



ANNUAL REPORT

Covering the period 1st October 2018 – 30th September 2019

AREA OFFICER REPORTS

AREA CHAIR (Jim Norris)

I took over from my predecessor, James McGill, at the February AGM. James was of course a very difficult act to follow. But fortunately he has still been around to give me his advice, support and wisdom as the Vice Chair. He has also been the Chair of the Rights of Way Committee, a role which he fulfils in a way that leaves me little if anything to worry about. He is talking about standing down from the Committee. Much though I would love him to stay on, if he does stand down he will do so with the much appreciation from us all – and would always be welcome back.

The saddest event of the year was the passing of David Hunt, one of the big personalities in the history of the Nottinghamshire Area of the Ramblers: a “mover and shaker” who has led and influenced much of the way in which we now do things. The extent of his popularity in so many fields was demonstrated by the number and range of people who attended his funeral – not all of us got a seat!

A highlight of the year was the visit of Ramblers CEO, Vanessa Griffiths. I was unable to attend myself but all the reports were positive and we must hope that we taught her much about what life is like at the “sharp end” of the Ramblers. Much thanks in particular to Judith Anson and Steve Parkhouse for the first rate administration of the event

There is a particular problem with the Area Committee at present and that is individual elected Officers doubling up in roles. We are all volunteers and it is too much to expect busy and committed people to give their full attention to several roles, each of merits a full time officer. In particular I apologise for my abject failure to carry out the role of Countryside Officer whilst also being Chair. More about this lower down.

I thank the Committee for their full and enthusiastic support throughout the year.

Jeremy

Pratt was wonderful. It was not easy taking over after the unfortunate ill health of Jack Proust left us in such a difficult position. Particularly as his official position was “Interim Treasurer”. I can’t help thinking that we took advantage of his good nature.

But not only did he sort out all our problems but he also managed to explain to me quite a lot about how Ramblers finances work – no mean feat. Thank you Jeremy and welcome to Neil Stafford, his replacement.

The efforts of our two Rights of Way Secretaries has been at its normal level of diligence in protecting and developing the county's footpath network. Nottinghamshire County Council certainly knows that we are here and have to be listened to. It is always difficult to create a brand new role and Chris Thompson has certainly succeeded in establishing the role of Tourism and Heritage Officer. I would also single out his work on the Mayflower Project and would also thank the members of his team from Retford who have done such sterling work. We remain in the debt of Judith Anson, without whom we would not be functioning at all – although I would plea someone to come forward to help her by taking on Judith's other role as Membership Secretary. My thanks also to Alex Staniforth for keeping us in the public eye.

Area very much appreciates the way in which our Local Groups perform. They are of course the very heart of the Ramblers, carrying out their walks, activities and other functions with enthusiasm and relish. In particular I thank those Group representatives who struggle out to Bilsthorpe on what always seem to be cold dark winters' evenings

One of the interesting events of the year was us sending out an email to our members to fill our vacancy as Treasurer. We were delighted to receive seven very worthy responses. Thank you to you all for your enthusiasm. I think our members across the Area can expect to receive more emails in future, advertising our key vacancies as: Area Countryside Officer; Membership Secretary and Groups Officer.

In particular I would single out Area Countryside Officer. When and still if, the Agriculture Act becomes Law this will become a highly important role. I feel certain that somewhere in our midst we must have an enthusiastic environmentalist keen to tackle matters that are of such importance to making walking worthwhile in Nottinghamshire.

I also enjoyed the Ramblers General Council in Manchester. It is no longer the "blood on the carpet" affair of repute and on many issues Central Office seems to be getting their act together – really. It is very useful to speak with representatives of other Areas – and on many things we turn out to be as good as most of them in my view. Don't forget the opportunity will arise at the AGM to put your name forward to come with us to Bristol in April.

AREA SECRETARY (Judith Anson)

The reporting year started with the resignation of Jack Prust as **Area Treasurer** when his health took a turn for the worse. This was at the time of the annual returns which caused severe pressure on myself and James McGill, then Area Chair. We were very grateful to Keith Coxon and Jeremy Pratt for coming forward and ensuring Area met the necessary deadlines. Jeremy stayed on as 'Not the Treasurer' for the rest of the year despite his efforts to escape. This ensured Area finances continued to function

and Jeremy provided considerable assistance to Groups. A new Treasurer, Neil Stafford, has been co-opted and will be putting himself forward for election at the AGM.

Unfortunately, Susan Page who volunteered as a Council member left us during the year. With the death of David Hunt, we no longer have any Council Members without portfolio. These members are particularly valuable as they do not have a specific role and can pick up projects or a single piece of work without having the pressure of an Officers role. It is also a good way to learn the work of Council. Please do consider **volunteering as a Council member**.

In looking at my **report for 2017/18** I note the report on the move from **‘Postcode to Parishes’** which was a Central Office initiative. Despite my attempts to follow up the work done by Area and Groups it is clear that Central Office has dropped this as a project. It was being led by Richard Colwill and the CEO November 2019 Bulletin says he has left Ramblers. This probably means the work has been wasted. I also referred to **Walking for Health** and it is still unclear what is happening in Ramblers with this initiative. I met the new lead officer in May and invited him to Nottinghamshire to discuss the joint work we had done between Groups and Schemes. This offer has not been taken up.

The **Ramblers Area Support Team** continues to be very helpful and the Executive has met them regularly. Diane Simcoe has been the only person for the North and therefore overstretched so it is good news a second person will be starting in 2020. Diane helped us with the successful advert for the Area Treasurer.

The **AGM in February 2019** was hosted by Gedling Group and we were blessed with excellent weather. The morning walks were well supported and Kate Ashbrook drew in more members than usual for the AGM itself. Kate spoke very well on the future of Ramblers and there was a lively question and answer session. I would particularly like to thank Alex Staniforth for volunteering to do all the administration for the 2017/18 Annual Report and AGM. This took a large amount of work off me and I am grateful to Alex for making the same generous gesture for this year.

The **discussion topics** held after the formal business at **Area Council meetings** continue to be well received by members. This year they have been Rights of Way Work – by James McGill, Compiling a Walk Programme – by the Vale of Belvoir Group and Treasurer Issues – by Jeremy Pratt. The business section of Council has also been lively this year with Group representatives making valuable contributions. Vibrant and challenging Council meetings should be the aim.

Four **first aid courses** were presented by the Red Cross were held and the feedback from those attending was excellent.

The **General Council** in Manchester was attended by me, Jim Norris, Heather Ingram and Chris Thompson. The motion on increasing diversity amongst Area

delegates to GC caused serious debate and unfortunately some of the comments would not have been out of place in the days of the Kinder Trespass. The motion was agreed. The last Area Council discussed the proposals and agreed that Nottinghamshire already meets all the requirements. It was agreed that **women should be encouraged to attend the 2020 GC** and I would ask you to put yourself forward. In Nottinghamshire we send 4 people. Two are the voting delegates, one of whom is the Area Secretary. The other voting delegate should be a member of Area Council (either a Group representative or an Area Officer) as they are the delegate for the year and may be called on to vote or comment in year. Two visitors are paid for by Area and will be chosen from those attending the AGM. GC 2020 is 4th & 5th April in Bristol.

The **CEO visit** in June took a large amount of Officer time to organise for a short visit but was a great success and I hope everyone saw the video. The detailed preparatory work was done by Steve Parkhouse, James McGill and me (including the great hardship of eating in the venue to ensure it was up to scratch). Other members made a valuable contribution on the day.

