

AUTUMN 2010

In this issue we hear how D of E students survived their practice Gold expedition, see just what can be packed into six days at Gelli Iago by Year 8 pupils, we've a special illustrated supplement by our youngest visiting group ...plus the story of an intriguing mystery on our doorstep...

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



MEMBERS BEAT THE WEATHER

2010, and a year of weather extremes! The coldest winter for thirty years - a freeze-up lasting for weeks and New Year snowdrifts piled high in the lane - a Springtime drought, a dismally wet summer (unlike some areas, Snowdonia was *not* short of water) and now, a truly seasonal Autumn. But plenty of groups of all ages have visited Gelli Iago throughout the year, made the best of whatever the weather, and taken home good memories. **Inquiries about membership have been pouring in too**, often new leaders having first noticed the Centre whilst walking past and thought, quite rightly of course, that it would be a good place to stay. **Welcome to Woverley School**, Kidderminster, led by Adrian Hobday, to **Wallasey District Scouts** from Cheshire, led by Alison Bell, and to **Eagle House**, led by John Heaton. We also have two new Duke of Edinburgh's Award groups: Nick Tawney's **Greenscheme D of E group** from Warwickshire, and **Woodbridge Open D of E group** from distant Suffolk, led by Andrew Down, who have already made several visits - coming to Gelli Iago *really is* worth a long drive!

A BUSY WEEKEND

Early September saw a flurry of activity during one of the busiest working weekends in recent history. Rooms were emulsioned, the kitchen spring-cleaned, chimneys were swept, a log store built and the classroom rescued from near doom with new timbers, roofing felt and preservative - even the Brenig was there in overalls, armed with a paintbrush. By the end of the weekend the Centre was positively gleaming from the attention of so many helpers!

CRUMBLING WALLS....AND A HIDDEN MYSTERY...

By far the most visible activity around the Centre this year has been restoration work by the National Trust on the 16th century ruined farmhouse behind the Centre, the original Gelli Iago, for so long the sight of its leaning chimney and crumbling walls evoking images of a long-forgotten past. The angle of the chimney had become so great that it would likely not have stood another season of gales and storms, but with funding from the Snowdonia Appeal restoration work started this summer to save this historic building from inevitable collapse.

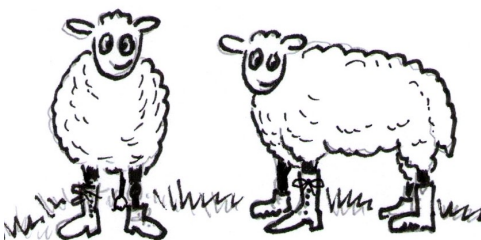
Diggers and dumper trucks rumbled slowly up the lane one day in early summer, heralding the start of the work, then crawled up the steep track to the old Gelli Iago. For weeks the team worked, first carefully taking down much of the gable end, with its huge fireplace and dry stack chimney, meticulously sorting and laying out the chimney stones so that the 'new' would be as close as possible a copy of the old. Five hundred years worth of dust drifted up as stones and rubble were cleared, and the crumbling walls were slowly taken down. At last the reconstruction began - first the gable end and chimney, then the other three walls were slowly and methodically built up to roof height. It looks more cared for now, if strangely upright and level - we'd grown so used to seeing the whole place precariously leaning. The building still awaits a roof, when funding allows, but may be temporarily covered to keep out the elements.

The project hit the Welsh headlines when a mysterious hoard of shoes was discovered, buried in rubble at the back of the fireplace - nearly a hundred single shoes, possibly Victorian, and entirely separate from the ancient remnant of a child's shoe which was also found hidden away amongst the fireplace stonework, a widespread folk custom to bring luck, or maybe ward off evil. Why had so many shoes been left there, and not one matching pair? Maybe Gelli Iago was once the workplace of a cobbler? For now, at least, the mystery remains. And to think they'd been buried there all these years and we never even knew!

If you'd like to read more, a link on the website www.nantmor.org will take you to the BBC News item.



New walls for Gelli Iago old farmhouse



GOING FOR GOLD

The Centre is often used by Scouts and D of E groups, as it's a perfect base for navigation training and expeditions. Andrew Down reports on Woodbridge D of E Group's latest visit, this October, with Farlingaye High School:

"16 students, three teachers from Farlingaye High School, co-leader Ollie and myself really enjoyed our stay at Nantmor. The programme included night navigation, and an acclimatisation training day before setting off on their four day practice gold expedition which took them south towards Barmouth. The three teams weaved their way across the Rhinog Mountains carrying all their equipment.

