

NANTMOR NEWS

AUTUMN 2017

Welcome to the Nantmor News! With our 55th Anniversary fast approaching catch up on the latest improvements to the Centre...

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



MOVING WITH THE TIMES

As late summer tints the bracken and the days turn more Autumnal it's time to look back over the past year at Gelli Iago. The trustee-directors, joined in March by Edwin now treading in his father's footsteps, have been giving the Centre its latest makeover. Returning visitors might be forgiven for checking their bearings as they turn in by the palatial bin store, drive over the recently repaired bridge, pull up in one of the new car parks and with easy access to the front door pause to admire the newly bonsai-ed yet still defiant box tree. Further improvements inside include recently tweaked and now brutally-efficient fire doors conforming to safety standards, and those drying room ceiling peep holes along with assorted pipe work and resident spiders have been skillfully concealed with pine boarding. The back chimney of the house, redundant since the demise of the kitchen Aga, has been neatly removed by the National Trust along with its accompanying leaks, and the other two chimneys repaired and re-rendered.

Affiliated leaders will be relieved to know that all safety policies have been reviewed, along with risk assessments and policies for just about anything you might consider doing during your visit, undeniably necessary in today's climate. Happily the days before the coming of Health and Safety allowed Nantmor to evolve into the place so many have grown to love. Recent hiccups with the Wifi are being ironed out, but please remember we don't have endless access so please use sparingly to avoid exceeding our limit.

There's a hectic time ahead too with an imminent re-invention of the bathroom to allow visitors the luxury of separate facilities, establishing improved comfort in the dining room, and deciding on the complexities of replacing, renovating or even removing the increasingly dilapidated classroom - or maybe, just maybe, working with the National Trust to fully restore the old 'long house' as an alternative, multi purpose facility, which would be an exciting project indeed!

But over all these changes the fir tree still stands proud, its roots holding on despite hydro disturbance, its branches gently bowing to their recent trimming and welcoming all who arrive.

...we've a few tales about this year's club meets, plus news of some more unusual visitors...

55th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

With still another five years to go until our 60th Anniversary we just can't wait to see folk again so we're having a 55th next summer! This will take place as an **informal gathering at Gelli Iago over the weekend 1st - 3rd June**. There'll be a **daytime buffet on Saturday 2nd June** and an **evening barbecue and social**, with accommodation at the centre for some, camping for the hardy and hotels for the more sedate. Our aim is to bring together as many members as possible, and we'd like to celebrate this amazing 55 years with a really happy and memorable occasion. More details will be sent out in the New Year, but **book the dates in your diary now!**



With last year's hydro work now mostly grassed over, the new turbine chugs happily away to itself when rainfall allows providing energy for up to seventy five homes somewhere, whilst the seemingly undeterred stream continues to follow its course down the waterfall and via the historic sheep wash. Plans for similar National Trust schemes in Snowdonia have been forestalled due to cost, so the nearby and previously threatened Afon Llagi continues to thunder down the hillside as it always has done.

A warm welcome to new affiliated members East Devon Explorer Scouts, Conway District Scouts, 1st Blackwater Valley Scout Group from Surrey, Winchester Open D of E and Merseyside Young Walkers. Might the distance some of these groups travel mean something special about their destination? Our survey showed that many love Nantmor for what it *hasn't* got; for its remoteness, for its torrent-of-a-stream and wild mountainside above, no matter (well almost) how long the queue for the toilet.

SEARCHING SOGGY HILLSIDES

Unperturbed by the promise of heavy rain an assortment of mobile dog kennels made their way slowly up the lane to Gelli Iago, tail-wagging occupants expectantly sniffing the air, heralding the start of another training weekend for SARDA's search and rescue dogs. The forecast proved right and Saturday dawned grey and extremely wet, but with Goretex jackets and Sarda doggy coats signalling the start of the fun it was soon noses down to work. As well as an induction for newcomers there was training for the regulars, searching for soggy volunteer 'bodies' hidden on the hillside above. By late afternoon the dogs, having run for miles, were content to curl up in kennels whilst their well exercised handlers relaxed in the comfort of the Centre. More was to follow on Sunday but by the evening Gelli Iago was quiet once more, gleaming with cleanliness and not a poo nor paw print to be seen. No doubt doggy memories were being peacefully dreamed of a hardworking weekend, just one in the lives of these dedicated people and their dogs who play a vital role in mountain rescue and save so many lives.

THE SPIRIT OF CLUB MEETS

Club weekends have been as popular as ever this year, even into the summer when in the past numbers have dwindled due to people's busy lives. Following last year's cancellation due to floods the two (or was it three) year old vintage Christmas pudding finally made its way along the lane, almost unassisted, to the December club meet, by now so well laced positively oozing brandy - happily the resulting combustion was quickly smothered with equally intoxicating sauce and the only safe solution was to eat it. The January Port and Stilton Meet turned out to be as popular as in past, and needless to say a good time was had by all on both weekends.

