

*The Climbers in the Club were very pleased to see a photo of Don Simpson in action on the front page of the last Newsletter so here (left) is another photo of WBMC members enjoying their climbing taken recently at the Gower. The photo above was taken (on Berneray I think) by David Coats on his recent trip cycling The Hebridean Way S to N*

	Contents	<b><u>CHAIRMAN DAVE H's CORNER:</u></b> Just a few notes on happenings since my first Chairman's message. As predicted the new committee is working well and a number of important topics are being actively pursued. A small working party is reviewing & testing an updated Club's website designed by Joe Priest. On completion the new site will be much easier to access and for the committee to update. Matters relating to the Club Hut are also being reviewed by another working party and its conclusions will be in the Newsletter in due course. It is encouraging that the coach meets are being well supported. The disappointment at the aborted Hawes meet (coach breakdown) is being offset by a second attempt in August which hopefully will be more successful. It is to be regretted that Hut Secretary Pete Poultney tendered his resignation but his successor, Fred Hammonds, will be well known to many. We wish him well in his new role. Members "ventures" have included a "gang of four" going offshore to the isle of Rum for a few days and a larger group spending a weekend in a hut at Glenridding. Evening outdoor meets continue to be enjoyable social events for those who attend. My best wishes to you all. Enjoy the summer wherever you go & whatever you do. Just be sure to return safe and well. Dave Hellyar
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<p>This Newsletter was produced by John Edwards. Thanks to those members who contributed information or articles. If you would like to write an article or spot something interesting about the mountains please get in touch with John via <a href="mailto:jaejed@hotmail.com">jaejed@hotmail.com</a> Also check out our Wikipedia entry <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bromwich_Mountaineering_Club">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bromwich_Mountaineering_Club</a></p>		

## NOTICEBOARD

### WELCOME TO NEW PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

Gill Seaton, Tate Collier, Carl Collier, Paul McAlley, Karl Bradley & Phil Wood have paid their prospective member fees (& there are 3 or 4 others who haven't!) so we wish them well and hope they find their time on the mountains with us enjoyable & friendly.

### PROGRAMME OF FUTURE EVENTS:

#### COACH MEETS TO THE HILLS & MOUNTAINS:-

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September – The Moelwyns

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October – Ambleside / Grasmere

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November – Llanberis

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December – Glossop + meal at golf club

Reserve your seat with Nigel (07703 345729) and

be guaranteed a great day on the hills. More next issue!

*These leave W. Brom at 7am & usually return around 9 – 9.30 pm giving ~7 hrs on the hills with linear walks often possible. If you don't fancy a long walk why not come along for a social day out?*

#### EVENING OUTDOOR / INDOOR MEETS :-

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September – Rob Allen leading a walk in Sandwell Valley (see later)

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October – Indoor Meet Illustrated talk by Ken Priest likely

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November – Indoor Meet: Illustrated talk by John Edwards likely

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December – Members' Christmas Social at The Red Lion, All Saints Rd

#### INDOOR CLIMBING NIGHTS – Last Tuesday of the Month & Wednesdays / Saturdays

Meet at “High Places”, Wyre Forest Climbing Wall, Silverwoods Way, Kidderminster DY11 7DT from 4.30pm on **26<sup>th</sup> September, 31<sup>st</sup> October & 28<sup>th</sup> November** although a few newer & younger working members are meeting 6.30 -7.00pm. Just turn up or get in touch with Pete Poultny (07779 366905) and ask to be added to the WhatsApp group.

Darren G tells me another group are meeting at “Red Point” Birmingham on **Wednesday around 1215 pm &/or Saturdays at around noon** so feel free to pop along if these times or venue suit you better.

#### COMMITTEE MEETINGS & SOCIAL NIGHTS AT THE RED LION (B71 1RH) :-

**14<sup>th</sup> September, 12<sup>th</sup> October, 16<sup>th</sup> November** Committee meetings start at 7.30pm (observers are welcome). Otherwise come along at around 8.30 pm for a drink & a chat or meal.

#### WEEKENDS & OTHER MEETS :-

##### WOMEN'S WEEKEND AT THE HUT Friday 15<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September

Always popular and a great culinary success, the 2023 Women's Weekend organiser is again Vanessa Biddulph so contact her (07709 514180) to secure your place for a weekend of walking, eating & possibly wild swimming.

##### TRAIL RUNNING WEEKEND Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> - Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September

The first of 2 weekends for those who like running. Contact Pete Poultny (07779 366905) for more information and to reserve your place.

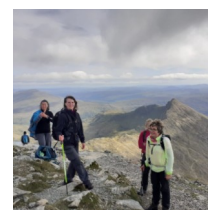
##### SCRAMBLING WEEKEND Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September – Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October

The hut at Coniston Coppermines is booked. Contact Mel Evans (07845 060043) to reserve your place in one of the 14 beds. Only £15 per night.

##### BIKING WEEKEND Friday 21<sup>st</sup> – Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October

Jonathan Howells is hoping to do one of 2 routes from the Hut and invites keen cyclists to join him. Depending on participants & weather it could be 'The Slate-man Traithlon' route or 50 or 75 miles of 'The Brailsford Way'. If you are interested please contact Jon on 07859 932389.

See [www.visitsnowdonia.info/fford-brailsford-way-cycle-routes-snowdonia](http://www.visitsnowdonia.info/fford-brailsford-way-cycle-routes-snowdonia) for more info and keep a look out for a MailChimp!



**RUNNERS WEEKEND Friday 28<sup>th</sup> - Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October**

A second opportunity to get those running shoes on. Contact Pete Poultney (07779 366905) for more information and to reserve your place.

**CURRY NIGHT IN WEST BROM Friday 2<sup>th</sup> November**

Back to the Akash Balti at 385 High Street, West Bromwich, B70 9QW, next door to The Wheatsheaf where we used to meet. Nigel Tarr (07703 345729) is co-ordinating the booking.

**SKILLS WEEKEND @ the HUT Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November**

A chance to pick up some navigation skills from Geordie Hind so reserve your place by contacting him on 07505 364318. \*\*\*\*\* SEE FULL PAGE ADVERT ON BACK PAGE \*\*\*\*\*

**STOP PRESS!!!! SCOTTISH WINTER WEEK 2024 : SATURDAYS 10<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**

Jonathan Howells has been in touch with Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William and reserved some rooms for WBMC. In line with most things they've gone up a bit - but still excellent value at £42 per night BB & Evening meal (incl. use of gym, jacuzzi, pool & sauna) + £16 single room supplement if desired. The long range weather forecast is for lots of snow so to secure your place contact Jon on 07859 932389. I think one night's fee does the trick.

**SOME FINANCIAL MATTERS / HUT & COACH PRICE DISCUSSIONS**

With inflation high for over a year now, the Committee, & especially the relevant Secretaries / sub committees, have been looking at the balance sheets relating to the Hut & Coach. Hut costs have increased by ~30% since 2021 and the committee are keeping an eye on things in case suggested donations for use of the Hut need to rise next year. In order to keep a better track of money owed, the Hut Sec would like all donations to be made within 2 weeks of a visit to the Hut. The Committee have also agreed that 3 days clear notice should be given by anyone canceling their visit, otherwise they would be expected to donate in full. Coach fares have been pegged at £23 per member per seat for many years now and the Committee will endeavour to keep them at this level – but if Robinsons' charges increase, these too will likely have to rise,

Apparently the Club's bank account has been wrong on the current website for some time but is hopefully now correct. Please note we have closed the HSBC account to save paying bank charges and are now using the following Co-op Bank account for day to day administration:- Ac No: 65487846 Sort Code: 08-92-99

**Important:** To better track the reasons for bank transfers INTO the Club's account a relatively simple system of 'Cunning Codes for Paying In' has been devised by Andy Brown & agreed by the committee in August eg 'SW09JBLOGGS' would refer to Joe Bloggs overnights for the forthcoming Scrambling Weekend. See full description opposite:-

Future event organisers should try and suggest a similar code for people to use if they pay for the event by bank transfer, though cash (or even cheques) are still acceptable of course, especially on the coach.

**W.B.M.C. Paying in Codes**

More and more of the clubs activities mean that club members are paying monies direct into our bank account. This has the potential for payments not to be recognized causing organisers and the Treasurer having a harder job than in previous years.

To make the payments easier to allocate to the correct activity it may be beneficial to have a code system to ask members to use.

**Membership**

AM24ABROWN

AM Indicates ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP. 24 indicates the year the payment is for. Initial and surname of the person who the payment is for.

IT WOULD HELP IF MEMBERS MADE A SEPARATE PAYMENT FOR EACH FAMILY MEMBER.

**Hut Fees**

HF08ABROWN

HF Indicates HUT FEES. 08 indicates the month the person arrived at the hut. Initial and surname of the person who the payment is for.

THE BOOKING IN SHEET SHOULD BE USED TO SHOW WHERE ONE PERSON IS PAYING FOR A GROUP.

**Coach Fees**

CF08ABROWN

CF Indicates COACH FARE. 08 indicates the month the payment refers to. Initial and surname of the person who the payment is for.

Further codes can be used for club events such as the Away Dinner (AD24ABROWN) or the Scottish Week (SW24ABROWN) to be decided on by the organiser and agreed with the Treasurer.

