



PEAK AREA NEWSLETTER



June 2016
peakarea@gmail.com

Rocking Chair

Rob Greenwood



We've had an odd start to the spring here in the Peak: snow one minute, sun the next, only for it to start snowing again! It's looking like we're back on track now and spring has – we hope – finally sprung: the crags are starting to dry and things aren't so wet underfoot if you're out walking.

Aside from getting out there's a lot of peripheral activity within the area at the moment, with Alex Honnold visiting the

UK/Sheffield for his lecture at the Abbeydale Picturehouse on 24 May, then the next Peak Area meeting on 8 June (far more important than any international superstar visiting of course...), and the Outside/BMC Crag Clean Up on the 11th, which promises to be a good, social event – as well as something positive for the area.

Hopefully one or more of these will be on your radar already, if not then come along and get involved!

Next meeting: Wednesday 8 June, 8 p.m.
The Winking Man, Upper Hulme, ST13 8UH



The new Stanage Pole

Access: June

Henry Folkard



At Stanage there have been problems with boulderers disturbing ring ouzels in the Cowper Stone area, causing a nest to fail within a restricted area. As well as being bad news for the birds it is potentially bad news for climbers and boulderers too.

Restrictions are only put in place where it is deemed necessary, and are always agreed by Adam Long or, if he is away, by me. For the majority of nests restrictions are not necessary, and none are applied. The system of voluntary restraint has worked well for some years now, and is a really good deal for climbers because it has resulted in much less restriction (which could be legally enforced) than would be the case in its absence.

There is a huge amount to lose, so where an area is restricted please stay away for the couple of weeks it will apply. On-site signage is the best, and only,

guide at Stanage. The position is pretty fluid, particularly at changeover time between first and second broods, so changes are not posted on the BMC RAD. Signs are always taken down as soon as a restriction can be lifted.

Incidentally, at the time of writing there is also a restriction at the weaselling area of **Higgarr Tor**. Elsewhere, at **Burbage**, **Millstone** and **High Neb** end the birds are doing OK at the moment.

On a much brighter note, the ceremony to erect the new **Stanage Pole** went really well – some of the Stanage sticker 'Ours to Care For' money helped to finance it. Thanks to those volunteers who helped, and to Adam who masterminded the rope-work for the lift.

The **2016/17 work plan for Stanage** is being worked up at the moment, so if there are any things you would particularly like to see done, do let me or Adam know.

Other climbing sites on the gritstone where we are trying to sort some better access agreements include **Eagle Tor** and **Grinah Stones** – ask at the meeting if

you want to know more.

The **Spirit of Kinder** day at the end of April, held this year in Hayfield in conjunction with the local community, and hosted by the excellent Royal Hotel, was a well-attended event. Star turns were a keynote speech from Carey Davies and contributions from local primary school kids who had been learning about their heritage, and saying, very much in their own words, why they wanted to protect it. 455 tonnes of slabs have been lifted on to the **Brown Knoll** path, and 1.5km already laid.

The BMC has objected to a planning application regarding a new track that has already been laid right across **Midhope Moor**, crossing it at about the point where Mickleden Edge becomes Cut Gate. We are not the only ones to have objected to this unwarranted intrusion on the landscape of the open moor.

There was a disastrous fire on Oaken Bank in the **Upper Derwent** earlier in the month (when it was not raining), which destroyed 25 hectares of moorland and 30 years of woodland regeneration, and all because of someone's barbecue. If you are out and about, your eyes and alertness could save another such disaster.

The BMC was represented on a **DofE Diamond Challenge** event early in May which involved a heck of a lot of organisation for someone, but for participants nothing more exacting than a walk across Kinder in the company of HRH the Earl of Wessex.

On the **limestone** the current access issues feature **Blackwell Halt, Shining Tor** and **Staden**. Jon Fullwood, and Rob Dyer in head office, are between them trying to get these resolved.

On more general topics, access and walking reps have spent a lot of time putting some alternative proposals together for the proposed **National Trust Licensing**

Scheme – with help from head office and access reps in the Lakes. These have gone to the head of the National Trust in the Peak as a position paper, and as a basis for further discussion. At the time of writing we are awaiting a response, largely because the chap in question is away on leave just now. If you want to know the detail do ask at the meeting, when some update should be possible.

We still await the inspector's formal decision on the **Longstone Edge East** public inquiry, which is taking much longer than anticipated to emerge. We think this is because there are now only two staff left in the Department for Communities and Local Government with the job of scrutinising such things before they see light of day, rather than anything more sinister.

