



Peak Area Newsletter

Issue 18

September 2012

The next Peak Area meeting is on Wednesday, 12 September, starting at 19:30, at the Globe Inn, 144 High Street West, Glossop, Derbyshire, SK13 8HJ. Too little space for everything! See you all at the Globe.

The Sec speaks

By Lynn Robinson



It was with great sadness that we heard of the untimely death of Julian Materna. He was a stalwart of the Peak access team and did a tremendous amount of work for the climbing in our area. A tribute has been written on the BMC website and can be found here:

www.thebmc.co.uk/articles/tag/Julian%20Materna
Trudi, Julian's partner, was the Peak Area Secretary before me and would like to thank people for their lovely messages of support and their donations to Edale MRT.

On the 12 August a gang of us descended (or ascended) on Shooter's Nab for a day's climbing. Unfortunately members of the shooting club tried to prevent us climbing within the recently agreed open access area – but Rick Gibbon kept his cool and following some quick negotiations we were 'allowed' to continue, albeit in a very limited section on the far right, until the club finished early, lowered the red flag, and let us climb on the rest of the crag.

Unfortunately after a few more routes it started to rain (the story of this summer) and we had to retreat to a cake shop in Marsden.

A few days later Rick and Martin Kocsis met with the shooting club and re-clarified the access situation. This has hopefully put to rest any confusion on the current access arrangement. The club now know exactly where the boundaries of the exclusion zone lie. To reassure you; the guide is 100% correct. The two key issues are all climbs on The Rostrum and all routes to the right are now outside the fall-of-shot zone and have open access at all times (by following the agreed approach in the guidebook); and if climbing on a Sunday do not park at the club-house car park. To aid the club, there have been two actions: The shooting club has been given clear maps of the exclusion zones and a big yellow spot has been painted on the crag, to mark the access boundary, that can be seen from the clubhouse (and probably from Halifax). Don't all rush to complain at once: it's at the top of the crag on an unclimbed bit of rock and seemed like a reasonable solution to prevent future difficulties. Cheers Rick and Martin for sorting that out.

Although it's sort of old news now, many congrats to Martin and his team of merry volunteers on the amazing "Over the Moors" guide that has been

If you're reading this from a printout, the hyperlinks won't show up (in some cases we do print them). To obtain an electronic version in which the hyperlinks will work, go to the BMC website (www.thebmc.co.uk). Members can have it emailed to them by contacting the BMC office: 0161 445 6111, office@thebmc.co.uk

Deadline for the next edition is Wednesday 7 November



officially launched since the last meeting. We are greatly enjoying using it between the rainy days. It really is inspiring and will hopefully get a few more folk out on these great crags. We will try and persuade someone from the BMC to bring a few discount copies for those of you who haven't managed to get hold of one yet, to the **Next Peak Area Meeting – 12 September 2012**. It's at a great pub – fantastic, cheap beer... yummy food... oh and the agenda doesn't look bad either! Agenda and notes from the last meeting are here:

<http://community.thebmc.co.uk/Event.aspx?id=2650>

As well as the usual update on important access issues around the Peak, Ian Carr will be giving a guidebook update and presenting a **proposal for Limestone route restoration as part of the guidebook work**. Also the Peak Area general guidelines to placing bolts and other fixed gear have been completed and will be presented for your information. Finally Dan Firth will be informing us about an exciting new scheme that is supporting the BMC Access and Conservation Trust. After supper (provided free by the BMC), Dan Lane, climbing photographer, will be giving his inaugural lecture (no pressure Dan!) entitled;

"The Journey to Becoming a Climbing Photographer"

If you want to check out his first slide then go to:

www.danlanephotography.com/articles_235334.html

- not a bad photo Dan!

The next date for your diary is 21 November 2012; AGM and amazing pre-festive quiz – this year our quiz maestro is Jon Fulwood – so get your thinking caps on – and, oh, please stick in a few routes for mortals won't you Jon????!!

