



NANTMOR NEWS

WINTER 2025

Issue 18



Welcome back to the Nantmor News!

It's been ages since our last issue, but we're thrilled to be in touch again with our old-style pigeon- post newsletter, dropped through members' letterboxes! Catch up with all the news and hear what our members have to say, check out the latest refinements, discover how tiny mountain seeds are turning into trees...
...and we solve a mystery lurking behind Gelli lago...



The newsletter of the
Nantmor Mountain Centre.
Group accommodation
in the heart of
Snowdonia.



IMPROVEMENTS GALORE!

The Centre has moved on in leaps and bounds in recent years, with its Wifi, CCTV, new fire, remotely controlled heating and face-lift for the invaluable classroom. Most dramatic of all, after months of pipe dreams following unwelcome water problems, virtually the whole water system has been renewed. This mammoth task began in June, the plumbers first installing a completely new system from intake to house with new collection tanks, no mean task on challenging terrain. That done, up in the loft the old storage tanks were replaced, with an extra tank on the landing to provide sufficient hot water when demands are high. All this, coupled with a pumped hot water system, has transformed Gelli lago's previous trickles to into legendary power showers, with much sought after indulgence especially after a long day on the hill.

Despite the weather groups poured in over the summer, amongst them long time member **Exeter Scouts**, who train mostly on Exmoor's tor-clad summits but happily make their annual summer trip to Nantmor for some real 'pointy ones', **Grove Lane Youth Group** from Stockport returning each year to face new challenges, **SARDA's doggies and handlers** training twice yearly in their favourite sniffing ground, and more - even **RAF Valley** dropped in for a weekend between storms.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A big welcome to Dragon ESU from Manchester, whose Explorer Scouts landed perfect April weather for their first weekend visit with ascents of both Snowdon and Cnicht; Beacon Activity Centre from North Devon led by 'old hand' Rob Cotton; The Minter Marmots led by Natalie, with her 'ex-uni buddies'; 'Wild Flow' group, in search of mountain adventure; and The Wain Walkers from Cheshire who made their first trip in April, braved the Welsh rain and 'had a fantastic time!' We look forward to seeing you all again next year!

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Visitors to the centre in recent times will be aware of all the improvements, highlighted by the Warden. Looking to the future, we are currently negotiating the lease renewal with NT and hope to complete by year end. Our next focus area is fund raising to go towards further upgrades, please visit the Centre and get involved to help us on our way. *Paul Howells - Chair*

OCTOBER WORK WEEKEND

The walls of Gelli lago must surely have shaken and trembled as an energetic team of volunteers worked their way through a myriad of jobs, from cleaning and sorting the classroom store, replacing the ash bunker's dubious lids, plastering the plumber's hole in the kitchen, restoring Jack's seat, installing the Belfast sink as a high tech boot wash, cleaning gutters, hanging mirrors, sealing leaks, even mending the old much loved table, and all the while Isobel's sewing machine buzzing away sewing new bedroom curtains - which now adorn the rooms hung on proper poles, and will help ward off the winter draughts.

Even veteran meet leader Tony was there, on 'light duties', complete with carpenter / fell-runner grandson Kit, who had energy left to check out Cnicht (the mountain, not the bedroom) at the end of the day.

A great turnout, leaving the Centre sparkling and ready for the next season!



From the Warden

"Our Centre is in excellent order: all fully functional and with many improvements. I urge every member to come and see for yourself - *feel* the warm rooms, *indulge* in the power showers, or *relax* by the glowing fire at the end of the day. A big thank you to all those who've helped to make our new recycling system work smoothly, and who leave the Centre so clean and tidy! *Charles O'Neill - Warden*

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

'A Happy Place'

Blackwater Valley BP Scouts enjoyed their annual Summer Camp with a programme packed with activity. Led by Richard Llewellyn, with co-leaders Gareth, Harry and Callum, navigation and safety training was followed by an overnight high level camp at the disused copper mines on Snowdon.

