

# THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB NEWSLETTER

July 2026: Editor Dave Gray



## Introduction

Welcome to the July Newsletter!

Thanks to Dave Antrobus, Helen Grant, Laura, Margaret, Mark Barley, Mike Doyle, Nicky, and Sonja, and as ever DLJ for their help with this edition . Please let me have material for the next edition, the final deadline for that is **July 24th**.

## Looking Ahead

**Here are the upcoming meets venues for July and August, details are on the Club Website. The** meets list is constantly being updated, please **check it out regularly** on the Website. Meets added to the programme since the last edition are in bold as a reminder **in case you've missed them....**

1 July	Midweek Climbing – Road Runner Crag
<b>7 July</b>	<b>Tuesday Walk – Bidston Station to Hoylake</b>
11 July	Saturday Walk – ‘Wharfedale 3 Peaks’
15 July	Midweek Climbing – <b>Oak Tree Crag</b>
<b>16 July</b>	<b>Thursday Evening Walk – Nannerch Circular</b>
24/26 July	Hut Weekend (Grounds working weekend)
29 July	Midweek Climbing – Marian Bach
12 August	Midweek Climbing Penmaenbach Quarry (Last Butt One Level)
14-16 August	Hut Weekend
26 August	Midweek Climbing – Castle Inn

## Focus on Venues

The starting point for the 7 July Tuesday walk is **Bidston Station**, from there the plan is to walk to **Hoylake**. Drawing on the book ‘*Railway Stations of Wirral*’ (available second hand via Amazon), here’s part of the Bidston station story...

Bidston is where, today, Merseyrail and the Welsh Border Line going down to Wrexham meet. Before multiple railway companies were consolidated in 1923, it was where the ‘Great Central’ Railway line from Wrexham met the ‘Wirral Railway’, which was basically what we know as the New Brighton and West Kirby sections of Merseyrail from their termini back as far as Birkenhead Park station. In those days the electric trains of the ‘Mersey Railway’ started at Park Station and crossed the river to Liverpool.



Here's a picture (*credit H.J Leadbetter Collection*) of the station in the 1920s when Bidston Moss really was a desolate marshy lowland. My best mate's dad, the late Peter Gwynne, worked at the station and told me it was traditionally called by railwaymen 'pneumonia junction' – you can see why!

The second photo (*credit E.C Lloyd Collection*) shows the station in October 1937.

The steam train is a Sundays only train from the old Birkenhead Woodside station to Birkenhead Park by the 25 mile 'silly route' - via Hooton and West Kirby! So in those days you could enjoy an almost circular rail trip round Wirral.

But modernity is on the horizon. Look carefully at the rails near the foreground and you'll see white patches on a third rail by the track. These are to warn passengers and railway staff that there is an electric rail present. It's part of the electrification of what is now Merseyrail completed by the 'London Midland Scottish railway group in 1938.



Chris Harris's '**3 Peaks of Wharfedale**' route takes in Buckden Pike, Great Whernside, and Birk Fell. The first two of these are pretty much the most easterly high summits in the Dales, Great Whernside is lower than the 'Ordinary Whernside', but it is much more extensive and remote in feel...



Great Whernside (*photo credit Steven Ruffles on Flickr.com*)

Buckden Pike is shapelier; older Yorkshire hands might remember the land in between the two hills as being pretty wet underfoot! It been a good few years since I was last there...

So it's good to read on the website <https://www.yorkshiretreasures.co.uk/blog/buckden-pike> that on the hill 'you can now enjoy a new dry-stone seat and better pathways, thanks to National Trust rangers. Breath-taking views from the 702-meter summit stretch over Langstrothdale towards the Yorkshire Three Peaks'

The above website, plus [https://mosshowefarm.co.uk/wild\\_guides/buckden-pike/](https://mosshowefarm.co.uk/wild_guides/buckden-pike/), and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/47/a1317647.shtml> together tell the story of the memorial on Buckden Pike, a cross erected in memory of five Polish airmen who crashed when their Wellington Bomber was caught by a severe snowstorm, during an operational training mission 30<sup>th</sup> January 1942.

The memorial was built in 1973 by the sole survivor, together with local people. At its base is a sculpture of a fox's head (*photo credits* [www.buckdenpike.co.uk](http://www.buckdenpike.co.uk) )



The survivor was the rear gunner, Sergeant Joseph Fusinak (pictured right), who had a severely broken ankle and couldn't walk. He crawled downhill for help, having had no choice but to leave his severely injured and immobile comrade, wireless operator Sergeant Jan Sadowski, in the wreckage. Soon he was lost in the whiteout and deep snow – but then he saw a fox's trail of footprints and decided to follow it on the basis that the fox was probably heading towards civilisation to hunt. The trail got covered by snow in the end, but thanks to its guidance Joseph reached the White Lion Inn at Cray where he was spotted by Nannie Parker, the landlord's nine year old daughter, and was rescued.



