

CYLCHLYTHYR BMC CYMRU

NEWSLETTER

Golygydd Editor: Neal Hockley dringo.cymru@gmail.com



De South



Cadeirydd: Ollie Burrows

With Christmas out of the way along with its inherent overeating and drinking many of us are now looking forward to a 2019 with the hills and mountains in the fore of our minds. In the first of the South

Wales Area meetings we are looking at access issues that have gone positively and others that will continue to need our attention, including **Llandarcy, Henrhyd Falls** and **Pant Quarry**.

We also have exciting news about the year ahead on our local sea cliffs including the **Range West Briefings**. Finally, as a new segment of every meeting we will be asking anyone with a new or redeveloped crag to pop along to tell us about it, informing the masses so to speak.

From me, I hope you had a lovely Christmas and hope to see you at a meeting shortly.

Cyfarfodau Ardal Area Meetings

De South: Tue 22 Jan 2019, 7.30pm (food from 7.00pm)
Venue: Port Talbot YMCA, SA13 1HU

Gogledd North: Tue 22 Jan 2019, 8.00pm (food from 7.30pm)
Venue: Beacon Climbing Centre, Caernarfon, LL55 2BD

Gogledd North



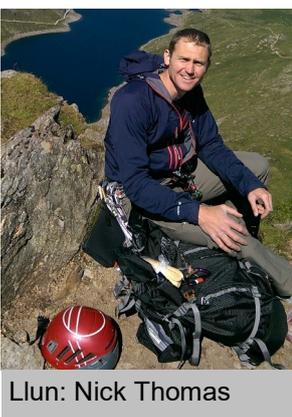
Cadeirydd: Tim Jepson

With the New Year has come a welcome halt to the deluge of ORG-related BMC documents which Chairs were being asked to present to their local areas during 2018. This doesn't imply that members' ideas and feedback about the continuing review process are no longer appreciated (see page 5). But it does mean that,

for the first time since I became Chair, I feel we should now be able to look forward to a less frantic area meeting during which the primary focus can be firmly fixed on discussing issues of particular interest to us in Wales. The agenda will include items on a **Welsh Language Policy** and **Parking in Ogwen**, but if you have some other issue which you would like discussed, please tell me before the meeting.

Having waited a year for someone to volunteer for the role of Area Secretary, three have come along at once!! We will trial a 'team approach' to organising area meetings with Neal Hockley, Tarquin Shipley and Steve Hobdell helping me out as and when required— thanks all.

I hope you can find time to contribute to the work of the BMC in North Wales by coming to the meeting at the Beacon next Tuesday (22nd) ...and why not bring a non-member friend. We may be able to persuade them to join!



Llun: Nick Thomas

Gair gan y golygydd Editor's note

Dyma ein cylchlythyr cyntaf, wedi ei taflu gyda'i gilydd mewn brwyn. Diolch I bawb sy wedi anfon rhywbeth! Wnewch chi anfon eitemau, yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg (efo lluniau!) ar gyfer y rhifyn nesaf i Neal: dringo.cymru@gmail.com cyn **26ain Chwefror**. I gofrestru am Cylchlythrau BMC ewch i bit.ly/bmc-areas

This is our first, hastily assembled, newsletter, thanks to all contributors. Items for the next edition are welcome in English or Welsh. Please send (with credited pictures!) to Neal: dringo.cymru@gmail.com by **26th Feb**. To sign up to receive BMC Cymru newsletters by email go to: bit.ly/bmc-areas

Neal Hockley



Pic: Tom Hutton

Mynediad a Cadwraeth Access & Conservation

Elfyn Jones
Swyddog Mynediad a Cadwraeth Access & Conservation Officer
Sir Benfro Pembrokeshire

Review of 2018: At the annual Pembrokeshire Climbing Liaison Review Meeting, the conservation bodies reported a successful year for wildlife on the Castlemartin Army Ranges. Not infringements of the agreed climbing restrictions were reported, the National Park & MoD were keen to praise climbers for their co-operation and for sticking to the climbing agreements throughout 2018.

