

ANABASIS MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

anabasmountaineering.org.uk | September/October 2019 Newsletter



Mynydd Drws-y-Coed and the ridge joining Trum y Ddysgl on Crib Nantlle, with the Snowdon Group and Yr Aran in the distance. October 2019.

Dear Readers,

Thank you for your feedback on the previous newsletter; all very positive and enjoyed by those who did get in touch. Essentially more of the same in this edition.

This idea is still very much a work in progress, so please do get in touch with any suggestions, ideas, reports or stories you'd like to share. I'm still undecided as to the frequency of these newsletters – monthly might be a bit ambitious, quarterly might well end up being a bit too lengthy.

Also, I've changed the email address by which you can contact me as some folks seemed to have trouble with my University email; instead, contact me at david-appleton@hotmail.co.uk.

I hope to see you at the Penmaenmawr Fell Race and Bonfire Meet on the weekend of 16th-17th November.

Best wishes,

Dave

September Scotland Trip – by Jan and Billy Murphy



Some of our Senior Members hit the heights when we stayed in Loch Lomond in September.

The weather was glorious, and we went up Ben An assisted by our youngest members, Layla and Lacy. The views over Loch Katrine were magnificent.

We also had a day walking on the slopes overlooking Loch Lomond; the views were well worth the effort.

It was a lovely few days, good to be on the hill with our "Senior" friends.



One from the Archives - John Nolan

Hi Dave.

I remember an amusing scribe in one of the old hut log books. The scribe appeared to be describing an intricate climb with last effort stretches and mantelshelves... it turned out to be the description of a paint job - maybe Clive or Steve Tonks?!

Best regards

John Nolan

Ogwen Horseshoe – Jack Tyrie and Dave Appleton

An outstanding afternoon on the fells getting to work on a long-discussed link up of 10 of the mountains above the Ogwen Valley in what was, ostensibly, a logical horseshoe.

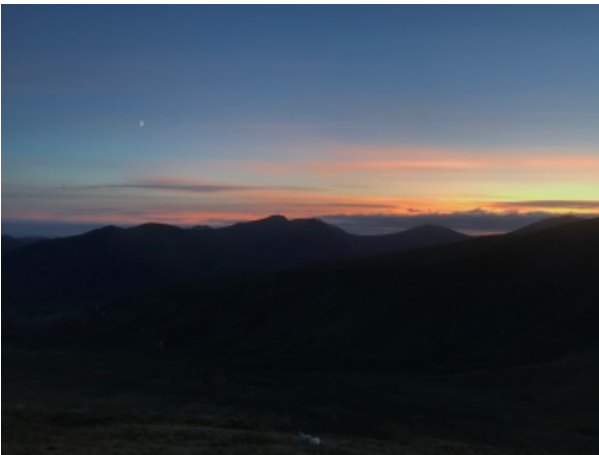
After a late start, three breakfasts and numerous brews, we left Siabod Café and ran around the back of the woods behind Plas y Brenin and off the Sarn Helen road up to the first top Gallt yr Ogof, onto Y Foel Goch and across Glyder Fach, Glyder Fawr and Y Garn. Once off the NE ridge, we stopped for Bovril and pasty refuel at the Ogwen brew shack and topped up water at the National Trust office.



Back up the south ridge of Pen yr Ole Wen across to Carnedd Dafydd and up to Llewelyn. Down to the Bwlch and back Pen yr Helgi Du on heavy legs and then the undulating trod out to Pen Llithrig y Wrach as the sun set. Darkness quickly set in on the pathless descent back into the valley, so we dug out the headtorches to see us back across the endless upland bogs to the A5.



Good views, good food, perfect weather, lots of nonsense messing around and transcending a myriad of discussions to put the world to rights. Rounded off with a pint and a mega meal in Y Stablau – perfect.



Snowdon Skyline – Dave Appleton

On September 15th I took part in the inaugural Snowdon Skyline, the penultimate race of the 2019 Skyrunner UK & Ireland Series. This was an absolutely extraordinary journey on the fells, beginning in Nant Gwynant, following the Watkin Path up to the



Col then cutting back across Y Lliwedd, down to the Miners Path, through Pen y Pass, up the back of Cwm Ffynnon to the summit of Glyder Fawr. From here, the route headed across the moonscape terrain to Y Gribin and down to Llyn Bochlwyd, the Ogwen Valley, back up to Tryfan via the North Ridge and the amphitheatre.

From Tryfan, we dropped down the South Ridge, along the Miners track to the Pen y Gwyrd Hotel, back up to Pen y Pass, up onto Crib Goch, Garnedd Ugain, Snowdon and down the South Ridge back to Nant Gwynant. Finished 14th out of 112 in just over 7hrs. A total of 37km and 3,230m of proper steep, technical ascents, loads of exposure, greasy rock and some wild descents.



