

The View

Issue No. 27

Winter 2006/07

Former COG member *Dave Bingham*
Tackles 6th Highest Mountain in the
World—Cho Oyu

Photo: Usk Valley by Bob N.



Dave Bingham will give an illustrated talk on his epic attempt at Chapter. An extract from his expedition log during 'summitting' is on Page 5.

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Newsletter of



Letter from the Chair



December 2006

A new, leaner Committee heads the group as we move towards 2007. Leaner, but never meaner. Can you imagine us being mean? No, of course not. You could leave an unopened box of Ferrero Rocher in our safe keeping, and the box would remain unopened with its contents intact upon your return. You can't get more virtuous than that! We'd rifle through your box of Milk Tray, no problem (leaving only the Turkish Delight), but we'd always leave your Ferreroes untouched. But why leaner? Two reasons. Firstly, we are one member less. Jane O. has stepped down from the post of Treasurer after three years excellent service. Many thanks, Jane. You will be sorely missed. But no-one new has stepped up to take her place. However, fear not, I am very pleased to report that Julian has moved sideways within the Committee (and only highly skilled members of the Committee are allowed to move sideways, since, in certain circumstances, like on a narrow mountain path, the move can be dangerous) to become the new Treasurer. He also maintains his position as Vice-Chair.

The second reason for there being a leaner Committee is the fact that we no longer have Vice-Presidents. Technically, the Vice-Presidents are not members of the Committee but are nonetheless available for consultation by the Committee. It was felt at the AGM that the group should aim for a leaner administration, and that any issues which the Committee and the President had to face could be faced by them alone, standing shoulder to shoulder, man to woman, meeting adversity and destiny face-on. Heroes to a man and a woman, with their Ferrero Rocher intact. Thus, our Vice-Presidents are no more, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank Peter K., Brian D. and Kevin H. for their dedication and commitment to the group.

Two other sideways-movers are Catherine H. and Bob N., who swap their former roles of Tuesday Events Coordinator and Secretary respectively. Thank you to both of you for all your work over the last year, and I look forward to working with you in your new roles in the coming year. For any members who wish to hold a Tuesday event, Bob N's your man. And remember, we have a brand new laptop and data projector waiting to be used. So if you've got a disk-full of photos from your last walking or cultural holiday, why not put on a slide show?

The £407.00 COG raised from the Three Peaks Trial 2006, originally intended for the YHA, has been sent to the Elenydd Wilderness Hostels Trust. This decision was unanimously voted for at our Extra General Meeting early in July 2006. The Trust is making good progress. It has leased Ty'n Cornel from its new hostelling-friendly owners, and the hostel will be open for advanced bookings from 7 January 2007. All bookings are through YHA central reservations on 01629 592 707. The Trust is also attempting to raise funds to purchase Dolgoch hostel. Further details can be obtained from the Trust's website, at < www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk >.

Now, if I can just prise open the lid, carefully unfold the foil wrapper, remove that delicious chocolate praline sphere, refold the foil in the shape of a ball, return it to the box and reseal, no-one will be any the wiser.

Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

Very best wishes

Clive



CHALLENGE WALKS

Sat Dec 2nd Cwmhir Christmas Cracker 25/17/12 miles from Phillip's Hall, Abbey Cwmhir, 6ml NE of Rhayader in Mid Wales. OS147 GR 053713. This year's event organised by Mid Wales LDWA in conjunction with Abbey Cwmhir Trust to which all profits will be donated. **Contact:** Mark Keeling, 8 Offas Way, St. Edwards Close, Knighton, Powys. LD7 1AL **Address:** 01547 529086

Jan 6th - Reservoir Roundabout - 20 miles - Elan Valley & Claerwen Reservoirs. A high level event requiring navigational & self sufficiency skill. Backup by Bridgend Mountain Rescue. Send SAE to: Mick Clayton, **Address:** 33 Worlds End Avenue, Quinton, Birmingham, B32 1JF **Telephone:**

07979004010

Jan 13/14th - Saturnalia - 25,15,10 miles - From Llanwrtyd Wells Square, along Roman Rds in the area. Held in conjunction with the Winter Warmer Beer Festival. Entry inc. free beer at Checkpoints, entertainment in the town throughout the weekend. Send SAE to: Gordon Green, Elenedd, Victoria Road, Llanwrtyd Wells, Powys. LD5 4SU, Tel. 01591 610270.

Website-<http://llanwrtyd-wells.powys.org.uk/eventsaturnalia.htm>

Feb 3rd - Lord Crawshaw Memorial Walk - 25, 15, 10 miles - From Llanwrtyd Wells Square, ver waymarked routes thru mountains, streams, lakes & forests. Send SAE to: Gordon Green, Elenedd, Victoria Road, Llanwrtyd Wells, Powys. LD5 4SU, Tel. 01591 610270.

Website-<http://llanwrtyd-wells.powys.org.uk/eventcrawshaw.htm>

Photo Montage of COG Events

The events shown are from recent COG walks and events.

5th November:
COG enjoyed a
night at the
firework display in
Coopers Field.



10th November:
Usk Valley
Walk—Chain
Bridge/post
walk pub stop
and a fab sunset.

