

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL EXPLORERS CLUB



Hik-Up: Autumn 2014

A new walking adventure every week



El Presidente's Ramble

Greetings and welcome to both new and returning Explorers! Our club is all about getting outdoors. I like to think that if you change your scenery, you can change your week!

This newsletter will hopefully tempt you to come along on our walks, if you haven't been tempted already. This year we start with a bang, with 4 walks in the first fortnight. More on them later in the newsletter, but let me say that if you need information on the club, I recommend either the website www.explorersclub.co.uk or joining our mailing list for the latest information.

I've been into walking for a number of years and I happily combine it with another of my hobbies - photography. So if you come along on one of the walks you'll probably see me juggling my camera, a map and cake/ice cream. Hope to see you soon!

Rhodri

Pyrenees 2014



Explorers Explained

The Explorers Club is all about getting out and enjoying the countryside. During term time we have at least one walk a week as well as socials. Every weekend we'll venture forth from Bristol either on a minibus or public transport. Public transport is payable on the day, minibus trips are payable in advance to reserve your space.

We provide an excellent way of seeing the UK: from the rolling hills of the Cotswolds, to the coastal paths of the Gower and the mountains of Snowdonia.

We offer both Day Walks and Weekends Away. We'll be staying in bunkhouses - so no need for tents! Over Easter and the Summer, we typically offer a longer trip. If you want to get involved, join the committee and decide where we go walking! Also, we're always looking for new walk leaders or minibus drivers!

Being a member of the Explorers Club also means you're a member of the BMC. This entitles you to discounts in over 700 outdoor shops in the UK.





Explorers explained

The Explorers Club is one of the oldest societies at the University of Bristol. In fact, in 2015 Explorers will be celebrating its 70th birthday.

Meet the Committee



Rhodri : President
Aerospace Engineering

I love any walk we do in snow. I've done the Waterfalls Walk in the snow and it's glorious. I also like walking on the Gower in Wales. The sandy beaches of South Gower (Three Cliffs Bay and Rhossili in particular) are seen as some of the best in the UK. Then there's Oxwich, Mewslade, Fall Bay...and they were all done in one walk last year. With two castles thrown in for icing on the cake. Now I also like cakes...



Becky : Vice-President
Biochemistry

My favourite walk is the Lake District - it's worth the drive! It's a great weekend away and the views are breathtaking at the top of the mountains. I also enjoy Dartmoor, the landscape is really unusual and there are plenty of opportunities to climb up Tors. At the end of any walk I always enjoy a well-deserved pint in the pub...



Miranda : Secretary
Computer Science

My favourite walk is the Christmas walk to Glastonbury Tor along the Somerset levels . It's very festive, we all get covered in mud* and then celebrate with mince pies and champagne at the top!

*or not



Callum : Equipment Officer
Geology

My favourite area to walk in is Snowdonia, especially the less well known peaks such as Elidr Fawr and Y Garn. I enjoy nothing more than getting exposed to all the elements during the day and then returning to a warm caving barn in the evening for some Explorers slop!



