



# **RAMBLERS INNER LONDON AREA ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16**



## **AREA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2015-16**

Chair	Phil Marson
Vice-Chair	Dominic Pinto
Secretary	Helen Abbott
Treasurer	Teri Moore
Publicity Officer:	Clare Wadd
Membership Secretary	Dominic Pinto
Webmaster/IT Officer	Phil Marson
Affiliated Club Representatives	Marion Watkinson & Anthony Atkins
Representative of individual members	Des de Moor

[www.innerlondonramblers.org.uk](http://www.innerlondonramblers.org.uk)

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*Registered charity in England and Wales number: 1093577*

*Registered office: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Camelford House, 87-90 Albert Embankment, SE1 7TW*

## **RAMBLERS' INNER LONDON AREA**

### **From The Chair**

This is the end of my second stint in the chair, two years after taking the role back from Alex Manning. There have been many highlights of my time serving the Ramblers and the people of London in this role. The two major highlights of this year have been our involvement in campaigns such as the Love London, Walk London Campaign and opposition to the Garden Bridge and the continued ability of Inner London to influence and support the Ramblers outside London.

We are the largest organisation representing walkers in London. Inner London has more than 4,000 members. Across the whole of the city, we have 8,000 more. But, historically, we've not been seen by policy makers and the media as relevant. The campaigning we've done, working with Central Office staff and the Ramblers Greater London Forum, and other organisations outside the Ramblers has changed this in just two years.

Inner London is the third biggest area in the Ramblers. There is a strong chance that we will overtake Essex to become the second this year. Members of Inner London Area make up a quarter of the trustees nationally. Des de Moor has run walk leaders training courses that attract members from across the South East of England. We've been quoted in the national media and the House of Commons.

Locally, we organise hundreds of walks each year for our members and the public, showcasing our built and natural environment, making contacts between people, and helping people get fitter and healthier.

All of this is achieved by hundreds of volunteers across the city. In my time as Chair, I've been supported and helped by the Area Council, particularly by Helen Abbott and Teri Moore as Secretary and Treasurer, and Clare Wadd, whose wide-ranging advice and support has been essential.

The Chair's role is most powerful when it allows its occupant to face out, representing all of the walkers in London, to change the way this, the greatest city on the planet, is experienced on foot. As I hand over to a new Chair, I look forward to being able to support them in carrying on this work.

*(Phil Marson, Chair, Inner London Ramblers Area)*

### **From The Publicity Officer**

The focus again this year has been on promoting both The Ramblers and walking on social media – twitter, Facebook and Instagram - and through our website, <http://innerlondonramblers.org.uk> which is kept regularly updated with interesting content.

During the year, I have continued to build links with other organisations whose aims overlap with our own, including the National Park City Campaign and Peckham Coal Line campaign, promoting their campaigns where there is a benefit to Ramblers in doing so. I have contributed many articles to South East Walker, which serves as the Area newsletter to all of the Ramblers Areas in the South East.

This has included co-ordinating an article on a different Inner London group in each issue, highlighting the variety of groups and activities available to members in our Area to join or join in with.

We ran a stall at the Angel Canal Festival again this year, where we promoted Ramblers membership to the public, taking contact details and following up with those who expressed an interest in joining us.

*(Clare Wadd, Publicity Officer)*

## From The Membership Secretary

Membership continues to plateau across the organisation. While the decline had been stopped by 2015, and churn reduced, new members only just about allowed us to maintain national membership at just under 106,000 at the end of September 2016. The changes over the year for Inner London Area and local Groups are set out in more detail below:

	<i>Month End</i>	<i>Sep 16</i>	<i>Sep 15</i>	<i>YoY Growth</i>	
IL01 Blackheath		500	521	-21	-4.0%
IL02 Hampstead		570	579	-9	-1.6%
IL03 South Bank		667	668	-1	-0.1%
IL04 North East London		356	360	-4	-1.1%
IL05 H'smith, Fulham, W'worth		493	504	-11	-2.2%
IL06 K'ton, Chelsea & W'minster		333	340	-7	-2.1%
IL50 Metropolitan Walkers		800	786	14	1.8%
IL40 London Strollers		136	133	3	2.3%
IL51 Capital Walkers		363	347	16	4.6%
IL96+98 Inner London Area – non group		310	303	7	2.3%
	<i>Total:</i>	<i>4,528</i>	<i>4,541</i>	<i>-13</i>	<i>-0.3%</i>

National membership 105,990 107,369 -1,379 -1.3%

*(Dominic Pinto, Membership Secretary)*

## Campaigning Summary

### *Love London, Walk London*

The Love London Walk London campaign started in the autumn of 2015 with the aim of raising the profile of walking and The Ramblers in the debate around the 2016 mayoral and Greater London Assembly elections. The campaign is run jointly by the Inner London Area and Greater London Forum (of Ramblers Areas with groups in Greater London), and has been well supported by staff from the campaigns team at Central Office. The campaign has been shortlisted for a Ramblers volunteer award this year.

