



South Gwent Ramblers



Minutes of the AGM held on 24 November 2005

Members present – Fred Fee, Maureen Fee, Keith Cooper, Brian Williams, Ian Reese, Ted Clevely, John Durbin, Margaret Nunn, Linda Westerberg, Kath Carter, Ken Phillips, Val Clark, Howard Harvey, David Fereday, Christine Plateeuw, Beryl Beer, Gill Griffin, Derek Humble, Adrian Sheehan, Doug Cocksedge and Sandra Cocksedge.

1. *Apologies for absence* from Lorna Hall and Mary Raymond.

2. *Minutes of last meeting* adopted.

3. *Matters arising from the minutes*

[para 8.3] 33 of us made the annual pilgrimage to Paignton. The weather this year was not as good as previous years but we had two excellent walks and the hotel was as good as ever.

[para 8.4] The River Severn did oblige with a 4 star bore and we were there to see it: we enjoyed a visit to Gloucester Docks Complex afterwards.

[para 8.5] Barbeque - Mr and Mrs Collard were unable to accommodate us and it looks as though we will have to organise our own in future years.

[para 8.6] The Hidden Gardens - well worth the visit followed by a very pleasant couple of hours at Dewstow Golf Club.

[para 8.7] Dales Walk - unfortunately this event had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers.

4. *Chairman's Forward*

4.1. Another successful year for our group. We have held a variety of walks and social events during the year and my thanks to all those members who gave of their time and effort to make them happen, without you we would really struggle. I would take this opportunity to remind members that you don't necessarily have to be on the committee to organise events for our group, so if you have been somewhere which you think would be of interest please let us know.

4.2. Last year I stressed the need for volunteers to serve on both Area and Group committees. I'm pleased to announce that the response for our group was excellent, however we would like to have more representation on the Area committee and Welsh Council. If you would like more information give me a ring.

4.3. 2004/5 has not been the best of years for some of our members and I'm sad to report the loss of two valued friends in Ann Williams and John Davies. Several of our members have had ill health and some required hospital treatment. Let's hope you recover quickly and are soon rejoining our walks.

5. *Officers' reports*

5.1. *Secretary* Ken

5.1.1. With regard to the attendance at last years AGM my teacher wrote "Could do better". This year she reports "Well Done" but adds the proviso "Keep up the good work". We most certainly had a better attendance last year and with refreshments and a slide show again this year we should get a good report next year.

5.1.2. Our coach trip to Porlock/Minehead was well supported and we even had a waiting list. (The moral being Book Early to avoid disappointment.) The weather was fantastic and we enjoyed two first class walks followed by a equally good meal in the evening. Some

of us even managed a cream tea (mid morning). Our Christmas Dinner and Walk also produced a record turnout and was enjoyed by all.

5.1.3. We continued our support for the Ruperra Trust and backed their appeal to encourage the owner of Ruperra Castle to carry out much needed renovations. They continue to expand the path network in the area and our memorial bench continues to bring welcome relief for the tired walker.

5.1.4. Several of our members continue their work installing and repairing the stiles and footpaths on our patch and we thank them for their efforts. Our Pathcare Scheme is still in being and if any member would like to take part please give me a ring.

5.2. *Treasurer* Brian reported that we are due to receive an extra £100 from Area since they are apportioning membership money differently this year compared to last. Brian also presented the accounts – see the end of the minutes for a copy.

5.3. *Footpaths Officer* Fred

5.3.1. I receive lots of planning applications from Newport CC, each affecting a footpath or two. Usually, the footpath is urban and a building is proposed near the footpath: I ignore these since the effect on the footpath is nothing more than expected.

5.3.2. Occasionally the footpath is not urban and I take more interest. Even then, there are few applications that I judge interesting enough to warrant a visit. I was satisfied with the six sites, all rural diversions, that I visited.

