

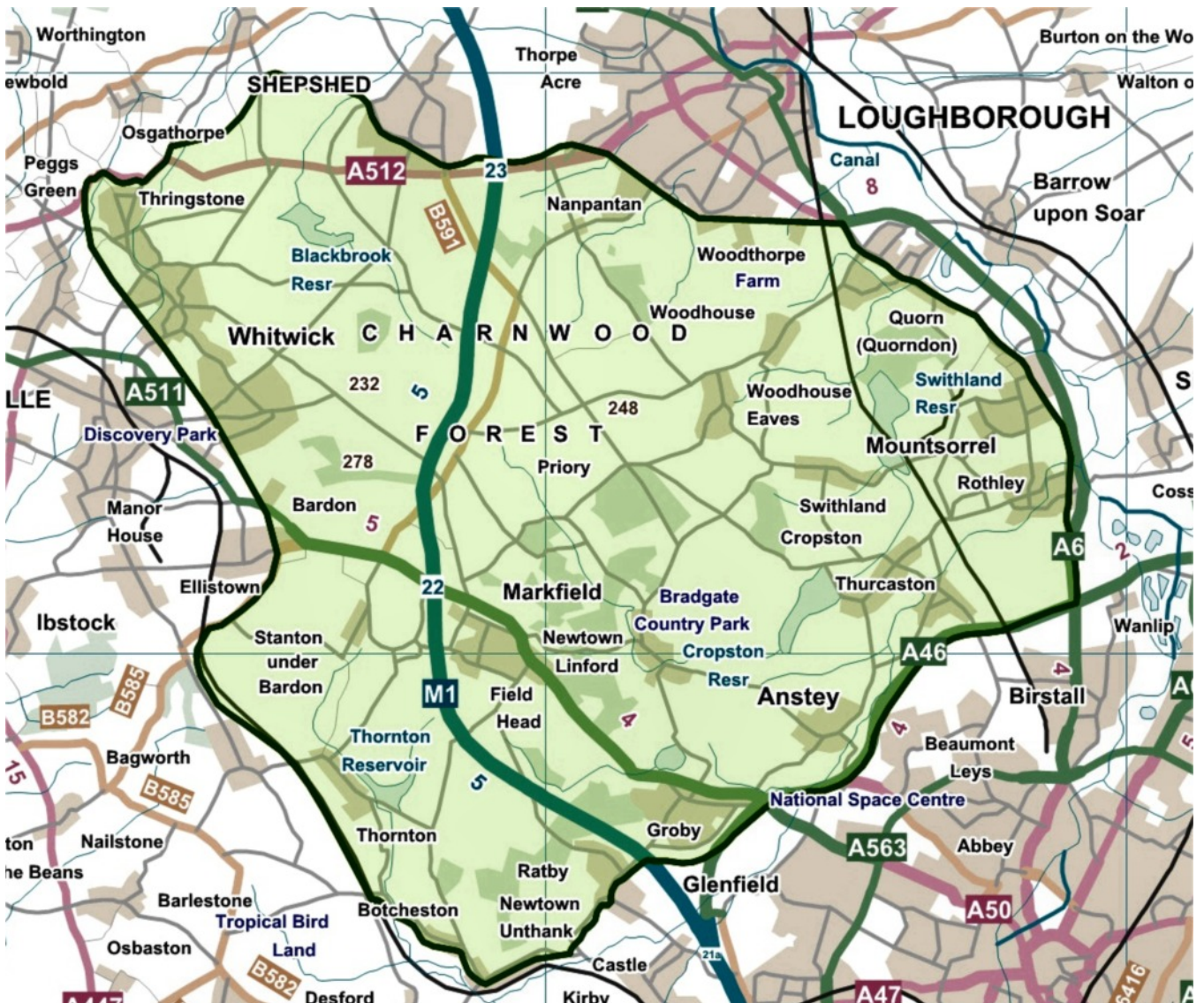
WRITE OF WAY

THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION

LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND AREA

NEWSLETTER

2020



Charnwood Forest Regional Park

THERE ARE EIGHT GROUPS MAKING UP THE AREA

**RUTLAND MELTON MOWBRAY COALVILLE LOUGHBOROUGH
HINCKLEY LUTTERWORTH LEICESTER
LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND YOUNGER RAMBLERS GROUP**



**Use your paths...
or lose them!**

**Enjoy our walks
Make new friends
Help our campaigns
Protect our paths
and open spaces**



**Ramblers
the walking charity
working for you**

**We can only look
forward to when
things will be
starting to return
to something like
normal and we
can start walking
with friends again
and hope that all
of our members
have come
through
unscathed.**

See the Area's facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/leicsrutlandra>

Visit our web site - <http://leicsra.org.uk>

and the Ramblers national web sites

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk>

and their walkfinder web site

ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/find-a-walk-or-route.aspx

http://www.ramblers.org.uk/areas_groups/groupswalksfinder.htm

Produced and published by the Ramblers

Leicestershire & Rutland Area

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Footloose DLNS
Glenfield Parish Council
Leicestershire Footpath Assoc.
Leicester CHA
Market Harborough R.C
Oadby Hill Walking Club
Over The Hill
The Grasshoppers R.C.
Kibworth Rambling Club

DIARY DATES

AGM

January 30th 2021 Area AGM.
This will using ZOOM
See back page for more detail

Area Quiz 18 December 6.30
for 7.00 Also using zoom and
for individuals not teams

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**Wishing all our members a
happy Christmas after
this difficult year.**

If you can find one still trading you may well visit a hostelry some time over the holidays and it is a fair bet that amongst those visited will be one of several known as The Chequers or Royal Chequers but few know where the name originates. Chequers or Chokers are the fruit of the Chequer Tree otherwise known as the Maple Cherry or, perhaps properly, as the Wild Service Tree. In Neolithic times this fruit formed a staple part of diet and they were still eaten till fairly recently.

It is still used by some people especially for wine making. The brown 'pears' are bitter as they develop but turn very sweet when ripe something like sultana or apricot in flavour and in Victorian times children used to eat them as 'sweets' as Christmas approached.

Last autumn saw bumper crops of sloe which are still quite common and the incredible mouth-drying qualities of this fruit still makes a Christmas treat if added to gin with a little sugar for a month or more before the festivities.

Not too late. Why not make your own Christmas tippie this year?



***The deadlines for material to go into these twice-yearly
newsletters are April 30th and October 31st***

THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WASN'T

For fairly obvious reasons we did not bring out a summer edition of Write of Way this year. Indeed not a lot of anything was done this year

When we all had time in our hands to research lost ways for example the records office was closed so we could do little more on that front.

Organised walks were on hold but we did get more people walking their own areas once exercise walks were permitted and groups and the Area officers had 'business' cards printed to hand out to encourage other walkers met to join the Ramblers

Our Chairman laid out his plans and ambitions at the last AGM very little of which he has been able to do. It was to have been his final year in office but under the circumstances your Area Executive Committee have agreed to seek a suspension of standing orders to make 2020, 24 months long

We do have a rule that he can only serve three consecutive years but in effect we seek members approval to waive this and have him serve an additional year with all other officers staying in post for 2021

The one exception is our Secretary whom is moving out of the area and that is another good reason for other officers to carry on so that we do have some continuity and do not have to find two new senior officers at the same time.

The following proposition is therefore to be put to the AGM this year

Members agree that rule 6.1 be suspended (*officers shall be elected for one year*) as well as rule 7 (*Chairman shall only serve three consecutive years*) and that all officers willing to continue remain in office for a further 12 months.

It is also intended that the groups unable to host the Area Walk and Area Quiz this year be invited to do so next year.

The AGM will have to be conducted as a virtual meeting using ZOOM

The Area has subscribed to ZOOM so any group wishing to organise their own ZOOM meeting should make arrangements with Martin.

RAMBLERS THANK YOU(S)

At the AGM in January our President Peter Williams presented an award to **Roy Denney** on behalf of the Ramblers nationally.

The citation reads:

“Roy joined the RA in 1996 as we were seeking skilled help with mapping for the Crow Act. Within a year he was elected to the Area committee and appointed editor of 'Write of Way' the Area newsletter; a role he continues to this day. This appointment was followed by that of Chairman for 14 years.



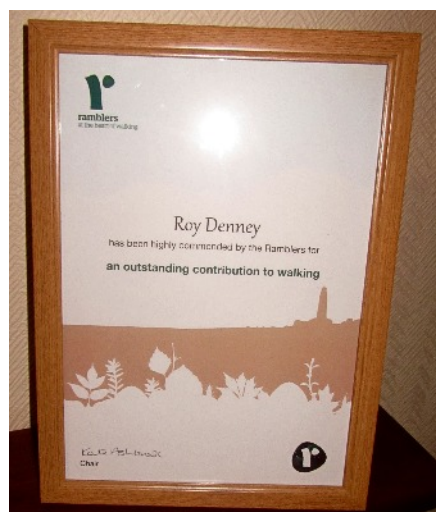
When the website was established he took on the role of compiling and updating the content and still continues to do this.

Being well ingrained into the ways of the RA, Roy took on the role of Area Walking Environment Officer and was able to use his involvement in environment issues and outdoor activities for the advantage of members.

Roy has represented the Area on the National Forest Access & Recreation Working Group for 15 years and could be found supervising contractors to ensure walking access was properly installed. Similarly he serves on the Leicestershire Local Access Forum becoming the inaugural Chairman when it was set up under the Crow Act in 2002 and serving in that position for 13 years.

