



Wales Coast Path at Penrhyn Estate

At long last it looks like there may be a solution to the section of the Wales Coast Path east of Bangor, between Porth Penrhyn and Aber Ogwen. The Wales Coast Path currently makes a massive detour inland on the eastern edge of Bangor, making the label 'coast path' a bit of a joke. It only rejoins the actual coast at Aber Ogwen. In between is the Penrhyn Estate, which we understand is still owned by the Pennant family. (The National Trust does own Penrhyn Castle, but not the surrounding land.)

Discussions about a truly coastal path in this area have been going on for many years, possibly decades. But we now learn that Gwynedd Council has made (12 May 2021) a **Public Path Creation Order under s.26 Highways Act 1980** to establish a public path about 2.9 kms long following the coast between the two points. The fact that Gwynedd Council has used compulsory powers suggests that there is still a lack of full agreement with the estate and so it is possible that there will be objections and the order will have to be considered at a public inquiry



The forbidding private entrance to the Penrhyn Estate near the bridge over the Afon Cegin. Photo taken by Charles Hawes when he was walking this section of the Coast Path in 2015. He commented in his blog "I was tempted to walk in and see what would happen"! © 2015 charleshawes.veddw.com
In fact, the new path will go left here, towards the sea, rather than passing through the gate.

before it can be confirmed.

There is no doubt that creating this new path will be in the public interest and the news will be welcomed by walkers both local and further afield.

Compulsory path creation orders have also been used in a couple of locations on the Anglesey Coast Path, although one resulted in agreement at the eleventh hour. PB

Offas's Dyke Path 50th Anniversary



THE Offa's Dyke Path is 50 years old this year, having been officially opened in July 1971 by John Hunt (of Everest fame). It runs from Chepstow for 177 miles to Prestatyn, following the ancient Dyke where possible.

Celebrations in 2021 may be somewhat hampered by Covid considerations. However, Ramblers Cymru are organising dates on three consecutive weekends in September to bring The Big Welsh Walk to the 50th celebrations. Walk leaders for **Moel Famau** will be needed with suggestions for routes on the 4th of September that include a long linear route, a medium circular route and a route that lends itself particularly well to families.

There will also be a selfie challenge - walkers are invited to send photos of themselves taken next to 50th year waymarkers placed along the length of the dyke. Please contact me with any offers at: john.elwyn@btinternet.com

Photo: Joanna Slattery © 2012

Thoughts from the Chair

Croeso

Dyma ni unwaith eto yn gobeithio fod diwedd y cyfyngiadau wedi dod i ben a bod pawb yn mwynhau gallu mynd allan eto i gerdded. Mae'n synnu faint yr ydym wedi colli mynd allan ar daith gerdded efo ffrindiau. Rwyf yn siŵr fod pawb yn croesi bob bys a bysedd traed fod hyn yn parhau drwy'r haf er mwyn i bawb gael gwyliau pleserus. Fel nifer, mae gennyf gynlluniau ar y gweill, fel darfod llwybr clawdd Offa a hefyd rhywfaint o lwybr yr arfordir Cymru. Pob hwyl am y dyfodol!

Welcome

After a hotly contested election with no other candidates, I was elected unopposed to the Chair of North Wales Ramblers. I have been a member since the early 1990s and am also Chair of the Clwydian Ramblers and have been elected to the WCEC for the past three years. So at present I definitely have enough jobs to keep me busy! My thanks go to Ron Williams who was my predecessor who has made a huge contribution to the Ramblers Cymru over the years and is still very active in promoting the rights of walkers.

