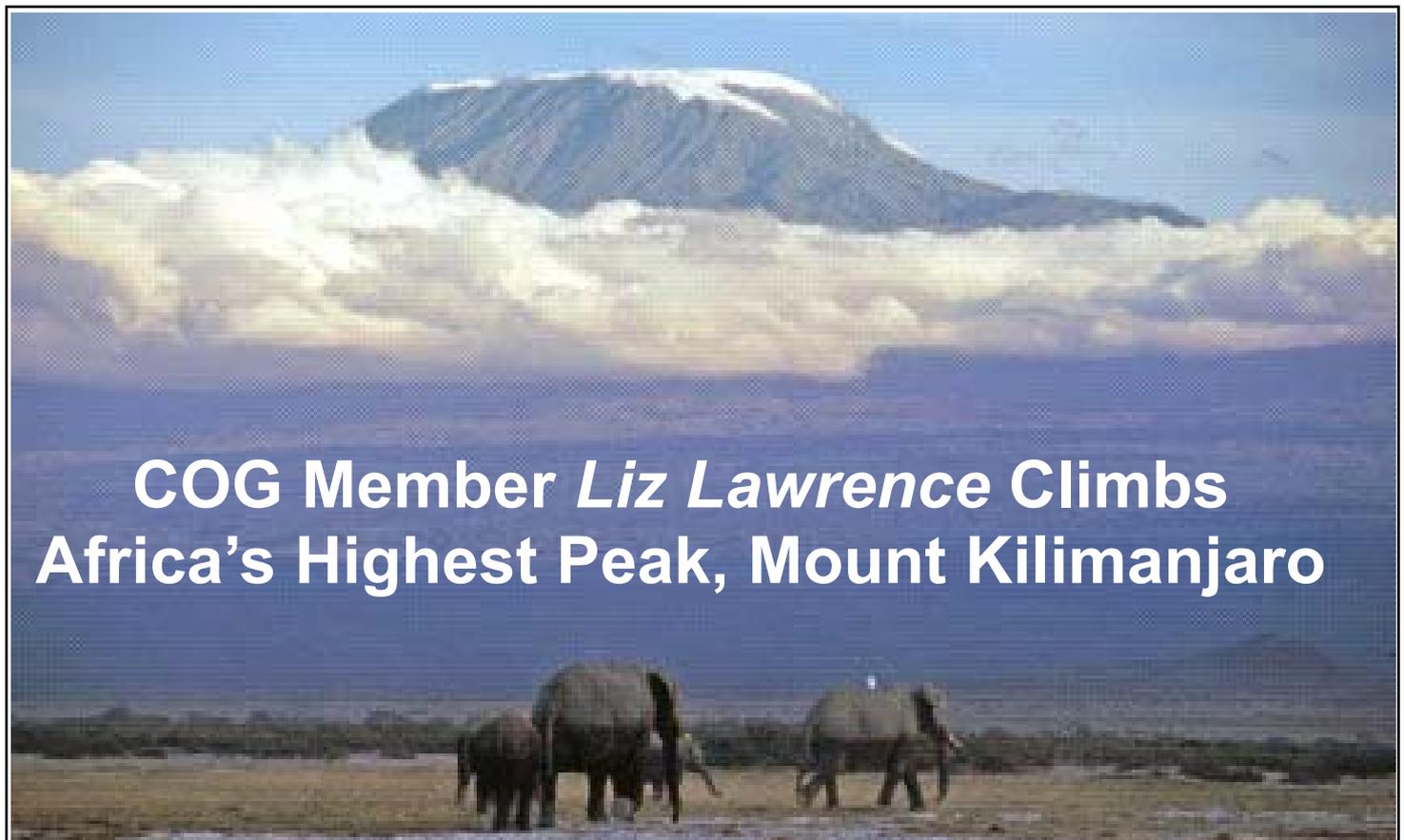


# The View

Issue No. 35

Autumn 2009

Photo: Black Mountains From Skirrid Fawr



## COG Member *Liz Lawrence* Climbs Africa's Highest Peak, Mount Kilimanjaro

Mount Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in Africa and the World's highest free-standing mountain,. In July COG member **Liz Lawrence** undertook the huge challenge to get to the summit. Kilimanjaro is located in northern Tanzania, around 200 miles (6 degrees) south of the equator. An extinct volcanic Mountain, it is 5895 metres high. Mount Kilimanjaro has 3 peaks, the very highest point of Kibo Peak is known as Uhuru (meaning *freedom* in Swahili) and old Tanganyika (as Tanzania was once called) . Temperatures range from about 20 to 30 degrees C at the foot of the mountain and between -10 and -20 degrees C at the summit. Along with the wide temperature range encountered on it, Mount Kilimanjaro's volcanic soil has promoted the growth of a variety of vegetation types: Lower Zone - Grassland - 20% Montane Zone - Forests - 21% Heath and Moorland - Shrubs and Slim Trees - 19% Alpine Desert Zone Lichens growth - 20% Summit Zone Arctic Vegetation - 20% Did Liz make it? **Full story Page 4.**

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### Newsletter of



## A message from your Madam



Well here I am again, giving my spell check its tri-annual workout as I write this, 'my last', Message from Your Madam. Well, maybe my chosen title of Madam Chair hasn't been the most politically correct all time handle used by the person to be chosen to head COG's committee, 'but there you go,' I'm just an old fashioned girl at heart.

I would like to say that it has been an honour to have been chosen by you all to head Cardiff Outdoor Group. But, owing to family commitments, I find that can no longer give the position of Chairperson my all and will be standing down at the forthcoming AGM.

As you are probably all aware, this year's Annual General Meeting will be held at Chapter on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October. I am hoping to see as many faces as possible at this year AGM, 'both old and new.' Remember, COG is your group. It provides you with the opportunity to get out there and do it. So come along and give it your support.

As this is my swansong, I feel it is a good time to mention the existing Committee and to thank them for all their dedication and input during the past year. (And in many cases, I think that this should read several years.) It is without doubt that without the committee's hard work and commitment Cardiff Outdoor Group would not maintain its reputation as such an outgoing and successful group which has encouraged and enabled so many people to appreciate the wonders of the great outdoors for well over 60 years.

As well as extending my thanks and appreciation to the committee, I would also like to give a big cheer to all those who have played an active part in the smooth running of COG by planning and providing the Program Secretary's with walks and events throughout the year. I would also like to thank all those who gave their time and energy to make The Three Peeks Trial such a success.

As I have now started dishing out recognition and thanks to each area of our illustrious group, I feel that one of our major successes of recent years must be The Small COG's. It gives me great joy and pleasure to say that this part of our group is going from strength to strength. (As regards new members, this probably goes down to the fact that they keep on growing their own!)

I'm not sure if COG members are aware, but throughout the past year the group has provided an incredible 56 walks, 37 events and 12 weekends/extended weekends away. The Small COG's have also provided members with at least one family walk each month, plus a few fun packed weekends for all the kids, both large and small alike.

As these outings and activities do not come about without the input and dedicated of enthusiastic individuals **Here I must mention**, that these said individuals are becoming a little thin on the ground.

As with most organizations that look to their members to play an active part in the success of the group, from time to time, the dynamics may change be it through members moving away or finding new interests, the demands of caring for the well being of family members, or, on a happier note, life changes brought on by the patter of tiny feet, no group can remain static. As the input and dedication of our group waxes and wanes, I am appealing to you all, to come forward and volunteer some of your time to the successful running of our group. (Who knows, you could even reach the dizzy heights of Chairperson and have the golden opportunity of making up your own PC-or-not-PC title.)

But, for those who thought that they had finally got rid of me, I am still intent on taking a full and active part in the group by dragging you all up hill and down dale. As a matter of fact, (as is usual, with my mercurial train of thought.) I have the seeds of many ideas for walks and weekends quietly growing away to be reaped and produced at a later date.

