

WRITE OF WAY

THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION

LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND AREA

NEWSLETTER

Nioy 2021



Bradgate Park

KEEP IN TOUCH

VISIT THE WEB SITE REGULARLY

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER AND FACEBOOK

THERE ARE EIGHT GROUPS MAKING UP THE AREA

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

**The 33rd AGM of the Leicestershire & Rutland Area
of the Ramblers Association will take place
on January 29th 2022**

Venue - The Linford in Newtown Linford

Time - 9.30 refreshments 10.00 prompt start

**This is your chance to influence the way we adapt
to a very new normal.**

**The meeting is expected to finish about 1.00
to be followed for those who wish to participate
with a short walk locally**

**There will also be an informal meeting of the new
committee with the guest speaker**



**Our Chairman has to stand down
at the end of this year as our
rules only allow for 3 year terms**

**If you want to consider taking on
the role have a word with Martin.
You will find it both interesting
and rewarding and with this rule
it cannot be a long term prison
sentence**

**You would be backed by a team with a
lot of knowledge and Martin will still
be there as Footpaths Officer.
Meetings are likely to be a mixture of**

**physical ones and ones using zoom. There are four executive
committee meetings each year and between time the officers
meet to keep things ticking over. Traditionally these have been
in a central social venue but some may now be by zoom.**

THE AREA EXECUTIVE

President - Peter Williams

Vice-President - Mike Statham

Chairman - Martin James - 07969 669230 martin at langsett1.com

Secretary - Katherine Hardwick katherinek2 at yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer - Lisa Parker lisa.parker83 at NTLworld.com

Footpath Officer - Martin James

Assistant Footpaths Officer - Charles de Podesta

Walking Environment Officer - Roy Denney - 0116 233 8604 roydenney at hotmail.com

Membership Secretary - Ray Phipps ray.phipps2 at ntlworld.com

Newsletter Editor - Roy Denney

Communications Office - Georgina Sear - georginasear at hotmail.com

Committee without portfolio - Tony Smith tonyjensapcote at gmail.com
- Sue Bicknell suebicknell at talktalk.net

and a representative from each group

OTHER POSTS ASSISTING THE RAMBLERS

Independent Financial Examiner Chris Tipper

National Forest Access & Recreation Representative Liz Roberts

Charnwood Forest Regional Park Stakeholders Representative Peter Williams

Blaby Tourism Partnership Peter Williams

GROUP CONTACTS

Coalville

Ken Storer 01530 833334 kenstorer@talktalk.net,

Hinckley

Deborah Hopewell 01455 446997 Ramblersbosworth123 at outlook.com

Leicester

Howard Watmore 0116 289 9255 howard.watmore at talktalk.net

Loughborough

Sue Bicknell suebicknell at talktalk.net

LRYWG

Mark Hewitt - 01162 741068 markbrianhewitt at yahoo.co.uk

Lutterworth

Anita Mothersole a.mothersole at NTLworld.com

Melton

Martin James - 07969 669230 martin at langsett1.com

Rutland

Michael Gillon Michael.Gillon7 at gmail.com

Whether you walk with or indeed have anything to do with the group you have been allocated to it is essential you keep them informed of your current email details as it will be the main means of keeping you informed in future

The Write of Way will be on the website in future but you may well get reminders by email when it is published and any local activities or issues will be advised to you this way

THE WINDS OF CHANGE ARE BLOWING

The pandemic has forced us to use electronic means of communication whether we like it or not and Groups, Areas and even the National Body are debating whether to stick with this, try to revert to the old ways or adopt a hybrid system. Not meeting physically is less time consuming, can involve more people and is less expensive. The downside is that many admin roles are carried out by people who appreciate the social element of getting together to discuss things and the already difficult task of filling posts might well get far more difficult.

Zoom etc do not allow real conversations to develop when there are more than at most half a dozen attendees.

A hybrid system seems to be gaining favour in other Areas although they vary across the spectrum and most have made no final decisions. Some have already committed to a transitional trial period with a view to progressing to all electronic if it can be made to work.

It remains to be seen whether the move to walking for exercise manifests itself in more members but there is a proliferation of small and often informal walking groups and the RA will have to promote its campaigning side if it is to justify the high subscriptions.

Walks programmes had come to a halt and many groups are reporting that walk leaders and walk coordinators are saying they do not want to resume their roles. As a result in some areas there is discussion as to whether some groups should merge

Our own groups had gaps in the line-ups before the break and a couple of previously active members have been talking about whether this should be considered here in Leicestershire. They pointed out that Loughborough and Coalville do have joint functions and could perhaps merge and I am aware the Lutterworth and Hinckley also worked together on some things

Early days but all things are on the table and the groups themselves and ultimately the members will decide.

One model which would encompass a lot of the ideas floating about would be for us to have Leicester, North Leicestershire and South Leicestershire groups together with Rutland. Melton could be in the North or stand alone as an East Leicestershire and the Younger Walkers group would have to decide how they wanted to position themselves. This sort of structure would also enable a more even allocation of post codes and some similarity in group sizes.

Groups encompassing two conurbations could alternate venues for physical meeting and they could intersperse these with zoom meetings.

Nothing is being suggested and any ideas must come from the groups themselves but with the changing world and an aging and shrinking membership all options may need considering

As people have had to get used to using computers and smart phones to keep in touch it has accelerated the debate about printed newsletters and walks programmes. There are suggestions on the table about this publication which will be online in future and nationally Walk magazine is being considered for changes; possibly re-branded and possibly more of a means for Areas to insert local news.

The Area Executive has decided that this should be the last paper version of Write of Way which involves changes to the Standing Orders to reflect this. Standing Orders are not part of the constitution so this decision can be made by the AEC

If members want to receive future editions by email they need to ensure that their group Secretaries have their current email address and members who are not in a group should send their email address to the Area Secretary. The W of W will continue to be available on the Area website but if anyone feels they are unable to access the electronic version, they may be able request a printed copy possibly from your designated group. You will still receive the Walk magazine and we are pressing that Areas can insert short pieces in that production to keep you abreast of local developments..

A majority of our members join to support our aims and our campaigning on their behalf and have no involvement with the group they have been attached to and if they learn nothing of what is happening locally and all they receive for their subs is the national 'Walk' magazine which they could buy in the shops for a fraction of the cost of their subs, personally I fear membership decline will accelerate

As the cost of printing and postage no longer comes into the equation there is theoretically no limit to how much material we can include so do please send in anything you think of interest to other members. Photos can be displayed in all their colourful glory

Given the size of modern photography files and the need to meet page breaks please send text and photographs separately, not embedded in the article.

Keep emails at under 15 mb and send a piece spread over several emails if necessary.

Some of the material currently in the newsletter will not now be so as it already appears elsewhere in the website pages..

Today is the tomorrow we all worried about yesterday and thankfully we are still okay.

Unfortunately we have lost friends and family and most things will never return to how they were before the pandemic

Change has been forced upon us and we need to manage it and decide how to take things forward



All footpath changes will now be shown, with maps, on the Area Website under the Footpath News pages.

This will be updated as and when diversions are confirmed.

If anyone has any questions on diversions etc. they can email Martin on footpaths@langsett1.com

RECORDS AND PERSONAL DATA

Legislation defines personal data as information which relates to a living individual who can be identified either from that data or in combination with other data which may become available.

In order to provide an effective administration for the Area and the groups making up the area it is essential that we make full use of computing. This does mean we need to keep certain personal information on file to carry out our day to day operations.

We do not record any sensitive personal data for example, racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, physical or mental health, sexual life, and any proceedings for any offence (committed or alleged), the outcome of such proceedings or any sentence of any court in such proceedings.

The Ramblers Association nationally (the Ramblers) sets out our formal Data Protection policy to ensure the organisation complies with current legislation. All Area and Group officers work under the prevailing guidance of the Ramblers data protection officer and members can access that guidance at the website detailed below.

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/great-britain/resources/volunteer-resources/membership-secretary-toolkit/data-protection-guidance>

See also item at foot of our web front page re Privacy Policy and Cookies

As an Area and Groups we are provided with full membership details from the central office. These are maintained by the Area and Group Membership Secretaries and are provided as required to other Area and Group Officers to allow them to fulfil their roles.

Membership data may be used for managing membership status and subscriptions, communicating with members with regard to organisational issues and promoting Rambler's events and campaigns. Only data needed for the specific purpose will be asked for or recorded.

In joining the organisation it is taken that members wish to receive such publications as are produced including Area and Group newsletters. To this end Area and Groups hold addresses on computer.

The only information we hold is information members provided to the organisation to allow us to provide you with the membership services you requested by joining the organisation and it will not be divulged to third parties without that member's specific consent.

The Area and the Groups use the postal addresses to post out local newsletters and email addresses to send out information between those publications.

Where a member has provided an email address, consent is effectively given for it to be used in furtherance of the organisation's activities. If at any time you decide you do not wish to receive email communications please advise the Area Secretary and your Group Secretary. Members will in any event be reminded from time to time that it is their choice as to how we communicate with them.

If you do have an email address we would ask you to keep the Area Secretary and your Group informed as we are trying to make more use of electronic communications to keep costs down

As all Area and Group Officers are volunteers the information you have provided is kept on personal computers or laptops etc., but we will keep the information you provide to us as secure, as accurate and as up to date as possible.

In order that members can contact the appropriate local officer contact details of that officer will be published in newsletters but only to the extent that officer wishes.

All this means that we will treat your information fairly and in ways you would expect.

Our formal privacy notice follows

Privacy Notice Leicestershire & Rutland Area of the Ramblers

We have access to the personal information that you provided to the organisation both nationally and locally and this notice sets out how, why and for how long we will use your personal data, as well as who it is shared with. It also explains your legal rights as a data subject

Why we need your personal information – contractual purposes

We need to collect our members' personal information so that we can manage your relationship with us. We may use our members' personal information to:

- Provide you with core member services
- Record your communication preferences.