5.3.3. The only out-of-the-ordinary visit was an afternoon being shown the proposed diversions and a proposed extinguishment within Newport Golf Club at the behest of the club. I could not see anything objectionable. All of the diversions were reasonable and some were advantageous, especially if you are averse to being hit by golf balls. Exceptionally, I thought that the extinguishment was reasonable in view of the dangers presented by the course of the particular path and the advantageous proposals elsewhere. The Newport CC Footpaths Officer was not so easily swayed. Since a formal application has yet to be made, we did not take the matter further.

5.3.4. I received a paper setting out the Government's proposal to open tidal coastal and estuary borders for access, in a manner similar to the access now enjoyed for open land. The RA want us to comment on such bordering land in our patch.

5.4. *Rambles Officer* Adrian

5.4.1. The past year has seen another successful series of programmes. The Club has organised over 90 walks that have covered over 700 miles. The overwhelming majority of them very well supported. That is a lot of walking!

5.4.2. As usual there were a range of walks covering most of South East Wales and beyond with everything from strenuous hill walks to very leisurely strolls, there was something to suit all tastes and abilities. In addition to our regular local walks we have had a weekend away in Paignton and another coach walk in Minehead. In the summer a walk along part of Offa's Dyke used local hired transport to enable the group to do a linear walk rather than the usual circular route. We have continued to cover many of the long distance paths in our area including the Raven Trail and parts of the Wye Valley Walk. In October there was a walk to the Naval Monument on the Kymin near Monmouth, that was our part in the Trafalgar festivities. There have been some joint walks including the Three Castles Circuit with the Newport Outdoors Group and others with local RA groups in Greater Gwent.

5.4.3. The Area Ramble was organised by South Gwent. Two walks went from Risca Leisure Centre. Over 70 people from across the Area took part; the event also attracted some new members. Thanks go to Derek Humble and Dinah Wallis who organised and led the

walks and to Kath Carter and her colleagues who organised the excellent refreshments afterwards.

- 5.4.4. This year has seen a number of people taking on leading walks for the first time. This is very encouraging because the new people contribute fresh ideas, not just new places to walk but also giving a fresh look at well walked areas. There is still room for more leaders if other people would like to volunteer. We lose a few leaders each year, not because they can't read a map, but through injury or because people move on. One of the strengths of this group is that we spread the leading load. The programme we offer will only be maintained if we have a supply of fresh blood. To our leaders who are temporarily off the programme, we hope you get well soon.
- 5.4.5. The format of the programme has been changed. The main reason for this has been a request from Ramblers at national level to try to standardise the information that programmes provide. The intention is to share this information with all Ramblers groups using the internet which will need information in a standard form. This will enable other Ramblers and members of the public to access information about our walks. This change has been linked with a new way of producing the programme on a computer which is easier using the new layout. We are still experimenting with the layout and the information and any comments and (helpful) suggestions would be welcome.
- 5.4.6. Greater sharing of walk information, particularly among the groups in the Greater Gwent Area, is also being discussed with the possibility of joint programmes at some time in the future.
- 5.4.7. Thank you to all of the people who organised and led walks, you are the people who keep the Group going and your efforts are very much appreciated. Thanks also to everyone who has helped in the production and distribution of the programmes.
- 5.4.8. I will conclude with the usual request. Anyone with suggestions for walks or who would like to start to lead walks please talk to me or any one of our leaders or committee members. All suggestions will be considered and for anyone who wants to lead there is support and training available.
- 5.4.9. It has been another successful walking year and I look forward to some equally enjoyable walking in the coming twelve months.

5.5. Membership Secretary Val reported current membership at 208!

South Gwent Ramblers Membership

Oct04	Nov04	Dec04	Jan05	Feb05	Mar05	Apr05	May05	Jun05	Jul05	Aug05	Sep05
200	200	200	200	201	203	199	199	202	201	201	205

Area Membership

Oct04	Nov04	Dec04	Jan05	Feb05	Mar05	Apr05	May05	Jun05	Jul05	Aug05	Sep05
932	925	926	933	925	942	932	929	928	921	924	931

- 5.5.1. As you can see our membership has been more or less constant throughout the year. This only represents a 3.01% increase over 2004, (2.05% last year) but compares favourably with the Area increase of 0.03%. (5.45% last year)
- 5.5.2. We have had our share of new memberships but have lost an equal number to people moving out of the area or deciding not to renew their membership. I would remind potential new members to state that they wish to become members of SGR on their application form, otherwise they will be allocated by their postcode.

