

# Ramblers Volunteer Section Round-Up

## 3 December 2009 to 11 January 2010



This round-up contains the text of all items posted on the Ramblers Website Volunteer Section since 3 December. Some of the items had deadlines which have now passed. These are included for interest only.

In some items as originally posted, website 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 January 10

Thoughts and reflections from the Chief Executive (News - posted 5 January 2009)

Happy New Year to all Ramblers volunteers.

A special thanks to all of the walk leaders who led walks during our Festival of Winter Walks, which we held in partnership with Nature Valley. It was yet again a huge success, with more than 700 walks across the country. Each one of those walks was planned, recc'ed, and led by groups and volunteers - not a single walk would have happened without you. I understand that the heavy snow interrupted only a few of them. Just before Christmas I took part in a 'Radio Day' for the Festival, with the broadcaster Ben Fogle. We managed to do interviews about the events on 38 local radio stations across Britain – so the Festival of Winter Walks achieved some great publicity for the Ramblers as well.

### Changing the way we work

One of the main strands in the current Ramblers strategy is to become a better-run organisation. For many years at the Ramblers, change to the way we did things was extremely slow. Over time our basic systems and processes fell behind modern standards – although things worked, it was often akin to keeping a steam engine going. Over the past year, we've been modernising many of these things. It is a painful process, because we've had to make lots of changes in a short space of time – finance systems, membership processes, management, marketing, communications, and so on. We are not there yet, but there are encouraging signs.

- In December, new-style membership reports - <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/Improved+Membership+Reports.htm> - were sent out to membership secretaries with accurate, relevant membership information from our membership master database. This follows a year of work in fixing the problems with the CRM system. The new reports have been well received by membership secretaries, and we're working with them on making improvements to the servicing of members for the future.
- We have also introduced a standard that all correspondence from volunteers or members will receive a response within 10 working days. I recognise that in the past, response times have been patchy – so we're introducing this new standard so you know what you can expect. If we need more time to answer your query, then you should receive a 'holding reply' in the meantime. It would help us greatly if wherever possible you could email enquiries (which saves both time and money for the charity), to the relevant team - <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/KeyContacts.htm> - for your enquiry.
- Since last summer, we have stopped sending out packages of paperwork to volunteers via the post. Instead, we are updating the volunteers section of the website, and we send out a monthly e-news roundup to volunteers. Although this has not been universally popular, particularly with those without easy access to email, it has proved popular with many others. Information is now

more widely available, to more volunteers, than ever before – and it is saving the charity over £100,000 in postage costs.

I can't promise that the painful process of rapid change has yet finished – the charity was simply so far behind, it is going to take a while to catch up. But I hope that, increasingly, the benefits of being a more modern and efficient organisation will start to show.

In the future, the way to avoid another period of rapid, painful change is to ensure that we constantly evolve, moving with the times as they change.

### **Imagine.....**

The RSPB has more than 1 million members, making it a tremendously powerful campaigning organisation. As its slogan says, "One million voice for nature".

The Ramblers, as Britain's walking charity, has just over 120,000 members – imagine how much stronger our voice would be with more members. Yet walking is more popular than ever – there are over 5 million regular walkers in Britain. We need to broaden our appeal to encourage more walkers to see the Ramblers as 'for them' – relevant enough to them that they want to join. That's one of the challenges for the Ramblers as we move forward. There are no easy answers – we need your involvement in helping the Ramblers appeal to new generations of walkers.

And finally, good luck with the many 75th anniversary events which are planned across the country. Don't forget to post information onto our special 75th anniversary website - <http://www.ramblers75.org.uk/>.

Tom

What do you think about Tom's blog? You can let him know by clicking here:

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/OneStopCMS/Core/SendUsAComment.aspx?guid=%7b426D395F-3C39-4C99-B9CF-579D9229D13B%7d>

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### **Special Regional Meetings 2010 - Book your place**

Spaces available for the meetings taking place in Leicester, Manchester, London and Exeter with Chair and Chief Executive during January and February. Information for all volunteers. (Event - posted 3 December 2009 and **re-issued** 5 January 2010, with duplicated info)

These four additional 1-2 hour meetings 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 a series of seven such meetings held in November and December.