**SATURDAY 9th SEPTEMBER : THE MOELWYNS****Depart:** 07:00 –West Bromwich

Edward St Car Park B70 8NL

07:20 –M54 Junction 2

**Toilet stop:** Corwen**Drop offs:** Capel Curig bridge (735572)

Pen-y-Gwryd (660557)

Club Hut / Nantgwynant (627506)

Maentwrog (660410)

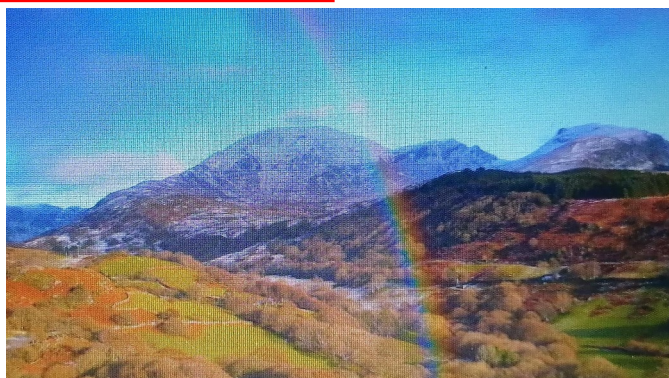
Tanygrisiau (685448)

**Pick up:** Tanygrisiau (685448)

Club Hut / Nantgwynant (627506)

**Required map:** OS 1:25000 Outdoor

Leisure Map No 17 Snowdon &amp; 18 Harlech &amp; Bala

*Moelwyns Mawr & Bach in Dec 2010 by Park Ranger Mills***SUGGESTED ROUTES:-****From Capel Curig (Pont Cyfng) : Route 1 – Moel Siabod to Ysgafell Wen.**

Leave the coach at the bridge and cross over by the spectacular rapids to follow the track to Llyn y Foel (714549). Then scramble up Daiar Ddu, an easy, fairly narrow arête, up to the summit of Moel Siabod (705546). Descend west over Moel Gid (695545) to Bwlch Rhiw'r Ychen (677543) & then head south, following a fence on the boggy ridge over Carnedd y Cribau (676537) and much farther on Moel Meirch (662504). Pass to east of Llyn Edno to Ysgafell Wen (White Ledge) with its 3 summits (664488, 664486 & the highest at 667481). Then descend west to col south of Llyn Yr Adar (Lake of the birds) at 657477. Turn left & follow a path SSE to the disused quarry (665462) then a good track can be followed to Cwmorthin & down to Tanygrisiau (685448) & the coach.

**NB:** This route ideally needs a clear day as it can be confusing in mist. (~ 21½ km / 13 miles)**From the Pen-y-Gwryd Hotel : Route 2 – 'Ridge' to Ysgafell Wen without Siabod.**

Climb a stile west of Llyn Lockwood and walk uphill in a SE direction over boggy ground to Bwlch Rhiw'r Ychen (677543). Then it's route 1 over the Ysgafells and on to the coach waiting at Tanygrisiau. (~ 16 km / 10 miles)

**From Nantgwynant: Various routes from and back to the Hut**

**From Maentwrog: Route 3 -** If you're not feeling that energetic a pleasant path leads from Llyn Mair (655413) eastwards through woods and past waterfalls to Dduallt station (679421). It then heads north over the fells alongside the Ffestiniog railway before this disappears underground. Take your pick of the paths past Tanygrisiau Reservoir to the village & the coach, the one up the west side will enable you to have a look at the hydro-electric power station (679445) (About 7 km / 4½ miles)

**From Tanygrisiau: Route 4 – Moelwyn Mawr, Cragysgafn & Moelwyn Bach**

Follow the track to the head of Llyn Cwmorthin (678460), cross a slate bridge & climb to the disused quarry (665462). Head south past the disused Rhosydd quarry & up the N ridge of Moelwyn Mawr (=Big White Bare Hill). It's north top has some fine rock teeth (661453) & another 400 ft takes you to the true summit (658448). Descend the S ridge to the minor top of Cragysgafn (658449) from where some easy scrambling leads to Bwlch Stwlan (661441). Traverse the face of Moelwyn Bach, then turn west to its summit (660437). Descend via Carreg Blaen-Llyn to the reservoir (666444) from where a good path leads back to Tanygrisiau (~12 km / 7½ miles)

**Route 5 – Moel-yr-hydd & Cnicht and back to the Hut.**

From Tanygrisiau head west to col at 668453 and then north to summit of Moel-yr-hydd (672454). Then NW through disused Rhosydd Quarries towards Llyn Clogwyn-brith (665467) but turning west to Llynau Diffwys (658466), Llyn Cwm-y-foel (654467) and climb Cnicht's SE slopes to summit (645466). Then along its ridge to the North summit (648469) and continue to Foel Boethwel (652477) and Llyn Yr Adar beyond. Descend steeply by stream to Llyn Llagi (649485) from where a path heads west to the minor road at 635490. Turn right and follow this down to Plas Gwynant, although the short cut back to the Hut at the bend is now closed off due to the state of the bridge. (At your own risk if you can get through!) (About 13 km / 8 miles)

**Route 6 – Stwlan Dam, Moelwyn Bach, Cragysgafn, Moelwyn Mawr, Moel-yr-hydd & Moel Druman**

Why not head SW to the Stwlan Dam, then S over Carreg Blaen-Llyn, to climb Moelwyn Bach from the south? Then down to Bwlch Stwlan, up over Cragysgafn and on to Moelwyn Mawr. Descend NE and climb Moel-yr-hydd (672454), then Foel Ddu to the north before dropping down to the ruined Barracks in Rhosydd quarry (665462). Take the path north to Llyn Yr Adar (657477) and then turn east to the main summit of Ysgafell Wen (667481). Drop SE to a col and a line of old fence posts leads past Llyn Terfyn and Llyn Coch, then the ridge ahead swings leftish to the (cairnless?) top of Moel Druman (672476). Head east from the summit, taking the path to the left of the little lake to the north of Llyn Conglog (675477) and then veer off right up to the 8<sup>th</sup> and final top, Allt-fawr (682475). A broad ridge leads S to Cwmorthin Quarry with its tips and disused inclines. Pick the right one and you'll soon be back at Tanygrisiau – pick the wrong one and !!!! (About 16 km / 10 miles)

**For Climbers there are lots of possibilities on the crags to the W & N of Tanygrisiau****Fares:** Members £23, Non members £26, Under 18's & Full time students £10**To Book Your Seat contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729***Should you cancel after the Wednesday prior to the coach date a £5.00 fee will be charged.**Failure to turn up without cancelling and the full coach fare will be expected.*

**SUNDAY 9th OCTOBER : A RARE MEET TO AMBLESIDE / GRASMERE**

Previously featuring on the programme in May 1984 & June 2007, when the route compiler warned 'Beware of the gear shops! Please note that walking into gear shops in Ambleside can cause severe financial damage: taking your credit card out is a risk you may not wish to contemplate.'

**Depart:** 07:00 – West Bromwich

Edward St Car Park B70 8NL

07:20 – Penkridge

**Toilet stop:** M6 Charnock Richard Services

**Drop offs:** The View from

A 591 N of Kendal (SD 496950) Orrest Head

A 591 N of Windermere station (SD 414987) (photo

A 593 / 591 Jn Ambleside (SD 372036) by Kirsty

Rydal village (SD 365062) Pattison)

North Grasmere (SD 335083)

A 591 at Thirlspot (SD 317178)

**Pick ups:** Grasmere Car Pk (SD 339073)

Ambleside Bus Station (LA22 0BZ or SD375044)

Kirkstone Jn of A591 & 592 (SD 405994)

**Required map:** OS 1:25000 Outdoor Leisure 7:

English Lakes SE Area (+ / - 5 & 6 depending on route chosen)



**Suggested Routes :** The following are just suggestions. You can get your own off the web if you want to from eg [www.walkingbritain.co.uk](http://www.walkingbritain.co.uk) or [www.walkingenglishman.com](http://www.walkingenglishman.com) or Wainwright's 'Eastern' or 'Outlying Fells' books.

**From N. Kendal : Route 1. Western End of The Dales Way (9.5 miles & 970ft ascent)** Road or footpath to Burneside and cross R. Kent to hit Dales Way. This follows river to nr Staveley, then roads & tracks to Bowness - SO TURN NORTH TO WINDERMERE @ SD 423971 to pick-up.

**From Windermere : Route 2. Wainwright's First Lakes Peak - Orrest Head (2 miles & 400 ft ascent)** It's just 20 minutes to the top (SD414993) via leftmost of 3 drives that leave the main road opposite railway station. Make a circuit by heading N to minor road, then left and left back to railway station near last pick-up.

**Route 3. Sour Howes (SD428032) & Sallows (SD437040) (9 miles & 2,000 ft ascent)** Stay E of Kirkstone road to Allen Knot (a NT earthwork at SD414011) & hit Longmire & Garburn tracks & back over the Wainwrights from the top of the pass (SD436044) and return to Windermere where you started + / - Orrest Head.

**From From Ambleside : Route 4. Loughrigg Fell – over & around (6.5 miles & 1,400 ft ascent)** Cross the River Rothay at SD372046 and there's paths galore but don't miss the summit at SD347051

**Rte 5. Wansfell Pike (SD394042) & Baystones (SD403052) (5 or 7.5 miles & 1,450 ft or more ascent)** Head E to Stockgyll Force & up first Wainwright, then NE to second and on to Idle Hill (SD046059). Then turn Left to return to Ambleside town via left side of Stock Gyll or Right to reach Troutbeck paths that lead S to Kirkstone junction.

