

Chair Talk

Welcome to the first 2019 issue of our newsletter, ***The Tameside Rambler***. It is also the first to be compiled by our new Newsletter Editor, Alan James, who has added this job to his other roles of Webmaster and Facebook Administrator.

There are lots of great walks to look forward to, including those during the **April Weekend Away** in Northumberland which will be the first time we shall be staying for two nights, rather than one.

There will also be a **Night walk** – details in the programme – and we will be facilitating a **Basic Navigation Skills Training Day** full details of which are later in this newsletter.

The **Greater Manchester Walking Festival 2019** will be held throughout the month of May and some of our walks that month will be featured in it. These are identified by having GMWF against them in the walks programme.

Social events are also in the programme and details of past and future events are elsewhere in this newsletter.

The revised **Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework** was published in January and is currently subject to public consultation until mid-March. Some proposals have changed for Tameside whilst others have not. Search on Google for the full proposals.

A long-distance walking route around Greater Manchester, called **GM Ringway**, is being developed by Dr Andrew Read. It is approximately 175 miles in length, split into 18 stages which all start and finish at train stations or tram stops, and passes through all 10 borough of Greater Manchester. Further details and maps can be seen at <http://gmringway.org/>

Finally, don't hesitate to contact me or any of the committee, with your suggestions for walks, social events or articles for this newsletter – we always welcome new contributors (contact Alan James or myself in the first instance).

Stewart Ramsden,
Chair

Record Breakers

The walk on Sat 5th January kindly led by John Harrison created a record attendance with 39 walkers and a dog !

It looks like we were fortunate to have such a large bridge on the walk to fit everyone on ?



Tameside Ramblers Annual General Meeting 2018

Our sixth AGM was held at the 250th Manchester (St Mary) Scout Group Hut, in Audenshaw. The meeting was attended by 20 members, which is about average for our AGMs although we would like to see a few more members attending. Those present were given a printed copy of the group's Annual Report and Statement of Accounts and the minutes of the 2017 AGM.

Members of the committee each gave a short verbal presentation of their reports and answered questions from the floor. Thanks were expressed to members of the committee for their work throughout the year and to the walk leaders, without whom we could not function as a walking group.

Discussions took place about the shortage of walk leaders and about comments from a few members that the majority of walks were either too long or at too fast a pace. It was noted that, nationally, Ramblers are introducing a programme of walk leader training to encourage more members to become walk leaders – this is something we will look out for, and we have asked our own walk leaders if they can try to introduce a mix of walks that include some shorter, easier walks at a slower pace.

A question was asked about whether Ramblers Insurance would apply if a walk leader advertised a walk on Facebook to fill a gap in the walks programme.

The question could not be answered at the time, but we now know that YES, Ramblers Insurance would apply in that situation provided certain criteria were met. This is more fully explained in the Ramblers Insurance article elsewhere in this newsletter

Members of the committee have to stand down at the end of 12 months but may stand for re-election if they choose. Other members of Tameside Ramblers may also stand for any position on the committee and if that results in a competition for a particular position, a secret ballot is held. This year our Footpaths Officer, Steve Slater, decided not to stand again and was warmly thanked for his contribution over the years. The remainder of the existing committee was re-elected unopposed and their details are below. We do now have a vacancy for the post of Footpaths Office – if anyone is interested, please contact Stewart Ramsden. Many thanks to Margaret and Ken for organising the venue.

The 2019 AGM will be held on Saturday 19th October at St. John's Church Hall, Dukinfield – the official notice will be published in the next newsletter.

The Committee

Chairman : Stewart Ramsden
Email : chairman@tamesideramblers.org.uk

Group & Membership Secretary : Prue Ramsden
Email : secretary@tamesideramblers.org.uk

Treasurer : Jo Manning
Email : treasurer@tamesideramblers.org.uk

Footpath Officer : Vacant

Walks Coordinator : Christine Harrison
Walks Coordinator : Lynda Chandler
Email : walks@tamesideramblers.org.uk

Social Secretaries : Ruth & Pete Summers
Email : social@tamesideramblers.org.uk

Web Master : Alan P James
Email : webmaster@tamesideramblers.org.uk

Committee Member : Alan Lowe
Committee Member : John Harrison

Ramblers Insurance

When out on one of our walks, you may have heard mention of Ramblers Insurance, but what exactly is it? The following information has been extracted from the Ramblers Insurance Guidance.

Ramblers Insurance does NOT provide personal accident cover.