David : General Assistant
Computer Science

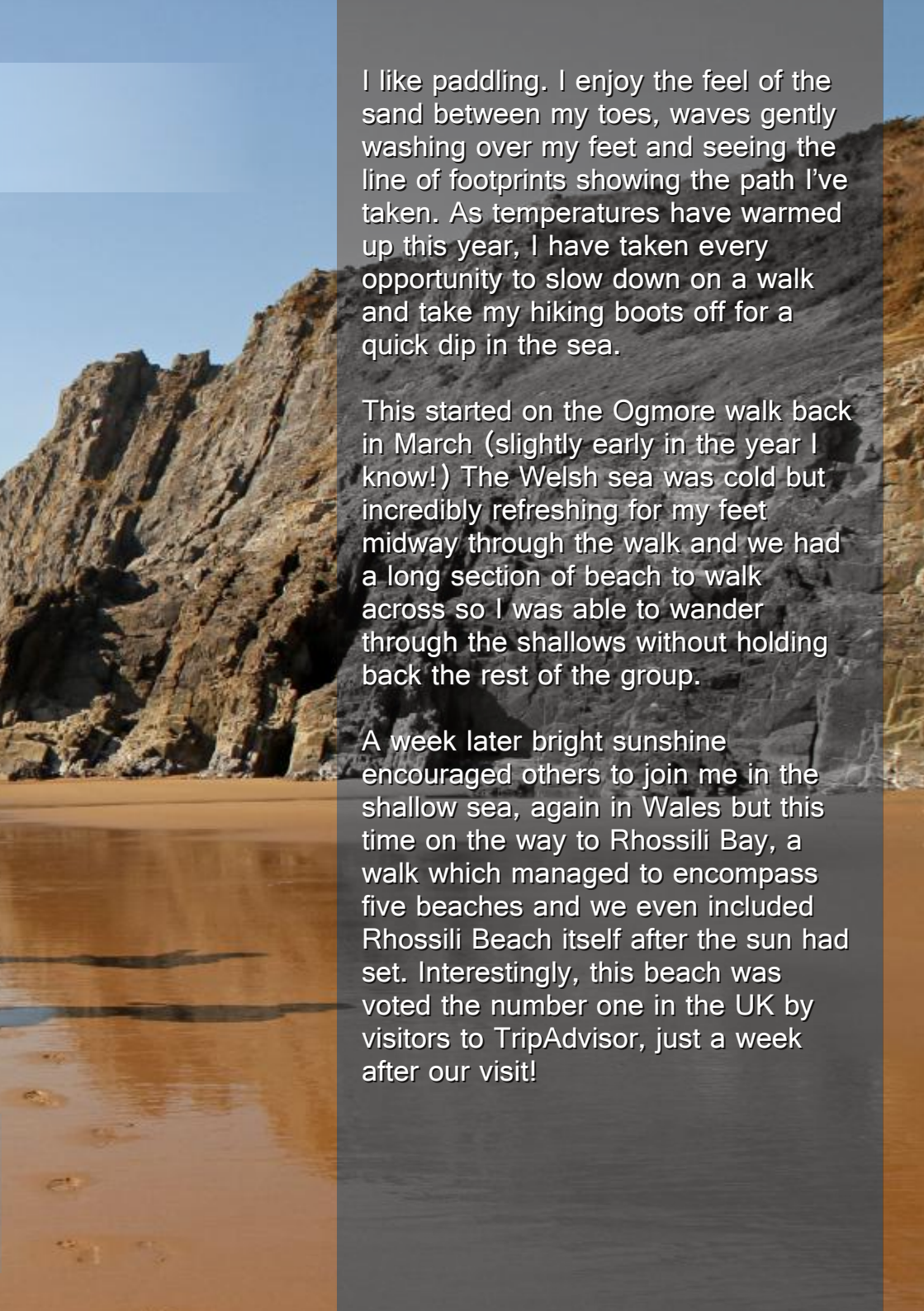
My favourite walk is Exmoor. It's got loads of variety: you start off on open moorland, walk through the beautiful wooded Lyn valley, pause to admire a waterfall and end on a stretch of coast into Lynmouth. At low tide you can even do the last miles along the beach.

Paddle Away...

by Miranda



I would encourage everyone to take a chance to paddle in the sea on an upcoming Explorers walk, although avoid the mud at Weston Super-Mare – it's not nearly as pleasant as the fine sand of the Gower!



I like paddling. I enjoy the feel of the sand between my toes, waves gently washing over my feet and seeing the line of footprints showing the path I've taken. As temperatures have warmed up this year, I have taken every opportunity to slow down on a walk and take my hiking boots off for a quick dip in the sea.

This started on the Ogmores walk back in March (slightly early in the year I know!) The Welsh sea was cold but incredibly refreshing for my feet midway through the walk and we had a long section of beach to walk across so I was able to wander through the shallows without holding back the rest of the group.

A week later bright sunshine encouraged others to join me in the shallow sea, again in Wales but this time on the way to Rhossili Bay, a walk which managed to encompass five beaches and we even included Rhossili Beach itself after the sun had set. Interestingly, this beach was voted the number one in the UK by visitors to TripAdvisor, just a week after our visit!

What to Bring Walking...

