



# BMC Cymru

## November 2013

IMPORTANT DATES

## Access and Conservation News

by Elfyn Jones

### Rhoscolyn

Following site meetings with land agents acting for the owners, the current access arrangements will continue. Initially the agents acting for the owners saw climbing as a potential income generator. They also had concerns regarding their possible liability in the event of an incident. However, they were persuaded that licensing or charging for access for climbing or by groups would not be practicable or acceptable and also that their liability towards rock-climbers was negligible.

### Range West Pembroke

The MoD have decided that a maximum of only 30 recreational users (including climbers, surfers and anglers) can access the Range at any one time. This is a huge reduction as previously 30 climbers were allowed in, plus other recreational users. The BMC are challenging the basis for this and requesting that the previous arrangements, which worked well with no issues or incidents, are re-instated.

### Craig Y Forwyn

Some changes to landownership may give opportunities to negotiate access to the right hand side of the crag. However the main central area is still owned by the caravan park

(Mr Webb) and he continues to assert that he will not allow access for climbing. Despite some rumours that access to the left hand side had been restricted that is not the case and Mr Jones still allows access but please follow the instructions to park carefully, and no dogs.



### Craig Ty Newydd

Some on-going issues here and the situation is fragile.....essential that no climbing occurs here from the end of September until February 2nd. It seems that some people have tried to access the site during the "closed season" leading to confrontations with the shooting syndicate who lease the land that the crag lies on. We really could lose access completely here if climbers do not abide by the agreement.

### Next Meeting

The BMC Wales AGM fun day will take place on Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November at the Indy Climbing Wall, Llanfair PG.

Events kick off at 12:00 with a bouldering comp open to all with age categories ranging from kids to vets. Prizes will be donated by Rab and DMM and participation in the bouldering comp gives free entry to a raffle.

The meeting will begin at 6pm, there will be free food, both veggie and non-veggie, Purple Moose beer and plenty of lively discussion.

At 8pm Calum Muskett will be giving a talk titled 'From Ogwen to the Eiger' alongside photos and videos from ascents this year.

### Other Access News:

Enquires on-going with Snowdonia National Park regarding walking access to the south side of Yr Aran, on Snowdon, to establish a way of connecting existing rights of ways to the open access land.

### Wales Access Legislation Review Update

Wales Access Legislation Review update

The Welsh Govt announced in the summer that they intend to produce a Green Paper in late 2013 to consult on a complete review of the legislation affecting access for recreation to the countryside, coast and inland water of Wales.

This is a very radical and exciting proposal which aims to simplify the way access to the countryside (inc. Public Rights of Ways) is managed and to increase the amount of land and water available for informal recreation by the public.

In a scoping document they state:-

"The purpose of the review of legislation in this area is to inform proposals on how a change in the statutory framework could further support the draw down of these benefits. Proposals for reform will be developed with the intention of securing better access to the outdoors for recreation, modernising and simplify the current regulatory framework, and providing clarity and certainty over where people can go and what they can do there. Within the scope of the review will be developing provisions on access to the outdoors, public rights of way, and the provision and administration of green spaces and allotments".

#### Summary

- Responsibility for outdoor recreation and public access comes under the current Minister for Sports & Culture, John Griffiths AM and he has made a firm commitment to improve and increase the amount of land and water available for informal recreation in Wales.
- In order to better understand the views and requirements of the various stakeholders a series of three workshops have been arranged across Wales during the first week of September. BMC will receive invites to these.
- In essence, the scoping paper makes it clear that the Welsh Govt aspires that Wales will have a Scottish Access Charter type approach to access and recreation enshrined in law by the end of 2015....to replace the existing CROW Act access and even more radically to suspend (not remove) the current system of public rights of way.

- This is probably the most important and radical piece of legislation affecting access to the countryside in Wales that has ever been put forward by any government.
- Elfyn Jones (BMC A&C Officer Wales) and Cath Flitcroft (BMC A&C Officer Campaigns) met with the Head of Outdoor Recreation and Access Policy at Welsh Govt at the start of August and were given a very early look and insight to the Welsh Govt's aspirations and were informed that BMC were a key stakeholder in the process.
- We were also told that the need for change and the principles for the proposals have been heavily influenced by the meetings and lobbying that have been carried out by BMC (as well as other groups) with govt officials and ministers over the last three years.
- There are also some concerns.....in order to accommodate a wider access to the countryside the Welsh Government also seeks to simplify the process that enables landowners to close rights of ways, to make it easier to restrict access to previous access land for land management or conservation reasons.

## Other News

### Welsh Climbing update

The late summer and early autumn weather has provided many opportunities for new routes and repeats. Leading the way, as usual, was James Mchaffie with a series of impressive ascents.

First off was 'The Ambassador' on Milestone Butress, one of the finest hard trad climbs in North Wales. The route went at a sustained and safe E8 6c led with all the gear in place after a previous attempt.

Next on the list was the long awaited first ascent of 'Tick's Groove', a well know project in the Dinorwic quarries which was climbed on-sight at E6 6b with Alex Mason and Mark Reeves.

