

Newport Outdoor Group (YHA)



Editors

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Web Site

<http://walk.to/nogs>

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Get The Outdoor Habit!

BRISTOL TRIP November 18th to 20th

By Richard Weeks

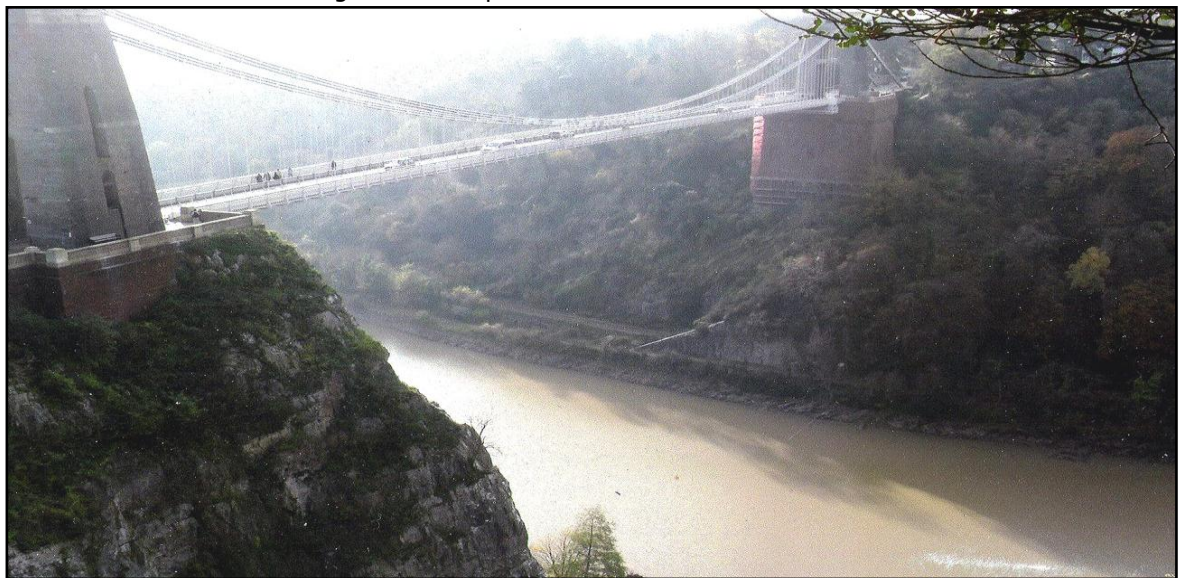
The Bristol trip was attended by 6 of the NOGs. On the Friday, Liz and I travelled by train from Newport. After checking into the hostel (which is less than 1 mile from Temple Meads), we visited a pub on the quayside, having halves of Thatcher's cider, chicken and chips in a restaurant, and finally drinks in a Wetherspoon's.

On Saturday we met with Sheila and Charles. They were only staying for the day, so they did their Christmas shopping, and said they would meet us later. Whilst walking through Queen Square in Redcliffe, we saw several vintage cars and buses. We were told by a filming crew that this was a set for "Upstairs, Downstairs", circa 1936.

Liz and I decided to walk to the famous suspension bridge in Clifton. On the way, we stopped to have breakfast (tea, coffee and porridge) at another of Bristol's Wetherspoon's, where the prices are so reasonable. After that, we continued to the bridge, where the views were spectacular. The tide was up on the River Avon, allowing us to take good photos, and having a zoom in lens I was able to get detailed pictures.

BRISTOL YHA: FACTFILE

Overlooking Bristol's lively harbourside, this hostel is situated next to the famous Arnolfini Gallery, a home for the contemporary arts. The YHA Bristol is set in a historical building, and features a restaurant and games room. The YHA Bristol has spacious dormitory rooms and private bedrooms. There is also a stylish guest lounge with a TV and Wi-Fi access, and laundry facilities are available on site. The majority of rooms contain bunk beds. It can accommodate 134 people, and it is currently rated as "very good" on the YHA site, with a score of 8.3 obtained from 96 reviews.



