

Stop Press
The BMC is calling on climbers, walkers and everyone with a love for Stanage Edge, to sign a petition to help safeguard its future. See thebmc.co.uk/stand-up-for-stanage for details and to sign the petition.

 **STAND
UP FOR STANAGE**



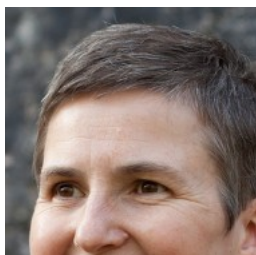
Peak Area Newsletter

Image of Stanage in the Newsletter headers is from a photo by Kerry Cooper

September 2013

The next Peak Area meeting is on Wednesday, 11 September, starting at 1930, at The Globe Inn, 144 High Street West, Glossop, Derbyshire. SK13 8HJ.

The Sec speaks



By Lynn Robinson

The September meeting is our annual trip to The Globe Inn (in the upstairs room), where the beer is cheap and we get to focus on the Moors, amongst other things. It's a full agenda with important issues to debate and as always, everyone is welcome. I'm on holiday, but Martin Wass has kindly offered to take the notes.

So, what's on the agenda?

Quarries - Neil Hewertson - BMC Quarries Development Manager, with what he's been up to and what work is being undertaken.

Limestone Guide - Ian Carr with an update on the BMC limestone guidebook that is in production. He will be showing some sample scripts that are now in book format.

Dry Tooling - the Dry Tooling paper is out. I've already had some comments, but if you have an opinion on any of the question posed, then come along to the meeting and join in the healthy debate. Ice-axes at the ready!

Access - the access team, led by Henry, have some important updates for us.

Looking ahead - The AGM and Annual Quiz! On Wednesday, 20 November, at The Maynard, Grindleford. Get reading those old guidebooks and magazine back issues now! I will soon be asking the amazing supporters of the Peak Area for another year of outstanding generosity by donating prizes for the quiz - you know who you are - expect an e-mail soon!! As ever annual elections are part of the AGM agenda so if anyone is interested in standing for a local area positions (such as Chair or Secretary), or wants to help out more in other ways, please contact Neil or myself for more information.

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 6 November

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Don Whillans Memorial Hut; Can you help?

By Mike Battye



The hut is an iconic and extremely valuable resource for all BMC Members. Last year it was used by more than 600 climbers, from over 30 affiliated clubs and organisations. This level of use requires a lot of effort by volunteers to maintain the accommodation and facilities. We are now working on some major repairs and refurbishments. If you possess the skills, or have the energy and enthusiasm to make up for the lack of them, you can help with: **Painting & decorating, Landscaping, Gardening** (within the constraints of the hut area's SSSI status), **Cleaning** (with bar credit for volunteers at the Olde Rock Inn...), **Interior furnishing, Marketing and promotion** - we particularly need to improve use of the hut on weekdays.

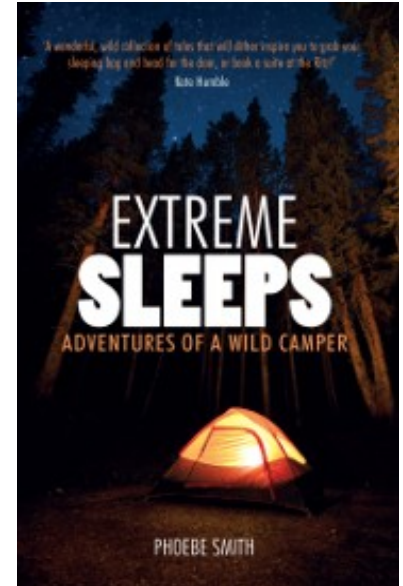
If you can guarantee to visit the hut, say, twice a month, then consider becoming a '**Hut Volunteer**'. This involves checking the hut is clean, tidy and secure; changing key codes as appropriate; restocking consumables and reporting any problems to the hut warden. In exchange you get Free access to the hut on weekdays, priority booking for weekends and 'The T-shirt'.

