West Bromwich Mountaineering Club Newsletter



This month's photo: Walker descending slabs from Breche de Capitello (Day 7 GR20) by John Edwards

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Hello readers,

Huge thanks as always to this month's contributors: John Edwards, Anthenia Dimitriou, Anya Lawrence, Rob Cox, Nigel Tarr, and Andy Brown.

If you have anything that you'd like to be featured in next month's newsletter – whether you're selling gear, looking for a climbing or walking partner, you've seen an event that members might be interested in, anything at all – send it to newsletter@wbmc.org (or through our website if it's an article) before the 6th of the month.

If you've never written an article before, why not give it a go?

Cheers, Joe

The WBMC meeting place



Horse & Jockey 49 Stoney Ln, West Bromwich B71 4EZ Join us every Thursday night from 9pm for a chat and a drink.

Note that indoor meets are still at The Cricketer's Arms



The BMC recognises that climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions.

www.wbmc.org

Noticeboard

Coach Meet Questionnaire

The West Bromwich Mountaineering Club Committee is dedicated to improving how the club is run, and to help us do this we would like to gain a better understanding of what our members want from the monthly coach meets. Due to low attendance over the last few months, we are currently losing a substantial sum each month.

We've had about 50 responses to the coach meet questionnaire so far but we would like to make sure we hear from as many club members as possible. If you haven't filled in the questionnaire yet you can do so in two ways: online (https://forms.gle/iA7xZFU8PrFYJ5CKA)

or you can print off the hardcopy that's attached at the end of this newsletter.

West Bromwich Mountaineering Club Coach Meet Questionnaire 2019 The West Bromwich Mountaineering Club Committee is dedicated to improving how the club is run, and to help us do this we would like to gain a better understanding of what our members want from the monthly coach meets. This questionnaire is completely anonymous, so please answer with as much detail as you can. Howdo you feel about the price of coach meets? Far too cheap | | | | Far too expensive | Roughly how many coach meets have you attended in the past 12 months? Where else would you like to see coach meets go?

Climbing Nights

Just a reminder that the club is still running regular indoor climbing nights at High Sports in Kidderminster – usually the last Tuesday of the month, but there are people going most Tuesdays. Whatever your skill level, come along for an evening of climbing in a relaxed atmosphere. Get in touch if you would like to be added to the WhatsApp group.

Letters to the Editor

The Story Behind The Story

By John Edwards

Many thanks to Bill Douglas for letting us all see David Syme's "Story Behind The Story" in the last Newsletter. I wonder how many folk felt like Carol & I did that we were actually reading a true story?

So many different lessons to note from this piece but, for what it's worth, here's my top 3:

- Be especially careful if walking alone even if you have all the correct gear & first aid kit with you.
- Have your winter gloves on a harness or elastic loops (standard practise with Br. Antarctic Survey in 1960's)
- Don't bother with a handkerchief if you've a runny nose on a high peak!!

Hut donations



Note the new prices: Members - £6.00 Guests - £10.00 5-17 - £4.00 Under 5s - Free

Stamped addressed envelopes are provided in the hut for payment.

To book

Email our new Hut Secretary Pete Poultney:

hut-secretary@wbmc.org

Please contact Pete before going to the hut.

WBMC members can purchase a hut key from Pete at a donation of £4

Coming up

Thursday 8th August 2019 Outdoor Evening Meet - Limestone Way and Sedgley Beacon



An incredibly varied 5 mile (9km) walk through urban countryside, starting & finishing at The Beacon Hotelhome of the legendary Sarah Hughes Brewery & its Ruby Mild. The walk starts and finishes on parts of Dudley's Limestone Way and passes through Swanbrook Valley before heading north to the highest point in Wolverhampton. So if you managed Turner's Hill in July, you'll have done 2 Unitary Authority Tops when you summit at Sedgley Beacon - 778 ft (237 m) above sea level with its tower built in 1846! The route has around 590 ft (182m) of ascent and descent and should take around 2 hours; a bit longer if to stop to buy a plant at the wonderful amateur nursery near the end!

