



Hew and Glenn on Marsco

The Gwydyr Mountain Club Newsletter.

June
2023

Edited: Chris
Harris

Coming soon: (details on meets list on GMC website)

- 7-9 July Yorkshire Dales - Inglebrough
- 14-16 July Hut Weekend:
- 22 July Kentmere Horseshoe
- 29 July Shropshire Hills
- 4-6 August Hut Weekend:
- 4-6 August Tywyn Meet: At Nuala's

Articles this Month:

- 1) Skye meet May 2023 - by Helen Grant
- 2) Dunsop Fell - by Chris Harris
- 3) Welsh 3000's 2023 - By Katie Harris
- 4) The West Highland Way - by Kev McEvoy

1) Skye meet May 2023 - by Helen Grant

What a week we had on Skye this year. Perfect weather and good company.

Some of us broke the journey up with stop-offs around Loch Lomond with warm-up walks on Ben Lomond and Beinn Ime.

Everyone arrived at our very nice digs Sligachan lodge and cottage on Saturday afternoon. The view from our window of the Black Cuillin set the scene for the week.

Discussion soon turned to Munro-bagging after dinner with those of us with a wish list consulting the 'Oracles' aka Teresa and Bryn on detail on the routes and the excellent book by Tom Prentice "The Cuillin and Other Skye Mountains".

Day 1

Sgurr a Mhadaidh and Sgurr a Ghreadaidh, 6miles, 997m ascent

We left Glen Brittle youth hostel at 8 am having got the last parking space and walked up the valley and scree to An Dorus notch and decided to follow the steep scramble onto the summit of Mhadaidh with encouragement from a lady in pink who had done the route 4 times! then steep down climb and scramble backup to

Ghreadaidh. Return was via the An Dorus notch with an awkward step back down with an audience! Thanks to Simmo for his help on this bit.

A great first day sampling the scrambling on the Black Cuillin.

Marsco Red Cuillin 7.5 miles 765m ascent

Glenn, Hew, Fi, Nikky, Teresa and Bryn decided to walk from the door with amazing views from the summit.

Fionn Coire Horseshoe – 11 miles and 867m of ascent

The Fionn Coire Horseshoe is recommended in Bill Birkett's book of Great British Ridge Walks as the easiest and most accessible route into the high Cuillin mountains, so it seemed like an excellent starter for day one of the Skye meet.

Richard, Kay, Mike, Steve, and Lindsey set off from the Sligachan house and headed up the NW ridge of Bruach na Frithe. This narrowed and became sharper as we ascended before topping out on the conical summit



The summit of Bruach na Frithe

of Bruache na Frithe. At 958m, this is the 9th summit on the Cuillin Ridge and gave great views of all the other peaks. We scrambled down to the bealach and over Sgurr a' Fionn Choire, before skirting round the base of the impressive Basteir Tooth (also appropriately known as "The Executioner's Axe"). Here we had a front row seat to watch climbers abseiling down the notch between the tooth and the main summit of Am Basteir. Our route down was along the ridge of Sgurr a' Basteir, with a rough descent on to Meall Odhar and back to the Sligachan inn.



Am Basteir on the left with the Basteir Tooth to the right



Climbers abseiling from the tooth

Day 2 Sgurr nan Gillean 7.5 miles 985m ascent



Richard, Simmo, Mike and myself walked from the door along a meandering path past waterfalls and over a plank bridge, eventually climbing up past Loch a Choire Riabhaich and up a scree slope and side of a boulder field to the ridge line. We met the pink lady again and followed her up the slope for a bit taking the purest line up the ridge which soon became steep and airy. Fortunately, we had rope and harness with us and when offered this option for a short pitch I willingly said yes! Once over this section it was a slabby airy route to the narrow summit followed by an awkward exposed down climb. Meanwhile Mike had descended to the col and bagged the nearby peak Sgurr Beag. Amazing day out with quite technical scrambling.

Day 3 Raasay Island

Most of us decided to catch the ferry over to Raasay for the day with 2 leisurely walks in the sun, a shorter amble along the coast with the whisky distillery conveniently on the route and others a longer 9 miles to the summit of Dun Caan with some swimming thrown in.

