



Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2011

Happy New Year!

A little late with the seasonal greeting perhaps but maybe Happy Birthday is more appropriate. The group celebrates its 30th anniversary this year and to mark the occasion we are leading the annual Glamorgan Area walk which will be followed by a buffet at The King Arthur. You may also have noticed a new name! At our AGM last October we decided it was time to change from West Glamorgan to Swansea Ramblers. Now anyone looking to join a walking group in the County of Swansea will be able to find our new www.swansearamblers.org.uk web site when they do a search for walking in Swansea.

Thank You!

As always, everyone in Swansea Ramblers owe a debt of gratitude to the walk leaders, the footpath clearance team, the committee members and volunteers who all do their bit to keep us walking each week. Thanks to everyone who has devoted some of their free time so that the majority of members can just pick up the programme and go on a walk. Volunteers are still very thin on the ground however. If you think you can help please do contact us.

Christmas Dinner Walk

A special thank you goes to Viv Davies for arranging the Christmas dinner at the King Arthur. Also to John Ashley who led a good walk beforehand. Pictures and video are on our web site.

New Walk leaders

Can YOU help a little to keep the wheels in motion (or should that be feet?). New walk leaders are always most welcome. You DON'T have to lead a long strenuous walk in the hills (but if you want to then we won't stop you!). We also need short and medium walks. YOU could lead a 2-3 mile walk for the less fit or maybe, dare I say it – a 5 mile walk!! Come on! Short walks are easier to lead, don't take so long to plan and won't be too difficult. We can even arrange for you to team up with an experienced leader while you learn the ropes. Ask John Ashley for more details: 01792-201171.

Stepping Stones

These short walks and most walks up to 5 miles are now rebranded as **Walk4Life**. Details of the shortest walks can be accessed from the home page of our web site. Look for the **Walk4Life** logo.

New Committee Members

Thanks to Roger Brown who has joined the committee and also to John Ashley for not only agreeing to become Programme Secretary but also our new Vice Chair. Good to have new faces on committee **BUT** we really do need more people to come forward and help with some of the work.

Path Clearance Team

Our work party goes out with the council to clear paths so that our members and the public can use them easily, unaware that we got there first with pruners, loppers, strimmers, hedge trimmers etc. We need more volunteers to come out and help with the clearance work. We normally go out once a month on a Wednesday and since sometimes not everyone is available on the day, we do need to find a larger number of people that we can call on. The clearance team enjoys the fresh air and sense of achievement so if you fancy giving it a try then ring Lynne Lock on 01792-645748

Annual Area Walk

This year's annual May Glamorgan Area walk takes place on Sunday 8th May. This year we will be hosting the event as part of our 30th anniversary. Ramblers from all the groups in the Old Glamorganshire area will come to Gower to join us for this event. There will be short, medium and long walks which will all finish about the same time at the King Arthur. John has arranged a buffet at a reasonable price of £7.50 per head so let's go back there afterwards and really celebrate our 30th birthday!

Annual weekend Away 2011/2012

This year a weekend away has been arranged in Lynton so we should have some wonderful coast and inland walking. Speaking of coast, The All Wales Coast Path is scheduled to open in May next year. May always seems to be a busy month for the Ramblers, with an annual Get Walking Day to promote walking to new members, the yearly Glamorgan Area walk and our weekend away. We'll have to make sure all these events don't clash next year, especially as Ramblers throughout Wales will be putting on special coast walks to celebrate the opening.

Same Old Walk?

Wouldn't it be nice if we walked somewhere we haven't been before? Or maybe walked on a different day or time? Could we do something other than get in the car, go to the walk then drive straight home again? John Ashley would welcome walks with a different theme. Perhaps you could lead a history walk. What about stopping at a pub half way around? – Could be popular in winter to get out of the cold/wet/snow etc and great in the beer garden on a warm sunny day. How about a night walk? – They were always popular! If you prefer to see where you are going we could try some early evening walks in the summer. Could we use a service bus for a linear walk. How about letting the train take the strain to get to a walk? Dave Bird is arranging some train walks (see below). If anyone fancies leading a walk just that little bit different please get in touch.

Train Rambles - HEART OF WALES WALK

Dave Bird has sent me these details of a series of walks that he plans to do.

