

summit: 55

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the issue

Mob rule

Head to the pub and make a difference.
Photo: Alex Messenger.

From Plato to the pub – how the BMC democracy preserves your freedom.

Assuming that Plato intended his 'Republic' to be a serious critique of Athenian political thought, the only just form of governance is Callipolis: an aristocracy led by unwilling (but enlightened) thinkers who spend much time contemplating the ethereal world.

Our Greek friend listed four further forms of government from best to worst. Second was timocracy (overvaluing honour); oligarchy (overvaluing wealth) was third; democracy fourth. In this penultimate form, the people take over, electing someone who fulfills their wishes – like more holidays and less tax.

The BMC finds itself in a situation that Plato would recognise. As a membership organisation, we're accountable to 68,000 people. However, most of the time we don't hear from them; people only get in touch if they're unhappy. Grievances are a great motivator for communication, and also for getting the wrong end of the stick and the overuse of rhetoric.

The BMC's version of democracy, Area Meetings, is the Better Way for getting yourself heard. Area Meetings are the only effective way to air your concerns, get local (and then national) support and 'get something done'. For example, the Cymru/

Wales meeting supported the appointment of an Access & Conservation Officer for Wales and, despite initial problems, the post was created and Wales will be much better for it. There is no question that without Mike Raine (of Tremadog Festival fame) and the Cymru/Wales Meeting, this would not have happened.

Personally I've never been one for meetings that achieve nothing and go on for hours: my (and your) personal hell. It's even worse if they're in the evening, when we could all be at home watching telly. It's been my priority to ensure that meetings last under an hour and that there's food and/or entertainment. As a consequence, the gatherings have become more sociable.

Inevitably, I've been accused of dumbing down the meetings – surely important issues need due consideration? I'd say that the converse is true: issues should be explained simply so that everyone can form an opinion. It's a waste of time for a few people to hold meetings to ransom with long words, complex arguments and insider knowledge. After all, little in the climbing and walking world is difficult, it's just the way that it is presented.

One notable proponent of the dark art of quick meetings is the world-famous Lakes chairman Al Phizacklea. He averages a smart 53 minutes (and four swear words) per

meeting. No one is offended, they've run two successful summer festivals and the Lakes Area is jumping. I rest my case.

I started this by being clever and mentioning Plato, but I never got to the final form of government. In democracies, government can end up granting too much freedom, at which point the state slides into the final form: mob rule. Despite what you might read or hear, without the work done by the BMC's regional teams your freedom to walk and climb would be severely curtailed. There are bigger and richer interest groups who'd love to get the whole pie for themselves and to hell with anyone else. If you doubt me, just ask the nearest canoeist. The thin line separating BMC democracy and mob rule by bigger, richer groups is clear enough. The days of waiting for 'someone to do something' are long gone: it's up to you to make a difference.

*Martin Kocsis,
BMC Volunteers' Officer*

Get involved online

Visit www.thebmc.co.uk/localareas for our new Local Area community site. Find up-to-the-minute info on all Local Area meetings, area news, contact your area representatives and much more. ■



WELCOME TO...

ISSUE 55

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.

BMC

177 - 179 Burton Road,
Manchester, M20 2BB
Tel: 0161 445 6111
Fax: 0161 445 4500
office@thebmc.co.uk
www.thebmc.co.uk

President:

Rab Carrington

Chief Executive:

Dave Turnbull

Summit Editor:

Alex Messenger
alex@thebmc.co.uk

EDITORIAL

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PUBLISHING

Group Ad Manager:

Emma Howl 01778 392443
emmahowl@warnersgroup.co.uk

Production:

Development Design
01778 391130
natalier@warnersgroup.co.uk

Graphic Design:

Viv Lane

Ad Design:

Emma Robertson

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Have your say

foreword

It's been a funny old summer: one moment all beautiful blue skies and sunshine, the next blowing a gale and threatening clouds overhead.

I've spent the last few months climbing in the Peak and North Wales – and inevitably this has meant a lot of sitting around sheltering, sipping flasks of tea and chatting with other crag residents.

The conversations often ended up in a common direction: Why doesn't the BMC do something about X? Often the suggestions were exotic – why doesn't the BMC put a roof over Stanage? Why doesn't the BMC kill off all midges? But there were more sensible ideas: suggesting paths improvements, and how neglected trad crags could be brought back to life.

If ambushed at the crag, my reply is generally that I'll take the idea to a BMC Area Meetings. These meetings are the main forum for BMC activity – through them the organisation is directed. These days most Area Meetings are in pubs, with sandwiches, beer and a slideshow; all very agreeable. They can be attended by anyone who has an interest in the outdoors; you don't even have to be a BMC member to attend – although, of course, we'd prefer it if you were.

But now you don't have to wait until you meet me under a dripping overhang to pass on ideas. We've just launched a new Local Areas section of the website – so check out www.thebmc.co.uk/localareas and air your views there. Especially if you've worked out a way to kill off the midges!

Have a great autumn.

Rab Carrington
BMC President

ON THE COVER: Luke Tilley stays focused in the British Lead Climbing Championships at EICA Ratho, Edinburgh. Luke (16), from Nottingham, came third in the Juniors. For more photos from this competition season turn to page 26. Photo: Alex Messenger.

THIS PAGE: Rob Adie getting to grips with Striding Edge on Helvellyn. Ridge scrambling is the ideal autumn activity - turn to page 34 to find out more. Photo: Alex Messenger.

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On top of the world

Great Britain near top of first ascents table, thanks to BMC/MEF funding

James Clapham and Gavin Pike, who received awards from both the BMC and Mount Everest Foundation this year, climbed two major new routes in Alaska. Here James Clapham is on the huge summit cornice of Mt Church after the first ascent of 'Amazing Grace'. | Photo: Gavin Pike.



Ever wondered which nation has bagged the most first ascents? Wonder no more: a list has just been compiled which counts the nationalities behind first ascents of peaks of over 6,400m. Top of the pile was Japan with a score of 225, followed by Britain with a respectable tally of 147. India came third with 103, then Austria (69), Germany (59), Russia (c50), Poland (40), USA (c37), Switzerland (34) and France (30). There are a number of reasons behind our high placing. Britain scores highly in the early exploration of the Himalaya. Shipton's expeditions, for instance, made dozens of ascents of peaks over 6,400m. This has left a legacy, as famous German climber Alex Huber recently noted: "It's a British tradition to go climbing in places where nobody has gone before."

Another significant factor has been the availability of BMC and Mount Everest Foundation grants, made available to expeditions, "visiting remote mountain environments and making first or innovative ascents in good style". Up until 2006 the BMC received a substantial amount of money from UK Sport to help support expeditions – although this has been totally withdrawn in the run-up to the 2012 Olympics. The BMC continues to award grants to expeditions, but on a much reduced scale. See www.thebmc.co.uk/expeditions

Get expedition support

BMC and Mount Everest Foundation (MEF) funding is not just for the elite. If you're planning an exploratory trip then make sure you apply before the deadlines (1st November and 1st March). Also, don't miss the session at Kendal Film Festival (Sunday, 4-6pm, Malt Room) where you can hear from returning expeditions and ask questions on how to apply for expedition grants.

Killer Kendal collection

Sharma, Robert, House, Anker, Steck, Houlding and Glowacz planned for Kendal

Summer is over and the nights are drawing in. Before you know it November will be here once more, bringing the premier event of the outdoor calendar: Kendal Film Festival. This year the organisers and presenting sponsor Berghaus have pulled out the stops to get a fantastic climbing line up: Chris Sharma, Thomas Hornbein, Alain Robert, Steve House, Conrad Anker, Ueli Steck, Stefan Glowacz, Stephan Siegrist, Glen Denny, Andy Parkin, Dave Pickford, Matt Helliker and Jon Bracey.

Plus, Henry Worsley walks in the footsteps of Shackleton, Cameron McNeish previews his latest BBC journey and Eric Robson re-evaluates the Wainwright legacy. Major Phil Packer (the army officer injured in Iraq who climbed El Capitan) will be there, telling his story alongside fellow adventurers Andy Kirkpatrick and Ian Parnell. This year's big hit is sure to be the premiere of The Asgard Project – the latest film from Alastair Lee featuring Leo Houlding big-wall climbing and BASE jumping on Baffin.

The Kendal Film Festival is on 19th-22nd November. Tickets are on sale now – book online or ring 01539 725133. See www.mountainfest.co.uk.

Jones is just the job

Elfyn Jones appointed as first-ever BMC Welsh Access Officer

Elfyn Jones has just taken up the new post of BMC Access and Conservation Officer for Wales. In recent years, the BMC has established good links with the Countryside Council for Wales, other statutory bodies in Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government. Elfyn is extremely well placed to develop these relationships further and help strengthen the BMC's profile.

Elfyn is a first-language Welsh speaker, familiar with Welsh legislation, an experienced climber, and he has plenty of experience of access and conservation issues. For the past ten years he has been the National Trust Property Manager for East Snowdonia. He said: "I'm absolutely thrilled to be given the opportunity to take on this role. I really look forward to starting in my new role in September and getting to know and support the scores of volunteers and local groups who are active across Wales."

Elfyn will work alongside the BMC's Cymru / Wales volunteers and the BMC's two existing BMC Access & Conservation Officers.



Elfyn Jones with Jane Davidson (Environment Minister), Rhodri Morgan (Wales' First Minister) and Dave Turnbull (BMC CEO). Photo: Ray Wood.

IN SHORT

news

Sexy sports

It's official: climbing is sexy. A recent online survey asked 6,000 people which sporting activity would make a member of the opposite sex more attractive. Results revealed that 57% of women found climbing attractive – by far the sexiest sport from a female perspective. In contrast men were most attracted to women into aerobics. No one, it seems, is attracted to golfers.

Nick Estcourt Award

Winners of this year's Nick Estcourt Award of £1,500 are Andy Housman and Nick Bullock. In September they will attempt to make the first ascent of the 1,500m North Face of Chang Himal, 6,500m in the Kangchenjunga region of Nepal.

Meet the BMC

Want to know more about how the BMC works? Interested members and volunteers can pop in to the BMC Office Open Day – from 3pm on Thursday 29th October.

Two tens on top

Jack Harley-Walsh (10) from Ascot has climbed Kilimanjaro. He hopes to become the youngest in the world to climb Mt Meru, Kilimanjaro and Mt Kenya, and is raising funds for Sebastian Action Trust and the Thames Valley air ambulance. Meanwhile Asher Silver (also 10) from Highgate, London is thought to be the youngest climber to summit Mont Blanc.

>>

Stop stampedes

Caution urged around cows



We all know that bulls are bad news, but there has been a recent spate of people being attacked by cows whilst out walking their dog. Few people realise that cows, particularly those protecting newly-born calves, can be dangerous.

You should normally keep your dog on a lead whenever near farm animals. But in these cases that could have led to problems. The cows may have been trying to drive off the dogs to protect their young. So, what can you do in such a situation?

Firstly, think twice about walking through a field of cows and calves, but if you find yourself in a field of 'suddenly wary' cattle then move away as carefully and quietly as possible. If with a dog on lead and feeling threatened, let the dog run free – the dog will outrun the cows. Those without canine companions should do the same: move away calmly, do not panic and make no sudden noises. The cows will normally leave you alone once they establish that you pose no threat.

www.thebmc.co.uk/news

Coastal access continues

As BMC continues to lobby new Coastal Access Bill, new audit shows 34% of coast has no legally secure path

Natural England has recently completed an audit of coastal paths. The results show that 66% of the coast (1,827 miles) is currently served by a satisfactory, legally secure path, while 34% (921 miles) has no satisfactory, legally secure path. It is hoped that this situation will be solved by the new Marine and Coastal Access Bill, which the BMC continues to lobby. The Bill completed its passage through the House of Commons committee stage at the end of July. It will continue to the next stages – of Report and Third Reading – after the summer recess, and may then return to the House of Lords for consideration of amendments made in the Commons. Once both Houses agree to the content, it will proceed to Royal Assent.

Cash boost for clubs

BMC dishes out Sport England funding to BMC-affiliated clubs

The BMC has allocated £23,000 of Sport England funding to a number of BMC affiliated clubs, to help them develop websites and newsletters, buy new equipment, and provide training and instruction for novices. This is the first year this funding has been available – thanks to a successful BMC bid to Sport England for four years of funding. Nick Colton, BMC Deputy CEO said: "We are delighted that the BMC is able to support clubs in this way. We look forward to hearing feedback on how the funding is benefiting the clubs and their members."

IN SHORT

Youth Academy

A climbing club specifically for under 18s is the latest club to affiliate to the BMC. Based at the Foundry Climbing Centre in Sheffield, the Foundry Academy is about tapping into the climbing community and the spirit of Sheffield to develop climbing and support young people into competition.

BMC upland conference

The BMC is planning a new event – the BMC Upland conference. Aimed at land managers and other specialists, it's planned for March 2010 in the Peak District.

Hill Walking in Welsh

A big piece of translation work, part financed by the BMC, has been undertaken by Mountain Leader Training. A Welsh version of their best-selling publication 'Hill walking' was launched at the Eisteddfod in early August.

MIA review

Mountain Leader Training is conducting a review of the Mountaineering Instructor Award (MIA) and is actively seeking feedback and suggestions. All of the eight awards administered by Mountain Leader Training are reviewed periodically, and the next twelve months will see the MIA under the microscope. MLT seeks the views from a broad range of stakeholders including award holders, employers, voluntary organisations and other interested parties. MLT has designed an online survey which is straightforward to complete and will provide a lot of useful information about how the award is perceived and used - see links from www.thebmc.co.uk/miareview.

Personal best at Plas y Brenin

Dame Kelly Holmes leads the way on rock

Dame Kelly Holmes went back to training in August – attending a five-day 'Rock Improver' course at Plas y Brenin, the National Mountain Centre. Double Olympic gold-medal winner Kelly developed a taste for climbing during her days in the armed forces, but only recently found herself with the time to take it further. Highlights of her week included a first



lead and the classic 'Christmas Curry' at Tremadog. Martin Doyle, Plas y Brenin's CEO, commented: "What struck us most was her obvious passion for climbing. I'm sure climbers around the country will be bumping into Kelly for many years." For more information on Kelly Holmes see www.doublegold.co.uk

Angela Smith MP also gets a taste for climbing

Angela Smith, MP for Sheffield Hillsborough, and her husband are also new converts to the thrills of climbing. They were invited to try climbing at Plas y Brenin by the BMC, and on their return to Sheffield went along to The Edge climbing wall for another dose. Angela said: "you never know, you might find us out on the gritstone yet!" Angela is the BMC's representative in Sport England's Parliamentary Sports Fellowship Scheme.

Photo: Kelly Holmes takes the lead. Photo: Dave Cheetham.



Learning to breathe

Andy Cave set for 13-date lecture tour

Andy Cave – internationally acclaimed mountaineer and ex-coal miner – is appearing at 13 venues this autumn, with his gripping lecture show 'Learning to Breathe'. Starting out as a miner in the Grimethorpe colliery, Andy's journey from blackened pits to breathtaking summits is both moving and startling. "An extraordinarily talented climber, with a ready, perceptive wit and natural flair as a storyteller" says Joe Simpson.

See www.speakersfromtheedge.com/news/andy-cave-tour-dates-announced

Rockfall of the Valkyrie

BMC Access Rep cleans up at the Roaches

In early August unstable blocks on Valkyrie Buttress at the Roaches were reported. The Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) asked if the BMC could assess the condition of the rock, so Dave Bishop (BMC Staffordshire Access Rep.) was swiftly dispatched to find out more. A large block appeared to have come off (halfway up the top slab of Valkyrie) and another block was also loose. With the assistance of PDNPA staff on marshalling duties, this was trundled in an impressive fashion. The work has left some dirty rock, but this should clean up with a few ascents and a spot of rain. The climbing has not been significantly affected.

Get laddered

Step up for the BMC leading ladder



Summer is drawing to a close which can mean only one thing: it's time to gear up for the BMC Leading Ladder. Now in its third year, the competition is sticking to last year's winning format – when over 300 climbers took part in regional rounds, leading up to an action-packed national final. The Leading Ladder starts in October and runs at dozens of walls around England and Wales. Special 'Leading Ladder' routes are set at each wall in a series of rounds. Grade difficulty starts at F5+ and each round will have 10 routes ranging from F5+ to F8a. Each round runs for a 16 day period and it costs just £1 to enter a round at each wall. It's a great way of staying motivated and fit over the winter. See www.thebmc.co.uk/ladder for full details

 **SUMMIT SERIES**

Renan Ozturk | Patagonia, Argentina | Crimptastic Hybrid Jacket | Photo: Tim Kemple

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NEVER STOP EXPLORING™

The BMC has a team of three 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

Many thanks to all who took note of the 2009 nesting restrictions – the BMC has not received any reports of nesting birds being disturbed.

White Scar

We are currently still waiting for a decision from the landowners on the proposed one year access trial.

North West

Witches Quarry

Climbers' cars are resulting in access problems at this popular limestone quarry. Climbers are driving up to the quarry to find the limited parking is full, turning around, and driving away to park elsewhere – in front of local residential housing. There is a real threat that access will be lost if this situation is not addressed, so please follow this approach advice:

- Car share if possible.
- Park in the ample layby at the foot of the hill, 500m down the lane towards Downham – it's only a five minute walk to the crag.
- Limited parking (10 cars) is available in the quarry – this should only be used if the large layby is full.
- Under no circumstances should climbers park on the roadside near the entrance gate – this can obstruct farm vehicles and other motorists.

Wales

Slate Quarries

Climbers have reported difficulties in accessing certain parts of the quarry complex. The landowners (First Hydro) are concerned about the number of recent accidents, increasing public access and liability. BMC are in communication with First Hydro on this – check the BMC website for breaking news.

Craig y Forwyn

We are still in the process of attaining property plans for various land parcels around the crag. So if you decide to visit, please take note of advice on the Regional Access Database.

South West

Avon Gorge

Members of the Red Rope Climbing Club recently teamed up with biologists from Bristol Zoo and Bristol Museum to help ring peregrine chicks in the Avon Gorge. The bird population in the Avon area is constantly being surveyed but the biologists had no safe way of getting to the cliff-face nests – until now. The climbers abseiled in and captured the young birds. The chicks were then weighed, measured, ringed and safely returned to the nest. The area's

ringing program has proved immensely valuable over the years; the brightly coloured plastic rings contain large letters/numbers, allowing individual birds to be identified and monitored.

Chudleigh

Poor parking and climbers ignoring the correct approach are straining relations at this popular south Devon crag. Staff from The Rock Centre (who also own half the crag) have been in touch to say that large numbers of

cars are being parked at Rock House, at the Rock Centre and at the Rock Garden Centre, creating a significant problem for the business.

The Rock Centre staff have been friendly towards climbers for many years, and recently installed helpful signs and explained preferred access routes to visitors. However their patience is being tested; it is vital that climbers follow the access and parking advice detailed in the South Devon & Dartmoor guidebook and the Regional Access Database (RAD).

North East

Kyloe Crag

Following on from the tree felling at Back Bowden, Richard Pow (BMC Northumberland Access Rep.) organised another session at Kyloe Crag. The crag was starting to suffer from being shaded-out, so local trees surgeons were employed to fell some of the larger spruce trees in the area. The work has made a big difference – a big thanks to all involved.

Yorkshire

Kilnsey Crag

Kilnsey is very popular at the moment, with significant numbers of climbers parking on the roadside verge below the crag. This creates traffic problems for both local residents and other visitors. The issue has been previously flagged-up by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and the best solution is to use the ample layby (450 meters past the crag on the right near Skiffare Bridge – often with an ice cream van for post-cranking refreshments). Keep an eye open for temporary signs.

Castlebergh Crag

Yorkshire limestone activists recently worked with Settle Town Council to make this crag safe and available to climbers in a unique collaboration. The council have funded the development of this sport cliff and local shops have bought route names. Check out the free topo on the Leeds Wall website. www.theleedswall.co.uk

Peak District

Stoney Middleton

A team of crag activists headed down to Stoney Middleton in July to set about thinning vegetation and clearing access to several climbing areas. The work has been sympathetically done and the crag retains its woodland ambience and remains screened from the road. Thanks to all involved.

Hen Cloud

The BMC is pleased to report that the nesting peregrines successful raised and fledged one chick this year. Gail Bleakley (PDNPA Property Manager) said: "Thanks for your help in ensuring a successful nest this year. We appreciate your support, feedback and advice".

Backdale

Longstone Edge has been given a breath of life: the House of Lords has refused to hear an appeal against the Peak District National Park Authority's enforcement action at Backdale Quarry. The landowner (Bleaklow Industries Ltd) and operator (MMC Midlands Ltd) may still work under the 1952 planning permission, which is primarily for the extraction of fluorspar in veins within the limestone. Only limited amounts of limestone can be taken off site.

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

Your guide to climbing and hill walking in England and Wales

access

Focus On... The Yorkshire Dales Three Peaks Project

The Three Peaks of Yorkshire are legendary: Ingleborough, Pen-y-ghent and Wharfedale. They attract over 250,000 walkers each year – and this has a big impact. In 1986 the area had the most severely eroded footpath network in the UK.

To address this, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) employed various restoration techniques. The work is a success, but doesn't end there.

Q. If the footpaths have been restored, what's the problem?

A. Protecting this area is a costly business, and National Park resources are being stretched to ensure that the footpaths and landscape are protected. The 'Three Peaks Project' has just been launched to provide a continuous source of funding to support the work. One way of doing this will be to enlist the help of charities, organisations, local communities and individuals.

Q. What does that actually mean?

A. The initiative involves enlisting the help of people who visit the Three Peaks, as well as those who live or work there. In addition, the YDNPA will be developing merchandise and building business and community interest in the area. A number of the charities that regularly use the Three Peaks for sponsored events (like

the NSPCC and Heart Research UK) have already volunteered to donate money. Many BMC members will have walked these peaks at some point, so we intend to support the project through the BMC's Access and Conservation Trust (ACT) fund. The details still need finalising, but it's likely to be something practical such as maintaining a section of path.

Q. Sounds great – how can I play a part?

A. Helping to support the work is very straightforward: you just need to keep your BMC membership up to date – it directly funds the Access and Conservation work program and our involvement in these areas. You could also become a member of the proposed 'Friends of the Three Peaks' group to provide more hands-on help, or make a financial contribution to our ACT fund.

