



Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers



Annual Report 2023 - 24

Covering the period 1st October 2023 – 30th September 2024

www.nottsarearamblers.org.uk

FORWARD



Sue Rick

1953 – 2024

In June, Sue Rick, our Area Chair, and Chair of Mansfield & Sherwood Group, passed away after a short illness. Her loss has been keenly felt across Nottinghamshire Ramblers. This tribute to Sue has been written by Mansfield & Sherwood's Secretary, Brian Tuffnell.

Sue, our beloved Chair, was a remarkable woman who wore many hats with grace and enthusiasm. As a mother, she nurtured and inspired her children, instilling in them the same adventurous spirit that defined her life.

Sue was a passionate Rambler, cyclist, and horse rider, always eager to explore the great outdoors. Her love for adventure didn't stop there; through her dedicated youth work she inspired countless youngsters, especially girls, to embrace challenges like rock climbing, camping, and orienteering. She not only participated in these activities but also encouraged others to push their limits and discover their potential.

In addition to her adventurous pursuits, Sue was a talented baker, known for her delicious cakes that brought joy to many. She had a keen mind for puzzles and quizzes, always striving to win and enjoying the thrill of competition. Her love for reading spanned both fact and fiction, and she could often be found with a book in hand, lost in another world.

Sue's skills didn't end there; she was also adept at knitting and sewing, creating beautiful pieces with her hands. Truly, she excelled at everything she tried, leaving a legacy of excellence and passion in all her endeavours.

She greeted everyone with a warm welcome, her heart expanded to fit everyone, and her smile was the universal language of acceptance.

Sue's spirit, kindness, and determination will be deeply missed, but her legacy will continue to inspire us all.

Sue, you have left a trail of love for us all to follow.

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Front page photos:

Newark Castle / Papplewick Pumping Station

Robin Hood Statue at Nottingham Castle,

Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station / Solar Farm at Meden Vale

All photos by Dave Hobson, Vale of Belvoir Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The almost unrelenting wet weather is, not surprisingly, a feature in many of the Group reports this year. Despite the challenges presented by the rain, our redoubtable walk leaders demonstrated their knowledge of our countryside by re-routing walks, sometimes at short notice, to ensure the safety and enjoyment of everyone. In addition to the walks, Groups organised holidays to a variety of destinations near and far, as well as many social activities. Thanks to their efforts, Ramblers membership remains stable in Nottinghamshire despite the competition from other walking organisations.

In November an Extraordinary General Council was held which voted to support proposals for a new Ramblers strategy, even though there was limited detail on what this might mean.

Like many Ramblers Areas, Nottinghamshire is currently a number of Officers short of its full compliment. As a result the work of protecting our Rights of Way has focussed on Group Footpath Officers, with Area Officers providing a coordinating role. Whilst the many DMMO claims submitted by Ramblers are leading to new walking opportunities, perversely, our rural footpath network is under an ever-increasing threat from solar farms and battery infrastructure, sometimes on a vast scale.

Thanks to the efforts of Chris Thompson, Nigel Sarsfield, and our Area President Paddy Tipping, the Notts Guided Walks Partnership produced another programme of interesting and informative walking opportunities.

Thankfully the wet weather relented in May for the annual Nottinghamshire County Show at Newark. This was well-supported by several Groups, helping to promote the work of Nottinghamshire Ramblers to the huge number of visitors to the event. Much of the preparation work for the Show had been carried out by our Area Chair, Sue Rick. Sadly her serious illness meant that she was unable attend the event. The very large attendance by Ramblers members at Sue's funeral in July was a reflection of the high esteem in which she was held.



AREA OFFICERS' REPORTS

1. AREA CHAIR

It is a very difficult task for me to write this report but I wanted to reflect Sue Rick's hard work and the outstanding contribution she made to Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers as Chair. Although many of these issues are covered in my own report, the words below are Sue's own, taken from her reports to Area Council. My additions are in [].

Judith Anson, Area Secretary

October Area Council Report

I recently attended one of a series of Zoom sessions to explain the New Ramblers Strategy which will be voted on at an Extra General Meeting on 25th November.

January Area Council Report

A very informative RoW training session was held at Epperstone Village Hall in October delivered by Sophie Reindorp from the Central Office team.

We held an extra Area Council meeting to discuss how Notts Area members would like us to vote at the Extraordinary General Council in November on the new Ramblers Strategy. Judith and I attended the EGM on 25th November in Manchester. There was a discussion, comments and questions session before a vote was passed in favour of the Refreshed Strategic Plan.

April Area Council Report

The Area AGM was held in February at East Leake village Hall and attended by 70+ people, hosted by Rushcliffe group. 3 walks preceded the A.G.M of various lengths including a history walk around the village. Afterwards refreshments and cake were provided by Rushcliffe group, there was a break to allow attendees to look at the notice boards which had information and photos about the achievements of each group, complete the place names quiz and catch up with people from other groups. To end the meeting, in response to evaluation from the previous year, it was decided that there would be a guest speaker instead of a Trustee speaker which was Graham Woodward from Nottingham Historical Society who spoke about Canals - 18th Century Highways.

To help improve the A.G.M. for the future, attendees were asked to complete evaluation

The Notts Area Committee are working on trying to get all information filtered down to all members, relevant information is posted on the website and sent to Group Secretaries/ Group Chairs. Unfortunately we lost the Area Facebook page last year which was an excellent medium in which to send out information, Sue Jones spent a lot of time building it up and made an excellent job administering it but at present this is not an option available to us.

If you have any suggestions of how to reach people without access to the internet please inform us.

Thanks to everyone who provided photos for the displays and annual reports; they were much appreciated. Thank you also to Janet Ross for taking the microphone to various speakers, to all who helped with the refreshments and car parking, setting up and helping to leave the venue as we found it.

Also to Rushcliffe Group for finding and hosting the venue and lastly to all of the Committee members for spending much of their time to keep the Notts Area going.

The New Walk Leader Training from Central Office

It is clear from the discussion that a lack of trained walk leaders is a big concern for several groups. Central Office are introducing a New Walk Leader Training as part of their review on Safety on Group Walks. From 15th May all new walk leaders will need to read and sign up to this. I have booked onto an online session on 22nd April to learn more about this. Following on from this, once new walk leaders have completed the training Notts Area will be organising some practical training, if anyone has the time or experience to help me deliver this please contact me. Support to access online training will also be given.

Notts County Show 11th May 2024

A stall has been booked for the show and this is a great opportunity to raise awareness of what Ramblers is all about to the general public. People from all over the county and beyond attend so if you have any leaflets/information about your group that you would like to promote at the show please forward to me by 9th May 2024. If you're visiting the show come and say hello. [Sadly, Sue was not able to attend the Show although she had made the arrangements and it was a very successful day. Sue would have wanted to thank everyone who attended and contributed.]



Photo: Brian Tufnell

Sue Rick
Area Chair

[Sue took over the role of Chair of the Rights of Way Committee in September 2023. Sue and I met Neil Lewis, Countryside Access Team Manager, NCC in December 2023.]

2. AREA SECRETARY (Judith Anson)

The sudden death of Sue Rick, Area Chair affected everyone in Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers. The regard in which Sue was held was visible at her funeral which was standing room only. Area has not recovered from the loss of our Chair and the Officers have struggled to fill the void.

