

North West Area Newsletter

They'll climb owt in Lancashire!

Newsletter editor: Rick Ginns

Lancashire is well known for its grotty quarries, most of which see regular traffic and remain popular throughout the year. The quarrymen have left us unknowingly with characteristically steep routes, almost exclusively crimpy in nature. Fashions persist however, and the result of this can mean some climbing venues falling out of favour with the wider climbing community. One such bastion of climbing that hasn't fallen out of the collective consciousness due to neglect is Hoghton quarry. The reason that this quarry has fallen into a comparative state of disrepair has been the delicate access arrangements which in past years led to a short summer window of opportunity in which to climb there. Reduced traffic means an increased likelihood of vegetation taking hold. Furthermore Peregrines often choose Hoghton as a nesting site which has compelled climbers to stay away from the crag during nesting. All of these reasons coupled with the serious nature of the venue has meant that the quarry has developed vegetation on many areas of the crag and at the beginning of the year it became clear that the quarry was in need of an organised effort to bring it back to it's former glory.



Instrumental in efforts to coordinate the proposed Hoghton clean up was Les Ainsworth. Crag clean ups have long been an activity Les has got involved in: an example of this can be seen in the 1975 Lancashire guide, Hoghton section: "a vast amount of vegetation has been removed... although the bulk of this gardening has been done, I would appeal to visiting climbers to help with what little remains". Crag cleaning is an activity that seems to be vital in the North West if we are to preserve the excellent climbing we are so lucky to live near. Usually all that is needed is a stiff brush, trowel, cutters and sometimes a shovel and a dose of enthusiasm to get the job done. It is always a collective effort, and the day usually ends with the cleaned routes being climbed. Hoghton has seen two clean ups already this year, the first in March during which many trees were felled to allow more air to the crag, which will hopefully inhibit the moss growth as well as ensuring the crag dries out

quicker. The second clean up was halted due to nesting Ravens, however the crag is now showing signs of what it used to look like. The aspect is much improved. Especial thanks should be given to Bruce Waddecar and Pete Simpson for taking on much of the tree clearing work – their dedication is outstanding, and thanks must also be given to all volunteers who attended.

I guess the thrust of this article is not only to document the work that has been going on at Hoghton, but also to encourage you, if you have enjoyed climbing in Lancashire, to come along to the next local crag clean up and put something back into climbing. If we are to continue climbing in these diverse and beautiful environments it is up to us to ensure the crags remain in a climbable state – just imagine the gems that you might find!



Hoghton quarry before...



Hoghton quarry after... much improved.

When is the next BMC North West Area Meeting?

The next meeting will be in May, and is likely to be held at Frogsmouth – see the below report for details on the work being undertaken at Frogsmouth. This will be the final bolting / restoration session and will feature a free barbecue – date to be announced shortly.

The next bolting / restoration session held at Frogsmouth is **Sunday 25th April** – those that want to help should contact Goi Ashmore at goiashmore@inrunoff.com

Wilton 1 clean up day

Sunday 25th April 2010

The schedule of work taking place at Wilton 1 is well underway, with more work happening each month. Specifically, the Wilton Management Group is looking into the drainage issues of the quarry with a view to improving the run-off from the quarry, particularly on the Grey wall area and further work is being discussed to improve climbing at the quarry. Some of this work has yet to be decided upon, so watch this space!

Your chance to get involved in the cleaning work comes on 25th April, next Sunday. Everyone is welcome as there is lots to do – as usual bring along brushes, trowels, shovels and other gardening equipment and let's

get the quarry into a good condition for the summer. After an extensive heather fire, some of the more hidden rubbish may well have been exposed so this may be a good chance to clear it. Other work may include:

- placing further stakes
- clearing the ledge at the graveyard end of the quarry
- Tree removal
- Cleaning route tops

This is a great opportunity to continue with improving the state of Wilton 1, previous clean ups have been well attended and it would be nice to see lots of people there on this one. The clean up starts at about 10 o'clock which should leave plenty of time in the afternoon to fit in a climb as well. Even if you can only spare an hour or two, your contribution would be very much appreciated.



The ledge at the graveyard can be seen on the right



The impressive Wilton 1 quarry

Coastal Access Volunteers Needed

After years of campaigning, the BMC welcomed the Marine and Coastal Access Act, which received Royal Assent on Thursday 12 November. The Act will ensure the creation of better coastal access, with a new right to walk along England's coastline and will provide a permanent right of access to a coastal margin around the coast (including beaches and cliffs). The BMC are looking for people who know and love their local coastline to volunteer to help ensure local climbers and walkers interests are met.

The creation of the coastal path and associated coastal margin are expected to take up to ten years to implement and is likely to cost £50m.

The legislation will be implemented by Natural England who will propose a series of long-distance routes around the coast of England and decide on the location of a margin of land to which the public will have access. This will be done in consultation with local people, and local access authorities. The margin of land to be included under the new right of access will include;

- land two metres either side of the line of the route
- all land to the seaward side (including dunes and cliffs)
- classic coastal land features such as cliffs and dunes on the **landward side** of the route to take the access land up to a suitable boundary (such as a fence) or other physical feature – but this isn't guaranteed. There are numerous coastal features that currently lie on the landward side of the potential coastal route that offer significant recreational opportunities and it is essential that these are included within the new right.

Natural England will consult widely on the implications of putting the route in a particular place. It is more important than ever that BMC members get involved at a local level to ensure that the proposed route and access to a margin of land includes all of the coastal land type features that are so important to us. Access to our sea cliffs is already well established but this could change at any time and at the discretion of the landowner. This is our only chance to ensure that our voice is heard at a local level and our sea cliffs as well as favorite coastal walks are included within this new right of access – particularly those coastal features that are set back from the current coastline.

