



SOAR FEET

Newsletter of the Loughborough
and District Ramblers

Winter 2022-23

As the summer edition was significantly later than usual, I have not rushed to press with this edition in order to spread things out a little. I hope it doesn't seem too late to wish you all the best for a happy and prosperous 2023.

Loughborough and District AGM

The AGM was again held at Ronald West Court on 3rd November and was chaired by Dave Twigg. Twelve members of the group were present and a further seven sent their apologies. Dave Twigg was thanked for taking on the role of Chairman for the last two years though he remains on the committee in his role as Walks Programme Coordinator. Our gratitude goes to Richard Jack for averting a constitutional crisis and taking on the role of Chairman. We also welcome John Samson back the committee.

The full committee is:

Chairman:	Richard Jack
Secretary:	Vacant
Treasurer:	Chris Rimbault
Walks Programme Coordinator:	Dave Twigg
Membership Secretary:	Lynne Atkinson
Social Secretary:	Sue Mears
Footpaths Officer:	Stuart Tyler
Area Representative:	John Samson
Other committee members:	Margaret Eade

Thanks again to Sue Mears for organising the venue and refreshments

Group Activities

We have generally managed a full programme of walks with a longer (10-12 mile) weekend walk and a shorter walk (6-7 miles) midweek, often with a lunch option at the end. There have been occasional gaps, reflecting the difficulty Dave has had in attracting new leaders. Most of the walks have been led by the committee and a small core of regular leaders. Options have been discussed by the committee and it is thought that much of the issue is getting people to come up with walk routes rather than actually leading

them. It has been decided to trial revisiting old programmes and approach people to lead the walks. If you would like to be put on the list to lead a pre-planned walk, or if you have a walk that you would like to propose, please contact Dave. If you are new to planning or leading walks, help will be available.

Social Calendar

The group weekend away took place in the Lake district in October. As usual, this was brilliantly organised by Sue, though she did occasionally lose control of the weather. The trip is reviewed on page 4.

Following our very successful first coach trip to the Cotswolds, Sue is currently organising a day trip by coach to walk in the Chilterns in the Wendover area. Further details are on page 3.

Dates for the diary

Coach trip to the Chiltern Hills

Saturday 1st April 2023

See page 3 for details

Long Weekend Away

HF Longmynd, Church Stretton

4-7th August 2023

Details on website soon

2023 Loughborough and District AGM

Two dates have been reserved

Saturday 28th October

if combined with a walk

Wednesday 1st November

if an evening meeting



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Meet the member: Richard Jack

Richard has been a member since 2019 and became Chairman of the Loughborough Group at the last AGM. He writes...

I grew up in North Staffordshire but have moved many times since about 1960 – Cambridge, Lichfield, Loughborough, Harrogate, Bristol, Solihull, Hong Kong, Herefordshire, Paphos and finally Quorn to name most of them. Studies and my career in the electricity generating industry (I started my working life as a metallurgist) were the cause of the all the moves and have led to an interesting life.

Although my parents were not walkers, my father was a keen student of the industrial history of North Staffordshire and most weekends when I was a child, he would take my brother and I for bike rides to visit the site of a pit, some bit of railway history, or one of the features of the local canals. I'd been through the Harecastle Canal

Tunnel on the electric tugboat several times and seen every pit head in the Staffordshire coalfield before I was ten.

Walking was an everyday feature of school life in the fifties – how else could we get school in those days? I first started walking for pleasure when I was about 16, teaming up with a friend from the next village who knew lots of walks around Leek and Buxton. We would ride our bikes to the start of a walk and spend the next few hours hiking up and down the hills which are a wonderful feature of that area. We didn't have the same variety of walking gear available as we have these days – or the money to buy it with – and I remember my first walking boots were a pair of work boots passed down by one of the family.

The first house of my own was in Lichfield and coincided with the arrival with the first of my sons. Cannock Chase was close by and offered a great opportunity for young families to let off steam. Then came my first stay in Leicestershire when I made the acquaintance of Bradgate Park. Little did I think that fifty years later I would return to enjoy it again.

My serious walking career only started when I moved to Harrogate. The family used to mark the end of the winter with a 20-mile hike with the local scout group. The longest walk I ever did was the 42-mile long Lyke Wake Walk across the North York moors from Osmotherley to Ravenscar. I did it with colleagues from work; we did it in a single stretch taking about 14 hours. The other big walk in that area is the Three Peaks of Yorkshire – 25 miles in twelve hours. If only I could manage those walks today!