The **Area AGM** in February had 75 members in attendance and thanks to everyone from the Rushcliffe Group for making all the arrangements and organising good weather. From the evaluation forms, the guest speaker, Graham Woodward on the History of Canals, was an improvement on members of the Board of Trustees. There were no nominations for Publicity Officer or Minutes Secretary which remain vacant but the other roles were filled.

During the year, Paul Fenton resigned as Area Rights of Way Secretary and Jim Norris did not renew his membership of Ramblers which left the Countryside Officer role 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. Role descriptions and nomination forms are on the website. To maintain Nottinghamshire as a vibrant Area we need volunteers willing to help. The Rights of Way (ROW) roles have been discussed by Area Council during 2024 and a final proposal will be considered at January's Area Council. The AGM will therefore not be able to elect those Officers and people interested in protecting ROW in Nottinghamshire are asked to express an interest. It will then be possible to appoint members on an ex-officio basis during the year.

Area Council has had a busy year with two special meetings. In October 2023 a proposal discussing the principles of solar farms not being located on green belt land and that long distance paths be protected were supported but the wording of the motions was not and they were withdrawn. A Special Area Council was held in November 2023 to discuss the new Ramblers strategy and agreed the Area delegates to the Extraordinary General Council should vote in favour. The January Area Council agreed a paper giving guidance to developers on solar farm applications and what Ramblers expected.

The April Area Council discussed the motions going to the General Council. Paul Fenton had resigned as Area Rights of Way Secretary in March but offered to return if certain conditions were met. It was agreed to hold a joint Area Council with the Rights of Way Committee in May. That meeting received three papers. The first set out the factual constitutional position of the ROW Committee. The second was from Paul Fenton stating the basis on which he was willing to return and the third being proposals to restructure the Rights of Way Committee. Area Council was keen to reach a compromise but Paul, who was not present, had stated the paper had to be accepted without change. Area Council voted against the paper and it was agreed to review the Rights of Way Committee. The Area Rights of Way Secretary role remains vacant. Details of the ROW proposals are in the Report.

An **Extraordinary General Council** was held in November 2023 to discuss the new Ramblers strategy. Sue Rick and I attended and had dreadful journeys both ways for a half day meeting. Others coming a long distance had even worse problems. There was little enthusiasm for the Strategy but as it was nebulous, with few hard facts it was agreed to vote for it. The usual **General Council** (GC) was held in April and attended by Adrian Amer and Neil Stafford (as I was unable to attend). This did not debate the new Strategy as this had been approved in November and there were no major items considered. Unfortunately it is clear that GC is being 'side lined' as even when Motions are approved the Board of Trustees has set them aside.

Groups are aware that **Assemble** has been discontinued. This was set up in 2019 at considerable expense as a resource to provide a central point for all documents, to allow volunteers across England to contact each other through a secure system but particularly to allow Groups and Areas to control their own information. This meant it was no longer necessary to email Central Office about changes to volunteers and wait for something to happen. Some of the information in the Assemble Library has been transferred to the main website but as this does not have a search engine (the

specification for the new website did not include a search engine!) documents are difficult to find. The information about Area Officers and volunteers was transferred incorrectly and all the generic emails removed. I have sent an email every month about this since July and have not even received an acknowledgement and none of the corrections have been made. I understand (from RamblersNET where it is possible to find information) that staff no longer work on this and everything is sent out to external contractors who, presumably have little, or no, understanding of how Ramblers Areas and Groups work. There have been similar problems with the excellent library of walks (Ramblers Routes) created by Ramblers volunteers on the national website which has, sadly, had some of its functionality removed when it was migrated to the new website. That is also now apparently managed by contractors.

By chance, I found out in September that Central Office staff had been made redundant including a key member of the Paths team. There has been no formal announcement about this but adverts for new posts made reference to “walking paths” being a key element of Ramblers work. I have raised this at the **Cluster meetings** as we should be referring to Rights of Way. Jack Cornish, who was heading the Don't Lose Your Way team is now Head of England. It is unclear what that means or what is happening to the DLYW work. The CO Regional Engagement Team, set up in 2017 as a result of a GC motion, has been disbanded and the implications for Areas are unclear. With the removal of Assemble, Area Officers are only able to contact other Areas by searching websites or personal knowledge. This is unhelpful and the future of Clusters must be in doubt.

Notts Ramblers and Groups had a presence at the **Nottinghamshire County Show** with interest shown in walking and the countryside. Groups gave out leaflets about their walks and talked about rights of way issues. Thanks to all those Groups who attended and made the event a success. As in the Chair's Report, it is thanks to Sue Rick's preparation that this went so well.

July Area Council discussed a worrying **copyright problem**. One of the Groups used a photograph from a local Tourist Office to promote their Group holiday to that resort on the website. This was picked up by one of the companies set up with the single purpose of trawling websites for copyright issues and the Group received a financial demand. After an initial unhelpful response, Central Office did negotiate a reduction in the charge and paid it. Area Council was supportive of the Group and felt that any Group could have done the same.

There was concern about the **Leading Walks** consultation paper in January and nationally almost 1,000 responses were received, with very few supporting it. Fortunately, this lengthy document has been much reduced in its final form although several Groups remained concerned that it deters members coming forward as walk leaders. Completion of the on-line training is necessary before new walk leaders can be added.

Regrettably this has been another **difficult and challenging year** for the Officers. I am very grateful that they are working well outside their job role to keep Area functioning. New people are required if Area is to continue its rights of way and countryside protection roles. In addition to the Group walks, this is the key function of Ramblers and our countryside is under increasing threat. Please do come forward to help with this.

Thank-you to the Newark and Collingham Groups for hosting this AGM.

3. AREA RIGHTS OF WAY SECRETARY & COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER (Judith Anson)

The Area Rights of Way Secretary and the Countryside Officer roles have been vacant for most of the year. I have been Acting in both these roles. I am grateful for the support of Neil Stafford and to members of the Rights of Way Committee.

In encouraging members to volunteer for these roles, I want to say there is no mystery about the rights of way work or special legal knowledge required. You need to know where to look, who to ask, be able to find information on websites and read a map. There is plenty of support from other members and it is important that we work as a team, sharing knowledge. Some of the roles involve going out and looking at paths and problems while others can be done at a computer. Our countryside is under threat from housing, solar/battery installations, mineral extraction and new developments. We need to protect our rights of way which means people willing to work on it.

Rights of Way Committee

This is, and always has been, a formal Sub-Committee of Area Council. While it has some delegated authority for items that are time sensitive (e.g. planning applications), all policy issues must be decided by Area Council. The current structure of the ROW Committee, its membership and supporting volunteer roles were set up in 2014

I have included in my Area Secretary Report comments on the Area ROW Secretary role and the discussion at the Special Area Council. Formal proposals will be made to the January 2025 Area Council on the structure of the ROW Committee and the Officer roles required to support that. It will therefore not be possible to elect the Officers at the AGM. Volunteers are asked to express an interest in the ROW work and they can be appointed ex-officio in year, formally reporting to Area Council. The focus of the new structure will be on greater Group involvement, in order to utilise local knowledge, reduce individual workload and improve the resilience of the team.