Surviving during the lockdown was not easy for many of us and it was made harder by constant changes in the regulations. The most difficult one to contend with was being confined to your local authority area. As I live in Mold (Flintshire) I could not travel to Loggerheads Country Park (Denbighshire) even though it is only two miles down the road. However people living in Llangollen could travel the eighteen miles to walk from Loggerheads! It was interesting to see numerous walks organised towards the end of last year

and advertised on the North Wales Ramblers. They were well attended and the leaders were very inventive in keeping within the correct boundaries and it was good to get out and have a chat again. However the changes to the lockdown measures just before Christmas meant higher-level restrictions came into force to control rapidly accelerating coronavirus rates across Wales. We could only walk from our house with no travelling allowed! During the lockdown, Ramblers Cymru joined forces with other outdoor organisations in Wales. They urged Welsh Government to keep a focus on helping people to safely access local exercise opportunities near to their homes, while also guarding against unnecessary or inappropriate path and green space closures. This was co-ordinated through The Outdoor Alliance in Wales and helped ensure that most local paths were open in our area whenever this was possible.

I remember being told in school that necessity is the mother of invention. It was pleasing to see that we kept communicating with each other through all the lockdown period using various methods like Zoom. This ensured that we could have virtual meetings of our groups on a local and national basis. I think we need to learn from these experiences and use these methods of communication more often in the future.

Like many other organisations we face numerous problems coming out of the lockdown measures and getting our priorities right is very important. Getting the walks programme up and running again that must be a priority and this has already started. It will also be interesting seeing what has happened to our membership numbers in the past year that needs to be increased. I have definitely

noticed that more people have been walking our local paths and would like to see them joining our organisation. From what I have seen in my area, paths that were closed illegally by landowners and nearby properties have been reopened.

During the lockdown Nuffield Health commissioned a study and found that over half of people in the UK have taken up a new form of exercise during lockdown. Many are vowing to continue with their new regimes with three quarters taking up at least one new form of exercise since lockdown began. Walking has been the most popular new activity with three in ten introducing this into their lockdown regimes. Those who have become more active over the past year, either increasing exercise levels or taking up a new form of exercise, 8 out of 10 say they will try to continue with their new exercise regime once life returns to a 'new normal'. Of those who have carried out some form of exercise, three quarters say that exercise has helped them better cope mentally with the disruptive impact that lockdown has had on their day-to-day lives. A report by the BBC found an Edinburgh widower who was struggling with mental health issues due to the isolation of lockdown has walked 2,000 miles in a year after his doctor prescribed that he join the Ramblers. "I was surprised when he didn't give me any pills and instead gave me the number for the Ramblers." If only all doctors would do this!

I am writing this article in early May when the easing of restrictions is being accelerated and the incidence and prevalence of Covid is rapidly decreasing. I am sure that we are all hoping and keeping our fingers crossed that this decline is permanent and we can look forward to getting back to 'normal' in the future. I would like to see a full walks programme starting in January 2022 with walks planned on a short term basis advertised on our websites in the meantime. As always there are a great number of individuals who contribute in various ways to the success of the Ramblers organisation. In particular it has been the role of our secretaries that has kept the difficult task of communicating during the lockdown and Joanna has worked really hard as our North Wales secretary in keeping everything functioning effectively.

Walking for Health—prescribed by the GP

Most Ramblers already know that walking is good for your health, including your mental well-being. BBC Scotland reported an extension to that idea when an Edinburgh man suffering from anxiety consulted his Doctor. Jim Snodgrass, 84, had become socially isolated after his wife died and the Doctor, Victor Jack, picked up on this.

The Doc didn't prescribe pills but instead gave Jim the phone number for

Ramblers.

The prescription worked. Jim's health and happiness improved greatly after he joined South Queensferry Ramblers.

The BBC article is well worth reading - try searching for "doctor prescribed rambling for lockdown anxiety" or follow the link below:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-56919166>

J Elwyn Williams

Secretary's report

North Wales Area would like to thank people for staying members during this difficult time. Like many charities some events have been affected and of course there have been periods without any group walks and other group activities. However many aspects of Ramblers campaigning work have continued. This has included locally and nationally submitting views to official consultations; continuing work on footpath issues and pushing for reopening of footpaths closed during the lockdown. Staying local and walking alone or with our household has been different but still very rewarding.

