasure to walk on.

The key factors that determine the state of public paths are political will and funding. Where we have successfully made the case for the vital role that rights of way have to play, and the benefits to the public, we have seen the necessary political will develop, and funding has followed.

Victory in the House of Lords

Our work received a significant boost in 2007 when the Ramblers’ Association took its first ever case to the House of Lords. We brought the case because interpretation of the law since the late 1990s had been making it unfairly easy for landowners to stop paths being recognised as public rights of way. The House of Lords’ judgment on what has become known as the ‘Dorset’ case was handed down in June 2007 in the magnificent setting of the Chamber of the House of Lords and to everyone’s delight all five judges found conclusively in our favour. From now on actions to stop paths being recognised as public rights of way will have to be transparent.

The Battle of the Budgets

Our work to ensure that the rights-of-way network is open and easy to use has continued. Hundreds of local volunteers followed up thousands of path problem reports, scrutinised hundreds of proposals to change the network, lobbied for improved budgets and policies for rights of way, and generally represented the walking public.

All of our contact with local highway authorities has been aimed at improving the national funding position.

With 171 highway authorities across England and Wales, all with differing priorities, the task has not been simple. Over the last year we have seen an increasingly tight financial situation in local government, with rights of way often seen as an easy target for budget cuts. In many places we have fought against these cuts, and only seen the level of funding increase in a small number of cases.

Improving Public Benefit

All local authorities should have produced rights of way improvement plans (ROWIP) by November 2007, but research by Natural England suggested that more than 40 authorities might not meet the deadline. The Ramblers’ Association has continued to monitor and comment on ROWIPs and has made further representations to the Department for Transport about the importance of the link between ROWIPs and local transport plans. In Wales we submitted robust responses to 14 local authority’s draft ROWIPs.

We have continued our presence on the board of the Paths for All Partnership in Scotland, and have encouraged Ramblers members to become engaged in ‘core path’ planning, and run training events for volunteers involved in local access forums.

If we are to succeed in establishing the political will to improve public paths we must be able to illustrate the benefits of an open and usable rights-of-way network to the public at large. Our new rights of way strategy is one tool in helping us to do that. The strategy represents the most fundamental review in decades of our approach to rights-of-way work. Key elements are a new training programme, local plans for rights-of-way work, a review of Ramblers’ Association activity with more tailored support, and overall a clearer focus on public benefit.







WE INCREASE
ACCESS FOR
WALKERS

We are at the forefront of establishing statutory rights of access for walkers to the outdoors in England, Scotland and Wales.

This year saw two milestone anniversaries for access, both of which clearly indicate just how much the Ramblers' Association has achieved in its desire to secure greater access on foot to the countryside.

Greater Access – Quietly Successful

In April, it was the 75th anniversary of the Kinder Trespass, and October saw the second anniversary of the full implementation of Part 1 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. The first gained widespread publicity with events, walks, speeches by the Secretary of State and even a train-naming ceremony in honour of the occasion. The second passed by almost unnoticed.

This lack of fanfare for two full years of open access to over a million hectares of mapped open countryside, registered common land and dedicated woodland shows just how smooth the introduction of the new rights of access has been. The number of restrictions on access land is going down steadily and consistently, with 99% of all access land open for walkers at any one time. However, we will, of course, continue to monitor all closures and restrictions to ensure that the right of access is restricted only where absolutely necessary, for example to protect wildlife or to minimise the risk of fires.

99%

OF ALL ACCESS LAND IS OPEN FOR WALKERS AT ANY ONE TIME

In Scotland we have already managed to secure, possibly, the most liberal access laws in Europe. However, we have still had to pursue cases that tested these provisions. In particular, those of Euan and Claire Snowie at the Boquhan Estate in Stirling, who applied to exempt 40 acres of their land from statutory rights of access; and Ann Gloag at Kinfauns Castle, Perth and Kinross, in the first legal case to test access rights under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act. We have received overwhelming support from members in Scotland who together donated £28K to fund this legal action.