These are the words that ended my 2027/18 Report and I am repeating them again as they are still relevant:

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

Report from Steve Parkhouse – RoW Officer Applications)

It has been a very busy year dealing with the following casework:

Applications to add Rights of Way to the Definitive Map

1. FP Walkeringham,
2. FP Farndon
3. FP Wysall 1&2
4. FP Grassthorne
5. FP North Collingham
6. BW Trent Embankment from Trent Bridge to Wilford
7. BW Rainworth BW4 to BW5
8. BW Rainworth Packmans Road
9. BW Dean Hall, Cauntton
10. BW White Stub Lane, Winkburn,
11. BW Maplebeck Road, Cauntton to Winkburn
12. BW from the above to the Cauntton to Hockerton Road
13. BW Colston Bassett
14. BW Wheatley, Clayworth & Gringley on the Hill + FP Beckingham.

Appeals to the Planning Inspectorate

15. Appeal to the Planning Inspectorate after the County Council's rejection of the 2008 claim for footpaths at Clipstone,
16. Kneesall to Flintham footpath across Trent Hills – triggered by 15 above - a 'DIRECT' sets a date by which the claim must be dealt with when this hasn't been done within 12 months of going in.
17. 2011 BW claim at Nettleworth connecting the Meden Valley network and the Maun Valley network of trails.
18. 2013 BW claims between Cuckney Hill and Hazel Gap through Meden Vale.
19. 2012 Pleasley Vale trails – Nottinghamshire parts of those Derbyshire has already dealt with.
20. 2015 Old Mill Lane to Spa Ponds, Forest Town

Cases with Landowner Agreement or Discussions Underway

21. BW Moorhouse & Ossington
22. BW Peafield Lane, Warsop
23. FP Norwell Woodhouse to Laxton

Next cases about to be lodged

24. BW Bothamsall – West Drayton Avenue
25. BW Kelham Bridge to Kelham Lane, Newark

User Evidence being collected

26. Bestwood – will probably be a British Horse Society application

Report from Allan Rogers – RoW Officer Administration and Maintenance

1. Much of my report has already been covered in reports to Area Council Meetings.
2. District Co-ordinators continue to be busy with plenty of varied items to attend to. These have included the following in the period 1st October 2018 to 30th September 2019:
 - 2.1 Consultations and Orders 66 of which 22 have been confirmed.
 - 2.2 CA17 Landowner declarations 26 2.3 Local Plans and T&C referrals 37
 - 2.4 RoW Problems with 49 within Notts CC and a further 6 in neighbouring CC's.The most common problem is overgrown paths – whether crops, weeds, bramble, nettles or the occasional tree or branch. The other major problem is missing waymarks – finger posts and yellow topped posts. Damaged or broken stiles and to a lesser extent bridges, pose more problems with major diversions being required to get around the obstruction. Our RoW Committee Chairman has recently written to Nottinghamshire County Council offering the services of Ramblers to help clear some of the 'simple' obstructions.

3. Progress on clearing the back log of major RoW problems is not good. The NCC list of details of 'recently' lodged temporary closures and open access restriction show that some temporary closures have been in effect since 2015. The list is **not** comprehensive. Unregistered 'closures' have been found elsewhere within the county, for example Clayworth BW7 which has been "Temporarily Closed" awaiting repairs to a bridge since September 2017 and remains closed until repaired or 21 March 2020. I am advised that, hopefully the bridge will be replaced in November 2019.

These closures are being investigated to see when they will be rectified.

4. Notification has been received that the bridge on Eakring FP17 (RHW) at Mansley Common has been repaired and the Temp Closure lifted. We also have been notified of the creation of two new Paths. One was claimed by Chris Thompson on 6 February 1998 but has now been rejected and replaced by a path on almost the same line but created by NCC. This merely confirms what has been on the ground since before 1998.
5. Central Office post twice monthly lists headed 'PathWatch'. These are lists of complaints from unknown persons who report footpath problems to Central Office. These reports are sent direct from Central Office to NCC. Occasionally there are genuine complaints which need to be investigated. A recent case is of a missing link between two paths.

More frequently there are problems with 'lost walkers' being off path or on extinguished paths and complaining that the farmer/landowner has obstructed the path with locked gates, barbed wire or having cattle in the field. On one instance the landowner was aggressive – not surprising as the walker had strayed into a back garden of a house. These above cause problems with both NCC and the Ramblers wasting time and resources sorting them out – Central Office are aware of the problem nationally but seem unable to arrive at a satisfactory answer.

6. Central Office has published a report 'The State of Our Paths' which records the outcome of 'The Big Pathwatch' carried out in 2015. It indicates that two-thirds of the rights of way in the East Midlands were well-kept and enjoyable to use. Nottingham City is the only district of the East Midlands reportedly with no poorly kept paths whilst Nottinghamshire is just on the average for well-kept and signposted paths being third placed behind the counties of Rutland and Leicestershire.
7. Finally, I would express my appreciation to the dedicated band of District Co-ordinators and other volunteers without whom much of the work on protecting existing paths from developers and obstructions could not be carried out. Any new volunteers to help with this work would be greatly appreciated.

AREA COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER

Post vacant

AREA MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (Judith Anson)

GROUP	NEW AND REINSTATED IN YEAR	TOTAL AT 1.10.19	TOTAL AT 1.10.18
Newark	16	118	127
Nottingham	32	318	318
Retford	11	87	81
Ravenshead & Hucknall	13	110	103
Worksop	11	63	62
Rushcliffe	51	315	311
Broxtowe	20	189	192
Gedling	18	192	207
Mansfield & Sherwood	21	117	110
Southwell	8	80	78
Collingham	5	62	62
Vale of Belvoir	10	107	110
Notts Derbys Walking Group	50	192	205
One Step Walkers	65	225	192
Robin Hood Way	0	3	3
Not in Group	22	62	66
Area Total		2240	2228

National Totals: 1.10.19 - 102,038, 1.10.18 – 102,818, 1.10.17 – 104,694, 1.10.16 - 105,990, 1.10.15 --- 107,369

Nottinghamshire is continuing to increase its membership numbers and all Groups should be congratulated. The national fall in membership continues and a national initiative is needed. Although a new membership strategy was been promised this year, it has not yet appeared. Area has produced its own flyers to promote membership in the absence of any national material.

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.

There has been a problem for myself and Group Membership Secretaries receiving **replies to queries** sent to the zendesk and I have been following some of the queries up with our Area Support Officers to get replies. There has been a suggestion that Central Office is intending to stop volunteers using **generic email addresses**. As this is an important method of passing on history where the Officer changes and also protects personal email addresses, I have expressed concern at the lack of consultation on this important issue. Having failed to receive a reply via the zendesk I have raised it in person at a meeting with our Area Support Team. At the time of writing, a reply has still not been received.

At General Council in April a graph was shown by the Ramblers Treasurer illustrating that as membership **fees** rose, the membership numbers fell (although a direct causal link could not be proved). It was a surprise that the fees were raised again in October.

The **Insight Hub and Membership Dashboard** were introduced in November 2018. This shows live data, rather than only a monthly total. All new members are shown when they join so Groups can contact them straight away to welcome them. Although outside the timeframe of this annual report, there have been problems with the development of the Insight Hub and Dashboard meaning it has not always been accessible. The monthly reports are continuing to be sent which gives Membership Secretaries information if the Dashboard is down.