Sue Rick took over the Chair of the ROW Committee from September 2023 and this is now being Chaired by Adrian Amer, Vice-Chair. We have welcomed new Group Footpath Officers who are joining the existing members in making an excellent contribution to the work of expanding and preserving the rights of way network in Nottinghamshire. I would like to thank all who have been involved with the ROW Committee for their work on specific issues and for Area Officers who have worked outside their role to ensure the essential ROW work has continued.

Work in Year

There is a summary below of some of the activities during the year. In addition, planning applications have been responded to as has correspondence from Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) including consultations (land owner deposits, path orders, DMMOs, etc). Planning Inspectorate (PINS) cases, information from Central Office and reports of ROW problems have also been part of the work.

Nottinghamshire County Council – two productive meetings have been held with Neil Lewis, Countryside Access Team Manager. New recording systems are being introduced in 2025 which will assist the reporting of ROW problems, and more staff have been recruited to assist with the backlog of the Definitive Map Modification Order applications (DMMOs). Volunteers were sought to work on the NCC ploughing and cropping survey. James McGill has produced an article on how members can be involved in this work “Good Crop Bad Crop” which can be read on the website.

Solar & Battery Sites – these are a major issue for the ROW network and their impact on our enjoyment of the countryside. Developers are offering ‘mitigation’ which in many cases involves walking in a ‘tunnel’ with high fences and loss of views. The Planning Inspector at the Knapthorpe Solar Farm commented “that will be a very different experience”. We have responded on all applications where ROW are involved and attended one planning enquiry. The Area guidance to developers is being revised to move away from the assumption that all solar/battery applications will be approved and to focus on the value of the countryside to walkers, not just the physical path. The Great North Road Solar application will be a major issue for 2025 and members have already been

visiting the sites and identifying the rights of way involved. Our principle is that no right of way may be extinguished although a diversion may be agreed, and that permissive paths are a bonus, not a replacement. Advice was sought from Central Office on solar applications but we were advised to use the CPRE (formerly the Campaign to Protect Rural England) guidance. Ramblers will not be offering assistance to Areas unless it is on specific legal points. The Central Office Paths Team staff complement is currently four, including one vacancy and one member close to retirement. The advert for the vacant post refers to “walking paths” and not ROW and it is unclear what is happening to the Don’t Lose Your Way work.

Trent Valley Way Following a meeting with the Trent Rivers Trust, Rushcliffe Group agreed to pilot a method of surveying a section of the Trent Valley Way (TVW). Depending on how this trial goes, other Groups will be involved in surveying the TVW to identify problems. The Trent Rivers Trust are seeking to expend the TVW to cover the entire length of the Trent, from Biddulph Moor to the Humber.

Ossington – members joined NCC in practical work at Ossington. The expansion of Ramblers involvement in ROW maintenance has been discussed with NCC.

A46 developments - the Public Enquiry on changes to the A46 round Newark was held in December 2024. Ramblers had not submitted any response to the proposals although there had been discussion with Active Travel.

A52 Nottingham Ring Road – Ramblers have responded to a survey about use of crossings on the A52. Work has continued on attempts to improve the existing underpass by upgrading the surface and installing lighting.

South Clifton & Spalford – this diversion has been under discussion since 2020, including access to Clifton Hill, and was agreed with work now underway.

Trent Hills – this has been a long standing DMMO claim by Chris Thompson and continued by Steve Parkhouse. There will now be a Public Enquiry in 2025.

Rights of Way Training

In October 2023, Sophie Reindorp from the Central Office Paths Team presented a training day on legal issues involved with rights of way. All Groups were invited to send members. This was an excellent session and all who attended found it very helpful.

In November 2024, a training session was led by Martin Bennett, Area ROW Secretary for Derbyshire Area and Group Footpath Officer for Derbyshire Dales. Unfortunately, the Saturday coincided with one of the storms and the planned walk to look at practical problems was abandoned. Due to individual problems, the attendance was much lower than planned but those who attended found it helpful.

East Midlands Mayor

It has been proposed that the 4 Ramblers Areas involved should meet and work together in discussions with the East Midlands Mayor to ensure Ramblers interests are taken into account. This was going to be taken forward by Jim Norris. Unfortunately, I have not been able to progress this and hope that a Countryside Officer will be elected who can work on this.

4. AREA MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (Diana Munro)

	GROUP	01.10.23	01.10.24	Net gain/loss	Affiliates
NE01	Newark	164	180	16	5
NE02	Nottingham	308	329	21	2
NE03	Retford	80	88	8	0
NE05	Worksop	69	69	0	3
NE07	Rushcliffe	332	307	-25	3
NE08	Broxtowe	207	189	-18	0
NE09	Gedling	176	164	-12	0
NE10	Mansfield & Sherwood	229	167	-62	1
NE11	Southwell	85	83	-2	1
NE14	Collingham	61	56	-5	0
NE15	Vale of Belvoir	106	93	-13	0
NE50	Notts Derbys Walking Group	156	138	-18	5
NE51	One Step Walkers	210	206	-4	13
NE70	Robin Hood Way	2	3	1	2
NE96	Not in a group	80	148	68	0
	AREA TOTAL	2,265	2,220	-45	35
	NATIONAL TOTAL	104,487	105,721	+ 1,234	

It looks as if the imbalance in group membership numbers is now settling down since the closure of the Ravenshead & Hucknall group in 2022. However the number of 'not in group' members is still high, largely due to members of the Ravenshead & Hucknall group being moved into this category. During the year, I contacted all the members in this category, either by email or letter, pointing out the advantages of being in a group but only a few chose to move to a group and, sadly, the majority ignored the communication.

	Notts Area	National
2015	2,235	107,369
2016	2,202	105,990
2017	2,203	104,694
2018	2,228	102,818
2019	2,234	102,038
2020	2,215	98,717
2021	2,382	101,130
2022	2,334	105,183
2023	2,265	104,487
2024	2,220	105,721

The overall drop of 45 in the Notts Area membership since last year is not particularly concerning when compared with historical figures.

It looks like the total national membership number might be creeping back up again towards the 2015 figure.



5. AREA TREASURER (Neil Stafford)

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

In line 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 has to be separated out and regarded as Restricted Funds. This is because the funding of DLYW came from the People's Postcode Lottery, Cotswold, and other sponsors, and not from membership fees.

Restricted Funds		
Receipts	2023-24	2022-23
Grants		200.00
From DLYW Project		675.00
Total receipts		875.00
Expenditure		
DLYW		352.23
Surplus/(deficit)		522.77

Main Funds		
Receipts	2023-24	2022-23
Ramblers Central Office	6,882.00	4,434.00
From Group		49.54
Donations		
Total receipts	6,882.00	4,483.54
Expenditure		
Group Funding	2,507.00	1,884.00
Newsletters/publicity	800.00	624.18
Campaigns/casework	325.45	160.90
Meetings (inc. AGM)	1,220.27	844.01
Admin	46.15	54.98
Other		80.00
Total payments	4,898.87	3,648.07
Surplus/(deficit)	1,983.13	835.47

Self-funds		
Receipts	2023-24	2022-23
Socials		139.50
Expenditure		
Socials		184.63
Surplus/(deficit)		(45.13)

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	-	6,882.00	-	6,882.00
Total payments	-	4,898.87	-	4,898.87
Closing cash balance	3,497.61	6,380.68	-45.13	9,833.16
Net assets/liabilities (funds)	3,497.61	6,380.68	-45.13	9,833.16

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 2024.

