

South Cheshire Group

Newsletter No. 34

October 2011

Notices

Let us have your e-mail address.

It will help us to improve communication and reduce printing and postage costs. The Newsletter and Walks Programme are published on the website—we'll drop you an e-mail to let you know when they are available to download.

Newsletter articles and group notices are generally available on the website ahead of the Newsletter.

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Publicity

Carole Bentley

Newsletter

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Members

Julie Hayward
Phil Keogh
Ray Sellars
Sally Nield

Dominique Dufour-Jackson
David Smith

Annual General Meeting

To be held on Monday 7th November at 7.30pm at the Nantwich Museum Gallery, Pillory Street, Nantwich. Agenda enclosed.

Members are requested to advise the Secretary of their intended attendance for catering purposes.

Please use the separate forms to nominate Officers or Committee Members. These should be sent in advance of the meeting to the Secretary or Chairman

e.mail: secretarysouthcheshireramblers@yahoo.co.uk

or post to Chairman (address on form).

Chairman's Chat

Philip Guest

Over the August bank holiday, which a number of the group spent at Plas Tan y Bwlch, we spent one evening kicking around a few ideas that had been suggested for discussion. Topics included where we walk, how far we should travel for a half day walk, do we need more long distance walks and should our 'away weekends' include already-provided walk leaders in order to reduce the demands on our own group's leaders. As I write this, no decisions have yet been taken by the Committee and I will be happy to field any group member's thoughts on these subjects which I imagine will be current for some time to come.

I was lucky to enjoy both of our two long group weekends away this year, at Derwentwater in the Spring and North Wales in the Autumn. Both weekends have been covered by other writers in the newsletter, however it is worth noting that HF holidays, who hosted Derwentwater, are now the Ramblers Association preferred holiday provider. This has come about as Ramblers Holidays are said to be no longer providing significant funding through the trust they set up for this purpose and to satisfy requirements from the Charities Commission.

However, on a personal level, I have had two highly enjoyable vacations with Ramblers Holidays this year and I

continue to be impressed with their professionalism and the quality of accommodation. In the spring I had a week on the island of La Palma and then in the summer two weeks in the Stubai valley in Austria. On the latter, when I arrived at the Hotel and looked out at the mountains and glaciers surrounding the resort, I said to myself 'surely we won't be going up there!' But with a brilliant leader I did all the C and C+ walks and returned to the UK so much fitter and surprised at what one can do.

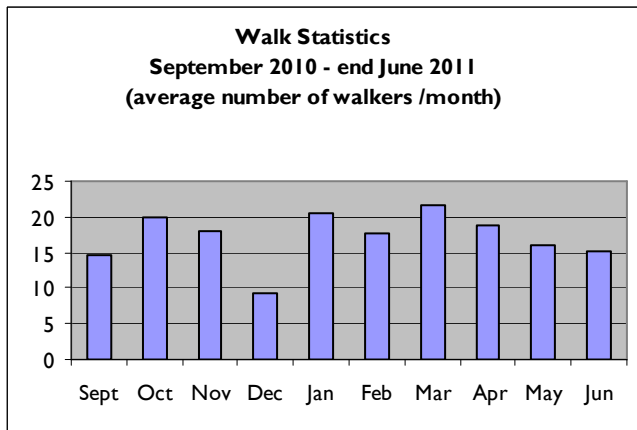
The AGM of the group is approaching and I do encourage members to attend as it is the one occasion in the year when you can elect your officers and committee members. If you have someone in mind for a role please be enthused to complete the nomination details in the notice of calling. I do look forward to meeting you at Nantwich museum on the evening of 7th November.



*Taith Ardudwy Waymarkers –follow the Buzzard!
The climb out of Barmouth (Paul Boniface)*

Walk Statistics

David Vernon — Rambles Secretary



Rambles Secretary Report

Another period of successful and enjoyable walking. In the 6 months to June 2011, 2 walks in the Peak District attracted 30 and 31 respectively; 2 walks on the same day in May attracted 27 and the 10 walks in June attracted a total of 153. Particularly it says something about the group, when the 2 walks centred around 'pubs' on 30 June attracted 36!

