



Thinking outside the box

The small car park at the former Pistyll Quarry (grid ref. SJ188574) - on the road between Llanferres and Llanarmon - is a great place to start walks on the southern end of the Clwydian Range as well as Bryn Alyn.

Returning there last year on the footpath from the Raven in Llanarmon village, we were surprised to see a brand new footpath sign advertising an alternative, livestock free route. Intrigued, we made enquiries. It seems that, with the support of both Denbighshire Council's rights of way lead and our National Landscape's access officers, the local landowner has provided an alternative route which avoids contact with cattle grazing in the area.

The new route is a delight - a little longer than the existing right of way but more interesting, hugging the River Alyn most of the way from the village to the well-known Stone Clapper Bridge. If we didn't know before how the upper reaches of the Alyn twist and turn we certainly do now! The landowner is to be congratulated on thinking outside the box and providing a



safe alternative in this widely walked area - and for doing so in close cooperation with our footpath teams. The existing right of way remains fully open but this is a super alternative and very easy to navigate!
(text and photo: John Roberts)

Walks for Women project

New Partnership!

Moving into year two of the project we have developed a great relationship with the North Wales Women's Centre, adding a 1-2 hour walk to their weekly timetable.

These walks have been open to all and really inclusive. Starting and finishing at the North Wales Women's Centre in Rhyl they mostly take in the prom and the surrounding green spaces such as Marine lake.

More than 30 women have now joined at least one walk with many attending very regularly. We have seen friendships forming as well as fitness growing, showing how important this programme is for physical and mental well-being.

As well as the weekly walks we organise occasional slightly longer, more adventurous trips using public transport. Last month a group successfully tackled Conwy Mountain and really enjoyed the challenge and the change of scenery. Chips on the sea front ended a really good day out!



Fun on top of Conwy Mountain (Mynydd y Dref)

(photo Liv Evans)

Several of the regular attendees have taken part in a Paths & Maps' workshop, introducing the ladies to map reading and basic navigation skills and from this, a few have stepped forward to complete walk leader training so that they can assist on the weekly walks along the sea

front. It's great to see this growing confidence within the group and are excited to see where the rest of the year takes us!

If any ladies would like to be involved in supporting this project in Rhyl please contact olivia.evans@ramblers.org.uk

Newsletter of Ramblers North Wales Area

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July 2026

A word from the Chair

Films are made on all kinds of topics, some of which are controversial and others are purely for entertainment in order to make as much money as possible! I was intrigued to read recently in the newspapers details of Orban Wallace's film called "**Our Land**" about the right-to-roam movement. It shows a campaigning group with a simple, reasonable aim: to give walkers in England and Wales the same rights that people have in Scotland, courtesy of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. This was brought into being by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act of 2003. As we are aware walkers there have the right to walk, cycle and camp if carried out responsibly to most land, public or private. These rights have now existed for some time without the apocalyptic end to the countryside as was once predicted by

land owners.

Our Land dares to tread where few have trespassed before, asking the timely question of who has the right to roam in the countryside? Parts of the UK are wild and beautiful places, but the vast majority of it is off limits to the general public, with 92% of land and 97% of all rivers in England not legally accessible. At the same time, it is a landscape shaped by centuries of inheritance and tradition, with land held and cared for by families across multiple generations.

Apparently the film does take a balanced view and includes landowners' concerns around environmental protection and the danger such widespread access could pose to a landscape already under threat. Mass Trespass events by Right to Roam seeks to extend this, but

often clashes with landowners. This documentary gives voice to both sides: prominent land authors, Nick Hayes and Guy Shrubsole, as well as landowners defending their custodianship. It examines complex issues of access, conservation, and long-standing property rights that have shaped the landscape for over a thousand years. Ultimately, it asks the provocative question: who truly has the right to roam?

Our Land is in UK and Irish cinemas from 8 May and will probably be on the streaming channels in the future and details can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/bdksseeu>

J Elwyn Williams, chair

From the Area Footpath Secretary

Please see elsewhere in this issue for reports on some specific cases.

