

THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB NEWSLETTER

October 2026: Editor Dave Gray



Introduction

Welcome to the October Newsletter!

Thanks to Bill, Gill Eccles, Nicky, and to Brenda with this edition. Please let me have material for the next edition, the final deadline for that is **October 26th**.

Looking Ahead

Here are the upcoming meets venues for October and November, 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....**

3 October	Saturday Walk – ‘Cheshire Three Peaks’
9-11 October	Hut Weekend (Work Weekend)
3 November	Tuesday Evening at Gallaghers – ‘Arctic Circle Solo hiking in Kungsleden with a Labrador’ – talk by Adeline
6-8 November	Hut Weekend – Bonfire Night Celebrations
17 November – 3 Dec.	Costa Blanca Trip
20-22 November	Hut Weekend (Silver Navigation Course)
27-29 November	Hut Weekend

Focus on Venues

The first meet of October is Bill's **Cheshire Three Peaks** walk – over Tegg's Nose, Shutlingsloe, and Shining Tor.

These are three varied hills, but perhaps the most distinctive is Shutlingsloe, a mini-mimic-Matterhorn that features in a lot of Peak District views. Here it is, brooding and mysterious, on a brooding day in February this year, a day that at one stage snowed on us!

Now for some Shutlingsloe FAQs: (1) why is it so pointy then?

In many views the hill is almost conical, but as you can see above it's more like a



prominent whaleback ridge. The prominence is due to the geology - the website <https://trailtrack.co.uk> reports that 'Shutlingsloe is built from layers of hard sandstone, mudstone, and siltstone. These tough rocks, known as Millstone Grit, give the fell its iconic, steep-sided shape'. Wikipedia clarifies that this is no ordinary Millstone Grit but that the lower slopes of the hill are Roaches Grit, and the topmost tor is Chatsworth Grit.

Roaches Grit is super hard and so Shutlingsloe has resisted the erosive attentions of wind, water, soil, and ice since well before the time of the dinosaurs, having been formed in the Carboniferous Period. Apart from the Roaches themselves, it is responsible for high points such as Axe Edge, Hen Cloud, and Ramshaw Rocks.

Shining Tor is also a Chatsworth Grit formation – another well know hard case in the Gritstone Gang. Apparently Shining Tor lacks any sign of glacial deposits so may have been a 'nunatak' standing clear of ice in the last glaciation.

FAQ number 2: 'Why was Shutling so Sloe?' The name is – again per Wikipedia – believed to be Anglo-Saxon in origin. The 'sloe' element is akin to the name element 'Low' or 'Law' given to many hills in England and southern Scotland – e.g. 'Broad Law', the highest hill in the Southern Uplands. All these elements are derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'hlaw' meaning 'hill'.

I had thought that the 'Shutlings' piece might refer to a *tribe* of people, which is often the case with places – e.g. Hastings – in eastern England that were settled/absorbed early on by Anglo Saxons. In the Hastings case by the Hastingas, the 'followers of Hasta'. But no, it's apparently simply a derivative of an Old English personal name – 'Scyttel', so we have 'Scyttel's Hill'.

Mmmmm...all that said I tried to find any known Anglo Saxon's Scyttels lurking online in amongst all the Ethelreds and Wulfstans and found zilch. What I did find was the suggestion that Scyttel is in fact (also ?) an ordinary Old English noun, meaning 'bolt' as in door, or 'dart' as in a small arrow made for throwing. It comes out in our word 'shuttle', the pointed tool used in weaving. So perhaps we have in fact got 'dart (as in arrow) hill' which might make sense given the pointed shape that's so well known?

This is picture of the metalwork of an iron-tipped 4th/5th century Roman plumbata, or lead-weighted military throwing dart. This is about 9cm long and with the wooden shaft/feather fletchings the whole thing would have been at least 30 cm long (credit <https://www.roman-artifacts.com>).



These things were news to me! As far as I could make out they were used particularly to injure or daunt enemy cavalry assaults and/or assaults by unarmoured infantry.

Military darts were used in medieval times in war and in hunting and are pictured in the art of the period, sometimes held by rulers as authority symbols. Roman written evidence suggests the weighted Roman darts were slung at the enemy rather like a long handled German WW2 hand grenade, and that a Roman soldier might be issued with up to five of them to hang ready from his shield.

It's worth saying that there is still academic debate about some of the practical detail of Roman military practice, and that sources are patchy. Also, actual examples of military darts from medieval times don't appear to have survived – the thinking is that without a lead weight, and with the handles etc. rotted away, they can't be distinguished from spear or crossbow arrow points.

