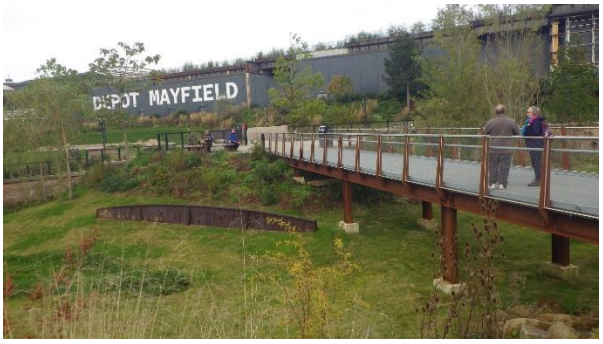
Manchester and Salford Ramblers

Newsletter No 65 March 2025

Message from the officers. At the Area AGM (November 2024) it was recognised that many groups now only use electronic communication and no paper copies are sent out. The cost of printing and postage, and the time involved, means that this trend is likely to grow. At our committee meeting, it was agreed that members without email should still have access to Ramblers material as part of the requirement to be inclusive. These members will be sent a postal copy. However, members with an email address will be sent the walk programme, booklet and newsletter via email only. In addition, it was agreed that walk leaders will carry a small supply of booklets to distribute on walks. Area Walk booklets will also be available at various publicity events as they are convenient as a way of promoting the Ramblers.

Manchester Green Trail: Diversion and Floods Update. A long term diversion is in place on Walk 10 of the Green Trail also as a result of the floods at New Year part of Walk 13 is closed until repairs have been completed. For updated details see https://manchesterandsalfordramblers.org.uk/walks/manchester-green-trail.html



Mayfield Park is Growing: Let's make it a great place to Walk to! Plans are being developed for the first new homes to be built at Mayfield and a major extension of Mayfield Park. LandsecU+I, the developers of this phase asked for views on the proposals. Manchester and Salford Ramblers strongly welcomed the expansion of the park and the continued development of the Mayfield project and have called for safe and attractive walking routes from all the neighbouring areas to the park.

In particular we want to see access across the Mancunian way to Ardwick, an attractive route from the park to the Lower Medlock Valley and big improvements for walkers around the London Road junction for access to the Baring Street entrance. **More details here**.

Castlefield Viaduct – plans to extend the Sky Park Plans have been announced for the extension of the sky park. It will increase from the current 120 metres to the full 330 metre length of the historic viaduct. Currently, visitors to the viaduct walk through a series of spaces and gardens before coming to a visitors' building and a glass wall where the untouched section of the viaduct can be seen. It is this section that will be developed and opened up.

It will include winding paths through planted areas to encourage people to take time out from the busy city below and connect with nature. The Phase 2 extension will also include WaterAid's Gold medal-winning garden from this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show, designed by architect Je Ahn and landscape designer Tom Massey. The Plans also include a second entry and exit point to the west side of Egerton Street via a lift and stairway to improve access and allow more people to visit – you can connect with the Salford Trail in around 300 yds and the GM Ringway along the Bridgewater Canal is less than 100yds away.

The planning application for Phase 2 is now live on Manchester City Council's public access portal, here.

Enjoying Urban Walks The Ramblers are best known for their efforts to protect and expand access to the countryside but increasingly the importance of accessible walks in towns and cities is recognised. For many who don't have the time, money or inclination to travel beyond their urban environment, it's important that the local park or other green area are accessible. This not only means the provision of green routes but also ensuring that there is a good infrastructure to enable safe walking.

The value of this was never clearer than during the pandemic when many people took up walking and became aware of some of the challenges in finding pleasant routes. This not only means routes which are nature rich but also have wide, level pavements, safe crossing points and good signage.

Manchester and Salford Ramblers have for many years been proactive in the promotion of urban green routes, working with partners to establish Salford Trail, Manchester Green Trail and with others the GM Ringway. These routes provide a network of paths linking green areas creating enjoyable leisure walks and opportunities for active travel.

We are rightly focused on the protection and maintenance of rights of way and public footpaths but we are also aware of the need to highlight issues around urban paths and pavements. Some of these are about the quality of surfaces and drainage but more often they relate to pavement parking and other obstructions. These can have a substantial impact of the enjoyment of urban walks. The importance of good infrastructure for urban walking has been for too long overlooked by local councils and government.