Some footpath work-groups were among the first things to restart as volunteer work outdoor was seen as a safe and positive thing to do. Walks have now started for many of our groups and we hope these continue to expand as walkers and walk leaders become more confident with arrangements.

Combined Walks Programme

We are planning to produce a Combined Walks Programme starting in January 2022. The timetable for collecting walks details should be circulated in September. Some walks will still be planned on a short term basis and advertised on our websites and social media. The programme will give details of where to find these.

Agriculture Wales white paper

We responded to the Agriculture Wales white paper consultation making it clear that North Wales Area Ramblers believe that landowners should only receive grants and subsidies where there is a public benefit. This includes maintaining and improving access to the countryside for pleasure, exercise and well being and also the wider care of the countryside through the preservation of our landscapes and wildlife and measures to combat climate change. There was also a national response from Ramblers Cymru

Training - Latest Opportunities

New online opportunities continue to be added so if you want to improve your navigation skills or your understanding of public rights of way there are lots of courses now running live, that are free to members and volunteers.

Slow Ways

Slow Ways is an initiative to create a national network of walking routes that can link different towns, cities and communities as directly as possible on foot. It has selected routes using existing paths and they are now looking for volunteers to check them. This is something we can do either as individuals or through our Groups

If you're up for helping, you can choose, walk and review a Slow Ways route. Find out more at www.slowways.org

Welsh Council 2021

Ramblers Cymru Welsh Council was held on Zoom in March. There were delegates from Groups and Area across Wales. A number of motions were put forward. One was passed about litter which ties in well with the launch of the revised Countryside Code (see below). It can be tempting to think that organic materials like paper or banana skins are okay to leave but what seems hidden does not always stay that way and the mover of the resolution pointed out that orange peel and banana skins can take 2 years to degrade.

The motion urged all Ramblers groups in Wales to include the slogan 'leave no trace of your visit' in their walks programme and that their walk leaders are encouraged to remind their members of it, as part of their briefing to those attending a walk.

Other motions were on staff support for work on walking trails; on the risk of losing access to routes designated as 'Other Routes with Public Access'(ORPAs) and changes to the structure of Welsh Council Executive Committee (WCEC).

Ramblers Cymru welcomed Rob Owen as our new chair of the Welsh Council Executive Committee (WCEC). Those returning to the WCEC include Chris Hodgson as vice-Chair, Gwenda Fitzpatrick and **Elwyn Williams**. New members are Maggie Thomas and myself (**Joanna Slattery**). Will Renwick remains as our president. Ramblers Cymru said goodbye and thank you to four retiring WCEC members: George Allingham, Stan Winstanley, John Cook and Dr. Ruth Hussey. (North Wales members in bold). The annual accounts were also passed.

Many of us missed the chance Welsh Council usually gives for general conversations and sharing ideas and are hoping we will be able to meet face to face next year.

The Countryside Code

This has been updated with significant input from the Ramblers. The code was initially introduced in 1951, updated after the Countryside and Rights of Way(CRoW) Act to cover open access land. The latest more general update applies to Wales and England and can be seen at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>

Key changes include:

- New advice for people to 'be nice, say hello, share the space' as well as 'enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory'.
- A reminder not to feed livestock, horses or wild animals.
- To stay on marked footpaths, even if they are muddy, to protect crops and wildlife.
- Clearer rules for dog walkers to take home dog poo and use their own bin if there are no public waste bins.
- A refreshed tone of voice, creating a guide for the public rather than a list of rules – recognising the significant health and wellbeing benefits of spending time in nature.
- New wording to make clear that the code applies to all our natural places, including parks and waterways, coast and countryside.

Area Annual General Meeting

Our Area AGM will be on Jan 8th 2022 at 2pm. We intend to send a reminder in December with the next walk programme but if this is not possible please contact me after December 15th for the details: secretary@ramblersnorthwales.org.uk Tel. 01492874563

It is likely the AGM will be on Zoom as we can't be sure how things will be working. If this coming winter goes ok we will certainly look to have a face to face AGM meeting in 2023.

