

Richmond Walking and Book Festival Annual Review 2024

This review is the annual report that the Trustees of Richmond Walking and Book Festival are legally required to make to the Charity Commission. It covers the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024.

Governance

Richmond Walking and Book Festival (the Trust) is a charitable incorporated organisation with limited liability. The Trust's only voting members are its charity trustees (foundation model constitution). It is governed by its constitution and was registered as a charity by the Charity Commission for England and Wales on 7 October 2020 – registration number 1191688. The Trust's registered office is:

17 New Road
Richmond
DL10 4QS

Objectives and Activities

The objects of the Trust are:

- (1) The advancement of education in the arts for the public benefit, in particular the art of literature, by the provision of an annual book festival in and around Richmond, North Yorkshire.
- (2) The promotion of community participation in healthy recreation by providing guided walks with the aim of offering opportunities for exercise and access to the countryside, local history, the physical and natural environment, flora and fauna through the medium of an annual walking festival in and around Richmond, North Yorkshire.

Public Benefit Statement

The objectives of the Trust are set out above. The Trust has fulfilled these objectives by providing a walking and book festival from 20th to 29th September 2024 plus a small number of events outside of this period. In making decisions and exercising its powers the Trust has had due regard to the Charity Commission Guidance on Public Benefit.

Organisation

The Trust is managed by a Board comprising all of the Trustees. Some operational decisions are delegated to subgroups for walks, book events, and marketing. The Board of Trustees is assisted in its roles by some volunteers but there are no paid employees. It is estimated that over 50 people helped with the 2024 Festival.

Friends and Supporters

The only members of the Trust are the Trustees. The Trust has a Friends scheme but Friends have no voting rights. There are currently 61 Friends (51 in 2023) including 33 paid friends in 2024, 3 friends for life, 10 Trustees and 15 advertising friends. We have a supporters email list (including Friends) of 660 (557 in 2023) people.

The Trustees

The Trust constitution requires that there should be a minimum of three trustees. There were ten trustees during the year two of whom resigned at the year-end.

Barbara Gravenor	Chair
Susan Young	Book Events Subgroup
Geoff Wall	Walk Coordinator
Jane McLennan	Minute Secretary and Book Events Subgroup
Judith Clark	Book Events Subgroup (Resigned)
James Gravenor	Treasurer and Book Events Coordinator
Karen Wyndham-Webb	Sponsorship and Friends Coordinator (Resigned)
Kathryn Streatfield	Book Events Subgroup and Brochure Coordinator
Nick Long	Walk Subgroup
Mark Leigh-Howarth	Book Events Subgroup

Links to other organisations

The Trust maintains close links with Richmond Town Council, a number of non-profit making bodies, providers of venues and accommodation, local businesses and local schools. The Trust is a member of Original Richmond Business and Tourism Association and is affiliated to the Swaledale Outdoor Club.

Risk Management

The Trust identified a number of risks in providing both guided walks and book events and reviewed these risks during the year and implemented appropriate measures to reduce and manage those risks. The Trust also took out relevant insurance.

The 2024 Festival

The Richmond Walking & Book Festival 2024 ran from 20th to 29th September with advance children's events on 22nd August. In addition we hosted two speakers as part of the Great Big Green Week on 15th and 16th June. This was the 19th Festival (the 4th to be organised by the Richmond Walking and Book Festival charity). The Festival was a success judged both financially and by the respondents to a survey we conducted: 100% of those who responded said they would recommend the Festival to a friend. Customer comments were overwhelmingly positive. 248 (350 in 2023) people participated in the 25 walks provided and 988 (792 in 2023) tickets were issued for 21 book events. 3 book events were cancelled because of low advance sales and 1 event because of the weather. 3 walks were cancelled because of bad weather. The strong partnership with Richmond School continued with school pupils previewing and reviewing talks and producing posters. Free tickets were given to some pupils. We offered a 50% reduction on the ticket price for people on income related benefits or in full time education or accompanying carers, for all walks and for book events. Excluding Georgian Theatre Royal events 9 concessionary tickets were sold (compared to 23 in 2023).

The Speakers

Feedback from the speakers who gave talks at the Festival was very positive.