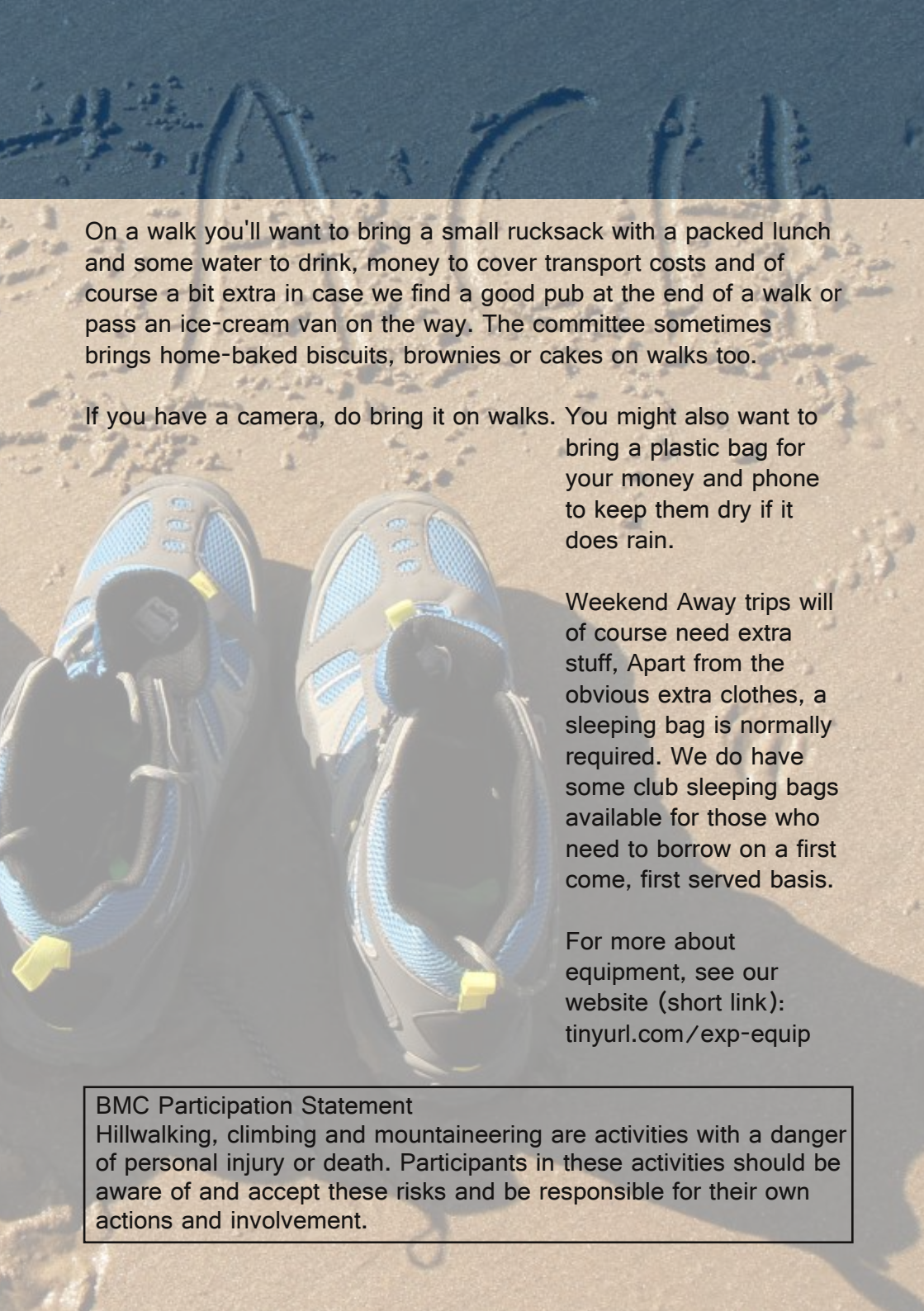
Although you don't need specialist hiking gear for most day walks, here are some tips about what you'll want to bring on a walk.

The first thing you want is some decent footwear. Some of our walks can be done in shoes but for the more challenging ones, and especially the mountains on weekend trips, consider getting a pair of walking boots with ankle support. If you can only afford to splash out on one thing, decent boots will get you the most comfort for your money. If you do come on a walk in shoes, expect them to get dirty at some point.

You'll need a jacket in case it gets cold or wet - which can be the same one you wear around Bristol. Hat and gloves will be useful in winter but you can find these in any department store for much less than they'll cost in an outdoor shop.

Most trousers will be just fine on a walk - except jeans, which are a pain to walk in if they get soaked, and don't keep you warm when wet either. A pair of cheap tracksuit trousers makes an excellent pair for walking, especially with a pair of waterproof overtrousers for rainy days. These are a good investment for rainy days in Bristol too.





On a walk you'll want to bring a small rucksack with a packed lunch and some water to drink, money to cover transport costs and of course a bit extra in case we find a good pub at the end of a walk or pass an ice-cream van on the way. The committee sometimes brings home-baked biscuits, brownies or cakes on walks too.

If you have a camera, do bring it on walks. You might also want to bring a plastic bag for your money and phone to keep them dry if it does rain.

