



Winter/ Spring Newsletter 2021

Editorial

Thank you for all the contributions I have received this month, please keep them coming in! There is a consultation document relating to sustainable tourism in Snowdonia which Simon Long has highlighted for us all at the end of this issue.

I intend to produce the next Newsletter in early May when hopefully we will be looking forward to a summer of walking with fewer restrictions.

Jane

Chairman

Greetings to you all.

Happy New Year, Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.

We will shortly be passing the first, and only anniversary hopefully, of the Covid saga that has so disrupted all our lives over the last twelve months.

This time last year I was off to Spain for a winter break with Maxine. We arrived back in the UK towards the end of February just as the Covid saga hit the news. We then booked another break for February 2021, dream on.

Who would have thought that twelve months later we hardly seem to have moved on.

Hopefully some of you will have had the first dose of the vaccine but we are still months off the end game for Covid.

A few of our Walk Leaders gallantly took the opportunity to organise some good walks last autumn during the short 'out of lockdown' period. Thank you.

Otherwise, we seem to be no nearer to restarting group walks. We patiently wait for our leader to reopen the countryside for us all!

Good news: Roy has developed a new, much simpler way of advertising, logging and recording walks and has found favour with those that have used it. Whatever happens in the future we may well hang on to and encourage us all to use that system for all Eryri group walks.

So, if you want to have a go at planning your programme of walks for when this Covid saga ends, please get in touch with Roy and he will help you get started.

In the meantime stay safe, get the jab and we shall soon be meeting once again in a glorious part of the world to enjoy each other's company for some happy walking.

Thank you, Dafydd.

Secretary

A reminder to update any changes in your details with the Ramblers, in particular, your email address. If you also know anyone who does not have an email address, please could I encourage you to 'buddy' up with them and send on the newsletter or help them with setting up email account. I hope everyone is keeping in good health and mind during these strange times we live in. Take care. Jo-Anne, Secretary

Footpath Improvements 2020.

It seems an age from the time I last wrote a newsletter article update on our Tîm Taclo Llwybrau (TTL.) It has been a difficult time for all of us in that we just had no idea how the events of Covid 19 would unfold. Our last footpath maintenance work day will soon have been a whole year away. Hopefully before too much longer we have had our jab and we can then look forward to us getting back on track again (excuse the pun.) Despite the appalling winter weather on some days it has been very encouraging to see so many people walking their local public rights of way or cycling in the great outdoors.

Over the last year there has been an increase in the number of complaints reported to the Council. They were mostly by walkers complaining that landowners were obstructing access but a few were also from landowners concerned by the huge number of walkers going over their land, using gates etc. This was exasperated further when lockdown rules were relaxed particularly in the SNP with a huge influx of visitors.

On a more positive note, Gwynedd Council has received £243k in total from the Welsh Government last year and a further £10k will be available for our right of way paths for this financial year. A further £80k has also been given from Active Travel to improve the Lonydd Las cycle paths and a further £10k to improve Llwybrau Llechi. Much of the work has been on surface improvements and the changing of stiles to gates.

Please contact me and ask to be added to our list of our footpath maintenance volunteers, it would be great to have you with us. We will be back as soon as the present government restrictions are lifted followed the go ahead from Ramblers and the Council.

Graham Fitch, Footpath Secretary, Arfon / Dwfor. Email: graham.fitchs@gmail.com

Navigation Skills Level 2 online

Just like everyone else I have been exploring the local footpaths and tracks in my area, during our Lockdowns. However, having recently been surrounded by a group of very friendly and inquisitive cows in a field and not being sure in which direction the footpath went, I decided that my navigation skills needed improving!

So I signed up for the Ramblers Cymru online Navigation Skills Level 2 course which is free to members. There are a variety of times and dates to choose from and the course is delivered via the Teams App and is easy to use.

There were 10 of us on the course from all over Wales and Martin Bevan the course leader, (who has many years' experience of being a walks leader), asked us all to introduce ourselves at the beginning.

I was quite anxious about whether the course might be too difficult for me, not even knowing at that point how to hold a compass properly! But Martin was very supportive, explaining everything very clearly and made the course very interesting and interactive with a mixture of videos, practical exercises and PowerPoint slides. He even covered some level 3 topics. We all had the opportunity to ask him questions throughout the course. The 3 hours went by very quickly and we were sent copies of the slides afterwards.

So what did I get out of the course? Well, apart from feeling that I learnt a lot of new skills, it gave me a lot more confidence to plan a Ramblers walk of my own and inspired me join the practical outdoor courses when they resume later this year.

