



Issue No. 29

Summer 2007

Photo: Cwmfanell, Valley, Nr Tal y Bont

COG MEMBERS ATTEMPT THE TOUGHEST MUNROE OF ALL— THE BLACK CUILLIN!

In May of this year COG members Roger Gimblett, Steve Bees and former COG member Ruth Burton attempted the Black Cuillin, a gruelling climb at the best of times. Full story on Page 5.



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Newsletter of



Letter from the Chair



I write this with some sadness, as this is my last letter as Chair. It has been a very enjoyable three years working with the Committee and acting as a representative for the Group. But it is time to step down and let someone else pick up the reins. And there are reins, literal reins, not metaphorical ones. I've kept them waxed and polished and in general good order, ready for their next custodian. There's no horse though. Looking after a horse would create too much work for the role of Chair. All that mucking out and providing fresh hay. It's bad enough keeping the Committee in order. They get through enough hay as it is. So I look forward to handing over the reins to the new Chair (whoever that may be) at the AGM on 23 October 2007.

Some things have changed during those three years, others have stayed the same. The main changes have arguably been with the YHA: its attempt to redefine itself in order to become financially secure in an increasingly competitive market, and its rationalisation of the relationship it enjoys with local groups. The closure of many of the smaller, out-of-the-way hostels in the UK is the decision which has been the least popular with longstanding YHA members. The Association's argument was that they didn't pay their way. Let's hope that the impressive work being done by Elenydd Wilderness Hostels Trust (which COG has supported and will continue to support) proves otherwise.

And things that have stayed the same? Well, to give one example. I'm pleased to say that our membership has remained healthy, at around the 100 mark. The website continues to be the means by which people find us, so a big thank you to Julian for creating and maintaining it. New members events are often successful too. We've just had one in July – an evening walk and drink in Penarth (thank you, Katherine) – and I am hosting a combined slide show competition and new members evening on 30 October. Please let me have photographs from recent COG events or trips (outdoors and in). A visual diary of the kinds of things we do and places we visit will hopefully be a revealing (but not too revealing) and stimulating introduction to the Group. There will also be an aesthetic element, in that I'll be asking you to vote for your favourite slide in a number of categories: best dressed member, most unusual pose on top of a mountain, tasteful depiction of human-animal interaction, and a George Clooney-look-a-like competition. Yes, once you account for a bit of mist, rain and a badly focused camera, there are quite a few of us who fall into this category. Well, a receding hair-line and stubble are not bad for starters. Clooney looks a bit plump too when you watch him on widescreen.

Hope you're all having a great summer. See you at the AGM, if not before. Hi-ho Silver, away!

Clive

CHALLENGE WALKS



Aug 18th—Rhayader Mountain Trail 43,29, 18 or 13miles, from Cwmdauddwr Old School, Nr Rhayader in Mid Wales, LR 147 GR SN967677. Scenic event over moorland, by Elan valley reservoirs & thro wooded valleys to the W & SW of Rhayader. Organised by Mid-Wales LDWA. Mark Keeling8 Offas Way, St.Edwards Close, Knighton. Powys. LD7 1AL 01547 529086 walkmad25@aol.com

Sep 2nd—Hearts First Hikes Brecon Beacons Challenge 12 miles, 3 peaks. For more information please contact 0800 783 6970., email walesevents@bhf.org.uk or see details on website bhf.org.uk/beaconschallenge.

Sep 14th to 16th—Heart of Wales Walking Festival, Llandrindod Wells Powys. Visit www.llandrindod.co.uk

Sep 18th to 21st—27th Welsh International 4 Days Walks 25, 15 or 10miles each day from Llanwrtyd Wells Square, Mid Wales OS 147 GR SN879467. Waymarked routes thru the mountains, forests & scenery of Mid Wales. More info & entry forms on website Gordon Green Elenedd, Victoria Rd, Llanwrtyd Wells, Powys. LD5 45U 01591 610270 gordon88green@btopenworld.com <http://www.green-events.co.uk>

Sep 22nd—Pumlumon Challenge from Nant yr Arian Forestry Centre, GR SN717813, approx. 8 mls E of Aberystwyth on the A44. The route is over the Pumlumon hills passing the source of the Wye and the Severn; then onto the Hengwm and Hirnant Valleys, around Nantymoch dam and more climbs before the finish. Full details and entry forms from website or by SAE to: Pentir Pumlumon Pumlumon Challenge, Lisburne House, Pontrhydygroes, Ceredigion, SY25 6DQ. Website: www.pumlumon.org.uk/challenge Contact Pentir Pumlumon Pumlumon Challenge Lisburne House, Pontrhydygroes, Ceredigion, SY25 6DQ

Oct 13th—Talybont Trial 20 or 10 miles The route starts and finishes at **Talybont** and takes in the high expanse of **Craig Pwllfa** and the smaller yet in some ways more beautiful **Tor y Foel**. Between these the walker may be able to trace the course of an ancient industrial tramway and the cave where it is said **Chartists** kept an arms cache before marching down to the valleys to Newport to demand free elections to Parliament. Entry and enquiries to:- Talybont Trial 2007, 122 Stow Hill, Newport. NP20 4GA.



April 22nd—Having a breather at Staunton ...with a horse who took a shine to Sian's sandwich!

June 10th—Evening walk in Caerleon.



May 1st—Evening walk in Rhyd a Gwern Woods.