Although now unable to lead walks due to health conditions, he has maintained his enthusiasm and joined the Board of Charnwood Forest Regional Park bidding for millions of pounds from the Lottery to protect and enhance the Leicestershire historic park.

Roy has represented the Area on other smaller committees and has worked (with another) on a successful 12 year fight to get a path opened which involved having to participate in a public inquiry; has put together a large legal case for a public inquiry to fight Network Rail over closure of a crossing; and monitors and advocates for walkers during the HS2 preparations.



Roy sees his most demanding task over recent years as coordinating a local group researching lost ways and preparing ongoing major submissions for definitive map modification orders”

On 5th April 2020 the Leicester & District Group celebrated another great servant to the Ramblers; a very special anniversary and a very special volunteer.

On that day **Marcus Broughton** was to have led one of their walks on the 50th anniversary (to the day) of when he first led a walk for them on 5th April 1970. Unfortunately the virus intervened.

Since then Marcus has been one of their most loyal and reliable volunteers. He has served on the committee at various times and has led hundreds of walks, guiding thousands of walkers around the paths of Britain.

He actually joined the Ramblers in 1966 (paying the hefty membership fee of 10/6d) making him a Ramblers member for 54 years. Leicester cannot be sure whether he is their longest serving member because Marcus's membership seems to predate the RA's current membership records. Luckily Marcus has a historical bent of mind and has preserved all their walks programmes since 1966 so we can be sure his memory of the dates is accurate. This preservation of a record of 50 years of the group's history is itself a unique and lovely gift to the Group.

Marcus himself is a quiet, unassuming gentleman who never makes a fuss or demands attention. But his sustained love of walking and his steady, loyal commitment to enabling others to share in this by his leading them on walks, is typical of many Ramblers volunteers whose efforts often go unacknowledged. Without the contribution of members such as Marcus the Ramblers would simply not exist.

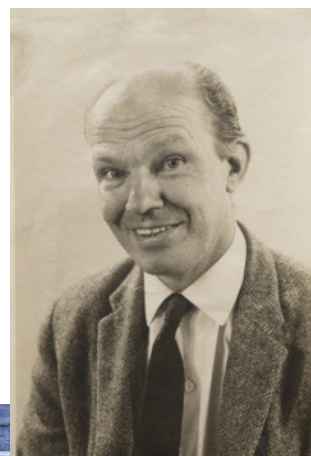
On 5th April 1970 Marcus led his first walk from Melbourne in Derbyshire and fifty ears later Marcus lis still going strong

Well done!

*Marcus
(map in
hand) leads
his group
To
entrapment
in a Fairy
Ring.*



Members also owe a debt of gratitude to then late Alan Loasby. He had been a member of the Leicester Group for over 40 years and for many of those years he served as footpath secretary of the Group and the Area, tirelessly campaigning to keep them open and properly recorded. Long after he ceased to be the Area Footpath Secretary, every six weeks he still enjoyed hosting a motley gathering of Group Footpath Secretaries at his home.



After his death we collected members donations to fund a seat in his memory in Swithland Woods. It is an unconventional but natural bench of sorts hewn from local timber. Alan was made Vice President of the Area Ramblers many years ago in recognition of the many, many years of service he gave to the Ramblers

Our last remaining Vice President, Mike Statham, had known Alan for half a century and does say that Alan's detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the county's countryside was second perhaps only to that of Stan Warren.

Alan was always totally committed and involved with the RA, but not just with the footpath work. He was also leader on many of Leicester's monthly coach trips. He helped with the setting up of the new Groups at Lutterworth, Melton and Coalville and this increase in Groups and membership in the 1970's enabled us to form the Leicestershire and Rutland Area dividing up the old East Midlands Area. Then he was Area Footpath Secretary three decades!

He led and organised many of the Forbidden Britain campaign walks in the late 1970's and was one of the first reps for the RA on the first Rights of Way and Access Group set up in conjunction with the County Council, National Farmers Union and the then Country Landowners Association.

He was a frequent Area delegate to National Councils and spoke regularly in debates and on submitted motions. He was particularly successful in getting the RA to support the bid to get the National Forest to come to the county and then monitored its progress and development regarding public access to the new forest sites. He was a great help with the running and organisation of National Council annual meetings when we hosted them at Leicester and Loughborough Universities

CHARNWOOD FOREST REGIONAL PARK

The Regional Park has been successful in its bid for funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund

Charnwood Forest was considered to be a National Parks when they were first proposed but it was to be turned down in favour of being an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Then the M1 was cut through the middle and even that protection was dropped.

The Regional Park is a partnership involving the local authorities and other agencies involved in the management of the area but it has no legal status.

The Landscape Partnership has been formed to tap into lottery funding on our behalf but had we been turned down again the Park as such would have continued and much of the preparatory research for the bid would have been of great use to us **but we have been successful** and now the work really begins. I continue to be a member of the Board of the Regional Park itself and these are exciting times.



The M1 is a significant barrier and has affected how people see and experience the Forest. Many local people are unaware that Charnwood Forest extends to the west of the motorway.

Our messaging throughout the project will help people to appreciate the full extent of the Regional Park, support improvements to neglected sites to the west of the motorway and improve connectivity at key M1 crossing points.

Significant habitats such as Charnwood's ancient meadows, woodland and heathland will be supported through targeted projects. These will help to improve habitat connectivity and the longer-term management and condition of the landscape.

We are taking advice as to how to promote and display the fossils and basic geology without either exposing items to vandalism or negating their value but they are virtually unique and of international importance.

Rocks laid down during the Precambrian Period are the oldest found within the Charnwood area, and date from around 560-600 million years ago. At this time what is now England lay within the southern hemisphere, where the pressures from plate movement caused magma to rise to the surface and form a chain of active volcanoes. The material erupting from these volcanoes accumulated on the sea floor surrounding the volcanoes, forming the rocks of the 'Charnian Supergroup', which is at least 3.5km thick.

Primitive life began to evolve at this time, the fossils of which can be found throughout Charnwood Forest. The only other place on earth where this evidence has since been found is Newfoundland.

Igneous rocks, for example the diorites that intruded the Charnian Supergroup, are worked in quarries throughout Charnwood Forest.

During the Cambrian Period the volcanoes were worn down by erosion allowing the sea to advance over the land. The Swithland Slates represent the muddy material laid down on the sea floor at this time, probably about 530 million years ago.

Fossilised animal burrows can be found within these rocks and examples are particularly notable on slate gravestones, as in Ratby churchyard. Swithland Slate has been quarried since Roman time and continues to a small extent, to be worked today.

This was followed by the Ordovician Period and about 450 million years ago, igneous rock, created through the solidification of molten magma was forced to the surface forming igneous rocks known as granodiorites and it is believed that these have been worked around Mountsorrel since Roman times and there is also evidence of Late Neolithic, Early Bronze Age, Early Iron Age and Norman activity. Mountsorrel Quarry currently exploits a particularly large mass of granodiorite.

The collision of two continental plates occurred approximately 420 million years ago forming mountains, the remnants of which today form the Charnwood Hills

The area has little topsoil and is still very rocky and as such of little use for farming which leaves us with the park as we know it today. It is however being encroached upon for housing and needs protecting and as more people live nearby the 'honey pot' sites are being overwhelmed.

We now have over £3,000,000 to spend on various projects with these problems in mind. We need to educate people about the value of the park but also of the many areas of it available to the public to take pressure off the more popular sites.

The project aims to raise the profile of Charnwood Forest to help people to explore Charnwood improving the network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes that link the various sites. .

It will also help people to engage with Charnwood's rich history through arts, activities and events and offer them opportunities to learn new skills such as dry-stone walling and wildlife recording.



The HLF head of landscape and natural heritage, said: "Across the UK people are increasingly realising that nature is in trouble and it's time to take a more proactive approach.

Schemes like these provide a creative solution to helping people reconnect with landscapes and the environment, to implement solutions at a truly landscape-scale and tackle issues such as soil loss and flooding by supporting partnerships and coalitions of the willing."

Work on this was already underway and one of the first things we did was produce **a walkers map** of the area to help people get about. I initiated the idea and did the local surveying and negotiated production and it was initially part funded by the Ramblers. It is on sale at tourist venues £6.99. This second edition is on waterproof paper and has a lot of the clutter on an OS map removed. It is also centred on the park so you don't need to take 3 OS maps out with you. It shows all the tea shops and pubs I could identify and the permissive paths I am aware of.

Given my involvement I do still have some copies of the map available which I can let **RA members have for £5** plus any postage costs if needed. The area covered is shown on the front of this newsletter

Charnwood is a key landscape within the wider National Forest's 200 square miles:

It is a unique upland landscape, the nearest hard rock outcrop to London, with sharp rock features, ancient woodland and a rich history.



We look forward to bringing Charnwood's stories to life and help the surrounding communities engage with this very special place.

From bird watching, enjoying wild flowers in spring to rock climbing, orienteering, horse trekking and rambling, there are lots of reasons to visit and explore Charnwood Forest.

Its unexpected, nationally largely unknown and dramatic upland landscapes are steeped in history, with one of the world's earliest fossils being found there during the 1950s and inspiring David Attenborough to follow the career path he has.

It really is great that the funding bid has been successful, giving us the means of encouraging people from Leicestershire and beyond to appreciate what's on our doorstep.

In one sense it is a relief as this is the culmination of seven years hard work. We now face five years to complete all the proposed projects and there will be many opportunities for volunteers to get involved

Roy Denney, Editor

TRADITIONS

Not a lot of walking has been done over the last 12 months. Probably the wettest autumn and winter on record left field paths you could swim in with occasional flood thrown in. Wind caused lots of damage and made any attempts to get out and about a challenge and then we had the start of the virus putting paid to our organised walks. Easter came and went and a glorious early summer, a year on with nothing much to show for it

Questions have been raised about why Easter is when it is and why it changes so much. Whilst many people think the strange way Easter moves about each year is something to do with religion it is actually an astronomical phenomenon.

