



The Langstrath valley

The Gwydyr Mountain Club Newsletter.

October 2022

Edited: Chris Harris

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

4-6 November	Hut Weekend:	Bonfire Party - Kev McEvoy
17 November	Thursday Walk:	Llantysilio Mountain - Mike McEneaney
19 November	Saturday Walk:	The Woolpacks, Kinder Scout - Dave Edwards
25-27 November	Hut Weekend:	Wine Tasting - Richard Smith
15 December	Thursday Walk:	To be arranged - Dave Edwards
23 Dec-2 Jan	Christmas and New Year Meet	

Articles this Month:

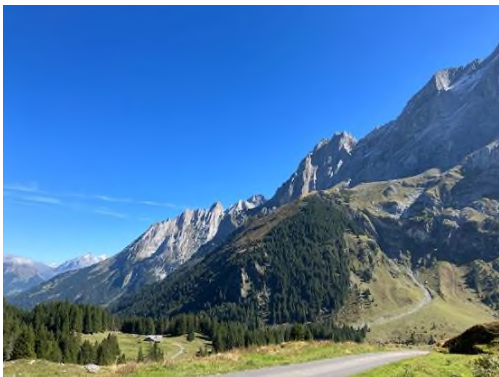
- 1) **Via Alpina, Switzerland, September 2022 - Angela Price**
- 2) **Chairman's Luxury Meet - Chris Harris**
- 3) **Helen and Glenn's Final Wainwright - Helen Grant**
- 4) **Castle to Castle Walks.**

1) Via Alpina, Switzerland, September 2022 by Angela Price



At the end of September, Sue Taylor, Linda Humphries and I set off to walk 6 sections of the Via Alpina from Meiringen to Lenk via Grindlewald, Lauterbrunnen, Griesalp, Kandisteg and Adeelboden.

The route was about 70 miles in length, with a total ascent of around 8250m and a total descent of around 7850m, and high-quality hotels were booked on our behalf at each destination. The route was suggested by the travel company Colletes, which was luckily very well signposted as a Swiss hiking route, because the directions and App recommended were incomprehensible. The instructions did however detail the length of each section, ascents and descents and the time the section was expected to take.



Even with Sue setting the pace we were always at least an hour later arriving than predicted, and the days always felt that bit too long and tiring. The scenery on the first 3 days was stunning, and enhanced by blue skies and a warm sun.

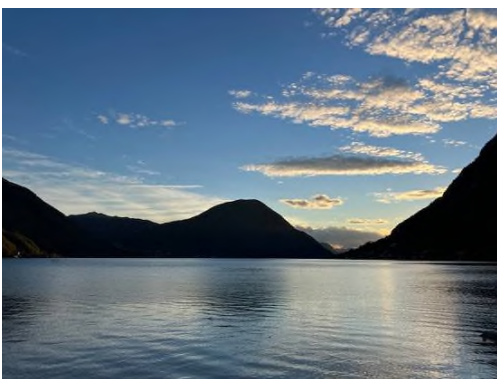


Towards what we had hoped was the end of Day 3 we crossed the Serfinenfrugge through snow and ice, which brought out the worst of my language, and the day only got worse when we realised how ridiculous we were to think that there might be an alternative cable car option to take care of the long, slippery descent on slate.



Luckily for me the weather deteriorated on day 4 with rain, and snow on the higher ground preventing us from walking on Days 4 and 5, so we made use of the highly efficient and coordinated public transport systems to sight-see, eat, drink, and reach our destination. By Day 6 the weather and leg stiffness had improved enough for us to walk to Lenk, although cable car assisted for the first ascent.

From Lenk we travelled by train to Lake Lugano on the Italian border to spend a few days of relative R and R with friends of Sue, who live overlooking the lake, before travelling back to Geneva for the flight home, feeling fitter, tougher, and purses considerably lighter.



2) Chairman's Luxury Meet 30th September to 3rd October - Chris Harris

The forecast was bad for the Friday drive to the Lake District, the reality was far worse. About Midday the clouds opened and dumped all their contents in about half an hour. The roads turned to rivers and lakes, the mountains turned into massive waterfalls. Many sheep were simply washed off the hill and drowned in Borrowdale that day. Most of the arrivals had tales of the challenges getting to Greenbank House. Janet and I crested a brow descending to Thirlmere and suddenly we were aquaplaning down the hill at 30mph with the camber trying to pull me into the adjacent drystone wall. The driveway to the accommodation was flooded with water pouring onto it. Pete had to shelter in the Borrowdale Hotel bar until the water subsided.