Hong Kong offered a surprising number of walking opportunities. Although the familiar image of Hong Kong is of crowded city streets, about 50% of the territory is country park with many wild rugged landscapes. There are several long trails and our winter weekends usually involved one day walking with friends – maybe doing a section of the MacLehose Trail which is a 100km long walk divided into 10 sections. Most walks done by the Loughborough Ramblers are circular walks – In Hong Kong we did linear walks. We would drive to the start, do the walk, and then pick up a taxi (you are never far from a taxi in Hong Kong) to get back to the car. Many of the sections of the MacLehose Trail are definitely a bit harder than leisurely.

After I retired, we left Hong Kong and divided our time between Herefordshire – we lived between Ludlow and Leominster – and Paphos in Cyprus. Both places offered wonderful walking, and we

were very fortunate to find good walking groups in both of them. Previously we had walked with friends rather a formal walking group. In Herefordshire we had the Orleton Ramblers who walked twice each month plus a week long holiday and a weekend break each year. Paphos was home to the Happy Wanderers who offered three walks each week plus two or three stays away each year. With these groups I started to lead walks and also became familiar with the GPS which opened up a new feature – the ability to plan walks from the map and be confident of finding the way without getting lost.

I had expected to take root in Herefordshire, but life has a way of taking unexpected turns. When it became obvious that I needed to be better connected to the family, it was natural to move close to one of my sons who had lived in Quorn for the last 30 years. This happened at the end of 2018 and the first thing I did was to look for a walking group. Walking has been a very important part of my life and I was pleased to find the Loughborough Ramblers with mid-week walks which match my current ability. The first walk I joined was in 2019 from Wymeswold led by the late John Harper, with lunch afterwards at the Greyhound in Burton. Covid interrupted group walking, and everything else. I am so pleased that we have been able to return to something near normal.



This year I and my partner Gill enjoyed a holiday with the group in the Lake District. The picture is of us surveying the scene as we took the ferry from Glenridding to Howtown on Ullswater before

walking back to Glenridding. I made it, but it almost killed me!



Just to prove Richard survived the walk in the lakes (which I led), here is a more action-ready photo of him greeting his group before leading the midweek walk from Quorn, this January-Ed

A Day out in the Chilterns Loughborough Ramblers Coach Walk April 1st, 2023. Cost £25

After our very successful day out last year to the Cotswolds, we are organising another coach day out, this time to the Chilterns.

We intend to walk part of The Ridgeway, which is part of the ancient Avebury to Ivinghoe Beacon National Trail. There will be two linear walks of different lengths, starting at Ivinghoe Beacon and Tring and finishing in Wendover for some refreshments at the local hostelryes.

Further information and details will be on our website shortly, keep a look out for it.

If you are interested in joining the day out, then please get in touch with Sue Mears and add your name to the list. We are aiming to offer this to our neighbouring walking groups so we can fill the coach.

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Social Activities

Long Weekend in the Lake District

This year's long weekend walking trip was 14-17th October at Derwent Bank, the HF country house in the village of Portinscale. The hotel has a delightful lakeside location and it's an easy walk into Keswick. Twenty-six of us arrived from lunchtime onwards on the Friday and most walked into Keswick in small groups. Given the weather forecast, it was an opportunity to check out the numerous outdoor shops! The rain held out but was heavy overnight. That evening, Dave put forward the proposals for walks over the next two days. There would be a longer and a slightly easier walk both days though both would have strenuous climbs. On Saturday we would walk from the Hotel, on Sunday we would drive to Glenridding and take the Ullswater steamer to Howtown for a choice of linear walks back to the cars. Dave was to lead the longer walks; I volunteered to lead the shorter walks though I started to question this decision when I arrived back at our room by the third different circuitous route in as many hours.



Ready and optimistic about that patch of blue sky (SM)

On Saturday morning, we woke to the sound of heavy rain but, fortunately, it had stopped by the time we assembled outside the boot room.

Both groups headed for the Catbells summit along the Cumbrian Way. After about 1.7km, we started the steep climb on to the ridge and the two groups began to separate. By the time we were halfway up, the skies had cleared, and we were treated to wonderful views back over the

lake and the Skiddaw range. However, heavy cloud and rain were closing in rapidly from the west and it was soon upon us.