Nottinghamshire is above the average for **email consent**. Nationally only 42% (out of total members) have given their consent to be contacted by email. In Nottinghamshire we have 50%. Of those members with an email address, nationally only 64% have given their consent. In Nottinghamshire we have 73%. For the AGM we are able to contact all members as this is a member benefit. There was also a victory for common sense during the year when walk programmes were also confirmed to be a member benefit and so could be sent to all members, whether they have opted in or out of emails. Unfortunately Ramblers view is still that newsletters are marketing (whether or not they contain any adverts) and can only be sent to members who have given permission for email contact.

The Insight Hub also allows **comparison of data**. Where members' ages are known, the average age is 66 nationally and in Nottinghamshire it is 64. Age has only been asked recently of new members so this is an interesting figure but accuracy is doubtful. On gender, we match the national average with 55% of our members being female.

AREA PUBLICITY OFFICER (Alex Staniforth)

Following my appointment at the Area AGM held in February this year several initiatives have been made on the publicity front. But first, just as a reminder the post

of Area Publicity Officer – it seems Ramblers Central Office (RCO) quietly dropped the phrase

‘Press and Publicity,’ which was in favour in times past – had remained unfilled since February 2016 when the writer himself who held that position stood down. So akin to the returning boomerang it’s back to square one... or is it? Well not quite. Like most matters in life things move on and in the intervening period there have been some notable changes.

At national level we have had a change of leadership at the top with the appointment of the new CEO, Vanessa Griffiths (late 2016), who incidentally paid a visit to Nottinghamshire Area – see later in this report. There have been other staff changes at RCO most it must be admitted for the better. Hopefully it will continue.

Locally there have been some significant changes, notably in the organisation of certain key positions at Area level and during the short period I have been in post as Area Publicity Officer. In my three reports submitted to Area Council extensive coverage/reporting was given to matters promoting the Ramblers, which had somewhat been low key in recent times, two items of which have some significance are detailed below.

First and foremost was the purchase of what is termed ‘The Eventing Tent.’ This was a major undertaking and a considerable financial outlay. In the short period the Area has taken possession of the new equipment we have been able to exhibit at three local events: the Gedling Gala, the Beeston Carnival (thanks to Broxtowe Group for taking charge and running the show) and the Southwell Ploughing Match and Show (SPM&S). The last mentioned was the first time since 2016; the 2017 Show was cancelled owing to atrocious ground conditions following bad weather and we did not participate in 2018. It should be borne in mind Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) organised and paid for our presence at previous SPM&Ss in return for exhibiting their pull-up display relating to Rights of Way and giving out their literature notably the Nottinghamshire Routes and Rides booklets. The reason we missed out on the 2018 SPM&S was NCC Countryside Access Team had to cope with a heavy work load and the booking window was missed. This year we took the decision upon ourselves to exhibit – and pay for – attendance at the SPM&S and will continue to do so in the future.

Our new acquisition now gives us the opportunity to get our message across on an altogether professional level. Therefore to justify the purchase, it is imperative the equipment and publicity material is used wherever and whenever an opportunity arises. I would urge all our Groups to seek out any likely events coming up on their patch where attending and displaying would be to our advantage.

Second, and coincidental with the above, was the introduction of three separately themed leaflets* to hand out to the public at events where the Area and Groups exhibit. The inspiration for these leaflets came from our own One Step Walkers Group (OSW) who, through their own innovation, produced a single sheet ‘hand-out’ promoting not only themselves but what walking and the Ramblers can do for the public in general. Well done and thanks OSW. The reason we have taken this step is

because over recent years there has been a dearth of Ramblers recruiting literature to get our message over to the public – remember the colourful booklet ‘The Heart of Walking’ from 2012? This was well received but was dropped some years back and with no comparable replacement obvious in the near future it was left to Area to fill this gap; though to be fair the latest recruitment/membership leaflet does headline what membership of the Ramblers brings and why supporting our charity matters to all walkers.

As mentioned earlier the Area had the pleasure of meeting the Ramblers Chief Executive,

Vanessa Griffiths on the occasion of her visiting Nottinghamshire. The Area had for some time previous been in contact with RCO requesting the possibility of a meeting and this was fulfilled on the 6th June. Soon after the event I produced an extensive report detailing the day’s proceedings and the benefits/outcomes. This was later posted on the Area website. Prior to the meeting the Area drafted a Press Release to coincide with Vanessa’s visit which included an invitation for her to comment and elucidate on the day’s proceedings.

The Press Release was given to the visiting RCO staff with the intention of returning a final expanded and redacted article for release to the local press, in this instance, the Nottingham Post. Regrettably, we did not receive the revised document until nearly a fortnight later and after consulting with our Area Rights of Way Secretary, Stephen Parkhouse on whose draft text the article was based, we concluded the moment had passed and its newsworthiness would be diminished; therefore the matter was taken no further. However, one bit of good fortune came out of this episode in that I reconnected with a former Post reporter and feature writer who by coincidence joined us later in the day. He had a tenet for publishing articles on countryside matters, many linked to walking. Over a period of many years he wrote numerous guided walks covering our county and further afield. We agreed to keep in contact in the future stating he was willing to assist us if and when we found ourselves in a similar position again; he still had connections with his former employer.

I’ll round off this report that in my personal view the past year has generally been positive. Therefore, let’s continue – indeed improve – in that vein and double our efforts to encourage more of the walking public to come and join our worthy charity.

AREA TOURISM AND HERITAGE PATHS OFFICER (Chris Thompson)

I first took on this newly created post at the Area AGM in February 2018. It had always been my intention to take on this role sometime in the future with the aim of promoting Nottinghamshire as a great county for walking. To achieve that goal I believe there is a need to publish a new walks book – the previous one is nearly 25 years old – and build contacts with important partners interested in promoting Nottinghamshire for its tourist and heritage potential.

I am proud to have been the initiator of the Robin Hood Way and in collaboration with the Nottingham Wayfarers Rambling Club plus many walking friends was able to see that particular route launched in May 1985. Later, the Robin Hood Way Association was formed to promote and conserve the route.

On taking up my new role I realised one of my first priorities was to become involved in the setting up of a long distance trail promoting and celebrating the Pilgrim Fathers' story for in 2020 it will be 400 years since they left these shores for the New World in September 1620.

To achieve this outcome, two long distance walks to promote the story's association with the East Midlands will be established. Thus my main role during this past year has been to create one of these which will be called the Mayflower Pilgrim Ramblers Trail. For the past

15 months or so I have worked closely with a working party, supported by our Retford and Worksop Groups and am pleased to announce a main route has been established commencing in Retford, linking the Pilgrim Villages in Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire, then forward to Gainsborough and Lincolnshire. The route through Lincolnshire uses the towpath of the Fossdyke Navigation to Lincoln then follows the River Witham along the Water Rail Way to Anton's Gowt then following the man made Drains to Boston as used by the Pilgrims to reach the Wash, where the Pilgrims aimed to depart to America. In addition, there will be a series of circular walks along the whole route and here we have been supported by a former librarian, Chris Latimer, who has gathered together the history of the Pilgrims' story and descriptions of the villages visited along the route

The working party has received excellent support from the Nottinghamshire County Council, who welcomed the establishment of the route. They have offered to fund the waymarking of the whole route including Lincolnshire and will set up a series of Interpretation Boards along route plus the circular walks in Nottinghamshire. However, Lincolnshire County Council has not at the present time been prepared to support the establishment of route. Nonetheless, the working party are anxious to complete the guidebook and have had support locally which hopefully will resolve our task to link Boston through Lincolnshire with the aim of the completed route being launched and available by the time of the Pilgrim celebrations.