I must admit, that my favorite aspect of our group is actually getting out there and doing it. And, as most people who join me on my walks will know, I am absolutely fascinated by the local history and folk law which surround the area where I lead my walks. So, over the next year I hope to beguile, enthrall or even bore you all with a wide selection of facts and fantasy which relate to my walks. **YOU POOR SOULS!**

As always and for the last time, cheers from your Madam,

Sian, X



## CHALLENGE WALKS

**Brecon Beacons Challenge for Cystic Fibrosis (Fri 9th-Sun 11th Oct)** 15 mile trek includes Pen y Fan. Need to raise £400. For more details see the web site: [www.cftrust.org.uk/help/events/breconbeacons](http://www.cftrust.org.uk/help/events/breconbeacons)

**Real Ale Ramble (Sat 21st-Sun 22nd Nov)** 25, 215 or 10 mile Challenge Walk. Contact Mr Lindsay Ketteringham, Neuadd Arms Hotel, Llanwrtyd Wells, LD5 4RB. Tel: 01591 610236. Email: [ramble@greenevents.ltd.uk](mailto:ramble@greenevents.ltd.uk) Web site: <http://www.green-events.co.uk> Other Challenge Walk events organised by the Neuadd Arms Hotel: **Saturnalia Sat 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 25**, 15 or 10mile challenge Walk options Lord Crawshaw Memorial Walk (Sat Feb 6<sup>th</sup>) 25, 15 or 10 mile Challenge Walk options.

**Cwmhir Christmas Cracker/Cracer Nadolig (Sat Dec)** 5, 17 or 12miles in 11 hours from Phillip's Hall, Abbey Cwmhir, 6miles NE of Rhayader in Mid Wales, (GR SO053713). Contact Wyn George, The Runnis, Dutlas Knighton, Powys LD7

1UF. Tel: 01547 510393. Email: [wyntherunnis@btinternet.com](mailto:wyntherunnis@btinternet.com)

**Reservoir Roundabout II Sat 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 22** or 18 mile Challenge Walk options. 22 or 18ml in 9hr from Nantgwilt Church car park, nr Rhayader (GR SN909638) Contact Carl Edwards, Bryniago, 53 Maesmawr, RHAYADER LD6 5PL. Tel: 01597 810566.

01591 610236. Email: [crawshaw@greenevents.ltd.uk](mailto:crawshaw@greenevents.ltd.uk) Web site: <http://www.green-events.co.uk>

**Crickhowell Walking Festival Feb 27<sup>th</sup> – Mar 6<sup>th</sup>** over 40 walks of various grades and a number of events for walkers and non-walkers alike.

Email: [david.f.thomas@btinternet.com](mailto:david.f.thomas@btinternet.com). Web site: <http://www.crickhowellfestival.com>

See <http://www.glamorganwalks.com> for other walks.



1st September—Meal at the Blue Anchor



30th June—Picnic on Rudry Common



9th August—Llantwit Major & Nash Point Walk

## To The Top of Africa! COG Member *Liz Lawrence* Took On The Huge



'Aren't you worried?' 'Bet you are having nightmares,' 'Have you seen how difficult it looks on the comic relief celebrity trek?' and other heart-warming words of encouragement became more vocal as the time of my Kili trek drew nearer. I had decided not to watch the comic relief shenanigans, but when the receptionist at work told me that someone called Chris Moyles had succeeded, I went looking for him in the corridors of Cardiff Law School to offer him my congratulations and ask for any tips. When I mentioned to the Head of the Law School's secretary, that I could not find this colleague, she informed me that he is a Radio 1 dj. Her directness was much appreciated, otherwise I could have continued to haunt legal academia like the Flying Dutchman! Instead I blithely ignored all the unsolicited dire warnings, including one from a fellow university lecturer that one of her students-a young and fit woman of 28 had died the year before. Perhaps some sense of reality should have penetrated the protective shield I had built around myself, when my good friend and fellow intrepid walker dropped out of joining me after having viewed various nightmare scenes courtesy of YouTube.

Subsequently, my tent buddy on the trek, Vikki, who had been wavering but had been deterred from dropping out several times, despite losing her deposit, by my bland encouragements, then burst into tears at the sight of me at Heathrow. 'Crikey, was sharing a tent with me that awful a prospect?' Surely the identity of the female snorer in the COG Bath New Year weekend, which had caused a bit of a nocturnal fracas, had been pinned on another room mate, or had someone been spreading scurrilous rumours about yours truly? Perhaps it was me who had been snoring after all, but no one had liked to tell me? Vikki assured me it was simply that she really did not want to do the trek after all and wanted to go home but by that time, her husband had wisely shot off without a backward glance. I however, was still feeling confident and excited. My euphoria at the impending adventure stemming from the no doubt rather naive view that I had been walking since I was 11 months old, so, what was the problem? Well.... 3 July 2009 between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m. I was to find out....

We flew from Heathrow to Nairobi, arriving at 6.30 in the morning. From there we embarked upon a seven hour bus journey to Marangu in Tanzania. Most of us had not straightened ourselves out after the cramped seating on the plane and were dismayed to find we were to be shoe-horned into even more cramped seating and joy upon joy, to be bounced about over myriad potholes and ruts on what were mainly dirt tracks. The high point was when one of the dust devils which were frenetically swirling about like mad dervishes outside, swept up upon and kindly engulfed us in ..... yes...lots of dust. Great! Scenery however was amazing in the African bush but the Kenyan side of the border was very dry and the people clearly struggling. We saw one poverty stricken lady, picking up a few shards of gravel fallen from a passing truck, absolutely nothing being

wasted. Tanzania however was beautiful, lush greenery and plenty of fruits and other crops growing. I had gone expecting very little in the way of material comfort, but found our hotel was surprisingly good with an excellent evening meal. It was good to meet our leader, head guides and most importantly, our doctor. We were told that the hotel was about 2,000 metres high, which seemed a bit of a cop out, and that we would be passing through 6 climate zones, from Equatorial to Arctic conditions on our way to Gilman's Point at 5,680m and Uhuru at 5,895m.

Much of the initial briefing focused on the physical effects of walking in altitude. At 4,600m, atmospheric pressure is about fifty percent of that at sea level. There are a variety of symptoms including headaches, tiredness, irritability, nausea and depression with the effects being felt from around 2,500m upwards. I didn't bother saying I experienced much of these, all of the time, living near sea-level in Penarth! This briefing was not for the faint-hearted and my tent buddy went off to our bedroom in floods of tears again. Not everyone however is affected by altitude sickness and it seems to affect people randomly. We had two ladies in our party of 62 and 71 years, neither of whom seemed to have much problem with altitude. Once Vikki had a good night's sleep she became more positive and in fact did not succumb to altitude sickness. Rather irritatingly perhaps neither did the two young male smokers who had several drags every day on the trek! Slow ascent is the only way to acclimatise and our itinerary was excellent as it allowed an extra day, on day five. On the way up, we were regularly overtaken by a very fit-looking, Korean group of young, fast males who we would then overtake later in the day and would watch as they were forcibly taken down having over exerted themselves. A tale of the tortoise and the hare being enacted and in fact the porters regularly repeated in Swahili words which sounded like, 'poorly, poorly' meaning, 'slowly, slowly.'

