



South Gwent Ramblers



Minutes of the AGM held on 6 November 2003

Members present – Fred Fee, Maureen Fee, Keith Cooper, Brian Williams, Ian Reese, Ted Clevely, John Durbin, Margaret Nunn, Linda Westerberg, Kath Sadler, Kath Carter, Ken Phillips, Val Clark, Howard Harvey.

1. *Chairman's prologue*

Ken met George West at John Ridley's funeral. This put the idea in George's mind that we should place a memorial plaque for John on a stile. George concurred and will ask Mrs Ridley first. We will have a walk to inaugurate the plaque.

During the Paignton weekend, we presented Dinah Wallis with a gift celebrating her active membership of the Group from its start and her 60th birthday. Dinah was pleasantly taken aback on the day and has since thanked us in writing.

2. *Apologies for absence* from Adrian Sheehan, Dinah Wallis, Ann Williams, Margaret Woodward and Mary Raymond.

3. *Minutes of last meeting* adopted.

4. *Chairman's foreword*

In 2003 we reached our 20th Anniversary, those members and guests who attended our barbecue enjoyed an excellent day and it was good to see so many of our original members once again. We must try and arrange more "reunions" in the future. Our celebrations were short lived however, as it was with great sadness I had to report the sudden death of one of our founder members and past chairman, John Ridley. John was the most dedicated rambler I have ever known and our group and indeed the Ramblers Association will miss his input tremendously.

Our group continues to flourish and my thanks to those members who give their time and effort in making it so. I would also thank Irene and Don Dodd for leading our annual London walk and Stella and David Collard for their work in organising our BBQ at their home.

5. *Matters arising* from the minutes

5.1. *Item 10.2* A successful effort was made that ensured walks finished before dark.

5.2. *Item 10.2* Alun Booth has led well supported starter walks.

5.3. *Item 10.3* The Severn Bore trip was cancelled because of a lack of suitable bores.

5.4. *Items 10.4/5* There is not much public transport on Sundays, so it is difficult to avoid using a car.

5.5. *Item 11* Kath Carter thought that it would be a good idea to have a "Map and Compass" evening and the meeting agreed. Ian Reese volunteered to present such an evening full. Ken thought that a light evening walk would be suitable as a practical adjunct to the evening.

5.6. *Item 12* Howard asked if we did midweek walks other than on Wednesday. Ken replied that this had been done and they were well attended.

5.7. *Item 13* We had tea and coffee.

5.8. Ted Clevely suggested do we have a slide show. The meeting agreed, and Fred Fee said that he could produce a slide show of his walking holidays.

5.9. Ian Reese added that the newsletter was excellent and is much appreciated.

6. *Officers' reports*

6.1. *Secretary* Ken Phillips

The bad news first. The turn out at last years AGM was **pathetic!!** despite our efforts to coax the members to attend. Let's hope I won't have to make the same comment next year.

After that, the year got better and better; we held a Ceilidh in conjunction with Bassaleg Bowls Club and 28 of our members enjoyed a great night. Our Christmas Dinner at Newport Golf Club was well supported and so to was our Christmas Walk and Lunch at the Huntsman. Our Christmas Festival Walk was dogged by atrocious weather, but those who turned out enjoyed a mince pie and a glass of sherry.

Certain of our members ventured abroad and walked in the Lahn Valley in Germany. Those less adventurous travelled to London and rewalked the Parks Walk.

We have continued our link with the Ruperra Trust and visited our bench on the estate during an evening walk. Our Adopt-a-Path Scheme is still operational but we would like a few more participants. The Greater Gwent Area committee has produced a Waymarking the Future document which needs your attention!!

Although our membership is increasing we have again lost members due to illness or death. Our sympathies are extended to the families who have lost loved ones and our best wishes for a speedy recovery to those members who have suffered ill-health in the last year.

