

# THE GWYDYR NO41 (DEC/JAN 2014)

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB



Cul Mor and Stac Pollaidh

Hi everyone, welcome to the latest newsletter.

Despite the rather unseasonably mild and damp weather it hasn't stopped us getting out and about and there have been some great meets and events this past couple of months.

Before I go any further though I do want to make a please to all members.....

This is YOUR newsletter and I do it for the club for two principal reasons. Firstly it's easy for anyone who surfs the net, who may happen upon our website, can easily see what we as a club get up to on a regular basis. Many people down the years who've come down to the Stork often remark that they think we might be a bunch of super fit mega stars and it's been a surprise for them to see how diverse our membership is and how easy it is to fit in. Secondly we have a large number of members who don't get out with the club as they would like, be that for geographical reasons or other very valid reasons. Year on year they fork out their subs and I hope at least they can see that we are a vibrant, active and inclusive club.

**Please see end of Newsletter for an important piece by Roger Hughes regarding the clubs 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday !!!**

My plea is this, send me pictures, articles, ideas – they don't have to be long – quite often a paragraph or two will suffice.

Anyway let's get on with it shall we .....

Dave Gray sent me the following summary of February's events, thanks Dave ☺

**4/3/14**

Mark Barley's day walk to the Roaches was a great success. We had lovely weather, massive views and checked out the mysteries of Lud's Church, Doxey Pook and the Bawd Stone. There were 11 of us out.

Andy Odger and others did the Banff Film Festival event in Liverpool, highly recommended.

There was a climbing wall trip this week per DLJ, Gail and others.

**25/2/14**

The activities at the Hut weekend included Pen yr Helgi Ddu/Penlithrig yr Wrach, Ro Wen and Moel Penanmen, a Carneddau circuit, plus a forest walk and a canoeing trip on the Conwy by Doug and Gail.

There was a climbing wall trip this week.

**18/2/14**

I had a day out over Shutlingsloe and Macc Forest with two work friends. Dave Chadwick dodged the fallen trees on a Clwyds circuit, you and Beth did Criccieth and Andy Odger did a Capel Garmon mid level walk.

**11/2/14**

I will reschedule if I can the cancelled Arans trip. Dave Chadwick, Dave Antrobus and I did Carnedd y Filiast (by Bala) as a consolation prize, it was very windy though the big rain held off; we would have been very battered higher up for longer on the Arans.

**4/2/14**

Pete Mann had a big party of 15 for his Shropshire Caer Caradoc ridge circuit – very wild and spectacular with huge stormy views, all weathers from blizzard to sunshine. Margaret was skiing in Andorra, Doug and Gail canoeing on the Tees and Wear.

### A Northern Highlands Trip.

Beth and I had a fantastic week in the northern Highlands at the beginning of March. We had some great days on the hill climbing Stac Pollaidh, Suilven and Cul Mor and while these hills are not Munro's they are exceptionally beautiful to look at rising sheer from a majestic expanse of loch and moorland. We also tramped into Sandwood Bay which has to be one of the most beautiful sandy beaches imaginable, we were fortunate enough to visit it on a wild day with the waves crashing onto the shore with the wind doing more

than clear the cobwebs of apathy that were apparent earlier in the day. It will never be a popular beach given that it's four and a half miles from the nearest road !!

We were not far from the summer isles which looked amazing and it would be a wonderful experience to sea kayak around them, camping at will (if that's possible) and visiting all the wonderful hidden coves and inlets. We had one day which was exceptionally wild and the sea was impressive to say the least with 30 ft waves crashing onto the shore.

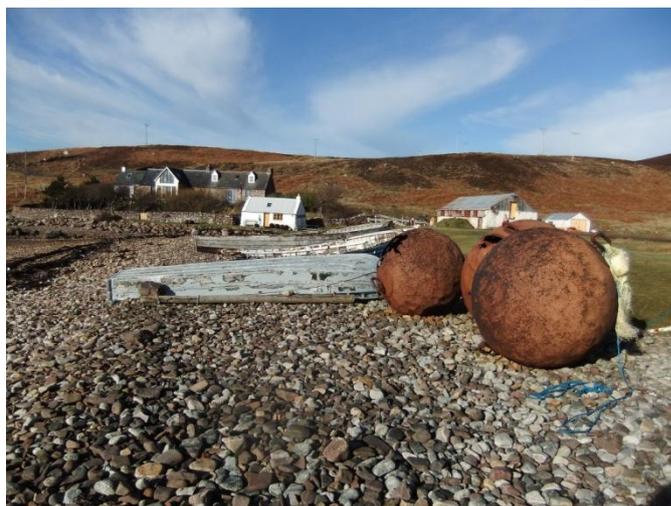
The weather was though, on occasion, superb but we did have a couple of inclement days where snow and hail fell to sea level whipped up by ferocious squalls which were so dense Ullapool would disappear from view from the cottage balcony yet it was only a few hundred yards away !