To volunteer or offer any other help contact the BMC Hut Warden, Mike Battye:
mikebattye@hotmail.com 07711 682400
www.donwhillanshut.co.uk

Extreme Sleeps

– A local
extract...

By Phoebe Smith



.... I took a running jump, raising my arms towards the top as I did. For just one glorious second I felt the grass under my fingertips then it was over, the cold wet patch of mud was right under my belly as I lay tightly against the slope grasping around with my hands for solid ground to cling to. I could feel the water saturating my top and began frantically moving my legs to try to propel my body upwards. Mud pellets were flying all over the place as I struggled on relentlessly – adamant in my refusal to admit defeat – until finally, summoning all the upper body strength I had, yanked myself up to the top.

The rain had stopped but I still felt drops against my right- hand side. I looked down and realised that I had somehow manage to twist the tap on my hydration bladder (that was holding my water in an accessible bag in my backpack), so that the tube for easy drinking was now dripping away all the water I needed, onto my mud-encrusted chest.



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Resembling a Glastonbury attendee circa 1998, I continued on a little longer until I could just about make out a sliver of aluminium in the murk. It looked like part of a wing, or maybe the side of the craft. A few steps on and I found more scattered parts of the wreck – the sliced-up pieces of a tail on one side, the huge chunk of a rusted engine the other, the porthole shapes where the glass used to be, a virtually intact wing. Among all this was a simple memorial stone dedicated to the crew who lost their lives that fateful day over sixty years ago.

I walked towards what would have been a window and touched it lightly with my fingers. It was icy cold and I instinctively pulled my hand away and shook it to warm it up. The fog lingered there, framing the scene like an atmospheric sepia snapshot.

Extract, by kind permission of the author, from *Extreme Sleeps: Adventures of a Wild Camper* (Summersdale, £8.99) by Phoebe Smith.

Access Notes

By Henry Folkard

Dateline: 28 Aug 2013



What is the future for **Stanage**?

A simple question, without any straightforward answer – but the BMC has a view and has not hesitated to express it.

If you are not familiar with all the background, a brief synopsis is that, as part of a review of all its assets, the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) decided to consider whether it needed to retain all its properties itself, or whether a like-minded organisation might be better placed to look after them, so long as it could safeguard the twin statutory purposes of National Parks. Broadly speaking, these relate to conservation and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks.

The Peak is unlike all other National Parks in that it owns four major estates, at Warslow Moor, North Lees, Eastern Moors and Roaches. It also owns a range of other properties like woodlands, car parks, toilets, information centres, camp sites, assorted parcels of land and its head office at Aldern House. Another major property, a celebrated education centre at Losehill Hall was disposed of to the YHA.

You will know that, with the support of the BMC, the RSPB and National Trust formed the Eastern Moors Partnership to manage the Eastern Moors. At the Roaches the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust were awarded a long term lease.

Then a new Committee came along. National Parks are governed by Members drawn from

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 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).

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County, District and Parish Council Councillors, and from Secretary of State appointees. They have no democratic mandate. In the Peak the Audit, Resources and Performance (ARP) Committee is the key Committee for decisions on property. The new ARP Committee wanted to determine whether, if it became more commercially minded in the management of its properties, it could retain them. Thus the Millers Dale Station complex, which it had been announced would go to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT), was now to be retained by PDNPA.

For Stanage North Lees a set of fundamental principles was agreed by PDNPA, after consultation with the Stanage Forum and BMC Peak Area Meeting amongst others, and an invitation for expressions of interest was ready for dispatch when the new ARP Committee changed policy. In a paper for the 23 March 2012 ARP Committee meeting a new approach called Gateway was agreed.

The BMC was horrified by this paper because it had no vision for future management, and said nothing about conservation, recreation, access or enjoyment. It was about what income PDNPA might extract from the estate, for no purpose that was specified, and said nothing about investing in it. On the BMC's reading of the

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.