It is important to remember that the insurance cover exists to give protection to individuals in the case of a claim being made *against* them by a third party (such as a landowner, a member of the public, or another Ramblers member); this is known as **Liability insurance**. For such a claim to be successful, the injured party has to be able to demonstrate that *they have suffered as a result of negligence*. This principle is particularly important to remember in the context of group walks. Here, for a successful claim to be made against the Ramblers, the injured party needs to show that the walk leader abdicated their responsibility in a reckless or negligent manner. Liability insurance covers activities in both GB and abroad, with the exception of USA and Canada. Please note that motor, travel and medical cover is not included and personal accident cover is only available to path maintenance teams.

Group Walks

To be considered an official Ramblers walk, and covered by the liability insurance, **all walks**, including coach rambles must:

- Be brought to the attention of the Programme Coordinator, who ideally has confidence in the Walk Leader's ability to lead the walk
- Be publicised as a Ramblers activity, in advance, in at least one of the following ways:
 - On the Group Walks and Event Manager
 - In a printed programme
 - On the group/area website

- Have a nominated Leader, and ideally a Backmarker who (together, or separately) have ideally recce'd the walk. Both the Walk Leader and Backmarker **must** be members.

Walks involving an overnight stay must also: Have an overall primary organiser who ideally has confidence in the ability of Walk Leaders to lead each walk and who will vary the programme of walks if circumstances demand. (This would apply to our weekends away).

The insurance cover applies to non-members for up to three walks.

Ramblers activities

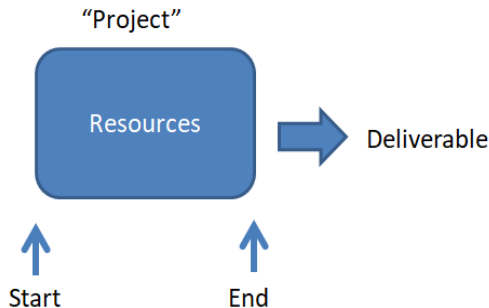
The insurance is particularly of interest to members involved in leading walks and to volunteers who carry out path maintenance with their group. It also covers other activities such as committee meetings, campaign rallies, publicity events and even social events. Activities are covered as long as they are official Ramblers activities, advertised as described above, organised by a group or area committee and led or organised by a Ramblers member and/or a volunteer registered by Ramblers staff.

Personal accident cover is only applicable for members carrying out path maintenance work and the names of those taking part have to be notified to Ramblers head office in advance. The upper age limit for this cover is 80 years. There is no upper age limit for the Third Party Liability Insurance covering walks, etc.



Planning a walk

The work that goes into planning a walk is often “behind the scenes” from the walkers, but is very necessary for the safety and enjoyment of our walkers. We can treat planning a walk as a “project”, and there is a very simple diagram summarising what a project entails;



“Start”

- Do you want a Wednesday or Saturday walk ?
- Will it have the conventional 10:30am start or will it change to suit train arrivals ?
- Summer or Winter walk ? – the weather at that time of year will have a bearing
- Where is the start location ? – is there nearby parking / toilets / post code or grid reference ?

“End”

- Depending on the time of year, will you safely arrive back in daylight ?
- Do you end back at the same location (circular walk) or to another location (linear walk) ?

“Resources”

- Will the weather at the time of the walk suit the path route / grade ?
- Route – how long & which type of terrain ?
- Are there any toilets en-route ?
- Where can we stop for drink & lunch ?
- Suitable car parking
- Asking for a back marker
- Mobile phone & map in emergencies
- Detailing the walk (e.g. 8 miles, Grade C) so it can be promoted (see map article)
- Photographer for that all important bridge or tree shot

“Deliverable”

A safe and enjoyable day out, often enhanced by a drink in bar afterwards ? !!

If this inspires you to plan or suggest a walk then please don’t hesitate to let Christine or Lynda know.

Map Library

Tameside Ramblers now has a small library of OS maps that are available to be borrowed by walk leaders for use when planning and leading walks. All the maps are 1:25,000 scale and are laminated to make them weather-resistant. Whilst most walk leaders will have their own maps, some may be of the paper variety which are not very robust and so the loan of one of the group’s maps would be useful. The maps we currently have are as follows:

OL1 Peak District Dark Peak. (2 copies). This map covers the area used for a great many of our walks, and includes parts of Tameside from just west of Werneth Low.

OL24 Peak District White Peak. Again, many of our walks take place in the western and northern parts of the White Peak.

Explorer 268 Wilmslow, Macclesfield, Congleton, Altrincham, Knutsford, Sandbach. Several of our walks have been in the area covered by this map.

Explorer 277 Manchester & Salford, Oldham, Rochdale and Stockport. This map also covers most of Tameside apart from the far eastern edges which are on the OL1 Dark Peak map.