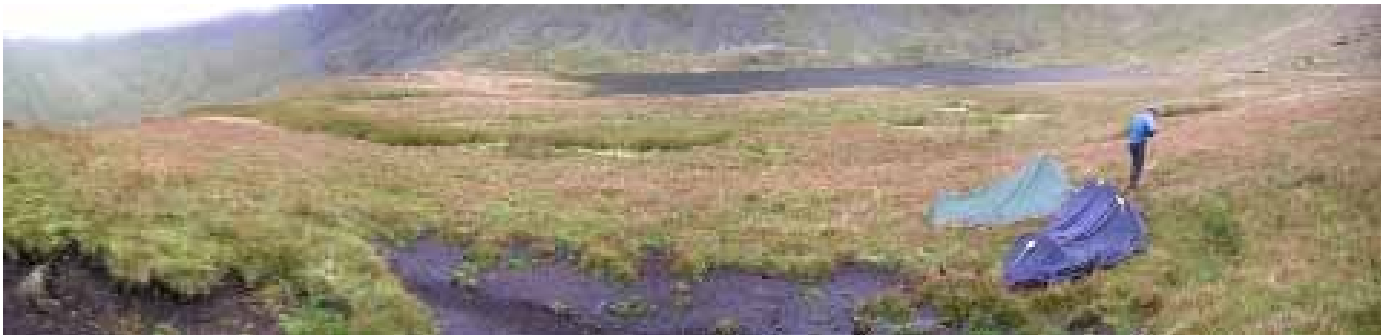


19th November:
View on the
Twmbarlwm walk



If you have any photos from COG events that other members may enjoy please email them to ch-lewis@cardiff32.freemove.co.uk

STEVE'S BIG SACK—THE BIG ISSUE



What with Chris putting in the Land's End walk over the past 3 issues of "The View" there's a lot of back-packing catching up to do. I'll restrict it to COGpacks from this year.

First camping event was the Llanthony Saturday night camp with night walk followed by walk on Sunday. Not for the first (or last) time, the only participants were Roger and myself. We enjoyed a good night walk down to Cwmyoy along the valley then climbed up to the Offa's Dyke ridge for a torchlit stroll over the snow. My navigation got slightly wrong at one point which in part contributed to us getting back to the campsite at the Priory after 11.00 pm and too late for a drink. Roger put on a brave face but did I notice his lip tremble? It was too dark to be sure. Next day was a good long walk, with the luxury of daylight, up to Hay Bluff along the ridge followed by a traverse of Darren Lwyd and back down into the valley. Good weather, I think (it was a long time ago).

No question about the weather for the Easter backpack on the Llyn Peninsula. It was fantastic, as was everything else about this 3 day trip. The idea of going to Llyn was to explore that bit that most people usually never get as far as, mainly because of the magnetic pull of nearby Snowdonia. Participants were Mark B, Ceri J (Mark's lady), Caroline G (who'd helped out on the 3 Peaks) and me again. We had camps on the coast near Tudweilog, on the headland opposite Bardsey Island and on the third night at Llanbedrog. The second night was a "stealth" camp on open land. Sorry, Ceri, it was NOT a wild camp - not with us all using another campsite's showers and toilets. A great location nonetheless. The trip had top-notch coastal walking, an interesting interior, magical views of Snowdonia in the distance and a half decent bunch of folk. My best COG event for ages and I can recommend the Llyn Peninsula if you haven't been. Try to get up Carn Fadryn for panoramic views.

Next up was a trip to St David's Peninsula in mid-July. Not my favourite time of year and, yes indeed, it was during that horrible hot, dry spell. But we were at least in the right place - relatively cool near the sea and with the option of sea bathing. Willing victims this time were Roger, Nigel, myself and Andy & Colette. Now before you all choke on your cocoa I have to tell you that the latter two used a B&B (the route allowed for this). Friday night was near Whitesands Bay from where on Saturday we headed NE up the coast before striking S and inland back down to the coast then skipping W to Caerfai Bay where Roger, Nigel and I stayed. A very civilised dinner followed, as one would expect with such distinguished company. Sunday was a straightforward walk back up

the coast to Whitesands Bay. Andy and I were the only ones to venture into the sea that weekend but it was too cold to linger.

The most recent backpacking adventure was the weekend straddling September/October. Martyn R and Bob G had good reasons for not coming in the end (and I believe them) so it was good ol' Roger and me again. On Saturday we had good weather and a generally low level walk over a hill and down to Llanymawddwy before climbing up to around 600 metres. This was our patch of moor for the night, near the lake Creiglyn Dyfi. By amazing coincidence, Chris printed in the last issue of "The View" a picture of more or less exactly where we camped. That's what I call good editing! After Roger spotted a good, sheltering peat hag we settled down there for a night of strong winds, rain and not much sleep. It was pretty rough. Still, next morning was dry and we even had the odd view through the mist on the summit of Aran Fawddwy. Within a couple of hours the skies were emptying but by then we were already in retreat. After a cup of tea at the woollen mill in Dinas Mawddwy all was well.

See how much fun backpacking can be! But there's only one way to truly know and that's by doing it. Honestly, it *can* be enjoyable - just ask Roger (ideally, during a lucid phase). If you're new to backpacking, fear not, we can usually tailor mileages to ability. And there's usually enough equipment to share if you don't have a tent, sleeping bag or maybe even a "spork" (again, ask Roger).

Next trip (late February): The classic, classic area between Hay-on-Wye and Kington. One day along Offa's Dyke, the next day coming back along minor roads and footpaths. Unfortunately, there's not much scope for adjusting the mileages this time and it's around 15 and 13 miles respectively. Bring it on.

See you in Hay-on-Wye, if not before....



Cho Oyu—6th Highest Mountain in the World

Dave Bingham Recalls Reaching the Summit

Back in 2004 I was a client on a six week trip aiming to climb Cho Oyu, an 8000m peak on the border of Tibet and Nepal. After an overland journey through Tibet we attempted to climb the North West slopes of this mountain, the sixth highest in the world using three camps. On December 5 I will be giving a presentation on this wonderful adventure at the Chapter and I hope you can join me. To whet the appetite I have given an extract from my writings about my time on the expedition which covers the summit attempt itself....