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paper it was all about how North Lees could be used to support the institution of the Authority through its administrative bureaucracy, and nothing about what the Authority could do to cherish the land, its wildlife, the enjoyment of local community and visitors alike and indeed the local economy. It was all about taking out of the estate, with nothing about what might be put back into it. There was no vision about what future management would best nurture the estate. Nothing was said about the estate's context in the wider landscape, access arrangements, access routes or conservation priorities.

The BMC objected to this approach, and copies of what we said to ARP Committee on 23 March 2012 will be available at the Peak Area meeting. It was written to address a Committee paper which is not attached, so some of the sense may be lost – but hopefully the gist of our message should be apparent.

Since then various deadlines, set by PDNPA itself, have all come and been missed and there has been no hint of vision or investment in the land, nor in the built infrastructure around

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North Lees Hall. The only initiative seems to have been to charge more at the camp site. Whereas there was once excellent communication between PDNPA and partners like the BMC, the Stanage Forum and the Peak LAF, there was now none. It seemed to us that decisions would now be taken internally behind closed doors without prior consultation. All we might hope for was to be told about them after they had been made.

A report to ARP Committee on 20 September will, we are told, present a completed review of financial and management options for the estate which will provide an information platform for Members to start considering different management models for the future prior to the next anticipated Gateway report in early 2014. Based on past experience, it is a reasonable expectation that all financial data will be in a part of the Paper (a Part B Paper) which is not available to the public.

That brings you up to date, at the time of writing this report. There may be new developments between now and our Glossop meeting.

Elsewhere at Stanage North Lees we had four successful ring ouzel nests – that's par for the course – and minimal restrictions. We scaled back on advertising restricted areas too widely since this has tended to act as a magnet for twitchers and wildlife photographers who, though well intentioned, may cause more disturbances to nesting birds than climbers.

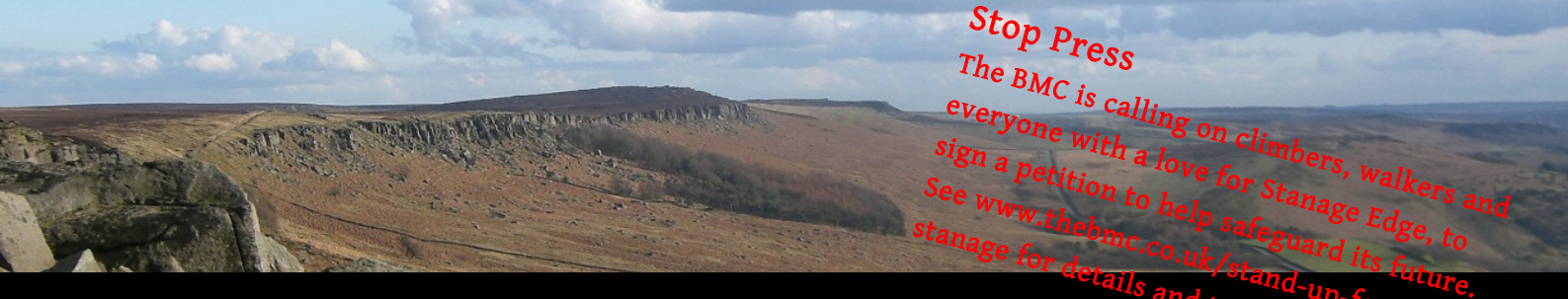
The dense bracken beds under the Popular End were sprayed with herbicide at the end of

August on a dry day, so hopefully you will see some beneficial effect next year. Thanks to the BMC volunteers who came along to marshal. The work was funded as one of the 40 plus Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area (NIA) projects.

Ride the Peak have made their opinion of the inappropriate nature of resurfacing work that has taken place on **Long Causeway** clear to Derbyshire County Council (DCC). The current width restriction is in force until June 2014, and could be renewed after that. The temporary closure on **Chapelgate** is in force until March 2015 whilst on the **Roych** the PDNPA (not DCC in this case) have determined to make a Regulation Order which will be likely to take effect from September 2013.