Meet at The Beacon Hotel (129 Bilston St, DY3 1JE) from 6pm to start walking at 6:45pm. Note the 224 & 229 buses stop outside the pub and there is the Blue Ocean Chippy opposite the pub if you want food before the start or at the end. The Beacon Hotel is also offering cheese or ham cobs but you need to let John Edwards know how many of these you will want 4 days before the walk. Great walk! Great pub! Great company if you turn up!

20th – 22nd September 2019 Lake District Weekend – Chapel Stile

We have the TOC-H Weirside bunkhouse booked again this September. Last year's event was a great success and I expect this year to be at least as good.

For those that have not been before, the bunkhouse is the old chapel, in the village of Chapel Stile, in the Langdale valley. This is central to the Lake District with very easy access to some of the best walking, scrambling, climbing and mountain biking on offer. It is also within a few minutes' walk of two excellent pubs, both providing good food and a selection of ales. There are 2 bunkrooms for 8 people and a further 2 each for 2 people, fairly modern toilets and showers, good heating and plenty of hot water, though the drying room is a bit of a waste of time...

As the kitchen is small, there will be a full breakfast provided each morning and a group meal at the centre on Saturday evening. The cost of the 2 nights is £35, to cover bed and the 3 meals.

To book your place please e-mail me at rob.cox1@btinternet.com or phone me on 07847315302 PLUS make a £35 bank transfer to: Sort Code, 08-93-00 Account, 81120954. This will allow me to keep track of the places that have been booked. Your place is not reserved until payment has been received and based on last year's trip we are likely to be oversubscribed. Contact me if you want to pay by any other method.



Extra Nights?

A couple of members have shown interest in extending the trip by another night. I'm happy to arrange this if enough people are interested, splitting the cost of the hut between those going. The cost of the hut is £150 per night and is not available on a per-bed basis, so to make it worthwhile we will need about 10 people. Please let me know if you are interested in an extra night, when booking, and I will look into the options available.

Finding Nemo

May 2019

By Anthenia Dimitriou With Photos by John Edwards



We started early Saturday morning from the West Bromwich car park. It was pouring rain and the weather forecast was rain for most of the day in Wales as well. People on the coach were saying the rain had passed Wales and it would be probably dry for when we get there. I was thinking 'good, it's meant to be a long meet but this is actually a pub weather'. I don't think like this very often.

It was my first time walking the Nantlle Ridge and pictures looked awesome! So despite the weather I was excited about it. Ken, Pete, Mel, Graeme and Jess were on the coach this time so I thought it was a great catch up to walk with them. Day was going smoothly, although I forgot my map, but that's not as important as I'd get lost with or without it anyway. Tip: that's why you need to walk with confident map readers if you're not one yourself.

The coach dropped us at Nebo. Forgive my Welsh but for me it was 'Nemo' all the way. Still raining but not very cold. Everyone was happy at this point. Two groups of ours started the same walk to the ridge but us six did a slightly longer loop.

As we started getting higher the weather got worse. It was pouring rain, wind and freezing cold in June! I was so miserable, I really just wanted to go back and lie on the sofa watching Netflix. Ken and Mel were on a mission to find the path so they didn't seem to mind the weather. Visibility was poor due to the mist and the rain. Pete and Jess were sympathising more with my thoughts. We were all hoping for sunshine, to get the views, to find the path and to enjoy the summer weather. It was lunch time and we struggled to find a place convenient to stop for some food. We found a rock and we settled there for 5 minutes. It was still so cold.

Three hours had passed, we were soaking wet and the weather didn't show any improvement. We got to the nice part of the hike where we could see approaching the ridge. The weather was finally getting better. Now we had some views and it was getting warmer. Never had such an immediate change of mood! Everyone was happy, chatty and smiling. We started drying and being warm again. The views of the ridge were amazing! Somehow the rock had dried quickly which made the scramble parts easier and enjoyable.

