

Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers



Annual Report 2021-22

Covering the period 1st October 2021 – 30th September 2022

www.nottsarearamblers.org.uk

AREA OFFICERS' REPORTS

AREA CHAIR (Sue Rick)

In my first 8 months as Area Chair I have attended Central Office Area Leadership discussion sessions including Meet the Paths Team, G.D.P.R., Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and updates on changes to Assemble.

I met the new Regional Engagement Officer for the Midlands & East, Claire Watkins recently on Zoom and discussed the problems facing most groups such as filling Committee posts, finding walk leaders & recruiting younger members as a priority. It is clear that some sort of strategy is needed to help groups combat these difficulties.

One idea I would suggest to Groups is that it would be good to have group members who are not post holders attend the Area Council meetings to help them understand the structure and develop skills needed for running their groups. Every Group can send a number of members to every Council meeting, although only 2 can vote. If any member would like to attend Council meetings please contact your Group.

Promoting local groups, Ramblers initiatives and raising awareness of Ramblers in general at the Nottinghamshire County Show at Newark and the Southwell Ploughing Match proved popular with the general public and ideas for future events were suggested by participants.

In June I met the Rights of Way team to walk on some of the paths that were now on the definitive map due to the work of the R.O.W. team. An incredible amount of work has been done by Steve Parkhouse to register these claims throughout the County and beyond which is much appreciated and only a small part of what he does. ROW protection and creation is the unique selling point of Ramblers and there should be more emphasis on it nationally.

I have been involved with the issues involving the Ravenshead & Hucknall Group (see Area Secretary's Report) and attended the Committee meeting of another Group to provide advice. If any Group has an issue of concern please approach Area Officers who are very willing to offer advice and assistance if required. No Group is alone; we are all part of the family of Ramblers. I am working closely with our new Groups Officer on how we can identify issues before they become serious. This is particularly important as several Groups have difficulty finding Officers.

I am working on buying Ramblers Area branded clothing for people to wear at Shows and for the ROW team when working in the countryside. Every Group has its own logo and can buy its own T-shirts, fleeces, caps, etc.

The last few months have been challenging as I am also Chair of Mansfield & Sherwood Group but I have enjoyed working with other Groups and discovering more about the structure and working of Ramblers. I would thank all Area Officers for their support and help as I have been growing into my new role.

AREA SECRETARY (Judith Anson)

The **Area AGM** was a success and all the better for being in person – the high attendance reflected that. Kate Ashbrook was the Board of Trustees representative and an entertaining and lively speaker. Nottingham Group provided excellent walks and a very well organised event. The food was enjoyed by all but special mention needs to be made of the tiramasu made by Adrian Amer. It was good to see Marion Staniforth but the absence of Alex was keenly felt.

New **Officers** were elected at the AGM. Jim Norris was thanked for his service as Area Chair and Sue Rick was elected as the new Chair. Diana Munro came forward as Area Membership Secretary and I was grateful to pass this on after many years. After the meeting Alex Ellis came forward as Groups Officer and was co-opted. The post of Publicity Officer remains vacant. The AGM is reminded that all Officers stand down at every AGM and if any member is interested in taking a post they should contact me.

Area Council resumed in person following a vote and it was good to meet people again. The discussion sessions after the business session have been on varied topics. In October 2021 Dave Hobson led a discussion on stiles, the standards to which they should be built and how Ramblers could follow up poor or dangerous stiles. The April topic was “to Book or Not to Book” led by Janet Ross. This allowed Groups to share their views on whether walkers should have to book to attend a walk. July’s Area Council was held on the hottest ever day and the topic was abandoned until October when Sue Rick led a session on walk leader recruitment and the problems experienced by some Groups.

The **new Ramblers brand** was launched and was well received. Regrettably there was no funding to Areas and Groups for this change and the Area Treasurer’s Report sets out our costs in rebranding our eventing tent. The other promised changes – to the Ramblers website and the replacement of GWEM by Walks Manager have still not happened. This is particularly annoying, since a number of us spent time over the Christmas/New Year 2021/22 producing the Area contribution. All Groups expected the Walks Manager to begin in April 2022. Although the ‘beta’ Website can be viewed there is no indication of when either of these will be introduced.

The **risk management** requirement of completing a form, stored for 3 years continues to be controversial and has been identified by Groups as a factor in the decline in number of walk leaders. Despite this being raised in 2 motions at General Council and the Board indicating it would be reviewed, the statements from Central Office make it clear that a written risk assessment must be produced for every walk. For a detailed discussion please see RamblersNET; I would recommend that all members join RamblersNET to join discussions.

General Council in 2022 was a disappointing format as it was a single day only open to delegates and not visitors. This changed the nature of the event which should be where all Areas have the chance to meet and exchange ideas in addition to the official business. Although it could be argued that in 2022, the Covid restrictions were not lifted in time this does not apply to 2023. A motion to 2022 GC asked for a return to the 2 day format. Predictably, with the time being so limited and part used for an unscheduled discussion, only half the motions from Areas were considered. This motion was out of time and was remitted to the Board. Regrettably the 2023 GC is also only 1 day so the motion was not acted upon. Nottinghamshire Area has always paid for 2 visitors to attend General Council in addition to the 2 voting members. This allows members to meet other Ramblers members and understand the democracy and decision making process of Ramblers. In my view allowing only 2 voting members from each Area is a backward step.

Area Officers have been involved in the future of the **Ravenshead and Hucknall Group** which had been unable to form a Committee. Letters were sent to all members of the Group asking for people to come forward to secure the future of the Group. This was unsuccessful. Although outside the timescale of this report, a vote will be taken at January's Area Council which will determine the future of the Group.

The Area Chair has referred to the work we have been involved with as part of the **Area Cluster**. This has been valuable and has allowed Areas to share information and contact Officers to discuss topics of mutual interest. I have spoken to other Areas about Flexigroups and path maintenance. The number of Area Liaison staff has been increased for 3 to 5 which is beneficial.

Ramblers appointed a **new CEO** in year, Ross Maloney and Ross hopes to visit Nottinghamshire in early 2023. I am on a CO Theory of Change Working Group.

Another **photographic competition** was held in 2021 with prizes awarded at last year's AGM. Some of the photos have been included in this report. Thanks to Cotswold Outdoor who provided a first prize of walking poles, to Joyce Pedersen who presented a jigsaw to the 5 prize winners and to Neil Stafford who gave an A4 print of each photograph and a large size to the winner. The prizes for the 2022 competition will be awarded at this AGM.



Winner, 2021 Photo competition – A Misty Stroll by Annick Bootman

Notts Ramblers and Groups had a presence at both the **Nottinghamshire County Show** and the **Southwell Ploughing Match** with interest shown in walking and the countryside. Groups gave out leaflets about their walks and talked about rights of way issues. The Ramblers Don't Lose Your Way initiative was a frequently asked question. Thanks to all those Groups who attended and made both events a success.

