

Happy Spring,

Well, it should be, but there's a bit too much snow around as I write to really call it Spring. It's pretty though.

As the new chair of the Peak Area Committee I have a message:

There are 5 Peak Area Meetings a year. If you can make it to at least one it'll make a huge difference to the meetings and ultimately to your experience of climbing in the Peak District.

Three are held at the Grouse Pub (by the top Froggatt car parking area), with one in Sheffield (probably at the Lescar), and the other at the Don Whillans Hut at the Roaches (Summer BBQ). There's always some food and entertainment laid on to liven things up and they are COMPLETELY FREE!

So come on, get interested, get involved, and get yourselves along to the next meeting – **7.30pm, The Grouse Pub, Froggatt Edge, Wednesday 16th April**. There will be sandwiches and chips, and entertainment will be a short talk on the Lotus Flower Tower and Grit E7's by **Lucinda Hughes**.

Matt Heason

What's Happened Recently?

Young Pete Whittaker has established an awesome new route at Burbage South, ticking another Last Great Problem in the Peak off the list with an E9 6c direct start to Braille Trail.

The third annual Sheffield Adventure Film Festival took place on the weekend of Feb 29 to Mar 2. It was a roaring success with numbers well up on the past two years. Prospective dates for next

year are Feb 27 to Mar 1 2009. You can check out a lengthy review of the event [here](#) (warning – contains strong language).



Chris Sharma warmed up a packed crowd at a chilly Climbing Works on Sunday 16 March with tales of his red-hot climbing. In his easygoing and understated manner, the California-born climber presented a slide show with film clips from King Lines and recounted how he's developed to reach the top of his game. One of the first generation of climbers to start off indoors, Sharma talked

about his natural progression to sport routes outside, then to bouldering, DWS and now onto long sport climbs, which incorporate bouldering – such as the projects he's currently working on in Andalucia and at Clark Mountain, Nevada. When asked by one of the youngest members of the audience where his favourite place to climb is, he said he loves climbing in Mallorca because of the Spanish culture, the ocean and the pure nature of DWS. His philosophical outlook was evident – both in terms of his playful approach to climbing, pushing himself to the limit, and also his wonder of finding natural climbing lines that are only just achievable. Sharma acknowledged the British climbers who had put up routes he'd been able to work on and laughed that even though he didn't seem to be 'sending' all the routes he's currently bolting, he'd like to leave some ready-made projects for aspiring climbers. Unfortunately he didn't get a chance to climb in the Peak during his visit but said he'd like to return and try out some of Steve's McClure's routes.



Moorland Grit

“Over The Moors”: Morrissey’s finest hour (and more besides) by Martin Kocsis

The BMC’s guidebooks are very different products compared with 10 years ago. Pressure from climbers, competition with other producers, and a Damascene conversion to actually paying someone to produce the books to a high standard have all had an effect. The current crop of BMC guides are thoroughly researched and lovingly written, and it shows.

At some point later this year my Moorland Grit team will finally hang up their boots, cameras and pens. They will stretch out in front of the fire in the back room of The Crown with a £1.25 pint, and congratulate themselves on the years (and years) of effort that have gone into the new guide. Already, I can see how good it’s going to be...it will be a definitive and thoroughly human record of our lives over the last ten years.



Steve 'offwidth' Clarke getting to grips with Shelfstones weirdness. Photo Martin Kocsis

The major crags have been written and tucked away....Ravenstones, Kinder Downfall and Shining Clough are all “history”. This spring and summer we will be concentrating on the more obscure crags and edges of the region. Recently on

UKClimbing, there was a feature about “10 crags you may not have heard of”, a fine idea, but few of the team thought that the crags were particularly obscure! To see the “real” list of crags that people won’t have heard of, I suggest looking at the contents page in Over The Moors.

Anyway, enough “carrots”...we always need help. We check all the routes on all the crags and this is not an easy task. The flip side to this is that we have (re)discovered many classics that would have escaped any other team. We need your help to finish the task. The best way to find out what’s going on is to get in touch with me on either 01663 750106, or kinderguide@hotmail.com

If you get involved and make a contribution (photos, writing up a crag, proof reading, telling me how brilliant my new routes are) you will probably get a free guide out of it. If not a free guide, then you will definitely get free cake, chips and the odd free pint thrown in. Perhaps more valuable than that, you will have had a chance to climb in new places, with new people and the accompanying new horizons.

