

"IN EVERY WALK IN NATURE, ONE RECEIVES FAR MORE THAN HE SEEKS"

John Muir



Taff Ely

Monday 2nd January: Hensol Forest led by Tony Lawrence.

The first walk of 2023 started from Hensol Forest car park, Monday was a departure from the normal routine to allow everyone to recover from New Year's Eve celebrations or maybe hangovers.

We were pleased to welcome two new walkers, Catherine, already a member and Alyson who joined the following week. The decision to have the first walk on the 2nd proved fortuitous since the Monday was a particularly fine winter day and the cold weather helped to suppress the mud caused by the previous days of rain.

The route crossed fields and followed roads into Ystradowen where we had our first stop. It then headed across fields to the villages of Maendy and Trerhyngyll then on to Aberthin where we had our lunch break.

From Aberthin the route headed North East across fields to Welsh St. Donats. After a flying visit to St Donats Church, a brief spell of road walking took us back to start point.

The return home necessitated a brief stop at the Ivor Arms, Brynsadler to ensure we all recalled the faces from 2022. It was after all, a year since we had last met.



January

Can you believe its our TER's Newsletter 1st Birthday, hasn't that flown by?

What also may have flown by for some of our members is the fact that the group has been running for 30 years and we will celebrate that later in the year on or close to the actual anniversary of the first walk, 7th November 1993.

January has been quite a wet month but that hasn't stopped our members getting out in force and welcoming new members too.

This coming year we have a full programme of activities lined up, with our first trip of the year less than 2 months away, I am so excited. I think 2023 is going to be a fantastic year of rambling with TER's.



Sunday 9th January: Mynydd Gelliwion and Mynydd y Glyn led by Tony Yule.

When Tony L was asking for walks for the start of 2023 I decided to recce this walk that I had led in 2013 to see if it was still passable. This had proved less than ideal so I decided to incorporate a couple of changes having learnt better routes on a walk lead by Barry. So on 1st December I walked the walk and, after spending 15 minutes clearing brambles from the 1st stile and twice going in the wrong direction due to the low cloud, I submitted the walk for January.

Having decided to submit the walk to Ramblers' Routes I redid the walk on the 4th January to check my written instructions that included a number of compass directions following my experiences in low cloud. These proved useful due to ridges that obscured the next feature. Also I was apprehensive of the climb up the bank necessary to reach the 1st stile. On the day, despite a good forecast, it was blowing a gale and walking through horizontal rain I didn't even stop for lunch.



The forecast of the day of the walk was terrible, 90% chance of rain for most of the day, and I was very surprised to find 17 people at Barry Sidings in the heavy rain. So off we go and luckily the rain cleared as we climbed through the woods. After the first stop we left the forest and it continued to be fine providing good views towards the Vale of Glamorgan. I connected a rope, prepared earlier but 6 foot too short, to the 1st stile to help people up the slope. We returned to the woods for a lunch that was curtailed due to the onset of wind, rain and hail. My decision not to visit the promised memorial was welcomed by all. The day ended with Colin inviting us to Hopkinstown's Cricket Club to dry out.

Now back to preparing the Ramblers' Route.

Saturday 14th January: Llanharan led by Geoff Williams.

If anyone can remember, this was a very wet couple of weeks and I thought is anyone going to be joining me on this walk? So I turned up to find just one person Derek, so we set out on a very invigorating walk over the old open cast mine site, sticking to the ridge to avoid the muddy paths.

Sunday 15th January: Pentyrch and the Garth led by Tracey Williams.

It was a pleasure to lead one of my favourite walks again in January - The Garth.

After 3 recce's, wading through streams and finding diversions I finally got the route safe and led 30 keen ramblers and some four legged friends, from Pentyrch up to the Garth.

Points of interest on route were the trig point (always a favourite) and Taffs Well Quarry.

It was Derek our Chairmans birthday that day along with a few other members that week (Tony and Katherine) so we celebrated with chocolates, cake and a tot of port to warm us up.