The maps are held by Chris Harrison, so you will need to contact her if you wish to borrow one. Chris will be able to tell you if the map you want is available or when it is expected to be returned to her. Maps will need to be collected from Chris or arrangements might be possible to have it brought to hand to you on a walk.

Maps should be borrowed for the minimum time necessary for your needs, in order to ensure that they will be available for borrowing by someone else. The maps have been identified as belonging to Tameside Ramblers, so they shouldn't get inadvertently mixed up with anyone's personal maps.

Learn to read a Map and to use a Compass on our BASIC NAVIGATION TRAINING DAY

If you would like to learn to use a map and compass to give you confidence when out on country walks and on the hills and moorland, or simply wish to 'brush up' on existing skills, then this is for you. **The event is free and exclusive to members of Tameside Ramblers.**

The training will be given by our very own Jason Johnston, who is not only a qualified Mountain Leader but is also a holder of the National Navigation Award Scheme's prestigious Gold Award.

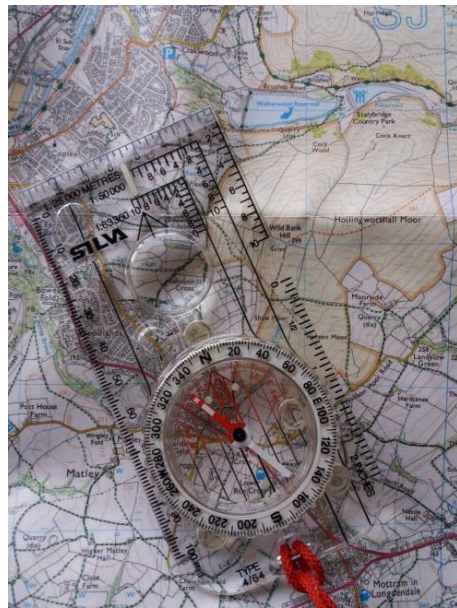
Jason will provide training in the following topics:

- Map types, symbols and scales
- Grid references
- Bearings
- Compass work and types of compass
- Timings and pacing
- Contour interpretation
- Route planning and grades
- Basic leadership skills

The training day will take place in the local countryside on a Sunday, date to be announced, for a group of 10 or 12 people. If there is sufficient demand, then a further date can be arranged.

Commercial organisations will usually charge £50 to £60 per person for a similar one day's training in navigation skills but this event will be **FREE** to members of Tameside Ramblers – a benefit worth almost double the annual fee for individual Ramblers membership.

The training will provide an introduction to the fundamental skills of navigation and the use of a map and compass and will be ideal for anyone aspiring to become one of our walk leaders or for any current walk leaders wanting to reinforce their existing knowledge.



A special certificate will be presented to everyone attending the training day.

What you will need: wear what you would normally do for one of our walks, but possibly bring an extra warm layer as there will be more time stationary than on a regular walk and don't forget food and something to drink. Maps will be provide but if you have a compass then please bring it: the style of compass shown in the accompanying photograph is ideal and the Silva Type 4 is particularly recommended.

If you are genuinely interested in attending, then please apply initially to Stewart Ramsden at stewart.ramsden@gmail.com by no later than 15th March 2019. Places will be awarded on a 'first come, first served' basis. The training day date and venue will be announced once numbers are known.

Night walk: In addition to the navigation training day, Jason will also be leading a Night Walk. Night walks are often used in more advanced navigation training to simulate walking in conditions of poor visibility so, as well as the novelty of going on a country walk at night, this is also a chance to see some advanced navigational skills in action. Details of the Night Walk are in the March to June 2019 Walks Programme.

On the Social Side

Place Names Talk: A talk by guest speaker and published author Anthony Poulson-Smith, on the origin of place names, took place on the evening of Thursday 6th December at St. James's Church, Ashton-under-Lyne. There was a good turnout of members plus a few St James' parishioners. There was great interest in the origins of local places, for example, Ashton and Dukinfield. Anthony finished his talk with a question and answer session, explaining the origins of, for example, Welly Hole Road and Broadbottom

Christmas meal: a record number (about 40 people) attended our Christmas social at the Smithy Fold, Glossop on Thursday 13th December. We took over several tables in 2 parts of the pub. We were helped as, just before we met up, there was a water supply problem, meaning no food being served and therefore fewer people in the pub. Fortunately, by 7.30pm, food was back on. We'll probably go back there in December 2019, although if it gets any more popular, we'll have to try to sabotage the pub again!



