

Walks for Women

Our new project in partnership with Actif North Wales is looking to engage young women aged 18-25 in the great outdoors and walking. The project is focusing on three areas in North Wales; Wrexham, Rhyl and Holyhead, and has already seen some great success in the Wrexham area where we have a group of girls who regularly attend the weekly walks! We have also been gifted passes for some of the North Wales National Trust sites, so the girls have been enjoying some steps around the wonderful Erddig and Chirk Castle. We are also doing weekly walks with Working Denbighshire's Barod programme on a Thursday afternoon which is looking for people around the Rhyl area to get involved and has some great incentives of kit on offer!

We have an event coming up on Tuesday July 15th which is a 'Snacks and Speaker' evening where we're having some women in the outdoors talk about their journey and experience with aims to inspire. We're also doing a kit swap, courtesy of some of our Welsh ramblers members donating some of their pre-loved kit, and a book share of outdoor books. The event will be on Eventbrite to book onto for free shortly!



Women's group walking near Chirk Castle (photo: Liv Evans)

If you or anyone you know may be interested, please reach out to me at olivia.evans@ramblers.org.uk

Liv Evans

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Lôn Las Môn – a Path for All

THE old railway from Gaerwen to Amlwch closed to passenger traffic in the 1960's, and closed completely in the early 1990's.

Local group 'The Friends of Lôn Las Môn', with supporters from all across the community, want to see the former railway redeveloped as a multi-use path. It would make a wonderful traffic-free path stretching 18 miles across Anglesey, connecting communities and enabling family-friendly walking, cycling and riding for people of all abilities. It would benefit residents and businesses and strengthen tourism in the local area.
A Path for All!

There have been several proposals for re-using the route of the line, either as a cycle path, or as a heritage railway, but with no effective outcome. It is now largely overgrown and contains much fly-tipping.

The Problem...

In April 2021, Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd signed a 99-year lease with a local heritage railway group, Anglesey Central Railway Ltd (ACRL), excluding

Lôn Las Môn from the discussions, despite a large local petition.

The lease has some significant and onerous Terms & Conditions that haven't been met, including that ACRL must obtain an order under the Transport Works Act 2012 (TWA Order) within 2 years of the lease start date. The lease was signed four years ago and there is no sign of progress.

A TWA Order is the legal process of obtaining the statutory [cont'd page 2]

Lôn Las Môn – a Path for All (from page 1)

powers to build and operate a railway. The final decision in Wales rests with the Cabinet Secretary for Transport – Ken Skates. ACRL need to convince the Cabinet Secretary that their plans are in the public interest. We believe that their plans are NOT in the public interest. The plans are unrealistic and they have made NO progress over the last 30 yrs, other than superficial weeding.

In 2022, the predicted cost of restoring the line as a railway was between £90m and £144m depending on whether it will be “light” or “heavy” rail (taken from the report by Consultants WSP, working for Transport for Wales). See link below.

Just the cost of inspecting the 70 bridges every 18-24 months is estimated to be more than five times ACRLs annual income, and that is before addressing any remedial defects found, or beginning to restore the track.

Our Solution...

In 2023, The Friends of Lôn Las Môn produced a comprehensive ‘**Briefing Document**’ explaining the history of the line, and the benefits our redevelopment plan will bring to the Community. – cost approx £10 million (in 2023).

The North Wales Transport Commission report specifically refers to this line, recommending that it should be safeguarded for the future, by developing walking and cycling routes along it. See link below.

Friends of Lôn Las Môn want to persuade Network Rail to reconsider their lease decision and allow the redevelopment of the old line as a path for all, for the benefits of the whole community and visitors to Anglesey and North Wales.

We are meeting with Ken Skates in mid-June – so hopefully we will be able to persuade him of the benefits of Lôn Las Môn.

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Deganwy level crossing

Ramblers were part of a “Working Group” convened in 2022 by Transport for Wales to try and arrive at a solution for the level crossing – which has been closed since 2011.

Despite a number of meetings and a detailed report produced by consultant engineers we don’t yet have a solution. Despite new footbridges planned for the North Wales main line, Network Rail have been making negative noises about the cost of a bridge at this location. We shall see.

Photo below: Missing bridge on the Amlwch line



Further information

Route Map: There is a Google interactive map of the route and the places and paths it interacts with on our website: <https://www.lonlasmon.com/pwy-ydym-ni-who-we-are/map>

Some light reading...

