Trips Organizer Hand-over

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Abstract

A comprehensive overview to organizing a full year's calendar of collections for Bath Area Rag. Notes and recommendations on various specific collections such as Hogmoney and London UnderGRAND are provided, as well as pointers on Easter Tour and normal Saturday collections. We conclude the inevitable — there is nothing more important than having fun.

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*With thanks to Pete, Pippa and all of my other lovely collectors

1 Introduction

Rag raids (also known as street collections) are by far the biggest money earner for Bath Rag. As Trips Organizer, you and the Rag President are responsible for organizing all the aspects of a collection. This is not as bad as it sounds. The way we at Bath run our committee means you should be taking over the post during the committee hand-over period during the Easter holidays. Semester One's collections should have already been booked. During Semester One your responsibilities are mainly dealing with the paper work that needs to be filled in for the local councils. By the time you get to Reading Week (around Stunt's Day in November) your thoughts should be turning to booking collection permits for Semester Two. During Consolidation Week after the Semester One exams your attention should be turning to booking the permits for Semester One of the following year. We have then gone a full circle and you can hand-over to your successor.

Trips organizer can be a very rewarding job. At the end of the collection, when the money has been counted and added up, you can look at the day's total and see how much can be collected for a worthy cause with so little effort.

2 Organizing A Collection

The best information on organizing a collection I know of was written by one of my predecessors Adam George-Wood. Rather than repeat his efforts, I suggest you read Adam's piece "How To Organise A Rag Raid", which can be found on the Rag Office computers as ragraid.doc under Committee/Collections Coordinator/ or on http://www.ukrag.net/.

2.1 Bath City Centre All Day Permits

Bath have there own system for dealing with applications for all day permits. The deadline for applications for the whole calendar year is 1st September and the confirmation of the permits is made in January. As the permits for Bath are rather important to us — we need them for Children In Need, Comic Relief, the Duck Race, etc — this must be done on time. As long as we apply on time and everything we are all but guaranteed the permits we want as the Mayor loves us.

3 Semester One

When planning semester one things to take into account are the dates of the Rag Ball, Fireworks, Rag/Stunts Day and Children In Need. There is little benefit in organising collections that clash with the fireworks or are the day after the Ball and Children In Need. Everyone should be too knackered to go out collecting. The traditional collections we've held and the ones we are expected to do/already agread to do tend to include a collection for Royal British Legion in Bath on one of the Saturdays surrounding Armistice Day and a collection with Cancer Research UK in Taunton in early December.

4 Semester Two

Things to think about in semester two are whether or not Comic Relief is running this year, the timing of the exam periods and Easter holiday. Our traditional collections include British Heart Foundation in Salisbury on the Saturday around Valentine's Day. The local chairman of BHF is Simon Jackson and he is more than happy for us to man that collection next year (February 2004).

5 Notes On Specific Collections

5.1 London UnderGRAND

London UnderGRAND, which I've also seen written as UnderGRAN'd, is Help The Aged's flagship student programme event. HtA bill LUG as a networking and training event as well as being the largest Rag collection of the year. LUG X and XI have been organized by Holly Catton (holly.catton@helptheaged.org.uk). UnderGRAND is normally held towards the end of June and is preceded by Tour To LUG. LUG requires absolutely no organization on our part, that is what Holly is paid for. It is held at a London university (in previous years I've been to it was at City Of London and Queen Mary's) so for once you get a proper bed in a room of your own.

The main event runs Saturday evening to Thursday morning with a huge Underground themed fancy dress party on the Saturday, seminars on the Sunday and collections on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The event gives you a wonderful opportunity to meet Raggies from all over the country and the seminars are the best free training there is for Rags. The seminars often cover topics such as organizing collections and tours, as well as recruitment and keeping, motivating and rewarding your volunteers. Some years the seminars are better than others. Because of its size, LUG is a good way to see how a large collection is organized and run. I would recommend that at least the incoming President attends as much of this event as possible, if not all the new Committee.

LUG is also a very good way of getting a head start over other collectors in the Top Collectors list.

5.2 Tour To London UnderGRAND

Tour To LUG is for masochists. Particularly if you convince Holly to make it a full week's collecting — Monday–Friday. You hardly get a chance to recover on the Saturday because of the party, and the next thing you know you're facing 3 days collecting in London, with no clean clothes.