The committee of Manchester and Salford Ramblers have decided to co-opt Cath Fernley to champion improvements in urban paths and pavements. She has for many years campaigned on these matters, working in schools on safer travel initiatives, campaigning on pavement parking and challenging policy on dropped kerbs and front garden parking. Nationally the Ramblers are campaigning for all cities in England to have a network of accessible and pleasant routes that link up green spaces and enable residents, commuters and visitors to explore cities on foot. It's important that Manchester and Salford continue to be a part of that. If you want to contact Cath please email her on cathfernley@yahoo.co.uk

Walks Organiser Report

As we start to come out of winter into the Spring months some of the walks are providing us with beautiful sights of the first budding crocuses, the pictures enclosed show these perfectly in this vast area in the Moravian Settlement Church gardens, I am sure there will be a lot more to scenes like these over the next couple of months.

Over the last month I have been tracking the M & S Ramblers numbers on the walks which took place in January, which typically is one of the coldest and harshest weather months of the year and the pattern already developing is that the Monday walks are really popular amongst the Ramblers with attendance on the 2 Mondays of 17 and 21 respectively. March has started the same way with the first Monday walk of the month attracting 17 Ramblers with some added new people which is encouraging, may well be worth considering including a 3rd Monday in each month, especially over the summer months. As for the other days walks, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, the totals have been pretty low but I believe adverse weather conditions prevailed on some of these days which without doubt would affect the attendance.

On a walk on April 21st (Bank Holiday Monday) which I am leading myself I intend to issue each Rambler with a copy of the May / June / July walks programme as a new initiative to encourage ramblers to join other walk leaders walks, any walks I attend in the meantime will also be given the programme sheets. So as well as being able to see the programme online they can get it in paper form for referencing.

Finally, I wish to thank the M & S Walk Leaders for their dedication and support leading walks for the group, their support has been fantastic as ever, fingers crossed for a decent warm Summer this year! Alan Scholes

Walking Elsewhere. Mull Head: Orkney

It was warm and sunny as we drove through Kirkwall, over the open country and south of the wide Deer Sound. A narrow isthmus joins the Mainland to Deerness, and the sun was bright, but it was breezy as we set out. As walked up to the Visitors Centre a curlew flew overhead, we walked on to the Gloup – an impressive blow hole whose cliffs

provided landing sites for Black Guillemots and the channel above was full of marsh marigolds. We walked onto the rough grass above the slabby rocks of the cliffs with blue sea and the white lighthouse on Auskerry visible to the NNE. We walked on, spring squill – a subtle colouring in the bleached grass.

Shortly we came to the Brough of Deerness. A steep sided rocky islet, now not accessible due to a land slip that had taken away part of the narrow path. Fulmars and Kittiwakes and Shag took turns sunning themselves and splashing in the water of the bay. We found a grassy bank in the sun to watch the displays and have our lunch.

As we continued our walk, there were more violets visible as we neared the end of the headland and scores of razorbills, and black guillemots were on the water below us.

We rounded the head and walked up to the trig point and enjoyed the wide views over the sea to the islands of Auskerry, Stronsay and Shapinsay. Closer across Deer Sound the cliffs of Rerwick Head with more islands, blue sea and sunshine a winning combination. The northwest side of the head was heather moorland sloping gently down to slabby rocks and views across the sound. We walked to the edge of Den Wick and paused in the sun and relative shelter. Our way turned on a green track up the hillside and back down around Brecklan to where we were parked to finish a very good walk around Mull Head. Alan Manning.

Socials At last we are up and running with our socials this year and our first event, an Art Adventure walk with the amazing Emma Fox, proved to be very popular.
We have another planned event for the 23rd April. This is a walking tour with fascinating facts and stories about Whalley Range and Alexandra Park. Details about this will go out in a couple of weeks so keep a look out for the email.

If you have any suggestions for future socials I would love to hear them. Chris Quinn.

Our Socials. Fabulous Christmas social evening, meeting for a warming drink and catch up with friends. Then onto Paramount for food and a great quiz. Everyone brought their brains (mostly!) and congratulations to the winners.

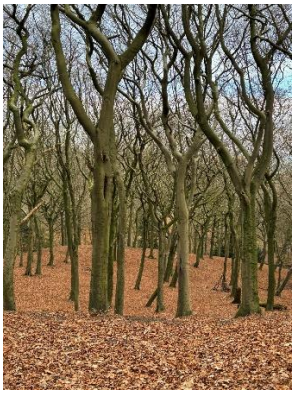
Carers Walks Another enjoyable festive walk in Manchester City Centre. Our route included some of the Christmas installations, sections of canals and the River Medlock, a look at HOME Arts Centre, saying hello to a statue of Engels, (brought over from Ukraine many years ago), a short section of historic Castlefield, Spinningfields, snacks on Lincoln Square and back through Albert Square. We finished up with hot drinks to warm up in the library cafe.

January saw us at Media City and Salford Quays. Some did a shorter walk, turning back from the Watersports Centre, while others picked up the pace and made it to Ordsall Hall. Such a good turnout on a grey day and all so cheerful. Luckily the threatened rain didn't arrive.

