

# **North West Area News**

**Issue 002 - February 2008**

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West Area Meeting**



## NW Area Meeting Elects New Chairman

After two years in the post, Les Ainsworth decided to resign his position as chair of the North West Area Meeting. Les will continue to take on the responsibility of Access Representative for North Lancashire and will also cover South Lancashire until someone takes over this role. He gave a personal statement at the meeting thanking all those who have helped him over the years and wishing the new chair well for the future. In his place, Colin Struthers will now take the meeting forward. Colin announced that he wished to put something back into the local area and hoped that his experience of climbing in the local area as well as chairing other voluntary groups will stand him in good stead. We wish both Les and Colin well in the future. The full list of positions for the NW Area Meeting is as follows:

**Colin Struthers** - Chairman

**Jon Dittman** - Secretary

**Lyndon Gill** - National Council Representative

**Ken Jackson** - National Council Representative

**Les Ainsworth** - Guidebooks, North and South Lancashire Access rep.

**Paul Horham** - Pendle Area access rep.

**Mark Hounslea** - Cheshire and Merseyside access rep.

**Nick Bond** - Climbing Walls rep

**Steve Gille** - Climbing Walls rep

If anyone would like to get involved and take on the role of access representative for South Lancashire, please contact Martin Kocsis at the BMC at [martin@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:martin@thebmc.co.uk).

*Front Cover: Henry on Golden Tower, Anglezarke.*

*Photo: Laurence, UKClimbing.com*



The new helmsman of the NW Area Meeting,  
Colin Struthers

## Next Area Meeting

The next area meeting will be held at the **Manchester Climbing Centre on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008 at 8.00pm**

Issues for discussion will be:

- Craig-y-Longridge party planning
- Hoghton clean-up
- On-going work at Egerton
- Work on the forthcoming guidebook
- Lucy Creamer will be there as BMC Competition Climbing Officer.

## Ever heard of Hoghton?

No? Neither had I, but legend has it that a crag to rival Millstone Edge in the Peak district lies in deepest darkest Lancashire. Access has been and still is problematic for climbers but renewed interest and a forthcoming cleanup could revitalise this forgotten crag. To find out how you can help to bring this amazing crag back to life, come along to the Area Meeting at the Manchester Climbing Centre!



The 20 something metre lead wall! About 20 something metres high!

## Stockport Wall opens

I appreciate that it has been open for some time now, but for those still not in the know, a new indoor climbing wall has opened in Stockport. Awesome Walls who already run a wall in Liverpool opened the doors to their latest offering and things look very promising indeed. The main room provides walls of all shapes and sizes from full on overhanging monstrosities to gentle slabs but the real sting in the tail is upstairs away from the main hall where a twenty something metre lead wall dominates the space. Despite these walls only being vertical they still present a stamina overload. Out to the back is an extensive bouldering wall and a couple of nice touches in the form of a specific area for campus board and traverse wall give the impression that the management of Awesome Walls really know what climbing is all about. A seating area is positioned overlooking the main hall and although at the time of writing there is no formal café, I am reliably informed that this is on the cards.

## The Wiltons are like sooooo 90's

You will have to accept my apologies for this insert, as it is a blatant space filler. The article on the next page was written prior to the recent clean-up at Egerton. About 20 or so enthusiastic volunteers turned up on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> February for the latest crag clean-up at Egerton. Much work was done including the piling up of recently felled trees,

route cleaning, and much more besides. A fantastic effort from all volunteers over the last two years has meant that Egerton is now a venue to reckon with and if you have not been, you must. A big thank you must go to all those who have helped to turn Egerton around.

