



Newsletter

Summer 2020

Hello,

Well I don't remember a winter where we have had to cancel so many walks because of the weather! Hopefully, summer is on its way and we can get back to normal and look forward to uninterrupted walking!

COVID-19 Virus

Ramblers GB is monitoring the advice given by the UK government and like Foot and Mouth disease some years ago, may instruct us to cancel published walks. If that happens we will email members to advise them that walks will be suspended until advised it is safe to resume group walks.

COVID-19 Virus - Update

You won't need me to tell you that the situation has escalated and we are all now self-isolating. Following UK Government advice, Ramblers GB have cancelled all walks and events until further notice.

Thank you to the leaders, co-ordinators and volunteers

The programme of walks we enjoy doesn't just magically appear every six months. Behind the scenes there are leaders planning walks and checking them on the ground, coordinators who make sure we are able to offer as many walks as we can and volunteer programme distributors who deliver by hand the majority of the programmes to reduce postage costs. Thank you to everyone involved in the process. If you can also volunteer to lead a walk next time, let us know. Printing is also a financial burden so we would like to thank one of our members for their generous contribution towards the cost.

Committee news

Every two months, our committee meet to discuss issues that can affect walking. Changes to or problems with footpaths are highlighted. New social events are planned by our social sub-committee and we monitor changes to membership growth. Other items are discussed, such as publicity for the group and latest path clearance by our maintenance team. If you would like to find out more about the work of the committee and maybe become a member of it, let us know.

Social Calendar

Our Social Committee have been working hard to arrange meals out, coach trips and other events of interest to our members. Our thanks go to all on the committee who have made these events possible. The socials already planned for 2020 can be found at the back of your summer programme.

Membership

We had 48 new members in 2019 (68 in 2018) but as with all organisations, members also leave for one reason or another so 2019 saw a slight drop in members. If you know of anybody who would like to start walking, remind them that joining Swansea Ramblers is a great way to see the countryside and make new friends.

Work Party

The work party is organised by Steve Robson and they work with the council to maintain footpaths. This can involve clearing undergrowth, installing gates or stiles and even building bridges. Ongoing work includes the major clearance of Trumpet Lane between Knelston and Burry, a highway that has been blocked for many decades.

Working with the council to clear paths is one way we show politicians that Ramblers are a valuable resource of free labour to keep paths open and in doing so, we can help make the links that get communities walking to promote an active lifestyle. This in turn can lead to government investment in path infrastructure to improve the places we walk.

Steve Robson is always happy to hear from new volunteers so if you fancy helping to maintain the paths we walk, please get in touch. Contact details are in the programme.

Anyone have a long distance project?

We have previously arranged projects such as: the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, the Ceredigion Coast Path, Offa's Dyke, Wye Valley and Heart of Wales Line. If any leader has a project in mind, let us know.

Keeping in touch by email

There are still members who have not joined the email list to receive group updates, such as cancelled walks or social events which often book up very quickly after the email is sent. Please consider opting in to the list not to miss out on group activities.

To register, you can phone our London membership department (Tel: 020 3961 3232) or go online to the national site and set up your Ramblers account. There you can add your email address and set your preferences for correspondence by email, post and telephone so we can keep in contact with you.

Please note that if you have already opted out of national correspondence, also prevents us from sending you local group updates so please don't opt out nationally if you wish to remain on our local email list.

Helping to raise funds

Some organisations make donations to the Ramblers when you make a purchase. Ramblers Holidays makes a direct donation to the group when you book a holiday. Amazon will donate 0.5% of a net purchase on many goods to Ramblers GB. You can register for 'AmazonSmile' which also works with your existing Amazon account. You just need to select Ramblers from the donation list when you first access AmazonSmile. Visit smile.amazon.co.uk for more details.

Membership benefits

Remember to show your Ramblers card in outdoor shops as some may give you a discount. These include Go Outdoors and Cotswolds. You can borrow paper maps from Ramblers GB and you access walk routes all over the country that have been devised and checked by fellow Ramblers by using the Ramblers App or the national website. Back issues of 'Walk' magazine can be downloaded from the national website.

Don't lose your way!

You may have seen this project mentioned in the national press, in our emails and on pages 24 to 27 of the spring 'Walk' magazine. This is an important project because when legislation was passed in 1949 requiring councils to register footpaths to give them legal protection, only about 50% of paths were actually registered.

Today many people still walk the paths that were not registered but one by one, they are being closed by development, neglect or deliberate blockage by landowners.

Unlike the registered paths, it is not straightforward to protect them. There is also subsequent legislation that seeks to lessen the chance of safeguarding these paths after 2026.

Swansea was one of the few 'Urban Boroughs' that in 1949 could opt out of the registration process - and it chose to do so. This has resulted in 70 years of neglect and loss of many paths in the old Swansea Borough although some are still walked to this day, people not understanding that these paths could close overnight.

Some Ramblers groups are seeking to register these paths; Swansea Ramblers is one of them. If you could help us to identify some of these routes, Richard Beale would like to hear from you.

Nationally, Ramblers GB has launched the 'Don't Lose Your Way' project and on their mapping site you can select a local area to check the paths. If you have already started independently to map some of these (*and we know some sections in Swansea and Gower have already been selected*), please let us know who you are so we can coordinate the work in our area.

More information can be found from the home page of the Ramblers where you can follow the link to the 'Don't lose Your Way' project. Please do consider helping to identify these paths that are missing from the modern maps. We can show you how to do this and Richard will be pleased to hear from you.

Cancelling walks in bad weather

As a leader, if you think the weather conditions are too severe, you can cancel the walk (or cut it short if the weather changes during the walk). You do not need to worry unduly about

cancelling; you are the person who best knows the conditions likely in the area you have chosen to walk. The committee will support you in your decision and you can always contact one of us for advice if you feel uncertain how to proceed.

If you think you will need to cancel, just contact Andrew, John France (or if unavailable, a member of the committee) then John or I will send out an email to advise the group of the cancellation. Contact details are in the front of the programme.

Often the decision to cancel is made the day before, based on the latest forecasts. If possible, a couple of days' notice would allow members more of a chance to see the email in advance of the walk. If you wish, we can even send out an email warning of possible cancellation and to advise members to check for a second email confirming cancellation.

There is no need to travel a long distance to the start to inform members of the cancellation. We advise in the programme notes that if travelling directly to the start, participants should contact you if conditions are bad (*and it would be best anyway to first contact the leader in case of cancellation for other reasons*). You could still go to the local meeting point in case people did not see the email.

Weekends away

We'll be going to Wells in Somerset in April for a walking weekend where each day there will be two levels of walks to be as inclusive as possible for many of our members. Past weekend trips have been very enjoyable and this should be no different. Even before we go, Karen is planning the next weekend away which will be in October, staying at the four-star Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells. Book in quick if you want to join us! It will be another memorable group trip. More details of the walks will be printed in the winter programme but in the meantime see the entry in the back of the summer programme and contact Karen to express an interest.

See you on a walk,

Andrew Morgan

You're receiving this communication because we believe that it would be of interest to you <as a member/supporter>. If you'd rather not receive similar information in future, please let us know. You can email ramblers@ramblers.org.uk, change your preferences online at ramblers.org.uk/myaccount or call (0)20 3961 3300.