



BMC Cymru

March 2014

IMPORTANT DATES

Access and Conservation News

by Elfyn Jones

Angel Bay

The landowners (Mostyn Estates) have approached the BMC requesting that climbers (boulderers) take note that breeding seals occasionally use Angel Bay. If seals are present, ensure that no dogs are taken to the beach, that you do not get between seals and their pups and ideally keep 100m away from the seals. Seal pupping time is normally late August through until October while seals will also "haul-out" for molting in January and February time.

Great Orme

Following the release of the "Fresh Meat" video on Vimeo, documenting some of the new developments on North Wales limestone, conservation organisations raised some serious concerns regarding the cleaning and preparation of new routes on the Ormes. All of the crags on the Ormes have the highest level of legal protection in terms of conservation as well as the issues surrounding liability and public safety for the routes above the Marine Drive.

Some of the most protected and rarest plants found on limestone in the UK grow on these cliffs and these sites are actively

monitored and surveyed annually by conservation bodies.

While most climbing activities on the Ormes are welcomed by the land managers and conservation organisations, there are some locations and crags that are deemed not appropriate for climbing due to the risk that climbers could damage the protected flora on those sites.

One such area is the line of cliffs both above and below the Marine Drive above West Shore. Some nationally rare and scarce plants are located on these cliffs and both National Resources Wales (NRW) and Conwy Council have requested that climbers do not climb on these cliffs, which include the recently developed Craig Heulog which is now banned.

Staff from NRW and Conwy Council are hoping to come to the next BMC meeting to discuss the issues and explain why the area is so important and the legal consequences of damage to the features of the site.

The next BMC North Wales area meeting will take place at the Vaynol in Nant Peris on the 25th of March. Food at 7pm and meeting at 8pm.

The next South Wales area meeting will take place on Wednesday the 26th of March at 19:30 in the Vardre Rugby Club, 3 High Street, Clydach, Swansea, SA6 5LF. There will be free food and a talk by Dave Turnbull on his Patagonian adventures.



Other Access and Conservation News:

Snowdonia Hydro Schemes

There are currently a large number of these schemes which have either been granted planning permission or are going through the planning process at this time within Snowdonia National Park. There are at least four in the Llanberis Pass, a couple in the Ogwen Valley, a proposal for one in the Anafon Valley in the northern Carneddau and numerous others in the Dolgellau and Dinas Mawddwy areas. In the main they are small scale schemes (with weirs no greater than 8 m wide by 1.8 m high at maximum height).

The BMC cannot realistically respond to all of these schemes – and any representation or objections have to be based on proven planning and material considerations to have any influence. To date the BMC has formally responded (contrary to comments on some websites) to a number of these developments and had in-depth discussions with the National Park planning officers and other organisations on the possible impact of these developments.

We have to be pragmatic that as an organisation the BMC is only one voice and its influence is limited and to face the reality that current government policy at both UK and Welsh level is to encourage such developments and that even within a National Park, the planners have to follow national guidance and allow these developments to happen. As an organisation the BMC has managed to positively influence the design and landscaping of some of these developments but that outright objections based solely on subjective opinion will not carry any weight if members wish to object to such developments.



Working on the new hydro scheme at Hafod y Llan

To assist and guide BMC members on how the BMC can support campaigns and objections to any development that members feel has a negative impact on cherished landscapes, the BMC created a working group of members, specialist volunteers and landscape experts to produce the BMC Landscape Charter which should be first port of call for advice on such issues.

Welsh Access Update

The Welsh Government announced in 2013 that they wanted to review all legislation affecting countryside access in Wales, with a view to improving and increasing access for recreation to the Welsh coast, countryside and inland water. The BMC fully supported this move and have been eagerly awaiting the publication of the government's "Green Paper" which would outline the government's proposals regarding new laws in this area. In late Feb the BMC met with the Welsh Minister for Culture and Sports at South Stack to look at the issues and discuss the proposed changes. The BMC also launched its "Open Wales" campaign and to date has had nearly 25,000 visits, nearly 5000 "likes" and over 200 comments on the BMC websites as well as hundreds of shares and likes on Facebook and Twitter. The latest news is not entirely positive as there has been considerable opposition to some of the proposals, especially from anglers and land owners regarding the issue of access to inland waters and rivers. The BMC, while recognising the lack of secure access to water is a massive issue for colleagues in the kayaking world and as also is the limited legal access for mountain bikers to open country, has concentrated its efforts on securing access to inland outcrops and sea-cliffs. The Sports Minister has considerable understanding and support for the BMC's "asks" and it's likely that the next step will be a BMC organised event at the Welsh Assembly to celebrate and lobby other politicians of the value and need for better access to the Welsh coast and countryside.

Tremfest

This will be on the weekend of May 17/18th and will again be ably (heroically?) organised by Jim and Julia Kelly. Thanks again go to the host, Eric Jones who as always gives the BMC and climbers a great welcome and tremendous support at Tremadog. Lots of things going on and this is your opportunity to actually put something back to climbing in a positive way and help look after one of the UK's most important trad climbing crags, which owned by the BMC on behalf of all climbers.

Other News

Welsh Climbing update

This winter has been marred by awful weather and little in the way of consistent cold spells in Wales. As a result it may come as no surprise that virtually no winter climbing has been done in Snowdonia this season and little in the way of rock climbing either.

