

THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB NEWSLETTER – EXTRA!

August 2026: Editor Dave Gray



Introduction

Welcome to the July Newsletter!

This is an Extra! edition with an article from Chris Harris on his Wharfedale 3 Peaks Meet. Thanks to Chris, to Brenda (as Club Secretary), and to Gill Eccles, Helen Grant, Mike Doyle, Mike Gilbert, Nicky, and Sonja, for their help with this edition. A special thanks as well to DLJ for his longtime support of the newsletter as Secretary. Please let me have material for the next edition, the final deadline for that is **August 25th**.

Looking Ahead

Here are the upcoming meets venues for August and September, 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 August	Saturday Walk – Cynr y Brain Circuit from Horseshoe Pass
8 August	Saturday Walk – Morecambe Bay Crossing
12 August	Midweek Climbing - Penmaenbach Quarry (Last Butt One Level)
14-16 August	Hut Weekend
26 August	Midweek Climbing – Castle Inn Crag
1 September	Tuesday Evening at Gallaghers – ‘Trekking in China’ talk by Mike Gilbert
1-11 September	Austria Trip – Stubai Alps
18-20 September	Hut Weekend

Focus on Venues

Well as I draft this we're in the third heatwave of the year, so it seems a gloriously inappropriate time for another of our occasional series of 'things one might do at **the Hut**' if the weather in the hills isn't playing ball. If the conditions on the north Wales coast are better, a good walk is a sort of circuit on the **Great Orme at Llandudno**. Mostly circular but with a good out and back section, depending on the starting point the approximate mileage is between 8.25 and 8.75 miles, and can be shortened, or lengthened if you wish by varying the route.

There's a map on the next page for orientation – *courtesy of* the laptop version of *OSmaps.com* – whose App is simply the best computer related purchase I've ever made and has saved me from many navigational embarrassments! Navigation on the Orme can be quite intricate so the 1:25,000 map on paper and/or on the OSmaps App is really needed.



If you have just one carload, then it makes a better walk to start from the small promenade of Deganwy, known as Marine Crescent, where there is limited parking available particularly at quiet times. The promenade is a left turn off the A546 across a level crossing, approx. GR is

777 791. I'll describe the route from here, and come back to parking alternatives at the end.



From here you take the prom and then the well marked Coast Path N through scrub and sand dunes,

This section gives fine views of the west side of the Great Orme.

Then go along the West promenade of Llandudno as far as the lodge building at the SW end of the Marine Drive, approx. GR 769 823.

At the lodge you leave the Coast Path and go slightly inland to join a public footpath that parallels the Coast Path going NW, but at a higher level, heading towards Gogarth. This section goes right under some pretty rugged cliffs.

In places fencing protects the drop on the left, and also the path itself from stonefall.

The public footpath drops down again and briefly rejoins the Marine Drive and Coast Path before leaving them again at approximate GR 762 829 to climb on a rising traverse up the steep grass slope of the Orme, through limestone outcrops. Being in limestone country and well used, there's one place on this rise where there is a very short piece of polished rock that needs a little care.



The path flattens out and joins another which circumnavigates a large wall that encloses non-access land on the Orme. Head SW on this path till the wall gives out and then go up to the summit of the headland which gives great views, and has a café etc.

From the summit head SE on a footpath that brings you down to the tramway. Follow this down across open land, it is worth diverting to take in Mynydd Isaf which has good views E to the Little Orme, and also a section of limestone pavement.

This shot is of the pavement, looking W across to the Carneddau.



Lower down the tramway track shares its space for a bit with the main road up the Orme. At about GR 776 828 the tramway goes steeply down a narrower road that is used by residents only; follow this down to the Tramway bottom terminus. Here go SE along the street and then turn first right to ascend a few metres to the road above the terminus level. Go SW along this road and join the wide footpath heading broadly SW that is known as 'Invalids Way'. Be careful here, it's intricate and it is possible to go too low at one point and get lost – I did at first!

Invalids Way takes you back to the lodge and you then retrace your steps on the Coast Path to Deganwy prom and your car.

Now back to the situation if you have more cars, or Deganwy prom is or looks to be full up. a good alternative is to park on street on or near the West Parade at Llandudno, near the boating lake, approx. GR 772 820, where there is usually plenty of space and as of my last visit this

year, all free. There is a slight disadvantage with this as the section of the walk S to Deganwy then becomes an immediate out and back.



Personally I don't mind this as the view SW from the path is very different from the one N and takes in the Penmaen Bach and Mawr headlands and the Carneddau -

If though you don't like the out and back section idea, another option is to start from the West Parade and to use the path which circumnavigates the wall on the headland to put on some length, and/or potentially explore the access land more generally. The N end of the Orme has quite a remote feel, plus more limestone pavement.

