

# THE GWYDYR No12 (Nov 2010)

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB

## Merry Christmas Everyone !

Yes, It's that time of year again – Bah Humbug and all that and I have to start with a bit of an apology for the lateness of this month's newsletter as I've been a tad busy with work and playing out a bit too !

It's been a busy and cold month and one hopes that this delightful wintry weather continues as this has to be the earliest decent snow we've had for many a year.....

My notes for this month are a bit sketchy so please accept my apologies (again !) if I have inadvertently omitted your daring deeds and escapades – it's nothing personal and the only real defence I can offer is one of incompetence but hey ho if anyone else wishes to take over this task they are more than welcome to email me..... thought not so here goes.

The month started with another of Mike Mc's Thursday walks in the Clwyd range where seven members partook of a 12.4 (to be precise !) mile ramble around Loggerheads. John and Christy went up Cregiau Gleision in the South Eastern Carneddau which is a great walk from the Chapel and one that is often overlooked by many in favour of the old favourites. The brothers Gilbert were in Cornwall walking part of the coastal path and Lin & Paul were in the beautiful Co, Durham which is one of my favourite locations with Durham City (is it a city or town ?) being a wonderful place in which to pass a day or two.

The first 'proper' meet was the Gwydyr premier Bonfire meet at the Chapel and this year, despite the cold and rainy weather, was very well attended and I don't think that was because the booze was free (courtesy and greatest of thanks to Dave Gray for that). Margaret Blakeborough, as is often her habit, pulled out all the stops when it came to the catering and there were masses of soup, pasta, scouse and delicious apple pie & custard to satisfy the most greedy of epicures among us.

Food and drink were not our only vices that weekend and plenty was done on the mountains too. A large and jovial party wound their way up Lliwedd via the delightfully steep and rocky Gribin Ridge to Bwlch Y Saethau whereupon a rough scramble led to the summit though the Chairman was dismayed to note that some members actually used their

hands on this latter section and one hopes that they hold their heads in shame 😊 Actually the Gribin Ridge is a lovely little scramble and I was really surprised that none of the party had been up it before so it was real joy to see everyone find a new way up a much frequented mountain.



Carol & Helen on Gribin Ridge



Pete Mann resplendent with map on ridge



Chris, Janet, & Katie Harris with Andy Odger



Katie, Chris, Carol & Janet scrambling

Inter alia, some members went up Pen Yr Helgi Du in the Carneddau as well as Cregiau Gleision and Crafnant. The bonfire itself was magnificent and all deserve praise for collecting wood and for maintaining the fire which was still burning early Sunday morning despite a near constant fine drizzle.

The next day, with the weather remaining fine but with a keen chill and the first snowfall of the year on the tops, an intrepid four wound their way up Yr Aran but not before a brief indulgence in the superb Gwynant Cafe where Katie impressed her elders (can't believe I infer I'm an elder 😊) by having a Lamb burger for breakfast. The air was crystal clear and the views from the summit ridge proved a delight with Mynydd Mawr and Moel Elio standing proud beneath the clouds and Caernarfon Castle discernable in the distance. A keen wind blew on the summit which removed any desire to procrastinate once a second lunch was consumed and a swift descent back down to the Watkin Path and another desired brew in the aforementioned cafe saw the fabulous four wind their way back to the Chapel for a final clear up and home.



Katie & Carol on Yr Aran Summit Ridge



Mynydd Mawr & Moel Elio from Yr Aran

As far as I can tell from mine and Dave Gray's notes the next big event was Katie Harris's talk at the Stork on her recent trip to Baffin Island which was truly excellent. Katie seemed to take a perverse delight in showing a clip of her munching on a raw fish eye though to be honest I felt more for the poor fish and I have this image of a one eyed fish swimming around the icy Arctic waters with a glass eye !

Andy Chapman returned from the Himalaya again after an ascent of Lobche East, a rarely climbed summit where he enjoyed superb views of Everest, Cho Oyu, Ama Dablam and Pete's Eat's – well not quite, apparently there was some cloud but he could probably have smelt the burning lard ☺

The following weekend Dave Gray went for a snowy walk in the Berwyn's where he enjoyed splendid views as far south as the Brecon Beacons. Katie Harris and her mum went up Y Garn and along the ridge in somewhat inclement weather as far as Carnedd Y Ffiliast while later in the week Chris & Janet Harris went to the Lake District for a walk over Dalehead in 2-3 feet of freshly fallen snow.

The weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup> November saw the usual suspects out at the Chapel while some went on Mark Barley's Saturday walk to Rawhead for which I have no details though this is probably due to a seriously malfunctioning email account on my part for which I apologise to all those who thought I was offering eternal wealth – sorry again !

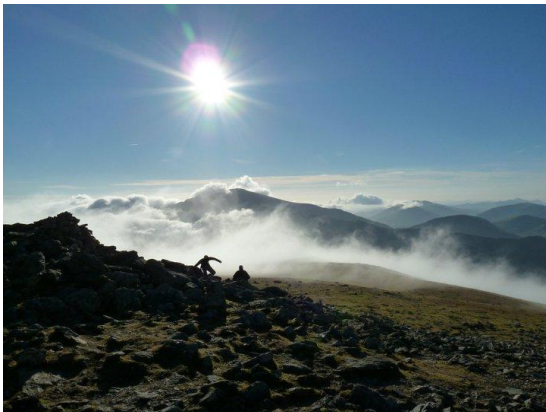
Andy Odger, Phil Earl, Neil Metcalfe and I went for a great scramble up the East Ridge of Y Garn which proved to be decidedly greasy in parts, especially near the top however ample compensation was gained with simply stunning views from the summit the extent of which left is near bored with cloud inversions and bright sunlight. It was on this walk that Andy Odger 'unveiled' his new toy – a digital camera with GPS ! – How long before we can have a built in microwave ????



Aaaahhh, an ickle pony



Aaaahhhh, four ickle men ☺



Snowdon from Y Garn



And again !

The following day, after Phil & Andy had gone home, Neil and I were joined by Carol Boothroyd and a superb day was had ascending the North Ridge of Tryfan in somewhat trying winter conditions given that we'd had a good fall of snow in the night. The ridge proved more troublesome than usual and twas deemed prudent, by two of us, to move left onto the East Face traverse path (if it can be called that !) to reach the summit though the more sure footed Neil decided to take the challenge straight on and took the last steep buttress direct.

In places it proved quite slippery given the fresh snow and one had a real sense of accomplishment after reaching the summit though I declined the alluring prospect of leaping from Adam to Eve – one must not be 'gung ho' about these things ☺

Mention must be made, before I forget, about the horrendous price of a bowl of chips in Cobdens Hotel the night before. £3.95 was a tad excessive for a small bowl of Tesco / Asda / Netto (delete as appropriate) oven chips, I think they'd made a mistake in charging so much though big respect and thanks to Neil for fighting our corner and being bolshie enough to demand a refund after we'd eaten most of them. One must learn from these things and the Bryn Tyrch is looking good now ☺



Carol putting her hair up on Tryfan



A bowl of chips – not actual size !

The same weekend Geoff Brierley and Mike Dagley went for a walk in the Moelwyn's and Mark Cashman chose to forgo the comfort and delights of the Chapel and elected to stay at the Climber's Club hut in Ogwen with the Bedford MC and while I don't know what they got up to on the hill I am sure a good trip was had as it's a superb and historic hut.

The following weekend was an official Gwydyr hut weekend and a good turn-out by members (existing and prospective) failed to ensure an enjoyable weekend as I was not there ☺ Actually, and you may find this hard to believe, but it was a good weekend and the weather was stunning thus enabling people to enjoy themselves without my being present.

After a long Friday night solving the world's ills a bright Saturday morning saw two groups leave the Chapel for a great day's walking. One party went to the Carneddau walking up Pen Yr Helgi Du and Pen Llithrig Y Wrach while the other team went on a walk to Dolwyddelan. The weather was clearly stunning and I am pleased that Sarah Walters (prospective member) sent the two pictures below to show how beautiful Snowdonia was that weekend.



Jasper (not a PM but his mum is ☺)



Snowdon & Lliwedd

I should add that Ronnie Davis, ever a man to do his own thing, chose to ascend the North Ridge of Tryfan and walk back to the Chapel – good effort Ron ☺

Andy Odger and Kevin McEvoy had a quick 'day-dart' out on the Glyders and a superb walk was the result – clearly these two have a summer trip to the Dolomites on their mind and it was probably just a male bonding session as they didn't even call in to the chapel, Andy's excuse being that he could not get his car up the lane because of the snow ☺



Kec McEvoy on a rock in Wales



Andy Odger on the same rock

Apparently some booze was drunk Saturday night, clearly to drown the boredom of my not being there – it's great being delusional ☺ and so Sunday was to prove a more relaxed and laid back affair with most choosing to go up Moel Siabod in continuing good weather.