Both the 'away' weekends were well attended and we are already planning next years trips. Our thanks to all our leaders; we always need more and any ideas members have for walks will be most welcome.

Morecambe Bay Walk

Carole Bentley

This was one of those 'once in a lifetime' occasions. And it began with a whistle, blown by Cedric Robinson, MBE, the Queen's Official Guide to the Sands. He's 77 years old but looks years younger and has been guiding walkers across the treacherous sands of Morecambe Bay for the last 48 years.

This never-to-be-forgotten outing was organised by one of our regular walkers, Andrew Franklin, who had joined one of Cedric's walks some weeks before. He arranged that we would join the expedition taking place on Saturday June 25th. About 400 other people had the same idea!

Quicksand, fast-rising tides, dangerous currents and deep tidal channels are what make Morecambe Bay perilous and so, for centuries, there have been official guides to show the way. Cedric is the acknowledged expert – he is often consulted by the rescue services – and his bay walks attract thousands of people every year from around the world.

The day before a guided walk, he sets out across the sands to mark a safe route with large tree branches which he pushes deep into the sand. They become a focal point for those at the front of the crowd of walkers which stretches back across the bay.

What to wear had been a topic of conversation in the run up to the event. We had been advised we could get wet up to the underwear level and that old shoes or sandals were better than walking boots or wellies. On the day, most people chose to wear shorts (and wet weather jackets because of the rain) and the chairman stole the footwear show with a 'fetching' pair of gold Crocs.



The walk began from Arnside, following the shoreline for a while and taking a detour through a caravan park. We then set out across the sands and eventually came to the first stretch of deep water. Cedric waited for everyone to catch up and then at the sound of the whistle again off we went. Surprisingly, the water wasn't cold and we ploughed our way through, accompanied by some swimming dogs and others being carried.

To one side was a tractor and trailer, the purpose of which soon became clear. It was to pick up those people who couldn't quite make it on their own two feet.

Back on dry(ish) sand we made our way further out into the bay and through a second stretch of deep water which wasn't quite as wide as the first. We then headed yet further out towards the horizon until we took a curved swing to the right in the direction of the opposite shore. The sand here was dotted with bright green samphire (a sea vegetable, delicious steamed and eaten with butter) leading on to a large expanse of salt marsh grazed by sheep. Here, hidden from view until you were upon them, were many deep, muddy and very slippery gullies full of water where quite a few people lost their footing and either got a soaking or just a generous coating of grey sludge.

Some four hours after setting out, having covered eight and a half miles, we reached Kents Bank railway station where coaches were waiting to take us back to Arnside (unfortunately the railway viaduct across the bay was closed for repairs).

Cedric's guided walks are free of charge and since his title confers an annual 'salary' of just £15 everyone was keen to leave him a tip. It had been a thoroughly brilliant experience and one which will never be forgotten.

It's impossible to write about Morecambe Bay without mentioning the deaths of 23 Chinese cocklers in February 2004. That tragedy occurred in the southern end of the bay, two miles out from Hest Bank. Cedric's walks are at the northern end of the bay, where the River Kent flows into the sea. end of the bay, two miles out from Hest Bank. Cedric's walks are at the northern end of the bay, where the River Kent flows into the sea.

The Annual Dinner

Dominique Dufour-Jackson, Sally Nield

Our 2012 Annual Dinner will take place at:

The Thatch Country Inn at Faddiley
on the
27th January 2012 at 8pm (for 8.30 pm)

Priced at £19.95 per person for a three course meal with tea or coffee.

For reservations and any further information please contact :

Sally on 07971458871 or Dominique on 07971603057.

Book early: Numbers are limited to 40 places.

Please confirm your choice of Starter and Main Course to Dominique or Sally by 14 December 2011.

The Thatch

WARRINGTON ROAD, FADDILEY, NANTWICH, CHESHIRE, CW4 6UE
TEL: 01270 624223 FAX: 01270 624224
"Simplicity at its best....."