Adrian Amer, Area Vice-Chair is hoping to establish a **working party on climate change** and the environment. Please contact Adrian if you would like to join.

I would particularly like to **thank the Area Officers** for their support. Many of them work outside their job roles to ensure that Area functions and can assist Groups. I mention particularly Neil Stafford who is willing to help with any task from repairing the props for the Shows to advising on policy and Sue Jones whose assistance in producing this Annual Report has been invaluable. Area Officers work as a Team which is essential to a vibrant and sustainable Area.

Last, but not least, thank-you to the Southwell Group for hosting this AGM. Rushcliffe Group will be hosting the 2024 AGM.

AREA RIGHTS OF WAY SECRETARY (Steve Parkhouse)

A very busy year in terms of the number of issues on the go. Here is a small selection:

Top of the List - Successful Complaint to Ombudsman – this was based on 6 cases where **Directs** had been obtained from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). These set a deadline for the County Council to decide applications but all were well overdue. Also made a case about the ever-increasing backlog of cases. During the complaint period the County Council made major progress on most of the 6 cases, but the Ombudsman found against them on the increasing backlog and there will be two years of monitoring to ensure that action is taken to put measures in place to reduce the backlog. Staffordshire County Council have also had a judgement against them. The two cases are a major change as previously Councils had been able to say they lacked resources. The Planning Inspectorate has also become much more critical in their Direct judgements. Watch this space.....

Active Travel road campaigns

- A52 – Still waiting to hear if funding has been awarded to replace the existing road crossing bridleway with proper Active Travel route through the underpass.
- A46 – Major problems with the widening of the A46 through Newark focussed on the complex A1, A46 & A17 interchange. One Active Travel route had been missed off the plans and another two will have significantly increased journey times for users on foot. Why when the Governments climate targets promise more Active Travel options do only motor vehicles qualify for reduced journey times, whilst the rest have their journeys made slower and far less pleasant! An Active Travel Working Party has been formed with National Highways, their contractors, County Council and the Active Travel Group to look at meeting identified needs for active travel with other funding because National Highways have stated that there is no more money included in the £0.5 billion road budget for providing better Active Travel routes. Watch this space.....

Major ROW Cases

- East Stoke & Elston footpaths PINS case - one where I was the case officer. No objections to proposed change so now awaits the Inspector's Decision Report. A win.
- Attenborough to Long Eaton bridleway network – won PINS appeal – Derbyshire County Council have to make Order for all the routes. A win.
- Trent Hills footpath – still waiting for commencement date – Now listed as the Case Officer.

- Kings Clipstone footpaths – now sent to PINS - another one where I am the Case Officer.

Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) Application made in Nottinghamshire

- Pleasley to Mansfield Woodhouse (Meden Trail) BW
- Selston to Pinxton BW
- Bassingfield to Tollerton BW
- Gotham to Ratcliffe on Soar FP & BW
- Farndon FP network
- Langford FP

Volunteers

- Monthly Zoom meetings for ROW volunteers continue and have started monthly report on issues.
- Way-marking – proving enjoyable activity with 2 or 3 going out to walk the routes and discuss where waymarks and yellow top posts are needed. Volunteers have been busy checking the Trent Valley Trail as the first project.
- We have written out our own Notts Ramblers Solar Array Mitigation for Developers document – Central Office have taken much of this for their National Policy

Other things

Lincolnshire – made 150 applications in a year – a massive effort. Also seem to have become a go to person for Central Office staff, whether on access issues or Mailchimp newsletters or use of Zoom.

The BHS made an award to Notts Areas Ramblers for our work improving the bridleway network.

You can find out more about the Don't Lose Your Way project, and Steve Parkhouse's vital role in improving and protecting our footpath network by going to the November issue of Walk magazine, or follow this link <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/News/Walk-magazine/Current-issue/2022/November/Winter-2022/dlyw>

AREA COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER (Sue Jones)

Many of the national issues I have reported on over the past year have been impacted by the recent changes in leadership and ministerial roles in the Government, with the resultant lack of decisions and U-turns resulting in grave concern among charities concerned with the environment, including the Ramblers.

National issues:

1. Police, Crime, Courts and Sentencing Act – this was passed in April 2022. For Ramblers and other environmental groups, there is major concern about curbs to peaceful protest and the criminalisation of trespass. As we know, the Ramblers is credited with the most successful direct action in modern history with the mass trespass on Kinder Scout in

1932 which is said to have led to the creation of the UK's national parks and walkers' right to roam. Hopefully we will not be impacted by this controversial legislation.

2. Environment Act - The first dedicated Environment Act for nearly 30 years was passed in November 2021. Thankfully after campaigning by environmental groups, a legal target framework was introduced covering nature, water, air and waste, and a pledge for stronger protection of ancient woodlands. However the Act was disappointing for us as ramblers. Proposed amendments for legally-binding targets for public access, tabled on behalf of the Open Spaces Society, were rejected.

Recently there has been a number of Government announcements that will have a negative impact on the environment if they are carried out. These include environmental deregulation resulting in a reduction in environmental protections, a relaxation of planning regulations and the release of greenbelt for development. The whole thing is currently a bit of a mess!

3. Environmental Land Management schemes (Elms) - despite the unveiling of schemes such as the Sustainable Farming Incentive, the Landscape Recovery and Local Nature Recovery where farmers will be paid to rewild land, there was no mention of provision of funds for public access. Yet this was public money to be given to farmers to provide public benefits, and the pandemic has highlighted the importance of spending time in green spaces and connecting with nature for our health and wellbeing. The user groups will keep fighting for this.

In addition, although Elms were in the election manifesto as a means to promote nature recovery and help England reach its net zero target, the government may want to return to unconditional subsidies for farmers where they will be paid per acre of land, no matter how well they care for it.

Local issues:

1. A52 Active Travel Partnership - as a result of our lobbying, the National Highways (NH) team ran a feasibility study to assess the requirements for crossings at the A52 between Wheatcroft and Nottingham Knight Islands. The report from the study was published and the MP for Rushcliffe organised a meeting with local residents and another meeting with National Highways, both of which we attended. As a result, NH have applied for further funding to take the project forward and are awaiting the result.
2. Mill Hill Quarry, Barton in Fabis - earlier this year, following over 1000 objections, the developers withdrew their application for a proposed quarry at such a sensitive location. They had failed to address over 100 problems with the proposals, but are reconsidering and may resubmit the application in 12 months.
3. HS2 phase 2b – Birmingham to Leeds. The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands published in November last year revealed that, instead of extending to Leeds, HS2 from the West Midlands will stop at East Midlands Parkway with trains joining existing lines to serve Nottingham and Derby city centres. This has implications for the transformation plan at Toton and Chetwynd Barracks as Toton will no longer be the site of the HS2 Hub. In addition, the MoD review and closure of Chetwynd Barracks has been pushed back by two years causing further uncertainty for the Masterplan. There is the possibility of new development at Toton being served by a new regional station, which must be half funded by the private sector.

