



Llanfair TH — look, new bridge!

TWELVE months ago we reported in this newsletter the difficulties encountered in getting the footbridge (*Pont Coed Cochion*) west of the village reinstated, after its loss to flood water.

There had been a council budget item for the replacement of the missing bridge but nothing had happened. John Buckley, our Conwy county secretary, had to start a legal process under section 56 Highways Act 1980 in order to make progress. Conwy CBC eventually agreed that the cost of replacement would be put in the budget for the current financial year, and this survived scrutiny by county councillors. Advantage was taken of a scheme for partial grant-funding, and we didn't have to trouble the magistrates in the end.

As you will see from the photo, work is now well under way to put a new bridge in place on FP 58, and you should be able to use it fairly soon. The location is at grid ref SH914696.



The new bridge should soon be ready for public use.

(Photo: John Buckley)

Big Welsh Walk 2020

NEXT year (2020) North Wales Area is hosting the **Big Welsh Walk on Saturday 13 June 2020 at Chirk Castle.**

We hope this event will publicise the Ramblers and recruit new members and we are pleased to be working with the National Trust on this event. There will be a variety of walks: long and short, guided and led. We hope to welcome locals and visitors from across North Wales and from England and other parts of Wales. Please see page 3, and look out for details on the websites/ emails and come and join a walk. Staff from Cardiff will also be helping with the event but we need local help as well so please get involved.

Joanna Slattery



Chirk Castle with Adam's Tower on left

(photo: Prichardson / public domain)

Area Annual Report

THIS Annual report as well giving you an update on things that are happening and a summary of key events is an opportunity to thank all our members for supporting the UK's number one walking charity. It is your membership and the work of all our staff and volunteers that allows the Ramblers to protect our paths, access and countryside and promote walking. There are lots of opportunities to get involved from walking and leading walks; footpath maintenance and liaising with councils to joining your local or Area committee.

The Area coordinates activities, supports groups, provides information and advice and links to staff. I would like to thank all our Area officers who give up their time in different roles. We are always ready to welcome new volunteers so get in touch if you would like to help. This newsletter comes particularly with thanks to Pete Bland as editor and Gerald Moss who organises the distribution. A whole team of walk leaders and walk programme coordinators as well as Jane Hadlow get the Walk Programme sorted. We hope the next programme will have a slightly different look inside. Thank you to Denis McAteer for coordinating this review.

Coast path festival

Three very successful days of events were held as part of the **Wales Coast Path Festival in May this year**. A variety of coastal walks were enjoyed, new links were made with other local organisations, our profile was raised and the Wales Coast Path organisation was very happy with the work we did. Thank you to the leaders and everyone who came or supported this in other ways.

North Wales mailings

These are sent out twice a year, but the way we send them has changed.

Firstly, a very big thank you to all those volunteers who have helped with this task over the years.

Until 2009 each Group in turn carried out the task, but there were many problems. I looked into out-sourcing the job, but the complexity was too great as the mailing to each Group was different. The Deeside Group and Ron Williams suggested carrying it out at the FLVC (Flintshire Local Voluntary Council) centre in Mold. Here, with a dozen eager

Earlier this year Rambler Cymru appointed a **new Engagement and Communications Manager: Brân Devey**. He is originally from the Bethesda Area and a Welsh speaker. I met him on the Ramblers Eisteddfod walk which was an opportunity to network with other organisations while walking in the Conwy Valley.

Ramblers App

A new Ramblers App for members has also been launched, details on the national www.ramblers.org.uk website.

A new volunteers' website (called Assemble) is under trial. Volunteers will soon be able to access this website from the main Ramblers' one, but it will be totally separate. It will make finding resources simpler and will also open up new possibilities for volunteers to work together across the country, celebrate our successes and learn from each other.

Free Training opportunities

Ramblers GB and Ramblers Cymru have increased the practical training that they are providing. First Aid training took place earlier this year and a series of Navigation and Walk Leader training events are part way through. To see the events visit:-

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/support-and-development/wales-training.aspx>

Further training depends on demand so please let us or Cardiff office know about requests for repeats or other training requests for you or your group.