To Start

Chef's Homemade Soup of the day served with chunky seeded bread
Warm Goats Cheese with salad (V)
Stilton Mushrooms - pan fried mushrooms in a creamy stilton sauce served with chunky granary bread (V)
Fishcakes served with mixed leaf salad
Traditional Prawn Cocktail with North Atlantic Prawns on a Mixed Leaf Salad
Chilled Honeydew Melon served with fruit coulis

Hearty Bite

Pork Fillet Medallions in smoked bacon, leek and port sauce, with grain mustard mash and red cabbage
Homemade Steak, Mushroom and Ale Pie with homemade chips and seasonal vegetables
Chicken wrapped in Bacon, in a mushroom and stilton sauce with baby potatoes and seasonal vegetables
Linguine Pasta with sun blushed tomatoes, olives, garlic and parmesan cheese in a light tomato and basil sauce
Cashew Nut, Hazelnut and Cheddar Cheese Loaf, topped with spinach and mushrooms, served with baby potatoes and a redcurrant and port sauce (V)
Salmon Fillet on spinach and leek, creamy prawn and white wine sauce, baby potatoes and seasonal vegetables
Pan Fried Sea Bass Fillet with lemon herb butter, on crushed potatoes with fresh seasonal vegetables
12oz Gammon Steak with free range egg, pineapple or both, mushrooms, tomato and homemade chips
Fresh Haddock in a crispy beer batter with homemade chips and mushy peas

Dessert

Choose from our sweet menu on the evening

To Finish.....

Your choice of tea or coffee

3 course to include tea or coffee £19.95

PLEASE NOTE THIS MENU IS A SUGGESTION OF FEASIBILITY AND DOES NOT GUARANTEE THE AVAILABILITY OF ALL ITEMS

Carry On Up The Taith

Paul Boniface

More than 20 of South Cheshire Rambler's finest took to Snowdonia on the August Bank Holiday weekend to walk the old track ways and drove roads that constitute the Taith Arduwy (Arduwy Way). And what a weekend it was; full of tremendous views, historic monuments and Welsh hospitality.

The hospitality was provided by our friendly and generous hosts at Plas Tan y Bwlch - an amazing country house once owned by the slate mine owners where if you listen carefully you can hear the evocative sounds of steam puffing from the engines of the nearby Ffestiniog Railway.



Walks

The Taith Arduwy (Northern Section)

The programme, creatively designed by walks leader, David Vernon, consisted primarily of three moderate linear walks along the Taith Arduwy which stretches from Barmouth in the South to Llandecwyn in the North. Not

that we walked it south to north or even north to south; that would have been far too conventional. We did it north-south-south-north-north-south as if we were recreating a three day, Bronze Age pub crawl.

There were other walks available for those who, either through remarkable foresight or bitter experience, were suspicious of David's descriptions of 'a gentle rise out of Barmouth' or 'a short pull at the end'. At the end of each day we certainly felt that we fully deserved the suppers of generous portions of ham, lamb and spam (sorry I went into Monty Python mode at the thought of the cheese board).

If the walks were long then it could be argued that the evenings were even longer. I know of more than one fellow rambler who along with me will henceforth think twice before accepting an invitation from John R for a late night snifter. Although I blame my own subsequent hangover on the shaky hand of the friendly barman whose idea of a single measure of Welsh whisky was to think of a number and treble it.

Not that every evening was an orgy of food and drink, dear reader. Oh no, we had some EDUCATION as well. The second evening was occupied, post-supper, by a very interesting talk from local 'track ways' expert Andrew Weir, who we very much hope will lead a walk for us should we return to Plas next year. Full details of his talk are, alas, somewhat sketchy for your correspondent due to an excess of beef stew, plum crumble and a moderate intake of Shiraz having induced an aura of half sleep / half coma after the first hour and a half. Those wishing for more intricate details of the talk will do no better than refer to

our very own Eileen Dorman who, Rory Bremner-like, was able to repeat, verbatim, large tracts of Andrew's unique delivery on day three of our walk, much to the amusement of her fellow walkers.

