



Peak Area Newsletter

June 2015

The next Peak Area meeting is on Wednesday, 3 June, starting, later than usual, at 2000, at the Winking Man Pub, Buxton Road, Upper Hulme ST13 8UH.

The Sec speaks

By Lynn Robinson



The next BMC Peak Area meeting, at The Winking Man Pub, Staffordshire, will start at 2000 so there's time to go for a walk, climb or boulder beforehand. Cath and Peter, our two hill walking representatives, will be leading a short, informal, wander, meeting at The south end of The Roaches at the Roaches Gate (SK 004 621) to start walking at 1830. Also, a few of us will be at the Don Whillans Memorial Hut from 1900 for a nosey around and a cup of tea/coffee, and of course,..... cake!

Following the last meeting, people have asked whether copies of Terry Abraham's DVD, Life of a Mountain could be available to buy, to save postage costs. I have arranged for some to be available for sale at the meeting.

People also asked about the Stanage Stickers. These are available from The BMC shop, and the cost of postage has been waived for these, but some will also be available to buy at the meeting. Also, hot from the printers... the latest BMC guidebook "Peak Limestone North" will be available to buy at the meeting.

Hope to see you all there.

Access Notes

By Henry Folkard

Dateline: 18 May 2015



There are no access restrictions to the Right (South) Bank of Water cum Jolly ie the Cornice side. This is open access land and there are no

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

Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome at any time; the Deadline for the next Newsletter is 26 August - send to peakarea@gmail.com



current limitations as a consequence of its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). If an assistant water bailiff insists you leave, you do not need to. But please report the incident to Jon, me or Rob Dyer. Climbers are requested NOT to approach the Right Bank by wading the shallow first weir below Litton Mill.

The contrast between the Dark Peak and the White Peak is not confined to the colour of the rocks. There has been a fair bit of activity on the access front in both areas since the last meeting, the difference being that in the Dark Peak it's been generally positive and dynamic, and in the White Peak it's all about problems, many being long-standing problems.

Let's start with **Stanage**. The car sticker campaign is going reasonably well, but you can pick one up at Outside in Hathersage or online from the BMC shop if you have not already got one for just £15 per year, defined as April to March.

It's not a parking ticket as such, but an invitation to contribute a little bit to help towards the upkeep of North Lees. As a thank you there is no need to use the pay and display facility at Plantation car park, and you get a discount if you stay in the North Lees camp site. All monies collected go directly towards the upkeep of the estate and, come March next year, we will say how what has been collected has been spent. A number of access improvements are already being planned, but, as the sticker says, Stanage is 'Ours to Care For' so if there is anything you think needs to be done, drop me an e-mail or phone and we can get it considered.

The sticker is not car specific. If you have two cars you can transfer it from one to the other. If this very

Ring Ouzels at Stanage

Sunday 14 June 0800 – 1300

Meeting Hollin Bank Car Park below Stanage Edge

Join Bill Gordon, the warden at Stanage for a wander under Stanage Edge to look and listen for Ring Ouzels and to find out more about them. This nationally threatened bird is thriving at Stanage as a result of positive management involving the warden and the climbers. Suitable for adults and children aged 12 and over. Assistance dogs only. Please bring binoculars if you have them. Booking essential on 01629 816270. Donations welcome on the day towards the cost of the walk and the management of Stanage-North Lees. For information on Stanage-North Lees and how to get here see:

www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/stanage-and-north-lees

reasonable approach works it means nothing more draconian will be imposed.

We are in the midst of the ring ouzel season. Sadly the first pair to nest at Wall End had their nest predated out – thanks for your help in protecting them. At the time of writing there is one current restriction, at Green Crack, but other known nests are not restricted. A particular problem this year has been wildlife photographers, who, despite their enthusiasm for wildlife and good intentions do more harm than good. Any areas that are restricted may change frequently, and on site signage is always the best guide and the most up to date source of information.