Within 30 minutes or so of leaving the top camp I approached the rock-band at around 7500m and clipped into the first bit of fixed rope with my jumar and safety line. The ice axe was stowed away in a holster on my pack freeing both hands, one sliding the jumar up the rope and the other pulling the rope through in one simultaneous movement. In this fashion I walked up the slope and then one by one members of the team ascended the rock-band in the dark, hands on the rocks occasionally, crampons scratching on the rocks, energetic pulls on the jumar. My heart rate raced away and my glasses fogged up so that even with the torch light the rocks disappeared from my view. I adjusted the oxygen mask down and hurriedly cleared my lenses so that I could get going again. At last the angle eased and I moved my jumar onto another section of fixed rope and climbed a shallow gully above. With a gentler angle my rhythm on the fixed ropes improved and I maintained a good pace for the remaining sections of fixed rope.

The sky lightened as the dawn arrived and I glanced around at the sharp peaks on the horizon. A beautiful sight indeed and the weather looked promising too; clear skies all around. Now off the fixed rope I tried to keep a steady pace up the steep snow slopes, my ice axe in one hand and a walking pole in the other. At a snowy shoulder which had taken ages to gain I paused for water prior to the next steep slope. My first water bottle was jammed tight (because of a cross threaded top as I was to discover later) but thankfully my second bottle opened fine. After two short mouthfuls from the bottle I drew in frantic breaths as the air was so thin at around 7800m. A few more mouthfuls and some chocolate and I shouldered the pack again and adjusted the mask into place. I was going again, following others up the steep slope.

A short fixed rope aided people over a short rock step and then we were on the final slope to the summit plateau. I was doing well for time and although my body was working hard, things seemed in control. But a few patterns played across my vision and looking up at the final snowy horizon above I wondered how clear that horizon was. Almost all problems with vision up high are caused by cerebral problems, that is water accumulation on the brain and I felt only something like this would stop me now. I had no spare energy to worry about this but continued upward, slow step by slow step.

Some summiters passed me on their way down as I gained the summit plateau



and words of encouragement and congratulations were exchanged. I paused again for water as did Lydia, one of the guides. Glancing around, I was happy that my vision was fine and gave it no further thought.

It would be a view that I would glance at for about 30 minutes and then it would be gone. A unique passing moment in my life.

Everyone had understood the time required across the plateau to the summit to be around an hour for a distance of around 400m. 400m was the distance from Corn Du to Pen y Fan, a distance I regularly did in 7 minutes with a brisk pace but in this surreal world of high altitude, times on training routes and challenge walks over the last few months had no relevance now. Step by step I made my way along the track. Lydia was slightly ahead. The first woman up Everest without oxygen in the late eighties she might have been, but the big mountains pay no heed to reputations. Every ten steps or so she paused and slumped over the handle of her walking pole whilst I endeavoured to maintain a steady pace and stop less often. Nearby a couple of men on another team not using supplementary oxygen took a

series of steps and would then crouch on the ground to recover. In this bizarre fashion tens of people slowly made their way to the prayer flags which marked the summit.

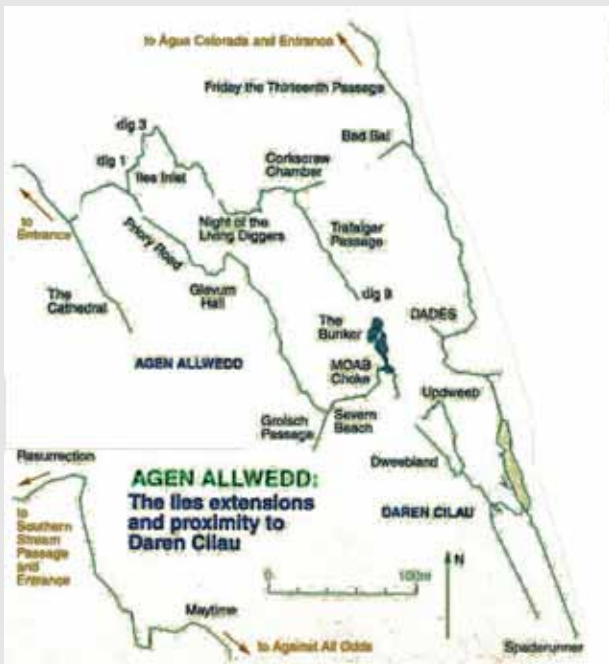
And then the snowy horizon was broken with two sharp peaks, the left one noticeably higher. I knew straight away: Everest on the left, Lohse on the right; and knew as well that clearly I was running out of higher ground! Within minutes the track took its final few sweeping curves and people gathered at the summit prayer flags could be seen just ahead. Dean the other guide that day was the first to offer congratulations and I was soon flooded with hand shakes from others as well. All clients reached the summit, nine on this day and one the next. Camera and video shots followed taking care not to lose gloves and not allow the oxygen mask to drop to the snow and freeze. Everest stood proud, the impressive North Face on the left and the Western Cwm straight ahead, the South Col too, the Hornbein and Great Couloir splitting the North Face. These features which had lived for me on book pages until now did exist and were laid before my eyes. It would be a view that I would glance at for about 30 minutes and then it would be gone. A unique passing moment in my life. You are only brief visitor on a big mountain summit and this is never truer than when over 8000 metres.

You would eventually become seriously ill at this altitude but in the warm sunshine and gentle breeze which we had you could be forgiven for forgetting this.