We are looking for access volunteers to represent their stretch of the coast and to work with BMC head office and local authorities on the ground to ensure the users' voice is heard. The BMC and Ramblers are currently putting together a Coastal Access Volunteer Guidance pack and will be running a number of workshops around the country to inform members of the new legislation and how they can get involved. If you are interested or wish to know more, please contact Cath on 0161 438 3333 or Cath@thebmc.co.uk.



Jack Scout - Lancashire's only sea cliff

Frogsmouth restoration report

By Goi Ashmore

I turned up at about 0900 on the day and saw that someone had already been busy felling the larger birches close into the crag. Over the course of the morning over 30 people arrived from as far afield as Oswestry and Preston. In Dan Middleton's absence (through illness) I held a short bolt workshop. As a result we now have enough people comfortable with drilling bolts to complete the exercise on the next working day.



Unfortunately, although drilling was possible, we were not able to place any of the bolts that the BMC had provided. The sandstone beds have turned out to be very porous; although dampness itself is not a problem for some resin types, on the day the rock tended to form a wet paste that stuck to the walls of the hole. Any resin would therefore stick the bolt to the paste, rather than bedrock. We therefore decided to leave gluing to a later day and concentrated on the drilling. The upside of the drilling was that all the routes on the Left-Hand Wall and about 1/3 of the Comic Wall were fully drilled – about 2/5 of the crag. On the next working day, given the promise of an 800W generator to recharge the drills, all drilling could be completed.

All the scrub was cleared from the base of the crag, as were further trees at the right hand side of the crag. The result is that all the bays from the right of the Comic Wall to the end of the rock have been opened out, to give improved circulation and better light for later in the year.

Several people did some great work, cutting out vegetation from the top of the crag and the routes themselves.

Special credit goes to John Codling who spent a lot of time loosening off the bolt hangers he had so painstakingly placed 20 years ago. Almost as impressive was Harold Warmesley's impression of Harold Lloyd, hanging off a spanner to loosen the old nuts (all puns intended). Martin Kocsis kept the tea coming until we ran out of power at about 1500h.

At close of business the vegetation from the base was more or less fully cleared, 2/5 of the drilling was done and over half of the vegetation from the top of the crag has been cleared.



Next steps are as follows:

- The decision on how many bolts we will get will be taken by late February; the bolts will be ordered in early March, so we aim to hold a working day in mid to late March, when the inside of the rock has also dried out.
- We will form a project plan, to finish the job in one big push. Given the left side of the crag is drilled, gluing can follow a creeping barrage of drilling at a 50 yard interval.
- The infantry then need to follow, with small arms at hand to finish the vegetation clearance.
- Success will be when we can hold an area meeting there in May.

I'd personally like to thank everyone for giving up their time and making the exercise a success.



Another appeal for the Wilton Fund

As most people reading this newsletter may recall, one of the biggest reasons that the BMC decided to purchase Wilton 1 was the many promises of donations from North West climbers that wanted to preserve climbing at Wilton for the future.

Although many climbers have indeed donated to the fund, unfortunately now that the purchase has been completed, the Wilton One Appeal fund is a little disappointing. It may be that Climbers think that because the BMC bought the crag there is no need now to donate to the appeal. However, we do desperately need cash to undertake all the work that we want to do to improve the crag.

If we can get the funds we will be able to make a real difference, but otherwise, improvements will be much more limited. So any more donations would be very gratefully received. Donations can be made over the phone to the BMC, by specifying that you wish to donate to the Wilton One Appeal. Every penny raised will be used to improve Lancs. climbing.

If you've enjoyed climbing in Wilton, then this is another call for you to donate – a sum such as ten or twenty pounds is greatly appreciated and will benefit all who choose to climb at Wilton in the future – many thanks!

Clitheroe Mountaineering Club.

Following on from past issues this month Clitheroe Mountaineering club is under the spotlight:

Clitheroe mountaineering club was formed in 1978 when a group of people were brought together by a common interest in mountain walking and rock climbing. The aim of the club is to encourage the enjoyment of mountain activities, providing help and guidance to members when requested.

Since the formation of the club, members of all ages have taken part in a wide variety of activities, both indoors and outdoors, at differing levels of specialisation and ability. Mountain walking remains the main interest of some members.

However, there are others who also rock climb, snow and ice climb, ski, mountain-camp and mountain bike. New members, whatever their level of experience, are always welcomed into the club and are encouraged to play an active part in its affairs.

The club holds regular outdoor meets in the Lakes, Wales and Scotland, on a day or weekend basis. Mountaineering huts are booked for six weekends each year.



Regular indoor meetings are held at 8pm on the third Thursday of each month at Clitheroe Cricket Club, Chatburn Road, Clitheroe, for eleven months of the year. Illustrated lectures include those given by guest speakers who are specialists in various aspects of mountaineering or who have visited different parts of the world in pursuit of their interests, and there is always a bar!

A group of members meet up to climb one evening each week.

During the summer months we go to a local crag. If the weather is poor, and during the winter, we visit one of the local indoor climbing walls.

Usually we meet at 5.15pm in Clitheroe Council Offices car park on Thursdays, unless there is a club indoor meeting, in which case we meet on a Wednesday.

Further details about the club's activities are available on the website: www.clitheroemc.org.uk

General enquiries can be made to the club secretary, Nick Millward, tel. 01200 441346.

Information about climbing meets is available from Tony Halliwell, tel. 01200 429396.



If you would like to write an article on your local crag, or contribute any other article for the next newsletter, please get in touch on northwestareanews@googlemail.com. This newsletter relies on volunteers from the North West, so please get in touch!

You may remember from the last newsletter that a scarf was left at a previous area meeting – you'll all be satisfied to know that it has now been claimed by its rightful owner – alas Gnasher is gutted.

