

Telthlau Tywys I Bawb  
Am ddim

Free Guided Walks  
For Everyone

# Wythnos Gerdded Conwy Walking Week

Gorffennaf 1 - 8 July 2009



ehangwch eich gorwllon.....

broaden your horizons.....

[www.conwy.gov.uk](http://www.conwy.gov.uk)



Review 2009

## **Contents**

	Page Number
Introduction	2
2009 Leaders	3
Programme	4
Promotion	4
Booking	5
The week	5
Feedback	7
Summary of feedback forms	7
For 2010	11

## Walking Week 2009

### Introduction

This year was the sixth year of the Conwy Walking Week, co-ordinated by the Council's Countryside and Rights of Way Service. The event has grown in success every year, with numbers of participants increasing and new leaders putting on new walks and events.

The aim of Walking Week over the past six years has been to work in partnership with organisations, communities, businesses, groups and individuals within the County Borough of Conwy to provide guided walks and activities in order to:

- encourage responsible access and walking in the countryside
- raise awareness and understanding of countryside issues
- encourage local people to discover their local countryside
- encourage visitors to the County Borough of Conwy
- give local people and visitors the opportunity to learn about the culture, history and natural history of the countryside around them
- promote the health benefits of walking and being out in the countryside
- benefit local economies

We have been successful in these aims and Conwy Walking Week has now taken a permanent place in many people's calendars, from local walkers to visitors countrywide.

In 2009 forty seven events took place over the eight days. Over 600 walkers endured blistering heat as well as some very wet days! The Welsh weather did not dampen spirits and really showed how leaders were able to create such good morale within a group!



## 2009 Leaders

This year there were a total of 46 leaders, some of whom were new to leading Walking Week walks.

Clwb Mynydda Cymru (Maldwynn Roberts and Eryl Owain)  
David Bathers (Stori Pen Cyf) with Sarah O'Reilly (Stori Pen) and Dennis Roberts (Local Historian, Penmaenmawr)  
D T Jones (Local Historian, Llanfairfechan)  
Andrew Roberts (National Trust Warden, Dinas)  
Dewi Roberts (National Trust Ward, Bangor)  
Alan Pritchard (Snowdonia National Park Warden)  
Tom Parry (Great Orme Historian)  
Malcolm Medlicott (Abergele Town Council)  
Les Hodgitts (Abergele)  
Helen John (Forestry Commission Education Officer)  
Steve Crosby (Forestry Commission)  
Eifion Jones (Llansannan Community Council) with Marian Davies (Local Walk Leader)  
Plas y Brenin – Outdoor Activity Centre  
Mike Conalty (Conwy Valley Ramblers)  
Edmund Rees (Local Historian for Pentrefoelas) with Haf Williams (Pentrefoelas Community Council)  
Ed Parsons (Welsh Water Ranger, Llyn Brenig)  
Ioan Davies (Snowdonia National Park Warden)  
George Smith (GAT) with John Roberts (SNP)  
Kate & Geoff Gibbs (North Wales Wildlife Trust)  
Tim Ballam (CCBC) with Helen MacAteer (Community Project Officer Dolwyddellan)  
Gwyn Jones (Trailblazers)  
Bedwyr ap Gwyn (Menter Iaith, Llanrwst)  
Laurence Cox (Seren Ventrures)  
Peter Hewlett and Simon (Walking North Wales)  
Arwel Elias (CCBC Outdoor Partnership)  
Aaron Watkinson (Historian)  
Rory Shaw (Snowdonia Mountaineering)  
RSPB Conwy  
Helen Jowett (Senior Countryside Officer, CCBC)  
Alun Jones (Countryside Warden, CCBC)  
Mike Klymko (Assistant Countryside Warden, CCBC)  
Tom Appleby (Countryside Warden, CCBC)  
John Mitchell (Coastal Access Officer, CCBC)  
Jennie Richardson (Coastal Access Officer, CCBC).  
Lesley Lawson (temporary Great Orme Country Park Warden, CCBC)  
Barbara Owsianka (Senior Countryside Officer, CCBC)  
Iona Parry (Great Orme Country Park Student Warden, CCBC)  
Sally Davies (Great Orme Country Park Assistant Warden, CCBC)  
Jenny Towill (Access Warden CCBC)

## **Programme**

The programme was put together based on the walks that leaders were willing to contribute, with a view to accommodating feedback that had been received by walkers on previous years. The wide range of events meant that several walks ran on each day of the week.

