



# Newsletter

Summer 2012

*Hello,*

Summer is on its way and we can look forward to dry days and less mud. (Let's hope so anyway!!) Another (almost) full programme of walks for the next six months has been produced and our thanks go out to Roger Brown, Bob Denley, and John Ashley for their hard work in putting it all together. The programme wouldn't happen if leaders didn't volunteer their time to lead walks so everyone's thanks go out to each leader as well.

## *All Wales Coast Path*

There's a lot happening this year on the coast, starting with the official opening of the Wales Coast Path on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Welsh Government has asked Ramblers Cymru to make the coast path the theme of our annual 'Big Walk' for this year on that May Bank Holiday weekend. Ramblers all around Wales will be gathering on the coast as part of 'The Big Welsh Coastal Walk' to get as many people out on the path as possible that day. Swansea Ramblers is going one better by holding a four day mini festival of walks based on the coast path.

We will be walking the entire length of the Swansea and Gower coast path over four consecutive days. Each day there will also be a shorter circular walk for the public to enjoy.

On Friday 4<sup>th</sup> May, Roger Brown will begin the festival with a linear walk around Swansea Bay to Bracelet (10 miles). Steve Hawkes will lead the Saturday walk from Bracelet to Port Eynon (14 miles) and Bob Denley will pick up the baton on the Sunday and take us from Port Eynon to Llanmadoc (14 miles). That leaves me to finish the event with a walk from Llanmadoc to Loughor, on the Carmarthenshire border, (14 miles).

We have arranged a coach for each day so booking is essential and you will need to contact the walk leaders by **18<sup>th</sup> April** to arrange your place. We don't know how many people will be coming out to celebrate the event but we've already had a request for 50 scouts to join in so **book early !!!**

## *Ramblers Festival of Evening Walks*

July sees the National Ramblers 'Festival of Evening Walks' and a number of our leaders have put forward some walks for us to enjoy. A short evening walk in the summer is a nice way to end the day so perhaps next year you might like to lead one as well. Anyone on a festival walk (Coastal, evening or otherwise) who wants to join the Ramblers can receive a 50% discount off the first year's membership so pass the word around to anyone who you think might join.

## ***Committee News***

We had five new volunteers for committee at the AGM: Rob Johnston, Jan Banfield, Bob Denley, Steve Hawkes and Peter Jones. A very big thank you goes to each one of them. Without volunteers on committee, we just couldn't run the society and put together a programme of walks.

Bob Denley has enthusiastically taken on the job of work party co-ordinator and some of the work done to clear paths and build bridges can be seen on the 'News' section of our web site. Steve Hawkes has taken over as membership secretary and is working to increase membership. Roger Jones stepped down as membership secretary at the AGM. Subsequently in December he agreed to fill the vacant vice chairman role.

We still need extra hands to help out on committee, especially when it comes to organising the programme. Roger Brown can't be expected to do the whole thing single handed and the committee has been helping out but we really need some volunteers to take on sections of the programme to make light work of it.

As well as sorting out the Sunday long walks, we would also like to hear from anyone interested in:

Organising Sunday short walks

Organising the really short 1-3 mile walks that would attract new members,

Organising evening walks such as those we'll be enjoying this summer

Organising the mid-week walks

Organising different types of walks, such as our popular night walks or train walks.

Very importantly, everyone should be aware that we **WILL** need a new secretary. Zetta Flew has given many years of sterling service to the group but she feels it is now time to step down and allow someone else to do the job. We cannot function, indeed are NOT allowed to function as a group without a secretary so we must find someone to take on this role ready for the October AGM or we are going to face a very serious crisis for the group.

## ***Short/Medium walks for the programme***

Ever tried to decide whether to go on the Sunday long walk or the Sunday short walk? A long walk is a long walk and a short walk is a short walk (aren't they?). At least once on the winter programme the short walk was longer than the long walk and often there is only a couple of miles difference between the two walks. A leader puts a lot of effort into creating a walk and checking it out on the ground. It is disappointing for them when many of the expected walkers go on 'the other walk' and embarrassing for members when their loyalties are torn between two leaders they know and then feel the need to apologise that they are going with the other leader. It is great that leaders volunteer a walk for the short walk. There are quite a few gaps on the new programme where NO leader offered a walk. Should we keep the short walks short? Should we cap them at 5-6 miles? We might get more new members if we have shorter walks. What about the medium walks? Some people can do 8-9 miles but nothing over 10 miles. I'm not suggesting we favour one distance over the other but perhaps we need to get the balance right and watch out for clashes. Is there a new short/medium walk co-ordinator out there?

