



Neil Kershaw considers *The Angel's Share*.
Photo: John Coefield.

PEAK AREA NEWSLETTER



April 2017
peakarea@gmail.com

Rocking Chair

Rob Greenwood



2016 was undoubtedly a rocky year for the BMC; however, I – like many – believe the organisation came out stronger and more focussed for it. If there is a positive to be taken, it is that the controversy surrounding the proposed name change gave members of the National Council, Executive, and BMC head office a real indication of just how much members care about the organisation, and how much we should value and listen to their opinion.

In light of this and several other matters, National Council, which includes elected

members from each area, voted to set up a working group to review the council's governance. There is also to be an independently chaired organisational review process which will begin in April 2017. In short, lessons have not just been learned – they are being acted upon.

However, by now many will have heard of the motion of no confidence that has recently been submitted for the AGM and signed by 25 or so 'luminaries' against the BMC's Executive Committee. If this goes through, all members of the Executive Committee, which includes the president (Rehan Siddiqui), three vice-presidents, treasurer, two independent directors, three members of the National Council and the Chief Executive Officer (Dave Turnbull) will

Next meeting: Wednesday 5 April, 7.30 p.m.
The Maynard, Grindelford, S32 2HE



Lees Moor Wood from Chesterfield Lane, Rowsley. Photo: Bill Bennett

have to resign. I have thought long and hard about how to word the following sentences, whether to remain impartial or express my own opinion, but my feelings surrounding the matter are resolute: it is both non-constructive and damaging to the organisation.

I welcome debate from an opposing view through our next area meeting. However, I see a great many shortfalls not only with the arguments already raised, but also with their approach: those issuing the vote have not engaged in discussion or debate, neither have they responded to my own emails regarding attendance at the next area meeting. It seems apparent that their approach is one intended to cause maximum damage.

As such, I very much hope that we can offer a resounding vote of confidence, but that is where I'll stop. I urge you to vote but it is up to you, the membership, at the end of the day! I look forward to seeing you all at the next Peak Area meeting, for or against.

Access News

Henry Folkard



There has been a flurry of access relevant things since the last meeting, so this report will be more about headlines than details, but as ever if you want more by way of detail, please do ask at the meeting.

First off, **Stanage North Lees**. At our February meeting Dave Turnbull was asked to write to Sarah Fowler, CEO of the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA), to ask her to reconsider a decision made unilaterally and without any stakeholder consultation to abolish the **Stanage Sticker**. It is all the more ironic that this high-handed attitude came from an organisation which says it believes in partnership and consultation: actions speak louder than words. By its actions PDNPA shows itself to be incapable of listening to those who would be its friends and supporters.

Dave duly wrote, and a copy of his letter, along with the unacceptably duplicitous reply, will be to hand at the meeting. The gist of the reply was that the sticker has not been abolished but reinvented at £40 p.a. (instead of £15) and will be park-wide. This implies a total misconception of what the sticker was about, as a park-wide scheme already exists. It was about a key stakeholder group putting something back into a place they cared about, and being told how income generated was being spent at North Lees.

The BMC actively promoted the scheme, Outside in Hathersage helped, and a number of BMC volunteers, including our Peak Area chairman, put a lot of effort into selling it. It was working: it was achieving what it set out to achieve and, as a bonus, because it was transparent and reasonable, it nurtured a lot of goodwill. So I suppose it's logical that an allegedly cash-strapped authority with its head in the clouds sees the way forward for Stanage North Lees as getting rid of a single, approachable and accountable property manager who did a first-rate job for the place and for the national park, and replacing her with three or four service managers, none of whom have overall responsibility for North Lees nor an overview of how the many aspects of its management are inter-related. All are on a higher salary than the single site-specific property manager they replace. For them, Stanage has seemingly ceased to exist as a special place. It's just a series of piecemeal park-wide management functions and has no unique identity or value. Sheffield and its people do not exist either.

The sting is in the tail. Beware. From 1 April, along with the new 'sticker', will come enforcement of pay and display parking by a company that generates its income, in part at least, from the number of penalty fines it can impose. This relates to

national park car parks, which, along the Eastern Edges are at Stanage Plantation (Hollin Bank) and Surprise View. So, welcome to the national park. It was set up for purposes of conservation and enjoying its special qualities. The main focus now seems to be income generation for the institution of the authority, and abandonment of dialogue with stakeholders, or any ability, despite the rhetoric on the part of its senior management, to work with stakeholders or community. They will just tell us what is good for us, and we will dutifully comply – or will we?

