

GROUP ANNUAL REPORTS

Broxtowe Group (Barbara Cordery)

The Group has attempted to maintain a full walks programme through the year with walks to suit every ability and covering varied geographical areas. It has not always been possible to offer as many alternative length walks in the week as before and occasional weekend walks have been missing mostly at Bank Holidays. This is largely due to a reduced pool of experienced walk leaders for varying reasons. However, we are encouraged that some of our newer members have taken up the challenge by leading their first walks.

To add some variety to our walks, our Programmes have included walks with differing transport options. There has been a train walk around the Matlock area, sections of the Robin Hood Way have been accessed using local buses and walks have started from tram stops. Additionally, the Group has run two Saturday coaches with subsidised fares. The first coach in April went to Gibraltar Point bird sanctuary and Skegness while in June the coach went to Flamborough Head. On the latter, we were joined by members of Walk and Talk. The sponsorship for the coaches has now ended but we hope to run further coaches next summer. The conundrum is finding a destination which is attractive to a wide range of people and not too far yet away from our usual walking areas.

Unfortunately, although we have encouraged new people on the coaches, we have not attracted new regular walkers from this source. The Group membership is slowly decreasing with the advancing age of our members, although we have had new members join.

Various Group members have undertaken long distance walks this year. Two of our members are now approaching the end of ascending all the Scottish Munroes. A third member has been accepted as a leader for HF Holidays (with initial advice from our walk leaders and then the help of a member who was already an HF leader).

With the retirement of our Media Officer at last November's AGM, the Committee agreed that it was prudent to create a new website hosted by the Ramblers. This is an on-going development as the knowledge of our new Webmaster increases, partly with the help of a Ramblers Volunteer Day. Full details of the walks programme (with maps) are displayed and these are also available in the Ramblers Walks Finder. Minutes of Committee meetings are accessible and there are links to the Ramblers main site, Area's site, our Facebook page which contains photos of our walks and to Broxtowe Walk and Talk. Members can link to Ramblers Holidays and Cotswold while non-members can access Ramblers and Tesco Clubcard for ramblers membership.

During the year, the list of Broxtowe emails supplied by Area and the list compiled by the Group have been consolidated. New members are invited to supply their emails as are members attending the AGM. We are using the emails on the list to keep our members up-to-date and to distribute programmes and Minutes thereby reducing postage costs. We are fortunate that Ramblers Worldwide Holidays advertise in our programme and so contribute to the production. The Group were pleased to have a presentation by them at our last AGM.

Over the months, preparations have been made for the Area AGM 2017 which is being hosted by Broxtowe on 5th February at Greasley Parish hall. Details of the D H Lawrence themed walks and facilities at the hall and local area have been circulated.

Undoubtedly there will be changes in 2017 with a fair number of our current Officers retiring at the Group's November AGM. We look forward to seeing what different ideas our new Committee will bring.

Collingham Group (Chris Adams)

During these twelve months Collingham Ramblers Group, although somewhat depleted in active members, due to advancing years and other health problems, has continued to run our usual programme of fortnightly walks on Sundays supplemented by monthly walks on a Wednesday. The Sunday walks have become a little shorter -we now average about 7 miles which seems to suit. This year we have sometimes been able to offer a shorter option on Sundays which has helped to keep our numbers up. Our Wednesday walks, which usually end with a lunch, are shorter -usually about 4 miles and generally attract a different clientele from Sundays.

We have walked in the three counties of Notts. Leics. and Lincs. and generally the weather has been kind to us. Two longer trips we had planned to Stamford and into Derbyshire had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers. We enjoyed a festive walk at Girton before Christmas with mince pies and mulled wine and had a well attended New Year lunch in Hallam in January. We also held a very pleasant garden lunch in Collingham in August.

We advertise our walks in four parish magazines and had a stall at the Collingham May Fair to try to recruit new members.

Two members have carried out footpath surveys in five parishes in and around Collingham.

Our group does not have a secretary at present but we intend to carry on as best we can until the next AGM in November 2017.

Gedling & Dukeries Group (Jim Norris)

The Gedling and Dukeries Group continues to thrive. We have had another year of successful activities. Well supported walks designed to meet all the varying preferences and abilities of our members. In spite of everything the British climate has thrown at us they have been well led, well supported and have provided joy and companionship to us all. One result of our activity is the normally good state of footpaths - although a growing trend has been forced on walk leaders of having to prepare their routes through overgrown footpaths. A pair of secateurs is becoming an increasingly important part of the walker's arsenal. Our social programme and coach trips have also provided much pleasure to us all over the past year.

