

## “GLAN DENA.”

THE INCEPTION AND HISTORY OF THE M.A.M.'S CLUB HUT.

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At the Annual General Meeting of the Association in 1944 Mr. T. Clutterbuck's proposal that an effort should be made to acquire a Club Hut received unanimous approval. Thus was taken the first step in the project that resulted in Glan Dena, a Hut which may claim, both for situation and amenities, to be second to none in the British Isles.

Shortly after this proposal was made a sub-committee was formed to deal with the matter and enquiries were started in the Snowdon district in an endeavour to find a suitable building which could be purchased or rented for the purpose. These enquiries were at first unsuccessful. Then Lord Penrhyn's representative, Colonel Wordsworth, was approached, and gave the matter very sympathetic consideration. Not long afterwards two members of the sub-committee were personally introduced by Colonel Wordsworth to Mrs. Robert Peel, the owner of Milestone Cottage, a roomy and well-built wooden bungalow situated at the foot of Tryfan. Mrs. Peel wished to leave the district and to sell the bungalow, with approximately  $1\frac{1}{4}$  acres of ground on which it stood, and named the price she required.

A special General Committee Meeting was at once called to discuss this proposition, those invited to attend including all Honorary Members, past Presidents, and Mr. Clutterbuck and Mr. R. E. W. Pritchard. At this meeting the enthusiasm and promises of financial support were so encouraging that it was decided to go ahead at once with the project. Various ways of raising the money were discussed, and it was eventually decided to form a Limited Liability Company and to issue shares bearing a small rate of interest.

Not long after this a number of the Committee visited the property with the late Mr. Walter Ralphs, an old friend of the Association whose professional advice as to its value was very much appreciated. Thereafter a special General Meeting was called, and the large number of members attending testified to the great interest taken in the proposal. The President, Mr. Wallace May, opened the proceedings by giving a general outline of the whole proposition. He was followed by the Honorary Treasurer who gave a concise account of the financial position. The Honorary Organiser of Outdoor Meets

then gave a detailed description of the bungalow and its surroundings, illustrated by lantern slides. Questions were invited, and the large number asked was indicative of the enthusiasm of those present. The Committee were unanimously confirmed in their decision to continue with the purchase.

The next stage was that all members received circulars inviting them to apply for shares in the Company and also to subscribe to a Gift Fund for equipping the Hut. The £1,500 required for shares was over-subscribed and, in addition, more than £900 was raised for the Equipment Fund. This enabled the purchase arrangements to be transacted without delay, and on 1st August 1945 the Association became the owners of the property.

After some deliberation it was decided to alter the name from Milestone Cottage to the more Cymric and euphonious "Glan Dena." This means "by the side of the Dena," the Dena being the stream which flows into Llyn Ogwen nearby. The change seems to be generally approved, and has especially pleased the local inhabitants of the Ogwen valley.

Meanwhile the Hut Sub-Committee had not been idle. Plans were already formulated and certain alterations to the interior, necessary to convert the bungalow from a dwelling-house to a Club Hut, had been decided upon. A comprehensive list of the equipment required had been circularised to all members with gratifying results.

And so, at the beginning of August, an eight-day working party gathered at the Hut to carry out these improvements. They included:

- Enlarging the dining room.
- Reforming the kitchen and fitting a large serving hatch.
- Reconstructing several bedrooms.
- Provision of a washing room.
- Installing four additional wash basins.
- Fitting hot and cold showers in two bathrooms.
- Installing calor gas lighting in dining room, lounge, and kitchen.
- Repainting exterior framing of doors and windows.
- A certain amount of interior decorating.

The transport of the large quantity of fittings and equipment needed for this ambitious programme (a great deal of which had been most kindly given to the Association) was made possible by the generosity of one of our members who sent it up from Birmingham in one of his large vans.

The original method of filling the tanks in the roof of the bungalow was by means of a rotary handpump drawing water from the Dena river. Part of the working-party's activities during this period included starting work on a trench for a pipeline from the Afon Lloer at a level above the Hut. A few months later, with the help of local labour, the pipeline was completed and has been an unqualified success and a great convenience. It ensures an abundant flow of water under pressure and free from risk of pollution.

Eight days of hard work produced a veritable transformation in the Hut, and it was deemed to be ready for an Official Opening. Accordingly the opening date was fixed for Saturday, 22nd September 1945. Kindred Clubs were invited to send representatives; farmers and their families and other friends in the Ogwen valley received invitations. At 4.15 p.m., on a fine but windy day in the presence of about 70 members, guests, visitors and friends, the ceremony took place.

In his speech the President, Mr. J. E. Grosvenor, congratulated the Association on its acquisition of such a valuable property. It would, he said, be the means of enabling the Association to widen considerably its sphere of activity. He referred warmly to the work and encouragement given by the past President, Mr. Wallace May, in all matters relating to the purchase and equipment of the Hut. He then formally unlocked the door of Glan Dena, insisting as he did so that Mr. Wallace May should be the first to enter.

Expressions of goodwill were made by Mr. Dummett (Alpine Club), Mr. Lawson Cook (Fell and Rock Climbing Club), and Mr. Saunders (Youth Hostels Association). The whole gathering then went inside and partook of an excellent tea.