June 8th—COG Kids cycle ride in Afon Argoed.



June 10th —Porthcawl



July 8th—Caerfenyll Valley walk to crashed plane site.



July 10th—Allt y Bella evening walk.

Any photos from walks, weekends away etc. that you'd like to share please email to the address on page 12.

STEVE'S BIG SACK



What can one say about this summer? At least I can feel happy at not having organised any backpacks (or anything else) during July. In fact, there haven't been any backpacking trips since the last "Big Sack". Shameful, especially when the weekend in June was cancelled so that I could see a couple of operas at the Millennium Centre. What's that, I hear you cry. Has COG's supposed token "hard man" gone soft

since working abroad in Bristol? Has he had too many cocktails and tapas at expensive, poncey bars in his lunch hour?

You'll need to attend Roger's Cullins talk to find out what's been happening in recent months. I have no idea what Roger's going to do, and haven't seen all the pictures yet, but with such delightful views on offer as yours truly abseiling off the "In Pinn" and Roger tucked up in his bivvy bag at night, this will be a treat to remember – and have nightmares about....

Okay, so there wasn't any backpacking in the last three months. However, Roger, Ruth and I *did* do something barking mad under COG colours. This was the 19 mile night walk on Friday 6th/Saturday 7th July. Top tip – don't go straight up the Blorenge from Abergavenny after eating a heavy Thai takeaway, washed down with beer and wine. That was the toughest bit. Fortunately, it was just about light enough to get up the Blorenge without a torch. After that we were moving in darkness. Ah, 'twas a night for dreamers: no rain, a cooling breeze, and an orange half moon rising mysteriously above the slag heaps of Llanelly Hill. That was when we got slightly lost and Ruth's GPS offered reassurance that we were where we meant to be.

After that we walked down to Blackrock and experienced a quiet Heads of the Valleys Road before heading up towards Mynydd Llangattock. After the darkness, the silence (with no traffic around) was the most noticeable thing about the walk. As it was just Roger, Ruth and I (aka "the bivvy boyz") on this walk we'd decided to take our bivvy stuff and have a strategic nap part way through the walk. We had a top spot beside a stream just above the "hafod" road and slept well between 3.00 am and 6.00 am.

Saturday was another good, clear day and after walking over Mynydd Llangattock we headed into Crickhowell for breakfast in a café. From there it was straightforward getting up the Sugar Loaf, past some D of E kids, then back

to our starting point in Abergavenny. I think we all enjoyed it. As a result, I'm now convinced that night walks aren't just mad things to do that upset your sleeping patterns for weeks (although it has) and I'll put another one on in the autumn. Probably for a shorter distance of, say, 10-12 miles, finishing at around 1.00 am – which would make it more sane and popular.

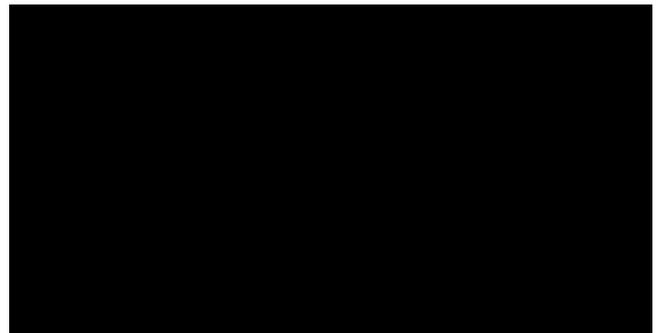
Looking ahead, the backpacking trip postponed from June is reappearing on the programme for the weekend Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd September. This time Kington campsite should be open so, without wishing to tempt fate, I can't see any possible reason for it not going ahead. It absolutely *will* happen, no doubt about it. Mile-

8/9th June—Night walk includes the Clydach Gorge.

ages are around 15-ish and 13-ish miles and let's just say that it will be a weekend to remember. The scenery north of Hay-on-Wye is gorgeous and we'll have the classic Hergest Ridge on Saturday afternoon before getting into Kington. This is a great town, full of pheasant pluckers. Saturday will be via Offa's Dyke Path, Sunday will be quiet lanes and paths.

As usual, if you fancy giving backpacking a go (or fancy giving it another go) then let me know. If you don't have equipment we should be able to sort something out. If you fancy the idea of the places and the walking but don't want to carry the weight then I *suppose* you could use B&Bs - and Kington now has a youth hostel.

See you at Roger's talk – if not before...



View of Abergavenny from the top of Blorenge at night!

WANTED

The Committee is seeking new members to join it at the AGM in October. If you've got ideas and would like to help out see Clive for more info.

Roger Gimblett Looks Back at His Second Attempt at the Toughest Monroe of All, The Black Cuillin on Skye



It's 7.37p.m. on Sunday July 8th 2007. I am sitting in the lounge at Pwll Deri Youth Hostel. Outside despite recent prolonged bad weather I am watching the sunlight play on the ocean waves, beyond which I can see St David's Head in the far distance.

With luck I will see a fine sunset this evening: and there is nowhere better to see a sunset than from Pwll Deri. I am relaxing on a comfy armchair taking in this sea view, surrounded by a few favourite books, a pleasant bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon.

Well gentle reader, now that I have set the scene I have an entirely different sea experience to write about.

In May of this year I experienced, we experienced Ruth, Steve and myself a different sea, a grey sea, surrounded by a sea fog.