And finally FAQ 3: 'I seem to remember Shutlingsloe from reading books at when I was a youngster?'

Very possibly. The hill features in the climax of Alan Garner's book, aimed at young people, 'The Weirdstone of Brisingamen'. Garner writes for both adults and young people; his fantasy books are a bit like the Harry Potter series in that magical events happen in a real world context. Like all successful and popular authors, he gets some criticism from people who either can't write creatively or whose books won't sell, but I think the books are enjoyable, not least because in the 'Weirdstone' the main villain, Grimnir, lives in a swamp in late 1950s Wilmslow!

Garner's sequel 'The Moon of Gomerath' features Shining Tor too, in a dramatic night-time scene. Here's a picture of its ridge and summit, taken from the north west.



I was out walking on the Clwyds the other week with Christine Smyth, a former member and Chair of the Club, and we were thinking back to fun days at **The Hut**. I asked her what her favourite walk based there had been, excluding the Welsh 3000s walk which she has completed.

Chris's response was 'Llyn Caseg-Fraith from Capel Curig'. It is a great hill walk in itself but it takes in one of the most beautiful places in Wales.

Llyn Caseg-Fraith translates into English as 'Lake of the Speckled Mare' and is a high pool on the eastern Glyders plateau. Its setting amongst the mountains is superb, and in the right conditions it acts as a reflecting pool for the east face of Tryfan.

This photo shows Glyder Fach and Tryfan from the lake on a spring morning (*Photo credit* www.bbc.co.uk)



You can start Chris's walk at the car park in Capel Curig and head north on the track towards Gelli Farm, or can do a longer day by starting at Capel and walking to Gelli via the river and Plas y Brenin. This latter allows you to take in the stunning view of the Snowdon Horseshoe across Llynau Mymbyr as an added extra.

From Gelli you pick up a steepish grassy path threading its way through small crags to emerge onto the boggy plateau of Cefn y Capel. From there it's a case of following the large path along the broad ridge, taking in the summits of Gallt yr Ogof and Y Foel Goch, the easternmost peaks of the Glyders range. Gallt yr Ogof means 'Height of the Cave' in Welsh and has major cliffs, particularly on the eastern side. Y Foel Goch is yet another 'Bald Red Hill' and isn't so immediately impressive – in my day the Ordnance Survey had lost the Welsh name somewhere in the bureaucratic mists and we therefore knew it as 'Nameless Peak' which I reckon sounds more exciting!

After a gentle descent the plateau levels out and you come to Llyn Caseg-Fraith.

After taking in the lake it's a case of joining the Glyder Miner's Path and descending steeply north, and when the slope eases off taking the path that goes to the right and down Cwm

Tryfan to the main valley. I always enjoyed this path, it has a wild feel, being overlooked by Tryfan's east face, especially if you're in the winter months and the light is fading.

Once in the valley it's a case of following the 'old road' the byway on the south side that parallels the A5 back to Gelli and the start of the walk.

Grand Days Out (and In) – Recent Meets Highlights

Gill Eccles writes 'What a fabulous trip it was to Austria, trekking the **Stubai Hohenweg** route. Through beautiful mountains, with glaciers, rivers, lakes and spectacular scenery.

Thanks to Sue for organising the trip, it's much appreciated.'

Here are a few of Gill's photos. First of all the group outside the Franz Sehn Hut at 2,147m...



This is the group just after leaving the Starkenburger Hutte on day two, looking at the Schlicker Seespitze (2,804m).

And here's shot from day 6 of the trek, between Sulzenauhütte and Nürnberger Hutte. The lake is the Grunausee, with the Gamsspitzl (3,052m) behind



And to ease us back into things UK some misty weather! Gill told me that 'On our final day on the trek, weather turned and we woke to a dusting of snow, so we had to take a safer route down the valley from the Innsbrucker Hutte to Karbala, before heading to the Elferhutte for refreshments then onwards back into Neustift.'



Nicky writes 'Just back from a fabulous **Hut Weekend** - solo hiking on Crimpiau, swimming and the Glyderau with Adele Samuel, Adrian and prospective Adrian - all in the sunshine 😊'

Here are some of her photos of the weekend, starting with the view south west from Crimpiau.

The final shot – Nicky standing on one leg on the Cantilever Rock amazed me. The only time I went on it I crawled along and didn't dare to stand up!



This next is of wild ponies on Crimpiau, and below that of Nicky on the Glyders Plateau:



