

ANNUAL REPORT

Covering the period 1st October 2017 – 30th September 2018

AREA OFFICER REPORTS

AREA CHAIR (James McGill)

It has been a privilege to serve as Area Chair since the 2018 AGM.

I have been fortunate to have had the support of an experienced and industrious Area Committee. *Prima inter pares* has of course been our Secretary, Judith Anson, who has combined the role with that of Membership Secretary, and it is obvious to me that without her dedication and efficiency Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers would have been unable to continue. Our two Rights of Way Secretaries, Allan Rogers and Steve Parkhouse, have diligently kept us on the paths of righteousness and Chris Thompson has settled into his new Tourism and Heritage role with his customary enthusiasm. Jim Norris (Countryside Officer) has kept us up to date with his witty and erudite communications and David Hunt (Council member without portfolio) has provided valuable insight and advice.

Jack Prust, our Treasurer, unfortunately had to step down at short notice in October due to a recurrence of a serious illness. Jack has been our Treasurer for six years; we are very grateful for all his hard work and we wish him well with his future treatment. His resignation came at a time when annual returns from Groups needed to be submitted to Central Office. Fortunately two Rushcliffe members, Keith Coxon (retired accountant) and Jeremy Pratt (retired bank manager) came forward and, with an enormous amount of work, succeeded in re-ordering our financial documentation. We are extremely grateful to Keith and Jeremy for giving us the benefit of their financial expertise – they have prepared our annual accounts and will be available later to answer any questions.

It is just as well we have a strong Area Committee because it hasn't been the easiest of years. As well as our accounting problems there has been GDPR to cope with and this was the subject of a large-scale meeting at Hucknall. We were not very happy with the approach of Central Office and I wrote to our CEO, Vanessa Griffiths to express our misgivings. Vanessa's reply was along the lines of 'it's not a crisis but an opportunity' – in this case, to reorder handling of membership data – and I accept her different approach.

Walking for Health was the topic of another large-scale meeting at Hucknall as Area is keen to promote WFH. Unfortunately the funding arrangements for this scheme are still under discussion at Central Office and the future relationship between Ramblers and WfH is unclear.

On a brighter note, meetings of Area Council have been well-attended and the new formula of devoting the second half to topic-based discussions is working well. We have had interesting sessions on developments in rural areas, contacting local politicians and solving Rights of Way (ROW) problems.

A highlight of my year was attendance at General Council at Bangor in early May. I have already written a report – please see the Area website. It was heartening to witness the enthusiasm of Vanessa and her excellent newly-appointed Senior Management Team. Change is very definitely in the air. I had the opportunity to talk personally with Vanessa and to invite her to visit Nottinghamshire in 2019.

Earlier in the year Steve Parkhouse and I travelled to County Hall to meet senior councillors and ROW officers. We stressed our wish to work in a spirit of cooperation rather than confrontation with the County Council, landowners and other organisations that use the ROW network. We seem to have made a good impression and it is possible that we will be invited back to address the full Planning Committee.

Another highlight was a visit that Judith and I made to One Step Walkers (OSW) in Derby. They are our fastest-growing Group and we wanted to see what they were doing that was so successful – it seems to be a combination of enthusiastic leadership and taking pains to supply their members with what they want. Feedback surveys were important, as was the use of 'Meetup'.

Despite the success of OSW, recruitment and retention remain a major concern. We will all have our own theories on the way forward. One of my preferences would be to reach out to walking groups and emphasise the role of Ramblers as the national charitable organisation devoted to protecting the interests of walkers. As a small step in this direction I have contacted all our Nottinghamshire affiliated groups to remind them of the benefits of individual Ramblers membership.

And, finally, a personal announcement: Jimmy Carter and George H Bush were 'one-term presidents' and I am going to be a 'one-term chair.' I shall be away for at least three months in 2019 – yes, it's the politician's excuse of 'spending more time with the family' – and cannot devote the time necessary to doing the job properly. It has been an interesting, educational and rewarding year and I wish my successor well.

AREA SECRETARY (Judith Anson)

This has been a challenging year. Last year, I said that doing 3 jobs meant none of the jobs received adequate attention and this has continued. If Area is to function effectively, we need more people to come forward so the work can be shared. Below is a summary of the key actions during the year.

Central Office (CO) has appointed an **Area Support Team**, following a General Council resolution. Richard Sharp, the Manager came to meet the Nottinghamshire Area Officers in November 2017 and James and I have regular contact with Diane Simcoe who is the Assistant for the north of the country. This has been helpful, allowing informal discussions on issues and sharing of ideas. Areas work 'in silos' and we could all be trying to solve the same problem but there is no mechanism for sharing these ideas except the informal Ramblers-Net.

The **CEO monthly Bulletins** continue to be helpful and informative. This has been a considerable improvement in communications between the Centre and Areas/Groups.

The move from **Post Codes to Parishes** exercised our thoughts. Early in 2018, I informed Area Council about the move at Central Office from post codes to Parishes in the allocation of new members. Following the receipt of maps from CO it was clear that their allocation of parishes to Groups did not match the position on the ground in Nottinghamshire. An exercise had been carried out circa 2013 but the paperwork at CO had been lost. Obviously Area needed to tell CO which parishes belong to which Group. The financial implications will be minor given that 95% of all members now join on line to a Group of their choice. From the maps, while some of the parishes allocated to Groups looked reasonable, others were completely out of line. Although I did a considerable amount of work on this in the first months of the year and agreed the re-allocation of Parishes with Groups, this seems to have been put on hold by CO. Although I met the person organising it at General Council and was promised that revised maps would be sent so Area could action the change there has been no further contact. I have sent several reminders but it is unclear whether this has now been dropped by CO or will be revived at a later date. Given the work put in by Area and Groups this is unsatisfactory.

Ravenshead & Hucknall organised an excellent **AGM** with walks and very good cakes. The Trustee was Richard May from Norfolk who gave an interesting talk and provided ideas for Groups on increasing membership and on rights of way. The four representatives who attended **General Council** found the talks from Ramblers CEO and senior team inspiring.

GDPR then came to the fore and, as mentioned in both the Chair and Membership Secretary's reports, has caused considerable anxiety, annoyance and concern in Area and particularly in Groups who risk losing touch with their members. While accepting the CO position, this does not help with Groups trying to ensure their members are informed of local activities. This is still being played out and it will take some time to rebuild the contacts that have been lost. The impact on membership numbers is unclear.

Area took the initiative in organising two meetings between **Walking for Health** Schemes and Groups. This work was led by Keith Wallace. The aim was to build closer links, given that Schemes and Groups were now under the Ramblers banner (although operating in different ways). It was hoped there could be a movement of members between the two – as Scheme walkers became fitter and wanted longer walks and if Ramblers members were no longer able to undertake longer walks. There could also be other joint activities such as socials so the walkers could get to know each other. Area Council was supportive of this approach. Changes to the organisation of Walking for Health by Ramblers and the withdrawal of Keith from leading this work for Area has means it is now on hold. Ramblers are looking for a way forward but it is unfortunate this promising initiative in Notts has been stalled.

The British Red Cross offered to provide **free first aid training** that was practical, devoid of jargon and would make people willing to assist in an emergency. Initially Groups were asked to organise their own courses but only one Group took this forward. I then organised four courses across Nottinghamshire and three have taken place. The feedback I have received is excellent with members I have never met ringing up to thank me for organising it. One comment was "literally a life saver". I have thanked the Red Cross for their initiative.

Unfortunately the health of Jack Prust, the **Area Treasurer** has deteriorated during the year and he resigned in October. I am sure we will all wish Jack well. James has mentioned in his report that action taken following Jack's resignation.

I would like to thank James, who has had a steep learning curve as Area Chair, for his support during the year with some difficult issues.

I would like to end with a personal plea for **more women to join Area Council**. At least 50% of Ramblers members are women and Group Committees have a good spread of female officers. Please come and join me on Area Council, at least without portfolio in the first instance just to have a feel for how Council works

AREA TREASURERS' ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18 (Keith Coxon & Jeremy Pratt)

Unfortunately, Jack Prust's ill health has continued through the year. Although he was able briefly to return to full duties, he resigned in October 2018. We all wish the best to Jack for the future and would like to thank him for his work since 2012.

It took a team effort to complete the accounts and group returns.

Area is seeking a new Treasurer and an Independent Examiner at the time of writing.

Annual Accounts to 1.10.17 - 30.9.18 - (Jeremy Pratt)

The accounts, with Ramblers Central Office approval, are presented on the Receipts and Payments basis using the Ramblers Annual Return accounting layout and Independent Examiners Report.

