

Ramblers' Association Taunton Deane Group Annual Report  
2006-7

Membership of the Ramblers' Association Taunton Deane Group (TDRG) hovers around the 410 member level. Members of the Group are kept informed of walks, news and social events by means of walks programmes and Group Newsletters delivered to them three times per year and via a regularly updated web site.

The programme of regular walks, organised by Joan Gubbin, take place throughout the year on Sunday (all-day and half-day), Wednesday afternoon and, during the lighter evenings, on Friday evenings. Included in the programme this year was the 56-mile Two-Counties Way (completed in 8 stages) and the final legs of the Parrett Trail. The Group holiday was taken in the North of England where 11 members completed a walk along Hadrian's Wall.

All of these walks were led by a small dedicated number of Group members – without them the programme of walks would not be possible.

The activities of the Group are publicised by regular reports to the County Gazette – but only a small proportion, sometimes heavily 'edited' are printed – and by monthly leaflets advertising future walks. Leaflets are distributed to local TICs and Libraries. A display was mounted in the foyer of the Taunton Library for two weeks in the summer to publicise the Ramblers Association and the Group.

Paul Wright, the Footpath Secretary has dealt with 24 proposals for footpath modifications and planning applications. He has also agreed with the Borough Council arrangements for TDRG Members to carry out the inspection of 21 circular walks plus the West Deane Way by Spring 2008

It has now been established that a working party, led by John Ollerenshaw, will meet on the last Tuesday in each month to carry out stile renewals and other repair work to the Deane's footpath network.

Efforts are being made to complete the RA's Grid Square Challenge by the end of the year.

Action is in hand to produce a DVD reflecting rambling and, in particular, membership of the TDRG. The RA has agreed that the recently issued national DVD can be used as the introduction to the local version. During the year we sent a questionnaire to all of our members asking for their views on the programme and the types and distances of walks offered. We received replies from 41 members (10%) and, on the whole, they supported the current range of walks included in the programme. Two of the members who no longer join in the walks gave opposite reasons, one said the walks were too fast, the other that they were too slow!

Roger Conway, the Group Chairman, has been appointed to the Somerset Local Access Forum (SLAF), which is a statutory body that exists to advise the County Council on rights of way matters and to monitor how they carry out their tasks. He will be seeking to articulate the walking interest and will continue to push the Ramblers' cause.

The Group web site continues to be popular and includes the programme of future walks along with reports and photographs submitted by walk leaders

To bring together larger groups of members a number of social events were organised during the year they included a pre-Christmas dinner, post-Christmas lunch, Quiz night and short winter evening urban supper walks.

Bob Camp  
November 2007