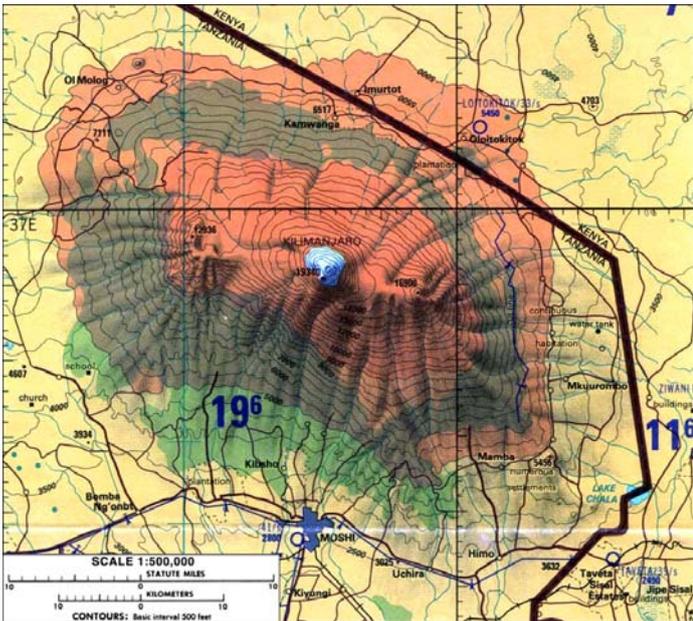
.....I had been walking since I was 11 months old, so, what was the problem? Well.... 3 July 2009 between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m. I was to find out.....

Furthermore, we were all prescribed with daily dosages of diamox which acts as a diuretic. This combined with 4 or 5 litres of fluids a day would, we were, told help with combating altitude sickness. It certainly seemed to do the job for me but I found it terribly difficult actually taking in those quantities of fluids and I doubt that I will be able to eat porridge again for a very long time. Food throughout the trek was excellent but we all came to hate the water based, sloppy porridge which was poured down our throats each day. On summit day, we were given two lots of porridge, morning and late evening but my throat just closed up the second time and I begun retching. Enough was enough! The other annoyance at being flushed out so regularly was the need to go to the loo frequently in freezing temperatures at night. The moon and stars were so bright that the women at least, had to trek a fair distance, the true source of p.... envy! I donned a black thermal balaclava at night to keep my nose warm and gave my tent buddy a nasty shock when she woke up to see a shadowy shape entering the tent on returning from a nocturnal sortie.

### Day 1

After an early start, we were pressed back into the bus again for a 4 hour rocky drive, around the mountain to Rongai where we met the rest of our guides and porters. One of our drivers was substituted for another who had been ill and there was a whisper of malaria. I heard the doctor say to the trek leader that she could not give him our anti malaria medication! There were over 100 porters to service our group of 25! Although we carried thirty to thirty five litre daypacks they were to carry the tents, tables and chairs and food and drink together with the medical equipment including the decompression chamber. By the way, this decompression chamber was not the heavy weight iron type used in the past but a portable, inflatable one. We ascended by the Rongai route, which approaches Kilimanjaro from the northeast side of the mountain. Ascent begun from Naremoru Gate at 1,950m where we had a picnic lunch and then begun walking, for three to four hours, through farmland of mostly maize and then into the forest zone where we saw a large family group of Colobus monkeys swinging from the trees. The doctor took a photograph of some children who lived in a hovel in the middle of a maize field. They asked her for a photograph of themselves which she was unable to provide much to their puzzlement. We continued our gentle climb of 700 m and camped overnight at 2,650m.

## Challenge of Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro. Liz Recalls What Happened...



### Day 2

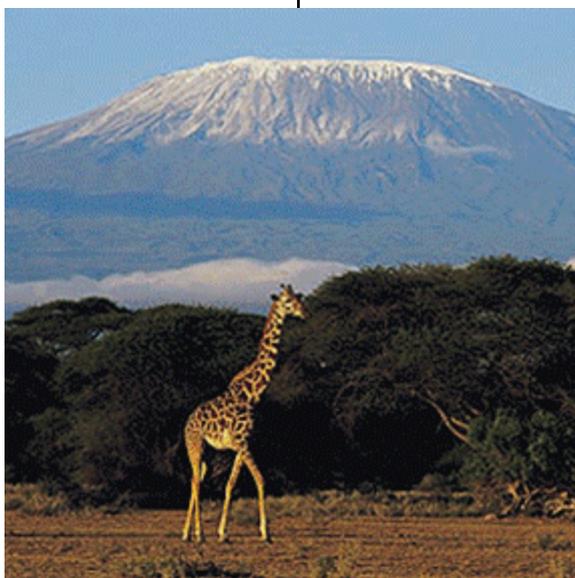
We breakfasted about 6.00 a.m. and left Simba Camp and began climbing on a narrow path through moorland with amazing views of Kenya to the north. Trees became sparser and eventually thinned out altogether but there were still plenty of wild flowers. Some of these such as Red Hot Pokers (*Kniphofia thomsonii*), St John Wort (*Hypericum lanceolatum*) and Busy Lizzies (*Impatiens*) were recognisable but there was one *Impatiens* we saw which only grows on Kilimanjaro (*Impatiens Kilimanjari*). We trekked for three hours and then stopped for lunch at the second lava cave we came to and then we traversed the mountain for three hours and camped at Kirelewa Cave at just over 3,600m on the edge of the lobelia zone. Those African guys were amazing. One of our group had her birthday today and the Africans produced an iced birthday cake which had been steamed for a couple of hours! In total, we had trekked for up to nine hours and climbed over a thousand metres. One of our fellow trekkers had begun to feel very weak and had dropped out.

### Day 3

Another early start and then a steeper trek to Marwenzi Tarn Hut at 4,295m, four to five hours and a 600 metre climb. We arrived in time for lunch at a pretty camp site, set in moraines in a glaciated valley with good views of the jagged peaks of Marwenzi Tarn. I had developed 'the runs' and was worried that this could be my turn to drop out. I was determined to keep going however and not rest in the tent as a couple of others did, in order to increase my chances of summiting. In the afternoon we had a short acclimatisation walk on scree to a higher altitude before returning to camp to rest and eat. Walk high, sleep low being the repeated mantra. A couple more of our group had been sick and were very weak and had decided to rest but had to drop out the following day. We all felt their disappointment and were anxious for our own prospects. After each evening meal the doctor would shell out various medications to everyone which was the source of much mirth. Fortunately my stomach eruptions seemed to be tempered with her white powders!

### Day 4

This for me was my favourite day despite still having 'the runs.' It was actually a rest day for acclimatisation purposes but some of us went rock climbing up Marwenzi. I



remember feeling like a big kid scrambling about on a thin ridge loving every moment but glad that my family could not see me with a sharp drop falling away either side. Thanks to the doctor's armoury I managed to get through these two days fairly lightly and had begun to feel ok by the evening although rather weak and spaced out. Our mountain leader gave us a stiff talk about the perils that might befall us the following night and day and just to ensure that the message had got through, the decompression chamber was produced for us to goggle at in awe. We went to sleep under a silent night, the skies clear and beautiful and full of stars...

### Day 5 and 6

We left camp at 7 a.m. and trekked for 5 hours across the Saddle, an alpine desert formed between the volcanic peaks of Mawenzi and Kibo, arriving at Kibo Hut, 4,700m, where some of the men had Kilimanjaro chilled beers! Goodness knows how much they cost but they were certainly appreciated. Some of us, including silly me, had thought that we had arrived at Gilman's Point in view of a large sign post bearing that name. We were feeling pretty chuffed with ourselves when it was pointed out to us that actually the sign was pointing out that Gilman's was actually further up, 5 hours away! Not quite time to get the bubbly out then! We were supposed to rest in preparation for the next day but many of the group were very animated. I can't say I was. Reality had at last hit me! We began to get ready for the summit at 11.00 p.m. and began walking at midnight. I managed to mislay my backpack at the last minute having had a last dash to the ladies (this is a euphemism for a foul, stinking black hole), and was not only late setting off but was actually the last to set off! Because of altitude, it is irresponsible to rush and catch people up so I comforted myself that at least I was with the doctor. That night was dire. Absolutely dire! It was just a case of gritting one's teeth and getting on with it. Our head torches gave off a very eerie light and the two ladies I was with began to have hallucinations and panic attacks. The hallucinating lady thought I had three legs which may actually have come in handy as I was feeling very tired even at the beginning of the walk. She was taken down and the other lady and I continued a very slow, arduous crawl, despite her grabbing hold of me every few minutes to avert another panic attack. We were walking on loose scree and she was worried about falling down the slanting slope from under our feet. My way of coping was simply to not look at this and just put my head down and look at the path and the legs of the people in front. The guides with us were amazing, very supportive.

