



## SWANSEA RAMBLERS SPRING NEWSLETTER 2023

Welcome to the Newsletter. In this issue there is news about the whole wide range of our activities, and, in particular, Facebook, Weekends Away, the walks programme, the path maintenance team, social events and discounts for members.

### **Introduction by our Chairman John France**

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter and I hope you find it enjoyable reading. As a Group we seem to be getting back to normal after the Covid pandemic. I was heartened to see so many of you there, at last year's Christmas lunch in The King Arthur in Reynoldston. There were 100 there and I think this was the most we have ever had. Social events such as this are all part of the enjoyment of being a member of Swansea Ramblers and I would like to repeat my thanks to the Social Committee who organized this so well, and who set up entertainments and visits throughout the year. I know it has been a struggle to recruit walk leaders, except, for the ever-popular Saturday walks. I would urge anybody who hasn't tried leading to give it a try. We are still attracting new members and currently have almost 400. Anyway, I would like to wish you all a happy and enjoyable 2023.

**Facebook-Richard Beale** A Facebook Public Group has been set up. The aim is to promote The Group to a wider audience and draw in new members. So what is the difference between a Facebook Page and Facebook Group?

A Facebook Page is a sort of simplified form of website and can be viewed by anyone. The Ramblers guidance says that '...it provides an official presence for your group, posts can be widely shared, and anybody can view and like. They are easy to find and help us open the way for everyone interested in walking. These are business pages rather than personal pages (personal pages are for a single individual).. '

'Facebook Groups are great for discussions in your Ramblers group. You may choose to have a Facebook Group in addition to your page for your community of members to chat and share photos.' Membership of the Group is open to anyone not just members of The Ramblers or Swansea Ramblers. This is part of promoting what we do as a group. Applications for membership and any posts have to be approved by The Administrator which is Richard Beale the Group Publicity Officer and applicants must agree to a set of rules.

All official walks and other events are displayed on our website which is <http://www.swansearamblers.org.uk>. Any arrangements made on Facebook are not official Ramblers events and Swansea Ramblers is not liable for any action you take, based on that content.

## Membership

This is rising and we are delighted to be regularly welcoming new members. But do you know people who 'like walking'? Do explain to them that all they have to do is come along and try us. They can give us a trial for 2 or 3 walks before they need any formalities. It's always a pleasure to greet them. Our Membership Secretary is Peter Jones Tel: 07840-542048 [membership@swansearamblers.org.uk](mailto:membership@swansearamblers.org.uk).

## Weekends Away-Karen Gibbs

I continue to work hard to deliver two weekend away trips per year for the group. The trips are normally in April and October.

Following on from the enjoyable visit to Llangollen in October 2022, the forthcoming trip to stay at the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells is well supported with forty-six members signed up for the trip.



Near Llangollen October 2023

The trips follow a simple format.

On Friday night the group meets at the venue for the quiz prior to the evening meal. Teams are formed by randomly picking a number so that members get to meet and make new friends. There is a small charge to play for prizes for the winning team and the profits are passed on to support the special costs of the walk leaders.

On both Saturday and Sunday two levels of walk are offered by leaders. Clive Scott leads the shorter route of up to 6 miles, and Tim Gronow leads a longer route. The walks are from the hotel where possible and members can choose which walk they do on the day. Clive and Tim carry out a briefing during the evening meal, when they describe the route and the walk level on offer.

All routes will have been recce'd by the leaders and this usually involves them visiting the area prior to the weekend. To help with these expenses, they receive the proceeds from the quiz mentioned earlier, plus some free accommodation based on the numbers booking the trip. However, this only helps with their expenses and never compensates them for their time and enthusiasm that they give to the

weekends. A big thank you to Clive and Tim for their support and immense contribution.

The October trip this year is to revisit the town of Great Malvern with a stay at the Abbey Hotel on Friday 20th and Saturday 21st October. Reserving rooms for this weekend is open by ringing the hotel direct on **01684-897897**.