Joanna Slattery

A note on General Council is on page 4.

From the Area Footpath Secretary

THE Pandemic is still having its effect on the rights of way network. Fortunately most of this is positive. Local residents have discovered and are walking their local path network. They have also been reporting problems: most of these have been sorted. Some have also discovered paths and tracks which people have been walking that are not on the Definitive Map*. Finding litter in the countryside, away from places like Snowdon, has been relatively rare. The use of the rights of way by cyclists has also seen a noticeable increase. This includes footpaths where they can legally only go with the occupier's permission. Energy drinks have been a large proportion of the litter that I have encountered.

During the first lockdown some occupiers took the opportunity to close footpaths on medical grounds. By and large these were resisted by the County Council and very few of them were actually sanctioned. The most common procedure was to put up an unofficial notice sometimes complete with rainbows. Most were again taken down over the following few months. However some, although now faded, still exist. They can be ignored.

Another notice that has been on the increase is North Wales are those warning walkers of Cattle. They vary from simply stating 'Cattle in Field' to those actually stating that walking with dogs is not allowed. The basis for this appears to be the media coverage of people with dogs being attacked by cattle. In my experience on well walked paths cattle generally ignore people walking across a field. Young cattle can also, like teenagers, be a little troublesome and be quite threatening. The presence of a dog



though can make a difference

I was out with a friend doing a risk assessment on a path that I was to use a couple of days later. We walked through a field of young cattle. They totally ignored us. On the day of the walk there were more of us and one member had a dog on a short lead. Despite the cattle not being cows with calves they became extremely agitated. So you have to be aware and careful.

Footpaths can be claimed as public rights of way and put on the map if they have been walked over a period of 20 years. They can also be claimed if there are historical reasons of them being a right of way. In North Wales we have had, since we were formed in 1989, very few claims. However there has been a sudden increase in the last 12 months. The Ramblers are involved in three

claims in Denbighshire – Llangollen, Pwll Glas and Meliden. In Conwy we are supporting a claim for an ancient route in Caerhun and a complex claim for paths in Gwrych Castle Woods**. A local group has been formed to claim some of the paths and tracks through the woods that have been walked since before 1985. John Buckley our Conwy Footpath Secretary is involved in this claim.

Ron Williams

Photo: Ron Williams

*The Definitive Map ('DM') is held by the Highway Authority. In Wales this means the county councils. The DM shows the paths that are recorded as public rights of way. It is this information that is used by the Ordnance Survey for its maps.

** **Friends of Cefn-yr-Ogof**, which has a presence on Facebook.

General Council

Due to the pandemic the Ramblers AGM ('General Council') was all held on line via ZOOM.

The virtual event lacked the vibrancy of our usual meeting. General Council normally provides an opportunity to meet and share with colunteers from all the regions of GB who we do not usually meet but who all have the very same issues we experience here.

A big part of the meeting is to elect our Trustees but as this was all conducted prior to the meeting I was unable to be involved. Although this sounds negative

and clearly shows my lack of enthusiasm for virtual meetings, as a organisation we do have legal requirements to fulfill.

A new chairperson was elected, **Rebecca Dawson**, and I'm sure we will all get to know her in the future. She succeeds **Kate Ashbrook** who has been a major influence on the Association.

Ramblers' finances are looking good, though a lack of activities contributed to this. Membership figures are still causing concern.

The highlight for me was the announcement that **Max Grant** was

granted **lifetime membership** of the Ramblers. This was in recognition of all of Max's volunteering over a long period, his contribution to all the committees he was involved in, his role in North Wales area (and other places previously), as well as his work on open access in Wales. There was much more than I have space to mention here, but it is nice to end on a positive point of recognition of all the hard work undertaken by all our members

Stan Winstanley

Deganwy Saga—part ten?

