



RAMBLERS' GROUP NEWS – APRIL 2018

Social Events:

The Welsh Night. A new innovation for this year, held at the Stag in Five Roads, the event was enjoyed by 30 members, many of whom had dressed for the occasion by wearing something red. There was traditional Welsh fare interspersed with some spontaneous entertainment; Eirwen Stephens and Kath Lewis recited their winning gems from the August 'Poems and Pints' night and Alwyn's granddaughter Megan gave a song. (She was on the staff of the Stag for the evening.)

Twmpath: held on 24th February at the Catholic Hall, Llanelli. Despite a disappointing turn out a good time was had by all who attended. The music was provided by 'Rattlin Bog' and the dancing was intermingled with a fish and chip supper, all washed down with self-catering liquids of varying potency.

St David's Day Cawl Walk: Alwyn Williams and Elaine Thomas led a 6 mile C grade walk around Burry Port. The walk was very well attended despite the bitterly cold, biting wind. At the start the walkers were accompanied by a representative of the Llanelli Herald who took some photographs and video. About 70 tickets were sold for the event, which meant many mouths to feed at the end of the walk. This year we were all invited back to the home of Jeff and Diana Davies on the Links where the marquee had been set up and the hot cawl, cheese, bread and welsh cakes welcomed the chilled walkers. Despite the high attendance there was ample supply of cawl and all who asked, 'please sir, I want some more' could have their fill, an amazing feat of catering excellence. Sincere thanks to Jeff and Diana. Retirement for further refreshment was to the Red Lion Pembrey.

Skittles: Held at the Poachers Rest in Ferry Side, this popular event is a real test of teamwork and skill. Teams of four battled hard, fearless of personal embarrassment, for the "Llanelli Skittles Trophy" nourished by copious helpings of curry, rice, sausage and chips with just a touch of liquid accompaniment; the final turned out to be an absolute thriller, drawing gasps of incredulous amazement from the capacity crowd. Alas, it was victory for the French as 'Bernard's Bravos' came out eventual winners.

Map Reading and Quiz Night. The final event of this years' social calendar was a very entertaining and educational evening. Devised by Hazel Blewitt, all who took part gained some new knowledge on map reading skills, whilst simultaneously having fun. Well done Hazel for a brilliantly devised evening.

Six Nations competition. This years 'six nations results prediction competition,' organized and hosted by Kevin Hewitt, turned out to be a nail-biter of a finish. Most of the big guns had England as favourites (how sad). This year's winners were joint first Sandra Bennett and Kevin Hewitt (fix, fix), third place Eirwen Stephens. Well done the ladies.

Looking Ahead:

Monday Club

Homers and Roamers – Both groups are enjoying a full summer programme with 14 of the Roamers taking a Spring Break walking holiday in Llangollen.

Summer Programme: The 2018 Summer programme is now well underway. Well done **Kath Lewis** our new Programme Secretary. The Wednesday calendar is complete but there are still gaps on weekends and Thursday evenings. Thursday Evening walks at 3 to 4 miles are an excellent entry starter for anyone who wishes to take up walking as a leisure activity but views the weekend and mid-week walks as too long.

Walking Events:

April has been a very busy month for excursions.

The **Llangrannog weekend** organized and led by Rob and Jan Davies. Based at the Urdd Centre and with a coach at their disposal members explored far off areas of the mid-west coast and country on linear walks. This year attendees tried their hand at archery under the instruction of the Urdd staff. I can confirm that no children or apples were injured in the course of this activity.

France with Bernard. Not an official LLanelli Ramblers event but well support by many members, the annual jaunt across the channel was, this year, centered at the beautiful city of Dijon in the Burgundy area. Everybody had a great time, but there was a lot of *wine-ing*.

Crickhowell Weekend- Two walks each day; one short led by Hazel and Ron, and one long led by Jeff and Diana. The weather was not what one would hope for this late in April but it did not detract from the pleasures of walking in this beautiful part of Wales.