On **Range East**, seven pairs of Choughs successfully reared 16 chicks (the highest number for some years) and a pair of Peregrines also successfully reared young. Elsewhere on the Ranges, Guillemot and Razorbill colonies also did well as did the Kittiwakes, which are now regarded as nationally scarce and are on the RED list of birds of conservation concern in the UK.

171 climbers attended the annual Range West briefings but only 225 climbers actually climbed at Range West (a record low). Hopefully more people will enjoy the superb climbing this year. As well as some desperate adventures, Range West probably has the best collection of low grade and utterly unique sea-cliff climbing in the UK!

At least 68 seal pups were counted along the coast in the autumn; again a record and climbers are reminded to **avoid abseiling into coves where seals may be present and to give young seals and breeding seals a wide berth (at least 100m)**. Seals normally breed in the autumn months from late Aug until early Nov. Despite being a fully operational and busy firing range, St Govan's cliffs were open for 231 days in 2018 (a 71% increase on 2017) while the rest of Range East was available to climbers for 132 days. The MoD are introducing a trial of mobile "guardhouses" for 2019, meaning that if only part of the ranges are being used, only that section will be closed (e.g. if training is only happening beyond Saddle Head, than access will be allowed up to that boundary, even mid-week).

Tips to help both climbing and conservation in Pembrokeshire... All of the cliffs along this spectacular coastline are within a Site of Special Scientific Interest. As well as being the nesting grounds of many protected seabirds, they also have many rare plants growing here, so please don't uproot or remove any vegetation from the cliffs. Overnight camping or vaning is not allowed in any of the car parks; please use the established (and incredibly good value) campsites at Bosherton and surrounding areas. Do not place any belay stakes on these cliffs - if you think they are required contact the BMC who will arrange for a MoD unexploded ordnance team to scan the area for old bombs, and ensure no rare plants or archaeology are disturbed.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park produce an annual leaflet detailing the current agreed restrictions for 2019, available at the car parks. The BMC Regional Access Database is also the definitive source of information. There were a number of avoidable accidents in 2018 - please ensure before abseiling in to a sea cliff that you have the means to climb or prusik out again!

In the event of an accident or incident contact the Coastguard by dialling 999. When a helicopter is being used for a recovery or rescue, ensure all bags and loose debris (as well as yourself!) are fully secure (the downdraught is enough to blow over a fully grown adult). See <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-regional-access-database> for more info.



Chough, Sir Penfro. Llun: David Evans
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/21081514@N08/>

Range West 2019 Arrangements: All climbers wanting to climb here in 2019 must attend a safety briefing. Range West is a live firing range and unexploded ordnance and other dangerous military items are found on parts of Range West. The dates for the 2019 briefing are:

- Thursday 07/03/2019 at 18.00
- Saturday 09/03/19 at 10.00am
- Thursday 18/04/19 at 18.00
- Good Friday 19/04/19 at 10.00am
- Thursday 23/05/19 at 18.00
- Saturday 25/05/19 at 10.00am (also part of the Annual Pembrokeshire Climbing Festival - details to follow!).

By special demand, an extra August briefing on Thursday 08/08/19 at 18.00, to take advantage of the month long shut down of the Ranges. (There is no firing at all and full access for briefed climbers to Range West for the whole of August).

All the briefings are held at the Castlemartin Army Camp, postcode SA71 5EB. As usual turn up about 10 minutes early to allow for parking (next to the big Chieftain tanks!) and to get through the security gates. There is no military training or firing (and therefore there will full access for climbing, subject to the usual conservation restrictions) between the following dates: Sat 13/04/19 to Sun 28/04/2019 and Thur 01/08/2019 to Mon 02/09/2019.

