



# BMC Wales

## August 2016

### IMPORTANT DATES

## Notes From the Chair

by Kate Worthington

Heading into September – which will hopefully prove to be a time of reflection, consideration, consolidation and drying out from summer rain. This summer has witnessed monumental changes to the fabric and direction of the British nation, with the recent results of June's EU Referendum throwing up political and financial uncertainty and liberating new prospects in equal (?) measures.

People feel shaken up, stirred...alert to action and consequence.

Great Britain has just enjoyed its most successful Olympics ever. In 2020 in Tokyo, climbing will get an opportunity to showcase itself on the world's biggest stage. Team GB athletes will have to excel in Lead, Speed and Bouldering climbing to meet with medal hopes. Should and how will the BMC (yep, that's the BMC, not Climb Britain I wrote) support the efforts of young climbers from England AND Wales? Let's not forget the young talent that already resides and breathes fire in this BMC Local Area.

This next round of Local Area meetings will include presentation and discussion on the recent rebranding of the BMC's public persona to 'Climb Britain'. I would urge

anyone with a strong opinion, either way, on the process and outcome of this project to attend their next Local Area meeting. This issue needs fair dialogue and a humane approach to reach a practical and positive resolution. Like I said, people feel alert and engaged, which is a fantastic outcome. The BMC is its membership.

In June, a mandate was sent along to the planned National Council meeting, from the North Wales area. This queried the BMC's position on the Snowdonia National Park Authority and the National Trust's continued acceptance of, and subsequent management of, small-scale hydroelectric schemes in areas held in high regard by BMC members for walking, mountaineering and climbing. We await the outcome of this mandate. What action do members want the BMC to take, if any, on this subject?

And would anyone like to crowdfund the purchase of a slice (or all?) of the enigmatic and completely talented and good-hearted Eric Jones' café and campsite at Bwlch y Moch, Tremadog? Keep it within the mountaineering community...

There's lots going on...and more...get involved. And then get back outside...

### Next Area Meetings

The BMC South Wales meeting will take place on Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September, 6.30pm, at Dynamic Rock, Swansea SA6 5EJ

The BMC North Wales meeting will take place on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, 7.30pm, at Pen y Pass YHA, LL55 4NY

The BMC Mid Wales area meeting will take place on Tuesday the 13<sup>th</sup> of September, 7pm, at the White Lion, Machynlleth SY20 8DN

Be sure to check the BMC websites Community Pages for updates on forthcoming meetings

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

There will be free food, both veggie and non-veggie and plenty of lively discussion. BMC members and non-members are welcome alike.

## Save the Conwy

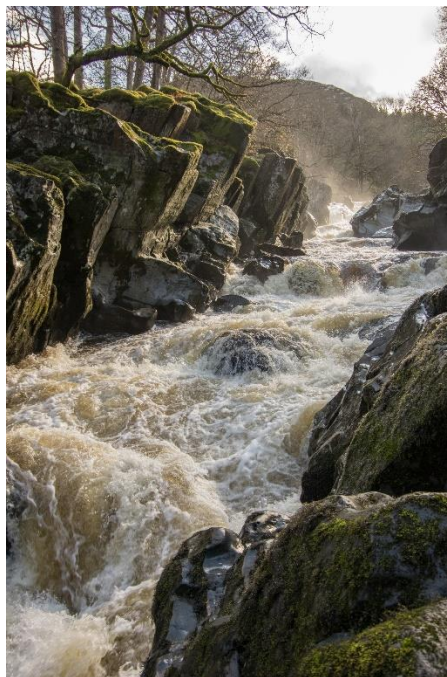


The Save the Conwy campaign has been floating the peaks and troughs of hope and concern over the past few months. The initial rejection of planning permission for the RWE hydroelectric scheme on the River Conwy has given great hope, the fact that kicking up a fuss and raising concerns about inappropriate activity in the National Park can stop schemes slipping under the Friday afternoon radar.

However, a planning application has just been resubmitted and a decision about the scheme's abstraction licence is yet to be decided, with the decision deadline currently postponed by National Resources Wales.

The lack of oversight for the growing, if not sprawling, number of hydroelectric schemes within the Snowdonia National Park seems to be deeply troubling. The Afon Las, a tributary of the Nant Peris in the Llanberis Pass has been constructed with a complete disregard to its agreed method statement: airdropped materials, hand-dug trenches and the removal of five trees, has given way to the construction of an access road, the felling of 25 trees and work carried out by digger; this is within one of the most iconic valleys of Snowdonia, supposedly protected at the highest level, a 'Special Area of Conservation'.

