

# THE GWYDYR<sub>No26(FEB2012)</sub>

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB



I love this picture ! It's the Cuillin in case you were wondering ☺

Welcome to this months newsletter and I hope it finds everyone well and looking forward to the Spring ☺ It has been so mild of late though Andy Chapman has emailed me to say there is still some of the white stuff in Scotland if anyone wants to make the journey up north.

At the end of the newsletter is a brief note from me and I, as well as all the other committee members, would appreciate your comments on what is suggested ☺

As usual there has been lots going on and I've had quite a few emails, actually more than usual so a big thank you, from members telling of daring do's.....

First up is an article from Geoff Brierley which I received too late for last months newsletter but I include now for completeness of the successful Burns night weekend – thanks Geoff :-

## **BURNS NIGHT**

January 2012 ended with the now solidly successful Burns Night celebration. It was great to have the opportunity to cook for the club and there was absolutely no way the food could have made it to the knives and forks of the diners without the interstellar work of Helen Brady and Reg.

Menu

Starter

Homemade Leek and Potato Soup or

Fillet of Pork with black pudding, wrapped in bacon and served with a rhubarb and honey sauce

Main

Haggis and mashed potato with crème fraiche in a tower, served with Neeps and beetroot puree

Dessert

Strawberry Cranachan trifle / Deep Fried Mars Bars !!



Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February saw me ascending Snowdon via the Watkin Path for a change. I hadn't been on the Watkin for some time until the previous weekend and I really fancied trying Yr Aran and Snowdon via its South Ridge. However there was still a good amount of snow around and the low hanging cloud that obscured Yr Aran made me reconsider my plan.

Rather than play the oft rehearsed game of Navigation Lottery I plumped for following the Watkin all the way to the summit.

And what a route it was today, as I neared Bwlch Cilian I encountered the first of the ice and from then on the snow banked up, leaving a narrow area that was just right to follow up the side of the mountain.

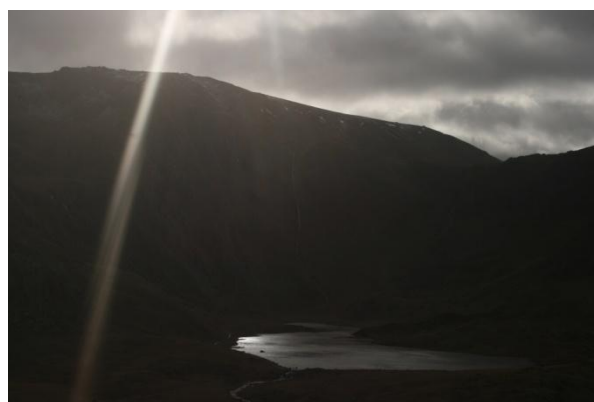


I was prepared for a quiet summit experience but on arriving the whole area was thronged with people, something of a surprise given the conditions.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> February I visited the cottage to do some work on the staircase and took the opportunity of an early morning dash to Pen yr Ole Wen, however the wind, lashing rain and hail put me off, twice.

Heading back to the cottage I got on with the work and shortly bumped into Neil and Andy who had come out for a scramble.

As they left I realised the weather had improved and took the chance to give Pen yr Ole Wen another go. This time the weather was considerably improved so I started up the South West ridge. Unfortunately the hail hadn't yet finished with me and in a particularly harsh shower it beat down upon the mountainside coating it afresh with a white sheen.



I swiftly donned a waterproof and turned round to head back down, I was happy to have done something and I certainly wasn't inclined to be out in this weather for the rest of the afternoon. By the time I reached the road however it had stopped but it turned out that this was to be the way of

it as yet another shower followed not too much later. I'd made the right decision and certainly a pint must be in order from the Tyn y Coed?

Chris & Janet Harris enjoyed a wintry looking weekend in the Lake District at the beginning of the month and Chris emailed me the following :-

### **North West Lakes – On the cheap !!**

We never intended to bag lists of mountains but after talking to various people in the club we realized it's an excellent way to make us choose new routes and areas so in October 2011 we took a chance on booking the Cockermouth Travelodge for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> February this year. We were hoping for decent weather so we could add to our Wainwright count and we weren't disappointed.

Arriving in the Lakes late morning on the Wednesday we managed the relatively easy Fellbarrow and Low Fell in sunny sub zero conditions with views across to the windmills of the Solway Firth.



