



The Gwydyr Mountain Club Newsletter.

August 2022

Edited: Chris
Harris

Coming soon: (details on meets list on GMC website)

2-4 September	Hut Weekend: Climbing Weekend
10 September	Derwent Edge and Winhill Pike - Dave Edwards
15 September	Thursday Walk: Sychnant Pass - Dave Antrobus
24 September	Saturday Walk: The Roaches - Debbie Kennard
23-25 September	Hut Weekend:
30 Sep-3 Oct	CLM: Lake District
8-9 October	GMC First Aid Course

Articles this Month:

- 1) **Dundonell to Poolewe – Backpacking Top of the Range (by Dave Gray)**
- 2) **Edale/Rushup Edge, 26th February - Dave Edwards**
- 3) **Kinder Scout Saturday, April 9th - Dave Edwards**
- 4) **50th Anniversary celebration of the purchase of the chapel - Kevin McEvoy**
- 5) **Nantlle Ridge on the 50th Anniversary weekend - Steve Birch**

Please note: Last month's Newsletter was getting rather large so I carried over some of the articles to this month. I try to input the articles in the order I receive them so if you want to be on the front page I need the articles sooner - which is a bit tricky if your event is at the end of the month !

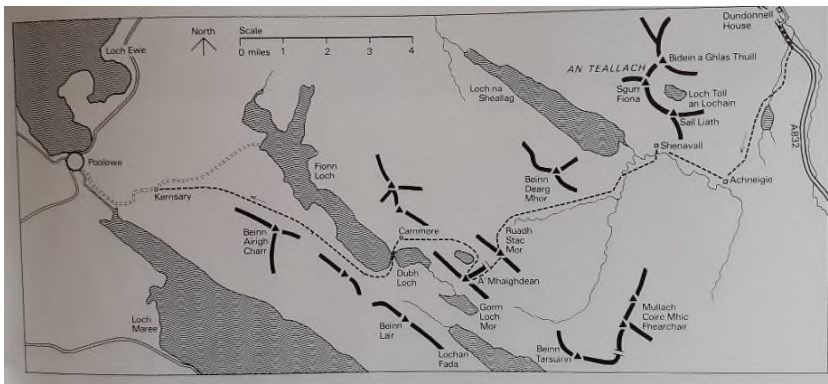
1) Dundonell to Poolewe – Backpacking Top of the Range (by Dave Gray)

Introduction

I very much enjoyed reading and hearing about Barbara and Sven's adventures on the West Highland Way, Chris Ramsden's historic walk on Hadrian's Wall, Steve Birch's success on the Pennine Way and Helen and Glenn's traverse of the Haute Route. All top of the range backpacks.

It reminded me of the days when my own walking included backpacking – in the sense of humping a heavy and recalcitrant sack from place to place rather than simple wild camping. One of my best ever backpacks was a six day/five night trip in May/June 2009 from Dundonell to Poolewe in the NW Highlands, stopping off to do Corbett size summits on the way. I did this with my old friends Hazel, Alastair, and Mike. I've had two other trips to the area as partial in and out again ventures – in 1989 with my best mate Bob (Hazel's brother) and with David Lane Joynt in 2014.

This backpack is something you might consider if you're up that way, the main through route is doable at a sensible pace with two nights camping out. Apart from the first section Dundonell-Shenavall it's not on the Cape Wrath trail, which wasn't going when I went there, so you still shouldn't have crowds. I hope the photos will speak for themselves as to how good this area is! I used the OS 1:50,000 sheet 19 on my trips. Please do check the route and related details out online as things may have changed since I was there.



Approximate route outline – map from an account in Chapter 5 of ‘The Big Walks’ (Wilson, Gilbert 1980) that included a diversion to ascend A Mhaighdean and Ruadh Stac Mor xxx

What Where Why Who When and How

The actual core through walk is about 30 miles long, and is mostly on excellent paths created by the deer stalking fraternity. It crosses Fisherfield Forest, which is frequently billed as the ‘Great Wilderness’. This is pushing it a little bit – Mr Roughass Badbear does not lurk hungrily behind every bush – but it is wild and remote. No inhabited houses, only a couple of points of shelter (of which more later), exposed to the worst of potential bad weather, and requiring you to pack everything in and out.