We await further news, especially as there is a confusion over whether the other part of phase 2 (Birmingham to Manchester) will go ahead.

4. Fracking - planning permission at the Misson site in North Notts – bordering a Notts Wildlife Trust SSSI - expired last year and an application to extend consent was refused. Various government U-turns later, we may be in a position where fracking is not going to happen anywhere in the UK.

AREA MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (Diana Munro)

	GROUP	01.10.21	01.10.22	Net gain/loss	Affiliates
NE01	Newark	124	165	41	8
NE02	Nottingham	309	311	2	2
NE03	Retford	89	84	-5	1
NE04	Ravenshead & Hucknall	102	103	1	1
NE05	Worksop	66	78	12	1
NE07	Rushcliffe	322	329	7	3
NE08	Broxtowe	177	199	22	2
NE09	Gedling	190	185	-5	1
NE10	Mansfield & Sherwood	121	145	24	2
NE11	Southwell	77	90	13	1
NE14	Collingham	58	59	1	0
NE15	Vale of Belvoir	101	111	10	0
NE50	Notts Derbys Walking Group	184	176	-8	3
NE51	One Step Walkers	234	230	-4	10
NE70	Robin Hood Way	3	3	0	4
NE96	Not in a group	58	66	8	0
	AREA TOTAL	2,215	2,334	+119	39
	NATIONAL TOTAL	101,130	105,183	+4,053	

Area Membership Numbers

This has gone up and down over the year, but the overall increase of 119 from this time last year is positive. Group membership secretaries will know how pleasing it always is to welcome new members, but this is often offset by members leaving for various reasons.

National Membership Numbers

Nationally things are definitely on the up! Having dipped to 98,717 in October 2020, this year's figure is approaching the October 2016 figure of 105,990. It is to be hoped that this time next year the national total could be back up to and exceeding the October 2015 figure of 107,369.

Affiliated Members

Members are reminded that they can become affiliated members of other groups in the country and therefore be on their mailing list whilst remaining a full member of their original Group. Currently this can only be done by ringing Membership Services at Central Office.

AREA TREASURER (Neil Stafford)

The annual accounts are presented below, with Income and Expenditure categorised in accordance with the Ramblers guidelines.

In accordance with directives from Central Office, from the start of the 2021-22 financial year all income and expenditure related to the Don't Lose Your Way (DLYW) project had to be separated out and regarded as Restricted Funds. This is because the funding of DLYW comes from the People's Postcode Lottery, Cotswold, and other sponsors, and not from membership fees. In order to enable sensible comparisons the 2020-21 data has been adjusted to follow this new format.

Restricted Funds		
Receipts	2021-22	2020-21
Grants	1,100.00	1,200.00
From DLYW Project	1,200.00	1,200.00
Total receipts	2,300.00	2,400.00
Expenditure		
DLYW	525.16	1,307.22
Surplus/(deficit)	1,774.84	1,092.78
Main Funds		
Receipts	2021-22	2020-21
Income from Ramblers Central Office	3,950.00	5,778.12
Donations	17.00	
Total receipts	3,967.00	5,778.12
Expenditure		
Group Funding	2,950.00	3,078.12
Newsletters/publicity	442.76	115.56
Campaigns/casework	97.70	88.35
Meetings (inc. AGM)	953.10	537.03
Admin	55.53	25.15
Other		125.00
Total payments	4,499.09	3,969.21
Surplus/(deficit)	(532.09)	1,808.91

In accordance with Ramblers financial directives, the accounts have been subject to Independent Examination, the signed certificate is shown below.

Summary of financial year for Independent Examiner

Summary	Restricted	Main	Self-funded	Total
Total receipts	2,300.00	3,967.00	-	6,267.00
Total payments	525.16	4,499.09	-	5,024.25
Closing cash balance	2,974.84	3,562.08	-	6,536.92
Net assets/liabilities (funds)	2,974.84	3,562.08	-	6,536.92

Having carried out procedures in accordance with the Area and Group independent examination guidelines, I consider the " NE "accounts to give a fair representation of the Area's/Group's financial activities for the year to 30 September 2022.

Signed:

A. Bolton

Date:

5 November 2022

Name of examiner:

ANDREW BOLTON

(Alternatively, if you do not wish to print off this sheet please send in a signed copy of your own Area/Group accounts to GB office).

At the end of the financial year the Area bank balance stood at £3,562.08 (excluding restricted funds).

Aside from DLYW, the accounts show two broad functions:

- The costs of running Area
- The distribution of funds to Groups

Costs of Running Area

Area received £1,000 from Ramblers Central Office in 2021-22. This was less than the anticipated expenditure due to the level of reserves. The cost of running Area (excluding Group payments) was £1,549.09.

Points to note:

- Restricted Funds - Grants (£1,100) – secured by the Area RoW Secretary from the British Horse Society in respect of DLYW claims he has made. Ramblers has encouraged RoW secretaries to submit expenses claims to the BHS where appropriate.
- Meetings (£953.10) – includes an annual Zoom licence, which continues to be used regularly by the RoW team and Area Officers. Expenditure has risen with the return to in-person Area Council and Annual General Meeting.
- Newsletters/Publicity (£442.76) – the main reason for the increase in expenditure was the cost (£229) of rebranding of the Area tent. Sadly Central Office were unable to provide any specific funding to Areas or Groups to cover their costs of rebranding work.

Membership Recruitment Initiatives

Area continues to hold £300 to support Group membership recruitment initiatives. Groups are welcome to submit proposals for consideration.

Budget for Financial Year 2022-23

Despite the deliberate underfunding of Area expenditure in 2021-22, the Area reserves are still high in relation to our forecast expenditure in 2022-23. This was reflected in the budget funding request. I am delighted to report that this Budget has been approved by Central Office.

Acknowledgements

Despite the challenges presented by the knock-on effects of the pandemic, thanks to the determined efforts of the Group Treasurers, the budget and annual returns were submitted to Central Office timetables in a timely fashion.

AREA TOURISM AND HERITAGE PATHS OFFICER (Chris Thompson)

It gives me much pleasure to report that whilst this role has had difficulty during this budget year to fully operate, it must be accepted that this role is a completely new post. The Tourism & Heritage Path Officer appreciates the support that he has been given by the Ramblers Notts Area Committee in advice to see this project benefits the interests of the Ramblers in Notts Area.

As you are aware the key aim of this post is to highlight and promote Nottinghamshire as a county rich in a wide heritage giving the opportunities as being full of walking opportunities.

Ramblers Notts Area Communication Committee Walk Leaflets Website

It is hoped that the initiative set up by the Ramblers Communication group to set up a website and asked members if they can assist to write up self-guided family walks covering the whole county of Nottinghamshire is fully supported. This is the best way we can fully highlight our county and I am currently putting together several walk leaflets for publication to the Ramblers Communication website.

