SOAR FEET

Newsletter of the Loughborough and District Ramblers. Winter *2015 / 2016*



It's good to report another successful year for Loughborough Ramblers with core activities maintained and new initiatives pursued. During the year a total of one hundred and two rambles have been led spread across eight different counties with more than 210 separate people joining in one or more of them. As part of our programme we have led walks for the National Forest Walking Festival, Charnwood Borough Guided Walks, and invited individuals to join us when walking for the BBC CountryFile Children in Need appeal. Each of these have resulted in added publicity for the Group and of course increased attendance. A membership initiative has seen us launch a postcard campaign inviting anyone interested in walking and the countryside to join us on one of our walks. A number of new and enthusiastic walkers have joined the Group and we are pleased to welcome them.

We have continued to monitor and, where appropriate, comment on planning applications affecting footpaths in our area. In the future this aspect will have added significance with increased building in rural areas and in particular with planning permission having recently been given for a new 'village' North West of Loughborough with consequences for current paths and potential for new ones. More recently we have played our part in the Big Pathwatch initiative, checking the state of paths in our area and helping with the verification of reports.

Our social activities have been greatly enhanced this year with the addition of a three day holiday for members in May. The destination was Llangollen



where the 54km Llangollen Round provided a suitable three day challenge. In 2016 we will be in Church Stretton, when more members have booked to join us. Once again we were grateful to accept an invitation to participate in a coach ramble organised by the Coalville Group and also their very successful annual holiday, this year to Whitby, when we were able to assist by leading three walks.

The Group's annual general meeting in November was held after a breakfast for all, and before a circular walk via Kegworth, Kingston, West Leake and Sutton Bonington. Financially we remain healthy due to grants from the Ramblers Association and our Partnership with Ramblers Holidays.

Finally a big thank you to everyone who has led a walk, helped with the holiday, served on the committee or supported Loughborough Ramblers in any way over the last year. In 2016 we will continue to work to recruit and warmly welcome new members, and support the aims and objectives of the Ramblers Association as detailed in their vision statement.

Loughborough Retain Title.

At the Area Quiz held at Newtown Linford on the 30th October Loughborough's Rocking Ramblers team (Debbie Wright, John Howells, Stuart Tyler and Vicky Howells) were again successful winners of the wooden spoon ! Meanwhile our first team (John Samson, Pam Bursnall, Steve Archer and Sue Mears) fared better finishing a narrow second behind a Leicester team.

Meet the Member: Stuart Tyler



For two years now Stuart has been Loughborough Group's Footpath Officer. Basically this means he receives copies of any planning applications from Charnwood Borough Council which affect footpaths and is asked to comment on them. He also attends regular meetings of the Area Footpath Officers where wider issues and large planning applications are discussed and acted on.

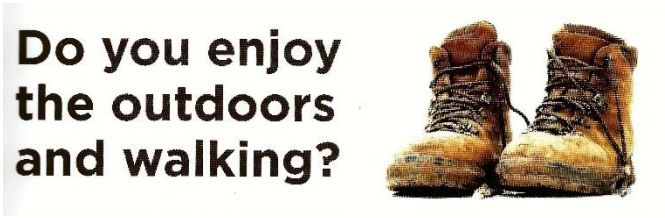
I was born in Loughborough, where I lived for the first 40+ years before moving to Shepshed. My Father was a telephone engineer for the GPO and my mum worked at Woolworths. I have an older brother and younger sister and went to school in Loughborough before leaving at 17 to start work. This was with Slack & Parr Ltd and I'm still there now after over 30 years. I started as an apprentice, then worked in the factory for some years before moving to the design office. I am now employed as a senior design draughtsman.

My main interest is amateur radio, which has many varied aspects to it. I like to build my own equipment, radio orienteering and taking part in 'Summits On The Air' scheme (SOTA). This involves going to the top of hills & mountains with your radio and contacting other stations. The qualifying hills in England are the marilyns, so not many in this area.

