

THE GWYDYR NO28(APR2012)

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB

Hello all, another newsletter is now here though given the pretty poor weather this month it is hardly a classic, but then again are any of them !!!!!!!

First up is Bethan Hines and Steven Thomas epic, for that is the right word, walk along the Offa's Dyke LDP. The path itself is 177 miles long and is normally done in twelve days however Beth and Steve managed it in a very respectable ten days. The route lies, for the most part, along the path of an ancient dyke built by King Offa of Mercia in the 8th Century (well not by him personally but by his slaves / voters / followers et al). It goes through some incredibly varied scenery ranging from gentle riverside paths through to the Black Mountains of the Brecon Beacons, the Radnorshire and Shropshire hills and eventually our own 'local' hills of the Clwydian Range. They were accompanied at various stages by club members (I only managed the first five days as parental duties etc became pressing – though I did backpack the whole route with my dad when I was sixteen !). David Lane-Joynt joined us for day two between Monmouth and Pandy, Mike Gavin met Beth and Steve on day seven and Doc Martin assisted on the long day to Llandegla on day eight.

Day ten saw Lindsey Foulkes assisting them over the last few miles to Prestatyn and when the victorious couple arrived at the finish many friends and family members were present with Champagne, ice creams and congratulations. It was an impressive achievement and one that they both should be very proud of. Beth has provided a fuller account of the trip below and some may be interested to hear that, single-handedly Beth and Steve have caused a severe shortage of Compeed in all the border towns !!!!!



Beth & Steve at the start above Sedbury Cliffs



Tintern Abbey from the Devil's Pulpit



The Medieval bridge at Monmouth



Liz, Steve, Beth and DLJ on day two !



Beth, Steve and I on the first peak of the Black Mtns



Beth and Steve having a rest !



The White Swan in Kington – great lunch stop 😊



Sheltering in a bus stop at Newchurch ☹️

Beth kindly wrote the following piece.....

Day 1 and we awoke early in the bunkhouse in Monmouth to a lovely frosty scene outside and after a quick photo shoot, off to Sedbury we went to 'dip our toes' in the water, or was it mud?! 177 miles to walk in 10 days but today we just had 17 miles to Monmouth and then another 4 back to the bunkhouse ahead of us!! Who didn't realise the Monmouth bunkhouse wasn't in Monmouth??? just as well it was on the official route so it would come off the next day's mileage :-). 8.5 hours later and the 21 miles were done.....a tough but rewarding day, much of which Steve and I spent trying to keep up with Allan who was then to become known as the 'pace car'!

Day 2 was to be just a 'short' 13.5 miles from the bunkhouse up to Pandy. We were joined by Liz and David Layne-Joint and the 5 of us had a leisurely 9am start. We enjoyed our lunch break at the White castle and even made time to divert to look at a 450 year old wooden chest in a church only to realise that the church was closed to deal with woodworm!! After quite a few miles of road walking Steve realised that his insoles were not quite doing what they should so an emergency visit to Boots in Abergavenny was needed at the end of the day to buy anything that had the word 'foot' on the label.....he should have tried my alternative remedy of vaseline and a sandwich bag for bed ;-). I think Bob was born today along with an impressive blister on Allan's heel !!!! 34 miles down..... 143 to go!

Day 3 and we were off into the Black mountains17 miles felt a bit daunting but once up on the ridge the views were spectacular and with the 'pace car' Allan, on form, the 11 miles on the ridge seemed to melt away with the remainder of the snow and we were in Hay on Wye in 7.5 hours. Time to just put up the tents and enjoy a delicious mix of pasta, bolognaise and chicken in white wine sauce before the rain came.....

Day 4.....and come it did! It rained pretty much all day on Easter Monday but we had a great day and walked 20 miles between Evenjobb and Hay on Wye. We treated ourselves to a bacon butty late breakfast stop in a great pub in Kington, the Swan and ended up playing bagatelle with the owners. If you ever go past, you really should call in; a really quirky pub! A very wet and muddy trio turned up at a friend's house for a very welcome, off the hill, shower and lovely meal. Bob was starting to grow and Steve's huge blisters later known as Tom, Dick and Harry were coming into their own!

