

Wellington Walkers are Welcome- 2018 Walking Festival Report

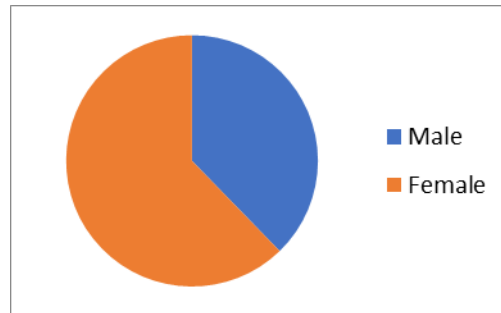
The Festival, held from 10th to 16th September, was very successful with a total head count, across 27 events, of about 400, walking approximately 1800 miles between them. In addition, about 50 people attended a film showing, organised by Wellington Orbit. As in previous years, many of the festival walks were themed. Some walks, such as the Industrial Heritage of the Wrekin Forest, the fungus foray and the four local Walking for Health, Telford and Wrekin walks are well established in the programme. Among the new ventures this year were walks to Rodington Vineyard and to the Eco Trail at Denso Manufacturing. Another new addition was a very well attended litter pick on and around the Wrekin, held jointly with Telford Street Champions. To cater for all walkers, the walks ranged from gentle tours of Attingham Park's Deer Park and of Wellington Town Centre to a chance to walk the whole of the new Telford T50 50 Mile Trail in sections, using public transport to and from the walks. The most strenuous was a 12-mile section of the T50 trail from Ironbridge to Wellington. Five people completed the whole of the T50 50 trail and several others walked more than one section. We also held two indoor events, the film and an evening looking at Telford at 50. Three events were fully booked and we had to disappoint some people.

Wellington Walkers are Welcome are very grateful to the leaders who gave their time and expertise freely. We are grateful too to the organisations who supported us by supplying leaders or hospitality - The Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust, The Friends of Dothill LNR, Walking for Health- Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, the National Trust, Wellington LA21, Wellington Orbit (was the Clifton Project), DENSO Manufacturing UK Ltd, Telford Steam Railway, Rodington Vineyard, South Telford Rights of Way Project, Telford and Wrekin Pride Officer and Wellington Library. We also had financial support from the advertisers in the festival leaflet and from Wellington Town Council. We were pleased too to include joint events with Mid-Wales and Marches Rail Rambles and with Telford and East Shropshire Ramblers.

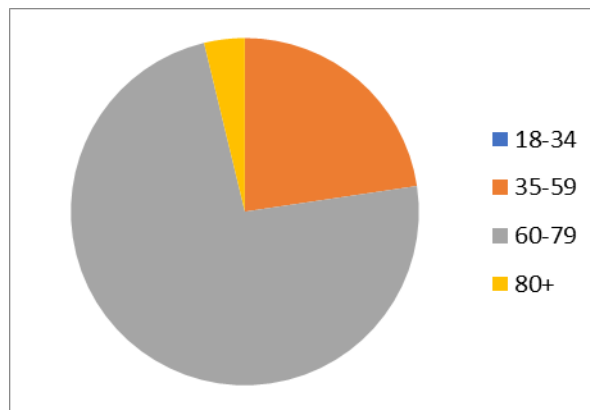
To gauge the reception, we again used an online feedback survey. The forms received covered all booked walks, apart from the memory walk. They also covered all parts of the T50 50 Mile Trail, the Litter Pick and the Telford at 50 talk. The 53 forms covered 69 attendances at events. Most of the 53 ratings were "excellent" with most of the rest at "very good", no one rated an event as "fair" or as "not up to expectations". We were pleased that 23% of those submitting forms said they were not regular walkers and 32% usually walked with friends or family only. Leaders were praised in many of the free text comments. Pace and keeping a large group together are perennial problems and these were mentioned in 3 responses. We particularly liked this comment "Amazed by the history of the area and our guide was a mine of information. And very pleasant and friendly making it a delightful couple of hours. It was my first Festival walk but my friend and I will definitely be eager to see the 2019 programme. Really appreciate all the hard work of the organising group." Predictably, as many of the walks were during the working week, the majority of the respondents were in the 60-79 age group. Although none of the respondents were younger than 34, some of the walkers were in that age group and there were some children on the Fungus Foray. Most of the respondents were local with equal numbers from Wellington itself and from the rest of Telford, only 2 were from outside Shropshire (Powys). (Although we know that in addition 2 walkers were from Rugby and several from Herefordshire). Most had taken part because of the festival leaflets, but word of mouth, our website, Facebook, Radio Shropshire and the Wrekin News had all attracted walkers. 69 out of 413 (17%) is not a very high proportion so the percentages should be treated as very rough estimates. Nevertheless, the responses give us encouragement for next year's festival. As the forms show, we have many loyal local walkers who attended four or more events.

The survey results:

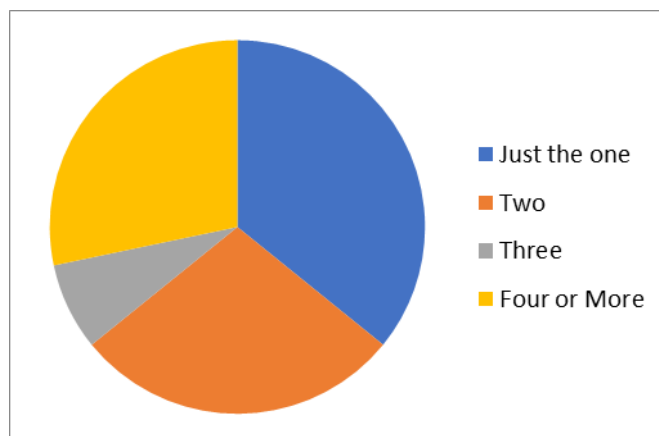
Gender
Male 20
Female 33
53



Age
18-34 0
35-59 12
60-79 39
80+ 2
53



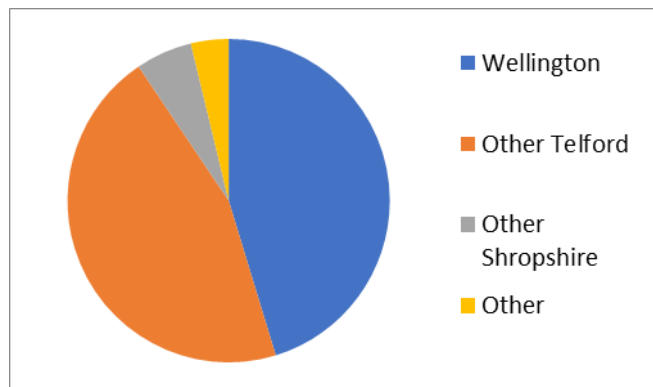
Walks Attended
Just the one 19
Two 15
Three 4
Four or More 15
53



Survey results, continued.

Where walkers live

Wellington	24
Other Telford	24
Other Shropshire	3
Other	2
	53



Rating

Excellent	37
Very Good	14
Good	2
Fair	0
Not up to expectations	0
	53

