

Chairman's Chat summer 2018

What an amazing period we are experiencing while I write this 'chat'. For once the weather in May has been warm and there's been very little rain on walks. Mags and I had a week on Loch Tay earlier in the month and not only had brilliant weather and surroundings but also two 'munros' and no midges.

Eileens mission to convert the Welsh resulted in an entertaining week of outings and walks and to the surprise of us all- snow! And we still climbed to the top of Cnicht without too much anxiety.

Our June meeting, which was thrown open to all members, provided some new insights as to how to find and encourage walking members to take on leading walks. Watch this space for how we intend to pursue this route later.

This should be my penultimate 'chat' as I will no longer be Chair after the AGM in November. I am hopeful that we will find at that meeting members to take on the committee roles, including my own. Enjoy your walks,

Best regards,

Phil Guest.

Latest News

1. The AGM on 5th November will be held at Nantwich Museum rather than the Yoga Centre. (the room at the yoga centre is being re-furbished).

2. Walk leaders will need to use the new format of signing in form used on walks. The form with the names and numbers on will need to be destroyed once the number of walkers has been sent to Rae. This is to comply with the GDPR regulations.

A small point, but one worth reminding walkers about; it is their contact number on the walk NOT their home number that should be recorded on the register. Also, leaders should carry the form on the walk with them.

3. If you have not opted in to receiving emails yet, and you are happy to be contacted by email would you please let Ramblers HQ know of your willingness of this. I understand from the membership secretary that anyone who has not done within the next "month or so" will be deleted from the contact list.

Committee

Chairman - Phil Guest Tel: 07918 687683

Secretary - Steve Butterfield Tel: 07711 284599

Treasurer - Philip Lund Tel: 01270 610763

Rambles Programme Coordinators - Carole Bentley, Rae Davies Tel: 07702 592753 Tel: 07469 937680

Membership - Hazel Wallis Tel: 01270 811186

Footpath Secretary - Alan Edwards Tel: 01270 620650

Website Editor - Jim Eckersley Tel: 07713 036232

Newsletter Editor - Steve Butterfield Tel: 07711 284599

Publicity - Helen Lea Tel: 01270 662384

Committee Members: Diane Birkenhead, David Roberts, Bev Brady, Pam Simmons, Steve Butterfield

FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

**Treasurer -
Philip Lund**

There has been more expenditure this year, due to a number of reasons and we will need to set a budget next year. There was a cheque for £150 from Ramblers Holidays which will help to boost our balance.

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**Membership Secretary -
Hazel Wallis**

Membership numbers remain stable at about 210.

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**Publicity -
Helen Lea**

Publicity works well. I submit the walks for each month to the Link Magazine and most people find this a useful point for information about the walks programme. The Chronicle also includes a note on the forthcoming walks.

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**Website Editor
Jim Eckersley**

The website is our primary way of communicating our activities and walks programme to members and people interested in walking.

Currently the 25 year celebration is taking prominence.

If you have anything you would like to add to the site or suggestions, please let me know.

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**Footpaths Secretary -
Alan Edwards**

Planning HS2 is having an impact on footpaths in South Cheshire, mainly south of Crewe, however, the good news is that all footpaths are to be sustained and many improved.

There are proposals in some areas, not ours, to turn footpaths into cycle ways. There is also a move to resurrect "lost ways". These are old paths known to locals but not on the ordnance survey maps.

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**Secretary -
Steve Butterfield**

There have been a number of "scam" emails recently. Please don't open any of the links should you suspect you have received such an email. Ramblers HQ has said that our current email provider Yahoo is as good as any and we just need to remain vigilant. Please let me know if you receive a suspect email.

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**Walk programme coordinators-
Carole Bentley & Rae Davies**

The programme for the next 6 months is now complete and is now on the web site.

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**Library -
Bev Brady**

The library is open. Maps and books are available to be borrowed.

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The Message from Phil

(I know you've seen it several times but here it is again!)

Dear Members,

At the committee meeting in February we discussed how to encourage more of our membership of over 200 to get involved in the group's organisation and to progress to becoming walk leaders. Our club functions only because some people volunteer to become 'officers' with varying roles. Without them we would cease to operate effectively, if at all. They give up their time for the good of the group and generally because they enjoy the 'taking part'.

