



# Peak Area Newsletter

Issue 16

February 2012

**The next Peak Area meeting is on Wednesday, 8 February, starting at 19:30, at the Maynard, Main Road, Grindleford, Derbyshire S32 2HE.** We will start promptly at 19:30 so please get there early to get your beer in. The bar in the meeting room will be staffed throughout the meeting for top ups. The main body of the meeting will be taken up with a Q&A session with Jon Stewart from the National Trust and Danny Udall from the Eastern Moors Partnership. Topics to be covered include:

**Progress** on the Eastern Moors Partnership.  
**Future proposals** for joint working between the BMC and National Trust on Stanage North Lees.  
**The Sheffield Moors** Partnership Proposal.  
**The Nature Improvement Area proposal** covering the Dark Peak area from Longdendale to Eastern Moors.

This is a unique opportunity to question and influence those with decision-making power and ensure the opinions of climbers and walkers are heard.

## The Sec speaks

By Lynn Robinson



The next Peak Area Meeting looks set to be an extremely interesting and informative evening, with the main feature a Q&A session with Jon Stewart

from The National Trust and Danny Udall from the Eastern Moors Partnership. This will take much the same format as that with Mike Innerdale from The National Trust. Topics to be covered include those already mentioned. But this is a huge opportunity to ask your own burning question and have it heard. ....so please come ready with all those questions.

There'll also be the usual chance to catch up with guidebook work. It's really great to see so many people enthusiastically volunteering to be involved in the Limestone Guide and I'm enjoying proofing the Moorland pdfs. I'm sure Grimer enjoys correcting the typos as much as I enjoy spotting them! Especially now his new lovely Boulder Britain guide is out, including some of the Peak's best problems (he might even sell you one).

After refreshments Mike Hutton will give a talk and slideshow on what's involved to get that ultimate shot, "3-years in the Life of a Climbing Photographer". It should be a great show as he's certainly taken a lead in guidebook covers (if not always elsewhere!).

Thank you to all those who looked us up on Facebook. As of 30 January, we've reached 75 people who 'liked' the page (up from 41 last November). Go on, you know you want to – just visit <http://www.facebook.com/bmcpeakarea>

If you're reading this from a printout, the hyperlinks won't show up (in some cases we do print them). To obtain an electronic version in which the hyperlinks will work, go to the BMC website ([www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)) Members can have it emailed to them by contacting the BMC office: 0161 445 6111, [office@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:office@thebmc.co.uk)

**Deadline for next edition is Wednesday 4 April**



## Access Notes

By Henry Folkard

Dateline: 23 January 2012



### Work Meets:

**Horseshoe**            **18 February**  
**Eastern Moors**    **10 March**

**The Area Meeting on 8 February** gives you a brilliant chance to talk with the **National Trust's General Manager in the Peak** about their new vision for engagement with people who use the High Peak and White Peak Estates and to help shape future plans about Stanage North Lees and elsewhere. It builds on the inspirational session we had a year ago with Mike Innerdale who has now been succeeded in the General Manager post by Jon Stewart.

Danny Udall will be on hand too to update you on the **Eastern Moors Partnership** and respond to any points you want to raise on developments there and the Estate Management Plan. This has now been finalised, and includes the BMC's own contribution.

But that's not all. Jon and Danny will also consult the Meeting on two additional developments. The first, near to home for anyone from Sheffield, is the **Sheffield Moors Partnership**, and the second, still formally a proposal, for an **Environmental Improvement Area** on a much bigger scale which overlaps with Longdendale / Dove Stone through the High Peak Estate and North Lees to the Sheffield Moors and Eastern Moors. A lot's going that will directly affect the places where you climb and walk, how they are managed and how they are developed in the future. BMC Peak Access reps are pretty much involved in most of it: this is your chance to tell the people who will be at the sharp end of making things happen what you think is important. That said, it seems no time at all since the last Area Meeting, and that splendid quiz Adam and John contrived. In one sense things have been fairly quiet on the access front. But something of major, long lasting and fundamental importance for climbers everywhere,

and not just in the Peak, has happened too. The management of the Roaches for the next 125 years has been decided.