Why we need your personal information – legitimate purposes

We also process our members' personal information in pursuit of our legitimate interests to:

- Provide you with news and updates about the activities of the Association, opportunities to get involved in training, organised walks other Area activities and campaigns
- Raise awareness of the Association's activities by capturing photos at Ramblers' events. We will use this for promotion and development purposes.
- Respond to and investigate your questions, comments, support needs, complaints, or concerns

Other uses of your personal information

We may ask you if we can process your personal information for other purposes. Where we do so, we will provide you with an additional privacy notice explaining how we will use your information for these purposes.

Who we share your personal information with

We may be required to share personal information with statutory or regulatory authorities such as the Health & Safety Executive to comply with statutory obligations. We may also share personal information with professional and legal advisors for the purpose of obtaining advice.

Third party suppliers with access to members' personal data

The Area uses third party suppliers to provide services e.g. banking and until now, printing/posting our newsletter. These suppliers may process personal data on our behalf as "processors" and are subject to contractual conditions to only process that personal information under our instructions and to protect it.

In the event that we share personal information with external third parties, we only share such information strictly required for the specific purposes and take reasonable steps to ensure recipients shall only process the disclosed personal information in accordance with those purposes.

Unity Bank process payment transactions securely on our behalf.

Alfred Willday & Son Ltd, Unit 1, Dunns Lane, Leicester LE3 5LX - 0116 251 8478 print and distribute our newsletter

The Newsletter is lodged with the British Library under Publisher ID L-42592

We use the Ramblers Association nationally to provide a web-hosting service for the Club website

How we protect your personal information

As all Area and Group Officers are volunteers the information you have provided is kept on personal computers or laptops etc., but we will strive to keep the information you provide to us as secure, as accurate and as up to date as possible. This means that we will treat your information fairly and in ways you would expect.

How long we keep your personal information

We only keep your personal information for as long as necessary to provide you with membership services. Unless you ask us not to, we will review and delete your personal information where you have not renewed your membership with us for one year.

You have a right to:

- Change your communication preferences or restrict the processing of your personal data for specific purposes.
- Request that we correct your personal data if you believe it is inaccurate or incomplete.
- Request that we delete your personal information.
- Access the personal data that we hold about you through a "subject access request."

You can contact us by getting in touch with the Area Membership Secretary or Secretary using the contact details on the Area website (<http://leicsra.org.uk>) or in the Area newsletter.

If you are dissatisfied, you have a right to raise a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.org.uk or Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

You are encouraged, assuming you have not opted out of Ramblers communications, to log into (or create) your Ramblers account and check your details, particularly your email address, to ensure you are kept in the loop about the publication of the 'e' WoW on the area website, and any periodic 'in-between' newsletters. If you have opted out is this still your wish now that you will not be getting any further posted information on local matters?

To do this go to the Ramblers home page at Home - Ramblers, and click 'Log in'. You can either log in or create your account. All the information on how to do this is shown on the Log in screen. You will be asked for your personal details, address and telephone then which branch you wish to be attached to and then preferred means of communication.

OUT AND ABOUT

Hinckley Walk

On a recent walk members of Hinckley group took a rest on the rustic bench in Swithland Wood funded by the Ramblers in memory of stalwart long term officer Alan Loasby



Coalville Away Day

Robert Woodward of Coalville Group writes their first coach trip since being released from confinement was a day on the Monsal Trail and very much looked forward too.

From past trips some members joined us from other Groups and we took off on a sunny Saturday with two walks planned, one to be the full Trail from the Wye Dale car park and the other from Monsal Head, both to finish in Bakewell.

Twenty of us took the route of about 11 miles, from Wye dale car park which included an extension at the end to follow the river back into Bakewell. Seven walkers did the 5.5 miles from Monsal Head and two did their own walk from Bakewell.

Stunning views throughout the walks and the experience of the awesome tunnels, viaducts and cuttings.

Toilet and refreshment breaks were possible at Millers Dale and Hassop stations and also at Monsal Head for those willing to climb the steep path 200 feet up to the pub.

This is well known to be a spectacular walk and so nice on a sunny day, but quite busy and risky with all the other users on bikes.



To round it all off, at the finish, a couple of hours in Bakewell for recovery by the river and a meal.

Sue Bicknell of Loughborough adds, when Coalville members expressed a wish to walk the Monsal Trail it didn't take much persuasion to get Roy Denney to organise this coach trip. A few Ramblers from other groups including Sue managed to muscle in and soon there was a coach full with a few spare seats to meet COVID regulations. It promised to be a good day out in good company and so it was.

Splendid weather, congenial fellow walkers and beautiful countryside.

Our thanks to Roy Denney for suggesting and organising this event and our commiserations that he was in hospital not well enough to actually take part

Result

The member who raised the issue if the near impossible path crossing by the motorway junction is pleased to note that our overtures have resulted in improvements.

“ It is great to see that, having been energised, effort has gone into maintaining the whole path section - all that is now needed is some encouragement to get the path used.

On my visit, at the start of this week, it is clear that some finishing off work is needed around the gateway from the field towards the A512 embankment. It is also not clear what route walkers are to be guided onto at the Loughborough end of the re-routing or how A512 crossing is to be done until the pedestrian crossing gets commissioned.

But this is almost 'fine tuning' (which I will try to get sorted) and shouldn't detract from the plea to get this path back into regular use.”

THE ROUND THE BOUNDS WALK

Fancy a walk of 6,000 kilometres (3750 miles)

You will soon be able to start off from Berwick on Tweed on the Scottish Border and walk south to Wallsend and then turn west and follow the Hadrian's Wall National Trail to Bowness-on-Solway. Then follow the coast south avoiding obstacles by sticking to the new English National Coast Path (ECP) till you go round the river Dee estuary as you enter Wales.

You can then follow the Welsh Coast Path round to the Bristol Channel where you re-enter England and follow the coast path out to Lands End the furthest west you will go,

Next still with the coast path you walk along the English Channel to Kent then up the Thames to your first crossing point before turning East to walk round the coast of East Anglia passing Lowestoft the most easterly point in this journey. You then follow the ECP north either to Wallsend or if you want to add another 100 miles, back to Berwick.

Not for you? You can bet your life somebody will have a go at it.

Not possible yet but most of the new path is in place and while there are some tricky missing links currently being worked on they hope to finish it before long.

For most of us it just opens up new linear walks along interesting bit of coastline but one group has already said it wants to have the whole of the English bits walked one weekend by members if they can find any prepared to head for the more inaccessible stretches. I have no idea how many members they have but if each one does 20 miles on each of the days of a weekend then 40 into 2,800 miles means they need 70 walking even if they walk alone, and there is the logistics of getting there so I cannot see it happening. It is though getting people thinking.

The most likely scenario as I see it is people having the ambition to do it all in stretches over a lifetime. I do now of somebody who walked right across Europe east to west but he did not say how long it took, whether it was continuous over months or how often he went back to it.

Two friends did walk from the English Channel to the Mediterranean through the French/Spanish borderlands and they spent two weeks each of three years to do that.

It would be good to think Scotland could have a coast path as well but at least they have the right to roam

Walking Again

Most groups are now organising walks again albeit with some precautions. The long lay-off has though broken many peoples routines and they have developed other interests and groups are finding themselves short of walks leaders and indeed many other roles.

We all like to walk and walking with a group is a social activity as well as providing exercise but walks can not be organised if nobody is prepared to lead them.

If everybody who is a regular on a walk just led one walk each year it would be problem solved.

We also need volunteers for campaigning work including seeking out evidence of the status of routes not officially recorded as rights of way.

Many groups are also looking for committee members and officers. These are not onerous tasks and can be quite sociable activities but without people to keep the machine on the road little will be offered to members locally and no campaigning to improve and protect our network of paths

Please give some thought as to whether you could help in some way.



Gallery



**Spot the
faces?**

**Previous
walks**



**MEMBERS PHOTOS OF INTERESTING PLACES
THEY HAVE SEEN ARE NOW VERY WELCOME**



Peter Williams, our President, consulting the walkers map of Charnwood we produced.

£6.99 in the shops but we still have discounted stock available at £5 to members. Contact the Editor for a a copy - roydenney at hotmail.com

While You Walk Along The Way

Whether you walk for exercise or the company of like minded people, walk alone or with family, whether you are actually a twitcher or botanist or just somebody who likes wide skies, we presumably all like the wild flowers, and trees and the creatures that inhabit them. natureSpot gives us all an opportunity to record whatever wildlife we see and recognise as we walk our green spaces when we are allowed to do so. 2020 was a good year for this locally based charity which won a national award. NatureSpot has the aim of promoting the wildlife and wild places of Leicestershire and Rutland and helping to increase public awareness of, and interest in local biodiversity. To help the public to identify local wildlife and to learn about the natural environment; to create, with public participation, an online showcase of the local wildlife and wild places and to encourage and facilitate wildlife recording

During the year and despite COVID restrictions, a record 58,800 new records were submitted by the community, of which 97% were accepted, thus adding significant additional knowledge to what we know about our biodiversity. 570 new species were added to the natureSpot reference library, giving a total of 7,239 by the year end. Nearly a hundred new recorders joined and submitted records during the year. Anybody can join so why not get involved. Don't be worried about getting one wrong. There is a verification system where experts class entries as confirmed correct; assumed correct, plausible; unable to verify; incorrect. In addition, records may be queried seeking more information before a decision is made. NatureSpot has developed a number of initiatives to help and guide recorders which also helps to improve data quality. The species account aims to include a detailed description of the key features needed to identify that species, including reference to similar species with which it could be confused. Every species has been given a RAG (Red / Amber / Green) rating representing the identification difficulty

The number of 'unique' visitors to the website reached a record level in 2020, exceeding 1.1 million.

Appreciations

The recent period has seen the demise of several members but there are two stalwarts whose passing we would wish to mark.

The first is Pam Clayfield.

Our Vice President had known Pam for decades. She was both a county councillor and district councillor for North West Leicestershire for many years. A strong, keen walker herself throughout her life, in the early 1970's she founded the Thringstone Ramblers and organised and led walks for them for many years.

He got them to affiliate to the RA so though not actually a member she was always very supportive of the RA and our campaigns and attended (along with other T R members) our campaigns to gain public access to High Sharpley, Cademan Woods, Gracedieu Woods etc. Above all she worked very hard, lobbying and campaigning with us to get the National Forest to come to north west Leicestershire.

