

Ramblers Volunteer Section Round-Up

7 July 2010 - 6th August 2010



This round-up contains the text of all items posted on the Ramblers Web site Volunteer Section since the 7th July. 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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In July we had 200 footpath successes reported to us by Groups and Areas all over the UK you can add yours and help us push the total for August up by filling in the Path Success Form at www.ramblers.org.uk/rights_of_way/successes.htm.

Volunteer Support

The Silver Slashers share their experiences of the advantages of joined up working

On the Isle of Anglesey the Silver Slashers have been working for five years to improve the local walking environment and show how good links between local Ramblers Volunteers and the Local Authority can reap real rewards for all walkers as well as helping the Ramblers to achieve its aims (Volunteer Case Study – Posted 03 August 2010.)

The Merseyside & West Cheshire Area organised a Public Ramble in the Amlwch area of Anglesey in June, where problems of footpath obstructions and vegetation overgrowth were encountered on a recce prior to the trip. Ingrid Donakey, Secretary of the Public Rambles wrote to the Yns Mons FP Secretary about these problems.

Ingrid says that “not only did they follow-up my FP obstruction problems but also their volunteer “Silver Slashers” cleared some of the overgrown paths to make them easier to walk in advance of our public ramble”.

One of the Public Ramble’s walkers then slipped on a tricky field stile on the actual walk. After the accident, Ingrid wrote to the local FP Secretary again to tell her what had happened and she followed through by inspecting the stile and instigating improvements to make it safer to use. The photographs illustrate the work they have done.

Andria Massey, Footpath Secretary Ynys Mon Ramblers Group, says, ‘that the Silver Slashers turned out for 50 sessions in 2009 with an average of 9 volunteers per session, Anglesey County Council paid travelling expenses which amounted to £2555 for the year so working on an average of 4.5 hours for the 451 volunteer sessions their work cost the Council £1.26 per hour, somewhat less than the minimum wage!’

Andria said, 'All this goes to show what volunteers can achieve with real commitment from the local Council. We could not do this without all the help and support given by Anglesey County Council Public Rights of Way Team, we should never underestimate the time taken by this team to arrange and provide materials for the volunteers to carry out this work'.

To report a path success just fillout the Path Success form at www.ramblers.org.uk/rights_of_way/successes.htm and to let us know about a particular path success or practice that you would like to share you can e-mail the Walking Environment Team at walking.environment@ramblers.org.uk.

New Group Walks Finder Support Page

A new Group Walks Finder support page is now available collecting all the guidance and support for this important resource in one place. (News - posted 31 July 2010)

A new and improved Group Walks Finder support page is now available in the Volunteering section of the website at

www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer/groupwalksfinder

All the existing support resources have been thoroughly revised and incorporated into five detailed factsheets which can be downloaded from this page, which also includes spreadsheet templates and a list of the currently supported walk theme and festival codes. This replaces both the previous factsheets and the various help and support options in the password-protected section of the Walks Finder.

The new page should make it much easier for existing walks editors to find the information and resources they need, and for Areas and Groups not currently using the Walks Finder to find out what's involved and get off to a good start.

The launch of the new support page coincides with some important changes to the system. These include branding all walks of five miles or less with the Walk4Life or Active Nation brands, withdrawing the 'Walking for Health' special category and revising the list of currently supported themed walk and festival codes. We have also taken the opportunity to make a number of minor improvements and fix some longstanding bugs. More information about the changes can be found at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/walk4lifeupdate.htm>.

If your Group is not yet using the system, now is the perfect time to get started. The Group Walks Finder is a great way to promote walks programmes and encourage new walkers, new members and new volunteers. It's also a great way to help everyone including existing members find a full range of walks across Britain, useful when travelling or when the Group covering your postcode offers no suitable walks for you but other nearby Groups do.

Around three quarters of Groups now use the system, which is one of the most popular sections of the Ramblers website. Many Groups say it is their major source of new members, and there is evidence to suggest Groups that use it enjoy higher memberships than Groups that don't.