We stopped at the top of the ridge to enjoy the views of the ocean, the mountains and the lakes around us. I got my phone out to take a picture or two.. I see a text from Gary saying he's going back to Nemo. Or at least this is what I read aloud. Everyone laughed at me so I reread the text, it was 'Nebo' not Nemo which is obviously a place and not a fish, duh. I'm glad he didn't follow me cause I

would definitely have sent him to find Nemo and maybe Dory as well.

It was a beautiful day and I'm glad Ken convinced Taff to make the appropriate rearrangements by telling him 'If you want to go home tonight, this is what has to be done'. Great team work once again, as everyone went back home that night. Hopefully Nemo will be found one day, maybe not on a Welsh mountain though.

Great to have new people on the coach who seemed to enjoy our coach adventures. If I could I wouldn't miss any of them. Thank you again WBMC and Nigel for organising the coach meets for us. We really appreciate it. See you next month.

Love,

Anthenia (The Greek)

Finding Nemo (continued)

John Edwards forwarded a few of the words penned by folk as the coach made its way home, which you can read below.



Nigel Tarr: Shame about the weather at the start but great finish to the day. Don't know if I chose the wrong route but it seemed to take forever to get to Nebo! Thanks to Ken Priest for his help on the hills - the radios proved a Godsend. All in all another good day.

Bill Douglas: After a damp and mistily atmospheric start, it was great to see the sea, the sun and Holyhead Mountain! Lovely day, great company, great fun thanks to y'all!

Jan Cox: Mega - thanks to Tony and co for helping me not be still on the ridge! Lovely day with fab. people; so glad I re-joined this club. (Ed: especially as she won the raffle for the Coach Sec's bottle of wine!)

Nic Marney (1st Meet): Great day from start to finish. All the people on the coach were great. Thank you.

John Edwards: Thanks to Nic for agreeing to start with a slight deviation to SH 4785 4925 so I could view "Tŵr Nebo", the tallest man-made structure in Wales at 317.4m, close up (& grab the nearby geocache!) Low-visibility, continuous rain & 10-20mph winds meant conditions early on were quite challenging for navigation, especially on the first 3 flattish summits with their intermittent paths and a GPS certainly helped. We caught up with the front party on the winding rocky descent from Craig Cwm Silyn, just before the clouds started to lift. The northern end of the ridge was just as I hoped it would be and the beer in the pub at the end the price I expected it to be!

Phil Smith: We waited and the lady delivered - lifted her veil and we saw the wonders about us!

Gary Coates: Apologies for the late departure.

Andy Morley: We got to about the 3rd summit and the

weather began to change. We had something of everything weather-wise and in all sorts of other ways.

Graeme Stanford: A wet start but more than made up for by the weather at the end. A classic ridge made all the more memorable by "Captain Nebo" 's adventures!!

John O'Neil: Most challenging thing I have ever done. Fantastic.



NOTE TO ALL MEMBERS:

Sadly the coach was again poorly attended, resulting in a huge loss to the club finances. In fact the average attendance on the last 4 meets has been just 27.5 passengers, and that includes the Coach Secretary!

So if you don't want to have cancelled coaches, PLEASE TRY AND SUPPORT THE COACH MEETS!! The committee are doing all they can to attract guests & visitors by publicising them via Meet-Up, Facebook & the BMC and some people from as far away as Worcester and Leamington Spa made the effort to be on this coach.

Ed: As a reminder, if you still haven't filled in a coach meet questionnaire, you can do so online by going to https://forms.gle/iA7xZFU8PrFYJ5CKA or you can print off the hardcopy that's attached at the end of this newsletter.