She knew her footpath law and kept a sharp and beady eye on the PROW's in North West Leicestershire and was quick to draw our attention (well Alan Loasby's !) to any problems over blocked paths, cropping over, ploughing out etc. She was no friend of the De Lisle estate and took issue with them, particularly over the neglect and mismanagement of Grace Dieu and Cademan Woods and the prospect of any more granite quarrying.

As a person, she was full of life and fun and very intelligent - she spoke fluent French and she was a staunch supporter and very involved with the former Thringstone Community Centre, now the Charles Booth Centre.

She was single though and had little family and very sadly her last year or two were particularly sad and distressing as she succumbed rapidly and severely with dementia. May she finally rest in peace after such a long and worthwhile life often in public service of one form or another.

The second was a stalwart of the Leicester group whom joined in 1976 and as it happens also a good friend of Michael Statham our VP.

He knew both Brian Woodward and his wife Christine well and was best man at their wedding in 1981 and kept in touch over the decades, even after they all stopped serious RA walks.

Christine kept Michael aware of his recent ill health, hospitalisation and very sadly his sudden and eventual death. Michael and his wife Anne both attended the funeral and burial in Wigston where he lived and worked virtually all his life.

Brian was above all a very kind, gentle and unassuming person.

He loved his walking and his local countryside which he knew extremely well.

He was always a very good Walk Leader and led for many years for the Leicester Group both on their local rambles and for many of their coach rambles and holiday week-ends that were arranged throughout the 1970's and 1980'



He was always totally reliable, an excellent map reader (in the now distant eras long before all the high tech. gizmos now available) His walks were always a pleasure to go on.

In those days too, when we were occasionally confronted or challenged by irate farmers or landowners while trying to walk some long neglected right of way, especially in east Leicestershire, Brian's calm, courteous but politely firm approach often saved the day and avoided any more unpleasant confrontations.

Brian was also a very keen ornithologist and was generally a very knowledgeable natural scientist. This always added interest to his walks as in an unassuming non-teacher way he could point out and draw our attention to many things that most of us would have missed.

Tributes such as these were made at his funeral and there were warm and affectionate tributes from the school, staff and pupils in Wigston where Brian taught for most of his working life.

Brian was a very good, decent, kind and caring person who in a quiet and unassuming way led a very decent life

Where Will We Wander - Roy Denney

150 years ago the term 'rambler' was interpreted to mean to 'wander at will'. Where will our rambles be in a few years time, where will there be left we can go to? the trends are towards less and less open country.

Not that long ago going to the moon was just a dream but my father saw the first bike with a pneumatic tyre come into his village and he lived to see men do it. We thought back then that this was rapid change.

I can remember when the first mechanical calculators came out and now a little chip in your phone can tell you almost everything known to man and everything which has ever happened

Tomorrow is coming much sooner than what we ever thought possible. All a bit George Orwell or H G Wells but it is certainly arriving faster than we would like.

Regardless of short term issues like the virus, many dramatic changes are likely in the next 20 years. Even people in their 70's will probably live to see these changes as though the increase in life expectancy has slowed, most will reach 90 and many increasingly 100. Even if we don't see all these changes our kids and grandkids certainly will. Members being fitter than most due to lifelong activity nearly all reach a ripe old age.

How will we get to walks anyway? We may no longer own private cars but if we do, car repair garages will have disappeared because an internal combustion engine has well over 20,000 individual parts and an electrical one 20 parts. Electric cars will be sold with lifetime guarantees to be repaired only by main dealers. It takes only 10 minutes to remove and replace an electric motor so if faulty they will probably pop a new motor in till it is repaired at some remote robot factory; not a courtesy car but a courtesy engine and you can have a courtesy cup of coffee till your car comes out with a replacement electric motor!

You will only see petrol pumps in museums and every corner will have charging points that dispense electricity. Many major auto manufacturers have already started building new plants that build only electric cars. By the time most are on stream though that technology will probably be being replaced.

A baby of today will see personal cars only in museums. We have already seen private drones carrying people.

Coal and fossil fuel will be a thing of the past so goodbye to OPEC! The Middle East is in trouble.

The future is approaching faster than most of us can handle. By the time we have learned how to deal with a new technology it is out of date

25 years ago Kodak had just short of 200,000 employees and sold 85% of all photo paper worldwide. Within just a few years they went bankrupt. Who would have thought of that ever happening? What happened to Kodak, Polaroid and the like will happen in a lot of industries in the next 5-10 years ... and most don't see it coming.

Did you think 20 years ago when you bought that camera that within 3 years you'd never take pictures on film again? With today's smart phones, who even has a camera these days? Yet digital cameras were invented in 1975. The first ones only had 10,000 pixels, but technological capacities will probably double every year. So as with all exponential technologies, it was a disappointment for a time, before it became far superior and became mainstream in only a few short years and will probably become redundant before long. When I stated producing the newsletter I could email the entire contents to my printer on a file half the size of the average photograph now sent to me for publication.

We take to the hills to take in the views; the crags, rolling hills and big skies. To admire the wildlife that inhabits it as well. Why do we bother when we can now go onto Google Earth and see it all from our homes?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and 3D printing are replacing many traditional industries and jobs; welcome to the new industrial revolution. Software has disrupted and will continue to disrupt most traditional industries in the next few years and it is not just manufacturing.

UBER don't own any cars, and are now the biggest taxi company in the world! Ask any taxi driver if they saw that coming. It is just a software tool, and on the same basis Airbnb is now the biggest hotel company in the world, although they don't own any properties. Ask Hilton Hotels if they saw that coming.

What are cities going to be for with no retail shops needed? Instinct says if you can work from home (or the beach), people will abandon their flats, terraced houses and tower blocks to move far away to more beautiful affordable locations.

Perhaps cities will begin to have a lot more green open spaces and become where people have their homes. Most commercial buildings can be adapted or demolished if not needed. We used to live in small communities and go out into the field to work. Perhaps we should live in lovely cities and those who cannot work from home would go out of the city to work, what a novel idea.

Land is a finite and precious resource in our island nation, and we need to find space to establish more trees to combat climate change. Where industrial use has degraded land and left it derelict we should restore it.

This has been achieved by the National Forest near where many of us live. Millions of trees have been planted largely on the sites of former coal mines, so trees could become part of the landscape in these new green cities.

It is thought that if you lumped together all these brown field sites including landfill tips there are a quarter of a million acres of land we could green up and build homes on at a price.

It has to happen as otherwise when everybody has moved out there will be no green spaces left to move to. Instead of making planning rules such that it is easier to build on countryside there should be a massive tax advantage for creating homes within cities. It would also help if we did not allow developers to sit on land-banks. Build it or lose it!

We enjoy escaping to wild places to enjoy the hills away from the hustle and bustle of modern life but in this brave new world will there be any wild places left?

Many young professionals cannot get jobs because of computers; you can get legal or medical advice within seconds, with a lot more accuracy than when done by humans. So, why study law or medicine? There will probably be very few lawyers in the future and the virus has shown that AI can diagnose as well as most doctors and that most doctors don't need to see you most of the time.

Computer programs already help nurses diagnosing cancer, and the programs are four times more accurate than human nurses. Already there are early experimental models of a medical device that works with your phone – taking your retina scan, your blood sample, and you breathe into it. It then analyses over 50 bio-indicators that will identify nearly any disease. There are dozens of phone apps out right now for health and they will just get better. Computers with pattern recognition software can even recognise faces better than humans

If we do still have cars will we drive them? We now have the first self-driving cars. In the next few years, the entire industry will start to be disrupted. You won't need to own a car anymore as you will call a car with your phone, it will show up at your location and drive you to your destination. Uber be warned!

No need to park it. You will pay only for the driven distance and you can be productive while driving. The very young children of today will never get a driver's license and will never own a car.

Millions of people die each year in car accidents worldwide and it is calculated we now have one accident every 60,000 miles. With autonomous driving that should drop to one accident in 6,000,000 miles. That will save more than a million lives worldwide each year.

Some traditional car companies will doubtless become bankrupt.

They will try the evolutionary approach and just build a better car, but tech companies like Tesla, Apple, and Google will do the revolutionary approach and build a computer on wheels.

I drive a twenty year old Volvo but look what they are doing right now. They plan on having no more internal combustion engines in their vehicles; their 2019 models that were all-electric or hybrid only, with the intent of phasing out the hybrid models.

Many engineers from Volkswagen and Audi are completely terrified of Tesla – and they should be. Look at all the companies offering all-electric vehicles. That was unheard of only a few years ago.

Insurance companies will have massive problems – they will be paying out less but without accidents, the costs will become cheaper and their car insurance business model will disappear.

Electric cars will become mainstream in the next five years in the developed world. Cities will be less noisy because all new cars will run on electricity. Cities will have much cleaner air as well. We may, as I said, actually want to live there.

Our green spaces are coming under increasing pressure now but wait till the changing climate sees deserts expand and coastal cities drown.

Solar production has been on an exponential curve for 30 years, but you can now see the burgeoning impact. And it's just getting ramped up. Electricity will become incredibly cheap and clean. Fossil energy companies are desperately trying to limit access to the grid to prevent competition from home solar installations, but that simply cannot continue - technology will take care of that strategy. The need for electricity will see all new properties required to produce and store electrical energy during the day and sell surplus to the grid.

Drones now photograph all the world beauty spots, cameras in space do likewise. Where is the surprise round that bend or from that summit? You can even do virtual climbs filmed in proxy, or fly to the top with a personal drone.

Where will be left for us to Ramble; to wander at will?

Inside one generation, computers will become more intelligent than humans... Will they decide we are redundant?

Welcome to tomorrow! – Most of it actually arrived a few years ago.