Margaret Blakeborough and Graham James went to the Lake District and had two lovely days walking in the snow while staying at the Wayfarer's Hut in Langdale. On the Saturday they walked from Troutbeck to Ambleside and on the Sunday they walked on the Cartmel Fells which the views were apparently amazing.

And so that really concludes November however I have played out a little bit myself so I am not a total 'slacker'. I had a lovely short day with a friend paddling round the Great Orme in my stunningly beautiful new sea kayak and a week later I had a great giggle trying to get round Hilbre Island but apparently the swell was too great and we turned back before it got too silly.

On the last day of November I took the train to Glossop and walked up 'Doctor's Gate' to Edale via Mill Hill and Edale Cross in conditions that can only be described as 'Arctic'. Clearly I was well prepared and ensured that a large Americano was drunk in the local Costa in Glossop before venturing out into the wilds of the Pennine moors. However it did get rather 'wild' at one point and I was supremely glad to make Edale and the mulled wine in the Ramblers Hotel was worth a million dollars though the coal fire was equally as desired if only to dry myself out, sadly it required two glasses of the aforesaid before I was sufficiently dry (outside) and presentable for public transport back to the Wirral and the Tuesday night 'OB' at the Stork.



A 'closed' Snake Pass !!!!!



Edale Cross



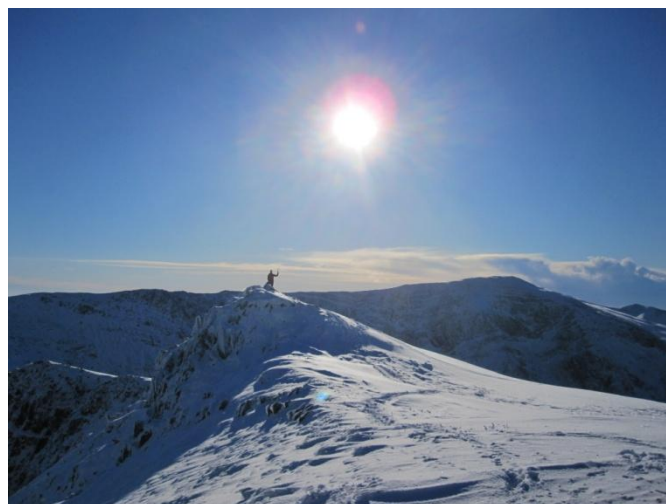
Hilbre Island



The most Beautiful Sea kayak in the world ☺

So that's November taken care of but this newsletter is running a week late and so I can 'squeeze' in this last weekend's activities so far as is known to me.....

The cold weather is continuing and with little hope on the horizon of any significant thaw we are possibly looking at the best and earliest winter for the last thirty years ☺



Andy Chapman on the Carneddau when walking with Richard & Tony

On Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December Andy Odger, Phil Earl and I walked / climbed up Senior's Ridge to the summit of Glyder Fawr and while we were denied any views the walk was thoroughly enjoyable. We popped into the Chapel on the way back and bumped into Andy Chapman who had come out to enjoy the winter conditions after a week's rock climbing in sunny Spain. While out there Andy managed to climb some of Ogwen's classic ice routes including The Screen, Chicane Gully, Central Route and Cold House Crack. Andy has brought back with him some items of equipment left at the Chapel including Dave Cole's red fleece, Pete Mann's Crampons however there is an ice axe the owner of which is unknown so if you've lost one can you email Andy to arrange delivery.

Adrian Dolan had a cold and misty day on the Saturday on Kinder Scout.

Sunday was a much clearer day with Carol Boothroyd and I having a brilliant short day on the Mam Tor – Lose Hill ridge. The views were superb with cloud filled valleys and clear sunny summits providing a total contrast from the previous Tuesday when I struggled over Jacob's Ladder in a near white out. This ridge walk is one of the loveliest in the district and is very popular so for those looking for an easy day out it's well worth doing and there are also delightfully quaint cafe's galore in Castleton ☺