Day 5 would see us get to the half way point. Another tough day with a stop in Boots Knighton for some more Compede, bandages and various adhesive dressings for the foot! As we waved goodbye to Allan, 88.5 miles done and 88.5 to go

Day 6 dawned and it looked like a brilliant day to walk from Lower Spoad nr Newcastle/Clun to Buttington Bridge nr Welshpool, a total of 19 miles, including half of the 'switchback' section and a trip up Long Mountain ! The first 5 miles took an amazing 3 hours.....ok we had a couple of breakfast stops but they really were tough little hills! We were missing the 'pace car' already? A flat middle section really helped with the pace and we completed the day in 8.5 hours. The views from Long Mountain were amazing and it was great looking at all the rain showers all around but they never caught us! We were also in for a surprise when we realised that the Beacon Ring was a hill fort! I tried to convince Steve that we should try to add on a couple more miles from the next day's quota.....but after a total of 108 miles, the sensible thing was to go and get some rest and see if we could convince Nicky to do our washing! What we didn't expect was a request to help with her badger problem.....

Day 7 was an early start and we were walking at 8am having being dropped off at Buttington Bridge near Welshpool. It was 20 miles to Craignant and we decided to walk the first 10 miles in trainers with the 'treat' of new boots at lunchtime courtesy of a special delivery to Llanymynech. There was lots of evidence of the dyke and most of the morning was spent walking along it (hoping the cows would move on before we got to them!!). A leisurely 40 minute treat of a lunchtime break and a delivery of coffee and boots from Nicky and we were off again at 12.30 looking out for Mike Gavin who was walking South from Oswestry. It was great to see a familiar face at the top of Llanymynech and we had a great afternoon walking up to the old racecourse above Oswestry. The final two miles were surprisingly difficult after a long section of road walking and we hobbled down to Craignant cursing the final few of the 78 stiles of the day. We were in for a treat though, there was a gravel car park and how good did that feel on tired feet!!! 128 miles done!

Day 8 and we were walking at 7.40am towards Chirk castle's 'back door' to meet Doc Martin. He arrived with Lola and we had a great day, finally completing the 18 miles into Llandegla by 4.30pm where we were rescued by Nicky and taken back to our cars. During the day we had enjoyed lovely view of Castell Dinas Bran from Trevor rocks and had great fun crossing the Froncysyllte aqueduct. Only 29 miles to go.....148 done!

Day 9 felt like we were nearly home and we had 17 miles across the Clwydian range to look forward to. We set off at

Sam and I were at the Clwyd gate by 10.30 am. The weather was glorious and after climbing the 250th stile Steve indulged in a spot of solar battery recharging (sunbathing) whilst I arranged for a friend to move my car from Llandegla to Bodfari. We carried on to Foel Fenlli and were enjoying lunch on Moel Famau by 12.45.....at which time we also enjoyed a hail shower!! The afternoon was far tougher and after the ascent round the shoulder of Moel Arthur and many more ups and downs we were glad to see my little Corsa waiting for us in Bodfari. Were we beginning to feel the 165 miles maybe? Incidentally Mike, we caught up with some of the 12 day trekkers realising we had made up 2 days in the last 5!!! 165 miles walked and only 12 to go sounded really easy now.....

Day 10 and a later than usual start, dropping a car and Doc Martin's celebratory champagne off at 8.30 am in Prestatyn. As we left Bodfari it snowed but within the hour we were enjoying a breakfast stop in the sunshine with views of the sea!! Climbing up out of Rhualt we were rewarded with amazing views over to Snowdonia and we stood there a while making out the familiar shapes of the Carneddau, Tryfan, Yr Wyddfa and even Siabod. We came across a horse that clearly thought the grass was greener.....With about 5 miles to go, my thigh decided it had had enough of this walking lark; something to do with over compensating for Bob the blister maybe? Seeing Linsey Fooks sitting at the side of the road as we climbed one of our final stiles was a very welcome sight and she walked with us as we descended down to the sea. Steve's parents also came to meet us and it was great to swap

'Dyke' stories with yet someone else who had walked it in their youth! Finally we met up with our trusted 'pace car' Allan who had somehow managed to get lost on his way up from the beach to meet us ;-). We all walked down to the beach together and after an ice cream, a glass of fizz and some photos, we dipped our toes in the water again, 177 miles further North and 10 days later!

It was a great experience overall with truly spectacular scenery throughout and amazing weather for April. We are now well on the way to raise over £2200 for Cancer Research UK and Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Team but it really wouldn't have been possible without everyone's support by way of sponsorship, walking company and logistical assistance. A big thank you to everyone and in particular Steve for being great company and Allan for being there for me every step of the way and for 'dealing' with Bob when we got home!!:-)

Beth's photo's.....



It's this way I'm sure.....