The groups AGM was held on Sunday 25th October 2015. The combination of a walk in the morning and food to share before the meeting increased the members attending to nearly 50. As in the previous year, from the Countryside Officer and Publicity Officer, all committee positions were filled. However, Ann Staples did announce that this was to be her last year as Coach Secretary.

The groups Christmas Walk & Fuddle was held at Papplewick Village Hall on 13th December 2015. As usual the event was well attended and much enjoyed.

On 17th July there was an excellent coach trip to Flamborough Head and Bridlington. As usual it was well supported and the walks excellent amidst the superb cliff scenery – good

for those who like gannets.

The groups Spring & Summer walks programme is nearing completion. It contains its usual wide range of short & longer walks to meet the abilities of the group. Brian O'Neill is to be complimented as usual for putting the walks programme together and sending off to the printers in time for distribution. The walks co-ordinators carried out their usual efficient function of collecting the various grades of walks and forwarded onto Brian for inclusion in the programme. We are slowly encouraging members who take own copy to take other members copies to deliver by hand; this method saves the group a considerable amount of money on postage charges. Of course, everyone with access to a computer can see the programme in full on the web site with the additional benefit of seeing the photographs of the walks afterwards

We are rightly proud of our Group website. Much credit goes to Graham Dicker for this.

The annual dinner was held on 14th May at the Ramsdale Park Golf Course, Calverton

On a note of sadness, the Groups oldest member, George Orgill died during the course of the year at the age of 101. Two other poignant events were a memorial walk for Graham Rix on 3rd November 2015 when a bench on Robin Hood Hill was dedicated and a memorial walk for John and June Lord led by June's sister. This was on 31st March and started at the Lime Kiln, Cropwell Butler a walk that John himself had led in happier times

There has been much talk about whether the Ramblers are geared up to providing a service for the modern walker. Well in Gedling and the Dukeries we seem to be doing something right and long may it continue.

Mansfield & Sherwood Group (Alex Staniforth)

The year seems to have flown by but what a lot has been packed into it. We commenced with the Group AGM in December 2015 attended by nearly a quarter of the membership and again it is pleasing to report all the posts on the Group Committee were filled. At the forthcoming Group AGM in December 2016 several members are standing down from the committee so we are hoping new faces will come forward to take up the vacant posts (fingers crossed).

The Group's Annual Year End Walk and Meal took place on Sunday 29th December 2015. Two consecutive 4.5 mile circular walks were planned, allowing walkers to choose to do either or both before enjoying a meal at the Black Bull, Blidworth, not to be confused with 'our HQ' in Mansfield Woodhouse of the same name. A total of 45 members participated in these while 35 members attended the meal afterwards

Our 2016 Walks Programme had walks every Sunday, a linear walk on the first Wednesday of every month and a monthly train walk from stations in Nottinghamshire and along the Hope Valley Railway Line. September proved our busiest walking month ever with no less than 20 opportunities to take a walk ranging from a 10 minute stroll to a 12 mile full ramble. Additionally, the Group contributed no less than 44 walks for the Nottinghamshire Guided Walks Programme for 2016. Several members of the Group are tackling Wainwright's Coast to Coast Walk across a three year period: the second of the three week-long sections being completed in April.

Our Walking for Health Scheme (WfH) has been expanded to offer walks every Tuesday and Thursday and continues to attract new walkers and helps recruit new members to our Group. The walks are drawing upwards of 30 participants. During the summer months a

new innovation took place promoting evening walks within our WfH Scheme entitled 'On Your Doorstep' which incidentally garnered a Volunteers Award from Ashfield District Council for making a difference to the lives of residents in Ashfield. Speaking of which it is with pride to report that Keith Wallace, who set up the scheme within the Group has received an 'Outstanding Contribution' award from the Ramblers for his work in promoting and coordinating Walking for Health in the county. Congratulations Keith – thanks and well done!

The social scene continues unabated and the Group recognises the effort and enthusiasm put in by our Social Secretary, Julie Lawson for organising a packed and varied programme throughout the year. Our members are kept up to date on all aspects of the Group's activities via the monthly newsletter emailed through to them. Thanks to Keith Wallace for providing this valuable service.

And finally, our membership numbers remain buoyant and currently stand at 118 (at the time of writing).

Newark Group Report (Carol Wilkinson)

This has been a fantastic year for Newark Ramblers. The number of members has remained stable and we have enjoyed a full programme of walks and social events. The committee has worked well together and everyone was re-elected at the AGM in November 2016.

The majority of our members have an email address which makes keeping them informed really easy and members seem to appreciate knowing what is going on at local, area and national level. Our Facebook page has seen an increase in the number of 'hits' it has and people regularly look at our website.