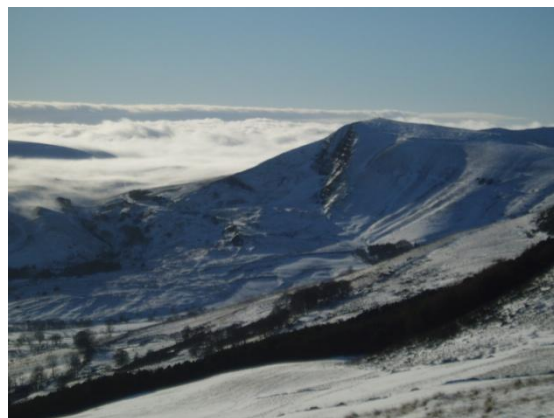
Phil Earl at the start of Senior's Ridge



Andy Odger on a steep bit



View towards Winnat's Pass from Mam Tor



Mam Tor from Back Tor



I received the following article from Roy Haythornthwaite of the Burnley MC and he has asked that I include it in our newsletter. Apparently the members of the Burnley club are regular visitor's to our web site 😊

### **IT'S NOT LOOKING TOO GOOD**

So you're out for a walk up in the Lakes, you get to a tricky bit, say up wetherlam somewhere, Whoops.... you trip over a rock and break your ankle. Not to worry you've got your mobile and ring for help, 20 mins later the helicopter arrives and you breathe a sigh of relief, the nice guy in bright orange smiles and says "are you insured with anyone for rescue". Oh dear you say, I don't think so, perhaps I'm ok with my house insurance cover. "I'm sorry" he says "you've got to carry a green rescue card, or we can't pick you up" and he gets back in the helicopter and off it goes leaving you still on the mountain. Ok, that's a bit far-fetched and probably wouldn't happen, but the government is looking to privatise the search and rescue service, and that will bring such a scenario a little bit nearer. The service is being sold off to a private company for £6 billion, the mainly French/Canadian company with backing from the RBS..... hang on a mow, didn't we give them guys £40 billion of our money to bail them out, is it our money they've used ?

And on top of that do you think they are going to pay that sort of money and not expect anything back? of course not.

So each and every one of us may well be advised to take out insurance, and how many walkers are there in the UK? 1 million, 2, 3, I don't know, probably a heck of a lot more, but obviously you're talking about a lot of money. Being a bit cynical you can bet the shares in the buying companies have already been snatched up by those in the know, nod, nod, wink, wink. Even the RAF are angry about the decision to reduce the rescue crews from 242 to 66 and they are also getting rid of the British made Sea king copters

and replacing them with the American made Sikorsky S92A at a cost £15 million each.

This is the same type as the one that crashed last year killing 17 out of the 18 passengers, it replaces the Sea King, a version of which first came in to service almost 50 years ago, and has had a near perfect safety record.

And just to make it all seem even more ludicrous, the American government is now buying Russian made helicopters instead of the U.S. Black Hawke, you just couldn't make this up.

### Roy Haythornthwaite



I received the above two pictures from Linda and Mike Gavin while they were on their tour of the Southern Hemisphere and now they have returned one hopes that they will put together a short article on the trip for the next newsletter ☺

This coming weekend is the club Christmas dinner at the Peerless Brewery in Birkenhead, an event that perhaps unsurprisingly has sold out given what's on offer. I expect the club members who are attending will do their duty and drink the brewery dry ☺ That would be a grand opening article in the next newsletter !

Before this event, earlier in the day, Dave Gray has a walk in the Clwyd's arranged and he assures me that it will be finished in time for people to scuttle back to the Wirral and have sufficient time to get changed etc. I suppose the obligatory 'off the hill' pint may be abandoned on this occasion.

<b>MEETS PROGRAMME</b>	
<b>DECEMBER 2010</b>	
11	Sat Walk - Bryn Alyn (Dave Gray)
20-31	<b>HUT</b> -Christmas Meet
<b>JANUARY 2011</b>	
01-02	<b>HUT</b> -New Year Meet
08	Sat Walk - Velvet Hill (Dave Gray)
21-22	<b>HUT</b> – Burns Night (Chris/Jan Harris)

One event that is a must attend is the Burn's Night at the Chapel and I am sure it will be another well attended meet though I think this year I will forgo the Kilt and Deep-Fried Mars Bars though if anyone else wishes to take up the mantle please feel free to do so.

One final reminder to all members is the Club Christmas Card Donation for those not wishing to send a card to other members. We are collecting monies on behalf of Kidney Research (or something) and this was an organisation that was close to our dear friend, John Huxley so for those members who wish to make a donation please send a £5 cheque to Dave Gray and I will mention in a future newsletter how much we've raised.

Anyway that's enough for now and I would just like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Allan McDonald