



# BMC Cymru

## June 2014

NEWS

IMPORTANT DATES

## Access and Conservation News

by Elfyn Jones

### Lower St Tudnos Buttress

A new seasonal climbing restriction has been put in place here for 2014 due to nesting Choughs. The restriction only applies to the Lower Tier (Upper Tier unaffected) and will be in place until June 30th.

### Castell y Gwynt

Although the Peregrine does not appear to be nesting here in 2014, the crag is still restricted as there are Choughs nesting directly above the descent gully which may be disturbed by climbers using this gully. This restriction will also be lifted by June 30th.

### Craig y Forwen

There's been some confusion here recently due to part of the crag being sold. The current situation is as follows. The entire crag is within an SSSI and vegetation removal of any kind (including ivy and invasive cotoneaster) is a criminal offence without formal consent from National Resources Wales.

**Left hand side** – permission to climb granted from both the landowner and to remove ivy and cotoneaster from National Resources Wales for a period of 5 years from 2013. Access & parking only from above.

### Central left hand (i.e. Great Wall area) –

land owner (caravan park owner) does not permit access at all. No consent given for climbing or vegetation clearance of any sort by NRW. Climbers have had formal visits from police following allegations of vegetation clearance here.

### Central Right Hand (i.e. Burgess Wall and Sangfroid area) –

part of Tyddyn Du farm and believed recently sold following the death of the previous tenant (still trying to find contact details of new owners and to see if the sale went ahead). The new owners have not explicitly given permission for climbing to happen but also have not made any efforts to prevent climbing on this section. There is no permission to remove or cut any vegetation here.

### Two-Tier Buttress –

owned by the recycling company based in Llanddulas Quarry. Following site meetings last year the company did not object to climbing here and NRW were willing to consent climbing on the Lower Tier subject to lower-offs being installed to protect ledge vegetation. However, consent can only be granted to the land occupier and to date the company have not formally applied for that permission to be given.

### Next Area Meetings

The BMC North Wales meeting will take place on Tuesday the 10th of June, 8.00pm at The Lilly, West Shore, Llandudno

There will be free food, both veggie and non-veggie and plenty of lively discussion. All are welcome.



*A climber making the most of the May bank holiday at Gogarth*

### Castle Inn Quarry

Several climbers reports that building material had been illegally dumped at the base of the right hand side of the crag. This was passed on to the warden who has since arranged for it to be removed by the Council. Unfortunately it has not been possible to get sufficient evidence to identify the culprits. Climbers are asked to immediately report any fly-tipping (and ideally registration numbers or description of the culprits) to the warden.

### CROW Act and Open Access Land Review Update

In 2013 the open access maps for Wales had to be updated and reviewed. The BMC applied for several areas to be included that were felt to fit the criteria for land to be defined as "open access". The final confirmed maps will be produced in November 2014 and the planning inspectorate is currently holding inquiries into several appeals by land owners against their land being included as open access. However it seems that most areas that BMC put forward will be included as open access land and have either not been appealed against by the land owner or the planning inspectorate agree that the land should be open access.

This means that the following areas are now classed as open access and include the land above the crags at Little Orme, the RAC boulders, land below Craig y Bera in the Nantlle Valley, land around Carreg yr Ogof (Trawsfynydd), land in the southern Rhinogau, top of Rhoscolyn cliffs and a few other bouldering venues as well.

### Welsh Access Review Update in Brief

The long awaited "Green Paper" outlining the Welsh Government's plans for new laws to improve and increase land and water available for access has still not appeared. There has been considerable (and not unexpected) opposition from land owners and fishermen to the suggestion for a universal right of access to inland water. The Minister for Sports issued an announcement in mid-May stating that there would still be a review of access legislation but that it would look to improve and simplify the existing legislation for access to land only. The announcement also stated that there would not be any new legislation during this term of government. BMC has provided an update on its website including what the BMC would want out of any new legislation on behalf of its members. BMC is now working at a strategic level with other recreational bodies to ensure that this vitally important opportunity is not forgotten about by government and to put pressure on the

Government to continue with its original plans to introduce new legislation.

## Other News

### Gower Climbing Festival

Date: September 13th – 14th

The Gower boasts some fantastic scenery in a compact area with such a variety of rock terrain among them. From the slabby trad routes of Three Cliffs bay to the steep and strenuously bolted Foxhole Cove there really is something for everyone. If you fancy a change of scenery this summer then the Gower will not disappoint!



