RTG Chair's Report 2026

The group has had another successful year. Our membership numbers are down slightly, but the average number of people out walking each week has increased.

Each quarter Rosie, our walks coordinator, and walk leaders put together a great programme in the wide variety of locations that fall within an hour or so drive from Trafford. On Thursdays our walks are around 8 to 11 miles, with anything up to 2000 or so feet of ascent. If a walk is more strenuous or leisurely than usual, we will try to offer an alternative. The Saturday Strolls on alternate weeks remain very popular, and we are grateful to Lesley and Sheila for continuing to organise and lead these.

Our spring and summer programme included "evening pub walks" for a second year. Overall these attracted a few more walkers than previously, possibly because they were generally based a little closer to home than last year's walks. However a series of four monthly Sunday walks through the summer, about the same level of difficulty as our Thursday walks, were not well attended.

Our trip to the Lakes in May is becoming "a thing" – though this year we went to Ambleside instead of Keswick. Once again, we were able to offer 10 walks over the four days so there was a good range. There was also lots of socialising in the pubs and restaurants in the village, rounded off with a group meal on Thursday evening. Plans for Ambleside '27 are well underway, with over 30 people already interested.

We have recently had another "overnighter" short break, though many people actually booked two nights' accommodation to make more of the trip. This time we based at Kirkby Stephen and had two days exploring the Howgills, with a great curry night as well. We hope to do more of these trips in the future as it gives us an opportunity to walk outside of our usual stamping ground.

Other social activities included a Christmas soiree, hosted by one of our members at her home, and a designated 'summer lunch' walk: this was trialled in addition to the winter lunch and was very well attended. There is an informal autumn post-walk meal in the programme, as well as special walks – and another soiree – in the diary for Christmas.

We are always trying to attract new walk leaders and are aiming to improve the support we can offer them. In the summer we organised a talk by the Bolton Mountain Rescue Team which was very informative. All our leaders have been provided with first aid kits, and we are currently looking at other emergency kit, leader resources and a "buddy" system.

I'm happy to report that the footpath team is continuing to thrive under Tony's leadership. This year the path maintenance group has been reinstated and now meets regularly to undertake path clearance, in addition to all the inspections taking place.

Many thanks to all the committee members who give so much to the club, most of it behind the scenes; to our walk leaders for their continuing support, rain or shine; and to the members of the footpath teams who have re-vitalised this important work. Thanks also to our members who make our walks, trips and social activities so enjoyable, and make all the effort worthwhile.

Katharine Thorley

12 October 2026