



Newsletter

Spring 2015

Hello,

Summer is just around the corner but let's not forget the wonders (*and wanders*) of spring as the cold winter gives way to warmer and drier (*we hope!*) weather. Spring is often a time when people think about joining a group to try out walking so if you know of anyone who may like to start walking, please encourage them to come out with Swansea Ramblers!

Membership Growth

It's official! We're among the top ten groups in G.B. for membership growth! In 2013 we had 65 new members and 2014 saw us introduce 85 more people to the delights of walking. So welcome to all our new members and we look forward to seeing you out regularly in 2015!

Volunteer Leaders

As a charity, we rely on our members to volunteer their free time to lead walks. A big thank you from all members goes to our dedicated leaders who enable us to enjoy so many walks all year around. You will notice there are some empty slots on the programme where we didn't have a volunteer come forward. If you haven't offered to lead a walk on the programme, why not ask us how to go about it? Some of the shorter walks are an easy way to start leading and we can mentor to provide you with support to gain your confidence. Everyone has to start sometime – so why not now?

Programme Production

Of course the programme that comes through your letterbox doesn't just happen! There are a band of coordinators, proof readers, stamp stickers, envelope fillers, etc. who help me get the programme into that final form which London and other groups have told us is one of the best they've seen! A big thank you goes to everyone who has helped to put together the summer programme!

Email addresses – we need another 147 of them!

Posting this newsletter is expensive! Often things such as social events are arranged at short notice or we need to advise you of changes to walks. We also send out other newsletters by email to keep you informed about developments but there are still about 147 members who have not provided their email address! We really do want to keep everyone informed of what's happening in your group so if you haven't been receiving our updates by email, don't miss out, email me today on infoATswansearamblers.org.uk (*replace the 'AT' with @*).

Social events

Ever popular was this year's Christmas walk and meal at the King Arthur in Reynoldston. Our thanks go to Zetta Flew for arranging yet another enjoyable day. The Thai meal in January when we started to create the summer programme goes from strength to strength and it's good to see so many of you there. Our Social Secretaries, Myra and Peter continue to think up great socials to enjoy throughout the year and we email details to all members who have provided their email address. We also raise funds for socials by holding raffles so if you have anything to donate, please let one of the social secretaries know.

Chester weekend Away 2014

The short walk weekend went very well in November. Details were emailed to everyone interested in the trip and a wonderful time was had walking, watching fireworks, eating lovely meals and generally enjoying the socialising. Thank you to all who attended and special thanks to the organisers, Myra Lewis and Clive Scott. Photographs of the weekend can be seen on the web site.

Malvern Weekend Away: Friday 29th to Sunday 31st May 2015

This year's weekend away is to the Malvern Hills. This is a lovely area for walking and should give us another memorable weekend away. Long and short walks have been arranged and details were emailed to members earlier in the year. If you have not received these details, let us know your email address and we'll forward information to you. If you do not have an email, contact Richard Beale, 01792-207833.

Project walk 2015 - 2017

One of our leaders, Dave Bird is leading a series of Rail Walks with the intention of reaching Fishguard at the Irish Ferry terminal. If anyone has ideas for other projects, why not talk them over with the walks coordinators? Thank you to Dave for creating these walks. Dave has this to say about his project:

"Following the successful railway walks to Church Stretton, we will be transferring our attention to the railway lines west to the Irish Ferry ports. As before, we will use the railway whenever possible to travel between the start and end of the walks.

The walks will take in the agricultural and industrial heritage of South Wales, parts of the Wales Coast Path and lots of stunning views. Most days there will be the option of refreshments and / or a meal before returning home.

In general, each day will be between 10 and 14 miles and the entire walk will take 2 – 3 years to complete. There will probably be a weekend away for the final few legs.

This year we will be walking three stages, from Llanelli to Kidwelly then to Carmarthen and finally to St. Clears".

Gower Mobile App

Gower Landscape Partnership has recently released an App on both Android and Apple which provides over a dozen self-guided routes with information that is displayed on the phone when you reach points of interest on a walk. The 'Gower' App is free and can be downloaded from the appropriate store.

Arranging Trips/holidays/walks

Occasionally, some of our members arrange walking holidays, either in this country or abroad. While some of these appear on our programme and are covered by Ramblers insurance, other events organised never actually become a Ramblers' event and remain a private trip. It is extremely important where these latter events have not been formally adopted as a Ramblers event that all participants or interested bodies, such as hotels are **NOT** given the impression that these are official Ramblers events. To do so may in exceptional circumstances lead to claims for damages against the local group or Ramblers GB, should some unfortunate incident arise.

Meeting for walks

a) Car sharing

Often, the programme will indicate a meeting point and a start point for a walk. There have been a few instances of people disappointed when they have turned up on foot to the meeting point only to find there was no lift available. We would be grateful if our members without transport would prearrange a lift with a car owner to avoid problems with transport. It is also important to respect the driver's wishes if they intend either to return immediately after a walk or to stay and socialise in the pub afterwards. A donation towards petrol should also be offered.

b) Departing from the meeting point

Members rely on the time stated in the programme to be at the meeting point. There have been issues lately where those of us gathered at the meeting point have assumed nobody else will be coming and have departed before the scheduled time. This results in other members arriving on-time after them, only to find the meeting point deserted and then not knowing if the walk is cancelled, whether they are in the right place or maybe just unclear how to get to the start point. Could all leaders (*or members standing in for leaders*) at the meeting point be aware that some other participants may still be on their way to join the walk. Leaders are also encouraged to allow ample transfer time between meeting and start points so people are not tempted to depart early or travel in excess of the speed limit to reach the start point by the time stated in the programme.