Coastal Corridor

The smooth running of open access has allowed us to focus our attention on a major, ongoing campaign for similar rights along the coast. Under the existing system, the public has no statutory right of access to coastal areas and, technically, even a family beach holiday can constitute trespass! Our campaign has gained considerable momentum over the year, beginning with a recommendation from Natural England, following a two-year programme of research, that an access corridor be established right around the coast of England. This proposal was then scrutinised during a lengthy public consultation run by Defra. The idea proved so popular that the Secretary of State made an announcement in October, only two months after the consultation ended, committing his government to bringing forward new legislation to make a continuous chain of coastal access a reality.

A lot of our campaigning work on coastal access has gone on behind the scenes, lobbying MPs and Peers, responding to consultations and working with Natural England to help shape its proposals. We could not have got so far so quickly without the continuing help of our volunteers and members, all of whom have been simply indispensable to the campaign effort. Next year promises to bring more lobbying and more parliamentary activity, with the new legislation for setting up a coastal corridor likely to be included as part of the Marine Bill.

'Land managers have realised that responsible public access and a working countryside can fit together.'



WE PROTECT THE COUNTRYSIDE



The Ramblers' Association is helping to protect the countryside and green spaces from harmful and polluting developments so that walkers can enjoy their tranquillity and beauty.

The Ramblers' Association has a long and successful history of campaigning for protected status for Britain's most wild and beautiful areas of countryside – in particular the Peak and Lake District national parks.

New National Parks

Finally, the last of ten areas in England identified as far back as 1946 as a potential national park looks set to join the others. In June 2007, the report from the public inquiry into the South Downs National Park was published. We were delighted that it recommended the park be established; however there was a sting in the tail. A vast area of land originally identified for inclusion known as the 'western Weald' was recommended for exclusion. This includes a large part of the East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The public inquiry will be re-opening early in 2008, and we will be fighting for this decision to be overturned.

We also helped to establish Scotland's first national park in the Cairngorms, but unfortunately a large part of Highland Perthshire was excluded. This year, as part of the PARC (Perthshire Alliance for the Real Cairngorms) coalition, we have continued to push for a boundary change to include this part of Perthshire. We have also participated in developing proposals for a coastal and marine national park in Scotland, and proposed a third national park on Harris in the Western Isles.

Renewable Energy

The Ramblers' Association recognises the serious effects of climate change, and strongly supports the increased development of renewable energy systems. However, given the impact of some renewable technologies on the surrounding landscape, we recommend a careful and responsible attitude to their development, combined with a massive improvement in the way that we use energy – investing in energy efficiency and conservation, as well as in demand reduction.

All renewable energy developments must be set within a context that recognises the values inherent in the British landscape, ensuring that these are cherished, not despoiled.

Unfortunately, present government policy is excessively focused on large-scale, land-based windfarms. This is leading to the industrialisation of the landscape in many parts of Britain and is eroding public support for the development of renewable energy systems. New incentives are needed, with preference given to small-scale developments on land, with large-scale wind developments only favoured in locations that are well offshore.

This year, we participated in public inquiries investigating the cumulative impact of multiple wind-turbine proposals in Scotland, and the problems forced onto the planning system by the government's renewables policy.



We contributed to the Welsh Assembly Government's consultations to protect the outdoor environment and we organised a series of windfarm awareness walks called Gorwel Agored/Clear Horizons. These walks ran in the South Wales Valleys where wind-turbine developments are set to take place, and several hundred people took part in these walks organised jointly with the local community.

Reducing Energy Reliance

We also actively work to discourage reliance on polluting forms of transport, and take a broad interest in a variety of transport issues. These include walking as a means of transport; road-building and its impact on the landscape and its direct effect on footpaths; public transport and making the countryside as accessible as possible; aviation and its impact on the landscape and the wider environment.

Our campaigning activity and impact has been in partnership with the Campaign for Better Transport (formerly known as Transport 2000). One of the main campaigning tools we've used has been a series of Transport Activist Roundtables focused on walking and cycling, which our Promoting Walking Team has helped to establish.