Access Notes

By Henry Folkard

Dateline: 28 August 2012



It was a bright, breezy, sunny afternoon when a group of Peak and Head Office BMC people joined a

significant throng in Wisewood Cemetery for the funeral of **Julian Materna** who, with his wife Trudi, have done much for the BMC Peak Area. Between them they masterminded repair work at the Plantation Boulders, looked after Wharncliffe, Rivelin and the north side of Sheffield and kept the Area Meeting going through arranging its meetings, sorting quizzes, doing the minutes and all those very necessary, if mundane and often unseen functions it is all too easy to take for granted. Julian had remained resolute and active in the outdoors in the face of an aggressive form of cancer, strengthened undoubtedly by unfaltering support from Trudi. Various tributes have already appeared in BMC publications, but for the Access Team he was one of us and in feeling the pain of his departing we rejoice in all he achieved. The humanist funeral was a very special moment for all of us there, a celebration of a great life and lots of daft and zany antics too.

A dismal August Bank Holiday seems a fitting climax to a wash out of a summer, with only the midges at Stanage relishing a terrible season. So let's begin with two pieces of good news.

The first bit of good news is that after a slow start to the **Ring Ouzel** breeding season, a record number of broods on North Lees were successful with seven nests fledging young. The previous maximum was five. So thanks to climbers who played their part by sympathetic behaviour, by heeding pleas about dogs, by keeping Bill Gordon, the Estate Warden, aware of birds you had sighted and by avoiding leaving litter, biodegradable or not.

One sighting was a second brood report from near Apparent North which was initially deemed to be unlikely because that area had been checked the same morning, and the territory of which it formed a part was known to be occupied already. It was thought the observation probably related to a bird from the occupied nest, but on checking a nest was indeed located. It was one of those little bits of atypical behaviour which the careful observations at Stanage have revealed, like the first ever record of a polygynous male a couple of years ago, and the female that nested on the rocks for the first brood and in the bracken beds for the second (so confounding the speculation that birds reared on



rock faces returned to nest on rock faces and remained true to such nest sites). Another North Lees discovery, by the way, relates to the tone of the ring ouzels call note which has been shown by sonograms to exhibit a distinct Derbyshire accent.

Restrictions were limited to a few sites only, and at others only very discrete signs were used. This was because signs for climbers had become magnets for others, typically bird watchers and wildlife photographers, who between them caused more disturbance than the climbers. The usual difficult judgements still had to be made, like whether a female that appeared to suddenly change its mind about a nest site after building would then revert to the original site, or at change-over between first and second broods when a sign taken down in one place may need to be re-erected at another site nearby in the same territory a couple of days later.

The birds did not do so well at Burbage where, as with the North Lees failures, predation was a major factor. In fact this all but annihilated every Burbage nest. Bamford birds, by contrast, fared better.

Whilst at **Stanage** there are some other topical matters. A major concern has been use and abuse by motor propelled vehicles (MPVs). The Long Causeway, which is a public right of way, is formally the responsibility of the Highway Authority, and not in this National Park, of the National Park Authority. There are two relevant Highway Authorities, depending upon whether you are in Derbyshire or Sheffield, because the route crosses the County boundary. Following an inspection by Derbyshire engineers in July an emergency traffic regulation order (TRO) was imposed by that County Council (DCC) until August and, to follow it, a temporary TRO, which is still current, that runs to January 2013. This temporary order is to facilitate repairs to the way on which use by MPVs is ordinarily a statutory legal right. The major concern relates to the stability of the revetment, and you do not need to be an engineer to observe it is seriously bulging, that the surface is seriously eroded, and that initial damage caused by increased traction of heavy vehicles has destroyed drainage channels leading to enhanced degradation by natural causes. The temporary TRO relates only to MPVs wider than 1.5 m. If repair work,

scheduled for the autumn, is not completed by the due date in January, DCC may need to seek permission to extend the temporary order from the Secretary of State. They are obliged to maintain the Long Causeway (and other ways with unsealed surfaces) in a manner appropriate to the nature, or character, of the way, but in this case are additionally understood to be subject to an order – made by Magistrates at the request of a 4x4 driver - requiring them to do this under [Section 56 of the Highways Act \(1980\)](#).

On top of this, in July, the Peak District National Park Authority asked statutory consultees if they felt it would be appropriate for that Authority to formally consult on whether to pursue a permanent TRO on Long Causeway (and also the Roych) in respect of all MPVs under Section 22 BB(2)(a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act (1984). The purposes considered relevant under that Act are completely different from the reason underpinning the DCC TRO. Under powers (but not a duty) available to National Park Authorities reasons cited are preserving or improving the amenities of the area, and conserving or enhancing the natural beauty of the area; or of affording better opportunities for the public to enjoy the amenities of the area, or recreation or the study of nature in the area. At a Committee meeting in July the Authority determined that it would indeed proceed to consultation on such a proposal. That consultation is expected to commence in September, and it will be open to individuals to comment upon as well as to statutory consultees.

