



Peak Area Newsletter

November 2015

The next Peak Area meeting and AGM is on Wednesday, 18 November, starting at 1930, at the Maynard, Main Road, Grindleford, Derbyshire S32 2HE.

The Sec speaks

By Lynn Robinson



It's with sadness that this will be my last contribution to this wonderful newsletter as the Peak Area Secretary. As you already know the AGM on the 18 November will be the last meeting for Neil and I as Chair and Secretary. We formed our 'coalition' at the launch of Froggatt to Black Rocks guidebook over five years ago. We've had great support from all the regulars and those that have bobbed in and out of the meetings – everyone's contribution to the debates and discussions have enriched the meetings and made our jobs so much easier. Remember that we are all volunteers and have a common passion for the Peak Area and I hope by getting involved in the meetings we can continue to support climbing and hill walking and maintain access to our beautiful countryside and all it has to offer.

The AGM is being held on the 18 November at The Maynard from 1930 and as always will be followed by the usual chaos and fun, generally known as the Festive Quiz. I've started to collect prizes.... But you know the score; if you can offer / bring along any prizes on the night, or get them beforehand to Neil or I, then please get in touch – I see it as a 'thank you' to everyone for their contributions over the year.

Somewhere squeezed into the evening will be an ordinary meeting. Rebekah Newman from the Peak District National Park Authority is going to give us an important update, but please feel free to come along with any burning questions you have for her.

That's all I have to say really, but just to finish off, I wish our successors all the best and hope that you all continue to attend the meetings and support them as well as you have Neil and I.

With best wishes, Lynn

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 13 January - send to peakarea@gmail.com



Access Notes

By Henry Folkard

Dateline: 3 November 2015



Access notes can be more than an account of what has happened. They can be a chance for BMC members to make their own views heard on topical issues to influence the future.

Most of the time nobody says anything – so drop me an e-mail in answer to some questions below, or on any other access issue you want to comment on, to tell me what you think about some of the issues that are topical at the moment.

My e-mail address is

henry.folkard@bmcvolunteers.org.uk

There is something of a Dark Peak bias at the moment. That is scarcely surprising given the pressures the Sheffield Moors are under. But a more fundamental question relevant to the whole of the National Park is how should open access land be managed, and how should that management be paid for – irrespective of who owns any particular parcel of land? The problems of paying for upkeep of open access land and public rights of way are common to all landowners.

Non-governmental organisations like the National Trust and RSPB, not to mention the BMC itself, are pretty much financially challenged at the moment, but for local authority organisations like the National Park Authority as well as City, County and District Councils there are crippling difficult decisions to be

made on what can be funded – and one should also spare a thought for the staff affected who will face a personal crisis with the demise of what had seemed to be a secure career path. I am told that DEFRA, which largely funds the National Park, is having to model two further scenarios, one for an additional 25% of cuts and one for 40%.

The point for BMC members is that cuts are going to be made across the board in services which directly affect our enjoyment of the countryside and our sport. One reaction is to seek ways of making those of us who enjoy the outdoors for free, and always have done, pay for it by one means or another. Not looking after the place is not an answer either because the National Park gets a lot of wear and tear, and a lot of abuse: things like the removal of 17 fridges dumped one night at Stanage all have to be paid for.

A lot of businesses survive by using the resource and opportunity of the National Park, but very few actually put anything back into it. There are huge questions about organised group events, many of them pretty large-scale, that charge a lot of money for registration, make significant profit, and put little back in to the landscape that is being progressively eroded. At the same time there are examples of good practice, as in some of the fell running events and voluntary work by some mountain bike organisations in creating and maintaining infrastructure, and by climbers in crag care and in providing information and guidance on good practice.

So what about visitor payback schemes or growing voluntary support from within our own organisation? Drop me an e-mail. Make your suggestions, or be in no doubt others will impose their own solutions on you, and the result may not be to your liking.



So **Question 1:** Visitor **payback schemes**, organised events and voluntary contributions: what are your suggestions for recouping some of the cost of looking after the landscape from the people who enjoy it?

Question 2 is **Stanage** North Lees specific:

a. The 'Ours to Care For' scheme has sold about 500 stickers and raised donations of roughly £6000. The 2016 (valid April 2016 to March 2017) stickers are now available, again at £15 or £20 for the remainder of 2015 plus 2016. How can we market it better and increase take-up?

b. What access improvements would you like to see at Stanage? Ideas for High Neb / Dennis Knoll parking would be particularly welcome;

c. North Lees Camp site: the special discounted rates for BMC members are available again this year, and some improvements to facilities are in hand. What ideas do you have for increasing occupancy, particularly in winter months?

d. Any general ideas for increasing income generation from within Stanage to make running it cost neutral?

e. Anything else you would like to see done at Stanage, or do you simply want it left pretty much alone as it is?

