

summit:53

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 **BMC**

The BMC is looking after clubs in 2009.
Photo: BMC.

▶ the issue

Eyes on the Ball

“Clubs are the lifeblood of British Mountaineering,” so wrote Rab Carrington in a letter to all 311 BMC affiliated clubs earlier this year. For the past nine months Rab has been chairing a forum of club members (the Clubs Working Group). This group has been tasked with sorting out what clubs want from the BMC and getting the BMC’s ‘eye’ firmly back on the ball in terms of the support services we provide clubs and club members.

Clubs are a high priority for the BMC. Last September we adopted a new four year Strategic Plan which, amongst other things, includes a commitment to improve our administration of club membership and to extend the technical guidance we provide to clubs (on child protection, huts, legal and insurance issues and the like) and the technical workshops and events we run for clubs. Alongside this, we’re pleased to report that Sport England has come good on our 2009-12 grant application. As of 1st April 2009 we have secured new money which will directly benefit clubs, in particular:

- £55,500 to provide grants to enable clubs develop their websites, newsletters and to purchase mountaineering equipment.
- £41,250 to pay for Mountaineering Instructors to help clubs take on novices and young people.
- £25,000 towards the cost of a Club Support Co-ordinator in the BMC office.
- £14,000 to improve the technical documentation we produce for clubs.

Then there is the question of the BMC membership structure and subscriptions. An enormous amount of work has gone on in this area over the past year. The Clubs Working Group has considered several different membership options and is currently working on a model which would offer club members a more basic BMC ‘package’ at a reduced cost. It is likely that we will be putting these ideas to clubs for consultation later this year.

The working group has also proposed setting up a dedicated Clubs Committee within the BMC to provide a formal ‘voice’ for clubs within the organisation. On the issue of subscriptions, clubs will be pleased to learn that we plan to hold the 2010 subscription at the current rate of £11.75; club subscriptions will not increase

again until 1st Jan 2011 at the earliest. And while we’re on the subject let’s just clear up one thing – according to rumours in some circles there has been a plan to increase club subscriptions to the level of Individual Member subscriptions over the next five years. We can confirm that it is categorically not the case – there has never been any intention of this type. As Rab stated in his letter, ‘...with the [subscriptions] adjustment that has been made this year the balance between Club and Individual Member subscriptions is now about right and I would not anticipate that further adjustments would be needed in the next few years.’

All in all – clubs and club members can rest assured that:

- The BMC very much values you as members and is fully committed to improving our support services for you.
- A structure is being put in place to give clubs a formal ‘voice’ within the BMC.
- There is no plan to substantially hike club subscription levels, and finally;
- Thanks to our successful Sport England bid there is more money for clubs over the next four years. ■



WELCOME TO...

ISSUE 53

Summit is the membership magazine of the British Mountaineering Council. The BMC promotes the interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers and the freedom to enjoy their activities. The primary work of the BMC is to:

- » Negotiate access improvements and promote cliff and mountain conservation.
- » Promote and advise on good practice, facilities, training and equipment.
- » Support events and specialist programmes including youth and excellence.
- » Provide services and information for members.

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RISK & RESPONSIBILITY

Readers of Summit are reminded that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.



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A fond farewell

April spells AGM and Annual Dinner season and we're limbering up for another great occasion at Plas y Brenin. The Agenda is on page 56 and our guest speaker is Jim Curran, whose turn of phrase is guaranteed to generate laughter, memories and occasionally great controversy.

The last year has seen some great events and the odd tussle with bureaucracy – but the peregrines at the Roaches fledged safely (I gather), so at least all went well on that score. The highlights included:

- No. 10 Downing Street in October 2008, thanks to John Mann and Gordon Brown
- The increased Sport England Grant, thanks largely to the office staff
- The new home for Mountain Heritage Trust at the University of Cumbria
- Rab Carrington's patient, painstaking work with the Clubs, and
- George Band's OBE for a lifetime of contribution to mountaineering.

There has been much hard graft, by staff and volunteers but if I had single out one group it would be the Finance Committee. Last year there was talk of how to invest the BMC reserves, so essential for our continuity – reserves are not simply 'money in the bank to spend'. Opinions varied between speculation in high-yielding stocks and various accounts, some even as far away as Iceland. But in the end our astute finance volunteers opted for playing Prudence – with your money. Oh, that government, the odd city council and NHS Trust had done the same.

I have to say that my time as president has actually been fun. I had been dreading the bureaucracy, but that happened rarely. Both National Councils and Executive Committees have been civilized, with sensible, if sometimes lengthy debate. Instead of spending too much time in the office, I feel I've been able to think about some broad, strategic matters and have seen them move forward. Whilst I would not in any sense claim to have changed the course of BMC history, I have witnessed a substantial movement by government towards recognition that mountain activities, and the BMC are of national importance.

For a sport with inherent dangers, in a society averse to risk and becoming hidebound by procedure, it is quite an achievement to be thought well of by an organisation such as Sport England. And it is because we have the ear of Government that we have been able to drive home several remarkable facets of our sport – its distinguished history, our track record of major first ascents, the active climbing scene here, its plurality, including inner city walls and competitions, and our many other faces – art, photography and film, literature and science. We need to keep stressing our heritage, that we are a living, multi-faceted, developing sport, and the role of our volunteers. I believe we succeed because we draw together the strands of our sport, because we handle risk in a sensible way, encourage innovation and help young people to go where no man has gone before.

Despite our many facets, we are one family and are seen to be a family. We do all the things that families do; we agree on some things, we squabble about others – that seem tiny to outsiders. But we are one. I believe that we are not as some other sports – a governing body cut off from the active members, stuffy and remote. Let's make sure we stay that way.

My BMC Direct Debit is in order – so make sure yours is too.



Charles Clarke
BMC President

ON THE COVER: A young Chris Bonington on the Eiger North Wall in 1962 – when he made the first British ascent with Ian Clough. Bonington reaches another milestone this year – he turns 75. Read more in our exclusive interview on page 20. Photo: Chris Bonington Picture Library.

THIS PAGE: Unstoppable climbing machine (and Plas y Brenin instructor) James McHaffie making the first onsight of 'Unridable Donkey' (E7 6b), Wen Zawn, Gogarth. Find out how James gets psyched on page 74. Photo: Alastair Lee / www.posingproductions.com.

Get all the latest essential news at www.thebmc.co.uk/news

Warm welcome

BMC International Meet sees new routes despite sudden thaw

The BMC International Meet in late February went down a storm despite the best efforts of the weather. Nearly forty guests, from 26 countries, gathered at Glenmore Lodge in the Cairngorms, to be schooled in the delicate delights of Scottish winter climbing by a similar number of UK hosts. A couple of weeks beforehand, the UK experienced some of the best winter conditions in living memory; everything was going to plan – until the mercury started rising.



BMC's Nick Colton meets Ueli Steck. Photo: BMC.

The rapidly thawing conditions proved no match for enthusiasm however, and teams stomped up the Ben for hard lines (Darth Vader and Babylon) and classics. Simon Richardson and Zoe Hart (USA) even found a new two-pitch route, The Alpine Princess (IV, 4). They followed this up with another new route on the Wednesday: Big Wednesday (VI, 6), climbed in a team of four with Ian Parnell and Maxine Turgeon (Canada). On warmer days teams headed out walking, rock climbing and dry tooling, also keeping occupied with a packed schedule of evening lectures.

Weary meet organisers staggered back into the BMC office, reporting that: "Fun was had, friendships were made, dance moves thrown and climbing tights worn with pride". Sounds good – thanks to all hosts and Glenmore Lodge.



The new route 'Big Wednesday'. Photo: Ian Parnell.

A strong panel. Photo: Keith Sharples.



Question time

Big names turn out for BMC grade debate

A who's who of British climbing turned out to discuss the why's why of British grading at the ShaFF film festival in Sheffield. The amassed mutterings of a vast panel of crimperati gave their own personal take on Es and whizz(ed) though many of the troubles they cause and solve. The BMC-sponsored Great British Grade Debate brought together Ben Bransby, John Dunne, Dave Birkett, Nic Sellers, James Pearson and Steve McClure under the headmasterly eye of the BMC's Nick Colton to see what was wrong with grades, and how they could help. It seems everyone quite liked them. Hooray.

Watch a short film of the debate online at www.thebmc.co.uk/gradedebate

Coasting along

Coastal bill advances towards Lords

The BMC welcomed the inclusion of the long-awaited Marine and Coastal Access Bill in the Queen's Speech in December. This new piece of legislation, which outlines a new right of access to our coast, is now being considered by the Lords Committee. The BMC has campaigned hard over the past two years for a permanent right of public access to the coast, and we will continue to campaign for the smooth passage of the Bill through Parliament.

The position in Wales is slightly different as the Welsh Assembly Government will not be following the new legislation outlined for England; they are already committed to improving coastal access via delivery of an All Wales Coastal Path. However, the new Bill does outline framework powers for Wales, so measures can be brought forward to complement the All Wales footpath. As it's therefore unlikely that a wider statutory approach to coastal access will be taken in Wales, the BMC will lobby for the Minister to develop the framework powers as soon as possible so they can be delivered alongside the statutory approach in England.

Best of British

British lead team tried, ready to be tested

Over 80 climbers battled it out at the British Lead Climbing Team Trials in December. The trial – which took place on the articulated competition wall at Edinburgh International Climbing Arena, Ratho – decided this year's Senior and Junior teams.

British Senior Lead Team 2009:

Women: Beth Monks, Emma Twyford
Men: Rob Haigh, Drew Haigh, Alan Cassidy, Aid Baxter, Adam Watson

British Junior Lead Team 2009:

Girls: Caitlin Wallace, Natalie Berry, Shauna Coxsey, Hannah Beresford, Michaela Tracy, Rebecca Hall
Boys: Edward Hamer, Andrew Towers, Ross Kirkland, Jonathan Stocking, Luke Tilley, Paul Williamson, Jonathan Field, Joshua Farrell, James Garden

Another Junior trial will take place in May so that a full squad of 36 climbers can compete in the European Youth Series Cup at Ratho in September.

See page 34 for details of all 2009 competitions

Team managers wanted

Both the British Senior Leading Team and the British Bouldering Team are looking for dedicated managers. If you're a keen climber with a background of coaching, training and competition climbing, and want to volunteer your experience than get in touch with rob@thebmc.co.uk.



Emma Twyford securing her place in the team for '09. Photo: Mark Alderson.

Shop and support the crags

Wild Country supports BMC Crag Care Fund

The BMC Crag Care Fund was set up last year to directly benefit the crags and to aid access and volunteer opportunities. Projects which have already benefitted include Nesscliffe, Bwlch y Moch, Sea Walls (Avon), Llanbradach (South Wales), Lower Pen Trywn and Horseshoe Quarry. Now Wild Country has set up a fantastic new initiative: the company will donate 2% from all sales of their new chalk and bouldering accessories. You can support our crags as you shop!

See www.wildcountry.co.uk/Products/2009PureChalk



New UIAA/CEN rep needed

The BMC is looking for a representative to attend meetings of the international bodies for mountaineering equipment standards (the UIAA Safety Commission and the CEN Working Group for Mountaineering & Climbing Equipment) to ensure that UK climbers are included in decision-making processes. The ideal candidate would be an experienced climber or mountaineer with an engineering background, with enough free time to attend the meetings (an annual UIAA meeting of up to six days, plus a couple of two-day CEN meetings). Contact dan@thebmc.co.uk if you're interested.



Free postage in BMC shop

Visit the new BMC online shop to get all the latest climbing and walking books, maps, DVDs and more. It's got all you'd expect: video clips, pdf previews of books, and of course, great BMC members-only prices.

Visit www.bmcshop.co.uk and use the offer code `summit53` to get free postage on all UK orders.

IN SHORT

► news

More Vixen Tor?

Walkers and climbers could soon gain access to Vixen Tor on Dartmoor, thanks to a decision by Devon Country Council in favour of creating two footpaths within the area blocked off by the current landowner. See www.thebmc.co.uk/news for details.

Range West permits

Make a date for one of three scheduled briefings if you want to climb at Range West this year. Briefings are at Castlemartin Camp at 9am on 23rd May, 27th June and 25th July. Access is allowed from 23rd May onwards.

Nesting restrictions

A number of seasonal climbing restrictions to protect nesting birds have now begun. All climbers are asked to check restrictions before they go climbing. But don't worry, this couldn't be easier – turn to page 38.

New Guides website

You may have thought British Mountain Guides would be far too busy climbing to worry about websites. Wrong. This year the British Mountain Guides have a new website and logo. The new site is well worth a look, packed with useful information, articles and a busy community section. See www.bmg.org.uk.

MLTA training

The MLTA is the membership organisation for ML, SPA, CWA and WGL candidates and award holders, and provides further training, networking and support opportunities. This year's events (which are also open to non-members) include GPS, movement coaching, SPA workshops and introductory bushcraft. See www.mlta.co.uk.

AGM time

Come along to BMC AGM to have your say

Make a date for this year's BMC AGM – on 25th April at Plas y Brenin – to have your say on the running of the BMC. Hot topics include club subscriptions and voting in the new President. Unusually there are two lucky candidates nominated this year, Rab Carrington and Doug Scott. Read their manifestos on page 57 before turning up and casting your vote. Alternatively, BMC members can vote by proxy using the postcard enclosed with Summit.

Turn to page 56 for full details of the BMC AGM and Annual Dinner

Have a dram on Balvenie

A dram of The Balvenie Single Malt Scotch Whisky will be served with pudding at the Annual Dinner. Dr. Andrew Forrester, Balvenie Ambassador, will also be there to serve a few more drams throughout the evening and answer all your whisky questions. Cheers.

Come along to the BMC AGM for your free dram of Balvenie whisky.



Funding for clubs

BMC secures funding to help train club members

In advance of the BMC's funding application to Sport England last year, we contacted a sample of affiliated clubs about support for new and less experienced members. We were interested to see if clubs would be keen for a programme whereby professional instructors would be paid to attend club meets, with the specific role of skilling-up novice club members.

The BMC is aware that clubs vary in the support they can provide for new members, and thought that such an approach could be of great use. Of those clubs that replied, the majority felt that support would be of benefit. One club had recently held a rope-skills day, delivered by such professionals, which they found very useful. A number of clubs felt this type of support would be unsuitable for their membership, some were undecided, and a couple suggested ways in which they felt support could work for them. As a result we asked Sport England to support this initiative, and have been successful in securing four years of funding.

We will be contacting clubs with details on how to access the funding.

Good guidance

New hut and club advice notes online

New guidelines for BMC affiliated clubs and huts are now available online. The club advice includes useful information on child protection, equipment, insurance and transport. The hut guidance notes are essential references for anyone involved in running a club hut and cover topics such as: fire safety, water supplies, civil liability and sources of funding.

Find out more at www.thebmc.co.uk/clubnotes and www.thebmc.co.uk/hutnotes



Shed load of history

Heritage Lottery Fund and BMC team up to preserve Bonington papers

Apparently Sir Chris Bonington has been keeping all his correspondence, papers and diaries in the shed at the bottom of his garden. But now, the Heritage Lottery Fund and BMC have teamed up to provide £39,600 and £15,000 respectively to catalogue and make this fascinating collection accessible to the general public. The collection includes expedition papers, correspondence, press cutting scrapbooks and manuscript drafts books. Sir Chris said: "I'm delighted that these are going to see the light of day."

Sir Chris Bonington is 75 this year – read our exclusive interview on page 20

CLUB SHORTS

Multiple Club refunds

If you're currently affiliated to the BMC via more than one club, you can opt to claim back additional subscriptions for 2009 (if you have already previously claimed a refund, there is no need to claim again). Write in or email office@thebmc.co.uk stating which clubs you are presently affiliated to, or fill out the online form at www.thebmc.co.uk/refund. If all of your clubs have paid up, we will send you an automatic refund from June 2009 onwards. Club members may also use their multiple affiliation payments to upgrade from Club Membership to full Individual Membership.

K Fellfarers 75th

K Fellfarers, one of the oldest outdoor clubs in the Lake District, is compiling a book to commemorate the 75th anniversary their Borrowdale hut. Get in touch with Roger Atkinson (01539 732490 / fratkinson@hotmail.co.uk) if you have any recollections or anecdotes.

New clubs

Over the past year the following 11 clubs around England and Wales have affiliated to the BMC. These are: Bremex Mountaineering & Climbing Club; Southfields Mountain Sports Club; Dorset Youth Climbing Academy; Outdoor Network Club; Metropolitan Police Mountaineering Club; The Chapel Mountaineering Club; Taunton Trailblazers; Not So Trad – Southern Lesbian & Gay Climbers; K Fellfarers (re-affiliation); Merthyr Tydfil Climbing Club; West Midlands Fire Service Rock Climbing Section; The BarCap Climbing Club (Barclays Capital); Oxford University Walking Club (Student Club); and Rock Chicks' Climbing Club.

The BMC has a team of two full-time Access officers and a nationwide network of 40 volunteer Local Access Representatives - all working hard for climbers and hill walkers.

Lake District

Nesting restrictions

By the time you read this, a number of Lakes crags will be restricted for nesting birds. See www.thebmc.co.uk for details – or turn to the centre pages of this issue.

Chapel Head

The National Park Authority has unfortunately rejected a BMC proposal for an extension to the agreed climbing area. Access to an area left of the central gully is currently banned on conservation grounds, so we commissioned a survey to examine the flora. This indicated the plants were fairly commonplace and we thought there was a good case for allowing access. However, after their own assessment, the Authority are currently unwilling to open up new areas for climbing, citing that “climbing will reduce the naturalness of this area, and prevent the ongoing development of vegetation”. We are considering our response – if you want to have your say, contact: Martin Curry, Head of Property Services, LDNPA, Brockhole, Windermere, Cumbria, LA23 1LJ.

White Scar

The BMC recently pitched our proposal for a one-year trial access arrangement to the owners of this banned crag – they were receptive and appreciated the value of the crag. Watch this space.

Wales

Pembroke

Just a quick reminder of the 2009 Range West briefing dates: 23rd May, 27th June and 25th July, all at 09.00 hours at Castlemartin Camp. Most of the seasonal nesting restrictions will also be commencing in March. Look out for the new belay stakes at Range West soon – many thanks to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and the MoD for their help.

Clwyd Limestone

The peregrines have returned to the Clwyd crags, so keep an eye open for signs and nesting markers. During last year’s nesting period, eye witnesses reported a couple of characters “acting very suspiciously” near nests containing chicks. If you spot any suspicious behaviour, please get in touch with the BMC.

Craig y Forwyn

The BMC have secured parking and an access arrangement to this famously banned crag. There are now ongoing discussions with neighbouring landowners about the exact location of various ownership boundaries in the area. In the meantime, you can access all the climbing in the left-hand section of the main crag.

South West

Sandford Quarry

The owner recently contacted the BMC to inform us that public access to this site is not permitted.

Cheddar Gorge

A quick reminder that the summer climbing regime will be starting in mid-March – check the website for details.

North West

Hoghton

The BMC recently met with the owner of Lancashire’s ‘potentially best quarry’ to explore extending the access arrangements. Discussions went well and we are hopeful of a positive outcome.

Wilton

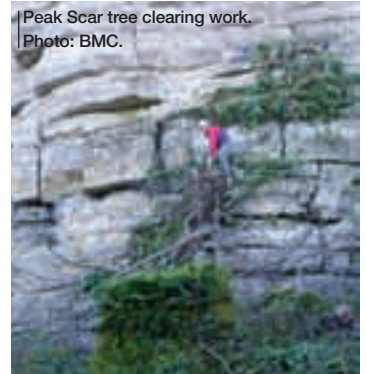
The first meeting of the Wilton Management Group recently got together in the Black Dog to thrash out what happens next, now the crag is owned by the BMC. Fencing work, site signage and replacing the old belay stakes are all high on the agenda – watch this space.

North East

Peak Scar

The Cleveland Mountaineering Club and the York Alpine Club have been busy clearing trees from Peak Scar. Mexborough Estates also felled 50 trees free of charge.

Peak Scar tree clearing work. Photo: BMC.



Yorkshire

Langcliffe Quarry

After a review period, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has reduced the agreed nesting restriction. Initially they wanted a permanent ban across the whole site, to protect the resident raven and peregrine falcons, but now agree that climbing outside of the nesting period will not impact on breeding success. You can now climb here after the peregrine chicks have fledged (usually mid-July) until 31st Dec.

Peak District

Derwent Edge

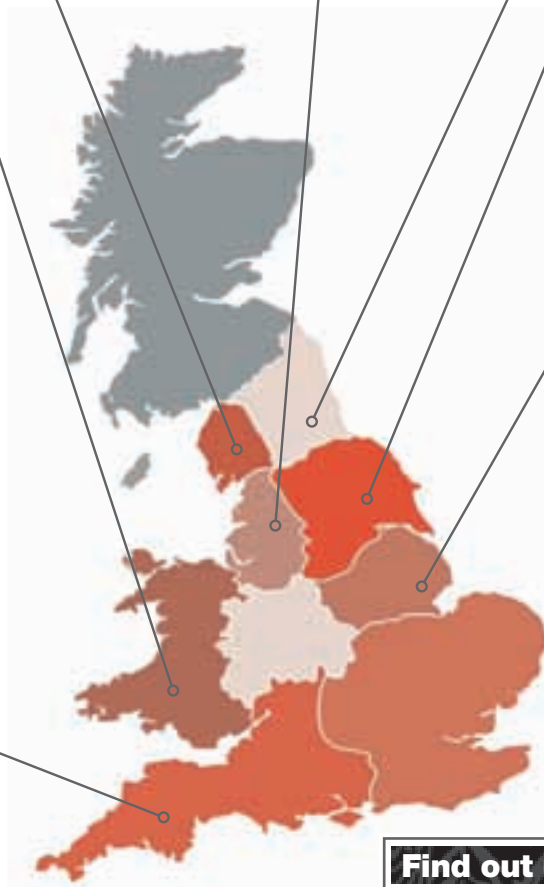
The Strines car park (GR 221 909) will be closed for the foreseeable future, due to logging operations. The bridleway leading to the edge from the Strines car park is available to visitors on foot, but cars should park at Cutthroat Bridge (GR 217 874) until further notice.

Backdale

The fate of one of the most beautiful views in the National Park will be decided by a Court of Appeal hearing, which began on 10th Feb. Keep an eye on the BMC website.

Black Rocks

Parts of this outstanding crag are rapidly disappearing beneath a canopy of trees, shrubs and saplings, so we’re talking to the Forestry Commission.



Find out more

For full details on any crag, see the Regional Access Database on the BMC website. Don't rely on your guidebook - it could be out of date.

www.thebmc.co.uk/rad

Letters

Got an opinion? Then let us know!

Email: summit@thebmc.co.uk to get something off your chest.

Write to us at: BMC, 177-179 Burton Road, Manchester, M20 2BB
or have your say online at www.thebmc.co.uk/summit

STAR LETTER

Rest in peace

My poem, 'Rest in Peace', is written in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the discovery of the body of Mallory on Mount Everest on 1st May 1999. I hope you like it.

M. J. McComish

*The boldest bid was ever made
for Chomolungma's summit plume
and there you lie, with tether frayed -
your grand reward, a frozen tomb.*

*Courageous English gentleman
who would the howling monster climb
with Irvine; your audacious plan
was thirty years before its time.*

*Your book of Keats and quaint tweed suits,
your wildest dream through goggled eyes;
with ice axe, rope and hobnailed boots
would catch the summit by surprise.*

*But going strong and glory bound,
you vanished on the bleak North Face;
three-fourths a century later found
at this, your final resting place.*

*And of that fateful desperate bid,
what evidence may yet unfold
upon the summit pyramid?
What final chapter to be told?*

*You championed the Empire's quest
and left your stalwart legacy
for evermore on Everest -
so rest in peace, amid the scree.*

Environmental cost

I hope that everyone appreciated the irony of the last issue having an article on recycling karabiners, directly followed by one on taking a short break to Ibiza. Surely no one really expects that the benefit of recycling old climbing equipment will counterbalance the appalling environmental cost of flying to the Mediterranean? But I'm not criticising Summit, I'm not even blaming the airline companies. No, I blame the readers: it's you who have to make the difference. After climbing all over the world, I've given up flying (and boy do I miss Yosemite and Arapiles), and have been discovering the climbing on this island of ours. Some will whine that I've still got a carbon footprint from travelling around Britain, but at least I'm trying. Everyone needs to consider their current lifestyle, not just travelling but also waste, food and energy. So please, do recycle your karabiners, but also get that sleeper train to Scotland or the Eurostar to Europe. And if you can't afford it, then make a sacrifice and stay closer to home. As climbers and walkers we cherish the natural environment – but we could all do a lot more to help look after it.