The 18th October Area Council discussed this and was minuted as follows:

- 3.4 *Mayflower Pilgrim Trail (Minute 5.7) – Council received a paper on the Mayflower Pilgrim Trail. While members were impressed by the outstanding work carried out in developing the trail and its supporting literature, it was agreed that it was not a function of Area Council to manage a long distance trail. The proposal was for Chris Thompson to establish a properly constituted body entirely separate from The Ramblers, with its own bank account and governance. The Robin Hood Way Association would be a model to follow. The separate body would be able to apply for funding from any source, including Area Council. Area Council agreed to recommend to Chris that such a body be established to take the Trail forward.***

I am currently working on the establishment of this separate body to take this work forward.

I would now like to make reference to the start of the work required to produce a new Nottinghamshire Walks book. This has been mentioned before and as we approach the completion of the Mayflower Pilgrim Ramblers Trail, I would like to ask for the support of the Groups and members to work with a team to achieve this goal. Since 1995 when

Nottinghamshire Area last produced a similar project, there have been many changes in our county, not the least to the Rights of Way Network i.e. path additions, diversions extinguishments etc. plus of course infrastructure and development. My first port of call is to ask Groups and members for their support then commence the initial work to put together this book. At this stage interested members can contact me to discuss possible walks in their Group area or their favourite parts of Nottinghamshire. Once details are established the next step is for you to walk a route then write up a description of it.

You can contact me at: nottsrow15@outlook.com I will then arrange to meet you, attend a Group meeting or send information to get you started. Full support will be given at every stage.

Finally, in July 2019 Nottinghamshire County Council launched a Tourist Strategy for Nottinghamshire. I was formally invited to the launch, meeting both professional tourist and heritage officers. This has allowed me to further develop the Tourist and Heritage Paths role. I have been able speak at length with them to discuss and promote walking opportunities. I am very excited that this Tourist Strategy has been set up as it further enhances the opportunity of making Nottinghamshire a promoted top tourist county also.

AREA COMMUNICATIONS SUB-GROUP (Judith Anson, Chair)

I would like to thank all members of the Group for making a valuable contribution to our wide remit. The responsibilities of the Group are website & social media, the Notts Walker Newsletter, communications generally, recruitment, raising the profile of Ramblers through publicity and GDPR. We welcomed Alex Staniforth as Publicity Officer and Chris Taylor as Webmaster. Although Keith Wallace has left, he is continuing to update the Facebook page.

Notts Area Website www.nottsarearamblers.org.uk

Chris continues to do the 'mechanics' of keeping the website updated and also manages Stackmail – the Area generic email system. I try and change the front page every few weeks and would welcome articles and photos from Groups. The pressure from my other Area roles means I do not always give the website the attention it needs. We have had articles about Group holidays, the video of the CEO's visit, local events and sadly, the notice of David Hunt's death. James continues to produce the Secret Life of a Rambler and will be grateful for willing volunteers. I am conscious that we are not up to date with other social media such as Twitter but currently lack the expertise and time to achieve this.

Notts Walker

Steve Parkhouse is Newsletter Editor and should be congratulated by everyone on the excellent opening rates for the Notts Walker which at over 60% is far higher than similar newsletters. Steve has also set up a second mailing list for non-members who are interested in the work of Ramblers and for Ramblers members who are not willing to give their email to Central Office. My Area Membership Report sets out the percentage of members who can receive the newsletter and the numbers continue to rise slowly.

Unfortunately we are unable to contact those members who did not give their permission for email contact prior to the introduction of GDPR so it is difficult to increase the number. If we could contact them, I am sure they would wish to receive our excellent newsletter.

The Notts Walker has covered important rights of way issues in the County, particularly lost way claims and has been successful in getting members to come forward to say they have walked paths.

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

Facebook Page

This is still managed by Keith and the number of likes and followers continue to increase at 121 and 130 respectively. 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

Publicity

Alex has produced his own report as Area Publicity Officer. Area Council agreed to the purchase of a new eventing tent printed with the Ramblers logo and also agreed a sum of £500 for publicity materials. Nottinghamshire decided to produce their own in the absence of any publicity material from Central Office. The Communications Group used the model of the leaflets/flyers produced by One Step Walkers and after several drafts; they were printed in August 2019. Although not a member of the Group, Rod Fillingham undertook the work of layout and working with the printer. There are three versions – a general Ramblers one, one focusing on the health benefits of walking and one showcasing our rights of way work.

Only 100 of each were initially printed (at a total cost of £25) as comments were requested. Copies will be available for members to see at the AGM.

October 2019 Area Council agreed to the purchase of a pull up banner to use at future events and this will be designed and printed.

Alex has reported on the use of the eventing tent. This is available to all Groups to borrow for their events and we need to get our money's worth so please do use it.

GDPR

The less said about GDPR the better. Ramblers' interpretation of GDPR continues to cause problems for Groups and Area and I have commented in my Area Membership Report. It has been helpful to discuss the problems in the Communications Group.

Ramblers App

Members should be familiar with the introduction of the Ramblers app. Dave Hobson, Dave Johnson and Rob Turner tested it in May and I sent comments to Central Office, which were not acknowledged. These comments were not particularly favourable and RamblersNET is also showing mixed views. Some Groups are now using it to register people who attend walks and using this data to analyse their walks. This will form part of the Insight Hub so Central Office can see attendance on walks nationally.

GROUP ANNUAL REPORTS

Broxtowe Group (Keith Jacobs)

This has been a most successful year for Broxtowe Group. Membership has increased slightly and more members are walking regularly with the group. The committee has functioned well and we have welcomed some new members who have overseen the website and Facebook most effectively. Having said this, we bid adieu to PC, who is stepping down as Membership Secretary after 30 years of sterling effort.

The walks programmes have been well filled with longer walks for every Wednesday and Sunday and some shorter ones. Weather issues led to 3 cancelled walks this summer but all were well informed in advance. We are anxious to find more walk leaders for shorter midweek walks and we will be looking at alternative walking days to encourage as many short walkers as possible.

We are reinstating some walking holidays after a lapse of some years. The stay at Malhamdale in September was well received and we look forward to visiting Dollgellau next March.

Our coach walks to Warwick and Horncastle were well attended and we will certainly be looking at more in the future, possibly opening them out to other members to ensure full attendance. Using public transport generally to attend walks seems right and we are planning a 'train walk' to Skegness soon.

Our presence at the Beeston Gala was well noticed and garnered some good local interest. We will certainly attend again next year and we seek other openings to raise our profile around the borough. Our 30th Anniversary celebration was most successful, with many former members meeting up and some good local media coverage.

Broxtowe will hold its AGM on 25th November.

Collingham Group (Christopher Adams)

Since our last AGM our programme of walks has gone well, albeit with a couple of cancellations due to bad weather and/or flooding-we do operate close to the Trent!

In December, both on a Sunday and on a Wednesday we organised festive walks with mulled wine and homemade mince pies. In early January we had our New Years' lunch at the pub in Morton which was well attended. The other social event of the year was the Summer Lunch held in a member's garden in Collingham, which was also well attended and included some guests retired from active walking who like to keep in touch.

