



Newsletter

Summer 2014

Hello,

Summer will soon be upon us and as I write, there is definitely a seasonal change in the air. It may not be quite time yet *'to cast a clout'* (and for seasoned walkers, it's never time *not* to pack waterproofs) but temperatures are climbing and hopefully the winter's mud on the paths will soon be drying out!

Keeping in Contact

If you don't have access to email, then this may be the first communication you've had since the last programme. If you do have email, then chances are that you've been receiving updates from us on walks and social events. If you haven't received emails from us then for one reason or another we haven't got you on our email list. If you'd like to be included, email the secretary, (secretary@swansearamblers.org.uk) and ask to be included on the list.

Walk Leaders' contribution

As always, on behalf of all our members who enjoy walking, thanks go to all those leaders who have agreed to lead a walk (*or a number of walks!*) on the summer programme. Without this dedicated support from leaders, we cannot look forward to a full programme of walks every six months.

New Walk leaders

We are always glad to hear from members who would like to begin leading walks. If you fancy giving it a go then have a word with us and we can team you up with an experienced leader to help you begin. It is rewarding to see fellow walkers enjoying your walk and if you start with a short and easy one, you'll be able to learn how leading can add to your walking enjoyment.

Has the programme shrunk in the wash?

Included this time with the newsletter is the new A6 sized programme. It has exactly the same style as previous programmes but has the advantages of being easier to fit in your rucksack and is cheaper to produce. We hope you like the new format; having shown it to members on a few walks, comments are generally positive. If you would still prefer to have the usual A5 size then that will still be available from the website to download as an A5 booklet. Many home printers have a 'booklet' option in the settings to print onto normal A4 paper to create an A5 booklet.

Programme Printing

Having mentioned about the cost of printing the programme, we have had a very generous offer from one of our members, Wayne Pulman, to print the summer programme free of charge at his business, Matthews Pulman, a firm of accountants and business advisors. Our thanks go to Wayne for this contribution to Swansea Ramblers.

Programme Directions

We've added two new features to help us find our way to many of our walks. In addition to grid references, we've now included post codes for Sat. Nav. devices and Google map directions for planning your route. The nature of post codes means that they only provide an approximate location so keep that in mind when using them. Google Maps display the route from the Guildhall to the start and include an interactive StreetView of the parking area. This works best in 'Old' Google maps where you can see directions, map and StreetView together so switch back to 'old' maps if you use 'new' Google maps! Leaders may like to experiment with these maps to add to their walk descriptions in the winter programme.

The Gower Way Project

We've an exciting new project for members which will run on the second Saturday of each month from April to September. Swansea Ramblers helped set up the Gower Way and now with the assistance of City & County of Swansea, we'll be walking the whole of the Gower Way in short sections, using a coach to each start provided by the Countryside Connections project. The Gower Way runs from the northernmost point in the Lordship of Gower – Penlle'r Castell above the Lliw Reservoirs to stone zero at Rhossili. We'll pass through the lesser known but beautiful northern areas of countryside and head south into the grandeur of the AONB of Gower. The coach seats will be booked on a first come first served basis so book your seat now to avoid disappointment.

New Weekday and Evening Walks

We have started an initiative to provide more weekday and evening walks on the programme. So if you like walking during the week why not offer to lead one as well? If enough members come forward to lead then we can have walks every week and you can always offer a group walk to Julia and Steve Robson, (midweek@swansearamblers.org.uk) at least a week before and we'll email everyone to give them the details.

Glamorgan Area Walks

Every year Ramblers' groups in the old county boundary of Glamorganshire get together for a joint walk. This time it is the turn of Tawe Trekkers group to lead three walks of varying lengths on **Sunday 8th June 2014**. This is an opportunity to meet other walkers from different areas. Some of us may remember enjoyable joint walks with Cynon Valley and Islwyn Ramblers and these events allow us to get together and discuss joint programming to explore each other's favourite walks.

Gower Walking Festival

The Gower Walking Festival, an event which is not part of the Ramblers, begins the day before the area walk on **Saturday 7th June 2014**. Some of our Ramblers leaders also lead for the festival so we have indicated in the programme when they are leading but remember, if you want to participate, there will be a charge and you'll need to book. By co-incidence, two of these walks occur on the same day as the area walk so there are five walks shown for that day! Of course, the area walks are free of charge. If you are a leader who is considering leading for future Gower Walking Festivals, could you let us know in advance so that we can liaise with the festival to ensure you are recorded as a Swansea Ramblers leader in their programme.

Big Welsh Walk

The other main festival event is our own contribution to Ramblers' Big Welsh Walk on the Bank Holiday Weekend of May (**Saturday 3rd May 2014 – Monday 5th May 2014**). We will be running a number of free walks for members and will be encouraging potential new members to come and join us.