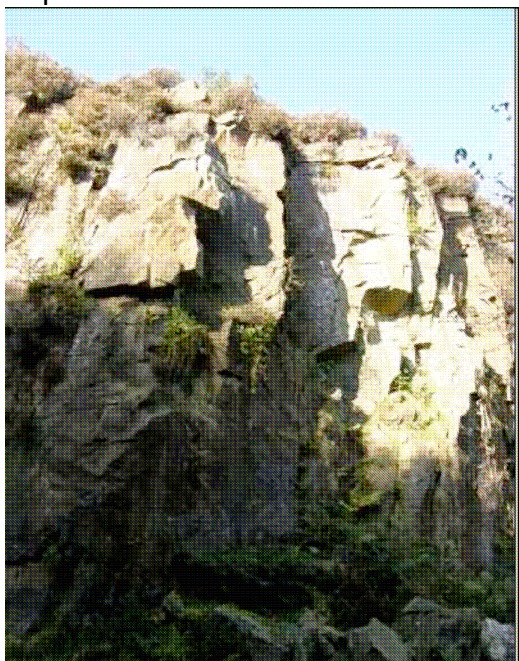
Thank you.

## What's on at Egerton?

The next couple of months provide North West climbers with a great opportunity to spend a bit of time cleaning up our crags so that we can get the best out of them in summer when the weather is better. Many of you will be aware that we have a management agreement at Egerton and so, over the past year and a half, we have spent quite a bit of time there, mainly removing trees from the foot of the climbs, but also cleaning up some of the routes. This work is now starting to pay off and the crag is certainly getting much more light and air, which keeps the rock a lot drier and provides more exposure on the climbs.

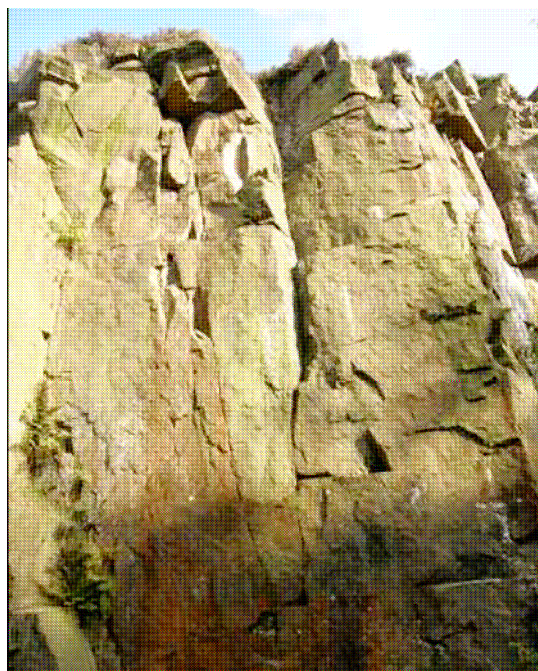
In particular, this had led to over sixty new routes since the reprint was published, and there are two completely new climbing areas within the quarry. It is also much easier to get around now that there is a decent path around the foot of all the climbs. No more paddling through the swamps or bushwhacking through hawthorns.

To demonstrate the impact of the great work by a number of volunteers, I have attached some photos. Not the best quality I am afraid, but I hope that they make the point.



**Grooved Wall**

Notice the difference? At the time of these photos, Grooved Wall had not had the trees removed, and was dark, vegetated and damp. On the other hand,



**The Empty Quarter - in need of climbers**

the trees below The Empty Quarter had been cut back some time before and it was much cleaner and drier. Though as you will see from the shade at the foot of the photo, at the time there was still some clearing to be done. This shadow line should be lower now! I know that some of you who have visited Egerton before we started this work, may well feel that the place is overgrown and not worth the effort. However, there are now over 240 routes there and, with your help, the majority will be in excellent condition by summer, with the vegetation and poor rock removed. So come along and help get it into that state.

If we can do the work we will all reap the rewards and I predict that the place will be packed on summer evenings later this year. Those of you who have, in the past, tried to climb Phantom Zone, will be aware of just how damp the routes can get. The photo on the left was taken of Phantom Zone on a dry afternoon after a couple of wet days. It shows how well the crag is now drying out. The fact that it is possible to get such a photo also shows how much has been cut back.

A programme of clean-ups is likely to be scheduled for the coming year so if you would like to help out you would be more than welcome. Notices will be posted around by the BMC and then it is just a question of turning up and mucking in.

