

# BMC Cymru Newsletter: January 2018

**Croeso/Welcome to the first BMC Cymru newsletter of 2018 and more importantly the very first BMC Cymru newsletter to cover both BMC Cymru North (Gogledd) and South (De) as separate BMC Areas!**

**Apologies for the lack of graphics or translations – this is a one off that hopefully will become glossier, bilingual and possibly even interesting to read when a nice BMC member volunteers to put it together next time!**

## **An introduction to the new Chairs of BMC Cymru Gogledd and De...**

**Tim Jepson, Chair of BMC Cymru North (Gogledd)**

*During a busy career in the outdoors, initially as an instructor at Plas y Brenin and latterly as a Senior Lecturer in Education at Bangor University, I never felt that I had the time to become more than superficially involved in BMC affairs. However, now in active retirement, when I was approached to take over from Kate as the chair of BMC Cymru (North) I knew it was time to get involved and to give something back to the mountains which have been such an integral part of my personal and professional lives.*

*My first ever rock climb, with family over Easter 1961, was on Clogwyn y Tarw, followed the next day by my first Welsh 3000er, Tryfan. The Ogwen Valley instantly became my spiritually home and has been my actual home since 1975 .... give or take a few kilometres! My wife is a competent Welsh learner and our two daughters are fully bilingual, and 'sgeni ddim llawer o hyder pan dwi'n siarad Cymraeg! We are all keen climbers, walkers, bikers and paddlers in the UK and abroad, but a good day out in Wales, so close to home, is always something very special.*

*I don't claim to be well-versed in outdoor politics and, as I prepare to chair my first full, local area meeting, it is becoming clear to me just how complex and interconnected are all the issues of funding, access, membership, organisations, clubs, recreation, training, safety, environment etc., especially in the light of partially devolved government in Wales which imposes an extra layer of complexity on it all.*

*BMC officers and volunteers already do a fantastic job of bringing their knowledge and expertise to bear on the key issues which affect members' interests. I see it as my job as area chair, not to try to match their expertise, but to help to bring it all together, to seek compromise where necessary and to help develop strategic solutions which benefit all mountain users.*

*The BMC has been through some turbulent times recently and this will result in change. But that process of change gives us the opportunity to influence the restructuring of BMC Cymru to give it a stronger Welsh identity and to offer a more focused response to the needs of members, present and future. I hope to be part of that process.*

*Tim*

### **Ollie Burrows, Chair of BMC Cymru South (De)**

(they are his own words – honestly!):-

*“Ollie is an avid climber of all disciplines who dabbles in running long distances to distract himself when the weather is rubbish. Having been on trips to the USA, the Alps, Norway, Spain, Germany, Patagonia, and Scotland he has amassed a well-rounded climbing CV with some half decent running results to boot. Having moved back to South Wales five years ago he has been active in the South Wales area both repeating routes and establishing new classics\*.*

*My hope for the South Wales area is to get a higher level of engagement with the BMC in the local climbing community and to improve and increase the numbers transitioning from the indoor walls to the crags in the area in a sustainable and informed way.*

*(\*This may be debatable!).*

*Cheers and look forward to see as many of you as possible at the next meeting.*

*Ollie*

## **Stop Press!!**

As we are about to publish this newsletter, news comes in that Eric Jones – such an amazing supporter of climbing and the BMC at Bwlch y Moch has finally retired from managing one of the most well-known climbing cafes in the world. A new owner, Gareth Streatfield, has bought the café and campsite and has great plans to further develop the facilities and is really keen to work with the BMC and climbers and to continue with the same ethos as Eric and Ann. The BMC would like to thank Eric and Ann for the great work and support given to climbers over very many years. More come on this later.....

## **BMC Organisational Review and BMC Cymru/Wales – WhichWay Forward?**

A group of current and past key BMC Cymru volunteer post-holders met recently to consider and respond to BMC Organisational Review Group recommendations/proposals regarding operation and structure of BMC in Wales. They produced interim proposals to be shared and agreed with the wider membership in response to Proposal 25 of the ORG report, “The BMC should consider a clearly defined sub-group or creation of a wholly owned subsidiary for effective delivery of the BMC’s operations and support in and for Wales/Cymru”. However many of these matters had already been noted and discussed at previous BMC Cymru meetings and are matters that the BMC needs to plan for irrespective of the outcomes of the ORG. These will be considered in more detail and your views sought at the next round of area meetings. Meeting information and the proposals can be seen on the [BMC Local Areas site](#)

## **Access & Conservation issues**

### **Range West 2018**

To climb in Range West Pembrokeshire you have to attend an annual safety briefing at the Castlemartin Army Camp. The dates and times for the 2018 briefings are:

Thursday 22 February @ 18:00

Friday 30 March @ 10:00 (Good Friday)

Thursday 26 April @ 18:00

Saturday 28 April @ 10:00

Thursday 24 May @ 18:00

Saturday 26 May @ 10:00 (Whitsun Bank Holiday).