I shouldered my sack and still on the supplementary oxygen made my first steps back along the plateau. Steep slopes, fixed ropes and an abseil down the rock band awaited...



Caving: New Cave Discoveries Beneath Mynydd Llangattock Part 2



This is the second part of an article about the major discovery of an extension to one of South Wales best known cave systems below Mynydd Llangattock .

The possibility of linking the caves of Daren Cilau (30km long) and Agen Allwedd (around 34km long) below Llangynidir has tantalised cavers for many, many years – often producing hopeful reports of imminent breakthroughs. Now, a major extension at the extreme limit of Agen Allwedd has been made, leading into some beautiful passage. In the first part of this article the team had found 90m of new cave from dig 3. Is the dream about to be realised?

Three days after finding 90m of new cave at dig 3, the three cavers Martin Beale, Royston Sellman and Mathias Willerup found a further 90m of open passage, Night of the Living Diggers, which alternated between walking and crawling. This new passage tended in an easterly direction towards Daren Cilau.

A larger party of 5 cavers returned within a week and after 3 hours digging they exposed a low open passage to crawl through to a corner. Beyond the corner the roof suddenly shot up to over 3m high, the biggest of the new passages so far found. Round a couple more bends and the cavers were stopped in their tracks by an absolutely stunning display of formations in the roof. There were intricate helictites, antlers and large urchin formations, possibly among the best examples these veteran cavers had ever seen.

Continuing ahead, the passage enlarged further, up to 3m wide and 4m high, with more antlers, urchins and some beautiful white columns. As it was the weekend of the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, the passage was named after it. After about 100m south from the breakthrough point the mud floor rose to virtually meet the ceiling. Now they were within 30m of Daren Cilau so more digging was required.

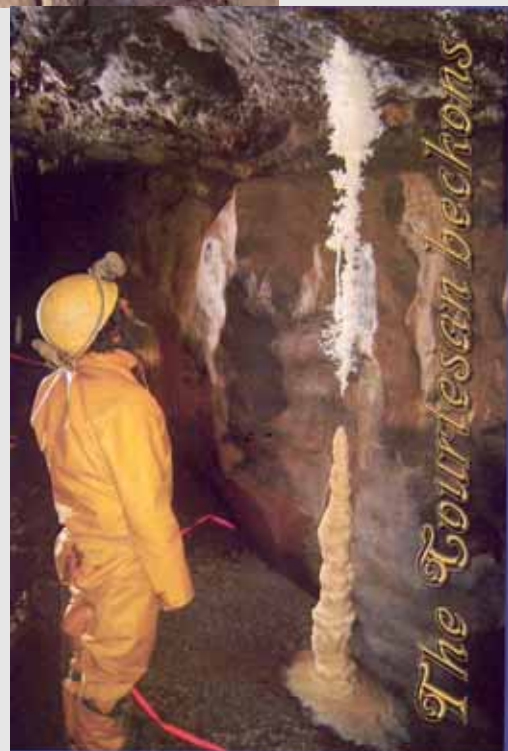
A few weeks later the cavers returned. On the way to the dig in the new Trafalgar Passage they had a look in what appeared to be an insignificant side rift. It had a 45 degree angle which didn't look promising but climbing through it incredibly emerged in the wall of a much larger passage 2m high and wide. The cavers were surrounded by absolutely stunning pure white formations, even better than those in Trafalgar Passage. There were more incredibly intricate helictites, urchins, antlers and peculiar corkscrew formations (after which the chamber was named Corkscrew Chamber). However the real Piece de resistance was The Courtesan, a

1.2m long, pure white stalactite coated from top to bottom with an incredible array of helictites, and beneath this was a 1 m high, pale yellow stalagmite encircled by a ring of crystal deposits on the mud floor.

Aside from the formations this was an exciting find in that it was a section of fairly major passage heading in a new direction, eastwards towards Daren Cilau. As luck would have it, the passage closed down after 20m, with the only way on being an awkward dig in a small, sand filled tube. The main issue with this dig is spoil disposal, the problem being that the entire chamber is filled with formations. However the cavers have found that with care the spoil can be safely transported back through the chamber for disposal in the main Trafalgar Passage.

UPDATE—Digging continues. Approximately 10m closer to Daren Cilau. See <http://willerup.com/oydc/> for reports.

This is an extract from the Caver's magazine 'Descent'



The Elenydd Wilderness Hostels Update

COG donated the proceeds from the Three Peaks Trial 2006 to the Elenydd Wilderness Hostels Trust. This is an update of the struggle to save the hostels from closure.



Ty'n Cornel

The completion of the sale will now be on 7th January 2007. The buyers will lease it to us for at least 5 years at a very low rent but the lease should be renewable if we can make a success of it. If the buyers decide to sell before January 2013, we shall be given the chance to buy it if we can. We plan to sign a licence with the YHA so that Ty'n Cornel will stay in the YHA Guide and website and will still display the green YHA triangle. Elenydd Wilderness Hostels will be responsible for running it and keeping it in good repair.

Bookings

Ty'n Cornel is open for advance bookings all winter and will be open as normal from mid-March to mid-November next year with a volunteer warden.

Charitable Status

Elenydd Wilderness Hostels was registered as a charitable trust on 29th August 2006, registered number 1115946. The objects are:-

1. To advance the education of the public, especially of young people of limited means, in conservation, protection and improvement of the environment by such means as the trustees may consider appropriate, including the provision of hostels and other accommodation to enable them to participate in educational activities.
2. To provide or assist in the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare, for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity, disability, financial hardship or social circumstances with the object of improving their conditions of life.
3. To preserve and protect the health of all, especially young people of limited means.
4. To promote, for the benefit of the public, the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment.