Move over Aldous Huxley, this is the brave new world

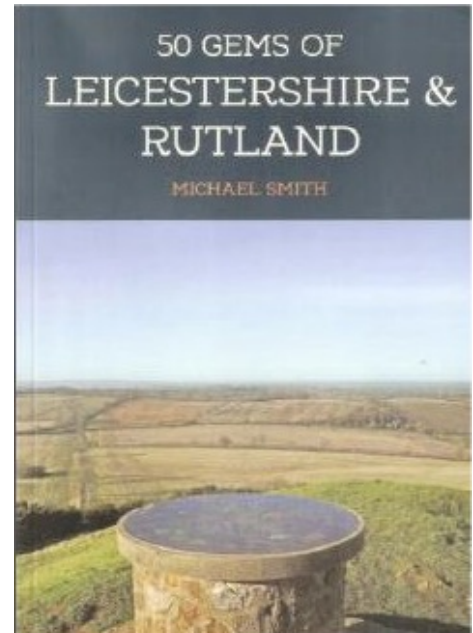
Book Review

Reviewed and commended by Herbert Eppel

50 GEMS OF LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND

Michael Smith, Amberley, 2021, 96pp, illus,
ISBN 9781445697000, £15.99

This book will hold much of interest for residents of Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland, however well they feel they know the area.



Take, for example, Halliday's Folly in the Rutland village of Greetham, the former home of a stonemason, nicknamed such in the 19th century from his habit of decorating his workshop with fragments of medieval masonry acquired during the repair or restoration of churches.

For visitors to the area it offers an excellent way of planning what to see. Each entry is around two pages long, but with sufficient information to give a good sense of the main points of interest, along with an address and postcode, and in many cases, a website link for further information. The Leicestershire 'gems' include Burrough Hill Iron Age Hill Fort, the Watermead Country Park, the gargoyles and grotesques inside and outside the parish church at Tilton on the Hill, and the Triumph Visitor Experience in Hinckley - along with number of lock-ups in North West Leicestershire. The Rutland section of the book takes in Rutland Water, Oakham and Uppingham, and 'steeple-chasing' around several interesting parish churches. As the author says, a tour of these would be 'a pleasant and interesting way of spending an afternoon' in itself!

Charnwood Forest Regional Park Update

The Charnwood Forest team are working with local tourism officers to take forward the visitor economy with small group webinars to support attractions, B&Bs and self-catering accommodation, and the hospitality industry. They are developing a festival around the Edible Forest and are researching how to make the Festival into a year-round proposition.

They are developing a Duke of Edinburgh scheme support pack and are looking into ways to help honeypot sites manage and mitigate the effects of the increased visitor numbers although the weather should assist over the next few months.

The most important thing we can look forwards to from our point of view is a new off the road path between Beacon Hill and the Outwoods, avoiding the need to walk along the busy and dangerous Breakback Road

Walking Environment Facts

If nobody walks a path in 20 years it ceases to be a right of way
if your favourite path is not registered by 2026 you will lose it
If you stray off a legal path you can be charged with trespass
If a path is closed for a day each year it shows it is a permissive path
You cannot claim a footpath be registered after 2025
If walking a legal right of way you can stop to enjoy a view and take a snack
You need to close a path one day each year to show it is permissive
To claim a path by usage 20 people have to give evidence of use for over 20 years
The Countryside Code tells you what you can and cannot do in the countryside
if you cut an obstruction on a right of way you can be charged with criminal damage
if you want to have a footpath registered you have to prove it was a footpath

To the best of my knowledge as a reasonably well informed layman all of these frequently quoted facts are incorrect. As your walking environment officer these are the sort of questions I get asked at gatherings.

I stand to be corrected but lack of use makes no difference to the legal status of a path. After 2025 we cannot use historic evidence to claim a path but if your favourite path is well used as is suggested then it would still be able to be claimed on usage and the 20-20 rule is not a rule it is a convenient precedent. As far as I know you can claim over any reasonable period but you would probably have a better chance if you had a good number of witnesses who had walked it for that long. People who have walked it shorter periods can still bear witness to support your case. You don't need 20 witnesses. I know of a case with only 12 witnesses which was successful. Remember you do not have to prove anything, just convince an inspector that on the balance of probabilities it was a public path and should be added to the definitive map.

If you wish to make it clear that in letting people use your path you have no intention of it becoming a right of way you have to display notices in a prominent place and maintain them there, and you can back it up by lodging information to that effect with the Highways Authority. Closing it for a day is not required and has no effect as far as I am aware.

If you meet an obstruction on a right of way you are fully entitled to clear it with any means at your disposal. You are not allowed to take equipment there specifically for that purpose. You are allowed to go round the obstacle if that is possible and wherever you go you cannot be charged with Trespass - there is no such offence. Similarly not abiding by the Countryside Code; it is only advisory.

Finally that picnic. Strictly speaking this is not permitted. A right of way gives you the right to pass and re-pass, not to stop. You are not even allowed to walk back and forth several times to obstruct somebody else as the right is to go from A to B for a legitimate purpose and then to return.

The basic rules are that once a path was deemed a right of way it remains so until extinguished. A path never registered can be registered if a good number of people have walked it for many years without any let or hindrance. Simple! Not really; the 'blue' book on footpath law which several of us have, is in small print and runs to 883 pages

It is there if we really need to dig deep and find something if fighting a case, but just trying to digest the facts in there you would lose the will to live.

The one big change coming gives landowners some closure in that once a path always a path will not be true after 2025

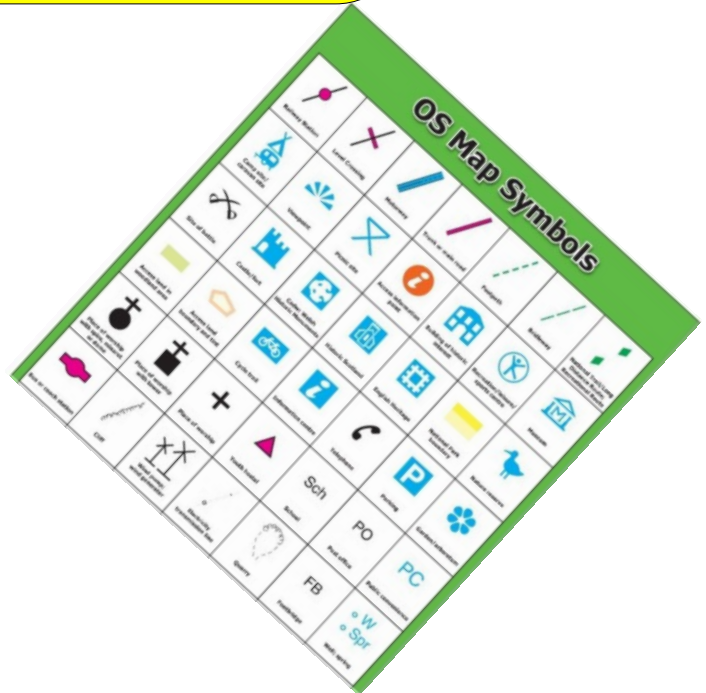
Map reading and navigation

Map reading

This year we ran two very successful map reading courses, which members found very useful. We have therefore decided to run the course again.

The course will be composed of two Zoom sessions and a practical session, which cover:

- Different types of maps
- Grid references
- Contours
- How to orientate a map and other practical tips
- Planning a walk



The dates for the next course are:

Sunday 9 th Jan	Theory (Zoom)	19:00
Sunday 16 th Jan	Theory (Zoom)	19:00
Sunday 23 rd Jan	Practical	
Daytime		

(other practical sessions can be arranged).

Navigation

We are just starting to arrange navigation training for those that have completed the map reading course.

The navigation course will be composed of a Zoom session and a practical session and covers:

- The compass
- Bearings and Magnetic bearings
- Walking on a bearing.
- Resection (locating your position, also known as triangulation)
- Pacing and timing.
- Techniques to make thing easier.



If you would like to join this course, please contact the Area Secretary.

Hands knees and bumpy daisy

Rather than getting down on your hands and knees to fight your way through overgrown paths, neglected during COVID; take a pair of secateurs on any walk you do. If we all do this and concentrate on local walks for a while we will progressively clear them. It is entirely legal to clear obstructions on a right of way

Once they are clear keep walking them as there is nothing better than people using a path to keep it clear. Footfall really is the answer. With limited resource in local government it is up to us to use them or lose them.

Some issues are just too complicated for us to physically solve and these should be reported to the County Council highways team. With only a handful of inspectors they cannot manage to monitor paths and if there is a problem that needs the attention of their contractors to deal with it a report will get it put on the jobs list. Always say who you are and that you are from the Ramblers to establish that you know what you are talking about as they get a lot of time-wasting reports from Joe and Jane Public.

Get a photograph where you can as well and great if you can get 'what three words' from your phone

Rather than hands and knees it is more your hands, feet and eyes that are wanted

Also when out on less well used paths keep your eyes open for indications of other old paths going off.

Some of these lost ways will come into their own again with all the development and house building going on but if we want to protect them based on historic evidence we first need to know there is something to look for - It is the old looking for what you know you don't know but not looking for what you don't know you don't know.

What indications might there be? A sunken linear area of land possibly worn down by many feet or hooves; two parallel hedges - to contain beasts being moved? A bridge apparently serving no purpose or some cobbles in the ground.

There are field walking groups normally looking for archaeological remains who are working with us and realise these early walkways are just as much part of our lost history. If they find an anomaly we note it and look on early maps and LIDAR to see if there is any record or indication of some form of track and where there is we then start looking in to the records to try and build a case.

At this point unless evidence starts to build up we have to weigh in the balance the work in front of us against the benefit which would accrue if we found it had been and therefore still legally is a right of way. With thousands of missing links and indications and limited time and manpower we have to prioritise.

We are building up a massive interactive map of the country with all the possibilities we have found and are currently going through it doing the exercise of prioritising.

Our guest speaker at the AGM is again the Ramblers National Officer leading this exercise who will tell us how far down this road we are.

The 33rd AGM of the Area

Minutes (Draft) of the 32nd Annual General Meeting of the Leicestershire & Rutland Area of the Ramblers Association

Saturday January 30th 2021 - Zoom online meeting.

Martin James, The Chairman welcomed all present on the Zoom Meeting, and let everyone know that the meeting was being recorded to help the Secretary with taking the minutes. There was approx 45 people on the Zoom call. We were bombed by non ramblers and unfortunately we did kick out some legitimate ramblers. We need to look at future zoom meeting invites and how we control attendance.

He also welcomed Ronnie Forbes and Diane Simcoe. Ronnie is a member of the Board of Trustees. Diane is the Ramblers Northern Area Support Officer.