We saw much wildlife too, Deer, Golden Eagle, Red Kite, Fox and even an Osprey perched on a roadside fence post !

Ullapool was a really nice little town with some great little pubs and an award winning (though expensive) chippy. There are also some great little bookshops and a Tesco's !!

I think next time we need to stay near Gairloch which was a beautiful little place with an amazing bookshop and café, so good that one could almost wish for a rainy day or two during a stay there just to relax.

We took our time heading back south pausing at Torridon, where we saw Gill Beamer's bench outside the café and stopped over at Andy Chapman's temporary home near Glencoe for a meal and some wine.



The summer Isles (left) and some old boats by a quaint harbour ☺



Stac Pollaidh (left) and Beth nearing the summit of same.



Beth on Stac Pollaidh west summit & a moody Suilven



Beth approaching a snowy Cul Mor summit and Gill Beamer's bench outside Torridon cafe cum shop ☺

For those newer members who are unaware Gill Beamer was a very early member with club and I believe it was in the early 1980's that she and her husband John took the plunge and moved to Torridon. A stunning place to live ☺

The next club meet after Burn's night at the Chapel was Teresa's trip to Borrowdale in the Lake District which was well attended and the weather was kind too.

Following Borrowdale we had Pete Smedley's Wirral walk from the Wiend to Neston where the obligatory 'off the hill' was taken in The Harp ☺ Thank you to Brenda for the pictures. It was a good turnout with over a dozen members making the effort and apparently it's surprising how tired you can get on a seemingly little local walk ☺



### The Annual Dinner

Mark Barley kindly sent the following and some great pictures of a large gathering on Moel Siabod prior to the day's main event in the Tyn Y Coed.....

On the Saturday of the Club Dinner a group of more than 20 met in the car park of the Tyn-y-Coed for an ascent of Moel Siabod with champagne and cake to celebrate Laura's 50th birthday. After a stiff climb up to the summit with some difficulty in route finding we made it to the trig point and "shelter" in a howling gale. With everybody crouching behind the walls of the shelter the champagne was opened and poured into glasses with some difficulty due to the high wind (apologies to those who got covered in bubbles). Both the cake and champagne were quickly consumed along with some lunch before we started to head down from the summit in the direction of Plas y Brenin (lovely to get out of that wind) where some of us headed to the Bryn Tyrch for a quick pint or a warming cup of tea. A very memorable trip and a great way to celebrate a birthday.







Milly sent the above three pictures and I hope you can enlarge them as they are great but for space saving I've had to reduce the size.

Apparently not all were on Moel Siabod as some went on a Welsh 3000's recce on Snowdon organised by Chris Harris.



The dinner itself was a great success too .....



The new Chairman addressing the faithful ☺



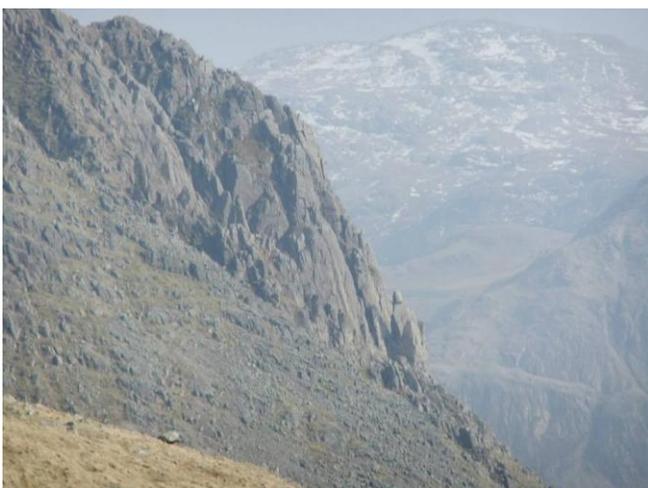
The wine was a flowing .....



