



D DAY DAWNS FOR D GROUP



When the D group was formed in 2020, it was primarily seen as an opportunity for long-serving LWR members to continue walking with friends but in a more leisurely environment. Whilst many Ramblers groups around the UK have similar facilities, the LWR D group remains the only one in the West Riding Area whose members can enjoy this opportunity. Most West Riding groups only offer one type of walk, typically 8-10 miles, at a weekend.

Unfortunately there is a perception amongst some LWR members that the D group is some form of 'last chance saloon' or retirement home for those who can no longer walk longer distances. These are myths and need to be dispelled.

In fact there is a lot of evidence to suggest that the D group could be a major engine for growing LWR membership. We need to examine a few facts.

The D group is as much an integral part of LWR as all out other groups.

The D group was set up by Angela Pearson and a few other members on exactly the same basis as the A+, A, B and C groups. They have a walk coordinator (currently Jim Heslop), offer a variety of walks in exactly the same areas as all our other groups operate, albeit shorter and more leisurely. Walks take place every Tuesday.

The Ramblers classify all walks by 4 levels of difficulty. The D group is at level 3 – Leisurely. This is defined by Ramblers as being "for reasonably fit people with at least a little country walking experience. This may include unsurfaced rural paths".

“Leisurely” for the D group also means being able to stop, rest, study wildlife and scenery, and take photographs without feeling that you are slowing the group down or being worried that you have to sprint in order to catch up with the rest of the group.

D group walks are 3 -5 miles.

The D group is not a Ramblers ‘Wellness’ walk

The Ramblers, on a national basis, offer ‘Wellness’ walks, often in association with the NHS. They are typically between 10 and 90 minutes long, over easy terrain and start at the same time and place every week. The two nearest groups are Armley and Belle Isle in Leeds.

The walks have no connection to Leeds Ramblers or West Riding Ramblers and are completely different in concept to the LWR D group.

The D group meets a real demand

The population of England is expected to increase at the fastest rate amongst older age groups. The average of LWR members is 73. Sadly none of us are going to get any younger so having the D group means we will be able to continue walking with our friends when longer distances are no longer feasible.

The D group can help with recuperation

Along with ageing, many members require knee replacements, hip replacements, physiotherapy and other medical interventions, which can make our usual walk unrealistic in the short term. Walking a shorter distance at a more leisurely pace provides an ideal way to gradually build up fitness and enjoy the company of fellow ramblers whilst speeding up a return to your usual group.

The D group allows you to ‘mix & match’

Because LWR has 6 groups, some members already walk with the D group one week and the C group another. Experienced Ramblers can look at the alternative walks on offer and, based on their knowledge, can decide which one to join.

In very simple terms, every LWR member is lucky to have the D group available to potentially extend their walking pleasure in a manner that no other West Riding group can offer. However, beyond this, the D group provides a readymade platform to attract new members.

Antonia Woosnam-Savage and Chris Tye were recently invited to give a talk to the Bradford based Midweek Wayfarers (a non-Ramblers group). Like LWR, all their walks are midweek but none exceed 10 miles and include:-

Tuesday 5 miles

Tuesday 4 – 5 miles

Wednesday 3-4 miles

Whilst Bradford Ramblers can only offer evening walks and are struggling to survive, the Wayfarers have 160 full members and offer all their walks every week.

Bolton Ramblers recently made the front page of their local paper due to the success of their 5 mile walks.

Shorter walks are clearly popular so how can LWR members help foster and grow the D group?

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. We have 93 qualified walk leaders. Would you offer to lead a D walk? Remember you will need to lead at a slower pace than other groups. Simply relax and have some fun.
2. If you are struggling with your present group, why not give D group a try?
3. Do you know members of other local Ramblers groups whose one walk a week no longer meets their needs? Encourage them to try the D group. It costs nothing and they remain members of their parent group.
4. Why not try ‘Mix & Match’?

5. The A65 from Guiseley to Ilkley is awash with new care homes. Do you know any residents or managers who are looking for an outdoor exercise opportunity, with qualified leaders and high safety standards?
6. Do you know people who want to get into walking but are apprehensive of long difficult walks? Encourage them to give the D group a try. Why not go with them on their first walk and act as a mentor?

Dare to be a D group Daniel. Let's get behind the D group for the future of LWR and, more importantly, before you know it, you and I will be walking with them!

You can reach Jim and see the D group walks programme via the LWR website – Walk Coordinators.

BRING THE GRANDCHILDREN!

With the long Summer school holidays approaching, many members are going to be called upon to look after their grandchildren whilst their parents are at work. Often this will mean devoted grandparents having to give up their weekly walk and find ways to entertain the children. Well why not solve both problems and bring your grandchildren (or children) with you on a walk?

We asked three sets of children who have been on LWR walks what they thought of their experience.

