

summit:33

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WELCOME TO ISSUE 33

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

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

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EDITORIAL

Contributions for Summit should be sent to the Editor Alex Messenger at the above address or alex@thebmc.co.uk. Every care is taken of materials sent for publication, however these are submitted at the sender's risk. The views expressed within are of the contributors, and not necessarily the BMC.

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RISK & RESPONSIBILITY

Readers of Summit are reminded that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement. The BMC publishes a wide range of safety and good practice advice and provides training opportunities for members.

foreword



I'm a celebrity - get me out of there!

I prefer movies to reality TV, but when it comes to climbing films, reality twins hands down. After *The Eiger Sanction*, *Cliff Hanger*, and the addition of nitro-glycerine to the kit list in *Vertical Limit*, it was great to see an honest documentary about a real event win Outstanding British Film.

The publicity surrounding the fiftieth anniversary of the ascent of Everest last May continued for an unprecedented month. *Touching the Void*, has touched a similar nerve in the public's mind and may well have a lasting impact on the public perception of mountaineering, beyond that of helping to answer those "Who takes the rope up?" style of questions that the Sylvester Stallone school of climbing does so little to clarify.

Mountaineering has a body of literature unsurpassed by other sports. Maybe this is because mountaineering calls for physical, mental and social qualities that set it apart from the games we learned in school, but haven't played since. Qualities that we in our own small way adopt; fortitude, adventurousness, bravery even, which are valued by society at large.

The government provides a substantial subsidy for educational mountain training and basic funding for organisations like the BMC. It does this in acknowledgement that sport and fitness are "A Good Thing" and should be encouraged. This funding is currently under threat, but equally the government is increasingly concerned that the nation is becoming unfit and overweight.

They also recognise that over a lifetime outdoor recreation has a greater impact on fitness than competitive games. Future funding is likely to be linked to whatever role the BMC chooses to play to improve the nation's health.

It's an exciting opportunity, and how will we want to be involved? What initiatives might we take? How will we agree to share "our" mountains with a new generation needing to recreate? The problems and challenges that the BMC faces now could be small compared to the pressures and conflicts of the future.

But for now, let's just hope we're not in for yet another TV reality programme, "I'm a celebrity - get me off this mountain!"

Mark Vallance
 BMC President

(TOP): Get me out of here! Mark Vallance takes a dip in the Antarctic Ocean.

ON THE COVER: Valerie Le Clerc enjoying the classic grade two scramble of Sharp Edge, Blencathera, Lake District. Credit: Alastair Lee.

Funding the Void

Touching the Void recently won a BAFTA for Outstanding British Film of the Year, catapulting mountaineering into the public eye. But the thriving UK mountaineering scene is now under threat from the London Olympic bid.



Touching the Void, the film version of Joe Simpson's prize-winning book, tells the story of an expedition in 1985 to climb Siula Grande in Peru, and what happened when things started to go very wrong on the descent. This incredible film won two prizes at Kendal Mountain Film festival, and a few weeks later went on to win the BAFTA for the Best British Film of the Year. But like many expeditions, this trip might never have taken place if it had not been supported with grants from the Mount Everest Foundation (MEF) and the BMC.

Also at Kendal, climbers from some of last years expeditions gathered to speak about their exploits; Mike (Twid) Turner, Anne Arran, Es Tresidder, and Rich Cross, all acknowledged the value of the support which they had received from the MEF and the BMC - a system that is one of the best in the world.

The MEF was founded after the successful ascent of Everest in 1953, and initially financed from surplus funds and subsequent royalties from that expedition to "encourage exploration of the mountain regions of the earth". It is a continuing initiative between the Alpine Club and the Royal Geographical Society and in order that it may continue long into the future, only the interest from the invested fund is distrib-

uted each year. The total available is dependent on the stock market, so has taken a battering recently, so that in 2003, only about £20K was available for expeditions.

With slightly different criteria for support, essentially excellence in mountaineering, the BMC distributes money provided by UK Sport. Although very generous in recent years, providing roughly twice as much as the MEF, the future of this support is currently in doubt. In light of the 2012 London Olympic bid, UK Sport has identified ten priority medal-winning sports to focus on, such as athletics and swimming. Mountaineering is not one of them, and the BMC has to make a case over the next few months for expeditions and safety work funding to continue.

Bill Ruthven from the MEF is frustrated by this attitude, "These are already far richer sports than mountaineering, with the annual income of a single top footballer several times greater than the total investment value of the MEF".

And oddly enough, mountaineering is medal winning, albeit in a special kind of way. Last year for the first time in history, a British team of Mick Fowler and Paul Ramsden were awarded the Piolet D'Or for their alpine style first ascent of a spectacular ice line on the North Face of Siguniang in Chi-

na's Eastern Himalaya. The Piolet D'or (Golden Ice Axe) is a French trophy awarded for the most outstanding achievement in the World of Alpinism during the previous year.

And this year, out of seven nominations, two were British; Kenton Cool and Ian Parnell for their first ascent on Annapurna III and Stuart McAleese, Ollie Sanders and Mike Turner for their first ascent on the Citadel in Alaska's Kichatna Mountains.

Although the award eventually went to Valeri Babanov, and Yuri Koshelenko from Russia, for their first ascent of Nuptse East I, recent ascents prove that despite our lack of high mountains, British mountaineers rank with the best in the world.

Surely the pioneering spirit of the individuals concerned should be encouraged and supported at least as much as those engaged in more highly organised competitive sports? And if the BMC was no longer able to provide grants, and the MEF grants did not rise substantially, it is likely that the future of British mountaineering expeditions would be at stake.

(TOP) On the summit of Annapurna III following the first ascent of the South West Ridge. L-R: John Varco, Ian Parnell, Stripey (the world's foremost mountaineering mouse), and his porter, Kenton Cool.



International Affairs

Your invitation to a week of Welsh rock action with climbers from around the world, 9-16th May, Plas y Brenin

The BMC International Meets are legendary for their great atmosphere and mix of participants, and many of the visitors actually have their first experience of trad climbing here. World-renowned for promoting the values and ethics of UK climbing, past events have even resulted in trad climbing revolutions in South Africa and Norway! And when you've seen a Latvian competition climber, a high ranking Chinese official, and an Iranian land mine victim being led across Dream of White horses by a leading Slovenian alpinist, you'll realise why these meets foster international and UK climbing relations like nothing else.

At a time when UK Sport is considering taking a step back from mountaineering

funding, a showcase international event like this is even more relevant than usual. The meet focusses on "World climbing standards", and asks the question - where does it end? We're looking for hosts to show these visiting climbers around. So if you fancy a week's climbing in North Wales, based at Plas y Brenin, just email alex@thebmc.co.uk with a brief resume of your climbing experience. Places are limited this year, and there will be a small charge to cover the week's full board accommodation, but it's still amazing value and will be an unforgettable experience. This years meet is supported by DMM, V12 Outdoor, The Beacon Climbing Wall, and Plas y Brenin.

(LEFT) Romanian guest on the '02 Meet. Credit: BMC.

Commercial Gain

The Access Team remain focused on the implementation of the CRoW Act in England and Wales and is currently working with DEFRA and CCW (in Wales) on the Government's interpretation of clauses that potentially impact educational and training activities on CRoW land. Last year, CCW suggested that under CRoW commercial activities (which might include educational and training activities) would need the landowners' permission. The BMC, MLTUK and MTT argued strongly that this contradicted a key principle underpinning CRoW (i.e. that it does not remove any pre-existing rights or freedoms) and that it should be amended due to the significant educational, safety and economic benefits that mountain training brings. This has been accepted.

Quality Quarries

From Horseshoe to Harpur Hill, a new BMC guide for mid-grade sports climbing in the Buxton and Matlock areas by Gary Gibson is due out by this summer.

Mass Staff Escape

In a recent breakout, the BMC lost three staff members. Stu Ingram unchained himself from the Information Co-ordinator desk and went travelling. Then Clare Bond, Access supremo sorted out her last crag argument and ran for the safety of Leeds, and now Lucy Mellor-Brook, Project Co-ordinator, a familiar stressed face at many BMC functions is abandoning her minutes and fleeing South. We wish them all the best, apart from Stu who should be proff reading.

Cunning Crag Cleaners

21 crags tackled in the first annual Peak Area litter pick

A rainy Sunday last December saw the first organised Peak Area litter pick, with incentives of free food, drink and a prize draw to lure a fine team of crag cleaners.

Despite the conditions over 80 people turned up, registered and grabbed their first free drink of the day in Longland's café. Teams were individually allocated to a crag and were provided with refuse sacks and gloves by Biffa Waste Disposal. An amazing 21 crags were cleaned by this willing band of volunteers collecting a total of almost ¾ tonne of rubbish. The most frequent litter being fag ends and finger tape, and the most unusual, well, half a garden gnome unearthed at Stanage.

This was a fantastic effort from all involved, and the hard working hordes were rewarded with another free drink and meal at the Grouse pub before prizes for various picking achievements were dished out. It's hoped that this will become a regular event on the Peak Area calendar, but let's also hope the crags stay relatively rubbish free in the meantime.

The idea had been conceived at an earlier Peak Area meeting, and became reality when Bunny McCullough (Access Rep. for the Eastern Moors) turned her hand to sourcing sponsors and making it happen. The BMC would like to thank everyone who turned up on the day and also Nick Longland, Sally and Mark at the Grouse,



Mike Pinder, and the following sponsors: *Adventure Unlimited, Rockfax, The Foundry Climbing Centre, Arcteryx / Sportiva, planetFear, The Edge Climbing Centre, Longland's, Buffalo Systems Ltd, CCC Outdoors, Rocksport, Crag X, Snow and Rock, Hitch 'n' Hike, Beta climbing designs, Outside, Nevisport, POD, The Old Barn, Foothills, UKClimbing.* And last, but definitely not least, *Biffa*, for providing the equipment and collecting the huge mound of rubbish at the end of the day.

- Report and photo: Simon Jacques.

What Future for Access?

As part of the Future Policy Review, the BMC's Access & Conservation Committee is reviewing its activities and direction. It is currently on the lookout for new members (including specialists in ornithology, land management and environmental fund raising) and has decided to hold themed meetings throughout '04. If you'd like to help out, get in touch.



Guides - uncertain future?
Credit: Mal Creasey.

Unhealthy Safety

New HSE legislation attacks the climbing world

New Health and Safety legislation intended for the construction industry could fundamentally change the teaching of climbing and mountaineering with serious ramifications for the sport as a whole.

Despite over two years of consultation with the Health and Safety Executive by representatives of the adventure activities industry, none of the concerns raised have been addressed in the latest draft of the Working at Height regulations published in December. These regulations originate from the EU and are aimed at the construction and window cleaning industry but adventure activities like climbing and caving have been scooped up and lumped in too.

The crux of the problem is that the regulations lay out many specific requirements that are totally at odds with current accepted best practice, but if not followed to the letter would leave people wide open to prosecution. These include the need to use a prescriptive double rope system whenever abseiling, lowering or ascending ropes, using two anchors per rope at all times, warning signs are required for each hazard, unstable or fragile surfaces (such as snow and ice) must be reinforced, and certain weather conditions are considered inappropriate for working.

But if these regulations just cover those working in the outdoors, surely there's no problem? The average climber or mountaineer won't be affected - or will they? Well, there is bound to be a knock on effect. Instructors teaching climbing will have to use a totally rigid and different system to their clients. This could easily lead to confusion and the belief that the methods used

by the instructor must be the safest. It could also lead to further insurance problems as insurers again wrongly assume that these regulations represent the safest systems in all instances.

John Cousins of the MLTUK explained, "It's a bizarre situation. The industrial roped access industry borrowed and adapted our techniques for use in the workplace. Now those methods have changed beyond all recognition, and they're being force-fed back to us without any thought."

On 15 January a packed "crisis" meeting was held at Plas y Brenin with 45 representatives from NGB's, AALA, professional associations, advisers, manufacturers and providers, and the chair, Doug Jones stated that as these regulations stand they are "a major threat to the future of adventure activities."

The fight is not over yet though and the Plas y Brenin meeting decided to continue the dialogue with HSE to seek exemption, together with taking advice on alternative solutions. The group also decided to ask everybody concerned to lobby government through their members of parliament pointing out these areas of concern and highlighting the contribution made to the countries health and wealth by adventure activities and the threat that the draft regulations pose.

For more background information, see the BMC website. The full document is available at www.hse.gov.uk/condocs and asks for views to be submitted by 2nd April 2004. The regulations will pass through Parliament on July 19th.

Michael Conville

We are sad to report the loss of Michael Conville. Michael was the father of Jonathan Conville, killed on the North Face of the Matterhorn in the winter of 1979/80, aged 27. Shortly after Jonathan's death Michael, along with other members of the family, set up the Conville Trust to encourage and assist young individuals to train for and pursue outdoor adventure in the spirit that Jonathan followed during his life. The BMC administers the Trust, and since it was established it has given thousands of young people the opportunity to go on subsidised mountaineering training courses in the Alps and the UK, currently around 200 each year.

High Bookworms

A new collection of mountaineering literature has been opened to the public at the Cumbria County Council library in Kendal. The Cumbria Libraries Mountaineering Collection, brought together from libraries all over the county, was launched in November. The collection will have a permanent home here and consists of more than 1,500 books and journals dating from the mid-nineteenth century. It will continue to grow and is expected to become one of the leading collections on mountaineering in a British public library. Most of the items will be available for borrowing, although more precious items will be for reference only.

Mountain Studies

From September, the emerging University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) will offer an MSc in Managing Sustainable Mountain Development, based at the UHI Centre for Mountain Studies at Perth College. The Centre was established in 2000 and aims to emerge as a centre of excellence on the issues of environmental management and conservation in the Scottish Highlands. This new MSc takes the work of the Centre further, and using the communications infrastructure of the UHI the degree will be provided online, enabling people to study where and when they like. Information on the MSc, and on the aims of the Centre can be obtained from Dr Price at the Centre for Mountain Studies, Perth College, Crieff Road, Perth, PH1 2NX.

Competition Winners

Well done to all the lucky winners from issue 32, and thanks for entering. Winners of the Lakeland CD were; Tony Emms, Becca Hemsted, Anne Lynch, Robert Trewhitt and G. Williams. Meanwhile the following now have warm hands thanks to Terra Nova; Tim Chapman, Claire Kestell, Justin Hirst, Russell Inman, D.R. Newsome, Sally Phillips, Bob Smith, Royston Smith, Alun G Williams, and Ian Wright.

Your Last Summit?

Oh no! If you're reading this as a Club Member, this is your last Summit for the year. From now on standard club members will only receive one full copy of Summit per year (the March edition). So if you enjoy getting all the latest news, safety advice, and feature articles about the BMC's work and more delivered straight to your door, then you'd better upgrade now. Club members can take advantage of a special deal to upgrade to full Individual membership at just £9.50. And in addition, you'll also:

Support the BMC's vital Access & Conservation work.

Support the BMC's work in representing climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers interests to government.

Help ensure that the BMC can continue developing its safety, training and technical work and services.

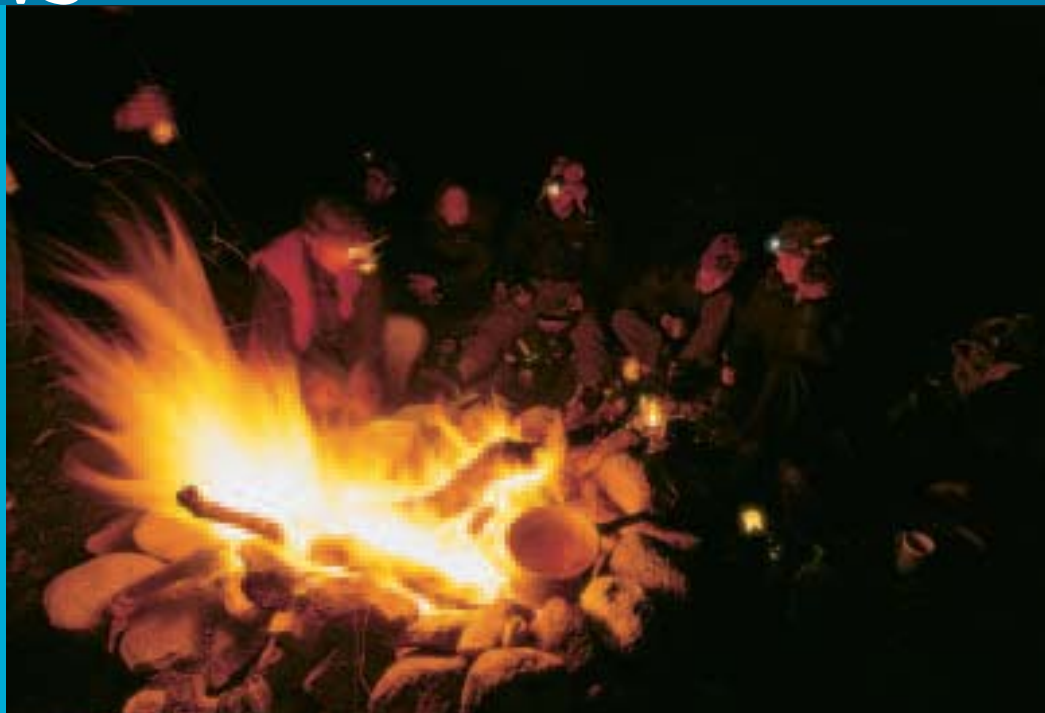
Club upgrade members will also get full Individual voting rights and £10K of personal accident insurance. To upgrade just phone the office on 0870 010 4878, or see the BMC website.

A Hut Topic

One ongoing issue that arose last year is the insistence by Gwynedd Council that the Oread Mountaineering Club hut at Rhyd Ddu should be classified as a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO). This would mean that the local authority would have greater powers of control over the hut such as; imposing registration in the HMO scheme, control over number of bed spaces, and insistence upon certain work being carried out. While the BMC agrees that club hut users should be as safe as possible, the restrictions imposed by being classified as an HMO run against the ethos of huts. On Oread's behalf, the BMC, lead by Iain McCallum, chair of the Huts Committee Advisory Panel, made representations to Gwynedd Council to convince them of this, sought the views of other organisations such as the YHA, and commissioned legal opinion to support our conviction that club huts are not HMOs. Discussion continues, and if any other clubs have the same issue raised against them, please contact the BMC. There is however one ray of hope – the draft Housing Bill contains provisions that explicitly define mountain huts as being outside the definition of HMOs, and the BMC will support this as the Bill goes through Parliament.

Rates savings for Clubs

The Chancellors pre-budget report in December included increased tax breaks for community amateur sports clubs (CASC), including mandatory 80% rates relief. The advice of the Inland Revenue for clubs wishing to register as such is that they ensure that their constitutions meet the specified requirements before applying, examples of which can be seen on www.ccpr.org.uk.



The Annual Gathering

BMC AGM and Annual Dinner, Bristol, 23-24th April

The annual gathering returns to the south west this year with the usual blend of strenuous debate, activity, alcohol and annihilation of brain cells. On the Friday evening we're laying on a slideshow - *British Sea Cliff Adventures* - by Pat Littlejohn and Dave Turnbull as part of a fund raising effort for the Cheddar Gorge Project. The

Saturday features a series of topical debates, the AGM, National Open Forum, and the dinner at the Novotel Bristol Centre with Sir Chris Bonington as guest speaker. Martin Crocker will then be leading a team of hanger survivors to Cheddar Gorge the following morning for some outdoor activity. For full details see page 52 of this issue.

ManCom Summary

For 14 February 2004. Presentations were given from Access & Conservation, the Technical Group, the Comps Committee, the Youth Advisory Panel, the Harrison's Rocks Management Group and the High Performance Steering Group. The membership, terms of reference and work programmes for '04 were agreed. Reports were given by the Areas. It was agreed that the Peak would present a report to the Executive detailing the risks and financial implications of buying Horseshoe Quarry. The Treasurer summarised the finances and reported that the BMC is currently on target for a surplus of

£84K for '03. He presented a proposal for subscriptions in '05 and the following were agreed: Clubs £8.00, Club Upgrades £13.50 and Individual £27.50. It was unanimously agreed to propose Michael Hunt at the AGM for election as Vice President. It was advised that the Annual Report and Accounts would be mailed out to Management Committee members late March. A paper was circulated from the MCofS in relation to the BMC Future Policy Review. A final draft of the Child Protection Policy was circulated and endorsed. Two new clubs were accepted for membership. The next meeting is on 23 April 2004 at the Novotel Bristol Centre.

BMC Area Meetings Calendar 2004									
2004	EAST DISTRICT	NORTH WEST	LONDON & SE	MIDLANDS	NORTH EAST	PEAK DISTRICT	SW & SOUTHERN	WALES	YORKSHIRE
Mar	Friday 17th Old Swageons Oyford Hall 8pm	Monday 20th BMC Office 7.30pm	Tuesday 23rd Frisco House 7pm					Saturday 27th Fyfe 7pm	Sunday 28th Leeds West 5pm
Apr				Thursday 27th Sheffold Cricket Club 7.30pm	Sunday 1st Forrester Arms	Thursday 4th The Grasses 7.15pm	Sunday 14th Bridle Drinking Wall 8.30pm		
Jun	Friday 18th The Golden Rule 7.30pm	Monday 14th BMC Office 7.30pm	Tuesday 16th Frisco House Francis St. London 7pm	Thursday 18th Alphaville, Hildesley 7.30pm	Monday 15th 8pm	Thursday 17th The Grasses 7.15pm		Wednesday 10th 8pm	8pm



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Cheddar Challenge

Work continuing to revitalise Gorge climbing

Work keeps progressing on the Cheddar Gorge Project, and following consultation a small selection of crags will be bolted. Abseil stations will also be installed where there is a clear case on conservation or safety grounds. The crags selected for bolting are those that accommodate existing sport or partially bolted routes i.e. Sunnyside Terrace, Sunset Buttress, Ginsberg Wall, Freaky Wall, Spacehunter Wall, and Horseshoe Bend Buttress. These will provide a range of fully bolted climbs across a range of grades.