- Restoring Your Railway scheme. (see pages 90-92) – English only <https://tinyurl.com/2v9cexsd>
- North Wales Transport Commission Report (see page 36) - *available via our website* (Publications / Rail & Transport)
- Lôn Las Môn - The Case for a Multi-Use Path *available via our website*

The opposition

In the interests of fairness and balance you may wish to familiarise yourself with the arguments put forward by Anglesey Central Railway Ltd and decide for yourself whether their aspirations are in any way realistic. See their website: <https://www.leinamlwch.co.uk/>

How can I help?

Remember that there are Senedd elections in 2026!

- You can write to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport – Ken Skates. Tell him you support the plans for Lôn Las Môn’s multi-use path and that you don’t think the plans by ACRL are in the public interest.
- If you live on Anglesey contact your local Community and County Councillor, our MP - Llinos Medi, and our MS - Rhun ap Iorwerth. Tell them you support the plans for Lôn Las Môn’s multi-use path.
- If you live elsewhere in North Wales - contact the North Wales regional MSs: Llŷr Gruffydd, Mark Isherwood, Sam Rowlands and Carolyn Thomas. Tell them you support the plans for Lôn Las Môn’s multi-use path
<https://senedd.wales/find-a-member-of-the-senedd/>
Get in touch...

If you would like to know more about Lôn Las Môn’s plans visit our website <https://www.lonlasmon.com/> or please get in touch – contact details above.

Notes from the Secretary

EARLIER this year in January we held our North Wales Area AGM – after the formalities we had an interesting talk by Rory Francis (Director of Snowdonia Society) entitled ‘Snowdonia for ever for everyone’.

The **Ramblers Cymru AGM** followed in March, this year held in Llandrindod Wells. We had some interesting walks, one took us to some diabolical stiles and access issues. These problems have been reported to Powys County Council by several people over several years and the issues are still outstanding. I cannot reiterate enough how important it is to report any issues to your local council and check that the repairs are carried out. Next year the Ramblers Cymru AGM will be held in South Wales before returning to the North in 2027.

ICE Key Rings ** – these have been a hot topic for quite some time, I am pleased to say that Area was able to purchase these and by now they should have arrived with your group secretaries. Particular thanks should go to Dave Con-

nolly for driving this initiative forward and sourcing the quotations on our behalf.

In addition Head office have launched a **credit card size ICE card**, at the time of writing this report the initial print run was exhausted and a second run is being arranged – you can order these credit card ICE cards from head office – follow the link in the Walk Leaders resources on the Ramblers website.

Also recently released is a new **Volunteer Guide** with resources and training, all updates and information are sent to you by email and I urge everyone to ensure that they keep their contact details up to date.

The dates for the **next area meetings** are 28th June and 8th November, both meetings will be held at the Tyn-y-Coed, Capel Curig – all are welcome and we would encourage at least one person from each group to attend.

**ICE = In case of emergency



Some ICE keyrings (photo: Shirley F.)

Contact details:

secretary@ramblersnorthwales.org.uk

*Shirley Fermor
North Wales Area Secretary*

Area Footpath Report

I have been Area Footpath Secretary for 16 years. When I was first appointed to this role I used to receive regular complaints about footpath problems across North Wales. Now I rarely get any. During this time I have been in succession Footpath Secretary for Flintshire and then (until last December) Denbighshire. I have also been a Footpath Worker since 1995.

I have seen a change in the complaints that I have seen and personally reported. For the first few years the complaints were largely about totally obstructed footpaths. If there was a minor problem Ramblers Members and the general public would simply “get around them”. This could mean anything from hacking your way through a hedge or length of path to climbing over a fence. Leaders often used to carry a length of insulation piping or a bin bag to get over a barbed wire fence or even a stile.

Now the issues are usually relatively minor - a missing step on a stile, an overgrown hedge, undergrowth or a missing sign or waymark. Restoring footpaths after ploughing is often an annual issue. This general improvement has meant that the footpath committees that used

to meet quarterly now rarely meet more than twice a year.

There has been one issue that has not changed during this time. This is consultations and investigations of Path Orders. These usually mean the proposed diversion of a right of way, occasionally a proposed addition to the network which was not previously recorded. The process for diversions is in principle straightforward. The Councils send out a consultation to the County Footpath Secretary. This states the reasons for the proposal and a map. The constitution of North Wales Area states that two RA Committee members must check the route changes on the ground. What this means in practice is that the County Secretary asks a couple of members close to the proposal to do the check.

Most requests are straightforward. The Secretary might respond to the Council with suggestions as to how the proposals can be improved for the benefit of the users. Very occasionally there might be an issue which is unacceptable. In such circumstances the response will state that the Ramblers would object if they current proposals went ahead. There then follows the publication of the Order,

This should be substantially the same as the Consultations but with the requested amendments. An objection at this time effectively stops the order being progressed without the case being referred to the planning inspectorate – or PEDW as it now is in Wales.