Maruchi (10) and Nuri (9)	Rufus (11), Arlo (9), Rafferty (8)	Felix (1)
		
Maruchi is now 19 and these are his words. "I always enjoyed walking with the Ramblers when I was younger because I got to spend ages in the Dales with Grandma's friends. It was (and still is) a close-knit community that was friendly and open and I always cherished tagging along whenever it was offered. Although the best part of every walk was the inevitable ending at a local pub for tea and cake! I look fondly on all of my memories with the Ramblers and now I've grown, my appreciation for them has only expanded".	Rufus and Arlo have been on a few B and C group walks. The photo was taken outside the Ramblers Church on a B walk around Towton Battlefield, near Tadcaster. However a real highlight for Arlo and Rafferty was a visit to Hill Top Farm lambing sheds arranged by Charlotte Jarvis on a walk she led around Middleton during Easter school holidays. The ample supplies of chocolate cake Charlotte provided for tea at her house also received a 5 star rating.	Felix did not say a lot but he was grinning all over his face at the end of the walk after joining the C group on their Railway Children Walk around Howarth this Spring. They noticed by his second walk with the C group, he was taking his first tentative steps, so LWR clearly helped his development. It was also the first time that a nappy change had taken place during a C group lunch break. Aah – the memories!
Grandma' – Chrissy White	Grandad – Chris Tye	Mum – Amie Ladley

I am always fascinated by how many of our members first got into walking when they were dragged out by their parents at an early age. Taking your grandchildren with you may well give them a healthy and fulfilling hobby for life. Maruchi is now at University, is a member of the Royal Marine Cadets and has recently completed the Three Peaks.

The other thing that really surprised me was how much members of the group enjoyed having the children along. Many got chatting to them and it is amazing what you can learn from young minds. I still remember a fascinating chat with Nuri about how the education system in Singapore, where she lives, operates. Rather than being seen as a nuisance children are made very welcome. As Nuri added, "I enjoyed talking to people on the walks and having various conversations, getting to know about people and their experiences".

As you will see from the quotes, food plays an important role. Make sure they are well provisioned before you set off and the incentive of a large ice cream or pub visit at the end of a walk is a great motivator. Try to select a walk that will have some interest for children. If you are unsure about their stamina, start with a shorter walk but the biggest complaint I get is, "Grandad, why are they so slow".

Ramblers Insurance covers children under 18 as long as they are accompanied by a family member or legal guardian.

WALK LEADER LIBRARY



As many members will be aware, a number of fellow Ramblers groups in the West Riding Area are struggling to mount walks due to a lack of qualified walk leaders. In the short term this creates difficulty in organizing a full walks programme and in the long run puts the very existence of the group at risk. Ripon folded a few years ago and a number of others are on the brink.

To try and counter this, Helen Wood (pictured above), the new West Riding Area Chair, is seeking to launch a West Riding Walk Leaders 'Library'.

Essentially the idea is very simple:-

1. (A register for volunteer qualified walk leaders will be set up by and for the West Riding Area.
2. If you are prepared to lead for other groups, you add your name and email address to the register.
3. If the walk coordinator for a WRA group is seeking a volunteer they can contact all the leaders on the register with the date concerned.
4. If a leader is interested they respond in order to seek more details (how far, how fast, where etc.)
5. Once both parties are happy, agreement can be reached for the walk to be communicated.

There are a few points worth stressing:-

- There is no compulsion to lead a walk
- You don't have to leave your own area if you don't want to
- You must be a qualified walk leader
- All normal Ramblers walk guidelines apply

If you would like more details or are prepared to join the register, please contact Mike Briers

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Shelia Howell, Krystina Gadd, David Steel, Andre & Catherine Tapennier. Please say hello and make them welcome.

CPR TRAINING

Leeds Ramblers have organized a CPR training session and are offering places to all West Riding Area groups, free of charge.

The details are as follows:-

TRAINING CPR

TRAINER West Yorkshire Ambulance Service

DATE Thursday July 16th @ 1:00pm

LOCATION The Pavilion, Scholes Cricket Club, Rakehill Road, Scholes, Leeds, LS15 4AH

Please contact Aileen Bussooa, the Chair of Leeds Ramblers, by email if you are interested.

Leeds.chair@hotmail.com

PLEASE SUPPORT LWR WALKS FEATURED IN OTLEY WALKING FESTIVAL



You will have read the earlier article outlining Helen Wood's proposal to create a 'library' of qualified walk leaders. As explained in the article the reason for this initiative is because so many Ramblers groups in the West Riding are struggling to attract new members and people prepared to become leaders. A few groups are on the brink of collapse.

At LWR we are very fortunate. As Mike Briers outlined at our last AGM, we had around 120 'volunteer actions' in 2025. A 'volunteer action' is an LWR member doing something to support the group. In practice we have some members who do more than one action (e.g. Antonia is our Footpath Officer, leads C group walks and is a member of the maintenance team) but overall around 80 individuals do something, mainly walk leading. Given the vast majority of our 400 membership are not active walkers that is remarkable. Thank you.

However we cannot become complacent. This year's new recruit is next year's volunteer. New members are our lifeblood and we need to keep attracting them.

We are offering 7 sponsored walks at the Festival this year. The aim is to attract new members and our best advertisement is you. Please support your usual walk and look after our guests. LWR members do not need to book in advance.

The walks are as follows:-

GROUP	WALK	GUEST BOOKING
A+	Reservoirs, Farms, Moors and more	Book at www.otleywalkingfestival.co.uk
A	Lower Washburn Round	No need to book
C	Chevin Up Westwards	Book at www.otleywalkingfestival.co.uk
D	Brief historic highlights of Otley	As above
C Tye	Fame is the Spur	Fully Booked
B	Washburn Wander	No need to book
C Tye	The Otley (Literature) Run	Fully Booked