Signed: *A. Bolton*
 Date: *31 October 2024*
 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 funds stood at £6,380.68, excluding restricted funds of £3,497.61.

Aside from DLYW, the accounts show two broad functions:

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

Costs of Running Area

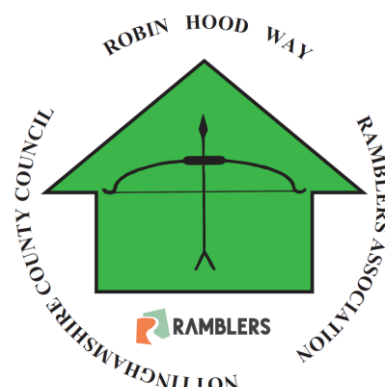
Area received £4,375.00 from Ramblers Central Office in 2023-24. Area expenditure (£2,398.87) was less than the anticipated, mainly due to visitors not permitted at General Council, and lower expenditure on publicity, (we did not attend the Southwell Ploughing Match, nor incur any Notts Walker distribution costs).

Points to note:

- Campaigns/Casework includes the costs of the RoW training day (£203.50) held at Epperstone in October.
- Meetings includes £215.98 for the 2024 Area AGM (including refreshments, walk recces, and guest speaker expenses) and £143.88 for the 12-month Zoom licence. Unusually, there were six meetings of Area Council rather than the normal four.
- Newsletters/publicity includes the payment of £500 to the Notts Guided Walks Partnership for their 2024 printed programme, as agreed at April Area Council, and the Robin Hood Way waymarkers (see below).

RHW Waymarks

The 2023-24 Area budget included Robin Hood Way Flexi-Group funding for the purchase of new waymarkers that featured the Ramblers logo. Two hundred new waymarkers were produced in September, at a cost of £222 (inc VAT). They were distributed to the Robin Hood Way wardens at their AGM, so hopefully they will be appearing on the route in the near future



Membership Recruitment Initiatives

Area continues to hold £500 to support Group membership recruitment initiatives. Groups are welcome to submit proposals for consideration.

Budget for Financial Year 2024-25

As Area reserves are high in relation to our forecast expenditure in 2024-25, only £1,900 in funding was requested for the next financial year. It should also be noted that, in financial year 2024-25 DLYW funds will no longer be regarded as Restricted. I am delighted to report that this Budget and that of all our Groups has been approved by Central Office.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank all the Group Treasurers for their work in ensuring that, the budget and annual returns were submitted to Central Office in a timely fashion.

6. AREA TOURISM AND HERITAGE PATHS OFFICER (Chris Thompson)

Notts Guided Walks Brochure 2024

This year we thank Paddy Tipping, Area President for assisting in finding grant funding and the opportunity of being able to publish a brochure of walks under the banner of Notts Guided Walks programme including in addition to our website.

We are delighted with the success of this programme and the additional links we have been able to attract. However, we asked for more support from Ramblers Groups to provide some walks to the 2024 brochure. The aim of the brochure is for groups to be able to attract new members and fully promote the excellent rambling programme provided by the Groups. The guided walks programme is now on Facebook, and a lot of work has been carried out to find more contacts in the County to see the handbook fully promoted. We apologise for walk leaders who had walks on our programme in April and May period. It took a longer period to distribute the brochures around the County. Fortunately, after further discussions with Notts Libraries they revised their original decision and in early May agreed to deliver the brochures to their libraries. This quickly resolved our problem in dispatching the brochures. We hope as we progress into 2025 programme we will have more support please from the Groups. That would be very much appreciated.

The brochure also included a full list of Well Being Walks to enable new starters to go out walking, a list of Notts Wildlife Trust Walks linking the opportunity to enjoy the environment, a list of Nottinghamshire long-distance Walks giving you the opportunity of organising a way to see more of the Nottinghamshire County, and several links to major tourist sites with details of walks they were organising. As you can see, we are doing everything possible to fully promote walking in Nottinghamshire as well as attract the opportunity of the public to take up walking, with the aim of seeing the Groups have more members joining The Ramblers. We will be putting together a further Notts Guided Walks brochure in 2025. One point, we publish a brochure in April then ask the public to constantly look at our website because we are constantly adding further walks to the programme. We thank all walk leaders for their support and to everyone who joined the walks. And lastly, we take this opportunity to thank Nigel Sarsfield from the Notts Derby Ramblers for all his support in designing the new brochure and carrying out all the updates and running the Facebook programme.

In 2025 we are joining Active Travel in producing the Walks brochure under a new heading called Walk Notts. The brochure will continue to promote a similar programme. We have carried this action because it was proving difficult to administer the Notts Guided Walks programme on a regular basis. In linking with Walk Notts run by Active Travel we have the full support of a regular admin team to keep the brochure continually updated. We hope this move proves successful.

Major Hayman Rooke

In 2023/24, the Ramblers Notts Area linked with Sherwood Forest Trust and other partners to promote the 300th anniversary of the birth of Major Hayman Rooke. We were able to launch and publish a trail in Mansfield Woodhouse, the Nottinghamshire home of Major Hayman Rooke. However, the proposed trail at Sherwood Visitors Centre linking the oak trees and Major Oak was not completed. Sadly, we must report we were not able to complete the joint work with Sherwood Visitors Centre so this project was not completed.

Trent Vale Trail

Chris Thompson is a member of this committee to set up a Long Distance cycle/walk Trail from Newark to link Winthorpe, Holme, Collingham, Besthorpe, Garton, South Clifton, to the Fledborough viaduct. This provides then a link to Lincoln. The aim of the Trent Vale Trail is to provide a family friendly walking and cycling trail route and for wheelchairs and pushchairs through this amazing wetland area. Currently the route is fully established to Garton with works currently in place to establish a bridleway into South Clifton and a permissive path to Clifton Hill. Circular walks are being prepared and there are YouTube videos. Please take the opportunity to visit the trail as a cyclist or walker. You will not be disappointed. [NB at December 2024, part of the route at South Clifton is closed for improvements. Check NCC website to see when it will reopen.]

Programme of Self-Guided Walks

During 2024 we requested support from members to see written up a series of self-guided walks to be included on the Ramblers Notts Area website. Full support will be given to members prepared to work with the Ramblers Notts Area Communication group to put these walks together. We ask if in 2025 members will come forward to assist us put together a series of self-guided walks. Please contact Chris Thompson on tourismheritage@nottsarearamblers.org.uk or Neil Stafford on info@nottsarearamblers.org.uk. Your support to assist with this project will be very much appreciated. It would be excellent if we can have more support from members to complement our current programme of walks. Thank you.

Members are welcome to send in articles on Tourism or Heritage issues or aid in writing up walks. The role of the Tourism & Heritage Path officer is to promote Nottinghamshire. During the year we asked members in the quarterly monthly report to Ramblers Notts Area meetings for support for assistance for interesting articles about Nottinghamshire. These articles can be items of interesting history about Nottinghamshire, putting together a walk for the Ramblers website or stories about interesting history of villages in the County or famous people who have lived or are living in Notts. We ask again if any member(s) are prepared to provide any interesting articles. Please contact me on tourismheritage@nottsarearamblers.org.uk if you are prepared to provide any articles for publication.

