



The Gwydyr Mountain Club Newsletter

July 2021

Edited: Chris Harris

Coming soon:

Thursday 29th July	Walk, The Wrekin and the Ercall - Chris harris
Saturday 6th August	Crimea pass walk from the chapel - Chris Harris
Saturday 14th August	Long Mynd walk - Bill Morrison
20-22 August	Hut weekend
Saturday 28th August	Central Clwyds walk - Dave Edwards

Articles this month:

1) The Lakeland 50 Saturday 25th July - Katie Harris

2) Epic day in Glencoe - by Richard Smith .

Looking at the weather you would not think it was only 2 months ago !

3) Chris Ramsden- Wild Swimming update

4) Cycling the Horseshoe Pass and Trough of Bowland

5) Llangollen World's End, Cynr y Brain Saturday walk.

6) Teresa Pedie recalling Knoydart 2014

7) GMC Climbing - by David Lane Joynt

1) The Lakeland 50, 24 hr Challenge. Saturday 25th July - Katie Harris

Katie Harris completed the challenge in 17hrs 38 minutes, finishing at 0526 Sunday morning. This was her first Ultra Marathon, she has not actually run a marathon before or even a half marathon. Her "friend" (she talked Katie into it) Hannah Bawdon ran with her.



The Lakeland 50 is an Ultra marathon. Almost double the distance of a standard marathon it is run on rough mountain paths with nearly 10,000ft ascent

The 50 mile (81k) event started at 11:30am on Saturday which means that the last part of the route would be run after sunset.

The stats: 50 miles, 9700ft ascent 10,070ft descent.

The route starts from the Northern end of Ullswater within the Dalemmain Estate before following the Eastern shore line as far as Howtown. A "quick" climb and descent followed by a trek along the banks of Haweswater sees you at Mardale Head. The route from here visits Long Sleddale, Kentmere, Ambleside, Langdale and Tilberthwaite before the final climb and descent to the finish at Conistone.

There are 6 manned(?) checkpoints on the course which are compulsory to visit, food and drink is available at each.

Competitors do not travel light, the compulsory kit list is extensive and not negotiable.



1. First aid kit to include: blister plasters, dressings, bandages and tape to secure dressing as a minimum requirement. We also recommend Vaseline, paracetamol and antihistamine.
2. Full WATERPROOF body cover, top and bottom.
3. Spare base layer top and bottom – must be full length bottoms & long sleeve top. A pair of warm running tights and a long sleeve running top or thin fleece are ideal.
4. Head torch / spare batteries if required to last one or two nights depending upon your race distance
5. Mobile phone fully charged
6. Whistle
7. Hat and gloves (BUFF or similar is acceptable as hat).
8. Emergency foil blanket or bivi bag, large enough to cover whole body. Don't cut down your foil blanket in an attempt to save weight.
9. Emergency food equivalent to 400kcal e.g. 2 mars bars
10. Map (supplied at registration, waterproof and pre-marked) Harvey 1:40,000.
11. Road book (supplied at registration on waterproof paper). There is a copy on the website which you can download for familiarisation purposes. The road book is a written description of the route, turn by turn.
12. Compass

13. Bring a solid cup

14. To further reduce plastic cutlery, we'll provide you with a 'FOON' at registration.

Obviously you also need a rucksack, poles and lots of water.

On the day the drop out rate was high, largely due to high temperatures causing heat exhaustion.

There were 1134 entrants, 119 retired.

Katie finished no. 719 in the full list, male, female etc. which is pretty amazing for a first Ultra.

Katie grabbed a couple of hours sleep in the tent (too hot for more) before driving back to Wirral where we kept her awake until 9pm with a family party in the garden not looking at all like she had done a massive walk.

2) Covid leads to epic day in Glencoe 28th May 2021 - by Richard Smith

In 2019, a group of us planned to walk the GR20 in Corsica and the trip was duly booked for June 2020. When Covid came along, the trip was postponed to 2021, when we thought we would surely be free of the pandemic. So it was disappointing to say the least when it was again deferred to 2022. Rather than sit at home feeling sorry for ourselves, we decided to venture up to Glencoe instead and to swap Corsica for the Lost Valley of Bidean nam Bian.