Each will involve both Rodney Whittaker, Chair, and Tom Franklin, Chief Executive. All volunteers are welcome, although as space is limited early booking is recommended to avoid disappointment (see booking form below). Priority will be given to those who did not get a chance to attend one of the earlier meetings.

The meetings will:

- begin with a short introduction from Rodney and Tom, explaining the priorities in the Business Plan for the year ahead and how they fit with the Ramblers work of improving places where people walk, and encouraging more people to walk.
- include an opportunity to discuss volunteer concerns, hopes, and ways forward for the year ahead, 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 of the meetings are:

Leicester

Tuesday 12th January, 6.00 – 8.00pm, Quaker Meeting Rooms

Manchester

Tuesday 19th January, 6.00 – 7.30pm, Quaker Meeting rooms

London

Tuesday 26th January, 6.15 – 8.15pm, Ramblers Central Office, Camelford House

Exeter

Tuesday 2nd February, 5.15-7.15pm (changed from the original time of 5.30-7.30pm) Central Library

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.

Click here to register (Registration Form) -

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

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### **Organising themed walks for 2010**

Information on how to organise themed walks in 2010 (action request - posted 22 December 2009)

### **Themed walks publicity boost in 2010**

Click on this link for a copy of the letter below:

[http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Resources/Ramblers%20Association/themed%20walks%20e-mail%20\(copy\).doc](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Resources/Ramblers%20Association/themed%20walks%20e-mail%20(copy).doc)

Click on this link for the forms to nominate your themed walks:

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Resources/Ramblers%20Association/Themed%20walks%20forms.doc>

Dear member

Following the success of last year's themed walks calendar, I am writing to ask if your group/ area would hold themed walks in 2010.

Firstly a massive thank you to everyone who held themed walks last year. They were incredibly successful in generating publicity, and - I hope – enjoyable on the day too!

Themed walks are one of the best ways the Ramblers has of publicising its walks, because they are interesting and the media like to cover them. There are many dates in the year on which themed walks can be held, ranging from Ramblers' dates like the Festival of Winter Walks to seasonal dates like Halloween. Themed walks can often be arranged without additional effort - for example, a walk through a bluebell wood in April can be ticked off as a 'Bluebell Walk' on the walks finder.

We'd be delighted if you could hold themed walks on some key dates throughout 2010 and (if possible) send us a colourful description of the walks.

A table of suggested themes is attached. Please could you, consulting with your group and walks co-ordinator, choose which themed walks you'd like to participate in. Then, could you send details of your choices, using the forms attached, to [ruth.somerville@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:ruth.somerville@ramblers.org.uk) \*\* NB it's vital to send me walks details, so I can promote it in the media \*\* Lastly, enter the walk onto the walks finder - this has been adapted to fit the themes.

More points

- We do not expect your Group to participate in all of the dates, they are just suggestions.
- If you can only pick two, please choose the Festival of Winter Walks and Get Walking Day. These two are most important for media coverage.
- We do not expect that all 2010 walks are planned yet; we hope that advanced notice will aid your planning.
- You can use themed walks to promote the Ramblers 75th Anniversary throughout 2010.

IMPT: The annual themed walks calendar is separate to the special 75th anniversary baton walks programme. For all baton walks enquiries please e-mail [75anniversary@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:75anniversary@ramblers.org.uk) or visit [www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/75th+Anniversary](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/75th+Anniversary)

Please do e-mail me on [ruth.somerville@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:ruth.somerville@ramblers.org.uk) or phone 020 7339 8532 if you have any queries.

Ruth Somerville  
Media Manager

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### **Summary of the Board of Trustees meeting 5th December 2009**

Read a summary of the decisions taken at the Board meeting in December (News - posted 9 December 2009)

For the first time, to save money, the board meeting took place at central office instead of in a hired meeting room. The Board agreed that most future meetings would also be held at central office. Trustees acknowledged that many Areas and Groups had made great efforts to reduce their spending. Like many other volunteers, trustees often don't claim the expenses which they could. The Board agreed that, as a further cost-saving measure, wherever they were able trustees would voluntarily reduce their claims for car travel mileage from 28p to 20p. The Board was also pleased to note that excess office space at central office had been successfully rented out to another charity, helping to reduce the net cost of central office.

### **Announcements**

The Board noted with sadness the death of Phil James, husband of Christine James, Cornwall Area Secretary.