Weekend Away trips will of course need extra stuff, Apart from the obvious extra clothes, a sleeping bag is normally required. We do have some club sleeping bags available for those who need to borrow on a first come, first served basis.

For more about equipment, see our website (short link): tinyurl.com/exp-equip

BMC Participation Statement

Hillwalking, climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

Socials

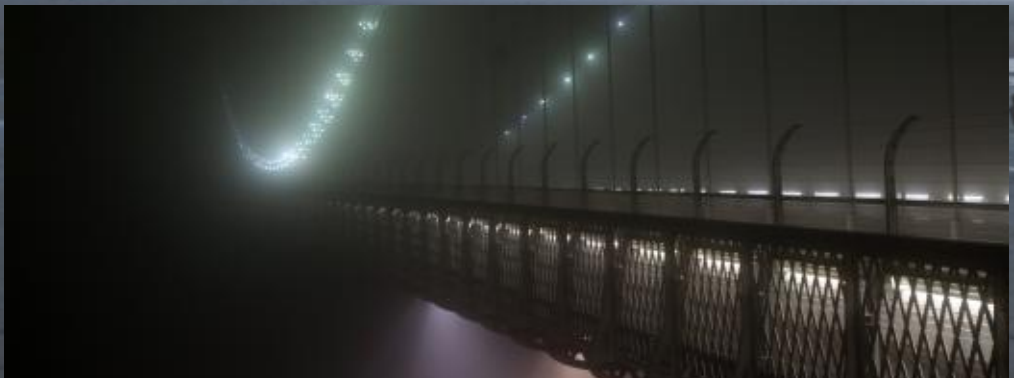
Explorers' Socials have long revolved around food. Pub Lunches, Evening meals out (the Clifton Sausage is a particular favourite) and any food related holiday which we can celebrate. This includes Pancake Night with both sweet and savoury topping selections...

We also enjoy Burns Night with Haggis, Neaps and Tatties for those who have yet to sample the delights of Scottish cuisine. We also feature a Culinary Walk around the world and wine and cheese evenings. This winter we experimented with a Winter BBQ which was far more successful than anticipated despite the rather cold temperatures!

As many of the committee possess a sweet tooth, this year we also added to the calendar the Pudding Party.



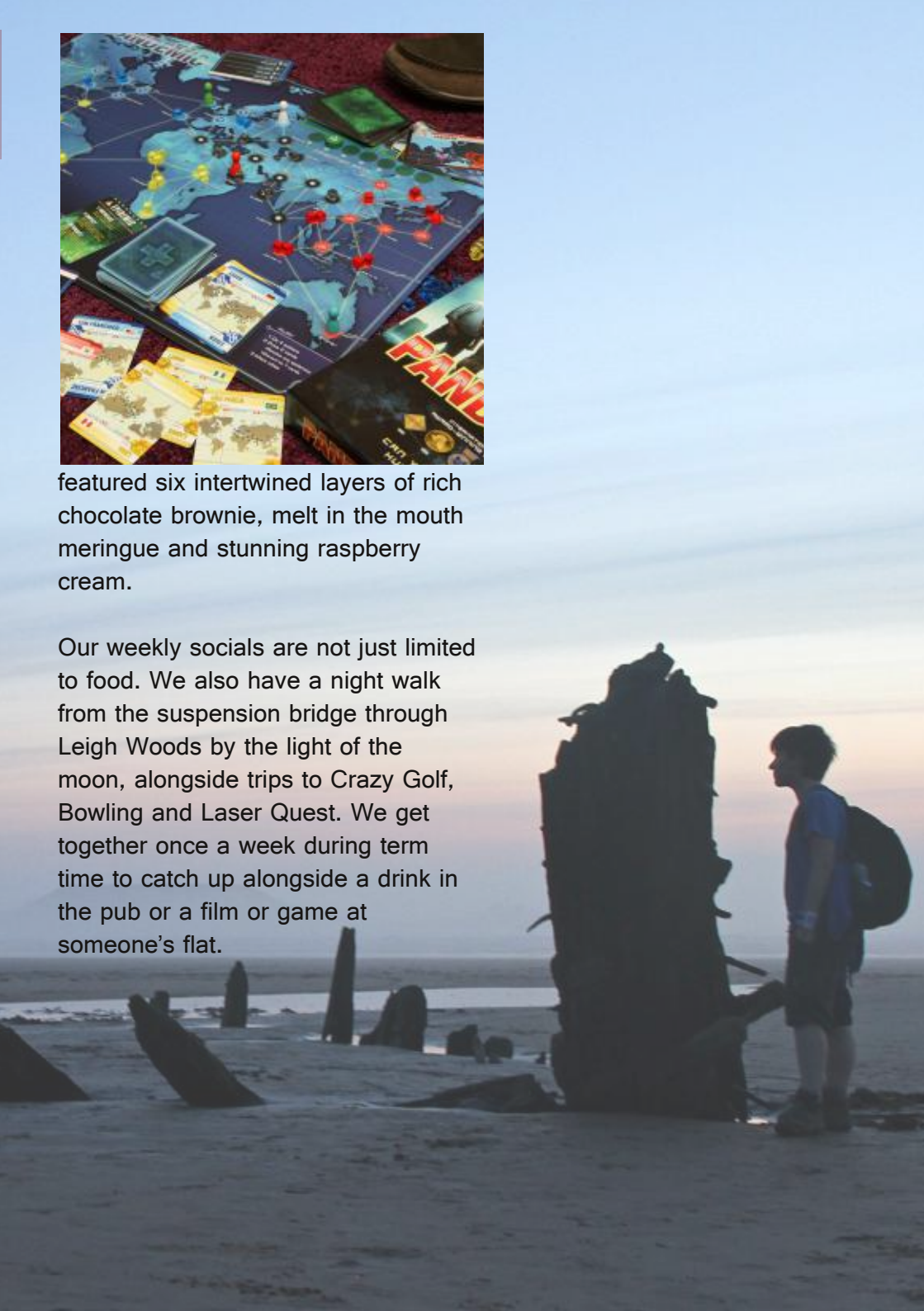
The basic idea behind this was that everyone brought a sweet dish and didn't eat dinner beforehand in order to be able to sample a range of scrumptious cakes and puddings. We were lucky enough to have over a dozen kinds of dessert available, from chocolate éclairs to pumpkin pie via bread and butter pudding and banana bread. The stand out favourite was newly elected President Rhodri's Chocolate Brownie Meringue Cake (pictured above) which





