

# THE GWYDYR<sub>No. 2</sub>

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB

I have not lost the magic of long days :

I live them, dream them still.

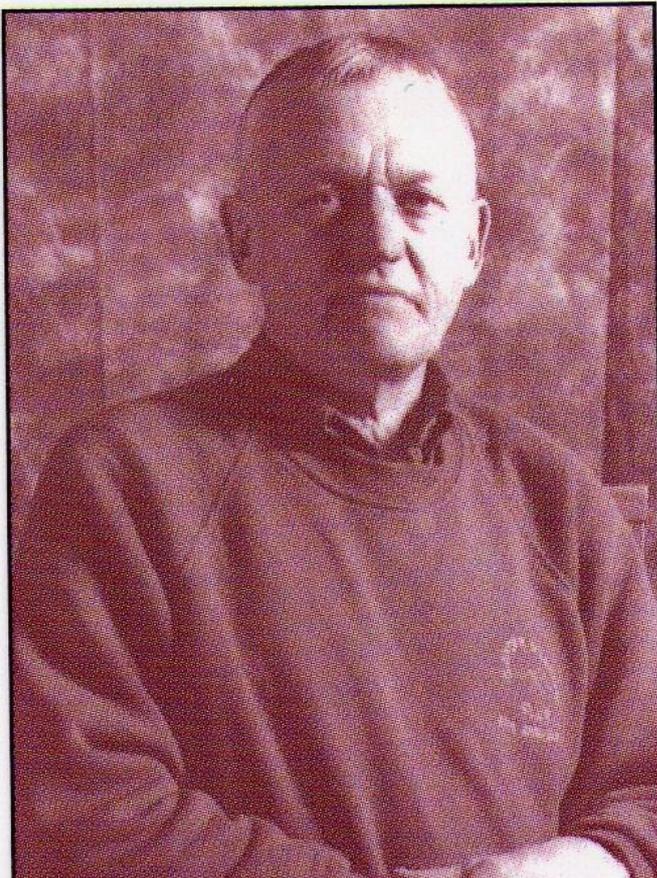
Still am I master of the starry ways,

and freeman of the hill.

Shattered my glass, ere half the sands had run,-

I hold the heights, I hold the heights I won.

Geoffrey Winthrop Young 'April and Rain'



John Huxley

As you are all no doubt well aware this year has begun with the saddest of news with the untimely passing of one of our most valued and esteemed founder members.

John was a wonderful man who had time for all members and was essentially 'Mr Gwydyr'. The club played a huge part in his life, as it does in many of ours, and we have lost a witty and loveable guy.

For many years John has coped with a number of illnesses and ailments though he faced them with humour and not a trace of self pity, where a lesser man would have succumbed John just got on with life and adapted him-self to changed circumstances. Long walks in the mountains and climbing were denied him but an old passion was re-kindled in bird-watching which he carried out with as much keenness as he once did with the more strenuous activities able to be done in days of better health.

He was a firm believer in his own brand of 'self medication' usually involving copious amounts of alcohol, most noticeably his beloved red wine, and an occasional 'wee dram' of something stronger.

Keen to make all members aware of the greatness of the club he wrote up the history and had it published himself, it was always amusing to see him 'badger' any new member to buy a copy no doubt to make them aware of the importance of being in such a great club.

There can surely be no doubt that John has left us a great legacy in the shape of the Gwydyr and I am sure we will all do our utmost to ensure that the club will continue as before 'to promote an interest in mountains and activities thereupon'.

Rest in Peace John, we will all miss you.

### **New Year at the Chapel**

The Chapel Xmas/ New Year meet proved a great success and on New Years' day a party of seven went up Moel Siabod through slopes laden with lovely fresh snow and a clear blue sky which granted us a stunning panorama from the summit. All the tops were clear and the light was fantastic, even Cadair Idris was visible as were the Clwyd mountains - all crisp and white and so rarely seen in such condition.

Prior to this, good day's out were had by most people staying at the Chapel with Allan and Neil having a pleasant day on (or rather in !) Sargeant's Gully to the left of Cyrn Las in the Llanberis Pass. Although there was a considerable volume of water underneath the ice and snow the climb was easy enough and very enjoyable, however Neil shall be forever named the 'Pitch Thief' for pinching one of my leads though he did try to atone for his misdemeanour by letting me carry the rope all day !! One day proved particularly challenging when a party of five (initially seven but that's another story !) found themselves attempting a walk in the Glyders and only managing to get to Bwlch Tryfan by wading

through waist deep snow in a complete white out! The same day Ronnie (prospective member), Dave Cole and Ray Baines attempted Snowdon by the Miners Track only to be defeated by excessively wintry conditions underfoot and a biting cold wind.