### **Governance improvements**

The Board thanked Jonathan Kipling, Hon Treasurer, for his report into the circumstances leading up to the financial decisions taken at the May board meeting. The Board had agreed all his recommendations including that next year's business plan and budget would be agreed in May rather than September - four months before the start of the new financial year. It also agreed to hold two extra board meetings in the coming year.

### **Financial and business performance**

The Board reviewed the financial and business performance for the first month of the financial year. Broadly, we are on track, with income slightly higher than projected. However, too much should not be read into a single month's figures. The Board noted that managers were reviewing management accounts and performance indicators on a monthly basis, and that the Hon. Treasurer was also reviewing them.

### **Scotland and Wales**

The Board received a report on devolution options which had been discussed at the Scottish Council Executive Committee. The Board agreed to put forward a motion to General Council calling for greater devolution of Ramblers work in Scotland, Wales, and England, and to set up a small working group to look at potential devolution models to achieve this. The Board also noted the new Ramblers Cymru business plan, and noted the intention to produce a Ramblers Scotland business plan by mid-January, to help with raising specific grants for Scotland and Wales.

### **Campaigns**

The Board received an update on our campaigning work, the highlights of which were:

Royal Assent for the Marine and Coastal Access Bill has put coastal access on the statute books.

Our response to the section 3A order (to amend the CRoW Act as it applies to coastal land) has been submitted following feedback from volunteers and staff.

The South Downs was confirmed as a National Park by the Secretary of State. We are working with partners in the South Downs Campaign to bring this work to a satisfactory conclusion.

Our Rights of Way Improvement Plan campaign continues to attract support. We had the front page story and an editorial comment in 'Waymark', the journal of IPROW (the Rights of Way Officers and Managers organisation).

The Countryside Access Management System (CAMS), which we have bought to improve our management of footpath casework, has been successfully installed on a remote current path order database. This should be operational in the new year.

In November the Secretary of State confirmed a definitive map modification order opening up a new length of restricted byway at Burnham Market, Norfolk. Norfolk Area Ramblers applied for the order, citing maps dating back to 1797; the Inclosure Award of 1825; and the tithe commutation map of 1837. Norfolk County Council rejected the application but the Area persevered with a Sch 14 appeal to the Secretary of State, which was successful. The matter went to inquiry where the Inspector, satisfied by the evidence, confirmed the order. The result is an excellent link in the network with no motor vehicles allowed on it.

A meeting has been held with partners to discuss issues around the mapping of downland in the CRoW mapping review process - <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/Review+of+maps+of+open+countryside.htm>. These discussions have given us a useful focus for going forwards - based on a landscape-scale approach to mapping, and the importance of securing downland access land which makes sense from a user point of view.

The independent report into our family walking pilot - <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Walking/Projects/England/walkingfurness/walkingfurness.htm> - was very favourable and has been sent to the Department of Health. A summary of the pilot, including findings of evaluation team is planned.

A micro-website - <http://www.getwalking.org.uk/> - for our Get Walking, Keep Walking scheme has been launched. Paid for by grant funding, it strongly promotes the Get Walking packs, to encourage those new to walking, and includes on-line functionality to request them. The launch will include routes for each project location, with more being added in coming weeks.

A paper has been presented to the Board's Strategy & Governance sub-committee outlining some of the opportunities and challenges that face the Ramblers in terms of potentially increasing the breadth and depth of Ramblers Groups offering programmes of walks, by making it easier to establish and maintain 'specialised groups'. More work is being done to look at options.

Our Led Walks team has produced an analysis of reported incidents that have taken place on led walks for two 6 month periods covering Oct 1 2008 – Sept 30 2009 in totality. This is the first time that such reports have been produced. The information they contain will help to raise the profile of risk management, identify any trends and help inform guidance and planned training for Walk Leaders.

## **Membership data**

The Board received a report on membership levels, generated by the 'master database' of our CRM system. Now that the data in the CRM system is accurate, we will have regularly available reports on the size and trends in our membership; this also dovetails with the new membership reports - <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/Improved+Membership+Reports.htm> - which will be provided to membership secretaries from the November data run (at the beginning of December). The Board noted the amended definitions - <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/News/Definitions+in+membership+report+>

[+information+for+membership+secretaries.htm](#) - for the various membership types that have been introduced from December 2009 - this leads to a smaller 'headline' membership number, of 122,616 as at 23rd November. (This represents those people who have a current paid subscription to the Ramblers.) A further 6,436 are categorised as 'payment pending' (which means that the person's last subscription has ended within the last 3 months and the renewal has not yet been processed). However, these changes in definition means that the information is much more accurate.