For me the information was both intriguing and fascinating and really informed our walk. Eileen

Sites

And the cultural and educational aspect of our weekend was not lost on those who went on the 'alternative' walks. It is a great personal regret that I could not accompany the adventurous souls who took a detour to visit the area where (reputedly) the film Carry on up the Khyber was filmed. Oh the infamy of it all (infamy, infamy, they've all got it in fer me).

The 'Taith' walkers also found time to appreciate some cultural history. First we stumbled across Cerig Arthur (Arthur's Seat). As you will see from the photo Arthur must have had a very strange way of sitting. The Crown of Thorns (Bryn Cader Faner) was more impressive (see picture right) and following a naked dance and a human sacrifice to the Sun God Murdyochwych (Rupert the Hacker) we enjoyed a lunch of ham butties, HP Sauce and yoghurt...ummmmm.



Arthur's Seat

Thanks

Any vote of thanks for our super weekend must start with David Vernon who managed to combine organisational skills and good humour in such a way that he made the job of herding ramblers (think of herding cats and you'll

get the general idea) look deceptively easy. There were others who helped make the weekend such fun including walk leaders Phil Guest and Ken (it'll be 'dryish') Thomas. I believe that Graham Taylor also led a walk as did John Rogerson. Thanks guys. Nice work.



Crown of Thorns (Bryn Cader Faner)

Finally

Wearily we trudged the final few miles on day three, through the pretty, bronze-age valley of the electricity pylons, up another 'slight incline' to the highest point in Christendom, towards our final objective. Arriving thirsty and hungry we were greeted by the lovely sight of Edwina Vernon who had prepared a surprise birthday celebration for David at their house in Llandecwyn. A super finish to a super weekend and our final thanks must go to Edwina for a truly scrumptious selection of food.

The end of the Taith Arudwy. Mission accomplished. Where to next? Well, I'm strangely attracted to the idea of joining the cast of Carry on Nancy (October - Bollington). Feel free to join me...

Copper Mines, Lakes and Mountains – Craflwn and Llyn Dinas

Robert and Judith Spowage

Close by Beddgelert in Snowdonia there is a place of outstanding beauty: The the Afon Glasyn valley. With Snowdon to the north and the Cnicht range to the south lies Llyn Dinas. This marked the start of our walk crossing the Afon Glasyn by a footbridge and along the south bank of the lake. Although we were caught in a heavy shower we were able to enjoy some of the views to the north.

After re-crossing the river, at the end of the lake and following the A494 for a short distance we began our climb up the Watkin path, through the trees, towards Snowdon. The first part appeared to be quite new and ran parallel to an older mine track. On joining with the original track we were able to see the Mountain range in all its glory. To our left, in the distance, Moel Siabod (872 m) in front Cnicht (698 m). Continuing the climb we finally broke out of the trees and into sunshine (only temporarily). The views were even better from our elevated position. They included a waterfall to our right which was in full force following overnight rain – very spectacular. At this point rather than going on to the Gladstone rock, where in September 1892, the then Prime Minister, addressed the people of Eryri upon 'justice for Wales', or to the site that was used as a location for the classic comedy "Carry on Up the Khyber" we went left onto an old Coach Road that lay in the Afon Gorsin valley. (Having had a lecture the previous evening on Ancient Trackways we were constantly speculating whether the road was laid over a Bronze Age trackway; trying to find indicators that would inform our thoughts).

Passing through a gate in a dry-stone wall the path became rather boggy. This only to be expected with David Vernon being our leader. However the views were very good and it was not raining – it started raining again at this point! Some parts of the path were a little difficult but overall not much of a problem. Lunch was taken by the ruins of an old mine building perched above a tributary of the Afon –y-Cwm. We could now see the end of the mountain range to the west, including a distant view of Moel Hebog (782 m).

We followed the track downwards eventually to our left passing what might, or might not have been a robbed out bronze age burial mound Then across the Afon- y –Cwm using a stone slab footbridge of ancient vintage and through the grounds of Craflwyn Hall (National Trust) to the main road and our transport.

An excellent walk with a good leader coupled with magnificent views made for a really good day out.