



*Welcome* to the first edition of the BMC's South West Area Newsletter. It's been put together by the volunteers of the Area Open Meeting. The idea behind it is to provide a local and relevant source of information for the area's climbers and walkers. Geographically, it covers Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Dorset and all points west as far as Land's End. It's a big area, but not quite as big as the rest of the country.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter then get in touch with the editor, Scott Collier, at [sjcollier@gmail.com](mailto:sjcollier@gmail.com) and the South West Area Chair, Jerzy Wieczorek, at [chairman.jerzy@gmail.com](mailto:chairman.jerzy@gmail.com)

## *Next Area Open Meeting*

The next SW area meeting is at **19.30 on Sunday 18th November** in the upstairs function room of **The Nova Scotia Inn, 1 Nova Scotia Place, Bristol**. Items likely to be discussed include bolting in Cheddar, plans for crag clean-up events at Avon, Wye Valley and Portland, and a benefit for the collapsing Lundy access road. There will be food and a free drink for participants. Do come along and have your say.

Next year, meetings will move around a bit, with plans to hold them in Cheddar, Portland and Plymouth, as well as in Bristol.

## Who's Who?

I find it's good to know who you're dealing with.



**Jerzy Wieczorek** is the Chair of the Area Meeting. He does a good line in keeping people on track and reaching decisions, and meetings always finish earlier than he says they will. This is a Good Thing. A prize for the first person to pronounce his name correctly. (It's *Yershy*, by the way.)

### Access Reps

These are your first point of contact if you run up against a problem of any sort on any of the cliffs or footpaths in the area. If they don't know what to do, they will know someone who does! Feel free to phone them up to tell them what a great job they're doing, and that you appreciate the time they give.

Portland - Neal Heanes 01305 826 299

Swanage - Steve Taylor 01929 550193

Wye Valley - Rick Sowards 01291 629962

Somerset & Mendips - Chris Simms  
07815 738643

Avon - Steve Findlay 0117 9026474

Cheddar - Martin Crocker 01275 394064

## The Avon Clean-Up

Steve Findlay is asking for volunteers to help clear the jungle below *The Ramp* (*Unknown Wall* area) on Sunday 4th November at 10.30am.

This area has been descending into bramble hell for some time now, so we need a team to get down there and sort it

out. The road will be closed that day, so that gives us an excuse get a bonfire going in the evening. Bring gardening gloves, bin liners secateurs and sparklers. Effigies are optional.

For more details, see the BMC news website closer to the time, or contact Steve directly on 0117 9026474.

## Further Clean-Up Proposals



© Heinz-Josef Lücking 2006. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution ShareAlike 2.5.

At the last Area Meeting, Rick Sowards suggested a clean-up at Ban-y-Gor. Everyone got very excited about this, and you should expect something to happen. Check the BMC and UKClimbing websites for details.

## Cheddar Access

We are now into "open season" in Cheddar! All climbs are unrestricted from October 1st until Thursday 15th March 2008 (apart from *Doomwatch* and several routes on the right-hand side of *Madrugada Wall* that are subject to a permanent ban, and the climbs above the bus-turning circle when the bus is running).

During the first trial year of the proposed new access regime there were too many instances (114, to be exact) where climbers have been spotted climbing

where they shouldn't. Whilst some may think the restrictions rather strict, this is how it had been agreed with the BMC and we must all abide by them - 'full stop'. If the Cheddar Caves & Gorge feel that climbers (albeit a minority) are taking the mickey then they are within their rights to place a permanent ban on climbing. If you see someone climbing where they shouldn't, let them know, and suggest an alternative venue (but be polite!).

For a full access calendar, go to the [Access & Conservation](#) section of the BMC website, find a Cheddar crag, and follow the links. Download the form, print it off and stick it in your guidebook. While you're at it, take a few spares to give to people at the crag who don't have one.

