



Mynyddwyr De Cymru

Newsletter - April 2007

Editorial

Summer must be coming; the winter league finished with the Pen Cerrig Calch Race a couple of weeks ago, the clocks went forward – triggering the restart of the Tuesday night training runs (see page 7 if you've not yet received a list of the run venues) and we've been having some stunning weather these last few weeks. My local paths and tracks have dried out making the running a bit easier. But look out for those brambles and nettles; they'll be along very soon I'm sure!

Finally, this is the ninth edition of the MDC newsletter that I've produced. I've promised my wife that I'll make number 10 my last and hand over to somebody else. My last issue will be out during July 2007 and that will see me having done the job for 2 ½ years. I think that's probably long enough for me. I do enjoy the job and should probably call it a day before it starts to be a chore and becomes boring for me! I expect you, the readers, might also benefit from a change of style so **let's have some volunteers to take on the job!** The newsletter doesn't need to continue in the same fashion or format that it has under my reign of terror. It's up to the editor to take it where they please. The only rule is that members who request a paper version must be sent a paper version. After all, some of them have been members of the club since before t'internet were invented! There's no requirement for the newsletter to come out every three months, as it has from me, that was just something Bill Fear and I aimed to do when we took it on; and I stuck to it. Perhaps releasing three issues a year might be little less onerous. Really it's up to

you. Let me know if you fancy giving it a go. I'll try and advise/support you as best I can, but remember, the last one from me will be in July and I can't be persuaded to continue after that. My wife would kill me (or perhaps throw my computer out of the window anyway!)

Rhys



A classic South Wales mountain view;
but where is it?

Photo by Rhys Williams

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Editor:

Rhys Williams
Holne Parc
Parc Seymour
Penhow
NEWPORT
NP26 3AE
01633 400337

rhys_jw@hotmail.com

Deadline for next issue: 7th July 2007

Club news

The MDC Annual General Meeting was held in the Red Lion at Llanbedr on Saturday 31st March. The meeting was as swift and painless as ever – we really are quite an informal club! All officers remained in post with the exception of the chairman, Martin Lucas. Martin had been warning that he would stand down for a couple of years in the interests of encouraging some new and younger blood (and having a well earned rest). Well, we have a new, not-so-young chairman in the form of Derek Thornley, who I'm sure many of you will know as the organiser of the Pen Cerrig Calch race, among other things... Thank you Derek for taking the job on. Thanks also to Martin for the tireless work as chairman in recent years; putting together the Tuesday night training list etc etc... Kay did agree that she'd still sit on top of various windswept summits as a marshal though – I think that's a job that just can't be escaped from!

Officers:

Chairman: Derek Thornley
Treasurer: Fred Parry
Secretary: Doug Adlam
Membership Secretary: John Sweeting

Others:

Newsletter: Rhys Williams **'til July 2007 only!**
Website: Jules Carter

Subscriptions:

If you've still not yet paid your club subscriptions for 2007, John Sweeting would like to hear from you! Please send him a cheque for £5.00 payable to "Mynyddwyr De Cymru". He can be found at: Lower Lodge, Cynghordy, Llandovery, Carmarthenshire, SA20 0LD, 01550 721086, LowerLodge@phonecoop.coop .



New chairman Derek Thornley announcing results after the Pen Cerrig Calch race.
Photo by Rhys Williams

Results

Note: only runners entered as MDC listed in the results tables here. For full results, consult the internet or the race organiser.

Tor y Foel AS 2miles/1000feet. 13th January 2007

Let's face it, January in the Brecon Beacons is never going to give balmy sunshine, but the wind, rain and low cloud that swept across the Talybont valley were severe even by the wild standards set by previous races in the South Wales Winter Hill Series. Nevertheless, 51 hardy souls/total nutters turned out to fight for the valuable league points. The race consists of a flat-out dash from the centre of the Talybont reservoir dam to the top of Tor y Foel and back, via some muddy fields, felled forest and open mountain. Conditions were such that our intrepid summit marshal, Kay, was blown over on the top, and decided wisely to turn the runners back about 50 feet below the summit. Nobody complained. Local hero Mark Palmer showed us how it should be run with an inaugural (short course) record of 19:17, with Helen Fines first lady in 23:21 in 10th place overall. Everyone else finished safely, with various layers of mud and blood, and post race entertainment consisted of a mass break-in of Gary's car to retrieve his keys – good job Mark P's a fireman!