Two recent problems have been fires lit by people wild camping or bivvying, and car break-ins. Risk from the latter can be minimised by leaving nothing visible inside cars – and for the former it's straightforward. Plain and simple – don't light fires.



If you want to camp there is a good camp site just below the edge at North Lees.

Talking of which, the proposed upgrade to facilities is happening, but not before bats have vacated the premises that are to be upgraded. The camp site is available to occasional VW-sized camper vans as well as tents. The reason you can't park a camper van elsewhere on the estate is because this is prohibited by bye-laws.

Four pods are to be erected on the camp site. Hiring one may be particularly attractive to overseas visitors, who have to grapple with weight limits on planes, to people who don't like midges and also during the quiet winter period. [For Stanage campsite bookings phone 01433 650 838].

Adam and I, representing the BMC, were presented to HRH the Earl of Wessex when he made a recent visit to Stanage and, among other things, made presentations to some long-standing volunteers – including Bill Gordon – for an outstanding contribution in looking after the Peak District National Park.



Adam Long, Bill Gordon and Henry Folkard

A particularly nice thing about the visit was that, by chance, a group of kids from Liverpool who were doing their Duke of Edinburgh Award turned up on the camp site and he wandered over to have a chat with them. He was actually quite chatty with Adam and me too, asking about the importance of Stanage nationally and internationally, the history of climbing and the place of Stanage in that history.

The Eastern Moors Partnership will be taking over the management of **Burbage**, Houndkirk, Hathersage Moors plus Nell Croft. The Eastern Moors stakeholder forum will extend its remit to include this area also. The BMC will be offering its own contribution for inclusion in a Management Plan as this is drawn up, and a meeting between Danny Udall, Adam, Louise and me is in prospect. If there are any points you want us to make on behalf of the BMC, either raise them at the meeting or with one of us before we put pen to paper.

In the Burbage Valley the major phase of the GB Plantation removal is now completed, but there is of course an amount of residual work to be done. This includes a fair bit of work on the track to reinstate the area immediately adjacent to it, and to narrow it. It should become a great deal less obtrusive when this has been done, though something will remain as a seldom to be used land rover track for purposes of maintenance.

The fences are temporary (and unwelcome) features to assist the establishment of newly planted native species, and their presence will be kept under review: no need to protect the saplings from sheep because there aren't any. The felling is essentially completed but there is a sense that it may not be quite right just yet. Some remaining stems will go naturally due to wind blow, whilst others will be used for chain saw



training – so that cumulatively over time there will be some further reduction in conifers.

The status of the Green Drive is almost certain to be changed to that of concessionary bridleway, though this has been hotly debated and is controversial. The informal track along the bank of the brook will be recognised as a footpath, though, this is all open access land anyhow. It will not be dedicated as a public right of way.

Moving round the Golden Frame to **Eastern Moors** there is not a huge amount to report from a recent stakeholders meeting, except that things there are going well. A lot was discussed, some of it regarding detail, and some of more direct relevance to recreational users who are not primarily walkers or climbers, besides reiteration of general points of principle regarding signage, fencing and so on. There are, incidentally, a fair few adders about at the moment at Curbar, Trackside Boulder and elsewhere on the estate.

Blackamoor is more of a walking than a climbing area. The BMC attended an on-site review of proposals in Sheffield Wildlife Trust's recently published Management Plan, and will be making a written submission on topics raised like rhododendron removal, path maintenance / dedication and landscape, all of which cropped up.

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.

None is without its own controversy, though in the grand scheme of things none really affects access, nor indeed the overall vision which relies to an extent on some fencing, about which we and others have made our views clear already. Finding the right balance in managing an area like Blackamoor is never easy, but by and large our impression is that the proposals generally address key matters in a broadly appropriate way.