Donations

Dolgoch will come up for sale at the beginning of next year, and we face a massive task if we are to be in a position to buy it. Please will you help the Trust to achieve this by making a donation now if you can. Many of you have generously promised to give the Trust money and, now that we are registered, we are ready to receive these pledges. If you pay tax you may like to sign the Gift Aid Declaration which will enable the Trust to claim back the tax you have paid and make your donation even more valuable. Please print the donation form and send it with your donation. Please encourage anyone you think may also be interested in helping.

Sponsored Walk

We have decided to postpone the sponsored walk between the 3 hostels, and the barbecue afterwards, until Saturday 19 May 2007 to give everyone more time to prepare. Thanks to everyone who has expressed an interest. Please contact JJ or the Secretary if you are interested in taking part or helping.

Membership

More than 120 of us have joined the Trust so far and are the proud owners of a little card! The money raised will help pay for the start up costs at Ty'n Cornel - YHA licence fee, insurance, repairs, etc. Our mailing list is approaching 500 now so, if you haven't already done so, please join and also recruit more members for us if you can.

Volunteer Wardening

Many of you have offered to warden at Ty'n Cornel and we shall start putting together a rota soon. We hope to be able to cover from at least mid-March to mid-November. Under the licence agreement with the YHA, volunteers will need to have been on a YHA training course and be CRB-checked. Please email Wardening or ring +44 (0)1283 537 440 if you are interested in wardening next year.

Publicity

If you have ideas, expertise, suggestions or can offer help, we should like to hear from you. Please email Publicity or contact the Chair.

Meetings

Three open meetings have been well attended and very useful. The next meeting will be held at Ty'n Cornel on Saturday 2 December 2006.

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
 Wwww.elenydd-hostels.co.uk

News From the YHA

Peter Kingsbury was at the YHA Wales AGM. Here he reports on what happened.

I obtained the following information from the YHA Wales Annual Meeting on the 11th November. The search for a new Cardiff hostel continues. Several sites - are being evaluated with a city centre location between David Street and Churchill Way being the favourite. A 180 bed hostel in a new building is proposed but there are still many hurdles to be overcome, not least funding, before this becomes a reality. The site is currently used as a surface car park.

Elsewhere in Wales, new 'Enterprise' (i.e. privately owned but marketed as part of the YHA network) hostels are likely to open within a year in Swansea, Rhossili, Holyhead, Cerrigydrudion (between Corwen and Betws Y Coed) and at Llangattock near Crickhowell (the latter will be a bunkhouse). On the less positive note, the Enterprise hostel at Lawrenny in Pembrokeshire has recently ceased to be a YHA location.

It was confirmed that Tyncornel will operate next season as a Enterprise hostel having being bought by the recently formed Elenydd Wilderness Hostel Trust. Dolgoch, the other remote hostel a half day's walk from Tyncornel, is due to cease to operate as a YHA property in autumn 2007.

The new manager of Cardiff hostel is Gordon Nugent who has taken over from Hilary Davies.



WATER

Why & How Much

So you know everything you need to know about hydration right? Swig several gallons of water a day; coffee's a no-no; drink before you get thirsty; etc. etc.....Well, the latest research shows it may be time to think again. Apparently it is possible to over-hydrate. It's called hyponatremia, also known as 'water intoxication'. If you drink too much during strenuous exercise, you flush much needed sodium and other minerals out of your bloodstream. In extreme cases this can lead to seizures, fluid in the lungs and even death!

SO I DON'T HAVE TO DRINK SO MUCH THEN?

Experts now recommend you drink enough that your wee remains pale, clear and copious—but not so copious that you're loo-bound every half

hour. Nutritionists admit that they're not sure if we still need to be drinking eight to ten glasses of water a day and say that simply drinking when you get thirsty could be sufficient.

CAN I STILL HAVE A MORNING COFFEE?

Yes you can! The experts have been wrong about caffeine. It's not as dehydrating as once thought. In fact a mug in the morning can count as one of your cups of water for the day. It will have you running to the loo more often than water, but you'll only lose half of what went in.

SO WERE THEY WRONG ABOUT BOOZE TOO?

Unfortunately not. Alcohol still isn't doing you any favours in the fluid replacement department. A pint of beer not only won't count toward your daily intake, but experts suggest consuming a full glass of water for every pint you drink.

WHY DO I NEED TO DRINK SO MUCH MORE AT ALTITUDE?

The atmosphere up high is cold and incredibly dry. When you inhale, the air's warmed and humidified, sucking the heat and moisture from your body. The higher you go, the faster you breathe, so the more you lose. Increased exhalation means you lose more carbon dioxide than usual, leaving your blood too alkaline. To right this the kidneys excrete alkaline bicarbonate into the urine. You must drink to help this flushing process.

RESEARCH

Military research has produced tables of the distance it's possible to walk in desert environments, with only limited amounts of water. In temperatures of 49 C a person can be expected to be able to walk seven miles without water before collapsing. This is a general rule, as the calculation doesn't include the drying effects of wind, which can accelerate dehydration. However, the will to survive can also affect the limits of human tolerance. One example is detailed in an old army journal and tells of Pablo, a Mexican, who survived in the desert for eight days on just eight litres of water. He had walked 100 miles in temperatures of 35 C and relative humidity of less than 28%.

When Pablo was finally picked up, his flesh was black and dry, his lips, nose and eyelids had shrunk to nothing, while his skin was covered with cuts, none of which bled. He was deaf to all sounds and blind except to light and dark. His breathing was slow and air roared as it passed over his dry throat. Although regurgitating water at first, he was eventually able to drink vast quantities, which his skin soaked up like a dry sponge. It took three days before his hearing and vision returned to normal. Incredibly, a week later he was completely recovered, except his hair had turned grey!