Let the dancing commence .....

While the majority were having fun in Wales Beth and I sneaked a quick weekend at Wasdale Head for her birthday celebrations. We had a brilliant walk up Great Gable and Kirk Fell where on the way down the wind was ferocious and forced Beth to spend practically the whole descent of Kirk Fell sliding on her bottom. Needless to say we were glad to reach the Inn and fortify ourselves with good food and beer before retiring to the 'posh' camping pod at the National Trust campsite for a nice bottle of wine – a great day out.

Sunday we went shopping in Ambleside ☺





Beth crawling down Kirk Fell ☺

Window in the smallest church in England

On the weekend of the 4<sup>th</sup> April it was Teresa's prospective weekend which I understand went well and we apparently enthused another couple of victims to perhaps join the club ☺

The following weekend was an 'impromptu' club weekend and there were several of us out at the chapel. Neil and Geoff went for a run / fast walk along the Crib Goch ridge to Snowdon and then down by the elusive stile path from the railway to Nant Peris before running up Elidr Fawr – great effort guys. I am sure I speak for all when I hope they manage a sub ten hour (at least) 3000's later this summer. Teresa and Bryn spent the Saturday practicing various rope manoeuvres on the Capel pinnacles in readiness for the Aonach Eagach ridge in Glencoe over Easter. Beth and I did the Manod's from Manod village which was a great way of doing them and much more attractive than the approach from Moel Penanmen through the hideous quarries. Save for a two minute shower we managed to avoid any rain too ☺

Chris Harris organised a great walk around Llanfairfechan and kindly wrote the following – thanks Chris. (Ps. I would have recommended the Fairy Hotel in Dwygyfylchi for the off the hill – maybe next time !)

## Llanfairfechan, North Wales Walk and Map Reading practice

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April

The walk was about 12 miles over rolling moorland. In fact all the undulating added up to over 2800ft of ascent and descent so it was quite a challenge to add in a bit of map reading practice.

The near circular route followed a section of the old Chester to Caernarfon Roman Road, passing standing stones (the famous 2 stones marking the end of the Welsh 3000's walk) then on to a cromlech dating from between 2000 to 3000BC.



Which one is the ancient relic ?

We had a little break at the Youth Hostel in Rhiw. Actually it turned out to be only a sprain but we sat outside the hostel admiring the views of the Conwy valley while medication was applied. The last part of the walk took us through a Druid circle where the remains of several adults and a child have been found – presumably many years ago. We decided against our own sacrifice as we were running late, it was very windy and the young maiden started to protest.

The views were amazing, Anglesey, Puffin Island, Drum, the Conwy valley, The Great Orme and Llandudno. We passed more than 20 historical sites

The off the hill pint was enjoyed at the Llanfair Arms in Llanfairfechan, strangely we could not find the Fechan Arms.

On Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April a group of four made their way to a delightful little cliff in the shadow of the shapely Cnicht called Lliwedd Bychan. Sadly the cafe in Croesor was closed so there was little to distract and thus we made our way up to the cliff where a great day was had. We did five easy climbs (V-Diff to hard Severe) and when the sun came out (albeit briefly) it was most pleasant and spring like. It's a smashing little place and well worth the 45 minute walk in and one we will be visiting again I am sure.



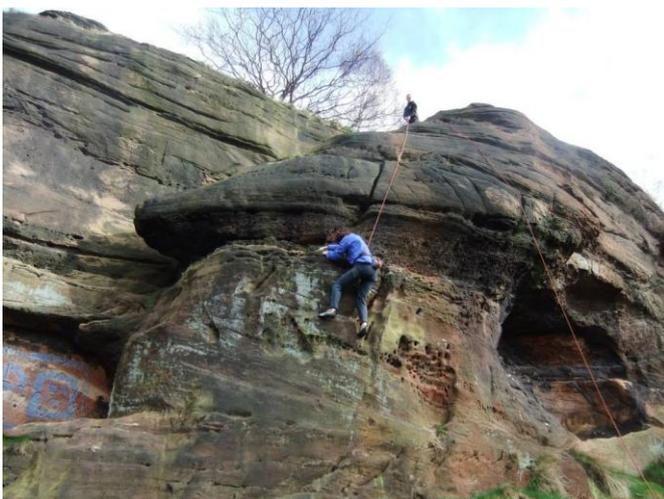
Andy Chapman, Lindsey Foulkes, Beth and I at Lliwedd Bychan

