



*Saturday on the Carneddau - annual diner weekend*

# The Gwydyr Mountain Club Newsletter.

April 2022.

Edited: Chris  
Harris

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

- 13-15 May Hut Weekend: Scrambling Weekend
- 24 May Zoom Meeting: 7pm Start
- 29 May-5 Jun Scotland meet: Glensheil Lodge
- 10-12 June Hut Weekend: Mobile phone photography
- 24-26 June Hut Weekend: Welsh 3000's

## **Articles this month**

- 1) Club Annual Dinner 25-27th March
- 2) Thursday Walk 7th April : Ruthin Castle to Denbigh Castle
- 3) 'Langcliffe Revisited' – A Yorkshire Dales Mid-Level and River Circuit by Dave Gray
- 4) Hadrian's wall by Mike Wallis
- 5) Chapel Heating System - Guide- Chris Harris

### **1) 25-27th March - Club Annual Dinner**

Finally, after 2 years of Covid, our dinner was going to happen. Menu's selected, band organised, accommodation booked. Then on the Thursday before the meal the new management at the Tyn y Coed dropped the bombshell - the booking was off. They were not exactly forthcoming with reasons and apologies but further investigation revealed that on trying to reopen, the new management had been confronted with Health and Safety. Apparently, the building was not fit for purpose and group bookings are not allowed until certain safety criteria had been met. They have since decided to discontinue the use of the function room and convert it into accommodation with access for disabled (unable ?) persons. Anyway 3 days later they seem to be well underway with the conversion work, presumably having managed to draw up plans and get all the permissions !

Neil Connolly, having suffered all the stresses of 2 years postponements and rebooking of dates, food and entertainment sealed the occasion by catching Covid.

Margaret stepped up and decided the event would happen but in a traditional manner at the Chapel. b.y.o.b. and nibbles, starters, mains, desserts allocated to participants. If there was discomfort about a large group indoors in close proximity then the tables would be set up outside - on the night people voted for warmth and comfort over avoiding the ever weakening Covid bug. As the advance party arrived at the chapel the on Friday evening news from the front line came through that the "mains" allocation were dropping like flies, from Covid, (is that

possible ?). We were all prepared to have a starters and dessert party. However on Saturday reinforcements arrived with supplies of mains and a massive feast washed down with plenty of drink followed. In actual fact all that was preceded by G&T's aperitif supplied by Margaret.

Well done Margaret for rescuing the day and many thanks to Neil for sticking with the booking over the past 3 years.

Saturday Walks:



I led a walk with Helen, Glenn, Bill, Pete, and Sue over the Carneddau - Pen yr Ole Wen, Daffyd, Yr Elen Llewellyn and back down to the reservoir. Taking the opportunity to recheck the "path" from the col below Llewellyn to contour round to the col below Yr Elen and also the shortest route back from Yr Elen to Llewellyn in preparation for the Welsh 3000's in June.

In the morning we had arrived at the roadside parking at the reservoir end of the Ogwen valley at 9.30 and just managed to find 2 spaces at the end of the line. The large parking bay at the lakeside end of Tryfan is closed,

undergoing maintenance - probably installing parking meters !

Margaret led a lower level walk to Dolwydellan so that she could be back in time to commence preparations for the evening feast.

Margaret's report: On the day of the annual dinner Adele, Adrian, Brenda and I sorted out kitchen ready for our meal, seating and tables sorted and counters cleared ready for food to be laid out on. Adele, Adrian, Brenda and I set off for a walk. Both Brenda and Adrian had, had covid so we were looking for an easy walk. So off we went to Dolwydellan to do eight miles. It was a lovely day and a very pleasant walk. I had a chat to a very nice friendly off roader who found it a challenging route? We stopped for our lunch down by the river at Dolwydellan and as we are serious walkers we did not stop at the pub for a drink but set off back to hut. On arrival at hut we found Fiona had arrived late due to car problems. And being such a good hut warden had put everything back where it should have been in the kitchen thinking that a visiting group had moved and left microwave, toaster, dishes etc all in the wrong places. Thanks Fi - but she did help move everything again. Then a very successful, all be it an unusual annual dinner.

## **2) 7 April Thursday Walk: Ruthin Castle to Denbigh Castle**

This castle to castle had all the ingredients we have come to love - mud, barbed wire well tied gates, hidden paths and broken stiles.



Roger armed with his trusty book led the way assisted by Mike and John and anyone who had an opinion. Parking in the Ruthin Gaol carpark we set off along Afon Clwyd then turning to Rhewl we met the Afon Clwydog where we joined the delightful Lady Baggot's Drive ascending gently to Bontuchel to start a serious hill on tarmac (a feral football took our minds off the ascent for a while) to what should have been the high point of the walk. However, the start of the descent meant crossing the remains of a stile into a field of mud descending steeply to a stream. As the fence would not

support a person and the mud slope would have prevented upright forward movement, a brief consultation of all the leaders led to the decision to continue up the hill a little further and skirt around the problem.