Meanwhile Simmo bagged another Munro Sgurr Mhic Chonnich

Day 4 Am Basteir 8.75 miles 1175m ascent

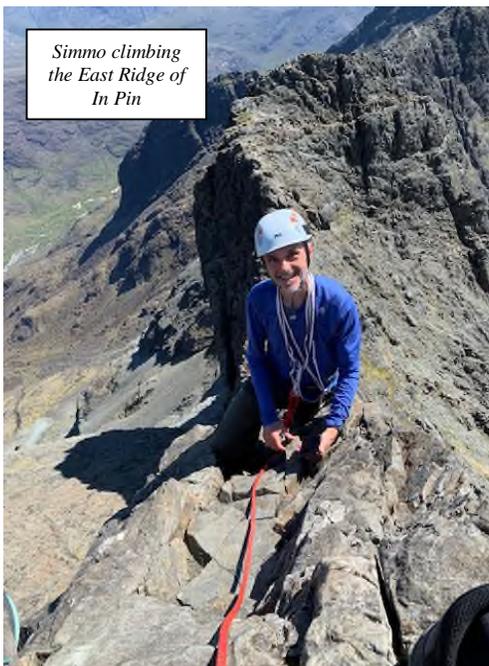


Early start walking from the door myself Simmo, Richard and Steve set off along the path meandering along the burn eventually reaching the Bhasteir gorge. Here we bumped into a guide I knew who gave us some intel on the ridge route. We followed him and his client for a short while until we hit the ridge line. Our refresh practice the night before on the bannisters at the lodge proved invaluable as we abseiled down the bad step. Great view from the summit and a short climb back up the bad step with our return via the outward route. Another amazing day on the ridge. Mike organised Blabheinn that he did with Fi, Hew, Kay, Lindsey and Dave 6 miles 3493 ft ascent

Day 5 Sgurr na Banachdaich 4.75miles 936m ascent

This Munro is advertised as the only Munro on Skye where hands are not needed! In our case it was on the horrible scree descent down. Myself, Mike, Nikky, Zahida, Kay, Fi, Lindsey and Hew decided to tackle this one today. The route up was fine once we hit the right path with a short bit of steep scree and rock to the summit. We tried to avoid the scree on the descent but unfortunately found a worse bit of scree! All survived the experience uninjured with some having more contact with the scree than others!

The Inaccessible Pinnacle. 6 miles 924m of ascent



The In Pin is a narrow shark's fin of rock near to the summit of Sgurr Dearg. Unfortunately for Munro Baggers, its top is about 9m higher than the top of Sgurr Dearg and it requires a moderate rock climb to reach the highest point followed by an abseil off. Richard, DLJ, Simmo and Steve set off from Glen Brittle with the aim of accessing the pinnacle. For Simmo, it was the last Munro he needed to do on the Isle of Skye.

The path headed steeply up the West Ridge of Sgurr Dearg and we were reassured by another walker who told us that the Mountain Rescue team use that route as the quickest way up when carrying out rescues. A little grade 1 scrambling was required as we neared the top of Sgurr Dearg, before the imposing view of the In Pin itself appeared. Thankfully, there was only one group of three climbers just ahead of us, so our wait in the "condemned cell" at the bottom was quite short. We climbed on two ropes, Richard and Simmo on one, followed by DLJ and Steve on the other. Initial apprehension soon gave way to delight, as the climbing was relatively easy with good holds but with tremendous exposure on both sides. Upon reaching the top block, we set up our abseil round the permanent anchor chain. Steve was slightly concerned about the thickness of the chain, comparing it to a necklace, rather than a ship's anchor



chain which he was expecting. Nevertheless, it had been tested by countless descenders before us and before long we were all safely down on the main mountain top of Sgurr Dearg. Here we sat in the spectator's gallery eating our lunch and watching the antics of the climbers following us.

