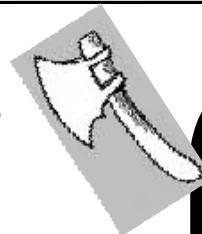


# The View

Issue No. 26

Summer 2006

## **BLAENCARON, DOLGOCH & TY'N CORNEL YOUTH HOSTELS SET TO BE AXED BY YHA!**



**BLAENCARON Youth Hostel**



**DOLGOCH Youth Hostel**



**TY'N CORNEL Youth Hostel**

Arguably the heart and soul of the YHA are epitomised by these three beautiful, remote hostels. No longer part of the corporate plan, the YHA is set to shut them. There is a chance however they could be saved with a little help from COG! Full Story Page 7.

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**Newsletter of**



# Letter from the Chair

July 2006

As announced in the previous edition of *The View*, COG has been awarded a grant by Awards for All Wales to buy a laptop and data projector, and COG has duly bought the kit. For the techno-lovers on the committee (and I'm sure you know who they are), it was like Christmas come early. Endless sprees round computer shops with yours truly carrying the big cheque. Yes, because the Award carries quite a bit of kudos, we couldn't just have a normal-sized cheque. We had to have one of those big ones, made of reinforced card. We got some funny looks from the staff in Dixons, but at least we managed to get out without committing ourselves to an extended warranty.



One of the conditions of getting the award is to attract publicity for our receipt of it. The COG committee has been fairly quiet on this front over the summer, mainly because the majority, if not all, of our slide shows take place during the autumn and winter. So now our thinking caps are on for an event – most likely at Chapter – for the coming months where we can show off our new laptop and projector, and which will attract some publicity. More often than not, our slide shows are based on members' holidays or adventures. While these are informative and stimulating, the committee thought we'd try and go for something a bit special.

We discussed this at our last committee meeting, and have brought up the topic on a couple of walks and, for some strange and unaccountable reason, 80% of suggestions from committee members, and your standard, mortal COG members, have zoomed in on the naked rambler as a newsworthy speaker. What this says about us, I dread to think. We know he did it just for the crack, but maybe a talk would yield further nuggets of information. All I shall say at this point is that we are looking into it. One flaw in the plan, I understand, is that he is still in prison. It has been suggested that one of us could stand in, using slides from Lands End to John O'Groats with some touching up from Photoshop, but this, I am afraid, is just rumour. The committee is, of course, happy to consider other options, should the pendulum of opinion swing the other way.

Seriously, your suggestions are most welcome. The group covers a wide range of activities which, as well as being great fun, have mental, physical and social benefits. There is a lot that we do that reaches out into the wider world, and could be the subject of a novel and newsworthy talk or presentation: for example, health, environment, beauty, community, etc. Any ideas, do let me know. If we can attract some diverse and unusual perspectives, you may find that Tuesday nights will never be the same again. And if, by any chance, we do get the naked rambler, just remember: maintain eye contact at all times!

Very best wishes

**Clive**



## CHALLENGE WALKS

**Aug 5 - Caerphilly Summits Challenge - 30/21/11 miles.** From Tongwynlais Primary School the route will be over the beautiful and varied hills and ridges surrounding the historic Caerphilly Castle, with views of the Brecon Beacons in the north and across the Bristol Channel to Somerset in the south. Entry £5 (£6 on the day). **Contact:** John Cunnane **Address:** 11 The Dell, Tonteg, Pontypridd, Mid Glamorgan. CF38 1TG **Telephone:** 01443 207836 (Before 9.30pm please) **Email:** JPCunnane@aol.com **Web Site:** <http://www.southwalesldwa.org>

**Sept 9 Gower Cliff Walk—22 miles** A sponsored walk in aid of Macmillan Cancer Relief. from Rhossili car park to Bracelet Bay. For those wishing to leave cars at Bracelet Bay, buses will get you to the start. Entry fee £5. For registration forms send an SAE to Mrs J Hill, Mor-Awel, Woodend Lane, Langland, SA3 4QG.

**Sept 15 to 18. 20 walks in the Rhondda Cynon Taff area from 6 to 18 kilometres.** Full details on their website or ring 01443 790551 or e-mail [walk@valleytourism.com](mailto:walk@valleytourism.com).

**Sept 19—22 - Welsh International 4 Days Walks—25/15/10 miles Each Day.** From Llanwrtyd Wells Square. Waymarked routes thru the mountains, forests & scenery of Mid Wales. Entry £25 for 4 days, or £7 per day, light refreshments at Cps. Free entertainment each night. Walkers may do any of the 4 days **Contact:** Gordon Green **Address:** Elenedd, Victoria Road, Llanwrtyd Wells, Powys. LD5 4GU **Telephone:** 01591 610270 **Email:** Gordon88green@btopenworld.com **Web Site:** <http://www.green-events.co.uk>

**Sept 23 - Pumlumon Challenge - 25 miles,** - Nant yr Arian Forestry Centre 8mls east of Aberystwyth on the A44. The route is over the Pumlumon Hills passing the source of the Wye & Severn, then onto the Hengwm & Hirnant valleys & around Nantymoch dam. Entry £9 inc cert & refreshments at Cps, traditional Welsh Cawl at finish. Full details & entry form on website. **Contact:** Pentir Pumlumon **Address:** Lisburne House, Pontrhydygroes, Ceredigion, SY25 6DQ **Web Site:** <http://www.pumlumon.org.uk>

**Oct 14 - Talybont Trial - 20 or 10 miles** - Anti clockwise from Talybont on Usk. Craig Pwlfa then via Pant-y-Craigiau, Chartists Cave, & Tor-y-Foel . 10ml route avoids high moorland but maintains beautiful scenery. Entry £6, u18s £3 (£8/£4 on day) inc cert, tea, coffee, squash, bis & cakes. Refreshment point on route. **Contact:** Martyn Rogers **Address:** 122 Stow Hill, Newport, Gwent. NP20 4GA **Telephone:** 01633 257632 **Email:** [martynrogers@supanet.com](mailto:martynrogers@supanet.com) **Web Site:** <http://walk.to/nogs>

## Photo Montage of COG Events

The events shown are from the COG walks between March and July.



