

RANGE WALKING CLUB GUIDANCE FOR WALK LEADERS (Version 3: May 2009)

1 These Notes are intended to assist walk leaders - especially those relatively new to leading in the Club - in planning walks, ensuring that walks go smoothly and, in the event of difficulties, in coping with them successfully.

2 The suggestions hopefully encompass all the practices which have led to 30 years of successful club activity, so that all walks can continue to be satisfying for leaders and members alike. They represent 'good practice' and should improve consistency between Groups. However, they are not prescriptive; experienced leaders may adopt a different approach - if so, please incorporate them in this guide for the benefit of others. Suggestions for any changes, deletions or additions to this Guide will be gratefully received by the Club Chairman.

Route planning

3 Contact the Treasurer to obtain a Club copy of the appropriate OS map or agree with him that a new one may be purchased.

4 The Group leaders should meet, preferably 10 - 12 weeks before a walk, to agree possible routes, suitable finishing point etc. This allows a month to find a mutually convenient date for the 'recce' (and the possibility of a further day in the event of difficulties being experienced). This timing also allows for preparing a 'write-up' and sending to the Group leader at least 1 month before the walk.

5 The walks are graded to provide suitable variety for a range of abilities, the longer walks being taken at a faster pace with more climbing, often over more difficult ground. The gradings need to be reasonably consistent from month to month, and between Groups, so that members do not commit themselves to a walk they will find unduly difficult.

6 Use the following suggested maximum distances and heights to help select a suitable route:

| | | |
|----|-------------------|----------------|
| C | 7 miles (10 km) | 500 ft (150 m) |
| B | 9 miles (13 km) | 1000 (300 m) |
| B+ | 11½ miles (19 km) | 1500 (460 m) |
| A | 13½ miles (22 km) | 2000 (610 m) |

The route can be extended by ½ - 1 mile (1 - 2 km) for each 500 ft (150 m) reduction in height, or similarly reduced for higher climbs. Another method used for calculating timings is to add ½ hr for each 1000 ft (300 m) of climbing. Walking speed is approximately 1½ - 2 miles/hr (3 km/hr) for a C group over horizontal, rough ground.

7 Use the appropriate OS map (scale 1:25,000) to avoid steep gradients and unsuitable surfaces. For a C walk avoid slopes of more than 1 in 5, or long stretches of >1 in 10 (i.e. more than ten 10m contour lines crossed over a distance of 1 km). Lengthy stretches of road walking (e.g. country lanes) is more acceptable for a C walk than other graded walks.

8 Establish the planned start and return times for the walk, and the time the coach will depart for the return journey. Once the Group has established the return departure time, a walk should be re-routed if necessary so it does not extend beyond this time and thereby keep others waiting on the coaches. Aim to return to the departure point at least ½hr before departure time. Although this can be extended, e.g.. in a popular tourist centre in summer, do not arrive more than 1½ hrs before departure. If the walk starts from a

coach park with toilet facilities allow $\frac{1}{4}$ hr after coach arrival before the walk can start. If possible, schedule in a visit to toilet facilities during the day. Allow $\frac{1}{4}$ hr drink breaks morning and afternoon and $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ hr for lunch, depending on the weather.

9 Consider the possibility of alternative routes at various points in case of difficulties during the walk or recce, in particular the possibility of cutting short the walk and returning to the coaches.

Addendum May 2009

- a) Any drop off point should normally be on the main coach route to the final destination.
- b) If a group wishes to be dropped off beyond the final destination, that would be OK provided they would be the last group to be dropped.
- c) All walks should be planned to end at the same point where the coach would be waiting.

All things are flexible! If there is a particular walk you want to do which doesn't fit the above criteria, please discuss with your other leaders and the chairman.

Reconnaissance Walk (the 'Recce')

10 Recce in, at least, pairs but if possible share a car with another recce group - this reduces cost and enables one group to do a linear walk (the other group providing transport at start or finish).

11 Timings achieved during the 'recce' will determine the route and pace selected. Allow extra time for difficult terrain and, with a large group, the effect of stiles. Many people find difficulty descending steep or slippery slopes and adequate time must be allowed, both in the planning and during the walk.

12 Keep a note of distinctive points along the route, e.g.. easily missed turnings; this will provide key information to someone else to lead should one of the leaders be unable to attend the walk.

13 Note the time to key points, the length of breaks and in following any deviations. These times will enable you to confirm that the route and timings are suitable, select appropriate points for breaks, pace the real walk and, if necessary, revise any of these easily during the walk.

14 Bear in mind convenient places for breaks (at the timings expected during the walk), for example providing shelter in the event of bad weather.

15 Use the OS map to confirm heights and distances. When calculating the height remember to allow for movement across contours - not just the difference between the highest and lowest points of the walk.

16 Prepare a brief write-up for the 'Walk Letter' describing the main features and problems (e.g.. stiles, steep descents) and send to your Group leader at least 4 weeks (preferably 5 weeks) before the date of the walk.

17 Consider reporting any blocked or diverted 'public rights of way' to the County footpaths officer (or the Ramblers' Association).

The Day of the Walk

18 Walks do not always start from a coach park with toilet facilities; if not, ensure there is a toilet stop on the outward journey.

19 The leader of each walk on the coach should, if possible, prepare and pass around a more detailed description and map of the intended route including any difficult points, e.g. steep descents.

20 In the event of a late start a walk should be re-routed if necessary so that the agreed departure time can be adhered to and others will not be kept waiting.

21 Agree which of you will act as leader / back-marker and any changeover points. One should carry a first aid pack and the list of emergency phone numbers. Except for the simplest of walks carry the OS map and a compass.

22 Leave a card displayed at the coach doorway clearly showing the planned departure time.

23 On leaving the coach park or at the earliest opportunity, e.g.. a stile, count the number of walkers on your walk. Preferably this should be done by both leaders to establish the definitive number of those in the group. Carry out re-counts at regular intervals.

24 Keep a steady pace to achieve the planned timings along the route. Don't allow people to rush ahead and dictate the pace. Stop periodically as appropriate to the terrain, e.g.. every 15 mins, to give a 'breather' and allow those at the rear to catch up. Check, by asking, that the pace is satisfactory.

25 The leader should try to keep the back-marker in sight where possible. Do not allow large gaps to develop so that the 'rear contingent' disappears from sight, for example in wooded areas; remember, they won't have a 'leader'.

26 The back-marker should stay with the slowest in the group, especially with the less fit or able, but encourage dawdlers to maintain the pace of the rest of the group.

27 Announce clearly when a break (coffee/tea/lunch) has been reached and how long the break will be. Give everyone a couple of minutes warning before departure. Check numbers before departing.

Handling problems

28 Leader and back-marker should each have a whistle to alert the other in the event of difficulty. If necessary the back-marker should ask a third person to run ahead to alert the leader.

29 Identify any trained first aider in the party. Never leave an injured or unwell person alone. If they leave the group, e.g.. to reach a public road, ensure 2 volunteers go with them (one person is then able to stay with them in the event of further problems while the other seeks help).

After the Walk

30 Return the first aid kits to the Group leader who should then pass them to the Group leader of the next walk.