DID YOU KNOW?

Elephants need to swallow 550 pints of water each day while we get by on 8 pints. Of that we lose 6 pints - 1 pint sitting around, 2 pints exhaling and three pints in wee. Evaporation of 1 litre of water from the skin will get rid of 580 calories of heat from the body—equivalent to the heat required to produce 40 cups of steaming tea!

Reproduced from an article in 'Trail' magazine.

CYCLING NEWS

FROM THE CTC

Latest careless driver fined £800

A driver has been fined just £800 for 'careless driving', following the death of a cyclist. The case follows an all-too-familiar pattern, where a cyclist is killed yet the driver escapes with a small fine and a driving ban for 'careless' driving due to serious anomalies in the legal framework of 'bad driving' offences. One is that the legal definition of 'careless' and 'dangerous' driving makes it very hard to secure convictions for the more serious "dangerous" driving offences. Another is that the tough sentences available for offences where someone is killed are not matched by the trifling sentences for equally bad driving where the victim happens to survive. This discrepancy appears to make the courts reluctant to use their full sentencing power where death does occur.

CTC fears that the Road Safety Bill, now close to becoming law, seems increasingly unlikely to tackle these problems. It proposes a new offence of "causing death by careless driving", yet CTC feels this likely to cause as many problems as it solves. It will have a maximum sentence of 5 years, yet "dangerous" (i.e. worse) driving will still only have a maximum sentence of just 2 years if (say) the victim is maimed rather than killed. In this latest case, the court was given evidence that Matthew Mackie (aged 20) was driving a large tractor and trailer when he overtook cyclist Brenda Kerry leaving a gap of just 50cm between his 6ft-high tractor wheels and the side of the road, causing her to wobble. His trailer hooked her handlebars, she was thrown into the road and sustained fatal injuries.

Abergele driver fined £180

Following on from the above, the driver of a car which in January this year collided with and killed four members of a group of cyclists near Abergele, has been charged with having defective tyres and fined £180. Robert Harris, 47, from Abergele, lost control on the road near his home on 8th January, where 12 members of Rhyl Cycling Club were on a training ride. He admitted three counts of driving with defective tyres and was fined £180 at Llandudno Magistrates Court. Magistrates said during the hearing that the defective tyres "were not a contributory factor". At the time of the collision, the police reported that the driver was within the speed limit and had not been drinking; hence the fatalities were simply a tragic accident. Following protests from cycling organisations, the police apologised for these comments. Yet the courts have still had no opportunity to consider whether or not the speed was appropriate to the conditions.

CTC feels that the episode once again illustrates how road traffic law, and those responsible for its operation, need to reinforce the message that road users have a serious duty of care to one another, and that endangering other people's lives on the roads is wholly unacceptable. CTC Campaigns & Policy Manager, Roger Geffen, said: "Our first thoughts are for the families of those killed in this terrible tragedy. It highlights the need for a serious overhaul of road traffic law and the priority given to its enforcement. Time and again when people are killed and seriously injured, the message given out by the legal system is that these incidents are nothing more than tragic "accidents". The victims are disproportionately pedestrians and cyclists, the very forms of transport we most need to encourage for health and environmental reasons."

Cyclist who refused to stay in the gutter loses court case

A cyclist who was prosecuted for inconsiderate cycling, whilst cycling in accordance with the National Standard for cycle training, has today been found guilty by a District Judge in Telford Magistrates Court and fined £100 with £200 costs.

CTC member Daniel Cadden was cycling fast downhill on a single-lane approach to a roundabout when he was stopped by police who believed that the position he had taken in his lane was forcing cars to cross the solid white line in the centre of the road illegally in order to overtake. But rather than stop the cars that had broken the law, the officers decided to charge Daniel Cadden with obstructing the highway.

Cyclecraft, the book published by The Stationery Office on skilled riding techniques, states: "The primary riding position (the centre of one's lane) should be your normal riding position when you can keep up with traffic, or when you need to prevent following drivers from passing you dangerously."

CTC Director, Kevin Mayne, said "The police at the scene said that Daniel should have been cycling well over to the left – effectively in the gutter – but the judge felt that Daniel should have crossed three lanes of busy traffic and used a segregated cycle track to save fractions of seconds off the journey times of a few motorists.

Reproduced from the CTC website.



Plans are well under way for the 2007 event on Saturday March 31st. Some major changes—there's the new 'Silver' Route and the anticlockwise option has been deleted. As many as possible volunteers are always needed to make sure the 500+ walkers from all over the UK get round the hills safely and have a good day. Its also COG's biggest fundraiser of the year so if you can help please do.

If you know you will be available or want more info then contact Andy P. on 20492482 or ajp@roblins.co.uk '

Dean Foley has penned this poem, inspired by Skirrid, one of the Three Peaks
Skirrid is also known as the 'Holy' mountain.

SKIRRID

December mist like a great silent sea
 Maroons us walkers on an island called Skirrid.
 We begin to tread down the low
 Useful path dressed like identical
 Explorers against the cold wind.

Suddenly within a hand's grasp,
 A horse rushes up close and
 Halts on a ledge of rock.

How different this scene is
 When lots of fit people run here,
 Every March when it's sunny,
 For the Three Peaks Trial.

As we stumble down more horses
 Gallop past for the Skirrid summit.
 Out of sight they turn and come back
 Into visibility following
 Us down the long hill weaving their way
 Diagonally like pale ghosts
 Parodying our ascent and descent
 To higher levels of consciousness

Till the fog blots them out again
 Like curtains drawn on a private circus.