Lovely walk and great company on a bright winters day

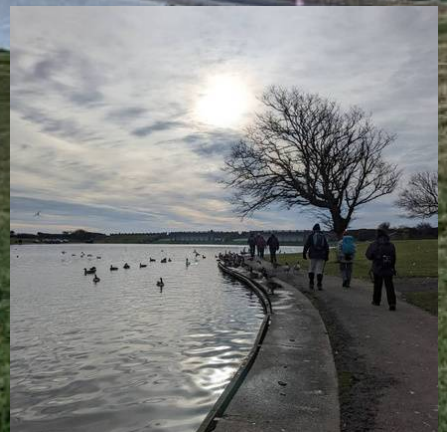


Sunday 22nd January: Cold Knap led by Colin Owen

Lovely crisp bright day today for a ramble with the group. Thank you to Colin who led his first walk for us, taking in the Nap, Romilly Park and Porthkerry on a 6 mile loop. (With a pub stop on route instead of the end).

Well done Colin. Here's to many more

** Leader also saved the day helping June with a flat tyre - what a hero.



Sunday 29nd January: Nelson led by Peter Law

27 ramblers participated including one lady living very close by who had requested a taste of walking with Ramblers (we think her experience was very positive!) The weather kept to forecast which was for initial light rain followed by dry but cloudy conditions.

Whilst muddy in places some of the worst mud was avoided by two slight modifications to the route, successfully executed in spite of a recent housing development rendering map following somewhat challenging.



Congratulations must go to the small cohort of walkers who eventually managed to reattach a chain, bolt and hasp device to a kissing gate. The leader watched the struggle from a distance with smug satisfaction having mastered the engineering process on the walk recce! The route then continued uphill on a farm access road through the middle of a large solar farm. Although a footpath sign halfway along the road confirmed that we had not strayed, we were nevertheless at the road end, confronted with a locked farm gate over which we had to clamber. This is unfortunately an all too frequent experience for ramblers.



Gelligaer Common was negotiated with some mud so as not to disappoint – this had been promised in the pre walk briefing. Fortunately a herd of cows with calves treated us dismissively just before we left the Common and on we progressed to Gelligaer Church which sported a wall upon which we could eat lunch.



We left Gelligaer via a sports field upon which two teams of young ladies in shorts were playing football. This of course was of no interest to the male ramblers

The return via the edge of Penallta Country Park was followed by refreshments at the nearby Railway Inn concluding I hope, a very successful walk.

2022 Walk Statistics

We thought it would be interesting to share a breakdown of the walks completed in 2022. If you are anything like me I find the statistics fascinating, Tony Yule our Footpaths Officer collates this information and he has often told me our average number of walkers is 17 and sure as eggs, he is correct for 2022, and we have walked a whopping 10,028 miles in total! Also interesting was nearly as many cancelled walks during the summer months as the winter months!

Grade	Walks	Average Walkers
Easy	1	8
Leisurely	32	16
Moderate	44	19
Moderate +	10	14

	Walks	Walkers	Miles	Cancelled	Average walkers
Jan	7	149	1056	1	21
Feb	5	79	494	1	16
Mar	6	131	915	0	22
Apr	5	93	709	0	19
May	11	201	1362	0	18
Jun	12	196	1107	0	16
Jul	12	180	1050	1	15
Aug	5	88	701	2	18
Sep	6	94	737	0	16
Oct	6	95	690	1	16
Nov	6	103	755	0	17
Dec	6	69	452	0	12
Total	87	1478	10028	6	17

2023 Walking Weekends and Walking Holiday

Dorchester Weekend Friday 29th March to Sunday 2nd April organised by Gareth Bissett.