5.6. Publicity Secretary Ken (pp Kath Sadler)

- 5.6.1. Our website has become a major contributor in our publicity campaigns. However I have continued to place details of our walks in the local paper and delivered a supply of programmes to the local libraries and outdoor pursuit shops.

- 5.6.2. We have continued to use the main library in John Frost Square for our displays of photographs and R.A. literature. Our thanks to them for their help and co-operation
- 5.6.3. Once again I will take this opportunity of asking our members if they can help in distributing our publicity material to their local areas, please give our secretary a ring.
- 5.6.4. Kath Carter suggested publicising the web site in surgeries &c.

5.7. *IT Officer's report* Keith

- 5.7.1. Not a very eventful year. The website sits there on the World Wide Web, open for business 24 hours a day and 7 days a week doing most of it for us. I keep it up to date with new walks programs and late changes and answer or pass on e-mail enquiries.
- 5.7.2. In March, I moved the website to a different host and registered a domain name for SGR, south-gwent-ramblers.co.uk. This has made it a lot easier to update. With the domain come @south-gwent-ramblers.co.uk e-mail addresses for all officers who want them.
- 5.7.3. I understand from other officers that our website is a proven asset for attracting interest and new members to our group; however, comparing 2004 with 2005, we have only slightly increased the average number of hits per week by 1.7, from 22 in 2004 to 23.7 at the time of writing this report.
- 5.7.4. The move to the new host has opened up other possibilities because of a much greater range of facilities. I can now make the website interactive and have been working on this. I have set up a trial on my own webspace. The current signpost design appeared in April 2002, following an earlier similar design; it is distinctive and is well liked, so I have wrapped the interactivity around our signpost. I have taken some screenshots for you all too see what I have done (not reproduced here).
- 5.7.5. **The Home Page** – This type of website is called a portal and there are a lot of options available that can easily be popped in and out.

Buttons – The first two allow you to flip the two sidebars up out of the way. There is a forum for posting messages and information. A forum is essentially a bulletin board where the messages are electronic not pieces of paper. There is a search facility and a calendar. The profile button is for forum members to put some information about themselves. Ignore the admin buttons, only I can see them.

News – This is somewhere I can put important items, it scrolls across the box.

Left Sidebar – This is the index of everything on the website, all the ones with a gold disc in front of them will load a page into the centre panel.

Recent Topics – This will automatically display the last 5 forum topics, the bold type is a clickable link to take you to the topic in the forum.

Right Sidebar – This is something I thought may make the site more interesting; **On This Day** is a newsfeed from the BBC and it automatically updates each day. Clicking on the bold type will take you to a BBC news article. This disappears when the forum is selected.

Centre Panel – This is where all the web pages will appear, all the arms are still clickable.

The Website Content – I have taken what we already had, edited it slightly here and there and added pictures to illustrate it. The page shown is **What We Offer**. All of the Website content will be available to be viewed, as is the case now.

The Forum – Is not just one board, it is as many as we want. I have set up 5. Guests and members will be able to view 4 of these and members will be able to post messages. By member I mean that to participate in the forum you will need to register as a member. It can be open to all comers or SGR members only; I would like to go with the former. The fifth one will only be accessible by SGR committee members. In **3.3** the boards are shown, in **3.2** I have chosen the **Group Events** board to show the topics already entered, each topic that has posts that a member has not read will have the 'new' icon. Above, in buttons, I mentioned a calendar. In **3.3** you can see the **Calendar** page; the events in **Group Events** are linked to the **Calendar**. The calendar will also display its own information, like Remembrance Day, Christmas Day and bank holidays etc.

Screen size – I have included two screenshots to show different screen resolutions. **4.1** is at 1024 x 768 and **4.2** is at 800 x 600. The pages will adjust, but not sufficient for a full view. This can be worked on if necessary.

