

RA National News Roundup Issue 6

Hello all and welcome to another edition of the National News Roundup. In this issue: a call for volunteers to lead Festival of Winter Walks events, and a focus on walking environments at Central Office.

1. FESTIVAL OF WINTER WALKS 2009/10

This year's Festival of Winter Walks will take place from 26th December 2009 to 3rd Jan 2010. For those unfamiliar with the Festival, it's a series of publicly promoted walks put on by the RA in an attempt to increase membership. Any non-member who attends a Festival walk gets 20% off their first year's RA membership if they later join.

Festival walks should ideally appeal to as wide a potential audience as possible. As such, they should be short, fairly easy, child-friendly and if possible dog, buggy and wheelchair friendly also. Anyone wishing to volunteer to lead a Festival walk should contact the Group email address by 25th September with the details. I realise this seems very early but the Group needs to let Central Office know which walks we are organising by 30th September to make the deadline for them to be published in certain December magazines.

The Group will also arrange for information on the walks to go to the local press (and potentially radio), as well as for discounted membership forms to be available to walk leaders. As well as leading their Festival walk, volunteers will be asked to collect names and (email) addresses of non-members attending. The reason for this is that a number of new walkers leave Festival events intending to join the RA, and promptly forget. With names and (email) addresses Central Office is able to send follow up notes a couple of months after the event to these people, and experience shows that a number of new members have been recruited by this method.

2. WALK LEADER INFORMATION AVAILABLE

If you're a walk leader and haven't yet signed up for the Led Walks Team newsletter, it isn't too late. As mentioned in the previous National News, these are issued on a regular basis and contain information and case studies of walk leading best practice. Your details will not be passed to third parties. To sign up, go to www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer/ledwalksform.

3. RE-FOCUSSED WALKING ENVIRONMENT TEAM AT CENTRAL OFFICE

Central Office has created a new Walking Environment Team, with a focus on promoting the first aim of the new RA strategy Fresh Air, Firm Ground. This team went live on February 2009 and has involved re-focussing the work of current staff members to look at national campaigns; policy development; local campaign support and volunteer training in relation to what are known as 'walking environments' – basically anywhere you can walk, from Ben Nevis to the streets of Poole.

Footpath Officers and Countryside Officers will have most contact with this team, but anyone that wants to get in touch can contact Martin Key on 020 7339 8584 or at walking.environment@ramblers.org.uk. The team's regular newsletters can be viewed by logging in at www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer/password.