Many of our walks have been re-run over a number of years and these seem to prove as popular as ever! Many of our leaders who have led walks before have been bringing in new ideas and leading different routes in their local areas.

We had a number of new leaders contributing to Walking Week this year and new events such as Nordic Walking, Tree Identification, and a Moonlit Safari took place. These all proved very popular and we hope leaders will want to return to lead for us in 2010.

## **Promotion**

5,000 postcards advertising Walking Week were printed and 188 were returned requesting programmes. It is assumed that these would have been newcomers who were not already on the mailing list (this was reflected by a total of 623 walkers participating on the walks, a significant increase on last year's numbers. 5,000 copies of the programme were printed. There is now an extensive Walking Week mailing list to which programmes were sent out. However it was noticed in the feedback that many people who had been on the mailing list and received programmes in previous years had not received their copy this year. As other people on the mailing list had received copies of the programme it is assumed that there was some mix up with the mailing lists, either associated with the move of offices and files or the change of staff running the week for this year. The mailing list will be updated again this year following feedback forms.

Programmes not sent out to the mailing list were distributed across the North Wales area via a distribution company.

Posters of the week's programme were printed, as well as individual posters for each of the walks. Some walks booked up so quickly that it was not necessary to produce individual posters. A press release was sent out in Conwy's Bulletin magazine which proved very successful.

Information was also available through the Countryside and Rights of Way Service pages of the Council's website. The Walking Week pages on the Council's website are available all year with the programme available from March/April. Numerous requests for programmes came from people visiting websites.

*Raring2Go* magazine advertised the Walking Week in its spring addition.

*Active* magazine included the Conwy Walking Week in an article featuring Walking Festivals across the country.

*The Times* wrote an article for their Sunday Travel supplement, this featured an insight to the 'Violet's Leap' story and walk.

## **Booking**

Walkers were asked to book onto walks as each walk accommodated a maximum of 20 participants. This resulted from feedback from walkers on group sizes in previous years, and also achieved an appropriate leader/walker ratio of 1/10. Conwy's Countryside and Rights of Way Service tried to place a member of staff on each walk, and this was possible on all but a few occasions.

Seren Ventures and RSPB Conwy used their own booking systems, which greatly facilitated overall co-ordination. The Council's Countryside and Rights of Way Service also had a student placement to help take bookings in the run up to Walking Week.

This year Booking Conditions were sent to everyone who booked onto a walk. This gave more information about the walks and the service being providing. Participants were asked to sign the booking conditions and bring them along to the walks. We worked on the basis that as long as people had agreed to the Booking Conditions we were happy for them to come on the walk.

Many walks booked up very quickly, and by the time Walking Week came around almost all walks had at least 10 participants booked. It was noticed that a few of the walks that initially filled up very quickly later had quite a few cancellations which resulted in them being less full. Registers of walkers were printed and taken to each walk. On almost all walks not all participants turned up but there were usually one or two that came along that were not on the register, thus resulting in numbers being more or less as expected.

In previous years the wheelchair walks have proved very popular with many people from the wheelchair ramblers booking early. However this year the walks did not fill up at all despite a mail shot being sent out to all those on the wheelchair ramblers mailing list.

Welsh-led walks were initially slower to fill but ended up with good numbers for most of the walks, in particular the Clwb Mynydda Cymru walks were very popular.