Question 3 is about **Landscape** across the Sheffield Moors:

a. Over the last year cattle have been introduced onto parts of the Sheffield Moors to help remedy the long term consequences of overgrazing by sheep. What do you think about the current numbers of cattle on the Sheffield Moors?

b. How do you feel about grazing by any type of livestock on the Sheffield Moors;

c. Mixed native woodland trees have been planted in various places, eg Burbage and Houndkirk. Do you think this will have any positive or negative effects on the landscape, wildlife or general enjoyment of the place?

Stick up for Stanage

Have you got your Stanage sticker yet?

If you love Stanage's...

- 1700 recognised climbing and bouldering routes
- classic cycling routes
- footpaths and access land over moorland, woodland and grasslands
- campsite set in the woodlands
- hang gliding opportunities
- wildness – that away-from-it-all, breath-of-fresh-air feeling

...you can help care for and protect this unique place.

Contribute £15 and you will be helping fund access improvements, ring ouzel conservation, woodland management works and appropriate interpretation. As a thank-you you will receive a sticker to display in your car for 12 months free parking at Stanage-North Lees car parks, plus a discount at the campsite. All money raised from the stickers will be used directly in the management of Stanage-North Lees.

For more information
www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/stickupforstanage



The management of **Burbage, Houndkirk and Hathersage Moors**, which remain Sheffield City Council owned, has been taken over by the Eastern Moors Partnership team – though all the paperwork has yet to be signed,

The Peak BMC Access team is already in discussion with them about **Millstone**, where the dilapidated fencing cum belay posts along the top is going to be replaced. There is also some work proposed on thinning of birch around the base of the crag, and a question of what, if anything at all, should be done about all the loose scree at the top of parts of the crag, particularly the Keyhole Cave area. Let Adam Long or I know any ideas you have.

An adder was photographed on the path through the **Plantation** at Stanage earlier in the year, but there is also some scepticism that the photograph was actually of where it was claimed to be. Perhaps worth bearing in mind for next year: there have not been any recent reports of adders at Stanage, but you never know what might turn up. There certainly seemed to be plenty of them about around the Eastern Moors this year.

You may notice an alternative way has been opened up through the Plantation. This is at the request of

mountain bikers and horse riders to give an alternative route to that used by walkers.

Further north at **Dove Stone** the moorland / bog restoration work undertaken by RSPB and United Utilities has gone well and achieved landscape, wildlife, carbon-capture and water quality benefits quicker than anticipated, and all without any adverse impact on open access or recreation use.

Further south at **Rowtor** there have been complaints again, this time mostly about night-time activity. Not everything that may happen there at night is down to climbers of course, but nonetheless there is some justification for the complaints from a local resident on this occasion. The lesson is simple: with all forms of adventure sport bad behaviour, and lack of consideration for others, even by a very few activists, costs the freedom of access the great majority enjoy responsibly. Thanks to Adam and the Ranger Service for calming things.

More generally **nocturnal activity** is becoming an issue across a number of sports, and has certainly increased with the availability of much better torches. Generally land managers are getting uneasy about it, for a variety of reasons, some to do with wildlife, some to do with parking, some to do with perceptions of nuisance. So if bouldering at night is your thing, be as discreet as you can and don't do any more to advertise your presence than you need. That way it should be OK. Considerate behaviour, even where one does not feel something is a real problem, even if others do, can save a deal of hassle later on. Flying **drones** is another emergent topic. Some people think they are neither big, noisy nor intrusive and should not be a problem – besides which they are widely available and people are going to use them whatever, whilst others object very strongly feeling

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.