Adrian Gude

Camel rope

Regarding the article on recycling in the last Summit, the Bedouin of Wadi Rum are always pleased to get their hands on old climbing rope for tent ropes and camel leads. So, if your ropes are looking worse for wear after a hard time on Rum sandstone, cut them in half (so they can't be used for climbing) and give them to a deserving Bedouin!

Tony Howard

Win a Berghaus rucksac worth £60 for your letter

Let off steam with a letter to Summit and you could win a brand new Arete 35 daysac from Berghaus.



The Arete is a no-frills daypack designed for cragging and walking. It features compression straps, two-point haul loop, four gear loops, side compression strap, ice axe/pole holders and two wand pockets. There's a fusion back system and oversized zip pulls for easy use. The pack is made from Esdura 600RS, a midweight 600-

denier ripstop polyester fabric, which combines an excellent balance of strength, wear resistance, soft handling and low weight.

For further information visit www.berghaus.com or call 0191 516 5700.



Grow up

The BMC policy of 'not becoming landowners' is rather reminiscent of Clause Four in the Labour Party Manifesto pre-1997: somewhat of a philosophical stance, in need of reappraisal. For comparison, the RSPB and the Woodland Trust both actively seek to purchase prime locations – without their actions much of real value would have been destroyed. The subject of price hikes by owners, due to desire and interest in a site, is not entirely valid as a guide to decision making. If costs are a real concern, then the answer is embedded in the article: subcontract to the paintballers and quad-bikers and employ an imaginative fund raiser. Buy the place, change policy and grow.

Dave McCartney

First to the top

I was interested to read in issue 52 that Adele Pennington was the first British woman to summit Manaslu. However, I summited Manaslu the day before Adele – without the use of supplementary oxygen. I'm a 49-year-old British woman from Wiltshire and was climbing with Phil Crampton and Tarki Sherpa from the 'Altitude Junkies' team. This was my first 8000m peak.

Valerie Parkinson

Still serving

The demand for my CD of climbing songs – the 'Bar Room Mountaineers' – has well exceeded expectations; the first pressing sold out in 48 hours, the second a week later. We're now having some more prepared. If anyone wishes to get hold of a copy, send a cheque for £11 to Dennis Gray, 16 Royal Park Avenue, Leeds LS6 1EY.

Dennis Gray

Stuff

H2O Amphibx iPod Holder + Surge Waterproof Headphones

£49.95

(Surge headphones)

£54.95

(Amphibx iPod/MP3-player holder)

Now you can swim, surf, run or climb to your own soundtrack. H2O Audio has launched their new waterproof headphone and waterproof armband line for iPods, MP3 players and phones. Working to a depth of 3.6 metres, the Surge headphones and Amphibx armband holders allow you to listen to music underwater, liberating swimmers, surfers, skiers, runners and holidaymakers.

The Amphibx houses the iPod, and its unique shape and specialist materials have been designed to comfortably grip your arm, with the latch-tight locking closures providing a 100% watertight seal. The Surge waterproof headphones come with five different sized earpieces, so you can find your perfect fit.

Find out more and buy online at www.h2oaudio.co.uk



Win a waterproof iPod holder + waterproof headphones

Win a set of H2O Audio's waterproof iPod holder plus waterproof headphones – worth £115. Just find out:

Q. Which famous male surfer is an H2O Ambassador?



British Mountain Map: Knoydart

£10.95 (BMC members)



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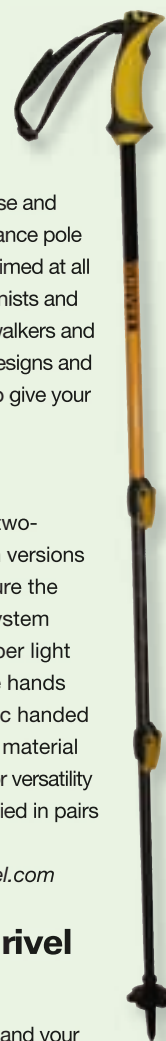
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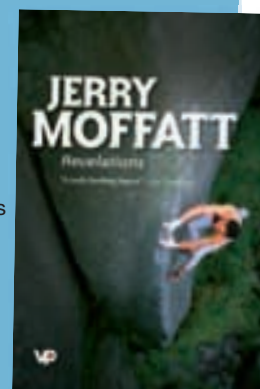
Q. Where is the Grivel headquarters?



Jerry Moffat - Revelations

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Niall Grimes, BMC writer-in-residence has put his quill to good use: ghost-writing the autobiography of Jerry Moffat – perhaps the greatest rock climber Britain has ever produced. Top sport-climber, brilliant competitor and bouldering pioneer, this is essential reading to get you inspired.



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Q. Who was the famous satan-loving mountaineer?



How to enter the competitions

Email summit@thebmc.co.uk with your answers unless stated. Or send in to Summit, BMC, 177-179 Burton Road, Manchester, M20 2BB.

Don't forget to state your name, address, which competition(s) you're entering and size if appropriate.

Good luck!

Closing date is 01/04/09.

Issue 52 winners

Many thanks to all those who entered last issue, and well done if you won. Get entering these great competitions and it could be you showered in free gear next time. A full winners list is available from the BMC if required.

Want to see your product here?

We're always on the lookout for new products to feature on these pages. It's free and very easy to arrange, email summit@thebmc.co.uk to find out more.





► that's me

The most upside down person I know? That's easy, it's Martin Crook. ■
'UpsideDown Wales' is available from www.bmcshop.co.uk - just £17.50 to BMC members.

My head goes very pink a lot. It's said I only get up what I do because I have a high pain threshold. They might be right, strange really, people here are climbing better than ever, but it's not regarded as anything special.

I'll never slap for a jug on the first ascent of an E7 again. However much you'd like to think that it doesn't matter, it does.
Young climbers don't mess about now: they do degrees, they work. There's no dole, people don't spend their time hanging out. They are much more business-like and they are climbing miles harder. It's conversation. It's how I imagine a pheasant shoot to be.

You have to recalibrate your gauge of what you can expect to get up, and it won't have anything to do with what you achieved as a mad keen youth. It doesn't mean don't try like a nutcase, but it does mean you might fall on your old warm ups.
I've got a healthy obsession with remote boulders. I share this with other gentlemen climbers who could once climb but who are now evidently crap. We seem to spend a lot of time on a hillside engaged in fine

Interview: Niall Grimes. Photo: Alex Messenger.





That's me

George Smith, 44, Upside-downer, Llanberis

Once in a blue moon the normal progress of climbing is replaced by something extraordinary: a particular group of climbers, a surge in standards, a supply of unclimbed rock and an ethos all fuse together to produce a Golden Era.

In the 1980s, Llanberis saw such a moon. The established scene (John Redhead, Martin Crook and Stevie Haston) were joined by a newer wave of visitors – Paul Pritchard, Johnny Dawes, Crispin Waddy and others – and together they produced some of the finest routes of their generation.

Yet, even amongst that group, one climber was noted for having particularly perverse tastes. Gaining renown as a pink-headed prospector of the perpendicular, George Smith's name was made in the shadowy upside down world of the roof cleft. His routes speak for themselves – No Holds Barred, Pre-Cambrian Wrestler and Ugly – and are rarely repeated to this day.

George has stayed in the area, working as an instructor, and lives on the hillsides of Fachwen with his wife, Anna, and two children, XXXXXX, 4, and XXXXXX, 8. Always a dilettante creative, George recently surfaced in Alun Hughes' film portrait of the area, 'UpsideDown Wales', a work which attempts to put its finger on the irregular pulse of Llanberis climbing life.

Llanberis is upside down. It's quirky and odd – which is why I like it. Plenty of people have been stuck on a route, I've been stuck in a route. It's a hazard of the territory. I was once bouldering in the Ogwen Valley and I got stuck inside a roof crack. If someone hadn't helped me out, I'd still be there.

You will have a zenith, no matter what grade you climb. But you are so engrossed at the time that you will have any context, you are just doing it.

The climbing royalty used to sit at round table in Pete's Eats. Only the upper echelons sat there, the 'Tritch', the 'Dawes' and the 'Waddy', all dressed like traps, penniless and on the dole. At weekends all the 'nobodies' – climbers with good jobs, careers and families – would sit around them, gazing on in awe.

My hand was shaking the first time I wrote up a new route. Making that mark in Pete's Eats' new route book was like swaggering into town, beating your chest. I was in awe of the Llanberis scene, and that first new route was a trophy that allowed me to get closer to it.

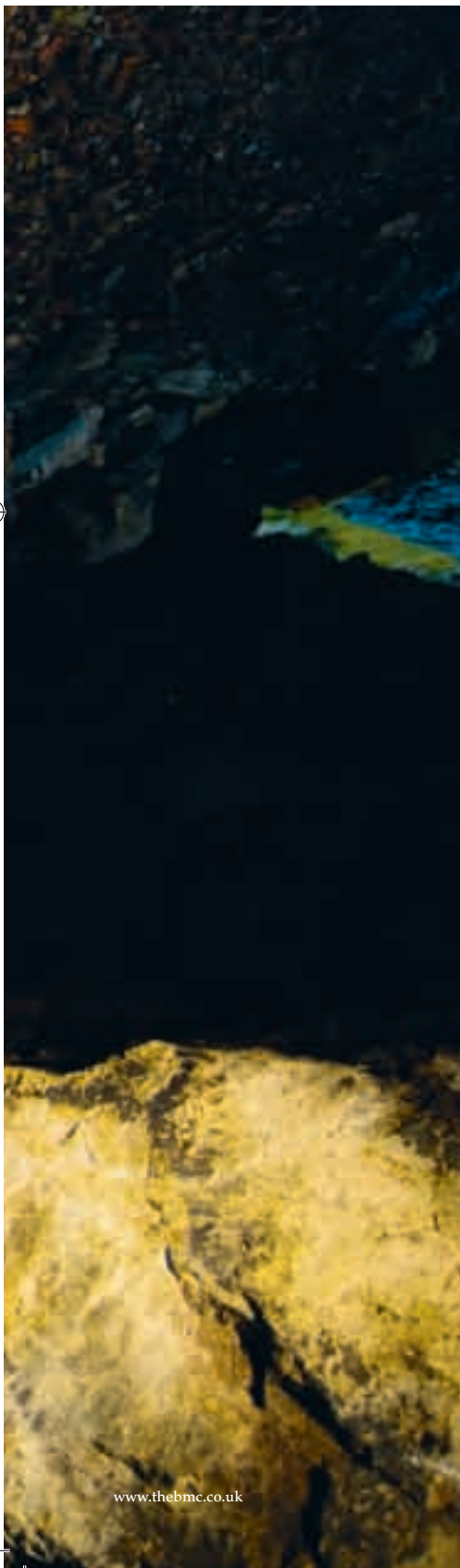
My obsession fitted the time and the place. I was obsessed by upside down struggles, and there were a load of crags, Gogarth in particular, that were covered in these rather specialist projects. No one else cared about these obscure objects of my desires, so I spent about a dozen years picking them off, one by one. It was heaven.

The Llanberis locals must have been rather confused in the eights. Generations had worked the people turn up, dressed strangely in bright lycra tights and ragged jumpers, and start clambering around all over the place.

It's only later, when you have left that place, that you will realise that was it – that was the time when you climbed your best.

When your standards start to slip you have to ask yourself if you actually like climbing. Do you think: Oh my God, it's over. Or do you think: This is still ace? If you still love it then you stand a chance.

Recalibration is a useful theory for the older gentleman climber.



Art of climbing

Ali Hargreaves, Painter

Painter and climber Ali Hargreaves specialises in commissions for climbers. Her work interprets people’s experiences in the mountains – expressed through a dynamic and empathetic style.

Ali’s love for climbing and the mountains began as a small girl, listening to her father’s stories of hanging belays at midnight, looking down onto the clouds far below. Her imagination transported her to a magical place – one that would come to dominate her life.

At eight, her father took her climbing to Rainster Rocks. Many bank holiday trips followed, but hemp ropes took their toll on her enthusiasm and she was temporarily misled by the dark pleasures of the Yorkshire cave system. Climbing won through, however, and in 1992 she discovered the delights of Scottish winter climbing and her future husband Phill on the same day, with an ascent of South Post Direct on Creag Meagaidh. It was a day to remember, even without the broken Andy Perkins, who they encountered during their white-out descent. His rescue involved a long run to the phone, a helicopter and a jar of vaseline – to grease a rather dilapidated stretcher.

An interest in painting was inevitable, since both her mum and gran were exhibited painters. Ali first put paint to canvas whilst on chickenpox exile at her gran’s house, and this led to A-levels, a college course in Art and finally a career as a teacher. However it was degenerative hearing loss that finally gave her the excuse to leave teaching and fulfil her dream of becoming a professional artist. She still climbs, with her two boys, and tells them tales of the mountains.

“This painting, of the Wilder Freiger in the Stubai Alps, was commissioned by

Cathy Gordon of the Karabiner Club in Manchester. I find commissions to be more challenging than straightforward paintings: they are more involving and, like climbing, the outcome never seems certain – the final moments before handing the painting over never fail to give me an adrenaline buzz.

For this painting, Cathy gave me a photo as a starting point. Wherever possible I involve the client in the creation: I’ll interview them, and find out about the conditions, their emotions and every other aspect of the experience. I’ll make a series of sketches and play around with composition, colour and texture. Often, I’ll write a poem incorporating the climber’s feelings and the spirit of their surroundings – the poem becomes part of the art.

I want my pictures to evoke the thrill and peril of climbing, and it helps enormously that I’ve climbed in the Alps. I’ve experienced the exhilaration of topping out on a summit; I’ve stood in awe of my surroundings as the sun sets at a bivi site; I’ve felt the sheer terror of near misses with crevasses and rockfall.

I think this picture is best viewed in the light of an early summer evening; colours change depending on the time of day that you’re looking at them. The colours I use are not always true, but emphasise the climber’s experience. This one started life with a simple yellow wash, so that there would be an underlying warmth coming through, and the rest of the colours were built up over several days. The blues and purples reflect the

coldness of the ice, but the yellows and oranges complement that cold, offering warmth for the solitary climber to aim for – you can tell that she’s heading for her companions in the warmer distance.

I always add texture to connect the picture to the feel of rock, ice and the elements. Here I’ve used plaster of Paris for the abyss and the footsteps, and thick wire for the walking pole. To accentuate the dangers of the abyss, I also used sandpaper. Small seeds added substance to the footsteps and tissue paper bolstered the stormy sky. Finally, I used ‘modroc’ (plaster of Paris bandage) to enhance the figures. As far as paint goes, acrylic paint is one of my favourite media, it can be used as a thin watercolour or as a thick oil so the paint sticks out all over the canvas. I use brushwork to highlight movement and ideas – in this case swirling the brush made the clouds appear to be building up to a storm.

The finished painting is slightly abstract, but still real and recognisable. Although I admire paintings of photographic quality, they don’t have the personality or depth of feeling that I strive for. For me, painting is all about communicating the whole experience and capturing peoples’ experiences. It’s about emotions, passion and mood. ■ ”

Find out more about Ali and her work at www.alisart.co.uk.

The finished painting of Wilder Freiger in the Stubai Alps. Photo: Ali Hargreaves.



► the interview

Photo: Ed Luke. From the "Rock Stars" collection, exhibiting throughout the UK in 2009. For show dates and details see www.rockstarexhibition.com.



Chris Bonington

the interview

Legendary British mountaineer Chris Bonington reaches another milestone this year: he turns 75. We sent Summit's youngest contributor – Tom Ripley, aged 19 – to quiz him on climbing, life and his plans for a seventh decade of exploration.

“I can be climbing a Diff when I’m 85. I’ll be a happy bunny.”

Chris, Sir Chris, Bonington: climber, mountaineer, adventurer, photographer, writer and expedition organiser extraordinaire. He’s been there and done it all – from alpine first ascents to Himalayan sieges, from descending the Blue Nile to surviving an epic on The Ogre. He’s been climbing for longer than most climbers have been alive, and, by the time I was born, he’d been climbing for over forty years and was President of the BMC. I was intrigued to meet him. But first, an introduction.

He started climbing aged 16 (like me). He was soon climbing with the best, and by the early sixties was one of Britain’s leading climbers (unlike me). Posted in Germany with the Army, his alpine climbing career kicked off with the first British ascent of the Bonatti Pillar on the Petit Dru in 1958, followed by the first ascent of the Central Pillar of Freney on Mont Blanc in 1961, and the first British ascent of the North Wall of the Eiger in 1962. A few years later he became an adventure photojournalist, reaching a dangerous climax when he accompanied an Army Expedition down the Blue Nile.

The start of seventies saw the first of his big Himalayan expeditions – Annapurna’s South Face – successfully putting Dougal Haston and Don Whillans on the summit. The next step was Everest, by the unclimbed Southwest Face. The 1972 attempt failed, but the 1975 expedition succeeded, with Doug Scott and Dougal Haston becoming the first Britons to summit. In 1977 he endured a fearsome ordeal on The Ogre with Doug Scott – during the abseil after a successful ascent, Scott swung wildly across the face and broke both legs. Bonington later fractured several ribs, and when the climbers stumbled back to base camp, with Scott crawling the entire way, they found that their support team had left. Their rescue took ten days; it was 24 years before anyone summited The Ogre again.

The eighties started well with an ascent of Kongur in China, but were marred by the disappearance of Peter Boardman and Joe Tasker on the North East Ridge of Everest in 1982. The next five years were happier: the West Summit of Shivaling in 1983, Mount Vinson in Antarctica and the realisation of a lifetime ambition – reaching the summit of Everest in 1985.

The nineties brought no slackening of pace, and, as we shoot towards the next decade, he shows no signs of slowing down. His climbing biography is a history of British mountaineering, and having devoured every word he’s ever written, I wanted to meet him in person. How has climbing changed since he started? What does he think of current issues – and, most importantly, does he still enjoy it? I grabbed an hour from his busy schedule and caught up with him at his Lakeland home.

Who inspired you at my age?

When I started climbing I couldn’t imagine going abroad. Everyone perceives me as a rich public schoolboy, when, in actual fact, my mum was a single parent and she stretched every limit to send me to a public day-school.



A young Chris Bonington on Southern Sandstone in 1955.
Photo: Chris Bonington Picture Library.

“Part of climbing is a sport, but climbing is much, much bigger than that: it’s a lifestyle, a philosophy, a way of doing things, a therapy.”

It was after the war and the country was very austere – we had no spare money and never owned a car – but getting to Scotland was within my reach, so my inspiration was W.H. Murray’s ‘Mountaineering in Scotland’. When I finally got to the Alps, Herman Buhl’s ‘Nanga Parbat Pilgrimage’ took its place.

How has climbing changed since you first started?

When I started climbing in 1951, the first pair of boots I bought was a pair of clinker-nail boots, and the first rope a hand-me-down hemp rope. You had two or three slings as your only form of protection (which you looped over spikes or threaded around chockstones) and a few heavy steel karabiners – which there was a good chance would break. Shortly afterwards nylon ropes came in; I persuaded my mum to buy one to keep me alive. For hard climbs Woolworth’s gym shoes were the best – PAs (the forerunner of modern climbing shoes) didn’t arrive till 1956. And, as far as grades went, the top grade in Llanberis Pass was about E1. However Joe Brown and Don Whillans were just starting to do some much harder things, and very quickly they pushed the standard of climbing forward by about two generations.

If you, Don and Joe were transported from your prime into 2009, would you still be up there with the best?

I’m sure that Don and Joe would still be genius rock climbers. I never had the build to be a genius rock climber. I was a good rock climber, a very good alpinist, a good Himalayan climber and a good organiser.

Would you class yourself as a climber, mountaineer or explorer?

A bit of all them really.

What does it say on your passport?

‘Lecturer’ – you want something absolutely bland on your passport, I want immigration to think that I’m very tame.

What’s your greatest climbing achievement?

It’s got to be the South West Face of

Everest, but that was more of a logistical challenge than a personal climbing achievement – since I didn’t summit. From a pure survival point of view it was definitely The Ogre. The interesting thing about The Ogre was that it wasn’t repeated for twenty-five years, and only after twenty-odd attempts. Thomas Huber climbed the second ascent with a Swiss climber and he was very, very impressed by the steep top bit – which Doug led, a fantastic piece of climbing on Doug’s part. The most enjoyable route I’ve done was when I made the first ascent of the West Summit of Shivling with Jim Fotheringham. We did it in pure alpine style: five days up and one day down. We knew nothing about the mountain and the decision to climb it was completely spontaneous – that, to me, is what adventure is all about.

What inspires you?

Climbing inspires me – any kind of climbing – and the beauty of the mountains. Then there is the challenge of exploration, going into an unknown area or climbing a mountain that you know nothing about. Or there’s looking up at something really hard and challenging, be it the South Face of Annapurna, or the South West Face of Everest, and working out just how you are going to climb it.

Why do you still climb?

I love it, but you’ve got to accept that it’s not the same when you get older. It’s not so much the drop in standard, that doesn’t bother me at all. After all, I’ve never been a brilliant rock climber – I was a steady E2, maybe E3-on-a-good-day, leader. No, the difference is that when you’re climbing at the height of your powers (in your twenties, thirties and right up into your fifties) you’re almost bouncing up climbs. As you get older you just creak up them; there isn’t the same kind of sensual pleasure. I just climb within my leading standard now, VS and the occasional HVS, and thoroughly enjoy it.

VS is one of the best grades anyway isn’t it?

Oh, it’s a brilliant grade. The problem is that when you’ve lived here for forty

years, you’ve done everything you’re capable of doing! I have to go further afield to get on fresh rock.

What’s been your best recent trip?

I had a brilliant time in the Lofoten Islands. The Priest must be the best roadside crag in the world – twelve-hundred-feet of superb steep slab climbing, about E2 5c on the crux and I got up that on a very tight rope!

Do you like climbing walls?

Indoor walls are absolutely fantastic, even for us hardened old trad climbers. Now even we can try and keep fit over the winter or awful summers, like the one we’ve just had. They are fantastic for introducing youngsters to climbing too. The interesting thing is to help the children that are really keen and introduce them climbing to outside. A lot of young climbers aren’t that interested in trad climbing, they just go bouldering. There’s nothing wrong with that though, maybe some will start trad climbing or go sport climbing abroad. What you want is the means of communication between all these different groups, so people can see what there is on offer and decide what they want to do.

What about competition climbing?

I’ve no problems at all. Climbing now fills a very broad church and competition climbing is just one part of that – it’s a natural development of sport climbing and climbing walls. The key thing is ensuring that all the different facets of the sport don’t actually damage one another. For example, I’ve got nothing against sport climbing, but you don’t want sport climbing on traditional crags.

Do you regard climbing as a sport?

Part of climbing is a sport, but climbing is much, much bigger than that: it’s a lifestyle, a philosophy, a way of doing things, a therapy. It is incredibly big, and in a way it’s important that the rules of climbing are not written rules – although ethics are something that we argue about passionately.



What do you think of the use of drugs like Diamox to speed acclimatisation and increase performance at altitude?

Oh, I've got no problems with that at all, as long as you declare that you used it. The pure purists, like Messner, will say you shouldn't climb Everest with any extra aid – which means no bottled oxygen or fixed ropes – but I think that's being over-elitist, and provided you are honest about your ascent then I have no problems. After all, I used oxygen and Diamox when I climbed Everest.

What do you think of the Chinese building a road to Everest base camp?

Actually, I'm not that bothered. You're already getting lorries to base camp so all they've done is put a tarmac track in. A more controversial thing is that Russell Bryce (the big wheeler-dealer for commercial climbing on the north side of Everest) has been trying to get permission to build a lodge at base camp. But again, as long as the lodge is tastefully designed I see no harm in that – they've got commercial expeditions going up there so decent toilet facilities are needed. Everest has become the Mont Blanc of the Himalayas, a honey pot; all the crowds go to Everest and that leaves all the lovely, big, nameless bits empty for people like me to happily climb in. What does worry me about this whole commercial climbing business is the number of clients on a mountain. This culture where people are walking past other people in trouble, leaving them to die because it's more important to get to the top. This is something that both commercial climbing and the climbing community need to come to terms with – it should be absolutely clear that if anyone is in trouble on the mountain then everyone should stop what they're doing and go to their help.