More information

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
www.yorkshiredales.org.uk

The Three Peaks Project
 Steve Hastie, Three Peaks Project Manager
 Stonedykes Barn, Stainforth, Settle, BD24 9PB 01729 825242
threepeaksproject@yorkshiredales.org.uk

The BMC's Access and Conservation Trust (ACT) Fund
www.thebmc.co.uk/act
 To make a donation towards The Three Peaks Project phone
 0161 438 3331



Footpath repair as part of the Yorkshire Dales Three Peaks Project.
 Photo: BMC.

www.thebmc.co.uk/news

SUMMIT SERIES

Patagonia, Argentina | Photo: Tim Kemple



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Great Outdoors Superstore, Newcastle Upon Tyne	0191 252 7624
Ld Mountain Centre, Newcastle Upon Tyne	0191 232 3561
Castle Mountain & Moor, Nottingham	0115 941 4059
Snow & Rock, Portsmouth	02392 205388
Snow & Rock, Romford	01708 436400
Snow & Rock, Sheffield	0114 275 1700
Globetrekker Outdoor Kit, St Albans	01727 835777
Ellis Brigham, Tamworth	01827 59047
Snow & Rock, Wirral	0151 328 5500
Gear for Girls, Wooler	01668 283300

NORTHERN IRELAND

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Surf Mountain, Lisburn, Co Antrim	02892 667171

SCOTLAND

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Ellis Brigham, Braehead	0141 885 4700
Graham Tiso, Edinburgh	0131 225 9486
Ellis Brigham, Fort William	01397 706220
Graham Tiso, Glasgow	0141 248 4877
Graham Tiso, Glasgow	0141 559 5450
Craigdon Mountain Sports, Inverness	01463 225996
Craigdon Mountain Sports, Inverurie	01467 625855
Craigdon Mountain Sports, Perth	01738 631006

WALES

V12 Outdoor, Gwynedd	01286 871534
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IRELAND

53 Degrees North, Blanchardstown, Co Dublin	00353 18249156
53 Degrees North, Carrickmines, Co Dublin	00353 18249156
Snow & Rock, Dundrum, Co Dublin	00353 12924700
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Letters

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STAR LETTER

Getting out there

I've been a BMC member for four years, having decided to put something back into adventure after 40 years of playing in the mountains. Well, and also needing some travel insurance! I must admit that I don't usually read Summit but found a few things of interest in the last issue, and also read the letter by Ken Adey (complaining about a lack of provision for older people in the outdoors). Personally I've just found it simpler to go out and do things, often solo. One age-old argument says that we should always be properly prepared and trained for our adventures, but then again, 'you can't teach old dogs new tricks'. If you really want to do something then you're going to do it anyway, and we can make judgement calls based on a wealth of experience. Okay, sometimes we may get it wrong (probably more so as we lose our faculties), but what the hell – I've worked all my life to get time to chase my dreams. Well, that's me. Two more weeks and then I'm off to the Alps. Round the Tour des Combins, to watch the Tour de France go over the Col du Grand St Bernard, then nip round the Tour du St Bernard and then over the Tour du Mont Blanc to Chamonix and home.

Geoff Eldridge

- Well Geoff, it was worth reading Summit – you've just won a rucksack.

One percent

I'm writing to express my opposition to the BMC 'putting some effort into pursuing Olympic status'. Competition climbers represent less than one percent of BMC membership and our interests lie elsewhere. The BMC had one Access Officer in 1975 – but today only two. I would have one for each Area Committee, to deal with access issues and to organise crag cleaning. In my part of the world major crags (such as Goat Crag and Great End Crag) are all reverting to nature and middle grade classics such as 'Bansai Pipeline' are lichen-covered. And with only two Access Officers you cannot maintain effective professional contact with organisations like the National Trust and RSPB.

For the benefit of the cadre of climbers and mountaineers this is where I believe you should focus your effort – not on a small and esoteric branch of the sport which would only get a footnote if Lito Tejada-Flores were updating 'Games Climbers Play'. Olympic sports usually represent an activity that most of the sport practice. But what is the connection between bolt-protected sports climbing and 'A Eliminate' on Dow, Tower Ridge in winter or a lightweight expedition to the Greater Ranges? None. Spend one percent of the BMC money and effort on competitions, but no more. Follow the Olympic road and the access remit which needs boosting will wither – I don't believe you have the power, or the influence, to do both.

Peter Freeman

Ken – go for it

I was disappointed to read the letter by Ken Adey in Summit 54. He seems to blame the rest of the world for his own life. Ken, get out there and go and join your local mountaineering club, rambling group or sports club. Go and join a youth organisation where you can put something back and take others out

into the outdoors; go and phone some of the numbers at the back of Summit and see what courses are being run. The only person stopping you is yourself.

Sarah (surname withheld)

Taking time

I so agree with Ken Adey in Summit 54. I'm now almost 70, but still go trekking in Nepal. I had to wait until I retired to afford the time to accomplish my childhood dreams, but, having no friends with similar aspirations, I travelled alone. I go solo because the organised trips fail to take 'time': arriving in camp two hours after the 'younger' group provides little recovery for the next day. I've no need to rush and can participate in the culture as well as the environment. There must be many 'Bus Pass' instructors out there but I've failed to find them, so I backpack, bothy and trek on my own. The BMC offers insurance for those past retirement age so why don't the skill providers do the same and give us a chance to continue our adventures?

Dr. Barbara C Holl

Catastrophe calling

It was interesting to read David Lawrence's letter in Summit 54, suggesting that we stop flying, however I wonder if people miss the real cause of the environmental catastrophe: a system of running humanity that blatantly puts profit before the welfare of people and the environment. I've travelled and climbed all over the Arctic over the last 20 years. And in recent years, as part of the Arctic Voice Expedition, have interviewed Inuit, scientists and seen for myself the effects of our actions on this fragile environment. The message is simple: there will be no Arctic by the mid part of this century. The story is much the same across the world. We can try and excuse our selfish travel indulgences by claiming that we are somehow helping others – but those areas which need schools and hospitals now soon will be uninhabitable anyway. Sadly I doubt if many people will give up long distance air travel until the sea levels swamp London and our food and water become scarce. By then it will be too late.

Glenn Morris



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Photo: Dave Brown

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Stuff

Blizzard Survival Bags From £22.99

Our brief summer is over, so if you're heading out onto the hills, you need to make sure that you pack some emergency gear. Dan Middleton looks at the pros and cons of bivy and bothy bags on page 66, and explains just how Blizzard Survival Bags work, so we thought we'd nab a few for you lot. The Blizzard Survival Brand has quickly become the new standard wherever thermal performance in a compact package is essential, such as military use, casualty care, personal survival and outdoor activities. There are over ten products in the Blizzard range and three of the most useful are:



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Q. Where is Blizzard Protection Systems' head office based?

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Q. Who started Lowe Alpine?



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Clif Bars: Whole Foods Market, Planet Organic, Snow & Rock
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Online: www.wiggle.co.uk, www.chainreactioncycles.com and www.aktive8.com

Find out more at www.clifbar.co.uk

Win a box of Clif Bars

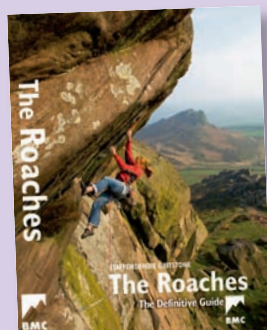
We've got three boxes of Clif Bars to keep you going. Just let us know:

Q. What three flavours do Clif Bars come in?



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£18 (BMC Members)



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It has a completely new set of fantastic action photos, bigger and better photo topos, all new routes and a set of the popular bouldering

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Win a copy of the revamped BMC Staffordshire guide

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Q. What secretive creature may (or may not) still live at the Roaches?

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Don't let injury stop play – we've got ten Ice Bandages to dish out to keep you moving. Just discover:

Q. How long does the Ice Bandage cool your injury for?



Issue 54 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.

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 01/11/09.

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.

Rucksack Guides

£7.99

Most books are great for bedtime reading, but sometimes you just want a quick reference tool to take with you on your adventures – enter the new Rucksack Guide series of skills handbooks. Written by International Mountain Guide Alun Richardson, they offer concise guidance and support in a pocket-sized format. The books are colour-coded for easy reference and all the information is simply presented for quick reference in testing conditions. There are currently three guides in the range:

Alpinism: the Alpine environment, dealing with hazards, altitude and avalanches, technical skills, tips and reminders on the key techniques.

Ski Mountaineering and Snowshoeing: choosing the right skis and how to look after them, finding the best snow, testing for weak spots and crossing crevasses.

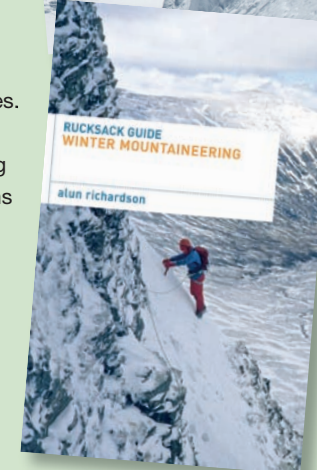
Winter Mountaineering: choosing the right equipment from crampons to ice climbing, emergencies guidance on extreme situations.

All three are out now, and are published by A&C Black. More information at www.acblack.com.

Win a set of Rucksack Guides

We've got three complete sets of Rucksack Guides to get you up to speed. Just guess:

Q. Name a winter hazard beginning with A.



That's me

Shauna Coxsey, 16, Student, Runcorn

Climbing is nothing without new blood coming into it, and over the years that new blood has become younger and younger.

However, when Shauna Coxsey decided she wanted to become a climber, she stood out even by today's standards: she was just three years old. This was made all the more remarkable because – unlike most cranking juniors – she didn't know anyone that climbed.

Under the force of her own will she started climbing at the local wall, soon going down the oft-travelled road of competitions. Gaining experience in her local BMC Youth Climbing Series, she went on to win both the British Junior Bouldering Championships (three years in a row) and the British Junior Lead Climbing Championships (twice)

Stout traditionalists will be relieved to learn that Shauna recently turned her attention to 'outdoor climbing'; with little outdoor experience she soon ticked Raindogs at Malham (one of Britain's best F8as and a lifetime goal for many climbers). Supplement this with super-quick ascents of two V9s (the cutting-edge bouldering grade for British female climbers) and you have a climber who obviously has a long way to grow.

I wanted to climb when I was three. I saw Catherine Destivelle on the Extreme Sports channel, climbing those towers in Africa. When I was four we passed a climbing centre and I read the word 'climbing' – I pestered my dad until he took me there.

I'd rather go training on a Friday night than go to a party. Climbing always comes first – it took a long time for my non-climbing friends to come to terms with that.

Last year I felt myself grow stronger. I spent a year concentrating on training power, while at the same

time my body was physically growing. It's hard to explain, but it felt like a lot of that growth was pure power. I don't think that will ever leave me.

Recently I've got into outdoor climbing and I love it. I started competing when I was seven after climbing for a few years. It was brilliant fun but outdoor climbing is a lot less pressured: you're only doing it for yourself.

I like to know the history of routes. I think it's rude not to, and I get really inspired by the history of outdoor climbs.

I was really motivated by Jerry Moffatt's autobiography. I went to Parisella's Cave in Llandudno and climbed Rockatrocitiy (one of Jerry's original boulder problems in the cave), then did Jerry's Roof in Llanberis Pass. That meant a lot.

I've been trying to get into trad climbing. But it's really hard: most people seem to have regular partners so it's not easy to get hooked up with someone.

Each climbing wall has a community which you can learn from. From the young people all the way up to the older guys who've been climbing for years and know all about the good routes to do. I usually climb with the older guys; it's hard to meet women climbing at the same level.

Climbing has helped me be independent. For a few years at school I was the only person in my year using

public transport, and I was happily jumping on buses and trains all over the country by myself. My dad worries of course, but he trusts me.

I remember the Youth Climbing Series as my best times in competitions. Nowadays I go along to help out as much as I can, setting routes, coaching and chaperoning. It meant so much to me at the time that's good to give something back.





Interview: Niall Grimes. Photo: Alex Messenger.

I do best at the things that I enjoy.

I'm going to college next year to do my A-levels (Psychology, Photography, Biology and PE). These aren't aiming towards getting into University; they're just the subjects I enjoy. And besides, I'm not sure that I want to go to university – all I can think of doing at the minute is climbing.

My family have always been a great support.

After my dad was taught how

to belay he'd always come to the wall with me. I live with my two grown-up sisters and if I'm ever in a competition in this country they always come along to support me. They're the ones who are always whooping and cheering at the back. They're really, really loud; everyone knows they're my sisters.

Runcorn's not the best place in the world. But I spend so much time climbing around the country that it

doesn't really matter too much. It's funny, I get called a Scouser nearly everywhere I go – apart from Liverpool, where they really are Scousers!

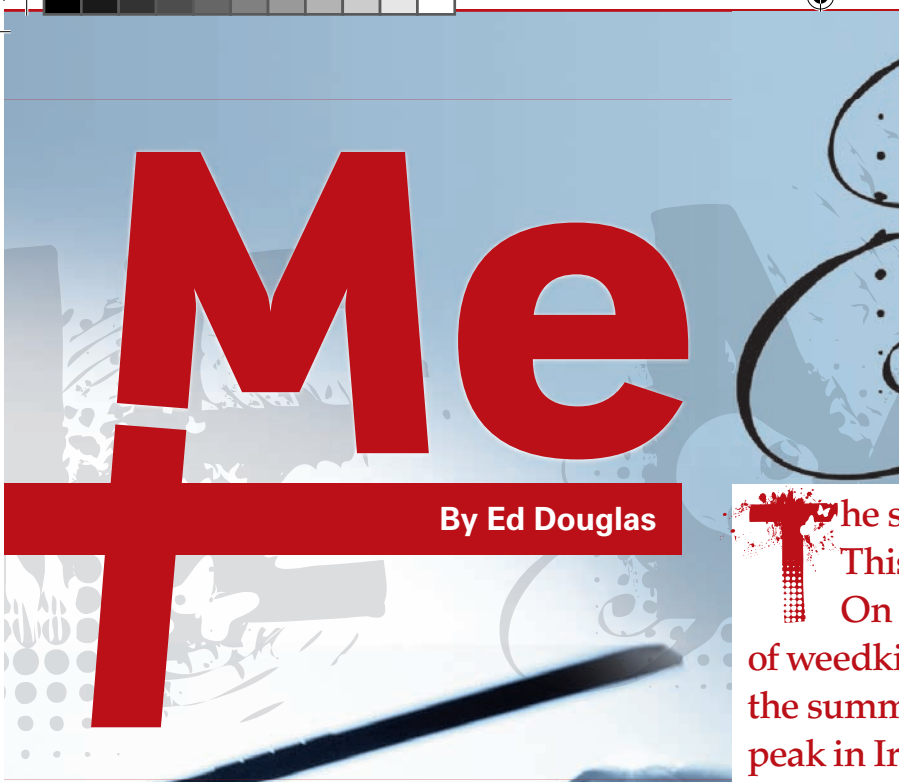
People often ask me what the point of climbing is. But I don't know, what is the point of climbing? All I know is that I can't imagine life without it. ■

Rescue

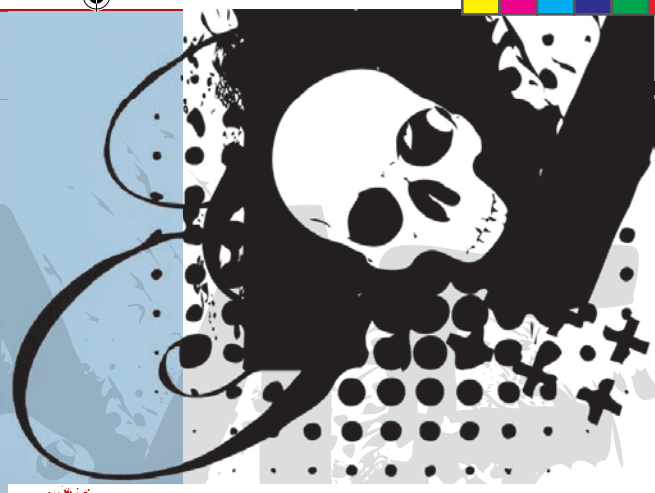
The long-standing motto of the mountains – of self-reliance and responsibility – is taking a battering: from a modern society demanding instant gratification. And, as mountain rescue call-outs surge, do all the signs point towards an end of freedom?



Llanberis Mountain Rescue
Team in action.
Photo: Mark Reeves.



By Ed Douglas



The skull and crossbones?
This is not what I was expecting. On a pirate ship, yes. Or a bottle of weedkiller. But on a sign nailed to the summit of Carrauntoohil, highest peak in Ireland?



I climb down towards it for a better view through the shreds of mist blowing over the top of the mountain. Next to the skull and crossbones are the words: 'Turn Back Now'. The sign has been put there by the Kerry Mountain Rescue Team. Naturally, I walk straight past it to see what all the fuss is about.

Like I said, the summit is shrouded in fairly thick cloud so it's difficult to make out what's going on. But the wind is tearing occasional strips of visibility below my feet and eventually I glimpse further down the steep slope and make out a faint path. It leads off into the mist in the direction I more or less want to go.

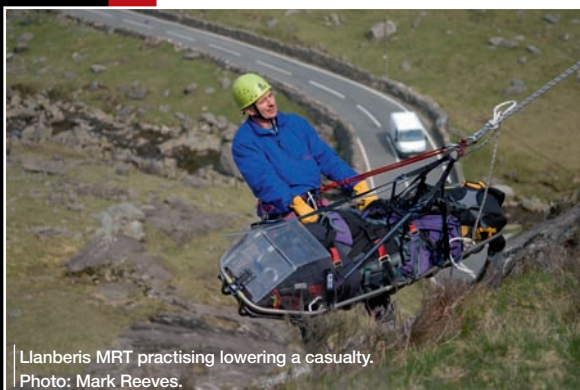
Now, here was a conundrum. What did the sign mean? Because there's a lot more to the phrase 'Turn Back Now' than meets the eye. It can be a warning. But for some of us, it holds the prospect of excitement. It indicates just the sort of place we wish to seek out. It's not an instruction. It's a delicious promise. For others, it's simply annoying to be told what to do in the mountains. Those fellows would rather make their own decisions, thank you very much.

My honest reaction is this: there's a path down there, so the sign has probably been placed to dissuade the inexperienced from following it, but in fact there is almost certainly a heavenly section of scrambling that will offset the current teeth-grinding boredom of slogging along an easy track.

So what did I do? I admit I was tempted. But there were a few hurdles in my way. Like my children, who were happily munching sandwiches

"In the past, rescue was a last resort. Now people who feel cold or disoriented are straight on the phone seeking help."

www.thebmc.co.uk



Llanberis MRT practising lowering a casualty. Photo: Mark Reeves.



A helicopter rescue for a helicopter (after it failed to start on the ground). Photo: Mark Reeves.



underneath the huge lightning conductor shaped like a cross on the summit. They tend to cut up rough if I take them past signs that say: 'Turn Back Now'. Kids today, eh? No enthusiasm.

Anyway, the weather was crapping out, I had a large cake at home and the dog was starting to look gloomy so we bailed down the way we'd come, back over the summit of Caher, rather than complete the horseshoe via Beenkeragh and Skregmore as I had planned that morning. The highlight of the day? Feeding the dog toffee popcorn when she started to get tired.

Better than Dexedrine. It was like she was a puppy again.

When I got home I looked up the website of the Kerry Mountain Rescue Team and came across this advice: "ESSENTIAL SAFETY INFORMATION FOR CARRAUNTOOHIL. KMRT would like to alert all walkers to an extremely dangerous situation, which exists on Carrauntoohil at present. As many people know, the summit is surrounded on three sides by very steep ground, and has always required careful navigation to locate the correct route in descent, particularly in poor weather.

This situation has been exacerbated in recent times by the fact that a visible "false" track has now developed leading from the summit directly towards dangerous ground."

That would be my false track, I thought. Oops. There was the usual chat about maps and compasses – yaddah yaddah – and the advice concluded by suggesting I use 'extreme caution' when navigating from the summit, particularly when visibility is poor. 'It should be noted that there are no safe descent routes anywhere to the N, NE, E or SE of the summit.'

Of course, there are no entirely safe descent routes from any mountain. But that kind of broad philosophical point isn't much use to mountain rescue teams. I imagine they find returning to the same places again and again to attend incidents that happen for more or less the same reasons to be tedious. Like Groundhog Day, but harder work and no prospect of coping off with Andie MacDowell.

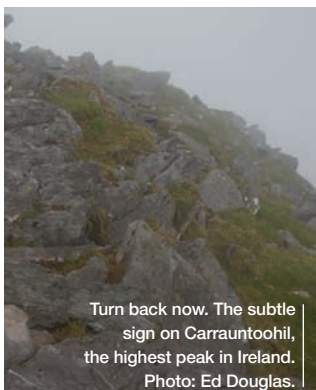
In early August, that sense of déjà vu took a bizarre twist. The Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team were called out to an incident below Broad Stand, the awkward steep scramble that offers a direct route between Scafell and Scafell Pike. Broad Stand is the granddaddy of that local news staple, the notorious accident black spot.

A 32-year-old man from Penrith had fallen 80ft. Rescuers had only been on the scene for a couple of minutes when they heard a shout from above. A second man, from Manchester and completely unrelated to the first victim, was falling towards them. One of the rescuers attempted to break his fall, but the second man injured his arm. Both victims were flown in the same helicopter to hospital.

Like the MRT in Kerry, Wasdale MRT has highlighted three locations where accidents happen routinely. Unlike Kerry, they haven't put up a sign. In fact, the team removed some notorious and badly placed bolts drilled by persons unknown, partly because they were



Make sure this doesn't happen to you! Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team in action, practicing a casualty winch. Photo: Mark Reeves.



Turn back now. The subtle sign on Carrauntoohil, the highest peak in Ireland. Photo: Ed Douglas.



An Edale Mountain Rescue landrover. Photo: BMC.

dangerous but also because bolts in Broad Stand don't sit well with British outdoor ethics, which places a lot of emphasis on self-reliance.

In many European countries, Broad Stand probably would have bolts safeguarding the difficult vertical section made famous by Samuel Coleridge, who wrote about descending it in 1802. Equally, some mountains in Europe are smothered in all kinds of signs to warn and guide hikers and climbers. Many of us find this frustrating, but presumably people from those countries wonder at what the authorities are up to here, relying on the public's sense of responsibility in this way.

Each to his or her own, you might think. On another mountain in Ireland, Brandon, there is an unsightly line of poles leading up the mountain's gentle western slope in a straight line to guide pilgrims to the summit. Few of those pilgrims care two hoots about self-reliance or the integrity of mountain sports. They want a physical challenge in a beautiful place as an expression of faith. And who are we to tell them they're wrong? The same argument holds for charity challenge walkers. If bolts on Broad Stand allow them to raise money for good causes more safely than that's good, isn't it?