Three of the days were clear and bright, and therefore quite cool at night (one night the temperature dropped to minus 3C). We even had a view of Snowdon, a rare treat at this time of the year! The area behind the centre is ideal for micro navigation which stood the students in good stead over the remainder of the week. One day was particularly wet with all the rivers and streams in full spate and local 'flash flooding', making that day very challenging with a number of route changes as a result.

All 16 students succeeded - though there were some very strange walking styles at the finish - and are now ready to embark on their Gold Qualifying Expedition in the Lake District next Spring. We look forward to using the centre again, even if the drive from Woodbridge, Suffolk is rather long!"

...and here's what the students thought of 'base camp'...

"Staying on this idyllic Welsh hillside has been a perfect base for us to climb Cnicht and start our gold practice expedition....a warm bed and hot showers every night is much appreciated and certainly better than a soggy tent."

"After a day of walking a hot drink and a burning fire was perfect to warm us all up."

"Staying at Gelli Iago was much more comfortable than being in tents for an extra night."

"Enjoyed making the fire at the end of an awe inspiring trip to the top of Cnicht...rooms were comfy and warm and the Centre was the perfect start to our expedition across Wales."

"...the comfy beds, drying room and hot showers were very much appreciated."

"Thank you very much for letting us stay...it has been fantastic and a wonderful base for us....the showers were fantastic too, and bathroom so warm. It was nice to meet Jane at the top of Cnicht! Love from Claudia, Ali, Ben, Alex, Ollie and all the others."



....AND JUST A SNIPPET FROM THE WARDEN..

"Now that it's Autumn, leaders please remember that the water supply inlet may need clearing during your visit, as fallen leaves can build up in the stream, blocking the pipe." *Bob James*

Thank you to Andrew Down and students of Farlingaye High School, students of Walkwood Middle School, children of Dame Catherine Harpur's School, and to Tony Tatford for contributing to this issue. If you have any items 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 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, 07891 367206 jane137@gmail.com

Also find us on our website: www.nantmor.org

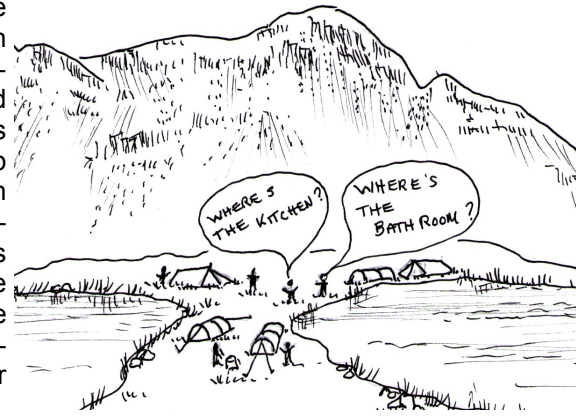
AN EXCITING WEEK FOR WALKWOOD

Year 8 students Nicola Moss, Rosie Crumpton, Toby Hemming and Todd Williams report on their week at the Centre last June.

"The week went by in a flash! We set off from Redditch on the Saturday, and from then on every member of the party was buzzing with excitement. We were planning to climb four mountains during our stay at Gelli Iago, along with an array of different activities that everyone would enjoy.

Luckily for some, but not for the enthusiastic members of the group, we only managed to climb three mountains: Siabod, Snowdon and Cnicht, whilst not being able to fit in the hike up Hebog as there simply wasn't time. We also experienced night orienteering, the Go Ape course, the Beacon Climbing Centre and many more fascinating challenges.

We had a two night camp stranded between two lakes half way up Cnicht with no running water or kitchen facilities, apart from the ice cold lakes we (nearly) froze to death in, and the Trangia stove given to each group. Our shelter depended on the tents being put up correctly, which took some doing. The tents slept up to three people so some didn't stay particularly tidy or organised!



On the last night the staff presented certain people with special awards for showing quality skills like teamwork, never giving up, or even just being the centre of attention throughout the week.