By this time conditions were very cold indeed. My thumb had gone completely numb and I was a little concerned about frostbite. My companions drinks had all frozen and the three of us were all drinking from my camelpack-ironic really as I was the only one who had not bought an insulated pack. The guy at the shop telling me to just blow the water back in to the pouch. 'Just blow the water back'-my foot. Had this chap done any altitude walking? Despite the swagger, clearly not. I needed all the

air I could get in my lungs and certainly did not have the strength to blow anything back. I was wearing the black balaclava so had my (pink) sheepskin hat into which I put the camelpack in, inside my back pack and this did the trick. Water rather than ice for the four of us. Because our group was so slow, mainly through enforced, unwelcome hugs every ten steps or so, we never got the hot tea which the porters had brewed up at hourly intervals as everything was packed away before we got there. By this time, the scree which had seemed pretty steep had now been replaced by large boulders over which we had to scramble. Although when you stopped and looked up, the rim did not look that far away, it looked incredibly steep and we were of course walking slowly. This part of the trek seemed interminable, absolutely interminable. Instead of taking 6 hours we took 7 hours which meant that once we had  
(Continued on Page 6)

## Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro (Continued From Page 5)

got to Gilman's Point, time was very limited to continue hiking across the ice fields. Moral of this story is for Liz Lawrence to get her act organised, i.e. not go to the loo at the last minute and lose back pack but also avoid high heel-wearing ladies who can't walk in hiking boots as their tendons have shortened-yes really! This together with panic attacks was the reason for the frequent stops and hugs which held our quartet up. Anyway, despite the cold, temperatures approaching minus twenty degrees, the views from the rim were breathtaking and my (pink) Mountain down jacket was fine. The sight of the dawn sun breaking through the girdle of clouds will remain with me. Photos taken at the summit include one of what looks like an ancient, shrunken creature wearing a (pink) jacket grinning feebly with an air of madness about her. No idea who she is then.

Although others wanted to stay up there longer and even got rather argumentative, I have to admit I was so tired I was relieved when we were told to go down as we had another seven hours trekking in front of us, probably longer for me as I hate going down and am very slow. The young lads however were basically surfing and running down whilst I made my progress rather gingerly and actually went head over heels at one stage, but only hurt what was left of my dignity. At least I wasn't flown down at breakneck speed by the Kili express which is what looks like an iron bed frame with a motor bike wheel in the centre. This was utilised to get one of our trekkers down speedily after a session in the depression, I mean decompression chamber, up on the rim. Fortunately for him, one of the Marie Curie reps, Mark, was a very fit tri-athlete and he and one of the porters flew past everyone to save his life. The previous year, Mark had had his chance of summiting thwarted as he had had to Kili express another trekker down speedily. At least this time, the altitudinally challenged trekker had the consideration to let Mark summit first. I also saw a couple of others in our group being speedily frog-marched down, sandwiched shoulder to shoulder with a porter either side of them. Again this was a life saving exercise to get trekkers who had been in the decompression chamber down as quickly as possible. We spent the night in tents at 3,700m having descended 2,200m. I had a cup of tea and went to bed where I slept solidly not bothering to get up for dinner despite the excitement for some, that chips were on the menu!

### Day7

Woke up feeling great. Was rather surprised however that some Americans at the camp had expected better toilet facilities! For goodness sake! We were on a mountain in Africa! We had a very pleasant walk through beautiful moorland and forest, to the gate at Marangu. We had been very fortunate the whole of our trek with the weather which had generally remained fine throughout although very cold if not freezing at night. Today we had a very light rain for a few minutes and also some swirling mist which looked magical as it swept about the vegetation. We bussed to our hotel and the ladies raced each other to the showers to make sure that they had hot water, whilst the men raced each other to the bar. We finished the evening with a celebratory dinner which again was surprisingly good.

### Final thoughts

I was so tired summit night that I really did not appreciate just what an awesome and majestic lady Kili is until I flew past her twice, going to and from Kenya. We were flying at the same height as her rim. I had told the lady sitting next to me what I had done the week before and she very kindly stood up and announced it to the rest of the passengers who gave me a round of applause and various people wanting to congratulate and shake hands with me. One chap in particular sat almost in my lap for what was left of the flight but at least I wasn't asked to give a speech!

My memories of the beautiful frosty night skies crammed to the brim with

so many crystal stars, and the allure of the amazing summit dawn stretching her slender fingers out along the horizon as she slid above the clouds and the panoramic views over Africa are tinged with some sadness and anxiety. I had wondered how the porters would view us, whether they would see us as self indulgent, but they just seemed very grateful to be in paid work and did not moan about the enormous weights they were carrying on their heads for our benefit. One young man carried his pack on the back of his neck, no doubt causing a lot of damage which would affect him in the future. Certainly, I would have been unable to complete the trek had I have had to carry my own tent and provisions but felt embarrassed that they were carrying up tables and chairs for us and would have been happy to have sat on the floor for meals. Absolutely nothing was too much trouble for us, including a hot cup of tea in bed every morning. Many of us left them our equipment and clothes as well as a tip but I remain concerned as to what happens to them, and their families, when ill or disabled or upon retirement and also their shortened life expectancy. Apparently one porter died a couple of years ago from altitude sickness. He had known he was struggling but continued to climb as he was worried about not being paid the full wage. Although the porters are better equipped and treated than say 10 years ago, the gulf between us and them remains huge.

I was truly shocked at just how little snow was left on the mantle of Kili. We all know those iconic photographs of Kili taken in the 1920s when the snow spills over the sides of her shoulders. There is nothing like this amount left. Al Gore in 'An Inconvenient Truth,' suggested that this is due to global warming. I now understand that this hypothesis is controversial and that there are other theories such as deforestation of the lower slopes being the cause. Other scientists say that such fluctuations are nothing new. It is very difficult for a non-scientist to have an informed view when there is seems to be so much conflict amongst the experts. I

did notice however that the Tanzanians living upon verdant slopes at the bottom of Kili, despite being poor, at least have enough drinking water and food. Presumably this is due to the snow melting each spring and I cannot imagine what the impact of the disappearance of the ice fields will be either locally or for that matter, globally.

### Acknowledgement

Thank you to those hard guys in COG/GMC. They will know who they are! Without their help and advice, enormous patience and even the odd kicking, this body of a weak and feeble woman would not have got very far. In fact she could have had a nice relaxing holiday. Yeh, thanks a lot guys!



### Footnote

The Kilimanjaro massif's geological origins date back to the early Pleistocene period, about one and a half million years ago when the Rift Valley was formed. Since then, the mountains volcanic activity has been concentrated in three locations, the craters of Kibo, Mawenzi and Shira. This trio of volcanic cones penetrate high into the cold upper troposphere hence the snow and ice despite the latitude. These cones evolved separately and a few thousand years ago, all had summits above 5,000. Gradually, Mawenzi and then Shira became extinct and only Kibo remains active, her last eruption being 100,000 years ago. Mt Kilimanjaro stands at 5985m and is Africa's highest peak and is the tallest freestanding volcano in the world, with Kibo its' central crater, standing on her two sister volcanoes Mawenzi and Shira. Kibo's eruptions have cloaked with lava parts of the eroded Shira crater created the plains linking the two junior sisters with Kibu. Today, Kibu is an active but dormant volcano, a strong smell of sulphur sometimes prevails from the crater and fumaroles still escape from the inner ash pit.

*Liz will be giving a talk on the climb to COG at Chapter after the New Year.*

## Review of the August Ty'n Cornel Hostel Weekend in the Elenydd Wilderness

By Rachel Gimblett

Often in a country pub, it is not uncommon to see a few old dogs asleep in front of the fire, slumbering and thinking of their day's walk. Likewise the memory of a small group of damp walking boots nuzzling up against the fire grate comes to mind when I recollect sitting in the warm fire lit lounge of Ty'n Cornel. Idle imaginings apart, the humans in the room seemed equally content, well fed after a BBQ and a good day out.