Finally at Gogarth, James nipped in for the first ascent of a thin wall and seam on the promontory beneath the Red Walls. Named 'Satan's Scream' and graded E8 6c, this route certainly packs some climbing in to its modest size.



*Mchaffie on the FA of Satan's Scream*

Over on North Wales Limestone Ben Bransby continued development of the Diamond and climbed the impressive project to the right of 'The Beast' at 8b+ and named it 'The Beauty'. Tommy Chamings climbed an equally worthwhile line at the opposite end of the crag called 'Jungle Warfare' and graded it 7c.

Chris Doyle, Tony Schelmerdine and Ally Smith have extended and re-equipped extensions to the Mayfair Wall routes to give another reason to return to this fine crag. Grades vary from 6c+ to Doyle's most difficult extension at 8a.

Over in the Devil's Gorge, Owen Davies made the first ascent of the superb 'Hades' to surely produce what will become a very popular 8a.

On the slate the effervescent Mark Dicken finally succeeded in climbing his narrow groove project at an estimated grade of 7b+. Named 'The Beast in Me' the route surely deserves some attention from the chimney and off-width connoisseurs.

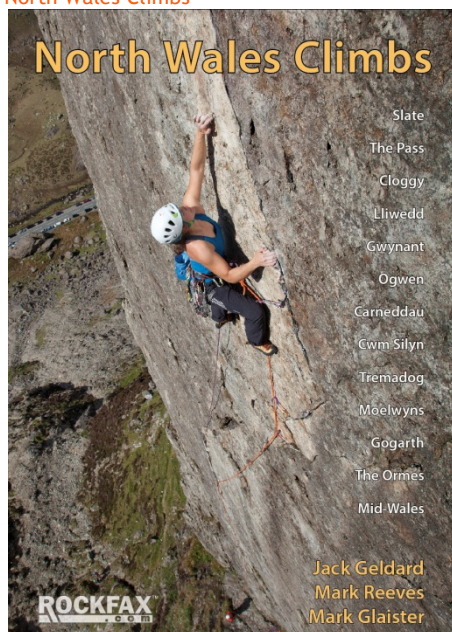
At Gogarth George Smith, Tony Loxton, Martin Crook and John Redhead have continued the development of the Range with a slew of new routes up to E5.

On the repeats front Emma Twyford made a great effort in repeating the bold and enticing arête of 'Rare Lichen' on Clogwyn y Tarw. In so doing she has joined a small, elite group of women to have climbed E9 6c and surely has the potential for much, much more!

*Calum Muskett*



## Guidebooks North Wales Climbs



Rockfax have just published a new select guide to North Wales.

The book covers all the major mountain crags from the Llanberis Pass, to Cloggy; and from Ogwen to the Carneddau. It also includes the Llanberis Slate quarries, Tremadog, the Moelwyns, the Gwynant Valley, Mid-Wales, Gogarth and the Ormes of Llandudno.

£1 will be donated from each of the first 1500 guidebooks sold to the North Wales bolt fund

### North Wales Bolt Fund

Received a generous donation of equipment from the BMC Better Bolts Campaign including glue in bolts, stainless steel maillons and a few belay rings. We also received 450 bolt hangers but are still waiting for the 12mm bolts.

Glyn Hudson has been beaver away and replacing gear in the Slate Quarries including Colditz and a new belay on To Bolt or Not to Be in Vivian.

He also has done some work on Spong but reports that some previous bolts have been badly placed and hangers spin. The heads had been badly hammered and it was not possible to remove them. Anyone available to take up the battery grinder or a new hacksaw blade would be really appreciated?

Big thanks from the NWBF for your support - all donations contribute to the massive effort local volunteers, activists and new routers put in to establishing sustainable fixed protection, lower-offs, belays and other access requirements. The materials and

equipment costs are high but if it's worth doing, let's do it right.

Spread the word - and rid the world of bad bolts!

[northwalesboltfund@googlemail.com](mailto:northwalesboltfund@googlemail.com)

*Chris Parkin*

### Climbing Walls

The Indy climbing wall over in Llanfair PG, Anglesey has seen a major re-furbishment now offering greater bouldering and lead climbing opportunities.



The Beacon Climbing centre in Caernarfon has finished work on the new routing roof offering a superb and intimidating training facility. Just looking at it makes your arms ache!

A new climbing wall has been built in Haverfordwest Leisure Centre. This is scheduled to open for some sort of public use in the next couple of weeks but access arrangements and opening times etc. are yet to be decided. The wall is very limited and likely to be of interest to schools and centres mainly, although there are 6 bolted lead climbing lines. If funding allows, the wall might be extended in the future to add more interest for climbers.

### Local Area Events

**The Annual Open Bouldering Competition** will take place at Prestatyn Climbing Wall on Sunday 15th December, great prizes as always. Routes to be set by Jon Ratcliffe, Andy Boorman, Danny Garnett and Richi Jones.

