

Increasing membership, influence and reach of the Ramblers

This information is provided for consideration by Areas

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 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 form linked from www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer/news/increasingmembership.html.
- 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** see [here](#).
- 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 1 March to 124,000 on 1 April 2010.

Group/membership analysis

This data aims to provide context for discussion with the data point being April 1st 2010.

Table 1: Number of Groups and members

	England	Scotland	Wales	Total
Groups	385	57	40	482
Members	108,255	6,856	6,394	121,505
Members per Group	281	120	160	252

This table excludes 2,558 members not assigned to a Group

Graph 1: Distribution of Groups according to membership

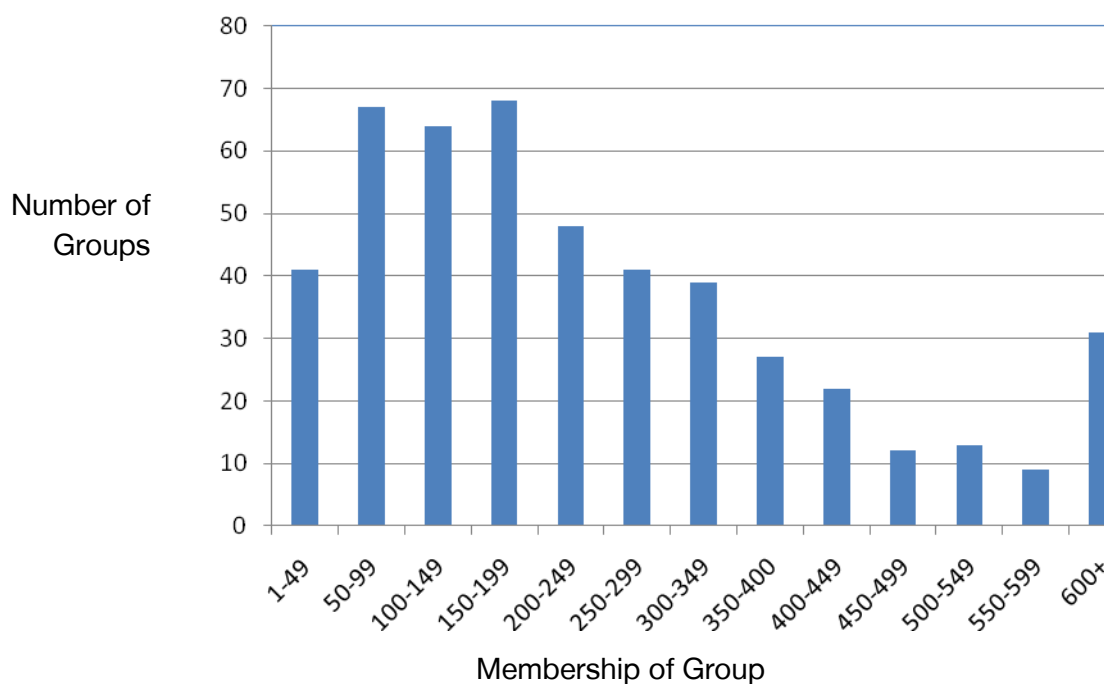


Table 2: Ten smallest Groups

Group Name	Type	Area Name	Members
Derbyshire Family Rambling Group	Family	Derbyshire	4
Forth Valley Family Walking*	Family	Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside	6
Northumbria Family Walking Group	Family	Northumbria	8
Eryri 20 - 30	20's & 30's	North Wales	8
Kernow Boots	20's & 30's	Cornwall	11
Notts Weekend Walkers	Weekend	Nottinghamshire	12
Strathtay*	Geographic	Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside	19
Wiltshire Wanderers - Young People's Group	20's & 30's	Wiltshire & Swindon	22
Sussex Young Walkers - Under 35's	20's & 30's	Sussex	22
Stour Walking Group	20's & 30's	Suffolk	22

* In process of closing. Note: This table excludes some Groups that currently have 0 members

Table 3: Ten largest Groups

Group Name	Type	Area Name	Members
Edinburgh	Geographic	Lothian & Borders	775
Metropolitan Walkers	20's & 30's	Inner London	800
Sheffield	Geographic	South Yorks & N.E.Derbyshire	835
Leeds	Geographic	West Riding	865
West Essex	Geographic	Essex	880
Bristol	Geographic	Avon	906
Wirral	Geographic	Merseyside and West Cheshire	956
Croydon	Geographic	Surrey	981
Tyneside	Geographic	Northumbria	984
East Dorset	Geographic	Dorset	1,115

Graph 2: Group size, number of walks and number of short walks

From details of walks entered onto the Group Walks Finder in March 2010. 291 (60%) of Groups used Walks Finder during this period)