The campaign had three main asks of the new major, to:

1. Employ a walking ambassador to promote London as a world class walking city for all.
2. Champion the Thames Path and other routes to ensure they remain safe and open for all Londoners to walk.
3. Ensure equality of access to our amazing parks and green spaces so that everyone has a green space close to their home.

We are delighted that Sadiq Khan's manifesto included all of our aims and that he started the process to recruit a Walking and Cycling Ambassador in autumn 2016. Whilst London had a cycling ambassador under Boris Johnson, it has never previously had a walking ambassador, so this is a huge step forward for us in our campaign to make London a walking city.

We've built a strong social media presence for the campaign, especially on Twitter where we have 1,000 followers and regular interactions with organisations and individuals who share our aims

Ahead of the election over 1,000 members contacted candidates directly and we invited most of the mayoral election candidates out walking with us. We were delighted to walk with Caroline Pidgeon and Sian Berry, both of whom are now in the GLA, and to talk to them about walking in London. Since the election, we have had a constructive meeting with Val Shawcross, Deputy Mayor of Transport, with whom we were pleased to be able to discuss walking as part of London's transport solution (as part of "active travel") as well as its benefits for health and wellbeing and the pleasure that it gives us.

We will continue to campaign to make London a true walking city over the coming years.  
(Clare Wadd)

### ***Opposing the Garden Bridge***

The Ramblers continued to oppose the Garden Bridge because of its impact on the Thames Path and its enclosure and privatisation of public space. It's a vanity project, being imposed on London by an unaccountable group of interested, well-connected people.

Working with Thames Central Outdoor Spaces, a Folly for London, and other organisations, we've campaigned to prevent this bridge being built. Highlights of the year include:

- I was invited to speak at a public meeting opposing the Garden Bridge, highlighting the Ramblers' involvement to 400 people in the hall and more beyond
- I raised our objections with the Deputy Mayor for Transport (in person) and the Secretary of State for Transport (by letter), leading to the Ramblers being referred to by both sides in a debate on the project in the House of Commons
- Attending a Mayoral 'Town Hall' with TCOS to get the topic raised, and the strength of feeling against the project known directly to the Mayor and listeners on LBC.

At the end of the year, the Garden Bridge project looks on the ropes. Contributors are disappearing, access has not yet been agreed on either side of the river, and the constructors have been stood down.

This campaign looks very winnable and we await eagerly the Hodge report into the Garden Bridge project, due early 2017. Afterwards, we look forward to working with the Mayor and the GLA on transport projects, such as the Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf bridge, that will actually add value to London's walkers. (Phil Marson)

### ***Access Campaigning***

Rights of way style work and campaigning has not - fortunately - taken as much time and effort as in previous years. Nevertheless we remain wary, especially of further developments that may interrupt or block existing footpaths and, outside the old London County Council area, recognised Public Rights of Way. Developments along the Thames and the Thames Path, at Battersea Power Station, and at Convoys Wharf in Deptford, will see new routes much closer to the river bank, for the first time since - in the case of Deptford at least - since Tudor or Stuart times (Dominic Pinto)

**Kensington Chelsea & Westminster Group** celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March with a walk recreating the group's inaugural walk from Richmond to Osterley Park, and Sue Chinn led a successful weekend of walks in fine weather from Shanklin, Isle of Wight, which attracted 19 members.

**Blackheath Group** continued moving to electronic distribution of its programme. Wednesday walks have been introduced and taken up enthusiastically, and they ran a feedback & information session for walk leaders in November. A dozen members of the group enjoyed a successful four day trip to Crickhowell in the Spring.

**North East London Group** continued to deliver a programme of weekly walks throughout the year and noted with satisfaction that membership numbers are relatively stable.

**South Bank Group** enjoyed 165 walks over the year starting and ending at 170 different points in London and 11 surrounding counties. The maximum turnout was 63 walkers, and they ranged as far as Ramsgate in Kent, 67 miles from London. Programme development and communications with members have been improved by continued development of their website and a new computer based system for walks leaders to input walks for the programme.

The **Metropolitan Walkers** continued to maintain their strong programme, offering 240 walks across the year and an increasingly popular programme of longer trips away. Over the past year there were sixteen different opportunities, including a New Year's trip to Sheffield.

The **Capital Walkers** was the fastest growing group in the Area again this year, with its varied programme of weekend walks augmented by a growing number of mid-week evening activities.

**Area Council** members have continued and strengthened links with sympathetic external organisations, including the Peckham Coal Line and the London National Park City Campaign.

**Ramblers Central Office** worked on an Urban Policy for publication in late 2016. Three members of Area Council reviewed and contributed to the drafting of this policy

We continue to be well represented on the national **Board of Trustees**, with the treasurer (Alex Mannings), chair (Des Garrahan) and one other trustee (Teri Moore) all being past or current officers of Inner London Area Council.