



Peak Area Newsletter

Issue 04 Autumn 2008

Happy Autumn...

A slight change of editor this month while Matt's busy racing around the country and, as luck would have it, this is the biggest newsletter we have produced so far, with a bumper crop of articles to inform, entertain and inspire. So forget the crap weather, we have the ever keen **Keith Sharples** giving us a taste of wild Kinder grit, **Dame Kelly Holmes** at Stanage, a Christmas 'HUG' message and a personal account by yours truly of a typical week (sort of!) in the life of a guidebook volunteer, plus all the other bits and pieces you've come to expect.

I wouldn't be doing my job unless I informed you all of the next **Peak Area Meeting**, which is at **The Grouse Pub, Froggatt Edge** on **Wednesday 26th November** at **7.30pm**. This meeting will also include the **AGM**, so if you are keen to join the team, this is your chance. Also on the agenda will be the appointment of a new Newsletter co-ordinator, access round-ups, guidebooks and the National Council. There will be the usual sandwiches and chips (with special Christmas pickles!) and entertainment will be the **Annual Peak Christmas Quiz**, this year hosted by a fiendishly nutty duo, with prizes kindly donated by Alpkit, BMC, Heason Events, Rockfax and Vertebrate Graphics. Graeme Alderson will give a short talk on a new breed of bouldering mat he is importing, and Keith Sharples will have copies of his stunning new 2009 calendar available.

Just to say if you have never been to an area meeting and are put off by thoughts of feeling unwelcome or that the meetings are stuffy committee affairs run by men with beards, **don't be!** The Peak meet has evolved into an all singing, all dancing forum where all sorts of Peaky topics are thrashed out, from bolts and bouldering to access and guidebooks. All are welcome and if you want to get involved, please don't hesitate to collar one of the squad, we would love to hear what you have to say.

There are 5 Peak Area Meetings a year. In the first half of 2009 there will be one in Sheffield at the Lescar on Tue 24 Feb, another at the Grouse on Wed 22 Apr, and one at the Traveller's Rest near Ramshaw on Wed 10 Jun. Note that dates and times are subject to change. Check the BMC website for details. There's always some food and entertainment laid on to liven things up and they are **COMPLETELY FREE!**

Cheers

Simon Jacques, Peak Access Rep.



What's Happened Recently?

The main news in the Peak has, unsurprisingly for this time of year, been on the Gritstone, however it has been courtesy of a brace of visiting Americans who have been making all the noise. Alex Honnold, Kevin Jorgenson and Matt Segal have been quite literally making many of the Peak's big routes look like child's play, with, between them, ground up ascents of Parthian Shot, an on sight ascent of Gaia, and incredibly quick headpoint ascents of New Statesman (actually in North Yorkshire), The Promise, End Of The Affair and more. Check out the forums and news pages of UKClimbing.com for an awful lot of editorial and public comment.

Our own Steve McClure has again been busy at the crag that refuses to be climbed out, Raven Tor, adding yet another desperate link from the Mecca finish.

And finally:

Dame Kelly sends it at Stanage!

By Tina Gardner, BMC Press & PR Officer

Double Olympic gold medallist and National School Sport Champion, Dame Kelly Holmes showed her natural sporting ability during a day of rock climbing in the Peak District National Park, where she met some of Britain's young talented climbers and was shown the ropes by the BMC.

The BMC's invitation to take Kelly climbing outdoors came on the back of coverage for the Beijing Olympics, where she said she wanted to try a new sporting challenge.

The BMC knew that Kelly had excelled in the Climbing Wall challenge on Channel Five's recent Superstars series, and wanted her to have the chance to go climbing outdoors on real rock in the spectacular scenery of Britain's most popular climbing crag - Stanage Edge.

The first challenge of the day was to tackle a couple of 20 metre high routes. Despite the wind, cold rock and technical challenges, Kelly battled to reach the top. Kelly climbed with the BMC's guidebook editor Niall Grimes. She was instructed by international Mountain Guide Rich Cross.