**Albania:
 COG Members on a Trip to
 Albania Were Surprised to
 Find a Camera Crew Re-
 cording Their Every Move.**

Albanian people were so shocked to find people want to visit their country they decided to make a TV programme about them. Bob Hall's group was selected as a typical representative group of foreigners! The half hour programme recently aired on national Albania TV.

Bob said 'The scenery, food, people and accomodation were all excellent. Can thoroughly recommend the place. Haven't been inundated with fan mail yet or been asked to do a sequell!'

Norman Wisdom has yet to comment on having competition as being the most famous Brit in Albania.



Is that Bob H. on the donkey!

Weekends Away



Weekend at Llandeusant YH on the Black Mountain 28th to 30th January

This weekend is a working party at Llandeusant Hostel, adopted by COG to receive proceeds from the Three Peaks Trial over the last ten years or so (but not this year). COG have also been doing annual working party trips to spruce the place up for the coming season. There's normally a communal meal & beer tasting (for scientific purposes) on Saturday night. Plenty of great walking also possible on the Sunday as the Carmarthen Fans are nearby.

As it's a working party weekend there are no rules about opening and closing etc.

There's 28 beds. The pub is about 1 mile from the hostel. Although facilities are basic there's an open fire in the lounge and it used to be an inn so its cosy. Further details from Roger G.



Easter Weekend in Cambridge 6th to 9th April

Cambridge is a wonderful fusion of the everyday and the extraordinary, a living city that has shaped history, that today reflects the best of historic and contemporary life and is continuing to make its mark on the future. The busy 100 bed international hostel is just minutes from the railway station and 15 minutes' walk from the city centre. The Victorian townhouse makes a great base for an English city break where you can relax by the river and visit colleges, museums and art galleries galore. Cost at the hostel £17.50 pppn and breakfast is included in the overnight fee. The hostel bar open from 6pm - 11pm daily. The hostel also has BBQ areas,

Common room, Cycle store, Dining room, Games room, Internet access, self catering kitchen, Lounge, Restaurant, Shop, T.V lounge, etc. Further details of travel arrangements, etc. contact the Organiser, Julian L. (Tel. 029 20567013).



End of March: Trip to Germany— Either Berlin or Hamburg

Berlin

Fifteen years since the Wall fell, and Berlin can still feel like two cities – not just east and west, but also winter and summer. Plus, if your mental image of the German capital derives from war films or spy stories, prepare to be pleasantly surprised by one of the greenest cities in Europe. This thoroughly modern metropolis has always been a bit of a bolthole for the bohemian and unconventional, but today it is a major cultural centre combining top-flight museums, galleries and concert halls with thriving alternative art and music scenes. The nightlife carries on through morning and there's every kind of eating to be had.

Hamburg

It's easy to see why the youthful Beatles fell in love with Hamburg. Germany's second largest city has a magnificent harbour right in its centre and, so the locals like to say, has more in common with canal cities like Amsterdam or Venice. Indeed, Hamburgers will proudly point out that their city has even more bridges than Venice. On the huge expanse of the Alster Lakes you can peer at millionaires' mansions from a rowing boat or tour boat (at the Jungfernstieg). The canals between the twin lakes and harbour are crossed by dozens of bridges, and gallery-hopping or shopping trips will offer lovely sudden glimpses of water. The city also has Europe's largest shopping mall. Let Jane O. know if your interested asap.

*******ORGANISER APPEAL*******

The committee needs your help - An appeal on behalf of your Tuesday programme organiser.

At this time of year, with the new committee settling in, we look forward to the next COG year and roughly sketch-in the events for the year. The quality of the programme in recent years has been excellent and we would like to maintain this standard. To do that though we need more of you to volunteer to organise events.

Would you like to give a talk on a recent trip or holiday, or simply organise an event that we haven't done before. Please note events such as bungee jumping off the Avon Bridge, as offered by Kevin, would not be covered by our insurance. Indeed Julian's offer to give a talk on flower arranging had to be turned down because it didn't fit with the brief of the group.

If your idea falls somewhere in between, we would be interested to hear it. We also need walk leaders for Sunday walks. Would you be prepared to lead one? If you haven't lead a walk before but have an idea for one please let us know. If you're unsure about organising it yourself please mention it to us as the committee can help you bring it about.

At present most events are organised by a small bunch of individuals. This year your highly dynamic committee would like to see more of you offer to organise/lead an event or put forward ideas for one. Remember the quality of the programme depends on the efforts of individuals. Whilst the past few years have been excellent in this respect, we would like to maintain this standard but need more volunteers to do it.

Please direct any offers or ideas for a Tuesday event to myself or for a weekend event to Rhona/Katherine.

Bob Neville

GOWER 50 Years as an AONB

50 Years ago Gower was designated Britain's first 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. This article looks back.



IF THERE were a beauty pageant for a landscape, the Gower Peninsula would no doubt be one of the sparkling jewels in the crown. With its sweeping golden beaches, mysterious caves, rolling hills and secluded valleys, dramatic clifftops, dunes, commons, marshes and woodland, this spectacular and varied landscape in South West Wales is home to some of the most iconic views in the country. Gower was the first location in the UK to be awarded the prestigious status, ensuring the unique characteristics of the landscape would be both protected and made accessible as a retreat for local communities.

