

Essex Area Update

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talkingwalking@aol.com

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June 2005

Essex 100 — 2005

Ann McLaren urges you to *use it or lose it*

I was both thrilled and delighted to see the coverage for both the Area short walks and the Essex 100 in the EAU. I have since begun to think, if I am someone new to The Ramblers in Essex would I want to join in either of the walks?

I feel the time is right to put a background into these events. I feel I am well qualified to do so because of the number of years I have been involved with both events and more important the fun I have had from just being involved and coming along.

It all started with the **RA Jubilee** in 1985 and an ambitious round Britain 2000 mile walk to celebrate the 50th year of the R.A which lasted about 6 months. Heather Kent was one of the two walkers who signed up to do it all. She stuck to the plan and walked every day, rain, hail, and shine. Between her and Michael Singleton, who sold T-shirts, badges and collected fares from those who used the minibus, they handled publicity. Michael also walked the whole route often doubling up two days together to give himself free time while Heather drove the event bus.

Freddie (Fred Matthew, now Essex Area President to those who are new) was appointed the co-ordinator for Essex and a large number of his followers

and friends turned up in eager support. We walked round Bures across Essex and into London with great glee and waved the walk off on its dignified way. Then colder reality struck and members started to murmur, "wouldn't it be great if we could do this every year!"

Meetings were called and plans drawn up and then followed what was for me a series of real fun events. Yes, there was rain but my memory fails to recall this as being a problem. I remember the sunny days, the car park starts and the joy of greeting friends from earlier year's walks, and then the buses that in later years made getting around dead easy.

The lasting gains for me have been meeting up with other Area Members. The really good friends I have made during these walks, as we came together linked in a common purpose. Members from so many RA groups in Essex willing and able to join. The knowledge of so many beautiful villages and footpaths stays with me and still is the basis of much of my current Essex information. Walkers have had to rely on our wonderful footpath officers working with Essex County Council, but the lasting result has been to see bridges, stiles, way marks and footpath signs growing before our eyes. There have even been times when we have walked just yards behind workers finishing a clearance

and even on a couple of occasions being just in front of them!

Perhaps one of the reason the walks have always appealed to me are they are lead by members of the of the area. We have all been able to follow leaders from a variety of groups and appreciate the many talented people we have here in Essex. The lengths of walks have been regulated and the pace agreeable to most walkers. But perhaps the nicest thing about both the long and short events is that you can come along on one or all the days to suit yourself and your ongoing commitments. Whenever it is you do join in, you will find so many nice people from so many excellent groups that together are Essex Area.

All current walkers in Essex whether R.A members or social walkers, benefit from most walks in some way from the legacy left to us by Freddie and his team. It would be wonderful if in another 20 years time someone else is urging members to join old friends and the 40th Essex 100, and, dare I say for those who find all day walking is no longer for them, try joining 'son of Essex 100', the Area short walk event. The much used phrase applies more than ever in 2005, you either use it or lose it!

Ann McLaren celebrates her 30th year of membership this year and is a Vice president of the Essex Area

Inside this issue:

Consultation on new financial arrangements

Job Vacancies

Out for Consultation – Reserves Policy for areas and Groups

The RA has launched a consultation document with almost a 'politically' tight' time-scale and want responses by 6 June. If you want a copy of the whole document, please e-mail Director of Finance, David Joseph at davidj@London.ramblers.org.uk

Below are printed details of the proposal:
Guidelines for applying the reserves policy

In making a realistic assessment of the level of reserves that need to be held, the area or group committee should consider the following:

- A. Working capital for charitable activities
- B. Contingencies
- C. Coach rambles, holidays, socials
- D. Forecast levels of income and expenditure in the following year
- E. Specific projects in pursuit of RA charitable objects
- F. Working capital for publications projects
- G. Minimum reserve level for small groups
- H. Regular review of financial position
- I. Restricted funds

A) Working capital for charitable activities

Working capital should be set at 25% of the annual cost of carrying out RA work. This expenditure used in this calculation should only include costs in pursuit of the RA's charitable activities. It must therefore exclude costs of coach rambles, social events, holidays, fundraising and cost of publication sales. Those items will be dealt with separately.

B) Contingencies

Where the committee feels

that a contingency may be needed, a sum of 10% of the figure derived in A is suggested but is not compulsory.

C) Coach rambles, holidays, socials

These events should be run as cost neutral activities. Groups are reminded that social activity must not be subsidised by funds raised to meet charitable objectives. They should not need reserves from RA funds. If deposits are required, such sums should be collected from the participants.

D) Forecast levels of income and expenditure in the following year

The committee should consider expected income and expenditure levels in the next year. This will assist in assessing if the reserves are adequate.

