

WRITE OF WAY

THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION

LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND AREA

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2010

22nd Annual General Meeting

Saturday 29th January 2011 - 9.15 for 10.00 start
St Peter's Church Hall
Glenfield

Hosted by the Leicester Group

The formal meeting will be followed by a
modest walk for those wishing to take part

**THERE ARE EIGHT
GROUPS MAKING UP
THE AREA**

COALVILLE

HINCKLEY

LEICESTER

LOUGHBOROUGH

LUTTERWORTH

MELTON MOWBRAY

RUTLAND

and the

**LEICESTERSHIRE &
RUTLAND 20s & 30s
WALKING GROUP**

Produced and published by the Ramblers
Leicestershire & Rutland Area
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The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily
those of the RA or its officers

See also the Area's web site <http://leicsra.org.uk>
(Web master John Samson 01509 557689)

and the Ramblers national web sites
<http://www.ramblers.org.uk> and the walkfinder web site
http://www.ramblers.org.uk/areas_groups/groupswalksfinder.htm

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ramblers
at the heart of walking

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND COMMENT

Welcome to another edition of our area newsletter, back in its usual format. Wearing my other hat as your editor I do appreciate those members who have taken the trouble to write or phone saying how much they enjoy receiving it.

We do however have to bear in mind the increasing costs and the financial constraints and will be increasingly putting material on our web site.

As we approach another AGM, I would wish to thank the other officers for their support during the year. It has been a busy year as evidenced by their individual reports. During the year Ann Amos has been co-opted as our new Treasurer and has done an excellent job. She has also brought down the average age of your committee quite considerably but does have a very busy life and would gladly step aside if anyone else would like to fill this role.

You will see from the agenda for the AGM that we have some housekeeping to do in tidying up our constitution. I trust that will not need much debate.

We do have a much more pleasant task to complete. Your executive committee have unanimously decided to invite Peter Williams to become our new President and to invite Alan Loasby to become our fourth Vice President. A number of us have worked with Peter for many years as he has been the lead officer at the County Council supporting the activities of the Local Access Forum. He has for many years been the head of the team responsible for the Country Parks, Green Infrastructure and Rights of Way Network and has always been a keen advocate of supporting and involving user groups in promoting activities in the countryside. He and his wife are members of the RA but he has kept a low profile in that regard given there could have been a perception of a conflict of interests. They are keen walkers and Peter does lead walks from time to time. Members who have been active for some time may recall Peter being our AGM guest speaker some years ago and newer members may have met him on the David Taylor walk or at the annual Area Quiz. In the latest re-shuffle at County Hall, Peter has now lost responsibility for Rights of Way and as such no conflict of interests can now arise. We are confident he will make an excellent President and I am delighted that he has accepted our offer.

Ten teams took part in the **annual quiz** hosted this year by Hinckley Group, which was again keenly contested. Peter and his wife joined Michael Parr and Stan Warren in forming a team from Area and managed to run out the winners. Of late we have asked the winning group to stage the quiz the next year so it looks like area will have to do it with whatever help we can find unless we can find a group to volunteer. From a possible 310 points, 3 teams got over 250 and the winners 268.

Alan has finally given up his position on the Area Executive Committee having served the Ramblers of this area in one capacity or another, for more years than he cares to recall. In his modesty he did need a little persuasion but he has also accepted our offer, so at the AGM I will be asking members to affirm these two appointments by formally electing Peter and Alan to their new positions.

Still on the subject of the AGM might I remind you that Rule 6 (ii) states *The AEC shall consist amongst others of: Group Representatives, who shall be nominated by their respective Local Groups* - so can I please ask that Groups let the Secretary know who is being nominated at or before the meeting along with any other changes of officers arising out of the Group AGMs.

The rule also states that the AEC can include: *Up to two elected representatives from affiliated groups or organisations* and I would invite our friends whether they have anyone who would like to join us for our 4 meetings each year. The AEC can also include: *up to two elected members from the floor* and again if any Rambler would like to come along and give us the benefit of their views without actually holding down any actual role within the committee please make yourself known at or before the AGM.

Finally can I also bring to your attention that the AGM normally elects two representatives to attend **General Council** representing the Area. It is particularly important this year that whoever goes gives full attention to how things operate at GC and perhaps, as well, notes any shortcomings. Our Area is to host general council in 2012. Quite obviously we will be looking for a good number of volunteers to help on that occasion and our representatives to GC this year should be members happy to take lead roles the following year. The expenses of our representatives are met by London but if more than 2 are happy to attend and can commit to helping in 2012, Area itself may elect to send up to two more as observers, meeting their costs from Area funds.

More so than ever, in time of cutbacks, it is important that we work with other organisations with similar aims and both nationally and locally the Ramblers are trying to do this if only to keep costs down and prevent duplication of efforts.

We do work fairly closely with the Leicestershire Footpaths Association (LFA) especially on footpath disputes, and by our representation on the Local Access Forum we share concerns and information with many others, including runners, cyclists, climbers and riders. If anyone knows of any suitable groups who may wish to consider affiliating to the Ramblers please let us have details. They can have the benefit of the information we pass down the line and any additional subscription is very welcome.

We do have a good working relationship with the rights of way officers at county hall and as finances and manpower become scarcer for them they will have to rely ever more on the voluntary sector in line with the 'Big Society' and as such we may be able to get even further involved. It is however a period of considerable concern. Not only have our own finances come under pressure but the rights of way teams are being badly cut back in places under spending restrictions. Nottingham County Council have I understand halved the number in their team and Leicestershire are working down the review process and are to reduce their senior management by 25%. As they get down to team level we fear we may see reductions in areas where the footpath network needs their support.

Members of your executive have met with the Chair and Chief Executive of the Ramblers and they assure us that steps have been taken to put their house in order. You will be able to hear this first hand as I am please to confirm that **Tom Franklin the CEO is to be our guest speaker at the AGM.**

Returning to the LFA they have just published a new book by Heather McDermid (their President and our AGM speaker a couple of years ago): Called 'Leicestershire Country Parks Walking' its content is self evident. It has 144 pages of which 52 are in colour and at the retail price of £7.99 it is excellent value and I can commend it to you.(ISBN 978-1-904207-55-8)

The LFA was founded in 1887 for the preservation and protection of footpaths and other open spaces in the county. They, like us, keep a careful watch on all legislation having any bearing on

rights of way. When the public interest seems to be threatened, representations are made to the appropriate authorities and we frequently find ourselves fighting the same causes.

