

# July 2017 Newsletter

## Overview.

The first half of the summer programme has proved to be full of walking activity. Attendances have overall been excellent, with high teens on Weekends and Thursday Evenings, 30 plus on Wednesdays. The Monday Homer and Roamer groups have also continued to go from strength to strength; but with a copious imbalance between lady and gentlemen walkers. This term has seen the inclusion of shorter walks at weekends (6 to 8 miles) which have proved to be popular especially by those walkers who are upping their mileage.

## Events:

**Crickhowell Weekend:** The final event of the 2016/17 Winter Programme was our weekend in Crickhowell; attendance was lower than usual, which was attributed to the usual attendees being forced away onto other commitments. In spite of the lower numbers the weekend proved to be extremely enjoyable, with excellent walking combined with glorious weather on both days.

**Croatia Holiday:** The first away trip of the Summer 2017 programme was in early May with a walking holiday to Croatia organised by Monica Rees. The group left Llanelli midday Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May and travelled to Heathrow for an overnight stay at a Premier Inn. Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May the group flew to Zagreb where they were met by Monica's niece Shan and her husband Cedo, followed by a 2 ½ hour coach transfer to the town of Nacise for their accommodation at the "Hotel Egghus". During the week's stay a local walking group organised four days walking, primarily fairly strenuous walking in the local mountainous beech forests.

On the first non-walking day there was a choice of a train trip to the regional capital of Osijek or a visit to a local winery, and on the second non-walking day Shan and Cedo organised a coach trip to Bosnia where the group attended a Catholic Mass under a hot and sunny sky to bless the crops, which was followed by an excellent meal of pork and seasoned cabbage. On conclusion of the mass and meal the group transferred to Shan and Cedo's bungalow for further generous amounts of

liquid and BBQ refreshments before heading back across the Bosnia/ Croatia border to Nacise.

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May was an early start back to Zagreb and the flight home. During the stay at “Egghus” the hospitality of Shan, Cedo and their staff was 2<sup>nd</sup> to none. It is hoped that a future holiday in Croatia can again be arranged.

### **Heart of Wales Line Trail:**

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July saw the first stage of Wales’ new long-distance path being opened at a ceremony in Craven Arms. The Heart of Wales Line Trail will run from Craven Arms south and westwards to Llanelli, mirroring the adjoining railway of the same name.

Around 100 people, including dignitaries and representatives from Network Rail and Arriva Trains Wales, and members of Llanelli Ramblers gathered on the station platform at Craven Arms, as the banner was unfurled, and the first stage of the route declared open to Knighton and Knucklas. 79 walkers then boarded the train to Broome to undertake a five mile walk back along a section of the newly-opened path to Craven Arms.

Work currently is now taking place in Powys on the section between Knucklas and Llandrindod – this is largely being undertaken by the County Council but includes local volunteer groups as well.

As work is completed on each stage of the trail, a detailed route description will appear on the route’s website [www.heartofwaleslinetrail.co.uk](http://www.heartofwaleslinetrail.co.uk)

Eventually though, a Cicerone-type guidebook of the complete route description will be published, discussions with prospective publishers are ongoing- funding for this though is dependent on the success of fund-raising initiatives. (see below). Although county councils along the route are attending to infrastructure repairs and improvements, funding for supplementary items such as the route roundels and logos is being funded by donations from ordinary ramblers. Volunteer groups are also involved in affixing these roundels/logos too existing waymarker posts.

What can you, do? Offer to take part in the volunteer work on the Carmarthenshire sections of the route – mostly, affixing the roundels and logos, and just as important, make a donation to: HoWLTA PO Box 778, Swansea SA4 5BL  
Cheques only – payable to HoWLTA and marked on the reverse “Donation to HoWL Trail” and include your name and address. All donors to date received an invitation to the launch on 4<sup>th</sup> July and new donors will receive invitations to subsequent launch events.

**John Maudsley – Heart of Wales Line Trail Working Group.**

### **Festival of Walks 2017:**

The themes this year were “Sources of Rivers” and “Waterways”.  
Walks were put on to source the Aman, Usk, Twrch, Guedd, Tawe, Llynfi, Garw, Ogmore, Corrwg Fechan, and Llŵchwr Rivers.

Walks centered on waterways were to the Neath Waterfalls, Bosherton Lakes, Paviland Cliffs and Llanstephen.

159 walkers took part in the Festival, and despite the competition of 80 other walking festivals available in the UK throughout the year, Llanelli was still able to attract 79 visitors higher than our average figure over the years. Disappointingly only 80 members took part. This was well below our average figure.

The Festival Committee would appeal for more member support next year; otherwise the cost of hiring coaches will become untenable. Sustaining the festival in its present form does require the persistent chasing of grants and sending begging letters.

With regard to finance- prior to this year’s festival, the bank balance stood at £2,377. Total cash received this year was £3,059, of this £1,300 was obtained from grant applications and donations, and the remainder from bookings. Other costs for recce expenses, administration and printing amounted to £1,200. Therefore the 2018 Festival will start with a kitty of £2,362.

