

LONG DISTANCE

LDWA

WALKERS ASSOCIATION

SOUTH WALES GROUP



“LEEKIE’S BLETHER”

DECEMBER 2022

**A NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH WALES LDWA GROUP MEMBERS WRITTEN
BY SOUTH WALES LDWA GROUP MEMBERS.**



THE COMMITTEE

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Walks Secretary
Challenge Walk Coordinator

Jason Winney
Simon Pickering
Kathryn Gordon
Sara Down
Jamie Lewis

southwales.chair@ldwa.org.uk
southwales@ldwa.org.uk
southwales.treasurer@ldwa.org.uk
southwales.walksec@ldwa.org.uk
southwales.cwc@ldwa.org.uk

THE OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Facebook
Website
Twitter
Merchandise
Newsletter

Valmai Lewis
Gerry Jackson & Sara Down
David Morgan
Judith Fox
David Morgan

southwales.cwc@ldwa.org.uk
southwales.walksec@ldwa.org.uk
southwalesldwa@live.co.uk
southwales.treasurer@ldwa.org.uk
southwalesldwa@live.co.uk

In This Issue

"From The Committee" p3

"Merchandise" p4

"Leekie's Travels" p5

"Offa's Twisted Wye Kanter" p6

"Ticking Off Marilyn - Not Munro" p7

"Testing A 33 Year Old Route Description" p11

"Down Memory Lane" p14

"South Wales LDWA AGM" p15

"The Rhondda Rollercoaster" p16

"Leekie Meets" p17



The South Wales LDWA Group **ALWAYS** needs walk leaders.

No walk leaders = no walks = ????

Please contact Sara Down if you want to lead a walk for

this wonderfully supportive group at: southwales.walksec@ldwa.org.uk

From The Committee



Should you need any evidence of the talents and achievements of South Wales LDWA than our recent Annual General Meeting showed it in abundance.

As outlined on pages 15, the group and its members have got up to all sorts in the year since we last met to review our progress. We've put on two successful challenge events, enjoyed more than 30 social walks totalling in excess of 800 miles and contributed to the activities of the wider LDWA.

I would encourage everyone to spend a few minutes reading our annual report (click [here](#) for AGM reports) to understand a little bit more what goes on behind the scenes.

Certainly, it is worth taking a look at how the group's finances work. Talking to people out on the trail it seems that many members are not aware that the group does not receive any funding from your annual subscription, with this money retained centrally to provide the national services we benefit from including the membership system/services, long distance paths database and Strider magazine.

That means the money that we require to support and run South Wales activities we have to generate ourselves, and this essentially means staging Challenge Events – so, Challenge Walks Co-Ordinator Jamie Lewis and his growing band of volunteers really are vital to the success of our group.

On the flip side, it is a perfectly reasonable to ask why a walking group needs any money at all. In our case, it is because we choose to support the wider activities of the LDWA and the walking community more generally. In practice, this means things such as providing a contribution to expenses for members volunteering at the LDWA's flagship Hundred mile event, funding a committee member to represent South Wales at the National Annual General Meeting and, in most years, giving a donation to charities that support our sport such as Mountain Rescue, the Air Ambulance and Walkers are Welcome.

On the subject of Finances, I would like to record a big 'Thank You' to Judith Fox who stepped down as Treasurer at the AGM having completed the maximum five-year term. Judith will be staying on as our Merchandise officer –and with the festive season just around the corner you might like to take a look at what Judith has on offer on page 4!

In Judith's place, we welcome Kathryn Gordon to the Treasurer role who I'm sure will do an equally stellar job – welcome Kath! While the AGM provides an opportunity for reflection, it is also prompts us to look to the year ahead. 2023 looks to be a particularly exciting year for South Wales LDWA as it will be our 40th anniversary. We have a few things in mind to celebrate the occasion – anniversary walks (foundation member Andrew Clabon will re-stage the group's second-ever walk on 7th October), a special edition of Leekie's Blether and potentially a social event to coincide with the visit of West Yorkshire LDWA in September.