Andy Chapman with Hugh Nettleton, Richard and Tony went to climb Central Gully on Glyder Fach only to have to abseil off from  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way up due to threatening avalanche conditions.

Mention must also be made of a short walk made up the Dam Access Road up to Ffynnon Llugwy. The weather was truly foul though Andy Odger, Allan McDonald & Neil Metcalfe together with Steve McNally, Adele Blakeborough and her new beau Adrian (all prospective new members) still went up the snow covered road which was completely obliterated by the time we got to the lake and decided to turn back. A couple of skiers had got into difficulty and needed help to get back to the A5 and their car as one of them had dislocated his shoulder in a fall.

On our last day, Andy Chapman & Steve McNally went up South Gully in Cwm Idwal which proved harder and leaner than normal and thus was probably nearer a Grade 5. Neil, Andy & Myself went up the kitchen path onto Glyder Fawr where we managed to see but not really photograph our 'Glories' before descending a very snowy Gribin Ridge back to Ogwen Cottage.

### **PJ's Saturday Walk in the Clwyd's – 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010**



As the above pics show it proved a very snowy and wintry walk. Eleven club members braved the conditions for this traditional first club meet of the year. Deep snow and sub zero temperatures made the going much more difficult and the route was shortened accordingly (this to ensure we arrived at the Colomendy Arms on time !) There were many photo opportunities and views in the clear air. Moel Y Gaer viewed from the summit of Moel Fammau was pristine and the steep descent through the forest was treacherous. A simple route made memorable and enjoyed by all.

### **More Winter Fun at the Chapel**

Andy Chapman was out again with Melinda Kinsman and had a great day on the Glyders after ascending a simple snow gully to gain the heights they descended a very snowy Bristly Ridge in perfect weather though still biting cold, Andy said it was as cold as Ama Dablam ! It's great that Melinda is now getting out again and surely it won't be long before she starts polishing off the Corbett's !!!

Carol & John went up into Cwm Lloer and attempted to climb one of the snowy gullies onto the Carneddau plateau but were defeated by atrocious snow conditions. The mountains look fantastic at the moment but with the continual cold temperatures the snow has not had a chance to consolidate properly yet. But when it does.....

Allan, Neil, Katie, Andy Odger & Ronnie had an 'interesting' ascent of Yr Aran on Saturday 9th Jan with snow up to my thighs and a very strong, cold wind stinging our faces on the ascent up the final ridge. We descended in fading light with Lliwedd and Snowdon South Ridge wearing a perfect coat of Alpenglw that went from bright pink to purple before finally fading and leaving us with a slippy descent down the iced up path. Carol and John finished off what they set out to do the day previously and had a memorable day on Pen Yr Ole Wen while Geoff went Mountain Biking around Betws Y Coed which must have been hard work and interesting given the state of the roads.



Melinda on the Glyders



Richard leading on Idwal Slabs

Andy Chapman returned to Wales for the day with Richard Kinsman & Tony Lamberton and climbed the Idwal Slabs in perfect winter conditions, apparently they hardly touched rock as it was mostly ice and snow all the way.

Sunday was a sad day as we had heard about John that morning. Enthusiasm was not at it's highest that day and only Neil, Katie and Ronnie went up Moel Elio above Llanberis under a heavy sky and even colder winds that saw them on the summit not to linger long before descending to Pete's Eats for a much needed brew. Getting over Pen Y Pass proved exciting as the roads were closed but we still got through – just ! Geoff had been Mountain Biking again !

### **Burns Night at the Chapel.**

This increasingly popular event was totally sold out with 24 members attending and was again a great success. I totally amazed everyone with my potato peeling skills, 15kg in 20 minutes was the target which I only narrowly missed by a few hours !! Luckily Carole helped me and everyone else out – Thanks Carole ! Geoff did sterling work with the Haggis, Tatties and Neeps and Helen Brady did a delicious soup for starters with Sue Taylor providing a very filling traditional pudding. All the usual requirements of a Burns Night meal were met with much Poetry and I read a poem for John Huxley, the first stanza of which is at the top of the newsletter and I think was most fitting, we then all rose and toasted his memory. The highlight of the evening (apart from my Kilt !) was the Deep Fried Mars Bars which proved a surprising delight for some, done in a crispy Glayvar enhanced batter they may become a regular feature of the event. Everyone 'mucked in' and consequently by 10.00pm we were all in the lounge relaxing and drinking with most of the washing up / tidying having been done.