30th April: On top of Tor y Fael



23rd April: Punchbowl, Blaenrhegyn



7th May: Brecon Canal near Talybont



7th May: Talybont Reservoir



4th June: Margam Abbey



4th June: Port Talbot



2 July: Taff Trail marker post near Talybont.



9th July—Some abseiling on coastal walk near Sully!



9th July: Coastal walk around Penarth headland.



28th June: Evening walk at St. Hilary

## LANDS END TO JOHN O'GROATS—



**In Parts 1 & 2 Steve covered the walk Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, County Durham & Northumberland. Part 3 continues the walk on Steve's arrival in Scotland.**

At the end of Part 2 Steve was leaving Jedburgh for the beginning of the walk through Scotland. Scotland had both the best and worst walking of the trip.

Walking from Melrose to Edinburgh included a Roman Road, some nice river walking along the Tweed, the Eildon Hills (low cloud so not much in the way of views), an old railway track, a bit of the Southern Upland Way, an old drover's route, forestry, as well as quite a few roads. Mostly camped but also stayed at Melrose YH. The German warden there is a bundle of laughs - *nicht!* Had a bunk above a snoring Glaswegian - had to rattle the bunk around for about half an hour before he finally shut up. Some of the things/places seen - Traquair House looked good, suggesting the kind of lifestyle I should have been born into. Peebles is a nice little town. Saw a stoat on the road on the road there. Carllops: a low point for energy and motivation. Stopped in the pub to collect some water and have a drink. Fortunately, their music is okay and I was buoyed up by "Groove is in the Heart" and "Walk this Way".

### Edinburgh.

At Linlithgow my foot and every other bit of me said it was time for a rest so got the train to Edinburgh. Unlike Hexham, this was really good. Went up Arthur's Seat - great clear views to Ben Lomond, which almost got me excited. Unfortunately, two of the places I wanted to go into are closed on Sundays - John Knox's house (not that surprising, really) and The Writer's Museum. Went to the National Gallery, chatted to a couple of old ladies in the teashop (ramblers) then saw a film - "The Door in the Floor". Not an outright classic, but recommended. Unusually for me I've showered virtually every night recently. Normally I'm a pig, happy to baste in a few days' worth of sweat but it's different after you've been walking.

### Edinburgh to Fort William (West Highland Way)

After a cup of tea under the Falkirk Wheel I swapped the Union Canal for the Forth & Clyde Canal (surprisingly okay for a canal walk). The rest of the walk, including the West Highland Way, had forestry, valleys and of course Loch Lomond - the loch looks great, even in the rain. The WHW is mainly a valley walk but on the last day I took an alternative "short cut" over the Mamores ridge - the scenery was stunning, the whole walk felt alpine in terms of weather, effort and views and it was the right decision to take this fabulous route.

The WHW was also great for camaraderie - most memorably, two young medic students, Kirsty & "Becks". They said that as was doing LEJOG they'd named me "Steel Steve", which made me like them even more. It's the most flattering and most inaccurate nickname I've ever had. I also saw a lot of a young Shetland couple (now living in Perth) - Stuart & Lois. Also regularly bumped into on the route were five Belgian boys and four University students from Boston. It seems that only the younger people are the ones who backpack, the older boring ones using B&Bs. I was the oldest of the backpackers. Had a good chat with two post-grad geologists, Stuart & Sarah at the really good Climber's Bar at the Kingshouse Hotel. They did their geological mapping around Blaenau Ffestiniog so there was plenty to laugh about.

*Midgimus Maximus.* I can't write about the WHW without a mention of midges. The Scottish habit of calling them "midgies" doesn't make them cute. They are the spawn of Beelzebub (ticks are the spawn of Satan). If you haven't had experience with midges they might sound like nothing much but they can drive you to despair. Pure evil. First used the midge head net after the Falkirk Wheel. Attempts at keeping midges out of the tent included using a plastic milk bottle to save getting out of the tent in the night; however, the little bleeders are everywhere and are truly a phenomenon of nature. It's difficult getting off to sleep when you're slapping your face every couple of minutes and it's normal to try and count the number of dead midges on someone's face as you chat to them.

The WHW was a good indication of what to expect in the coming weeks in terms of getting knackered, soaked, bitten and occasionally inspired. I'd recommend the route as an introduction to walking in Scotland and I don't think it would be too shameful if you left the tent at home. Like the Pennine Way, the camaraderie is really good.

### Fort William to Ullapool

This section, in theory, was the toughest - stretches of up to 3 days without supplies, a walk over through and over the hills of the West Highlands, and the potential for crappy days of bad weather and midges. It also had the potential to be the best bit, and it was. Incredibly, the good weather continued and there was only one day of rain out of nine.