In addition there is no firing on the range (so access to all the cliffs, subject to the seasonal nesting bird restrictions) on the following dates:

Easter shutdown 24 March – 8 April

Summer shutdown 4 August – 2 September

### **Snowdonia National Park – huge cutbacks**

BMC has heard that due to a funding deficit of over £700,000, the Snowdonia National Park Authority is considering substantial cutbacks to some of its services and an increase in fees such as parking fees. It appears likely that the Warden and Access service could suffer considerable cutbacks with a suggestion that at least four warden posts may go and a substantial cutback in the National Parks work on rights of way and other paths. The car park fees are proposed to rise to £6 per day for most car parks, along with the removal of the half-day rate (£5) from Pen y Pass forcing all parking to pay the full day rate of £10 and removing the half day rate from the Nant Peris car park (will be a minimum fee of £5 irrespective of length of stay). BMC is responding to this.

### **Tremfest is back!**

The popular gathering of climbers at Tremadog, organised by the BMC to carry out essential work at the BMC owned and managed crags at Tremadog and to clear overgrown routes is back for 2018. Put the date in your diaries – turn up with gloves, secateurs, sickles, handsaws and clothes that you are happy to get covered in mud and be prepared to win amazing (well....ok, some fun) prizes in the by now infamous prize draw (oh and get some free beer...). **Saturday 21 April is the day.....!**

### **Welsh Government Consultation on Natural Resources (and Access!)**

This was completed in the autumn and we are still waiting for the Government's response – thanks to all who responded and supported the BMC's response. The Welsh Government received over 16,000 responses – by far the most popular consultation on new laws that it has ever done. We are imminently expecting a response from the new Minister for Environment and are quietly optimistic that the BMC's main ask – to extend CROW open access land to include the coast and cliffs will be included in new legislation.

## Birds and nesting season

Finally on the access side – it's nearly bird nesting time again and that time of year when our feathered friends take back possession of some of their nesting grounds. Thanks to everyone who stuck to the rules and avoided climbing on those restricted crags but there were a few infringements of climbing restrictions last year – notably in Pembrokeshire. So please check the current situation on the [BMC Regional Access Database](#) (RAD) and look out for on-site signage at Pembroke, Clwyd limestone and the Ormes. It is a criminal offence to disturb or damage the nest of any nesting bird and disturbance of any nesting bird within an SSSI is also an offence. Some other birds (notably Peregrine and Chough) have additional legal protection. "Disturbance" can be difficult to define but any human activity that causes the birds to become agitated, to move and /or stay off the nest, to display agitated flying such as dive-bombing or flying in circles making screeching noise can be deemed to be disturbance.

## Youth and Comps

The last couple of years have been really exciting to be involved with youth climbing in North Wales. This year a number of climbers were either reselected or selected for the first time to the British youth development squad. Well done to Kieran Forrest, Finn Hayward, Ruby Wood and Jamie Jenkins who were all rewarded for the hard work needed to get to the standard required. Youth climbing outside is also healthy, highlights being Finn Hayward's quick ascent of Statement of Youth (8a) at Lower Pen Trwyn and sending Corridors of Power (font 7c+) in the Pass. If I am not mistaken Kieran Forrest climbed sport 8b (at least!) this year.

Watch this space, with so many motivated youths these will not be the only stand out performances.

*Fraser Ball (Coach for North Wales Youth Climbing Academy.)*

## The important stuff!

Next Area meetings are:-

BMC Cymru North Wales Area Meeting will take place at **Lodge Dinorwig on Tuesday 30 January 2018, starting at 7.30pm (food from 7.00pm).**

[Find out more on the BMC Local Areas site](#)

The BMC Cymru South Wales Area Meeting will take place at Swansea University (Bay Campus) SA1 8EN on **Sunday 11 February 2018, starting at 7.00pm.**

[Find out more on the BMC Local Areas site](#)

BMC Mid Wales outreach group – provisionally **Wednesday 18 April 2018 at White Lion Machynlleth at 7.30pm.**

[Find out more on the BMC Local Areas site](#)