The bridge itself was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, completed in 1864 and spans the Avon Gorge. Sadly Brunel never saw its completion, as he died in 1859. On the 100th anniversary of his death a commemorative plaque was unveiled in his honour. It is interesting to note that the struts on either side of the bridge differ. One has beveled edges and the other is squared off. The top arches on either side are also different in size.

After walking across the bridge and back (which is free for pedestrians, while motorists have to pay. Traffic lights also operate on the bridge). We ventured onto the Downs where viewpoints were plentiful. Having an ice-cream and a rest, we later took the scenic route back into Clifton. En route we saw a grey squirrel and the autumn leaves had fallen. Sadly we did not have time to visit the Zoo. In the shopping centre we then met Chris and Nigel. They arrived on the Saturday, and we agreed to meet them later. Liz was looking in the shops for a tea pot stand, but couldn't get one without the teapot. We then got back to the Hostel and rested until 6 pm.

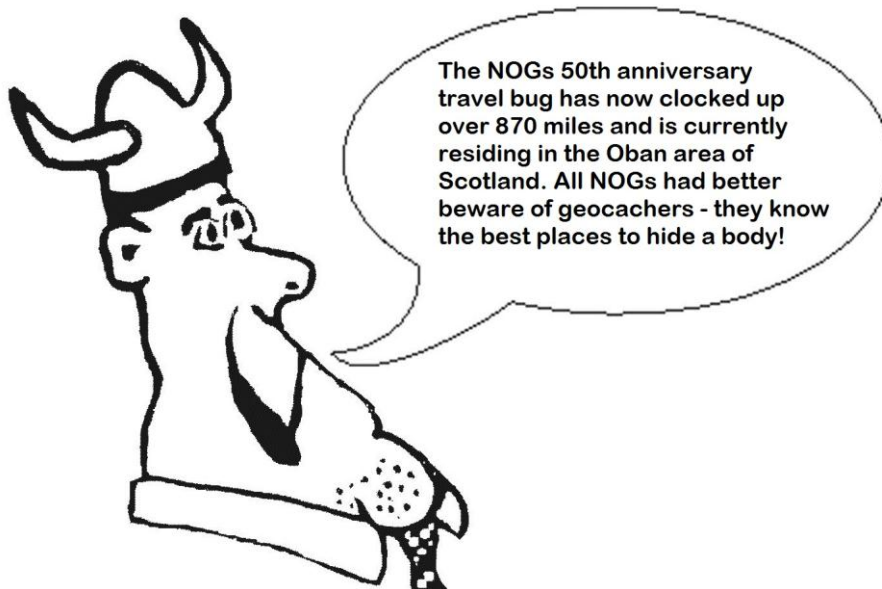
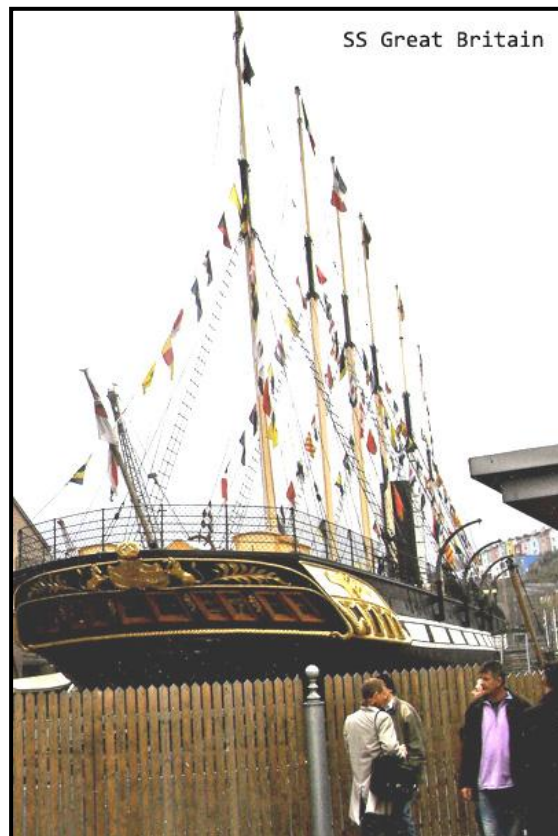
When the whole party had assembled at the hostel, we crossed the bridge to Wetherspoons, which was directly opposite, and had our evening meals. Sheila and Charles had to head home, but the remaining group went to the local Bier Keller in the town centre. Entrance was £6, the beer came in stein glasses and was £6.50 per litre! Around 80 people

attended, some celebrating birthdays, weddings or wedding anniversaries. Everyone joined in with doing The Conga. The band, who were local, played a mixture of folk type songs and music from the charts. Fun was had by everyone. We left at 12 midnight, but the festival continued until 1 am.

