



LOWER WYE RAMBLER



Number 47

www.lowerwyeramblers.org.uk

Feb 2010

CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

A belated Happy New Year to you all!

As many of you are aware, the Ramblers' finances have been a cause for concern but we are assured that, with the first balanced budget for many years, there is every hope that things will be on track in the near future. However, all this has had a knock-on effect to the Lower Wye in that our allocation against budget has been reduced by 35% and so we are having to tighten our belt!

We are therefore reducing the number of newsletters from three per year to two, to coincide with the distribution of the six-monthly walks programme, in February and August. This means that the notice for some of the social activities, weekends and holidays will be well in advance so please make a note of the dates in your diary now and you can always check the detail nearer the event.

We have lost Maurice Turner from the committee after many years' service to the group, although I am pleased he will continue to look after our website. We welcome Pat Willmott as the new Membership Secretary from 1st March. My thanks to all committee members who are working hard to provide us all with an excellent programme of walks, weekends, holidays and social events. Come along and give them your support.

Dawn

SPRING & SUMMER WALKS PROGRAMME

March to August 2010

There are plenty of interesting midweek and weekend walks in great locations in the 2010 'Spring and Summer' walks programme plus the ever popular evening walks in the Summer months. As always we have tried to mix long and short walks each month so all members have the opportunity of doing walks that suit their fitness and ability. With that in mind this programme also provides a choice of a long walk or a short walk on three of the summer months on Sundays.

We are very grateful to Gordon for organising the next leg of the South West Coastal Path from Padstow in May and those of us who will be continuing on the next leg anticipate another enjoyable long weekend in Cornwall. With one long distance trail continuing so another is coming to its end – the Offa's Dyke Path, of which some of us will have trekked the full length when completed in May. We greatly appreciate the achievement of our leaders Terry and Stevie who have done a superb job on the planning of the walks and arranging the accommodation, meals and transport along the route. It has been a memorable experience and we look forward to celebrating the completion of the trek on reaching the banks of the Severn.

We all know the benefits of regular walking and I quote from a recent article in 'The Times' called 'get moving' in which regular walking was a cornerstone of the author's exercise plan.

"Exercise through walking should become an essential part of your weekly life and as well as helping with weight control, it gives you energy and improves your mood. With regular walking your body shape and composition will change, your muscles will become more toned and dense and will burn calories quicker. The improvements in your mood can be life-changing in themselves as when you exercise by walking several miles, your body releases endorphins which are the so-called 'feel-good' hormones. Endorphins give you a natural high, so exercise through walking, quite literally, can make you feel happy. "

So put on your walking boots and enjoy the variety of walks in our Spring and Summer programme with your 'exercise buddies' (journalist's term for ramblers) and hopefully you will release lots of endorphins and will feel very happy!

Len

FOOTPATH MATTERS

The spate of diversion applications from landowners continues and the RoW Officer at County advises that some 20 are in the pipeline. We have agreed, with modifications, diversions at Llangwm Isaf Farm, Graygill on the Kymin, Caldicot, Portskewett, Tintern (above where the landslip occurred) and Usk.

We are becoming concerned at the lack of progress that the County is making in removing obstructions on footpaths that we have reported on several occasions, some going back 7 years. This is despite the appointment of an Enforcement Officer on the staff on the Countryside Service.

We shall be taking up this matter and expressing our disappointment with the County. Currently only 50% of the County's footpaths are properly accessible.

Allan

The R.O.W Maintenance Support Team: 'The Chain Gang'

The Chain Gang has celebrated its first anniversary. Since December 2009 we have turned out in all weathers every week and honed our skills working with the County Field Wardens in all corners of the County. Only the very wet ground conditions at the end of the year brought a temporary halt to our work, but a resumption in January saw us in Abergavenny installing one of the new fangled metal kissing gates that ramblers in Gloucestershire are more familiar with. Ron Gladwin has left the gang to devote his energies with David Watkins to the path maintenance of the rambles routes in our guide booklet – he has been replaced by Dave Andrews from the U3A.

Allan

'WELSH RAMBLER'

Whether we like it or not, the Ramblers are moving to electronic communication with members. Ramblers Cymru intend moving to an e-mail Newsletter and if you wish to receive this please go to www.ramblers.org.uk/wales and follow the instructions to register and they'll add you to the mailing list. Remember you can opt out of this at any time and you are assured that your e-mail address will not be used for any other purpose.