Events:

New Year meal: Sixteen of us had our post Christmas meal at Umeeds in Salybridge. The evening went well and we'll report more on the event in the summer newsletter.

Trip to Stockport: on 16th February 2019, we will be having a day out in Stockport, starting with a linear walk, followed by a visit to the air raid shelters museum and afternoon tea at the Plaza. Details are in the current walks programme. More details will have been e-mailed to members and put on Facebook by the time you receive this newsletter.

Weekend away: this will be on the weekend of 5th to 7th April at Sill Discovery Centre at Once Brewed near to Hadrian's Wall. There are 22 people staying in the hostel and about another 8 staying at the local pub, so let's hope the weather is kind and we all have a great weekend.

BBQ: please see current walks programme for details. Maximum of 16 members.

We have no other social events planned for the July to October programme, yet. However, we'll continue to look at different types of events and would be delighted to hear from any of you if you can come up with suggestions, especially something completely different from what we organise currently.

Pete and Ruth Summers
Social Secretaries

Technology Update

As ramblers we are fortunate to be able to exploit the proliferation of technology often incorporating internet access on a wealth of platforms.

www.tamesideramblers.org.uk

We have our own web site that we can update to suit our requirements, e.g. find full walk details on our web site.

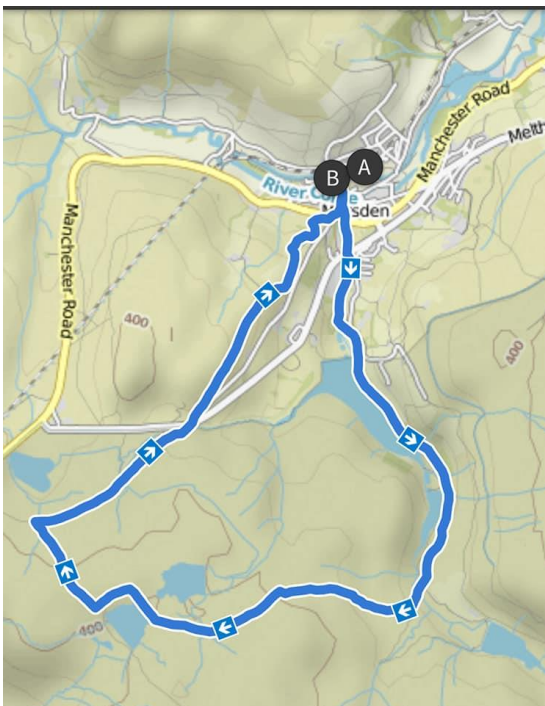
Facebook

Updates on walks , completed routes and photos can be shared privately amongst members on our Facebook page;

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/172437999572817/>

Electronic mapping

Free applications such as Komoot & MapMy Walk are great aids for mapping out and recording walks with associated data (e.g. height climbed, walk rate).



www.ramblers.org.uk

The main ramblers web site was recently subject to a “ransomware” attack, whereby hackers try to take the site down or extract personal details unless paid a “ransom”. The Ramblers site had to be taken off-line for a number of days whilst it was “repaired”. There are also a number of “fake” emails doing the rounds purporting to be from fellow Ramblers when there are actually “phishing” for information.

Limitations

Most electronic devices do have an achilles heel , as they are limited by battery life. Also the reliability of most smart phones whilst walking in all weathers is not to be relied upon. A whistle and map are still optimum !.

Being safe On-line

Picking a strong passwords for your on-line accounts is important. Try starting with three random words, and include lower- and upper-case letters. To make it more secure, add in numbers and symbols (such as @ # \$ % ^ & *) – and make it at least eight characters long.

Another alternative is to make up a memorable phrase or sentence, and take the first letter from each word to create a sequence.

Email

Emails is a simple and free way for us to keep in touch with you. But, under recent legislation we need your permission to use your email address for such purposes. Any members who have an email address but have not given it to us to please do so and also to give Ramblers permission to send emails to them in order that we can more easily communicate with our members. Contact Ramblers membership services membership@ramblers.org.uk or call 02039613232

Trip to China - October To November 2018

After a great deal of planning (2 years), 12 Tameside Rambler's members met at long last at Manchester Airport on Saturday 27th October to fly out to Hangzhou in East China for a memorable week's walking in that City. Almost 24 hours after setting off, we were met by our host, Karen, at Hangzhou Airport and taken to our hotel in a beautiful part of the City, near the West Lake.

After a couple of hours rest at the hotel, we had a walk to the nearby Botanical Garden which set the standard for the week. It was a great way to start the holiday. We were joined by Jie's friend, Green, who had travelled out from London, so there were 14 of us having our first Chinese banquet back at the hotel, followed by an early night to get over the jet lag.