What's your view on fixed abseil points?

It depends. If there's a perfectly reasonable descent path, then a chain so you can abseil straight off is pure laziness. Leaving bits of tat is also inappropriate – routes finish at the top and I think this business of just doing the hard pitches is rather sad. However it's wrong to be against bolts under any circumstances. I think it was utterly sensible for those bolts to be placed at Sergeant Crag Slabs (where the descent is environmentally damaging) and rather stupid of someone to hammer them out.

www.thebmc.co.uk

Chris and Don Whillans setting off for the Eiger in 1962. All photos: Chris Bonington Picture Library.



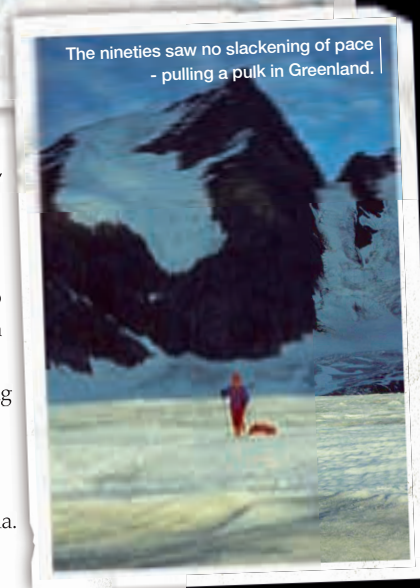
High on The Ogre in 1977 before the fateful retreat.



Achieving a life-long ambition - on the summit of Mount Everest in 1953.



The nineties saw no slackening of pace - pulling a pulk in Greenland.



How did it feel to visit 10 Downing Street?

It was a lovely experience, everyone enjoyed themselves (although Gordon Brown wasn't there – he had an economy to sort out). It really was representative: you had mountaineers, rock climbers, boulderers, competition climbers, bureaucrats, manufacturers and journalists. It was probably the first time that such a wide section of the climbing community had been together for a long time. In the old days we had a National Mountaineering Conference – a bit like the Kendal Mountain Film Festival, but run by the BMC – and everyone got together, got drunk and did wild things. There really should be an event like that every couple of years.

Where can I get the best pint in the Lakes?

At a pub called the Old Crown down in Hesket Newmarket. I'm a stakeholder in the brewery behind, so must admit that I've got a vested interest. All beer is superb, but Doris' 90th is the best of the lot – Doris was the mother-in-law of the brewery's founder and he originally made this particular brew for her ninetieth. It was so good that they kept it.

What's planned for this year?

Well, I've got the annual trip to Australia; my eldest son lives there and I get see my grandchildren and go climbing. Then every year we go at least twice to Spain to stay with friends of ours who are golfers; Wendy plays golf every day and I go climbing. Then I've got the annual trip to Morocco: a lot of old farts go there and Joe Brown is hopefully going to come this year – he's missed two trips because of

his arthritis. I've then got five weeks in Nepal, going as bait on my eldest son's first commercial trek. It'll be great – I haven't been to base camp for about ten years. I've then got another little trek, taking the guys who own Berghaus on an adventure trek on the south side of Annapurna. I think the Lofoten Islands will become an annual event, so I've got that in June, then it's off to the States in the autumn.

No plans to retire then?

Nope. My ambition is to be able to keep on climbing for at least another ten years. If I can be climbing a Diff when I'm 85, I'll be a happy bunny. ■

Tom Ripley (19) is an avid climber and budding writer. In the summer he can be found hitching around the Lakeland crags or loitering in Chamonix. He is currently on his gap year and appears to attract epics, the best of which result in helicopter rides. Luckily for him he has BMC insurance.



superstar



KELLY HOLMES IS LOOKING FOR A NEW SPORT: COULD IT BE CLIMBING?

Our man Niall Grimes put the double gold medal-winning runner through her paces at Stanage Edge – how did she do?

Climbing coach Katherine Schirmacher tells a cool story. A few years ago she was trying the classic Raindogs at Malham Cove. Things were going okay, but her attempts were constantly frustrated by two wet pockets low on the route. Katherine would stuff newspaper into these pockets upon arrival at the crag to soak up the moisture, but still found success elusive.

"It was frustrating," she told me. "So to give myself motivation, I began to stuff pictures of Kelly Holmes into the pockets. I collected pictures of her holding the British flag, took them to Malham and shoved them into the pockets. I just wanted some of that motivation."

I seldom watch sport on telly, but every now and then a performance rises off the screen and grabs me somehow, an event



Kelly Holmes cruising Big Business (V1), Stanage.



Niall Grimes introducing Kelly Holmes to the delights of gritstone.
All photos: Alex Messenger/BMC.

where the spirit of the athlete transcends the sport and becomes something intensely inspiring. Like Kelly Holmes' double victory in the Athens Olympics in 2004. You could just tell from watching the experience – and Kelly's reaction to her own performance – that this was an incredible sporting event.

During the 2008 games, I switched

on one night and saw Kelly (now Dame Kelly) being interviewed – she said that she was interested in trying out some new sports. At the time I was writing a book about the climber Jerry Moffatt, and was working on the chapter about his years in competitions, his initial failure and later success. Climbing is essentially competitive, but from working with Jerry, I got a sense of how 'competition' differs from being competitive. Being competitive is a character trait, be that of the sport, or the person. Competition is an activity where someone must perform at the highest physical levels, and be in total mental control over every aspect of their performance. Through talking with Jerry, I got a real insight into the art of competition.

Watching Kelly, two things struck me. One was, wow, I bet she'd be good in a climbing competition, the other was that she seemed really nice, and that she would really enjoy climbing, that she would really get it.

With Kelly's invitation on my mind, I got to work and dusted off the old BMC publicity machine and, within days, our people were talking to her people. Kelly's assistant wanted to know what we thought would be the positive outcomes. The best answer we could come up with was the truth: "She might like it?"

Every now and again, it seems that the truth is the best answer. It was on.

We had met Kelly that morning in Hathersage, and were surprised to see she already had climbing shoes and a chalkbag – courtesy of the 'Superstars' TV programme – and were able to head straight to the crag. The sun shone brilliant, while an iron-cold ice-blasted wind howled across Stanage Edge. On the walk-up we all chatted that way we thought we would chat to someone who wasn't a celebrity. Boys-oh-boys it was cold. With BMC press expert Tina Gardner on sandwich duty, mountain guide Rich Cross there to make sure that Kelly came to no harm, and Alex

“The sun shone brilliant, while an iron-cold ice-blasted wind howled across Stanage Edge.”





“ Katy Whittaker showed Kelly what climbing should really look like, and the afternoon turned into a fun bouldering session. ”



Kelly Holmes - not giving up on Crozzle Wall (V3), Stanage.

Messenger papping the event, I got my gear on and declared I was going to lead a climb and she would second. Scanning the guide for something easy but exciting, I decided upon, and led off, up 'Fairy Steps', a fairly straightforward but very exposed VS traverse with no gear.

At twenty-five feet, I had no runners in. The cold had turned my fingers into what felt like polystyrene skyhooks. Holds were covered in damp patches of beautiful iridescent green. I was trembling, suspecting that at any moment poor Dame Kelly was about to witness an unexpected groundfall. Abandon.

To the chimneys!

By now the wind had taken on an almost exquisite frigidness. I started up 'Hollybush Gully Right' with numb, technical handjams. The upper chimney was like somewhere you would test rockets for aerodynamics, and I howled my way to the top. Kelly put in a supreme performance seconding the route, not just overcoming the handjam start, not bridging the howling gully of arctic death, not working out how to extract a runner, but in making out she enjoyed it – a true professional.

Sandwich time. By now BMC boss Dave Turnbull had shown up, and took the heat off by explaining what the BMC does and how it runs. Kelly has set up, or is heavily involved, with many charities and voluntary organisations to promote sport and give young people a chance, so was interested to find out more about what climbing had to offer.

In the afternoon, we were to meet up with the young grit-climber Katy Whittaker and others for some bouldering in the Plantation. Dave explained bouldering to Dame Kelly, and, along the way, pointed out Crescent Arête – the super-classic V2 highball.



“Yes, that one’s quite scary,” Dave advised Kelly.

I couldn’t help but thinking that standing on a starting block before a race against seven of the world’s best athletes in front of 3.9 billion people where you have trained for most of your life for the next three minutes and fifty seven seconds, and where if you make the slightest hesitation or error of judgement you will not experience success, but failure, is probably slightly more intimidating than doing Crescent Arête.

By the time we got to the boulders, the wind had died. The sun was warm and the conditions were perfect. Katy showed Kelly what climbing should really look like, and the afternoon turned into a fun bouldering session. We all did lots of problems, and she seemed surprisingly able to climb some steep and very thuggy problems, and her approach, a dogged expectation that if she keeps at it she will do it, seemed pretty successful. Soon, the icy horrors of the morning were soon forgotten. In fact, the fact that Dame Kelly was Dame Kelly was soon forgotten too, which to my mind is one of the nicest aspects that a ‘celeb’ could have. Again, it was the person that came through.

At the end of the day, we were all trying a little V3 slab, and one by one we all did it. In the end, it was just Tina and Kelly who were left to do it, and both their frustration was showing. They tried different methods, foot sequences and approaches, and, while the rest of us settled into judging their performances, they tried and tried. And tried. There was an interesting refusal by Kelly to give up, as her foot slipped time and time again off a smear, a point where I would have happily walked away. But no. They both kept at it. In the end, Tina got it first (hurray for the BMC!), followed right away by Kelly.

I hope Kelly enjoyed her day, and I hope she enjoyed climbing. I felt privileged to show climbing to her, and it was great to see how a sporting great reacted to our funny little pastime. However, if there was one abiding facet of Dame Kelly Holmes that struck me above all others it was this:

For a gold-medal-winning runner, she needs to use her feet more. ■

The team: Rich Cross, Niall Grimes, Pete Whittaker, Jo Stadden, Katy Whittaker, Kelly Holmes, Tina Gardner and Dave Turnbull.



DoubleGold
 Dame Kelly Holmes
 Double Olympic Champion

Climbing
 my way into the
 business world

Follow my progress online
 doublegold.co.uk

On Camp with Kelly
 oncampwithkelly.co.uk

DKH Legacy Trust
 dkhlegacytrust.org



Obscurity

Because the best things aren't always obvious.

Froggatt shines like a jewel. Bumbling beginners, tick monsters and delicatessans can all warm to its delights in a moment, and it will, in turn, warm their memories season upon season. Curbar, angry Curbar. A beast. A best friend you don't want to hang out with all the time, given to black moods and sudden turns. But still, you'd stand by it forever. Birchen, the beginners' crag? Only because the first lesson in any worthwhile pursuit is humility and respect. A hunter must learn that animals bite; huff and puff on the first moves of your V Diff

("I did VS at the wall?") and, get up it or not, you have improved.

These are the great ones. Work is almost complete on the new BMC gritstone guide, *Froggatt to Black Rocks*. This vast-ranging tome will be the mightiest we have yet produced, and will detail the routes and boulder problems on almost 50 crags. That's 50. It combines most of the old blue Froggatt guide, with every crag from the old yellow Chatsworth guide. As such, it covers crags of vastly differing statures and fame.

It has the great ones listed above. After that there are the crags that you will most likely have visited, but don't know very well. This guide has done a tremendous

job of shining a light onto these great, but shy, crags. Gardom's Edge is laid bare for you. The perverse joys of Chatsworth are there in all their glory. Yeandcliffe Quarry is manifest. Cratcliffe Tor will be a hermit no more. Robin Hood's Stride is weasily wecognisable. Black Rocks comes out bright and shining.

For all these crags, the usual three-star treatment is being dealt out. Great crag shots, top action pics, inspirational descriptions. The usual extras are all these too – the anecdotes and suggestions of different ways to look at the crag. An Editor's Choice feature gives the knowledge on the routes you might not have thought of. One of the best-loved features of the Stanage guide, bouldering circuits, are being used here, with colour-coded adventures being set out for Curbar, Baslow, Froggatt, Birchen, Gardoms, Cratcliffe and Robin Hood's Stride.

This is perhaps the best-researched guide in the series so far. The in-depth knowledge is quite deep. And while these crags mentioned have been picked over like a Christmas turkey, there is another level of crag in this guide which has taken research to the next level.

Harland Edge, Dobb Edge, Matlock Bank, Bauston Tor, Shining Cliff, Eastwood Rocks, Ravensnest Tor, Leashaw Brow. Know anything about these? Thought not. Yet these crags, as much as any, will give this guide its uniqueness. We asked three of the crag writers to give their impressions of the dark and obscure end of the crags in the new guide.

www.thebmc.co.uk

Ben Bransby climbing his new line 'My Prune' at Cratcliffe.
Photo: Adam Long.





A willing victim gets stuck into 'No See Um' at Ravensnest Tor.
Photo: Andy Lewandowski.

And some of the rock is reminiscent of gritstone.

Recruits gather, the tranquillity is disturbed and the possibilities multiply. Odd comparisons result: Tremadog in the Peak; Gogarth over Ashover. A sea of fields does stretch east into Nottinghamshire and some of the climbing definitely suggests elsewhere. Odd discoveries are made: the exceptional adaptability of the patio crack cleaner and the toilet brush. A chipped hold indicates an earlier visit; the unmistakable smell of oil wafts up from the shale at the bottom of the crag.

Ravensnest Tor, another one for the oddities list.

MATLOCK

By Ruben Brown,
Matlock Obscurist

One day, a couple of years ago, we went to one of the Matlock gritstone crags and there was somebody else there. Crazy. That had never happened before – I suppose if it happens again we'll have to move to Scotland. It was the first time we'd been to Leashaw Brow, and we were expecting little more than moss and brambles. Instead we found a skinny man smoking tabs and taking huge, looping falls from an immaculate prow of gritstone. He had no idea where he was, having found the crag, using binoculars, from a pub on the A6. He reckons that there's another crag out there, one he's seen from afar but not yet found. One day.

Every so often these crags see a little bit of attention. The call of the woods is answered by the obscurist, the

RAVENSNEST TOR

By Andy Lewandowski,
Amber Valley Correspondent

For years I lived just minutes away from the brazen delights of Stanage – that edge of edges. Grit in the deep south of the Peak District had a cloak of mystery around it; here were rumours of rock in the woods but it took persistence to find. Spurred on by the occasional guidebook, a foray south would result; partners puzzled by the route taken – climbing's west isn't it?

Wind up Slack Hill, announcing the Amber Valley. The edge is up there, somewhere, cue much head scratching in the back. The flat farmland parking does little to assuage the rising tide of doubt, Cocking Tor appears to save your face, only for abortive rhododendron tunnelling to redden it again.

Esoteric, inner, secret, mysterious. Yes, some of the south certainly is. Apart from a few exceptions, it's largely hidden from view and difficult to eye up from a distance. You don't just roll up, jump out and look up. A bit of ferreting is necessary, you have to get face to face with it, eventually you will get your reward. Now living

closer, with a licence to roam, more secrets have been unravelled.

Taking a break from cutting back the weeds at Turning Stone Edge, a peer to the south reveals glimpses of unknown rock. Secateuring a path down through the brambles, an unlikely surprise reveals itself: something big and ugly lives in this quiet corner of the Amber Valley.

Steve 'Offwidth' Clarke busy checking Emperor's Flake, Chatsworth.
Photo: Reuben Brown.





Andy Banks at Eastwood Rocks.
Photo: John Coefield.

EASTWOOD WESTLY

Jon Fullwood,
Southern Area Prospector

As kids we'd stand at the edge of our boring town and speculate about the hill on the horizon, with the caterpillar on its back. In time 'the gang' of three would set out on a quest to reach the distant peak around which we'd built our stories. The place we found was the western flank of the Amber Valley. The caterpillar was a copse, which, being circular and on a hilltop, looks the same regardless of which direction you approach from.

Later we'd take the bus out with a sack full of dad's climbing gear and climb between the rhododendrons – Amber Buttress, Amber Arete and Plumb Bob – according to the barely visible highlighting in my gaffered-up Derwent Valley guide.

I left for University and the gang dispersed; the others drifted out of climbing, but still they'd come back to the caterpillar hill. Now as rowdy youths, full of acid and skol lager, gathering under the hollow beach tree; crawling around the dark leafy tunnels to the Turning Stone. Uni came and went; I gravitated to Sheffield, found a

room in a climbing house and did the dole thing. Upstairs, Mark Turnbull was earnest and hard working, writing the Turning Stone script for the 1996 Chatsworth guide in between making climbing films like 'Hard Grit'. I was a waster and wound him up royally with my slovenly ways and glib downgrading of his new routes. Of course, as crag editor, he got his way on the grades.

Years on and I keep finding new things there, a Joni Mitchell song beside a Paul Mitchell wall, a sun-cross hidden in full view, many reasons to go back again. Someone has just found a whole new crag! I wonder if Mark, who doesn't climb now, will chance to see that. It's a decade on and I've finally got my way on the grades.

Last week Niall sent over the Cocking Tor script for checking. On the bottom of the page was a black and white shot, three lads, walking out toward the caterpillar. ■

Froggatt to Black Rocks comes out this summer. Covering 2,900 routes and 450 boulder problems on all the gritstone crags from Froggatt to Cratcliffe to Black Rocks. It will be a bazooka-bumper. You'll love it.

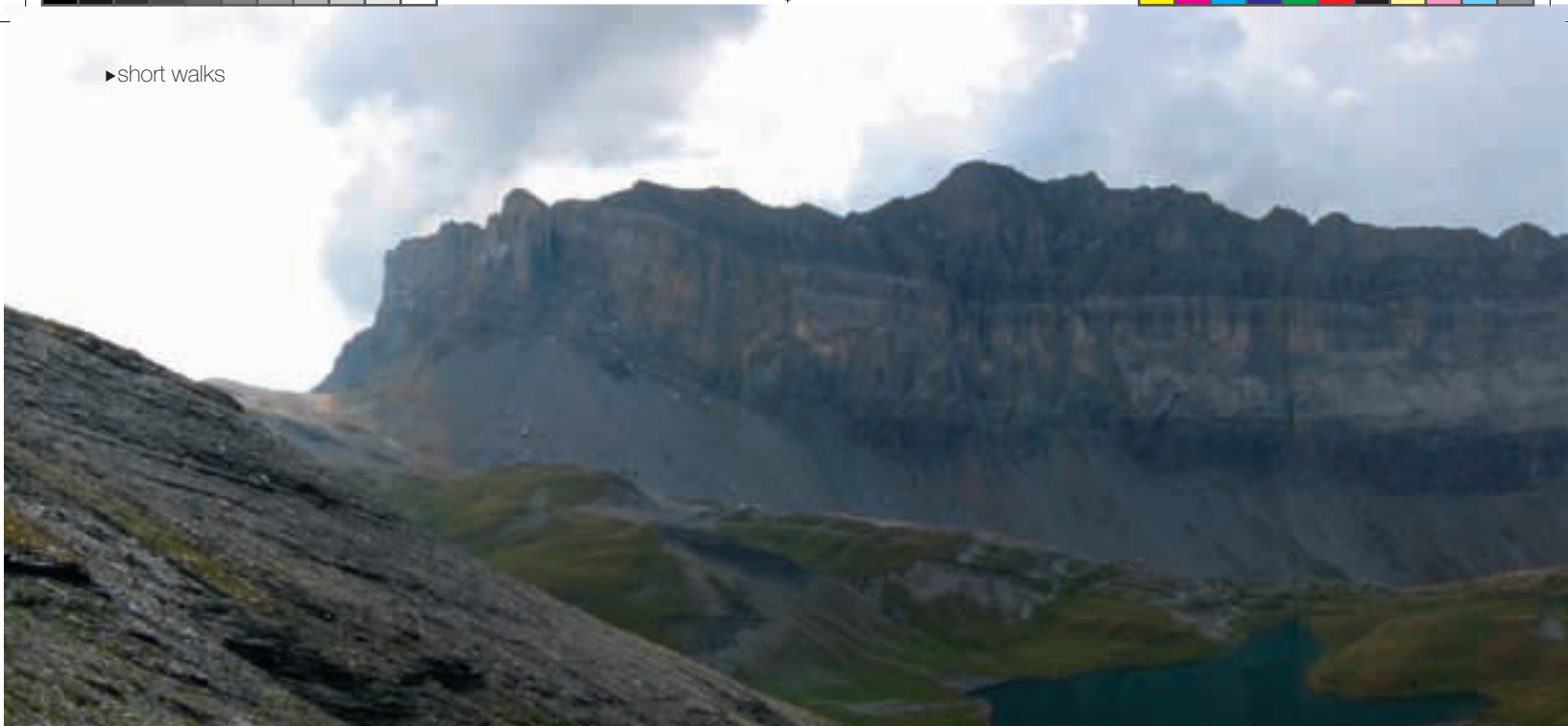
localist or the pioneer. The rocks occasionally have company, but mostly they're undisturbed. These crags are esoteric, which could mean they're not worth the effort. Maybe to some that's the case; climbing's a personal thing.

The other week we were sat around drinking tea with a friend who has just moved to the Hope Valley. Nowadays he climbs on the eastern edges a lot, and loves it of course. But we got talking about days out on the wild faces of Duke's, sunsets at the Alport Stone, winter days on Beeley Moor and silent woodland rock. The green and the gold. That evening he looked into his mug and said: "You know, I think that the best times I've ever had climbing in the Peak were around Matlock."

Pervert.

The caterpillar of Cocking Tor.
Photo: Niall Grimes.





The Tour des Fiz, Haute Savoie

Short of time? Then try this weekend out for size – a mountain circuit of the stunning cliffs of the Rochers des Fiz, passing through two nature reserves offering stunning views of Mont Blanc.

The towering cliffs of the Fiz dominate the skyline as you drive from Geneva to Chamonix; for many years I'd crane my neck whilst driving along the auto-route to stare at these stunning rock faces. Being nosy, it all got too much and I finally had to just go and explore. Much to my delight I soon realised that a perfect miniature 'tour' could be done in two to three days, taking in views of the big alpine peaks and offering rare wildlife, hidden valleys and incredible geology.

The tour can be started from Plaine Joux, high on the mountainside above the Sallanches valley, and the first day can include an ascent of the Pointe Noire de Pormenaz – which sits at 2,323m. This is a very satisfying beginning: a decent summit offering some of the very best views of Mont Blanc. This tour is not overly frequented, which makes it all the more

appealing, and it offers accommodation with bags of character. The first night's stop is at the Refuge de Moede-Anterne, where the 'myrtille' tart comes highly recommended!

After a steep climb over the Col d'Anterne the next morning, the views change to the beautiful high meadow – where vast herds of sheep graze in the summer months. Here you might manage to spot 'Le Pastou'. These giant white dogs have been bred for centuries in the Pyrenees, and they are usually referred to by their local name of 'Le Pastou' (taken from 'pastre', the old French word for a shepherd). Born in the 'bergerie', or sheepfold, the puppies quickly establish a strong bond with their future charges. Consequently their natural instinct is to protect the sheep from intruders. They spend much of their time on their own guarding the flock – they are fascinating to watch, but it's best to give them a wide berth!

Shortly after, you can stop for coffee (or the night) at the historic Alfred

One of the Refuge de Plate's permanent residents.

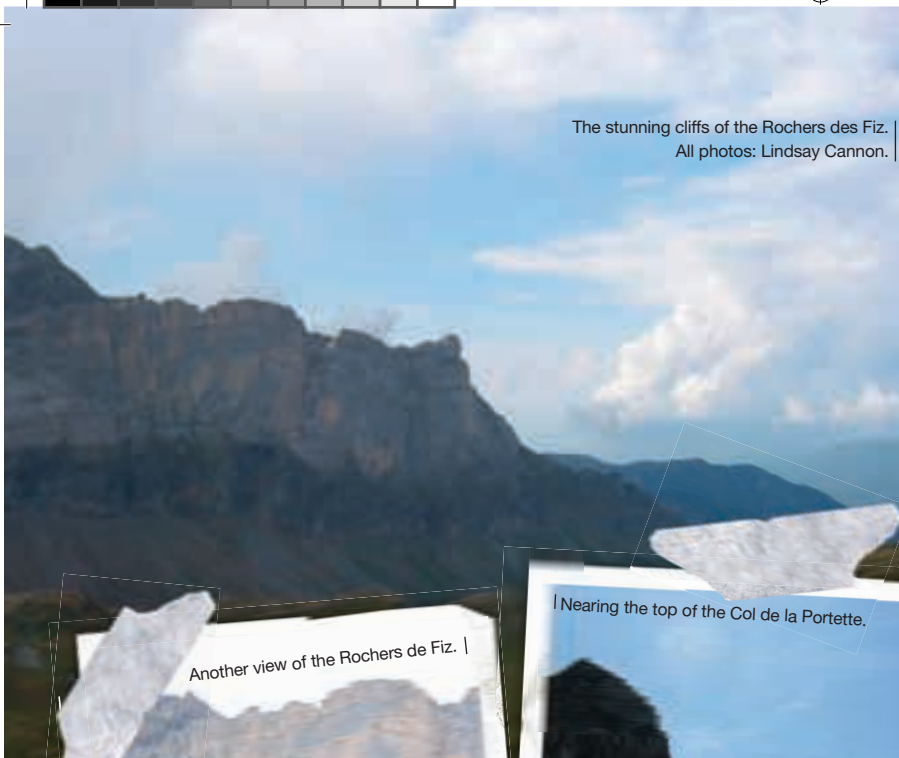


Another of the Refuge de Plate's friendly locals.