6.2. *Treasurer* Brian Williams

Accounts are attached below

Despite all efforts, money in hand has risen. Don't be fooled however. Since the accounts from last year were audited, bills of £389 have been received . The bills include expenses for the area newsletter, officers' expenses of £179, and barbecue expenses. This will lead to loss of £220. Brian is not worried because the loss is intentional - we want to use money in hand for the membership. Money coming from the area is up, because our membership is up.

The accounts were accepted - proposer Ken Philips, seconder Kath Sadler.

6.3. *Membership secretary* Val Clark

Another milestone was achieved this year. Our membership has been climbing steadily throughout the year and we finally reached the magical figure of 200. This represents a 26% increase since the dark days of Foot and Mouth Disease.

Our Website is attracting more and more attention and I continue to send out copies of our programme and membership forms to all who request them.

Unfortunately some of our members have let their membership lapse. Usually it is a case of forgetting to send the necessary renewal. However, if you know of any problems please let me know.

6.4. *Publicity Officer* Kath Sadler

I have continued to place details of all our walks in the local paper and have also delivered a supply of programmes to the local libraries and outdoor pursuit shops.

We have also put on a display of photographs and R.A. literature at the main library in John Frost Square. This has been in place twice during the year and attracted a great deal of interest as most of the literature was taken by the public.

If you are able to take any programmes or literature to your local shops, health centre or libraries please let me know.

6.5. *IT Officer* Keith Cooper reported that he has kept our web site up-to-date, and answered E-mail enquiries.

6.6. *Rambles Officer*

This has been another very successful and active year. Looking back over the programmes since last Autumn we have organised over ninety walks of all types and in a variety of locations. The mainstay of our programmes have been, as always, our long and leisurely walks. These have included joint walks of the long and leisurely groups, mid-week evening walks and some very leisurely walks for those who wish to go at a slower pace. We have been out with other groups in the Area and made use of leaders from other groups through the leader exchange scheme. Some of our walks have been exploring the long distance paths in the region with groups walking along the Usk Valley and Sirhowy Valley footpaths in stages in recent programmes. We have put on events in co-operation with the Ramblers nationally including the Festival of Winter Walks and supporting Car Free Week with a walk through Newport City.

There has been co-operation with the local Council. Members have "adopted" some local footpaths around Newport and used them for our walks. At the same time they have reported to the Council on the state of the paths, the signs, the stiles and other features. This has helped the Council keep those paths in better repair.

We have walked to support the Ruperra Trust who are working to rejuvenate an area of woodland around Ruperra Castle and make it into an amenity for the public. Walking across Ruperra Hill has given support to the Trust and helped to ensure that the paths that lead to it are kept clear and accessible.

Our walks have taken place all over South East Wales and beyond, from Llangattock to Langland, Gower to Gloucester. There has been a trip to Germany with a four day visit to the Lorelei and what has now become our regular visit to London. Most recently members spent a weekend in Paignton and had three days walking in Devon.

All of this activity shows the tremendous variety of walking activity that the club supports. We offer walks for all types of walkers, from those who want a leisurely urban stroll to those who want to spend the day in the hills. We walk for pleasure and we walk because it does a lot of good for others, encouraging good health, encouraging walking instead of using cars all of the time and helping to keep local amenities in good shape. On behalf of the club I should like to thank those members who have organised and led all of these activities. We should recognise and appreciate that everything we do is organised by members who put a lot of time and energy into our programmes. Varied programmes help us to keep members and to attract new ones. More members mean we can do more things. It is a virtuous circle.

Can I end with my usual plea. As I said above, all we do is done by us. If anyone would like to organise an activity or would like just to suggest something we could do please come forward, talk to any committee member. We have resources to support activities whether it is planning a walk, developing a footpath or anything else that supports walking. A member of our committee would like to hear from you.

Ken emphasize the request for walks for the next programme. Ted mentioned that he had seen the notice of a walk round St Woolos cemetery which concentrated on the history of the cemetery. Fred remembered Linda's walk in the "Jews Wood" cemetery during which a lot of history was learned. Ian remembered hearing of interest walks in Cardiff.