PDNPA is also to set up a charitable trust along with a company limited by guarantee as part of its Giving Strategy. While the paper proposing this says how PDNPA will benefit it says nothing about how it will relate to charitable and non-government organisations which have to rely on donations because they do not enjoy a still-substantial grant from central government, and yet do a terrific job for the Peak landscape, and our enjoyment of it – or does PDNPA want to corner the market on Peak-inspired giving just for itself?

As a PS on Stanage, a booklet on the history of the **Stanage Pole** will soon be available. It is produced by the Stanage Forum and co-sponsored by the BMC and Derbyshire Soaring Club.

The **Spirit of Kinder Day** is on 22 April, at 2.00 p.m. at Edale Village Hall – admission is free. Cakes (which are not free) are by Edale Women's Institute. Speakers include Dame Helen Ghosh, director general of the National Trust, Stephen Trotter, director of Wildlife Trusts England, Vanessa Griffiths, the Ramblers new CEO, and Jon Stewart, general manager for the National Trust in the Peak. Sheffield poet and songmaker Sally Goldsmith will sing some of her songs, ending with the Manchester Rambler, while

the event will be introduced and hosted by Rony Robinson of BBC Radio Sheffield.

The day is themed around the magnificent, and ongoing, restoration of Kinder by the National Trust. It will also see the formal launch of a new book *Clarion Call*, which is based on a collection of glass plate slides of Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, and describes Sheffield's place in the fight for access – a fight necessarily continued by the BMC and its access team to this day. Spirit of Kinder Day is organised jointly by the Kinder and High Peak Advisory Committee and the National Trust.

The BMC has submitted its contribution to the **new management plan for Burbage, Houndkirk and Hathersage Moors** to the Eastern Moors Partnership, and a copy will be available at the meeting – along with that for the Eastern Moors.

On Burbage Moor, the BMC was represented at a commemorative tree planting of a rowan near the Packhorse Bridge. A celebrated photograph of the original rowan is featured in one of the Clarion handbooks, but it got shot to bits during the war by the Canadians. Incidentally, the old Canadian arms dump on the Carl Wark side of Burbage Brook has never been cleared and still lurks there, decomposing in the peat.

On the **Dark Peak trails**, Chapel Gate is again deteriorating. The road planings used in the resurfacing a couple of years ago have predictably started to wash out – exacerbated by lack of routine maintenance of drainage culverts. Work is in hand on Bamford Clough, but is technically very complex. The mountain bike fraternity has put forward proposals on Cut Gate (see February 2017's newsletter), and is in discussions about Hope Brink. We believe PDNPA will be taking enforcement action

on the Midhope (Cut Gate) matting, but are keeping an eye on progress.

Maintenance funding for national trails like the Pennine Bridleway has been secured in the short term. The current state of the Roych section is testimony to the effectiveness of this expenditure.

Within the context of the Derbyshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan a review of the status of certain ways will be included, though work on the plan is currently suffering from the draconian cutbacks suffered by Derbyshire County Council (DCC). Some footpaths may be suitable for concessionary upgrade to bridleway status, though that should not be taken to imply any widespread upgrade, and will always be dependent on sustainability.

DCC is however developing its Key Cycle Network (KCN). While this will have more impact to the south of the county, it will also be relevant to an extent in the national park, and of course for people wanting to get to the national park by bicycle.

A new walk: Friends of the Peak District is developing a national park boundary walk. The launch event is in Buxton on 17 June, and a presentation of certain public rights of way themed in respect of their geological interest, and supported by a booklet, is also being developed. See page 5.

Win Hill is for sale, but so far as we are aware has yet to be sold. A bid by the National Trust was not accepted, but that does not in this case imply that anything else has, and National Trust remain in contact with the vendors.

On the climbing front it's **bird nesting season** again. Besides the ring ouzel situation round Burbage and Stanage – which is well signed on site if any restrictions are deemed

necessary – the major issue, as ever, is with ravens and peregrines. In terms of overall population both species are doing well and expanding, but they do rather nest on crags upon which we like to climb, and both species are vigorously monitored by enthusiasts with a particular interest in them. Incidentally, there are now 30 pairs of peregrines nesting in London. If you want to watch them, that's where to go.