**From Rydal : Rte 6. Fairfield & Red Screes (12 miles or less & up to 4,300 ft ascent)** Up lane beside Rydal Mount & fork left at gate to rocky Nab Scar & Heron Pike (SD356083). Then N over Great Rigg to Fairfield (SD359118). Turn right to Hart Crag (SD368113) & Dove Crag (SD374105) from which you could head back south to Ambleside. Or continue to Little Hart Crag (SD387100) +/- Red Screes (SD396088) before heading SSW down the ridge to Ambleside.

**From Grasmere : Route 7. Helm Crag +/- the Easedale Round (8 miles & 2,300 ft ascent)** Take the Easedale Road and well marked path off right to the lovely summit of Helm Crag (SD327093). Return to Grasmere via path to N and then E if you fancy an easy day or continue over to GibsonKnott (SD319099) and Calf Crag (SD302104) Continue W to the col & then head back to Grasmere over Easedale's Tarn Crag (SD304092)

**From Thirlspot : Route 8. Helvellyn & Seat Sandal (9 miles & 3,700 ft ascent)** Climb to Raise summit (SD343174) and then S over White Side, Lower Man to Helvellyn (SD342151) On to Nethermost (SD344142) & Dollywagon (SD346131) Pikes before dropping down to Grisedale Hause. Head for Grasmere, taking in Seat Sandal (SD344115) if you've time & energy left.

**Fares: Members £23, Non members £26, Under 18's & Full time students £10**

**To Book Your Seat contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729**

*Should you cancel after the Wednesday prior to the coach date a £5.00 fee will be charged.*

*Failure to turn up without cancelling and the full coach fare will be expected.*

## **SATURDAY 11th NOVEMBER COACH MEET - LLANBERIS**

**Depart:** 07: 00 – West Bromwich

Edward St Car Park B70 8NL

07: 20 – M54 Junction 2

**Toilet stop:** Corwen *Crib Goch, Crib y Ddysgl &*

**Drop offs:** Capel Curig (721582) *Yr Wyddfa*

Pen-y-Pass (647556) *by Aaron Robson*

Llanberis (583598)

**Pick ups:** Llanberis Coach Park, near

Electric Mountain (583598)

Pen Y Gwryd (660558)

**Required map:** OS 1:25000 Outdoor Leisure 17: Snowdon / Y Wyddfa

**Suggested Routes:** (But be prepared to cut short as daylength is quite short.)



**FROM CAPEL CURIG Route 1 The Glyders and their Eastern Ridge** (~ 15km - 10 miles)

From Capel head west and follow the ridge to Gallt Yr Ogof (685586) and continue over Foel Goch (678582) and past Llyn Caseg-Fraith (670584). You should get a classic view of Tryfan's east face from here (made famous by Poucher). You can then ascend Glyder Fach (656583) followed by Glyder Fawr (642580). Descend south to Pen-y-Pass and walk down the road to the Pen Y Gwryd Hotel.

**FROM PEN-Y-PASS Route 2 The classic « Snowdon Horseshoe » or « Just » Snowdon** (~ 13km - 8 miles)

If you're ambitious ascend Snowdon (610544) via Y Lliwedd (624533 & 622533) and come back down over Crib Goch (624552). Or do Crib Goch first if you prefer scrambling uphill rather than downhill. However, the grade 1 scramble across the top had the same exposure whichever way you tackle it! This could be a hard day in the time available and should not be attempted in high winds. **A descent to Llanberis following the railway track is an alternative finish if you want to climb Snowdon and do half the Horseshoe.**

**Route 3 Snowdon & Moel Cynghorion** (~ 17km - 11 miles)

Ascend Snowdon via the P-Y-G or Miner's track. Then leave in a north west direction and descend the Snowdon Ranger path as far as Bwlch Cwm Brwynog (591558). A steep grassy climb then leads to the summit of Moel Cynghorion (587564) which (hopefully) gives fine views over the Menai Straights. Descend to Bwlch Maesgwm (573559) and then follow an easy path northwards to Llanberis coach park

**Route 4 The Glyders and their Western Ridge** (~ 17km - 11 miles)

From Pen-y-Pass climb Glyder Fawr (642580) and then drop down north west to climb shapely Y Garn (631596). Continue along the grassy plateau to Foel Goch (629612), Mynydd Perfedd (623619), Carnedd y Filiast (620628) and the rough summit of Elidir Fawr (612613) before dropping down to Llanberis and the coach park.

**FROM LLANBERIS Route 5 The Nuttalls North West of Snowdon** (~ 16km - 10 miles)

Climb to summit of Moel Eilio (556577), possibly visiting the Ceunant Mawr waterfall en route. Descend 400 ft and then ascend Foel Gron (560569) which has 2 tops the lower of which has the larger cairn. Follow the ridge south to Bwlch Maesgwm and then east to Moel Cynghorion. You could head north back to Llanberis or head south, then south east to pass right of Llyn D'ur Arddu and on to Llechog summit (606568). Then follow railway path north back to Llanberis.

There should be a 'Led Walk'

**Fares: Members £23, Non members £26, Under 18's & Full time students £10**

**To Book Your Seat contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729**

*Should you cancel after the Wednesday prior to the coach date a £5.00 fee will be charged.*

*Failure to turn up without cancelling and the full coach fare will be expected from you.*

**R.I.P. JOHN HOWELLS (1949 - 2023)**

It was with shock and sadness that members learned that one of our long-standing & well-liked members, John Howells died suddenly in the early hours of Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July, just 17 days after he completed the 67 mile (108 km) footpath around the Isle of Wight with wife Linda.

The couple married in December 1970 and lived in the South Staffordshire village of Coven, where he was one of the most recognised & well respected characters among the locals, invariably cheerful & smiley. John was a staunch supporter of Wolverhampton Wanderers and a legendary matchday steward, who served in the Steve Bull Stand for over 20 years. He was also a loyal and regular supporter of WBMC events and someone commented on Facebook that the only time he missed an Away Dinner was when he was at sea on a cruise. I lost count of the times the phrase "a lovely man" popped up in the ~250 comments that people posted on social media.

He leaves behind his wife, Linda, 3 sons, 5 grandchildren and a great grandson and I'm sure you'd want me to send them all condolences on behalf of the Committee and all Club members. John's funeral will be held at St Paul's Church, Coven on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September at 11.00 am

**THE LAST EVENING MEET OF THE YEAR :Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

Meet: Eaton Valley Primary School, Dagger Lane, West Brom B71 4BU (Grid ref SP021921) 1830 for an 1845 start to walk. There is a small free car park here that has a 2m height barrier.

Leader: Rob Allen

Route: The walk will take in Sot's Hole and Priory Woods Nature Reserve, Sandwell Valley. It is around 6km in length and should take approx 1½ hours. After the walk there is the option to return to "The Red Lion" in All Saints Road for food and drinks.

**CLUB TRIP TO SLOVENIA 6th - 13th JULY 2024** from Jan Cox

Slovenia is fab! We are staying in Kranjska Gora, a small, pretty town about an hour from the airport and within walking distance of both Italy & Austria. Eddie the Eagle did his ski jump there in 1988 when it was still a winter resort. There are live webcams if you want to see the town. There are a range of activities from very easy valley hikes to some quite hard stuff requiring via ferrata & climbing kit. Have a look at "johnxtrail" on YouTube for some of the harder stuff.

So far, 11 have made firm bookings and another 9 are interested. All are welcome, including partners & non- Club members. Folk are responsible for booking their own flights and accommodation and there is no set agenda. The plan is to communicate via WhatsApp regarding daily activities which include hiring bikes & white water rafting as well as hiking & mountaineering (and eating and drinking).

The range of accommodation is huge from huts and hostels (these can get booked up quickly) to 5\* hotels with pools and stuff. A 'Slovenia WhatsApp' group is already up & running where folk can post ideas and find roommates, plus flight and accommodation information. If you are interested or want more details contact Jan at [secretary@wbmc.org](mailto:secretary@wbmc.org) and I'll add you to the Slovenia WhatsApp group.



## MARGARET & ALAN GEORGE WITH WOLVERHAMPTON MC IN 1958

As mentioned in the last Newsletter Margaret George's brother Chris sent me some fascinating historical documents including the centrefold pages 10/11 from the Wolverhampton Chronicle of Friday July 18<sup>th</sup> 1958 entitled "The Mountaineers" which I reproduce below.

Chris also enclosed "an original 'Magazine No 1' from Spring 1965 when I think the breakaway group was formed". This cost 1/6 and is more relevant to Wolverhampton MC as it is their first magazine, put together by Miss J. Honisett, following the success of Newsletters produced by Chas Shaw.

PAGE 10 - WOLVERHAMPTON CHRONICLE



● A smile, a sigh . . . at the end of the climb



High up above Cwn Cowarch Valley are Penn schoolteacher Miss Pat Parsons (right) and club secretary Stan Wintrip, a member of Wolverhampton police force.

FRIDAY, JULY 18, 1958

### They stand at the top of the world

HAVE you ever heard the call of the wild? Never yearned to climb the mountains and stand on top of the world drinking in the heady air and the cool, clear water?

Wolverhampton Mountaineering Club do it often. There are 30 members. Most weekends, a group goes out to Wales or the Peak District with thick rubber-soled boots, warm clothes, sou'westers and climbing gear.

Last weekend, Chronicle writer TONY WILMOT and photographer BRIAN RANDLE went out with them, only they did not have climbing boots. Nor sou'westers.

By the time they finished they wished they had . . .

They found you needed to be sound of mind and limb, young and keen. Climbing can be dangerous without proper training. And wet without a sou'wester.