Do you enjoy long linear walks and train rides? Then try the Heart of Wales walk.

This walk, appearing on both the Gower Society and Ramblers programmes, will start at Gowerton and follow the general route of the Heart of Wales railway line. Initially the walks will be on Sundays, walking away from Swansea for 10 – 15 miles each day, and returning on the train. As we get further from Swansea we will take the train out as well as back – probably on Saturdays – and eventually we will need to use whole weekends.

But remember, these are not our usual railway rambles that happen to be on a Sunday. They are long, quite strenuous walks which make use of the train. ***If the group is too slow and we miss the train.....***

Ramblers Cymru

Julie Hannam has now left Ramblers Cymru at the end of her contract to engage communities with walking. Rob Hanna, our Senior Officer in Wales, has been forging new initiatives to raise the profile of Ramblers. New 21st Century technological solutions for modern tourists are being pioneered in Wales. The Peoples Collection web site, part of the National Museum of Wales is working with Ramblers Cymru to produce eTrails that can be downloaded to mobile phones so that the route can be followed on the ground. Other partnerships with The Welsh Assembly Government and The Countryside Council for Wales have been made and partly as a result of these collaborations, Rob will be able to employ two new members of staff in the Cardiff Office. One position will be an officer to support the All Wales Coast Path, in addition to my PhD research into coastal economic regeneration based on the path.

All Wales Coast Path

Already mentioned in passing, the new long distance trail is scheduled to open in May 2012 to coincide with the London Olympics. It will be a continuous 850 mile path around the coast of Wales. - Over a thousand miles if you include the Offa's Dyke path which will mean a continuous walk around the boundary of Wales. No other country can claim to have a path around its borders. Some of it will initially mean some inland road walking where no voluntary agreement has been reached with landowners or the topology does not allow a path, e.g. a long detour around an estuary. Zetta & I went in February to the latest opening at St Dogmaels where the Pembrokeshire Coast Path was joined to the Ceredigion Path to form a continuous 250 mile section. See web for photos and video.

From new paths to blocked paths

Although new paths are being created around the coast, 52% of the Welsh network remains blocked, overgrown or obstructed. It is up to each of us to report any problems we encounter with paths. Swansea Council Footpath team do a lot of good work but there are not enough of them to do everything. That's why our work party helps out. If you discover a problem, maybe while checking your walk for the next programme, give Lynne Lock a ring and she will pass the details onto the council. They may clear it themselves, ask us to go ahead and clear it or maybe arrange to come out with us to supervise. Remember: **IF YOU DON'T REPORT IT, THE PATH WON'T CLEAR ITSELF!**

Walk Leaders Information- Personal Details on the web

This subject was clearly mentioned in the last two newsletters and it has become necessary to repeat it again. We live in an on-line digital age where our personal details can be found on the internet. As a 21st century group, we must also have a web presence and we publish our walks both on our site and the Ramblers national Walks Finder site. If you wish that your telephone number should not appear in your walk entry on the web you MUST inform the programme Co-ordinator EACH TIME you submit a walk. This of course means that John Ashley must substitute his own telephone number as the point of contact and leaders should ensure he is given sufficient additional details about the walk to be able to answer phone queries.

New Swansea Ramblers web Site

To coincide with our name change, Alex Thomas, our web master worked long and hard to provide a seamless transition from the old web site. Thank you Alex for the conversion and for the continuous work you do to keep it up to date. The new site, www.swansearamblers.org.uk has many of the familiar pages from the old site. We have also added more walk photographs to the site, so there is getting on for just under a hundred walks that you can view. Also from the home page you can click on the Evening Post page which has a number of guided walks that I did for the newspaper. We also provide downloadable copies of the programme and membership application forms. This newsletter and some of the previous ones are also on the web. We hope to set up an online archive so if you have any old photos or memorabilia of the last 30 years of walking, please let me know and we'll get a copy on the site.

Bay Magazine Sponsorship

Last but not least, a big thank you to the Bay Magazine for printing our programme free of charge. Many of our groups struggle to find the funds to produce a programme and I think you will agree with a member of Ramblers staff from the London publicity office that the layout of our programme is one of the best in the country. The support of The Bay Magazine will ensure we can continue to produce high quality programmes in future.

Andrew Morgan
March 2011