Though only one hour away from Shanghai by train, Hangzhou is less known outside China. As one of the six historical capitals of China, it was the capital of South Song Dynasty (1127-1276). With its fertile land, it was the grain and silk production centre for the rest of the country, hence the construction of the Grand Canal from Hangzhou to Beijing. It has three main waterways, Qiantang River leading to the East Sea, West Lake and Grand Canal. It was the favourite and most visited place by Qing Emperors Qianlong and Kangxi and they remodelled the imperial Summer Palace after the West Lake during their reign.



On Monday morning, we had an early start. Our first walk was to the West Lake and included our first experience of the local Tea Houses. We all contributed to the food which we shared and were served a variety of teas, including green tea, black tea, and the wonderful chrysanthemum tea. Following this, we walked through the picturesque lotus gardens to take a boat trip across the lake to a small island called Three Pools Mirroring the Moon (its image can be found on the RMB1 banknote) where we experienced island among islands, lake among lakes, pagoda among pagodas. The views of the surrounding hills and various pagodas were sensational to say the least. On returning to the hotel, Karen took us to a local restaurant for another Chinese banquet (more of the group now skilled at eating with chop sticks).



As on most of the walks, Karen was accompanied by a friend of hers who led us on the walks. Tuesday morning we were joined by Karen's former school friend Jing. We caught a bus to the Prince's Bay. We walked via the Leifeng Pagoda site to the China National Silk Museum for a tour and lunch. Following this, we walked past some paddy fields, also known as Eight Diagram's Field where eight different crops are planted, for a short ascent up Jade Emperor Hill for some great views of the city and a visit to the local caves. A bus took us back to the hotel, followed by another local Chinese banquet. Jie even managed to talk to her husband Andy via Skype, who was no doubt having his breakfast.

Wednesday started with another bus ride to Tiger's Spring. We walked by the springs where locals were queuing up for fresh water. We then continued along a steepish mountain trail to the village of Longjing (or Dragon Well) , passing by tea plantations, nine creeks and eighteen gorges (though we did not try that). and on to another Tea House for lunch. A lovely walk took us along the edge of the lake with the sun going down over the nearby mountains giving great views. Back by bus to the hotel and another Chinese banquet at a local restaurant chosen by Karen.

Thursday morning we went into the City centre for a boat trip along the Grand Canal Hangzhou . After docking, we visited the local Fan Museum before walking along the canal bank for lunch. Yes, at another Tea House. We then met Karen's parents in their apartment near the canal, which was a joy for all of us. Back at the hotel, the evening took on a very different theme. We went our separate ways for the evening meal, and this was followed by the concert of West Lake Impression performing on the West Lake (on water indeed). This included dancing, singing, and a spectacular light show depicting local culture like tea picking and legends such as The Butterfly Lovers. Certainly, one of the highlights of the week.



The dancers at the West Lake concert

On Friday, we walked through Zhejiang University grounds, joined by Alexandra Wood, an exchange student from the University of Manchester and up a very steep hill to General's Hill with more great views of the City. We reached the North Peak where the Fortune Temple is located and some of us paid respect to the Fortune God and continued to Lingyin Temple. There were not only some impressive Buddhist temples, but also hundreds of Buddhist statues carved into the sides of the rocks in the 13th century



Leifeng pagoda (with boat in foreground)

We had a vegetarian banquet in a local café for our lunch. As it was our last night in Hangzhou, we had our final banquet of the week at the hotel, which included some extremely strong spirit of Maotai provided by Karen.

This landscape of temples, pagodas, pavilions, gardens and ornamental trees, as well as causeways and artificial islands has inspired famous poets, scholars and artists since the 9th century. The West Lake has influenced garden design in the rest of China as well as Japan and Korea over the centuries and bears an exceptional testimony to the cultural tradition of improving landscapes to create a series of vistas reflecting an idealised fusion between humans and nature.

By the end of the week, we covered the Ten Scenic Sites per map below. In addition we learned to use chopsticks, drink green tea and enjoy sharing food and above all, we all speak Chinese Ni Hao.



A variety of Chinese teas

We left Hangzhou on the Saturday with Karen waving us off from the impressive railway station for us to join up with the tour company for our Rail Discoveries adventure, which included visits to the Great Wall, a cruise along the Yangtse, a visit to the panda sanctuary, and a trip to see the Terracotta Warriors. The tour included several long and tiring rail journeys. On 15th November, we flew out from Xian airport and our flight back to Manchester.



The dancers at the West Lake concert