New bilingual Membership leaflets are out with the new charges that started on 1 October. Groups should have received some so if you need some con-

tact your group or order them from the membership team: membership@ramblers.zendesk.com.

There is also supposed to be a bilingual poster, but it hasn't become available as we went to press.

The last AGM (see report in the May 2019 newsletter) was attended by 45 members and 4 visitors. A minute's silence was held in respect of valued colleagues.

Next year's North Wales Area AGM will be held on 11th January 2020 2 pm at Craig y Don Community Centre, Llandudno. There is also a walk in the morning returning in time for the meeting.

Next year's **Welsh Council** will be on the **21-22 March 2020 at the Margam Park Discovery Centre** in South Wales.

Last but certainly not least: **Climate Change**. Recent protests have managed on a few occasions to take precedence over the 'B' Word. Our coastline in North Wales includes some very vulnerable land and paths. Colwyn Bay prom has caught the headlines recently with talk of threats to the railway and A55 but the Coast Path goes along the prom itself. It is up to Ramblers to make sure the needs of walkers are not forgotten.

I shall keep looking at ways we can be more environmentally friendly. I mentioned car sharing and public transport walks last time. This time I would like to urge all members to avoid single use plastic bottles. There are lots of robust, long lasting alternatives that save money as well as the environment. I welcome any suggestions to share in the next newsletter.

*Joanna Slattery
Area Secretary*

volunteers from the Berwyn, Clwydian, Deeside, Vale of Clwyd, and Wrexham Groups, the operation was very slick being done in under two hours; and it could be said to be a social occasion.

Unfortunately, FLVC downgraded their facilities in 2018 so we had to find an alternative.

Technology has moved on in ten years, and a mailing company near Wrexham said they could do it for us. The last mailing was done by them, it was successful, and it saved us money. One person from Ramblers North Wales can oversee it (I hope); sadly, not even volunteers are immune from redun-

dancy.

There are now nine Groups, and five send out material with the Area mailing. If secretaries of any Group wish to do the same they can contact the Area Secretary; it saves money all round. *GM*

John Kay, Berwyn Group

After founding our group and serving as secretary and chairman for over 20 years, John stepped aside at our recent AGM.

We all owe him our gratitude for everything he has done for our club and for Rambling in North Wales.

Dave Collins

Chairman's Report

FIRST of all I must thank all the volunteers in North Wales who actually deliver the objectives of the Ramblers Association. This includes the walks leaders, footpath workers and Group and Area Officers. Without their time and efforts we would not be recognised as a highly effective organisation.

Public Inquiries

It has been a mixed year for Ramblers in North Wales. We have had two notable successes with rights of way inquiries. The first was the Footpath at Rhoscolyn on Ynys Môn where the coast path on the ground differed from the definitive map. The county council, which had originally supported the claim for this path realignment, withdrew its support and the Ramblers, on behalf of the Community Council, took it on, and we succeeded. The second was the Deganwy level crossing. In that case the local MP and a Conwy councillor were the principal supporters and we took a secondary role. The decision was again in our favour. (The Deganwy inquiry decision has now been challenged by Network Rail and may result in a High Court hearing.) At both inquiries we are indebted to Pete Bland for representing the Ramblers.

Big Welsh Walk

The Big Welsh Walk has been for the Ramblers in North Wales *"something*

that took place somewhere else". It started in 2012 when the Wales Coast Path was officially opened. Groups combined to organise walks that covered almost the whole of the route. This was a huge success and the Welsh Government approached the Ramblers to put on other events. This eventually led to the Big Welsh Walk. In 2017 and 2018 it took place at Devils Bridge.