On **Longstone Edge West** we are about to comment on a new planning application seeking to vary current agreed conditions for restoration of the site, essentially by postponing such restoration for 20 years. On the face of it any such proposal is completely unacceptable, but there are some technical reasons, concerned with treatment of the tailings which are used for the infill which may make this a practical necessity. Come the meeting we should know what line we have taken, but it is not at all straightforward – and there is a whole raft of associated other issues too.

Finally, something on which everyone can, and I hope will, comment, because your views will have impact – the **ROWIP**. So what is a ROWIP? Perhaps it's a bit of an arid subject but it is the **Rights of Way Improvement Plan**. Resources to maintain, let alone improve, the network in Derbyshire, and in the other Highway Authority areas impinging on the Peak, are sorely stretched. As indeed are the staff in post to do anything with what there is to spend.

What the ROWIP does is determine priorities for expenditure. If you have views on what those priorities should be, then please let me know. There will be some public consultation in due course – at the moment it has just begun with both the Peak and Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forums. Three of the suggestions for this ten-year review of the existing document are: greater emphasis on upland rights of way (with sensitivity regarding any work to the general character of the way); possible review of the status of some footpaths to accord higher rights on them for cyclists and horse riders (if you have any rights of way in Derbyshire in mind where you think this might be desirable now is your chance); and consideration of better provision for users of motor-propelled vehicles. This last item is, of course, contentious.

That's enough for now.

Stop Press: A pretty major piece of news: Moscar Estate (which includes Long Causeway to the A57 at Stanage, Bamford Edge, Upper Derwent and quite a lot more) has been sold by Jeremy Archdale to the Duke of Rutland/Haddon Estates. This is now officially confirmed.

Climbing News & Gossip

Simon Lee

Spring has sprung, the grass has riz, I wonder where the Southern Lime guide is? Wonder we may – some of those scripts were written 15 years ago! No doubt there is a more pressing need for a further update to the Lancashire guide. Is the guidebook committee perhaps made up of members whose affiliations lie elsewhere? See the darker reaches of the BMC website for details.

Brexit is dominating the news and at this time of National Crisis we look to our leaders for inspiration and direction. Disappointingly Dave “I’m just a humble bureaucrat” Turnbull, our chief executive, is offering no guidance to BMC members. Britain never signed up to Euro climbing but over the last 30 years our crags have been overrun with bolts. These “sports” routes, as BMC president Rehan Siddiqui calls them, compete for our limited rock resources and in extreme cases they take over native trad routes. As far as I can see, a ‘yes’ vote will give Italian-based IFSC the mandate to force the BMC to become a governing body in order that Shauna can win the Olympics. This is the Thin End of the Wedge™. After that everyone will have to fill in a risk assessment and sign a disclaimer to climb at Stanage. Despite the threat to the freedom of our cherished sport, the BMC council is said to be split on the subject and in any case are still locked in the debate on the question of how many angels can dance on an RP0.

This season’s fashion in the Peak is esoterica, which has made a startling comeback. You heard it here first. Hot right now is Joe Heeley (the younger) who climbed the project rib at Mervyn Stutter Crag near Ashover. Named *Kent Clark* (8A), Joe used a footblock on *Skeeter Ram* so the



The Worm Ouroboros, Wormstones

fully independent line still awaits. BTW if esoteric southern bouldering is your bag then head directly to Marc Bellingall's fabulous website *The Southern Esoteric Bouldering Companion* – esotericboulderingcompanion.weebly.com – just don't expect soft touches from Marc.

Also near Ashover Simon Cundy sashayed into Milltown Quarry after an absence of 20 years to add some trad routes with Colin Hughes and also an excellent 6c+ limestone slab, *Tamla Milltown*. Details on UKClimbing.com. Simon also added the first route to Shining Bank Quarry at Youlgreave: *Agents of Fortune* (6b+). Gary Gibson was quick in to assess the potential but was escorted off the catwalk by Haddon Estate employees. Undaunted, Gibson declared on Facebook that he will be back. Gibson has also revealed the whereabouts of his new buttress mentioned in the previous newsletter which is very close to fashionable Horseshoe Quarry. Horsethief Buttress offers 11 “reasonable” routes between 6a and 7a. Further details on

www.sportsclimbs.co.uk

Mark Rankine championed the trad cause with a couple of haute couture offerings. At Wormstones he did *The Worm Ouroboros* at E6/7 6b, and then on the east side of Bradwell Dale he did *Bradwell I Scream* (E7 6c), which is “protected” by RPs and skyhooks. Details on UKBouldering.com This has already been repeated by Neil Furniss, but further aspirants should note that cavers fossicking in the same vicinity have reputedly been escorted off the land by the denizens of Hazelbadge Hall sporting shotguns.

