

Swansea University Hiking Club

Newsletter September 2007

Hello everyone and welcome to another year's hiking! Whether you are a returning member or a new bod, we have something to offer you! This year we have continued to tweak the walks and social programmes to make them better than ever!



The highlight of the walks programme is, as ever, the weekends away. We cater for all abilities here and take in a good variety of different styles of view. Elan Valley was new last year and proved to be very popular, as does the Rhinogs at the other end of the scale. The walking year culminates in the Lake District to take in some of the best that British walking has to offer. The 'other' summer trip is still being organised but looks to be another corker...

Life is about more than just hiking though. Our social calendar is full with a wide variety of socials from bowling to pub crawls! The Christmas Dinner as the main event of the social year, but we have many other ways of tempting you... Oh, and did anyone mention that every walk ends at a pub? We end up at some pretty out of the way old fashioned taverns that really make the Hiking Club a unique experience.

For anyone who is interested in becoming more active in the club we hold elections for two First Year and an International Representative in late October. This is an ideal way to see how the club is run and line up a potential committee position. The T-shirt design competition will also be launched this term, so get thinking up logos and possibly see your design worn by many a proud hiker!



The committee wishes everyone an enjoyable year's hiking and socialising!

Alex Herridge

Chairman

Committee

Chairman: It is Alex's job to ensure everything the club does runs smoothly – Which basically means doing a little bit of everything! He is also the club's front man to 'discuss' issues with the AU... Alex enjoys nothing more than leading the charge up the next mountain.

Vice Chairman: Aaron is responsible for keeping club kit and booking transport. Whenever the Chairman has to be in three places at once, Aaron is there to fill in for him! Aaron is best known for his love of Guinness.

Treasurer: Chris keeps tabs on the Club's money and Committee drinking. This involves collection of all debts for walks and then liaising with the AU to ensure the club always has funds at his disposal. Chris is famous for eating more than anyone else on a weekend away – But you'd never know it!

Secretary: Greg is the man with THE key job: he phones the pub at the end of the walk to make sure they know we are coming! He also ensures that we have a roof over our heads for weekends away and takes careful (yet amusing) minutes of our weekly committee meetings. Greg can often be found climbing obstacles and generally amusing the group.

Publicity Secretary: Jack keeps everyone up to date with what is going on in the club. This mainly involves sending the weekly emails that every hiker reads with avid interest to find out where they are off to the next Sunday. Jack is the voice of reason and sanity in the committee, but still has fun when 'interesting' routes are concerned...

Social Secretary: It is Elle's job to keep everyone entertained during the week. She keeps the social calendar fresh and leads everyone in the frivolity of socials. Elle is always to be found in a friendly mood and ready for an impromptu social!

Webmaster: Martin keeps our brilliant website up to date and continually makes little improvements. He is indefatigable in chasing people for photos from walks!

Aaron Jones

Vice Chair



Christmas Term Walks and Socials

Walks:

30th September: **Rhosilli -> Port Eynon A**

7th October: **Neath valley thing B**

14th October: **Pen-Y-Fan C**

21st October: **Usk A**

26th -> 28th October: **Peaks Weekend B**

4th November: **Pembrokeshire – Freshwater East B**

11th November: **Fan Fawr C**

17th - > 18th November: **Elan Valley A**

25th November: **Llanfrynach -> Pontsticll A**

2nd December: **Woebley Castle B**

9th December: **Caerphilly Castle A**

Socials: Watch out for updates on the website!

3rd Oct – **Start of term drinks:** Get a chance to get to know your fellow hikers in a non hiking environment!

9th Oct – **Equipment Trip:** This is a fine chance to get any hiking gear you need for the year on the cheap (and some free refreshments)! 15% off anything in Leisure Quest!

17th Oct – **Around the World pub crawl:** This social provides a chance for you go around the world in one night with only your taste buds leaving the UK.

24th Oct – **1st Year and International Rep Elections:** Do you think you've got what it takes to help organise a club? Then maybe a committee position is for you!