Took a route up the Great Glen to Loch Lochy before cutting NW to Loch Arkaig, Glen Loyne and the South Kintail Ridge. Here I met some Munro-baggers doing a Water Aid charity event aimed to get everyone on the 3000 ft hills of Britain between 12.00 noon and 2.00 pm that day). From Shiel Bridge I headed to a small place called Camas Luinie where there was a luxury cottage for me at £10.00 for the night. Pure luxury - a bath, followed by dinner, followed by a read on the sofa as my mingling



## Part 3 Scotland by Steve Bees

garments were in the washer. Next evening I used . a bothy - very nice it was too. Another great evening, deer grazing outside as I sat eating my camp dinner.

From there, over to the youth hostel at Torridon (where nothing torrid happened). Went down to the shop for a takeaway cup of tea at a picnic table, reading my book, overlooking the loch. Fabulous. That evening there were five other men in the dorm but no snorers (it can happen!). Next morning Morag, the shopkeeper at Torridon, gave me a free cuppa (the Scots seem to like my Welsh accent, and her mother-in-law was from Cilfynydd). The next day the weather was good so I decided to go for the top of Beinn Eige from the loch. Had a really steep climb up to Ruadh Stac Mor but then it was misty. The only time of the trip when navigating was truly a matter of safety. Then walked the road to Kinlochewe. Good views back to Liathach but I was pretty knackered. Too late into Kinlochewe for food but I got into the bunk-house attached to the hotel.

Heading to Ullapool from Strath na Sealga there were absolutely awesome views back to An Teallach - probably THE view of the trip so far. However, it was a good decision not to attempt it with a full backpack (I can feel good about being too lazy for it) as the ridges looked pretty cruel. I must return to tame the beast.... Stayed at the top location hostel in Ullapool. On Saturday night 1980s semi-legends B A Robertson is playing at the local hall - tonite! He still has the same haircut, girls. If I was someone who lived life to the max I'd have gone - but I'm not, so I didn't. Next day was a rest day with a boat trip around Isle Martin.

### The Last Week! Ullapool To Glen Einig

Had an easy track past Loch Achall (with a pair of black-throated divers and loads of sandpipers), then past Loch an Daimh then further towards forestry. Camped wild but my lighter disintegrated. Fortunately, some D of E kids were camped nearby and they donated a lighter so I didn't have to eat energy bars and flapjacks for dinner. No midges!

Next day I had some dull road walking. Stopped for coffee at the hotel at Oykel Bridge (paid for by a nice older couple I got chatting to). The shop at Invercassay sells cheese macaroni pies - I think you can only get them in Scotland but they're good fuel. There was more road walking then to Lairg, an important supply stop before the emptiness of Sutherland and Caithness. Headed over empty moorland to Loch Choire where I camped - lots of deer and an idyllic spot for camping, but the midges were out. Also, for the first time really this trip, so were the ticks. Scum. From there it was truly awful, boring track then road walking to a tiny place called Forsinard. Here I stealth camped in a ditch beside the road (it was a nice ditch though). More ticks - one big one fell into my lap when I unpacked the sleeping bag. Disheartening. DisGUSTing!! However, the people at the hotel were really nice and I had a good dinner. Went back for breakfast the next day as well. Forsinard has an extremely high concentration of decent folk per head of population. Not many Scots, mind. One of the wardens at the RSPB place is a nature expert & tick veteran and has even had Lyme Disease in the past. Respect! He also told me about clegs and keds (urghh....).

The walk down north down the road from Forsinard was okay but cutting through the forestry over to Loch More was INCREDIBLY boring. It was a relief to get onto the road at Strathmore Lodge where at least there was something to look at. Camped at a campsite just NW of Loch Watten. Midgey.

What with a long 33 mile day on Thursday I didn't leave the campsite until 12.00. Fortunately, there was a shop and a pub that does sandwiches at Watten. Walked past a young couple walking JOG to LE - frankly, I didn't think they were made of the right stuff (!) - and they were planning on 20 miles a day for 10 weeks(!). Still, I wished them well. At Hastingrow I used some toilets on a construction site - they make pipes for the North Sea. The bloke there was incredibly nice, even by Scottish standards, and offered to make me a cup of tea. It's a long, long, straight road from there but just past Brabster I got views of

the coast and the Orkneys. All day, I'd been letting myself get reflective - places like Caroline's parents' cottage in Cornwall, Crediton and Tiverton all seemed SUCH a long time ago. Well, they were.

After 20 miles and what with the sore feet, I was relieved to get into John O'Groats. I'd been expecting an anti-climax so it wasn't too disappointing in the end. On the spur of the moment I decided to celebrate by booking into my first B&B since Bell Busk (with Lee). Then I had a dinner in the hotel opposite and a couple of celebratory single malts. Chatted to a bloke from Swansea then went to bed early. All very low-key.

Next day walked over to Duncansby Head (the real NE point of Britain) and had the obligatory "official photograph" at the signpost - it cost £9.50 and the photographer couldn't even spell John O'Groats properly. Still, after three months (to the day) walking I was feeling pretty laid-back.

### In Conclusion

I can't understand people who do **LEJOG** the other way around. Imagine looking up at the Five Sisters of Kintail, knowing that you've got Staffordshire to come. Where's the motivation?