Our walks programme runs throughout the year except August with walks every other Sunday and monthly on Wednesdays. The Sunday walks are 7-8 miles, often with a shorter option and an additional leader. Our Wednesday walks are 4-5 miles usually with a pub lunch. One Wednesday walk in September was more challenging going into Derbyshire, so this year we have walked in all four counties: Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire. We always try to car share.

We have enough walk leaders at present but it would be nice to see some new volunteers. We have a membership on paper of 62 and our shorter walks on Wednesdays are well supported whereas some Sundays we have seen only a few takers and this with the march of time among our members is a worry.

Our committee meets quarterly but of course much of the work goes on between meetings – thanks to our Walks Coordinator and our Secretary. Our new Treasurer has been in post for a year and has dealt smoothly with all the bank changes that had to be made. This concludes my report.

Gedling Group (Jonathan Ankers)

Certainly 2019 has been a very challenging year for the Group. New Chairman, Martin Smalley and Treasurer, Paul Musson have taken up their posts. Long serving member Pat Rogers has also stood down, having been Social Secretary for many years, and is replaced by committee member Colleen Pilgrim. I have taken over responsibility for the Group's website from Graham Dicker, who possessed the skill and technical knowledge to write and maintain the bespoke website up until this year. I am very thankful for the excellent template and software now provided by Ramblers! Thankfully, all the members leaving the committee are still working hard on the Group's behalf albeit in the background.

In February, the Group was pleased to host the Area AGM at Papplewick Village Hall, which was very attended and seemed to be enjoyed by all those present. Later in May the Group celebrated its 30th Anniversary which included a dinner.

Sadly a number of ex-members passed away during the year.

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, although we are having increasing problems finding new walks leaders. Age and infirmity even affect Ramblers!

To round off, we put on three highly successful coach trips: to Scarborough, The Cotswolds and Stratford.

Mansfield & Sherwood Group (Alex Staniforth)

Yet another 'busy and fruitful year' started with the Group's AGM which took place on the evening of Tuesday 20th November 2018 at The Plough Inn, Market Warsop. Despite a lower attendance than the 2017 AGM – the cold, wet weather not helping – it turned out to be quite successful as it saw the Group fill all its allotted Officer positions, and as a bonus, a couple of new faces came forward to serve on the new committee, one of which was a new Walks Coordinator, Brian Tuffnell taking on the post – see his first report later. The evening was rounded off with a good natured, not too serious quiz, followed by a raffle and a large chip butty each

Our Group Chairperson, Sue Rick summarising for the current year stated she was happy to report that the Group has continued to provide a friendly welcome on all our walks to new members and visiting members alike, stating 'it was a pleasure to meet new people and be part of what the Ramblers is all about.' She praised the local knowledge provided by the walk leaders which was not only very interesting and informative but the care taken to research the walks was much appreciated. . One goal for forthcoming year is to have more new people trained to be walk leaders either locally or with the Ramblers Roadshows as requested by some members. She thanked all the current committee members for their support throughout the year

As usual, the social calendar for the year organised by our indomitable Social Secretary, Julie Lawson has been really varied including among many activities:

- A visit to the Veolia Recycling Plant at Mansfield
- A Pétanque Tournament at the Blidworth Pétanque Club, which proved to be a very competitive and fun afternoon with prizes for both winners and losers.
- An interesting talk about the history of the oil wells in Nottinghamshire.
- One of the highlights was a visit to Castle Howard, North Yorkshire for the BBC Countryfile Live Show, 16 members enjoyed a good day despite issues with the minibus!
- In March, a weekend at Castleton YH was attended by 16 members with others joining just for the walks. It was a very mixed weekend weather-wise: snow, wind and rain but that didn't spoil a thoroughly enjoyable break away.

Julie thanked everyone for taking the time to book venues, buses and visits etc.

New Walks Coordinator, Brian reported we have had a good variety of walks totalling 69, including walks on the Cotswold Way and Cleveland Way of which 63 have been completed with six still to be completed. These have included nine evening walks: Three on a Wednesday, which have been well attended and one to come on a

Saturday. He estimated the Group on its walks had covered in the region of 550 miles (890km). These have been led by 19 leaders including three new leaders, which included not only Yvonne and Denise but he also. We have unfortunately temporarily lost two leaders, Richard and Rita owing to injury but hopefully we will see them back leading walks very soon again in the future. Our long distance walks saw 16 members walk Part 1 of the Cotswold Way with 18 members completing a further stretch of the Cleveland Way.

We held another joint event with Worksop Ramblers, this time travelling to York with 10 of our members taking part. It is hoped to continue this partnership and Sue is looking to invite Worksop to our future visit to Haworth and Brontë Country.

Brian closed his report stating his first year as co-ordinator had been most satisfying. He enjoyed the role and had learned a lot along the way. He will be publishing a full programme for the first six months of 2020 both online and in print. Finally, he thanked everyone who has given up their time to research, recce and lead the walks.

In the immediate future we will be looking to recruit a new Membership Secretary as Chris Taylor is standing down at the Groups AGM in November 2019 and hopefully will try to recruit a publicity/ social media coordinator to help promote the group.

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)

The committee has worked well together this year to provide a good programme of walks and a varied programme of social events. Our walks vary in length from 3 miles to around 9 miles and cover varied terrain in Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and in the Vale of Belvoir. There have been some changes during the year, particularly for the Membership Secretary who now used the Dashboard to monitor membership and to send out urgent emails regarding changes to walks etc. The rules regarding GDPR have also been relaxed a little and this has helped us to stay in touch with all members.

As a Group we continue to make contact with all new members and to find out, if possible, why people leave the group. New members find us friendly and approachable and because of this our membership numbers remain stable.

Sadly, we lost Beryl Walker this year. Beryl was Secretary of Newark Ramblers for many years; she led numerous walks, went on residential trips, and was a much loved member of the group. A good number of Ramblers attended her funeral. She will be missed by us all. More members are now claiming expenses for recces and this has reduced our bank balance to a more reasonable amount.

Our walks programme is put together quarterly and I am pleased to report that some of our newer members are offering to lead walks. The Walk Leader training which is being offered in Newark in the New Year will be welcomed by many of our members.

We are fortunate to have James McGill in our group. His expertise, knowledge and guidance are much appreciated and it is good to know that we have a representative at Area level. During the year Jean Everington stood down as Footpaths Officer and James has taken on this role once again.

In order to communicate with our members we use our website and our Facebook page as well as email, text and post. All members receive copies of the Walks Programme and this is also available on our website. Each week the next walk is added to the Facebook page and changes to the programme are emailed out to members, added to Facebook and the website. We are currently in the process of updating our website with the help of Chris Vaughan.

We receive enquiries from prospective new members and guest walkers through email and our Facebook page. Our aim is to respond to these enquiries within a day and I believe that this is much appreciated.

Throughout the year we have been represented by members at various civic events in the town. We very much appreciate members giving up their time to attend these events and for promoting Newark Ramblers. Two members attended the Area AGM on 3 February and found it interesting.

Newark Ramblers was represented at the Christmas Tree Festival in Newark Parish Church. The tree looked lovely and our thanks go to everyone who helped with decorating etc. As a committee we have decided to take part in this Festival again this year. We are re-using the theme, 'Walking in a Winter Wonderland' as this represents what we do and is relatively easy to achieve.