Charity walkers and inexperienced youth groups are on Richard Warren's mind when I call him. Warren is chairman of the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSMRA), the umbrella organisation for the region's 12 MRTs. Charity challenge walkers, like those dubbed 'three-peakers' who tick off Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon in 24hrs, are regular clients of the busiest MRTs – essentially those in the Lakes, North Wales and the Highlands of Scotland. (There's an interesting parallel here with the situation on Kilimanjaro in Tanzania where inexperienced charity trekkers are putting intense pressure on local rescue services. Around three per cent of

trekkers on Kilimanjaro require some kind of rescue.)

Warren is also concerned about the increasing number of young adult groups supervised by inexperienced leaders who call out the mountain rescue for situations where they should be able to cope on their own. Frequently this means finding people who have got lost through poor navigation skills. He is reluctant to point the finger. 'Once a rescuer starts publicly judging groups there's a problem,' he says. MRTs prefer to leave any official criticism to come from the police.

But the problem of inexperienced walkers getting into trouble, however, has become a burning issue for MRTs all over the UK for one simple reason: the increase in call-outs. Warren says that until recently the total number of incidents on his patch was around 400, which was just about manageable. In the last few years, however, the number has started growing by around 10 per cent a year. That's putting added strain on the volunteers who run the service.

This year, Warren fears that the total number of rescues involving Lake District MRTs will cross the 500 mark. Keswick MRT has already done 100 call-outs this year and Wasdale is not far behind on 90. It's the same all over the country. Scottish mountain rescue recorded 387 outdoor recreation call-outs in 2008. That's a rise of 16 percent on 2007. When I ask him if MRTs in the Lakes are in a state of crisis, Warren says, "it's approaching that stage".

Like many in the voluntary rescue sector, Warren says Lakes MRTs have tried to improve public education through the media, but with only mixed results. That's hardly surprising. There's an expectation, particularly among younger consumers, that someone will offer a service to meet your needs as they arise. You can Google the closest pizza joint on your shiny iPhone as soon as you're hungry. And there's any number of snazzy adventure tourism



Bowdale Pennine MRT performing a rescue. Photo: Bowdale MRT.

"In many European countries, Broad Stand probably would have bolts safeguarding the difficult vertical section"

outfits eager to take you on the trip of a lifetime. Why wait? What's with this long apprenticeship? What's with these inconvenient mountains?

In the past, rescue was a last resort. Now people who feel cold or disoriented are straight on the phone seeking help. For years government has been telling us we're clients of a public sector, which delivers services. Added to that, many members of the public believe mountain rescue to be an extension of tax-funded emergency services. Climbers and hill walkers know they are volunteers, but many hill-users these days don't have any connection with the outdoor world.

In his recently published memoir, Cairngorm MRT veteran John Allen gives a hilarious example of how things have changed in his long career. A teacher, lost in mist with 39 London schoolchildren on the benign slopes of Meall a'Bhuachaille, calls for rescue. The teacher demands a helicopter. There's a polite but determined exchange of views. Does the teacher have a map? Not really. But then the mist lifts, revealing the easy path down. Now they are not lost, but they are frightened and they still want rescuing.

Finally, some of the team set out for Meall a'Bhuachaille to lead the schoolgirls off only to discover that they've got bored waiting and have come down anyway. "What kept you?" quips one of the girls



If call-outs continue to rise, will Mountain Rescue be able to remain a voluntary organisation?
Photo: Bowland Pennine MRT.

as the two parties meet. That's quite a cultural gulf to overcome.

More cynically, others who have survived a sufficiently dramatic ordeal see it as axiomatic that they will sell their story to anyone who will pay. Inevitably, one or two others have pushed that to its logical conclusion and gone out with the intention of getting 'lost' to earn themselves some easy money. John Allen recalls this happening on his patch, but successfully heads off the conspirator before he can collect.

The admirable principle of climbers and hill walkers voluntarily looking after their own that underpins the modern mountain rescue service seems horribly frail against a rising tide of increasing call-outs and a less grateful society. Richard Warren believes that people going into the hills should take responsibility for their own safety. It's an

old-fashioned message of self-reliance and respect over instant gratification. But how can it be achieved?

As a longstanding member of the Llanberis MRT, Mal Creasey is well aware of the problems Richard Warren and his colleagues are facing in the Lake District. Like the incidents on Broad Stand this summer, there were two accidents in the same place last winter on Snowdon, which resulted in two fatalities. And while signposts on accident black spots are a vague threat in the Lakes, local climbers, including Mike Raine of the BMC, had to fight hard to head off a proposal from Gwynedd police to put up warning notices on Snowdon.

Creasey's day job, however, is development officer at Mountain Leader Training England. "It's our job to write the syllabus for trainee mountain leaders and much of the emphasis is on people taking responsibility for themselves. Self-reliance is a fundamental part of it." The problem, as Creasey acknowledges, is that those who would most benefit from MLTE's considerable expertise and deep experience don't even know what they don't know.

There are several ironies in this troubling situation. First, despite the surge in call-outs, climbing and hill walking have become safer. It's simply that so many more people are visiting the hills. Second, MRTs are reluctant to criticise individuals or groups by name because they know we all make mistakes. But identifying the incompetent, particularly when it comes to school groups, may be the only way of bringing attention to a

problem that has to be solved.

Rescuers and instructors alike have all grown up believing in the freedom of the hills. That means being free to get things wrong as well as right. Almost all of us carry in our heads a little flashing sign that says: 'Turn Back Now'. That's why we don't need them plastering the hills. We don't always obey, but that's part of the attraction. Most of us would also agree that with the right skills properly learned, you don't need bolts on Broad Stand. Managing our own safety has to be one of the most satisfying aspects of what we do and fixed gear is someone else's idea of our safety.

How mountain rescue teams and training boards get that message across to the widely disparate groups visiting the hills is critical. We can't go on putting more and more pressure on a voluntary mountain rescue service without something giving way. If call-outs continue to rise, then the strain on individual MRT members and their families will discourage others from volunteering.

It's almost 40 years since the Cairngorm tragedy when six schoolchildren died in a blizzard. If something similar happened today, the media response to it would be crushing. The police and the government would feel compelled to act, and be seen by the media to be acting. And that would result in much more than a few signs disfiguring the landscape. ■

Ed Douglas is a freelance journalist specialising in climbing and mountaineering.

MORE INFORMATION

Mountain Rescue

The national co-ordinating body for volunteer search and rescue teams in England and Wales. Find out information about their activities, training, facilities and more.

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High Performance, Low Impact





Ned Feehally defending his title successfully in the 2009 British Bouldering Championships. As current British Champion the pressure was on Ned: "After accidentally winning in 2008 I felt like people expected me to do well again - I don't like pressure! But after qualifying for the finals with a pretty good score I felt much more relaxed. I was feeling strong and I couldn't wait to start climbing again. It ended up being very, very close but I snatched victory from the jaws of defeat."



David Mason pulling hard on problem two in the qualifiers. David just missed out on the final but did secure himself a place on the British Bouldering Squad for 2010.

INFOCUS

The British Bouldering Championships, Cliffhanger, Sheffield

All photos: Alex Messenger / BMC.

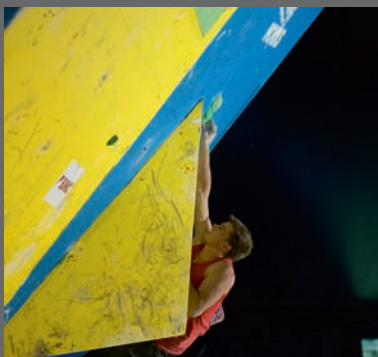
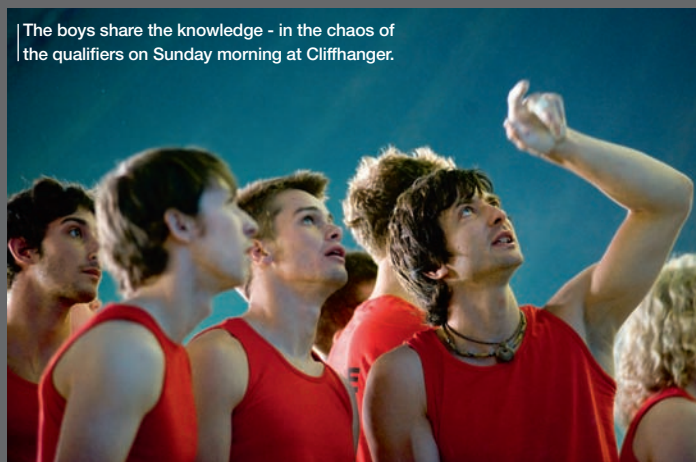
That 'barbeque summer' never did materialise so this year's hottest action has all been indoors – first at the British Bouldering Championships (at Cliffhanger in Sheffield) and then the British Lead Climbing Championships (at Ratho in Edinburgh).

Both events went down a storm (just like the weather) with our strongest climbers battling it out on dastardly plastic creations. The British

Bouldering Championships saw a huge crowd of spectators, yet some people don't think of competition climbing as having much in common with 'real' climbing. But give it a few more summers like this and that'll soon change – an island as damp as this needs all the climbing it can get – plastic or not.

Anyway, enough words, here's an eight-page photo special. Hopefully it'll inspire you to get strong despite the weather – we hear the forecast is great for the winter.

The boys share the knowledge - in the chaos of the qualifiers on Sunday morning at Cliffhanger.

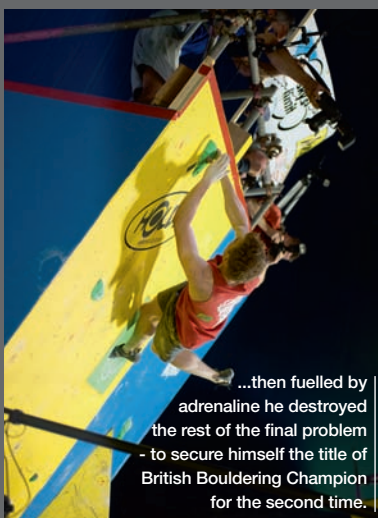


The difference between winning and coming second. Dave Barrans just missing the crux hold on the last problem in the final.

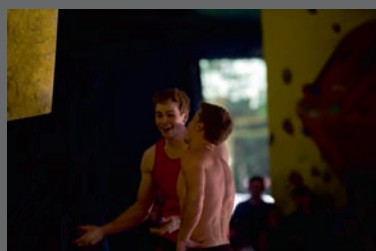
Dave had just returned from securing himself a bronze medal at the World Championships in China. He might have been jetlagged - or maybe just too short?



No trouble for Ned. Ned Fehally latching the same hold - Ned had just enough left in the tank to catch the hold...



...then fuelled by adrenaline he destroyed the rest of the final problem - to secure himself the title of British Bouldering Champion for the second time.



Dave and Ned discuss the final moves minutes after Ned topped the problem ahead of Dave. What a final!



Gareth Parry (previous British Bouldering and Lead Climbing Champion) uses his experience and wisdom to crank his way into third place in the finals.



Katy Whittaker in action on one of the final's problems - demonstrating that the boys' brute strength could be replaced with grace and flexibility.



Visiting American Skyler Weeks sets another new World Dyno Record. Skyler has visited Cliffhanger every year and each time set a new world record in the sport - this time of 2.825m.

BBC RESULTS

Female Juniors

- | | |
|----|---------------|
| 1. | Shauna Coxsey |
| 2. | Kitty Wallace |
| 3. | Suzie Zitter |

Male Juniors

- | | |
|----|-------------------|
| 1. | Jonathan Stocking |
| 2. | Jonathan Field |
| 3. | Nathan Phillips |

Female Senior

- | | |
|----|----------------|
| 1. | Leah Crane |
| 2. | Katy Whittaker |
| 3. | Diane Merrick |

Male Senior

- | | |
|----|--------------|
| 1. | Ned Feehally |
| 2. | Dave Barrans |
| 3. | Gaz Parry |

Full report and results at www.thebmc.co.uk/comps



in focus ◀

Above - Leah Crane pressing out a move in the senior qualifiers. Leah - who is a long-standing member of the Bouldering Team - was given some serious competition from Katy Whittaker, but a cool head saw her bag victory for the first time: "Due to my own mistakes, the past two years of the BBCs weren't the best for me. So I was totally psyched to win and finally become Champion. I guess all the hard work finally paid off!"

Left - Jonathan Stocking cruises his way towards his second straight victory in the Junior Bouldering Championships. Jonathan is a name to watch out for. He has won the Junior Lead Climbing Championships three years running, and last year came fourth at the World Championships in Sydney.

Right - Mina Leslie-Wujastyk gets horizontal in the final of the BBC. Mina is another long-standing member of the British Bouldering Team.

Below - Shauna Coxsey on the last problem in the junior finals. Shauna went on to top the problem and successfully defend her title as Junior British Bouldering Champion for the third year running.





► in focus

Glasgow-based Natalie Berry making a tricky clip in the qualifiers. Natalie was competing in the senior category for the first time - which she won. Afterward she said: "Winning the BLCCs was fantastic. To win such an event is great in itself, yet to win in front of a home crowd is the icing on the cake! I felt well prepared after training specifically on the new competition wall at Ratho. So despite some setbacks - such as an operation, a four-week break from training and final school exams - I still managed to achieve my goal of becoming British Champion."



INFOCUS



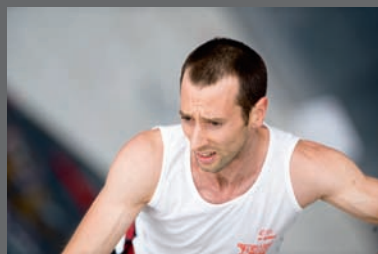
Michaela Tracy in the qualifiers. London-based Michaela has recently moved to Sheffield to concentrate on her climbing full-time. She will be back at Ratho in September to compete in the European Youth Series - the first international competition to be held in the UK since 2004.



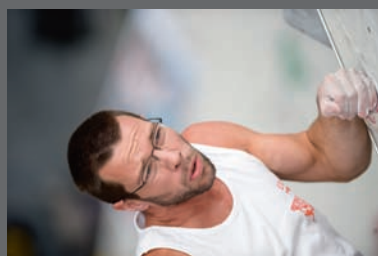


in focus ◀

Edward Barbour, over from Belfast, seen here on his first qualifying route.



Left: (Clockwise) Drew Haigh, Stephen Glennie, Gaz Parry and Natalie Berry.



The British Lead Climbing Championships, Ratho, Edinburgh

All photos: Alex Messenger / BMC.

Rebecca Hall making a swift exit high in the womens' final. Rebecca was also competing in the senior category for the first time.

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Summit - Autumn | 29



in focus

Michaela Tracy showing some great style in the womens' final. Michaela is an experienced international competitor - she competed on the junior team for several years - and needed all her skills to tackle the super-steep new Entre-Prises wall.



IN FOCUS



Left: Natalie Berry upside-down and on her way to winning the senior female final.

Below left: Drew Haigh lowering off after clipping the chains on the final route to take the win! This is the first time Drew has won the British Lead Climbing Championships; he came second in the BMC Leading Ladder earlier this year.

Below: A climber moving into the horizontal roof of EICA's new competition wall.



BLCC RESULTS:

Female Juniors

1.	Kitty Wallace
2.	Shauna Coxsey
3.	Suzie Zitter

Male Juniors

1.	Jonathan Stocking
2.	Alon Gurman
3.	Luke Tilley

Male Veterans

1.	Mike Smith
2.	Eddie Cooper
3.	Nick Colton

Female Senior

1.	Natalie Berry
2.	Michaela Tracy
3.	Rebecca Hall

Male Senior

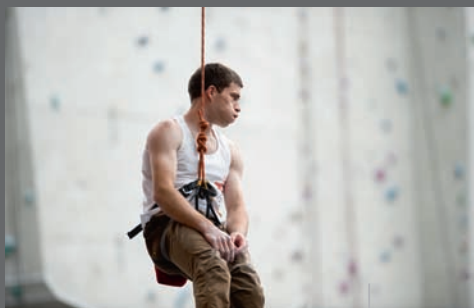
1.	Drew Haigh
2.	James Garden
3.	Adrian Baxter

Full report and results at www.thebmc.co.uk/comps



James Garden in the mens' final. James got to within one move of the top before his arms gave out, bagging him second place.

Alan Cassidy psyching himself up for his final route. Alan recently stepped down from the senior lead team to concentrate on his outdoor climbing.



Above: Alan Cassidy lowering off after being ejected from the relentless new articulated wall.

Above left: The senior female competitors congratulate Natalie Berry as she reaches the ground after winning.

Left: The competitors are given six minutes to observe the routes before going off to isolation. They can only tell how well their competitors are doing by the roar of the crowd.



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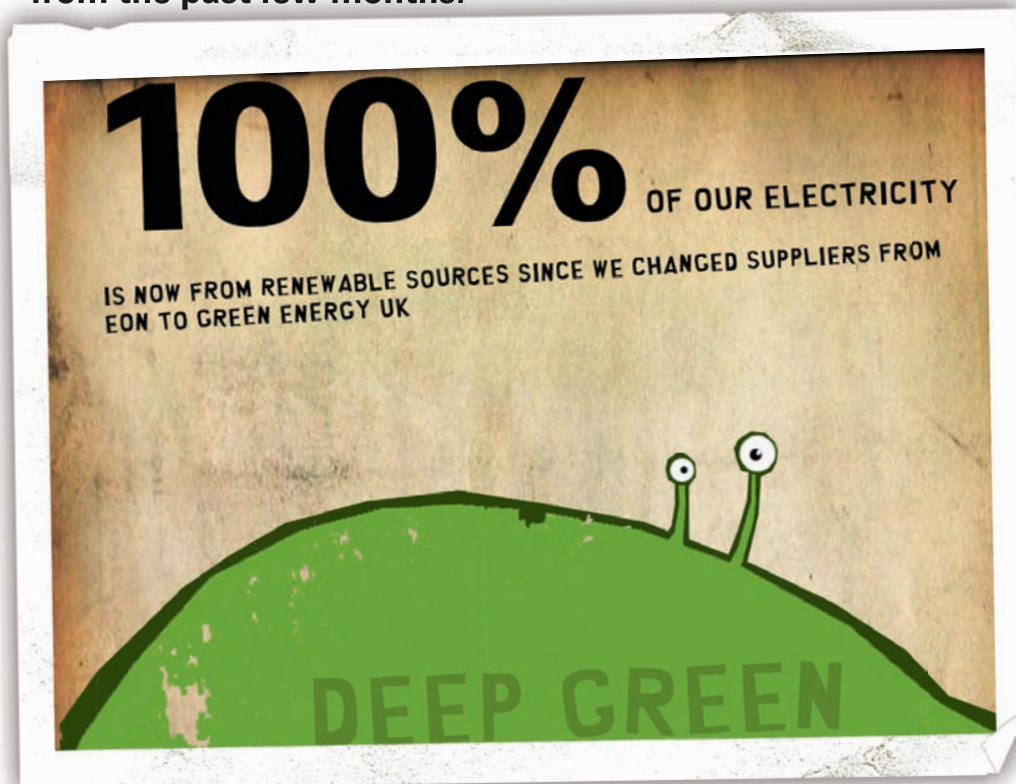
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GREEN NEWS

Zara Maung rounds up the UK's green climbing antics from the past few months.



One of the postcards explaining the changes at the Castle Climbing Centre. Illustration: Ray Eckerman.

Climbing clubs go green

Ecofever is catching in the climbing community! A couple of months ago I set up www.ecoclimber.com – the liftshare site for climbers. Ecoclimber's now got over 150 members but there are thousands of potential liftsharers out there – so please sign up and post a lift wanted / offered when you next go climbing!

Castle shows commitment

You may have read in my previous column that London's Castle Climbing Centre is looking to go energy self-sufficient and send zero waste to landfill. Well, in May the centre held an eco-festival to promote its new environmental policy – signed by the board of directors and the core management team, it sets out the centre's waste, energy and greener purchasing targets for the years ahead.

Some of the changes we've already seen include bins sprouting up all over the place for recycling food and material waste, as well as a bottled water boycott in the café (climbers are asked to buy a reusable flask and fill up their water bottles for free from the tap). Other schemes in the pipeline include setting up on-site renewable energy facilities, water collection and recycling and planting an organic veg garden in the backyard to supply the café. The staff seem really keen to keep up the good work. Well done guys!

Brixton climbers get into training

Eco-conscious climbing groups have been getting in touch, wowing us with their determination to share transport or ditch the car altogether. Brixton Climbers' Club is one shining example: with members taking trains around the country to climb and even bringing their bikes along to cycle the final stretch to the crag. One of their more adventurous trips this year was from London to Skye. Here's their account of the journey to inspire you (which seems to focus mainly on drinking – one of the perks of taking the train I guess!).

Saturday: leave Peckham @ 11:30am for a train departure from London Euston 12:30pm. Arrive Glasgow 4.5 hours later. Go for pint. Glasgow to Mallaig train via Fort William (5hr). Stunning views. Arrive Mallaig just before midnight. Stay in a hostel.

Sunday: First ferry (8am) Mallaig – Armadale, half an hour. Immediate link up with a bus to Broadford, half an hour. Enough time for a fried breakfast in a cafe, then another bus to Sligachan, half an hour. Hitchhike from Sligachan to Glen Brittle campsite, around 15 miles – took about half an hour to get the lift then another half hour in the car.

Rest of week: Camp and climb in Glen Brittle for the best part of a week, stocking up

at the shop for things we couldn't carry. Sadly no beers to be found.

Thursday: hitch back to Sligachan, again taking about half an hour to get a lift. Climb more there.

Saturday: 7:30am bus to Armadale (1hr), linking directly to a ferry to Mallaig. Enough time for another fried breakfast, then the 10am train to Glasgow (5hr). Time for a pint, then train to London (5hr). Tube across town then train to Peckham, arriving home 11pm, tired but happy.

The intrepid Brixton climbers have also conquered other destinations using a train and bike combo. These include the Ecrins, Cadair Idris, Borrowdale, Swanage, Cairngorms, the Ben, Pembroke, and "obscure southern sandstone crags". Read more about their adventures at: brixtonclimbersclub.blogspot.com.

BUMS on seats

The brilliantly named 'BUMS' (Bangor University Mountaineering Society) is teaming up with Ecoclimber.com in September, to raise awareness about climbing and environmental responsibility amongst its club members. The aim is to get as many 'bums on seats' as possible in carshares and on local public transport.

York climbers bike meets

A recent BMC article followed the decline of the traditional climbing clubs and their inability to attract the masses of young climbers who inhabit the climbing walls and outdoor forums. Yorkclimbers.ning.com think they have discovered the antidote: in just over six months the York Climbers internet forum has eclipsed all the local traditional climbing clubs in membership take-up, scope, quality and frequency of events. The group appeals to people of all ages and abilities and organises informal gatherings during the week and at weekends. The York Climbers also bike to meeting points in and around the city to share lifts to the crag.