The Highlands were fantastic, the highlight of the trip, and it was definitely the right decision to take that route rather than the east coast of Scotland. It was also the right decision to finish at John O'Groats. I can't understand people who do it the other way around. Imagine looking up at the Five Sisters of Kintail, knowing that you've got Staffordshire to come. Where's the motivation?

It didn't feel like much of an achievement to have got up there. That's because it was just a long holiday doing my fave pastime. It was very relaxing to wander freely. What's so hard about that? Apart from the odd day when the foot felt terminal (like at Ashbourne and back in Cardiff), it was almost all enjoyable and, thanks to good weather and walking conditions, I felt very little gloominess - not bad for three months mostly alone.

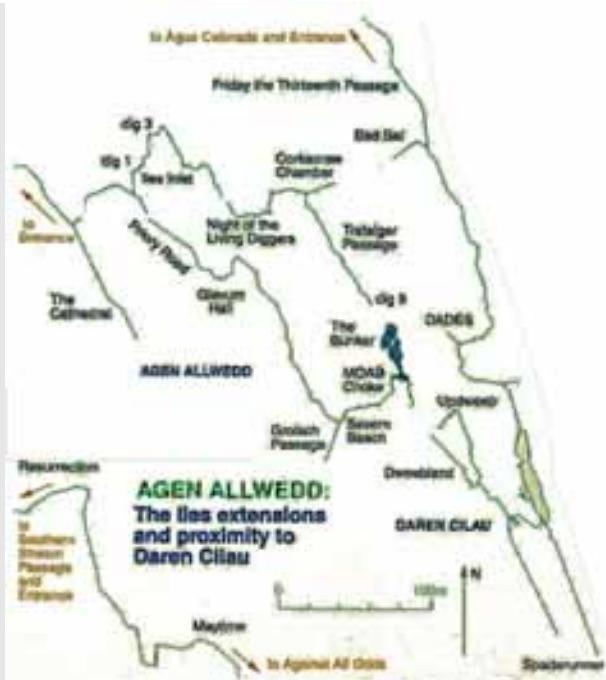
I didn't lose weight, didn't turn into an Olympian he-man and didn't "find" any part of myself I hadn't visited before. I am now introduced to people as "that bloke I told you about who walked from Land's End to John O'Groats".

### WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

The world is a complicated place, made more complicated by the fact that it's full of other people and all their stuff. On the whole people are nice but things like work and stress turn them (and me) into gits. And that is why capitalism doesn't work.



## Caving: New Cave Discoveries Beneath Mynydd Llangattock



**This is a two part article about the major discovery of an extension to one of South Wales best known cave systems below Mynydd Llangattock . Next time you go walking there spare a moments thought for the people in the ground beneath you!**

The caves of Mynydd Llangatwg are among the most extensive in the UK. The mountain contains three major systems: Agen Allwedd (around 34km long), Daren Cilau (30km) and Craig-a-Ffynon (8km). A connection between these three would result in a system over 70km long and give the potential of making 10km+ through-trips, a goal worth striving to attain.

Over the last 50 years a series of major break-throughs, due to a huge amount of effort and determination from a number of teams, have extended these caves to within very short distances of each other. Of particular interest is the area of dig 9, between the ends of the caves of 'The Bunker' in Agen Allwedd and Dadesin Daren Cilau. Here the gap between the two caves has been reduced to 24m and yet the connection still remains elusive, the last digs taking place in the late 1990's.

In 2003 another team was put together and tried digging at Severn Beach which could be reached in an hour after relentless wet crawls, stoops and

boulder obstacles. After a year the cave was extended by 30m but in the wrong direction. Also the air was bad. On one trip the team tried an alternative dig at Iles inlet, a northbound cave. Iles was discovered in 1957 and is a substantial passage that after 20m the roof comes down to a complete sand fill. One team member had noticed scalloping in the walls of the passage indicating it had once taken a very large flow of water and most intriguingly, the direction of scalloping showed this was not an inlet passage as the name suggests but an outlet passage.

Using drag trays and tools the team excavated a 2.5m shaft. After a couple of months of digging mud and sand a phreatic arch had been exposed. Further digging under the arch then steeply upwards eventually the team emerged in a chamber 3m high, 2m wide and 5m long. The chamber zig-zagged then the roof dropped straight into another dig. It was a slight disappointment, but this time there was an airspace to follow and the digging would be far more straightforward.



**Formation in new cave.**

Further digging exposed a large boulder blocking the way. The initial hasty attempt to remove it resulted in one team member becoming trapped on the wrong side of the boulder. Fortunately for him some carefully coordinated levering and hauling allowed the other team members to manoeuvre the boulder out through the arch with just millimetres to spare. The way on was left virtually open. Further trips led into a beautifully scalloped, walking sized passage heading due north but only for 20m before the roof dipped down to a total sand fill. By now Daren Cilau was only 150m away. Spirits were high and dig 3 began in earnest. Another shaft and another arch was found. Further trips (including overnight trips) of frantic digging and eventually the team in October of last year broke through into wide open passage. However, rather than continuing north as expected the passage surprisingly swung south east into a narrow crawl and through some tight S-bends before emerging into an altogether larger south east trending walking sized passage which they followed for some 40m. It was again very well scalloped and had a flat mud floor with beautiful flow marks, ending at a small arch which appeared to have open passage just beyond, but would require enlargement. In total the team had found almost 90m of new cave.

The second part of this cave discovery beneath Mynydd Llangattock will be in the next issue of *The View*.