None of the Gorge's main traditional climbs are to be bolted; no bold leads that are significant are to be bolted, and no climb will be bolted if the first ascensionist's blessing cannot be acquired. The Gorge will continue to remain, primarily, an adventure climbing location, and cliffs containing only trad routes are being restored to their former glory with dedicated cleaning and stabilisation work.

For the purpose of the approved bolting, the Cheddar Gorge Climbers Bolt Fund has been set up, and donations are urgently needed so the work can start. This is a now-or-never opportunity and deserves support by the climbing community. As Martin Crocker explains on page 62, the expectations for extended access into spring and autumn are extremely good, and it is so important that the restored routes are used by climbers after all this work.

Donations can be made in person at the Bristol Climbing Centre or Quip-U For Leisure, Old Market, Bristol, or send a cheque payable to Cheddar Gorge Climbers Bolt Fund to: Cheddar Gorge Climbing Project, c/o 23 Ryecroft Rise, Long Ashton, Bristol, BS41 9NQ.

(LEFT) Martin Crocker on the first ascent of his epic new route *Blagging Louts*, E5 6a, Castle Rocks, Upper Tier, Cheddar Gorge. Credit: Carl Ryan

NORTH WEST

Egerton Quarry

A crag clean up has been arranged for Egerton on 8th May. See BMC website for details nearer the time, or contact Les Ainsworth on 01539 536678.

Trowbarrow

A substantial rock fall has been reported at Trowbarrow at the right hand end of Main Wall – please take care.

PEAK DISTRICT

Stanage

2004 sees a new, targeted approach that should reduce inconvenience to climbers and increase the breeding success of the ring ouzels. This will involve short-term voluntary restrictions on the edge; at the Rim, in the Strangler area and at Count's Buttress in late March/early April – see on-site signs and RAD for details. Throughout the season there may be short-term restrictions where birds are nesting.

Stanage Parking

Also at Stanage, the Access and Conservation Trust has agreed to put £1,000 towards the cost of improving the design of a car park at Stanage Edge, following a joint project proposal by the Peak District National Park and the BMC. An area of verge parking at Cabin Track, currently a mess of black plastic netting and muddy ruts, will be transformed into a robust but informal parking area. As Matthew Croney, the Stanage/North Lees Estate Manager for the Peak District National Park Authority ex-

plained: "gritstone hardcore, which is natural to the area, will provide a firm surface but careful grass seeding should ensure that it blends in with this wild landscape".

Millstone

The ravens are reported to be nesting in the Twikker area again, please avoid this during nesting as per the signs on the ground.

Ravensdale

English Nature reports that the ravens are not prospecting at Ravensdale this year, so no nesting restriction will be placed. Peregrine may still nest later in the season, so keep an eye on BMC info sources for updates.

SOUTH EAST

Bulls Hollow

The power of local volunteer action was demonstrated at Bulls Hollow last year. The project to restore Bulls Hollow to climbable glory has now had its second stage completed. Scrub bashing and tree cutting work involving a team of committed volunteers has been completed with an amazing transformation to the crag. The professional tree surgeons will now move in for some work, and more volunteer effort will follow. To follow the progress of the scheme, and see reports, photos and video footage of the work so far visit www.adcock.clara.net/bullshollowrestoration.htm. The BMC office is here to help support local projects, so if your local area has something you'd like to get underway, then do get in touch.

YORKSHIRE

Almscliff

Recent graffiti, reported by the BMC, has been removed from Almscliff Crag, funded by English Nature.

OTHER

Crags in England

As part of an ongoing dialogue about mapping open country under the CrOW Act, the Countryside Agency are keen to have details of any crags where the mapping process has not produced the expected result under the criteria and problems could arise for climbers as a result. If you have examples, please contact the BMC.

BUFT Momentum

A British Upland Footpath Trust (BUFT) symposium took place at Plas y Brenin and there was strong support for the trust to continue with a role in setting the standards for pathwork. The next step is to use this momentum to get things done, so a meeting of those interested in carrying things further is planned. If you want to get involved please contact the office.

REGIONAL ACCESS DATABASE

Don't rely on guidebooks! For the latest access info on more than 600 crags in England and Wales, check out the Regional Access Database (RAD) on www.thebmc.co.uk



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Photo: Nick Wardland/Scribbling Images.com



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Summit gets sent a lot of weird things, but this little brown book published by Think in conjunction with the Ramblers Association stands out! Now if you want to know the record distance for walking on your hands, what Colonial Jack did with a wheel-

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We've got ten copies of this to dish out, just answer the following question:

Q. What is the largest UK National Park?

Answers on a postcard to the BMC Office or email summit@thebmc.co.uk. Winners will be published in Summit 34. Closing date is 01/05/04.

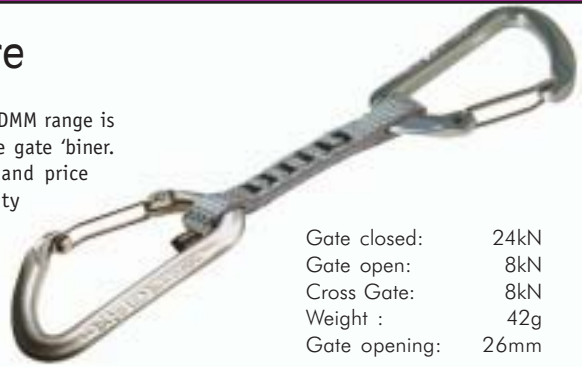
LIVEWIRE QUICKDRAWS UP FOR GRABS

DMM Livewire

From £11.50

The latest addition to the DMM range is a competitively priced wire gate 'biner'. But despite both weight and price shavings this little beauty manages to retain the usual stamp of DMM quality. Weighing in just a little heavier than the Prowire, the Livewire has a shrouded nose, wiregate and is supplied on 12mm

Dyneema in three different lengths (10,20,30 cm). It's also available as a pack of five at an extra discount (£52.50). All in all, if you're after a new 'draw that won't break the bank look no further. For more info see www.dmmwales.com.



Gate closed:	24kN
Gate open:	8kN
Cross Gate:	8kN
Weight :	42g
Gate opening:	26mm

WIN ONE OF 10 QUICKDRAWS

In usual Stuff style, we've got ten sets of these quickdraws to give away! So get on the DMM website and answer the following simple question:

Q. Name 3 models of DMM karabiners.

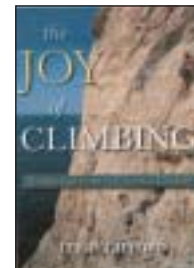
Answers on a postcard to the BMC Office or email summit@thebmc.co.uk. Winners will be published in Summit 34. Closing date is 01/05/04

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Planning an Easter escape? Don't forget one of the most important items of kit you can take with you - BMC Insurance. The policies represent excellent value for money, and can provide cover for all kinds of sports. From trekking in Greece to sport climbing in Spain there's a policy for you. BMC Insurance is available instantly online from www.thebmc.co.uk or call the office on **0870 010 4878** for help.

The Joy of Climbing

£19.95



Some say that climbing is better than sex. That's probably not true, but Terry Gifford's new book celebrates the sheer joy of climbing and the enormous satisfaction and pleasure derived

from it. He's gathered together a selection of his articles demonstrating the sheer fun and enjoyment of climbing, taking the reader around the UK and ranging as far afield as the United States, France, Germany, Spain and Crete. They have been especially chosen to provide a stimulating but achievable challenge with a wide appeal, but the central characters celebrated in the book are, of course, the numerous awe-inspiring climbs themselves.

READERS OFFER

We've negotiated a special deal for Summit readers. Order The Joy of Climbing at just **£17.50** (plus p&p) by contacting Whittles Publishing on **01593-741240**.

Access Focus Leaflet

Free

The latest version of this vital information leaflet is now available, giving details of voluntary restrictions across the UK and Ireland. The detailed information on bird nesting restrictions can be found on the centre pages of this issue. There is a pdf on the BMC website too. If you require additional copies for yourself, contact the office.

WIN A SYNCRONIC SENSOR MASTER



Sensor Master

£100

As a relatively new brand Synchronic have entered the altimeter market with some compact models that are crammed with features yet easy on the wallet. The Sensor Master has an altimeter, altimeter history graph, barometer, thermometer, alarm and timer, and of course tells the old fashioned time. It's a slim moulded shape, and light enough to suit the most demanding alpinist whilst features like the 48-hour pressure history graph allow for accurate weather prediction to help you avoid trouble.

The Sensor Master from Synchronic is one of four models ranging from £50 to £120. For full product info and stockist information visit www.synchronic.co.uk or contact Equip Outdoor Technologies on 01773 601870.

WIN ONE OF THESE BEASTS

We've got two of these lovely gadgets to give away - just find out:


Q. What is the maximum height a Synchronic Sensor Master will measure to?

Answers on a postcard to the BMC Office or email summit@thebmc.co.uk. Winners will be published in Summit 34. Closing date is 01/05/04

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BRITS ABROAD

British alpinism is thriving - what's the secret of this renaissance? According to **Ian Parnell**, it's all down to the UK Sport Grants and the legacy of the 80's minimalist attitude.

All Photos: Ian Parnell unless credited.
Interview: Alex Messenger.

Just before winter set in, Ian Parnell, Kenton Cool and John Varco (US) made the first ascent of the South West Ridge of Annapurna III (7,555m). This was a highly coveted line that had repelled several strong European teams.

It was yet another world class effort from the Brits in recent years, and was nominated for the French Piolet D'or award. This award (aka Golden Ice Axe) is given out annually by Montagnes Magazine and the Groupe de Haute Montagne for outstanding mountaineering achievements.

But only five years ago Ian Parnell was stuck behind a desk lost in dusty world of organising climbing competitions. What happened, and why is British alpinism so healthy at the moment?

(LEFT) Bivy cave at 7100m on Annapurna III. When the three found this cave they had been on the go for six days. The previous night had been appalling, with John Varco "doing a good impression of dying" and coughing up huge amounts of blood. The cave was a lifesaver, allowing them to recover sufficiently to summit the next day.

(INSET) Bivvying on the initial 600m rock band.

Annapurna. Another nice result. You and Kenton Cool seem to make quite a team, how did you first hook up?

The first time I met Kenton he was crawling in to Coire an t-Sneachda! It was on a BMC International Winter meet and he was just out of his wheelchair following a nasty accident breaking both ankles in the slate quarries. I just looked at him and thought that guy's insane. He definitely made an impression, but after that I tried to avoid climbing with him. The first time we actu-

ally teamed up was on another BMC Meet, the Slovenian exchange. There was a good crew out; Sam Chinnery, the Benson Brothers, Kenton. It was a great trip, we all shared the same ethos of what we wanted to do in the mountains, and how to do it. And as a result all ended up heading to India later that year to try the Arwa Spire.

What about John Varco?

We met John in a bar in Chamonix over the winter season. It soon became evident that he shared our non-too-serious approach to climbing, and despite the fact we'd never

seen him climb, we planned the trip. Getting on socially is the most important thing. I mean, if you can't take the mick out of someone, then you're in for a bad time on the mountain.

Isn't three people literally an odd number to climb as?

A lot of people ask that. It was the first time I'd ever experimented with it, and I've got to say, it really was a huge success. Two people can follow almost as quick as one, so there are no time issues. But three can



squeeze into a two-person tent surprisingly easily, share the same amount of cooking equipment and rack, giving great weight savings. But the biggest bonus is in the mind. Psychologically you're a much stronger unit. If there are just two of you, one person's mood can jeopardize the whole trip. But with three you've bought yourself some breathing space, if someone has a bad night there are two people to look after them - there's no effect on the momentum.

You were nominated for the Piolet D'Or, does that mean anything?

Yes of course, although us Brits do have a laissez faire attitude to awards, especially French ones, you can't help but feel flattered when your climb gets nominated. It's always nice to be recognised.

Annapurna is just one of many trips. You must live a hectic life?

Well, I'm not denying it's graft sometimes. I'm a professional photographer and writer, and have been steadily plugging away at that for three years now, and this last year it's really taken off. It's been hard work getting that off the ground, I'd like to calm down now and do a bit more climbing, get a better balance between climbing and work. Nine months climbing and three months work would be nice! (*What!?* - Ed)

Earning your living from climbing and writing, do you ever feel under undue pressure to bring back the goods?

No, not really. I'm a freelance writer, with good relationships with magazines like *Climber* in the UK and *Alpinist* in the states. Luckily I'm able to write about more than just my holidays, so don't lose too much sleep if I've had a bad trip. I also get equip-

ment support from Arc'teryx and Snow + Rock and as far as they are concerned, as long as I am testing gear out in the mountains to give feedback then the summit is just a bonus.

From BMC Competitions Officer to Extreme Alpinist, that's some transformation - just how did you pull that off?

I've never pigeonholed myself as any particular type of climber, it's all the same thing. For me organising climbing competitions was still using climbing to run away, avoiding doing a real job. But I knew it wasn't for me long-term. Then on my 30th birthday, I found myself halfway up an aid route on El Cap. Leo Houlding and Patch Hammond were my next-door neighbours, having a wild time on El Nino, a major free line. I remember sitting there and watching them. Watching the way they went for it, no boundaries, giving it their all. It was then that I realised time was running out, and I really wanted to give climbing my everything. On return to the UK I just quit work. As soon as that step was made, the climbing increased, and the big trips started.

What plans for the future?

I've got lots of plans, some of which I can't tell you! The three of us know what direction we want to go in, and have some great objectives. In fact I'm back to Alaska with John this year to do something a little strange. We're trying the second ascent of a route that I put up, The Knowledge on Mount Hunter. I climbed this on one of my very first trips, but we aided six of the 35 pitches. We want to go back and iron those out; it's an amazing route, so set up to be at the top end of free mixed climbing difficulties. Plus I'd like to go to the summit, we missed that out last time. Then it's back to India in the autumn for something similar to Annapurna III.

Any plans to write a book?

Well, I have got a book plan, but I won't say any more. It's not about my own climbing but a coffee table thing, and will be amazing if we pull it off. But yes, it's not for a long while.

Did any people inspire you?

Loads and none I guess. I think it's easy to be overawed by heroes and think big climbs are only for superstars when they're within the reach of many climbers. Having said that I do remember seeing Doug Scott and Chris Bonington lecture when I was about ten, and deep down that probably set the agenda. More recently there's a guy called Voytek Kurtyka, he's the most visionary alpinist there's been in recent times, plus his writing is amazing.

How have BMC/MEF grants benefited you?

Well, the set up in Britain is fantastic, it's probably the best funding system in the world. It doesn't concentrate on a few high

profile expeditions each year, but instead gives contributions to lots of different people who want to head out to the mountains, from top performers to people on their first ever trip. People like me, and almost anyone from my generation of alpinists wouldn't have been able to do any of our expeditions without this support. It's allowed people to go to some different objectives too, without funding some areas of the world are off limits to all but super rich Japanese expeditions.

British alpinism is on the up at the moment, any ideas why?

It's definitely very healthy at the moment. As I said, the grants have been an invaluable help, and also you need good role models and inspirations. A lot of today's climbers are building on the previous generations, it's all continuous growth. We all owe quite a debt to the 80's generation; Mick Fowler, Andy Cave, Andy Perkins. That lot shied away from the glossy and expensive trips in vogue with other countries, and hammered away with a DIY, low-key, lightweight approach. In effect they provided a really good template that showed that anyone could put a trip together.

How do British mountaineers compare on the world scene?

Well, we haven't got a real superstar that stands out but that's probably a good thing. What we have got is real depth of talent. Lots of people who are good, pushy climbers at the moment, everybody feeding off each other. This depth is so strong, just look at the meaty ascents. Every year Brits are pulling off something good and respectable. And in fine style. Mick Fowler and Paul Ramsden actually won the Piolet D'Or last year, which is one sign of the level that British alpinism has now reached. It's very positive at the moment, but if the grant support ever went, that would all change.

What's your highpoint so far?

Last trip was pretty way up there. Kenton and myself have been climbing together for a while now and it got pretty emotional. Yeah, we were both there on the summit, bawling our eyes out. Must have been altitude sickness or something!

Finally, have you got one tip for any budding alpinists?

Go for it. Go for your dreams but build up steadily. Alpinism takes a long time, the climbs I really want to achieve are still five years off for me. Just pick a reasonable objective to start with and gradually build up. But definitely give it a try. **II**

(LEFT) John Varco leading on the top rock band c.6800m on the South West Ridge of Annapurna III.

(RIGHT) Ian Parnell leading on the initial 600m wall, again on Annapurna III. Credit: John Varco.



"Go for your dreams but build up steadily.
Alpinism takes a long time.."



ICE COLD

Think you've had a cold winter? How about travelling solo for months at -40c? Welcome to the world of Gary Rolfe, Arctic Explorer.

Gary is making a name for himself having established the vital ingredients to succeed and survive, single-handed in the most hostile wilderness locations on the planet. Here he offers a unique insight into his methods and innovative gear that help protect him and his dogs. Unashamedly extreme concepts from the colder edge.

His secret is his no compromise attitude. Everything from the dogs, nutrition, gear, training and clothing are all scrutinised in minute detail for improvement. The gear is kept simple and it must perform under incredible stresses. And it has a tough life. For one month of any journey with ten huskies he starts with a ten-foot sled carrying a 1000lb payload that includes 620lbs of dog food, reliable communication gear, fuel, medical and veterinary kits. The dog food is also fit for human consumption. This makes up his world. So tuck up nice and warm, and get ready for a closer look at the nightmare scenario of living way below zero for months on end...

WAKE UP CALL

The day starts with me brushing frozen breath from tent inner walls, roof and sleeping bag on to the shelter's floor. Here it remains frozen. From the night before my stove and lantern rest full of Coleman white gas (naphtha) on a firm level base of thin

wooden ply. The generator's fuel rod and two fuel pans wait there with curled dollops of petroleum paste. I use white gas since it has the lowest flash point of all reliable stove fuels, and in extreme cold the only other serious stove fuel challengers are aviation fuels. Jet A produces more BTU's (British Thermal Units) per minute meaning less to carry, but it's a pig to light. Jet B (kerosene and white gas mix) isn't much better. Whilst AV 100 is the easiest to ignite. But the overriding factor against using big BTU aviation fuels is their fumes, these severely sting eyes if burnt in the confines of a tent. There's also P50, an Arctic fuel that is basically domestic heating oil. But like Jet A it's difficult to get going

(MAIN) Pingo and Hansel, lead dogs on the Beaufort Sea. **(INSET)** Gary on the Mackenzie River, Northwest Territories, travelling by moonlight at -45c - now that's cold. All credit: Gary Rolfe.

and really isn't much better than kerosene anyway, soots like crazy and stinks. So, all in all white gas weighs less than aviation fuel, emits the least fumes, is easy to start, won't clog up stove parts and is stable.

BREKKIE IN BED

I've a waterproof container that, for one month holds 310 oversized matches and emery boards. With gloves on I sprinkle out and select one match, praying it's not a dud. Most standard lighters aren't much good at forty below zero, they're hard to operate and the fuel doesn't have a low enough flash point. An alternative is using a Zippo lighter - the large flint wheel is easy to strike and it works with white gas. Don't try this in less than extreme cold though, it won't explode but above 15c will become too hot to handle.

Once my stove is primed with 30 plunges, I light the paste. It spits and crackles. The trick is to warm those critical metal parts that carry gas vapour to its ignition point. This is always dangerous, inadequate warming can lead to a pooling of fuel. Turning the stove knob I watch the little flames uncoil then flick up from the burner pan. Then there it is, heat. Lit white gas vapour roars, hectic, strong. My tent warms and this feels all so very, very precious.

Water is essential for all times on a journey. It's hard just staying warm out here, and to avoid a hypothermic state requires immense physical output, with a corresponding huge intake of oxygen. The end result is that every day 3/4 litre of water is required purely to humidify the inhaled freezing air. Dehydration and hypothermia are linked in a vicious dance. Before breaking camp I fill four one-litre steel flasks with boiling water to last the day. These flasks are only ever used for water, and will last for two days and nights at -30°C, smaller sizes simply freeze solid. The cups are wrapped with cloth backed duct tape to prevent them freezing to my mouth.

I eat breakfast with a plastic spoon - again, this won't freeze to mouth tissue. My diet is based on complex carbohydrates, delivering instant and constant long lasting energy in a ratio of 60% carbohydrate, 25% protein and 15% fat. On expeditions I ingest around 5,200 calories daily, the equivalent calorific expenditure to running a marathon a day. This is supplied via specially developed sports nutrition powders of fructose and protein sprinkled over pasta or oats with dried fruit. The whole idea is to provide instant and long-lasting quality energy to maintain critical body weight and replenish tired muscles before, during and after exercise. Weight for weight my food per day will weigh 950g, slightly less than one of the dog's daily rations. All pasta and rice is pre-ground before packing, it cooks quicker and is lighter on the stomach.

