



Newsletter

Summer 2018

Hello,

Ah Summer! Longer days and warmer weather and no more snow, (*though I have seen it in the Lake District in May!*), so let's make the most of it and get out there walking! There's going to be plenty of opportunity to do so with a record 120 walks on offer in the new programme.

Evening walks have struck a chord with members so we are now able to offer a walk every week for the next six months. Monday short walks are not far behind and these have been proving popular with new and seasoned walkers. We will also have four coach trips, two weekends away and a holiday in Austria so Swansea Ramblers are getting out and about a lot these days!

Thanks to all those leaders!

Thanks to everybody who offered to lead a walk (*or walks*) and a special welcome to new leaders who will lead their first walk. We still need more volunteers to come forward and I'm sure there are a few people out there who with a bit of confidence and encouragement could give it a go. Those who have '*dipped the toe of their boot in the water*' have found it a rewarding experience and not as difficult as they thought!

Thanks to all on committee!

For many, their programme magically drops through the letter box every six months but behind the scenes are the volunteers who diligently do the admin work, contact leaders for walks and put the whole thing together. However, it's not just the programme that needs careful preparation, there's a lot more to keeping us walking, including socials, footpath clearance, discussing footpath obstructions/diversions with the council, watching for things that may affect our walking environment, looking after membership issues and even trying to add more paths to the network (*more about that later*). So thanks to the committee who keep things on track!

Are you keeping in touch?

Most of our membership has provided their email addresses so we can send details of socials, changes to walks and information about weekends away, etc. There are still some of you out there who are missing out and the only time we make contact is with this newsletter. A few members never even come on a walk these days but still support our walking charity. It would be lovely to see you at social events so if you are unable to join the walks, you are still very welcome to come along to these. Also, you may have a wealth of knowledge of walks you've led previously, so if you think we're missing out on that special walk you used to do, why not come along and tell us?

Updating your membership details

New legislation means that you'll need to contact our London Office to change your address or other details. You can phone them to do so but the easiest way to change details is via the GB website,

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/>. Here you can register with your membership number and once logged in, you can not only change things like your email address but access lots of walking routes that you may like to do when on holiday and borrow maps of that area. Click 'Register' at the top of the screen then enter your membership number and details.

Membership growth

With almost 400 members we are one of the fastest growing groups in the UK. Seventy-seven new members joined Swansea Ramblers in 2017 but we also lost members who for one reason or another, were unable to continue walking with us. This is a shame but membership churn always reminds us that we can't rest on our laurels. We will continue to promote walking with Swansea Ramblers and every one of us can do the same by spreading the word to friends and relatives. If you've enjoyed walking and socialising with the group then tell others because the vast majority of the public have no idea what a Rambler is or does. The Welsh Publicity Officer for the Ramblers has to tell people "I work for the Ramblers, *a walking charity*" because of this lack of awareness amongst the non-walking public. So spread the word and encourage people to take up an enjoyable way to keep fit in our Outdoor Gym!

Where's my leader?

We are a walking group and as such should really be walking together as a group – *that's why we have a group in the first place*. However, not everybody can walk at the same pace so on some walks we end up with the group becoming spread out. Those who can walk faster sometimes speed ahead of the leader into the distance. This forces the walking pace and puts the rest of the group (*and the leader*) under pressure. Those ahead of the leader sometimes go off in the wrong direction plus act as a magnet to other walkers who try to follow them rather than their leader.

The leader also has to be aware and adjust for some of us who are a bit slower than average. This may cause considerable problems for the leader who has both to attempt to rein in the speeding walkers who are disappearing out of sight while at the same time having to slow down the rest of the group to allow the back to catch up. The leader can't be in two places at once!

Perhaps the most preventable issue is where the leader speeds ahead of the group! This is the one that really shouldn't happen! A leader who volunteers to lead a group should really adjust their own pace to the slowest person, so that the group is always together. Yet time and again some leaders are so far ahead they cannot see their back-marker, they don't stop at path junctions where a stretched out group could go wrong then at catch-up points, immediately charge on just as the last (tired) walkers (almost) reach where they were standing.

So could we all spare a thought for the group as a whole and everybody adjust our walking pace so we all enjoy a group walk together?

What are Sunday Short Walks?

This is one area where we could provide more walks for members and attract new walkers. We have quite a lot of long walks for Sundays but for some reason the shorter walks are not being offered. So what is a Sunday Short Walk? It's shorter and easier than the long walks, in fact it could be a very short walk such as our Monday or Evening Walks. It could be a '*Saturday on a Sunday*' type of walk of six moderate miles or maybe a '*Saturday Plus*' walk of seven or eight miles. They could be perfect for a figure of eight walk where you do three miles in the morning, return to the start for lunch then set off after lunch for another 3 miles, possibly with some new afternoon participants (i.e..3+3=6 miles). So let us know if you fancy leading a figure of eight walk or even being the Sunday Short Walk organiser for the group.

