



BMC  
**Summit**

**ISSUE 12 WINTER '98 / '99**

**FREE TO ALL BMC MEMBERS**

**£2.00**





Apparently the summit of Ben Nevis is moving. According to the mountaineering textbooks the 'Ben' is the highest summit in Britain, but in the near future this may not be the case.

One summit I know that has not moved (well, it was certainly there in September) is the Galenstock in central Switzerland. A day after arriving in Switzerland (and despite rain and fog at the Albert Heim hut, and deep fresh snow on the glacier) I was standing on its summit (I even have a picture to prove it). It was the start of a great week of climbing; dodging bad weather by crossing from the German speaking part of Switzerland into the Italian part, then back again and through the French speaking area and finally into Italy. The Alps are great; a wonderful mixture of mountain environments, enjoyable walks, climbs of every type and grade, and comfortable mountain huts. Any trip through the Alps also means a journey through different cultures and languages. I always find it very enjoyable to experience the change in cultures as you travel from one alpine language zone to the next: each area has distinct characteristics but also fundamental common links. For example, although there are marked differences between the three language zones in Switzerland staying in any Swiss Alpine Club hut has a certain sense of 'Swissness' that makes it distinct from huts in the other alpine countries. You would simply not mistake being in a french speaking Swiss hut for actually being in a hut of the Alpine Club of France. I enjoy the multilingual environment and am impressed by the strength, size, and co-operation of the different national mountaineering federations around the Alps. I suppose this is quite normal as the Alps are at the centre and cultural crossroads of Europe.

Looking at the United Kingdom there are changes to the constituent parts leading to increased devolution and autonomy. At the start of 1998 being a British body did not seem to be an advantage: the old GB Sports Council had divided into a United Kingdom Sports Council and English Sports Council (to complement the Home Nation sports councils for Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales). The BMC had assurances that "it was not the Sports Council's intention to cut grant aid to governing bodies and, in general terms, it was expected that the proportion of grant aid going to those bodies... would stay the same as present". But it seems that this commitment relied upon goodwill and co-ordination between the relevant interested groups. And you can draw your own conclusion from the fact that this year's combined sports council grants to support



## The summit of the Galenstock in Switzerland, but where is Ben Nevis?

BMC programmes is 48% lower. It is hardly surprising then that this year it has been more challenging than usual for the BMC to maintain full support for its wide range of programmes and good causes; particularly those lacking sports council assistance such as access and conservation, training, youth and climbing walls. However, the latest indication is that there may be a new opportunity for the sports councils to review the value of BMC work and the possibility of providing additional support. So, combined with the continued growth in BMC membership and trading activities, perhaps the New Year ahead holds new opportunities.

There is an argument that the BMC should change in a similar way to the sports councils, perhaps into separate mountaineering councils for England and Wales (to complement the Mountaineering Council of Ireland and Mountaineering Council of Scotland) and also with a new United Kingdom Mountaineering Council established. Does this make sense? Could such changes lead to better representation and promotion of the interests of climbers, hill walkers, and mountaineers and the freedom to enjoy their activities? Could such a structure provide more efficient membership services that would continue to generate income for development programmes and good causes? Could such a structure lead to greater co-operation between the constituent mountaineering groups of the UK? Or would it lead to unnecessary duplication and a miasma of bureaucratic procedures between five mountaineering councils (as some would say has occurred with the sports councils)? Would 'British' mountaineering cease to exist and with it the concept of British climbs and British mountains, indeed perhaps even the concept of Britain having a highest mountain?

There is a Mountaineering Co-ordina-

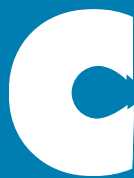
tion Group for the UK and Ireland that promotes communication and co-operation between the various councils. Two recent examples of co-operation between the MCoS and BMC are the new Ben Nevis car park and the British Upland Footpath Trust. The MCoS and BMC contributed to the cost of establishing the Allt a'Mhuillin car park and with COLA and the Ramblers (the other founder members of BUFT) have been undertaking a review of BUFT to establish a development plan for 1999 to 2002. Following the recent publication by BUFT of 'Mending our Ways' there is a need for a focussed lobbying effort to help ensure resources are available and good practice guidelines are followed for mountain footpath maintenance (see page 18). This work is just as important as the lobbying on the access consultation which for England and Wales is reaching a crucial stage (see page 4).

Once again Summit has a mixture of good advice and information whatever you might be doing this winter. And for when you are not out on the hill or down at the wall the BMC has the perfect alternative: a new rock climbing video (see 'Shallow Play' on page 9). Summit again raises questions: do you agree with the Peak bolts meeting (page 16)? Should climbers and mountaineers be more pro-active about purchasing land as with the Snowdon appeal (page 22)? And even, should Britain have a highest mountain and a mountaineering council? As ever your views are welcome.

Take care,

*Roqu Payne*

General Secretary



# CONTENTS

Welcome to issue 12 of

## Summit

the BMC members magazine. Hopefully there is something for everyone. Opinion, essays and photographs are more than welcome. Summit will develop and grow with your input.

**We look forward to hearing from you.**

The BMC offers a wide range of services to meet the needs of its members, these include liability, accident and travel insurance, access to mountain huts and reduced cost travel, and a wide range of information and advice services. For further details contact the membership services team.

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"The BMC recognises that climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement."

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## REGULARS

### 4 News

*Extended news coverage and access roundup*

### 22 Forum

*To buy or not to buy?*

### 28 Arena

### 48 Briefing

*All the upcoming events and publications*



## LETTERS

### Ten Tors not ridiculous

I could not let Martine Scholl's letter, 'Forum Feedback' published in Summit 11, go without comment. I strongly agreed with everything she wrote - until she called the Ten Tors event a "ridiculous competition". I still agree with her that young people should be encouraged to take part in outdoor activities for the sense of achievement and satisfaction they will gain, rather than for the purpose of being the best and beating all records, and I see no conflict between this belief and my support for Ten Tors.

Ten Tors is not a competition. The organisers take pains to stress this both to the young people who take part and to the older folk who train them in the months before the event. The objective is to complete the event, as a team, in the time allowed. To achieve this requires not only skills in navigation but also the ability to work together, helping each other to overcome the problems, pains, and anxieties that they will inevitably encounter during the two days of their expedition.

I have been training teams for Ten Tors for six years. Most years our intake consists of a dozen fourteen year olds who have never carried a rucksack before and don't know one end of a compass from the other. To transform themselves from this raw state into an organised team which can

successfully navigate 35 miles (or more) across Dartmoor and be completely self-sufficient for two days is an achievement that they can be truly proud of. One need only watch a few teams crossing the finish line to appreciate the elation that the participants feel, a sense of achievement that they will keep forever, and which may be the start of a lifelong love of the outdoors. You can't call that ridiculous.

Paul Groves

### Equality of Summits

I am writing to praise Roger Payne's article 'Equality of Summits' (Summit 10). In particular, having shared in the excitement of such sports as cross-country skiing, Canadian canoeing, hillwalking and gorge walking with the blind/visually impaired in the capacity of a sighted companion, I relate closely to your sentiments about imposing our limitations on those with so-called handicaps in an effort to 'protect' their interests. Inherent in participation in adventure sports are challenge and risk but that's how it is for all of us and therein lies the attraction. Creating opportunities for participation is surely the key to development for those apparently less able who seek challenges in the outdoors, allowing people to adapt their

# FEATURES

## 9 Shallow Play?

*Getting better by 'Alex'*

## 12 Winter Camping

*Plas y Brenins Rob Spencer takes a look at winter camping.*

## 14 The New Youth

*Anne Arran looks how kids use walls*

## 16 Peak bolts

*The 16 October meeting. What happened?*

## 18 Life on the Tracks

*Andrew Carling reflects on path work and the 'Mending our Ways' book.*



## 20 Route Cards

*The pro's and con's*

## 24 Scottish Avalanches

*Steve Long, of Plas y Brenin, on why people still get caught out every year.*

## 26 Students

*The 1998 Student Seminar*

## 32 Equality of Vision

*By Lorraine Nicholson*

## 34 Competition Training

*How the French do it by Anne Arran*

## 42 Expeditions of 1998

## 44 Iran

*This summer four British Women were invited to Iran to climb. Leyla Pope reports.*

## 46 Surviving the Winter

*Options for getting through the cold months*



# LETTERS

many abilities to the sport concerned rather than remaining on the outside looking in.

**Lorraine Nicholson**

*Having recieved the adove letter Summit asked Lorraine to expand on her experiences in a full artice. This appears on page 32.*

### Four Wheel Drive

I am becoming increasingly concerned about the proliferation of adverts in the press for off road vehicles. The images presented advocate irresponsible vehicle access to our upper ground and precious open lands. I feel that the BMC should take a stand on this growing trend and counter it with adverse publicity. I know farmers are more and more using vehicles over land instead of walking, but it is not at farmers that the adverts are aimed. There has been a massive increase in four wheel drive vehicles on the roads and if a fraction take up the so called 'challenge' (ad speak) then our precious free areas will be maimed.

The problem is already evident in the Western Lakes. I live three miles from Ennerdale. I have seen bikers on Great Bourne. I have seen four wheel tracks formed where hitherto was just open land. A stand by the BMC is necessary and important.

**Glenn Wilks**

### Tolerance

I read in "Climber" this month, with some dismay, that the BMC is taking an active role in a Register of Incidents regarding the Travellers in the Avon Gorge.

I find this activity very unpleasant. If criminal acts are committed by the Travellers, then it is a matter for the police. If not then it is of little concern to the BMC. I am aware that the BMC wishes to maintain acces to the crags in question. However, positive action on this front would be preferable.

I thought that the climbing community was meant to be tolerant of others, particularly where it came to life style choices. After all, we rely on the good will of others to a very great extent. This register does not represent tolerance in any form. In fact it has very disturbing fascist overtones. Informing on people to the state because their priorities in life do not match yours is a very frightening prospect. How would the BMC look on it if this was do to climbers, in the hope of getting them banned, moved on or locked up for their sport.

If the BMC wishes to see action on this front, surely applying pressure to Bristol City Council to provide a more suitable site would be preferable.

**L.S. Ashton**

## BMC Membership

Individual	£15.00 (£7.50*)
UK individual with High magazine	£39.00 (£31.50*)
Family	£25.50

\* denotes 50% discount on individual membership for unwaged, under 18 and those in full time education (please send proof of status).

I wish to join the BMC and enclose a CQ/PO for £.....

I wish to join the BMC and also subscribe to High Magazine at the specially reduced rate for BMC members, and enclose payment of £.....

Please debit my Access/ Visa account. My card numbers is:

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Access to the Open Countryside

## The debate goes critical

The Access debate has reached a critical phase as the time of the Government's decision on how to increase access to open countryside approaches. The BMC has been lobbying Ministers to ensure that the access needs of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers is fully understood. Members of the BMC's Access and Conservation team have had meetings with Environment Ministers and the Welsh Office, and attended the Labour Party Conference in Blackpool. The BMC has also written to affiliated Clubs, committee members and hundreds of trade contacts, urging them to write to their MPs to highlight mountaineers' concerns and support for the BMC's position.

The Government's decision on England and Wales is expected in early December. At the time of writing there is no indication of their intentions. However, the BMC remains concerned that some of the proposals under consideration will fail to deliver the Government's commitment to improve access arrangements. Meanwhile in Scotland a major step forward has been achieved with recognition of access needs between landowners and representatives of the MCofS. Many thanks to all those who have supported the BMC's campaign.

### Climb '99

The 1999 UIAA World Championship and Climb '99 has received enthusiastic support from the climbing and hill walking trade and with a year to go all the signs are that this will be the biggest and best event of its kind yet held in the UK. Lookout for advertising in the new year and for speaker announcements.



### Peter Mould

It was with great sadness that the BMC learned of the death on 13 October of Peter Mould.

Peter had been Chair of the BMC's Access and Conservation Committee and a tireless worker towards access and conservation work, since the Committee was formed in 1973. His contribution has been a major guiding force behind the BMC's access work for which Peter had been made an honorary member, he will be sorely missed.

### 1999 Winter Meet

The 1999 International Winter Meet and Seminar will take place at Glenmore Lodge from 7-13 March. It will follow on from the Alpine Club Symposium being held in Sheffield (see left) and will discuss some of the issues raised there. The meet event is being supported by Marmot.

Representatives from all UIAA federations are being invited. At the first international winter meet and seminar 1997 forty four climbers from 23 countries took part. These guests were hosted by 30 British climbers and anyone interested in acting as a host for the 1999 meet should contact Andy MacNae at the BMC Office.

### Student Seminar

The 1998 Student Club Seminar took place at Plas y Brenin in early October. Nearly 100 students attended and topics included group leadership, equipment pools and climbing alls and novices. Solicitor Paul Debney of Cartwright and Lewis gave an excellent overview of club and individual liability. Practical sessions covered skills from navigation to assisted hoists. Cotswold Outdoor supported the seminar and are also sponsoring production of a Club Resource Pack that will go to all student clubs and will include a wealth of good practice advice. A report on the seminar appears later on page 26.

One of the over-riding messages to come out of the Seminar was the desire amongst students for quality subsidised, skills training. The BMC, with the support of Silva, is currently examining ways of providing this training.

### New Lakes winter bouldering league

Stop Press News: contact Mike Gibson for details 015395 32426

## Concern over Lakes staples

A high percentage of bolts on Lake District Slate and Limestone crags are of the smooth strait legged staple variety. Climbers should be aware that with all resined anchors there is no bond between the resin and metal and so if the staple is strait legged, and unkeyed (i.e. smooth), there will always be a possibility that it will pull out under a relatively low load.

There have been a number of incidents resulting from this and most recently a lower off staple pulled out at Hodge Close. Lakes activists are publicising this incident and asking climbers to double check before loading staples.

- √ No rock anchor is guaranteed bombproof-always check
- √ Lower offs - Clip into and tie through both anchors (if there are two), if possible don't commit yourself to a single bolt.
- √ With staples try and avoid an outward pull.

## Alpine Club Symposium

'Climbing into the Millenium' is the title of the Alpine Club's symposium on Saturday 6 March, Sheffield Hallam

The keynote speaker is Reinhold Messner and the symposium will be chaired by Chris Bonington. Other speakers include Alex Huber, Warren Hollinger, Arnaud Petit, Doug Scott, Alan Hinkes and Mick Fowler so it looks like it will be a popular event.

For further information and tickets contact the Alpine Club 55/6 Charlotte Rd, Old Street, London EC2A 3QT.

## Science and Technology conference

Anyone interested in the science and engineering of climbing equipment may be interested in next year's International Conference, which will be taking place at Leeds University 7-9 April. Papers are being called for with a submission deadline of 31 December.

For further information check out: [www.leeds.ac.uk/sports\\_science/conference/climbingsci99.htm](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/sports_science/conference/climbingsci99.htm)

## Focus on youth

### Gripped?

Look out for new information on the BMC *gripped?*

Web site pages <http://www.thebmc.co.uk/gripped>

The BMC area Youth co-ordinators are providing information on their areas for parents and young people. These include common questions asked by parents on their children's climbing, in the areas of training, equipment and climbing outside. Answers will be provided to common questions.

