

Overall there were 251 attendances spread out over the 10 walks: 116 members and 135 non-members. However quite a few people came on more than one walk and, as far as I can judge, 109 different people (all adults) took part of whom 68 were members and 41 were non-members. If anything these figures will actually be an under-estimate as some people will have slipped through the net.

In all the years I have been doing the Festival walks this is by far the best attendance and I can come up with 2 possible reasons for this:-

1. Better weather (the last two Festival events were heavily affected by ice and snow). At the same time 4 of the walks during this festival took place in windy and wet conditions.

2. More attention from the local media. The Liverpool Echo published a letter from me and drip-fed very brief details of all walks bar one into its daily 24/7 "What's On" section. On Christmas Eve morning I was interviewed by Radio Merseyside over the phone and the Knowsley Challenge free paper published the full programme of walks.

All walks were publicised on the Ramblers' national walks finder, the local group website, the local group's Facebook page, the website of Liverpool Brisk Walkers and the Facebook page of Liverpool Brisk Walkers. Local member, John Leach visited no less than 22 libraries within Liverpool and Knowsley and left copies of the walks programme. Joyce Hughes, joint local Rambles Secretary and Membership Secretary, took part in 3 of the walks and was able to publicise and take bookings for Sunday coaches. Ingrid Donakey, Secretary of the Area Public Rambles Committee and also a local "Walking for Health" leader, was successful in encouraging several people to take part in the Festival.

Details of the walks were as below:-

1. Saturday 24th December Sefton Park/Obelisk/Cricket Club/Greenbank circular. A brisk walk of 3.5 miles. 30 attended. 18 non-members. Referred to on 3 successive days times briefly in "What's On" section of Liverpool Echo. Discussion during telephone interview with Radio Merseyside reporter on morning of the walk. Mention in letter from me published in Liverpool Echo on Wednesday 21st December.

2. Sunday 25th December. Christmas Day Mystery Ramble. 5 miles 10 attended: 9 members and one non-member. Referred to during telephone interview. Referred to in Liverpool Echo letter. Appeared 3 times in "What's On".

3. Monday 26th December. Sefton Park/St Michaels Circular. A brisk walk of 3.5 miles. 39 attended: 10 members and 29 non-members. Appeared in "What's On". Given reasonable weather, a Boxing Day brisk walk always seems to go down well.

4. Tuesday 27th December. In and Around Liverpool Parks . A ramble of 7-9 miles. Appeared in "What's On". Led by Liverpool group member Jean Williams. 34 attended: 19 members and 15 non-members. One of members was from the Wirral. Participants were able to come off the walk early at a couple of points.

5. Wednesday 28th December. Hall Road to Freshfield. A ramble of 7 miles. Led by Liverpool group member Christine Barton. Oddly the Liverpool Echo did not include this in "What's On". 14 attended: 10 members and 4 non-members. One of the members was from an Oxfordshire group. Howling winds and rain. The Iron Men on the sands in Crosby could not be seen. The weather was such that the leader had to change the route and terminate the walk early at Formby. Given the conditions plus the fact that the local train service was affected by engineering works, this was a good attendance.

6. Thursday 29th December. Meols to West Kirby. A ramble of 7 miles. Led jointly by Liverpool group members Christine Knox and Jackie Abrams. 17 attended: 12 members and 5 non-members. Appeared in "What's On" One of the non-members was a leader for the local NHS "Walking for Health Initiative" Parts of the day were blustery and wet.

7. Friday 30th December. The Tarbock Trail. A ramble of 5 miles. 11 attended: 7 members and 4 non-members. Appeared in "What's On". Light rain for the whole of the 2 hours we were walking. Ironically this was the best part of the day weather-wise but the rain which fell before the walk, I feel sure, affected attendance.

8. Saturday 31st December. Paths of Sefton Park and Ibbotson's Lane. A brisk walk of 3.5 miles. 37 attended: 9 members and 28 non-members.

9. Sunday 1st January. Otterspool/Brittania Inn Circular. A brisk walk of 5.5 miles. 22 attended: 6 members and 16 non-members. Very windy and wet all the time and before the start of the walk. A better-than-expected attendance in the circumstances.

10. Monday 2nd January. Port Sunlight to Hooton. A ramble of 7 miles. Led by Liverpool member Jean Williams. 37 attended: 22 members and 15 non-members. There were 3 members of the Stockbridge Village walking group and two involved in walking through the Huyton U3A group.