Our eyes were squeezed tightly shut against the assault of stinging rain being forced directly into our faces by the air-stream formed by the quick passage of the sea launch across the sea. We had left from Elgol on this inhospitable Thursday morning.

We are on our way to Loch Coruisk. From there we will disembark and attempt a successful traverse of the Cuillin Ridge.

Someone has got the weather forecast badly wrong. We *need* two good days to stand any reasonable chance of success. It is not looking good. This attempt could fail as quickly as the first attempt of 2005, when Ruth and I were forced off the ridge by the weather, dejectedly retracting our steps down the three thousand foot slope we had just come up. The books state that ninety per cent of people fail on their first attempt: how many fail on their second?

I think it's got to be a success this time. I really don't want to contemplate failure. As on the first attempt we have been training seriously for six months. As a group Ruth Steve and I sat down on a summer's evening and planned the key abilities we needed to feel confident of a successful traverse attempt. The list reads very fit: stamina for two fourteen hour days; ability to tolerate exposure to height and vertical drops on both sides; tolerable rope skills with top level scrambling and basic climbing ability; ability to undertake overnight bivi without shelter in poor conditions.

With the list drawn up we began the six months training, which looking back on it from the comfort of this chair, was both very tiring and good fun at the same time. A strong team was being forged during these months. We carried heavy rucksack long distances- the Welsh 3,000 Footers were attempted and completed by Ruth and Steve: I utterly spent, surrendered at Pen y Pass: but we all got to bivi overnight just below the summit of Tryfan. To see both the sunset and sunrise from such a vantage point: memories are made of this.

And we did other things. Our worst bivi out was in Rhyader where it poured with rain all night. If it rains when you bivi you don't get much sleep and you get damp if not totally wet. Not pleasant but it ticked another training box: we were toughening up.

From the wet of Mid Wales to the opposite extreme. April found us experiencing the 'Shropshire Savannah'. It had not rained for six weeks. The streams were dry, the wells were dry. This experience ticked another training box: water is precious, respect it, conserve it, carry it.

By May we were as fit and as ready as it was possible to be. Other fears surfaced. What if we got injured so close to the trip? We rested up.

The launch's engine slows; I can now open my eyes. We look around us and the sea mist parts to reveal in Steve's words " It looks like Skull Island" –from the King Kong film.

We step onto the jetty, and say our goodbyes to Rachel, Sian and Enid who are to do a walk along the loch shoreline.

I wrote earlier someone has got the forecast wrong, very wrong. In our path before we begin the first ascent we have to cross the Mad Burn, but today with the rain it is the Insane Burn. Masses of water are coursing across our path. Think of a mountain stream....wrong think again twenty foot wide. A river crossing was not something that we expected to encounter; we have not trained for it. If we had we would not have trained on a torrent such as this.

Forty minutes later we are into our third attempt at forcing a passage. So this is it, second attempt of the Cuillin Ridge and a total of twelve months training in all. Our boots and socks are sodden. We have travelled a quarter of a mile; it's going to be a long day.

Our guide Martyn finally gets across, he ropes up and throws the rope to me. I tie on. Directly at my feet is the fiercest water surge I have seen yet. It is not looking good.

With apologise to Tolkien

*Eleven peaks for the Munroist with their quest to fulfil,
Six for the absailors on their descent of faith,
One ridge to compel them all
And in the dampness trial them.*

Did Ruth Steve and Roger succeed in crossing the Cuillin Ridge? Attend a talk on the trip this autumn.

Find Out if Roger & Co made it at the Talk in Chapter, 8pm, Tuesday 2nd October

Caving: Latest News**Busy Year for Cave Rescue**

During 2006 the two South Wales cave rescue teams (Gwent CRO and West Brecon CRT) attended 9 underground incidents assisting 15 people. They included the rescue of a 20 year old woman from a party exploring Ogor Ffynon in the Mellte valley, to the east of Porth yr Ogor. The casualty fell sustaining what were initially thought to be serious injuries. Cave Rescue eventually hauled the casualty from a 5m deep pit and she was flown by helicopter to Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr Tydfil. Fortunately it appears the injuries amounted to severe bruising and abrasions: clearly it was not her lucky day.

In another incident a party from Sheffield were seriously overdue from Agen Allwedd. They were found in the early hours and guided back to the surface after spending 17 hours underground having failed to negotiate the Grand Circle (they had attempted it in the reverse direction to that normally undertaken) and were unable to retrace their entry route. A shortage of available people who knew the cave well proved a significant factor on this occasion but, given that the missing party had sustained no injuries, the evacuation proved to be a smooth operation.

The Rainbow Canyon Dig

In 1997, when two cavers first dug through the choke at the end of Rainbow Canyon in the Dollimore Series, Ogor Draenen, a key knee-hold on a particular boulder was critical to maintaining the stability of the rest of the choke. Place your weight anywhere else as you moved up through the boulder pile and you risked the collapse of the whole lot. Unfortunately, not everyone who followed in their footsteps had this crucial piece of information and these subsequent visitors suffered many scary moments. The trouble is that Rainbow Canyon is very well placed for further exploration in the cave, so following a small breakthrough by another caver beyond the choke in February 2006 a new 10 person team were keen to push on. A member of the team Fleur Loveridge explains: "We first had to stabilise the choke as, following the passage of cavers, this was now in a dangerous condition. It proved to be a bigger task than we had anticipated, taking three scary trips during which the choke totally collapsed three times. After clearing the third collapse, only one large poised boulder remained, but this was so large we were not sure what to do with it. The problem was solved by sending Si Flower who, being ignorant of the

dig, didn't know what he was supposed to be scared of. After he jumped up and down on this final dodgy boulder, while simultaneously enquiring where the final dodgy boulder was, we concluded that the way on was now safe(ish). Next problem was a narrow squeeze which was enlarged then the passage was found to drop into a trench leading to a partially filled, phreatic-roofed passage. Some digging and boulder shifting allowed further progress over the course of two trips before reaching another breakdown chamber, but is mostly full of rocks. Further trips during the winter digging season involved a few camping trips to remove the boulders. The chamber has a solid roof and walls with a draught to follow so further progress is hoped for during 2007.