Three members attended a Training Day at Nottingham which was very interesting and gave us much to think about with regard to our walks programme and we are intending to invite members to attend a map reading course in 2017.

One of our members has been responsible for getting in touch with local Walking for Health groups so that their members are aware of the benefits of belonging to the Ramblers Association.

We continue to be represented by our members at local civic events throughout the year and this gives us much needed publicity. Our best publicity this year, however, resulted from taking part in the Newark Parish Church Christmas Tree Festival in 2015. We themed our tree on the four seasons of the year. It looked very pretty and we were fortunate enough to have a photo in the local press. This led to an article in the Newark Advertiser in September (it really did take that long).

This year our Walks Programme included a variety of walks, long, short, easy, harder, urban and, of course, the majority took part in the beautiful countryside surrounding Newark. Mostly we managed to have a longer and shorter walk both starting from the same point which makes us so much more inclusive. We also had a couple of evening walks and our very first 'Train Walk'. Seventeen members caught the train at Newark or Fiskerton and went as far as Whatstandwell. Our first stop was the local cafe where everyone enjoyed coffee or hot chocolate before starting our walk to Cromford. It was a beautiful day and we all really enjoyed our walk. The afternoon was spent looking round Cromford Mill or walking along the canal before catching the train for our return journey.

Sadly, we lost one of our members this year. Bill Bristow was a very active member of Newark Ramblers for many years. He attended the AGM in November 2015 and died shortly after. Many of our members attended his memorial service in Southwell Minster.

In February we hosted the Area AGM at Norwell. The tea and cakes went down very well and the walks were much appreciated. Some of us went on the Norwell Village Walk with Michael Jones, Chair of Norwell Heritage Society, which was so interesting we decided to add it to the programme as an evening walk with a meal at the local pub.

Newark held three walks during the 'Walk About Festival' in September and our leaders proudly carried the special flags provided.

Social events are a very important aspect of Newark Ramblers. They give an opportunity for members to get together to enjoy an evening out, get to know each other a little better and very often to eat together. This year we have enjoyed many such occasions including:

- In December, our annual Christmas Fuddle, a get together and buffet
- Visits to the Odeon in Newark to watch performances of ballets streamed live from London
- Visits to the Robin Hood Theatre at Averham to see plays
- Visit to the Palace Theatre, Newark to watch the Amateur Operatics production
- A Quiz Evening
- A Treasure Hunt around Newark followed by a Fish and Chip Supper at Barnbygate Church Hall.
- Historical walk round Norwell followed by meal at The Plough
- A Ceilidh at Winthorpe Village Hall

We have various events planned for the coming year which will include another ceilidh, a visit to the Veolia Recycling Plant and more visits to the theatre. Our main venture in the coming year will be a 3-night trip to Cloughton near Scarborough staying at Cober Hill.

As you can see, Newark Ramblers is a very active and friendly group and we are all looking forward to another successful year.

Nottingham Group (David Dobson)

The group has had another successful year with almost two hundred walks organised during the year. There have been weekly walks on Sundays and regular walks on Wednesday and Saturdays. The walks generally have had reasonable/ good numbers attending. The Wednesday walks have been very popular at times with numbers attending in the upper twenties. The group membership figures have not changed much over the year. There has been no increase in the coach fares charged for the Sunday walks during the current period.

Finding walks leaders for the large number of walks planned is always a recurring issue. A navigation course was held during the year. This proved so popular with members that the course had to be split and two courses took place. Several new walks leaders have been recruited as a result of the courses.

There have been two YHA weekends organised. These were to the Welsh Borders in April and North Wales in October. In addition, there was a six-day walking holiday to Pembrokeshire based in Tenby. This was in June.

The annual day out was to Lichfield and the National Arboretum. This was in July.

Group Members have organised regular social events during the year. These have included restaurant meals and a summer garden “bring a plate” event.

There have been several Sunday walks followed by a meal during the year. The main ones are the Christmas coach in December and the annual walk and meal in September. The Wednesday and Saturday walkers have also organised their own events during the year.

Emergency information/contact details key rings were distributed free to group members during the year.

The group had a collection instead of sending Christmas cards to each other. The sum was distributed between the East Midlands Air Ambulance and the Edale Mountain Rescue.

The group took part in the BBC Radio Nottingham “Get Notts Moving” event during March. Group members walked a cumulative distance of 743 miles over the five walks organised over the event 7-day period in February.