This year we have all had to work a little differently. Zoom is one of the adaptations we have had to make; a lot of you will have got used to using Zoom over the last 12 months, however there will be some who are still new to the platform. Martin quickly went through some Zoom protocols that would help the meeting run smoothly.

He explained the Zoom chat window. Members were advised that they could open this by pressing the chat button at the bottom of the window. If members wanted to ask a question or address the meeting they were asked to indicate this in the chat box. People monitoring this would keep the chairman informed. Martin advised members that he had muted everyone's microphones.

When asked to address the meeting, members were asked to unmute themselves so they could be heard by the meeting. Once they had finished talking they were asked to mute themselves. Members were asked to type their name and the name of the group they were a member of into the chat window to form the register.

A short video from Kate Ashbrook and Tanya Curry was played. Link below:

<https://youtu.be/AVhNOo7vA30/>

Apologies for absence were received from - Michael Statham

The minutes of the 31st A.G.M - Sat 25th January 2020 were proposed by Trevor Martin and seconded by Suzanne Elliott. Poll results 30 Yes, 2 abstained. Accepted - . There were no matters arising from those minutes not otherwise on the agenda.

The presentation of annual reports followed:

Chairman's Report

Further to the report in the Write of Way (WoW) there are just a couple of things Martin would like to add.

The chairman thanked the Area Committee for the work that they have done in this difficult year. It has not been easy at times but everyone has adapted to the changes and the Area has functioned well.

The chairman also thanked Roy for running the Area quiz on Zoom. It was different and not the social event as it would be normally but was still a great success. Let us hope that this year we are able to return to the normal format.

With the forced increase in electronic communication it was felt that now was the time to review how we communicate with our members. The Area Committee met on the 7th Jan 2021 to discuss the WoW newsletter. The meeting was not to review the need for the publication or the content of the Newsletter; the only thing to be discussed was the delivery method.

The cost of printing and posting the publication has increased over the years and will only continue rise. The environmental cost of printing 11,000 sheets of paper for each edition was also taken into account. Electronic communication offers many benefits including larger, colour photographs, no limits to the number of pages and the chance to communicate as and when we need to.

Therefore, it was agreed that this year we will produce one printed issue in November. This will be the last issue that will be printed and posted. Future editions will be emailed out by the groups and will be posted on the Area website. If anyone feels they are unable to access the electronic version they will be able request a printed copy. Our Standing Orders have now been changed to reflect this decision. All members will be informed of these changes in the November WoW.

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

The accounts were then approved

Lisa Parker - Treasurers Report - thanked John for the handover. Lisa also advised the meeting of a small correction to the figures published in the WoW. Group Treasurers have been advised.

Martin James, as the Footpaths Officer gave additional updates to those in WoW:

Charnwood - I81 - Barkby - Minor diversion to put path onto the line already used
Harborough - A45/A48 - Great Bowden - diversion onto new bridge across Midland Mainline and realignment of paths to suit
Harborough - C30 - Wistow - diversion onto new bridge across Midland Mainline
Harborough - B41 - Hallaton - minor diversion through allotments to put path onto line used for many years
Melton - E3 - Burton Lazars- additional short length of path to bring E3/D69 onto a highway.
North West Leicestershire - O35/O36 - Bardon - latest round of diversions around Bardon Quarry
North West Leicestershire - L74 - Lockington-Hemington - diversion to remove two railway crossings to allow trains to stop before entering East Midlands Gateway.
Oadby and Wigston - Z12 - Wigston Harcourt- diversion onto new bridge across Midland Mainline

Roy Denney, the Walking Environment Officer Update:-

Most organisations I am involved with are having few meetings, if any; what there are use Zoom and don't really allow debate
Bradgate Park is ticking over and I am arranging more signage within the Park; the Leicestershire Round 100 mile walk starts and ends at Bradgate.
Charnwood Forest Regional Park is moving on and projects within the £3,000,000 + budget are rolling out; new paths shortly
The Access Forum is not meeting but we still monitor major developments and all footpath orders, objecting where needed
The Unrecorded and Lost Ways team continues to do what can be done but with the Records Office closed the volunteers are thwarted just when they have time - more later
I still have some walkers maps of Charnwood Forest at members discounted rate £5 instead of shop price of £6.99

A question was asked about an extension to the 2026 cut-off date for submitting cases to get unrecorded ways added to the Definitive Map; Roy said he doesn't think there will be an extension but will see what Jack Cornish says in his presentation.

Ray Phipps, the Membership Secretary, reiterated that membership was a major issue in line with national trends and groups commented on their own experiences. The figures are in WoW.

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

It has been decided that there will only be 1 posted version of WoW this year
This will be the last one although I would have preferred a longer transition
I will be relinquishing the website editing activities, which will now be done by our Communications Officer, as soon as she feels able to take it on board
I will produce two WoW this year, if material and Covid19 justifies it
First will only be circulated electronically to test the system
Second will be posted out in November
A newsletter should not be a history, it says news on the tin. For news to be current I recommend 4 newsletters each year

Georgina Sear, the Social Media Coordinator - Update - since WoW report in Sept 2020, every single Facebook group has grown membership, 3 by over 100. Area FB page up 123 to 311 followers. Hinckley Group FB page up 119 to 1137 followers, and Melton Group FB page up 103 to 271 followers. Well done everyone. Challenge to convert to membership. Thanks to all groups who manage their FB pages.

Publicity Officers Report - We have not had a Publicity Officer for a few years, the Committee have decided that it would be more appropriate to merge the roles of Social Media coordinator and Publicity Officer under the title of Communications Officer. Georgina Sear has inherited and agreed to take on the new role.

Webmaster Report -

I have recently had plenty of communications with Jim, our Webmaster. He has said that he is happy to continue updating the content of the Area website for the time being. He has always said that it was a role that he didn't want to keep forever and that if we found somebody to take on the role he would be only too pleased to step aside. Georgina our new Communications Officer has offered to take on the role to update the website. Therefore later this year, when restrictions allow, Jim will work with Georgina and once he is confident that it is in safe hands he will complete the handover of the site to her.

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

The officers' and groups' reports were then accepted. Zoom poll done "Are you happy to adopt the accounts and accept the officers reports and group reports" proposed by Suzanne Elliott and seconded by Trevor Martin, Poll Result 27 Yes, 2 abstain. Accepted

Trustee update - Ronnie Forbes - Central Office representative

Member for 7 years, Trustee for 4 years and coming to an end.

Walks welcoming & diversity. Rural groups do struggle.

Thanks to all volunteers for your support.

During pandemic more people are doing local walks.

3 key areas for 2021

Membership & Growth

Awareness & Engagement (brand refresh & web update)

Relevant & inclusive

General Council - unlikely to be a physical meeting, 17th April 2021 is the date. Ramblers are looking for new trustees. If you are interested the link provides additional information
<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/trustees2021/>

Membership - Total members - 99,408. Focus on lapsed scheme - contacting lapsed members, over 600 returned.

First renewal critical point - Ramblers are contacting lapsed members to keep them as members. High in overheads.

Questions raised

Georgina raised question re web platform, which Ronnie and Di could not answer. Georgina has Di's email to communicate with after this meeting.

Ronnie gave his email address should people want to contact him.
cases and asked where are we going next? Jack Cornish stated that some public enquiries have been successful and in others we are awaiting results. Any precedent will help our area cases with Network Rail.

Roy raised question re One man One Vote - feasible now with technology; Ronnie doesn't know if Ramblers will establish this; it's on the agenda

Tesco Clubcard vouchers: are they going to be reintroduced? You could pay for your membership with Tesco Clubcard vouchers. Di can check and get back to Martin, as might be a way to get new membership.

Lost Ways - Roy gave an update on local efforts on Unrecorded and Lost Ways.

Effort in Leicestershire is organised by the Access Forum and I am Secretary/Coordinator ; we have 17 interested volunteers

I am assisting 3 local groups Looking for evidence on people doing walks, with John Howells.

I have lodged 2 full lost Way claims. Martin has put 1 in.

We have comprehensive records of all cases of in Leicestershire.

Roy introduced Jack Cornish; Jack is Ramblers Lost Ways Program Manager for the 'Don't Lose His presentation included the following highlights:Your Way' campaign.

National Lost Ways programme

Adding Rights of Way to the Definitive Map

Evidence of 20 years usage

Historical evidence

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

3,500 volunteers comparing two historical maps from around 1800 (OS & Bartholomew) with Rights of Way on current map

Volunteers looking for footpaths, bridleways, and roads shown on historical maps but which appear not be recorded on current OS maps

Showed Leics & Rutland maps - wants to bring benefit to the network, but has to be practical, but we need evidence.

Next steps

We are prioritising routes, bringing data sets together locally and nationally.

Want an Extension to the 2026 cut off date by 5-years to 2031 & implementation of the Deregulation Act

Jack asked if there were any questions and Roy made the following comments:

We've found over 3,000 routes and prioritised them down to 60 and we have submitted 3 cases

Applications need to be written; we need help in creating strong cases with information; it's a very complex process.

8 Minute Break

President Update by Peter Williams

Peter thanked all volunteers and gave particular thanks to Kim & Martin along with Lisa for taking on Treasurer role, and Katherine for taking on the Secretary role.

Environment Bill: it's been delayed by 6 months, Ramblers aim to get a requirement to get green space; We should write to our MPs to get it incorporated. Link to the environmental bill -

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/news/latest-news/2021/january/our-chance-to-improve-access-to-nature.aspx>

Carry secateurs when you walk locally to help the community.

Support the Lost Ways programme; There is a good article by Roy in WoW.

The President moved a motion to suspend rule 6.1 within our Standing Orders and Constitution stating that officers are only elected for one year. Proposed by Peter Williams and seconded by Suzanne Elliott. Poll Result 27 Yes, 1 No, 2 Abstain. Accepted

The President moved a motion to suspend rule 7 within our Standing Orders and Constitution stating that the Chairman can only serve three years Proposed by Peter Williams and seconded by Suzanne Elliott. Poll Result 27 Yes, 1 Abstain. Accepted

The President invited all officers, other members of the AEC and Representatives on outside bodies to continue for a further year.

