

Dogs

Obviously, not all of our events are suitable for dogs! Additionally, there are occasions when it would be inadvisable for them to attend walks - such as during lambing time. If you intend to bring a dog, you should contact the leader before the day to check it's all right.

Website, E-Mail and members' list

Up-to-the-minute information about the Group's activities can be found on the Group website at

<http://www.bigfoot.~c.o.g>

Please note there is no ‘?’ at the end of the address. Most of the Group's printed material is available here, including this leaflet and programmes. There are also details on how to find our meeting places, a membership form, information about the Three Peaks Trial, links to other relevant organisations (including other on-line YHA groups) and some photographs showing past activities.

We aim to update the website at least once a month.

You can also email us at c.o.g@bigfoot.com

We have set up an email list, which we use for giving late breaking information. For example, it was heavily used to give details of last minute changes during the 2001 Foot and Mouth crisis. To join the list, send a blank email to

cog_members-subscribe@topica.com

Insurance

As a local YHA group we have limited third party insurance from the national YHA and more comprehensive insurance to cover other potential claims. This covers group members as well as third parties.

If you have any queries about insurance, please contact the Chair.

And finally....

We hope all this doesn't look too daunting. At the end of the day the group is about enjoyment and ultimately that's what we aim to do....



MEMBERS' INFORMATION

Event leaders

Walks and other events are usually led by group members on an informal basis, although all leaders are familiar with the day's route and / or area. We expect participants to follow the leader's advice. On a walk or cycle ride, you should always ensure that you don't drift too far from the main "pack", including getting too far ahead.

Weekends and longer breaks away

The group generally has a weekend away once a month, usually staying at Youth Hostels, these being the cheapest and most convenient method of visiting an area. Sometimes a cottage is booked. Unless it is a bank holiday, we leave Cardiff on Friday evening, have a full day's walking (or other activity) on the Saturday, followed by a short/medium walk on the Sunday before arriving back in Cardiff on Sunday evening. Other activities in the past have included visiting places of interest, hiring cycles, horse riding...

There is no need to provide sheet sleeping bags at youth Hostels in England and Wales.

The organiser of a weekend will usually have an idea of walks or activities for the group although there are no hard and fast rules about what you do - it's all up to the individual. Again, it's best to contact the organiser if you have any queries.

Arrangements for meals will vary - most members prepare their own meals, but we sometimes have communal meals. Some hostels provide breakfast, dinner and even packed lunch. Very often there is a nearby pub which sells meals. Contact the organiser to find out.

Backpacking weekends are becoming a popular alternative to hostelling. On these, members sleep in tents and carry all the necessary equipment with them for the trip.

Occasionally, there is a longer trip, typically a week or more and often abroad. Look out for mention of these in **The View** as they need to be booked further in advance than most weekend trips.

As with other events, a deposit at least will be required on booking a weekend or longer trip.

Group Equipment

The Group has equipment that may be borrowed by members, whether as part of a Group activity or individually. There is an Equipment List available.

The Programme

Programmes are produced every two months and cover two months. They are normally published about six weeks before they start, so that there is at least this much notice of events. The current programme is reissued with the new programme, both reminding members of events and reflecting any changes that have occurred to the programme.

Certain standard information is given about most outdoor events: a brief description of the event, where and when to meet, whether it is necessary to bring a packed lunch, and in most cases, the name of the organiser.

A mileage is given for walks and cycle rides together with an indication of its grading (the "boot" or "wheel" factor!). The grading is usually left to the event leader and is therefore somewhat subjective, but if you have any queries you should contact the leader who will give an indication of what's involved. In general, a one-booter should be within most people's capabilities and a three-boot event will typically involve a couple of steep climbs, rough ground (for walks) and may indicate that there are no facilities (i.e. no pubs and toilets!). If you have any doubts of your own abilities, please make these known to the leader.

Some events cost money to the participants. In this case it is normal to pay a deposit (or sometimes the full amount) to the organiser to confirm your booking.

When you join/ed, you will be/have been asked whether you mind your telephone number publicised, if appropriate. This is so we know whether we can put your telephone number next to your name on the programmes (printed and on the internet), if you lead an event.

We understand that some people have good reasons for their telephone numbers not being made public; if this is an issue with you, please bear in mind that we never use surnames on programmes, only the initial. Also, if there is no telephone number against an event, this means more work for the committee as any calls will be directed at them.

However, the choice is yours - you can check or alter this status at any time by contacting the Membership Secretary.

If you want to know more about an event and there is no obvious contact number, please contact a committee member for more information.

The programme sometimes shows activities that are organised by Group members on a more informal basis, for instance, 5-a-side football, climbing and backpacking.

Welcome to Cardiff Outdoor Group!

We are the local YHA group for Cardiff, and combine outdoor with social activities, generally locally, but with regular trips further afield. Our current membership is around 100-110; there is no fixed age group. Activities are usually split between Tuesday evening and weekend events. The former are often indoors (less so in spring and summer) whilst the latter usually involve walking or (less frequently) cycling, canoeing, etc. There are no strict rules about what we do and if you're interested in organising an event that isn't catered for, please talk to the Programme Secretary, or another committee member.