Mynediad a Cadwraeth Access & Conservation

Pont Cwm Dudodyn – Elidir Fawr

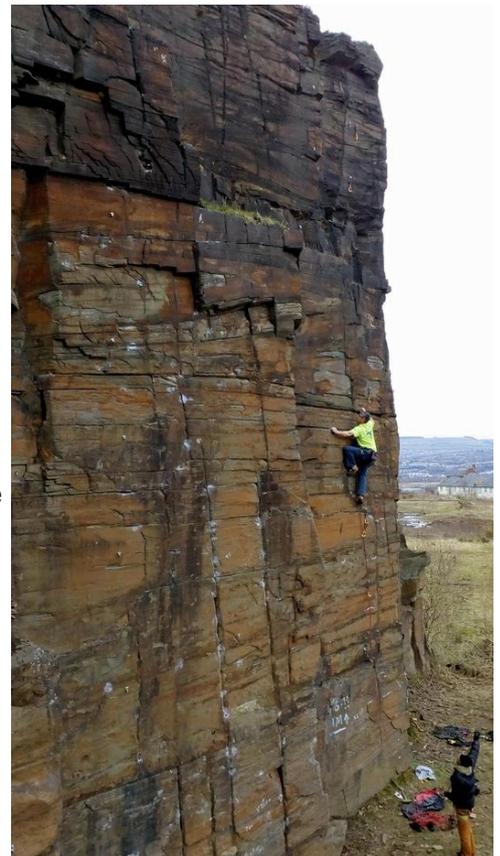
Discussions are on-going with Snowdonia National Park and the landowners (who are amenable) to replace the bridge on the main access path to Elidir Fawr from Nant Peris (and on the line of the 15 peaks routes). The path is not a public right of way and as most of it lies outside of the National Park, no one organisation appears to be responsible for the bridge. Its hope that the BMC's Access & Conservation Trust, together with support from Snowdonia National Park and possibly Snowdonia Society may be able to fund this replacement. When the funding is in place it's likely that a volunteer work day will be arranged to construct the bridge.

Craig y Forwyn

No progress made here. The owners (Hogans Group) had applied for planning permission to expand and redevelop the caravan park below the crag, at Plas Newydd. They had asked BMC not to pursue the lease/acquisition options until this had been resolved. It now seems that in December 2018, Conwy Council rejected their plans for the redevelopment of the caravan park. Letters and emails have been sent to Hogans Group requesting a meeting and to restart negotiations for access to climb here but there has been no reply to date. This continues to be a priority for the BMC in terms of access work.

Llandarcy (Abertawe Swansea)

This is relatively newly developed, very accessible, quick drying mid-grade sandstone sports venue with some 40 routes up to 25m on the outskirts of Swansea. Located on an old oil refinery site, the whole area is being redeveloped as a huge housing development of 4,000 houses and associated schools. The landowners have obvious concerns regarding liability and the impact climbing could have on this huge multi-million pound development! However the developers, St Modwen Homes Ltd are very keen to work with climbers to develop this area as a green space within the development and discussions are ongoing and initial signs are very positive that they will grant some form of access subject to the BMC taking on a licence or lease of the climbing area and responsibility for managing the climbing here. This option is now being taken to the various BMC processes and to the relevant committees to approve. Local area support is essential if this is to happen.



Llandarcy (Credit: South Wales Climbing Wiki) <https://swcw.org.uk/wiki/>

Morgannwg: Chwarel Pant Pant Quarry Glamorgan

This is definitely located in Glamorgan, South Wales not in North Wales as noted in the last Summit magazine!! I've sent an atlas of Wales to the Summit editor! However progress here is not so positive. The landowner, Tarmac, have again restated that it's a working quarry and that in their opinion the climbing area cannot be separated from the remainder of the workings. Until they finally stop working here, they do not want to even discuss the options for access for climbing.

Cyfyngiadau adar Bird restrictions

Finally: It may be winter but our feathered friends are already starting to prospect for nest sites. Please check the BMC Regional Access Database for the current situation regarding access for nesting birds on the crags. Remember some start nesting early, for instance the **Gogarth** Restrictions (mainly South Stack but also Flytrap Zawn) start on Feb 1st and the **Clwyd Limestone** restrictions start on Feb 15th. Also a reminder that just because there may not be agreed restrictions for climbing; it does not mean that there are no nesting birds on any particular crag. We only agree formal restrictions for specific bird species, usually Schedule 1 protected species and the key sea-bird species. However every bird nest is protected by law, so if you come across nesting birds on a route the advice is to climb past as quickly as possible or abseil off and not hang around to cause further disturbance.