We were then able to join the Hiraethog Trail where we were sheltered from the wind behind gorse bushes to enjoy our lunch.





The Trail led us along a ridge with delightful views of the Clwyd range but did leave us a bit exposed to the strong, cold wind. As we approached Llanraeddr we turned towards Denbigh where the castle perched in front of us. Roger marched us to the castle gates where we briefly sheltered from the wind then descended into town to arrange the car shuffle back to Ruthin with the help of Rogers able assistant, Judy.

### 3) ‘Langcliffe Revisited’ – A Yorkshire Dales Mid-Level and River Circuit by Dave Gray

Right now I keep on getting letters from Sayed Javid, telling me how vulnerable I am to Covid (I never knew he cared!). So trips away are still solo efforts in static caravans. I reckoned the site I like at Gisburn, just west of the Dales, would ‘go round again’ and so it proved this March. I was away for five days and spent four of them in sunny but *very* windy conditions on lower hill and moorland walks. I shelved plans for the bigger stuff ‘cause of the gales.

One day I felt the need of a change so worked out a circuit based on Langcliffe just north of Settle, where I had such a good walk in the Autumn. This one takes in a couple of waterfalls and the River Ribble itself. I found it interesting and varied and I think it’s worth sharing if you’re looking for something at this level in the area. The route is mainly on very good paths and tracks, plus some very quiet lanes, and is about 9.25 miles long.

Here is an overview map of the area of the circuit at 1:50,000 in two sections, first the north end and then then south. This is from OS Landranger sheet 98. It’s far easier to navigate with the 1:25,000 map, which is OS Explorer sheet OL2, which is what I used.



As before, I parked at the reasonably large village car park in Langcliffe by the church and the old school, GR 823651. This runs an honesty box, minimum daily charge £2.

From the car park the aim is to head N from the village and then NE, on the footpath/track that goes across (per the 1:25K) to Dick’s Ground Plantation. On the north map above it’s the one marked ‘A Pennine Journey’). I





found escaping Langcliffe quite difficult, you need to pay attention in the maze of little houses. Unless you want to end up in the kennels and cattery as I did at one stage! Beware of the rather grandly named long distance trails around here – it doesn't necessarily mean the waymarking is better than normal.

This path give good views of Stainforth Scar, and close up one appreciates better how much the original natural scar has been increased by quarrying to form an impressive and natural looking cliff. This is the Scar (actually photographed from a bit further south on our route).



The path crosses the line of the Scar ridge at GR 827663 and carries on to join a track that you follow trending NE, passing just S of (Upper) Winskill farm. Next turn sharp left at GR 832668 to take a crossways track to head N, and then turn left again to pick up the track that goes NW, to pass the gorge of Catrigg Force waterfall. This whole area give good views of Ingleborough, Whernside, and Pen y Ghent, and the rural Dales architecture of farms, barns, and walls is also of interest.

*Pen y Ghent from Winskill – with a typical upland Dales barn*



*Drystone walls near Winskill*



*At the gate of the falls path*

At the Waterfall a short path takes you easily down from the track into the wooded gorge right to the foot of the main fall.



Catrigg Force is on Stainforth Beck, and the walk up from Stainforth village is sold as being a favourite of the composer Sir Edward Elgar, a frequent visitor to Settle. I associated him with the Malvern Hills down in the Midlands and didn't see him as this rugged! The falls have over thousands of years eroded the land back, to produce what's called a 'gorge of recession'. The place is very atmospheric and this picture of the main fall speaks for itself.

Return to the main track and go downhill, NE-ish till you come to the village of Stainforth. Here you can cross the beck by stepping stones and then go through the village, to come out on the Horton in Ribblesdale road which has a pavement here.





Our route goes towards Horton for a couple of hundred yards and we then turn left, down the minor road to Stainforth Force waterfall. We cross the old bridge and on the far bank pick up the riverside path of the Ribble Way, which we'll follow S now, right down to the main A59 road. We come almost immediately to the falls. As you can see, their character and setting is very different from Catrigg.

Beyond the falls the path follows the river, which is full of rapids, downstream.