THE level crossing at Tywyn, Deganwy, was closed off by Network Rail ('NR') in 2011, over ten years ago. The saga to get it reopened has been covered in previous newsletters since 2013. The crossing of the Llandudno branch line connects Glan y Mor Rd to the fore-shore and the shared use path running along the Conwy estuary - which is also the Wales Coast Path at this point.

I foolishly thought when we we got the inquiry inspector's decision in 2019 confirming public footpath status that we were all set to have the Tywyn crossing reopened. But in fact, Network Rail ('NR') went to the High Court to get the inspector's decision overturned. They failed.

NR then sought permission from the Court of Appeal to overturn the High Court decision. Permission was refused. At last, I thought, the crossing will now be reopened.

No such luck. The crossing remains closed under a temporary traffic order and NR has now applied to Conwy Council to have the public right of way across the railway **extinguished**, on the ground that it cannot be made safe, even with changes like the installation of warning lights and a possible diversion so that the path crosses the line at right angles rather than obliquely.

The safety of the public using a level crossing is obviously important but there is no record of fatal accidents here, nor serious injuries. Nobody can remove risk completely from using a level crossing, just as we take a risk every day when crossing a road or when driving. NR however has long sought to remove level crossings wherever possible.

NR now threatens that if they don't



The level crossing as it was in 2009, viewed from seaward side. The ladder stile is visible. Photo cc-by-sa/2.0 - © N Chadwick - geograph.org.uk/p/1479936

succeed in getting the crossing permanently closed it will withdraw permission for use of the **Conwy Estuary shared use path**. This well-used route was built partly on NR land using millions of public money (including European funds) after the Conwy tunnel project.

The NR threat really takes the biscuit and reads like blackmail to me. It also

points up the problems associated with constructing expensive shared use paths for the use of the public without having the assurance given by public right of way status. Indeed Natural Resources Wales has policy guidelines for the Wales Coast Path strongly in favour of the route having permanent public status.

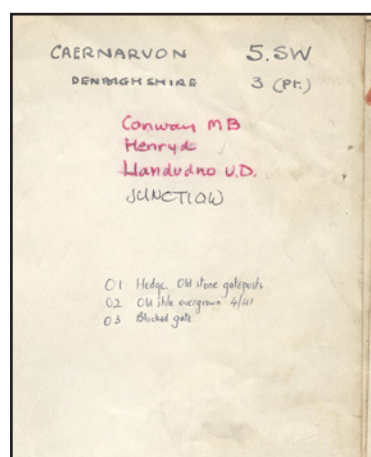
You will see from the story about the Coast Path at Penrhyn Estate (*front page*) that there is a solution to making a route permanently public — a path creation order under Highways Act 1980.

Conwy Council has consulted on the NR application for extinguishment and Ramblers have sent in a strong response, as have the Conwy Estuary Trail Users' Group and others. If an extinguishment order is made we will object and I suppose we can then look forward to another long delay and a second public inquiry.

Pete Bland

Deganwy Timeline	
March 2011	Level Crossing closed by NR
Jan 2014	Application lodged by Guto Bebb MP and Cllr Mike Priestley to have crossing registered as public footpath.
March 2016	Conwy Council makes an Order adding the path to the Definitive Map. Network Rail objects.
May 2019	Public Inquiry held in Llandudno Junction. Ramblers support the Order.
July 2019	Inspector decides that there has been a public right of way over the crossing since the railway was constructed.
Aug 2019	NR applies to the High Court to have the Inspector's decision overturned.
July 2020	His Hon Judge Jarman Q.C. dismisses the NR application: the Inspector's decision stands.
Aug 2020	NR applies to the Court of Appeal for permission to appeal.
Dec 2020	Permission to appeal refused by Lord Justice Lewison
March 2021	NR applies to Conwy Council to have the level crossing footpath extinguished