5.3 Freshers' Week collection

The first collection of the year is important as it will be many people's first collection. If Rag has had a successful recruitment campaign during Freshers' Week and at the Clubs & Socs Fayre, you could have upwards of 50 people at this collection. In Jimmy's year (1999–2000), they required two coaches for the first collection to Southampton and one coach for the second collection in Reading.

In previous years, the Freshers' collection was in Southampton collecting for (if I recall correctly) NSPCC. In recent years we tend to collect in Swindon for Breast Cancer Campaign. The important thing is to get a town that can take a fair few collectors without people tripping over each other and a permit for a charity that is easy to collect for. Collecting in Eastbourne for Help The Aged would not be a good idea, for example.

The most important aspect to the Freshers' collection in to ensure that as many of the Freshers come back, either to future collections or just to Rag generally, as possible. For many, if not all, of the Freshers this is there introduction to Rag. You should be using all the motivation and recognition techniques and more at the first few collections.

5.4 Midland Mania

Mania is organized by Help The Aged and is hosted by Aston. It is not a normal part of Bath Rag's calendar. Collecting for HtA in Birmingham is not much fun. Indeed, collecting in Birmingham is not much fun. Birmingham falls in the same category as Newport and Swansea. However, Aston's Student Union is far superior to Bath's. Mania can be good fun solely for the socializing in the evenings. Mania is probably not a collection to take a coach load of Freshers to. Particularly if Zippy and/or Sarah are going to be there.

5.5 Christie's Against Cancer

Christie's Against Cancer is the largest single site cancer treatment and research facility in Europe and is based in Manchester. Every November they organize the biggest one day collection of the year, which has in the past raised in excess to £19,000.

Christie's is hosted by UMIST Rag in Manchester. The accommodation is your stereotypical church hall, so take your sleeping bag. This is an important collection to do well in as we are currently the defending champions, having beaten Aston Rag to the title by under £5.00. It is also a good event for Bath as Christie's usually have prizes for furthest travelled Rags, and we win furthest travelled Southern Rag by default.

One thing to note is that the organizer, Rachel Roberts, is Welsh. If they run a competition for best team name again, it may be worth throwing in something in Welsh, which is how Aberwystwith won this year.

5.6 Hogmoney

Yes that is Hog*money*, not Hog*manay*. It's a pun. Cancer Research UK Scotland's Hogmoney is the most expensive collection Bath do due to the travelling costs involved. Following on from this year's cooperation with Bristol Rag over transport, it would be a good idea to see if this can be continued. The biggest complication is that the organizer, Rodger Spillaine, is not known for being prompt in sending out information about the event. This year, we received the application form on 19th November with a deadline of 3rd December. Before that we had no confirmation that the event was even be running after the merger of ICRF with CRC to form CRUK.

The biggest attraction for many people to Hogmoney is, of course, Edinburgh's New Year celebrations. CRUK blag enough tickets to the Royal Bank Street Party for all the collectors. Another attraction is that we get New Year's Day off to enjoy Edinburgh. This tends to involve shopping, ice skating on the open air ice rink and for the last couple of years, watching the latest Lord Of The Rings film at the cinema.

The accommodation used to provided at St Margaret's House, St Hillary's School in Edinburgh, although this may change as the school buildings are up for sale. They have also used Kirk O'Fields church hall, but this year they squeezed us all into the school's boarding rooms and the school's sports hall.

When you are not at the school or out collecting, you will probably be in the pub. For the last few years, the pub of choice has been The Craggs where all the Rags meet up on the first evening to sign in, and claim our free food at the buffet after collecting. On New Year's Eve, remember that the Holyrood is a nice pub with an atmosphere, even if the barman is a scary Scot in a kilt and a skin tight Spice Girls t-shirt.

For future reference, you should expect the entirety of Edinburgh town centre to be closed from about the 29th December. Do not try to drive through it.

5.7 Easter Tour

Tour is the most socialable event you organize. When done properly, Tour involves half-a-dozen to a dozen collectors collecting in a different town each day for a week. The towns should be places you wouldn't normally collect in due to their distance from Bath. Distance doesn't matter on Tour because the idea is to leave Bath far behind. The preferred option is to crash in friends' and families' homes for a week.

The first decisions you have to make are on a general route for Tour, and for a charity to collect for. This year we have made a break from tradition for Bath Rag by doing Tour for Childline instead of BIBIC. The route was put together during a casual conversation between myself and Pete with a road map in front of us. The route, down to Plymouth and then along the South Coast to Southampton, was picked to take in Pete's and Huseyin's home towns as well as where I lived the previous year on placement. It was hoped that by visiting coastal tourist towns we would attract more collectors.