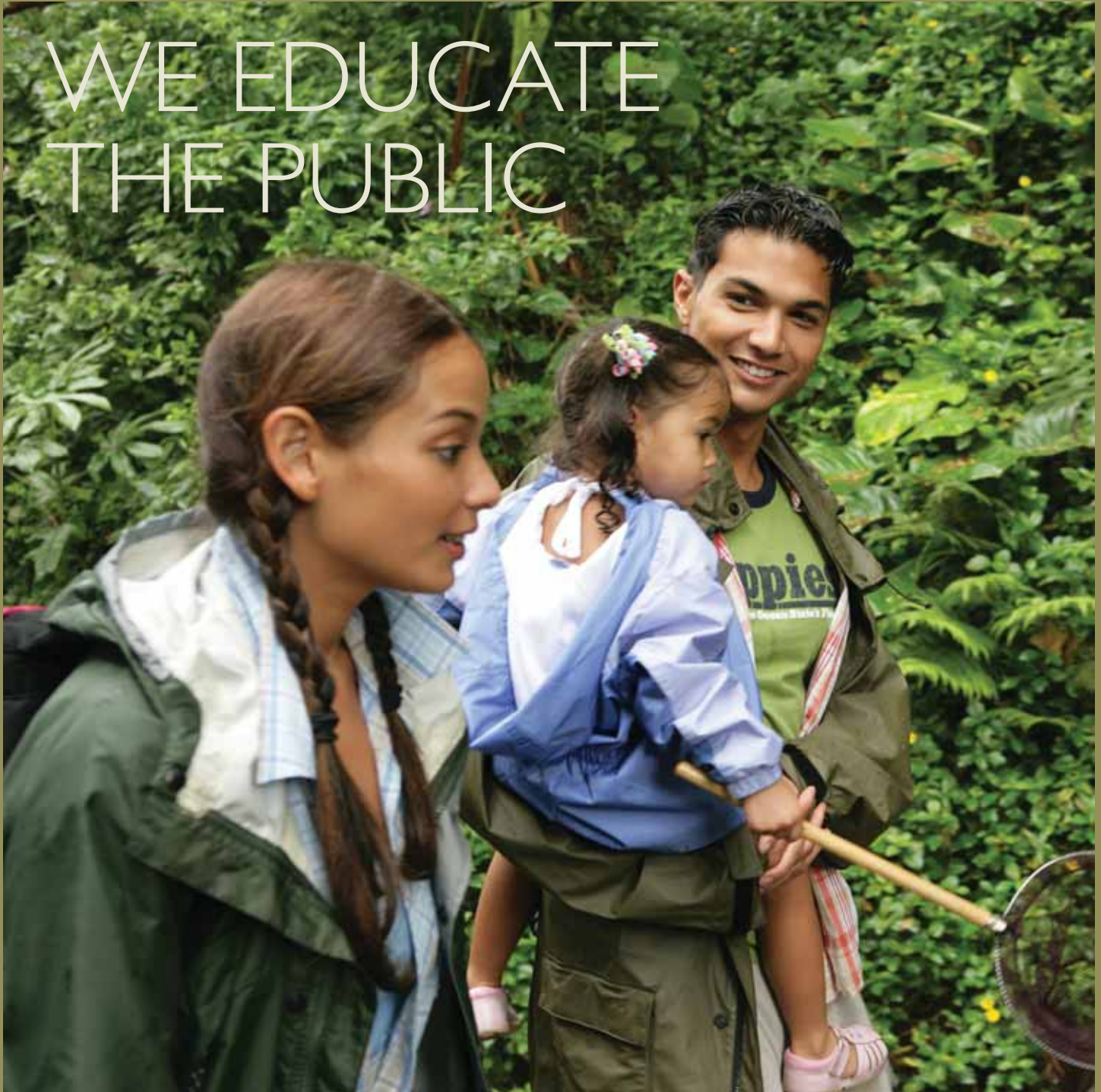


We joined the Planning Disaster campaign, which has challenged the government's radical reform of the planning system. As well as a number of meetings with ministers and government advisers the campaign has generated over 30,000 responses during the public consultation phase from individuals, including Ramblers members. The alliance of organisations working on this campaign has in excess of three million members. During January 2008 there will be opportunities for representatives of the alliance to give oral evidence to the appropriate committees relating to the planning recommendations. Undoubtedly there will be a further parliamentary phase of lobbying and influencing during which we will be seeking to shape backbench opinion.