Anyone who has Bill Birkett's book entitled "Great British Ridge Walks" will know that there are some superb routes in there, so looking for a circuit in Glencoe, we found an interesting route which fitted our objective perfectly.

We started from the car park halfway up Glencoe at 8.00am and headed down initially to a bridge over the river Coe at the Meeting of Three Waters. We ascended towards Coire Gabhail, but rather than heading straight up to the flat bottom of the valley, our route took us up some interesting slabby scrambling (grade 1) known locally as the Gearr Aonach zigzags. The exposure gradually increased, with some great views down into Glencoe and of the Aonach Eagach ridge opposite.



At one point, our way was blocked by a small chimney, and after checking with Bill Birkett, I confirmed that this was the correct way up. One member of the group (who shall remain nameless) exclaimed "I'm not going up that!" so I was tasked with finding a way of circumventing the chimney, which involved an awkward shuffle to the right with outward leaning rocks above. We all managed to get past this obstacle and continue upward to the subsidiary top of Gearr Aonach and our first lunch stop of the day. From here there were great views down into the Lost Valley, where the MacDonald clan are reputed to have hidden their cattle to prevent rustling.

Looking down into the Lost Valley from Gearr Aonach

Our way forward was to continue along the ridge and up to the summit of Stob Coire nan Lochan. This is a wonderful peak with a small platform and tremendous views in all directions. Although the summit is at 1115m, it does not count as a Munro because the drop between it and Bidean nam Bian is only 115m. This seems rather perverse given that it is such a dramatic summit.



From here, we could clearly see the main objective of the day, the summit of Bidean nam Bian. Although it was the end of May, significant drifts of snow lingered on the tops, and we were relieved to have gone to the trouble of carrying ice axes and crampons just in case. An easy descent and short climb up led to the top of Bidean, at 1150m, the highest point in Argyll.

Descending from Stob Coire nan Lochan

Glenn reaching summit of Bidean with Stob Coire nan Lochan behind

We descended down snow slopes, past the Lost Valley Buttress, to Bealach Dearg. Here a difficult decision had to be made; continue up to the next Munro, Stob Coire Sgreamhach (the Peak of the Menacing Rock Corrie!), or descend from the Bealach into the Lost Valley. In theory, the latter should have been the easier route, so we opted for it. However, a steeply sloping bank of old snow covered the first part of the descent, which necessitated climbing down backwards and kicking steps whilst daggering with an ice axe.

About 10m down from the col, it was possible to leave the snow field and step back on to rock, but this was even more precarious as the rock sloped outwards and was covered in loose scree. A fall here could have been disastrous! After a minor meltdown, which almost resulted in the loss of a drinks bottle, we got back onto the snow and carefully picked our way down until the gradient lessened and we could safely slide on our backsides down into the Lost Valley.



Descending from the Bealach

From here, the path seemed quite straightforward along the flat-bottomed valley, but this was lulling us into a false sense of security! It is not called the Lost Valley because it is easy to get into and out of! Thinking we only had a short way to go to get back to the car park, we encountered some awkward down-scrambling over boulders as the stream leading out of the valley cut into a steep-sided gorge. How anyone ever managed to get cattle into the valley is hard to imagine. To add to our woes, the heavens opened and there was a torrential downpour for about thirty minutes. We finally arrived back at the Meeting of Three Waters and wearily plodded up the hill to the car park, arriving at 7.00pm.



**Walking along the flat bottom of the
Lost Valley**

According to Strava, 10 miles and 3980ft of ascent in 11 hours and 2747 calories. In reality, an epic day out which will live long in our memories.

Many thanks to Glenn, Helen, Kay, Lee and Gill for providing the company and trusting me to lead them on the route. It is best summed up by the ever-dependable Bill Birkett: "Set in the magnificent Highlands of Scotland, this must surely be one of the best mountain ridge walks in the world. It has just the right balance between ease of movement and technical difficulty, between challenge and intimidation, exposure and danger, mountain grandeur and desolation, wildness and wilderness".