Different options for young people in different areas as to how young people can progress with their climbing and places to meet others of a similar age and ability. Up and coming competition dates, venues and contact names and numbers.

There is also a picture gallery, BMC events diary and some features which appear in the most recent *Gripped?* magazine. If you are under the age of 18 and have an article, photograph or idea to contribute towards *Gripped?* magazine please send it in to Anne Arran at the BMC Office or to [train@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:train@thebmc.co.uk).

To become a member of *Gripped?* you should be under 18 and have a keen interest in climbing, mountaineering or hillwalking. All you then need to do is to become an individual member of the BMC at the special discount young persons rate of just £7.50 for the whole year. You will receive your *Gripped?* magazine free of charge approximately every three months, and you will be entitled to discounts on many BMC publications and events for young people. You will also receive all the benefits of BMC individual membership, including personal accident and liability insurance, the quarterly Summit magazine and access to the BMC information service and specialist travel insurance cover. Information on Outdoor meets run by the BMC will be available first to *Gripped?* members.

### BRYCS 99

This highly successful series will be running again in 99 with the first event in late April and the final in May. Lookout for dates in forthcoming editions of *Gripped?* It is designed for young people between the ages of 6 and 15 who have already climbed. The 13 to 15 age group will be expected to lead. There is also a bouldering with the emphasis being on fun.

### Troll BICC 98/9

Just a reminder that there is a junior category in the 98/9 BICC series. You must be a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 15 on 31 August 1998. The standard of routes which people will be expected to lead is 6c+ to 7a+ for the junior ladies and ~7b+ for the Junior boys. Be there! For entry forms contact the BMC Office.



## Harrison's Rocks - new developments

Climbers can expect to see a lot of activity at Harrison's Rocks over the next six months following a number of reports commissioned by the English Sports Council. The work will include felling dangerous beech trees and removing or stabilising some precarious boulders along the cliff top as well as improvements to the toilet block and car park notice board. The next phase of the Harrison's erosion control project will also begin in November focusing on the Unclimbed Wall area. Please note that some of the work may require temporary closures of sections of the Rocks or certain approach and descent routes - please check the noticeboard for details. Bob Moulton, Chair of the Harrison's Rocks Management Group said:

*'The BMC welcomes the English Sports Council's initiatives at Harrison's as an important contribution to the future well being of the Rocks. We look forward to working together to ensure this precious crag is protected for climbers well into the next millennium'.*

## Cheddar Gorge - winter rock clearance

Rock clearance work in Cheddar Gorge this winter will focus on the Pinnacle Bay and the road will be closed for up to four months from 2 November. The BMC has urged Longleat Estate to ensure that the contractors take special care not to unnecessarily damage existing rock climbs. It is hoped that negotiations over access to Pinnacle Bay can be reopened once the clearance work is complete early in 1999. Climbers access is permitted during the rock clearance work - contact BMC Access Rep John Baker (Tel: 01761-462267) for details.

## Hen Cloud - nesting restriction

The Peak Park has agreed to lift the Hen Cloud seasonal nesting restriction at an earlier date next year if ring ouzel are not nesting by early May. The site will be regularly monitored between Feb-May and the restriction notices will be removed if the birds fail to nest. This change follows the recent meeting between the BMC and ornithologists from English Nature, CCW, RSPB, National Trust and the National Parks at which there was a broad agreement that restrictions should be flexible and lifted early if birds fail to nest.

## Pembroke Annual Meeting

The annual meeting between the BMC, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, Castlemartin Range and the National Trust takes place in late November. Important issues include increased firing on Range East, nesting restriction arrangements and belay stakes in Range West. Individuals or clubs with issues to raise should write to Dave Turnbull at the BMC.

## YMC supports Access Fund

The Yorkshire Mountaineering Club has recently agreed to donate 50p to the BMC Access Fund for each copy of the new gritstone guidebook sold. The BMC would like to thank the Club for their generous support. The Access Fund continues to be a vital tool in safeguarding access for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers throughout England and Wales.

## Cars in National Parks - what future?

Park & Ride in Snowdonia, new parking bays at Stanage and the Roaches, improved bus services in Borrowdale, rural clearways, pay & display, the Stanage Bus and loss of informal parking facilities. Transport and parking in the National Parks has never been a bigger issue and with the Governments recent White paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone', local authorities are increasingly seeking to control the use of the car, regularise parking and encourage the use of public transport. The BMC is becoming increasingly involved with transport issues and with promoting practical schemes such as the

Stanage Bus and the lift sharing website facility. New transport initiatives are underway in Snowdonia, the Lake District the Peak District and other National Parks. As part of the Lake District Transport Strategy for example, a Keswick and District area action plan is currently going through public consultation. The plan sets out options for traffic management in and around Keswick, including Borrowdale. The results will be used to develop a single plan which will go out for detailed consultation. Issues under consideration include a 40mph speed limit in Borrowdale (to protect cyclists), better bus links to Keswick and a new bus service to Seathwaite. Parking charges are also being considered in Seathwaite.

Often the objectives of traffic management schemes are worthy, but the detail can prove unpopular and difficult to implement. The Northern Snowdonia Study may well be a case in point. Would climbers use a Park & Ride system to visit Llanberis Pass or the Ogwen Valley if informal parking was removed and what would be the impact on local climbers and walkers? The spontaneity of summer evenings at the Cromlech boulders could take on a whole new complexion if you had to take the bus, and anyway, is there really a problem in the first place except on bank holidays and peak weekends?

The important thing in all of these initiatives is that the BMC is part of the consultation process and in order to fully represent your views we need to hear from you. A feature article on transport in the National Parks will appear in the next Summit magazine in the meantime issues and concerns can be raised at BMC Area Meetings (Wales, 7pm, 28 Nov, Plas y Brenin; Lakes, 7.30pm, 27 Nov, Golden Rule, Ambleside; Peak, 7.15pm, 3 Dec, The Railway, Buxton).



Tale tale signs of traffic management in our National Parks



## Acid on Ropes

The Equipment Investigation Panel is currently investigating a damaged rope sent to the BMC after the owner spotted damage at a climbing wall. Tests have showed that what looked like abrasion was in fact Sulphuric Acid damage, and that had the rope been fallen on then it would probably have broken. This investigation coincides with a report from Germany which records three rope breakages due to acid attack.

The message is clear. Keep ropes well clear of any acid and in particular car batteries (a common source of sulphuric acid).

## BUFT and Mending our Ways

BUFT (the British Upland Footpath Trust) is developing a new forward plan and has recently published the very well received 'Mending Our Ways'. Mark Vallence will soon be joining BUFT as a BMC representative. For a further insight into path work see Andrew Carlings article on page 18.

## Ben Nevis car park now open

The car park at the foot of the Allt a' Mhuillin was officially opened on 9 October. This long overdue carpark will be welcomed by winter climbers and is the outcome of discussions between the MCoFS, the Highland Council and Forest Enterprise.

## Annual General Meeting & Dinner 1999

**16 & 17 April 1999 Llandudno**

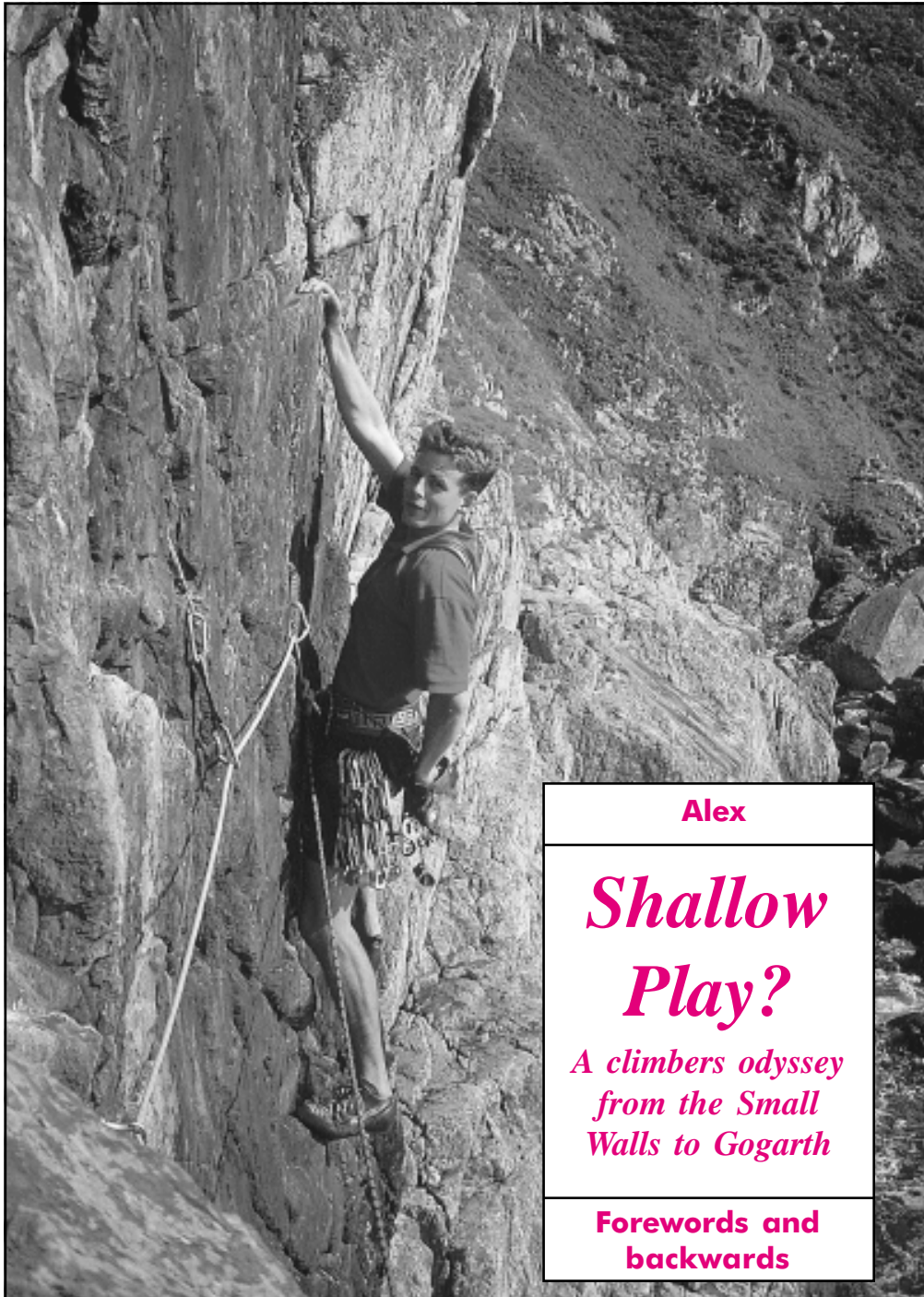
Friday 16 April 1999  
St George Hotel, Llandudno  
Lecture, buffet and late bar

Saturday 17 April  
AGM St George Hotel  
Annual Dinner



**On the subject of cars it's not just the National Parks. Dovestones carpark where pay and display was recently introduced is managed by the Oldham Borough Council**





**Alex**

## *Shallow Play?*

*A climber's odyssey  
from the Small  
Walls to Gogarth*

**Forewords and  
backwards**

**OK**, so if indulging in an activity, termed “Deep Play” by sensible psychologists in sensible jackets, where all possible benefits are far outweighed by the penalties for failure, then what do they call just flirting with it? You know, you’d like to think that you had the head for a spot of Deep Play, but there’s something inside your mind that stops you, draws the line. Big runout, no gear? - no thanks. Easy crack, loads of gear, Mmm yes please, take a ticket and stand in line. But even then, although you have no wish, well I don’t anyway, to abandon the pleasant feeling of control for uncharted vertical despair there is still a niggling desire. You want to get fitter, stronger, faster, slicker... in a single word - better - but what does this mean?

For the ripped contingent it probably means doing a few more one arm pullups, ticking that 8b+ next year, rising from the oh so low levels of 8a, and perhaps recreationally ticking a few E5s, ironically of course, just to show they’re still in touch with things, retro-cragging perhaps. For the beginners it’s even easier, since virtually anything could be defined as getting better. Hey

brilliant, I managed to lace my shoe up first time, amazing, I found the shop, bought the guidebook, found the crag, and even found the route. Didn’t climb it mind, but that’s still an improvement on last time when we failed to even do the shop.

For me, it was in a single word, confidence. I knew I could cruise Hard Severs all day long, unfairly equipped with the modern advantages of wall training; never really close to falling off, gear sort of all right, everything kind of OK - but was it? As soon as I started to try and make progress it all fell apart, a step up in grade resulted in twenty steps down in performance, classic lines became brutal fearsome struggles, and suddenly I didn’t look forward to leading anymore. It was too traumatic an experience to fully enjoy, everything always went wrong, and I was sent scurrying back to the dusty wall with my tail between my legs, spending hours pounding the plastic, licking my wounds and somehow convincing myself that footless bobbing would solve all my problems.

After a few heavy discussion sessions in the pub, plus a bit of





### **"The ultimate shallow water solo splash"**

logical thought (those psychologists would be proud), a glimmer of enthusiasm for real rock was regained. The problem was that I'd been reared on a wall then spat out into the outdoors, somehow missing out on a big chunk of that famous "climbing apprenticeship", i.e. Idwal Slabs in the rain. If I lived in Kansas, I could probably sue the wall for lack of care and resultant mental cruelty, perhaps I'd get my million. You see m'lud - they enticed me in, charged me lots of money, built all my hopes up, told me I was a climber, got me addicted then chucked me out, left me defenceless at the mercy of the big harsh world outside. Like a driving instructor never teaching you above 2nd gear then luring you on to the motorway.....

#### ***I need a photo of me on a portaledge looking wild....***

So that was the reason (I'd hate to think it was actually my fault), but what could be done? Not being American suing was out of the window, leaving three options;- a) stick to walls and sport climbing forever b) give up and play golf or c) do some learning of my own. a) and b) weren't really options, since the glossy mags kept teasing me with glimpses of the mad bad trad world that beckoned., so the answer became c). Great I thought, assuming that dreads, a perma-tan and mad - eyed stare would be acquired somewhere along the line, I need a photo of me on a portaledge looking wild....

But back to reality, a plan evolved. I teamed up with a friend in a similar position, and we went out every weekend. Starting off on things that even we found easy, but practicing the gear placements, the rope management, the stances. In fact we practiced everything but then we had everything to learn and absolutely nothing to lose. Apart from a bit of cred at the wall perhaps when non-E grade routes were mentioned, but hey they could lump it - their E grades were on bolts, and I was heading for a portaledge.