In the same cave system Ogor Draenen, bats have recently been seen in the Megadrive section. In 2007 the counts of roosting bats have been 26 and 28 where previously 14 would have been considered high. Possible reasons include the milder winter and that Draenen lies near the northern limit for horseshoe bats and with warmer weather more are moving into the area.

Smoking Underground

Rusty Horseshoe Dig, situated on the west of the Black Mountain to the west and up-dip from Sinc-y-Giedd, was a site of great promise during the summer of 2006. However despite valiant efforts by a large number of cavers, the terminal choke denied significant progress. The cave tended back directly under the surface shakehole and the draught, it seemed, was in some way driven by this location. Following the unsuccessful smoke test in January another much larger smoke test was recently conducted. This time a large fire was set at the terminal choke but ignited remotely from the surface (as the previous attempt proved more than embarrassing when the air current reversed direction and filled the cave with smoke before the cavers could make their exit.

In the new test the fire burned most convincingly and for the best part of three hours the smoke disappeared into the unknown. No smoke was detectable anywhere on the surface, so the team are positive that Rusty Horseshoe is indeed part of some much larger system. *Above is from the 'Desert' Caving Magazine.*

News From the Brecon Beacons National Park**Sgwd yr Eira Closure**

Wales' best known waterfall, Sgwd yr Eira is to remain closed until at least the end of this year. Located in the heart of Waterfall Country, near Ystradfellte, Sgwd yr Eira waterfall was closed in May when it was found that some overhanging rocks pose a potential danger to visitors. Talks and investigations are underway involving the National Park Authority, Forestry Commission Wales and the Countryside Council for Wales to agree a way forward, but until the site is deemed safe, the footpath leading to the waterfall and the fall itself is fenced off in the interests of visitor safety. Work on the rock face is unlikely to take place until January 2008 at the earliest.

Special walk to worship service on Pen y Fan - 28 July

A unique "Walk to Worship" service will take place at 12.30pm on Saturday 28th July on top of the Brecon Beacons highest mountain, Pen y Fan, celebrating precious landscape and rural life. Organised by the Parish of Cantref, 'The Cantref Walk to Worship' will be led by the Venerable Randolph Thomas, Archdeacon of Brecon, to commemorate the life and work of the hill farmers, Brecon Beacons National Park's 50th Anniversary, the National Trust, the Army, Brecon Mountain Rescue and the many visitors who love and visit the National Park. The service is set to attract hundreds of visitors and walking enthusiasts from all over Wales, where it is hoped that the collection will raise much needed funds for Cantref Church, Brecon Mountain Rescue and the National Trust's vital work towards maintaining footpaths.

First Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) launched in Wales

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) celebrates being right on track after launching Wales' first Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). After two years of extensive consultation, the BBNPA has delivered the first plan for any local authority in Wales and the only ROWIP to be produced by a National Park Authority in the UK. The comprehensive plan looks at the future strategic management of rights of way and access land in the Brecon Beacons National Park and how the network can improve quality of life for the whole community, identifying where improvements, infrastructure or otherwise, will help deliver this over the next 10 years. It covers nearly 2000 kilometres of rights of way in the National Park and sets out the way these routes will be maintained and improved to enhance the public's enjoyment.

From Brecon Beacons National Park Website—www..breconbeacons.org



The Elenydd Wilderness Hostels Update

COG donated the proceeds from the Three Peaks Trial 2006 and will be donating proceeds from 2007 to the Elenydd Wilderness Hostels Trust. The Trust is now running both Ty'n Cornel and Dolgoch

Dolgoch - WE'VE DONE IT !

Yes, after a hectic but rewarding campaign for funds, the Trust has contracted to buy Dolgoch. Barely two months ago, the Trust agreed terms with the YHA for a purchase at £125,000. With only £40,000 available at that time the task of raising the balance within the limited period specified by the YHA looked formidable. However, the response to our urgent appeal has been overwhelming with £106,500 donations received and we have firm promises for further sums which together with a claim for gift aid should bring us close to the balance needed for completion at the end of October. Should we be fortunate enough to exceed the magic figure the money would swiftly be used for much needed repairs and improvements to the property.

The future

Once we take possession it is intended to open for business at once unless we have to close for immediate essential repairs. The terms of the sale to the Trust require operation under the YHA's Enterprise Scheme for an initial period of two years as in the case of Ty'n Cornel. It will therefore be possible to make advance bookings for Dolgoch and Ty'n Cornel through YHA central reservations on +44 (0)1629 592 707.