Early March saw a Meet with a difference with optional defibrillator training when Nick Aitken from the charity 'Welsh Hearts' delivered an excellent session on the Saturday morning. A good number attended, in fact more local residents of the valley than Club Meet members, who'd come to learn how to use what's on their doorstep. With an age range of between 9 months and 70+ Nick did an amazing job of teaching us all (well nearly, Rosco did fall asleep on mum though Edwin aged 4 proved a budding expert) and everyone went away feeling more confident, not just about the defib but also all the other tips regarding difficult first aid situations. If ever it's repeated this should be a must for anyone, regardless of previous first aid skills. Needless to say it was amply washed down that evening with the delicious and complementary Welsh 'Cawl', cooked again to perfection by Owen.



Most of August was busy with family groups: Emily Tustin and veterinary friends, joined by mum Isobel and Treasurer Jenny, enjoyed a week of all weathers, followed by seemingly ageless early-NMC-days veteran Phil Coley and family, including lively and musical grandchildren now dubbed 'The Lindley Pipe Band'. Loaded with musical instruments and talent and loving every minute of their exciting few days making music, baking scones and dragon hunting they're already longing to return next year for a 'proper barbecue and music session'. We hope they do!

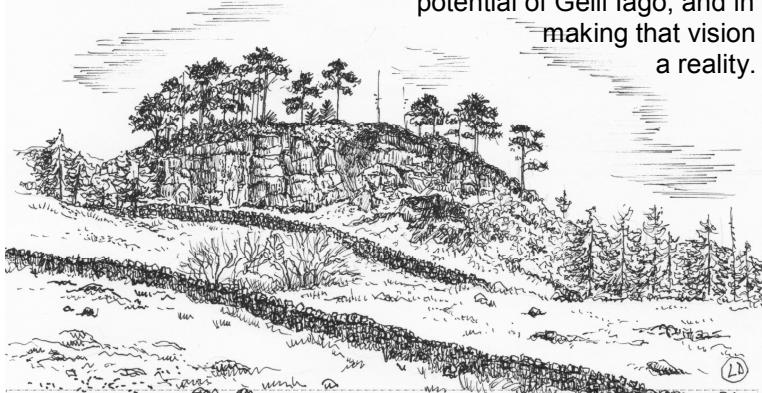
The Nantmor Mountain Centre is a small and friendly organisation. It has charitable status and since 1963 has been active in providing simple but memorable farmhouse accommodation for groups in its stunning location between Nantgwynant and Nantmor village in the Snowdonia National Park. Our members include 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: Mark Underwood, 01684 833004 mcunderwood@btconnect.com or The Secretary: Jane Pedley, 01766 890673 jane137@gmail.com. Also find us on our website: www.nantmormountaincentre.co.uk



THANK YOU

Colin McCall

One of the virtues of the 50th Anniversary was the opportunity it gave for so many to reunite with old friends and in some cases to meet with those who, until then, had been merely 'names from the past'. So it was with Colin McCall who joined us with his wife Margaret to share in those celebrations, and who sadly passed away last December. Colin was among the handful of students who in the early '60's chanced upon Gelli Iago as a then empty farmhouse and, realising its potential, approached the local farmer who owned it. With his contemporaries he then set about persuading staff of Shenstone College of the merits of this idea, and was instrumental in setting up the first 'Adventure Schools' with Birmingham schoolchildren, which were the forerunners of many such courses at Gelli Iago. It was a delight to meet with Colin and to hear from him tales of those early days at the Centre when the only lighting was from paraffin lamps, but with a host of happy children, the forerunners of many thousands more to come. Throughout his life Colin held 'Nantmor' dear to his heart. We in turn are indebted to him and others for their foresight in recognising the potential of Gelli Iago, and in making that vision a reality.



Dr Dennis Brailsford

Long standing members of the Nantmor Mountain Centre Association will be saddened to hear that Dr Dennis Brailsford passed away, aged 91, in July, following a full and generous life devoted to his family, education and sport. As Principal of Shenstone College, Bromsgrove, from 1969, Dennis built on the foundation established by Mary Wood, being a very strong supporter of the Mountain Centre at Gelli Iago. Dennis served as Chairman, later as President of the association, and provided much influential support and promotion of the centre at significant times of its evolution. He maintained his interest and links through contact with a number of former students and members of staff and presided at the 25th, the first of our celebratory weekend dinners. Dennis was a true friend of the Association whose life should be celebrated for the benefits he brought for the betterment of the life experience of others.

Tony Tatford, Hon Vice President NMCA