It obviously has historic connotations impacting on all the religions 'of the book' but is actually based on the movements of the moon.

This is a bit odd given that so much of the Church calendar hangs on the date of Easter Sunday but when this is actually based on it being the first Sunday, after the first full moon, after the official spring equinox (March 21). There you go! Simple isn't

Just before Easter we should have had General Council but that had to be cancelled like so much else

Christmas will be here before you know it and we will be bringing a tree indoors but why? The fir tree is the traditional Christmas tree and the branches of this tree have been used for centuries to decorate houses during winter festivals. The evergreen nature of the fir represented life and fertility and was a celebration of the coming of spring.

The modern tradition seems to have started in Germany around the middle ages but caught on in England during the 1880s when Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, had a Christmas tree installed in Windsor Castle. Trees were decorated with candles, nuts and fruits in those days.

Part of many people's Christmases these days are chocolate Yule logs. These haven't always been covered in chocolate as the tradition predates the invention of chocolate and hails back many years to a time before central heating. We also have a tradition of the twelve days of Christmas and these traditions overlap.

In Nordic times winter solstice celebrations involved the burning of a Yule log. They were always very careful to make sure the log stayed lit as it was unlucky to have to re-light it. A large tree was felled and brought indoors in a grand ceremony. The widest end of the tree was placed into the fire and lit from remains of previous year's log. The tree was then slowly fed into fire over the festival. After twelve days, the remains of the Yule log were safely stored to protect the house against lightning and evil spirits for the following year.

Anglo-Saxon pagans would light candles on top of the Yule Log to light up the house and welcome the early spring sun. In fairly recent times on Christmas Eve, the youngest member of party would light two candles from the burning Yule log and everybody present would make silent wishes about the year to come.

Burning Yule logs and bringing in a small log or piece of coal if visiting just after midnight on New Year's Eve continued in the west and north of England into the first part of the 20th century.

In the dark days of winter the cheeky Robin brightens up our gardens with his lovely red breast. There are any number of myths as to how it got that red breast amongst which was it being scorched by fire while taking water to lost souls in purgatory or that it was stained by the blood of Christ as the robin comforted him on the cross. The Robin is now very much a symbol of Christmas but this does not go back very far. The 'tradition' comes from an association with the postman. Victorian postmen wore red jackets which earned them the nickname 'robins'. The bird then became popular on Christmas cards as a symbol of the postman delivering them.

Bright red holly is widely used as a Christmas decoration and is often used on top of the Christmas pudding. Before Christianity, holly was the male symbol of fertility and ivy the female partner. During festivals in the dark days of winter, a young boy dressed in holly and a young girl in ivy would parade through the streets bringing life to the most miserable part of the year. Bringing holly into the house was also thought to protect a home against evil fairies. It was considered bad luck to fell a whole holly tree so only the odd branch was taken. It was also accepted that witches ran along the tops of hedges and a strategically placed holly trees caused an excellent barrier. Better hang on to that sprig of holly to ward off mischievous fairies!

Another tradition from the mists of the past is very welcome today. A stolen kiss under the mistletoe is all very well but why do we lock lips under this particular evergreen and poisonous plant? It was considered a plant of vivacity and fertility by Druids, with its always green leaves and wintry white berries. Kissing under it is thought to come from Norse mythology. There are variations on the story involving Baldr, son the Norse goddess of love and fertility, Frigg. He was supposedly is plagued with dreams of his impending death and as an enemy arrow made of mistletoe hits him, Frigg's tears fall upon the mistletoe arrow and turn it into white berries. Baldr is brought back to life and Frigg proclaims that anyone standing under the miraculous plant will come to no harm and will receive a kiss as a token of love.

It sounds like a convenient excuse which we all use now but in Victorian times male servants were allowed to steal a kiss from their best girl under the mistletoe and a refusal would bring bad luck. It is said that a man would pluck a berry from the bunch with each kiss and the privilege would ended when all the berries were gone. Next time you pucker up under the mistletoe, remember you're keeping a tradition going

DON'T LOSE YOUR WAY

After the 31st of December 2025 any historic path which is not formally recorded on the definitive map of paths will be lost unless still being well used. If it is still in current regular use then as always it can be claimed as a de facto public path based on unhindered usage.

If, however, it has fallen into disuse for now it is still technically a path regardless of obstructions on the ground and with historic evidence it can be added to the map of recorded and therefore protected paths. The CROW Act created a cut off point after which historic evidence will not be accepted.

The building of new communities, shopping precincts and industrial estates; new roads and HS2 many of these links will become very advantageous again.

This network is the envy of the world having evolved over many centuries before records began. We do however have records going back quite a long way. These paths link villages to other communities, to paths and roads, to the mill or the pub, to shops or to the fields they worked. Nowadays leisure walking is widespread but we are increasingly encouraged to use this free facility both for exercise and a means to get out into the countryside for our general health and wellbeing.

If the unprotected miles of paths are to be enjoyed by generations to come we have to get applications in to local Highways Authorities to have them added to the map. Some have major obstacles on them now and some would be very inconvenient to landowners and managers but if a right is established it should encourage them to offer an acceptable alternative. If they dedicate such a route we could call a halt to any claim but if it has got that far then we could accept a diversion order.

Numerous user groups are finding the gaps and the anomalies and building databases of the problems but volunteers are needed to tease out the evidence. The process is fairly simple but time-consuming and if the evidence is not there to be found, frustrating. If hard evidence is not there but there is a fair bit of circumstantial evidence we can still claim as it is hoped any claim in process at cut off will not be extinguished giving us more time to find that silver bullet.

The starting point is comparing old maps with those of today. Old maps often show lost rights of way that may have fallen into disuse and many can be found and studied online - every area also has local early maps and they also turn up in old books.

The National Library of Scotland has a digitised copy of maps of the UK which you can zoom into. Old maps have giveaways like a footpath (F.P.), bridle road (B.R.) or a 'road' which is not on a current Ordnance Survey map – There are many other sources which can be accessed. Your County Archive will have dozens and you can spend hours of fascinating research there.

You don't even need an old map as just studying a present-day maps shows up anomalies. If things that don't quite make sense, then the probable answer is that something is missing like an old path.

The system whereby they were put on the map was that each parish listed them.

Some interpreted the rules differently and some were perhaps not as diligent or left things off for ulterior motives. The chairman of many parishes was often the large local landowner. If one parish has an abundance of paths and is next to a parish with relatively few, it begs the question why

One thing you can take as read is that path did not go nowhere. It is rare that a right of way will be a dead-end, so what is missing? It could be it used to go to a mill which has gone but if it ends at a parish boundary it almost certainly means one parish listed it and the other did not for whatever reason but the path will have continued

It is best to look at the definitive map rather than the OS where some things are not as clear but you may see a path doesn't quite reach the road. The road may have been moved and nobody thought to divert the path officially even though everybody still walks it.

If you are not a records buff and prefer legwork, you can look for clues when out and about. There are a number of things which may reveal the traces of historic paths or even bridleways.

A sunken line on the ground may indicate where a path has been "hollowed out" by use over time. It may have parallel rows of hedges either side which is a dead giveaway that it was probably a drovers' route where cattle were moved

You may see remnants of an old stone surface in a field which may indicate a historical road or even cobbles in a river which might suggest an old ford. If walking along an old stone wall you may see what looks like an old worn stone stile which may indicate an old route existed at this point. If there is a tunnel under a raised rail bed what was it for?

Each Highway Authority is tasked with researching its 'lost ways' but few have the resources to do much. Most welcome volunteers assisting and in most cases it is through the good offices of their Local Access Forum or user groups like us or British Horse Society

If you are interested in helping contact one of the Committee

Your Area feel that this is such an important subject that Central Office should put more resources into it. Our AGM may be asked to support a proposal to that effect to go to the General Council next year, a proposal held back from this year

PUZZLE CORNER

If you are shielding, isolating or in quarantine here are a few things to occupy you

Camping Out

Word Search Puzzle



H	C	R	I	V	E	R	E	B	D	W	F	O	R	E	S	T
M	L	R	G	G	V	F	S	R	T	I	D	G	A	G	G	S
P	X	C	P	E	E	P	I	N	Z	L	T	O	N	A	R	A
O	Z	C	L	E	C	T	E	S	E	D	E	I	G	A	R	M
D	F	D	T	A	F	T	P	R	H	L	K	M	E	C	A	O
U	T	D	R	V	Q	V	I	I	T	I	U	B	R	T	C	U
B	G	D	E	E	R	F	J	U	H	F	N	P	J	V	C	N
U	T	A	E	R	P	V	W	K	S	E	S	G	M	H	O	T
G	A	O	S	M	S	S	C	B	O	N	S	Q	O	U	O	A
S	S	K	A	Q	S	A	X	N	R	A	C	U	G	X	N	I
P	C	C	T	L	P	C	A	E	Z	T	O	I	M	P	I	N
R	Q	F	I	K	I	C	T	X	X	U	M	L	Y	M	U	S
A	H	A	C	B	N	N	P	U	Z	R	P	A	F	K	E	M
Y	R	A	U	R	A	W	S	I	X	E	A	M	Q	M	L	R
T	B	W	I	L	D	E	R	N	E	S	S	H	H	H	A	S
S	L	E	E	P	I	N	G	B	A	G	S	X	G	D	K	M
K	V	H	H	K	K	G	W	V	G	Y	H	K	B	Y	E	O