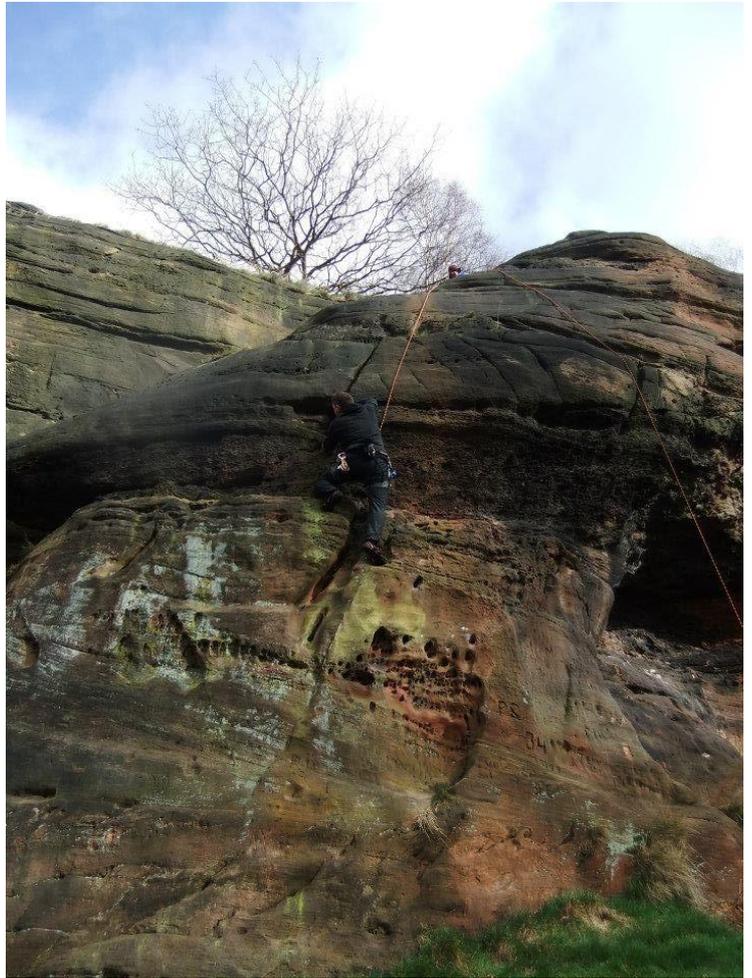
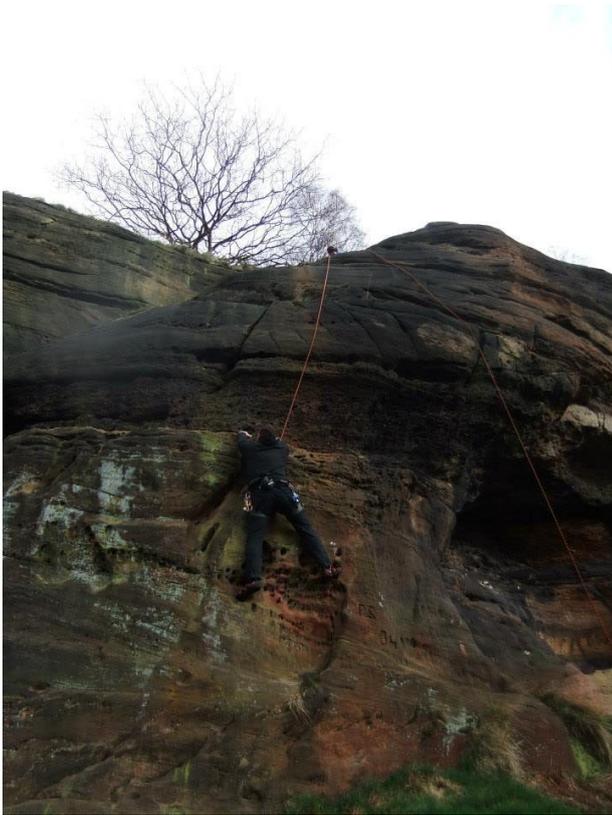
## Midweek night climbing

I hope to be able to resurrect the midweek climbing again soon and will post on the club's Facebook page when and where we are going. Recently Andy Odger, Beth and I had a chilly but fun Saturday afternoon at Helsby. It's a great place to while away a couple of hours on a sunny summer's evening so if anyone is interested please keep an eye out for my postings. I do have some spare equipment and am happy to encourage any prospective if they fancy taking the big step from indoors to outdoor (ie. real :-p) climbing – it's great fun honest !!