Why don't I eat more fat? Well unlike the dogs I can't metabolise and mobilise it fast enough to serve as an efficient energy source during intense exercise in violently cold conditions. And equally ill-evolved, I can't produce Vitamin C, so make do with a

concoction of minerals, vitamins and amino acids. For major bodily functions I aim into a bag and perform inside the tent. Double lined re-sealable bags from the previous day's food are used, and in a minute or so their contents freeze solid.

DRESSED FOR WORK

It's now that I get toggled up. Once on the move there's no messing with clothing, once it's on, it stays on. Zips under the arms of every layer and side vents help regulate body heat. Undergoing huge bouts of exercise over many hours, it's paramount to evaluate the layering system for wicking away sweat from my skin. Allowing sweat to freeze on my body is not only unpleasant, but a potential killer. Rab's Vapour Rise first layer system has become a critical part of my kit in recent years.

Then it's onto more specialist kit. Cycling shorts with a chamois leather crotch give added protection in the nether region, whilst ski goggles with a felt nose protect

from the wind. When it's cold enough to turn spit into ice cubes I wear two fleece gaiters around my face. The first is close fitting, the second big enough to fit over the first creating a warm wedge pocket between the two. My body benefits from breathing in this slightly warmer air. A fur-trimmed parka hood ruff is a sound investment to stave off a frostbitten face, and there are a few choices out there. It may seem strange in the days of modern man-made fabrics, but sometimes nature knows best. The most spectacular affair uses the very best tundra wolf, wolverine and beaver furs, and is prized. Sewn together this creates what the Inuit call an 'amowak'.

For my eyes I wear disposable contact lenses, glasses would just freeze to my face. A week's supply are kept thawed next to my body, the rest lie frozen on the sled. On shifting sea ice they're worn for extended periods - the thought of being woken by ice breaking up under camp and scrambling blindly out of water gives me the creeps.

(TOP) December 6th, sun setting for the last time behind boreal larch in the Mackenzie Delta, North West Territories.

(BOTTOM) Moving over the frozen Beaufort Sea.





Piper shaking off a blanket of snow before being harnessed for a days travelling.

"Huskies love the cold. This is their domain, here they are purveyors of excellent efficiency."

The last job I do inside the tent is to smear my face with Bag Balm. This antiseptic ointment protects potentially vulnerable frostbite areas from splitting. Importantly it contains no water and doesn't freeze to body parts. As well as protecting it encourages fast healing, anything else is nothing more than a cosmetic.

TOOLS OF THE JOB

Some days I greet the world by throwing a cup of boiling water into the air, watching it explode into a bursting cloud of minute spangled ice crystals. In the morning sun it falls like glitter. Then camp is broken and the sled packed. All food and gear is packed in large duffle bags, and paint markers boldly identify the stuff sacks that contain a sled kit, ski kit, ammunition, dog kit, cook bag, spares bag, dog food, medical and veterinary kits. IT delicacies such as my laptop and Iridium sat phone go inside a single Neoprene-coated nylon dry bag and into a Pelican protective case.

My tent and sleeping bag system are all zipped into my bivi bag. I've used seriously good tunnel and freestanding tents in the Arctic but still customize them. A decent drying loft is installed and awning cord hoops sewn along the frame for tensioning poles from the inside. A tent fly snow flap is another job, once complete, this looks like a hovercraft skirt. I also tape all pole sections bar the middle one with cloth backed duct tape, the tape doesn't become brittle.

Tent fires are the ultimate nightmare. Flameproof material is not cheap but it's a serious addition to the loft area. I've a small Chubb fire blanket as back up. If you purchase one, make sure it'll put out the fuel you intend using, not just a regular chip pan fire. Alongside fire the other tent concern is ventilation. All stove fuels produce carbon monoxide, a potential killer. Fail to recognise the importance of an inlet for fresh air and outlet for stove emission fumes, and nausea will quickly graduate into headaches, poisoning, blindness and death.

I travel alone with the dogs and if we fall through while moving over river or sea ice, our immediate future depends on the stove kit. This is kept at hand in a dry bag with the water flasks, day food, a bowl, my only spare clothing, and spare matches waterproofed with edible tallow candle wax. The bag also contains basic parts of my medical and veterinary kits. You don't have to be in the Arctic to appreciate packing a kit aimed at getting your dog back to safety. It doesn't weigh much and could save it's life.

On top of my bivi there's space for other gear needed throughout the day. Bear paw pattern snowshoes with built-in crampons, a solar panel, rifle and a snow shovel with a steel face are all arranged and bungeed down. A .30-06 calibre rifle filled with 150g bullets, no scope just open sights, is kept in a lightweight sleeve. A felt cover with lanyard covers the barrel end - in polar bear country a plugged barrel is bad news.

A gear rail at the stern of my sled keeps ice screws, karabiners for tent guys, snow saw, an axe and wire snips tidy. Also handy is a knife (with a split ring threaded through a hole through the blade for easy opening with gloves). All tool handles are sprayed fluorescent red for easy location in snow, smaller items sprayed completely.

For an independent and renewable power source a Unisolar MBC-262 solar panel is combined with a rechargeable sealed lead acid 12V Gel Cell deep cycle battery. Even at forty below zero the amorphous silicon alloy panel remains flexible, and its customised cable and junction box don't become brittle. To absorb solar energy the panel is secured over the sled, and while on the move, requires only the cable terminal tabs to be attached to the battery and it begins to charge. It's worth noting that the heaviest rechargeable batteries are the most effective owing to their quality lead content. Head-torches, a spare GPS and emergency strobe lights are chosen to all be compatible with rechargeable AA nickel metal hydride batteries.

Before we move off I harness up the dogs in their usual frenzy of excitement. I ski alongside the sled on wax-less wood core skis with free-heel mukluk bindings, the only way to generate enough body heat to stave off hypothermia. At best the sled runners skim effortlessly full lick over stretched flat pans of sheer ice; the dogs happy and pulling in unison, with their nimble feet going nineteen-to-the-dozen. I watch the dogs, concentrating on their footings, harnesses and expressions to check their mood.

FINDING YOUR WAY

GPS's have made polar navigation easier, and using them with gloves on narrows the selection to those with decent sized buttons. A regular compass is a dead loss in the high Arctic. Alcohol freezes in the compass housing giving sluggish readings. But if the sun's out shadows can be used. At noon local time anywhere on the planet your shadow will point true north. Since the sun moves 15° west every hour, I aim that angle off my shadow and gradually alter the degree increments as time passes. For instance at 11am local time the shadow is cast 15° west of true north and at 1pm, 15° east of true north. Northern bush pilots sometimes use the same method from shadows cast by wizened boreal larch, ice pressure ridges, or even a polar bear.

COLD SNAPS

Expedition camera work is never easy, and in the Arctic it calls for ingenuity. At forty below cameras are operating on the very threshold of their ability and film becomes brittle, shattering if the frame advance isn't even. This can never be achieved with a manual unit, and all the cameras are set to slowest frame advance (silent advance). By not shooting the extra frame at the end of the roll the chances of keeping precious film intact increases. Silent advance also avoids static electricity caused by the felt on the film gate, in extreme cold this can cause a vertical line through the film. Don't exhale into your camera while changing film either, it'll freeze, causing ice crystals to form and scratch film.

The only filter I use is a circular polarizer to remove unwanted reflections and saturate colour. Lens caps have oversized tabs for use with gloves on and quick release plates are on all bodies. All the camera gear has adhesive moleskin wrapped around constantly handled areas. I aim to shoot eight rolls of slide film every month, one every four days. Film stock ranges from 50 to 400 ISO and nothing is ever done without gloves, even changing films. It saves calories and prevents cold injuries.

ON THE GO

I believe in routine, and the dogs appreciate this too. We travel for fifty-five minutes then rest for five. The dogs nuzzle one another, content, they take the weight off their feet, lie down and curl with their backs to a wind that sometimes looks to massacre with its insane cold. On calm days weighty



".the constant grating and grinding of the ice repeatedly lets off without order or warning, tension splitting crescendos. Then that echo underneath. Fading, freezing, lost in the deep, that lurking black.."

At camp on the Mackenzie River in 24 hour darkness.

snowflakes fall like goose down. The flakes bump and cover us white. I snack on complex energy Powerbars, the dogs tuck into high calorie ground chicken nuggets.

HOME TIME

Unless a storm dictates otherwise I halt the dogs after eight hours travel. This is a dangerous time, a polar bear can appear with little warning. Polar bears will actively stalk and kill a human for food, weighing in at nearly half a tonne with claws longer than your fingers. On the move I look out for their kills and watch for downwind attacks. A female with cubs is extra bad news. Fresh droppings look like human faeces with bone and fur, and glistening scarlet clods of sea ice indicate a seal blowhole has been visited. Unsuspecting surfacing seals are bludgeoned with no remorse, and their pups aren't left orphaned for long. There are no prisoners taken out here - seeing blood on sea ice always makes my arse tighten.

Now stopped, ready to make camp, my surveillance for polar bears is aided by the dogs extra sensory world. Their superior sense of smell and ability to select movement in poor light helps buy me reaction time. Pingo is a crafty rascal; he's also a demon fighter, and when making camp he shadows me like a bodyguard. Smart, nimble and tough he is perfectly suited to stall a bear nearly eighteen times bigger than himself.

I begin to dig pits a metre deep for each dog then cut and shape snow blocks for building a low windbreak. My movements become dead slow. Alone it always seems to take so very long, that one last big push to set up camp. Crushing exhaustion has to be staved off with fierce concentration. "Just let me get this done", I plead. The spindrift, wind and endless barrage of driven ice crystals hurtle over the ocean's crust. Not used to momentarily losing pace it hits the windbreak. Up it goes, frozen a million times, traversing an endless distance to god knows where.

SETTLING DOWN

The dogs settle and I get the tent up. It's then I disconnect the freshly charged battery from the solar panel and bundle it into

the dry bag before bringing it inside the tent. Still fully clothed, I begin to organise the tent interior. Some things can be improvised on the Arctic Ocean but a stove can't. In extreme cold it sustains my life. Daily it repeatedly melts 90 litres of snow then boils 12 litres of water to hydrate the dogs and myself. I'm sharp to lift and replace stove pan lids quickly to prevent condensation. It takes four hours to melt enough water, but the process reminds me that I will be warm again.

Then I strip off my clothing and air it from the loft. Everything is systematically dried. No matter how it feels, it will contain moisture - a potential killer. At that most defenceless of moments and listening to the din outside, I'm reminded of where we're camped. The constant grating and grinding of the ice repeatedly lets off without order or warning, tension splitting crescendos. Then that echo underneath. Fading, freezing, lost in the deep, that lurking black. The sound makes me wince.

When on a rest day or sitting out a storm, the laptop comes out. I create a snug nest in the loft for the IT gear still in its dry bag. Condensation forms instantly on the bag's exterior, and it takes six hours for the equipment to thaw before booting up. I have to be patient, water forming on the defrosting equipment would cause irreversible damage. When satisfied, the battery is checked and its direct current converted through a lightweight inverter to power the laptop. This setup also enables direct recharging of the sat phone and video camera batteries. Once up and running, at 24,000 bps, emails are relatively quick to send. I keep a diary and maintain tables of technical performance and research analysis on the tolerance capabilities of gear and materials. Canine and human research data investigating the physiological and psychological affects of temperature extremes is also collated.

Every hour new live maps of weather and ice conditions can be picked up off satellite-linked websites. From these maps I determine if there's open water ahead. Polar bears follow open water in order to hunt and though they aren't territorial they do

protect critical space around themselves. This space varies in size and from animal to animal, and if anything invades a bears space it'll try to eliminate it. At pre-arranged times I also phone to update base with essential progress info. From these conversations I write specific details on my tent walls. This gives me a sense of progress when often very little else matters.

I soak the dogs' feed inside an insulated Coleman 'cooler'. Feeding the dogs at night is usually seriously ugly with the wind pummeling at a ballistic breath taking velocity. Here I try to stand, only to be bought to my knees. Ticker tape ice splinters remorselessly swirl and swerve this way and that, blowing from all angles. Whistling wind shrills and blasts millions and millions of glittered flaying shards through the beam of my head-torch. Adapted cables lead from the unit on my head to a battery pack kept warm inside my clothing. Ice debris fragments collide with me head-on like a sledgehammer. Near misses glance and flick. My body gets punched, jabbed and dented at an almighty pace before I fall into Piper's 'nest'. He lifts shedding snow like a giant casting shackles aside. Unruffled he feeds well with a slathering tongue dribbling. Like the others once fed Piper is hardly ever bothered by what else is going on and easily settles.

At home I work to get stronger, maintain endurance and recover as quickly as possible, all without getting injured. Training at 4am is hell, but it produces discipline for situations when I need to channel my fear into sharp effective decision-making. Tiredness reaches a scale of intense difficulty out here. At forty-five or even fifty below it all simply gets to a point where I just get on with it, never letting the dogs down. This disciplined edge enables me to perform at the best of my ability and fulfil theirs. Huskies love the cold. This is their domain, and here they are purveyors of excellent efficiency.

When training the dogs I expose them to anything they might experience on a journey. Not only do they need to experience these conditions, routines and situations but must experience them while trusting


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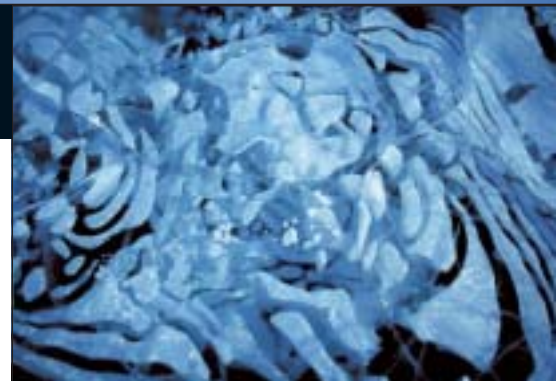


(TOP) Dawson and Kavik resting at the mouth of the Mackenzie River.
(RIGHT) Crazy sea ice formations – patterns copied by the Inuit in their art work.

me. By the end of their first season puppies will have experienced bears, moose, thundering ice, water and a bottomless supply of love and attention. With time the bonding, loyalty and trust follow.

Once I've fed the dogs and myself, I brush my teeth. I don't know what they put into Crest toothpaste but it never freezes. To date the longest I've gone without washing on an expedition is four months. This was during my longest spell in the Arctic. I didn't step on carpet or see grass for 18 months. Personal hygiene amounted to dusting myself with medicated zinc oxide powder. I didn't rot and the dogs didn't complain of any smell so everyone was pleased I guess.

I use American made Wiggy's sleeping bag systems; since they don't retain moisture. One bag is comfortable at forty below and zipped into an oversized lighter bag rated for twenty below. I then combine three closed cell sleeping mats. Two go under the sleeping bags inside my bivi, the other one laid directly under the bivi. Currently I'm experimenting and working with Beacons Products from Merthyr Tydfil to increase insulation properties made from a combined 4mm VA30 and 11mm LD15 Plastazote mat. The mats weigh just 320g.



DARK DREAMS

The cold has petrified me. In 2002, tent bound on the Arctic Ocean I sensed something huge lived out there. Its presence reigned with supreme power. After feeding the dogs one night I scribbled on the tent:

"I'm aware my body might be found. At the time of writing I'm sane and ask that you deal with my remains. Either lay me on the ice, toss me into open water or feed me to my dogs. Please post the letters and diary to my parents. Thank you"

I turn out the stove and lantern then wait for them to cool before filling the pair full with Coleman white gas ready for the morning. Only when this attention to detail is complete do the thoughts of sleep become real. ||

MORE INFORMATION

Gary's site:	www.garyrolfe.com
Rugged laptops:	www.panasonic.co.uk
Flexible solar panels:	www.uni-solar.com
Contact lenses:	www.cibavision.com
Wiggy's sleeping bags:	giles@sls-group.com
Snowshoes:	www.tubbsnowshoes.com
Down clothing:	www.rab.uk.com
Stoves and lanterns:	www.coleman-eur.com
Veterinary packs:	www.padi-paws.co.uk
Nutrition supplements:	www.powerbar-europe.com
Hard to find fabrics:	www.justmakeit.com
Dry bags & hydration:	www.outdoordesigns.co.uk



Next issue: Gary will cover bears, firearms, safety considerations, and transport of dangerous goods. Summit will also be publishing updates from Gary's next expedition, fresh from the Arctic Ocean.

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tions available cope easily with even the most awkward of loads and all the bits and pieces that accumulate.

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SERIOUSLY STRONG

Ratho Wall finally opened, and it was worth the wait. To start with a bang they hosted the Seriously Strong UIAA-ICC World Cup.

And what an appropriate name for a title sponsor, although Seriously Cold might have been just as apt. It was Baltic. Who says these competition climbers are a bunch of softies? The Difficulty climbers had it worst, trying to climb very technical routes on small holds when they could barely feel their tips. No they didn't like it at all. But the boulderers - they loved it. Sub zero conditions, fantastic friction, in fact "the best conditions ever for a competition" according to one ecstatic Frenchman.

So what about the Brits? Well it was arguably our best ever competition, we didn't get any podium places but had a total of five finalists plus three others in the semis. Malc Smith, Gaz Parry, Mark Croxall, Katherine Schirmacher, all made it through to the bouldering final, whilst Lucy Creamer made it into her first ever difficulty final, the first British female for a long while.

But the show belonged to Sandrine Levet. She came, she saw, and she did more than conquer, she wiped the floor, winning both the bouldering and difficulty events. This

was the first time anyone had ever won both disciplines on the same weekend, and as result she walked off with the overall bouldering World Cup and finished second in the Difficulty World Cup. Wow.

The BMC also ran the A5 BBC this autumn and as ever that was mega successful. Rounds at Ratho, Blackburn (BoulderUK) and Preston saw heaps of fantastic climbing and determination. Eventual victors were Andy Earl and Jo Gordon in the Seniors (both these categories went to the wire) and Jeff Landman and Hazel Findlay in the Juniors, although these climbers were more dominant.

Many thanks to all of the sponsors of the A5 BBC: The North Face, Entre-Prises, OTE, High, Bentleys Chartered Accountants and not forgetting Snow + Rock who had the half price shop at Preston.

There is also a lasting legacy of the events with the A5/Entre-Prises boulder currently residing at Preston. This is a great addition to the wall, and the boulder promises to live there for quite a while, taking the occasional holiday to Birmingham. ||

Don't forget, The North Face UIAA-ICC Bouldering World Cup is at the Outdoors Show at the NEC on 2-4 April, see page 39 for a great ticket offer.

For more information on Ratho see www.adventurescotland.com



(TOP) Gaz Parry desperately trying to control the swing on an evil finals problem.

(ABOVE) Sandrine Levet, the star of the show, crimping her way to victory. Both credit: Alex Messenger.

Alpine climber Pete Takeda is such an ultra light freak, he used to be known for taking a knife to his jackets and cutting off zipper flaps, extra cords and anything else he felt was extraneous, all in the name of a few ounces. That is, until he joined the Marmot Design team and helped decide what would hit the cutting room floor on our Minima Jacket. The result? A 2.5 layer jacket that is incredibly light weight yet tough enough to handle even the most extreme conditions. Pete knows the Shadowlight Gore-Tex® PL3 Shell will stay waterproof yet breathable in the snowy Himalayas.

He counts on the Hybrid Welded, Micro Stitched Construction, Single Draw Storm Hood, and full length Stormproof Pockets to keep him warm and dry in gale swept Scotland. And he likes that it weighs eight ounces less than any of our other jackets. Which, according to Pete's math, saves him several thousand pounds of effort on your average climb. Give or take a few if you include his knife. It's no wonder people who work outdoors for a living are the inspiration for the clothing that works for them. The Minima Jacket. **Count on it.™**

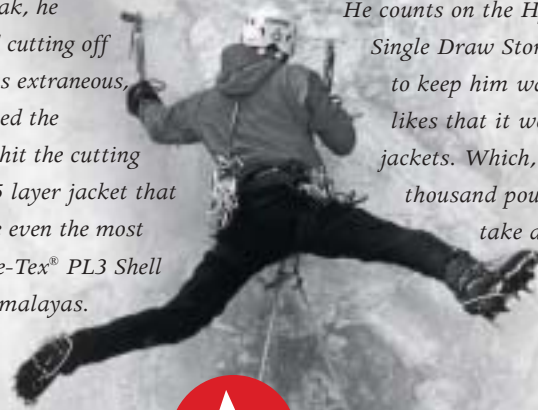


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POWER CUT



It was light when we woke below Longs Peak. Not great when you'd meant to wake at 5am for a very long day, when days weren't that long to begin with.

Ian hadn't heard the alarm because he'd been wearing earplugs. He claimed my snoring kept him awake, I personally preferred the term 'heavy breathing'. I'd forgotten to bring my watch, and hadn't heard Ian's, buried as it was within his thick sleeping bag, necessary for the depths of Colorado winter. I'd also forgotten the food, which was lucky, as it was only my stomach that woke me.

We'd driven up from Boulder the day before in 'Frank's truck', a municipal climbers truck once owned by the late 'Frank' who unfortunately died two years ago while soloing Fitzroy. The truck seemed to have about as much get up and go as us, who hadn't gotten up and done anything in the two weeks we'd been here. It was turning into one of those crap times I hate, not fun enough to be a good holiday, not bad enough to be a great climbing trip.