Peregrines in the White Peak suffered heavily last year from theft of eggs/fledglings and there are restrictions – or, to be more precise, discussions about restrictions – on which Jon Fullwood is leading, at Beeston Tor, Shining Bank Quarry and Darlton Quarry. Police responsible for rural crime are closely involved given what happened last year so if you are thinking of visiting these venues it would certainly be better to wait a while and have a word with Jon regarding the current state of play before you do visit. It's a very delicate situation, and there is room for quite a lot to go awry.

At Millstone ravens were observed over a period when a pair was trying to nest, and eventually, after discussion, it was decided restricting the area around *Twikker* would be appropriate. It is possible, even probable, that at this point in the season the birds will not actually lay so the situation is being carefully monitored and the restriction will be lifted as soon as it can. There is a sign on site.

Finally, Derbyshire Police has unveiled a new **rural crime taskforce**. It's not just about breaking into outbuildings, thefts of quad bikes and 4x4s, sheep rustling and the like, but also covers poaching, illegal off-roading, bird persecution, destruction of nests and badger baiting.

That is a bit of what has been happening since the last meeting.

Peak District Boundary Walk

Julie Gough, Friends of the Peak District

Did you know that the current Peak District National Park boundary is almost identical to the one drawn up and proposed by our founders – Ethel and Gerald Haythornthwaite – almost 90 years ago?

Friends of the Peak District has devised a new 190-mile walk which never strays far from that boundary and celebrates not only the huge diversity of our first national park but also its historical significance.

Following existing paths, tracks and quiet lanes the route enjoys a wonderful mix of all that the Peak District has to offer, from dramatic crags and open moorland to quiet woodlands and popular trails, with the space to enjoy its tranquillity. And mile for mile it's hillier than the Pennine Way!

One reason for devising the route was to raise awareness of the Peak District's outstanding natural beauty and to encourage people to cherish and protect it. Walkers will find themselves away from the crowds and common hotspots of the Peak, in quieter, less well-known corners of the national park.

The Friends are also publishing a guidebook to accompany the route, edited by local author Andrew McCloy and due out in June 2017. This has been a collaborative project: after mapping the approximate route on paper, volunteers walked it on the ground and made many improvements using their local knowledge. They have also written articles for the book about conservation issues and campaigns which the Friends are involved with.

The Boundary Walk will be launched at 12 noon on Saturday 17 June at Buxton Town Hall by Emma Bridgewater, president of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

www.friendsofthepeak.org.uk



Ned Feehallyon *Arthur's Bulge*, Mother Cap Quarry.
Photo: Feehally Collection.

Climbing News & Gossip

Dave Parry

Let's start with a rant: is it me or has this winter just been the worst gritstone season ever? Warm, wet, humid and generally unsettled.

Then when the weather does improve it manages to be amazing only on weekdays, and then reliably poor again on the weekend. If it carries on like this I may as well move to somewhere with no decent gritstone on its doorstep. I was thinking of Leeds.

Now on to the rather paltry smattering of recent happenings scraped from the bottom of the news barrel. With that in mind let's first mention a few new problems at Rivelin courtesy of web forum magnate and BMC marketing supremo Simon Lee and accomplices. Full details on UKB, but they are in the general area of the left end of the crag near *Master Kush*, grades in the 5s and 6s. They look all right, although Simon did a new arête problem too with Pete Dalton (famed for starting the band Pulp) so I'm

sure that one will be in a Different Class.

Notching the grades up a few gazillion now, a young Irish lad David Fitzgerald has been over and repeated Ben Moon's testpiece and notorious skin-shredder *Voyager Sit Start*. That's 8b+ lest we forget, not a bad visitor's tick. Looks like he did it the day before St Patrick's Day, which is unfortunate as it robs me of an opportunity to pad the column out by milking some tenuous Irish link or indulging in some national stereotyping to be sure to be sure. I think this might be the same 'Irish Dave', as he's imaginatively known by at least one person, who flashed *Stuey Five Bellies* at the School Room last time he was over in Sheffield, so obviously a man of exquisite good taste.

