

# NANTMOR NEWS

## AUTUMN 2011

Welcome to the tenth issue of the Nantmor newsletter!

..read about some of the latest happenings at Gelli Iago, we've reports from two new affiliated members, there's news of an exciting event on the horizon... ..and we learn the secrets of a flower once used to ward off the devil himself...

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



### WILD WEATHER AND BOOKINGS

There's been yet another year of weather extremes in Snowdonia, once again often in sharp contrast with the rest of the country. The last newsletter was posted just in time before the winter snows arrived when for eight days no vehicle passed along the Nantmor lane, until the snowplough carved a temporary passage. The valley lay for weeks in the grip of winter, with many streams iced up and water supplies frozen. Weeks of unseasonal drought in Spring when streams nearly ran dry was followed by extremely wet summer rain, and now Autumn gales, the first of which sadly toppled the old apple tree which had for so long stood sentry in front of Gelli Iago.

Bookings have been up this year, with some 400 people having used the facilities so far (not just the toilets of course, and not all at once). One busy weekend saw 50 or so Hereford and Worcester Scouts, the hardy ones camping out, but happily the weather was kind, with sunshine on Saturday for those who climbed Snowdon.

The Centre nearly burst its seams in November with a record attendance in recent years of **twenty two** for the Club Meet. Carloads covered from as far apart as Pembrokeshire, Cheshire and the Midlands for a weekend packed with walking and scrambling, seeing old friends and meeting new ones, relaxing, eating and (just the odd bit of) drinking. The weather was fantastic - clear frost at night and sunshine by day, as groups scaled Snowdon, Moel Hebog, Cnicht and explored lowland tracks. A weekend to remember!

### 50th ANNIVERSARY

With the 50th Anniversary of the Nantmor Mountain Centre Association fast approaching, plans are already under way for this major event. Celebrations will take place at Gelli Iago over the weekend of **3rd - 6th May 2013**, the early Spring Bank Holiday.

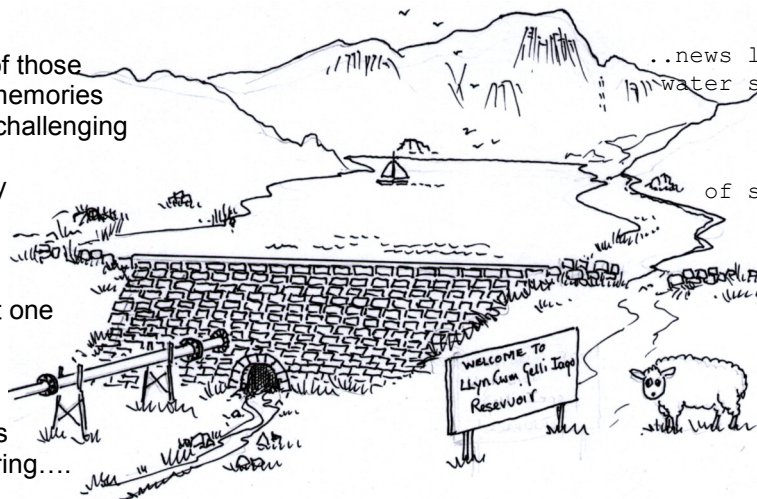
Early plans are for a substantial **daytime buffet**, an **evening barbecue** (also substantial) and **barn dance with ceilidh band**, which we have permission from the National Trust to hold in the long house - and for those with energy left next day, a **trip on the Welsh Highland Railway**.

A **commemorative publication** is also planned, with those involved over the years invited to contribute. So please refresh your memories and think about all your interesting and exciting experiences whilst at the centre and share them with us all by committing them to paper (or screen), enhanced with photographs would be a bonus. The deadline for this is **December 2012** so that the flood of material can be sorted, collated etc. and decisions can be made on methods of presentation. None of this can be successful without your active interest and involvement.

We're expecting the event to be supported by even more than at previous gatherings, and are really looking forward to celebrating both this **very special Anniversary**, and **confirming the Future of the Association**. So book the dates in your diary now - remember, *not* next year, but **May 2013**.

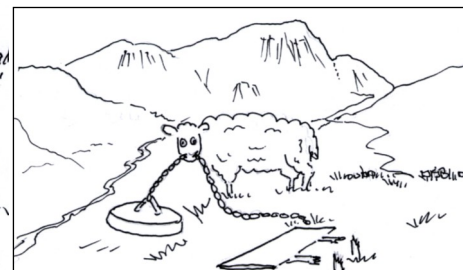
### IN THE PIPELINE

Encouraging news for all of those who have less-than-fond memories of Gelli Iago's sometimes challenging water supply: plans are under way for a completely re-vamped system to include a more substantial dam less likely than the present one to succumb to the forces of nature, a settling tank, and renewed pipework. Work is expected to start in the spring....



### STOP PRESS!

...news leaked of dramatic improvement in water supply since last week's replacement of purification filters... hopes and pressure running high....rumours of several cold taps running sim..



## Tales of two new members...

### AWAY FROM TECHNOLOGY

Harbury D of E Award Group from Warwickshire, led by Nick Tawney, chose one of the wildest and wettest week-ends of the season for their first visit, in October. Spooked by the darkness on their late arrival, they nervously groped their way past the doomed apple tree still lying on its side from the previous day's gale, and into the house. Happily any signs of panic due to lack of street lighting were soon cured once they'd found the light switch, and the group were soon warming themselves by the fire. Saturday's training walk around the slopes of Cnicht in torrential rain did nothing to dampen their enthusiasm, in spite of a somewhat cramped lunchtime inside their group shelter tents.

