

Lancashire Mountaineering Club

Newsletter

January 2020

Welcome to the first newsletter of the decade. I hope it's the first of many. As usual it depends on what news there is to print and that depends on you. I would appreciate contributions emailed as attachments in *Microsoft Word*. Thanks to all those members who have sent in material.

Beddgelert Public WiFi is now available free for visitors to the village

Visitors to the LMC hut at Cae Ysgubor, Beddgelert, often find themselves out in search of a wifi connection to catch up on their emails or pursue their social media. Unfortunately, Cae Ysgubor is situated in a bit of a digital communications black hole at the moment – it's located in one of Snowdonia's many digital "not spots"! Of course, getting away from the digital hurly-burly is for many of us a great reason to seek the solace and remoteness of Snowdonia, but it can still be handy to know where to get internet access if you should need it.

Well, several of the businesses and community groups in Beddgelert realise that this is important to 21st Century visitors, and so have collaborated together under Gwynedd Council's Digital Gwynedd project to provide publicly-accessible wifi around the village free for the use of visitors. Beddgelert, Nefyn, Harlech, Ffestiniog, and Penygroes are the first towns to trial the digital scheme.

Visitors to the village can access the Wifi in the orange-coloured zones shown on this map of Beddgelert village. Shortly there will also be some signage installed around the village to show where the best coverage is to be found.



The first time that visitors connect to the public WiFi, they are asked to register with an email address. Once registered, they will be able to use the Beddgelert wifi free of charge for up to one hour each day, which is usually adequate for most email and social media catch-ups. On subsequent visits, no further registration will be required.

The following meet reports have appeared on the web site but give a flavour of what goes on.

Lake District Meet: 6 January 2019- Mike Haines

On a murky January Sunday, a group of 9 set off from the Walna Scar Road car park to ascend the Old Man of Coniston via Goats House, taking in Swirl How, Little How Crag and Brim Fell

before ascending the Old Man. On a clear day you can see for miles and miles and miles. However, clear day this was not but it was great to stand atop one of the Lakes iconic Fells and we could just about see each other.

After lingering awhile, we avoided the tourist route on the way back down, opting rather to take the more direct route down, skirting the quarries, to take us in a straighter line back to Walna Scar Road and our transport.

From there we drove down to Coniston and had a drink and a chat in the Sun Inn, which was a great way to finish off the day before heading back home.

Once again, it was a great day out in the Lakeland Fells – far far better than trudging round the shops in the January Sales.

New Members Meet: Cae Ysgubor 30th – 31st March 2019 – David Toon

A disappointing turn out, though the number of kids helped. Nick Collie went scrambling by himself on Saturday as Pete was unfortunately late down on the morning. The family section went to Little Tryfan for some easy climbing – the kids did half a route a couple of times. Pete scrambled some gullies on Little Tryfan which he had never been on before. The family contingent then progressed to the RAC boulders, but did more lounging about in the sun than bouldering. We then had a leisurely afternoon back at the hut, Emelia and I rode the bike down to Bedgellert to be greeted by the handlebar moustache club! We had a fire on the car park which the kids loved, and the adults. Nick Collie went early to travel down to Bristol to visit his niece. Pete Cheakley left early to try to see the sunset on top of Snowdon, but the mist stopped it. Stuart and I climbed at Tremadog on the Sunday. Kate and Anne went to Criccieth beach with the kids. Unfortunately, Jason and family had to leave early as they had run out clothes

Loft Scrambling / Climbing Meet: 27/28 April 2019 – Mike Haines

Attendees: Saturday: 6 - Mike Haines, , Roger Gott, Ian Phillips, Richard Duerden, Mark & Janette Braithwaite (+ Harvey and another little dog)

Sunday: 6 – Mike Haines, Roger Gott, Ian Phillips, Richard Duerden, Lucy Weston, Richard Toon

Mike, Richard, Roger, and Ian stayed at the Loft on Friday and Saturday night.