All I need to do in the meantime is practice what I have learnt - oh, and to walk across that field with those cows, now that I know where the footpath is!

Ruth Whaites

Walks

We trialled Facebook for walks last autumn with limited success, a walk was posted most weekends when the weather permitted but we felt it could be improved.

At the AGM it was agreed that we would set up a rolling walks programme for 2021. If you have not seen the announcements on Facebook take a look at the Walks page on our website

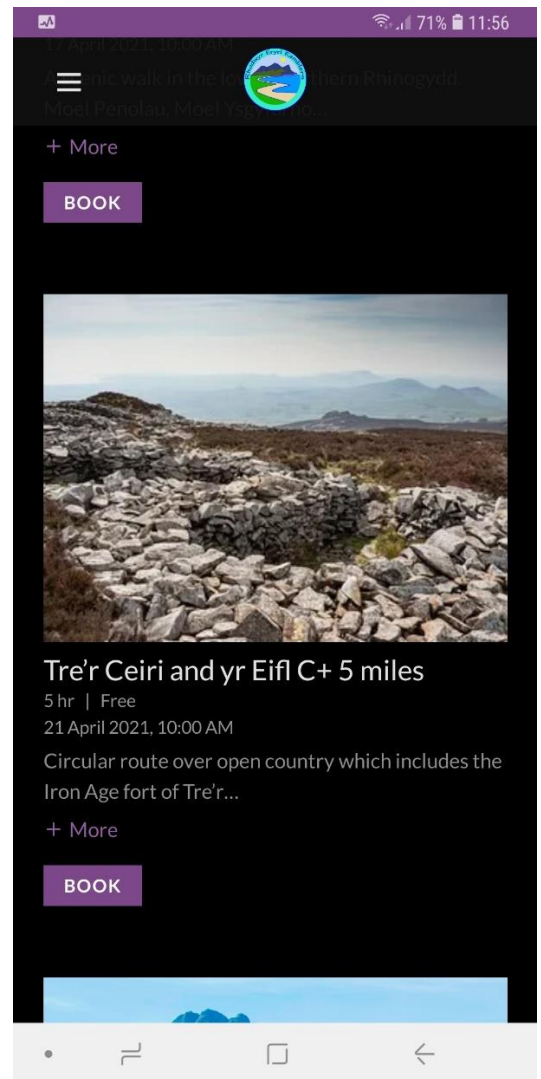
<https://eryriramblers.org/walks>

- The service creates a flexible walk programme - walks can be added at short notice and changed to suit the conditions - no more walking in bad weather!
- It's a booking system - the leader can set the safe number of walkers
- It provides the register
- Adding walks is fast, simple and includes a photo (as recommended in the new leader training programme)
- Leaders don't have to give out personal home telephone numbers or email addresses
- Confirmation, reminders and cancellation notices are automatic
- Booking is easy - it's mobile friendly

The programme is ready to roll, more walks will be added as soon as Ramblers HQ announce group walks can re-commence.

Take care and stay safe,

Roy Walks Secretary



Eryri mobile friendly website

Snowdrop Walk

It's that time of year when a walk along the Afon Dwyfor to Llanystumdwy is essential and will always raise the spirits. This was my second walk with the Ramblers ten years ago, led by Pat and Dave Stephens and advertised as their Snowdrop followed by Cake Walk so two of my favourite things! My first walk involved Cnicht and definitely beyond my level of fitness. Their Snowdrop walk made me realise Ramblers was for me after all and the first of many along this beautiful stretch of river with seasonal delights of dipper, snowdrops, daffodils and bluebells.

Last week I sat halfway along eating a cake failure, drinking coffee and looking forward to company this time next year.

Jane



Tips for walkers

'Spats': I've had positive feedback from a couple of friends recently who agree with me that Spats are ideal for this time of wet muddy walks. They protect the boot tops and lower trouser legs and are a dream to put on utilising a Velcro strip. So no fiddling with laces, straps, etc. They are available on line for £14.45 which includes p&p, see www.spatsleisuregear.com.

NB I have no financial interest in this company but have a concern for our comfort!

Margaret Lowe

(and a dream to clean! Ed.)

An Irreverent Tale from the Anon Rambler

Ramblers are a great bunch of people. As with all groups there are strong opinions on certain subjects. The one that comes to mind is dogs. Dogs are great companions. Loyal and dependable. Unfortunately, they can be disruptive and a nuisance too. Do Dogs have a place on organised Ramblers walks? This question has raised fiery debates. There are reasons for and against dogs on walks. Some feel it is a right of dog owners to join a ramble and feel free to bring their dog. Some, no dogs under any circumstances.