The next day (-4C when we left the car) we managed an icy walk/scramble up to Whiteside and along the ridge to Hopegill Head. Then, heading out to Grasmoor and back via Wandope and Whiteless Pike. The conditions on top were beautiful, just enough snow to give character but not too much to impede

progress. Thankfully the strong breeze dropped to gentle by the time we got to the top as I reckon it was about minus 10C up there. The only hazard being an area of ice covered rock for of a couple of hundred feet below the snow level which was easily overcome with the help of Grivel Spiders. The biggest challenge was leaving the Kirkstile Inn after the walk.

*Janet on the "path" from Whiteside to Hopegill Head*



*Looking back on the route from Wandope with Grasmoor on the left, Crag Hill on the right and Hopegill Head in the distant middle (our shadows on the right !!).*

The next day was still subzero so we just had a pootle up Rannerdale Knotts, one of Wainwright's pimples, and then down to Buttermere, followed by a bit of retail therapy in Keswick picking up New Year bargains.

A total of eight Wainwrights over 3 days.

The Travelodge (recommended) was £10 per room per night and was warm and clean and the room was large. Cockermouth is a lovely working town rather than the tourist traps in the rest of the Lakes. There are some excellent shops and restaurants and it's only 20 minutes stroll from the Travelodge. You would never guess it was only back in November 2009 when the floods submerged the town in fact it is perhaps cleaner than it was as everything is freshly painted or repaired. The high water markers at head height are a bit disconcerting.

Thanks Chris, a Travelodge for a tenner seems a right bargain 😊

Chris also wrote the following on the Clwyd's walk on the 4<sup>th</sup> February :-

### **Saturday walk 4<sup>th</sup> February**

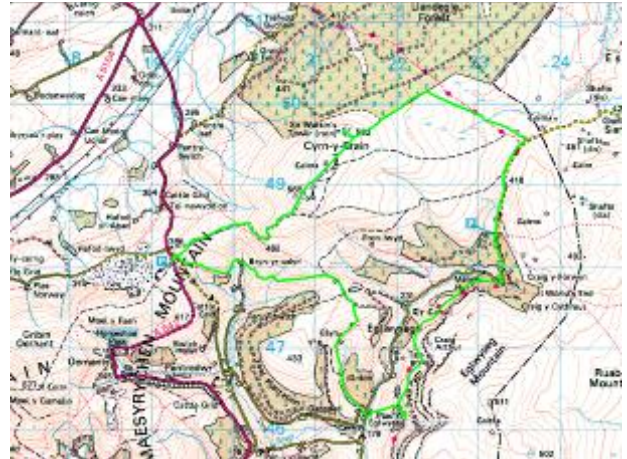
#### **Ponderosa to World's End**

Some arrived early and enjoyed breakfast in the Ponderosa. Twelve warm and happy people started the walk on a cold and dull day. Heading down the side of the Old Horseshoe Pass descending in a trough of ice and mud (the old drovers road) then down a nice grassy section to arrive at Plas y Eglwseg. Climbing up to the Offa's Dyke path we followed it to Worlds End where we forded (or stepping stoned) the river. The fine drizzle was turning to light hail at this point and we climbed up the road to the car park to have our lunch sheltering from the icy precipitation under the pine trees. Well that was my plan, not realizing they were Larch which of course are deciduous. After lunch we were out on the open moors, the mist came down, the fine hail got heavier so we got a bit colder. Arriving at the woods we followed a clear path of mud and ice to the summit of Cynr y Brain at 562

metres. A couple of hundred metres took us to the ruins of Sir Watkin's Tower (a folly erected by the landowner of the same name – Watkin, not folly).



Some of the group climbed to the top of the tower green



Route marked in bright green

Back to the main path then after a really peaty, boggy, icy, muddy section we followed the track to the Ponderosa where we broke the thin layer of hard ice off our clothes and rucksacks. Those that were able to, enjoyed the off-the-hill pint in the Bridge in at Pontblyddyn - Henry Morgan the 18th century pirate was said to have been a regular there! Did I mention the ice and mud?

On the weekend of the 11/12<sup>th</sup> February 2012 Bethan and I were joined by Carol Boothroyd and John Driver at the Chapel. Saturday saw the four of us heading up the armchair ridge of Y Garn in somewhat misty weather which we hoped was hiding the snows higher up. As we crested the final ridge we finally hit the soft snow which lasted all the way to the summit and afforded Beth an opportunity to use her new crampons for the first time. A descent down the kitchen path saw us soon at the Tyn Y Coed for a much appreciated off the hill.

Back at the Chapel we four were joined by Neil Metcalfe who was fortunate enough to feast on my delicious home-made Rabbit stew. I pinched a recipe of Delia Smith and added dates and cider to the concoction which added an unexpected flavour and lined the stomach sufficiently to absorb the booze we inevitably consumed as the night wore on.