AGM

Despite the focus on Dolgoch much else has happened this Spring. A well attended AGM took place at the Community Hall in Llanddewi Brefi on the 21st April when our chair Marilyn Barrack admirably summarised the Trust's achievements and spoke of our hopes for the future. Ty'n Cornel was running well and bed nights reserved had already exceeded the 500 target figure.

Our former treasurer Richard Hollis gave a very clear presentation of the accounts for the past year which had been approved by the Financial Examiner John Finney. Richard who has taken on the responsibility of hostel maintenance manager at Ty'n Cornel also gave his report on the repairs and refurbishment work carried out there.

Our fund raising member Pearl Chalk who has put an enormous amount of work into preparing and submitting Grant Applications reported that to date there had been no positive response to submissions to assist with the Dolgoch purchase. There seemed to be a greater possibility of success for repairs and refurbishment grants.

Two new trustees, David Davies of Ynysybwl and Stephen Griffith from London, were appointed. David, a keen walker, had already been an active, helpful member of the Trust. Stephen is chairman of cycling's 'Rough Stuff Fellowship' and has previously attended a number of meetings when he was able to add usefully to the discussion of matters affecting the Trust.

The Launch

The formal opening of Ty'n Cornel followed the AGM. Blessed with brilliant sunshine a large crowd of members and wellwishers, many from the locality, witnessed the official opening of Ty'n Cornel. Some experienced an exciting journey by bus which it is alleged never slackened speed on reaching the last mile of unmade track to the hostel!

The tape was cut by our youngest member present, Sidney Townsend and the Mayor of Tregaron jointly. There were welcoming speeches from the Mayor and Ceredigion County Councillor, Catherine Hughes. Our chair Marilyn Barrack spoke for the Trust and the YHA was represented by Elenydd manager Helen Maurice-Jones and their Enterprise Officer John Cant. John Morgan, a local historian, gave an excellent impromptu snapshot of what the Doethie valley was like a hundred years ago.

Member Sarah Townsend had raised the profile of the Trust by approaching Outdoor Sales Specialists who had responded by providing some of the prizes for the raffle she had arranged. The much coveted first prize of a rucksack donated by Taunton Leisure was won by the volunteer warden at Dolgoch but trustee David Davies was, we heard, very content with the Black's discount voucher he won. A grateful thank you to Sarah for her effort in raising almost £100.

Sponsored Walk

Another success for the Trust, thanks to the hard work and careful planning of our student member Jeffrey Matthews whose brainchild it was. To date over £3000 in sponsorship money has been raised but this reflects only part, an important part nevertheless, of the success story. As a social occasion and one which promoted the Trust's aims and proclaimed the beauty of the Elenydd it could hardly have been bettered. Well, maybe the weatherman could have been as kind as he had been at the Launch but there were generous bursts of sunshine!

Two walks were arranged. A shorter one of 6 miles between Dolgoch and Ty'n Cornel via Soar y Mynydd. A longer one of 15 miles, again using both hostels, which kept southwards west of Llyn Brianne before returning northwest via the Doethie Valley to Ty'n Cornel. All were greeted at the finish with the sight of a stupendous feast - nominally a barbecue but none of your burnt sausages and burgers here. What our supporter Liz Snell of Tregaron and her friend, together with supportive spouses, provided at cost only was truly sumptuous. Many thanks Liz.

What of our successful young entrepreneur Jeffrey, victim of his own success and now saddled with arranging a similar event next year? To be truthful before the subject could even be broached JJ was already planning for 2008. Rumour has it the stakes (ascents) might be higher. Did we hear mention of Drygarn Fawr? We will let you know the date for the 2008 walk, when fresh challenges can be met and new friendships forged, in the next newsletter. Over to you young Jeffrey!

A New Walk

Something more concrete than rumour has also emerged - the possible creation of a permanently waymarked, new route by the Tregaron Walking Group in conjunction with Forest Enterprises commencing at Twm Siôn Cati's cave at Rhandirmwyn. It is hoped the route will pass Ty'n Cornel before continuing to the house of his birthplace in Tregaron. No Welsh man or woman needs to be reminded of Twm Siôn Cati's identity, but for the less fortunate a brief word about him might be helpful. Twm and Siôn are the Welsh versions of Tom and John and Cati a Welsh abbreviation of his mother's name Catherine. Twm was a 16th century Welsh Robin Hood of noble blood who, after many exploits of derring-do - no doubt some of them the stuff of legend as in the case of the illustrious Robin - lived to achieve respected retirement as a magistrate, antiquary, genealogist and poet.

Membership

This is just a little short of 300. At least 500 are wanted, so scour your address book, think of friends of old, exercise your persuasive powers and help us reach this target.

Membership forms are available here. Tax paying members can gift aid their subscription, a very valuable extra for the Trust courtesy of The Treasury.

Help Required NOW !!!

The pressure of work is so great at the moment, especially with the imminent acquisition of Dolgoch, that we urgently need more people to come forward who would be willing to give help. If this does not happen, the situation may become critical. If you feel you can help in any way please contact Marilyn or Bill.

Further information can be found on the Elenydd Trust Website at www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk

"Ty'n Cornel is running well and bed nights reserved have already exceeded the 500 target figure."

Cycling News

A new bridge over the River Ely?

A new opportunity has arisen to help fund a foot - cycle bridge over the River Ely in Cardiff Bay. It would link the Sports Village with Penarth Marina and form part of a low level link between Cardiff and Penarth at the start of the Ely Trail.