Sadly Jan Sadokski was dead when he was reached by rescuers. Joseph survived not only this crash but being shot down over Germany in July 1942, and being imprisoned as a POW. He settled in the UK, married, and had a family including son Richard who is interviewed on video on the [www.buckdenpike.co.uk](http://www.buckdenpike.co.uk) site. Joseph died in Cambridgeshire in 2017 aged 95. He was awarded the British Empire Medal in the war for his courage in trying to get help for Jan.

Uncannily, locals told the story of a fox appearing in the village earlier in the day; it was able to make off, escaping before it was shot by a member of the Home Guard who was too slow on the draw...

WW2 crashes in training – whether initial or for operations – were very common. Figures vary but it seems that around 15% of RAF casualties were sustained in accidents of some sort. Planes were underpowered and weather forecasting and navigational aids were primitive, by today's standards; it was these latter factors that caused the Buckden crash. Getting lost in bad weather happened to experienced pilots as well; in combat veteran Geoff Wellum's hard-hitting book '*First Light*' (available on Amazon) there is a graphic account of what this was like.

There are three midweek climbing opportunities in July! One of these is at **Marian Bach**, a sheltered and sunny south-facing crag with a wide range of sport climbs.

Here is a shot from Mike Doyle on the first ascent of *Vulcan XM 607* (F4) back in 2018, from his book '*A55 Sport Climbs*' (photo credit Keith Mills, who did the first ascent with Mike).

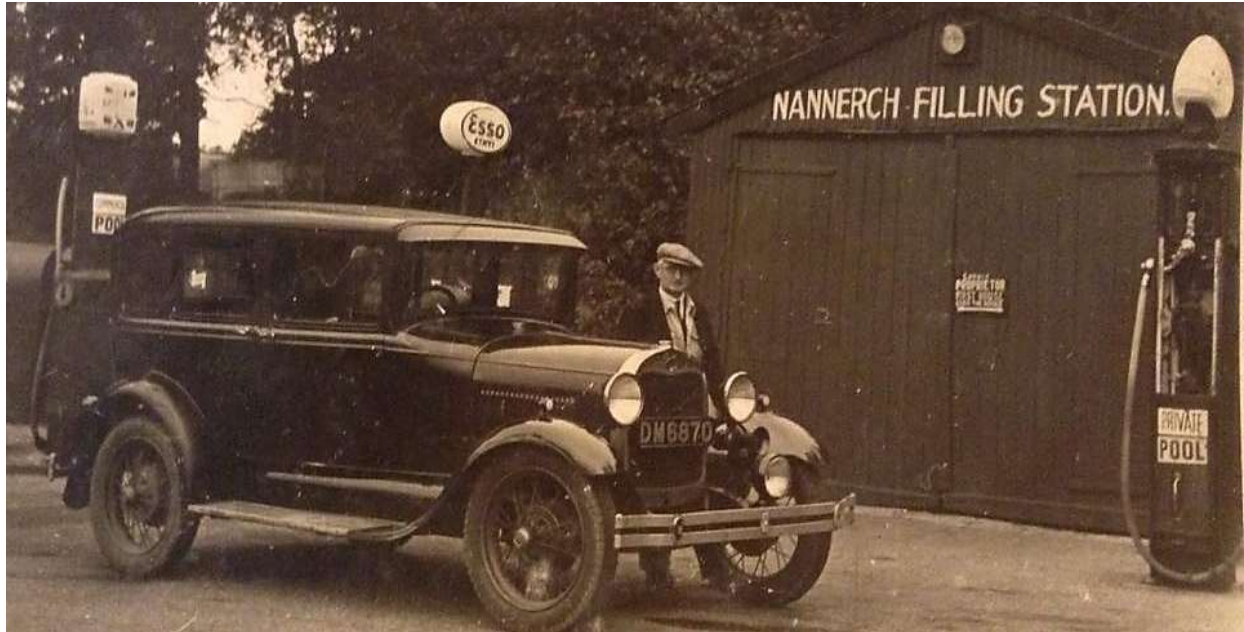


Nicky's **Nannerch Circular** evening walk begins and ends at the Cross Foxes pub in Nannerch. An article in Liverpool Echo reveals that this pub goes back to 1780, has a trad interior (see *their photo*) and it seems to be a good place for those who like real ale!



I also came across this intriguing photo, of the old garage in Nannerch (*photo credit Patricia Cairns* via <https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/nannerch-in-times-past> ), which seems to be advertising a 'Private Pool' on the pump pictured right!

Did this place double as an early spa?



Sadly not! The notice dates the picture to WW2 and the time of petrol rationing, as described by John Luke, a former sales assistant at a garage in Ballymena in Northern Ireland, on the website <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/53/a4110553.shtml> :

'Petrol at that time in our station was in three grades: Esso High Test 1/1½ d [6p !] per gallon, Esso Ethyl 1/1 d per gallon, and Essolene 1/- per gallon.

