

## The Anabasis is Fifty Objects: Object Numbers Thirty One to Forty

### Object Number Thirty One:

#### *Helsby Hill*



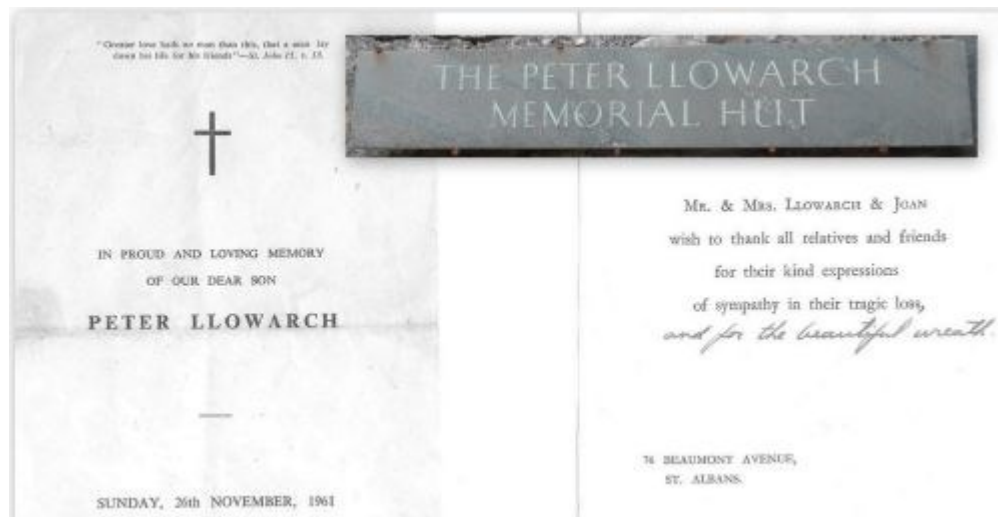
It is right that there is much Welsh matter among our Objects, but the Anabasis is a Club based in Merseyside, and most of its members live in Merseyside and North Cheshire. This makes the local hills as important as any of our hills, many of our hours being spent climbing the rocks of, walking, running and riding over, the sandstone hills of Frodsham and Helsby.

The first people came to live on Helsby Hill maybe 5,000 years ago and this was eons after the rocks formed in desert rivers flowing across a continent that was equatorial, many miles away from where the Hill is today. Later, the watcher from the summit hill fort would have seen the Roman road passing below, and then the Norsemen coming, for this was the boundary between Anglo-Saxon Mercia and the Danelaw: it's in the place names, Helsby, Irby, West Kirby, all Norse in origin. Years passed, the peace of the hillside was broken by the sounds of quarrymen, hewing the rock that made buildings in Liverpool and Birkenhead, and the marshes below were drained and crossed by the Ship Canal, the railway, the motorway. Then people from the towns built with Helsby sandstone returned to climb the rock that remained. Now the watcher from the ancient hill fort, with the last of the fire red rock below, sees the midsummer sun set over the River Mersey, the bats emerging, and the pulsing light of a passing plane as stars crystalise in a darkening sky. The watcher's view is about to change\*, because between the Hill and the river, we are to have 19 wind turbines each 125 metres high, over-topped only by the upper tier of rocks that buttress the 141 metre summit. Whatever the arguments about renewables, fossil fuels, nuclear energy, it is difficult not to feel that something is being lost with the arrival of these giants on the marshes below our Hill. (*\*It has changed now*)

## Object Number Thirty Two

### *The Peter Llowarch Memorial*

Peter Llowarch joined the Anabasis shortly after its formation in 1961, one of a group of RAF Mountain Rescue people that included George Murphy. Later in the same year, Peter was killed on the Main Wall climb, Cryn Las. He was one of a team of 3 and he fell to his death when unroped and trying to assist his companions who had got into difficulty.



Peter's parents, Mr and Mrs Llowarch, did the formalities at Garth when the Hut opened in 1962, and they made a donation to pay for the installation of the gas supply.

The Hut is now home to four memorials (that I know of). Peter is the only one to be remembered in stone (a slate plaque), Donald and Danny Duffy, Ray Rogers and Eddie Gray live on in various pieces of timber (bench, plaque, tree respectively). Sadly there may be room for more, but how many memorials is enough I wonder.

The picture on the left shows the Veterans in Sefton lads giving Llowarch's headstone a clean.

## Object Number Thirty Three

### *The Measuring Post*



In the kitchen area of the Hut, a white-painted, square, vertical, timber post has for many years been used to record the height of children. Repeated measurements of the same child at different points in time enable the post to provide a record of the growth of that child, quantitative data to verify parental pride - or, perhaps, their weeping at the evidence that their little treasure will not be little for long. These days, the heights recorded are as likely to be grand-children as children, but is there a Member's great grandchild there I wonder? To the consternation of some, of some, the post got a fresh coat of paint on one occasion, obliterating at the stroke of a paint-laden brush the record of a generation of young Anabasoids. But, as can be seen from the picture, it is inevitable that the post will become 'full' (even though it does, of course, have 4 sides) and there comes a point when it becomes impossible for it to serve its purpose of recording child growth, so it may be that on some future date it will again fall victim to the paint-laden brush.