Some Areas and Groups list walks on their own websites, but we recommend they list them on Walks Finder too. There is no need to retype details: once walks are on the Walks Finder you can link to them from a local website or create a simple listing that can be incorporated into another web page.

The Group Walks Finder is easy to use if you have a few very basic IT skills, a computer with an internet connection and readily available software.

To see the Walks Finder in action visit www.ramblers.org.uk/walksfinder.

Media and publicity training workshops, 20th September – 3rd October

Excellent local publicity over our 75th year has been generated. The press office is very keen to continue this good work and so would like to run a number of workshops focussing on developing media skills, discussing what we have already done and sharing ideas (Event posted 23 July 2010).

We are holding a number of regional media and publicity workshops in September and October this year. The events will include training, discussions and ideas sharing. The workshops aim to help raise the group/area's profile in the local media, and also to improve group/area publicity materials such as walk programmes.

At the moment we are looking at how many people would like to attend, before we start booking conference halls!

Ideas for the day are as follows:

- Workshops to be held between 20th September and 3rd October (2010), 10AM – 4PM
- Sessions to take place in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Durham, Swansea and Stirling.
- Training is by members of staff from our London, Welsh and Scottish offices.
- Workshops open to the people responsible for their group/area's media and publicity work.
- Sandwiches, refreshments to be provided
- Travel expenses to be covered by areas/ groups, unless otherwise requested

Would you be interested in attending? If so please send us an [e-mail](#) telling us your name, Group/ Area name, Role, availability – week, weekend or both, suggestions of what to include and any comments you , by the 10th August.

Special National and Regional Meetings 2010: two more dates added - book your place

Due to the popularity of the six meeting dates already announced, two more meetings have been added for Nottingham and Bristol, but London is now full - book your place (events – posted 22 July 2010)

The two-hour meetings, announced on 25 June 2010, are being held to help improve communications between central office, the Board of Trustees, and Areas and Groups of the Ramblers - Britain's walking charity. They follow similar meetings held across Britain during last winter, which were well-received by those attending.

Each will involve both Rodney Whittaker, Chair, and Tom Franklin, Chief Executive. All volunteers are welcome, although as space is limited (and several of last year's events were fully booked) early booking is recommended to avoid disappointment (see booking form below).

The meetings will:

- begin with an introduction to the Ramblers business plan for 2010/11 – setting out what the priorities are for the year ahead, for both our campaigning and our walks programmes;
- focus on the issue of how we are working to increase our membership – after many years of gradual decline, we all need to work to increase our membership this year;

- include an opportunity to discuss volunteer concerns and views, for Rodney and Tom to report back to the Board of Trustees and the Senior Management Team.

Tea and coffee will be provided.

The dates and times (exact times TBC) of the meetings are:

Newcastle - 7 October 2010 - early afternoon

Cardiff - 14 October 2010 - early evening

Glasgow - 26 October 2010 - early evening

London 2 - November 2010 - early evening – Sorry, it's now FULL

Liverpool 19 - November 2010 - early afternoon

Plymouth 23 - November 2010 - early evening

We have recently added:

Nottingham 19 - October 2010 - early evening

Bristol 30 - November 2010 - early evening

Timings will be confirmed in an e-mail confirmation of booking during August. We would expect your Area or Group to reimburse your travel costs. If this is not possible, please indicate on the registration form, under other comments.

Please note that spaces are limited, you are recommended to book early to avoid disappointment. Complete one form per person, following the instructions on the form and submit.

Places are filling up, go to

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/Regional+Meeting+Registration.htm> for a Registration Form.

Events

Baton Walk Update

A quick update of the first six months of the Ramblers 75th Baton Walk. News.

Half way through our 75th Anniversary year and the response to Baton Walk celebrations has been fantastic. So far many groups have picked up their baton and organised over 160 walks and other events. There have been many innovative ideas.

Cornwall Area launched the Baton Walk on New Year's Eve. Many walkers turned out to "Toast the Ramblers Anniversary Year". Other groups in the South West struggled through snow and ice to carry the Baton onwards.

