

THE GWYDYR NO 15 (FEB 2011)

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB

I apologise for the rather short newsletter this month but I've been rather busy and I promise to make amends next month.

On the 1st February Dave Gray enjoyed nice weather on the Clwydian range and Bryn Alyn while Geoff Brierley went on his bike somewhere – I do wish people would email me more information sometimes but there you go. Margaret Blakeborough was also on her bike riding to Northop and back.

The following weekend Dave Gray organised a great walk in the Peak District though sadly the weather proved atrocious with rain falling all day and the mist lay thick covering all the summits and providing no views whatsoever. We left the cars in Manor Park in Glossop to walk up the Doctor's Gate path and at the top of which we turned left to reach the cold and bare summit of Bleaklow. It was then a simple case of turning round and going back the way we came.

We did find a nice pub with a real fire which helped dry us out a bit and it was good to see so many members out on the walk, thirteen in total.

The following weekend was Keith Colwell's walk to Gragiau Gleision with, again, thirteen members attending and at least they enjoyed good weather on this occasion. Keith Colwell provided the following little piece on the day :-

Craigiau Gleision roughly means the 'blue cliffs'. Well today they were mainly grey and peaty brown, with extra little rivulets burbling merrily away around us as we ascended through the pine forest.

Graham and Margaret brought along a 'visitor' they found at the Chapel; one Janet of Cirencester; prospective member Lindsey joined us, Sue Taylor, Helen Beddoes, Ross, Big Ron, John, the delectable Carol, Mr Dave Grey, and the inimitable Mal Bonner.

Trudge plop slurp splat went the thirteen intrepid hill-sters up through boggy muddiness. Everyone thought I'd exaggerated the case and I was mightily impressed to see, as I counted them coming out over the stile of the forest on the south eastern flank of Gleision, that there was hardly a spatter of the gooey substance above their gaiters. Gleision is a crest of rugged rockiness, but its good path soon took us across and over Craig Wen and down to the lane at the head of Crafnant. Here some went direct to the cars, including Dave and his passengers and Mal who had had a bad day, feeling rather tired and under the weather on the traverse of Gleision. Thanks to Dave and the above for shepherding him off the hill. Ross, myself, and Helen, completed the walk, traversing over to Llyn Gerionydd and round westwards to the car-park to meet the others. Once seated by the glowing artificial coals in the Fairy Falls in Trefriw ruddy faces were seen to be glowing with satisfaction over their glasses, raised to another fine Gwydyr day!

I've not been a total 'slacker' this month and on Sunday 20th February I had my first real introduction to proper sea kayaking with the Liverpool Canoe Club. It was a glorious day and a great experience though I did seem to spend a disproportionate amount of time in the Irish Sea rather than on it !

We left Benllech bay after the obligatory cafe stop for a much needed coffee and after finding a sheltered bay for lunch we paddled over to Ynys Dulas, a small rocky islet, in the hope of seeing some seals and possibly landing for a second lunch. However as we made our way over a significant swell came upon us and such thoughts of landing were cast aside as we decided to head back to the shore. We did see a couple of seals, one of which was clearly smiling as if he (or she) knew what was in store for us. The tide was now ebbing from our left (facing the shore) and so we paddled against it to try and avoid some rougher water but the current was too strong and we soon found ourselves riding some BIG (6-7ft) waves which were initially exhilarating but soon, for me anyway, became quite scary. As I was paddling like mad, which is what you apparently do in big waves, I heard a rather loud wave coming up behind me and I just knew that it had my name on it, so to speak. I was pushed forward at a fair rate as it caught the rear of my kayak but then I went over and came out of my kayak for my first swim of the day. I didn't seem to notice the cold as the adrenaline was pumping and once I'd got both legs out of the cockpit (I cursed my long legs repeatedly) I hung onto the kayak as another wave washed over me. As I crested the next wave I saw two other members of our party in the water and thought that this was going to be an interesting afternoon. I lay on my back and kept swimming towards the shore, if only to keep the blood pumping, knowing full well that I wouldn't be forgotten about and someone would come alongside to assist me getting back into my kayak. Two of our party duly did come alongside and in a jiffy I was back in my kayak, shivering wildly, while pumping the water out of the cockpit. The sea clearly had other ideas however and I was soon back in the water as a rogue wave caught me, another brief swim and a short tow saw us in slightly calmer waters where I could get back into the kayak properly and we then rafted up for a tow off another member of our party. Some fifty yards from a steep shingle beach we were let loose and paddled furiously to reach dry land and the best cup of coffee I've ever tasted. A change of clothes improved my outlook on the events and a rather tiring carry of twelve laden sea kayaks to the nearest road a kilometre away warmed us all up no end.