## **Volunteers**

The Board received a report on the special National and Regional meetings which the Chair and Chief Executive had held with 150 volunteers, during November and December. It noted that four more meetings had been set up for January and February. It also received a report on the progress of the Ramblers Volunteers Survey, which all volunteers were encouraged to take part in.

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# **Campaigns**

## **Walking Environment Update - January 10**

News from the Walking Environment Team. (News & Action request - posted 11 January 2010)

Happy New Year from the Walking Environment Team. We hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas, and look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

## **Defeat in High Court on Manchester FP 254**

Judgment in this long-running obstruction case was handed down shortly before Christmas. Much to the Ramblers dismay, the judge ruled that the path runs along a different line to that which we argued and is therefore not obstructed by a gate which was often locked. We are considering our options, but this is likely to be the final legal action on this path. The important issues to take forward are:

- To re-open discussions with the relevant local authorities about the re-opening of a through route in this locality
- To approach Government for a change in the law, highlighting the weaknesses of the current s.130A procedure
- To consider whether our guidance to footpath secretaries on the use of s.130A should be altered

We will keep you informed.

## **Natural England consultation on Lakes to Dales landscape designation project**

Natural England has published proposals for extensions of the Yorkshire Dales and Lake District National Parks. It is now consulting on whether these areas have the qualities necessary to be in a National Park and whether they should be given National Park status. The consultation documents can be found here: [www.lakestodaleslandscapes.org.uk](http://www.lakestodaleslandscapes.org.uk)

Staff will be working on a response with the Areas involved, but would be interested to hear from any other volunteers who have views on the proposals. Please send these to Janet Davis, Senior Policy Officer, [janet.davis@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:janet.davis@ramblers.org.uk) by 28 February 2010.

## **Where You Walk campaign**

A quick reminder about our 'Where You Walk' campaign, which is gathering views and opinions on best practice and suggestions for improvement to the walking environment. The information gathered will be fed into our Walking Environment Manifesto. Area and Group volunteers will be formally consulted in due course, but we'd also like to know what you think as individual walkers. Let us know here:

<http://e-activist.com/ea-campaign/clientcampaign.do?ea.client.id=117&ea.campaign.id=4965>

## **Hello and Goodbye**

We are delighted to welcome Anastasia French to the team, as the new Campaigns Administrator (replacing Martin Key). Anastasia was previously Membership Services Assistant at the Ramblers, and is already settling in to our 'first point of contact' role. At the same time, we are sorry to have lost David

Murray, our Campaigns Coordinator, who left the Ramblers shortly before Christmas to become Chief Executive of the Green Party; and Jancy Overell (nee Davies), our Volunteer Support Officer, who has embarked on a career in teaching. We wish David and Jancy well. We have already recruited a new Volunteer Support and Development Officer – Ed Wilson, who will be starting on 18 January, and will be recruiting a new Campaigns Officer during January.

### **Contact**

If you would like to get in touch with the team please contact Anastasia French at [walking.environment@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:walking.environment@ramblers.org.uk) or 020 7339 8584

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### **Canterbury Group major campaign success**

Read about the success of the Ramblers Canterbury Group in lobbying for a new bridleway bridge over a dangerous road. If you have a good local success story, we want to hear about it. (News - posted 6 January 2009)

Check the Volunteer Features page - <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/VolunteerFeatures/> - for more details (below). If you have a good story of a local Ramblers success, we want to hear from you!

### **New £1.35 million bridleway bridge over the A2 at Kingston**

Work is underway on a new bridleway bridge across the A2 at Kingston. When the road was upgraded and a crash barrier installed no consideration was given to the 15 PROWs crossing it.

In 2002, after a public exhibition and consultation, Ramblers led by Ken Wright, Bromley, and Kath Gill, Canterbury, then Area officers, organised a rally that attracted over 100 people. It was supported by City Councilor, Martin Vye, a member of the Canterbury Group, the British Horse Society, Sustrans, Spokes, Parish Councils, the Dover MP, local Group members and others. On the day the police would not let them cross the road as it was “too dangerous”

Councillor Vye said “It makes clear sense to build the bridge and at last people can access the beautiful paths on either side.”