The stunning cliffs of the Rochers des Fiz. | All photos: Lindsay Cannon.



Essential facts: Tour des Fiz

Getting to France

Fly to Geneva: a range of airlines fly to the city including Easyjet (www.easyjet.com), British Airways (www.britishairways.com) and Flyglobespan (www.flyglobespan.com). Or get the train (www.seat61.com).

Getting to the start

Begin from Plaine Joux, near Plateau d'Assy, which sits high on the mountainside. From Geneva you can take a train to St-Gervais-Le-Fayet, then a taxi to Plaine Joux. Alternatively, spend a night in Chamonix first, and then take a taxi to the start. It's around 1.5 hours from Geneva airport by car.

Accommodation

On the Tour, accommodation is in mountain huts. There is a choice of four on the route – all with great character and in beautiful settings – and which ones you choose will depend on how long you want each day to be.

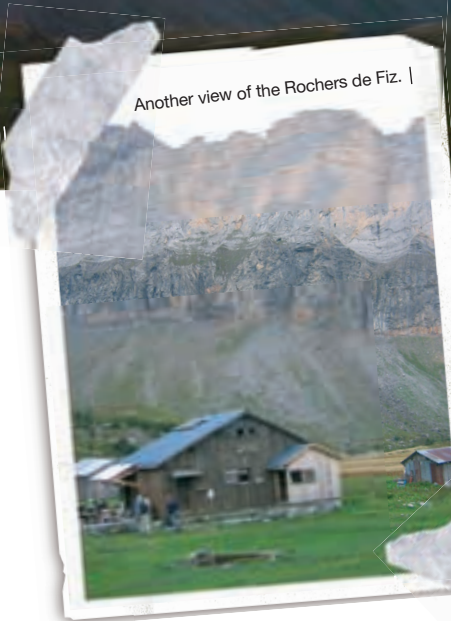
Maps and guides

1:25,000, Institut Géographique National
3530 ET Samoëns.

When to go

Mid-June to mid-October.
Check beforehand that the refuges are open. Snow can also lie late in the couloirs, which could make crossings interesting.

Another view of the Rochers de Fiz. |



Nearing the top of the Col de la Portette.



Oscar Wilde. His ascent of the Wetterhorn, in 1854, is credited with marking the beginning of the Golden Age of Alpinism.

A hike up through the impressive Gorge de Sales is next, leading into the Grand Pré, (or large meadow) where herds of cattle and sheep were taken for summer grazing for centuries. Here you can often spot marmots, ibex, and the rare 'gypaète barbu' (bearded vulture) which has just been successfully re-introduced to the area. In the 19th century, the bearded vulture had a rather unfortunate press: it was accused of devouring lambs, and even small children. Alpine authorities eventually declared open season on the bird, and the last one was shot in 1913. But the vulture (known as the 'bone crusher' since it drops bones from a great height in an attempt to break them open for the marrow) is now back.

As you wander on up the Grand Pré, the limestone geology becomes very apparent and if flowers do it for you then you're in for a treat: the limestone soils give some very rare types. Now it's over the Col de la

Portette and onwards down to the Refuge de Plate. The Désert de Platé is a high altitude karst (limestone pavement). On the Désert de Platé, water does not trickle over the surface – it's sucked into the interior of the mountain itself, to resurge finally from beneath the limestone. The Refuge de Plate is definitely worth an overnight stay as it's got so much character. The situation is great, offering more views of the Mont Blanc Massif, and it's got real history: used by the 'maquis' – the rural guerrilla bands of the French Resistance – during the Second World War. Today you can just relax with a refreshing drink, surrounded by hens scratching in the grass and the Refuges' two donkeys, Nanette and Fifine. The final descent is an exciting path through steep and seemingly impenetrable rock bands, as it descends down to the valley before



The charming Refuge de Moede-Anterne.

traversing the mountainside back to Plaine Joux. So, if your holiday has been credit-crunched, and you only have a weekend to spare, then check this out. Alpine landscape, stunning views and off the beaten track – what more could you want? ■

Lindsay Cannon is an International Mountain Leader (IML) and presents on The Adventure Show for the BBC. Join her in the Alps at: www.tracks-and-trails.com.

Competitions '09

BMC Competitions Officer Rob Adie takes a look at what's planned on plastic for this year.

Strongman Keith Bradbury will be at Cliffhanger in July - will you?
Photo: Alex Messenger.

BMC Leading Ladder Final

4th April, Foundry, Sheffield

The second-ever BMC Leading Ladder Final will take place at the Foundry Climbing Wall in Sheffield. The top ten climbers in each of the 12 categories of the Leading Ladder will be invited to attend, and this year the format has been changed to run just like a Leading Ladder round.

Competitors will have a certain amount of time to do as many of the routes in their category as possible, and tactics will come into play when deciding which routes to do in what order. However this means that there will be no scary qualifiers, finals or isolations! This should hopefully emphasise the fun element of the day, so make sure you get competing in your local rounds to secure your place!

www.thebmc.co.uk/ladder

BMC Junior Team Trials

9-10th May, EICA, Ratho, Edinburgh

The second Junior Team Trials will be held on the new competition walls at EICA, Ratho. This second trial is to determine the Junior Team that will compete in the European Youth Series Competition also to be held at Ratho in September. This is your chance to secure your position on the team and compete for your country on home turf. What are you waiting for?

www.thebmc.co.uk/teamtrials

BMC Youth Climbing Series

7th March, 28th March & 25th April, Nationwide

The hugely successful Youth Climbing Series winds up again this year, with the first of three regional rounds starting on the 7th March, in nine regions around the country. You only need to take part in two rounds to qualify for the National Final, which is on the 20th June at the Westway Sports Centre, London. For more information on series, and to find out which walls are hosting rounds in your region, go to:

www.thebmc.co.uk/youth

BMC British Bouldering Championships

11-12th July, Cliffhanger, Sheffield

The BBCs will again take place as part of the Cliffhanger festival at Millhouses Park, Sheffield. Britain's strongest boulderers will be lined up ready to compete - who will be crowned British Bouldering Champion? The BBCs are open to all - however if you're not planning to enter, make sure you come down to cheer them on.

www.thebmc.co.uk/competitions and
www.cliff-hanger.co.uk

BMC British Lead Climbing Championship

18-19th July, EICA, Ratho, Edinburgh

The BLCCs are moving this year, up north to EICA Ratho, to take advantage of the huge new competition climbing wall. Britain's best lead



Dave Barrans competing in the 2008 BLCC - this year sees a venue change to Ratho.
Photo: Alex Messenger.

climbers will be seen hanging upside down in the huge roofs of the new wall, performing some wild moves and taking some even wilder falls. The BLCCs are also open to all, so get your entry in early and get training. If you're not competing, come down to see some spectacular flyers. This year's event will be run alongside the Edinburgh Rat Race, so spectators will be able to watch Britain's best climbers as well as competitors competing in the original urban adventure race - double the entertainment.

www.thebmc.co.uk/competitions

Autumn/Winter 2009/2010

The BMC are planning to run a new series of competitions throughout the winter months, these are only in the planning stages at the moment, but this is part of the BMC's continued commitment to competition climbing. They are aimed at getting as many climbers as possible interested in competition climbing - keep a keen eye on the BMC website for more information.

www.thebmc.co.uk/competitions

PROFILE: STEVEN ADDISON

Steven Addison (14) is a keen climber from Inverness. He's been climbing for five years and last year became the youngest person to compete in the UIAA Ice World Cup, aged just 13!

Favourite walls?

My favourite walls are Extreme Dream in Aviemore, EICA Ratho and Inverness.

Favourite crags?

Polldubh, Reiff, and Duntelchaig.

Best competition results?

First in 2007/2008 Mixed Masters

Juniors, second in Scottish Championships 2008, 23rd in Men's World Cup Speed, Saas Fee 2008 and third in BRYCS 2007.

Best onsight:

E1 and 7b outdoors, 7c indoors.

Climbing ambitions:

To get really strong and lead Dracula (E3) and maybe one day in the future Rhapsody (E11).

How did you end up competing in the World Cup?

After winning the 2007 Mixed Masters (junior), I was asked by Scott Muir if I wanted to go to the Ice Climbing World Championships in Val Daone and Saas Fee, together with five adult climbers from Scotland. I readily agreed, but about a week before Val Daone, four of the others had to pull out due to other commitments – which left just me, my dad and one other climber. We didn't know what to expect, but as it turned out there was nothing to worry about. Riccardo Milani, who organises the event, made us very welcome. He even gave me, as the youngest competitor ever to enter the event, the task of lighting the torch at the official opening. As this was my first international ice climbing competition, I was pleased to finish 31st in my group in the semi-finals.

The following month there were five climbers from Scotland at Saas Fee where I was delighted to finish 23rd in the speed competition. This year I received a bursary from The Mountaineering Council of Scotland which meant I could go to Val Daone and Saas Fee again, which I was really delighted about. My goal was to do better than I did last year, and I was very pleased to finish 27th out of 31 in the semi-finals at Val Daone. A week later saw us in Saas Fee where we met up with Tim Emmett – he was very encouraging, giving me some tips. I managed to finish in 36th place in my group, 80th in the world. ■



GREEN HILLS

Our eco-expert Zara Maung is back – with five ways that you can go greener this year.

Get on your bike for a greener 09.
Photo: BMC.

1. GET MOTIVATED

If you only do one thing for the environment this year, download and read the free book called 'Sustainable Energy – without the hot air' from www.withouthotair.com. It's written by Cambridge academic David MacKay – a man "concerned about cutting UK emissions of twaddle about sustainable energy", and is a brilliant explanation of our energy woes. If the International Energy Agency is right, we're going to see global oil production peak by 2020, natural gas reserves are set to run out in our lifetimes and coal may run out soon after that. In terms of climate change, the consequences of burning all the world's fossil fuels look disastrous, but even without climate change we can't go on – we'll simply run out. MacKay's motto is: "If everyone does a little, we'll achieve only a little". It's his way of saying that we don't just need to recycle, we need to understand just how unsustainable our lives are and do something drastic.

2. THINK CLEAN ENERGY

We really like to kick up a stink when someone puts up a wind turbine and spoils our view – the biggest obstacle to wind energy projects in the UK is the planning system – and so our country generates a pitiful amount of renewable energy. Luckily some people are more forward-thinking people. Steve Taylor, Executive Director of the Castle Climbing Centre in London, is one of them. He's commissioned a feasibility study into how the Castle can become ultra-insulated to save heat, and even produce enough of its own energy to become self-sufficient. Worried that the

neighbours might object to a big wind turbine spinning off the castle turrets, he's even looking into fixing dynamos to the ropes to generate energy from climbers. According to Steve, trying to get other climbing centres together to buy up a load of renewable energy technology would be akin to 'herding cats', but if any other centres want to get involved, then please give Steve a bell.

It seems to me that mountain huts would be very good places to start fitting clean energy technology. Any mountaineering clubs in possession of a hut, and the will to take it off-grid, have until June 2009 to apply for a clean-energy grant from the government. Not-for-profit organisations, like climbing clubs, can apply for grants through the 'Low Carbon Buildings Programme' to install green energy generating equipment like solar panels, wind turbines or biomass boilers. Visit www.lowcarbonbuildingsphase2.org.uk for details of how to apply, or call 08704 232 313.

3. WHERE'S YOUR JUMPER?

Climbers and walkers are a hardy breed, thriving at cold temperatures. So here's a tip for saving energy and money – switch the heating on for an hour when you're cold, otherwise leave it off. If the mere thought of doing this leaves you cold, then you probably need to insulate your house. British Gas is making big business out of insulating homes and they'll do a free consultation with you to figure out how you can seal up your house and save on energy bills. Go to www.britishgas.co.uk/energy-efficiency/products/home-insulation.html or call 0845 971 7731 to book

a free appointment. You're even entitled to free insulation if you're over 70, or on benefits.

4. STAY GROUNDED

We're supposed to be headed towards another ice age, but with global warming in full swing we're now headed for the frying pan. Don't bury your head in the sand; do the science. Flying creates a hell of a lot of CO₂, and CO₂ creates global warming. To plan less polluting train journeys to Europe visit www.seat61.com – it's packed full of helpful timetables.

5. SAVE AND SHARE

You know the drill on recycling, but the less stuff you buy in the first place, the fewer resources you'll waste. If you can't use public transport, think about sharing car journeys too. Why not post a climbing trip up on www.ukclimbing.com and see if anyone wants to tag along for the ride? Even better still, try to scrounge a lift from someone already heading the same way as you. Back at home, fit a smart electric meter to your mains supply (you should be able to demand one for free from your electricity supplier). These monitor your real-time energy usage. Try monitoring your energy consumption weekly. By fitting energy-efficient light bulbs, washing clothes at lower temperatures, turning off idle machines and lights, and using energy-efficient appliances you could halve your electricity bill. ■

Good luck going green in 2009 and remember, don't give up! Get in touch with Zara at ecoclimber@googlemail.com if you've got any useful advice to share.

NESTING RESTRICTIONS 2009

THINKING ABOUT BOULDERING AT THE ROACHES? OR AN EVENING ON THE CLWYD LIMESTONE CRAGS?

The BMC's **Regional Access Database (RAD)** should be every climber's first stop for up-to-date information. The RAD is a searchable database of all the crags with special access and conservation considerations, including all the agreed nesting restrictions for England & Wales.

The UK is internationally important for many wintering, migratory and nesting birds and for over 30 years the BMC has worked with the statutory conservation bodies, RSPB, National Park Authorities and local ornithologists to agree the least restrictive option in maintaining access to crags whilst protecting nesting birds.

There is a general acceptance amongst conservation bodies and landowners that restrictions should be flexible, monitored and reviewed to ensure they reflect nesting patterns and maintain credibility with climbers and the RAD plays an important part in this, so why not log-on and check it out?

The RAD can be accessed directly at

www.thebmc.co.uk/bmccrag/

BMC Access & Conservation Officer (Regions) **Guy Keating**

T: 0161 438 3309 E: guy@thebmc.co.uk

www.thebmc.co.uk

BRITISH MOUNTAINING COUNCIL

177-179 Burton Road, West Didsbury, Manchester M20 2BB

T: 0161 445 6111 E: office@thebmc.co.uk

The BMC is the national representative body that exists to protect the freedoms and promote the interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers, including ski-mountaineers. See our participation statement at www.thebmc.co.uk

CLIMBERS AND CONSERVATION WORKING TOGETHER



THE SOUTH

CHALK

Isle of Wight

Sun Corner, headland at the SE end of Scratchell's Bay, includes Gateway to Heaven and Albatross where it passes Sun Corner. A year round restriction applies to Highdown Cliffs (East of Sun Corner) for ornithological and botanical reasons. 1 Mar - 31 July

SOUTH WALES

GOWER PENINSULA

There is a nesting restriction on all routes between Minchin Hole and Quartz Corner (just East of Bacon Hole) inclusive. The restriction is reviewed in May - watch out for signs onsite or contact the National Trust Warden on T: 01792 390636, for up-to-date details.

Thurba Head - Restriction is from Central Cleft to Wimp.

Yellow Wall (VR) - Between 5 Minutes to Kill and Farly Wramina

Huntsman's Leap: restriction on both sides of entrance, includes Charybdis and Leap of Faith. 1 March - 1 August

Chapel Point: due to rock fall restriction now The Temple to Blow Out. 1 February - 1 August

Chapel Point, St Govan's Pinnacle: 1 March - 1 August

Chapel Cove: Permanent restriction

Trevallen: restriction between and including Mealloaf and Breaking

Falcon Crag (upper), Borrowdale: signed - may be moved to cover lower Falcon Crag and/or the Gully area.

Falcon Crag (lower), Borrowdale: unsigned - no restriction unless birds nest.

Gowther Crag, Swindale (NE buttress only): unsigned - no restriction unless birds nest.

Heron Crag, Eskdale: unsigned - no restriction unless birds nest.

Humphrey Head: signed.

round restriction applies to rignaworn limits (east or sun corner) for ornithological and botanical reasons. 1 Mar - 31 July

Beachy Head

A peregrine nests at Beachy Head. Contact the Ranger (T: 012323 415267) to check access arrangements. 1 Feb - 30 June

Saltdean

Contact the BMC to see if nesting restrictions apply.

SWANAGE

Pier Bottom to St Aldhelm's Head: Pier Bottom is the valley North of St Aldhelm's Head. Restrictions apply between Buttery Corner and Slippy Ledge including The Yellow Wall to the valley of Pier Bottom. Hedbury Big Cove, Smokey Hole and Topmast Quarry. **Guillemot Ledge:** between Dancing Ledge and Valkyrie Buttress Direct and East of The Razor's Edge. **Comarant Ledge:** West of Sea Cow and East of Oran. **Blacklers Hole:** left of *Frontiersman* (including the sea cave) and all routes between *Aboriginal Script* and *Casa Nostra*. **Boulder Ruckle West:** from *Sardine Special* to *Hard Day's Night*, *Andycap* to *Raindrop* and *Gim Crack* to *Airy Legs*. **Traversing West** along the cliff base from the Marmolata entry point is restricted. **The Lighthouse Cliffs:** between *Scotsman Chimney* and the start of *Traverse of the Gods*. Climbing is not permitted from Tilly Whim Coves to Durlston Head or Tilly Whim Quarry for ornithological, ecological, and safety reasons. 1 Mar - 31 July

PORTLAND

The restrictions on Portland vary depending on where the birds nest. Contact the Portland Ranger (T: 01305 259292), or the BMC for full details. **Cheyne Cliff (VR):** This restriction can be variable in extent - look out for signs marking the restricted area.

NB Restricted areas are no longer marked by circular disks on the bottom bolts of boundary routes, but by on-site signage. 1 Feb - 1 Sept

BERRY HEAD

The Old Redoubt, Oz Wall, Upper and Lower Ranger Buttresses. The Rainbow Bridge Cliffs are open for climbing unless on-site signing indicates restrictions. For further information check with the BMC or the local Ranger (T: 01803 882619). 1 Mar - 31 July

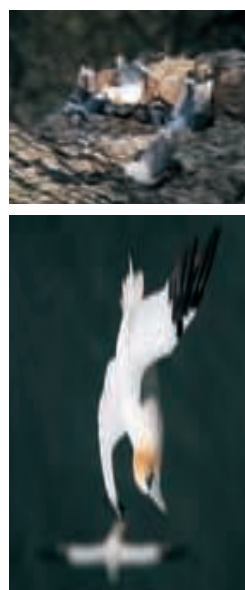
LUNDY

Lundy Island has extremely important seabird populations and a number of the cliffs have bird restrictions. Restrictions vary annually so climbers should check the guidebook before visiting and obtain the leaflet available on arrival. For info, Lundy Warden (T: 01237 431831). Accommodation/travel details can be obtained from the Landmark Trust (T: 01628 825925). 1 April - 31 July

BAGGY POINT

Restriction covers the whole area between *Scratling Zawn* and *Slab Cove* (Pink Void) and is reviewed mid-season (late April/early May) - check with the local BMC representative or the National Trust. White markers define the restricted areas (VR). Contact the National Trust warden to check. (T: 01271 870555). 15 Mar - 30 June

Notes: Variable Restrictions (VR) may change during the nesting season.



Thurbo Head - Restriction is from *Central Clef* to *Wimp*. **Yellow Wall (VR)** - Between *5 Minutes to Kill* and *Early Warning*. The restriction will be reviewed in May. 1 Mar - 14 Aug

SOUTH PEMBROKESHIRE

NB Pembroke restrictions are complex and vary annually. Please check the noticeboards in Stock Rocks, Broad Haven South, Stockpole Quay or the St Govan's Head car parks. Information leaflets are available from the BMC, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Mrs Weston's Café.

Range West

Access available for briefed climbers from the end of May 2009 to end of January 2010

Climbers must attend an annual briefing and hold a valid permit to access Range West.

Range West briefings, starting at 9.00am: 23 May, 27 June & 25 July at the gatehouse for details.

Briefings held at the Castlemartin Camp. Park next to the tank and ask at the gatehouse for details.

The following seasonal restrictions are marked on the ground by the PCNPA:

Berry Slade to Western Walls: *False Start* to *The Jolly Swagman* & *Rollercoaster* inclusive. 23 May - 1 August

Western Walls: *The Jolly Swagman* & *Rollercoaster* to *All Quiet* inclusive. 23 May - 15 August

NB This restriction covers the area at the top of the cliffs as well.

Wind Zawn: *Khamsin to Floules* inclusive. 23 May - 1 August

Srata Walls: *Discovery to Listen With Mother* inclusive. 23 May - 1 August

Srata Walls: *Limney Head Gully*. 23 May - 1 August

Impending Inlet, Limney Point: *Impending Doom* to *All Hands To The Pump* inclusive. 23rd May - 1st August

Hobby Horse Bay: *Dawn Chorus* to *Crack of Dusk* inclusive. **NB This is a permanent restriction due to archaeological interest**

Cabin Door: 23 May - 1 August

Mount Sion Central: *Take Me Into Insanity* to *X-rated* & *Trevor's Traverse* inclusive. 23 May - 1 August

Mount Sion East: *Main Sumph* to *Come All Ye Faithful* inclusive. 23 May - 1 August

Flimston/Penmeter Bay: *Hermit to Life's Rich Pagan* inclusive. 23 May - 1 August

Range East

Stack Rocks: Restriction on all routes - *Elegy* *Stacks Bay*, *The Elegy* *Stacks*, *Maidmans Point*, *The Cauldron* and *The Green Bridge*. 1 March - 1 August

Thunder Wall: All climbs. 1 March - 1 August

Newsford: South West Face - restriction between *Tango* *Charlie* and *Return of the Natives*. 1 March - 1 August

Temporary restriction - Newsford: South Face - temporary seasonal restriction on *By Popular Demand*, *Daydreams* and *Lateral Bearings*. 1 March - 1 August

Newsford Arches: restriction from *Soak the Cat*, *Newsford Point* to *Lacinator*, *Panzer Wall*. 1 March - 1 August

Seaside Gully/Triple Overhang Buttress: restriction from *Fight the Good* *Fight* (*Seaside Gully*) to *Midnight Express* (*Triple Overhang Buttress*).

NB Routes between and including Horroscope and Galactic Co-ordinator must be reached by abseil only. 1 March - 1 August

Triple Overhang Buttress/Ripper Cliff: restriction starts at *Star Control* to *Ripper*. 1 March - 1 August

Buckspool Down: *Space Buttress*, *South and East Faces*, *Buckspool Down* and *Sitting Bull Buttress* - temporary restriction on all routes. 1 March - 1 August

The Fortress (west): new restriction - no known climbs affected. 2008: *The Stockade* crag is within this restriction if reinstated. 1 March - 1 August

The Fortress: restriction on all routes between and crossing *Wild Country* and *Little Red Rocker*. 1 March - 1 August

The Castle Blowhole: restriction on the whole of the *Blowhole*. 1 March - 1 August

Devil's Barn: restriction on all routes. 1 March - 1 August

Stennis Head: new restriction in 2008 - *Hercules* and *Flash* restricted. Restricted: 23 May 2008 onwards - look for signs.

Unapel Cove: permanent restriction

Trevallen: restriction between and including *Mealloaf* and *Breaking The Habit*. 1 March - 1 August

St Govan's Head: restriction between *Safety In Numbers* to *Aquarius* and *Zodiac*. 1 March - 1 August

Stackpole National Nature Reserve - Lydstep

Lydstep Headland on *Stagole*, *Warp Factor* and *Hyperspace*. 1 March - 1 August

NORTH PEMBROKE

Check signs onsite. Restrictions are under review and may be lifted early.

