

Manchester and Salford Ramblers

Annual Reports 2023.

Chair's Report.

As we have moved on, to some extent, from the difficulties of arranging walks in the context of lockdowns and required isolation it has been pleasing to see the usual array and variety of walks going ahead during the year and I'd want to thank all the walk leaders who continue to arrange and provide the significant numbers of walks that have been available. We've also had a fascinating range of social events during the year, with more planned, so thanks to Chris for planning and co-ordinating these. Two very successful weekends away have also taken place and thanks to Carol for her efforts in this regard.

Some of you will know that I've had some problems with nerve damage in my left leg, which along with some after effects of long covid, have meant that I've not been present on all that many walks. It has also meant that my other role of path clearing organiser has been sorely neglected this year, but I'm hoping to remedy both of these issues over the next 12 months.

I also wanted to record some formal thanks as part of my report to the AGM.

- Although we did record them at the last AGM it is worth reiterating our thanks to Salle for chairing the group over many years.
- Maggie has also stepped down as walks co-ordinator during the year, although still assisting Salle, who has picked up the role, and we ought to thank Maggie for the sterling work she has undertaken in this role for many years.
- As mentioned above, Carol has organised and planned our weekends away for a number of years, and has decided, understandably, to step down from this role and it would be remiss of us to not formally thank Carol for her efforts in this regard.

Finally I wanted to mention the development of regular walks and support to asylum seekers who are living in hotels in Manchester. We are very grateful to Steve in particular, who has co-ordinated these and to the volunteers who have supported the walks. Steve has been dependent on a relatively low number of volunteers and occasionally the planned walk has had to be cancelled due to not enough people being available. So if anyone is in a position to help out with the walks this would be much appreciated. I cannot emphasize how important this support has been and how appreciative of the support and opportunity the asylum seekers are. The group did receive some national recognition for the work with asylum seekers that you may have seen.

Barry Windle.

Secretary's Report.

Another year, another AGM! I'd like to thank Barry, our new Chair, for his hard work, enthusiasm and support during his first year in the role.

Following last year's AGM, Maggie Smith stepped down from organising walks and we would like to express our thanks for her many years of hard work, organising the walks programme, supporting the walk leaders and her musical renditions at our AGM's!

Our new Walks Co-ordinator, Salle, has got into her stride and managed to recruit some new leaders. We've had some new areas to explore, which have been interesting and informative. From Walkden and Wythenshawe, Littleborough and Lyme Park, Broadbottom and Boggart Hole Clough, we've covered them all! Evening walks were enjoyed and the weekends away have been well attended. Sadly, Carol has decided to step down from organising these trips so we are looking for a volunteer to keep this popular event going.

The Open Committee Meeting, held last April, was well supported and we hope to repeat this next year.

The Social events have, as usual, been fabulous. Despite some horrendous weather at times during the year, the socials are well attended. We have visited some great places, seen some fantastic architecture and had local history brought to life. Thanks to Chris for all her hard work. Looking forward to the Christmas extravaganza!

Carer's walks remain very popular. It's so good to see how a walk can help someone who just needs a break or a chat with different people and I'm sure the volunteers get a great deal of satisfaction from helping too. Thanks to Margaret for her continuing work.

The register for Footpath Clearing/Maintenance has been updated and a small group of members are working with David on this project. Thanks go to David and the members who have given up their time and energy for the benefit of others.

The group continues to be involved in many campaigns and projects, including working with both Manchester and Salford councils, other walking groups in the city, such as the GM Ringway, and community groups. The Asylum Seekers walking group is continuing and they have been awarded a sum of money to help with travel costs. Well done to Barry and Steve for their hard work. If any members would like to get more involved with any of the campaigns, projects or other volunteering roles, please let a committee member know.

Unfortunately, we did not manage to send a group representative to General Council last year but 2 colleagues were able to attend.

Let's all look forward to another year of walking, socialising and making a difference!

Janice Kerrigan.

Treasurer's Report.

The accounts have been examined and signed as a fair representation of the Group's financial activities for the year by our independent examiner Mr Bruce Thompson.

The Group's funds are divided into three categories, Main, Self-funded and Restricted. Main activities are those which directly deliver the Ramblers charitable aims and are funded by the Ramblers via the Area, e.g. production of walks programmes and practical footpath work. Self-funded activities are funded directly by members and consist of holidays and social activities. Restricted funds are funds that have been donated or granted to the Group for a specific purpose and have conditions attached.