Dame Kelly said "I was nervous when I first looked at what I had to climb but I was up for the challenge and knew I was in safe hands with the BMC. It was both a thrill and a relief getting to the top. It's definitely something I'd like to do more but I'm not a big fan of the cold so next time I'll pick a warmer day."

After lunch, the sun came out and Kelly got the chance to meet some younger climbers including Katy Whittaker, Jo Stadden, Pete Whittaker and Rob Clifton. They demonstrated bouldering on the Plantation Boulders and then Kelly showed her determination to succeed on some of the boulder problems.

Kelly said: "It was great meeting some of the young and talented local climbers. They are really good at what they do. I hadn't done any bouldering before but really enjoyed it and can definitely see the attraction".

Dave Turnbull BMC CEO said: "We're really pleased that Dame Kelly chose to try out rock climbing. It was fantastic to see an Olympic gold medallist finding out what rock climbing in Britain has to offer. Climbing is a very accessible sport, with over 300 indoor climbing walls throughout the UK - many within inner cities - and an abundance of rock varieties and superb climbing venues in the great outdoors."

The day was featured in the local ITV News Bulletin 'Calendar' in the evening.



Access Summary

By Henry Folkard

Two tenders have been made by the National Trust and RSPB jointly and by Derbyshire and Sheffield Wildlife Trusts jointly in response to the National Park Authority's invitation to present new management proposals for its Eastern Moors Estate. This includes Froggatt, Curbar and Birchens besides vast tracts of adjoining moorland. In the event that the Wildlife Trust proposals are preferred, the BMC has made it clear we will be very happy to work with them, but both we and the Friends of the Peak have formally supported the NT / RSPB bid. History in the making?

Next Question – what will happen when the National Parks Asset Review considers the future of the Roaches estate?

On Backdale a date for the Court of Appeal hearing has been set for February 2009. It is a great pity an earlier date could not be found, since the destruction of the National Park continues apace. The Head of Law at the National Park has thanked the BMC for passing on members' views on this vexed legal matter, saying the comments have been very helpful and spot on.

Remember the Matlock to Buxton rail link proposals? Having been put to bed for twenty years by a consultant's report renewed interest seems to have emerged as we go to press ten years sooner than anticipated. We do not yet know the strength of this interest, but we can remember what most (but not all) members thought last time round.

The A628 Mottram – Tintwistle By-pass Public Inquiry is unlikely to reconvene before about May next year. An access issue has however arisen in respect of Bottoms Quarry, which the BMC is addressing through a national meeting on access matters with the landowners, United Utilities. The BMC will also be challenging yet more fencing on u.u moorland in the northern Peak.

Natural England and the National Park Authority have both registered strong objection to some comments on the Roaches peregrine in the last newsletter, which they felt were unjustified and unacceptable. BMC access reps have had private meetings with both parties and a formal meeting is scheduled for the end of November. It is important to remember that we generally enjoy good relations with both organisations, not least because we share a very great deal of common ground and outlook. The birds are likely to return next year - there is probably only one other peregrine on the nesting site on the gritstone of the peak though no one is suggesting that dearth has anything to do with recreation – and we hope to reach consensus at the November meeting on how to do what we can to help nesting success without unnecessary restriction of recreational activity: indeed it seems climbers are perhaps the only group who sufficiently safeguard the birds to allow them to nest successfully on gritstone.

Congratulations to Sheffield City Council who are dedicating Millstone for open Access under Crow.

Particular matters of concern in the National Park are off-roading and raves (particularly in the Lawrencefield / Millstone area) though the two are not connected. Pity the rangers who have a nigh on impossible job in cleaning up the litter and broken glass afterwards - though the ample spray paint graffiti takes a little longer to go. There has also been a spate of thefts from pay and display machines: if you are out and about and see anything suspicious, or any fires, do not hesitate to notify the authorities, or the local BMC access rep if you prefer.