The BMC responded to the invitation sent to statutory consultees in respect of the Long Causeway, but made no response in respect of the Roych. The BMC noted that whilst many members felt use by MPVs was in conflict with the principle of quiet enjoyment of ‘wilderness’ areas, which should be kept free of all man made intrusions, it was also the case that some of our members were also keen MPV activists and were of a different view. That said, whatever one felt about it, one could not take lightly the fact that what was being proposed was the removal of a legal right under statute law: whether one felt that law to be an ass did not alter the principle that it was the law. The BMC is well aware that its own access agreements rely very largely (and

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entirely if the venue is not on Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) land) on concessionary or de facto access, and one has to be a little bit careful before arguing that someone else's statutory right should be removed on the basis that one did not like them having it. What would our reaction be if MPV users decided they did not like climbers and campaigned for such rights of access as we enjoyed or had negotiated to be rescinded on that basis? We noted that on Long Causeway the state of disrepair of the surface rendered use by legal users who were not MPV users unpleasant or impossible, and that there was severe risk of irreparable damage to an historic structure, namely the revetment, which formed an integral part of the landscape as we knew it. Because of this we felt it imperative to restrict use which might cause further damage at least until the structure could be safeguarded. We believed the structural damage to be caused predominantly by heavy vehicles and proposed, as the least restrictive option (an important principle for climbers where restrictions are being proposed to limit their activity) would be to prohibit use by such vehicles (essentially 4x4s and Quads) but not to extend that prohibition to two wheeled vehicles which caused less threatening damage. For those we recommended a one way system (from Redmires into the Peak) and a 20mph speed limit. The BMC also urged dialogue with representative MPV user groups. In the event the action recommended by the BMC was pretty much what DCC subsequently deemed to be necessary technically and underpinned their TRO, even though our comments had been directed to the Authority's consultation.

Amongst the other respondents to the Authority's initiative, Friends of the Peak and horse riders were supportive of the proposal to consult formally, as was the Sheffield Local Access Forum (LAF), whilst the Peak LAF's response was similar to the position taken by the BMC. Sheffield City Council was not supportive of the Authority's proposal, whilst

Derbyshire Constabulary pointed out that in the event a permanent TRO was imposed they could not guarantee the capacity to enforce compliance. It is a nice question to consider who might enforce compliance if the Police don't and representative user groups feel sufficiently alienated by the process to ignore what they perceive to be an unjustified assault on their enjoyment and legal rights.

With regard to the **PDNPA's asset review** there is little to report. Despite the express wish of the Authority's Committee Members no meeting of the Stanage Forum Steering Group has been convened, and the timetable for the 'Gateway' process is known to have slipped from September to at least January. It does not follow that the BMC has done nothing behind the scenes. Those discussions we have had have been without prejudice and behind closed doors, and are ongoing. It may be possible to give some update at the Area Meeting. We believe PDNPA now wish to retain ownership and management of the North Lees, but we have serious reservations as to whether, with the cut backs they face, they will retain the capacity and calibre of experienced staff to do so, and also attract new investment, as effectively as, say, the National Trust and RSPB have done on Eastern Moors. Rather we understand their approach to be one of 'sweating the assets' to generate income for the Authority. That means making a commercial profit to support the Authority, not North Lees, over and above meeting the ongoing cost of maintaining the Estate with its multiplicity of farming, conservation, wildlife and recreation interests, along with preservation of open access and an important cultural and archaeological heritage – whilst keeping it all in favourable condition. We do not believe out-and-out commercialisation to be a feasible or appropriate option – or does finance come before freedom? Would retention by the Authority showcase its twin statutory purposes and duty, and the very reason for its existence, or revive all the old conflicts whilst attempt was made to milk it as a cash cow to support a bureaucracy?

Please send articles, letters, photos, notices and so forth, to peakarea@gmail.com All topics considered, the only requirement is that it is relevant to the mountaineers, walkers and climbers in the Peak Area. Summit magazine is the place for the national stuff. Any length up to 600 words; if you want to go longer, best to call us first. **We particularly welcome material from clubs.** Deadline for material is two weeks before the meeting.