Clwb Mynydda Cymru ac yr Eisteddfod

Stephen Williams

Bydd Clwb Mynydda Cymru yn dathlu penblwydd yn 40 mlwydd oed eleni. Ffurfiwyd y clwb yn yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol yng Nghaernarfon gan griw o fynyddwyr i hyrwyo mynydda drwy'r iaith Gymraeg. Yn rheolaidd mae gan y clwb stondin ar faes yr eisteddfod ynghyd â gweithgareddau yn ystod yr wythnos.

Cynhelir yr Eisteddfod yn ystod wythnos gyntaf mis Awst bob blwyddyn fel dathliad o'r diwylliant a'r iaith yng Nghymru. Mae'r wyl yn disodli rhwng y gogledd a'r de, gan ddenu oddeutu 150,000 o ymwelwyr. Eleni, cynhelir yr Eisteddfod yn Llanrwst.

Mae'r clwb wedi trefnu i rannu stondin gyda'r BMC, Y Bartneriaeth Awyr Agored a Mountain Training Cymru i ddangos sut mae clybiau a sefydliadau i gyd yn cydweithio ac yn cefnogi ei gilydd. Cytunwyd bod hwn yn gyfle ardderchog i godi proffil y BMC yng Nghymru a chael rhywfaint o gefnogaeth am y gwaith sydd yn cael ei wneud gan yr holl sefydliadau sy'n ymwneud â mynydda, dringo a heicio.

Mae'r pedwar sefydliad yn bwriadu cynnal gweithgareddau amrywiol yn ystod yr wythnos a fydd yn denu pobl i'r stondin. Mae Clwb Mynydda Cymru eisoes wedi trefnu trafodaeth a gynhelir gan Gerallt Pennant (Gohebydd Gogledd Cymru ar raglen Wedi 7 a Heno ar S4C) gyda'r mynyddwr lleol, Eric Jones ac aelodau eraill o'r clwb. Bydd taith gerdded wedi'i threfnu o Gaernarfon i Lanrwst ar gychwyn yr Eisteddfod a darlith gan Huw Jack Brassington (cyflwynydd, siaradwr ac anturwr) a ymddangosodd yn ddiweddar ar raglen deledu yn cwblhau Ras Berghaus Ar Gefn y Ddraig. Mae cynlluniau hefyd mewn lle i ddarparu digwyddiadau ychwanegol gyda'r gobaith bydd hyn yn denu mwy o bobol at y stondin.

BMC Cymru is going to the Eisteddfod!

Llanrwst 3-10 August



This year BMC Cymru is going to share a stand at the national Eisteddfod with Clwb Mynydda Cymru (who are celebrating their 40th birthday this year), Mountain Training Cymru and the Outdoor Partnership. The stand will be a great opportunity to raise the profile of BMC Cymru, and build support for climbing and hillwalking in Wales. The four organisations are planning lots of activities for the week, Clwb Mynydda Cymru has already arranged a panel discussion with Gerallt Pennant, of S4C, the legendary Eric Jones and other club members. There will be a walk from Caernarfon to Llanrwst to kick off the week, a lecture by Huw Jack Brassington (presenter and adventurer), and much more...

Pyrenees Achievement

By Peter Salenieks

Mike Krokos, a member of Gwent Mountaineering Club, is believed to be the first British person to scale all two hundred and twelve 3000 metre peaks in the Pyrenees.

When he started in 1996, there were no accurate maps of the summits and only old guides in French, Spanish and Catalan, which were difficult to find.

Reflecting on an achievement that saw him visit the Pyrenees for twenty two years in a row, his advice to anyone wanting to follow in his footsteps is: *"don't rush it, don't just stick to the 3000m summits, explore villages, canyons, meet people, learn the local language, when you have done all that and climbed the peaks, you will feel that you are part of these mountains and will never need another project in your life."* Well done Mike!





Pete on the summit of Stok Kangri, Ladakh

Clubs' Committee

Peter Salenieks

The latest Clubs' Committee meeting took place at the BMC Office on 17 January. In addition to the regular work of the committee, several members are active on the Clubs Sub Group of Work Stream 7 for the Organisational Development Group. They reported on the initial phase of this work, plus future plans. The overall aim is to provide the Board with a recommended strategy to support clubs and to build deeper strategic relationships with them which will enable the BMC to harness the positive elements of clubs whilst ensuring that the collective view of clubs are heard at various levels of the BMC.

