



Photo: Sgwd Yr Eira by Bob Neville

Global Warming— COG Vote for a Change of Policy in Response to Climate Change Threat



Scientists are advising that the our planet is heading for a Climate Crisis. In recognition of this COG agreed a motion at the AGM to do one public transport walk per two month programme. Not a lot but COG are the first walking club in the UK to commit to using public transport only on some walks in recognition that global warming is an issue that needs to be addressed at some level by the club. If Global Warming develops as predicted then this current COG action will no doubt be the first step of many. *Full Story Back Page.*

In this Issue.....

Message From Your Madam	Page 2	Weekends Away	Page 7
Challenge Walks Listing	Page 2	Three Peaks Trial News & Caving News	Page 8
Photo Montage	Page 3	Steve's Big Sack	Page 9
Trekking in the Smokies (Page 1 of 2)	Page 4	Elenydd Wilderness Trust News	Page 10
Trekking in the Smokies (Page 2 of 2) & Cycling News	Page 5	Countryside News	Page 11
Global Warming—COG Public Transport Policy	Page 6	Chocolate Tasting Report	Page 12

Newsletter of



A message from your Madam

Well here we are again, Heading towards summer. Well here I am again, arriving on your doorstep with the summer program for the glorious months of July and August. From start to finish we have managed to put together a varied and interesting program of walks and events ranging from an enjoyable round of golf at Heath Park to a weekend of sun, sand and sea on the Gower Peninsula.

While on the subject of sunny days, the long term weather forecast is boding well for the months ahead. Not only is our friendly BBC weatherman forecasting a good one, nature has also shown its hand with many reports of strange sightings along the Welsh Coastline which predicts a warmer than usual summer ahead.

During our recent bank holiday weekend visit to Pantyrathro Hostel, when out and about on a walk along the Tywi Estuary we were met by the strange sight of dozens of Lion Mane Jellyfish. These incredible creatures had been washed up on the tide and were spread out along the shoreline.

On arriving home from "what had been another enjoyable weekend with COG", I decided to find out more about this incredible sight. I typed "Jelly fish" into my search engine and information appeared telling me that there have been many sightings of jellyfish along the Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire coast.

The conservation charity, "Sea Trust", is advising us not to panic. Although hoards of jellyfish are being sighted along our coast, people should not forgo their days out on the beaches. According to Cliff Benson, a spokesman for the Sea Trust, most jellyfish are pretty innocuous giving nothing more than a nettle-type sting.

Be this as it may, the large and foreboding species of the Lion mane jellyfish that we spotted on the sands of Llansteffan during the bank holiday looked to me like "large and slimy monsters".

The particular pair in the photograph was by no means the largest, apparently the largest example of Lion mane jellyfish on record was 2.2m in diameter with tentacles reaching 36.5 m. (For the OLDER members of COG was 7ft 6 inch in diameter with tentacles reaching 120ft). So, out of concern to all you dear COGers, if you see any ancestors of this particularly large fellow, my advice would be to RUN.

However, we should look at said jellyfish in a more favourable way, apparently to see these particular creatures this early in the year foretells of warm summer ahead.

So, if you believe this particular prediction or look out for a "red skies at night" or maybe keep a small claustrophobic beetle in a match box or just take the easy way out and tune into Derek Brockway. My personal prediction for this summer is for fun in the sun with Cardiff Outdoor Group.

Sian X

Cheers to you all,



Sian with jellyfish



CHALLENGE WALKS

Sarn Sabrina Walk (Sat 23rd May 2009) 25ml in 11hr from St Idloes Church Hall, Llanidloes; Tel: 01686 414893.

Email: sarnsabrina@llanileisure.co.uk Web site: http://www.llanidloes.com/sarn_sabrina

Drovers Walk (Sat 13th Jun 2009) 25, 15 or 10ml from The Square, Llanwrtyd Wells Tel: 01591 610666

Email: llanwrtydtouristinformation@yahoo.co.uk Web site: <http://www.green-events.co.uk>

Gower Gallop (Sat 13th Jun 2009) 30, 20 or 12.5ml in 14, 12 or 9hr, from the Pennard Sports Pavilion, Pennard,

Gower Tel: 01792 296219 Email: gowergallop@swanseaoutdoorgroup.org.uk

Rotary Across Wales Walk (West to East) (Sat 20th Jun 2009) 42, 26, 16 or 8ml in 20hr meeting in Newtown,

Powys Email: manteg@bopenworld.com Web site: <http://newtown-rotary.org.uk>

Brecon Beacons Challenge (Sat 20th June). This 14 mile 3 peak fundraising challenge is in aid of the British Heart

Foundation <http://www.bhf.org.uk/>

Caerphilly Summits Challenge (Sat 4th Jul 2009) 32, 23 or 12ml all to finish by 21.00 from a NEW VENUE at

Machen Village Hall Email: jpcunnane@sky.com Web site: <http://www.southwalesldwa.org>

Gower Macmarathon (Sat 5th Sep 2009) Choice of either a 22 mile route A challenging 22 mile scenic walk from Rhossili to Mumbles along cliff paths and sandy beaches Tel. 01792 540079 or email southwestwales@macmillan.org.uk

46th Across Wales Walk (Sat 5th Sep 2009) 45ml in 18hr from the English Border at Anchor Bridge Tel: 01527 545998 (evenings, before 21.00).

Email: stuart@acrosswaleswalk.co.uk Web site: <http://www.acrosswaleswalk.co.uk>

Mountain Trail Challenge (Sat 19th - Sun 20th Sep 2009) 30 or 17ml in 18 hr from Grawen Campsite Tel: 07973 320437 (weekday eves before 22.00; weekends anytime before 22.00). Email: mountain-trail-challenge@live.co.uk Web site: <http://www.mountain-trail-challenge.com>

31st Talybont Trial (Sat 10th Oct 2009) 20 or 10ml clockwise from Henderson Hall, Talybont on Usk Tel: 01633 257632.