The second good news story relates to the **Eastern Moors**, where things are going very well and there has been good and thorough consultation with stakeholders over the rainy season that has masqueraded as a summer.



The same has been true of the **Sheffield Moors Partnership**. A broad framework for improving access, particularly through establishment of better links between contiguous landholdings and creation of concessionary bridleways has been agreed in principle, and we are now moving towards implementation. The woodland management scheme which started at the Curbar end of the Edges will extend towards the Froggatt end during the autumn and winter.

So what do access problems have in common with bananas and buses? A tendency to come in bunches. This summer there has been a bunch of issues relating to climbing in **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)**. The three SSSIs in the Peak where there are ongoing problems are at **Roche Abbey, Water cum Jolly and Anston Stones**. None is on CRoW land. In all three venues climbers have been told to scarper by people appearing to have some official authority because the area is a SSSI and climbing is not allowed in SSSIs. In some cases there have been threats of summoning the Police if climbers did not withdraw immediately, and reference to penalties of fines of up to £20,000 under the [Wildlife and Countryside Act \(1981\)](#).

Now if one pauses for reflection it is apparent climbing is not banned by virtue of a site being a SSSI. Horseshoe is a SSSI, so is Stanage, so is Malham and so are countless other venues. Despite the fact that being banned automatically from SSSIs is clearly a bogus assertion there remains a need for climbers to tread carefully and be respectful in any conversations with landowners. It is true that there are potentially severe penalties for committing what is a criminal, and not a civil, offence of causing damage to a SSSI. Removal of vegetation is one example of what might constitute such an offence. Again, if you chance to be placing a bolt or two in a SSSI the formal position is that because that might constitute what is called a consenting issue there has to be permission to do it. That is why the BMC, though it owns much of Horseshoe, has to agree, or get consent for, everything we do at Horseshoe, including bolting it, with Natural England who are responsible for SSSIs. Finally, in each of the three sites that is causing a current problem, there is no formally agreed right of access (except ironically

perhaps to the Cramside Wood part of Water cum Jolly). Access is de facto access only, not even by concession. Whilst low key de facto access is often tolerated, if a venue suddenly becomes popular because of the issue of a guide book or postings on web sites, landowner's hackles can get raised and they may say 'no access for anyone'. If they do there is very little anyone can do about it.

Suffice it to say that for each of these three venues the BMC is working in the first instance through Natural England to try and find a solution, but it takes a little while. Clarity on access is always desirable, but a bit of a fudge can be better than outright refusal of all permitted access to privately owned land.

A few years ago John Malley, who was the National Trust's Manager in the **White Peak**, usually attended our Area Meetings, but over the last five or six years (or is it longer) that close working relationship changed as the Trust appointed one overall General Manager for both the White and Dark Peak Estates. During the summer Dave Bishop and Rob Dyer re-established closer contact with the Trust's Ilam office through Jim Barber, following an approach via the General Manager for the Peak, Jon Stewart, who came to our Area Meeting earlier in the year. Dave and Rob reported on a thoroughly constructive and positive meeting which came as a breath of fresh air in a world that seems sometimes to be beset with problems. It's also good that on top of that, Sophie Milner generally gets to our meetings to represent the Trust.

Besides issues already referred to there are a number of ongoing matters on limestone. The **Staden / Cowdale** Public Inquiry will re-convene in September. The BMC has considered carefully, in the light of the earlier part of the hearing, whether we should make further submission either by a second letter or verbal statement. We have taken advice from both the local community and Friends of the Peak. We have concluded that our original submission said what needed to be said and was as relevant now as it was when it was written. Whilst the future of climbing is of cardinal importance to us, we do not think it will have significant bearing on the outcome of the Inquiry which will hang on



economic arguments, transport and site access, damage to historic structures, general environmental considerations and local amenity (the BMC has argued that the climbing on the site is a part of such an amenity), plus the planning history for the site and the availability of feasible alternatives. It must also be relevant that two different High Peak Borough Council Planning Committees unanimously rejected earlier proposals. No one is drawing any conclusions from the first part of the Inquiry as to what the final outcome might be.