"We arrived at the disused levels and set up camp. The weather was less fair with clouds and rain coming over the mountain and mist coming up from the valley."

"Various lightweight stoves came out with a mixture of lightweight food stuffs, some including puddings! All the stoves worked, all the food was consumed."

"The next morning was clear and dry as we awoke at 04:30 and began to strike camp after a long and pleasant sleep. We knew that a cooked breakfast awaited us at Gelli Iago..."

Throughout their stay culinary delights, transport and good cheer were provided by Gail and Emma back at the Centre, with a welcome breakfast for the hungry campers on their return.

Leader Richard writes "Happy memories are the first feeling you get whenever you come to the Centre. There are no ghosts at Gelli Iago, just an atmosphere of friendship, fun, and achievement, and happy memories. Some of those memories ours!"

'The Nantmor Experience'

Cole District Scouts have Nantmor firmly etched into their calendar, bringing a full house at least twice a year.

Explorer Scout Ben Lewis reports, *"It is a wonderful place to visit with incredible views from the doorstep and I really enjoyed hiking up Cnicht right behind the centre and further afield."*

From co-leader Martyn Pilley, *"I have been visiting NMC twice a year for more than ten years and just love it every time... sitting with the fire burning while we discuss walking options...whether a party of Scouts about to get the walking experience of their lives, or our annual leaders' winter trip, I know it will be a momentous weekend."*

From Henry Pilley, former Scout & Explorer, *"My love of climbing mountains stems from my visits to NMC as a Scout and Explorer... ..thanks to the knowledge and skills of our leaders and the unique location of the Centre...the highlights have been the peaks we've stood upon, regardless of whether we had a stunning view or couldn't see our feet!"*

Group leader Michael Blake sums up, *"Once I discovered the Nantmor Mountain Centre and drove up that wonderful lane I knew this would be perfect for introducing our Scouts. Our leaders can't help but share their enthusiasm for the whole Nantmor experience!"*

TURNING SEEDS INTO TREES

Hattie Jones, a ranger with National Trust Cymru, talks about her recent visit to Gelli Iago to collect crab apples:

"The National Trust has a tree nursery in Eryri where we are growing native trees from seeds collected in the local area."

"It's important for us to raise hardy trees that can withstand the wild weather we experience here in North Wales."

"After hearing about the gnarly old crab apples

growing near Gelli Iago - trees that have managed to thrive in such

harsh conditions -

we set out to

find them and

collect their

fruit. They

hadn't

produced

many apples

this year, which

may have been due

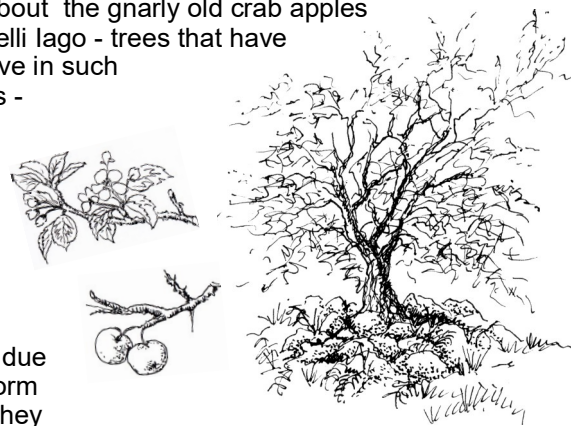
to a late cold storm

in spring when they

were in blossom. It's also

possible that their age means they're simply less productive."

"Nevertheless, we managed to gather almost a bucketful of apples and are excited to grow the offspring of these wonderful trees, planting the young saplings out in the surrounding area in years to come."



Whirlwind Visits

Staff and pupils of Batchwood School, St Albans, make their 400 mile, 36-hour whirlwind visit to Nantmor several times a year. Approaching from the south, they first explore the magnificent beach at Harlech, then on up the lanes for a single night at Gelli Iago. An early start next day to climb Cnicht, then off back home again, spellbound if exhausted!