Email: martyrogers@supanet.com Web site: <http://www.walk.to/nogs>

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



15th March: Wenallt & Tongwynlais, South Glamorgan



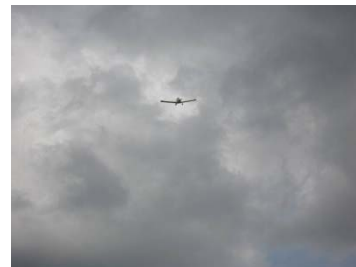
Any Photos we
can use in
The View?
Email to:
TheView@fsmail.net



5th April: Langstone & Wentwood, Gwent



19th April: Llandegfedd, Gwent



10th May: Black Mountains, Powys



17th May: Waterfalls, Brecon Beacons and Distillery Visit



A Bear Tale—

Hiking in the Smokies *By Richard Thompson*

(<http://rovingrich.whereareyou.net/>)



The Smokies

Way back in 2001/02 I was going backwards and forwards across the Atlantic like a yo-yo: winding down, each time, in North Carolina. It's a state that sprawls like a sunbather, east to west: feet tickled by the Atlantic Ocean, or buried in the sands and lofty dunes of the Outer Banks; head couched in the Appalachian Mountains and, the crown jewel of the southern part of that long, long, mountain chain, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

This national park, nicknamed the Smokies, is a huge forested area, with about a fifth reckoned to be old growth. It is the greatest expanse of old growth forest left in the eastern US. I was lucky enough to visit the place four times in the course of that year, but I saved one of the very best experiences I had there till last.

At the end of May 2002, I spent nine days hiking and camping there. Alone, except for the weekends when a friend met up with me, I covered more than 120 miles in those nine days, all in forest. As ever, there were breathtakingly beautiful views to be found. Mountains stacked on mountains, as if there had been a high speed collision; yet seemingly boundless: the rolling landscape melting away into the distance and its warm, bluish haze. All the peaks and valleys were cloaked in their first, fresh flush of green; and the trails were often thick with blooming azalea, rhododendron and mountain laurel. The ground flora was still putting on a great show too. Not only were the flowers beautiful, but I could delight in their colourful names as well: jack-in-the-pulpit, dutchman's britches, painted trillium and spring beauty. Chipmunks disappeared in a blur round many a corner. And the huge, spectacular, pileated woodpecker shook the trees with its chiselled bill, the skies with the whoosh of its wings, and my eardrums with its indefatigable laugh.

On my last full day alone I hiked up to a campsite that looked very promising, judging by my map. The campsites in the Smokies are rather basic, involving nothing more than a flat area to pitch a tent, a natural source of water, such as a stream or a spring, and a wire on a pulley strung between two trees from which one can hang up food out of the reach of bears. This campsite was a good mile off the main trail, so wonderfully isolated, and a few thousand feet up. It proved to be one of the most beautiful campsites I had ever seen: perched under a canopy of southern beech on the elliptical brow of a gently sloping hill. There is a magical quality to the way the leaves of southern beech play with sunlight, as if turning the pages of a gilt-edged book. And that evening, as the sun began to slide, it seemed almost mystical the way those leaves began to scatter its rays, transforming each, Midas-like, to gold. I was ringed by light, spare fingers of light; atavistic, primeval: cathedral light in pagan form. There was a sense, in the silence, of a forest speaking to me; measuring the immeasurable with its compass of light; yielding its secrets through a glance, or a smile.

I had finished my evening meal and was relaxing in front of my tent, enjoying the solitude. I felt sure I was the only person for many miles around. The only people I had seen all day were a couple early in the morning, perhaps a dozen miles distant from that place, and they had been heading in the opposite direction. Call me a misanthrope, but the sensation, the illusion, of boundless wilderness, that one could almost be the only person on the face of the Earth, has a tantalising charm at times. So there I lay, stretching out in front of my tent, sipping a drop of post-prandial whisky from my flask, immersing myself in the wonders of the forest.

Then he showed up: "Crunch. Crunch. Crunch. Crunch. Crunch."

I heard him before I saw him, churning and shattering the fallen leaves, coming up the path that terminated at the campsite. It was the only path. There was only one path in and out from there.

Of course, I felt a little dismay. Would all my illusions be shattered? Would I have to converse with this intruder, dredging back into being my human self? Yet I thought too: "it's very late for another hiker to be turning up." And then: "the noise doesn't sound quite human."

I stood up to take a look and there he was: the biggest black bear I had ever seen. He saw me and the crunching stopped. He paused and, for a moment, just stared straight back at me. He was thinking: but not for long. Here was a decisive bear. He began again: "crunch crunch crunch crunch," along the path and straight onto camp, keeping an eye on me all the while. He skirted me a little, before sitting down about thirty yards away: and then he resumed his stare. We sat watching one another for quite some time. I tried to take a few photos, but they didn't come out very well because it was getting dark. The bear didn't move: he just stared and stared.

I was not nervous. I could see he was wary of me, despite having lost some of his inhibitions. But it was getting dark. Soon I wouldn't be able to see him at all; wouldn't know where he was. I felt I had to do something about the situation: assert my authority. I reasoned that, if I didn't try to scare him off, it might seem like encouragement and, in time, he might end up even cockier: a real problem bear for future walkers. Besides, I wanted to get a better photograph and thirty yards was much too far away for my little camera!



It is no easy feat to remain unflustered in the dark with just a flimsy bit of canvas between you and a predator at least twice your weight, sporting big pointy claws and teeth!



I approached him, halving the distance between us and took another photograph or two. The bear sat still and watched. I then began to roar. Being so many miles removed from other people I felt free from all inhibitions: I could yell and scream with complete abandon. So I roared like I had never roared before, waving my arms in the air to accentuate my height. I thought I sounded absolutely terrifying. I was sure of it. The bear, on the other hand, had other ideas. He didn't move an inch. He just carried on looking at me, with the same placid expression, as if it were all to be expected, as if it were nothing new. It was only when I threatened to throw a rock at him that he finally moved; but even then only twenty yards. He scurried away and sat down again behind a bush to resume his inscrutable stare.



A typical Black Bear

Clearly, chasing off a big black bear is no easy task! I paused to collect my thoughts, then scoured the area for fist-sized stones. I stuffed them into my pockets and grabbed my hiking poles. An intake of breath and I moved towards the bear again, bashing the poles together as I went. This time, though, he did move, and swiftly too; but not in the direction I was expecting. Instead, he gave me a mock charge! But it was so feeble it was funny. His lunge towards me was dramatic, certainly, but as soon as he realised he was in danger of coming out from behind the bush he was hiding behind he stopped dead in his tracks. Needless to say, I was rather grateful for that!