Speaking of good taste, and moving east of the Peak, a venue that has inexplicably managed to avoid being on the circuit for top-level international jetsetting uberwads is Earth Quarry at Conisborough. Well that is soon to change as Mike Adams has done an 8c problem there. Yes that's not a typo – EIGHT CEE. Actual Font 8c. In a hole in the

ground in a former colliery village in Doncaster. I tip my hat to Mike not only for the physical difficulty of his *Bordello* problem, but for the vision to see past conceived norms of aesthetic appeal and not to be worried about what sneering armchair commentators such as myself will make of it. To be fair I've never been to the crag so I have no idea if it's as bad as it sounds or looks in videos or in photos, but the sheer difficulty of this new offering will surely put the crag on the map. Certainly if you want to combine 8c cranking with a visit to a partially restored 11th-century castle then you could do a lot worse (English Heritage members get in free).

Far from being typecast as a quality-blind mutant-strong quarry botherer Mike has also added an extension finish to one of his existing hard testpieces at Impossible Roof near Roche Abbey, a steep limestone crag with, let's say, a more conventional aesthetic appeal (i.e. you WOULD be seen dead there). *Serenation* is a variation finish on his *Serenata* problem, and shows that while I moan about the weather, Mike is out there knocking the 8c problems out like it's going out of fashion. Nice work Mike.

Back to grit and one of the best of the handful of new problems to report is Ned Feehally's problem on the boulder perched above Mother Cap Quarry, named *Arthur's Bulge* and graded 7c+. I have seen a video of this and it looks good, but does seem to involve the full repertoire of Feehally tricks – toehooks, slopers, heels above your head, locking off to your waist etc. Don't expect an easy ride. Ned also reports he's done a sit start to *Small is Beautiful* at Burbage (conceivably may have been done before) and also a 7a mantel problem by the File at Higgars, amusingly named *Higgars With Attitude*. I'm not going to explain that one so don't ask.

Not much to report on the hard gritstone route front again. I hear James

Turnbull (not that one, the other one) has repeated *Nah'han E7/8* at Gardoms, but other than that it seems either weather or fashion, I'm not sure which, has put the kaibosh on the hard grit repeats this winter. Speaking of *Hard Grit*, this year marks 20 years since that iconic film was released. There's an event on commemorating the film at Abbeydale Picture House organised by Grimer and Matt Heason. I wouldn't normally give a free plug to these things, but I'm fairly confident that this newsletter won't be out until after the event anyway. I assume it was a cracking night and a good time was had by all, a few deckouts were relived, and many an amusing anecdote was told. Makes you think though how focus has shifted in 20 years; you look at the hard routes getting done and repeated these days and really nobody is doing much that's significantly harder than what was being done 20 years ago, despite general bouldering standards skyrocketing. We're probably due another hard grit renaissance, maybe this 20-year anniversary will prompt the next generation to get out there and put up the next hard routes, the futuristic lines. Who will be the new Seb Grieve, and can anything tear them away from their latticeboards and weighted deadhangs?

Speaking of Seb Grieve, there are a few new problems at the Moorside area of Gardom's courtesy of the *Hard Grit* star himself. Decidedly less trouser-filling looking than his exploits from the film, these problems are on a boulder by the path beneath the Suavito boulder. Grades in the 4–6 range. No mention of a shipwreck of a flake, but still for full effect I recommend popping on your jeans, polo neck and Anasazis and talking to yourself all the way up. Where's that Metolius mat?

Get in touch

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

The BMC AGM: Use Your Vote

Chris Moor

So as winter finally turns to spring, the clocks go forward and the midges start to hatch. It's also time for the BMC's Annual General Meeting. This year it's being held on 22 April at Plas y Brenin.

It's been a funny old year for the BMC and so it continues, with former president Bob Pettigrew formally tabling a motion of no confidence in the current Executive Committee.

The full wording of the motion can be found here:

www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-agm-agenda--motion

It has to be said that the motion, which accuses the exec of poor governance and withholding 'future policy decisions' from last year's AGM, is somewhat lacking in detail. It would appear that some further written arguments have been circulated privately, and in some cases have made their way on to the usual online forums. Bob has been invited to the Peak Area meeting on 5 April in the hope that he can provide some substance to his accusations.

The BMC has responded to the motion with two documents that can be found on its website. Firstly from the president:

www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-agm-presidents-statement-2017

And then from Martin Wragg, the BMC Honorary Solicitor:

www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-agm-agenda--motion

I would strongly advise everyone who cares about the BMC to spend five minutes reading these articles. One thing that is unclear, however, is what would happen if the motion is passed. My guess would be that the Executive would feel compelled to resign either immediately, or pending an Extraordinary General Meeting, in which all positions are up for election. The effect of leaving the BMC rudderless for this period is, of course, impossible to assess.