Old Ramblers' six inch maps



THE image (left) shows the wording on the cover of a folded OS six inch 'County Series' map. The OS sheet number is stated and the parishes covered are written in red ink. There was a large collection of such maps used by Ramblers' volunteers in North Wales to record public rights of way. We think they were purchased centrally in the 1950s or earlier, to be used by volunteers when county councils were trying to record the network of paths to put on the Definitive Map. At the time North Wales was still attached to Merseyside for Ramblers' admin purposes. Typically, the maps themselves are heav-

ily annotated to show numbered paths and path furniture, e.g. 'Gap', 'S', 'FG', 'G'. Some of these maps have survived—a collection held by Conwy Valley Group was deposited in Conwy Record Office. Another bag of maps was handed over at an Area AGM. Some others are held for Wrexham / Flintshire. These original maps are important historical documents and very useful for path research, but many of them have disappeared.

If you hold or have inherited any maps which appear to fit the description given, please get in touch with Pete Bland or Ron Williams. PB

John Kelly

In praise of...

The Vale of Clwyd Group kickstarted outings in earnest with oversubscribed bookings for several walks led by **John Kelly**, a stalwart of the VC and its Programme Secretary for some time now.

John joined the VC in February 2002, turning up on his first walk with “no proper gear” as he put it, on a day when the River Clwyd was about to burst its banks and hailstones pelted down. He had had difficulty finding the start, being unfamiliar then with Welsh village names & geography. A bad start you’d think. Undeterred, a self-confessed “chronically shy” JK started leading walks 18 months later, remembering fondly the unobtrusive & unstinting support from Malcolm Wilkinson (a past Secretary of the VC).

When I “interviewed” him recently (we know each other from very early VC days), he had totted up that he had led at least 155 walks for the VC, joined other leaders on over 250 walks, and that, taking into account walks he led for other groups, his walk on 25th May 2021 latterly was his 900th. Who know, without the pandemic in the way, could it have been 1000?

JK is also known for his...frugality shall we say and the picture of him, taken by Janet Hinton, on a walk he led on his 79th birthday no less, shows his latest bargain, a £4 Aldi cap!

*Yveline Hands
Publicity Officer, Vale of Clwyd Group*



Meirionnydd Group Update June 2021

This short article is in place of our usual Meirionnydd Group newsletter. Our newsletter editor, Alan Norton, has recently stepped down so we have been unable to produce a printed newsletter this time round. I’m sure you would like to join me in thanking Alan for his contribution over the years. We are hoping to recruit a replacement to the role and would welcome a volunteer from among the group’s membership. If you would like to know more about what is involved, please contact me. Meanwhile, those of you with internet access can visit our website at www.meirionnyddramblers.org.uk where our News and Events page and our Rights of Way Updates page are updated regularly and where you can also see photos from our recent walks.

Facebook users may also be interested in the new Meirionnydd Ramblers Facebook page. Currently we use this simply as an additional way of publicising forthcoming walks but could expand the use somewhat if one or two other members would like to share the responsibility of administering the page. Again, contact me if interested.

Finally, our group AGM will be held on Saturday October 23rd. We very much hope to be able to hold an in-person meeting this year in the usual Llanelltyd Village Hall venue, but this will depend on the status of Covid 19 restrictions at the time. If face-to-face meetings are not allowed we will hold the meeting online. Further details will be circulated to group members nearer the time.

*Jacky Cross, Chairman, Meirionnydd Ramblers
Email: chairman@meirionnyddramblers.org.uk*

Arthur Roberts Memorial

After he died in 1991 a memorial stone was erected to Arthur Roberts, who was a founder member of Ramblers and a prime mover of Ramblers Holidays. He was an indefatigable campaigner for footpaths, the Offa’s Dyke Path and CPRW. He did an enormous amount of work to get paths recorded on the Definitive Map after 1950 and even into the 1980s—mentioned in this newsletter previously.