So a few more roars and flung rocks later he finally fled, finally disappeared from view. I had managed to assert myself. But I knew he'd be back. I knew he would return under the cover of night.

I needed to move quickly. The last traces of the sun were almost gone. I removed everything but the bare essentials from my tent, all toiletries and clothes, in case some smell akin to food, or some trace of a smell, might encourage him to attack the tent. I hung almost everything I had on that wire between the trees. Then, gathering together some stones, some ammunition, to pile at the entrance to my tent, I clambered into my sleeping bag and waited.



I finally remembered—red with hunter, white with fisherman.

It was then that I began to feel a little nervous. It is no easy feat to remain unflustered in the dark with just a flimsy bit of canvas between you and a predator at least twice your weight, sporting big pointy claws and teeth! It had rained a little in the afternoon too and the droplets were sliding from the canopy to crackle on the forest floor below. I was waiting, just waiting, and every little sound was setting me on edge. But when he did come back, finally, there was no mistaking it. An animal that size simply cannot walk softly: "Crunch! Crunch! Crunch!"

I burst from my tent in just my underpants, leaping up and down, roaring like some half-crazed hermit, whirling my torch this way and that, flinging rocks in his general direction. I must have looked insane. But he ran (who wouldn't?); and I clambered back into my tent to begin the wait again.

He returned once more, perhaps half an hour later. But this time I didn't come tearing out of my tent quite so quickly. I gave him a chance to sniff around first, reasoning that, perhaps, he would realise all my food was hanging up out of reach and give up for the night. So, after roaring like a half-crazed hermit one last time, this thought relaxed me sufficiently that I was able to fall asleep. If he did come back again that night I never knew it. I slept soundly till dawn: dead to the world (figuratively speaking, of course).

Cycling News: Bridge over the Ely to go ahead

Pont-y-Werin, the "People's Bridge" was guaranteed funding last month with a settlement from the Welsh Assembly Government. Cardiff Outdoor Group heard nearly eighteen months ago about the Sustrans initiative called "Connect 2" which includes funding for this bridge. Vinny Mott from Sustrans told us about over seventy schemes across the UK designed to 'bridge' gaps, allowing communities to cycle or walk across difficult barriers such as rivers, roads and railway lines. The scheme to bridge the River Ely, linking the Sport Village in Cardiff with Penarth was one of the most expensive schemes.

After Sustrans won lottery funding for Connect 2 at the end of 2007, £1.15 million was allocated towards Pont-y-Weryn. There followed much tense negotiation for the remaining three million or so pounds needed to make the bridge a reality. This is now in place. Work is expected to start on the bridge later this Summer with completion possible in early Summer 2010. Needless to say that when it's open, we'll be making use of it as there will be many more choices available for walking around Cardiff Bay.

For more information, see http://www.sustransconnect2.org.uk/news/news_detail.php?item=People%2s+Bridge%2+to+be+built+this+summer.

Julian Langston

New-look bridge is no inspiration, say design gurus

Planners ignore pleas for more elegant crossing

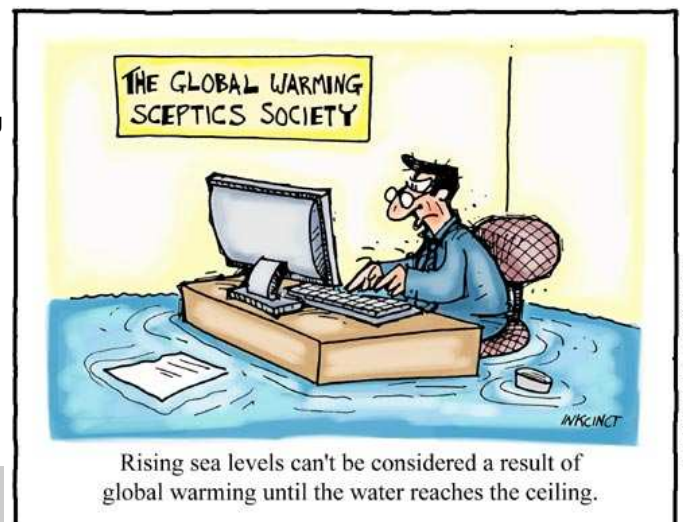
As this piece from the 'Echo' shows, the design of the new bridge is controversial after the initial 'landmark' proposals were dropped.

Doing Our Bit—COG Annual General Meeting Amends Policy Due to Global Warming Threat

The vast majority of scientists are in agreement that our planet is heading for a Climate Crisis. To stop global warming we have two options—we can either get rid of people (not a vote winner!) or stop using carbon based energy. The latter would be most people's preference. In recognition of this COG agreed a motion at the AGM to do one public transport walk per two month programme. This will reduce the use of our own vehicles thereby contributing in the smallest way possible to reducing the use of carbon based energy. While this is the smallest possible contribution and more symbolic than anything else, it is a start (as Confucius famously said "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step"!) As you'd expect from a 'hot' topic like this, the motion was amended before it got enough support to become COG policy. And now for the difficult bit! The COG Committee want to hear from you if you are prepared to lead a walk using only public transport.

GLOBAL WARMING—11 REASONS TO WORRY!