**"Despite being terrified when we first arrived in the pitch black, the centre served us well with a nice kitchen, warm fire and comfy beds"** wrote Elliot.

Sam thought so too, and mused **"the beds really are comfy"** while Eleanor felt that **"the lodge was very spooky because of its remote location.."**

Tom thought the centre **"was great to come back to from our walk"**, while Ben agreed that it was **"nice and homely....and surrounded by a picturesque landscape"**.

Lauren liked **"the really warm fire"**, and was impressed that **"..it has a good, easy kitchen to cook in"**.

Jack summed up the centre **"A real corker of a Lodge, with impressive showers"**, Ellie wisely thought **"It's nice to spend time away from all the technology...the area is absolutely stunning....and the cooker is awesome. Ace place!"**

### PIONEERS SET THE PACE

History was made in July when eighteen 1st Bagenalstown Baden Powell Scouts from Co. Carlow in Ireland, led by Ann and Martin O'Halloran became our first affiliated group to visit from outside the UK. Not only that, but they were the first group for many years to arrive on foot. Their hired bus from Holyhead left them to walk heroically up the lane from Nantgwynant, evoking memories for a few, this being the norm in far-flung student days, except that **these** carried **all** their gear including food! It should be explained that this was by no means due to a sadistic bus driver, it had been planned and they were quite happy to walk. Next day, after walking back down the lane to meet the bus, they strode up - and down - Snowdon from Pen y Pass, then back up the lane once more to the centre. Great energy and enthusiasm!

Ann O'Halloran reports: **'The whole experience was wonderful! The mountain centre is a brilliant facility in the best possible location for anyone who enjoys the mountains. Here's just a sample of their comments about the centre:**

**Both Liam and Liam thought 'The waterfall and pool at the back of the centre were just what we needed after a long day on Snowdon'**

**'The scenery was lovely and the climb up to the cottage was well worthwhile'** said Eoin

**Ronan '..just loved the stream..'**

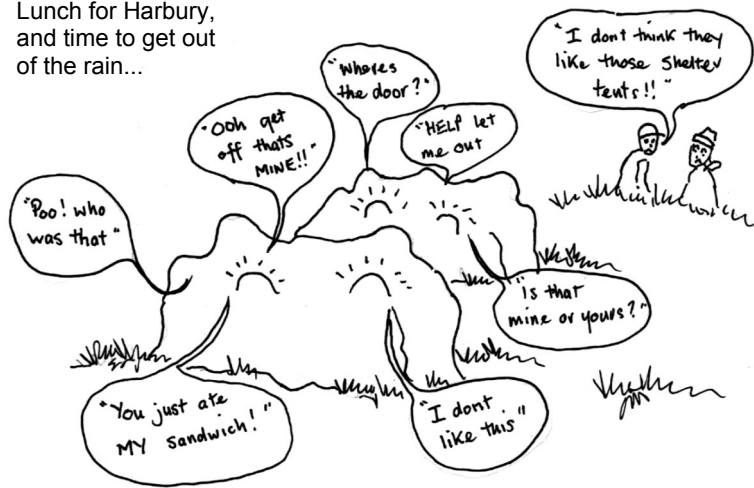
**Ciara thought '..the facilities were perfect for us', and Jennifer would '...certainly go back again'.**

**'The area around the centre is just beautiful'** thought Fiona.

**Tommy '..loved everything about Wales, my second time to climb Snowdon'.**

**Said their leader Ann, 'I think there is no doubt that we will be back again'.**

Lunch for Harbury, and time to get out of the rain...



### NOT JUST A PRETTY PLACE

Many people are unaware that, as well as being a good place to walk, Cwm Gelli lago is amazingly rich in wildlife. Nestling between the upland heathland of Arddu SSSI and the ancient forest of the Meirionnydd Oakwood, its slopes are home to a huge variety of plants and animals, most of which we don't even notice. Sabine Nouvet, Wildlife Officer to the National Trust, tells of how:

**"Gelli lago is fighting the Devil"**

**Take a walk up Cnicht through Gelli lago at this time of the year and you will be surrounded by one of the prettiest flowers we have on our mountains, Devils bit scabious.** This pretty purple pincushion of a flower is steeped in folklore: in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the herbalist Culpepper prescribed a concoction made from this plant for snake bites, swollen throats, wounds, and the Bubonic Plague. Stories follow that the Devil was so angered by the plant's ability to heal various diseases that he bit off its root.

Now, the flower is making resurgence on the hills of Snowdonia. Where sheep numbers and grazing pressure have been lowered, the surviving plants are now able to bloom and even to regenerate with seeds, something which had been hindered in the past under heavy grazing. As a result many farms which have changed their grazing patterns, such as ones which entered agri-environment schemes like Tir Gofal are now visibly more purple than they were ten years ago.



Gelli lago is a great example, but most walks around the Beddgelert hills will take you through wet meadows and river banks with these flowers at the moment. Enjoy them knowing that they are a sign of health and goodness for the countryside and for our souls!"

Sabine Nouvet,  
September 2011

DEVILS BIT SCABIOUS Succisa pratensis.

Thank you to Harbury Duke of Edinburgh Award Group, 1st Bagenalstown Baden Powell Scouts, and to Sabine Nouvet for contributing to this issue. If you have any items for the next issue, or photos which can be printed for display in the centre, please send 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 have a chat with one of us and discuss how it might suit you or your group then please contact:

The Warden: Bob James, 07889 570483 bj13@btinternet.com or

The Secretary: Jane Pedley, 07891 367206 jane137@gmail.com

Also find us on our website: www.nantmor.org