Main Fund

This year we asked for and received Ramblers grants of £1,520. We also received a donation of £290 from Ramblers Walking Holidays as a result of members taking holidays with them. Expenditure was £1,390, which included a sum of £350 for path clearing equipment and associated expenditure. We have a healthy balance of £2,081.

Self-funded

Members donated towards gifts for the retiring chair and retiring walks organiser. A surplus of £258 from previous self-funded holidays was transferred to the Main fund. We have a balance of £585 for future social events.

Restricted Funds

A grant of £500 was received from Stepping Out with Carers CIC , to organise and deliver further short walks for carers and those they care for. A total of £5,148 was spent on carers' walks from that and previous grants, and a balance of £634 remains for future carers' walks.

Sean Dunne

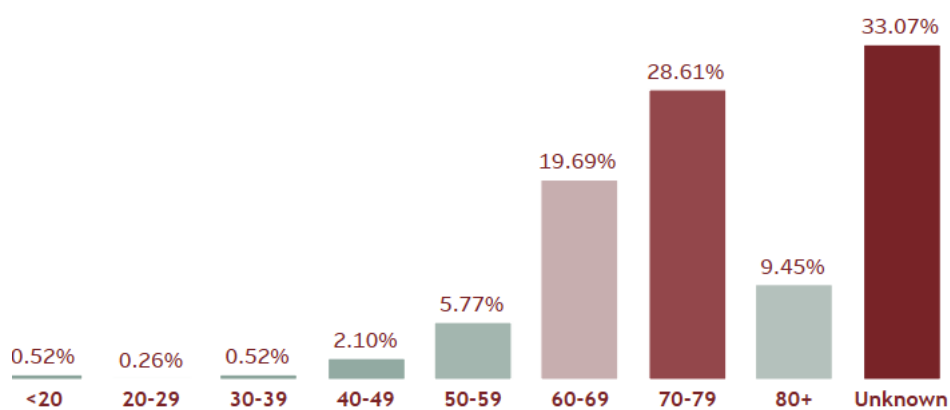
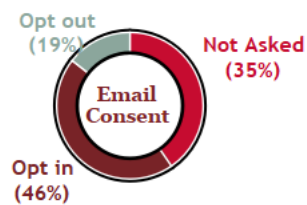
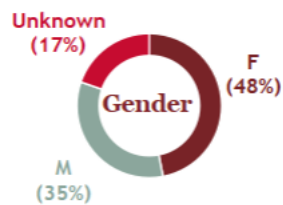
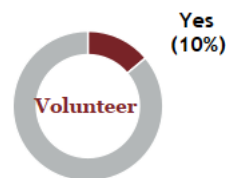
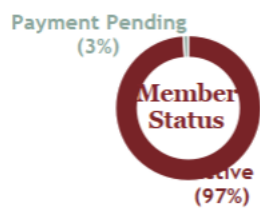
Membership Report.

After the impact of Covid in the previous years' records the group has returned to offer a full range of walks, activities, weekends away and social activities throughout the year, and this is reflected in the increase in memberships which as at the end of September 2023 is 381, (including membership payments pending) which is up on the membership number of 369 September 2022.

Most new members are providing an email address which reduces the administrative costs for the group, reduces the committee members' workload and enables members to receive more up to date information on walks, social events and the latest information on Ramblers locally and nationally. At present only 46% of members have opted in for email consent, If you currently don't subscribe to contact by email and would like to update this option please log in to your Ramblers membership account, or if you have not yet created an account follow the links at <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/login.aspx> then **My account** and **Contact Preferences** where you can add/update your email and contact details.

Membership details for end of September 2023

Active + PP Members - Start of Month	381
New Members	2
Rejoiners	1
Transfers In	0
Leaver	-3
Transfers Out	0
Net Growth	0
Active + PP Members - End of Month	381



Bob Lenihan.

Walk Co-ordinator Report.

Big apologies- this report will be a departure from the entertaining reports of the last 15 years. Thanks to Maggie for providing that.

Firstly, a big thank you to all the walk leaders who help keep our walks programme going. We have been able to provide a varied range of walks on Mondays – our short walks – and then Tuesday and Saturdays for longer walks and in the summer months some enjoyable evening walks. In addition to our regular walks programme Ramblers volunteers also support the Carers' Walks and the walks for Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

Our walks, nearly all based on public transport connections, have covered city centres walks highlighting some of the interesting buildings and green spaces within the city, wider urban walks using parks, riverside and canal towpaths; and some wider afield out into the Peak District. We have made good use of the three trails which cover our group – The Salford Trail, Manchester Green Trail and the Greater Manchester Ringway. Any comments on the walks programme welcome.