In addition, the recent announcement that if members required assistance to put the walk surveys carried out into a finished walk leaflet is warmly supported. This way we hope more members will be prepared to put a walk(s) leaflet together for publication.

Trent Vale Trail

In addition, I have linked up with several partners involved with rambling projects. Firstly, I have gone on the committee of The Trent Vale Trail. This is a multi-user Trail from Newark to Fledborough to link onto a former railway link route to Lincoln. My role is to promote the Trent Vale Trail as a walking route and in this respect we are putting together a series of circular walks promoting the trail. I am delighted that Collingham Group have put together a self-guided family walk off the Trent Vale Trail which also caters for the disabled around the Besthorpe Nature Reserve. I am putting together more walks and it is hoped these will be available during 2023. It must be noted that the Trent Vale Trail has the full support of the local community, and much work is being carried out by a highly active committee to improve the rights of way along the proposed route.

Major Hayman Rooke

In addition, I am working with Sherwood Forest Trust and other partners including RSPB, Denis Hill Heritage Consultant and Mansfield Woodhouse Heritage Link, with a project to promote the 300 years since the birth of Major Hayman Rooke. Major Rooke was a British

soldier and antiquarian who became an antiquary on his retirement from the army. He is famous for his work in Nottinghamshire and the Major Oak Tree at Sherwood Visitors Centre is named after him.

I have been asked to put together some walks promoting the life of Major Hayman Rooke and I am involved in partnership with RSPB and Denis Hill Heritage Consultant in the setting up of a Major Rooke Trail at Sherwood Visitor Centre promoting many of the veteran Oak trees in addition to Major Oak that would have been there in the life of Major Rooke. In addition, a Major Rooke Town Trail at Mansfield Woodhouse (his hometown) is being prepared in partnership with Mansfield Woodhouse Heritage Link and Denis Hill Heritage Consultant, as well as a series of walks promoting the skills of Major Rooke as a surveyor, cartographer painter and his interests in forestry and archaeology. It is hoped most of this work will be completed during 2023.

Promote Confirmed Definitive Rights of Way Claims

Much work has been done over several years claiming “lost way paths”. I am currently putting together a series of walks promoting these new rights of way some of which will take a few years to be included on a current Ordnance Survey map. I am doing this work wishing to also work closely with the Ramblers Notts Area Rights of Way Committee.

Putting together reports highlighting Nottinghamshire Heritage

The success of the role of Area Tourism & Heritage Path Officer would benefit from the support of Ramblers Members and groups to highlight the heritage of Nottinghamshire. I welcomed the advice at a recent Ramblers Area Management meeting that instead of sending out a promotional document which because of the need to fully explain the type of heritage reports this would be too cumbersome; I have now taken the advice of the meeting.

I am now putting together a couple of heritage reports to highlight the type of work that would be suitable. I hope these will go on the Ramblers Notts Area website as soon as possible and create some interest from members/groups to kindly work with us to put together similar heritage reports to promote Nottinghamshire. I hope to complete this work before Christmas so that they can be put onto the Ramblers Notts Area website to highlight suitable material for members to write heritage reports.

The role of the Tourism & Heritage Path officer has many opportunities, and I can confirm much other work is underway and will be promoted when the tasks are available for publication. I lastly hope I will have the support from members and groups to develop this role and see Nottinghamshire is a county well worth visiting due to an excellent website of information it promotes on walking in their county. Thank you.

AREA COMMUNICATIONS SUB-GROUP (Judith Anson)

This has been a difficult year for me - managing without a Publicity Officer, the need for the rebranding and other pressures. It has not been possible to take forward all the projects on the to do list or follow up issues.

Nott's Area Website www.nottsarearamblers.org.uk

Chris Taylor continues to do the ‘mechanics’ of keeping the website updated and also manages Stackmail – the Area generic email system. Sue Jones runs the Facebook page

(see below). I have tried to keep the website updated but have not been able to do this regularly enough.

As I have stated in my Area Secretary's Report we worked hard on the Area contribution to the national Ramblers website – thanks particularly to Dave Hobson for his Robin Hood photos – but the new website is still not operational and no start date is known.

Share your favourite walk with your Ramblers friends.

We all have a favourite Nottinghamshire walk. It may include a significant landmark, or a stunning viewpoint. Why not share it by having it posted on the [self-guided walks section](#) of our website. We are not asking you to write it all up. Simply send us a map (to info@nottsarearamblers.org.uk) with an outline of the route, the start location and points of interest, and we'll do the rest.

Notts Walker

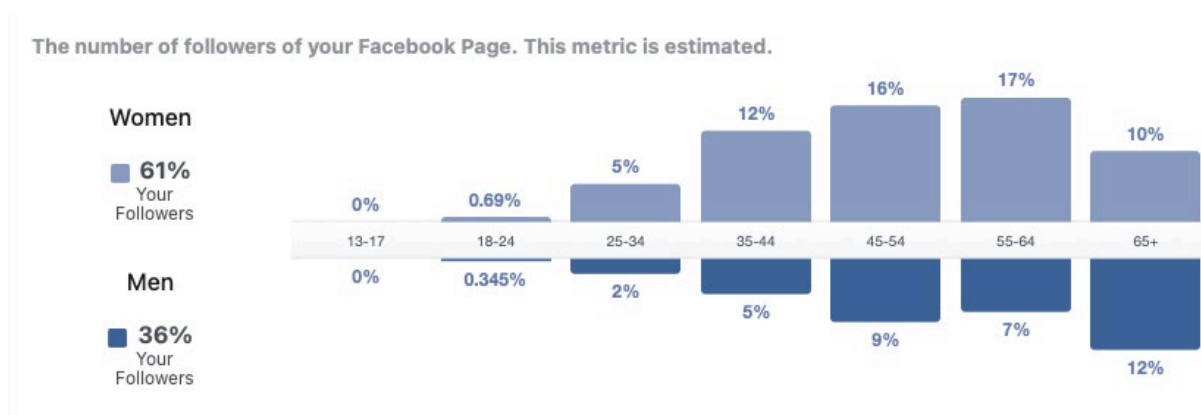
Steve Parkhouse is Newsletter Editor. The opening rate continues to be above 60% and Steve receives regular compliments on the content. The focus on the Nottinghamshire Rights of Way work illustrates what makes Ramblers different from other walking organisations. Ramblers protects rights of way for everyone.

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

Facebook Page – from Sue Jones

Over the past year we have gained 73 new followers to the Area Facebook page and have been sharing the posts of 7 Nottinghamshire groups (recently increased to 8 through Gedling group setting up a FB page). These posts have received a number of 'likes', including from the main Ramblers page (I tag them on the shared posts). This helps to increase the number of people finding out about group walks and events in Nottinghamshire.

A graph of the age range and gender of these followers suggests they are mainly females in the 45-64 age groups. This shows that FB is a good mechanism for targeting this younger age group.