As the season progresses, my hilarious and witty Blog on the BMC website will keep you up to date with our progress and plans. UKClimbing is another good place to find out about our plans.

Clean-up of the month:

BMC Crag Clean-ups: stop complaining and do something! Martin Kocsis

Cheedale’s completely overgrown, Gardoms is inches deep in green and Cratcliffe is hidden behind impenetrable forests. I hear this sort of moaning on a regular basis...and there’s truth in what’s being said. The terrible state of some of the Peak’s crags is not in doubt (limestone is a particular worry), but the solutions are not always straightforward.

Many crags lie within Sites of Special Scientific Interest (much limestone and a number of moorland crags), others are owned/managed by the National Trust (the mysterious Yarncliffe Edge) and yet others by Conservation Groups (Duke’s Quarry and Cheedale)

Whilst you may be tempted to wade in and start chopping and uprooting, you would do well to hang fire for a while and take



advice. Going into an SSSI and “gardening” without permission will get you a £20,000 fine, and that’s just the start of it.

We have had dozens of successful clean ups over the last two and a half years all round the country. Some have taken place within SSSIs with the encouragement of Natural England, who have seen our work as being beneficial to the protected environment. You will not always get permission, but in most cases, landowners are quite friendly and open to the idea. The trick is that most non climbers don’t understand what “crag clean-up” actually means. Once we can convince them that it has nothing to do with wholesale vegetation and habitat destruction, then they relax.



I could go on for quite some time, but we haven’t got long. Clean ups are fun, worthwhile and always supplied with cake. Here’s what you need to do to make a difference:

- Find a crag that disappoints you (if you can see it under all the veg)
- Find out who owns/manages the crag
- Talk to the team at BMC High Command (we will do all the behind the scenes legwork to make the clean-up legal)
- Choose a date, and allow us to publicise it
- Inform us of your preferred bakery produce to be supplied on the day

Contact our crack clean-up team at BMC High Command on 0161 438 3336 or martin@thebmc.co.uk

Send it!

BMC PEAK GUIDEBOOK UPDATE

A preview of the forthcoming BMC guides by Simon Jacques - Access Representative & Guide Book Scribbler

Good news! Following the epic BMC Stanage guide, the teams in the Peak have been working hard out on the crags, at their keyboards and in the pub to bring you the next set of guidebooks to be published in 2008 and beyond.

From Froggatt to Black Rocks is to be the last volume in the current Eastern Edges series of BMC guidebooks, and has proven the team with its sternest test so far.

Nevertheless, undeterred and steered by the mercurial Series Editor, Niall Grimes, his assiduous workers have re-written all the crags from the old 1991 Froggatt book, which were not included in the award winning Burbage, Millstone and beyond guide. These have then been mixed into the pot along with the 1996 Chatsworth guide crags. The full crag list and more information can be found at www.thebmc.co.uk

The range, size and variety of the crags that are to be found in this guide have proved a stiff challenge and have required utmost dedication from the team in their quest for up to date and accurate information, especially where some of the less ‘glamorous’ quarries and tors are concerned.

All this hard work in some of the more esoteric areas and the lack of decent weather has lead to an unfortunate delay in the publication of the book, however the team have all agreed that a Froggatt feast served under-cooked would not be acceptable and the fully roasted gritstone banquet will, indeed be worth waiting for.

The Guide contains full colour topo’s, includes all the essential bouldering, anecdotes and historical information you’ll ever need along with some stunning action shots and is on course for a autumn release, so remain vigilant!

For your visual delights the other guides that are currently in production are:

Over the Moors

This epic project looks to combine the old Moorland Gritstone: Chew Valley and Kinder guides. Work is advanced and the team are awaiting the finer weather to return to the moors this year.

Peak Limestone



A mammoth project for the next couple of years is to get a brand new, fully up to date set of definitive guides to bring new life to what is actually a tremendous climbing resource.

Other guides in the pipeline that might be of interest to Peak area climbers are the tomes of **Lancashire Rock**, **Cheshire Area Sandstone** and **Leicester Climbs**, which are all underway.