Llyn Ogwen from the Armchair ridge on Y Garn



Bethan nearing the summit



Bethan and I on Y Garn

The next day Carol and John went for a low level walk in the Northern Carneddau which left Neil, Bethan and I to venture from Gerlan up to Drosagl and back via a very wild, misty and oft disappearing path. Views were really non-existent but the exercise was good.



A late lunch !



Bethan & Neil heading up Gyrn Wigau

On the 18<sup>th</sup> February Dave Gray organised something a little different though after all the organisation he was unable to attend ☹, Dave Chadwick kindly provided the following little snippet :-

### **Pennine Station to Station: 18 February 2012**

#### **Something Different**

The intention was to walk a section of the Pennine Way (8.5 miles, 310m ascent), travelling to and from the walk by rail.

Helen Avison, Dave Chadwick, Steve Dodd, David Lane-Joynt and John Simpson assembled at Lime Station to catch the 08.22 to Hebden Bridge. We changed at Piccadilly for a walk across to Victoria, the wettest part of the walk, and there picked up the Hebden Bridge train. We arrived at Hebden Bridge at 10.22 to be joined by Alan Cowderoy, a long time member from Leeds.

The rain had almost cleared by the time we set off to find the path to the Pennine Bridleway and then to Stoodley Pike (402m), a Napoleonic War memorial rebuilt during the Crimean War. We picked up the Pennine Way to travel over about 3 miles of flat wet moorland. It could have been difficult going but the worst parts had been covered with stone slabs ensuring a rapid and dry crossing. The weather had turned into a bright clear day as promised by the Met Office..

After a quick lunch we descended via the Todmorden Way to Warsland and then by the Rochdale canal towpath to Walsden station, with about 10 minutes to spare for the Manchester train. Alan left us to return to Leeds. We managed a quick drink at Piccadilly and arrived back at Lime St at 18.57.

It was a good day out made possible by Dave Gray's planning of the route and railway timetable.

On the same day Neil Metcalfe and Andy Odger went for a seemingly scary scramble called Sentries Ridge on Craig Y Bera. Apparently it was a complex climb (ie. they got off-route) and very loose. Like two proper mountaineers they continued up to the summit of Mynyedd Mawr before descending the steep and apparently, according to Mr Odger, slippery grass slopes ☺



Sentries Ridge & Mynyedd Mawr



Neil with a map !!!!!!!



The next day provided a delightful and wintry contrast as the intrepid duo made their way up onto Crib Goch and Snowdon. They descended the PYG track back to Pen Y Pass after another really good day out.



Neil on Crib Goch



On Snowdon icy summit

The same weekend Bethan and her friend went for a couple of 'recce' walks for her forthcoming Offa's Dyke trip around the Knighton area of the Shropshire hills. The weather was a bit mixed and sadly a couple of niggling injuries prevented any great distances being covered but nonetheless good training walks.

Helen & Bryan were also on a section of the Offa's Dyke path while Chris Harris had a somewhat snowy ascent of Moel Arthur in the Clwydian range.

The following weekend saw a fair number of club members out at the Chapel for our club weekend but prior to that Bethan and I went to the Llyn Peninsula for some good walking on the Coastal path.

Day one was spent walking from Abersoch to Aberdaron in for the most part damp and misty weather. So dense was the mist that when we were walking along the beach at Hell's Mouth we could see perhaps only 100 metres out to sea. Mention must be made for those considering walking the whole path that for a significant part of this section one has to walk quite a way in-land however a new stretch of coastal path is due to open next year which will take in Cilan Head. I've been climbing there and it's very impressive 😊

When we reached Aberdaron, after some seventeen miles, we had a lovely couple of beers in the Ship hotel before catching the bus back to Llanbedrog and a taxi back to Abersoch. However we did enjoy another beer and a curry (£6.00 each and no restriction on what beer you had – better than Weatherspoons !!) in the Ship Inn and a friendly barman took much pleasure in showing us old photographs of Abersoch from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The next day we walked from Tudweillog to Porth Oer (Whistling Sands) and back doing something like 21 miles in total. The weather improved as the day progressed and this time the path hugged the coastline though despite its lowly altitude we did experience a fair

number of up and down sections and an impressive amount of bog. A couple of beers in the delightful pubs of Abersoch and much perplexity at the aged businessmen and their secretaries (!!!!) rounded off a cracking couple of days.



Bethan at Hell's Mouth



Porth Ysgo – there is some great bouldering here !