In February, Birmingham City launched the West Midlands celebrations and in March, Wales continued the theme with great enthusiasm hiring a drummer for their launch in Cardiff. They were joined by the Minority Ethnic Women's Network who brought their own special version of a baton in the form of an Indian dancing stick. Many groups in Wales participated offering a variety of scenic walks.

April saw groups in the North West continue the Baton Walk. On 24th April, walkers from the Manchester Area celebrated with a walk to the top of Kinder Scout on the anniversary of the 1932 mass trespass. Scotland entered into the spirit of celebration in May offering many more exciting walks. For example Dumfries and District took their baton to the summit of Queensberry.

In June, Tom Franklin joined local groups in north east Lancashire to walk to the top of Pendle Hill. Many Ramblers have paid homage to campaigners who inspired Ramblers by retracing their predecessor's steps. Other groups have organised exhibitions showing the History of Ram-

blers and what they stand for today. These included Manchester, Isle of Wight, Bicester and Kidlington, Tavistock and Winchcombe

The Wiltshire Area combined their celebrations with British Waterways when they completed a relay race from Reading to Bristol along the 200 year old Kennet and Avon Canal over a week. They carried a baton specially decorated with canal art and containing historic documents from both Ramblers and Kennet and Avon Canal.

Throughout the past 6 months, groups have ensured that images of Ramblers with their batons and brightly coloured balloons have appeared across the airwaves and front pages of their local media; unprecedented media coverage, worth over £10,000 per month in advertising value! Highlights include Cornwall's top-spot on ITV, the blanket local BBC Radio coverage of the Kennet and Avon canal relay, as the baton made its way from Reading to Bristol, and lots of big newspaper articles featuring black-and-white 1930's Ramblers photos in the North West, for Kinder Scout Anniversary baton walk.

Photographs of all these events can be found on [FLICKR](#) and our [Gallery](#). They are great so pass them around your group members.

In July, ramblers across Yorkshire and Humberside will take up the baton to continue the celebrations. Let's make the second half of the year even more exciting. Where will your group be taking the Baton? Please let us know? 75anniversary@ramblers.org.uk

Just a reminder of the months that are allocated to you:-

Yorkshire & Humberside - July

East Midlands - August

East - September

London - October

South East - November/December

Get Walking for the Games

Get Walking For the Games, Ready to go! Launch of the Ramblers Get Walking for the Games project is taking place on the (News - 24 July).

Ramblers launches its new Get Walking for the Games project with two special led walks visiting 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games venues on the London 2012 Open Weekend, Saturday-Sunday 24-25 July. The walks are meant to inspire Ramblers Areas and Groups across the country to plan their own Get Walking for the Games walks. Saturday's walk runs from Windsor to the spectacular rowing venue Dorney Lake and back along the Thames. Sunday's walk focuses on the main Olympic Park in Stratford, East London, and includes local waterways as well as good views of several landmark venues now in advanced stages of construction. See the [Group Walks Finder](#) for more information about the walks .

Get Walking for the Games aims to get more people active through walking using the energy and inspiration of the Olympic Games. Walks can include not only games venues but Cultural Olympiad sites, places linked to the history of sport and the Olympics, training venues and paths and green spaces improved thanks to the event, so there are opportunities for Groups all over the country to get involved. The project has been awarded the coveted Inspire brand by London 2012 and is a great way of getting more people involved with walking and the Ramblers. For more information please go to <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Walking/Projects/2012.htm> or contact thomas.moulton@ramblers.org.uk .

For more about the project visit the project homepage at www.ramblers.org.uk/2012

2010 Safeguarding Review

A review of the Safeguarding Policy has been conducted. Feedback on the draft is welcomed. (Consultation - posted 5 August 2010)

The Ramblers provides activities, which sometimes include children & families, and adults who may be vulnerable. We are committed to doing what we can to safeguard their well-being. Our trustees have a legal duty to act prudently, and are therefore responsible for putting reasonable measures in place, trying to ensure that those benefiting from, or working with, the charity are not harmed through their contact with it.