Llechdafod Cliffs (VR):

Penbwchdy: (*Penbwchdy Head* to *Pwll Deri*).

St David's Head Area: *Craig Coetan* (upper & lower tiers), *Mur Cenhinen* and *Coastguard Cliffs*. 1 March - 1 August

MID WALES

Ilanymnech: *Red and Black Walls*. 1 Mar - 30 June

Craig yr Aderyn (Bird Rock): *Eastern Face* and *Central Buttress* (Central Buttress will be subject to a mid-season review). 1 April - 31 July

NORTH WALES

LLEYN PENINSULA

Duration of restrictions varies between different cliffs. Check the Climbers' Club guidebook for details. 1 Feb - 31 July or 1 April - 31 July

CLWYD LIMESTONE

Eglwysseg Valley: check for markers at the crags (do not climb between the red sides of the square markers) and signs on the approach path. Restrictions can apply at *Craig Arthur*, *Pinfold South* or *Monks Buttress*. 1 Mar - 30 June

LITTLE ORME

Great Zawn, left-hand side.

Deiritus Wall.

The Allotment.

West Buttress of Deiritus.

Auk's Buttress, under review.

Diamond Buttress. 1 Mar - 15 Aug

GREAT ORME/PEN TRWYN

Un-named Crag.

Castell y Gwynt: left-hand Side.

Upper and Lower Craig Pen Gogarth.

Point Five Buttress.

The Hornby Crags.

Wunderwall: between *Gibbering Wreck* and *Golden Goose* *Creature*.

NB Routes above Marine Drive are subject to a summer safety restriction - climbing is not allowed before 6.00am on all Bank Holiday weekends or during the Welsh school summer holidays. 1 Mar - 31 July

GOGARTH

Moustrap Zawn, Red Walls, Penlas Rock, Smurf Zawn, Blacksmith's Zawn, south side of South Stack Island.

North Stack (flytrap area): 20,000 leagues... to *Seal Song*. 1 Feb - 31 July

THE NORTH

LAKE DISTRICT/CUMBRIA

if peregrine are nesting, the following crags are restricted between 1 Mar and 30 June:

Bowness Knott: unsigned.

Brantrake Crag, Eskdale: signed.

Buckstone How: unsigned - no restriction unless birds nest.

Chapel Head Scar, Whitbarrow: signed - the site is regularly monitored and restriction lifted if the birds fail to nest.

Eagle Crag, Borrowdale: unsigned - no restriction unless birds nest. The routes between *Dumbo Cracks* to *Trapeze* (inclusive) are not restricted.

neron Crag, Cskaoie: unsigned - no restriction unless birds nest.

Humphrey Head: signed.

Raven Crag, Yewdale, Caniston: signed (Western edge scramble not restricted).

Raven Crag, Thirlmere: signed - the site is regularly monitored and the restriction lifted if the birds fail to nest.

Stonestar Crag, Duddon: unsigned - no restriction unless birds nest.

Thracknell Crag, Thirlmere: unsigned - no restriction unless birds nest.

Wallowbarrow Crag (E buttress): unsigned - no restriction unless birds nest.

Wallowbarrow Gorge: signed.

Welter Crag: permanent restriction - call BMC office for details.

if ravens are nesting, the following crags are restricted between 15 Feb and 31 May:

Buckbarrow, longleddale: signed - restriction applies to lower and upper crags, and scramble (may be extended to 30 June if peregrine also nest).

Raven Crag, Threshwaite Cove: signed - also covers scrambles (may be extended to 30 June if peregrine also nest).

Raven Crag, Kenmere: signed (may be extended to 30 June if peregrine also nest).

Swarthbeck Gill, Barton Fell, Howtown: signed.

Upper & Lower Thrang Crag: signed - the birds vary nest sites, and restrictions can change (may also extend to 30 June if peregrine also nest). *Farm Buttress* remains unrestricted.

St Bees Head:

This area is an RSPB reserve, the largest seabird colony in NW England, and home to the only black guillemot breeding site in England.

The main bolted areas at *Apiary Wall* and *Scabby Back* are unrestricted. All other areas including *Fisherman's Steps* are restricted - 1 Feb - 30 July

Bouldering:

Apiary Wall and foot of Fisherman's Steps: unrestricted.

South of Fisherman's Steps: restricted.

Flewick Bay: south of inlet (where path meets the shore) - unrestricted.

South Head: restricted.

YORKSHIRE

The YDNPA monitor the nest sites and lift the restrictions as soon as the chicks fledge.

Gordale Scar: (VR) check the RAD for full details.

High Stoney Bank: *Raven*. 15 Feb - 31 May

Langcliffe Quarry: 1 March - 30 June

Mulham Cove: check onsite signs. 1 Mar - 30 June

Blue Scar: whole crag. 1 Mar - 15 July

LANCASHIRE/CHESHIRE

Warton Quarry: (VR) may apply - check signs onsite.

Hoghton Quarry: check with the BMC prior to visit and onsite signs.

Halsby (Upper Central Buttress area): (VR) can apply, check signs onsite. 1 Mar - 30 June

PEAK DISTRICT

Roaches: (VR depending on nest site). PDNPA monitor site and lift the restriction as soon as the chicks fledge. Check onsite signs.

Twitaker Bay, Millstone Edge: (VR) variable restriction, check signs onsite.

Ravensdale: (VR) variable restriction, check signs onsite.

Garsdon Rocks: (VR) variable restriction can apply, check signs onsite.

Stange Edge: localised restrictions are likely for nesting ring ouzels - check website and see onsite signs.



SCOTLAND

Large numbers of birds nest on Scottish sea cliffs, stacks and inland crags between March and July - check with The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MC of S) for full details.



IRELAND

There are relatively few negotiated restrictions on climbing for nesting birds in Ireland. Visiting climbers should first contact Mountaineering Council of Ireland (IMCI).

BMC

By Jon Garside, BMC/MLTE Training Officer.

HILL WALKING ESSENTIALS

Your guide to staying safe on the hill

Expert advice on walking
skills and destinations



**11 PAGES
OF ESSENTIAL
WALKING ADVICE
AND
INFORMATION**

Hill walking is amongst the most popular of all leisure activities, attracting people of all ages. Whether rambling in the Yorkshire Dales, exploring the Lakeland Fells or tackling the Cuillin Ridge, the British hills offer beauty, challenge and adventure.

GET YOUR BOOTS ON

Walking in wild country requires a collection of skills, including navigation, route finding, and hazard avoidance. The best way to learn is by adopting a progressive approach, developing skills incrementally and building on past experience. Here we look at some essential hill walking skills whatever your aspirations.

Check the weather

For familiar walks, a likely check may be a quick look out of the window before grabbing some boots and heading off. But a more reflective approach may be necessary when taking in a new route or when walking with those possessing little or no personal experience. Both the Met Office and the Mountain Weather Information Service (MWIS) publish free mountain weather forecasts, which can be downloaded at www.metoffice.gov.uk and www.mwis.org.uk. The MWIS provides the most extensive service for Scotland, with user friendly what-the-weather-will-feel-like interpretations.

You don't need to be a genius to conclude that as you climb a mountain it gets windier and colder. If only a general forecast is available then you'll know if it's likely to rain, but the difficult part is predicting how much windier and colder it will be higher up than that given for the sea level forecast. Temperature is the easier of the two. Dry air cools at about 1°C per 100 metres height gained and moist or foggy air cools half as quickly, at about 1°C per 200 metres. So, if the TV forecast says that North Wales will experience a clear day, with Bangor at a respectable 10°C, then the summit of Snowdon could be a chilly zero.

Wind is confined to our atmosphere, and as height is gained, the wind accelerates through the smaller gap between the land and the top of the atmosphere. The same funneling effect is produced in cols, as the wind is pushed through such narrowings. Expecting two to three times the wind speed on the summits to that at sea level is a useful rule of thumb. Wind speeds on the summit of Ben Nevis average three times that in Fort William, for example. So, if the general forecast predicts strong winds, then leaving Crib Goch to another day would likely be a wise move!

The combined effect of wind speed and temperature should also be

considered. Wind chill is a major mountain hazard in the UK, and a common contributory factor in hypothermia cases. Cold moist air combined with a strong wind can result in it feeling much colder, and a 20°C drop would not be unusual. The MWIS forecasts give useful 'wind chill' indications.

A whole article could be written on weather alone, but one final point to consider is thinking where the wind has come from, and how this will affect its characteristics. To the north and west of the UK are oceans, to the south and east are land masses. Therefore, northerly and westerly air flows will be wetter than southerly and easterly ones, and so more likely to bring precipitation. Warm south westerly air tracking from the Gulf carries a lot of moisture and is very common for the UK, resulting in our generally wet weather.

South of us it is warm, and so is the wind. And there are no prizes for guessing that northerlies are cold, originating in the Polar regions. The only 'odd' winds are easterlies. They are usually drier than those which track over the sea, but reflecting the land they pass over, are biting cold in winter, yet can be quite balmy in summer.

Plan your route

Once you know what weather to expect, then it's time to plan your route. The apparent ease with which an experienced hill walker negotiates a route can be misleading. Having mastered a range of skills and developed the judgement to manage specific demands, problems are anticipated and measures taken to deal with them. This is as true for planning as it is for walking.

First and foremost should be consideration of how the proposed route matches the abilities of the group. If a section of the route is going to be particularly challenging for one of a group of six, for example, then it will be easier to manage than if the majority of

the group are going to be at their limit.

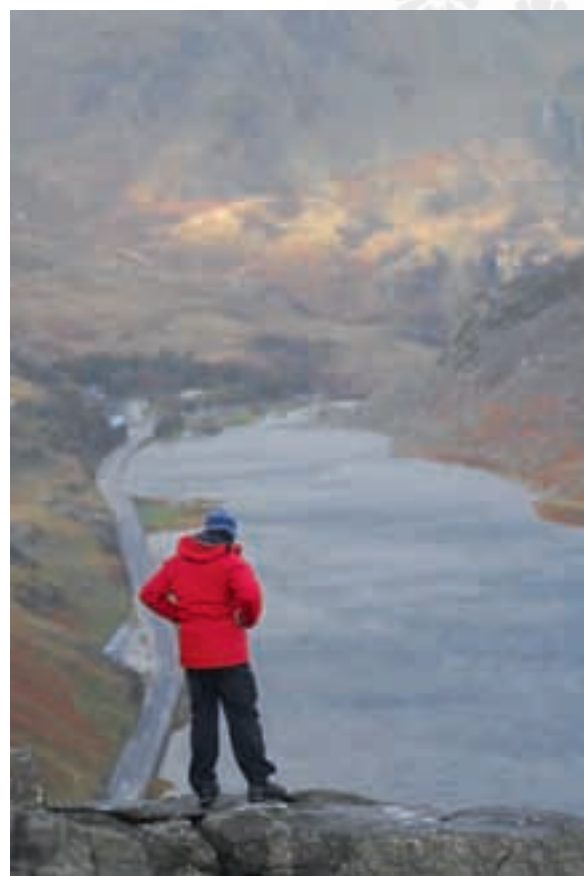
One of the most common terrains in which walkers can come unstuck is steep ground, such as rocky ridges. Concave slopes that steepen near the top are also common throughout our uplands and can act as terrain traps - drawing in the unsuspecting who are then too committed to turn around.

Use a map and compass

If able to use a map effectively, the unsuspecting walker is unlikely to find themselves in serious terrain, unaware of where they are, and unable to find a safe route out. A well-planned route would avoid such areas anyhow. Being able to navigate allows the hills to be explored whatever the weather, as appropriate routes can be first planned and then followed.

Map reading and navigation are often confused as the same thing. The former

Always plan your route.
Photo: BMC.



Learn how to read contours.

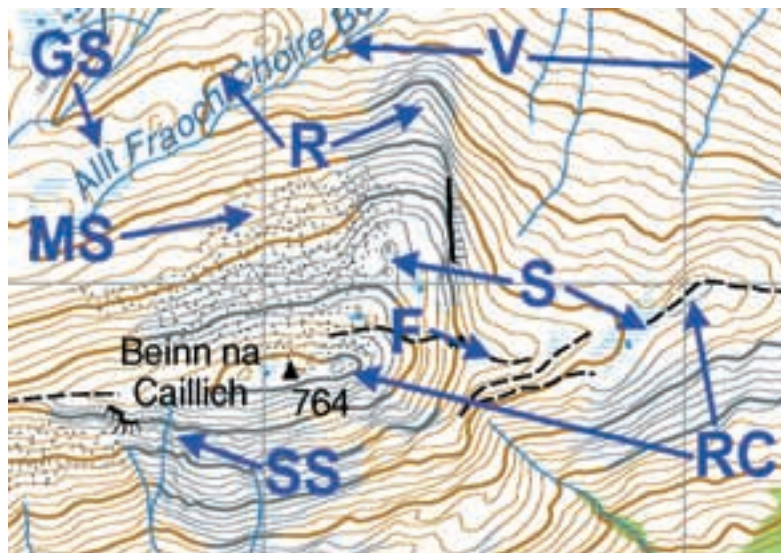
could be described as knowing that blue symbols are wet and that black lines can represent a wall or a fence. Navigation describes knowing how to use this information effectively, when both planning a route and out in the hills.

We can all navigate in urban areas, getting to pub on time and somehow making it back home again. The features are man-made, such as roads and buildings. Their mountain equivalents, such as paths, walls and sheep folds make people feel comfortable when trying to pinpoint their position. However, contour lines are the most useful feature on the map as they are more reliable and describe the terrain on both the micro and macro level. Understand the contours and the mountains are there to explore.

The Hill Skills section of Summit 51 has an excellent article about contours, written by Roger Wild, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland Mountain Safety Advisor. It's available on our website and there is not repeated in detail here. The reason that contour lines are so important though, is that by linking land of equal height, they describe the shape of the land. The UK is blessed with very good maps with contour details faithfully reproduced. The British Mountain Maps use colour gradients to further emphasise the relief.

When out in the hills the land in front of you will be at a certain gradient (or flat) and will change in shape as you move around. Being able to match where this is replicated on the map will allow you to find your way around the hills.

The new BMC hill walking poster is available from www.bmcshop.co.uk.



Copyright: Harvey Maps.

It takes time to master the skills of being able to read the land, as it were, but the upside is that there are in fact only six general contour features. These are highlighted on this map excerpt.

- Ring contours which portray knolls and summits (RC)
- Saddles which are also known as bwlchs, belachs and cols (S)
- Slopes which can be gentle (GS), medium (MS) or steep (SS)
- Valleys which could be vast or very small (V)
- Ridges which again, vary in size (R)
- Flat areas which are an absence of contour features (F)

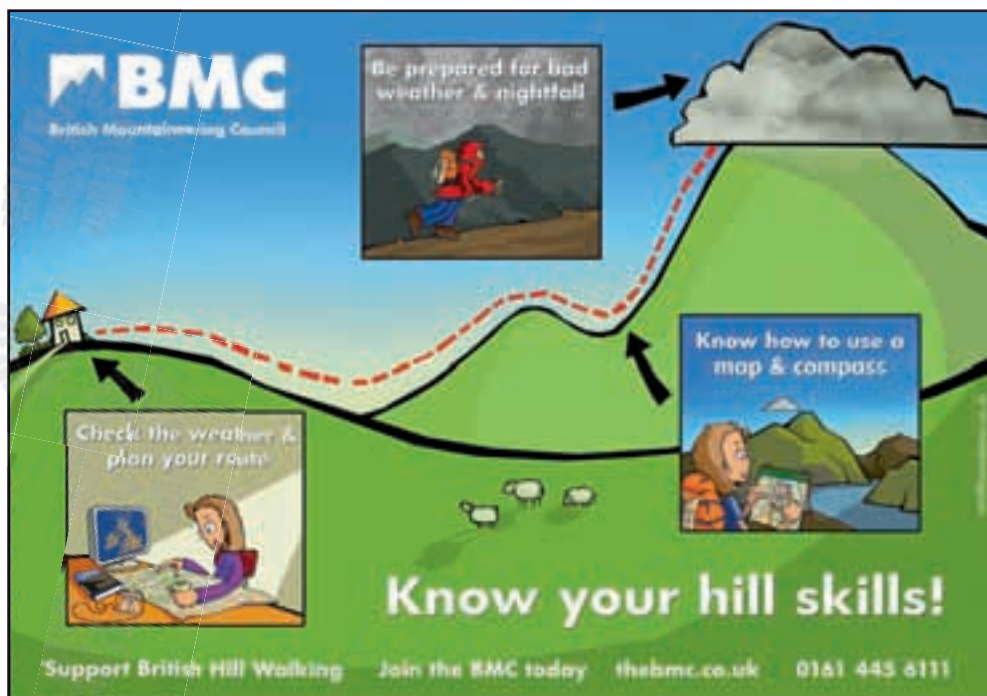
Being able to match the land in front of you with the shapes described by the contours is the first step, map reading effectively. The next step is using that information to get around the hills, in other words, being able to navigate.

Route choice is central to effective navigation and is done at both the macro

level, such as choosing to follow the Snowdon Horseshoe, and the micro level, such as picking a route up to Crib Goch's summit. On steep ground especially, routes are often identified with the eye alone. This is necessary as the map is not so detailed as to describe the easiest route through a short steep section. However, the map will identify the vertical hundred metre cliff ahead, and so help in ensuring that what may seem as unimportant route choices at the time, do not lead into hazardous terrain ahead.

As mentioned earlier, urban navigation skills translate well to the mountains. Tick-off and catching features are two obvious examples. The instructions to get to someone's house, for example, could be, "Follow the road to the Post Office, turn left, and take the second path on the right. If you get to church you've gone too far. Turn around to find the path". The equivalent in the mountains might be, "Follow the ridge until it steepens, and then walk west to the small tarn. Follow the stream to the second fork, and follow that to the sheep fold. If you get to the wall crossing the stream you've gone too far. Turn around to find the stream fork". The tick-off features are the Post Office and the ridge steepening, these waymark the route. The catching features are the Church and the wall crossing the stream, these prevent you going too far off route.

Urban navigation is carried out using visual pointers, sometimes given by someone else. When in the hills, however, the pointers have to be identified by the navigator, often using the map to predict what lies ahead. We are all used to following roads, which is why streams, paths and fences can feel comforting to follow. Such linear hand-rail features are undoubtedly appropriate in many situations but can change: new paths



are made and streams dry up. It takes glaciations and earthquakes to radically change the shape of the land. Such events being very uncommon mean that the contours are the navigator's best friend. But only by appreciating that the contours getting closer together on the map mean the slope will steepen, for example, can such features be used when navigating.

Good weather days are often the best to practice new navigation skills, as it can be easier to identify any errors you make. But remember that good navigation does not mean not getting lost; it's about being able to move around the hills with confidence and using the appropriate techniques at the right time, including being able to relocate when necessary.

Tourists finding their way around London are likely to have a map, but would not need a compass. Similarly, one can often navigate in the hills with map alone, but a compass will sometimes be required, especially in poor visibility. In such situations, being able to both take and walk on a bearing accurately are vital skills to master.

For a more detailed outline of all these topics, and more, check out the Navigator's Dozen on the Mountaineering Council of Scotland website – www.mcofs.org.uk/navigationers-dozen.asp.

Be prepared for bad weather and nightfall

Armed with a decent weather forecast, an informed choice on what clothing and equipment to take can be made. This is not to assume that we're all so affluent as to have a wardrobe of waterproofs for all occasions! More that time should be spent thinking how 'bad' the weather could be, and appropriate clothing and equipment taken.

The weather of course may be good! It could even be very hot. On those sunny summer days three litres of water may be necessary along with sun hats and plenty of sunscreen. Unfortunately, these islands are famous for wetter kinds of weather along with a large range temperatures being commonly experienced in a single day. Walking also heats the body, and when we stop we quickly cool.

Combined, these external and internal temperature variations call for a flexible clothing system made up of layers. Most body heat is lost through radiation in the same way that a light



bulb emits both light and heat. A fair proportion of body heat is lost by evaporation through the lungs and skin. Convective air currents cool the body some more, and the smallest amount is lost through direct contact, such as a hand holding a rock.

If the weather turns out worse than expected, such as strong winds, then convective heat lost may become a concern. Similarly, if someone becomes injured and sits down, then heat lost through direct contact can be a problem. Both these issues can be easily rectified – putting on more clothes for the former and sitting on a rucksack for the latter.

Therefore, spend some time to consider how the day's weather will impact upon the equipment you will need, be it hot, cold, windy or rainy. Also ensure you are prepared to deal with common incidents.

One common incident is becoming disoriented and having to descend in the dark. Nowadays, even supermarkets sell LED head torches for a fiver, weighing about the same as a couple of Mars bars. Mountain Rescue teams receive call outs every year from people who are 'stuck' as they have no torch to walk off in the dark. Walkers who would much prefer to get themselves off, but realise they are under equipped to do so. Whatever the season, it's important that all party members carry a torch in their sacks.

Whole books have been written on good practice for hill walkers, the most comprehensive ones being Hill Walking and Mountaincraft and

Leadership. If films are more your thing then the Hill Walking Essentials DVD covers the skills and techniques in an easy put-your-feet-up-with-a-cup-of-tea-and-watch-the-telly format. All three titles are available in the BMC online shop.

We've also produced a good practice hill walking poster in A3 and A4 format, if you know of any walls that could do with a bit of brightening up then we'd love to hear from you. ■

The BMC produce a range of British Mountain Maps, so there's no excuse to get lost.
Photo: BMC.

MORE INFORMATION

Hill Walking Essentials DVD
£13.50 (members)

Filmed in the Lake District and the Scottish Highlands, the DVD outlines the essential skills and techniques for summer hill walking in the UK.

Hill walking

£16.99

Packed with essential information and techniques, this essential book covers getting around in the hills, the upland environment and group management.

Mountaincraft and Leadership

£16.99

Long recognised as a definitive text by the Mountain Leader Training Boards of the United Kingdom, Mountaincraft and Leadership is an invaluable reference tool for everyone.

All available in the BMC online shop: www.bmcshop.co.uk.
Prices exclude p&p.



OVERSEAS WALKING

Got Lake District lassitude? Weary of Wales? Brighten up your walking with an overseas walking trip this year – we look at the best places to go.

Where to go?

Think **Europe** and most people think of the Alps. There are, however, dozens of other mountain regions worth exploring, from the Pyrenees of Spain to the Pindos mountains of Greece. Most Scandinavian countries have mile-upon-mile of deserted summits and tundra, or head to Greenland for some real wilderness. The Tatras offer alpine peaks at a fraction of western European prices. Southern European countries – often dismissed as only suitable for sun-lovers – have beautiful uplands. The 500 mile Lycian Way in Southern Turkey or the GR 20 across Corsica are just two of the well established long-distance European treks.

Africa's mountains are crowned by Mount Kilimanjaro, the continent's highest point. 'Kili', together with its neighbours Mount Meru and Mount Kenya, offers trekkers the opportunity to ascend from a sub-tropical to a sub-arctic environment in little more than a week. Yet Africa offers the mountain explorer much more than these sub-6000m peaks. Uganda's Ruwenzori, Ethiopia's Simien mountains, and Morocco's Atlas range are just a few of the continent's less well-advertised jewels.

South America is home to the Andes, the world's longest and perhaps most diverse mountain range. Running for virtually the entire length of the continent, the Andes contains a lifetime's worth of opportunities for the backpacker and mountaineer. Highlights include Peru's Cordillera Blanca,

HOW TO TREK OVERSEAS

You've got three options:

Option 1: travel agency

UK-based trekking agencies exist to take care of every part of your trip: flights, internal transport, hotels, permits and guides. They will also help with visas, check your level of mountain experience and offer equipment advice. In the event that you aren't happy, the agency is likely to be accountable by law. Of course, this level of service comes at a certain price.