If you aren't planning to go to the AGM, but want to ensure your voice is heard on this crucial matter, then voting is simple. All BMC members should receive a voting card with their spring edition of *Summit*. You must appoint a proxy to vote on your behalf, but this can be the chair of the meeting and you can instruct them exactly how to vote on your behalf. Alternatively you can nominate someone else to be your proxy, although the only reason to do this is if you are undecided on the issue and want your proxy to decide for you.

More details on proxy voting, including additional forms should you need them, can be found here:

www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-agm-proxy-voting-explained



Mountain hare hiding in heather. Photo: Carl Bedson.

Have You Seen a Mountain Hare Recently?

Carl Bedson

Seeing a mountain hare dashing across the heather is one of the delights we enjoy in the Peak District. In winter, these small mammals lend an Arctic appearance to the moors. They have bright white coats in winter, which turn brown in summer.

However, did you know that mountain hares had died out in the last Ice Age? They were actually reintroduced to the Peak District in the 1880s by a group of landowners, who brought some down from Perthshire. From those early translocations we now have a population of bunnies which hide amongst the cloughs of Bleaklow, Kinder Scout, Holme Moss, Saddleworth and the Derwent Edges.

Despite this apparent success mountain hares are vulnerable, enduring a harsh life upon the cold and exposed moors. Their distribution in the Peak District is patchy;

it appears they do not occupy all the habitats available to them. Mountain hares may face threats including disturbance by humans, changes in land use, roadkill and climate change. They are also under pressure from the European brown hare, which sometimes competes with mountain hares for territory, or even hybridises with them.

To investigate these matters a study is now taking place, co-ordinated by Manchester Metropolitan University and involving a number of wildlife and conservation charities. If you see either a mountain or brown hare, please send information (six-figure OS map references), photos or anecdotes to me. Such observations will be used to help understand the status of the mountain hares and how we may safeguard them for future generations.

Email: carl.bedson@btinternet.com

Hill Walking Notes

Peter Judd

A Strategic Plan for Hill Walking: Latest News

I'm delighted to report that February's National Council meeting unanimously approved the Hill Walking Working Group's (HWWG) Strategic Plan – fantastic news! As Dave Turnbull reported at our last area meeting, Sport England has shown interest in the possibility of funding some of the proposed developments too, at least for one year and possibly longer, though it is hoped the proposed developments will eventually become self-sustaining through growing hill walker membership. So the HWWG has been wound up on an extremely optimistic note!

The strategy proposed the setting up of a Hill Walking Standing Committee, however National Council has chosen to recommend a short-term **Hill Walking Implementation Group** instead, to oversee the early stages of making the strategy happen. It's likely that some of the HWWG's membership will be invited to be part of this, so it's quite possible that Peak Area will continue to be represented. Those of you who read my article about the strategy last time will know that it's bold and ambitious. It's exciting to think that the first steps in implementing it are already being taken.

Mend our Mountains 2

Mend our Mountains (MoM) was a huge success both nationally (over £100k raised plus an enormous amount of positive media attention) and locally (£17k going towards national park's Ringing Roger path repairs).

Thoughts have moved on to **MoM2** with an ambitious target of £1m (gulp!). Carey Davies held an open forum discussion about the Peak District's involvement as part of the BMC's contribution to ShAFF. National parks have been asked to propose projects. Peak

District National Park Authority's Mike Rhodes is currently considering putting in proposals based around two iconic Peak District paths with quite different characteristics: firstly a section of the hugely popular **Great Ridge** between Hollins Cross and Lose Hill, and secondly, a contribution to improvements to some of the most damaged sections of the **Cut Gate** bridleway that runs from the top of Howden reservoir to Langsett.

The second of these is already the focus of discussion amongst the mountain biking community with Ride Sheffield and Peak District MTB. They have published a discussion document about this route, inviting collaboration with other users groups. While there are tensions between some parts of the walking community and some MTBers it is also clear that both organisations mentioned are doing much to improve MTBer behaviour and reputation. So collaboration over Cut Gate might offer an opportunity for walkers and MTBers to improve further their relationship and gain a better understanding of one another.

What are your thoughts about these two proposals? Something to discuss at future area meetings I think!