Work on the removal of the Great Britain Plantation in the **Burbage Valley** – again this is funded by the Dark Peak NIA – should start later this year, but it certainly will not finish then. The majority of the work is now rescheduled for 2014 but it can not be re-scheduled beyond then because funding will be time expired.

On the **Eastern Moors** a new bridleway route has been agreed and signed which will be of particular benefit to mountain bikers and horse riders. It runs from where the Barbrook track meets the Owler Bar / Baslow road towards Barbrook Cottages where it does a right and left to meet the Owler Bar / Fox House road. It will be extended to provide a continuous route across Totley Moor really into Dore and, in the other direction, across the Baslow Road past the old Ramsley Reservoir. Other access improvements on Eastern Moors are in the pipeline.



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The launch of the National Trust's **High Peak Moors Masterplan** will be on 20 September. This is an invitation event, but one of the invitees is the BMC, and the BMC is providing a guest speaker for the event. The Trust got a good lot of response in their consultation from recreation users, and this was important because not every consultee shared the same values. Without anticipating the launch it is fair to say one of the more contentious elements relates to re-establishment of woodlands in some cloughs, which will be good for biodiversity and indeed for landscape without compromising access. Surely a walk up Middle Black Clough where clough woodland remains must be an absolute delight for anyone.

Next, in the Dark Peak, something of a plea for anyone who has views about the progress of the **Alport** Project, and how its next phase should evolve, to have a word with me at the Area Meeting, or just get in touch. A number of different approaches to clearing the dense conifer plantations have been tried. All seem to have had their merits and disadvantages, and how best to take things forward in the light of the experience that has been gained, whilst respecting the parameters of the project, is problematic and perhaps the subject of some difference of opinion between partners.

It seems that the vexed matter of the **A628 Mottram / Tintwistle** bypass scheme may be coming back onto the agenda. No one questions that there is a very severe traffic problem in the area for both local people and through traffic, but whether the best way to resolve it is by creating a trunk route over Woodhead and a dual carriageway into Glossop is a moot point.

Where would all the traffic go then? What would happen next: a dual carriageway over the Snake?

Adam and I attended a conference in Sheffield on re-wilding, particularly in the **Blackamoor / Sheffield Moors** area. The various speakers all gave very good presentations, but it may not be too much of an exaggeration to say that was all they had in common. Well, there was in reality a fair bit of common ground. Economic pressures are bound to have some general effect on farming practice, especially as High Level Stewardship schemes funded by Natural England are due to phase out. If Natural England can not offer incentive payment for delivery of their vision of landscape there is rather less reason for anyone to subscribe to it. Nor can one now ignore the effect of grazing by feral deer – just look at the rowans – which is more likely to increase than decrease. But how best to manage the land, and what to manage it for, are matters on which any views you have would be welcome, and can be fed back to the managing partners.

Finally in the Dark Peak – **fracking**: how could it affect the Peak? The answer is, who knows? The information I have – and if yours is better, please do share it – is that the only area in the Peak which is considered to be prospective – where the lower shale unit is inside the gas maturity window and is likely to be of sufficient thickness (and that is an unknown) – is beneath Bleaklow and Howden Moors, and a small area west of Kinder Scout. More generally the BMC's Landscape Working Group is shortly to re-issue a revised Landscape Charter to which the impact of all forms of energy generation on the landscape will be relevant – and not least the



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associated infrastructure to take the energy from the point of generation to the points of consumption.

So to the White stuff, and I will save the really contentious bit till last. At **Aldery** a number of trees which were destabilising the crag have been removed on the advice of geotechnical people. With them, inevitably, has come some extraneous matter most of which has been bundled below the main gully left of Ash Tree Slab. Some very major blocks have come out of the gully and are resting in the best place for them, flat on the deck. It transpired that these blocks were backed by a natural cavity and their sudden collapse was therefore as inevitable as it was unexpected. An object lesson for us all perhaps when climbing in old quarries. There is still some work to do there, so expect a few more changes, and the erection of some short sections of post and rail fencing designed to make anyone stop and think before getting too close to unstable sections. Thanks to those volunteers who have done the hard work.