Sadly for everyone the week soon came to a close, as by now the Centre felt like home for us all. We returned home on the Friday singing Mr James' favourite songs that we had just begun to like. All the children would like to thank Daniel McEvilly, Lauren Clark, Toni Davenport, Edwin James, Sean Williams and Bob James for providing great weather, and this opportunity to have fun and create amazing memories that will last a lifetime."

David Tustin

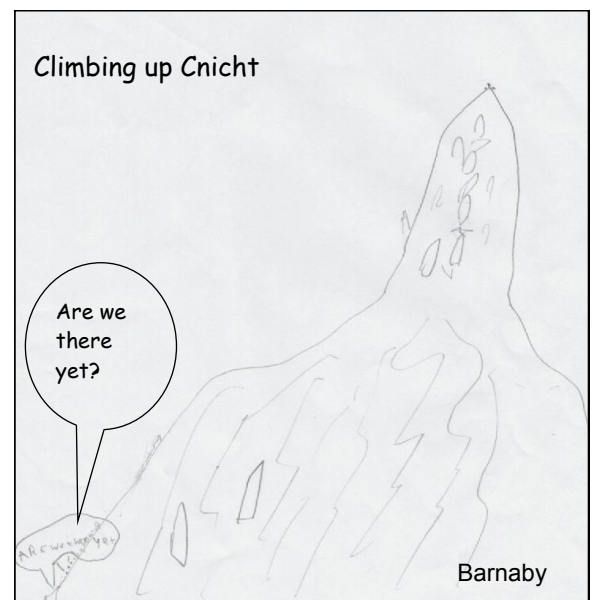
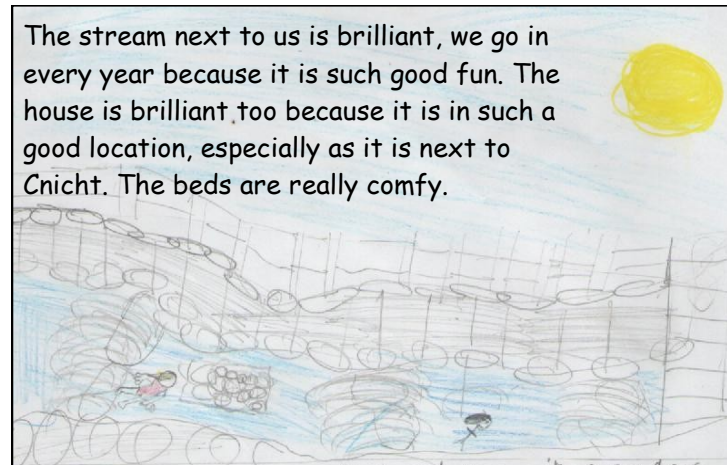
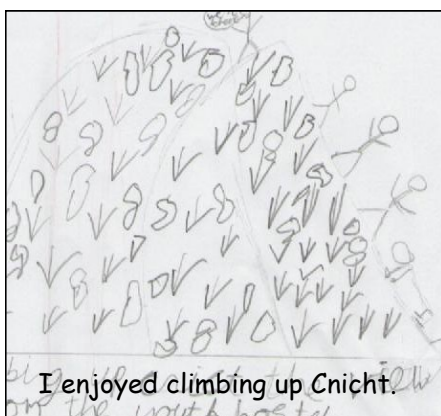
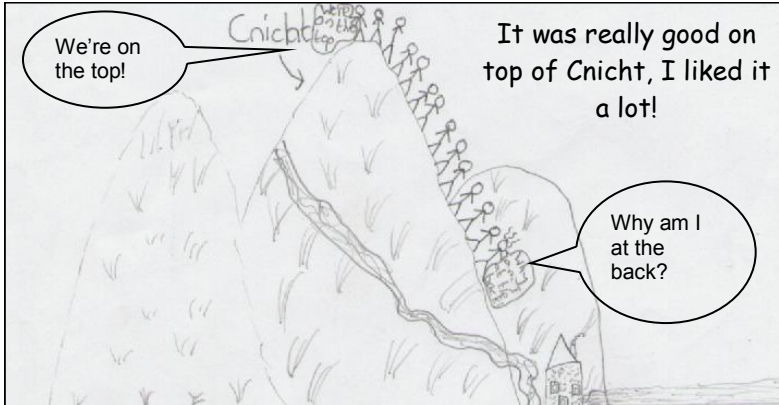
It is one of life's truisms that we often do not fully appreciate quite how much someone contributes until we have to cope without that help. So it has been in the aftermath of the death of our Membership Secretary, David Tustin. David passed away suddenly in late August, a shock to his family and us all. It was a great and fitting tribute to Dave that so many were able to be present at his funeral in support of Isobel and Emily and to acknowledge Dave's contributions to this association and to the promotion of education in the great outdoors. Dave's legacy lives on in the efficient membership records he maintained so meticulously, but more importantly in the enthusiasm he shared with so many and the knowledge he imparted in the process of encouraging others to recognise the value and enjoyment available from facing the challenges to be found in wild country. Our memories of David will now join with those of other great contributors towards the realisation of the objective that lies at the root of the Gelli Iago story - memories that will no doubt stir a story or two each time we return to this wonderful place.