As the Ely at this point is a navigation, the bridge would need to be able to lift or swing out of the way of boats - this puts the price tag up to about £3.5million. While everybody agrees the bridge is a good idea, nobody has been willing to find funding for it.

Now it has been shortlisted by Sustrans to be part of their "Connect2" bid for Big Lottery funding. It is one of 79 schemes across the UK, competing for £43 million. All Connect2 schemes aim to link communities by building or restoring links, often by bridges. If the bid is successful, about £1.15 million will be earmarked for the River Ely crossing - about a third of the total cost.

In early June, Sustrans finalised their Connect2 bid to the Big Lottery. If this is successful, it will be judged against other bids and be decided by a public vote in a televised contest this coming winter. Details of this will follow.

There will only be one winner, who will take all. Currently the five other contenders for up to £50 million are:

- o Sherwood Forest, The living legend, Nottinghamshire

- o The National Museum of Science and Industry Collection Centre in Swindon
- o The Eden Project, Dry topics biome in Cornwall
- o Waterlinks in the Somerset Levels
- o The Black Country as Urban Park in the West Midlands.

However, all these are local; only the Sustrans Connect2 bid is across the country.

This bridge would open up many new routes for walkers and cyclists in Cardiff Bay, not least, helping to link Penarth with Cardiff.

For more information about Connect2, including details of other nearby schemes (including Clydach near Swansea, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouth, Newport, Tintern and Treforest) see <http://www.sustransconnect2.org.uk/>

For more on the Big Lottery, have a look at <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/> - search for "Living Landmarks: the Peoples' Millions" and ts about 2/3 down the page.

Julian Langston

To find out more about the scheme and Sustrans, come to the Cardiff Outdoor Group talk given by Vinny Mott of Sustrans on Tuesday 18th September, 8pm in Chapter – see

Cycling News from the council

Queen Street Trial

The proposed experiment to allow cycling along Queen Street between 4pm and 10am is to go ahead following approval from the council executive in April. The two year experiment could start this Autumn, or may be delayed to Spring 2008, depending on the legal process that still has to be completed.

The experiment is based on a similar one conducted in Cambridge - that has recently been judged successful.

Car ban for High Street

Through private cars are to be banned in High Street / St. Mary Street between the castle and Wood Street in a year-long experiment starting late this summer. Buses, cycles, taxis will be allowed through as before; private motor vehicles will have access to the area, but may not use it as a through route.

If the experiment is successful, plans will be drawn up to improve the environment of High Street and St. Mary's Street. These will probably include widened footways and perhaps cycle lanes.

Circular route round Cardiff Bay

A complete route around Cardiff Bay, including the barrage looks set to be open during the first quarter of 2008. A grant of £120,000 from the Countryside Council for Wales is being made to provide a temporary path from the Norwegian Church to the east end of the barrage, pending a final route when the area is redeveloped in a few years time.

This has been a gap along the water front ever since the barrage was completed as this part of the shoreline is still in the control of Associated British Ports and as such closed to the public. Much of the expenditure will go on fencing to keep people on the temporary path out of the operational dock areas. A bridge over the lock near the Norwegian Church will also be included.

The grant is part of a wider package to help open up parts of the Welsh coastline which are currently inaccessible.

Julian Langston



New 'Bronze' Route Set to Be Launched in 2008

Following a successful 'reccie' of a proposed Bronze Route preparation for Three Peaks Trial 2008 will shortly begin with a meeting of the event sub-committee. The Bronze Route will take in a stretch of the Usk river, Sugar Loaf before descending through woodland to Abergavenny and will compliment the already established Platinum, Gold and Silver routes.

Any suggestion for the event are always welcome.

Chris Lewis

Best Bar None

The market is awash with cereal bars offering all kinds of health benefits and energy boosts. Trail magazine asked nutritionist Allan Johnson to pick his favourite. "**Jordan's Superfoods Bar** is a nutritional repair kit," he says:

Blueberries—Rich in antioxidants and vitamins, including folic acid; **Cranberries**—High in vitamin C and other antioxidants; **Pumpkin seeds**—High in protein, fibre and vitamin E; **Almonds**—Rich in vitamin E and minerals such as iron, magnesium and calcium; **Wholegrain oats**—High in soluble fibre, low in saturated fat.

Don't Skip Brekkie

Recent studies suggest that up to half of UK adults regularly skip breakfast. But what happens to breakfast-less body when you get on the hill?

Instead of using breakfast energy, your body will start using its stored carbohydrates, kept in the liver and muscles as glycogen. The liver glycogen is broken down into blood glucose while the muscle stores are used for muscle energy. But during a hill-walk, these stores will only last a few hours. Once muscles have gobbled their own stores they turn to the blood glucose produced by the liver. But that glucose is needed by the brain so as it depletes not only does your body start to tire dramatically so does your mind. And that's when your judgement starts to go. In short, skipping breakfast will leave you tired at best and in danger from poor decisions at worst.

From 'Trail' Magazine

New Year Weekend at NT Exmoor Basecamp

Friday 28th December to Tuesday 1st January



We're staying in a lovely converted stone barn at Countisbury on the north Devon coast. The 688 hectares of majestic coastline, steep wooded valleys, moors and farmland of the Watersmeet estate surround the basecamp. The whole area is within the Exmoor National Park. This NT Bunkhouse has the usual mod cons, central heating and with beautiful views of the surrounding area. Only 1 mile east of Lynton & Lynmouth, no distance from the coastal path and "The Sandpiper Inn". There are plenty of different walks we can do for the Saturday, Sunday and Monday; I have had offers to lead them. We will have a New Year's Eve party at the basecamp and on New Year's Day we will make our way home stopping off in Dunster for lunch and to explore this historic village. If interested contact Katherine T on 029 20881572 for more details.

