



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A CRACKING OUTDOOR NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL

RED, WHITE AND BLUE

By Jackie Roberts

With the weather forecast being brilliant for the whole weekend (September 13th to 15th), I was really looking forward to my stay in Llanddeusant with the NOGS. And I was not disappointed! I arrived at the hostel just in time to see a beautiful sunset, then was off down to the pub.

It seemed like a very good idea to enlist the contributions of all and sundry towards this write up and I have to say that a very good start was made with probably half a dozen or more giving their own brief anecdotes of their experiences up until Saturday evening. I remember the front of our building being a perfect place to sit with a glass or two and watch the sun start to descend and reminisce after a glorious day.

However somewhere between late Saturday evening and Sunday morning the sheets of foolscap paper provided for the purpose appear to have disappeared. Can I just say that adequate supplies of paper were available for the games played, some by myself.

It is unfortunate but means that my apologies go to all of those that contributed some very witty (by all accounts) insights into the lives of lesser spotted NOGS. Apparently nobody seems to know anything at all about the whereabouts, not even laying claim to be the last one to inscribe. There was a log fire and a few charred remnants in the morning but surely not ?!!! All I can say is that it puts me in mind of a certain trip a couple of years ago - does anybody remember the Mystery of the Missing Tarts?

So, all I can describe is the time enjoyed by myself and immediate companions, starting on Saturday morning with a fantastic breakfast prepared by Bristol YHA Group - note the unchanged name! The hostel is a former inn named the *Red Lion* and is ideal for exploring the western end of the Brecon Beacons. We all set off together in an easterly direction towards the source of the river Usk,

picking up a small collection of stragglers along the way (sorry Paula, Ali and Ian K!), and having reached a certain point a smaller group of us took a hike up to Llyn y Fan Fawr where we stopped for lunch then we climbed up onto Fan Brycheiniog and then across onto Bannau Sir Gaer. The views were really marvellous and to be honest it was a shame to end the days walking.

Back eventually to base and we all enjoyed an evening meal prepared by the NOGS before a session of wine and merriment across the table playing traditional board games. Next day after a big clear up and of course breakfast by the Bristol group, people went their separate ways, I believe quite a few went walking but a noggle of us decided to take the opportunity to visit or revisit Carreg Cennan Castle, as Sophie and Adrian had done the previous day.

For those of you who have never done so, it is well worth a visit, if possible remember to take your own torch! Later that afternoon we had the stunning spectacle of watching red kites being fed at the Cross Inn, the local hostelry that is referred to by Leslie at the beginning of this account.

To round the weekend off we had the traditional tea and cakes at the Brecon Mountain Centre at Libanus (before you reach Storey

Arms from Brecon, Martin!!!) We enjoyed the last of the sunshine before departing home our separate ways and looking forward to the next time.



NOGS CDROMS FOR SALE

The Millennium CDROM is now complete and on sale for just £2-00 each. For those not around in the Year 2000 this is a record of anything we did in the Millennium, it contains lots of pictures and sound clips. It also includes a history of the Group, which goes back over 30 years. Please contact Dave Green if you want a copy.

NOGS NEWS REPORTER OF YEAR

Congratulations to the Roberts Family who were the worthy recipients of the NOGS NEWS Reporter of the Year Award for 2000-2002.

SNOWDONIA LONG WEEKEND

By Dawn Bishop

So it's half term again and a long weekend is planned for the NOGS to Snowdonia and the Bangor hostel for October 14th to 27th. But where are all the Nogs? You would think that a long weekend in the heart of one of the best mountain ranges in Britain would have you all scurrying to book your places. Anyway most of you were not there so I will let you know what a great experience you all missed.

Driving through the middle of Wales in the autumn you pass through some of the most stunning scenery imaginable. The dark solemn mountains as a backdrop to the vivid colours of the autumn leaves on the trees, as you



approach Snowdonia the mountains grow even taller and more rugged and are shot through by waterfalls that look like great jagged forks of lightning. Eventually as you approach Bangor the mountains give way to the sea with the lights of Anglesey twinkling across the Menai Straights.

Bangor hostel is a big old country house just off the A5. We arrived at around 8pm and were met with a very warm welcome from the hostel manager. He and all his staff were all very helpful and cheerful and very good cooks. The rooms and other facilities were all well up to standard. Once we had dropped off our luggage and made our beds we were off to find food and a drink. The food came in the shape of a chip shop on the sea front and the drink came courtesy of the Tap and Speal which had a very good selection of real ale's. Fed and watered we headed back to the hostel at closing time. No hurry as Bangor has 24-hour access.