If you have any images you would like to contribute, know any historical or local anecdotes, or can offer your knowledge and skills in any way, please get in touch at guides@thebmc.co.uk

Keep an eye out for updates on the BMC website and in Summit Magazine for release dates and see you on the crags!

Dive, Dive, Dive! It's The Subs Debate.....

John Horscroft tackles the contentious issue of Subs levels for BMC affiliated clubs

I've been asked to address some difficult subjects in my time, but this takes the biscuit. Frankly, I'd rather have a crack at bringing peace to the middle east than explain the current debate about BMC subscriptions. It's an emotive subject, steeped in history and guaranteed to start a ruck. Club members have always paid less for membership than individuals. However, with a burgeoning individual membership, there are many who ask why that should still be the case. I've been asked to look at the opposing arguments so, gulp, here goes.

Historically, the clubs were the BMC. In 1944, Alpine Club President Geoffrey Winthrop-Young was instrumental in setting up the BMC, initially comprised of 25 constituent clubs. Individual membership didn't actually exist until the seventies. For many years the BMC was the preserve of the clubs and their members. Thus, all BMC good works were carried out by club members and that tradition held good for many years after the introduction of individual memberships. However, these are different times and while there is still a vibrant club scene, the number of individual members has risen astronomically.

Current;y club members receive a reduced package of benefits from the BMC for a club affiliation fee of £8.75. They can upgrade to a full membership for £14.75, a total saving of £6 over the current individual membership fee of £29.50. This would seem on the face of it to be a simple case of individual members

subsidising club members to the tune of £6, and it's very difficult to come up with a justification for that.

Interestingly, I'm a beneficiary of this largesse. I'm a Climbers' Club member and pay at the lower rate. I'm fully aware of the contribution Climbers' Club members have made over the years in the form of BMC Presidents, Vice-presidents and too many volunteers to mention. However, their motivation hasn't been to keep the subs low for club members, it's been to work for the greater good of the climbing community.

The sense that subscriptions of any type are paid under sufferance no longer holds true, because it's arguably a climber's duty to belong to the organisation that fights for their rights. Thanks to innovations such as this very newsletter, the BMC website and Summit Magazine, we're all fully aware of the superb work the BMC does on our behalf. Therefore it only seems fair that subscriptions should be broadly the same, club member or not.

Right, I've had a go. Just make sure you turn up at the next Peak Area Meeting to have your say. And no fighting.....

Access Summary

Henry Folkard summarises the access issues of the moment

Mr Justice Sullivan remitted the Planning Inspector's decision on Backdale after a three day hearing in the High Court of Justice, at which a BMC representative was present. The implications are that operators are free to work old mineral permissions - that is to say permissions which do not conform to the Environment Act (1995) - in whatever way pleases them. This is potentially terminal in respect of landscape, amenity, recreation, biodiversity and the local economy for Longstone Edge and where there are extant old permissions in this and other National Parks. What can we do about it? The only way to change the High Court ruling is to ensure the case is taken to the Court of Appeal - if leave to appeal is granted. You can help by alerting your local MP to the extreme seriousness of the situation. Ask her/him to impress upon Ministers the absolute need to go to appeal if the principle of protecting National Parks is to survive. If it does not survive, watch large areas of the Peak turn into aggregate. The BMC has written in detail to the National Park Authority suggesting arguments that should be made at Appeal. This is the greatest threat National Parks have faced since their inception: it has come



about on our watch and we have to fight it. I will be happy to go into as much detail as anyone wants at the Area Meeting.

On a happier note, thanks to Derbyshire Aggregates Levy Grant Scheme (DALGS) for funding access improvements to public open space at Horseshoe and to the National Parks team for doing such a first rate job. We will need another volunteer day before long to finish off some scrub clearance and burning. And if you are there and want some timber to take home for logs, help yourself.

The second phase of tree clearance at the Embankment has been completed, and the place transformed. Thanks to a different Peak Park team for this. We are working on Cratcliffe as our next priority.

Nothing much to report on the A628 Mottram - Tintwistle bypass public inquiry. Autumn looks like a more probable resumption date than May, but that could change. Similarly there are no new developments on Eastern Moors to report - though there may be by the time we meet. A modified proposal for Tearsall has been submitted. We will not formally object but restate our concerns about landscape, environment and restitution. Our proposals on Goddards have been fed through to the landowner but have yet to elicit response.