#### ***Would we be up to it?***

Well, Dream of White Horses really, but if we messed it up I guess a portaledge could come in handy. Looking back it was the last route we did this summer. Sounds ominous that, but don't worry no spiralling fall into Wen Zawn here, no enforced convalescence until the next season, merely the good old British weather. June is not traditionally thought of as the onset of autumn, but perhaps the government decided to turn the seasons back, get us all indoors and working harder earlier this year, avert the recession by global climate change. Intriguing. But

anyway, it still was the Summer's end, and a culmination in more ways than one, of a long standing ambition and a test of our hard won skills. Would we be up to it? Or would we crash and burn, taunted by yet another sneaky HVS.

Well, we got valuable points early on by a impressive hat trick, of finding the car park, finding Gogarth, and finding the route all first time. Those days of wandering around fitting random bits of rock to guidebook descriptions were finally behind us. Although I still think that Clogwyn y Grochan is Carreg Wastad and vice versa - that makes Crackstone Rib quite challenging I assure you, try it someday.

#### ***Started to freak out***

After a good solid recce, the abseil in went spookily smoothly, it's amazing how confident you feel when there's a solid prussik on the rope, not just 8.5 mm ropes slithering a shade too fast through your new ultra-slick belay device...Before I knew it my mate was skipping across the first pitch (we'd started from the notch - I plead high tide) and within the blink of an eye and a few nervous gulps I'd joined her. Started to freak out just a little then, lots of sea, lots of rock, lots of space, the mind's imagination expands to fill all available space (just like work). And as my imagination expanded rapidly, I tried to decide where I'd get washed up if I took the ultimate shallow water solo splash. Suspected it might mean becoming wedged in the ominous sea cave next to a tortured buoy getting laughed at by seals, so I diverted my attention to checking the belay instead. Ali had done a good job, all equalised and tight, I relaxed a little, and gently sagged into the harness, gingerly allowing the velcro to rip like it always does and then did it, sat down on my first fully hanging belay. Hey man - next stop Yosemite.

#### ***Whoops - wrong!***

The next pitch went all too well, I managed to avoid crossing the ropes, gear stayed in, body even stayed on, and strangely enough I enjoyed it. It was a feeling I hadn't had for a while, being out there, being challenged but feeling good. In fact the belay was reached with a small tinge of disappointment, the pitch was over, now just the bizarre spatial mechanics test that is setting up a hanging-ish belay. So if that rope goes there, and I clove hitch here, what happens? Whoops - wrong! it's the sea cave for you.....

But it all went, if you'll forgive me, swimmingly well and 2 minutes later I was the proud owner of one hanging belay, great view, popular area, small kitchen though. Even the ropes were happy, coiled neatly over a sling instead of being thrown thought-

lessly to the wind, winding unhappily beneath my feet.

Still a hanging belay is a hanging belay, especially in a thin strappy sports harness, and it was good to send Ali scooting off into the land of unfeasibility that is the final pitch of Dream. (I can call it 'Dream now, I've done it). Luckily for me (and I guess her as well) she remembered to extend all the runners. And when I say extend, I do mean extend, it must have felt strange reaching the sanctuary of a gear placement, slipping in a friend, relaxing then clipping in a massive two metre sling - eek!. But it worked, all her gear stayed in, and it helped her cruise the traverse in top style, no rope drag to slow her down on her final trip above the ocean.

### **revel in the exposure**

A squeal of delight echoing across the zawn signalled the end for her and the beginning for me. The rope came tight and I was away, attempting to cruise, and almost managing it, a summer's worth of movement skills paying off in one single perfect pitch. I even took time out to look down, revel in the exposure, let myself feel it then recover and move on. As I collected Ali's perfectly positioned gear my mind wandered, drifted back to the beginning of the season. There's no way we could of done this route then, technically maybe, if it'd been at the wall with red holds, but in practice we'd have probably tied ourselves up in knots, got totally gripped, and undergone some major head stress..

But now, we could climb, in both senses of the word - we could move our arms and legs in random, occasionally smooth motions that seemed to give some upward progress, but even better we could use all the equipment in all the (hopefully) right ways to get into and out of totally mind altering situations without the grim mental trauma that used to haunt us...So some wild - eyes might say that I'm not climbing hard enough yet, but there's no mistake I'd got better somehow, my belated apprenticeship had paid off.

### **we'd ticked it**

Alis's disembodied head peering down the exit chimney reminded me of the job in hand, so I kicked into gear and headed for the top, leaving the waves crashing in to the big, black, scary sea cave way down below. We sat on top, quietly enjoying the flat land and sunshine, feeling relaxed. The knot of tension in my stomach slowly unwound, we'd ticked it, and ticked it well. Maybe the play hadn't been deep by some standards, but at least we'd rolled up our trousers and got our toes wet.....the psychologists would still disapprove.

The rat had been fed for now and there was only one thing left to do - nip round on to the promontory and laugh at the other parties still halfway across the route. I mean - that's just the best thing, isn't it?

Alex travelled to Gogarth courtesy of BMC Travel Inc, and wears equipment by Troll, Clog, Scarpa and Marlow, he likes Nottingham Wall. He has read too much of Paul Pritchards book for his own good, but has no aspirations to do any of the routes mentioned in it. Although he does hope to sit on a portaledge sometime, preferably in a shop.

Cut out some of the mental trauma and anguish experienced by Ali and Alex - Buy the BMC rock video and booklet, learn the essential skills. But don't worry it's not just them, Seb Grieve, Airlie Anderson, Adam Wainwright and Johnny Dawes also pop up.....

### **Climbing Rock**

Video and booklet £15.00 (£12.50 to members) available direct from the BMC Office

# WINTER CAMPING

Rob Spencer, Plas y Brenin



**Camping in winter conditions is a serious business. A multi-day trip in the snow can be a real survival exercise, it's colder, wetter, windier and if you're lucky it may even snow!**

**Looking after yourself is vital. You need to stay warm, dry and fed and watered – it's a full time job.**

## Tent Design

A four season tent is crucial to survival. If your tent doesn't work you may as well forget it and go snowholing! Strength and simplicity is the key. You may have to pitch the thing in a blizzard, so make sure you're well practised. If a lot of snow is expected think carefully about the strength of tent poles – it may be worth doubling up some poles on lighter geodesic tents. Try to select a tent with steep side walls and small panels so that snow does not collect on the flysheet too much. If snow does accumulate you'll have to get outside and clear it – not a popular task. Be careful though, I was once in a snowbound tent on Nanga Parbat and had to get out in the night to clear snow. Unfortunately I was a little too vigorous and pushed the shovel right through the tent – my partner was not amused.

Four season and expedition tents often have extra guying points which should be used if possible, although this can be difficult. Regular tent pegs are not effective in snow so a little thought is needed here. If you're rich you can buy special snow anchors for your tent. However a little improvisation will save money and weight. Ice axes, ski poles and skis make great anchors either as stakes or buried horizontally in softer snow. Another trick is to fill a stuff sack or carrier bag with snow and bury it. This works well but if it freezes it can prove impossible to get them out again afterwards.

## Site Selection

A little thought put into choosing your campsite can save you a lot of bother. Obviously a sheltered site is preferable but care

is needed. A sheltered site is likely to be on a lee slope or in the lee of a wall or boulder. Unfortunately this is where wind blown snow accumulates and so you could find that your tent gets covered in snow. Go a little way downwind rather than being right up against whatever shelter you've chosen. In the mountains you will have to consider your chosen site in relation to potential avalanche slopes. Are you on one or beneath one? Don't forget avalanches are not restricted to the Scottish mountains. Many years ago I was camping in the snow below Froggatt Edge when Great Slab avalanched and buried our tent – not the sort of thing you associate with the Peak District.

Camping in snow does give the opportunity to modify the site. You can stamp down a flat platform or build one up with a shovel. Check for rocks below the surface before you commit to a massive digging session. There's nothing worse than spending half an hour digging a platform to find that there's a large rock in the middle. Once you have a flat area you can build a nice wall to protect you from the elements. But remember to build it a few metres away from the tent so that you don't get snow building up right on top of you.

It should be obvious from the above that a snow shovel is a very handy thing to have in winter. Many good lightweight shovels are available, usually designed for off-piste skiers. If you have a shovel always have it easily to hand, in the tent porch, so that you can dig yourself out if necessary. Don't just leave it, or anything else, outside the tent. If it snows you may not be able to find anything in the morning.



## Hanging Out

Before you get into your tent try to brush off as much snow off your clothing as possible, otherwise it will melt all over everything inside. On those big 70's expeditions Chris Bonnington used to take a small brush for this, perhaps a little excessive for the lightweight back packer unless of course you're particularly house proud.

Ground insulation is vital in winter so a sleeping mat is essential. Everyone has their own personal preferences be it closed-cell foam, or self inflating mattress. American testing found out that using both types, one on top of the other, was the warmest and certainly the comfiest – few folk are prepared to carry two mats though.

Once installed in the tent, get into dry clothes as soon as possible and get in your sleeping bag. The sooner you get in your pit the warmer you'll be, so don't faff around. If your bag is a bit chilly breathe into it, it'll soon warm up. Or if you're a real softy you can make a brew, put hot water in your water bottle and use it as a hot water bottle – luxury!

Make sure that your sleeping bag will be warm enough, a liner will increase its insulative ability. Also consider the filling: multi-day trips can lead to a very damp bag so modern synthetic fillings may be best as they remain warm when wet. Did you know that if you are rescued off a big wall in Yosemite by the Park Services, they can charge more for the rescue if a wet down bag contributed to your predicament – be warned.

Try to get wet stuff dry. Most tents have attachment points in the inner to allow you to rig a drying line. Gloves and socks will be the priority and may have to go inside your sleeping bag to dry out – the best place is unfortunately your belly! If it's really cold inner boots will need to go in the sleeping bag as well to help keep them dry and warm. Don't be tempted to keep your boots on though – you'll end up with trench foot.

## Cooking

Now for the gourmet bit! Cooking in tents can either be a chore or an interesting diversion. If it's stormy you're going to have to cook in the tent porch. Be very, very careful. There is a big risk of burning down your only shelter so a considered, systematic approach is crucial.

Stoves have to be stable, which is sometimes tricky in the snow because the stove will melt down into it. So it's a good idea to have some sort of pad under the stove. A thick piece of aluminium foil is light and effective but anything will do, so long as it doesn't melt. This ground insulation is particularly important if you use a gas stove because the cold inhibits the performance of the stove. The usual trick is to pre-warm the gas cylinder (propane-butane mixes are best) in your sleeping bag. Be careful though, if the gas cylinder leaks you could be suffocated, as the gas collects in your sleeping bag, it has happened.

There are numerous cunning methods of pre-heating gas cylinders to enhance performance. All involve dodgy stove modifications, which could have explosive consequences. The safest method of pre-heating gas cylinders is to use a hot pad on which the whole stove assembly sits on top of. Some manufacturers now make these for their stoves and they are a bit like those reusable hand warmers – cunning and a lot safer. But, like all gadgets it's extra kit to carry and not really necessary unless you camp in extreme cold.

Condensation whilst cooking is more of a problem in winter so good ventilation is vital. This can prove tricky in a blizzard but nobody said it was going to be easy, so do your best.

The next question is, what should I eat? The answer – anything you like and lots of it! Mountaineering in winter is hard work and so you need plenty of fuel. Appetising food that you really want to eat is going to be better than a ghastly dehydrated meal. Fat is good because it helps keep you warm – polar explorers have got it wired – they eat slabs of lard!



## Using snow blocks to protect and anchor the tent

(Photo: Jim Gregson)

## Going 'outside'

So having created shelter, got warm and dry, had a nice meal and a cuppa, What's next? The next thing that inevitably happens is the urge to go to the loo and it will almost certainly be a raging blizzard outside.

If you just want a pee take a tip from expedition climbers and use a pee bottle – at least a litre will be necessary. And be careful not to mix up the pee bottle with the drinking water. If you do brave the elements and go outside be careful not to contaminate any snow you may be using to melt for water. The best way of avoiding this is to bring bags of snow into the porch for easy access.

If you have to drop your trousers don't just dig a hole in the snow and hide it. The snow will melt, leaving behind a disgusting mess in the spring. Excrement needs burying in the ground but this may prove impossible if it's frozen. Packing out excrement is possible but difficult to do in a safe way, even though it is a legal requirement in some parts of the world. Read the MC of S's leaflet on Sanitation in the Outdoors for more information.

**Camping in snowy conditions is more difficult than in summer, but perhaps, because of that, is more rewarding. Do take it steady and learn the skills at lower altitudes and closer to home at first – before disappearing off into the high hills.**

**Lets hope there's some snow this year to do it in!**

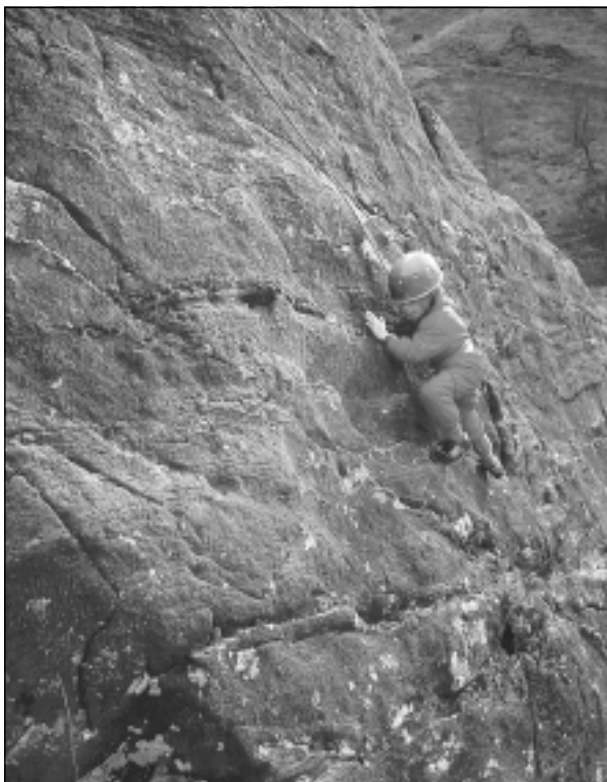
**Rob Spencer is a Guide and works at Plas y Brenin, the National Mountain Centre**

# The New Youth inside and out

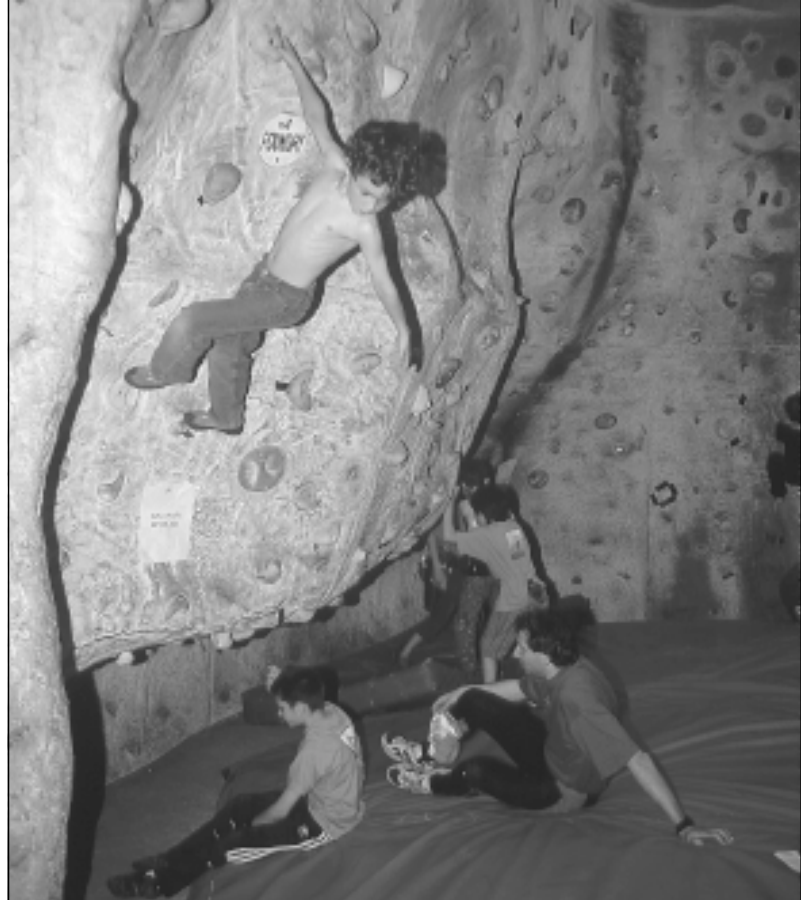
Currently many of the larger walls in the UK have climbing clubs for young people. Over the last 3 or 4 years these have become for many young people their first steps into the world of climbing. Some of these clubs run activities outdoors during the summer holidays and have licensed outdoor pursuits providers attached to them.