South Wales LDWA has an active WhatsApp page. Why not get involved and keep up to date with local matters? Email southwales@ldwa.org.uk and join!



MERCHANDISE

Gear up for the summer "Challenge Walk" scene with Leekie merchandise. Replace that faded, ripped, snagged and much loved T-Shirt! Wear "Leekie" with pride and be smart for Leekie's Travels!

Our items include:

- T-Shirts (large badge)
- T-Shirts (small badge on left chest) out of stock
- Multi Functional Head Tube
- South Wales LDWA Oval Badge
- Rhondda Rollercoaster Badge
- Leekie Mugs (too expensive to post so only available in person from Judith)

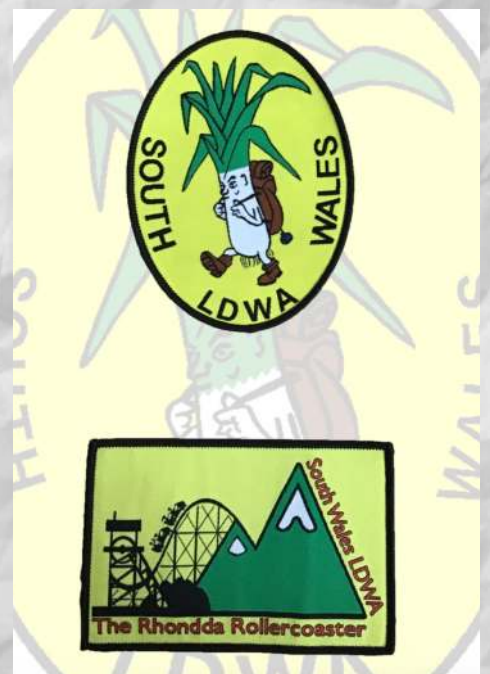
Prices

T-Shirts £12.00 (+£1.64 P&P)

Head Tubes £6.00 (+£1.64 P&P)

Badges £2.00 (+76p P&P)

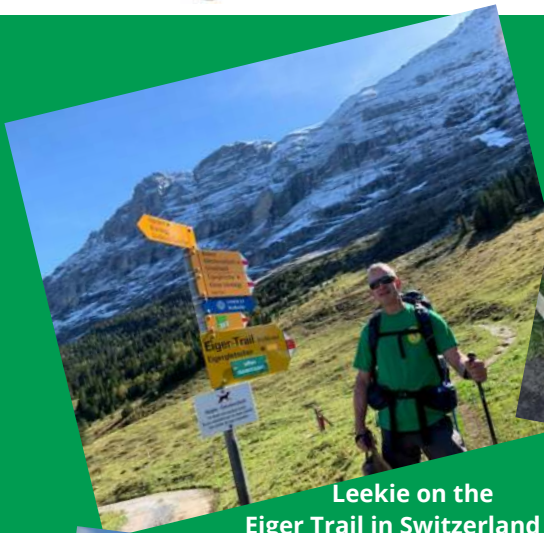
To place your order, email Judith Fox (judithfox224@yahoo.com) and she'll provide details on how to pay.



Leekie's Travels



Promote "The Leek"! Send in photos of yourself wearing Leekie when on your travels and we'll collate a montage of them here in the Blether!



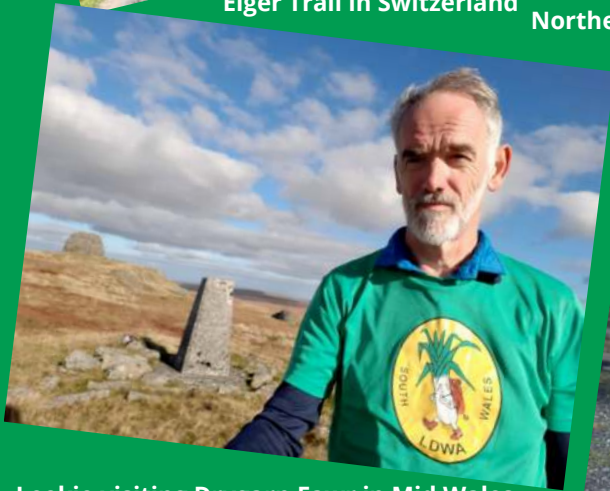
Leekie on the Eiger Trail in Switzerland



Leekie has made it to Carrick a Rede on the Northern Ireland coast



Leekie is caught here walking in Corfu with Albania in the distance



Leekie visiting Drygarn Fawr in Mid Wales



Leekie has just enjoyed an absolutely wonderful adventure whilst walking the entire South West Coast Path Trail. Three photos of Leekie at the mid-way point, the end and at a particularly scenic location! Well done Sue & Dave!