DRYING BOOTS BY AN OPEN FIRE



CONTENTED COGGERS

The contentment might stem from sitting in a traditional farmhouse lounge which gave a unique atmosphere of bygone days. There is clear evidence of the care and attention now bestowed to this old farmhouse, now under the ownership of the Elenydd Wilderness Trust and benefiting from monies raised at our 3 Peaks Challenge Walk held in March. Ty'n Cornel along with its sister hostel Dolgoch, are miles away from civilisation. They were saved from YHA extinction by a group of people from all sorts of backgrounds who had one thing in common – a shared passion for both this part of the world and for people to have the opportunity to come and stay in this superb piece of wilderness. Thanks to them the hostels remain a fantastic way to have a few days away from the cluttered and hectic lives that modern life seems to throw at us.

The dates for the weekend were carefully planned and chosen by our very own 'Patrick Moore' (Roger G.) because the Perseids meteor stream were to be at their best and the hostel, being remote, would be free of any light pollution making a brilliant 'firework' spectacular without the need of any gunpowder!

Due to the lack of signposts to Llanddewi Brefi, the nearest village to the hostels (also of 'Little Britain' and 'Last Gay in the Village' fame!), I gave

out briefing notes beforehand so everyone could be very clear how to get there. But as happens with all the best laid plans....., as we approached Llanddewi Brefi on Friday afternoon there was a huge road diversion and due to lack of mobile phone signals we were unable to warn everyone else in advance. Thankfully, everyone did manage to overcome this extra adventure and arrive at the hostel on Friday night having navigated the last 1½ miles, over a rough and untarmaced road, though much improved from last year.

On Saturday there was a choice of 2 walks:

Either a long one: 14 miles from the hostel down the Doethie Valley as far as Troed Rhiw Ruddwen then onto the dam at Llyn Brianne, back along the forest track along the side of the reservoir back to Soar y Mynydd and back along the track to the hostel. This walk was led by 'Busy Bees Adventure Treks'. Thank you to Steve for leading this walk.

Or a short one: 7 miles from the hostel down the Doethie Valley as far as Esgair Gwair - up to Pen y Guernos - following the fence along the forest to the track on the side of the reservoir, back to Soar y Mynydd and back along the track to the hostel. This walk was led by R & R. It was raining when we set off, but the Doethie valley did look atmospheric in the mist. Unfortunately there was not much time to stand and stare because the path down was quite slippery and required concentration. After a few miles, we parted company with the longer walk, which carried on down the valley. That left 6 of us. We went up out the valley and down the other side. For a brief moment the mist cleared and we managed to get a super view looking back up, but it was only a fleeting glimpse as the mist rolled back in and covered the valley again.



As we walked over the col and into the next valley, the rain cleared and we looked down on one of the long 'fingers' of the Llyn Brianne reservoir. We had lunch outside the small chapel at Soar-y-Mynydd sitting down to have a well earned rest and to re-fuel before the trek back to the hostel, but we got attacked by mossies! Ouch! After looking around the chapel, we headed back to the hostel along the track.

Back at the hostel we were able to unburden ourselves of wet gear and hang everything up in the barn opposite the hostel, which with the help of donations is now a cosy sitting room where passers by can rest a while and have tea and coffee to warm up before carrying on their journey. We had a good day despite the 'light drizzle' that seemed to invade the valley and blow across the moors and spray us and everything around in a relentless very fine mist!

Saturday evening we had a sumptuous BBQ. We managed to banish the invasive 'light drizzle' in order for Roger our chief BBQ chef to light the coals and we were able to sit out and have a great evening. Many thanks to Clare, Carol, Sianny girl and Cienwen for preparing all that  
(Continued on next page)

## Review of the August Ty'n Cornel Hostel Weekend (Continued From Page 7)

food! Being 15 of us plus the warden it was quite an organised operation. Having the benefit of hindsight, we learnt a valuable lesson from the Port Eynon weekend, there was hardly a lettuce leaf to be seen!

Sadly, we were not able to see the Perseids meteor stream as the night sky was just too cloudy, however we were not totally disappointed as we had a tiny glimpse of that strange orange spherical object that is supposed to be the nearest star in the galaxy.... The telescope we used is nicknamed the 'rainmaker' and it lived up to it's name! Not being able to see the Perseids meteors we did the next best thing..Roger produced a small metallic lump of rock he claimed was a real meteorite. (Being a severe critic of anything to do with astronomy one could think it's just a small lump of polished clinker!) As the evening drew to a close, with good company you don't need any electronic devices wired to the national grid to have a good time! Thus reliving those bygone days.

Sunday we did a short walk from the hostel, but again the invasive 'light drizzle' plus a strong wind added a certain atmosphere to our views along the valley. The route chosen was one of the official suggested walks from the hostel, however the route needs a bit more work as we ended up ploughing our way through untracked bogs and it seemed to take ages to get back. The only member of the party who made the least shrieks and curses was Bill! He was very brave, it was tough enough on 2 legs let alone 4! It was a relief to finally return to the hostel with somewhere dry to sit down and change into dry socks. Then we sadly packed the cars and returned to 'civilisation' and our hectic and cluttered lives.

Thank you to all of you who came and for making a great weekend! If any other Coggers having read this article have been inspired and wish to have a few nights away from light pollution - and want to help out and see where the 3 Peaks money goes to, there will be another opportunity next year. We are hoping to organise a working party at the other hostel in the Elenydd Wilderness, Dolgoch. Watch out for announcements in your forthcoming programmes and 'The View' and don't forget to keep the last Saturday in March free for the Three Peaks!



THE TYCORNELLERS L TO R: Cienwen, Enid, Bob G, Sianny Girl, Steve G, Sue C, Steve B, Carol, Lawrence, Rhona, Julian, Rachel, Phil, Claire with Bill.

### 'Thank You COG' From The Elenydd Wilderness Trust

Three Peaks Trial Treasurer Julian L., sent a cheque from the money raised at this year's event. The ELW reply is shown below:



Elenydd Wilderness Hostels

Hosteli Unigeddau'r Elenydd

Charity Commission Registration number/Rhif Cofrestru Comisiwn Elusennau : 1115946  
[www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk](http://www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk) Registered Office/Swyddfa Gofrestredig : 7 Azalea Close Cyncoed Cardiff CF23 7HR President/Llywydd : Trevor Fishlock

Gimble Porth  
 6 Newleaze Gardens  
 TETBURY, Glos.  
 GL8 8BY  
 Tel. 01666 504393  
 email [gimbleporth@btinternet.com](mailto:gimbleporth@btinternet.com)

17<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Dear Julian

Richard Hollins recently informed the Trustees of yet another donation made to the Trust by your Group. We are quite staggered by the sum received. It is a most generous gesture on the Group's part and for which we are immensely grateful.

Whilst we can look back on what we feel has been a remarkably successful three years in the Trust's existence finance is always at the forefront of our thinking. We have been fortunate in obtaining grant money for some work but nevertheless without the sort of help your group and others have given the Trust's future would be anything but bright. Apart from its financial value your gift has the added benefit of keeping all concerned with running the Trust in good heart.