Ian and I had been staying with the legend's legend, Rolando Garibotti – alpinism's answer to Julio Iglesias. He'd been a real gent in putting us up, seeing as we just turned up having found his address in the Yellow Pages. Some would say he hardly knew us, but I had met him once, in Camp 4 in 1997, for about 15 minutes. Nevertheless he made us welcome, and it was only when he groaned "*I theenk I am going to have nervous breakdown*" that we figured we'd outstayed our welcome and headed off to Longs Peak in the truck. Everyone said it was too cold, too early in the year, there would be no ice. But what the hell, it was a holiday.

Ian isn't one to apologise for such oversights as oversleeping, which is a good technique as you start thinking that it must be your fault after all. It also turned out that he had left his headtorch on, its bulb now about as strong as my enthusiasm to climb. But we'd tramped up seven miles of forested zigzagging trails to get here, so it seemed daft to turn around now. We'd also signed in at the ranger station and we'd be letting the side down going back and ticking the "did you fail?" box. Plus I figured Rolo was hoping we'd be gone for a while.

The climbing was good. But although I thought I was climbing faster than usual it turned out that I wasn't. At all. Something that became only too apparent when reviewing the pitch on Ian's video camera later. In fact I couldn't really understand what the f*ck I was doing. Instead of seeing the "super-slick, super-quick dude" that I imagined I was, all I saw was a bumbling idiot, who it seemed had no understanding of the word urgency. I would make a tiny movement, stop, think for a while, then either reverse that movement or make another miniscule effort. It was just painful to watch.

Ian came up and led the next pitch, which again seemed to take forever. He actually disappeared for half an hour, and the next thing I saw was a hand waving from deep inside a crack. Very off-putting. It turned out that the route involved a dash of caving, passing a huge chockstone. The exit was pure Parnell, as, with very little ice to help him, he bullied his way up to the belay. You could tell it was hard as his wordage dropped by the metre, always a bad sign if the climber is a journalist.

"Watch me on this bit Andy." Pant. Scrape.

"Watch me here." Scrape, scrape, pant.

"Watch me." Pant, pant, scrape.

"Watch." Scrape, scrape, scrape, scrape.

"Me." Scrape, scrape, deep breath, scrape.

"uurgh." Total silence for ten minutes...

"Safe, thank **** for that!"

The next pitch looked unpleasant, and very fall-offable. The choice was simple; a narrow snow-choked slot to the left, or an off vertical corner with a dribbling of ice to the right. Imagining myself getting upset on the right, I traversed left and started excavating the slot. Ian wasn't convinced, and neither was I. The difference being he thought I should go right and I thought we should just go down.

Half an hour later I'd gibbered my way up the corner, feeling like a mixed climbing Homer Simpson. It seemed to me that I'd put in a heroic effort and had got higher than I'd expected, but the next section looked like you couldn't fluke it. So I just moved around a bit, groaned, and put in and took out a few dubious wires to delay any decisions. Then I dropped my axe. Off it went, having "unclipped itself" from my leash. Unluckily that wasn't going to be the end since up came Ian's axe for me to carry on with.

But I couldn't carry on this way, so down I went, rather too easily considering how hard it had felt coming up, and marched efficiently over to the corner, muttering a quick 'I knew I should have gone this way' in order to make up for my appalling performance. It went slowly, but eventually easier ground was reached, at which point I promptly dropped the other axe. Luckily it landed fifteen feet lower in all the snow I'd excavated previously. But I still had to be lowered down like a lemon to retrieve it before scraping slowly back up again. I even started to feel sorry for Ian.

The pitch went on for what seemed like several more hours, at which point I was about 50 feet above the belay, poised beneath a dubious hanging pinnacle with nothing to clip into apart from a bleached white sling that seemed to be frozen under a boulder. Blame is the better half of valour; so I belayed off the sling and brought Ian up, so that if we did die then it would be his fault for coming off, not mine. Then with total disregard for my safety, Ian yarded up the pinnacle with his axes and ran it out onto the wall, making a series of uncomfortably contorted and bold moves up the finish.

There was about an hour left before it got dark by the time I reached the top. It had

"We told them to stay on the track and be down before sunset, God have mercy on their souls..."

taken us all day to climb four bleeding pitches! Dean Potter had soloed Cerro Torre in less time than it had taken us to climb a scrappy M5. Thank god our sponsors couldn't see us.

We looked up towards the summit, still a long way away. With only one head torch we'd have to bivi, something neither of us wanted to do even though we'd lugged all our bivi gear up the route. We just couldn't face a miserable night on the mountain - we were too old, plus we were on our holidays after all. The desire for a warm bed, warm feet, warm food in fact warm anything overpowered any desire to visit the summit of Longs Peak. There was no paper scissors or tossed coins, the only thing thrown were the rope ends and down we went.

It was dark by the time we reached the tree line and began stumbling down the four miles of zigzagging trail back to Frank's truck. My tired feet moved faster than they were able, sped up by Blair Witchian thoughts, made all the more real as we passed an old twisted sign pointing deep into the forest that read Goblin forest. Goblin forest? I thought, my mind racing, easily startled by fatigue, why is it called that? I started imagining the rangers standing over our shattered remains, flaming torches and shotguns in their hands, nervously eyeing the woods, "We told them to stay on the track and be down before sunset, God have mercy on their souls"

Every scrape of a boot or squeak of a ski pole tip was transformed into the trace of a blood curdling scream escaping from the deep wood, or a mind-snapping yelp as some poor victim was dragged to a sticky end. I was teetering on the edge. Fully accepting that at any moment Ian was going to scream "Holy mother of God...what the hell is that?" Luckily he didn't, in fact he didn't say a thing. He just tramped on behind me in the dark, no doubt simply wishing he could see where he was going.

It was 10pm by the time we reached the signing-out booth, glad to be out of the woods. Once back in the silent car park we stripped off our steaming layers and threw the lot into the back of Frank's truck, and with aching bodies climbed slowly inside for the hour long drive back to Boulder and a big Mexican meal as a reward. We could even invite Rolo to make up for the past two weeks. All my forgotten bivy food lay on the seat between us but it could wait. Ian turned the ignition key but nothing happened. He'd left the lights on. II

(LEFT) Come on Andy! Beneath Longs Peak. Credit: Ian Parnell.

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hard cash

Counting the cost of rural decline and contributing to rural diversification by **Clare Bond**, BMC Access and Conservation Officer.

I'm from Yorkshire and therefore stingier than a Scot, and a climber too which compounds the issue. Us lot aren't exactly renowned for throwing money around are we?

Maybe my attitude stems from early student days when any opportunity for a scam was part of the game. Dossing in the North Wales slate quarries, hitching lifts to the Lakes, and climbing on ropes rescued from a minibus crash. I was young, poor and foolish. But that was all a long time ago now, surely my attitude must have changed? Well a little. And now while I'll happily splash out on a nice bottle of wine, a B&B, a flight to Spain, I'm far less happy putting it in a Stanage pay and display meter, or heaven forbid paying to climb outside. So how do I defend these arbitrarily defined differences in expenditure?

At a recent Central Council for Physical Recreation conference, Alan Blackshaw gave an interesting paper on fundamental human rights – namely everyone's right to enjoy nature, wildlife and the landscape. So should you have to pay for a fundamental human right? Of course not. But who's going to cover the increasing costs of participation in outdoor recreation; from climbing and sky diving, to bird watching and picnicking? If it's fundamental surely the state should pay?

But what is there actually to stump up for? Erosion is natural, as is trampling, disturbance and invasion of dominant species. Us human beings often forget that we are nature too. However, it seems that we, and our fellow birds, bees and plants need management; they need protecting from us and our effects on the environment and we need managing, so that we don't destroy the very things we are going to enjoy.

The Government has recently tried to give us a statutory right to go out and enjoy our landscape. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act, in England and Wales, and the Land Reform (Scotland) Act, in Scot-

land, have both gone a long way to give us a statutory right of access, despite known shortcomings. Conservation legislation has also been beefed up at the same time. The government has also committed cash, albeit not necessarily wisely spent, to help us get out there and enjoy our countryside. So what's the problem?

Well, the rural world is changing. The traditional upland farming practices of hill sheep farming are becoming less profitable and the survival of farming is hanging by a thread of subsidies. With the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) currently under reform, farming as we currently know it is unlikely to survive. Farmers will have unprofitable land and still be left with some of the costs of public access, that the government has just secured our statutory right to, such as damage to walls. Shouldn't we therefore be encouraging them to provide those services that we do need, such as cafes, pubs and campsites, and supporting them to make a living from them?

The BMC has been concerned about the role of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in and on rural areas for some years and set-up, rather ironically, a rural development panel just prior to the onset of Foot and Mouth Disease in 2001. The initiatives of the panel were delayed by the outbreak and if one wanted to draw anything positive out of the whole affair, then the focus on and acknowledgement of a diverse rural economy in the aftermath of the disease would be it. If the BMC or the Ramblers Association had the figures then, which we have now, of money brought into the rural economy by outdoor recreation, we would have been far better placed to push harder for an early opening of the countryside.

The idea behind the two rural development projects that the BMC has initiated is to try to maximise that input by climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers into two of the rural areas they visit, both socially and economically. Not just to gain us better statistics and hence more weight in the political arena, but to founder better understanding and links between visitors and the local communities. The latter objective is really the important one as, being

realistic, these projects are drops in the ocean compared to the billions actually spent, but goodwill and understanding make the real difference to our enjoyment out there. In England and Wales this is particularly important, since many of the areas which we visit fall outside those to which we will have a statutory right of access.

CHIPs

The Northern Snowdonia Climbing Huts Information Project (CHIPs), aims to supply club huts in Northern Snowdonia with information packs of local facilities. The packs also contain information on the natural history and culture of the area. The suggestions in the packs will hopefully get visitors thinking about the services and facilities they use and encourage them to spend money locally. Interest in the packs has already expanded beyond huts, so don't be surprised if see one while munching in Pete's Eats. You might even be tempted to try somewhere new to eat, or maybe hire a bike if the weather's bad.

Langdale Project

The Langdale Project had an innovative start on a cold January evening last year, when the BMC went to Langdale and asked the local community what they would like the BMC to give back. The suggestions ranged from re-opening the local toilets to creating better links between clubs with huts in the valley and local businesses. In the end two of the suggestions seemed to be both feasible and appropriate. The first a youth involvement project, which would allow local youngsters to experience climbing and scrambling for themselves and give them training in the skills required for them to go out and undertake outdoor activities. The aim was to increase the understanding amongst local young people, of why there were so many visitors to the valley, what those visitors got out of their visits and maybe even in the long run to make them think about taking part in the activities either recreationally or professionally.

The second project is called 'closer contact' and has already resulted in a meeting between local businesses and clubs who own huts in the valley. A major leap forward in communication, from a situation where business representatives from the community could not even post the local business directory through the door, as club huts don't have letterboxes!

Both projects may be small, but just undertaking them has shown a positive commitment by climbers and hill walkers, through the BMC, to supporting the communities in two of our more treasured climbing and hill walking areas. The goodwill that such commitment and support brings should not be over-looked. **II**

CHIPs is supported by the BMC, ACT, Adfywio and the National Trust. **The Langdale project** is a joint project between the BMC and the Lake District National Park Authority and has received additional support from ACT, Cumbria County Council and Cumbria Youth Alliance.

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Flake Crack, Heisby. Climber Derek Walker
— photo Jim Perrin




BIRDS 2004

Bird Nesting Restrictions “Access and Conservation Working Together”

	duration
south wales	
GOWER PENINSULA	
Yellow Wall (VR) - Between 5 mins to kill and Early Warning the restriction will be reviewed in May. Thurba Head, from Central Cleft to Wimp.	Mar to 14 Aug
SOUTH PEMBROKESHIRE	
NB Pembroke restrictions are complex and vary annually. Please check the notice boards in Stack Rocks Broad Haven South, Stackpole Quay or St Govan's car parks. Information leaflets are available from the BMC, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Mrs Weston's.	
Range East Stack Rocks Area: Including Flimston Ridge (West Face) and the Cauldron.	Feb to 15 Aug
Thunder Wall: All climbs	Mar to 1 Aug
Mewsford South West Face: <i>Tango Charlie</i> and <i>Return of the Natives</i> – may be lifted in May. Mewsford South Face: <i>By Popular Demand</i> , <i>Daydreams</i> and <i>Lateral Bearings</i> – may be lifted in May. Mewsford Arches/ Mewsford Point and Panzer Walls. Soak the Cat on Mewsford Point to Lacerator on Panzer Walls. Triple Overhang/Seaside Gully: normally <i>Midnight Express</i> to <i>Fight the Good Fight</i> – but check on site. Routes between <i>Horoscope</i> and <i>Galactic Coordinator</i> must be reached by abseil only. Ripper: <i>Cliff/Triple Overhang</i> ; normally <i>Star Control</i> to <i>Ripper</i> - but check markers and signs on site.	Mar to 1 Aug
The Fortress West: restriction but no known climbs (this restriction may need to be moved to Buckspool Down covering Space Buttress South and East Faces, Buckspool Down and Sitting Bull Buttress – see on site signs for details). The Castle/Fortress: all routes between and crossing <i>Wild Country</i> to <i>Little Red Rocket</i> . The Blowhole (adjacent to The Castle): all routes. The Devil's Barn: all routes.	Mar to 1 Aug
Huntsman's Leap: both sides of entrance inc: <i>Charybdis</i> and <i>Leap of Faith</i> .	Mar to 1 Aug
Chapel Point (VR): normally between <i>Portnoy's Complaint</i> and <i>Blow Out</i> . Likely to be lifted at the end of May. NB Year round restriction on Chapel Cove - St Govan's including St.	Mar to 1 Aug

Ireland

There are relatively few negotiated restrictions on climbing for nesting birds in Ireland. Visiting climbers should first contact Mountaineering Council of Ireland (MCI) mci@eircom.net or at www.mountaineering.ie; who will advise them of local contacts. Alternatively, advice may be obtained from Birdwatch Ireland; Rockingham House, Newcastle, Co. Wicklow
www.birdwatchireland.ie Tel 00353-1-2819878 Fax 00353-1-2819763



Mountaineering Council of Ireland
Comhairle Stiobhteoireachta na hÉireann

mid wales	duration
Llarymnech: Red and Black Walls.	Mar to 30 June
Craig yr Aderyn (Bird Rock): Eastern Face and Central Buttress (Central Buttress will be subject to a mid season review).	April to 31 July
Nesscliffe: (VR) may apply - please check for signs on site or contact the Shropshire County Council Ranger rangers.north@shropshire-cc.gov.uk (Tel: 01691 623461).	
north wales	
LLEYN PENINSULA Duration of restrictions varies between different cliffs. Check the new Climbers Club guidebook for details.	Feb to 31 July or Apr to 31 July
CLWYD LIMESTONE Egwyseg Valley: Check signs on site and approach path. Restrictions will apply to Craig Arthur, Pinfold South or Monks Buttress.	Mar to 30 June
LITTLE ORME Great Zawn, lefthand side, Detritus Wall. The Allotment West Buttress of Detritus. Auk's Buttress, Diamond Buttress.	Mar to 15 Aug
GREAT ORME/PEN TRWYN Un-named Crag, Castell y Gwynn; Lefthand Side. Upper and Lower Craig Pen Gogarth. Point Five Buttress, The Hornby Crags. Wonderwall: Between <i>Gibbering Wreck</i> and <i>Golden Goosed Creature</i> .	Mar to 31 July
NB Routes above Marine Drive are subject to a summer safety restriction - climbing is only allowed after 6:00pm during all Bank Holiday weekends and school summer holidays.	
GOGARTH	

the south

CHALK	duration
Isle of Wight Sun Corner: headland at the south-eastern end of Scratchell's Bay includes <i>Gateway to Heaven</i> and <i>Albatross</i> where it passes Sun Corner. A year round restriction applies to Highdown Cliffs (East of Sun Corner) for ornithological and botanical reasons.	Mar to 31 July
Beachy Head A peregrine nests at Beachy Head. Contact the Ranger (Tel: 01323 415267) to check access arrangements.	Feb to 30 June
Saltdean Contact the BMC to check whether nesting restrictions apply.	
SWANAGE Pier: Bottom to St. Aldhelm's Head; Pier Bottom is the valley to the	Mar to 3 July

north of St Aldhelm's Head. Restrictions apply from here to the eastern (right-hand) arete of the Yellow Wall.

- Between St Aldhelm's Head and Sippersy Ledge.
- Between Winspit East End and Halsewell Bars.
- Hedbury Big Cove, Smokey Hole and Topmast Quarry.
- Guilemot Ledge: Between Dancing Ledge and Valkyrie Buttress Direct, and east of The Razor's Edge.
- Cormorant Ledge: West of Sea Cow and East of Oran.
- Blackers Hole: Left of *Frontiersman* (including the sea cave) and all routes between *Aboriginal Script* and *Cosa Nostra*.
- Boulder Ruckle West: From *Sardine Special* to *Hard Day's Night*, *Andygap* to *Raindrop* and *Gim Crack* to *Airy Legs*.
- The Lighthouse Cliffs: Between *Scotsman Chimney* and the start of *Traverse of the Gods*.

Year round restriction between Tilly Whim Caves to Durliston Head (inc. Tilly Whim Quarry) for: ornithological and ecological reasons.

PORTLAND

The restrictions on Portland vary depending on where the birds nest. **NB restricted areas are no longer marked by circular discs on the bottom bolts of boundary routes, but by signs on site.** Please contact the Portland Ranger (Tel: 01305 259292), or the BMC for full details.

- Blackknor Central: *Pregnant Pause* to *Slim Jim* (VR).
- Wallsend South: *Halfway to Heaven* to *Walking on Sunshine* (VR).
- Cheyne cliff: *Mirroring of the Sea* to *Pandemonium* (VR). This restriction has been extended to include the 2 new routes to the right of *Drowning on Dry Land*.

BERRY HEAD

The Old Redoubt, including Rainbow Bridge Cliffs to Bismarck Wall (including Cod Rock). The Rainbow Bridge restriction may be lifted early. Check noticeboards on site or with the BMC or the local Ranger (Tel: 01803 882619)

Oz Wall, Upper and Lower Ranger Buttresses.

LUNDY

Lundy Island has extremely important seabird populations. Of the 100 plus climbing areas listed in the guide 71 have bird nesting restrictions. Restrictions vary from year to year so climbers should check the guidebook before visiting and obtain the leaflet available on arrival. Lundy Warden (Tel: 01237 431831).

Accommodation/travel details can be obtained from the Landmark Trust (Tel: 01628 825925).

BAGGY POINT

Between Scratling Zawn and Slab Cove (*Pink Void*).

White markers define restricted areas (VR). Contact the National Trust warden to check (Tel: 01 271 870555).

Govan's Pinnacle (Public safety).

Trevaller: between and including *Meatloaf* and *Breaking the Habit*.

St Govan's Head: Between *Safety in Numbers* to *Aquarius* and inc. *Zodiac*.

Range West

Climbers must attend an annual briefing and hold a valid permit. Access into Range West likely for briefed climbers from mid-May; see BMC info sources for details of briefing dates.

Stackpole

Moving Word: West Face *Fools Rush In* to *Cormorant Flake*.
 Mowing Word: South Face *The Razor's Edge* to *Plain Failing*.
 Stackpole Head: West Face, South Face (inc. Stackpole Point, Cracks Wall, Leaning Tower and Promontory), East Face (inc. Main Face and White Pillar): *The Cooler* to *Poisoned Love*.
 Stackpole Far East: all routes except the fisherman's ledge.

Lydstep

Mother Carey's Kitchen: In the Stargate area, check signs on site.

NORTH PEMBROKE

Check signs on site. Restrictions may vary or be lifted early.

- Abercastle (Myny Deullyn cliffs); (VR).
- Lechdafad cliffs; (VR).
- Penbwechdy (Penbwechdy Head to Pwll Dert).
- St David's Head Area: Craig Coetan (upper & lower tiers), Mur Cenrhinen and Coastguard Cliffs.



Scotland

Large numbers of birds nest on Scottish sea cliffs, stacks and inland crags between March and July. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCoS), in consultation with RSPB Scotland and Raptor Study Groups, has produced an Information Sheet about birds and climbers, which contains general guidance on wildlife law and responsible climbing, as well as details of sites where restrictions are requested. Visit the MCoS website at:

www.mountaineering-scotland.org.uk/council/birds.html, or call 01738 638 227.



I Mar to I Aug

I Mar to I Aug

I Mar to I Aug
 I Mar to I Aug
 I Mar to I Aug
 I Mar to I Aug

I Mar to 30 June

I Feb to I Aug

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

the north

LAKE DISTRICT/CUMBRIA

The restrictions in the Lakes are all variable (VR) and will be reviewed in April/May; if birds are not nesting they will be lifted early. Check noticeboards in shops, walls and cafes in early May for details and the BMC web site. Any new restrictions will be notified on the BMC website and by signs on site.

Upper Falcon Crag, Borrowdale only: The restriction may be moved to cover Lower Falcon Crag and/or the Gully area; Raven Crag, Yewdale, Conistone, Upper Thrang Crag, Martindale; Gowther Crag, Swindale (NE buttress, but may change if the bird nests elsewhere, check signs on sight); Brantrake Crag, Eskdale.