On Sunday, the four of us walked across the harbour front. We saw famous ships, including the "Matthew" and SS Great Britain. This ship had been used in the Falklands War in 1982 and had been brought to Bristol and restored. Interestingly, we saw the swing bridge in operation, and also the lock gate that connects the harbor to the river. Views en route included the suspension bridge from ground level. Stopping for an hour, we had coffee in a quayside hotel, then walked back to the hostel via a Wetherspoons on the other side of the harbor. The weather was dull, with the rain keeping off, but in dire contrast to the previous day!

With a few hours of the day to spare, we visited the M Shed, again on the quayside at Prince's Wharf. Admission is free with donations welcomed. This is an exhibition centre, packed with interest, and is a mine of information about Bristol. It contains an Anderson Air Raid Shelter, a green 1966 Bristol Bus (Reg. FHW 1580), a double decker that required a driver and conductor when in operation. Numerous bikes were on display, including a Penny Farthing and a scooter. Also of interest were three small models of local bridges, the suspension bridge amongst them. Also on the ground floor was a tourist information centre and refreshments. The second floor included a Spitfire plane engine, and memories from people who's forbearers had to bring up families in the 19th Century. These were mounted on plaques throughout the rooms. Several artists had sketches on show. On the top floor it is possible to take panoramic photographs of the harbour and its many sights.

As time finally passed, we departed the exhibition centre and collected our luggage from the hostel. We then headed for the train station, passing Radcliff Church, completed during the reign of Elizabeth 1st (1558-1603). Catching the train bound for Cardiff, we stopped at Newport, and then headed home under our own steam.



The NOGs 50th anniversary travel bug has now clocked up over 870 miles and is currently residing in the Oban area of Scotland. All NOGs had better beware of geocachers - they know the best places to hide a body!

Noggin the Nog

SNOWDEN

By Colin Wallace

On a Friday as I set off in my car to travel from Bristol to Newport I was full of apprehension, as I felt like a virgin this being my first trip to Snowdon. In addition to this apprehension I also had to cope with trying to arrive at the right time in Newport to pick up my two passengers, one who is not an early riser and likes you to arrive dead on time. The other passenger is one who gets up at the crack of dawn, and then waits hours for you to arrive.

Luckily the second issue did not materialize, as the three of us had arranged a time that was suitable to all parties, so once packed we were on our way in good spirits. The trip from Newport to Snowdon takes about four hours. It was agreed that we would have a pit stop halfway. We stopped for lunch at the Elan Valley, and after lunch had a brief look around at some interesting information on the history of the dam. We then headed off on the open road with one more

stop in Betws y Coed for a coffee, before arriving at Idwal Hostel, where some of the NOGS had already arrived and by late evening a total of thirteen NOGS had arrived and were booked in. Norman of "has anyone got a map" fame, and father of International Rugby Player Jamie Roberts (Newport born, Cardiff Blues, Wales and the British Lions) would be leading the three walks planned, and so after a good night's sleep and breakfast, we all assembled outside the Hostel to start the first walk.