Some Lleyn snapshots 😊

On the Saturday Bethan and I were accompanied by her friend Dave (who is an electrician and has done a survey of the Chapel electrics for us !) and we made for the little village of Croesor and an ascent of Cnicht which looked stunning on the drive over from the Lleyn. Sadly the delightful cafe was closed ☹️ so there was little we could do but just go walking straight away. The sun was shining but clouds drifted across the upper slopes of our hill and the Moelwyns making the mountains seem much higher than they really are.

Once we reached the final slopes the mists closed in and didn't release us till we reached the old quarry track which leads back to Croesor. We were met on the descent by Neil Metcalfe and prospective new member John who had ascended Cnicht from the Nantmor valley, they were as pleased to see us as we were surprised to see them – they needed a lift back to their car and we happily obliged. A few beers and a nice meal in the Tyn Y Coed saw us back at the Chapel after a really good day out.

Geoff was at the chapel after his beginners mountain bike ride on Conwy mountain where eight members were present. The ride finished early and so Geoff took the opportunity to have a quick dash up Pen Yr Ole Wen. Teresa Peddie had an epic long day on the Glyders ascending Y Garn from Ogwen Cottage then bagging Elidir Fawr before retracing her steps back to Y Garn and knocking off both Glyders Fawr & Fach before descending Bristly Gully and getting half way up Tryfan's south ridge before calling it a day – unsurprisingly she was quite tired after her big effort.

Dave Gray, Fiona Langton & Ronnie Davis went for a good long walk in the Carneddau as well so it was a good mixed day out for all concerned.



Cnicht



Shortly before the mists rolled in .....



A waterfall !!!



Bethan & Dave approaching Cnicht rocky summit

The next day dawned equally fine and Dave Gray, Fiona Langton & Ronnie Davis were the first to leave on a mid level walk which took in the Crafnant valley I believe as they met Bethan, Teresa and Dave at some point who were also on a similar walk but left much later after an aborted attempt to cross the stepping stones on the Llugwy.

Neil Metcalfe and I decided to head to the Moelwyns in the hope of finding some dry and sheltered rock. We were lucky and bagged our first two climbs of the year. On Clogwyn yr Oen we climbed Kirkus Climb Direct and then Orange Outang just before the wind picked up and it went cold.



Neil on the second pitch of Kirkus Climb Direct.

### FORTHCOMING MEETS :

01	Thur Walk: Helsby (Mike Mceneany)
09-10	Sat Walk: Kinder Scout (Mark Barley)
20	<b>CLUB AGM</b>
23-24	<b>HUT</b> 45th Annual Dinner (Sue Taylor et al)
30-31	South Highlands (Adrian Dolan)

The Club AGM will be held at the Stork public house with an 8.00pm start and as usual there will be much to discuss so we hope you can make it. If you are unable to attend you can still vote by email and there are a couple of constitutional amendments up for consideration and a separate email will be sent to the members in the next week or so. Also, if you would like to stand on the committee please feel free to do so as it is your club and your voice is as equally important as mine or anyone elses 😊

The club dinner this year promises to be a cracker with a live band, photo competition, raffles etc so if you have not got your ticket yet please contact Dave Gray to do so. This event is the highlight of our social calender and it's success depends on your support so if

you're not busy come on down. I understand from Dave that there is just floor space left at the chapel but we now have a club tent (2 man) or bring your own and there are plenty of local B&B's to choose from in Capel Curig.

### **Things lost and / or left at the chapel :**

Last weekend I picked up two pairs of boots and a black top which were left in the drying room. If they are yours can you contact me and I will arrange their return, Dave Gray also has a number of items which have been left. Christie Miles is also looking for a map which she inadvertently left in the drying room so if you picked it up can you email her to advise – thanking you.

### **Chairman's note :**

At the committee meetings of late we on the committee have discussed many things and there are a couple of things upon which we would be grateful if the membership at large could give us their thoughts.

- (i) Wood burning stove in Chapel.  
We, at present, have a gas fire in the lounge which runs on bottled gas. This gives us an instant heat output though it isn't cheap and we do get a lot of condensation from it hence the de-humidifier in the lounge. Would the membership prefer an alternative heat source ?
  
- (ii) Storage at the Chapel.  
We do have a distinct lack of accessible storage at the Chapel. What do people think we could do about this ? I feel we could make better use of the space under the stairs and could easily build some storage cubicles upstairs. When large groups stay there are usually many bags and sacks all over the floor – hardly safe if you need to get up in the night !!

These are just a couple of things the committee have discussed of late and membership feedback is welcome – just drop me an email. Also if there are ANY matters you would like the committee to discuss then please feel free to drop me an email.