The Area accounts have two broad functions.

- Firstly, the cost of running the area and
- Secondly distributing funds from Central Office to Groups.

The accounts for 2017/18 show a deficit of £2570. This deficit has two elements



The cost of running Area was £1700 from Area reserves



Funding from Central Office for Groups was £870 short as this amount was not included in the original 2017/18 budget submissions. That being said, to correct the position this amount was included in the 2018/19 budget submission to Central Office.

The funds held by Area increased in the previous two years. Under the circumstances and given the high level of Area reserves, no funds for running the Area were sought for the 2017/18 year hence the £1700 deficit above.

This policy of reducing Area reserves also applies to the 2018/19 financial year. Funding for Groups for 2018/19 will come from Central Office.

At the time of preparing this report the 2017/18 accounts have not been examined by an independent examiner.

Ramblers – Annual Return Form (Short) - (Jeremy Pratt)

We strongly recommend the use of the Annual Return Form (Short) by Area and by all Groups. Simply by entering detail in one section of the Return Form the information is automatically passed to other relevant sections and balanced ... it really works very well.

We will be very pleased to help/mentor any Group treasurer in using the Form.

Annual Returns 2017-18 (Keith Coxon)

Unfortunately, due to Jack's illness, the request for the Group Annual Returns was sent out late with Groups having to work hard to make the deadline. Judith Anson did sterling work in following up returns, which enabled Area to achieve the national deadline for most Groups, with two being submitted later. The Annual Returns from Groups for 2017/18 were reviewed for consistency, bank balances and Group funding as required by Central Office. Only three Groups are using the Ramblers Annual Return Form – see above comments above about helping Groups with this.

Group main reserves for some groups have been brought to the attention of the Area Executive. Main reserves are defined according to a traffic light system with red (really excessive) being over 200% of a group's expenditure in the last financial year .

Annual Budgets (Keith Coxon)

We were not involved in the budget process; the funds have been received from Central and will/ have been sent to groups. The deficit from 2018 is also planned in 2019 so as to reduce the reserves held by Area.

Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers (Code NE) – Annual Accounts

Receipts & Payments for Year Ended 30th September 2018

Main					
Receipts	Current yr	Prior yr	Payments	Current yr	Prior yr
From CO (funding)	2,033.32	6,297.52	To CO	-	-
From CO (other)	-	-	To Area	-	-
From Area (funding)	-	-	To Group (funding)	2,903.44	3,497.52
From Area (other)	-	-	To Group (other)	-	-
From Group	-	-	To S/W Council	-	-
From S/W Council	-	-	Walks programmes	-	-
T/fer from 'Self-funded'	-	-	Walks related	-	-
Donations	-	60.00	Walks leader training	-	-
Legacies	-	-	Newsletters/publicity	200.00	260.00
Grants	-	-	Publication/goods costs	-	-
Fundraising	-	-	Campaigns/casework	557.44	1,377.41
Deposit interest	-	-	Practical work	-	-
Investment income	-	-	Fundraising costs	-	-
Publication/goods sales	-	-	Meetings (inclg AGM)	823.36	536.60
Advert sales	-	-	Admin	119.54	-
Other	104.61	-	Other	104.61	-
Total receipts	2,137.93	6,357.52	Total payments	4,708.39	5,671.53
Surplus/(deficit)	-2,570.46	685.99			

Self-funded

Receipts	Current yr	<i>Prior yr</i>	Payments	Current yr	<i>Prior yr</i>
Day walks	-		Day walks	-	
Holidays	-		Holidays	-	
Socials	-		Socials	-	
Deposit interest	-		T/fer to 'Main'	-	
Other	-		Other	-	
Total receipts	-		Total payments	-	-
Surplus/(deficit)	-				

Summary	Main	Self-funded	Total	<i>Prior yr</i>
Total receipts	2,137.93	-	2,137.93	6,357.52
Total payments	4,708.39	-	4,708.39	5,671.53
Surplus/(deficit)	-2,570.46	-	-2,570.46	685.99

Cashbook reconciliation & Bank balances for year ended 30/09/18

Cashbook reconciliation				
		Main	Self-funded	Total
Opening balance		9,875.42	-	9,875.42
Surplus/(deficit) on R&P		-2,570.46	-	-2,570.46
Closing bank balance		7,304.96	-	7,304.96
Closing balances <i>(please give breakdowns below)</i>	Cash	Bank	Total	
	Nil	7,304.96	7304.96	
Unity Trust Bank		7,304.96		

AREA RIGHTS OF WAY SECRETARIES (Steve Parkhouse & Allan Rogers)

Report from Steve Parkhouse - Applications made

Rainworth – 41 User Statements – section at Rainworth of the ancient green lane linking Mansfield to Bilsthorpe, which had been diverted round the pit tips but never closed off.

Lady Bay – 272 Users Statements - network of BWs between Trent Bridge and Holme Pierrepont – riverside route had been permissive cycle route for 20 years until new owner did not renew.

Attenborough to Long Eaton on going - had been permissive cycle route for 10 years until new owner did not renew. Joint claim in Notts & Derbys

Planning Inspectorate

Pleasley Vale – Joint claim in Notts & Derbys – Public Inquiry for Derbys part called off after objectors withdraw objections – to be settle by written evidence already submitted. Awaiting outcome.

The Mount, Forest Town – Mansfield Woodhouse FP61 - claim by local residents of which the ROW Secretary was one of the users. Notts Area submitted submission opposing Mansfield District Councils application to extinguish. Awaiting outcome.

There is a lot being worked on, but results are very slow coming because of bottleneck with the County Rights of Way Department. Working closely with other user groups and residents on the claims. One short linking FP at Southwell has been added to the long list of Lost Ways claims waiting to go in.

Report from Allan Rogers – Administration and Maintenance

At the last AGM the post of Area Rights of Way Secretary was split three-ways to give two Area Rights of Way Secretary posts and an independent Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer who reports directly to the Area Chair and Council. This arrangement has worked to the benefit of the Area allowing each Officer to progress their work and avoiding overload and consequent problems.

Within the Ramblers Nottinghamshire has been split into six Districts which tie-in with the boundaries operated by the County and City; this has encouraged the formation of working relationships between members of the Ramblers and County / City Rights of Way Teams.

A register has been updated of the details of Path Orders and other Consultations principally between Nottinghamshire County and the Ramblers. Nottingham City send details via Central Office; these have been included in the total workload of our team. In the 2017/18 financial year we have recorded 162 separate subjects involving communication with Councils and the Ramblers. These are broken into:

Qty	Header	Details
69	Map Modification Orders	Creation, Diversion and other Modifications and Extinguishment can involve liaison with Ramblers Groups, Central Office, Councils, applicants, and developers. This is by far the largest consumer of our resources.
32	Planning Applications	Often these are difficult to find and involve regular searches of District Council websites, newspapers and contacts. Some send notification to Central Office who processes them invariably causing delay and leaving less time to liaise with Groups and submit comments by the deadlines.
31	Path Problems	There is a steady flow of problems relating to ploughing and cropping closely followed by overgrown paths and hidden obstacles, and broken bridges and stiles and broken or missing signposts / waymarks
30	CA17 Landowner	Generally, these are no problem but have to be looked into as

	Statements	they may cause problems with claims for new or modified paths.
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Meetings continued to be held at quarterly intervals with the District Coordinators and Group Footpath Officers. All Group footpath officers are invited to attend but only a few do so.

Much local work has been achieved in respect at looking at planning applications, sorting out rights of way problems and consulting on rights of way orders from Nottinghamshire County Council and Borough Councils. We are gratefully indebted to the District Coordinators and Group Footpaths Officers for all your hard work in this respect.

A major path concern in Newark has been resolved resulting in the closure of a railway crossing, a diversion of and creation of a new path alongside the River Trent. This ties in with other paths and on completion will be a much better route for all users. Again, Nottinghamshire County Council / VIA East Midland are operating winter closures of some Byways across the county for four-wheel vehicles. This will mean from November to April, a series of Byways will be closed off to these vehicles.

If any person is interested in rights of way work please contact me (Allan Rogers 01623 797321 allan.rogers@nottsarearamblers.org.uk) Full support will be given.