Lynton and Lynmouth are like twins, one village complementing the other. Lynmouth is wedged between a steep cliff and the ocean on North Devon's coast, while Lynton looks down from the 500ft (152m) high cliff top on her twin. The views from either are glorious. You can see across to the Welsh coast on a clear day.

The village of **Dunster**, when the sea lapped at its edges in the 12th century, thrived as a trading port for beans and barley, wine and Welsh wool. The ocean retreated, leaving Dunster sitting 2 miles distant, and it turned to England's growing wool market and became a weaving centre. The old Yarn Market (rebuilt in the late 16th century) with its unusual-shaped roof still sits in the middle of the High Street. The long, very wide High Street is graced with 17th through 19th century buildings. The Luttrell Arms, with its hammerbeam roof, dates back to around 1500. There's a tile-hung 15th century nunnery at the narrow end of the street. Thatched cottages and a packhorse bridge complete the picture. Further details from Katherine T. 029 20881572.

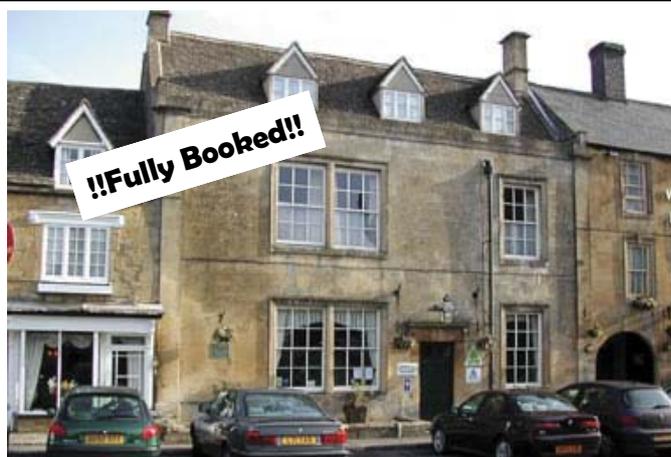
Weekends Away



August BH—Camping at Manorbier, Pembrokeshire 24th to 27th August

For this years camping adventure we visit Manorbier (near Tenby). A delightful site within walking distance of the beach. Walks arranged on Saturday and Sunday and possibly a BBQ on Saturday evening. Express your interest ASAP. If you have no camping equipment, and would like to go, contact me, as some surplus equipment is available.

Further details contact Lawrence on 029 20733012



Weekend in Stow on the Wold YH, Cotswolds 14th to 16th September

Stay in a Grade II listed 17th Century town house in the centre of the historic market town of Stow-on-the-Wold. Accommodation has been recently refurbished providing smaller rooms, many ensuite, thanks to Heritage Lottery funding. You'll find a picnic tables in the garden or enjoy freshly prepared meals overlooking the town square, including our famous Cotswold Country Breakfast. 4 Star, 48 Beds, £15.50 pppn. Further details from Sian (tel. 01446 719697)

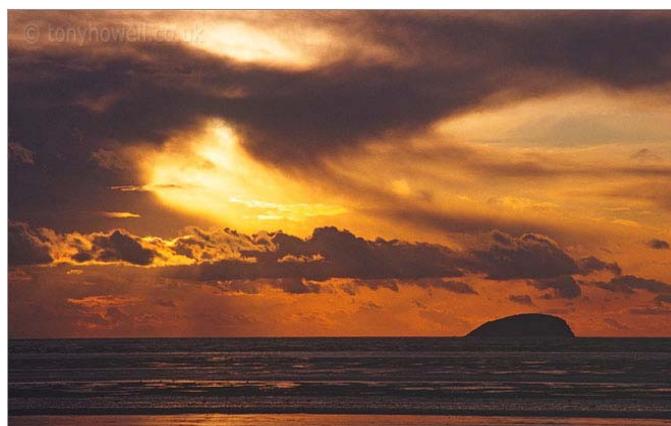
Facilities: Lounge●TV Lounge● arden●Cycle Hire●Cycle Store●Parking● Meals Available●Dining Room●Restaurant●Self-Catering Kitchen●Drying Room● Laundry● Shower● Washing machine● Internet access



Weekend at Brecon YH 9th to 11th November

This stunning Victorian country house is situated just a few miles from the historic market town of Brecon with its medieval streets and Cathedral, making it the perfect base to explore the area. You'll never be short of things to do with canoeing, sailing and boating on offer on Llangorse Lake just four miles away and pony trekking available nearby. For something a bit more serene, experience the Brecon Mountain Railway, take a boat trip on the Brecon canal or just relax in the beautiful surrounding countryside. YHA Brecon offers excellent quality accommodation, food and service. Delicious meals are prepared with locally sourced ingredients and guests can choose from a fantastic selection of organic wine and beers. 3 Star, 53 Beds, £14 pppn. Further details from Clive (tel. 029 20902164)

Facilities: Common Room●TV Lounge● Garden●Shop●BBQ Area●Parking● Meals Available● Dining Room●Restaurant●Table LKicence●Self-Catering Kitchen●Drying Room●Laundry●Shower● Washing machine



Day Trip to Steepholm Monday 20th August

Once a year the Balmoral does a trip to Steepholm. This year it's on 20th August. The boat leaves Penarth Pier at 12:30 and returns 9:15pm. Cost £31. Further details from Quentin C. tel. 029 20706806

Julian Langston's Favourite Place— The Redwood Forests of Northern California

We continue our series of COG members 'Favourite Places'. Julian Langston explains why the Redwood Forests of Northern California is his favourite.