Some clubs may have 60 to 100 regular participants and operate solely in the indoor environment providing an accessible taste of adventure in the inner city. Some walls like the Rock Face in Birmingham have received sports council funding for their academy specifically for providing a space for young people not only to climb but experience other activities. Wall clubs are a major opportunity for young people to experience climbing. It must not be forgotten that outdoor centres also run special courses in school holidays. Climbing with friends and family can be an equally good or better option for young people who are lucky enough to be taken out. Some Traditional climbing clubs may also offer opportunities, but some clubs are more welcoming than others.

Inevitably the social profile of young climbers continues to change. Their parents do not always climb nor do any close relations or friends of the parents. Bearing this in mind there is an additional responsibility of the instructor and wall manager to inform parents about the activity of climbing so that they are fully aware of what their children are doing and the associated risks. They also need to be prepared for when a child wishes to carry on climbing on their own or if they want to climb outside. Both obviously carry more risks associated with them and are the real essence of British climbing. However many children



**And out!**



**BRYCS '98- having fun inside**

*(Photo: David Simmonite)*

despite being given the option would prefer to just climb inside often because that is the way they get more climbing done.

It is exciting enough for them in this environment and they may have another 3 of 4 hobbies, which also are consuming passions for a while. Many social/youth workers prefer to use the indoor environment as a medium to improve group dynamics or perhaps work on another social issue. Obviously the outdoor experience is still highly valued by many.

## **So what do all these young people do and why do they keep coming to these clubs?**

Usually the club has some system of progressive achievement targets, which may come in the form of badges or certificates so that parents and children can see how they are progressing. These are specific to the wall and there are many imaginative systems in place, which allow a number of areas of skill to develop over a period of time. A benefit of children attending regularly is that instructors/ leaders can gain a greater knowledge of the young climber and thus experiment with more adventurous teaching methods. Areas of skill may include climbing performance, technical skill, knowledge of British climbing and ethics, knowledge of warming up and training. There may also be an outdoor session progression element to the award. There is nothing wrong with having a leading session as long as it is appropriately supervised. These may allow children of differing physical ability and ages to work together in the same group.

## **Tips on club structure design:**

1. Children will be able to do different things at different ages. For example co-ordination and attention span usually increase with age. This will effect the standard and sort of climbing that can be done. It will also affect the amount of supervision that is required whilst a child is belaying. Age is a funny thing and there are exceptions to every rule and hence there are many judge-

ments that must be made by the supervisor or coach.

2. Consider that some parents with little knowledge may see Samantha aged 10 climbing and decide to built her a 45 degree board at home. They know about gymnastics and think that it would be good for her to be on there 6 times a week.

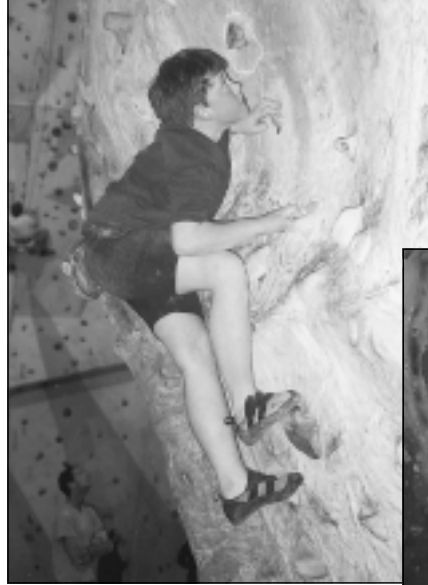
Advice should be given to parents and children about over training especially if they do competitions.

3. Make sure that parents do not bribe their children to achieve. It is often good to have parental involvement in the session for 6-12 yr. olds but make sure that they are not taking responsibility for some one else's child with out parental consent.

4. If the session is leading or outdoor climbing the child and parent must be aware of the increased risk.

5. Make the sessions fun with mini games to intersperse with the technical stuff. As the people get older e.g. 13-16 yr. olds the club may turn into a social meeting ground as well as a place to learn more skills. People may not want to achieve specific things and may wish to have a larger amount of control over what goes on.

6. Make sure that they have the opportunity to learn about or have knowledge on all aspects of climbing, hill walking and mountaineering.



## Spider Club at the Foundry



7. Have a mechanism whereby parents and children can feed back comments about the session.

8. Advice should be given on how they can best achieve any aspirations that they might have even if the club does not offer it.

9. Make the session fun and entertaining as well as informative

**If these matters are considered well there is a greatly increased chance that the young climber will become a responsible independent climber both inside and out.**



# Bolts

## The debate moves forward

The meeting of 16 October, held at the Foundry, made significant steps forward toward finding a consensus on the future direction of Peak Bolt development. The meetings aims were simple 1) To address concerns that existing routes on established crags might be bolted to meet a perceived need for lower grade sport routes and 2) to develop workable guidelines for future development.

The meeting was chaired with characteristic diplomacy by Derek Walker and a comprehensive spectrum of climbers was represented. In his introduction the meeting Derek said "Bolting guidelines are not laid down by the BMC, they are and should be climbers guidelines for climbers and they should encapsulate the ideologies underpinning British climbing and thereby give a reference against which climbers actions can be judged.....guidelines must reflect the views of the broadest possible church of climbers and so anything agreed at tonights meeting should not be seen as set in stone but rather as suggestions for approval and adoption by the climbing public"

The discussion was wide ranging and often emotionally charged. Many strong views were put and some revealing statements were made. Progress however was slow until Gary Gibson spoke up. He freely admitted to having made mistakes in the past, including the bolts in the Lifts, but was keen to see sustainable and sensitive development in the future. In order to address concerns about bolts spreading onto existing naturally protected routes he proposed a list of Peak Limestone crags on which no further bolting should take place. The meeting was able to agree this list unanimously and some additional crags were also agreed.

### These crags/areas are:

High Tor, Moving Buttress, Chee Tor, Rheinstor, Central Buttress Water cum Jolly, Stoney Middleton, Ravens Dale, Dovedale Valley, Manifold Valley, Staden Quarry, Wolfescote, Earl Sterndale, Willersley, Wild Cat, Pic Tor, Plum Buttress, The Sidings, Pleasley, Brassington/Harborough, Roche Abbey, Winnats Pass, Jackdaw Point, Stoney Quarry, Stoney West, Cave Dale/Bradwell Dale, Tideswell Dale.

A few more crags were suggested but for various reasons were left for later discussion, these were Secret Garden (Deep Dale), Cucklet Delf, Water cum Jolly (except Ravens, Rubicon, Moat and Cornice) and Chee Tor East.

The meeting accepted that on a few of the above crags there were areas of very steep and crackless limestone upon which sport routes might be developed without objection (for instance routes freeing some steep aid lines).

### Guidelines

In the case of newly developed crags and 'grey area' crags it was agreed that guidelines for development would be useful as a reference point for those considering equipping a line. It was emphasised that such guidelines would only find support if they reflected the views of climbers in general. As part of the process of developing such guidelines a set of questions was posed by the meeting and climbers are invited to write to the BMC with their own ideas on how these questions should be answered.

The questions, all suggested by the floor, can be separated into 1) Those that deal with key principles and 2) Those that are concerned with how development takes place.

### 1) Key Principles

- If a route is naturally protectable\* would climbers prefer that the first ascent be done without fixed protection?
- If a Sport Route is on sight flashed, without the bolts being clipped (with the hangers taped over?) does the ascensionist have the option of then removing the bolts?

- Is it acceptable to replace old rusty pegs with new pegs or bolts?
- Are climbers opposed to bolts which effect existing routes?
- Is it sometimes acceptable to retro bolt?

\*Defining naturally protectable is difficult. Climbers will have a feel for what is meant but as to what is justifiable opinions will vary. At the meeting there was agreement that if the protection was sound and the rock good then the route should be established with natural pro. If responding to this question examples might be useful.

### 2) And with regard to how sport climbing is developed:

- Who's responsibility is fixed equipment as it ages, who should fund replacement?
- Should the BMC assist with the funding of bolt placing or replacing?
- It is argued that there is a growing demand for sport climbing. Should such a demand be proactively catered for? Do climbers accept the principle that sport routes can be created for others? and should the extent of any demand be a factor?
- Should the fact that a route established on natural gear has received very few or no subsequent ascents be a factor when considering its appropriateness for retro bolting
- What sanctions should be brought to bear against climbers contravening the consensus view, and who should bring these sanctions.

So what do you think? Please write to the National Officer at the BMC Office with your views. All views will be taken into account. Where a clear consensus exists guidelines will be published, where there is no consensus this will be highlighted and debated in print.



The Vision at Water cum Jolly

(Photo: David Simonite)



# Life on the Tracks

## changes afoot?

by Andy Carling

I always wanted to work in the outdoors. For ten years I realised this ambition, employed on the National Trust's path repair teams at Langdale and Grasmere in the Lake District. My vision of a lifetime of glorious sunny days spent out on the fells soon met with reality. Path repair is a very demanding way to earn a living. Ten-hour days. Walk up the fell; put in a full day's work, and walk down again. Same thing tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow ..... And all this for ten grand a year. However, in the end it was the climate that defeated me and I headed for the warmth of Africa for a few years.

I recently returned to Cumbria to find an invitation from the British Upland Footpath Trust to attend the launch of their new publication 'Mending our Ways' at the Old Dungeon Ghyll in Langdale. The prospect of lunch at one of the Lake District's best pubs was too good to miss, so on a sunny September morning I joined the multitude at the Old D.G. And here was a surprise - not just the usual gaggle of frost-bitten pathworkers, but also an assortment of managers and policy people talking about funding and strategy. No chance for a good gossip here, so I arranged to meet up with my old colleagues working on The Band, a path high up the Langdale Valley, some days later.

The Band is probably the worst erosion problem in Cumbria, and a mammoth undertaking. Four kilometres of badly eroded path which, the National Trust anticipates, will take two to three years to complete. But statistics don't show the scale of the task. You have to walk up it to appreciate what the teams have ahead of them.

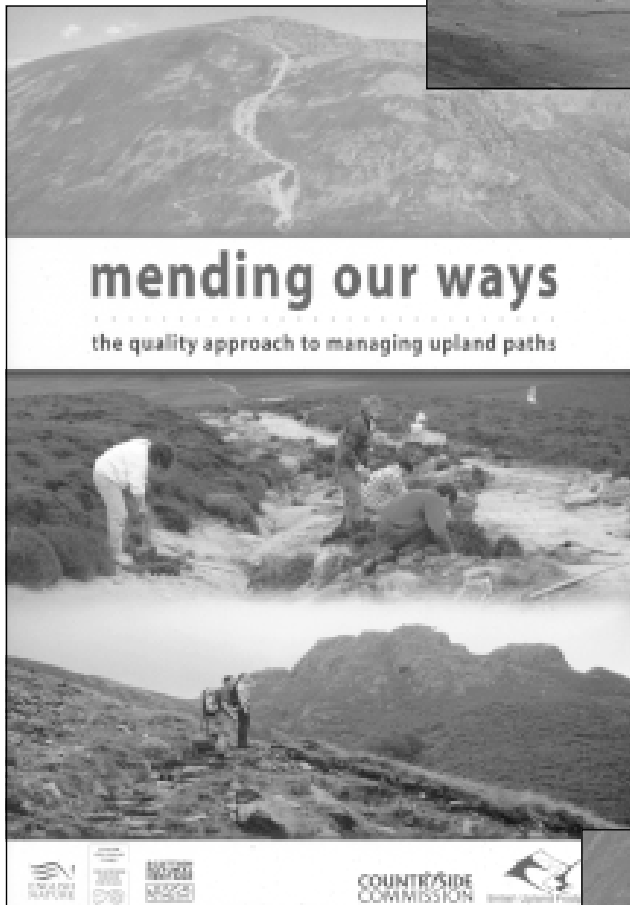
Leaving the Old D.G., I walked through Stool End Farm and up the fell. Walking on the new path I was struck by the thought that I hadn't seen pitching this good for quite a while. It was quality stuff. Large stones; a level, solid surface; drainage had been a major concern - well planned and built to last. Eventually I made it to the last pull up to Three Tarns, where I heard the grunts, groans and muttered cries of "bugger" that signal the presence of a footpath team at work.

By happy chance I arrived at lunch time and joined the team for a brew. We had met briefly at the BUFT get together and I asked their opinion of the 'Mending our Ways' book. There was unanimous approval. At last someone had stated in black and white what we knew all along - that pathwork requires not just skill, but also proper resourcing and planning if those paths are to be built to last.

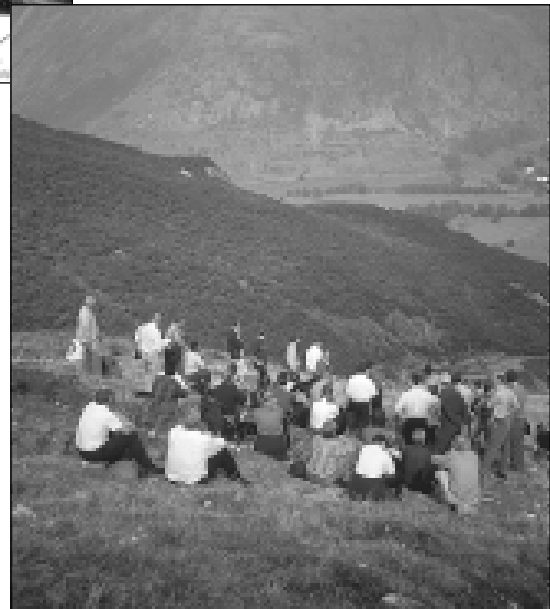
Over recent years BUFT has been striving to bring together pathworkers to determine what makes a really good path. We are agreed on many of the techniques, and there are some very



**"The ugly scar of The Band stood out like a gash across the landscape"**



**The launch of Mending our Ways**





skilled workers out there who really know their craft. However, there are still too many examples of truly awful work. What 'Mending our Ways' emphasises is that a good path is achieved at two levels. Firstly, you need skilled workers who know techniques and also how to landscape a path. And secondly, you need to give them the resources to do the job. Good pathwork doesn't come cheap, but one thing is for certain - a well planned, quality path will last you a lot longer and ultimately provide better value for money. 'Mending our Ways' illustrates how this can be achieved.