Walks Manager is the way Ramblers manage the walks programme of the groups and all our walks now appear on the national Ramblers website. Our walk leaders provide Alan with the information for him to put on the website. Thanks to Alan for taking on this responsibility. Any feedback from walk leaders on this would be welcome.

If you would like to volunteer as a walk leader but are not sure how to go about leading a walk, we can arrange online training for new walk leaders and a buddy system to help you plan and recce your first couple of walks. Just let us know.

Thanks again to everyone who makes this walks programme possible.

Salle Dare

Manchester Footpath Report.

The situation regarding management of rights of way (RoW) in Manchester remains unsatisfactory though there are some positive developments. While the authority still has no dedicated rights of way officer, and no dedicated RoW budget, there is a glimmer of progress. Our most recent meeting with Manchester City Council (MCC) was in August.

Definitive Map (DM) updating and new Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

After being an agenda item in our meetings for the last decade, there is some perceptible movement on the updating of the DM, last fully updated in the 1980s, though some definitive descriptions go back to 1949. We were advised that the project to review and revise the DM is now underway.

- Phase 1 will involve reviewing all existing information and digitising that held on paper records.
- Phase 2 will include a plan of action to update the DM and statement and an examination of how well the path descriptions attached to the DM path compare with paths on the ground.

A new RoW website is proposed as well as clarification of the process for Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs). Also the ROWIP (some years old and very generic) will be updated.

It is planned that each path will be reviewed and inspected with MCC inspectors including the actual start and end points of a path on their spreadsheet. Work will start with the straightforward paths, then those requiring remedial work and those that require legal action to resolve etc. There is no set timescale, and the expertise of Ramblers and PNFS will be called on.

We requested at the August meeting that we be updated on these inspections regularly - in batches of 10-12 footpaths at a time. I have in the past compiled my own list of paths where the DM description is outdated or inaccurate, or where the path on the ground varies from the DM and / or as marked on OS maps.

We have had no further information since the August meeting.

Update on footpath maintenance

MCC have made limited headway with our list of around 38 "problem paths". Hopefully the work on the DM will see this accelerated. At the August meeting there were reports back on the following paths :

173 surface muddy but passable – agreed

135 (Nico Ditch)– one section passable and remainder that is blocked and dangerous has previously been passed to Corporate Property who presumably allowed the school fence to be built.

238 – anticipating that vegetation will die down

14 (reported by Martin PNFS) - to be chased up with Arbor and notified when the action is completed.

79 With Corporate Property (surface issues)

2 & 11 Site meetings with myself are still to be arranged - MCC inspected the paths reporting them as clear, betraying confusion about the line of the path in both cases.

Other specific paths issues

65 I found this path (which is overgrown) in Blackley Village fenced off. As agreed at previous meetings with MCC I reported this on the MCC website via the CRM system and received a very unsatisfactory response.

59 Remains blocked (closed without proper procedure)

181 10 years after Court ruling remains closed. Legal department to report back to Highways .

Reporting RoW issues to MCC

Following the problem with FP65 report, we have been advised that the system for reporting issues to MCC (known as the CRM system) is being revised. The system is used for reporting a wide range of issues to the council eg. flytipping, damaged pavements etc.

We have suggested that RoW issues should have their own category to ensure that issues go to the correct department. Also this should mean that those involved with the contact centre and neighbourhood officers have some training on PROW.

HS2 FP Diversions and Closures

Many thanks to Alan, who produced a comprehensive response on behalf of the group to the consultation on the proposed Manchester Airport HS2 railway station.

The final proposals, including realignment of the motorway, would have had a major effect on rights of way in Ringway parish and over the border in Trafford.

The main issue was that the proposals did not appear to incorporate active travel provision or consider opportunities to enhance and maintain existing routes for use in accessing the station. They also failed to adequately consider mitigating the effects on recreational routes. While Phase 2(b) of HS2 has now been cancelled, it remains to be seen whether the station (and tunnel to Piccadilly) will once again be proposed as part of "Network North" - if indeed that amounts to anything at all!