Do please pass on to your members and organisers of the Three Peaks Walk, producing as it did such a splendid result for us, our gratitude and appreciation of their efforts. Many many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Edwards  
 Trustee

Mr J. Langstone  
 Treasurer Cardiff Outdoor Group  
 4 Lloyd Avenue  
 Llandaff  
 CARDIFF, CF6 2BX

*PS. I might add it gives me particular pleasure to write this letter having been born in Cardiff though brought up in West Wales.*

*J.*

# Steve's Big Sack



There has actually only been one COG-pack since the last racy Big Sack – the Berwyns trip, from Friday 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June. Two others braved the midges – Bob G and Roger G. The fun started at Llangynog campsite – a small and very pleasant site, with a good pub nearby. Saturday morning saw us heading up the valley to the church at Pen-nant Melangell, which has the shrine and

relics of St Melangell. She's associated with hares but for us the walk was mostly associated with a very high proportion of pheasant roadkill. After a pleasant climb up the top of the valley we hit the moorland – and no track, as the map had promised. After around an hour or rough ground it became obvious that the weekend required paths. Fortunately, we had one up to the summit of Moel Sych. En route, enveloped in cloud, we came across a local speciality, cloudberries. These are arctic plants that grow in the Lakes and Scotland but, for some reason, only grow in one place in Wales.

Standing in the wind and mist on top of Moel Sych the decision to go down was an obvious one. We peered over Wales' highest waterfall, Pistyll Rhaedr, before finding a wild camp further up the valley that had just the right amount of breeze – enough to disperse the midges, but not so much to disturb sleep. It was an unqualified success. Next day we fed the midges at the bottom of Pistyll Rhaedr before going into the café for some everyday luxuries – chairs, tea, cake, etc. The weather remained dry as we walked along the valley's southern rim then cut back to Llangynog.

A quick look at the programme will show you that there are no upcoming backpacks for November/December. However, there is a slackpack on the weekend of November 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>. The plan is to get the 8.50 am bus from Greyfriars Road up to Brecon, maybe have a cup of tea, then walk up Pen y Fan and along Cribyn, Fan y Big and the rest of the ridge over to Carn Pica before the descent to Dan y Wenallt hostel. Next day will be up the ridge below Tor y Foel (or up it if people are keen) before descending to Cwm Crawn then hitting the moors en route to Carno Reservoir, the playground of the gods, on the edge of Ebbw Vale. From there a quick taxi journey down to Ebbw Vale rail station will be in order (I can tell you now that the walk to the station wouldn't be up to much). Mileage for the first day will be around 13.5 miles (but with ascent of around 1,000 metres) and the second day will be shorter and easier, though a bit rougher under foot. It could be adventurous....

As this slackpack will involve a hostel that needs to be pre-booked, if you're interested in coming can you let me know as soon as possible on 07812 586949 or [stevebees13@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:orstevebees13@yahoo.co.uk)

Although there hasn't been much in the way of backpacking recently, over the summer we did have what is probably one of the best unofficial walks in the South Wales Valleys: The Ultimate Valleys Walk (Parts 1-3). This is the third time the group's done it, the first time was around 8 years ago, the second time 5 years ago. Doesn't time fly when you have to go to work? This year each stage was walked in consecutive months (at least, that was the plan) – April, May and June. In the end, the final section was done in August because the day in June wouldn't have done the final

section justice. Three COGgers did all three stages: Liz L, Tina T and Richard T. Sometimes there were more people on the recce (like for part 3) than on the day we were officially doing it.

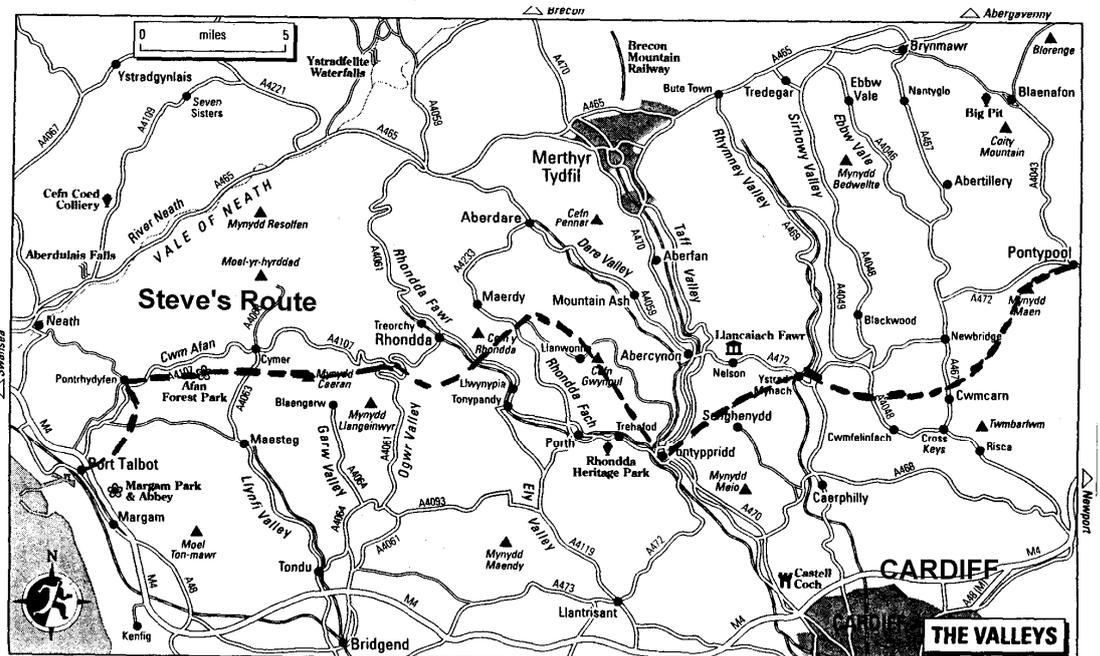
For the unfortunates amongst you who have no idea what I'm talking about, the "UVW" is a linear walk of about 54 miles from Pontypool & New Inn rail station in the east, across the Valleys, to Port Talbot. Admittedly, the idea of walking that distance just to reach Port Talbot doesn't sound attractive but the walk itself (devised by me) is superb. Time to get your OS maps out!

From Pontypool and New Inn you cross your first valleys river – the Llwyd – and head up past Griffithstown and Penyrheol to your first valleys hill – Mynydd Maen. Rather than walk to the fairly obvious Twmbarlwm, to avoid having to look at Cwmbran the route goes south-west to Cefn Rhyswg. There's a nice downhill through bluebell woods to Cwmcarn where there's an optional café stop at the new visitor centre (an improvement on how it was a few years ago).

After crossing the mighty Ebbw river there's a direct, steep path up to Mynydd Islwyn. The motte and church are the same as ever but, unfortunately, the shooting club that the path skirts (safely) has grown and become more popular. Peace and quiet is regained by the time you reach Nant-y-Draenog reservoir, and there are fairly obscure paths and tracks down to the preserved mill at Gelligroes on the Sirhowy river. The next ridge is a fairly low one by Valleys standards but there's a busy road to cross at Maesyccwmmmer. The river Rhymini is crossed via Hengoed viaduct. Unfortunately, in recent years the viaduct has been made safer and uglier with a barrier all along the parapet. Stage 1 ended at Hengoed train station.

Stage 2 begins with an easy stroll along cycle route 47 to Pont y Saeson before climbing up a minor road and tracks to the fallen cairn on Mynydd Eglwysilan. There's a short walk along Senghenydd Dyke before nipping down to one of the walk's highlights, a walk down the quiet, wooded Cae dudwg valley to Cilfynydd. The A470 and Taff are crossed by bridge and then there's a recently-improved old railway line in the direction of Ynysybwll (with quite dramatic views of the river). Ynysybwll is by-passed by taking the track and attractive path on its south-westerly side up to Buarth Capel. Then there's more track and footpath before reaching one of the Valleys' great pubs – the Brynffynon at Llanwonno. This place serves good beers AND cheap cake. (Note for future: doing the UVW in one weekend with an overnight at the Brynffynon would be heavenly.)

*(Continued on Page 12)*



## Cycling News

**Tragic Carnage on South Wales Roads as 3 Cyclists Killed**

Oxford University graduate Kate Auchterlonie was killed in February while riding on Caerphilly Mountain three days after celebrating her 28th birthday. She was returning home from a training ride when the fatal crash happened at 9.15am on February 17. Kate was pronounced dead at the scene. Gwent Police arrested 28-year-old Howard Johnson Owen, the driver of the green Honda Prelude two-seater car involved in the early-morning crash.