Rushcliffe Ramblers produced a Q&A article about their group and the post on FB received over 270 views. A previous article by Mansfield and Sherwood Group attracted similar interest. I would be very happy to support any groups wanting to produce a short article to post on the Area website/FB to see if it can attract new members.

You do not have to be a member of Facebook to view the page.

www.facebook.com/nottsarearamblers

Publicity

The Nottinghamshire County Show at Newark was a great success. The Robin Hood Way Association joined the stand. The Southwell Ploughing Match was also very well supported (see photo below with the rebranded tent). I would like to thank everyone who helped putting up and taking down the stand at both events and those Groups who attended both events to talk to the public about Ramblers and the importance of rights of way.

I hope a member will come forward as Publicity Officer so we can do more to promote Ramblers in Nottinghamshire.



Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers rebranded tent at the Southwell Ploughing Match

GROUP ANNUAL REPORTS

Broxtowe Group (Keith Jacobs)

A good year for Broxtowe concluded with our AGM on Monday 21st November. Attendance was a little disappointing at 17, but it was a VERY wet night. The existing committee were all re-elected and we were delighted to welcome RM as our new Footpaths Officer and CG as a member of the committee 'without portfolio'. It is most pleasing that we have enlarged our committee and we can now look at a number of advances for the coming year. This

would include more public transport walks, more away stays, more leader training and a higher local profile for Broxtowe Group.

Finances have been well managed and Broxtowe were able to decline the Ramblers grant for this year. The suggested increase in expenses for walking may mean a reconsideration for the coming year.

Membership has risen slightly over the year and we have maintained a full programme of Wednesday and Sunday walks. Several new leaders have emerged over the year, though we are still anxious to recruit more. This would enable a greater variety of walks to suit all needs; distance, difficulty and perhaps different times as well.

Our weekend away in the Gower (based in Swansea), was a great success and we will certainly be seeking more such visits next year.

We look forward to our Christmas walk and meal at the Poppy and Pint on the 14th of December and to meeting Nottingham Group at the same venue!

Collingham Group (Chris Adams)

Our last AGM was on 30th Nov 2021 and resulted in two new members joining the committee, one of whom is taking responsibility as our Web Page Editor. The rest of the committee remains the same.

In December we organised both a Sunday and a Wednesday mince pie and mulled wine walk in our local area.

This year our committee has met four times-in February, April, July and September and our AGM is scheduled for Nov. 22nd. at the community pub in Collingham - invites and agendas have gone out.

In January of this year we had our annual Festive Lunch at the pub in Morton which was well attended.

Our usual programme of fortnightly Sunday walks (target length 7 miles) and monthly Wednesday walks (target length 4 miles with optional lunch) has continued throughout although, unusually, we had a cancellation due to heat and another due to very heavy rain. In this period we have successfully inducted a new walks leader. We are very conscious of the need to find some younger members-our age profile is going very much in the wrong direction!

In August we had our annual Summer Lunch at the Bowls Club in Collingham-we like to invite retired members to this event which they much appreciate and this year we were also able to celebrate the 80th birthday of our oldest walk leader.

Membership of our smallish group has remained steady at 61 but in reality not much more than a third of these are regular walkers. We have maintained our policy of not driving more than 1 hour to a walk and of course we car share where possible. It remains true that the local walks attract more members than those which are further afield. The new Emergency cards have been distributed to all our walkers. We have walked this year in the Lincs. Wolds, the Vale of Belvoir and the Peak District as well as more locally.

I should mention that our February committee meeting was with Chris Thompson from which resulted a walk leaflet for the Trent Valley Trail at Besthorpe.

We are now advertising our walks on the Area website and buying advertising in local media for which we have sufficient funds.

In the course of the year our Treasurer has resigned but we are fortunate to have found a replacement who will be ratified at the AGM.

It is worth noting that despite our name only a minority of our membership lives in Collingham-our current members are quite widely dispersed, not all in Notts, as we are so close to the Lincs. border.

Gedling Group (Jim Norris)

This has been a year of rehabilitation and return to normality. The Committee has stabilised and returned to having physical meetings every two months. Goodbye Zoom!! We have all the key posts filled and at the AGM, held in an actual room, not only did all the existing Committee re-stand but we acquired an additional Committee Member with a key remit to establish our Facebook Group.

We no longer use a printed booklet as our primary means of advertising our walks programme to our members – an improvement to efficiency which we regard as a successful initiative. We think our website walks programme is really quite smart looking.

Our movement into the use of technology has also included establishing a “Whatsapp Group” through which members can opt to exchange and arrange car transport to walk start points.

Things which in the pre lockdown “Old Days” would have been regarded as routine have been reintroduced to our considerable satisfaction – Christmas fuddle, planning for bus trips, an Annual Dinner.

Our walks programme remains comprehensive with regular Sunday Walks and our famous Thursday walks. Our thanks to Chris Thompson for including his walks in our programme. We still run our formidable A Walks and contrary to some rumours it is possible for ordinary members to go on these without having to pass a rigid and demanding fitness test first.

We do still have the issue of difficulty of finding Walks Leaders and, yes, this does seem to have a link with the matter of risk assessments. Still, somehow or other we manage to get by.

Mansfield and Sherwood Group (Sue Rick)

We have had another excellent year with 28 new members unfortunately there were 34 leavers including 1 deceased, a total decrease of 6 on last year. However the new members have been very active and some have volunteered to be walk leaders and for the committee.

The publicity officer post was filled this year which has enabled us to raise our profile in the local community and on social media through newspaper articles and sharing successes.

We started the year 2021 year 18 months into the Covid lockdown, thankfully this year we have been able to car share which has enabled us to have more varieties of walk. We started the year with a visit to Chesterfield Crooked Spire. We have had a successful year with the completion of the Cotswolds Way in May which was delayed for 2 years because of Covid, celebrations took place in the hot tub afterwards! The group completed the Robin

Hood Way long distance path which Russ started during lockdown when we were unable to go out of the county, we celebrated the end with a drink at the Trip to Jerusalem.

This year we've tried all inclusive coach trips with Alpha & Daish's which has worked really well as with a growing group it had become very difficult to book evening meals and transport the group. We had our usual YHA weekend at Easter in Edale with glorious weather. We continue to share coach trips with Worksop group and enjoyed a trip to the National Arboretum which we organised and to Brimham Rocks & Fountains Abbey which Worksop organised. In the summer we had lots of open garden & well dressing walks with lunch afterwards. On the summer solstice day we walked into Chatsworth from Baslow to see the Burning Man Sculpture exhibition and watch the sunset from the hunting tower.

In August we held a memorial walk at Malham in Yorkshire for Alex Staniforth one of our founder members and long standing post holder. Malham was Alex's favourite area, we invited Marion, Alex's wife to come with us for the day and she was able to visit her friends & go out for lunch.

