



PEAK AREA NEWSLETTER



April 2016
peakarea@gmail.com

Rocking Chair

Rob Greenwood



After Bill Gordon's superb talk at our January meeting I feel like we have set the bar high for future meetings, at least where entertainment is concerned. Fortunately for us at our April meeting we have Claire Carter and the highly acclaimed film *Operation Moffat*, which has won awards at Banff, Kendal and beyond.

In keeping with the feminist theme Lynn Robinson will be giving us a round-up from the **Women's Think Tank**, which addresses the issue of gender within BMC membership.

The other big news beyond the meeting is the **BMC AGM**, which takes place over 16–17 April at the Castleton YHA. Aside from the formalities (which are over quite quickly) there's a vast array of activities taking place, including guided walks, lectures, quizzes and – in terms of local importance – the erection of the new **Stanage Pole** by our very own Adam Long.

One final word must go to the BMC's **Mend our Mountains** campaign, which began in mid March, and is actively trying to raise money for environmental projects on some of Britain's most popular peaks. On a local level these efforts focus around the footpath erosion on Ringing Roger. For more information read Peter's **Hill Walking Notes** (page 12).

Next meeting: Wednesday 13 April, 7.30 p.m.
The Maynard, Grindleford, S32 2HE



Photo: The Roaches.

Access News: April

Henry Folkard



It is a curious fact that important access-related developments tend to occur a few days after the deadline for newsletter contributions – and this month is no exception.

First, two dates:

Sunday 17 April – the day after the BMC's AGM – is the day of the erection of the new **Stanage Pole**, erected, the publicity blurb will say, by the BMC at noon. Adam Long is masterminding the event. A well-designed new collar has been cast to accommodate it which reflects its original purpose as a boundary marker (possibly of the pre-Conquest frontier between Mercia and Northumbria) and maybe a guidepost.

The earliest known map depiction dates from 1723. It has been variously known as Thurstone Pole, Stannage Pole and Standedge Pole. There are various letters and numbers inscribed in the host rock, the earliest now visible being *TM 1631* though there is historic reference to inscriptions no longer visible from 1550 and 1581.

Second, **Saturday 23 April** is this year's **Spirit of Kinder day**: free entry in the Royal Hotel at Hayfield starting at 2 p.m. The BMC's Carey Davies is one of the keynote speakers. There are additionally a number of events in the morning around about promoting the new Trespass Centre in Hayfield, besides sundry guided walks – some National Trust led, some Ramblers led. Details appear elsewhere in the newsletter, and there will be some flyers about it at the Area Meeting.

These days we can tend to take access for granted, and in a sense we have been able to because of the work of redoubtable pioneers in the 1920s and 1930s in the wake of the theft of the land from the people through the Enclosure Awards of roughly 1810 to 1840.

As the old rhyme says (and I may have remembered it slightly incorrectly),
*The law condemns the man and woman
Who stole the goose from off the common
But lets the greater villain loose
Who stole the common from the goose.*

Building on the legacy of the 1920s and 1930s came the establishment of National Parks in 1949, very largely because of the CPRE and Friends of the Peak here in Sheffield, and ultimately the CROW Act of 2000. The mission goes on with, hopefully, the eventual establishment of the coastal path - and why not give England the same access rights that are enjoyed in Scotland?

But one can never be complacent about access as there are always those who will seek to restrict it either directly, or through what I call accessibility; that means getting on to the open access land or along a Public Right of Way (PROW). The position is less complicated for access on foot on CROW land, but if you are a mountain biker, horse rider, caver, or like flying, the position is much more problematic.

A fair few established paths are in fact concessionary paths or

concessionary bridleways, though you might well not discern that from an OS map. The footpath along the top of Stanage is a case in point. That means rights can be withdrawn if open access land is closed for any reason, like fire risk, whilst a PROW can not be closed except through a complex legal process. The right to pass and repass (that is what defines a PROW) is pretty well inviolate, as is the mantra 'once a right of way, always a right of way'.

