



Peak Area Newsletter

January 2015

The next Peak Area meeting is on Wednesday, 28 January, starting at 1930, at the Maynard, Main Road, Grindleford, Derbyshire S32 2HE.

The Sec speaks

By Lynn Robinson



As 2015 starts it's time to reflect on the many achievements that have been made in the Peak Area over the last year, thanks to all the activists who work tirelessly on our behalf. In particular the sterling efforts that go into maintaining access in the area. We can all do our bit by volunteering to help out where we can, by attending meetings and joining in the discussions and debates on things that matter in the Peak, by highlighting issues, or even just picking up litter when we're on a walk or at the crag. Agenda items for meetings are always welcome from anyone – so get involved and email me your suggestions.

This is definitely Neil's and my last year as Chair and Secretary as we will reach the time-limit allowed for the positions. Please let us know if you are interested in either position as we would like to help arrange as smooth a transition as possible for any potential candidates.

The Peak Area meetings for 2015 are:

Wednesday 28 January, at 1930, The Maynard, Grindleford.

Wednesday 15 April, at 1930, The Maynard, Grindleford.

Wednesday 3 June, at 2000, The Winking Man Pub, Buxton Rd. Upper Hulme. (Note the later start so people can go for a climb or walk beforehand).

Wednesday 9 September, at 1930, The Globe Inn, Glossop.

Wednesday 18 November, at 1930, The Maynard, Grindleford – AGM.

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). Members can have it emailed to them by contacting the BMC office: 0161 445 6111, office@thebmc.co.uk

**Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome at any time; the Deadline for the next Newsletter is 1 April
- send to peakarea@gmail.com**



For those 78 people who attended the meeting in November, I'm sure you'll agree that following the normal business of the meeting, the quiz was great fun, mainly due to the effort that Graham and Neil put in and of course thanks to all those who kindly donated the prizes: **Alpkit, Awesome Walls, BMC, Cordee, Cotswold Outdoor, Dan Lane, Heason Events, Outside, Rab/EquipUK, Rockfax, Robin Mueller, The Climbing Works, The Depot Nottingham, The Foundry and Vertebrate Publishing.**

Best Wishes for 2015, and why not make it a New Year's Resolution to get involved in the work of the BMC and come along to your local area meetings? Hope to see you soon, Lynn

Peak District to host BMC Equity Symposium

by Margi Bryant



Next May the Peak District will be hosting the BMC's second Equity Symposium, a weekend get-together of people who want to see increased participation by ethnic minorities in hillwalking, climbing and mountaineering. The Symposium will be a mix of workshops, talks, outdoor sessions and fun activities, and will take place from 15-17 May at YHA Castleton in the Hope Valley.

The BMC is committed to the principle that hillwalking, climbing and mountaineering should be open to people of all ages, abilities,

backgrounds, cultures, races, religions and orientations. The BMC has a good track record in supporting people with disabilities and is now looking at ways of encouraging and supporting people from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, where there is often very low takeup of these activities due to lack of familiarity or opportunity. Improving the situation is a priority for the BMC's Equity Steering Group.

Key collaborators in this aim are Mountain Training, which has funds to sponsor BAME participants on skills and leadership courses, and the Mosaic National Network, which builds links between BAME communities and National Parks. Last year, these organisations hosted a well-attended event in Haworth. There is a short film about the Haworth Symposium on BMC-TV here: <http://tv.thebmc.co.uk/video/bmc-equity-symposium-2014?current-channel=all-channels>.



First BMC Equity Symposium; map-reading on the moors above Haworth.



The Haworth event showed how much interest and enthusiasm there was, but also flagged up the need for more structured opportunities and support. The next Symposium in Castleton in May will look at how this support can be provided. There'll be a focus on how community groups and leaders can get the necessary skills and confidence to tackle hill and mountain activities; how activity providers can meet community needs; and how the BMC can support all this. We warmly welcome the involvement of BMC affiliated clubs in the Peak Area. Long-term, we hope some local clubs will get more involved in equity initiatives such as taster days, informal training (eg map skills for walkers), supported activities (eg guided walks or supervised indoor climbing sessions), or even just adopt new tactics for recruiting members. We hope there will be a future role for individual members too. We are working with Mountain Training on a mentoring scheme, whereby individuals who are BMC or Mountain Training Association (MTA) members could offer support and advice to BAME community groups on an informal basis. This could cover anything from advice on outdoor gear or route-planning to how to get further training. More information about this scheme, as it develops, will be available via the BMC e-newsletter.