Offa's Twisted Wye Kanteer



A Date For Your Diaries!

Sunday 16th April 2023

Thanks so much to the South Wales LDWA Group volunteers who will be hosting the event! Now that we have enough people to 'run' the day, all other South Wales LDWA Group members are encouraged to enter!

**Ang
Norma
Enrique
Andrew
Simon
Tony
Jamie
Valmai
Rod
Dave
Ferne
David**

To enter the event, click [here!](#) 

"TICKING OFF MARILYN - NOT MUNRO"

By Hugh Woodford



Lists. We all make them from time to time. Shopping lists, to do lists, bucket lists, are the most common. Walkers & mountaineers are well catered for in the UK – Munro's, Wainwrights, Nuttalls Welsh & English 2000 footers, Corbetts, Deweys, county tops, to name a few. I completed the Welsh 2000's in 1998, using the Robert Jones logbook & checklist, rather than Nuttall's, and have been slowly working my way through the English Nuttalls. A booklet by Alan Dawson, entitled 'the Hewitts & Marilyns of Wales' provided me with another list to attempt. By virtue of summiting all the Welsh 2000's I had also completed the Hewitts – hills over 610 metres high with a drop of at least 30 metres all round.

The Marilyns provided a fresh challenge, as they are hills of any height with a drop of at least 150 metres on all sides. This criteria seems simple enough but, as with almost everything in the UK, it has been over-complicated by the addition of 'regardless of distance, absolute height or topographical merit'. This means measuring to the nearest higher summit – in Snowdon's case, this means there is a drop of 1038 metres from its summit before the ground rises again towards a higher summit, in this case the height of a col near Kilsyth in central Scotland, where the ground drops to 47 metres before rising again northwards towards Stob Binnein (1165m)!!! If just the 150 metres rule applied, a number of mountains would not be eligible – Snowdon, Carnedd Llewellyn, Glyder Fawr, Aran Fawddwy, Cadair Idris, Pen y Fan, Waun Fach, plus quite a few others. Rather than there being 156 in Wales, the total would reduce considerably. Whilst I do not necessarily agree with some of the entries, it is still a list and, therefore, one that I would like to complete. As I write this article, I have 50 to go.



Tryfan & The Glyder Range

Without realising, almost all of us will have done quite a few Welsh Marilyns. Local ones include Sugar Loaf, Skirrid, Bryn Arw, Tor y Foel, Mynydd Troed, Mynydd Llangorse, Mynydd Machen, Wentwood, Coity Mountain. With a drop of 150 metres on all sides the views should be 360 degrees and extensive. In most cases they are.

Because 103 on the list are below 610 metres it means travelling to areas and hills that I would not usually go to, all across the Principality. A boat trip is required to get to Mynydd Enlli (Bardsey Island) off the Lleyen Peninsula – not something I look forward to as a poor sea

traveller. Some are remote, while others require very little effort, such as Mynydd y Betws, whose summit tussock is within 50 metres of a road. As my aim is merely to stand on summits,



The author at the summit of The Begwyns

the distance I have to walk to get there becomes irrelevant. To get near to some of the more remote hills will mean finding an adequate parking space, often on a country lane, where I am not causing an obstruction to passing traffic. As with the Welsh 2000's, at some point I will have to do some careful planning to make either single or multi-day trips in order to get more ticks.

One which is likely to be problematic is Myarth, on the Glan Usk Estate between Crickhowell and Bwlch, as it is on private land. (Ed - done that one!!)

Some Marilyn's have interesting stories.