On farmland, and indeed elsewhere, a fair few concessionary ways were funded through the High Level Stewardship scheme. This is now superseded by a new scheme called Countryside Stewardship which does not allow funding for concessionary ways – so be prepared for some nasty shocks. Also, because of the general dearth of funding for the maintenance and upkeep of all rights of way, and severe reduction in the staff employed by Highway Authorities and other statutory organisations to do this hugely important job, the pressure is coming more and more on the user to pay; that's you and me.

This pressure will increasingly be felt even on CROW land if an activity is not specifically permitted under the Act. One category, besides those mentioned above, is activity deemed as commercial activity. If you pay to go on a guided walk, that is classed as commercial activity, and, likewise, if you pay for climbing instruction that too is commercial activity.

One major landowner here in the Peak, and nationwide, the **National Trust**, has just issued some **Outdoor Activity Licensing Guidance**. One has to have a great deal of sympathy with the Trust who face huge costs in keeping the landscapes they own for the nation in good heart and able to cope with the wear and tear that results from increasing levels of usage, but at the same time it is a matter of concern for the BMC to know just what this will mean for our members. The Peak is reputed to be the second most visited of the 6,500 National Parks worldwide (the first is Mt Fuji) so we have our fair share of the problem right on our own doorstep.

At Head Office the BMC has a meeting in prospect with the National Trust at national level, whilst here in the Peak our local Access Team also have a meeting in prospect – just after the deadline for newsletter contributions. Both national and local BMC reps will report back on this at the Area Meeting. The over-riding message, however, is clear, and it's a general message not just specific to the National Trust. If a way can be found of charging you for enjoying the outdoors, its going to happen – or to put it another way, the expectation will increasingly be that where possible the cost of upkeep and maintenance should be passed to the user.

The BMC's **Mend Our Mountains** initiative will help beyond what it achieves in respect of a few selected

paths in raising awareness of a looming problem, and the more we can propose solutions the less likely it is that someone else's solution will be imposed on us. That is why it is a good idea to support the **Ours to Care For** sticker scheme at Stanage and the **Peak Park's own Access Fund**, targeted amongst other priorities to the Wish List for access improvements in the Peak to which the Peak Area Meeting has put forward items for inclusion. You can also help by subscribing to organisations like the **National Trust**, the **John Muir Trust** and, here in the Peak, the **Friends of the Peak** whose contribution to the wellbeing of the landscape we all cherish has, over the years, been immeasurable.

Just one little example of why landowners really do have a problem: its getting harder to leave rubbish at Dump It sites even if you are not in a white van – so where does it get left instead? Every time someone dumps 17 fridges at Stanage or other debris, one way or another you and I will end up paying for the removal at £100 a time.

On the general theme of wear and tear in the countryside something else that is causing concern is increase in **night time usage** across a number of recreation activities. The BMC has issued some general guidance on this in response to the growing concern. The tenor of the guidance is not 'don't do it', but rather 'think about how you do it', and understand that even if you can't see why it should be an issue for

wildlife, local communities, relentless wear and tear on the landscape and some other people just take on board the fact that when Access Team reps go to meetings with landowners, and to open forums, its something that is increasingly being raised.

The **ring ouzel** season is under way again. This year there is a concerted monitoring effort right across the Sheffield Moors area and beyond, to include Moscar and some other sites. All the monitors are meeting to agree a standard methodology which should add to the value of what have, on some sites, been just a series of random observations. Data will also be gathered on predator behaviour and on curlew. Ring ouzel restrictions are not imposed as a matter of course, but only where they are deemed necessary, and for the limited period that is necessary.