Richard Smith

PS: Richard also wins this months prize for the longest descent on 10th July



3) Chris Ramsden- Wild Swimming update



On 11 July I competed in my first competitive 10km Swim Run. It was held in Wavern Water, Rotherham (pictured from my tent). A 10Km route in and around the lake it involved 13 trail running and 11 open water swim sections. I completed it in 1 hour 55 minutes and really enjoyed the experience. I'm now looking forward to more events both in and out of the water.

Cheers
Chris Ramsden

4) Cycling the Horseshoe Pass and Trough of Bowland

In our continuing efforts to get fit for the LEJOG (Lands End John O'Groats) cycle ride in August, Helen and Glenn Grant, Richard Smith and I rode from Wirral to World's End via the Horseshoe Pass on Monday the 5th July and 3 days later Helen, Richard and I did a circuit of the beautiful Trough of Bowland. The four GMC riders doing LEJOG in August are Helen and Glenn Grant, Steve Birch, Chris Harris

The first ride, for was 82 miles with 5310 ft of ascent, equivalent to one of the harder days on LEJOG.



The Trough of Bowland clocked in at 53.3 miles 4780ft ascent, similar to an "easy" day.



5) Llangollen World's End, Cyrn Y Brain Saturday walk.



A great turn out of 14 walkers on a day that threatened significant showers and allowed us to complete the walk without any rain.

10.2 miles with 1990ft of ascent.

6) Teresa Pedie recalling Knoydart 2014 **Remember this, Knoydart, Scottish trip 2014.**

We all met up at Mallaig, arriving one by one at the harbour eagerly anticipating the boat trip into Knoydart, the only way to access this wilderness without a huge walk in.

We started off in style....we had hired a private charter, a converted trawler with a bar! It was a beautiful sunny, calm day, ideal for a boat trip, and the trip over to Knoydart was fantastic!

When we arrived, we were met by a lady who collected all our luggage, and transported it to our bunkhouse, the Old Byre, a couple of miles away.

The accommodation was superb, with a hot tub in the garden, a couple of minutes walk to the beach, and a mile stroll to the one pub on Knoydart.

Once we'd settled in we quickly got to planning...there was lots to do... munros, lower level walks, coastal walks, cycling, fishing and so on, all of which were experienced by various individuals and groups through-out the week.

The weather held for us, and we had hot sunny weather for the whole week...with the accompanying midges when the breeze dropped, but hey ho, we could soon escape them in the hot tub!!

All in all, a fantastic week in a fantastic location, definitely worth a return journey!!

Arriving



Arrived



Locals



Ladhar Bheinn





Meall Buidhe and Luinne Bheinn



Rest Day



Leaving



7) GMC Climbing by David Lane-Joynt

Climbing in the Club has seen a resurgence since the lockdown eased. There are regular sessions at the indoor climbing wall, and we are now starting to climb outside.

Indoor Climbing

We have a regular Monday morning meetup at The Boardroom indoor climbing centre at Queensferry. Our regulars are Helen Grant, Melinda Kinsman, Bill Morrison, Lee Robinson, Richard Smith and me. In addition, Anna Roberts goes climbing with Boo Stone and I think Tom McEvoy is still going to the Hanger bouldering centre in Liverpool. Gavin Crompton, who is working on qualification for the Rock Climbing Instructor award will also be climbing indoors in the evening or at a weekend.