The Chairman on Hay Bluff @end of Black Mtns



The path is very well signposted for dwarves ☺



Offa's Dyke above Kington



A wet day on Hergest Ridge above Kington



Half-way there now ☺



A bridge over the canal



Steve and Doc Martin on Froncysyllte Aqueduct



Bethan showing the way



Steve on the Clwydians – not long to go now ☺



Bethan and Steve



Steve and the sea now visible ☺



Who said the grass is always greener



Lindsey joins Beth and Steve for the last miles



Beth and Steve at Prestatyn – Journey's end ☺



Ten days after dipping her feet into the River Severn

Beth takes a dip in the Irish Sea ☺

While Beth and Steve were busy walking the dyke Dave Gray and Helen Avison were in Scotland were on Beinn a Chaisteil near Auch which proved quite wintry and snowy. They also ascended Beinn an Lochan in Arrochar. Dave kindly sent the following pictures.....





Neil, Geoff & Teresa were out at the Chapel at this time too walking, scrambling and mountain biking on the Marin Trail and Elgins Fancy !!!

Mike Mc had organised an 'interesting walk' in the Glyders. Mike has providing the following 😊

Thursday 19 April Janet & Chris Harris & myself together with 5 friends attempted Bristly Ridge. After a dry & bright drive out we were greeted at Llyn Ogwen by a heavy hail shower. Undaunted we kitted up & walked up to the mountain wall at Bwlch Tryfan for lunch one. By this time the rock was very greasy, it was not raining & but the cloud was down. We struck out onto the ridge & made good progress although route finding was difficult in the mist. After some time & several abortive moves we reach a rock wall with no obvious route, so we reluctantly descended in the direction of Llyn Bochlwyd "a Huxley Descent", loose boulders & scree! When the Llyn came into view it was time for lunch 2. From our GPS record we reached 889m so were only 100m short of the summit. As we had only covered 2 miles in 4 hours we descended to Llyn Bochlwyd & contoured around to circuit Llyn Idwal "to put some miles on the clock." Although we failed to complete the ridge, a good time was had by all, a very satisfying day.





Andy Chapman and Peter Vaughan had a cracking day out on Lliwedd late last month and Andy has sent me the following, thanks Andy.

Peter and I did Bilberry route on Lliwedd, we left the car at 10.00am and spent two hours wading through deep snow to reach the route which took six hours on the route which wound its way all over the place and was quite technical in places (for a scramble !). It took another two hours to walk out and we finished in moonlight, definitely the best day out we've had out in Wales this year and it was good training for Peter who is off to the Himalaya later this year with Andy Odger.





Next up on the 21st April was Geoff Brierley's Saturday walk up Pen Y Ghent in the Yorkshire Dales. The meet was very well attended by fifteen members and the rain ☹️. The walk commenced from Horton in Ribblesdale and was a very pleasant nine miles in total. The obligatory 'off the hill' was taken in the Crown

Hotel where we succeeded in making the place rather damp with our wet clothes drying in front of a lovely open fire.



The Gwydyr (except Reg !) on Pen Y Ghent summit



Pen Y Ghent before the rain came in

We were graced with the company of Roger Hughes (after his super train journey of which more maybe next month ☺) and a 'mystery' life member of the club, Roger kindly sent me the following which may be of some interest to our longer standing members.....

A new (?) face on the Pen y Gent meet, 21st April.

Some of the current members on Geoff's rather wet ascent of Pen y Gent may have been unsure who the shadowy figure was that got off the Leeds train to join the party in Horton on Ribblesdale.

Alan Cowderoy has entries on pages 11, 38, 78, 102 and 103 of John Huxley's book and is shown as "cowboy/daffodil eater" in the index. Alan joined the club in the late 60's and because he is a life member he has been able to stay in touch with us despite moving away from Wallasey years ago and working abroad for much of the time since then. (To some of us Leeds also counts as abroad.)

Now for a bit of club history. For the benefit of current members, life membership does not denote any special prowess on the mountain. In 1971 when we were trying to buy Tan y Garth for £2,000, John Huxley, Les Fowles John Beamer and I visited the NatWest bank and asked to borrow £1,700 to go with the £300 the club already had. We were shown the door by the manager who described us to our faces as men of straw. We went round to the Slaughter House for a pint or two, and as treasurer, I was asked what we were going to do next. I suggested that we each went to our own banks and tried to borrow £100 as a personal loan. A couple of weeks later we were able to go back to the bank manager with £1,700 in the GMC bank account and ask to borrow £300.

Surprisingly, his attitude was quite different! We borrowed the money, bought the chapel and house and the rest is history. A number of those members who put their own money into the scheme agreed that £30 of it would be treated as the purchase of life membership and need not be repaid. It represented about ten years' subscriptions or £500 in today's money, so we are still grateful to Alan and those members at the time who helped the club with the purchase of Tan y Garth.