OGB

Tor y Foel results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
1	Mark Palmer	M40	19:17	1 st man
5	Mark Saunders	M40	21:09	
11	Rhys Williams	SM	23:29	
14	Neil Lewis	SM	24:06	
18	Leigh Lawry	SM	25:12	
21	Peter Burne	SM	25:52	
23	Andy Blackmore	SM	26:01	
25	Gareth Griffiths	M40	26:21	
28	Martin Lucas	M50	26:40	
29	Andy Stott	M40	26:48	
35	John Shanahan	M50	27:52	
38	Steve Brown	M50	29:55	
42	Rob West	M60	30:45	
45	Dave Gilbert	M50	31:32	
46	Eric Meredith	M60	31:35	
48	Les Pugh	M60	35:56	
50	Roger Howell	M60	36:57	
51	John Battersby	M70	37:12	
51 finishers				

Ras Tarren Hendre AM 6miles/ 2000feet. 3rd February 2007

Tarren Hendre results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
44	Neil Lewis	SM	1:06:20	
48	Richard Wilson	M50	1:07:24	
94 finishers				

The Darren AS 3miles/1070feet. 10th February 2007

Darren results				
Posn:	Name	Cat:	Time	
1	Matthew Collins	MS	22:34	1 st man
8	Rhys Williams	MS	28:00	
11	Neil Lewis	MS	28:20	
15	Peter Gareth Williams	M40	29:04	
17	Leigh Lawry	MS	29:24	
18	Gareth Griffiths	M40	29:26	
23	Peter Burne	MS	30:42	
24	Martin Lucas	M50	30:45	
27	Andy Stott	M40	31:23	
28	John Shanahan	M50	31:26	
29	Helen Bennett	FS	31:32	
33	Steve Brown	M50	32:56	
35	Eric Meredith	M60	35:41	1 st M60
36	John Sweeting	M50	37:50	
37	Dave Gilbert	M50	37:52	
40	Roger Howell	M60	44:13	
41	John Battersby	M70	45:13	1 st M70
41 finishers				



Caption: Rubbish clip-art

Quantocks AM 7miles/1900feet. 25th February 2007

Quantocks results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
1	Tom Gibbs	SM	00:52:56	1st man
21	Martin Lucas	M50	01:06:37	
35 finishers				

Tumble AS 2.5miles/750feet. 3rd March 2007

Tumble results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
3	Peter Williams	M40	26:45	1 st M40
5	Douglas Adlam	M40	27:03	
8	Mark Bryant	M40	27:48	
11	Neil Lewis	SM	28:11	
15	Leigh Lawry	SM	29:08	
16	Gareth Griffiths	M40	29:16	
17	Andrew Blackmore	M40	29:28	
20	Helen Bennett	SF	30:18	1 st lady
21	Peter Burne	SM	30:22	
22	Martin Lucas	M50	30:29	
27	John Shanahan	M50	31:36	
29	John Sweeting	M60	33:25	1 st M60
32	Eric Meredith	M60	35:09	
35	Les Pugh	M60	39:57	
36	Roger Howell	M60	41:26	
37 finishers				

Llanbedr-Blaenafon AL 15miles/4500feet. 24th March 2007

Llanbedr-Blaenafon results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
1	Mark Palmer	M40	2:06:38	
11	Julian Carter	SM	2:32:40	
17	John Syms	SM	2:49:10	
21	Gareth Griffiths	SM	2:54:40	
23	Neil Lewis	SM	2:56:01	
27	Andrew Blackmore	SM	3:02:50	
30	Alan Stone	M40	3:09:35	
41	Adrian Moir	M40	3:38:10	
-	John Sweeting	M60	DNF	
Non-comp.	William J Darby	M50	3:24:34	
42 finishers				

Pen Cerrig Calch AS 3miles/1500feet. 31st March 2007

Pen Cerrig Calch results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
8	Neil Lewis	SM	34:41	
9	Mark Bryant	VM	34:57	
10	Peter Williams	VM	35:25	
13	Rhys Williams	SM	36:13	
15	Gareth Griffiths	VM	37:14	
18	Peter Burne	SM	38:19	
19	Andrew Blackmore	SM	38:23	
20	Martin Lucas	SVM	38:27	1 st SVM
23	John Darby	SVM	39:56	
24	Helen Bennet	SF	40:07	
32	Eric Meredith	SSVM	46:36	
35	Roger Howell	SSVM	51:27	
36	Les Pugh	SSVM	53:43	
37 finishers				