Independent Review of Educational Content of Festival

The Trust commissioned an independent review of the Educational content of the Festival from Delphine Ruston, former Head of English at Richmond School and Sixth Form College. This review is attached in full as an appendix 1 to this report.

Finances

In 2024 walking events produced a surplus of £980 after donations were made to the National Trust, the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, the Lower Ure Trust, Keld Resource Centre and the Heggs Castle project. The book events produced a surplus of £1,325. Grants, sponsorship, advertising, donations and other fund raising activities generated income of £3,722. After deducting marketing and website expenses (£4,284) and administration expenses (£1,363) the Festival made a surplus of £380 (£903 in 2022) which when added to our balance brought forward means that we carry forward a balance of £18,668 as at 31 December 2024 to underwrite future Festivals. The Trust aims to maintain reserves of £15,000.

Statements of Receipts and Payments and Assets and Liabilities are attached as Appendix 2.

Barbara Gravenor
Chair
Richmond Walking and Book Festival

Appendix 1 Richmond Walking and Book Festival 2024 – Education Report

The 2024 Richmond Walking and Book Festival offered 28 walks, 15 of which were new, and 20 book events. Key subject areas of the festival included: ecology and environment, history and archaeology, biography, non-fiction and fiction, including crime and detective fiction. A feature of this year was some events that were curious and intriguing, defying categorisation and provoking people to think afresh.

Two additional events were offered outside the main festival period. These focused on conservation. In June, Dr Tom Moorhouse, ecologist and author, gave a presentation on his book, 'Elegy for a River', about his conservation work around water voles. This was of special interest to the local community where water pollution on the River Swale is currently a serious issue, reflecting concerns nationally. The second event was with writer and campaigner, Roger Morgan-Grenville, who spoke about his book, 'Across a Waking Land – A Long Walk Through a British Spring' which describes his 1000-mile walk from the New Forest to Cape Wrath to see for himself the state of nature in Britain and meet with people across the country who are working to reduce species loss and develop regenerative farming.

Ecology and Environment

Ecology and the environment are important, ongoing themes of the festival. Four 'Discovery Walks' gave participants the opportunity to explore the Dales terrain with a local guide and learn about new approaches to land management, for example the Arkengarthdale and Heggs Castle re-naturing project where three landowners are working together to increase biodiversity and develop natural flood management. Other walks explored the history of Swaledale: Dales barns, the chapels of Arkengarthdale, and the lead mining industry. These walks were often complemented by talks, for example with journalist, Joe Willis, who has written an entertaining and illuminating guide to Swaledale.

History

Another ongoing feature of the festival is history – of people and places, locally, nationally and internationally.

The headline event was an audience with well-known broadcaster and historian, Lucy Worsley. Three hundred people gathered in Richmond School hall where the evening was introduced by the Head of History. Drawing on her recent research, Lucy Worsley presented fascinating new insights into the hidden life of Agatha Christie. A lively Q&A demonstrated audience engagement, drawing on Lucy Worsley's extensive and distinguished work as a curator and expert on the lives of Queen Victoria and Jane Austen.

The festival has a track record of inviting writers who point a spot light on overlooked histories and introduce audiences to the findings of recent research. This often leads to a reassessment of accepted narratives. Such a case was the evening with Matt Tiller who has investigated the remarkable story of forgotten black footballer, Jack Leslie, recorded in his book, 'The Lion Who Never Roared'.

A popular walk is the visit to Rokeby Park with its connections to Sir Walter Scott and JMW Turner, along with its historical setting in the Tees Valley. In Richmond, another popular walk explored the history of Richmond's wynds and lanes. Participants included local people who have an ongoing interest in the rich heritage of the town and a couple who had stopped-off in Richmond while walking the Coast to Coast National Trail.

Engaging Young People

The festival reaches out to young people in entertaining and inspiring ways outside the scope of the school curriculum. In August during the summer holidays and for the second year running, author and cartoonist, Mike Barfield, presented his hilarious, interactive show for 7-11 year olds at three local libraries (in liaison with Catterick, Richmond and Colburn Community Libraries (CRACCL)), this time exploring his new non-fiction book, 'The World's First Rollercoaster and Other Amazing Inventions'. In September, Year 7 students at Richmond School designed posters for different events. And five literature students from Years 11-13 volunteered to read a book for one of the events and write a preview, for example a Year 11 student wrote an enthusiastic preview of Toby Wilkinson's book, 'King of Kings – Ramesses the Great.' Students were then given free tickets to attend with parents and afterwards wrote a review. Both previews and reviews gave students the opportunity to practise their writing skills for a 'real' purpose and were posted on the school website. The student who attended Sally Coulthard's talk on 'A Brief History of the Countryside in 100 Objects' commented to another audience member that the book had fuelled his desire to study archaeology at university.