7. *Election of Officers.*

All serving officers except for Ray Cantwell agreed to stay on for another year. Kath Carter agreed to join the committee and Ted said that he would join next year.

8. *Area Council* delegates from the Group are KC and Adrian Sheehan. Adrian also serves on the Area Committee.
9. *Proposed activities* Ken suggested the following: Christmas events; another barbecue: a minibus to Gloucester docks to view the Severn Bore; A trip to Westonbirt Arboretum which Margaret though was too close to the last visit (the meeting agreed); a trip to Slimbridge which was enthusiastically received; Margam Park which Brian suggested could provide a coach ramble; the Royal Welsh Show; a weekend to the Palace at Paignton – again deemed too close to the last one, but worth bearing in mind for later; a weekend at Portland Bill – again well received; a coach trip to the Gower; and a boat trip from Penarth, perhaps with a walk from Ray Cantwell. Other suggestions came from: Howard – the Malverns – Fred could do a walk there, but the topography is too steep for all but energetic walkers; Kath Carter asked if Ramblers Holidays provide weekend breaks – the answer was that they did, but they were much more expensive than “in-house” trips; Fred suggested a walk to have lunch at the Goose and Cuckoo and will liaise with Ken to organise a joint long/leisurely walk; Howard suggested a walk up the Mellte valley; and Mary Raymond sent a note that she could lead walks for a weekend in Exmouth (perhaps at the end of May?) and Ian said that he knew walks in that area. With so many ideas on the table, an informal meeting will be arranged for members to discuss the many suggestion and to make suggestions of their own.

10. *Any Other Business*

10.1. Pat Tebby and Denise Humble have asked Ken whether he would be offering tickets for another ceilidh since the 28 ramblers who went to the ceilidh last year enjoyed it so much. Once Ken's Bowls Club deadline has passed, tickets will be available @ £5 for January 2004.

10.2. Fred offered to produce a colour centre-spread for the newsletter to commemorate the 20th anniversary with an indexed group photograph taken at the barbecue and with other photographs taken during the year. The meeting agreed that this should go ahead.

11. *Auditor* – Mr Booth will continue.

12. *The date of the next committee meeting* was set for 20 November 2003.

South Gwent Ramblers

Statement of Accounts Year ending 30 September 2003

| | | | |
|--|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Opening balance 1 October 2002 | | | <u>1548.57</u> |
| Income | | | |
| RA Holidays advertisements | 80.00 | | |
| Allocation from Area — Membership | 326.56 | | |
| Allocation from Area — Newsletter | 42.47 | | |
| Christmas dinner | 351.50 | | |
| Sweat shirts | 200.00 | | |
| Coach ramble — London | 420.00 | | |
| RA grant — Walk and Talk | 100.00 | | |
| Anniversary barbecue | 102.00 | | |
| Interest — Bank | <u>21.17</u> | | |
| | | <u>1643.70</u> | |
| Expenditure | | | |
| Secretary's expenses | 84.04 | | |
| Membership Secretary's expenses | 5.00 | | |
| Programme Secretary's expenses | 238.96 | | |
| Christmas dinner | 367.40 | | |
| Coach ramble — London | 420.00 | | |
| Christmas festive ramble sustenance | 14.00 | | |
| Sweat shirts | 240.00 | | |
| Donation to Ruperra Conservation Trust | 100.00 | | |
| RA labels | <u>5.58</u> | | |
| | | <u>1474.98</u> | |
| Excess of income over expenditure | | | <u>168.72</u> |
| Closing balance 30 September 2003 | | | <u>1717.29</u> |

Balance sheet 30 September 2003

| | 2003 | 2002 | 2001 | 2000 |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Monmouthshire BS | | - | 1372.54 | 1500.00 |
| Barclays Bank | | - | 94.57 | 389.47 |
| Unity Bank | <u>1717.29</u> | <u>1548.57</u> | - | - |
| | <u>1717.29</u> | <u>1548.57</u> | <u>1467.11</u> | <u>1889.47</u> |

B Williams Esq
Treasurer

T A L Booth Esq
Auditor

22 October 2003