30K
NUMBER OF RESPONSES TO THE
PLANNING DISASTER
CAMPAIGN CONSULTATION

'The Ramblers' Association recognises the serious effects of **climate change** and strongly supports the increased development of renewable energy systems.'

WE EDUCATE
THE PUBLIC





Our work informs the public about their rights and responsibilities.

Our capacity to deliver information and educate the public has continued to be developed as we work to position the Ramblers' Association as the 'first-stop shop' for information about walking in Britain.

New Media

Our website remains a comprehensive source of information, advice and inspiration for anyone interested in any aspect of walking in Britain.

This year we have harnessed the immediacy and utility of online publishing, and complemented our printed publications with online applications.

We have created walk.co.uk, an online version of our members' magazine, designed to attract a new type of audience to our work and refer them on to our main website. We have introduced a dedicated Blue Book Extra (BBE) website for our legal publication *Rights of Way: A Guide to Law and Practice*. BBE provides access to supplementary materials and allows us to track recent judgments affecting rights of way, assisting readers by keeping the book up to date.

We have developed a new accommodation database that allows advertisers to create and pay for their adverts online. Also members can now search an extended list of over 100 long-distance paths, and access accommodation information in greater and more accurate detail.



'Old' Media

We have expanded and improved our range of printed publications giving advice and support to members, the public and volunteers, and increased our stock of third-party publications sold through the Ramblers Bookshop.

2007 saw the publication of a completely revised and updated edition of our legal 'bible' *Rights of Way: A Guide to Law and Practice*, aka the Blue Book. The Blue Book, published jointly with the Open Spaces Society, is an essential work of reference for professionals and volunteers alike, and is regularly referred to in cases across England and Wales – including our victory in the House of Lords earlier this year (see page 06). Our members handbook and accommodation guide, **walk BRITAIN**, has this year included more useful tips and advice about walking than ever before. We plan to dedicate future editions specifically to walking issues, with a particular focus of helping newer Ramblers members get more out of their membership.

walk magazine has undergone a second format change since changing masthead brands from *The Rambler* over five years ago, including an increase in size and pagination and an ongoing programme of editorial development to ensure the magazine's broader credibility.

'Our website remains a comprehensive source of information, advice and inspiration for anyone interested in any aspect of walking in Britain.'

More Ways to Spread the Word

New printed publications such as our supplement **walk extra** allow us to communicate information for members direct to their doorsteps, while specific advice is available on subscription via newsletters such as Take Action, full of 'bite-sized' ideas for busy volunteers; our new bi-monthly email for volunteers involved in membership and recruitment; or *Working for Walkers*, our newsletter for rights-of-way professionals.

Changing Public Perceptions

To help change public perceptions about the Ramblers' Association, we have taken steps this year to speak face-to-face with new audiences. As well as attending the Retirement Show at Earl's Court, we also were present at the Innocent Village Fete in London's Regent's Park in August. This event was very family focused which gave us an opportunity to speak directly to parents about the benefits of our work, including the increasing number of family-friendly walks available, while engaging the children with our fun fête game The Ramblers Map of Britain!

'2007 saw the publication of the fourth edition of the **Blue Book**.'

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Review of financial management

Turnover for the year 2006/07 amounted to £5.9million. This included £1.43million generated by activities in the Ramblers' Association Areas and Groups, a generous grant from Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust, and £2.75million from membership subscriptions.

Of this, £5.7million was spent on our charitable objectives as described on pages 04-13.

The year ended with reserves at a healthy level demonstrating our ability to implement the new strategic plan. This was also the final year of our strategic plan, Waymarking the Future, and the key financial objective of ensuring economic viability for future years, has been achieved.

The figures (below) were extracted from the full audited annual report and accounts for 2006/07. Copies can be obtained from www.ramblers.org.uk/aboutus/Annual-report.html or by applying to our central office in London (see the back cover).