This is a hard one. When Chris asked me to write on this, I had to think long and hard.

I'm going to break with tradition here as I shortlisted several, none of which are in the UK. Not that there aren't many British places that have a lasting and wonderful memory, but the ones at the top of the list are all a long way from home.

I considered the wonder of Victoria Falls on the Zimbabwe / Zambia border. Then again, the amazingly azure Crater Lake in Southern Oregon has a special place in my heart – I've visited this twice, once in deep snow.

Most people who know me know that I really like trees and forests, so it will come as no surprise that the glorious colours of New England in the Fall featured high on the list. The heady hues of the north east corner of the USA are waiting for me to visit again when I have a chance.

I finally decided upon the Redwood forests of northern California. Sadly only some 5% of the original forests remain, Redwood (*sequoia sempervirens*) unfortunately making rather good timber (or lumber as Americans are wont to call it).

It is impossible to adequately conjure up with mere words the awesome majesty of these giants, but I'm going to have a go. It is useless to quote statistics, such as the fact that the tallest trees are over 360 feet tall and more than 20 feet diameter at the base. Pointless to say that some trees mass over 1,000 tons putting them amongst the largest organisms ever to have inhabited the earth. If one of these giants were placed next to the tallest building in Cardiff (the Pearl Assurance Building in Kingsway), it would top it by a third and block part of the road. Irrelevant to point out that they don't reach maturity until between 600 and 900 years old – some venerable specimens have been around for well over two millennia.

The best I can do is to ask you to imagine yourself in one of the country's tallest cathedrals – Canterbury or Ely will do quite well – and think of yourself gazing up towards the vaulted nave roof. Now let your mind wander and picture the great pillars as Redwoods with the trusswork on the roof being the branches far above. Take away the rest of the building and insert some forest ambience, a blue sky and



Photo: If the 315' "Chandelier Tree" were next to the tallest building in Cardiff, this is what it might look like. Some Redwoods are 50' taller than this. This tree was 400 years old when Jesus Christ was born.

gentle breeze to move the tops of the trees around. Finally, multiply the whole by about four and you may just have a glimpse of what it's like to experience these incredible forests.

Better Access to the Coast

Welsh Assembly grants, totalling £1.5 million, will be spent on improving access for everyone to enjoy the coast of Wales. The grants, distributed by the Countryside Council for Wales to local and national park authorities, kick-start a six-year programme of improvements to the Welsh coast, revealing more of its glory to walkers and others than ever before.

The Countryside Council for Wales is administering the scheme on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government.

THE QUIZ—The Answer!

After seven attempts and no winner COG Quiz King Kevin Ham's question beat everyone with no correct answer given.



To recap Kev had explained it all in the last issue except, Why he went to see the first test match, and why he would not have seen it had he not been on Julian's walk of 27 February.

The Answer: The Champaign region of France; Governor's Camp on the Masi Mara, and Christchurch, New Zealand—They are all places I have visited, as a prize, for winning a competition. In the case of the New Zealand win, I had to starch off the winning answer to a rugby question, on a post card, that I picked up in a pub. That pub was the Glantaff Inn. It was the pub we visited after Julian's Taff Trail Walk.

Nearly every Tuesday at Cog I have worn a supplemental prize. A Black Fleece with Guinness on the Front and a big embroidered panel on the back concerning the test match series.

Kevin

Experience Flat Holm Island

Rich in wildlife, steeped in history. Just 5 miles from Cardiff and Barry, the tiny island of Flat Holm is a different world with a wealth of history and wildlife. You will be amazed at how much there is to discover.

Since Dark Age times, Flat Holm has been a retreat for monks and since then has acted as sanctuary for Vikings, Anglo-Saxons, silver miners, smugglers and cholera victims. Fortified in Victorian times and again in World War II it is perhaps most famous for receiving the first ever radio message across water sent by Marconi in 1897. Flat Holm is now a site of special scientific interest and a local nature reserve.

The island is a haven for wildlife, home to one of the largest colony of gulls in Wales. There are many other animals to see including shelduck, slow worms and George, our wild tortoise. Spring and summer bring a profusion of rare and interesting wild flowers.

Quentin is organising a day trip to the island on Saturday 18th August. The plan is to leave Channel View Leisure Centre at 8.30am and return at 9pm. Cost £10 (includes a BBQ). Names by 12th August to Quentin, tel. 029 20706806

So follow in the footsteps of the first recorded welsh saint and visit the most southerly point in Wales. Walk over Viking bones and explore the Victorian gun pits before coming face to face with a gull chick or slow worm.



A Colour Version of 'The View' is Available from the COG website.



You Have Any Photos From Weekends etc, Articles, Letters, Etc. that could be used in future 'VIEWS' Then Email Them To
ch-lewis@cardiff32.freemove.co.uk

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Photographs, including those in The View may be used on the COG website. Any member not wishing to appear should tell the editor.