- 1. Weather:** There has been a 100% Increase in intensity and duration of hurricanes and tropical storms since the 1970's. The eleven hottest years on record are (in order, hottest first): 1998; 2005; 2003; 2002; 2004; 2006; 2007; 2001; 1997; 1995.
- 2. Environmental Holocaust:** 15% - 37% of plant and animal species could be wiped out by global warming by 2050.
- 3. Disease:** About 30 new infectious diseases have emerged in the past 20 years. Global warming will expose millions of people to new health risks. Infectious diseases are emerging, resurging and undergoing redistribution on a global scale.
- 4. Food Supply:** Diseases and fungi will attack crops; freak weather related disasters will destroy existing crops; once abundant foods may disappear. An insecure food supply, increased frequency and intensity of storms, and rapidly rising sea levels are just a handful of the possible effects you will see in coming years. The price you pay for food is getting higher already as a result of global warming effects on agriculture. What's worse is that this is leaving many of the world's hungry in a desperate situation, unable to afford adequate food. In the future, it could make it so hard for humans to grow enough food that everyone experiences food scarcity. Countless species will be wiped out if global warming continues unchecked. It could play a major role in the extinction of many species that are crucial to stabilizing the food chain that you and I (and countless other animals) depend on for our food.
- 5. Population:** In October 1999, the world's population reached **6,000,000,000**, which is double that of the year 1959 (the doubling occurred in 40 years). The world's population is currently increasing at the rate of about **80,000,000** per year (about 1.2 %). The current world population is 6,781,521,494 (22nd May 2009-Wikipedia).
- 6. Population Holocaust:** Global warming already contributes to more than 300,000 deaths (Kofi Annan/Guardian 29/5/09) and 5 million illnesses annually, according to a team of health and climate scientists at the World Health Organization—and those numbers could double by 2030. By the year 2050, up to one million additional deaths from malaria may be occurring annually as a result of climate change.
- 7. Heat:** 400, 000 square miles of Arctic sea ice have melted in the last 30 years (roughly the size of Texas). This is significant, because as white arctic ice is replaced by dark water (or land, in the case of tundra), our planet absorbs more heat. The reason for this is ice reflects more light and heat than do water and land, something scientists refer to as the "albedo effect." The albedo effect of ice is believed to have had a major impact on Earth's climate over the eons and the loss of albedo could accelerate the warming of the Earth significantly.
- 8. Sea Level:** Global sea level has risen between 10 to 25 cm in the last 100 years and will rise faster still in the coming decades. A one-meter rise in sea level would threaten half of the world's coastal wetlands of international importance for their biodiversity. A 6m sea level rise is likely if either the Greenland Ice Shelf or the East Antarctic Ice Shelf were to melt and slip into the sea. The rate of Greenland's ice melt over the last five years has increased by 70%. In Bangladesh, 15 million people live within 1 meter of sea level. In addition, much more dramatic sea level rises in the future are possible. If global warming catalyzes further warming and melts all of the ice in the arctic regions and at high altitudes, sea levels will rise by 230-260 feet.
- 9. Gassed:** About 75% of the annual increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide is due to the burning of fossil fuels. The remaining 25% is attributed to changes in land use - forests converted to rangelands, rangelands to agriculture, and agriculture to urban areas or land degradation--deforestation, overgrazing, overcultivation, desertification, and salinization. The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increased gradually from a low of 190 ppm 21,000 year ago, to about 290 ppm in the year 1900. Measurements of the concentration of carbon dioxide since 1959 (316 ppm) have revealed an increase to 388.5 ppm in 2008, a record high. The global carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels has increased by 35% since the Kyoto Protocol was signed in 1992. The projected concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by 2100 is 541 - 970 ppm under a "business as usual" scenario where we don't dramatically reduce global warming emissions. It takes 50 - 200 years before carbon dioxide stays in is absorbed from the earth's atmosphere into carbon sinks. 1000 years is the length of time changes in the earth's surface temperature, rainfall, and sea level will remain even after carbon dioxide emissions are completely stopped. The arctic tundra is melting causing an increase in methane levels in the atmosphere. Methane is a more toxic greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. A positive feedback loop could be created whereby the warming of polar regions puts more carbon and methane into the atmosphere, thus causing yet more warming in an unstoppable cycle.
- 10. Economy:** In the last several years insurance companies have faced regular, increasing costs from increased storm activity and intensity. The ravages of weather affected by global warming on the economy will become alot more severe in the future.
- 11. Global Warming Deniers:** The vast majority of scientists advise that Global Warming is a reality. However many big business' stands to lose a lot of money if green energy takes over from oil, gas and coal. The oil and coal industries spent \$427 million in the first six months of 2008 in political contributions, lobbying expenditures and advertising to oppose climate action. They have the money to 'guide' the decisions that are made.



Rising sea levels can't be considered a result of global warming until the water reaches the ceiling.

As the NASA climate scientist James E. Hansen noted, "If we do not change course we'll hand our children a situation that is out of their control."

Weekends Away



**Wild Camping in Snowdonia
19th to 21st June**

We head north to the mysterious Berwyns, possibly seeing fabled cloudberry plant and Wales's highest waterfall. Wild camp on Saturday night. Contact Steve B. on 07812 586 949 by Wednesday 17 June.



**Port Eynon, Gower
3rd to 5th July**

Once a lifeboat station, YHA Port Eynon (3★ hostel, 28 beds) is in a beautiful position on Gower with an award-winning beach on its doorstep. The bay is also extremely popular for all watersports and there is storage for surfboards, canoes and other bulky equipment at the property. With the Gower Coastal Path and cycle trails crossing this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its 34 miles of heritage coast, YHA Port Eynon is an outdoor enthusiast's dream. The hostel facilities include a self catering kitchen, lounge, BBQ area and garden. Also the hostel is to undergo an extensive refurbishment between March and May this year so you'll be amongst the first to enjoy the revamp. Cost £15.95 pppn. Further details Contact Sian Don 01446 719697 or email shannycelt@hotmail.com



**Elenydd Wilderness Trust—Ty'n Cornel
14th—16th August**

The recent introduction of electricity to this bunkhouse has done nothing to detract from the true sense of wilderness and isolation on offer here. The nearest pubs and shops are at Llanddewi-Brefi, seven miles and Tregaron 10 miles away. Review: "I walked to this hostel last summer, on a backpacking trip with my two teenage boys. After a sweltering trek up the Doethie valley (Red Kites hovering above us, Ravens chasing them from the cliffs) we arrived at the hostel in mid afternoon. This is a stunning hostel..... the snug is cosy and the whole place has an atmosphere of warmth and friendship..... Beds are good and clean, the showers work..... best of all is the location: remote, high in the hills, it's about as unique as they come. This hostel is right up there with the iconic mountain hostels. Fabulous - go there and see what I mean." Cost of accommodation pppn £10.00. For further details and to book, please contact Roger & Racel G on 029 20851176.