*This is an extract from the Caver's magazine 'Desent' Cav*

## A view on the President? Asks COG President Bob Hall

**"Pompous old git". That is one former member's view of the person specification for the post of President of Cardiff Outdoor Group. I'll leave you to decide if I am fit for the role! But what is my role?**

There are also a number of Vice-Presidents. Who are they and what do they do? Are they an important part of the organisation or a relic from the past?

So do we need a President and Vice-Presidents? Please let me, or any member of the committee, know if you have any opinions on this. I would like to hear your view now so that when the Annual General Meeting comes around we can have before us a motion that we know has general agreement on whether or not these posts should continue. If they continue we need to have a job specification for them; and, as well, a rather better person specification than "pompous old git"!

I've already received a number of comments – all of which have been different – and would welcome more opinions. So please let me know, preferably by e-mail to [bob.hall@bcs.org.uk](mailto:bob.hall@bcs.org.uk), or by any other means.

## COG Join Fight to Save Elenydd Wilderness Hostels!

The 3 Elenydd youth hostels are set in the Cambrian mountains of mid Wales. They are popular with walkers and cyclists who value their isolation and unique character. However the YHA plans to close and sell them in the next year or so. The **ELENYDD WILDERNESS HOSTELS TRUST** has been set up to save these special hostels for future generations. This is why COG had the Extraordinary General Meeting on June and unanimously voted to change the AGM motion to donate approximately £400 from this year's Three Peaks Trial and transfer all the money to the Elenydd Wilderness Hostels Trust.

The Elenydd is an area in the southern Cambrian Mountains in mid-Wales, between Llanwrtyd Wells and Tregaron. It is a wild and beautiful place, the silence broken only by the bleating of sheep or the occasional call of a bird. It is a wonderful area for outdoor activities - walking, cycling, horse-riding - and an ideal place to escape from the pressures of the modern world. The three hostels, Blaencaron, Dolgoch and Ty'n Cornel have been providing accommodation for visitors to the area for many years. Two are converted farmhouses high in the mountains and the other is a converted school on the outskirts of the small town of Tregaron. All are simple hostels, full of character, run by volunteer wardens and in stunning locations.

### **The story so far**

On 1 February 2006 the YHA announced that the two remaining Elenydd hostels, Ty'n Cornel and Dolgoch, were to close, along with 30 other hostels, in order to pay off some of their large debts and to concentrate resources on 'the more popular areas'. The closure of Blaencaron, the YHA's least-used hostel, had been announced in December 2005. These would have left a large hole in the former network between Brecon and Borth where, ten years ago, there used to be six simple hostels.

### **First Meeting**

The three Elenydd hostels had been mainly run and maintained by volunteers in recent years and there was a widespread feeling that something must be done to save them. A group of volunteer wardens, hostellers, local people and other supporters held a well-attended meeting in Tregaron on 29 April 2006. They decided to form a charitable trust to try to buy and run some of the hostels.

### **Progress**

- 'Elenydd Wilderness Hostels' was set up and has held meetings at Ty'n Cornel in May and Blaencaron in July.
- A business plan was drawn up for the running of Ty'n Cornel and/or Dolgoch. Blaencaron had already been put up for sale at £175,000 but was considered too expensive for the time being.
- A website [www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk](http://www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk) was set up with information, photographs, maps and links, and has been improving all the time thanks to the hard work of the webmaster and several other contributors.
- Supporters have offered over £30,000 in donations towards buying Ty'n Cornel and Dolgoch in amounts varying from £10 to £10,000! The supporters shall ask for these when the Trust is formally registered. Several hundred pounds has also been given to cover expenses.
- The Trust now have about 400 supporters on our mailing list.

### **Ty'n Cornel for sale**

On 14 May the YHA suddenly put Ty'n Cornel on the market at an asking price of £125,000, following publicity in a Sunday newspaper. This was a devastating blow as the Trust had not expected to have to raise so much so quickly. The Trust were not yet in a position to bid yet bids were to close on 5 June. Two supporters, a couple from Cardiff, made an immediate bid at the asking price and opened talks with the Trust about running the hostel. The Trust discussed outline terms and they lobbied the YHA. There was quite a lot of interest in the property and the price went up. After a considerable delay, the Trust recently heard that the YHA has accepted the couple's bid. It seems that the Trust were very lucky that it was not sold for 'holiday lets' or something similar.

### **The Buyers**

The couple who are buying the hostel had been walking with friends between the three Elenydd hostels at Easter and had decided that Ty'n Cornel must stay open as a hostel to keep the beautiful Doethie valley area accessible to walkers and lovers of these wild places. They want to remain reasonably anonymous, but to satisfy curiosity - they are professional people in their mid thirties living in Cardiff and have taken out mortgages on their own homes to raise the money.

### **The Lease**

The Trust are now negotiating the details of the lease of Ty'n Cornel for an initial period of 5 years, at an affordable rent considerably below the commercial rate. The Trust hope to be able to renew this for further periods if they are able to run it satisfactorily. If the new owners decide to sell within the first six years, the Trust will be offered an opportunity to buy the hostel at the market price.