But for those who might think Alan's only contribution to the GMC early years was cash, I reproduce a 1971 photograph of him climbing Directissima on Kilnsey (taken by fellow member Nick Parry) which I think says all you need to know about his credentials - great to see you again, Alan!



Great 😊 Thanks Roger and yes good to see Alan still out and active.

Bethan and I had come out to Geoff's meet the night before and were camped at Malham. Given the weather on the Saturday we were somewhat sceptical over our judgment and decision to go camping in such horrid weather however we were fortunate that things could and did only get better.

After the beer in Horton in Ribblesdale we had another very pleasant half hour at the Lister Arms in Malham village before retiring to our large tent for dinner and a rather nice bottle of wine.

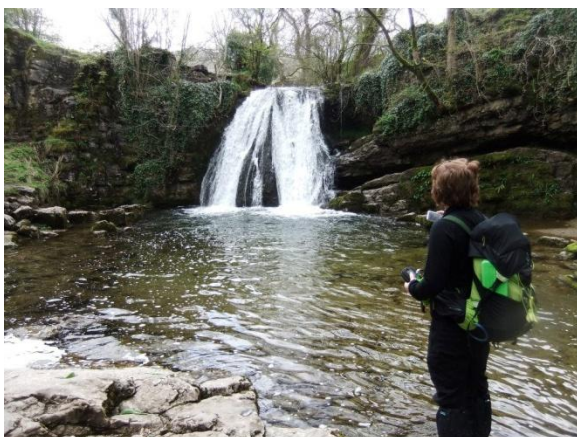
That night the rain fell heavily and we really feared the worst as it came in a seemingly biblical deluge but thankfully the morning dawned dry and bright and, save for the occasional hail shower, we were troubled no more.

Malham is such a beautiful, dramatic place and I was surprised that Beth had not been there before and so there was no real option open to me in deciding what we could do. Once breakfast had been dealt with and the tent had been dried and packed we made our way back into Malham village, resisting the cafe, we wandered over to Janet's Foss which was to be the first lovely sight of the day on the classic Malham circular walk.

Janet's Foss is a delightful waterfall and served as an appetiser for the dramatic and imposing Goredale Scar (though not before we 'caved-in' at the strategically placed tea van where a lovely cup of Earl Grey assuaged thirst and my decision in not bringing a flask). We scrambled up the waterfall 'path' and made our way over to Malham Tarn, Beth was amazed at the Limestone Pavements and didn't seem that bored with my Geography lesson about 'Clint's and Grike's' etc etc !!

After leaving the tarn, and another tea van 😊, we headed down to 'water sinks' and the dry valley leading to Malham Cove. Again Beth seemed even mildly interested in my geological ramblings as I explained that the river emerges again at the foot of Malham Cove. Hail began to fall quite heavily as we reached the top of the cove where the limestone pavement is perhaps the most impressive in the district. A slippery descent down the steep stepped path saw us at the foot of the impressive cliff of Malham Cove where once a waterfall fell over its lip. There were many climbers clinging and hanging from its steep walls where the rain rarely affects the climbs such is its steepness and it was nice to meet a mate of mine from years ago who was walking into the crag for a climb as we walked out.

It was a great, though short, day out with many sight's along the way and its' hard to think of another walk of only seven miles that has so many redeeming features and I will definitely organise a meet here sometime soon as there is so much to do.



Beth @ Janet's Foss Waterfall



Goredale Scar – the path climbs the waterfall !!



It's not as steep or wet as it looks ☺



Beth scrambling up the waterfall



Goredale Scar scrambling and the upper falls ☺



Beth at the top of Goredale Scar



Malham Tarn, only 14ft deep apparently !



Yorkshire Dales snapshots 😊

Neil Metcalfe was unable to make Geoff's walk and went for a good scramble and walk in the Ogwen area. Sadly with all this rain proper rock climbing just ain't do-able at the moment, fingers crossed for May eh 😊

On Wednesday 25th April five of us went to the Cotswold store in Liverpool to listen to a talk / slide show by Andy Kirkpatrick, a well known and slightly mad climber whose first book won the Boardman Tasker award for mountain literature. He was utterly brilliant and he has another 'talk' at the Costwold

Chester shop on the 6th June 2012 - you have to go and see him. Not only are his tales mightily impressive but he is seriously funny in his presentation and even if you are not a mountaineer you will be impressed. The talk is entitled 'Climbing Inappropriately' and the blurb says