Manod Mawr, a disused slate quarry just outside Blaenau Ffestiniog, was deemed a safe place by the British Government in which to store the priceless paintings of London's National Gallery during the second World War. The quarry entrance was enlarged so that trucks could drive inside. The paintings were moved through the caves on rail tracks and stored in specially constructed air-conditioned underground chambers where they were safe from the Luftwaffe and Nazi art hunters. Security was tight and the paintings were checked daily. It is said that they left Manod Mawr in better condition than when they arrived! There are some fabulous black & white wartime photos by Fred Ramage on the Amusingplanet website. Google Manod Mawr, then scroll down to the amusingplanet entry to view them.

When Heather and I left the summit of Foel Goch in the Berwyns (doing this as a Nuttall for Heather) we picked wimberries a little further down. Suddenly, without warning, an RAF jet came from the north, passing low over the summit and giving us a bit of a fright. A similar thing happened to me back in the 90's as I walked down the Ogwen Valley towards Capel Curig on a restricted byway. As I neared a dip in the track, out of nowhere it



Pegwyn Mawr

seemed, an RAF jet came screaming towards me, maybe about 100-200 feet above me. It scared the s**t out of me!

Tryfan - in my opinion, the finest mountain in Wales. As you drive north on the A5 from Capel Curig up the Ogwen Valley it comes into view in all its majestic profile. I have summited a few times via various routes, including some scrambles. My first attempt, back in the early 90's, was via the north ridge - a grade 1 scramble. Naively, I assumed route finding would be straightforward. Wrong! Because it is so well used, choosing the correct line is difficult. I ended up going too far left, meaning I had an airy scramble with loads of exposure just below the summit. In later years I completed scrambles up a couple of gullies on the east side. Although relatively easy, one slip would be the end as there is nothing for up to hundreds of



Tryfan

feet to break a fall. My favourite, and most used route is via a clamber up a gully on the west side. At the top of it is a large slab which needs careful crossing, then up between rock walls before emerging near the summit. In spite of being likely to have the ascent to oneself, the summit is always busy. The twin pillars of Adam & Eve await for those prepared to clamber up the 8-10

feet to the top of one before jumping the 3-4 feet to the other. I have never been brave enough to attempt this leap. On a clear day, the views from the summit are superb in all directions. What a mountain!

Garth Hill, overlooking Taff's Well, used to be on the longer route of the Caerphilly Summits back in the 90's. It was named Ffynnon Garw in the 1995 Hugh Grant film 'The man who went up a hill and came down a mountain', written by Christopher Monger, a native of Taff's Well. The trig point on the summit is on top of a Bronze Age burial mound. At 307 metres, it just qualifies as a mountain, rather than a hill.

Some of my favourite Marilyns include Y Garn (Carneddau), Rhobell Fawr (a few miles north of Dolgellau), Moel Ddu (between Porthmadog and Beddgelert).

Moel y Gest, just outside Porthmadog and overlooking Tremadog Bay, is another favourite, and easily accessible from a large layby on the A497. When I summited a few years back, in the layby was a chainsaw sculptor with a fair selection of his items for sale. According to the map, there is a fort on the summit and disused quarries lower down. The chances of meeting anyone on the hill is almost nil, so it is a good resting place to look out into the bay.

Bryn y Fan, about 4 miles north west of Llanidloes, overlooking Llyn Clywedog reservoir, is easily accessible from the car park opposite the Bwlch y Gle dam on the B4518 mountain road between Llanidloes and Llanbrynmair. The summit is less than a mile away, via a farm track which goes most of the way to it. There are good views of the reservoir and surrounding countryside. Back at the car park the public toilets have been removed in recent years.

One of my most recent ticks is The Begwns, a couple of miles south of Painscastle. A fabulous 360 degree viewpoint takes in the northern escarpment of the Blacks, Beacons, Eppynt, Hergest Ridge, Malverns plus loads more besides. The trig point was adopted by a family from Boughrood in 1997 and proudly



Bryn y Fan

displays a Welsh dragon on both sides. The highest point, 1 metre higher than the trig point, is within The Roundabout - trees (mostly pine) within a circular dry stone wall approximately 50 metres in diameter. Visiting it midweek, apparently I was lucky that it was fairly quiet as a couple of locals I met said that it is often busy. Farmers were busy in their tractors cutting

bracken on the common which is owned by the National Trust.