More happily, Sheffield resident and member of the Women's Climbing Sym-possé Emma Flaherty is now confirmed as a BMC vice-president and has also confirmed sending *Back Street Mime Artist* at Burbage as her first UK 8A using some sly beta from old fox Keith Sharples, who sadly still remains a contender.

Get in touch

Send your Peak area news, gossip or article ideas to me at: peakarea@gmail.com



Ramesses the Great, Churnet

Activist Profile: Stuart Brooks

Age? 37.

Where do live? Burton upon Trent, Staffs.

Occupation? Chef.

Where did you grow up?

Burton upon Trent.

What type of climber are you?

Boulderer.

Who do you climb with currently?

Steve Lea, first climbed with him 20 years ago, crikey!

Describe what you did when you last went out?

Me and Steve had a midweek road trip taking in Longridge, Malham, St Bees then Kilsney. We haven't done much sport

climbing so doing a few routes at Malham and Kilsney was a nice change. Seriously impressed with the Yorkshire limestone. Plan to get back ASAP.

When and how did you start climbing?

First time would have been in the Scouts. Started climbing every weekend with Dave Mawer back in 1993. Still knock about now when time allows.

Who were your early influences?

Being star struck watching Big Ron at the Foundry in 1993, and of course the Dawes. The film *Stone Monkey*, really did inspire a whole generation back then.

What is your hardest route and boulder problem and how important are grades to you?

Low start to *Sean's Problem* (7C/7C+),

Cressbrook. While it's nice to climb hard problems from guidebooks, the real buzz comes from trying something which is sick hard to that individual then breaking it down, analysing the sequences, desperately trying to unlock the movement required for success. Sometimes this can happen in a session or sometimes years. So I guess grades aren't that important to me, it's how hard it feels to me.

What were your first new routes and/or boulder problems in the Peak?

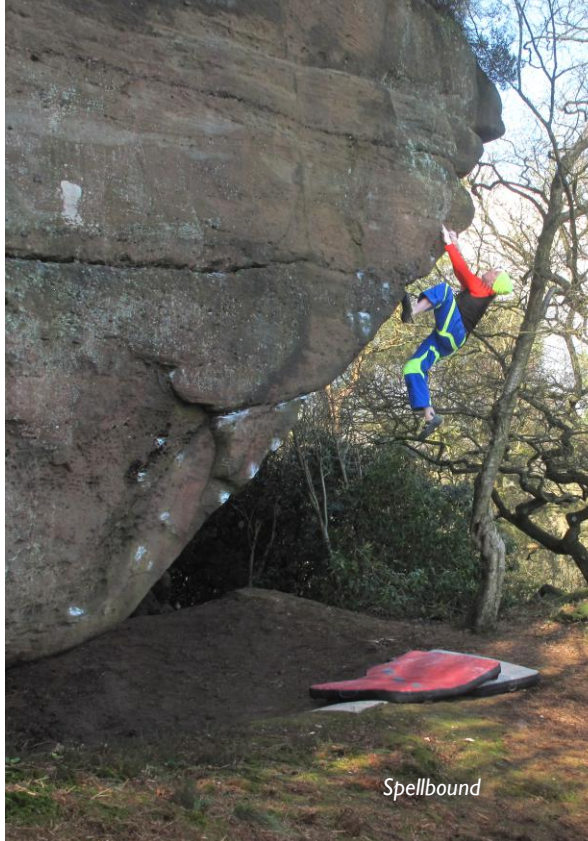
First problem would be the exquisite *Push* up and right of Cottage Rocks in the Churnet, done in 1999.

What are your favourite routes and crags and places in the Peak?

Would have to be The Roaches – so many fine routes and such a beautiful backdrop. *The Sloth*, slap bang in the middle of that amazing piece of rock. Quite remarkable the position you're in considering the grade.

What are your best new routes and/or problems in the Peak District?

Two that stand out are *Spellbound*, in the Peakstone Amphitheatre, and *Ramesses the Great*, in the New Kingdom, both in the Churnet. *Spellbound* is a strong line, an outrageous angle and well spicy if you aren't 100% on your sequence. At first glance *Ramesses the Great* is not an obvious line, the more time you spend there the more the line of weakness across the block beckons. It was the problem I really wanted to do before the *Churnet Bouldering* guide came out. It's long enough to be a route, and the process of refining the sequences to be more energy efficient is what I enjoyed the most. Get to it! In my opinion a better pump than *Wright's Traverse* over on the other side of the valley.