The Area Rights of Way committee is chaired by James McGill with the District Coordinators as follows:

District	Coordinator'	Contact details
Bassetlaw	Stephen Parkhouse	bassetlawcoord@nottsarearamblers.org.uk
Newark & Sherwood	James McGill	newarkandsherwoodcoord@nottsarearamblers.org.uk
Mansfield	Stephen Parkhouse (temporary)	bassetlawcoord@nottsarearamblers.org.uk
Ashfield	Chris Thompson (temporary)	nottinghamcoord@nottsarearamblers.org.uk
Broxtowe	Alex Staniforth	broxtowecoord@nottsarearamblers.org.uk
Gedling	Alex Staniforth	gedlingcoord@nottsarearamblers.org.uk
Nottingham	Chris Thompson	nottinghamcoord@nottsarearamblers.org.uk
Rushcliffe	Paul Fenton	rushcliffecoord@nottsarearamblers.org.uk

AREA TOURISM AND HERITAGE PATHS OFFICER (Chris Thompson)

This is the first Annual Report for the Area Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer. The aims of the post are to coordinate all issues to do with Tourism & Heritage paths within the county and report back regularly to the Area Council. In addition, to championing initiatives that lead to greater opportunities for people to benefit from existing rights of way, and, where appropriate, by the creation of additions to the Rights of Way Network.

In 2020 it will be 400 years since the Pilgrim Fathers and their families left Plymouth and Southampton for America and various projects under the 400 2020 Pilgrim Roots project are being planned locally by Nottinghamshire County Council, Bassetlaw DC and partners to celebrate this occasion. The Ramblers are part of this project and are currently putting together a long distance trail from Retford to Boston in Lincolnshire. This 110 mile long Pilgrim Trail will link Pilgrim associated villages in Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire and Lincolnshire and follow the Fossdyke Navigation and River Witham as followed by the Pilgrims to Boston. Circular walks have been also designed.

Currently work is underway with a working party and thanks must be given to Retford and Worksop RA group members for all the work needed to set up such a large project This involves test walking the trail and the circular walks, writing up historic details and important tourist information specific to each walk, consulting landowners for permission to waymark the route, media promotion, and many other important tasks. We, the Ramblers, should also thank Chris Langham, a retired librarian, who has put together a detailed synopsis on the history of the Pilgrim story to complement the guidebook. It is hoped to launch this trail in April 2020 with the accompanying guidebook and the route fully waymarked.

A meeting has been organised with DH Lawrence Society with the eventual intention to work also with the Byron Society to create a Lawrence and Byron Trail from Hucknall to Eastwood linking important sites associated with these literary local notables. There will be a main route prepared complete with circular walks. This project is in its infancy and we will report further during 2019.

A major project was intended to begin this year putting together a book of circular walks in Nottinghamshire with rambles around the whole county. Due to the amount of work involved on the Pilgrim Trail project, the proposed walks book has been delayed for 12 months. It is hoped this project will get the backing of Ramblers Groups in Nottinghamshire to help write up walks in each group area. In the meantime, should anyone interested in supporting this project and prepared to write up walks please contact me before undertaking the work; it would be greatly appreciated.

During the year the Battlefields Trust and Nottinghamshire County Council launched a further trail entitled 'The Battle of Stoke Field' with a self-guided heritage trail leaflet. This can be obtained plus to watch the video of the trail from www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/battleofstokefield or www.battlefieldstrust.com/resource-centre

The trail starts at Trent Lane off the former A46 near Eden Hall, and follows a waymarked route down to the River Trent and across to what was the battle site then into East Stoke past the site of Red Gutter where thousands of fleeing rebel soldiers were killed trying to escape the battlefield. The route then goes through East Stoke pass the Church of St Oswald returning to the start of the trail.

Another part of my work is to look at all aspects of Heritage. In this respect I have tried to make contact with various partners to obtain a list of people who lead Heritage walks. Due to recent data protection legislation, partners are not now able to forward confidential data. The aim of these walks is to promote the heritage of our county. Should any member have some interesting heritage knowledge and would like to lead a walk, or knows anyone that could lead such walks then please contact me. Some examples being the history of lace

making in Nottinghamshire, a history of railways, and a history of the coal mining industry etc.

In addition, as part of my heritage role, I have been looking at ways to protect and improve rights of way. Foremost, I am anxious to see the former Calverton Colliery site become a country park; likewise land at the former Harworth Colliery in the north of the county. This includes the large colliery spoil heap with what would be an excellent view from its summit and several redundant old tracks and former railway lines which could provide excellent additions for walking possibilities etc.

In summary, should anyone have further ideas to promote the heritage of our county please come forward with them. I am always pleased to work with you. One matter that does cause me some concern is the planned high speed rail link HS2, which is projected to pass through part of our county: this could create, in my opinion, many environmental nightmares. And finally, thanks to everybody who has helped me carry out my duties throughout the year

AREA COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER (Jim Norris)

1. Introduction

The most interesting and important event of the year was the discussion that was held at the January Area Council. We divided into Groups and answered three questions:-

- What are the major environmental issues in Nottinghamshire?
- What is the Ramblers position in these?
- What should we do?

The discussion showed that there are many matters of concern to Ramblers in determining how to identify where the environment in which we walk is endangered. It was refreshing that Ramblers at both national and local level are clear what our view is. The difficult bit is what to do about it.

We are all clear that there are many problems which, if not unique to Nottinghamshire, do seem to be concentrated in the County. In particular are the encroachment into the Green Belt; building on flood plains; gravel pits and quarries; difficulty in making planning objections; HS2 and fracking. There are issues relating to renewable energy. Whatever we might think about the importance of solar panels and wind farms, these benefits need to be balanced with the impact they have on our countryside.

Thank you to all those who contributed to the session: it has concentrated my mind wonderfully.

2 Major Strategic Developments

Anyone who cares about the countryside and the environment needs to be fully aware of two major developments which will impact on us all.

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

With all the other exciting national events going on, this development has rather sneaked under the radar. But from the point of view of planning and developments and their potential

impact on the countryside is likely to be of considerable significance. In particular it enshrines the principle of “a presumption in favour of sustainable development” but takes it that bit further.

Approval for planning applications will be granted unless the “adverse impacts of doing so would significantly outweigh the benefits.” The purpose is to ensure that there are no delays. If there are “no development plans, permission is granted unless there is clear reason not to”.

On reading it, it appears that there is ample scope for placing an objection to any planning application. It even includes provision for objecting on the grounds of the negative impact on climate change. You can also object on the basis that the decision should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. You could also object on the grounds that the application does not include adding links to existing rights of way. Plans also need to include any detrimental effects on the environment, so objections could be lodged on the basis that these are missing. Protecting the Green Belt is also enshrined.

The problem lies in an objector having to prove that bit about the adverse effects having to significantly outweigh the benefits. A cost benefit analysis with the outcome balanced in favour of approval. We can look forward to trying to establish that the adverse impact with regards to climate change outweigh the benefits of a planning application to build on a wood.

We will have to see how accurate the CPRE is in their view that in practice this Framework might create a planning system not much different from having no planning regulations at all.

The Policy Framework does not impact on what are described as “nationally significant projects” They continue to be dealt with under the Planning Act 2008.

2.2 Agriculture Bill

This Bill was laid before Parliament on 14th September. Under it the current system for farmers under which most payments are related to the amount of land owned will be replaced by a landmark scheme focused on public benefits and enhancing the countryside. In effect it is the replacement for CAP.

It is important to remember the words of Paddy Tipping at last year’s AGM. Under the CAP some landowners receive more than a £1million a year to do nothing with the land. Whatever else might be said about the Agriculture Bill, or indeed Brexit, the Bill contains provision for placing conditions and environmental requirements on landowners to get their money.

From 2021, payments will begin to be made through a system of environmental management contracts to deliver environmental benefits such as improving soil health and providing habitats for wildlife, and wider contributions such as improving public access to the countryside and protecting distinctive landscape features.

The transition period, which will continue to 2027, is intended to provide stability for farmers, and give them sufficient time to adjust and adapt. This should mean that farmers are able to change the way they farm to be profitable, reduce their impact on the environment and restore the health of the countryside.

The Secretary of State will have the power to give financial assistance to, quote: 'Managing land or water in a way that protects the environment.' and 'Supporting public access to, and employment of, farmland or woodland and a better understanding of the environment.'

As Paddy explained last year this all provides Ramblers with the opportunity to engage with landowners to explore new ways of looking after, maintaining and using arable and other land in the country.

3. Fracking

Nottinghamshire is one of the counties which are affected by fracking. The impact of this is likely to grow because large areas of the county have been identified as having the relevant geology and much of the County has been divided up into licences.