Throughout the year we have enjoyed various social events:

- A Murder Mystery Evening in Southwell library
- A social evening with games, a quiz and musical entertainment by Clive Rudd.
- A Derbyshire Train Walk and a Family Walk in March we enjoyed a Treasure Hunt around Bottesford and in the summer, an evening walk at Long Bennington followed by a pub meal.
- Trips to Kew Gardens and the National Memorial
- Several theatre visits to The Robin Hood Theatre
- Visit to see a musical by the Newark Amateur Operatics at the Palace Theatre
- A Ceilidh at Norwell Village Hall More social events are planned for 2020.

Overall, Newark Ramblers is a successful group with around 25 – 30 members walking regularly each week. We are now putting on more weekend walks as some of our newer members are still working and need this service. As a committee we aim to be pro-active in our group activities but to also listen to the wishes of the membership and action these wherever possible. Our AGM, which was attended by

38 members, gave everyone an opportunity to comment on the group and to put forward suggestions either at the meeting or on a suggestions sheet.

Nottingham Group (David Dobson)

The Group AGM was held on Sunday 4 November 2018 at St Peter's Rooms in Ruddington. The change to a Sunday afternoon following a local walk has proved popular as the attendance was much improved compared to previous years when the AGM was held on a midweek evening. Tea and cake were provided following the walk. All the committee positions were filled except the Vice Chair.

The group had two successful Youth Hostel weekends in 2019, Grinton in Swaledale in the spring and Hadrian's Wall in the autumn. A group coach holiday to Weymouth took place in June 2019.

The fortnightly coach walks during 2019 have been popular. These coaches have averaged 46 passengers (39 required to break even). A small increase in the coach hire charges for 2020 has been negotiated with the coach hire firm, but this will be absorbed without having to increase the coach fares. The coach hire firm has complimented the group on its detailed and comprehensive printed programme for 2020. There are often four walks on offer on the coach outings. Finding leaders to cover the shorter walks is a recurring issue. Leaders have been asked to appoint back-markers for their walks.

Briefly:

- The fortnightly Wednesday walks average 20 / 30 members on the walk.
- The short Saturday walks, Sunday local walks and 'A' plus Saturday walks have a regular following.
- The group Footpaths Officer has submitted claims in respect of several city footpaths.
- The annual day out by coach in July 2019 was to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park near Wakefield.
- A group went on a mini cruise to the Netherlands in April and visited the Keukenhof tulip fields.

A collection at Christmas 2018 raised £250. This was split between the Edale Mountain Rescue Team and the East Midlands Air Ambulance. The money was distributed in early 2019. A similar collection is planned for Christmas 2019. The collections are in lieu of individual Christmas cards between members.

The group organised two evening meals for members at restaurants in Nottingham during the year. Two garden parties were scheduled for summer of 2019 but only one took place. The other was cancelled due to adverse weather on the day.

The group web site was incorporated into the Ramblers web site during the year. In addition, various Facebook groups have been set up to keep regular walkers updated on forthcoming walks and to share photographs of walks.

One Step Walkers Group (Robert Ingram)

This is my first year as Chair of this group and this is what we have achieved in the last 12 months. This has been a very challenging year as we lost our Website Officer

soon after I was in post and it took some time to find someone to replace him. We are very fortunate now to have a professional Website Officer and he has completely regenerated our out of date system. We are still looking for a new secretary, but our previous one will continue for now as he is still on the committee. We also had to finish aligning our processes to the GDPR requirements. Our evening walks are very popular and we have been running additional evening walks through the summer. Our autumn and winter evening moonlight walks have been very successful and we are now running starlight walks in between our moonlight walks, giving two evening walks a month over this period of short daylight hours.

Walks – From 1st January to 1st December 2019 we have held 24 Saturday long walks, 27 Saturday short walks, 46 Sunday walks, and 44 evening walks. 141 walks in total. In addition to this there are numerous walks held on our walking weekends and holidays.

Walks Attendance – Numbers have remained strong, but we have competition from expanding ‘ Meetup Groups’. Average numbers have been, Saturday long walks 13, Saturday Short walks 15, Sunday 22, Tuesday evening 20 and Thursday evening 15. Overall average attending walks 18.

Accounts – From our treasurer’s report, we had an opening bank balance of £2133 on 1/10/2018 and a closing balance of 1962.98 on 30/09/2019. [Note- this figure varies significantly through the year depending on event deposit outgoings and event payment incomings]

Weekends away – We have had 13 weekends away so far this year.

Holidays –We have had four walking holidays longer than a weekend across the year.

Socials – Our annual Christmas meal at the Rose & Crown, Middle Mayfield, organised by the Social Coordinator was enjoyed by all. The 2019 event is sold out with 59 places. Our popular summer social and walking event in Baslow had 58 people attending. We have organised lots of outings to plays, musicals, concerts, meals, ten pin bowling, Ceilidh, and pub events, too numerous to account for numbers accurately.

Membership – We had 217 members in December 2018 and 5 affiliate members. We now have 244 members and 9 affiliate members, an increase of 27 members. Other Ramblers members register as affiliate members to receive our Newsletter. Our membership secretary is very diligent encouraging prospective members to join and follows up those not renewing. We also hand out Ramblers leaflets with a One Step Walkers leaflet on walks which explains step by step how to join.

GDPR – We have done our best to comply with Central Office guidelines on GDPR and we are fortunate to have a Membership Secretary and a Website Officer both of whom are knowledgeable in this area and ensure all our processes complies with the regulations.

Newsletter – Our Communications and Publicity Officer is sending out quality weekly Mailchimp newsletters that remind members about walks and events planned in the near future. We also list walk leaders that have been leading walks for the last month in recognition of their efforts.

Other Events – We held a map reading and walk leading day in January 2019, which has encouraged several members to volunteer to lead walks. We are repeating this on 18th January at Ticknall and it is starting to become an annual event.

Meetup – We have 797 Meetup members. However, we find that we get about 20% extra people attending walks from publicising on Meetup but only a small number of those actually join Ramblers. As this is now costing us about £170 per year and Meetup are looking at ways of increasing income, we have decided to discontinue this membership. We have replaced Meetup with an additional public facing Facebook account that publicises our walks, enables people to register and costs nothing to run. Our excellent Website Officer has set this up for us and we have had a reach of 2900 people on this site to date and attracting new walkers.

Facebook (social account) – We now have 437 members with people posting on a regular basis. This is used to arrange short notice casual socials and sharing pictures of events which all contributes to the useful and friendly communication in the group community.

Finally, a huge thank you to the committee and group members that volunteer their time to help us all enjoy the walking and social events we organise. I look forward to the group continuing to thrive in 2020.

Ravenshead & Hucknall Group

We have had another good year of varied and interesting walks and social activities. After a decade of steady decline in group membership numbers, the past year has seen a slight increase from 103 in 2018 to 109 in 2019. We have benefitted from a steady flow of membership enquiries over the year, mainly as a result of having a few pages presence on the Ramblers website and publishing our walks on the 'Walks Finder'. Generally new recruits tend to be balanced out by members leaving us through age, leaving the area, or sadly, as in the case of the past year, two members passed away.

The group is in a good solid position financially, our treasurer keeping us in-line with Ramblers requirements. Recent years has seen expenditure (postage etc.) kept to a minimum by adopting an email only communication policy (agreed at AGM), for the distribution of new Walks Programmes and social activities.