The other side of Buxton gets full exposure in the local press on problems around the highly poisonous blue lagoon which is a very major problem for local residents and the Police. There is no problem with climbing at **Harpur Hill** per se, though it remains the position there is no formal access agreement, and so far as we know the only climbers who have been caught up in the general fracas were some who had stopped climbing and were sitting by the lagoon. Where there is a significant problem is in parking, and yes, there is no disguising the fact this is difficult. A number of climbers' cars have been ticketed because what seemed a sensible place to them to park was not deemed to be legal under road traffic regulations. It's all about white lines.

Elsewhere we are engaged in ongoing discussions regarding possible developments in **Stoney Middleton Dale**, and we will be having another go at resolving the long standing problems at **Willersley** with, we believe, some useful support from Derbyshire County Council.

A short round-up of other items includes our ongoing support for the removal of pylons from **Longdendale**, consideration of the next phase of the **Alport Project** (we would particularly welcome members' views on this), the **Dark Peak Public and Private Lands Nature Improvement Partnership** and latest developments on the long running **Longstone Edge** / fluorspar extraction agenda, and finally proposals regarding a quarry in the woods above Beeley called **Burnt Wood Quarry** – about which we are pretty relaxed.

Rick Gibbon intends to raise some issues local to the north Peak verbally at the meeting, but if you have

any questions of things covered in this report, please do raise them at the meeting.

By way of a post script: a plug for the [Friends of the Peak](#) who do an absolutely huge amount of good in the Peak. If you don't belong to them, why not think about joining? They are having hard times at the moment, staff cuts and all the rest. Dame Fiona Reynolds is fronting a [campaign](#) to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Gerald Haythornthwaite and boost their severely depleted reserves. There is no more worth cause in the Peak. You can always give them a ring on 0114 266 5822.

The BMC's Regional Access Database (RAD) has up to date information on all crags in England and Wales. Otherwise access rep contact details are in the BMC Members Handbook and on the [BMC web site](#). Access reps attend most Area Meetings if there are any points you want to raise with them, or you can phone Henry Folkard on 01298 871 849 or the BMC office on 0161 445 6111 (office@thebmc.co.uk).

Win, Win, Win.

By Dan Firth



Moving house in the summer of 2011 I realised that I hadn't used my climbing gear for more years than I cared to remember. Deciding that I couldn't go on storing it in the loft forever I looked around for somewhere to recycle it. I quickly discovered that there was nowhere in the UK, but that there is some recycling of climbing ropes in France and the USA. [Green Peak Gear](#) – a community interest company – has come about as a result of wanting to fill this gap. After some initial research to confirm that the materials climbing gear is made from can be recycled I approached the BMC with the idea, to ask for their support. Fortunately they too wanted to do something about the issue, and their ongoing support has made a tremendous difference to the project. An important part of the idea behind Green Peak Gear is that any profits that are made will go to the [BMC's Access and Conservation Trust](#) – to give



something back to the outdoor community in exchange for the gear donated. Having gained the BMC's support I looked for volunteers to help start the project. There was great interest and a number of people, from all over the UK, are now helping make the idea a reality. In addition to the project volunteers we have received great encouragement from many organisations and individuals.

The Aims of Green Peak Gear are to:
 Prevent climbing equipment going to land fill at the end of its life.
 Create employment and skills development opportunities.
 Donate profit to the BMC Access and Conservation Trust (the charitable arm of the British Mountaineering Council).
 Find innovative way of re-using rope and other climbing gear.

We kicked off in June 2012, with a pilot to determine if a viable, self supporting, long term operation can be set up. A key element of what we do is collection of retired gear. Jointly with the BMC we approached climbing walls in Northern England, asking them to host a collection bin where people could deposit their gear. The response was overwhelmingly enthusiastic and we now have bins at The Foundry, The Edge and walls in Manchester and Liverpool.

It quickly became apparent that the cash from recycling the gear would not be enough to sustain operation, and early on we decided that making new, saleable, products from the gear, giving it a new life, would be essential. Initially we are focusing on items such as dog leads, hammocks and mats. Other ideas are welcome! We also want to provide gear to community organisations for 'non-safety of life' use, such as knot tying practice or guide-lines on paths.



The Foundry bin

Green Peak Gear's aspiration is that none of the climbing gear we collect goes to landfill. Where possible we remake items into new products or redistribute the gear for alternative uses. Gear that cannot be reused will be recycled. We are setting up arrangements with companies who recycle nylon (rope), general plastics (harnesses and helmets) and metals. At present the recycling value of what we collect barely covers the cost of collection and transfer to the recycler. In other words reuse is (as a rule) better than recycling from both an environmental and a financial point of view.