The descent back to Glen Brittle included a fair amount of loose scree on top of slabs, much to DLJ's disgust. We arrived back at the Sligachan Hotel in high spirits and celebrated with the local ale. Simmo, DLJ and Steve contemplating the In Pin

<< *Richard abseiling off the In Pin*

Day 6 Marsco

Relaxing day with some doing the Old Man of Storr followed by the whiskey distillery and lobster and chips. Glenn and I had a nice walk along the sea cliffs at Rubha Hunish. Zahida, Dave and Lindsey did Marsco. In addition other coastal walks were completed during the week including Macleods Maidens, Ben Tianavaig, Ramasaig Lorgill and the Hoe, We finished the week with a cheese and wine evening at the Lodge. Thanks to Teresa for organising another good week.

2) Dunsop Fell 17th June- by Chris Harris



The Trough of Bowland, or as they seem to prefer now the Forest of Bowland, is an area of lovely little villages, quiet roads and is only about the same travel time/distance as the chapel. Most villages seem to be well equipped with a at least 3 of the following: carpark, toilets, pub, post office, café.

It is 14 years since Mike McEneaney led a Thursday walk across Dunsop fell so I thought it was time to revisit it. On the day there were 8 partakers, Helen and Glenn, Zahida, Lindsey, Alan and Gill Potter, me and Lindsey.



In the intervening years, the initial walk up the valley appears to have had more tarmac laid but once past this we entered unspoilt river valleys and moorland. Grouse shooting seems to have been significantly increased which means following a good path has a good chance of leading you (me) to grouse butts. Also noticeable was an increase of water features in the lowland areas, many small ponds, I suspect to help with fire fighting if needed. As we descended from the fell we saw a rather fine specimen of a Roe deer at quite close quarters, unfortunately nobody was quick enough



to get a photo.

The off the Fell drink was taken in The Hark to Bounty in Slaidburn. On the return journey across the moors to Clitheroe I was surprised to see a huge hare sitting at the side of the road, I have never seen one so big in this country.

3) Welsh 3000's Saturday 24th June 2023 - by Katie Harris

The Mission: The Welsh 3000ers. Summit the 15 mountains over 3000 ft, in Wales 🇬🇧 within the space of 24 hours, without using any form of transport.

The aim: To finish together!
Dad to complete Welsh 3k in his 70s (he's 71 and a half).

Distance: 39 km but 48km including the walk-in and walk out to the nearest road.
Ascent: 4,684m



We look surprisingly awake in the photos* despite leaving Pen Y Pass at 0500. With fog & occasional drizzle, very poor visibility & 25/30mph winds, gusting 35-40 forecast until 14:00.

We were optimistic. We knew the route very well having done it many times before, carrying map 🗺️, 🧭 compass and GPS.

Crib Goch 🏔️1✅ was greasy, slippery, gusty windy & drizzly- all the best things for a confident start! **Carnedd Ugain** 🏔️2✅ hid in the mist & **Snowdon summit** 🏔️3✅ was barren of people!

The descent to Nant Peris was increasingly wet from both above & below. The bracken was armpit deep by the time we reached the valley. It's rare that toilets 🚽 are inviting, but the warm & dry of Nant Peris public toilets was almost cosy- I'm not ashamed to admit that I changed my socks 🧦 shoes**👟 whilst sat on the loo 🚽!

There was no let up as we ascended **Elidir Fawr** 🏔️4✅ & on the relative flat before ascending to Y Garn 🏔️5✅ we were battered by the wind! 8 hours of persistent rain 🌧️, 50m visibility (paced) 🚶, wind blasted 🌪️ and soaked to the skin!

The ascent up to the Glyders didn't seem as long as I remember, but as always, this is the point my dad gets turbo power & ascends far faster than me!

We bagged **Glyder Fawr** 🏔️6✅ & at 2pm the rain stopped & the sun came out. I felt like a lizard 🦎 warm, wet & basking in the ☀️ sun!

Glyder Fach 🏔️7✅ was rain free but incredibly windy!

A slip & slide down bristly scree as the clouds ☁️ raced above our heads & over Tryfan. A scramble onto **Tryfan** 🏔️8✅ where some brave/foolish people were jumping Adam and Eve, in 🌪️ winds likely to sweep you off your feet, if you weren't ready for it!