## The Mountaineers

WHITE mist nestled the tops of the dark, majestic mountain peaks that seemed to tower to infinity. Rain smacked the rock face unceasingly, forming angry rivulets which rushed, roaring and snarling, over jagged rocks. Lonely mountain sheep baa-ed and cried in unison.

Nine pairs of heavy, rain-soaked boots splattered and squelched their way over boggy moss and slippery chunks of granite. A heavy squall descended from the mountain rooves, rain drenching everything exposed.

Tiny rivulets became raging torrents in a matter of minutes. The valley roared with falling water. But the nine pairs of boots, leaking a complaint, trudged on, higher and higher.

### OMINOUS CLOUDS

"Come on, you chaps," yelled the two leaders, Alan George and Charlie Shaw, framed against sheer rock-face and black, ominous clouds 50ft higher up.

With my colleague, photographer Brian Randle, at my heels, I pushed my protesting legs forward, clutching at fern and rock for support, while my feet sank into the soggy mountainside.

Members of Wolverhampton Mountaineering Club grinned down at us. These uncomfortable conditions were an almost every-weekend experience for them.

About 500ft, up Alan and Chas halted us all for a five-minute breather.

"Oh, we're pretty used to this kind of thing in the mountains," Chas told us as we panted our thanks at being allowed to rest. "These rain squalls can blow up in no time at all. And go away just as quick."

Spurred by his cheerfulness, we pushed on again. But the rain beat down just the same—harder, if anything.

How's it going?" asked pretty Mrs. Rosemary Catell, whose architect husband, Keith, was on ahead of us.

Around us, bedraggled but smiling and enthusiastic, club members, all keen lovers of the open air and mountain districts, laughed and chatted as they climbed with springy steps.

They showed no sign of fatigue. To them, ascending the 2500ft. Craig Cowarch in Cwn Cowarch Valley, was just a routine mountain walk.

But the rain had made some paths dangerous. Twice the leaders consulted club secretary Stan Wintrip, also an experienced mountain climber, and turned us back to look for other paths up.

"Enjoying your first trip?" laughed Penn schoolteacher Miss Pat Parsons, her face framed against the piteousness of her waterproof windcheater.

"Great fun," replied burly Wolverhampton police constable Eric Bannion, casting a withering glance at the overcast sky.

Through the weight of rainwater Eric's sweater had stretched nearly half its original length.

The female element of the Wolverhampton club were proving themselves every bit as hardy and energetic as the men. And there is no nonsense about torn skirts, laddered nylons or getting their hair wet.

Mrs. Margaret George, for instance, beaming at us from under a balalaika helmet. Regulation garb as far as she is concerned is waterproof windcheater, corduroy shorts and woolen socks.

Most club members have climbed mountains abroad. Chairman and ex-Commando, Charles Shaw, a Wolverhampton paint factory foreman, has climbed extensively in China and on the continent as well as Scotland and the Peak District.

### SLITHER DOWN

We reached the mountain top and sheep baa-ed their farewells as we slithered and groped our way down Craig Cowarch, piling into the waiting cars to drive back to the club's rented farm cottage at Dinas in the Dovey Valley.

Back in the cottage, production engineer Wilf Hammond, of Foxhills-road, Penn, put a match to a log fire.

Soon we were laughing and chatting about our experience over piping hot tea while clouds of steam rose from our saturated trousers.

"You must have some stew before you go back," insisted Margaret George, handing us a plateful each. "We usually put all our left-overs and spare tinned stuffs in the pot and stew it up for supper."

It sounded awful. But it went down very well.



It looks dangerous. It is dangerous—certainly not recommended for beginners. Club chairman Chas Shaw, ten years a mountaineer, uses a rope to negotiate an impossible-looking rock face.



Wash reference outside the club's Welsh farm cottage.

### CONTENTMENT SECURITY

## WHERE WILL A REGULAR SAVINGS ACCOUNT LEAD YOU?

£1 saved every week from the age of 18 will provide the sum of £419.11.8 by the time you are 25. This is sufficient for a deposit on a house or can be used for any other purpose which you desire. Interest is at the rate of 4 per cent. (including bonus), the Income Tax being paid by the Society. Equal to £6.12.0% if Income Tax at 6/6 in the £1 is paid.

Full details gladly given, free of charge, by

### SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE BUILDING SOCIETY

5, PRINCESS STREET, WOLVERHAMPTON

Managers: J. M. DEAVILLE, Secretary: R. V. STEWARD.

Directors: J. H. Gaskley, J. P. Chairman, Alex. Arnold, J. Bailey, R. B. Brierley, R. A. Brooks, Arthur L. Bower.

Wolverhampton MC's website states it was established in 1951 and we know that WBMC's 1<sup>st</sup> AGM took place in October 1952 so I don't think the breakaway Chris mentions related to WBMC from Wolverhampton MC, or vice versa. Anyone know different?

What does seem clear is that several people, like Margaret & Alan George were members of both clubs. I have made sure the original documents were sent to the committee of Wolverhampton MC but will print some relevant / interesting parts here from them.

WOLVERHAMPTON CHRONICLE—PAGE 11

## THE LONG, HARD TREK ...



Halfway up the mountainside and the going's getting tough now. Clothes are soaking wet. The rain beats a heavy, relentless tattoo on sou'westers and caps.

### A Song In The Air

Alan George leads his party up the last treacherous steps to the top of the ridge (left). With him are Stan Wintrip, Eric Bannon, Chas Shaw and Wilf Hammond. Right: It must be the Welsh air, for they are singing again—as they dry out in front of the fire, Mrs. Margaret George and husband Alan (standing) with club chairman Chas Shaw.




Two tired young ladies turn into a tasty plateful of hot stew. Pat Parsons (left) and Mrs. Margaret George, cook on this occasion. "We usually have a few tins of peas and beans and things at the cottage, so we can always whip up a quick meal."



While the tea brews, Keith Cattell (standing centre) strikes up a tune on his mouth-organ. After some playful remarks about his musical talent, everyone joined in singing.

Oh-oh, my aching feet... It's a great gain, this mountain walking, but it's a relief to get your boots off and the air licking round your toes, says architect Keith Cattell.

## Munrospun

With a MUNROSPUN pack you can make yourself a distinctive outfit of toning separates. One of the top fashions of the day made at a fraction of the cost of ready-made garments! Each pack contains a length of beautiful MUNROSPUN tweed and sufficient toning knitting wool to make a jumper. Ideal for a gift to a friend—or to yourself.

The MUNROSPUN knitting adviser is here to help you with all problems concerned with the care and making of knitted goods. Your time and trouble in knitting by hand or by machine are amply repaid when you use MUNROSPUN Wool.

KNITTING ADVICE

### THE WOOL SHOP

AND THE HOME ARTISTIC

88-90, Darlington Street, Wolverhampton

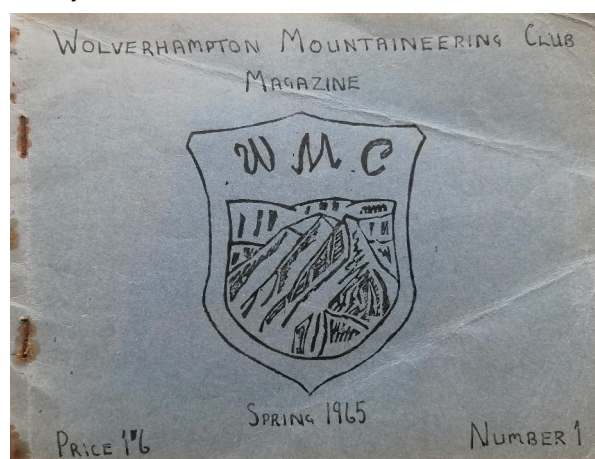
Back in July 1955 six Wolverhampton MC members, including Alan George & Wilf Hammond visited the Arans and thought it would be nice to have a club cottage there. Within a month, a 5 year lease had been arranged with the Jones family that owned an empty cottage "Tynyfford". Alan was one of

those to spend the first night in the cottage (5<sup>th</sup> Nov). The next day Margaret Freeman & Gill Jackson arrived and stirred the men into action "doing the place up". Margaret subsequently married Alan George & Gill became Mrs Hammond.

The Club's committee meeting on 16/12/1964 was held at Alan & Margaret's home when they discussed 3 possibilities for a Snowdonia Hut:- an ex-Power House, the Ballroom wing of a Castle & a 4 bedroom house in Llanberis! Margaret went on to serve as their Treasurer for 5 years.

Wolverhampton MC originally had ~20 members & this soon rose to a peak of 30, with 20 - 24 regulars. They tried to encourage an influx of junior members but failed and membership gradually fell to about 17, so from 1956 no Annual Dinner was held due to low membership.

Obviously things had picked up by 1965! I looked through to find names I recognised and spotted a Henry 'Constitution' Piotrowski mentioned – surely a relative of our Nick P.



WOLVERHAMPTON MOUNTAINEERING CLUB	
SPRING 1965	NUMBER ONE
Officers of the club 1965	
Chairman	Cyril Park
Hon. Secretary	Charles Shaw
Hon. Treasurer	John Lyons
Meets Secretary	Brian Gleaves
Cottage Warden	Colleen Park
Membership Secretary	Colin Spedding
Indoor Meets Secretary	Christine Bradford
Jun Members Representative	Graham Poole
Magazine Editor	Jill Honisett

THE CLUB 1951-1965

Writing all the notes necessary to compiling this history and searching the files for factual data was quite simple, but now I come to put it down in a more digestible form within certain size limits, only those who have had a bash can appreciate all the screwed up balls of paper littering the floor. Nevertheless to mention all the characters who come to mind and all the memorable meets is quite impossible, so I apologise in advance.