The group jointly with Rushcliffe group held a publicity event at an outdoor shop in Nottingham in March. The previous October, the group also had a publicity display at the Nottingham Canal Festival. This event didn't attract much interest so although the group was invited to the October 2016 event the committee decided not to put on a display there in 2016.

Looking forward to 2017, the programme of walks for the year has been decided based on the usual plan of alternate weekly walks on Sunday by coach (usually four walks) or local transport (one walk). Shorter and longer walks on Saturdays on a regular basis together with fortnightly walks on Wednesday. The process of finding leaders is now underway. The Wednesday walkers are planning to walk the newly created Notts Wolds Way in three stages during 2016. It is hoped to organise two YHA weekends during the year. However, at present it seems unlikely that there will be a six-day walking holiday unless a volunteer can be found to organise it.

The group AGM took place in November 2016. All the vacant committee positions were filled at the meeting. Due to special circumstances the Group Chair will stay on as in interim Chair for a period until a new Chair is appointed.

Notts & Derby Group

No report received to date (4.12.16.)

One Step Walkers Group

No report received to date (4.12.16.)

Ravenshead & Hucknall Group

No report received to date (4.12.16.)

Retford Group (Sally Fraser)

Another good year with attendances in double figures on most walks. In the early part of the year we recorded our highest number of walkers at 29.

We continue to walk more locally during the winter months and then into Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire during the summer.

The programme this year included a short mid-week break to the Yorkshire Dales. Lovely weather and glorious views were enjoyed on walks in the Askrigg and Aysgarth area.

Our Challenge this year was the Yorkshire 3 Peaks done over two days which allowed time to take in the scenery. The weather was good and everyone enjoyed and completed the Challenge.

Our AGM was in October. We started with a short morning walk in the Beckingham area, returning to the Village Hall for a pie and peas lunch followed by delicious homemade desserts.

Rushcliffe Group (Mike Stock)

The Group has provided a varied programme of walks hopefully to suit all tastes amounting to 86 in total with an average attendance of 19. We have continued with our Short Walks ably and enthusiastically led by Jeremy Pratt who also organised and ran the weekly Health Walks from the Castle Meadow Medical Practice in West Bridgford.

Our ever-popular walking holidays have been well supported. In April for the first of three holidays 64 members spent a weekend at the HF Hotel Peverell Peak in Dovedale. The walks were of varying lengths so there something for everyone to enjoy. Après walk entertainment comprised a quiz, a beetle drive and musical entertainment provided by the Radcliffe Ukulele Strummers singing a wide range of songs culminating in the Nottingham (Manchester) Rambler and the Proclaimers' I'm Gonna Walk 500 miles which felt rather apt after we had slogged through mud and up and down the hills.

The Mourne Mountains in Northern Ireland was the destination for 18 members for a week of walking which coincided with a local walking festival in which we participated as well as organising our own walks. The social highlight of the week was the Saturday Night Knees-Up Shindig where various members distinguished (if that is the right word) themselves on the dance floor dancing to the strains of a traditional Irish Band. A more sober outing was a visit to the Titanic Exhibition in Belfast.

In July, 16 members travelled to St Pancras by train to embark on another walking tour of the capital. After a lunch in a garden at the top of a skyscraper, the party strolled around Docklands Wharf taking in Crossrail station, garden squares, skyscrapers and the waterways down to the River Thames crossing via the Greenwich foot tunnel and to reach the Cutty Sark after which heading into Greenwich Park and walking up to the Royal Observatory and the Meridian Line. From Greenwich Pier, the group took to the water and travelled on the Thames Clipper to Blackfriars. The walking tour ended by walking back from Blackfriars to the Euston Road and Kings Cross area where the group enjoyed a meal together before catching the train back to Nottingham.

For the final walking holiday of the year in September, 43 Ramblers made the long trip to the Mumbles, an area of outstanding natural beauty. There was a full and varied programme of walks, the longest being a 13-mile coastal walk from Penmaen to Rhossili.

Other walks included Three Cliffs Bay, Oxwich Bay, Cefn Bryn, Pwildu Bay and the Clyn Valley. Wales is known for being the land of song and some of the Group gave full voice to their singing talents on the Friday night in the pub. The locals were very understanding but possibly not impressed with the quality of the singing!

Our Christmas dinner was held at the Poppy and Pint in West Bridgford and was attended by 60 members. We also held a pétanque tournament at the Plough in Normanton on the Wolds. Some of the games were fiercely contested whilst others were more relaxed. A barbecue was also laid on for the hungry participants.

None of the above would be possible without a dedicated and active committee and the walk leaders to whom heartfelt thanks are due.