Festival of Walks – 25th to 28th May – Booking is well underway as we look forward to this year's festival. There is a fantastic programme of five walks each day, ranging from challenging to easy family walks. The weekend will start with our Friday evening 'Get Together' and end with a traditional Welsh Tea. Please book ASAP as some of the walks are already starting to fill up. If you haven't already done so, check out the festival programme and book yourself a walk or two for this Holiday weekend. Why not invite family or friends!

Two Moors Way with Ian and Peter.

The first extended weekend of this walk will take place on June 8th 9th and 10th and be based at Ivybridge. Further details on the online programme.

August Bank Holiday Camp – 24th to 28th August 2018:

Come on Down for this fun packed family friendly weekend. Join us for a few hours or a few days. With all the usual events, there is something for everyone. Full details to follow in due course.

South West Coast Path - 8th to 15th September – Walking the 630 miles of SWCP continues, this September based in Looe. For further information contact Rob and Jan 07974 757806 –

Heart of Wales Line Trail (HOWLT)

Special correspondent, **John Maudsley**, reports on the opening of the Pantyffynnon to Llanelli section of the Trail:-

“Open for businessand on a roll “ !!

Tuesday 27th March, the day that the Heart of Wales Line Trail finally took flight. Over 100 people flocked to Pontarddulais station, to witness Swansea's Lord Mayor, Cllr Phillip Downing, unfurl the Trail banner and declare the southern section (Pantyffynnon to Llanelli) officially open.

Following the launch, the 40, or so, official guests, retired to the Institute, where they heard warm words of welcome by the Town Mayor, Cllr Jane Harris and enjoyed light refreshments, courtesy of the Town Council, who hosted the event.

At the same time, in Coedbach Park, walkers from all over South and West Wales were gathering to undertake the inaugural guided walks over the newly-opened section of the Trail.

A total of 71 walkers took part in the three walks, including representatives from 10 distinct walking groups, plus national representatives from two walking organisations – Ramblers Cymru and the Long Distance Walking Association. All three walks were well supported and were ably led and stewarded by members of Llanelli Ramblers. They were also scheduled, so that use could be made of trains on the Heart of Wales Line.

The shortest walk, a four mile circular, returned to Coedbach Park, in time to take part in a Tai Chi event, the seven mile walk concluded at Bynea station, in time to catch the 14.52 train back to Pontarddulais, whilst the longest walk eventually reached Llanelli railway station at 4.30 pm, where they were met by the Town Mayor Cllr J.S. Edmunds and Cllr Louvain Roberts.

Following this official welcome, this group of walkers, retired to the Miramar Hotel to await their return train north (18.42) and to partake of a buffet and light refreshments, courtesy of the landlord and Llanelli Ramblers.

Meeting on Thursday 29th March, the Trail Steering Group adjudged the launch a success, and paid special tribute to the contributions of Llanelli Ramblers, with reference to their work in stewarding at the station, walker registration at the Institute, and leading / backmarking the three guided walks. Well done Llanelli Ramblers.

Open for business ? Yes, most definitely.

On a roll ? Next stop, Llandovery on June 26th, when the whole route between Pantyffynnon to the Powys border, near Cynghordy will be officially opened.

Keep your eyes peeled for future events on the Trail..... **and keeeeeeep walking !!!**

Footpaths Maintenance Working Party - After a few years absence the group has now been resurrected and teams have been out on two occasions to work on replacing styles with the new design of galvanised steel, self-closing gates. Team Leader, Jeff Davies, liaises between Carmarthenshire's PRow warden and the volunteers to schedule a work day, and then hi-ho, hi-ho, it's off to work they go. On the first outing the work party were joined by two members of the Ramblers Cymru staff who were keen to see the type of work that was being done and, in fairness to the two ladies, they both got stuck-in.

Now that the group has been established Jeff is hoping to schedule at least one workday every month.