To set the scene I must ask you to recall the early 1950's. Although the war had been over for five years we were still suffering the aftermath, particularly the transport situation. Petrol had only just been de-rationed, vehicles were hard to obtain, hitch-hiking to the mountains was for the many not the few. Nylon ropes had been heard of, some of us had even seen one; vibram soles were in a similar stage of development, and believe it or not – Joe Brown had still got a few V.S.'s on Gloggy not ticked off.

In November 1951 my attention was drawn to an advertisement in the Express and Star, asking persons interested in mountaineering to attend a meeting at the Y.M.C.A. Stafford Street. I cannot remember the exact date or which evening this was held, but I do recall about 26 persons attending. The outcome was that a club was formed and given the name "Wolverhampton Y.M.C.A. Mountaineering Club". A small committee was formed to get things rolling. Chris Whitfield was the first Secretary, I was Meets Secretary. I am unable to recall other officers, but amongst the founder members were, George Haggitt, Alan George, Stan Wintrip and a be-whiskered chap called Tony Oakes, who is now Chairman of the Cava and Crag Club.

and a V.S. Committee man. H.M. Forces unfortunately had the pleasure of Wilf Hammonds' services at this date, otherwise he would have been present. He and I had been doing a fair amount of climbing together for three years previously.

The committee got down to work and the first meet was laid on for the following Saturday. This turned out to be quite an epic in many ways and would make a story in its own right. Here are the bare details:- The borrowed Army truck was in doubt until an hour before departure, when it did appear it was devoid of any form of cover for the passengers, and the rain was cat and dog like. One very resourceful pair entered the Y.M.C.A. and 'borrowed' the stage back cloths which duly covered the rear of the truck. The journey got under way with George Haggitt driving, and that was just the start of troubles to come. George found it necessary to stop everytime second gear was required, this caused some delay and in addition the cab roof leaked, and before we reached Wellington the back cloth was leaking also, covering the occupants with a mixture of rain and multi-coloured distemper as well as flooding the floor of the truck. Snowdonia was reached in 4½ hours. To reach the Milestone it was necessary to walk along the wall at the side of the lake as the road was almost a foot under water.

My own epic on this venture was the leading of my first V.S. Who talked me into this I cannot recall, but I would certainly not do it now even on dry rock. The Sunday activities must have been more normal, because no memories exist, apart from the return journey which again took about 4½ hours.

Continued on next page

A Memory from Geraldine Hammonds: "So sad to hear about Margaret George. I went to her house before Christmas to deliver my card and her brother was visiting. He said "Do you know she sends over 300 Christmas cards?" However, I am really writing with a memory of Alan. Whilst on a February holiday with the club in the late 1990s, Alan and I were walking & chatting and he offered me the following advice "Geraldine, be careful of the men in this club - if it comes to a choice between a mountain or a woman, they will always choose the mountain!" (Editor: my wife agrees with Alan.)

A Memory from John Eadon: "Sorry to hear the news. It was Margaret who introduced me to WBMC back in the 1990's when we were on a local ramble together."

Margaret's Funeral: This took place on 4<sup>th</sup> August at Springdale Methodist Church and was attended by Chairman Dave, Bob Duncan, John Hipwood, Ray & Richard Cooksey from the Club.

To get back to this short history, with the growth of the club, from the original 20 odd members to a peak of 30, and a high proportion of active members, a close-knit group developed. Meet attendances were regularly 20-24 members, and parties of this size used to go out on the mountains (Gawd ! ) At the end of the second year at the Y.M.C.A. it was decided to part company with the association, due to increased subscriptions and lack of financial support. Meetings were held for a few months in a classroom at Walsall St Schools, but this was not a successful move, until the club received a welcome at the Gifford Arms, Victoria Street. During the period at Walsall St there was a considerable drop in membership, which did not rectify itself until at least 6 months after the move to the Gifford. A few names which spring to mind from this period are:- George 'Taxi' Clarkson, the late Jon Adams, Henry 'Constitution' Piotrowski, John Selby.

After almost two years at the Gifford, and with some pressure from 'reactionaries' it was proposed that the club needed to encourage younger members, and to this end unlicensed premises must be found. So the search was on ! it was a few months before the late Harold (Johnny) Walton found the small building at the rear of Stephenson St, one up and one down (by ladder) Plenty of hard work ensued, cleaning out, repainting, scrubbing, painting, scrounging furniture and installing electricity until the new headquarters were ready for yet another move of the club. Members who joined there will recall Harold's fine mural on the upstairs wall. However the hoped-for influx of junior members did not materialize, in fact the club suffered a gradual fall in membership to a level of about 17.

-11-

In 1962 the "Summerhouse" was due for demolition, so a move was again necessary. The pubcrawl method of search was tried with little success and it was proposed to move to the United Services Club. Although this was a first class central meeting place with facilities to suit all tastes, the club did not feel entirely at home here. Regular outdoor and indoor meets ensured that the club flourished and high climbing standards were attained. Members assisted at the "Towers" with instruction and supervision. Membership was now about 35, and the records show that the club purchased a British Legion Hut, regardless of cost - £10, but the attempt to install it in the grounds of the "Towers" as a club hut was abortive. A successful jumble Sale was held and two mountain tents were purchased for the club.

At the A.G.M. in 1963 it was agreed that as the United Services Club was soon to move, financially the club would be happier to dissociate and find further premises. A sub committee of four volunteers was formed to make a diplomatic pub crawl. This was not successful as a pub crawl, because the "George" was chosen as the starting point, and after the meeting on the first Tuesday in December 1963, the club was soon installed. The same informal happy atmosphere of the "Summerhouse" days seems to be here again. New members keep coming along, club activities continue at a high level, although regrettably some older members seem to be growing away from the younger ones, with reference mainly to the support of meets. Nevertheless the strength of the club does not seem to be affected, and the future of the club seems to be well assured.

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Many pleasant things happened however, the first of which was the finding of TYNYPFORD. For this Gill Jackson (now Mrs Hammond) and Pat Parsons must be thanked. Looking at the cottage today it is difficult to appreciate the filth and rubbish disposed of by the first working party. Other memories of this period are Henry's production of 'the constitution', by now much amended, Harold's film shows, my four years as Chairman, Margaret Georges five years as Treasurer. It is noted regrettably that from 1956 no Annual Dinner was held, probably due to the low membership.

In the winter of 1959, a gradual drift to the "Summerhouse" in St Marks St had set in, and after the A.G.M. it became jet-propelled. By 1960 "Gaffer" Anslow was making the club very welcome in the small back room. How it held all the club at times is hard to believe. The "Summerhouse" is now no more, but this period there seemed to be the beginning of a second phase in the life of the club. Membership was once more on the increase, Tynypford was really getting used and much had been done to improve its facilities. Meet attendances were again up to about 16-18 and social activities such as Barbecues, Bonfire and Pancake parties helped greatly to establish and introduce new members. The affiliation of the club with the British Mountaineering Council, the birth of connections with the 'Towers' and our President-to-be the late Mr Frank Kerridge, the start of the Annual Dinner, which is becoming now the one meet of the year that all members, active or otherwise, make every effort to attend.

-12-

During 1964 the club suffered two sad incidents. Firstly the tragic loss of its first President, Frank Kerridge, a great supporter of the club and friend of many members, and shortly after the sudden loss of Harold (Johnny) Walton, a well remembered past member and Chairman of the club. 1964 can also be noted for the number of members who went to Skye, and the even smaller number who saw the Cuillins !

Well that's it, and I must say that I am rather proud to have had some part in it. Perhaps in another 14 years I shall be asked to do another history of the club, to which end, I make the mental note - keep more records ! To conclude, I must admit that I am no believer in tradition (Annual Dinners excepted) so my message to the club is this:-

"GO FORWARD" WOLVERHAMPTON MOUNTAINEERING CLUB.

CHAS SHAW

-14-

## HEATING & PARKING AT THE HUT

**Parking:** Since the last Newsletter I have received clarification about parking at the Hut from Pete Poultney, who reluctantly resigned from his post as Hut Secretary in the light of criticism he felt came his way as a result of a rhododendron that he planted close to the Club's parking area. It contained the following from the Headmaster, Jeff Handley, which had not been brought to the Committee's attention before the June meeting, which Pete did not attend.

*"Pete, I thought the plants were a good addition and marked the boundaries nicely & looked good. Members are not supposed to park outside the designated spot anyway; there is a clear boundary and you were doing a good job of defining it. In exceptional circumstances we make capacity for overflow parking. I would inform those who complain to wind in their necks otherwise the Head of Centre might get arsy about ANY parking outside the defined boundaries and ask all Plas Gwynant staff to challenge this. I hope this is helpful. Jeff Handley"*

Pete confirmed that we still need to ask the Head if we can park other than the area immediately outside the Hut any & every time the Hut car park is expected to be full and even then it's parking by old tree remains only.

**Heating:** New Hut Sec, Fred Hammonds has discovered that the cost of hardwood fuel for the hut burner has risen to £110 per cubic metre so please only light the fire if necessary, preferably not before 4 or 5pm. As he will not be visiting as frequently as Pete did, supplies of kindling to start the fire may run low so please bring, or collect, your own kindling. Also please bring your own tea towel/s as you may find there are no clean or dry ones when you arrive. On his first maintenance visit Fred discovered the lower plate of the wood burner has cracks. The manufacturers state it does not need replacing yet (it will be costly when we have to) but that to prevent this happening (or getting worse) the plate should always be covered with a layer of ash and not cleaned completely. There will be a hut working party soon but, in the meantime, remember Hut bookings go to Fred at [hut-secretary@wbmc.org](mailto:hut-secretary@wbmc.org) or [07527744481](tel:07527744481) and you should endeavour to pay your hut fees within 2 weeks of your visit, preferably by bank transfer into the Club account, identifying the payment as 'HF' followed your name.