In total five went swimming that day so I didn't feel too much of a fool as I was clearly the least experienced member and I can't wait to go again though I think I'll take a closer look at the weather next time. A nice beer in some unknown pub rounded off the day nicely though I resisted the temptation of the carvery menu which on reflection I should have indulged like the others.



Heading out to Ynys Dulas in calm water



Ynys Dulas



The swell was getting bigger now, interest in photography stopped shortly after this was taken



Ynys Dulas from the beach where we landed

The chapel weekend of the 25th February saw eleven members out and about, walking up Moel Siabod, over to Dolwydellan and scrambling up Foel Fras. The weather was largely good I understand though some hail fell on the Sunday just to remind us all that it is still technically winter. John Murphy was up in the Lake District and has now completed all the Wainwright's so congratulations for that John. Chris and Janet Harris went a walking in the Trough of Bowland, an area devoid of women apparently as they all congregate around Pendle Hill (according to Chris – I cannot comment !!) Helen and Brian went walking on a section of the Cleveland Way.

Earlier this week I went over to Hilbre for a nice walk in the winter sunshine – thankfully the tide was out so at least I stayed dry on this occasion !

This month saw the election of John Driver as a member and we've had quite a few prospective members turn up at the pub on a Tuesday evening and so one hopes at the next intake we can boost our numbers still further.

One must also mention and congratulate Andy Chapman as his employers have finally allowed him a crack at Everest this spring. It has been a lifetime wish for Andy to go to Everest and while in the past he has been up to the North Col on this occasion he will be trying the 'tourist' path (tongue very firmly in cheek !) from the south. He leaves in a little under three weeks and I am sure we all wish Andy the best of luck and that he has a great and safe trip.

FORTHCOMING MEETS & EVENTS

The club AGM will be held in the Stork on Tuesday 22nd March 2011, the meeting will commence at 8.00pm prompt and if you are unable to attend you can now cast your vote by email. Simply send an email from your club registered email to either myself or Mike Dunn with your vote. We know for certain that there is one committee position being vacated, that of Secretary and it's important that this is filled. Any member can stand for any committee position and the forms will be available on the night for completion.

There is one pressing matter that we require members to be aware of and that requires an amendment to the club constitution with regard to the election of Trustees. We've sought guidance from the BMC and the amendment will be sent to you in the next few days for your consideration and approval.

The weekend after the AGM is the Annual Dinner at the Tyn Y Coed, Capel Curig. All members and prospective members are invited to attend. Geoff is organising the photograph and slide show so please contact him if you have any suitable photo's or video's. Also please contact Dave Gray if you wish to attend.

MARCH 2011	
05	Sat Walk: Darwen area (Mark Barley)
11-12	Winter S/C Meet Blencathra Centre (Sue Taylor)
22	Club AGM
25-26	HUT Weekend – 44th Annual Dinner
APRIL 2011	
02	Sat Walk: Cheshire Peak (Mark Barley)
07	Thurs Walk: Conwy Mt (Mike McEneany)
15-16	Sandstone Trail (Keith Colwell)
22-25	Easter TBA
29-01	May BH-TBA

One final thing.....

On the May Day Bank Holiday (Royal Wedding Weekend !) I aim to walk the Lleyn Coastal Path from Caernarfon to Porthmadog. It's 94 miles and a 4 or 5 day backpacking trip so not too strenuous. If anyone wants to join me please feel free to contact me to see what we can sort out.

Also Andy Odger has a Skye trip planned for the end of May, it's a cracker of a place and we'll be camping at Sligachan. More details will follow from Andy in due course and it would be great to get a good group together. Last year's trip was especially memorable with a stunning day on the Pinnacle Ridge of Sgurr Nan Gillean with even a car breakdown at the campsite and the ensuing fifteen hour journey home not dampening our enthusiasm for the place.