✓ Ropes | ✓ Harnesses | ✓ Helmets | ✓ Hardware
 X Boots | X Shoes

For old ropes we are currently exploring higher value fibre-to-fibre recycling. New ropes cannot be made from recycled fibres, but the quality of the recycled yarn is high and suitable for many other uses. Sadly, climbing shoes are 'difficult' and are not being collected in our bins. We are working with a specialist rubber consultancy to explore the possibility of reusing the sole rubber but this isn't going to happen in the near future.

The Tough Girl of the Peak...

by Simon Jacques



Curbar Crag has always to me been elusive, within touch but always fierce, uncompromising, and a tease as we traversed under its flanks on the roadways for the newspaper deliveries on a Sunday Morning...

The nippy but springy White Bedford Rascal saw us doing a leap of faith as we jumped out the sliding doors gaining momentum in the air before we hit



tarmac, running as we went with newspaper in tow to deliver the weekend papers to the posh set that dwelt in the villages of Froggatt & Curbar. Every week, the mature ladies of Curbar seemed always to accept their Sunday Paper in a skimpy dressing gown... again like the edge they lived beneath, they were a tease but who was I to argue with?

Gazing up at the amazing soaring crack lines of the **Eliminates** and more importantly the romantic grooves such as **Profit of Doom**, I managed to understand linked nuts to be threaded above one's head, desperate crimps, bridges, jamming the crap out of the cracks and what had become before, there was a history that I dearly would like to tread in said footsteps... It is truly a crag of champions, a lady with balls of steel.

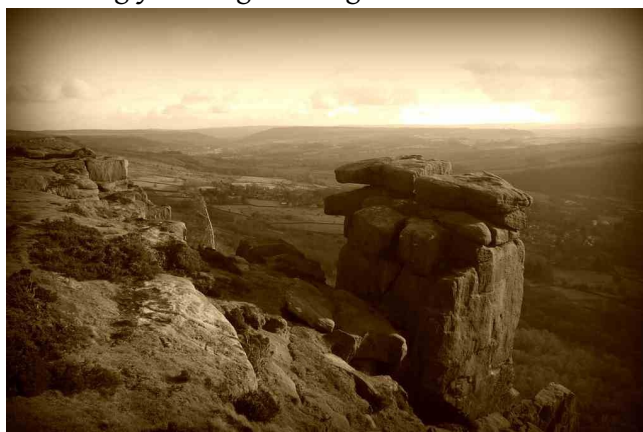


But Curbar scared the hell out of me. **The Peapod** (HVS 5b) was easy until I entered the pod the wrong way, half way up Elvis / Disco leg at the double, I'd messed up on one of the finest HVS's hereabouts and I was majorly sulking... I needed to make my peace with Curbar.

The Brain (VS 4c) was ace – such a delicate and contrasting climb of two halves, until my mates sheepdog decided that after I topped out of the traverse, it would like to shag my leg... Get down Shep was the Mantra.

Then we did the lovely Slab routes near the Froggatt end; more delicate Froggatt than brutal Curbar. But I still needed to connect with the crag, it was too Alien to me. I spent a long hot, and yellow sky summer walking the woods and the edges. We felt the gritstone lines that were asking to be awakened;

something seemed to come of age on the escarpment and activated we all went to work with gusto. The rock began to sing towards its fans & they attended accordingly hearing the song.



With the wire brush the Lichen rained down in the woods, I'm sorry that the steel ever touched grit but I wasn't the first & won't be the last. The boulder problems I had found were not the greatest, but they were mine and Curbar had finally let me have her way with her...I thought I'd finally pulled her... how wrong was I?

I decided not to put them in the new Froggatt guide as they are not of great quality and they are very personal to me as the end of a journey with the Cloggy of the Peak.

Following more searching for bouldering for the new guide, we found a lovely slabby rounded wall behind the End of The Affair on Moon Buttress dubbed "**The Trench**". Could I do any of the problems? Save for one, could I shi**, the old girl Curbar had re-asserted herself... She is indeed one hell of a hardcore crag. Enjoy her challenges and respect the hell out of that edge; she's a proper bitch...

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