**Ridgeway Walking Weekend—Clyffe Pypard Hostel,
25th to 27th September**

This bunkhouse is part of the Goddard Arms (a Camra Pub) in small village of Clyffe Pypard (close to Avebury, Marlborough and the Ridgeway and White Horse Way and about an hour and a half's drive from Cardiff) Hence a chance for some good walking, drinking and opportunity to see and explore an interesting part of the world including an opportunity to explore White horses, stone circles and quaint Wiltshire villages. Walks planned include one from Avebury and one local to the bunkhouse. For further information please contact Jane O. on 029 20402571 or email Jane_ormrod@btinternet.com



Many thanks to everyone who helped make this year's Three Peaks Trial Challenge Walk the most successful on record. The funds raised from the event is not far off £3K, a record amount raised. Another record was the turnout. 664 took part on the day, another 86 paid but didn't turn up (the type of entrant we like!) The total number of participants (pre-entrants, those entering on the day and those that paid but didn't turn up) was 750. For those who like some stats, a breakdown on those doing each route is shown below. The publicity team clearly did a great job - Catherine, Enid and Katherine!

The day was a huge success and most things went smoothly which was down to the huge efforts of COG members and friends of COG members and Longtown Mountain Rescue Team who were marshalling the mountain top checkpoints. The only blip was when all the staplers which are a vital part of the registration process all decided to give up at the same time.

Particular thanks to the efforts of the sub committee for all the efforts in the run-up to and on the big day —Julian L., (Comms and website) Viv B. (Event Secretary & Volunteer Coordinator) , Martyn R. (Event Administrator), Catherine H. (Publicity), Enid L. (Publicity), Katherine T. (Publicity) Sian D. (Kitchen), Roger & Rachel G. (Sub-committee Memembs). Also thanks to all those COG members who's efforts produced an outstandingly successful day: - Bob H, Andrew P, Clive C, Jane O, Lawrence, Kevin, Rhona, Graham B, Angela D, Brian D, Jane M, Rosie N, Susan P, Jane P, Jeanie, Wayne M, Richard, Sarah L, Lowri L, Roger T.

Statistics—Numbers of Walkers Taking Part

	No. Walking on the day	Pre-Entries	Entered On The Day	Total No. Paid	Pre-Paid But Not Turned Up
Platinum	112	117	9	126	14
Gold	420	363	107	470	50
Silver	78	45	39	84	6
Bronze	54	46	24	70	16
Total	664	571	179	750	86



It was a massive help having Longtown Mountrain Rescue Team along who did a superb job marshalling all the mountain top checkpoints. They have agreed to assist each year which is good news ensuring there is maximum safety cover for the walkers taking part. 50% of the funds raised will go to the LMRT for this support.

3PT Website Update

The website has been changed a bit for 2010. Additional details are in the process of being added - history of the event, event blog etc. Check it out at www.threepeakstrial.co.uk

Caving News—Summary of All Cave Rescues in South Wales in 2008

- Culvert near Garnant (Amman Valley), assist authorities - 4/1/08, 12:07, WBCRT, 5 person rescue team , length of rescue 15 min.**
 Asked to search a culvert by mountain rescue team acting for Dyfed-Powys Police. A groundsman from Garnant Golf Club was missing; he was found dead on the course before the team arrived. (WBCRT = West Brecon Cave Rescue Team)
- Porth yr Ogof (Ystradfellte) medical emergency - 8/2/08, 15:10, WBCRT, 13 person rescue team, length of rescue 3hr 30min.**
 Caver (f24) suffered a dislocated knee in a very awkward, tight location. She could not be moved until her kneecap was replaced by the attending team doctor. After splinting and rest she was walked out of the cave with assistance.
- Agen Allwedd (Llangattock), lost or overdue - 16/2/08, 22:00, Gwent CRT, 50 person rescue team, length of rescue 6 hrs.**
 A group attempting the Grand Circle trip in a clockwise direction missed the designated callout time of 22:00. The party had been seen in good spirits at 16:00, but one of the group had suffered a hamstring injury and the party had experienced some route-finding problems and was subsequently moving slowly. Notice of the party having been found was received at Whitewalls cottage at 04:45; the group was assisted out of the cave by 06:00. Assisted by WBCRT.
- Dan yr Ogof (Swansea Valley) , flooding - 15/3/08, 20:40, WBCRT, 17 person rescue team, length of rescue 23hr 50min.**
 Two cavers (m39, m) were trapped beyond the Lakes by floodwater. Contact was made via a fixed phone line and the rescue dump was used by the pair; divers ferried in additional supplies. Water levels dropped by the afternoon of the following day, allowing a safe exit. Assisted by the CDG.
- Llygad Llwhchr (Black Mountain), medical emergency - 15/7/08, 12:45, WBCRT, 9 person rescue team, length of rescue 6 hrs.**
 A caver (f18) suffered a dislocated kneecap as a result of a stumble. Her injury was reduced and she was able to make her own way out of the cave with assistance from the rescue team; an air ambulance and mountain rescue team were in support.
- Hospital Cave (Swansea Valley), flooding - 1/9/08, 14:10, WBCRT, 15 person rescue team, length of rescue 11 hrs.**
 Two cavers (m, f) were trapped after a severe short storm sumped the entrance. 'Comforts' were dived in, as were wetsuits and associated equipment and the cavers were dived out individually. Assisted by CDG.
- OFD2/Cwm Dwr (Swansea Valley, lost or overdue - 12/10/08, 18:06, WBCRT, 12 person rescue team, 2hr 45min.**
 Two male cavers became lost on a through trip from Cwm Dwr to Top Entrance; they were found in the Salubrious area of OFD2 and escorted to the surface.
- OFD2/Cwm Dwr (Swansea Valley, lost or overdue - 6/12/08, 09:00, WBCRT, 35 person rescue team, 4hr 15min.**
 A party of cavers (m21, m18, f19, f19) was unable to find the route out from Cwm Dwr via the boulder choke; the overdue group was found by a searchy party and escorted out.

The above is from Descent Magazine



Steve's Big Sack

I can't believe it's time for another "Big Sack". Things have been busy for COG 's Hard Nuts.

