

# THE GWYDYR No37(JUN/JUL 2013)

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB



Helicopter arriving at PiK Pobeda Base Camp

Welcome to the latest newsletter of the Gwydyr Mountain Club. Well, it's certainly been hot for the past few weeks and lots have been done by various members throughout the UK and elsewhere. Certainly Andy Chapman had an interesting time in Kyrgyzstan (formerly Soviet Union!) with a mega epic (see below). Melinda and Richard have also been to foreign fields with an ascent, amongst other climbs, of the beautiful Devil's Tower in north eastern Wyoming. Phil Don went a wandering in Norway as well which he described to me as 'amazing' !

I've not been down much of a Tuesday so have kind of been out of touch for a bit and not been able to record what people have been getting up to. Thank you very much to all those who have submitted articles – it does make life so much easier ☺

First up this month has to be Andy Chapman's personal and non-guided trip to Kyrgyzstan with Tim Ralph who was with him on Ama Dablam in 2009 as a client and is a British "seven summiter" with the aim of climbing Khan Tengri and Pik Pobeda, two of the five 7000'ers in the former Soviet Union. Andy had previously climbed Khan Tengri back in 2000 and was keen to climb it again with his friend before trying the much harder Pobeda.

Pik Pobeda is the highest mountain in the Tien Shan, and the most northerly 7,000-meter peak in the world. It is a massive dome, covered in snow and ice, located just ten miles south of the range's second highest peak, Khan Tengri (7010 m./ 22,998 ft.). Although Pobeda is 1500 feet higher than its neighbour to the north, Khan Tengri was believed to be the highest peak in the range until Pobeda's discovery in 1946.

Pobeda's longstanding obscurity is testimony to its extreme remoteness. The summit was not reached till 1956 by a Russian party led by Vitali Abalakov, he of the notoriously awkward to construct ice thread fame!

The first British ascent was in 1991 in the twilight days of the USSR.

After a slight mishap with missing luggage Andy was eventually helicoptered into Base Camp (much easier on the legs than a boring walk-in !) situated on the glacier Zvezdochka. A few days were spent acclimatising before they set out to have a crack at Khan Tengri however they only went as far as Camp One due to heavy snow conditions, avalanches fell with alarming frequency from all the main peaks.

Attention then turned to Pobeda where they hoped conditions would be better but if anything the avalanches were far worse so a retreat was made back to base camp to consider their options. A few days rest was needed and then a further attempt was made on Khan Tengri from the south.

Conditions were appalling with many teams struggling to come to terms with the amount of snow and despite reaching Camp Two, where they had been stormbound for two days, it would clearly have been foolish to continue and so acquired experience dictated an ordered retreat. While preparing to go a Polish lady climber, who was on the on 4<sup>th</sup> ascent of the north side of Everest, asked if she could accompany them back down, Andy agreed and the descent was begun.

About an hour from Camp Two and at about 5500m Andy was leading with the Polish climber in the middle when suddenly the snow gave way beneath Andy's feet, in an instant he was falling. The rope cut deeply into the snow and brought him to a halt some 8 metres below his partners who had managed to hold the fall. Andy found himself in a crevasse with the rope between them deeply embedded in the lip of the crevasse. After the initial shock Andy managed to get him-self upright and bridged the crevasse to take the weight off the rope, his feet were on one wall of the crevasse and his back wedged against a tall pillar of ice. He placed an ice screw in the pillar and tied himself onto it, safe for now, before shouting to his friends to try and free the rope. However it was so deeply embedded it would not move an inch and so Andy had no option but to ask them to cut the rope.....

Communication was somewhat difficult but they eventually understood and cut the rope which allowed him to pull a sufficient length through, in addition to coils around his shoulder, to rig up an abseil. Tied to an ice screw fixed to a pillar of ice whose solidity was unknown, Andy managed to crawl, whilst feeding the rope through an Italian Hitch, over some deep un-compacted snow, hanging over the jaws of a crevasse of unknown depth, to the far edge of the crevasse where he managed to haul himself up back onto the glacier. Looking back Andy could see that he had fallen over a cornice which had formed on the lip of the crevasse. Andy shouted to his partners but they heard nothing, he did hear the words 'Camp Two' and could only assume that they would be returning to that camp. Alone, and in an avalanche bottle-neck, Andy had to descend quickly as the time was now 7.00am and in an hour or so the daily avalanches would start due to the sun hitting the ice cliffs above the narrow valley.