Leen Valley Trail

A trail route is being prepared jointly with Nottingham Local Access Forum to produce a long-distance trail from Newstead Abbey to Nottingham Castle. It will require further involvement with Nottingham County Council and Gedling Borough Council. There would be two starts, one from Newstead Railway Station linking Robin Hood Line Train/Nottingham Tram from Hucknall to Nottingham and the other from Pilgrim Oak off A60 (entrance to Newstead Abbey). The route will follow the River Leen except a small section from Papplewick to Bestwood where the riverside path is not available for walking. We hope to provide a more detail update at the next meeting.

New Pedestrian Bridge over River Trent.

Through my involvement with Nottingham Local Access Forum, I have approached Eugene Suggett Ramblers Central Office to see if they can assist Nottingham City Council about finding a way to create definitive rights of way along the embankment to link the new pedestrian bridge. Currently these paths are non-definitive (i.e. permissive). I hope to have a more detailed answer to this issue shortly. There is technical work required to achieve legal rights of way and Nottingham City Council do not have the resources to do this. However, we need to make sure all the paths to the new pedestrian bridge should be legal rights of way. We will keep you updated on how this matter proceeds.

Rigg Lane Burnstump Hill

Currently the path from Burntstump Hill near Burnstump Park is a well-used path, but is not a legal right of way. This path is on the Robin Hood Way and is an important route to link Papplewick Pumping Station and the many forests of Sherwood Forest. All walkers familiar with this route are asked please to contact me to fill in as user evidence form so a claim can be served on Nottinghamshire County Council to establish a legal right of way. Please contact me on tourismheritage@nottsarearamblers.org.uk

We look forward to expanding the role of the Tourism & Heritage Path officer during 2025 and welcome full support from members for be able to achieve this. Thank you very much.

Note added by Judith Anson:

As some members may be aware, as well as being our Area Tourism and Heritage Paths Officer, Chris is also the Chair of the Robin Hood Way Association, a Trustee of the Trent Vale Trail, and a member of the both the City and County Local Access Forums (LAF). LAFs were set up as part of the CROW Act of 2000 to advise Councils on the improvement of public access to land in their area for the purposes of open-air recreation the enjoyment. If you share Chris' passion for improving countryside access, and are interested in joining the County LAF, then further information can be found at: <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/walking-cycling-and-rights-of-way/rights-of-way/local-access-forum>

7. AREA GROUPS OFFICER (Alex Ellis)

I cannot believe as I write my report that another year will have passed. I have to say I have not walked with as many Groups as I would have liked due to the fact that I have been away rather a lot but hoping to remedy this next year 2025. I would like to say that all Groups are still very active in their walks programmes, activities and holidays. Getting walk leaders is still problematic and recruiting younger members within the Groups.

I have been doing some online training with Ramblers in other Areas to see how they are trying to rectify this. Some of their ideas are working e.g. short dog friendly walks leading to longer walks and this brings in new leaders. Reaching out to youth organisations as in map reading courses and navigation to produce future walk leaders.

My activities with Groups throughout the year

Walking with Southwell Group.

Notts & Derbys Walking Group – meeting with their Committee in February with other Area Officers.

Newark Ramblers - I attended a Ceilidh which was well attended and the food was excellent. A great evening and also a Games evening. In November a walk in York; a great idea travel by train or car.

Rushcliffe Ramblers - attended a flat walk with Rod Turner taking us to the green belt in West Bridgford I lived in that area and did not know that it existed. November walk and then their AGM at Cropwell Village Hall.

I feel I do need to mention my group, Mansfield and Sherwood. In 2024, we lost our Chair Sue Rick. It was a complete shock to our group and it is taking some time for us as a group to come to terms with the loss but we are, because Sue would have wanted us to carry on and flourish.

I am hoping to set up with groups to send me their News Letters to follow progress and will look into this after our Area AGM.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Groups for your efforts in keeping your groups walking programmes going and always making me feel welcome.

See you in 2025 .

8. AREA COMMUNICATIONS SUB-GROUP (Judith Anson)

It has not been possible to reconstitute the Communications Sub-Group given the issues within year and the vacant posts. Promoting Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers helps Groups recruit new members and demonstrates our role in protecting the countryside and rights of way.

Notts Area Website www.nottsarearamblers.org.uk

Brian Tuffnell, Area Webmaster has done an excellent job improving the website and making it more user friendly. Thanks also to James McGill who continues to promote the Secret Lives of Ramblers. Articles and photos for the website are always welcome.

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

We are seeking a new Editor but this will not be an elected Officer post and there is no requirement to attend Area Council. Please contact me if you have a creative flair and want to take our newsletter into the next phase.

Social Media

With the loss of the Facebook page, we no longer have a social media presence. Offers of help with this will be welcome.

Nottinghamshire County Show

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the Nottinghamshire County Show at Newark was a great success. I would like to thank everyone who helped putting up and taking down the stand and those Groups who attended to talk to the public about Ramblers and the importance of rights of way. The Show is 10th May in 2025.



GROUP ANNUAL REPORTS

9. Broxtowe Group (Keith Jacobs)

Broxtowe Group's membership has remained stable over the year with some new members replacing the sad loss of others, as we might expect. The committee are considering ways to increase membership with a higher local profile, perhaps with leaflets and more open events, like introductory family walks. Having said this we are aware that there are many other avenues for people to support healthy outdoor activities and open access issues. The committee remains in good health, with 10 members covering all posts with the exception of Publicity Officer. Having said this, we will be seeking replacements for our Footpaths Officer and our Walks Co-ordinator by our 2025 AGM.

Finances have proven to be less unpredictable this year as applications for expenses etc have been entered in a timely way and our budget has covered these well. The scare generated by a demand for £360 for breaching copyright by the Visual Rights Group was allayed by CO being prepared to pay a lesser amount. As a group we will certainly be cautious about which images we use on our websites, but there is still a concern that the practice has been allowed to continue. We hope that CO will consider this matter further and that it will no longer be an issue in future. Broxtowe extends its thanks to Area Council and other Notts groups for their support in this matter. Sadly, the initial result was the resignation of our Publicity Officer, to whom the matter was initially directed by the Visual Rights Group.

The walks programme has functioned well with every Wednesday and most Sundays having their walk of from 4 to 11 miles. As some of our senior walks leaders have stepped down, so several have taken on the role and in token of the committee's thanks, walk leaders were invited to a social gathering. This was also an opportunity to encourage leaders to suggest or prompt others to complete the online training and enter walks. Our Walks co-ordinator has indicated that he will step down at the end of next year and he is hoping to introduce someone to the role while examining ways to make it more flexible and user friendly.

Our group visits to Bannau Brycheniog (Brecon) and the Isle of Wight were a great success and we are planning visits to Keswick and Eastbourne next year; visits to which members of other groups will be very welcome. We are also considering a river cruise on the Trent at some time next year, perhaps after a short walk.

Broxtowe Group will be holding its AGM on Monday 25th November.