31st Oct – **Cefn Bryn Night Hike:** This is your chance to go walking with ghosts! This is a local 'fangtastic' walk - a frightfully good night out! Fancy dress recommended!

7th Nov – **Laser Zone:** This social is as energetic as they come! Headless chicken (Elle) or skilled assassin (Aaron and Chris) – You'll still have fun! The winner receives VIP tickets to PLAY the nightclub.

14th Nov – **Bowling:** Come along and show off your bowling skills (even if you profess not to have any)! This is an extremely funny night out and recommend to everyone!

TBC – **Christmas Dinner:** This is THE big one though...

12th Dec – **End of term drinks:** A chance to say goodbye to your fellow hikers and wish them a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Austria 2007

At the beginning of the summer the hiking club ran a trip abroad for the second year running which has firmly made this an annual event after the enormous success of both this trip and our Pyrenees trip the previous year. In June 2007 we visited the small picturesque town of Hallstatt which lies in the heart of the Austrian lake district (the “Salzkammergut”) where we camped for the duration of our trip.

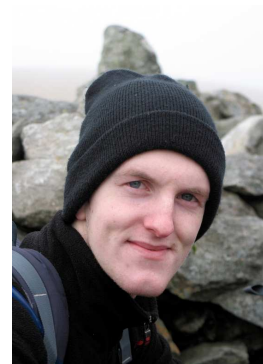
During this amazing twelve day holiday we did some of the best walks I have ever done. A couple of the highlights were climbing to the top of Plassen, a mountain just under 2000 metres, and walking to the Simony Hütte which is a large manned hostel at the base of the glaciers coating the north face of the Hoher Dachstein – the main mountain range in the area. We also did some shorter but still truly beautiful walks in the surrounding valleys. My particular favourite was a walk to the glacier garden (“Gletschergarten”), an area of tremendous natural beauty with unusual rock formations carved out by glaciers and some truly breathtaking waterfalls.

We even had time for some sightseeing in-between walks which included venturing into a number of caves in the local area - including an ancient salt mine and an ice cave, we also found time to spend a night in the historic city of Salzburg.

However the most amazing part of this trip was the price. This trip was nearly two weeks long but due to some clever planning by our trip organiser Julia Summerfield, we were able to keep the cost to around £300 including food, cable cars and cave entrance fees. So what will we be doing for our summer 2008 trip...? Plans are still in the pipeline but look out for an email over the next couple of months for details.

Chris Laidler

Treasurer



Elan Valley Weekend Away 2006

The Elan Valley is 70 square miles of moorland, bog, woodland, rivers and reservoirs in a wild and remote setting with amazing dams, copper domey things and an awesome viaduct. If you like the sound of this then read on.

On Friday 17th November we journeyed to mid Wales in a selection of overloaded hatchbacks in which we could enjoy the undulating country roads!

On arrival we all set about marvelling at the recently converted 16th century stone barn adjacent to Beili Neuadd that was to be our home for the next two nights. Complete with oak beams and a lovely wooden staircase that provided the ideal runway for hikers atop giant cushions. Our 'just outside' Rhayader base provided an ideal sobering walk for some after they quenched their thirst for Guinness and Tequila (!!) in the local pub. The stars were incredible for the walk/stumble back and we had an informative commentary from physicist and (then) chairman Chris.

The following day we awoke to a fresh autumnal morning with bright blue skies and sunshine. We drove to the visitors centre near the southerly Caban Coch reservoir and started the days walk up to the eastern set of reservoirs; Pen y Garreg and Craig Coch. It was straight up moor land hillsides for the first part and then easier walking across a plateau providing far reaching views with great visibility before dropping down to the aforementioned waters for lunch and much frivolity. We then crossed onto the other side of the valley, across the stonkingly nice Gareeg Ddu viaduct and back to the cars. It was then back to base, some quick nosh and then of course to the pub.

Sunday's weather was fine to start with but soon deteriorated into a thoroughly rainy day. This time we walked up to the westerly Claerwen reservoir where we saw hundreds of red kites circling above our heads. The bad weather did nothing to dampen our spirits, if anything it brought out some madness like traversing knee deep rivers due to a very bad judgment of depth and a certain member taking on and losing to a very aggressive mole hill (you had to be there I guess...). It was then back to base then back to Swansea via Brecon's best chippy. A fantastic weekend had by all.