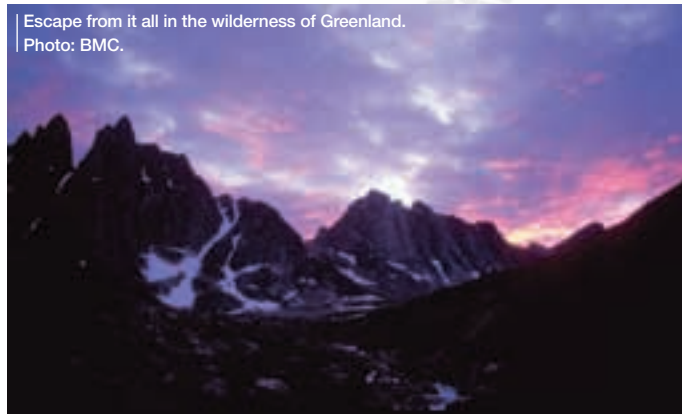
Option 2: in-country operator

Booking directly with an in-country operator cuts out the UK-based agency, so is usually cheaper. It's most suited to those who have time on their side and are able to personally visit various businesses on arrival. It's not always the ideal solution for backpackers who have only a short period of time and no prior experience of their destination. One significant advantage is that most will be prepared to make partial arrangements for you, but if you do receive poor service, any sort of compensation is unlikely.

Option 3: DIY

Going it alone can create a wonderful sense of independence. You are answerable to no-one and, unlike on trips organised by travel agencies, not required to make any effort to be sociable. You're more likely to be accepted by local communities and you're in control of your schedule. However, if you choose to travel independently (either on your own or with friends) you will of course be responsible for handling everything, including permits. Note that solo travel is not recommended for all regions.

Escape from it all in the wilderness of Greenland.
Photo: BMC.



Bolivia's Cordillera Real and Ecuador's high altitude volcanoes, as well as the region known as Patagonia which straddles southern Chile and Argentina.

North America contains a stunning choice of mountain ranges. The USA boasts the Sierra Nevada, the Cascades and Alaska. Canada is not short on mountain wilderness either: backpacking opportunities abound in the infamous Yukon and the North West Territories. Or head for the Rockies, which span both countries.

Australasia's premier snow-capped mountains are to be found in New Zealand's Southern Alps. There is technical climbing on mountains such as Cook but trekkers (or trampers, as they are known) are very well catered for with world-class trails such as the Milford Track. Australia is less well-known for mountains, but there are plenty of highland areas including the Snowy Mountains and Blue Mountains. The Carstensz Pyramid is the best-known piece of rock in the Pacific, but there are gems here for the trekker too: the Kokoda Trail and the Shaggy Ridge in Papua New Guinea are tough treks steeped in the history.

Then there is **Asia**, home to the world's highest mountain range, the Himalaya. Bhutan, Tibet, Nepal, India and China all have a share of the thousands of peaks that make up the chain, and there remain many untrodden summits and valleys awaiting discovery. A number of other principal mountain ranges also vie for attention within Asia. The Karakoram is dominated by K2, the world's second-highest mountain, whilst Central Asia's Pamirs and Tien Shan ranges straddle the Central Independent States of the former Soviet Union and neighbouring China. Dozens of other locations, from the Hindu Kush to the Kamchatka volcanoes, await your discovery.

How long to go for?

In theory, it's possible to fly to Kathmandu, trek to within sight of Mount Everest and be back at work within a week. In reality, a few more days would allow you to enjoy it. So, ask yourself three questions: how far away is the country? What is the distance to the peak from the access point? What altitude do you want to reach? Travelling time is crucial – take Patagonia for example, whilst the trekking takes place at a comfortable low altitudes, you'd be hard-pressed to enjoy a trip of less than three weeks. When it comes to altitude, the restrictions are physiological – you can't go above 2,500m without acclimatisation. Experienced travelers will build in a couple of 'catch-up days' in case of unforeseen factors. ■

Article adapted from the Mountain Travellers' Handbook by Paul Deegan – available in the BMC online shop, priced £11.50 to members (plus p&p).

BMC ALPINE MEET 2009

August 1st-16th, La Berade, Ecrins National Park, France

Sample some great alpine walking and climbing on the fourth annual BMC Alpine Meet – sponsored by Sea France.

La Berade is the location for the fourth BMC Alpine Meet, an opportunity for BMC members to go mountaineering, climbing and walking in some of France's most beautiful scenery. With more than 100 peaks over 3,000m, and steep vertiginous rock walls, it's hardly surprising that mountaineers have been attracted to this region for over 100 years. It's also a haven for walkers wanting to explore some spectacular scenery in France's largest national park, with hundreds of kilometres of well maintained mountain paths.

La Berade can be easily accessed by plane, train, bus and car. Once in La Berade, the mountains are accessed by foot including the majestic Meije and remarkable rock peak of the Dibona. There is also a host of valley cragging to sample, including both long and short routes. There's gear hire available in La Berade for those needing to rent boots and a groceries store for provisions.

The Alpine Meet is based at the Camping Municipal which has all the amenities you'd expect from a well-organised French campsite, including hot showers and washing-up. A BMC volunteer will be attending the meet, bringing with them a selection of maps and guidebooks, a large BMC basecamp tent, camp chairs and tables. Our volunteer will help facilitate any problems that may arise, and organise some social events during the meet. A CAF centre offers dortoir accommodation at a reasonable price, and there are other dortoirs in the village.

The main emphasis of the meet is to have fun, make contact with fellow BMC members, and develop your skills through getting out in the mountains independently or on one of the mountaineering, climbing or walking courses. The Guides and International Mountain Leaders (IMLs) running the courses will also be able to chat informally with other meet goers. The deadline for course applications is the 15th May.

How to apply

There is a registration fee for all those participating – which goes towards the administration costs associated with the meet. The registration and course booking form is available from BMC website. There is no deadline for registration, but to ensure a place on the campsite it's recommended that you register by mid July. Email jon@thebmc.co.uk to find out more.

www.thebmc.co.uk/alpinemeet

Read Andrew Entwistle's account of the 2008 Alpine Walking course at www.thebmc.co.uk/alpinewalk08



www.thebmc.co.uk

WALKING AWARDS

Mountain Leader Training administers a number of awards for mountain leaders – what do they all mean?

Mountain Leader Award (ML)

Known as the ML, this award has been around since 1964. Those progressing through the ML are trained and assessed in the skills and techniques for leading summer hill walking parties. The Winter Mountain Leader Award is designed for leading winter walking parties.

Walking Group Leader Award (WGL)

The WGL is designed for people leading groups in upland non-mountainous terrain such as the Peak, Dartmoor and the Cheviots. The WGL training and assessment courses are shorter than those for the ML award.

International Mountain Leader Award (IML)

Whether trekking in summer or snow-shoeing in winter, an IML holder would be at home leading walking parties in the Pyrenees or Patagonia.

Find out More

www.thebmc.co.uk/qualifications

www.mlta.co.uk

www.baiml.org



Hill Food: Bread making

by Amy-Jane Beer

Knead something to brighten up bland camping mealtimes – Amy-Jane Beer gives the lowdown on baking your own bread.

There's nothing quite as filling – or tasty – as freshly baked bread, and simple flatbreads can be made so easily that there's almost no point in carrying bread into a wild camp. They don't just provide a satisfying staple to bulk out a meal, but can also be used in place of cutlery for shovelling in other food too. Here are two recipes for simple camp breads – and one for some 'proper' bread. Enjoy.

Bread 1: Chapattis

Makes about 16

(serves four or five as a side dish)

- Pans: 1 flat griddle or frying pan, non-stick will make life easier
- Stoves: 1
- Campfire: Yes
- Other equipment: Bowl or pan for mixing, clean board or clean plastic sheet for kneading.
- Prep time: 20 minutes
- Pack weight: About 60g per person
- Fuel Efficiency: Good
- Vegetarian

Chapattis are the traditional accompaniment to spicy Asian dishes including dhals and curries, but go just as well with western-style stews such as ratatouille, chilli or chicken hot pot.

- 1 mug (200g) of chapatti flour
- Pinch of salt
- Vegetable oil
- Warm water
- Optional: to add interest to plain chapattis you can add a handful of small seeds (sesame, poppy etc) or herbs to the dough

Tip most of the flour into a bowl or pan, keeping a little aside for rolling, and mix in a generous pinch of salt and a dash of oil. Add the warm water, a splash at a time, and work into the flour to make a dough. Knead the dough in the bowl, on a board or on a clean plastic sheet, then cover it with a cloth and leave to sit for 10 minutes. Divide it up to make golfball sized pieces, which can be rolled in flour and flattened in the palm of your hand to make thin rounds. Heat up a pan, griddle, or a clean smooth rock and

Looks tasty! Nothing beats baking your own bread at camp.
Photo: Amy-Jane Beer.



cook the chapattis for about a minute on each side, or until bubbles start to appear. You can eat them like this, or finish them off by holding them briefly over a naked flame using tongs or a wire rack – this will make them puff up like pittas. Serve plain or with butter as a snack or as an accompaniment to a savoury main dish.

Bread 2: Damper

Serves 2

- Pans: 0
- Stoves: No
- Campfire: Yes
- Other equipment: Bowl or pan for mixing dough, foil or wooden kebab skewers for cooking
- Prep time: 15 minutes
- Vegetarian

This traditional camp speciality is a bit of a nostalgia trip for anyone who ever attended a scout/guide or school camp as a kid. Often these early experiences are less than positive – leaving many of us with memories of gritty, charred artefacts with raw gooey innards smothered in jam to make them edible. Done right though, damper can be a very acceptable and versatile alternative to proper bread – it takes a fraction of the time to make and can be enhanced with all kinds of add-ins – you can improvise to your heart's content.

- ½ mug (100g) flour
- Small quantity of water
- Optional: a knob of butter or dash of vegetable oil added to the mix will help make a smoother dough and give the finished damper a slightly better texture.

Put the flour in a pan or bowl, add the butter or oil if using and rub it in with your fingers or a utensil until it looks a bit like breadcrumbs. Add the water a little drizzle at a time, mixing and kneading until you have stretchy dough. You can cook it whole in a camp oven, or make individual damper twists by forming long thin sausages of dough with your hands and winding them around wooden kebab skewers pre-soaked in water, or green sticks stripped of their bark.

VARIATIONS: You can make your damper sweet or savoury by adding in any of the following:

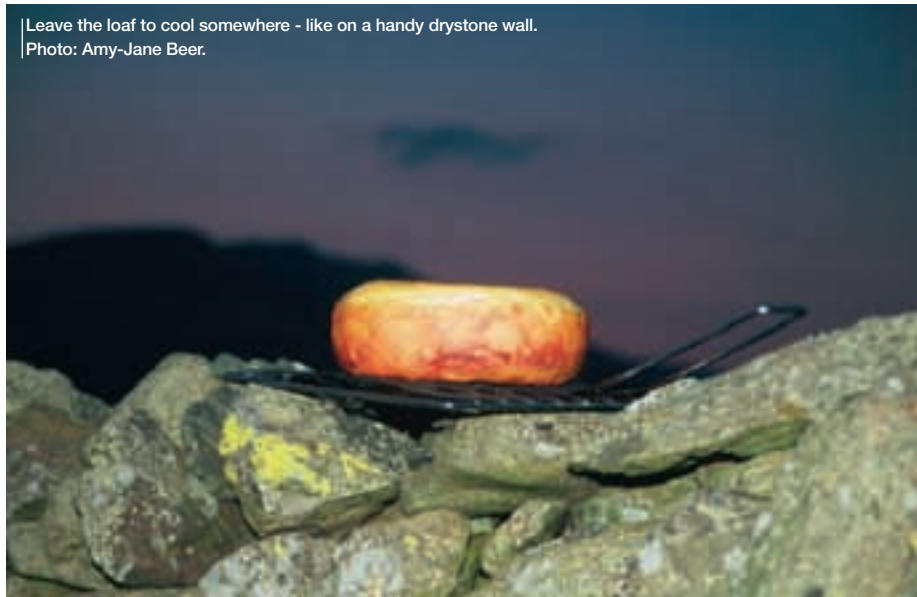
- Dried fruit: raisins, sultanas, cranberries, chopped dates or apricots
- Honey
- Sugar and mixed spice
- Chocolate chips
- Seeds: sunflower, pumpkin, sesame, poppy, pine nuts
- Chopped sundried tomatoes
- Chopped garlic and herb
- Chopped salami or pepperoni
- Grated cheese

Bread 3: Proper bread

Serves 2–4 depending on appetites!

- Pans: 1 lidded, or a camp oven
- Stoves: 1
- Campfire: Yes
- Other equipment: plate, board or plastic sheet for kneading
- Prep time: 2 hours including 1 hour rising time
- Pack weight: About 250g in total
- Fuel Efficiency: Low
- Vegetarian

Leave the loaf to cool somewhere - like on a handy drystone wall.
Photo: Amy-Jane Beer.



Some camp recipes are an entertainment in themselves, and a spot of baking is a great way to while away a summer afternoon in camp. Undoubtedly, it's easier and probably cheaper to buy bread, but nothing beats the smell of the real thing emerging freshly baked, and turning out a loaf on a camp stove imparts a very special satisfaction that you have to experience first hand to understand! It's an ideal group activity following a strenuous morning, or on a rest day - if you're part of a large group, how about a baking competition? Bear in mind this is very much a summer recipe - not only does it take quite a long time, you need warm temperatures to help promote the reaction by which yeast makes the bread dough rise.

- 1 mug (200g) of flour
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 spoonful (5g) dried yeast or ½ spoonful fresh yeast (many bakeries, especially those in supermarkets, will give this away free if you ask nicely).
- 1 golfball-sized knob (25g) margarine or 3 spoonfuls (25mls) vegetable oil
- ½ mug (200ml) warm water

Dissolve the yeast in about two-thirds of the warm water (no need to heat this specially - the contents of a water bottle left in the sun all day will be perfect), keeping some back to add later if the dough is too stiff. Stand aside in a warm place. The yeast will gradually foam up as it begins to ferment. After five minutes, tip the yeast into your mixing bowl and stir in half the flour. After a couple of minutes you should have a smooth, elastic

batter. Add the salt, oil/margarine and other remaining ingredients, alternating flour and spare water to create thick dough. Turn this out onto a clean, flat, floured surface (a chopping board, plate or a clean heavy duty plastic bag like a rucsac liner). Knead the dough for five to 10 minutes, using a rocking motion of your hands and knuckles, folding it often until it becomes smooth and springy to the touch.

Push the dough into a well greased or oiled pan, or a camp oven which it should only half fill. You can improvise a camp oven using nesting pans, separated by a handful of fine gravel - make sure the dough goes in the smaller one! If you like you can mould it into rolls instead of a single loaf. Set the pan aside in a warm place, and leave for about one hour to rise. Ideally it should more or less double in size, but not outgrow the pan. If this happens, you'll need to remove some. Place a lid on the pan (it's a good idea to grease the inside of the lid in case the loaf rises further when cooking)

To bake:

If you're using a stove-top camp oven, bake on a moderate heat for 20-25 minutes. If you're using an open fire or BBQ you want a loose, twiggy fire or glowing embers. Place the pan in the fire, making sure it's well surrounded, and place some hot coals on the lid to create good all-round heat. Baking times vary, but check the loaf after about 20 minutes, then every 5-10 minutes thereafter. When cooked, it will be golden brown on the outside. Turn it out of the pan for the final test - it should make a hollow knocking sound when you rap it with your knuckles or the back of a spoon. If you get a dull thud, it

means the dough is still damp in the middle and you need to bake it for a bit longer.

Leave the loaf to cool somewhere the air can get all around it - support it off the ground on a grid or some clean stones. Five minutes will do - the smell will mean it will be almost impossible difficult to resist any longer! Serve with your choice of sweet or savoury spreads or topping (garlic butter is fantastic), or as an accompaniment to any meal.

Alternative:

Even if you only have one pan it's possible to bake bread on a stove using a single pan with snug fitting lid, as long as the lid is completely heatproof and doesn't have any wooden or plastic handles or knobs. You'll have to keep moving the pan around on the heat, with no more than a minute or two in any one position. After about 15 minutes, turn the pan upside down (holding the lid in place) and cook the top for the same time. In New Zealand we heard that an aluminium disc a couple of millimetres thick or even several thicknesses of foil set beneath the pan will help disperse the heat and reduce the tendency to burn. It sounds plausible though we haven't tried it.

Alternative:

For an easier option use one of the many 'just add water' bread mixes available from most supermarkets - you'll find them on the baking aisle next to the flour.

BEWARE: *Loose flour is an explosion hazard. Avoid pouring it or allowing it to form clouds anywhere near a naked flame.*

Hint:

When dealing with imprecise measurements, such as our 'mugs' and 'handfuls', it's always better to add plentiful ingredients like water gradually - you can always add a bit more if required, but taking some out if you overdo it is tricky! ■

This extract is taken from 'Moveable Feasts - what to eat and how to cook it in the great outdoors' by Amy-Jane Beer and Roy Halpin. Buy it today in the BMC online shop. Look out for more recipes in Amy-Jane's new column in Summit - starting next issue.



CAMP OVENS

Camp ovens (sometimes called Dutch ovens) come in two basic types: those designed to sit in an open fire, and those for stove-top use.

A conventional camp oven is a large cast-iron container with a loop handle and sunken or lipped lid. Often the base has little legs. The idea is that the pot nestles directly into the fire and the sunken lid is filled with hot coals. This generates an even heat inside, allowing you to roast or bake anything from lamb casserole to whole chickens, bread or even fairy cakes. This is a very popular method of camp cooking in Australia, where huge distances mean many long-distance car journeys are often broken with an overnight camp in the middle of nowhere. Aussies are so keen on this particular piece of kit that they even hold a festival in its honour; the Australian Camp Oven Festival takes place biannually in the Queensland town of Millmerran. Camp ovens are heavy, but if you're camping with a vehicle the weight doesn't matter. Alternatively a traditional camp oven makes excellent open canoe ballast for expeditions on the water – just make sure that they've got enough buoyancy attached! They are pretty much indestructible and if properly looked after will last several lifetimes.

Stove top camp ovens are usually much lighter than the traditional type. We love our Optimus Mini Oven (available from www.base-camp.co.uk) for all kinds of bread, cake and especially for toad-in-the-hole, which it cooks so well we even use it at home in preference to the kitchen oven. It's made of aluminium so it's light (a shade over 500g), although still a bit bulky for backpacking over any distance. It has three parts, a doughnut-shaped base and doughnut cooking pan and a lid. The base protects the cooking pan from direct heat, thus avoiding burning. The holes in the middle of the base and pan allow heat to circulate inside so the food cooks from above as well as below. The only disadvantage is that it can only be used on clean-burning stoves, ideally gas; soot from dirty fuels would end up inside the pan and spoil the food.

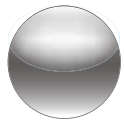
The Outback Oven from US outfitters Backpacker's Pantry (www.backpackerspantry.com) is a folding stove-top camp oven. The 'oven' is made of tightly woven mesh, which folds for storage. In use it encloses a lidded pan, which sits over a diffuser plate that allows for very even baking of its contents. Whilst we've not tried it, it does come highly recommended by those that have. At about 700g the original is about 185g heavier than the Optimus but it is not restricted to clean-burning stoves. There is an ultralight version without a dedicated pan that only weighs about 270g. The idea is that you use it with your regular camp pans. The overall weight saving and collapsibility makes this system potentially more transportable than others.

Improvising

You don't have to buy a purpose-built camp oven – they are surprisingly easy to improvise. You just need two different-sized, lidded pans that will fit inside one another without touching at the sides. Separate the base of the inner pan from the outer one with a handful of fine gravel or with water. This separates the cooking pan from the heat enough to prevent burning. Using gravel creates a hot dry heat, perfect for baking bread or roasting meat. Using water limits the temperature and of course generates a lot of steam. This is can be disastrous for bread but is perfect for gooey sponge puddings. ■



Make your own camp oven with two pans and make your own bread.
Photo: Amy-Jane Beer.



Events:

See www.thebmc.co.uk/events for full details and application forms for all BMC events

Wilderness Medical Training

Glenmore Lodge, 25-26th April

This course covers illness, injury, environment related problems and the use of some prescription medications. It's ideal preparation for anyone undertaking any adventure travel abroad.

www.glenmorelodge.org

Tim Emmett Lecture Tour

Nationwide until end April

Top Gear's Audi-beating, speed-climbing B.A.S.E.-Jumper comes to a lecture theatre near you. "The Ronaldo of rock-climbing... makes Jason Bourne look like a girl," reckons The Guardian.

www.speakersfromtheedge.com

BMC Rock Climbing Lectures

Sponsored by Cotswold Outdoor
Nationwide, April – May

Get your rock climbing knowledge up to speed with our rock climbing lectures. Presented by Libby Peter and Lucy Creamer, these interactive talks aim to bring your skills up to scratch and inspire you for another season on the rock. Some events will feature masterclasses. Libby will cover technical climbing skills such as ropework; Lucy will cover climbing movement skills.

www.thebmc.co.uk/rockclimbing

BMC AGM

Plas y Brenin, 24th – 26th April

The BMC AGM returns to Plas y Brenin in Snowdonia for a weekend of climbing, walking and probably drinking. Turn the page for full details.

www.thebmc.co.uk/yourbmc



Come along to the BBCs in July to show your support.
Photo: Messenger.

www.thebmc.co.uk/events

BMC FUNDamentals of Climbing Workshops

Various venues, March - September

Book now for the FUNDamentals of Climbing workshops, designed for those coaching climbing, especially those coaching young people. Dates are: Climb Rochdale, 22nd April and 8th July; Plas y Brenin, 28 March, 16th May and 12th September; Birmingham 18th April; London 29th May.

www.thebmc.co.uk/fundamentals

Sir Edmund Hillary Memorial Lecture

RGS, London, 28th May

Chris Bonington recalls the "The Everest Years" and special guest Ang Rita Tshering Sherpa, star pupil in the first Hillary School – who now heads the Himalayan Trust in Nepal, will speak on how the Trust continues to benefit the lives of the hill people of Nepal.

www.himalayantrust.co.uk

BMC Outdoor Youth Meets

Various venues, May and June

BMC outdoor youth meets are for U18's who wish to extend their knowledge to the outdoors. Young people are accompanied by a parent, or an adult, who is responsible for them. Dates for this year are: London & South East, 16th May; North Wales, 30th May; Yorkshire Hill Walking, 6th June.

www.thebmc.co.uk/youth

Crag AttaK

Cheddar Gorge, 4-5th July

Crag AttaK plans to return to Cheddar Gorge this summer for a climbing festival, incorporating The Climbers' Club meet. Come along for 'summer access' to all routes – including 'Coronation Street' and 'Crow', the Gorge Crawl E-Point challenge, speed climbing competitions and RockSport for beginners and children – by Cheddar Caves & Gorge's RockSport team. Details to be finalised.

www.thebmc.co.uk/events

BMC British Bouldering Championships

Cliffhanger, Sheffield, 11-12th July

The BBCs will again take place as part of the Cliffhanger festival at Millhouses Park, Sheffield. Britain's strongest boulders will be lined up ready to compete – who will be crowned British Bouldering Champion?

www.thebmc.co.uk/competitions

BMC British Lead Climbing Championship

EICA, Ratho, 18-19th July

The BLCCs are moving this year, up north to EICA Ratho, to take advantage of the huge new competition climbing wall.

www.thebmc.co.uk/competitions

BMC Alpine Meet

Ecrins, 1st – 16th August

Make a date in your diary for next year's BMC Alpine Meet. This time we're heading to the Ecrins Massif in France. See page 49 for full details.

www.thebmc.co.uk/alpinemeet

Arran Outdoors Festival

Arran, 18th-21st September

An exciting programme of events is lined up for enthusiasts and beginners alike. Walk the hills with experienced local guides, learn about the history, geology, flora and fauna of this beautiful island or choose a sea-kayaking tour and experience Arran from a different perspective.

www.arranoutdoorfestival.co.uk

BMC Student Safety & Good Practice Seminar

Sponsored by V12 Outdoor
Plas y Brenin, 3 – 4th October

If you're involved in running a student climbing, hill walking or mountaineering club then you need to book a place at this year's Student Seminar. The event gives senior post holders from university clubs the opportunity to improve their club practices and ensure safer enjoyment of our mountains. Application forms available from April.

www.thebmc.co.uk/studentseminar

Looking for climbing competitions?

See page 34.

BMC Area Meetings

Lake District: tbc

London & SE: 22nd June, The Devereux Pub, The Strand

Midlands: 26th March, Holywell pub, Hinckley, 7.30pm

North East: 16th March, The Stonebridge Inn, Durham, 8pm.