The highlight of this Skyrace was without a doubt the exhibition of such brilliant sportsmanship from all the athletes involved, with everyone checking up on each-others wellbeing, particularly on some of the steeper and more exposed sections of scrambling. The volunteers were invaluable too, for the emergency jelly babies

somewhere on Tryfan, various words of encouragement and for the burrito and brew immediately after crossing the line. Just awesome.

Various photo credits owed to [Ian Corless](#) and [Evan Davies](#).

37 Days in the Saddle – Pete Simpson

At 7.00 am on a typical damp grey autumn morning (Sept 3rd) I crept quietly out of my house, took my bike out of the garage and peddled contemplatively down the street. Rosie had flown to Turkey the day before and Roger Reid was still fast asleep upstairs. For 2 hours I was swept along through the drab Lancashire countryside and mournful Warrington rush hour congestion on the start of a transcontinental adventure.

Over 50 years ago (July 1966) I had left school aged 18 and the next day left home for a cycle tour which took me to Greece via Yugoslavia and back via Italy. As all us oldies say, “things were very different then”. No mobile phone or internet to keep in touch with home, no credit card or cash machines to get extra money if I ran out. I budgeted my £1 a day and sent a post card on an almost daily basis to update progress (they took a week to arrive). The advantage was much less traffic. Indeed, using nothing more than a country map and a few cities plans, I navigated my way effortlessly and visited by bike all the major tourist sites in Paris, Vienna, Athens, Naples, Rome and Marseilles as well as many smaller towns. In 2016 I had a notion of “commemorating” this ride with another from our house in Ormskirk to our house on the south coast of Turkey, but other adventures delayed this for 3 years. The lugubrious looming of Brexit hastened the decision to “do it now”.



At the end of day one I had skirted around the peak district and was somewhere near Uttoxeter vainly looking for a camp site I had booked into. Google maps had taken me to a deserted country road with no sign of a building. While cycling round in ever diminishing circles a runner hove into sight and was promptly questioned (I cycled alongside so as not to interrupt his training!) Anyway, he had no knowledge of the campsite but said the place name was 5 miles away and up a steep hill. A short expletive later (from me) he volunteered to let me camp on his lawn which was nearby. This set the tone for the rest of the trip: Everywhere I went I was confused by the profusion of roads and junctions and everywhere I went people were unbelievably helpful. Google maps on my phone (when I got used to using them) were a godsend but by no means always a solution. I do not seem to have a bike option, only a car or walk. Many roads prohibit cycles and sometimes the walk option was not feasible by bike (especially in one forest in Germany!).



My route was Holland, Germany, then along the Danube cycle way from South Germany, through Austria, Slovakia (Bratislava), Hungary, where I left the cycle way to cut across Hungary, Romania where I re-joined the cycle way along the border with Bulgaria, before leaving it again to travel south through Bulgaria and then across Turkey.

Days 2 and 3 across Britain were characterised by extreme traffic volume and impatient car drivers (lorries slowed behind very patiently if it was unsafe to pass but the cars held up by the lorries were less charitable and indeed one saw fit to protest by deliberately swerving into my path with a few shouted obscenities). However, when I was puzzling over my map a man came out of his house specially to ask if I was ok and showed me how I had erroneously got on to the Ipswich road instead of the Harwich road.

What a relief Holland was. Everywhere has a cycle route and if it crosses a road, cars give way! Britain wants to leave Europe?! We are 40 years behind most European countries and instead of wanting to catch up we want to ossify ourselves in our past! In UK I was frequently cycling past queues of cars stuck in jams; in Holland we all went at a steady pace with no hold ups. The only problem was I did not have (and could not have carried) all the cycle route maps I needed; so, it was back to flagging down cyclists and asking.

In Germany too there are a lot of cycle routes and a lot of considerate car drivers. One day I was on the road having given up trying to route find on a cycle route and a woman on an electric bike (very popular in Germany) stopped to berate me for being on the road. At which I had a rant about the fact that roads had signposts and cycle ways did not. She promptly turned around and guided me for 5km!

I crossed into Germany near the famous Arnheim “Bridge too far”. There is a cycle route all the way up the Rhine and then all the way down the Danube to the Black sea. I was very tempted to take these routes but the rivers wind about so much that it would have added numerous kilometres to my ride. But once I got clear of the industrialised Rhine/Rhur region it was out into the forests (and hills) all the way to Bavaria. Lots of great scenery and lots of good camp spots (both on sites and wild).



At one pension I met and shared a room with a French guy of my age who was walking the “Huguenot Trail” which follows the escape route taken into Germany by French persecuted Huguenots. Previously, I had met a Canadian couple on a tandem who were cycling from Amsterdam to the source of the Danube and on to Pau. When I joined the Danube cycle way myself, I of course met quite a few groups of cyclists - notably a Scottish group. But the most adventurous were two French Brothers I met in Bulgaria who had spent 6 months cycling (on very basic bikes) from Vietnam to France. They had come via Cambodia, Laos, China and then the Silk Road (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Georgia and Turkey. They admitted to some use of trains in China and Uzbekistan but most of it had been on bikes. They aimed to be in France in another month, but I suspected they might slow down to delay their return to “normalcy” for as long as possible.