Cheers aye,  
Les Ainsworth

## **Bizarre Lancashire Crag: Number 1 – Cow's Mouth Quarry, Littleborough**



An example of the fine lines on offer at Cow's Mouth. © Shirley Gibson

For years I'd driven past what appeared to be the top of an old quarry face poking out above huge spoil heaps on the M62, and hadn't done anything about it. Laziness was a major factor. One day, I decided to have a proper look. Steve Hayes, drawn away from a day with his fiancée by tales of unclimbed lines in a major and accessible quarry, drove his sputtering VW camper van across the northern moors to the layby. From there, we excitedly approached the rim of the quarry that I'd been staring at for the previous ten years. It hadn't looked like much from the road, and close up didn't it seem much better. So much for the 'Millstone of Saddleworth'.

Sometime last year, my failing memory played a trick on me, and I realised that it couldn't have been as bad as I remembered. Kate, my next willing accomplice, has always lived in hope (on the Edale Road), and seemed ideal for such a venture. "This better be worth it Kocsis, or I'll kick you up the arse!" she hinted, as we wound our way out of Greenfield and onto the moors above. In the end, it

was worth it, and full details of 'Hownowbrowncow Quarry' will appear in a future guidebook.

We hadn't expected much, we were rewarded and, filled with vigour, we drove further north to sample the potential delights of the fabulously named Cow's Mouth Quarry. You only appreciate this place when you climb on it, since the view from the nearby moorland track is uninspiring. We did three routes before darkness fell and then retired to the pub. Three months later, I convinced a sceptical Tuesday Night Team to visit and, despite initial guffaws, no one left the crag before dark or before having done at least eight routes each. I dangled a famous, opinionated publisher of climbing books off the end of my rope on Overhanging Crack, to hoots from the rest of the team. Others soon followed his example. Flying time was clocked up on the thuggish Z Crack, and we left the crag more than satisfied. The best time to visit is a warm summer evening after work, when the thought of queuing up on Stanage is too much to bear. The nearby pub serves a decent array of puddings.

Martin Kocsis

## **Lancashire: not just black puddings.**

Many years ago, the Standedge area (Pule Hill, West Nab) was within the realm of the Lancashire guidebook. Before that, the Chew Valley was also in thrall to the region. Those days are long since gone and both areas now exist in what has become known as “Moorland Grit”. For those of us who climb on these dark and brooding moors it seems right that they have a geographical designation of their own.

The BMC’s forthcoming guide to these crags has been a long time in the making, and is almost ready. One more summer should see us knocking on the printer’s door with well researched scripts, bags of new routes and some inspirational pictures. As with all such voluntary endeavours, help is always needed. When we hold slideshow/curry evenings for the guidebook team, there is invariably “standing room only”, yet when it comes to a day on Ashop or the mighty Ravenstones, few of the buggers who were eating our curry and watching our slides ever appear.

This is where you come in! We need people to come along on our regular weekly spring and summer meets to climb, fall, pose and eat butties in strange places. You won’t have any great responsibilities on our meets, just as long as you turn up, have a laugh and get some climbing done. We also need people who have photographs of climbing on any of the Kinder, Bleaklow, Chew Valley or Standedge crags to come forward. If we use your picture, I’ll see to it that you get a free guide next year.

Also, this is your chance to have a say in the finished product. If you complain about the thing when it’s finally published, but did an impressive bodyswerve to avoid involvement in its creation, you will be ignored.

To get into the loop, contact me on [kinderguide@hotmail.com](mailto:kinderguide@hotmail.com) or, if you eschew such impersonal nonsense, then you can phone me on 0161 438 3336.



**Irish George topping up his tan on Dovestone Edge's classic jamfest 'Hanging Crack' (E2)**

I also have an erudite and witty ‘blog on the BMC website about this project. Go to [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk) and then click on “Guidebooks” then the “Moorland Grit” button, and you can see what you’ve been missing.