In 2019 it was decided to celebrate the seven years success of the Welsh Coast Path. This took the form of seven days in May when walks were organised at seven places on the Coast. In North Wales this involved three Groups – Conwy, Ynys Môn and Eryri. Thanks to the three groups for organising and taking part in the programme

The 2020 Big Welsh Walk will be centred on Chirk Castle. In recent years the National Trust has opened up permissive footpaths across the estate around the castle. As well as using these paths the walks will include a 20 mile challenge walk. There will also be a programme of walks suitable for all. The event will take place on Saturday June 13th. So why not put it in your diary and join fellow ramblers from North Wales and further afield?

Trunk roads

The A483 and A55 were upgraded to dual carriageways from the end of the 1970's.

This upgrade was put together as a series of by-passes. Crossing points were put in for most of the footpaths the roads crossed. To begin with this appeared to be ok. However as the roundabouts at each end were removed the traffic became much quicker and without gaps in it. The Ramblers have been campaigning since the mid 1990's to make these crossing safe. Progress has been painfully slow.

However, during recent years some improvements have been made to make crossing safe. Also for new roads, such as the now being constructed Caernarfon by pass, the needs of walkers and cyclists have been taken into consideration and facilities provided for them. During the past year we have been in discussions with the Welsh Trunk Roads Agency and hope to see some more improvements.

The first one of these is likely to be around Wrexham on the A483 where we have been consulted, together with the cycling organisations, on improving existing junctions so that they are safe for walkers and cyclists. The Area also responded to the consultation on planned improvements to the A55/A470 junction. This is known locally as the Black Cat Roundabout. Measures are being considered to improve this junction so that walkers and cyclists can safely use it.

Ron Williams

Big Welsh Walk 2020—13 June 2020 at Chirk

WE ARE really pleased in the North East that we have been chosen to host the Big Welsh Walk in 2020. This is the third year of the Big Welsh Walk, previously held in Ceredigion in 2017 and 2018 (and Coast Path Walks in 2019). It is our turn in 2020. The event will be on 13th June 2020 at Chirk Castle, a scenic National Trust location ideal for a wide selection of walks.

The early planning of this Challenge event will include a self-led walk of 20 miles plus, documented and marshalled by stewards, possibly three or four led walks between 5 and 15 miles, as well as short walks in the grounds of the castle. The previous two events have taught us what routes are popular and who are attracted to these routes. The event is aimed at attracting an audience

new to Ramblers and encouraging new membership into the organisation, but of course we welcome our members along too. There will be a registration fee, however there will be a discount for members. Chirk Castle will be the base for stalls and refreshments manned by the National Trust, Ramblers Cymru and volunteers.

We are near a railway station at Chirk and have ample car parking, the castle is in a commanding position near Offa's Dyke path, the hills and valleys of the Ceiriog and Dee, and the local canals with their tunnels and aqueducts. A variety of interesting routes are possible both on the flat and in the surrounding hills.

This is a Ramblers Cymru event and we hope that North Wales members will support us by turning up on the day to

support the work that Ramblers does throughout Wales.

More information will be available later, but as this event falls within our 6 month January to June 2020 programme we wanted to give everyone early notice and we hope you will make a note in your diaries to attend and invite your friends along too.

Dave Collins

Welsh Bus Passes—Renewal

If you have a bus pass issued by a Welsh unitary authority and haven't already renewed it, please be aware that it may stop working after 31 December.

You can apply for a new pass using the Transport for Wales website:

<https://tfw.gov.wales/travelcards>

Or you can ring 0300 303 4240

Area Footpath Secretary's Report

See also chairman's report

Gates or stiles?

The replacement of stiles with gates has accelerated during the last year. Traditionally the county councils would give a landowner a stile or gate for them to erect. These are often left for a long time before being erected. When the work is eventually done it is often unsatisfactory. This can involve the county council's Footpath Inspector visiting the site several times before the work is completed. Some of the counties in our area have now developed a new tactic: offering the landowner either a stile or a gate. If the stile is chosen then putting it up is left to the occupier. If the gate is chosen then the council will put it in for them. The vast majority are now choosing the latter option. The work is carried out either by contractors or volunteers. This only requires a couple of visits by the Inspector and the end result is a path which is easier to use.