The plenary session of the Stanage Forum is being held over to the North Lees Open Day in September (or thereabouts) of 2009. Work on the North Lees Estate is progressing and pretty well on target as per the Management Plan. If you have not taken a look at the new footbridge at Hood Brook created by Robin Wood, just north of Bronte Cottage on the footpath to Greens House do: its an absolute an absolute gem.

Several ring ouzel chicks were ringed on North Lees this year and three fledged without being ringed: it was too cold a morning when we went to do the ringing. Three nests were predated, probably by stoats or weasels, grey squirrel and crows respectively. Not nice seeing the remains of a female ouzel eaten on the nest. Breeding success was again disastrous in the Burbage Valley area: a lone chick at Burbage oaks being the only success (human disturbance may have accounted for the other chick here but elsewhere the problem was predation). It was a bad season too north of High Neb, though Bamford Moor fared better.



A Day Out On Kinder

By Keith Sharples

High in the Dark Peak is Kinder Scout; a place many climbers have heard about but few have actually been. The popular myth is that Kinder is a big, boggy hill and, hence by association, no place for a self-respecting crag-rat to be seen. Certainly that was the impression I had before I actually got off the sofa, pulled on my approach shoes and mustered the effort to head up there with my climbing rack and a few mates to see for myself. Frankly, I don't mind admitting it but I was shocked with what I saw. If only I'd known just how good it was up there I would have gone earlier! So, I've learnt my lesson the hard way. Here's some beta to fast-track your own Kinder experience.

First off, let's be specific, I'm talking Kinder South here – yep the sunny one! Other bits of Kinder don't enjoy the same sunny aspect as the southern crags do for obvious reasons. To be honest, I'm also going to concentrate on Nether Tor and Upper Tor as this duo of crags offer the opportunity for a great day out as they are close together and the shortest walk-in. That's not to dismiss the rest of Kinder South, namely Upper Edale Rocks, The Pagoda, Crowden Towers nor Crowden Clough Face; it's just that these don't offer quite the same concentration of climbing as the crags at the eastern end of the escarpment do. So park up in Edale, the railway station is a good bet, and then head up into the village of Edale and then keep going. Typically, it'll take best part of an hour so set yourself a rhythm and keep at it! Depending upon whether you go to Nether Tor first or Upper Tor will dictate exactly which path you take, but follow instructions in any of the guides and you'll be fine. Once on the rim of the Kinder plateau, it's but a short stroll betwixt the two crags. If it helps, Upper Tor gets the sun earlier in the day and Nether Tor keeps it later into the evening.

Upper Tor is a quality, compact crag offering a good selection of routes from Diff through to E7. This is a great place to lose your Kinder virginity. The rock is rough, clean and refreshingly un-polished! This is hardly surprising really given the location. It's not unlike stepping back in time 25 or perhaps even 50 years in that the cracks still have rough pebbles within them and the surface of the rock offers a friction that those that frequent the more popular eastern Edges can only dream about. **Upper Tor Wall (HS)** is an uber classic; not only that it offers up a grand opportunity to photograph your mate amidst the scenic splendour – a three star route and one of the best at that. **The Ivory Tower (HVS 5b)** is the next classic on the list. This feels a big route and in fairness it isn't short for grit given that it's around 20m long. It weaves its way cleverly up the buttress finding the passage of least resistance. Assuming that you survive the traverse left and so are able to get established onto the upper reaches of the route, the headwall is a joy to climb – a wall more wrinkled than many a wrinkled wall! **Brutality (E1 5b)** is everything that you'd expect of a route labelled with such a moniker – brutal. Don't walk on by though, it's well worth half an hour or so of your time. The next target is the big roof to your right taken by **Robert (E1 5b)** and **Do the Rock Steady (E7 6c)**. Chances are that you'll marvel at the latter and shake a stick at the former. You should, it's worth the effort. By the way, it's reasonable at E1 as well, well-protected, short and offers good finger locks. You might see it at E2 elsewhere – truth is, it ain't ever been E2 nor will it ever be!