Inspections

During the coming year it would be a good idea to review our own path inspector network and hopefully hold a meeting to attract new inspectors and update them on the progress being made by the City Council.

Richard Cleverley

Thanks to Maggie Walker, whose thorough notes of our meetings with MCC this report is largely based on, and Alan for the HS2 work.

Salford Footpath Report.

There has been continued high usage of both the path and the M & S group website. Alan Manning has made adjustments to the website, simplifying access to the ST section.

Further obstruction by fallen trees in woodland on Worsley 29 between Ellesmere golf course and the M61 link road was reported in the Spring and cleared by SCC in the Summer.

We have strongly opposed the one mile diversion proposed for Eccles 28 as part of the Port Salford rail link scheme. As part of our campaign we have supplied SCC with details of a new "*at grade crossing*" specifically designed - and approved by Network Rail - for use on lightly used low speed rail lines. This would allow the footpath to keep to its present rather shorter route - 15 metres.

We were quietly confident that an acceptable compromise could be reached on Eccles 4 at Barton to enable walkers to avoid most of the new dual carriageways. However, there has been no movement on path creation in this area.

A much delayed consultation on improvements to the path under the Ordsall Chord was launched in early Spring. This proposes a minor realignment and significant upgrade to this long closed short stretch of riverside path. The plan was approved and work should start soon.

The battle of Ralli Quays, a major feature of 2022, has calmed down. We are assured by SCC that the riverside path will be protected and Stanley Street designated a PRow. There are no plans to incorporate the narrow flood-prone riverside path, with its low level access issues, into the Salford Trail.

Leaflets for ST

Meetings with TfGM mapping department have been held to discuss the reprinting and possible redesign of the generic leaflets; our stock is low. (We had previously agreed not to reprint the individual walk leaflets.) Huge thanks to Simon Platt and Shula Odell who have created numerous drafts for the map to accompany a completely redesigned generic leaflet. We are near the end of this process and about to discuss the artwork and text for the remaining parts of the leaflet.

DMMOs

We intend to work up applications for DMMOs on short sections of the ST which are not PRoWs. Work pressures have prevented me from starting the process of collecting signatures; apologies.

Salford City Council initiatives and consultations

A new footpath officer was appointed by SCC at the beginning of September - poached from Manchester! I have arranged a meeting with Liam Sands on 20th October and am confident that the good relations between the Council and Ramblers will be further enhanced. Amongst items on the agenda will be:

- The completion of the Swinton Greenway link to Winchester Road (Eccles 16)
- The obstruction of S & P 22 between Langley Road and the River Irwell
- The continued blockage of W 97 at Rawsons i' th' Nook.

A number of planning applications have been reviewed; nothing contentious.

All remains peaceful on Worsley 156 (Haddon Road Worsley.)

The final section of the new path network leading to RHS Bridgewater has been completed. This links Leigh Road with Walkden station.

Whilst planning permission for the upgrade of Barton Swing Aqueduct and the provision of a pedestrian route across it has been granted, SCC cannot provide any date when their part of the funding package will be available.

Path clearing

Thirteen members responded to Janice's advert in the Spring seeking footpath maintenance volunteers. Induction courses were held and workforce divided into small groups covering five sectors of the city. Equipment has been purchased through Ramblers and litter picking kit has been donated by SCC. We are now Salford Litter Heroes! To record and facilitate this work the Definitive Map and Statement has been translated into an interactive spreadsheet, each path on the SCC interactive map has been labelled and sector maps produced. I thought we were being over ambitious in July but I am delighted to report that The Salford Footpath Team is up and running, has its own WhatsApp group and has had its first letter of congratulation from SCC!

Finally, a personal note of thanks to everyone who has helped keep the paths clear throughout the year, making them happy places for recreation and communication, and to the ST gang and the budding litter heroes. It has been a pleasure to work with you.

David Yates

Web Administration Report

Our group has two linked web sites. We have a section on the national Ramblers web site and our main site is hosted by Ramblers-Webs. The main linked feature of both web sites is information on our forthcoming walks, these details are also displayed on the Ramblers App.

Web site usage

We have changed the way that statistics are collected on our local web site, so the figures for this year are not directly comparable with last years. However, it remains the case that the most popular parts of the web site are on walks, with the Salford Trail, Walks Programme and the Green Trail getting the most visits.

The chart below shows the number of unique visitors to our, and after a small dip last November, there has been steady growth this year and we are currently averaging just over 1,000 visits per month.