Formed about the same time, my own mountaineering club may have accommodation of interest to groups and affiliates. Formed in 1892 the YRC has hostels in Little Langdale and Clapham, North Yorkshire. These are only available for hire by recognised kindred organisations but they have agreed to include us in that class. If you wished to use them you would need to book early as they are in heavy demand. The Lakes cottage sleeps 12 in bunks in a single dorm and as such may not be attractive to mixed sex groups but the one in the Three Peaks area has 2 dormitories of 4 and 12 bunks respectively and is in a secluded position in a small wood surrounded by farmland about half a mile from Clapham village; ideally placed for access to Ingleborough. More information is on the YRC website www.yrc.org.uk

Can I also commend the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust to you. Whilst at times they do seem to wish to deter walkers from disturbing the wildlife, Leicestershire would be a far poorer place without their efforts. We do not want to walk an extensive but sanitised network of paths with nothing to see. (www.lrw.org.uk) It has 15000 members and cares for 34 nature reserves.

Another organisation well worthy of support is the Woodland Trust. Forests and woodlands hit national headlines recently, when news was leaked of a proposal to sell off Forestry Commission publicly owned land in England. This trust are very good at promoting public access to their lands and with support might be in a position to buy some of these FC lands. The Woodland Trust's view is that not all of the Commission's estate needs to remain in public ownership but they do have a number of concerns, which I share, about the consequences of a substantially accelerated disposal of sites which deliver significant public benefit. Some ancient woodland sites which have been planted with commercial conifers may be at risk despite the fact that the Commission has committed to restoring them to their former glory.

For details of the Trust see www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Finally can I commend the John Muir Trust to you. They also campaign to preserve the wild corners of the UK, where we all like to wander. Most of the land they own is in Scotland so we are too far removed to help as volunteers but the subs of any of us who do join, help to fund their work and we can join with them in campaigning on issues which impact on the Ramblers. The JMT has launched two petitions to urge the UK and Scottish governments to give greater protection to the country's last remaining wild land.

The petition in Scotland calls for wild land to be protected by a new environmental designation. The petition for the UK calls for National Park areas to be expanded and created to cover the best areas of wild land. They aim to use these petitions to send a clear signal to the government that many thousands of people care passionately about wild land and want to see it given greater protection. Thousands have expressed concerns about proposed major developments in much-loved wild areas such as the Cairngorms and Snowdonia National Parks, as well as the Western Isles and Shetland. To quote "It is vitally important that everyone who cares about our landscape adds their voice to our campaign through signing these petitions."

They are to be found on their web site (www.jmt.org).

We surely want to walk in beautiful natural places and by supporting these organisations we can augment the work we do ourselves.

22nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND AREA

- 1 Chairman's Opening Remarks & Welcome
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Approval of the minutes of the 21st A.G.M, (page 7)
- 4 Matters arising from those minutes not otherwise on the agenda
- 5 Presentation of annual reports
 - a) Presentation of accounts and Treasurer's report (11)
 - b) Adoption of the accounts
 - c) Other officers' reports
 - Chairman (3) - Secretary(10) - Membership Secretary (15)
 - Countryside and Access Officer (11) - Newsletter Editor (15)
 - Footpath and Survey Secretary (10) - Webmaster (11)
 - Publicity Secretary, Campaigns Coordinator (14)
 - d) Adoption of Officers' reports
 - e) Group Reports
- 6 GUEST SPEAKER **Tom Franklin - Chief Executive Officer, The Ramblers**
FOLLOWED BY A 15 MINUTE BREAK
- 7 Motions/constitution changes previously notified, including any for National Council (9)
- 8 Election / Affirmation of President and Vice Presidents
- 9 Elections of Honorary Officers (Chairman - Vice Chairman - Secretary - Treasurer
Membership Secretary - Countryside and Access Officer - Publicity Secretary - Newsletter Editor
Footpath and Survey Secretary - Webmaster - Campaigns Coordinator)
- 10 Elections of further members to serve on Area Executive Committee
 - a) Representatives from groups (Coalville, Hinckley,
Leicester, Loughborough, Lutterworth, Melton, Rutland,
Leicestershire & Rutland 20s & 30s Walking Group
 - b) Up to two representatives of Affiliated Organisations
 - c) Up to two 'elected' members from the floor
- 11 Election of Representatives to General Council (2)
- 12 Appointments
 - Confirmation of appointment of an Auditor / Independent Financial Examiner
- 13 Date, venue, hosts and format of the next AGM
- 14 General Council 2012 in Leicestershire & Rutland
- 15 Open Forum

The AGM will be followed by a walk for members wishing to participate, led by Leicester Group.
Members should bring their own packed lunches

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Leicestershire and Rutland Area of The Ramblers
held 23rd January, 2010 at St. Peter's Church Rooms, Glenfield at 10.00 am.**

Present: Mike Statham	Vice-President
Tony Andrews	Vice-President
Roy Denney	Chairman
Brian Gaunt	Treasurer
Michael Parr	Secretary
Stan Warren	Footpath & Survey Secretary
Martin James	Membership Secretary
Bob Woodward	National Forest Representative
Helen Johns	RA Trustee

35 other members were present and are listed on the attendance sheet.

1. Chairman's opening remarks.

Members stood for a minute's silence in remembrance of our late president David Taylor, MP.

The Chairman referred to the support that David had given him over the years. The Ramblers were well represented at his funeral and sent a floral tribute. Coalville Group are organising a walk in his memory in August on his birthday. An obituary has been posted on our web site.

The Chairman thanked members of the Area Executive Committee for their work and especially Brian Gaunt and Martin James, who are standing down. His opening remarks constituted his report for the year.

2. Apologies for absence.

Eddie East, Chris Tipper, Bernard Timson, Malcolm Burdett, Mary Rooks, Steve Peck.

3. Confirmation of the Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th January, 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Matters arising.

None.

5. Presentation of annual reports.

Accounts and Treasurer's Report. All expenditure for the year is now included in the year in which it is incurred. Internet banking now makes transactions between Area and Groups much quicker.

The financial difficulties in which the association as a whole found itself made reductions in the amount allocated to areas inevitable. Our allocation was reduced to £2.75 per member £5470 in total. This was divided up amongst groups and area and the only strong objection came from Lutterworth.

Senior staff at The Ramblers were confident that the steps taken to reduce the budget would be effective and that future years would see an improvement in our finances.