The Ramblers Association has a national policy on this as follows:

- *Fracking has an unacceptable impact on the beauty and character of the countryside which is incompatible with areas that are designated for their natural beauty, biodiversity or geology.*
- *Fracking should not take place within a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or National Scenic Area; such activity is incompatible with their statutory purposes and would undermine their designation for the protection of their landscape and scenic beauty.*
- *Fracking should not take place within Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Natura 2000 sites; such activity is incompatible with their statutory designations and would undermine their biodiversity, habitats, geology and physiography.*
- *Outside of designated areas each application should be considered for its impacts upon people's ability to enjoy the outdoors via public rights of way and public access land as well on the beauty and character of the countryside and on climate change.*

There has been test drilling in Notts. Nationally there is only one operative fracking site, in Lancashire but as I write a drill rig is arriving at Tinker Lane, Barnby Moor.

4. HS2

This has been a year of interest and activity with regards to HS2. Somewhat to many peoples surprise when the maps were issued of the proposed route, it turned out that HS2 had fulfilled their statutory requirements and included what appears to be reasonable alternatives for all the rights of way in Nottinghamshire which are affected. By 2033 it looks as if walkers in Nottinghamshire will find that detours will not add any significant distance or inconvenience. On the other hand they might have some extra noise and discover that some ancient woodland has disappeared.

Unfortunately the position is by no means as clear with regards to what happens in the construction and development stage up to 2033. I write this the day before I and some colleagues are due to meet with an HS2 Liaison Officer both to become fully informed and to express our concerns. Currently there is a further Consultative exercise open and I will be submitting the Ramblers' position as usual.

AREA MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (Judith Anson)

GROUP	NEW AND REINSTATED	TOTAL AT 1.10.18	TOTAL AT 1.10.17
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	IN YEAR		
Newark	30	127	122
Nottingham	21	318	321
Retford	12	81	89
Ravenshead & Hucknall	9	103	104
Worksop	10	62	65
Rushcliffe	32	311	319
Broxtowe	14	192	200
Gedling	17	207	209
Mansfield & Sherwood	25	110	108
Southwell	8	78	75
Collingham	12	62	51
Vale of Belvoir	16	110	103
Notts Derbys Walking Group	48	205	205
One Step Walkers	65	192	165
Robin Hood Way	0	3	3
Not in Group	23	66	64
Area Total		2228	2203

National Totals: 1.10.18 – 102,818, 1.10.17 – 104,694, 1.10.16 - 105,990,- 1.10.15 --- 107,369

All Groups have recruited new members with a welcome increase in Area numbers. The national fall in membership continues and a new national initiative is needed. Groups need support on recruitment and just providing membership leaflets is not sufficient.

Please note that the new/reinstated figures cannot be matched back as they do not show numbers leaving. These figures may also reflect a change of members between Groups, so one Group's loss is another's gain. The Robin Hood Way is a flexi-group and members can join this Group while remaining in their own Group – see below.

There is a **new category of members called affiliated** (and is, very confusingly, nothing to do with the Affiliated Groups). These are members who join 1 Group but then can affiliate to another to receive walk programmes, emails, etc. This gets round the GDPR regulations. Unfortunately there has been no publicity for the initiative so existing members will be unaware of it. Groups need to bring it to the attention of members who walk with them, but belong to another Group.

The introduction of **GDPR** has made this a very challenging year for Groups. The GDPR lead, Felix Wilkey came to talk to Groups in Notts in May to explain the national process. It is clear that members did not realise that by saying No to email communications from Central Office, this also meant they could no longer receive any email communication from their Group or receive the Notts Walker. Indeed many members do not remember receiving the email from Ramblers. Only those members who had previously (i.e. before the introduction of GDPR in May 2018) said Yes to emails received the request to opt in/opt out of emails under GDPR. Therefore those members with an email address recorded at Central Office but who had said No sometime in the past did not even receive an email to ask them to opt in or opt out under GDPR. I understand that, to date, no written

correspondence has been sent to either these members or members without an email address to ask them to accept emails.

There has understandably been great concern in Groups that, by following the GDPR rules, they could no longer communicate with a large proportion of their members except by letter. As an example, in April 2018 the distribution for the Notts Walker was 1,323 but at 1st October there were only 908 members signed up to emails. If members no longer receive communications from Area or from their Group they may not renew their membership as the only communications they will receive are Walk magazine and their renewal letter. As is mentioned in the Chair's Report, Area Council asked that a letter be sent to Central Office setting out Groups concerns. It can only be hoped the situation improves or a reduction in membership can be anticipated.

On a more optimistic note, the introduction of the **Insight Hub and Membership Secretaries Dashboard** should be very helpful. Nottinghamshire participated in the pilot and all Group Membership Secretaries will have received their training by November. The dashboard provides live data so there will be no need to wait for monthly reports to arrive. Membership Secretaries can log in at any time and view the changes since the last log in. The monthly and weekly reports will therefore be redundant and phased out. Like all new systems, users need to become familiar with the dashboard and training needs to be robust but this is the way forward. I have been impressed by how Central Office has listened to opinions and made changes to accommodate the needs of volunteers.

AREA COMMUNICATIONS SUB-GROUP (Judith Anson, Chair)

I need to thank all members of the Group for making the website, Facebook and The Nottinghamshire Walker a success. The Group also took on GDPR and we were grateful for Dave Johnson and Rob Turner who have joined us. Unfortunately, Keith Wallace will be leaving us after the AGM and we are urgently seeking a new Webmaster so the website is not lost.

Nottinghamshire Area Website www.nottsarearamblers.org.uk

Keith Wallace has updated the website with interesting articles and particularly the report on the Isle of Wight holiday with excellent photos. We have not had as many articles as I would like but we have been dependent on receiving items. All Area activities are reported and the CEO newsletter has been added.

The Nottinghamshire Walker

Steve Parkhouse is Newsletter Editor and the opening rate for the Nottinghamshire Walker continues to increase – 63.8% in mid-October due to the excellent content and relevance to walkers. The Rights of Way issues covered have been a great success with the response to the Lady Bay problem being almost overwhelming.

As mentioned in my Area Membership Report, the number of members we now have on the mailing list for The Nottinghamshire Walker has been considerably reduced due to the GDPR arrangements. This is unfortunate because I believe most members wish to continue to receive local information. Steve Parkhouse has established a separate distribution list for The Nottinghamshire Walker, which anyone can join, and their email address is kept within Mailchimp only for that purpose. This allows Ramblers members who are not willing to give

their email address to Central Office, to continue to receive The Nottinghamshire Walker. The number on this list is growing.

Contributions should be sent to notts.walker@nottsarearamblers.org.uk

Facebook Page

This is being managed by Keith and the number of likes and followers continue to increase. Keith adds any items related to walking from other sites including items from Groups. You do not have to be a member of Facebook to view the page.

www.facebook.com/nottsarearamblers

Walking tracks and routes on Group websites

Dave Hobson has produced a blog post on how to include walking tracks and routes on websites. This has been circulated to all Groups.

<https://vbramblers.blogspot.com/2018/08/displaying-routes-and-tracks-on-maps.html>

Group Pages on Ramblers Website

A note has been sent to all Groups reminding them of their entry on the Ramblers website and advising them how to update this and personalise it for their Group (rather than the Ramblers default). Keith Wallace has assisted one Group with their entry.

GDPR

The Communications Group has been very helpful in the discussions on GDPR and providing guidance to Area Council and Groups. This has been covered elsewhere in the Annual Report.

Other activities

One Step Walkers Compliment Slip – the One Step Walkers Group has produced a compliment slip to be added to the Ramblers recruitment leaflets or to be placed where potential members might pick them up. The Communications Group thought this was an excellent recruitment tool and it was circulated at Area Council and sent to all Groups.

Norfolk Ramblers Recruitment Card – Richard May, Board of Trustees speaker at the Area AGM and Chair of Norfolk Ramblers showed us the recruitment card used by Norfolk Ramblers. This is the size of a credit card and handed out to members of other walking groups to emphasise what the Ramblers does and why all walkers should be a Ramblers member even if they don't walk with a Ramblers Group. It was proposed that a stock of these be printed for the Groups in Nottinghamshire. It was decided to defer this proposal.

Recruitment & retention – a meeting was held just to discuss how to improve recruitment and ensure retention of members. It is particularly important to recruit younger members to Ramblers perhaps by setting up a new 20s/30s Group but we need younger people to do that. Unfortunately, Area is short of people to take this initiative forward so it remains on our 'to do' list.

GROUP ANNUAL REPORTS

Broxtowe Group (Keith Jacobs)

Broxtowe held its AGM on Monday 26th November. The meeting was well attended and numerous issues were considered. Some changes to the committee were made as Sue

Page (Webmaster etc.) and Mike Chamberlain (ROW Officer), both stood down after sterling service. Lynne Daniels and Richard Coupland have taken on their roles and Trish Jacobs will take on the Welfare brief.

Membership remains fairly stable, though recruitment is still an issue (we will perhaps have a presence at more local events, like the Beeston Carnival).