Having picked a route and a charity, I contacted Esther Pearson at Childline who was extremely positive about the idea and set upon the councils for permits. However, Esther has since left Childline and until they appoint a new South West area coordinator we deal with Rachel Ward ??? at head office.

Things to consider taking with you:

- firstly, and most importantly, a miracle. Believe me, on any tour, you need a miracle
- sleeping bag
- bath/shower stuff
- permits
- buckets
- lids
- seals
- IDs
- lip salve
- sun tan lotion — you never know, it might be sunny…
- cloth bags/sealable bags for bucket swaps
- money bags aka coin bags
- weighing machine and weights
- count sheets
- calculator
- camera
- mobile phone
- battery charger for phone and/or digital camera
- maps
- money
- paying-in book, both for Childline and Bath Area Rag just in case
- chocolate covered coffee beans
- screwdrivers/tools

- air freshener
- food
- drink
- snacks
- barbecue
- alarm clock
- clothes

5.8 London Loot

London Loot is a City of London megaraid organized by Iain Elliott of Meningitis Research Foundation. Iain is ex-Aston Rag and has a habit of turning up to all of the big megaraids. London Loot is held on the Wednesday and Thursday before Good Friday over Easter. It is an amazingly easy collection to get big totals. We have seen people who have never broken £500 collecting over £1000 on both days. Loot has a smaller, more personal feel to it than UnderGRAND with only 30 or 40 collectors. The accommodation is pretty much the same as UnderGRAND making use of London university halls or residence. Last year we were at the London School of Economics.

5.9 Children In Need & Comic Relief

Children In Need (CIN) and Comic Relief are both held on Fridays, CIN in November each year and Comic Relief in March every other year. They are the two longest days we do. Collecting usually starts soon after 7am with people in security jackets definitely not collecting anywhere near any traffic lights and ends when the pubs throw out at 11:30pm. During the day money is collected in the town centre as normal. Between the Cashier, Trips Organizer and President you will have to find a way of getting all the money back up to the Rag Office, counted and banked. You will certainly want a count machine for these days. It can be worth it to send people stuck on campus around the offices in Wessex House door-to-door collecting. Just start on level 2 and work your way up, making sure you get all the offices on each floor. The finance and personnel people as well as the English Language department are very friendly. You may also want to hit the Plug and Venue at lunchtime and both the Parade and Plug in the evening.

6 Resources

6.1 ukrag.net

http://www.ukrag.net/ was set up by an ex-raggie called Martin who, for whatever reason, is known as Duck. Martin has been trying to get as many people as possible to use the web-site to share ideas and information. The site does have a very good list of websites and charity contact details. It also has a fair number of photos from Rag events in the Galleries.

6.2 Mailling Lists

There are also a couple of mailling lists that have been around for a few years. The most useful one is rag_uk_list which is a moderated list used mainly by charities to send out details of forthcoming events. ragbabble is an unmoderated free-for-all list where all the old gits hang out telling stories about how things were different in their day. However, it can be good for keeping up with the gossip. On a weekday, ragbabble often knocks up 20–30 emails of complete rubbish. My recommendation is to sign up only to rag_uk_list. You can sign up by going to http://groups.yahoo.com/.

7 Totals

It is your job to maintain the totals spreadsheet as well as the top collectors page on the Rag website. Keeping the spreadsheet up to date also helps when it comes to filling out returns and for Presentation Evening.

8 Things To Do To Pass The Time

8.1 Sing

Raggies don't sing enough anymore. In the good old days not a single evening at a megaraid would pass without a few verses of *I Used To Work In Chicago*. Singing is a good way of passing the time on long journeys on the way to or from a megaraid. According to one ex-raggie, singing can also be used as a team-building and motivation technique during tours.

8.2 Drinking Games

Another common game raggies end up playing at megaraids is *I Have Never*. I can strongly recommend you don't play *I Have Never* in the presence of Sarah, Zippy or Harry. Although you will win easily, you will be scarred for life.

8.3 Blagging Stuff

9 Conclusion

Trips Organizer is an important post in Bath Rag. We need a Trips Organizer to free the President to do his proper role of overseeing Rag and advising the Committee on our jobs.

And finally, remember *there is nothing more important than having fun*.