North West: 8th June, The Belmont Bull

Peak District: 22nd April, The Grouse,

Froggatt, 7.30pm

South West: 15th or 16th May, venue tbc

Wales: 9th June, Deganwy Castle Hotel, 9pm

Yorkshire: 8th June, Ilkley Moor Vaults,

7.30pm

Check latest details at www.thebmc.co.uk/yourbmc

Summit - Spring | 55



BMC AGM

BMC Annual Dinner & AGM weekend



Plas y Brenin, 24th – 26th April

Want to have a say in the running of the BMC? Then make a date for this year's BMC Annual Dinner and AGM weekend.

Weekend Programme

Friday 24th April

20:30 Make a weekend of it. Turn up on Friday night to relax and catch the free slideshow by James McHaffie – 'Cutting Edge Climbing at home and abroad'.

Saturday 25th April

07:30 - 09:00 Breakfast

09:00 - 13:30 The ideal opportunity to sneak in some climbing or walking before the business of the day

11:00 - 12:00 Coaching Developments in Climbing, Hill Walking and Mountaineering – Open to all
In autumn 2006, representatives from the three Mountaineering Councils and five Mountain Leader Training Boards began a series of meetings about coaching. This group produced a report in autumn 2008, which can be downloaded at www.thebmc.co.uk/coaching. A presentation on their findings and conclusions will commence at 11.00am at Plas y Brenin, followed by a Q&A session.

13:30 - 15:00 National Open Forum

15:00 - 15:45 AGM Registration

16:00 - 17:30 AGM

19:00 Annual Dinner with Guest Speaker Jim Curran. The evening will continue with a late bar.

Sunday 26th April

Head off into Snowdonia fortified by the legendary Plas y Brenin breakfast.

The BMC returns to Plas y Brenin in the heart of Snowdonia, giving the ideal chance to climb, walk or just catch up with old. On Friday evening James McHaffie will kick things off with a slideshow – 'Cutting Edge Climbing at home and abroad'. Hopefully this will inspire you to get out and explore Snowdonia on Saturday morning before the formalities begin; there's plenty of world-class climbing and walking within easy striking distance of Plas y Brenin – fingers crossed for the weather.

The BMC AGM will start at 4pm on Saturday, with registration from 3pm – both in the main lecture room at Plas y Brenin (adjacent to the bar). Registration is a must if you wish to vote on any of the agenda items on the opposite page, so make sure your membership is valid and make your vote count.

After the formalities of the AGM, the evening will continue with a tasty three-course meal at 7pm. Places are limited so do book early to avoid disappointment. Following the dinner there will be speeches by Charles Clarke (BMC President), Dave Turnbull (BMC CEO) and our Guest Speaker Jim Curran.

Accommodation

Accommodation is available at Plas y Brenin and includes breakfast for only £25 per person per night. Accommodation bookings can only be made through the BMC by completing and returning the booking form by 6th April.

Annual Dinner Tickets

Places are limited so book early to avoid disappointment. A dram of the Balvenie Single Malt Scotch Whisky will be served with pudding. Dr Andrew Forrester, Balvenie Ambassador will also be there to serve a few more drams throughout the evening and to answer all your whisky questions. Tickets are £25 per person for a tasty three-course meal with wine. To book please complete and return the booking form by 6th April.

Further information

Please contact Becky McGovern at the BMC, email becky@thebmc.co.uk or call 0161 438 3302. Full information and booking forms: www.thebmc.co.uk/agm.

SPECIAL OFFER!

Tickets are just £15 each for the first 20 BMC members who have never been to a BMC Annual Dinner before. First come first served!



Come along for a weekend of hill walking.
Photo: BMC.



Notice of the 2009 Annual General Meeting of the British Mountaineering Council

Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig, Snowdonia
Saturday 25th April 2009
AGM Registration: 15:00
AGM start : 16:00 start

The AGM is open to all members of the BMC. Any Member shall be entitled to speak at a General Meeting but if any Voting Member has not made payment of all subscription monies due by him/her to the BMC he/she shall not be entitled to vote. In the case of a vote, whether by a show of hands or a poll, every Voting Member aged not less than eighteen years present in person or by proxy shall have one vote. As laid down in Article 51.1 ordinary business put to the vote shall be decided on a show of hands unless before or on the declaration of the result of the show of hands a poll is demanded either by the Chairman of the meeting or by not less than twenty Voting Members present in person. Please allow adequate time to sign in so that the AGM can start promptly. BMC staff will be available on the day to answer questions and offer assistance.

Candidates for BMC President

This year we've got two candidates up for election to be BMC President. To help you choose, we let them introduce themselves:

Rab Carrington

I've been involved with the BMC for the past five years since my retirement from the RAB Down Equipment business. During that time I have been active in many aspects of BMC work, principally:

- Active member of the BMC National Council and Executive Committee
- Active member of BMC Youth & Training Committee and the Competitions Committee
- Attendee at the Peak Area and a paper member of Technical Committee
- Chair of Clubs Working Group
- Mentor in Project Development Meetings
- Instrumental in helping to reorganise the working environment at the BMC Office

I consider my main strengths to be:

- Experience of 40+ years of climbing covering most disciplines (trad, alpine, winter, himalayan, sport and bouldering)
- Strong business background which allows me to work well with the office staff and implement change where applicable
- Up to date knowledge of the mechanics, structure and operation of the BMC
- A forward-looking attitude which allows me to realise that mountaineering is an ever-changing sport. A realisation that everything that was done in the past was not necessarily good and, likewise, new directions in the future are not necessarily bad!

My aims for the next three years are:

- Improve the efficiency of the BMC organisation
- Improve communications between the BMC, its members and the outside world
- Safeguard all forms of mountaineering, climbing and hill walking for the future.

Doug Scott

The BMC plays a key role in British climbing and not just because of all the services it provides. Climb in those countries without the equivalent organisation and see the proliferation of drilled rock more or less everywhere. The BMC has a hard-working team in the office, a huge band of dedicated volunteers and its finances now in order. The time is ripe to take new initiatives and to re-affirm the BMC's basic philosophy, which I propose should be back to basics – working to represent the interests of climbers, hill walkers, mountaineers and their clubs.

- Reverse the situation that is causing many clubs to leave the BMC by welcoming, rather than compelling, club members into the BMC, always remembering they are the bedrock of the Council and the reinforcement bars of British climbing
- Bolt funds to be used not only for replacing unsafe bolts but also for removing bolts where they compromise traditional climbing
- Open up a vigorous debate upon man vs mountain or man vs man and whether climbing should head towards the Olympics.
- Promote traditional climbing abroad and increase international exchanges, whilst at the same time making them more inclusive. Increase British representation on international committees
- Maintain increased vigilance towards all outside agencies, especially government departments where they may attempt to use and change climbing for their own agenda
- In the interests of democracy all BMC members and club members should be encouraged to receive Summit, ensuring a wider dissemination of information.

To achieve the above, I would draw upon my experience from the millennium review of the Alpine Club made during my presidency and also from heading up Community Action Nepal, with its 49 salaried staff in Nepal, and a large band of dedicated volunteers organised with the help of just one part-time staff member here in the UK.

AGM AGENDA 2009

Chair: Charles Clarke, BMC President

1. Welcome, introductions & apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on Saturday 19 April 2008
3. Adoption of the 2008 Annual Report
4. Adoption of the 2008 Annual Accounts and Auditors Report
5. Appointment of Auditors
The Finance Committee recommends the appointment of Bentley & Co for the year ending 31 December 2009
6. Report from the President
7. Voting procedure for elections
8. Elections

a) *The following candidates are eligible for re-election:*

Pat Littlejohn Vice President
(eligible for re-election until 2010)

Rehan Siddiqui Vice President
(eligible for re-election until 2011)

David Lanceley Honorary Treasurer
(eligible for re-election until 2013)

Charles Clarke retires as President, Rab Carrington retires as Vice President and Brian Griffiths retires as Joint Honorary Treasurer.

b) The following candidate is recommended by the BMC National Council for the position of Vice President:

• **Audrey Seguy** *(nominated by Steve Taylor and Mike Watson)*

c) The following candidates have been nominated for the position of BMC President:

• **Rab Carrington** *(nominated by Martin Boysen and Brian Griffiths)*

• **Doug Scott** *(nominated by Bob Pettigrew and Alan Blackshaw)*

9. Subscriptions from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2011

The National Council recommends that subscription rates for 2010 will remain unchanged at the levels set for 2009.



Hill Skills: Desert trekking

by Dom Hall

The word desert conjures up images of endless sand dunes, camels and blistering heat. But in reality desert areas can encompass an incredible variety of terrains and climates – what do you need to know when travelling through them?

Most large tracts of desert are characterised by vast gravel plains, dry mountain ranges, canyons and stony tundra. They can even be covered with coarse vegetation or cacti. Despite their differences, all deserts share one major characteristic: a serious lack of water. Deserts are defined as areas that have little-to-no rainfall (less than 250mm per year), and where water of any kind is extremely scarce. It's thought that some areas of the Atacama Desert in Chile have never actually seen any rainfall!

Hot work?

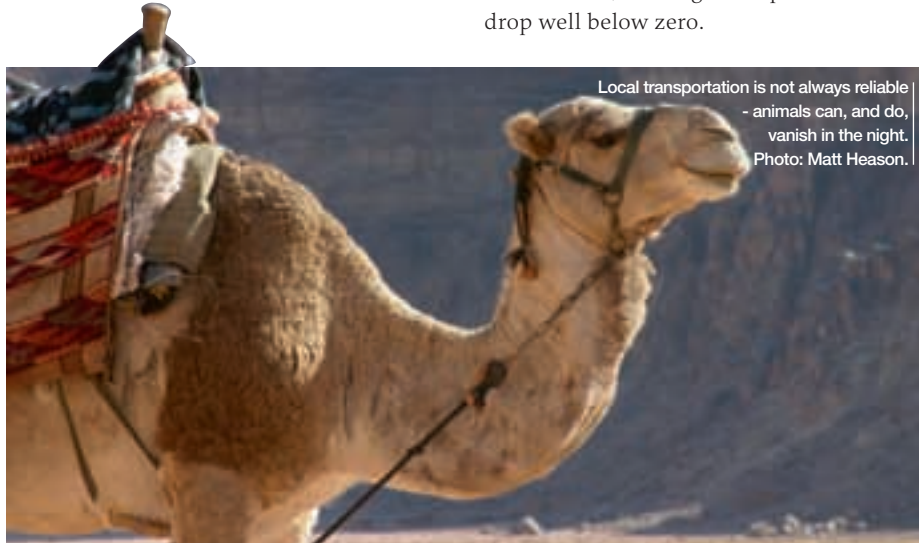
Most people find that dry climates are generally easier on our bodies than damp and humid ones, but even so, try to acclimatise slowly before beginning any serious activity. Allowing at least three days of moderate exercise in the heat before you start your activities for real will mean that you're more comfortable in your surroundings when the going gets tough. Although it may be scorching in the day, don't underestimate how cold the nights may get. Desert skies are normally clear, and this allows the earth to radiate all the heat of the day back into space, making for some chilly evenings. Make sure you take a good sleeping bag and a few warm clothes in case of cold snaps. In some desert areas, such as the Gobi Desert in Central Asia, overnight temperatures can drop well below zero.

Drink like a fish

As a rule of thumb, each person trekking in the desert should be consuming around 7-8 litres of water per day to just to keep moving, and more if you are carrying packs or digging vehicles out of sand dunes. In particularly dry (but not necessarily hot) deserts you may not even notice yourself sweating, as sweat evaporates as soon as it is created. This can be especially dangerous, as you may not even notice that you are getting dehydrated. Make sure you keep drinking water regularly, check the colour of your pee, and learn to recognise the signs of heat exhaustion and dehydration in yourself and others. As you lose fluid you'll also lose vital minerals and salts, so don't be afraid to add salt to your food every night, and carry a few packets of rehydration salts with you at all times, just in case.

How to travel

Try to plan your trekking days to start before dawn to take advantage of the cool mornings. Plan a long break in some shade during the hottest part of the day (normally from 11am until 3pm) and continue trekking into the late afternoon when it's cooler. If you're using pack animals or vehicles to carry you or your equipment, this also allows time for everyone, and everything, to rest or for any repairs that might be needed. When trekking use binoculars frequently to judge the terrain ahead. Short detours around sand dunes and gorges spotted in the distance can save you hours of effort, and the curses of the rest of your team!



Local transportation is not always reliable - animals can, and do, vanish in the night. Photo: Matt Heason.

Expert Q&A

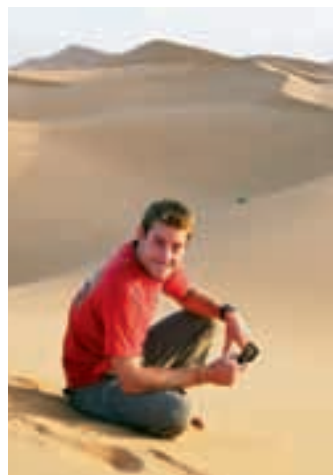


Photo: Sam Leggett.

Our desert expert is Matt Leggett. Matt has been working as an explorer and expedition leader for over eight years, leading numerous expeditions to remote desert, jungle and mountainous regions. Most recently he developed, and led, all four expeditions for Ben Fogle's current 'Extreme Dreams' series with the BBC – trekking from the Equator to the Tropic of Capricorn. He currently lives in Edinburgh with his wife Sam.

Q. I've heard that less is more when it comes to clothing in the desert – is that right?

A. Perhaps surprisingly, no! Avoid shorts and short sleeves at all costs, these will only increase the loss of water from your skin and inevitably lead to painful sunburn. Lightweight and loose fitting clothes are by far the most comfortable. Get yourself a good hat with a wide brim, or even better, copy the locals and buy yourself a long cotton 'shemagh' or headscarf, which can double up as a hat, scarf, towel, sarong and pillow all in one.

Q. Is it possible to wash in the desert?

A. When water is short, washing is a waste of valuable water supplies. Instead take a small pack of wet-wipes and a miniature spray bottle of water to cool you down – you won't be much cleaner, but it'll make the world of difference after a long day.

Q. What's the best way of camping out – do I need a tent?

A. This very much depends on the area you'll be camping in, but normally sleeping under

In deserts you need 7-8 litres of water just to keep moving.
Photo: Sam Leggett.



Plan for the best – prepare for the worst

Always make sure that you have a generous emergency supply of water with your vehicles or animals to get you out of trouble; carry at least two litres with you at all times, even when you sleep. Animals can, and do, vanish into the desert with all of your supplies, water can be tainted, and support vehicles can break down. Make sure you keep a compass close to

hand, be sure you know how to use it and learn the direction that help may lie in. Making small mistakes can lead to big problems, so you can never be too prepared.

Don't let this put you off! As with all wilderness environments, at first glance it can all be seriously intimidating. But treat the dangers with respect, and with some forward planning and a few new skills, you'll be able to leave the tourists and the 4x4's behind, and

explore some of the last great wilderness regions on earth. ■

Dom Hall runs Fieldskills – an expedition training and support company. Fieldskills run a range of UK-based expedition training courses including: desert safety training, tropical forests, savannah and mountain environments, and general expedition planning. For more information see www.fieldskills.com.

the stars is the way to go. This is quick and simple, with a million-dollar view of the stars. However, in some areas strong winds can make your night a sand-blown misery: have a shelter of some kind close to hand, or construct a lean-to using a tarp to give you some shelter.

Q. What kind of footwear is best?

A. It's very unlikely that your boots will need to be waterproof, so most lightweight fabric boots are often excellent for desert trekking. Don't be tempted to use sandals. Army desert boots are excellent for hot and arid environments.

FURTHER INFORMATION



Fieldskills

Specialist expedition services company providing a combination of advice, training and logistical support.
www.fieldskills.com

Royal Geographical Society (RGS)

Resources for those planning expeditions to any adventurous environment.

www.rgs.org





Climb Skills: Climbing as a team by Adrian Berry

Climbing has long attracted rebellious youths, left uninspired by the traditional team games. As a rule we've no great desire to take bit parts in a team enterprise – we'd rather not accept that success, or failure, may be in the hands of others.

Climbing is solitary; it's just you and the rock. At the end of the rope there's no-one to pass the ball to, there's no-one else to blame and no-one else to take the credit. Or is there? The more I've learned about the psychology of climbing, the more I'm convinced that this isn't the whole picture: climbing is a team sport after all.

Developing a sense of 'team' between yourself and your partner is worth a great deal, and makes a much greater difference to the outcome of an attempt on a route than you might imagine. I know this because my job as a climbing coach regularly puts me in the position of being someone's partner for a day, and over the years I've learned how to be the very best partner I can. Team-play in climbing is a fairly one-way flow of assistance: from the second to the leader. Being a second is so much more than holding somebody's ropes, in our roles as seconds we have a significant influence on the outcome, so here's how to influence it for the better.

Develop trust

If your partner grabs a quickdraw when they get gripped, wait for the rope to go tight and then sit back, it's because they don't entirely trust you to be paying attention. Develop trust by always paying (and be seen to be paying) attention to your partner. When they pull up rope to clip, let them know you're paying attention by having the slack ready – if they pull up rope and find it tight, they'll know you're snoozing. Keep your focus on them – if they look down and see you chatting it hardly inspires confidence. Demonstrate that you're paying attention by maintaining communication, which brings us onto the next point.

Give praise and encouragement

If your partner does a move well, tell them! It'll give them confidence in themselves, and shows them that you're watching the closely. Encouragement literally means 'to give heart' – when your partner's 'heart' is fading, give them the benefit of your objective viewpoint. They may be worried about being above the gear, but you may be able to ascertain whether their fears are justified or not. If they have a bomber piece of gear a metre below their feet and the ground is ten metres below that, then remind them that they are in a safe position. Tell them that you're watching them carefully and they are safe to go for it – even though it may not feel like that on the sharp

end! One of my climbing partners reminds me that they are on my side by simply saying "I'm right there with you," whenever I'm looking doubtful – it works wonders.

Stay positive

As we get more stressed on a route, we tend to both think and act in a defensive, negative way. We tend to report things like, "it's looking a bit blank up there" or "I'm feeling a bit pumped". When our partner is going through this, it's our job as seconds to try and turn it around. So, "it's looking a bit blank up there" might be responded to by "there's bound to be something – keep looking" and, "I'm feeling a bit pumped," could elicit "you're looking strong and you've only got a few more moves!". Obviously, it is good to avoid implanting negative ideas in your partner when they're on the lead, so it wouldn't be a good idea to point out that it looks a blank above them. This just communicates the fact that you'd rather they didn't continue, which is the last thing they want to hear.

Pre-climb preparation

When your partner is getting psyched for a big lead, they're likely to be so focussed on the route that they can forget silly things like having enough chalk and reading the guidebook description thoroughly. You have a role in making sure your partner has what they need: have they got the right gear? Have they warmed-up adequately? Have you

Expert Q&A



This issue's expert is Dr Rebecca Williams, a dual-qualified clinical psychologist and climbing instructor. She runs Smart Climbing, a company which takes a holistic approach to climbing, combining psychological and technical tuition, to help climbers move more fluidly and confidently.

Q. How can I get in a positive frame of mind for climbing?

A. Climbers tend to be very achievement orientated and this can result in black and white thinking, seeing things in an all-or-nothing kind of way. This is quite a punitive way to view our performance: only absolute success or total failure with no in-between. Try instead to appreciate all the nuances of your performance, notice the single moves or links you perform well. Spend time thinking about past successes, not ruminating on failures.

Q. I have a phobia of falling - what can I do?

A. Exposure is the best way to counteract a phobia. Start by taking small falls and practice this until you feel comfortable, then very gradually make them bigger. Practice regularly. You may also want to think about why you are frightened of falling (lack of trust in a belayer, bad experiences, fear of being out of control?) and try to work through this.

Q. I get nervous on a route, how can I relax?

A. Nerves are usually do with our thoughts running away with us. Don't try to fight the fear, this only makes it worse,

but instead, try to anchor your mind into your body. Breathing into your belly (diaphragmatic breathing) can help, as can focusing on the feel of the rock beneath your feet/ hands – anything to get you out of your mind and into your body.

Q. What is visualisation?

A. Visualisation is creating a mental picture of what you want to happen. You can do this either by viewing through your own eyes, or as if viewing a video of yourself climbing. It works best when you elaborate on the details, including touch, smell, body-feel as well as the visual. Be careful not to get sucked into thinking about what you don't



Adrian Berry on Le Torcheur d'Éléphant 6c+ Saint Léger, France.
Photo: Phil Vickers.

got a warm belay jacket so you can remain jolly and encouraging?

Post-climb analysis

The slap on the back for a pitch well-led is often more rewarding than the lead itself, so be generous! If all didn't go to plan then try

to be constructive – and agree to come back another day!

Lastly, what goes around comes around. If you can be an inspiring climbing partner, then those around you cannot help but to be infected, and you'll soon find yourself at the receiving end, and you too will experience

what a huge difference it makes. ■

Adrian Berry is a professional climbing coach. He has written two books on how to become a better climber: *Sport Climbing+* and *Trad Climbing+*, both published by Rockfax. Find out more at www.positiveclimbing.com.

want to happen! Focus instead on successful movement.

Q. What is mindfulness?

A. Mindfulness is being aware of the here and now, without judgment. Our thoughts tend to be quite random, flipping between past and present, or labeling and judging what we observe. This is unhelpful for climbing, as really we need to think about the best way to use our bodies, moment to moment rather than potential falls or past failures. Mindfulness practice involves training ourselves to direct our awareness into the present through meditation.

Q. Is climbing psychology just for high grade climbers?

A. Absolutely not! Most climbers don't climb anywhere near their physical ability due to limiting psychological factors, such as a lack of body awareness, limiting self beliefs, fear and often shame (not wanting other people to see them fall off an 'easy' route). Climbers also can struggle to read moves, maintain concentration and focus, and keep up their motivation. Paying attention to mental factors can really make a difference.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Smart Climbing
www.smartclimbing.co.uk
Climbing courses with a holistic approach - combining psychological and technical tuition.



Positive Climbing
www.positiveclimbing.com
Performance climbing coaching from Adrian Berry.



Tech Skills: Passive protection by Dan Middleton

Imagine climbing in the days before nuts and hexes. Protection was limited to chockstones, spikes and sometimes pegs; if you were lucky there might be a handy tree, but often you just had to run it out. No wonder that a wierd and wonderful array of protection evolved to calm the leader's mind. Over time, several basic designs of passive protection have proven their worth.

Curved nuts

Everyone has their favourite type: 'Wallnuts', 'Rocks' or perhaps 'Stoppers'. These all work in the same way: the curve acts to provide three points of contact, compared to the usual two that you'd get with a straight-sided nut. This makes them more stable and less likely to rotate out of position. Many nuts also have a sideways taper, which extends the number of placement options, especially in shallow, flaring cracks.



Offset nuts

These straight-sided nuts have made a bit of a comeback recently. Although they won't always be as secure as a curved nut in standard placements, they will fit into flared cracks and other odd shapes where curved nuts just won't go. The small and medium sizes fit into peg



scars pretty nicely, making them especially useful for aid climbing and protecting once-pegged routes.

Hexentrics

Hexentrics offer lightweight protection for wider cracks. Using different faces enables several different crack widths to be protected. Placed correctly, a camming action is created, enabling them to be used even in parallel-sided cracks. 'Rockcentrics', and the new 'Torque Nuts' expand on this theme, curving the faces to increase the camming effect. If you're planning on clocking some air time, there is something rather reassuring about having one of these locked into the crack below you. Indispensable for winter climbing, they can be encouraged into icy cracks, when cams will often slide out.



Camming nuts

Nuts such as 'Tricams' take the camming idea one stage further, with a camming face opposite a wedge which acts as a pivot. Because of their narrow width, sometimes these can fit perfectly into pockets or shot holes when nothing else will go in. The downside is that they can be awkward for the second to remove.

Micro wires

Micro wires allow placements to be made in ever thinner and shallower cracks. As the size

of the nut comes down, so does the thickness and strength of the wire cable. Soldering the ends of the cable into the nut is much stronger than tightly bending a thin cable back on itself. Even so, although these small wires are amazingly strong for their size, they can break under the stress of normal climbing falls. Bear this in mind.