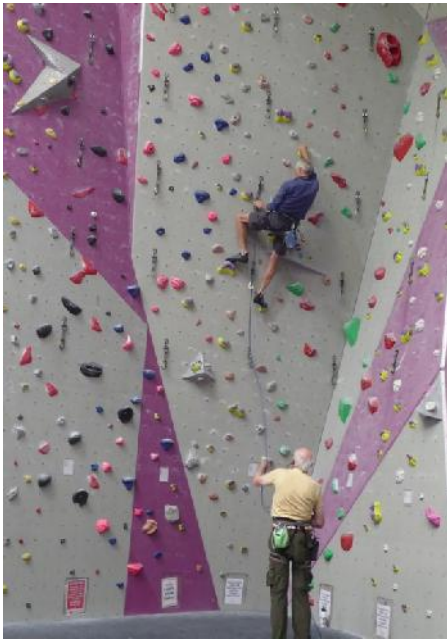
Helen sends out a weekly email to all those interested, and we also have a WhatsApp group for the climbers. So if you are interested in indoor climbing get in touch with Helen or me and make sure that you are on the circulation list for emails and join the WhatsApp group.

The Boardroom is a converted warehouse and has a good range of both top-roping and lead climbing routes plus a number of auto-belays which you can climb on your own. Although indoors, it is a very large open space, so hopefully the Covid risk is small. We sometimes go to Awesome Walls, or at least I do, and this offers a slightly different experience as it is an old Catholic church with a high nave.

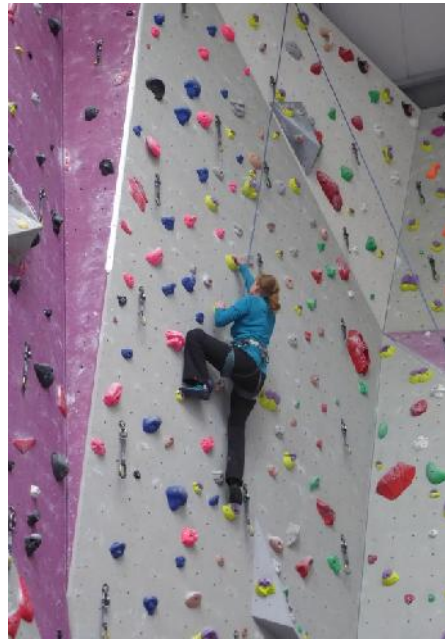


There is a good range of routes in terms of difficulty, so everybody can have a go. Our star performers are probably Melinda and Richard, who are on 6b routes, but the rest of us are trying to catch up.

Melinda at the Boardroom



Richard leading an overhanging 6a. With David belaying.



Helen on the same route as Richard was on



Lee being lowered off a top-roped route

Outside Climbing



David at the top of Flake Crack. The large cave where the rope goes across is the first cave on "Twin Caves" route

Our first session outdoors was to Pot Hole Quarry near Llanferres. This proved to be an interesting but slightly chastening experience for those new to climbing on limestone. The rock at Pot Hole is very steep, now polished and hard on your fingers. It bears little or no resemblance to the climbing wall, so it was a real learning curve, but we did manage to get up some of the routes. It was a nice day and I think we all enjoyed it.

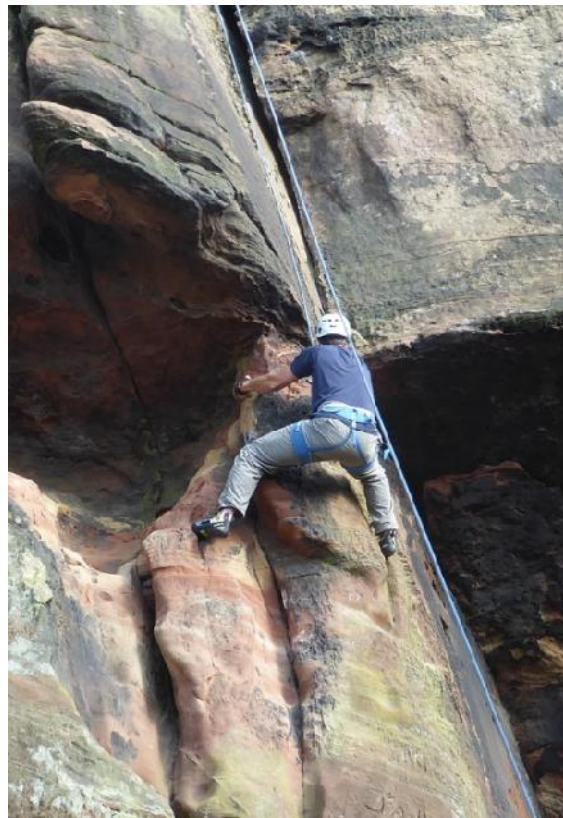
For our next session we decided to go to Helsby and try the sandstone climbing. A couple of years ago I had been to Helsby with Oli Jenner and Jon Foulks, so I set up a top-route on Flake Crack. This is the most famous route at Helsby, and a real challenge before the days of protection with cams. There were four of us: Bill, Lee, Richard and me. The others