10. Collingham Group (Chris Adams)

Our small group continues in good heart and with an excellent committee. As I look around the faces on a Sunday morning I realise that none of them were present when I first got involved 17 years ago - it just shows that we have managed to renew our membership over the years but it can be hard work recruiting. We have had discussions in the group about a possible amalgamation with another nearby group but our committee prefers to carry on independently for the present. We have had a good variety of walks again this year on alternate Sundays in the counties of Notts, Lincs and Leics - walk lengths have settled at 6-7 miles which suits our demographic and car sharing is now better co-ordinated. Now that we have caught up with the 21st. Century (not me personally) we are quite often getting people from other groups joining us which is always good. Our policy of varying our shorter mid-week walks over 3 possible days has had some success but numbers are not huge.

As I reported at the time, the severe flooding in our natural catchment area did cause some cancellations but we soon recovered - our traditional mince pie walk had to be in early March with hot X buns instead of pies. We had an excellent New Year lunch at the pub/restaurant in Bassingham and I'm currently scouting a venue for the next one. We had several members turn out for the County Show in Newark in May and it was good to meet up with members from other groups. In August we had our usual summer lunch at the Bowls Club in Collingham, an event which some retired members like to attend. Walk leaders are very generous in donating back their petrol expenses so we are able to subsidise this event. Our finances remain sound - we have an excellent Treasurer so, in accordance with Ramblers guidelines, we have been able to purchase first aid kits for our walk leaders. We continue to advertise in village media and this is money well spent. We have set our AGM for Nov. 7th. at the Memorial Hall in Collingham. We have one vacancy on the committee which we are confident we can fill and everybody else is willing to carry on for another year.

I close by mentioning that our most recent walk - new to me-was around Wellow and Rufford in glorious autumnal sunshine, followed by a pint by the village green-what could be better?

11. Gedling Group

No report received

12. Mansfield and Sherwood Group (Brian Tuffnell)

Walks & Social events

This year has been marked with sadness following the death of our Chair, Sue Rick. Despite this, it has also been incredibly rewarding, filled with walks and social events. We kicked off with a coach holiday in Kendal, enjoying four walks, visits to two castles, and a cruise on Lake Windermere, mostly in lovely weather. In October, we visited Papplewick Pumping Station and its now-empty underground reservoir during a 1940s - themed weekend, complete with lots of memorabilia. Our Christmas party was a great success once again. We began 2024 with a New Year's Day Walk over the Palterton ridge and celebrated Burns Night with a Scottish-themed meal and a reading of one of Robbie's poems. February saw us attending the local Hospital Troupe pantomime to support local charities and touring an Amazon Fulfilment Centre. In March, our second coach holiday took us to Tenby, where we walked two sections of the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path and visited the beautiful city of St Davids. April brought out our competitive sides during an Easter Egg hunt walk. We also had a Walk Leaders training session, attended the hilarious "Calendar Girls" play at Mansfield's Palace Theatre, and enjoyed a fun Ceilidh. Another memorable night was spent at the dog races in Nottingham. At the end of May, a group of us stayed in Barley, walking Pendle Hill and two other trails, including the Witches Trail—fortunately, we didn't encounter any living witches! In June, we tried disc golf, which basically involved throwing a frisbee around a golf course. Some participants

amusingly aimed for targets high up in the trees. Later that week, the committee had a meal at Refined in West Notts College. June also featured a coach outing to Brimham Rocks and Fountains Abbey, organised by Sue Rick, and was a fitting tribute to her. We took control of the boat and operated the locks during a canal boat ride along the Chesterfield canal. To end the month, we attempted the Yorkshire Three Peaks, tackling one peak per day. We managed Whernside, in atrocious conditions, and Ingleborough, but Pen-y-Ghent was cancelled due to a severe weather warning. Undeterred, we plan to try again next year. After climbing the peaks, our next adventure took us underground to the Ecton copper mines.

AGM

We had a very successful AGM with a just one walk on offer walk prior to the meeting followed by a fuddle, raffle and bring & buy sale. The meeting was well attended and elected new committee members.

Committee Meetings

We have continued to have open Committee meetings where any member can come along and learn about what's involved with running the group. We even had one meeting whilst on our coach holiday, a captive audience.

Publicity

Our Facebook site is thriving, effectively advertising our walks and sharing our achievements. Support continues to grow, occasionally bringing in new walkers. We also regularly update the local papers and newsletters with our achievements and litter-picking efforts.

Walk Leaders

This year has once again seen us recruit new walk leaders. The online walk Leader training has been very helpful & leaders have been supported to do the recces, buddying etc. Our leader training day was well attended.

Training

Many of us have attended the online training events provided by Central Office and completed online training courses. As previously mentioned, we held a walk leader training day which was well received.

Membership

Our current membership stands at 161 and although we have lost members over the year, we continue to attract new members.

Litter Picking

Our litter picking team continue to have a monthly litter picking walk and over the year have filled over 90 bags of litter and collected many other items that cannot be classed as litter – car parts, mattresses, gas bottles to name a few.



13. Newark Group (James McGill)

A successful year with numbers continuing to increase and no shortage of volunteers for committee roles.

WALKS PROGRAMME: Two open sessions held for actual and potential walks leaders. No shortage of walks leaders – the difficulty is getting them to step forward and actually put on a walk!

Varied walks with occasional forays into surrounding Counties, also train walks and a day trip to London.

Some interesting statistics for 2023-2024:

We have provided **200** walks led by **33** different leaders for **1871** walkers who walked **12,515** miles

Our top walker achieved more than **600** miles

147 members have attended walks

26 non-members have joined walks

52 visiting members have joined walks

ROW MATTERS: Continued active involvement at Area level, also two ROW maintenance sessions at Ossington under guidance of NCC.

SOCIAL PROGRAMME: Active social life including theatre trips, ceilidh, garden party, sports evening, all events publicised in our recently introduced newsletter.

PERSONALITIES: Joyce Pedersen will be much missed after a very successful six years as Chair. We also held a special thank-you walk around Carsington Water as a thank-you to Carol Wilkinson who stepped down last year as Secretary.

14. Nottingham Group (Linda Honey)

- Our Nottingham group remains the largest group in our Area. Our membership, at the last October count, was 326. This number seems to go up and down around this level as a few members lapse, and new members join. Of these 326, it only appears that approximately 80 walk regularly (or at all) with us !
- We pride ourselves on being a very green walking group. All our walks are either on public transport, or by coach.
- Our Sunday coach runs once a month. Some of our coaches this year, have run at a loss, whilst others at a profit. However, we have managed to largely maintain a consistent budget over the year. The coach collects from both County Hall at West Bridgford, and Maid Marion Way in the centre of Nottingham. We would like to remind everyone that members of all Ramblers groups are very very welcome to join us. The cost per coach to Ramblers members is just £12, currently. Contact details, and walk details are always on our Ramblers website. We recently have altered the number of walks offered each month from four to three. This has been done somewhat reluctantly, due to a continual shortage of walk leaders. The three walks will now be designated as:- Long Walk ..10-8 miles, Medium walk ..8-6 miles , and Short Walk 5-4 miles
- Our Wednesday public transport walks are always very well supported by a very regular enthusiastic group of walkers. We are very pleased that we continue to attract new members. Our walks organiser makes everyone feel very included. He sends out two emails about each walk. The first asking for replies to ascertain how many walkers will be attending, and another to give details of the walk and meeting point. There is always an opportunity, for

those who wish to, to meet up socially after each walk, at a nearby pub.

