

End of February 2009 Bulletin.

Note from myself, Madam Chairman.

Hi everyone,

The snow, and cold but bright weather, makes for great walking, and many have been taking advantage of the weather this winter. The first weekend in February saw Paul and Lin doing a good walk on the Clwyds, and there were ascents of Siabod and Snowdon as well. While lots of walking is done in Snowdonia, the Clwyds can provide either a short afternoon stroll, or an impressive day walk. I remember doing one such day walk organized by Paul (above) which was a very long day out, and Nuala and I have had one of our many epics on the Clwyds. The views looking towards Ruthin and beyond, and back towards the Wirral, are spectacular. Geoff, Phil and Chris Russell have also been on the Clwyds this month, and Chris's report of an ascent of Moel Famau proves there is adventure to be had there:

'During the last heavy dumping of snow I walked home over Moel Famau (as you do) through the snow. The main track was so well compacted it looked like a piste machine had been up which set about a train of thought.

I went home to collect my skis and tried them out in the field over the road. Happy that I was still able to slide hopelessly out of control down hill (in the dark I should add) I talked Beth in to joining me up Moel Famau the following evening.

The evening came, after returning home after work it was a quick change of clothes then up towards the Col to park up. Starting from the top car park I donned my skins to my skis, released the heel and carried on up. I was in my own little world, looking down at the snow beneath my planks - I was in the Alps, the Himalayas, then I looked up to see that Beth was actually walking quicker than I could ski uphill. I blame the skis - they're too long and need a service...(poor workman and all that). Anyway, undeterred I carried on upwards eventually finding a rhythm to walk to, now and again stopping to adjust the height of the heel step on the binding as the hill steepened and then leveled out. Halfway up it became apparent that it was dark so out came the head torches. Closer to the top the cloud came in and combined with the snow became quite disorientating, so much so we nearly walked past the tower on the top.

Now the moment of truth came. Descent....in the dark.....in the mist.....hmm.

Locking the heel down on my bindings, locking the heel flex to "ski mode" we started down, Beth walking ahead so I had somewhere to aim for in the dark. I began to ski down. To say it was scary is an understatement, unable to see more than 10 metres, on a steep (when on skis it felt steep, like a double black diamond run) narrow track. Anyway, long story short, I skinned all the way up, and skied all the way down from the summit, only removing my skis at the top to lock the bindings and remove the skins for the descent.,

The following weekend saw Paul (Hubby) and I, and three other guys staying at the Camping Barn at St. John's in the Vale in the Lake District. Unfortunately a few others couldn't make it due to sickness - I wasn't supposed to be the only female there, but it was a unique Valentine's Day weekend!

We could see snow on the hilltops but it didn't look too snowy considering the weather the previous couple of weeks. We went up Ullscarf (a hill I had never heard of but apparently it is the hill that is nearest the centre of 'The Lake District') via the Wythburn Valley. Once up over the first 'alp' it felt like we were in a remote area of Scotland. The scene was of mixed ground with increasing snow under foot as we gained height. There were icy blue pools, and areas where, if our weight broke through the 'crust' of the snow, we were up to our knees in it. Visibility was not good as we approached the summit, a chance for Dave to prove yet again how good he is at navigating and pacing. We got down, and went for an off-the-hill pint at which time I found out that my husband likes watching the rugby - and I thought he was perfect! Having said that, we were grateful for his fire-making abilities once back at the barn.

This weekend had been booked following the success of the same weekend last year, and has already been booked for next year - 19th/20th March 2010 - there are only eight places, so if you wish to go, see Dave Gray soon.

The same weekend saw Allan et al climbing on Holyhead Mountain - Carol doing her first lead on the Sunday.

Mike Mac day walk on 19th February 2009 was from the Horseshoe Pass, along the ridge of Llantysillio Mountain to Moel y Gamelin, Moel Mofydd and on to Bwlch Coch returning along a footpath below the ridge. Fourteen people attended, the walk being over ten miles in length, and although I don't know the details I hear that new member Chris's GPS came in handy.

The 'Chairman's Luxury Meet' was a great success the last weekend in February, us staying in superior accommodation in Ingleton, Yorkshire. The name is a little misleading - the Chairman was on the meet, but it was down to deft organization by Hux, together with those attending contributing a dish towards a sumptuous feast on the Saturday evening - a little like a 'safari supper' with starters in one cottage, soup course in another, and then mains and desserts in another - that made it such a successful weekend - working out the crockery and cutlery count in each cottage before departure was a difficult part of the weekend though. Some people were able to get out walking on four days (as we had the option to stay on in the cottages on the Sunday night). The treks out on Saturday and Sunday were both straight from the

cottages and so the cars got a rest all weekend. Saturday saw us doing a circular walk northwards from Ingleton amid limestone scenery, and plenty of pot holes. On Sunday there was an ascent of Ingleborough. At our 10am start it was still a little wet, but as the forecast was for the day to get better we postponed our start for a while, and with the rain having stopped we started our ascent. There were some sightings of the sun, but half of the day was spent in mist, and on our final pull for the summit we also had to contend with strong gusts, hail and snow. With hindsight the extra trials of the weather made the achievement all the greater, and we were able to ponder over this in front of a real fire in the pub afterwards.

While some were in Yorkshire, others were at the Hut for the weekend - climbing Saturday & Sunday - including Allan, Carol, John, Christy, Neil and Phil. It was a poor day weatherwise, but John led a hard severe - White Streak - reported by Carol as 'bloody dam good lead, but scarry'. Routes were done on Clogwyn, and in the Moelwyns - Neil and Phil doing Africa Rib. Others did Gribbin Ridge on Snowdon, Y Lliwedd, and Galt y Wenallt

The end of February Quarter-End Tuesday meeting saw four new members voted in - Phil (who seems to have been around for ever!), and the family of Chris, Janet and Katie. Welcome to you all.

The Club AGM is coming up on Tuesday 24th March 2009, 8pm at Birkenhead Park Rugby Club - all welcome. On the Saturday following the AGM there is the GMC 42nd Annual Dinner held at the Tyn-y-Coed Hotel, Capel Curig - see Hux if you haven't already booked on it. At the Annual Dinner there will be the judging of the photo competition and also a raffle organized by Margaret. Anybody wishing to submit photos for the competition needs to see Geoff pronto as tomorrow (10th March 2009) is the last date for submission of 'In Action' photos. With regards the raffle, anybody wishing to donate a prize to the raffle, please contact Margaret.

See you at the AGM and/or the Dinner.

Regards.
Christine.