E) Specific projects in pursuit of RA charitable objects

Where a new project has been identified the committee may choose to designate a portion of reserves to finance it. It is important that the intended project should be real and have a reasonable timescale for execution. Designation should not be used as a means to accumulate funds. If a specific project fails to materialise within a reasonable time, the designated funds should be returned to the general reserve for charitable purposes which should then be reduced through the budgeting process.

F) Working capital for publications projects

As with E, specific projects, a publication project should have a realistic timescale. At the project planning stage, consideration should be given to inter-alia, need, potential sales demand, a realistic selling price, promotion/marketing of the publication, print run and production costs, and time

before obsolescence (to avoid writing off unsaleable stock).

G) Minimum reserve level for small groups

The reserves policy will allow small groups to maintain reserves of up to £250 before needing to apply these guidelines.

H) Regular review of financial position

Committees should review their financial position and the level of reserves on a regular (quarterly) basis. This will assist committees in determining whether income levels are adequate, excessive or if action needs to be taken to improve finances. Area and group committees should remember that they are effectively trustees of the money held locally on behalf of the RA

I) Restricted funds

A restricted fund only arises where the donor of the funds stipulates a restricted use. In most cases, such funds will have originated from legacies. Regardless, such funds are intended to be used; they are not a permanent endowment. Committees must demonstrate how such funds will be used and over what timescale to promote the RA's objects in accordance with the restriction. RA central office should be consulted if it becomes apparent that the restrictions cannot be met.

Reply as quickly as possible if you have a view on these financial arrangements

'Essex Area Short Linked Circular Walks 13-20.08.05

Looking for activities during the long school summer holiday?

This is an ideal opportunity to introduce grandchildren & young walkers to our lovely countryside'

**ESSEX AREA
RAMBLERS—
CONTACTS:**

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See EAU in dazzling
colour on the
Colchester web site:
www.colchester-ramblers.com.co.uk

Registered Charity Number
1093577
Company reg. Number
4458492

Secretary's Update

New leaflets:

I can get you copies of the following:

Footpath Worker – a bulletin for all concerned with the care and protection of public rights of way;

Discovering Lost Ways – a leaflet setting out the options for volunteering published by The Countryside Agency

Paths for People – which sets out exactly what councils can do to help to improve and promote their path networks. You could well order sufficient copies to send one to each of your councillors.

Grants available from Volunteering England

Home Office money in conjunction with the Year of the Volunteer is available in grants of between one and four thousand pounds for brand new projects – let Len Banister know if you want further information.

Diary Dates

17-19 June– Urban Escapes Active
Leisure Show, Lee Valley Showground,
Waltham Abbey

18-24 June– Use Your Paths Week

26 June– Stop Stansted Expansion Ramble

4 July– Area Council Meeting

20 July—Executive Committee Meeting

13-20 Aug – Essex Area Short Linked
Circular Walks

14 Aug–SE Essex 13 mile Challenge Walk

3-11 Sept–Essex Hundred

12 Sept – Executive Committee

17-25 Sept– Welcome to Walking Week

18 Sept– National Walking Day, in
conjunction with ITV

22 Sept– In Town without my Car Day
(part of WWW)

15 Oct– Ann McLarens's 30th
Anniversary walk

18 Oct – Area Council

6 Dec – Executive Committee

26 Dec-2 Jan– Festival of Winter Walks

9 Jan – Area Council

4 Feb—Essex Area AGM (followed by AC)

Essex Area saves Countryside Agency ££££

At a recent meeting of the Agency's **Coastal Survey Workshop** two of the Essex Area stars, **John Dowding** and **Kevin Ascott** presented the highly detailed document collated from reports from Footpath Officers by **Dave Hitchman**. All the "official bodies" were both impressed and indeed, one could say grateful, as it must have saved a lot of public money; which would be needed to produce that vital information. Rumour has it that John and Kevin were quietly 'chuffed'.

Vacancies

We have three vacancies for Area Volunteers. If

you believe that you have the kind of skills which are desirable, please get in touch with Len Banister. If you know someone else who might be interested, please bring this piece to their attention.

Editor for Essex Area Update

We require someone who can assemble contributions and do some writing for this, the e-mail edition of EAU. You need access to email and it would be useful if you had a scanner. You **do not** need desk-top publishing skills. We already have a volunteer who will transform your efforts into the hard-copy edition and that which is published on the web.

Publicity Officer

We need someone with energy and ideas who will be

able to promote Area-wide initiatives and help Group Publicity Officers with the business of keeping our activities in the public's consciousness.

Information Technology Officer

As an area we are still in the Dark Ages when it comes to using IT. Here we want someone who is going to look at all aspects of our work and advise us on the ways in which we can make our organisation more efficient and effective. We would also hope that the successful applicant could act as a resource for the Groups. **We know that there are suitable people within our membership. Even if you feel that you could only do part of one of the jobs, please get in touch with Len.**