This walk is also close enough to Wirral to be a day trip for many of us - and Deganwy has a station near its prom, so it's possible to take the train!

Straying briefly into September, on the 1st Mike Gilbert has a slideshow **talk at Gallaghers on 'Trekking in China'**. With a population of over a billion you'd be forgiven for seeing China as lacking in wild country. When I visited and went to the Great Wall, to the second-most touristy bit an hour or so beyond Beijing, I was very surprised as to how wild the scene was – and the second of the two shots below show how fast the meticulously restored Ming dynasty wall relapses into ruins and dry jungle.



And this is the vast, mysterious Qinghai Hu (rough translation 'Blue-Green Lake'). Also known in Mongolian as Koko Nur, it is located nearly 10,500 feet in Qinghai province, one of the remotest parts of China proper, on the railway line to Lhasa.

So this show may well be an eye-opener!

Back to the end of August, one of the month's midweek climbing meets is at Castle Inn Crag. Mike Doyle's book 'A55 Sports Climbs' describes its 'many superb routes on good rock', and how 'Development in recent years has meant that the crag now boasts eight sectors with many climbs in the valuable lower grades.'



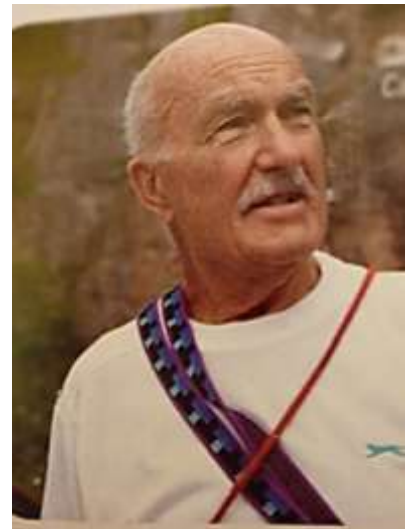
This is the main crag directly above a car park. Please do read Mike's advice on parking for this crag in his book, as the crag is near a residential area. (*Photo credit outdoornation.uk*)



Surely amongst the most rugged car parks in the UK! If anyone would like to contribute to a fun montage of 'rugged car parks' please email me photos and where they were taken!

Digging into Mike's book I was very struck by the career of its dedicatee, Colin Goodey (*Photo edited from A55 Sports Climbs*)

Amongst many other pioneering achievements Colin was one of the first group known to have climbed at Castle Inn, in 1958. Colin returned to there at the age of 75 in 2011 and started doing new sport climbing routes yet again, with people queueing up to repeat them as soon as they were finished!



Colin died in 2018 aged 82, I found further interesting material on his life at - https://www.ukclimbing.com/news/2018/03/north_wales_pioneer_colin_goodey_passes_away-71504

Looking further than usual ahead, I thought it was worth following up a recent email, reminding everyone that Gail having done preliminary work on the **2026 Sport Climbing Winter Sun Trip**, she has needed to pass on the ongoing organisation role and Mike Doyle has taken that up. Mike would like interested people – and those who have queries - to contact him by email, his address is on the members section of the website.

The key features of the trip are:

- Dates between 17 November and 3 December (16 nights)
- Massive climbing opportunities, over 5000 climbs at sports grades F4 thru F7A. Details are in a new guidebook - <https://rockfax.com/climbing-guides/books/costa-blanca/> (which is also available at the Boardroom)
- Plenty of hill walking too, see for example <https://www.cicerone.co.uk/walking-on-the-costa-blanca>
- Flights to Alicante, currently start from around £100 return
- Car hire from the airport
- Base at/around Finestrat, to be organised when numbers etc crystallise.

Grand Days Out (and In) – Recent Meets Highlights

Staying with climbing, Mike Doyle writes -

‘An enjoyable mid week rock meet at Road Runner Crag - a friendly bolted sea cliff with interestingly technical routes directly off the shingle near Conwy Morfa.’



Here's a couple of Mike's shots - on the left is a view of the east end of the crag which really brings home that it's tidal! The second shot shows an ascent of *Beep*, 6A, Mike comments that this route is '6A in the book but thin and highly technical and more like 6B'.



Turning to recent walking trips now, Nicky writes 'Massive thanks to Vanda and Kev for organising the **Pembrokeshire Meet**. Sea swims, coastal walks, pretty villages, a tiny city and lots of laughs'. Here's some of Nicky's pictures....



Whitesands
Bay...

and St David's Head...



St David's Cathedral...



...and the World
Cromlech Lifting
Championship, St
David's 2026!!



I loved this brooding shot of wild ponies on St David's Head moorland which Sonja posted...



The weather conditions were superb for the **Wharfedale 3 Peaks** walk. Here's a shot of the vast Dales scene from Helen Grant who writes 'Thanks Chris lovely day to be out in the Yorkshire dales 🕶️☀️' Please see Chris's article below for more on that day.



