THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB NEWSLETTER – EXTRA!

November 2025: Editor Dave Gray

Introduction

Welcome to the November Newsletter! This is an Extra! edition with an article from Steve Swygart on his and Helen's climbing road trip in Scandinavia, which includes some great photos and interesting insights into the stranger bits of Scandi culture. For technical reasons that will be emailed separately. Thank you to Steve, and also to Heather, Helen Grant, Mike Doyle, Ray, Richard Merry, Tom Humphreys, and as ever DLJ for help with this edition. Please let me have material for the next edition, the final deadline for that is **November 26th**.

Looking Ahead

Here are the upcoming meets venues for November and December, 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 are in bold as a reminder **in case you've missed them…….**

4 November	Special General Meeting at Gallaghers
7-9 November	Hut Weekend (Bonfire Party)
15 November	**Saturday Walk – Lyme Park and Sponds Hill**
28 -30 November	Hut Weekend (Asian Weekend)
9 December	Christmas Meal at Gallaghers
12-14 December	Hut Weekend (Silver Navigation Course)
18 December	GMC Christmas Climbing Competition
24 December – 1 Jan	Christmas and New Year Hut Meet

Venues in Focus

Starting off with the **Lyme Park and Sponds Hill** meet, I've taken the opportunity to do a bit of research, into two questions that have bugged me on previous visits.

On the ridge we pass the historic Bow Stones, two atmospheric eroded 8th-10th century Anglo-Saxon cross shafts (*photo credit 'Kenny H'*). The thinking is they once stood elsewhere and were re-erected here in the 16th century as boundary or way marks, and that the cross heads are in the house in Lyme Park. I've finally (found a photo of one of these cross heads which is overleaf (*photo credit* https://www.flickr.com/photos/tedesco57/40811091754)

Anglo Saxon crosses could be very tall. The 10th/11th century one at Maen Achwyfan in Flintshire tops out at 11 feet tall.

And what or who was or is a Spond? Why Sponds Hill? Well the jury is out. Even the Oxford English Dictionary seems to give up on what a spond is – there's just one obscure reference in English in 1763. Derived from the Latin word for a couch. I reckon it's more likely that it's named after a person. Spond is an unusual surname, but Sponds are present in the southern half of England per https://en.geneanet.org/surnames/SPOND .

Any better theories please let me know!

The summit of the hill is the site of a round barrow, a burial mound from the neolithic or early bronze age.

Otherwise, next month's meet focus is on the **Hut**, including the **Asian weekend** which I am really sorry I won't be able to go to. I do love curry! And cook a version at least for myself a lot. Fellow bachelors listen up dudes! And those of you who cook it properly please look away now, 'cause here comes my Instant Cheats Curry recipe…

Ingredients (serves 1 or 2) – 1 large brown onion, coarsely chopped

2 or 3 fresh tomatoes cut into halves or quarters (you can used drained canned plum ones but fresh is much better)

2 generous half teaspoons of medium or hot curry powder

3 or 4 teaspoons of either mango chutney (Asda or better still Geeta's), or Aubergine (Brinjal) pickle (Pataks)

A generous amount in a frying pan of olive or sunflower etc. oil

The *subject of the curry*, an appropriate amount beef, pork or turkey mince; or chicken breast or turkey thigh chopped small, or a drained can of tuna, or chopped mushrooms, or chopped red or green peppers. Or a mix if you fancy it.

Method - 1. Do any necessary chopping up of ingredients

2. Put the oil in the pan and scatter in half the curry powder to infuse, bring to high heat if you're cooking meat, medium if your main ingredient is veg.

3. For the meat version add the meat and onions and brown the meat, then turn down to fry on a medium heat. For non meat put mushrooms or peppers and onions in the oil, and fry on medium heat from the start. If you're using tinned tuna, put that in nearer the end and start off just with the onions.

4. When the ingredients go in the pan, sprinkle with the rest of the curry powder and keep on frying on a medium heat. For at least 20 minutes if you're currying meat, making sure it's cooked through. A bit into the fry up put in the tomatoes and a

bit more curry powder if needs be. It doesn't matter if the ingredients sear a bit. Stir the mix occasionally as it fries.