Bill and Flo Gordon are leading the survey on the Stanage area, and Kim Leyland on the Burbage area with Adam Long being the principal contact for the BMC. If you see any sightings you think could be of interest please don't hesitate to contact him or me, (adam@adamlong.co.uk or henry.folkard@bmcvolunteers.org.uk) because it all helps to build up an accurate picture. You can help too if you see others behaving badly by dropping litter (especially non-biodegradable litter), failing to keep their dogs on a lead and under close control, staking out a nest to watch or photograph the birds in such a way that

it disturbs nesting birds, or settling down for a butty or a chat in the vicinity of a nest.

We promised an update on where all the **Ours to Care For** Stanage sticker money has gone. A detailed breakdown exists, but in round figures about 500 stickers have been sold raising over £6,000, spent on access works on Long Causeway and the Plantation (£1,200); conservation work including volunteer support (£2,500); car park maintenance and signage (£1,500); dry stone wall restoration (£200); support for refugee and asylum seeker groups (£500); Stanage Pole replacement (£500). The money has delivered more than its face value worth because in every case it has effectively provided matching funding to supplement other resource and make things possible that otherwise would not be.

The next targets for this income will be attention to the roadside verges at the Popular End, around the Plantation car park, in the High Neb parking area and at the informal lay-bys above Sheepwash Bank.

On the grouse moors around the **Upper Derwent** annual restrictions will be imposed again this year, and signed by the Estates at key entry points. PROWs are not affected by such restrictions, nor, by courtesy of the landowners, are major concessionary routes. Linear passage by walkers along regular paths does not cause much by way of disturbance to ground nesting birds. The big, big problem is, as ever,

with dogs. Other people's dogs being where they should not be – they are banned all year round on grouse moors – costs you your access.

Any mention of **dogs** tends to result in a howl of protest, but it is a very real issue for livestock farmers, perhaps especially on the moors around Sheffield. The current tenant at North Lees has lost a number of ewes to dogs, and a farmer on the Eastern Moors Stakeholder Group had the udder ripped off one of her cows by dogs. A recent report in a national newspaper highlighted 116 ewes killed in one night alone near Chichester, and cited 1,085 incidents reported last year to the Police, killing and injuring an estimated total of 18,500 livestock. Assuming the report to be accurate this is a matter of fact.

On **Kinder, Bleaklow and Upper Derwent** a massive 50,000 trees have been planted over 150 hectares (in round figures) to restore our native landscape to something approaching what it was like before it was eaten by sheep. There will be a map detailing key sites available at the Area Meeting, along with detailed plans for the work on some of the sites. The planting has been carefully managed with archaeological sites like charcoal hearths left open. These hearths are interesting because they show there must have been trees where their traces remain in the past to have created the charcoal. Additionally, to the delight of all, 4.8km of old wire fencing has been removed, mostly from the Upper Derwent.

Essentially what has happened is that one phase in a massive moorland restoration programme for overgrazed habitat, representing a £4m investment, has been completed. Apart from landscape and habitat improvements one result will be better water and carbon retention in restored boggy areas. The water retention will in turn prevent downstream flooding, and keep the peat where it belongs. Filtering it out of the water supply lower down creates a cost saving for United Utilities sufficient to justify their £2m contribution towards the cost of the initiative.

A corollary for mountain walkers is that much of the land, essentially an upland raised bog, will be wetter, so plan your route with care. Some warning notices have been placed at key access points and are particularly pertinent for those of the 6,000 DofE kids who visit the Peak each year who make Kinder their destination.

If you fancy a walk with a difference in these parts check out the Moors for the Future Community Science web site **www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/community-science** and carry out a scientific survey on key indicator species like bumblebee, curlew, mountain hares or sphagnum by walking a defined transect and recording what you see.

Burbage and Eastern Moors and Sheffield Moors Partnership

Work on the contract to formalise the management of **Burbage, Houndkirk**

and Hathersage Moors by the Eastern Moors Partnership is progressing, but at the time of writing is not yet complete. A National Trust team will however be progressing work on the approaches to the pack horse bridge at Burbage, whilst the bridge itself is also to receive the attention it needs.