The Chairman resumed the conduct of the meeting and asked members to affirm Peter Williams as President and Mike Statham as Vice President.

Election of Area Secretary

Kim thanked everyone. It has been a challenging year, we attended central office meetings, did risk assessments and lead by example.

We have had one nomination for this role which is Katherine Hardwick

The question was asked: 'Are there any others who wish to be considered for the role?' No others wished to be considered.

Proposed by Kim Vallance and Seconded by Suzanne Elliott. Poll Result 30 Yes, 1 Abstain - Accepted

2021 Area Committee:-

President. - Peter Williams

Walking Environment Officer - Roy Denney

Chairman - Martin James

Membership Secretary - Ray Phipps

Secretary - Katherine Hardwick

Editor - Roy Denney

Treasurer - Lisa Parker

Communications Officer - Georgina Sear

Footpath Officer - Martin James

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

Confirmation of appointment of an Auditor / Independent Financial Examiner Chris Tipper. Proposed by Lisa Parker and Seconded by Suzanne Elliott. Poll Result 27 In Favour - Accepted

Motions/Constitutional changes:- None

This year's General Council is planned for 17th April 2021 at the Birmingham NEC. This is to be a rationalised one day meeting due to the present Covid restrictions and is obviously subject to change. The Chairman suggested that we nominate 2 delegates to represent us as usual but not nominate any observers as we have done in previous years. The Chairman said that Roy Denney had said he was prepared to represent us if the meeting was on Zoom; however he was hoping to be away on the 17th of April. As at the time of the meeting the GC was to be held at the NEC the two delegates were selected from the meeting. The two delegates are Georgina Sear & Robert Jones.

Any other Business

The Alan Loasby memorial bench was raised by Howard; He said it was very unusual and he was quite disappointed with it. Peter replied by saying that it's an unconventional bench and is used by kids. He said that it was installed by Bradgate Park youth group.

Area Events were then agreed (subject to restrictions)

a) Area Walk - Late summer - to be hosted by Loughborough Group

b) Area Quiz - Nov/Dec - to be hosted by Rutland Group

c) Next AGM - Sat 29th Jan 2022 - to be Hosted by Loughborough Group

Meeting closed at 11:55

Officers Reports

CHAIRMAN

Thank you to all our members for their continued support.

As I come to the end of my three-year term of office as Area Chairman I thought I should do a review of what has happened in the last four years. Yes, my three-year stint turned out to be four, I didn't see that coming!

I guess the most significant event during my time has been Covid-19. At the AGM in 2020 life seemed so simple. The groups had all had held their AGM's, with walks for the next few months in hand, and holidays and summer social events being planned. Then came the 23rd of March 2020 and all Ramblers walks came to a halt. However, the work of the Area and Group committees had to continue throughout, and all the committee members became 'Zoom users'. When restrictions began to be lifted in July, the Ramblers were not prepared to allow group walks to start again. In September we were allowed to start walking in groups but with a maximum of 6 people as long as we followed certain rules. The dreaded Risk Assessments were just one of the new hoops that had to be jumped through, along with more work for the Area and Group committees to go through.

Some groups decided to delay restarting group walks until the limits on the number of people that could attend were raised. Walking life was returning to normal. Well, nearly normal. Then on the 5th of November it all came crashing down again and would not start up again until December.

All group AGM's in 2020 were held via the Zoom platform, as well as the Area AGM in January 2021. After a few unsavoury moments at the beginning of the meeting (we were 'Zoom bombed') the meeting ran surprisingly well.

Post-Covid, things have returned to normal and group walks seem to be well-attended.

This year I have also been lucky to attend a presentation made to John Williams from the Rutland group; you can read more about this elsewhere in the newsletter. I also attended this year's Area Walks Day which was arranged and hosted by Loughborough Group, again you can read more about this elsewhere. A big thank you to Loughborough Group committee for arranging this. I will also be attending the Area Quiz in November which has been arranged by the Rutland Group.

You will see that this is the last printed edition of the Write Of Way that we will be producing. The use of electronic communication is now commonplace and it is time for the Leicestershire and Rutland Area to join the 21st century. The main benefit of using electronic communication is that news and information can be sent out as and when it becomes available.

Please ensure your group Secretaries have your current email address. News and information will also be available on the website which can be accessed at home, on smart devices and at libraries. If there is absolutely no way that you can access the electronic version then please let us know.

Our Communications officer Georgina has been doing an excellent job this year managing the Area website and our social media presence as well as helping Lutterworth group to redesign and re-launch their website. I also know that she is also working on another exciting project (see her report).

I would like to thank all those currently on or have been on the Area Committee over the last 4 years. You have all performed your roles brilliantly and kept me in check. As this is my last year, we need a new Area Chairperson. **Are you interested?** To be honest, it is a really easy role because you will have a great team working around you.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Overview Social Media

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 188 to 417. Assistance, in one or two periods of my absence, and posts from other administrators has been most welcome.

The focus for most local Facebook group pages is in advertising or recounting group walks with splendid pictures. I am happy to support any group who would like to start up or reinvigorate a Facebook page. The success of promoting the Rutland Round 21st anniversary was a notable media success with coverage on radio and in the press.

Local group Facebook data Members/followers/likes. (Last year's data in brackets.)

Lutterworth (35) 45

Hinckley (1038) 1263

Melton (168) 413

Loughborough (96) 136

LRWG members (77)78: open (432) 481

Leicester and District open (194) 537

Leicester and District members (82) 140

Twitter and Instagram

The area twitter account 'Leicestershire and Rutland Ramblers', and has grown from 73 followers to (2019 was 44) to 116. The Hinckley Ramblers twitter account has (237) 239 followers, and their Instagram account has grown from 127 followers in 2020 to 146.

Area Website

During the year I took on the administration of the area site, with help from Jim Storer.

The area granted a sum of money to engage an expert to help upskill me with a view to improving the look of the site and being able in turn to offer training and support to group webmasters (who use Joomla). This upskilling is ongoing and I am willing to help any group webmasters where needed.

I have updated the site regularly with footpath news, articles and featured articles such as the Rutland Round. I have added more pictures to the site generally – improvements are ongoing.

The next change will be the introduction on the site of a sign up to a periodic area newsletter via Mailchimp.

I have assisted Lutterworth group to transfer their site content into the standard Ramblers format and to transfer the domain holding to Ramblers.

FOOTPATH SECRETARY REPORT

Thank you to the group Footpath Secretaries who have continued to look at planning applications and changes to the Public Right Of Way (PROW) network throughout the pandemic. They have also been out checking issues etc when they have been allowed to, and the work they are doing is vitally important.

Rather than just producing a list of diversions as we have in the past, all changes to the PROW network are now shown on the Area website along with the Order map so you can now see where the route is.

Leicestershire County Council (LCC) have issued a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) to allow Network Rail (NR) work on the track between East Goscote and Rearsby. The road crossings on Broome Lane, East Goscote and Rearsby Road, Rearsby are to be closed occasionally, mainly at night over the weekends. However, the footpaths I66 and I73 have been allowed to be closed from the 25th October 2021 to 4th March 2022 (18 weeks).

I73 was closed earlier this year for at least 11 weeks (the TTRO was for 8 weeks but NR kept the crossing closed illegally for another 3 weeks). During this time, they managed to replace half a dozen bits of wood on the crossing footboards. The diversion route for this footpath during the closure is along Broome Lane, East Goscote.

I66 is the footpath between Rearsby and Rearsby Mill. This path is part of the Leicestershire Round (a path promoted by LCC). The alternative is approximately 1 ½ miles longer and uses the pavement to walk to Thrussington. From there you walk along the Ratcliffe road where, in parts, there is NO pavement.

I can see no reasons why these paths are cannot be opened when NR are not working on the track (when the road crossings are open). Temporary footboards could be used. I suspect the reason the block closure is that they cant be bothered to unlock the gates each time they finish working on the track.

NR always say that closures are need for safety reasons however, they are only concerned about safety on the railway and don't give a damn about pedestrians being forced to walk along dangerous roads where there are no pavements.

I have challenge LCC as to why they authorized such a long closure on an important, heavily used footpath. Obviously they just issued the closure without any consideration to footpath users .I have also been in touch with Network Rail and the MP for Charnwood .I doubt that NR will back down and open the paths when they don't need to be closed. I will be taking photos at regular intervals to see whether there is any actual work being done to the footpath crossings and to ensure that the crossings are open immediately once the TTRO expires. I will also keep pressing LCC to ensure that in future they only close paths for justified reasons.

TREASURERS REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

These are the as yet unaudited accounts of the Area for the last twelve months.

Note: In accordance with RACO guidelines, these accounts are prepared on a "receipts and payments" basis, and debtors and creditors are accordingly not recognised.

Treasurer's Certificate:- I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the books and records presented for audit were an accurate record of the Area's financial affairs and were complete in all respects.

L.Parker (Treasurer)

He audited version should be available by the Area AGM

Ramblers - Leicestershire and Rutland Area			
Receipts & Payments Account			
Year ended 30th September 2021			
	Current Year		Prior Year
Income:	£		£
Central Office funding	6,427.04		6,864.00
Donations (A Lowsby)	0.00		0.00
Other refund	0.00		400.00
Fundraising	0.00		0.00
Deposit interest	0.00		0.00
Publication/goods sales	0.00		0.00
Total Income	6,427.04		7,264.00
Expenditure:			
Funding to Groups	3,177.03		3,264.88
Newsletter printing	907.20		1,700.40
Publicity	0.00		0.00
Newsletter distribution	780.00		90.38
Campaigns and casework	183.68		18.30
Meetings, inc. AGM and GC	159.23		536.37
Restoring the record	0.00		0.00
Admin costs	0.00		98.06
Other (A Lowsby bench)	0.00		0.00
Total Expenditure	5,207.14		5,708.39
Surplus	1,219.90		1,555.61
Funds brought forward	4,668.84		3,113.23
Adjustments			
Funds carried forward	5,888.74		4,668.84

Balance Sheet at 30th September 2021					
		Current		Prior	
		Year		Year	
Assets:		£		£	
Fixed Assets		0.00		0.00	
Investments		0.00		0.00	
Stock		0.00		0.00	
Debtors		0.00		0.00	
Cash & bank		5,888.75		4,668.84	
Total Assets		5,888.75		4,668.84	
Liabilities:					
Creditors		0.00		0.00	
Total Liabilities		0.00		0.00	
Net Assets & Funds at end of year		5,888.75		4,668.84	
For Information, the distribution of the Area entitlement to Groups was as follows:					
Coalville		304.07		301.04	
Hinckley		291.95		298.01	
Leicester		1,600.00		1,600.00	
Loughborough		220.24		230.24	
Lutterworth		165.70		166.71	
Melton Mowbray		187.92		193.98	
Rutland		213.17		216.20	
L & R Walking Group		193.97		258.59	
Total		3,177.02		3,264.77	

WALKING ENVIRONMENT REPORT

One thing I have not been doing in the last 12 months is walking . A combination of COVID and hospital attentions to my foot put paid to that.