Stunning support, stunning scenery and stunning steepness

A report of the Snowdonia Half Marathon

By Anya Lawrence With photos by Anya Lawrence and Pete Poultney



On the sunny, glorious weekend of the 18th May I travelled up to Snowdonia with my parents to compete in the Snowdonia Half Marathon. This was a race that I'd long had on the bucket list, being hailed as one of the most scenic races in the country. And, as I set off from the pretty market village of Llanrwst with the 662 other runners, I would certainly agree that my surroundings were far more breathtaking than the usual country lanes and city roads that most races are run on.

However the scenery wasn't the only aspect about this race that different to the all other half marathons I have done before; for a start it was definitely not a course for getting a fast time, as the race organisers were so keen to remind everyone at the start to prevent a mad stampede of PB-chasing runners.

It was also one of the most remote races I have ever done, even though I was never too far from Llanwrst or even Betws-y-Coed as the crow flies. Whilst I'm accustomed to running past crowds of flag-waving, cow bell-ringing, cheering onlookers, as I wound my way around the isolated Lake Geirionydd and Lake Crafnant, and the thick expanse of forest in between, I saw few other people besides my fellow runners and most of the race was spent in eerie silence.

Furthermore, it was marketed as "one of the UK's toughest half marathons" on the website and it certainly lived up to its reputation being by far the hilliest half I have ever run. The first 4 miles could easily be described in three words: an uphill struggle.



Starting as it meant to go on; the first uphill climb of the race

In fact, the gradients were so severe that most people were walking before the first mile was even up, something I have never witnessed in any long distance event before! A short descent to Lake Geirionydd and the gently undulating lakeside road offered a brief respite from the uphill before we climbed yet again up along the forest tracks of Mynydd Deulyn. Fortunately, just when I thought the climb would never end, we were rewarded with a mile-long stretch of fast, technical descent down to Lake Crafnant. This lake was even more isolated than the first, with only a single older couple kindly offering jelly

babies outside their little waterside cottage, which most of the runners were too exhausted to even take!



After running three miles around the lake, the route began to follow a tarmac road and gradually we started to make our way back towards civilisation again. A photographer and paramedics standing beside their parked ambulance were just outside of Trefiw; I gave a quick smile to both in the hope that I would get a nice picture and also to reassure them that I was not in need medical assistance!

But at the back of my mind were the commentator's words at the beginning of the race: "there's a 1 in 7 hill at mile 11.5 guys, so have fun!"

Apparently, in previous years runners had complained that the race should be harder given the name "Snowdonia Half Marathon" and the organisers had duly responded by rerouting the last section up the horrendously steep single track road out of Trefiw.

Putting such a hard ascent near the end of what was already a testing course was at best very cheeky and at worst downright stupid decision on the race organiser's part - I witnessed more runners hobbling in absolute agony up this hill than I have had hot cups of tea!



The start of the 1 in 7 Forest Hill

Continued overleaf...

Stunning support, stunning scenery and stunning steepness (continued)

However, I was determined that I wouldn't suffer the same fate and even though my legs were screaming for me to stop throughout the entire torturous ascent I managed to run (albeit at a shuffling pace) all the way up Forest Hill. This is probably my most surprising and proudest running achievement to date and all the other competitors I passed gave me absolutely amazing support, even though they were unable to run up the hill themselves. Their congratulations and kind words of encouragement gave me an absolute buzz as I descended the last 2 miles of the course back to where we started in Llanrwst.



A rare flat section of the course

After collecting my finisher's medal and technical T-shirt prize for winning the Under 20s category, it was off to Betws-y-Coed with my parents for a well-earned coffee and cake. Later in the evening at the Saracens Head I bumped into Pete Poultney, who had also run the race. Pete agreed on how tough the race had been and said how he was a bit disappointed that the organisers had changed the route yet continued to show pictures of the original easier course, which passed a pretty castle and river, on the event website.

So my final thoughts on the Snowdonia Half; well it is definitely not for the faint hearted- all in all the race entails over 570m of climbing, making the flat equivalent distance nearer to 15 miles than 13. This severity certainly shows up in the results- the winning men's time of 1:22 is some 15 minutes slower than that of most other UK half marathons and my own time of 1:52 was down by a similar amount from my usual 1:39.