On **Eastern Moors** the second cull of surplus red deer is now complete with the herd brought back to its optimum level of 160–200. This is a contentious exercise, but a necessary one for the health of the herd which lacks any natural predators, like wolves or lynx, to keep a sustainable balance.

A template for a **Sheffield Moors Partnership** stakeholder group has been agreed, and the work to get it up and running will start in the late Spring or early summer. This will be a strategic group looking at common landscape issues across the Golden Frame and will not get involved in the sort of detail current site based forums address.

Work with Derbyshire County Council (DCC) on their **Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)** is about to kick off. This is an important document both politically and practically. DCC is the major Highways Authority in the National Park (the National Park Authority is not the Highways Authority for the Peak District National Park), but highways and their Countryside Service are having to bear the full force of really severe cuts. Unless the case is made for retaining at least some funding, and some staff, the rights of way network will fall

into complete disrepair. You can see this happening already in some parts of the Peak in other County Council areas. Practically the ROWIP's value is to determine priorities for spending whatever money is left in the kitty after the cuts. This can matter quite a lot if the general lack of bridleways, or of joined up routes, or of routes with consistent surface, or with too many stiles, or with inadequate signage is a problem for you. There is normally a public consultation about establishing priorities on DCC's web site when the process begins – or let me know your priorities so I can feed them in through a consultative group on which the BMC is represented.

At **Horseshoe** the steep bank above the car park hosts a number of loose boulders, some of which fell into the car park earlier in the year. Luxuriant growth of brambles during the summer is pretty good at catching a lot of what comes down, and some work is in hand to get the worst of what is lying on the slope trundled. This will reduce the risk of any damage to parked vehicles, but remember parking is at your own risk.

There is loose rock around at **Aldery** too – nothing new there then. As the newsletter goes to press recent reports of a large flake on *Broken Toe* getting looser are being checked out.

Finally, an issue regarding **Anston Stones** has cropped up which Rob Dyer is investigating. We have also had to agree a peregrine restriction at **Tissington Spires**: there has not been one there before.



Stonnis

A film about Black Rocks, Cromford

Stonnis

Mike Pollitt

I loved Black Rocks as a kid. I could squirm into its gullies and scramble across the pinkish graffitied top, the edge-warnings of my concerned parents only adding to the excitement. As a Scout I scraped my knees and trainers against it, eagerly following the impatient top rope. When I first refound climbing years later the image of Seb on Meshuga finalised my choice of cliffs over mountains – breathtakingly inadvisable heroics in a beautiful, yet familiar place. I owned a pair of jeans and knew exactly where Black Rocks was – the same could not be said for salopettes and Zermatt.

As climbing took over my life, I learnt

more about Black Rocks; its historic foundations, revered testpieces and especially the mental VSs in-between. I also learnt the value of being taken down a peg or two and the perverse pleasure of its idiosyncracies. At most other grit crags you know where you stand – a line of rock faces in one direction, kindly walkers traverse the top, if it hasn't been raining you can get on most stuff and there'll have to be a decent hold up there somewhere if it's that grade. Black Rocks turns every one of these conventions on its head, with an added inscrutably spooky feeling. I loved it all and wanted to climb there all the time.

Most people didn't and when I visited in April 2014 it was for the first time in years. I sat alone watching the red-lit west wall and thought about the nature of my past few hours climbing, the awe in the voices



Photo: *Birch Tree Variant.*

of foreign climbers when I'd told them that this was my local crag and the faces people at the climbing wall pulled when this place was mentioned. It became clear just how good a film someone with talent and experience could make about Black Rocks.

They probably weren't going to bother so I thought I'd have a go myself. The ideas were in my head almost quicker than I could think them – classical music and historical quotes to create an appropriate feeling of grandeur, unjustly neglected mid-grade routes shot the way famous last great problems normally are and people trying as hard as they possibly could on routes they expected to cruise.

I couldn't have predicted the next 14 months as my little project got bigger and bigger. Not knowing the people who are in proper climbing films, I just asked my mates if they fancied it.