There is also a wealth of news and information on the main Ramblers' website, www.ramblers.org.uk and the volunteer section replaces all circulars, newsletters, bulletins, handbooks, factsheets and resources. An e-newsletter is sent out monthly to all volunteers who want it – just register on the website.

Dawn

THE RAMBLERS – 75th ANNIVERSARY

To celebrate 75 years of The Ramblers in 2010 there is to be a nation-wide series of Baton Walks. The celebration started with a national launch in the south-west in January and the 'baton' will go on a passage through Wales and Scotland and taking in the nine English regions. The Lower Wye will be doing its Baton Walk on Sunday 21 March starting at Chepstow Castle – full details are in the walks programme. Please make a special effort to come on this walk and celebrate 75 years of The Ramblers.

Also to mark the 75th Anniversary we are proposing to have a presence at the Monmouthshire Show in August. We will be looking for volunteers to help on the day so please let me know if you think you could help.

Dawn

THE EISTEDDFOD – EBBW VALE – 31 JULY-07 AUGUST

Another request for volunteers, this time to help on the Ramblers Cymru site at the Eisteddfod on Tuesday 03 August. We need five volunteers, Welsh speakers especially welcome. Again, if you think you can help, please let me know as soon as possible.

Dawn

MONMOUTHSHIRE WALKING FESTIVAL

The county's long-distance footpaths, including Offa's Dyke Path and the Wye Valley Walk, will form a central part of the ten-day festival which takes place this year from 22-31 October with six day-long hikes following Monmouthshire's boundary from Magor in the south to Llanthony in the north.

The Lower Wye will be contributing a number of walks – if you would like to volunteer to lead a particular walk please let me know as soon as possible. Further information can be found on www.walkinginmonmouthshire.co.uk.

Dawn

DIARY DATES 2010

21 March	75 th ANNIVERSARY BATON WALK – details in Walks Prog
14-17 May	SOUTH WEST COAST PATH – details in Newsletter
17 July	SUMMER BBQ – details and booking form in Newsletter
03 Aug	EISTEDDFOD – details in Newsletter
26 Aug	MONMOUTH SHOW – details in Newsletter
19 Sept	AREA WALK – hosted by Lower Wye - details to follow
24-27 Sept	DERBYSHIRE – details in Newsletter
13 Oct	QUIZ NIGHT – details to follow
22-31 Oct	MONMOUTHSHIRE WALKING FESTIVAL – details to follow
03-10 Nov	CYPRUS EXPERIENCE – details in Newsletter
07 Nov	GREATER GWENT AREA AGM – hosted by South Gwent - details to follow
19 Nov	LOWER WYE GROUP AGM – details to follow
11 Dec	CHRISTMAS LUNCH – details to follow

A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

Why do we go rambling? There are as many reasons as there are ramblers, probably more. We do it to enjoy the scenery, to meet

some regular friends. To get some exercise, to see the wildlife, to avoid clearing up after last night's party and to avoid mowing the lawn - a veritable myriad of perfectly good reasons to ramble.

There is now another reason to go rambling and a new breed of rambler is making his/her presence among us. He is the MA – no, not the Master of Arts, he is the Measurement Anorak. The MA comes fully equipped with a device to record the distance walked in miles or kilometres according to preference, the height gained in feet or metres, the average speed and the time taken and the time elapsed at coffee and lunch breaks (if allowed by the leader). The device records all the data and is then taken home and plugged into the computer for further analysis and discussion. The essence of rambling, as in skydiving and sex, is surely in the immediacy not in its subsequent analysis.

The oft asked question “How far is it to go, Freda?” that used to elicit a response such “Not far now. Just over the next hill” is now more likely to get a reply such as “1.237 miles and 23 and ¼ minutes” or something similar. Not very romantic is it?

The new-fangled device is the Good Personal Samaritan or GPS for short. They are very useful to help you locate your position when you have fallen by the way and been left behind by the Group after stopping to reload fresh batteries. They are also useful in providing irrefutable evidence with which to berate the unfortunate leader whose walk exceeds or falls short of the specified time and distance. The GPS is similar to those devices fitted into vehicles and which permit 40-tonne lorries to become stuck in narrow country lanes, to the delight of small boys and the chagrin of farmers who prefer to block the lanes themselves. The walkers' GPS is an advance on the technology of the dreaded and unreliable pedometer that, as everyone knows, never agreed with the recording of any other pedometer and was the source of endless arguments.