Attention All Clubs

Austin and I would like to update our records of any hill walking leads/representatives within BMC-affiliated clubs in the Peak Area and we will be using the BMC database to contact clubs directly. However, I have done this in the past with limited success, attributing the limited response to outdated records. If you could email austinjknott@gmail.com with any updated details of key contacts in your club that would be really helpful.

Our ambition is to set up a network of contacts; to find out what hill walking activity is going on at grassroots level in clubs across the Peak; and to use the

network to help shape the implementation of the national hill walking strategy, as well as helping support our local clubs.

Peak Mountaineering's 'Pick and Play' Event

Fancy being rewarded, for half a day's cleaning up of our countryside, by an opportunity to take part in a supported outdoor activity for a few hours, or know someone who might? Local mountain activities and training company Castleton-based Peak Mountaineering has been running their imaginative 'Pick and Play' one-day clean-up event in the Peak for the past six years and will do so again this year – on Sunday 14 May, most likely operating out of Surprise View car park above Hathersage.

This entirely FREE and family friendly event offers participants the opportunity to make a difference by taking part in a clean-up, organised in conjunction with Peak Park Conservation Volunteers, and then uses volunteer instructors (mostly local members of the Association of Mountaineering Instructors) to offer reward activities. Last year these included abseiling, climbing, bushcraft, navigation workshops and a Ranger-led nature walk, all aimed at beginner level and offering an opportunity for the curious to try something new.

While beginner-level rewards might not immediately appeal to experienced BMC members (though some may fancy the navigation workshops maybe?) many of us probably have friends or family members who care about the environment and, perhaps have an interest in trying out one of the outdoor activities they know we are so keen on. So please point anyone you know, who might be tempted, towards this excellent event.

This year the BMC locally has a small involvement because I will be there as Hill Walking Volunteer Rep. to help draw participants' attention towards the work of

the BMC, especially in upland access and conservation, with a few BMC leaflets, booklet and other giveaways. I have also volunteered to help with providing some of the post clean-up activities too. Find out more and express interest:

www.peakmountaineering.com/blog/2017/03/15/Peak_District_Pick_Play/

For avoidance of confusion, please note: this event in no way replaces our own Peak Area crag clean-up that will hopefully take place again later in the summer (it's aimed at a completely different audience). All being well we'll add a clean-up walk to that too!

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 22 April: Spirit of Kinder Day, Edale Village Hall, 2 p.m. start. An impressive range of speakers is promised, including Dame Helen Ghosh, director general of the National Trust (talking about NT's role as owner of much of Kinder). The BMC will have a stand too; come and say hello if you attend! More info in Henry's access news on page 3.

Late June or early July: BMC Peak Area weekday evening hill walk in association with Moors for the Future. Plans are at an advanced stage to go and look at some of the amazing moorland restoration work done as part of the Moors for the Future programme. Keep an eye on the Peak Area Facebook page for more details.

Sunday 6 August: BMC Peak Area hill walk from Buxton heading up on to Axe Edge. This walk will be led by volunteer rep. Austin Knott. More details in the next newsletter and on the Peak Area Facebook. Email Austin to express early interest: **austinjknot@gmail.com**



Win Hill and Lose Hill from Kinder.
Photo: Austin Knott.

Activist Profile: Peter Judd

Age?

56.

Where do you live?

Sheffield.

Occupation?

University teacher, electronic engineering.

Where did you grow up?

I'm a Geordie by birth but I spent most of my childhood and youth in south Cumbria, that's where my love of fell walking was born. The Lake District mountains will always have a special place in my heart.

Who do you go walking with currently?

Mostly with my wife (we met in a walking club; I'm forever grateful that I have a partner who shares my biggest interest), often with local walking clubs, sometimes leading.

Describe what you did when you last went out?

A club walk around the Manifold Valley last weekend. Some ace views despite the rain, but unbelievably muddy underfoot!

When and how did you get into walking?

Huge thanks to a sixth-form teacher who took us walking in the Lakes every Wednesday afternoon (got me out of team sports too). I wonder how many of us have an inspirational teacher to thank for introducing us to the outdoors? Drifted away from walking for a few years but visiting the Isle of Skye I saw the extraordinary Cuillin range; that relit my passion for mountains and I've not looked back since. I wasted my university years in Sheffield by not taking advantage of the wonderful Peak District on my

doorstep – I've been making up for that ever since!