I loved the footage we shot but I didn't expect festival judges to enthuse about the 'great characters I'd found', strangers to want to shake my hand after screenings or my heroes to give it such glowing reports online, in print and in person. I just wanted to share how my local crag made me feel.

Stonnis, the mighty and infamous Black Rocks, Cromford, has given me so much. If you haven't spent a late-spring evening absorbed in the pleasures of this absurd and special place I implore you to do so. Or at least watch my film.

<http://tv.thebmc.co.uk/videos/stonnis/>



Photo: Seal Stones.

Activist Profile: Jon Fullwood

Age? 42.

Where do you live? Totley, Sheffield.

Occupation? Rope Access Operations Manager.

Where did you grow up?

Alfreton, Derbyshire (grim ex-mining town eight miles east of Matlock).

When and how did you start climbing? My dad was a climber but for whatever reason didn't see fit to take me and my brother out climbing till I was fifteen. We used to go out with the local club mostly. Lots of midgy evenings doing VS on the grit, or Wildcat and the odd weekend away in Wales or the Lakes.

What type of climber are you?

That depends on where I am and what time of year it is. When at home mostly a boulderer, but I love route climbing of most varieties and do a fair bit in the warmer months.

Who do you climb with currently?

Midweek developing forays are often solo missions, or with Ned Feehally. Lots of other Sheffield heads on an infrequent basis. My wife, but not so much since she discovered fell running.

Describe what you did when you last went out?

The forecast and webcams were showing drizzle across much of the Peak but a chance of dryness in the west, so I went to have a look at some lines I'd spotted a while back at Hen Cloud. It was midweek and I wanted some solitude so I didn't check if anyone else was free. After driving through filthy weather all the way to the Winking Man it was great to pop out of the ming just in time for the crags. Hen Cloud was in good nick and fortunately the peregrines hadn't arrived yet. I had a great day cleaning and climbing four new boulder problems around the 6C/7A mark. Had the crag to myself, though I seemed to be constantly under surveillance from a stream of folk with binoculars turning up at the gate.

Who were your early influences?

I watched *Stone Monkey* videoed off the telly many many times, so Dawes obviously. I read and reread my dad's old

climbing mags, so Fawcett, Allen, Livesey, etc. Later I started climbing a lot with Andy Crome and his outlook was a big influence.

What is your hardest route and boulder problem and how important are grades to you?

Hardest route, not sure, one of the few 8bs I've done, possibly my new route *Giant Haystacks* down Blackwell Dale – that took a lot of effort. Hardest problem, probably my new problem in Sydney, *Sheffield Steal* (8A). It's nice to climb biggish numbers, I'd like to climb bigger but I've never had the patience for sieging. I figured out a long time ago I stood a better chance of feeding my ego by climbing new things. I'm a much better finder than I am a climber.

What were your first new routes/ boulder problems in the Peak?

I think my first new route would have been *'Ere Come Fudgie* at Wyming Brook, it's all been downhill since then. The first new problem would be *Ten Inch Zombies* at Eastwood, but I didn't start actively looking round for new stuff until the foot and mouth crisis when I did a collection at Wharncliffe.

What are your favourite routes and crags and places in the Peak?

My favourite routes are mostly my own if I'm honest. They aren't the best in the Peak but the whole process of finding, cleaning, climbing, naming and sharing means I have the best memories and an

almost parental bond with them.

I have a special fondness for south Peak lime and grit, possibly because I started climbing on these crags: Cratcliffe, Black Rocks, Eastwood, High Tor, Thor's Cave, Beeston... The high moorland grit crags are also up there: Howshaw, Upper Edale Rocks, Grinah, Barrow... My favourite non-climbing area is the reef knolls around Earl Sterndale and Hollinsclough: Parkhouse, Chrome, Swallow Tor.

What are your best new routes and/or problems in the Peak District?