The Friday Festival Launch was disappointing as 20 people who had committed to being there didn't turn up. There were 35 people in total at the launch of which 27 were leaders and back markers!. Also present were invited dignitaries...Town Council Deputy Mayor Mrs Louvain Roberts, Burry Port Town Councillor Mrs Lisa Mitchell and Chair of Llanelli Rural Council Mr John Evans who formally opened the festival. Roger and Dawne of Cotswold Outdoor Carmarthen once again brought a selection of goods for sale, gave demonstrations and donated prizes for the free raffle.

The ever popular Monday Welsh tea was once again a great success. Due to the hard work and great organising skills of the catering team, 95 walkers were treated to a sumptuous spread, supplemented by generous donations of cakes etc. by members.

The Festival was closed by Chairman Alwyn Williams who thanked the loyal hardworking members of the Festival Committee, the enthusiastic walks leaders and back markers, the amazing Welsh Tea catering team. Alwyn also thanked the sponsors, Llanelli Town Council, Llanelli Rural Council, Burry Port Town Council, Principality Building Society, Tesco, Mike Clarke Printing and Gwyn Price Coaches for subsidising the cost the Family Walks Coaches, and for being so reliable and amenable.

Finally Alwyn announced that he would be standing down as Chairman. It must be recorded, that Alwyn's Chairmanship over the last 9 years has been truly outstanding; he has coaxed many thousands of pounds from local authorities, commercial enterprises and the Welsh Assembly and worked tirelessly to promote Llanelli Festival of Walks.

### **Offa's Dyke:**

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July saw the completion of Peter and Ian's Offa's Dyke long distance walk. Friday turned out to be a wet day; thankfully the weather of the remaining two days was excellent. Their project ended with a celebration dinner at which, in the flavour of the Tour de France, jerseys were presented for outstanding efforts: Yellow Jersey to Nina who has twice completed Offa's Dyke,

King of the Mountain Polka Dot Jersey to Lampeter Rambler, Colin for his speed of mountain accent, and the White Jersey to young lady again from Lampeter who was the youngest walker to complete the walk. Peter and Ian have intimated that they will again organise another Long Distance Walk in the very near future.

### **Monday Groups:**

Both Homers and Roamers continue to offer walks. The Homers meet at the Leisure Centre for walks starting within a localised radius. The Roamers walks can be viewed on the Llanelli Ramblers web site.

The 16 Roamers recently had a holiday walking the Llangollen Canal. Both groups continue to welcome new members; in particular there is a shortage of male members.

### **Future Events:**

#### **August Bank Holiday Camp at Pembrey Country Park:**

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> to Monday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2017** is a fun packed weekend programme for adults, children, family and friends: based in the Archery Field behind the ski slope. There is a choice of either camping for as many days as suits, or attend on a daily basis.

Camping cost is £10 per Unit per Night.

Programme:

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August

6.30pm 4 mile walk from the camp site led by Alwyn followed by a BBQ with Jeff and Diana. BBQ Cost - Adults £4; Children £1,

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August

11.00am Beach Combing with Diana and 2.30pm Crafts in the Marquee

Or

11.00am from the camp site 6 mile flat walk led by Ron and Hazel to Burry Port.

7.00pm Curry with Jeff followed by Poems and Pints with Mary (write your own or read your favourites).

Curry Cost – Adults £4 Children £1

**Special Offer – Book both BBQ and Curry - £7 Adults £2 Children**

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August

10am – 8 mile C+ walk from Kidwelly to Ferryside –

Meet at Car Park in Kidwelly. (Over bridge and turn into car park by the side of chapel)

Return 15.51 train back to Kidwelly. Huw mobile: 07582555518

Or

2.00pm- Nature Trail with Diana followed by Foliage Creations and a Themed tea party in the Marquee (cakes only)

7.00pm Join the fun in the evening, Display your entertaining skills with Ramblers have Talent

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> August

11.00am Sandcastle competition (packed lunch) or Fun and Games in the Marquee if wet.

2.30pm - Cake making/decorating in the Marquee

Evening – Campfire on the beach with Andy or if bad weather, Folk Dancing/Family Movie night in the marquee.

To book for BBQ and Curry tickets, contact

Hazel 01554-75533- Adrienne 01554-751777 Diana 07746915602 by Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

### **Cornwall Holiday:**

Staying near St Austell. Five days optional walking the South West Coast Path plus one day site seeing. For further details contact Adrienne/Huw.

### **Social Evenings:**

Thursday October 2017, is the first of the winter's social evenings in the form of a lecture by Mr Brian Davies – further details to follow.

### **AGM:**

This year's Annual General Meeting is to be held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at 7.00pm.

The following committee members have declared that they will not be standing for re-election:

Huw Francis – Newsletter Editor

Monica Rees – Publicity Secretary

Nina Clements – Web Secretary

Alwyn Williams – Chair of the Festival Committee

All of the above have served for many years on Llanelli Ramblers Committee and now feel it is the right time for other persons, with perhaps fresh ideas to seek election. Please contact our Secretary, John Cook (01554 759211) who can give you further information if you are prepared to consider putting your name forward.

**Huw Francis**