I set off back down to the Old D.G., skidding on the worst eroded sections of The Band. Looking back up the hill, the ugly scar of The Band stood out like a gash across the landscape. That was when the other big message in 'Mending our Ways' really struck me. Good management should aim to prevent paths from getting into such a dreadful state, through maintenance and pre-emptive work, rather than allowing them to erode to the state where they are a blot on the landscape, impossible to walk on and a massive task to repair. I glanced across the valley to Redacre Gill - the last footpath I worked on with the National Trust. That had once been a scar like The Band but, following



**"erode to the state where they are a blot on the landscape"**

restoration (funded by BUFT and the National Trust), it is now scarcely possible to make out its line running up to Pike O' Blisco.

This, then, was what the BUFT meeting was all about. BUFT's mission is to get the message across to land managers and funding bodies that they must give the footpath restoration teams the backing and resources they need. Good luck to BUFT. This will be a difficult path to follow, and it is long overdue that someone went down it.

**Copies of Mending our Ways are available from: BUFT, PO Box 96, Manchester M20 2FU.; tel: 0161 445 4747; fax 0161 445 4500.**



**Path repair is a very demanding way to earn a living. Ten-hour days. Walk up the fell; put in a full day's work, and walk down again. Same thing tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow .....**



# Route Cards

## **The pro's & con's of leaving detailed information about an intended hill walking and mountaineering 'expeditions'**

**Adapted from the MCofS Information Service Paper of the same title.**

In the advent of a genuine emergency route cards are often seen as helpful for facilitating rescue by Police and Mountain Rescue teams. However many hill walkers and mountaineers do not use the formal route card as they see it as constraint on their ability to change their plans and cope flexibly with prevailing conditions. Route cards will also be at odds with the 'open ended' nature of some mountaineering expeditions as people sometimes prefer to head off into the hills without a predetermined objective. Neither the mountaineer or the Police want rescues initiated unnecessarily and so if a route card is left then the person holding it needs to be capable of making a judgement as to whether or when the alarm should be raised.

### **The following principles need to be considered when deciding if and how to use a route card.**

- The ethos of Mountaineering incorporates the ideology that mountaineers should be independent, self reliant and able to look after themselves.
- Hillgoers should not be encouraged to feel that they have a right to be rescued by volunteer rescue teams or that their safety is ultimately guaranteed by the emergency services.
- A late return, a benightment, a forced bivouac, are all situations for which a mountaineer should be prepared, and do not necessarily justify alerting the mountain rescue.

Suggestions are often made by those outside mountaineering that all hill goers should be obliged to complete a route card for every expedition. Such a blanket stipulation is not acceptable to many mountaineers for the reasons outlined above. However, the act of letting friends know where one is going is traditional and common practice and is regarded by the public at large as common sense in a wide variety of circumstances, not just hill walking.

*Leaving information about the day's plans is a 'custom and practice' of the sport rather than a social obligation in any wider*

*context. The effectiveness of the voluntary mountain rescue teams is greatly facilitated if a reasonably accurate description of a hill walker's/mountaineer's plans is available.*

In principle therefore, leaving a route card and reporting back is widely regarded as good practice but at the same time a practice that can reasonably be foregone for sound mountaineering and safety reasons.

## **Who should be advised to use Route Cards?**

### **Leaders who owe a duty to an employer or a duty of care to party members.**

Leaders of parties who owe a duty to employers or voluntary organisations are normally obliged to conform to a reporting system to enable those on whose behalf they are acting to know what they are planning to do and when they plan to do it. In such a situation an expedition would not be open ended and the range of information recorded on a route card may be extremely elaborate and dictated by the employer.

*They should not be used as models for recreational mountaineers*

### **Mountaineers?**

Experienced hillgoers undertaking expeditions in areas with which they are unfamiliar or in usually severe conditions might consider leaving a simple route card. Hill walkers and mountaineers who are going to attempt something at the margins of their ability might also consider letting somebody know what they are planning to do. During the winter months potentially severe conditions and unfamiliar terrain are the norm and so leaving a route card or informing someone of your plans will often be good practice.

*In principle the person holding the route card should be a family or club member, a friend or associate.*

### **Others**

Visitors from far afield who are unfamiliar with the area or people who are alone could be advised to leave a route card. Such a population, while they are not accountable to anybody, might feel more confident if a 'pastoral' service of this sort was available and not solely in relation to mountain based activities. Such a 'reporting' service may be offered by some accommodation providers..

In Scotland schemes of this type form part of the 'quality' standards monitored by the Scottish Tourist Board. Schemes are presented as a service to visitors, and are not in any way intended to constrain their activities or frighten them off the hill and are only used if both parties are happy with the arrangements.

Many of the private bunkhouses and hostels in Scotland may be more willing to offer this service as they are more likely to be mountaineers themselves, have a more detailed knowledge of local hills and therefore better able to make decisions.

**The MCofS publishes a range of information sheets pertinent to Scottish Mountaineering. Contact MCofS 4a t Catherine st, Perth PH1 5SE.**



# FORUM

## Land purchase: is it the best way to protect your interests?

Purchase of land is a topical issue this autumn as donations flood in from across the country to the National Trust's Appeal for the purchase of the southern flank of Snowdon. The Appeal attracted wide publicity and prompted a massive response. But there are also those who believe that the purchase by the Trust and the price being paid is unnecessary – or even unwelcome. Some feel that the supposed 'threat' that an unsympathetic landowner might purchase the land and prohibit access is exactly why there should be new legislation to protect access rights. Others simply feel that whatever any new landowner might try to do, it would be impracticable for them to prevent access to Snowdon. The BMC has a policy against land purchase in all but exceptional circumstances but recognises that ownership can have distinct advantages. In Scotland the MCoF has made considerable progress towards agreeing with landowners a universal freedom of access to be put to the Scottish Parliament when it is established. Barbara Jones and Susanna Perkins examine the argument for Forum:



**"The simplest way to protect a particular interest would appear to be purchase of the land for its sole use by the purchaser"**

In the present day, when there are so many pressures on the countryside for farming, recreation, building, forestry, military use, conservation and so on, the simplest way to protect a particular interest would appear to be purchase of the land for its sole use by the purchaser. In the small, crowded islands of Britain, sole occupation is usually not possible on anything but the smallest sites. Fortunately, many activities do not necessarily require exclusive ownership for them to take place. This is generally the case with mountaineering activities, which take place on land used for other purposes, and yet conflicts occur and access may be denied. The question is, under what circumstances should land be purchased to safeguard our interests?

### To buy or not to buy? that is the question ...

#### Buy, buy, buy ...

Purchase would appear to be the easy way to safeguard interests. In mountaineering terms, these are likely to include access, freedom to walk and climb without restriction and, in the case of some crags, management to combat erosion and for vegetation clearance. Ownership provides long-term secure control, without any worries about a change of owner or the need to renew the management agreement when it expires. Gone, too, is the requirement to accommodate the needs of other interests on the land where these conflict with your own. There will often be regulations to meet (for planning and conservation purposes, for example) but in general there is freedom to manage as you wish.

And after all, possession is nine tenths of the law.

Ownership can also bring less tangible benefits. For some organisations ownership of land or property may increase their status and attract new membership. People would doubtless be less enthusiastic about joining the National Trust if there were no properties to visit, or the RSPB if they owned no bird reserves. Land purchase thus helps achieve not only their organisational objectives but also attracts further revenue.

The advantages of ownership are obvious. What arguments can there possibly be against it?

#### Why not to buy ...

Purchase may appear to be the simple solution to safeguarding interests and attracting support. However, many organisations, especially conservation bodies, have often sought to invest their resources in management agreements rather than purchasing land. Why?

The obvious answer is money. As anyone who owns a house will know, purchase requires not only capital outlay but also brings with it hidden overheads. However, delving more deeply into the costs and benefits of ownership reveals other complicating factors.

Firstly, purchase of land may not in fact be necessary to protect particular interests. Taking the example of conservation organisations again, some supposedly 'threatened' land can be protected by designations that effectively prevent unwelcome management or development. Initiatives such as agri-environmental schemes may also be available; these provide incentives for land to be managed in a way beneficial for more than one interest - such as access or conservation work alongside farming

activities. Purchase of such land for conservation is something of a waste and resources could be better spent on purchase of land with less protection. In the context of access, the Government's proposals to increase access to the open countryside have the potential to open up 1¼ million hectares of the uplands of England and Wales. In the event that the Government sticks to its manifesto commitment to do this, what would be the point of purchasing land in upland areas in order to secure access? (Summit 11 explored this labyrinth).

Purchase is not the end of the matter, merely the beginning of a long responsibility that may consume a large amount of resources for management; land is like a house - when used it needs constant attention. The difficulty of raising funds for ongoing maintenance costs is a perennial problem. The RSPB and the National Trust are bodies that do purchase land, and with it they must take on the burden of management and maintenance. They are large organisations which have available the manpower, administrative infrastructure and fund-raising ability to meet this burden. In addition to the revenue generated by a large membership they often apply entry charges to sites to help fund land purchase and staffing expenses. This option may not be feasible for relatively small organisations that lack such backing and 'pulling power'. There is also the ethical issue of charging for access, which, for organisations such as the BMC, is contrary to their charter.

Another burden of ownership is that of legal liability. The liability laws in Britain dictate that where land is open to the public the owner has a duty to ensure that visitors are reasonably safe in using the land. This will involve the owner in safety work that may be costly and time-consuming. Liability issues can be high on some cliff and quarry faces due to instability, and in woodland due to the threat of overhanging branches and dead wood. At present, concern over liability is one of the main obstacles in securing access agreements, and the BMC is calling for reform of these laws.

Finally, and looking specifically at BMC interests, consider two hypothetical questions. If it were known that the BMC considered purchase of crags where access was threatened, would we encounter growing difficulty in securing access agreements, with owners preferring purchase or payment for access? Purchase could set a very dangerous precedent. And, in the event that the BMC had to purchase sites where access was threatened, would we find ourselves increasingly committed to land management - and fund raising to support it - rather than working in the interests of the sport itself?

## And another problem ...

In the event that purchase of land is considered necessary, who should buy it? When an organisation purchases land it assumes the power to manage that land according to its own objectives. Very few organisations share exactly the same vision. Take the Snowdon case. The National Trust is an obvious candidate to co-ordinate the purchase, having the staff and land management expertise on hand. BMC members and affiliated clubs have contributed over £12,000 through the Chris Brasher challenge, and a great deal more money has doubtless been donated by keen mountaineers direct to the Trust. The National Trust is obviously a responsible and respected land manager, but it may not always be in harmony with mountaineers. For example, the Trust has a policy against wild camping on some of its estates, including North Wales, and this alone has deterred some clubs and individuals from contributing to the Snowdon Appeal. The BMC believes that the Trust should manage the estate in a way that accommodates the needs of all those who have contributed - and that includes BMC members. We shall be pressing them to do so.

## Some possible answers

Two factors have emerged as fundamental to the question "to buy or not to buy" - the size of the organisation, and its resources. But there is a third idea. This concerns the purpose for which the organisation seeks to exercise control over the land. Land is often purchased with the objective of producing a crop of some sort, and in order to maximise this crop the land may need to be managed in a specific way. The crop may be wheat, cattle, or sheep, for example. Similarly, wildlife organisations may purchase land where a suitable management regime cannot



### "Another burden of ownership is that of legal liability"

be negotiated. This they may manage for a specific purpose - to conserve bird colonies, wildflowers or butterflies. Are these not, in a sense, also a crop? Members pay subscriptions to the wildlife organisation, not only because members believe in the cause of conservation but also because they like to see this 'product' in the countryside.

Now take the case of an organisation such as the BMC. No 'crop' is taken. Indeed, best practice to mountaineers is to enjoy the land in its natural state and depart, having (to use the hackneyed phrase) "taken nothing but photographs and left nothing but footprints". We do not seek to alter the land in any way - the reverse is in fact true. Is purchase of land therefore necessary? In the small, crowded islands of Britain is it not possible to find a way for this 'transient' use of the land to sit comfortably alongside other uses? The Government's current review of access to the open countryside has the potential to do just that.

### BMC Policy on land purchase

The BMC has a presumption against the purchase of land. Wherever access is denied the first option is always to negotiate an access agreement with the owner. Where this is not possible, access should be secured by encouraging a third party which is sympathetic to access (such as a local authority or trust) to purchase or lease the site. Purchase or lease of land directly by the BMC should be avoided. The overriding consideration is that any agreement entered into must not compromise the provision of free access to other sites.

# Why do people still get avalanched?

by Steve Long

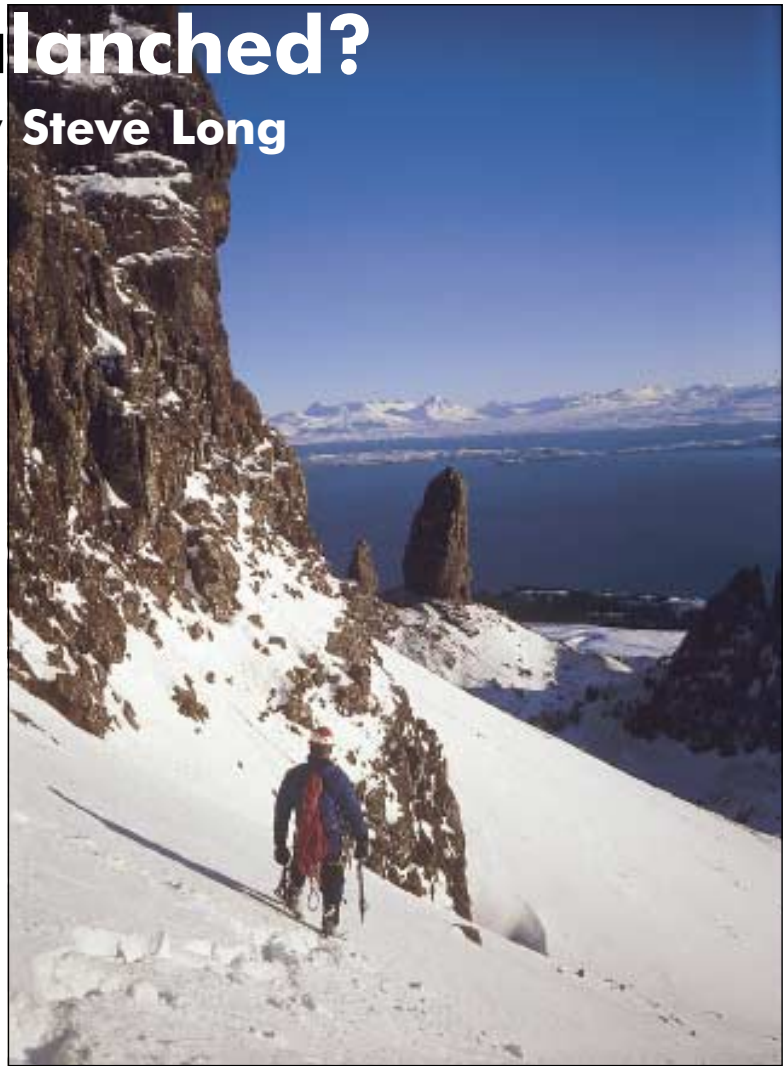
Every year various journalists pose this question before pontificating on the irresponsible nature of mountaineers who thereby risk the lives of the rescue team at great expense to the taxpayer. It would appear that the many thousands of drivers who ignore the warnings of dangerous road conditions and thereby come to grief (and really do cost the emergency services a fortune) are somehow justifiable. However, exposing the ironies implicit in public opinion isn't going to increase mountain safety, so let us examine the sources of information available to us about avalanche conditions and try to make best use of what is available.