Temporary TROs

Councils can impose **Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders** ('TTRO') to close highways, usually for safety considerations. They can be issued for short periods, sometimes only 5 days for minor problems. More usually a closure will be for 21 days for an incident which can quickly be resolved: frequently used for fallen trees and minor development or repair works. These short closures can be imposed by Notice on site and without any advert in the local press.

Keen ramblers may be familiar with six months closures, which are formal orders made under the council's seal and advertised in the local press. They are used for more complicated issues. Six months is generally the limit for minor highways (footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways, BOATs). Other highways can be closed for up to 18 months. This is usually for major works affecting the highway such as a major construction. Both order periods can be extended by application to Welsh Government.

In North Wales use of these powers varies considerably as between different councils. Some counties use them sparingly, getting the issue sorted within the time period. Others continuously extend them without any real effort to deal with the problem.

The worst offender in North Wales

is Conwy CBC. Conwy routinely issues these notices and extends them without any work being planned or carried out. The applications for extension are subject to the approval of Welsh Government but in our experience refusal is rare. We believe only one extension was refused in North Wales, and that was in 1999.

Discussions are taking place with Conwy CBC in an effort to get them to sort out the nine long-standing Orders which are currently in force in the County. If this fails, then the Ramblers will consider whether the council can be taken to court by way of judicial review.

During the last six months we have had two successes in Conwy. In March 2024 a motorcyclist damaged the wall on the Slate Trail **near Ty Hyll**, where the riverside path comes up to the A5. This resulted in Conwy CBC issuing a TTRO on it. Despite constant complaints from ourselves and the Community Councils of Capel Curig and Betws-y-Coed nothing was done. The excuse was that they could not identify the owner of the wall. (There are two occupiers involved.) In October we served notice on Conwy CBC to open the path. We pointed out to them that they had the authority to do the work and charge the occupier(s). The path was re-opened in March 2026.

The other case is a footbridge known as **Pont Ardda** (SH767657) which is above Dolgarrog. This is on the boundary between Trefriw and Dolgarrog and involves three footpaths. In October we

also served notice on Conwy CBC to repair the bridge. They have now agreed to do this, so hopefully the work will be completed this summer.

Footpath Workers

Paul Dewar has now volunteered to take on the role of County Secretary for Denbighshire. The other County Secretary that is needed is at Conwy. We now have a potential volunteer for this role too.

County Footpath Secretaries need support from a team of people who are prepared to support them. You can volunteer through your Group or directly to the current secretary.

Llandrillo

Historically, Llandrillo (yn Edeirnion) was in the County of Meirionnydd. This changed in 1974 when it became part of the new County of Clwyd. As a result of the creation of unitary authorities in 1996 it is now part of Denbighshire.

During the transition to Clwyd from Meirionnydd some transcription errors occurred when Clwyd created an updated Definitive Map and Statement for that county. This resulted in a problem at one farm where there the maps do not agree. The farmer is proving difficult to deal with. These issues have been taken up nationally by Ramblers. We are not hopefully of a quick and easy solution!

Ron Williams

Notes from the Secretary

NORTH Wales Area held its AGM in January at Craig-y-Don Community Centre. Kevin, from the Conway Valley Group, led a well-attended walk in the morning, and those attending were able to eat their picnic lunch inside the centre afterwards.

The formal business of the meeting was completed quickly, after which we welcomed Hugh Burgess to speak about his pilgrimage from Halkyn to Spain — a remarkable journey of approximately 1,500 miles completed in just over 12 weeks.

Hugh Burgess is Priest-in-Charge of the Mountain Parishes of Halkyn, Caerfallwch (Rhosesmor) and Rhes-y-Cae in the Welsh Diocese of St Asaph.