So I’d leave it till late Spring – pre midge, and before any deer stalking starts. Also, a vital point is that there are two large unbridged rivers to cross near the Dundonnell end. The Abhainn Srath na Sealga at Shenavall I have splashed across boots-on both times I’ve crossed it, but the bank-full depth *at the ford* would be four feet plus at the bank and more in the middle, and we saw pools twenty feet deep in the rest of the river. Don’t try this therefore when the water is in any way high: this suggests Springtime after a dry spell and with a solid good forecast – if you don’t have all this in place I would be flexible and do a safer and more enjoyable alternative, there’s plenty of other great wild camping trips in the neighbourhood. The second river crossing is of the Abhainn Gleann na Muice at the ford near the old house of Lachrantivore. This river is wider, shallower and generally less scary but I wouldn’t like it at all in flood. For us this was a boots-off calf deep jobby. The low lying mile or so between the two rivers is probably the only sustained piece of very rough going on the main through route.

The through route really calls for a car at each end. The 707 (sic!) Westerbus bus runs one journey Gairloch to Ullapool each way just on a Thursday, and there is no obvious way to loop back on foot. This factor likely means a party of four will feel good, and so it’s probably better to camp wild rather than use the bothies, as four people is very much the practical maximum for bothying. The fact that the scary rivers are at the Dundonnell end makes that the better starting point – if you fail to cross them then the retreat isn’t so far. There is a reasonable amount of informal parking at both ends.

One idea if two cars don’t work for you might be to hide an unloved pushbike at or near Poolewe and face a pretty tough 25 mile plus cycle, or you could enquire about taxis at Gairloch near the Poolewe end, there are two firms which come up online at the moment.

Along the way

The route is simply superb giving magnificent views. You start at Corriehallie near Dundonnell at GR113850 on the A832 road. The route climbs until you reach the top of the pass to get a breath-taking into the wild moment, the view of Beinn Dearg Mor and the Strath na Sealga.



Beinn Dearg Mor and Strath na Sealga from the path

Leaving the track a path goes down to Shenavall bothy, just before 'Scary river 1'. This magical place is one possible source of shelter, the bothy is popular and can be busy.



Shenavall bothy, Beinn Dearg Mor

A quick dash over the boggy bit takes you to Lachrantivore and 'Scary river 2'. This was our Camp 1 bang opposite the mighty An Teallach. The only sounds were the river, the cries of sandpipers, skylarks and the unearthly drumming noise of snipe displaying.



Camp 1 – Mike, Hazel and Al



Camp 1 – 'Scary river 2' and An Teallach

From Camp 1 we ascended on a good path up Gleanns na Mhuices Mor and Beag to a lonely plateau and the high lochans Feith Mhic-Illean. I picked up some litter, a discarded full tube of sun cream, we had been plastering it on already because of the very good weather. It turned out a good move as we soon came across some very sunburned German students, the only other people we met en route, and I was able to give them my find to help out.



The high lochans, looking west x



x

From the plateau we did an out and back across a broad ridge of heather clip to claim the Corbett summit of Beinn a Chasgain Mor (2,811'), which increased the already extensive views of the Munros A Mhaighdean and Ruadh Stac Mor to the south. The former is reckoned to be the most remote Munro. A highlight of the ascent was finding a young mountain hare, a leveret, hiding in a shallow scrape or 'form' near the path, something I've never seen before or since. We didn't hang around to take photos as we didn't want to scare it or scare the parents away.



Our view of A Mhaighdean x

The route then took us dramatically over the western lip of the high plateau and swings down to Carnmore, a remote house of the shores of Dubh Loch and Fionn Loch. By the house is – when I checked it out in 2014 - a very basic bothy. It could be a further refuge in an emergency. That night we established Camp 2 on some flat ground by the Fionn Loch. It was our base for two days of walking in the area – see more below.



The descent to Carnmore



My tent at camp 2 – view of Carnmore climbing cliffs

From the Fionn Loch the path out goes NW across a gradually opening moorland to rejoin landrover tracks at the working farm of Kernsary, a route that gently eases you back into the Rest of the World. This path can be damp in places, but if you've waited for that weather window it shouldn't be too bad. My log of the 2014 trip recalls it as a 'pleasant walk out', and my memory is of constant looks backwards as the bigger hills receded from view. The walk ends with a green woodland stroll by the River Ewe to the car park.

Mountain Menus

Here's a quick rundown of the hills we did from this walk, on all three of my trips – starting with 2009.

From Camp 1 we had a magnificent day on Beinn Dearg Mor (2,985') by its SE corrie and E ridge, then on to Beinn Dearg Beag (2,690') and down to Loch Toll an Lochain where I swam; I also had a dip that evening in Scary River 2. En route the next day we did Beinn a Chasgain Mor (2,811') as already noted.



Cliffs of Beinn Dearg Mor



Ben Lair at sunset from Camp 2 x

From Camp 2 we did mighty, cliff strewn Ben Lair (2,821') starting off in a partial temperature inversion, and on the second day Ben Airigh Charr (2,595') and its sidekick Spidean nan Clach (2,306').