What constitutes a good day out walking for you? Length, challenge, company, weather etc?

Ten to twelve miles, somewhere new, a good ridge or edge to walk along, maybe a bit of scrambling, a summit or two and just my wife for company. Any weather will do (well, maybe not for the scrambling bit), nothing like a good battle with the elements to give you a glow of satisfaction at the end of the day! Some good cake in a decent tea shop at the end followed a good pub meal in the evening would round it off nicely thanks!

Do you have a favourite area for walking in the Peak?

I love the Dark Peak, the spectacular weather-worn gritstone outcrops and deep cloughs of the northern edges of Kinder Scout, Blackden Brook, Seal Edge, Fairbrook Naze are all a bit special.

What one piece of advice would you give anyone not from an outdoors background who's just getting into hill walking today?

Find some experienced folk to hook up with, and if you can't find any then join a BMC club that includes walking amongst its activities. Then commit yourself to picking up as much knowledge and as many skills as possible. It's OK having others always lead you round but it's much more fun when you become able to find your own way about and can take care of yourself. When I returned to fell walking after school I taught myself navigation using books as I was doing loads of solo walking and needed to be responsible for myself. I then decided to get the Mountain Leader award too, loving every



Peter on the Great Ridge.
Photo: Glynis Judd.

minute of the training, the consolidation period and the even the assessment!

What do think of the BMC?

I've been a member for years but had never bothered to find out what the area meetings were all about until three years ago. I was amazed to discover the extent of the work of our Peak Area access volunteers and just how much of it is of value to Peak walkers, not just climbers. It has been a huge privilege to represent the Peak Area on the recently ended National Hill Walking Working Group. I've met some fantastic and very able people amongst both the Peak Area activists and my fellow HWWG members, not forgetting the various officers I've dealt with, and not least our hill walking officer Carey Davies. The willingness of the organisation to step up to the challenge of better representing hill walkers has been very satisfying. Now we need to make sure that many more adventurous hill walkers discover just how valuable – no, essential – the BMC is to them and bring them on-board. Who else will stand up for our interests?



Curbar Edge. Photo: John Coefield.

National Trust Update: March 2017

Luke Barley

White Peak

Our main focus in the White Peak this winter has been finishing off scrub management and fencing works as part of farm tenants' agri-environment grant schemes.

Our big challenge here in terms of biodiversity is balancing the grassland, scrub and woodland habitats and with these interventions we try to ensure we're getting that balance right; protecting the best bits of wildflower-rich grassland while still allowing scrub (which birds and invertebrates love) to thrive elsewhere. We've also completed a plan for all our woodlands to ensure they remain in good condition in the face of the threat from ash dieback, and following extensive partnership working with Natural England and the Forestry Commission, we'll hopefully start the practical work next winter. In the Hamps valley this will also mean some restoration

of coppice management – cyclical cutting of understorey species like hazel – to benefit dormice. In preparation for this work we've also been restoring some old dormouse nestboxes that were installed throughout the valley a decade ago, and rejuvenating our survey effort.

Visitors to Ilam will have noticed that the 'zigzags' down from the garden to the river are closed; Storm Doris felled an enormous ash tree which destabilised two of the steep paths and clattered lots of railings as it fell in a singlehanded wave of destruction. Contractors are currently working to rebuild revetment walls and we'll have the paths open as soon as possible. Doris also rudely interrupted our project to lay a long hedge next to Bunster Hill, but we still got a few hundred metres done. Hedgelaying is a traditional skill where shrub species like hawthorn

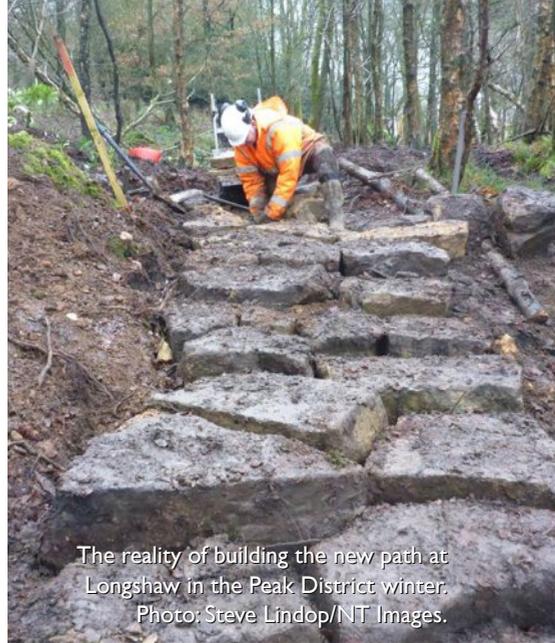
are 'laid' over while still partially attached, so they stay alive but form an impenetrable barrier to stock. As well as keeping the craft alive, laid hedges provide a better habitat for lots of small animals, birds and invertebrates.