Saturday dawned fine with a threat of light rain but fortunately the day was dry and Helen and Glenn were able to achieve their final Wainwright - Castle Crag (see next article).



Blackmoss Pots



Rosset Pike



Descent of Stake Pass

The Sunday was another fine day and I was able to bag Rossett Pike, one of my remaining Wainwrights. Helen and Glenn, Adrian and Adele, Katie and James and I were accompanied by Richard, a prospective member, friend of Hew, who lives in the Lake District and had been staying near to Greenbank House and had joined us the previous evening.

The route was Rossett Pike from Stonethwaite, via Angle Tarn returning via Stake Pass. Starting from Stonethwaite, we followed Stonethwaite Beck then headed South alongside Langstrath Beck to Blackmoss Pot, a real beauty spot popular for taking a dip in the pools. It was here that Richard told us about the "Woof Hole", a shelter under a huge boulder to the West of the valley. It was little known until Trail magazine gave it a mention a few years ago. To enter, you needed to pull a hidden lever which opened a section of drystone wall to reveal a shallow shelter with raised bunks. There is a plaque - "In memory of Malcolm Prentice 1943 to 2015 whose efforts built this refuge for all to enjoy". You may note my use of the past tense in some of the above. The door is now damaged and the shelter shows signs of abuse, ie rubbish. Sadly, we did not have time to view it.

Continuing up the beck we split onto Angletarn Beck which took us across many tributaries and rocks to Angle Tarn from which a well made path led us onto Rossett Pike. The views were amazing (well it is a Wainwright), across the Langdale Fells and valley and so many other mountains. It felt like you were within spitting distance of Pike of Stickle.

It was at this point that Richard left us (after lunch) to descend into the Langdale valley to catch the bus to Ambleside where he was to meet Jacqui, his wife. I was slightly jealous as it's not often you get the chance to do a linear, valley to valley walk in the Lakes. We returned via the Stake Pass and followed Stake Beck down to rejoin Langstrath Beck which took us to the Langstrath Arms for an "off the hill". 13 miles and 2550ft ascent being the stats..

3) Helen and Glenn's Final Wainwright - Helen Grant

Glenn and I have been ticking off Wainwrights for the last eleven years. It all started when I watched Julia Bradbury TV series on the Wainwrights. I then bought the dvds and drove Glenn round the bend playing them over and over again! A ticklist map was also purchased. Once we joined the club any excuse to bag more especially as Janet and Chris are bagging them too. So we often colluded with them on club meets to tick a few more off.



This year we realised we had 30 left to do and thought it would be nice to aim to finish them for the club weekend in Borrowdale. Castle Crag from Grange, 700ft of ascent meant a wide range of club members were able to join us and we could walk from the door of the Greenbank country house.

Over the years we have had lots of weekends in airbnbs finishing them off too and got to some places off the beaten track.

So on Saturday 1st October a large group of GMC set off to summit Castle crag with GMC Sherpas carrying bottles of champagne and plastic flutes. The weather was kind and stayed dry for us with a nice path climbing along the river through woodland with a short steep slate ascent to the top.

Champagne was supped and then it seemed like a race to get back to the digs to get ready for the party that evening.

Following day we started our second round with Rossett Pike, summited for the second time and adding another one to Chris's tally, with a lovely walk from Stonethwaite.

We have just started bagging Wainwright's Outlying Fells now.

Any excuse really to go walking in the Lakes.



4) Castle to Castle Walks.



Rhuddlan Castle

The joint venture by Roger Hughes and Mike McEneaney has drawn to a close ending with Denbigh to Rhuddlan. Although there is a rumour that someone might take on Chirk to somewhere in the near future.

Roger also sent out this invitation:

Offa's Dyke, a play by Michael Stevens

Anyone on our Castles Walks will be familiar with the work of Mike Stevens - he wrote the book!

He has just written a new play which is on at Theatre Clwyd from 9th -12 November. I quote -

"A comedy by Michael Stevens with music by James Peacock following the fortunes of a group of walkers on the long distance trail. Can they make it from Chepstow to the promised land - Prestatyn?"