

NANTMOR NEWS

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

Welcome to this special issue of the Nantmor news, featuring the 45th Anniversary of the Nantmor Mountain Centre - we've also a report from pupils of Walkwood Middle School, and Sara Joyce recounts the newly-formed St Matthew's Walkers' midwinter visit to Gelli lago..



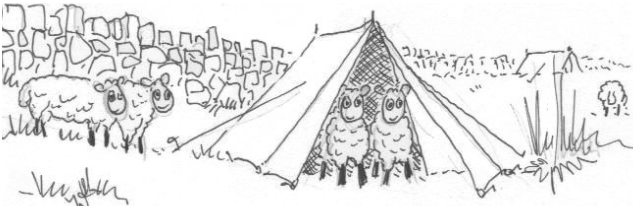
SATURDAY 3rd MAY 2008
What a wonderful weekend it was! Over seventy of us – members, families, friends, local residents and National Trust officials – met at Gelli lago in glorious sunshine to celebrate the occasion.

Conversations flowed, memories were re-lived, old friendships renewed and new ones kindled as we tucked into a sumptuous buffet provided by Caffi Gwynant. The hot weather even drove some to retreat to the shade of gazebos to escape the sunshine, sip wine and to hear the truly memorable speeches, which enthused and inspired - Tony's as Chairman, David's as President and John Morgan's of the National Trust which was so encouraging for the future - pausing only once, to listen for a moment to the sound of the stream reminding us of the very essence of Nantmor itself: it's being on and part of the mountain, unique and special. Moving stuff!

Next came a presentation by Bob, the Warden, on behalf of all to Brenig – dubbed from that moment as “*The Brenig*” (there could only be one) in recognition of his 43 years of unbroken service to the Association. Years which have seen Brenig in the early days as lecturer at Shenstone College and director of it's Mountain Leadership Course (patiently suffering us wild '60's students), and over the years in various roles from Secretary to current Booking Secretary, and still the same dependable pillar. Thank you Brenig!

Toasts over, it was time for the cake to be cut by David, symbolically helped by two of the youngest members, Emily and Katie, before it's rock (!) hard icing was skilfully carved up as only Stuart and Val knew how and it's images, painted on by Lesley, were sadly - but tastily – dissolved into memories.

A few hours to relax (or wash up) then, as the evening approached we were beckoned by Edwin's drifting barbeque aromas as Tony's fairy lights began to twinkle from the old apple tree... Time to discover Gough's bar, cunningly installed in the cool Warden's office to allow settling of the *n* gallons of beer generously supplied by Tony G, or perhaps to nostalgically search for names inscribed long ago in the old visitors' books. And on into the evening, so many thoughts shared between friendships sometimes as old as Nantmor itself, until exhausted revellers drifted – or staggered - to bed, either crammed into a very full (and resonant!) Centre, or driven by sober wives to hotels, or maybe groped their way to tents on the dark field, comforted perhaps by the thought of those inviting - but alarmingly sloping – portaloos, a godsend for the desperate. A day to remember!



All this excitement followed weeks and months of detailed planning, plus the hard graft of those who helped at the weekend shifting tables and chairs, putting up gazebos, washing up and generally getting the place ready to receive possibly more people than Gelli lago had ever seen before. Then there was the food: all locally sourced and produced by Caffi Gwynant, home baked and prepared in Liz Owen-Till's kitchen and delivered to the Centre, and tasting even better than we'd dared to hope. The wonderful weather helped too of course, but the day was really made perfect by the people who came. And so many! It was as good to see some 'real oldies' from the past as it was to meet younger folk, to be introduced to members of the Trust and to welcome 'the neighbours' which added to the day a special feeling that Nantmor isn't just a place that's visited then locked up and empty, but reminded us that it exists, as it always has, amongst a living community.
We look forward to the 50th - and beyond!

OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF: Following the fantastic new bathroom there's no end to improvements, with a new fire (less technical to use than the last one) - it burns logs as well as coal, shows promise as a slow stew cooker and even heats the room efficiently.. New, burgundy (!) curtains, the original (and magnificent) slate floor cleaned up and linseed oil treated, and fresh pictures on the walls have completed the '08 facelift, for the time being at least..
Since the last issue the website has gained a blog, so please send in contributions!

PRAISE FROM THE WARDEN..
“Congratulations to Ipsley Ramblers on leaving the Centre in an exceptionally clean state following their recent visit, in particular Kit and Toby Hemming who, it's rumoured, 'did all the work whilst the others sat around drinking coffee'. The Centre really was superbly clean. Well done and thank you!
The new badges are now on sale - same design as the old one but blue this time. Cost only £1, if you'd like to add one to your collection please send a cheque (payable to 'Nantmor Mountain Centre Association') to me, Bob James, Wyche Cottage, Tibberton, Droitwich, Worcs WR9 7NQ”.



BACK TO THE LAND OF MY FATHER(S)
'Hen Gymru fynddig, paradwys y bardd'
(Old land of the mountains, paradise of the poets)

An evening with a friend in our 'local', reliving my happy childhood memories of Snowdonia, led me to organise a New Year getaway with friends at Gelli lago. We formed the St Mathews Walkers and had such a memorable few days in the mountains we plan to return as often as possible. I have such fond memories of the centre, having first seen the place when I was only 3 years old, during a stay at David Dean's cottage along the lane. My first impressions of such basic mountain retreats were not so good and I can remember telling my parents that I was 'looking backward' to going on holiday there (it made perfect sense to me at the time as it was quite simply the opposite of looking forward). Having subsequently spent most of my summer holidays as a child in Snowdonia, and having joined many mountain leadership weekends with my Dad (Brenig Garrett) and his students at the centre, it is now dear to my heart. I'm delighted to have been able to take my own children (Celia 15, Ollie 12) and my husband (Chris) there.

We spent 4 nights at Gelli lago over New Year 2007/2008 with two other families, taking enough food and wine to see us through in case we should be snowed in! To our relief the weather was perfect and we managed to do lots of walking with the children who coped brilliantly in wellies and trainers. Ollie was so impressed with Snowdon that he has asked if he could camp overnight on the mountain in the summer with his Dad (I think not!).



Thank you to the pupils of Walkwood Middle School, to Sara Joyce and to David Dean for their contributions to the Big Issue.



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 it's 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:

Jane Pedley / Lesley Dawson June 2008

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

AN AWESOME WEEK!
Pupils from Walkwood Middle School made the most of their 'Wales Week' in June, their 28th year of such visits led by Bob James, and more yet to come with Sean Williams in the lead:
“It was the best week of my life! We climbed Snowdon, Cnicht and Moel Siabod...the sights were amazing.. We went climbing, orienteering and played traditional games. After a while the Centre started to feel like home” Bethan.
So too thought Gemma: “..a great experience...it was brilliant! We all had to keep the house nice and tidy, and Mr James cooked for us. My favourite was the day we went on the beach, then we went back to have a barbeque and played games as it was the last night..”
Dan will remember his week because
“It was awesome! The mountains were a bit of a struggle but the views from the top just breathtaking! I won't forget the blisters either.. ..loads of laughs with the new friends I made, not forgetting the teachers and how cool they were too..”

...and we're cool...



New Years Eve was spent walking in Cwm Idwal (one of my favourite places) and we all managed to climb up to the Devil's Kitchen. The children insisted on striding ahead, despite my advice that we should keep together and walk at the pace of the slowest member of the party (good mountain safety advice from my Dad from days gone by!). Breathing in the fresh mountain air and drinking from the streams gave us all a healthy glow which continued well in to the early hours of the morning, but was probably then a result of flowing wine and New Year celebrations! The evening was very cosy and sociable and included attempts at table crawling, all of which were unsuccessful! Well we had to try!