I started walking while in the scouts. My parents were also in the scout fellowship and on one of our camping weekends I remember going over Kinder Scout and that is the walk that got me hooked. I don't have time for a great amount of walking but do like to walk somewhere new if possible. My favourite walking area is Derbyshire, especially Kinder, and in Leicestershire Bradgate Park. I think both of these are because of happy memories of these places. More recently I have enjoyed walking around Lambley Dumbles and have various routes around that area. I now need to compose one to include the new Gedling Country Park.

Recruitment Initiative

With this copy of Soar Feet you will have received both a postcard and a business card inviting anyone who enjoys walking to join us. Please can you play your part in our recruitment campaign by placing the postcard on a prominent noticeboard near you. It could be in a library, supermarket, GP surgery, or parish noticeboard. Basically anywhere it will be seen. The business card can be used to pass to someone you know who walks.



Why not join **Loughborough Rambers** on one of our walks ?

Dates for your Diary

*** Skittles Evening ***

7.00pm. Tues 12th April, 2016
Soar Bridge Inn, Barrow-on-Soar

*** Coach Ramble ***

Saturday 7th May, 2016
Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Organised by Coalville Ramblers.
Select your length of walk, view the exhibits, enjoy a hearty meal.

Further details of both events later.

Coffin Walk from Church Wilne

Jenny Alobaidi reports on the walk Stuart led on the 30th August.

Church Wilne now consists solely of St Chads Church, a former fireworks factory, St Chads Water and, of course, the car park where we met on the last day of August, on what promised to be a fine day. Google suggests that Church Wilne was abandoned when the entire population moved the few miles up to Draycott. And so did we! Stuart had chosen the weekend on which the Draycott Scarecrow Festival was being held. It seemed that the whole village was taking part in the festival. Our walk took us past a few of the exhibits which were excellent. My favourite was the scarecrow on the beach.

Our next stop was the ancient village of Ockbrook where we piled into the small village tea shop for our coffee stop. Full of cake and coffee, we carried on to Dale and had a late lunch sitting on the grass under the only surviving part of Dale Abbey - the remains of a stunning 40ft high chancel window. The Church of All Saints, adjacent to the ruins of the Abbey, is still used today - although the congregation must be quite small - the entire church measures 26 ft x 25 ft!! The attached house, which is now a private residence, has,

in the past, been an infirmary for the Abbey and, sometime prior to 1820, a pub called The Blue Bell. The doorway, now bricked up, between the church and the pub can still be clearly seen!

We carried on, through the woodland behind the church, and climbed up to the Hermit Cave which was cut out of the cliff by a 12th Century Derby baker, who wished to live as a recluse. The cave is well preserved but, sadly, despite the notices, some idiots had felt the need to carve their initials into the soft sandstone.

From the Hermit Cave, we crossed the fields to the village of Breaston and the start of the Coffin Walk. As Dave joked - we had walked 11 miles to get to the start of the walk!! Although St Michael's Church in Breaston dates from the early 13th Century, originally only mass was said in the Chapel and weddings, baptisms, funerals and internments had to take place in St Chads Church in Church Wilne. Coffins had to be carried the 2 miles from Breaston to Church Wilne and the Coffin Stones are still visible along the way where the coffins would be laid while the carriers rested on the journey.

Everyone agreed that this had been a really interesting walk, with lots of variety. Stuart even arranged some sunshine!



Jenny's Favourite Scarecrow

2016 Coalville Rambler's Walking Weekend. 23rd – 26th Sept. Laguna Hotel, Bournemouth



Full details of this holdiay, including prices, are expected shortly. If you are interested in going and would like a booking form please contact John Harper by e-mail at: **harper636@btinternet.com** or send a self addressed envelope to John at: 35 Main Road, Old Dalby, Melton Mowbray, Leics., LE14 3LR

Muddy Boot Award

This year's winner:
Betty Douglas for her walk at Bottesford on the 29th November 2014

NFW Way Ranger Appeal

In 2014 the National Forest Way (NFW) was officially opened and is now beginning to attract walkers from far and wide. In order to keep the route in top class order the National Forest Company are now aiming to set up a group of Rangers who will help to 'look after' short sections of the route. CAN YOU HELP? Training and support will be given to all participants.