featured six intertwined layers of rich chocolate brownie, melt in the mouth meringue and stunning raspberry cream.

Our weekly socials are not just limited to food. We also have a night walk from the suspension bridge through Leigh Woods by the light of the moon, alongside trips to Crazy Golf, Bowling and Laser Quest. We get together once a week during term time to catch up alongside a drink in the pub or a film or game at someone's flat.



Yorkshire Weekend 2014

by Callum and Rhodri

Weekend Away locations vary from year to year, depending on where the committee fancies visiting, with 2-3 in each term. The final weekend trip of 2014 was spent in the splendid Yorkshire Dales National Park. We'll travel Friday evening, then walk on Saturday and Sunday. Typically, you'll have a choice of walks on the day. As for food: Breakfasts, lunches and Saturday's evening meal are included in the weekend trip costs together with transport and accommodation.

Friday

The bus was a scene of silence as the BBC weather forecast revealed a weekend of potential storms and torrential rain, but we would not be put off!

Just as the day's light began to leave us we arrived at Kirkby Lonsdale and headed along a small track towards our accommodation for the weekend, Bull Pot Farm Bunkhouse. All year I had been planning on going to the weekend trips to Snowdonia, the Lake District and elsewhere but had never had the organisation to do

so! So with my lack of experience on such trips I approached our accommodation for the weekend with an open mind. To sum up, I was pleasantly surprised, the bedrooms comprised of very large bunk beds with each "level" sleeping around 6 people, the bathrooms were clean and most importantly had running cold and HOT water and there was sufficient communal spaces to allow us to enjoy a cuppa tea before heading off to bed. All in all better than my university accommodation!

Saturday

We awoke with aspirations of belting sunshine and a day spent in shorts and t-shirts, this was optimistic, especially given the forecast we had heard the night before, but over breakfast (a hearty portion of porridge served with golden syrup) spirits in the group were high. Having successfully manoeuvred the bus out of a slightly tricky parking space we headed out towards Horton-in-Ribblesdale, and it was only 10 minutes into this short journey that the weather began to change, the clouds came in and the heavens opened, great.

Option 1: 3 Peaks

The others left the bus at this point for their shorter walk, leaving three intrepid members to continue to Horton: the start of a mammoth day on the hills. Having parked up, we embarked on fully waterproofing ourselves for what was likely to be a truly damp day.

The Yorkshire 3 Peaks Challenge is undertaken by thousands each year, and in response, a local cafe has taken it upon themselves to put in place a timing system to record groups attempting the challenge at all times of day. The time was exactly 11:10am, with 12 hours to complete the peaks of Pen-y-ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough, the clock began counting!

