



Autumn Newsletter 2020

Editorial

With our walks being advertised on Facebook at fairly short notice and work on footpaths forced to be suspended there has been little reason to produce a monthly Newsletter. However, I felt there was enough news to produce one before Christmas so here it is. I plan to produce another Newsletter at the end of January when we all may be a little clearer about where we are in relation to what we can and cannot do. Your contributions would be very welcome on anything related to walking - particularly book reviews, tips, reasons to be cheerful or walks further afield.

AGM, 19th November

Just a reminder that this will be conducted through email this year and you will have received the agenda and reports beforehand. Please make time to contact Margaret Lowe if you have any comments about any of the items.

Charging to access Snowdon - update from Simon Longman

In a previous email I requested members views about charging for individuals to go up Snowdon.

The responses, about 10, were split evenly for and against. Clearly 10 responses aren't statistically significant but the results give us a bit of steer to members feelings. Whatever happens the difficulty will always be how will you charge and enforce any charges. My personal view is nothing is going to happen fast but I will monitor any actions and let you know accordingly.

However in the wider arena the topic has been receiving a deal of focus.

Firstly, below is a copy of a recent letter to the Cambrian News from North Wales Area which clearly articulates our views as an organisation.

Secondly, there are links to articles on potential solutions.

Lastly, Gwynedd County Council discussed the problems and voted to investigate the issues caused by too many visitors walking up Snowdon.

Gwynedd Council, in collaboration with Snowdonia National Park, will urgently investigate the possibility of charging tourists who visit parts of the Park, particularly on and around Snowdon itself. (Gwynedd councillors voted 53 to 0, 1 abstention)

Dear Editor,

The Ramblers in North Wales and elsewhere have welcomed the increase in walking that has been a positive in difficult times and we have been especially pleased to see people getting to know their 'milltir sgwar' / local area.

The recent vote by Gwynedd Council to investigate the possibility of charging tourists who visit parts of the park and possibly for visiting the summit of Snowdon was in part linked to the large number of visitors and overcrowding.

Ramblers would be totally opposed to any restrictions being put on public rights of way and the access land on Snowdon; the National Park or anywhere else. It would not be legal to charge people for climbing the mountain and it would not affect the anti-social behaviour of the minority. We would also be likely to lose money due to the huge practical problems to set up any scheme like this and from visitors going elsewhere.

Rather than putting people off visiting our beautiful area, we believe energy and money should go into providing sustainable access to Snowdon, educating people on care for the environment and promoting less used areas of the National Park. We would welcome wider discussions on the costs, benefits and impact of tourism.

On the transport side this has to be started already with the welcome plans from the Snowdonia National Park Authority and Snowdon Partnership to consider a sustainable/ Austrian-style visitor scheme including larger 'park and rides', zero carbon buses and integrated transport links.

As outlined in the recent Ramblers Cymru manifesto ahead of the 2021 elections in Wales, we want the legacy of this dreadful pandemic to be that Wales invests more in supporting people's access to the paths and landscapes around them. Walking should be at the heart of communities as it brings wonderful benefits to people's health and wellbeing and done sustainably can also bring long term economic benefits.

Sincerely,

Joanna Slattery (on behalf of North Wales Area Ramblers) Ramblers Secretary

Other articles of interest can be found at the following links sustainable transport etc.

The Daily Post article on this is on <https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/snowdonia-visitor-pass-plan-combat-19101675>

This is linked to/ based on the Snowdon Partnership parking and transport project: <https://www.snowdonpartnership.co.uk/projects>

Rhodwyr Eryri Ramblers Newsletter

Walks

Last Autumn we walked and scrambled up the South-West Ridge of Moel Siabod, it was one of those rare, priceless calm but clear and fresh Autumnal days.

We didn't rush, we had long leisurely breaks to breathe in the clean air and drink in atmospheric views.

We looked South past Cader to the rounded distant mid-Wales hills of Plynlimon the source of the Seven, Wye and Rhiedol, and beyond imagining we could even see the Black Mountains.

We looked South-East and saw Arenig, the Arrans, the Berwyns, and across to the Stiperstones and Long Mynydd of Powys and Shropshire.

Looking North gave us classic views of the Nantlle Ridge, Aran, Snowdon and Lliwedd with the Glyders, Tryfan and the Carneddau on our left.