Tony Tatford, Chairman NMCA

DAME CATHERINE HARPUR'S SCHOOL'S VISIT TO GELLI IAGO

Dame Catherine Harpur's School, Derbyshire, have been regular visitors to the Centre for many years. Armed with dedicated staff, wonderful parent helpers, bags of enthusiasm and a bunch of 8-11 year olds brimming with excitement, they made yet another successful trip in June this year. Said leader Maggie Reddish, "We love coming here every year - it's the perfect place for us."

The children seemed to think so too..



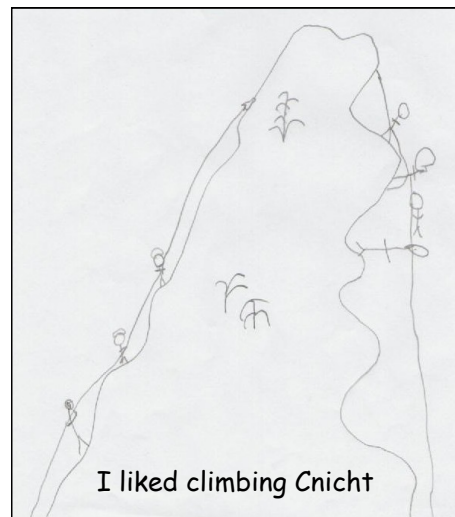
Dame Catherine Harpur's School, June 2010

Climbing to the top of Cnicht



Amber

I liked climbing Cnicht



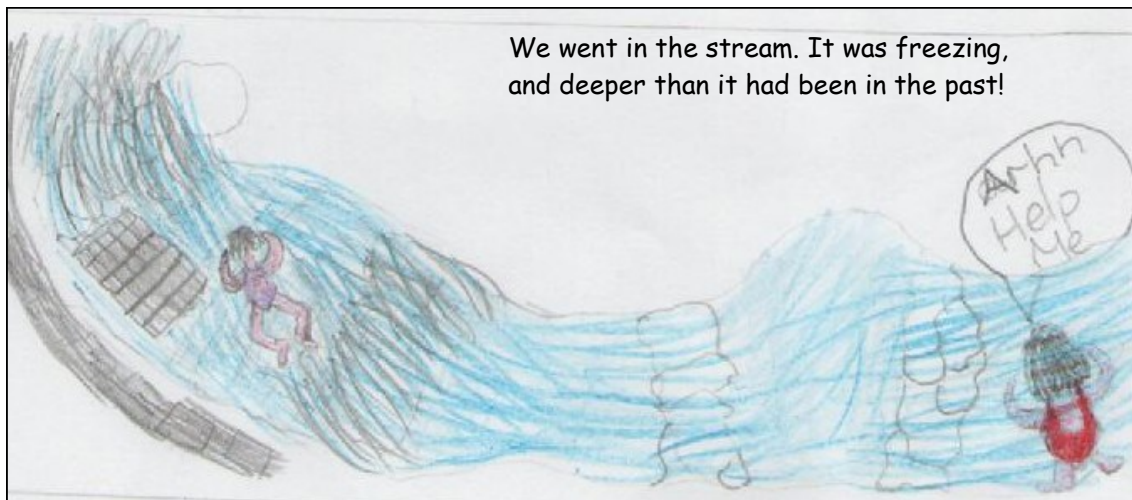
The ice cream shop
(it was gorgeous)



We went in the stream and it was amazing!



We went in the stream. It was freezing,
and deeper than it had been in the past!



Climbing Cnicht



We
all
went to
the ice
cream shop...



....and had **huge** ice
creams!

Thank you so much for letting us stay. **THANK YOU!!**