The first part of the route took us towards Pen-y-ghent (694m), a summit which when not drowned in clouds and mist reveals a rather daunting summit and is a hill not to be taken lightly. The approach to the peak was gradual with the initial stages being through grassy fields and the later stages seeing us cross more rocky terrain. It is only towards the final stage of the route that the ascent becomes slightly less gradual, as, on passing through a small wooden gate, the

path suddenly darts upwards at a sharp rate towards the summit. Some care must be taken on this part of the route as the path, at points, is unclear and required us, at times, to pick our way through sections of loose rock. The summit was reached at around 12:15, and to our surprise we were not alone at the trig point, a large group of volunteers walking for WaterAid were found posing for pictures but also enjoying a well deserved warm beverage! The conditions at the summit were nothing short of terrible; driving wind, rain and a thick blanket of fog meant that apart from a quick refuel consisting of water and fruit and nut mix, there was little desire to hang around at the top for long. One down, two to go.



The next leg of our journey saw us drop off the quickly descending slopes of Pen-y-ghent and begin the hard slog up the valley towards the Horton-in-Ribblesdale viaduct, a truly remarkable piece of engineering, built on the designs laid down by John Sydney Crossley in 1870. This stretch of the route was the real backbone of the three peaks circuit we had chosen.



Without a peak for approximately 9 miles, tedium often began to creep in as we crossed yet another style into yet another vacant field. At times, the viaduct became visible through the ever present clouds, and these brief sightings of the half way mark spurred us on through the rain, which persisted for the whole morning. Having only covered half the mileage, it became apparent that I had drastically underestimated the amount of water I would need to consume in order to complete the day.

Thankfully a couple of guys leading a three peaks challenge were kind enough to donate but a few of the thousands of litres they had in the back of a small white transit van, parked just beside the road a few hundred metres from the viaduct. Having supposedly broken the backbone of the walk I assumed I would be feeling both confident and at full strength, I could not have been feeling any different. The conditions had got the better of me and I was feeling both physically and mentally exhausted, and the worst part of all this was that I knew the ascent of Whernside would perhaps be even worse.

Whernside is an interesting member of the famous 3-Peak trio. It stands at 736m, the highest of all the peaks, but does not flaunt a sheer cliff or a particularly spectacular summit, is not shrouded in history of climbers both past and present and certainly does not require a difficult route to be undertaken in order to summit; but it nearly bloody finished me! I find it tricky to put my finger on exactly what I found hard about this peak in particular. Maybe it was the lengthy stretch of walking, seemingly in the wrong direction, between the viaduct and the "start" of the Whernside path or maybe it

was that once up to the ridge, there is a prolonged period of wondering where the ridge is as you plod further and further along the summit path. The conditions at the top of Whernside were very similar to those encountered on Pen-y-ghent, which made our stay at the summit a short one, we tightened our hoods, zipped up our jackets and embarked on a brisk descent of the peak. Two down, one to go.



The descent from Whernside is possibly the nicest of all the descents, it is fairly steep but allows a lot of ground to be covered in a very short time. In addition to this, a section of the route is on paved road. Now this may not impress the purist, but after nearly 30km it is a welcome relief from the mud and cobbles experienced

on the rest of the walk. At this point on the walk, a number of us were running low on both water but also sustenance. The Old Hill Inn, located at the foot of Ingleborough, is a cracking little pub with ample space for walkers and dogs; and it came to our rescue today. There is no better feeling than getting sat down in front of the raging fire enjoying a cup of tea and a slice of flapjack after 7/8 hours hiking in the rain. The only problem came when we attempted to move on forward, the magnetic draw of the blazing fire proving to be a significant obstacle between us and an ascent of Ingleborough. After much procrastination we dragged ourselves out of the door with full waterbottles and full fuel tanks.

The majority of the Ingleborough ascent was enjoyable and saw us moving over well trodden paths and over paved sections through bogs. I think at this point we were all thinking that it was in the bag; think again. The last section of the ascent is brutal, the scrambling is not hard but twists and turns and frankly appears to go on forever. Once up this section we expected to see the top, but no, yet more arduous ridge walking ahead of us. After 5 or 10 minutes the trig point comes into sight and the feeling of

elation was one I haven't felt for a while. Having taken a few quick photos we thought we'd make tracks and push on back to Horton.