Worcestershire Beacon,  
Malvern Hills

This is the correct number for the Sales and Reservations Office which is based at The Abbey Hotel. **This number is available Monday to Friday, 09:00 – 17:30.** Callers should ask for Natalie or Alyson, as they are dealing with the booking. Remember to quote **201023SWAN** when you make your booking, to receive the Ramblers' discounted cost of the rooms.

On recent trips we have been joined on walks by members who opt to stay in their caravans/campervans on sites near the hotel. Both the Camping and Caravanning Club and Caravan and Motor Home Club have sites at Blackmore at nearby Hanley Swan. Please let me know if you intend to stay there.

There is a spring 2024 trip planned to the Wynnstay Hotel in Machynlleth so keep 19-21 April free in your diaries!

Finally, an appeal to all members that if they privately have a good experience at a hotel that has capacity for up to fifty people, please let me know. I'm constantly searching for venues for future trips, and recommendations are invaluable.

Karen Gibbs. Vice Chair. Organizer, Weekend Trips Away.

Contact: karen.gibbs@talktalk.net.

### **The Walks Programme**

As you will be aware since the start of Covid we have not produced a printed programme. There are several reasons for this: Covid restrictions and rules were changing frequently so that it was unwise to publish a long range programme; leaders were reluctant to submit walks; risk assessments were introduced and the committee subsequently decided to adopt a flexible approach posting walks on the website when offered and changes could be made easily if required. A further consideration was the increasing cost of printing and mailing the programme which would amount to well in excess of £500 per issue. For all these reasons the Walks Programme is published on our Website which is curated by Andrew Morgan: <http://www.swansearamblers.org.uk>. Please note that only official walks advertised in this way and open to all members are covered by Ramblers third-party liability insurance.

More walk leaders are always required and it is suggested that for your first walk you buddy up with a more experienced leader. There are free courses offered by The

Ramblers for walk leaders. See The Ramblers website/Assemble for details.  
<https://www.ramblers.org.uk>.

### **Monday Walks-Richard Beale**

We are always looking for short/easy Monday Walks. These are aimed potential new members in particular, so that they try easier walks and if see if being a member of Swansea Ramblers is for them. Of course existing members are always welcome. Normally, the walks start at 10.00am and finish by lunchtime. If you are considering leading walks for the Group this is an ideal opportunity for you to practise leading on a walk you know. There lots of gaps in the programme (see website) so new walks are welcome please contact me on ShortStrolls@swansearamblers .org.uk

### **Mid-Week Walks (Tuesday-Friday)-Clive Scott**

We have been lucky to have some great mid-week walks and have some excellent walks to look forward to in our calendar.

We are always looking for leaders for mid-week. We have lots of flexibility for these walks. They can be on any day from Tuesday to Friday; start times can be flexible; length of the walk is up to the leader with most being between 5 and 9 miles. Mid-week may also provide a good opportunity for a smaller group to go further afield.

The opportunities are yours.

Please consider leading, or co-leading, a mid-week walk. If you have any questions or further information please contact Clive Scott who can also support recce's or co-lead walks with you. Clive.scott1@icloud.com. Tel.07369299198.

### **Saturday Walks-Roger Brown**

These have been extraordinarily popular and great fun, thanks to the work of Roger Brown, the organizer. Come along and join in - a good day out in some very interesting places.

### **Sunday Walks-Rob Johnston**

Pre-Covid there were regular longer walks on a Sunday. Unfortunately, since Covid it has been harder to recruit walk leaders for this category. Typically these were 9 to 12 miles in length with some being graded strenuous. However, some of these have been well attended drawing in some people from other Rambler groups suggesting that there is a latent demand. If you would like to submit a walk for the programme please contact Rob Johnston on Sundays@swansearamblers.org.uk

### **The Path Maintenance Team-Clive Scott**

The Swansea Ramblers Path Maintenance Team have had a great 2022 and a busy start to 2023.