The River Conwy scheme has become a harbinger of change to the vision of our National Park's purpose, a change that needs to be checked and questioned. 'National Park' should not be a big arrow that points to a wealth of resources to be exploited. When the National Trust tell us "we look after special places throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland forever, for everyone" and the Trust is the major land owner for a potentially destructive and intrusive scheme, is Keith Jones the "man making the National Trust greener", or in fact the 'man making the National Trust more profitable'?



Great concerns have been raised and questions need to be asked about the people whose roles ostensibly lie in the protection of our natural heritage, but whose motives seem somewhat ulterior... If the Save the Conwy campaign has shown us anything so far, it is that National Parks need to be protected by the people who love them most.

Please help us to take action, a written objection to the National Park against the planning application is a great place to start. Please check out the website below for more information about submitting an objection.

Follow the updates and calls to action at:  
<https://savetheconwy.com>

or follow on Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/savetheconwy](https://www.facebook.com/savetheconwy)

on Twitter:  
<https://twitter.com/savetheconwy>

and on Instagram:  
[www.instagram.com/savetheconwy](https://www.instagram.com/savetheconwy)

## Gower Climbing Festival

16th – 17th September 2016

The Gower Climbing Festival, now in its 8th year, is a well-established event in the BMC calendar, organised by local

BMC volunteers for climbers from all over the UK. Regular attendees will confess to the delights of Gower climbing, the fabulous scenery and the much appreciated breakfast bacon rolls. This year, the festival has stepped it up a notch with other events taking place through the days.

### Youth Days

The first addition is an open invitation to under 18s who are competent indoor top ropers, but haven't made it outdoors yet. The youth days are organised with the BMCs youth officer James McHaffie and offer young climbers a taste of outdoor top roping. More details and forms on the festival website.

### Sea Cliff Workshop

A highly useful commodity for anyone wishing to start climbing sea cliffs is knowing how to do it safely. Gower Rock guidebook author Matt Woodfield will be on hand on Saturday to give an introduction of what to expect and look out for on your first trips.



### The Rest of the Climbing

The Gower can cater for all climbers of all grades from F4 sport climbers up to F8b+ along with trad routes from Diff to E8 interspersed with bouldering spots along the way. Tidal and non-tidal options mean climbing can be done at any time of day, and quiet crags can be located among the busy ones.

Wet weather options can range from picking up the Wales coast path around the Gower to visiting a variety of pubs in the area.

### More Information:

Festival website:  
[www.gowerclimbingfestival.co.uk](http://www.gowerclimbingfestival.co.uk)  
(including an inspiring video!)

BMC Local Areas site:

<http://community.thebmc.co.uk/Event.aspx?id=3644>

Matt Everett

## Climbing News

North Wales has seen a boom in new route activity this year and for a change this has happened away from the slate and limestone cliffs. The classic crags of the Llanberis Pass and Gogarth have yielded some quality new additions, many of which have been climbed by the man of the moment, James 'Caff' McHaffie. Caff has been working through a list of new route possibilities in the evenings and putting time into abseiling in dreich weather to inspect them. Not content with his busy start to the year where he made the first ascents of 'Gravity Wave' E8 6c at Porth Dafarch, 'The Ivy Flame' E7/8 6c at Tremadog and 'The Track of the Shadow' E7 6c on Carreg Wastad, Caff returned to some classic crags to add some major modern test-pieces.

First on the list was 'House of Talons' E9 6c (8a) high up on Dinas Cromlech. This meaty new addition tackles the wall left of Rumblefish and despite its modest length it packs in some tough climbing. The protection comes almost solely from sky-hooks, in particular the small 'Talon' hooks, and Caff placed twelve on his lead. This route was possibly the hardest lead in the Pass for a couple of weeks...

Shortly after succeeding on his new line on Dinas Cromlech, Caff turned his attention to the unclimbed slab to the left of Direct Route on Dinas Mot. This immaculate slab is fairly devoid of protection and certainly sparse on useful holds! Caff found a line which leaves the corner of Direct Route immediately after its crux before traversing out to the left arête, where a couple of wires can be placed around the left side. From here a very sustained series of tenuous slab moves heads up until better holds are finally reached a long way from the protection. The lead was a little closer to the edge than Caff had expected, with slightly worn fingertips from the

previous evening's attempts, but 'Dark Religion' E9 7a (8a++) was born and is undoubtedly a contender for the hardest trad route in Wales.