If anyone would like to know more about the Symposium or the work of the Equity Steering Group, please contact [Margi Bryant](mailto:margibryant@bmcvolunteers.org.uk) (margibryant@bmcvolunteers.org.uk) or [Carey Davies](mailto:carey@thebmc.co.uk), BMC Hillwalking Development Officer (carey@thebmc.co.uk).

Access Notes



By Henry Folkard

Dateline: 16 December 2014

The deadline for copy falls some time before the Area Meeting, and not so long after the last lot of access notes. At the time of writing there is not a huge amount to report.

Stanage North Lees

A much more positive dialogue has been established with Rebekah Newman, the National Park's new manager for North Lees, than was the case with her predecessor in that post, who basically did not deign to speak to stakeholders, nor for that matter the Stanage Forum. Why senior management condoned this was as incomprehensible as it was worrying.

Rebekah formally took up post on 1 December. We met the next day and made positive progress on finding a way forward on a number of issues which needed to be addressed, and for which her boss, Mary Bagley, did much to pave the way.

There will be much closer working with the Steering Group of the **Stanage Forum**, and the new web site, www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/stanage-northlees should keep you updated on its recommendations. The major task will be refreshing the Management Plan for North Lees. Adam Long and I represent the BMC on that



Steering Group. A schedule for meetings should be agreed before the Area Meeting, The **North Lees Campsite** is being retained by the National Park, anyhow for the time being. Hopefully it will see some improvement to facilities - more showers – besides getting a much needed lick of paint. It will also be made more mountain-bike friendly. Addition of a general purpose covered area has also been proposed. In an attempt to boost income during the quiet season the BMC has negotiated a special discounted flat rate of £5 per person per night with the National Park Authority for BMC Members and Affiliated Members. This will run to the end of March 2015, and it covers regular sized camper-vans as well as tents. The site will be open from early-ish on Friday mornings to dusk on Sundays. No pre-booking is needed: just turn up and pitch. If you want to make special arrangements for mid-week stays this is possible but you will need to check with the Manager on 01433 650038 that she will be about, as it is not normally staffed mid-week in winter. The number will ring through to an answer phone and she will call you back if you leave your own number.

On the vexed question of **parking**, an easy to get, reasonably priced, annual permit is proposed.

Please send articles, letters, photos, notices and so forth, to 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.

This will cover Surprise View as well as Stanage and Burbage. It is not so much a parking charge as a way of raising some income to go towards access and land management improvements. These will be featured in the refreshed Management Plan. This is where you come in as your ideas are really welcome. Suggest these at the Area Meeting (see page 1 for dates) or e-mail me (link on page 12).

Initial proposals are for three new concessionary Rights of Way; dedication under the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000 (CROW) of certain areas that are not currently open access; more work in the woodlands; a cattle grid (to save having fences); a decent archaeological survey; some subtle and non-intrusive branding of signs.

A car windscreen sticker will be produced with a logo of the crag and a strap line 'ours to care for' or something similar. It will be a different colour each year.

Links have been established between Rebekah and the major recreation user groups, the Moscar Estate and the Eastern and Sheffield Moors Partnerships. Margi Bryant, a member of the BMC's Equity Steering Group, will also be contacting Rebekah to explore possible joint initiatives (see Margi's article on page 2). Louise Hawson will be leading joint BMC / National Park walks, Details will appear on the Stanage web site.



Work on **Long Causeway** seems to me to be blending in OK, and, again a personal view, I think the job Derbyshire County Council (DCC) did there was a job well done – though I am aware not everyone is of the same view. You will have noticed the revetment was left alone. It had been monitored for movement over two or three years and found to be pretty stable. So it is hoped that with better drainage and no wear by heavy vehicles it will last as it is for a while yet. The estimate for a rebuild is £2M.