Routes: *Escape to Valhalla*, Thor's Cave; *The Great Tribulation*, Hipley Hill; and *Lip of Fools*, Eastwood Rocks. Problems: *Low Rider*, Stanage; *Panopticon*, Howshaw; *The Golden Egg*, Clifftop Boulder; and *Burning Lark Sunset*, Hepstow Brow. *Low Rider* finding its way on to the cover of the VP bouldering guide was a proud moment.

What type of climbing do you enjoy most and why?

Massively long steep stamina pitches on tufas and well-protected long sea cliff routes. I'm quite a slow climber with a good eye for trick ways of doing moves and devious rests (good at finding you see) so I get on well with this sort of climbing. Sadly the Peak has neither so I go bouldering mostly. Other than that I like climbing with some exploratory value, and prowls, everyone loves prowls, they're like The Eagles of climbing genres.

Grit or lime?

Grit.

Hill Walking Notes

Peter Judd

Most hill users will easily be able to bring to mind familiar sections of footpath that have suffered damage and, as the base of the path has broken up making the ground harder to traverse, become ever spreading unsightly scars on much loved hills.

The initial cause is simply the large numbers of feet passing over the same ground, then rain, frost and other weather related erosion processes join in. The consequence is not only unsightly scarring, visible from some distance, but also a loss of foliage and ground cover as the path spreads and more people attempt to bypass the difficult ground underfoot.

There are alternatives of course: choosing hills that fewer people visit, making route choices that avoid well used paths or even eschewing paths all together and so on. However it is unrealistic, perhaps even undesirable, to expect everyone to do this and few of us are going to do all these things all of the time. Inevitably most, if not all, hill users will contribute to such damage at some stage in their walking life. The damage can be repaired of course: we could close such paths and divert routes elsewhere and let nature reclaim the damaged path. But that is neither desirable, nor practical. An alternative is to repair the damage and replace that path with a

stone-stepped way. Some object to such paving as unsightly and inappropriate in semi-wild places. But done well, I would argue, it is far better than to just allow the damage to continue to spread. Indeed, done properly, such paved paths can allow natural ground cover to reclaim much of the damaged area whilst walkers pass safely by using the much narrower paved way. With good stone choice this replacement path can be far less visible from afar and allow many years of passage without deterioration.

But who pays? In these financially challenging times we can no longer expect the Peak District National Park Authority to carry out such work, it simply does not have the funds to do much at all. Isn't it right and proper that we, the hill users, make some contribution? This is where the BMC's new experiment with crowdfunding, the **Mend Our Mountains** campaign comes in. It's a chance for all hill users to give something back. The BMC Hill Walking Working Group is fully supportive of the campaign. National Park Authorities were asked to suggest suitable projects and our own authority's proposal to repair part of the Ringing Roger approach path has been accepted as part of this campaign. Anyone familiar with the last few hundred metres, where the ground steepens just below the nose of rock at the top, will know how bad it has become, visible even across the valley. A worthy target, I'm sure you will agree. I hope you will give some thought to contributing, in particular contributing



Photo: Ringing Roger, Kinder.

to the Peak District part of the campaign. This is the link to use:

www.crowdfunder.co.uk/mend-the-peak-district/

The campaign ends on 9 May and, as with most crowdfunding campaigns, if it doesn't reach its target, no funds will be taken at all and so nothing will get done. I hope this doesn't happen. So it is important that as many people join in as possible. Please give it some thought and encourage others to do so too. Oh, and there are even some nice rewards for contributors too!

BMC AGM walks

Many of you will already know that this year's BMC AGM and annual gathering will take place at Losehill Hall in Castleton on the weekend of the 16 and 17 April. We wanted to make sure that attendees have an opportunity

of a walk in our beautiful hills so we have organised two walks, one on Saturday afternoon (starting at 1.30 p.m., a walk of around eight miles taking in Cave Dale, Mam Tor and Lose Hill) and the other on Sunday (starting at 9.30 a.m., a walk of around 10 miles taking in Hope Cross, the southern edge of Kinder Scout, Ringing Roger and Hollins Cross). Both walks start and finish at Losehill Hall.

