



Affiliated to HF Holidays

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All of our walk leaders are volunteers who donate their time for free. They organise safe, enjoyable and healthy walks in the countryside. We need more leaders!
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Many thanks to Graham Little for his notes and photographs. Very lucky with the weather in a beautiful part of Britain.



Stride and Stroll Needs YOU!



Sun — Rain — Storm — Snow

Stride and Stroll leaders always show!



Winter is approaching and the weather is everything we could expect for late autumn and up coming winter walks.

It is a simple fact of life that countryside walks at this time of year can present a number of challenges for our dedicated team of volunteer walk leaders. Their experience and training allows them to identify potential hazards which are not obvious to the less experienced and therefore need to be pointed out to our walkers.

Of course there will be many walkers who are experienced and knowledgeable enough to recognise hazards for themselves but our leaders need, as far as is possible, to be confident that that no previously recognised hazard presents an unacceptable risk of injury to any walker.

It is for this reason that all of the progression walks offered on Saturdays are actually pre- walked by trained leaders (and frequently others) during the previous week.



Walker Numbers 2019.

Every year Stride and Stroll carries out a survey of walker numbers and attendances.

The analysis of the numbers allows us to plan many elements of our operation which may not be obvious to outsiders. We are a very large walking group, offering Short health walks on Thursdays for many and Progression walks on Saturdays for 5 separate activity/ability groups. In 2019 we have been pleased to see that we had 277 active walkers. This figure indicates a net increase of 33 active walkers over 2018.

In 2019 we offered a total of 44 different walk venues which included, amongst others, parks, forest trails, hill venues at Lickey, Waseley and Clent and riverside venues at Astley Burf, Bewdley, Alveley and Hampton Loade.

All of the work involved in the management of the venues, in order to ensure we have on-going parking space and, where necessary permission, to park is carried out by many of our volunteer walk leaders.

Leading walks, organising pre walks, walk venue management, website management, walking holidays, social events, walk leader training, first aid and safety training, 277 walkers, 44 venues.

How many trained volunteer walk leaders? - 34!





What do walk leaders do?

When a group of more than 20 people are walking in the great outdoors, a minimum of two trained walk leaders are required. The leader at the front of the group obviously conducts the group over the desired route and, perhaps less obviously, is able to point out any potential hazards as they occur over the route. The possible hazards will have been identified during the pre-walk earlier in the previous week.

Where possible Stride and Stroll will have two leaders regardless of the size of the group. The second 'leader' will walk at the rear of the group as a back marker. The primary objective is to ensure safety and so he/she will try to prevent the group fragmenting and will, where necessary, repeat hazard warnings issued by the front leader. In extreme circumstances the back marker can bring the group to a halt with 4 whistle blasts.

Stride and Stroll also operates a warning system when walking on roads where 1 whistle blast indicates traffic approaching from the front and two whistle blasts indicates traffic from the rear. In both cases walkers are required to move to the right hand side of the road when it is safe to do so.

On rare occasions, where group size dictates, a third trained leader will walk close to the mid-point of the group and attempt to ensure that safety messages are received and understood by all walkers.

There are several 'walk leader' functions which do not entail actually leading a group. Many walk leaders prefer to walk as back markers for a while as they build confidence and learn the most common walk routes.

Many existing Stride and Stroll walk leaders maintain a library of walks and can advise new walk leaders when asked.

The following is an extract from the Walking for Health website and answers many common questions.

Do I get training?

Yes. You'll receive a day's training from a nationally recognised and well respected scheme, as well as refresher training every two to three years.

What skills do I need?

The main skill we need from our volunteer walk leaders is an enthusiasm for walking and its benefits!

You don't need any particular experience, but we love our leaders to be friendly and welcoming, with good communication skills; reliable, punctual and well organised; confident at speaking in front of small groups; able to take control and be assertive when needed and observant and sensitive to the needs of others.

The one day training course is delivered locally by local trainers, and split into two sections.

Section 1 - Theory

This section of the day explores the concept and issues around health walks. The outcomes for this part of the training are:

Understanding the partnership that delivers the national programme and supports all the schemes.

Understanding the benefits of activity and the positive impact on physical and mental health.

Understanding what a health walk is and how to run one.

Explore the paperwork, understand why it is required and how the data will be used.

Understand the insurance cover provided by Walking for Health through the Ramblers.

Learn how to create a safe effective route and carry out a risk assessment.

Explore difficult scenarios such as dogs on walks and how to deal with them.

Understand about inclusivity and what this means.

Section 2 - Practical

Everyone takes part in a demonstration walk led by the trainer focussing on best practice, risk assessments and how to adjust walks to suit people with a variety of needs. Participants are given the opportunity to put the theory into practise and explore any issues they may have.

At the end of the training all trainees are given a progress card which they have to complete to become a fully trained walk leader. To become a recognised Walking for Health walk leader they need to:

Shadow a walk leader.

Lead a walk whilst being observed by a trainer walk leader.



September 2019 walking holiday – Lulworth Cove, Dorset

34 walkers travelled to HF holiday hotel in Lulworth Cove, Dorset on Monday 16th September 2019. The weather was brilliant for the whole week. We had taken over the whole hotel for a self guided walking holiday.

Three short walks had been planned and they had been pre walked By Anne and Graham in June of this year.

Walk one on the Tuesday was from Worth Matravers walking down to the coastal path. Passing Winspit, an old quarry, where two Dr Who stories had been filmed. Then stopping off at the man made caves which were excavated and stone transported by sea to Kent where the stone was used for building in parts of London.

Climbing to the coastal path and walking to Dancing ledge, so called because when the sea comes in the water looks like it is dancing over the rocks. We stopped there for our picnic lunch. After which we climbed to return to Worth Matravers along the Priests Way. This path was used by the local Priest walking to his churches between Swanage and Worth Matravers. We finished our walk at the Square and Compass pub for a refreshing cold drink.



Our second walk on the Wednesday started from the Corfe castle National trust car park a 5 mile linear walk back to Corfe.

From the car park we walked 10 mins to Norden station on the Swanage steam railway line. We caught the first steam train of the day to Herston Halt. We then walked along the lane to join the path to climb to the Purbeck Way and return to Corfe.

We stopped on the Purbeck Way to have our picnic after which we climbed a mound which gave us a fabulous view into Poole harbour and Brownsea Island.

On returning to Corfe, walkers had the opportunity to look around Corfe and visit Corfe Castle.

We started our last walk of the week from the hotel. Walking along the footpath to join the Coastal path then branching off back onto the road and passing the village church. We then climbed to join a path with a fantastic view over Lulworth Cove.

We then continued towards the Durdle door caravan park. Skirting the edge of the site then gradually dropping to join the Coastal path at Scratchy Bottom then arriving at Durdle Door. We stopped here for our picnic and some of us ventured down the 150 steps. (I didn't count them) to the beach and a closer view of the Durdle Door.

We continued a short climb to the refreshment stalls where some of us had ice cream or drinks. I felt sympathetic for the group so took them around the climb for the coastal path keeping to a low path arriving back at Lulworth Cove.





During the holiday the hotel held an inter house quiz night.
A good night was had by all.
The Winners in our hotel looked to me like bandits. Well done to them.
Our other entertainment was Bonny Sartin formerly of The Yetties.



Merry Christmas