Following feedback from volunteers and staff, a review of the Safeguarding Policy and its related procedures and guidelines has been conducted. The revised policy provides volunteers and staff with a greater variety of tools so that the most appropriate approach can be used for any given activity. This includes Area/Group walks, particularly when children or vulnerable adults regularly take part, and also Ramblers grant funded projects, some of which work quite intensively with children and vulnerable adults.

The policy, procedures and guidelines will be reviewed henceforth on a yearly basis. They are however, subject to change at any time, to reflect any updated legislation.

The draft policy is available at '[Have my say](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/Consultation.htm)' – a webpage where all consultations are listed found at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/Consultation.htm>.

We would welcome feedback from interested parties by Friday 3rd September 2010. Feedback should be sent to directorsoffice@ramblers.org.uk.

Walking Environment Update - August 2010

News from the Walking Environment team. (News & action request - posted 3 August 2010)

Recent media coverage of Coastal Access

You may have seen coverage in the 1st August editions of the Sunday Times and Telegraph, reporting the 'indefinite shelving' of coastal access. Following this we sought, and received, assurances from the Minister – Richard Benyon MP – about the future of the scheme. We have put out a press release setting out the current position:

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/news/Latest+news/coast-path-commitment>

It goes without saying that the Ramblers will be working hard to keep the profile of coastal access high during the comprehensive spending review – and stressing the benefits of the English Coastal Trail for tourism and the economy. We will keep members and volunteers in touch with the campaign, and highlight actions they can take to help in the next few months.

Draft role descriptions for Walking Environment volunteers

As part of an ongoing review of volunteer roles in the Ramblers the Walking Environment team has drafted new role descriptions for Footpath Secretaries, Access Officers, and Walking Environment Officers (a working title for the role which has evolved from Countryside Secretary):

- Area Footpath Secretary – draft role description
- Group Footpath Secretary – draft role description
- Area Access Officer – draft role description
- Group Access Officer – draft role description
- Area Walking Environment Officer – draft role description
- Group Walking Environment Officer – draft role description

To see these documents go to <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/weu-aug-10> or get in touch with Ed Wilson, Volunteer Support and Development Officer.

Please send comments to Ed Wilson, Volunteer Support and Development Officer, by Wednesday 6 October: ed.wilson@ramblers.org.uk, or by letter to the Ramblers Central Office address. We are particularly keen to hear views on the 'Walking Environment Officer' role, and how this takes forward the work of Countryside Secretaries, combined with a more strategic responsibility across the board.

Putting London on the Map

Throughout August we will be launching the 'Putting London on the Map' campaign. Inner London is the only area which does not legally have to record footpaths on definitive maps. Whether you live in London or choose to walk in the capital when visiting, you can help us lobby to get paths recorded. For more information on the campaign follow this link:

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Campaigns+Policy/maplondon>

Level Crossings

The Law Commission and the Scottish Law Commission have recently published a joint consultation paper entitled "Level Crossings". After more than a year of research, informal consultations and meetings, the paper reviews the law relating to level crossings throughout Great Britain and makes provisional proposals for its reform. The reforms include significant changes to the procedures for closing and diverting public rights of way which cross railways on the level. Staff from Central Office and from Ramblers Scotland will consider the proposals in detail and will prepare a draft response on which we will consult volunteers before submission to the Commissions later this year.

After appraising and taking into account the comments received, the two Law Commissions will produce and submit a report to the Lord Chancellor and to Scottish Ministers. This will contain their final recommendations and the reasons behind them. A draft Bill, giving effect to the recommendations will be produced at the same time.

The full paper can be viewed here: http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/level_crossings.htm.

If you have experienced any problems with the present procedures for closing and diverting rights of way which cross railway lines (sections 118A and 119A Highways Act 1980, or any more general problems with level crossings please let Janet Davis know (janet.davis@ramblers.org.uk) as soon as possible.

'Footpath Worker'

Footpath Worker Volume 26, No 3 was published and mailed out to Ramblers rights of way volunteers in July. If you did not receive either this one or Volume 26, No 2 please contact Anastasia French (walking.environment@ramblers.org.uk) and ask for a copy.