

NANTMOR NEWS

CHRISTMAS 2012

Welcome to this Christmas edition in the run up to the 50th! Read about Staffordshire Guides' first visit, news at the centre, new members.. and there's been a special visitor to Gelli Iago...



NEWS AROUND THE CENTRE

Everything's on track for next May's 50th Anniversary as plans are finalised for the long anticipated weekend of celebrations. The original idea of house-warming the tarpaulin-covered long house has been shelved in favour of a more weather proof marquee. Caterers and ceilidh band are booked, portaloos and parking, tables and chairs, serviettes and slide shows plus a myriad of other details, all that remains is the order for fine weather. Possibly never before has so much planning gone into one day at Gelli Iago!

The pre 50th facelift got off to a flying start with last September's working weekend as a team of dedicated members and volunteers worked themselves into a frazzle. Junk was cleared, chimneys swept, bathroom taps tweaked into action and bedrooms seriously decorated – no sleep for the insomniac now with the odd psychedelic wall glinting in the torchlight. As for the brutal efficiency of the gleaming new gas cooker, that's second to nothing except perhaps the re-vamped water supply since last April's dam improvements and settling tank installation, which seems to have at last solvedsshh...it's still working..

A flurry of new members have booked in, including Dorridge Scouts led by Michael Blake, and St Joseph and St Helen's Scouts with Peter Norman have already made visits this year. New faces on the committee too, with Staffordshire Scout leaders Ken Scott-Clegg and John Plavenieks bringing yet more energy and enthusiasm to the challenge of bringing the Association into its next fifty years.

A farewell and thanks to Roger and Kay Gauler who retired earlier this year from Emrys House in Beddgelert after over twenty years of keeping an eye on the centre, spare keys in the box and a shop full of goodies - a life saver for any forgetful leader, as well as for the village. Happily Delyth and Glyn have taken over and are every bit as helpful as their predecessors. And some news we were very sad to hear, of one of our members, Angela Starkey who regularly attended club weekends, who died recently. We offer our condolences to her family.

CHANGES BEHIND GELLI IAGO.. The old slate bridge, so long the gateway to Cnicht, had become unsafe for the volume of traffic it gets these days, and has been replaced. Aware of its historic value the National Trust have carefully removed the old flagstones, worn smooth by decades if not centuries of use, and re-laid them with others onto a more structurally sound bridge, complete with sturdy oak handrails for wobbly walkers..though rumour has it that the displaced Troll still lurks in the shadows beneath....

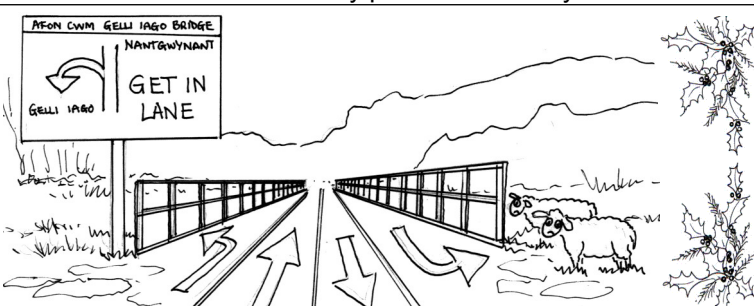
CHILDHOOD HOME REVISITED

Last summer brought a special day for Gelli Iago with a visit by someone who was born and spent much of her childhood there. Magwen was just thirteen when her family left in 1963, a short time before the house was 'discovered' by our early pioneers. We often don't stop to think of how Gelli Iago was once a working hill farm, we're so used to the idea of it just being 'the centre', but here lived a family with eight children whose father farmed the hill slopes above. This was Magwen's first opportunity to revisit her childhood home, and a welcome chance for us to extend our knowledge of the place.

Emotions ran high as Magwen crossed the threshold for the first time in nearly 50 years. Then into the dining room with memories of evenings sitting by the warmth of the Range, the room lit by oil lamps. As she slowly re-explored the house with husband Ken and family, Magwen talked of the pantry long since gone; of the pig which hung all winter from a beam in the dairy; of butter churning, wash day and scrubbing tiles; of showing the Vicar into the parlour; of the baby's room now Siabod bedroom; of sitting on the landing window seat, still the same.

Outside there was the sad demise of Ty Bach, then the only 'small room'; the ruined long house still with its roof and rickety loft ladder, where Tad bred sheepdogs to train; and a childhood hiding place inside the old and now even more hollow ash tree. Later by the fire over a hot drink, more memories sprang from iconic photos in the family album of an almost forgotten chapter in Gelli Iago's history: dressing for chapel in Sunday best; a Wendy House where Jack's bench is now; muscling ewes into the sheepwash; haymaking in the barn at Gerynt; and the 'new' extension being built, now the kitchen and Cnicht bedroom. Then off down the track in pouring rain, and across the bridge where once eight children shyly opened the gate for visitors, farewell, and a promise to stay in touch. Thank you Magwen!