The Welsh slate memorial, located on Penycloddiau at the north end of the Clwydian hills, was unfortunately vandalised earlier this year. It was broken off near its base and it seems that it can’t be repaired. Ron Williams is looking into a replacement and funding for the cost. He has had some offers of individual contributions and Ramblers Holidays have been approached.



Photo of broken memorial: Ron Williams

Sue Stubbs 1950 – 2021

YNYS Môn Ramblers Group were so sad to report the death in January of one of our stalwarts—Sue Stubbs, after a few months battle with cancer. Sue's husband John, who passed away two years and one day before Sue, was instrumental in forming and running the group path maintenance team ('Silver Slashers') in 2006. Alongside John, there was always Sue to support him and carry out the administration required to collate all the statistics and to type up his reports for the committee meetings. When John passed away, we were so grateful that Sue took on his responsibilities as well as procuring tools and safety equipment for the other volunteers.

Only four Silver Slashers were able to attend Sue's funeral because of Covid restrictions, which was a great source of sadness to us all as she was much loved by everyone who knew her. Many more would have wished to attend to give her the send-off we had hoped for. To say we miss her is an understatement but we all feel privileged to have known and worked with her. When we are able to meet up, we hope to have a wake to say our good-



Sue Stubbs (left) on a Silver Slashers work party, installing a marker post on Llanfaethlu FP11
Photo: Andria Massey

byes. We intend to purchase two trees to replace those taken up for the graves in the Boduan Eternal Forest Pwllheli. As she loved feeding the birds, we are think-

ing of purchasing a Wild Cherry and a Rowan which we hope to have in place at the end of the year

Andria Massey

Slow Ways

SLOW WAYS aims to create a network of walking routes that will connect towns and cities, and many villages, along paths and sometimes roads throughout Wales, England and Scotland. It is run by an enthusiastic group of young and highly computer-literate people, and they are supported by the Ordnance Survey. It is designed to complement the Sustrans cycle route network, but geared specifically to walkers, of all types and abilities. The Slow Ways distinctive geometric network will make it easier for people to see, imagine, plan, navigate and share journeys. With each route starting and finishing in populated places, or transport nodes, the Slow Ways will make it easier and more affordable for people to go on short, medium and long distance journeys.

During the spring and summer of 2020, during the Covid 19 crisis, 700 volunteers walked and walked and walked, and produced a first draft map of about 7,500 routes, stretching collectively over 68,000 miles.

The person behind this idea is Dan Raven-Ellison. He is a 'Guerrilla Geographer', National Geographic 'Emerging

Explorer' and is leading the campaign to make London the world's first National Park City. A former secondary school Head of Geography, Daniel's work focuses on exploring and thinking about places in creative ways. He considers that in the years ahead, it is extremely likely that more people will be exercising and taking their leisure locally: trying to save money by using public transport less, and becoming more and more aware that outdoor exercise is an important part of keeping healthy.

A draft map has been launched recently, delayed by the COVID lockdown. They want 10,000 volunteers to walk, check and review the routes. And, I expect, suggest new routes or improvements as well.

This may be something of real interest to you individually, and as a walking group we (Clwydian Group) have asked for more details to see how we can help and share the workload. Search for SLOW WAYS online:

<https://slowways.uk/>

You can ask to be involved, or just kept in touch with developments.

Howard White

Climate change

A debate took place at the Senedd at the end of June on a Plaid Cymru motion on Climate and Biodiversity which:

6. Calls on the Welsh Government to:

- a) introduce legally binding requirement to reverse biodiversity loss through statutory targets;
- b) legislate to establish an independent environmental governance body for Wales.

The debate can be seen at the following link from 305 onwards. The motion was carried and I'm sure will be supported by all Ramblers.

<https://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/12320#A66148>

Ramblers Cymru is a partner in Climate.Cymru – check out their website: Climate Cymru - For the Wales you love:

<https://climate.cymru/>

Group AGMs

Last year we included a table of Group AGM dates and venues. This year it seems likely that all or many AGMs will still have to be held online, using Zoom or similar. You will need to contact your Group Sec nearer the time or check the Group Facebook page.