So how many Consultations and Orders does each County produce a year. This depends but usually about one every couple of months. Some councils even less.

We need new volunteers to take on the role of Path Order Recipients for Conwy and Denbighshire. We also need more volunteers to support them. You can do this either through your Group or directly via footpathsecretary@ramblersnorthwales.org.uk

You will not be alone! The purpose of this appeal is to help our long standing (ageing but still active!) North Wales volunteer members. They are more than prepared to support anyone who want to join in. If you would like a chat for more information then please feel free to phone me, or any of the county secretaries.

*Ron Williams
Area Footpath Secretary*

Recycling used walking gear

I HAVE always supported recycling whenever I can in order to help the environment and I have tried to avoid using single use plastic whenever it is possible. I used to get some strange looks in supermarkets years ago when I brought my own bag for shopping rather than using the flimsy carrier bags that were provided for free. The Welsh Government changed all that with the Single Use Carrier Bags Charge (Wales) Regulations 2010 that placed a requirement on all retailers to charge a minimum of 5p for single use carrier bags. By now most people have reusable plastic or fabric bags that saves the environment and it has been one of the best initiatives under-

taken by the Welsh Government.

Ramblers Cymru as part of their Barriers to Walking project can use any kit you don't need in two ways. One is to create a small store of good quality kit for participants of the new Actif North Wales project that is running in three communities across North Wales. This is working with young women aged 18-25 to help get them walking into the outdoors. Anything that is not needed for this project will go to Kitsquad, a small charity for people who enjoy outdoor activities but don't have the means to get the kit they need.

More details can be obtained from <https://kitsquad.co.uk/>

Rohan also have a Gift Your Gear initiative that invites you to donate pre-loved outdoor clothing, giving it a second life and helping others to enjoy the great outdoors. Just head to your nearest Rohan shop to donate your pre-loved outdoor clothing and get 15% off your next Rohan purchase to help refresh your adventure wardrobe. Ramblers members already get 15% off purchases at Rohan but it is a good cause!

<https://www.rohan.co.uk/giftyourgear>

By participating in these schemes you reduce waste and support organisations that encourage outdoor activities for those who might not usually have access to the great outdoors.

*J Elwyn Williams,
chair, North Wales Area*

Vale of Clwyd News

At the time of writing, the VC, like many groups, are preparing their July to December programme, having decided to proceed as in the past, using the same spreadsheet, with the objective of replacing the booklet with a factsheet of our own, intended for those not necessarily accustomed to social media. Walks will be advertised on the North Wales and RA Websites as usual.

One particular event will be the VC's 30th anniversary, set for Saturday 18 October at Eirianfa Day Centre, Denbigh with a pre-celebration walk in the morning, and a get together / afternoon tea at 2pm with a fancy anniversary cake. We will be reminiscing with old newspaper articles and photographs streaming on an overhead with possibly a speech or two. The great and the good in the RA are of course invited, and colleagues, leaders & members of other groups too. We are particularly interested in welcoming 'older' VC members who may read this. Do get in touch with me Yveline at vcmembers23@gmail.com or on my mobile 07434946698. Thank you.

Membership

Membership continues to increase, Groups are well supported, but opting out of Group membership continues to increase and is now at 95.

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.

Your Group's walk leaders are now listed in the Insight Hub. All walk leaders should be registered in this listing. Opposite is a count of registered leaders by Group.

Please contact me if you have any questions about any membership issues, such as the number and names of the

registered walk leaders shown below.

Group	Leaders
Clwydian Group	15
Conwy Valley Group	15
Ynys Môn Group	8
Wrexham Group	11
Meirionnydd Group	35
Berwyn Group	21
Vale of Clwyd Group	16
Deeside Group	16
Eryri Group	25
Grand Total	162

Dave Collins, Membership Secretary
membership@ramblersnorthwales.org.uk

Group	May 2025	Nov 2024	Dec 2023	Dec 2022
LW01 Clwydian Group	152	158	159	167
LW02 Conwy Valley Group	246	228	231	233
LW03 Ynys Mon Group	145	146	143	152
LW04 Wrexham Group	124	123	120	119
LW06 Meirionnydd Group	124	115	103	107
LW07 Berwyn Group	67	66	65	61
LW08 Vale of Clwyd Group	155	149	155	162
LW09 Deeside Group	116	111	109	116
LW10 Eryri Group	257	245	216	199
LW96 Area Membership	95	88	50	36
Grand Total	1481	1429	1351	1352



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