Summary Financial Information for the year ended 30 September 2007

CHART A: INCOME

	£
Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust	380,000
Legacies	272,583
Donations	207,290
Grants	52,402
Other fundraising activities	169,980
Fundraising total income	1,082,255
Membership subscriptions	2,752,347
Publishing and book sales	586,934
Walking related activities	1,220,000
Investment and miscellaneous	217,847
Total income	5,859,383

CHART B: EXPENDITURE

	£
Rights of way	1,166,877
Countryside protection	533,238
Freedom to roam	670,182
Promoting walking	3,008,516
Governance costs	323,372
Total charitable expenditure	5,702,185
Fundraising costs	214,962
Total expenditure	5,917,147
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources	(57,764)
Gain on investments	17,452
Net movement in funds	(40,312)

£5.9

MILLION TURNOVER FOR
THE YEAR 2006/07

CHART A: INCOME

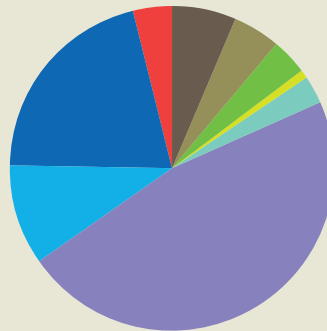
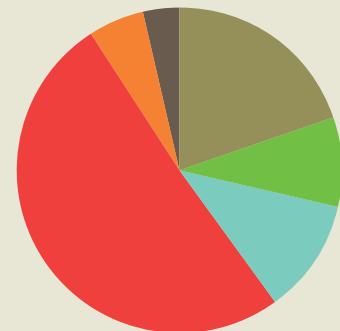


CHART B: EXPENDITURE



A BIG THANK YOU TO...

The Board of Trustees were:

Kate Ashbrook (Chairman)
Ian White (Vice Chairman from April 2007)
Denis Fuller (Treasurer)
Kevin Matthews (Vice Chairman, to April 2007)
Rodney Whittaker
Tom Fisher
Kate Gocher
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Owen Plunkett (to April 2007)
Terry Pollard
Jo Bird (from April 2007)
Brian Reader
Andrew Bibby (from April 2007)
Maxwell Ayamba
Jacquetta Fewster (from April 2007)
Gwendoline Goddard
Beverley Lufkin (from September 2007)
Ron Williams
Des Coles

We are grateful to the following members who generously left us a legacy in their will:

Mr Ralph Bailey
Mr Derek John Baker
Mr Raymond Asher Barber
Mr Jack Baron
Mr Ronald George Bullock
Mr Henry Cook
Mr Robert Curzon Coombe
Mr Alan Cowper
Ms Betty Patricia Cramp
Mr Geoffrey Drinkwater
Mr Leonard Firby Edmondson
Mrs Ruth English
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Mr Norman Tomlinson
Mr Peter Allison Toombs
Mr George Herbert Bridges Ward
Mr Norman Winterbottom
Miss Joan Mary Wood

We are also grateful to the following, who have provided financial support during the year:

A & H Pilkington Trust
Ardwick Trust
Arnold Burton Trust
Austria Tourist Board
David Brooke Charitable Trust
Edward Sharples Charitable Trust
Eurostar
Fisherbeck Charitable Trust
InterRail
Millets/Outdoor Group
Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust
Ramblers Worldwide Holidays
Regatta Great Outdoors
Rohan
ShareGift
Steel Charitable Trust
The Darton Charitable Trust
The Gatliff Trust

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Get Walking project. Photo: Simon Waters
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Photo: Richard Mann
Page 10: Cul Mor from Stac Pollaidh, Highlands
Photo: Anthony Angus
Page 11: Ffynon Oer, Gorwel Agored/Clear Horizons
walk, Olchon Valley, 'On the Black Hill', Herefords
Photo: David Abram

The Ramblers



Ramblers' Association

2nd Floor
89 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7TW
T: 020 7339 8500
ramblers@ramblers.org.uk

The Ramblers Scotland



Ramblers Scotland

Kingfisher House
Auld Mart Business Park
Milnathort
Kinross KY13 9DA
T: 01577 861 222
enquiries@scotland.ramblers.org.uk

Y Cerddwyr The Ramblers



Ramblers Wales

3 Coopers Yard
Curran Road
Cardiff CF10 5NB
T: 029 2064 4308
cerddwyr@ramblers.org.uk

www.ramblers.org.uk

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Mixed Sources

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