## Object Number Thirty Four:

### *The BMC*



The Anabasis is an Affiliated Club Member of the British Mountaineering Council, the national body working on behalf of hillwalkers, climbers and mountaineers. Affiliation to the BMC brings many benefits to the Club as a whole, and included in the Club Membership Fee is the individual Club Member upgrade, but an additional (discounted) premium of £15.20 is payable to secure individual membership.

For individual members, the main benefits are discounts at retailers (including the BMC shop), third party liability insurance and 4 copies of the excellent Summit Magazine every year. For the Club, the benefits include an opportunity to purchase an appropriate insurance package for the Hut, listing of the Hut on the BMC website as accommodation for hire, access to advice, and funding opportunities. In reading this, you are enjoying the benefit of funding from the BMC because it has supported setting up the Club website.

The BMC is now proposing to re-brand itself as *Climb Britain*.....

The picture shows the BMC Offices in a former church building in Didsbury, Manchester.

## Object Number Thirty Five:

### *The Website*



The Club Website goes back to 2012, when, armed with a grant from our friends at the [BMC](#), we commissioned Dave Barton's friend Fiona Hines to do the initial work. The picture shows the original heading text font along with Simon Rogers' fine photo which formed the header for every page. A key specification was that the site could be content managed by ourselves and Fiona used the free software Kompozer to make it possible. Nevertheless, and as usual It was found that it was not possible to upload pictures with Kompozer alone and subsequently, helped by Simon Letts and Emma Cartwright, and with a bit more cash from the BMC, we employed another programme, Filezilla. This too is free software and is a FTP (file transfer protocol) tool which enables you to transfer files from your computer to the website. Once we had cracked this we were up and running and have a detailed manual for the whoever takes over from me. Of course the Website could be better, and even within the limitations of the current software and personnel no doubt more could be done.....all suggestions welcome!

## Object Number Thirty Six:

### *The Membership Card*



Not a lot to say about this one, save that we were once quite posh and had Membership cards. What we have now is [BMC](#) Individual Member Cards which you need when you are after a discount at a retailer.

Wouldn't it be cool to have a single card for both BMC and the Anabasis? And make it digital so that it operates a fancy new lock at the Hut, re-programed annually when people pay their membership fees and with a bar code for those discounts....mine's a pint!. At the excellent suggestion of Roger Reid, I have added an image of one of the original 1960's Membership Cards, which, in its personalised form, represents the zenith, golden age, pinnacle, of the genre. This one belonged to George Murphy, President of the Club, raconteur, mountaineer and all-round good fellow. So now I have just about got over the problem of not having much of interest to say about Membership Cards. And this particular Card is of course, quite interesting.



## Object Number Thirty Seven

### *The Swamp*



The origins of what came to be known as 'The Swamp' go back to whenever it was in the 1980's that the Club took over the lease of the whole of the Hut building, adding the third formerly occupied by the Liverpool Probation Service to the two-thirds it already had. This enabled the sleeping area to be relocated to the present Alpine Bunk Room in the newly acquired third and created space in the 'old part' of the Hut. Here, a lounge/seating area was constructed (mainly by Stan Winstanley I think) with a ceiling and this created a further area for sleeping in the roof space above: this is The Swamp. In its early years, The Swamp was 'occupied' by a group of younger persons known as 'The Porkies', after the main (i.e. noisiest) 'character', Porky himself, also known as Mark Hounselea. (Left in the picture, with Steve Tonks, right). At those times, The Porkies and The Swamp came to be associated with behaviour which fits broadly under the heading of 'Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll' but this was simply a case of the older generation stereotyping the activities of younger persons who appear to be having a better time than they are.

Only one of the above activities can really be pinned on The Porkies: Rock. Much of that was climbed and to a high standard (and Porky himself still does, to this day). Nevertheless parental concern of contamination was such that (as Esther Threlfall remembers): "Aaahhh the swamp! That hallowed ground we kids always wanted to go to but were never really allowed. It was so exciting when we went up and explored for short periods The area most claimed by the porkies!". Eventually the Establishment launched its ultimate weapon: Health and Safety. The Swamp was closed for sleeping and became a storage area. There is a case to answer with single steep ladder access and location directly above the stove in the seating area below. Nevertheless, after fulfilling its valuable storage space role during the toilet and washroom works, and new storage space being created in the renovated section, there is talk of The Swamp once again being used as a sleeping area.

*(These plans did not come to anything and the Swamp was never again used as a sleeping area).*

## Object Number Thirty Eight

### *Fell Running*



*Thank you to Stan Winstanley for this one, and as he was the man who, back in the 1980's, added running to walking and clambering as the Club's means of getting about the hills, it is fitting that it come from Stan who also got us involved in the Penmaemawr Race.*

A bearded hominid seen at the top of Moelyci was disturbed whilst grazing during the annual Ras Moelyci. One excited observer said "I got such a shock but managed to get this photo. When it saw me it ran off following the Ras route almost as if it wanted to take part. It was very moving."