The change around the end of May is related to changes in the design of the Area web site that were linked to the launch of the new national web site. Prior to May if you selected one of our walks on the Area web site you would be referred to our page on the national web site, now that enquiry is referred directly to our local web site, and the Area web site is now the main source of referrals.



New National Web Site page and Walks Manager

The Ramblers national web site was finally relaunched at the end of May. Here is the link to our page on the new site: [Manchester and Salford Ramblers Group - Ramblers](#)

As part of the relaunch a new tool has been developed to record and display information on group walks – Walks Manager. Walk Leaders were briefed on the changes and in the main the transition has been successful.

Salford Trail – original web site

The current Salford Trail was developed by a whole team of Ramblers volunteers from the Manchester and Salford Group, but it was Roy Bullock who in 2007, noted that “certain towns around Salford had long distance trails” and, “Salford as a city having so much green space and such a rich history It deserved to be able to show these things to the full in the form of The Salford Trail.” He and Al Tomlinson, set out to create such a trail and by mid-2012 created a web site with the route and related information.

This is still available and contains much of interest and can be accessed by following [this link](#).

Alan Manning

Campaigns and Projects Report.

Get Manchester Walking, Cycling and Wheeling

In February Manchester City Council adopted a new strategy, to make walking, wheeling, and cycling more accessible and easier for everyone throughout the city. We met Cllr Rawlins, the lead Exec Member and senior council officers twice during the development of the strategy and made a formal submission. [Here is the link to the announcement and the full document.](#)

We are recognised as a key stakeholder in this work and have been assured we will be involved in future developments.

HS2

In summer and early autumn, a lot of work went into responding to what at that stage was the latest iteration of plans for the HS2 route from Crewe to Manchester. However, on 4 October, the Prime Minister announced that the project was cancelled.

The Government subsequently published “Network North: Transforming British Transport– a £36b plan to improve our country’s transport.” In the first section the document highlights that a third of all private transport trips were made by walking, but in what follows there isn’t a single reference to walking, pavements, footpaths or rights of way!

Castlefield Viaduct

We continued to be in touch with NT staff at the viaduct. Our idea of developing a series of walks to and from the viaduct has not made as much progress as I had hoped due to the pressure on the NT staff. We had a group walk and tour on the 16 October. They will be open in their current format up to Autumn 2024 and the long-term vision remains one that we very much support of a permanent public park with through routes.

Greater Manchester Walking Festival

This was held in May and was successful. Our group had 7 walks in the festival programme and there were walks offered by another five Ramblers Groups.

Alan Manning

Social Secretary's Report.

Although, due to various circumstances, we have had fewer socials this year, those we have had have been well supported by our members. A range of walks, talks and tours provided a variety of 'meet ups' and hopefully everyone found something which interested them and brought them together with other members.

Some of our events are free, others might incur a charge or a donation. On average the groups are around 20 people.

Ours events this year have included:

December Christmas Social

This is always really well supported. Starting with a meet up in St Anne's Square we walked to the Paramount on Oxford Road for refreshments and our Christmas Quiz.

March

Middleton. Edgar Wood guided walk

Despite the horrendous weather over 20 people joined us for this very informative walk and talk led by Christine and her husband. It was very interesting and was an opportunity to view a good selection of buildings plus find out the history behind them. We needed to find somewhere dry so we had to finish a very enjoyable afternoon in the historic Boars Head pub!

May

We had much better weather on our next outing to sunny Chorlton where we met one of our favourite Manchester guides, Emma Fox.

A great walk around the highways and byways with amazing facts and quirky stories aplenty. Around 20 people came with us with a good smattering of Chorltonites who were particularly interested.

June

A visit to Wythenshawe Hall has long been on my wish list and this year we managed it. It was well worth the wait as 2 hours went very quickly in the company of two extremely knowledgeable and interesting volunteers who showed us the hall and relayed its history in an entertaining way.

July

Summer social. Bolton

Ten hardy explorers headed off north to Bolton on the train on a Monday evening in July. A pleasant walk around the town revealed its history and facts about its pivotal role in the Industrial Revolution. We also learnt about some of its famous sons and daughters.

Knowledge gained was later tested in a fun quiz in the pub where we took our necessary refreshments after the walk!

Next Social October 12th.

Chris Quinn

Newsletter Editor Report.