5. Meanwhile cook the rice and extra veg etc. A few minutes before it's all ready, stir chutney or pickle into the pan, lower the heat a bit and let it infuse and heat through. Serve!

I hope everyone enjoys the meet and appreciates curries and other food cooked the proper way! I had a sneak preview of an early draft menu – my picks on that would be the Fruit Lassi,Tandoori Chicken, Slow Baked Spiced Beef.

Occasional Section – Members Personal News

In this edition we remember Club life member **John Beamer 1943 – 2025**

Together with his great friend Maurice Ewing, John joined the GMC in May 1968. They were part of the climbing scene at the Breck in Wallasey and sources vary as to whether they encouraged the famous mountaineer Alan Rouse to join, or whether it was the other way round!

John served as Club Chairman in 1970, as President from 1971 to 1973, and as Trustee of Tan y Garth. He was a convivial man and some idea of his great capacity for fun is given in John Huxley's Club history, one early days story being: 'One of the great post-pub activities was listening to John Beamer reciting from the [Llanrwst] Hut Log; sometimes he wore a road cone on each foot while doing this. More normally, though, he would dance around in the road cones afterwards.'

John worked on the railways on Wirral. In 1975 he and his late wife Gill moved to Scotland, settling down in a lochside cottage in Torridon in 1976. He worked at various jobs including the oil rig building concern at Kishorn. John was very active in the Scottish hills, back in the pre 'Munro bagging - tick list era', but Gill recorded that he did Ben Nevis by Carn Mor Dearg Arete with Maurice, and that he 'claims that this was his second mountain ever'. Other Highlands classics making it into writing include Liathach, Ben Alligin, and Suilven. John was on the Club Anniversary Meets in Nepal in 1992 and the USA in 1997.

His wider interests included wildfowling with Maurice, his boat on Loch Torridon, and fishing both there, and more recently down in England with again Maurice.

One of his great qualities was being helpful to others. He was turned out on mountain rescues in Torridon, as well as being a volunteer Coast Guard. As late as 2020 he was nominated as a 'Local Hero' by the people of Torridon, for keeping the local road ditches clear and reducing flooding risk during the Pandemic. More personally, Fred Heywood recorded his close friendship with Alan Rouse in the book written after Al's death – 'John was the friend he turned to whenever he was troubled'. When I and several other Club members were rained out of Glen Affric in 1986, John quickly found us refuge in Torridon – I for one was deeply grateful!

Grand Days Out (and In) – Recent Meets Highlights

Helen Grant tells me that the **Yorkshire Three Peaks** meet was ‘a brilliant day; wall to wall sunshine’. Everyone in the party who set out to do all three summits did so, in just under 12 hours. As you can see from Ray’s photos below, it was a sunrise start from Ribblehead, with its magnificent viaduct, going over Whernside as the first summit. Some of the team came out for the day, others stayed and ate at the Station House pub at Ribblehead by arrangement using their camper vans.

Pen y Ghent was the final one of the three, again captured by Ray. A big thank you to Derek Claxton and Geoff the dog for supporting the walk, meeting the team at two points en route.

After crediting HM The King in the last edition, this newsletter Goes Royal yet again! The Club had it seems been loaned some old personalised trousers by Prince William for the **Hut Working Weekend**…see Richard Merry's photo right…

There were a number of members hard at work, not least on doing a deep clean of the Hut. Thanks to everyone who turned out!

Additionally, Tom Humphreys reported 'Thanks to Sven and his friend Owen (the WIFI expert) the WIFI in the hut is at long last back up and running and is whizzy.

We owe them a big round of thanks. They gave up their weekend free of charge and repaired the system that apparently was quite a mess, that needed debugging with significant parts replaced that Owen very generously provided free of charge. He's not a club member he's a good friend of Sven's and obviously a very decent person and now a GMC friend.'

Mike Doyle's first report from the Sicily Sports Climbing Trip was short and to the point: 'Weather hot - beer cold!' Two super photos he posted are on the next page, one is Melinda climbing, the other is of karst scenery plus the Med.

x

The **Joint Meet with Dundee** MC in Chapel le Dale went off well from posts on Facebook, and has the **Moel Findeg** Sunday walk. I've been away from home for a few days coming up to I press so I'll cover these fully in the next newsletter, please watch this space!