## *Crag AttaK*

Cheddar Cave's Crag AttaK, the event at least part of the South West had been eagerly waiting for, took place on 16th September in Cheddar Gorge. Postponed from a wet July (which claimed other victims like the Bristol Music Festival) the weather came good in time and a dry, if chilly, day was appreciated by all.

Organised by West Country climber Martin Crocker and hosted by Cheddar Caves & Gorge (the owners of the main cliffs), Crag AttaK was a light-hearted outdoor climbing competition and festival aimed to raise money and awareness for an important SW charity: Children's Hospice South West. This charity provides support and respite care to life-limited children and their families at its two

hospices, including the recently opened Charlton Farm near Bristol.

The event also sought to mark up what is hoped to be a turning point for climbing in the Gorge, promoting the new *trial* access regime which has enabled a massive increase in climbing activity here.

The event kicked off with the Cheddar Man Marathon, a challenging rat-race style course across the Gorge landscape in which 12 two-person teams had been invited to compete. Windy conditions obliged a cold start on the first discipline, yet almost no-one floundered on the so-called 'difficulty climb' - a F7a featuring a crux roof topped by tech climbing through overlapping slabs. Next came a punishing race against the clock up Jacob's Ladder, 274 steps up the south side of the Gorge. Legs still heavy with lactic acid, our heroes were then ushered into the Heaven's 900, almost a kilometre of relentless uphill running. Some cut their losses and chose to walk. That brought them to the *piece de resistance*: a 60-metre tyrolean strung across the sky to the top of High Rock, almost 400 feet above road-level. Fearless yelps of joy filled the Gorge, as one by one, competitors threw themselves into the void, yarding frantically uphill at the far end to beat the clock. Next came an abseil descent of High Rock with team members trying not to snap a fragile cord that suspended Children's Hospice South West balloons between them. Drawing upon skills of teamwork, to say little of a gentle touch, most teams got their

balloons to the base intact thus maximising points and surprising the organisers. The final event in the marathon was a Speed Climb in which the guy who escaped the Difficulty Climb got to blast a 25m HVS in as fast a time as possible, occasionally stripping bare for minimal wind resistance but extra laughs - our MC, Duncan, made sure of that.

The results of the marathon were:

1<sup>st</sup> place: *Bristol Cream* (Adam Mulholland and Matt Rawlinson)

2<sup>nd</sup> place: *Army Mountaineering* (Mark Stevenson and Mike Smith),

3<sup>rd</sup> place (joint): *ITV West* (John Alcock and Ben Bransby) and the *BMC* (Rob Adie and Richard Simpson).

While all that was going on, a series of open events were being held on some of the road-side crags. The Open Speed Climb saw valiant attempts, with a special prize awarded to 12-year old Claudia who just kept coming back, thereby improving her time by 3 minutes in the process. Local ace Adam Mulholland clocked up the winning 64 seconds score on this 25-metre F6a. Unfortunately everyone chickened out of the fancy-dress, even pantomime horse (for HSW reasons), leaving Ivy-Man to make a complete ass of himself when he missed the unenforced dyno on Jill and grounded out. He was last seen being harrassed by goats.

The day was rounded off with local produce and ale, as competitors licked their wounds and listened to the

announcement by Hugh Cornwell, Director of Cheddar Caves & Gorge, that the new climbing arrangements would be allowed for a second trial year up to June 2008. That was the froth on the Potholer, making a very special day resonate with all Cheddar Gorge climbers. Who knows, if the climbing year proves successful, maybe we'll have a Crag AttaK 08!

A short film of the event by freelance broadcaster Jo Morrison will be posted on a local web-site (to be announced): check it out to see what you missed! Lots of money was raised and news bulletins on ITV West ensured good publicity for Children's Hospice South West.

Thanks are due to supporters Undercover Rock, Avon & Somerset Search and Rescue Service and Taunton Leisure, and additionally to The National Trust, Cheddar Ales, The Gorge Outdoors, Geronimo, and Climb magazine. And thanks especially to all the climbers who took part, raised sponsorship, and made an effort to be seen to support Cheddar Gorge climbing and Children's Hospice South West.