If your climbing centre or club is trying to cut its carbon footprint then please email ecoclimber@googlemail.com to tell us all about it and get some publicity.



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**Stoney tightropes slung between peaks,
gap-toothed like ancient jawbones,
chiselled crests spearing up out of
sea surge or corrie shadow –
these are the stuff of climbing dreams.**

There's something special about ridges. When rock, sky and climber meet a sort of spell is woven, an experience that blends vastness with detail, mind-cleansing space with up-close climbing intricacy. Mountaineers with an eye for bold forms and beautiful backdrops are drawn to the edges, where some of the most rewarding routes in the British Isles are waiting.

Seen from a distance the compelling simplicity of an arete unfailingly draws the attention. You can't help

scaling it in your mind's eye before even leaving the valley, picturing yourself grappling with pinnacles and tiptoeing along knife edges. The irresistibility of mountain ridges was felt too by climbing's pioneers; the most prominent of our ridges were explored in the sport's infant days, and have a rich traditional heritage built over decades of ascents.

On such venerable classics old fashioned mountaineering challenges like route finding, exposure and weather – rather than technical prowess – come to the fore. In

contrast to cragging the moves matter rather less than the overall feel, the sense that we're having an adventure in a high, wild place. Climbing ridges is as much an aesthetic experience as a physical exercise.

What is a ridge anyway?

Some span the empty air between summits; others buttress the flanks of craggy cwms or sea cliffs. Wherever it may be, if it's longer than it is wide, with a defined crest and steep sides, then it is unquestionably a ridge.



scrambling ◀



Andy Higginson, Crib Goch. Photo: Alex Messenger. |

RIDING

By Dan Bailey

Grades and difficulty

When is a 'scramble' really a 'climb'? How long is a piece of rope? Trying to draw a firm line between scrambling and rock climbing would be futile. Yet convention suggests we do just that. Perhaps this is because two independent grading systems have evolved, one for scramblers and the other for climbers. The fuzzy area in which these grades merge is a place of confusion. But really, what's the difference?

Both scrambling and climbing involve using your hands (feet, chin, dogged determination and the rest) to move over steep ground from which it would be undesirable to fall. Both can be incorporated into a long day in the hills. You might think that scrambles don't require a rope, but some certainly do. And although climbing is generally seen as something that's done with strings attached, climbers are often happy to go rope-free. The key difference lies in the degree of difficulty, which is surely a matter for each individual, and so this article makes no fundamental distinction between scrambles and climbs.

Nevertheless it's helpful to abide by the conventional grades. With a little fine tuning the confusing mess can be incorporated into one complete system. In my new book the obsolete climbing grade Easy has been superseded and

subdivided into scrambling grades 1 to 3. After this come the conventional climbing grades Moderate, Difficult and so on. The weird and confusing 3S classification (sometimes employed in scrambling guidebooks) has been abandoned, because it overlaps with the climbing grade Moderate.

Grade 1: where hill walking becomes really interesting. Classic examples include the traverse of Crib Goch and Blencathra's Sharp Edge, routes that walkers with little relevant experience but a head for heights would find achievable – if exciting – in benign conditions. Although they can be very exposed the hands-on passages are generally short and sometimes even avoidable. Route finding is intuitive.

Grade 2: routes include longer sections on steeper rock, generally a little more technical and not so easily downclimbed or escaped from. The safest line may not be immediately obvious and competence is required.

Grade 3: routes are committing and serious, with at least one (sometimes more) significant pitch of exposed thought-provoking ground that may include moves of Moderate or even Difficult standard climbing.

How to learn the ropes

By their nature ridges tend to have a strong mountaineering flavour. Beginners might find the relative remoteness and the sense of scale daunting, but these aspects are integral to the experience. Reading a route on paper is a very different exercise from climbing up it. What might in advance look like an easy romp could well hold a few surprises on the day. Those more accustomed to the gymnastics of indoor climbing will need to adopt a new approach in the hills; this is an entirely different game, as close to sport climbing as fell running is to sprinting. But that's not to say it is exclusive or inaccessible. Ridge climbs are not the preserve of grizzled beardies with secret handshakes and an encyclopaedic knowledge of arcane knots. Given that grade 1 scrambles are just hands-on walks with added exposure there's a good old-fashioned classic waiting for even the greenest beginner.

On these routes all-round hill fitness trumps a chicken-legged boulderer's physique, and the solid attributes of a hill walking and scrambling generalist are of far more use than an ability to 'heel hook' or 'thumb sprag'. The cobwebby term hill sense captures it nicely. Requisites for the average ridge

include an aptitude with map and compass, sound basic rope work, cool route finding judgement on complex and occasionally serious terrain, the ability to take loose rock and vegetation in one's stride, stamina for the long walk-ins and a sense of humour when you get rained off yet again.

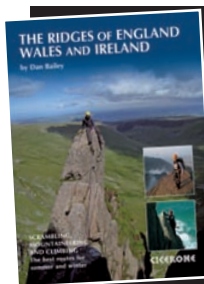
Assimilating all this by making a gradual progression through the grades from the easiest scrambles upwards is a traditional route into mountaineering and an immensely satisfying way to learn the ropes. Nevertheless, don't forget that much can be learnt under the expert supervision of an experienced friend or qualified instructor.

Staying safe

Although serious climbers are occasionally snobbish about low-grade 'bimbles', unroped scrambling can be as psychologically testing as any 'climb' and is often rather riskier. On any route of any difficulty there are places where an unprotected slip could be unpleasant or even terminal; gravity respects no grade distinctions after all. Classics like Crib Goch can be as mobbed as a high street in the sales, but despite the carefree atmosphere the frequency of serious accidents on such low-grade routes is high. Even the easiest ridges are far from trivial, and need to be treated with respect.

The key to a full appreciation of the outdoors (to say nothing of a long healthy life) is remaining flexible in the face of changing conditions. When it rains experienced climbers might sensibly set their sights a bit lower than they'd planned, settling for a scramble when harder things don't appeal. There is a grim enjoyment to be had in battling hostile elements and winning through to achieve something substantial, but bear in mind that ridge scrambles can be particularly precarious in wet or windy weather. In these conditions walkers for whom the routes are a challenge at the best of times ought to think twice, particularly if the party is of mixed abilities. ■

Dan Bailey has a passion for the world's wild steep places. He has hiked, climbed and occasionally hobbled in mountains across five continents, before coming to rest in Scotland on the Fife Riviera.



The Ridges of England, Wales and Ireland

£16.15 (members). By Dan Bailey, published by Cicerone

This article is an extract from Dan Bailey's fantastic new book: The Ridges of England, Wales and Ireland. The book describes nearly fifty ridge routes for scrambling, mountaineering and climbing – in both summer and winter.

Buy now from www.thebmc.co.uk/shop

Pinnacle Ridge, St Sunday Crag

Pinnacle Ridge may be prosaically self-explanatory, but the route by any other name would climb as sweet. Lakeland's finest ridge scramble is a grand alpine-style outing up a complex rambling face, never difficult but certainly atmospheric. For a 'mere' scramble the exposure is exhilarating, hanging high over the deep trench of Grisedale; yet quality rock and a short lived crux make this an ideal ridge for people looking to push their grade. From below the line is unclear, but like all the best routes it unfolds logically as you climb, the lower blocky section building to a sudden and photogenic crescendo on the shark's fin pinnacles. If only it were a bit longer...

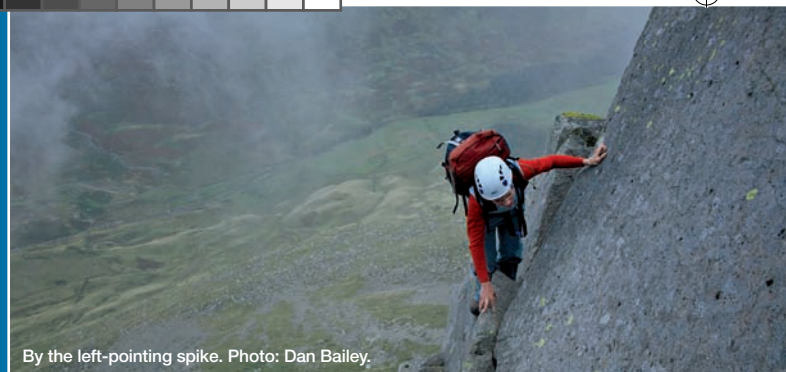
Approach

Walk up the steep hill on the minor Grisedale road. Just before reaching a small pine plantation on the left, the main path for St Sunday Crag branches off left; it looks logical on the map, but takes too high a line as it nears the NW face, necessitating a loss of hard-won height. A canner approach is to continue on the Grisedale road, which soon becomes an unsurfaced track. After about 1.5km, pass Elmhow farm and the adjacent pine plantation of the same name. At the far side of the trees turn left immediately on a minor path, then left



The impressive Grisedale face of St Sunday Crag; Pinnacle Ridge is just one of several buttresses. Photo: Dan Bailey.

Grade	3
Distance	12km as described (can do much less)
Ascent	700m
Time	4½ – 5 hours
Start/finish	Patterdale: park in private pay & display opposite Patterdale Hotel or in Glenridding.
Maps	OS Landranger (1:50000) 90; OS Explorer (1:25000) OL5; Harvey British Mountain Map (1:40000) Lake District
Accommodation	Patterdale YHA (0845 371 9337), Helvellyn YHA (0845 371 9742), Sykeside campsite near Brotherswater (017684 82239), Gillside campsite and bunkhouse (017684 82346)
Sleeping out	There's nowhere particularly suitable in the lower reaches of Grisedale, except perhaps hidden in a plantation.
Public transport	Infrequent bus from Penrith – limited service in winter.
Seasonal notes	An absorbing winter mixed grade II with few unavoidable difficulties. Although a decent build up of snow is said to be comparatively rare on this crag, the route ought to be OK in any condition. It might be a good choice in unconsolidated snow, as there's little turf to damage.



By the left-pointing spike. Photo: Dan Bailey.

again around the back of the wood, to reach a grassy path that zigzags cunningly up the steep flank of St Sunday Crag. On about the 440m contour the hillside eases off into the shallow scoop of Blind Cove (not named on the 1:50000 map). Head roughly SW to reach a grassy terrace at about 500m; traverse along this, following signs of passing boots beneath the screes that skirt the base of the craggy NW face. A higher traverse on sheep paths is also possible, but leads through steep broken ground. Unless you already know what you're looking for (and even if you do, frankly) it's hard to discern the correct line of Pinnacle Ridge among the jumble of buttresses and gullies overhead. A scree-filled gully bounds its right side, and a scrappy scree slope runs directly from its base. Other identifying features include a small tree about 40m up on the right side of the ridge, a horizontal left-pointing spike a little higher, and a horizontal left-leaning tree higher up still. From the terrace a faint path climbs grass and scree to reach a cairn at the foot of the ridge.

Climb

Pinnacle Ridge, 180m grade 3
Climb a heap of flakes and blocks – easy clambering on rough sound rock. A broad ridge soon develops. The best (and airiest) line is on the right edge, while to the left it's possible to slink onto easier and less pleasant ground in a little vegetated gully that bounds the N side of the route all the way to the pinnacles. This would be a wasted effort. Follow polish and crampon scratches to reach the prominent left-pointing spike; climb its exposed right side, with an interesting step right along an obvious fault. Easier scrambling then leads to the base of a big steep tooth. Flank this on the left to gain a niche behind. If a rope is going to seem necessary anywhere, this is the place to belay.

Leaving the niche is the short sharp crux of the route, and might take an effort of will if you're not used to such things. Enter the obvious vertical corner, bridging up on polished rock for a couple of metres. Transfer to the left wall, where unexpected jugs are a welcome reward.

Continue direct up the wall to reach the spiky ridge crest, and an optional belay. Dispatching the crux was the key to success; you've now burst out onto the eponymous pinnacles, a jagged rank of spines with a vertical drop to either side. Though thrilling, the scrambling is rather easier henceforth. Linger over the pinnacles, as they are sadly short lived. A careful slabby downclimb from the final point leads to a narrow neck. Continue out the far side on easy vegetated slopes, from where there's a grandstand view back over the pinnacles. Up on the left a heap of spiky blocks provides a last burst of scrambling, soon leading to easy ground above the face. Head S over the plateau to reach the summit cairn.

Descent

The simplest option is to follow the main path NE back down to Patterdale, an easy descent of around 40mins.

Continuation

However if you don't mind a bit of a leg stretch (and if not, what are you doing here anyway?) then this is a good chance to climb Fairfield via the very mildly scrubby Cofa Pike. Alternatively, how's about taking a closer look at the lonely bowl of Sleet Cove at the head of Deepdale? A clear path descends St Sunday's well-defined southwest ridge, reaching the low col of Deepdale Hause in a little under 1.5km. From the Hause ascend about 20m (height gain, not distance) towards Fairfield to pick up a rough path that cuts down E to reach the grassy floor of Sleet Cove beneath an impressive array of crags, the hanging gardens of Hutaple. This might be the time to try Portcullis Ridge (a good VDiff, if quite short). Continue beside waterfalls into the lower level of the dale. Now clearer, the path passes through glacial moraines, following the N bank of Deepdale Beck through the wide lower valley. Meet a track just before Wall End farm; this leads past several houses to reach the A592 about 1km S of Patterdale.

This is just one of the 48 ridges described in Dan Bailey's new book.

scrambling ◀



Murky conditions on the pinnacles. Photo: Dan Bailey.

ESSENTIAL GEAR: RIDGE SCRAMBLING

Ropes

One person's gripping epic is another's inconsequential solo, and confidence can vary with mood and weather. However I can offer some general guidance. Scramblers on a grade 1 route can sensibly expect not to need a rope. On grade 2 and 3 scrambles it is wise to carry one – also a harness and a minimal rack consisting of a few nuts, slings and runners. Gear choice for Moderates and Difficults is a grey area even for accomplished climbers, but as a general rule once the route is hard enough that you're consciously holding on and planning the next moves with care then it's usually time to crack out the kit.

Footwear

In days of yore leather boots were de rigueur and anyone training for the Alps could choose to follow in the pioneers' clumpy footsteps. If you've got reasonably supportive and grippy soles then either summer walking boots or approach shoes will suffice on routes from grade 1 to about Difficult. Moving further up the grade scale, people generally feel happier in rock shoes. There is another footwear option to consider – the walking/scrambling/climbing hybrid – but in general these are designed for drier climates, and fall down on waterproofing.

Headgear

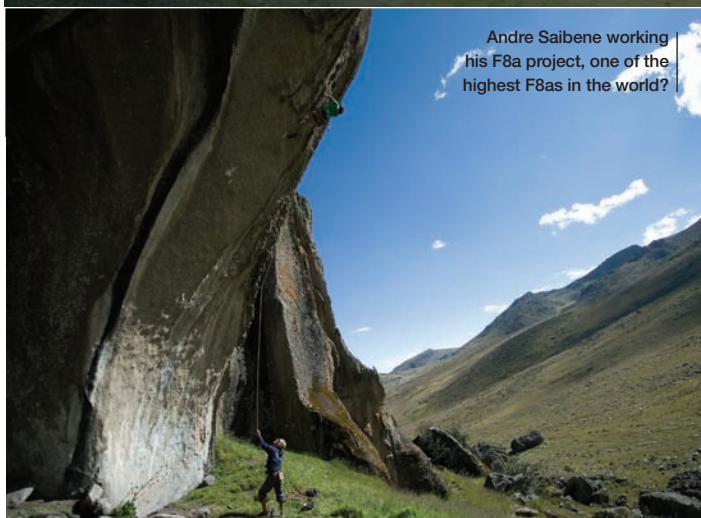
When to don a helmet is a decision for each individual, although wherever there's loose rock waiting to be kicked down onto your head it might save you a serious injury. A prevalent misapprehension is that easy ground means low risk, but once the air is thick with whirring missiles of death it's irrelevant whether you're scrambling up Tryfan or teetering up a crumbling South Coast chalk horror.



playground of the gods



The playground of Hatun Machay.
All photos by Jowan Gauthier/www.spontaneousbeauty.com



Andre Saibene working his F8a project, one of the highest F8as in the world?

Jo Kilner checks out Hatun Machay in the High Andes of Peru – one of the most magical climbing places in the world?

The beat-up old taxi, held together by rust and string, rattled over the final rise of the dirt track. Suddenly we were faced with a magical sight: a granite ‘forest’ spread across a 4,200m high Andean valley. We’d surely stumbled across the climbing playground of the gods.

With a final bounce the taxi came to a halt, depositing us and our dusty packs next to the refuge. After catching our breath we grabbed our climbing gear and scampered down the hillside towards the rocks. We felt like kids in a candy store as we got closer and gazed up at the pockmarked towers, technical walls and overhanging tufas – not to mention the variety of huge boulders scattered around the base.

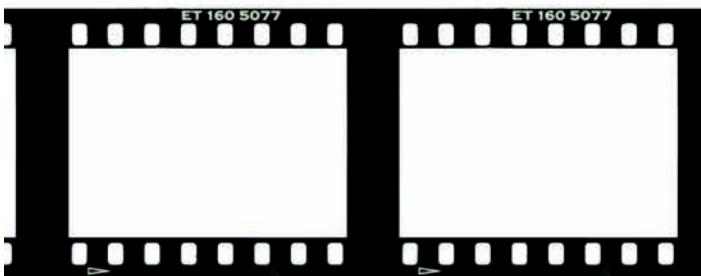
Hatun Machay is composed of granite

spires mixed with volcanic rock that rises up to 100m high. Eroded over time into amazing formations, the name means ‘Big Cave’ in the local Quechua language. The ‘stone forest’ was home to an ancient people over 1,200 years ago; nowadays you can walk around and find fascinating cave paintings, carvings, flint arrowheads and primitive tools. As such the area is of great archaeological importance, so although Hatun Machay spreads over 200 hectares, only the northern portion near the refuge has been developed for climbing. There is much untapped potential though, and climbers are working with the local community to carefully develop new areas of the ‘forest’.

To date there are around 80 well-equipped sport routes (ranging from French 4 to 8a, up to 60m in height) and if you spot another ‘must do’ line, the

Below: Looking across from Hatun Machay to the stunning high mountain scenery of the Norte

Below: Surveying his fields in the high landscape.



There are around 80 well-equipped sport routes...and if you spot another 'must do' line, the owner of the refuge will gladly lend you a drill.

owner of the refuge will gladly lend you a drill. The quaint stone refuge really adds to the whole experience – it's basic but friendly, with room for around 50, a communal kitchen and a wood-burning stove to huddle around on chilly nights. It has the atmosphere of a family farm and if you're lucky you might even be treated to their freshly baked bread – a unique treat.

After three days of fabulous climbing our fingertips were screaming, reluctantly forcing a rest day. Not that this was any hardship – a short hike up the hill behind the refuge gave us fantastic views of the Cordillera Huayhuash range, including Siula Grande (of 'Touching The Void' fame), as well as the Cordillera Blanca. For more rest day fun there's often a slackline set up, a trick introduced by visiting famous photographer and climber Heinz Zak.

The must-do routes include the 'Welcome To Huaraz' (at a sustained 6b+) and 'La Negra Luly' (6b) at sector La Fisura, 'Relatos de un Naufrage' (a 3-star 7a) at sector Los Sietes, 'Pincitas' (a wild 6a+) at sector La Cueva, which also hosts 'Regreso Con Gloria' - most likely the highest 8a in the world? Other excellent routes are those at sector Placa Verde including 'Brichelito' (6c+) and 'Typhoid' (6b+) – both thin, technical and totally absorbing.

That first day we warmed up on a beautifully sculptured 5+, all the while eyeing up the adjacent route, an unnamed 6b+ with a steep overhanging start followed by a long, leaning arête up the tower. We couldn't resist, it was superb, the bouldery start having perfect jugs to dive for, and the arête yielding hidden pockets just when needed. The rest of the day continued in the same style, just picking great looking lines. It was a tired, happy party that made its way along the stream, back to the refuge as the sun dipped behind the mountains and the full moon rose. The welcoming smell of wood smoke drifted down to meet us – together with something else – the aroma of freshly baked bread. We rushed down the hill, three hungry climbers all trying to squeeze into the refuge at once.

Hatun Machay with its superb climbing, amazing situation, and mystical history really has to be one of the most magical places to climb in the world.

A shaman looking down from one of the multiple spires of Hatun Machay.



Waiting in the sunshine - a local Huaracina in traditional dress.

ESSENTIAL FACTS: HATUN MACHAY

When to go

The dry season (May to November) sees warm, sunny days with cold, clear nights. It's still possible to climb in the wet season (December to April) but the mornings are often dry and much warmer (up to 35C in the sun) with rain later.

Getting there

Fly to Lima. From Lima fly or bus to Huaraz. From Huaraz you can either catch a public 'collectivo' to the village of Catac, then share a taxi to the refugio for around \$10-\$15, or more adventurously catch a local bus towards Lima and ask to be dropped off at Km 131, then hike up the dirt road westwards for about 1.5 hours.

More information

Andean Kingdom, based in Huaraz, can provide all the latest information including topos. You can also arrange private transport through them. See www.andeankingdom.com.

Other stuff to do

Huaraz is the premier climbing and mountaineering centre of Peru, offering 5,000m and 6,000m peaks, world class trekking and even big wall climbing on the nearby Sphinx. There's also mountain biking, horse-riding and other activities on offer.

And finally

Check out Google Earth: 10 05'34.96" S, 77 20'56.47" O, elevation 4,228m.

Cautley Spout and Arant Haw

Tim Woods and Gary Shipp leave their cars at home and head for one of England's best-loved forgotten corners: the Howgill Fells.



Looking into a misty Bowderdale from Randygill Top.
All photos: Car Free Walks.

The Howgill Fells are the forgotten corner of northwest England. Tucked between the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales – and with superb scenery that rivals these illustrious neighbours – they failed to make the cut for either National Park. Yet anyone who explores the region will agree that such arbitrary park boundaries do the Howgills an injustice.

It would be a further slight to suggest that they are recommended for people looking for an alternative to the Lakes and the Dales; this region merits attention in its own right. The wild moorland hills, which drop sharply into serene valleys, contain few well-defined paths. The whole area is designated as Open Access land, allowing those who venture here to wander at will.

The inner fells are often totally silent – no mean feat considering the M6 motorway runs right along the western side. In fact, for anyone who seeks tranquillity in the hills, the Howgills offer a marked improvement on the busy National Parks nearby. No overflowing car parks or cafes at the foot of each hill, nor busy roads

carving across the landscape. On most days, you can enjoy lunch on any summit in total solitude, save for an inquisitive sheep or two.

