



Newsletter Summer 2016

Hello,

Is summer really on its way? Well! Like many of us who have braved the rain this winter to get into the countryside, I am now looking forward to the next 6 months of walks with fingers crossed for a dry summer! After all, it never rains in the summer, *does it !!*

Another programme of walks

We again have a large programme of walks for our members. This programme doesn't just magically appear, it's there because we have both an army of dedicated volunteers who offer to lead and our busy coordinators who collate all the walks before I put together the final programme. Our thanks go to each one for providing another season of enjoyable walking.

Evening walks

For the last couple of years, we've been running short summer evening walks which have proved very popular both with members and the public. An evening stroll can attract over 20 people to experience the summer countryside after work and these are usually followed by a get together in a local hostelry. What we haven't been able to attract both last year and again this year are enough volunteers to lead these walks, so regrettably we haven't been able to provide an evening walk each week. If you think you could lead an additional evening walk, please let me know and I'll email the details to members. These are not onerous walks to lead, just a couple of hours out to enjoy the last of the day's sunshine so if you have a favourite short stroll, why not let us tag along with you? Ideal for any first time volunteers who would like to find out what it's like to lead.

Short Sunday walks

These short walks alternate each week with the long walks. Now whereas the long Sunday walks have enough volunteers, only one leader has offered a short Sunday walk. That leaves 11 Sundays without a short walk. So this begs the question, does the membership want short Sunday walks? Some of our members may not want to walk on a Sunday as possibly Church or family commitments come first.

If you do want to walk on a Sunday, what type of walk do you want? Do you wish to start the walk in the morning to have the rest of the day free or do you prefer a leisurely stroll on a Sunday afternoon so you don't have to get up early? Do you want slower paced walks like the Saturday walks or the Monday walks? These Sunday walks could be up to 8 miles long to provide a step up from the Saturday 6 mile walks but equally, they could be shorter if that's what you prefer. Why not let us know what type of Sunday walk you'd like to see on the programme and maybe even offer to lead one?

Long walks

We again have a full programme of long Sunday walks for those of us who want to see a bit more of the countryside on an all-day walk. We also run some longer walks on weekdays and occasionally on Saturdays.

Saturday walks

These walks are proving increasingly popular and in good weather attract 40 – 50 (*or more*) people. Even in the rain we still see lots of members enjoying 3-4 hours walking before going back to the pub! Let Lynne Esson know if you'd like to learn how to lead one.

Midweek walks

Another full series of walks has been created for the summer but we do need more leaders to volunteer walks for the next programme as one member is leading 10 of these summer walks! Midweek walks can be long or short so have a think about leading one next time and let Julia Robson know.

Monday Walks

These started in October 2014 following a public meeting in Killay Library. They are aimed at people who can, (*or only want to*), walk a short distance at a fairly relaxed pace. Arranged for Monday mornings, they are branded as '*Easier Walks with Friends*' with the idea of encouraging people to try walks with us and eventually become members. There are still a number of Mondays without walks especially in August and September. If you would like to offer to lead one of these easier walks, please contact Richard Beale at ShortStrollsATSwanseaRamblers.org.uk (Replace AT with @).

Just how long was that walk?

A few walks seem to have been a little longer than advertised. While it can be difficult to work out exact mileage before checking a walk on the ground, it may be better to overstate the expected mileage on the programme rather than find your walk is longer/harder than first thought with no alternative available to shorten the distance. Some of our members may not be able to complete a walk more difficult than advertised. This could cause a serious problem for a leader if a situation occurs in an isolated area so it is in *THE LEADER'S INTEREST* to ensure mileage and walk description match a participant's expectations!

Social events

Peter Jones has stepped down as joint social secretary. Thank you Peter for your work in building up the successful social side to our group. In his place, Joanna Craddock has volunteered to become our new joint social secretary with Myra Lewis. They have already worked hard to put together recent social activities so thank you to both for your work. If any member can donate something for the raffles, please let Myra or Joanna know. Myra has arranged a garden party with an Indian 'pop-up kitchen' for 13th August and our thanks go to Steve & Julia Robson for again allowing us to join them in the attractive setting of Green Cwm!

Weekends away

Following on from our weekend trip to Chester in November 2014 and a spring visit to Malvern, yet another successful weekend away was arranged for October 2015 when we went to Stroud and explored the Cotswolds. Thank you to the organisers and leaders who made this possible.

Two further weekends have been arranged for 2016. In April, we will be going to Leominster and will each day have the choice of a long or short walk in some lovely countryside. In October, we are going to Dunster in Somerset which will also be another memorable weekend of long and short walking. If you would like to come on these weekends, information about hotels and transport can be obtained from Myra Lewis and Joanne Craddock. Richard Beale will organise the April walks.

Annual Christmas meal

We had another successful social at the King Arthur in Reynoldston when almost 80 of us enjoyed a Christmas lunch. Many thanks go to Zetta Flew who put a lot of hard work into making sure everything went smoothly. The walk beforehand was led by Peter Jones and after less than ten minutes the rain had stopped allowing us to enjoy a lovely walk. So next year just grit your teeth and come along, rain or shine! After all, we do have changing rooms with showers laid on for afterwards! Talking of next time, we have provisionally booked the King Arthur for 4th December 2016 and 3rd December 2017 so mark your diaries now!