February's backpack was, as usual, in perfect weather and there were six of us out, the others being Ruth B, Yvonne, Roger G,

Mark B and Nigel F. Yes, there were ladies. Friday night saw us camping at a very nice, quiet place in Wall-Under-Heywood. The pub was busy, which bodes well for future visits (ie. it should still be in business). On Saturday the sunshades came out for our stroll over to Caer Caradoc where there were beautiful views to the Wrekin and the Berwyn Hills (more of which later). After this we had lunch at a café recommended by Yvonne which was an organic whole-food paradise. Leaving was difficult but on we walked through the Carding Mill valley which was full of normal people. Once up to the plateau of the Long Mynd we walked over the Betchcott Hills then followed the Jack Mytton Way down to Bridges Youth Hostel. Here we had the luxury of a cooked dinner, cooked breakfast and a pub just down the road. The warden was very friendly and an excellent cook. Backpacking doesn't get much softer than that.

The next day we took a ridge back up to the Long Mynd then walked over a top quality ridge into Little Stretton. The weather was still perfect, though a tad breezy. Following a swift ascent of Ragleth Hill we headed over to Wenlock Edge and went up and down it (as the weekend wouldn't have been complete without it). I think we got back to the cars at about 4.00 pm. A good time was had by all and the February backpack maintains its record as one of the sunniest and most popular backpacks of the year.

The following month saw us exploring new ground to the north-west of Llandovery. This time the hardy souls were Roger, Nigel and me. Again the weather was good (on the whole) but windier and cooler than the February backpack. The first day we had a quick look at some bumps in the ground (Llandovery's Roman fort) then went up the Tywi valley to Cilycwm. Then came the biggest climb of the weekend, up Mynydd Mallaen. This was a classic Mid-Wales hill: really attractive, steep-sided valleys and boggy moor along its plateau. In mist this would be a nightmare to navigate but the good weather held out for our trudge along the top. From there it was quiet farmland and valleys to our campsite just outside Ffarmers. The campsite was very nice but the pub down the road was, frankly, disappointing: a bit too 1970s and the choice of beer was severely limited. Next day we headed up a ridge before heading down to Pumpsaint and the obligatory coffee stop at Dolaucothi Gold Mines. Then a really attractive old drovers'

route over the hills to the village of Caio before following some obscure paths then quiet roads back to Llandovery.

The next backpack is in the Berwyns for the weekend of Friday 19th to Sunday 21st June. For those of you who don't know, the Berwyns are just south-west of Llangollen, have one of the highest waterfalls in Wales, and are rolling hills with some steep scarp slopes. If the weather is good then Saturday night will be a wild camp – and if there's no wind we'll camp high to avoid any potential midge problems. At some point we will probably call at Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant where we'll hold a competition to see who can pronounce the name.

If you get this in time and you're interested then let me know on – 07812 586949 or stevebees13@yahoo.co.uk

It has been a very welcome change having some new blood on the longer walks recently – particularly Liz L, Tina T, Mike K and Richard the Ecologist. And when I say "new blood" I don't mean that there have been initiation rites involving sharp objects and/or torture, because I realise that's probably the impression most COG members get about the "hard nuts".

Hopefully the new bods have been pleasantly surprised by the good bits of the Ultimate Valleys Walks. Up to now both parts 1 (Pontypool to Hengoed) and 2 (on to Ton Pentre) have had ideal walking conditions. Part 3 is on Saturday 6th June and as it's the longest day, at around 22 miles, another good day would be in order. Part 3 will take us from Ton Pentre up to "the Bwlch" then over to the walk's high point at Werfa, from where it's a ridge walk over to Caerau then Afan Argoed Country Park; after a quick café stop there's good walking along the river to Ponrhydyfen then a climb through forestry and more tracks/roads to Port Talbot. There may be certificates for those who've done all three parts. The bad news, however, is that next year I might try and extend the route to include parts 4, 5 and 6 back to Pontypool.

Other upcoming long walks are Chris's linear Beacons walk on Saturday 27th June which will no doubt be another classic. I'm not sure about what else is coming up in July or August other than a long walk I'm doing in the Wye Valley/Forest of Dean on Sunday 2nd August where the trees will provide welcome shade from the sun.

...we had the luxury of a cooked dinner, cooked breakfast and a pub just down the road.... Backpacking doesn't get much softer than that..

To my knowledge, there's no COGpacking in July or August – I'm away every weekend in July and they're not great months for backpacking anyway (too much perspiration!).

No doubt backpacks can be dusted off again for September & October....

Elenydd Wilderness Trust News

The Trust has received Three Peaks donations in the past and with a further donation planned for 2009. The Trust continues to make good progress.

NEW TRUSTEES

Nominations for the appointment of new trustees would be welcomed. Contact the Trust's secretary Janet Hollins for further details.

DOLGOCH

Steve Griffith, despite his deep involvement and work for the Trust, has volunteered to take over the additional role of Hostel Manager. However, he would be grateful for help. Offers to Steve please Tel. 02088337409 email steve.y.griffith@royalmail.com

The Track Our contractors the Forestry Commission have transformed access to the hostel – ten culverts constructed, a continuous “V” ditch on one side, a passing place and small level parking area above the hostel. The final dressing has yet to be laid but this will be done after phase 1 of the building work at the hostel is completed.

The Hostel No one we are sure could fail to be impressed by the sight of the new hostel roof. Previously stepped on the rear elevation where the pitch of the roof changed to cover the lobby, shower and office area, it now runs smoothly to its lowest level. Old buildings often produce unpleasant surprises and our Dolgoch clearly felt tradition must be followed. It was discovered that the chimney was being held in place by the roof which once removed could have led to disaster so we have a brand new chimney. Extra unwanted expense but very necessary!

Timber work to the barn roof has been completed, the roof felted and battens fitted, and will be tiled once the gable end of the hostel has been rendered, probably before this newsletter is distributed. Hopefully the end of April will see completion of Phase 1 work which will mean a repeat of the efforts of the small band of members who worked so hard to get the property prepared for an Easter booking. Anyone prepared to help should contact Marilyn for date and times.

Above the hostel, trustee Bill Hine has spent three days planting small deciduous trees grown from local seed. In all some 400 trees have been planted. A very pleasing sight Bill. Many thanks. **Help needed** Cutting and raking grass at both hostels on the weekend of 24th – 26th July. If you are able to help please contact Bill on **0117 9531698**.

TY'N CORNEL

Bookings-wise, a very encouraging start for the hostel with 340 bednights booked and paid for by the end of March.