'Andy's speciality is big wall climbing and winter expeditions, which involves pitting himself against a vertical climbs of over 1000 metres (that's two and a half world trade centres), often in temperatures as low as minus 30 degrees. Andy has scaled Yosemite's El Capitan - one of the hardest walls in America - over ten times, including two solo ascents. One of these ascents was a 12 day solo of the Reticent Wall, viewed at the time as perhaps the hardest climb of its type in the world. In 2002 he undertook one of the hardest climbs in Europe: a 15 day winter ascent of the West face of the Dru. This 1000 metre pillar pushed him and his partner to their limits and was featured in the award winning film 'Cold Haul'. Andy has also taken part in three winter expeditions to Patagonia. The stories that Andy has brought back from these expeditions have become modern classics in the climbing world and have brought new meaning to the words 'epic' and 'cold'... It is perhaps Andy's journey from remedial student to successful climber, writer and speaker that interests his audience most. Brought up on a council estate in one of Britain's flattest cities, Hull-born Andy suffered from severe dyslexia which went undiagnosed until he was 19. One of his greatest strengths is his ability to talk about his life and his climbs in a way that is totally accessible to the non-climber and allows the audience to experience the risk and tension of big wall climbing. Andy also works in film and TV, as a stunt safety advisor and this plays a part in many of his talks, which take you from the heights of Patagonia to the chocolaty depths of Charlie and the Chocolate factory!'

You won't spend a better £8.00 this year !!!

FORTHCOMING MEETS :

04-06	Pembrokeshire (BH) (Les Folwes)
11-12	HUT Weekend
18-19	Copper Mines Hut (Kev McEvoy)

Beth and I have taken over Les Fowles bank holiday meet in Pembroke and we are staying at the Port Clais campsite near to St David's. An email has been sent to the membership and so far there are half a dozen of us going though the old adage of the more the merrier surely applies. Please feel free to email me on allangwydyr@hotmail.co.uk and I will forward details.

Kevin McEvoy meet is sure to be a good one as the location is superb so contact him if you are not booked in as yet as I am unsure as to availability space wise.

Coniston Hut Meet

18th & 19th May 2012

Hi all, I have booked the Barrow Mountain Club hut in the Coppermines Valley. There are 15 beds at £8 per night. If you interested please e-mail or phone me on 07531877558.



- Details:** A fantastic mountain setting at the head of the Coppermines Valley. Routes from the door onto the Coniston fells. The hut has 16 beds in 3 rooms, showers, fully equipped kitchen, electric cooking, night storage heaters, all facilities, Lounge with open fire. Access by car up the track to the youth hostel. Pubs & shops are one mile at the bottom of the track in Coniston, the favourite being 'The Black Bull', home of Coniston Brewery.
- Directions:** Once in Coniston, turn left up the road with 'The Black Bull' on your left. This becomes a rough track. (Watch the gorge on your left!) Follow for about 1 mile, passing a row of cottages up on your right. The track ends at some gates with the Youth Hostel on your left and the Barrow M.C. hut on your right. At the bottom of the track there is a sign for the Coppermines Youth Hostel; do not confuse this with the Coniston Youth Hostel in the village.
- Beds:** 15
- Grid Ref:** [SD289986](#)

Addendum :

Having thought I'd finished the newsletter for this month I just happened across an email from Dave Gray who took notes at the Stork when I was away on the Offa's Dyke. I have just copied and pasted

- Adrian Dolan's S Highland trip – Adrian, Ray Baines and Steve Dodds – did two good days in fine conditions and bagged 4 munros: Meall Glas and Sgiath Chuil in Glen Dochart ; and Meall Corranaich & Meall a'Choire Leith in the Ben Lawers group.
- Roger Hughes Great Circumnavigation of North Wales By Train was a huge success – 15 people, 13 hours riding the rails in good weather, 1.5 hours drinking, and a 6-bottle celebration of Mike Davies' 65th birthday.
- Jim Metcalfe had a trip to the Lakes in the great sunny weather – peaks ascended included Langdale Pikes, Crinkle Crag, Bow Fell
- Keith Colwell was in North Wales – did Moel Eilio and Moel y Cynghorion from Llanberis, as was Neil Metcalfe a long list including Crib Goch, the N Rhinogs, Nantlle Ridge and Pen yr Ole Wen. Both enjoying the good weather we had.
- Mike Mc, Les, Joyce, Sue and me where with Sue's Gourmet Trekkers in Nidderdale, we had two very pleasant mid level walks around the reservoirs and crags in this area which is largely new to me at least

Addendum Addendum !!:

This weekend saw Neil and John Simpson up on Crib Goch and Snowdon and a group of girls walked from Llanberis up onto the Moel Elio ridge. The weather was good but a tad cold and windy. Sunday was a bit of a washout by all accounts..