- Our Sunday monthly local public transport walks will continue as usual. The current walks organiser stepped down at our recent AGM, in order to fulfil our vacant role of Footpaths Officer. Fortunately, another very long-standing member and experienced walk leader agreed to take on the organising of the Sunday local walks, at our recent AGM.
- Our monthly leisurely public transport strolls will also be continuing, even after their organiser opted to step down from the role after leading some wonderful walks for this group over the last three years. Another longstanding committee member and walk leader has agreed to take on this important role. The average age of our membership is inevitably rising. So this programme of walks is especially invaluable to our members.
- We held our recent AGM on Sunday 3rd November at 2pm, at Highfields Fire Station, in Beeston. It is worth noting that this fire station offers their function room free to registered charities. This is obviously a good saving for us. We were thus able to provide a small buffet to all attendees. Seven members completed a walk to the AGM, along the canal, starting at Nottingham Railway station beforehand.
- Nine members of our committee agreed to stand for re-election, and all were elected. We also very happily managed to fill the five remaining committee vacancies.

15. Notts and Derby Walking Group (Rosanna Rapacchietta)

The group has offered varied walks throughout the year in the Peak District, Nottingham and Derby areas with evening walks in the summer period. Walks continue to receive good turnout and interest through the social channels including Facebook, Meetup and website. These social channels provide details on the walks available, updates, socials and weekends away events.

The group organised a few weekends away which were planned in May to Grinton, Yorkshire and in August to the Lake District. Although the May weekend places filled, the level of interest for the Lake District weekend in August was too low and therefore needed to be cancelled. The group will need to make improvements in communication with members and promoting events to encourage wider participation.

Socials also need to be more prevalent and currently include pub stops during walks with some shorter walks available when committee meetings have involved in person meetings.

Walk leaders are also required to ensure the group can continue to offer varied walks and the latest walks programme is on the website for the Autumn period.

The Committee has received updates from Ramblers in recruiting new volunteers and walk leader training guidance.

The AGM will be held in person on the 21st November at 6:30pm in Beeston.

16. One Step Walkers Group (Neil Sherratt)

2024 has been another great year for the Group, with a fine selection of walks to suit most abilities as well as social evenings and weekends away. We are looking forward to 2025 when we will continue to provide an excellent variety of walks and hopefully continue to attract new members to our group. We are also looking to increase our social media promotion through the appointment of a social media Committee member.

Group Walks

During 2024 we have undertaken 141 group walks totaling a staggering 1460 walking miles. We have provided midweek walks, Tuesday evening walks, and walks on virtually every Saturday and Sunday.

This year 31 of our members have lead walks for us, on behalf of the Committee and all our members I would like to say a massive thank you. A special thank you to those members who have led many walks for us, our top contributing Walk Leader this last year, Andrew Yeoman, has led 20 walks, closely followed by Paul Adcock, Sue Ecob, Jenny Thompson, Dot (& me) and Yinka Soetan. Thank you, guys, your time and efforts are very much appreciated.

To facilitate the walks being on the website, our 'Walk Coordinators' have tirelessly asked, pleaded, coerced and press-ganged people into leading walks, and have then uploaded them onto the website. Massive thanks to Paul Adcock, Sue Ecob, John Herbert and Tracey Mowbray.

Membership

Encouragingly we have had a slight increase in our group numbers through this year. We now have 206 members and 13 affiliated members. I would like to thank Kara Rimmer for all the work she has undertaken as the Membership Secretary, and we are very grateful for her offer to stand for election again for the coming year.

Club Accounts

The move to internet banking implemented during 2023 continues to be a great success making movements of monies through the club account far easier. All monies concerning social events, holidays and weekends away now go through the club accounts providing a secure and transparent process. Many thanks to Dave Croft, our longest serving Committee member, for his continued work through the year and many thanks for again standing for re-election as the group treasurer.

Socials & Holidays

This year the Group have offered 30 social events. Many of these have been theatre visits which on two occasions have included our own thespian members starring on the stage. Other events have been discos, meals out and a fashion show. Some members completed a 10k sponsored walk around Nottingham as part of the 'Shine Night'. This year's Summer Picnic was held in Calver Village Hall where 41 members shared their signature dishes and chose to do one of two walks during the day. Rather than the usual raffle, members walking knowledge was put to the test with a quiz. There have been 6 holidays this year, including one to Corsica. During our stay in the Elan Valley some of us tried kayaking with varying degrees of success! We have had group weekends away in Ripon, Ironbridge, Wharfedale and Bakewell.

Looking towards 2025, we already have 2 weekends away on the events calendar, The Malvern's and Pickering, North Yorkshire, which have proved very popular.

One Step holidays are usually very popular meaning places go quickly. The committee has recently discussed, and agreed, a new policy which we trust will result in a fairer and more transparent method of booking.

Thank you to all those members who have arranged, planned or coordinated either a social, a holiday or supported by leading a walk during a weekend away.

Group Newsletter & Publicity

Many thanks to Andy Kind, who has over the past year, composed and sent out our Group newsletters.

We have identified publicity, particularly Social Media publicity as an area the Group can develop in the coming year, this will hopefully enhance our Group's membership. To assist us in developing our Social Media presence we shall be appointing a Social Media Committee member at the coming AGM.

Webmaster

A massive thank you to our webmaster Darren Williams who provides all our I.T. support. Darren operates his own I.T. business and very kindly provides a top-quality professional service for us completely without charge. We are extremely grateful for his time and assistance.

This year, there have been few visual changes to the One Step Walkers website. However, Darren has focused on enhancing the site's performance. Improvements have been made to the speed by and the website now runs on a new server with greater resources. During the winter months of 2024/25, Darren is planning a significant upgrade to the website. The entire site will be moved to a new page builder, which will make it much quicker and offer better tools for future development.

Area Representative

Many thanks Yinka Soetan for your time and support attending the Area Ramblers meetings. The Area Ramblers provide support for our Group as well as dealing with Local and National issues. Through Yinka attending these meetings we have been able to raise queries for discussion and obtain clarification as well as feeding back to our group issues of importance from the Area and National Ramblers meetings.

Summary

We have had a successful year with a fantastic selection of well attended walks. Our social events and holidays calendar is very healthy. Our walks are well attended and we feel we are supporting our members and the Ramblers objectives.

In the coming year we will continue to focus on providing a great selection of walks, recruitment of new walk leaders and consolidating our membership numbers. We are hoping to enhance the Group's publicity and will be focusing on our Social Media coverage.

Finally, a massive thank you to the Committee and Group Members who volunteer their time to help us all enjoy the walking and social events that have provided throughout the year.

17. Retford Group (Sally Fraser)

Our walks have been attracting 8 – 12 members. There doesn't seem to be any distinct pattern to this, one week a local walk has 10 people another week it could be only 4.

We are very dependent on a small number of walk leaders who continue to offer a good variety of interesting walks. Our best and number 1 leader is now turned 80 years of age and is still happy to lead 8/9 miles in the Peak District. We continue to try to recruit new leaders with limited success, made somewhat more difficult by the mandatory on-line training for new leaders, which even our seasoned leaders are reluctant to do.

We have enjoyed a couple of social events this past year. Two of our members organized a meal at a local pub where various people were given 'Awards', Best Dressed Rambler being one.