Fiction

Numerous events offered attendees the opportunity to gain unique insights into the process and craft of writing. Novelist, Tom Crewe, was interviewed by local festival sponsor, Austin Lynch, in a highly illuminating and often moving account of his decade-long project to write his debut novel, 'The New Life'.

There were also several events focusing on the ever-popular detective and crime fiction genres: Tom Mead presented an informative and entertaining evening on the golden age of detective fiction; and Martin Edwards talked about his book, 'The Life of Crime: Detecting the History of Mysteries and their Creators', as well as presenting the first planned talk in memory of Peter Robinson, former patron of the festival and local writer of detective fiction.

The Curious and Intriguing

Several events offered alternative ways of engaging with the world. Nicholas Royle presented an hilarious evening introducing the audience to his quirky pursuit of collecting all Picador paperbacks published between 1972 and 2000, as documented in his book, 'White Spines: Confessions of a Book Collector'. Kenneth Wilson, author of 'Highway Cello', recounted his cycle-ride from Hadrian's Wall to Rome with a cello on his back, as well as giving a live performance. Author, Mark Bridgeman, hosted a Trial by Jury Dinner Event at Richmond Station. Meanwhile, accomplished performance story teller, Dominic Kelly, captivated an audience at the Georgian Theatre Royal for a spine-chilling telling of his Scandinavian whodunit, 'Mara'.

Active Participation

There were four events that offered participants the opportunity to practise skills. Ten people attended two 'Sketchbook Walks' with artist, Liz Harvey, which involved a three-hour stroll around Richmond. Aimed at beginners and more experienced artists alike, Liz Harvey guided participants in working on composition and different mark-making techniques in order to develop a series of sketches of the local area.

For the third year running, there were two beginners' bookbinding workshops with Richmond bookbinder, Delphine Ruston. These were attended by two mixed groups of six. A fourteen year old, self-professed book fanatic came along with her father, having travelled from Chester; a couple from Wetherby who run a stationery business had always wanted to know how a book is made; while a retiree had travelled from Cumbria. Participants learned how to make a chapbook and a hard-back notebook. All twelve participants expressed a desire to learn more about bookbinding and follow-up workshops are planned for the new year.

The Walking and Book Festival continues to flourish, drawing both local people and visitors from further afield. Richmond and the Dales provide endless scope for investigation and appreciation; and book events introduce audiences to a rich and diverse range of publications. The core Festival Team co-ordinates the programme, liaising with writers, publishers and related organisations; while a large and dedicated group of volunteers provides day-to-day support.

Delphine Ruston

6.10.2024

Richmond Walking & Book Festival Accounts 2024		
	1 January - 31 December 2024	1 January - 31 December 2023
Receipts and Payments	£	£
Receipts		
Grants	1,000	1,000
Donations	160	935
Friends scheme	480	435
Gift Aid	103	186
Bank interest	167	37
Sponsorship and advertising	1,770	2,050
Quiz night & coffee morning	209	195
Book events	14,197	9,078
Book sales	2,539	1,784
Bar	710	192
Bag sales	126	12
Walks	1,698	2,443
Sub-Total	23,159	18,347
Payments		
Book events - speaker & related expenses	13,073	8,758
Book purchases	2,176	1,436
Bar costs	354	83
Purchase of bags	0	195
Walk expenses	609	1,108
Bank charges & commission	993	612
Advertising, promotion & website	4,284	3,975
Other expenses	1,289	1,277
Sub-Total	22,779	17,444
Surplus for Year (unrestricted funds)	380	903
Statement of assets and liabilities at 31 December	2024	2023
Cash in Current Account	5,527	18,288
Cash in Savings Account	13,141	0
Total Cash	18,668	18,288
Funds brought Forward	18,288	17,385
Surplus for Year	380	903
Unrestricted Funds Carried Forward	18,668	18,288