Andy had jarred his back in the fall and it was incredibly sore, he made the remainder of the descent without further mishap though in great discomfort. The next 24 hours were anxious for Andy as he had no idea if his friends had made it back to Camp Two and they had no idea whether he was alive or not, it was only the next day when he saw them return that he knew all was well and they knew he was alive. His friend had twisted some ligaments in his knee holding the fall and it was clear the 'holiday' was all but over as further climbing was just not possible. They learnt later that day that three Polish climbers had been killed in an avalanche on Khan Tengri.

I am sure everyone is glad that Andy is back in the UK and well and he's hoping his back clears up pretty soon. Andy still has the promise of work in Antarctica at the end of October where he hopes to clear up the issue of climbing Mt Vinson, maybe going to the South Pole itself and hopefully catching up on how his best friends are doing (the Emperor penguins). Any discrepancies in the above are purely my doing and not Andy's ☺

Andy has sent me the following pictures :-



Avalanche in which 3 polish climbers lost their lives.



Scene of accident, pillar to left of Andy's rope.



Sunset on Pik Pobeda



Sunset on Khan Tengri



Mr Lenin !



Andy and what's left of his rope !



The MI 17 Helicopter – Sherpa bus !!



Camp Two – after being stormbound for two days

Chris & Janet Harris had a nice day out .....

### **Chris and Janet's Big Day**

I've been told that the Welsh 3000's is much tougher than the National 3 Peaks, so, being curious I decided to find out.

Preferring to walk in fine weather meant that we needed to keep a close eye on the developing weather. Anyway Friday 5th July looked OK, not too windy, too wet, too hot or too cold. So we set off for Fort William at 9am on the

Thursday morning having booked the Ben Nevis Hotel for the night. We arrived in time for a swim sauna, steam and Jacuzzi before we ate a rather poor dinner in the bar then had an early night.

Up at 5am on Friday, we had asked for an early breakfast - continental they said. After the previous nights miserable offering the breakfast was absolutely superb, fresh fruit, cereal, cheese real ham etc., even warm croissants and pain au chocolat.

The start of the walk is only 5 minutes drive away so we were walking up The Ben at six minutes past six. Mist turned to drizzle then to light rain so we had to employ the waterproofs. On the ascent we saw about a dozen people walking or running up and down. After 2hrs 40 minutes were on top of the highest Scottish mountain. It was cold windy and cloudy – as one (or two) would expect.



The snow across the path was surprisingly solid !

One down (up?) – two to go.

As we descended Janet counted over 300 people going up.

Back to the car for quick elevenses then it was 270 miles and nearly 5 hours drive to Wasdale Head. Leaving the car park in beautiful evening sunshine at 1730 we had a lovely climb up Scafell Pike – 1 hour 50 minutes.



Back at the car park we were beginning to recognise 3 peakers from Ben Nevis.

Then it was 210 miles and a 5 hour drive to Pen-y-Pass where, at 0115 in the morning the car park was half full (or was it half empty?). Most people were trying to find £1 coins for the machines as they refused to take notes. Up the Miners' track in the dark to see dawn on Snowdon, it was windy and cold so we did not stay too long, returning by the Pyg track.

I made it back to the car park for 6am, Janet a few minutes later.



The last Peak



The Pyg Track

My opinion: It's a lot easier than the Welsh 3000's although I did try to make it harder by doing all the driving myself. The routes used in the 3 peaks challenge are the most boring tourist routes up all three mountains. I did enjoy the driving though, especially Glencoe and the Lakes. We could have done it quite a bit quicker if we had not talked to so many people on the way.

Summary: 24 miles walking, 10111 ft ascent, 480 miles driving (+70 back home)

I would like to thank Red Bull for making the driving possible; one can for each drive worked a treat.