*James McHaffie making the first ascent of the impressive 'Dark Religion'*

Caff also made the first ascent of a steep, non-tidal roof climb at Porth Dafarch which he called 'Stone Masonry' E8 6b (7c+), a good and unorthodox climb requiring good knee-barring skills! Along with Dan McManus, Caff added two more excellent routes with 'Divided Britain' E7 6b and 'Combined Energy' E8 6c both being hailed as future classics with steep and very sustained climbing through sea caves at the Range.



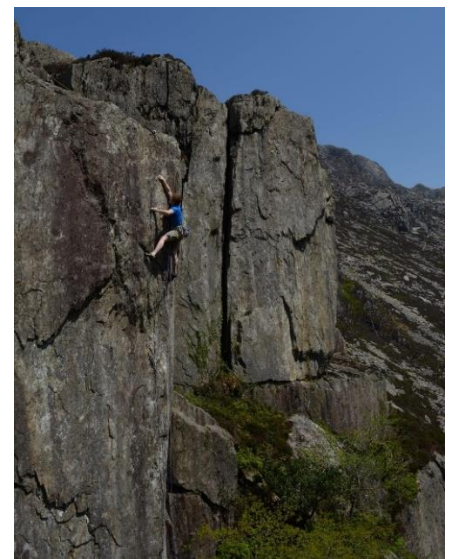
*Dan McManus repeating 'Stone Masonry'*

The Pass has also seen a couple of other quality new additions this year. Mike Goldthorp's 'Queen Bee' E7 6c on

Scimitar Ridge takes the much eyed clean-cut arête high up on the crag and is said to be an excellent boulder route. Up on the Equator Walls I stumbled across an obvious new route which climbs the blunt arête and following crack up the left side of the wall. 'Tropic Thunder' weighs in at E6 6b and is so named because it's almost always wet – it certainly was on the first ascent with Tim Neill!

Gogarth has also seen a spree of new route activity. I plugged an obvious gap between the first pitch of 'Wen' and 'Rubble' to climb 'Paperback Writer' at a bold and strenuous E6 6b. Tim Neill has been on something of a mission at the crag climbing a rack of quality new routes which he has updated us with below:

"The very best were 'Jaborandi Direct', E3 5c (with Steve Long and Donald King) and most especially 'Aficionado' E4 6a (with Andy Teasdale), both on the Main Cliff...also very worthwhile and in the one star bracket were 'Day Trip' E2 5b (beside 'Nightride'), 'Miss Holyhead', 'Holyhead's Next Top Model' (an E4 and E3 just right of 'This Years' Model') and finally, 'Eruption' E4 6a, a line between 'Wonderwall' and 'Volcano' in Easter Island Gully (with Lee Roberts). All climbed first go either on-sight or in the case of 'Day Trip' after a brief abseil inspection."



*Calum Muskett repeating 'Overlord'*

On the repeat front a number of difficult and rarely repeated routes have seen ascents. James McHaffie made swift

work repeating 'Face Mecca' E9 6c on Cloggy after only a few hours of practice on a Grigri. Angus Kille repeated 'Gribin Wall Climb' E9 6c as well as repeating 'Overlord' E8 6C on Dinas Cromlech. 'Nightmayer' E8 6c had its third ascent at the hands of Alex Mason whilst 'Rare Lichen' E8 6c at Ogwen was repeated by Tom Livingstone. Nick Dixon and Ed Booth repeated 'The Great Escape' E8 6c on Suicide Wall making the first repeats of this route and finally Robbie Phillips and Ian Cooper made the third and

fourth ascents respectively of the very difficult 'Coeur de Lion' E8 7a in Twll Mawr.

*Calum Muskett*

## Positions up for grabs at BMC Wales

There will be two positions within the BMC in Wales coming up for grabs at this year's AGM. We'll be looking for a new secretary to take over the role of writing this newsletter, keeping minutes

at local area meetings as well as some co-ordinating of social media and keeping in contact with the team in Manchester.

There will also be a National Council Representative position coming up which is an important role within BMC Wales making sure that the voices and opinions of people in Wales are heard and shared with the National Council.