We are organising walks in the Dorchester area on the dates shown above, the walks will consist of a short walk of approximately 5- 6 miles on Friday on Cranborne Chase, near Shaftesbury. There will a longer walk of about 8-10 miles on Saturday possibly with a shorter walk based on a similar route to the long walk, with the intention of encompassing valleys of the River Piddle and Cerne. On Sunday there will be another shorter walk of approximately 5- 6 miles, near to Dorchester. However, the full walk details will be finalised prior to departure available to members attending.

Accommodation

Two hotels have been identified the Dorchester Hotel (Premier Inn) and Wessex Royal Hotel (Best Western), there are other hotels in Dorchester that you may wish to consider. So far 25 members have booked and let Gareth know. He has also arranged 2 minibuses, price will be confirmed nearer the time but it should not exceed £25 per person, with 28 seats available. Contact Gareth by e-mail on gar.biss@outlook.com or telephone on 07818490707.

Montenegro Saturday 16th to Saturday 23rd September organised by Andrew Fellows.

Day 1 Join tour Dubrovnik/Podgorica Airport, transfer to Zabljak.

Day 2 Walking tour of the Lakes in Durmitor National Park. Total walking approx: 18km, 4-5 hours. Elevation gain 50m.

Optional: Rafting on Tara river (it is possible to be done in the afternoon).

Day 3 Hiking the Jablan lake. Total walking approx: 15km, 6 hours. Elevation gain 685m.

Day 4 Tara river canyon and Biogradsko lake. Total walking approx: 9km, 3h hours. Elevation gain 300m.

Day 5 Exploring Skadar Lake National Park, Godinje village and transfer to Kotor. Today, we have a transfer to Virpazar and we set out to explore the Skadar Lake National Park on a boat. After the boat trip, we will visit one of the villages and we'll have a wine tasting and a degustation of a local products. In the afternoon transfer to Kotor.

Day 6 Morning visit to Kotor, free afternoon.

Day 7 Vrmac Mountain hike.

Day 8 Tour ends Dubrovnik/Podgorica Airport.

Price varies with size of group starting from the minimum number of 10 people 1.050 euro's to maximum number of 18 people 980 euro's, on today's rate converts to £863-£925. Flights need to be booked by you, initial searches are Easyjet from Gatwick but we will explore this further when we see what interest there is. Contact Andrew by email on andy@felsconsulting.co.uk or telephone on 07711938310.

There is another weekend being planned for October in North Wales and coach trips in the summer months, information will be shared as soon as its available.

An interview with Maria Kerr

Maria has been an active member of our group for many years but also has a real interest in history, particularly her family history and has recently written and published a book about the five branches of her family tree, **Flesh on Their Bones**.

What inspired you to write the book?

As a child I was told how my great grandfather had fought in the famous battle of Rorke's Drift but decades later this was disputed so I started researching him and was then hooked to search for all my ancestors.



How/where did you find the information?

Libraries, family history sites, graveyards, registry offices, all the while accumulating a vast amount of evidence, then I had the dream "I was going to write a book".

What does the title mean.

I wanted the book to not just describe its subjects, my ancestors but to bring them to life, hence to put Flesh on their Bones.

And what about the book cover?

I changed my mind many times about the cover, thinking images of a graveyard or a headstone, it was my son who suggested Pontypridd bridge, my family is from around the Pontypridd area and the bridge symbolises spanning the gap between the generations.

What has been the reaction so far from readers?

It has been really positive, especially from family members who have been amazed at the detail and how much research I did.

Who helped you get the book published?

Candy Jar Books who are based in Cardiff and especially Will Rees who edited it for me, he just suggested small changes which made a huge difference to how it read.

SOCIAL



February Walks

Sunday 5th

Clytha Castle led by Michelle Mansell 7.5m M

Saturday 11th

Barry Sidings led by Lisa Burton 4m L

Sunday 12th

Castell Coch led by Julie Brightman 7.5m M

Sunday 19th

Creigiau led by Sue Bowker 8.5m M

Saturday 25th

Trelewis led by Martyne & Geraldine 4.5-5m L

Sunday 26th

Dimbath and Ogwr Fach led by Steve Craven 8-9m M