There may be restrictions at Humphrey Head and Wallowbarrow Gorge.

The following sites are **NOT restricted this year**:

Chapel Head Scar, Whitbarrow; Heron Crag, Eskdale.
 In these areas, if birds do nest the sites will be signed, please check before climbing.

The following voluntary restrictions are to protect nesting ravens.
 Swarthbeck Gill, Barton Fell, Howtown
 Lower Thrang Crag, Martindale (not including Farm Buttress)
 Raven Crag, Threshwaite Cove (restrictions may be extended for a month if peregrines also nest); Buckbarrow, Longsleddale.

St. Bees Head: Restrictions on all areas except Apiary Wall and the Scabby Back area. **NB Do not access via Fishermans Steps during nesting season or walk south along the cliff from this point.**

YORKSHIRE

Blue Scar (whole crag).
 Malham Cove, Right Wing (check for signs on site).
 Langcliffe
 Darby Delph: (VR) restriction may be lifted early.

LANGS / CHESHIRE

Warton Quarry: (VR) may apply - check signs on site.
 Houghton Quarry: Last year a trial opening allowed climbing in July. This will hopefully take place again in 2004, but is dependent on nesting birds. Check with BMC prior to visit and the signs on site.

Helsby (Upper Central Buttress area); (VR) applies; check signs on site.

PEAK DISTRICT

Twikker, Millstone: (VR) variable restriction, check signs on site.
 Ravensdale: (VR) variable restriction, check signs on site.
 IV Cloud, The Roaches: (VR) variable restriction, check signs on site

Note: Variable Restrictions (VR) may change prior to or during the nesting season.

BASICS: indoors

By Steve Long



Jamie Goodwin bouldering on the woodie, The Edge, Sheffield. All photos credit: Nick Smith

Climbing can be enjoyed on many levels. At its most spontaneous and basic, just footwear is required. On the other hand, in cold and remote locations a range of equipment and clothing is essential just for survival. It's difficult separating the essentials from the luxuries, and impartial advice is hard to find.

Which is why we're running a four-part series on learning to climb, your guide to the early learning stages of this mysterious and varied world. Here in part one we tackle indoor walls, then later issues will cover the progression onto crags and mountains, basking in summer sun and wrapping up for the ephemeral delights of winter climbing, at home and further abroad.

Climbing Walls

Not that long ago, most people took their first tentative climbing steps on real rock, but these days it's much more likely to be on an indoor wall. Artificial climbing walls have seen an enormous surge in popularity over the last few decades, and have improved beyond all recognition from the early basic efforts. Now there are few towns in the UK that don't have a wall, making them a very accessible place to start.

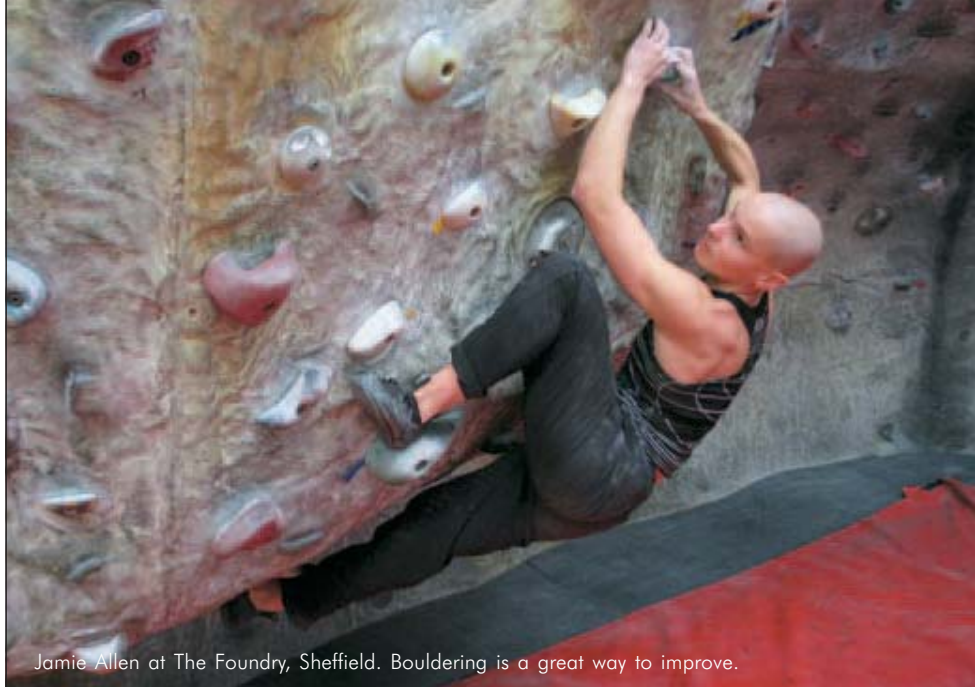
Most large walls run introductory taster sessions, with all equipment provided. These are by far the best way to start out, since they will familiarise you with the skills and risks involved. In fact if you're a complete beginner most walls won't even let you in until you've taken such a course. It'd be great to just turn up and start climbing, but they cannot run the risk of novice climbers making serious mistakes. The better of these courses will also include an element of coaching and an awareness of how indoor climbing relates to the outdoors.

This will usually be picked up when you fill in the registration form on your first visit. The purpose of this form is to both make you aware of the risks involved, and to alert the wall to your level of skill, so don't be tempted to bend the truth. If you don't know how to belay, admit it now!

Under 18's not on an organised course will have a few more stages to go through. On BMC recommendations, 16-17 year olds should have to pass a basic competency test, 14-15 year olds should have this test plus a parental visit, and under 14's are only usually admitted at the manager's discretion. OK, now that you're through the door, what can you expect to see? These days most walls feature a mix of roped climbing and bouldering. What do you need for these?

Bouldering

Bouldering is a distillation of climbing movement; cutting out the rope-work and paraphernalia to tackle “problems” no more than a few metres above the ground. Outdoors this takes place, unsurprisingly, on boulders, and indoors cunning wall designers have pulled out all the stops to mimic the natural world; steep walls, slabs, roofs, caves, arches, all preferably with some good padding underneath. Some dismiss bouldering as not “real” climbing, but at every stage in your climbing development you’ll benefit from it. Your body learns a broadening repertoire of muscular adjustments, fingers strengthen, relevant muscle groups tone up, and the mind adjusts to noticing opportunities for movement and recovery - eventually subconsciously.



Jamie Allen at The Foundry, Sheffield. Bouldering is a great way to improve.

THE GEAR:

Taped Fingers

So you’ve seen pictures of people in the magazines wearing finger tape? Don’t copy them! The only sure way to prevent long term injuries is to build up finger strength over time. Using tape when you don’t need to will just cause problems.

Chalkbag

To keep your fingers dry. Many walls will require you to use a chalkball to cut down on excessive dust in the atmosphere. Help reduce this further by closing your bag when not using it, and taking it off when bouldering.

Rock Boots

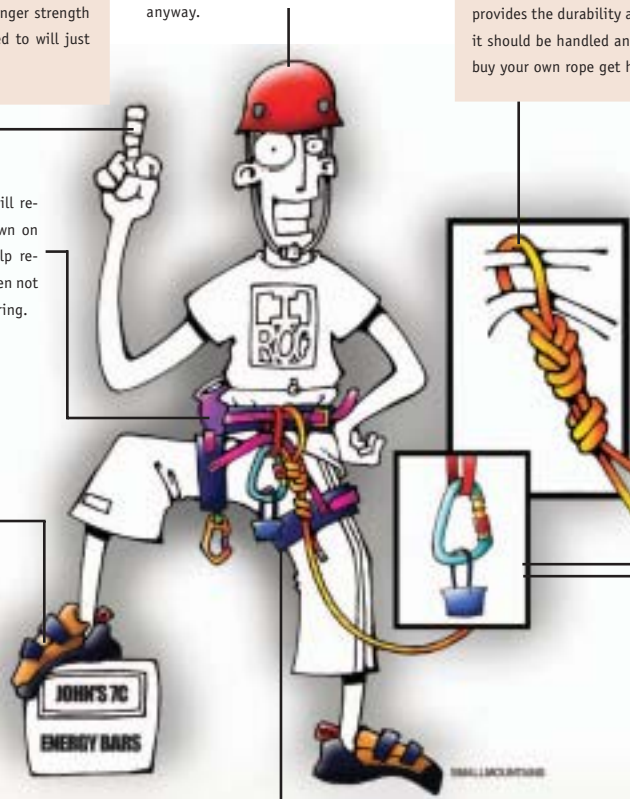
Precise footwork is fundamental to climbing, and poor shoes will hinder your development. The preconception that “feet slide off small holds” will take years to overcome if your early climbs are undertaken in sloppy shoes! Try out several different makes, they come in a bewildering variety of shapes and sizes. Choose a pair that feel comfortable but snug, with no spare space around the toes. Most climbers put shoes over bare feet to increase sensitivity, but there are no rules here, and socks give greater warmth and hygiene. The choice between rock boot, shoe and slipper is very personal. Slippers give little ankle or arch support and strain the legs when standing on tiny edges, but at the other end of the spectrum, rock boots give great support but limit flexibility without any benefit indoors. Don’t be lured into buying expensive asymmetrical shoes; at the highest level of performance these can make a difference, but for beginners they represent a painful waste of money.

Helmet

A lot of people don’t wear helmets indoors, but remember that no type of climbing is risk free. If you think there is a chance of swinging and smacking your head, consider wearing a helmet. Some walls will insist you wear them for taster courses anyway.

Rope

For your first climbs you’ll probably be using a rope supplied by the climbing wall and already fixed in place, or you will be accompanied by a more experienced climber. The rope is designed to be very strong but remain elastic enough to absorb some of the energy from a fall. For indoor walls a full strength (No.1) kernmantle rope provides the durability and strength required, and as your lifeline, it should be handled and stored with care. If you are planning to buy your own rope get hold of the BMC’s impartial Ropes booklet.



Belay device & karabiner

A climbing pair will need at least one belay device with a screwgate karabiner to handle the rope. The choice is extensive, but can be broadly divided into ‘slick’ and ‘grabbing’ categories. Slick devices allow the rope to be paid out and taken in easily, but provide relatively little friction in the event of a fall. Examples of slick devices are the Air Traffic Controller (ATC) and The Bug. Grabbing devices help hold falls more easily, but require care when paying the rope out as they tend to be rather “all or nothing”. Examples of grabbing devices are the Gri-Gri and Single Rope Controller. These devices are good for top-roping but require considerable skill to use effectively for belaying a lead climber. Learning to belay with such a device could lead to problems down the line if you progress outside and want to use double ropes etc. Buy a karabiner with a screwgate that is designed to work with the belay device that you choose. Some devices will only work properly with wide-ended (or “HMS”) karabiners, so ask the advice of the shop when purchasing. A snap gate should never be used, since the belay device could be jolted out of the karabiner when shock loaded, with terminal consequences.

Harness

A sit harness spreads the load between your waist and legs when hanging from a rope. Choose one with a central attachment point (belay loop) to belay from, and look for features such as foolproof buckles (to prevent threading error), and adjustable leg loops (useful if heading outside with extra layers on). The waist belt should fit snugly around the waist (not hips) when the leg loops are fastened snugly around the upper thigh. Some harnesses are designed for a longer pelvis with women in mind. Most also have thin gear loops for carrying equipment, remember that these are very low strength and NOT designed for belay attachment points. As with all technical equipment, using a second-hand harness is potentially dangerous unless you have a good knowledge of its previous use and an experienced climber has checked it over for signs of aging.



Penny Allchin leading at The Edge, Sheffield. Her belayer is paying close attention, but this is not always the case! Keep an eye on the job in hand, and try not to be distracted.

RISK AND YOUR RESPONSIBILITY:

Walls tend to be busy, sociable places. When you're surrounded by people having fun, it's easy to forget that all climbing involves an element of risk and to be lulled into careless mistakes by familiar settings.

More accidents occur every year on artificial walls than on the obviously hazardous precipices outside, mainly due to a lack of awareness or simple lapses in concentration. The following safety points are relevant to any climbing wall.

Climbing always involves a possibility of falling from height.

Holds occasionally break or rotate, even when properly maintained. Check them before launching out above the void.

Check the landing area when bouldering. Is there matting throughout the possible landing zone? Is it fixed or might some-

body pull it away? Are there any gaps where mats join?

Foam matting absorbs the energy of a landing, but don't overestimate its ability.

Double-check the consequences of unfastening any anchor before you do it.

When belaying a partner, standing directly under the first anchor of the climb minimises the potential for being pulled off-balance.

Don't be distracted, concentrate on the job in hand!

If in doubt - ask.

Indoor climbing is an activity with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

But before leaping on the wall, it's a very good idea to warm up first. Hauling your body weight by the fingertips puts intense strain on tendons and ligaments, and over the years this will lead to chronic finger and elbow injuries. A short jog, followed by some light movement and gentle stretching is all that's needed. Try to include finger stretches in any routine, holding the outstretched hand and gently pulling back.

Bouldering is safer and a lot more fun with an attentive and encouraging partner. Take turns to "spot" for each other - standing by, ready to slow or control a fall. Rather than trying to catch the climber, the spotter should field the shoulders to prevent a head-first landing. Work with your partner to develop problems by setting challenges such as eliminating holds or using only certain kinds of features. But remember that bouldering is an intensive activity, especially for newcomers, so don't be afraid to stop before you're worn out, most injuries occur when tired, having just one last go on that problem.

Toproping

A top-rope is a pre-fixed rope threaded through a strong anchor point at the top of the climb, with both ends on the ground. The climber is attached to one end of the rope, while the other end is threaded through a belay device and continually adjusted in order to remain reasonably taut as the climber makes progress. Having reached the anchor point the climber is lowered back to the ground by the belayer.

The first stage is to fit the harness correctly around your legs and waist. Read the harness instructions and check each others' harnesses and knots as a matter of course. To attach a rope to the harness, I would recommend using a figure of eight knot threaded through both the waist and leg loops of the harness.

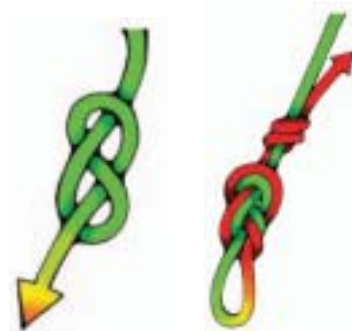
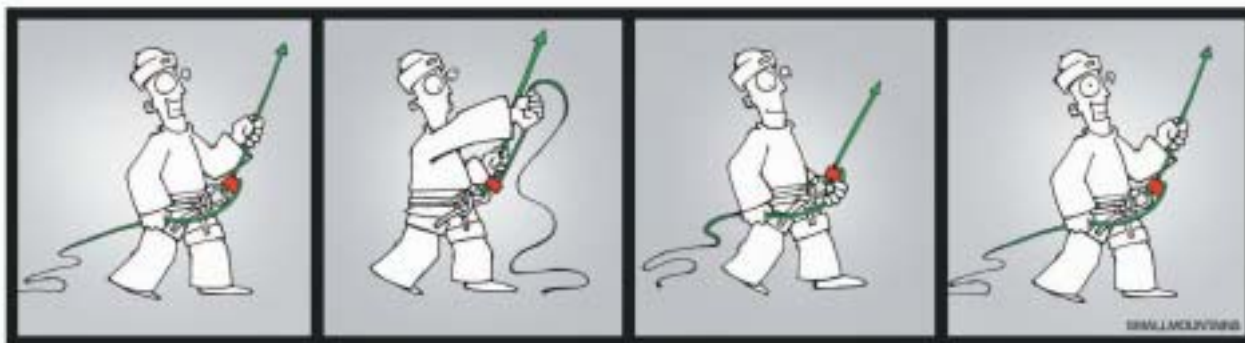


Figure of eight knot, with stopper.

The completed knot should be pulled tight and have a 'tail' end of at least 30 centimetres - not much longer or you will find yourself standing on it. Practise this knot. It's normal - but not essential - to tie an overhand knot around the main rope with the tail end, to act as a "stopper" (i.e. preventing it creeping undone). Another popular knot is the bowline, which is easier to undo after being loaded in a fall, but this is harder to tie and easier to get wrong.



Belaying. As with all climbing skills this is best learnt from an instructor or a more experienced climber. As illustrated here, the key point is to never take your hand off the live end of the rope.

Belaying

Belaying allows you to hold your partner's weight or even arrest a fall. Using one of the many devices on the market, sufficient friction is applied to the loaded rope to allow you to stop a falling climber with your hands.

Belaying is a fundamental skill in climbing, but is often taught quite badly. Read the instructions for the device, and if you've been lent it by your partner, examine how it works. Most create friction by forcing the rope through some tight direction changes. Pulling the unloaded end increases this friction, usually in the opposite direction to the loaded rope. It is possible that you might be handed a more complex mechanical device to use, probably a Gri-Gri. This needs a little more training, particularly in how to pay rope out, otherwise it is easy to get it wrong and drop your partner when you attempt to lower them.

Thread the rope through the device as shown in its instructions and clip it onto your harness belay loop, taking care to lock the screwgat. The rope should be pulled back away from the direction taken by the live rope (i.e. the rope travelling towards the climber). This Z-bend is what provides the mechanism for holding a fall; otherwise the only friction is provided by the bend around the karabiner, forming a simple 1:1 ratio pulley. A belay device clipped to the belayer's harness should ideally be used with the belayer positioned sideways to the climb; this allows the belaying hand to be pulled backwards without being restricted by the belayer's hip. If in any doubt, do not hesitate to ask the advice of the climbing wall staff. Even experienced climbers find it hard adjusting to new devices, and it's far better to make mistakes on the ground.

Taking in slack rope

Taking in the slack rope requires attention. As you move your belaying hand back toward the plate to take in again, hold the rope in the locked position with the other hand. If you get into the habit of doing this properly, the rhythm will become natural. While your partner climbs, you need to take the rope in at the same rate, so that it remains reasonably snug. That way, if the climber slips, the fall is simply a little stretch in the rope as it absorbs much of the energy. This is another vital skill, and needs practice to do well.

Making progress

With an attentive belayer, the climber should be able to concentrate on movement. On steep climbs the rope may be threaded through intermediate anchors to prevent a huge swing outwards in the event of a fall. These need to be unclipped as the climber progresses beyond them; however, it is vital that the top anchor is left fastened. To minimise the risk of this anchor becoming unfastened the rope should be threaded through a locking karabiner or twin

karabiners. Carelessness over this point has led to several accidents in climbing walls, so both partners should be particularly vigilant as the climber approaches the top anchor. The climber should clip the rope back through one or more intermediate anchors (often referred to as "runners" "quickdraws" or simply "draws") while being lowered to the ground if the climb is overhanging.

(BELOW) Penny Allchin at The Foundry, having found another attentive belayer.



SKILLS



Leading

The lead climber trails the safety rope from the ground upwards, clipping it into quickdraws as progress is made. A fall can again be limited by the belayer, but as the leader moves beyond the runner, some distance must be travelled before that rope can tighten and field the fall. Lead climbing is thus both more exciting and inherently riskier than top roping or "seconding" a climb, and it should never be forgotten that an attentive and skilled belayer is essential. Communication is important, often distilled to curt unambiguous commands such as "slack!" when extra rope is required by the leader (probably in order to clip the rope through a quickdraw), or "take-in!" usually meaning that the leader is nervous or about to be airborne. However sociable the atmosphere, the belayer should never lose track of the lead climber's position. In climbing walls it is not uncommon for climbers to lead climbs after relatively little experience. The pre-requisites are confidence in rope-handling by both partners and sufficient practice at belaying not to get muddled at critical moments. However, a healthy respect for gravity should be maintained, and the potential distance and direction of a fall should be calculated be-

fore committing to a move. This is particularly important when pulling over an overhang or passing protruding holds.

What next?

Some people spend their entire climbing career climbing indoors, but after a few sessions most will start contemplating transferring their newfound skills outside. And that can be a big step, so stay tuned for part 2; learning to climb single pitch routes in the great outdoors. II

Steve Long works for Plas y Brenin, the National Mountain Centre. PyB runs a full programme of courses to suit all levels of ability, from indoor climbers progressing to climbing outside right through to big wall climbing. All are delivered by experienced, enthusiastic and highly qualified instructors. Plas y Brenin is run by the Mountain Training Trust, a charity set up by the BMC, MLTB and UKMTB on behalf of the Sports Council. For more information on Plas y Brenin check out www.pyb.co.uk.

For more information on starting to climb indoors, check out the climbing skills section of the BMC shop on www.thebmc.co.uk, or call the BMC office.

Hilary Bloor seconding at The Edge, Sheffield. If seconding think before you automatically unclip anything - people have unclipped the top anchors by accident!

A photograph of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue tank top and dark pants, climbing a blue wall with pink holds. She is looking towards the camera. The background is a large, light blue wall with various pink and red holds.

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AT THE ORDNANCE SURVEY OUTDOOR SHOW 2-4 APRIL, NEC, BIRMINGHAM

The first round of The North Face UIAA-ICC Bouldering World Cup is taking place at the Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show.