The descent back into Horton is a slog, there is no getting around it. Moving over muddy ground with blistered feet and sweaty clothes is not the ideal way to end the walk. However, the knowledge that you have well and truly broken the backbone of the Yorkshire 3-Peaks provides that little bit of motivation needed to carry on going. The last section is signposted and the distances into Horton decrease horrendously slowly; I'm sure a Yorkshire mile is further than a Welsh mile! Once off the fell, the

path took us over a small railway and then through a housing estate and back towards the main bridge crossing the river....so close! The cafe we had so enthusiastically graced 10 hours ago came into view and we put what little we had left in the tank into accelerating towards it. We had finished, in a little over 10 hours, a good achievement considering the weather conditions!



That evening we headed back to the caving barn and enjoyed traditional Explorers 'Slop', just what was needed after a long, wet day on the hills.

Option 2: Peak + 2 Gills

Those that didn't fancy a mad 42km dash decided to take in the peak of Inglebrough en route to two blue stars marked on the map. For those who don't know Ordnance Survey key designations, stars denote "tourist features", or in our case extra pretty landscape.

We detoured from our start point to get a closer look at the Ribbleshead viaduct before taking the easier ridge route up to Inglebrough via Park Fell (563m). The weather was being quite modest at this point, limiting itself to a sedate grey cloud blanket. We'd even taken off coats and other layers since we'd

gotten a bit warm. Someone (who shall remain nameless) then muttered those famous words - "it's not actually that bad" just as we were moving from Green Hill up onto the summit of Inglebrough. Well I don't remember the hillside being particularly green, but I know where it gets the water from! The heavens opened and the rain cannoned past us at a near horizontal rate. If you haven't seen raindrops passing you to land metres away, then you've missed something special! Since we had fortuitously put on waterproofs to shield us from a bit of wind, I thought it hilarious. The rain did hurt a little through the coat though...



At the summit, we decided we really couldn't see much (seeing the trig point was enough of a challenge) so we carried on sharpish. A pity since you can see 360 degrees from the summit! After 30 mins or so, the rain had almost gone so it was bad timing really. We headed southwards to Gaping Gill, the first blue star. Gaping Gill is a hole in the ground: A river flows in, creating a 98m waterfall disappearing into the void. It's the tallest unbroken waterfall in England. For us, it was also a lunch stop and a place to rest.

As we carried on, the weather slowly got better and better. After Gaping Gill we had Trow Gill which is a pretty limestone gorge. There is also another blue star nearby, but we didn't fancy investigating it that day. A pity, since I've since found out it's Inglebrough Cave, where the water from Gaping Gill reemerges! Maybe next time.



The last bit into Horton was done under increasingly blue sky but we didn't fancy trying to climb Pen-y-ghent. A good plan to have the pub next to the possible walk extension for anyone who felt extra keen!

Sunday

We awoke to glorious sunshine and clear blue skies and after another hearty breakfast of porridge/toast we headed to the small village of Malham. The area surrounding Malham is renowned for its limestone geological features - and the planned walk would take in the best on offer. Sunday's walk is usually shorter than Saturday's since we have to get back to Bristol in the evening. However, shorter does not mean less fulfilling!



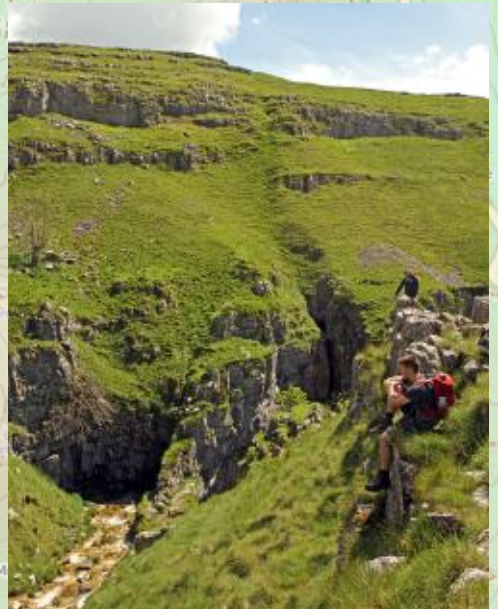
Starting from Malham, we took in Janet's Foss (a waterfall) before walking through a simply magnificent gorge called Gordale Scar. Gordale Scar is a limestone ravine with cliffs over 100m high and the footpath continues deeper into the gorge before going up a waterfall (the water splitting into various channels around the route).





Now that was definitely a highlight of the walk! After the first waterfall, the path leaves the ravine via a series of steps with the beck leaving via another picturesque waterfall. So picturesque in fact that it is a painting by J.M.W. Turner and William Wordsworth wrote the sonnet Gordale about the chasm.