By the time we reached Ogwen at 16:40 we were thoroughly dried out. ** However I discovered my trainers had significant holes in!

We chased the light to bag the summits across the Carneddau, Dad knows all the short cuts so this bought us a bit of time.

The compass had come out a few times during the day & as tiredness kicked in & the mist descended again it was useful to prevent navigation errors when both of our minds said 'this feels like north east' but my watch & the compass proved otherwise. Clag is terribly disorientating, even if you've been there dozens of times before!

Pen Yr Ole Wen 🏔️9✅,

Carnedd Daffyd 🏔️10✅

Yr Ellen 🏔️11✅ which never disappoints & Dad and I both agreed that this is one of our favourite summits 🏔️ in Snowdonia.

The cloud 🌥️ built & from **Carnedd Llewelyn** 🏔️12✅ we watched the orange glow of sunset which 🌅 loomed beyond the distant hills. Unfortunately the cloud also meant we lost the light sooner but we yomped into the darkness to bag **Foel Grach** 🏔️13✅, **Pile of Stones** 🏔️14✅ & the final summit; **Foel Fras** 🏔️15✅ at 22:46, switching on our torches 🔦 to bag our final summit selfie 📸!

A light glowed on a distant hill (Drum) and as we got closer, we realised it was **James Bamforth**, waiting to walk off the hill 🏔️ with us. It was a slow 5.5km, plod to the car, arriving at 00:20. Unfortunately too late for last orders at the pub 🍺 but chilli con carne 🍲 cooked by Mum, a hot 🚿 shower & bed 🛏️ awaited at the hut in Capel Curig!

🏔️ Completed 16 hrs 13 mins. My father's is retiring at 71 and me at 37. It wouldn't be the same without Dad.

My mum got up at 0400 and dropped us off at Pen Y Pass then dropped down to Nant Peris where water & food bags and changes of socks were waiting. Mum waited up for our return at 01:00. It was mum and dad's wedding anniversary!

**The shoes went into holes and I thought I'd snagged them on a rock until I overheard a conversation in Cotswold about warranty, spoke to the staff and it was deemed a fault and got a full refund! Just need a new pair of shoes!



4) THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY - by Kev McEvoy



A brief history

The West Highland Way is a long distance route from the Glasgow suburb of Milngavie to Fort William with an official distance of 153.2km (96 miles).

The idea for the route originated way back in the 1940's, but it was in the aftermath of the success of the Pennine Way that the plans for the route began to develop. The trail was approved for development in September 1974 and was completed and opened on 6th October 1980 by Lord Mansfield, Minister of State at the Scottish Office.

The Route

The great pleasure of this route is the many changes in its character as it moves from Lowland Scotland to the Highlands. From its start in the Market town of Milngavie it runs northwards over Conic Hill down to the beautiful Loch Lomond, the route follows the eastern shore of the Loch and onto Glen Falloch and Strath Fillan. It is from here that the views change from forests and lochs to more open ground with great views of Ben More, Stobinian. After Tyndrum the route runs down to the Bridge of Orchy under the flanks of Beinn Dorain and out over Rannoch Moor.

The Middle



The majority of the route follows old drover tracks and the old military road so navigation is never really a problem, it is also well sign posted but this is done with sensitivity so not to impact on the scenery.

Once over Rannoch Moor, with great views of Buachaille Etive Mor the route heads up the Devil's Staircase (nowhere near as bad as it sounds) and down the long decent into Kinlochleven. After a steep ascent out of Kinlochleven you enter the remote and atmospheric Lairig Mor and on into Glen Nevis with great views of the Ben for company. All that's left is to follow the road onto the finish in Fort William.

I did the West Highland Way over 6 days last September and I would strongly recommend it , if you fancy a big walk in some of the best scenery in Britain.



The End

I carried my own kit but there are plenty of companies who, for a small fee, will transport your kit onto your next stop.

Any bad bits?

Not really. But there are long sections of the way where you will have the constant drone of traffic on the A82 for company!!!
But if you walk regularly and are reasonably fit and don't forget your Compeed plasters you'll be fine.



The Lairig Mor



A distant Cobbler