Avalanche Information Service. I mention this first because it's the most obvious source of information - however; often misunderstood or used out of context. A daily report is printed and posted in prominent access points at a small number of Scottish mountain areas. These are limited to various Cairngorm areas, Creagh Meaghaidh, Lochaber, and Glencoe. These are specifically based on observations from the same area, and make reasonable predictions about particular slope aspects. That leaves the rest of Britain, where you will have to make a similar sort of judgement for yourself. But don't be misled - snow can't read the outlook suggestions! Avalanche conditions are based on regular observations combined with the weather forecast and a bit of statistical analysis. Quite subtle changes in the weather - particularly wind direction/speed and temperature, can lead to very significant unforecasted changes in the snowpack.

Weather forecast. The weather pattern is enormously important in developing the snowpack, so keeping an eye on the weather pattern over the days leading up to your trip will give you very useful information; perhaps to postpone your trip or at least to change your destination. The forecast for the coming day is also useful, but you should stay tuned to what the weather is really doing as the day progresses - it has been known for the forecasters to get it wrong!

What the mountains can tell you. This is too subtle an art to cover in detail here; if you want to stack the odds in your favour in winter, you should seek out ways of recognising the information available. Go out with somebody more experienced (beware of anybody calling themselves an expert - learning about snow is a humbling experience!) and learn from their methods. Read books, go to lectures... it all helps. Learning to read from the snow is a bit like learning to play poker; the good player can read subtle signs in their opponent; body language, tones of voice. Snow changes in appearance and texture according to conditions, so changes in brightness, colour, the sound of your feet as you walk, all give plenty of information. As the sun hits crags, little spontaneous snow slides may be triggered. For that matter, any signs of recent avalanche activity tells you a lot about a particular slope aspect, although it might be limited to a particular slope angle or altitude.

Within the snowpack may be hidden important layers with more or less cohesion. Digging snowpits at various intervals throughout the day can give you important information about how well the snow is bonded and the depth of any shear planes. Various shear tests (Rutschblocks and shovel) give a feel for inherent instability and the energy required to trigger an ava-



**"constantly read and re-evaluate the clues"  
The Old Man of Storr in a rare winter**

*(Photo: Paul Pritchard)*

lanche. The information gained from these tests and observations hold true for all similar slopes (i.e. similar aspect, angle and altitude) and regular quick tests will give a picture of the whole landscape.

Putting it all together. Using all the information available will enable you to identify areas of greater risk, but only if you are constantly reading and re-evaluating the clues. An avalanche information notice is simply further information to add to your own observations.

Using the terrain. You are not going to get avalanched on a plateau unless you walk under a slope or over a cornice. Getting to or from the plateau may however be more problematic. This sounds pretty obvious, but reading the terrain is a risk management exercise. Ask yourself (a) how likely is the slope to avalanche, and (b) how serious would that be? A shallow surface slough in a small bowl is likely to be far less serious than a deep avalanche above a crag. Indeed it is the craggy nature of our hills that makes getting swept off your feet particularly dangerous in Britain. By identifying areas of higher risk you may be able to avoid them, or at least reduce the risk by identifying a safer route through them, linking so-called islands of safety. Conversely, beware of islands of danger! Within a mainly safe slope, there may be little patches of unstable snow due to some other factor (such as angle or exposure to sun). An avalanche of a small patch might be enough to sweep you off your feet and thus be at the mercy of the terrain below.



Crossing a potentially risky slope one at a time will reduce the loading, and enable other members of the party to identify sightings of the victim if the worst should happen. Survival chances for avalanche victims are dramatically increased if observers conduct an immediate search - but only if there is not further avalanche danger for the searchers....

Advice to climbers. The biggest area of risk is the cornice. Any ground over about 50° will generally shed snow as fast as it accumulates, but wind deposition at the top of the climb can build up big masses of potentially unstable snow. Slab can build up on Grade I-II ground, which may constitute the whole climb or at least the approach and escape. Once established on steeper climbs, there is a danger of the cornice being triggered from above and being channelled down the climb. The exit from the climb can be particularly hazardous if a cornice has formed, especially if solid rock belays are not available. Avalanches on the exit pitch is the single biggest cause of accidents for climbers. Treat them with extreme caution. Has the temperature warmed during the day? Has there been wind or weather deposition before or during the climb? If any of these factors give cause for concern, then the best way to finish the climb is often by abseil descent.



### **Slab can build up on Grade I-II ground**

Over the years I have lost several friends to cornice collapse, so I cannot stress this advice too strongly. Cornices are difficult to test from below: if conditions lead you to suspect them, don't risk it.

Keep a weather eye open. Keep re-evaluating throughout the day. If the level of risk is changing, modify your plans. Avoid slopes where avalanche danger is increasing, or if this is not possible, try to reduce the risk to manageable levels. But the main danger is ignorance. If you don't know how to read the snow, and at best rely on avalanche report notices, then be prepared for the mountains to deal out a few hard lessons!

**Steve Long is an Instructor and Guide at Plas y Brenin.**



**If you want to learn more about avalanches as well as the full range of winter skills then get along to one of the BMC winter lecture. With the support of Lowe Alpine the talks are given by Louise Thomas and Andy Perkins.**

# Students

## The good practice seminar

by James Marshall

It was a fine autumn day when Pete and I got in the car and headed off for Plas Y Brenin early on Friday morning. We were to attend the BMC Student Safety and Good Practice Seminar, but we intended to get a few routes in while we were up there, before the weekend proper started. We arrived at Llyn Ogwen in fine(ish) weather, having had the quickest journey up from Milton Keynes we'd ever experienced. So things were looking promising as we set off for the crag. However, the sky was starting to look a bit grey when we reached the Idwal Slabs and in typical British fashion, just after having geared up, it started to pour down and our route turned into a waterfall. With several inches of water in our boots, we retired to the dryness of the Plas Y Brenin climbing wall for a few routes and a sneaky look at the bouldering problems set for the next evening's competition. We spent the evening in a local hostelry drinking beer, eating pizza, and drying our clothes out in front of the fire.

Fortunately, the weekend was set to improve significantly. We arrived early on Saturday morning to be greeted by a horde of around 100 people all registering for the seminar. After a welcoming speech from Roger Payne things were quickly under way, with 6 workshops to circulate around. These covered: first aid and emergency rescue, club management and folders, group leadership, maintenance of shared gear, and introducing novices to climbing walls. The proceedings were rounded off for the day with a lecture on negligence and the "duty of care". The day was particularly illuminating for us as it revealed we had been driving our University minibus illegally and facing a £1000 fine for the driver on every trip! (Something every club should know about is the "Section 19"). The "duty of care" lecture also helped clarify the concepts of negligence and responsibility in climbing, mountaineering and walking accidents. After attending the very popular bouldering competition (an orienteering event was also organised), and not even submitting our score sheets due to poor performance (see,

we didn't cheat!), the evening gave the chance for a beer and an excellent slide presentation from Julie Ann Clyma on her expedition to K2.

Following a very wet and windy night, in which our tent was nearly blown down, we returned to PyB on the Sunday morning to be shown the new BMC video (minus sound, due to a slight technical hitch!), and then on to the practical sessions. Everyone had been polled the previous evening to decide on the day's workshops, so while we were doing advanced rope skills, other groups were doing navigation, mountain leadership, and placing lead protection, among other activities. We found the day-long session immensely rewarding, practising setting up belay anchors, locking off belays, assisted hoists, 3 in 1 hoists, prusiking, and abseiling. After the day's workshops, everyone met up again for a final session to discuss the weekend's activities, raise points,



**"We found the day-long session immensely rewarding, practising setting up ....assisted hoists, prusiking, and abseiling"**



**"next year it will be even better"**

and share experiences. Comments were also asked for regarding the Student Club Folder currently under preparation by the BMC, which should be a very valuable resource when it's sent out to everyone. There was a lot of feedback on the organisation of the seminar too, so next year expect it to be even better! With all that done, there was just time for a final cup of coffee and slice of cake, before beginning the long drive home after a very interesting and useful weekend, full of ideas on ways to improve our club...

All that remains is to thank everyone involved in organising the weekend (especially Roger Payne and Andy MacNae, as well as all the other volunteers who generously contributed their time), and to recommend that if your University club didn't send someone this year, they definitely should next year!

**James Marshall is President of the De Montfort University Climbing Club.**

The Student Club Folder will be sent out to all student member clubs and the BMC club guidance notes can be viewed on the BMC website which also contains a wealth of good practice advice.





# Arena

## Management Committee Meeting 14 October

The meeting opened in silence in memory of Peter Mould who had passed away on 13 October. BMC members had been urged to write to their MPs to support the BMC response to the Government's consultation on Access to the Open Countryside in England and Wales. The Government will announce its decision at the end of November after which there may be a need for further lobbying.

There have been 83 replies from clubs responding to the 'Membership 2000' response form. The Executive Committee will consider the replies in detail and report to the next Management meeting. In response to the Chris Brasher challenge BMC members have contributed over £10,000 via the office towards the National Trust's Snowdon appeal.

BMC members are invited to put forward any suitable nominations in respect of the following Chairs who are completing their terms in office at the end of the year: Mike Ratty (Midlands Area), Paul Dewhurst (Lancashire & Cheshire Area), Ellyn Jones (Committee for Wales), and Graham Desroy (Competitions Committee). Paul Dewhurst and Tim Richardson are the respective acting Chairs of the Competition Committee and Access and Conservation Committee; and both are willing to be appointed as Chairs. At the next Management Committee meeting there will be a report about potential candidates for President

and Vice President to be nominated for the AGM on 17 April 1999 in Llandudno.

A vote of thanks was given to Liz Guest and Liam Hastie for seven years work at the BMC office. Andy Gowland is the new Marketing Co-ordinator and Anne Arran the new Training Officer. Progress has been made for a joint approach between Tarmac and the BMC for the management of Horseshoe Quarry.

The next Management Committee meeting is on 12 December in Buxton and will discuss the statements agreed at the end of the International Women's meet and Seminar (see Summit 11). Areas are invited to discuss these statements and any other issues raised in this issue of Summit.

### History Errata

#### A sharp eyed Ian Thomson has spotted the following errors in the BMC history

The MIC was introduced in 1968, not 1965 (the formation of the MIC was approved in 1965)

The Yorkshire Ramblers Club was founded in 1892, not 1899.

The Rucksack Club was founded in 1902, not 1907.

	LAKE DISTRICT	LANCS & CHESHIRE	LONDON & SE	MIDLANDS	NORTH EAST	PEAK DISTRICT	SW & SOUTHERN	WALES	YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
<b>Nov '98</b>	Fri 27th 19:30 Golden Rule, Ambleside	Mon 23rd 19:30 BMC Office Manchester			Mon 30th AGM 20:00 7 Stars Shincliffe nr Durham		Sat 28th Plymouth	Sat 28th AGM 19:00 PyB	
<b>Dec</b>			Tue 8th AGM 19:00 Francis Ho Francis St London SW1	Thu 3rd AGM		Thu 3rd AGM 19:15 The Railway Buxton			Mon 7th 19:00 Leeds Wall, Gelder Rd
<b>Feb '99</b>		Mon 1st 19:30 BMC Office Manchester	Tue 9th 19:00 Frances Ho Frances St London SW1		Mon 1st 20:00 7 Stars Shincliffe nr Durham		Sat 6th Warehouse Gloucester		Mon 1st 19:00 Leeds Wall, Gelder Rd
<b>Mar</b>	Fri 19th 20:00 Golden Rule Ambleside	Mon 22nd 19:30 BMC Office Manchester		Thu 18th 19:30 The Rock Face Birmingham		Thu 18th 19:15 Railway Inn Buxton	Sat 20th The Mermaid Eastern Portland	Sat 20th 19:00 Plas y Brenin	Mon 15th 19:00 Leeds Wall, Gelder Rd
<b>Apr</b>			Tue 13th 19:00 Frances Ho Frances St London SW1		Mon 12th 20:00 7 Stars Shincliffe nr Durham				

### December 1998 and 1999 Area meeting calendar









# EQUALITY OF VISION

by Lorraine Nicholson

In response to Roger Payne's Foreword in Issue 10 entitled "Equality of Summits". I would like to expand on some of the issues relating to disabled access to the world of adventure sport and in particular to the visually impaired sector of society which I have acquired experience of in the capacity of a sighted companion.

Over the last five years it has been a real pleasure to share in the excitement of such sports as cross-country skiing, Canadian canoeing, hillwalking and gorge-walking to name but a few with a cross-section of visually-impaired people ranging in age from 8 to 68! All of them have one main thing in common apart from the obvious and that's a craving for adventure and exhilaration as well as enjoying an enormous amount of fun.

Most sports are based on pushing ourselves to achieving the best of our capabilities so why should it be any different for those with sensory or physical disabilities? However, even in this day and age, it is frightening to hear of some of the negative attitudes which still prevail towards disability essentially based on ignorance and misguided beliefs. All too often there is a tendency to impose our limitations on those with so-called handicaps in an effort to "protect" their interests when what we should be doing is encouraging them to discover their potential as individuals. Inherent in participation in adventure sports are challenge, excitement and risk but that is the attraction for all of us regardless of ability. "Over-protection may be more harmful than a certain amount of accidental injury" somebody once remarked and there is a lot of truth in that. Prejudgements are all too common and constitute one of the greatest barriers disabled people have to overcome.

Recently on a challenge to climb Snowdon, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis in 36 hrs, the co-ordinator of four teams including four blind/partially-sighted people was scathingly told: "They won't do it". Adventures may start in the imagination, the alternative to vision, but it is the will to succeed and the strength of the human spirit which makes anything possible. They did it!