IN CASE YOU MISSED ITBIG HIT ON THE BEN

A spectacular lightning strike on the UK's highest mountain on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June was caught on camera and featured on the BBC News because it is thought to have shattered "a stone pillar" at the summit of Ben Nevis. It was captured in an image taken by a BBC Weather Watcher from Corpach, near Fort William during an evening thunderstorm and the damage to the pillar was spotted the next day by Kinlochleven-based mountain guide Rich Pyne, who has been to the top of the 4,413ft mountain 562 times. It was not the trig point that was damaged but the toposcope with descriptions of locations visible from the edge of the peak's North Face. The structure's metal plate had been missing before for some time, possibly the victim of vandalism like the one on Baggeridge Hill. BBC Scotland Weather said the UK & Ireland recorded 28,000 lightning flashes on that Monday, with most of them concentrated over NW Scotland & Ireland amid the heat wave and a further 4,800 lightning flashes were recorded across Scotland on Tuesday!

IS THE B.M.C. IN TROUBLE?

On 12<sup>th</sup> July, 20 days after their AGM, the BMC posted a "Restructuring" statement & update on their website.

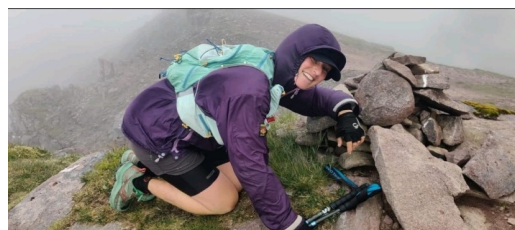
*"Due to the slower than forecast rate of growth of our membership, and as a result of other income being suppressed as we emerge from the pandemic and current external environment, we are reviewing our operational and base costs in order to maintain a sustainable BMC for the future. We have initiated a small restructure process which will ensure that we have the right structure, financially and operationally, to deliver our priorities across all areas moving forward over the coming years. It's important to note that our membership is still growing, but growth is not at the rate that we had projected. We are in the same position as a lot of other similar organisations who have not yet achieved a full bounce back from the impacts Covid amidst the current climate. Our operational budget will need to reflect the income we receive and we need to ensure we have the right staff base moving forwards across all our areas of work, with income for the remainder of the year set to be below forecast we will make proportionate reductions where we can across all areas of the BMC. All departments will be affected, including ACES (Access, Conservation & Environmental Sustainability) as the team has grown faster than income can support, however our commitment to the work ACES delivers remains as strong as ever and we guarantee retaining a higher level of resource than in recent years. We will continue developing our work and support for outdoor and indoor climbers, and raising awareness of our important work within the hill walking community, which we recognise as vital to the future of the BMC. Although this process causes uncertainty for everyone involved, we hope there will be a minimal reduction in the number of permanent staff and will be providing all necessary support to those affected. Our staff, volunteers and members are our main concern and we are doing everything in our power to minimise the impact of this decision on our employees, and by extension, on our members and stakeholders. We do not expect this to impact our day-to-delivery and aim to work through the process as swiftly as possible. We want to emphasise that our strategic aims remain unchanged and there is no divergence from them."*

CEO Paul Davis, Chair Roger Murray & Members champion Andy Syme.

What it doesn't say is that the projected deficit for 2023 would likely have been £275,000 if 'course corrections' (which included making a couple of members of the Access team redundant) were not made. They had a deficit of £105,295 in 2021, which had more than doubled to £267,754 by the year end 2022, and they have failed to recruit 8,000 new members this year and so will fail to reach their target of 91,000 members by the end of 2023. 2011-2017 was a period of consistent growth for the BMC with an average of 1500+ new members a year, although this slowed slightly in 2018-19 and, like many organisations, the pandemic years 2020-21 saw a major loss of members (7,000+). Basically they hoped to recruit from their new targets Hillwalkers and Indoor climbers, and maybe overestimated in an effort to impress Sport England who have been a major source of funds in recent years. Thanks to Geordie Hind & Oliver Stephenson for spotting this original piece in [www.ukhillwalking.com/articles](http://www.ukhillwalking.com/articles). Since then there have been 2 new posts on the BMC website:- <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/restructure-update-statement> and questions & answers <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/ceo-qa> neither of which makes any mention of possible future rises in membership or affiliation fees.

**NEW MUNRO SPEED & AGE RECORDS et al**

Jamie Aarons, a Californian based in Scotland, set a new record for the **Fastest Self-propelled Round** of all 282 Munros beating Donnie Campbell's 2020 time of 31 days, 23 hours & 2 minutes by finishing on Ben Klibreck on Monday afternoon (before 26<sup>th</sup> June) in a time of 31 days, 10 hours and 27 minutes. This is not just a female record but the overall record by a person



*Jamie Munro-bagging (or geocaching?)*

of any age or sex and will not be an easy one to beat!! The social worker & ultra runner set off in May and so encountered a long hot spell in the Highlands, and though the largely settled weather & relatively dry conditions underfoot must have helped, the heatwave also made avoiding sunburn & dehydration an almost constant challenge in the first few weeks. Towards the end, a cloudier spell came in welcome, but there were storms and floods to contend with too & Jamie was in the Corroir area not far from the Ben on the day that the pillar was destroyed by lightning.

Her daily average over the journey was a staggering 9 summits a day with her biggest total in a calendar day being 14 Munros. She managed an average of just 4 hours sleep per night (Donnie moved over the ground faster but averaged 8 hours sleep a night before his last 48 hr sleepless sprint).



Many of the summits were 'bagged' in the gloaming Jamie's route had 135,366 m ascent & she covered 2576 km – 1315km on foot, 830 km by road bike, 370 km by mountain bike, 49 km on her gravel bike & ~11 km of kayaking, including the obligatory sea leg to & from Mull.

(More on [https://www.ukhillwalking.com/news/2023/06/jamie\\_aarons\\_sets\\_new\\_munro\\_round\\_speed\\_record-73379](https://www.ukhillwalking.com/news/2023/06/jamie_aarons_sets_new_munro_round_speed_record-73379))

Incidentally the record for the **"Most Munros in 24 hours"** was broken in early July 2021 when running coach Kim Collison (aged 41) ran over 99 miles and climbed over 29,000 ft including 33 Munro summits in the Cairngorms in 23 hours & 48 minutes! Starting & finishing at Brig o' Dee, he added Braeriach to a record set the previous year. The expedition required 2 months planning and was built up of 5 different stages, with more than 12 navigators & friends to keep him going and on the right tracks.



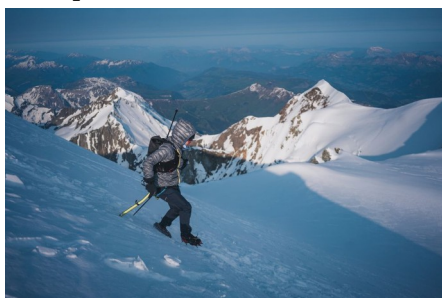
And last year, 82 year old Nick Gardner, a former physics teacher from Gairloch, **bagged all 282 Munros while in his 80's** – the equivalent of 17 Mount Everests! In mid-2020 he & his children made the difficult decision to move his wife Janet into care as she had advanced Alzheimer's. She no longer recognized him and he felt that he was mentally deteriorating too and needed a challenge to pull himself out of it. He had just turned 80 and had enjoyed mountaineering & climbing since he joined St Andrew's MC while at university. Over the years he'd climbed around a quarter of the Munros, especially his local ones in Torridon, Fisherfield, An Teallach & Sutherland, so he thought he'd try and complete a whole round in 1,200 days & to raise £10,000 for Alzheimer Scotland & the Royal Osteoporosis Society.



He started alone in July 2020 and after his first 2 or 3 tops he started stopping people on the hill to tell them what he was doing, and they started joining him & donating money. He completed his round on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2022 on Cairngorm with over 150 friends, family & supporters. At that

time the total he'd raised was £58,000 but in the end the "mountain goat" grandfather raised over £80,000.

Another female record breaker this year was American ultrarunner Hillary Gerari, who lives in the French Alps who set a new **fastest-known time record on Mont Blanc** this year on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June. She set out from Saint Bernard du Mont-Blanc Parish church in the center of Chamonix at 2:02 a.m, and returned to town around 9:30 a.m. having ascended & descended the highest summit in Western Europe on foot in 7 hours, 25 minutes & 28 seconds.