Road junctions

Improvements to improve access for pedestrians at road junctions or at crossing points are being made in the Area. This invariably means that the crossing will be shared with other non motorised

users. These include cyclists, horse riders and mobility scooters. Cycleways have benefits for walkers too. They are usually flat or gentle gradients and are suitable for walkers with mobility problems. The popularity of the Coast Path, much of which is shared with cyclists, is testament to this.

Definitive Map problems

The Definitive Map is held by the County Councils. The process to create the map was started in the early 1950s. It is supposed to show all the rights of way in the County. The drawing of the map went through three stages. The first stage was carried out by the Parish Councils who surveyed what they considered to be rights of way within their parishes. The map was then discussed at their meetings. When they were satisfied that it was correct it was passed on to the County Council. This then became part of a county wide Draft Map, the issue of which was publicised. Objections could be made by anyone.

The Second stage was carried out by the County Councils who checked the Draft map and queried any objections and other issues which were identified.

This process took many years and eventually a Provisional Map was published. At this stage only landowners could object to the map, which involved a court hearing (Quarter Sessions).

The third stage was the publication of the Definitive Map when all outstanding objections were dealt with. The Definitive Map and the accompanying statement was final. The whole process took far too long and anomalies and problems were either ignored or sometimes created – the map drawing process was entirely manual in those days. The most common issue was that the line on the final map differed from that on the original Parish map, a cartographic version of Chinese Whispers.

The result is that the current Definitive Maps are often inaccurate and may not show either the correct line or the route that is actually being walked. One Council has identified 672 such errors ('anomalies') on their maps. It is estimated that the current cost of advertising each of these anomalies in the press, in order to correct them, is about £1,000. It is very difficult to see how these can be dealt with in the foreseeable future.

Ron Williams

Lixwm Footpath Claim Public Inquiry

This inquiry has been re-scheduled for January 29th and 30th. Support by members will be welcome. It will take place at Ysceifiog Village Hall starting at 10 am.

Rhoscolyn: post-Inquiry

We reported in the previous newsletter (May 2019) that the inquiry inspector had accepted the evidence given by path users and had added the "walked" route west of Borthwen beach to the legal record.

The inspector had not however agreed to delete the line still shown for the path on the Definitive Map, which we believe was never walked - it crossed fences, went through a garden and down a steep bank. This problem has now been dealt with post-inquiry by an Extinguishment Order issued by Ynys Môn Council in respect of the erroneously recorded path alignment. The Order went through with no objections. So, we are now back to one path, which agrees with where everyone thought it was!

Deganwy level crossing

Since we were up against the might of Network Rail, their London barrister and several expert witnesses, we were not terribly optimistic about winning this inquiry, which took place in May.

The level crossing has existed since the Llandudno branch railway was constructed in the 1850s. Prior to that the public road (now Pentywyn Hill) came right down to the edge of the Conwy estuary, thus giving local residents of Tywyn direct access to the water for fishing, water transport etc. The crossing was not recorded as a public path and Network Rail said it was private.

Considerable efforts were made by the lead supporters, Guto Bebb MP and Councillor Mike Priestley, to collect evidence of use and to put together a strong case in favour of the path being public. A good deal of work was put in by Guto's secretary Barbara Baldon and by Julian Pitt, a retired planner who has recently become chair of the Snowdonia Society.

Ramblers put in a supporting case which concentrated on the historical

evidence, since we knew that there were legal obstacles in the way of using recent user evidence to prove public rights.

Anyway, to everyone's joy the inspector accepted the case in favour of the path being public and confirmed the order. That would normally mean that the path would be re-opened for public use but Network Rail have lodged a challenge to the inspector's decision in the High Court. So far as Ramblers are concerned the matter is now with our experts in London, and we will have to wait and see what the final outcome is.

Abergele Woods

There are reports of that locked gates have appeared in Abergele woods, north-east of the hospital at grid ref SH948755 approx, interrupting what used to be a popular walk for locals.