The Group's finances are in a healthy shape, though concern was expressed at the recent imposition of bank charges and it is hoped that Ramblers will find a way to circumvent what seems a rather uncharitable gesture by the bank.

The implications of GDPR are being digested and whilst the results seem less drastic than we feared there are still several members who have not registered their approval with HQ and some difficulties with communication remaining to be resolved.

The walks programme proceeds well in its on-line and 'slimmed down' printed format. Virtually every Wednesday boasts a longer walk and many of them have shorter walks available also. Longer walks are available nearly every Sunday with just a very few Saturday walks. The walks have been well attended (slightly more than last year), but we are still anxious to increase the number of group walkers. This is especially true of the Sunday walks and we would like to present shorter walks in future as the need for them is clear enough. We are attempting to liaise with Walk and Talk to encourage walkers to move on to a longer format as they feel able to, though less structured walking does not suit all (nor does the membership fee!).

We are pleased to note some new recruits as walk leaders among our newer members who will gain confidence by being able to 'buddy up' with more experienced leaders and put in more walks in future.

Our coach visit to Chester in the summer was very successful, with its offer of two walks or no walk at all. Regatta day in Chester gave the visit a more festive air and all enjoyed the delights of this picturesque town.

Although attendance was limited, our residential visit to HF Long Mynd was much appreciated with good accommodation and well prepared walks. Discussion is now under way about more residential visits next year, either with HF or some other format. A spring visit is likely as Broxtowe will celebrate its 30th Anniversary next autumn.

Collingham Group (Christopher Adams)

Our group recently celebrated 25 years of existence and continues to offer a walking program throughout the year. Our normal pattern is to offer a fortnightly walk of around 7/8 miles on Sundays and a shorter four mile walk monthly on a Wednesday; this normally being combined with a pub or café lunch.

Our membership has held steady at 52 with some new recruits this year and some leaving us. Our membership overall is ageing and this is reflected in the greater numbers turning out for the shorter walks. We walk in Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire – a walk outside Stamford was the furthest away in the last twelve months.

Financially we are in a good place and we have recently elected a new secretary and a new treasurer to our committee. We always advertise our programme in the village and parish magazines and on notice boards but mostly it is personal contact that brings new people in.

We are lucky to have an IT literate member and we were able to successfully navigate the new data protection regulations. Also, we have ensured that all our members carry their emergency contact cards. Sadly, we have not found the time or the energy to carry out our designated parish footpath checks.

Our two main social events: a New Year's lunch at the pub in Dry Doddington and a summer lunch/garden party at the house of two members in Collingham were well supported. We also had our annual Festive Walk with mince pies and mulled wine at Girton just before Christmas. Our programme for the first half of 2019 is in place.

Gedling Group (Jonathan Ankers)

This has been an exciting and challenging year for the Group. Having managed to cope without a Chair we were delighted to have Alex McGowan take up the position at the 2018 AGM.

We are in the midst of some key events. We are spending much time working towards fulfilling the honour of hosting the 2019 Area AGM. We are also planning for our 30th birthday! We hope to involve the many members who have been with us either throughout this period or for long portions of it. It is a matter of considerable pride to think of all the happy memories we have provided for so many people over such a long time and to think of the affection in which we are held.

Two long serving members of the Committee stood down this year. Brian Torr has filled the roles of both Treasurer and Footpaths Officer with great distinction for many years and Jim Norris who has represented us on the Area Council for such a long time. I don't think we are actually saying goodbye to them.

The saddest event of the year was the passing of Alec Kingsmill, our Chair for many years and someone who deserves much credit for creating the very distinctive ethos of the Group... one of the very good guys.

As is usual in these Reports we can record that the Group continues to thrive. We continue to be supported by our team of enthusiastic and experienced walks leaders and our walks are well supported. We maintain a full programme of walks across the year of varying lengths and difficulty to suit the tastes of our members. We are having some increasing problems in finding new walks leaders. For some reason we all seem to be getting older.

The Group's Christmas Walk & Fuddle in December was well attended; as usual. Our annual dinner was held in May and was also well attended.

There were two highly successful coach trips: one to Hunstanton and another to Whitby. More happiness for those lucky enough to go.

I believe the Group is a good example of a key element of the Ramblers Association; providing excellent and popular walks for our members and good fellowship.

Mansfield & Sherwood Group (Alex Staniforth)

The Group's AGM took place on the evening of Tuesday 20th November 2018 at The Plough Inn, Market Warsop. Disappointingly, it was only attended by 15 members but the cold, wet weather, a dark night, and the fact it was held outside our normal 'Mansfield base' may have played a part in this. Nonetheless, it was a successful affair which saw the Group fill all its allotted Officer positions, and with a couple of new faces to boot! The evening's proceedings were rounded off with a good natured quiz, a raffle with many donated prizes and a large chip butty each!

The Group on the whole has had a busy and fulfilling year with a great variety of walks and events. Our Chairperson, Sue Rick has not only been very active in that role but also doubling up as Walks Coordinator to which members responded positively. At the AGM she thanked everyone who had helped the Group throughout the year by attending walks, welcoming new people and members from other groups who had joined us on our walks programme. She thanked also those that had served on the Group Committee, those leading the walks and organising social events and representing the Group at Area Council. By good fortune a volunteer stepped forward to take on the Walks Coordinator role at the AGM.

As regards our walking year this has been, in the main, quite successful although we struggled for a spell to get walks leaders for the Short Walks Programme. However this was partly resolved by offering short walks on the days of our Longer Walks Programme. We enjoyed a wide variety of walks this year, some combined with social events which have been well attended. At the recent walk's meeting we discussed putting on some midweek walks in the daytime for 2019 and continuing our evening walks. In response to a request from some members' two night walks were piloted: these were well received by those members who work shifts and can't attend the weekend walks or who needed some fresh air after being at work all day.

A bonus has been five members coming forward and volunteering to lead walks, one of whom did walk leader training at the recent Ramblers Roadshow in Lincoln.

Highlights during the year included 15 members completing the West Highland Way with six of them climbing Ben Nevis on their day off! Also, 15 members walked part of the Cleveland way from Kildale to near Saltburn. The Group are walking the whole of this National Trail in a series of weekends throughout the next year or so. Most enjoyable was the joint walk with Worksop Ramblers at Saltaire travelling there and back by coach; we hope to continue these joint events in future years.

Our programme of social events goes from strength to strength thanks to our long-serving and enterprising Social Secretary, Julie Lawson. Her aim has been to hold a social event of some description every month and this has proved most successful: highlights included a visit to Mr Straw's House with a meal and an optional walk, a cruise in the River Trent again with a meal, a short walk and games afternoon, a skittles night and buffet, plus a Christmas meal and after a long walk at Castleton attending a Christmas Carol Brass Band Concert. Future events for 2019 are already being drawn up.

Our finances are in good order thanks to our Group Treasurer, Richard Lord keeping us regularly informed on the Group's resources and producing a comprehensive report for our AGM. In addition, he presented an informative paper on the subject of Volunteer Expenses which addressed the issues of reimbursing volunteers and expenses for recceing walks.

Again at the AGM, our Group Membership Secretary, Chris Taylor reported our membership numbers are virtually static with very little difference since our AGM in 2017. Chris is also our new Group Webmaster where he reported changes to the website has been minimal this year apart from updating of the website software and the information displayed. All information regarding social and past walks details have been kept up to date as and when he received them.

As always, the Group is indebted to all our serving officers and committee members who selflessly give their time and effort to help sustain the joy of rambling... and the Ramblers' core strategy of promoting walking and protecting Britain's unique network of public paths.

Newark Group Report (Carol Wilkinson)

This has been a very good year for Newark Ramblers. Though the overall number of members has remained about the same, we have had 25 new members over the year and many of them are now regular walkers, some even leading walks. On our regular Wednesday walks there are usually between 25 and 30 ramblers.

At the AGM 2017 James McGill stepped down as Chair and we were unable to appoint another Chair. During the year, however, two of our newer members joined the Committee and became very involved in the running of the group, taking turns, along with other committee members, at charring meetings. At the 2018 AGM they became Chair and Deputy Chair respectively and we are looking forward to working with them in the next year. We have a committed and enthusiastic committee who are keen to develop the group.