Furthermore, I wouldn't recommend it to anyone who is new to running or running with an injury- the vast majority of competitors who I saw cross the finish line were more injured than when they had started the race! Also experience in long distance running and correct pacing and nutrition is key to successfully completing this event; for me keeping a steady pace with faster downhill efforts, plus a cheeky jelly baby at miles 6 and 9 was a good strategy, whilst others preferred to use several energy gels and some runners were having to sip Lucozade near continuously to get round the course.

However, the race is not only stunning in in its steepness but also in its scenery and the support that the all the runners provided each other. The encouragement I received from the other runners will stay with me as I resume training for my next event and I dare say for a long time after that as well.



Anya and dad, Paul, at the finish

A bit more on the WBMC archives

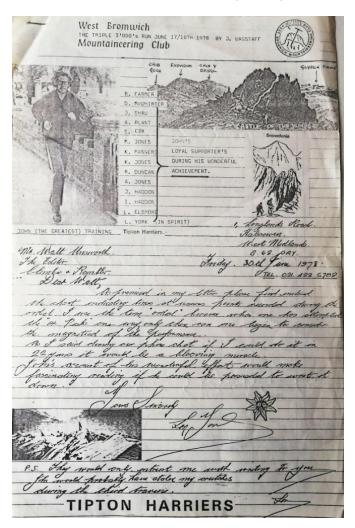
By John Edwards



You might have noticed that there are some gaps in the stuff that was deposited at Sandwell Library. The first rebound first Hut Log Book (1964 – 1981) has now surfaced again and if anyone has any of the following items that they no longer want I'd be very grateful if they could let me have them to add to the archives on my next visit:

- Meet Cards for 2008/2009, 2014/2015 & 2015/2016
- Membership Cards for 1993/4, 1994/5, 1996/7, 2000/01, 2002/3, 2004/5, 2008/9, 2009/10 & 2011/12
- Minutes for 2012, 2016 & 2017 AGM's

But most importantly I think there is an important major item out there somewhere, namely a large A4 ring folder with AGM minutes from 1954 to 2008 (at least)



One of the things that has just been dropped off that might be of interest to newer members was a letter by Len York to Walt Unsworth, the editor of 'Climber &

Rambler' detailing the amazing "Triple Welsh 3,000's Run" by John Wagstaff on June 17/18 1978.

Len wrote: "Dear Walt, As promised in my letter please find enclosed the chart indicating times at various points recorded during the ordeal. I use the term "ordeal" because when one has attempted the '14 Peaks' one way, only then can one begin to consider the magnitude of the performance. As I said during our phone chat if I could do it in 22 years it would be a blooming miracle. John's account of his wonderful effort would make fascinating reading if he could be persuaded to write it down."

Well in due course John did put together a full account for the "Fell Runner", which can be read on pp111-119 of the club's "The First 50 Years" book - a copy of which is also in the Sandwell archives. However, the detailed breakdown of his times was not included and I'd not seen it before. In summary:

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Coach Meet - Patterdale

Sunday 7th July 2019

Depart

07:00 – West Brom. Edward St Car Park (B70 8NL) 07:20 – Penkridge

(Short stop at Charnock Richard Services)

Drop off

Kirkstone Pass (401081) Patterdale (391161) Glenridding (386169)

Pick up

Glenridding (386169)

Required maps

OS 1:25 000 Outdoor Leisure Map No 5 – The English Lakes NE No 7 – The English Lakes SE

Suggested routes

Route 1 (~14km / 9 miles)

First breach the summit of Red Screes (396087) via the steep climb from Kirkstone Pass. Leave the summit NW and follow the wall past Little Hart Crag (387101) and onto Dove Crag (3375104). Continue on the path over Hart Crag onto the high point of Fairfield (359117). Leave the summit N down a very short but steep ridge to Cofa Pike. The ridge continues NE over St Sunday Crag (369135) all the way to Patterdale (391162) a short road walk takes you to the coach in Glenridding.