BACKPACK	FOREST	RIVER
BEARS	HIKING	SLEEPING BAG
BUG SPRAY	LAKE	SUMMER
CAMPFIRE	LANTERN	TENT
CANOE	MOUNTAINS	TRAILS
COMPASS	NATURE	TREES
DEER	RACCOON	WILDERNESS
FISHING	RANGER	WILDLIFE

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ANAGRAVATIONS

There is a clue in the saying, either similarities or opposites

DIRTY ROOM

BEST IN PRAYER

MOON STARER

A ROPE ENDS IT

THEY SEE

HERE COME DOTS

CASH LOST IN ME

LIES LET'S RECOUNT

ALAS! NO MORE Z 'S

I'M A DOT IN PLACE

TWELVE PLUS ONE

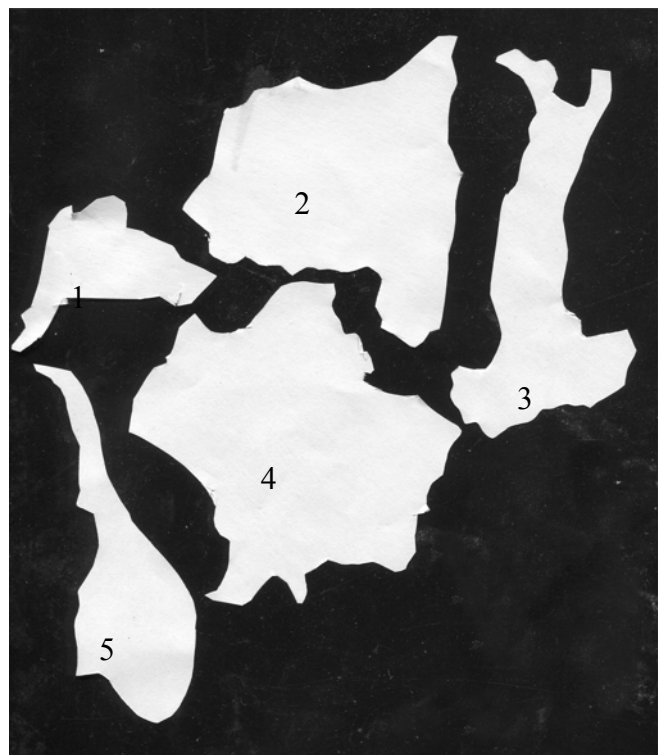
WOMAN HITLER

IS IT LEGAL, NO

MORE TINY

I LIMIT ARMS

Can you name the above?



These countries are not aligned to north and are mirror images. Can you identify them

Have this page open on the night of the area quiz and the answers to name the face and countries and the anagrams will be given. If you cannot join us and want the answers please email the Editor and answers will be sent out after the quiz.



Regional Quiz

The usual team format is not possible this year but all members are invited to take part in a quiz as individuals by using zoom.

Date Friday December 18th sign in from 6.30, 7.00 start

Meeting ID: 894 9423 8356

Passcode: 335371

Or put this link into computer and follow onscreen instructions

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89494238356?pwd=eIRCanEwb2dvaVd0aFFxSzlpbnBKUT09>

Where The Saints Went Marching In

Three intrepid members of Hinckley completed an epic walking 'holiday' this year and I take my hat off to them. I am a member of a mountaineering, exploring and expeditions club and six years ago I attempted St Cuthbert's way with them, the idea being to do what we calculated as 63 miles over a weekend. We stayed at the Kirk Yetholm YHA which we took over for the weekend and 32 of us set off on the Saturday morning being ferried by cars to Lindisfarne as soon as cars could cross the causeway, to walk back as start of our route. It was the first really long walk I had done for a few years but to celebrate my 70th I gave it a go full of optimism.

Some 10 hours later I staggered back into the hostel as tail end Charlie and walking like a tin soldier with knees locked up. A fast early pace in sunshine saw us lunch at 18 miles with only 12 to go but then it rained as only Northumberland can and those miles seemed like leagues, walking largely through heather and long grass with little indication of any path as we crossed the high moors. It was a relief to join the Pennine Way for the last bit where the path was more defined. St Cuthbert's Way had been little walked back then and rough country lengths hardly visible. Half our party did manage the remaining 33 miles to Melrose the next day but I could not even drive my car for several hours.

St Cuthbert's Way is a very good walk but tough in places and better walked in shorter stages. The Hinckley team did it in the opposite direction which is more usually walked and were wiser than we were. If this trip was not hard enough after they reached the end they went straight into an even longer walk.



On 16th August after months of uncertainty and cancelled trips Tony Smith, Brian Knight and Mike I'Anson were relieved to be able to at least make a start on their long-awaited

adventure into the Scottish Borders and Northumberland.

They were to walk from Melrose to Holy Island over five days, with every intention of following this with a ninety-seven mile trek south, along St. Oswald's Way, from Holy Island to Hexham.

The first was a tough day, with a climb out of Melrose over the Eildon Hills. The great views back over Melrose and the River Tweed were of little consolation as some quickly realised they should have trained more and packed less.



Brian Knight, Tony Smith and Mike I'Anson, at Kirkwhelpington

The going got easier as they descended following Bowden Burn and then the River Tweed, to St. Boswells and onwards to Maxton where they left the river and joined 'Dere Street' a Roman Road. This was not quite the hiking expressway they had hoped for but they plodded on to the visitor centre at Harestanes and a taxi to Jedburgh and accommodation. Just over fifteen miles walked and around 1800 ft climbed.

Next day was even tougher and a decision to finish a couple of miles sooner than scheduled to be on time for an early dinner reservation didn't look quite such a good idea on a wet Monday morning when they had to walk two miles to the 'start'. Nevertheless they steadily headed east, enjoying some good views of the River Teviot before rejoining Dere Street for a final stretch. The drizzle was unrelentingly as they passed through forest and farmland, passing the ruins of Cessford Castle before arriving at the village of Morebattle where they enjoyed a brief refreshment stop. From here the serious climbing began up to Wideopen Hill, the highest point on St. Cuthbert's Way, and halfway between Melrose and Lindisfarne. The poor weather meant that the views, which normally would have been spectacular, were unfortunately rather limited. It was with some considerable relief that they gradually descended to Kirk Yetholm and their overnight accommodation. Almost eighteen miles walked with around 2,500 ft climbed

Next day leaving Kirk Yetholm, Scotland, they had a fourteen-mile hike across the Cheviots to Wooler, in Northumberland. Happily the day was dry for the long climb out of town along not only St. Cuthbert's Way but also The Pennine Way, which shares the same route for a couple of miles. For some of them this brought back lots of memories of previous adventures on this famous long-distance path. There was soon a parting of the ways however as they headed east, gradually making the long climb up to the border ridge and crossing into England, with wonderful views in all directions. They then descended to Hethpool, to follow College Burn eastwards for a couple of miles, before a second big climb up to Gains Law and across the grouse moors before a slow descent to Wooler. There were a few intermittent showers later in the day and it was a case of waterproofs on/off/on etc a few times which was a little frustrating. 14 miles walked and over 3,500 ft on the GPS: more than the map said but Mike's knees, suggested this was accurate.

Wednesday they awoke to the encouraging prospect of some sunshine, so after a good breakfast served in a socially-distant manner in their rooms, they had a spring in their steps. They were soon brought back down to earth when their host for the previous night caught up with them with walking poles left behind. Suitably equipped, they began the first climb of the day, past the radio station and on to Westwood Moor, with spectacular views back to Wooler

and the hills they had crossed to get there. They then descended to cross the River Till before turning east to the village of West Horton; then passing an impressive wooden carving of St. Cuthbert himself, the inspiration for the walk.



Another climb followed up to St. Cuthbert's Cave, where the great man is reputed to have rested occasionally on his travels.

Shortly after, they had the most impressive view of the day; a distant view of Holy Island and Lindisfarne Castle.



This was still some way ahead however and to complete the day's walk they headed north through the welcome shade of a pine forest before the final stretch to their overnight accommodation at West Mains, ready for their crossing to the island next day.

The final day on St. Cuthbert's Way was completed in warm sunshine with a mere five miles walk to Holy Island over its causeway. This is only crossable at certain times of the day, dependent on the tides, but due to careful planning the tide was out. Lesser walkers might have walked on the roadway but as by now they considered themselves to be 'pilgrims', they were determined to follow the true 'Pilgrim's Path' across the sands. This route is a couple of miles or so and took a little over an hour. It was very pleasant really and was basically just a long paddle, although one of their number did manage to sample the full mud treatment too. No names will be mentioned here though; what goes on tour etc... On arrival at the hotel on the island they dumped rucksacks before doing some exploring, starting with Lindisfarne Priory of course, thus completing the full sixty-two miles of St. Cuthbert's Way and officially qualifying as pilgrims. From here it was pretty much straight to the pub for a welcome lunch of beer and sandwiches and the afternoon was spent 'at leisure', recovering from the exertions of the previous few days before next day setting off on St. Oswald's Way, a ninety-seven mile journey which should see them arrive in Heavenfield, on Hadrian's Wall near Hexham in eight days time.

After a leisurely breakfast at the very pleasant overnight stop at The Lindisfarne Hotel, they reluctantly said goodbye to Holy Island via the causeway, back to the mainland. Blustery winds with rain in the air soon had waterproofs out and after braving the oncoming hoards of day trippers they were glad to be back on some quieter footpaths heading cross-country back to Fenwick, backtracking for a few miles as St. Oswald's Way shares the path with St. Cuthbert's Way. It has to be said that St. Oswald could have learned a thing or two from St. Cuthbert about mapping and signposting with them having to consult a map to find the way on occasions.