Neil and Adam were at the National Park headquarters in December to represent the BMC and support Andi and me in the presentations we made to reflect the Area Meetings' preferred option for the **Roaches** and speak in favour of the proposal from the National Trust. When you speak at Committee meetings you only get three minutes, so it is difficult to fit in everything there is to say. We were in some difficulty in knowing how to pitch our comments since no Officer Recommendation was given in the Committee Papers that were available to the public, neither was there any summary of the three proposals that were under consideration. We felt this complete lack of transparency regarding the future of a property owned effectively by the public – because it was bought with public money – to be unacceptable. We believe the National Trust's proposal to have been misrepresented in the papers available to Members, but could not challenge that which we had not seen. Lynn subsequently made a Freedom of Information request to see the full documentation, but this has been refused.

Our anticipation that no matter what we said the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust bid would prevail proved correct despite our best efforts. However, questions were prompted from Members over the future of the **Don Whillans Memorial Hut**, and this resulted directly in an amendment to the recommendation before Members (which of course we had not seen) which should allow us to secure at least an extension of the terms of the current lease to protect our interest in that property, the investment of BMC members who contributed towards its acquisition, the commitment of those volunteers who have looked after it and indeed the spirit of the original contract.





Adam and I subsequently met with Keith Jennings, the new Head of Property Services at the National Park, to show him round the Memorial Hut and explain the climbing interest at the Roaches. Simon, Gary, Louise and I also attended the Wildlife Trust's open day earlier this month since we must now look to cementing the positive relationship Dave Bishop has built up with them over the years.

On the **Eastern Moors** a work meet is planned for 10 March, courtesy those hard working students from Sheffield University. There will be opportunity for others too, and Simon will post details nearer the time.

The BMC's Management Plan, which was overseen by the Eastern Moors Group – that's Adam, Simon, Clare, Phil, Chris, Neil and myself – has been adopted and appended to the formal submission of the documentation underpinning the Partnership's contractual commitment. This is something of a first for the BMC and is, if you like, an extension of the 'Climb It, Protect It' theme. Working closely with the RSPB and National Trust on whose lands we climb all over the country, and with whom we have much in common in terms of membership, can only reflect well on our ability to represent the interests of our members.

There is no definite news on when the National Park will issue the prospectus for **North Lees**. There are rumours about what form it may take which would cause us very great concern if ever they materialised. BMC's CEO Dave Turnbull has held a scoping meeting with the National Trust and RSPB to discuss format for their proposal and the contribution the BMC could make to it. Our fundamental belief is that this publicly owned land should in its entirety belong to the Nation, for everyone to enjoy in perpetuity and inalienably. The BMC will not settle for less. The way ahead is, however, deeply fraught and hugely uncertain, and to be frank, we are worried sick and taking nothing for granted.

From 21 to 29 April [The Kinder 80 Trespass to Treasure](#) event involves a whole series of events, publications, talks and walks in celebration of the 80<sup>th</sup> celebration of the Kinder Mass Trespass. I am sure you know the history: a group of trespassers

from Manchester met a group from Sheffield and some kind of a scuffle is supposed to have ensued. Some of the Manchester Group, led by Benny Rothman, ended up being arrested and eventually imprisoned and achieved thereby an immortality which has escaped the equally valid contribution from east of the Pennines. Kinder 80 will celebrate both achievements and highlight a lot of information which has recently come to light. Some speakers will put a revisionist gloss on some bits of popular myth, and others may take a more traditional view. Yet in a sense the more important bit is in the looking forward, perpetuating and treasuring what the Trespass achieved – the eventual establishment of National Parks and of open access under CROW (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) no less. That's the great heritage from which our generation has magnificently benefited. Now it is for us to keep it alive so it can in turn be taken forward by future generations. You can never rest on your laurels with Access. You can never take it for granted.