If you know this area and have walked the paths can you please contact John Buckley, our Conwy County Secretary? His details are in the walks programme.

RW/PB

Membership report

Group Membership of North Wales Area as at 30 September 2019

Group	Life	Single	Joint	Reduced	Joint Reduced	Total	Payment Pending
Clwydian	9	63	43	26	12	153	7
Conwy Valley	8	121	81	36	20	266	11
Ynys Môn	4	72	40	19	10	145	2
Wrexham	5	32	23	16	19	95	2
Meirionnydd	4	52	29	25	14	124	5
Berwyn	5	28	10	12	4	59	-
Vale of Clwyd	2	52	44	24	19	141	5
Deeside	-	39	50	21	7	117	-
Eryri	5	79	52	34	21	191	10
96	1	24	2	8	-	35	1
98 (unattached)	-		2	0	-	2	-
99 (Affiliated Clubs)	-	7	-	-	-	7	-
Area Total	43	562	376	221	126	1328	43

The numbers listed above are for Active Members.

Payment Pending Members are shown in the last column

THE NATIONAL RA Membership on October 1st 2019 was 102,038 as compared with 102,515 for October 1st 2018 and with 104,391 for October 1st 2017. So there has been a 0.5% reduction nationally over the last twelve months compared with a 2.7% reduction in North Wales Area membership.

Note that the concessionary rates are by and large being phased out, so the reduction here of 37 members includes 15 who have been members for a considerable number of years and who no longer are able to manage the walks.

The feature of most significance during the year is the demise of Bangor/Bethesda Group and the transfer of the group members to Caernarfon/Dwyfor Group in October 2018. At the AGM of the merged group it was decided to adopt Eryri as the new group name, as you can see in the Table above.

As I mentioned last year there are currently substantial changes being made to the way London manage the monthly Membership Lists. These have not yet been implemented. The Ramblers Insight Hub will be an online service where members can view and query information about The Ramblers and what we do. Members will have to LogIn to view any Insight Project. Of relevance in this context is the Membership Secretaries Dashboard. This has nine different lists at present:

- New Members
- Movers & Leavers
- Member Changes
- Full List

Contact Lists

Label List-no Email consent

Label List- including Email consent

Updater List

The Membership Secretaries Dashboard will only be accessible to Group Membership Secretaries and the information provided will only refer to the particular Group. If anybody wants more information about the Insight Hub please let me know.

As Group 96 doesn't have a Membership Secretary, I suspect that as Area Membership secretary I'm the only person in North Wales who will be able to access the Group 96 data.

The Affiliated Clubs are still missing from the standard statistics supplied by London (I have included them in the above Tables) so the figures quoted there differ a bit from the London figures (I get LW99 lists separately, along with the full membership lists so we are up-to-date with the Affiliated Clubs membership).

So far, I have had no adverse reports regarding the new ways of communicating with London. If anyone has any queries regarding any membership issues please let me know,

Neville Fernley
Area Membership Secretary

I.C.E.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CARD
PLEASE CARRY ON ALL WALKS

Personal Details

Name

Address

Contact number

Date of birth

Medical Information

Medical Conditions & Allergies

Medication

AS we enter the dark months, we might not welcome ice. But in this case I.C.E. means "in case of emergency" and you should find in the envelope enclosing this newsletter a card which you are urged to use. More can be obtained from your Group Secretary.

The card is two-sided and you enter your personal information and then keep the card in the pocket of your rucksack, or somewhere handy, where your friends can find it in case you have an accident.

Whether we are old or young we might have medical conditions which we don't want to broadcast but which could become crucial in case of accident. The card also provides for details to be entered of your emergency contact, whether a spouse, other relative or friend.

I.C.E. phone contact

Andy Wilson of Conwy Valley Group has provided some useful information on how to set up your smartphone to store your emergency contact information. The idea is that, once set up, a helper or member of the emergency services would be able to access that vital information without having to unlock your phone.

There isn't enough space here to list the full instructions for Android and iPhones, but if you search on "ice information android" [or iphone] you will soon find something useful.