My most recent tick is Pegwn Mawr, about 5 miles south east of Llanidloes. There is space to park 4 cars opposite Llidiart y Waun Community Centre. Although only about 5 miles there and back, there is a steep early descent followed by an even steeper ascent to reach open hillside. Around half of the route is on Glyndwr's Way. It certainly highlighted my total lack of fitness – I am probably operating at about 20% capacity at present and the most unfit I have been in my life – and I had to give myself a good talking to not to turn around and accept failure. A good wide mown track makes navigation easy as far as the large wind farm near the summit. Most of the blades were in full swing and provided the only noise around. The trig point is 30 metres or so from the highest point which is marked by a pile of stones. The struggle was certainly worth it for the fabulous views for miles in every direction.

With, currently, 50 tops to go for completion, many will be ticked off one at a time. There are 2 sets of 3 which will make good circular walks: Banc Llechwedd Mawr, Drosgol, Disgwylfa Fawr from Nant y Moch dam near Plynlimon; Carn Gafallt, Gwastedyn Hill, Rhiw Gwraidd, from Llanwrthwl near Rhayader, which for some time I felt would make a good walk to leave to the end.



The summit of Skirrid - A Marilyn

Did you enjoy this article? Would you like to write and submit an article for your mates to read?
If so, please send your work to:
southwalesldwa@live.co.uk

"TESTING A 33 YEAR OLD ROUTE DESCRIPTION"

By David Morgan



In 1989, the Brecon Beacons 100 was hosted by the combined force of South Wales and Bristol & West LDWA Groups from the wonderful town of Crickhowell. Our very own South Wales LDWA Group member (signed on a free transfer from Bristol & West), Shirley Hume, was the Organiser having taken over the reins less than a year before the event was due to be held. There were 473 entries and on a very hot Spring Bank Holiday weekend the event commenced and when the last entrant returned nineteen minutes before the 10am cut-off on the Bank Holiday Monday, the event concluded.



Like all the LDWA 100s, the results and route descriptions are stored for LDWA members to peruse at their leisure. They can be found in the archive section of the website that is dedicated to the 100-mile event. I have wondered as to how many LDWA members do actually look at the archive and indeed, actually use it to plan walks knowing that the 100 organisers will always try and choose interesting and beautiful places in their area.

Being a South Wales LDWA Group member myself, I have been aware for many years that the annual 100 had been hosted in our area, but in 1989 my interests involved chasing an oval ball around a field and shoving my head between the thighs of other men whilst pushing, shoving and grunting a lot. Walking 20 miles let alone 100 miles was just not on my radar!

However, that's not been the case in recent years, and I was fortunate to have obtained a GPX file of the 1989 Brecon Beacons 100 and frankly, the idea of walking the route really appealed to me. I explored the possibility of leading a series of social walks for the South Wales LDWA Group but as there would have been a lot of preparation and big distances to travel, I wanted to be sure that others would support the walks. I sent an email to South Wales LDWA Group members but the limited responses were disappointing, and with so much planning to do, I abandoned the social walk idea.

I then explored the possibility of backpacking the route over a few days, and I still might do this as it would make a lovely 4 – 5 day backpacking trip. But, deep down I wanted to walk the 100 miles in one go and experience the Brecon Beacons 100 route as it had been designed. I muted the idea with some South Wales LDWA Group members who I knew would be intrigued and potentially interested.

The "maddest of mad ideas" as it was known definitely tempted my friends but sadly, due to a number of genuine factors, the idea dwindled gracefully. However, the one aspect of the route that particularly intrigued me was the second half that left Trecastle (the event breakfast checkpoint) and returned to Crickhowell as it passed through countryside that was not known well by me. Consequently, one Saturday in March, Simon Pickering and I took a taxi from Crickhowell to Trecastle and walked 46 miles back to the car with event route description, map and GPX file to hand.