As a group we have, over recent years, greatly increased the number and variety of led walks. However, for a variety of reasons, the number of volunteer walk leaders has declined and a small group are now bearing what we believe to be an 'unfair' load in order to provide the walks, that are well attended, for the enjoyment of our walking members. The message is clear - unless we can encourage more members to become walk leaders, the number of walks will inevitably be reduced in future.

So, how can you help and learn more?

We are inviting any member who would like to know how they can either help in running the group or find out how they can become a walk leader to join us that evening.

Almost all of our current committee are walk leaders and are more than happy and ready to assist aspiring leaders and provide practical 'on the job' training.

I am aware that a number of committee members, who have served the group willingly for some time now, wish to step down and this is an opportunity to see what their roles are and what they do to keep the group afloat.

After all, we are celebrating our silver anniversary this year, and we need to be ready and equipped to push on to our GOLD!

With best wishes

Phil Guest Chair

The Walk Programme

We wish to thank all those who have led walks in the first part of this year. Thanks also for texting and emailing your walk numbers into us promptly. We hope to build upon the numeric information gleaned this year and by the end of the year be able to build a clear picture of which walks are more popular. It's a little premature to make any kind of comparison at this stage of the process.

Our walk leaders have (at the time of writing - end of May) undertaken 40 different and varied walks and 589 members/prospective members have enjoyed their efforts. Well done everyone!

Current walk numbers are very encouraging with the number of walkers across all types of walks showing an average of 15 walkers per walk. The individual types of walks break down like this:

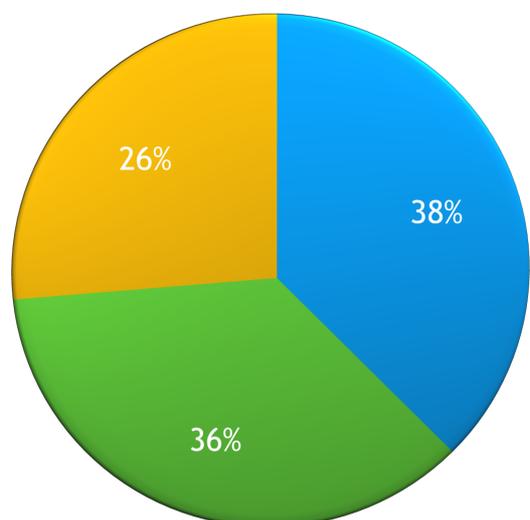
Our Saturday/Sunday long weekend walks continue to be a popular event with an average of **16** walkers. Short Sunday afternoon walks too have an average of **16** walkers, whilst mid weeks (Wednesday and Thursday) return an average of just over **11**.

The next walk programme (July-December 2018) is now complete and is available online via our South Cheshire Ramblers web page : www.ramblers-southcheshire.org.uk. Full and further details of all our walks can be found on the **Ramblers' National** site, available via the link on our home page.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Rae Davies and Carole Bentley
Walk Programme Coordinators

- Long weekend walks
- Short weekend walks
- Midweek walks



25 Year Celebration

As , I'm sure you know by now, this year marks the 25 year anniversary of the formation of South Cheshire Ramblers.



Social Event

A social evening on 21st July has been organised. This will include a hog roast meal and a ceilidh. There will be lots of current and past members who will be able to share memories and enjoy a chat and a very sociable evening.

Tickets have sold extremely well and there has been tremendous support for this event from Members of South Cheshire Ramblers past and present, their guests and Friends. Close to 100 people will be attending.

Those who have bought tickets will know there is a booklet with lots of information about our group and photos of past and present members. There is also a competition to enter.

The social event has been organised by Eileen Dorman with the assistance a small group of people; Helen Lea, Bev Brady, Hazel Wallis, Mags Grindrod, Phill Keogh and Steve Butterfield.

Please keep looking at our website for the latest updates. (*I've included the latest information that will be published on the web site at the end of this newsletter.*)

Walks

A number of walks have been put on the programme for July to December to commemorate the 25 year anniversary and are walks from past programmes. These include walks along, or starting from the South Cheshire way.

The walk on 22nd July is from the same starting point as the very first walk on the South Cheshire Ramblers Programme.