As the optimists always say though, there is always dry rock in Wales for those who look for it as Pete Robins and Benno Wagner have proven.

Firstly Pete Robins has laid siege to many well known projects over on the Llŷn Peninsula succeeding in making the first ascent of the incredible arête "The Big Orange" at a highball 8A. Following the first ascent of this impressive line Pete then attempted the oft tried highball wall below Rhiw. This excellent and thin addition goes at 7C+/8A and has been called "Bytith Wall". Apparently a new area has also been developed along the coast from Porth Ysgo but details are currently being kept quiet whilst the remaining lines are being mopped up...

Pete then turned his attention to the Little Orme where he made the first ascent of a great new sport route on the little ventured Allotment called "The Runner Bean" 8a+ which lies next to Chris Doyle's new addition "Sweetcorn Man", a 7b+. Pete also climbed direct through the main roof at Upper Craig y Don to produce a 'funky' new 8b which remains as yet unnamed.



Benno Wagner topping out on Melody E8 6b

It's not only been sport climbing and bouldering though. German powerhouse Benno Wagner has taken temporary residence in Wales and has been dispatching testpieces left, right and centre. Clearly not daunted by a run out he made a very swift head-point of Stevie Haston's horrorshow "Melody" E8 6b at Craig Dorys on an extremely windy day. Watch this space...

Calum Muskett

North Wales Bolt Fund Upper Pen Trwyn - Appeal for Inspectors

The NWBF benefits from money from the BMC by carrying out the inspections of the Upper Pen Trwyn belays - this work is crucial to maintaining access to climbers on these very significant and popular crags. Over the last 6 years BMC money this has paid for several quality battery drills including 2 Dewalt 36volt machines each costing over £500, but worth it as they can drill 30 - 40

holes per charge. It has also allowed the fund to bulk buy bolts, resin and other essentials enabling new routers to have access to cheap bolts and gear.

We need to keep a rolling program in force completing a third of the 200 belays each year - inspections are simple and require very little time but they do need specialist equipment and some basic training on the procedure and the reporting requirements. We need to get more volunteers trained up and willing to help - we can't rely on the old dogs doing it for ever and we don't want to lose the income stream.

North Wales Climbing is in **desperate** need of new blood to help out with these inspections.

Can anyone willing please contact Chris Parkin - chrisparkinguide@goolemail.com

With the spring approaching the weather should soon allow volunteers to assist in the inspections.

Free Bolts

The BMC better bolts campaign has delivered a massive pile of 12mm expansion bolts and metal hangers.

These are available to anyone who is re-equipping old routes either on the Coastal Limestone or in the slate Quarries. There are also some stainless maillons and a few stainless lower-off rings in this haul so time to get both routes and belays sorted...

'BMC authorised' crags:

Llanberis Slate: Twll Mawr/Quarryman Wall, Gideon & Film Set



Great Orme: The Cutaway, Mayfair walls, Castell y Gwynt, Dutchmans Zawn, Hamburger Buttress, Craig Arwahan, Upper Empire, Point 5, Seal Point, St. Tudnos & Craig Pen Gogarth

Little Orme: Great Zawn, The Allotment, The Meadows & Hole of Creation

Other coastal crags:

Penmaenbach Quarry
Llanfairfechan – Big Quarry
Creigiau Heulog – Bunker Crag
Pantymynwn – Devils Gorge

MORE BOLTS & STUFF

The NWBF has a supply of bolts available at cost to new routers together with the resin and other stuff needed for both glue-ins and expansion bolts.

DONATIONS

Donations have been thin on the ground lately, a few individual donations, Over £500 from the Beacon and Indy winter bouldering aggregates and £520 from RocFax from sales of the New North Wales Selected Climbs.

Big thanks from the NWBF for your support - all donations contribute to the massive effort local volunteer activists and new routes 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.

Sustainable Bolting - Safer Clipping for now, tomorrow and the future generations
northwalesboltfund@goolemail.com

Chris Parkin

Local Area Events: Indy Climbing Wall

Back due to popular demand is the Annual Indy Bouldering Comp and Party on Saturday 29th of March.

The comp has a fully inclusive format with funky problems for kids, novices, wannabes, once a weeklies, obsessive's, oldies and wads alike with cool prizes to be won. The problems will be set throughout the wall, and you have as long as you want to climb as many of them as you can. All abilities and ages welcome!

Entry is £5 (includes entry to the raffle) and the wall will be open for the comp only from 10am till 6pm.

The Indy Party will be that evening at Hendre Hall with a line up of DJs guaranteed to get you busting some moves till 2am+. The party is FREE to all registered users of Indy Climbing Wall and comp entries.

(Registration at Indy is free to all, just pop in, entry to the wall is still just a fiver!)



Steve McClure Lecture

Steve McClure will be delivering a talk at the Beacon Climbing Centre on Friday the 4th of April at 8.30pm. Proceeds will be going to the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team.

The Winter Climbing Information Service

The winter climbing information service which sends out live feed on temperatures above and below the ground is now live! This should be a useful tool for winter and summer climbers alike who are travelling to the area from further afield. It is hoped that from this climbers will be able to gauge when the turf is fully frozen and when the crimps are at just the right temperature for perfect friction!



Emma Twyford battling to stay in contact with the rock on the Ogwen Crack, E8 7a, which is at the same altitude as the new temperature equipment