During the year James McGill became Area Chair and we are very proud to say that he is still also a committed member of Newark Ramblers. James' role as Footpath Officer has been taken over by Jean Everington. Sadly, shortly after our AGM last year, Jean Quickenden was killed in a road accident. Jean walked regularly on Wednesdays and up until 2016 was still doing the longer walks. Many members attended the funeral which showed how much Jean was loved and respected by us all. Two committee members stepped down at our AGM:

Marie Legg has been part of Newark Ramblers since 1994. It was Marie who first started organising regular Wednesday walks over 20 years ago. Before that walks were on different days each week. She also organised some longer walks: Southwell Minster to Lincoln cathedral – twice! Walking both sides of the Trent and doing 7 or 8 miles each week and organising cars to be at the beginning and the end of the walk – quite an achievement. The Leicestershire Loop, the Gingerbread Way, the Teapot Walk and many more.

Marie has been a member of Ramblers since 16 March 1994 and on the committee for most of that time. She has served as Social Secretary and as Walks Co-ordinator and has been a valued member of the committee coming up with lots of innovative ideas. More recently she was involved in the organisation of a residential trip to Cober Hill which was enjoyed by all who took part.

Jenny Williams has been a member of Ramblers since 8 January 1991 and joined the committee in 2013. She has served as Walk Programme Co-ordinator with Ken Martin for most of that time. Jenny has been a valued committee member, frequently representing us at Civic Events. Whilst she has been Walk Programme Co-ordinator with Ken we have introduced shorter walks and ambles to start at the same point as the longer walk. This has entailed finding more leaders at which Jenny has been excellent, very often leading the

walks herself. Jenny also enjoyed doing longer walks and completed the last part of the pilgrim route to Santiago de Compostela. Following ill health which resulted in a heart operation, Jenny was out of action for a while. However, as soon as she was able she started walking again, very short distances at first, gradually building up so that she can now walk along with the rest of the group.

Our thanks go to these two lovely ladies who have contributed so much to our group. There are going to be some big changes in the coming year particularly for the Membership Secretary and Group Secretary. Training is being offered to the Membership Secretary on the new Dashboard but there is disappointment that this is not being offered to Group Secretaries who often are the ones who make the regular contact with members.

Our Membership Secretary does a great job in contacting new members and members who have left the group. This has given us a better understanding of why people join us and why they leave. Visitors to the group often say that we are extremely friendly and make them very welcome.

Ensuring that members are registered on the RA website to receive emails has been quite a big job. Only being able to send one emailed reminder has meant that we have had to try and talk to those members who hadn't registered. Many people found the process quite daunting, not being used to changing their profile online. Most people have registered now and there are only a few more people to 'prompt'.

Another way in which we keep members informed is through our Facebook page. Information about the next walk is added to the Facebook page, sometimes with a photo of the village we are starting from or historic information about a church etc. We also say 'thank you' to our walk leaders through the Facebook page. We feel it is very important that walk leaders are recognised for the part they play in our organisation; without them we would not have a Walks Programme. They do a great job in finding new and interesting walks, renewing our interest in tried and tested walks and arranging some walks that are further away or accessed by public transport, e.g. Train Walks, Linear Walks using the local bus.

It is so important that we try and accommodate the needs of all of our walkers; some people want short walks, some people want long walks, some people want slower walks and others want what could be described as 'interest' walks, i.e. visiting a church or other historic place, food at the end of the walk etc. Newark Ramblers is very fortunate. We have people who will lead all of these types of walk. We realise the importance of looking after our long-standing members who can no longer 'run up a fell or jump over a stile'. These members still want to get out and about, to meet people, to get some exercise and feel as much part of the group as they did in the days when they were more actively engaged in leading walks or being part of the committee. Our aim is to offer a shorter, slower walk whenever possible which starts at the same place as the longer walk so that everyone has an opportunity to enjoy walking with us. We are very pleased to report that some of our newer members have also become Walk Leaders. If help is needed, they can get assistance with planning walks, doing a recce and walk leadership from some of our experienced walk leaders.

Throughout the year we have received invitations to send a representative of Newark Ramblers to Civic Events in the town. This year we have been represented by Jenny,

Gordon, Anne-Marie and Joyce who have all given up their time to attend these events and promote Newark Ramblers.

Newark Ramblers was represented at the Christmas Tree Festival in Newark Parish Church which enabled us to promote our group.

Throughout the year we have enjoyed various social events and outings:

'A Midsummer Night's Dream' at the Palace Theatre

The Newark Amateur Operatic Society's production of 'Cats'

'A Christmas Carol' at the Robin Hood Theatre

'God of Carnage' at the Robin Hood Theatre

Coach trip to Sandringham with optional 7 mile walk

Train Walk from Market Rasen

A ceilidh in Norwell Village Hall

Social events form an important part of our organisation. They give members an opportunity to get to know one another better and in a different environment and they are vital for members who are no longer able to take part in walks but who wish to feel part of the group.

14 members attended an excellent First Aid Course run by the British Red Cross which has given those members more confidence in being able to administer First Aid if required. Our members have all been given information about the British Red Cross app which they can download and which gives good, clear instructions about what to do if medical help is required. Four of our members attended Roadshows this year, three at Oxford and one at Lincoln. They all agreed that this was a valuable experience as it was an opportunity to learn more about the Rambles organisation, meet staff from Central Office and to talk to members from other Rambler groups.

Members of Newark Ramblers are looking forward to enjoying more walks and social events in 2019.

Nottingham Group (Brian Clayton)

The closing weeks of 2017 followed the well-recognised pattern of Christmas walks and meals which were much enjoyed by all.

The 2018 walks programme has been as comprehensive as ever and working on a 5-year rolling programme has proved very successful. This practice also allows new walks in each location to be devised. However, it is not as straightforward as might be thought because local bus time tables frequently change preventing previous travel links from being used. Care must also be taken to ensure that the current Skill's coaches can reach previously used parking areas. The effort of members of the small (Waterstones!) sub-group dealing with these matters is greatly appreciated.

The Committee office holders are listed on the Agenda and I would like to thank them all personally and on behalf of members of Nottingham Ramblers for the sterling work they have done during the past twelve months. Setting and achieving high standards in a rapidly changing environment is a tough challenge. The key to our success lies in the strength of our teamwork.

The Sunday coach organisation team has again been excellent and the walks generally well patronised. Only once was there a significant coach delay owing to a defective window wiper requiring a replacement coach. One coach, to Kinder, had to be cancelled owing to

the lack of walks leaders, a rare event which hopefully will not occur again. Thanks also to the leaders of the walks which converted words on a booklet page to many a fine experience. There is, however a shortage of C-walk leaders and this must be addressed as soon as possible. The A walks continue to attract high numbers, B walks also are well supported, C walks have been modified at times to allow short C walkers to join. There is no doubt that ways must be found to increase the number of leaders for all our programmes.

The Sunday local walks and the Mid-week walks have also been very successful in both variety and, in some cases, in the large size of the groups taking part. As in previous years, there have been several successful walking weekends at Youth Hostels this year, but more new faces would be welcome.

The membership of Nottingham Ramblers has held up well and it is the largest group in the County. We also have a social programme which included a garden party and evening functions. All these activities are supported by our excellent website.

The 2018 holiday this year covered the first week of June and was based in Weston Super Mare where we were all accommodated in a very good hotel and delivered to our various venues by a cheerful Skill's driver. The weather was very good throughout allowing us to walk in the Quantock and Mendip Hills as well as a free day to explore other places. Many thanks go to all members of the team who arranged the transport, accommodation and walks. Preparations for the 2019 holiday have started for the visit to Weymouth.

Two incidents occurred this year which resulted in broken bones and hospital treatment. Happily, both individuals have fully recovered. Appropriate reports were sent to Ramblers as required under such circumstances. It was also a pleasure to welcome back Boghdan Skrypec earlier in the year after a full recovery from his bad fall in October 2017.

Notts & Derby Walking Group

Last year saw NDWG turn 21 years old and members celebrated by completing the group's first long distance path. Ten hardy members completed the West Highland Way in September 2018.

The group continues to run Sunday walks in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and surrounding counties. We also offer regular Saturday walks, usually of a shorter distance. In the summer we also offer monthly long-distance challenge walks of over twenty miles and leisurely Wednesday evening walks. Our group trips remain popular. Last year trips were organised to Keswick, the New Forest, Tintagel, Borrowdale, Hadrian's Wall, Bath and New Year was spent in Whitby.

As well as continuing to offer a variety of walks, social activities and weekends away, NDWG's priority over the next year is to encourage new members. To do this we are having to address the challenge of attracting young people, who have so many competing demands on their time, while ensuring that we do not discriminate against our older members. We are at present exploring the use of Meetup.

October 2018 saw our AGM, which was attended by over 40 members. As usual there were lots of changes to our committee. Rob Lievesley, who has been on the committee for over 10 years stepped down, and three members joined the committee for the first time.