Leaders' meeting and Thai meal

The leaders' meeting is just for leaders? Wrong! This is just another social event during which some of our leaders pick a date to lead a walk. The main reason to come along is to enjoy the social - so again on Monday 27th June, we've booked the Thai in the Bay View Hotel where we can once more sample the food and meet up with other members. As usual, it's just walk up to the bar to order your food and it will be brought over to you. Please contact me by 14th June so I know the numbers attending. A reminder with contact details is in the programme.

Footpaths

Our footpath officer, Bob Denley continues to monitor issues with paths, such as the breach in the sea wall at Cwm Ivy where the path has been washed away. Thanks Bob for your work looking after paths. If you come across a problem, possibly while checking your walk for the programme, take a photo and let Bob know, ideally with the grid reference then he may be able to get something done to clear the path before your walk.

Work party

We have a group of volunteers who assist the council to maintain paths and clear vegetation etc. Thanks go to Steve Robson for organising the work party and liaising with the council to agree which paths we should clear for them. If you would like to join in the practical work of keeping footpaths open, contact Steve and he'll let you know when the team are going out on a job.

Membership

Sarah Goodall stepped down as membership secretary at the October AGM and Peter Jones agreed to take on the role. Thank you to both for your work. We are still one of the fastest growing groups in GB with another 62 members joining in 2015. Our publicity material in What's On, Swansea Life and The Evening Post continues to attract members, as do the posters of walks we distribute. The main reason people join is because when they try out a walk, they are made to feel welcome and realise we have a social friendly membership. So thank you to all members. If you know of anybody who'd like to start walking, encourage them to give Swansea Ramblers a try!

Annual Area walks

This year's get together of Ramblers groups across Glamorganshire takes place in Merthyr Tydfil on Saturday 14th May. Starting from Cyfarthfa Castle, (*worth a visit in itself*), there will be three walks available, hosted by Merthyr Ramblers. These will be a short, medium and long walk to suit most abilities. Details of the walks are in the programme.

May/September festival

The last few years has seen an annual national walking festival take place over the May Bank Holiday weekend. We are running three walks as a swansong to this Big Welsh Walk event which in future will be replaced by a September festival of walks.

Project walks

Dave Bird's '*Irish Ferry*' linear walks continue this year as he makes his way to Fishguard. Also this year and next we will be walking the entire length of St. Illtud's Walk (*see below*). These sorts of projects can take a while to put together so if you are a budding project manager, why not start thinking now about a themed sequence of walks such as the *Pembrokeshire Coast Path*?

St. Illtud's Walk

This 64 mile long distance trail was created over 20 years ago by the late Colin Davies of Llanelli Ramblers to link the country park at Pembrey with Margam Country Park. Over time, parts of the route had become overgrown and signage faded or disappeared. One of our members, Roger Button raised concerns about the issues and documented the problems. Our committee member,

Richard Beale has been working for nearly two years to relaunch this trail, representing Swansea Ramblers at meetings held between Llanelli Ramblers, Neath Port Talbot Ramblers and the three local authorities through which the route passes. We have successfully reinstated the path and improved the signage. A series of seven Saturday linear walks to traverse the entire route are planned for the relaunch, 5 of which are in the summer programme. Book now for the coaches to avoid disappointment!

Stage 1	30 th April	Stage 4	23 rd July	Stage 7	2017
Stage 2	21 st May	Stage 5	3 rd September		
Stage 3	18 th June	Stage 6	2017		

Email list

Many members have provided their email addresses and are receiving updates about walks and social events. If you haven't yet given us your address, please email me at infoATswansearamblers.org.uk (replace AT with @). I'll add you to the list to ensure we keep you up to date with the group's activities.

Committee News

Zetta Flew stepped down from committee after giving a long, dedicated service to Swansea Ramblers, acting for a decade as our secretary then recently as a committee member. Our thanks go to her for all the work she has done for the group.

If anybody would like to help in the general running of the group, we'd love to hear from you. We meet once a month to discuss issues affecting walking in Swansea and you are welcome to come along and see what we do.

We would also like to hear from anyone interested in organising Sunday short walks since as mentioned above, these are not well supported at the moment and we need a dedicated coordinator to concentrate on just these walks. There is also a need for somebody to coordinate evening walks such as those we'll be enjoying this summer and somebody to organise different types of walks, such as night walks with head torches, pub lunch walks or train walks.

Where does that walk start?

Although all walks contain a grid reference, unless you have a map, some locations may be difficult to find. Swansea Ramblers' website has a link to our GB Walk Finder. This shows you the start point on a map as well as more details about the walk.



Finally

Swansea Ramblers is all about socialising while enjoying the countryside. So if you know of anybody who may be interested in walking but are too shy to join a group of strangers on a walk then encourage them to take that first step and try out a walk with Swansea Ramblers! *(Believe it or not, there are a lot of people daunted by the thought of walking with people they don't know!)*

See you on a walk,

Andrew Morgan