What type of climbing do you enjoy most and why?

Bouldering; the freedom to move on rock without fiddling/clipping gear. Being able to push yourself physically and mentally without too much danger.

What do think of the BMC?

The BMC play a vital role which I think most of us take for granted. We are lucky to have such a helpful organisation fighting our corner.

Grit or Lime?

Grit. We had a saying back in the day: "It's a crime to climb on the lime". However, I've really enjoyed the last couple of summers down Chee Dale, but don't tell anyone.



AGM walk: Sunday's party below Ringing Roger

Hill Walking Notes

Cath Lee

Join a short walk before the June Peak Area meeting

If you can get over to The Roaches before the BMC Peak Area meeting on Wednesday 8 June, it would be lovely if you could join hill walking representative Peter Judd, and myself if I'm able to make it, for a short walk up past Doxey Pool towards the trig point on The Roaches.

Doxey Pool and The Roaches have all sorts of stories and legends connected with them. One is that the pool is bottomless and its water level never changes despite the amount of rainfall. It is also said to be home to an evil water spirit who lures travellers and walkers to a watery grave. There are several accounts of the apparition of an evil-looking woman rising from the waters. Another legend is that the ghost of a highwayman's daughter haunts the ridge at night and is known as "the singing woman of the Roaches". So who knows what we

might come across on our walk! It could be an exciting evening.

If you are interested in joining the walk, please be at Roaches Gate, by the car parking lay-by at SK 004621 for about 6.20 p.m. to be ready to set off walking at 6.30 p.m.

BMC AGM walks: enjoyed by many

The BMC's AGM, which took place in Castleton this spring, offered an excellent opportunity to show off our Peak District hills that we simply couldn't miss.

On the Saturday afternoon, Peak Area volunteer hill walking representative Peter Judd led 25 members on a journey that took walkers from limestone to gritstone, taking in Cave Dale, Windy Knoll, Mam Tor and Lose Hill. Although accompanied by a cold breeze, walkers enjoyed lovely views, especially from the Great Ridge. Towards the end of the walk hail showers raced across the Edale valley, but fortunately the party missed the worst of them as they returned to Castleton.



AGM walk: heading up onto Kinder Scout

Sunday morning revealed hills covered in a light dusting of snow, however the warm sun soon melted that away. Sunday's longer walk drew a smaller party of 11 (there were, of course, many other worthy distractions, such as the re-erection of Stanage Pole), and Peter took his party over to Hope Cross, then climbed up to Crookstone Knoll and skirted around the southern rim of Kinder Scout for a look at Ringing Roger, before returning to Castleton via Hollins Cross. Again the excellent sunny weather offered superb views and allowed good conversation along the way. Peter would like to thank everyone who took part, and in particular Austin Knott and Mark McKenzie, who assisted Peter with leading on both days.

Kinder Scout and other iconic mountains to be 'mended'

We are delighted that thanks to the BMC's recent **Mend our Mountains** crowdfunding initiative, repairs to the highly eroded Ringing Roger path on Kinder Scout will be able to go ahead, along with work on

other iconic mountain paths across England and Wales.

The £10,000 fundraising target for the Kinder Scout project and the £100,000 national target have both been smashed thanks to the generosity of all those who pledged money and local businesses that donated rewards.

In addition to emails, newsletters and social media posts by the BMC, you might have also heard about the project on BBC Breakfast, ITV Border, or heard about it on Radio 5 Live. It was also featured in *The Times*. I believe that this has been one of the most successful appeals for mountain paths ever run, and of course it's resulted in great publicity for the BMC, clearly demonstrating its support for hill walkers and for the environment.



Dovedale

The National Trust in the Peak District

Luke Barley

Here at the National Trust we share a deep affinity with the work of the BMC, and we're grateful to have some space to tell you about our conservation work and to share some of the amazing species and habitats that you might see when you're walking or climbing in the Peak District. To start with, we thought it would be a good idea to give you some background about who we are and what we do.