See you out there,  
Martin Kocsis

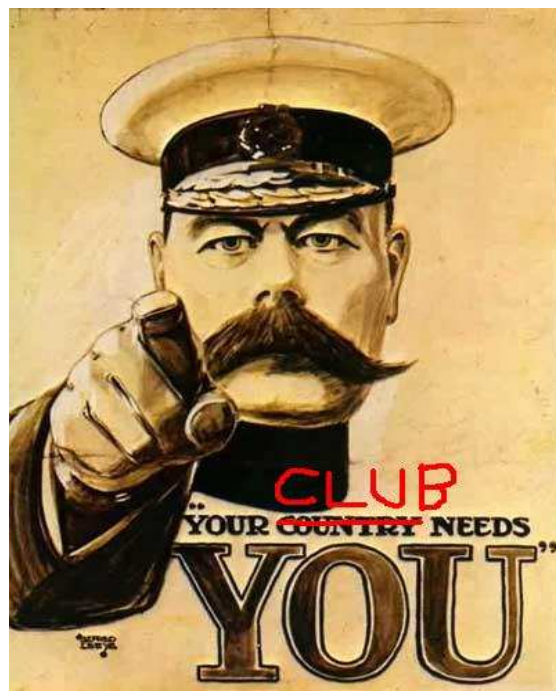
## ADVERTISE YOUR CLUB HERE!

Is your club struggling to find new members? Does your club have so many members that a few more does not matter? Want to start a new climbing / walking club and need a way to communicate the details? If the answer to any of these questions is yes and you are in the North West Area then we want to hear from you.

To get a blurb about your club on this newsletter, send us a short description of how brilliant your club is, contact details, where and when you meet and anything else you feel is important like websites or huts. Photos can be included as well.

Send this all in an email to [northwestareanews@googlemail.com](mailto:northwestareanews@googlemail.com)

This newsletter is sent to everyone on the BMC mailing list in the North West and is also published on the BMC's website and publicised on UKClimbing.com. Entries are free of charge!



If you have any questions about the PMC you can call or phone the Secretary, Mike Pringle, on 01257 275984

## Preston Mountaineering Club

Preston Mountaineering Club was established in 1933 by a group of Lancashire lads. We are, I hope, a very friendly sort of club and welcome new members of all abilities from 18 upwards. We climb, walk, scramble, cycle and generally get lost all over the UK, Alps and beyond.

In the winter months you can find members at West View climbing wall on Thursdays from 6pm or happily bashing their way up an icefall in the Lakes or Scotland. On summer evenings we move outdoors to a varied selection of crags. There are weekend meets approximately once a month, either hut, camp or YHA based. Details of both evening and weekend meets and more can be found on our website at

[www.climbpreston.co.uk](http://www.climbpreston.co.uk)

## Mynydd Climbing Club

The Mynydd Climbing Club is one of the most active mountaineering clubs in the South Manchester and High Peak area!

The Mynydd was formed in 1955, and has a membership of around 200, based mainly round South Manchester, Stockport, Glossop, New Mills, Buxton, and Macclesfield.

The Welsh name “Mynydd” translates as “Mountain” in English. We have close links with Wales, and have our own hut in the striking Crafnant valley in Snowdonia.

We have a very active climbing programme with regular crag meets every Tuesday night throughout the summer. We have weekend trips roughly every other weekend in summer, visiting most of the major UK climbing areas. We have walking, winter mountaineering, climbing wall and social meets during the winter months. There are usually at least two longer trips abroad during the year.



Home sweet home, in the peaceful Crafnant Valley



What a lovely bunch of people, Elegug Stacks, Pembroke

Our members have diverse interests ranging from traditional rock climbing and alpine climbing, sport climbing, bouldering and skiing to mountain biking.

We like to think of ourselves as a friendly, non-elitist club, and as well as having some very capable climbers amongst our members, we operate at all grades, and encompass all ages. We are a family - friendly club, with supervised children of all ages welcome on meets and at the hut.