On the Saturday morning we met up at the Stickle Barn car park with Janette and Mark and their 2 dogs before heading up to Stickle Tarn. From there, we split into two sub groups, with four heading up the famous Jack's Rake scramble and two (+ 2 dogs) ascending Pavey Ark via the scrambly East Ridge, where we met up with the others at the top of Jack's Rake. After a bit of a natter, we headed of back down to the Stickle Barn for a pint or two.

In the evening, the four of us who were staying over had a great meal in the Britannia Inn at Elterwater – and what a lovely pub it is!

On the Sunday, which was a lovely day, we again met up at the Stickle Barn car park before splitting into 2 groups. Lucy and Richard headed off to do some climbing while the rest of us tackled a grade 1 / 2 scramble up Thorn Crag before chilling out with a spot of lunch, after which we traversed down and round to Stickle Tarn and headed back down to Stickle Barn, where we met up with Lucy and Richard for a beer.

In the end, there wasn't as good a turn out as we expected, with a few late drop outs. However, those of us who made it had a great time and it will be well worth repeating the scrambling / climbing formula



Knoydart Meet: 3-6 May 2019 –Mark Braithwaite

Attendees: 9 – Mark & Janette Braithwaite, Ian Philips, Neil Thompson, Graham Watson, Linda Palentine, Andy & Kath Lowe, Rick Duerden

An advance party of three left Loch Arkaig on Wednesday evening to back pack into Knoydart via three Munroes, and an overnight stay at Sourlies Bothy. Good weather, with excellent views were enjoyed, arriving at Inverie around lunch time on Friday.

We checked in to a lovely, modern cottage and met the balance of the party arrive on the evening ferry from Mallaig.

Saturday was again bright and breezy and the whole party enjoyed a fabulous walk around the Knoydart peninsula coast, with great views to Skye, Rhum and the Small isles



Evening dinner in the Old Forge pub.....good meal but not cheap!

Sunday was another bright day, with one or two showers. Most members enjoyed a good walk traversing Larven, whilst a smaller contingent enjoyed a shorter walk up to Mam Barisdale.

Departure in sunshine on the 11 am Monday ferry back to the cars in Mallaig.



LMC Kayaking Meet 2nd – 4th August – David Medcalf & Cathy Woodhead

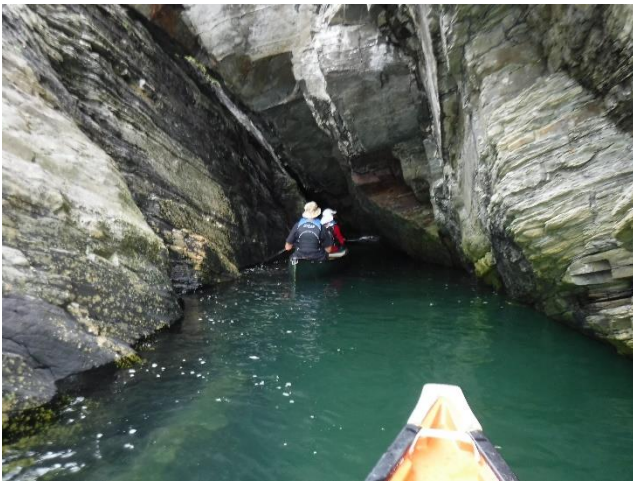
The first LMC kayaking meet for a long time took place in August. A dozen members, young and old, based themselves at Cae Ysgubor for a couple of days paddling on the estuaries at Porthmadog.

The Meet Leaders had begged, borrowed, ferried, inflated and loaned an impressive array of boats, from sleek sea kayaks, white-water kayaks, inflatable kayaks, sit-upon kayaks and Canadian Canoes. After allocating crews to the various craft, we found that we even had a spare boat!

The tides were good – very high in the middle of the day – and the weather was mostly kind, with not much wind, some sunshine and only a short interval of rain. Day One (Saturday) was spent getting used to being on the water and exploring the rocks, caves and the island in the Glaslyn estuary. (The Glaslyn is the river that flows past Cae Ysgubor). Lots of fun was had, nobody fell in and we had a picnic on Ballast Island in Porthmadog harbour. In the evening there was a barbecue at Cae Ysgubor whilst people became aware of muscles that don't usually get such hard use wielding paddles.