Peter Salenieks, the committee chair, is representing clubs on the All-Wales Working Group. He also represents all the specialist committees on the Recommendation 33 Working Group, which is chaired by the

President and is looking at the reconstitution of National Council. The inaugural meeting was held on 10 January. A questionnaire is being prepared to canvas the views of National Council members and specialist committees.



Organisational Review Update

Dan Lane, National Council Rep, Wales

The Organisational Development Group has a new, mini-website where all ORG documents can be accessed and commented on: <https://odg.thebmc.co.uk/hc/en-gb>. They are particularly inviting feedback on:

- Interim National Council ToRs
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
- Articles of Association
- Board ToRs

You can email the ODG directly at odg@thebmc.co.uk see also: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/how-to-give-feedback-on-odg>



Mountain Training

John Cousins

Mountain Training launched new opportunities for Indoor Climbing Assistants and Rock Skills courses:

<http://www.mountain-training.org/latest-news/rock-skills-and-indoor-climbing-assistant-go-live>.

The Board Room in Chester are advertising Indoor Climbing Assistant courses. Max Adventures from Siabod Café, and RAW adventures are offering Rock Skills courses. More course providers will be added soon!





BMC Hill Walking Symposium 24 – 25 November 2018

Kate Worthington

23 November 2018 – I found myself winging my way across to the Castleton YHA, Peak District. And came across the foggiest conditions I have ever driven in, over Rushup Edge and Winnats Pass – entirely unpleasant. Only to be softened by the many pubs in the village of Castleton, offering some medicinal recovery! I had been asked by the BMC to host one of the Saturday session workshops, as part of the very first BMC Hill Walking Symposium. The general shape of the weekend was workshop sessions, input and discussion on the Saturday and group local walks on the Sunday, which gave delegates excellent opportunity to develop ideas and discussion from Saturday...in the 'great outdoors', as well as network and build relationships with other members and hill walkers, over the course of the misty, murky two days. I was only available to attend on the Saturday – a shame. A missed opportunity get out with others on the Sunday, as there were members from across England and Wales. In fact, each BMC local area was represented by at least one delegate at the symposium, which is really positive. This attendance can only be increased in the future.

The topic of the workshop I was asked to facilitate was (wait for it...it's catchy) '*Clean-ups, path repairs and upland conservation work - fixing our uplands & making a lasting difference*'. Most notably, this included discussion on my ongoing involvement with 'grass-roots' clean up projects, like the *Real3Peaks Challenge* and working with the Snowdonia Society here in Wales. My feedback to staff in the BMC office was the topic area was too broad for the time made available, but the workshop, amongst other sessions on 'Navigation in the hills', 'How to deal with hazards and incidents', 'Protecting and celebrating the upland environment' and 'Leading a great BMC hill walk – for BMC volunteers', gave delegates a variety of workshop choices, as well as general input and discussion on how the BMC works for hill walkers, politically and practically, access legislation in Wales and England as well as volunteering opportunities for hill walkers within the BMC. So there was a lot going on at Castleton YHA, over the two days.

I certainly think the Hill Walking Symposium was an excellent addition to the BMC event calendar – and it's funny to think that for a climbing, mountaineering AND hill walking organisation that it hasn't happened to date?! It would be good to see the locations of future symposiums move around England and Wales, too. It is certainly evident that Carey Davies, BMC Hill Walking Officer, needs more support and additional staffing to enable him (and additional staff) to carry out the work of supporting, developing and promoting hill walking within the BMC and outside of the BMC. I believe this aspect of the BMC's work is woefully under resourced, with regards to officer working remits, across Wales and England. As Carey commented, in his general address to delegates, he can't be everywhere working on everything (yes...but...) Is this situation under review, this is what members want to know, isn't it? This query has certainly been raised and discussed at previous BMC Cymru local meetings. And I did raise this question with Dr Catherine Flitcroft, for example, within my feedback about the symposium.

I enjoyed meeting BMC members, from other areas in England and Wales (two members from South Wales!) I sense there has been a generally positive reception to this first Hill Walking Symposium and I look forward to seeing future events shoulder their way into the BMC's event calendar on a more regular basis. For more information on the symposium, see <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-hill-walking-symposium-looks-to-the-future>