Professor Nomark of the Himalayan Institute said "This looks to me like "betti yeti" a distant cousin of the true Nepalese yeti. There have been unconfirmed sightings in the Snowdonia range over the years and this one could well be from that genetic pool".

*Reuters*

#### Riposte from a supporter of Stan

Betti yeti go getty  
the pompous patronising  
scouse git  
toss him up and spit him out  
betti getty the better of it

But betti is a gentle yeti  
non violence is his creed  
so betti takes his time  
to savour  
the summit

betti feels the sigh of the hill  
after the pounding of 100 pairs of feet  
then betti cruises  
down  
to enjoy the sound  
of younger men  
preoccupied to be  
someone  
even a fell runner with a respectable time – for now...

## Object Number Thirty Nine

### *The Hut Book*

'The Hut Book' is not so much a single 'book' as a series of volumes going back to the Club's early days that together comprise 'The Hut Book'. The whereabouts of previous volumes is unknown to me. The present volume, resplendent in its very own glass case, is, sadly, somewhat neglected these days. There are probably as many pages dedicated to recording the annual fortnight holiday at Garth of 2 members, as all other entries combined. A reflection of many things, I am sure, one of them being that mountain trips are more likely to be days out and not conducted from a base at the Hut.



As well-used as the Hut is, the Club work meets and socials which it hosts attract few entries in The Book, and there is rarely anything from the visiting groups that hire the Hut. At other times, The Hut Book has been a treasure trove of wit -

*"I was building a mammoth barbecue of huge and protenic shape. It's main function was to roast Ray over a long period - say 2 hours - but it seems not to be. Shame, as I was looking forward to slicing off a piece of Ray, I would say it was a pork cutlet. Anyway, the eating was done in and on the new to be erected barbecue in the now revamped derelict a section of the Hut".*

bragging -

*"Porkies One Red Wall Nil!"*

and complaining - usually about the weather and/or the state of the Hut. About the latter, at least, there was always something that could be done:

*"Grays and friends arrived after 2 long years; how lovely it was to see the place, sentimentality filled the air. Suddenly somebody smiley and hairy started tearing the place to pieces and knocking down walls to boot. How amazing, we all grabbed hammers and paint brushes and there it was.....different! We think it's a brilliant improvement and we all loved the weekend."*

## Object Number Forty

### *Dyffryn Mymbyr - the no(i)sy neighbours*



Dyffryn Mymbyr is the name of the valley in which Garth is located, and it also gives its name to the farm on the southern flanks of the Glyders, on the other side of the A494 road from Garth (just visible through the trees). Along with Cwm Farm, to the west, Dyffryn Mymbyr is Garth farm's nearest neighbour. Dyffryn is perched 200 feet up the hillside from the road, and the original cottage on the site dates back to 1350. The main house seen from Garth is of Victorian vintage. The site is now owned by the National Trust, continues to be a working farm and the house and the cottage are available as holiday lets.

Dyffryn was made famous by Thomas Firbank's book *I Bought a Mountain*. He bought the farm in 1931 and was joined by his young wife, Esmé, in 1934. Firbank did not return to Dyffryn after the Second World War, the couple divorcing in 1942. Esmé stayed on working the farm alone until she married Peter Kirby. She had worked the farm for 60 years before the infirmities of old age prevented her and her husband from continuing, and it was then transferred to a tenant farmer, Geraint Roberts. After Esmé's death in 1999, the farm was bequeathed to the National Trust.

Thomas originally, and then Esmé and Peter, made a success of the farm at a time when sheep farming in Snowdonia was in decline. Only larger scale farms were viable, and Thomas and Esmé were able to scale up by their acquisition of the farm west of Dyffryn in Cwm Ffynnon. Esmé came to command the respect, if not always the affection, of her neighbours in the farming community. One of the great legacies of her life has been the work of the Snowdonia National Park Society (now the Snowdonia Society) which she founded and through which she campaigned tirelessly to conserve the natural beauty of the area. There is much that we take for granted today that is as it is because of the work Esmé and her supporters: the Cromlech Boulders, the A55 tunnel under the Conwy, red squirrels on Anglesey, the 'unimproved' A5 from Bethesda to Ogwen; and some scars that recall the battles lost: the pipeline coming down from Cwm Dyli to Gwynant, the ugly road up from the A5 to Ffynnon Llugwy in the Carneddau. Another legacy of Esmé is a low-level footpath through the valley from Pen-y-Gywryd to Capel Curig. "It is a walk for those who do not wish to climb the heights and for those whose legs are, as yet, too short to do so". Before Esmé died, the Society relocated its office from Dyffryn to Ty Hyll (The Ugly House).

I met Esmé once - in the early 1970's working with young people in Liverpool, we built a stile for a footpath at Cwm Idwal. Esmé helped us decide where to locate it and came to meet us when it was put in place.

Teleri Bevan's book *Esmé: The Guardian of Snowdonia* is a fascinating account of her life.