Nether Tor to the east is more like a moorland crag – bigger, more spread out and not quite as vegetation free. That's not to say it's a rambling mess – it isn't – but it just isn't as compact as Upper Tor. **Moneylenders Crack (VS 5a)** is the first major route to do. At close on 20m it's another long route and the top is steep and thought provoking. Right again, and on the lower section is a striking arête, shorter than most of the route hereabouts. This is taken by **Edale Bobby (E5 6a)** and offers the usual bold, technical climbing style typical of such arêtes. A confident and skilful approach is needed. Finally and farther right **Flash Wall (VS 5a)** is the route to head for. It's steep but well-protected and although it's based on a crack it climbs like a wall. It's another route that is pretty photogenic as well.

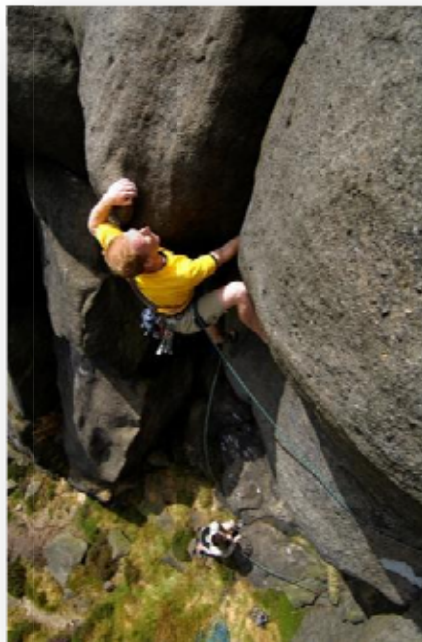
So there you have Kinder South – well the eastern end of Kinder South to be honest. Head up there on a summer's day with a rack of gear and a pair of ropes between you and a mate and you'll come back down at the end of the day knowing that you've earned your ticks. All the routes mentioned wouldn't be out of place in a list of the Peak's best routes and you'll be amongst the few that will have done them as well.

Keith will be at the next Peak Area Meeting (the AGM) on Wed 26th Nov at The Grouse Pub above Froggatt, with copies of his new 2009 calendar.



Keith's Gallery

From Top Left, Clockwise: Jon Barton on Flash Wall (VS 5a) at Nether Tor; Mark Hundleby on Moneylenders Crack (VS 5a); Jon Barton (climbing) and Mark Hundleby on The Ivory Tower (HVS 5b); Mark Hundleby (climbing) and Jon Barton on Brutality (E1 5b).





The Horseshoe Upkeep Group (“Every Crag Needs a HUG”)

By Martin Kocsis

There’s work to be done and we need volunteers to do it. The plan is that the group will meet on an ad hoc basis. The team’s work will come under the headings of Access, Conservation and Bolting. I imagine it will meet four or five times a year.

Work will include fencing, planting, pond digging as well as footpath repair and installation (if it’s possible to ‘install’ a footpath, but you know what I mean). Also in our plans will be woodland management, rock stabilisation, and bolting in association with the Peak Bolt Fund.

You don’t have to come to all the events, and tools will be provided. There will be a ready supply of brews and slices of genuine home-made cake. You may also get training in the use of things like chainsaws and strimmers, and first aid training will be on offer too (hopefully not as a result of the former! Ed). If you have a wood burning stove, you might be able to make off with a certain amount of firewood throughout the year. Basically, it will be a good laugh with benefits for everyone who uses Horseshoe for whatever purpose.

Applications for membership should be made to Martin at the BMC Office. If you apply, you will be accepted... we do not discriminate! If you have appropriate talents/qualifications, please let me know. Email: martin@thebmc.co.uk Tel. 0161 438 3336

The Secret Diary of a Guide Scribbler...