The usual access restrictions for **Derwent, Moscar, Hallam and Bamford Moors** have been notified. The operative dates for 2015 are 11-24 May; 26-29 May; 1-5 June; 8- 12 June. Public rights of way are not affected. In previous years the landowner has also allowed continued use of major concessionary routes and access to climbs between the Long Causeway and Stanage End. As ever the major problem for the grouse moor owners is not people, but dogs. Dogs are in fact banned from grouse moors at all times of the year (except where they are under tight control on a public right of way). Please do not take your dog to the crag, or onto the moors at all as this will only lead to withdrawal of concessions. Observing this restriction makes life a lot easier for everyone who wants to walk or climb.

Eastern Moors

A meeting of the **Eastern Moors** Stakeholders Forum took place in mid December. There is complete transparency about finance, and about future proposals. There was quite a lot of detail on some topics, like the kind of gate-latch horse riders like and the whereabouts of adders, but also very frank and open discussion on items like reaction to grazing by cattle, whether

control of deer numbers is necessary, and fencing.

Three incidents of cattle causing injury to people were reported after about 20 years in which no such incident was reported. In some, if not all, of these incidents cows with calves took exception to people with dogs. But that apart, not everyone feels comfortable walking on open access land where there are cattle about. They do however do a better job than anything else at trampling bracken and molinia tussock grass. The other problem with cattle is that they seem to spawn fences. There has been a most unwelcome proliferation of fences all over the place recently, and very strong views were expressed on this – and indeed on anything to do with introducing man-made intrusions in the form of signage to parking places like Shillito Woods or the lay-bys under Curbar. There was similar strong resistance to turning car parks serving Eastern Moors into kiddies play grounds or minor theme parks.

In 2010 there were about 126 red deer on Big Moor. The rut count in 2014 was 263. Since the deer impact on vegetation, especially in woodlands, and are vectors for TB and for ticks (hence Lyme disease) there is some concern about numbers. Keeping a healthy herd is an absolute priority and it should be managed accordingly.



It was felt that a coherent approach across the **Sheffield Moors Partnership** area was needed for these landscape scale considerations. Thus there was significant frustration that whilst there had initially been good stakeholder involvement in drawing up the vision for landscape, conservation and access routes, which transcend estate boundaries, this had been all but abandoned in favour of a landowners' only approach. This is particularly inappropriate around Sheffield where much of the land is in public ownership, and is there for people to enjoy unhindered, not for conservationists to criss-cross with fences. The force of comment at the meeting was such that it should not go unheeded.

Burbage

All the felling work at the **Great Britain plantation** site is now completed, though there is still some tidying up to do, and also the planting of native species to create a landscape which looks a bit varied and more like a natural continuation of the upper part of Padley Gorge – which is exactly what it is. Over 7000 tons of timber was harvested. Much of this went for biomass, but some was good for fence posts and some for planking.

Chapelgate

The BMC joined Ride Sheffield and Peak Mountain Bikers, along with Friends of the Peak in expressing disquiet to Derbyshire County Council (DCC) at work that was in hand on **Chapelgate**. There has also been strong representation from the Peak Local Access Forum on this. As a result work in hand is suspended until mid January by which time a number of consultations with stakeholders will

allow an approach which meets as many aspirations as is possible.

Not all parties want the same thing. DCC is legally obliged, because of the legal status of the way, to provide a surface suitable for horse drawn carriages, whilst the mountain bikers prefer a more challenging surface with sections of bedrock left exposed. The BMC's comments have focussed more on landscape and environmental matters, and on what is commensurate with a sense of place and the general character of the way. We have also made strong representation on the absolute necessity for ongoing maintenance, and probed proposals for the treatment of a badly eroded section of blanket bog at the high point of the way.

