

SUMMER 2019

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

We've the old and the new in this late summer edition - with news of a jam packed AGM and a well deserved tribute to our retiring President. There's good news for sleepy visitors, a word on the wildlife around Gelli Iagoand an eye opener into some hidden secrets of the past among these hills...



Mild winter, spring deluge, midsummer heatwave! Perfect recipe for a summerful of flowers and butterflies in the valley and hills around. **A good turnout of members too for the AGM**, some linked with NMC since the sixties, all keen to keep up with an Association which has given them so much throughout their lives.

That Nantmor means so much to so many was clear from the hailstorm of replies when ex President and founder member David Dean popped the question 'What is Nantmor?', having been so quizzed by TV presenter Iolo Williams during recent filming in the Cairngorms. **'Knowledge of the outdoors!'** came the cry, **'Love of nature! Sense of wonder and awe! Community living! Resilience! A gateway to learning!'** Such magical outpourings from hearts long rooted in Nantmor must surely mean there's something very special about this place?

Later in the meeting, unexpected news for many when Brenig expressed his wish to stand down as President, with his hopes that Tony Tatford should succeed him. Tony's humble thanks and acknowledgement of Brenig's years of service were applauded by all.

Jane as Secretary then spoke of Brenig's amazing track record since joining the staff at Shenstone College in 1966 - Having set up the Mountain Leadership Course enabling students to undergo training at Gelli Iago, over subsequent years he had become Assistant Warden, Deputy Warden, Secretary and finally Booking Secretary before his eight year Presidency, amounting to an **incredible fifty three years** of unbroken service.

Drawing on her own memories as a Shenstone student, **Jane recalled the image of a young Brenig**, then lecturing at the college yet comparatively close in years to his charges, and the perfectly juggling of more formal teaching back at college with his total immersion in frequent trips to Gelli Iago, mainly for Mountain Leadership training with its varied practical and at times informal situations. She told how during all this time Brenig had played it just right - even at times exercising his role 'in loco parentis' (then legal until the age of 21) firmly, effectively and good-naturedly, earning the respect of every student and in many cases inspiring them to complete their college years. Brenig had worked his same magic through his involvement with Nantmor, which equally owes him so much.

Had legalities permitted, Jane was sure that we would at that point have raised a glass to say, **'Thank you Brenig!'**

At the Open Meeting on July 1st a presentation was held in recognition of Brenig's service. Tony as President delivered the following tribute:

"It is a very considerable honour for me to have been asked to present, on behalf of past and present members and supporters of our association, our acknowledgment of the immense contribution made over some 53 years by our dear and much respected friend, Brenig Garrett."

"When, at our most recent AGM, I accepted Brenig's generous nomination for me to succeed him in the role of President, I did so in the knowledge that what Brenig was doing in stepping down from that position was a further carefully considered part of his plan for how his contributions may be made in the best interests of this association."

"Throughout all these years Brenig has provided consistent, positive, determined and loyal service and highly valued leadership to this association. That service has always been focussed on what may best support and further promote the ideals on which our existence is based and how those early plans may best be moulded to provide for our continuing operation in the future." (*..continued overleaf*)

A RECORD FOR THE FUTURE

Talking of wildflowers and butterflies, something different has been introduced to Gelli Iago. Brown and A4 sized, its page form the humble beginnings of a natural history record of

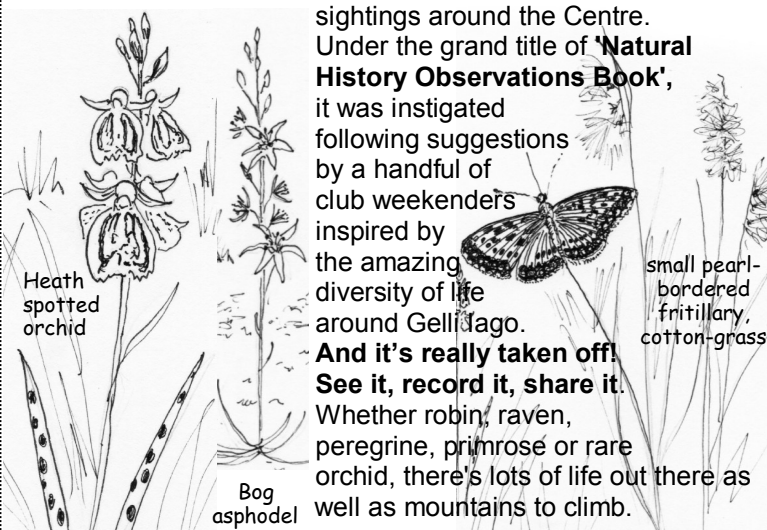
sightings around the Centre.

Under the grand title of **'Natural History Observations Book'**,

it was instigated following suggestions by a handful of club weekenders inspired by the amazing diversity of life around Gelli Iago.

And it's really taken off! See it, record it, share it.

Whether robin, raven, peregrine, primrose or rare orchid, there's lots of life out there as well as mountains to climb.



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“Our history is rich and tells of many who, in their particular and valued ways, have given so much to ensure the development and promotion of a shared belief in what is on offer with NMCA. Each of these people deserve the recognition given to them, as I believe, each would share loudly in support of our acknowledgement of all that Brenig has given to Nantmor.