Wednesday morning dawned clear and bright despite the dismal forecasts of the night before. After checking the forecasts for next few days we decided that if we were going to attempt the Carneddau ridge we needed to do it straight away, so after breakfast we set off for Llyn Ogwen and the start of our walk. The plan was to climb up to Carnedd Llewelyn 1064m then to walk along the ridge to Carnedd David, Pen Ole Wen and then back down to Lake Ogwen. The day started well, we took a water Board track which climbed quite steeply to the Ffynnon Llugwy, from there we took a sheep trail which lead up to the ridge the climb was quite hard and the ground was fairly wet and slippery. The ridge gave excellent views across the valley to Trifan and the Glyders. As we worked our way along the ridge the weather conditions worsened. By the time we reached the scramble to the summit the conditions had become bad enough to make the final ascent dangerous. We decided at this point that caution should be the better part of valour and took the same route back down to the car. Getting back just before the weather turned really nasty. We arrived back at the hostel in time to order the evening meal before having a hot shower. The meal was excellent and only needed a short stroll to the pub and a few pints of Speckled Hen to leave four very contented walkers.

Friday dawned grey and damp. We all eventually found our way to the kitchen for a late breakfast around 9am. Over breakfast we decided our best plan for the day would be to stay out of the mountains and do a walk around the coastal path on Anglesey. We set off at around 10 am heading over the new Menai Bridge. Once across the bridge we realised we were just down the road from that railway station, you know the one with the longest name in Britain. It was a photo opportunity we just could not miss. With the photo opportunity behind us we headed off to Moelfre where we began our walk, as we headed north around the coastal path towards Dulas Bay the sun came out and the weather took a turn for the better, which lasted until late in the afternoon. The path follows a coastline that is extremely beautiful with the late autumn sun reflecting off



the sea, which is a mass of little white wavelets. We stopped for dinner at Ligwy Bay, watching the wind blowing spray from the top of the wavelets. After dinner we carried on along the coastal path before deciding we were going to head back in land and walk up to the highest point on the island This was Mynydd Bodavan 560ft. George Nigel and I did the walk and were rewarded with breathtaking 360° views around the island. After a brief photo stop at the top we headed back down to Moelfre to meet Neil who had decided not to do the last part of the walk. Then after a quick drink in the village pub it was back to the hostel for a quick change and out to find some food.

Saturday again we woke to the sun shining brightly through the windows; the forecasters had got it wrong again. We decided to do a walk up Talyfan, a 610m mountain to the south of Conway. We started the walk from the very picturesque village of Rowen, following a very long and steep hill up past the youth hostel. While Nigel and I trudged slowly up the steep climb, George and Neil shot past us on the youth hostel's off road buggy, which dropped them at the hostel. From there we followed a bridal way, which passed several ancient sites. At the end of the path we headed off across open land towards Caer Bach fort. We stopped for dinner on a scrubby area just to the West of the fort, finding a nook in some rocks out of the wind. Dinner over and it was time to make the climb to the top of Talyfan, this last part was steep and fairly rocky in places, but well worth the climb. We reached the top and were rewarded with stunning views of Conway to the north-east. To the east and south we could see as far as the borders and mid Wales and to the west we could see the Drum Ridge with the Carneddau behind it and further into the distance the Glyders with snow on their peaks. The wind on the top was so strong that we almost took off. From the top of Talyfan three of us decided to extend the walk out to Foel Lwyd about a km away and 603m high. The walk was very pleasant and not too challenging, but gave us excellent views on Anglesey and back along the straight to Bangor.



On the way back down all three of us agreed that we would like to go back soon to walk the Drum ridge. Back in Rowen we met Neil outside the pub and made our way back to the Bangor hostel where we had time for a quick shower before an excellent meal in the hostel.

On Sunday night the wind was howling around the Hostel all night, and the morning brought no improvement at all. After breakfast we decided that our best plan would be to head straight home. As we headed down towards Capl Curig the weather conditions worsened. In several places there was water across the road, and we were travelling through puddles almost a foot high. As we approached Betws-Y-Coed we were told to go back as the road ahead was so full of fallen trees that it would be the next day before the road was passable. Our only way out of N. Wales was to head for Conway and then the Borders. We finally got home at about 6pm.

It was a fantastic weekend and I for one can't wait to go back again.