

WALKS PROGRAMME

Once again the group has offered a varied walks programme. As usual we aimed for a Sunday walk every week of the year, and a leisurely Friday Amble fortnightly in the months of February to November. My thanks go to Jean Aellen for working hard to coordinate the Friday walks; as usual all Fridays were allocated and I understand the walks were very well attended. In addition we had a welcome 'extra walk' on a Friday, falling in a week when there wouldn't normally be an amble, and the memorial walk for Andy Pearson on a Wednesday. Sundays have been more difficult to fill, and over the year there were 11 Sundays when no walk was offered. These vacant slots are increasing year by year – for example last year there were 7 (if we disregard Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve) and the year before there were only 3. I believe the walks which did take place generally attracted a good number of walkers, both from Severnside and other groups. The record for a Sunday must go to Geoff Mullett's walk where there were around 30 walkers. Fortunately there weren't too many stiles!

LEADERS

Huge thanks to all our leaders, many of whom have offered multiple walks in each programme. It is becoming increasingly difficult to fill the slots on both Fridays and Sundays. I believe Jean has now only 9 active leaders for Fridays, and of the 15 who have led this year on Sundays, 4 are currently unable to lead for health reasons. On a positive note, several people who have joined us from other groups have been actively leading, and one of our leaders has been able to return after a long absence. We also had one completely new leader this year who has contributed both Friday and Sunday walks – but we desperately need more! Do get in touch if you are at all interested, it's not difficult!

TRAINING

As I'm sure everyone knows, Ramblers now require every leader to complete training. New leaders have had to do this for a year or more, but existing leaders were exempt. This has now changed and we all need to be recognised by Ramblers as qualified leaders by the end of this year. I think it's fair to say that this requirement has caused feelings of irritation and resentment. However, please can I ask all leaders to bite the bullet and comply as we really can't afford to lose any of you. After the end of the year I won't be able to allocate a walk to any unqualified leader, and such a leader would not be covered by Ramblers insurance. There are two online modules to complete (Preventing & Managing Incidents and Walk Leadership foundations) plus The Walk Leader Handbook to read. They are very straightforward and take maybe 2 to 3 hours in total to complete - you don't need to do it all at one sitting. I've been monitoring the group's progress and there are still 14 leaders who need to do this; of these 8 are currently active, and I'll be reminding them again by email very soon. If anyone has difficulty accessing the material please get in touch. Many thanks to the 18 leaders who have already completed.

WALKS FOR THE MONTHS TO COME

There are 3 free Sundays in the current programme to fill, plus the whole of next year! Please get in touch if you'd like to book a date.

Sue Lancaster