Committee News

We have had some new members on committee. Myra Lewis has joined as an additional social secretary to assist Peter Jones in providing us with social events all year. Helen Gough has agreed to coordinate the evening walks. We would like to hear from anyone interested in coordinating the Sunday short walks or arranging other walks such as train rambles or occasional night time short walks with head torches.

Footpaths

Bob Denley continues to look after issues on footpaths, whether there is a diversion planned or something has happened to block a Right of Way. If you come across an obstruction, let Bob know and he'll liaise with the council to resolve the problem.

London is launching a project to survey the state of paths in England and Wales. ***The Big Path Watch*** is intended to encourage individual volunteers to come forward and send a report of their local path network to London. The committee does not understand why such important work should not be coordinated by our footpath officer who logically should be the person made aware of any local issues but London have confirmed that group involvement is not required. Further information about how you can become involved in this survey can be found by going to www.ramblers.org.uk and searching for 'pathwatch'.

Work Party

Steve Robson has agreed to take on coordination of the footpath clearance party. If anybody would like to assist our volunteers in keeping our paths open and useable, please contact Steve.

Monday Short Strolls (2-4 miles)

Some of you may have noticed Mondays are fast becoming a popular day for short strolls which not only introduce new people to walking but have also become yet another opportunity for existing members to go walking. Richard Beale has done some sterling work to get these up and running. We need more leaders to volunteer to lead on Mondays throughout the summer, so let Richard know as soon as possible if you could lead one of these walks which are important for attracting new members.

Go Outdoors Discount Card

We have been able to arrange a discount at Go Outdoors and enclosed is a card which entitles you to this extra reduction. Please note you will first need to purchase their normal annual discount card.

Walk Finder Article 2

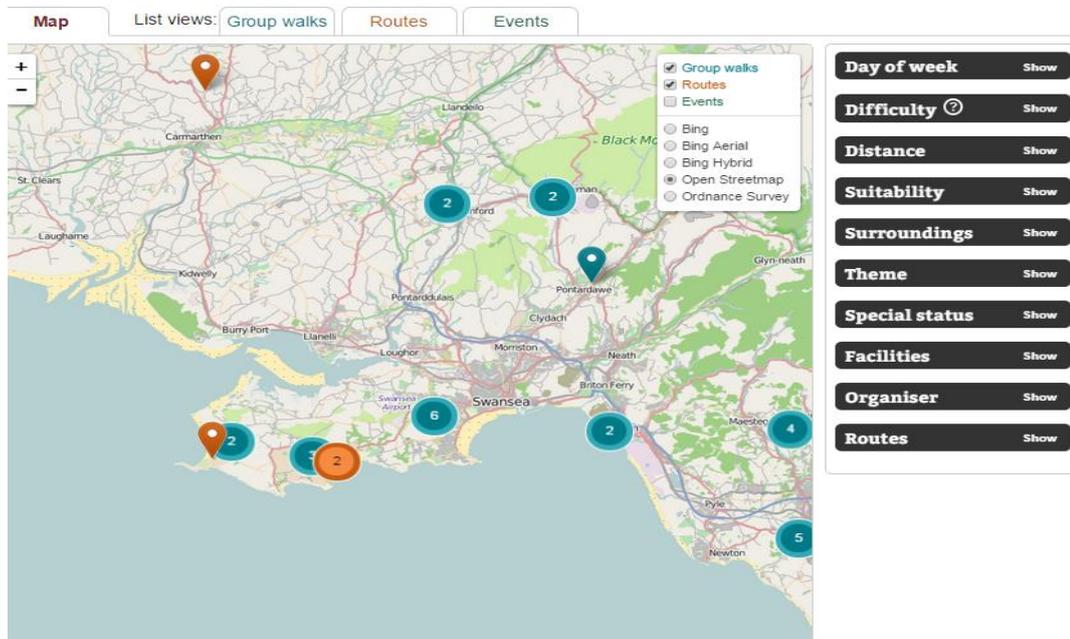
Below is the second in a series of articles from Richard Beale, our Publicity Officer. Walks Finder is available on the national Ramblers website (*and from a link on the dropdown menu of Swansea Ramblers web site*). You can use this facility to find Ramblers led walks all over the country and also Self-guided walks called '*Ramblers Routes*'.

See you on a walk,
Andrew Morgan

Group Walks Finder - 'Where Do You Want To Walk'

In the December issue of the Newsletter, I described the above as a useful feature which can be found on the home page of the Ramblers GB website. It enables you to search for walks organised by any Rambler group in Great Britain and also self-guided routes. It can be accessed by entering your location in the box under 'Where Do You Want to Walk' on the home page.

In this issue I am going to tell you a bit more about the features of the Group Walks Finder. Once you have done the initial search from the home page by using a post code or location, you can refine this further by using the criteria on the right hand side of the webpage (see below). Just click on them to reveal the contents.



The content of day of the week, difficulty (using national grading) and distance is obvious. The others are less clear, so I am going to give examples of their content:

- **Suitability** - includes child friendly, dog friendly and no car needed
- **Surroundings** - includes city, town, coast, mountain and woodland
- **Theme** - includes adventure, family fun, long distance path and wildlife
- **Special status** - includes Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, historic park or garden and nature designation (SSSI etc.)
- **Facilities** - includes parking, refreshments and toilet
- **Organiser** - allows you to choose a Rambler Group Area e.g. Glamorgan
- **Routes** - this allows you to choose self-guided routes either free to all or those only accessible by members of The Ramblers

There are some other features on the Group Walks Finder which I shall cover in the next newsletter. I also intend to explain how walk leaders can assist in providing information for this facility. In the meantime, I would love to hear from you if you have found this article and the previous one interesting and if have used the Group walks Finder.

If you have any comments or queries about the Group Walks finder please let me know.

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