An example that springs to mind was a walk from Beddgelert to Moel Ddu and returning down through the woods and along the river path back to Beddgelert. Roughly 10 miles. 20 people turned up. One was a new lady, thinking of joining the Ramblers and she had a dog. A very nice springer spaniel. We started off well. Across the fields heading upwards. The dog was having a whale of a time. Running here and there. Sniffing, weeing and making new friends.

As we started to go up, the path narrowed and we entered farming land with sheep and lambs. By now the leader was red faced and clearly not happy about something. He made his way to the new lady and told her to put her dog on a lead. She was clearly taken aback by the quite abrupt request but complied. Unfortunately, it was one of those leads that extended out on a long thin line! As we climbed higher, the path became more of a narrow ledge with everyone in single file and the dog weaving in and out of everyone's legs. It wasn't long before the explosion happened.

The leader, who was a large man, obviously in a high dudgeon about the dog, didn't mince his words but ordered this dog to be brought to heel on a short lead. I felt at least a heart attack was on the cards with the heaving frame and ruddy red face! The rest of the walk was an uncomfortable affair, the lady had taken offense and there was an atmosphere you could cut with a knife. Needless to say, she stalked off at the end of the walk never to be seen again. The rest of us were treated to an unwelcome homily on the shortcomings of dogs and dog owners!

The question posed at the beginning 'whether dogs have a place on walks' has been answered by our illustrious leaders who have given guidance that dogs are not allowed except for registered Guide dogs with the agreement of walk leaders.

Other Groups

Menter Fachwen Newsletter - <https://eryriramblers.org/news%2Binfo>

Yr Wyddfa and Ogwen Sustainable Parking and Transport Strategy: Consultation and Community Workshops

As you are aware, the Yr Wyddfa Partnership with the support of Transport for Wales has been developing a long-term strategy to improve access and connectivity in the core area of Snowdonia National Park. We want all local communities involved to help us shape and deliver improvements to sustainable local transport including parking, public transport, walking and cycling.

We have spoken to many of you over the last year for your initial input into the recommendations made in the Parking and Transport Review by Martin Higgitt Associates. This report sets out potential solutions to the parking, traffic congestion, pollution, and noise issues in the most sensitive inner area of Snowdonia National Park.

We would like your feedback on these and will be undertaking a rolling programme of consultation and engagement to this end. Grasshopper Communications and Jacobs have been appointed to support this phase of engagement.

We are carrying out a five-week consultation from **Monday 1 February to Sunday 7 March 2021** to find out local views on the suggested sustainable tourism model and ideas about the potential solutions.

An online community workshop is being held for each of the four gateway communities of Llanberis, Betws-y-Coed, Beddgelert and Bethesda (via Zoom) to gather ideas on the sustainable tourism approach and potential solutions for parking, passenger transport and interchange, walking and cycling, and new local services and amenities in your community.

We recognise that each area will have different issues and opportunities and have therefore designed each workshop to focus specifically on those communities:

- **Wednesday 24 February - Llanberis, 18:30 to 20:30**
- **Thursday 25 February - Betws-y-Coed 18:30 to 20:30**
- **Tuesday 2 March - Beddgelert, 18:30 to 20:30**
- **Wednesday 3 March - Bethesda 18:30 to 20:30**

To book onto one of the workshops, please complete the online booking form at <https://www.snowdonpartnership.co.uk/parkingandtransport>. To help us organise the workshop, we would appreciate it if you can sign up by **Tuesday 16 February 2021**. You will then be sent details of how to join the day before the workshop.

You can also find out more information and view our consultation summary document at <https://www.snowdonpartnership.co.uk/parkingandtransport>.

You can give your feedback by:

- **Completing the online survey:** The survey questions are highlighted through the consultation document and can be completed online at <https://www.snowdonpartnership.co.uk/parkingandtransport>.
- **By post:** Download or request a printed copy of the questionnaire and return to the Freepost address: **Freepost GRASSHOPPER CONSULT** (No further address or stamp required).
- **By email:** yrwyddfa@grasshopper-comms.co.uk
- **By phoning:** 01286875860. If we are unable to answer your call, please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

The closing date for comments is **12:59pm, Sunday 7 March 2021**.

We hope that you can participate in the consultation and look forward to meeting you at the workshops and hearing your views.

Best wishes,

Hannah Dineen
Associate Director - Grasshopper Communications

2021 Newsletter

All contributions gratefully received by birstallberry@hotmail.com
Deadline: Friday 30th April 2021