



Swansea Ramblers

Newsletter

Autumn 2011

Hello again,

Autumn may be upon us but let's make the best of the Last of the Summer Wine (but not Compo!) and get out there and walk. We're still in our 30th year and should be celebrating. Ramblers GB are marking the autumn change to our trees with a week of woodland walks and our walk will take place on Sunday 9th October.

Many of you have been members for some time but you never come out with the group. Why is that? We'd love to see you out with the group. Maybe you just like to walk by yourselves safe in the knowledge that your committee and work party fight to keep the paths open so that you can go out and have an enjoyable walk. Of course, if there *is* anything that stops you walking with the group, why not tell us. It may be you want shorter walks, midweek walks or something else that is missing from the programme. Why not let us know? Do you have a favourite walk? Why not offer to lead it on the programme and get to know the regular walkers.

Committee News

A number of committee members, after many years service, now wish to stand down and allow someone else to have the chance to keep the society running. The special newsletter that went out recently does not seem to have produced many volunteers. Only four people (two in their 80s) contacted Zetta to offer assistance and our thanks go out to each one of them but all said they were not able to serve on committee. Your walking group only functions if it has an adequate number of volunteers. This newsletter, the walking programme, membership queries, finances and handling queries from the public cannot carry on without volunteers prepared to take on these tasks.

All walking societies rely on a small number of volunteers to carry out the administration and to offer to lead walks. That is why we are able to publish a list of walks six months in advance. Most people come along on walks without a clue where they are, where they are going or where they have been – but thoroughly enjoy it !! Are you going to be able to do such walks by yourself if there's no programme?

AGM

This year's AGM will as usual be held in the Environment Centre in Pier Street at 7pm on Wednesday 19th October. (Go down the side of the Evening Post building and on the left). Sadly, only 15 people out of about 270 attended last year. Now is your annual chance to influence how your group is run and ensure it continues to exist. Please come along, (and volunteer if possible) then afterwards let's all go and drink to the next 30 years!

Area AGM

There is also an area AGM as well. This year it takes place at 2pm in Maesteg at St Michael's Church on 5th November (Yes I know it's Bonfire Night! Maybe someone knows of a good place in the area to watch the fireworks afterwards?). Swansea Ramblers is part of the Glamorgan Area of Ramblers Groups and you may have met some of them in May when we hosted the Glamorgan Area walk. It would be good to have some joint walks with these groups. Gail Allen led a successful walk in August when we were joined by Cynon Valley Ramblers. We'll have another chance to walk with them in January but for now they are off to Tuscany in September on a group walking holiday. - Now wouldn't that be good? Volunteers anybody?

Footpath / Work party News

Lynne Lock and the rest of your committee regularly discuss proposed path diversions and closures. Lynne often meets with the council to check if these modifications are acceptable for walkers and her input is much appreciated by both the committee and Swansea Council. Other committee members raise issues about obstructed paths and Lynne also discusses these with the council. The result of one of these discussions and (on a rather rainy day) the help of your work party was the re-opening of footpath LG10a after 40 years of obstruction. If you want to try it out then check the Winter programme for 2nd October when I'll be leading a walk along it.

The council has re-opened a number of paths in the Cwm Clydach area with the help of the work party and have published a leaflet describing the walk. We are having ongoing discussions regarding sections where conditions under foot are only suitable for serious walkers rather than family groups.

The future of other footpaths remains in the balance. At Perriswood, PR35 has been blocked for many years. Now the new landowner is claiming it should never have been registered as a path. Does anyone remember using this path from the main road north east to the village? If so come forward to say. Never assume any path you use will always remain open. As any work party member will tell you, paths become overgrown very quickly and need maintenance. There is often someone wanting to build over it or move it away so that 'persons' don't come anywhere near their nice expensive house. After all, who wants people walking past their window? Hmmm! – maybe I'll ask the council to extinguish the public pavement outside my house to ensure my privacy and increase my house value! Remember – No volunteers means -- no committee members –which means - paths get closed one by one!