### **Running Ty'n Cornel**

The Trust intend to run Ty'n Cornel under an 'enterprise agreement' with the YHA so that it will still appear in the handbook and on their website. In general the Trust intend to run it along similar lines to the YHA but with more publicity and more support from our members. There are still many things to sort out: laundry, bookings, lock(?), winter opening, rotas, fuel, insurance, furniture, CRB checks, concessions, work parties, fire regulations, phone(?), etc. There will be an opportunity for members to have an input on these at our next meeting at Ty'n Cornel on 5 August.

### **Membership**

*You will soon be able to become a member of the Elenydd Wilderness Hostels Trust by completing an online membership form.* Membership will cost £10 for individuals, £25 for groups and £50 for corporate membership. It is hoped that the money the Trust raise from these subscriptions will help to balance the books.

### **Registration**

The Trust expect to be registered by the Charity Commission as a charitable trust in the next few weeks. They shall then be eligible for Gift Aid and will start asking for donations towards buying Dolgoch, which the Trust expect to be up for sale next year, and perhaps Ty'n Cornel sometime in the future, and towards running the Trust.

### **How can you help?**

All of us involved so far have to work and also have other interests, so our time is very limited. Can you offer the Trust any skills and time? The Trust particularly need help with the following: Fund Raising; Maintenance; Publicity; Survey; Local Group; Secretarial; Donations. **STAY AT TY'N CORNEL**. If all our supporters try to stay at Ty'n Cornel for at least a night or two next year, it will all work, and with your feedback the Trust can make it better. Plan a trip to the Elenydd in 2007 now. Encourage your friends to go and try it too. If you are in a YHA local group, put it in the diary. **Event in September** The Trust are thinking of holding a weekend of walks between the Elenydd hostels to bring together younger people, people from the local area, committee members and other supporters, ending with a barbecue on the Sunday.

### **Contacts**

Marilyn Barrack, Chair, 7 Azalea Close, Cyncoed, Cardiff, CF23 7HR tel:(0)2920 732 289  
Bill Hine, Secretary 24 Brecknock Road, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 2DD tel: (0)1179 719 091

### **Latest News:**

IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THE TRUST WILL BE RUNNING TY'N CORNEL FROM FEBRUARY, FOR AT LEAST FIVE YEARS !

## A New Trail for Cardiff :

### The Ely Trail. Julian Langston Reviews the Route

**Following the success of the Taff Trail and the first stages of a trail along the Rhymney Valley, Cardiff's third river corridor will soon have a cycle / pedestrian path.**

Parts of the new path, along the River Ely have already been built and more are expected to open this year. Plans are in place for a reasonably continuous path for cyclists and pedestrians leading from the mouth of the Ely to St. Fagans. Further extensions are possible in the future.

The idea of the Ely Trail was first conceived by ex cycling officer of Cardiff County Council, Jake Griffiths, but much of the implementation is owed to Lou Lusardi, the council's current cycling officer.

The bascule bridge that Cardiff Cycling Campaign has been campaigning for so long will form the start of the trail, at the same time as providing a link between Penarth and the Sports Village. It is generally agreed that this bridge is a vital link, but unfortunately funding has not yet been found.

From here, the trail will go upstream along the right bank of the Ely, partly alongside existing roads, and partly completely off road. It will go under the railway line and cross a flood bank to join Stuart Close and then Penarth Road. Most of this stretch is cyclable now, but completion of the surface and other details is awaiting the laying of utilities under the path. This section should be finished later this year.

A future crossing of Penarth Road will lead to the newly completed mile-long stretch to Leckwith Road. This stone dust route mostly hugs the river, but is also close to the dual carriageway – indeed it crosses it at one point.

There were several options for the stretch upstream of Leckwith Road – this was complicated by the proposals for the Leckwith Stadium development, just on the other side of the dual carriageway. Our preferred route is the one to be built, again later this year. This will run alongside the river, under the dual carriageway and into an area

of playing fields. When complete, it will continue alongside the river, through the Arjo Wiggins paper mill site (now largely demolished) to Ely Bridge, where Cowbridge Road West crosses the River Ely. An urban village is planned for the site – this stretch of path will be built as part of the village, so will not be complete for several years.

A temporary link to Ely Bridge will use Paper Mill Road, an existing, but poor quality (for cyclists) footbridge over the main railway line, and the footway along Cowbridge Road East to Ely Bridge Roundabout. There is some possibility that ramps will be provided to make wheeling a bike over the bridge possible.

There are a number of possibilities for feeder routes onto the trail between Leckwith Road and Ely Bridge. Cardiff Cycling Campaign has long campaigned for a route from Heol Trelai to Lawrenny Avenue, which would cross the trail and provide access from the lower part of Ely. A number of schools and playing fields would be served by this route, but a short bridge over the river would be needed.

A toucan crossing will allow cyclists to cross Cowbridge Road West, leading to Wroughton Place, and then a track, which is to be upgraded, hopefully later this year. The track leads to Birdies Lane, which will take the route under the railway line onto Bwlch Road, which forms the route through Fairwater. This road has recently been calmed and 20mph speed limit imposed.