Sunday was 'expedition day' and we left the slipway at Borth-y-Gest on the incoming tide and used this to help us across to the other river that joins the sea near Porthmadog – the Dwyrdd that starts near Blaenau Ffestiniog. The voyage took us past the iconic village of Portmeirion to the remote uninhabited island called Ynys Giffan. From there we threaded the tidal channels up to the road & rail crossing at Briwet Bridge for a rainy picnic! The drama of the day was the deflating of the inflatable kayak – with the Lenehan family on board! An emergency stop on a sandbank was required – the sinking boat was rolled up and placed on a sit-on kayak whilst the family was re-distributed amongst the other boats! Cunningly we used the outgoing tide to take us back to Borth-y-Gest and a hard-earned cup of tea before heading home.

Thanks to all those who loaned us boats! It was an excellent weekend that we may repeat next year.



Wednesday Walks –Mary Ledwick

Thanks to everyone who led walks in 2019 and to those who have volunteered to lead walks in 2020. Will leaders please send details to Dave Sudell, davesudell@hotmail.co.uk, who will circulate information for the next few weeks.

2nd Jan. Chris Walker, 8th Jan. Josie Smith, 15th Jan. Jim C., 22nd Jan. Andy,
29th Jan. Craig Hinkins, 5th Feb. John, 12th Feb Jim Lawson, 19th Feb. Ian L

1st 2020 outing. Thursday 2nd January – Chris Walker

After all the over indulgences of the Holiday Period 20 of us and a dog assembled for a later than normal start at the Aspull end of Borsdane Wood. Records indicate this linear wood has been there since at least 1600. There are over 15 different species of tree together with a multitude of other fauna and flora (enough of the nature lesson!) Today there are 20 tree carvings ranging from “the old man” to “the fairy door” – a good challenge to find them all if you walk the full length to Hindley.

Exiting the wood you cross one road and then head to Top Lock on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal – a stretch of water that figures in several other W.W.s. Dropping down the Wigan flight we turned off onto the old Whelley Loop Line that is now a cycle track into Haigh Hall. There are plans to extend this along the long abandoned railway track to Red Rock from where you can cycle to Adlington and on via Brinscall to Blackburn (well almost!)

Lunch stop was at Haigh Hall and then back to Chris and Norma’s via various paths and old mine tracks. A leisurely 8 miles but the leader was reprimanded for his weak “Oiys” when the party failed to do a couple of right turns! Holland’s pies and beans and/or Xmas cake courtesy of Norma and Sue rounded off a gentle intro to 2020.

A Day in the Dales. Wednesday 8th January 2020 – Josie Smith

This week’s walk met in Clapham for a 10am start up Ingleborough. The forecast was good but it didn’t seem so, as the tops were clouded over. Eleven of us did a 10.5 mile circuit via Bar Pot, Gaping Ghyll, Little Ingleborough and Ingleborough with a return past Nick Pot and Long Lane. Nearing the top we were treated to hailstones, snow and very cold wind, which fortunately cleared as we reached the summit and remained so for the rest of the walk. The Reading Room Café/Bar was a welcoming end to the day with tea, cake, beer & cider. Mary had a stroll through the estate grounds, her first outing after her shoulder operation, and sadly Richard spent the day solo as he arrived late.



COSTA BLANCA DREAMIN’ - David Medcalf

Cathy Woodhead and I have just returned from a fantastic few weeks on the CB, based in the mini-Benidorm of Calpe (i.e. not quite so many tower blocks!), and your new Newsletter Editor has insisted that I say a few things about it. It’s well worth a visit and, in fact, LMC has recently had a mini-meet there (Oct 2019) with another planned for March 2020, I believe. Leo Fallon is responsible for those – see recent emails through the Club List. It’s a very social scene in Calpe and at the many crags in the area, with probably a couple of hundred British climbers holidaying on the CB over Christmas/New Year. There is a regular evening rendezvous in a Calpe bar where beer is drunk and plans are hatched – anywhere between 20 and 40 folk turn up, usually.