It's all a bit lost in the mists of antiquity, but I think that this is the thirteenth year of Pen Cerrig-calch Winter League racing, and the weather (just about) lived up to the odd-good even-bad rotation that always seems to happen. This being an odd numbered year, the sun shone. (OK, there was a chilly wind and it did chuck it down with hail when we were in the pub, but this is March in South Wales). There was some close racing

at the front with runners fighting for Winter League points. Harry Matthews, Robert Gordon and Martin Shaw were neck-and-neck at the summit, but Harry managed to gain about 45 seconds from Robert on the one-and-one-half mile descent, and Martin needs to brush up his descending technique, losing out by almost four minutes at the end. (It's alright Martin, just have your brain removed; that'll do it). Max Suff gained valuable Winter League points with an excellent run as 1st Vet in 7th place overall. Helen Fines became only the second woman (after the legendary Angela Brand-Barker) to come within 6 minutes of Ann Nixon's 10-year-old (and unbeatable?) course record. Old Greybeard Lucas managed finally to beat Steve Littlewood to first S/Vet, but Steve claimed to be running with a wooden leg (Although Martin claimed to have a range of virulent diseases picked up in foreign parts, so maybe it was even-Steven). John Collins had a bit of a battle for first over 60, but eventually eclipsed the valiant efforts of Francis Uhlman by more than 3 minutes. Sue Ashton had a great run, taking the prize for "ladies of a certain age", and Ian Turnbull followed 5 minutes behind (in a very creditable 31st place) as first over 70. One of our regular over 70s, John Battersby, was too ill to run but had made a special prize for whoever, as he put it, came in his last place. Checking the record, John has never actually been last, so his special "nissemaen" (look it up on Google – I had to) [beats me! – Rhys] was awarded to Ian for taking

John's place as the oldest runner in the race. Thanks to K (back to her usual summit duties), to Shirley and Clive for entry and finish recording, Cliff for the use of his fields and facilities, and to Mas at the Red Lion for the beer, cider and food. If the Winter League still wants it, and we're all spared, then we'll be back on the last Saturday in March 2008, but be warned; the weather WILL be awful!

And just for the record, in MY races the age categories are as follows and are the same for both male (M) and female (F):

- J is 17 & under
- S is 18 – 39
- V is 40 – 49
- SV is 50 – 59
- SSV is 60 – 69
- SSSV is over 70

As I've yet to have an entrant in a fell race who is over 79, I haven't yet had to think up a category. Course records are 26:30 (Tim Davies, 2003) and 33:11 (Ann Nixon, 1997). Something for the youngsters to go for!
Derek Thornley

South Wales Winter Hill Series 2006 – 2007

As the glaciers retreat from the hills above Blaenavon and the Abergwynfi mammoth hunt draws to a close for another year, we can look back at another successful Winter Hill Series season. 130 runners took part in at least one race, with 25 doing at least five out of the seven races to maximise their League points. Final positions in several categories were in doubt right up to the last race, and eventually only 10 points covered the top three places. Here's a few notes on how things went...

Fan Fawr: the sunny one

It was a glorious autumn day in the Beacons and the car park at Storey Arms was overflowing with a record turnout for this short sharp blast to the summit, exchange of pleasantries with the marshal ("Number please!" "Eeurgh-spit" "Thank you!") and straight back down. League newcomer Robert Gordon set a fine standard with a flying 17:42, over a minute clear of a close bunch including Mick O'Doherty (first vet) Robert Mullett, Peter Ryder and Mike Fawcett. Steve Littlewood resumed where he left off last season with a convincing 0/50 win, with Helen Bennett holding off Emma Bayliss for the Ladies' prize.

Sugarloaf: the long one

A huge field by South Wales standards assembled at the foot of the steepest tarmac road in Monmouthshire for the third running of this fine race. After the initial lung-busting climb there is a level(ish) section across the open hill before a steep climb to the summit. A couple of nasty undulations on the way back can take their toll but at least we don't run back down that road! Last year's League champion Mark Palmer made his season's debut and the Pontypridd firefighter comfortably saw off the challenge of Mullett, O'Doherty and Martin Shaw. Steve Littlewood decided to let others have a chance by getting hopelessly lost and scoring a glorious 1 point, but more excitingly Helen Fines of Bristol and West had a fine run as first Lady in eighth place overall.

Blorenge: the steep one

The nub, crux and scariest part of the series, this climbs ever more steeply to the blockhouse on the summit, from where the descent route is slightly easier – but mind your head on the canal tunnel just before the finish! Robert Gordon returned for his second win of the season, closely followed by Martin Shaw and Dave Finn. Helen Fines scored another top 10 finish and to the best of my knowledge is the first lady to score over 90 points in a winter league race. There were no hospital cases this year, perhaps due to the relatively dry slopes and less bracken than usual. The legs still hurt until the Wednesday though!