You will recognise all these walks as they are marked "Anniversary walk" on the programme.

Visit to Plas Monday to Friday, 26-30 March

Can we first say a huge thank you to all those involved in making our stay at Plas Tan y Bwlch such a wonderful experience. A special mention has to go to Eileen for organising the holiday in such a magnificent building in such a scenic location. Plas Tan y Bwlch is in the Snowdonia National Park and it occupies a superb position overlooking the valley of the River Dwyrd.

Given that it was a walking holiday, the walk leaders clearly made a huge contribution, offering a wide range of varied and excellent walks. There was such a diversity of walks of varying levels of difficulty designed to cater for all levels of ability. There was also a variety of transport to begin and end walks. This obviously included travelling by car but much more fun - we travelled by steam train twice.

After walking to Ffestiniog from Plas we returned by train back to Plas, and on another day we started our walk after a ride on the steam train from Abergynolwyn Station.

The third walk was known as the Roman Walk started at a Roman Fort, Castel Tomen y Mur. Whilst on this walk we could see through the snow Cnicht which some of the group were climbing up and sliding down!

We walked through snow, sleet, rain and sunshine during the week, but overall we were very lucky to have good weather as the forecast was not good.

As much as we enjoyed the walking perhaps the most important element are the people you share the experiences with and as usual this was a real joy.

We soon settled into a daily routine which included breakfast and collecting packed lunches, tea/coffee and biscuits in the late afternoon and we would then meet in the bar at 6pm for drinks before dinner at 6.30.

The food was very homely and tasty and the staff were so friendly, helpful and pleasant. We were so pleased to be served by "Mrs 2 soups" who played the role even better than Julie Walters!

Following the evening meal we retired to yet another beautiful room at Plas for a briefing about the following days walks and entertainment. This included Eileen's beetle drive, Tony's 60's and 70's music quiz and Paul's talk about Kilimanjaro. After the entertainment we went for drinks. Some decided to go down the hill to the local pub, but one night after walking back up the hill to Plas they found themselves locked out. A decision was made to telephone Hazel to see if she would come down and let them in. Fortunately she did.

Once again, a huge heart felt thank you to all those who made a contribution in whatever way to making our stay at Plas Tan y Bwlch such a great success. We enjoyed ourselves so much we are looking forward to the next Ramblers holiday.

CNICHT 2018

As part of the Welsh adventure at Plas Tan y Blwlch this spring, someone suggested that as the above was near and not too difficult a party might want to visit and climb it.

So it began. Bright that morning, quite a large party gathered at the front steps of Plas and determined which car and driver would be used to accommodate the group. I was fortunate in getting our leader for the day, Alan, but even more fortunate as Mike from Leek volunteered to go up front. The journey to Croesor is not far but once we got past the coal lorry our leader drove on ignoring the cries of Mike, who by this stage had his feet against the dashboard for support.

Cnicht rises above the village of Croesor where we parked. It is 2265ft (690m) high and because of its distinctive shape is known as the Welsh Matterhorn. That morning it truly looked a challenge, dark and foreboding with the rain continuing to fall. 'Whats the weather forecast leader? ' a bit of rain that will soon stop', he optimistically cried, Helen commented that she had snow forecast and soon enough, visibility across the car park was impossible due to the heavy driving blizzard of snow. It stopped and looking up the mountain had changed, it was white over with snow. My thoughts turned to, are we right to venture this one?, our party is not over experienced when my phone rang. It was Eileen clearly distressed as she had found herself and her party on a road where gates had to be opened and closed. 'Where are you all' was the cry and in spite of my advice she shortly arrived at our newly snow covered carpark.

Boots on, waterproofs shaken out and we were off up a very steep road that seemed to bring on the desire among some for an early 'Scottish break'. But no matter the party was brought together and set off though the woods and onto a stony track where the shape of today's track was clear to all and clearly quite a challenge with an increasingly wild, stony and rocky path unfolding upwards. Steadily we moved together to the steeper section and then arrived on a plateau where coffee and buns were taken. The pinnacle of Cnicht had been hidden for some time so there was surprise amongst some that we were not yet at the top. 'Do we have to go up there?' was the question, 'Is there not an easy route around the side?'