Leaving St. Cuthbert behind they continued, enjoying fine views across to Holy Island and also to the Farne Islands further south. The route led to Belford and overnight accommodation and their landlady for the evening, Val Barnsley, formerly, of Teign Bank Road Hinckley. About twelve miles walked so not too demanding.



Next a fairly gentle eleven-mile day in ideal weather: dry with a little sunshine and a cool breeze. Leaving Belford behind them and crossing the busy A1 and (after checking with the signal box on the telephone) the East Coast Main Line, they continued to 'The Outchester Duckett' a four-storey tower; a quirky building now a holiday let.

The route, sharing with the Northumberland Coastal Path, took a broad loop across the Bamburgh Castle Golf Course giving wonderful views across Budle Bay, all the way up to Holy Island. The busy path around the headland led to the village of Bamburgh, and a close-up view of the castle. Stopping for a lunchtime beer they continued the last four miles to the busy town of Seahouses and overnight accommodation on The Ship Inn.



Next day walking through Seahouses with views of the harbour and the Farne Islands the route followed the coast road through seemingly endless caravan sites but fortunately they soon entered a National Trust Conservation Area; Beadnell Links and Newton Links. The information boards claimed these were 'teeming with wildlife', however it seems nobody had informed the wildlife of this; perhaps it takes Sundays off?

Continuing they passed Newton Point and eventually reached Low Newton-by-the-Sea where they stopped for an early beer at (another) Ship Inn, which was by now getting extremely busy. Fortunately finding some grass to sit on they made the acquaintance of a friendly shi-tzu named Milo and his owner. The path continued through Embleton Links and then Dunstanburgh Castle Golf Club with fine views across Embleton Bay to Dunstanburgh Castle.



At this point it started to rain and, after donning waterproofs and putting away cameras, they hurriedly finished the day's walking with the final section to Craster and their accommodation in Dunstan. Only about eleven miles and after a comfortable stay just off-route in the village of Dunstan they headed off on the 14 miles to Warkworth. The forecast was for intermittent rain all day but the weather was surprisingly good and dry all morning with the sun managing a brief appearance. Back to Craster to rejoin St. Oswald's Way and the Northumberland Coastal Path and one of the best days of the trip so far. There were spectacular views over the rocky coastline both to the north; back towards Craster and Dunstanburgh, and south where they could make out Coquet Island in the distance. They spotted several interesting birds and wild flowers, some of which they could actually identify.

They proceeded through the quiet village of Boulmer, thought worth another visit, and eventually arrived at Alnmouth and a lunchtime beer, having eventually found a pub that was open. After lunch the weather returned to form, fleeces and waterproofs were quickly donned before briefly heading inland around the Aln estuary completing the coastal section of the walk, heading inland to Warkworth. A longish day at just under fifteen miles

They had steady rain next day on a walk endured rather than enjoyed, fortunately only eleven miles, but taking about five hours. Disappointing as the route, which largely followed the River Coquet, went through some lovely countryside which on a better day they might have paused to admire and photograph. Cameras stayed firmly covered up though. Happily temporary shelter in the Northumberland Arms at Felton permitted an enjoyable lunchtime beer, although a bowl of hot soup might have been a wiser choice. In the afternoon fighting through wet bracken they eventually slipped and slid through the mud to finally arrive at the Anglers Arms, Weldon Bridge. Fortunately they were there for two nights as it would probably take them that long to get dry again.

Wednesday they were relieved to set off to Harwood in dry weather, going west along the Coquet Valley, past Pauperhaugh eventually arriving at Rothbury, close to the Cragside Estate created by and former home, of Sir William Armstrong, a Victorian engineer of note. After a stopping for a quick snack (no time for beer that day), they climbed into the Rothbury Forest, which was in reality open moorland with colourful heather and fine views to enjoy in

all directions. At 3:00 p.m. and making good progress the Forestry Commission 'threw them a curve ball' with an unexpected diversion which went on a loop on difficult terrain and off their printed maps, adding almost two miles to the walk. To make matters worse it started to rain and didn't stop for the rest of the afternoon. They eventually met their taxi at just after 6:00 p.m. having walked nearly nineteen miles and feeling like drowned rats yet again. Happily, hot showers, a good meal and a few beers restored flagging spirits despite another unpromising weather forecast. Next day it was with some trepidation they left their taxi, in the mist, near the village of Harwood, basically in the middle of nowhere.

Setting out for Hallington hoping for the best their optimism was rewarded with a near-dry day of walking. The ground was very wet and care needed to negotiate

After a brief 'lunch' stop, sitting on a bench outside the church, but having another taxi rendezvous later in the day, it was necessary to keep one eye on the clock. Enjoying the pleasant if unremarkable, scenery passing through both Great and Little Bavington(s), dodging some inquisitive cattle and chatting with some equally inquisitive but friendly locals they progressed.

They came across two workman in the process of installing a newly-built replacement stile/ladder and had the honour of being the first ever walkers to use it; such was its pristine condition however that they felt rather guilty for not removing boots first.



Arriving in Hallington their taxi took them to Hexham, home for the next two nights. Friday, as per usual, the forecast was uninspiring but thankfully the weather gods evidently decided that they had suffered enough and allowed the last day's walking in reasonable conditions. Taxi back to Hallington, and then a steady climb towards the village of Great Whittington where pausing for breath, they were able to enjoy some fine views of their route behind them. They stopped briefly to admire the remains of Whittington Mill before continuing to climb to the summit of Toft Hill, again while they got their breath back, pretending to admire the views (and take photos).

They gradually descended to join Hadrian's Wall at Milecastle 20 at Carr Hill before turning west. They each were part of a group of eight who had 'walked the wall' five years previously, although in the opposite direction so surroundings were vaguely familiar, especially Halton Red House where some had stayed overnight.

They were hoping for a lunchtime beer at Port Gate but we're dismayed to discover that the pub had since been converted to a coffee house so they pressed on with only a very brief stop en-route for a snack.

The weather, dry up until this point, became very windy and what very little rain fell was pretty much horizontal. Fortunately it didn't last and they finally arrived at Heavenfield, the official start/finish of St. Oswald's Way. Stopping to savour the moment and reflect on the challenges encountered covering around 170 miles since they began St. Cuthbert's way in Melrose two weeks earlier, Mike suspects they all silently vowed to never to attempt anything so foolhardy again when they could be warm, dry and comfortable at home. Although originally planning to walk all the way back to Hexham they opted instead to walk the short distance to the village of Wall for a quick beer before catching the bus back to their hotel.

So that's it for another year; another adventure completed. Mike kept the diary and would like to thank his two companions: Tony Smith, particularly for all the work in booking accommodation and transport, and Brian Knight, especially for the many fine photos he contributed.

GALLERY



The paddle, Holy Island crossing



Seahouses Harbour



Limdisfarne Castle



**River Tweed near
St Boswells**



**Lindisfarne
Priory
with the
castle in the
background**



Pilgrim's route over the sands



Gains Law near Wooler



Felton



Warkworth



Pauperhaugh



College Burn, Hethpool



Craster Harbour



Looking back to Beadnell



Bamburgh Castle

**Heavenfield
End of the road**



MAJOR FOOTPATH CHANGES THIS YEAR

For more information on these diversions or any other changes contact martin@langsett1.com

Charnwood

K22 Rothley Diversion from cross field path to field edge path.

Harborough

C15 Great Glen Minor diversion to correct a mapping error.
A54 Great Bowden Minor diversion to make way for housing estate road.
W71 W87 Ullesthorpe Diversion to make way for a new housing estate. Path given its own route (not along estate roads).
A24 Market Harborough Path diversions to make way for a new estate road. An extra alternative has been added.
Y108 Dunton Bassett Addition of a new path between Leire Lane and Ashby Parva Road.
W53 Broughton Astley Minor realignment of path to reflect surfaced path on the ground.
A118 Market Harborough New path along a section of disused railway. Paths CP12 and DC9 also added to Northamptonshire map.
W62 Frolseworth Small diversion to put path onto line used for many years.

Hinckley and Bosworth

N50 Coalville Diversion of path around new industrial unit. New paths created and improvements made to other parts of N50 by the developer.
T104 Ratcliffe Culey Addition of a short section of path between Sketchley Lane and T34.
S89 Barton in the Beans Retrospective diversion following the building of 4 houses. Acceptable diversion.

Leicester City

Churchbell Way Minor diversion to an unrecorded bridleway.

Melton Mowbray

E18 Scalford Minor diversion to take footpath onto a track that has been used by some for many years.
H109 Asfordby Addition of a path used by local people for years. Application made prior to planning permission for new housing development

The map of footpaths on the County Council website is useful but not always up to date with temporary diversions

See <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cycling-and-walking/where-to-walk-in-leicestershire>

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



I hope that this edition of the Write of Way finds you well both physically and mentally.

Well, what a year this has turned out to be. After the last AGM I decided that, as this was my last year as Chair, my target for the year was to attend a walk with each group in the Area.

I managed to get out with Loughborough group in January, then all hell broke loose and the plans went out of the window. Turn the clock forwards 8 months and things are still up in the air.

I thought that in this report I should give you an update of where we are with all the rules and conditions that we must currently follow. However, when I thought about it, I realised there is a very good chance that things will have changed, possibly several times, before you get to read this.