WOW – well done Chris & Janet 😊

Kevin McEvoy sent me the following from his Patterdale trip:-

Patterdale 12/13<sup>th</sup> July 2013

15 members & 3 prospective members descended on Patterdale on Friday afternoon ready for a weekend of fun. Saturday dawned with clear skies, half the group went up Helvellyn via Swirral Edge and over Raise descending into Glenridding in very hot weather. The other group took the easy option (don't tell Vanda I said that) and caught the ferry steamer to Howton and took the lakeside path back to Patterdale. Saturday night saw the group in the White Lion, and after a hearty meal and a few pints some of the party went to the Patterdale Hotel for a night cap and a bit of dirty dancing!!

Sunday morning I rose early and went up Helvellyn via Striding Edge, I saw nobody until I reach the summit, it was great to have the ridge to myself. After breakfast most of the group went up Place Fell. Myself, Vanda, Andy, John and Brenda decided to mess about in a motor boat for the day.



Friday night gathering!



Early Morning Grisedale



Turn the bloody motor on!



John, Andy and Brenda



Arty Shot !



Early morning view of Coniston

Thanks Kev 😊

The Welsh 3000's was a great success and detailed below are the finishing times etc of all those who took part. As always special mention must be made to those in support without whom the event wouldn't happen. Thank you and well done to everyone.

Person	Start	Start Time	Arrive Nant Peris	Depart Nant Peris	Arrive at Ogwen	Depart from Ogwen	FINISH - Foel Fras Trig Point	Total Time
Geoff Brierley	Pen-y-Pass	06:20	08:04	08:25	13:13	13:48	18:44	12hrs 24 mins
Neil Metcalfe	Pen-y-Pass	06:16	08:05	08:27	14:28	15:00	20:15	13hrs 59 mins
John Simpson	Pen-y-Pass	06:16	08:05	08:27	14:28	15:00	20:15	13hrs 59 mins
John Watson	Pen-y-Pass	07:10	11:45	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx
Annalese	Pen-y-Pass	07:10	11:45	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx
Katie Harris	Pen-y-Pass	06:22	08:33	08:47	15:27	15:45	21:10	14hrs 48 mins
Miles Doughty	Pen-y-Pass	06:22	08:33	08:47	15:27	15:45	21:10	14hrs 48 mins
Bryn Roberts	Snowdon	04:10	06:22	06:40	n/a	n/a	17:50	13hrs 30mins
Arfon Jones	Snowdon	04:10	06:22	06:40	n/a	n/a	17:50	13hrs 30mins
<b>Partial</b>								
David Lane-Joint	Nant Peris			08:47	16:17			
Dave Cole	Snowdon	04:00	06:50	07:20	14:37			

The trophy winners were as follows :-

Vet's : Bryn Roberts (Not a member yet but will be soon 😊)

Overall winner : The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Brierley

Ladies : Katie Harris

Well done to all concerned 😊

Janet Harris & Margaret Blakeborough have been real Diva's this month .....

### Deva Divas Triathlon

750metre river swim, 25km bike ride, and a 5km run.

By Janet Harris



In a moment of madness I agreed to do a sprint triathlon which was organised by the Deva Divas, a ladies only triathlon group and being held on the meadows in Chester. 333 entrants included me, my sister Beverly and Margaret Blakeborough.

I have never done anything like this before, I have never run competitively, I can swim but prefer the swimming baths to open water, and have never swum in a wetsuit, cycling was the only event I felt confident in.

The Deva Divas had a couple of training days of which I was only able to go on one, so I went a couple of times with my sister to Manley Mere in Cheshire to practice swimming in open water and a wetsuit. My experience was not good as the water was cold and murky and no matter how hard I tried I seemed to swim on the spot and you would not believe how gloopy it feels underfoot. I came away feeling very worried and wondering whether I could go through with it. A practice with the Divas in the River Dee boosted my confidence a little but I was still very worried about the swim. I did as much cycling as I could, went swimming regularly to West Kirby baths doing 35 lengths each time, as for the running I thought that would be fun but I found it quite hard and boring. The one thing we were told to practice was the transition from cycling to running as your legs can feel that they do not belong to you.