Arch Slab, VS 4c at Three Cliffs Bay, Gower

The annual Gower Climbing Festival has been confirmed for the dates of Saturday the 13th of September until Sunday the 14th. The event will be taking place at Pitton Cross campsite (as per previous years) and camping will cost £7 per person per night. Bacon butties will be provided in the morning in exchange for a small contribution to the local bolt fund / RNLI, and local expertise and advice will also be available for those new to the area.

More information is available on the Gower Climbing Festival website: (<http://www.gowerclimbingfestival.co.uk/gcf/>) and also on the BMC's events page.

Matt Everett

### Pembrokeshire News

Massive increase in numbers at the Range West briefings – approx. 200 climbers have already been briefed and there is still one briefing to go (26th July 2014. 09.00 at Castlemartin Camp). There have been a few adjustments to seasonal climbing restrictions as the birds have arrived (or not). In Range West, the Plover has failed to show up meaning that the Gupton Gate access is now open and we can climb on Western Walls without a huge walk in (except for the restricted section: 'False Start' to 'Jolly Swagman' and 'Rollercoaster' inclusive. Arch Zawn has a restriction which covers just the

Arch itself as birds are nesting under it ('Anaemia' – 'Archeology').

In Range East, there are a lot of Herring Gulls nesting on the ledges below 'B-Team Buttress' so routes above and below this ledge are effectively un-climbable. Climbers are requested to avoid this section until the chicks have fledged (probably mid July).



Dan Mcmanus climbing the brilliant Pembroke testpiece 'Why Should I?' E6 6b

At Mowing Word, there is a new nest site just left of the belay where 'New Morning' and 'Heart of Darkness' meet. For this reason there is a new restriction covering the routes; 'Right Wall' to 'New Morning'/'Razorbill' (inclusive) and including 'Heart of Darkness' past where 'The Flax of Dream' crosses it.

Apart from that, everything else is pretty much as normal. The weather is not too bad and there's been lots of activity including quite a few new routes being found.

Steve Quinton

### Queen's Commonwealth Baton Relay

The Queen's Commonwealth Baton relay has been in Wales for the past week and on Thursday it visited Snowdonia. An early start saw the baton bearers from Eryri Harriers running club take the baton to the Summit of Snowdon where they were joined by Paralympic Gold medal winner Aled Davies. Unfortunately the weather didn't mirror the perfect conditions Sir Chris Bonnington had when he carried the Olympic torch to the summit in 2012 but it was good to see an active local club with so much history in the area take an active role in the proceedings.



*Eryri Harriers runners carrying the baton up Snowdon*

The torch was then to take a whistle-stop tour of the area which saw Sir David Brailsford cycle the Baton alongside Llyn Padarn next to Llanberis where the rowing event in the 1958 Commonwealth Games took place. BBC one Show presenter Alex Jones carried the Baton along the Menai Straits handing the baton to the Commonwealth hopeful sailor Mari Davies.

I had the privilege of carrying the baton into the Beacon Climbing Centre outside Caernarfon where I was joined by the North Wales Youth Climbing Academy and the Welsh Sports Minister. We got the Commonwealth mascot Clyde the Thistle attached to the climbing wall. With paddles for hands and flippers for feet he wasn't ideally prepared for climbing but was a great hit with the kids - behind his cartoonish smile it was difficult to see how much he was enjoying hanging off the wall, fortunately he didn't have a spiky personality!



*Handing the Queen's Commonwealth baton across to Clyde the mascot*

The day finished with a live broadcast of the BBC One Show from the docks in Caernarfon where the baton was carried along a 5km race to Welsh hammer thrower Osian who delivered the baton live onto set. With one more day left in Wales the baton will continue its journey towards Glasgow for the start of the games on the 23rd of July.

*Calum Muskett*

#### **North Wales Bolt Fund**

Thanks to those that have donated via PayPal and a big thank you to RockFax who

to date have donated £750 from the sales of their new North Wales Climbs.

#### **Slate**

There have been issues with high usage of some belays /lower-offs in the Slate Quarries and the excessive weighting and un-weighting has resulted in the stainless steel expansion bolts wearing the soft slate. This has allowed bolts to turn in the hole and feel loose.