Let's think about Christmas!

OK – so it's a long way off but once we hit midsummer's day in June, the days start to get shorter again and it's all downhill to Christmas! So don't get the winter blues, mark your diary NOW for the next Christmas walk and meal at the King Arthur in Reynoldston. We've booked **Sunday 7th December 2014** for the meal and judging by the 70+ people who enjoyed the social last Christmas, it's going to be a popular event again this year. Even more would have come last year but had other commitments, so make sure it's marked in your diary to avoid disappointment.

Leaders' meeting and Thai Social

Another very popular event is the Thai meal at the Bay View Hotel. Around thirty five of us came along in January to enjoy the food while our walk leaders chose dates on the summer programme to lead their next walks. We've again booked the Bay View for **Monday 30th June 2014**, so mark it in your diary and if you've not been before, come along for the social and try out the Thai food.

Membership Growth

Over fifty new members decided during 2013 that being a part of Swansea Ramblers gave them the chance to explore the countryside and meet new friends. In our Glamorganshire area of walking groups, we are the most successful group for growing our membership and we keep being asked, "What is your secret?" Well simply put, it's giving the public what they want – Short walks on a regular basis and with a start time not too early in the morning. People who have never walked with a group come along on the Saturday walks and discover, like we all did, that walking in the countryside with Swansea Ramblers takes them places they never knew existed. As people's stamina improves with regular walking, it's nice to see that some then try out the longer Sunday walks to explore even more of our countryside.

Work Party

There have been a lot of trees blown down across footpaths in the winter storms. Those of you who came on the Knelston walk will remember our impromptu work party to clear a tree which had fallen across a stile. This prevented us from continuing the walk, until loppers and saws emerged from the rucksack to remove some of the offending branches!

We have a regular group of volunteers who work with the City & County of Swansea to maintain footpaths and hopefully keep them clear before you get to know there's a problem! If you would like to take part and make a positive contribution to our footpath network, why not contact Bob Denley (footpaths@swansearamblers.org.uk) and join the band of volunteers who clear and maintain paths. In these times of financial cuts, the assistance of Swansea Ramblers to keep paths open may be needed more than ever.

Footpaths

As mentioned above, you may find some paths blocked by storm damage or just by general growth of brambles. If you come across a path that needs clearing, or find that a path that should be open but has been blocked by wire or locked gate, let Bob Denley know and he can contact the council to see what can be done (footpaths@swansearamblers.org.uk). Remember, if you don't report it, we won't know about it!

Week Away- Arran

This May, we don't have a weekend away but a whole week is devoted to visiting the Scottish Island of Arran. Ian Smith and Mark Wolle have been arranging this trip over the last few months and taking names of participants. Our thanks go to Mark and Ian for volunteering to arrange this trip.

Weekends Away

Not everyone can go for a whole week's walking and some of our members would also like shorter walks and more of a social. One of our volunteers, Myra Lewis, has offered to arrange a weekend in Chester, so we can combine a social with some short walks provided by another of our members, Clive Scott. Our thanks go to both these volunteers for offering to put this weekend together.

The details so far are:

Date: Thursday 6th November 2014 to Sunday 9th November 2014

Venue: City of Chester

Accommodation: Book yourself into your accommodation of choice. Myra can advise on hotel deals

How to get there: Drive (car-share) or if Arriva Trains re-issue the winter cheap 'Club 55 tickets', go up by train.

Walks:

- ***Saturday morning*** – 6 miles outside of the city. Mainly flat & on paths suited to conditions for November
- ***Saturday Afternoon*** – A short walk in the city, maybe to the cathedral and Chester Rows.
- ***Sunday morning*** – A 3 mile walk around the famous Roman walls of Chester

Myra will be co-ordinating the weekend and providing information about hotel & train deals. If you are interested in going to Chester, please express your interest **NOW** by emailing Myra: myralewis@ntlworld.com

Committee News

As usual, a small band of volunteers meet every month to discuss matters affecting walking and to deal with the necessary work of group administration (of which perhaps many members are unaware). Membership queries, footpath problems, programme completion, social events and other things affecting Swansea Ramblers are discussed and decided upon. If you would like to come along and see what we do to keep things running smoothly, we'll be pleased to see you at our meetings.

Volunteer Development Day

London is arranging a volunteer training day to be held at Swansea Grand Theatre on **Saturday 7th June 2014**. More details will become available later. If you are interested in participating, please advise John France (secretary@swansearamblers.org.uk).

The web link is <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/what-we-do/events-index/2014/june/volunteer-development-day-swanea.aspx>

See you on a walk,

Andrew Morgan