Any BMC member who would like to join in, whether attending the AGM itself or not, will be very welcome. However, may I ask that all such people sign up using the appropriate part of the AGM booking form, so we have a good idea of numbers:

www.thebmc.co.uk/agm2016

Short walk before the June Peak Area Meeting.

Some of you may remember that fellow Area Hill Walking Rep. Cath Lee led a short walk before the June Peak Area meeting (where it has been traditional for attendees to take in a climb or other activity beforehand).

We intend to do something similar this year too. If you fancy a breath of fresh air before the meeting, and the weather is suitable, then we presently plan to meet below the south end of The Roaches, at the Roaches Gate, by the car parking lay-by at SK 004 621 ready to set off walking at 6.30 p.m. Look out for emails announcing details of this meeting nearer the time to ensure plans have not changed.

Climbing News & Gossip

Simon Lee

The weather this winter in the Peak has not been kind to climbers but the dedicated always find a way to get out so there is plenty to report on in this inaugural round-up.

At the end of the lime season Tom Randall was rewarded with the second ascent of Steve McClure's *Cave Linkup* (8A+) at Raven Tor and then dived deep into the cave and climbed out into *Let's Get Ready to Rumbleweed*. There was some debate about the most appropriate name for this extension and I think he ended up with *Let's Get Ready to Fumble Ben's Weed* (7C+), or at least I hope so. At the Chee Dale Cornice Haydn Jones found a right-hand finish to *R'n'P* to give *Body Snatchers* (8b+).

Over on the grit in October Niccolo Ceria bagged the coveted second ascent of Ben Moon's *Voyager Sit Start* (8B+) at Burbage North which had been unrepeated for nine years despite gallant attempts by fellow Italian Michele Caminati. This year Ned Feehally reclaimed some local honour with the third ascent. *Voyager* stand start (8B) also got a slew of repeats this winter, perhaps most notably from visiting up-and-coming teenager Hamish Potokar. Hamish also repeated *The Ace* (8B) at Stanage Plantation as did his equally youthful friend James Squire. *The Ace* is the low start to *The Joker* (8A) and the left hand crimp used on both has been

observed to be much improved due to excess brushing (more care please!).

Controversially *The Joker* was recently done with what appeared to be a jump off a boulder at the start. In response first ascensionist Jerry Moffatt, replete with shotgun, dogs and flat cap, was rumoured to have headed out to the Plantation to set things right. Together with accomplice Ben Moon and apprentice Tyler Landman they were said to have attempted to lever the offending boulder away but collectively lacked enough leg power. In contrast Ned Feehally discovered he had more than enough leg power to launch up the unclimbed dyno left of *The Joker* which went at a modest 7C and was aptly named *Full House*.

Pete Whittaker and Tom Randall maintained their dominant place at the cutting edge of absurdity by climbing Master's Edge in Minion suits. While Ron Fawcett's take on this is unknown a more respectful low-key approach was adopted by Nathan Lee and Steve Ramsden who both flashed it.

At Bamford Quarry Mark Rankine did the excellent looking *Boadacious Groove* (7A) and the arête to its right *Big Excellent Adventure* (E5). The wall left of *Kelly's Variation* at High Neb yielded to a delighted Ellis Ash, to give *Dunge Master* (7B), and was quickly repeated by Ben Bransby who confirmed the quality and added a harder sit start.

Jon Fullwood can always be relied on to add new problems each season. This winter he added a good sit start to *Moo*

Cow at Shining Cliff (7B+). At Birchen he climbed a 6C low start to *Cold Compass* and also found *Iron Eye* (7A+) on the roof to its left which he then did more directly at 7B and confusingly named it *Iron Eyes*. A similarly confused James Jacobs did a sitting direct start to *Nelson's Slab Direct* at 7A thinking he was doing *Iron Eye*. At Burbage North, Dave Parry linked *Blind Ali* into *Blind Fig* on Valentine's Day to give *Love is Blind* (8A).