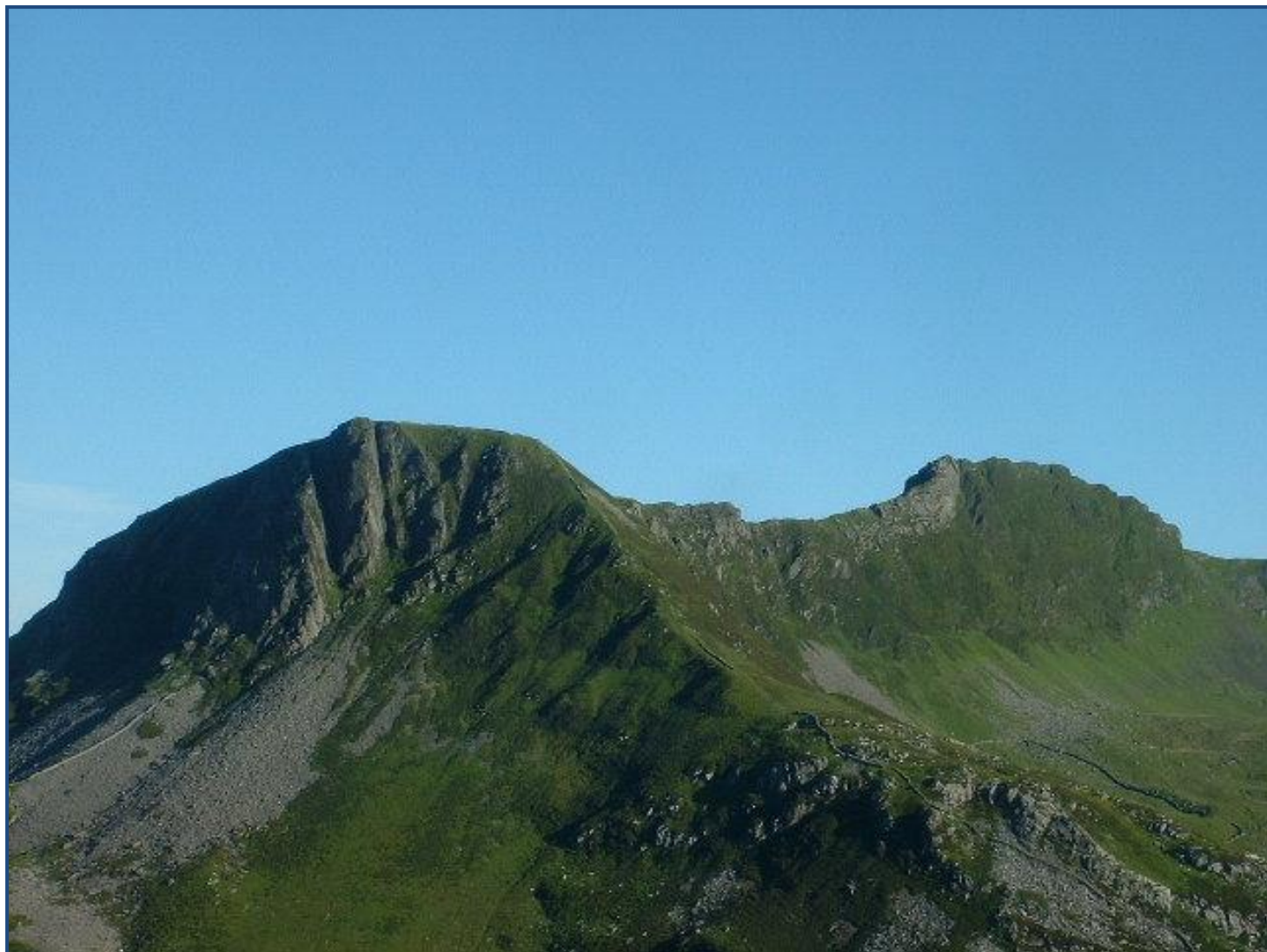
Saturday 23rd April

The first walk was up to the summit of Y Garn (947m) via Lyn Idwal and the Devil's Kitchen. This would entail a route around the east side of the lake, then an ascent to Llyn y Cwm via the Devil's Kitchen route, followed by the ascent to Y Garn. The weather was overcast and grey with very little views and so when we eventually reached the summit where lunch was taken it was decided to cut short the walk and head back to the hostel via the North West flank of the mountain to the entrance of Cwm Clyd. At this point the track then descended to the north end of Llyn Idwal and the hostel.

Upon reaching the hostel there were a lovely selection of home-made cakes and biscuits to be eaten, all helped down with some lovely brews of tea and coffee.