generously volunteered that I should go first and show them how to climb Flake Crack. I was on a top-rope but safe even if I fell off, but even so I was slightly apprehensive as I had not done anything like this since I had been admitted to hospital for emergency surgery two year earlier.

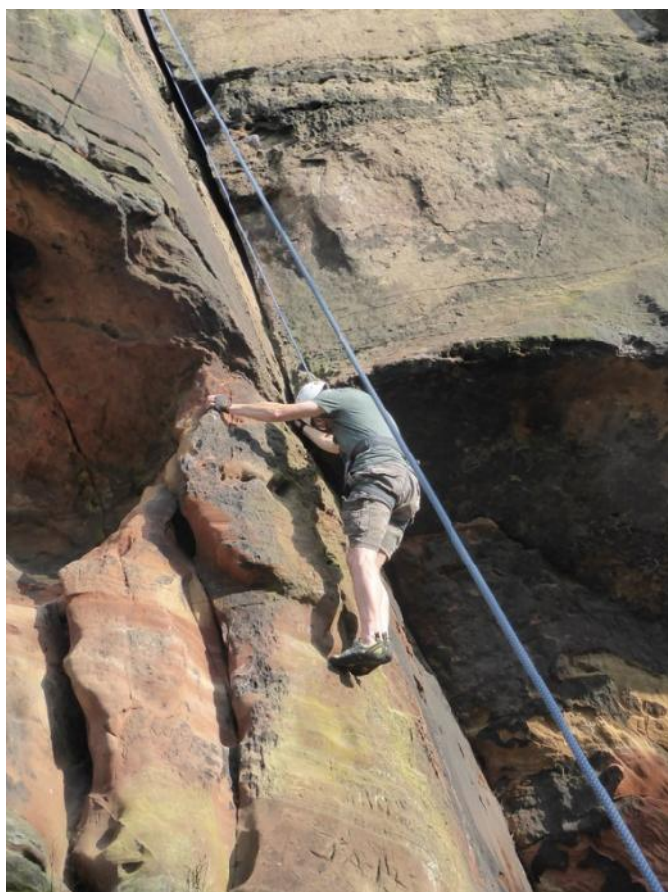
Thankfully it all went fairly well. I had my crack gloves on to protect the back of my hands as the skin there is thinner now. They really do help with hand-jamming. After some difficulty getting into the bottom of the main crack I was soon able to feel much more secure with some good hand-jams and reach the top. They all wanted to borrow my crack gloves now. Next up was Richard and as I expected he stormed up the route , and then Lee. This sort of climbing was a very new experience for Bill, but he seemed to learn quickly.



Richard at the start of the main



An interesting move for Lee



Bill doing well on the initial moves



*Richard on the interesting move out of the first cave on
“Twin Caves Route”*

We then moved on to the next door VS of Twin Caves Route. Again I was the guinea pig. This is a very athletic route. Climbing out of the first cave involves a sort of layback move trying to lever yourself up a big overhang. You cannot see where your feet are scrabbling to find anything to push up from. It is a good spectator sport for those at the bottom. Once you get over the first cave you think you have cracked it – you haven't, as Lee found out. The second cave involves more scrabbling on the top of a cave where you cannot see, to try and find something for your feet. We then ran out of time but I am sure we will be back to have a go at “Dinner Plate Crack”, the other VS in this area.

Recently I went with Gavin to the Trevor area of the Eglwyseg escarpment near Llangollen, where we climbed three Severs on Railway Buttress. Nice limestone and surprisingly not at all polished