There's no project!

In the past we've always put together a project walk. Previously we've walked the Pembrokeshire Coast Path (*in both directions*) The Wye Valley from the source of the Wye to the sea, Newport to Newport,

Irish Ferry cross country walks and the Ceredigion Coast Path to name but a few. So do we have any budding project planners out there to put on a themed series of walks in a future programme?

Social events 2017

We had a wonderful time at all our socials and events last year.

These included:

- Meals at the Woodman Inn, Topo Gigio, The Junction, The Greyhound, The Cennen Arms and a carvery at Cefn Cribwr. We also had a cream tea, a garden party plus cakes and tea at a National Garden.
- Three coach trips: Mynydd Preseli, Pen Y Fan and Bath Christmas Market.
- A walking weekend in Kington.
- Christmas lunch at the King Arthur.

Wow! Thank you to all in the Social Committee.

Social events 2018

The team have already put together a number of socials and events for this year.

These include:

- Social evening events in April, June and October.
- 4 coach trips – Manorbier, St. David's, Severn Bridge and Bristol/Westonbirt.

The Christmas coach trip this year will be to Bristol for the Christmas Fayre then to Westonbirt Arboretum for an evening walk through the "*Enchanted Christmas Illuminations*"!

- A cream tea - We have again been invited into the home of one of our fellow Ramblers for a lovely cream tea (*Paul's partner makes the most lovely fruit cake!!*).
- The Indian pop up kitchen at Steve and Julia's.
- Christmas lunch at the King Arthur.
- Tavistock weekend - The weekend of walking to Tavistock is already fully booked! (*Friday 27th – Sunday 29th April*)
- Kington weekend - There are still places available for the Kington Walking Festival. (*Friday 21st – Sunday 23rd September*)

Social events 2019

Looking ahead to 2019, we have just finalised a weekend to Ross-on-Wye (*Friday 12th – Sunday 14th April*). **So don't miss out!** Please check the summer walks programme and especially your e-mails for what will be coming up next! - And if you haven't yet given us your email, please do send it now to: info@swansearamblers.org.uk

Footpaths

Bob continues to check footpath issues, liaising with the council and responding to planning applications where they affect footpaths. If you come across an issue on a path, always take a photograph of the problem and send it to Bob, where possible with the grid reference. Bob will advise the council and ask that the issue be resolved.

Work Party

We continue to work with the City and County of Swansea to improve footpaths by undertaking clearance, installing bridges and other path furniture. This is one of the ways we make a difference to the walking environment so if anybody would like to take part, contact Steve Robson for more details.

Don't Lose Your Way!

Just after the Second World War, new legislation came into force that required local authorities to maintain a map of all footpaths and bridleways in their area. This map, called the 'Definitive Map', was intended to provide a comprehensive list of paths within the authority's boundary. Each *identified* path was 'Legally Registered' to give it legal protection and a requirement for an authority to maintain it.

The preparation of Definitive Maps was the responsibility of County Councils. These maps were completed in conjunction with other local authorities and the extent to which public rights of way were recorded varied from area to area. This left many paths unrecorded which are still walked to this day but have no legal protection from suddenly being fenced off and closed. These paths can still be registered but they need to be claimed by members of the public as Rights of Way and often, successful claims are the ones supported by historic maps and documents that provide evidence of public use over a long time.

In 2026, *the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* will bring to an end the use of such important historic evidence. England will comply with the Act - but in Wales, Ramblers are petitioning Welsh Government to repeal this cut-off date.

Ramblers GB are trying to identify unrecorded paths before the 2026 cut-off date. To do this work in Swansea, we have created a sub-committee (Clive Scott, Bob Denley, Andrew Morgan, Richard Beale and Margaret Kirkup).

Registration is exacerbated by the fact that the Old Swansea Borough Authority was actually exempt from registering ANY paths. (*This is why there are so few paths in central Swansea*). Where other authorities adjacent to Swansea DID register their paths that entered (*and still enter*) Swansea, these paths on modern Ordnance Survey maps stop dead at the historic Swansea Borough Boundary.

To begin with, we are focussing on paths around Kilvey Hill and Bonymaen. Local volunteers in Kilvey have for some long time wanted to register their paths so we will continue to meet with them and other interested parties.

We will need people, including our membership, to come forward and provide evidence of path usage. If you have used paths in the Kilvey and Bonymaen areas that are not on the OS maps, let us know as your input may help protect these paths.

You can contact me by email, (r.beale1@gmail.com) or on my mobile (07505-974986).

Richard Beale, Publicity Officer.

Join a walk anywhere in UK

Don't forget that when you are on holiday you can join walks led by local Ramblers groups. Many of these walks appear on the national Walks Finder which can be accessed on our website from the 'Walks' dropdown menu. Just search for the area you want and see what's on offer.

And Finally

Thank you once more to our member, Wayne Pulman for providing free printing of this programme and newsletter.

See you on a walk,

Andrew Morgan