By Simon Jacques (33 and a bit...)

Monday: Checking...



The new week and surprise, surprise the pitter-patter of rain auditions at the window, its symphony an accompaniment to a perfect day for checking out the Whatstandwell Area, with fellow guide scribe Offwidth. This is a man über psyched for the cause, deeply passionate about the project, an inspiring bouncing Tigger of a fellow, who often makes one feel so very lazy. Now sometimes you never go to places because none of your mates have ever been there to wax lyrical and entice the senses. Sometimes, because you don’t see them in the magazines, and sometimes, well just sometimes, because they are quarries like these. That’s not to say they are to be ignored, oh no! These holes in the ground aren’t, as some suggest as bad as genital herpes, they do truly deserve a visit as indeed we did on this wet day.

Tigger bounces round the grottos; enthusing as ever about the quality of the fierce looking stygian rips in the walls and so he may. Tipping our chins up towards the quarry’s great lip, soaring lines soon become evident and much scribbling ensues as inky teardrops run down the ledger. On the way back to the car, we spot a dubious video cassette stuffed into a hole in a dry stone wall. Obviously the youngsters of Whatstandwell’s porn sharing drop off...now that’s got you interested...



Tuesday: Piccies!

This is more like it, the great fireball burning up crisp azure skies ...a photo day for sure. With blue & yellow t-shirts on the menu, the order for the day is some smashing Chatsworth Grit at a sweet esoteric location. It sounds great doesn't it? Well not quite... First off the farmer is bringing in his cows on the approach lane. Note to Reuben, new access approach needed. Then the light starts to play a little game with us. As soon as Mr or Mrs model springs on to the rock, a cloud shuffties over the sun. As soon as nothing's happening, it moves on, mocking us as the rock becomes bathed once more in perfect sunlight. If you have ever taken springtime rock shots in the Peak, you will know exactly what I mean...

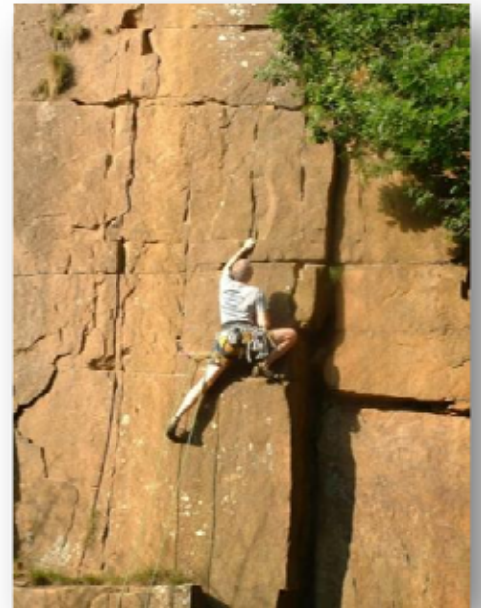


Wednesday: Catastrophe...

Access issues plague the day, as a well-known bouldering circuit is no longer open for climbing. Phone calls are made and the mood is sombre after scripts have been prepared and photos taken. Still, it brings home the fragile relationship that we sometimes forget exists between ourselves and the environments we populate, not to mention the importance of keeping existing access agreements in mind when writing guides. An admonition in what can go wrong has been dealt out and due care must be heeded...

Thursday...Pioneering!

A day of action! A spot of exploration, new problems and getting down and dirty in the greatest woods in the area. For some, Froggatt may conjure up visions of smooth slab lines, soaring arêtes and crunchy cracks, all with a sprinkling of stars. Well them's for me too, but maybe not in the same parts of Froggatt that you know and love. We are off to the neglected buttresses that lie below the main approach path, the rocks that you pass as you make your way to Three Pebble Slab, Valkyrie, or maybe a Roman Orgy. A light brush soon overcomes the greenery of some of the blocs and quality problems are sent. The dedication of the team operating in these parts to clean and find new lines is admirable, and after some extensive searching and downright hard graft, the script becomes suitably rich with a smattering of truly inspiring problems. My bath at the end of the day is soup-like in its consistency; complete with Lichen Shampoo, a sign of a good scrattle in them there woods...happy days...