Hill Walking

Much of the BMC's access work is perhaps more generally relevant to hill walkers than it is to climbers. Being a member of the BMC does give you a chance to get something done, or at least fed through to the powers that be, where you feel there could be better links or access points. You can raise these at any time by e-mailing me (see above) or raising concerns at Area Meetings. As I have mentioned before the Peak Local Access Forum (LAF) retains a wish list for improvements – there are currently about 30 wishes in it – and I generally bring this to Area Meetings so you can see what is on it if you want to.



Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area

Early in December the head honcho from DEFRA concerned with **Nature Improvement Areas** paid the Dark Peak a visit and had a taster of what has been achieved by visiting Stanage, Burbage, Blackamoor and Moss Road. He left duly impressed. The work on Moss Road gave opportunity to bend his ear on the importance of joined up access routes, bridleway provision and of the extent to which the local rural economy depends on the recreation sector. Joined up access routes are also joined up corridors for wildlife, so their provision and maintenance provides excellent value for money.

At a time when access provision has been drastically affected by cut backs affecting Rights of Way Officers, diminished funding for access infrastructure and absence of funding for concessionary routes under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (previously known as the New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS)) the prospect for access is not at all good. Despite a welcome commitment to the coastal path (if it's not victim to post election cuts) there looms some pretty serious campaigning ahead to protect our heritage and birthright. The visit to the Dark Peak by the

DEFRA chap did much to bring the reality of things on the ground home to largely London desk bound officials – and to impress the role the BMC plays in working for the benefit of the whole recreation community. The opportunity to do that was not wasted.

SW Peak Heritage Lottery Funding

A major initiative for the **South West Peak** has secured initial Heritage Lottery Funding. This is brilliant news, and not least for access because a review of access routes, including bridleways, their signage and state of repair has been included in the specification. Comment has been made that the rights of way network in Staffordshire is particularly in need of some tender loving care and that in comparison with the network in Derbyshire it comes off pretty badly. The Peak LAF is represented on the Steering Group. This is another topic where you can make a difference. If you have particular concerns about access routes in the area, where links need improving or status needs reviewing do let me know and I can feed your comments in to the project team.

Campaigns

Space does not usually permit much room for update on the **Save Longstone Edge** Campaign, in which the BMC played a leading and crucial national role.

It still rumbles on. The issue of determining the ROMP area (Review of Old Minerals Permissions, 1952) hangs upon determination of a seminal case in Oxfordshire which will hopefully clarify what the legislation means. The problem is that official guidance on the pertinent bit of the pertinent Act seems at odds with what the Act

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 on the [BMC web site](#). Access reps 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).



appears to say on its face. This is proving a very lengthy process, though it would seem a common sense no brainer that the Act, which is what Parliament enacted, should prevail. Meanwhile we still await the outcome of some test bores that were made adjacent to Peak Pastures by British Fluorspar to determine whether it was worth their while to opencast the area, insofar as the current permission will allow this.

The **Tearsall** excavation, which the BMC also opposed, has failed to yield even a modicum of what mineral there was supposed to be there. Excavation in Milldam Mine is, however proceeding, and this is not deemed to be contentious.

Recent announcements on highway improvements bring an **A628** scheme to the fore again. The BMC opposed the last ill thought through proposals for a Mottram / Tintwistle by pass and Glossop spur. The new proposals are different, but whether they will deliver what they promise if they come to fruition remains to be seen. I believe the Friends of the Peak are not persuaded that the severe traffic problems in that area will be greatly ameliorated by the proposals. It would be good to know what your views are on the detail, when this is available.

Limestone, Aldery and Horseshoe

Though I am no longer dealing with access issues on Limestone I should mention that dedication of National Nature Reserves by Natural England for open access, which is due to roll out really from now on, will include parts of **Lathkill Dale** as well as the whole of **Cressbrook Dale**, as urged by the Peak LAF. This is highly

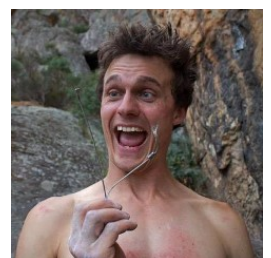
significant as access to Lower Cressbrook Dale has long been an aspiration for walkers. Moreover the concessionary access path from Ravensdale Cottages up to the crag will now be a path through open access land. Any move to restrict access for any reason will need to be agreed with the Access Authority.