Moving more into the High Peak, there appears to be an emerging consensus not to do anything dramatic in the **Alport Valley** at this time. The extent of the current mess at Burbage after a three month operation is perhaps indicative of what the Alport might look like after an operation spread over seven years if wholesale felling went ahead. Neither plantation should ever have been put there in the first place. Neither should they have been planted without proper provision for subsequent access. We are where we are, but whilst removing the Burbage Plantation seemed manageable, doing the same for Alport seems not to be manageable without creating a worse alternative than letting the conifers remain. This is what will now probably happen, though there will be minimal maintenance, and perhaps some judicious attention to the hard edges of the plantation.

Kinder is looking pretty good with the largely successful establishment of a vegetation cover, due in no small part to the controversial Kinder Fence. Had it not been put there, sheep would have eaten every green shoot before young plants were established. Some stiles in the fence that have not been used are not going to be replaced, but all those on desire lines will be retained and kept in good repair. Again it is open to you to suggest where any



additional stile you think would be beneficial should be sited.

Work on the **Upper Derwent** watershed path has come in for a lot of criticism, and not without justification. The specification for the work was probably sound – even blessed with hindsight – but the execution of the work rather less so, partly due to factors within the control of the appointed contractors, and partly outside it. What has been done should weather in, but this will take time.

Further north again Mark has raised the recent planting around, and very nearly all over, **Alderman Rocks**. This is open access land, and there are no access restrictions on it for people – just for dogs. The proximity of the planting to the crag is hopefully being addressed by one means or another. This planting was part of a landscape measure under the Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area. As a landscape measure this work of re-instating a more diverse and natural landscape (more natural than a sheep nibbled monoculture) has been applauded by many, but strongly objected to by others, perhaps because it represents a change from the familiar.

The BMC's Walking Ambassador **Chris Townsend** did a sterling job as Master of Ceremonies at the **Spirit of Kinder** event at Edale. The keynote speech by Dave Morris threw down the gauntlet in a rousing and politically controversial speech to everyone campaigning for better access provision in England, whilst Anne Needham and Chris Sainty gave very different, yet strangely complementary, talks on walking Kinder in the 1920s, and on the Pennine Way, appropriately on the 50th anniversary of its inauguration – a time span similar to that which elapsed between the original conception of the idea of a Pennine Way and bringing it to fruition. Access gains can take a while to achieve.

On Northern Limestone Jon has had something of a baptism of fire. Unauthorised and threatening signs were removed from **Badger's Cove**. This is open access land and climbing there is not subject to any restriction. The cause was initially deemed to have been an over zealous badger guardian but it has transpired that some cavers had been digging nearby, and reportedly using explosives and removing artefacts. Police were involved, and so were archaeologists. Since local cavers did not know who was responsible various warning signs were erected which were inappropriately worded.

At **Water cum Jolly Right (South) Bank** problems have been ongoing with a strident assistant water bailiff – but see the headline at the top of this report. He has been demanding all climbers he sees leave the area on the basis that the land is a SSSI, and climbing is banned in SSSIs. A number of climbers have pointed out to him that this is plain nonsense. Climbing is not banned in SSSIs. Malham, Horseshoe and Stanage are three SSSIs and so too is nearby Ravensdale which is a National Nature Reserve as well. He has no justification at all for such confrontational and inappropriate behaviour.

The land in question is not his (since we don't climb in the river), and even if it were it is mapped as open access, so there is a perfect right to climb there as climbing is a permitted activity under CROW. The last time we enquired of Natural England whether they had any problems, all that notwithstanding, with climbing on the Right Bank, the answer was 'no', and this has very recently been reconfirmed.

Thanks to the National Park Authority's local Ranger for reinforcing the message that there is no legal restriction on climbing on the Right Bank. Cramside



Wood, on the Left Bank, is not so straightforward, but that is not the issue here.

Finally, Stanage is not the only place to watch your car security, as there has been at least one break in at **Horseshoe**. It is not the first time cars have been broken into on the A623, and motor bikes have been lifted too.

That's it for now. Have a good summer.