For most of the way it sticks close to the river, though at one point it pulls away around a newly created community woodland. It also takes a brief detour at GR

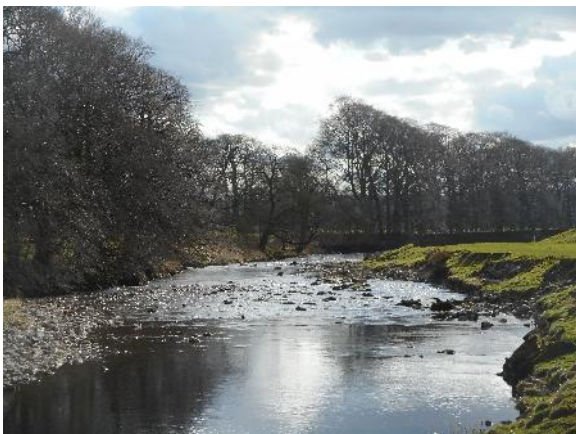
817655 to go up to the hamlet of Stackhouse, before leaving the lane S of there at GR814651 to return to the riverside fields. The path is waymarked a bit intermittently, and you need to make sure you are following the route, as rogue sheep have made more paths that the OS don't map! All the way down I was looking out for dippers on the river, I didn't see any, but there were several grey wagtails feeding around the water.

As you enter Settle you do see for a little while its dark underbelly – the back of the craft centre, and where the local shipping containers go to die. Watch the squeeze stiles as you come towards the school playing fields; one has a nasty uneven drop on the far side. I didn't see it and nearly took a very nasty tumble, scraping my hand on the wall.

Things improve once you are across the main road in Settle. The path is set out in a walkway with some interesting interpretive signs about the history of the town. One thing I learnt is that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century cattle drovers kept on using old fords to avoid paying tolls on the new turnpike road bridge! Past the town the river quietens down to a broad smooth stream. I found this part of the walk restful and attractive, and got compensation for the non appearance of the dippers, by seeing a pair of goosanders. These ducks are sawbills which feed on fish, and they only inhabit clean waters.



*Male (to left) and female goosanders*



*River Ribble South of Settle*

Reaching the A59, the footbridge marked on older maps has now gone, but you cross the river by going up to the main road and down again the other side, there is a large verge. The route then follows a track/bridleway E to cross the road into Settle and also the railway. At Hoyman Laithe (GR818621) turn left on a footpath/trackway that goes N, towards the suburb of Upper Settle. On reaching the road, we turn right at go into that village, the Pennine Bridleway soon coming in from the right to join us. Again, here in the village, despite our now being on a national trail, the navigation isn't always obvious.

Basically one goes N and stays right, especially at a junction at a strange narrow house, to come under the Castlebergh Plantation.



'Junction Lodge'- the 'narrow house' in Upper Settle (photo: geograph.org.uk)

Then at GR 821638 we leave the road and the village and go quite steeply uphill on the bridle way heading for Langcliffe. I only managed all of this because a kind local gave me good directions!

This bridleway levels out and goes through pleasant Dales fields, giving good mid level views of the Ribble Valley and the hills beyond. Follow it N – easily enough with the 1:25K map – back along and eventually turning sharp left down into Langcliffe near the car park. By this time on my walk the sun had gone in, and dark clouds were starting to play with covering the top of Ingleborough, so it was good to reach the car having had a dry and mostly sunny day, on a very attractive walk.

#### **4) WALKING THE WALL – CHRIS RAMSDEN**

Having completed the Offa's Dyke last year I had the taste for another adventure. I had a spare week's leave in March 22 so planned to walk Hadrian's Wall.

The Wall is a UNESCO protected Roman Wall heritage site. The National Trail is 84 miles stretching across North England.

In planning the walk several guide books suggested the official route was East To West but many recommended West to East so the biting wind was at your back. I made the decision to travel West to East for more practical reasons; it was easier to get a train home from Newcastle plus I wanted to catch up with a City based friend.

I got a train from Liverpool to Carlisle then a taxi to my starting point, the quiet picturesque village, Bowness-On-Solway. An overnight stay ready for the long walk ahead.

#### **Day 1: Bowness On Solway to Carlisle.**



A gentle start with 15 miles flat along the Solway filling trail and road through villages and open land. Arriving in Carlisle and a visit to the Cathedral.

#### **Day 2: Carlisle to Greenhead**

On leaving the outskirts of Carlisle I started to see remnants of the wall and lots of historical information. The terrain starts to get more undulating. Arriving in Greenhead my accommodation was still a mile or two away but the host kindly picked me up to save my weary feet. This was a reflection of the friendliness and hospitality I experienced the whole route.



### Day 3: Greenhead to Hexam



This section follows huge parts of the original wall and includes the large oak tree famously used in Robin Hood Prince of Thieves movie. A very undulating section that follows the edge of crags which also makes for a very windy walk.