The hostel did not supply food, and so for those NOGS who had decided not to cook there was now a need to find somewhere to eat, and so early evening the first delegation of NOGs set off to try and locate a hostelry that could keep us supplied with food and drink. Soon after the first delegation left the second one took off as well, and just after they had set off a text a text came through from the first delegation of NOGS that a pub serving real ale had been located, and another pub had been located that would serve food. All this had been done by Norman who as you all know by now is the father of International Rugby Player Jamie Roberts (Newport born, Cardiff Blues, Wales and the British Lions). After a drink at the first pub that actually sold real ale, it was time to move on to the pub that sold food. There was a good selection of food and an additional bonus was a TV showing Rugby. The match being played was between Leinster and the Ospreys. Now amongst the NOGS was Tony, who is a big fan of the Ospreys, hence he was cheering them on. However, he was getting quite upset (only joking) that Kevin - who is a big Dragons fan - was supporting the opposition, and worst was to follow when in the last couple of minutes Leinster secured a penalty to win the match. Poor old Tony was inconsolable, as not only had his team lost, but he was getting nearer and nearer to celebrating his **58th** Birthday.

The following photo of Y Garn is copyrighted by David Medcalf at <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/22398> and reproduced here under the creative commons licence.



Sunday 24th April

I woke up in good spirits as news had come to me that I was not the only Snowdon virgin, there were in fact two of us (Thanks to John Gray), also the weather was perfect for walking. A decision had already been taken to climb to the summit of Snowdon (1085m) via the Snowdon Ranger track and return via the Blwch main ridge and Rhyd Ddu path (read further on for an incident on the ridge!) The walk commenced at the car park near the Snowdon Ranger Youth Hostel and incorporated an ascent to Llyn Ffynon-y-gwas reservoir. This was followed by steeper ascent above Clogwyn Arddu cliffs to the railway track. From the Pyg track at Bwlch Glas we pushed on for the final ascent to the summit, where lunch was taken.

After enjoying lunch and the surrounding views, it was now time to make back to the start of the walk. Everyone was in good spirits, the views and weather could not have been better as we set off, however things changed when one of the Snowdon Virgin's - namely myself - decided to fall over on the narrow ridge referred to earlier. Luckily I managed to hold on to some rocks that stopped me falling further, and Norman (Father of International Rugby Player Jamie Roberts, Newport born, Cardiff Blues, Wales and the British Lions) was on hand to administer a bit of first aid. As I scrambled back up to the ridge, one of the lady walkers said she would have cried if it had been her falling, so fighting back the tears I carried on like a brave little soldier.

We finally arrived at Rhyd Ddu village and made straight for the tea room, where tea, coffee and an assortment of cakes were enjoyed. After a nice rest and refreshment, we started to make our way back to the hostel. On the way back four of us stopped off at Petes Eat for a bite to eat, and of course a drink.

Monday 25th April

On the last day a couple of people decided not to do the final walk and so did their own thing, meanwhile the rest of the group climbed to the summit of Tryfan (915m).

The route taken from the hostel was to Cwm Bochiwyd, followed by an ascent to Bwlch Tryfan between Glyder Fach and south ridge of Tryfan. There were excellent views to be had of Bristly Ridge and the Glyders. The ascent to the summit was now via the south ridge, but circulating the Far South of Tryfan, here there were terrific views of Nant Ffrancon valley, as well as views over the Carneddau and the Glyders. At this point there were clear views of Y garn that was climbed two days earlier. The descent was then on the west side of Tryfan to a point below Llyn Bochlwyd and finally a steady walk back to the hostel. Upon arriving at the hostel panic set in as the NOG goodie bag was nowhere to be seen. Luckily one of the walkers had some refreshments in his car and so the day was saved. Once refreshments were over the NOGS decided to head for home, all apart from John Smith, who was left at the hostel to wait for the injured Snowdon Virgin to pick him up. Needless to say I turned up on time, much to the delight of John. As many of you know I come from England, so apart from thanking Norman for the first aid he administered, I am also very grateful to him for supplying me with all the Welsh names you see in this article.

In conclusion, it was agreed by all that it was one of the best weekends in Snowdon that the NOGS could remember!



The above photo of Tryfan, The Glyders and Y Garn is copyright by Ian Greig.

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