Friday: Old Hands... New Routes...

I've been studying lines, straight ones, horizontal ones and those with a bit of a crick in them. This one's the former of the former in that it should go, well, straight up! Enlisting the help of a fellow NHS colleague on one balmy evening, we tromp down from the Grouse Pub to Tegness to see if it will go. Belay stakes are clipped, worried brows are furrowed, and clipped brows are worried. After a short top rope session, a worried cameraman is shitting his pants... But I fret needlessly as the warm-ups in the quarry are dispatched easily by Lee who seemed oblivious to the shaley nature of the crag, loose holds, and scary top outs that are literally to die for. Through a lens, his soloing becomes strangely comforting, this is a man who knows this territory and is a perfect choice to go for the last great line in the Northern Quarry. Which makes it all perfect when he ties on at the bottom of his new route, I doubt he even recognises what he's about to do. He climbs so fast, whacking in some poor gear, and soon he's at the top, giving me time for only a couple of good shots, and with only a slight pause for



reflection, states a grade of E3 6a. Evening Light was thus born, perhaps an unsightly offspring compared to its extended family of handsome siblings over Froggatt way. Yet this child of an honest but unloved crag can proudly hold its head high, just as its creator does each and every day...after all, Lee Bower is 6ft 4!!

Saturday: A Kinder Surprise!

The Alarm goes off at some God-awful time for a Saturday, coffee is necked as pack ups are hastily assembled. Guidebooks tumble off the bookcase as I try to locate the most recent to Ashop Edge. The 1970's one, it seems, will have to do.



The grouse accompany me across the bleak moor to the Northern edge where we hook up with the rest of the Moorland Grit Guide Team, and new routing is the name of the game it seems. All goes to plan and so far so good. Then Kinder starts to play the very devil with me, and on the second of a new route, the evil green grit strikes as I pull on an axehead like pinch that abruptly explodes into my forehead, sending me spinning off into the wild moorland air... Stunned but not deterred I don a lid and fight my way back up the slippery pinches to sneaky undercuts, and the route is battered to submission, as indeed am I.

We move around Ashop edge, suspicious, nervy, a kind of respect growing to its remoteness, its ability to play games, fooling & teasing. Nowhere then more so apt than Jester Cracks to take my next fall down the mountain... just someone, somewhere, in summertime...

Sunday: Research...

Interestingly, I find that the husband of my old Primary School 'Nit Nurse' has put together an unabridged history of Baslow; so I gain some fascinating info for Gardoms. The origins of Froggatt elude me, until I find that it's named after the people who dwelled there who pertained to look like frogs! ...Must try harder... Obtain some very rare pictures of quarrying at Tegness and Yarncliffe via a local source, humbling and exciting in the same instance... Oh and did you know that Julian Cope, the famous 80's rocker has a website called The Modern Antiquarian, which deals with all things 'Time Team'? Well he does, and a great source of information it is too, for places like Rowtor Rocks and Robin Hood's Stride. Speaking of which, a seriously good book for some historical quotation is E.A Baker's tome, Moors, Craggs and Caves of the High Peak & Neighbourhood, check it out, they don't write them like that anymore...

...I end the very long week, in my cosy shed, perusing by lamplight some of the influential past guides to Peak Gritstone. Penned by such seminal authors as Byrne, Gregory, Allen and Milburn, these vast mines of information contain seams of guidebook gold, which continually encourage, concentrate the mind and force a grounded approach to the next modern working guide to the Peak Grit area. Something we hope you will all enjoy as much as we have in its long, sometimes painful but never dull and always inspiring creation...

