

Shrewsbury Ramblers Group

Area Report 2024 – 5

Shrewsbury Ramblers Group has enjoyed a successful year.

Membership continues to hover around the 400 members mark.

We have continued to offer our very extensive walks programme; longer walks on Tuesday and Sunday, shorter walks on Thursday and evening walks on Wednesdays in the summer. Most slots in the programme were filled, including a few joint walks on Sundays with South Shropshire Ramblers.

Walk numbers have been maintained on Tuesdays, whilst there has been a notable increase in the popularity of Thursday walks and a welcome increase in the numbers walking regularly on Sundays. Walkers continued to participate in rain, wind and snow. The group also offered walks for the Shropshire Way Festival of Walks and the Festival of Walks over the Christmas period.

There has been a notable change in the way in which the **walks programmes** are being put together. Walks Manager enables walk leaders to add and change walks much later. The previous system of publishing a walks programme ahead of time, three times a year has largely been abandoned.

The group provided a very successful programme of **walk-leader training**. A sub-group of the committee worked with existing and trainee leaders to complete the Ramblers online certification and followed up with First Aid training – both events took place at Upton Magna village hall and particular thanks go to Di Higgs, Neil Mosley, Richard Kinley, Nev Hubbard and Amanda Hartley-Newton for the organisation. As a result, a good number of new walk leaders were added to our list who are now offering walks in our current programme. All walk leaders were offered First Aid kits, purchased with profits made from our '20 Walks' books. In addition, a number of books relating to walk leading were purchased.

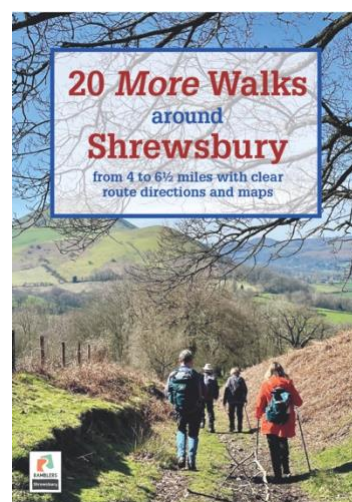
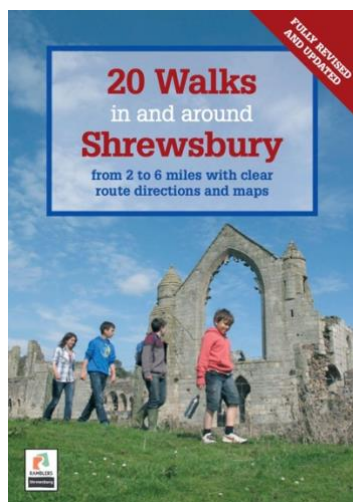
Alongside the training, we made strenuous efforts to tidy up our list of walk leaders in **Walks Manager**. Nev Hubbard, our webmaster, updated the list, removing many names from the 91 who were listed – for instance, those who have hung up their boots for good or moved away. The number of walk leaders on the Walks Manager list is now just over 60. We are hoping to persuade a further 11 members who have led walks in the past to undertake the registration process.

During the year, the group adopted a **new website** to operate alongside the conventional Ramblers site. The website was designed by Charlie Bigley, the Staffs and Newcastle webmaster, and he and Nev installed it. Members find it much more accessible and easier

to use when finding out walk details. The system is now used for emails and for booking for trips and events. Our very great thanks to Charlie and Nev. Charlie is willing to work with other groups who are interested to install the system. (See his separate report.)

The group has a very extensive programme of **social events**, organised by Tessa Conway-Holland, our events co-ordinator. During the year, members have attended concerts, gone on cinema visits, group guided walks, themed walks, ten pin bowling, a barbeque, a festive lunch, mince pie walks and theatre. The AGM and Social was attended by more than 80 members, who heard a presentation by Alicia Lowe-Dyke of the Welsh Wildlife Trust, who updated us on the progress of the beavers reintroduced into the old bed of the River Severn in Shrewsbury.

The group's '**20 Walks**' books continue to sell well. To date, over 10,000 copies of the original book and its update have been sold and 1500 of the second. A group of 5 members worked over 18 months to update and revise the original book with the help of over 30 members who re-walked all the routes and updated the text. Our thanks to Curt Williams for project-managing the entire process.



Two **away-weeks** took place, both well-attended, one to Monmouth and the Wye Valley and the second to the HF House at Bourton-on-the-Water. A full programme of walks with options of different grades and lengths was led by members of the group. A new group of members has now taken on this responsibility from Rebecca and Paul Barker. There are plans to visit Kirby Lonsdale and Whitby this year. In addition, three day-trips by coach took place to the Curbar Edge, Hilbre Island and Formby.

We are currently undertaking a review of group **safeguarding procedures**. This has involved changing the format of our booking forms to meet the requirements of the Ramblers safeguarding policy, writing a reduced version of said policy to be put online for easy access of walk leaders, encouraging walk leaders (and others) to undertake the Ramblers online training module and nominating one member of the committee to be the safeguarding

officer to whom concerns are initially to be addressed. We are also co-operating with Ramblers in supporting a local partially-sighted walker in Shrewsbury.

The **committee** lost two of its longest-serving and committed members in Kath Bristow and Rebecca Barker. Fortunately, we were able to find two excellent replacements. We expect a number of the current committee members to step down in November and are looking for new recruits.

For the second year in a row, Shrewsbury Ramblers participated in the **St Chad's Christmas Tree Festival**. Decorating the tree uncovered as - yet unknown talents among our members as miniature stiles, tiny copies of the '20 Walks' books, crocheted boots, decorative waymarks, compasses, map folders, bobble hats and model ramblers appeared, not to mention the stars and baubles made from OS maps. The ever-active Amanda Hartley-Newton was the prime mover in this venture.



Sue Turner

Jan 2026