

Changes to the Walks Programme

First of all the Committee wishes to record its thanks to all walk leaders for providing a full programme of interesting and varied walks. Without the walk leaders the Group would cease to function and we value their contribution greatly.

Probably none of us enjoys change but we need to make some changes for the future to ensure that we make best use of our limited financial resources.

You will have seen in the November 2010 to January 2011 newsletter and also the latest Avon Area News (AAN) that in order to reduce expenditure throughout the Area, there will be changes to the frequency with which our programme and AAN are issued. From February 2011 our programme will cover four months rather than the three months we have known to date. Future programmes will cover:

February / March / April / May
June / July / August / September
October / November / December / January

Submitting Walks

(i) Because of printing costs, which have recently increased, we wish to keep the programme to the current four pages and still include the newsletter plus the adverts which generate income for the Group. Whilst the months between September and April may be manageable there is the possibility that the months of May to August which include evening walks could lead to problems of physically fitting everything in. We will need to see what happens with the first programme but in order to facilitate the new arrangements we will be making the following changes:

(ii) The **walk description** will be limited to two lines. Rather than the Programme Co-ordinator having to modify what is submitted we believe it is better for the walk leaders to ensure that their walk description is as succinct as possible. To assist with this we hope to be able to limit the number of characters in the description box of the 'submit a walk' form.

(iii) It would also help if only one **contact telephone number** were entered – some walk leaders give both landline and mobile numbers. We would like walk leaders to provide the number which is more likely to enable walkers to contact them.

Grading Walks

Grading Walks is another change that will take place. This will apply to walk leaders who put on a walk that is 5 miles or under. They will be required to grade their walk in accordance with the Ramblers definitions found on the Group Walks Finder.

The definitions are

- **Easy Access** Walks for everyone, including people with conventional wheelchairs and pushchairs, using easy access paths. Comfortable shoes or trainers can be worn. Assistance may be needed to push wheelchairs on some sections.
- **Easy** Walks for anyone who does not have a mobility difficulty or a specific health problem or is seriously unfit. Suitable for pushchairs if they can be lifted over the occasional obstructions. Comfortable shoes or trainers can be worn.
- **Leisurely** Walks for reasonably fit people with at least a little country walking experience. May include unsurfaced rural paths. Walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing are recommended.
- **Moderate** Walks for people with country walking experience and a good level of fitness. May include some steep paths and open country, and may be at a brisk pace. Walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing are essential.
- **Strenuous** Walks for experienced country walkers with an above average fitness level. May include hills and rough country, and may be at a brisk pace. Walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing are essential.
- **Technical** Walks for experienced and very fit walkers with additional technical skills. May require scrambling and use of ropes, ice axes and crampons.

It is proposed that when grading a walk, the walk leader will use only the initial letter(s) eg EA = Easy Access / E = Easy etc

Grading is required because walks up to 5 miles are included by Central Office as walks for the Walk4Health campaign and when we upload our walks to the Walks Finder we need to include the grading information. It seems more appropriate for walk leaders to grade their walk than for someone else to have a guess and possibly get it wrong.

To assist walk leaders, the submit a walk form will be modified to prompt them to include the grade of walk if it is 5 miles or under. If a walk leaders wishes to grade a walk that is longer than 5 miles then they may do so.

The Committee anticipate that the majority of these shorter walks will be the Friday ambles / Saturday walks and the shorter walks on Sundays. They also consider that the majority will be either Leisurely or Moderate, and occasionally Easy or Easy Access.

We will also be making some modifications to the way the walks programme is presented to members but we hope it will be clear to everyone (eg maps – E = Explorer / L = Landranger; dates eg Sun 21 Nov).

As stated in the current programme, all walk leaders will be sent a letter or email to confirm the new arrangements. After the first of the new programmes the Committee will review the process and contact them to find out if there have been any problems with the revised arrangements. Hopefully we will all adjust quickly.

If any of you have any queries about or difficulties with the new 'submit a walk' form, please contact the Walk Co-ordinator in the first instance.