We have again produced four newsletters, two just by email and two with a printed version as well. It would be good if more members would register their emails so they can receive the email version

which has longer articles and also they can see all the lovely photos taken on our walks, social and other events.

Once again thanks to all who post photos and comments on our Facebook group, a selection of which are used in the newsletter. New photographers this year include Kerttu Kepa Oinonen Kinsler, Janet Costello, Sean Dunne, Judith Jewels, Holly Partlett, Maria Stubbs, Dave Lees, Mark Chung, (Ramblers Trustee, for pre Area AGM walk photo). Other photographers include Janice Kerrigan, Steve Saxton, Barry Windle, Kate Wilson, Rob Dean, Mags Metcalf, Pat Williamson, Richard Cleverley, Alan Manning, Carol Hibbert, Andrew Read, Margaret Manning.

Again thanks to those who have written articles and submitted items for the newsletter during the last year, including Kate Wilson, Mags Metcalf, Salle Dare, Alan Manning, Janice Kerrigan, and to Mags Metcalf and Janice Kerrigan for proof reading.

I always enjoy reading reports of our Group's activities and campaigns and hope other members do as well. It would also be good if other members would write a piece for the Walks Elsewhere section, it can be a walk in the UK or abroad. Members have submitted some varied and interesting articles from day walks, long walking holidays and other trips which included walking, such as when on a mainly sightseeing holiday. Please contact me if you think you could submit an article, short or long, with a few photos if possible but not essential.

We have found that the Facebook group is a useful addition to our other means of communications with members, and supporters and has led to many new walkers and members for our Ramblers group.

As I said last year having done the job of newsletter editor for well over 7 years I would be happy to pass it on and a fresh approach would be good. If anyone else would like to take over as editor please let me know. It doesn't require great technical or design skills and full support will be given to anyone taking over.

Margaret Manning

Carers walks.

Over the last year we have again run walks for carers and those they support from Manchester, Salford, Wigan and Leigh carers' organisations and Bury. Unfortunately carers from Bury have not been able to attend most walks as the staff are stretched for time. Although carers can come anyway very few do. The volunteers have come from M&S group, though we do ask the other Ramblers groups if they have members who would like to support, so far none have come. Thankfully we have plenty of willing volunteers from M&S.

Since the last AGM we have held 16 walks, mostly in the five Greater Manchester Boroughs but our big day out this year was in Tatton Park on a very wet day in June, but still enjoyed. Following this we bought some waterproof ponchos to lend to those who don't have a waterproof coat. They were very useful on our September walk at Media City and Salford Quays. Attendance on walks varied from 8 for just one group, to 29 for three groups at Tatton Park. Unfortunately for that walk the Manchester minibus didn't turn up so just a few came by car. The others took the initiative to go on a walk at Castlefield viaduct. As well as the joint ones we did one for each group in Carers week and

in November we did two in north and south Manchester. All together we have had over 300 carers and cared for on the year's walks.

As ever the carers were very appreciative of the chance to exercise, socialise and enjoy the outdoors. They also are very thankful to all our Ramblers volunteers who help lead and support the walks. Also thanks to Mags Metcalf who has organised some of the walks. If anyone else wants to volunteer please contact me.

We have mainly funded the walks with Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board Mental Wellbeing Grants. We hope to get another similar grant but no application timescale yet. If we don't get a new one or there is a gap while Sue Mott from Stepping Out nationally applies elsewhere then Sue will help us out from Stepping Out national funds.

Two specific carers groups have continued running their own walks, inspired by and in addition to, our joint walks. We were also able to put on another online walk leader training session in January so several more carers have become walk leaders for our joint walks and for their local ones.

Margaret Manning

Publicity Report.

It has been a bit quiet this year which not many events I was able to attend.

I have however distributed The Ramblers recruitment leaflet 'Get more out of your walks', The Salford Trail and The Green Trail leaflets to Community Centres, Libraries, Art Galleries and to anywhere I could hand out these leaflets and to people on our walks who were not members. These continue to be popular at many centres.

We have continued with postings on our website, newsletter and Facebook. Thanks to Alan and Margaret.

We have been invited to share a stall with an Active Travel Event at RHS Bridgewater later in October.



We recently attended the **Greater Manchester Green Summit** event held at the Lowry Theatre. This was well attended with over 1400 people booked on and many exhibitors, interesting sessions, speakers and workshops. We had good interest in our stall.

Mags Metcalf