Ramblers Cymru AGM

The Ramblers Cymru AGM was held in Llandrindod Wells for the second consecutive year over the weekend of 21–22 March. Before the formal business each morning, delegates had the opportunity to join short local walks from the hotel. Llandrindod Wells has an interesting

history as well as a number of pleasant parks and walking routes close to the town centre.

On Saturday, the focus was on the elections, and Rebecca Brough explained how the new super constituencies will affect our groups and areas. We also looked back at some volunteer achievements over the year. In the evening, delegates enjoyed a meal followed by dancing with a local ceilidh/twmpath band.

On Sunday morning, the financial reports and minutes of the 2025 AGM were presented, together with an informative presentation on a footpath restoration project, this provided valuable insight into overcoming practical obstacles.

After lunch, Jacky Cross from the Meirionnydd Group spoke about the issues surrounding off-roading, leading to an interesting and lively discussion.

The dates for the next North Wales Area meetings are 4 July and 7 November, both to be held at Tyn-y-Coed Hotel, Capel Curig. All members are welcome,

and we encourage at least one representative from each group to attend. Following the formal meeting, a light lunch of soup and a roll will be provided, together with an opportunity to chat and discuss any issues informally.

Area Treasurer

After our AGM when the committee was elected our area treasurer stood down and this position became vacant for the North Wales Area. It is a significant position as the role collates the group budgets and requests and distributes the funds from head office. Fortunately, Jacqui Stapley has agreed to take on the role.

Contact details:

Shirley Fermor:

secretary@ramblersnorthwales.org.uk

Joanna Slattery:

joslattery10@yahoo.co.uk

Shirley Fermor

North Wales Area Ramblers Secretary

A new route in Conwy County

The **Bro Celynnin Pilgrimage Way** is a new 22 mile (35km) trail linking five medieval churches in the Conwy Valley. It is a scenic, spiritual loop that connects to the broader North Wales Pilgrim's Way at the ancient St Celynnin's Church.

Two local church primary schools, Ysgol Porth-y-Felin and Ysgol Llangelynnin, had a competition to design the official stamps to be collected at the churches as part of a pilgrim's passport for participants. Five pupils producing winning designs.

The trail is open to all, in a bid to make it a modern-day pilgrimage, helping to boost people's well-being as they connect with fellow pilgrims and the local community, while discovering beautiful stretches of the Conwy Valley and the deep spirituality of our historic churches.

The trail threads through the Conwy Valley along existing rights of way, linking churches with other historic rural places including the former Aberconwy Abbey (now St Mary's Church, Conwy) founded in 1172 by Cistercians monks,

supported of the Princes of Gwynedd.

The trail links the five churches in the Conwy Valley and at Llangelynnin Church connects with the existing North Wales Pilgrim's Way, which leads to Ynys Enlli. The Bro Celynnin Pilgrimage Way will officially launch in July 2026.

Rosemary Mart adds "We also want to offer opportunities for walkers to take time out of their busy lives, to exercise, to pause, to reflect for the benefit of their physical, mental and spiritual well-being in our beautiful part of the world. If it leads people to questions of faith or doubt, we are here to walk with them on their journey."

Joanna Slattery from Ramblers said "This path and the small path of Conwy, connecting St Mary's and St Benedict's in nearby Gyffin will be an excellent way for people to become more engaged with this stretch of North Wales. Not only will it showcase Conwy's vibrancy but also the beautiful churches which are historic gems. It has been a pleasure to support and help facilitate this project."

A website with the route will be available from the launch.

Looking for a walk route to try?

Conwy Valley Ramblers have a library of many of the walk routes that have been CV led walks in 2025 and 2026. Thanks to our walk leaders for leading and providing the routes. Anyone can now access them.

They are on our website.

conwyvalleyra.org.uk

Look under "Walks" and find them at the bottom of that menu list.

If you have an O.S. mapping subscription you will be able to open and use the routes on this App. Otherwise it will be less detailed and you will need to check the route on the relevant paper map.