Pied Flycatchers at Stanage

Wed 3 June 2015 1800 – 2030 OR

Sunday 7 June 1000 – 1230

Meeting Hollin Bank Car Park below Stanage Edge

A short walk (1-2 miles) through the woodlands with the wardens from Stanage and North Lees to look for woodland birds. We hope to be able to see pied flycatchers feeding their young. Suitable for adults and children aged 12 and over. Assistance dogs only. Please bring binoculars if you have them. **Booking essential on 01629 816270.**

Donations welcome on the day towards the cost of the walk and the management of Stanage-North Lees. For information on Stanage-North Lees and how to get here see:

www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/stanage-and-north-lees

lead a short, informal wander around The Roaches prior to the meeting at The Winking Man. Anyone able to come a little earlier, and not fancying a climb, might like to join us - a great chance for a good chat with fellow hill walkers. We plan to meet below the south end of The Roaches, at the Roaches Gate by the car parking lay-by SK 004 621 ready to set off walking at 1830.

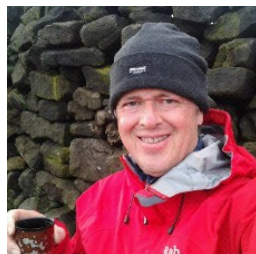


The summer months bring warmer and hopefully drier weather, so many of us are turning our thoughts to longer more adventurous days in the local hills and taking the opportunity to explore corners not previously visited. As ground nesting birds leave their nests there are fewer worries about exploring off-path and making our own way across the high moorland with its carpet of Heather and Bilberry. The “Moors for the Future Partnership” has done much to begin the process of improving the condition of some of our most eroded and denuded peatland landscapes (more info here; www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk). The introduction of Heather Brash to bind together the surface and grasses such as Cotton Grass have made a noticeable difference to some of our most damaged areas in the Dark Peak in the last few years. This excellent work makes a trip to somewhere like the summit of Black Hill a much more appealing prospect than was the

Hill Walking in The Peak Area

By Peter Judd

Joint BMC Peak Area Hill Walking Representative



Anyone reading this before the 3rd of June BMC Peak Area meeting might like to note that Cath Lee and I, your two Hill Walking Representatives, are hoping to



case just a few years ago; this and other similar places, once thought a bit barren, are perhaps worth a re-visit sometime this summer?

Drier weather opens up the possibility of some enjoyable scrambling too, especially those routes making use of the steep stream gullies onto some of our higher gritstone plateaus. Walkers who think of the Peak District as having little to interest the scrambler might be surprised to see as many as 41 scrambles listed in Cicerone's "Scrambles of the Dark Peak" (www.cicerone.co.uk), published just a few years ago. Although many walkers will, like me, have taken the enjoyable direct routes onto Kinder up Crowden Clough and Red Brook in past summers, there's plenty more to go at if you know where to look. I'm certainly hoping to tick off one or two more myself, if opportunity allows.

Cath Lee and I continue to make our contribution as part of the BMC's national Hill Walking Working Group. Presently most work is being done in smaller sub-groups, getting to grips with particular areas of the BMC's work and seeking out more opportunities to further support hill-walkers.

Cath is working with the sub-group looking at Publicity and Communications which has already helped adjust the balance of hill walking coverage in Summit magazine and is now looking at the BMC

member benefits package and BMC insurance products, to try to identify attractive additions of interest to hill walkers.

I'm working with the Organisation, Structure and Culture group. We have already proposed some changes to the way the BMC is associated with the entry level hill walking courses offered by Mountain Training, to see if the BMC might be better promoted to candidates on such courses. We are also looking into the possibility of the BMC encouraging and supporting more area level, perhaps even national level, festivals and events with strong hill walking themes. Such events would be an excellent way to bring together hill walking members and increase their sense of community. Indeed I have even found myself wondering whether we, here in the Peak Area, might be up for organising something locally, perhaps focused on Kinder Scout maybe? It needn't be anything too ambitious. I'd be very interested to hear people's views!