It must be stressed that these have been on the very popular French 4's, 5's and low 6's that attract groups, and many visitors. Mark Reeves witnessed 30 lead and top rope ascents of just one route in less than 3 hours! This must equate to 300 to 500 ascents in a good week.... Compared to most slate routes these belays are subject to 1000's times the use of most others.

No bolts have failed and none are likely to, but it is generally recommended that belay bolts on popular routes should be resin. If you find a new 20m 5+ route with easy access and solid rock then make sure you put resin bolts in belays. If it's a new 8b+ then the problem is unlikely to occur for the next 100 years so good expansions would not be an issue.

Check all bolts that you clip - use your sense, unless you are clipping bolts in an overhanging wall then they would stay in, even if placed with a gentle tap in to the hole. Loose Hanger - if the hanger moves and not the bolt it should be possible to re-tighten with a spanner - 17mm for 10mm expansion bolts and 19mm on 12mm - or a good adjustable.

**Loose Bolts** - if the threaded stud (i.e the bolt) moves - then report it! E-mail to: [northwalesboltfund@googlemail.com](mailto:northwalesboltfund@googlemail.com), [elfyn@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:elfyn@thebmc.co.uk)

All climbers should be grateful for the efforts of Mark Reeves who was trained up to use the Hydraulic pull-tester and spent days and days investigating and repairing many of the popular belays. He also managed a workshop for a few local instructors who turned up to learn how to replace belays.

#### **Limestone**

The Ormes are back in fashion and the pressure to help complete the Upper Pen Trwyn Inspections is on - without the completion of these the climbing on the whole of the Ormes could be jeopardized. Chris Parkin and Andy Boorman ran a workshop to train up eight local climbers and Mark Reeves has provided an online recording system so Andy and Chris can keep track of the inspections and report to the BMC.

The NWBF gets funding from BMC for this work so it is doubly important for access to the Ormes and cash to buys bolts and equipment.

#### **NWBF paypal:**

<http://northwalesboltfund.webs.com>

*Chris Parkin*

#### **Cae Ysgubor**



Lancashire mountaineering club are opening a new hut later this year just outside Beddgelert. The hut will be available to hire on the BMC list and is expected to be used by local youth/walking/disabled/etc groups for day or residential use. There will also be mountaineering and climbing courses based from the hut.

*Richard Toon*

#### **Welsh Climbing Update**

The past few months have been seen a number of new routes being climbed across North Wales, mostly at amenable grades. I accompanied Tim Neill on Gogarth's Main Cliff where Tim deviously followed a line of good holds and ledges that cross Main Cliff classics such as Hunger and Citadel before finishing up the final section of Dinosaur. At E1 the route is destined to become a popular excursion and has already seen repeat ascents.



*Tim Neill lapping up the exposure on the first ascent of 'Main Wall' at Gogarth*

Ian and Celt Lloyd-Jones have made the first ascent of perhaps the longest sport route in the UK by climbing 'The Desolation of Smaug' in Twll Mawr. Weighing in at 6c this route follows an interesting series of slabs and grooves up out of Twll Mawr.

Elsewhere there has been a small revival in new routing on the slate but mainly over in the Clegir quarries. Pete Robins polished off an old Noel Craine project by making the first ascent of 'Admire or Ignore' whilst Martin Crook has added a number of more amenable sport routes.

Over on Scimitar Ridge Nick Bullock found space to the left of 'Agamemnon' to create 'North by Northwest' at E6 6c. Pete Harrison has added a new E7 named 'Triskelion' in a small granite quarry above Llanfairfechan.

James Mchaffie and I swung efforts on a testing overhang beneath 'Samurai Groove' at Carreg Hyllidrem. Attempting the line ground-up we used completely different sequences. Matching the lip of the roof before plummeting earthwards I snatched defeat from the jaws of victory and Caff succeeded on his next effort. We're slightly unsure whether the pitch had been climbed before or not but are happy to claim a very good pitch of E6 6c.

Pat Littlejohn handed over a fine first free ascent to me over in Gwilwyr quarry on the Llŷn Peninsula. 'Overlode' is a well protected and bouldery E6 6c climbed on my second go ground-up.



*Calum Muskett making the first ascent of 'Overlode' E6 6c*

Mike Lewis has spearheaded development of Craig Nant y Fedw West where he has climbed 18 new routes up to E2 in difficulty. George Smith, Adam Wainwright and Martin Crook have continued their sporadic activities at the Range with a number of interesting climbs between VS and E5.

*Calum Muskett*