The bridge costing £1.35 million is due for completion in February. It is an arched steel and timber construction.

Canterbury Ramblers will be organising a walk to celebrate once it opens

Do you have a good story of a local Ramblers success? Let us know by clicking here: <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/OneStopCMS/Core/SendUsAComment.aspx?guid=%7b4157D130-72AB-45AE-8BDE-63FFB886E475%7d>

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### **Coastal Access Updates**

Coastal Access Updates - Natural England Scheme Consultation (News / action request - posted 7 December 2009)

### **Consultations, Secondary Legislation and Preparations for Implementation**

Following the passing of the Marine and Coastal Access Act a number of public consultations are taking place which will lead to the secondary legislation needed to enable Natural England to start work on the ground.

Natural England is currently holding a public consultation on its Coastal Access Scheme. This is the methodology for implementation and sets out its approach to how the trail will be aligned and how access rights will be managed. The deadline for comments is the 5th February and as usual we ask that any areas or groups who have comments make them via the Walking Environment Team - [walking.environment@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:walking.environment@ramblers.org.uk) - at central office so we can coordinate our response.

Please note this is a very large document that has not been publicly produced in paper form and is only currently a set of PDF downloads from Natural England's web site.

Natural England - Consultations -

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/position/consultations/default.aspx>

Natural England – Scheme downloads -

<http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/NE222>

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs consultation on its proposals to amend the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 for coastal land has finished. Thank you to all area officers and others who made comments. It's likely that these proposals will form the basis of statutory instruments to be debated in parliament some time next February.

We are awaiting details of a third item, the regulations covering landowner appeals, but these will be shorter and hopefully take less time to pass parliament than the first two.

Information Links and Publications

•Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 -

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2009/pdf/ukpga\\_20090023\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2009/pdf/ukpga_20090023_en.pdf)

•Natural England Coastal Access Home Page -

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/coastalaccess/default.aspx>

•Natural England's Frequently Asked Questions - [http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/Coastal-Access-faqs\\_tcm6-11004.pdf](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/Coastal-Access-faqs_tcm6-11004.pdf)

•DEFRA's Section 3A order - <http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/countryside/coastaccess.htm>

Please visit our Claim the Coast Campaign pages for more information -

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Campaigns/Claim+the+Coast.htm>

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## Walks Leaders

### Led Walks Incident Analysis and Case Study

The vast majority of Ramblers walks occur without incident. Occasionally, incidents do occur. Reported incidents have been analysed (Oct 08-Sept 09). Very occasionally an investigation may be required. The learning from one such investigation is presented as a case study. (News - posted 4 January 2010)

Walking is one of the safest outdoor activities. It's completely natural, doesn't overly strain your body and doesn't require sophisticated equipment. Every week, Ramblers volunteers organise over 500 led walks - in the vast majority of cases without incident.

### Incident Analysis

Occasionally, incidents do occur and it is requested that these are reported directly to Central Office: <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/AreaGroup/Basics/Insurance.htm>

For the first time in organisational memory the Ramblers has analysed reported incidents. This has helped to:

- Raise the profile of risk management
- Ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place
- Better place the organisation to provide appropriate guidance to walk leaders, members and the public
- Identify any training needs.

Bi-annual summaries will be published on the Walk Leaders page:

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/AreaGroup/Resources/WalkLeader.htm>. The first two summaries have been published and are available below:

Report 1 (Oct 08 – Mar 09) -

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Resources/Ramblers%20Association/Website/Volunteering/Documents/Ramblers%20Incident%20Report%201%20Oct%2008-Mar%2009.pdf>

Report 2 (Apr 09 – Sept 09) -

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Resources/Ramblers%20Association/Website/Volunteering/Documents/Ramblers%20Incident%20Report%202%20Apr%2009-Sep%2009.pdf>

### **Case studies**

Very occasionally, for a variety of reasons, a reported incident may necessitate further investigation to better determine the sequence and nature of events and to help identify advice or procedures that will reduce the likelihood of a recurrence. Such an investigation, led by the Ramblers, took place early in 2009.

An overview of the incident, including the lessons learned for the organisation, is on the Case Studies page: <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/AreaGroup/Resources/Led+Walks+Case+Studies.htm>