All of the family activities were slow to fill up. Posters on the events were sent to all schools across Conwy, and some schools then put this information into their newsletters which significantly increased bookings. However schools did not pass on information about booking, and this meant that a lot of families turned up at one of the activities who had not been expected. Luckily the numbers were just about manageable for the event. If we did the same again next year we would need to re-iterate to schools the need to tell parents to book onto the events.

## **The Week**

Walkers experienced both blistering heat and heavy downpours during the week. The weather did have an affect on the attendance on some of the walks, but all walks went ahead, with some being shortened slightly. It was necessary to have a member of staff in the office during the week to take new bookings, cancellations and enquiries.

Walk	Number Booked	Number attended	Number in reserve
1. Walk with Saints and Seabirds Penmaenmawr	19	19	0
2. Nordic Walking, Dolwyddelan	13	15	0
3. Cwm Idwal - National Nature Reserve	20	18	3
4. World war II, Great Orme	21	20	1
5. In Memory of the Rescue Dogs' (Penmaenamawr)	16	15	0
6. Llansannan Scenic Walk	19	18	2
7. Two Lakes and a Hill, Trefriw to Capel Curig	18	18	0
8. Walking in the Past - Lanbedr-y-Cennin	20	19	8
9. Historical Church Trail, Trefriw	17	15	0
10. Walk to Ceirw, Llanrwst	15	13	0
11. Llanfairfechan Upland Walk	17	17	0
12. Tree ID Walk, Gwydir Forest	18	18	0
13. Gladstone Evening Walk, Penmaenmawr	20	20	4
14. Moonlit Safari, Llyn Brenig	21	22	10
15. Carnedd Fawr	19	21	0
16. The Brenig Link	9	7	0
17. Welsh Learners - Llansannan	12	10	0
18. Violets Leap - Penmaenmawr	25	18	5
19. Independence Day Walk, RSPB Conwy	no info	6	0
20. Scooter Walk	2	0	0
21. Evening Pub Walk, Dolgarrog	20	18	6
22. Huw Tom Walk, Penmaenmawr to Rowen	21	14	6
23. The Alwen Trail	6	8	0
24. Finding your Way, Llanfairfechan	10	13	0
25. Llanrwst to Trefriw Walk	4	4	0
26. On Patrol with a National Park Warden, Ogwen	18	11	0
27. A guided walk with Plas Y Brenin, Capel Curig	10	10	6
28. Talk and Walk, Abergele	22	17	0
29. Hwylfa and Carre Adnod Penmachno	20	14	0
30. Flying Start Pram/Wheelchair Push, Old Colwyn	0	0	0
31. Walk to Drum, Llanfairfechan	19	15	0
32. Cwm Penmachno and her Quarries	21	20	2
33. Conwy Mount History and Wildlife	19	20	0
34. Wildlife along the sea shore, Llanfairfechan	21	13	0
35. Llansannan Evening Walk	6	2	0
36. Mymbyr Lakes Circular Walk	20	17	0
37. The Great Orme – From Sea to Summit	17	16	0
38. Paddle Walk, Conwy River	8	8	10
39. Wheelchair Wander, RSPB Conwy	7	2	0
40. Llanrwst Scenic Walk	17	16	2
41. Parish to Parish, Pentrefoelas	14	13	0
42. Climbing and Abseiling, Conwy (family)	6	6	0
43. Teddy Bear's picnic, Bodlondeb Woods (family)	14	14	0
44. Evening Fairytale and Lantern Walk, Conwy (family)	17	20	0
45. Mine Exploration Day, Llanrwst (family)	12	12	0
46. Geocache Challenge, Pensychnant (family)	7	10	0

## Feedback

This year feedback forms were either completed at the end of the walk or participants were given a pre-addressed envelope. Over 50 feedback forms were returned in these ways.

Overall feedback from both feedback forms and verbal feedback on the ground was that people were extremely pleased with the organisation of the walks and that the walks were either what people had expected, or better. As seen in previous years there were many requests for more guided walks throughout the year, and more walking weeks.