No replied the leader, just follow me but do take care as it does get trickier from here to the top. At this juncture Jim and John decided it was time to do some free climbing on any crag that looked particularly difficult to the rest of the party. It was time for scrambling!!

Passing poles to one another and using not only hands and feet but in one or two cases the backside we began to make progress up the narrow, steep and stony 'path'. Lungs bursting and deplorable language for a Ramblers group eventually all made the top. It was exhilarating (I was told) and commendable that all made it but sadly the views of the Snowdon ranges were blanked out by the clouds.

Dropping down along an easy path led us to the part of the walk that we were told included many bogs, streams and short but slippery slopes. But there was no obvious path. John as an out rider was seen from time to time in the distance, sometimes to our left and sometimes to our right and possibly sometimes in the right direction. In the meantime, Jim took on the roll of a wrecking ball by tumbling down a steep and slippery grassy bank with an attempt to take Hazel with him. She was lucky but probably still believes to this day that Jim had it in for her then.

Eventually a lunch break was agreed and the sun came out, the snowy flank of Cnicht still towered behind us but after our refreshments the party took off to return down a pleasant path to the cars. A most enjoyable and challenging full days walk, well lead, in spite of conflicting advice from all. Unfortunately we took the wrong road back to Plas but Mike from Leek got plenty of experience in opening and closing gates. Well done Alan and thanks for a great day.

ANON

Local Group, Area and National Ramblers

It was only when I became secretary and I attended the area AGM with Phil and Jim did I have any idea about how our group fits into the area a national structure.

There is obviously the National Ramblers organisation.

The country is divided into Areas. Our Area is Cheshire East.

In each Area there are a number of groups; in our area there 3 groups; South Cheshire. East Cheshire and Congleton.

This year South Cheshire has the responsibility for the Area. So Phil Guest is the chair of Cheshire East and Steve Butterfield is the secretary.

Any members of the Ramblers can join any walk organised by any group.

These are publicised by each group and are also published on the National Ramblers Website.

We frequently get members of other groups joining our walks if it is located close to where they live or is one that they just wish to do.

Steve Butterfield

ICE - in case of emergency

We have always been fortunate on our walks. There have been very few incidents requiring first aid or that of a more serious kind.

It is on the leaders checklist that leaders should be aware of where the ICE information is for each walker. As we know each other so well on our walks it doesn't seem to be such a big priority, particularly where couples and friends walk together. However, should we have new ramblers or those from another group joining us on a walk, then this does become something we should be aware of. Even though on each walk there is always an experienced member who can recognise danger or step in to help in situations requiring emergency action it would be helpful if we all got into the habit of carrying ICE information with us on our walks.

There are several possibilities:

Phil's key rings:

This seems to be the best and simplest way. These can be prominently displayed on rucksack or a bag where the leader could easily see them. Spares could be kept in the walk leaders bag and issued to new walkers or guests joining a walk just for that day (to be returned at the end).

On your smartphone:

Almost all modern smartphones have a way of storing your emergency information. All paramedics are aware of how this can be accessed should it need to be.

Carrying a card or a copy of the ICE - issued by the ramblers.

There are many available on the internet and ramblers have their own version.

Why is it important?

Just to illustrate why this might be necessary. Recently, my mum (who is getting on in years) got in the habit of going off on her own to different towns on bus journeys and one day she got lost. It set me thinking about what would happen if she could not find her way home or had an accident or cut herself. (She takes warfarin tablets to thin her blood and if she bled the blood would not clot). I immediately downloaded a small card form the internet and filled it in for her to keep in her purse. Should she have a problem on one of her "days out" at least there are emergency contacts and this information about her blood.

For us, there may be a new walker who has a medical need that none of us are aware of and they may not want to disclose at the start of a walk. Where would we start to look if there was a problem on a walk? Would we rummage in someones rucksack? That's why I think Phil's key rings solve all the problems. Until that is sorted out, can I urge you all to carry some form of emergency information with you on all walks.