This is a great opportunity to see some of the strongest climbers in the world battle it out right in front of your eyes. Bouldering competitions have been increasingly popular in recent years, and it's easy to see why. The action takes place mere feet from the crowd - you can see every detail of the minute holds, and every eye-popping expression as the competitors desperately try to stay on the wall. Last year's Climb '03 featured the final round of the British Bouldering Championships and an International Open. The atmosphere was fantastic, with the crowd really getting behind the climbers, but with this being a World Cup, it's set to be bigger and better.

But it's not just sitting around watching others, there's the usual "have a go" walls and ice wall to tire out the kids, a range of skills and advice workshops in the BMC Mountain Theatre, and information from the BMC stand. This is an informal way to meet some of the top names in the sport and get some tips on performance, photography, safety, and more.

Plus there's the Berghaus Theatre hosting some big names in state of the art presentations, including Conrad Anker, Andy Kirkpatrick, the Huber brothers, and Sir Chris Bonington.

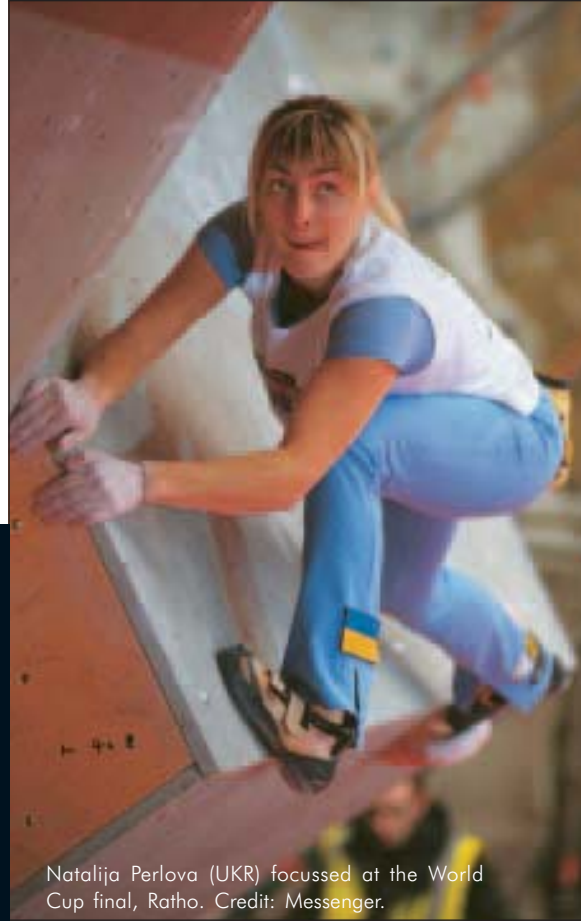
And of course, there's the retail stands. Come along to check out the latest gear and snap up a bargain, all the major brands will be under one roof.

The Outdoors Show also covers far more than just climbing, so leave the climbing zone and explore the Canoe, Diving, Adventure Travel, and Adventure Sports Zones too. ||

SUMMIT TICKET OFFER

It's a weekend not to be missed, so we've got a great ticket offer for Summit readers. Just call **0870 010 9086** and quote 'BMC' to get two tickets for the discounted price of £16. (Normally £12 Adult / £6 Concessions)

See www.theoutdoorsshow.co.uk for all the latest information about the event.



Natalija Perlova (UKR) focussed at the World Cup final, Ratho. Credit: Messenger.

BMC Safety on Mountains

clothing - equipment - navigation - hazards
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Iain Peter, Chief Executive, Plas Y Brenin, National Mountain Centre



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A&E

LOOKING IN DEPTH AT ACCIDENTS, TO ASK THE CRUCIAL QUESTION: WHAT WENT WRONG?

For Steve Warner it started as a normal Saturday climbing at Burbage North in the Peak. A rare escape from Croydon, he'd been up in the area since Friday, and had progressed through the grades as confidence returned. Late afternoon, he spotted Knights Move, HVS 5a, the classic of the crag, and jumped on it.

After 10 metres of climbing, three pieces of gear were in. A good runner at two metres, a DMM Walnut 0 at six, and at eight, a DMM Walnut 4 in a marginal placement. Steve really needed some more gear in, but then, searching for the next placement, his foot popped. The number 4 held momentarily, but then ripped from the crack. Moments later he hit the ground.

Ten days later he was out of hospital facing 12 weeks on crutches. A permanent plate had been inserted into his heel to hold the heel bone together, and a back brace was needed to allow vertebra to uncompress.

He started to pack his gear away, resigned to a long lay off, and found to his surprise that the size 0 Walnut had completely snapped, resulting in his ground fall. Steve explained, "this came as a total shock, I only weigh 75Kgs, I wouldn't have thought my weight would be sufficient to break the wire."



After research on the web yielded no clues, Steve contacted the BMC Equipment Investigation Panel (EIP), and sent in the broken wire. The crux of the matter is why had a Walnut 0 (rated strength 2kN) failed due to overload of climber whose weight is just 0.74kN? What had gone wrong?

POINT OF FAILURE

The broken wire was in very good condition, showing no other signs of maltreatment, and the breakage had occurred where you would expect, in the region of greatest stress-concentration. There were no indications of pre-existing defects, and microscopic examination showed nothing out of the ordinary. It was time to look at the details of the fall. Steve was only just above the top runner when he fell, so the number 4 ripping had very little effect on the fall dynamics. Essentially he fell from 2 – 3m above his real top runner, the Walnut 0. That meant a fall of 4 – 6m with approximately 8m of rope between him and his belayer, giving a fall-factor of 0.5 to 0.75. This is a significant fall-factor, and it's not surprising that a force of over 2kN would be generated on the runner. In fact in tests carried out by the BMC Technical Committee, it was found that in typical fall situations it was not difficult to generate forces between 6kN and 7kN on runners.

THE FORCE BUILDS

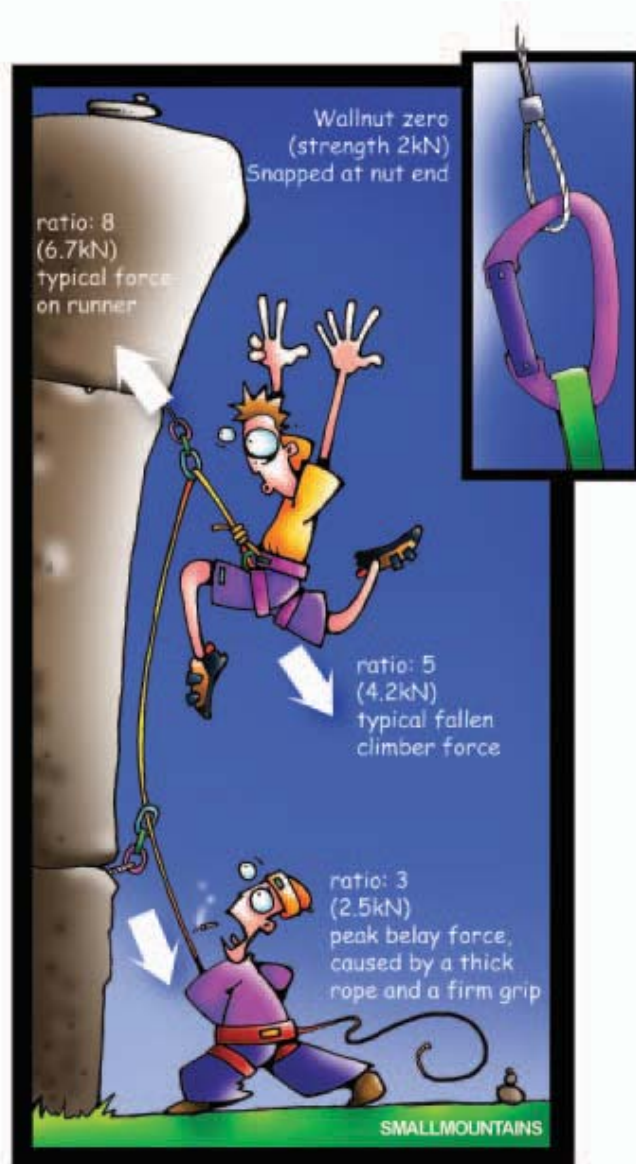
Let's take a closer look. Consider first a completely static situation with the climber clipped directly to the Walnut. The climber weighs 75kg, so his gravitational force is (9.81×75) newtons or 0.74kN. This would be the force generated in the runner if he were hanging perfectly still without any movement at all. Now suppose the same climber is attached to a rope which passes up through a karabiner down to a belayer on the ground. Neglecting friction, the force in the rope will be the same on both sides of the karabiner, so the total force on the karabiner will be doubled at 1.48kN. If the karabiner were attached to a Walnut 0, the Walnut would not be overloaded, and would not fail. However, that assumes that the climber hangs motionless on the end of the rope. If the climber were not in contact with the rock, and say prusiking up the rope, the force in the rope would oscillate up and down as the climber moved. With over-energetic prusiking it is not too difficult to generate a peak force in the rope as much as twice the gravitational force of the climber. This would put a total load approaching 3kN on the nut, which would certainly overload it, and possibly cause failure

SIGNIFICANT FALL

Given that supposedly static situation, it's not difficult to imagine that the peak forces generated in a significant fall will easily be sufficient to cause failure. When a climber falls free for 4 – 6m before weighting the rope, the force in the rope rises rapidly until the rope starts slipping through the belay device (dynamic belaying). The peak forces at this point are determined by the geometry of the rope/runner system, the type of belay device, and the amount of hand force being applied by the belayer. Experimental measurements using popular belay devices have shown that the peak force in the rope running to the belayer can reach up to 2.5kN, reducing to less than 1.5kN with a thin rope and a slick belay device. For typical ropes and karabiners the three forces at the karabiner have been found to be in the ratio of 3:5:8. Applying those ratios to a peak force of 2.5kN gives the forces shown in the diagram (right).

So, if the nut had taken the force of the fall, and the belayer had made a determined effort to hold the rope, the force on the nut would have been between 6 and 7kN. Even using a thin rope and slick belay device it would still have been 4kN. Given that the rated strength of the Walnut 0 is 2kN, failure was inevitable. Of course, the actual strength of protection will be higher than the value stated by the manufacturer. The UIAA and EN standards both require the manufacturer to state a strength below that which they can ensure. Hence DMM ensure that all Walnut 0 nuts will fail at a load greater than 2kN, and their average failure strength is actually about 3.4kN.

(LEFT) Fiddling in micro protection. Credit: Alex Messenger.



REMEMBER

All this shows that in a significant fall (fall-factor 0.5 or above), where the belayer is making a serious effort to hold the fall, the force on the top runner is likely to be between 6 and 7kN. For a climber to feel confident that their runners will hold without breaking, they should have a minimum strength of 7kN. And even this does not guarantee security, since higher forces can be generated in some high friction situations. Remember that a Walnut 0 and all other micro protection (including nuts and some of the latest micro cams) with a similar strength rating are only intended to be used where the nature of the rock prevents the use of bigger, stronger protection. In some situations it may be possible to share the load across several micro-nuts, but if this is not possible, you should take a moment to appreciate the limited security provided, and act accordingly... II

Thanks: Steve would like to thank the Edale Mountain Rescue team for all their help on the day. The BMC would like to thank Neville Mcmillan for producing the original technical report, and to DMM for all their assistance with the investigation and this article.

The Equipment Investigation Panel (EIP) oversees the analysis and reporting of equipment failures and incidents submitted to the BMC. Anyone concerned that a piece of safety related equipment has failed or been the cause of an accident can complete an Incident Report Form (on the website) and send the form, along with the equipment to the BMC. An independent investigation will then be carried out.

toe woe



You're in an Argentinean hospital, toes turning blacker by the day.

Local surgeons want to operate. You need a second opinion, and fast.

That was the dilemma faced by a BMC member just weeks ago. Not knowing where to turn, his father back in England contacted the BMC, and a specialised network of climbing doctors was activated.

With the help of digital photographs of the patient's feet a second diagnosis was swiftly made, and his repatriation to the UK overseen by BMC Insurance. But how was this all possible? Luckily for this mountaineer, his predicament coincided with some new developments in mountain medicine in the UK, designed to help in such situations.

For many years the BMC has been able to call on the services of a number of climbing doctors to act as advisors on medical issues. Doctors such as Jim Milledge and David Hillebrandt sit on the UIAA Mountain Medicine Committee, and Charles Clarke has written many of the definitive medical information sheets available on the BMC website. Their advice has also been available to the British Competition Climbing Team, and they have ensured that all correct safety and medical procedures are in place at competitions and other BMC events. But until recently there was no real infrastructure or means of attracting new doctors to this specialised area.

Several years ago the UIAA Medical Commission established a Diploma of Mountain

Medicine in a number European countries. Aimed at qualified doctors, this was intended to enable doctors to utilise their skills for the benefit of mountaineering, with particular regard to practice in mountain environments. And at the 2001 UIAA Medical conference in Kathmandu the two BMC representatives, Jim Milledge and David Hillebrandt, were asked to look at the need for a UK version of this Diploma. They admitted to being "very sceptical about another mountaineering qualification", but were won over by the practical nature of the syllabus and the obvious enthusiasm of their European colleagues.

The next step was to find a means of delivering the course. Medical Expeditions is a UK based charity that has a remit for mountaineering medical education and research supported by its sister club Medex. Medical Expeditions already ran the respected three-day annual Play y Brenin Mountain Medicine Symposium and they agreed to administer the Diploma. A group of twenty mountaineering doctors spent over a year discussing the content and acting as guinea pigs for an initial pilot session before running an extremely successful course last November. 25 climbing doctors were accepted onto this course and a further seven are on the waiting list for 2004.

The aim of the course is to give registered medical practitioners the theoretical and practical knowledge to manage the specific illnesses and diseases that may occur in the mountain environment. This includes an understanding of the physiological changes associated with exercise and

with living at altitude; an appreciation of the mountain environment and the environmental factors that may lead to illness or injury; aspects of travel medicine that are important to mountain travel; proficiency in the practical skills of survival and mountain rescue; training in the management of altitude related disease and in the specific problems of managing illnesses and injuries that occur during a journey to the mountain environment.

The UK Diploma is being run on a modular basis with a course logbook similar to the tried and tested system currently used by the Mountain Leader Training Boards. The personal logbook will contain sections on pre-course experience (both medical and mountaineering), each course module and, most importantly, continuing post course experience. The four course modules are: Altitude and environmental medicine and physiology, travel and expedition medicine, mountain rescue and traumatology, and personal mountaineering skills.

UIAGM guides assess candidates on their ability to look after themselves in the mountains during the UK summer, Scottish winter and Alpine modules. While the international syllabus has an emphasis on the needs of Alpine rescue doctors this has been adapted to our home conditions to cover more travel and expedition medicine for doctors working for commercial expedition companies. It also covers the unique conditions of Scottish winter.

The thinking behind establishing this Diploma goes deeper than simply giving a number of doctors increased skills in Moun-



(TOP) Adam on Aconcagua. (LEFT) Adam's toes as the frostbite progressed. By publishing his digital photos on the web Adam was able to convey his condition to doctors back in the UK, allowing them to make a remote assessment.

All credit: Adam.

tain Medicine. One of the other main items on the agenda is to get a nationwide list of qualified Mountain Medicine Doctors with practical hill experience that the BMC could use to refer climbers with medical problems. The fine details of how this could be funded have yet to be arranged but within three years there should be a network of doctors all over the country with the Diploma. All will have their own personal and professional interests such as cardiology, trauma care, A&E work, expedition work, travel medicine, sports climbing, ski touring, mountain rescue and so on. In such a network if the initial contact doesn't know the answer they will quickly be able to locate a colleague who does.

So it was this fledgling network that helped save one of our member's toes. Adam had recently made a successful ascent of Aconcagua, but suffered frostbitten toes during the descent. He'd managed to walk out on the frozen feet and reached Mendoza hospital where they dressed his toes. Once back in Buenos Aires a local surgeon suggested surgery to remove the dead flesh followed by a skin graft from the groin. It was at this point that Adam started to query the decision.

The BMC contacted one of the medical advisors involved in the Diploma, and within hours a number of UK frostbite experts had been consulted. His return to the UK was swiftly arranged, and within a few hours of touching down, a UK vascular surgeon, also



(ABOVE) Mal Creasey (R) and David Hillebrandt (L) digging a snowpit on the Scottish Skills module of the UK Diploma in Mountain Medicine. Credit: Nick Mason.

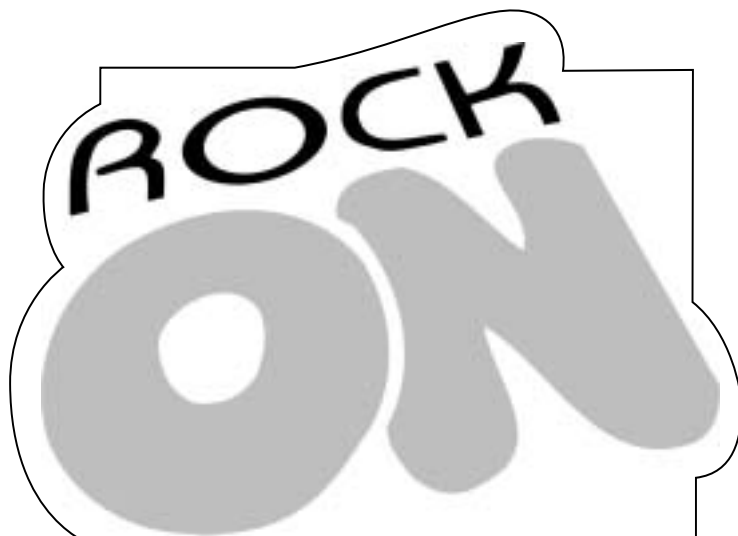
a Faculty member of the Diploma, was seeing him. As we go to press it looks like he will keep his toes, and soon return to active mountaineering, perhaps with some warmer boots though! And following on from this incident, the UK team have already set links to obtain further advice from the international frostbite experts in Chamonix if needed in the future. II

MEDICAL INFORMATION SHEETS

The UIAA Mountain Medicine Centre produces a range of 12 advice sheets, all available at www.thebmc.co.uk.

MORE ABOUT THE DIPLOMA

For more information about the UIAA/IKAR/ISMM Diploma just see www.medex.org.uk, or email Caroline Clay at cc44@leicester.ac.uk



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the write stuff

Want to see your name up in lights? Getting published in the mags is not as easy as it seems - like all areas of publishing, the outdoors market is highly competitive. **Terry Gifford**, veteran writer and organiser of the International Festival of Mountain Literature has some top tips for those wanting to get started.

Firstly, apologies if what follows appears to be stating the obvious. It is intended for new writers in the spirit of encouragement. The field is wide open for unsolicited work, but editors are still needing to state the obvious. Among these points there might be something new to some, and even if you know it all, it's still worth going over the basics.

Take note

Keep a notebook and keep writing notes in it during and immediately after your trip. Mine is small enough to fit in a pocket, hard-backed and waterproofed to keep off the rain. I find it simpler to keep one notebook for everything I do, but I have prepared a special one for a long trip, putting some quotes inside along with passport number, credit card loss number and flight details. You can write in pencil in a light rain. I have a bad memory and at the end of a long climb I have forgotten the features of the pitches, so I was particularly grateful to my partner, Tim Noble, when he insisted that I wrote a note on a piece of paper at each of the 13 stances on our climb of the Miroir in Switzerland so that I could write about it later.

Be inspired

Keep a journal that collects good writing. As with any kind of writing, the quality of

your own work is influenced by the quality of your reading. I use an A4 hardback journal and a file for cuttings. Copy out brilliant sentences into your journal and paste in the journal models to be studied. Annotate what you have included. The journal is not an archive, but a tool for your learning, so don't be afraid to underline and scribble in the margins. Even very experienced writers still secretly do this.

It's all in the pictures

I need photos to jog my memory, especially contextual photos that might not mean much to others. As the professionals say, film is cheaper than going back again. But you can rarely sell your writing without one decent picture, so we all have to learn the basics and then learn to improve. Or travel with a photographer. Of course, they will be trying out a new lens/film/relationship and it will inevitably fail, so a back up plan never hurts anyone. Remember that editors look at the pictures first and this colours how they read your writing, and in some cases the piece will stand or fall on the quality of the images.

Know your audience

When you want to write, you might consider whether this is for the audience of the club journal who might know you and the people you name, or for the general audi-

ence of a specific magazine. If you are not an alert reader of the publication for which you are to write you will misjudge the audience. A first draft might be written only for yourself. But when you submit for publication you are addressing a specific audience. It will help to eventually be able to write a first draft with that audience in mind. Generally, I submit to my club journal work which is too original, unusual, or risky to be accepted for a wider audience. Or work which is addressed to friends, with in-jokes, or an information piece that I want to pass on to fellow club members, possibly a year or two before I offer it to a general audience.

Find the story

'Have you got a story to tell?' the editor is immediately asking. The trick is in finding out what that story is if you didn't actually touch the void and survive. But first you have got to *want* to write. (If you feel you *have* to write, it will show.) About three or four times a year I have found that an experience has been so charged in some way that I want to explore it in writing. You might find 'the story to tell' in a metaphor, or a search, or the route itself, or a relationship, or a crucial choice. The article should have a central focus or theme. The detail of the route, its essential character, should emerge, together with essential informa-

tion and current tips, but the writing should have an over-arching focus that might be different. Research can sometimes produce the story, leading you to seek out and interview the first ascensionist, for example.

