

NANTMOR NEWS

CHRISTMAS 2009 EDITION

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

Welcome to this Winter Edition of the Nantmor News, with good tidings on the lease for Gelli Iago, a welcome to new members, a bit of a scolding from the Warden and a word on club meets by a seasoned supporter...



NEW LEASE IN OUR OLD HOME

Christmas 2009, and another milestone for Nantmor with the new lease now agreed, and the knowledge that Gelli Iago will continue to be home to the Nantmor Mountain Centre for the next eight years, and hopefully many more to come. In celebration the house has been having a face lift, with long-promised new carpets, a new double-glazed bathroom window (no more ice patterns), chimney swept clean for Santa, and lots more. The place has been busy with groups – Scouts, schools, higher education students and even SARDA's search and rescue dogs - well their owners, the dogs bring their own accommodation - on a training weekend.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to Balcarras School, Cheltenham, whose group leader Jon Pearce fell for the place on his first visit, and saw the potential for bringing groups of youngsters.

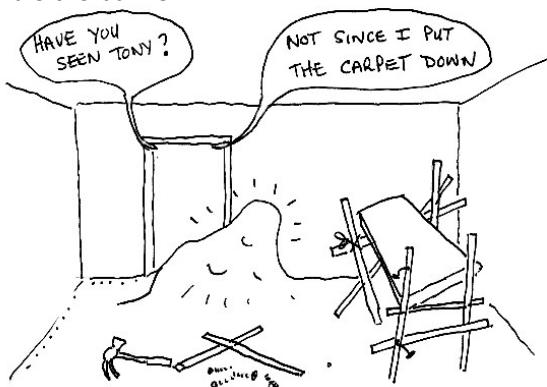
Pitsford Explorer Scouts from Northampton have also joined up, led by Georgina Tabor, who loved the centre as a student and is now returning as a leader. The group chose just about the wettest weekend in August for their first visit, the Bank Holiday, testing the drying facilities to the extreme. Reports Georgina: *"We all enjoyed our stay very much, and can't wait to come back. The weather wasn't great, but we made the best of it - almost reached the top of Snowdon in 65 mph winds, but had to turn back for safety. The new bathroom looks good, and works well. Thank you very much!"*

The most recent group to join, King Henry V111 School from Abergavenny, will be using the Centre as a training base for not one, but two trips to Africa next summer, led by the obviously energetic Ross Robertson (Africa? when there's North Wales?). Good luck to both teams, good training, and we look forward to hearing about your expeditions.



CARPET LAYING FUN

Gelli Iago throbbed with activity for two days following November's club meet as the old carpets, having long since seen better days, were at last replaced by a dedicated work party. The first task was to dismantle the wooden bunks which are cunningly held together by screws - a wise precaution except that there are forty eight for each bunk, 528 in all... Sounds of relentless screwing and unscrewing issued from the bedrooms as Tony, John and the Black & Decker took on this tedious mission. Each room thus cleared (no light undertaking as the bunk sections then had to be stacked on the landing), dubious under-bunk deposits were gingerly removed, the old carpet peeled off and historic dust vacuumed up by a sneezing secretary. Then Chairman Tony sprang or rather kneeled into action revealing his true vocation in laying each new carpet with such skill and expertise that only a master craftsman knows, before once again Tony (the one with the drill) and John moved in to painstakingly re-screw and reassemble the bunks.



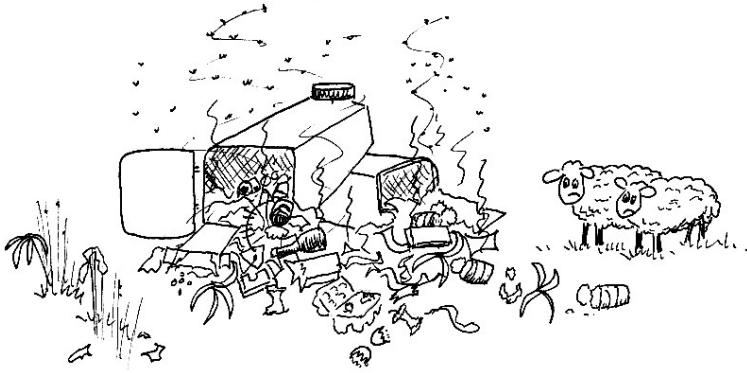
Meanwhile downstairs in the Warden's Office rumbled earth movements as a chest of drawers, table, cupboard, filing cabinet, gargantuan armchair and mountains of spare equipment (thoughtfully donated in the past for want of a better home) were extricated by Bob in an attempt to rediscover the floor. The old carpet thus located and subsequently removed, Tony (the one with no drill) knelt once more to his new calling. With the room transformed a sensible amount of furniture was replaced and the trailer duly loaded with offerings for charity, recycling and the tip. The end result - the whole of the upstairs and the Warden's Office now carpeted in a manner truly matching the splendour of the new bathroom - a far cry from the old days of bare floorboards.