The reports and accounts were adopted

Other Reports

- A) Secretary. The committee has agreed to host the General Council of the Ramblers in 2012 at Leicester University. We were represented at meetings with the Chief Executive and Chairman in Leicester and Birmingham.
- B) Newsletter Editor. Discussion was deferred to later in the agenda.
- C) Membership Secretary. Problems with the central computer continued to make life difficult.
- D) Footpaths and Survey Secretary. Proposals at Groby have been rejected by the County Council. In Watermead Country Park the Connect2 project was progressing with bridges altered and paths resurfaced. Alterations negotiated at Castle Donnington were in abeyance following the failure of the company to attract the British Grand Prix. At Barrow-on-Soar the footbridge over the railway has received planning permission. The dispute at Swannington will go to a public enquiry. A number of housing developments are in the pipeline

and objections have been raised whenever proper provision has not been made for existing footpaths to be preserved.

- E) Campaigns Co-coordinator – nothing to add to written report.
- F) Access and Countryside Officer. The Marine and Coastal Access bill has now received Royal Assent. Plans for amending the network of paths around J19 on the M1 / M6 / A14 intersection have been agreed. The National Forest Representative had also presented a report
- G) Webmaster. Please ensure that your changes in officers are noted.

All the Officers printed and verbal reports were accepted.

6. Presentation by Eddie McWilliam, Countryside Policy and Promotions Officer, Leicestershire County Council.

7. Motions for General Council. None.

8. Amendment to the constitution.

At present the constitution has no provision for the election of vice-presidents. The following amendment was therefore adopted unanimously: Add to 6.(e) The members may also elect up to four vice-presidents, again as an appreciation of services rendered, but if so elected they shall not be members of the AEC except only if they are elected to that body by virtue of another position.

9. Election of vice-presidents. Mike Statham, Ron Fox and Tony Andrews were elected vice-presidents.

10. Election of Officers.

Chairman. Mike Statham took the chair. Roy Denney was elected.

Vice-chairman. Roy Denney resumed the chair. Terry Bates was elected.

Secretary. Michael Parr.

Treasurer. No nominations.

Membership Secretary. Phil Barnes.

Countryside and Access Officer. Michael Parr.

National Forest Representative. Bob Woodward.

Publicity Secretary. Eddie East.

Newsletter Editor. Roy Denney.

Footpath & Survey Secretary, Stan Warren.

Webmaster. John Samson.

Campaigns Coordinator Roy Denney.

There being no other nominations all the above were duly elected.

11. Group representatives.

Coalville. Bob Woodward.

Hinckley. Tony Smith.

Leicester. Terry Bates.

Loughborough. John Howells.

Melton. Nil

Rutland. John Williams.

L&R WG Karl Pigginn.

12. Other affiliated groups and nominations from the floor. Nil.

13. Nominations for General Council. Michael Parr and Terry Bates were nominated.

14. Helen Johns.

The Chairman outlined the concerns of many members in regard to the circumstances the national body finds itself in and then invited Helen Johns to respond. As the member of the Board of Trustees appointed to liaise with this area, Helen spoke of the problems that have dogged the association, especially over the past year. She referred

to the recent financial report that revealed uncomfortable truths about how the problem had been over-looked whilst focusing on the debacle of the membership computer. She apologised for this and said that cuts had been made and systems put in place that should ensure that it does not happen again. The aims of the Board will be to support volunteers, especially in implementing coastal access; supporting the walking programme and seeking funding for it; communicating our work to the public and ensuring a well-run organisation.

In discussion afterwards it was suggested that our targets are too modest and that we should work closely with local groups. Many big things such as the right to roam & coastal access have been achieved and we need a new focus.

The question of re-location outside London is being actively pursued for the next break in the lease in 2015. The expenditure on a new logo was criticised and it was suggested that it could have been done free.

15. **Appointment of an Auditor.** Chris Tipper was appointed.

16. **AGM 2011.** It was agreed that Leicester be invited to be hosts on 29th Jan. There will be a walk but lunch will not be provided. Either the Chief Executive or the Chairman of the Ramblers be invited to speak.

The formal AGM closed at 1.10pm and was followed by an open forum where members' views were sought on two issues.

a) Larry Ball Memorial Walk. This will this year be arranged by Coalville group on 28th August and will also feature in the Ramblers' 75th anniversary walking programme. All groups are asked to keep the date clear and to include this in their programme. There may be a tree planting at the start of the walk. Members supported the idea of this being an annual event with other groups to be asked to organise the walk in future years.

b) Future of Write of Way. Various options to reduce cost had been considered. The AEC had suggested that one issue of 20 pages per year was sufficient. However, the editor had received a number of favourable comments and the needs of the majority of members who do not walk with groups must not be neglected. A full 32 page edition in the Winter containing AGM papers plus a simpler single sheet edition in the Summer was generally supported by those present with the situation to be reviewed again next year in the light of prevailing finances.

AGENDA ITEM 7 Motion to amend constitution

We are offering some slight changes to our constitution. Headquarters have belatedly informed us that the constitution we offered to them nearly two years ago as approved by our membership was not acceptable. Para 6(iii) said "but such co-opted members shall not be entitled to vote at AEC meetings" and this is apparently contrary to their wishes so this clause needs to be removed.

Given that we are having to open up the issue of the constitution we also propose some minor tidying up.

We are proposing that rule 6 which at present reads

(iv) The AEC shall decide where 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. An agenda for all such meetings shall be provided at least 7 days in advance. Half the members shall form a quorum. In the absence of both Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the meeting shall appoint its own chairman. Agenda items shall be received by the Secretary 10 days prior to the meeting.

Should now read

(iv) The AEC shall decide where 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. An agenda for all such meetings shall be provided at least 7 days in advance. Half those members entitled to attend shall form a

quorum provided that at least three of those present are honorary officers of the Area. In the absence of both Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the meeting shall appoint its own chairman. Agenda items shall be received by the Secretary 10 days prior to the meeting.

Rule 6 (vii) reads - *The AEC shall receive regular reports of the activities of each Local Group If any Local Group cannot arrange to be represented at an AEC meeting then that Local Group should submit a written report.* A number of groups do send in their minutes and on occasion when their representative cannot attend do send a written report. Some do not however and I would ask that they try and keep area more informed as to what they are doing. All groups receive their funding from the Ramblers as the parent organisation and it is not much to ask that they report what they are doing to justify that funding. As an Area we do not make too much of an issue of getting written reports to quarterly meetings of the AEC where a group rep cannot attend, as this often arises at short notice, but it has always been practice that a report is provided for the AGM normally circulated in advance within the AGM section of the newsletter. This requirement is not however specifically laid out in our rules so as we are having to tidy them up at this meeting we are proposing to clarify this point.