SPONSORED WALK

This will again be based on Dolgoch and will include the two walks which proved so popular last year. Full details can be found on the Trust's website www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk

LOCAL EVENTS

The quatercentenary of the death of local folk hero Twm Sion Cati is being marked throughout the year in different ways. Saturday, 22nd August, the day prior to our next open meeting at Dolgoch, sees Rhandirmwyn staging a celebration which includes organised walks, craft displays and workshops, talks and poetry readings in the 12th century chapel Capel Peulin, with a hog roast and country dancing at Ystradffin Farm in the evening. Sounds like a rousing prelude for members before enduring the routine of next day's committee meeting! Book your beds at Dolgoch now!

PUBLICITY

A new brochure has been produced. Photographs provide one of the most important aspects of a brochure and member Sue Brown, who has spent time seeking these out, writes as follows:

Calling all photographers

The Trust would like to build up a library of photographs for use in the future and to keep as an archive for the hostels.

We need them for our publicity, for displays and for articles in the press. To date we have been fortunate to have been given some excellent images, and now with the spring and summer before us, would like to encourage all you keen photographers to take some photos for the Trust. When you are next at Ty'n Cornel or Dolgoch or out and about in the area and the sun is shining or the light is just right, perhaps you could take a few shots. For our publicity work we need photos with young people in them. Something eye-catching that captures the spirit of being in the Elenydd or of staying at one of the hostels. Take time to 'pose' your models to get the best picture. It is essential that permission is obtained from the people in your photos for the Trust to use their images and where children are involved that of the parents. Digital photos need to be of high quality to be suitable for printing. Please send your digital images to photos@elenydd-hostels.co.uk with a maximum of 8 per photographer. If you still use film and have prints suitable for a display, these can be sent to: Susan Brown, Parc Manordeifi, Pontrhydyceirt, Cilgerran, SA43 2PG.



The new Elenydd Wilderness Trust publicity leaflet.



Beacons Bus is back!

Beacons Bus is 10 years old this year. It is a network of specially commissioned buses that runs from major towns and cities bringing you into Brecon in the morning.

The buses then run on various routes around the National Park before returning home via Brecon at the end of the day. You can get off the bus at a huge variety of places en route or go all the

way to Brecon. There you simply hop off one bus and onto the next to get to many great destinations. The Cardiff service carries bikes on an award winning trailer so you can bring your bike too. Have a car-free day in the hills and bring your bike too!

The service runs on Sundays and Bank Holidays in the summer months from all sorts of places in South Wales taking you up into the National Park to return that evening. This year the service runs from 24th May - 27th September. For a free copy of Beacons Bus or Offa's Dyke timetables, One Way Walks booklet or Discover/Travel Guides, fill out the form on the website <http://www.breconbeacons.org/> or visit an Information Centre.



Illegal off-roading

The National Park Authority is taking Illegal off-roading very seriously with a zero tolerance policy.

The problems associated with off roading activities include environmental damage and disturbance to wildlife, danger and annoyance to other park users and a negative impact on tourism.

The National Park Authority welcomes any information relating to

illegal off-roading activities within the park and you can complete the form below to report specific incidents.

The information which you provide is important, enabling us to build a picture and focus our resources on problem areas. This information will also be passed onto the police for them to respond to.

Report illegal off-roading – fill out the form on the National Park website - <http://www.breconbeacons.org/the-authority/wardens/illegal-off-roading>. Information required is your name, address, e-mail address, location of incident, date and time of incident, details of vehicles, any comments also if you have a photo this can be downloaded on to the form.

Underwater Life Off the Welsh Coast Now on Youtube

CCW is exploring new ways to reveal the natural and cultural importance of the environment. Now YouTube and Google Ocean is being used to upload underwater information and images on line.

Dr Rohan Holt, CCW's Marine Monitoring Ecologist who shot some of the underwater video said: "The colour and richness of life off the Welsh coast is a constant source of wonder - a rich heritage so easy to forget when it's out of sight. The footage is great and nobody needs to get wet: it's all just a click-of-a-button-away!" Go to www.youtube.com/user/countrysidecouncil

Even more information can be found on Google Oceans maps – they illustrate Wales' Marine Protected Areas, showing the international importance of 30% of all Wales' marine environment. Photographs, videos and site facts of some of the important habitats can also be found here. Google Oceans is available by downloading Google Earth from <http://earth.google.co.uk>



The Save Llanishen Reservoir Campaign Gets Major Boost.

There's been yet more twists to this remarkable campaign by Cardiff residents to save the Llanishen Reservoir.

The reservoir is part of the 'green corridor' from the city centre to the hills north of Cardiff. In April following a public enquiry the Planning Inspector recommended the Western power proposal to infill the reservoir and cover the site with houses be accepted. The Welsh Assembly Government has the power to overturn the Planning Inspector's recommendation which they duly did. (It used to be the Home Secretary but with devolution this power has passed to the Assembly—devolution delivers!)

In a further set back for Western Power Cadw have recommended the reservoir structure is listed as a building of architectural or historic interest. But the wretched Western Power have a last card to play and that is taking the case for a judicial review. For a challenge to be successful they would have to show that the Minister misinterpreted the law or, for instance, that the inquiry, hearing, or other appeal procedures were not carried out properly, leading to unfair treatment. If a mistake has been made, and the Court considers it might have affected the outcome of the appeal, it will return the case to WAG for re-consideration. Of course the greedy lot at Western Power have recently announced they will pursue the judicial review.

Watch this space!

Cardiff's 'Ghost Slug' In World Top 10 of New Species

WITH its eerily white skin, razor-sharp teeth and a taste for earthworm blood, the so-called "ghost slug" of Cardiff is not exactly a gardener's favourite. But the eyeless creature has now captured the hearts of an international panel of natural science experts, who have just placed it in their "top 10" of newly-discovered species. The International Institute for Species Exploration's State of Observed Species report, published this month, highlights thousands of new plants, animals and other specimens officially designated as new species in 2008.

The ghost slug, named *Selenochlamys ysbryda* – partly after the Welsh word for ghost, *ysbryd* – shares its top 10 status with a bizarre collection, including bacterium that only live in hairspray tins and a Madagascan palm tree that flowers itself to death.