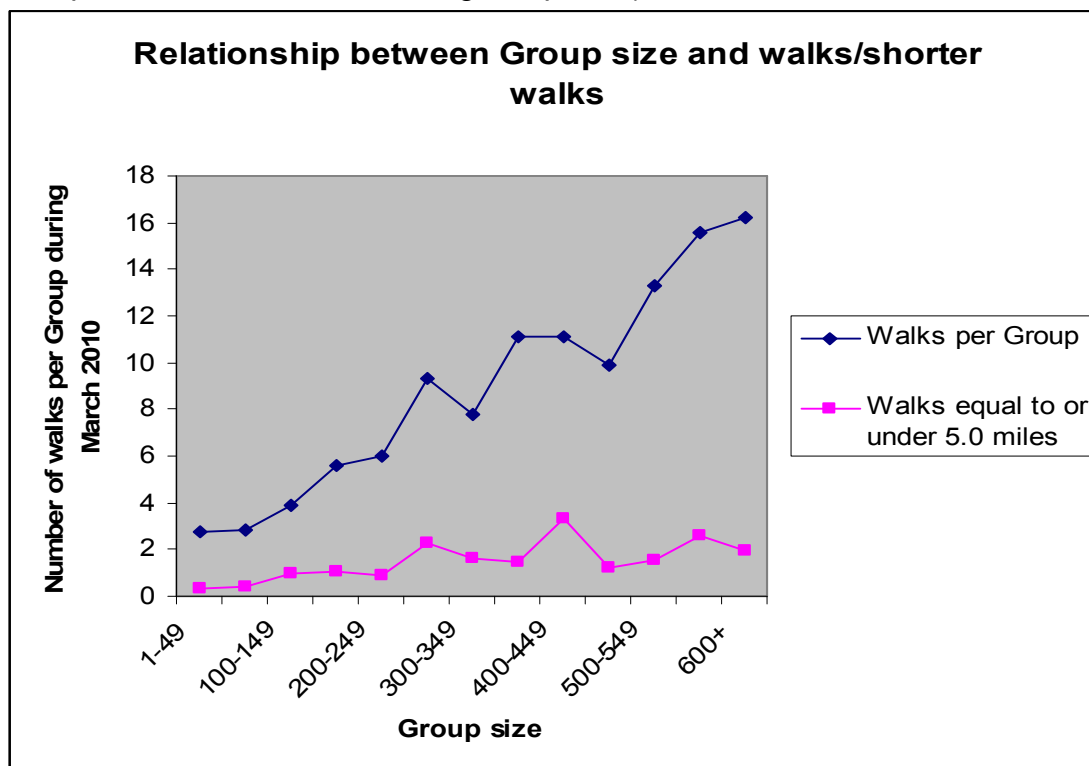


Table 4a: Relationship between number of Groups in an Area and membership

Number of Groups in an Area	Total number of Areas	Average members per Area	Total number of Groups	Average members per Group
<3	7	526	18	205
4-6	13	1,301	67	252
7-10	19	2,323	156	283
11-15	14	2,932	184	223
>15	3	5,233	57	275

Table 4b: Areas with lowest membership within each range

Area	Number of Groups in an Area	Number of Groups in Area	Members in Area	Average members per Group
Pembrokeshire	<3	1	180	180
Grampian	4-6	4	481	120
Cornwall	7-10	7	1,130	161
Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside	11-15	15	1,496	100
Strathclyde, Dumfries & Galloway	>15	22	2,729	124

Table 4c: Areas with highest membership within each range

Area	Number of Groups in an Area	Number of Groups in Area	Members in Area	Average members per Group
South & East Cheshire	<3	3	1,294	431
Merseyside and West Cheshire	4-6	6	2,631	439
Inner London	7-10	7	4,314	616
Hampshire	11-15	15	5,027	335
Surrey	>15	16	7,240	453

Inevitably the data can be interpreted in different ways. Potentially interesting and relevant points that came to light whilst completing this exercise include:

- More than a third of Groups have less than 150 members
- ~7,000 members belong to 69 Specialist Groups, with the balance of members (>114,000) belonging to 413 Geographic Groups*
- Excluding the Metropolitan Walkers, with a membership of 800, the average size of the remaining 53 20s-30s hike Groups is 99 members.
- Almost 10% of Groups have less than 50 members
- 21 Groups have less than 30 members
- The largest Group has more than 1,100 members
- Groups with the largest membership coincide with urban areas
- The largest Groups offer a walk almost every other day
- The smallest Groups offer fewer than three walks a month
- Larger Groups offer more short walks ($\leq 8\text{km}/5\text{ miles}$) than smaller Groups
- Only 60% of Groups used the Group Walks Finder in March
- The average size of Groups that used Walks Finder in March was 276, compared to 197 of those Groups that did not
- 18% of all walks were $\leq 8\text{km}/5\text{ miles}$
- There is quite significant variation in the average size of Groups when comparing Areas with similar numbers of Groups. For example Cornwall has seven Groups with 161 members per Group whereas Inner London has seven Groups with 616 members.

* Specialist Groups are those to which members are assigned only on special request, such as hike 20s-30s, family walking and easy walking Groups. Geographic Groups are those to which members are assigned by default on the basis of their postcodes.