That evening 45 members and guests sat down to a sumptuous dinner, the cooking of which had been most kindly undertaken by Miss Dilys Williams of Braich-ty-du assisted by Mrs. Jones of Capel Bach. Toasts were proposed and amusing speeches followed in a very cheery atmosphere, the forerunner, it was felt, of many a happy meal beneath our newly-acquired roof. The catering for the whole party for the entire week-end had been undertaken by Mrs. Byam-Grounds, and her untiring energy and enthusiasm resulted in the highly appreciative consumption of vast quantities of delicious fare. Refreshments on a lavish scale had been generously brought by Mr. Clutterbuck, and these contributed very considerably to an enjoyable evening.

Unsettled weather next day made the east face of Tryfan a popular climbing ground for many members and guests, whilst others contented themselves with ridge walks and local scrambling. All who were fortunate enough to be present at this historic First Meet will agree that it was an unqualified success, and that Glan Dena was well and truly launched.

Since the opening, official Meets have been held at Glan Dena about once a month, the average attendance being over 26, which—the capacity of the Hut being 32—is evidence of its popularity.

A strong desire to make yet further improvements resulted in another working party being organised prior to August Bank Holiday, 1946. The main object was to install a wind-driven electric lighting system, and this was accomplished with rapidity and complete success. The erection of the 27-foot tubular steel mast carrying the dynamo and propellor caused some excitement, but the skilful operation of climbing-ropes by those best qualified to use them got the job done without mishap. The 40-watt lamps in the three main rooms, and the 12-watt bulbs in the bedrooms give all the light that could be desired, and obviate the danger and inconvenience of the paraffin lamps and candles previously employed to supplement the rather gloomy calor gas lighting.

Another job of some magnitude carried out on this occasion was the paving of the garage floor with native rock. The original wood flooring had rotted badly in several places, so that the whole area was cleared and rocky slabs were laid, the gaps being filled in with a mixture of cement and gravel, to form a solid and permanent floor.

It is intended in the near future to make a further interior improvement. This is the extension of the passage-way adjoining the bedrooms on the south side of the building, so as to give access to the drying room without causing inconvenience to the occupants of the lounge.

This account of Glan Dena would not be complete without an expression of our sincere appreciation of the many kindnesses received from our numerous friends in the Ogwen district.

First of all we are indebted to Colonel Wordsworth. But for his helpful act in introducing us to Mrs. Peel the eventual purchase of Glan Dena by the Association might never have taken place. His subsequent consideration and kindness in assisting the Association officials with insurance matters, granting permission for the new water supply, dealing tactfully with

the military authorities, and aiding us with several other problems, have been greatly appreciated.

Our nearest neighbours at Gwern-y-gof-uchaf farm are of course well known to all members who visit Glan Dena. Mrs. Williams' catering has been a great boon to many, especially in this very trying time of rationing. She seems never to be upset, either by the size of the parties which descend on her at short notice, or by the sometimes inconvenient hours of their arrival. Ably assisted by her young family, she successfully feeds large numbers of hungry climbers from Glan Dena, even though she has her own guests to look after.

We also have staunch friends at Ogwen Cottage, where Mrs. Williams is usually prepared to accommodate members or friends when the Hut is filled to capacity. Mr. Mervyn Jones, who has assisted us on many occasions, kindly helps with the exchange of calor gas cylinders. During and after the heavy gales which often occur in the Ogwen valley he keeps a fatherly eye on our property, reports immediately any damage, and, if necessary, effects first aid repairs. It is a great comfort and relief to the officials of the Association to know that our property is being so well protected by someone on the spot.

It is a great convenience to many of our members and visitors to be able to obtain the Hut Key—on presenting the card of authority—from Mrs. Jones at Capel Bach, and her kindness in having the custody of this key is much appreciated.

To conclude, those members who have not yet visited Glan Dena may be interested in a short description of the Hut.

It is situated about two hundred yards from the Capel Curig end of Ogwen lake, a hundred yards north of the main Holyhead road. Tryfan towers splendidly close above it, and its rear windows look across the Llyn to the grand shapes of Y Garn and Foel Goch. The building is 63 feet long, 26 feet wide, and raised 18 inches above the ground on brick piers. It has a dining room with Triplex grate, a lounge with fireplace, and a kitchen whose calor gas stove plus two extra gas rings supplements the Triplex grate in providing excellent cooking arrangements. Seven bedrooms, two with wash-basins, and all fitted with two-tier metal bunks, give a total sleeping capacity of 32 persons. Two bathrooms, each with wash-basin, bath, hot and cold showers; two lavatories; a washing room with three basins; a drying room with boiler and two hot water cylinders, completes the list of rooms. Water is stored in two tanks

in the roof with a total capacity of 400 gallons. There is proper drainage to a septic tank. A pantry adjoins the kitchen, and there is a coal-house at the rear. The garage, a few yards from the Hut, accommodates three cars.

To appreciate the value of Glan Dena one need only glance at the figures below, with which perhaps this account may fittingly end. They indicate the number of persons using the Hut, up to 31st December 1946:

Bed/Nights, Members	.....	.....	1,003
Bed/Nights, Visitors	.....	.....	464
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TOTAL	.....		1,467
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*It would be well for mountaineers . . . to realise that their sport may well have to survive a shocking crisis within the next hundred years—on the day that an autogiro or helicopter makes a landing on the summit of Mount Everest. The date cannot be far distant when such machines will be on the market, and the most enthusiastic mountaineer would boggle at the thought of climbing a mountain under a hail of peanut shells and the intensive scrutiny and vivid commentary of a dozen week-end trippers of mixed nationality, floating noisily in the air off the face of the crags.*

—from *The Delectable Mountains*, by Douglas Busk.