Sometimes the focus can be the form of the piece itself if it is a parody, or written in a particular genre, like a myth. Editors are always on the lookout for a different form that can still tell a story. Of course, forms should be practised by the writer just as much as anything else. And this might be the moment to say that genuine humour is the holy grail for editors. If you can make readers laugh out loud, you're made.

Choose your length

Also needing some practice is the business of getting used to the standard length and then pacing the piece within it. 1000-1500 words should get to feel the right length for what you are writing. The first sentence is the crux. But grabbing the interest with the first sentence and sustaining attention towards a satisfying sense of an ending within 1500 words takes practice.

The art of submission

A single sentence email to the editor saying you are about to submit a piece on a certain subject and asking if it would be welcomed, can save weeks waiting for what the editor immediately knows will be a re-

jection because there is just such a piece already pencilled in for next month. When submitting, ask for a copy of their submission guidelines (usually on their website), and stick to them. If they ask for hard copy and email, give them that. Don't waste too much time on a covering letter, just give a brief summary of the content of the piece.

However tempted, don't offer the same material to more than one editor at once. Get an acceptance letter and know the rate you will be paid. You may need to keep this letter safe for up to two years, so know where you put it. Sometimes 'a pulling fee' will be paid if a piece has been accepted but not used. After acceptance you have to be prepared to sit back and wait for between six months and two years. Don't hassle the editor, but enquire with one sentence once every six months. If you find out that your article is in the pipeline for imminent publication check that your information is still current and forward corrections.

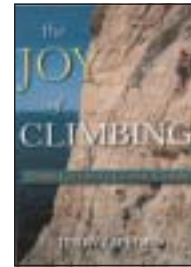
It's in print!

When your piece is published keep several actual copies and make some photocopies for friends. Getting back issues to give to grandchildren in years to come will be more difficult than you can imagine now! Remember that the cheque is always 'in the post', so be prepared for at least a month's delay before payment arrives.

Look to the future

Finally, plan to do next what others are not doing. Ask editors what sort of articles are in short supply. Find a climbing partner who is a photographer, not a writer, then get out there and get to work! **II**

If you'd like to try your hand at writing, why not consider Summit? See www.thebmc.co.uk for guidelines.



Terry Gifford is Reader in Literature and Environment at the University of Leeds and Director of Research in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries. He is Director of the International Festival of

Mountaineering Literature at Bretton Hall Campus, Leeds. This year the festival is on the 27th March. For details check out www.festivalofmountaineeringliterature.co.uk Terry has also just released a new book, "The Joy of Climbing". See page 12 for details and an exclusive offer.

(LEFT) The Zwischbergenpass at sunset. Credit: Tom Povey.

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new breed

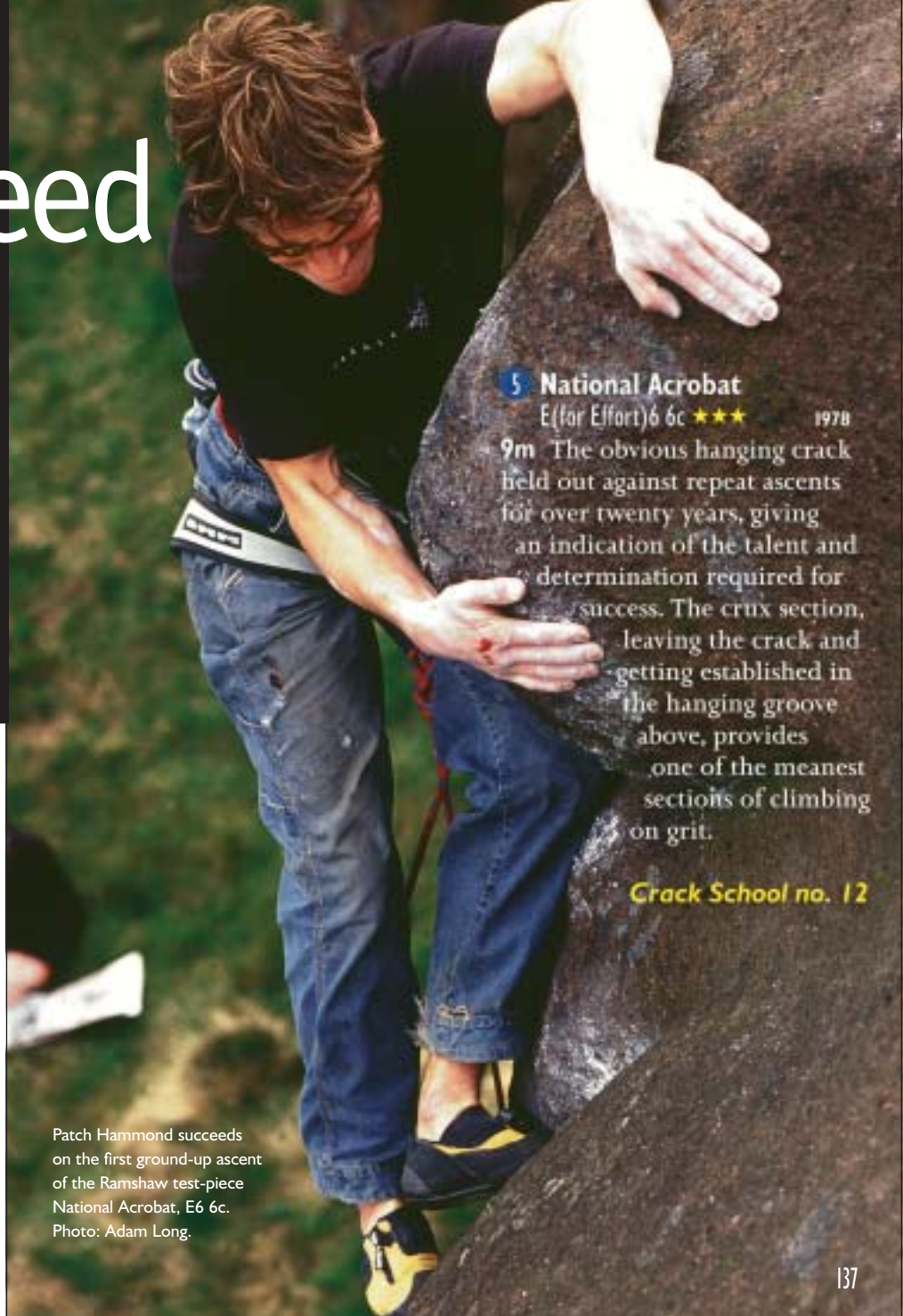
Niall Grimes and the BMC Guidebook volunteers are proud to present their new baby. The first of a new wave of guidebooks is here, and it's looking very healthy indeed.

The new Staffordshire guide will be the first of a new style of guide for the BMC, a style that combines all the best features of traditional, definitive guides, with all the amazing possibilities that modern design and printing technologies allow.

These aspects come together to produce a visually stunning, deeply informative and highly entertaining guidebook, and one that should set the standard for climbing guides for years to come.

“Not bad! But it's not much fun on the bog, is it?”

This cryptic comment has been muttered by many in reference to the new selective guides that have appeared over the last few years intimating that, while they may be very flash, there is a lack of route history and depth of cover that stops them from being a really good read. This comment seems unfair. However, due to the fact that



5 National Acrobat
E (for Effort) 6 6c ★★★ 1978
9m The obvious hanging crack held out against repeat ascents for over twenty years, giving an indication of the talent and determination required for success. The crux section, leaving the crack and getting established in the hanging groove above, provides one of the meanest sections of climbing on grit.

Crack School no. 12

Patch Hammond succeeds on the first ground-up ascent of the Ramshaw test-piece National Acrobat, E6 6c. Photo: Adam Long.



it is so commonly said, a lot of work has gone into making Staffordshire one of the best publications you could possibly take to the toilet; because, while the pages may be totally non-absorbent, at every turn there is a thrilling yarn, a Don Whillans anecdote, a piece of local lore or a list of suggestions to get you visit a new area. You may be in there for some time.

“It's great here on the bog, but will I want to leave?”

In a word, too right! Inspiration, that's what it's all about. You might have taken the guide to the bog for a read, but before you knew it, you'd got up, forgot to wipe, and headed straight for the crag. The Staffordshire guide has been the result of a complete rethink over what a guidebook should be like. At every turn, long and hard decisions were made to determine whether any aspect could be improved on. One of the

roles a definitive guide must fulfill is to show what else there is in an area. Therefore, a lot of trouble has gone into showing how good all the other areas in the county are- Grabbach Hill, Back Forest, Gib Torr- even the Churnet Valley! For every area, all effort was made to find what was good about the routes, to show how any route can be great. For example; “This delicate and tenuous climb provides real a test in the art of friction climbing.”

The new guide goes a long way to illuminating the joys and beauty to be found in every part of Staffordshire, and the enthusiasm that comes across from the crag writers will surely have you itching to get there. Tough on the bog, Tough on the causes of the bog.

(ALL) A selection of pages from the new guide: radically different from before!

Richie Patterson

My personal opinion is that the modern climber is somewhat under-skilled in the area of crack climbing, so in a spirit of generosity(?) I have set a task which when completed will (maybe) enable even the indoor addict to face that prime stopper of gritstone climbing – the crack.

Within the text I have selected a tick list of Ramshaw's best crack climbs that should enable any climber that completes them to hold their head high and proud in any pub in the land. Hopefully this mastery will lead them to espouse the virtues of the bloodied hand, (fist, elbow, and knee?) and to continue to pass on the grand gritstone tradition, which Johnny Dawes so presciently called

“THE **best** forgotten art”

The CRACKER'S Dozen

1. **Phallic Crack HVD**
Spectacular climbing on a big buttress.
2. **Great Scene Baby S**
Short and stiff to hone the technique.
3. **Tricouni Crack HS**
Not quite hard as nails.
4. **The Crank VS**
Now you're really learning. *A jammer's milestone.*
5. **Green Crack VS**
An awkward change of angle.
6. **Great Zawn HVS**
Wide, ballsy and committing.
7. **Brown's Crack E1**
Very short, but just plain hard.
8. **Foord's Folly E2**
Thin hand technique can help.
9. **Imposition E2**
Another difficult change of angle.
10. **The Undertaker E3**
Short lived but perplexing.
11. **Ramshaw Crack E4**
Hands to fists to arm-bar. *Testing.*
12. **National Acrobat E6**
The path to true mastery.

“It's all very well, but where are the routes?”

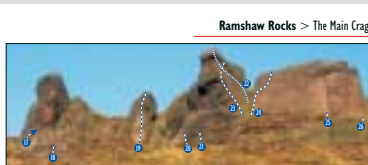
While the bog-based performance is very important, it is imperative that this is not achieved at the cost of a guide's functionality. The advent of digital photography, desktop publishing and cheaper colour printing has made colour photo topos common in modern guidebooks, and the users have expressed a liking for them. Thus, this new publication reluctantly says goodbye to the beautiful line drawings of previous editions, and goes for clear, full-colour photo-diagrams. These have been a lot of work to produce, but the result is well worth it, with high-quality sunlit shots of almost every major and not so major buttress. Scores of highly detailed maps have been produced, making it simple, not only to arrive at the Roaches, but also to find the farthest-flung corners of the Churnet Valley, and more importantly, to get you back to civilization.

What the guide has set out to do, was to provide the best possible definitive record of all climbing in Staffordshire. This has meant endless research into the routes, the mammoth task of compiling a definitive bouldering record, writing a history, researching first ascents. This has been combined with a great amount of photography, mapping and design work, ensuring that all the hard-earned information has been presented in the most accessible way, in the most attractive and inspiring format. And if you need convincing, the example spreads seen here should leave you in no doubt. So, whether you are locked in the privacy of your privy, stood quaking at the bottom of the Great Slab, or queuing through the back roads of Lesser Oakamoor, you can be sure that the Staffordshire guide will see to your every need and more. II

So don't hang around, order your copy today.

Neil Bentley attending Crack School. Ramshaw Crack. Photo: Seb Grieve.

138 Ramshaw Rocks



- 1 Body Pop E4 6s ***** 1984
11m More commitment required! From the top of the groove, the right arête is gained adventurously. Luckily, as height is gained, the climbing eases enough to keep you moving in the right direction. Usually.
- 2 Wall and Groove VD** 1984-1973
9m The crack is often green, but much better than it looks. Starting from beneath the prow (or direct), move up to gain the chimney proper which is surprisingly tough.
- 3 The Arête S** 1984-1973
9m A steep route which takes the obvious tongue-like flakes to gain a ledge.
- 4 Louie Groove E1 5s *** 1988
8m The square-cut groove is easy at the bottom but more intimidating as height is gained, and has seen a few wobblers. Sorely gear for those who look.
- 5 Leeds Slab H5 4s** 1980
8m Ascend the centre of the cutaway on 'chippers' to finish up the notched ribs.
- 6 Leeds Crack D** 1984-1973
6m The short crack right of the slab gives good introductory jamming. The short blun arête to the right is a pleasant HVS 5s.
- 7 Honest Jonny D** 1974
5m The short little groove just right of the ribs. Fifteen metres right and higher up is a blunt-wood pinnacle with a thin crinkled crack on its front face. It can be climbed by going up the wall on the left at 6b. *Take Her Under.*
- 8 The Undertaker E3 6s *** 1973
6m A mini National Acrobat, and like that route, only a fierce approach (or a very long reach) aids progress as the initially on-operative crack turns unhelpful, a frustrating distance below the next good holds. *Crack School no. 10.*
- The wall to the right features a couple of short solos: **Pink Flake, 4c**, takes the obvious booming flake in the wall to the right, gained from the right; it is 5a to gain the flake direct. **Manet, 4c**, is shorter and features a fine move onto the rounded shelf further right then straight up.
- 9 Overdrive E1 5c** 1977
7m Something of a gripper, with anxiety rising with height. Ten metres right of The Undertaker is a small, triangular, roof buttress. Using good but creaky holds, gain the lip of the roof and mantled boldly up to finish on a selection of gritty slopers. The two cracks underneath this have also been climbed as **Twin Cracks (D, pre-1973)**, and **Double Chin (00, 1973-8)**, both of which finish up the wider broken groove above.
- 10 Prowler HVS 4c** 1973-80
6m Take the very friable roof to the right as its widest point and finish up the secondary prow.
- Right again is a buttress with a prominent second crack to its left. The two short grooves to the left of this crack have been climbed and, though worthwhile exercise, are hardly routes. Both go at about 4c.

Ramshaw Rocks 139

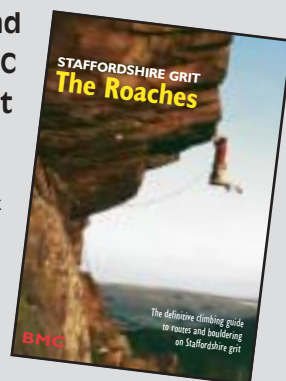
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That's right. The new BMC Staffordshire Guide is due out mid April, and you can be one of the first to own this glossy crag companion. Just think - everybody will want to climb with you when they see you with one of these babies.

The guide will normally retail at £17.50, so to take advantage of this introductory offer call the BMC on 0870 010 4878 or order online at www.thebmc.co.uk.



BACK TO THE FUTURE

Inside the BMC Future Policy Review with Tony Halliwell.

It's no secret that the BMC has been going through a period of self-examination. And when Mark Vallance, the BMC President, was interviewed recently he particularly stressed the importance of consulting all members for their views on the organisation's priorities.

So I got in touch, offering my market research experience to aid this project, and faster than I could say "climbing!" I found myself attending a Future Policy Review meeting to discuss how this process could be managed. The consultation was expected to take place in at least two distinct parts; first there was the already scheduled series of regional open meetings and second, a possible membership survey. Although expecting to be involved only in the latter stage, I was also grilled for any techniques which could be helpful in extracting information from the open meetings.

My experience centres around group discussions, or focus groups as they're now called. But these usually consist of eight participants; not 80, as experienced at the open meetings. Furthermore, we faced a number of conflicting demands. It was desirable that the open meeting agendas should be as wide ranging as possible and driven by the participants, with everyone, rather than a possible vocal minority, able to have their say. But we also wanted the meetings to be focused, forward-looking and to last only a couple of hours. All meetings were to be attended by Mark Vallance, Dave Turnbull and Bob Moulton who had been appointed independant chair of the Future Policy Review process. Oh, and whatever technique identified needed to be usable by people who, understandably, didn't have market research experience. Not the easiest task!

So we came up with a simplified version of a "syndicate groups" technique. For half an hour or so, this gets people into smaller groups in which they identify the six or seven most important areas which they feel the BMC should concentrate on in the future. These lists were then compiled in order to create an agenda for discussion of the most commonly recurring. It could be argued that this process is reductive, limiting the discussions only to the most populist and ignoring the margins. The counter argument is that if you are going to review and renew your activities, first you cover your bases. Once you've got these sorted, then you can look at the extras. This seems to have worked pretty well and the top hits for what the BMC should be focusing on are shown to the left.

On the face of it, it could be said that there were few surprises here, with perhaps the exception of Finance only getting one mention. Although we did ask attendees to be forward thinking, you could fall into the trap of thinking that the meetings only provided confirmation that the current emphasis is correct.

But a recurring theme was a desire of the large majority of the participants that the BMC should be doing *more* in key areas, especially Access, Representation and Communication. Illustrating this last point, a common finding in the meetings was that BMC members just don't know what the BMC does! In fact some of the meetings turned into road shows rather than consultation exercises, with more time spent educating people about the BMC or correcting their misconceptions, than on actually consulting them about future policies. And if this was with the people interested

YOU SAID...

THE BMC PRIORITIES AS VOTED BY YOU AT THE OPEN MEETINGS:

WORK AREA:	VOTES:
ACCESS & CONSERVATION	
REPRESENTATION	
INSURANCE/MEMBER SERVICES	
COMMUNICATIONS	
COMPETITIONS	
DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE	
YOUTH	
TECHNICAL	
GUIDEBOOKS	
MEMBERSHIP DIVERSITY	
PROGRAMME PRIORITISATION	
ETHICS	
MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	
REGIONAL SUPPORT	
TRAINING	
FINANCE	
INTERNATIONAL LIASON	



enough to turn up, what chance is there that the majority have any notion of the BMC's activities?

Overall however, whilst there was general praise for the work already being done, the BMC got clear direction from this series of meetings that Access must continue to be its top priority. A clear picture also emerged that members want the BMC to be higher profile and become noticeably more effective in lobbying, not only on Access, but also on any other issues which affect us and our activities, such as the Working at Heights directive and personal freedoms.

Better communications, on the other hand, is not so much a policy; it is a means to an end. This issue seems crucial. Some of the meetings were attended by well informed individuals with detailed ideas on policies, whilst others just didn't possess the necessary information to formulate anything other than vague suggestions. Perhaps it needs to be the other way around. If the BMC can succeed in communicating its activities better, we will then be able to react in favour of these - or against them. After all, if we don't know what the policies and activities are, how can we ever let the BMC know what we think?

But achieving the golden goal of better communications is easier said than done, and a number of paradoxes emerged from these meetings. First, Dave Turnbull has described the BMC as "bad news for forests" in that it already produces tons of literature and yet members were saying that they don't get to hear enough about what the BMC does. Second, participants at the meetings showed a genuine interest in finding out more about what the BMC does. Yet there is also a perception that much of the BMC's news is not that sexy and most climbers and hill walkers would prefer to let the BMC get on with things whilst they go out to the crags and hills! A reflection perhaps that most of us will only ever react to the BMC's policies and not help set them?

Few solutions emerged from the meetings on how to engage members more effectively. The web was mentioned repeatedly, as was better use of Summit. The new IT project will certainly help with this, but the BMC also appears to be considering ways in which it can get out more to have a presence in places where climbers and mountaineers congregate, such as climbing walls and popular climbing venues. A good tactic, but how can you adapt that to meeting hill-walkers?

One possible barrier to engagement, and a topic which did emerge strongly during the meetings, is that of democracy, with all its attendant issues of membership structures and subscriptions. Feelings about this have also been aired vocally on the web, with long threads appearing on ukclimbing.com. There seems to have been

consensus, including agreement from senior club representatives, that the block vote is unsustainable in this day and age and that there needs to be a move to one member, one vote. How it moves forward to achieve that is a different matter, but as we do so, we need to lay to rest the picture of victims and villains that has sometimes been painted. It emerged in one meeting that your average Alpine Club member is a member of 2.4 clubs, with the huge majority not bothering to claim back the multiple affiliation fees they pay and therefore contributing considerably more to the BMC than might be assumed to be the case. Across the meetings however, a clear message was given that the membership and voting structure needs to be changed.

The BMC has emerged from a couple of difficult years during which it has come in for a fair amount of flak. These criticisms have led to some inner torment and the Council re-examining itself and its priorities. What emerges from the first stage of this exercise is that the BMC is already mostly doing what we want it to do and, so long as it continues to manage its financial affairs more effectively, shouldn't beat itself up too much about whether or not it is doing a good job. The main lessons that it should take from these meetings are firstly that it needs to do more on lobbying and maintaining a high profile and secondly that it's time for a more democratic structure. Beyond these, the challenge facing the BMC is not so much re-establishing policies, but rather working out how to engage and interest us enough to participate.