Back over Skiddaw; just don't look to the west

On the positive side, if we turned and looked back, we were treated to the full arc of a rainbow. The summit was wet and windy with hail thrown in for good measure. The plan was that the longer walk would continue beyond High Spy and leave the ridge on the path through the disused Rigghead quarries. The seven of us on the shorter walk were relieved to leave the ridge earlier, at the Hause Gate pass, beyond Catbells and we headed down toward Grange. We were now sheltered from the wind and a break in the rain gave us the chance for a quick early lunch. A WhatsApp from Dave informed us that the other group had abandoned the ridge walk because of the weather and had come down ahead of us and planned to return by circumnavigating the lake, a total of 10 miles.



Long walk view across the lake back to Catbells (JS)

We continued down to the road, picked up the Cumbrian Way and followed it back along the lakeside toward the hotel. The rain wasn't too bad, and we were no longer buffeted by the wind.

We had kept dry and been treated to great views earlier on. On balance, a good walk; about 7.5 miles in total with 500m of ascent.

It poured down again later but we were in the bar by then.

Sunday got off to a great start. We parked up in Glenridding under blue skies to catch the 09.45 Ullswater steamer.



We sat back and enjoyed the 7.5km journey halfway up the lake to Howtown. We waved goodbye to Dave's group as they headed off into the hills. Our group (11 in total) kept to the lakeside path around the base of Hallin Fell. There was little climbing but picking our way over roots and rocks on the narrow path was tricky. It was clear from various signs and appearance of stewards that there was an event underway and we were pleased to be clear of the narrow lakeside path and on a wide track before the first runners came past. We crossed a stream at the point we were due to start our climb and stopped for our refreshment break and to cheer on the walkers and runners as they negotiated the ford, many in fancy dress. We then started the long slow 450m climb to Place Fell, 3km ahead.



Climbing above Ullswater toward Place Fell

The cascades of Scalehow Force were more impressive because of the recent heavy rain, but it soon became apparent that the peak ahead was not Place Fell but the “false summit” of Hart Crag which had obscured our objective for most of the climb. However, it provided perfect shelter and good views while we ate our lunch. There remained the small matter of a short walk and 50m ascent to reach Place Fell (657m). The path down to Patterdale was less steep than I feared, with just a few scrambles to negotiate, and we made good time. The summit and descent afforded great views of the Helvellyn Ridge, St Sundays Crag and Fairfield. The total distance was around 7.2 miles. It was a great walk, planned by Dave and the committee; enhanced by the boat trip and the weather. I think we all found it fairly strenuous, and more so if you hadn’t walked in the hills recently. I think (hope!) everyone found it rewarding.

Meanwhile the long walk had climbed out of Howtown heading south toward High Street, leaving the ridge after High Raise (802m).



Wether Hill on the climb toward High Street (JS)



Passing Angle Tarn on the return leg (JS)

Their return was via The Knott and Angle Tarn before descending to Patterdale on the same path as the other group. Total distance 11 miles. It poured of rain later, but we were in the bar by then. It was still raining next morning. Many of us dismissed the idea of a walk and opted to go to the pencil museum; on balance, this was a better option than getting wet!

Our thanks to the committee for making the trip possible but our particular thanks go to Sue Mears. I’m sure we all appreciate how much hard work it took to make this trip so enjoyable and the success that it was. Thanks also to Sue Mears and John Samson for their photos.

Christmas Lunch Walk 2022

This was again held at the Griffin Inn in Swithland on Wednesday 21st December.



We were lucky enough to have a dry, sunny day although underfoot was muddy from the recent rainy days. We were able to enjoy the now familiar walk from Swithland, through Woodhouse Eaves up through the golf course to Bradgate Park to enjoy lovely views of Old John then on through Switthand Wood back to the pub, 7 miles in total.



The Griffin Inn was only recently under new management, and we were treated to a warm welcome by the staff. The walk was a good start to the Christmas festivities.

Sue Mears

Soar Feet: What Next?

I've written, in several recent issues of Soar Feet of my desire to hand over the role of editor to someone new. I feel we have reached the stage where it would benefit from some fresh ideas. This is my tenth issue and it is the last one I will produce. As it stands, I assume that there will not be any more issues unless someone comes forward to put them together. All I use is Microsoft Word and an outdated knowledge of its functionality. I will be happy to provide anyone with any advice that they need or want to get them through their first publication. If you are interested, please get in touch.

Before I sign off, I would like to thank all those who have contributed over the last five years; often with only minimal arm-twisting!

Ted Wells