The Future – The designer of the portal software intends to integrate a picture gallery at some point. This will enable members to upload and display their own walk photos.

5.7.6. I hope you like it. The website address is and will remain the same <http://south-gwent-ramblers.co.uk>

5.7.7. If you would like to take a look trial site, it is currently at <http://nokonium.co.uk/sgr/>

6. *Election of Officers.* The committee was elected as follows:

Chairman	Ken Phillips
Secretary	Ken Phillips
Auditor	Alun Booth
Treasurer	Brian Williams
Rambles	Adrian Sheehan with Alun Booth organising the easy walks
IT Officer	Keith Cooper
Membership	Val Clark
Footpaths	Derek Humble
Publicity	Fred Fee
Committee	Ian Reese, Ted Cleverly, Kath Carter, Howard Harvey, Christine Platteeuw and Lorraine Bird

Thanks to Derek and Fred for volunteering!

7. *Area Council* the delegate from the Group is Adrian Sheehan with one vacancy. Adrian also serves on the Area Committee. **A volunteer is needed to take on the South Gwent way project.**

8. *Welsh Council* – no volunteers

9. *Proposed activities*

9.1. After three consecutive trips to Paignton, we are organising a trip to Guernsey in early October.

9.2. A recent committee meeting proposed two trips: to Pembroke in May and Lyme Regis in September.

9.3. We may revisit Westonbirt Arboretum in June.

9.4. Ted proposed a trip to Aberglasny.

9.5. Beryl Beer suggested a barbeque at Porthkerry (past Barry) for July/August: the venue is bookable.

9.6. Kath Carter suggested a skittles evening at County Hall. The alley is bookable for groups and entry is £1. A bar and refreshments are available at the venue. Kath suggests a February date with word-of-mouth publicity.

10. *Any other business*

Kath Carter noticed that the amount offered to drivers for lifts to walk start points has not kept up with the cost of running a car. Ken agreed and said that the fuel cost for a journey should be calculated and then divided between the number of people in the car. Christine thought that the current *ad hoc* procedure lead to some embarrassment and agreed with the proposal. Ian noted that, in other groups, the walks leader works out the cost per passenger and a grid is used for the calculation. Keith said that a rate per mile would encourage greater car occupancy. Gill said that Lower Wye group specify the cost of a lift per person in their programme. The consensus at the meeting was for some standardised calculation: the matter should be discussed at the next committee meeting.

11. *Auditor* – Mr Booth will continue.

South Gwent Ramblers

Statement of Accounts Year ending 30 September 2005

	£	£	£
Opening balance 1 October 2004			<u>1214.15</u>
Income			
RA Holidays advertisements	80.00		
Christmas dinner	427.44		
Visit to Dewstow — entrance fee	246.00		
Coach ramble — Minehead	290.00		
Deposits for Paignton weekend	100.00		
Refund from Area of AGM expenses	258.50		
Allocation from Area — Membership	503.00		
Interest — Unity bank	<u>30.54</u>		
		<u>1935.48</u>	
Expenditure			
Secretary's expenses	127.14		
Programme Secretary's expenses	189.09		
Minute Secretary's expenses	40.00		
Pre-walk expenses	40.70		
Area AGM expenses	258.50		
Newport CC catering for Group AGM	45.83		
Christmas dinner	425.00		
Ann Williams — <i>in memoriam</i>	20.00		
John Davies — <i>in memoriam</i>	20.00		
Coach ramble — Minehead	250.00		
Coach ramble — Minehead — refund	40.00		
Visit to Dewstow — entrance fee	228.00		
Booking Fee — Paignton weekend	<u>100.00</u>		
		<u>1784.26</u>	
Excess of income over expenditure			<u>151.22</u>
Closing balance 30 September 2005			<u>1365.37</u>

Balance sheet 30 September 2005

	2005	2004	2003	2002
Unity Bank	<u>1365.37</u>	<u>1214.15</u>	<u>1717.29</u>	<u>1548.57</u>

B Williams Esq
Treasurer

T A L Booth Esq
Auditor

12 October 2005