You can also use your phone to send a "999" text message in case your signal is not good enough for a normal call. **But you have to pre-register your phone:**

<https://www.emergencysms.net>

Ramblers Association - North Wales Area

Summary Of Accounts

Year ending 30th September 2019

Receipts and Payments at 2019

<u>Receipts</u>	2018/19	2017/18	<u>Payments</u>	2018/19	2017/18
Central Office	13,400.00	8,800.00	Groups Grants	3,672.00	3,572.00
Credit Interest 20114798			Walks Programme	5,015.56	5,351.64
Credit Interest 20114808			Newsletters/Publicity	390.00	1,217.38
Publication Sales	158.40	172.00	Book Sale Expenses	-	
Advertising Sales	210.00	420.00	Footpaths	476.10	430.42
Miscellaneous Income	-	1,580.18	Countryside Protection	36.00	36.00
			Access	124.38	173.35
			Meetings (inc AGM)	901.61	1,030.78
			Admin	1.50	15.00
			Flexi Groups		
			Wat's Dyke Way	54.42	
Total Receipts	13,768.40	10,972.18	Total Payments	10,671.57	11,826.57
Surplus(+)/deficit(-)	3,096.83	- 854.39			

Bank reconciliation

	2018/19	2017/18			
B/Fwd 1 October	6,915.51	7,769.90			
Surplus(+)/deficit(-)	3,096.83	- 854.39			
Watt's Dyke Way	- 1,145.76	- 1,200.18			
Available Bal at 30 Sept	8,866.58	5,715.33			
Bank balance at 30th Sept	10012.34	6915.51			

Signed:	Honorary Treasurer: Jeff Nagle
Signed:	Independent Examiner:
Date:	Address:

Area Treasurer's Report 2019

Income

Our income for the year was £13,768.40 made up from Central office grants of £13,400, advertising sales of £210, publication sales of £158.40 (Ron's book produced on behalf of the area).

Expenditure

Our total expenditure for the year was £10,671.57, the bulk of which, was, as usual, spent on the production and delivery of the Combined Walks Programmes and newsletters. For the two editions' this year the cost was just over £5,000, (the cost of the CWP comes to approximately £1.25 each, including postage). Thanks to Gerald's efforts in finding a new company

to handle the distribution of both the CWP and newsletter the cost has come down this year by approximately £400.

Group funding was £3,672. Meetings, travelling and admin costs came to £1,500.

Summary

Financially the area remains in a healthy position. We ended the year with an available balance of £8,866.58, which excludes the £1,145 in the Wat's Dyke Way account.

Having started with a balance of £6,915, we have underspent our budget by £1,900, in part by recouping from HQ the £1,350 we spent last year funding

one of our groups when their budget bid was not included in our final grant. The remainder is due to us not having to use fund set aside for training. Even with this our reserve s figure remains well with guidelines at 85%.

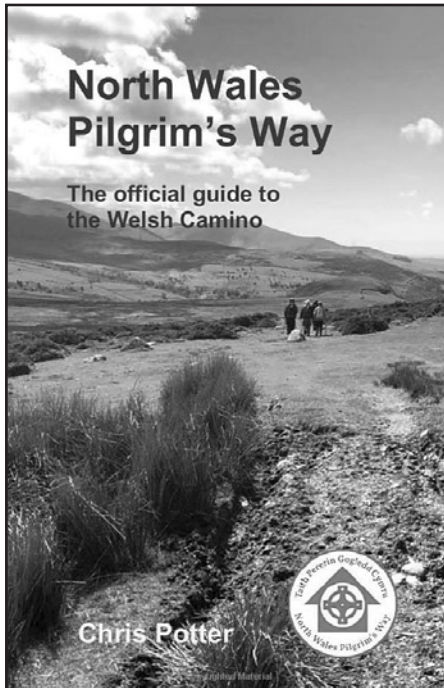
Once again, a big thank you to all the group treasurers for their help and cooperation in getting the various returns completed and sent to me on time, it makes my life a lot easier.