There are now 50 AONBs designated (36 in England, 4 in Wales, 1 straddling the English/Welsh border and 9 in Northern Ireland) covering about 18% of the land, with a further nine in Northern Ireland. The wide range of habitats in its 188 sq km reveals why the first AONB status was awarded to the Gower Peninsula. Among its prized habitats are heathlands, grasslands, fresh and salt water marshes, as well as historic ancient woodlands. In Gower AONB alone, there are also 24 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), four Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), three National Nature Reserves (NNR), and one Ramsar (wetlands) site. "There is a plethora of different schemes but they all have slightly different purposes. Most are designations linked to wildlife, not landscape," says the National Trust's head of land-use planning, Alan Watson. "An AONB is a broad designation saying that area of land is of national landscape importance," he adds. Adam Wallace, senior adviser at the Countryside Agency, backs Mr Watson's definition, and stresses the focus on local Communities. "These are people-based concepts. They are centred around people living within the landscape," he says. "Biodiversity is one aspect, but community engagement in the management of their land is fundamental to AONBs and is something you do not necessarily get with other sorts of designations."

Back in 1956 a shortlist of 12 areas had been drawn up, and it was a race against time between Gower and Quantocks to see who would get AONB status first. The 188 sq km of Gower Peninsula was chosen for its classic coastline and its outstanding natural environment (33% of it is designated national nature reserve or site of special scientific interest). It ranges from the south coast's superb carboniferous limestone scenery at Worms Head and Pennard Cliffs to the salt marshes and dune systems in the north. Inland, the most prominent features are the large areas of common, dominated by sandstone heath ridges including the backbone of Gower, Cefn Bryn. Secluded valleys have rich deciduous woodland, and the patchwork fields are characterised by walls, stone-faced banks and hedgerows. The peninsula has had its share of threats to its stunning landscape. The Gower Society, a civic society set up in 1947 as a local history group, campaigned against eyesore developments, such as the proposed Butlins holiday camp on the Warren at Rhossili and lobbied hard for the area to be protected.

Continued on Page 12



THE QUIZ—IT'S YET ANOTHER ROLLOVER!

IT'S ANOTHER ROLLOVER FOLKS! COG Quiz King Kevin Ham's quiz question goes to a FOURTH phase after no correct answers were received. The prize is now **£20** for the person who can solve the riddle below. If no one gives the correct answer to Kevin by 28th February then the prize money will 'roll-over' again to the next issue of 'The View'.



This has been running for quite some time now. I have tried to make it easier, but to no avail.

So I will lead you through things.

The longest day was my shortest day. Do you think I went a short distance or did I go far. Did I travel by rail or did I fly and watch a movie?

So where will you find a river river not mentioned in the other editions of this quiz. What happened there that summer a year ago? A matter of death and life is now easy to find.

So the only thing left is why did I do it? Moreover, what part does Julian's walk play in all this? That I leave you to speculate over.

Should you require copies of the previous clues then email: ch-lewis:cardiff32.freeserve.co.uk

There is no restriction on the number of entries per person.

Gower- 50 Years as an AONB (Continued from Page 11)

Local naturalist and author Jonathan Mullard tells us Gower is made from very ancient rocks and thanks to the movement of the Earth's continental plates, the peninsula's magnificent limestone cliffs were actually made when Gower was sitting on the Earth's equator.

Around 360 million years ago, at the beginning of the carboniferous period there was a major rise in sea level, covering all of what is now Wales. What is now Gower was then on the equator and limestone began to form. The sand with which many of Gower's coves and beaches is blessed was formed due to the grinding action of ice flow and glaciers when the majority of North-West Europe lay under thick ice sheets. Some 8,000 to 6,000 years ago, a period of global warming produced large volumes of melt water which transported the sand into river systems and near coastal waters. When the sea level rose it re-worked these sands and pushed them shorewards, until they lay near or at the heads of bays. Environmental evidence records devastating sand movement between the 13th and 15th centuries, with settlements at Pennard, Penmaen and Rhossili being abandoned due to besanding (incurSION of sand).

A broad timeline is also reflected in the area. There are at least 1,200 archaeological sites within the AONB of different periods and types. These include caves, Iron Age forts, Bronze Age burial cairns, Neolithic chambered tombs, medieval castles and churches. A lighthouse and 19th-century parks can be seen, as well as a 19th-century silver lead mine, quarries and remnants of the 19th-century lime industry and a World War II radar station. Gower, once labelled by Dylan Thomas himself as "one of the loveliest sea-coast stretches in the whole of Britain", has justifiably moved and brought out the best in many artists, poets, writers and musicians throughout the ages. The Gower countryside also played an important part in Dylan Thomas's life. He often spent whole days "walking alone over the very desolate Gower cliffs, communing with the cold and the quietness"

Historically, there have always been two Gowers (no-one born on the peninsula or in Swansea calls it The Gower, after all its original name was Gwyr not Y Gwyr) because after the Norman invasion the medieval lordship of Gower was split into Gower Anglicana (English Gower) and Gower Wallicana (Welsh Gower). To the south and west of the dividing line compact rural settlements were created and English was spoken. To the north and east of the dividing line single farms and hamlets were dominant and Welsh was spoken. The Normans took the best soils and climate and the divide is clear today, with names like Nicholaston and Bishopston in the south and Welsh names like Llanrhidian further north. The "English" of Gower was once a virtually impenetrable West Countryish dialect to people from outside Gower, and today it has virtually disappeared.

There are problems. Jonathon Mullard says parts of Gower's beaches are already suffering from natural sand erosion. And he warns about the dredging of sand off Gower, a practice opposed by the Gower Society among others. He says, "The vulnerability and dynamic nature of beaches and dunes means that the dredging of offshore sandbanks can only add to the problem."

However, despite problems hopefully the next 50 years will be as successful as the last!

Article from three sources- the BBC website; Western Mail & South Wales Evening Post.

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

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

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

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