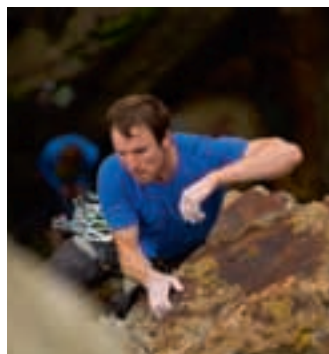
Care and maintenance

The key is to prevent corrosion or damage to the wire cables. When removing, a gentle tap with a nut key is better than violently ripping upwards – difficult to remember when you're scared seconding! A rinse in tap water and thorough drying before being stowed away is well worth the effort after any sea-cliff adventures. If any badly bent cables, or broken or corroded wire strands are visible, it's best to retire the nut. This is particularly important when it comes to micro wires. Hexentrics and the like can be re-slung once the sling starts getting furry, faded or old – some manufacturers offer a re-slugging



Nuts: useful. Photo: Messenger.

Expert Q&A



This issue's expert is Dave Noddings. Dave works for DMM in North Wales. Described by Jerry Moffat as, "the true king of rock climbing," Noddy's prowess on the rock is matched only by his reputation with the ladies.

Q. I'm a beginner – what nuts should I buy?

A. A set of wires (size 1-11) is a good starting point. You can then expand your passive pro rack by doubling up on these 'standard' wires and getting some micros. It's also worth remembering the value of hexes – they are a very cost-effective way to get some large runners.

Q. How are wires made?

A. We have different processes for small and large wires: the smaller ones (up to wallnut six) are

CNC machined, the larger ones are made with extrusions (long tubes of alloy are cut into wire-size chunks), then CNC machined. All sizes then go through heat treatment (to ensure strength and hardness), rumbling (to give a lovely smooth finish), anodising (to protect from corrosion), then final assembly (the wire is threaded and joined using a super-strong aluminium swage).

Q. How do nuts fail during testing?

A. We test samples from each batch we make, and they generally fail at the same stress point – where the wire enters and exits the nut. It's the wire itself that breaks, not the swaged joint or the actual nut.

Q. I'm replacing some of my old rack – has modern gear improved?

A. A huge variety of modern gear is available: from tiny wires for hairline cracks, to massive tube chocks for offwidths, and everything in between. We've concentrated on making things stronger, lighter, safer and more user-friendly.

Q. Can my old wires be recycled?

A. Maybe. We're currently working on a metalwork recycling project based out of our factory in Wales. It should be live soon – so don't chuck your stuff in the bin just yet.

Q. The crucial runner on a route is a micro wire. Is there anything I can do to make it less likely to break or rip out?

Vicky Barrett gets a great nut placement in Sunset Crack (HS 4c), Froggatt.
Photo: Alex Messenger.



service. If you end up doing this yourself, use the thickest rope or cord that will fit and use a double fisherman's knot (triple for dyneema cord).

Strength and standards

The standards which apply to passive pro are UIAA 124 and EN12270, which are almost identical. The minimum strength allowed is 2 kN, so micro wires can be included. This is a little controversial, because it's well known that forces in typical falls are

almost always higher than this. The alternative is that micro wires would end up being made outside the standards, with potentially lower standards of quality control. Of course, most pro is stronger than this – the guaranteed strength must be marked on the nut. In practice, this theoretical strength is rarely reached, failure is usually because of rock fracture or nut edges shearing due to poor placement. This is more likely with marginal pro, because the forces are transmitted over a smaller area.

Learning to survive

The lifting out and shifting of gear is likely if you fail to extend it adequately – carry some longer quickdraws and don't let your belayer stand too far back from the crag. Get your second to give you marks out of ten for each piece. Qualified instruction or the advice of an experienced mentor can make a big difference early on in your leading career. ■

Dan Middleton is the BMC Technical Officer. Contact him at dan@thebmc.co.uk with your technical questions.

A. Obviously make sure that you get the micro wire in the best part of the placement, and that it's seated well so that it can't lift out. Consider extending it with a long quickdraw – if proximity to the ground allows it – or using a ripper sling, if available. Having a revolver karabiner on the bottom end of the quickdraw will lower the impact force on the runner – by allowing the energy to better absorbed by the rope. Likewise, using a skinny, stretchy rope could also help. And finally, team up with an experienced belayer who can give a 'soft catch' and help that wire stay where it's meant to!



Larger wires are made from long tubes of alloy.
Photo: Messenger.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.thebmc.co.uk/equipment

Read more Tech Skills articles on the BMC website.

www.thebmc.co.uk/Feature.aspx?id=1477

Microwire failure incident.

www.theuiaa.org/safety_labels_products.php

CEN versus UIAA standards.

DMM

www.dmmclimbing.com

Three decades of experience in making quality climbing equipment.





Club Skills: Renovating your club hut by Fran McNichol

The Vagabond Mountaineering Club has its club hut (and spiritual home) in Nant Peris. We recently gave the hut a much-overdue renovation – but it wasn't all plain sailing.

History

The Vagabond Mountaineering Club started life in 1949 and first took out a lease on an unoccupied cottage near Nant Peris in 1952. Facilities were basic – water came from the stream and there was no sewage or electricity; the princely sum of £32 was raised to make it habitable. Club magazines from the 70s report significant alpine ascents, exuberant cragging and a healthy drinking scene, all centred around Nant Peris. In 1980 the hut was sold, but our lease continued until 1989. The club was in limbo for several years until it decided to buy the property, valued then at £35,000. In 1994, after raising £9,000 from donations, the club received a £30k grant from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts and the hut was saved.

After years of uncertainty about the future, the maintenance of the hut had been neglected. It was lacking basic amenities, cold, damp, unhealthy and infested with rodents. People were increasingly reluctant to spend more than a single night there, especially in winter. At the 1998 AGM a proposal was accepted for a total re-build. This would include washrooms, a shower,

new entrance, drying area, better kitchen and improved parking. There were some strong objections of course: that climbing huts were meant to be basic and that the hut's unique character would be lost. However at this time the BMC set up the Huts Group, a support committee aimed at assisting clubs, which proved invaluable.

Planning ahead

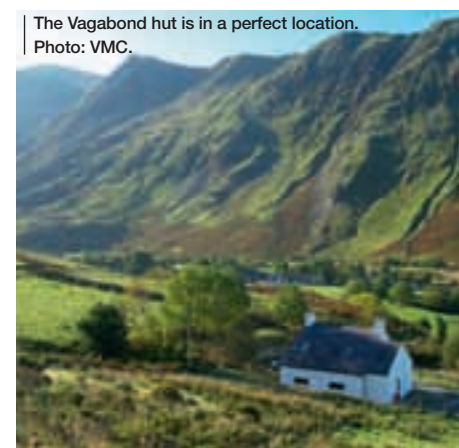
Planning was a minefield and took years to negotiate. There was little local support; as outsiders we were simply lucky not to conflict with home-grown interests. Plans were presented in 1999, 2000 and 2001 and rejected. Eventually a site meeting was arranged with a Snowdonia Park official and a design thrashed out on the back of an envelope, and in November 2001 the plans were finally accepted. Detailed drawings were completed by architect Allan Owen and three quotes obtained from local builders. We chose Mike Bailey, a Climbers' Club member who came highly recommended.

Money, money, money

Now all that remained was how to fund the expansion? There seemed to be money available in the form of lottery grants and sports foundation money, but despite application upon application it proved fruitless. After four futile years of applications we came to the grim realisation

that, as a small and effectively private members' climbing club, we did not qualify for a single penny of outside funding.

The solution that was found is a truly magnificent reflection of how climbing can inspire and unite a group of disparate individualists into a team pursuing a common dream. We decided to fundraise within the club to cover the cost of the basic building work and to rely on members' work meets to fit out the interior. This tiny club (a total of only 60 members) spent its entire savings – and in addition raised the money for a substantial loan from regular contributions from members and supporters. The entire membership committed to a small monthly payment (about £20) for 3-5 years to service the loan. Everyone paid, even many former members who haven't been seen for years.



Expert Q&A



This issue our huts expert is Martin Kocsis. Martin is the BMC Volunteers' Officer, and he also looks after huts. He can be found outside many climbing huts with a large husky and an equally large slice of cake. Get in touch with your huts questions: martin@thebmc.co.uk

Q. How can I meet fellow hut managers?

A. That's easy. Just come along to the biennial Hut Seminar run by the BMC Huts Group, held in the autumn at Plas y Brenin. You'll be able to meet fellow hut managers and quiz experts on all aspects of running a club hut. Keep an eye on BMC events for dates of the next one.

Q. Who can stay in a hut?

A. This very much depends on which club owns the hut. Some clubs allow any BMC member to stay, others only members of

certain clubs. Contact the booking secretary of each hut to find out more.

Q. What is the Alex MacIntyre memorial hut?

A. This is a BMC/MCoS self-catering hut, located near Onich, eleven miles from Fort William. It's a convenient base from which to explore and climb the mountains of Glen Coe, Ben Nevis and the Mamores. The hut can accommodate sixteen people and is open to members of the BMC/MCoS and their families. Phone 020 8241 4442 for details.

Q. I've got an urgent question about our club hut – who can help?

A. First, check out the new hut guidelines at www.thebmc.co.uk/hutnotes. Then if that doesn't solve your problem, email martin@thebmc.co.uk.

Q. I've heard that I would be responsible if legionella was present?

A. Clubs do not normally have any employees and are therefore not obliged to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. It is however important that clubs recognise that they have a legal duty of care towards members, guests and any other person while these people are in the club's hut. Under common law you have a duty to consider the risks from legionella that may



The new, improved Vagabond MC hut.
And you can stay in it too!
Photo: VMC.



Man at work

The keys were handed over and Mike Bailey worked tirelessly, and mostly alone, for the best part of three years. There were some delays – it's not quite clear whether it was the heavy work on the cottage or the Ogwen guidebook which led to his heart attack! Luckily his recovery was relatively swift. For those three years we were vagabonds in more than name. The Climbers Club saw a vast influx of Vags, keen to benefit from the convenient accommodation in our home turf. We also owe huge thanks to the Ceunant Mountaineering Club for their generosity with beds when we had none, often associated with vast quantities of port and Stilton.

In autumn of 2006, we were returned the keys to a shell, which was warm, dry, insulated and sound. That first weekend we all rushed out to Wales to test the weatherproofing. We slept on the floorboards in the new bunkroom upstairs and the excitement was palpable. It was at this stage that the club really pulled together in a spectacular fashion. A year of work meets followed, all attended by over 20 people: laughing, singing, working, painting, mixing, plastering, carpentering, plumbing, tea making and even doing a bit of climbing.

All worth it

The opening party was pure emotion, and

the recycled gymnasium floor was thoroughly tested as we danced 'til dawn with the doors thrown open – light, music and fireworks pouring down the valley. Members came flooding back, even those who had previously eschewed the cottage as a grim health hazard, and new members were keen to join. It felt like we had a new lease of life; without a functional hut, the Vags were drifting and fading away. There was climbing aplenty going on but no cohesion. Now we are a family again. The hut is occupied every weekend, membership is increasing, beers downed and routes being climbed.

Want to stay in the hut?

If you're lucky enough to live in the Cheshire/Merseyside area you can join the Vagabond MC. If you live elsewhere, but are a member of an 'adult' BMC affiliated club, then you can apply to use the main room. This is available one weekend per month, see www.vagabondmc.com for dates and rates. ■

Fran McNicol is the recruitment officer for Vagabond Mountaineering Club, and has the onerous job of chatting to strangers about climbing wherever she goes. See www.vagabondmc.com.

affect your members or guests and take suitable precautions to control the risks. Check www.thebmc.co.uk/hutnotes for more information.

Q. Can I take my child to a club hut?

A. Yes. Whatever the situation and whoever is in the hut (or on a campsite), if a parent (or adult in loco parentis) is with their child they can decide whether they're satisfied with the arrangements available. There is a very useful document on the BMC website that discusses these issues, see www.thebmc.co.uk/Download.aspx?id=115.

FURTHER INFORMATION

BMC Hut Guidance Notes

If you're involved in running a club hut, then check out the new BMC Hut Guidance Notes.

www.thebmc.co.uk/hutnotes

BMC Club Guidance Notes

If you're involved in running a club, then check out the new BMC Club Guidance Notes.

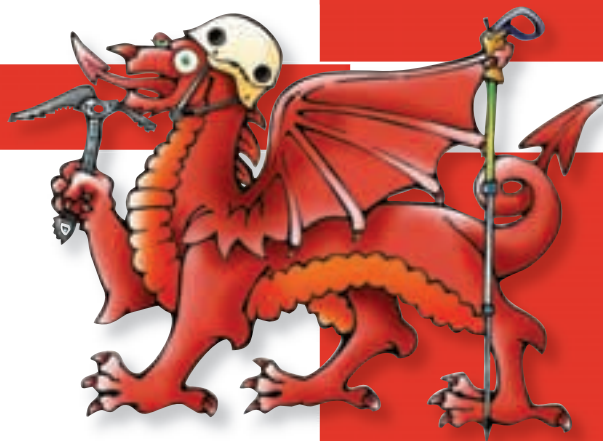
www.thebmc.co.uk/clubnotes

BMC Hut list

Download a list of the club huts in England and Wales.

www.thebmc.co.uk/huts





Musn't Grumble

It can be a slow and frustrating process trying to do things properly. It's easier to sit back and complain – but it's amazing how quickly grumbles can disappear with a bit of knowledge.

When I returned to North Wales four years ago I grumbled: that Craig y Forwyn was still closed, that Tremadog had become overgrown, that the Cromlech approach was falling apart. I grumbled about the BMC and what they were doing about 'it'. But as you get older you suddenly realise that you have to stop grumbling; it's up to you to do something.

So what have BMC Cymru/Wales been up to? Throughout 2008 there were crag clean-ups and/or re-bolting work at Rams Tor, Llanbradach, Mountain Ash, Navigation, Coed Ely, Witches Point, Trebanog and Watch House East. Look out for more this year – or why not organise one yourself with BMC support? Pembroke access has been improved and there are new belay stakes in both Range West and Range East. Craig y Forwyn is also potentially open for business once more - see news for latest details.

2009 should see work begin on a sustainable approach to Dinas Cromlech – an approach which will both be better for climbers and preserve the scree slopes for which the Pass gets its SSSI designation. Professional tree work has just been undertaken at Tremadog, supported by hundreds of hours of volunteer time. Volunteers are the cornerstone of most of our work: liaising with landowners and conservation bodies, re-bolting routes, building paths, keeping information flowing, organising bolt workshops and contributing to guidebooks. Our professional officers have been beavering away too. BMC Access Officer Cath Flitcroft spends a large amount of her time lobbying the Welsh Assembly Government, and her colleague Guy Keating has been central to the Craig y Forwyn access agreement. Volunteers Officer Martin Kocsis is another regular visitor.

Given the growing importance of the Welsh language, the demands of the Welsh Assembly Government and the sheer amount of climbing and hill walking in Wales, I look forward to a time when Welsh volunteers are supported by a full-time BMC Officer in Wales. Hey, and wouldn't a third Access and Conservation Officer (fluent in Welsh and qualified to work across both England and Wales) be a great thing too?

In the meantime are you grumbling or volunteering? If you're grumbling then at least say thanks to those are volunteering. Buy them the odd beer, they'll appreciate it and you'll feel better too. ■

Mike Raine
BMC Wales

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Rhaid imi beidio â grwgnach

Mae ceisio gwneud pethau'n iawn yn gallu bod yn waith ara deg a rhwystredig. Mae'n haws o lawer eistedd yn ôl a grwgnach – ond mae'n rhyfeddol pa mor gyflym y medrith grwgnach ddiflannu efo dipyn bach o wybodaeth.

Pan ddychwelais i Ogledd Cymru bedair mlynedd yn ôl, grwgnach wnes i. Grwgnach am fod Craig y Forwyn yn dal ar gau, grwgnach am fod llwybr Tremadog ar goll dan dyfiant, grwgnach am fod y llwybr i Gromlech yn syrthio'n ddarnau. Mi wnes i rwgnach am BETH ROEDD Cyngor Mynydda Prydain yn ei wneud ynglŷn â'r 'peth.' Ond wrth ichi fynd yn hŷn dach chi'n sylweddoli'n sydyn fod rhaid ichi beidio â grwgnach. Mae'n rhaid i chi wneud rhywbeth.

Felly, beth mae adran Cymru o'r Cyngor Mynydda wedi bod yn neud? Drwy gydol 2009 roedd yna ddigwyddiadau clirio creigiau ac / neu gwaith ail-folltio yn (Rams Tor) Llanbadrach, Aberpennar, Coed Elái, Trwyn y Witch, Trebannog a (Watch House East) Edrychwch am fwy o ddigwyddiadau tebyg eleni, neu beth am drefnu un eich hun gyda chymorth y Cyngor Mynydda. Mae gennym fwy o lefydd dringo yn Sir Benfro bellach ac mae yna hoelion angori newydd yng nghadwyni'r Gorllewin a chadwyni'r Dwyrain. Mae'r Cyngor hefyd wedi gweld Craig y Forwyn yn ail agor ar gyfer Busnes – edrychwch ar y Newyddion Mynediad am y manylion diweddaraf.

Yn ystod y flwyddyn hon dylai gwaith ddechrau ar lunio llwybr cynaladwy i Ddinas Cromlech – bydd hyn yn well ar gyfer dringwyr ac yn fodd i ddiogelu llethrau'r farian, sy'n rhoi statws SSSI i'r Bwlch. Yn Nhremadog mae gwaith coed proffesiynol newydd ddod i ben, gwaith a gefnogwyd gan gannoedd o oriau o wirfoddoli. Mae'n swyddogion proffesiynol wedi bod wrthi'n torri hefyd. Mae Cath Flitcraft, Swyddog Mynediad y Cyngor Mynydda, yn treulio llawer o'i hamser yn lobi'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol, ac mae ei chydweithwyr, Guy Keating, wedi bod yn ganolog i gytundeb mynediad Craig y Forwyn. Mae Martin Kocsis, y Swyddog Gwirfoddoli, yn ymwelydd cyson arall.

Wrth ystyried pwysigrwydd cynyddol yr Iaith Gymraeg, gofynion y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol a phoblogrwydd mynydda a cherdded yng Nghymru, dw i'n edrych ymlaen at amser pan fydd Swyddog Cyngor Mynydda Llawn Amser yng Nghymru er mwyn cefnogi gwirfoddolwyr Cymru. Yn byddai trydydd Swyddog Mynediad a Chadwraeth (sy'n rhugl yn y Gymraeg ac â chymwysterau i weithio yng Nghymru a Lloegr) yn wych?

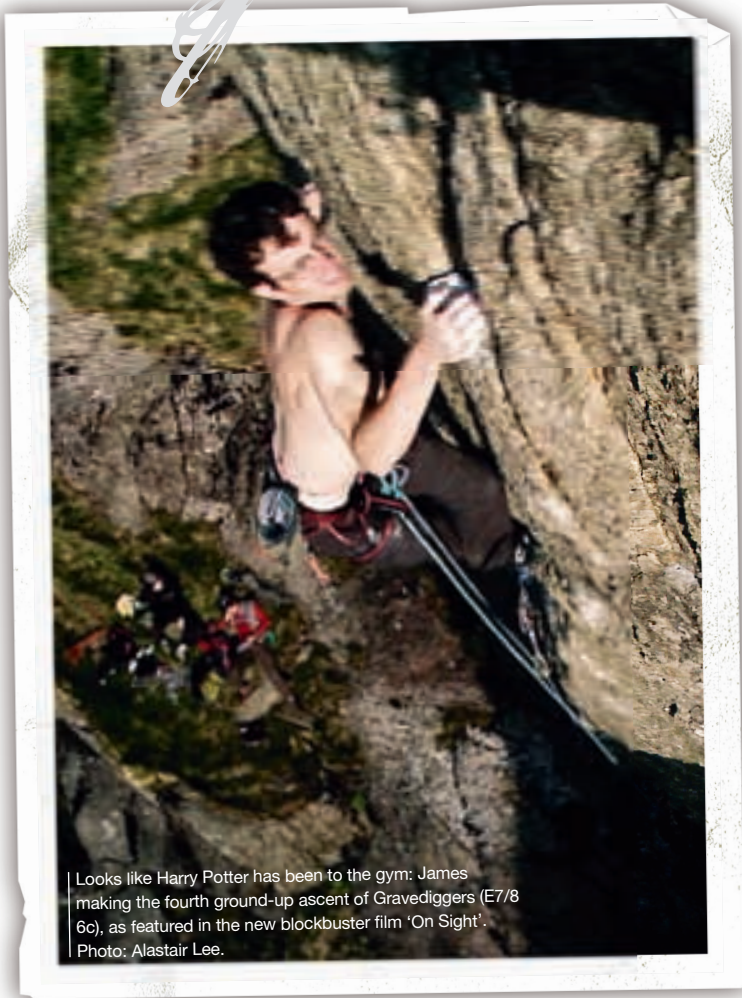
Yn y cyfamser dach chi'n grwgnach neu'n gwirfoddoli? Os dach chi'n grwgnach, ewch at y rheini sydd yn gwirfoddoli a dweud diolch – prynwch beint neu ddau iddyn nhw. Mi fyddan nhw'n gwerthfawrogi hynny, ac mi deimlwch chitha'n well hefyd. ■

Mike Raine
Cyngor Mynydda Prydain, Rhanbarth Cymru.

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Psyche

James McHaffie – Plas y Brenin instructor and unstoppable onsighter – shares his secrets on how to get psyched after the winter.



Looks like Harry Potter has been to the gym: James making the fourth ground-up ascent of Gravediggers (E7/8 6c), as featured in the new blockbuster film 'On Sight'. Photo: Alastair Lee.

*M*y first-ever lead was on Brown Slabs, it didn't go smoothly. I got the lot: sweaty hands, over-gripping, disco legs and runners rattling out. It wasn't the ideal transition from wall to rock, so now at the start of each season I make an effort to avoid repeating that fateful day.

Starting back outside after climbing indoors for months (or not!) can feel a bit jerky. There are some formalities that can help: organise your rack, have ropes you're willing to bungee off, boots that fit well and climb with people that you trust. Now you're ready to push yourself.

Why push yourself at all? It's not like you can't have great days out within your comfort zone, with more chance of a plane crashing into you than becoming unstuck from the rock. But at some point climbs will

"The climbs I was trying weren't leading me into *certain death*, and I realised that a *less lethargic* approach is necessary: you need to be *focused and psyched*."

capture your imagination that require you to step out of this comfort zone, or at least stretch it. This aspect of challenge can add to the experience (sometimes!) and open up new options for climbs and venues.

Any book says that "the best training for climbing is climbing" – that is, the more you put into something, the more you'll get out of it. If this statement holds true then we can also say that the motivation to put in that effort is one of the key factors in pushing your limits. This is where I divulge sad secrets; during the winter months I love looking through guidebooks and making a wish-list. There, I've said it. These goals help keep my motivation up when I'm sick of the cold, chalky climbing walls and damp rock.

I plan my climbing year: I start by climbing indoors in the winter then to outdoor bouldering (it's easier to find dry rock), a little sport climbing to build fitness and then on to trad for the summer. The first few times I'm out I just climb for mileage, doing as many cracking routes as possible on accessible crags. To climb your wish-list routes you'll need strength and confidence. The best place to build strength is indoors, or on the boulders, but confidence is built from mileage, not abortive attempts on something near your limit. I try and have a solid week of climbing in April or May to get my confidence up for the season – this seems to be when the good weather is around.

When I was regularly climbing E3, I had a few climbs that I backed off and appeared to have a real mental block with; they looked intimidating, the holds were hard to find, the gear placements an unknown quantity and the guidebook said bold. I realised that I was lacking 'faith' – that I was going to reach good holds and gear. The climbs I was trying weren't leading me into certain death, and I realised that a less lethargic approach is necessary: you need to be focused and psyched.

I try to place two or three runners together before a hard section. This means I'm much more relaxed and therefore less likely to fall off. And, if I do fall off, the gear is more likely to hold. Before embarking on the crux I always look at exactly where my feet are going to go, check the fallout zone, warn my belayer, take some deep breaths then go for it.

I hate falling off, even on sport routes, but it's better to get used to falling than get into a habit of grabbing draws – just aim for the next hold and tell your belayer to watch you carefully. Never give up. I'm often dismayed at how pumped or broken I feel a small way up a pitch, but if you try really hard you'd be surprised how far beyond the 'pump' you can push it.

If you fall off a route you really wanted to do don't get worked up about it – there are loads more to do. Best of luck, and be careful. ■

Plas y Brenin is the National Mountain Centre based in the heart of Snowdonia – a mecca for rock climbers of all standards. They offer a wide range of coaching and courses to suit every level and aspiration. Visit www.pyb.co.uk.