Route 2 (~14km - 9 miles)

From Kirkstone Pass follow St Ravens Edge (405085) to Stoney Cove Pike (417100). Descend to Threshwaite Mouth and ascend Thornthwaite Crag (432101) on your way to High Street (441111). Follow the ridge N to The Knott (437127) and descend to tranquil Angle Tarn (417145). A good path takes you into Patterdale (395161) where a short stroll along the road leads back to the coach.



Photo from visitpeakdistrict.com

Fares

Members – £20.00 Guests – £22.00 Under 16's and full-time students – £8.00

To book contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729.

Should you need to cancel do so no later than the Wednesday prior to the coach date or a ± 5.00 fee will be charged. Fail to turn up and the full coach fare will be expected.

ROUTF 3 (~14km - 9 miles)

From Patterdale follow a track to where it turns right over Grisedale Beck (383157). Climb steeply to the Hole In The Wall (359155) and traverse the grade 1 ridge of Striding Edge to the summit of Helvellyn (342152). Descend via Lower Man (337155) to Whiteside Bank (338166) and then take the lower path down Glenridding Common (352166) a good track leads past the Youth Hostel (366174) back to the coach in Glenridding.

Coach Meet - Stanage

Sunday 11th August 2019

Depart

07:00 - West Brom. Edward St Car Park (B70 8NL) 07:20 - Penkridge

Drop off

Ringinglow (SK 290 837) Upper Burbage Bridge (SK 260 829) Hooks Carr Car Park (SK 224 828)

Pick up

Lay by A6187 (SK 220 816)

Required maps

OS 1: 25 000 Outdoor Leisure No 1 – Dark Peak

OS 1:50 000 Landranger 110 - Sheffield



Fares

Photo from visitpeakdistrict.com

Members - £20.00 Guests - £22.00 Under 16's and full-time students - £8.00

To book contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729.

Should you need to cancel do so no later than the Wednesday prior to the coach date or a ± 5.00 fee will be charged. Fail to turn up and the full coach fare will be expected.

Suggested routes

From Ringinglow

Route 1 (~10 miles / 16km, 140m ascent)

Follow the Houndkirk Road South East for a mile before heading South to Houndkirk Hill. Turn West and reach Burbage rock then follow the edge North to Upper Burbage Bridge. Again turn West to the top of Whit Path Moss before following Stanage Edge North West for 2 miles to High Neb. Back track to SK 240843 and follow footpaths back to Hathersage.

From Upper Burbage Bridge

Route 2 (~11 miles / 17km, 160m ascent)

Head West to White Path Moss then turn North West and follow Stanage Edge, detouring to Stanedge Pole, 3.5 miles, over High Neb, to SK 230874. Turn back on yourself and follow the footpath south to Bamford Edge and the top of Bamford Moor. Go South East to SK 218840 and follow Hurst Clough South to the golf course then turn East and finish at Hathersage.



Photo from mountaintracks.co.uk

Climbers – Fill your boots on Stanage Edge, the premier gritstone edge in Derbyshire. Climbing at all grades. Leave the crags with enough time for the 1.5 mile walk back to Hathersage.

West Bromwich Mountaineering Club

Coach Meet Questionnaire 2019

The West Bromwich Mountaineering Club Committee is dedicated to improving how the club is run, and to help us do this we would like to gain a better understanding of what our members want from the monthly coach meets.

This questionnaire is completely anonymous, so please answer with as much detail as you can.

How do you feel about the price of coach meets?	Far too cheap						Far too expensive
Roughly how many coach meets have you attended	d in the past 12 n	nonth	s?				
Roughly how many coach meets will you attend in t	the next 12 mon	ths?					
Where else would you like to see coach meets go?							
If you don't attend the coach meets, why not?							
What would encourage you to go on more coach m	eets?						
What do you think would encourage others (memb	ers and non-mer	nbers)) to go	on m	ore co	ach r	meets?