The town of Sedbergh, located at the southern tip of the Howgills, is an excellent base from which to explore. This attractive market town is becoming increasingly well known for its many second-hand bookshops, and is home to several pubs and cafes – ideal for fuelling up before a trip into the hills. There are also bus connections to Ravenstonedale and Tebay (via Kendal) on the northern side most days, making it possible to complete a linear traverse of the whole range.

Sedbergh is also ideally situated for shorter walks around the southern Howgills Fells. This is the section that did make the grade for the Yorkshire Dales; perhaps this official seal of approval is due to the presence of Cautley Spout – England's highest waterfall above ground, and one of the most impressive. Walking into the Howgills alongside this stunning natural feature, followed by a circular walk across the southern tops, provides a satisfying taste of the wider region.

A four-mile valley trek may not sound like the ideal start to a day of hill walking, but the footpath heading northeast from Sedbergh is no tedious trudge. Following the route of the River Rawthey, the path passes through some wonderfully varied countryside as it skirts the foothills of the Howgills. The patches of woodland are awash with wildflowers in spring and summer months, and the fields are marked by the brilliant yellow of gorse bushes. Birdlife abounds, and the views uphill offer a taste of the steep climb to come.

The footpath leading to Cautley Spout begins near Low Haygarth. Nearby is the Cross Keys Inn, but anyone fancying a quick pint before the ascent is out of luck. This is a temperance inn – a pub that doesn't serve alcohol. Several such inns were created around Lancashire in the late 1800s by the Temperance Society, which advocated a moderate approach to life, particularly with regard to alcohol. Unsurprisingly, few remain today. The Cross Keys Inn instead focuses on food, with much of its menu locally sourced; it's well worth planning your day to include a stop here at lunchtime.



Returning to Sedbergh, via the Rawthey Valley, with the gorse bushes in full bloom.



Arant Haw and Soolbank: the southern tip of the Howgill Fells.



Essential facts: the Howgill Fells

Getting there

There are regular bus services connecting Sedbergh to Kendal, Kirkby Stephen and Kirkby Lonsdale, as well as several smaller towns and villages nearby. For more information, ring Traveline on 0870 608 2608 or visit www.traveline.org.uk. The nearest train station is Oxenholme (just outside Kendal), on the same bus route from Sedbergh.

Maps and guides

OS Explorer sheet OL19
OS Landranger Sheet 98
Harvey 1:25,000 Superwalker Map
'Walks on the Howgill Fells: And Adjoining Fells', by Alfred Wainwright

Terrain

The Howgills Fells offer easy walking, and the paths on the southern side are more clearly defined than those to the north, making navigation simple. This route presents no technical challenges, although the section along the top of Cautley Crag is exposed, and the path next to Cautley Spout is steep in places.

When to go

The Howgill Fells are enjoyable at any time of year, with the fells changing in character through the seasons. Cautley Spout is particularly remarkable after heavy rain. Despite the relatively low altitude, full winter equipment is needed in snowy conditions, and it is worth noting that the central Howgills are isolated and receive few visitors – longer trips will require good preparation.

Sleeps and eats

Sedbergh has an excellent range of places to eat and drink, and The Red Lion in the town centre is good for walkers in need of a hearty meal. For a full list of places to eat, visit www.sedbergh.org.uk/shops/eat-drink.html. There are also plenty of places to sleep in the town – visit www.sedbergh.org.uk/accommodation to find somewhere to match your price range and comfort level.

Want more?

For more car-free routes in and around the Howgills, visit www.carfreewalks.org.

The impressive Cautley Spout, England's highest waterfall (above ground).



Approaching by the path alongside Cautley Holme Beck, you'll hear Cautley Spout before you see it. For nearly 200 metres, this series of falls crashes down the narrow tree-lined gully, getting ever steeper towards the source. The footpath ascends the precipitous ground alongside the waterfall, offering spectacular views all the way up.

After ascending the slippery, rock-strewn slope near the upper falls, a newly laid footpath crosses Swere Gill and Red Gill Beck and leads on to Cautley Crag. These streams can swell quickly after heavy rain, however, so a 'dry-feet' alternative is to stay on the right hand side of Swere Gill and up to a bridleway. This leads to The Calf, the highest point of the Howgills at 676 metres. Sticking to the line of Cautley Crag is more enjoyable, however, an exposed walk with dramatic views down the face of the cliff.

The Cautley Crag path leads on to Great Dummacks, the eastern part of the small plateau that stretches south from The Calf. The views from here are stunning; looking west, the eastern hills of the Lake District are visible, and the Yorkshire Dales sit to the south and east. The rounded

peaks and deep valleys of the Howgills spread out to the north and the temptation to return for a longer expedition will prove strong for most walkers.

The final stage of the walk is a high level walk across Rowantree Grains to Arant Haw, the most southerly summit in the Howgills group. The bridleway down Winder provides an easy route back into Sedbergh – the perfect place to pick up something to read on the bus journey home.

Tim Woods and Gary Shipp run Car Free Walks (www.carfreewalks.org): a website of walks in England, Scotland and Wales that can be reached using public transport. You can also add your own car-free routes to the database. ■



MOUNTAIN MEDICS

Getting high can be a risky business. Barry Roberts of Wilderness Medical Training is here with some expert advice for your next adventure.



First winter ascent of Gannbjornsfjeld - the highest mountain in the Arctic. Photo: Barry Roberts.

Whether you're heading to the hills of the UK, the Alps, the Poles or even the Greater Ranges, you should be prepared to deal with common medical situations.

Climbing and mountaineering have always been perceived as high risk activities, but what are the actual statistics? Well, in a 2002 study of 316 'non-natural deaths in travellers abroad', there were 12 (less than 4%) due to skiing and mountaineering but a whopping 158 (50%) from road accidents. The risk of death for Himalayan trekking is approximately 1 in 7,000 – which compares favourably with Himalayan mountaineering at 1 in 34 (excluding Everest). Even climbing Everest itself appears to be getting 'safer' and is perversely less risky than other Himalayan climbing; in 1999 the ratio of deaths to summit successes was 1 in 7. By 2007 this shrank to 1 in 83.

Hazards en-route to base camp should

not be ignored either; driving on mountain roads, river crossings, wildlife, malaria, waterborne diseases and contaminated food are just some of the risks to be sidestepped. Rescue and evacuation will always be problematic at altitudes out of helicopter range (or availability).

With a moderate amount of medical training, an otherwise keen mountain first aider can learn to manage more complex medical conditions than a sprained ankle. Certainly on larger expeditions, a team medic should be appointed and undergo advanced training to deal with the usual challenges of expedition life such as cuts, blisters and diarrhoea and more critical situations when far from help.

At Wilderness Medical Training our experts aim to bridge the knowledge gap between mountain first aid and the domain of mountain medicine. In this article six experts tackle some of the more common topics – from Acute Mountain Sickness to eye care.

How to deal with: AMS, HACE and HAPE

Dr. Nick Mason

Ascent to high altitude results in acclimatisation – complex changes in the body that allow climbers to function effectively. The most important adaptation is an increase in the depth



and rate of breathing which enables more oxygen to be brought in to the body from the reduced ambient air pressure. The number of red blood cells that transport oxygen from the lungs to the tissues increases at altitude. Although red blood cell production by the bone marrow increases with time at altitude, the initial apparent rise is due to the body excreting water through the urine thus concentrating the number of red blood cells. Total body water can be reduced by up to 5%. During this process, most people will need to get up to pee in the night.

In some people, the loss of water through the urine at altitude is reduced and they may become puffy in the face, hands and ankles. This is peripheral oedema. Oedema characterises all of the high altitude conditions and means fluid in the wrong place. Peripheral oedema, particularly if severe, is a sign of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). After a recent gain in altitude the presence of a headache and one or more of the following symptoms should be regarded as diagnostic of AMS:

- Poor appetite, nausea or vomiting
- Excessive fatigue or weakness
- Dizziness or light headedness
- Difficulty sleeping

AMS is rare below 2,500m. Roughly half of climbers ascending to 4,500m will experience symptoms. The only truly reliable predictor of an individual's susceptibility to AMS is their previous performance at altitude. People who do well or badly on their first visit to altitude will generally repeat this performance subsequently. Physical fitness does not protect against AMS. A useful guide to avoiding AMS is that once above 3,000m you should sleep no more than 300–400m above your previous night's altitude and for every 1,000m ascent, or every three days, spend two nights at the same altitude. Over-exertion and dehydration exacerbate AMS; slow down, carry light loads and drink plenty of water.

Mild symptoms of AMS are the body's way of

telling you that you need to ascend more slowly. Listen to your body regardless of personal ambitions, pride or pressure to stick to a group schedule. If the symptoms worsen, remain at the same altitude until they resolve. Painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen are effective to treat the headache of mild to moderate AMS. Severe, debilitating symptoms require descent to the last altitude at which you felt well. Never ascend with worsening symptoms of AMS. The drug acetazolamide (Diamox®) works to hasten acclimatisation but is no substitute for a sensible ascent profile. Acetazolamide artificially produces the changes in the biochemistry of the blood which occur with acclimatisation but it does not mask the symptoms of AMS.

While mild AMS can be regarded as the body's way of telling you to spend more time acclimatising, High Altitude Cerebral Oedema (HACE) is life threatening. HACE and AMS almost certainly represent two extremes of the same disease process. Severe symptoms of AMS associated with confusion or unsteadiness on the feet indicate HACE. It is usual, although not invariable, for HACE to be preceded by symptoms of worsening AMS and a common scenario is when somebody has ignored AMS symptoms and continued to ascend.

Everybody gets short of breath climbing but if it is disproportionate compared to your usual experience or to the rest of your group, or if it occurs while resting or lying flat, it must be treated as High Altitude Pulmonary Oedema (HAPE). The blood vessels of the lungs constrict in response to reduced levels of oxygen causing the pressure inside them to rise. In some individuals this pressure increase can be exaggerated causing fluid to leak into the air spaces of the lung, inhibiting the uptake of oxygen and producing a cough.

For HACE and HAPE delay in descending rapidly and immediately can be fatal. Aim to drop at least 1,000m below the altitude at which you fell ill. Do not re-ascend. Give the drug dexamethasone for HACE and nifedipine (Adalat®) for HAPE.

Don't forget that local mountain porters can also develop altitude illness. Look after them as you would yourself. Guidelines are available on the International Porter Protection Group website: www.ippp.net.

How to deal with: mountain sickness in the young and old

Dr. Jon Dallimore

There are many reasons not to trek or climb to high altitudes with children, especially those under five. Risks to children include steep drops, slippery surfaces, animal hazards (think scabby dogs in Nepal), diarrhoeal illness and hypothermia, as well as lower levels of oxygen.

9 year-old Sam Dallimore trekking to Everest Base Camp. Photo: Jon Dallimore.



Children should have experience of walking and camping holidays in the UK before venturing abroad. Parents should have realistic ambitions and be familiar with the destination.

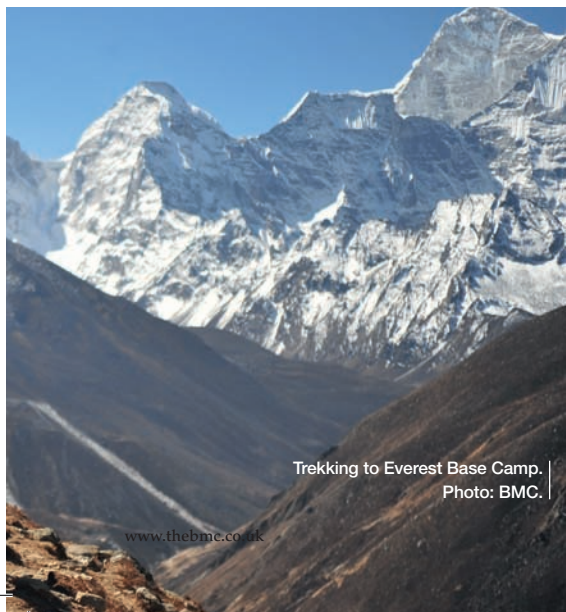
Most evidence suggests that altitude illness in children and adolescents is as common as in adults. Children under the age of three rarely complain about headache, nausea, tiredness, loss of appetite and sleep disturbance – the main symptoms of altitude illness. Researchers have used a scoring system which measures the degree of irritability, playfulness and excessive crying and other features which may indicate altitude (or other) illness. Ascending while unwell with respiratory or other infections makes AMS more likely so itineraries must be flexible to allow for extra rest days. Treatment of altitude illness is the same as for adults – rest initially and descent if symptoms do not settle.

Altitude illness is no more or less likely in the mature climber than in younger adults. A more relaxed pace and the lack of competitive pressure might help older trekkers cope better. In general, as for younger climbers, rapid ascent and undue exertion should be avoided. Old age doesn't come alone and mature climbers may have other health problems and these should be carefully discussed with a doctor who understands altitude physiology and the demands of the mountains. That said age alone should not be considered a bar to fit older people travelling to high altitude.

How to deal with: climbing on bottled oxygen

Dr Rob Casserley (five times Everest summiter)

Oxygen can be regarded much like a fuel for the body. It helps to make ATP, the energy block that cells and tissues utilise to work normally, so without oxygen, respiration and ultimately life, grinds to a halt.



Trekking to Everest Base Camp. Photo: BMC.

www.thebmc.co.uk

Supplemental oxygen has its detractors in the high altitude climbing fraternity, however, its role as a life-saving medication in the presence of an altitude-related illness is indisputable. AMS, HAPE and HACE are all mediated by lack of oxygen (hypoxia) and are all cured by oxygen. Whether this is done by descent, entering a portable hyperbaric chamber or breathing bottled oxygen will depend on the situation and resources. Undoubtedly many lives could have been historically saved had there been better access to supplemental oxygen.

Anecdotal, supplemental oxygen helps protect the brain. Brain cells die with age but this occurs at increased rates when exposed to prolonged periods of hypoxia. It is not uncommon, post expedition, for climbers to describe memory loss and behaviour of susceptible individuals can become erratic. Frostbite damage too can be ameliorated or even prevented using bottled oxygen. Many experienced climbers claim that the main benefit of oxygen use is that it helps to keep their peripheries warm.

Times have quickened, reducing the duration that climbers are out on the hill. This has major safety implications and can only be regarded positively. Greater proportions of climbers attempting an 8,000m summit without the use of oxygen fail, and of those, a significant number require assistance in descent by those climbing with oxygen. Of course this compromises the rescuers chances of going to the summit. Less controversially, if you want to enjoy – and remember - that summit experience, seriously consider using oxygen!

Bottled oxygen is not a panacea – you still have to work very hard – but beware the expedition that sets off to extreme altitude without it.

How to deal with: remote eye care

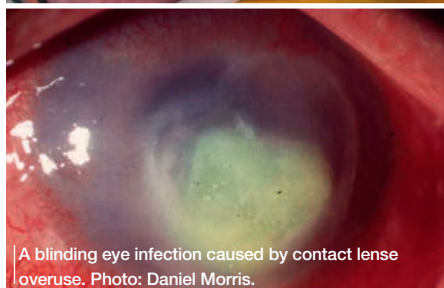
Dr. Daniel Morris

Snow blindness is caused by over exposure to ultraviolet light. The risks are higher on snow and at high altitude. Snow blindness is exquisitely painful and sufferers are so light sensitive that they cannot open their eyes. They may need to hide in a sleeping bag until it settles down, usually over about 12 hours. Antibiotic eye ointment and painkillers should be used and it usually settles overnight. Wear sunglasses (with sidepieces) or goggles that block 100% UV light, even on overcast days.

Contact lenses are difficult to keep clean when camping and users tend to wear them all the time, which makes infections more likely. Daily disposable lenses are recommended but hand hygiene is still important. Give your eyes a rest from lenses for a few hours each day.



As far as the eye can see - a self portrait on Everest. Photo: Barry Roberts.



A blinding eye infection caused by contact lens overuse. Photo: Daniel Morris.

Untreated infections can lead to blindness so if there is any eye pain, pus or a change in vision seek help immediately.

Laser refractive surgery is becoming increasingly popular amongst outdoor enthusiasts keen to avoid using glasses or contacts. High altitude can affect the surgical results resulting in blurred vision. This phenomenon is not predictable but fortunately resolves on descent. Get refractive surgery done at least three months before travelling to allow healing and reduce the risk of infection.

Loss of vision is always concerning, even if it is temporary. On high mountains the low air pressure can cause retinal haemorrhages, which sometimes temporarily affects vision. A severe lack of oxygen to the brain can also cause blindness as occasionally reported by climbers in trouble at extreme altitude. Any change in vision at altitude (or elsewhere) should be a signal to descend and seek advice.

How to deal with: cold

Dr Harvey Pynn

Humans evolved from tropical climes and maintain a core body temperature of 37°C. We have poor tolerance to getting cold (hypothermia) and overheated (hyperthermia).

Every outdoor person with a bronze D of E should know that body heat is lost to the environment via conduction, convection, evaporation and radiation. In very high mountains, the combined effects of hypoxia (low oxygen), sluggish circulation (more viscous blood) and dehydration coupled with environmental conditions conspire to challenge our thermal balance.

The brain acts as a thermostat to keep body temperature constant. In the cold, the body reduces blood flow to the skin to prevent heat loss and starts shivering or exercising to generate heat – all to maintain core temperature. It only takes a drop in core temperature of 2°C to affect brain function - judgement (e.g. route finding) and fine motor tasks (e.g. doing up a zip).

Key body temperatures

Temperature can only be accurately recorded with a low reading rectal thermometer - an impractical test when high in the Cairngorms! Act on behavioural signs early by putting the casualty in a bivvy bag in a survival shelter, changing into dry clothes and, if conscious, giving food and hot sweet drinks to prevent further deterioration. Mildly hypothermic victims will need 24 hours rest to recover. Start treatment early or the core temperature will drop further; the heart rate will slow and eventually stop beating.

Despite no apparent signs of life, never give up treating a severely hypothermic casualty. These victims need urgent evacuation and specialist medical attention

Body temp	Signs and symptoms	
36.5 – 37.5°C	Normal	
<35°C	Mild hypothermia	Confused, irrational and uncoordinated
<32°C	Severe hypothermia	Shivering stops
<28°C	Coma	Heart stops beating
13.7°C	Lowest recorded body temperature with full recovery	

SPEAKERS FROM THE EDGE Presents

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"A ready perceptive wit and natural flair as a storyteller"
Joe Simpson - *Touching the Void*

"A remarkable journey from underground to release in the worlds high empty places"
Glasgow Herald

September

25 CAERNARFON Galeri 01286 685222
26 HARLECH Theatr Harlech 01766 780667

October

06 MIDDLESBROUGH Middlesbrough Theatre 01642 81 51 81
12 LOUGHBOROUGH Town Hall 01509 231 914
14 ABERGAVENNY Borough Theatre 01873 850805
20 EPSOM Playhouse 01372 742555
21 BARNSELY Dearne Playhouse 01709 894 128
22 BLACKBURN King George's Hall 0844 847 1664
23 CARDIGAN Theatr Mwldan 01239 621200

November

04 RHYL Pavilion Theatre 01745 330000
06 BOLTON Albert Halls 01204 334400
13 PITLOCHRY Festival Theatre 01796 484626

December

02 SALFORD The Lowry 0870 787 5790

Following his dad into the pit at 16, Andy Cave's journey from 3000 ft down a Yorkshire coal mine to the dizzying heights of Himalayas is awe-inspiring. *Learning to Breathe* charts one mountaineer's extraordinary journey, culminating in the one of the greatest Himalayan climbs of the century, a climb that would end in tragedy and force Andy to question his passion for adventure.



SPEAKERS FROM THE EDGE Presents

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Breathtaking images & unforgettable stories from the wilderness

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03 MOVA WALES Mochynlleth 01654 703355
07 LEAMINGTON SEA ROYAL 300 Theatre 01926 438 438
08 RHYL Pavilion Theatre 01745 330 000
09 BOLTON Albert Halls 01204 334 400
22 LONDON Royal Geographical Society 0114 250 8048
23 EASTBOURNE Congress Hall 01323 462 000
24 QUENSEY Whittaker Hall 01481 711361
28 STIRLING Albert Halls 01796 471 500
31 ISLE of LEWIS An Lanntair Arts Centre 01926 334 418

>NOVEMBER

06 BARNSTAPLE Queen's Theatre 01271 324242
11 MALVERN Malvern Theatres 01684 892 277
13 SOUTHEND Southend Theatres 01702 351135

>JANUARY

28 KIRKCALDY Adam Smith Theatre 01592 583302
29 INVERNESS Eden Court 01463 234234
30 PITLOCHRY Festival Theatre 01796 484626

>FEBRUARY

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Supporting the





Frostbite on the 1988 services expedition to the West Ridge of Everest. Photo Al Evans.

but must be handled very gently to avoid sending the heart into ventricular fibrillation where it quivers like jelly and does not beat effectively. A casualty will only be pronounced dead if they have been warmed up and still show no signs of life.

When cold, blood is shunted away from the extremities to try to maintain the core temperature – local cold injury may develop. Frost nip is superficial cold damage, often on the face or ears. Frost bite is deep, frozen tissue causing loss of function which can be life threatening if fingers are affected. Frostbitten parts may become blistered and extremely painful. Frostbitten tissue should be thawed if possible by suspending the affected body part in water at 38-40°C without delay. If there is any possibility that the tissues will refreeze keep the affected body part frozen as repeated freezing and thawing will cause increased tissue damage.

In cold environments eat and drink properly. Wear proven, appropriate clothing and boots that fit properly. Stay dry and guard your digits and your face from the elements. Prevent heat loss through the scalp which can be massive, hence the adage, if your feet are cold, put on a hat!

How to deal with: medical kits

By Barry Roberts

Take the minimum necessary to deal with the broadest array of potential problems. Ensure that each team member has a personal supply of paracetamol and blister pads and an adequate supply of personal prescribed medications. It may be a requirement to have a comprehensive base camp kit and smaller, basic portable kits for satellite teams. You can improvise splints and stretchers but not medications or sterile

equipment. You may need supplies to cope with the following:

Environment: altitude drugs

Eyes: local anaesthetic drops, antibiotic drops, spare glasses for contact wearers

Infection: antibiotics to treat dental, chest, gut and skin infections (oral antibiotics treat simple bacterial infections or can buy time in more serious infections), oral rehydration sachets

Teeth: emergency filling kit

Skin: blister pads and tape, cling film for burns (can also be used to splint), sutures, steristrips, Superglue, iodine, local anaesthetic, antihistamines

Sickness and pain: prochlorperazine can control nausea and vomiting (thus reducing dehydration) and simple analgesics (e.g. paracetamol with ibuprofen) taken regularly are effective for significant pain. Forget about getting hold of controlled drugs like morphine.