Highlights are the actual launch event on the anniversary day, 24 April, at 10:00 or soon after in the Moorland Centre in Edale, a John Beatty spectacular at Hope Valley College on the evening of 26 April and a Martin Kocsis presentation on Climbing on Kinder at the Longshaw Moorland Discovery Centre on the evening of 27 April (but will he have the guidebook?). The Launch event is by invitation only, but that said anyone who is passing by is not going to be turned away – and if you have never heard Mike Harding's rendition of The Manchester Rambler, have you ever lived? The full agenda is on the point of being finalised and may or may not make it for circulation with this newsletter. If it does not you should find it on [www.kindertrespass.com](http://www.kindertrespass.com) Some of the walks may require pre-booking.

The winter gales have brought a fair bit of maintenance requirement for **Horseshoe and Aldery**, and thanks here to Gary, Simon and CAN UK for all their contributions and help. There is, as ever, more to be done. Hence the work meet on 18 February. Three fairly large rocks have tumbled down the steep bank above the parking area at Horseshoe, perhaps through natural causes, perhaps dislodged by dogs, people or both. So you might want to think twice about where you park your car at



Horseshoe – at your own risk – at least till the weather settles down.

And so to **Staden / Cowdale**. The landowner has eventually appealed against the rejection of his latest proposal for a water bottling plant on the site. No date has been set for a Public Inquiry, but the BMC has submitted comment to the Inspector. As well as this a motor cycle scrambling style event has been held there and the landowner is legally allowed to mount a further fourteen of these a year without planning permission. Despite a number of assurances given by the landowner, prospects for restoration of concessionary access do not look good.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has expressed concern about recent climbing activity in **Water cum Jolly** – striping of vegetation and bolting to be precise. Like Chee Dale it's a sensitive and protected area and the same codes of conduct apply on both sites. To be visible is always to be vulnerable.

Rural areas, and the Peak is no exception, have seen recent **increases in crime**, including theft of livestock. One incident has been reported where night time bouldering caused some difficulty because it appeared to be irregular nocturnal activity in an area where poaching is known to take place. If you are out and about at night and come across anything suspect, advice is to observe and report, but not to tangle: poachers may carry guns.

On the vexed issue of **off roading**, the National Park is due to finalise its new policy early in February, whilst Derbyshire County Council's draft strategy document is still out for consultation.

And that's it for now.

**The BMC's** Regional Access Database (RAD) has up to date information on all crags in England and Wales. Otherwise access rep contact details are in the BMC Members Handbook and on the [BMC web site](#). Access reps are attend most Area Meetings if there are any points you want to raise with them, or you can phone Henry Folkard on 01298 871 849 or the BMC office on 0161 445 6111 ([office@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:office@thebmc.co.uk)).

## The Roaches

By Dave Bishop



The Peak Park Audit and Resources Committee have cogitated, deliberated, and decided. The Roaches estate is to be leased to the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) for 125 years from Spring 2013.

Because of the work put in over 2011 talking to 6 of the 9 'interested parties', the other three remaining anonymous, we were able to identify the two organisations that we could support, the National Trust (NT) and the SWT, and the BMC is now well-placed to play a significant part in developing the future management of the estate with the SWT as the successful party. The BMC favoured the NT, but we always said that we could, and would, work with the SWT. So now we will.

Further asset reviews coming along in the Peak, that have strong climbing and walking value, will need the BMC's 'voice' to be vigorously and relentlessly put before all bidders, the Peak Park, community groups and anyone else who shows an interest in influencing the future of whatever asset is on offer, and choices will have to be made. This requires effort, initiative and time, often during the day, so if you've got some spare then let Neil or Henry know, they will be delighted to have you volunteer.