Bouldering on Helsby upper tier ☺





Beth, Andy and I on the most horrid, slippery and greasy Severe imaginable at Helsby ☹️

In addition to the outdoor meets Mark Cashman has asked me to let you know that he goes to the Climbing Hangar every Tuesday and Thursday from about 7.00pm onwards and he is more than happy to 'hook-up' if it helps - thanks Mark.

### **Forthcoming Meets**

17-21 - EASTER (BH)

25-26

- **Hut** Weekend: St George's Day  
(Geoff Brierley) - Welsh 3000s recce

**MAY 2014**

02-05

- Scottish self catering week Glencoe area  
(BH) (Andy Odger/Sue Taylor)

09-10

16-17

- **Hut** Weekend

- Welsh 3000's recce

23-31 - Knoydart Week (BH) (Pete Mann)

## **Family weekend at the Chapel**

A couple of members have asked me about having a family meet at the Chapel for those members with children young and old. I think it's a good idea and great way of getting members involved and hopefully sow the seed in the minds of future members.

Therefore can people email me if they would like to see it organised, say one weekend in August, and if anyone can help out that would be great. I'm happy to organise a little climbing (if it's raining we could go the climbing wall in Caernarfon .....

<http://www.beaconclimbing.com/> )

Maybe if a suitable volunteer would offer a member could babysit at the Chapel while the parents get a breather at the Tyn Y Coed ??

It's just a thought and maybe one worth exploring – we have quite a few members with young children.

## **THE CLUBS 50<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY – IMPORTANT !!**

Roger Hughes has kindly provided the following for discussion, please let the committee know your thoughts – thank you.

### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Expedition - Sikkim - 2017**

#### **(A suggestion)**

Over the last year or so, members have been throwing ideas around as to what we might do in 2017 to celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. As far as I know, there are no serious plans yet, but at the annual dinner I was asked whether I had gone any further with my ideas for a “multi standard” trip to Sikkim and the eastern Himalaya. I promised a few people I would get something down and send it round to see if there was sufficient interest – so here goes!

In 1992 we made a 3 week trip to Nepal over Easter, this had the advantage that people only used 2 weeks holiday leave plus a day or so, and strangely, the dates in 2017 could be almost identical.

**Date:** I would suggest we go Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April and return Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2017 (Easter weekend is 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> April). This is just 3 days earlier in the year than the 1992 trip.

**Target:** The Singalila Ridge and a major peak

The Singalila Ridge runs south/north on the eastern border of Nepal with Sikkim. It offers trekking of varying standard and length, some travel companies offer “6 days easy trekking” others “17 days moderate trekking” so it should be possible to devise something which most of us could aspire to! The attraction is that it finishes at the Goeche La, 4,800 metres, a spectacular position directly opposite the south east face of Kangchenjunga, and it has a series of optional escape routes into Sikkim in the east.

In addition, there are a number of peaks which we could target, Mt. Tenchenkhang (6010m grade D+) Mt Joponu (5,603m grade D) and Frey Peak (5,830m grade AD+) but there are others (easier, harder, higher,

lower) and we would need to investigate more when we know the strength of the party and who wants to do what.

### **The general area and its suitability**

This area appeals for a number of reasons. It has a particular place in mountaineering history in that the early Everest Expeditions all passed this way – through Dargeeling and Gangtok and over the passes into Tibet before turning west to reach Everest from the north. It therefore has local history as well because we would be in the footsteps of the 1921, 1922 and 1924 parties with Mallory and Irvine. The area is also steeped in the history of the British rule of India from Younghusband's time, and the hill stations and tea plantations of the British Raj.

We could reach Dargeeling by "toy train" from Siliguri, a journey of 9 hours. The line was built in 1880 and climbs 6,850 feet in 50 miles. There are endless opportunities to visit temples and monasteries, small villages and hill stations and soak up a culture totally different to our own.

Once we have an indication of interest, we can plan a more detailed itinerary, but we could have some time in Delhi or Kathmandu en route to Sikkim if that was wanted.

### **Cost – the big question!**

The only guide at the moment is the cost of a similar commercial trip, so we have to be looking at £2,500 to £3,000.

However, don't give up on it straight away!