## ***Walk4Life***

If we want to increase our membership and be more inclusive then we need to be offering very short walks all year around. Again this needs someone to volunteer to co-ordinate AND volunteers to lead. Sometimes only one or two people turn up, sometimes nobody! A regular and advertised programme of very short walks would be more likely to attract new members. It would at least give us more publicity and raise our profile in Swansea.

## ***Weekday/Evening/Themed walks***

A lot of people would like to walk at times other than the weekend. We have a few weekday walks and this year some evening walks on the programme. If you would like more of these types of walk, why not volunteer to lead one. The more volunteers we have, the more walks we can do.

## ***Ramblers Cymru***

The director of Wales, Angela Charlton, has a team of two full time staff, Ceri Thomas and Gwenda Owen. There is also a temporary member of staff co-ordinating the Ramblers 'Big Walk' on the coast. The team promote Ramblers in Wales and Angela has regular meetings with Welsh ministers, something Ramblers GB would love to see at Westminster!

## ***Weekend Away 2012***

The weekend away to the Jurassic Coast in Dorset is on the weekend of 12<sup>th</sup> May. These weekends away tend to be arranged a year in advance so ask on a walk about the 2013 one and see if you fancy it.

## ***QR Codes***



Love them or hate them, the QR code is becoming more popular and is now appearing on our programme. This one contains our web address allowing mobile phone users to scan then visit our web site.

## ***Footpaths***

There is often some rotten stile on a walk or a piece of barbed wire where it shouldn't be. The Swansea Rights of Way team do a splendid job in keeping paths open (compare for example Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire where you have to expect paths to be closed rather than open). Our local team can't be expected to check every section of path all the time so when you spot something wrong, take a photo, record the location (preferably the grid reference) and let Lynne Lock know the details. She will liaise with the council and see what can be done.

## ***Swansea Ramblers web site***

Don't forget we have a web site with details of programmed walks and photographs of previous ones. The news section tells you about what's been happening and the contact us pages tell you how to get in touch with the committee. Remember when people ask you about the group to tell them we have a web site.

## ***Photos Archive***

We now have an archive of photographs on the web. More will be added thanks to Alan Richards who has sent us some dating from the late 80s and mid 90s. Have you got any old photos of walks for the web? Let me know.

## ***Work Party***

We have an enthusiastic team of volunteers that go out with the council to clear vegetation, build bridges and do what's needed to keep you walking. The work can be fun, therapeutic and social. A number of us recently completed an official brush-cutter course so we can be let loose with the power tools! Bob Denley has taken over as co-ordinator and anyone who fancies giving it a go should ring him on 01792-371248.

## ***Evening Post Walks***

I am still writing a weekly walking column for the Evening Post and many of these walks appear on our web site with maps and photos for people to use as guides to do the walk. The majority of these walks are very short, partly because I only get 400 words to describe them and partly because the average reader only wants to do a short walk. Short walks can ignite an interest in walking and hopefully a desire to try some of the longer walks we offer. If you know of someone who doesn't at the moment want to do long walks why not suggest they look at the Self Guided walks on our web site?

## ***Annual Christmas Meal***

This is now a popular annual event and the last couple of years we have enjoyed an excellent meal in the King Arthur Hotel's spacious function room. Thank you to Peter Jones for the walk before the meal. Unlike most walks, we had the use of a couple of spare rooms in order to change and freshen up ready for the Christmas meal. We have again booked the King Arthur and this year it will be on 25<sup>th</sup> November. Booking details will appear with the winter newsletter. Meanwhile, make a note of the date for this Christmas as some of our members were disappointed to find they had already arranged something else that day.

See you on a walk this summer,

Andrew Morgan