



Newsletter

Winter 2017

Hello,

We've had another successful season of summer walks (*if not always summer weather!*) which has seen increased numbers enjoying the evening walks programme. We've also had about 50 new members so far this year and it's good to welcome them to the group. Winter is ahead of us with its crisp, enjoyable walking conditions (*and definitely no winter blues!*) but before that we can look forward to the autumnal transformation in the countryside as the leaves change colour and fall - and we can look forward to these thanks of course to all those members who offered to lead a walk on this programme.

Missed a social or walk update? – We haven't got your email !!

A large number of members receive group updates via email. This means (*as often happens*) that a social event, such as those below, begins to book up almost as soon as the email goes out. Changes to walks in your printed programme are advised to members by email, e.g. due to adverse weather conditions. If you have not already given us your email address you could be missing out so please send this to us now via infoATswansearamblers.org.uk* to ensure we keep you right up to date with what's happening in the group.

*(Replace AT with @)

Weekend Away 2017 in Kington, Herefordshire

(Friday 13th to Sunday 15th October)

October sees another of our popular walking weekends. The area around Kington is lovely to walk as some who did the Offa's Dyke Trail a few years ago may remember. We'll revisit the Dyke and some of the Mortimer Trail but most of all we'll enjoy the social aspect of the weekend, having fun before and after the walks as well as during! On Saturday and Sunday, there will be a long and a short walk each day. The hotel is fully booked but if you can find your own accommodation, just drop Myra a line to say you are coming.

Weekend Away 2018 in Tavistock, Devon (Friday 27th to 29th April)

OK! I'm getting a bit ahead of myself and straying into the summer programme but these things are planned far in advance to ensure all goes smoothly when we get there. The hotel was booking up fast last time I checked and Myra reported her phone was red hot with booking just minutes after I sent out the email about the trip! The town is on the edge of the Dartmoor National Park and we can look forward to some lovely long and short walks each day. Contact Myra ASAP to check for availability.

Christmas Meal at the King Arthur (Sunday 3rd December)

Our annual Christmas meal becomes more popular every year, so popular that we're not going to put on a pre-dinner walk as members would rather turn up dressed for the dinner rather than go for a muddy walk beforehand! See the booking form included with the newsletter and contact Lynne ASAP to book on.

No Leaders' meeting this summer?

People keeping asking why there was no leaders' meeting and meal this summer. Well actually, there was one and the programme advised that it was at the Grand Hotel during the roadshow - but some people didn't notice the entry (*or read my emails!!*). The main reason we didn't have a separate meeting is because unlike the January meetings when 30+ members come along, the last few summer meetings have been poorly attended, possibly because a lot of people are on holiday in the summer. That makes it difficult to book a venue, especially for food - but enough of you want to come along, we can try it again next summer.

AGMs! (Glamorgan - Saturday 21st October AND Swansea - 28th October)

Ah! I can see you glazing over already. BUT our AGM at the Greyhound in Oldwalls on Saturday 28th October will be different of course! A choice of a long or a short walk, a quick AGM to get the formal bit over for another year then – *food!* Do come along and enjoy! It should be another good day.

This year, we're got two AGMs as on Saturday 21st October we are also hosting the Glamorgan Area AGM at the Towers Hotel in Jersey Marine. We'll have a short walk before so you'll have a chance to meet other Ramblers from South Wales.

Walking Projects

For the last few years we've been working with other Ramblers' groups to revitalise this long distance trail between Pembrey and Margam Country Parks. During 2016 and 2017, Richard Beale organised a series of 7 walks to give members a chance to experience this walk that passes through three counties. The final walk was in July and we had a buffet at Margam to celebrate.

Our other project has been organised by Dave Bird and this was to walk from Llanelli to Fishguard in sections, often using the train to enable linear walks to be completed. The final section was completed over the summer.

So where shall we walk next? Is there any budding organiser out there wanting to organise a series of walks, such as the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, Beacons Way or another long distance route? Have a think and let us know.

Work Party

We have a group of volunteers who go out with the council to clear paths and install items such as gates, etc. Our work party goes out every 2nd Wednesday so if you'd like to help out, contact Steve Robson. Details are in your programme.

Footpaths

Bob Denley is our Footpath Officer and liaises with the council to resolve problems on paths. If you come across something wrong on a walk, such as a missing/broken sign, overgrown path or an obstruction such as a padlocked gate or barbed wire across a path, take a photograph (*with GPS switched on if using a phone camera*), make a note of where the problem is located and send the details to Bob who will inform the council. Remember – if you don't report it – it won't be fixed!

In Case of Emergency (ICE)

Many mobile phones have an "ICE-Emergency contacts" option that can be accessed even if the phone is locked. We advise adding one or more of your contacts into the ICE group so if 1st aiders or the emergency services need to contact somebody on your behalf, they will have that information available on your phone.

Swansea Ramblers has also produced an ICE paper card where you can record the same information and any relevant health details, such as diabetes, to assist 1st aiders and emergency services to help you in an emergency situation. These cards can be obtained from Lynne Esson and her contact details are printed in the programme.

Hire of coaches for walks

We have had some successful day trips in coaches, including a linear walk over Penyfan and coming up, a day trip for 100 members to Bath (*Details in the programme*). All leaders have the opportunity to apply to the Social committee for subsidised funding of coaches if they wish to arrange a trip to walk further afield and/or to facilitate a linear walk. These walks can be long all-day walks such as our Sunday walks or the shorter walks such as those typically done on a Saturday. Why not discuss a walk for the summer with the Social Committee now?

Walking as part of a group

The majority of members join Swansea Ramblers to walk as part of a group. This may be because of the social aspect of being with other people but one of the great benefits of a group walk is being able to leave the navigation bit to a leader who will get us back safely.

We offer group walks of various lengths and difficulty since not everybody can walk at the same speed or over the same distance but it is important that all members understand that on any group walk you attend, there will always be people of varying abilities. Group walking therefore is a compromise since faster walkers have to adjust to the speed of the slower walkers!

The larger the number of participants on a group walk, the slower the group becomes due to things such as stiles, gates etc. When a group begins to get spread out or if we come to a junction, leaders have to stop the front of the group in order to let those behind catch up before the group can move on. If we don't keep the group together then it isn't a group walk!

If one or more of the walkers feel they need to leave the walk to get back earlier than the group they can of course do so BUT each individual leaving must inform the leader in person that they intend to continue independently. Once an individual has left the group walk, they are no longer covered by our 3rd party liability insurance.

It's nearly winter – let's start planning next summer!

It may seem a long way off but the planning for the summer programme has already started with another weekend in April arranged and some members planning a foreign holiday in addition to the official Ramblers activities! While we still have the 'summer' weather, if all leaders could start thinking now of walks they could do next year, they could maybe write down the details and file it away for January. Then you can come along to the Leaders' meeting in the Woodman in January knowing exactly what walk you'd like to lead in the summer. This is especially true of the short evening walks that you may be doing now by yourselves and which you think would be ideal for the group evening walks next summer. Have a think and I'll look forward to seeing what you come up with at the Woodman!

See you on a walk,

Andrew Morgan