Creating such opportunities for full participation is surely the key to development for those wishing to seek outdoor opportunities, allowing people to adapt their many abilities to the sport concerned rather than remaining on the outside looking in. Fortunately, there are several very good organisations which work to develop and facilitate taking part in activities outside the scope of everyday lives. Amongst them is British Blind Sport which organises "Have a go Days" to encourage new sporting interests. Through such organisations those who feel held back and frustrated in their everyday lives can find an outlet to freedom through adventure which in turn allows them to extend the parameters of their lives, grow in self-confidence and realise some of their personal Everests. GDBA Holidays based in Kendal, organise a vast array of activity and special interest holidays all over the world for those with visual impairment and trips are subsidised for those who go as sighted companions. The rewards for companions are multiple: experiencing a deeper awareness of your surroundings by lending people the benefit of your sight to describe details, all the time being taught to see the world afresh, having been made more aware of your other senses, you begin to feel you have missed out on so much previously; the sweet

smell of heather, an eagle mewing overhead, the rush of a waterfall, all things which are too often eclipsed by the melee of general life around you. In short you enter a far more subtle, sensory world, a very special place indeed.

I watched from the ground as Michelle, a 16 year old girl who is totally blind, climbed on a top rope up an 80ft pine tree using only verbal commands and tactile sensation then abseil textbook fashion down its trunk. It was something she had never done before and her delight was obvious. I was fortunate enough to be there to share in it. How often have we been surprised ourselves by how well we did at something new and how often has that confidence spurred us on to do more? That thrill, that excitement in new found abilities should be there for everyone to grasp. Equality should come in the form of being given the same opportunities for participation, self-development and self-ful-



## They did it!

(Photo: Lorraine Nicholson)

filment by allowing people of all abilities to be embraced in adventure sports.

The visually-impaired people I know have trekked in Ladakh, paddled across the Channel in a dragonboat, cross-country amongst the Greek Islands, Canadian canoed in the USA, France and up the Caledonian Canal, backpacked coast to coast across Scotland, run the London Marathon and most recently proved the bystander totally wrong by successfully completing the 3 Peaks Challenge in 36 hours. And that's only some of three people's achievements within 4 years.

What's more they tend to succeed quietly, not seeking applause or publicity, since their prime motive is self-fulfilment but if they do choose to publicise their achievements, it's usually to encourage others like them to test their own abilities or to raise awareness in society as well as a recognition of just what they are capable of achieving. All they ask for is the gift of opportunity.

David Blunkett, MP, in his autobiography "On a Clear Day", states: "By accepting challenges, I can prove to myself that I am no different and can take on the world just like anyone else". I think we can rest assured that the world will be taken on from the USA to Ladakh, if given the chance.

**By all means volunteer to be somebody's eyes but don't deny them their vision.**



# Podium places

## How do the French do it?

by Anne Arran

Pierre-Henri is the French National Team Coach. He works full time for the French national body, FFME at the National Centre for Climbing in Aix - en- Provence. I have been speaking with him to pick up a few tips and to find out what successful machine has been in operation behind French Competition super stars over the last few years.

### So where do the Liv's and Francois' come from and how do they get noticed? How many young people are climbing in France?

There are about 25,000 school children in France who have done at least one competition.

5,000 of these young climbers take climbing as a specialism at 'A' level standard. In the 12-18 age group we have some special schools where young people can do 5-6 hours a week climbing.

### What is the Structure of Coaches?

As you can imagine what I found was a carefully thought out structure extending from youth development at grass roots participation level in the clubs, through to Regional, Departmental

There are 5 National coaches, 3 of those for high level performance and 5 main regional coaches plus many others.

### So where do all these ideas come from?

#### The National Centre

The National Centre in Aix en Provence provides several possibilities for young climbers to live in the centre or go to school near it.

- The first part of the Centre is for climbers to live in and study/train all the time.
- The second part is where the climbers study in the centre and live outside. There are also young climbers from Marseille and Grenoble who visit the Centre.
- The third role of the centre is to provide training for the French youth and senior Teams.

### How are new young climbers discovered for competition?

'When they are 12 or 13 yrs old they can do their first championship. If they are older we know them any way. We have 6 regions and ask the top 3 places from inter regional competition to come and do another competition from which we select the best 5 or 6 climbers. Then from these we select 4 after a training session for the French Team. The last selection is made 10 days before the first International. From the inter regional competitions we also make a French group of 60/70 climbers who do training with us as a level down from the French Team'.

### So what relevance does this have to coaching in British climbing

The French have gone into great detail to achieve climbing success for young people. Their focus has been on competitions but the lessons learned and principles may well be transfereable to any other aspect of climbing. In particular in the areas of physical and emotional development of young climbers.

In Britain instructor qualifications and courses are often centred around 'safety' and equipment skills and the progression of supervision and teaching and group management; there is often little emphasis on enhancing climbing performance. There is one big difference between Britain and France: the level of risk which people normally expect is much lower in France.

In most sports climbing danger is a result of poor rope work or technical mistakes. In Britain risk is a fundamental aspect of the climbing experience and indeed for some it is why they do it. Therefore another dimension needs to be addressed in the UK.

We need to decide what our priorities are so that new and established climbers with different goals can gain the most from their climbing and training. John Cousins from the UKMTB has organised a meeting to discuss coaching in Mountaineering which



### Liv Sansoz in action at Birmingham

and National level programmes. Comparisons could be drawn with our wall clubs and the BMC Areas in which BRYCS took place.

### What Qualifications can they take?

Each layer has a structure of coaches operating within it and these coaches can be qualified to Degree level to practice professionally. Alternatively there are 3 and 5 day Diploma courses. Level 1 is for work within Clubs and level 2 is to coach at a Regional or Department Level.

For coaching at high level coaches must be very good climbers who have done competition and know how to set routes.

To enter Diploma level 1 you need a

- Teaching proficiency certificate
- Federation Teaching beginner's climbing Diploma
- To have attended a Level 1 coach training course.



encompasses personal proficiency at participation level, elite level and competition level. Progress made so far in these areas will be discussed. In addition existing Leadership awards will be discussed along with a potential home for coaching within or outside these existing structures. The MC of S have also done some research on what might be needed. The meeting is on 24 October so watch out for more information.



**Yuji Hirayama benefiting from the French training**

### **Pierre Henri's top tips for coaches and young climbers**

**When do you suggest young climbers should start training and have you got any advice which you can give?**

- Until the young climber is 15 yrs old they must climb a lot outside to learn all the different sorts of climbing techniques and body positions. They must not use holds which are too small. It is better to climb in steeper walls with bigger holds so as not to damage fingers.
- Many young climbers come to us from gymnastics and they think the climbing training is easier. Under the age of 15 yr. it is important to do other things so you have good abdominal and shoulder strength using body weight exercises and not weight training to get strength.
- After 15 years we ask selected young climbers to climb mainly on resin and do more strength training.
- We are not interested in podium places in the World Youth Championships. Many young climbers for example Frederique Tuscan who won the World Youth Cup when he was 14yrs old, now at 19yrs old wants to stop. We find that after 6 years of climbing hard on the circuit, even with the seniors people lose motivation and want to stop.
- Parents and children must realise that at under the age of 15 you must not think that you are the best.

### **What sorts of things are contained in the Syllabus of the Diploma?**

#### **Diploma level 1 (3 days) Club Coach**

##### **Duties of the coach**

To give the students a taste for competition and climbing in general. He or she is responsible for creating a sports climbing environment if one does not already exist.

##### **Qualification**

The level 1 coach must be able to manage a group of climbers in complete safety. Coaching of young climbers while taking into account the limits of effort that they can invest in relation to their age. They must be able to oversee the proper physical and moral development of the individual through the activity of climbing.

#### **Syllabus**

##### **About Competitions**

- Historical background and the French climbing Organisation
- Competition organisation and regulations for young climbers
- Managing climbers during the competition and during travel away from home (introduction to responsibilities)

##### **The Coach and external environmental considerations**

- Families (Integrating parents into the life of the club)
- Responsibilities to parents and managers
- Relationships between the club, department level, regional level and national level

##### **Physical Environment**

- List of climbing structures
- Main features of training / coaching on a competition wall
- Wall use

##### **Sport Preparation**

- Analysis of the climbing competition
- Factors determining performance
- Physiological approach
- Coaching methodology
- Technical approach, informational approach and psychological approach
- Limits which must not be exceeded given a climber's age

##### **Session Organisation**

- Session record card, warming up, training exercises and flexibility exercises. The Training log book (simplified version)

#### **Diploma Level 2 (5 Days) Regional or Departmental Coach**

##### **Entry Level**

You must have a Level 1 state climbing certificate 1st Degree or STAPS licence climbing option.

##### **The Folder**

To take this course a folder must be submitted for assessment (5-10 pages) and include History of club involvement over what time, some thing about the climbers.

##### **Folder Contents**

What actions have been taken, clearly stated objectives, an example of a session or competition and the results achieved. A list of human resources must be given and a brief on relations with club presidents and other partners e.g. The Youth Service or Recreation Department, sponsors and the town. A list of clubs and facilities available in the area. Problems encountered. Conclusions drawn from actions and development perspectives. Aspirations and why the course is being taken.

##### **Course Summary**

- Operation of various classes and selection systems, identification of aspirations, theoretical input.
- Same subject matter as level 1 but also coaching exercises, planning, diet, accidents and emergencies, the competition.
- Preparation of a climbing facility for a coaching session for strength training and for a beginner's session. Facilities include a boulder, a leading wall, a weight training gym a running track circuit course.

##### **Assessment**

###### **1. Theory / written**

The coach will be given a session to prepare with instructions that some thing has gone wrong either a school, educational or personal problem. They must say in written form how they would run the session despite the problem.

###### **2. Deliver a practical session**

3. An oral review of the training folder in light of what has been learned on the training course.

Exceptional trainees may be put forward as trainers of Level 1 coaches. They must validate their being proposed by taking part in the annual day for trainers and coaches.















# Expeditions of 1998

In November and March the International Committee screens expeditions and administers Sports Council grants. The Committee provides support for British expeditions exploring remote mountain areas, or making first British ascents in the Greater Ranges, by obtaining and awarding the UK Sports Council grants and/or giving an expedition 'approved' status. The criteria used by the International Committee in making awards are similar to those used by the Mount Everest Foundation with whom the Committee works closely. The following expeditions all gained BMC approval, the majority with grant support.

For 1998 increased Sports Council funding for expeditions has greatly improved the level of support available to British expeditions and made many possible that would otherwise have been beyond the means of the members. In addition the advent of the Lyon Equipment awards, now in their second year, has been a considerable boost to adventurous expeditions. From 1999 Lowe Alpine will also be offering awards to adventurous expeditions.

Applications for grants and approval are made at the same time as applying to the MEF and the initial BMC screening takes place as part of the MEF screening process. Application forms are available from the MEF's Honorary Secretary and must be submitted in the year prior to the expedition for either one of the two screening sessions (the closing dates for which are 31st August and 31st December).

## Himalayan Ski Crossing (Zanskar)

### Ben Stephenson

Ben Stephenson, Joe McCarron and Amar Inamdar crossed the Zanskar Himalaya by Ski between February and April. 600km were covered in five weeks.

## Baffin Island Ski Mountaineering

### David Williams

The team successfully completed a 150km ski traverse through the mountains of the Cumberland peninsular. Some 14 summits were climbed on route.

## SMC Greenland

### Stephen Reid

This team of eight made six first ascents of unclimbed peaks in the Sefstroms Glacier area in the Western Stauning Alps.

## 1998 Cordillera Sarmiento (Patagonia)

### David Hillebrand

The team experienced the usual horrendous weather prevalent in the region and were unsuccessful.

## Irish Nepal

### Kieran O'Hara

The team attempted Jonsang peak (7,450m) in N.E. Nepal. 6,650m was reached before heavy snow forced a retreat. Received a Lyon Equipment award.

## Torre Egger West Face

### Andy Parkin

The objective was changed to Cerro Standart. Two attempts were made on an unclimbed route on the North Face and an ascent was made of Exocet on the East Face.

## British Greenland

### Tony Penning

Tony Penning and Ian Parsons climbed two new routes in the Tasermuit Fjord area with free climbing of up to E4.

## Cumbria East Greenland

### Steve Brailey

This team of ten visited the Lemon Mountains and climbed seven virgin peaks of c2000m.

## Cumbria & N Yorks Karakorum

### David Kay

No report yet received.

## Scottish Bolivian

### Antony Barton

The team climbed four new routes in the rocky Quimsa Cruz area. Supported by the MCofS.

## Sissu Nala (Himachal Pradesh)

### Ian Ford

A high point of 5550m was reached on the W ridge of Gehan (5870m).

## CUMC Trans Altai (Kyrgyzstan)

### Rowland Barker

This 5 strong team made a number of first British ascents of peaks up to 6700m. Two members also climbed Pic Lenina (7134m).

## Savoia Kangri

### Ruaridh Pringle

The team reached c7000m in alpine style on this unclimbed 7286m peak. Also supported by the MCofS.

## Kang Yissay

### Duncan Penry

This small military team attempted both the NE ridge and the S ridge of Kang Yissay, coming to within 40m of the Summit on the latter route.

## Rignys Berg (E Greenland)

### Mark Bailey

No report yet received by apparently a successful trip.

## Huantsan (Peru)

### Olly Sanders

This team of four attempted the 1400m unclimbed E face of Huanstan. 1000 of the face was climbed prior to retreat. Supported by the Welsh Sports Council.

## 1998 Distaghil Sar N Face

### Andrew Collins

The glacier approach to the North Face proved too dangerous and so the expedition was called off. Received a Lyon Equipment award.

## Sani Pakush (Hunza)

### Al Powell

This team of four spent four days reaching a highpoint of 5600m before stonefall and breaking weather forced a retreat. Winner of the Nick Estcourt Award and the top Lyon Equipment Award.





## Swachand (Photo: Simon Yearsley)

### Anglo American Kanchenjunga Ginette Harrison

This was a highly successful expedition with Ginette Harrison making the first female ascent of the peak.

### Irish K2 Calvin Torrens

Unsuccessful on K2.

### Kangerdlugssaq (E Greenland) Phil Bartlett

Some thirty virgin summits were climbed during the course of a highly successful expedition.

### Diran (Pakistan) Chris Holder

No report yet received.

### Viper Ridge (Foraker, Alaska) Geoff Hornby

This expedition was cancelled at the last minute.

### Swachand (Gangotri) Simon Yearsley

The team of three attempted the West Face of Swachand (6721m) reaching a high point of 6100m before exceptionally severe stonefall forced retreat.

### Shiptons Lost Valley Martin Moran

A successful crossing of the Badrinath-Kedernath watershed was made by this five strong Indo-British team. Supported by the Welsh Sports Council.

### Greenland 1998-Steps of Tillman Rev Bob Shepton

This innovative trip sailing and climbing trip climbed ten peaks of c2000m in the Akuliarusinguaq Peninsular area. Two new routes were also climbed on Sanderson's Hope.