People have been climbing at **Staden** without objection but the formal position remains that the landowner has asked climbers to stay away. He did say he would allow their return, so perhaps we can take it that he has. It would be good to ask him and get a positive answer, but the risk in doing that is that he might well say 'that was then and this is now, and the answer is no', which would be worse than the current situation. It is something, as the saying goes, that is being kept under review.

A joint visit was made by the BMC and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to **Masson Lees**. The

quarry, and surrounding meadows and woodland, failed to sell at auction and both parties have had scoping discussions with the land agent and with each other. On balance it seems not terribly likely that any joint ownership proposal will result, but we are at any rate investigating the potential.

Problems on all of the magnesium limestone outcrops **east of Sheffield** seem to be with us perennially and access to them may be raised at the Glossop meeting. Low key activity that goes largely unnoticed seems tolerated, but in general terms problems occur when any site becomes popular. Then climbers get blamed for every perceived nuisance at a venue, whether they are the cause of the problem or not. Mostly climbers actually do more to keep places clean and tidy – from both their own rubbish and everyone else's – than other people who use the sites. However there has been some completely unauthorised gardening at one site, which may have some merit from a purely climbing perspective, but is actually more likely to achieve local antipathy and restrictions on access. Tread softly, quietly and discretely: to be visible can be to be vulnerable.

At **Roche** the position as we understand it is quite clear, that the landowner does not want any climbing on his land: the previous owner was more tolerant. The warden who looks after the English Heritage site also acts for the landowner who requires him to eject climbers.

A suggestion has been made by a New Mills based climber that he agrees a protocol on **bolting with the National Trust** on all their land. Since this is a national issue the BMC feeling is

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that the matter is best handled by the national access officer since he will be aware of what arrangements already apply in different parts of the country. In the Peak Rob Dyer and Dave Bishop have already reached a very reasonable agreement with the National Trust, and we see no reason to repeat the process, nor to re-write our own bolts policy which has been thrashed out at recent successive Peak Area meetings. The climber in question has suggested that members may want to discuss his suggestion at the Glossop meeting, though he can not be there himself. So, if anyone wants to pick up on it, the floor is yours.

Last but not least, the vexatious matter of **Watercum Jolly**. A small group of activists and access people met one evening at the Grouse and agreed an approach to try and resolve both the question of access to Cramside Wood, and more general access issues in the Dale. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT), who come over as being the most aggressively anti access organisation we have liaison with, say they are prevented by a covenant from allowing any access to Cramside Wood for any purpose other than conservation – and this extends to use of the concessionary path along the river bank.

We have yet to see the covenant, or establish what authority it has. Suffice it to say DWT have received a letter from a solicitor acting for the Litton and Cressbrook Fly Fishing Club reminding them of it and insisting it is observed, whilst the BMC solicitor was unable to locate any such agreement when he searched the records at the Land Registry. From our meetings with the DWT Reserve Manager and the fishing club's water bailiff it seems clear to

us that both would prefer there to be no climbing access at all anywhere in WcJ, irrespective of whosoever owns the land. To be fair, the Reserve Manager will say it is wrong to perceive her to be anti access as her policy is to allow access to key areas, whilst we agree to avoid less frequented spots which have been climbed in the past but have held so little interest for climbers in recent times that they have become completely overgrown.

That is broadly the compromise arrangement we have reached in negotiation, and like all compromises it is realistic, pragmatic, deliverable and acknowledges the things that are of greatest value to each party, whilst not being entirely satisfactory for either. Add bolts to the mix, and it all gets twice as difficult.

Timing is important if the action is to stand any chance of success, and equally it is important not to disclose too much beforehand, which would be likely to dilute its impact. It should be possible to give an update at the meeting. And that's quite enough for now. See you in Glossop.

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