Llyn Y Foel from Daear Du South-West Ridge on Moel Siabod



The Nantlle Ridge, Aran, Snowdon and Lliwedd from Siabod

It took until August for Ramblers HQ to permit group walks and then they put a lot of responsibility upon our Walk Leaders under the guise of Covid regulations. Our Committee agreed more acceptable and supportive guidance for our walk leaders to follow and issued a leaflet to each Eryri member stressing that personal responsibility is paramount.

With what is left of the Autumn period, we agreed not to issue a fixed programme but to permit leaders to publish walks directly on Facebook choosing the best days. Whilst we could do with some more mid-week "C" walks, we have had a good walk published nearly every weekend.

We as Ramblers all know the benefits of being outdoors, people still seem keen to join us, our Facebook group now has over 400 members.

It was magical and energising to be high with such good views giving that "on top of the world" feeling only Ramblers can experience.

Then this year DISASTER, lockdown came leaving our Spring walks programme in tatters.

Personally, we made great use of the fine weather doing local walks, it was interesting to see how many people thought they had to do a mandatory hour per day - we were out for hours and hours.

But we missed the mountains. In July when lockdown was eased, where did we go for our first unofficial high walk?

Moel Siabod!



Afon Llugwy from the meadows near Pont Cyfyng

The prime requirement is for all members to stay safe, keep fit and be comfortable with whom and where they meet. For me, walking following our guidelines is the absolute key, I hope it is for you, let us hope for a more relaxed 2021.

**Take care everyone,
Roy Milnes Eryri Walks Secretary.**

October 2020

Book Review

Robert McFarland's 'The Wild Places'

According to Scotland on Sunday's reviewer this book is 'glorious' and 'the greatest praise' that can be given is shown by buying a pair of walking boots!

The book is divided into sections based on a specific example of different types of landscape, e.g. forest, ridge, saltmarsh, island. McFarland walks in and over each, usually alone and usually making a night's bivouac. The section on 'Island' features our patch with 'Ynys Enlli'. Following the perils of the crossing, the sound of seals welcomes him. He discourses on the pilgrims and their search for wilderness and the dangers they faced, thus 'sharpening their faith to its utmost point.' His sleep was broken by birds 'falling through the air, screaming as they fell.' The shearwaters that had flown from the southern Atlantic to breed in burrows on the island.

Unsurprisingly, searching for wild places took McFarland to Scotland, to Rannoch Moor, Skye's Loch Coruisk, Raasay, Ben Hope, Sandwood Bay and Strathnaver. The last had been home to about 1,200 inhabitants that were brutally cleared in 1814-19 to make way for sheep. Thus was a present day 'wild place' created - a reflection that nowhere was immune from human interference. The chapter featuring Cape Wrath includes paragraphs on the importance of maps and our dependence on the accuracy of 'grid' maps as opposed to the earlier 'story' maps which depicted 'place as seen by a person or culture moving through it.'

So be inspired to don your walking boots, but do not expect a route guide. What McFarland does is use landscape to trigger explorations of the mind. His earlier book was called, 'Mountains of the Mind: A History of a Fascination.' His wide reading and experiences are mined and condensed into a vivid and poetic English.

If anyone would like to borrow my copy please contact me,

margaretlowewales@btinternet.com

Tips for walkers

You may already know this but I didn't:

If your boots always rub the same bit of your foot use Vaseline and you won't get a blister -it works!

Reasons to be cheerful!

1. **Some progress** : a new gate has replaced a rickety old stile just North of Criccieth (SH489377) on the alternative coastal path.



2. Thank you Jo-Anne, you can be relied on to be cheerful!

Following Ramblers HQ rules
to the letter



Further afield - Jane Berry

I escaped North in August and walked the St Cuthbert's Way, Melrose to Holy Island, around 75 miles as accommodation does not appear conveniently on the trail. This is a gentle walk following the River Tweed, Dere Street (a Roman Road), and the Pilgrims way across the sands to the island. The only higher days encompass the Eildon Hills and the Cheviots. However, the weather was rather like our October here for rain/gales and a sprained ankle on the first day made it more challenging! Excellent for historical exploration and accommodation but rather too many hard surface tracks.

If anyone would like to borrow maps and guidebook, please get in touch.

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

Winter 2021 Newsletter

All contributions gratefully received by birstallberry@hotmail.com

Deadline: Friday 22nd January 2021