Steve Butterfield

These are the headings on the ramblers version of the ICE card

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CARD PLEASE CARRY ON ALL WALKS

Personal Details :

Name

Address

Contact number

Date of birth

Medical Information

Medical conditions and Allergies:

Medication

Primary Emergency Contact

Name:

Relationship:

Contact number:

Secondary Emergency Contact

Name:

Relationship:

Contact number:

Contacting the emergency services

With a phone signal

Dial 999 or 112 and ask for Police/Mountain rescue. It will pick up any available network.

With a reduced phone signal

Try to use Emergency SMS to text an emergency message to 999 or 112. Register your phone in advance at www.emergencysms.org.uk

Any emergency message should contain:

Your location (ideally terrain plus grid reference), name, gender and age of casualty, nature of injuries or incident, any known medical conditions, number of people in the party, the colour of your clothing/equipment, your mobile number.

If you can't get any message through, the International Distress Signal is 6 blasts on a whistle or 6 torch flashes - at 1 minute intervals.

VERSION 2.0 SEPT 2017

(the pdf version of the actual card is available on the ramblers website)

Some small but important points

Meeting points and times

This year there have been several people who have phoned to ask about joining a walk. I have always emphasised to them to be at the meeting point of the walk at least 10 minutes earlier than the time stated on the programme. Inevitably they have said "oh, I didn't realise - it doesn't say it anywhere". The last part is no longer true as there are statements and instructions on the web site. However, if you are a new member or one who has not joined a walk for some time, please contact the walk leader to check details of the walk and be at the starting point fully equipped and ready to leave at least 10 - 15 minutes earlier than the stated time.

What do I do to join the group?

We have a number of emails from people who have moved into the area and are interested in walking and wish to join our group. Their question is how do I go about it.

If I reply to the email, I will refer them to Hazel who will point them in the right direction of membership etc.

I will also urge them to look at our web site, find the walks programme and choose a walk that suits their ability and interests. Then to join us on a walk!

How do I join the committee?

If you wish to help with any aspect of running the group, please contact Phil Guest and he will discuss this with you.

How do I become a walk Leader?

The planing for each walk programme starts some months ahead of when it is finally published.

Carole will send out an email to all the walk leaders asking for offers of walks.

If you wish to offer a walk please let Carole know your email address and she will include you on the initial circulation list.

If you are just thinking about it and are not very sure, it may be a good idea to tag onto the walk leader on one the walks you join to quiz him or her about the process of planning and leading a walk.

What do I do if i see a problem with a footpath?

Let Alan Edwards know! Give him the location and ideally the OS grid reference. Let him know which is the local authority - Cheshire East, Staffordshire, Shropshire etc. Cheshire have a definitive map giving all the numbers of each footpath. This is available on their web site (search for "definitive map") Also let him know the problem. some farmers are better than others at maintaining the paths through their crops.

What is a walk leader?

Purpose of role: Share your enthusiasm and passion for walking by leading people on group walks in a welcoming, safe, responsible and enjoyable way.

Skills and experience

- Passion for walking and an empathy with all the charitable aims of the Ramblers.
- Previous experience of walking your local area/community.
- Good communication skills and a friendly nature.
- leadership abilities to keep a group together & remain calm during unforeseen circumstances.

Planning the walk

- Liaise with your Group's Walks Co-ordinator to choose a walk that is suitable for the programme and that complements other walks in the programme.
- Commit to dates that you are due to lead a walk.
- Familiarise yourself with the route before leading the walk

On the day of the walk

- Be responsible for the group, ensuring their safety at all times.
- Deal with any questions and issues with good humour and patience.
- Enjoy the walk and thank everyone for coming.
- Before you agree to lead a walk
- Be familiar with the terms of the insurance cover and the expectations of being a Walk Leader.

There is support available

- Existing Walk Leaders are always available to give support and advice. Many Walk Leaders take their first walks under the guidance of another experienced leader; some groups already offer Walk Leader, Navigation skills and First aid training. Central Office offer support on all aspects of walk leading and offer training for leaders through our Volunteer Development Days. Extensive guidance on leading a walk is also available on the Ramblers website. www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone >volunteer toolkits > walk leader toolkit

I know that all walk leaders do all this already - but here is the official list!

Walk Leader's checklist

Each year, Ramblers volunteers lead over 50,000 group walks - every one unique. Here are our tips to help your walk run smoothly.

