

THE GWYDYR NO. 5 (APRIL)

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB

Toilet Block Refurbishment.

This past month has seen no Chapel use due to the ongoing toilet refurbishment however these works are now largely complete with only the ceiling and trims to be finished off. Mention must be made of Reg and Dave's hard work on this project, apparently they have been putting in long twelve hour plus days and the club owes them a great deal of thanks for their help and dedication in finally seeing through this major project. Members should see Margaret over the opening ceremony and the first 'flush' of the toilets which will take place in early May !

On the hill stuff : (Apologies for brief details – cannot read my notes !)

In early April Paul & Lin Jensen managed an 80 mile cycling trip in West Wales, Carol & John went to Trevor Quarry above Llangollen and did five routes. Phil Earl went to Tremadog and did four routes including Merlin Direct which gave him an 'exciting' time apparently. Jon & Christy went walking in the Howgills and Debbie & Keith Tavener went up Crib Goch. Margaret decided to go on a long bike ride of 65 miles and Carol Boothroyd paddled for 22 miles through the Menai Straits – all good stuff.

Peter Vaughan decided he would have a 'wild camp' on Moel Siabod in the snow and despite drinking half a bottle of wine found it a rather cold affair and has now purchased a new sleeping bag as a consequence



Peter's 'cold' tent !



View from tent door

The Roaches – Rock Hall Cottage (16-17th April)

A superb weekend was enjoyed by 13 members in this brilliant and unique location where the only downside was the laborious walk from the cars to the cottage itself.



Rock Hall Cottage



The Dining / Kitchen area

Most members turned up early on the Friday to try and make the most of the glorious weather. The usual suspects went climbing while Mike Mc and Ross went for a walk and a visit to the pub which sadly was too far away from the cottage to be of use to most of us though we thought ahead and had plenty of booze anyway.

Lots of climbing was done over three days from Moderate through to a (top-roped) E3 !

The Saturday walk was a great success and Helen, Brian, Ray, Ross & Mike were joined by Steve Walker and went for a good 12 mile walk (including a pub en route) before we all assembled back at the cottage for a communal curry and much drinking.

The weather continued to be fine and Sunday saw the climbers out again in force and, bolstered by the arrival of Andy Chapman, more climbs were done though by midday we were all feeling a bit tired but managed to wring out a couple of hours bouldering before finally calling the weekend to a halt and chilling outside the cottage with many cups of tea. It was with a heavy heart that we left this lovely place and I will do my best to try and secure another booking for next year.



A closer view of Rock Hall Cottage



Andy Odger



John on Chalkstorm E3 5c



The Climbers



Neil Bouldering

Sadly not all members could make the trip and Geoff Brierley went to supervise Reg and Dave at the Chapel while Carol Boothroyd went for a night paddle around Hilbre Island which was apparently very good though dark !

On the 22nd April Mike Mc had good company on his Thursday walk in the Berwyns with seven people attending for a long twelve mile walk and the obligatory pub.

On Dave Gray's Hirnant walk on Saturday 24th April five people attended and were afforded some great views by all accounts. Geoff Brierley went for a cycle around the Gwydyr forest and he also had great views.

On Wednesday 28th April John McDonnell, Neil Metcalfe and I went to Trevor Rocks Quarry where we managed six climbs in windy weather including the classic 'Any Which Way'.

May Bank Holiday Weekend – What the Chairman did !!!

The weather continues to be glorious though still a bit cold, I had promised to go climbing on the Sunday & Monday however that left me with a day where nothing was happening – clearly an unsatisfactory state of affairs. From time to time an idea will enter your head and for some reason it just won't go away. I have no idea what triggered the thought of going for a bivvy in Robin Hood's Cave on Stanage Edge however the seed was sown and before I knew it I was planning my escape so to speak. Despite my best efforts to persuade Neil and Geoff to join me I found myself alone on the train rattling through the Cowburn tunnel en route for Hathersage on a rather damp looking late afternoon.

The slog, for there is no other word for it, from Hathersage to Stanage Edge left me hot and sweaty but at least the rain had stopped and there was more than a hint of blue sky overhead though the seemingly ever present wind was a concern as I only had a thin sleeping bag. Thinking that a man can endure any amount of discomfort for one night I had travelled rather lightly and was already regretting the lack of a fleece jacket but upon arrival

at the cave I was glad to note that the wind had dropped slightly and in the cave itself it was quite pleasant as the wind clearly did not know it was there.

I lay out my sleeping bag and ate a frugal tea though I praised my foresight in 'decanting' a nice half bottle of Merlot into my water bottle before I had left home. I was now cold and the wind had realised there was a cave to investigate and so I snuggled into my painfully thin sleeping bag and tried to doze off even though it was only just after 9.00pm. I must be getting good at this dozing lark as the next thing I remembered was hearing some voices and shining lights and after checking my watch it was a quarter to midnight. I did think it strange that someone would want to come to this cold and draughty place so late however I was more concerned when I realised it was four Sheffield Scallies looking for somewhere to get stoned though to be fair to them they were very polite when they had realised they had disturbed my slumber and said 'Excuse me mate is it alright if we get stoned in back of t'cave'. I was hardly in a position to decline and just hoped that they would not be too long as I was enjoying my sleep.