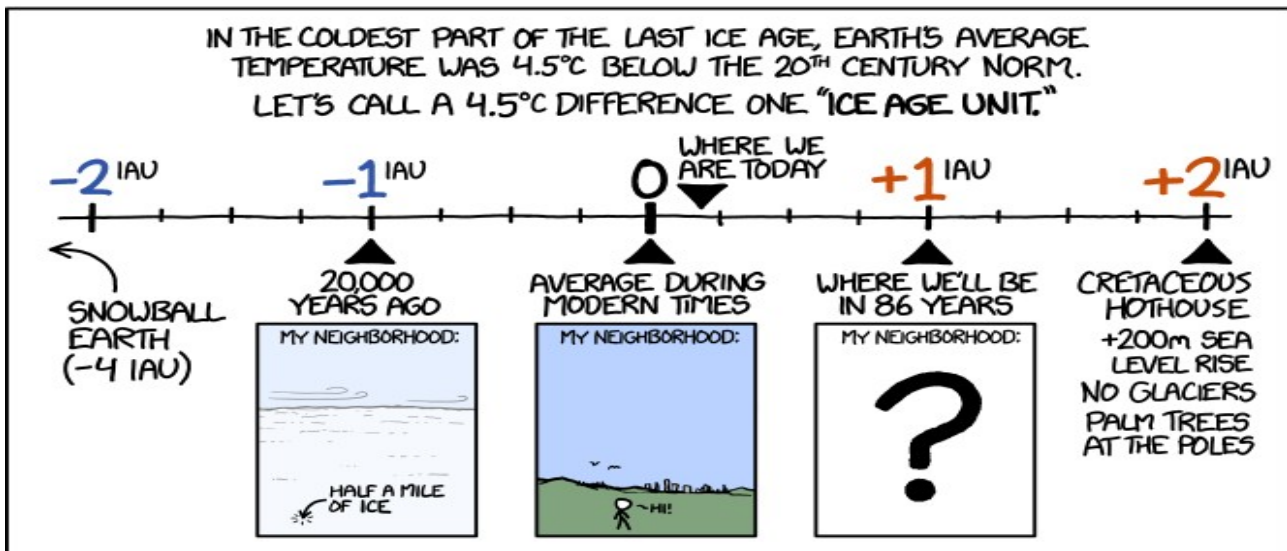
they are an intrusion on personal privacy, inconsistent with quiet enjoyment, and startle horses.

On **Limestone** there is not a huge amount to report. Jon and others had a successful clean-up on Church Buttress down in Dovedale with much appreciated support from the National Trust, so thanks to all for that effort.

The Public Inquiry on **Longstone Edge East** aka Backdale aka the ROMP area is set for January. Representation was made both by Friends of the Peak and BMC regarding restoration proposals at **Topley Pike Quarry**. There remains a big challenge regarding after use of old hard rock quarries. Proposals which lack all imagination seem acceptable to planners, where adventure activists see nothing but huge opportunity. If you want to join the debate, get stuck in, and have a word with Jon, me or Rob in Head Office to see how you can contribute.
[... continued on page 6]

WITHOUT PROMPT, AGGRESSIVE LIMITS ON CO₂ EMISSIONS, THE EARTH WILL LIKELY WARM BY AN AVERAGE OF 4°-5°C BY THE CENTURY'S END.

HOW BIG A CHANGE IS THAT?



The good news is that according to the latest IPCC report, if we enact aggressive emissions limits now, we could hold the warming to 2°C. That's only HALF an ice age unit, which is probably no big deal.

That was written in 2014. In the 1990s the plan was to hold at a 1°C rise. Now, in 2015, the talk is about limiting the rise to 'below' 2.5°C. See where this is going?

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Neil Hewertson did a very good, if perhaps under-recognised job, as Quarries Project Officer for the BMC, and a meeting was convened in October to try and build on his achievement. The approach that has been adopted is to concentrate first on getting climbing access agreed in one Yorkshire Quarry, Threshfield, because this offers a good chance of success, and if we are successful, try to roll the precedent of that agreement out elsewhere. The fact remains though that development of climbing in old quarries owes more to tolerated trespass by a few dedicated activists than to official approaches which tend to accrue presentation of problem after problem with alarming rapidity that serve to frustrate the capacity for any representative body to progress things.

Finally the custodianship of **Horseshoe** has passed to Colin and Kym Nave and Alan Austin. The conservation volunteers who have helped on an annual work meet have been unable to come this year, but the essential work has got done, with particular thanks to Duncan, Tony and Sarah.

That's it for now. See you in the Maynard Arms.

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).

Hill Walking in The Peak Area

By Peter Judd
Joint BMC Peak Area Hill
Walking Representative



Fancy joining us for a walk this month?