So after many weeks of training, Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July finally arrived. The weather was warm and cloudy, much to

our relief as it had been very hot in the days beforehand. We arrived on the meadows in Chester at 7 o'clock on the Sunday morning and set up our bikes and arranged our clothes for the transition. We put our wetsuits on, had a safety brief and did some warm up exercises. Everyone seemed to be in a good and happy mood.

My swim down the River Dee was okay. I had hoped for some current to carry me down the river but due to the lack of rain the

water was very calm so no help there.

My main fear was being the only person still swimming down the Dee when everyone else had finished, but there



were still some people in the water when I got out. Next, the transition. I had practised this at home but it's not the same as on the day, trying to get dressed when you are wet and in a hurry and everything was sticking to me. The bike ride (Chester to Rossett and back) was good, a little less wind would have helped but it was nice to be cheered on by the marshals and people standing outside their homes. The next transition went better than the first and it was off on the run. This was not too bad, starting to recognise other competitors now as you have to go round the meadows twice. At the end were friends and family cheering me on and telling me to go faster, then at last

the end.

There is a great sense of achievement when it is all over but I do not think I will be doing it again. Been there done that, got the T shirt.

Beverly, Margaret and myself all finished, and I was happy with my times don't think I am a threat to anyone.

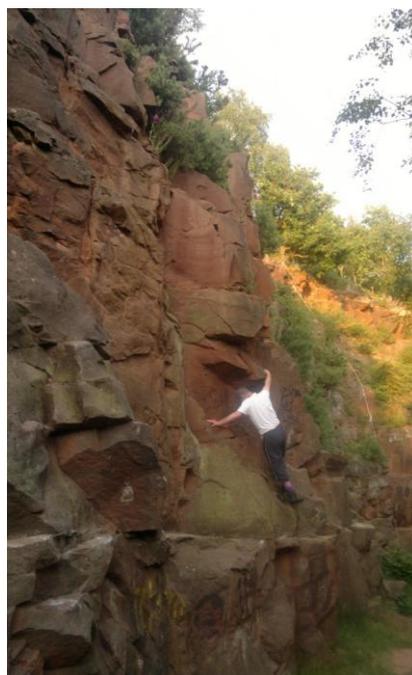
27min swim, 1hr 6 min bike and 30min run

There were three things I wanted to achieve:

- 1) Finish
- 2) Not be last
- 3) Raise funds for Breakthrough Breast Cancer (contributions still gladly accepted)

### **TUESDAY NIGHT CLIMBING**

Given the great summer weather we've been enjoying of late quite a few of us have been getting out for an evening's climbing. We've been to Irby, Frodsham & Helsby and had great fun doing the classics at Helsby and the esoterica that is Irby. Given the nature of climbing we can't really plan too far ahead as to where we will go as it's an activity that is more weather dependent than most but keep an eye out for the emails if you fancy coming along.