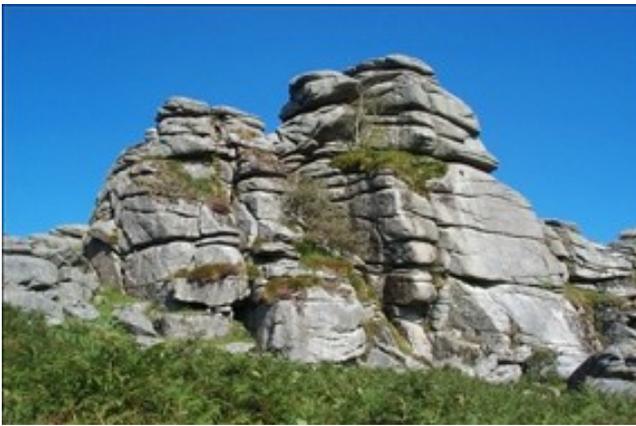
*Martin Crocker*

## *Vixen Tor*

Prior to 2003, climbing and walking were regularly undertaken at this renowned beauty spot near Merrivale. However, after a change in ownership, signs and fences were erected warning the public to keep out and despite negotiations for a voluntary access agreement and a financial offer by Dartmoor National Park,

this historically visited site remains inaccessible to the public.

A premier post was put on UKClimbing asking those who have ever visited the Tor to recall their experiences on the [Ramblers Association website](#). The RA is currently collecting evidence of public visits to Vixen Tor in a bid to help reclaim public access to this well-loved crag. This site is still live and many climbers have now registered their past visits to the crag.



© BMC 2007.

If you have a visit to report, then log onto the RA website or write to the BMC with your details.

The RA and the BMC are currently working on a campaign postcard to be distributed in the South West, which will be placed at climbing walls and other appropriate venues. This should be available in the next month or two. As part of this campaign, the public are being asked to complete and send the detachable freepost card to the new Chief Executive of the Dartmoor National Park Authority demanding that they take action to secure access for all to Vixen Tor. Help us to build an 'evidence of use' database, which will help us to claim public rights.

Share this postcard with friends and family so that as many people as possible take action on the issue.

The RA are also planning to lead a further and larger campaign early next year - details to follow.



During a well attended inaugural meeting of the South West Action Team in Plymouth in July, a plan was hatched to take on the challenge of vegetation at Chudleigh, near Exeter. As it was the first time the team had attempted anything like that, they soon came up against the unexpected. As Chudleigh has a designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the team had to negotiate with Natural England and the landowner for permission. After one false start, this was forthcoming after a site inspection by Barbara Benfield (lichen expert), Mark Glaister and Ben Hall (S.W.A.T.).

The clean-up is now taking place on Saturday 27th October at the crag. Meet at 10.30am below the crag to receive your instructions from the S.W.A.T. organisers, Mark Glaister and Ben Hall. Bring gardening gloves, secateurs, bin liners and some butties. A buffet will be laid on at the local after the event for all who took part. Further details on the BMC website news section closer to the date.

If you would like to be part of S.W.A.T., send me an email ([martin@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:martin@thebmc.co.uk)) and I'll put you on the list!

## *Wye Valley Guide*

The editor of the guide, John Willson, received an initial consignment of the guide at the beginning of September. However, the team was not satisfied that the printing and manufacture of the copies was to an acceptable standard, and they made the decision to have to book immediately reprinted by a tried and trusted company. This means that there will be a delay in delivery, which should now be expected in mid November. The team believe that the product is very high quality, and they have made a sample section of the book available on the [Climbers' Club website](#) available as a free pdf download.

## *The Lundy Road Appeal*



© Landmark Trust 2007.