In the lead up to 1992 we opened a club savings account to enable people to save towards the trip, and we can do the same again this time, the way it would work is this:

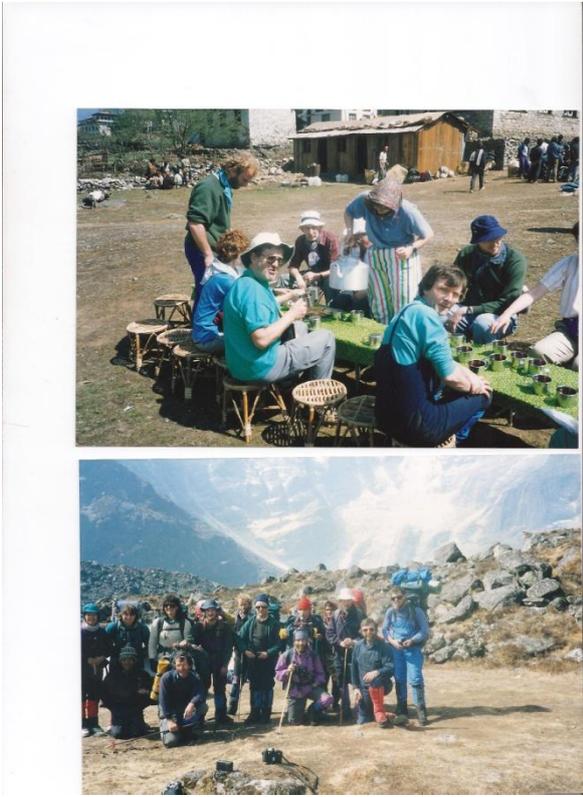
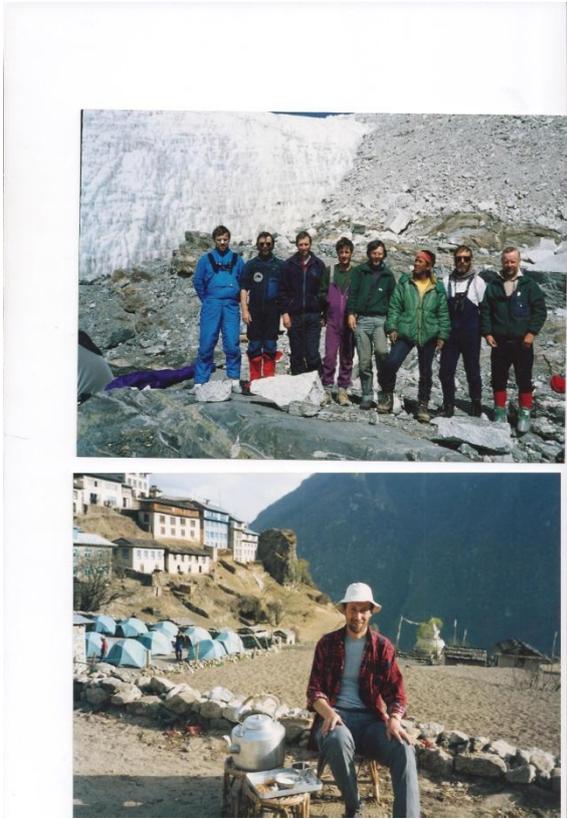
If you imagine you might normally spend up to £750 for a three week holiday, then deduct that from the total cost because that is your 2017 holiday. This means that you only have to find £2,000 - £50 per month for three years is £1,800 and with any luck there will be another £200 in interest over the period. It doesn't have to be these exact figures, but you can see how it might work, and of course if in the end you don't go, or you change your mind along the way, you simply get your money back.

It may seem a commitment so far in advance, but unless you join the scheme it may be out of your reach when we get closer and there is no doubt it worked last time, we actually got 24 people on the 1992 trip, most of whom would have been unable to put the full cost down at once.

### **Action Needed**

The only way this will happen is if we start planning now. If you are at all interested, I would ask that you email back to me within the next few weeks. At the end of May I will assess the level of interest, and if there are sufficient people who see this as a good way to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we can start to get some definite ideas down and maybe open an expedition bank account.

If there is insufficient response, not a problem, we will have to get our heads round some other proposal(s)!



Roger Hughes 12.04.14

Anyway that's the end of the newsletter and I hope to get the next one out mid June so please send me your picture and articles for inclusion.

Have fun everyone 😊