The Access Forum has not been meeting but I have been Zooming with the National Lost Ways team on a monthly basis and work on that has been proceeding. As our guest speaker is again to be the Leader of that project I will say no more on the subject

Some aspects of the Charnwood Forest project have been delayed but by and large it is on course

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY’S REPORT

These figures are for the year end 2021 & 2020

	2020	2021
Area total	1334	1400
LE01 Hinckley	198	208
LE02 Leicester	408	407
LE03 Melton	90	97
LE04 Coalville	209	216
LE05 Rutland	112	140
LE06 Loughborough	126	125
LE07 Lutterworth	67	72
LE50 LRWG	95	108
LE96 Others	28	27

After a disastrous year membership of the RA is slowly recovering as shown by these mixed results. Nationally there are now 101,130 members which whilst showing some recovery is still not up to pre pandemic levels.

EDITORS REPORT

My report is covered by articles in the Newsletter elsewhere. I would just like to add my thanks to Jim Storer for his assistance during the period when my role included feeding material into the Area website.

I don’t have even a passing interest in tweeting, twittering or having my face in a Book nor understanding the black arts involved in a web site. I provided the material and Jim did the messy stuff and even he was glad to hand it over to somebody who seemed to enjoy it

SECRETARY’S REPORT

I took over from Kim as Area Secretary in December last year and I’m not quite sure where the last year has gone! I spent the first half of the year waiting for lockdowns to lift and by the time I looked it was June and half the year had disappeared.

I have enjoyed meeting with and getting to know the Area Officers & Committee members this year virtually via Zoom and have admired everyone’s commitment & dedication to the Rambler’s cause. I would like to thank everyone for their patience while I found my feet in the new role; we seem to be muddling through pretty well so far.

This years’ AGM will be the first where I’m in charge of the minutes so I’m feeling the pressure to accurately reflect the conversation but I’m looking forward to being able to meet some more of you in person in January and I really hope to be able to join you on some new walks next year.

Group Reports

RUTLAND

As with all rambling groups, Rutland's activities over the last year have been interrupted by this dreadful pandemic. We were able to get going again in April, following the necessary guidelines, and members have enjoyed some splendid walks right throughout the county, as well as over the border in Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire.

Membership is looking particularly healthy for our group, with the total hovering around the 140 mark at the moment - an increase of around 20 over the last year. One of the few 'positives' of the pandemic has been a growing interest right across the country in walking, and perhaps our increase in membership is a reflection of that interest.

Needless to say, most social activities had to be 'put on the back burner' this year. However, the one thing we were able to organise, albeit after several months delay, was a special presentation for our retiring footpaths officer, John Williams. John, the mastermind behind the Rutland Round, and his wife Tricia, were guests of honour at a special event in Ketton on the 22nd August. Tea and cake were on offer after a ramble in the local area, and John was presented with a very special yellow way marker trophy in recognition of his achievements.

Finally, the Rutland Walking Festival took place over a couple of weeks in mid-October, having been put back from its usual slot in May. Once again, a few members of the Rutland group were involved as walk leaders. The first week featured the complete Rutland Round - 65 miles around the county boundary, spread over 7 days - and was well supported. Short walks all over the county were on offer

LRYWG

There has been a lot of interest and high attendance levels on our walks since they restarted this year.

We continue to use the 'meetup' app as our booking tool. We have hosted walks on most Sundays and since the easing of restrictions we generally have not had an upper limit on the number of attendees.

We have had a number of vacant committee positions (including chair) for some time and we are keen to encourage newer members to come forward to take on the roles.

LEICESTER GROUP

Following the easing of Covid 19 restrictions the Leicester and District Group resumed its walk programme in April 2021. Initially we operated with various anti Covid 19 measures in place but most of these have now been lifted.

Our walks programme is probably one of the busiest in the country with 260 group walks planned this year. The twice weekly shorter walks (5-6 miles followed by a pub lunch) remain the most popular. Thanks to Tony Richards & Mel Smith we have also started a new series of weekly "leisurely" walks of 4 miles or less and these have also proved very popular.

We also attract regular walkers from other Groups & Areas with our longer walks. We are unusual in offering three longer, all day walks (10-15 miles) every week.

We have not yet resumed our monthly Coach Ramblers but hope to do so in spring 2022. We have a Group sub committee working towards this goal.

Membership has increased slightly from 400 to 407 reflecting a small national increase in Ramblers numbers.

The Group has reported over 100 problems with footpaths to the County Council in the last year. Thanks to our Footpath Secretary we now have a good relationship with the Rights of Way Team. Helping to maintain the footpath network remains an important aspect of our work.

This year we have also started to actively promote the group via regular contacts with local newspapers and media outlets. There are signs that this is helping to generate interest in our activities.

Thanks are due to several new members who have joined the committee in the last year and made very important contributions. In the coming year we hope to consolidate our walks programme, to attract new walkers and to establish a new standalone Group website.

COALVILLE

Our year so far has been very encouraging as we have been able to get back to our 4 month programmes. The walks have been well attended and we are still producing three walks each week.

Our AGM took place in October and alas three of our stalwart Committee member decided it was time for them to stand down. I wish to thank them on behalf of all our members for all the work they have done for us over the past many years. They are Rob Woodward (sec) Gerald Cave (footpath) and Gwen Storer (social).

All the best to them and thanks again.

We did manage a coach outing in September to Bakewell and a walk along the Monsal Trail and thanks to everyone who helped to organise that.

We shall as in previous years be laying a Poppy Wreath on the 11th Nov at the Coalville Clock Tower.

MELTON MOWBRAY

This year we were able to resume walks at the very end of March and continued on a weekly basis at the beginning.

We are now up and running, almost normally, and have enjoyed a drink in the pub gardens after walks, when the weather has permitted, and even had the odd pub lunch. Most of these walks have been well attended and we have gained new members this year.

As usual we are keen to advertise our walking programme, and in addition to e-mailing it weekly 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, The Melton Times, and local radio station, 103 The Eye, and post programme leaflets at various venues in and around Melton.

Last year holidays were all cancelled thanks to Covid 19, but in September a few of us ventured into Wales for a lovely long weekend walking in Llangollen. We even had some sun!

St Mary's Parish Church, in Melton Mowbray, are organising a magnificent celebration of Christmas Trees from Wednesday 1st to Wednesday 8th December again this year and we will be decorating a Ramblers tree, at this event, which is well worth a visit if you are able to go.

2021 has proved to be a better year for our Group, and I'd like to say a big "thank you" to all our members for their support during the year.

LUTTERWORTH

This has a very unusual year for all Ramblers. We may have had fewer walks, not so many walk leaders available and fewer members able to join in with those walks we offer, but we are still alive and kicking.

Although we have missed a lot of Sunday walks over the past 18 months but we squeezed in our 2020 Mince Pie walk taking in Windmill and Beacon Hill with a picnic at the rustic shelter near the top. Since then, we have managed to keep going with 23 official walks, which included the Loughborough led Area Walk in August and the Cotswold walk led by Rob and Val Deacon which was an exciting change from the Leicestershire and Warwickshire countryside.

The number of walkers has been restricted from groups of 6 and then up to 14 but it is now up to individual walk leaders if they wish to increase their numbers. We needed to introduce a booking in system for all the walks, meeting at the start of the walk rather than at Lutterworth Town Hall. There is a benefit to this as walk leaders now know who to expect on their walks and we are continuing with this arrangement at least until Christmas. We hope now that members will try to car share whenever possible by personal arrangement.

Membership of Ramblers has become a big issue across the UK and we have been doing our best to spread awareness and interest in local walking. Dianne Thorp and Anita have been offering short Friday Morning Walks since June, two per month and this has been successful in attracting current members to join us for a short mid-week walk, as well as those who are new to walking or trying to get back into their stride. We have run 5 so far and will continue with this format up to Christmas as it does offer more variety in our walks programme.

We have also been trying to spread the word about our group and on September 9th we ran an Open Coffee Morning at the Lutterworth Town Hall on market day to let the locals know about us and how to get involved. We gave out lots of hot drinks and cakes as well as publicity and Martin James, Area Chairman and Footpath Officer, was on hand to give info about local footpath issues. This was very well received by the locals and a number of new walkers came on the Friday Morning walks as a result. We have been invited to take part in the Age Concern Information Day at the Wycliffe Rooms in October and we are also following up links in Broughton Astley with a view to promoting ourselves there.

Together with Area Group, we have just started discussions about the name of our group. We actually serve the Harborough District although our membership does not reflect this. Maybe with a name like 'Lutterworth & Harborough District' we might attract a wider membership especially if we hold some promotional events in places like Kibworth or Market Harborough.

Many of us have increased our technology skills, not an easy thing for anyone but as with many things over the last 2 years, this has helped us to communicate and function as a group. Our last AGM was by Zoom and the Ramblers Area AGM also, on which several of Lutterworth members took part. Some members are now using the Ramblers app which

allows us to follow the map on the ground on our mobile phone as we make progress on a Ramblers Route. Thanks to Milton Scott who recently led a walk demonstrating how this worked.