But here's the crux - do you agree? Here's your opportunity. Is there more that you'd like to add? Most importantly, have you got any ideas on how the BMC can get you more interested in, and aware of, what it does? Right from the start of my involvement I was impressed by how seriously the people at the BMC were taking this review and how thorough they want it to be. Why not put pen to paper, send an email, or start a thread on the BMC discussion boards on ukclimbing. Now is the time to make your views known. **II**

Tony Halliwell has 25 years market research experience with major household brand names and established his own research business in the North West in 1990. He was, until recently, a trustee of the Bremex Trust and is an MIC holder and a member of AMI. An individual member of the BMC, he's also an affiliated member via AMI, The Alpine Club, FRCC, North London MC and Clitheroe MC.

(LEFT) Lisa Rands on Old Friends, E4 5c, Stanage. **(ABOVE)** The Aonach Eagach Ridge, Glencoe. From testing micro-protection to advising walkers on safety issues, the BMC has its work cut out. Both credit: Alex Messenger.

BERGHAUS PRIZE LETTER WINNER

DANGERS OF SAFETY

"Well-known climbers,, whose opinions necessarily carry the greatest weight, have recently declared their belief that the dangers of mountaineering no longer exist"

It's over 100 years since Mummery wrote this in his essay on the "The Pleasures and Penalties of Mountaineering". The words seem as relevant today as they were then, and we can probably all recall an acquaintance lost to the mountains.

A century later those who should know better have again declared the same belief, evident in the collective response to the HSE working at height directive promoted on the ukclimbing.com website (topic: Serious Threat to Outdoor Activity). The response states that professional mountaineers can "proceed safely" without the regulations.

For example with reference to fragile surfaces in winter terrain the response argues against the legislation on the grounds that "Currently such activities proceed safely due to a reliance on the workers skills and experience of weather knowledge, snow conditions and the handling properties of the fragile surface." This statement is highly misrepresentative of our game since it is obvious to any climber that you cannot proceed "safely" on such surfaces. Professional instructors are in no position to offer the same level of assurance that society expects the rest of its industrial workers to receive.

The term "safe" is simply not appropriate. "Safe" when used with reference to mountaineering can never imply the same margin against risk as what would be accepted as best industrial practice. The point of principal is that professional mountaineers, and their clients, make informed decisions about the risk and accept them as a lifestyle choice. This is what must be exerted to the HSE. The participation statement engenders this ethos well. Here was the perfect opportunity to collectively state the case of all mountaineers to an increasingly, disproportionately, coddling society.

Mountain accidents are inevitable; they are an inseparable part of our game. The mountain does not distinguish between amateur and professional. Today, society has professional mountaineers in its sights. Tomorrow amateurs will be the next target. The mountaineering lobby must be consistent in the justification of our game if we are to prevail against the incessant nanny state.

We must get back to basics and make the terminology of risk unequivocal. The collective response demonstrates a clear departure from the plain language used by the Mountaineering Bodies in respect of safety and risk. For example in Summit 7, Adge Last wrote, "Some find it surprising that we only use the word "safety" very rarely and with great caution. This is because we are involved in an activity that is inherently risky and it would therefore be foolhardy to portray it as one that can be made safe"

Statements like these are straightforward and honest. Together with the participation statement, they underpin our right to take partake risks, but in recent years the participation statement seems to have fallen out of favour. In the rush by walls and centres to introduce new people to the sport, the risks have been conveniently pushed to one side.

The future of mountaineering is in peril. If we continue to deny the risks of mountaineering then don't expect a coddling society to understand or accept the inevitable consequences of our actions. Expect them to regulate and legislate to protect climbers from themselves.

Lyndon Gill



SEA FEVER

Just writing to let you know that after eight months in the making, "Sea Fever, Classic Climbs of Pembroke" is out. It's a film made with Carl Ryan and Peter Hall, and is a 3 1/2 hour compilation of independent films covering a variety of climbers having fun and epics on a variety of classics of Pembrokeshire. We've been selling it locally on video, and are now able to produce it in DVD format. The DVD is a real advancement as it is authored, the menu means you can

go straight to the parts you want, and skip the guys you don't want to be forced to see! Given the length of the compilation, this suits our film compilation better. Also the film is especially effective on insomniacs and awaits accreditation by The Medical Council - only joking, you'll be on your toes, or tips!

The double DVD price is just £26.99, offering good value for money all things considered. If you'd like to buy one, send a cheque made out to 'Hang Loose Films' to:

Hang Loose films, 3 Cotswold Close, Fforestfach, Swansea SA5 5AZ, and for further details call me on 01275 394064. Anyway, forgive the commercial interlude. We're just trying to make a little money in order that we can advertise properly!

Martin Crocker

MELTING AWAY

I read with interest in Summit 32 that you're advising people to book cheap flights to the Alps before they all melt. I'm sure that the irony of this statement can't be lost on you, i.e. the fact that global warming that's causing such dramatic events as last year's freaky summer is the direct result, amongst other things, of people jumping on board cheap airlines. If members of the outdoor community can't begin to get the links between our activity and the resultant environmental damage then there's not much hope really!

Simon Birch

THRUSTING BUCKS

On the Future Policy Steering Group the other night I was taken to task by the young thrusting Plas y Brenin instructor, Neil Johnson, for quoting past incidents in safety and training as a guide to future action. Neil claimed, "Whilst old events are relevant, it is the problems we have to deal with now that are important".

Such lack of respect for empiricism is natural among the young, and of course in many ways he is right, but time and time again a study of past events also gives valuable clues for forming sensible future policy. In the training field the Cairngorm Incident and the Lyme Bay tragedy are seminal events that should form a background to the thinking of anyone involved.

In truth a feisty dialogue between young bucks and old farts (females seem to be able to steer around such posturing) usually hammers out acceptable policy. But this put me in mind of the BMC's 50 Year History - a book stuffed full of the triumphs and follies of the past. Anyone who wishes to understand the nature of our Representative Beast (aka Governing Body) should have this book close to hand.

Yes, at times it rambles on and is worthy and boring, but embedded in its pages is much valuable history and some very interesting articles as well. I am told that there only 50 copies left and with "World Champ" Simon Nadin gracing the cover and numerous mug shots of the good, the bad, and the ugly inside, it is a package that few who seek a tangential view on our zany sport could sensibly resist.

Ken Wilson

"The First 50 Years" is available from the BMC Office or online shop, priced £10 members / £17 non-members.

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AGM TIME!

EGM, AGM, voting rights, subs, Ken Wilson, shouting, bits of paper. Yep, just when you thought it had all calmed down...along comes the next one. That's right, it's the BMC AGM and Annual Gathering 2004. This time it's in **Bristol** and is sure to be a lively event.

Friday 23th April

The weekend starts with a free slideshow double-act at 9.00pm in Victoria Suite II at the Novotel Bristol Centre from Pat Littlejohn and Dave Turnbull - "Sea cliff adventure climbing - the South West to the Northern Isles." This is open to all, and makes a great start to the weekend.

Saturday 24th April

With Avon and Cheddar Gorge close at hand this will be a perfect opportunity to combine an activity weekend with some important issues at the AGM and National Open Forum. There is also a programme of workshops and briefings for volunteers and members - please join us for a valuable opportunity to hear all the latest news and present your views. Pre-dinner drinks are at 7:00pm for a superb dinner at 7:30pm. Chief Guest is Sir Chris Bonington, and others will include representatives of organisations in the BMC Partnership Programme and other outdoor recreation and countryside bodies. After all the formalities the evening continues with a late bar.

Event Schedule, Bristol Grammar School, 24th April		
10:30	Access & Conservation: The Way Forward	(Junior Common Room/JCR)
	Supporting the Area Committees	(Princess Ann Block)
	Climbing Wall Open Meeting	(Princess Ann Block)
12:00	Lunch	(JCR)
1:00	National Open Forum - The BMC Future Policy Review	(JCR)
2:30	Tea	(JCR)
3:00	AGM Registration	(JCR)
3.30-5.00	AGM	(JCR)
7:00	Pre-dinner drinks	(Novotel, Bristol City Centre)

Name : _____ Address: _____
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Annual Dinner and late Bar
 I would like _____ tickets for the Saturday dinner at £22.50 each £ _____
 I would like the **vegetarian meal** option (please delete as appropriate) Y / N

I enclose a cheque made payable to the BMC for £ _____
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Please return to: BMC, 177-179 Burton Rd, Manchester M20 2BB, fax 0161 445 4500, email Lucy@thebmc.co.uk

Notice of the Annual General Meeting of the British Mountaineering Council 2004

15:30, 24 April, JCR, Bristol Grammar School, University Road, Bristol

The Annual General Meeting and National Open Forum is open to all members of the BMC. The venue has wheelchair access and members with other special needs are encouraged to let the BMC office know in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made. All individual BMC members and members of BMC affiliated clubs may speak at the AGM, but only adult individual members and authorised representatives of member clubs are entitled to vote (see note below). Please allow adequate time to sign in so that the AGM can start promptly. BMC staff will be available to answer questions and offer assistance. Copies of relevant documents are available on the web site or from the office and will be available at the AGM.

AGM AGENDA

1. **Welcome, introductions & apologies for absence**
2. **Minutes of the previous AGM held on Saturday 12 April 2003**
3. **Minutes of the EGM held on 25 October 2003**
4. **Adoption of 2003 Annual Report**
5. **Adoption of 2003 Annual Accounts**
6. **Report from and Appointment of Auditors**
The Finance Committee recommends the re-appointment of Salter & Co for the year ending 31 Dec 2004.
7. **Elections**
The following candidates are eligible for re-election:
President: Mark Vallance (eligible for re-election until 2006)
Vice President: Paul Braithwaite (eligible for re-election until 2005)
Vice President: Louise Thomas (eligible for re-election until 2006)
Honorary Treasurer: Gordon Adshead (eligible for re-election until 2008)
John Mason retires as Vice President.
The Management Committee recommends the election of the following:
Vice President: Michael Hunt
(nominated by Henry Folkard and Mike Pinder)
8. **Subscriptions from 1st January 2005.** The Management Committee recommends that: *"This AGM resolves that the per member subscription fee for individual members (currently £25.00) should be £27.50, the per capita fee for affiliated clubs (currently £6.25) should be £8.00 and the club upgrade fee for members of affiliated clubs (currently £9.50) should be £13.50. All other fees to be determined pro-rata."*

Voting: As laid down in Article 55 votes at the AGM will be by show of hands unless a poll is demanded by either the Chair, 3 individual members, or by one authorised representative of a member club. If a poll is called, votes will be calculated by using voting papers distributed. Members may nominate a proxy by completing the form (to be returned to the Chief Executive not less than 48 hours prior to the AGM).

Sunday 25th April

For those who like climbing with a hangover, there will be a site visit and climbing trip to Cheddar Gorge. Martin Crocker will be on hand to explain the BMC funded 'Cheddar Gorge Project' which aims to secure summer time access to parts of the Gorge.

(RIGHT) On a Conville winter training course, just part of the BMC's wide range of work over the last year
Credit: Mal Creasey

Accommodation

The Novotel Bristol Centre is offering a B&B package of £70.00 per room (£35.00 per person) based on two people sharing for a minimum of two nights. The cost for single occupancy is £80.00 per room and Saturday night stay only is also £80.00. Please phone The Novotel Bristol Centre direct on 0117 976 9988 to book your accommodation. An alternative accommodation list is available from the BMC Office – please call Lucy Mellor-Brook on 0161 438 3303. ||

The Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show

2-4th April

The Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show is returning to the NEC, Birmingham, 2-4 April. This major event of the outdoor calendar features the first round of the UIAA-ICC North Face Bouldering World Cup 2004 in association with Entre-Prises, High Magazine and On The Edge, "have a go" climbing walls, a packed programme of inspirational slideshows and workshops from some of the most famous mountaineers around, and retail and manufacturers stalls. Further information and booking from www.theoutdoorsshow.co.uk, and see page 39 for a Summit readers ticket offer.

SW Area Meeting

21st April

After a few years in the doldrums the South West Area is up and running again, with a new Chair, Secretary and Management Committee rep. 20 people turned out at the January re-launch meeting and agreed to focus the area meeting in Bristol for a one year trial period, with reps from other parts of the SW being encouraged to get involved. The next meeting is at 6pm, 21 April at the Bristol Wall. All welcome, and the more the merrier!

Colin Kirkus Weekend

23-24th April

Ripping Yarns are republishing the classic book by Colin Kirkus, "Let's Go Climbing!" To celebrate the launch, they're holding a "Colin Kirkus Weekend" at the Heights Hotel in Llanberis. The Friday evening will be an informal get-together, Saturday will see a recreation of one of Kirkus' classic routes followed by a meal and slideshow with guest speakers. Entry to the slideshow is free, and the meal is £8 but this includes a bottle of limited edition "Norman Collie Ale", brewed specially by the Isle of Skye Brewery. See www.rippingyarns.com for more details.

BMC AGM

24th April

The BMC AGM 2004 is on Saturday 24 April at Bristol Grammar School. Friday evening activities and the Saturday evening dinner will be at the Holiday Inn, Bristol. See page 52 for full details.

Range West Briefings

May

This year's briefing dates will be Friday 9th April (Easter) and Saturday 29th May (Bank Holiday) at the Castlemartin Range, at 7pm. Range West will open on the 29th May, with some areas subject to bird nesting restrictions.

It is planned to hold another briefing later in the season to coincide with the traditional August opening date.

BRYCS '04

May - July

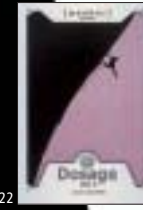
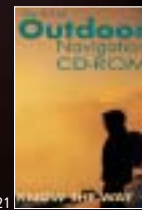
The dates for the British Regional Youth Climbing Series are now confirmed. The series runs throughout the summer, and is split into ten geographical regions, with the final at Ratho on 25th Sept. For details of all dates and application forms, see the BMC website.

Huts Seminar

2nd October

The fourth annual Hut Seminar will be held at Plas y Brenin on Saturday 2 October at 3.30pm. The seminar will discuss: building and planning regulations, energy efficiency, hut management and maintenance plans, changes in the law affecting hut operations and schemes for increasing visitor numbers to huts. Anyone involved with managing or planning a club hut is encouraged to attend. The seminar, which includes a hot supper at 7.30pm, is free. Further details on the event can be found on the BMC website.

See www.thebmc.co.uk for more upcoming events.



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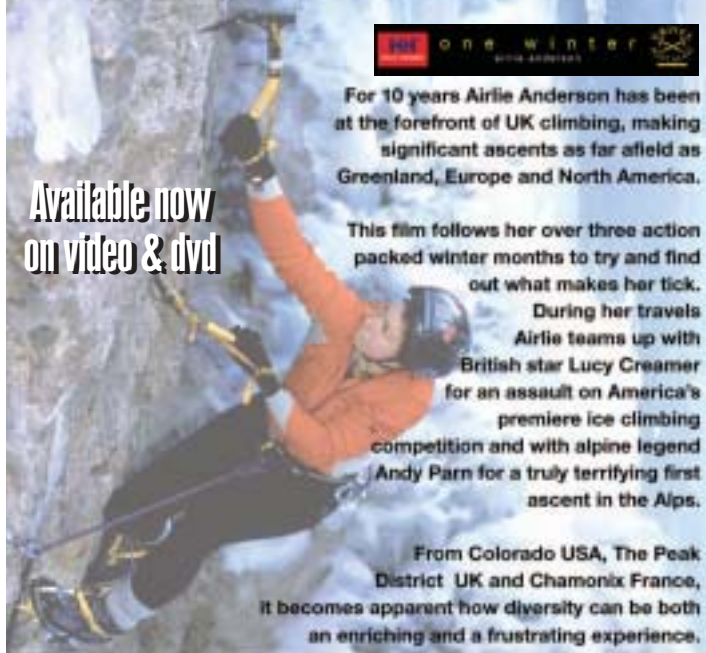
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SITUATIONS VACANT



Regional Access & Conservation Co-ordinator
Salary scale £20,700

The BMC is seeking a specialist officer with experience in countryside management and nature conservation to work as part of the Access team at the BMC Office in Manchester. The post will involve liaising with landowners and countryside bodies (throughout England and Wales) and supporting the BMCs Regional Access volunteers. The post will involve drafting responses to planning and consultation documents, managing a programme of conservation projects, developing policy and campaigns and through BMC publications and the outdoor media, providing good practice information for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers.

The successful applicant will have a sound knowledge of current access and conservation issues and should be a keen climber with an interest in the environment and an enthusiasm for working with volunteers. The post requires good administrative and communication skills, a willingness to work some evenings and week-ends and extensive travel.

Application details are available from:
Lucy Mellor-Brook

Tel: 0161 438 3303 Fax: 0161 445 4500
Lucy@thebmc.co.uk www.thebmc.co.uk

The BMC actively promotes equal opportunities.
Deadline for return of completed applications – 09:00 hrs on Monday 19 April 2004.

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ISSUE 33 – SPRING 2004

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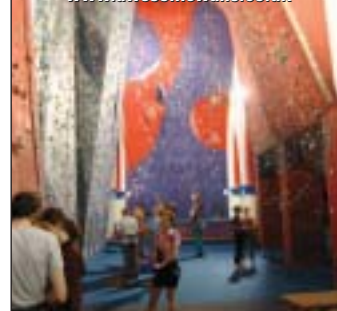
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IVY LEAGUE

Things are stirring in Cheddar Gorge. **Martin Crocker**, Cheddar Gorge Climbing Project Coordinator explains.

"Upon investigation it soon became apparent that the natural cliffs of limestone had no place as a climbing ground," so exclaimed Graham Balcombe, the originator of Piton route in the Avon Gorge in 1936. His distaste for Somerset's loose natural limestone crags might have represented how many others have felt about Cheddar Gorge from time to time. When it comes to 'denial', of all the great crags I know in Britain I can't think of a more apt and little-exploited target than Cheddar Gorge.

It might escape politicians but perhaps the best chance of turning public opinion around is not through words but through action: to enable people, climbers, to benefit first-hand and, in this case, to climb on these unique and atmospheric crags which have been lamed by a harsh winter-only climbing season and the unavoidable effects of recent land-management operations.

Over the decades many climbers have wondered at the dream of "summer access" to Cheddar Gorge and how this could unlock its true potential as a climbing venue. Dream? Maybe not, at least not for a fairly merry band of locals who are awake and rising to a challenge, the first real chance ever, for the quiet limestone giant of Britain to rear up from the shadows and be itself.

Over the past four decades, I've charted how vegetation in the Gorge has come and gone, phases of exploration have competed for press coverage with more established areas, and the owners have had to face the monumental task of maintaining their land so that is safe for the public and preserves its unique conservation interest. Much of the Gorge's worst loose rock and ivy has now been removed and there are rock-catch fences beneath many of the cliffs.

Moreover the owners appear to recognise that climbers should now have as much an entitlement to use the cliffs as the motorists who drive up the Gorge's winding road - provided we do so responsibly. The expression of their goodwill is an opportunity for us, unfolding now as routes on the main cliffs of the south side are restored, re-cleaned and re-gearred under the guise of the Cheddar Gorge Climbing Project. To quote one of the audience in last November's BMC-facilitated Open Meeting now is the time "to get on with it".

I admit it, over the years, I've been tormenting BMC Officers, trying to seek specific support to improve the access regime in the Gorge, particularly in combination with improved public safety standards. They were always sympathetic, but understandably had more popular fish to fry - until now. With the unease of the twentieth century behind, a clearer vision that access is what climbers want most from the BMC seems to have evolved.

And here, perhaps, was a project that could have the potential to deliver a piece of good-quality access without getting engorged by bureaucracy. Hence the Project starting October 2003, hence

my role as its coordinator, hence further support from The Climbers' Club, and hence a gaggle of local climbers who are running about headless waiting for the crags and routes to become available once again and - touch rock - for extended access.

I'm hard at it. As a consequence I reckon I now hold the record for the number of ascents and descents of Shoot Gully: that maligned and treacherous gully of sloping, muddy ledges, awkward steps, and dusk-time slithers and slips. It's often my way to the cliff-top and a means to start the process of inspection, risk-assessment, note taking, cleaning and re-gearing of a selection of the finest crags and climbs in the Gorge. I follow Soay sheep out along precarious terraces where they graze oblivious of gravity, to set up 100-metres of static line that takes me over climbs I haven't seen for 10, 20, or 30 years.

And what climbs they are - *Warlord, Caesar, Return of the Gunfighter, Thor* - awesome climbs amongst scores more adventure and sport climbs across the grades: all setting themselves up for a green light to realise their potential - for climbers. And any loose rock of significant size remaining on the selected climbs is removed with the invaluable help of Cheddar Caves staff, who expertly manage the necessary road closures and offer advice and goodwill.

While not in a position to assume that extended access is guaranteed, it has been a pleasure to preside over an unsurpassed optimism and welcome from all quarters that persuades me that the odds at the current time are very good indeed. So what can you do? You can join in by taking a fresh look at Cheddar Gorge, making a contribution to the Cheddar Gorge Climbers' Bolt Fund, supporting the local volunteers, and, ultimately, climbing there safely and informed - whatever the season. ||

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact me via the BMC, or ring 01275 394064. Updates will be posted on the BMC web site. We are also working towards supplying technical information on the Bristol Climbing Centre's website.

(TOP) Martin Crocker making the first ascent of his awesome and bold new route *Stoned E6 6b*, Gully of the Creeps Area, Cheddar. Credit: Carl Ryan.

(RIGHT) Martin prospecting amongst the ivy, c.1973. Credit: Crocker collection.



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