**A BMC Winter Lecture** at Bangor University by Neil Johnson and James Thacker on the 26/11/2013 at 19:30 with free prize draw and bringing you up to speed on winter skills

### The Winter Climbing Information Service

Cwm Idwal is one of the most popular locations in North Wales for winter climbing. It is also the home of many of Wales's rarest arctic alpine plants, which are protected by European legislation. A lot of the winter routes in the Cwm are located on the same north facing nutrient rich cliffs that are home to these plants. Although it is a general

accepted principal that winter climbing doesn't impact on these colonies if the ground is well frozen, there is a concern that climbing in partially frozen conditions could cause serious damage. A "North Wales White Guide" was produced a couple of years ago to raise awareness about these issues and give climbers information about where the most sensitive areas are.

The intention is now to pilot a Winter Climbing Information Service for Cwm Idwal, funded by Natural Resources Wales and the BMC's Access and Conservation Trust. A remote sensing unit will be placed somewhere in the back of the Cwm, at around 600m, that will take hourly automated ground (turf) and air temperature readings. The data will be sent out remotely to a web server and will be available as a mobile enabled webpage, linked to the BMC's RAD service. The idea is to chart the temperature change in the air and turf so that climbers can keep tabs on what it's doing right up until they get to the Cwm. This would potentially alert people to things like fast thawing events, saving fuel and foliage alike. The web service will also have links to other conditions reports for the area and possibly have a place for photographs to be uploaded.



This will hopefully be a useful tool for climbers, giving good quality information day or night. However, it will be important to remember that the readings will only be taken from one location and, although they could give a good indication, will not represent conditions around the whole of the Cwm or the rest of North Wales. Climbers will need to use their judgment on how to interpret the data, keeping in mind the basic

principles of safe and sustainable winter climbing.

*Joe Roberts NRW*

#### Rock Fall in Vivian Quarry

In mid October the Bobby's Groove area of Vivian Quarry was affected by rock fall. Damage to climbing was minimal but 'The Golden Shower' now appears to be lying in chunks of slate on the floor and the top section of 'The Weetabix Connection' has met a similar fate!

#### Mountain Training Wales Report

Lots of exciting developments were agreed at the Mountain Training UK Board meeting held at Plas y Brenin on Saturday 12th October. The Walking Awards review and the Hill and Mountain Skills developments were top of the agenda and here is a summary of some of the decisions:

The Lowland Leader scheme has been approved and will be launched on 30th March 2014. The information needed by the public, new candidates and potential providers will soon be available.

The Walking Group Leader Award will get a name change to Hill and Moorland Leader - a better representation of the terrain used within the award. The overnight camping element will be removed from the syllabus and made available as an optional Expedition Skills module which can be used by existing award holders and Lowland Leaders to extend the remit of the award to remote camping in appropriate terrain. These changes will all be in place by 30th March 2014.



The Hill & Mountain Skills scheme will also be launched soon. Hill Skills courses will provide an introduction to hill walking - participants will require no previous experience. Mountain Skills courses will offer progression - participants will be advised to have some hill walking experience. The minimum age for participation will be 14 years.

*Andy Boorman*

#### The Mountain Training Coaching Award Scheme

The Coaching Award Scheme is designed to develop the coaching skills of those working in indoor climbing walls, sport climbing and bouldering, but the scheme should also be of great interest and value for volunteer and professional leaders, Instructors and Guides who want to apply their greater coaching knowledge wherever they work.

There are three award levels: Foundation, Development and Performance Coach. The Foundation Coach and Development Coach were successfully launched on 1st October and well over 100 candidates have already registered; development work is now underway for a Performance Coach. Thanks are due to Martin Chester (on loan from PyB) and the supporting staff and volunteers for delivering the scheme on time for the agreed launch date.

*Andy Boorman*

#### 50 Years of Mountain Training

Mountain Training will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary next year and aim to celebrate in style throughout the year, with one of the earliest events being the Outdoor Show on 13th February 2014.

Check out [www.mountain-training.org](http://www.mountain-training.org) for full details of all this news.

*Andy Boorman*

#### Pembroke News North Pembroke News

The National Trust have 'removed' a large amount of loose rock at Porthclais between 'Red Wall' and 'Dreamboat Annie' resulting in a big pile of choss that will hopefully be dissipated by forthcoming winter storms. In

the meantime, routes from 'Sea Fever' to 'Porthclais Corner' should be avoided. A Peregrine has moved back to the nest site on Mur Cenhinen in 2013 - this may affect access to routes on the right side of the main face and the seaward face during spring 2014.

*Steve Quinton*

#### South Pembroke Access

The Castlemartin Ranges are going to be very busy for the foreseeable future but the Army are planning to keep the 4 week firing break for August as well as a 2 week shut down at Christmas (from 14th Dec 2013) when there will be access to Range East and Range West for briefed climbers. For updates on range firing activities visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/s/castlemartin-firing-notice--2>



or for latest changes use the recorded message on 01646 662367 which is updated daily. The next cliff climbing liaison meeting is due in mid-November or early December. Any changes to restrictions or access arrangements will be determined then.

*Steve Quinton*

#### Welsh Climbing Championships

The Welsh Climbing Championships were held for the first time in North Wales this year at the Beacon Climbing Centre. There was a great turn out with climbers travelling to the competition from all over Britain. The open comp was won by James Mchaffie and Charlotte Gardener.