An overview of the National Trust in the Peak District

The National Trust was created in 1895 to ensure that places of natural beauty and historic interest are safeguarded "forever, for everyone". We are a charity and rely on memberships, donations and the contributions of our commercial operations to pay for our work (as well as grant funding such as agri-environment schemes). We own

over 18,000 hectares of the Peak District (about 13% of the National Park) on behalf of the nation, including vast expanses of moorland on Kinder and across the Dark Peak, the atmospheric woodlands of the Longshaw Estate, and wildlife-rich gorges like Dovedale in the White Peak. The Trust also works in partnership with the RSPB to manage the Eastern Moors. Much of our land is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its outstanding conservation interest, and we look after two National Nature Reserves (NNRs) on Kinder and in Dovedale. Three teams of rangers and other officers look after the Trust's land in the Peak District, based at Edale, Longshaw and Ilam. We're also reliant on our hundreds of willing volunteers who help us get our work done, and on partnership working with agricultural tenants and other local stakeholders.

Here are a few of our current projects:

MoorLIFE 2020

MoorLIFE 2020 is an EU LIFE project that will deliver millions of pounds of work to protect and restore blanket bog in the South Pennines. Working in partnership with Moors for the Future, the National Trust will focus on improving moors that contribute to drinking-water catchments across the Dark Peak. Over the next five years, over 1,500 dams will be installed to block drainage grips and re-wet the peat, the diversity of vegetation across 450 hectares will be increased (including the re-introduction of vital, bog-building sphagnum moss), and over 800 hectares of bare peat will be re-vegetated. The Trust will continue its work to provide sustainable access across wet ground. Blanket bogs are some of the UK's biggest stores of carbon, so improving their condition locks up carbon and – just as importantly – avoids the loss of previously stored carbon through erosion. Good moorland management also improves water quality and provides better habitats, so this work is a real win-win (-win).

Wood pasture restoration at Longshaw

Visitors to Longshaw might have noticed a huge amount of timber leaving the site. Around 1,700 tonnes of conifer was removed from wildlife-poor plantations last winter to restore the 'wood pasture' habitat – where animals graze under open grown trees and scrub. This is thought to be the closest analogy to the pre-human landscape in which all our biodiversity evolved, so it's incredibly valuable for wildlife. A huge amount of volunteer effort went into clearing up this job so a big thanks to all the willing helpers!

Woodland management across the Peak

Ash dieback has arrived in the White Peak and will dramatically impact our woodlands, which are dominated by ash and which form a third of the woods in the Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation (SAC, a European designation). The ranger team are hard at work surveying the woodlands and specifying management work to mitigate the expected death of most of our ash, in order to ensure the woods are resilient for the future and that they continue to provide great habitat for all the species that rely on them.

At Longshaw the rangers have been carrying out grant-funded work to benefit endangered birds whose breeding grounds are restricted to the upland woods of the extreme west of Europe. Pied and spotted flycatchers, redstarts, and wood warblers spend winter in southern Europe or Africa and arrive back in the Peak in the spring; they need open woodlands with glades and a varied structure, so the rangers have been busy creating the right habitat for them in a number of woods. Along with volunteers, they also maintain and monitor around 100 nest boxes that help to ensure the visitors have a place to stay.

The ranger team in the Dark Peak are well on the way with one of the biggest tree planting schemes in the country. Over the winter, rangers, volunteers and contractors planted nearly 50,000 trees to restore woodlands in cloughs on the moors. Clough woodlands are incredibly valuable, not least for the birds mentioned above, but also because of the role they play in stabilising soils, limiting erosion, and slowing the flow of water, helping to filter it and mitigating flood risk. There's more to come next winter!

2016 Peak Area Meetings

8 June, 8 p.m.

The Winking Man, Upper Hulme

14 September, 7.30 p.m.

The Globe, Glossop

16 November, 7.30 p.m.

The Maynard, Grindleford

Forthcoming Events

<http://community.thebmc.co.uk/peak>

Outside Crag Clean Up

The 2016 Outside Crag Clean Up will take place on Saturday 11 June, supported by the BMC and Wild Country.

Drop by Outside in Hathersage any time after 9.30 a.m. on your way to the crag and collect a plastic bag, pick up rubbish while you're out and then bring your loot back to Outside between 6 and 7 p.m. and claim your free litter picker's barbecue and beer. Find out more at www.outside.co.uk

British Bouldering Championships

Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 July.

This year's British Bouldering Championships will again take place as part of the **Cliffhanger** festival, which this year has moved to Sheffield city centre. The competition itself will be in Devonshire Green. Find out more at: www.theoutdoorcity.co.uk

BMC Peak Area Contacts

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<http://community.thebmc.co.uk/peak>

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Simon Lee and John Coefield.

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