Bill Symondson, an ecologist at Cardiff University, added: "The lack of eyes and body colour could indicate the species evolved in a cave system. "It was probably introduced to Britain in plant pots, making it an alien species, although we can't be certain." An estimated 1.8m species have been formally named and described over the past 300 years since Swedish scientist Carolus Linnaeus started his binomial system of taxonomic classification.



Thu 11 Jun - Sat 13 Jun
From 11:00am until 11:00pm

The Campaign for Real Ale will be transforming Cardiff International Arena into the biggest pub in Wales.

There are now around 35 real ale breweries in Wales and they hope to have all

of them at the festival. Real ales from across the UK will also be on sale. Altogether the festival will feature over 150 different real ales from around the UK, along with more than 50 ciders and a good selection of foreign and bottles beers. The event will also feature Traditional Pub Games, Stalls selling Beer Festival memorabilia, T-shirts and new for 2009 Crafts Stands for you to peruse at leisure between ales. Visit www.gwbcf.org.uk for further information.

COG's FAVOURITE CHOCOLATE BAR—LINDT DARK

Cocoa Tasting Evening Selects a 50% Cocoa Content Chocolate Bar As the COG Favourite

At the Chocolate Tasting Evening seven chocolate bars were sampled with varying cocoa content. The general consensus is that the more cocoa content the better the quality of chocolate bar. However from the untrained palates of the COG members this didn't quite follow with the 90% cocoa content bar being the least favourite, having quite a foul, pungent flavour. The bars were sampled in order of cocoa content, least content first (ie Cadbury's Dairy Milk. When the votes were counted up the result was: **1st: Lindt Dark** (50% cocoa content); **2nd: Lindt Dark Noir** (70% cocoa content); **3rd: Green & Blacks Dark** (85% cocoa content); **4th: Tesco Finest Organic Ecuadorian Milk Chocolate** (39% cocoa content); **5th: Cadbury's Dairy Milk** (23% cocoa content), **6th: Cadbury's Bourneville** (60% cocoa content); **7th Lindt Dark Supreme Noir** (90% cocoa content).

History of Chocolate

The transition from bitter beans to food source likely occurred during the time of an ancient tribe called the Olmecs (1200 to 300 B.C.) who lived in the tropical lowlands of South Central Mexico. They are known to have domesticated the plant and the beans were a central part of their culture from at least 600BC. The Mayans are considered the most culturally advanced among the Mesoamerican civilizations. They were the first true chocolate aficionados—it became an integral part of their society, used in ceremonies, given as gifts and incorporated into their mythologies. The Aztecs led an empire of almost 15 million people between the 14th and 16th centuries. They prized the cacao bean so highly that it was their form of currency. The bean also was used as money in Central American markets long after the Aztecs were gone, as late as 1858. There was even cocoa bean forgery! Forgers would take empty cacao shells, fill them with earth, reassemble them and palm them off as real. The beans were the natives' "coins." A list of Aztec trading prices looked something like this: 1 small rabbit = 30 cacao beans; 1 turkey egg = 3 cacao beans; 1 large tomato = 1 cacao bean. Columbus was the first European to discover cacao beans but it took some time before Europe discovered chocolate. Columbus thought they were a type of almond. Though he did bring them back to Spain with him, cacao and chocolate went unnoticed for some decades because the Spanish didn't know what to do with them. However the explorer Cortes' saw how the Aztecs drank the chocolate and took the technique back to Spain where the aristocracy began to enjoy it as a drink. Carl Linnaeus, a leading 18th century botanist, created the classification system that assigned Latin designations to all organisms. He named the cacao bean "*Theobroma cacao*," which translates as "Food of the Gods."

In 1847 Joseph Fry found a way to separate and then blend powdered cocoa with cocoa butter (plus sugar, of course) and make a paste that could be easily molded into a bar. Up until this time, the powder had been mixed with water, which made it thick and hard to work with. Fry discovered that by mixing extra cocoa butter with the cocoa paste you could make chocolate a portable, solid food. This was the very first bar you could eat without cooking or treating. It caught on immediately. Fry quickly became the largest chocolate manufacturer in the world.

One reason Switzerland is so famous for its chocolate is because it was the birthplace of key inventions that perfected chocolate production. Philippe Suchard is responsible for the *mélangeur*, the first chocolate mixing machine that did the tough job of combining cocoa paste and sugar into an even blend. Chemist Henri Nestlé invented a process to create powdered milk through evaporation. He teamed up with Daniel Peter, a chocolate manufacturer, who combined the powdered milk with chocolate to create the very first milk chocolate bar in 1879. The same year, Rudolphe Lindt invented the *conche* machine and the process known as *conching* a refining step which is critical to making shiny, smooth and creamy chocolate without any graininess. Legend has it that Lindt discovered conching by accident when one of his employees left a machine running all night. These advances put the Swiss in the forefront of chocolate manufacturing, and throughout the 19th century they produced the equivalent of 12,000 pounds per Swiss citizen per year. They didn't eat all of it themselves however, most of it was for export!

Mass production of chocolate bars became established during the 20th Century. Cadbury launched its first milk chocolate for eating, created by adding dried milk powder to cocoa solids, cocoa butter and sugar in 1897. Then in 1905 Cadbury Dairy Milk was launched to compete against the leading brands of Swiss milk chocolate.

Growing Cocoa—Some Little Known Facts

Each tree bears about 30 usable pods a year, which translates to roughly 1000 beans a year. It takes 500 beans to make 1 pound of bittersweet chocolate – so in the best of circumstances, each tree produces beans for only 2 pounds of chocolate. Almost 90% of cacao bean production comes from farms under 12 acres. Of the 3.5 million small family cacao farms worldwide, it is estimated that 2.6 million are located in Africa.



A Colour Version of 'The View' is Available from the COG website www.cardiffoutdoorgroup.org.uk



you have any **Photos** From Weekends etc, **Articles**, **Letters**, **Reviews of Trips**, Etc. that could be used in future '**VIEWS**'? If the answer is '**YES**' please Email them to TheView@fsmail.net

The View is published by Cardiff Outdoor Group 13 Gelligaer Gardens, Cathays, Cardiff, CF24 4LT. Website: <http://www.cardiffoutdoorgroup.org.uk>
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