Earlier in the day a party of eleven including, Neil, Carol Boothroyd (Prospective member), Geoff, Helen & Davide, Steve Walker, Pete Mann, Ray Baines, Kevin McEvoy, Andy Odger and I went up Moel Hebog which proved a really nice walk apart from the end when I broke a fence – it was an accident and it was really Neil Metcalfe's fault for losing the path ! We graced the Pen Y Gwryd for an 'off the hill' pint / coffee before retiring to the Chapel and then, to keep out of the Chef's way you understand, we went to the Tinny for another beer (or two).

Richard and Tony went up North Buttress on Tryfan while Helen Beddows & Brady with Melinda went up Tryfan by the North Ridge.



Cnicht from the Slopes of Moel Hebog



Pete, Carol, Kev and Andy on Moel Hebog



It's just wrong !!!!!!!!!!!!!



Relaxing in the Lounge.

Sunday was a relaxing day for some and while Carol Boothroyd went paddling on Lake Bala, Helen Beddows went Mountain Biking and the Harris's walked to Dolwydellan and back the rest of us just chilled out at the Chapel as for some the lack of two nights sleep proved too much – must buy some ear plugs for next time.

### **John's Funeral**

On Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010 John's funeral took place at Landican Cemetery and, as expected, there was a huge turnout of members past and present. The Humanist service was very appropriate and well conducted with readings from Les and John's family, quotations from members recent emails were also read out. Afterwards we retired to the Cherry Tree public house for food and drinks and it was lovely to see so many people celebrating John and his life. On a personal note I arrived outside the Chapel in Landican only to find myself looking around for someone missing and after a moment I realised the person I was looking for was not there. The Gwydyr will not be the same without him but I hold his memory dear and as I have said before, there is no more fitting memorial to John than the club itself.

John's ashes will be released on the Berwyn's at some point in the near future, this being where he went on one of his earliest walks. It is hoped that this meet will be very well attended and more than one member has suggested that perhaps we ought to consider the possibility of commemorating John in some sort of 'memorial walk' each year. Members thoughts on this would be appreciated.

### **NOTICES**

**For Sale :** Keith Colwell is selling a Large Black North Face holdall / duffle bag, it has hardly been used and in very good condition, reason for sale is it's simply too big. They retail at £80 - £90 but Keith is looking for £45.00. I have a large one and its 80 litres in size and is perfect for throwing everything into one bag for a Chapel weekend.

**For Sale :** Nuala Mulholland has two pairs of winter walking / mountaineering boots for sale – one Leather and one of Plastic. They are made by Raichle and are size six. The Plastic boots have seen some use though there is plenty of life left in them. The Leather pair are in excellent condition and have hardly been worn. Nuala is open to offers apparently !

**Christmas Card Donations :** Rather than sending Xmas cards many members made a donation to charity, Margaret Blakeborough et al made a donation to Kidney Research while Mike and Linda Gavin made a donation to Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue.

## **FORTHCOMING MEETS**

Dave Gray has a Saturday walk on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2010 to Whitbarrow, please contact him for details if you cannot make it on a Tuesday night.

The next club Chapel weekend is the 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

At some point in February I want to arrange a day in the Peak District (weather permitting) to go climbing and I am happy to take anyone who wants to get out who has not climbed before. I've got spare equipment so all you need is a bit of enthusiasm. The climbs are all single pitch (ie. usually less than 50ft) and not intimidating in any way though the full English breakfast at Longlands Cafe in Hathersage certainly is !

**STOP PRESS:** Mike McEneaney has sprung a surprise Thursday walk on us at the last minute, It is this coming Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010 and it starts at the old reservoir outside Cilcain (OS Ref 173648) at 10.00am. Walk to Moel Dywyll, Moel Arthur and Moel Y Parc and return by the Low Level Route. Please let Mike know if you are going, these walks are proving very popular and no doubt this will be just so.