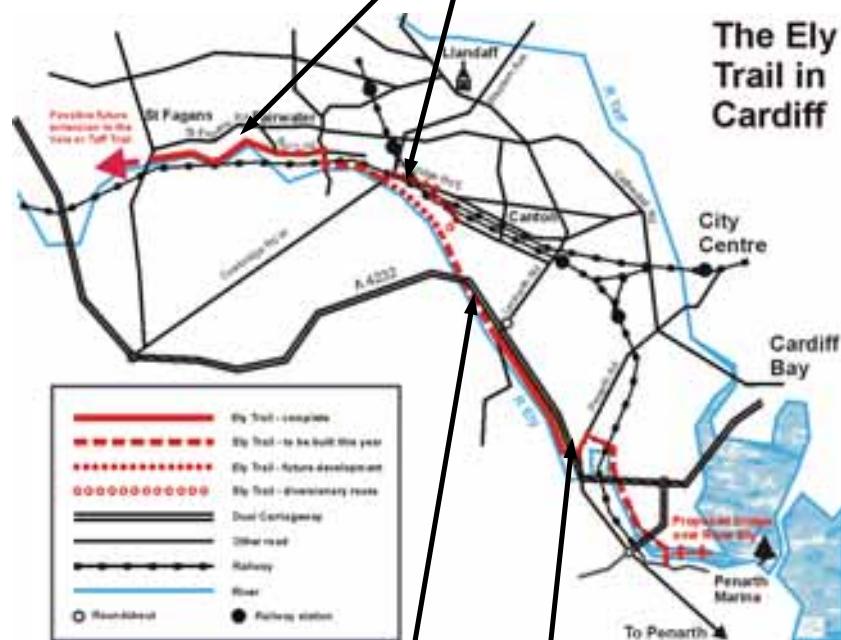
The second new stretch runs from the end of Bwlch Road to St. Fagans village and will complete this section of the Ely Trail. Future possibilities include extending further along the Ely Valley into the vale, and linking northwards, onto the Taff Trail, largely making use of disused railway lines. Lou Lusardi is particularly keen on the latter as it would create a cycling loop using the Taff and Ely Trails, (a good Sunday event for COG!).

Cardiff Cycling Campaign has welcomed the development of the Ely Trail. Although largely intended for leisure, there will be a number of useful utility routes created by it and its feeders.

The Ely Trail between Fairwater and St. Fagans.



Arjo Wiggins Site—the path would be next to the river on the right.



View west of Leckwith Road—the trail will be on the right bank.



Penarth Road to Leckwith Road section at Penarth Road.

## Weekends Away



### **23rd-25th August: Bank Holiday Weekend at Borth Hostel, Ceredigion.**

The name of this 60 bed Edwardian house is Morlais, which translates as 'the voice of the sea'. You'll understand why once you see its position overlooking Cardigan Bay just 20 metres from the beach. Enjoy striking sunsets from the headland or walk on the dunes and four miles of sandy beach. The Ynyslas and Ynys Hir nature reserves, Nant Yr Arian Forestry Centre and the world renowned Centre for Alternative Technology are all within reach by bicycle, public transport or car.

Cost: £11.95 pppn. Facilities: BBQ areas; Classroom; Common room; Cycle store; Dining room; Drying room; Games room; Internet access; Kitchen; Laundry; Lounge; Luggage stores; Porch; Restaurant; Self-catering kitchen; Shop; T.V lounge.

Organised by: Enid L.



### **September: Week in South France**

COG are doing a trip to the south of France staying in a 'bourgoise mansion'. Plans are for walking and site-seeing in between the obligatory wine drinking! Note: The trip is now fully booked.



### **29th Sept to 1st Oct: Backpacking Weekend in the Arans**

Explore this long, dramatic ridge with the COG elite. Friday night at Dinas Mawddwy, Saturday a wild camp beside a mountain tarn.

Photo shows Craiglyn Dyfi, source of the Afon Dyfi.

Names in advance to Steve B (07812 586949) before Wednesday 27th September.



### **29th Dec to 1st Jan: New Year in London**

A chance to see the best fireworks around and celebrate new year in London. Samuel Johnson said 'Whoever is tired of London is tired of life'. This new year is an opportunity to sample the buzz. Loads of attractions even in winter: churches/cathedrals, museums, theatres, history, pubs, restaurants, walks along the Thames, etc.

For details of costs, travel arrangements, etc. contact the Organiser, Julian L. (Tel. 029 20567013).

## Sue Cox's Favourite Place—Pen y Fan



### We continue our series of COG members 'Favourite Places'. Sue Cox explains why South Wales' highest peak is her favourite.

Chris caught me unawares last Sunday as I stopped for breath on my way up the 'North Face' of the Blorenge. I found myself agreeing to writing a short piece for The View on my favourite place. At the time he asked me, the place that came immediately to mind was my own bed on a Sunday morning and not having to get out of it for a Cog walk!

With more thought I realise that I have dozens of favourite places but one in particular comes to mind, as it is associated with lots of happy memories and symbolizes 36 happy years spent in South Wales. It is Pen Y Fan.

The walking connoisseur might well scoff at such a choice. Pen Y Fan is now a well trodden route and very eroded at the summit. On a weekend day the popular routes are far from a remote experience with all and sundry plodding up in a range of suitable or unsuitable footwear.

Despite this, I love the views from the top and would be glad to receive a quid for every time I have stood there. My estimate would be anything from 50 to 100 times.

My family returned to South Wales after a short time in Gloucester, my birth place, and Taunton. (All my family are Welsh, so I am too!) The first time I walked up Pen Y Fan would have been shortly after coming to Cardiff when I was 7. I can remember waiting for my mother to reach the top so we could have our well deserved picnic. My two, older brothers leading the party followed by Dad and me.

I can remember games of cricket in The Beacons National Park and enjoying the wonderful view of Pen Y Fan from the Mountain Centre, one of my Grand-parents' favourite places. The area was a definite favourite for my family and I used to get quite excited as we wound our way through the Merthyr Valley, before the A470 was completed, towards the National Park.