BITS AND BOBS:

The Warden's Desperate Plea to Party Leaders

“Once again I’m making an appeal on behalf of the Wombles because we’re still getting problems with rubbish. As big wheelie bin tipper lorries simply can’t squeeze up the Nantmor lane the bins are emptied by hand - each bag is lifted out individually and thrown into a smaller, lane-sized lorry. So rubbish must be secure, in strong bags which will not burst open when picked up! If in doubt double-bag it! Otherwise the bin will not be emptied until done so by wind and wildlife - to scatter in the lane and flow down the stream, the remainder to rot into a festering heap in the bottom of the bin, eaten by maggots (at best) or shovelled out in due course by some hapless soul. This has happened several times and is an appalling task. Recyclables must be properly rinsed clean and left un-bagged in the appropriate boxes. Some groups find it simpler to take their rubbish back home with them, not usually practical with a large group.



Having got the rubbish off my chest, a big thank you to those who leave the place clean, tidy and ready for the next group, and top marks to Arrow Vale High School after their November visit - the place was immaculate! It’s not always easy to organise, especially when everyone’s tired, it’s raining, or there’s a long journey ahead, but it’s a crucial aspect of staying at the Centre, and just as important as getting up the hills.

Please remember to sign the Visitor’s Book! It’s an important log of who’s been, an essential record of fire practice, and interesting to look back at next time you come. **And don’t forget the Activities Log** – folk shouldn’t need reminding

about the safety element in recording their groups’ whereabouts and intended time of return. I’m sorry to say that some groups haven’t been filling these books in.

The ‘new’ fire’s been a great success - easy to light as long as you open / close the correct vent, quickly heats the room and a pleasure to sit by on winter evenings. **It won’t burn if you don’t empty the ashes** – best to do this both night and morning - and if you burn logs instead of coal they **must be well seasoned** for at least a year and preferably two, or the chimney gets tarred up causing problems with ventilation, not to mention Santa. Thank you all, and Merry Christmas!”

Bob James



Wishing a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all from the newsletter team!

Thank you to Georgina Tabor, Dave Spyer and Bob James for their contributions to this Christmas issue. If you have any news, views, reports or memories for the next issue 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 Ramblers 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

‘MY IDEAL WEEKEND IN SNOWDONIA’

Enthusiast Dave Spyer unfolds the merits of club meets..

“Way back in time Colin Morris and Tony Days asked me “How do you fancy a weekend in Wales?” This was the start of a rekindling of a love of walking in Snowdonia and my introduction to Nantmor and Gelli Iago.

Now, some twenty years later, my club weekend starts around Wednesday searching for boots and walking gear, desperately wondering how I can reduce the amount I bring – if only to stop Colin and Tony’s groans as they see my pile to pack. Friday arrives, Colin looks at my pile of gear, says it’s still too much but somehow crams it on board...we pick up Tony and his load, check the all-important slow cooker is safely on board and off we go. Our first stop is the fish and chip shop in Llangollen...then back in the car and on to Beddgelert to check on the quality of the local beer. It passes. Finally the ascent up the lane to Gelli Iago. We arrive, hoping someone is already there and the fire is lit to give a warm welcome...dump the gear, a chat, a warm and off to bed.

Saturday always starts with a big breakfast and a debate over where to walk - high or low depending on the weather before we set off, leaving the slow cooker in charge. We may go along the lane then through the woods to Nantgwynant, or over the top footpath via Hafod Owen, then following the valley past Llyn Dinas or maybe along the recently opened track leading from the Watkin Path to Crafwyn. Whichever way we chose we are always - strangely - drawn towards Beddgelert and its compelling hospitality. The walk then takes on a more lively note, particularly the last section, as having been through Nantmor village (we think) we follow the footpath through Dolfriog Woods – a challenge both to navigate and negotiate on dark winter afternoons..



Gelli Iago at last, and the welcoming warmth from the fire and aroma of our meal cooking! Peeling off our gear we settle down, soon devouring the contents of the sacred cooker. The evening passes quickly – washing up, sorting out usually wet and in my case muddy gear, and enjoying the camaraderie and banter that a visit to Gelli Iago always engenders. A final climb of the day to Cnicht (the room) and another wonderful day is over.

Sunday brings another large breakfast - we clean up the Centre, repack the car, say goodbyes to one and all and start off home...a stop in Llangollen, our sarnies and a short walk... I arrive home tired but with yet more pleasant memories of Snowdonia, Gelli Iago and fellow members. I unpack my gear and settle down in my favourite armchair with a mug of tea. My wife Alison enquires “Have you had a good weekend?” - but I am sound asleep, with the mug about to slip out of my hand..”