Paths to Wellbeing

Ramblers Cymru has been successful in securing £1.2m funding for a new project to train new volunteers to improve access to nature and local green spaces. The project will also enhance biodiversity and environmental quality.

The project will play an important part in helping us deliver our vision to put walking at the heart of communities. 13 new staff members across Wales will work with partners (22 local authorities, Woodland Trust and Wildlife Trusts Wales) to create a national framework for this volunteer driven activity.

Ramblers Cymru believes that local communities' engagement with paths and green spaces will be strengthened by investing in upskilling, equipping, supporting and leading local volunteers to manage and undertake practical path and habitat maintenance and improvements. Ultimately this will help more people discover the joy and wellbeing benefits of walking in nature.

Find out more via the Ramblers Wales Office or the website

John Robinson

We learn with sadness that John Robinson died on 3 July. John was for many years up to the late 1990s Area Secretary and a keen FP campaigner.

The funeral will be on Wed 14 July at 1030, Pentrebychan Crematorium, Wrexham, but numbers will be restricted to 30. Pete Bland has got contact details for the family if you want to attend.

A tribute to John will appear in our next edition.

Arenig Car Park Closed

The parking area frequently used by walkers when climbing Arenig Fawr is currently closed. The location is on the lane from the A4212 at Pont Rhyd y Fen (Grid Ref SH 829 392).

The closure is due to fly tipping during the Covid lockdowns. It is not clear if there are any plans to re-open it.



Max Grant



Max out on the hills in 2010. (Photo: Margaret Thomas).

MAX Grant was awarded the honour of **Life Membership** of Ramblers this year. He is by profession an engineer and was our ultra-organised Area Secretary for several years from 2014 to 2018, when he unfortunately suffered a major stroke. His roots in volunteering however go back a long way, after he joined the Association in the 1970s.

He started out in Surrey after he became frustrated with the number of blocked paths he encountered. After he moved to Yorkshire in 1992 he became Area Footpath Sec for West Riding area and was instrumental in persuading North Yorks CC to devote more money

and staff resources to its rights of way network, roughly doubling the previous budget. He then took a major part in the 'Freedom to Roam' campaign which led to the CROW Act 2000 and the access land now shown on OS maps.

Max moved to North Wales in 2004 but it wasn't retirement as most people understand it. As well as serving on the Ramblers Board of Trustees, the Welsh Council Exec and other committees, he did the lion's share of the work in North Wales dealing with the 2012 review of Access Land, not to mention FP work.

The award is richly deserved because volunteers like Max come along rarely.

North Wales Area website

Our Area website has been improved and many thanks for all Matt's hard work on this. Please take a look — <https://ramblersnorthwales.org.uk/en/> It now has a Welsh language part (which will be expanded further) and lots more photos.

Matt who has done the work would like to have more photos from a range of people and places. The photos need to be JPEG, preferably with a label and the photographers name (If they are not the sender obviously they must agree to it being on the site). Please send any photos you would like to share to highlight your part of North Wales to: matt.nobles@protonmail.ch

Matt has added a Featured Walk/Taith Gerdded dan Sylw under the Walks tab. To feature one of your walks here, please send a short description of the route and at least 10 photographs (as JPEGs and labelled) to: matt.nobles@protonmail.ch It would be great to have ones from across the Area so that it can change regularly.

Published for North Wales Ramblers, LL30 1PS. Layout by Scrooge Graphics 07/2021

Views expressed in this publication by individual authors do not necessarily represent the official view of Ramblers Cymru.

The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity (England & Wales no 1093577) and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales (no 4458492). Registered office: 1 Clink Street, 3rd Floor, London, England, SE1 9DG

Printed by: W O Jones Printers, Ltd, Llangefni, LL77 7JA. Tel. 01248 750253