Protection: gloves

Sterile pack: containing needles, scalpel, syringes, forceps, scissors, cannulae, suture holders, dressings



Don't advertise your medical kit at borders, police check posts and customs. Medicines are valuable in poor countries and some countries don't take kindly to travellers carrying valium, codeine based drugs and needles. Packing it in a bright red bag with a cross on it is asking for trouble. Take official looking copies of the contents list and the prescription authorisation to purchase Prescription Only Medications (POMs). Don't wait until the week you depart to start thinking about getting hold of POMs. Not all doctors are going to be enthusiastic about taking responsibility for providing you with the relevant prescriptions if you don't have appropriate training.

Medical preparation for overseas mountain travel

By James Moore

What do you need to do before you go?



PRE-SCREENING

- Be fit. A 'get fit on the trail' attitude worked for Don Whillans but is an old school attitude.
- Identify pre-existing medical problems.
- Get appropriate travel vaccinations in good time.
- At altitude, dental problems may flare up so get x-rays before departure.

MEDICAL TRAINING AND KITS

- Obtain medical training and medical kit advice appropriate to your team's needs, size, destination and distance from definitive care. This might include prescription only painkillers and antibiotics. Beware of obtaining these abroad; in some countries over 70% of medications are counterfeit.
- Do you need anti-malarials or altitude drugs?
- Remember the basics like how you will purify water.

RISK ASSESSMENT

- Think laterally and "what if" about the risks and hazards for every phase of your journey.
- Allow time for a sensible ascent profile.
- Despite good planning, some activities remain inherently hazardous – like climbing!

INSURANCE

- Over a third of people travelling abroad from the UK do so with inappropriate or no insurance. Get BMC Insurance before you go. ■

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If you're serious about mountain medicine then you need to get hold of a copy of the Oxford Handbook of Expedition and Wilderness Medicine. Edited by Dr Harvey Pynn and Barry Roberts, this 710 page book has been written by dozens of experts with the outdoors person in mind. It's packed with clear guidance and inspiration and is refreshingly devoid of excessive medical jargon.

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Q. Who is the WMT's Medical Director who co-edited the Oxford Handbook of Expedition & Wilderness Medicine?

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Wilderness Medical Training

WMT is the original company that specialises in expedition medical training for medics, Gap year students and explorers in the UK, Chamonix and Morocco. WMT also runs courses with partners Glenmore Lodge in Aviemore and the Royal Geographical Society in London. 'Far From Help' – WMT's two-day foundation course for explorers – is being hosted at the Royal Geographical Society/IBG in London (6-7th March) and at Glenmore Lodge (10-11th April).

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three men on a rope

A short story by Ed Bellthorpe

"The sea's surface made an imperfect mirror from which we failed to see our folly. We had come to the wrong place."

Photo: Adam Long.

I was beginning to suspect that, if I were to continue moving in these strange circles, I would become quite giddy. But something about the whole Llanberis scene led me on.

@nd that is why I found myself on the bald cliff-top slopes of the Llyn Peninsula with these two characters, known in the village as the enigmatic 'Honed Stranger' and his anxious belayer 'Pronto'.

I'd been acquainted with them right from the very beginning of the night before. They were at the same after-the-pub-scene (this had occurred in such a spontaneous way that it had been hard to determine the specific host at the property in question). There were tons of cragging casualties. The desire to discuss climbing achievements seemed inversely proportional to their magnitude. The older people seemed to exit at about midnight, their extra years putting them under some Cinderella spell. Intense late-night planning among strangers, I loved that. Yes, we would rise early and do something difficult down the 'Llyn'. The beer had spoken.

I would like to tell you all about the Stranger and the things he said – but he hardly spoke a word. Pronto, however,

talked a lot. If I had listened, he would have revealed his aspirations, his fears, and his love of gear and guidebooks. He drove whilst the Stranger made as if to navigate. What a view towards Abersoch: Saint Tudwel's Island looked like a giant aquatic sombrero that had broken free of its moorings. But neither of them noticed the view. Raindrops on the windscreen made the whole picture a lot clearer. Pronto relaxed; I swear he was relieved. He had made himself face the fear of a Llyn trip, but could now say that it had been 'rained off'. The Stranger, on the other hand, began to grunt with anger. It was as if he were vexed beyond words, fate stealing the day. With a great flurry he threw the map at the windscreen.

The rain had faded by the road's end. There was a quiet sense of unease here. We crept past a deserted farm. Time had encrusted it with lichenous art. Fence posts rocked in the light breeze, their rotting tops supporting strange ecosystems of moss and heather. The wind-sculpted trees pointed inland like

trembling fingers. The motionless sheep looked the size of pool tables from a distance. The Stranger stopped to try and stare one out, whilst Pronto continued the interpretation of the guidebook.

A fellow appeared before us riding upon a quadbike. As he came close Pronto put out his hand as though halting a taxi. The gentleman's waxed coat blended with the backdrop. No part of the bike could be seen beneath its coat of mud. It looked to me as if his life might be given over to wholly practical matters. His expression was one of overt neutrality. The engine ticked over. "I wonder if you could tell us the way to get to 'The Nuns inside my Head,'" Pronto enquired, "or whether we might be somewhere near 'Acapulco Zawn'?" The fellow stared into another place. "No," he said, and gently wound the engine back to life, setting off toward the tortured trees. Pronto frowned at the poor service.

After an unreal abseil past multi-storey guano, we reached giant sea-



washed platforms. A few jagged rocks broke through the marauding swell beyond. The sea's surface made an imperfect mirror from which we failed to see our folly.

We had come to the wrong place.

The Stranger did not care. He was encouraged by the life-giving lack of direction. Now he could choose our fate, just as traditional climbers used to, before it had 'all been done'. Pronto was last. His white knuckles must have provided more friction than the belay device. Out came the mighty book. His eyes darted about, seeking grooves and features from the precious texts. Slowly the hand with the book lowered itself. The arm hung limply, pages flapping. "We're in the wrong place," he wailed. It was the only time I saw the Honed Stranger really smile.

As we clambered along the ledges, I heard Pronto give out a sudden yelp as if he had been struck by something. When I got to him his face was a fixed frame of horror. I looked down into the water, expecting some undesirable macro fauna. But no – it was Pronto's technical fleece. It had slipped from his narrow waist and plunged for the depths, making a new life for itself, assuming a strangely flat form, like a manta ray. Quite majestically it curled and dived into the darkness. For a moment you could just make out the reflective piping, and then it was gone.

We traversed from cave to cave. Time had honeycombed the cliff's base. The birds screamed overhead. Columns of wet green slime delivered showers of drips.

The Honed Stranger had found what

he considered to be a line. He silently sorted his kit, tied on and set off without a word. As we watched the tide prevail, he began hurling loose suitcase-sized blocks from above; a fan of bird life launched from the upper walls in protest. More blocks. The waters had cut us off now and darkened with the solemn sky.

The curious curving strata made for a troubled mosaic above. Plane after plane of rock bedding stacked up – just as the odds were, against us. We heard calls. Our man was screaming. Fear? No, he was simply cursing the cliff for its refusal to yield. More blocks... then the Stranger! Down he came. A hundred feet. Falling silently, almost to the water. Pronto gasped in some sea air before the tightening rope dragged him sideways into an unforgiving pillar.

Wow. I'd never seen anyone take a proper monster – so this was how an epic unfolded. Without these events, climbers' pubs would be such quiet places.

The Stranger was calm. Some kit had come out on him, but he said he would go back up. He shook out his blooded hands as he spoke, explaining to Pronto that he needed another piece of big kit. When his petrified companion said he had none, there was a bit of a symbolic moment as the Stranger reached out and grabbed the guidebook. He rolled Pronto's whole tick-list world up tightly, his dark eyes twinkling as he bound it with a sling.

The belayer sat with his mouth open. As the Stranger returned to battle I heard Pronto begin to quietly sob. Head down, his shoulders heaved with pure misery.

The Stranger had returned to the

comfort of his own chaos, whilst down below, the cold crept in upon us. Later – lowering from the carefully wedged book – our leader announced the presence of an impasse. He was not a person that one encouraged to have 'one more go'. Blood oozed from battered jamming hands, his hair set with dust, sweat and chalk.

Pronto looked aghast, he was rarely cornered without a plan of escape. The Stranger was tired but calm. He grinned at Pronto. For the Honed Stranger, planning was the most terrible sign of weakness. "We'll leave all the stuff and just jump into the sea and swim for it," he observed. And he did just that. Purposeful strokes leading him across the now turbulent waters and onto the rock slabs beyond. I followed. Our belayer took one last look up at the lost book before slowly easing himself into the unknown. As I watched the hapless Pronto howling in the shifting swell I was reminded of Alice in Wonderland, drowning in her own tears. Each loud call of grief was interrupted by a sad gulp.

The story would be all the more dramatic had anyone actually perished. Having crossed to the safety of the ledges myself, this was perhaps why I hesitated a moment before flicking a long sling out to assist Pronto. The Stranger was wondering around, looking up at previously unseen parts of the cliff. For him there had been no crisis, just an adventure. Shivering along the rugged shelves as the light faded, we escaped like rats from the sinking day. ■

"Wow. I'd never seen anyone take a proper monster – so this was how an epic unfolded."



Photo: Adam Long. I



The art of recovery

To perform well, you need to recover well. Humphrey Bacchus puts his feet up.

The need for proper recovery is often only associated with elite athletes – those who compete at the top level and have their training plans mapped out for them. Surely most people can just go with what feels good at the time – a cup of tea and a hot bath perhaps?

While most of us train to get better before our challenges, little attention is paid to the time after serious physical exertion, activity or training. Most of us will feel tired, sore and energy-sapped after a hard workout down the climbing wall, a heavy skiing day or a long walk. And what you do following these activities has a profound effect on both how you feel, and how you will perform in the days to come.

Your performance in future is only as good as the recovery from the previous session. Taking a little time out to focus on the hours after exercise pays massive rewards in how we bounce back the next day, and allows us to perform more consistently for longer periods. Outlined below are just a few of the things that can be useful after training.

Stretching

In the last issue of Summit I talked about stretching and flexibility in relation to injury and performance, but the help in recovery is just as important. Stretching helps to reduce muscle soreness and increase nutrient and blood flow through to all body tissue. Stretching gives muscles time to relax after the process of contraction during exercise, and relaxation aids recovery for all the systems of the body.

Hydration and nutrition

This may seem like common sense to you, but hydration and nutrition have an integral relationship to recovery and performance. Making sure we drink enough fluids to replace those we have lost during exercise is essential. Likewise eating to replace depleted glycogen levels is important. Lack of attention to

either of these will result in a decrease in performance and slower recovery rates. I will be talking more about this in the next issue.

Massage

Massage hasn't been around for thousands of years for no reason. Apart from decreasing stress hormones after intense workouts, balancing cortisol levels and boosting the immune system, it also decreases feelings of muscular fatigue. A good sports therapist or massage therapist can also help to improve posture by addressing muscular imbalance and also treat injuries as and when they come up.

Compression clothing

'Recovery clothing' and 'performance clothing' has really come into the limelight over the past few years. Sponsorship of athletes wearing compression clothing during and after events has led to a rise in amateur sports people considering whether there might be modest gains for them. Compression clothing can be seen underneath sponsors' clothing on all sorts of athletes: downhill mountain bike racers, runners, rugby players and triathletes. Compression clothing can be seen as both performance enhancement clothing during exercise and also as giving a head start to the recovery process. Some of the benefits include:

- Decreases muscle expenditure during exercise
- Faster removal of lactic acid from muscles
- Decreases post-exercise muscle soreness
- Increases venous return (i.e. a more efficient return of blood from muscles)

Some of it is relatively expensive but it does last a long time and could be a good investment if you're training regularly.

Cryotherapy

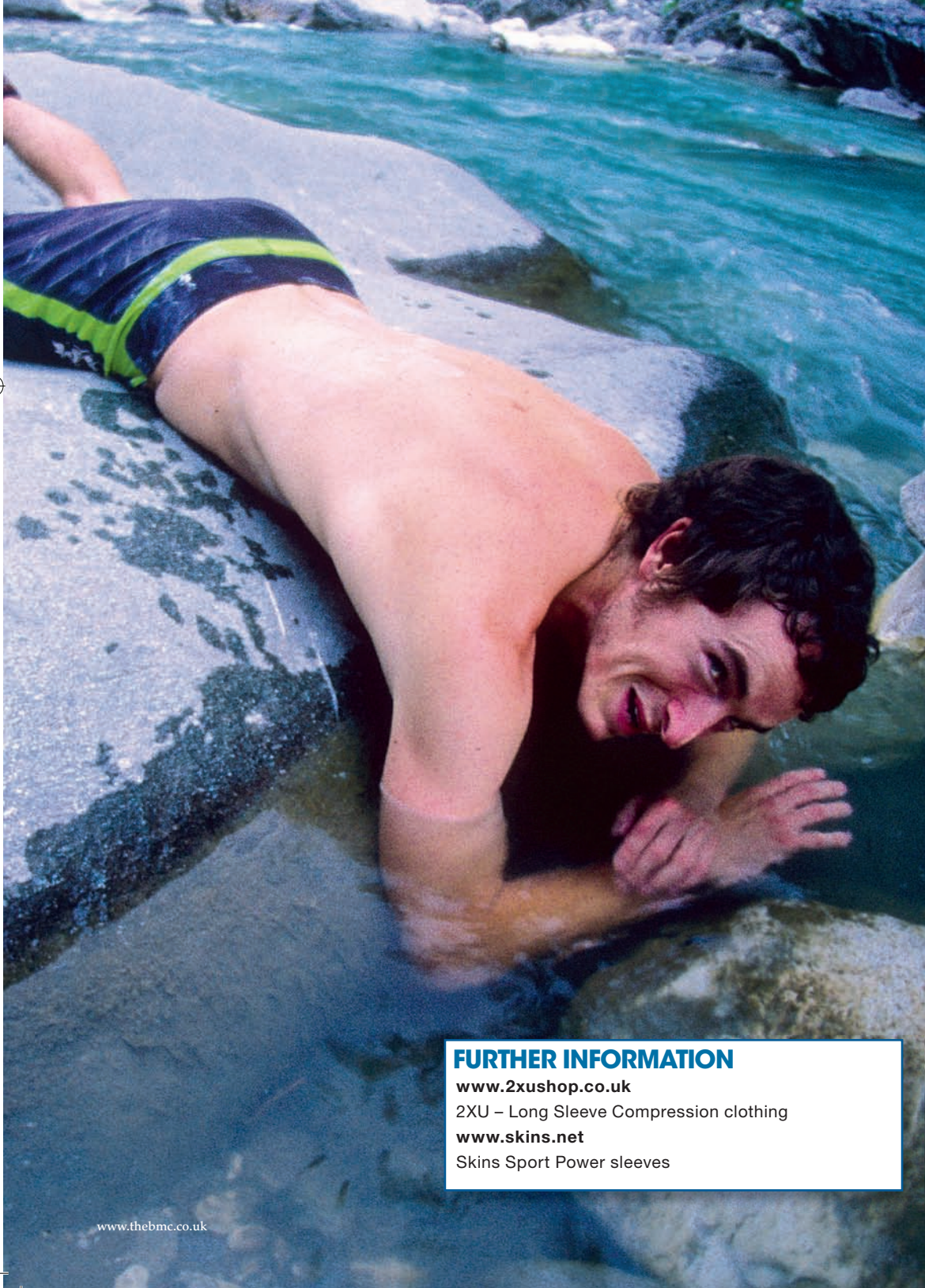
Using cold as therapy is not a new thing, but like compression clothing, it has been appearing more and more in sports



Andy Harris gives his elbows a treat after a hard day at Magic Wood, Switzerland. Photo: Alex Messenger.

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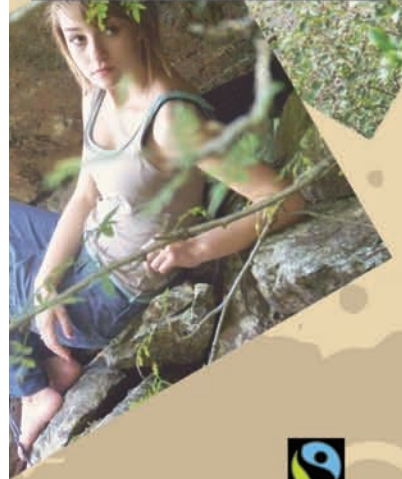
Feel the pump: a lactic acid line-up at the Arco Rockmaster.
Photo: Alex Messenger.



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literature recently. So how, and why, would we use it? Strenuous exercise causes muscle damage, just like with more acute injuries, and it is now becoming common practice to apply cold applications to areas that have experienced the highest physical load during activity. Cold therapy has been shown to reduce swelling in muscle tissue which is caused by micro trauma, reduce cell death from hypoxia (low oxygen levels), increase venous return and reduce pain through numbing of the nerve endings. The suggested temperatures are around the 12-15 degree mark for about 15 minutes. The water doesn't need to be freezing cold.

Active recovery

Active recovery relates to low level or low intensity activity after heavy workouts. Active recovery can encourage recovery and reduce the levels of muscle lactate faster than passive recovery. Numerous studies have shown that replacing complete rest with a little activity aids in blood circulation and with it comes the feeling of fast recovery. This means a little swimming or light yoga – not polishing off a few more routes!

Sleep

After all this, get good night's sleep. During sleep we restore our systems and allow our muscles to repair, energy levels to return and focus to restore. The more you train, the more you need sleep – an overtired body is more liable to injure itself and lose mental focus. ■

Humphrey Bacchus is a Neuromuscular & Sports Therapist. He has worked within sports medicine and rehabilitation both in the UK and in the USA. He runs a company called MTB Works which works with climbers, off-road triathletes, mountain bikers and adventure sportspeople. Clinics are in London and Oxford – see www.mtbworks.com.

How to recover

Following a heavy training session:

Rehydrate: drink plenty of fluids to replace those lost

Refuel: replenish lost energy resources

Stretch

Rest: allow the body time to recover from physical exertion

Ice: decrease inflammation from micro-trauma with cold applications

Compression: throw on some compression clothing for a decrease in muscle soreness after training

Treat your forearms

Forearm treatment for general fatigue:

- Take two plastic washing up basins
- Fill one with cold water and enough ice to reduce the temperature to 12-15 degrees
- Fill the other with hot water (bath temperature)
- Starting with the right forearm, submerge it in the cold basin for 2 minutes
- Then right forearm into the hot basin for 4 minutes
- Then back into the cold for 2 minutes
- Repeat with left arm

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Gary with two of his pups, Bigness and Gus

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For full information and available dates visit www.on-up.co.uk/czech-holidays or email onwardsupwards@on-up.co.uk and quote your BMC Membership number.

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Your guide to: BMC member discounts

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COMPETITION ALERT

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Email summit@thebmc.co.uk. Accommodation not included. Terms & conditions apply: The winner must take their free course on a specific course date picked by Snowdonia Adventures. They will endeavour to give the winner plenty of notice as to the course date. The prize is not transferable to any of our other courses or activities. There is no cash or voucher alternative.

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General information

Prize winners will be selected at random and will be notified by the BMC. Only competition winners' details will be passed on to the companies providing prizes in this feature. Closing date for all competitions is 16th October 2009.

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The PyB Column:



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The 'C' word

Coaching has become a controversial word in the outdoor world – but Martin Chester can't see why.

Can you think of a controversial word beginning with C? A few spring to mind, but I'll bet that 'coaching' isn't one of them! For many years, a heated debate has raged – not only on the semantics of the word 'coach' (as opposed to 'instructor', 'leader' or 'Guide'), but on whether we should even be formally coaching in the first place.

Interestingly, this debate isn't unique to mountaineering. At a Sports Coach UK meeting in Loughborough I was tickled to hear the team from the sport of Karate explain their fundamental issue with 'coaching': karate instructors are 'Senseis' and not coaches. It's embedded in the culture of their sport.

We come from a tradition of adventurous explorers who believed in the lifelong apprenticeship of mountaineering and self-teaching. Consequently some scorn the instructors or leaders who "degrade our noble pursuit of adventure and glorious tragedy" by teaching people just enough to be safe before casting them adrift on a voyage of self-discovery. We seem to tolerate Guides though

– perhaps they avoid criticism due to their roots in the golden years of alpinism?

Of course some self-taught high performers go on to apply their learning to coaching others, and they do it very well. There is nothing new in the principles of top climbers pushing the boundaries with training knowledge gleaned from other sports, but there is currently no recognition for their coaching skills. Perhaps, in the absence of any awards or recognition of coaching ability, this is why we resort to the only scale we have to judge coaches by: climbing grades. This is hugely frustrating for those talented coaches who have no mechanism for proving their worth, but I'm guessing it's just as frustrating for you as a consumer? Surely you want to know whether your Guide, leader or instructor is as proficient at coaching as they are with a set of wires?

Climbing is no longer a sport for the elite; it is enjoyed by people from all walks of life and at all climbing abilities. There is clearly a demand for coaching and not just for sport or competition climbing; climbers at all stages of development enjoy getting better.

As Chief 'Instructor' of a Sport England

National Centre, coaching has been a feature of every working day of my life for the last decade. As a keen mountaineer and kayak coach, I get to share thoughts and ideas every day with coaches from boating, skiing and orienteering. Early in my career I attended a 'Coaching Processes' course which, quite simply, changed the way I worked forever. It opened up the way to applying learning transferred from other sports and disciplines which ultimately helped me to get better at my job (regardless of whether I was coaching, leading, Guiding or instructing at the time).

So, having personally and professionally gained so much, I honestly do struggle to understand the controversy. It seems that it doesn't so much matter what you call it, as much as what you do. Why the obsession with semantics? What is there to fear? And why deny ourselves the chance to learn from other sports and disciplines?

Over the years I have watched the debate rise and fall, go round in circles, disappear into the realms of academia, get lost in competition and even get confused by its own purpose. And at every stage I have had those days where you wonder: "How did it ever

come to this"? How has climbing become a sport in which only the elite few deserve good coaching? How can it be possible that only those elite few make good coaches? Surely everyone has the right to access the highest quality of coaching, from your first steps to fulfilling your potential? Our view of coaching should be based on how good you are with people – not the size of the crimps you can pull on!

I think part of the problem is the view that being a coach holds some sort of status, rather than seeing coaching as a distinct and understandable process. The skills of high performance (self-centred focus on personal excellence) and the skills of coaching (the vicarious pleasures of teaching, communicating and structuring the individualised learning of another) are very different. Being good at one doesn't necessarily make you good at the other.