A Social Afternoon complete with tea/coffee and a mouth-watering array of cakes, was an attempt to recruit walk leaders and do some fact finding. Quite a fruitful discussion was had by those attending. Old photographs stirred memories, a quiz tested the brain cells and a book stall and raffle contributed to group funds.

18. Rushcliffe Group (Julie Lloyd)

We have enjoyed another successful and enjoyable year.

We have seen committed and dedicated committee members retire and we thank them, our existing team and our new recruits for all the work they have completed this year.

We have attended training sessions to improve our knowledge and keep our volunteers safe and mastered various changes to the national website.

We have completed a full programme of walks. This includes a full complement of Sunday (59) and mid-week (18) walks plus (10) holiday walks. We have continued with our booking system although walk leaders have the discretion both to restrict numbers and waiver booking as preferred. We continue to encourage car sharing where possible.

Holidays included: a) a spring weekend in Alnmouth, enjoyed by 40 of our members; b) An autumn weekend in Llandudno (29 members) with an enjoyable climb up the Great Orme. Social events included: a) 19 Nov 2023 Rushcliffe Ramblers AGM in Kinoulton preceded by a short walk followed by lunch and homemade cakes and our unique AGM awards; b) 10 Dec 2023 A Christmas Lunch at Ashmore's in Radcliffe, preceded by our usual short walk to work up an appetite; c) 04 Feb 2024 hosted the Area AGM in East Leak, preceded by a choice of three walks and followed by an impressive array of homemade cakes; d) 11 Sept 2024 we held a Skittles evening for our walk leaders as a thank you for their efforts throughout the year.

We continue to produce a quarterly online newsletter (Relay) where we keep in touch with our members, providing reports on various activities, helpful advice such as reporting issues when on walks, reinforcing guidance from Central Office, notice of events and training and general chit-chat.

Our membership numbers have dropped slightly giving a total of 306 as at 14 Oct 2024.

19. Southwell Group (Dave Johnson)

Normality has been resumed with this year passing so quickly it seems like only yesterday I was writing last years' report after a trip to the Isle of Wight.

We have had a full programme of weekly walks since our last AGM and whilst the attendance on these has generally been low, each walk has been thoroughly enjoyable despite the weather conditions at times.

The mini breaks continue to be very popular with trips to Dolgellau in mid Wales (Spring 24) and Bourton-on-the-Water in the Cotswolds (October 24). What varied locations we are fortunate to travel to and aren't we lucky with the accommodation, the weather and the scenery. Our present format of 2 walks and a sight-seeing trip on each day we are away works extremely well. No visit to Dolgellau would be complete without a trek to the summit of Cadair Idris (Penygadair) at 893 metres above sea level, 70 feet short of the magical 3000 feet. On both trips, sightseeing activities are available for those who don't want to walk every day. At Dolgellau and Bourton we were joined by other residents who complemented us on our friendliness and willingness to include others in our activities. The recent weather in Bourton did cause some last-minute changes to our planned walks with some paths being flooded by overflowing lakes and rivers.

We are fortunate in having experienced walk leaders who plan meticulously and produce a varied programme which is enjoyed by all. This does involve identifying a suitable place to go or route to walk. Trying the activity out beforehand, the recce, although not on our mini breaks, carrying out a risk assessment (checking weather forecasts, identifying potential hazards and methods to reduce the risk) and of course leading the group on the day. Lots of responsibilities but tremendous

satisfaction and the gratitude of the participants. If you have never been a leader, then talk to me or any of our leaders who will show you the ropes and act as a guide/mentor.

We have also had the usual social events. The Christmas Walk and Fuddle, spring BBQ and the theatre and picnic at Toilethorpe were all well attended. Our thanks go to the many organisers who have given of the time and energy to arrange/lead these activities and to the participants for supporting these activities. If you weren't there, you don't know what you missed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our committee, Jim (Treasurer), Dinah (Secretary/Membership), Lynn (Publicity), Sandy, Christine and Pamela (Programme), Peter (website) for their support and tireless work for all our benefit.

Finally, I am standing down as Area Council Rep and ROW Officer at the AGM. Any volunteers would be welcomed with open arms.

20. Vale of Belvoir Group (John Young)

Another successful year in many respects. We have had a walk every weekend, a programme of evening strolls, a weekend away and a full calendar of social events. However, it is evident, that on some weekends, a number of walks have had to be changed (often at last minute) due to the weather or ground conditions discovered during the walk. This presents a challenge to walk leaders, but when this happened the walk leaders have managed to sort an alternative route or a completely new walk. Without this level of commitment and adaptability we would probably struggle some weekends to have a walk. The impact of the weather looks likely to affect our activities more often than we have experienced in previous years.

We continue to aim to produce the walk programme at least a few months in advance of any set date. This does present a challenge on some occasions as many walk leaders have other interests and family commitments. In addition, the recent Ramblers Walk Leader guidance may have caused some leaders to think twice about leading walks, and this seems to be influencing people's willingness to lead walks. This is a concern and will need to be monitored.

Our group blog goes from strength to strength, and we are grateful to have this excellent publication and method of keeping members informed and up to date with forthcoming walks via the walk programme and a great record of walks completed.

Our social programme continues – we had a very enjoyable skittles night in August, and our annual lunch in the garden at one of our member's property was excellent but a sharp rain shower just before the end of the walk slightly dampened attendees' spirits (and clothing!) but we still had a good time. 20+ members went to Whitby for a weekend of walking and fun which was excellent.

There will probably be a number of changes in VBR committee members as some members are stepping down from the committee after 'doing their time'.

21. Worksop (Diana Munro)

We currently have a total membership of 73, which includes some affiliated members. We have been very pleased to welcome several new members this year, but sadly the numbers leaving for various reasons has matched the numbers joining. We are always so pleased to welcome new members, especially ones that join us on our walks! Our walk reports on Facebook, complete with lovely photos taken by our members, are enjoyed by over 360 followers, including we hope potential new members. We also promote our group by putting flyers and copies of our programmes in various public places.

Our group has put on 43 walks since the beginning of our current programme with an average turnout per walk of 11 walkers. The highest number of walkers on any walk has been 21, and the lowest number was three (although to be fair this latter was a very challenging walk in very hot weather!). Sadly three walks this year have had to be cancelled for various unavoidable reasons. Several of our regular walkers have started struggling with painful hips and knees, which is a worry – we seem to be keeping the joint replacement service busy!

This year's Worksop Ramblers Getaway was three days' walking in the North Yorkshire Moors based in Pickering. 21 of us thoroughly enjoyed the walks, including a trip on the famous Great North Yorkshire Moors railway (and we did get a fabulous steam engine pulling our carriages!) and then a walk back to Pickering. Meals out together in the evenings were also enjoyed. Plans are already afoot for next year's adventure!

Quite a few of our leaders are becoming proficient at editing their own walks on Walks Manager, including putting photos on (not always the right way round!) and registering walkers on the App. Annoyingly the Ramblers App has its ups and downs and doesn't always work.

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

22. Robin Hood Way FlexiGroup

No report received.

End of Report

Report photos:

P3 – Four seasons of Miscanthus, Southwell

P10 - Newstead Abbey Literati

P16 – Sherwood Forest

P17 – Newstead Abbey

P19 – Brinsley Headstocks

All photos by Dave Hobson, Vale of Belvoir Group