Therefore under Rule 9. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AREA where it states:

The business of the AGM shall be to:

- (a) *Consider and adopt the Annual Reports of the AEC and Honorary Officers and the Area income and expenditure accounts for the preceding financial year, a balance sheet showing the assets and liabilities at the end of that year and the report of the independent financial examiner or auditor.*

We propose adding a new Clause

- (b) Receive and note the Annual Reports of the Groups making up the Area.

Further to this, rule 9 - final paragraph at present reads

"Elections under items (b), (c), (d), and (e) will be determined by simple majority vote of those present, with each candidate supported by a proposer and a seconder. Unless otherwise agreed by the meeting, candidates shall be absent from the room when the vote is held. The proposer and seconder may speak on behalf of their nominee before the vote. Members not present at the AGM may be elected, providing that they have previously signified their willingness to serve."

If we adopt these changes the first clause will have to change to read (c), (d), (e) and (f)

We propose that in future an additional sentence be added - viz - A quorum at any general meeting shall be 20 members or 51% of the membership (rounded up) whichever is the smaller number.

Proposed by Roy Denney - Area Chairman

Seconded by Michael Parr - Area Secretary

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Area Secretary

The Area Executive Committee has met four times during the year. It has written to the County Council expressing concern at the fragmentation of the Rights of Way Team and pointed out the importance of rights of way in the context of the campaign to improve health and the sustainability of rural economy.

Two events have taken place on an area wide basis, the annual quiz, organised by the Hinckley Group and the first Larry Ball Memorial Walk, organised by the Coalville Group. At the latter, a tree was planted in memory of Larry at Mount St. Bernard Abbey. The walk was also used as our contribution to the 75th anniversary of the Ramblers as part of the Baton Walk project.

John Jackson and I attended the General Council of the Ramblers which was useful experience for when we host the event in 2012.

Now that almost all circulars and correspondence with Ramblers H.Q. is online, it is possible to circulate information to groups very quickly and easily, which saves a lot of work.

Michael Parr

Countryside and Access Officer

The Leicestershire Local Access Forum has come to the end of its first five-year Rights of Way Improvement Plan. During the plan some 40% of the footpaths in the county have been refurbished and some 400 stiles replaced with hand or kissing gates each year. The Ramblers have made a substantial contribution by suggesting places where there might be extensions or modifications to the definitive map. The county now has a long list of our hopes for improvements. The next ROWIP is in preparation, but it is unlikely that it will be as comprehensive as the previous plan as the cut-backs in local government expenditure start to bite. The number of times that the LAF meets has already been reduced from six to five times a year.

During the year the LAF has looked at a number of major planning applications, in particular the application to extend Bardon Quarry. The amendments to Junction 19 on the M1 have been agreed, but the whole scheme has been put on hold pending a government review. A full account of the forum's work is available at www.Leics.gov.uk/laf

Michael Parr

Webmaster

The Area's website <http://leicsra.org.uk/> has information on Area events, links to the Group web sites and contacts and more. Any additional content for the site, such as announcements of events, etc are welcome. Groups should check that their contact information is up to date and let me know of any changes.

John Samson

Area Treasurer

This year has been tough on everybody from a financial perspective and The Leicester & Rutland Area is no exception. As the accounts show we finished 2009/10 having spent £375 more than we received. We have however, vastly reduced expenditure in comparison to the previous year and the actions implemented by groups to achieve this are to be commended. For 2010/11, the budget has increased to meet rising costs but we still need to be mindful of the current economic climate.

To this end I am hopeful we will be able to offer the option of receiving the Write of Way via e-mail. It is already available in an electronic format on the Leicester Area website. This has the obvious advantage of addressing environmental concerns as well as financial restrictions for anyone choosing this alternative.

Ann Amos

Name: Leicestershire & Rutland Area
 Code: LE

Year ended: 30/09/10

Restricted Funds					
Receipts	Current yr	Prior yr	Payments	Current yr	Prior yr
Donations	50.00			-	
Total receipts	50.00	-	Total payments	-	-
Surplus/(deficit)	50.00	-			

Main					
Receipts	Current yr	Prior yr	Payments	Current yr	Prior yr
From CO (funding)	5,417.52	9,175.00		-	
From Groups	-		To Groups (funding)	3,360.00	5,175.00
Deposit interest	2.53	14.91	To Groups (other)	-	
Investment income	-		Newsletters/publicity	1,924.94	2,971.99
Publication/goods sales	7.00	9.00	Publication/goods costs	-	162.22
Deposit interest	2.53	14.91	Campaigns/casework	34.00	
Investment income	-		Meetings (inc. AGM)	309.92	477.04
Publication/goods sales	7.00	9.00	Admin	56.72	238.34
Other	-		Other	117.29	40.00
Total receipts	5,427.05	9,198.91	Total payments	5,802.87	9,064.59
Surplus/(deficit)	-375.82	134.32			

Self-funded					
Receipts	Current yr	Prior yr	Payments	Current yr	Prior yr
	-			-	
Total receipts	-	-	Total payments	-	-
Surplus/(deficit)	-	-			

Summary	Restricted	Main	Self-funded	Total	Prior yr
Total receipts	50.00	5,427.05	-	5,477.05	9,198.91
Total payments	-	5,802.87	-	5,802.87	9,064.59
Surplus/(deficit)	50.00	-375.82	-	-325.82	134.32
Fixed asset movement	-	-		-	
Investment movement	-	4.00		4.00	9.00
Stock movement		-		-	
Movement in funds	50.00	-371.82	-	-321.82	143.32

As at September 30th 2010 the balance at the bank was £2239.74
 We also hold a small number of shares in Ramblers Association Services
 These are draft accounts, subject to audit - The certified version complete with balance sheet and auditors report will be available to members at the AGM

Footpaths & Survey Secretary

The most pleasing result of the year has been thwarting the attempted diversion of a well-used village path in Swannington, and getting the route re-opened and added to the Definitive Map. However, it appears that the landowner is still making life as unpleasant as possible for users, and there is now another diversion application. Resolution of the problem at Brentingby Lodge was also long overdue, but it has been said that enjoyment for the user has been reduced by the lack of an abusive confrontation with the landowner.

Of our other long-running issues, our claim at Groby is in the hands of the Planning Inspectorate for a decision on whether an order should be made. At Elmesthorpe, the development across U50/U50a continues with a series of mainly retrospective planning applications, and has progressed from two fish ponds to a residence. The intention to divert the path seems to be getting forgotten by Leics. CC. Problems at Donington Circuit continue – a further temporary order this summer gave the Download Festival organisers free rein to threaten and remove path users, while we still await formal consultation on the permanent diversion which was agreed almost two years ago. We have resolved to support local users if a similar situation develops next summer. The level crossing at Barrow-on-Soar remains closed while Network Rail and landowners argue over the site of the replacement bridge. Suggestions that the temporary closure extension should be refused may focus minds, as re-opening would mean speed limits and manning of the crossing.