If Dame Kelly's coach could toast her on the track, then there would be a rapid re-shuffle in the Holmes training camp. But her most recent coaches were none other than James McHaffie and Ruth Taylor at Plas y Brenin. I would love to hear Dame Kelly's take on it and whether she recognised the behaviour of her instructors as 'coaching' her? Here at Plas y Brenin we totally believe that everybody has the right to the highest quality coaching.

Perhaps the most surprising resistance to a formal coaching system comes from within the outdoor industry itself. We are, of course, the lucky ones – as we have "already got a badge, thanks," and many claim they've been "doing that coaching stuff for years". Whilst many of them are indeed great coaches, it saddens me that we could possibly have learnt all there is to know. There can be no progress, no future developments, nothing left to learn. Even those whom I have looked up to are capable of the odd surprising comment; one of my great inspirations recently 'accused' coaching as being a PyB buzz word.

In fifteen years of full-time work at Plas y Brenin I must have seen several thousand rock climbers pass through the doors. They were all psyched to improve, trying to learn new skills and all sharing a common passion for their climbing. In that time I've learnt a lot about coaching by being coached myself (not so much from books or academic theory, although that also fascinates me) and from good, honest anecdotes. It has helped in every day of my working life since – regardless of whether my clients believed I was Guiding, leading or instructing. Who on earth would want to close the door on all that?

By keeping the door open to debate, coaching developments and progress in other sports, we'll carry on learning, carry on improving and carry on giving our customers the best coaching we can. So come on, let's not get hung up on the "C word"!

You concentrate on trying to be as good as you can be – and we'll do our collective best to help you. Whatever you want to call it. ■

Martin Chester, Plas y Brenin

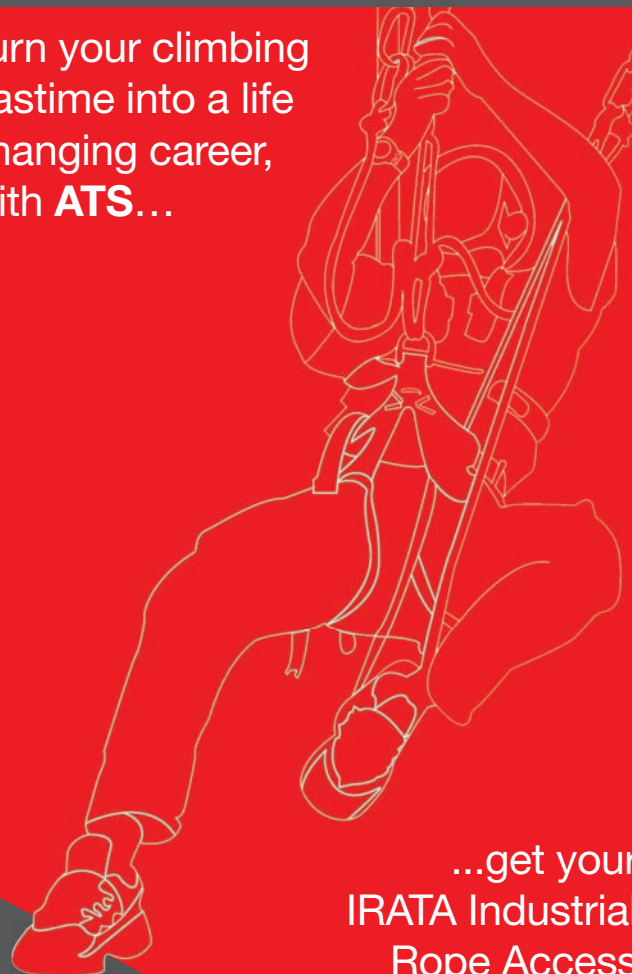
Martin Chester is the Chief Instructor of Plas y Brenin (www.pyb.co.uk), the National Mountain Centre based in Capel Curig, Snowdonia. He is also the Publicity Officer for the British Mountain Guides (www.bmg.org.uk).

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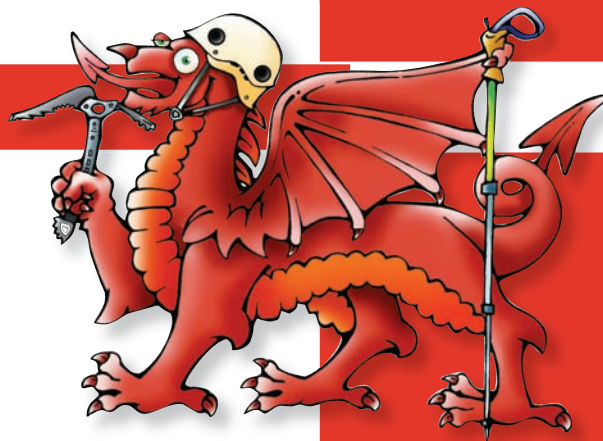
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Phantom buses

Midweek in July I found myself climbing on the Grochan. We couldn't help but notice the number of buses travelling through the Pass: 18 buses in the time it took us to climb 'Phantom Rib' – and all virtually empty. Just what is going on?

These buses are part of the 'Snowdonia Green Key Scheme' – their regular run between Llanberis and Pen y Pass is designed to lessen car traffic in the National Park. Since its inception the Green Key Scheme has been subsidised by the Welsh Assembly Government, but this subsidy will be withdrawn in the autumn.

So, to fund the buses Gwynedd Council have imposed parking charges at the foot of the Watkin Path, in the Nant Peris car park and, controversially, in the lake side layby in Llanberis. Also controversial is their 'creation' of 93 roadside parking spaces at Pen y Gwryd, with a pay and display machine on its way here too. So Gwynedd now takes money off walkers and climbers for parking, just to give to a local bus company to run empty, polluting buses up and down the Pass.

The Green Key Scheme is not working: it ignores the needs of climbers and boulders and assumes that walkers are only interested in the summit of Snowdon. Every day I see motorists try to park at Pen y Pass then head down to either squeeze on the roadside verge near Pen y Gwryd. Or head down the Pass and park in one of the free laybys before taking the bus, or walking back up to Pen y Pass. Everyday I see walkers risking life and limb following the A4086.

For all our sakes Green Key needs sorting out. We at the BMC continue to lobby where we can, but Green key doesn't seem to notice the activities of climbing and bouldering. Do we need a proper Snowdon Park and ride scheme? Do we need a massive underground car park at Pen y Gwryd? Do we need a 'Snowdon supremo' to manage the mountain? What are your thoughts? How do we as the BMC have a positive input? Can you volunteer to help with lobbying? Meanwhile next time you're in the Pass, count the buses and watch your pennies disappear – all in the name of 'saving the environment!' ■

Mike Raine
BMC Wales

Bysiau Rhithiol

Ganol wythnos yng Ngorffennaf pan roeddwn yn dringo'r Grochan sylweddolais ar y nifer o fysiau a oedd yn teithio drwy'r Pas: bu i 18 bws deithio yn y cyfnod a gymerodd i ni ddringo'r 'Asen Rithiol' - a phob un bron yn wag. Beth sy'n digwydd?

Mae'r bysiau hyn yn rhan o 'Gynllun Goriad Gwyrdd Eryri' – maent yn teithio yn rheolaidd rhwng Llanberis a Phen-y-Pas er mwyn lleihau traffig y ceir yn y Parc Cenedlaethol. Ers iddo ddechrau mae'r Cynllun Goriad Gwyrdd wedi cael ei ariannu gan y Llywodraeth Cynulliad, ond bydd yr arian yn stopio yn yr Hydref.

Felly er mwyn ariannu'r bysiau hyn mae Cyngor Gwynedd wedi bod yn codi tâl am barcio ar droed Llwybr Watkin, yn maes parcio Nant Peris, ac ar ochr y llyn yn Llanberis ac mae y rhain yn creu dadleuon. Un arall yw'r 93 man parcio newydd sydd wedi eu creu ar ochr y ffordd ym Mhen y Gwryd, a bydd peiriannau talu ac arddangos yn cael eu gosod yno hefyd. Mae Gwynedd yn cymryd arian gan gerddwyr a dringwyr i barcio er mwyn ei roi i gwmni bysiau lleol sydd yn wag ac sy'n llygru'r ffordd.

Nid yw'r Cynllun Goriad Gwyrdd yn gweithio; mae'n anwybyddu anghenion dringwyr ac yn cymryd yn ganiataol mai diddordeb yng nghopa'r Wyddfa yn unig sydd gan gerddwyr. Bob dydd rwy'n gweld gyrrwyr yn ceisio parcio ym Mhen-y-Pas ac yna yn dod yn ôl lawr i un ai barcio a gwasgu ar ochr y ffordd wrth Pen y Gwryd, neu'n mynd lawr y pas ac yn parcio yn un o'r manau am ddim ar yr ochr cyn mynd ar y bws, neu'n cerdded yn ôl i fyny Pen-y-Pas. Bob dydd rwy'n gweld cerddwyr yn peryglu eu bywyd yn dilyn yr A4086.

Er ein lles ni i gyd mae Goriad Gwyrdd angen ei ail-drefnu. Rydym ni yn CMP yn parhau i lobio, ond nid yw'r Goriad Gwyrdd yn sylwi ar weithgareddau dringo a dringo clogwyni. A oes angen cynllun Parcio a Theithio yn Eryri? A ydym angen maes parcio mawr dan ddaear ym Mhen y Gwryd? A oes angen 'Pennaeth ar Eryri' i reoli'r mynydd? Beth yw eich barn? Sut yr ydym ni yn CMP yn cael mewnbwn cadarnhaol? Gallwch chi wirfoddoli i helpu gyda lobio? Tro nesaf fyddwch yn y pas, rhaid i chi gyfrif y bysiau a gweld y ceiniogau yn diflannu – i gyd er mwyn 'achub yr amgylchedd!' ■

Mike Raine
BMC Wales



Recipe Corner:

Fruit crumble and custard



Polished off your main course and still got room for more? No problem, Amy-Jane Beer shares her recipe for a simple fruit crumble and custard.

Equipment:

- Two pans, plates and spoon
- Pack weight: about 180g per person
- Cook time: 15 minutes
- Fuel efficiency: Good

This isn't a traditional crumble as there's no baking involved, and the various components only come together for a few brief moments before being demolished. But it's a great way to use locally sourced fruit and the result is every bit as tasty as the oven-cooked version.

Ingredients:

- 1 golfball-sized knob of butter or margarine
- 8 digestive biscuits
- 2 handfuls of porridge oats
- 1 large double-handful of fruit (such as apples, blackberries, raspberries or rhubarb)
- 3 heaped spoonfuls of sugar
- Optional: 1 teaspoon of mixed spice or ground ginger, small handful of chopped, mixed nuts
- 4 dessert spoons of instant custard powder

How:

Crush the digestive biscuits in a plastic bag, or on a plate with the back of a spoon. Melt the butter in another pan over a low heat. Add the crushed biscuits, oats, nuts (and spices if using) to the butter and stir well to form a crumbly mixture. When mixed, tip the crumble back into the bag and set to one side. Chop the fruit into bite-size pieces (removing inedible parts like pips and cores). Place in the pan, sprinkle with the sugar and add a splash of water. Heat and stir for a few minutes until the fruit is softened. Cover with the crumble mix. In another pan boil a mug full of water and use it to make up the custard (stir carefully to avoid lumps). Pour over the crumble and serve immediately.

This recipe 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. ■



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September

Sun 6 **Keswick** - Theatre by the Lake - Life & Hard Times - 7.30 pm
CAN/Threlkeld Cricket Club - 01768 774411

Wed 9 **Caldbeck** - Village Hall - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm
CAN - 016974 78094 - margaret.hodge@northernfellsgroup.org.uk

Wed 16 **Taplow, Berkshire** - SGI-UK Taplow Court Grand Cultural Centre - Three Peaks - 7.30pm
CAN/THc - 01753 848944 - anne-marie.rogers@thameshospicecare.org

Thu 17 **Gainsborough** - The State Club - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm - CAN/St John's Ambulance - 01427 811118

October

Wed 14 **Ambleside** - Univ. of Cumbria, Percival Lecture Theatre, Rydal Rd. Three Peaks - 7.30pm
CAN/Mountain Heritage Trust - olivia.toppin@cumbria.ac.uk

Thu 15 **Glasgow** - Boyd Orr Theatre, University of Glasgow - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm
CAN/Super 7 - www.super7.co.uk

Fri 16 **Richmond** - St Francis Xavier School - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm
CAN/Swaledale Mountain Rescue - 07821 031960

Sat 17 **Rotherham** - College of Art & Technology Theatre, Eastwood Lane, S65 1EG - Crawl down the Ogre
7.30 pm - CAN/Phase - 01709 702550 - info@phaseworldwide.org

Sun 18 **Wetherby** - The Bridge Hotel, Walshford - Crawl down the Ogre - 7.30 pm
CAN - 01423 358673 www.wetherbyfestival.co.uk

Mon 19 **Arbroath** - Webster Memorial Theatre - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm - CAN/ROKPA - 01241 435800

Tues 20 **Inverurie** - Town Hall - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm - CAN/ROKPA - 01382 872020

Wed 21 **Elgin** - Elgin Town Hall - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm - CAN/ROKPA - 01343 562600

Thu 22 **Invergordon** - Art Centre - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm - CAN/ROKPA - 01349 854414

Fri 23 **Orkney** - Pickaquooy Centre - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm - CAN/ROKPA - 01856 879900

Sun 25 **Wick** - Assembly Rooms - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm - CAN/ROKPA - D R Simpson's shop

Wed 28 **Perth** - Perth Concert Hall - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm - CAN/RSGS/ROKPA - 01738 621031

Thu 29 **Dunfermline** - Carnegie Hall - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm - CAN/ROKPA - 01383 602302

Fri 30 **Moffat** - Moffat House Hotel - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm
CAN/ROKPA - 01387 373232 ext 230 charity@rokpauk.org

November

Sat 14 **Maryport**, Cumbria - Senhouse Roman Museum - Mountaineering and the Landscape - 7.30 pm
01900 816168 - senhousemuseum@aol.com

Sun 15 **Maryport**, Cumbria - Senhouse Roman Museum - Author's Forum - 7.30 pm
01900 816168 - senhousemuseum@aol.com

Mon 16 **Wirral** - Birkenhead School, 58 Beresford Road, Oxton - Three Peaks
CAN / Classrooms in the Clouds (supported by ICE) - 7.30 pm - 0151 666 7237

Tues 17 **Colchester** - Institute Main Hall, Sheepen - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm
CAN/HEADWAY - Tel: 01206381456 valpryor@btinternet.com

Wed 18 **Oldham** - Uppermill Civic Hall, Uppermill, Saddleworth - 7.30 pm - CAN

Thu - Sun 19 - 22 **Kendal Mountain Festival** - Brewery Arts Centre - 01539 725133 - www.mountainfest.co.uk

Sat 21 **Doug Scott at the Kendal Mountain Festival** - 2 pm
Kangchenjunga 30th Anniversary Historic Event - 01539 725133 - www.mountainfest.co.uk

Mon 23 **Buxton** - Opera House - Life & Hard Times - 7.30 pm - 0845 127 2190

Thu 26 **Rickmansworth** - Watersmeet, High Street - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm - 01923 711063

Fri 27 **Bassenthwaite Primary School** - Sports Hall - Three Peaks - 7.30 pm
CAN/School Funds - 017687 76690

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Hill Skills: Mountain Incidents

by Rob Johnson

Heading into the mountains means different things to different people; exploring this beautiful and peaceful wilderness involves escapism, physical challenge, camaraderie and freedom. But whatever your motivation, you need to enjoy the mountains safely – they can be hostile places.

As a member of the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team (one of the busiest teams in the UK) I see my fair share of mountain incidents. These range from people being lost and frightened, through to serious injuries and fatalities. So let's take a moment to consider how to avoid common incidents in the first place, and how to deal with them should they occur.

Getting lost

Many incidents that rescue teams deal with stem from people not being able to navigate effectively. Developing navigation skills and choosing walks that match your current

ability will allow you to plan a route, interpret contours, use a compass, estimate distance and follow your planned route in any weather. Many of the phone calls that teams receive are a result of people going the wrong way, sometimes onto serious ground, or getting completely lost. Once planned, tell someone else of your route. Give them an expected return time and a time by which they should summon Mountain Rescue if you don't return. It's a good idea to consider a couple of different route options in case of bad weather – which you should also tell this person.

The simple slip

The most common injury that Mountain Rescue teams see is the lower leg injury, caused by a simple slip. This can be a twisted ankle, a dislocation or a break. The best way to avoid this is to wear walking boots that have a good sole and some ankle support. Develop your movement skills too; learn to walk steadily by placing your feet carefully and think about your body positioning. Watch how somebody experienced moves and copy them. When was the last time you saw a shepherd? You could also consider investing in some first aid skills, which can be invaluable in all walks of life. I seem to use mine more often in road traffic incidents than on the mountains – perhaps that says something about my driving!

The weather

People are often surprised by the ferocity of mountain weather. Wind speeds will often be three times that of the valley once you are

on the summits. On a clear day the temperature will drop by one degree for every hundred metres of height gain – making it a good ten degrees colder on the summits. Check the weather forecast before you go. The Met Office and the Mountain Weather Information Service provide mountain specific forecasts that will tell you summit temperatures and wind speeds. I try not to be too specific about my plans until I read the forecast in the morning. If the wind speeds are above 35mph I'll avoid exposed ridges. In winter I also need to know where the freezing level is so that I can pack axes and crampons if necessary.

Benightment

It's amazing how often we're called out to help people who have been benighted. It should not be a surprise when it gets dark, it happens every night. Plan your route realistically, allowing for plenty of time to get back before it gets dark and carry a headtorch in case you do get it wrong.

What kit to carry

Reduce the likelihood of being caught out by carrying emergency kit. In summer conditions I carry a good quality waterproof jacket and trousers, spare warm layers, a couple of pairs of hats and gloves, food and drink for the day, a first aid kit, and a group shelter. Choose your clothing so that you wear wicking layers next to the skin, avoiding cotton such as jeans. As well as your map and compass, carry a headtorch and spare batteries in case you get caught out at night. See Tech Skills on page 66

The result of a winter's slip in January 09. Photo: Dom Stockton.



Expert Q&A



This issue's expert is AMI Professional Officer Mike Margeson. As a Mountain Rescue

Team Leader and Training Officer for Mountain Rescue England and Wales, Mike has attended many mountain incidents over the last 30 years.

Q. If things go wrong when should I call Mountain Rescue, as opposed to dealing with the situation myself?

A. The golden principle of enjoying the outdoors has always been self-reliance, although this is often forgotten these days. Usually, Mountain Rescue teams would much rather be called sooner rather than later. If there is a genuine injury, that is what the voluntary Mountain Rescuers are there for, and are happy to help.

Generally, self-evacuation should be for walking wounded and minor injuries. Unless the injuries are such that you shouldn't move the casualty, it should be remembered that it may be worth considering a move to a more sheltered location; even with modern communication systems it can still be a while before the rescuers reach you.

Q. Who pays for Mountain Rescue?

A. Mountain Rescue is a 365-days-a-year, 24-hour service entirely staffed by volunteers. This is a unique service and

Mountain Rescue teams work in conjunction with the police. This service is funded entirely by donations from the public, fundraising by the 54 rescue teams in England and Wales, donations from those who have experienced being rescued and their families and friends. If you would like to help, go to www.mountain.rescue.org.uk or the new 'Basecamp' on Facebook which is for people who are interested in supporting the work of Mountain Rescue.

Q. Is there a single way in which you think less experienced hill walkers could be better prepared?

Bowland Mountain Rescue Team in action. Mountain Rescue Teams operate in all conditions - but how can you avoid needing their services in the first place? Photo: Mountain Rescue collection.



for further information on some emergency equipment. Rucksacks are not waterproof so pack your kit in drybags; using a variety of sizes makes life easier.

Calling for help

A mobile phone will make it easier to call help should you need it. You should call 999 and ask for the Police and then Mountain Rescue. Keep your phone on and try to give accurate details of where you are. If you're lost then the team will ask you to describe your location, and when team members are

nearby you will be asked to make lots of noise. A whistle is handy for this, as are a good pair of lungs. Don't be afraid to ask for help from passing walkers – they might be able to save the team a long walk.

Enjoy the mountains

I'm a firm believer in the need to serve an apprenticeship in the mountains. If you take the time to start off small, and progress onto larger wilder mountains as your skills increase, then you can enjoy the mountains without scaring yourself. If you're confident walking on

the main paths then you can consider getting off the beaten track, perhaps progressing onto scrambling or winter walking. Above all have fun and enjoy the British hills – they are some of the most diverse and beautiful in the world. ■

AMI member Rob Johnson is a full time Mountaineering Instructor (MIC) and International Mountain Leader (IML) based in Snowdonia. He runs a wide range of navigation, scrambling, climbing and mountaineering courses in both summer and winter. Visit www.expeditionguide.com.

A. Rob has already mentioned a map, compass and torch, but spare warm clothes, gloves and hat, good waterproofs, some food and a bivvy bag should always be carried – even in summer. In my experience, being over-ambitious for the experience of your party, and the inability to use map and compass competently, are at the heart of a group's problems. A GPS is not a substitute for a map and compass; it is an additional tool.

Q. If a helicopter comes, what should I do?

A. Secure any clothing or equipment. Stay together, crouched down in a huddle. There is considerable downdraft and noise. It is important that you stay where you are, until instructed by the helicopter crew or the Mountain Rescue personnel. Do not approach the helicopter under any circumstances, unless instructed to do so.

FURTHER INFORMATION



Mountain Rescue

Check out the statistics page to get a feel for common mountain incidents.

www.mountain.rescue.org.uk

Mountain Weather Information Service

Mountain-specific weather forecasts providing user friendly, what-it-will-feel-like interpretations.

www.mwis.org.uk

AMI

The Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI) is the representative body for professionally qualified Mountaineering Instructors in the UK and Ireland. AMI is committed to promoting good practice in all mountaineering instruction. Find out more about AMI and find a freelance instructor on their site.

www.ami.org.uk



Climb Skills: Self rescue for climbers

With a good forecast and a summer of climbing fitness behind you, it's time to hit that adventurous sea cliff. It looks intimidating so your mate suggests that you should "take some prusik loops, just in case." Wise words indeed, but what can you actually do with this kit, so often clipped to the harness without a second thought?

Nobody leaves the ground expecting disaster. But having a little self rescue knowledge is a very good thing if you're visiting a remote crag, climbing far from help or just to boost your confidence for your next adventure.

Self reliance

When choosing to visit a remote or major crag self reliance is an essential part of the process. Being confident in your ability to manage unexpected incidents should make you feel more relaxed in general, and help you climb better.