Very best wishes to Bob Lee (Deeside) who is stepping down as their treasurer at their next AGM.

Jeff Nagle
Area Treasurer

Book Review

THE North Wales Pilgrim's Way was first walked in 2011 in response to a challenge. Our own Ron Williams was involved in writing up the original route. This guide by Chris Potter, independently published, has only recently appeared, and draws on experience with the route since then.



This slim paperback is about the same size as an OS Explorer map, so it will fit in a map pocket, but it packs in a lot of detail. The route from Basingwerk Abbey to Bardsey Island is divided into thirteen sections, each of which has detailed notes on the route and a sketch map. There is a website with up to date information and you can download navigation data if you are using a GPS, but proper OS maps will be needed as well.

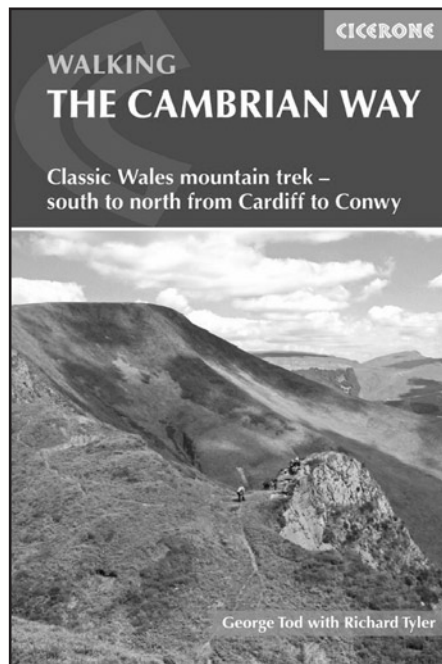
There is advice on backpacking, B&Bs, how to travel light, public transport information and some notes on Welsh pronunciation. There are even some pages at the back to take your "passport" stamps, although you can get a separate Pilgrim Passport at the start of the walk, from Greenfield Valley visitor centre.

As with the more famous Camino to Santiago, the route can be treated as a religious or spiritual pilgrimage. Or you can simply treat it as an excellent long distance walk through lots of beautiful North Wales countryside, with a ferry trip at the end to a special island which few people get to visit.

£9.99, 75 pp, ISBN 978-1080333134
(can be ordered through Amazon)

The **Cambrian Way**, a tough long-distance mountain walk from Cardiff to Conwy, has a lengthy history starting in the 1970s. Most people with an interest will know that it was devised by Tony Drake, a stalwart member of Ramblers and for a long time its Gloucestershire Footpath Secretary.

Tony researched the route and self-published seven editions of his own guidebook, with black & white line drawings—I have several of these on my own bookshelf. This new publication is quite different and benefits from the professional expertise of Cicerone, the



well known publisher of walking guides, as well as the efforts of George Tod and Richard Tyler, who took on the task after Tony's death in 2012.

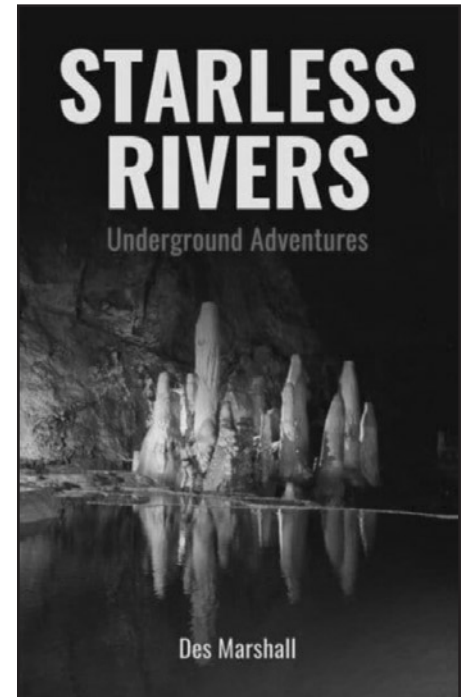
Route descriptions are illustrated with OS Landranger extracts. The route is depicted with a coloured line which is semi-transparent so as not to obscure the underlying map detail. The main route is shown red and alternative routes are in blue. For each section a gradient profile is provided.