So where are we now with the Roaches? In early December Rob Dyer and I met with Helen Dale the Reserves Manager of the SWT to continue that positive working relationship. I've known Helen now for 15 plus years and the first 'case' that I ever dealt with as an access rep involved meeting her at Baldstones and Gib Torr when the SWT's then Director wanted to ban climbing. It was a Ring Ouzel disturbance issue, what else!, and when we were able to show how climbers operated and the fact that there was a public footpath that cut through the Ring Ouzel territory, the threatened ban was withdrawn without argument, has never resurfaced, and climbing access is unrestricted. During 2011 Rob and





I met with Helen on several occasions including two 'guided tours' of the estate to explain BMC members' use and concerns, and it is apparent that the SWT understand very well the complexities of managing the estate for access and conservation reasons and are willing to listen and learn and want the BMC to be closely involved. The estate is mostly open access under the CRoW Act anyway.

When we met, Helen brought us up to date with her talks with the Peak Park since their November decision and she offered to come to a Peak area meeting to explain their work and to answer your questions, should you have any! This is likely to be the Staffordshire meet in the early summer.

We discussed the Don Whillans Hut (DWMH) and the BMC's intention, if we couldn't buy, to obtain a long-term lease before SWT's lease took effect, to at least expire at the same time as theirs in 125 years, thus ensuring security of tenure and no change of landlord. Helen stated that she could see no problem from SWT's perspective other than that the Peak Park hadn't yet made their intentions clear on what action they were going to take. So we await the decision-making wheels to turn at Bakewell. We offered SWT the occasional mid-week use of the DWMH subject to availability, cleaning and so on. This had already been agreed with Michael Hunt as hut chair and as you probably know by now, the SWT used the Whillans Hut on Saturday 14 January, no members having booked that day, in order to meet the public and BMC members. It turned out to be a 'very successful day' according to Helen and the weather was glorious. Quite a few BMC members, members of the Ramblers, locals and other visitors turned out, over a hundred in total, including one man who was born there. The comments and reaction to the Park's decision in favour of the SWT were generally positive. It was very much a 'get to know you' day and far too early to discover SWT's plans as they don't take over until next year, however they will be discussing with Rob and Andi in the spring about the future of the estate. A number of visitors also came forward as volunteers to help them in the future and Helen, on behalf of the SWT, thanks the BMC for their generous offer of the hut for the day.

Wearing my BMC Access and Conservation Trust (ACT) hat we offered SWT 'kick start' financial support for a footpath restoration project at the Roaches subject to certain guidelines to protect climbing and walking interests. The path section chosen and preferred by ACT is the stretch from the top of the stairs northwards past the boulders towards the short climb up to Skyline, about 300 metres. This footpath's surface is deteriorating badly as well as drainage from it eroding the steps themselves, spilling down Lower Tier routes and putting surplus water into the Spring boulders area. Definitely in our interests then! Andi will have to advise whoever does the job so as to preserve the integrity of the bouldering on the Upper Tier. And yes there are several kilometres of footpath repair work needed on the estate, but as Lao-Tzu said in c600 BCE, later borrowed by Mao Tse Tung to motivate the Chinese people's army, 'A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step'.



*Erosion at top of the stairs area at the Roaches looking S. (2006)*

The ACT have recently supported a footpath project on the Black Mountain/Y Mynydd Du in the Brecon Beacons National Park and with our £3000 'kick-start' finance the Park were able to generate £51,570 of additional support, making £54,570 in total to cover 800 metres of reprofiling and some stone pitching. That's an average of £68 per metre, which I suppose proves that I can both add and divide, and that footpath work is expensive.





Finally we talked about access restrictions for conservation reasons and re-emphasised the BMC policy that we encourage a negotiated 'least restrictive option' approach whenever access and conservation collide, as this produces a self-policing agreement with BMC members and is the only result that can work in practice, and its cheaper than wardening! We suggested that she come to the 'peregrine meeting', usually in early March at Hen Cloud, not to meet the birds, but so that she could gain a sense of how this 'least restrictive' policy aim is discussed, decided upon, and put into practice by Andi, Rob and representatives of the Peak Park, Natural England and the RSPB. Must cost a fortune, I hope the birds appreciate the effort and cost.

We left things there and agreed that Rob and Andi will be in touch concerning the Open Day and SWT's intentions on developing a management plan for the estate. The BMC will be one of the consulted partners in the development of that plan.