It would be great to know whether other groups provide routes and for us to share where members can find them in future newsletters.

Joanna Slattery

Another way of sharing walks, for those of a "techy" disposition, is to provide GPX files of the route, which anyone can load into their favourite mapping App.

Ed.

The Zigzag Path

Dolgarrog FP04, widely known as the Zigzag Path, has iconic status in the Dyffryn Conwy area. It climbs steeply over 200m up from near sea level in the village through the woods of Dolgarrog National Reserve (NNR) to reach the upland plateau above. It was constructed as an engineered step-free graded path, probably in the 1850s, to allow access to the slate quarries in Cwm Eigiau, and is now a much cherished amenity as a vital connecting link in the local footpath network.

Unfortunately it is currently closed, unlawfully obstructed since December 2024 by large trees blown down by Storms Bert and Darragh. The very steep glaciated slope was planted with Beech trees in the early years of the nineteenth century. These trees are now huge, and very vulnerable to strong winds because they are growing in thin soils. Several trees have fallen over the path, completely obstructing it. Removing them is far from simple as they have fallen downslope with substantial root plates looming over the path. This is a challenging problem as the root plates have to be secured before the tree trunks can be cut.

The path has been closed for public safety by a completely justified Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, regularly renewed, since March 2025. The current iteration, properly approved by Welsh Ministers, runs to November this year.

Initial responsibility for removing the obstruction rested with Natural Resources Wales as the occupier of the land. After the passage of over six months without remedial action it was decided to request the assistance of the highway authority, Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC), utilising the procedure set out in s.130A Highways Act 1980.

This process starts with formal service of a request Notice to the authority, seeking their help in securing the removal of the obstruction; it was served on the Chief Executive by recorded delivery on 30 June 2025.

The Notice must be in the format mandated in law by Regulations; it is supposed to trigger action by the authority to use its influence and if necessary its powers to secure the removal of the obstruction. The authority is under a statutory duty to respond to the complainant in writing by Notice in a specified format, indicating what action the authority proposes to take, within one month.

In fact CCBC made no formal response at all, despite reminders. The path remained blocked. After the passage of four months and two reminders, on 11 November a further formal Notice was served on CCBC's Chief Executive by recorded delivery. This Notice, also in a format prescribed by Regulations, advised CCBC that court proceedings would be initiated if no action was taken to remove the obstruction to the Zigzag path.

No action resulted despite yet another reminder letter informing CCBC that proceedings would be initiated if no response was received. On 31 December, over a year after the path was obstructed and six months after the service of the first Notice, a formal Complaint was laid in court in Llandudno seeking a Court Order under s.130B Highways Act 1980 requiring CCBC to secure the removal of the obstruction.

This case has now appeared in court on three occasions and is currently adjourned to 22 July 2026 in the hope of securing a negotiated settlement without the need for a contested trial and an Order. The path remains blocked.

The law seems quite clear. The status of the Zigzag Path



Some of the obstructing trees

(photo: V Buxton)

is not in dispute - it is a public footpath shown in CCBC's Definitive Map and Statement. It is unlawfully obstructed by windblown trees. There is a duty on the occupier of the land to remove the obstruction which they have not done. Failure to discharge this duty is not in itself an offence, but the failure does trigger the highway authority's powers to secure removal of the obstruction - at the expense of the occupier.

CCBC, as highway authority, is under a clear legal duty set out in s.130(1) Highways Act 1980 "to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway for which they are the highway authority ..." The words 'assert and protect' require CCBC to energetically argue the case for the path. Case law has made it unambiguously clear that CCBC is required to take the side of the public, acting against the interests of the land occupier if necessary.

The law goes further: s.130(3) requires CCBC "to prevent, as far as possible, the stopping up or obstruction" of the Zigzag Path. This is strong language - not the legally more usual 'as far as reasonably practicable' but rather 'as far as possible'. CCBC is required by law to do everything possible to reopen the path.