This year's General Council was cancelled and rescheduled later in the year as a video conference where motions, questions and elections for the members of the Board of Trustees were submitted prior to the conference.

At the time of writing all the groups are now out walking to varying degrees. Thank you for being patient while the group committees have worked their way through all the rules and regulations. I must also say a big thank you to the group committees for all of the hard work they have put in during these uncertain times. Without the people on the committees we would not survive as an organisation.

For some their duties never changed, and throughout the Footpath Officers have continued to look at planning applications and footpath diversions. When problems have arisen, they have been out to check on blocked paths and illegal signs. Thanks for your continued hard work.

I am sad to announce that our Area Secretary, Kim Vallance, is leaving Leicestershire and relocating to Mull. Over the last few years Kim has supported me in my role as Chair. Whenever I have needed an email sending out to the groups, I have given Kim a call and the email has been sent within a few hours. She has attended online meetings with Central Office, she has helped the groups to learn how to use Zoom for committee meetings and AGM's. For Melton Group she has organised our walks programme, ran our website and uploaded the walks onto the Walkfinder. Thank you Kim, you will be greatly missed.

I suppose at this point I should tell you what the future holds for the Area and the Ramblers' in general but in these uncertain times I would not like to make any guesses. I am, however, sure that we will continue to protect the rights of walkers, fight to keep the Public Rights of Way network protected and continue to walk in our beautiful countryside.

Martin James

Agenda for the 32nd Annual General Meeting of the Leicestershire & Rutland Area of the Ramblers Association

**Virtual Meeting using Zoom Saturday, January 30, 9:30 am sign in
Meeting 10.00 – 1:00 pm latest**

Meeting ID: 849 4731 1331

Passcode: 147087

Or enter this link into your browser

**[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84947311331?pwd=OTBFcXBqRzFr
TGIKMmN6VnhEajJ5QT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84947311331?pwd=OTBFcXBqRzFrTGIKMmN6VnhEajJ5QT09)**

- 1 Chairman's welcome
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Approval of the minutes of the last A.G.M
- 4 Matters arising from those minutes not otherwise on this agenda
- 5 Presentation of any annual reports
 - a) Chairman's report
 - b) Treasurer's report and presentation of accounts
 - c) Secretary's report
 - d) Footpaths Officer's report
 - e) Walking Environment Officer's report
 - f) Membership Secretary's report
 - g) Editors report
 - h) Social Media Coordinator's report
 - i) Publicity Officer's report
 - j) Group reports
- 6 Adoption of accounts and acceptance of officers' and groups' reports

10 MINUTE BREAK

- 7 Presidents remarks
- 8 President moves a motion to suspend rule 6.I of the standing orders and constitution stating that officers are only elected for one year
- 9 President moves a motion to suspend rule 7 within our standing orders and constitution stating that the Chairman can only serve three years
- 10 The President invites all officers, other members of the AEC and Representatives on outside bodies to continue for a further year.
- 11 Chairman resumes the conduct of the meeting and asks members to affirm Peter Williams as President and Mike Statham as Vice President (maximum four permitted).
- 12 Election of a Secretary
- 13 Election of a Publicity Officer
- 14 Confirmation of appointment of an Auditor / Independent Financial Examiner
- 15 Any proposed motions for General Council
- 16 Nomination of two representatives to General Council and up to two observers if it happens
- 17 Area Events (dates, hosts and formats)
 - a) Area walk – Saturday, late summer - Loughborough Group
 - b) Area Quiz – Friday night Oct / Nov - Rutland Group
 - c) Next AGM - Last Saturday in January 2022 - Loughborough

FORMAL MEETING CLOSE

Minutes of the 31st Annual General Meeting of the Leicestershire & Rutland Area of the Ramblers Association Saturday January 25th 2020 – Coalville Labour Club,

Martin James, The Chairman welcomed all present and gave site facilities update. There were approx 50 members in attendance

He welcomed Gerald Price from The Woodland Trust and Christopher Hodgson our Central Office Representative and thanked the Coalville group for hosting the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from - Mike Statham, Tony Smith, Ray Phipps, Charles De Podesta, John Howells, and Georgina Sear.

The minutes of the 30th A.G.M – 26th January 2019 were approved. There were no matters arising from those minutes not otherwise on the agenda.

The presentation of annual reports followed:

The **Chairman's** report had been published in advance, Martin said that he was going to visit all the groups, and thanked them all for their continued support.

He went on to name the winners of **best kept footpath** competition with a special award for Bradgate Park in recognition of the Trusts improvements to footpaths approaching the park.

The reports of the other officers had also been published in the WoW newsletter but some updates were provided.

Martin James gave treasurer update on behalf of John Howells **Treasurer**, and as per WoW John is standing down as Area treasurer **to concentrate on Lost Ways** and we don't have a replacement for him. Chris Hodgson reiterated that training is available and Martin asked for anyone interested in the role to let him know, and that this quarter's payment had been approved this week.

The accounts were then approved

Martin James, as the **Footpaths Officer** added further path diversions etc since the publication of the WoW. C15 Great Glen, small diversion. E18 – Scorfod Diversion. N50 – Hinckley & Bosworth – Diversion (roundabout). Wykin – Martin has served notice, it's underway. Leicester City Football Ground, talks ongoing.

Roy Denney, the **Walking Environment Officer** said that The Charnwood Forest were meeting the Lottery Fund representatives the next week with a final decision on their request due in March 2020

(Update – The bid was successful)

Martin James presented membership figures on behalf of Ray Phipps, the **Membership Secretary** who reiterated that membership was a major issue in line with national trends and groups commented on their own experiences.

Table presented . figures as at 6th Jan 2020 – Area Figures:- down 3.28%

Area Figures	Year - 2018	Year - 2019
Leicestershire & Rutland	1418	1373

Roy Denney, the **Editor** just wished to publicly thank Jim Storer for managing the Area Web Site which receives many plaudits - As Editor he provides the content but all the technical stuff is done by Jim.

Kim Vallance presented social media update from Georgina Sear the **Social Media Coordinator**, who reported a 100% increase in Facebook traffic across the area as a whole, and special mention to John Whitehead, Keith Busfield and Peter Hopewell who are joint administrators of the Area Facebook page and have done a lot of work which has contributed to the growth, she also thanked the Group Facebook administrators for keeping their pages up to date.

All the **Group reports** had been published in advance of the AGM.

The officer's and group's **reports were then accepted** and adopted by the membership.

The **guest speaker, Gerald Price from The Woodland Trust** gave a slide presentation from the Trust, and highlighted the National Forest Walking Festival 16-28th May 2020.

The **President** then responded to the Woodland Trust presentation given by Gerald and thanked him, he also recommended author Isabella Tree. The Wildings – A return of nature to a British farm. He also thanked John Howells the **Treasurer** who has stepped down as Area Treasurer. Peter then Presented a Rambler's National Volunteer Award to Roy for his service to the Ramblers. Peter also recommended members sign the HS2 petition.

New positions. After a short break the members affirmed Peter Williams as President and Mike Statham as Vice-President for another year. The President then took the Chair for the **election of a Chairman.**

Chairman - Martin James - as per the constitution this is Martin's last year as Chairman.

Martin then resumed the Chair. Members had been nominated for the various other roles by members of the Area Executive Committee and these were approved en bloc.

Secretary – Kim Vallance
Treasurer – Position vacant
Footpath Officer - Martin James
Walking Environment Officer – Roy Denney
Membership Secretary – Ray Phipps
Editor – Roy Denney
Social Media Coordinator - Georgina Sear

The members present were asked if anybody wished to take on the vacant role of Area Treasurer.

(Update - Lisa Parker has accepted this role.)

Elections then took place of **further members** to serve on Area Executive Committee, Members elected from the floor, Trevor Martin is now Hinckley Rep, so Tony Smith was nominated as elected member,

Nominations of **Group Representatives** - changes to be advised to the Area Executive Committee .

Confirmation of Chris Tipper as our Auditor / Independent Financial Examiner followed.

Mike Statham has stood down as our representative on the National Forest Access & Recreation Committee.

(Update Liz Roberts has accepted this role.)

Motion/Constitutional changes:-

Roy Denney was nominated as a representative at General Council to present motion below, which will be held in Bristol on the 4th-5th April 2020. A further representative can be co-opted. The meeting supported the funding of one observer and authorised one further if interest was shown and candidate was agreed by the AEC. We are proposing one motion for the General Council if Roy feels the prevailing circumstance make it appropriate as the situation evolves.

This Council asks the Board of Trustees to explore funding opportunities to employ regional researchers to assist Areas and Groups find evidence to support requests for Definitive Map Modifications Orders.

Note

The Ramblers have obtained funding to encourage the public to report possible lost ways. This may well be a good way to promote the Ramblers but it is not the area where help is most needed. Most Areas already know where the missing links are but do not have the volunteers to research the evidence needed to have historic paths recognised. Such volunteers as we have can continue working it if full time staff could help it would go a long way towards making a real impact

(This motion was supported at the meeting. Post meeting Update – Motion being held back until Next Year - want to see how things develop in 2020, things are moving in the right direction so we will watch and see.)

The Central Office Representative, Christopher Hodgson

Gave update on priorities. Encouraged everyone to promote the Ramblers, and educate all on the rights of Way and keeping footpaths open. Need more publicity both locally and nationally. He was encouraged by how the Area is embracing the walk app, as well as Facebook, web and Twitter. Nationally in the Ramblers, 10-year decline in membership, Leicestershire and Rutland Area average age is 65 and average length of membership is 14-years.