There is a mountain (sorry!) of preliminary detail, and appendices devoted to accommodation, useful contacts and the Welsh language. As is now usual, you can download GPS navigation data from a dedicated website, but remember that electronic devices can fail and take paper maps and a compass too.

This is an essential tool for anyone contemplating the Cambrian Way.

£14.95, 264pp, ISBN 978-1852849900
Discounts available, also E-book.

Starless Rivers was sent to us by local publisher **Carreg Gwalch**, and will provide a totally different experience to reading guides and travel books about routes above ground. Des Marshall explores routes underneath the ground in this autobiography.



Des started out as a climber and mountaineer in Kendal, where he was brought up but soon became interested in caving. He is a qualified instructor and has lived in North Wales since 1994. He includes some interesting stuff on our slate quarries and mines, but the places he describes range across Europe, the USA and Nepal as well as Yorkshire, the Mendips etc.

This book will give you some vicarious underground thrills without having to do the routes yourself.

£9.50, 288pp ISBN 978-1845242886

Group discipline

FOLLOWING an incident that happened in another area an investigation is taking place at Head Office concerning the management of a walk. Essentially the back-marker lost touch with the leader and an incident occurred in the gap that had arisen between them. Walks leaders are reminded to keep their group together and:

- Stay in sight or communication with your backmarker at all times.
- Allow for regrouping and head-counts as required.

Denis McAteer

Celyn Forest opened up



photo: Cyngor Gwynedd

A path through the Celyn Forest just north of Llyn Celyn is usable again after some well coordinated clearance work. The path (Llandderfel 110) connects the A4212 layby (SH86468 40894) on the north shore of Llyn Celyn with Cwm Heskyn and opens an alternative route to or from Carnedd y Filiast via Nant Hafod (SH87541 41122).

National Resources Wales, who own the forest, have cleared the fallen trees

and height restricting branches which have been obstructing for some time and the path has been brushcut. The pylon maintenance team have done some work to improve the drainage. This was coordinated by Samantha Hollingworth, ROW officer, after being contacted by a Ramblers member. It demonstrates what can be achieved when path problems are reported. Many thanks Sam.

Karen Ashton

Val Jones

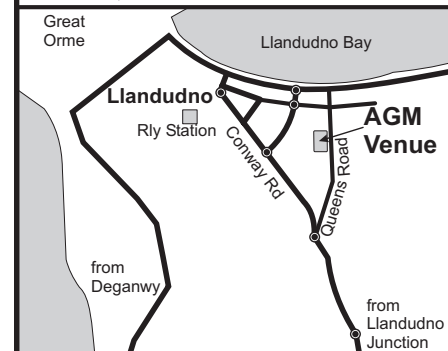
ON August Bank Holiday Saturday, Val Jones was taken ill while leading a walk for the Vale of Clwyd Ramblers and it is with great regret that we record her sad loss. Val and her late husband Derek had been stalwarts of the VC since arriving on the Ramblers' scene as experienced walkers in 2000.

Val brought her wise and experienced head to a range of activities for the VC as chair, publicity officer, walk leader and organiser of away weekends.

She was an all-round safe pair of hands and a great encourager of new talent. She was a promoter of walking in the wider community including U3A, walking for health groups and in leading for local walk festivals too as well as being a lover of nature and of all things Welsh.

Val would become a carer for Derek when he succumbed to dementia and then she became a staunch advocate of and fundraiser for dementia research and care.

Val and Derek will be greatly missed for their contributions to rambling, for their kindness and encouragement to their fellow walkers and, above all, for



their limitless good humour often in adversity.

The Vale of Clwyd group wishes to express its gratitude to all who assisted Val on the day whether from Wales Air Ambulance, Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue or from the wider Ramblers' community. Your efforts are much appreciated.

Chris Grier