



Cyngor Mynyddda Prydain Cymru – Gogledd  
BMC Cymru/Wales – North

## Annual Report Adroddiad Blynyddol November 2018

### Chair's Report

My first year as Chair of BMC Cymru has been dominated by the BMC's Organisational Review and the opportunities which the review has presented for developing the BMC's work in Wales. Although I was unfortunately unable to chair two of last year's local area meetings, I did, as chair, make a presentation to a mid-Wales area meeting, attend a Ramblers Cymru networking event in Cardiff, participate in two meetings discussing the 'Way Forward in Wales', contribute to an Area Chairs phone conference and to the Manchester Open Forum, and act as our rep. at the last MTUK meeting. I also attended the Tremadog Festival, a drop-in session of the Prosiect Carneddau and the Gwyl Mynyddda Ogwen, alongside much time spent emailing, lobbying, telephoning and discussing matters on behalf of BMC Cymru Gogledd

Not only has my first year as chair helped me establish a better understanding of the work of the BMC, it has also strengthened my belief in the value, complexity and subtlety of that work. Not much that the BMC does is simple and indeed many of the problems it faces require careful negotiation and compromise solutions which can become emotive and divisive, as exemplified by the Organisational Review.

I was therefore pleased that we managed to keep the OR discussion in Wales civil and purposeful and that the strong endorsement of the Organisational Review Group's recommendations at the Kendal AGM was a nationwide reflection of our discussions and vote in North Wales. However, I would also argue that in North Wales we lost out to some degree because we never really heard the dissenting viewpoint, a viewpoint supported by a minority of BMC members, but with principled arguments worthy of examination.

In light of the complexity of the BMC's work, I consider the North Wales region to be extremely lucky to be able to draw on the varied knowledge and experience of a tremendous range of experts amongst its members. I won't name names for fear of missing someone out, but in the fields of Mountain Rescue, Mountain Training, Equity, Governance, Environment, Access, National Parks, National Trust, Education, Climbing Walls, Expeditions, Competition, elsh OrganisationEquipment .... and more .... we have genuine world-leading practitioners and innovators on whom we can call for advice. This expertise potentially puts BMC Cymru Gogledd in an influential position in terms of driving future BMC policy developments in Manchester, but paradoxically its influence in Cardiff is currently constrained by not having a separate identity in Wales.

In the coming year, we have a one-off opportunity (supported, I believe, by the CEO, President and newly-appointed chair of the Board of Directors) to develop that identity in Wales as part of the implementation of the OR recommendations and we must not let that opportunity slip through our fingers. It is up to us!

That identity should lead to the ability to respond to devolved policy initiatives, a paid BMC officer with a clear responsibility for Welsh issues, an appropriate language policy and

better links with other outdoor organisations in Wales, all sadly lacking currently. If BMC Cymru can become one of the key, respected and consulted outdoor organisations in Wales it will benefit not only those members resident in Wales, but all BMC members who visit Wales.

It is only by significantly developing the identity and influence of BMC Cymru in Wales that we can begin to deal effectively with the local issues, such as access, conservation, transport, waymarking etc. that many members understandably feel are at the heart of what the BMC should be doing.

One idea that I may decide to pursue in 2019 is to hold a couple of single-issues meetings, in addition to the five local area meetings. Potential topics for a single-issue meeting might be Micro-hydro schemes in Snowdonia, or The bolting of granite quarries in North Wales ...I would be happy to receive other suggestions. It has been a frustration for me during the last year to find that there is rarely time to discuss important issues in sufficient depth to reach any sort of conclusion. Single-issue meetings could allow that in-depth discussion between those with a genuine interest in the topic, and lead to a specific policy proposal to take to the next area meeting for endorsement

I have very much appreciated the contributions, formal and informal, of all the members and volunteers with whom I have had contact this year and I look forward to consolidating our relationships in 2019. But I would like to finish this 2018 report by thanking in particular Dan Lane, Anthony Eccles (our NC reps.) and Elfyn Jones (Access and Conservation Officer for Wales) without whose guidance and support I would have been totally lost this year.

Tim Jepson

## **National Council**

The topics taking up the majority of discussion time at National Council meetings have all been related to the Organisational Review and its implementation. Of locally relevant issues, the approval to purchase Craig y Forwen (if purchase proves the best way to ensure long-term access) was by far the most significant. Thanks go to Andy Boorman who stood in as the North Wales rep. at NC in April to successfully present the case for purchase of Craig y Forwen.

Dan Lane

Anthony Eccles

## **Youth Development**

Youth climbing in North Wales has gone from strength to strength in 2018. Four young climbers: Ruby Wood, Kieran Forrest, Jamie Jenkins and Finn Hayward (all previous North Wales Youth Climbing Academy members) have been in the GB development squad, competing at a number of international competitions.

The NWYCA continues to help develop high-performing young climbers, a number of whom are going to the GB squad selection in the near future.

Youth climbers from North Wales are also performing well outside. This year Finn Hayward has climbed sport 8a+ (also a number of 8a's) and 7c+/8a on boulders.

Youth trad. climbing is also happening outside, with young climbers on-sighting up to E5. The number of kids climbing at the walls is amazing, and with 6 year-olds climbing 6b indoors, the future looks bright. The North Wales region should be proud of its young climbers.

Fraser Ball

## **Mountain Training UK**

Unfortunately, this year I have only managed to attend half of the meetings but have kept a close liaison with MTUK and stakeholders in between times. The main issues arising out of meetings this year, that BMC members would have an interest in, are the completion of the Climbing Walls review which has been a lengthy process and has had some very relevant and valued input from a number of BMC members along the way .... so we should thank all those involved for their time and efforts. A key area for the BMC is that this review has introduced a new scheme of personal skills certificates similar to the previous Hill & Mountain Skills. This new Rock Skills scheme aims to engage with the growing indoor climbing participants and introduce them to the joys of climbing outdoors. It is a staged process from introduction; Intermediate and through to Learn to Lead (Trad & Sport). This can have a very direct and positive impact on membership demographic and an opportunity for BMC to also engage with a new audience as well as benefiting clubs and individual members. There were also some amendments to naming the awards, in order to make things clearer for the general public, and the introduction of some entirely new climbing instructor and assistant awards.

Another interesting development is the re-igniting of the association's working group. There have been some very beneficial initiatives across our sister organisations in Scotland and Ireland and in the first meeting this year it was agreed that we could all work better together, thus reintroducing the small informal group that meets before and after the meetings to share developments and good practice.

Ross Worthington

## **Climbing Walls**

Jon Ratcliffe

## **Hillwalking**

To be added later

Anthony Eccles

## **Mountain Training Cymru**

No Report