From Froggatt to Black Rocks is out Spring 2009, the soon to be classic Over the Moors guide late 2009. Keep watching the shelves...!

Who's Who...

This month it's the man Peak Area Access Guru Henry Folkard who is given free rein to regale us with a tale or two...

"One day he said "my name is Mike". We nodded as he walked his two border collies past my home most days. "Oh", he said a few days later, "are you a climber?" The next exchange was to be fatal. "I am Chair of the BMC's Peak Area Committee. We need someone to help with access work". That was some ten years ago. For the previous thirty I had just got on with the climbing and taken next to no notice of access, content if ever I thought about it to let someone else sort it. Pay back time had come.

In the sixties some kids in a youth club I was involved with in an inner city Birmingham parish liked the idea of having an adventure. We decided to go climbing. I bought a small book called 'Teach Yourself Climbing', a couple of hemp waist ties, the odd Hiatt karabiner, four pegs and along with a Viking No2 hawser laid rope, off we went.



We went to the Roaches a few times before we discovered it was called Ramshaw Rocks. We did find the Roaches later on. I remember the first visit. No one else there and overgrown with grass. We wandered up to the top of the crag, looked over and thought we could see a way of getting up, banged a couple of pegs in, threaded the rope through the eyes – we thought that was what they were there for – and whilst one person got ready to pull, the rest of us went back to the bottom, tied on in a fashion and fought our way up. At a delicate move left, I found the use for the pointy bit on my hammer, and plenty have been glad of the holds since. Confession made. We had no guidebook, had not heard of grades or route names and initially knew no other climbers: we just went and discovered something for ourselves, and had fun finding a way up a natural weakness in a rock face.



Best days? Tony wanted to lead The Corner and I wanted to lead Left Wall. We each did our thing and then we did The Thing – and Colossus the next day; an Idwal day with Mick from the bottom of The Slabs to the top of Manx Wall via Grey Arête: Vector for the first time with Graham; a greasy Shibboleth and years later Yellow Edge with Tim; Fire Tower with Phil; Mousetrap, Red Wall and North Gaulton Castle again with Tony; Crescent Arch and a route next to it with another Tony and lots of Pembroke days. And Kalymnos. Favourite Peak Routes include Pearly Gates, Dead Banana Crack, Hawks Nest Crack and Mississippi Buttress. Don't ask about bolts or bouldering.

Besides climbing? An amateur interest in natural history, the Peak National Park, Classical music, not so modern art, architecture (including modernism) and, if you really want to get me going, species hellebores and hardy ferns. I know nothing about the telly – never had one – football or IT.

Perhaps the nicest thing about forty years of climbing - and there is a deeply tragic downside too, but that's not for now – is that I have stayed in touch with many of my sometime climbing partners, and indeed continue to climb with several of them. Last year I enjoyed a repeat of the first route I ever did at Stanage, forty years ago with Charlie, the same partner. I must find out what its called. But I am still petrified of abseiling!”

Henry

Upcoming Events

Nov 23: Rab Junior Bouldering Series 11.30am The Edge, Sheffield

Nov 26: Peak Area Meeting – Grouse Pub, Froggatt Edge. 7.30pm – AGM & Christmas Quiz. <http://www.thebmc.co.uk>

Nov 28: An Evening With Andy Cave & Andy Kirkpatrick. 8pm Buxton Opera House, Buxton

Dec 1: Best Of Kendal Film Night Showroom Cinema, Sheffield

Dec 2: Best Of Kendal Film Night Showroom Cinema, Sheffield

If you have an event that you'd like to see listed here then please let us know.

The Peak Area Newsletter is written by Peak climbers and walkers, for Peak climbers and walkers. We're happy to take contributions for the newsletter on any topic that is relevant to the readership. Pictures help an article look better, and help to increase its appeal and depth. Write something, send it in and prepare for either fame or notoriety, as is your want and send to: matt@heason.net / 07966 529219