Background and purpose: The National Forest Way extends over 75 miles from Beacon Hill Country Park in Leicestershire to The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. The Way is divided in to 12 stages, each covering about 6/7 miles. (Leicestershire covers stage1-5). Regular and coordinated surveys will help to keep the NFW well maintained and fully accessible at all times. Findings can be sent to the NFC to ensure that relevant information is passed on to the Rights of Way teams of the authority who are responsible for access and maintenance. This will mean that jobs are registered and can be carried out on a regular basis.

Volunteering Task: The role is to carry out monthly surveys of an agreed section of the NFW (and to carry out agreed simple maintenance tasks e.g. cutting back of overgrowth on paths, when required and in liaison with NFC) To complete the feedback form, each month, attaching photographs where possible and to send the form to the National Forest Company.

Training: A training and induction day will take place early 2016 so that volunteers are ready to start surveying Spring 2016. This day will enable volunteers to meet and discuss the role, plus answer any queries or concerns.

Expenses / Resources: Volunteers will be able to claim for travel expenses for training and for survey work and will be provided with all necessary tools and will receive a branded fleece to wear.

Conclusion: This is a pilot project and offers the opportunity for local people to become more actively involved in conserving our walking routes. As well as making sure the NFW is kept in excellent condition, the fleeces will be a welcome sight on the ground for walkers, landowners and all friends of the National Forest; not only as its hands, but as its face as well!

Further Information: The organiser of this opportunity is Caroline Scothern and she is very keen to work with The Ramblers. If you are interested in becoming a Volunteer Ranger please contact Caroline by email at csscothern@nationalforest.org or by phone on 01283 551211. She will be holding a 'get together' in January for interested people to find out more. It will be a fun way to help maintain part of our local footpath network.

MP Supports Benefits of Walking

Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Loughborough Ramblers wrote to Nicky Morgan encouraging her to attend a Parliamentary debate on the Economic Value of Outdoor Recreation' held on the 28th October. Unfortunately she was unable to attend but replied stating her support for both the economic and health benefits that outdoor recreation plays. She quoted VisitEngland who have estimated that the spend by visitors undertaking long walks, hiking or rambling is around £1.8 billion a year.

Area AGM

9.30am. Saturday 24th January 2016
Burton Lazars Village Hall, LE14 2UR

Guest Speakers: Michael Jeeves, L&R Wildlife Trust.
The meeting will be followed by a short walk at 1.00pm.
(If joining the walk bring a packed lunch)



Congratulations to Peter and Joanna on their engagement

Keep Safe Cards

We have obtained a quantity of 'Keep Safe Cards' and plastic wallets which we are giving out to members as they come on walks. These are cards on which individuals can list any important information about their health and who to contact in case of an emergency. The idea is that they can be permanently left in a rucksack pocket where they could be found if necessary.



This plaque was seen at Burton-on-the-Wold's playing fields, on John's walk, on the 2nd December. It was on a stone 'dedicated to all affected by conflict'. (On the 2nd December Parliament voted to start bombing sites in Syria.)

Our Group's Trip to Whitby

Jane Trevarthen recounts a sunny holiday by the sea

Our annual September trip away with the Coalville Group was on the weekend of 18th – 21st September staying in the Royal Hotel in Whitby. It has a wonderful position with lovely sea views for those lucky enough to be on the front of the hotel. Unusually, all the single rooms had a sea view, which was a real bonus for those of us who usually get to overlook the car park !