Buxton MC has now formally taken over responsibility for **Aldery** – which is looking in pretty good shape at the moment.

I wish I could tell you who was looking after **Horseshoe**, but the sad fact is that no one has yet volunteered to do that. The job is more about keeping an eye on the place, especially the roadside trees and any apparent instability of rock faces (for which the BMC gets professional opinion when anything is reported) and looking after the grassland areas than about the climbing specifically. If you are interested have a word with Neil or Rob Dyer.

Not the Peak District

by Rob Greenwood
Twitter: @Rob_Greenwood



I like both autumn and winter, but have always found the transition between the two a somewhat undignified process: impending darkness, ever-present rain and of course my least favourite of all – the cold.



After several years of misguided decision-making (ie going somewhere even colder) I decided it was time for a break...maybe even to have a holiday that I actually enjoyed in real time, not just retrospectively... Somewhere that doesn't just have good weather, but also good climbing, fine wine and maybe even the odd animal or two with a pouch. Unfortunately the latter does limit your choices somewhat and as a result, on 4 October, I boarded a flight to Australia – destination Mount Arapiles/The Grampians.



Kachoong at Mount Arapiles

British climbers, particularly those used to climbing on the grit, will take to climbing at

Mount Arapiles quickly. The impeccable red quartzite has a forthright style, particularly around the 19/20 grade which has the same ego problems as the British HVS equivalent. It can't be stressed enough just how good the rock quality is (it may even be better than Peak Lime) and throughout a whole month of climbing I don't think I touched a single loose hold. As if it couldn't get any better the Mount is home of the 'sinker wire'. So what is there not to like? In all honesty I couldn't think of anything. Despite this being a world-class crag there are surprisingly few people there and outside of weekends/public holidays you are unlikely to queue for routes.

With regards to popularity, if you thought that Arapiles seemed quiet wait until you go visit The Grampians – they make it look positively crowded! Even at the famous Taipan Wall we only saw one other party and that was none other than Hathersage resident Mr Ben Bransby! The Grampians have a somewhat wilder feel and both the flora, fauna and fabulous red sandstone are jaw-dropping. In 2012 bush fires scorched the area and part of the wonder of climbing within the Grampians is to be within this decimated landscape, witnessing the re-growth that has occurred in the fires' wake – it's all part of the natural cycle. The fauna however requires a paragraph to itself...

Australia, as far as countries go, must have the highest number of entertaining animals per capita of anywhere in the world. Throughout our stay we saw Kangaroos, Wallabies, Stumpy Tailed Lizards, Wedge Tailed Eagles, Echidnas, Emus, Koalas and even a Platypus. These are never isolated sightings, nor out of the ordinary



– they really are everywhere! I could positively say that I enjoyed the wildlife just as much as I did the climbing, it is a non-stop source of amusement.



Eau Rouge at Lost World Crag, Grampians

So if like me you fancy adding a month of summer to your life start having a think about what you're doing next October, you won't even have to miss a BMC Peak Area Meeting!

The BMC as the Natural Home for Hill Walkers

By Peter Judd

Peak10roam-bmc@yahoo.co.uk



There can be little doubt that the BMC is already rightly seen as the natural home for climbers, both by its members and also by outsiders. However recent enquiries by the BMC into the main interests of its membership have made it clear that as many if not more members count themselves as predominantly hill walkers. In

recognition of this the BMC has recently accepted a Hill Walking Strategy document drawn up by its Hill Walking Officer Carey Davies. Carey's aim is that the BMC should soon become known as "The Natural Home for Hill Walkers too"!

The interests of climbers, mountaineers and hill walkers are by no means mutually exclusive. Indeed we have a great deal in common and few of us would consider ourselves to be exclusively confined to just one of those classifications. In fact there is significant cross-over of activity and interest, not least in the conservation of, enhancement of access to and love of the hill and mountain environment. Carey's strategy document acknowledges this but goes on to set out ways in which the BMC can do more to better support its hill walking members.