The social & walks calendar has been busy and included many combined walking & social events including a visit to the Crooked Spire at Chesterfield, bowling, the Christmas tree walk, Pantomime, Fine dining, Tissington Hall, Narrow-boat trip and excellent cream tea on the Chesterfield canal. The adventurous amongst us had a White water rafting trip at Holme Pierrepont followed the week after by canoeing and paddle boarding. The Paddle boarding was very easy apparently!

We purchased litter picking equipment thanks to a donation from the Chair of Notts County Council and formed a litter picking group. The group meets monthly and we have had lots of positive comments from members of the public and we are hoping to capitalise on this by having some group cards printed to hand out. The group chooses a different area each month according to where our group members have identified hot spots; there is a lot of litter out there so a never ending job.

The group received a large anonymous donation this year which stipulated it was to be used for a bus trip or Christmas party for our members. So in September we had a coach trip to Flamborough Head and Bridlington with a large group walking from Flamborough along the coast path to Bridlington and the shorter walkers catching the land train from Sewerby into Bridlington followed by fish & chips. We were lucky to see lots of seals & other wildlife near Flamborough. The ones who weren't able to walk so far had a day in Bridlington.

In January Steve Parkhouse ROW officer and I met up with Mansfield MP Ben Bradley to talk about Rights of Way issues in our area including Pleasley Vale, Cuckney and Mansfield Woodhouse.

We have started having some open committee meetings where any member can attend to show our members what's involved in running the group and increase knowledge about Ramblers in general. This has resulted in some people coming forward to help with different events. Encouragingly for our group we continue to have quite a few younger members joining and becoming walk leaders. We also had a new member volunteering to help at the Southwell Ploughing Match with some of our other members, a very cold day with lots of layers being applied.

We made our recent A.G.M. more of a social event which resulted in attendance more than doubling. We provided a long and a short walk followed by an hour to have lunch and eat all of the delicious cakes everyone brought in. We had a raffle and bring & buy stall for unused

walking equipment which members new and regular found useful. Our current Treasurer Richard Lord has decided to resign as of September 2023 so we need to recruit a new Treasurer before then and are looking at trying to train someone to take over.

Newark Group (Carol Wilkinson)

Newark Ramblers is a wonderful group and I am proud to be a member. Everyone is so friendly and helpful and guests are often heard to say how welcome they feel when they join us on one of our walks.

This has been a much better year for us. Covid restrictions were eased and we were able to get back to our normal walking routine. We did, however, decide to keep two walks on Wednesdays and this has proved very popular offering a choice of location and length of walk.

Our Walk Leaders are wonderful; they offer a wide variety of walks all over Nottinghamshire and into Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire. We really do appreciate all that they do. Several members took part in an on-line map reading course which they found very useful.

Our Car Sharing app seems to be working very well and anyone who wants to car share is welcome to use this app.

We are keeping a copy of the Risk Assessment for each walk as required by Central Office.

Sadly, one of our former members, Beverley Owen, died during the year. She had already arranged to have a plaque made and this has been placed in Newark Cemetery. The collection at her funeral was used to have her name inserted in the Book of Remembrance at the Crematorium.

During the year several members have been walking the Robin Hood Way section by section. This has been much enjoyed by those taking part and many members have now completed the walk. We shall put a few sections on the programme next year for those who have missed some of the walks so that they can complete the RHW too.

Whilst most of our walks start at a given point and members make their own way there, there are also Train Walks where we all meet at the station and reach the start point by rail. This year we have enjoyed visits to Nottingham, Lincoln, Market Rasen and Matlock.

Joyce, our Chair, has been involved in setting up a Walking for Health group sponsored by the Co-op. We have a small group of walk leaders who take people on a short walk twice a month. We are hoping that some of these walkers will also join Newark Ramblers.

We were expecting changes to the way in which we add walks to the main computer (GWEM) in March but this has been delayed. However, the pilot scheme has now ended and we are expecting these changes in the New Year.

A group of members enjoyed a residential visit to the HF house in Malhamdale in May. The weather was lovely and everyone really enjoyed the various walks.

Our website is a real asset to the group providing information on walks and lots of photographs as well as routes and social events. Our thanks go to Roger but also to Nic and Brigid who assist him.

We have continued to submit an article to Use Locally every other month throughout the year and these have been well received by both members and the general public. This is an easy way of promoting our group.

During the year we have enjoyed several social events including:

Visits to the Robin Hood Theatre to see 'Vicar of Dibley', 'Breezeblock Park', 'Perks of the Job', 'Breaking the Code' and 'Teechers'. In December a group of members is going to see 'Theft'.

We have also visited the Palace Theatre to see Singing in the Rain and to Coddington Village Hall to listen to Mumbo Jumbo and Steel Rhyme.

More than 40 members enjoyed a walk followed by Christmas Lunch at the Tawny Owl. This year we shall be going to Edingley to enjoy our Christmas meal.

Once again, we were represented at the Christmas Tree Festival in Newark Parish Church. This is a really good way of promoting the group and a really lovely thing to be involved in. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to the planning and decorating of the tree. We are taking part in the Christmas Tree Festival 2022 with the theme 'Santa's Boots are made for Walking'. We have a team ready to decorate the tree and another to take it down.

Our Boxing Day walk was featured in Newark Advertiser which was really good publicity for us.

We took part in a Senior Citizen's Fair at Balderton Village Community Hall organised by our local MP, Robert Jenrick. We had plenty of helpers and Roger brought along a computer showing a rolling programme of photos from our walks which was greatly admired by members of the public.

We also enjoyed a Quiz Night at Coddington Village Hall. This was well attended.

A ceilidh held in Norwell Village Hall at the end of September was a huge success with 44 people attending. The band was fantastic and we all enjoyed a lovely supper.

During the year members have taken turns to arrange an evening meal out at a local pub or restaurant and this continues to be eagerly anticipated each month.

We have lots of things planned for the future including a Christmas Party Fuddle and planting a Nottingham Cob Tree in Sconce Park to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

I have to say, it's not until you begin to write down everything that we have done over the past year that you realise what a great time it is to be a member of Newark Ramblers.

Nottingham Group (Barrie Dale)

We started the year full of optimism given the gradual reintroduction of our walking post Covid. A full walks programme was prepared and printed with each walk organiser contributing to a thoughtful programme for the year. Our webmaster pulled all the stops out to organise, print and publish a professional booklet. However, as my report will amplify, we reached a critical situation regarding the viability of our coach programme given that the cost of our coaches increased substantially yet coach attendance by members was insufficient to cover the cost of running coach fortnightly outings.

The Wednesday walks programme was always well attended while numbers on the Sunday walks proved disappointing.

As Chair, I have been involved and attended all four of our quarterly meetings along with the additional Extraordinary Committee Meeting on 28th July 2022 to determine what to do about the previous few weeks of losses sustained on our coach walks.