In 1989 Bob and I did two very full days walking from a camp by Shenavall – A Mhaigdean (3,172'), Ruadh Stac Mor (3,011'), and the other Fisherfield Forest Munros Beinn A Chlaidheimh (3,000), Sgurr Ban (3,146'), Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair (3,343') and Beinn Tarsuinn (3,070').

In 2014 David LJ and I did A Mhaigdean (3,172') on our first day and Meall Mheinnidh (2,362') on our second day before walking out. We camped near the site of 'Camp 2'.

I should also mention that the crags – Carnmore Crag and Torr na h'Iolaire - above Carnmore are a major rock climbing area with I understand over 100 routes at various grades.

And finally

Well in 2009 we paid a token price for our fantastic weather: the anticipated Poolewe chocolate fest, deeply buried in the car, was waiting for us – all melted down!

2) Edale/Rushup Edge, 26th February - Dave Edwards



We parked at Edale Railway Station Car Park in Edale for 9.15, with the view of setting off to walk by 9.30. The Grid Reference is SK 123 853. Postcode S33 7ZN and we assembled outside the cafe next to the railway station, which is between the 2 carparks

The walk was around 9/10 miles or so with about 1,000 feet of ascent. Weather on Kinder Scout plateau was a bit raw, windier & colder than in the valley floor, so it was a good idea to take extra wind proof clothing with us.

The route was North out of Edale (240 m) to Grindsbrook Booth, West along the Pennine Way to Upper Booth.

Up Jacob's Ladder onto the edge of Kinder Scout, turning South over Edale Head to Brown Knowl (569 m). We continued onto Rushup Edge. East over Lord's Seat (540 m) to Mam Tor (517m).



Daylight allowed us to go along The Great Ridge a little further East to Hollins Cross (400 m) before descending back into Edale. After leaving Mam Tor, the dressed

stone path is relatively flat & fast, so we had time to do that well before dusk.

Afterwards we called into the pub in Edale for the customary off the hill pint. Doug eventually caught up with Gail who had been waiting for his return in the pub in Grindsbrook. However, Gail went down with Covid a few days later and I believe that she thought that she caught it waiting in the pub for Doug. (It's a good job we didn't go there instead.) The joys of walking hey. Otherwise, a good day was had by all (Glenn & Helen, Debbie, Angela, Gail & Doug. Dave A, Dave C, Mark & Ray. (10 of us in all.)



3) Kinder Scout Saturday April 9th - Dave Edwards



We met at 8.45.am Bowden bridge Car Park N.P. 165. Kinder Road. Hayfield, for a 9.am start and the closest Postcode was the "Sportsman Inn" 165 Kinder Road SK22 2LE.

The car park was within a couple of 100 yards of the pub, in what was the former Bowden Bridge Quarry, known as the "Trespass Carpark"). It is opposite the Bowden bridge. Map reference; OS Explorer OL1 The Peak District Dark Peak Area. 048 869.

You might find it of interest if you've got time, to have a look on Wikipedia of the "Mass Trespass of Kinder Scout 1932", which started out from this former quarry & led to the "right to roam" & later the start of the National Parks in this country of which the Peak District was the first one to be given National Park status.



The route was along Kinder Bank, beside Marepiece Wood. North along the side of the reservoir to ascend William Clough to gain access on to the Kinder Scout plateau and eventually to the waterfall of Kinder Downfall & Kinder Low (603) before descending along a rough track to take a stile across the fields back to the Trespass Car Park.



However, disaster struck poor Zahida, who took a tumble alighting from one of the field stiles, resulting in her fracturing the fibula of her right leg. This was suspected at the time as Zahida was able to support her weight on that leg, but in some

pain I might add. The tibia is the main weight supporting bone of the leg and was intact & this was allowing her to slowly hobble with the aid of poles to the nearest vehicular track which was at least a mile away. I asked Dave Antrobus to walk on ahead to rendezvous with us with his car & by the time Debbie & I had gotten Zahida to this nearest track & got Zahida settled down on a low wall, Dave arrived. Debbie & I carried/lifted Zahida into the front seat of Dave's car who had kindly offered to drive her back to Liverpool. From there her family took her onto hospital, to confirm our fears that it was a tibial fracture. This has resulted in her Mont Blanc trip with Glenn & Helen to be postponed & another trip that Zahida was committed too as well. Zahida didn't need an operation on her leg which means that her recovery would be quicker, but as I write it is still ongoing. She still has some discomfort I believe, but is able to walk further on a weekly basis.

I have offered to do some rehabilitation walks with her in the 3rd/4th weeks of August, but if anyone else is able to offer to do the same I'm sure she'll appreciate that along with any phone calls etc to keep her spirits up.