The one thing that Simon and I were intrigued by was how would a 33-year-old route description fare and importantly, with 46 miles to walk, would its accuracy keep us on track! Well, it didn't do too badly as it transpired! It certainly hadn't aged as well as a 1989 "Domaine de la Romanee-Conti Romanee-Conti Grand Cru, Cote de Nuits" (check it out at £17,155 per bottle!) and with the inevitable changes to the landscape, we might describe the 1989 Brecon Beacons 100 route description as full bodied but turning musty when exposed to air!



In countryside where there had been no infrastructural changes, it worked perfectly. Occasionally the description would talk about an iron gate, yet we'd find a galvanised steel gate. Sometimes though, we'd see a discarded iron gate to the side, and we would be able to look at it with historical fondness!

The route description worked well in areas of forestry that after 33 years had been felled. It was obvious where we had to go, and Simon and I enjoyed open views through the de-forested areas where we knew the 1989 entrants might have been hemmed in by the trees.

We did struggle when forestry popped up in front of where we knew we were supposed to go, and looking at the trunks of the newer trees, it was obvious that they were well under 33 years old. Where to go though was another conundrum and it was necessary to revert to map navigation.



A brand new gate not listed on the route description and an old one now abandoned!

But the biggest killer to the 33-year-old route description was the erection of fences in the fields that we often walked through. If evidence was ever needed that our UK landscape evolves over the years, then the creation of the fences was it. Simon and I would read the route description and confidently move forward only to find fences appear where we didn't expect them. Sometimes we thought that the fences fitted the route description and wasted time trying to interpret where we should be next.

But the one matter that we both agreed on in relation to the route description was the detail offered by the author on sections that we walked in the dark. And we knew that the section that we walked from Glasbury to Crickhowell would have been many entrants' second night section and they would have been very tired compared to how we were feeling. We both concluded that the Brecon Beacons 100 route description was definitely meant to work in conjunction with a map whilst



Fine views were enjoyed all day.

modern LDWA 100 route descriptions provide far more detail and can often be used as standalone documents.

Overall, the route chosen by the organisers was one that Simon and I enjoyed enormously, and we both agreed that the entrants would have loved it. The land to the north of the River Usk felt remote at times, was always visually pleasing and provided magnificent views of the entire Brecon Beacons mountain range. It visited tiny hamlets, open moorland, and provided riverside walking as we approached Glasbury. Once we crossed the River Wye we were back on familiar territory and struggled up the climb from Pengenffordd up Rhiw Trumau and we did this with 54 less miles in the legs than the Brecon Beacons 100 entrants. Goodness knows what they must have felt like as they reached the top of their last big climb! Once we'd negotiated the Grwyne Fechan in the dark, the route was a straightforward finish to Table Mountain, Crickhowell and the end of a superb day and partial night.



Maen Richard Standing Stone



The start at Trecastle Community Centre



One of the checkpoints used on the 1989 event



Simon enjoying the day's fine views



Uneroded paths were a joy to walk

Down Memory Lane!

A new addition to the Blether when we look back at walks the Group has enjoyed over nearly 40 years of walking!

This edition looks at a walk from the 4th September 2010 when, as well as enjoying a fine walk, bum sledging was what people truly loved! The walk itself was the marshals' walk for the 'Where Ravens Dare' challenge walk and details can be found in our wonderful walks database! Click [here](#) to access the database.

Do you have photos from walks that the Group has enjoyed in the last 40 years? If so, please email the Editor!



South Wales LDWA AGM

29.10.22

Whilst few people will look forward with glee to the South Wales LDWA AGM, it is a necessary date that must go into the diary in order to comply with the LDWA Local Groups constitution. And, with some relief, more than 12 people (including 2 committee members) attended thus ensuring that the meeting was quorate following a really pleasant 13 mile walk from Machen Village Hall.

The meeting was very efficiently run, helped by the sterling work of the committee who had shared their annual reports prior to the meeting.