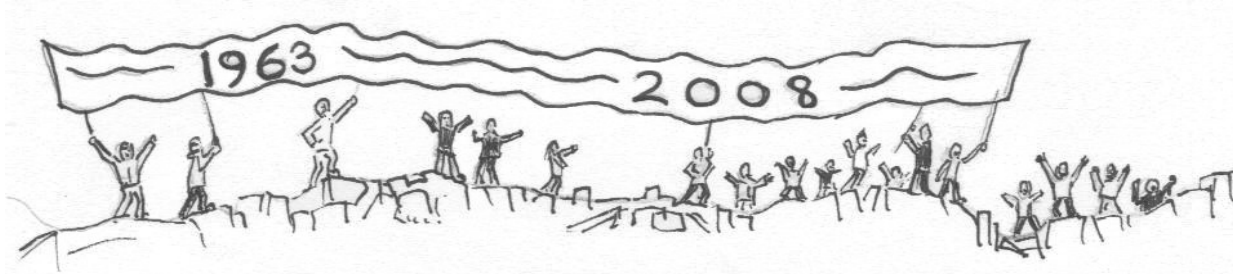
We had a less energetic New Years Day, some went to Beddgelert to see Gelert's grave (the children were rather upset at the slaying of the poor dog), whilst others slept! We walked up to the Twin Lakes mid afternoon but had to turn around before we reached our destination as daylight was fading – very good therapy for clearing the head though!

By 2nd Jan we had all recovered and were ready for a 'real' walk. We climbed Snowdon, going up the Pyg track and down the Miner's track. We decided not to go right to the top as our friend, Rob, had broken his foot only four weeks earlier and it seemed just a bit too much for his recovering limb! Ollie was disgusted with our decision not to aim for the summit and wouldn't speak all the way down - we bribed him with a promise of returning in the summer to do it 'properly' when visibility was better! Despite the cloud over the summit, the views were fabulous and we were all in awe of the amazing scenery.

To sum up, we had a wonderful and truly memorable stay at Gelli lago. The centre provided a perfect base for us (the showers were pure luxury), and the mountains were more breathtaking than I remember. Living as we now do in Worthing, West Sussex, it is not easy for us to go regularly, but we will certainly aim to re visit my childhood 'stomping ground' as often as possible so my children can share similar fond memories.
Sara Joyce, St Matthew's Walkers

NMCA 45th ANNIVERSARY

We were delighted that David and Valery were able to travel south to join the Anniversary celebrations (in spite of the untimely petrol shortage which threatened so many journeys that weekend) - and have included here David's speech with his thoughts on the Association - past, present and future...



Cnicht from Llynau Cerrig-y-myllt

FROM THE PRESIDENT..

David Dean OBE
Badanfhuarain
Nethy Bridge
Inverness-shire
PH25 3ED

"Thank you Tony and all members of the Committee for your warm welcome to all of us.

What do you say to an organisation which is 45 years old?

'Pretty good going..... but please, please, keep going.'

Why?

Well certainly not to prolong the life of a relic beyond its sell by date; that's for sure.

Rather, it's because there is clear evidence that people, young and old who have trod the dressed slate floor of Gelli Iago and slept under its roof, wrestled with its water supply, crowded together to cook in its kitchen, repaired its plaster walls, cleared its chimney and in between, climbed above the Centre to gaze on the spumes of wind blown waters of Llynau Cerrig-y-myllt, Llyn-y-Biswail and Llyn Llgi and much, much more in Snowdonia's ancient landscape are interesting and interested people whose lives have been enhanced by the experience. A very large number of these people were under the age of 21 at the time and open to gaining significantly from these long lasting and formative experiences.

How?

Dedication, quiet perseverance and the generating of fun and purpose amongst the 45 years of committees has, I suspect, been the key.

No words of mine can possibly be adequate to acknowledge the leadership of our Nantmor Mountain Centre Committee chaired for the last 27 years by Tony Tatford. Tony and our Warden, Bob James, supported we know full well by Sue and Julie have given 38 years each to Nantmor. And of course there are others we would want to commend for their energy and loyalty to making this all work culminating perhaps in 'The Brenig's' 43 years of service given quite selflessly. Brenig Garrett has been no less than a rock to Nantmor throughout almost all its history and we thank him for it. And then there are all of you gathered here together with the many who could not share this day with us in person. That's how!