This was around 27 mins faster than the previous record of 7:53:12 held by Swedish runner Emelie Forsberg, who completed her attempt on the 15,777 ft peak on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018, paced by her husband, the men's record-holder & Catalan ultrarunning legend Kilian Jornet. Gerardi had had her eye on the record for some time, electing to spend most of her recent running on high-elevation technical terrain, including snow, instead of trails. *"Just as you don't want to run with a*

*heavy cumbersome pack of climbing equipment, you don't want to be on a glacier at altitude without the right gear to keep you safe,"* said Gerardi, who carried semi-automatic steel crampons, micro-spikes, an ice axe, harness, & a glacier kit, among other gear. *"Identifying when and where to switch modes and what the lightest, safest gear I could bring was part of the fun of the project."* This record-breaking attempt joins a long list of other accomplishments on Gerardi's resumé—she won the 32-mile Trofeo Kima skyrace in Italy last year, the Marathon du Mont Blanc in 2021, and the 74-mile Grand Raid des Pyrenees in 2015—but it's safe to say this year's achievement is one of her proudest. And while we're on crazy records, this July 29 year old Hari Chandra Giri broke his 4<sup>th</sup> Guinness world record by walking down 75 stairs at a Buddhist temple on his hands in 25.03 seconds! Watch at <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2023/7/nepalese-man-hand-walks-down-stairs-at-record-breaking-speed-754767>

### **A LONG WEEKEND ON RHUM / RÙM from Claire Hammonds**

Four club members (Claire & Fred Hammonds, Andy Brown & Dave Hellyar) travelled to the Isle of Rùm in April 2023 to enjoy the mountains and scenery. We caught the midday ferry on the Friday 28<sup>th</sup> and arrived on Rùm 2 hours later. As the main Bothy had been booked out by Edinburgh University we camped at the rather



basic campsite opposite. The campsite was located next to a beach giving panoramic views of the Skye Cuillin and was great for the twitchers amongst us.

On Saturday Fred, Claire & Andy set off to do the Rhum Cuillin, whilst Dave walked directly to the Dibidal Bothy in the SE corner of the island. We were all carrying heavy packs as we planned to



sleep at the Bothy and it was a long, hard day's (10hrs) walk over tough water logged ground that offered interesting scrambles and then a gruelling walk out to the Bothy. The Dibidal Bothy was really comfortable after such a long walk and on Sunday we completed the remainder of the Cuillin Ridge and then completed the unpleasantly long walk back to the campsite. This was made more challenging by the heavy overnight rain which had

Claire above the Dibidil Bothy



Claire & Andy on the traverse of the Rum Cuillin



Fred & Claire relaxing in the bothy



Guirdil Bothy with whale vertebra



swollen the numerous streams we had to cross. (N.B. take 2 walking poles!) Monday we walked to the Guirdil Bothy on the NW coast, which was a much more pleasant walk on a proper track. However there was a cheeky stream crossing just before we arrived! The Bothy was located on a beautiful, remote beach and again gave us a comfortable night's shelter. Tuesday we walked back and took in a couple of tops, before meeting up with Dave who has been doing some otter watching & low level walking. The island has a lot to offer by way of walking, twitching and wildlife spotting. Locals are friendly but there are limited services as it's community run. The Island has a well stocked shop with limited opening hours. In April there were few midges and I'd recommend a trip to the island to everyone.

TORRIDON ESCAPADES from Tony Emms

Torridon and the Fisherfield forest are quite unique mountain areas in the Highlands of Scotland. Many of the summits are hard won, requiring extra physical effort, and involving, as they often do, long walks in and out to gain the summits. Although they appear as individual bulky isolated mountains, they rarely culminate in one single peak that you simply ascend and descend, but rather as several peaks connected by long ridges which necessitate long days out.



This May was our third outing to Torridon staying at our usual base in Shieldaig, a pretty little village on the shore of Loch Shieldaig. There is a small, excellent campsite set above the village with fine views across the loch, a local shop, pleasant little cafe and a pub serving food. There are many enjoyable lower level walks from the village along the headland and along the shores of Loch Torridon.

In previous years we have scaled the three Torridon Giants, Beinn Alligin, Liathach and Beinn Eighe and the outlying iconic, An Teallach. This year Bill, Julie and I started with a popular circular mountain walk in the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve above the beautiful Loch Maree. We decided to extend this circular walk by incorporating an ascent of Meall a' Ghuithais (2910ft) starting from the halfway point on the circular walk, and returning to the same point to continue the walk. The circular walk itself, with its interesting and informative signposts, winds its way through extremely varied terrain, encompassing forest tracks, quartzite ribs and channels, a short easy scramble, rocky viewpoints, waterfalls, fossils and a deep gorge. What's not to like? This is a walk to take slowly and enjoy.



*Slioch & Loch Maree from circular walk*

Our second hill day was Slioch (3214ft), its huge bulk rising abruptly from the shores of Loch Maree. Starting from Incheril, near Kinlochewe, the approach to Slioch (the spear) has an easy three mile walk in along the shore of Loch Maree, before the real climbing begins. Thereafter the route leads up beside several waterfalls and then slants steeply upwards into a wide, high level corrie. Once in the corrie, the lure of the minor summit of Sgurr Dubh (2421ft), was too much of a temptation for Bill to resist and he veered off in the opposite direction to keep that rendezvous. After crossing the wide corrie two long, steep zig-zag traverses led on to the subsidiary summit, where Bill rejoined us for the forthcoming handshakes and congratulations as we crossed a small snowfield to the main summit. The views from the summit were extensive, northwest over Loch Maree & northeast across the vast Fisherfield Forest (no trees!). We descended via the 'one step' on to the narrow ridge leading to the Munro top of Sgurr an Tuill Bhain (3064ft). A rocky descent down the southern flank of this hill led back into the corrie before retracing our steps steeply down to the shore of Loch Maree, and the 3 mile walk out.



*Slioch (3214ft) and Loch Maree*

Our third major hill day started a little further south at Achnashellach Station. A pleasant easily graded track led gradually up through woods beside the River Lair finally emerging into the fairly flat Coire Lair. The plan was to circumvent the steep rocky buttresses on the west face and north face of Sgorr Ruadh by the gently rising track through Coire Lair to reach the col at the head of the Coire. Then from the col climb the NW ridge to the rocky crest & summit of Sgorr Ruadh. As we progressed through Coire Lair, our route lay under the long high level ridge of Beinn Liath Mhor (3037ft) on the north side of Coire Lair. At a fork in the track, Bill once again succumbed to the lure of the ridge and changed his course for Beinn Liath Mhor,



*Sgorr Ruadh (3155ft)*

some 1800ft above us, whilst Julie and I continued up to the col, where we spied a tiny figure high on the ridge traversing towards Beinn Liath Mhor. We set off from our side of the col up the narrowing northwest ridge to the isolated rocky summit of Sgorr Ruadh (3,155ft). Soon after a couple, on their first hill walk on their first trip to Scotland, joined us and we asked which way they had come up. They too had come along the ridge (Bill's ridge) & via the col, but had not seen Bill. We sat about for a while waiting for Bill. Presently an American woman with her two young girls arrived and we asked them the same question. They had in fact overtaken a man fitting Bills description, but we regarded this with some scepticism as we couldn't accept that Bill had been overtaken by two children!



Eventually, we decided to start our descent from Sgorr Ruadh aiming for Fuar Toll (*the cold hole above*). This is a fascinating place, filled with innumerable small rock outcrops and fifteen or so tiny lochans, a veritable maze. A perfect spot for a high mountain bivvy, despite the name suggesting otherwise. We lingered hereabouts contemplating Bill's whereabouts. A little later, we resumed our descent and as we crossed the River Lair we were joined by Bill who had been absent, if not invisible, for most of the day.

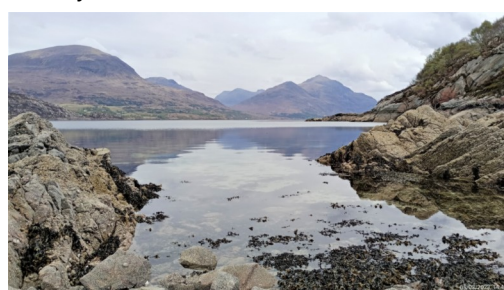
On our last day in Torridon, Julie and I did some low level walking taking in the pretty Balgy Falls and wooded trails along the shores of Upper Loch Torridon. In direct contrast Bill, in a quest for one more traverse, set off along the summit ridge of Beinn Shìeldaig (1693ft), the hill behind the village, returning via the shore of Loch Damh and the Balgy Falls (*photo right*)



Darren Groutage visited us twice, unfortunately on both occasions we were out, purely by accident mind! We will return to Torridon next year at the beginning of May. Bill has his sights set on An Teallach. It will be on the meets card if you are interested.



*Below Left: Rare sighting of Bill on Sgurr an Tuill Bhain (3064ft) & right Loch Torridon and Liathach from Eilean' Chaoil*



## **RECENT MEETS**

### **Evening Meets**

Evening Meet numbers continued to fluctuate during the summer. Only 8 turned up for Mel & Gel's canal walk at Kingswinford on 6th July and one of those was not up to walking far so the walk was shortened a little and more time spent in the pub! In contrast 16 walked over Clent with Mike Smith on 10<sup>th</sup> August and were joined by another 2 members in "The Fountain" at the end. .

### **Keswick Coach (Long Meet)**

32 passengers headed north to the Lakes and enjoyed a fine day in the Lakes until the late afternoon when the weather turned really foul with sheets of rain and thunder & lightening! Being a Long Meet most groups were still on the hills and this forced several to make late changes to their plans. One group that was about to head over Fairfield peeled off and spent and arrived at "The Travellers' Rest" earlier than they had planned because of this. Others had

ascended Sharp Edge and other group climbed Skiddaw via Ullock Pike. Because it was a long meet the financial loss was a little larger than usual but the summer months have always been the most risky meets as one never knows how many members will be on holiday. Photos are on the Club Members' Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2400209280024580>

### Hawes Coach

Well we finally got to this lovely North Yorkshire town and were greeted at the Ropemakers car park by Don Simpson who'd driven over from York! The coach meet was notable for 2 other reasons: 1<sup>st</sup> I think I can safely say that Emma Dickinson & Scott Simpson were our first ever coach passengers from Kent! Apparently they were up in the West Midlands to see Jacky (another passenger) and so came along with her for the wonderful country views and interesting walk. 2<sup>nd</sup> I've just checked back in my walk log book and see that the only other time I did Great Shunner Fell was around 50 years ago, back on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 1974.