Dark Peak

We're continuing to work hard on our MoorLIFE 2020 and Higher Level Stewardship projects to improve the ecological condition of the moors, which simultaneously improves their value for biodiversity and their ability to store carbon and provide clean drinking water. Some of the heavy work – like installing dams in gullies or cutting heather – stops at this time of year to make sure we don't disturb nesting birds, but monitoring the effect of work to date and planning for its resumption in the summer continues apace. We've got some shiny new equipment to cut heather, with the aim being to diversify the age structure and provide a better habitat that also allows other species to colonise, like sphagnum mosses (which we'll also introduce to the cut areas). Cutting heather also plays an important role in our management to guard against wild fires.

You might notice a lot of helicopter activity at the moment and this is a big push to get old materials down off the moors – we've been taking down redundant fences and clearing up other waste products. We've also planted another 30,000 trees in the cloughs this winter (on top of the previous year's 50,000!) which will again hugely improve their habitat value while also managing water well, and plays a key part of our High Peak Moors Vision.

Last but not least, heavy rain has washed some of our tracks and paths away so we've got a big job on fixing them along with our usual summer programme of maintaining and improving the access network.



The reality of building the new path at Longshaw in the Peak District winter. Photo: Steve Lindop/NT Images.

Longshaw

If you've been to Longshaw recently you'll have noticed a huge amount of work around the main visitor area. The main feature will be a new path through the woods from the car park to the tea room; this will be accessible for all and provide a really pleasant short circular route. It should be open by May half-term. We've also planted a new hedge to create a safe play area near the Woodcroft car park.

The restoration of the wood pasture continues with the planting of around 70 oak and hawthorn this winter; these are widely spaced and the oaks will grow to be impressive landscape trees. Elsewhere in the woods, we'll be doing bird surveys in areas we've been managing since 2011; they were surveyed before the work started so it will be fascinating to see how the bird populations have responded. A survey last summer of pied flycatchers using nestboxes provided a very positive result as we observed 31 pairs raising 103 chicks following a brilliant effort in woodland management, nestbox management, and surveying by rangers and volunteers; a real conservation success story.

Peak Area Meetings

2017

5 April, 7.30 p.m.
The Maynard, Grindleford

7 June, 7.30 p.m.
The Maynard, Grindleford

13 September, 7.30 p.m.
The Maynard, Grindleford

22 November, 7.30 p.m.
The Maynard, Grindleford

Forthcoming Events

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

Spirit of Kinder Day

22 April, Edale Village Hall

BBC Radio Sheffield's Rony Robinson hosts this year's event, which includes high-profile speakers, cakes, music from Sally Goldsmith and the launch of a new book, *Clarion Call*. More info on pages 3 and 4.

Pinnacle Club Open Meet

12–14 May, Bob Downes Hut, Froggatt

The Pinnacle Club is a UK-based club of enthusiastic women climbers. This meet provides an opportunity for prospective club members to see how a meet works and to get to know the club. You must be able to safely lead climbs at whatever level you climb at, so this is not a club for beginners. More info on the BMC website.

Friends of the Peak District

Annual Challenge Walk,

20 May, 9 a.m. onwards

A choice of three routes, all starting from the Royal Oak in Wetton. Email Julie for more info: julie@friendsofthepeak.org.uk

BMC Peak Area Contacts

Peak Area Chair: Rob Greenwood.
robgreenwood@bmcvolunteers.org.uk

Secretary: Becky Hammond.
becky@bmcvolunteers.org.uk

Peak Area Reps (your voice on the BMC National Council):
Rob Greenwood and Dave Brown.
<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
Austin Knott.
austinjknott@gmail.com

Peak Area Newsletter Editorial:
Dave Parry and John Coefield.
peakarea@gmail.com

Next meeting: Wednesday 5 April, 7.30 p.m.
The Maynard, Grindleford, S32 2HE