All that remains is loads of work, meetings, and hopefully the creation of a local group of climber/walker volunteers to help the SWT in the management of the estate. Is this the 'Big Society' in action? Are you listening Cameron? Oh! And the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, who slung their weight behind the SWT and were so influential in the process, have expressed a wish to build a long-term working partnership with the BMC, so there's a positive note to start 2012 with. Over to you.



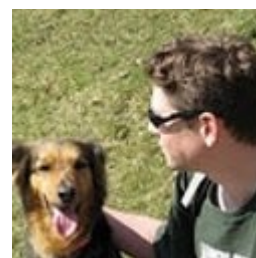
ShAFF returns for another great year at: The Showroom, Sheffield. For those few who haven't been, ShAFF includes some of the best adventure, travel and extreme sports films as well as talks and lectures on epic climbs, runs and rides. Running **March 9-11** with two Expert Nights:

Thu 9 Feb @ 20:15 - ShAFF Presents: ShAFF Expert Night – Climbing.

Thu 23 Feb @ 20:15 ShAFF Presents: ShAFF Expert Night – Running.

## Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Open Day at the Roaches

By Simon Jacques  
(on the right in the picture)



Saturday 14 January saw the inaugural Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Open Day at the Don Whillans Memorial Hut at the Roaches. Many attended just to enter the hallowed 'Rockhall', with a glorious fayre of cakes and refreshments.

The SWT have recently been selected by the Peak District National Park Authority to manage the Roaches estate with a 125-year lease starting in 2013. They recognise the estate's importance for climbers and walkers and wanted to talk to users on-site about what we enjoy about it and what could be improved.



*BMC folk Henry Folkard and Louise Hawson in front of the Hut*

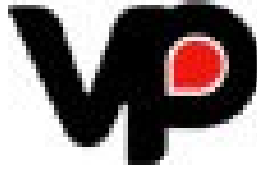
Peak Area Access representatives Henry Folkard, Gary Sheppard and Simon Jacques met informally with Helen Dale, Head of Reserves, and other SWT volunteers at the crag to discuss the future ideas of the SWT for the Estate and how best the BMC could be represented within these.

Helen assured us that the BMC would be part of a future steering group and we invited SWT representatives to the Peak Area Meeting at the Winking Man Pub in July 2012 to come for a question and answer session.





## The Fourth Day - The Hell of the Trolltind Wall



Excerpt from Troll Wall, by Tony Howard. The team of Tony, John Amatt and Bill Tweedale are on Day 4 of their eventual first ascent of the wall. 'Overhangs, intense cold, snow, rain, loose rock... and some of the most dangerous and difficult climbing ever done.

[www.v-publishing.co.uk](http://www.v-publishing.co.uk)

They had them all... From their bivouacs they watched huge boulders "drift away in the wind"... More over-enthusiastic reportage in the Manchester Evening News... [£16.19 for BMC members from the BMC shop.](#)

We woke early and watched the kaleidoscope of dawn invade the skies before having breakfast in the heat of the morning sun whilst discussing plans for the day. None of us thought it would be possible to reach the Summit Gully at the top of the Narrow Slab before nightfall and unless we did, we could see no possible place for a bivouac. After the lesson of the Great Wall we decided to play it safe and just concentrate on covering the first three hundred feet of the slab. We would then haul the sacks up and return to our present bivouac, leaving the sack-hauling line in place as a fixed rope. This was a pleasant sort of programme since it meant each of us would be able to have a rest at the bivouac while the other two climbed.

Bill led off first, climbing carefully over a precarious 'skin' of blocks poised one above the other and



obviously, the Wall...

covering the base of the slab. Soon he reached a belay on its outer edge, on the very brink of the huge saw-toothed overhangs with nothing but space below. I climbed up to him and continued over the blocks towards the inner corner where the slab started to sweep out leftwards through the overhangs like a gigantic scimitar. Amidst such inspiring architecture, it seemed desecration to use pegs but the climbing became increasingly difficult. Reluctantly, I hammered in the first and then, with more pegs for aid up the edge, moved delightfully out across the slab, revelling in my position. Eventually I reached a small stance, large enough for both feet, and hammered in a couple of belay pegs. That was me done for the day. The next pitch would be John's and would likely be as far as we got before evening, although the slab had so far proved much easier than we had expected. I had a last look round before preparing the ropes for abseil.