One Step Walkers Group (Robin Davidson)

Looking back I have now completed three years as Chair & served on the committee as a walks organiser for a prior four years. In all that time I cannot remember a year that has been so busy, seen so much change, growth of the group or enthusiasm and commitment from fellow committee members. We are no longer just a group of regular walkers sharing a common interest, we have become a large club offering walks, social meals, theatre, weekends away and walking holidays. The friendships I see members making & enjoyment of all is so important in many members' lives. We plan committee meetings to be casual relaxed evenings out that we look forward to attending and the large family feeling we have created seems to have extended to group events especially in the last 12 months. It will therefore be with some regret that I stand down from my position in December however the time has come for a change and for someone with new initiatives to take over and guide the group along.

Before that time arrives let me bullet point what we have achieved in the last 12 months.

Walks – We have held 52 Sunday walks, 26 Saturday long walks, 23 evening walks & 19 short Saturday walks. The latter was introduced to reduce the numbers on Sunday walks & offer a shorter walk after surveying members in late 2017.

Attendance – Numbers across 2018 have remained strong with long walks becoming more popular and thankfully attendance on other events spreading more evenly, typical attendance has been Sunday 21, Saturday long 13, evening 25 & Saturday short 16.

Accounts – Running events on a non-profit making basis we have ended the year with approximately £1200 in the group account which covers event deposits.

Weekends away – Our chief organiser's weekends have become legendary as well planned, organised fun events that are value for money and always oversubscribed.

Therefore it has been good to see other club members are stepping in to organise additional events to meet demand & the years seven weekends in total have seen us in the lake district several times & as far south as Norfolk.

Holidays – Three events across the year walking the Limestone Way, South Downs Way & the ever-popular West Highland Way.

Socials – Our annual Christmas meal at the Rose & Crown Middle Mayfield organised by the Social C-Coordinator was enjoyed by all & raised £115 for Edale

Mountain Rescue, the 2018 event is sold out with over 60 places. We held a summer social in Baslow that despite being on the World Cup semi-final day was attended by 50 members. We have been to numerous plays, musicals, held meals, ten pin bowled, had pub nights, supported a black tie charity evening night & held a quiz night.

Membership – Beginning the year with 170 members we have broken the 200 barrier with 204 by mid-October. The professionalism of our membership secretary encourages prospective members to join & follows up those not renewing to discourage them from leaving.

GDPR – Complying with Central Office guidelines involved an amount of work for me and the Membership Secretary we could have done without. It was disappointing to see our newsletter circulation drop from 300 to 70 initially but encouraging & educating members has subsequently built circulation up to 98% of members. We do not fully comply with all GDPR guidelines but are well on our way to completion.

Newsletter – Graduating from an antiquated Yahoo mailing list our Communications Officer is sending out quality weekly Mailchimp newsletters that encourage members to read & attend events.

Other Events – We held an informal map reading & walk leading day which has encouraged a few members to step up & lead group walks, we will repeat this in early 2019 with some first aid training.

Meetup – Standing at 695 members the social meet site continues to be a good way to attract new members to trial the group & a worthwhile number join us & Ramblers on an ongoing basis.

Facebook – With 364 members we have active members posting on a regular basis thanking volunteer event leaders, arranging short notice casual socials & sharing pictures of events which all contribute positively to the group community.

Finally, a thank you to the committee & group members, I look forward to the group bringing so much enjoyment to all in 2019.

Ravenshead & Hucknall Group

No Group Report available at time of publication of this Annual Report.

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Retford Group (Sally Fraser)

Never before has the weather played such a part in disrupting the Walks Programme! Rain, rain and more rain at the beginning of the year, making paths either disappear or so water logged they couldn't be walked for fear of losing boots in the mud. Then at the other end of the spectrum a summer so hot that recces didn't get done and some walks were swapped around in an effort to find shade. Despite all of that we have still enjoyed a full programme albeit not the one originally printed. Our Walk Leaders are to be congratulated on the splendid walks they keep producing.

We had a fabulous holiday at Church Stretton in May. Eighteen members were treated to wonderful views and interesting facts about the area by walk leaders from Shropshire Ramblers.

The September holiday to Sedbergh, although wet for some of the time, was enjoyed by ten members staying in Sedbergh and Dent. Glorious countryside, with some interesting diversions and intensive map reading and navigation all added to the experience.

Our AGM was held in October at a local village hall. A short morning walk was followed by a pie and peas lunch and cakes and trifle made by two of our members. Very much enjoyed by all. We then settled down to a slide show provided by a local photographer. The subject was Old Retford and surrounding villages, lots of "oh I remember that" and "is

that so and so” meant no commentary was needed. The AGM ran smoothly and the Officers were re-elected.

Rushcliffe Group (Mike Stock)

I am pleased to report that the Group has enjoyed another successful year of walks, social and holiday events and wrestling with the intricacies of the GDPR Act. A survey conducted within the Group found that 53% of members participated in at least one of the events.

We produced a varied programme of walks to suit all tastes throughout the year. Although we have had the hottest and driest summer for some time, we had to cancel three walks due to adverse weather conditions. In addition to our regular walks, we run weekly Health Walks from one of the surgeries in West Bridgford.

For the Spring Weekend away 48 members and guests made their way to Selworthy in glorious Devon. Unfortunately the weather was anything but glorious but we managed to complete our programme of walks albeit with one or two mishaps with a couple of walkers taking a tumble in one of the fast flowing streams. However everyone managed to get back to the hotel in one piece.

For our week away, we chose Lake Bled in beautiful Slovenia as our destination. 28 attendees took the flight from Stanstead for a direct flight to Ljubljana followed by a short coach ride to Lake Bled. We used the HF guides who prepared a varied programme of walks, which generally involved a lot of climbing but well worth it for the glorious scenery. On the rest day some of us went to Ljubljana to see the sights, particularly the castle, which houses a museum showing an illustrated timeline of the country’s tortuous past.

Once again, we had our day trip to London for a walking tour. This year we visited Eltham Palace and gardens, a mixture of medieval and modern architecture. Once the favoured haunt of medieval kings, apart from the great Hall little of the original place remains. The modern part has been designed in the art-deco style. After a tour of the building, we made our way to Blackheath stopping off for some liquid refreshment before crossing Greenwich Park to Greenwich pausing to admire the Cutty Sark. We made our way to King’s Cross for an evening meal before taking the short walk to St Pancras to get the train back to Nottingham

For the Autumn Weekend away, 28 members returned to Yorkshire again but this time to Beverley. A highlight of the weekend was a guided ghost walk to explore Beverley’s murky past. Needless to say, the group ended up at a pub. There was a choice of five walks of varying difficulty.

Once again, the group has been active on the social side. We started the year with the Christmas lunch at the Country Cottage, Ruddington attended by 76 members and guests. As usual we held our pre-lunch walk in biting cold weather which gave one an appetite for the meal.

In February, we held a Quiz evening complete with buffet at the Wolds Hotel in West Bridgford. 33 attendees submitted themselves to this ordeal finding out how much or how little they knew or what they had forgotten. It was an enjoyable and nobody asked for counselling afterwards. In May, we visited the Holocaust Museum at Laxton for a tour and a talk by one of the survivors. This proved to be an interesting and moving experience.

Finally, 2018 is Rushcliffe's 30th anniversary of the forming of the Group. To celebrate, we held a Barn Dance at the Edwalton Golf Club. The caller did an excellent encouraging or some cases cajoling people to take the floor. For mark the occasion, a special anniversary cake was on show but not for long as members polished it off.

None of the above activities would be possible without the hard work and enthusiasm of the committee, walk leaders, social events' organisers and holiday organisers to whom many thanks are given.

In conclusion, special thanks are due to Martin Smith. Martin is standing down from the committee after 21 unbroken years of service. In addition, he became Footpath Officer the following year. He has also provided valuable service in this capacity to Area

Southwell Group (David Johnson)

Despite the challenges of the long wet winter and dry hot summer our fortnightly programme of Sunday walks continued to attract good numbers of participants as did the summer programme of Friday evening walks. Our social events also continued to flourish with good numbers attending our Christmas walk and fuddle, our summer BBQ and our trip to Toilethorpe Open Air Theatre.

Once again we organised two mini breaks. This year's spring break saw 16 members stay at the HF Holidays' Monk Coniston Hotel at the northern end of Coniston Water during the middle of April. On the Friday afternoon several participants circumnavigated Tarn Hows, a picturesque and favourite location, set in the fells above Coniston Water and proved a perfect way to recharge the batteries after the drive from Southwell.