Before the walk

Choose the route

- It may be one you know, taken from a map, a guidebook or Ramblers Routes.
- Consider the location, length and timing, whether linear or circular.
- Consider season, terrain, climbs, likely ability and fitness of the group.
- Consider points of interest.
- Check public transport options, car parks, refreshments and toilets.

Recce the route (preferably with your backmarker)

- Note critical navigation points, hazards and problems, adjusting if necessary.
- Check timings, rest and toilet points, escape or alternative routes, any access restrictions and mobile phone coverage.
- Report any path or access problems to the relevant group officer or online via www.ramblers.org.uk/pathproblem

Publicise the walk

- To be covered by Ramblers insurance, a walk must be a recognised Ramblers activity.
- Submit your walk to your group walks programme coordinator with the correct level, informative description and identified leader for it to be publicised in advance online, on the Group Walks and Events Manager (GWEM) and/or in print.

The day before the walk

- Check weather forecasts: www.metoffice.gov.uk or www.mwis.org.uk for mountainous areas. Adjust the route or cancel as necessary.
- Recheck public transport and forewarn cafés/pubs if you plan to visit.
- Check phone (and GPS) are charged.
- Check personal gear and first aid kit. For first aid advice see www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/safety/introduction-to-first-aid
- Be prepared to answer queries from potential attendees.

At the start of the walk

- Arrive early and be welcoming - particularly to newcomers.
- Appoint and brief the backmarker (if you don't already have one).
- Make sure you know who is starting your walk. Ensure you know how to access their emergency contact details.

- Ensure those accompanying under-18s or vulnerable adults know they have responsibility for direct care and supervision.
- Where appropriate check the equipment of the party and be prepared to turn people away if circumstances demand.
- Give an overview of the walk, how long it will take, points of interest, refreshment stops, and any places where particular care is needed.
- Outline your expectations of walkers. Invite anyone with concerns to speak to you in private, for example about medical conditions.

On the walk

- Set a pace to suit the party's capabilities and advertised walk grade.
- Stay in sight or communication with your backmarker at all times. Allow for regrouping and head-counts as required. (*note from me: wear a his-vis top - particularly the backmarker*)
- Regularly check your route, using a map and/or compass if necessary.
- Help the group across stiles, roads, gates and in poor weather as required.
- Keep an eye on the weather and change your plans if needed.
- Be alert to any problems with individuals and chat to newcomers.
- Provide membership forms to non-members and explain the work of the Ramblers.
- If there is an emergency, dial 999 or 112 and ask for Police/Mountain Rescue.
- Importantly - enjoy the walk!

At the end of the walk

- Check everyone has returned and can get home and thank them for coming.
- Encourage newcomers to join the Ramblers.
- Report incidents/near misses to Ramblers GB as soon as possible via the Incident Report Form.
- Report any path or access problems to the relevant group officer or online via www.ramblers.org.uk/pathproblem

For more information visit www.ramblers.org.uk/walkleader or email volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com

VERSION 1.4 SEPT 2017

a pdf version of this (2 page A5 booklet) is available on the ramblers website

(this is the latest information that will be placed on the website)

South Cheshire

Ramblers

Thank you for your tremendous support for this Event ! June 2018

The Organising Committee hopes that you have had the opportunity to open your Silver Ticket Packs and found:

Ticket

Please take special care of your

Ticket:

- You will need to show it on the day for admittance and to get your Welcome

Drink and Meal.

- Each ticket has an entry number for the **Prize Draw**. So don't miss out !

Ramblers Pen

To complete the Puzzles in the:

Commemorative Booklet

We hope you have enjoyed reading the booklet and solving the **Puzzles**.

- Don't forget to submit your answer by **12 July**

All correct answers will be entered into a Draw and the winner revealed at the Event.

~ o-O-O-O-o ~

Timing

The Evening will start at 6.00pm with a Welcome by the Chairman, Phil Guest and the

Hog Roast Meal service will commence at 6.30pm.



[if you requested the Vegetarian Meal this will be shown on the ticket]

There will be an interval after the Meal to re-arrange the room for the Ceilidh Dancing which will start at around 8.15pm. The Band Jigsmith and the Caller will play two one-hour sets with an interval in-between.

The evening will close at around 10.30-11.00pm, depending on how energetic you are feeling !