Tor y Foel: the stormy one

January in the Beacons was always going to be tough, and the exposed nature of the higher slopes with a westerly gale driving spray over the Talybont dam and low cloud meant that the marshal turned the race about 50 feet below the summit – without any complaints. Mark Palmer returned to beat Dave Finn by 42 seconds, but with Martin Shaw scoring 98 the championship was still wide open. A third excellent run by Helen Fines consolidated her lead in the Ladies' category.

The Darran: the snowy one

Heavy snow from the night before was just starting to thaw, but the icy steep climb to the Twmbarlwm hill fort caused problems for many on the way up and again the way down. The Gwent League on the same day was cancelled – wimps – and the fell race picked up a few extra entries as a result. Local hero Matt Collins showed how it should be done, beating Robert Gordon by a clear minute with Pat Wooddisse close behind in third. Helen Bennett took advantage of the other Helen's absence to make up ground in the Ladies', closely pursued by first "Lady of a certain age", Sue Ashton. Martin Shaw missed this one – his assumption that it would be cancelled underestimated the tenacity of the Winter Leaguers!

The Tumble: the "down and up" one

Now this was a strange result. With a few of the leading contenders absent, Mike Duxbury took advantage of some uncertainties about the precise route over the moorland to the top of the long descent and opened a large lead

which was never challenged. This took him to the top of the table with only one race to run. The never-ending climb to the finish, though, caused the rest of the field to bunch closely, with very high scores being recorded even as far down as me! Young Ms Bennett wheezed past me in the last few yards to take the girly's prize, with a fine run from an improving Sue Ashton very close behind in second.

Pen Cerrig Calch: the last one

It was an odd-numbered year so the weather was OK, but with an easterly gale which just about helped the runners up the long climb. League newcomer Harry Matthews and Robert Gordon opened up a large lead by the summit over Martin Shaw and Mike Duxbury, which did not close on the very fast descent. Max Suff was first veteran, concluding a very consistent series, but the race for first O/50 was hotly contested right down to the line between Steve Littlewood (running with a wooden leg apparently), John Darby (returning from skiing), yours truly (recovering from... well, you don't want to know) and John Collins, who at 69 should be taking things a little easier by now. Modesty prevents me from mentioning who prevailed. Helen Fines had another excellent run, but as this was only her fourth race of the series her chances of catching Helen Bennett in the overall standings were very remote.

So to the pub and the presentation of awards. Due to the pressure of time and trying to work it all out before everyone went home I'm afraid there were a couple of errors on the day so apologies to Peter Williams for missing him out of the second vet prize – entirely my fault and the correct prize will be awarded when I see you. Also to Mike Duxbury for confusing you and Pat Wooddisse in second and third overall – this was not entirely my fault as Mike didn't put his surname on his entry form at PCC. Only a fell runner...

We hope those who did all seven races enjoy their special Walter Winterleague mugs. Many thanks to all our organisers for volunteering their races for the League and to their generous donations to the prize fund, and to the long-suffering marshals for freezing their bits off through the winter so we can have our fun. We hope to see you all at Fan Fawr for the start of the 2007-2008 season; tell your friends! The full results and places will be on the WFRA website or can be obtained from me.

Martin Lucas

The major results were:

Senior Men:

1. Martin Shaw (Mynydd Du) 489 pts
2. Mike Duxbury (Stroud) 484
3. Pat Wooddisse (MDC) 479

Ladies:

1. Helen Bennett (MDC) 374
2. Sue Ashton (O/50) (Chepstow) 350
3. Helen Fines (B&W) 342

Vets O/40

1. Max Suff (Hereford) 451
2. Peter Williams (MDC) 426
3. Ian Richards (Sospan) 396

Vets O/50

1. Steve Littlewood (Hereford) 438
2. Martin Lucas (MDC) 382
3. Chas Ryder (CRB) 362

Vets O/60

1. Ian Turnbull (O/70) (FoDAC) 290
2. Eric Meredith (MDC) 251
3. John Collins (Swansea) 215



A morning view of Pen-y-fan from Llyn y Fan Fawr.
Photo by Rhys Williams

**“Ar y creigiau geirwon
Mae'r hen afr yn crwydro”**

The evenings are drawing out and once the clocks change it will be time for the ...

MDC Tuesday Night Runs!