Jack Jones

Publicity Secretary



An Exchange Student's Perspective...

When I began my studies as an exchange student in Swansea this January and decided to join the Hiking club at the start of the semester, I did not really have an idea what it would be like. I just knew that I like walking and that I would like to explore as much of Wales as possible. So I signed up and went on the next hike.

The first thing I realized was that there were quiet a lot of exchange students on the walks, but also many British students and since everyone was very friendly, I felt quickly integrated into the group. Thereafter I regularly went on hikes. We went to a lot of places which I would have never reached on my own without a car. They also organized a couple of longer trips to places a bit further away. One of them was the Snowdonia summer trip, which was really great fun. I especially enjoyed climbing up Tryfan, which I would have never been able to do on my own.

Therefore, I want to thank everyone for a great semester and especially those people who organized and led the hikes and trips. You did an absolutely great job. I gained many of my impressions of Wales on those hikes.

Tanja Teuber

Browsing through my Lonely Planet® after nearly ten months as an exchange student in Swansea, I realised that the Hiking Club took me to most of the places you should definitely see while you are in Wales. For a ridiculously cheap price the club offers trips to some really stunning spots in (South) Wales every Sunday, you name them: Brecon Beacons, Tintern Abbey, the Pembrokeshire Coast. In case you are not sure about your walking ability all walks are classified according to length and climbing. So if you want to see what Wales is like all you have to do is join the Hiking Club and let the committee do the planning while you only have to hop on the bus week after week.

The best thing is though, you not only see and walk through the lovely Welsh countryside but you are accompanied by other people who really enjoy walking. Although the club seems to be a meeting point for exchange students from several countries there are still British students from Swansea. Although most of them are part of the committee, they know the walks well, enjoy them and form the backbone of the club. Finally, every walk ends in a pub and everyone is happy to have a pint after some walking, a lot of fresh air, and possibly some rain, but always stunning scenery. So all you have to do on coming to Swansea is join the Hiking Club and enjoy Wales!

Dustin Wollny

Christmas Dinner

When I was in my first year of university I threw myself in at the deep and joined a few clubs that interested me! The Hiking Club is the ONE I stuck to as it offers me so much.

When you mention the words ‘hiker’ and ‘formal dress occasion’ in the same sentence you may get a few raised eyebrows and quizzical stares but surprisingly we do scrub up quite well when persuaded to swap out walking boot for a pair of glam sparkly high heel or a neck warmer with a bow tie! The Christmas Dinner provides a chance for everyone to get out their best suits and posh frocks and have a very merry time all in the name of festiveness! Oxwich bay was the fantastic backdrop for this year’s dinner and was a truly fitting location to enjoy the relaxed atmosphere.

Throughout the meal I thought to myself about how many good friends I had made through the hiking club and how much I would miss them over the Christmas holiday period but then realised that it wasn’t long until the spring term when we could put our feet on the hills again!

Elle Richardson
Social Secretary



Sign Ups

JC's bar (Coffee shop side)

- Wednesday 12:30 - 13:30
- Friday 12:30 -13:30

The first few hikes of the term tend to be very busy so sign up early. Weekends away have separate sign up meetings.

Coach Pick-ups

On a Sunday Morning:

- Uplands (outside Spar shop) 9am
- Student Village (Bus stop at bottom of village on main road) 9:05am
- Campus (Fulton House) 9:15am

We normally arrive back in Swansea between 18:30 - 21:00 in the evening.

Walk Equipment

Please refer to the Equipment and Safety Rules or the equipment page on the website for information on what you should wear and take with you on walks. Jeans and Trainers are not allowed.

If you are unsuitably equipped, you will not be allowed to walk for the safety of the group.

If you are unsure of what you should bring contact the committee.

Web Site Info

For the most up to date info on all the Club's activities and contact details for the committee.

www.hiking.org.uk

Martin Lilley

Webmaster