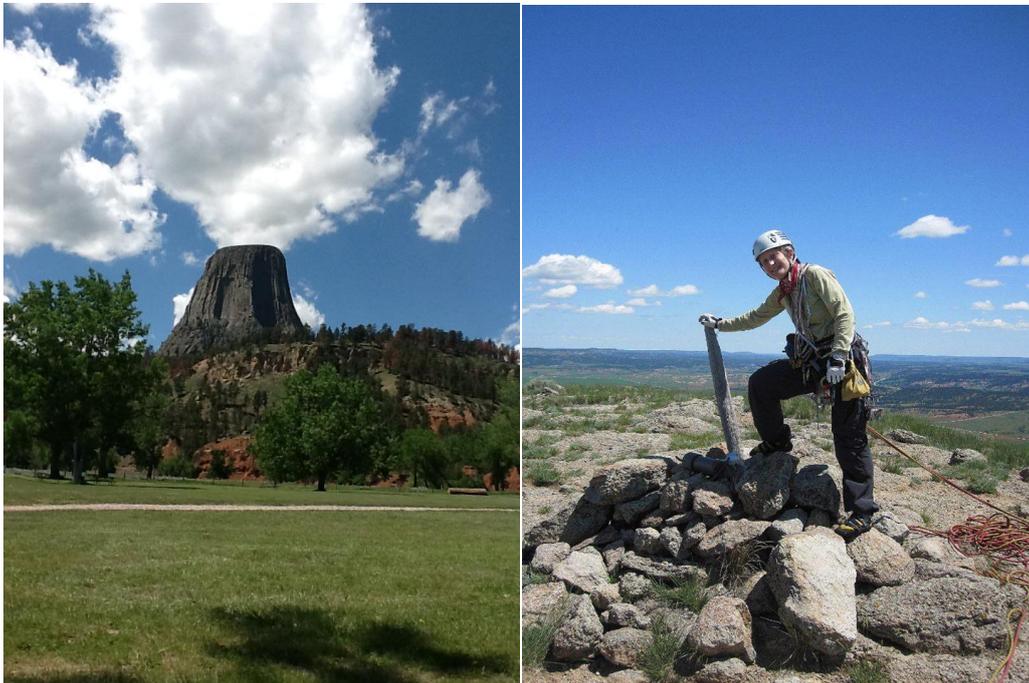
A pleasant evening at Irby Quarry ☺

Special mention must go to Dave Gray for the completion of all his Corbett's recently accomplished with the ascent of the Cobbler with Andy Chapman. This means that Dave has now done all the Munro's & Corbetts's – the first Gwydyr Member to do so. Congratulations Dave ☺

If that was not enough he had a two day backpack of the notorious Derwent Horseshoe, at forty miles long it's a tough walk though some head-cases do it in a day !!!!!

Melinda Kinsman has been adventurous again, this time climbing, inter alia, the Devil's Tower in the US with her husband, Richard. I've pinched a couple of Facebook pictures and hope she does not mind ☺

Hopefully Melinda might write something more substantial for the next newsletter ☺



The Devil's Tower (Left) and Melinda on the summit itself ☺

The weekend of the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> July was a real scorcher and as it was a hut weekend Beth and I thought we'd make the most of it given that the Chapel is probably the coolest (talking temperature here !) places to stay.

We left the Wirral ridiculously early on the Saturday morning in the hope that we would get a walk in before the heat became too much. We went to the Berwyn's and had a great walk in the mist with just a gentle breeze to cool us – though not strong enough to repel the flies which were horrendous. We came across a few rather dead sheep and can only assume that the carcasses were something of a Mecca for the beasties. Anyway as the day wore on and we had completed the three peaks (Mynydd Tarw, Foel Wen & Tomle) we'd set out to do we made our way to the picturesque Pistyll Rhaeder for a brew and a bite to eat (great views but poor cafe!).

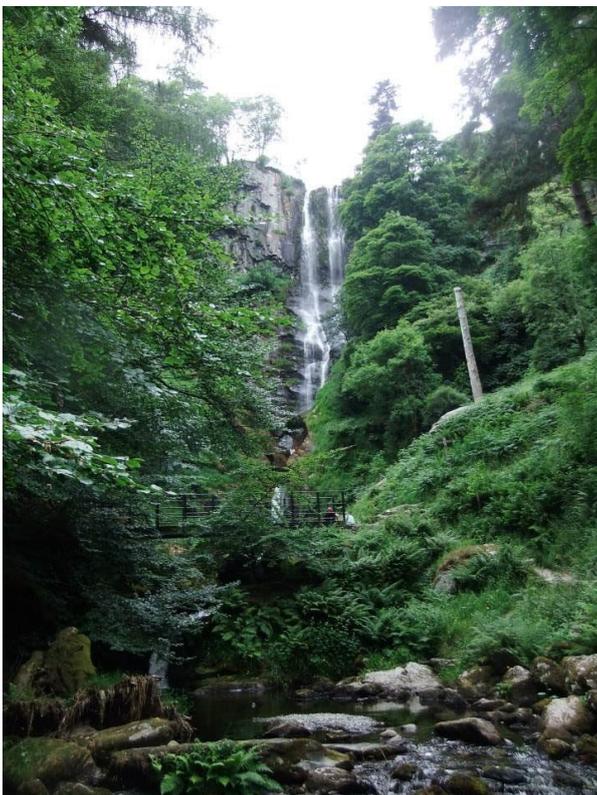
The Chapel beckoned but not before a pleasant 'off the hill' in the Tyn Y Coed where several past Gwydyr members were present for Pete Butler's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday bash. Alan Cowdery was in residence at the chapel and had had an excellent weeks walking in near perfect weather.