Our evening and weekend meets are very informal, and you only need to turn up to get a climb or two, so do come down and join us - it's by far the best way to get to know us all! We meet in The Royal Hotel, Hayfield every Thursday from 9. Ring the membership or meets sec if you're intending to come on a meet for the first time, and we'll make sure you find a climbing partner.

Contact details on the website:

[www.mynydd.org.uk](http://www.mynydd.org.uk)

For up to date news of meets and events look at the forum- any last minute changes tend to be posted here.

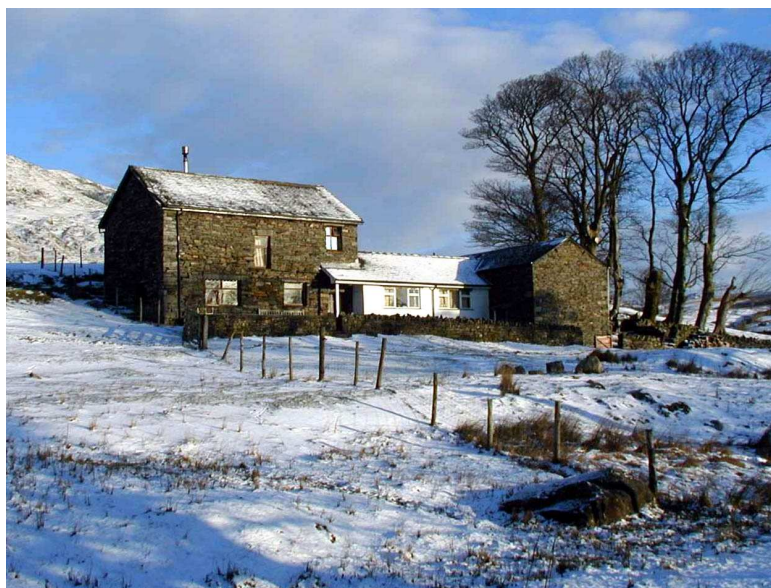
## **Lancashire Caving and Climbing Club**

“The Lancs” as it is affectionately known, is an old-established and very active club with currently around 200 members. A few of our climbing members are also active underground, but most members are predominantly into climbing. We have a core of activists who are keen on rock climbing in all its guises, snow and ice, alpinism and even bouldering. We have members who are actively new-routing and contributing to guide book work, and climbers of all levels of ability from the most modest to some high performing hard persons!

The club is always keen to welcome new members. We pride ourselves on being non-elitist, non-sexist, non-ageist, non-racist - we are a friendly club and don't have cliques! We offer the hand of friendship to the newcomer, who will find a supportive and helpful environment in which to extend their climbing skills and experience. We have quite a number of active women climbers. While we cannot, for reasons of legal liability, offer formal training to the novice (for whom we would always recommend attending a course at somewhere such as Plas-y-Brenin)

Membership is currently £25 per year. Further details and an application form are to be found on our web site at [www.lccc.org.uk](http://www.lccc.org.uk) (where you can read our current newsletter and meets list) or you can contact the Membership Sec. on 01204 63176.

The inexperienced new member will receive kindly help and guidance. If you want to get away from those indoor walls and into real climbing give us a try.



While our geographical base is as the club's title, we have members in all parts of the North West, including Cumbria, Yorkshire, Cheshire, and a flourishing “sub-group” in the Welsh Borders. Our meets programme is impressive. We have opportunities for climbing just about every weekend, with day or weekend meets (and caving meets twice a month). Our meets take place largely in Lancashire, Yorkshire, The Peak, North Wales and the Lakes. Visits to Ireland, Jersey, Lundy and many other climbing venues occur in a typical year. Various winter ice venues are included, recently visiting the Alps and Norway as well as Scotland. In summer there is a weekly programme of evening meets, whilst in the winter we have monthly indoor meets with slide shows and lectures near Bolton.

We have two huts, one in the South Lakes (photo) near to Dow Crag and one close to the delightful Moelwyn Crag in North Wales. Membership entitlements include a key for these, a bi-monthly Newsletter and a lively bi-annual Journal.