Over the course of the last year, a number of issues have arisen and I will have to be selective in which ones I include or this report will be of excessive length. However, I am conscious that the wider membership may not be aware of the many issues that the Committee discusses on a regular basis and an annual report is probably the main way to keep you informed. I will exclude the regular inevitable issues that occur and focus on a few substantial ones that have occupied much of our time.

Key issues discussed

Coach Walks

As stated above, a combination of fuel costs and a fall in coach walk attendance meant that some fortnightly coaches lost money. This was not sustainable in the medium term even though we kept going with the occasional losses for some time.

Our Secretary and I called an Extraordinary Committee Meeting on 28th July 2022 to determine what to do. Each committee member was invited to suggest options and they responded with a range of ideas. I collated all these and at this meeting we discussed and voted on each one. A lot were very thoughtful and imaginative. Some got passed and others rejected. The critical one, given the urgency of the of the coach financial situation, was to operate the coach once a month rather than once a fortnight. This has proved successful as an interim measure. Coach numbers have improved and coach attendees are aware of the need to continue to book on our coaches if they want to continue. (Late cancellations have not helped on at least one occasion which makes life harder for the coach organiser.) We will run a three month walks programme for 2023 incorporating monthly coach walks providing numbers continue at current rates.

Walk Leaders

A shortage of walk leaders makes life difficult for walk organisers and we have suffered a decline in members prepared to lead walks. It can be a time-consuming business involving recce walks and the degree of responsibility involved. My thanks go to walk organisers and walk leaders for the work they do.

The issue of risk assessments involved often comes up but, as our Area Secretary wrote to me when I flagged up my concern about a shortage of walk leaders, she said a risk assessment is only a recce written down, i.e. a few observations on the nature of the walks and obstacles.

Committee Membership

A number of committee members are stepping down without at this stage any members willing to replace them. This is a real concern. Hopefully, we will get a more positive response at the AGM. Without a response, it is questionable whether we can fill the vacancies that need to be occupied in what is a large rambling group. Please participate to keep the group going. It provides a lot of pleasure for a lot of our members.

Area AGM - 6th February 2022

We hosted a gathering of all the groups in the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Area at Trowell Village Hall. Everyone on our Committee pulled together and the feedback was that it was a well organised and productive meeting.

May I thank all the committee members (too many to mention) who have supported me this year. Each of them took responsibility for their roles. Without their knowledge and hard work I would not have been able to help run Nottingham Ramblers as the office of Chair requires. In this regard, I would like to thank our Secretary on his knowledge of Ramblers' protocol and for the secretarial duties he has performed over my three years, always to the highest standard.

Nottingham and Derby Walking Group

No report received

One Step Walkers Group (Robert Ingram)

This is my fourth year as Chair of this group and I will not be seeking election again this year. Walking and events are virtually back to normal after the Covid lockdowns. We have now removed all covid restrictions from our website and Risk Assessments, but are still following government and Ramblers guidelines.

Walks – We have four walk coordinators who arrange walks for:

- Saturdays
- Sundays
- Weekdays
- Evenings

Routes are normally planned and recce'd by the walk leaders. Risk Assessments are produced by the walk coordinators based on information from the walk leaders and recorded on the OSW website. Details of each walk and Risk Assessment are published on the OSW website with a registration facility. When the number limit is reached, no one else can register. We normally have walks on Saturdays, Sundays, week days, week day evenings through the summer and moonlight evening walks through the winter. Walks can be on any day of the week and any evening. We have 49 registered walk leaders, but not many lead walks on a regular basis.

Walks Attendance – Allowing walk leaders to determine walk numbers has encouraged more people to lead walks. This means new walk leaders can limit the numbers attending and this is also useful where there are limited car park spaces. The maximum number that can be selected is 99, but we recommend not exceeding 30 for safety reasons. Walk leader limits generally range from 10 to 30. Walk numbers have been lower than expected this year. This may be because other walking groups have started up in the area and Meetup groups are very popular.

Accounts – The true balance in our accounts was £1351.61 on this date of 15th November 2022. This sum is still a little high due to having less activity during the covid 19 situation. [Note- the amount of money in our account varies significantly through the year depending on event deposit outgoings and event payment incomings]

Weekends away – We have managed to arrange a few weekends and long weekends away this year.

Holidays – We had a number of long distance walking holidays this year. There have been some misunderstandings about how weekend and holiday events should be organised to give equal opportunity to all members to book. Hopefully this has now been resolved.

Socials & Events – We ran our Navigation Workshop at Bonsal on 23rd July which produced some new walk leaders. Our Summer Party walking event was at Alstonefield on 6th August with an attendance of about 70 people. We ran a First Aid Workshop on 6th October at Mickleover Community Centre with training from the British Red Cross.

Membership – Current membership is 240, with 9 affiliated members. We continue to get membership enquiries and new members replace those that have left Ramblers.

GDPR – Our Website Officer is very familiar with GDPR and ensures all our processes comply with the regulations.

Newsletter – The OSW Mailchimp newsletter is published once a week, reminding members about planned walks and events. We also list the last months walk leaders, thanking them for their efforts. Current circulation is 262 with a readership of 159.

Facebook – We have two Facebook accounts, one private, for OSW or other Ramblers members and one with public access. Facebook 1 is used to arrange casual socials, sharing pictures of walks and events and has 730 people registered. Facebook 2 is to advertise our events to the public or other Ramblers members and has 825 people registered.

AGM - Our AGM will be held on the 1st December 2022.

Summary - Since Covid restrictions have been lifted, walk numbers have not increased as much as expected but membership numbers have held up quite well. Finally, thank you to the committee and group members who volunteer their time to help us all enjoy the walking and social events we organise through the year.

Ravenshead & Hucknall Group

Please see comments in Area Chair and Area Secretary reports

Retford Group

No report received

Rushcliffe Group (Mike Stock)

I am pleased to report that we have been able to provide a full programme of walks, social events and holidays for our members. It was with some relief that the restrictions imposed by government during the pandemic are hopefully behind us.

We have resumed in-person meetings. Although Zoom virtual meetings were invaluable when we could not meet, I felt that they lacked the spontaneity and personal interaction of in-person meetings. If the need arises, we would not hesitate to use Zoom in future.

We had our first indoor social gathering for two years when 74 members and guests attended the twice-postponed Christmas lunch at Colwick Hall.

In July 2022, we visited Burton-on-Trent for a guided tour of the National Brewing Museum. We learnt a lot about the brewing process and various common sayings emanating from the

brewing trade (e.g. mind your p's and q's). The visit was preceded by a morning walk from Barton Marina.

The final social event of the year was a train trip to London in September for a guided tour titled 'Royal Walk.'

We have cleared our backlog of postponed holidays starting in November 2021 with a four-night stay at Dovedale. This was followed by our spring weekend at Keswick. 8 hardy walkers climbed Scafell Pike while the rest of us had slightly less strenuous walks. We finally completed the backlog when 8 members flew to Croatia for a memorable week's walking based at Porec.