Alan Cowderoy pic from Moel Siabod ☺

Given the hot weather a barbecue was clearly in order and so to assist the absorption of alcohol much meat and fat was consumed and great conversation flowed. I had a great long chat with Alan who had much to tell about the Gwydyr's early days in Llanrwst and even more interesting were Alan's climbing exploits from the 60's & 70's.

The following day we all went our own way and Beth and I went up into the Ogwen valley for a few short climbs on Bochlwyd Buttress.





The weekend of the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2013 was Kevin McEvoy's annual Rhoscolyn meet. We camped at the Outdoor Alternative site which has to be one of the nicest located sites anywhere.

On the Saturday morning we divided into two groups, walkers and climbers and while the walkers disappeared relatively early for the classic circuit of Trearddur Bay Kevin, Andy, John, Phil Donn (& family), Beth and I headed over to Rhoscolyn Head and the delightful Symphony Crack.





Like I say, I've not been down to the Stork much on a Tuesday so Dave Gray has been taking notes and emailed me the following :-

Mike Mc – Group of 6 on Berwyns – hot and sticky!

Phil Don – in Norway with work colleagues, hiking around Stavanger

David LJ and Gayle – climbed Grooved Arete on Tryfan

Me – with old work colleagues, Bleaklow from Glossop

Dave Chadwick – W Highland Way, Crianlarich to Ft William

Geoff B and John Simpson – Snowdon.

Jim Metcalfe also sent me the following, thanks Jim :-

Not sure if Mike Gilbert contacted you before he went off to Cornwall but the two of us had a great walk on Wednesday 7 August from Ogwen

over Yr Garn, Glyder Fawr and Glyder Fach

On the slog up Glyder Fawr we stopped to talk to an instructor leading a group down from the summit.

He seemed a little surprised that two guys of our age had actually been over Yr Garn already! Interestingly he actually looked older than us.

#### **FORTHCOMING MEETS**

<b>August 2013</b>	
09-10	<b>Hut Weekend</b>
17	Saturday Walk: Wirral + BBQ (Mike Mc)
23-25	<b>B.H. Northumbria Self Catering Weekend (Heather Bliss)</b>
<b>September 2013</b>	
06-07	Lleyn Coast + Hills (Dave Gray)
13-14	<b>Hut Weekend</b>
21	Saturday Walk:: Moel y Parc (Mike Mc)
27-28	CLM Self Catering Weekend (Sue Taylor/Lin Jensen)

If anyone wants to go on any of these meets please contact the relevant organiser. Also we will shortly be starting to compile a new meets list for 2014 so if you want to start giving it some thought as to where you'd like to have a meet .....

Also, this year's Bonfire party will have a Halloween 'twist' to it so book your places early. Please email myself or Beth to book your place. We are not sure how much it will be but we'll try to do it as cheap as possible.

## **CHAPEL SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT**

We have now received the final report from the sub-committee and this should be with all members in the next couple of days. Can you please read it and let us have your comments (if any) prior to the next committee meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2013.

## **MORE GEAR DISCOUNT 😊**

At the Outdoor Megastore in Bootle we have managed to negotiate some discount on purchases, we are not sure as to how much but if you call in and ask for Tony he will look after us. They tend to concentrate on family camping items (and there's lots of 'em!) as well as having some RAB & Berghaus clothing. Their website is :-  
[www.outdoormegastore.co.uk](http://www.outdoormegastore.co.uk) !

Well that's this newsletter finished 😊

Please email me anything you would like to include in the next newsletter which I hope to get out early October (ish).