

CYLCHLYTHYR BMC CYMRU

NEWSLETTER

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De South



Cadeirydd: Ollie Burrows

With the tumultuous time we have all been having politically-both nationally and in the BMC- it has been refreshing to see huge positives in the access world! Gaining access rights to sea cliffs

nationally is a huge success and everyone should pat those involved on the back (and buy them a pint no doubt) as the vast amount of time and effort this has taken I am sure won't be taken for granted. Sea cliffs are (in my opinion anyway) Wales' premier resource for climbing and walking in both South and North Wales and makes us a world class destination to visit! With the upcoming Pembroke and Gower Climbing Festivals this year looking set to be even bigger and better, the summer of 2019 is shaping up to be better than ever, we just have to hope the weather is as good as it was over the Easter Weekend!

Cyfarfodau Ardal-Area Meetings

De South: 24th May 19:30 (food from 19:00) Manorbier YHA, Manorbier, SA707TT (part of Pembrokeshire climbing festival <http://community.thebmc.co.uk/Event.aspx?id=4094>)

Gogledd North: 4th June 19:00 Conwy Brewery, Tan y Graig Road, Lysfaen, Conwy, LL29 8UE

Canolbarth Mid: 5th June, White Lion Hotel, Machynlleth from 19:30.

Wnewch chi anfon eitemau, yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg (efo lluniau!) ar gyfer y rhifyn nesaf i Neal: dringo.cymru@gmail.com

Items for the next edition are welcome in English or Welsh. Please send (with credited pictures!) to Neal: dringo.cymru@gmail.com



The editor ski touring below Rosablanche. Llundun: Xavier Dos Alpes

Gogledd North

Cadeirydd: Tim Jepson

Since a hip placement in February, I haven't really been able to get out in the hills, or on the rock, but I have been able to do quite a lot of off-road biking. I have therefore taken an extra, personal interest in the Welsh Government Access Announcement (April 4th) that proposes to allow, amongst other things, cycling on open access land and footpaths. While I broadly welcome the reduction in restrictions, and I recognise the similarity in the health and enjoyment benefits of walking and cycling, I can't see the two activities happily sharing the same terrain without a massive education programme to moderate the behaviour of the bikers, and to nurture the tolerance of the walkers. It doesn't matter how slowly I come up behind walkers on my bike, I still feel guilty as they leap off the path in shock when I politely signal my approach. There is something about the relative differences in speed and mind-set between cyclists and walkers which don't make for easy compatibility.



← Tim biking on open access land in the Carneddau

Nevertheless, the BMC need to be congratulated on the campaign in Wales which has contributed to these radical access proposals. At the end of March I attended the AGM in Buxton, accompanied by our two local reps., Anthony and Dan. This year's meetings, and the presentation dinner, were all well-organised and good-humoured, without the rancour of recent years. It is relatively easy to be critical about some aspect of the broad scope of the BMC's work, but to see the President, the Chair of the Board and other volunteers at work alongside the BMC officers leaves me in no doubt about the commitment, dedication, ability and experience of those on whom we all rely for the running of our organisation. Our local area meeting on June 4th can report in more detail on other issues arising from the AGM weekend, but two issues of interest to us in Wales were, firstly, the fact that funds have been identified to develop the presence of the BMC in Wales, and, secondly, that currently the timeline for that development is 'at risk'. I have said it before, but I will say it again, we mustn't let this one-time opportunity for change slip



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Pic: Tom Hutton

Mynediad a Cadwraeth Access & Conservation

Elfyn Jones

Swyddog Mynediad a Cadwraeth Access & Conservation Officer

Birds, feathers and bans!

A quick round up of changes and main climbing restrictions for 2019 – as always these are being constantly monitored and could change as the season progresses. Check for on-site signs and download the free BMC Regional Access Database App for the most up to date info as the following is only a quick summary of the main areas and of changes in 2019.



<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/bmc-rad/id635707992?mt=8> for i-phones or <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.co.bmc.rad.app> for Android phones.



The Ormes

Choughs are nesting on various crags this year, looks like they're having a good year due to the mild winter. Restrictions are in place on Mayfair Wall, Lower St Tudno's, Castell y Gwynt (also a Peregrine site), Point Five Buttress and Crescent Buttress on Hornbys.

At the Little Orme, Choughs are nesting in Hole of Creation, while the bulk of the Little Orme is covered in sea-birds. The main area of interest is the Diamond, which is restricted until Mid-August, mainly as it's not only an important nesting area for Guillemots but also home to the largest Kittiwake colony on the North Wales Coast. Kittiwakes are particularly threatened as they depend almost entirely on sandeels for their food; climate change and warmer seas are having a huge impact on their survivability. The UK population has dropped by over 70% since 1986, meaning that individual "refuge colonies, such as found on the Diamond are of vital and potentially international importance to protect these species from extinction.



Kittiwake (Credit [Boaworm](#))

And of course don't forget the Bank Holiday and school summer holiday restrictions on climbing above the Marine Drive – no climbing before 6pm on Bank Holiday weekends or between July 15th and Sept 8th.

Gogarth

Red Wall, Mousetrap, Blacksmith and Smurf Zawn all have agreed and well established restrictions for sea-birds, as well as at Flytrap Zawn (which is not mentioned in the current guidebook!). Also at Gogarth there are reports of a rockfall on the approach path to Main Cliff – the area affected seems to be the steep section before the final drop down to sea level, just before the Aardvark/Imitator area.