CCBC's powers as highway authority are equally clear; provisions of the Highways Act 1980 allow CCBC to say to NRW words to the effect of "please remove the obstruction, or we will do it for you and send you the bill". These powers are routinely used by CCBC to deal with windblown trees by means of a standard notice.

The Zigzag Path has now been unlawfully obstructed for well over 18 months. Despite pleas from Dolgarrog Community Council, and the ongoing court case, it remains so. Parliament made the law clear in the Highways Act 1980, and reinforced it via the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 which amended the 1980 Act to give members of the public, as the

UK Minister said at the time, “a new procedure ... to enforce through the Magistrates Court a local authority’s duty to prevent as many obstructions as possible”.

Despite the clear will of Parliament the Zigzag Path has been unavailable to the public since December 2024, with no end currently in sight. The current court proceedings are believed to be the first of their kind in North Wales - the eventual outcome will therefore be of wide significance.

Richard Brunstrom

Tywyn level crossing Deganwy

The interminable saga of the “Ffôn Tom” level crossing between Glan y Mor Rd and the Conwy Estuary Trail has been reported in these page since 2013, and appears to have reached a new low point.

I will skip over the successful local campaign to get the crossing recognised as public, and Network Rail’s attempts to get a public inquiry decision overturned in the courts. After asking Conwy Council and then Welsh Government to extinguish the path on safety grounds, we ended up with a “working group” of interested parties, including NR, Sustrans, Ramblers etc chaired by Transport for Wales. A firm of Consulting Engineers (AECOM) produced a detailed report spelling out the options, including a reinstated crossing with additional safety measures, and a costly bridge.

There is no space to go into all the detail here but Ramblers and other campaigners think that a reinstated crossing could be made sufficiently safe with additional measures and a reduction in the line speed. NR disagree and don’t think the crossing could ever be safe. One of their experts has a handy phrase - “the only safe level crossing is a closed crossing”.

We learned in May that in one of his final acts as Transport Minister before leaving office at the election, Ken Skates authorised civil servants to proceed with the extinguishment process. We await the formal notice and will object. Another public inquiry to look forward to!

Anglesey Footpaths



The new machine in action

(photo: Andria Massey)

In recent years probably due to climate change, Ynys Môn Council has had increasing numbers of muddy footpaths to deal with. In the past, they have installed boardwalks now using plastic fittings which will, hopefully, last for at least 30 years. However, on many occasions, these are not the solution and they are expensive. Also, achieving the depth required for the posts might not be possible for various reasons. So, they have been looking for other options and have started using stepping stones and stoning the paths which is the better solution where possible.

The problem they have encountered is the need to compact the stones, meaning they have had to hire a machine to do this work at a considerable cost, particularly if the machine had to be delivered. Two of our volunteers looked into the problem of cost and suggested we try to raise funds to buy our own machine. Researching the possibility, they came up with a Petrol Plate Compactor machine at a cost of £358 which we thought was attainable amount to raise funds.

I decided to approach The Ramblers with an application under the **Path Accessibility Fund** (see link at the end of this article) which caused quite a stir

as they had never received a request such as this. This request entailed lots of work for Helen Bates who had to approach the Trustees and Finance Department and finally the Insurance Company. We had so many questions to answer including where it was to be stored, to confirm it would be insured and lots of discussions on the Health and Safety when it was in use.

Thankfully all questions were answered successfully and after some six months following my application, our machine was delivered. In the meantime, the cost had reduced so Helen also provided various items of safety equipment. The machine has already been used on a muddy path at Llyn Maelog, Rhosneigr where 20 tons of stone and gravel was laid over 160m so it has already paid for itself. As a wonderful new boardwalk had recently been built on the opposite side of Llyn Maelog, the stoning work makes this a pleasant safe circular walk for the walking public.