At a recent members' consultation event in Hayfield, Brian Smith, the BMC's Independent Director, made it clear that it is not intended that the BMC should set up in direct competition with other walker-focused organisations such as the Ramblers, rather that we work in co-operation where we have shared interests but recognise that the BMC's particular focus is on more adventurous walking in hills and mountains. Brian also made clear that changes to benefit hill walkers should not lead to a devaluing of the excellent work already being done to the benefit the other interest groups that the BMC represents.



The BMC already does a great deal for hill walkers, not least through its work on access both at a local level and on the national stage. Now the BMC intends to enhance its provision for hill walkers in a whole range of areas. For example, improving communications by enhancing both the quality and the volume of the hill walking content in Summit, on the BMC website, BMC.TV and through its other digital channels. Other areas include increasing public engagement, a better member benefits package and work to make sure the BMC's structure, staff roles and spending more closely reflect the interests of the membership as a whole.

In order to help the BMC take its strategy for hill walkers forward a Hill Walking Working Group has been formed whose purpose is, not to change the existing strategy already adopted, but rather to help the BMC determine which areas to prioritise, set clear realistic targets, recognise constraints, put pressure on where necessary and help the BMC's officers deliver the changes needed. Brian Smith made it clear that this working group has only a limited life in order to inject a sense of purposefulness and urgency into the process of change which should mean we see things develop quickly. The Peak Area AGM held in November appointed both me and Cath Lee to be our area's representatives on this group. The first working group meeting is scheduled to take place in late January. These are exciting times, we will certainly do our best to speak up for the interests of our hill walking members and to relay back news of developments as they arise!

With all this positive news there is one note of caution to sound. It is clear that, regardless of

the outcome of the coming general election, further severe public spending cuts are on the way. One likely candidate for such cuts is the funding of Sport England who in turn give considerable financial support to the BMC which is used, among many other things, to fund Carey's post as the BMC's first Hill Walking Officer....

A small but significant number of BMC members are also members of the Mountain Training Association (MTA). Peak District based members will be interested to hear that a Peak Regional MTA Group is being formed co-ordinated by MTA member Stephen Jones. Anyone interested can contact Stephen via mtapeakdistrict@gmail.com

Fences and 'Open' Country

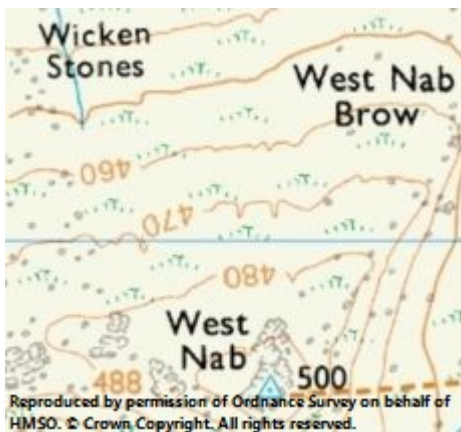
by Mark Warwicker.
(Northern Peak Access Rep)



At the last Peak Area meeting, fences received much attention. We were warned that these are likely to proliferate behind Stanage. Separately, as he stood down as Access Rep for the Northern Peak, Rick Gibbon warned us again that if we don't act, then some of the good work of the CROW Act will be undone as new fences cross and re-cross land designated as 'open' by the Act.



The above picture was taken just before Christmas at West Nab. It runs across the middle of the map extract below and you'll notice that



it is not shown. Nor does it follow any pre-existing boundary. I could have chosen any number of places to make the same point in the Northern Peak: the head of Ramsden Clough; Black Hill; Shining Clough; indeed the whole of Bleaklow is now enclosed - as well as traversed - by fences. As Rick said, this makes something of a mockery of 'Open' Country, and dilutes the wild nature of these special places. It might be too late for the Northern Peak, but if you don't want to see a similar lattice-work of new fences at Stanage, Burbage, Froggatt, then now is the time to make a fuss.

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Peak Area Reps (your voice on the BMC National Council): <http://community.thebmc.co.uk/peak>

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