The group continues to produce two six monthly walks programmes per year Autumn/Winter and Spring/Summer. Over the year our walks have mainly been in and around Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, with the occasional foray into either Staffordshire, Lincolnshire or Leicestershire. We have enjoyed a good variety of scenic and interesting walks of between 5 and 12 miles, some easy, some more challenging! A core of 12 members have led a total of 49 walks (25 Sunday, 12

Saturday & 12 shorter Tuesday walks). If members completed all the walks they would have covered 341 (published!!!!) miles.

Over the past year we have enjoyed an active social calendar, organised by our Social Secretary. These included – Annual Dinner at Ramsdale Golf Centre (January), Skittles evening, Beetle Drive, Nottingham City Guided Walk (Civic Society), Weekend away in Llandudno and a visit to the Museum of Timekeeping (Upton Hall). We look forward to more social activities in 2020 with a return to the Ramsdale Golf Centre in January for our annual dinner and a weekend away in the Wye Valley planned.

Retford Group (Sally Fraser)

We have enjoyed another year of varied walks due to our faithful band of Walk Leaders.

Our first holiday of the year was again spent in Shropshire and based at Church Stretton. We were treated to a history tour of Shrewsbury, led by one of our own members, followed by a river cruise. During the week walks included a bus ride, a novelty in itself, to Craven Arms and a long walk back along the Long Mynd to Church Stretton. The week finished on a high with 'The Awards Night' with Certificates handed out for various achievements, including Best Cake Maker! The weather could, at times, have been a little kinder but all in all everyone enjoyed a very pleasant week.

In September the holiday to The North York Moors was based in Danby. The first day we met at Great Ayton and ascended Roseberry Topping. After sitting awhile to take in the fabulous views we carefully negotiated the way down and strolled over field paths and woodland heading to the Captain Cook Monument and the car park. We visited Whitby and climbed the 199 steps to the Abbey before joining the Coast Path back to the cars parked at Hawsker. The weather was mainly warm and dry; one rainy day meant a change from a moorland walk to a low level walk in Little Fryup Dale

Our Group has been involved in putting together and checking various parts of the intended new walking trail to commemorate the Pilgrim Fathers.

Our AGM was held in October and Walk Leaders put forward their proposals for the 2020 Programme of Walks. It was particularly pleasing to see walks contributed from first time Walk Leaders.

Rushcliffe Group (Mike Stock)

Another year has disappeared all too quickly but the Group has had another busy and successful year of walks, socials and holidays.

In the spring, we made two visits Wales going to Beddgelert to walk in Snowdonia and Brecon Beacons. At Beddgelert we used HF walkers who provided interesting and challenging walks followed by lively evenings in the bar. At the Brecon weekend, we climbed the Sugar Loaf on the Saturday and Corn Du, Pen-y-Fan and Fan-y-Big on the Sunday before returning to Brecon late afternoon for a welcome pint. Sadly the

weekend was marred by the sudden death of one of our members on the Monday walk. Everything possible was done to save him but to no avail.

For the summer walking holiday 25 members travelled to Zakopane to walk in the Tatra Mountains. We used HF walk leaders who ably guided us on the walks. Some of the walks were considered to be tougher than would be expected for grade 2 possibly because cobbled and uneven stones. In spite of that, the group had an enjoyable holiday. On the rest day, some members visited a Polish town of Oswiecim better known by its German name of Auschwitz, the site of a notorious Nazi death camp, which to say the least was a sobering and moving experience.

For the autumn walking weekend, 36 members invaded Stroud for walks in the Gloucestershire countryside. Over the weekend, there were seven walks available of varying lengths and difficulty. Finding a restaurant to cater for 36 hungry walkers can prove difficult but we found an Italian restaurant and the Clothiers 'Arms pub where we had two excellent meals.

Our programme of social events started with an enjoyable Christmas lunch at Colwick Hall. The Grand Ballroom was festively decorated, the staff were efficient and friendly and the food delicious. As usual, our resident poet laureate Pam Duesbury delighted the assembled company with her review of our year before the proceedings ended with a raffle.

Other events included a First Aid Course ably led by Wendy Fletcher, a visit to Tissington Hall and Gardens and in October a talk from Rob Turner on the Coast-to-Coast walk complete with photos and details of the terrain and a graph of ascents and descents.

Once again, the Group has enjoyed a varied programme of walks throughout the year at the weekend and mid-week. In addition, in conjunction with the Embankment Surgery in West Bridgford, we run weekly health walks, which hopefully will encourage participants to do our longer walks. As ever, none of these events would be possible without our committee, hard-working volunteers and walk leaders.

Finally, I have to report the passing of Dennis Fox earlier this year. Dennis was our membership secretary for many years and took an active part in the East Leake Partnership. He will be sadly missed by those who knew him.

Southwell Group (David Johnson)

Our New Year started on a sad note with the death of one of our original members from way back in 1990. David Hutchinson will be sadly missed for the contributions that he made to our Group, not just in his role as Chair for a number of years. He led walks and because he had spent a life time working as a farmer he willingly shared his knowledge of the countryside on our walks. On the brighter side we have welcomed several new members to the group and they are already making a mark on the activities of the Group, contributing to organisation as well as walking.

This year we have continued to walk, talk, laugh and occasionally cry. We have discussed local and national issues and admired our varied countryside. We have been joined by Ramblers from other groups and people who have seen our walks advertised in various local places.

Our Sunday and Friday evening walks are the bedrock of the group and as walkers we are grateful that a lot of members are prepared to suggest and lead walks on our programme. Our mini breaks continue to be extremely popular and again we are collectively thankful that members will take on board this task. This year, our walking trips to the Long Mynd in Shropshire in the spring and to Whitby in East Yorkshire in October have been organised by some of our newer members. Both trips benefitted from our group joining HF as an Associate Group Member.

Our social programme continues to flourish with an annual summer BBQ, a trip to the outdoor theatre at Tolethorpe and Christmas walk and fuddle and other more impromptu gatherings.

The most noticeable feature of Southwell Ramblers continues to be the support and friendship that they offer to new and old participants alike. There is always an enthusiastic level of support and encouragement which is appreciated by those that step forward and organise activities.

Vale of Belvoir Group (John Young)

Our vibrant Group has a membership of 107 and we continue 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 social aspects of our group. We are very lucky that we have so many members (21 for the current programme) who are willing to prepare and lead walks. We are very grateful for their efforts.

Some of our members have recently returned to walking after suffering health issues and we are pleased to welcome them back. Unfortunately, some members continue to suffer various ailments and we wish them a speedy recovery.

We had a very successful weekend in Dolgellau in Wales in September which everyone enjoyed. Next year we are going to Selworthy in Somerset 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.

Workshop Group (Diana Munro)

We have enjoyed another year as a member group of The Ramblers running a varied programme of walks on Sundays, Thursdays and Wednesday evenings during the

summer months. This year the Wednesday evening walks were fortnightly on alternate weeks to the Thursday walks. The decision to start and finish Wednesday evening walks at a venue that provided post-walk sustenance was well received by the participants. The social side of our walks has definitely been enhanced with after-walk drinks at local hostelrys and this is now a regular feature of walks for those wishing to partake.