We look forward to reading Magwen and her daughter Helen's article in our 50th Anniversary publication next year.





SOGGY BOGS FOR STAFFORDSHIRE GUIDES..

Early November saw Gelli Iago as training base for a group of energetic D of E Award guides from Staffordshire on their first visit, as reported by leader Ivan Poole..

"We arrived on Friday evening after a wet journey along the A5, the low point of which was stopping for chips in Betws y Coed to find the chippie had run out of fish, most sorts of pies and battered sausages! Nonetheless we managed to load up on carbs before arriving to a warm welcome and a roaring fire – thanks Jane.

Saturday dawned grey but dry and we set off towards Dinas over very soggy terrain: perfect for D of E Gold training! Picking a route through boggy patches became a never-ending negotiation of totally waterlogged ground which tested boots and sure-footedness alike. Heading back towards Gelli Iago after an unpleasant cold squall that numbed a few faces and fingers we enjoyed wonderful autumn colours in the woods, but the real highlight was Rachel asking as we negotiated a particularly boggy stretch to the sound of the train whistle...

"Does the train come this way? !!!
Ellie, with a reputation for falling in every muddy patch possible, failed to trip, but Chris more than made up with a spectacular forward roll in the mire. Later on after a mass attack on spag bol and apple crumble, courtesy of Masterchef Chris (may she always be there to feed us) we dissected the day, covered some theory and planned for the next.

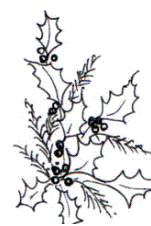
Sunday brought a dusting of icing sugar on Lliwedd. We set off towards Cnicht in high spirits after a good night's kip and a proper breakfast. Time and the need to practice micro-nav precluded a trip to the top as we headed south over the bwllch towards Croesor, pursued by a double rainbow. Cnicht gave a great impression of Everest as a plume of thick white cloud streamed east off the summit ridge in the rising wind.

At precisely 11am we stopped and held a two minute silence, it being Remembrance Day, at a point where we overlooked the sea and mountains. Very moving in such a timeless landscape.

The pace increased as we bombed down the path in a tight group, then Ellie performed a spectacular slip, trip and fall in one of the wettest spots of the weekend. At last!

Back at Gelli Iago the girls made a great job of cleaning up before we set off back home. All the way to Capel Curig a vivid rainbow lit the road ahead of us, highlighted by the gloomy, lowering bulk of the Glyders behind.

A fitting end to a great weekend. Like Arnie, we'll be back!"



We look forward to seeing many members past and present, and friends of the Association at next year's celebrations!



Christmas greetings and New Year Wishes to all our members and readers

Thank you to Kathy Laws and to Ivan Poole 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 or on the website, 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, 01766 890673 jane137@gmail.com
Also find us on our website: www.nantmor.org



SETTLERS FROM THE PAST

Every summer weekend regardless of weather sees a surge of visitors to the valley, many of them heading for the slopes of Cnicht and beyond. But it's still a far cry from the bustle of life in Cwm Gelli Iago in the distant past, when its slopes were dotted with scattered settlements, high above the dangers of the forested valleys below, in a climate more temperate than ours (we hope!) It seems it was just the place to live, maybe due to access to the coast and other valleys or the abundance of fish-stocked lakes, we shall never know.

A group of club weekenders were joined last May by Kathy Laws, Archaeologist to the National Trust, for a walk around Cwm Gelli Iago searching for signs of those early inhabitants.

Following on from an article in our last newsletter, Kathy writes:

"Not just a Pretty Place - Part Two

As well as being a wonderful place to walk, rich in wildlife, Cwm Gelli Iago has a wealth of archaeological and historic sites. The range of site types, from Prehistoric hut circles to medieval house sites to more recent sheepfolds and enclosures is typical for this area. The concentration of sites in this secluded valley is, however, rather special.

It is clear that people have lived and farmed in Cwm Gelli Iago from the Prehistoric period onwards. As you walk around the Cwm and come across ruined walls and the footings of ancient buildings try to imagine smoke rising from fires, stock being tended and people living much more in harmony with the natural landscape than we do today.

Some of the earliest sites are Scheduled Ancient Monuments considered to be of National Importance and protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. These sites are well worth a visit but take care not to move stones or carry out any activity which disturbs the ground."

Kathy Laws, Nov 2012