Take the right kit

Essential emergency kit includes a couple of prusiks, some abseil tat and a knife. A lightweight ascender (such as a Ropeman or Tibloc) is an optional extra. Prusik loops are inexpensive, and two can be made from 3 metres of 6mm cord, each loop tied with a double fisherman's knot. When climbing on

big sea cliffs requiring long abseil approaches, having some dedicated ascenders is also definitely a good idea for use in an emergency. I certainly won't forget prusiking 100 metres up Dun Mingulay past vomiting fumars in a hurry.

Start as you mean to go on

Dealing with any problem on the crag relies on having a good belay. Individual anchors should be equalised and independent of each other before any climbing even starts. There should be no slack rope in the system and the belayer should be positioned so that they will not get pulled violently in any direction should the climber fall. When considering how forces will be absorbed by the system as a whole think ABC: anchors, belayer, climber.

Dealing with a fallen climber

When dealing with a fallen climber who cannot get back on the rock easily, tying off your belay plate allows you to easily free up your hands to do some rope work wizardry, or just scratch your head with the knowledge that your partner is safe. Practice tying off a belay plate in non-serious situations.

Simple solutions can reduce the risk

Sometimes the simplest solutions are the best, with lowering the climber being the best approach in many situations.

Whatever you do, make sure you have a plan, as any improvised crag rescue will be stressful. STOP is a useful acronym, standing for Stop, Think, Orientate and Plan.

STOP what you're doing and try to establish what has happened. Do you need to make the situation safe by tying off the belay plate? Can you communicate with your partner? Can you shout for help?

THINK what you need to do. Can your partner help themselves? Is outside help required or can you affect a rescue yourself? Is the climber unconscious?

ORIENTATE yourself and where you need to go. If your partner is unconscious you'll need to get to them to ensure that they are OK. Could you lower them to a ledge or the ground and then abseil to them? Do you need to hoist them up?

PLAN how you are going to do it. Can you haul, or lower, staying in the system, or do you need to escape from it?

If the climber needs assistance then the belayer will either be able to help whilst staying in the rope system, or will need to escape from it.

Use your head

Don't rush things; a clear head is vital. Imagine a conscious able-bodied climber who has fallen off and can't get back onto the rock. No-one's in danger; a clear head is all that's required.

Expert Q&A



This issue's technical expert is Steve Long. Steve is the Chief Officer for Mountain Leader Training and wrote the best-selling book 'Hill walking'. He is also the co-author of the 'Self Rescue for Climbers' DVD, so knows a thing or two about getting out of trouble!

Q. Have you got any tips for prusiking up a rope efficiently?

A. Prusiking is a simple but strenuous process, best practiced in a safe and calm setting before it's required in earnest! Two prusik loops are used; I much prefer to have the waist prusik attachment fixed above the leg-loop one. Sit back, move the leg prusik up, straighten your leg and hook the rope with your elbow at head level, then slide the waist prusik up. Don't be greedy and make big steps, it just makes the job more strenuous. Stay attached to the rope with a back-up knot as well,

adjusting this every few metres so that you have a failsafe.

Q. What is a 'Y hang'?

A. When looking after a casualty, you don't want to support their weight directly as this is very strenuous and can be dangerously exhausting. A "Y-hang" is simply two loops connected to the abseil device: you hang from one and the casualty hangs from the other, so that the belay device is taking their weight. It's often a good idea to connect a short sling directly between the casualty and yourself to make it easier to keep the casualty by your side and reduce the risk of accidental pendulums.

Q. Should I be concerned about suspension trauma?

A. In an unconscious casualty blood flow is restricted around the leg loops and waist. You'll have felt hints of this on hanging belays, but a conscious person shifts around to keep the circulation going. After about half an hour of suspension an unconscious casualty is at risk of dangerous trauma when finally freed. This hazard is best minimised by working quickly and effectively in an emergency, but if long-term suspension is unavoidable, issues such as keeping the airway open are more urgent. Supporting the casualty in a position with the knees raised will reduce the significance of suspension.

Q. How can you make hoisting a casualty easier?

by James Thacker

How to: escape the system

A French prusik knot is the most commonly used when climbing. It can be easily released under load, and is perfect to self protect when abseiling and escaping from a belay system. The simplest method of escaping is to tie-off the belay plate and take your harness off. Clearly this only works if you're in a safe position at the top of the crag. More commonly, a French prusik will be placed in front of the tied-off belay plate, which is then attached with a sling to the anchors – effectively bypassing the belayer and the belay plate.

How to: get to the ground

Instead of worrying about leaving climbing kit behind, identify the easiest way to get back to the ground and safety – if that is the right option (a chilly summer's night on a ledge may well be a better choice than attempting a multi-pitch abseil in the dark). Conversely, there aren't many crags where 100–120 metres of rope won't get you to the ground. Being able to tie two ropes together and lower a climber past the knot is a useful skill to master. Fixing the rope and then abseiling past the knot yourself gets you both to the bottom. You can pick the ropes up later.

How to: solve more complex problems

Rather than learning set rescues or solutions to potential problems it's best to think of having a variety of techniques at your disposal allowing you to design a solution.

James Thacker sea-cliff climbing. Don't forget your prusiks in situations like this!
Photo: James Thacker collection.



Every situation will be very different. Consider signing up for a self rescue course – it will really boost your confidence.

When to get outside help

Sometimes you might have to accept that you need outside help, particularly if your partner is injured, and on a remote crag getting them to the bottom or the top might be just the start of an epic. In the UK we're lucky enough to have some excellent professional and

voluntary rescue services who can help you, so if heading to a remote area it's probably best making a note of the number to call. ■ For diagrams and more information see www.thebmc.co.uk/climbingoutside.

James Thacker is an MIC and Trainee Mountain Guide. James offers private guiding, instruction and self-rescue courses in the Peak District and across the UK – see www.jamesthacker.co.uk. James is supported by Haglofs: www.haglofs.se.

A. Always use gravity to assist your evacuation. An assisted abseil or even a lower is usually far simpler than a hoist. However, there are situations where an abseil descent simply isn't practical (e.g. a tidal sea cliff). If there's no option but to hoist, work as a team with the casualty if possible. To hoist an unconscious casualty it's normally more effective to 'escape the system' so that you can move around freely and incorporate mechanical devices.

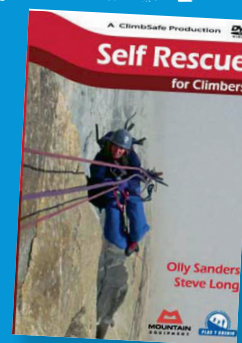
FURTHER INFORMATION

Self Rescue for Climbers DVD

£19 (BMC Members)

A comprehensive guide to problem-solving in climbing situations. It's aimed at the problems recreational climbers may encounter whether climbing on multi-pitch sea cliffs, mountain routes or road-side crags. Chapters include: good belay practice, simple hoists, escaping the system, abseil safety, prusiking and equipment testing.

Available from www.thebmc.co.uk/shop.



Rock Climbing Essential Skills & Techniques

£16.99

Packed with essential information and techniques, this is the official handbook of the MIA and SPA schemes. Includes information on self rescue.

Available from www.thebmc.co.uk/shop.



www.jamesthacker.co.uk

A variety of climbing courses and guiding from James Thacker – including self-rescue training.



Tech Skills: Emergency equipment by Dan Middleton

When things go wrong in the mountains, having the right equipment can make the difference between getting into serious trouble and getting home in one piece. Yet we're not talking about the latest GPS gizmo, but the humble bothy bag. It's not glamorous and you can't show it off in the pub, but it can make your lunch stops more bearable and help you survive being incapacitated. Time for a closer look.

Bothys, bivvies and survival bags

There is an old alpine saying: "If you take bivy gear, you will bivvy!" There is a lot of truth in this argument. After all, in the mountains speed often equals safety. Knowing how far to push the lightweight approach requires experience and good judgement though; consider carrying a few simple items for when then the chips are down.

Foil blankets

These might come in handy after running the London Marathon, but for use on the hill, forget it. Any amount of wind tends to cause these to tear and disintegrate. They are probably better than carrying nothing, but much better options are available.

Survival bags

We're probably all familiar with the good old orange plastic survival bag. By reducing the effect of wind chill, and providing a waterproof shell, it can help insulating layers – such as clothing and sleeping bags – to function more effectively. The main downside is that the plastic is not breathable, so condensation can be a major problem. To use one of these bags in an emergency, first arrange some insulation (a rope or rucksack for example) between you and the ground. Get in a sitting position, and pull the bag over the top of your head. Tearing a breathing hole at face level will dramatically cut down on the amount of trapped condensation.

Bothy bags

In recent years, bothy bags and group shelters have become extremely popular. Derived from the Zdarsky sac used in the Alps from the 1930s, modern materials make these a viable proposition for any mountain-goer to carry. They are effectively a floorless tent and are available in all sizes: from two people to big groups. There are no poles or guy ropes; the bodies of the people inside keep the fabric relatively taut. Made from breathable, water-resistant fabrics, these shelters enable body heat to be shared, injured people to be looked after and bad weather to be sat out.

Blizzard bags

The new kids on the block are Blizzard Protection Systems, based in North Wales.

Their range of survival bags and jackets have been rigorously tested and enthusiastically adopted by several armed forces and emergency services. By trapping air cells between reflective foil layers, excellent thermal insulation as well as water and windproofing is provided. With a packed size not much bigger than a guidebook, these are a serious option – especially for fell runners and lightweight fanatics. One downside is that once deployed, they don't pack down small in the field (although they can be repacked at the factory or at home using a vacuum cleaner). Used in conjunction with a bothy bag they are a very good and compact system for almost any conditions.

Headtorch

As the nights draw in the numbers of people caught out without torches rises steeply – and rescue teams get busy. Not only will a torch help you get down safely – it will also help you get found if you are injured or benighted. Carry one whenever and whatever you are doing in the mountains, and make sure it works before setting out.

First aid kit

This doesn't need to be excessive – a basic kit could be some duct tape, strong painkillers and a single wound dressing. If that isn't enough then you're probably going to need a chopper anyway. For walking and backpacking add a small blister kit.

Expert Q&A



This issue's technical expert is Derek Ryden. Derek is the inventor of Blizzard products and MD of Blizzard Protection Systems. He has nearly forty years experience of walking and climbing and his other successful inventions include the Ropeman and the Slug.

Q. What emergency kit should I carry in summer?

A. In good weather I tend to go light – just a waterproof and some food. Plus I always have a torch, whistle, some painkillers, gaffer tape and abseil tat in the top of my sack (these last two are great for

improvising). In poorer weather, or if I'm taking a group, I would add spare clothes, a Blizzard Survival Bag and sometimes a bothy bag. Forgetting to take sun block and midge repellent can also really ruin a good day.

Q. Is there anything extra I'd need in winter?

A. In winter, the Blizzard Survival Bag and extra clothes, especially spare gloves and hat, become essential. I would also take a more powerful torch. LED torches are so light now that it's worth carrying at least one spare in the party. Sometimes in winter I'll go fell running with minimal clothes and equipment, but carry a Blizzard Survival Jacket just in

case – it's not as warm as a bag, but you can wear it on the move.

Q. What makes Blizzard Survival Bags so effective?

A. It's like having a sleeping bag and a waterproof outer in a single small package. It's much warmer than you'd expect because as well as reflecting heat, the air pockets provide good insulation, and the elastic keeps it close to your body.

Q. Who'll stay warmer – one person in a Blizzard Survival Bag, or two in a bothy bag?

A. Probably the guy in the bag, but I see the two as complementary, rather than as competitors. It often makes a lot of sense to carry both.



A Blizzard Survival bag in use.
Photo: Blizzard Protection Systems.

Other kit

A map and compass aren't for emergencies – they are essential kit. Know how to use them and don't rely purely on your GPS. A whistle can be used to call for help, as can a mobile phone. Beware though, you may not always have a signal, and remember the phone is no substitute for adequate navigational skills. Spare food and clothing may come in handy, especially in cold conditions. Finally, don't forget about dehydration, even in winter. Take some water with you, or a means of obtaining some such as a drinking straw. ■

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

Heat loss mechanisms

Heat loss mechanisms (most important first)	Caused by	Solution
Evaporation	Wet clothing	Stay dry using shelter or waterproof clothing. If possible remove wet clothing and replace with dry insulation
Convection	Circulating air	Block wind by windproof clothing or shelter
Conduction	Direct contact between hot and cold surfaces	Place insulation between you and the ground
Radiation	Electromagnetic emission	Reflective layer

Q. How easy is it to repack a Blizzard Survival Bag once used?

A. On the hill it's usually easier to just stuff it into a rucksack, then dry it out and re-pack it properly back home. You can never get it back to the factory-packed size, but if you use a vacuum cleaner carefully you can get somewhere close (see instructions on the Blizzard web site).

Q. Could I use a Blizzard Bag for alpine bivies?

A. Absolutely – for alpinism, adventure racing or ultra-light backpacking it can save a lot of weight. It's still useful to have piece of foam to sit/lie on, although obviously you can improvise if you are really hardcore.

FURTHER INFORMATION



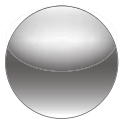
www.thebmc.co.uk/equipment



www.thebmc.co.uk/shop



www.blizzardsurvival.com



Events:

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

IFSC European Youth Series – Edinburgh

EICA, Ratho, 19 – 20th September
The EICA is hosting a round of the IFSC European Youth Series climbing competition on the weekend of 19-20th September. Europe's best young competition climbers will compete on the new international standard climbing walls. This spectacular wall is the largest articulated wall in the UK, and can be set to overhang by 12 metres. www.eica-ratho.com

Andy Cave: Learning to Breathe

Nationwide, September - October
Internationally acclaimed mountaineer and ex-coal miner Andy Cave will be appearing at 13 venues this autumn with his gripping lecture show 'Learning to Breathe'. "Cave is an extraordinarily talented climber...with a ready perceptive wit and natural flair as a storyteller," says Joe Simpson. His tour starts on 25th September in Caernarfon and runs through till December 7th at the Lowry in Manchester – see website for full details. www.speakersfromtheedge.com

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, 3rd – 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. Qualified volunteers are also wanted, please contact jon@thebmc.co.uk. www.thebmc.co.uk/studentseminar

Mountain Leader Training Association Autumn Conference

Plas y Brenin, 24 – 25th October
This weekend event promises to be stimulating, sociable and interesting. A programme of workshops has been devised, a small selection of which includes Coaching Processes, BMC Fundamentals, Disability Awareness and Bushcraft. www.mlta.co.uk

Meet the BMC – Open Invitation

BMC Office, 29th October
An invitation is extended to all members and volunteers to come along, meet the staff team and have a look around our office. If you'd like to attend you can either let us know by email to: Lynda@thebmc.co.uk or just turn up on the 29th October from 3pm. We look forward to seeing you.



BMC Winter Lectures

Sponsored by Lowe Alpine & Asolo
Nationwide, November

These inspirational lectures will be presented by Dave Hollinger and Rob Jarvis (British Mountain Guides). Whatever aspect of winter mountaineering you aspire to, Dave and Rob will make you aware of the skills required to explore the winter mountains. Topics covered include: equipment and clothing, navigation, footwork, route planning, avalanche awareness, climbing and much more. There will be a host of humorous tales from which to glean invaluable advice and photos to inspire you for the winter.

Dates and venues:

- Birmingham, Tuesday 17th November**
Birmingham University
- Nottingham, Wednesday 18th November**
Nottingham University
- Sheffield, Thursday 19th November**
Sheffield Hallam University
- Cardiff, Tuesday 24th November**
Cardiff University
- Reading, Wednesday 25th November**
Reading University
- Norwich, Thursday 26th November**
University of East Anglia

All lectures start at 19:30 and finish at approximately 21:30. Tickets cost £5 per person for BMC members and £7 for non members. Group discount: purchase 10 tickets or more in advance and each ticket will be £3.50. Tickets available to purchase on the door or in advance. www.thebmc.co.uk/winterlectures



Get inspired for winter. Photos: BMC.

Kendal Mountain Festival

Kendal, 19th – 22nd November
This year's Kendal Mountain Festival looks as good as ever – don't miss out: get your tickets early. www.mountainfilm.co.uk

BMC Clubs Seminar

BMC Office, 28th November
This seminar is for all BMC affiliated clubs to find out about the latest developments in four areas of interest (legal, insurance, technical and huts). The sessions will be run as open forums, allowing you to both ask questions and share information with others. Each session will be run by an expert in their field. All BMC affiliated clubs are invited to send a maximum of two representatives. The seminar is 10 - 4pm. Places are free and on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact Martin Kocsis to reserve your place. www.thebmc.co.uk/clubseminar

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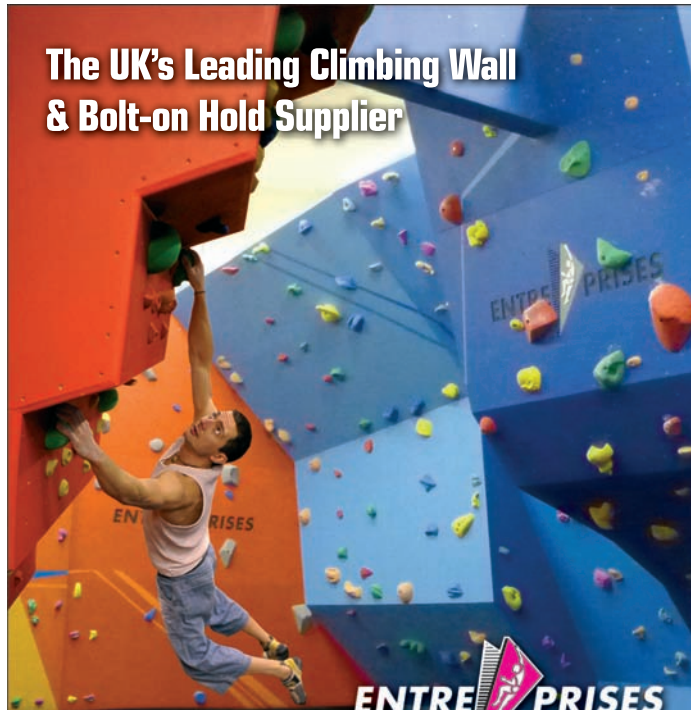
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Bivilogue

Sam Leach reports back from a baltic bivi.

Was he serious about spooning? He seemed like he could be.

Stars are nice tonight, bright as anything. Going to be cold though. Smash and soup worked well, absolutely stuffed. Feel pretty warm, maybe I made a good call with this thin sleeping bag? Better than the hut I reckon, saving money. This is the way to do it.

Stars are bright. Ooh, cold nose now, better give it a rub. Might close this bivi bag up actually. Will there be too much condensation? Won't see the stars though, but I'll be asleep soon anyway – pretty tired. Good to be in the mountains, better than playing cards in the tent. Rain sucks. This is more comfortable than the tent I reckon, not camped on a ski field. Why are we camping on a ski field? I can't believe how warm I am. I can't wait for the route tomorrow. Bit scared though. We can always back off though, can't we? It'll be fine. He can lead the crux. It'll be fine.

Feet feel warm, sweating almost. Hope my boots don't freeze too much tonight; hope it doesn't snow. Not going to snow, it's very clear tonight. **Nice stars.**

Bum feels a bit cold. Rest of me is great though. Reckon that cheese helped. Bum's pretty cold actually. Damn, already got all my clothes on. Maybe if I put my mittens down there? Is that a bit weird? Let's try it. Am I really doing this? It does actually work, perfect temperature all over. **This is brilliant.**

Cold tonight; air feels crisp. I wonder if there's a real ledge under this snow. Must be something, this bloody rock in my side. Why is the lump always under the hip? Why don't I move my hips? Shooting star. Nice. **I wonder what time it is.**

Where's my watch? Mittens are working. Knees feel a bit cold though. No insulation on knees I guess, used to be though: too much walking up mountains. Elbows are pretty cold. Bummer, legs not feeling too warm either. Was he serious about spooning? He seemed like he would, but maybe not. Would be good though, bum's quite cold again now. Maybe if I just rolled over? Might not be very welcome. Probably was



Smash n' soup – bivi food of champions. Photo: Sam Leach.

joking. Should I do some star jumps? Feeling quite hungry. Hope I get to sleep soon. Need more smash. **Hope I sleep.**

Nice stars. How long until morning now? Did I sleep? Wish I didn't wake up, if I did sleep. Wonder what it's like just before you fall asleep? Can never remember after. Lots of stars tonight, maybe the most I've ever seen. No, probably not. There were lots in Australia. It was warmer in Australia. Wish I was in Australia. That Aussie I met at Caley that time was pretty crazy. Be good conditions at Caley now, except for the darkness. Maybe not with all that rain though. Probably green. Almscliff would be better, need to get on that traverse again. It's always dry. **Wish we could spoon.**

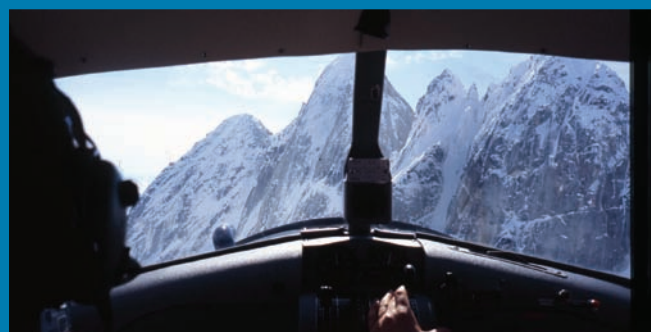
Did I fall asleep? Is he asleep? Maybe we could talk. No, he's probably asleep, breathing heavily. There's the plough. The stars have moved. Ploughing the sky; ha, that's a good one, should remember that. Maybe not.

Cold night. Did I just shiver? Can't tell. Thighs are cold now. Everything is cold. Knees are really cold. Thin sleeping bag was a bad idea. Not even as warm as a liner really – bad call. Cold bum. Cold night. Nice stars though. I was definitely asleep then, had a bit of a dream, where was I? We. It was me and, um... dunno. Why can I never remember dreams? What if I'm missing lots of important messages? Maybe I missed the one about the warm sleeping bag. Damn, could have done with that message. Stars look different. Going to be a nice day tomorrow I think. Hopefully melt some of that snow off. God I'm cold. I'm freezing. Need a new sleeping mat. How many years have I had this one? **Really cold, so cold.**

If I clear my mind of thoughts I might get back to sleep. Maybe there's a message waiting. Could do with a brew. Not much gas though. Didn't bring any teabags either. Save weight. Best wait until morning, I've got some muesli bars. **Next time we're staying in the hut." ■**

Sam Leach is a BMC member and a keen writer.

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