If all this suggests that Leics. CC have not been active, this is far from the case, as we still deal with a succession of proposals, most of which seem to benefit only the landowner, and at best have a neutral effect for the user. Two this year which were of benefit were a diversion out of a bog north of Lount on to firm ground at the expense of 20m extra distance, and some diversions on the Wartnaby estate to improve connectivity.

Surveying continues steadily, although I have taken a sabbatical, and we are still on target to complete another full cycle in 2012. The number of problems encountered continues to drop, albeit slowly. It will be interesting to observe the effect of spending cuts on the state of the network.

A major addition to the permissive network has been due to the Prestwold estates, which should increase the opportunities in that area by keeping everyone off the A60.

Although we have no details at present, it is almost certain that the ROW Officers in all our Highway Authorities will be affected in some way. It is essential that all members contribute in every way possible to the national 'Dead-End' campaign by lobbying councillors and MPs, getting the support of other path users, and resolving to walk less popular paths. Both Leicestershire and Leicester have on-line problem reporting, and it is essential that **all problems** encountered are reported – more problems means a recognition that paths are valued and used, and cuts in the maintenance budget is not a soft option.

There seem to be two other significant threats to our enjoyment of walking in the county. Substantial housing and business developments seem to be proposed in all directions, and the opportunity for objection based on loss of paths is virtually impossible, as many include additional routes to link with existing paths. While it is obvious that the enjoyment of the path will be reduced

if fields are replaced by houses, but how to turn this into a meaningful objection to the actual development is beyond my powers and indeed my role in the RA.

Secondly, railway crossings appear to be under serious threat of closure where we are at present

walking across the tracks, as Network Rail seeks to provide an infrastructure to allow faster, larger and more frequent trains. Spare a moment to consider the effect on our path network – there are 16 such crossings between Syston and Melton Mowbray alone, all on well-used and vital routes.

Please make it your New Year resolution to walk more, but drive less – focus on our local paths, and tell as many people as possible how valuable and useful our paths are, then show them by organising more walks suitable for beginners.

Stan Warren

Campaigns Coordinator

Campaigning work during the year has again all been channelled through the footpaths activities and the work of various officers on the Local Access Forum. Those officers working in this area have kept in touch with each other by email without the need for additional meetings.

Roy Denney

National Forest

Part of the role of the Countryside Officer is to represent the Ramblers on certain outside bodies including the National Forest. Given Michael lives the wrong side of town for their meetings Robert Woodward has been covering these meetings for us and now reports on this years activities.

Government Review - Early in the year Roy Denney and myself submitted written evidence to the Parliamentary DEFRA Progress Review giving comment and support for the Forest as we see it in our area. The Review was held in January and the report issued in March. The outcome announced on 14th October was that the audit was full of praise for the achievement and future plan and gave the 'green light' to the NFC to continue with government backing.

On Your Doorstep Campaign launched

- * New leaflet to encourage public use and care of the Forest
- * Plant a tree or even your own wood (grants available)
- * Volunteering for working groups
- * Days out for families, schools and activity pursuits

Business Sponsorships - Nearly 40 commercial enterprises have given help with tree planting, practical and financial help.

Cycle Route - Opened this year, connects Moira Furnace, Conkers and the New YHA with short off road loops and a 4.5 mile circuit. Cycle hire is available at Moira Furnace and Rosliston.

Long Distance Trail - The project continues in identifying the ideal route and associated costs. A report is expected soon.

The next meeting of the National Forest Access and Recreation Working Group is in December. I shall step down as our representative at the year end and hopefully allow another RA member to continue in this interesting role.

Robert Woodward

Membership Secretary

Current membership numbers for the area are:

	Oct 2010	Jan 2010	Change
Hinckley	295	291	+4
Leicester	466	475	-9
Melton	164	162	+2
Coalville	283	286	-3
Rutland	118	116	+2
Loughborough	186	178	+8
Lutterworth	149	144	+5
LRWG	124	114	+10
Total	1785	1766	+19

Membership numbers have remained fairly static over the year with a very slight overall increase.

The membership system at Central Office has improved over the year and we are now receiving both a summary of new, lapsed, renewed and overdue members as well as a spreadsheet of the complete membership. This is making my job and I hope the job of the group membership secretaries a lot easier.

There are still problems with the Central Office database, such as long since lapsed members appearing in our monthly spreadsheet, but these are gradually being ironed out.

Phil Barnes

Newsletter Editor

I would like to thank the contributors and ask them to keep material coming. Your committee have however decided to cap the size of future newsletters so hopefully I will have such an embarrassment of input that I will have to exercise editorial choice. We are however slowly migrating our newsletter towards an electronic form and any material we cannot fit into the paper version may still be put on the web. The paper version is also displayed on the web except for pages giving personal details. We do get many appreciative comments about the newsletter, particularly from the membership that is not close to any of the groups.

Last year however we had to curtail the summer edition to 8 pages which could be produced as a single sheet printed front and back. This did save us a considerable sum in a time of severe financial difficulties.

This year however funding is back at a more realistic level and the newsletter will be in a more familiar format although your committee have agreed to cap the number of pages to keep finances under control.

Roy Denney

GROUPS' REPORTS

RUTLAND

Our walk leaders have provided interesting walks for us to enjoy with the overall number of walkers increasing this year. We have been pleased to welcome newcomers to the area, many of whom have become regular walkers.

We were honoured to have the Lord Lieutenant of Rutland, Dr Laurence Howard, as our guest speaker at the Annual Dinner held in March at "The Whipper Inn Hotel" in Oakham. Dr Howard gave us an insight into the history and duties of a Lord Lieutenant.

The first Festival of Walks in Rutland proved to be a success and several of our members led walks for the Festival, including the Rutland Round. The Festival is to become a regular feature in our area.

Thanks to the initiative of one of our members, during September we enjoyed a weekend in north Norfolk based at Wells-next-the-Sea. The walks were led by a local couple who not only introduced us to the delights of the area, but also provided lots of local information.

2010 has proved to be another successful and enjoyable year for the Rutland Ramblers.

Joy Coleman

20s & 30s WALKING GROUP

2010 was another exciting year for LRWG. The year started off with a New Years Eve Karaoke and Nintendo Wii Game party at one of the members houses which went on until about 3am. In February the group went off on a weekend to Coniston in the Lake District. There was a fair amount of snow up there which made it very scenic. In March, we had the other extreme of weather and had a very wet but enjoyable weekend in the North Downs. Most of the group also stopped off at Winchester on the way down there.

