



The Gwydyr Mountain Club Newsletter.

January 2023.

Edited: Chris Harris

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

2023

10-12 February	Hut Weekend:
16 February	Thursday Walk: Details to be confirmed - Mike McEneaney
18 February	Saturday Walk: Sett Valley trail - Mark Barley
19-23 February	Scottish Winter Meet - Chris Harris
3-5 March	Hut Weekend: Navigation Training - Simon Clark
12 March	Sunday Walk: Wenlock Edge - Bill Morrison
16 March	Thursday Walk: Castle to castle - Dave Edwards
21 March	Annual General Meeting
25 March	Annual Dinner - at Moel Siabod Cafe - Sue Taylor

Articles this Month:

- 1) Away Meets.
- 2) Thursday Walk 19th January: Clwyds in Foel Fenli area - Dave Antrobus
- 3) Hut Weekend 20-22 January: Burn's Night - Neil Connolly
- 4) Crib Goch in Winter by Simon James

1) Away Meets.

There have been a number of suggestions for club meets farther afield than the UK. Contact the organiser if you are interested.

November 2023	Patagonia - Organiser Boo Stone
New Year 2023/4	Madeira - Organiser Steve Birch
May 2024	Aviemore - Organiser Teresa Peddie

2) Thursday Walk 19th January: Clwyds in Foel Fenli area - Dave Antrobus. Written by Chris Harris



The previous few days had showered a covering of soft snow on the Clwyds. Dave wisely chose the lower carpark on Moel Famau for the start of the walk as the lying snow on the road prevented anything less than a serious 4x4 getting there. As it was we spent some time moving DL-J's rear wheel drive BMW into a safe area using muscles and shovels.

Leaving the car park we followed a lesser used route to summit circumnavigating Fron Hen clockwise to Fron Heulog before we summited Foel Fenlli.



After a quick photo stop we then descent via Offa's Dyke Path to Bwlch Pen Barras for lunch.

The second summit of the day was Moel Famau but rather than the easy tourist route Dave led a descent into the vale of Clwyd. As we left the bwlch we were hit by a massive hail/snow shower which fortunately lasted only a few long minutes. From the vale we ascended round the North side of Fron y Felin to the top of Moel Famau from where we followed the direct route to the car park in the fading light.

The obligatory of the hill pint was taken in the cosy warmth of Druid Inn at Llanferres.

3) Burn's Night Weekend 20-22 January - organised by Neil Connolly. Written by Chris Harris



Well done Neil for taking on the challenge of feeding 22 drunken diners and succeeding admirably

The 3rd meet of 2023 to have a snowy theme was Burns night. It started with emails, texts etc from the early arrivals at the hut to say the access to the car park at the hut was difficult. Well done Simon, Reg and Jon for clearing the track and the steps from the car park in time for the Friday arrivals.

Saturday provided a great selection of 4 walks. Bryn and Simon made a crossing of Crib Goch in full winter conditions (see next article), Richard Smith led me and Zahida up the South West ridge of Y Garn with the intention of coming down Devil's Kitchen, however, the weather was so good we extended the route to climb Glyder Fawr and descend via Yr Gribin Ridge. Sue Taylor led the large group on the assault of Moel Elio and Kev and Sven took on the newest mountain in Wales, Yr Wyddfa - up the South ridge and down the Watkin.



The off the hill pint was of course taken in the Tyn-y and before long we had a full table of GMC. The new manager asked if we were dining but we explained that we were just having a few drinks before returning to the Chapel to celebrate Burns Night with a few drinks. A few minutes later he returned and plonked a bottle of Glenfarclas single malt Whisky on the table to help us through the night. Maybe there's hope for the Tyn-y after all.



Meanwhile, in the chapel kitchen Neil, ably helped by Janet and Reg had been preparing a sumptuous feast of Scotch Broth (or Spiced Pumpkin Soup)
 Braising Steak and Onions, tatties, green veg and neeps (vegetarian/vegan option - Mushroom Wellington)
 Haggis (or Vegan Stuffed Peppers)
 Cloutie Pudding and/or Cranachan

4) Crib Goch in Winter by Simon Clark

Winter ascent of Crib Goch and Crib y Ddysgl to Yr Wfdda summit.