Zoom has also helped our Committee to meet regularly which meant we could respond to the variety of Covid rules and guidelines in order to keep us all as safe as possible. Although social distancing is not a requirement now, I think we are all familiar with the joys of keeping apart, mask wearing, extra hygiene as well as the need for written risk assessments and attendance lists for Track & Trace. None of these elements are onerous, they help keep walking with Ramblers as safe as possible, but it is a bit more work.

Three of our members took part in the navigation training event on Zoom given by Ramblers Area. Two basic theory mapwork and navigation sessions were covered and then Anita accompanied the 3 participants on walks in the Bradgate & Swithland area to put new skills into practise. A further two sessions will be offered in the autumn covering compass and navigation skills on Zoom which anyone interested can join up for when the dates come from Martin.

We are now able to plan some social events, the BBQ in August was enjoyed by 19 members despite the rainy evening, and we are back to our Soup & Pud format for this year's AGM. Dianne Thorp, our Social Secretary is now planning a skittle evening in November and a New Year's Bring & Share Lunch at Claybrooke Village Hall. Although we have not been able to have any residential walking trips this year the postponed Jersey walking week did indeed happen at the end of September with 17 members involved. The sun shone, the scenery was inspiring, and the walking, inland and coastal, was varied. We look forward very much to resuming our Derbyshire and Spring walking trips in 2022.

We are now fully engaged with making changes to our Group website which will launch this month. Georgina Sear & Area Officers have been very helpful in supporting the changes. We will have similar content but displayed with direct links to Area and Ramblers national websites. We appreciate the offer by John Divine to co-ordinate this, assisted by Milton Scott and Steve Price once they have all received appropriate training and send a great many thanks to John Whitehead and Bob Howes for keeping our Group website online for so many years with such dedication.

We would also like to say a big thank to Pete Berry, who will be leaving the Committee after several years as our Footpath Secretary, who was also involved in producing some of our publicity materials which we are still using.

We look forward to being out and about in 2022 and some good walking.

LOUGHBOROUGH

For a second year running the Group's activities have been affected by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic but we have been able to return to something like normal in the past 7 months.

After the last report in November 2020 we restarted a limited programme of weekly walks in December before having to stop completely for the 3 month third lockdown which lasted until the

end of March 2021. Walks were restarted on 3 April 2021 and in the 7 months to the end of October two walks have been offered each week apart from a few occasions in the summer holiday period. Although limited car sharing has been used since July, the majority of the weekend walks have involved less travel than in the past but we are gradually starting to move further afield. All the walks however have been reliant on a relatively small number of leaders and they have had to be offered on a one to two week rolling programme. One difficulty in attracting leaders seems to be the need to complete risk assessment forms as now required by the Ramblers.

The number of leaders is slowly increasing and hopefully this trend will continue. The Group was also responsible for organising the Area Walk in 2021 and offered both a short and a long walk which attracted members from all the Area's groups.

The social programme was also very restricted during the year. Fortunately the twice cancelled

group holiday finally went ahead in August with a change of venue from the Lake District to Whitby. 25 members went on the holiday and enjoyed two full-day coastal walks and a half day walk on arrival day. No other events took place during the year due to uncertainties related to pandemic restrictions but a Christmas walk and lunch social are being arranged for December 2021. Events for 2022, including a group holiday, are to be discussed at the first committee meeting following the AGM.

Despite the restricted activities 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.

Membership of the Group has again declined slightly as some members have not renewed their subscriptions but it is encouraging that we have also gained new members despite the limited activities taking place in the early part of the year

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 committee has met 3 times during the year, with all meetings taking place online. 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 difficult year. As always, it is very much appreciated.

HINCKLEY

The group are steadily recovering from the interruption to our walking program. The Summer Evening walks were well received, and attended, to the extent that the short program was extended from the usual Six evening walks to Eight walks with the last two walks starting at the earlier time of 6pm to ensure we finished in daylight!

The regular Thursday, Saturday and Sunday programme is also up and running. November is looking good with just a couple of open dates left to fill [at the time this is written at the end of October]. Attendances are returning to normal. Our Sunday walks have suffered more than the other days as in normal times these full day walks would be further afield. Many of our members are still a little reluctant to car share which makes walks in Derbyshire and the Cotswolds less viable when fuel costs aren't shared by 3 or 4 passengers.

During "Restrictions" many of our members formed small groups and some of those are continuing to walk informally. It is encouraging that a couple of new Walk Leaders have come forward.

Our first post Covid Social event will take place towards the end of November. Also many members are "signed up" for a Coach Holiday to Bridlington next year. Although excursions are part of the deal with the coach operator most of those taking part will be out on "group" walks instead.

Our AGM takes place after this item is required by WoW Editor so we are unable to report on any changes that may have taken place.

Our weekly newsletter - Pete's Ramblings - has continued to be issued throughout the year to keep members up to date, as has our Website. Ramblings has now passed the 400 mark in number of issues. This is available to all on our Facebook page, by a link from our website { hinckleyramblers.org.uk } and also by link from the Area website.

Next year, 2022, sees Hinckley Group celebrate 50 years since the group was established. Provided, of course, that external factors don't intervene again we will try and celebrate this landmark anniversary in style. We did celebrate the 45th anniversary and quite a few members who took part in the very first Hinckley ramble joined us for that. Can that really be 5 years ago!

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of **John Harper** in January, following a ten month illness.

John had been a very active member of the Loughborough Group for many years.

He was Chairman between 2011 and 2017 and prior to that he served as Treasurer.

John also edited the Soar Feet newsletter for several years and he regularly led many midweek and week-end walks.

Six trees in memory of John have been planted in the National Forest.



These are suggestions for consideration at the AGM. They may be withdrawn prior to the meeting if circumstances change but are provided here to meet notice requirements

AGM PROPOSAL TO REGULARISE OUR CONSTITUTION

To cover the situation of having or choosing to have virtual meetings the following alterations to our constitution are proposed: (These need a two thirds majority to adopt and must be approved by the Board Of Trustees nationally) The parts in bold are the alterations / additions.

Rule 6 iv to read

iv) The AEC shall decide **when and how** it shall meet with meetings to be held at least once every three months, subject to not less than 14 days notice of time and place. **Meetings of the AEC or any sub-committee or working group formed by the AEC may be virtual meetings utilising electronic means if the AEC so decide or when legislation prohibits physical meetings**

Rule 9 para 1 to read

The AEC shall hold an Annual General Meeting of the Area (AGM) not later than five months after the end of the financial year. In any event the AGM shall be held before the last date for submission of ordinary motions to General Council as will be advised from

time to time. Not less than fourteen days notice of the AGM shall be given to each member of the Area.

Each individual member of the Area and one representative of each affiliated group or organisation in membership of the Area shall be entitled to one vote. AGMs may be virtual meetings utilising electronic means if the AEC so decide or legislation prohibits physical meetings

Rule 10 to read

The Chairman of the AEC or the Secretary may at any time at his / her discretion, and shall upon receiving a request to do so signed by not less than twenty members giving reasons for the request, call a Special General Meeting (SGM) to be held within twenty-one days of the receipt of the request. The Secretary shall in writing, give fourteen days notice, to all ordinary members and the representatives of affiliated clubs and organisations, of the exclusive business for such a meeting. As much detail as is available as to the nature of the exclusive business shall be provided with that notice. Voting rights at a SGM shall be as for the AGM. **SGMs may be virtual meetings utilising electronic means if the AEC so decide or legislation prohibits physical meetings**

AGM SUGGESTED MOTIONS TO GO TO GENERAL COUNCIL

1) This Council requests the Board of Trustees to arrange that Walk Magazine has a section where Areas can make brief announcements or inform members of items of local interest.

Note - As more and more Areas are only communicating with members by electronic means and not all members can access thee and many email addresses are out of date the Walk magazine will be our only link to these people many of whom can be asked to volunteer for projects and campaigns.

A majority of our members join to support our aims and our campaigning on their behalf and have no involvement with the group they have been attached to and if they learn nothing of what is happening locally and all they receive for their subs is the 'Walk' magazine covering only national matters as largely it does at present, membership decline will accelerate. They could buy 'Walk' in the shops for a fraction of the cost of their subs.

2) This council asks the Board of Trustees to ensure that all members are allocated to their local groups by actual County/ Borough/City location rather than by the current practice of using Postcodes.

Note - In Leicestershire & Rutland there are significant areas that are allocated to Postcodes that are nominally in Lincolnshire, Peterborough Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Over half of Leicestershire geographically does not have a Leicester post code.

This means that there are many members that lose the benefits of allocation to what should be their local group and all the benefits that brings. It can be argued that people can request a move but, in practice, very few do.

Given the availability of programmes that will establish actual addresses from Postcodes (for example the Royal Mail's Postcode Finder or Grid Reference Finder) it would seem to be a straightforward matter for Council to instruct staff to allocate members to their actual location.

Agenda for the 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Leicestershire & Rutland Area of the Ramblers Association

Saturday, January 29th, 9:30 am sign in / refreshments

Meeting 10.00 – 1:00 pm latest at The Linford, Newtown Linford

- 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) Group reports
- 6 Adoption of accounts and acceptance of officers' and groups' reports
- 7 Guest Speaker - Jack Cornish, Project Leader, Dont Lose Your Way

15 MINUTE BREAK

- 8 Presidents response and remarks
- 9 President takes the Chair for the election of Officers
 - a) Chairman
 - b) Treasurer
 - C) Secretary
 - d) Footpaths Officer
 - E) Assistant Footpaths Officer
 - e) Walking Environment Officer'
 - f) Membership Secretary
 - g) Editor
 - h) Communications Officer
- 11 Chairman assumes the conduct of the meeting and asks members to affirm Peter Williams as President
- 12 Confirmation of appointment of an Auditor / Independent Financial Examiner
- 13 Any proposed changes to the constitution
- 14 Any proposed motions for General Council
- 15 Nomination of two representatives to General Council and up to two observers
- 16 Report of any Central Office Representative if present.
- 17 Area Events (dates, hosts and formats)
 - a) Area walk – Saturday, late summer - LEICESTER Group
 - b) Area Quiz – Friday night Oct / Nov - LRYWG Group
 - c) Next AGM - Last Saturday in January 2023 - MELTON group

FORMAL MEETING CLOSE

There will then be an informal meeting of the new Committee and a short walk locally