Andria Massey

Footpath Secretary and Access Officer
Ynys Môn Ramblers Group

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/what-we-care-about/path-accessibility-fund>

Lôn Las Môn

The fate of the old railway line between Gaerwen and Amlwch was featured in an article here last June. Since then Anglesey Council has been consulting on future routes to add to the “Active Travel Network” and it appears that the old railway line has been earmarked as a potential Active Travel route, albeit long term.

pages 6 & 7 are omitted from the website version of this newsletter as they contain personal data of officers.

Ramblers members needing contact details for Area and Group officers, or for county Footpath Secretaries may contact the Area Secretary for this information:

secretary@ramblersnorthwales.org.uk

Notice of Area and Group AGMs

Group / Area	AGM details	Contact
North Wales Area	Sat 9 Jan 2027, 2 pm, Craig y Don Community Centre, Queens Rd, Llandudno LL30 1TE	secretary@ramblersnorthwales.org.uk
Berwyn	Thu 19 Nov 2026, 12 pm, Gresford Community Centre LL12 8PS,	info@berwynra.org.uk
Clwydian	Tue 14 October 2026, 7 pm, Daniel Owen Centre, Earl Road, Mold CH7 1AP	ramblerclwydian@gmail.com
Conwy Valley	Sat, 3 October 2026, 2 pm, Wormhout Hub (near Llandudno Hospital)	kevinslattery1@yahoo.co.uk
Deeside	Mon 9 November 2026, 2 pm, Cricket Club, Smithy Lane, Northop Hall, CH7 6DE (& talk on The Witches of N. Wales)	e.roberts5@hotmail.co.uk
Eryri	Wed 11 November 2026, 1:30 pm Royal Victoria Hotel, Llanberis LL55 4TY	chaireryirambler@gmail.com
Meirionnydd	Sat 24 October 2026, 10 am, Llanelltyd Village Hall LL40 2TA,	secretary@meirionnyddramblers.org.uk
Vale of Clwyd	Sat 14 Nov 2026 2 pm, The Rhuddlan Hwb, Clos David Owen, Rhuddlan Denbighshire LL18 2UJ	vcmembers23@gmail.com
Wrexham	Wed 18 Nov 2026, 7:30 pm, Wrexham Lager Club, 1 Union Rd, Wrexham LL13 7SR	wrexhamramblers2024@gmail.com
Ynys Môn	Mon 26 November 2026, 2 pm, Canolfan Beaumaris, LL58 8AL	dgmelling@btinternet.com

Register your email address!

Roy Milnes, chair of Eryri Group, asks members to record their email address with Ramblers.

He says "If you know of a member who is not receiving our newsletters and messages or have changed their email address or phone number please ask them to update their contact details with HQ".

It's easy to do - first find the main-Ramblers website:

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk>

At the top of the page there is a button to press in order to sign in to "my account", after which you can check and amend your details.

Of course, Roy's comments apply equally to *all* of our Groups, not just Eryri.



Membership

Membership continues to be stable.

It is worthwhile to create an online membership, you can then change your preferences for receiving communications and update any other personal details. An online membership is also the gateway to training and is needed for walk leaders.

Walk leaders of all Groups are now fully qualified and listed.

Please contact me if you have any questions about any membership issues, such as the number and names of the registered walk leaders and the status of their training.

membership@ramblersnorthwales.org.uk

Dave Collins, Membership Secretary

Group	May 2026	Oct 2025	Nov 2024	Dec 2023	Dec 2022
LW01 Clwydian	147	152	158	159	167
LW02 Conwy Valley	236	239	228	231	233
LW03 Ynys Mon	142	136	146	143	152
LW04 Wrexham	125	117	123	120	119
LW06 Meirionnydd	124	122	115	103	107
LW07 Berwyn	61	63	66	65	61
LW08 Vale of Clwyd	142	146	149	155	162
LW09 Deeside	114	113	111	109	116
LW10 Eryri	260	264	245	216	199
LW96 Area Membership	81	89	88	50	36
Grand Total	1432	1441	1429	1351	1352

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