

Wellington Walkers are Welcome- 2012 Festival Report

The Festival was very successful with over 200 walkers taking part in 11 events. The walks ranged from gentle tours of Sunnycroft and Wellington to two all day walks. The most strenuous was the rail ramble which went from Telford Central Station to Wellington and took in both the Wrekin and the Ercall by the steep southern routes. Most of the walks were themed, encompassing Victorian heritage, geology, photography, Nordic walking, flora and fauna, industrial archaeology and map and compass work.

Wellington Walkers are Welcome are very grateful to the leaders who gave their time and expertise freely.

So far 83 feedback forms have been received, including at least one for each event with most rating the experience as 5 on a 5-point scale, and all but 2 of the rest as 4. There were minor criticisms of the balance between walking and talking in the geology walk and of traffic noise obscuring the Victorian heritage speaker's voice. One person wanted less mud on the all-day Sunday walk. Suggestions for future events included a walk around Apley, more advanced map and compass work, a shorter all day walk and Nordic walking off tarmac, all of which Wellington Walkers are Welcome hope to organise. Only about 60% of those who filled in the feedback forms said they had visited the group's website (<http://www.wellingtonwalkersarewelcome.org.uk/>), although most bookings came that way. Very few had visited the group's facebook page (www.facebook.com/WellingtonWalkersAreWelcome). Most respondents were regular walkers, the majority walking at least weekly. Of the very few who did not walk regularly, two were runners. 89% of those filling in the forms were over 50, with about half over 60. Virtually all would take part in another festival.

Walkers came from as far afield as Cardiff, Nantwich, Bloxwich, Market Drayton, Bridgnorth and Ludlow, although 70% came from the Telford area, with 39% living in Wellington itself. Ages ranged from 12 (map and compass) to over 80 (also map and compass). Many had taken part because of the festival leaflets, but word of mouth, posters, websites, newspapers (including the Wellington News) and the listing in the Ramblers' magazine had all attracted walkers.