Saturday saw a group take on the challenge of the Old Man of Coniston via Walna Scar and the Brown Pike and Dow Crag ridge whilst another group followed the western bank of Coniston Water to Trover returning via Walna Scar. On Sunday we walked along the Cumbria Way from Elterwater to Skilwith Force and Colwith Force before visiting the fascinating Cathedral Cavern, an old slate quarry, where lunch was taken. After that, one group returned to Elterwater via Slaters Bridge and another group walked back along the Cumbria Way to our hotel.

On Saturday those not walking took the steam gondola around Coniston Water, breaking there journey at Brantwood House, home of John Ruskin. On Sunday they visited the home of Beatrice Potter and other surrounding National Trust Properties.

Our second break took place during October and saw us revisiting Newfield Hall just south of Malham, after a gap of some 18 years. On the Saturday a group completed a leisurely circular walk of 6 miles from Newfield Hall along the River Aire round Airton village whilst another group completed a more strenuous circular walk of 9 miles from Newfield Hall to Weets Top returning via part of the Pennine Way.

On the Sunday a leisurely circular walk of 6 miles to Malham Cove was offered or a longer circular walk of 9 miles to Malham Tarn both starting from Malham. A small group returned to the hotel on foot along the Pennine Way. On the Monday a short walk of 4 miles along the River Wharfe to Bolton Abbey was offered before participants drove home. Again, there was plenty to occupy those not walking, including visiting the cheese factory at Howes.

Of course, none of this would be possible if it wasn't for the large number of active members who are willing to organise events and a ready willingness to participate.

Vale of Belvoir Group (John Young)

Our vibrant group of 'Merry Ramblers' which has a membership of around 110 continues to attract new members at a steady rate. We have a very eclectic walk programme which aims to accommodate all levels of ability and meet the wishes of the members as to the type and location of our walks. The majority of our walks are suggested by our members and all those who take part in our walks seem to enjoy not only the walk but also the general camaraderie of our group.

The group was pleased to support the Area initiative to organise local First Aid Courses.

We held a course in Bottesford village hall on October 2018 and had a very good attendance. Everyone who was there found the course pertinent and informative. Thanks to Judith Anson for organising the event.

Unfortunately, we have a few members who are suffering from health problems that prevent them from taking part in the group walks and we wish them a speedy recovery.

We had a very successful weekend in Malhamdale, North Yorkshire which everyone enjoyed despite the damp weather. Next year we are going to Dolgellau in Snowdonia again using HF accommodation.

In addition to the walk programme, we have had a number of social events that have taken place over the year, all of which have proved to be very popular. Comments made by members indicate that they enjoy being part of the Ramblers and in particular our group so we plan to continue doing the same as this year.

Worksop Group (Diana Munro)

We currently have 67 members, almost the same as this time last year. Since November 2017 14 new members have joined us, which sadly means that a similar number have ceased their membership for whatever reason. At least half a dozen of the new members have joined us on our walks this year.

Following guidance from Ramblers, we are as compliant as we can be with GDPR. All our walk leaders have signed permission forms for their details to be included in our printed programme and online on the Ramblers site, and bulk emails are sent 'BCC'. We now ensure that only members who have 'opted-in' to emails receive emails from us. This is the situation at the time of writing:

Opted-in: 38*

Opted-out: 10*

No preference: 19 (mostly non-walkers)

*Includes some members without an email address but who live in the same household as members with email addresses.

For our Group to thrive and grow, effective communication with our members is key, so it is to be hoped that the number of 'opt-outs' and 'no preference' will reduce over time. It is noticeable that the majority of the 'no preference' are long-term members who do not have (and never have had) an email address recorded at Central Office. We can of course also

communicate through Facebook and our page now has 67 followers, compared to 49 this time last year. We will no doubt continue to send out a few newsletters and our programme by 'snail mail' but with the ever-increasing cost of postage this will inevitably impact on our bank balance.

Walk numbers since the current programme started at the beginning of April this year have had their ups and down. The 'ups' have been largely due to 5 of our walks being included in the Nottinghamshire Guided Walks Programme and 2 being included in the Chesterfield Canal Walking Festival. Unfortunately, 6 walks were cancelled for various reasons – including low turnout, the heatwave and heavy rain. Numbers for Sunday walks have been between 18 and 3, Thursdays walk numbers have been between 34 and 5, and Wednesday evening walks were between 9 and 2. 10 members were very pleased to join Mansfield & Sherwood Ramblers on their coach trip to Saltaire in September – a collaboration which we hope to continue.

Our recent AGM was attended by 13 members. Sadly our treasurer resigned due to the pressure of other commitments but happily another member has volunteered to fill this role. There was some lively and interesting discussion and definite enthusiasm for planning next year's walking programme. 17 members are looking forward to our Annual Christmas Lunch at the Station Hotel, Worksop, on 9th December.

Robin Hood Way Flexi-Group (Allan Rogers – Primary Contact)

We are a small group because all interested members already belong to other Ramblers Groups. The introduction of a new category of Affiliated Members is welcome. This will allow members to remain in their original Group but to affiliate to another Group (Robin Hood Way NE70?) so they can also opt in to receive newsletters, walk details, etc.

To become an 'Affiliate Member' of Robin Hood Way NE70, call Ramblers membership direct on: 020 3961 3232 – during office hours. This cannot be done on-line, however your contact preferences can be. This will not change any of your other existing details with your original Group.

We continue to help with maintaining and reporting on the condition of the Robin Hood Way running from Nottingham Castle to Edwinstowe Church passing through 109 miles of Nottinghamshire countryside, villages and towns.

There are 17 wardens who looking after the route, reporting back to Nottinghamshire County Council Rights of Way Team with any maintenance problems and ensuring that the route is adequately waymarked. We have occasional walks usually associated with walks members have arranged for the Group that they are attached to.

There is no specific budget held by this Group so before expenses are incurred, we request funding from Nottinghamshire Area and are pleased to acknowledge having received funds for waymark signs.

We work closely with the Robin Hood Way Association whose members are also in the Ramblers and encourage joint advertising at all meetings and exhibitions that we attend.

End of Report

Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers

Receipts and Payments for year ended 30.9.18

Name: Nottinghamshire

Code NE

Year ended: 30/09/18

Main					
Receipts	Current yr	Prior yr	Payments	Current yr	Prior yr
From CO (funding)	2,033.32	6,297.52	To CO	-	
From CO (other)	-		To Area	-	
From Area (funding)	-		To Group (funding)	2,903.44	3,497.52
From Area (other)	-		To Group (other)	-	
From Group	-		To S/W Council	-	
From S/W Council	-		Walks programmes	-	
T/fer from 'Self-funded'	-		Walks related	-	
Donations	-	60.00	Walks leader training	-	
Legacies	-		Newsletters/publicity	200.00	260.00
Grants	-		Publication/goods costs	-	
Fundraising	-		Campaigns/casework	557.44	1,377.41
Deposit interest	-		Practical work	-	
Investment income	-		Fundraising costs	-	
Publication/goods sales	-		Meetings (inc. AGM)	823.36	536.60
Advert sales	-		Admin	119.54	
Other	104.61		Other	104.61	
Total receipts	2,137.93	6,357.52	Total payments	4,708.39	5,671.53
Surplus/(deficit)	-2,570.46	685.99			

Self-funded					
Receipts	Current yr	Prior yr	Payments	Current yr	Prior yr
Day walks	-		Day walks	-	
Holidays	-		Holidays	-	
Socials	-		Socials	-	
Deposit interest	-		T/fer to 'Main'	-	
Other	-		Other	-	
Total receipts	-	-	Total payments	-	-
Surplus/(deficit)	-	-			

Summary
Total receipts
Total payments
Surplus/(deficit)

Main	Self-funded	Total
2,137.93	-	2,137.93
4,708.39	-	4,708.39
-2,570.46	-	-2,570.46

Prior yr
6,357.52
5,671.53
685.99

Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers
Cashbook reconciliation & Bank balances for year ended 30.9.18

Name: Nottinghamshire

Code NE

Year ended 30/9/18

Cashbook reconciliation				
		Main	Self-funded	Total
Opening balance		9,875.42	-	9,875.42
Surplus/(deficit) on R&P		-2,570.46	-	-2,570.46
Closing bank balance		7,304.96	-	7,304.96
Closing balances (please give breakdowns below)	Cash	Bank	Total	
	Nil	7,304.96	7304.96	

Unity Trust Bank	7,304.96
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Having carried out procedures in accordance with the Area and Group independent examination guidelines, I consider the "Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers" accounts to give a fair representation of the Area's financial activities for the year to 30 September 2018.

Signed:



Date:

01.01.2019

Name of examiner: Brian Palmer