



Promoting Interest in Mountain Activities

The Gwydyr Monthly Newsletter January 2015

Happy New Year to all the members of the Gwydyr Mountain Club!!

Hello and welcome to the January edition of the monthly newsletter, the first of 2015.
Thank you to all of those who provided content for the newsletter

What's On This Month?

01-04 Hut: New Year meet.

10 Saturday: Walk Berwyns (Dave Gray).

23-24 Hut Weekend: Burns Night (Chris & Janet Harris).

31 Saturday Walk: Wirral (Janet Coates).

Future Attractions!

February

7 Saturday Walk: Blackstone Edge (Brenda).

20-21 Hut Weekend.

28 Saturday Walk: West Pennine Moors (Mark Barley).

March

7 Saturday Walk: Brown Clee Hill (Pete Mann).

17 Annual General Meeting: Stork.



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20-21 Hut Weekend: 48th Annual Dinner.

Recent Activity

December

6 Saturday Walk: Clwyda (Lindsey Fooks). Lindsey reports that 16 members (Chris and Janet Harris, Lin and Paul Jensen, Helen and Glen Grant, Roger Hughes and guest, Helen Avison, Mike Gavin, Ray Baines, John Crosby, Dave Chadwick, Dave Antrobus, Lindsey Fooks and Barbara, a prospective member) enjoyed nearly ten miles and 2,500 feet of ascent among the Clywds on the day in question. Tackling Pennycloddiau first, the expansive views across the Vale of Clwyd were much admired as we ambled across the ridge. The walk took in some of both Offa's Dyke Way and the Clwydian Way as we hacked up to Moel Y Parc. A solitary crow seemed to be following us at times until we reached the sting in the tail (as well as glorious challenge) of Moel Arthur which we left behind just as the light was beginning to change. Overall the weather was kind to us, giving a dry, bright day with the mildest of winds.

13 Christmas Meal. I haven't received any reports of this event but I am led to believe it was a good evening with over thirty members attending.

26th December -4th January Christmas/New Year.

A large number of members enjoyed at least some time in the Chapel over the festive season depending on their holiday entitlement and domestic/family responsibilities. There was a continual fluctuation in the number of people staying at any one time so it was difficult to keep track of all the comings and goings so I won't even try to list all of them. There was quite a change in the weather conditions over the period with really cold, dry and snowy conditions right after Christmas. Those who were out enjoyed Snowdonia at its winter best. Around Hogmanay and New Year's Day itself the temperature really rose and it rained almost continuously which made for poor walking conditions. Nearer the weekend it dried up and got colder again. However the weather did not deter people for venturing out and a range of high, mid-level and lower level walks were completed depending on the prevailing weather conditions. As it was the festive season members were able to enthusiastically engage in a variety of social activities!!



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Committee news

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 13th January.

Other news

Chairman's Thoughts

As I write this the winter solstice has come and gone and therefore the light should begin to slowly improve. The festive season has come and gone and no doubt some members will have been given new gear as presents and be keen to get out and use this. This is the time of year when New Year resolutions are made and after the indulgences of Christmas many will be keen to improve their health and fitness by getting out and about on the hills. However, the turn of the year often heralds a change in the weather and we begin to experience the worst of our winter. As I have mentioned in previous newsletters, winter is a great time to be out in the hills particularly if we have any snow. Nonetheless, it does present challenges, shorter days, more gear to carry, and generally poorer weather and underfoot conditions resulting in slower speed. So it does need to careful preparation and planning to ensure that we can enjoy the hills in all their winter glory and still return safely to walk, or climb, another day.

One issue that is sometimes overlooked in all the plethora of advice available is that of avalanches, particularly (but not exclusively) in Scotland. I know many members really enjoy the Scottish hills and have plans to continue exploring them both summer and winter. Therefore my book recommendation this month is "**A Chance in a Million? Scottish Avalanches**" by Bob Barton and Blyth Wright, second edition published by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 2,000. This is an excellent book which is full of lots of useful advice and information of how to assess the risks involved in winter walking or climbing in the hills. It focuses on Scotland because there is a greater likelihood of snow than other parts of the UK but the advice is good for any upland area across the country. Remember there are fatalities every year in the British hills and many of these occur in winter. Last year was regarded as the worst winter in Scotland for sixty nine years and unfortunately there were a couple of well publicized events involving avalanches which resulted in a number of deaths.

As well as this book if you do venture into the Scottish hills this winter then don't forget to check out the Scottish Avalanche Information Service at www.sais.org.uk. Again a



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great site with lots of excellent advice which might make the difference between going out and returning safely. Don't become a statistic for the lack of planning!!

Pete