The [Landmark Trust](#), who lease Lundy from the National Trust, have launched an appeal to raise funds to repair the island's road. It has suffered from extreme weather conditions and increasingly heavy rainfall over recent years. As a result of all this, the cliff face along which the road runs is experiencing movement and is increasingly unstable. The Trust

planned to carry out phased work over the next five years, but weather conditions mean that the work has to be speeded up. The target amount is a whopping £250,000. All donations, large or small are welcome, and should be made (payable) to:

The Lundy Fund  
The Landmark Trust  
Shotesbrooke  
Maidenhead  
Berkshire SL6 3SW

You could also call Emma Seymour on 01628 825920.

There are rumours of a fundraising event for Lundy being organized in the new year by the BMC's South West area... watch this space!

## *South West Area Clubs*

This is a simple list of the clubs we know about. The information is basic, but at least it's here! If you're in one of the clubs listed and your details are wrong, get in touch with the editor. If you're not in one of the clubs, then why the heck not?

### **AGC Mountaineering Club**

Club Secretary - Ms H Pink  
3 Four White Gates, Chittlehampton, Nr  
Umberleigh, Devon, EX37 9QR  
Telephone: 01769 9540114  
Email: [paul@agcmc.org.uk](mailto:paul@agcmc.org.uk)  
Website: [www.agcmc.org.uk](http://www.agcmc.org.uk)  
Children under 16 welcome with an  
accompanying adult.

### **Avon Mountaineering Club**

Club Secretary - Mr A J Tallant

48 Upper Cheltenham Place, Montpelier,  
Bristol, BS6 5HR

Telephone: 0117 9859275

Email: [membership@avon-mc.org.uk](mailto:membership@avon-mc.org.uk)  
[secretary@avon-mc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@avon-mc.org.uk)

Website: [www.avon-mc.org.uk](http://www.avon-mc.org.uk)

### **Climbers' Club**

Club Secretary - Ms M Papworth

Email: [secretary@climbers-club.co.uk](mailto:secretary@climbers-club.co.uk)

Website: [www.climbersclub.co.uk](http://www.climbersclub.co.uk)

A national club who are responsible for many of the guidebooks in the area.

### **Clingons Climbing Club**

Club Secretary - Mr P A Knight

13 Parc An Dix Lane, Phillack, HAYLE,  
Cornwall, TR27 5AB

Telephone: 01736 755913

E-mail: [phil@hayle50.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:phil@hayle50.freeserve.co.uk)

Website: [www.clingons.freeserve.co.uk](http://www.clingons.freeserve.co.uk)

### **Dockyard Venturers**

Club Secretary - Mr G Latham

Lavender Hill, 116 Mannamead Road,  
Mannamead, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 5QH

Telephone: 01752 214650

### **Exploration Group of North Somerset**

Club Secretary - Ms S Battin

67 Roman Way, Stoke Bishop, Bristol,  
BS9 1SP

Telephone: 0117 9687166

E-mail: [sue.battin@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sue.battin@hotmail.co.uk)

Website: [members.aol.com/egonsmc](http://members.aol.com/egonsmc)

Friendly, informal, mixed hillwalking/  
mountaineering club. Events every  
Sunday/weekend.

### **Forest of Dean Hillwalkers**

Club Secretary - Mr A Bevan

Berrington Cottage, Bulls Hill, Ross-on-  
Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5SD

Telephone: 01989 563743

### **Kernow Climbing Club**

Club Secretary - Mr B Hannon

23 Home Park Road, Saltash, Cornwall,  
PL12 6BH

Telephone: 01752 662634

### **Lands End Climbing Club**

Club Secretary - Mr A March

Wheal Cuning House, Cape Cornwall  
Road, St Just, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19  
7NG

Telephone: 01736 787070

New members always welcome! Lower  
age limit 14.