Here's what they said about their October visit:

"The lanes are narrow but made up for by the towering mountains, and a good beach. Rebecca's car broke down - absolute class! The house is warm and cosy, not extravagant but does a perfectly fine job" (Isaac)

"Nice beach!" (Frankie)

"It was very good, and the food is good too" (Zach)

Co-leader Rebecca wrote, *"The lanes to get here are narrow but make it into more of an adventure! Coming into the house with the fire on makes it nice and cosy after a long drive."*

Leader Paul Billingham: *"Batchwood School loves this place!"*

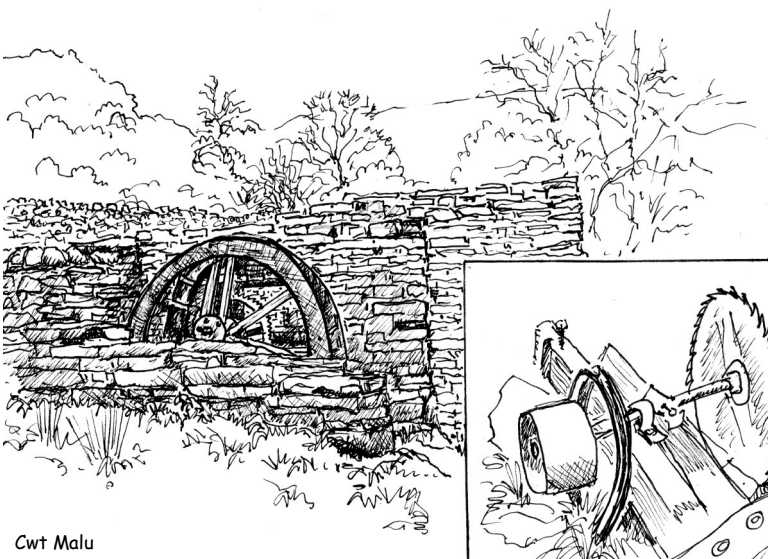
A MYSTERY SOLVED

People often ask the original purpose of the water wheel behind Gelli Iago. On old documents and plans it's named as Cwt Malu, which translates 'threshing mill'.

"Threshing what?", I eventually asked hill farmer Trefor, who has lived in and farmed the valley for many years, puzzled as to what would have needed threshing in such a location.

"Gorse", came the answer, *"as fodder for horses"*.

In the past, horses needed winter fodder, and chopped gorse was used - plentiful, nutritious, easy to harvest. Trefor added that the mill was also used for chopping beet as fodder and hay for horses, and of course for powering the saw. Other local farmhouses had similar: a wood lined 'leat' or channel to convey water to wherever it was needed, often right into the farm kitchen where its power was used to churn butter. If water was running near the house, it was put to good use. Now, the old mill is slowly sinking into the hillside and its metal saw rusting away. The outline of the leat can still be traced, part of its course tracked by our water supply. Hopefully these treasures will endure long enough for future generations to admire, as a reminder of how life at Gelli Iago has changed over time.



Cwt Malu

Thank you to all those who have contributed to this newsletter. Please send items for the next issue to: jane137@gmail.com.

The Nantmor Mountain Centre is a small and friendly organisation. It has charitable status and since 1963 has been active in providing simple but memorable farmhouse accommodation for groups in its stunning location between Nantgwynant and Nantmor village in the Snowdonia National Park. Our members include Schools, Colleges, Scouts and Rambler's groups. We welcome interest from new users of this most unusual and rare facility.

If you would like to find out more please visit our website: www.nantmormountaincentre.co.uk

The Nantmor Mountain Centre Association is a registered charity (No 1164407) and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (No 09221690)

Leaders please circulate this Newsletter. Pdf on website.