For the Mayday bank holiday, we spent 5 nights camping at Padstow in Cornwall. This included a visit to the Eden project and some coastal walking. There was also a local tradition happening on May Day called the "Obby Oss Festival" which was very interesting to watch.

In June I led a camping trip to Hunstanton in Norfolk. This involved visiting the preserved Sea Henge in Kings Lynn museum on the Friday. On the Saturday I led a coastal walk to Holme next the Sea where Sea Henge was found and on the Sunday a coastal walk to Snettisham. In July we went on a camping trip to Snowdonia in Wales and a large number of the group walked up to the summit of Snowdon via the Watkins Path. In August there was a weekend camping trip to the Brecon Beacons. On the Saturday, there was a walk up Pen Y Fan (highest point in the Brecon Beacons).

For the August bank holiday and in to September we spent 8 nights in the North West Highlands of Scotland. Four nights were spent at Ullapool SYHA and four nights at a lighthouse near Gairloch. We had great weather for the entire trip. A number of peaks were climbed. There were also a number of Loch and coastal walks. Some of the group took a boat trip to the Summer Isles. A few of the group went out sea fishing and caught a large amount of mackerel which we ate for dinner for the next couple of days. Some of the group also went Pony trekking on the last day of the holiday.

There was a group trip to the Forest of Dean area in October and in November the group went to Durham and a day trip was planned to do some walking close to Hadrian's Wall on the Saturday.

Additional to our large selection of trips away, we had a pub meet at least once a month and a meal most months.

There was a walk every Sunday and from May to August we had evening walks every Wednesday and every other Tuesday. I also led a couple of night hikes in the winter months. We had two trips to Alton Towers, one for bonfire night and one which included an 80's concert in the summer. We had a summer barbeque party and disco in June. At the end of the year we went on a Haunted Leicester walk which was led by a Leicester Blue Badge Guide.

2011 looks to be another exciting year ahead and trips were already being planned to the Lake District and the Norfolk broads at the time of writing.

Karl Piggin

HINCKLEY

Another great year for our group. The figure 8 walks mentioned in last year's report proved to be very successful early in the year, then a member offered to do a short morning walk followed by a meal on Thursdays for those unable to complete the full day's walk. This took off, and now has a regular following, and several leaders, so we thought we no longer needed the figure 8's. However, we have had a request to re-instate them, so will do so in the new year.

Our annual dinner was held at the Royal Arms, Sutton Cheney, and was so enjoyable that we are using the same venue in January. The Photograph Competition and Quiz at Elmesthorpe Village Hall was a great success, we are always amazed at the superb photos taken by our members. Trevor and I acted as Quizmasters, which seemed to go well, so we will do it again next year.

Our Easter Break was to Alfriston in Sussex, where we had superb walking, and lovely weather. Groups who walk midweek have been to Norfolk, to Gunton Hall in Suffolk, to Totnes, and to Craven Arms in Shropshire. Six members completed the Coast to Coast Walk during August, and managed to avoid the rain.

John Sim and Trevor Martin held a Walk Leaders course during the summer, with 9 members taking part. We now have some new leaders, but could still do with more.

We were involved in the Leicestershire Walking Festival, leading three walks on the programme, and took part in the initiative by Voluntary Action Leicestershire to "Walk to the Moon." Hinckley Ramblers managed to contribute 1,869 miles during October.

We are pleased to report that we have managed to cut our costs considerably, firstly by printing our programmes "in house" instead of having them done by a local printer, and secondly by asking members who previously had programmes posted to them, to download them from the website.

Barbara Elliston, who has been our Secretary for 10 years, retired at the AGM. She has done an excellent job, and we are all very grateful to her. I am delighted to report that Deb and Pete Hopewell have taken over, and will share the job between them.

Ellen Sandeman and Mike Clark have also left the committee after many years of activity.

All three of them have done an excellent job. Many thanks!

Finally, a great big "Thank You" to all our members, for your support during the year. I am sure 2011 will be equally successful.

Wendy Martin

MELTON

The Melton Group have provided a full and varied walks programme for the year: walks have covered 4 – 15 miles, both locally and further afield, and we are now entering our second year of night walks. The majority of walks have been well attended.

Membership currently stands at 164, down 11% on last year. This is despite our efforts to promote the RA through the distribution of the Walks Programme and other RA leaflets in and around the Melton area.

On the Social scene, the highlights have been a weekend away in Robin Hood's Bay and a

coach-ramble to York, with various other events such as a pantomime, BBQ and a barn dance. This year we have made some changes to the way we communicate with members, distributing the majority of information electronically via email and our website www.meltonramblers.org.uk.

Suzanne Elliott

LEICESTER

MEMBERSHIP

The Group has had another very successful year. We have gained 33 new members since February, though this has been offset by more members not renewing, so our membership is officially 471. This is quite a drop on last year, but I think much of this is due to the fact that the statistics from Central Office are now more accurate since they mastered the new database. It is also evident that though we attract a good number of new walkers, those that leave are generally non-walking members.

WALKS PROGRAMME

The walks we put on continue to be popular. In particular, the Thursday morning walks have gone from strength to strength, with attendances regularly between 20 and 30. We have recently introduced an alternative longer all-day walk on the first Thursday in the month, and this too has proved popular, attracting around ten walkers each time on average so far.

In the summer months, Saturday afternoon walks for families have become more popular, though Tuesday evening walks have suffered this year due to the organiser having to relinquish his role right at the start of the season. We have now appointed a small group of members who have organised a good Tuesday evening programme for the coming year.

All-day Saturday walks and all-day Sunday walks continue to attract a good number of walkers, and we have had two overnight mini-breaks in the year - at Hartington and in the Lake District. Some of the Saturday walkers also took part in the Charnwood Challenge and the Belvoir Challenge. The coach rambles continue to attract 40 - 50 people every month, and places visited this year have included the Shropshire Hills, the Cotswolds, the Chilterns, several forays into Derbyshire, Henley-on-Thames, and as far afield as Monmouth.

WALK LEADERS

One problem we have encountered from time to time is difficulty in contacting walk leaders, as there was no comprehensive contact list. This has now been rectified, and as a result it was revealed that we have 57 walk leaders, which is quite astonishing! Although we continue to have some difficulty finding leaders for some of the walks, several new members have come forward during the year, which is very encouraging, especially as some of our older members have decided to stop leading.