Yes, for the 27th year Mynyddwyr De Cymru invite you to join them on their weekly wanderings over the lumpier parts of South Wales. We usually run for about 60 to 90 minutes, regrouping as necessary or just when we want to admire the view. The terrain is always “testing” to say the least, so be prepared for mud, rain, mist, sheep, burnt out cars and (occasionally) fine sunshine. **All runs start at 6:30 pm prompt.** We normally dive into a local hostelry for a glass of pop and a bit of scoff afterwards but it's not obligatory. Occasionally some of our braver members host runs from their homes – please ring them in advance so they have an idea of numbers. Also there are a couple of **non-competitive weekend epics** for you to work up to – if you're not used to MDC's idea of a grand day out please ring me well in advance for details. We look forward to seeing you at:

March

27 **Tynant Inn**, Morganstown, Cardiff (top car park)

April

3 **at home with Doug & Sarah**, Fairwater, Cardiff. Ring 029 20565750 for details

10 **Darran pub, Risca**

17 **Cardiff Harlequins RFC** Whitchurch, Cardiff. Joint run with Harlequins runners

24 no club run but **Pentyrch Hill Race** 6.5/1600 BM 7:00 pm from Pentyrch Rugby Club.

May

1 **Great Western Hotel, Blaengwynfi** (probably no food at this venue)

8 **Storey Arms** at highest point of A470 N of Merthyr

15 **at home with John & Jane Aggleton** Whitchurch, Cardiff. 029 20615362 for details

22 **at home with Tom & Astrid**, Chepstow. 01291 628807 for details

29 **Fox & Hounds, Blackmill** north of Bridgend.

June

5 **Cardiff Harlequins RFC** Whitchurch, Cardiff. With the Hooligans again.

12 **at home with Mark & Alice** Risca. 01633 615586 for details

19 **Tintern** car park at GR 527002 off the A466 (**not** the Abbey car park this year)

26 **Cwm Lluch** (north side of Penyfan) followed by midsummer BBQ if dry

July

3 **Llangynidr Village Hall**

10 **Storey Arms**

17 **Torpantau** (highest point of the Pontsticill-Talybont road)

24 **Castle Inn, Pengenffordd** twixt Talgarth and Abergavenny on the A479

31 **Llangeinor Arms** GR 925880 north of Bridgend

August

7 **Angel Inn Pontneddfechan** for the ever-popular waterfalls run with optional swim

11 (Sat) (provisional date) **Bob Smith Traverse**: The annual attempt at 45-50 miles of running over and cycling between the six 800 metre summits of south Wales, from Llanddeusant to the Grwyne Valley. *Not a race but a grand and rather demanding day out. Details as Transfan below.*

- 14 **Red Lion, Llanbedr** outside Crickhowell
- 21 **Neuadd Reservoirs** north of Pontsticill
- 28 **Llanthony Priory**

September

- 4 **Cwmcarn Forest Drive** main car park
-

8 (Sat) (Provisional date) **Transfan**. 21 miles and 8500 feet of navigation through the wildest parts of the Beacons. Still unchallenged as the toughest one-day fell-running event in Wales. *Not a race but run/walk/limp at your own pace. The awesome and magnificent **Transfan Trophy** (holder: Mark Palmer) will be awarded for the best sporting performance. Details: Martin Lucas 01656 880009*

- 11 **Gilfach Goch** picnic site at the end of the road. Fox & Hounds Blackmill afterwards
- 18 **Llantrisant Forest car park** GR ST 023846 NW of Talbot Green
- 25 **Caerphilly Mountain** by the café on the A469

October

- 2 **at home with Kay and Martin, St Brides Major** 01656 880009 for details
- 9 **Storey Arms for Penyfan in the dark**. Bring a torch but leave your brain behind!
- 16 **Fagins Ale & Chop House, Taffs Well** Ditto re torch/brain availability
- 23 **Merthyr Mawr Village Green** for the sand dunes in the dark followed by end of season feasting for all survivors at the Farmers Arms, St Brides Major

Please note that whilst MDC club runs are open to all, participation is entirely at your own risk. Fell runs may go down as well as up and you should be aware that the terrain can be rough and remote and come prepared with adequate clothing and equipment for the likely conditions. MDC, its officers and members bear no responsibility for loss, injury or damage sustained to you or your possessions during our runs.

If you need more information phone me (Martin Lucas) on **01656 880009** but not during Torchwood or Sgorio please, or find me at greybeard@chestnutview.freeserve.co.uk on the rare occasions we use the devil machine.

"The older I get, the better I was." – Old Greybeard