Eglwyseg/Llangollen area

Peregrines are nesting on Monks Buttress for the first time in many years, so the restriction is in place here until the end of July. However the birds don't appear to have nested on either Craig Arthur or Independence Quarry (Sun Bank Quarry), so the restrictions have been lifted here for 2019.

Carreg Mianog - Carneddau

Reports of Peregrines nesting here but the exact location is not known but thought to be on the east side of the cliff. Please avoid if you see these birds here – they have specific protection under countryside law and it is an offence to disturb these birds.

... Mynediad a Cadwraeth Access & Conservation....

Gower – Trial Wall and Yellow Wall

Kestrels are nesting here again this year, so please follow the on-site signs and the variable restrictions agreed with the NT and which worked really well last year. Yellow Wall on Gower is also restricted due to sea-birds and Peregrine

Pembrokeshire

As always it's a constantly changing picture here, but the best up to date info is both the RAD as mentioned above and also the really useful leaflet produced by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park: http://pcnpa.org.uk/Files/files/Recreation/Climbing_eng.pdf

Also look out for the red cliff top pots that mark the restricted areas. The Bosherton Head restriction (Star Wars area) has however been lifted early for 2019 and more will be lifted as the season progresses.

The final briefings for Range West will be on Thursday 23/05/19 at 18:00 and on Saturday 25/05/19 at 10:00, with a final one 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).

Significant recent rockfalls have been reported on Range West at Cabin Door and on the Fifty Foot Wall (Juggy Point) – make sure you check that the route you want to climb is still there before committing to that abseil!!

Crafnant

Local residents have been increasingly concerned about unsociable behaviour (van camping, parking, speeding traffic, litter, etc.) in this wonderful but very small and contained valley. There are some residents calling for restrictions on all parking beyond the official car park at the start of the valley – which would have severe impact on access to the cliffs and bouldering at the head of the valley. BMC will be discussing the issues with both the residents and the National Park at forthcoming meetings.

Bolts – always controversial!

Some groups who regularly use Barmouth Slabs have proposed that the installations of belay bolts at the top of the slab are required. This will be discussed at the Mid Wales Area Meeting on June 5th.

At another site in the Lledr Valley, there are reports that belay bolts have been added to the top of **Craig Rhiw Goch**, which has caused some angst among climbers visiting this location. Access here (which is used by both traditional climbers and as a group abseiling venue) has been sensitive in the past (it's not on open access land and the National Trust tenant has objected to access here in the past).

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Welsh Government Access Proposals

In an unexpected and welcome announcement, Hannah Blythyn, the Welsh Government Minister with responsibility for Recreation and Designated Landscapes made a very welcome decision on extending access rights to the Welsh coast and countryside. The BMC had been campaigning for a long time to have similar rights to CROW Act open access extended to the crags and cliffs of the Welsh Coastline. Currently there is very little protected legal right of access to our sea cliffs and coastal slopes, where arguably some of the most important climbing in Wales exists. With this announcement it now seems that the rights we have under CROW Act to access open country in the hills and mountains will be extended to the coast. Other rights will be granted such as being allowed to cycle on designated and identified footpaths, to cycle on open access land, to be allowed to swim in rivers and natural lakes and the Minister was clear in stating that unless comprehensive agreements are in place to secure access to open water and rivers for canoeing and kayaking, she will introduce legislation to allow this as well.

Along with this, there will also be other responsibilities and the thorny issue of the control of dogs in the vicinity of livestock will be clarified, introducing a law that dogs must be on a short lead at all times in the vicinity of livestock. Much more information is on the BMC Web article <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-campaign-wins-open-access-to-the-welsh-coast>

Welsh Language Scheme

As an organisation that formally represents climbers and hillwalkers in both England and Wales, the BMC Board have agreed that the BMC will sign up to a Welsh Language Scheme at some point, hopefully by mid-summer 2019. This does not mean that all or any clubs will be forced to carry out all its activities or produce its publications bilingually! It will be up to individual clubs to decide on their own approach to this. While there is currently no legal requirement for the BMC to produce its materials or operate bilingually, it is of concern that as an organisation the BMC primarily only operates in English only within Wales and produces no bilingual publications or practically carry out any bilingual activities. We have carried out a questionnaire audit with the Welsh Language Commission and will be working with the Commission to produce a pragmatic and realistic Welsh Language Scheme to enable the BMC to provide a long overdue service to Welsh speakers and learners in Wales and to raise awareness among members elsewhere of the work the BMC does in Wales.

Clubs news

From Peter Salenieks

The affiliated clubs consultation during the BMC AGM weekend at Buxton was well attended and constructive (pic below). It gave club representative further insight into the proposals that are being developed within Organisational Development Group Work Stream 7 with support from members of Clubs' Committee.

Also of note, Jonathan White was elected to the Board as Nominated Director Clubs. Huw Jones, who has strong links to Welsh clubs, joins him as Nominated Director Finance alongside other new and existing Board members (<https://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-board-of-directors>).

We are preparing for the next Clubs' Committee meeting, which will take place in North Wales during the first weekend in June.