It is rarely crowded anywhere in the Costa Blanca hills. This time, amongst many others, we met up with some LMC folk, past and present... David and Kate Toon, with their growing family, were there, and so were Richard and Jean Toon. We climbed with Richard a couple of times and we all had a superb meal out on their last evening. One day we found we were climbing at the same crag as an LMC member from thirty years ago – Martin Hoare, who used to climb with Richard. Martin was pleased to catch up on the LMC folk from that long-ago era!

Mostly it is 'sports climbing' out there, Rockfax publish a good guidebook, current edition 2013, but new crags are being developed with bolts each year – we have friends who keep in touch with the local scene to find out where these are, so the 'evening bar network' is important! But there are also some trad climbs around the area, some of which are true classics. I tend to prefer multi-pitch trad climbing rather than 30 metre 'lower offs', but it's all fun.

It's not all climbing though – there is great walking as the hills are spectacular and the centuries-old paths are amazing. A friend of ours, Terry Fletcher, has written a Cicerone guide to fifty such walks and scrambles – we've done a few and they are all good. Also there is an active group of mostly ex-pat Brits, the Costa Blanca Walkers, which I think one of our members, John Fishwick, belongs to. Their website lists 376 different walks and they welcome visitors.

And there's cycling too – the Costa Blanca is a favourite winter training ground for many professional teams, and lots of amateurs too! It's an important part of the local economy so the road surfaces are generally good, the traffic is well-managed and the road signage is intended for cyclists, giving, for example, the average gradient of the uphill sections. We hired (electric) bikes a couple of times – posh road bikes on one day, enabling us to zoom up the mountain tarmac, and mountain bikes on another day when we explored some of the off-road trails.

If climbing, walking and biking don't exhaust you enough, there is a large number of fearsome gorges (barrancos) carved through the limestone by rivers over the millennia. We went through El Barranco del Infierno (Hell Gorge) and it was amazing – ten(!) abseils, high-level hand traverses, no escape after the second abseil, a final path with 2,500 steps back up to the road. What's not to like?

So now, the logistics: EasyJet flights go to Alicante from Liverpool – prices vary, of course, but we paid about £150 return each, including one hold bag between us (full of climbing gear!). It's probably cheaper away from Christmas/New Year. Alicante is about an hour's drive south of Calpe and you need a car to explore the area – we paid about £7 a day to hire a VW Polo, but if you shop around you can find special offers at around £1.50/day! (It's probably cheaper to rent a car in Spain than to own one in the UK!)

And you'll need an apartment. There is a lot of choice as only about 5% are occupied in the winter, and all of them seem really nice – we paid around £25/day. Use 'Reserving.com' which is a Spanish version of Booking.com and cheaper for the same apartments! The supermarkets are significantly cheaper than the UK so self-catering works well, but so do the 'special menus' in restaurants – you can get a three course meal with wine for around £7 if you look around. There's a lot of choice!

The best times for climbing and walking are between October and April – we always go in December/January. The weather is usually good, but it can rain for a day or so. We arrived just after three rainy days and had 28 dry, sunny days. The air temperature varied between 15 and 20 degrees, but it was always lovely and warm in the sunshine. Tee-shirts and shorts! Cathy went swimming on a couple of occasions, but that seemed too 'refreshing' for me.

If you have any questions, you can email me. Medcalf959@btinternet.com

LMC Annual Dinner, Shap Wells Hotel, 23rd Nov. 2019

The dinner was attended by 76 members and guests. Most stayed in the hotel, some even for two nights. An excellent evening was enjoyed by all. Proceedings began with the traditional Chairman's reception, followed by a sociable evening with the usual stand up bingo, followed by a three course dinner, rounded off with an entertaining after dinner speech from Dave Medcalf. Prizes for the photo competition were presented before dancing to music provided by a disco. The band having given backward owing to illness. So far feedback has been very good so we intend to follow the same format next year. We hope to see you all there.

Janette Braithwaite.