The distance 10 miles approximately and took about 7 hours or so. There were no big ascents/descents, but we did manage to get to the pub afterwards at the Sportsman. Those that attended the walk were, Dave Antrobus, Lindsey Fooks, Nicky Hickin, Jane Jones, Debbie Kennard & of course Zahida.

4) 50th Anniversary celebration of the purchase of the chapel - Kevin McEvoy



Over the weekend of 4 - 6 August we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of our club hut in Capel Curig.

We had a full weekend of activities with 35 members attending.

The weekend started with a group of 13 members walking up Siabod on the Friday afternoon followed by a traditional off the hill pint or 2 in the Tyn-y-coed.

Lin Jensen, Janet Harris and Helen Bartlam did a low level walk to Lyn Crafnant.



Friday evening we had a champagne and sausage roll reception. Sue Taylor, helped by Paul & Lin Jensen did stirring work making the home made sausage rolls which went down well a glass or 2 of bubbles.

On the Saturday morning bright and early Steve Birch lead a group over the Nantlle ridge. While Mike Mc and Derek Burrows walked over to Dolwyddelan where they had a pint in the Gwydyr hotel.



On the Saturday evening Vanda and myself, again with great help from Sue made a hot buffet for everyone and the evening was spent eating & drinking and reminiscing with old photographs and tales of how the hut was bought and modernised and turned into the hut we know today.

Sunday morning saw 17 of us descend onto the Siabod cafe for breakfast.

5) Steve's Nantlle Ridge walk Steve Birch on the Anniversary weekend.

An Introduction to the Nantlle Ridge Circuit...rapidly becoming one of my favourites!

A circular route starting from Rhyd Ddu and return via the ridge between Cwm Dwyfor and Cwm Du Forest (for smaller groups there is the chance to park in the layby (@ SH 567526 for free)

The Nantlle Ridge scramble from Rhyd Ddu is undoubtedly one of the classic ridge walking routes in Snowdonia.

This route does not include the outlying peak of [Mynydd Graig Goch](#), but does dog-leg out to the summit of Garnedd Goch although due to time constraints we returned after the cairn on the unnamed peak before Garnedd Goch .

From the car park cross the road and follow the cinder track until it forks, take the right fork up to the B4418, where you can pick up the bridle way proper.



Follow this until after the last gate and stile, where you begin to climb.

This part of the Nantlle Ridge is a slog. The climb is only about 450m to the summit, but once there you have the rocky playground of Drws Y Coed to play on.... entertaining rewarded by many views both out to sea and Snowdon behind you.



The path is relatively straight forward to follow.... literally up to Y Garn!



Mynydd Drws-y-coed

From the summit of Y Garn you have a clear view of the ridge ahead, and of Mynydd Mawr across the valley. From here you can follow the wall to the start of the scrambling. The scrambling is over pretty quickly and next is the ridge walk.



From Drws y Coed, we followed a grassy ridge, staying on the crest as much as possible, up to the top of Trum y Ddysgl, before dropping back down across a broken grassy ridge to Mynydd Tal-y-mignedd.

The descent to Bwlch Dros-bern is not pleasant, being eroded and steep. The final summit will make up for that, being a rough scramble in places and a rough walk-in other. The path that continues to contour the hill is the more obvious path, but this ascent becomes indistinct, steep and heathery. Once on this first path, the route finding is clear in most parts, with some interesting gullies on your left to peer down. The path does disappear across some of the boulder fields, but care should find you to the summit of Craig Cwm Silyn.



There are two summits on Craig Cwm Silyn, the second of which appears on the ground to be more important (it has a square stone tower), but the actual summit is the first one. Views here extend back over the ridge and across Cwm Pennant to the Hebog range.

We left some of the group to sunbathe at the Obelisk so had to re ascend to get back up to the path , there are other paths in distinct that go through some boggy terrain to eventually arrive at the disused Quarry workings (potential escape routes) But there is a very clear path that eventually brings you out along a fence line and down to a gate.

From here you can follow the track through the forest until you come out over a small bridge onto a clear forest road. At the Road immediately turn right and then left at the major junction.

From here continue along the road until the next left over another small bridge...look out for the path on the right after the bridge that runs along the river, follow this till its natural end.

Cross over at the road then continue along the track Follow the footpath, and this line should find you out of the forest and onto open hillside

Nothing left for it now, but to continue along this, and after a couple of kilometres you will arrive back at the start of the climb up Y Garn. Back track from here to the car park, or if you want a pint, follow the first road the path hits and the Cwellyn Arms is barely five minutes down the road.