The present generation of GPS has a limited capability but MAs can eagerly look forward to the next more powerful version. These will record wind speeds, max and min temperatures, light and noise levels, adiabatic expansion rates, the depth of water in puddles and the exact spot where you left your walking pole leaning against a tree

on your last walk and also give a 12-day weather prediction. All future walks leaders will be required to carry one and transmit the data continuously by mobile phone to the RA Central Command Centre who will put it on the internet so that the rescue services know where you are at all times.

Quite why we need these devices to find our way around our own backyard is a debatable question. After all, Scott found his way to the South Pole and Hillary to the summit of Everest with no mobile phone or GPS

But a reaction is developing. We are shortly to announce the formation of a new sub-group in the Lower Wye in which members will come equipped with nothing more sinister than a map and compass (and, in the summer, a pocket radio to get the Test Match scores). This new group will have as its motto "No Electronic and Extraneous Recording of The Highs And Lows – NEANDERTHALS for short.

Like to join?

G O R Ambler

SOUTH WEST COAST PATH – 14-17 MAY 2010

The weekend will be based in Padstow – Friday 7 miles, Saturday 9 miles, Sunday 9 miles, Monday 6 miles optional

To register your interest please send an 8x4 (DL) stamped addressed envelope to:

Gordon Taylor, 64 Silverbirch Close, Littlestoke, Bristol, BS34 6RN - by 14 March latest. Please include your name and telephone number and I will send accommodation details and information. I strongly recommend early booking as accommodation is limited. Any queries my number is 01454 616344

Gordon

PROPOSED DERBYSHIRE PEAK DISTRICT WEEKEND

We are planning a weekend from Friday 24th to Monday 27th September walking in the Peak District.

This will entail 2 half day walks, and 2 full day walks. We plan to stay in Buxton. The total cost per person for dinner, bed and breakfast is £136 – regardless of whether you have a single, double or twin room.

Only the date is finalised at present. Dawn, David and I are to do a 'recce' in April. Although I do not want deposits yet, I would like to know who is interested as soon as possible by person, email telephone or text. Thank you.

Ron

Email ron819@btinternet.com

Mobile/Text 07527 320820

Tel/Message 01600 713726

PROPOSED WEEK'S CYPRUS WALKING HOLIDAY

Fancy a week in Cyprus at Polis Chrysochous from 3rd to 10th November, flying from Cardiff to Paphos? Weather 18-20 C, dry, staying at Hotel Aphrodite, 3 * quiet location.

We need no fewer than 16 people, and no more than 30. At present we have only 13. The cut off date was 31st January, so if you are interested please apply through me asap. The cost is £685. This includes picnic lunches on the 5 walking days, as well as dinner, bed and breakfast, and all transport. Varied walks from 7-10 miles on the Akamas Peninsula. Good swimming, fabulous views.

Sue Oswell

Tel: 01600780416 Email: cretacotta@hotmail.co.uk

CHRISTMAS LUNCH, LLANVAIR DISCOED

Once again the popular Christmas Lunch was well supported. On Saturday 14 December, 44 members met at the Woodlands Tavern, Llanvair Discoed for a two-course lunch. Some had undertaken a circular walk, led by Hilary and David, around Grey Hill, before meeting up with the others in the bar. Following the meal, we all joined in hearty carol singing led by Hilary, which got us into the spirit of Christmas before heading home.

Heather

PUBLICITY

If you have any LWR news, reports or photos by the paparazzi of famous local walkers in action, please let me know.

Nick

'ELF + SAFETY!'

An 11-mile coastal footpath, built at a cost of £30,000 by the Rotary Club to allow ramblers to enjoy the scenery along Loch Ryan near Stranraer has fallen foul of elf'n'safety. Dumfries and Galloway Council officials fear hikers may slip and graze their knees. They are also worried that the route goes through a field of cows. It gets sillier. Elf'n'Safety is so concerned that someone might fall in the loch and drown, they are insisting that a lifeguard has to be present at all times. The council will allow organised groups to use the footpath only if they are supervised by a 'trained outdoor specialist' – whatever that is. Next thing they'll be demanding handrails on every hillside. How long before they insist that everyone has to wear a hard hat and a high-viz lifejacket before they're allowed to venture into the countryside?

(Courtesy of the Daily Mail!)

LOWER WYE RAMBLERS COMMITTEE 2009-2010

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