As I grew older I enjoyed walking the Pen Y Fan routes with various friends and two or three boyfriends. I even remember skinny dipping in LLyn Cwm LLwch, at the foot of the mountain, many years ago when I was young and foolish.

More recent memories have included an exuberant, scrummy picnic with my friend Jacqui after work. Jacqui excels at picnics and they are always delicious. Also, how could I not mention, that COG evening walk when Quentin, dressed in his tuxedo, provided us with sherry and nibbles at the top.

Pen Y Fan stands out like a Beacon in the area. I have worked in Prince Charles Hospital and often caught tantalising glimpses of it from the windows, especially on a sunny day when I would have preferred to be walking one of those well trodden routes. On drives home from North Wales, a long, tiring journey, it gladdens the heart to see it slip into view just past Llysnewydd and reminds me that I am nearly home.

My most recent visit to Pen Y Fan was with two, new friends I met on holiday. They were both from the South East and wanted to visit the Beacons so I invited them for the weekend. I led them up the more interesting Northern route and they were bowled over by the scenery. They reminded me how lucky I am to have mountains so close to my home and that South Wales is a great place to live.

## GOOD NEWS FOR CHOCOHOLICS!



'TRAIL' magazine reports some great news! **Chocolate** is good for you! Researchers in Greece have found flavanoids in cocoa relax blood vessels and help your heart pump more easily. Dark chocolate is best. So is **liquorice** - It's been found liquorice contains a substance which kills cells infected with a cancer causing virus, inhibits the growth of the SARS virus, hepatitis and HIV. And **sherbet** - The sodium bicarbonate in sherbet slows the build up of painful muscle acidity during intense activity like sprinting or climbing.

Another little known fact—sugar calms you down - Worried by map-reading? Stressed about exposure? Eat your energy bar. Scientists at the University of Cincinnati have found sugary foods quickly reduce levels of stress hormones in the body and combat anxiety.

The July 'Trail' magazine also quotes Dr Adam Collins of www.nutriffic.co.uk on the best on-the-hill choc bars for giving an energy boost. The result is:

**1. Mars** - The best balance of energy and healthy fat levels; **2. Crunchie**—Healthy fat levels but very high in sugar; **3. Picnic** - Good protein and reasonable fat/sugar levels; **4. Snickers** - The most energy but very fatty; **5. Twix** - Good carbs but it's high in fat; **6. Kit-Kat Chunky** - Too high in fat and sugar; **7. Dairy Milk** - The highest fat of all, but low additives; **8. Topic** - Average energy but too fatty; **9. Boost** - High in energy but also fat & sugar.

Dairy Milk, which is pure chocolate and good for you, comes in 8th? That must mean Mars bars are extremely good for you and should be made one of the 'five a day'!



## THE QUIZ—IT'S A ROLLOVER!

IT'S ANOTHER ROLLOVER FOLKS! COG Quiz King Kevin Ham's quiz question goes to a third phase after no correct answers were received. The prize is now £15 for the person who can solve the riddle below. If no one gives the correct answer to Kevin by 30th September then the prize money will 'roll-over' again to the next issue of 'The View'.



*'Because I was on the walk 27 February (now that's a rare event.) I was not on the summit of Pen y Fan for what was for some the longest day, but was for me the shortest day, not just of the year but also of my life. Nevertheless, I did get to see, the river river, the return of the king; and matter of death and life.'*

*Nobody has responded to the challenge to put a meaning to these statements. Which I have reordered.*

*So I will give you this. It's all about a journey. So tell me*

*The why, the when, the how, and the where.*

*What I did on the jaunt and what I did there.*

*I have tried to make the answers google proof but one is most definitely not so protected.*

*It seems that you need further help, so I will tell of the things I saw.*

*The river river this was not the one in Bristol, Falkirk, Ontario, or Nova Scotia.*

*Of the return of the king I need tell you nothing, a big round zero.*

*Of a matter of death and life, I will give you the answer in the form of a traditional quiz.*

*My first is in Hostel and Hotel too.*

*My second starts more than a score.*

*My third is at the beginning of something very personal to me.*

*My fourth you have seen before.*

*By the way I reserve the right to lie to any questions put to me.*



COG Members on top of Sugar Loaf during the rekkie for the Silver Route.

Plans have begun for next year's event which takes place on Saturday, March 31st.

Following the poor conditions this year and the lessons learnt major changes are planned for Three Peaks Trial 2007. The anticlockwise route is being dropped so checkpoints on Blorenge and Skirrid will be in place for a much shorter period. The routes are being renamed. Route B, the most challenging physically and for map reading skills is now the Platinum Route, the traditional Three Peaks of Blorenge, Sugar Loaf and Skirrid is now the Gold Route and a new Two Peaks route is to be introduced. This route will do Blorenge, Sugar Loaf then join the last section of the last section of the Platinum Route in to Abergavenny. This route was rekkied on Enid's walk in July.

**A Colour Version of 'The View' Will Hopefully Be Available from the COG website shortly.**

**IF YOU HAVE ANY PHOTOS, ARTICLES, LETTERS, ETC. THAT COULD BE USED IN FUTURE 'VIEWS'**

**THEN PLEASE EMAIL THEM TO  
ch-lewis@cardiff32.freeserve.co.uk**