Helen also writes 'Thanks Gill for organising the Stubai training **meet-up at the hut**. Two days of great walks - the Carneddau, and the Watkin path up Snowdon, and descent on the South Ridge, in sunny and bracing windy conditions at times. 🌞 ☁️ 🏔️'.

Here are two of Helen's photos – Tryfan from the Carneddau, and the group on the Watkin path with Y Lliwedd in the background.



Gill Eccles writes 'Thanks Nicky for a lovely evening walk from **Nannerch** last night. It was a beautiful area and perfect weather'

This walk was a delight, had a sunny evening but after the heat of the last couple of weeks it was lovely to be out in cool conditions and pallid evening light. For me every step of the way new ground and the route gave a new view of the hills of Moel Arthur and Pen y Cloddiau.

After the walk we had a pleasant drink outside the hospitable Cross Foxes pub in Nannerch.

Here's a magic shot from Gill of all the colours that a humble thistle can produce!

And one of us with the view of Pen y Cloddiau:



Finally Doug used the new WhatsApp facility to create an **ad hoc day out on the Nantlle Ridge**, which had great weather, for those in the group who are going on the Stubai Alps Meet was a good opportunity to put in more training miles!

This is some of the team starting out on the section leading west to Mynydd Tal-y- Mignedd, thanks to Helen Grant for this photo.



EXTRA!

7th JULY 2026: THE WHARFEDALE 3 PEAKS...by Chris Harris

The Wharfedale Three Peaks hike is centred around the village of Kettlewell in Upper Wharfedale, and covers the three summits of Great Whernside (2,310 ft), Buckden Pike (2,302ft), and Birks Fell (2,001 ft). On the day we did 18.2 miles and 4,019 ft of ascent.

For some reason Great Whernside is lower than Whernside, which is 2,414ft!

We started at 0800 hours in the car park in Kettlewell village. This meant for me, Lindsey and Bill, in my car, we left Wirral at 0530. Helen and Glenn found a local site overnight for their motorhome, and Clare came up trumps, car camping in a car park in the village charging £3 for an overnight stop.

Bill suggested this walk shortly after finishing the Yorkshire Three peaks last year and I volunteered to lead, as I said I had already done Great Whernside and Buckden Pike.



However, I soon realised I had not actually summited Great Whernside, so I dug around on the internet to find a GPS route. The one I found was rather basic and joined up 29 waypoints somewhere near to footpaths.

In fact this worked rather well, as most of us were using the OSmaps App and we all got involved in deciding which side of walls and fences we should be on. To add to the entertainment some of the paths had been moved around so that Grouse could be murdered.

Great Whernside Summit

Weather wise, the forecast was perfect, max valley temperature 25C, hilltops 18C and breezy. And in fact the forecast was correct.

Starting at 0800 the ascent to first lunch (Great Whernside) was pleasantly steady. We then descended 650 ft to re-ascend to Buckden Pike.

On the ridge, a few hundred yards before the summit, is the memorial to the five Polish airmen who died in 1942, when they crashed in a snow storm. The sole survivor who broke both ankles in the crash had a fox's head cast in bronze and donated it to the memorial, to recognise the fact that the fox saved his life. The full story with some interesting links is in Dave's July Newsletter.

Memorial to the Polish Airmen, with the fox's head on left below the Plaque (Bill's photo)





Having descended to Buckden village we then had to face a pretty steep (more steep than pretty!) 1,100 ft ascent to Birks Fell during the hottest part of the day.

The paths on Birks Fell are rather vague as it is not much climbed.

Birks Fell summit with Pen-y-Ghent in the background

It is really just a number on the map without any real merits but someone somewhere decided it was a Wharfedale Three Peak, so it had to be climbed that day! However, having looked across at the Yorkshire Three peaks, Pen-y-Ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough, for most of the day, we were now at the closest point to them.

The ridge was not particularly interesting but the descent back into Kettlewell was, with amazing views of the village in the valley.

The pace seemed to pick up as we neared the village with a good choice of pubs. We opted for the Racehorses Hotel as it was the first one!

But to finish – the nature highlights of the day. First off was a sighting of ‘a ewe with a view’ clearly posing for pictures...

...and early on our descent from Great Whernside we were crossing some boggy grass when a large black snake slithered across the path about a foot in front of me. Apparently I made a noise that Helen has not heard before!

The snake was at least 3 ft long and an inch diameter, much bigger than any snake I have seen in the British Isles. Google told me that it was a grass snake. However, black grass snakes are not very common, but the reason some are black is that in cooler areas the darker colour absorbs more heat. This tied in with the fact that we were at nearly 2000 ft.



Chris Harris

July 2026