ECONOMIES

We have cut down our expenditure this year considerably by changing the design of our printed programme. Originally in an A6 stapled booklet form, we now produce it as a single A3 sheet, saving over £400 in the process. In addition we have reduced the number of Committee meetings from 4 to 3 a year, thereby cutting down a little in travelling expenses.

WEBSITE

We have also put our printed programme and newsletter on our website as PDF documents, so anyone can download and print them off if they want to. We intend to do the same with the Group's Annual Report and possibly with the Walk Leader's Handbook. In addition we upload our complete programme of around 200 walks onto the 'Find a Walk' section of the Ramblers' website, and this, together with our own website, seems to be the most effective way of attracting new members.

David Siddons

LOUGHBOROUGH

We walk on with a renewed Committee this year. Much gratitude is due to David Nutt, who retires as Treasurer, and Pam Bursnall, who retires as Publicity Officer, for many years of dedication to the Group. John Howells enthusiastically took on the role of Secretary last year, and this year we welcome three new members to the Committee: John Harper as Treasurer, Steve Archer as Publicity Officer and Carol Morris.

The post of Footpath Officer remains vacant for the moment.

We had our fullest ever summer programme, with much help from Malc Burdett and other leaders. An average of 11 come on the weekend walks. Malc also provided us with many interesting statistics on the walks, including a league table of the most energetic members of the Group.

This year's joint coach ramble with Coalville took us back to the Cotswolds, for a choice of walks around Bourton in the Water and the well-earned meal. Our weekend trip was to Lynton in Exmoor, providing a wide choice of moorland and coastal walking, and even a chance to try folk dancing. Many thanks to Sarah Puxley for once again for organising such a successful weekend.

The 2009 Area Quiz was won by a team consisting of Loughborough and Coalville members. Nearly thirty devoured our first Christmas Dinner, and another is to take place in December. The 2010 slide show included a glacier trip in the Switzerland, walking in Saxon Switzerland (which is in eastern Germany) and a quiz. Our next slide show will be on Friday, 11 Mar at 7.30 pm in John Storer House; the programme will appear on <http://go.to/lbra> at a later date.

Technology advances. Our programme is now available on the Group Walks Finder, and walks can be submitted online to the programme on a form created by Gordon Murray. Most members continue to receive the programme and Soar Feet in printed form, but a growing number are getting these in electronic form.

John Samson

LUTTERWORTH

We have had a very successful year at Lutterworth with increased numbers on our Sunday walks and good attendance at our Summer evening "Walk and Dine" programme. Our average attendance was 17, the lowest 7 and the highest 30, on 20 walks more than 20 people attended, pretty good for a small group. We only had to cancel 1 walk because of adverse weather.

We had a weekend away at Tewksbury in May with 32 participating a great time was had walking and socialising. There was also a very good walking week in Cyprus with 16 enjoying the walks and sight seeing. Next March 2011, 12 of our walkers are going to Tenerife, and in May 2011 we hope to have a weekend in Malvern. We are very fortunate to have members willing to organise these trips. We are also looking forward to our Annual Christmas dinner early in December.

We had our AGM on Sunday 21st Nov. A short 3.8 mile walk around Peatling Parva was followed by Soup and Puddings in the village hall. While drinking our tea and coffee we had the meeting and

there was some lively discussion and planning for our future. We now have a new footpath secretary and 3 new committee members.

We are concerned that with no written news letter or paper programme some members, especially those who do not walk, are not covered by either our web site or email but we cannot go back to paper and postage as we do not have the funds.

Yvonne Coulson

COALVILLE

This past year was another success for Coalville Ramblers as we managed to maintain our full programme of walks throughout the year. Included in our programme was a week of walks dedicated to the memory of local walks writer Holly Ward, where we retraced some of his many routes. In August we also arranged two walks and a tree planting ceremony in memory of the late Colonel Larry Ball at Mount Saint Bernard Abbey and also led four sponsored walks on what would have been our late President, David Taylor MP's birthday.

The Christmas social event was held at a local pub with a buffet and a band.

The annual coach trip to the Cotswolds was well supported by Coalville and Loughborough ramblers and the three walks were followed by a meal at The Swan, Moreton in the Marsh.

We supported The National Forest Walking Festival in May and the Leicestershire County Council walking festival in September by members leading walks on their programmes .

Our weekend away this year was at Eastbourne but the varying times of arrival meant that the planned stroll to Sovereign Harbour didn't take place on the Friday afternoon; amazingly though, those that had arrived managed to find the local Wetherspools. On the Saturday, using the local bus service, three groups travelled out beyond Beachy Head and all completed the coastal walk back, in beautiful sunshine via the Seven Sisters. On arriving back in Eastbourne we were greeted by the band playing on the promenade bandstand.

On the Sunday two groups set out from the Seven Sisters Country Park at Cuckmere Haven to walk into Alfriston where some were met by people in medieval costumes inviting us to travel back in time at the local Clergy House. Here there was someone demonstrating the art of chain-mail, also a display of the food enjoyed in bygone years and some were even invited to sample a cake baked for the occasion.

Each night in the hotel some still had energy to dance the night away, all in all a very enjoyable weekend.

Elaine Easom

LOOKING FORWARD

SLIDE SHOW

Loughborough Ramblers' annual Travel Evening will be at 7.30 pm on Friday, 11 March in John Storer House, Loughborough (grid ref SK534192), with slides from Bhutan and other places around the world. Full programme to appear on <http://loughboroughramblers.org.uk/>. All welcome!

LARRY BALL MEMORIAL WALK

This years walk will be organised by the Leicester Group on Sunday 14th August 2011 - It will be a figure-of-eight from Hallaton - bring your own packed lunch.

Morning depart 10.30am from Hallaton Butter Cross: Horninghold, Knob Hill farm, Highland, Sinney, Blaston, Works, Hallaton (lunch)

Afternoon (depart 2.30 pm from Hallaton Butter Cross), Hare Pie Bank, Slawston, Cranoe, Hallaton. Total distance 11 miles

All groups are asked to include this area walk in their programme

AREA QUIZ

Next years quiz will be held at St Peters Church Hall Glenfield on Saturday Oct 29th.

Please make a note in your diaries.