In January 1940 petrol was rationed. When that happened all the "brand" names disappeared there was no more Esso, Shell etc. It all became "pool" petrol. Every car owner had to apply for a Ration Book. For a small 10HP vehicle this was issued on a basis of 5 gallons per month, maybe 6 gallons for larger cars. Anyone who used a car for business or professional purposes had then to apply for a "supplementary" ration which was allocated according to need.

Commercial vehicles had a different type of petrol issued — it was known as "leaded" petrol and was red in colour and it was an offence to use this petrol in private cars. All sorts of schemes were tried to remove the colour from this petrol such as filtering it through ladies' silk stockings (there were no nylons in those days) and putting "black lead" into it to absorb the colour. These worked to some extent, but if you were caught you were prosecuted.'

Why the Nannerch 'pool' is 'private' I'm not sure – but the other pump has a different sign I can't make out, so possibly one pump is for commercial users and one for ordinary drivers.

So back again to WW2 – funny how stories of those days so often involve dodgy deals and ladies' stockings!

## Grand Days Out (and In) – Recent Meets Highlights

The **Aviemore meet** was blessed with good weather and was a great success. Big thanks to Teresa for all her work in putting the trip together.



Sonja writes 'So yesterday two Munros 'conquered'. First one Ben Mac Dui (2nd highest in UK) then Cairngorm. Snow ❄️ & sunshine ☀️ Came across the only free roaming reindeer in the UK. Amazing to see'.

Here are some of Sonja's photos –

On the plateau...

.... And the Cairn Toul group from the summit of Ben MacDui



Later in the week the scene changed – here's Sonja again:

'Swapped snow for sand today & had a lovely relaxing day on Loch Morlich'...



And Nicky posted 'What a fabulous week in Aviemore! Sunshine and blue sky ☀️ Fantastic walks - Ben MacDui, Cairngorm, Geal Charn, and Meall a Bhuachaille. Plus walking, swimming and paddle boarding at Loch Morlich . Finished off with the Aviemore Park run (well walk for me 😊) Great company and lots of laughs; thanks for organising the group 'take away' Sue. And the icing on the cake was getting up close to the reindeer 🦌 😊!' Here's a couple of Nicky's photos -

The Reindeer...



...Fun in the Loch...'I can see Australia from down here!'



Helen Grant tells me that the other Munros she and others did during the meet were Beinn Udlamain, Sgairneach Mhor, A' Mharconaich and Geal Charn west of the Drumochter Pass, and Carn na Caim and A' Bhuidheanach Bheag to the east.

Plus the remote summits of Beinn Bhrotain and Monadh Mor going in from Glenn Feshie, which is a major walk! I did those two back in the day from a wild camp right underneath them on the River Dee and that was quite enough for me in a day!

This photo is A Mharconaich from Sgairneach Mor (it's one of my own shots from my trip up there a few weeks back)



Shifting from feet to wheels, our cycling correspondents Laura and Mark Barley tell me that one day they cycled with Margaret and Graham to Newtonmore via Kingussie and back (36 miles), visiting the folk museum at Newtonmore, which is well worth seeing. The same team also did a 30 mile ride from Aviemore to Loch Morlich and then through the Ryvoan Pass, to Nethy Bridge and Boat of Garten before circling back to Aviemore.

Mark and Laura also cycled from Aviemore to RSPB Loch Garten, Bridge of Garten and back to Aviemore by the cycle track (24 miles), and last but not least did a 4.25 miler from Sugar Bowl to the Chalamain Gap.

This photo is a 'Black House' at the folk museum. I visited this museum a few years back and it was interesting, and sobering, to see what these were like inside, given some of my ancestors originated in the Far North of the Highlands.



(Photo credit <https://www.highlifehighland.com/attractions/highland-folk-museum> )



Hale Lighthouse

(photo credit Chris Newman <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zacerin/14862371356/> )

Now once again from Helen on Facebook - 'Thanks Dave for an enjoyable wild and windy walk on **The High Berwyns** today. 11.24 miles and 2,506 feet of ascent, followed by an off the hill pint at the Grouse Inn at Carrog. A good turnout with a mix of climbers and walkers, fourteen members and two prospectives. 😊'

We did Cader Berwyn and Craig Berwyn summits, and also took a short detour to the site of the Bronze Age cairn on Moel Ty Uchaf. This is Helen's shot of us approaching Cader Berwyn:



And overleaf is Helen's photo of Craig Berwyn summit from the (very welcome!) stone shelter on Cader Berwyn...



On the rock climbing scene, Mike Doyle reports 'A good turnout (9) at **Nant Dulas** today in bright sunshine at a very pleasant crag'. Here's a couple of his shots of the group in action –



Dave Gray - June 2026