### N Wales Unclimbed Pakistan Mike Turner

The team were successful on two good steep rock peaks in the Nangma valley with one route giving A4 climbing. Supported by the Welsh Sports Council.

### Reo Purguil Julie Ann Clyma

Permission was denied at the last minute and the objective changed to the E ridge of Meru. 6300m was reached before heavy snow forced retreat.

### Drohmo/Januk (NE Nepal) Julian Freeman Attwood

The central spur on the south face of Drohmo was attempted with a high point of 6100m being reached. Januk was also attempted with 6250m being reached on the S spur.

### NE Indian Frontier Doug Scott

Cancelled.

### Siula Chico (Peru) Mick Fowler

Fowler and Yates attempted the steep West Face of Siula Chico but retreated at 1/3 height in the face of serious objective dangers.

### Parbati South (Kulu, India) Rob Collister

Collister and John Cousins were plagued by very bad weather and were unable to attempt this fine rock line.

### Baltar (Hunza) Duncan Hornby

The team were attempting sub 6000m peaks but were suffered warm weather and stonefall and no ascents were made.

### Sepu Kangri Chris Bonington

The team made the first ascent of the West Summit (6830m) but high winds prevented a continuation onto the main Summit.

### British Canadian St Elias Alun Hubbard

A highly successful exploratory trip, via sailing boat, which climbed five peaks, two of them previously unclimbed.

### Hielo Norte (N Patagonian Icefield) Alun Hubbard

Will be heading out in November.

# DESTINATION: IRAN

## 4 women go undercover in the Islamic Republic

Words by Leyla Pope pictures by Celia Bull

Standing in Tehran airport I watched as four women in long beige coats and head scarves swished past, their city slicker image only slightly marred by Tevas and bulging rucksacks, “We’re here!” yelled Celia in her fetching Islamic dress. And so began the first ever women’s climbing exchange between Iran and Britain, the culmination of months of global emailing and faxes from the BMC, the Iranian Women’s Mountaineering Federation, and of course various embassies and ministries.

The seeds of inspiration for the trip were sown back in May, at the BMC’s Women’s Symposium in North Wales. The slide show “Women’s climbing in the Islamic Republic of Iran” raised a lot of interest, most people being unaware that climbing exists in Iran, let alone any active women’s climbing groups. This is hardly surprising since media coverage focuses more on political controversy than the excellent skiing, 4000m peaks and remote unexplored ranges. After the symposium though many women were curious to sample Iran, and I offered to liaise with the women’s climbing groups there and to organise a joint climbing expedition. The final team was Celia Bull, Glenda Huxter, Kath Pyke and myself, with Glenda’s sister Linda roped in to catch it all on film.

Women’s climbing in Iran has been greatly affected by the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Women are legally required to wear Islamic dress and sports clubs are segregated. But despite the constrictive dress code – loose trousers, a coat to the knees and a head scarf covering the hair - climbing continues, women have their own climbing federation, run their own workshops and train women to become instructors.

Fleeing Tehran’s terrible traffic and pollution, we headed straight for the Alburz mountains. Our destination was Alam Kuh, Iran’s second highest mountain at 4,850 metres, which boasts a formidable granite wall starting at 4,000 metres.

At the mountain village of Rudbarak we received a very warm welcome from the representatives of the Women’s Climbing Fed-

eration. Having little information about the Alam Kuh wall, we spent an evening scouring photos at the local mountain centre, trying to spot lines to climb, this impressive white granite wall has enticed climbers since the beginning of the century, and was finally ascended in the 1960s by various French, Iranian, Polish and German teams.

To gain a more personal insight into the climbing, we interviewed Mr Nagavi, the local hero, recently returned from the first ever Iranian ascent of Everest. Mr Nagavi, works as a guide to the Alum Kuh area, and his father was the first ever professional mountain guide in Iran. Speaking with abounding enthusiasm, he pointed out the main lines on the wall, and warned us of serious rock fall risk, and the dangerous and involved descent route. But overwhelmed by sleepless nights, non-stop travel and jet-lag, Kath and Glenda dozed quietly in the corner as Mr Nagavi talked on.

### ***I like climbing too much!***

It was a wet, drizzly morning as we loaded mules to begin the long walk in to the Sarchal hut at 3,850 metres. Miraculously, within a few hours of walking, we passed through the clouds to discover a startling blue sky, and bright sunshine. Conversations in broken English echoed throughout the valley,

“Are you married?” asked an Iranian host.

“No”, replied Kath, “are you?”

“Me?” she replied with startled chuckle, “I like climbing too much!”

The mules could go no further than the Sarchal hut, and from then on we had to ferry our equipment over the glacier to our higher camp near the base of the Alam Kuh wall.

Truck loads of rock thundered down the wall continuously through the day, and only then did we begin to appreciate the seriousness of the climbs we had planned. Kath and Glenda

spent a whole day scouting out potential lines, as well as working out where established routes began. "It was epic" grinned Glenda as she described finding the base of routes. We had begun to question the possibility of putting up a new route, considering the limited time available, and the heavy rock fall. Kath and Glenda decided to do an established route called "Hariroost", the last British team to climb it had spent three days on the wall, but Glenda and Kath hoped to do it in one.

We watched the small figures gradually ascend the immense wall from the security of our tents. Climbing steadily up the route they summited at dusk, and we waited to celebrate with them. By nightfall they still hadn't returned and the Iranian women were visibly worried, they were terrified about an accident happening on this trip. Celia and I decided to postpone our route and to search for them at first light.

At 3am two very weary climbers stumbled into the camp, after summiting they had descended almost a kilometre of scree only to discover that they were in the wrong valley! Nagavi's advice about the descent was now remembered with startling clarity. They told hellish stories of reascending before eventually finding the route down with one head torch between them.

### ***hellish stories***

An hour after their arrival Celia and I set off for our route, another established one called the German Flank – which follows a ridge through the middle of the wall. We watched a spectacular pink dawn over the cloud-inverted sky. The route is a classic – varied climbing with stunning views on both sides. As the route became steeper we passed a precariously perched boulder called the "Samovar rock", which can be distinguished when looking at the wall from a distance. Celia noticed two bolt lines and we both mumbled something about "death wish" and then climbed on. Finishing the final crack Celia and I summited at the same time as an Iranian Women's team. "Congratulations!", were yelled in several broken languages as well as numerous hugs and handshakes.

The descent down was not to be underestimated though. It follows a very winding path through "The black towers" before reaching what Iranians call "a scree ski slope" – or simply a steep icy couloir decorated with loose rocks.

Following the Alam Kuh trip was a rock climbing workshop held in the foothills surrounding Tehran. For five days Kath, Celia and Glenda used ingenious methods of communication to teach this group of almost twenty Iranian women climbers. Despite the language barrier, there was an incredible sense of exchange between the two groups.

The climbing workshop by day was often accompanied by singing in a café at night. Some of these girls had travelled from provinces throughout Iran, places as far away as the Afghan border, to be taught by the team. Their enthusiasm to learn was astonishing if not exhausting. At the end of the program, we were invited to go and visit the girls who all claimed that their province had the most beautiful climbing in the country.

Next summer a group of Iranian women are hopefully coming to Britain and the Alps for the return part of the exchange. So far Iranian Women's teams have found it almost impossible to go on expeditions abroad for both financial and political reasons. This trip has begun the first few steps in building a bridge between women and climbers in the two countries and we are very grateful to everyone that helped it happen.

**Leyla Pope was a host at the BMC International Women Climber's Symposium and is currently an undergraduate at Cambridge where she has to write essays on some very strange subjects.**



# Hibernate or Disintegrate

by Alex Messenger

Squirrels probably have the right idea. As soon as the weather cools down a bit, off they go, collecting nuts like mad before sleeping straight through the damp rigours of the traditional British winter. No biting the stiff upper lip for them, no shivering for 5 months, none of that if you're six inches long with a furry tail. However for the rest of us lacking the option of sleeping through the entire season (students excepted), the only way to make the Spring clinging to at least some tatters of respect, fitness and sanity is to devise a cunning plan. Not anything as scientific as a macro-micro-enduro-power 7 days on, ½ hour off - I'm gonna be a hero next year - climbing training plan, as devised by Henri le Stamina, more of a gentle survival tactic. So don't be the next victim of SADness, and watch the winter months fly effortlessly by with our Exclusive 5 point plan. Follow it and you are 100% guaranteed no increases in performance whatsoever, but it's a damn site better than sitting on your nuts for six months!

## 1) Take some time off.

The wise people of sport are constantly wittering on about the importance of a break to prevent performance plateaus. So now's your chance. A break of 6 months may be needed in extreme circumstances, but for most a mere month should do. Active rest is often recommended, but we prescribe inactive rest. If you can't do it with a remote control then don't bother should become your months motto. After a good 4 weeks of this, you'll be ready for anything, so you can move on to....



The traditional British winter rock experience

## 2) Try something different

OK, you've been climbing all year, but don't you think you've become a little boring? Well I was 50ft out from a tied off rp when my foot popped.....have I told you about my new project??? Yawn Yawn Yawn. And don't you hillwalkers get complacent either. Is anyone really interested anymore in that glorious long weekend that saw you sneaking a peak at the Munro Almanac afterwards, (just out of interest mind). Yawn Yawn Yawn. And you at the back, Mr. Alpiniste, we're sick of hearing that tale of epic despair on the 123<sup>rd</sup> pitch of out there new wave A5 in the middle of a hurricane Johnny. So try something different. If you're a walker get on some new wave A5, extreme Alpiniste should test themselves on Pen y Ghent, and climbers, well the best bit about climbing is looking and being looked at, so I'm afraid caving is prescribed for you....



Watch the winter months fly effortlessly by





## Jet off to a sun soaked paradise

### 3) Return Refreshed

Hopefully after a period of alternative activity your passion for your one true love will prevail, and you'll return refreshed and keen. (NB confine this strategy to outdoor pursuits only). After gibbering up gnarly aid routes winter walking will seem brilliant, and you'll be out every weekend, soaking up the views and putting the knifeblade horrors behind you. Alpinistes freshly released from the rigours of the 3 peaks will wing their way to Chamonix and solo Divine Providence relishing every minute of the character building suffering they have been denied for so long. Climbers rescued from the dank confines of North Yorkshire sewer tunnels should hopefully spring onto the crags and send all manner of testpieces, whatever the weather, because you never know somebody, somewhere might be looking now...

### 4) A bit of training

Now your enthusiasm has returned it's for a spot of training. Climbers have it easy here, walls littering the country, the biggest hurdle an unfamiliar bolt on. You might as well make use of the plastic heavens, but for those with a DIY bent it's time for some more diversion activity. Build your own cellar board. This is great fun, requiring misappropriating large amount of plywood, power tools and bolts ons, throwing it all in your cellar then emerging, blinking two months later to drag all your friends round to worship the newly created altar of power. Trouble is using it just isn't as much fun, and next summer it will lurk down there, bugging you, reminding you of the power you should of got, and when you move it'll remain, a monument to your DIY and hopeless optimism before being broken up for firewood by smelly squatters. But don't be put off – go for it. You've got nothing to lose, apart from your fingers in a nasty jigsaw accident...

Walkers and Alpinistes will not require such specific training. If you want to walk harder, further, and longer simply get abandoned in the middle of nowhere with no money, this will greatly improve your stamina. Alpinistes may find it hard to recreate the suffering found on longer routes and the general levels of excitement. No matter – simply use resources closer to hand. Walk through Moss Side naked, or simply taunt bouncers on a regular basis, an enormous hand hitting the side of your head will be excellent training for the Whympyr colour.

### 5) Go and bug somebody else

Now that you're fully fit it's time to exploit it, preferably somewhere else, The BMC Access Team and Ramblers Association would like to thank you for keeping them busy over the past year, but now it's time to go and cause problems elsewhere. Jet off to a sun soaked paradise, ignore the local ethics, drop litter everywhere, tramp all over private land and have a great time. Drink all you can and fall over. Then do it all again. And hey, it doesn't matter that next year its all a banned mess, time to move on, like the hippies in SE Asia, this beach is dead man, lets go..

Alex has absolutely no intention of following any of the programme described in this article. He is newly unemployed and having spent winters both hibernating and disintegrating he is now taking the 3<sup>rd</sup> option – emigrating, and intends to remain in hot, sunny, paradise type places until April. In fact by the time you read this he'll probably be laughing at you on a beach somewhere near the Andaman Sea.

**Alex Messenger was the BMC's Information and IT Co-ordinator (until he wrote this article and revealed his true colours).**

# Briefing

## New equipment and life insurance

BMC members are frequently calling the office to ask for insurance in addition to the travel scheme and the cover that is built into membership. We are pleased to announce that in response to this demand year round equipment insurance is now available and also discount life and critical illness cover designed for climbers, hill walkers, and mountaineers. At the time of writing details are being finalised but will be available before the end of the year.

### 1998 Winter Lecture Series supported by Lowe Alpine featuring Louise Thomas & Andy Perkins

23 November <b>Southampton</b> The Debating Chamber Students Union Southampton University University Road highfield Southampton	30 November <b>Manchester</b> University The Arts Building Manchester University Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL
24 November <b>London</b> UCL Edward Lewis Lecture Theatre Winnmeyer Building 46 Cleveland Street W1P 7PN	1 December <b>Leeds</b> University Roger Stevens Lecture Theatre Wood House Lane, Leeds LS1 1UH
25 November <b>Coventry</b> University Student Union Priory Street Coventry, CV1 5FJ	2 December <b>Sunderland</b> University Tom Cowie Lecture Theatre St Peters Campus St Peters Way Sunderland Business School SR6 ODD

**Tickets £3.00, available from the BMC or on the door.**

## New accident insurance limit

Individual BMC members automatically have liability and personal accident insurance. Since these were introduced in 1994 there have been 12 claims resulting in several payments to members who have suffered serious injuries - in one case a member who fell only 10 feet and broke her back resulting in quadriplegia. The BMC believes this insurance is important and valuable to protect members. Because of the claims experience from 1 January 1999 the accident insurance limit will be £50,000 for all new members and renewals.

## New Partners

The BMC's 1999 Partnership Programme was launched at the COLA trade show in Harrogate and got a wide range of commitments for next year including support for a hill walking video and booklet, Grippid? magazine, the international winter meet and seminar, the British Regional Youth Climbing Series, the Access Fund, and the 1999 UIAA World Championship and Climb 99. These commitments are being finalised now and Partners for 1999 will be fully acknowledged in future issues of Summit.

## Adventure travel & sports show 15-17 January 1999

The Daily Telegraph Adventure Travel and Sports Show covers all aspects of adventure travel and adventure sports. from white water rafting to mountaineering, and features over 100 companies exhibiting the latest equipment.

The BMC will be present with the new 1999 travel insurance package and a full range of information service fact sheets. There is a free 7m high wall and speakers (about 14 in all) include Benedict Allen, Ffiona Campbell, Steve Bell of Himalayan Kingdoms, David Hamilton of High Adventure and adventure cameraman Chris Bradley.