Last year saw the re-opening of Trumpet Lane at Knelston. This enabled access for residents, local school kids, brownie factory workers, people from the adjoining caravan site, horse riders and, of course Ramblers and other walkers for the first time in decades. Completing a huge amount of work over two years this was a fantastic achievement for Steve Robson, Path Maintenance Team Lead, and the team. Brilliant job!



Trumpet Lane, Knelston

After 10 years doing a magnificent job leading the team, Steve decided to step back and, whilst remaining a team member, handed the baton to Clive Scott over the summer. The achievements of the team, with Steve as lead, are immeasurable for local residents and walkers - many bridges replaced, miles of footpaths cleared and stiles and gates repaired. Thanks Steve. Brilliant job.

More recently the team have replaced 4 footbridges (2 in Llanmorlais, 1 in Gowerton, 1 in Bishopston Valley, built a brideways bridge from scratch (in Dunvant) and cleared hundreds of metres of paths. We are also a team who work together, get things done, build friendships and have a laugh.

We work alongside the Council's Countryside Access Team and currently work on the second Wednesday of the month (occasionally this has to flex).

We are also currently clarifying insurance and risk assessments to enable some independent working. The Path Maintenance team is great fun, very satisfying and is out in the fresh air with friends.

All volunteers are welcome and no previous experience, or skills, are required apart from enthusiasm and a smile.

Please consider volunteering. No firm commitment is required of any volunteers, just an indication of availability, or not, the week before we meet up and contact Clive Scott for any further information or questions. Clive.scott1@icloud.com or Tel:07369299198



New bridge in Bishopston Valley erected in December 2022

## **The Social Committee**

This was set up by Swansea Ramblers some years ago to provide social occasions for our members. These have been very popular. Recently there was a trip to Brobury house and gardens and to the city of Hereford, where many members went to the cathedral while others shopped and enjoyed a lovely city. For future events see: <http://www.swansearamblers.org.uk> and click on 'Socials' for the future programme.

## **Discounts for Members**

Members of The Ramblers are entitled to a 15% discount in Cotswold Outdoor shops. Unfortunately there is not a shop in Swansea and the nearest ones are Carmarthen, Cardiff and Brecon. Go Outdoors in Swansea offers a 10% discount for members of Swansea Ramblers.

## **Smile Amazon**

Until 20<sup>th</sup> February Amazon had a scheme whereby 0.5% of the value of your purchases would be donated to The Ramblers. This scheme has now been discontinued.

## **Ramblers Committee**

**Chairman:** John France Tel: 01792-547439 chair@swansearamblers.org.uk  
**Vice Chair:** Karen Gibbs Tel: 07748-349264 vicechair@swansearamblers.org.uk  
**Secretary:** Catryn Edwards Tel: 01792-203112 secretary@swansearamblers.org.uk  
**Treasurer, Walks Programme and website:** Andrew Morgan Tel: 07719-409504  
programme@swansearamblers.org.uk webmaster@swansearamblers.org.uk  
**Footpaths:** Clive Rees Tel: 07969-378750 footpaths@swansearamblers.org.uk  
**Membership:** Peter Jones Tel: 07840-542048  
membership@swansearamblers.org.uk  
**Social Committee:** Myra Lewis: myralewis@ntlworld.com  
Christine Rees  
Paul Williams  
Lynne Esson  
**Path Maintenance and Mid-Week Walks:** Clive Scott Tel: 07369299198  
Clive.scott1@icloud.com  
**Publicity:** Richard Beale Tel: 07505974986 publicity@swansearamblers.org.uk  
**Sunday Walks:** Rob Johnston Tel: 07776 080834  
Sundays@swansearamblers.org.uk  
**Walks Programme and website:** Andrew Morgan Tel: 07719-409504  
programme@swansearamblers.org.uk webmaster@swansearamblers.org.uk

*Edited by Richard Beale Swansea Ramblers Publicity Officer 9.3.23.*