### Day 4: Hexam to .....

An overnight stop at a local pub then back on the trail. Now, my intention had been to stop over at Heddon on the Wall. However, in my infinite wisdom I thought 'it looks relatively flat and if I start early I can get this trail done in one day'. Now this wasn't my first ill-judged decision in life and it and, I'm sure, won't be my last. As I got to the original stop point I felt great and it was still only 1pm. Another 6 hours of light to be enjoyed. I got to Newcastle Quayside as dusk settled and it was only another 4 miles to the end, not much eh! Well in checking Strava I'd already done 30 miles and my legs concurred. But still no I knew better so I carried on. Yes I finished it but it was painful and sadly a very dull and uninspiring end. The route was down roads at back of houses and finished at a small Roman Fort museum which was now closed. Still I had finished. A taxi back to hotel right on the quayside then a few well-earned beers to celebrate.

### Reflection and Recommendations

1. West to East was great for the reasons I gave although, if planning the walk, I would seriously consider stopping at the Quayside you'll not be missing anything further on.
2. Be realistic on what you can do. Generally the route is low level with quite a bit alongside (not on) roads.
3. It is undulating in the middle but nothing more than the Clwydians.
4. There are very few refreshment stops on route so be prepared with food and water.
5. Book accommodation ahead and close enough to walk from trail as taxi/bus options are scarce.
6. Take the time to stop, look and read about the wall. There's loads of well-presented information and you are literally walking in the footsteps of history.
7. Everyone I met was friendly and hospitable so take the time and have a chat.
8. If you're planning to trip give me a call I'm happy to share my learning and experience. Enjoy.

### 5) Chapel Heating System - Guide - by Chris Harris

I think it's about time the mysteries of the chapel heating system were explained.

I'm writing this as I think we need to try to keep heating costs down in the chapel and this may help.

a) There is a **gas powered boiler** situated in the loft, accessed from the ladies' washroom. This is supplied by four gas bottles situated outside the kitchen. At least one member of any group should take a reading from the bottles before leaving at the end of a stay and report to the hut warden if new bottles are needed.

**If the gauge is showing red then please tell the hut warden asap.**

The boiler has excess capacity because, when it was installed we wanted the option of heating radiators throughout the chapel. For cost and practical reasons this was not done so now the boiler heats just the 2 radiators in the washrooms, the showers and all hot water. There is a timer on the boiler and a thermostat by the window in the ladies washroom. Unfortunately this is not the best position due to the cooling effect from the

window. The ideal setting is 7-9c. this keeps the temperature in the washrooms at a pleasant level. The timer switches the heating on at about 5am to 10am (allows for early and late risers) and 4pm to 11pm.

This level of heating minimises condensation which in turn minimises mould.

The timer and the thermostat can be left at these settings throughout the year.

**Please do not wedge the washroom doors open** as the 2 small radiators will try to heat the rest of the chapel which will mean that the gas bottles will empty at a rapid rate.

## b) Electric Storage Radiators.

This is my understanding of the system so if you disagree with any of the following please contact me and I will update this guide.

The electric meter at the chapel is fitted with the economy 7 tariff which means that for 7 hours each night the tariff is a lower rate. The timing can vary with GMT and BST but is generally somewhere between 10.30pm and 8.30 am. The dehumidifiers are also wired and timed to take advantage of the night time tariff.

The radiators have electrical elements that heat ceramic or clay bricks overnight. They are well insulated and the amount of heat released during the day is controlled by the output dial on the radiator, 0 being slow release and 5 maximum release. The input dial, similarly numbered, regulates the amount of heat coming into the radiator overnight.

As a simple guide, it's best to set both the input and output to the midpoint no. 3. In cooler weather higher input may be required but this does of course depend on the preferences of the people in residence.



On the meter board in the lounge there is a timer which controls the days that the heating comes on.

Looking at the picture, there are 4 options selected with the "SELECT" button.

OFF = off - used during summer months

TIMED = heating will come on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

ONCE = I've no idea - don't select this one.

ON = comes on every night. If you ever use this, make sure it is reset to "timed" on your departure.

It is recommended that the timer is permanently left on TIMED, ie comes on every weekend.

Most groups arrive on Friday so the chapel will have warmed up on the Thursday night. If you are staying after Sunday then you can manually set the heating each night you are staying.

To set the heating for each extra night press the "ADVANCE BOOST" button. You will hear a clunk. It will switch off the boost after that night so if a further night of heat is required then it will need to be set the next day.

Historically, the heating would be switched on for the bonfire weekend (beginning of November) and switched off after the Annual dinner (end of March). This used to be strictly adhered to. However global warming does not appear to have reached Capel Curig so far so it is understood that some heating may be required outside the core period.

There is 1 - 2 KW heater on the kitchen wall, a fan heater in the lounge, an oil filled rad and a convector rad and 2 infrared heaters in the bunkroom, along with a gas fire in the lounge to supply extra heat in colder times.