As we are a YHA local group we expect group members to be members of the national YHA. For details on how to join the YHA, ask another group member or contact the YHA's national office on 01727 845047 (email: customerservices@yha.org.uk). Information is also available from the YHA shop in Castle Street, Cardiff.

Whether or not you are a regular walker, this leaflet should help you out. If you have any concerns about any aspect of the group, please contact the Chair or another committee member (see *The Group's Committee* below), who will be pleased to answer your query.

The Group's Committee

This band of higher beings are ultimately entrusted with the smooth running of the group. The panel at the top of the programme should give you an idea of who's responsible for what, with telephone numbers for you to get in touch with committee members. If you have any views, ideas or criticisms please pass them on to a committee member. Committee meetings are held every two months and if you're interested in attending or participating please let us know.



Tuesday Evenings

Although there is always a social element to the walks, Tuesday evenings are the "official" social events. These include slide shows, talks, visits to places of interest, evening walks, etc.

Our most regular venue is in Oddfellows House (upstairs) at the corner of West Grove and Newport Road (diagonally opposite the *Cardiff Institute for the Blind*); this is convenient for the town centre and Queen Street train station. Proceedings are usually under way at 8.00 pm - please try to attend before this time, as arriving late is rude and distracting to speakers.

After an event at the Oddfellows, we always get together in the bar downstairs.

A number of evening events are outside, walks or other activities, particularly in the summer months. These will be shorter and more local than weekend events, but otherwise operate in the same way.

Children

Members are welcome to bring children on events, but remain responsible for them at all times. Members should check first with the event leader that it will be suitable for children.

The South Wales Three Peaks Trial

This is the Group's annual charity event, held in Abergavenny on a Saturday in early Spring. Proceeds are usually split between the YHA, the Group and another charity organisation. We usually start planning for this event towards the end of the preceding year. Group members aren't obliged to assist for this event, but help is always needed and appreciated.



The View

The View is the Group's newsletter and is published every four months. It complements the programme by providing more detailed information about a few forthcoming events, as well as a look back at one or two past events of note. It is a forum for members to write articles that they think would be of interest to the Group and letters about any aspect of Group activities that inspires them to write. There is also a slot for information about what the Group as a whole is doing.

The editor is always pleased to receive submissions or ideas for material for the newsletter. The editor's contact details appear on the programme.

Between issues of **The View**, a supplement is published, which is designed to keep members informed about what the committee is doing on behalf of the Group.

Walks and other weekend day events

We usually meet for weekend events at the front steps of the National Museum just off Park Place (next to City Hall). Sometimes we meet at the Sherman Theatre, Senghenydd Road, or elsewhere when events near the museum make it impractical to meet there. Generally we will leave between 9.00 - 10.00 am. It is important that you arrive in time, so allow an extra 10 minutes to be on the safe side. The start of the event will usually be elsewhere, and if you want to go directly to the start you should contact the organiser before the day (if the leader's telephone number isn't provided, you can always contact one of the committee members listed on the programme).

Our weekend walks tend to be in local areas around South Wales - the Brecon Beacons National Park, Wye Valley, Vale of Glamorgan, and the South Wales valleys, for example.

Weekend day walks are usually on a Sunday and we often have a choice to cater for all types of walkers - a long and short walk on the same day, or a medium-length walk or other event. Details to whet your appetite will be on the current programme.

In general, we share cars to get to the start of an event, both to reduce costs and to reduce environmental impact - in addition, some rural car parks are very small! There is no charge for parking near the Museum on Sundays. The cost of transport is shared. At the moment it is recommended that 12p is charged per mile, with the total cost then shared between those in the car, although this amount is subject to review.

The Group also has more occasional events - particularly cycling and canoeing. Gliding, sailing, caving and climbing have also featured on our programmes. Basically we'll do anything outdoors-ish (or indoors-ish, come to that!) and if you have any suggestions for events or want to organise one, please contact the Programme Secretary or another committee member.

The "boot" grading described above may be used for such events if appropriate, it may be replaced by the "wheel" grading for cycle rides.

If you need to be back from the event by a specific time it's always best to check the estimated return time with the leader before leaving the Museum (this can prevent problems later on).

Equipment

We have an excellent safety record, and in the interests of safety and enjoyment on walks, we advise that you bring the following :-

- Stout walking boots with ankle support and good grip (for walks)
- Waterproof jacket (and over trousers) - even if it's sunny at the start of an event, it may be raining at the end
- Rucksack (or pannier for cycle rides if you have one)
- Spare pullover, hat & gloves
- Torch
- Small first aid kit
- Packed lunch (unless a pub meal is advertised as available)
- Spare energy bar or chocolate

Not all of the above will always be necessary. Jeans are to be avoided on many events, as they are cold when wet and take an age to dry.

If, for example, you don't have a waterproof for a winter walk, contact the walk leader who may be able to arrange for you to borrow one for that walk. If you are a regular walker, however, most of the above will be essential.

Necessary equipment for other events may be more specialised - if in doubt, ask the organiser.