And so ladies and gentlemen, yes please, let's find the route by which this most remarkable Association can continue in its role with people of all ages and conditions and occupying this most treasured place of stones and tumbling waters - Gelli Iago, home to the Nantmor Mountain Centre."

David Dean
www.lazyduck.co.uk
www.lazyduck.co.uk/david

Thankfully, in Britain, there will always be beacons which shine out and defy a culture of mediocrity or worse. We need them to be there in the fields of sport, education and the arts where parallel inspiration and dedication enable a continuous flow of enterprising projects to contribute to the lives of successive generations. Nantmor Mountain Centre, essentially that's the people, the place and the programme which operates from here is one such beacon. We all know that we are close to the time when a new generation of Nantmor enthusiasts needs to stand up and take us forward.

At Nantmor in 1963 and the years which followed I discovered the power of the elements, raw and simple. They challenged me and, I believe, shaped much of my future. For many of us they provide a respite from an overload of 20th and 21st century living. Nantmor though is more, much more than a piece of restorative sticking plaster in an uncomfortable world but only if we invite its invigorating healing possibilities to get inside us and work for us and thereby for others.

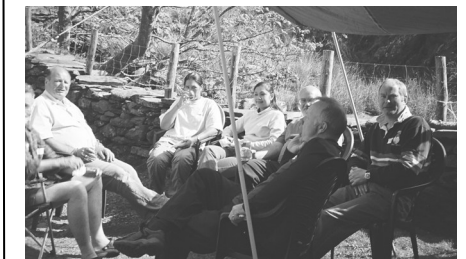
I hope and believe our members have, over the 45 years proved good stewards of this place. Is it in a more sound condition and fit for purpose than we first found it in 1963? Undoubtedly yes.

In a conversation recently with a senior worker in the National Trust for Scotland I was hearing of the pains they take to find suitable tenants for their properties; we were talking about a west coast island in particular. Of course the National Trust did not 'select' us. They 'inherited' us in much the same way as they inherit other highly valued assets. I would like to think that the National Trust feels as positive about our association as the nation generally values and appreciates the National Trust.

It is our pleasure, as our Chairman has said, that John, Richard, Arwyn and Sabine of the National Trust, together with some of our immediate neighbours in the valley have generously made the time to be with us today.

"What a wonderful day! ..it was lovely to hear about everything that has been achieved over the past 45 years..."
Lynne Davies

Baa! We loved it too!



..an inherited and highly valued asset..



"It was a fantastic evening, we all really enjoyed it and are so glad we came! Thank you for inviting us."
Margaret Brooks, Fedw Bach

It was good to see so many there and we all look forward to the 50th, but five years is a long time to wait to see everyone again so don't forget Club weekends are brilliant, and of course run throughout the year. Bring your own food and drink and the time will be yours to walk / climb / relax / whatever - just enjoy a weekend at Gelli Iago! The Anniversary was so enjoyed by all that even before the weekend was over there were rumours of an annual 'May barbeque weekend', so watch out for the 46th!

Photos of the event can be seen on the website: www.nantmor.org

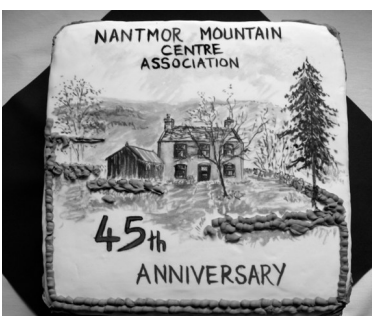


The waterfall behind Gelli Iago



"Thanks for a great weekend! The whole event (Saturday's weather included) revolved around preparation and the hospitality of all the members present. ...a lot of good memories, old friends seen again, and a few new friends too! I'm looking forward to the 50th."

Terry Smith



"It was an incredible weekend which will remain in everybody's memory for a long time, especially so in mine..." Bob James

Baa ..and in mine..

