

## Rambling for All

Rambling in the countryside is a great way for people with disabilities to meet people. However, there is a lot that needs doing to make access to the countryside possible for many disabled people.

Issues that need attention in making the countryside accessible include:

- surveying routes to see what changes are needed to make them more accessible
- liaison with landowners, giving advice on access such as: suitable surfaces for wheelchair use; RADAR locks for gates.
- information on accessible routes
- transport to the start of the ramble
- help for individuals on a ramble

Fieldfare Trust and The Ramblers Association are active in improving countryside access for disabled people.

### Fieldfare Trust

The Trust promotes enjoyment and education in the countryside for all sections of the community, especially those who by reason of disability or disadvantage are handicapped in pursuing opportunities. Contact the Trust for details of accessible paths in the NW and elsewhere in the country.

### The Ramblers Association Let's Get Going project

The project aims to bring the pleasures of rambling to people with a variety of special needs including people with disabilities. The RA is establishing a network of local community link officers. A set of guidelines is available from the national office on their role. Project working groups choose sites to improve for the benefit of people with disabilities.

Organisations of disabled people are involved in survey work, for example: to make routes fully accessible to wheelchair users.

Walks leaders are identified who are willing to organise walks with people with physical sensory and learning difficulties.

Typically, a Let's Get Going initiative starts through the personal interests of individual members.

### BT Countryside for All project

This project is funded by BT and managed by Fieldfare Trust. It is establishing guidelines and standards on good practice in access provision. Schemes include work on physical access, events management, interpretation, networking, information, health and safety and transport. An award scheme celebrates and publicises examples of good practice. The grants scheme provides money for projects which give people with disabilities the same chances as everyone else to enjoy the countryside.

Interpretative techniques are used to present information about a site so that people get the most out of their visit. Examples of interesting and effective media include leaflets, audio tape material, information boards and more interactive methods such as guided walks, theatre workshops and story telling. This work is improving the quality of interpretative provision for all visitors.

A design manual is being produced which will provide technical information to help countryside managers select the right facilities and designs to suit everyone. It will address standards of access appropriate to formal, managed, semi-natural and wilderness environments.

Networking links diverse countryside and disability organisations to share and reach common goals.

Information is needed if people are to access the countryside. Guidelines for the presentation of accessible information are being developed.

### Further information

The Fieldfare Trust, 67a The Wicker, Sheffield S3 8HT. ☎ 0114 270 1668.

The Ramblers Association, 1-5 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2XX. ☎ 0171 582 6878.

Fax: 0171 587 3799. *RA Fact Sheet 11: Rambling for People with Disabilities* (free) lists useful publications and addresses.

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