The walk report statistics were particularly impressive with Sara reporting that the Group had enjoyed 839.5 miles and 149,600 feet ascent in the last 12 months. No wonder the Group members are so fit! Jason Winney was singled out for leading the most walks for the Group and he enjoyed a deserved round of applause.

Jamie update the Group with regards to our Challenge Walks and was pleased to report that the Rhondda Rollercoaster was returning in 2023 after a few years' absence created partly by Y 100 Sir Fynwy and then the pandemic. He also reported that Offa's Twisted Wye Kanter had been successful and was scheduled to take place in 2023.

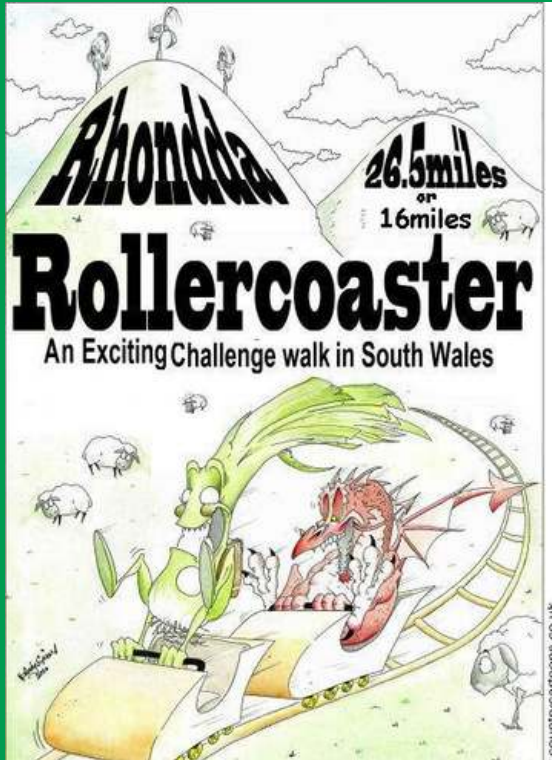
Simon reported that committee members had represented the Group at the LDWA Local Group Reps weekend and the national AGM. He said that it was important that the Group remained involved at a national level. He also thanked Stuart Bain for his work on the LDWA NEC over the last 4 years.

Jason identified that members had a real passion for walking and thanked everyone for their efforts over the last 12 months. He brought an efficiently run meeting to an end.

Long standing member John Roberts then gave a very interesting talk on the Welsh born poet W.H. Davies and his fascinating 'Supertramp' life! Thanks so much John!



The Return of our Rhondda Rollercoaster!



After an absence of four years, we are pleased to announce the return of the Rhondda Rollercoaster on Saturday 13th May 2023.

Jamie Lewis is the key organiser for the 2023 event and has been hard at work developing amendments to the route due to the significant landslip that took place on the approach to Tylerstown Tip.

The event ALWAYS attracts big numbers and already the entries are piling in, so if you haven't done so already, **PLEASE** would you contact Jamie and offer to help marshal on the event. It really is great fun working hard with your walking mates either on a checkpoint, at Walk HQ or if you are really fortunate, as a sweeper.

In order to offer to help and have a great day out, please email Jamie at: southwales.cwc@ldwa.org.uk





Leekie Meets Ang Williams



1 How long have you been an active member of the South Wales LDWA Group?

12 years (I think)

2 Where did you hear about the Group?

The wonderful Claire Murray

3 What do like best about the Group?

Camaraderie, great conversation, deep and meaningful friendships and emotional support when needed.

4 Where is your favourite walking area in the South Wales LDWA Group area?

The Black Mountains

5 How many LDWA 100 mile walks have you completed?

One so far

6 What is your favourite challenge event?

Abergavenny Platinum three peaks

7 You arrive at a LDWA checkpoint. What cake would you like to eat?

Chocolate brownie

8 What is your favourite piece of walking equipment?

My Montagne topless visor

9 What is your favourite sandwich filling on a walk?

A deconstructed egg sandwich - hard boiled egg and cold toast

10 What's your ideal walking distance?

20 miles although quite getting into the 50 milers!



Ang on her first ever LDWA 100 mile walk, the Trans-Pennine 100, an event that she successfully completed!