Foremost, a huge thank you to every single walk leader for submitting their walks, receiving the walks and then leading them. This year we have participated in a few walking festivals, including the Notts Guided Walks Programme, the Chesterfield Canal Walking Festival and the South Lincolnshire Walking Festival. These have proven to be well supported and have provided us with the opportunity to raise the profile of Worksop Ramblers over a wider area. While participating in walking festivals does attract a few new members, it also hopefully succeeds in encouraging people to walk who might not otherwise have done so. It is also interesting to report that as a result of our participation in these festivals, some of our walk leaders have attended training sessions including in leadership and first aid. It has also resulted in the acquisition by the group of some high-vis tabards, a requirement of festival organisers for walk leaders.

The enthusiastic committee has met four times over the course of the year and its functions have been to prepare and circulate the Group's programme of walks for the forthcoming year, to receive regular updates on membership, finance, Notts Area Council meetings, footpath issues etc. We are deeply indebted to the committee members who have given up their time to serve the group with such dedication. Particular thanks must go to Janet and Keith for representing our Group at Notts Area Council meetings; this means that we have an insight into developments and activities at Notts Area level. We are also grateful to Brian Bacon for coordinating our footpath wardens and I would urge our members to consider offering any help they can in checking the paths in our patch.

Membership has dipped to 64 compared to 68 at this time last year. Since the beginning of this year we have gained 8 new members, compared to 6 in 2018 and 3 in 2017 – so definitely going in the right direction, although sadly this means that 12 individuals have decided to discontinue their membership during 2019 for whatever reason e.g. no longer relevant to them or ill health.

We do not have email addresses for 14 of our members and these were all sent notification of the AGM in the post. With the exception of one member who walks with us once a year at most, all of these are non-walkers who may have been regular walkers in the past and continue to support the Ramblers through their subscription.

Walk numbers since the current programme started at the beginning of April this year have at times been quite promising. Our 5 walks in the Notts Guided Walks Programme attracted between 15 and 9 walkers per walk, and our 2 walks in the South Lincolnshire Walking Festival attracted 17 and 13 walkers respectively. Our 2 walks in the Chesterfield Canal

Walking Festival attracted 5 and 9 walkers respectively. Of our other walks, Sunday and Thursday walks continue to be enjoyed by a small but happy group of regular walkers, usually numbering between 10 and 6. Walk numbers for the 7 Wednesday evening summer walks peaked at 11, dipping to only 4 on one occasion. Of significant note is the very successful coach trip to York organised by Janet and Keith in June; this was enjoyed by 50+ individuals made up of members of Worksop Ramblers, Mansfield & Sherwood Ramblers and National Trust volunteers.

So far only two walks in the current programme have been cancelled; one on Thursday 25th July when the forecast temperature was in the high 30s, and one on 8th September when most of the regular walkers (including the leader!) had other commitments – even the recent very wet conditions have not stopped us getting our weekly dose of fresh air and exercise!

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

We are a small group because all interested members already belong to other Ramblers' Groups although this year, we have been joined by two more affiliated members. To become an 'Affiliate member' of Robin Hood Way NE70 Group, 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 the Nottinghamshire countryside, villages and towns. There are 18 sections to the Robin Hood Way and 14 circular walks plus the Mansfield to Edwinstowe walk with 20 wardens looking after these sections and walks. The wardens survey the route reporting any maintenance problems to Nottinghamshire County Council Rights of Way team and ensuring that the route is adequately waymarked.

Some sections of the route have shared wardens, others single, and this means that some wardens cover more than one section of the route. Additional helpers are always welcome to ensure the future of the walk. Currently, the whole of the route of the Robin Hood Way is being surveyed with a view to updating the Robin Hood Way Guide Book. This work is funded by the Robin Hood Way Association with whom we work closely.

We have occasional walks undertaken by members who have arranged them for the Groups they are attached to. There is no specific budget held by the Group so before expenses are incurred, we request funding from Nottinghamshire Area and are pleased to acknowledge having received funds for waymark signs.

This year, the FlexiGroup had a significant presence at the Southwell Ploughing Match and Show held on Thoresby Park at the end of September which we attended along with representatives of the Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers.

AREA TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 30.9.19

The accounts are presented, as last year, on the Receipts and Payments basis using the accounting layout of 'Ramblers Annual Return Form'.

The accounts have two broad functions

- Firstly the cost of running Area
- Secondly distributing funds to Groups.

The accounts for the year overall show a deficit of £3305.51.

Cost of running Area.

Area made no request for funding from Central Office in 2018/19 in view of reserves held as at 30.9.18.

Area 'Payments' spending (not including Payments to Groups) totals £3558.50.

I will explain some sections.

1. **Walks leading training** £69.22 – the costs associated with four first aid courses arranged for members. The cost of the room hire for one course held in October 2018 was shown in the 2017/18 accounts.
2. **Newsletters/publicity** £311.36. £200 - as in past years the advert in Notts Guided Walks programme. £111.36 – expenses in attending promotional events.
3. **Campaigns/casework** £1165.96 – this year very much more work has gone into establishing Rights of Way. This is important work.
4. **Practical work** £192 – cost of waymark discs for Robin Hood Way Association.
5. **Other** £818.35 – a new promotional event gazebo for use by Area and Groups cost £688 and £130 was the cost of hosting the visit of Vanessa Griffiths (Ramblers CEO).

Distributing funds to Groups

As reported at the 2018 AGM, there was a shortfall of funding from Central Office for Groups of £870. This amount was received in 2019. However there were other adjustments re the funding to/for Groups from Central Office in 2019 giving rise to a net imbalance of £563. During 2019 Area assisted one Group who had a short term funding problem, however it should be noted that 82% of that assistance has now been returned to Area and will be reflected in the 2019/20 accounts.

Independent Examination of Accounts

At the time of writing this report the Area accounts have not yet been examined by an independent examiner but I do have an offer for this work to be carried out.

As previously reported Neil Stafford has now volunteered and taken over as Area Treasurer.

Jeremy Pratt.

December 2019

Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers (Code NE) - Annual Accounts

Receipts & Payments for Year Ended 30th September 2019

Main					
Receipts	Current yr	Prior yr	Payments	Current yr	Prior yr
From CO (funding)	3,001.84	2,033.32	To CO	-	
From CO (other)	-		To Area	-	
From Area (funding)	-		To Group (funding)	2,438.85	2,903.44
From Area (other)	-		To Group (other)	310.00	
From Group	-		To S/W Council	-	
From S/W Council	-		Walks programmes	-	
T/fer from 'Self-funded'	-		Walks related	-	
Donations	-		Walks leader training	69.22	
Legacies	-		Newsletters/publicity	311.36	200.00
Grants	-		Publication/goods costs	-	
Fundraising	-		Campaigns/casework	1,165.96	557.44
Deposit interest	-		Practical work	192.00	
Investment income	-		Fundraising costs	-	
Publication/goods sales	-		Meetings (inc. AGM)	874.86	823.36
Advert sales	-		Admin	126.75	119.54
Other	-	104.61	Other	818.35	104.61
Total receipts	3,001.84	2,137.93	Total payments	6,307.35	4,708.39
Surplus/(deficit)	- 3,305.51	- 2,570.46			

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	Main	Self-funded	Total	Prior yr
Total receipts	3,001.84	-	3,001.84	2,137.93
Total payments	6,307.35	-	6,307.35	4,708.39
Surplus/(deficit)	- 3,305.51	-	- 3,305.51	- 2,570.46

Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers bank balance as at 30.9.19 was £3999.45

End of Report