The coach picked us up from the Rushes and we had a nice long stop in Beverley on the way north. It is a lovely town and we could have done with another hour to be able to explore more of what it has to offer.

Arriving in Whitby about 2.30 we booked into our rooms and had the rest of the afternoon free to explore the town at our leisure. We all met up again for our evening meal in our specially reserved area of the restaurant where we discussed our next day's walks. They had been circulated on the coach on our journey north and decisions were made then as to which we would go on. We had a choice of three per day so there was something for everyone.

I chose Peter's Ravenscar to Robin Hoods Bay 12 mile walk which started by crossing the moors, with wonderful views, to Ravenscar where we had a break for a cuppa. We then followed the coastal path via Boggle Hole (what a wonderful name!) to finish our walk along the beach to Robin Hoods Bay. We had a while to spend exploring and finding somewhere for lunch before walking to High Hawsker to meet the coach. We thought we had done well doing 12 miles but we were passed by numerous runners who had started from Guisborough and were finishing in Filey – a total of 60 miles to be completed in 18 hours or less!

I led the Sunday's walk from the hotel in Whitby to Staithes. This is a lovely coastal walk which passes through Sandsend, Kettleness, Runswick Bay and finally on to Staithes – another 12 miles, but with the sea by our side all the way it makes it an unusual walk for us landlubbers! The coach picked us up from Staithes at 4 o'clock which gave us time to relax before our evening meal.

We had a wonderful weekend, which was enhanced by the beautiful weather we were blessed with. Unfortunately, quite a few of the "regulars" were unable to join us for one reason or another and they were sadly missed, two of them being Gwen and Richard Storer, which was a shame because Gwen had put all the hard work into organising it again for us. Richard had an operation the week previous to our departure and we wish him a full and speedy recovery.

Our thanks go to the Coalville Group for inviting us again – we are already looking forward to Bournemouth in 2016!



An appropriate wind vane seen at Ravenscar

Your New Committee

At our AGM on the 31st October the following officers were elected: Chairman: John Harper; Secretary: Christine Wells; Treasurer: John Howells; Publicity Officer: Steve Archer; Footpath Officer: Stuart Tyler; Programme Secretary: Sue Bicknell; Social Secretary: Susan Mears; Officers without portfolios: Heather Jennings, Margaret Machin. Jeanette Hollis agreed to act as our Independent Accounts Examiner and Gordon Murray as Webmaster. The post of Editor of Soar Feet remained vacant. Anyone interested in filling this post should contact John. E-mail. **harper636@btinternet.com**

Thanks to our Walk Leaders

In the five months between July and November no less than 17 different individuals have led walks for Loughborough Ramblers. Peter Richart with 6 led the most walks, while Sue Mears led the most popular from Nanpantan. John Howells led the longest walk of 14 miles from Dovedale and John Harper led the walk where most miles were walked by the group. Thanks to all our walk leaders. Please keep them coming.



Jenny, Hadi and Heather enjoy a lunch stop at Little Dalby John's walk from Thorpe Satchville on the 8th August

The BigPathwatch

This campaign is now drawing to a close. It was aimed at protecting and improving all our footpaths in England and Wales. In Leicestershire, at the last count, the state of footpaths in no less than 1099 kilometre squares had been reported. This amounts to 43% of the total number in the county and of course in some squares there are no paths. The Loughborough Group were given a number of designated squares to cover to ensure the whole exercise was viable, and with three weeks to go there only remain five still to survey which we are confident will be covered. The survey has already resulted in some problems on our footpaths being sorted and in due course the Ramblers Association will publish a report of the overall findings. So a big thank you to all those members who have taken part by reporting the state of any footpaths they walked.

New Year's Celebration

Friday 5th February 2016. 7.00pm

Beaumanor Hall, Woodhouse.

Something different for 2016 - a Pie Night.

Cost £10

Booking forms included with this edition of Soar Feet

See you there