Area Events were then agreed

- a) Area walk – Saturday 22nd Aug @ Nanpanton. Sports Ground – Hosted by Loughborough Group
- b) Area Quiz – Friday 13th Nov @ Wing Village Hall – Hosted by Rutland Group
- c) Next AGM – Sat 30th Jan 2021 – Hosted by Loughborough Group

Open Forum - discussion re WoW and high costs of postage, ongoing discussion as pre requisite is for all members to be on email before the WoW can move from print to electronic distribution. Not all members have email and until they do, we don't want a half way distribution of both written and email.

Roy also said that a new issue of the Charnwood Map has been produced and is available.

Meeting closed at 12:46

10 people attended a walk led by Sue Bicknell of the AEC

OTHER OFFICERS REPORTS

EDITOR - Nothing to report

SECRETARY - I like everyone have had to adapt to a new way of working with Zoom meetings replacing face to face meetings, it's amazing how quickly everyone has adapted and I appreciate everyone's continued support.

It's hard to remember life before Covid but our last face to face area meeting was in February, since then we've had officer and AEC Zoom meetings, I've also attended numerous central office Zoom meetings, as well as supporting Martin as Area Chairman in regular communications to keep all the groups and their members up to date.

I'm moving to the Island Of Mull on the West Coast Of Scotland, looking forward to a new life, with Darcey my Westie, I'll still support the group until a replacement is found, but it's been fun and thank you.

WALKING ENVIRONMENT OFFICER - In addition to article re Charnwood Forest the major emphasis this year has been trying to register lost paths before they can no longer be claimed on historic evidence. Volunteers had more time on their hands but the Records Office was closed, meetings were not permitted and a number of key players were ill or injured so locally not a lot was done. Nationally the RA has managed a lot of publicity for the campaign and has recruited hundreds more volunteers and they are rightly proud of this. However I see no claims about the number of paths being lodged for adding to the map which is where we feel most help is needed. One motion I would have supported at General Council had it happened was to have paths along river banks treated like coast paths and be rolled back as needed

At present if a river bank collapses or a river finds a slightly different route a path can be lost where at the coast the path is a certain distance from the coast and if the coast moves the path follows it. Similarly and not well understood if a path exits onto a road and the description on the definitive statement says to the road then if the road is straightened etc., the path still goes to it after it has moved

Ramblers are concerned about the continuing low level of usage of access land. The main reason why many walkers are reluctant to use it is because they do not know where the access points are located; this is both to gain access to and leave access land and in walls, fences etc within access land. Some local authorities have attempted to provide publicity about access points, but this is frequently of poor quality. In many other places the publicity is non-existent. Publicity on how to use access land needs to be improved, with ideally the access points being shown on OS 1:25,000 maps.

The Ramblers continues to raise the issue in any discussions with OS and highlight it as a matter of concern when discussing access issues more broadly. It is hoped that our digital transformation work will also give us new opportunities to promote awareness and understanding of access points. More information will give us a stronger basis to inform our work and demonstrate that identifying and showing access points should be a higher priority.

Discussions have started with government concerning the (now twice delayed) review of open access maps. In these discussions, we raised the need to improve information about open access rights, responsibilities and mapped land. This included a need to look at how to improve provision, maintenance and promotion of access points onto, and within, access land. Paths within access land could also be better advertised and a friend in the north of England has just fought successfully to get some shown.

Two well used paths to a summit were originally permissive but the NT, the landowner did not want them put on the OS map. Then CROW came along and both paths are entirely in Open Access Land, rendering the permissive status obsolete. OS accepted my friends argument that as both paths were in Open Access Land the permissive status was irrelevant, and since each path was extant on the ground and visible on aerial imaging (which he had to prove), they should be added to OS mapping as "black dashed" paths since they add to and connect with the local path network, and there being no other paths to this summit.

So now the paths have been added to the digital OS MasterMap 1:1250 and will be included on the 1:50k and 1:25k digital maps in due course, and the paper versions when they are next revised

Another issue of concern receiving attention is that of narrow footpaths which are bordered on both sides by hedges or fences and frequently become overgrown; such paths are difficult to maintain because of lack of access for mechanised equipment, resulting in them becoming difficult or impossible to use. Where a field-edge path follows a hedge, the hedge often grows out and encroaches on the footpath. This is not a problem if the path is unfenced, but numerous field-edge paths have been fenced off, often using barbed wire which can cause injury or snag on clothing when walkers are forced close to it. Similar problems often occur with surface vegetation on narrow paths fenced on both sides. Where farmers and landowners have fenced off paths to separate walkers from crops or livestock they should be required to allow a reasonable width, both for path users and ease of maintenance.

Schedule 12A of the Highways Act 1980, which stipulates minimum widths in the context of ploughing and cropping, provides a suitable model for legislation but the minimum of 1.5 metres for a field edge path is insufficient when the path is fenced. A minimum 3 metre width for any newly created or diverted footpath which is bordered on one or both sides by a hedge, wall or fence should be imposed.

Membership Secretary -These figures are for the Ramblers' year ends

	2020	2019
Area total	1334	1389
LE01 Hinckley	198	205
LE02 Leicester	408	424
LE03 Melton	90	94
LE04 Coalville	209	206
LE05 Rutland	112	121
LE06 Loughborough	126	131
LE07 Lutterworth	67	71
LE50 LRYWG	95	101
LE96 Others	28	37

The reduction in membership locally is matched nationally where the RA has seen a disastrous drop of about 4000 in the last year, to a little over 98,000 due presumably to the ongoing pandemic.

Social Media Officer

After their considerable growth in 2019-2020 and despite, or maybe because of, the challenges of 2020, our social media channels have continued to thrive. All of our social media channels have attracted new followers.

The number of people liking or following the Leicestershire and Rutland Facebook page has grown from 101 to 188. The pattern of posts to the page is similar to last year principally cross-sharing other groups' posts, posting information on a broad range of related topics from HQ, some campaigning, promoting the area walks available in a particular week, and information from local 'outdoor' groups such as the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, and Leicestershire Country Parks. Assistance and posts from other administrators has been most welcome.

The focus for most local Facebook group pages is on advertising or recounting group walks with splendid pictures.

I am happy to support any group who would like to start up a Facebook page.

Local group Facebook data

(members/followers/likes, depending on the status and set up of the page)

Lutterworth (30) 35

Hinckley (990) 1038

Melton (141) 168

Loughborough (82) 96

LRWG members (68) 77, open (420) 432

Leicester and District (161) 194

Leicester and District members (59) 82

Twitter and Instagram

Our area twitter account is called 'Leicestershire and Rutland Ramblers', and has grown from 44 followers to 73.

The Hinckley Ramblers twitter account has (237) 239 followers, and their Instagram account now has (103) 127 followers.

TREASURER

I would personally like to thank John Howells, outgoing Treasurer, for the seamless handover of the Area accounts to me. I have enjoyed my role so far and I look forward to working with the Area Executive Committee going forward.

The year end accounts will be audited in due course by our appointed Auditor, Chris Tipper as soon as arrangements can be made.

There are surplus funds of £1,555 this year – these are designated funds as follows:
10 x Anquet Mapping Tool for Footpath Officers, Zoom Pro subscription and remaining funds for the Write of Way magazine. All these funds are expected to be used in the next financial year.

Thank you to all Group Treasurers for their continued help, I hope to meet you all in person at some point!

Accounts follow and in accordance with RACO guidelines, these accounts are prepared on a "receipts and payments" basis, and debtors and creditors are accordingly not recognised.

Year ended 30th September 2020

	Current Year	Prior Year
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Treasurer's Certificate:

L.Parker (Treasurer)

GROUP REPORTS

RUTLAND

We only just started up again at the end of August, limiting our numbers to 20 on each walk and all have been well attended - ranging from 12 to some of 'full houses'. We have a programme of fortnightly Sunday walks through until Christmas, following all the Covid-19 guidelines

LUTTERWORTH

This year it is a very different report as there is not so much to report on. Reading last year's Report there was a lot to be thankful for, lots of lovely regular Sunday walks, weekends away and fun social events. This year we still have a lot to be thankful for but not so much of the other stuff.

In October last year we were still able to come and go as we wished. After our last AGM we had a skittles night at the Red Lion in Huncote. More excellent pub grub and the fun of playing a game together, for 25 of our members. This was quickly followed by an overnight in Matlock with a lovely walk on Sunday from Winster passing 2 standing stone circles and a misty morning walk with train ride on Monday from Cromford. We had regular Sunday walks despite the very wet winter, occasionally aided by the odd umbrella. It was a good walk if the water didn't go over the top of our boots. We enjoyed our Christmas lunch at the Greyhound in Lutterworth and a Mince Pie & mulled wine walk in the Bradgate Park Area

With the new year 6 of our members attended the Area AGM at Coalville Labour Club, with an interesting talk from the Woodland Trust. 3 of our walks in February were cancelled because of rain and storms and we managed to adapt our programme to walk on more sturdy paths and tracks including the Great Central way from Blaby and Abbey Park and historic Leicester until lock down in mid March. Before lockdown we had 16 walks with an average of 11 walkers. Since then we have had a very limited programme of walks and none of our planned social events. Our week of Jersey walking has had to go on hold until some time next year.

We have managed to maintain our regular Committee Meetings in gardens and many walks continued as 'friendship' walks for up to 6 organised by members between themselves over the summer. In order to get Group walks up and running we put in place the Ramblers suggested Covid Safety system for walk leaders to follow which meant we were able to offer walks for 14 members to walk together. We had 3 very enjoyable walks (average 12 walkers) before the virus increased and we feel we can now only offer Group walks for 6 at a time with all the necessary paperwork. This programme is just building up, so we hope to have many more walking opportunities together before Christmas.