Most folk decided to make this their main destination, though 4 went to Burtersett and over Wether Fell. Andy biked along the Cam Road up onto Dodd Fell and some made Hardraw Force; the Wensleydale Cheese Shop & the surrounding area their main targets for the day. The weather was pretty good with just the occasional short-lived rain squall in the morning but distances were long and a few thought it best to give Fountains Fell a miss in order to get back to the coach in time for a drink. However, those that did this second top also managed to make Nigel's deadline and an enjoyable meet was had by all. The chippy that sold slices of battered black pudding and Wensleydale was the culinary highlight of the trip for a lucky few!



Fred, Andy & Nigel chatting to our driver -  
THE Mr Robinson at Charnock Richard



The River Ure as we set out from Hawes towards  
Hardraw having crossed Hayland's Bridge



Great Shunner Fell – a mighty 716 metres



Bridge over tributary of the Ure

### MINUTES WBMC COMMITTEE MEETING 13th July 2023 @The Red Lion 7.30pm start

**Present:** Andy Brown, Claire Hammonds, Nigel Tarr, Dave Hellyar (Chair), Mike Smith, Fred Hammonds, Georgie Hind, Jan Cox, John Edwards, Tony Emms, Rob Allen, Darren Groutage

**1. Apologies for Absence:** Jonathan Howells, Mike Thompson

**2. Acceptance of May Minutes:** Proposed by Georgie and seconded by Darren. In the June minutes John was accidentally omitted from the list of attendees meeting with Joe regarding the new website.

**3. Matters Arising:** Progress is being made with the new website. Those who have trialled it are pleased. Agreed that another month of trials are necessary. Darren to contact Joe about a further meeting. Jan, Fred, Georgie & Tony are interested in joining this. Jan to ask Joe to add Fred as the new Hut Sec & update the new bank details onto the existing website. The financial and hut working parties are in progress and will report next month.

**4. Officer updates: Treasurer:** Club balance is £10,667.51p +£30,000 ringfenced as of 13/07/2023. Claire is opening a business account in order to get 2% interest on the £30,000 online account. Easyfundraising has earned over £51 from 11 members. John proposed a prize for the member who raises most donations. Claire has updated the bank details with HMRC which will take 39 days to process (complete early August). Hopefully once done HMRC should transfer gift aid from 2022 and 2023. Should be about £1700 in total. The Committee agreed to pay Pete £171.15 owed to him for plants and hut essentials. Hut costs will be approved by the Committee in future.

**Membership Secretary:** 32 members (including some prospective members) have not renewed. Claire can WhatsApp Tony any incoming membership payments.

**Newsletter:** Guest Editorship of the newsletter was advertised to encourage others to participate but no response to date. Routes for October and November coach meets have been done. Dave will do a Chairman's Chat.

**Website/Publicity:** Tony, Darren, Jan, Georgie and Fred to meet with Joe to continue more evaluation of the new website.

**Hut Secretary:** Fred and Pete have had a handover meeting and Fred now has the 'Black Book' and associated paper-work. The Committee agreed that hut bookings continue to be at the Hut Secretaries discretion as stated in the Constitution. There was some discussion around payment from those that had booked and not been to the hut. This item will now go to the Hut Working Party (Fred, Tony, Mike & John)

**Coach Secretary:** The Keswick long coach meet made a loss of £214 with 32 attendees. So far 17 have booked on the next coach.

**Meets:** Thanks to Mel for leading the Kingswinford outdoor meet. Mike S will lead the August meet to Clent and inform the Hill Tavern. Jan to chimp details. Next coach meet is Hawes. Rob will lead the September Outdoor meet & has given details to John. We need to advertise Mitch's Meet (to ?) & the Skills W/e led by Georgie in the November newsletter.

**5. BMC:** Nada. Agreed to delete this item from the agenda with one abstention.

**6.AOB:** Agreed that it is too late to devise a fund raising project in association with Sport England as Jacky Wright confirmed this needs completion by the end of August to be considered for matching funding.

**Meeting finished:** 20.57 pm

**Date of next meeting:** 17/8/2023 The Red Lion 7.30pm

### MINUTES WBMC COMMITTEE MEETING 17th Aug 2023 @The Red Lion 7.30pm start

**Present:** Andy Brown, Claire Hammonds, Nigel Tarr, Dave Hellyar (Chair), Mike Smith, Fred Hammonds, Georgie Hind, Jan Cox, John Edwards, Tony Emms, Rob Allen, Darren Groutage, Mike Thompson

**1. Apologies for Absence:** Jon Howells

**2. Acceptance of May Minutes:** proposed by Andy and seconded by Nigel.

**3. Matters Arising:**

1. So far no response from Joe re requests for additional meeting. John to contact Joe and Dave to write a letter. If no further response by the September meet then consider use of another provider.

2. Andy proposed a notation to be used to code payments going into the Club account. Onus on the event co-ordinator to inform about further codes.

3. So far no issue with dogs at the hut. Potential problem with dogs barking in the proposed kennel. We do need a dog policy.

**4. Officer updates: Treasurer:** Club balance is £10,009.40p + £30,000 (ring-fenced) as of 17/08/2023. Claire has opened a business account for the latter at 2% interest. Expecting the HMRC input on 29th August of over £3,000 gift aid (2 years up until end 2022). Easyfundraising donations are £90 so far.

**Membership Secretary:** Thirty members (including some prospective members) have not renewed. They are no longer covered by BMC insurance. There are 8 prospective members. Civil liability only lasts for 3 months so these are not insured unless they join within 3 months. Students, over 18 that are not members pay the full hut guest fees.

John proposed changing the membership in an idea via email. This will be further discussed at a later date.

**Newsletter:** Due out 29th August with couple of articles by members.

**Website/Publicity:** Tony, Darren, Jan, Georgie and Fred to continue to evaluate the trial new website.

**Hut Secretary:** Fred is happy with the new payment system and a screen shot of the booking sheet works well. Need to get a map of the land owned by the Club.

Hut costs are up by 30% between 2022 and 2023 and by 37% between 2021 and 2023. Outgoings for the previous 3 year are as follows:-

2021 £4,300 (electricity £600)

2022 £4,600

2023 (estimated) £5,300 (electricity £2,600). In addition, one of the cookers needs replacing (£600).

Hut fees to be considered at a later date.

**Coach Secretary:** The Hawes coach attracted 34 passengers and made a loss of £39. Very positive responses from newbies. Only 8 names for September meet as lots of regulars on holiday then. John to send an email encouraging attendance. Nigel to decide cancelling one week in advance if necessary.

**Other Meets:** Mike Smith's Evening meet on Clent attracted 16. Rob will lead the last Outdoor Evening meet of 2023 to Sandwell Valley. Ken Priest has agreed to entertain in the October Indoor meet & John Edwards will do the same in November.

**6.AOB:** Some concern regarding the current state of the BMC and corporate insurance. The BMC has had slow income growth & has needed to restructure. We need to look at alternatives in case the BMC folds. Corporate insurance runs until December 2023. Should have an idea of BMC price increase for 2024 in September. Looking at Hiscox and Austrian Alpine Club as possible alternatives. Hut insurance does not mention nearby trees. Inspector Darren to investigate.

Meeting finished 21.02 pm

Date of next meeting 14/9/2023 The Red Lion 7.30pm start



West Bromwich Mountaineering Club

### Skills Weekend

**Friday 17th – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

**Venue – WBMC Nant Gwynant Hut in Snowdonia**

**Aim:** To equip club members and potential members with the skills, confidence and competence to walk in the British hills in non-winter conditions.

**Course content:**

- Clothing and equipment
- Navigation skills using map and compass
- Route planning
- Mountain Weather
- Mountain hazards and avoidance
- Dealing with Emergencies and Rescue Teams

So, if you would like to participate on the weekend, learn more and be independent on the mountains or just want further information please contact David (Geordie) Hind on either 07505364318 or [geordiehind@gmail.com](mailto:geordiehind@gmail.com) - prior to Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

### 2024 MEET CARD

The 2024 Meet Card is now in development. If anybody is planning any Club events that they would like included please forward the dates and event title to [secretary@wbmc.org](mailto:secretary@wbmc.org) by the end of October at the latest.

### EASYFUNDRAISING REALLY DOES WORK!

So far the Club's supporters have raised £90 in around 2 months. **The top supporter to date is Fred Hammonds** whose online purchases via the site have resulted in £35.96 accruing to the Club. Claire Hammonds & John Edwards are in 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> positions but have not bought a Tui holiday like Fred did! Sadly there are still only 16 people who have signed up to the site [www.easyfundraising.co.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.co.uk) which is not very good when you consider the Club has around 200 members. If you have not already done so, please go on line and register through the link at the bottom of the page. **If you have already signed up it is most important not to forget to enter the website of the business via [www.easyfundraising.co.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.co.uk)** Please sign up at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/wbmc/>

### LATE NEWS JUST IN! LAKE DISTRICT PARKING CLAMPDOWN

The National Park has introduced 24-hour charging at its car parks whereas previously it was free between 6pm & 9am. Locals can get a 'residents permit' which will allow them to still park for free between those hours but tourists have to pay. The decision is to try and cut down on the litter and mess left by some irresponsible driver who overnight in their vehicles near beauty spots.