It was a joy to be cycling on a designated cycle route with fabulous scenery and history (e.g. right through Vienna) and I would have loved to continue from Hungary into Croatia and Serbia, but apart from the extra distance I was discouraged by foreign office advice that travellers with Kosovo stamps in their passport might be refused entry to Serbia. I had walked the Balkan trail (which goes on the ridges which border Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo) in 2015.



So, it was a more direct route across Romania to where the Danube flows out of Serbia and then along it again where it forms the border with Bulgaria. I was discouraged by family and friends from wild camping in Romania (there were no campsites en route) on safety grounds. But as accommodation was so cheap, I stayed in rooms or B&B's. The only problem being that the short tourist season had already ended, and I had to plan ahead well to find places that were open. People could not have been more friendly or helpful. As I progressed through villages children shouted "hello", gave me high fives and cheers - adults too! The problem was lorries. Very straight roads encouraged fast driving, but the roads are not wide. Very close proximity of fast-moving lorries was scary and the wind blast very hard to counter to avoid being blown off

the road. I had two wet days in Romania which made it worse and on one occasion fell off on wet railway tracks (there seem to be numerous tracks, many now disused, which cross the roads).

Bulgaria is the only country I had not previously been to. It was a revelation for being so tranquil. It was easy to find quiet roads (though the surface was even worse than British roads!). And I had a wonderful rest day at the home of some Brits who had previously lived near us in Turkey.

Entering Turkey was like "coming home" It was great to be able to converse (in Turkish) with people everywhere I stopped, and of course Turkish hospitality is legendary. I love the mountain scenery and even the main roads are not too busy. Main roads are all dual carriageway with a super smooth surface and a wide hard shoulder for bikes. Seeing the sea near Gallipoli for the first time in a month was unforgettable. The problem is litter and dogs. The UK is not good, in Germany and Austria I saw absolutely no roadside litter. Turkey was unbelievable. The entire length of all the roads was strewn with plastic bottles and other litter. And we pay Turkey to take our plastic for recycling (???) and so claim to meet recycling "targets".

Dogs love a bike to chase. Every dog I passed gave chase. I hate them. They are seriously scary. On one occasion I was chugging up hill on a dual carriageway when a whole pack gave chase. Of course, I veered across the road (fortunately nothing immediately behind). A following lorry slowed down to my pace and for several minutes drove between me and the pack before signalling to me that it was now safe to move back to the nearside of the road. I was just so grateful to the driver for his foresight and help. In case you are wondering why I have submitted a cycling journey for a climbing club newsletter, let me say that on each of the final two days I went over passes in excess of 1500 metres!



And finally... I coasted downhill to "our" village of Uzumlu where I was greeted by a rousing reception organised by Fethiye Race for Life, for whom I was getting sponsorship by my ride, to support children with cancer. A bit overwhelming after 37 days on my own, but it was a great way to end the journey.



Update from Veterans in Sefton (VIC)

Dear All,

Veterans in Sefton (VIS), have had yet another very productive and successful period at Anabasis. Our monthly visits afford the veterans with holistic needs, namely 'PTSD', an escape from day to day life and the pressures of home. The tranquil 'back to nature' setting the Hut stands in offers an array of natural holistic remedies to the Veterans. The outdoor space alone plays a great and fundamental part as this alone reduces anxiety levels greatly, which is more than evident once entering the valley and Garth



farm. The veterans are self-contained and have full support on hand by means of a fully trained Holistic team including a registered PTSD dog called 'Maisey', who alone plays a natural, but vital role.

Once settled into the hut various routes are undertaken so that the Veteran is physically challenged; these challenges naturally trigger teamwork and conversations between veterans naturally flow between one and other.

Conversations are not just about sharing military and combat experiences, but challenges the veteran faces on a daily basis, this type of natural support to one and other is what we have aptly named at VIS as 'Camaraderie Counselling' which has proven an invaluable tool. Once arriving back at Anabasis it's not long before the curry is on and the log burner is well underway, the evening is set and time to reflect. Anabasis alone is proving an invaluable asset to the Veterans.



For added information the Charity received some marvellous news in September and that was to say that VIS was successful in winning the National Lottery Bid. This now affords the charity four years stability in supporting our veterans and the wrap round service.



On a final note we cannot thank you the Committee and fellow members of AMC enough. You alone at AMC, though you may not realise it play a huge part in the Veterans recovery, giving hope, breaking free from isolation and introducing him/her back to the outdoor world which so many had forgotten about. Once again, and on behalf of all the Veterans in Sefton, thank you!

We are Stronger Together.