Membership

We had some new members join Swansea Ramblers this year. Welcome to all new members and especially those who have already offered to lead walks. We have about 270 members and it's a shame we only see a small fraction of this number on our walks. The membership secretary would like to hand on the membership admin to a new volunteer. Is there anyone out there who'd like to give it a try? Roger will still be there to help you take over.

Self Guided Walks

Andrew has been busy writing a weekly Weekend Walk column for the Saturday editions of the Evening Post. Many of these walks have been uploaded with maps and photos to the Swansea Ramblers website. They are mostly shorter walks to encourage people to walk. If anyone asks you about walks in the area that they can do themselves, please tell them to have a look at the web site. They could also look at the Galleries of previous led walks to see if they would like to join us on a walk in the programme.

Walks Programme

For thirty years the committee have succeeded in producing a programme of walks for you to enjoy. Our thanks go out to walk leaders past and present as well as the programme secretaries who put it all together into the programme that drops through your door.

A number of the co-ordinators have already retired, leaving John Ashley to do most of the work. Thank you John for all you have done. John won't be able to do the summer 2012 programme. Roger Brown has been helping with the winter programme but nobody should be expected to do the whole thing by themselves.

We need people to come forward and prepare different sections of the programme ready for inclusion in the main programme. If a number of people volunteer and do a small part of the programme then this makes the programme creation a much easier task. Help will be provided by existing volunteers so you won't be left all alone to sink or swim!

The different sections of the programme are:

- Walk4Life (very short walks)
- Sunday long walks
- Sunday short walks
- Mid-week walks
- Special walks (Long distance projects, train rambles, themed walks, other short walks etc).
- Overall co-ordinator to put it all into one programme

It's Chriiissssttmassss !!!

Well maybe not quite yet but it's time to start thinking about that turkey dinner! The King Arthur has been booked for Sunday 20th November and the menu choices are enclosed with this newsletter. PLEASE BOOK BY 19th October as we need to give numbers to the King Arthur and pay the deposit to keep the booking. Further details are on the menu page.

All Wales Coast Path

The new long distance path around the coast of Wales will be officially opened on 5th May next year during the Bank Holiday Weekend. Zetta and I have been involved in surveying the path on the ground and attending meetings since 2007. We will finally see the dream come true in time for the Olympics and the publicity surrounding the first path around the borders of a country. Hopefully Swansea Ramblers will be able to programme events over this weekend to celebrate.

The opening is NOT the end of the process. The Pembrokeshire path recently celebrated its 40th birthday and there are still improvements being made. For the coast path, many councils around Wales have been doing what councils have done ever since the first ever authority was formed – i.e. sit down, talk and do nothing then suddenly realise they have a deadline to meet! There is still much to do to create the path and in some instances there may be a lot of road walking until a) someone has the political will to compulsory purchase some sections and/or b) someone gets killed on the road. Luckily, Chris Dale and his team in Swansea Rights of Way have been tirelessly working away to get the majority of the Swansea section ready for the opening – Well done Swansea !

On the positive side, some sections will be outstanding and taken as a whole, well worth doing – but it's not a 'National Trail' and therefore some sections will not be up to that standard. The belief is also that not many people will want to do the whole thing so the roads are just being used to connect the 'good bits'. Time will tell what people want to do.

Weekend Away 2011

We went to Lynton in May and generally had fine weather to walk Exmoor. Tim Gronow led the first walk up to Selworthy and Dunkery Beacons. The next day Ian Smith took us on another good walk to the Doone Valley and on the last day, Mark Wolle found us a National Trust tea room at Watersmeet and stunning views high up above Lynton. Thank you to all the leaders and to Karen for the organisation.

Weekend Away 2012

The weekend after the coast path opening sees us going to the Jurassic Park – sorry- Jurassic Coast of Southern England for some stunning walking and maybe a dinosaur bone or two. Contact Karen for details.

Happy walking

Andrew Morgan