After reading through the priorities the Group was to focus on this year, we can still use these to guide us through the uncertainty & challenges of 2020 – 21.

- 1 Continue to offer a varied and interesting programme of local Sunday walks and occasional trips away to experience walking in new and exciting areas, adapting to current virus situation.
- 2 As many more people are appreciating the benefits of walking in the countryside, we aim to reach out and increasing membership by raising the profile of the Group locally, advertising in the local press or on social media. We have last year's budget to help us with this.
- 3 Try to re establish social events as appropriate.
- 4 Offer a greater number of weekday walks as walk leaders are willing and able to walk and some special introductory walks for potential new members. Try walks with a special theme, e.g. photography, architecture
- 5 Promoting our Group and its programme to a wider audience on Facebook. We are also keen to develop our Group Website through the main Ramblers Website over the next year or two. John has done a great service to the Group for many years and will now retire in Spring 2021, so we will need another enthusiast to take his place.
- 6 Offer opportunities to volunteer with supporting the Ramblers aim of protecting the footpath network in the area. We did explore the work of the Lost Ways project in the Spring this year and the recording phase of this project is now accomplished. Pete has done his best to cover the work of Footpath Secretary in this difficult year and we welcome John Divine onto the Committee to assist him with this very challenging job.

Thanks are due to Lutterworth Group members for all the help, support and enthusiasm they have shown this year either as regular walkers, walk leaders or committee members. Welcome to our two other new Committee members, Mary Button as Membership Secretary and Steve Price as a General Member. We hopefully look forward to good walking in 2021.

MELTON

Until March 2020 we were having a good year for walking. Our walk leaders provided interesting walks for us and things were carrying on as usual. When the lockdown came we had to abandon the summer programme but for the last few weeks, since the government restrictions lifted to allow groups of 30, we have been resuming walks decided on a weekly basis and led by members of our Committee, to allow walk leaders to adjust to a "new normal" of risk assessments, etc. These few walks have all gone well and been enjoyed by all who came along. We have had a fairly good turnout on them and enjoyed a drink in the pub garden afterwards.

Some of us had a lovely Christmas Dinner, in the evening, at the Sysonby Knoll hotel in Melton and some of us joined up together for a great New Years Eve at the Harboro Hotel

As usual we are keen to advertise our walking programme, and in addition to e-mailing it to the majority of our members and placing it on the website, we upload it onto the Ramblers "Walks Finder", have a regular section in the local weekly newspaper and local radio station, 103 The Eye, and post programme leaflets at various venues in and around Melton.

The holidays we were going to have were all cancelled thanks to Covid 19, but I'm sure that once this awful time is over we will begin to arrange them again.

2020 has proved to be a taxing year for our Group, and I'd like to say a big "thank you" to all our members for their support during the year.

LEICESTER

For The Leicester & District Ramblers, as for everyone in the country, the last year has been dominated by the Covid 19 pandemic. Our usual walks programme was suspended indefinitely in March 2020 with over 100 walks eventually being cancelled. We had more difficulties than most re-starting our walks because the City of Leicester had the Covid Lockdown extended for five weeks longer than the rest of the country. Indeed it continues to have restriction in place. Nevertheless we began to plan for resumption of our walks whilst the City was in full lockdown and our first walks restarted in early August 2020.

The new programme involved adopting some new procedures such as written risk assessments and track and trace registers in order to make our walks "Covid Safe". For the most part the restart has been successful with many members gradually returning to walking and happy to walk in much smaller groups than previously. All our walks closely follow guidance from the national Ramblers organisation.

Our long established coach trips have suffered badly because of the pandemic and all future trips are cancelled indefinitely. We still hope to resume these at some stage in the future and are actively seeking a replacement for John Rhodes as Coach Secretary.

The Group and the Committee owe a huge thanks to John for the huge amount of work & care he has put into organising the coach trips for many years (since 2008) and for the pleasure this has brought to many people.

Covid 19 has also disrupted the Group's methods of communicating & organising. Printed walks programmes are not appropriate at the moment because plans are subject to change at very short notice. Face to face meetings are not allowed so the committee has had to meet via "Zoom" tele-conferencing facilities.

In the coming months we hope to see the walks programme become more firmly established but all our planning is currently very much for the short term because the progress of the pandemic is so unpredictable.

Due to government regulations regarding Covid 19 and having taken advice from the Ramblers UK Head Office this AGM will be held using Zoom Tele-Conferencing Facilities.

All Members of the Ramblers Leicester & District Group are invited to attend this AGM. The Committee fully appreciate that some members may not have the facilities to attend a Zoom Tele-Conference. If you wish to attend the AGM please contact the Secretary, Charles de Podesta at secretary@ramblers-leicester.org.uk. All relevant documents can be viewed on our local website <http://ramblers-leicester.org.uk>.

Submission of motions or comments.

Because of the format of this meeting there will be less opportunity for discussion than at previous meetings. If members wish to ask any questions or to introduce any motions, please do so in writing by no later than the 12th November 2020. Please note that motions will require a proposer and seconder. Contact the Secretary, Charles de Podesta

Agenda Items for the Leicester and District Ramblers AGM

- 1. Approve the Minutes of the 2019 Leicester and District Ramblers AGM**
- 2. Approve the Leicester and District Ramblers Accounts for the period 2019/20**
- 3. Leicester and District Ramblers Executive Committee Elections**

At the AGM all Members of the Executive Committee will stand down from their posts and an election will be held for a new Committee. All Members of the Leicester and District Ramblers Group are invited to stand for any position on the committee. Please notify the Secretary no later than 12 November 2020 if you wish to stand for a Committee Position. There will be a Zoom Teleconference Poll Vote at the AGM to elect the Committee for 2020/1. The table below identifies those Members of the Committee who have already declared their intention to stand again.

POST	Post holder 2019-20	Candidates 2020-21
CHAIRMAN	Terry Bates	Terry Bates
VICE-CHAIRMAN	Howard Watmore	Howard Watmore
SECRETARY	Charles de Podesta	Charles de Podesta
TREASURER	Bob Collins	Bob Collins
MINUTES SECRETARY	Anne Bates	Anne Bates
MAP LIBRARIAN	Jenny Freeman	Jenny Freeman
STATISTICS	Jenny Freeman	Jenny Freeman
MEMBERSHIP	Ray Phipps	Ray Phipps
WEBSITE MANAGER	Howard Freeman	Howard Freeman
WALKS PROGRAMME	Howard Freeman	Howard Freeman
FOOTPATHS	Steve Crane	Steve Crane
COACH SECRETARY	John Rhodes	None
SOCIAL SECRETARY	Tony Richards	Tony Richards
JOINT SOCIAL SECRETARY	Frank Russell	Frank Russell
PUBLICITY SECRETARY	Vacant	None
MEMBERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (3)	Vacant	None

4. Vote to approve the New Leicester and District Group Constitution.

A subgroup reviewed our Group Constitution in December 2019. The L&D Ramblers Group Constitution has been amended to concur closely with the recommended Model Group Constitution that aligns with the Ramblers UK Standing Orders and Articles. Any comments or suggestions should be submitted to the Secretary no later than the 12 November 2020.

There will be a Zoom Teleconference Vote at the AGM to adopt this new constitution.

5. Publish the Annual Report of the Leicester & District Ramblers Group for 2020

6. AOB

LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND YOUNGER WALKERS GROUP

We restarted walks in August (after originally planning to start in July but then delaying due to the Leicester lockdown).

We have been using meet-up.com for pre-booking people on walks typically setting limits of around 12-16 walkers.

We find that meetup works well in getting new people on to our walks and once the preset limit of bookings has been reached, the waiting list facility is very useful as people can change their status from 'attending - yes' to 'attending - no'. This gives others a chance to join with the organiser being notified of such changes by email but not being otherwise involved.

However, there have been cases where individuals have not changed their status to 'attending - no' but have then not turned up for the walk thus others may have been prevented from joining the walk.

We have been using meetup for some years. Although it attracts many new people to our group we think that only a fairly small number of them become Ramblers members.

In addition to the 'official' group walks, several members of our group have organised their own walks as a 'group of friends'.

Naturally, during the pandemic we have not been physically meeting up for social events. However, groups of friends have met up virtually via Zoom.

We have been using Zoom for committee meetings and we will be holding our AGM via Zoom.



**THE
RAMBLERS
NEED
YOU**

**We need a new secretary,
It is not an onerous job
and puts you at the heart
of everything going on.**

**When allowed to, we
meet formally normally in
Glenfield, four times a
year and informally if
free, most other months
at a social venue.**

**All correspondence is by
email and you assist the
Chairman.**

**For more information
contact Martin.
See page 3**

The Ramblers are registered as a data controller with the Information Commissioner for the United Kingdom and the Channel Islands, data controller number Z7904496.

We respect your privacy and are committed to maintaining the security of your personal information. This policy outlines how and why we collect and use personal data. We want to ensure you are informed and in control of your data.

Please be assured that we will never sell your personal data, and will only ever share it with third parties for our own purposes (eg sending data to a printer for them to send renewal letters on our behalf).

When you give us your details we will always tell you what we are going to do with them. If we request your contact details for any reason, you will always have an option to not provide them or to opt out of contact. It is always your choice and you can change your mind at any time by contacting our Membership Services Team (details below).

We may also use your data in order to:

enter into, or perform, a contract with you, including managing volunteering activities;
comply with a legal duty;
to protect the vital interests of the data subject or of another natural person;
for our own (or a third party's) lawful interests, provided your rights don't override these