If you read this before the end of November then you may be interested to know that Cath Lee (your other BMC Peak Area hill walking rep.) and I (along with BMC member Austin Knott) are leading a 9-mile walk over Combs Moss, from the village of Combs, near Buxton on Saturday 28 November, meeting at 1015. Combs Moss is perhaps more familiar to climbers than walkers because of the crags at Castle Naze - the site of a prehistoric hill fort. Despite this it offers excellent walking around the edge of high moorland with every likelihood of great views. This walk should provide an excellent opportunity to meet and chat with other BMC hill walking interested members. BMC affiliated clubs with a hill walking interest might also find this an excellent opportunity to promote themselves to prospective new members perhaps? There should be a good opportunity to socialise in the village pub afterwards too. The walk crosses significant areas of Access Land with restrictions that mean we must say: no dogs please. To help keep an eye on numbers, please drop Cath Lee an email if you plan to come:

cath.lee@peakwalking.com Many more details on the web at: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/join-bmc-volunteers-for-a-winter-walk-in-the-peak-district>



News from the most recent BMC Hill Walking Working Group (HWWG) meeting:

You may have noticed a much more varied and balanced selection of articles appearing in the most recent issues of Summit; we very much welcomed this development. This coupled with the vastly increased range of hill walking relevant material on BMC TV means hill walkers will hopefully feel a much greater sense of inclusion.

The HWWG is now hoping to address such things as hill walkers' membership benefits and insurance packages as well as looking at how we could increase hill walking capacity in the Access and Conservation team.

It was also good to see that the BMC has recently taken the All Party Parliamentary Group for Mountaineering for a walk from Edale up onto our own Kinder Scout, led by another member of the HWWG. This, coupled with the recent debate in Parliament on the value of outdoor recreation means that the profile and value of our activities has received a big boost amongst the power brokers of late.

Winter walking

I hope you've enjoyed the autumn colours as much as I have this year, there's been a spectacular display of reds and browns. But I write this just as the leaves have begun to rain down in quantity, carpeting the ground in deep drifts and revealing the stark skeletons of the trees that will haunt our skyline throughout the winter season. Winter in the Peak brings a time of crisp clear mornings, of cloud inversions filling our valleys with cotton wool whilst the sun burns bright above, of sparkling frost-edged

scenery and peat groughs turned from energy-sapping leg-swallowing bog, to frozen concrete motorways. A great time to get out on our local hills!

The last couple of winter seasons have seen our hills plastered with good quantities of snow at times so let's hope for a good carpeting at some stage this year (although spare a thought for the our upland farmers who struggle to get fodder to their cattle and sheep at such times and, in the very worst of drifting snow, must dig out their animals, buried as they shelter behind walls). As for our wild life: Red Grouse become much easier to spot as they struggle to find scarce food amongst the snow and you may even be lucky enough to see some of our Mountain Hares, the Peak being the only place outside of Scotland to have a significant population, well camouflaged in their white winter coats. Incidentally the Moors for the Future Partnership, through their community science project, are keen to receive details of sightings of Mountain Hares, you can find out more here:

<http://www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/community-science/haresurvey>

However benign and beautiful our local hills may look at times they still demand respect, the packing of a warmer layer or two, a headtorch for the shorter span of daylight and greater attention to the task of navigation. I was amused to hear one of the British Mountain Guides presenting the BMC Winter Skills Lectures last year say that the toughest winter navigation challenge he had ever endured was spent hunting for features on our own Bleaklow whilst preparing for his winter guides test. He mentioned this to make the point that the Peak District can make a very valuable training ground for sharpening skills needed for the more remote and challenging winter environment to be found further north.



One aspect of winter hill walking that doesn't often enter the minds of Peak District walkers are avalanches, a major hazard for winter walkers in Scotland, they are not unusual in The Lakes too. However, it may surprise some to learn that they are far from unknown in our own Peak District. For example, back in 1964, an avalanche killed two climbers in Wilderness Gully, Chew Valley. This, along with another incident where a walker on a wintery Bleaklow lost his life to exposure and two others were missing for two days, led directly to the creation of the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation that year. As recently as two years ago significant avalanches swept down the side of Winnats Pass (near Castleton) and across the road, narrowly missing passing vehicles and blocking the road, following heavy snowfall. One such event even made the national news. Somewhere I have a poor 'phone photo from the same year of a large pile of avalanche debris, consisting of big blocks, that had come from a full-depth slab avalanche that slid from a gully just above Peter's Stone in lowly Cressbrook Dale following a thaw. So keeping an eye on conditions during periods of heavy snowfall and major thaw in the days prior to a walk isn't just something for adventures in the more northerly British hills!

So let's hope for a good season of winter walking and I do hope to meet some of you on our Combs Moss walk on the 28 November.

Access Notes Late News

The Moors for the Future Partnership (www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk), which works to protect priority international habitats in the Peak District and South Pennines, has received €16million to deliver the MoorLIFE 2020 project. This is the largest award ever given by the EU LIFE Programme to a UK conservation project. The funding will enable the partnership to expand its work hugely, protecting the integrity of 9,500 hectares of active blanket bog through re-vegetating bare peat, improving hydrology and diversifying existing vegetation.

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

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