### **Ohjac Club**

25 Hamilton Lane, EXMOUTH, Devon,  
EX8 2JT

Telephone: 01395 272291

E-mail:

[daveandsue@hamilton123.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:daveandsue@hamilton123.fsbusiness.co.uk)

Website: [www.ohjac.co.uk](http://www.ohjac.co.uk)

The Over the Hill and Just Around the  
Corner (OHJAC) Club is a club for people  
with interests in walking, hill-walking,  
trekking, climbing and mountaineering  
based in East Devon, England. Formed in  
February 2004 the Club now has over 50  
members who participate in regular walks/  
ventures in the UK and Europe, and social  
activities.

### **Red Rope Walking & Climbing Club**

Club Secretary - Mr J Noble

Telephone: 07762 210108

Email:

[BristolAndSouthWest@redrope.org.uk](mailto:BristolAndSouthWest@redrope.org.uk)

Website: <http://redrope.gn.apc.org/>

A national club with a sizeable presence

in the Bristol area.

### **Romsey Climbers**

Club Secretary - Miss K Monk  
15 Medway Drive, Chandlers Ford,  
Hampshire, Hants, SO53 4SR  
Telephone: 07939 062 852  
Website: [www.romseyclimbers.org.uk](http://www.romseyclimbers.org.uk)

### **South Devon Mountaineering Club**

Club Secretary - Ms J Cotter  
8 New Buildings, Well Street, Exeter,  
Devon, EX4 6JD  
Telephone: 01392 437 990  
Website: [www.southdevonmc.org.uk](http://www.southdevonmc.org.uk)

### **Stoke Damerel Climbing Club**

Flat A, 60 Charlotte Street, PLYMOUTH,  
PL2 1RJ  
Telephone: 07816 335509  
Website:  
[www.stokedameralclimbingclub.co.uk](http://www.stokedameralclimbingclub.co.uk)  
Friendly club for all ages and abilities.  
10m high constantly routes. Thursday pm,  
Friday pm and Sunday am.

### **Swindon Mountaineering Club**

Club Secretary - Mr R T Perkin  
20 The Limes, South Cerney, Cirencester,  
Gloucestershire, GL7 5RF  
Telephone: 01285 869099  
E-mail: [timperkin@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:timperkin@yahoo.co.uk)  
Website:  
[www.SwindonMountaineering.supanet.com](http://www.SwindonMountaineering.supanet.com)

### **The Mill Climbing Club**

Club Secretary - Ms P Odam  
3 Sunnyside, North Street, South Molton,  
Devon, EX36 3AN  
Telephone: 07901 90790  
E-mail: [paula-princess66@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:paula-princess66@yahoo.co.uk)

### **Walking & Adventure Group (WAG)**



Club Secretary - Mrs P Holmes  
Rose Cottage, Forge Hill, Lydbrook,  
Gloucestershire, GL17 9QS  
Telephone: 01594 862717

### **Wessex Mountaineering Club**

Club Secretary - A Cumming  
17 Monkworthy Drive, Ashley Heath,  
Ringwood, BH24 2JJ  
Telephone: 01425 483111  
E-mail: [members@wessexmc.org.uk](mailto:members@wessexmc.org.uk)  
Website: [www.wessexmc.org.uk](http://www.wessexmc.org.uk)  
The club encourages members of all  
aspirations and abilities from the Wessex  
area.

### **Yeovil Mountaineering Club**

Club Secretary - Mr G Morris  
Sedgemoor Game Farm, Fivehead,  
Taunton, Somerset, TA3 6PS  
Telephone: 01460 281624

### *Relevant websites*

#### **The British Mountaineering Council**

[www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)

#### **The Climber's Club**

[www.climbersclub.co.uk](http://www.climbersclub.co.uk)

#### **The Ramblers' Association**

[www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)

#### **UKClimbing**

[www.ukclimbing.com/forums](http://www.ukclimbing.com/forums)

#### **Dave Henderson's South West Climbing**

[www.javu.co.uk](http://www.javu.co.uk)

#### **Cheddar Caves & Gorge**

[www.cheddarcaves.co.uk](http://www.cheddarcaves.co.uk)