Finally, for our autumn weekend away, 30 members descended on Bridlington. The highlight of the weekend was a 13 mile walk starting from Bempton and following the coastal path via Flamborough Head to Bridlington. The only advice to the walk leader was to keep the sea on your left! Although we were scattered around the town in B&B's, we met up on both nights at two excellent restaurants for dinner.

We have had a full programme of walks ably led by our walk leaders. We have continued with the booking system and encouraged car sharing wherever possible. Our walk co-ordinator Lorraine has finally decided to relinquish her role. She has been organising our walk programme for 22 years, which is quite remarkable.

Whilst membership numbers remained constant throughout the pandemic, the latest membership numbers indicate that we have had a net loss of 10 members. In association with Vale of Belvoir and Rushcliffe Move and Mingle, we have launched a publicity initiative to attract more walkers.

We keep in touch with members through the quarterly publication of a newsletter providing reports on various activities, helpful advice about reporting defective stiles, notice of events and general chit-chat.

None of these activities would be possible but for the hard work of the walk leaders and committee, particularly the holiday organisers and the social secretaries.

Southwell Group (Dave Johnson)

It seems a long time since we have had a normal year but since our trip to Norfolk in the Autumn of 2021 and our AGM on the 11th October 2021 we have managed a full programme of walks and social events throughout 2022.

Over the winter of 2021/2022 we continued to produce quarterly programmes with longer and shorter walks on alternate weeks and the reintroduction of Sunday walking to encourage new members from those that still work, for one reason. Our summer programme was published in a six-month block and the winter programme for 2022/2023 likewise. We did have a Christmas walk and lunch in December 2021 although the lunch had to be individual rather than shared. Approximately 2 dozen people participated which was encouraging.

We held a very enjoyable BBQ at the second attempt, the first being rained off, would you believe, with the normal shared delicious salads and desserts.

Two highly successful minibreaks have taken place, both to new areas. In the spring we visited the Brecon Beacons staying at Nythfa House and in the autumn we visited Abingworth Hall in the South Downs National Park. Both are HF establishments. On both a

full programme of both long and short walks was offered. We “bagged” the highest peak in the south of the UK, *Pen y Fan* at 2908ft, several hill forts with a wealth of history in both locations, a canal side walk because it rained which shortened our walking day, a medieval church with 13th century wall paintings and some tremendous scenery. Keith provided a driver service for visiting places of interest for those who choose to participate in this way.

We have also supported Area at the Southwell Ploughing Match in 2021 and 2022 and the Nottinghamshire Country Show in May. We are planning Nottinghamshire Area’s AGM on 5th February 2023, it will be held in Epperstone Village Hall and we will need the support of members for walks, cakes, refreshments and setting out and tidying up the hall please.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our committee, Ian (Treasurer), Dinah (Secretary/ Membership), Lynn (Publicity), Sandy, Christine and Pamela (Programme), Peter (website/ Facebook) for their support and tireless work for all our benefit. I should also recognize the hard work done by walk leaders who give of their time to plan, recce and then lead the walk.

Vale of Belvoir Group (John Young)

The last year has seen most of us return to a fair degree of normality after the tumultuous 2+ years of Covid. That said we all acknowledge Covid can and still does impact upon us all (usually when we least expect it). A side effect of Covid which we think is happening is the reluctance of many of us to commit to planned longer term activities i.e. leading walks many months in advance. This has resulted in a much increased effort by the walks coordinators and committee as a whole to produce and maintain our walk programme – thank you to everyone involved. Prior to Covid we could easily produce a 6 month programme. At present we publish 1 or 2 months ahead on our blog but occasionally we do have gaps in the programme. Luckily we have a number of members who can be relied upon to fill those gaps by planning and leading walks – you know who you are and I (and the rest of VBR members) thank you for your support that allows us to continue to offer walks each weekend.

The importance of having an up to date group blog to inform members of walk plans and being able to contact members (who have agreed to be contacted) by email for late changes or requests for walks cannot be understated. Thank you to Dave Hobson for maintaining the blog and everyone who contributes to it. The pictures and commentaries are great!

Our group membership increased from 103 to 111 over the last 12 months though interestingly few of the new members have become regular walkers but we still have the regulars who turn up come rain or shine.

Our social programme is now back up and running and we had a great night in August at the VBR Skittles event. 28 members went to the Lake District in September for the annual weekend away - thanks to everyone who helped organise the much enjoyed weekend. Next year we are planning to go to Northumberland.

Ramblers HQ continue to cause some concerns and in particular we are disappointed about the slow progress on the following; Walks Manager; Groups' pages on the Ramblers rebranded website; the new approach to reporting path problems; the new approach to risk assessment.

Workshop Group (Diana Munro)

We currently have a total membership of 77, plus one affiliated member. Since this time last year 12 new members have joined us and 4 have been reinstated, but during the same period a similar number have left.

Of our 77 members approximately 40% are active walkers, which leaves quite a few who used to walk with us but are no longer able to but keep their membership up because they want to support the Ramblers, and quite a few who possibly joined with good intentions but have not actually got round to walking with us yet!

A significant change since I became Membership Secretary 9 years ago is that out of 77 members, only 4 have no email contact (some couples have one email address between them). This number would have been well over half the total 9 years ago. How times have changed! Obviously this makes communication with our members much easier, faster and cheaper.

Our Facebook page now has 189 followers – up by 50 from last year. All our walk reports are shared to the Notts Area Facebook page. Publishing our walk reports on Facebook is probably the most powerful way we have of sharing news about our activities and hopefully attracting new members.

Walk numbers since the beginning of the current programme in April have been excellent, very rarely dropping to single figures. There are between 10 and 15 participants on the majority of our walks, which is a really nice number in terms of friendliness, manageability and being able to all get round a table in the pub afterwards! The highest number of walkers was on the Brimham Rocks/Fountains Abbey coach trip with 23 participants – but to be fair, a significant number of members from Mansfield & Sherwood Ramblers joined us on that day! A superb day out was had by all, by the way.

Only one walk had to be cancelled this year and that was because of exceptionally hot weather in July. However, in August, despite the temperature soaring to 38°, 10 of us still did an Idle Valley Walk – mad dogs and Englishmen! We obviously survived to live another day, but not without the leader's husband dishing out cool water at various points on the walk and walkers resting wherever there was shade.

A hugely enjoyable and successful activity this year was three days' walking in the gorgeous countryside near Barnard Castle in September. Accommodation was on an 'every man for himself' basis with some participants unknowingly ending up in the same B&B's! The evenings were spent at various restaurants enjoying good food and one another's company. Hopefully we will do this again next year on a similar basis in the North Norfolk area.

At the time of writing, we are looking forward to our annual Christmas lunch on 18th December.

Robin Hood Way FlexiGroup

No report received



Second, 2021 Photo competition – For My Eyes Only by Sue Jones



Third, 2021 Photo competition – That Sinking Feeling by Lynn Baldwin

End of Report