Obituary: Ron Townsend 1919-2015

(From; www.peakclimbingclub.co.uk/obituary-ron-townsend-1919-2015/)

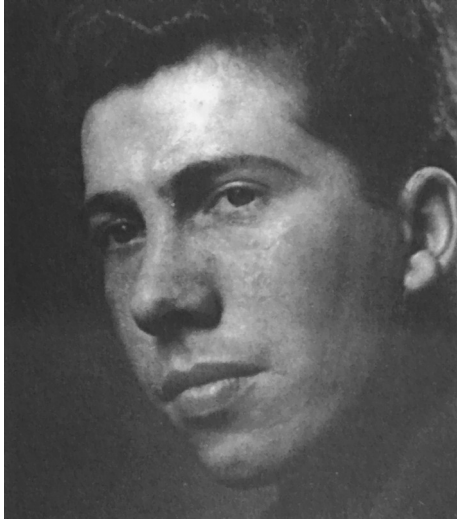
It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Ron Townsend on 14 May 2015.

Ron founded the Peak Climbing Club in 1942, and climbed until he was in his 80s. He climbed first ascents of some familiar routes, including Via Media, Narrow Buttress, Gargoyle Buttress and, of course, Townsend's Variation, and was involved in writing guidebooks in the 1950s and '60s. He was an honorary member of the PCC and also the Fell and Rock Climbing Club. Long-time club member John Skelton has written the following obituary:

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](http://www.thebmc.co.uk). 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).



RON TOWNSEND - The man behind the routes



(Photo: Townsend Collection)

Ron Townsend, founder member of the Peak Climbing Club and one of the foremost gritstone climbers in the post war era, has died. We thought he would live for ever, a view probably shared by Ron! For he was a man full of joy and full of life. When we look back at life we can only do so from our own view point and experience and I make no excuses for that. Others will have their own memories but they will no doubt be variations on a theme. I first met and climbed with Ron when Margaret and I were raw teenage members of the Peak. The first thing that was obvious was that he was a brilliant natural climber. A club meet at the Roaches saw Ron float up unprotected routes while we struggled behind him. He would have been about fifty then and the senior person in the club but he was patient, encouraging and we thoroughly enjoyed his company.

Ron was great at encouraging people to climb. The list of Peak members and former members who Ron 'got started' is too long to list here but they all know who they are and will be for ever grateful for it. One of the great things about Ron was that he was always

more interested in what you had been doing rather than what he had been doing, even though he would have been up to all sorts.

He was a botanist of immense knowledge. He knew the flowers of Derbyshire and The Alps like few others, a keen amateur geologist, a skilled photographer, an expert wood carver, the list seems to go on and on. But his skills and knowledge were not something to keep to himself. They were for sharing and any walk or climb with him would be punctuated by his observations; pointing out the delights of the world which the rest of us somehow walk and climb past.

Ron was a friend to many people because he loved people. He was never afraid of a physical approach, a hug, an arm round a shoulder were natural to him. He was a master at the lost climbing art of heckling. Being slow or trying to put runners in when there weren't any would always bring forth a 'witty' comment but delivered with a great sense of fun.

So we will miss him; not only the Peak but the Fell and Rock and all those who knew him, but we will not forget him. When we walk down Ravensdale or do Via Media or climb on Gable or sit in Langdale he will be in our thoughts and there will be smiles on our faces.

BMC Peak Area Contacts:

Peak Area Chair, Neil Foster:

neil.foster@bmcvolunteers.org.uk

Secretary, Lynn Robinson:

lynn.robinson@bmcvolunteers.org.uk

Peak Area Reps (your voice on the BMC National Council): <http://community.thebmc.co.uk/peak>

Access Reps Co-ordinator, Henry Folkard:

henry.folkard@bmcvolunteers.org.uk

Peak Area Hill walking Reps:

Peter Judd: Peak10roam-bmc@yahoo.co.uk

Cath Lee: Cath.lee@peakwalking.com