A few feedback forms had stated they had had trouble finding starting points, as many people are unable to understand the use of Grid References. It may be worthwhile next year asking leaders for both Grid References and directions to the meeting point of the walk.

The walk grading caused some controversy but this is always difficult as people's perceptions are so different. Next year we could perhaps include information on terrain, steepness etc to give more of an idea of what the walk involves.

Dogs On one or two walks some dog owners did not keep their dogs under close enough control. This made some walkers unhappy and in one instance a couple left at the start of the walk due to several dogs being unsettled with each other. It was mentioned both verbally and in the feedback forms and might be worth re-iterating at the start of every walk that all dogs must be kept on a lead. It may also be worth thinking about making a point in the programme that dogs are welcome but **MUST** be well behaved and kept on a lead under close control at all times.

## Summary of feedback forms

A total of 223 feedback forms were received back at the time of writing the report.

### 1. How did you find out about Conwy's Walking Week?

Programme (people that had either picked up postcards or programmes): 58

Countryside Service email and postal mailing list and programme distribution

(therefore had been to previous Walking Weeks): 36

Word of mouth/friend: 28

Newspaper: 22

Web: 14

Poster: 13

Tourist Information Centre: 8

Conwy Bulletin: 8

Library: 4

Llanrwst Leisure centre: 4

Some other ways that people had heard about Conwy's Walking Week were;

Glasdir

Community Notice Board.

Red Lion, Dolgarrog.

Ramblers

Through work with the Council.  
Sadwrn Siarad.

## **2. Why did you choose the walk you went on?**

Location: 54  
Local history and information: 36  
Grade, distance, duration, date and time: 25  
To speak/practice Welsh: 15  
See and learn about new area: 12  
Navigation skills: 11  
Scenic: 9  
Learn about flora and fauna/trees: 7  
Learn Nordic Walking: 6  
Looked interesting/sounded nice: 6  
Good for children: 5  
Unusual: 3

*Some other comments received;*

To meet people/company.  
The leader and enjoyed the same walk last year.  
Convenient.  
Because first choice was fully booked.

## **Was the walk what you expected?**

Yes – 207 - a few said much better than they had expected.  
No – 17 – Most of these were due to walks being more/less strenuous than expected, or the route being different to what they had expected.

## **Did you think the walk was well organised?**

Yes – 220  
No – 3; 1 – due to disruptive dogs, 1 – felt their was insufficient information from the leader, 1 –felt their was insufficient information about the start of the walk.

## **Do you have any suggestions for future Walking Weeks?**

*Locations for walks:*

Mynydd y Gaer (east of Llanfarth)  
Iron Age Fort  
Llyn Brenig circular  
Capel Garmon Burial Chambers  
Llangernyw  
Cefn Brith  
Cerrig y Drudion  
Nant y Glyn valley  
Aircraft crash sites  
Llanefydd  
Glan Conwy  
Llanfairtalhaiarn  
Betws yn Rhos  
Colwyn Bay  
Bristly Ridge  
y Gribin

Pen yr Ole Wen  
Fairy Glan by Llanfairfechan  
Moel Siabod  
Conwy Mountain  
Cwm Eigiau  
Tal y Fan  
Moel Fammau  
Dolwyddelen to Betws y Coed via San Helen  
Rhiwddolion deserted Village  
Aber Falls  
Huw Tom's walk again (but not on a Sunday)  
Blwch y Ddeufaen  
Rowen to Aber  
Continue including places like Penmaenmawr which don't get the same publicity/promotion as other tourist centers

*Times of walks:*

More walking weeks at different times/ throughout the year /walks once a month/  
walking weeks more frequently: 5  
More night walks specifically evening walks  
Long distance walks over a few days  
Seasonal to see flora and for a changing according to season  
Spread over two weeks More walks so that there is more chance for walkers to obtain their first choice extend walks over a two week period

