

Loughborough & District Group of the Ramblers - Annual Report 2022

For the first time since 2019 we are able to report group activities that have returned to something like pre-Covid levels.

We are generally managing to run a full walks programme with a shorter (5 to 7 miles) walk midweek and a longer (10 to 15 miles) walk at the weekend, although there have been some occasional gaps. The walks have been well attended but they have been dependent on a relatively small number of leaders and this continues to be a major issue. The number of walks offered further afield, such as in the Peak District, has also been limited due to the small number of members willing to drive to these locations. During the year the group completed walking the Leicestershire Round in a series of 15 circular walks and one linear one, having started in April 2021. In July we also offered two walks as part of the National Forest Walking Festival and the group is indebted to Tony Coates for arranging and leading these walks.

The social programme has also been returning to something like normal. This started in December with a Christmas walk and lunch. In April we organised our first ever coach trip when 36 members, from Loughborough and neighbouring groups, travelled to the Cotswolds. Two walks were arranged on the Cotswold Way, a shorter one of 6 miles (extended by some to 9.5 miles) and a longer one of 12 miles, with everyone finishing at Chipping Campden for refreshments before the return journey to Loughborough. Our annual holiday was held in October at HF's Derwent Bank House near Keswick. Twenty six members from Loughborough and neighbouring groups attended with short and long walks being offered on the Saturday and Sunday. The Saturday walks started at the HF house and both included an ascent of Cat Bells before completing different circular routes back to the house via Derwent Water. Both Sunday walks were linear and started with a boat trip on Ullswater to Howtown followed by routes over Place Fell or High Street and back to Glenridding.

There have been two full editions of our newsletter, Soar Feet, during the year and the group is indebted to non-committee member Ted Wells for editing these. Ted has done this for several years and has indicated that the next edition will be his last. Any member interested in taking on this role is encouraged to contact Ted, either directly or through any member of the committee.

Total membership of the group has remained reasonably constant during the year with a number of new members replacing the ones who have not renewed their subscriptions.

The role of Group Secretary has been vacant since the 2020 AGM. The responsibilities have been shared by other members of the committee but hopefully this situation can be remedied at the forthcoming AGM. The current Chair, who also has other committee duties, took on the role at the 2020 AGM as the group were informed that it would not be allowed to operate without a formal Chair or Secretary. This was for one year but two years have now elapsed and it is essential that a new Chair is elected at the forthcoming AGM.

The committee has met 4 times during the year, with all meetings taking place at members' houses, rather than the online sessions of the previous two years. Our finances continue to be well managed and we are kept up to date with footpath changes and legislation.

Finally a big thank you to everyone who has led a walk, served on the committee or supported the group in any way over the past year. As always, it is very much appreciated.

The Committee
October 2022