He appeared in Court in July charged with causing Kate's death by careless driving. Prosecutor Michael Mather-Lees said a number of motorists complained of sun glare on the morning of the accident on February 17 of this year. Mr Mather-Lees said the collision occurred 67m from the Watford junction on the single carriageway 40mph speed limit road. He said there was no suggestion that the defendant had been speeding.

"As a result of the collision, police attended very quickly as did the other emergency services," the prosecutor said.

"On arrest Mr Owen stated 'I don't know why I didn't see her.'

"In interview he said he used the road daily or regularly and was not in a hurry and was travelling at 40mph.

"He had lowered his sun visor and he did not see Miss Auchterlonie.

"He pleaded guilty at the earliest opportunity."

Hilary Roberts, defending, said his client has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and prescribed anti-depressants following the crash. Kate Auchterlonie family's impact statement urged the judge to show the "compassion and generosity" she was known for in life.

In passing a suspended prison sentence, Judge Denyer also disqualified Owen from driving for two years and ordered him to carry out 150 hours of unpaid work.

*Editor's note—You can buy an anti-glare visor attachment for your car for less than £10 at [http://www.care4car.com/productdisplay/productid/316/Car\\_Sun\\_Visor\\_Extension\\_Glare\\_Reducer.html](http://www.care4car.com/productdisplay/productid/316/Car_Sun_Visor_Extension_Glare_Reducer.html)*

34-year-old Stuart Erick Robst, died after a hit-and-run incident in Ely, Cardiff on 30th April. He was knocked off his bike by a green Rover 216 coupe car at Grand Avenue, on the junction with St David's Crescent, at about 6.11pm. But the driver failed to stop and headed north up the road. The car was later found abandoned nearby in Ty Cefn Road, to the rear of the lower shops on Grand Avenue. Stuart suffered serious head injuries in the incident. He was taken to the University Hospital of Wales, but later died. Two men were taken into custody and are helping police with their enquiries.

A 66-YEAR-OLD cyclist, Terrence Alfred Bishop of Crynant, Neath, was killed near Banwen, Neath, at the end of May. The crash happened about 6.30am on Saturday on the A4109 Inter Valley Road at its westbound junction to Heol Gaer, Banwen. The incident involved cyclist Mr Bishop and a blue BMW estate car. Before his retirement, ex-Royal Marine bandsman Mr Bishop worked as an orthopaedic shoemaker. He moved to Crynant from the Gillingham area of Kent four years ago with his wife Jeanine.

**100 Miles of New Sustrans Cycle Trail in the Valleys**

A further 636,000 people in the south Wales Valleys are set to benefit from new walking and cycling routes planned as part of the Valleys Cycle Network. In September, the Welsh Minister for the Economy and Transport, Ieuan Wyn Jones, announced the final part of funding that will allow the creation of an extra 100 miles of routes. These will stretch from the mountainous landscape of Abergavenny in the east to the spectacular Carmarthenshire coast in the west.

The new Valleys Cycle Network will enhance more than 250 miles of existing walking and cycling routes in the Valleys and will follow the former tramways, towpaths and railways in the south Wales Valleys - legacies of its industrial past. It is hoped that the Network will provide people with an attractive alternative to car journeys, cutting local congestion, reducing carbon emissions and helping people to travel in ways that benefit their health. When completed, the new routes will connect to parts of the National Cycle Network that are already popular like the Taff Trail and Celtic Trail, as well as linking up towns, shops, visitor attractions and country parks, and improving access to large employers.

*Articles from the South Wales Echo & Sustrans website.*

## Caving News

**Five Hours on a Rock**

On Saturday 6 June two parties of cavers from Aberystwyth entered OFD leaving tickets on the board with their estimated time of return. It was a quiet weekend at the South Wales CC cottages - they were the only cavers present but, luckily, one regular who was flooded out of his campsite turned up at the club and initiated a callout soon after 11 pm, when the cavers became overdue.

One party of three cavers was undertaking a through-trip from Cwm Dwr to Top Entrance, starting at noon; it had been raining steadily overnight and the forecast was for more rain. Much later in the day, at 5pm, two cavers entered TopEntrance intending to meet their friends

en route. The groups met in the streamway, turned and started back towards Maypole Inlet but suddenly met rising water - outside, the weather remained foul with a severe storm developing by about 6pm.

The now five-strong team was well equipped and roped up to help them reach Maypole Inlet, but it proved impossible to climb the ladder as it was buried in a raging waterfall. Hoping to move away from the torrent, they gained a ledge just upstream from the inlet, then were forced still higher to a boulder bridge when bivi bags, though they also had some candles and food. Some 27 cavers were called out overnight, the first search team finding the five around 2.30am, by which time they had spent about five hours on the boulders. They were roped out and made an exit without incident - though the outcome could have been very different if the group had not been so well equipped or taken the right approach to sit out the flood rather than deciding to continue further downstream. Thanks are due to everyone on the rescue team who helped bring about a successful conclusion.ere they huddled.

**Thieves Target Caver's Minibus**

On 10 May a party from Southampton UCC returned to the surface after a trip to Ogof Rhyd Sych near Merthyr Tydfil, to discover that their minibus had been broken into and emptied. As well as personal gear including dry clothes, mobile phones and wallets, the bus had previously contained at least four full SRT kits. If anyone is offered a deal on gear that seems to good to be true, or sports gear bearing a SUCC tag, please let Piers Hallihan know: piershallihan@yahoo.co.uk. Regrettably, cavers must still avoid leaving anything visible in their vehicles while parked near acave. In the 1980s the Ystradfellte area was targeted by thieves and this only ended after a caver mounted surveillance operation in 1987, when sufficient information was gathered to enable the police to make an arrest (see Descent 76).

The perpetrator was sentenced to two years in prison; it was evident that several 'caver car parks' were involved. Let us hope that this latest

incident is not a return to those days - but be aware that at any of the usual parking places, someone who knows that cavers will be gone for a significant period might be watching and waiting ...

**Gower School in a Hole**

AN unusual but interesting piece of news reached Descent in November 2008. It appears that while the local council was designing new foundations for a demountable classroom at Llanrhidian Primary School on Gower, a 'natural solution cavity' (cave) was revealed in the grounds. The routine site investigation by Ground Investigation (Wales) led 19 the children being relocated to Penclawdd primary, where they are likely to remain until Easter. Caver Tony Waltham has acted as a geological consultant to the investigating team. Local information suggests sizeable passages 'extending west towards Weobley Castle' are present. Other 'old' entrances are supposed to exist at or near the site, which apparently had long ago been filled with debris.

*Articles from 'Descent' magazine.*

**New Year in Perranporth, Cornwall**  
**Thurs 31st December to Sunday 3rd January 2010**  
**Sian D. Provides the Info:**

I am pleased to let you all know, that after a lot of on-line searching your committee have finally managed to secure 'an exclusive to COG' New Year booking for Perranporth Youth Hostel.

This hostel is located on the rugged cliff tops of North Cornwall and overlooks the well provisioned seaside village of Perranporth. Perranporth is within easy reach of the surfing capital of the UK, Newquay. As we have the Hostel all to ourselves, with no need to be out of the building by a set time or concerns about sharing facilities with strangers, this should be a pretty laid back weekend. BUT, for anyone who may care to stretch their legs a little, I am willing to lead walks.

And for the foodies amongst us, in addition to our traditional New Years Eve meal, will be happy to organize group meals either in the hostel or at one of the local pubs.

**Booking and accommodation:**

Although Perranporth Hostel can accommodate up to 24 people, for the comfort and enjoyment of those who want to come along on this New Years break, I only intend to fill 18 places. The individual price for this weekend will be capped at £50.00. But this price could go down slightly, depending on numbers. For any family groups, or couples who don't want to be apart over this festive season, I am also able to offer the exclusive use of a four bedded room for the overall price of £200 for the three night stay. (This price could also be reduced slightly in accordance to overall numbers.) (As this is a Rent-A-Hostel situation, I am unable to make provisions for anyone wishing to come along for a shorter stay at a reduced rate.)