Above and beneath were the tremendous overhangs, and poised between, gently shelving outwards at a pleasant angle, the slab continued, finishing to the left on the skyline. What lay above its limit was hidden by the overhangs. If the slab itself didn't lead to the Summit Gully then it would have to be the long overhanging crack we had seen from the First Bivouac, which was now concealed by the roofs above my head.

The only section of the route visible was the next fifty feet of the slab. From here it seemed quite holdless, but the crack I had been using for pegs where its inner edge met the overhangs continued for quite a way. Unfortunately, as far as I could make out, it seemed to end above the most blank-looking section of the slab and didn't reappear for at least ten feet.

Please send articles, letters, photos, notices and so forth, to [peakarea@gmail.com](mailto:peakarea@gmail.com) All topics considered, the only requirement is that it is relevant to the mountaineers, walkers and climbers in the Peak Area. Summit magazine is the place for the national stuff. Any length up to 600 words; if you want to go longer, best to call us first. **We particularly welcome material from clubs.** Deadline for material is two weeks before the meeting.





I wondered if we would have to use bolts to cross this section, but hoped we could manage without. Leaning back from the belay, I thought I could see a faint crack above the overhang just at this point. Perhaps, if we could get a peg in there, we would be able to tension left from it across the blank section of the slab. Anyway, all of this was John's problem.

Before abseiling off, I called down to him to sort out the drill and some bolts and then roped down, back to the bivouac for the brew that was on the boil. Bill and John then climbed up to my belay point and John led off, prepared if necessary to spend the afternoon drilling holes in the rock. He moved up across the slab, placing the odd peg at intervals and inching slowly along, a small figure dwarfed by the colossal scale of our surroundings. He reached the impasse and, looking up from two hundred feet below, I saw him searching for cracks in the slabs. There were none. He leant out from his etriers, craning his neck to see over the roof above. Had he seen something? I couldn't contain my impatience.

'Anything there?'

His reply floated down. 'Yes, I think so; I think there's a bit of a crack high up.'

Fiddling with the pegs at his belt, he finally chose one, and then, in tension from Bill, stretched up over the roof, and despite being unable to see searched with the peg for a crack. For a few anxious moments, he prodded and probed and then suddenly, as if tired by the awkwardness of the position, he moved back to his etriers, his hand no longer holding the peg. It was in the crack. He moved up again, this time clutching the hammer and with a few swift blows knocked the peg into position. So far, so good. He clipped in the rope and moved the etriers up for the move across the slab. If John couldn't make this with his reach, then I doubted very much if Bill or I could.

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Peak Area Reps (your voice on the BMC National Council): Rick Gibbon & Neil Foster

<http://community.thebmc.co.uk>

Newsletter Editors (articles, comments, threats, etc) [peakarea@gmail.com](mailto:peakarea@gmail.com)

Access Reps Co-ordinator, Henry Folkard:

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*Surprisingly this isn't in the Lake District*

He shouted down: 'Give me some tension, Bill!' Then slowly John leant down and across until he was at full stretch, almost horizontal across the slab. Held in position by the ropes from Bill, he reached out with a peg to the distant crack and drove it home. Hurriedly he clipped in an etrier, shouting, 'Slack!' Released from his position, he swung down to the peg. We were across.

John rested, and looked up, able to see for the first time what lay ahead. What would it be, the slab, or the overhanging crack? Bill and I waited silently for the answer. Both of us knew that in the next five hundred feet lay the key to the route. If there were no way out, we would be trapped. Trapped with the prospect of having to descend over two thousand feet of extremely difficult rock. But there would be a way; we were not going down.