Bryn Roberts and Simon Clark Jan 21st 2023

There aren't many occasions in North Wales when we have nearly perfect alpine conditions, but this weekend was one, The Gwydyr were out in force to raise a glass (like we need an excuse) to the famous Scots poet Rabbie Burns.

So lots of folk were out in different parts of the mountains, I'd driven up on the Thursday and had already had a solo day up Yr Gribin and across the Glydereau on Friday which was stunning.



<<Castell y Gwynt – Glyder Fach

Its times like these when few folk are around that the solace of the mountains come into their own, as the light faded into a pink glow on my descent I began to think about the next day, Id originally planned to do Crib Goch today but as ever I stayed up too late socialising then got up later than planned then moving cars in an icy car park all delayed my start meaning the Glydreau made more sense.

So my plan was to do Crib Goch on the Saturday, it was great to see Bryn and Tess up for this weekend, and I knew Bryn would be

up for the ridge.

So Saturday morning good and early we stomped up to the Tynnie bus stop to catch the Sherpa, which left at 9.15am. This turned out to be a good decision as Sven and Kev were going to drive up and join us but the Penny Pass carpark was full since 4am according to the warden! So they did the Watkin path instead.

As we walked up the PYG track there were a few other folk but it was surprisingly quiet meaning it should be uncrowded on the ridge, a good sign as passing people on it increases the risks.

We stopped at the Blwch where the track splits looked up at our objective and decided "Game on", there is always a little apprehension with a winter ascent of this ridge as it is very narrow in places and one slip would be serious.

We gained the start of the ridge after negotiating the rock bands that lead up to it, I often think this is the hardest part as route finding is complex and care has to be taken. Crampons were worn from the start of the rock bands which was a good decision at that point.

We had a quick sandwich and drink but set off quickly to avoid big group of students behind us.



<< Bryn just below rock bands

The first part of the ridge is straight forward but it very quickly narrows into a knife edge fin, the drops on either side are not an option, but I guess if it came to it I'd always go keep left as there is a snow slope which may just allow an ice axe arrest



The key to getting across a narrow ridge like this in winter is to stay focused, take it steady and be absolutely confident with your foot placement's. That's easy to say and it does take practice when wearing crampons. It's important to stay upright and keep your weight over your feet, occasionally I would re-adjust my crampons so the teeth found the best contact with the rock, before weighting them fully. The sound of crampons crunching on rock and biting into the smallest rock fissure is invitingly reassuring, and we soon got into a steady rhythm. Fortunately there was little breeze and we made quick progress, we were moving smoothly and efficiently and all too soon the difficulties were over.



Looking back along the ridge before ascending to Garnedd Ugain

We stopped and took some pictures,

Continued along to the first pinnacle it looked dramatic but is straight forward.

Then on to the next one which Bryn led off around the left side to a big rock flake which was a much better line than the group in front of us choose.

As we topped out on the last pinnacle the snowy ridge and slope to Garnedd Ugain / Crib y Ddysgl came into view. As we ascended this section the wind increased to 25 – 30 mph which would make life a bit spicy along the ridge now.

At the summit cairn we stopped just took in the view, Snowdonia on days like this is just utterly stunning, the mottled clouds added a contrast to the snow laden mountains creating an unrivalled landscape.





Looking across to Yr Wdffa summit from Crib Goch

We walked onto the finger stone and debated whether we would bother going to the summit, but something in me just had to, don't ask me why, I've stood at that summit so many times I've lost count; but the route just doesn't seem complete without doing so.

We had a quick bite to eat and left the summit at 12.30, it had taken just under 3 hours to traverse the ridge and get to this point and our descent down the Miners' Track would take another two.

The descent was quick and quite amusing as it's the tourist route and all the Snowdon newbies were sliding down on their bums and shuffling and pirouetting down the path.

So many times people we passed said "We should have got those spikes" as we descended with ease our crampons allowing complete confidence in our descent.

It so good to see so many people out in the mountains enjoying themselves and experiencing Snowdon and the sense of achievement summitting will bring them and that they get down safely.

We picked up some litter on the descent and hoped we were setting an example which some might learn from; its sad to see but is a fact on a mountain that sees over 800,000 ascents a year.

As we arrived in the car park an hour before the next bus we simply had no option but to take shelter in the Mallory bar in the YHA. A seat next to the fire and a well-earned couple of pints was just the perfect end to an excellent day.