At the top, we decided to stop for a lunch-with-a-view. We perched on the rocks and looked down on Gordale Beck with the chasm off to the right.





After eating, we continued onwards to Malham Tarn where a few Explorers decided to take a brisk dip in the lake. This caused the odd double-take by passers by as the sun hadn't warmed to proper summer temperatures!

We returned to Malham via Malham Cove, which is not a beach but a limestone pavement above steep cliffs. Some of Harry Potter (Deathly Hallows Part 1) was filmed here. I liked the birds of prey nesting nearby although they

weren't happy with some climber's antics.

After we left the delights of Malham behind, there remained only the trip back to Bristol, with a stop in a service station enroute for some much needed greasy food, courtesy of Burger King and KFC!

All in all, it was clear that this had been a successful trip and one that will surely reoccur in future years.

SAT Sept 27th 2014

Sugarloaf Mountain Walk



Sugarloaf Mountain (596m) is the southernmost peak of the Black Mountains of Wales. We'll start from Abergavenny before heading north to Sugarloaf itself. If clear, you'll be able to see a great deal from the summit. With views of Shropshire to Somerset, the Brecon Beacons to the Cotswolds. This walk will likely be about 18km.



Meeting Time: 8:25am (TBC)

Location: Outside Temple Meads Station

To sign up, email: rhodri@explorersclub.co.uk

SUN Sept 28th 2014

Bradford-Bath Walk



This is a more gentle affair than Sugarloaf, with a flat walk along the river and canal between Bradford-on-Avon and the historic city of Bath. There will be a cake stop after lunch before we go through an old railway tunnel for over a mile before arriving in Bath to see the sights. We'll also sample the ice-cream! This walk is likely to be about 15km and you may want a torch for the tunnel.

Meeting Time: 9.45am (TBC)

Location: Outside Temple Meads Station

To signup, email: rhodri@explorersclub.co.uk



SAT Oct 4th 2014

Cheddar to Wells Cathedral



Say cheese! This walk goes from Cheddar Gorge across the Somerset levels to the historic city of Wells. Along the way we should get a glimpse of Glastonbury Tor, pass through Ebbor Gorge and take in a Cathedral at Wells. Wells was used in the filming of Hot Fuzz and both Cheddar and Wells are good sources of cider and cheese. This walk will likely be about 18km.



Meeting Time: 9.10am (TBC)

Location: Inside Cental Bus Station

To signup, email: rhodri@explorersclub.co.uk

SUN Oct 5th 2014

Waterfalls Walk



MEMBERS ONLY WALK: We're going to Pontneddfechan in Wales. In the morning there are 4 waterfalls. After that you'll have the option of a brief exploration of a cave where the river goes underground for 1/2 a mile. You'll definitely need a torch though as it'll be pitch black without one. On the way back there will be more waterfalls. We also get a chance to walk behind Sgwd yr Eira, a 50-foot high waterfall. Walking boots advised due to uneven terrain. This walk will likely be about 15km.

Meeting Time: (TBC)

Location: (TBC)

To signup, email: rhodri@explorersclub.co.uk

Autumn Term Events

Saturday	27 September	Sugarloaf Mountain
Sunday	28 September	Bradford to Bath

Welcome Fortnight Activities

Week of 29th September	Laser Quest
Saturday 4 October	Cheddar Gorge to Wells Cathedral
Sunday 5 October	Waterfalls Walk (Brecon Beacons)

Week of 6th October	Pub Social
Saturday 11 October	Ogmore's Jurassic Heritage Coast

Week of 13 October	Crazy Golf
Saturday 18 October	Malvern Hills Walk

Week of 20 October	Pudding Party
Weekend 24-26 October	Lake District

Week of 27 October	Halloween Social
Saturday 1 November	Chepstow Castle to Tintern Abbey

Week of 3rd November	EGM and Meal
Saturday 8 November	Exmoor

Week of 10th November	Night Walk
Saturday 15 November	White Castle Walk

Week of 17th November	Culinary Walk
Weekend 21-23 November	Snowdonia

Week of 24th November	Pub Social
Saturday 29 November	Avebury Neolithic Stone Circle Walk

Week of 1st December	Film Night
Saturday 6 December	Pen y Fan (Brecon Beacons)

Week of 8th December	Christmas Meal
Saturday 13 December	Caerphilly and Castell Coch

Week of 15 December	Games Night
Saturday 20 December	Glastonbury Tor