At Roche Abbey Ned Feehally and Dawid Skoczylas repeated Mike Adam's *Serenata* (8C). Dawid then went on to complete the desperate looking wall left of *Hooligan* at Raven Tor. Christened *West Side* it extends his 8B boulder problem *East Side* and is graded a conservative 8C. Further downstream Kristian Klemmow added *Pinch an Inch* (7b+) to Lammergeyer Buttress and next to it straightened out and bolted *Final Apocalypse* at 7a+. Nearby Mark 'Zippy' Pretty added *The Honeymoon Is Over* (7c) next to *Honeymoon Blues* and a variant to that route from the second bolt, *Decree Nici* (7b+). On the right side of Rubicon Paul Freeman added *Point of No Return* (6c) and next to it Gary Gibson added *Trunk of Punk* (7a) which is a rightwards finish to *Last but Not Least*. Gary says he is currently completing work on a new venue which will imminently yield 11 new routes. Check his website www.sportsclimbs.co.uk for updates.

Ella Russell and Jo Allen both did their first 8As, *Quarantine* at Anston Stones and *Back Street Mime Artist* at Burbage North respectively. BSMA is rapidly

gaining neo-classic status. Also close to repeating it is Emma Flaherty, who spoke at the BMC Glossop Area meet last year and has been nominated as vice-president to replace Mina Leslie-Wujastyk. Given its location it is surprising that a problem of such quality as BSMA was only recently climbed (in 2013 by Iain Farrar). As with *Full House* it shows that there are quality unclimbed problems out there, lurking in full view.

Mark Rankine has taken advantage of a sabbatical from work to grow his hair long and open a new bouldering sector in Priddock Wood below Cutthroat Bridge: 15 problems from 5+ to 7B, the best of which looks to be *Tarkus* (7A+). Details on **UKBouldering.com**

Visiting Canadian supremo Sean McColl, fresh from winning the CWIF bouldering competition, ventured outside with fellow competitor Jorg Verhoeven to Black Rocks. Sean, who had previously failed on *Hubble* because he had the wrong brand of kneepad, said he had wanted to do *Gaia* for 15 years. Reporting on the day Sean blogged how stoked he was to flash *Gaia*... on top rope... before both he and Jorg led it. Well done Sean.

On a final sad note, Brian Cropper, who was an active Peak new router in the '70s and '80s, has died. A tribute can be found on **UKClimbing.com**

Get in touch

Send your Peak area news, gossip or newsletter article ideas to me at: peakarea@gmail.com

2016 Peak Area Meetings

13 April, 7.30 p.m.
The Maynard, Grindleford

8 June, 8 p.m.
The Winking Man, Upper Hulme

14 September, 8 p.m.
The Globe, Glossop

16 November, 7.30 p.m.
The Maynard, Grindleford

Forthcoming Events

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

BMC AGM 2016

The 2016 AGM weekend is taking place at YHA Castleton (Losehill Hall, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S33 8VB) from Friday night (15 April 2016) through to Sunday (17 April 2016).

The BMC has booked the entire venue for the weekend so BMC members have sole use of all the available facilities. Book your accommodation and food at www.thebmc.co.uk/agm2016 for a weekend full of social get-togethers, walking and climbing activities and a few meetings!

Stanage Pole Re-erection

Sunday 17 April, 12 p.m.
At Stanage Pole, obvs!

Spirit of Kinder Day

Saturday 23 April, 2 p.m.
Royal Hotel, Hayfield. Free entry.

BMC Peak Area Contacts

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Secretary: Becky Hammond.
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Peak Area Reps (your voice on the BMC National Council):
Rob Greenwood and Dave Brown.
<http://community.thebmc.co.uk/peak>

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Peak Area Newsletter Editorial:
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Next meeting: Wednesday 13 April, 7.30 p.m.
The Maynard, Grindleford, S32 2HE