*Themes*

Walks on industrial archaeology themes/historical: 5  
More Nordic walking: 3  
More about geology, geography of area  
More of these "Paddles"  
Another geocaching walk, maybe with caches more well hidden  
Views with lots of interest  
Wild flower walk/Mushroom Identification  
Caves

*Contact and Location:*

A mobile phone number would be useful because the starting location was difficult to find.  
More explicit details of meeting places needed. OS grid refs only ok if you have map and ability to read it  
Location of start of some walks a little vague if no map  
better contact with organisers for all events  
More specific information about where the walks end  
At remote locations to erect temporary signs to indicate the starting point

*Charge*

Suggest a minimal charge of £2/3

*Group size*

Slightly larger group to avoid disappointment of walks being overbooked.

*Grading*

Some 'moderate' walks were thought to be strenuous.  
More walks between your grading of easy and moderate.

*Length of walk*

More walks about 6 - 8 miles long

Make them longer

*Other*

No dogs or specific information about short leads, quiet and well behaved.

Walks aimed for young people

more younger people involved

Screening people for the harder walks

The details of the walks could be included type of ground to be covered e.g. stony, marshy etc

more linear walks with transport (at our cost) provided

Some welsh led walks led bilingually instead so as not to alienate non welsh speakers

Where have you come from?

Llandudno 25

Conwy 23

Colwyn Bay/Old Colwyn 20

Abergele 16

Llanrwst 14

Rhos On Sea 11

Llanfairfechan 8

Flintshire 7

Llansannan 7

Dyffryn Conwy 5

Holyhead 5

Penmaenmawr 5

Betws y Coed 4

Dinbych 4

Penmachno 4

Llangernyw 4

Bangor 3

Gwytherin 3

Henllan 3

Dolwyddelan 2

Mold 2

Llanfairtalhaiarn 2

Capel Garmon 2

Capel Curig 2

Rhuddlan 2

St. Helens

Tal y Bont

Prestatyn

Caernarfon

Penrhyn Bay

Llanddulas

Llanfair Ffestiniog

Abergwyngregyn

Blaenau Ffestiniog

Preston 2

Oxford 2

North Yorkshire 2

Liverpool

Shropshire 2

St Helens  
Wrexham  
Nottinghamshire  
Mansfeild  
Leicestershire  
Hereford  
Cambridge  
Cheshire Peat District  
Hay on Wye  
Leicestershire 3  
East midlands

### **Are you visiting specifically for Walking Week?**

Yes – 35  
No – 188

### **For 2010**

Walking Week has steadily increased the number of participants over the years and 2009 followed this trend with over six hundred walkers attending the walks. The number of people leading walks has also risen. 2009 saw new leaders taking new walks, and there have already been people getting in contact with the Countryside and Rights of Way Service expressing an interest in leading walks in 2010.

With the Walking Week currently taking place in July it is at a time when the Conwy Countryside and Rights of Way Service is extremely busy. Walking Week is one of the added pressures on all staff in the service during this time. The Service has previously thought about running Walking Week at a different time of year, so this may be something that is considered for the future.

It was very helpful having a student placement in the run-up to walking week. In 2010 there will be a student specifically dedicated to the Access Warden and the Biodiversity Officer. It would be useful if this student is involved in Walking Week from the start to benefit as much as possible from the student's time and have their full assistance in the few weeks prior to Walking Week.

Many people asked for more guided walks and more walking weeks in the feedback. In May 2009 the first Pentrefoelas Walking festival was held which proved very successful and had 78 participants attend. In October 2009 there will be the first Snowdonia Walking Festival held from Betws y Coed. This shows that other communities are taking it upon themselves to hold walking festivals. It is the intention of Conwy's Countryside and Rights of Way Service to encourage and help communities within the county to initiate more, smaller walking festivals within their area's to complement the annual Conwy Walking Week.

There are further opportunities to be explored with other Council Services, especially in relation to the Council's emerging Tourism Strategy.