It will follow the traditional format; no individual questions to embarrass you; teams of up to four; general knowledge rounds; specialist knowledge rounds to pick from for double points and a novelty round - Gather from 7.15 - normally finish 10.00

A modest charge to cover actual costs including for tea / coffee and biscuits to be provided

More detail will be provided in the next newsletter

GENERAL COUNCIL 21-22 April 2012

It is our turn to host the rest of the Ramblers by staging General Council here on our patch. Last time we did so we used the facilities at Loughborough University and this time we are to use University of Leicester halls of residence in Manor Road, Oadby. In the past it has involved two nights stay for delegates but has been reduced to one recently and at this point of time we are assuming that will be the case again next year

General Council is largely made up of delegates from the various areas and we expect 200 delegates but have room for 250. It elects members of the Board of Trustees which amongst its responsibilities, is legally and ultimately responsible for the charity, providing security and continuity and ensuring delivery of our charitable outcomes. General Council also discusses and votes on motions. They cover policy matters and internal governance. Most motions are submitted from Ramblers Areas. Motions that are passed are then referred to the Board of Trustees for action. It also receives the Annual Report & Accounts, and the officers and staff are there to field questions from the representatives present.

There is also time for sharing ideas, as well as socialising and we as an Area would want to make our guests very welcome, give them a good time and organise a local walk early Sunday morning for those attending.

We will need to appoint an overall coordinator to liaise with central office and will need volunteers to man enquiry and registration desks, to act as tellers, scrutineers, timekeepers and microphone holders in the hall and a taxi service to ferry delegates from the station not to mention numerous other roles quite apart from a core organising team to pull it all together. Surrey had about 30 people helping this year.

Central Office do provide a lot of the support needed in the build up but we will need local manpower on the day. Meals are provided for helpers

There is also a suggestion that the hosts provide an entertainment on Saturday night, so we may well elect for a quiz.

FOOTPATH CHANGES

Changes to our Path Network since the last edition of Write-of-Way

Leicestershire

Quite a few changes, but all of a very minor nature except for the re-opening of the disputed path at Swannington and the changes by the Wartnaby Estate around Grimston and Wartnaby itself, which were promoted as a package which we felt overall were of benefit, with gains outweighing losses.

Swannington - Creation and eventual opening of the through route from St George's Hill to Hough Mill - if you use this path and get harassment from the landowners, please notify both the police and LCC immediately.

Hinckley - Small diversion off Outlands Road for path leading across the by-pass to Wykin - now leads off new housing development.

Barrow-upon-Soar - Diversion of path through new housing development south of Strancliffe Lane bridleway.

Peckleton - Small diversion of path west of Stocks House Farm on route Kirby Mallory to Desford.

Knossington - Very small diversion of path heading west from village.

Lubenham - Very small diversion of path leading out of children's playground westwards towards Foxton.

Wartnaby - Diversion away from farm buildings of path approaching from Six Hills Road to west end of village. Also small diversion of footpath heading south-west to Saxelbye,

Grimston - Changes to network south of Six Hills Road in vicinity of railway tunnel, which improves connections across the road towards Old Dalby. Also minor diversions on the Grimston-Wartnaby bridleway near the tunnel, and immediately east of Saxelbye Road.

John o'Gaunt - Diversion of both footpath and bridleway which used to cross at Lowenna Lodge, south-east of Twyford, to avoid farm buildings.

Harston - Diversion to circuitous headland route of dead-end bridleway heading north to Lincolnshire border, but we do gain a permissive link off it to the Viking Way (The Drift).

Braunstone - Extinguishment of non-existent dead-end path off Narborough Road South which nominally terminated in a block of lock-up garages.

Staunton Harold - Diversion of path from Lount immediately south of Staunton Harold Hall Drive - it avoids a very waterlogged part of the field at the expense of about 40m of extra distance.

Sweepstone - Small diversion of path leading south to Newton Burgoland, allowing housing development on old industrial site.

Rutland

No changes at all to the network

Stan Warren - November 12th 2010

CELEBRATIONS TINGED WITH SADNESS

Since the last newsletter we have marked the passing of our last two presidents.

On what would have been the 64th birthday of David Taylor M.P., Coalville Group organised a day of walks to remember him. In a fortnight of heavy rains the sun shone down all day on Sunday August 22nd when 118 ramblers and local people gathered at Sence Valley Forest Park to take part in the David Taylor Memorial Walks.

To accommodate the numbers, those doing the more ambitious 8 mile circular split into two crowds going in opposite directions whilst another 4 mile walk set off at the same time for friends and family, not regular walkers. The walkers included David's widow Pam, their four daughters, grandchildren and the family dog Oscar. Also present were former colleagues from the County and District councils and members of our Area committee and other groups.

David, up to his untimely death, had of course been President of the Coalville Group as well as President of the Area. The walk took in countryside around his home village of Heather, within the developing National Forest. While passing through Heather Churchyard, many walkers took time out to pay their respects at David's graveside.

A collection on the day raised £265 cash for the British Heart Foundation with some personal donations and sponsorship expected to follow.

On the previous day, the National Forest had paid its own tribute to David - a staunch supporter - by unveiling a plaque at the tree previously planted in Heather by his family and friends in grateful recognition of David's service to his community, the parliamentary constituency of North West Leicestershire and The National Forest. The Plaque read 'Remembering David Leslie Taylor MP of Heather - 1946 - 2009'. The assembled family, friends and colleagues then moved on to nearby Ibstock where the Forestry Commission unveiled a sign to rename the former Coronet Copse as David Taylor Wood.

David had succeeded Larry Ball as Area President when Larry had to step down after a lifetime of efforts on behalf of the Ramblers. Larry passed away just before David and had also been a keen champion of the National Forest and to mark his passing and to give thanks for his efforts, two walks were organised the weekend following David's walks, again within the new forest.

They were also the Area's contribution to the Ramblers '75 years' celebration 'Baton' walks.

A five mile morning walk started from and culminated at Mt. St. Bernard Abbey where at lunchtime, a tree was planted in Larry's memory with a plaque reading 'This tree was planted by members of the Leicestershire & Rutland Ramblers Association to celebrate the life of their former President, Lt. Col Lawrence F. Ball (1920-2009)'

Attending, amongst other members, were the three Vice Presidents notwithstanding that one is nearer 90 than 80 and another had just come out of hospital after major heart surgery.

Following this short ceremony, ramblers then set out on another 6 mile walk round this developing area within the National Forest.

We were again blessed with wonderful weather.



Elevenses on the walk to celebrate the life of our immediate past President, David Taylor M.P.



Captain receives trophy at annual area quiz



Members with the 'Baton' celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Ramblers before starting the celebration walk

This tree was planted by members of the Leicestershire & Rutland Ramblers Association to celebrate the life of their former President, Lt.Col Lawrence F. Ball (1920-2009)

Vice President Mike Statham planting the tree to celebrate the life of our former President, Larry Ball

Below Members on the walk coming off Timberwood Hill

(above the plaque left beside the tree)