“To dwell on the past without purpose could be regarded as an indulgence. Whilst tonight, we reflect on so much that has been graciously given and gratefully received, we do so in the sure knowledge that Brenig’s continued involvement lies in his concern for how this organisation may continue to provide appropriate and similarly worthwhile experiences for others well into the future. Always with an awareness of creating the opportunity for the involvement of others and the potential for them to become major contributors, Brenig has helped lead our association in the provision of experiences that have impacted positively on so many lives.

“Directly and indirectly, everyone who has stayed at Gelli iago owes a debt of gratitude for these opportunities. Many others, who may never have visited, have gained much from his determination to raise and share an awareness and concern for the environment and its care. Consequently, many who may not even know Brenig would thank him for his persistence, his vision, his wisdom, his guidance and his concern.

“On behalf of us all here tonight and others unable to be present we thank you Brenig for what you have done for this association to this point. We recognise the value of your gift and the generosity with which you have devoted your time and commitment without expectation of recognition or reward.

“Tonight, we ask you to allow us the opportunity to make that recognition, to say our thanks to you and to wish you and Val well in the future as you continue to serve this ideal in whatever way you are able.”

Tony Tatford, President NMCA

A specially commissioned watercolour painting by Lesley Dawson was presented to Brenig, along with a bouquet of flowers for Val as a small token of appreciation for her unstinting support over the years. Vice President Bob James then read out the following message from David Dean:

‘Brenig

Just a word dear friend from your predecessor as President and your admirer. The depth of experience and wisdom you have given throughout all your years spent working for NMCA, always at the coal face, has been a gift, the like of which, few if any can match. I doubt anyone present at tonight’s meeting as well as the many, many of us not able to be there could fail to appreciate just how much Nantmor MC, its rich history but even more importantly, its future means to you and thereby of course to Val.

‘I would join you in wishing the current post holders every success in justifying the strength of legacy and mission you and those who worked so closely with you are passing to them. Have a great evening, you and everyone.’

David

Warden 1963-65 and sometime President

Thankfully Brenig assures us that he hasn’t stopped yet, and we look forward to his continuing support as a Vice President.

WINDS OF CHANGE

The Centre’s looking good with its brand spanking new mattresses, a long shot from their historic horsehair predecessors worn into dubious hollows, now boosting the rooms both in looks and comfort. With bathroom refurbishment and extension plans still rumbling, who knows what comfort our users will see before long?

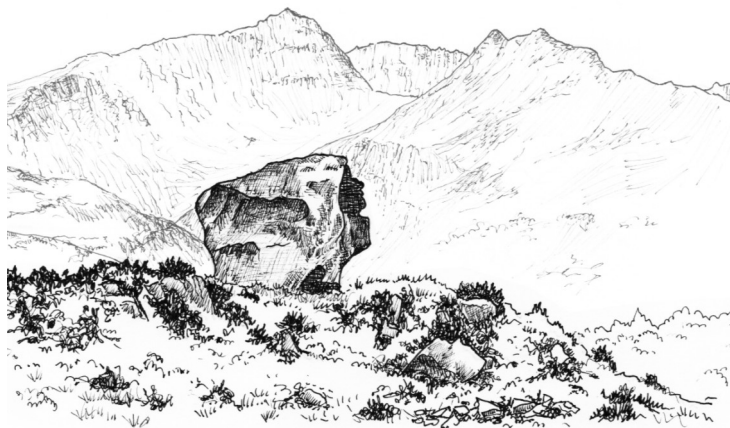
Following the AGM Jane stepped aside as Secretary after thirteen years in office, whilst Toni Davenport took up the baton and continues as Webmistress. Jane remains a trustee-director and her role in Community Liaison will ensure she keeps an ear to the ground in the valley.

FROM THE WARDEN

A reminder that Gelli iago isn’t immune from rubbish disposal problems, so PLEASE bag correctly as on the notices ready for our new collection day which is Thursday.

SNOWDONIA IN A NUTSHELL

A wild March day saw seven potential geologists toiling up and down windswept slopes and gullies, racing forecast rainstorms, led by local geologist and historian Clive Hudson. From the quarry to Llagi we tramped, learning of sandstones and dolerite, of strata and synclines, of sills, intrusions and microgranite. On and up insanely steep slopes through heather, bilberry and moss-covered boulders to ‘Clive’s summit’, an incredible glacial erratic boulder the size of a small elephant, perched precariously by the ice sheet 20,000 years ago. There we rested and we marvelled.



Then downwards we plunged, yet more crazy slopes and bogs towards Castell, passing ancient, slowly disappearing walls long since built by our ancestral neighbours to enclose their precious stock. One last haul up onto Castell summit, itself an even more ancient volcanic plug and part of the eruptive turbulence that created the very rocks from which this landscape was carved. What a day! Inspired by Clive’s tireless, infectious energy and enthusiasm for not only the makings of Snowdonia but opening our eyes to everything from tiny yet colourful lichens to miniature toadstools, we wondered how each could have known and tramped these hills so many times yet still find so much to learn.

On down to the warmth of Gelli iago, just beating the rain; mugs of hot tea by the fire, and later that Club Weekend, Owen’s traditional Welsh ‘Cawl’ hotpot, as warming and delicious as ever.

In order to accommodate a Scout Group booking the March 2020 "Cawl" meet will now be from Thurs 27th February to Sunday 1st March (3 nights).

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