

# THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB NEWSLETTER – EXTRA!

**May 2024: Editor Dave Gray**



## Introduction

Thank you for supporting last month's pilot edition of the Newsletter.

This month we have our regular three features plus an Extra! article from Teresa on a dramatic – and challenging – ascent of Blencathra.

Thanks to Brenda, Helen G, Janet Coates, Margaret, Mark Barley, Mike Doyle, Teresa and of course David LJ for help with this edition.

## Looking ahead

Here are the upcoming meets venues for May and June, details are on the Club Website. The meets list is constantly being updated, please **check it out regularly** on the Website. Meets added to the programme since the last edition on 2 April are in bold as a reminder **in case you've missed them...**

7 May	Social event at Gallaghers: Quiz
<b>7 May</b>	<b>Climbing - Helsby</b>
10/12 May	Spring BBQ/Hut weekend
<b>16 May</b>	<b>South Clwyds</b>
<b>21 May</b>	<b>Climbing – Dyserth Waterfall Crag</b>
26 May/2 June	Scotland Trip: Aviemore
4 June	Social Event at Gallaghers: New Zealand Talk
<b>4 June</b>	<b>Climbing Irby Quarry</b>
7/9 June	Hut Weekend
<b>18 June</b>	<b>Climbing Dyserth Castle Slab</b>
21/23 June	Hut Weekend: Welsh 3000s

## Venues in Focus



It's great that a new Thursday day trip meet, **the South Clwyds** has recently been slotted in by Janet Coates.

This is a lovely area where I've often walked, much quieter than the hills to the north but commanding big all round views.

This picture is Moel Gyw from above Llanferres, in high summer.

Also new on the block is a series of **Outdoor Climbing Meets** organised by Mike Doyle. These feature relatively local crags both trad and bolted. They live in the Climbing section of the website, that hitherto was unknown ground for me! There is also a midweek meet in August year being organised by Gail Smith at the Hut.

One of Mike's venues is Irby Quarry where the late Barry Otterson used to take us climbing back in the day.



For those who've not been before, **Aviemore** is a fantastic base for walking and climbing, with plenty for everyone and, not always the case, things to do at a low level if the weather doesn't behave. The main Cairngorms range in Gaelic is traditionally called the *Monadh Ruadh*, or Red Mountains.



My own first visit was in Days of Wool and Nylon (i.e. 1980!) when best mate Bob and I backpacked over the 4,000 summits in the main range. This ancient picture is Bob on Angels' Peak with Braeriach, the UK's third highest mountain, behind.

Bob still has his compass round his neck because we'd just gone over Braeriach in mist.

We went on to camp on the plateau, and then headed west to Fort William doing the other Scots 4000' summits on the way.

This trip was also my first experience of walking in the Highlands so I was in at the deep end!



Had we been in Cairngorms just 20 years or so earlier we'd have no doubt been smoking pipes...like this stalwart of the Loch Garten RSPB bird reserve. 'Manly' or what! Our trip was in August and pipe smoke might have kept off the midgies.

From the look of him, no midge would have dared to bite George. He was a POW in WW2 and there has recently been a book written, called 'Birds in a Cage' about what he and his friends achieved whilst POWs.

Loch Garten was the original home to ospreys after their return to breeding in the UK, and guarding the nest from the horrid egg collectors was an epic task. Literally back to barbed wire for George.

The reserve is forested, and is very beautiful in an understated way. It's a pleasant alternative venue if the weather is unkind.

As is often the case with bird reserves, the birds I went to see weren't there and I had to wait till 2024 to see my first UK osprey. I did however get to see a Capercaillie (a big grouse the size of a flying Christmas dinner!) on its nest. Some bird, some nest.



No pipes in were evidence in 2019 on a fantastic Aviemore meet Teresa organised.

This photo shows the slightly gentler Monadliath (the Grey Mountains) – still Munros – on the north side of the Spey valley.

The peak is Carn Dearg above the Allt Ballach.

Between us we did all the Monadhliath munros in 2019. Long days in terms of distance but easier going overall than the Monadh Ruadh. And very wild and remote in feel.

At a level down in the hills a good day is a circuit from Glenmore via Ryvoan taking in the Meall a Buchaille – Craigowrie ridge. The first hill is the main summit at 2,657 feet. A final idea at low level would be to do part of the Speyside Way ( <https://www.speysideway.co.uk/>).

## Grand Days Out (and In) – Recent Meets Highlights



We had thirteen people (including 4 prospective members) out on a very breezy but sunny day, for Mark Barley's **Lantern Pike and Cown Edge** walk on 6 April.

We had magnificent views, some good laughs, and most people finished off with a drink in the pub at Rowarth. Here's some of us looking windswept on the west side of the Edge.

For more on these hills, look back at last month's newsletter!

Looking a back a little further, Margaret tells me that '...we held the **Annual Dinner** at the Sunlight Restaurant in Bebington. The staff there could not have been more accommodating and the venue proved to be very suitable.



The food was very good and the surroundings very nice. The feedback from our diners was excellent and quite a few people thought it ideal for next year too!

Everyone enjoyed catching up with friends that had not been seen for a while, and chatting with some new members who came along for the first time.

We played the now customary stand up bingo, which Hew organised. We

had three cash prize winners.

Then followed the free raffle with prizes of a Cotswold voucher, a Marks& Spencer voucher, a bottle of malt whisky, a bottle of Japanese gin, a weekend at the cottage, a voucher for afternoon tea for two (given by the restaurant) and an oil painting of 1953 Ascent of Everest painted by me.

All recipients seemed delighted with their prizes.

There were 13 entries to the photo competition (the Gwydyr and the Weather) it was won by Nicki by one vote. There were three photos with the same number of votes till the last vote came in!

Adele worked hard doing all the technical stuff on the lap top and the joint organisation ended up very much down to her, leaving me just to do the running about...'



I know from the jolly sounds coming from David LJ's mobile when I rang him up that the **Little Langdale Meet** was great fun. See thumbnail left. Look out for more on this meet in the next Extra! edition...

On the **climbing** side of town Mike Doyle and Alan J had a successful day out on Fence Buttress, on Penmaenmawr Mountain. They did four routes, the one illustrated is 47 and 71, graded F5.

The other picture is a shot of the crag taken using a drone.



And finally, time out was taken on the regular Thursday indoor climbing meet at The Boardroom to give David LJ a splendid cake and gift to celebrate his **BIG** birthday!



If you've never read 'The White Spider', find a copy and give it a go – a classic book.

**EXTRA!**

## **A BLOWY BLENCATHRA! – by Teresa Peddie**

Bryn and I had planned to climb Blencathra via Halls Fell Ridge. The ridge is quite exposed higher up with some nice scrambling.

We chose a day in between the winter storms when the weather was forecast to be dry and less windy.

However, when the day dawned the forecast had changed, and 40-50 mph winds were forecast!

So change of plan, and we opted for the safer route of ascent via Scales Fell and descent via Bannerdale Crags and White Horse Bent.

There were spectacular views...

*Scales Fell to the Summit...*



*Sharp Edge and Foule Crag from Scales Fell...*



It was definitely the right choice for the weather, as the wind was very strong both on the way up and a steady 50 on the exposed top! Added to this was the excitement of lots of icy patches, making footing perilous and staying upright a challenge!

*Blencathra summit overlooking Clough Head and the Dodds...*



*Blencathra summit looking over to Skiddaw...*



*And Bryn on the summit, with Derwentwater in the background...*