To date COGers have shown quite a lot of interest in this particular break, with seven places reserved already. So, if you are interested in coming along to COG's 2009/10 New Years weekend, please contact me "Sian", on 01446719697 or email me on [shannycelt@hotmail.com](mailto:shannycelt@hotmail.com) no later than, Thursday, October 29th.



Perranporth Beach with Youth Hostel photo inset.

**Navigation Course**  
**January (Exact Date to be Confirmed)**

**In January COG are organising a Navigation Course. This will be subsidised from COG funds and places will be filled on a first come first served basis. Some information on the course:**

The course is run by Kevin Walker Mountain Activities. Kevin Walker Mountain Activities is a small, long established outdoor training business which has been running navigation courses in the Welsh mountains since 1978. Their main base is at Crickhowell in the Brecon Beacons. The region is relatively uncrowded, and many first-time visitors are amazed by the wealth of wilderness. Their website states "The nature of the terrain makes the whole area ideal for navigation courses, and we make particularly memorable use of several large tracts of wonderfully wild, featureless moorland. We are convinced that the success and effectiveness of our navigation courses is due to the friendly professionalism of our team, the quality of our training, and the individual attention made possible by very small groups - on our open navigation courses, we never work with more than 4 clients per instructor, often with less."

In overall charge is Kevin Walker, a highly experienced mountain addict who has been running navigation and mountaineering courses for 30 years. Well known in the business, Kevin ran Mountain Leader training courses for several years, and has written many books including Mountain Navigation Techniques (widely regarded as the standard work), and Learn Rock Climbing in a Weekend (published worldwide). Recent books include The Essential Hillwalkers Guide, published to critical acclaim in 2002, and Navigation - Finding Your Way on Mountain & Moorland, published by Frances Lincoln in 2007. He also writes and publishes guidebooks under the banner [Heritage Guides](#), and occasionally writes for the outdoor press, particularly TGO magazine. He is currently working on a book for Frances Lincoln (publishers of the Wainwright Guides).

The course COG plan to do is over two days. Accommodation arrangements to be advised. Kevin Walker says "On this, by far our most popular course, we strip away the myths and complications and teach you a range of simple, straightforward skills which can be used anywhere and in any conditions.

Basically a combination of our Map Interpretation and Poor Visibility Techniques courses, we use day one to introduce you to the art of map interpretation, which allows you to read a map like a book; then on day two, we teach you a range of compass skills, and show you how to estimate time and distance with great accuracy. We also explain the concept of micro-navigation, and teach you some basic relocation techniques. The continuity gained by attending for two consecutive days means that we often cover more ground than is possible on two separate one day courses, making this a very cost-effective way of learning about navigation."

If this has wetted your appetite for the course contact Viv to book your place—029 20763810.



## Steve's Big Sack

(Continued from Page 9)

Dragging yourself away for the next bit can be difficult, especially as it's through some forestry and therefore slightly below the walk's usual stratospheric standards. I forced people to check out the *clavicula* at the Roman marching camp at Twyn y Bridallt and their lives were enriched as a result. There was then a slightly out of the way track down to the Rhondda Fach at Ferndale before taking the obvious bridleway over the hill, which had a good view towards the woods above Llwynypia. From the old spoil heaps north-west of Ystrad there's an easy (though bungalow-strewn) track up to the rail station at Ton Pentre. Getting the train back from a Valleys station on a Saturday evening you might notice young women wearing skimpy dresses, openly making last-minute adjustments to their underwear as the train approaches Cardiff Queen Street. It's disgusting.

At around 9.00 am on a Saturday morning you might find yourself beginning part 3 of the UVW, crossing the Rhondda Fawr river before taking the classic bridleway up the hill and over to "the Bwlch". If you're unlucky (as we were) there won't be an ice cream van up there. Great views, though, over Craig Ogwr on the way up to Werfa masts. There's the last of three cross valley dykes just before Mynydd Caerau, which has a cemetery of Bronze Age cairns and good views over to Gower. There's a bit of forestry on the way down to Caerau, where you cross the infant Llynfi river, but after that you're on the obvious track to Afan Argoed Country Park, on the southern side of the Afan valley (and it's quite a nice change to find a valley going in your direction, for a change). Another of the walk's highlights, after Afan Argoed, is the walk along the right bank of the river down to Pontrhydyfen. The Afan is crossed again by way of the old aqueduct and there's a climb through trees in the direction of Bryn then Mynydd Bychan. The path here has got a bit damp in the last 8 years or so.

The clear track over Mynydd Emroch takes you into Port Talbot through a direct and not too painful way. Top tip – don't go down into Port Talbot directly from the hill with the mast the way Richard and I did in August. Painful.

And there you have it. No-one will be impressed or understand but you might have enjoyed it. I wonder if anyone reads this who hasn't actually been on any of these events? If you fit that description and you fancy a bit of adventure with COG's coolest dudes then contact me by one of the usual channels. Fresh blood is always welcome....



The Three Peaks Trial 2009 raised a record £2,125.30! The proceeds have been distributed between the Longtown Mountain Rescue Team (who did a fantastic job supporting us on the mountain top checkpoints) and the Elenydd Wilderness Trust. See LMRT's thankyou letter below and the EWT thankyou letter on page 8. Plans are progressing well for the 2010 event on Saturday March 27th. For details see the website—[www.threepeakstrial.co.uk](http://www.threepeakstrial.co.uk)

### 'Thank You COG' From Longtown Mountain Rescue Team

Three Peaks Trial Treasurer Julian L. sent a cheque for £1125.15 to LMRT from the money raised at this year's Three Peaks Trial. The LMRT reply is shown below:



## Longtown Mountain Rescue Team

Unit 9, Union Road Industrial Estate, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 7RQ

Charity No: 518928

"Saving lives in wild and remote places"

14<sup>th</sup> September, 2009

Mr. J. Langston,  
Treasurer,  
Cardiff Outdoor Group,  
4 Lloyd Avenue,  
Llandaff,  
CARDIFF. CF5 2BX

Dear Julian,

Thank you for your letter of 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2009 with enclosure of cheque in the sum of £1125.15.

We too very much enjoyed the day and working with you.

We are currently in the process of ordering new waterproof jackets for the Team and the monies will be put towards this cost.

Thank you once again for an enjoyable day. We too look forward to next year.

Best regards,

Yours sincerely,

MARK NICHOLLS  
Team Leader

Longtown Mountain Rescue Team



### LLANISHEN RESERVOIR NEWS: DEVELOPER'S APPEAL SUCCESSFUL

The twists and turns continue in the on-going appalling planning application by the multi national company Western Power Distribution to wreck part of Cardiff's 'green corridor' by infilling Llanishen Reservoir and building 300 houses on the site. In July the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) listed the dam wall. However WPD was proceeding with a previous appeal to the High

Court to overturn a decision by the Welsh Assembly blocking the planning application. On legal advice WAG was forced not to defend the WPD appeal. This now means the Assembly have to review their decision to not allow WPD's development. However it would seem WPD will have to submit an alternative development proposal now the dam is listed. In a further twist Cardiff Council this month (October) declared the area around the reservoir a nature reserve. The battle goes on!

A Colour Version of The View is Available from the COG website (web address below)

Wanted For Future 'Views': Any Photos From Weekends etc, Articles, Letters, Reviews of Trips, Etc. that could be used in future 'VIEWS' please Email them to: [theview@fsmail.net](mailto:theview@fsmail.net)

The View is published by Cardiff Outdoor Group 13 Gelligaer Gardens, Cathays, Cardiff, CF24 4LT.

Website: <http://www.cardiffoutdoorgroup.org.uk> E-mail: [info@cardiffoutdoorgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@cardiffoutdoorgroup.org.uk)

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