Positive things are happening on mountain biking, and canoeing is not forgotten either. Some 4 x 4 drivers were arrested recently and may be prosecuted for more than one thing. If this includes damage to a SSSI they could face a fine of up to £25000 - and so of course could you if you damage SSSI by gardening a route in a SSSI.

It's coming up to bird restriction time, so watch out for local and web site announcements. None has been agreed as of today, but tomorrow can be different. 'Hot spots' are Ravensdale, Millstone, Five Clouds and Stanage, where the long resident ring ouzel old speckly has already returned - early. Perhaps he knows something about the summer we don't.

Nationally expectation is that the Marine Bill, which includes proposals on coastal access, will soon begin its passage through Parliament. Approaches in England and Wales differ, with the proposed coastal path in Wales going nowhere near the coast in some places.

Finally, if you are driving around the Peak, watch out for new speed limits – mostly 40mph – on currently unrestricted roads.

If you want to know more on any issues please ask at the meeting or feel free to phone me on 01298 871849. But I don't do emails.

Who's Who?

In the first of this series, a short profile on chair of the Peak Area Committee Matt Heason

Matt is 35 and was born in Bangor, North Wales. He didn't start climbing until he left home although he was reluctantly dragged up Lockwood's Chimney in Nant Gwynant at 11pm one night when he was 6. He started climbing whilst at sixth form college in Brecon, then in earnest at Swansea University where he studied Geography and ran the climbing club for a couple of years. He's climbed all over the UK (except the Lakes for some inexplicable reason). He moved to Sheffield after graduating, for the climbing and was there for nearly 10 years before moving to Grindleford to be closer to the crags.



Following around-the-world trip in 2003 he arrived home with a head full of ideas and during the winter of 2003/04 he organized 30 multimedia shows using an integrated mix of digital slides, videos, music and talk that featured Andy Kirkpatrick, Ian Parnell, his brother Ben Heason, Lisa Rands and Steve McClure. Heason Events was born. Matt then went on to promote events for the big guns including Chris Bonington, Doug Scott, Al Hinkes, Simon Yates, Colin Prior and Gordon Stainforth. Matt also helps organise the BMC Youth Climbing Series and wrote the news and other freelance projects for planetFear until recently. The last three years have seen some decent growth in the business with the Sheffield Adventure Film Festival and also Cliffhanger, both large scale events based in Sheffield for outdoor orientated folk.



In 2006 he and his wife Sophie had a little boy who started walking at a shade under 9 months and already shows a complete disregard for his safety scaling gritstone slabs in his wellies.

Matt took on the role of Peak Area Committee chair in November 07.

Upcoming Events

- Apr 1st – Andy Kirkpatrick Lecture – Worksop - <http://thebhmc.co.uk/>
- Apr 5th – BMC Youth Climbing Series – Round 2 – The Edge – www.thebmc.co.uk
- Apr 12th – Climbing Works International Festival - <http://www.climbingworks.com/>
- Apr 26th – BMC Youth Climbing Series – Round 3 – The Foundry – www.thebmc.co.uk

• **Apr 16th –Peak Area Meeting – Grouse Pub, Froggatt Edge.**
7.30pm – Lecture by Lucinda Hughes

- May 31st - BMC outdoor Peak District Youth Meet – The Roaches – Hog Roast at the end of the day ☺
- Jun 4th – Peak Area Meeting – venue tbc. www.thebmc.co.uk
- Jul 12th – Cliffhanger – The British Bouldering Championships – Sheffield – www.cliff-hanger.co.uk
- Sep 10th –Peak Area Meeting – venue tbc. www.thebmc.co.uk
- Nov 26th - Peak Area Meeting – venue tbc. www.thebmc.co.uk

If you have an event that you'd like to see listed here then please let us know.

The Peak Area Newsletter is written by Peak climbers and walkers, for Peak climbers and walkers. We're happy to take contributions for the newsletter on any topic that is relevant to the readership. Pictures help an article look better, and help to increase its appeal and depth. Write something, send it in and prepare for either fame or notoriety, as is your want

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