They clambered around me and after a minute or two I heard a scream, not one you would associate with high jinks but more one of excruciating pain, and a language so full of expletives that I thought I'd stumbled into a Tourette sufferers convention. I tried to ignore them for a few moments however something was clearly afoot (the pun will soon become apparent) and I had to force myself out of my now warm and cosy sleeping bag to see what was happening. One of the four lads was lying prostrate on the floor of the cave with a spliff hanging out of his mouth and his three friends were looking on with some concern, I then noticed his foot was at a rather funny angle and at that moment I realised I was going to have an interesting night. One of the lads was on the phone saying he did not know where he was but he was in a cave, he was speaking to the Emergency Services and I took the phone off him and told them what had happened – the Mountain Rescue were on their way!

These lads had apparently took a taxi from Sheffield after a night out and were dropped off at Redmire's Reservoir where they then walked to the cave which one of them had seen the previous weekend and thought would be a good place to get mildly stoned.

After an hour or so in which all four lads were becoming increasingly relaxed I saw the first of the blue flashing lights of the Mountain Rescue vehicles pull into the lay by at the popular end of Stanage Edge and knew it would not be long before I could get back to my sleeping bag. I scrambled out of the cave to meet the first of the rescuers as, to be honest, I wanted to tell them what had happened and I did not want them to think I was with them. The first of the rescuers arrived within ten minutes or so and proceeded to run past the cave, I shouted him back and when more arrived they began to assess the now very relaxed casualty whose eyes lit up at the prospect of a bottle of gas to relax him still further. The three uninjured lads were escorted to the top of the cliff and put in a bothy bag and told not to smoke inside it which I thought was quite funny. The injured lad was actually in quite a

bad way and had to be helped up out of the cave onto the ledges leading to the top of the cliff, he stopped frequently to inhale from the gas bottle and he only seemed to move when they took the bottle away from him – I think he was enjoying the experience by now!

Then the Air Ambulance arrived with its searchlight which lit up the entrance to the cave and surrounding area, it all seemed to get rather dramatic and one could almost hear the voice over from a presenter describing the scene to millions of avid viewers on prime time TV. The casualty was now at the top of the crag asking for more gas which the rescuers seemed only too glad to give despite his clearly stoned countenance.

The helicopter landed and I got told off for taking photographs and to turn my head-torch off for fear of confusing the pilot!

The casualty was loaded aboard and the Helicopter took off towards Manchester which really annoyed the three lads as they wanted a lift back to Sheffield, a few minutes later and they were all gone and I had the cave and surrounding hills to myself again. I glanced at my watch and was depressed to note that it was now nearly three o'clock and so sleep would not come easy, especially as the nearly full moon was up lighting the surrounding cliffs with an eerie glow that made weird grotesque gothic gargoyles out of the cliff edges. Grit-stone is a strange rock in that it weathers easily and with the contrast of light and shade cast by the moon it was not hard to imagine oneself in some medieval crypt that would do justice to a well known Bram Stoker novel.

I did manage to get another couple of hours sleep and awoke to a beautiful morning, several cups of coffee restored my stiff limbs and gave the required boost to see out the rest of the day. I managed a dozen climbs before catching the train back home and no-one was more glad than I for a hot bath and an early night.

The next day I went to Anglesey with Andy Odger and we climbed on Rhoscolyn in lovely warm sunshine and then onto Holyhead Mountain where it was windier and less sunny for a few more climbs. On Monday I went to Windgather with Peter Vaughan where we had a really good short day climbing with sun, rain, sleet and hail all in the space of a few hours.



Entrance to Cave lit by Search-light



The Air Ambulance



Entrance to Robin Hoods Cave



Andy Odger on Symphony Crack – Rhoscollyn

Other Bank Holiday Stuff:

Ray Baines organised a meet at the Side Farm camping site in Patterdale and eight club members attended to climb Helvellyn, Place Fell and Armison Crag.

Lin Jensen and others went on an eighty mile cycling trip over the Trough of Bowland.

Forthcoming meets :-

This coming weekend of 7/8th May sees Geoff and (hopefully) many others at the Cottage on a mission to paint everything that doesn't move. Margaret is commencing cleaning works at the Chapel and I am sure they will both be grateful if anyone could lend a hand.

On Thursday 20th May Mike Mc has one of his walks planned around Edale in the Peak District which is a beautiful area and if you have not been its well worth going to if only for the Nags Head pub.

Sue Taylor's luxury 14 peaks meet has had to be cancelled due to a lack of interest, maybe everyone is saving themselves for the whole day affair.

There will be a long weekend (hopefully) taking place at the end of this month to Skye (28th May – 1st June) and if there are enough people interested (6+) then we may be able to procure a minibus so if you can **definitely** go then please email me and I will see what we can sort out.

Mike Mc has a week-long meet at Pitlochry from the 5th – 12th June and Steve Walker has All Stretton YH bunkhouse meet the weekend after.

And of course at the end of June (w/e 25th & 26th) we have the full Welsh Three Thousanders meet at the Chapel – please let the committee know as soon as possible if you are going to take part so that we can arrange / coerce members into volunteering in support.

A PLEA !

You should now have some idea of the format the newsletter is taking so **please** send me emails with what you've been getting up to and pictures would be great as well. If you wish to write an article then send it to me as a word document and I will incorporate it into the following newsletter.