In bright sunshine 24 set off from the Velodrome for February's carers walks from the Velodrome. The longer walk went past the big building project at the Etihad Stadium, along City Way to Holt Town, back along the Ahton canal and through Philips park. The short walk did a meander around Philips Park, enjoying the sunshine, spring flowers, well kept allotments, wildfowl on the lake and of course good company. The carers all enjoyed the walk, lunch back at the Velodrome and the chance to see down into the velodrome track. Thanks to all the Ramblers who helped make it such a good event. Thanks to players of the National Lottery for funding the carers walks.

Our walks.

Clifton Country Park to Ringley, following the line of the old canal on the route back.



The weather stayed dry for our annual mince pie and mulled wine fest atop Tandle Hill. Good turnout, plenty of Santa hats. Though windy up top, bits of blue sky, amazing shafts of light and great views. Back through Chadderton park.

Our New Year's Day short walk was even shorter due to flooding in the Mersey Valley. Nine of us managed to get from Old Trafford Tram stop, through Longford Park and down through Stretford Cemetery but then were halted in our tracks a few metres along Hawthorn Lane. We could see the Lakes on Stretford Meadows and Turn Moss playing fields but then had to retrace our steps. At least the rain had stopped!

Sauntering around Sale Water Park on a bright & relatively mild day walkers enjoyed the birdlife & the Lakeview Cafe.

Thirteen walked to Riverbank Coffee via the Bridgewater Canal & River Mersey & enjoyed a hot drink on a dank day.

A really lovely circular walk from Wilmslow via Lindow, Morley Green & Quarry Bank Mill. Perfect winter weather too.

Irlam & Chat Moss a nice flat walk on a really beautiful calm day, well attended with a total of 17 walkers

Middlewood to Bramhall. A small but select group walked along paths, through mud, over fields, through mud and over bridges. Lunch was at Poynton lake, where we heard a sad story but also saw a kingfisher. Had a good day.

A rather chilly walk from Walkden station. Along a loopline, passing the old platform of Little Hulton station. We crossed Ashton Fields with it's rather odd canal lock structures then entered Blackleach Country Park. After walking beside the lake we then made our various ways back to Walkden.

Platt Fields & Fallowfield. Slow walk. A little drizzle later on but the worst of the rains held off till after the walk. As well as touring the Park, admiring Platt Hall & Platt Church, we passed other significant buildings in the area. The Ashburne Hall residences had their origin from a meeting in 1899 to discuss the shortage of accommodation for women students. A house for them was opened in 1900 in Victoria Park, Ashburne Hall moved to this site following the Behrens' gift of the Oaks. The arts & craft style buildings were constructed between 1910 and 1933, designed by Sir Percy Scott Worthington. They are now all listed Grade II. We also passed the 'Toastrack' & Platt Chapel.

Nine of us set off on a bright sunny February day to walk stage 17 of the GM Ringway, from Leigh to Irlam. We followed the Pennington Brook, which becomes Glaze Brook, Windy Bank wood, passed the early 17th C, Grade II* listed Light Oaks Hall, with its Tudor brickwork and stone mullioned windows. We joined the Salford Trail across Chat Moss and half way around Little Woolden Moss. Missing out a short section of the GM Ringway, we followed the Salford Trail on a quiet track passed farms and across fields to Irlam Station, where some walkers took the first train to Manchester while others sampled the refreshments on offer from the magnificently restored station building.

Debdale Park circular, along the side of the lower reservoir, passed the now closed donkey sanctuary, onto the Fallowfield Loop. We arrived at the Moravian Settlement and Church, where the Minister gave us a warm welcome. We viewed the Church & ate our packed lunches inside. If you've never been there before it is worth looking round the Church, cottages, old college and 'God's Acre' as the MInister called it, otherwise known as the Cemetery, with its swathes of beautiful purple crocuses. Coming back along part of the Ashton canal it seemed we were briefly hidden away from the hustle and bustle of Gorton. We returned to the park alongside the upper and lower reservoirs.

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RAMBLE WORLDWIDE HOLIDAYS PARTNERSHIP The Ramblers have an agreement with Ramblers Worldwide. So don't forget if you take a Ramblers Worldwide Holiday tell them you are a member of Manchester and Salford Ramblers, quote MR10 and we will receive a donation to our funds.

OTHER RAMBLERS WALKING GROUPS IN OUR AREA Lots of other walks on Wednesdays and Sundays in our Area programme & all groups also on our Area website. http://www.manchester-ramblers.org.uk

The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity (England & Wales no 1093577 and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales (no 4458492)

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