Southwell Group (Dave Johnson)

Once again the year has flown by. Since this time last year, we have had 23 Sunday walks, 6 summer Friday evening walks and 2 trips away covering approximately 260 miles of walking, equates to London Bridge and back. On the social front, we have had trips to the theatre, a BBQ and a Christmas party. None of this would have happened without the participation of the membership and a great number of people with a willingness and talent for organising. Also, my thanks go to those members who take on roles on the committee working behind the scenes to ensure the success of the group. There are too many people to individually name because everyone gets involved and there is always the risk of missing someone out, so will you all please accept my thanks for your willing participation in whatever capacity.

Of course the weekends away are always a highlight of the year and a step into the unknown because so much has to be left to chance, but with a tremendous amount of research and careful planning these events always turn out well. Our Spring trip was centred on the HF hotel in Alnmouth and a special thanks to Sandy and Shirley for suggesting this and doing a grand job with organising it. Lynn took on a similar role and took us back to Ross on Wye, last visited approximately 14 years ago. Thanks to her for sorting this out ably supported of course by her husband. Leading walks in unfamiliar country is always a daunting experience but we are fortunate in that people will take on the challenge.

Another great year.

Vale of Belvoir Group (Brenda Mitchell)

At our November 2015 AGM, our long-standing Chairman Rab Bird stood down, we thank him for his great commitment to us during the last 10 or more years. This post remained unfilled until November 2016 AGM.

Our weekly Sunday walks attract 15 to 20 persons on average, and monthly Wednesday walks, about 10 persons, and we see most of our members at some time during the year.

We have had some successful social events, Christmas (2015) lunch at Neville Arms, Kinoulton; during the summer, lunch in the garden at our Secretary's home; Skittles evening at the Royal Oak, East Bridgford.

Derbyshire walks weekend in August, and Away Weekend in Ludlow, Shropshire in September.

Our Group blog is interesting and informative and is kept up to date weekly.

We have continued to attract new members, and have been told by them that we are a friendly and welcoming group.

Workshop Group (Diana Munro)

We have enjoyed another successful year as a member group of The Ramblers running a highly-varied programme of walks on Sundays, Thursdays and Wednesday evenings during the summer months. In addition, we have run a week away in North Yorkshire and two coach trips, one to Richmond, North Yorkshire involving an 11-mile walk followed by Sunday Dinner in Wetherby, the second a walkers-only by minibus trip to Grassington walking down the River Wharfe to Bolton Abbey, rounded off with fish and chips at the Wetherby Whaler. However, we have now realised the impossibility of a small group like ours filling a full-sized coach and in future we will only run walkers-only mini-bus trips.

The Wednesday evening walks this year have been less successful with low turnouts and some wet weather being the principle reasons. The committee have discussed the Wednesday evening walks and are planning fewer next summer all finishing with the option of a pub and avoiding weeks with Thursday walks. Sunday walk attendances are still somewhat disappointing, however the Thursday walks continue to attract a loyal core of regular walkers.

We have continued to utilise the online facility of the Rambler's website Events Manager to publicise our programme nationally and it has brought us one or two new walkers and the odd new member. We now have a Facebook page which is kept regularly updated with details of forthcoming walks and walk reports with photos. So far we have 38 'likes' and according to Facebook our page is viewed by many more than that.

We also continue to run the successful footpath warden scheme with the result that the footpaths in our area are regularly checked and any problems identified are quickly reported and followed up.

Our membership numbers continue to fall with a 39% drop since 2009. The last time we had any new members join us was in February this year, but more recently we have welcomed one transfer from another group and another one re-join us after a short lapse. A copy of our programme and joining details are always given to any visiting walkers so we are always hopeful about attracting new members.

From time to time we inevitably feel despondent about the future of our shrinking group but our spirits are soon lifted when walk numbers sometimes achieve double figures and we enjoy a lovely day out in great company. The process of planning next year's programme will soon start in earnest and who knows, we might even attract some new members in 2017!

Robin Hood Way (Flexi-Group)

In early 2016 a Ramblers' Flexi-Group/Special Interest Group – The Robin Hood Way was formed. One of its principal aims is to recruit more wardens to look after the Way and for the Way to continue after the Robin Hood Way Association ceases to exist.

To date 11 members have come forward to take on the task of looking after sections of the Robin Hood Way and for the first time ever two of the Circular Walks have wardens to check them.

There are only two sections of the Way without a warden (they are Section 3 Bramcote Park to Kimberley and Section 5 Bestwood to Burnstump Park).

If anyone is interested (you can work in pairs if you wish) please contact:
info@robinhoodway.com

Many thanks to all new wardens for volunteering to keep this historic way open.