



Lose Hill and Back Tor,
Photo: Peter Judd.

PEAK AREA NEWSLETTER



November 2020
peak.area@thebmc.co.uk

Rocking Chair

Andy Reeve



Here we are again at the end of the local area meeting year, and with it our local AGM. On a personal note, this will mark a year in the role of chair.

It's a bit early for annual retrospectives so I can probably just about get away with saying 'gosh this year has been very different from what I envisaged' without sounding too clichéd, but the truth of it kinda goes without saying anyhow. The AGM is the platform for local members to vote for who they would like to occupy the officer roles which are vacant or where an officer's term is up for renewal (this year that is chair,

secretary, one National Council position, and the clubs rep). Being frank, the low number of people putting themselves forwards for these positions can make the voting seem like an empty procedure from the outside, but please do come along and vote (assuming you're a member! Non-members are welcome to the meeting but please don't vote). It really means a lot to know we have the support (or otherwise!) of local members, and is one of the main ways you can exercise your democratic right.

Sticking with the democratic theme, even if you only give so much as a cursory glance at the political machinations of how the BMC is run, you'll know that it is currently facing a loss of confidence amongst the membership as a consequence of the

Next meeting: Wednesday 4 November, 7.30 p.m.
The Internet. Register **HERE**.

turmoil at board level. Fixing these problems will be essential for the ongoing usefulness of the BMC for regular outdoor activists like you and me. However, it hasn't passed me by that the focus on these issues is seen as tedious by many people – and who can blame you! Ana and I are going to try and steer the meetings back to a fair balance between the local issues and political and restructuring aspects.

And on that note, this month we have the gen on loads of local access issues (problems and progress!), planned hill walking events in the Peak, and a reminder about bolting down Dove Dale, all taking centre stage.

Register for the online Peak Area meeting by clicking [HERE](#).

Access News: General

Henry Folkard

Since the last area meeting there has been a flurry of activity regarding aspirations for the long overdue review of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) legislation, to which Peak access reps have contributed. This activity was triggered by someone called Guy Shrubsole who wrote a book Who Owns England – described on the cover as 'A formidable, brave and important book'. Guy Shrubsole is a campaigner for Friends of the Earth. His book was very well reviewed, and its certainly worth reading. Besides the BMC, the Ramblers, canoeists, cavers and others were involved.

One consequence of Covid-19 is that just now may not be the most opportune time to raise issues like wild camping and wild swimming, besides which it is hardly likely that there would be any parliamentary time available for debate, with Brexit and everything else upon us. But we did begin to

put forward an agenda of things we would like to see in the future so we could begin to build public support for them – as we did when we campaigned for CROW. If you have ideas for improvements you would like to see – and I very much hope you do – please share them with Louise, Peter, me or Cath so we can add them to the agenda. Our three principle suggestions were:

- landscape features should be the basis for future mapping, rather than detailed vegetation cover on individual parcels of land. This would mean that something like a Derbyshire Dale (Chee Dale or Bretton Clough for example) would be mapped as open access in its entirety rather than bits being included or excluded depending on tree cover or grazing intensity, while an integral feature in the landscape, like Vixen Tor on Dartmoor, would also be regarded as open access;

- trees and woodland – a lot of trees have been planted recently in the Peak, and elsewhere, and usually at public expense. There should be returns, in terms of public benefit, for this use of public money: as things stand if open country that is mapped as such becomes wooded it would be excluded from open access in any future mapping exercise.

We think that where such environmental improvements are made loss of access should never be a consequence, especially where the planting is of broadleaves or mixed conifer/broadleaf. Allied to this we think it should be incumbent on the Forestry Commission (or whatever it's called now) to consider desire lines in its planting and felling operations to facilitate access, perhaps not just access on foot but also to look to future trends in recreation and consider where better facilities for mountain bikers, for example, might be appropriate;

- proposals should not be lumped together as an all-or-nothing manifesto: we



New fencing at Stanage.
Photo: Mark Anderson.

might strongly support better access to water, but would not want to lose any prospect of better rights for hill walkers and climbers to landscape features because a fisherman in the Lords objected to canoeists.

That's just a flavour of what we said, but as I say above please do share any ideas you have with us to help build and strengthen our case.

In the north of the Peak familiar problems prevail, though Mark's diligence may be paying off along the A635 Saddleworth Moor road. Though some of the recent yellow lines have been put there by the Highways Authority, they have apparently not been responsible for those in the lay-by opposite Upperwood House, and they have asked for debris blocking some, but not all, parking areas at the side of the road to be removed – though nothing has yet to happen. Elsewhere it is believed signs denoting a fall of shot area near West Nab are actually outside the affected area, while the matter of the locked gate restricting vehicular access on the track to the shooting club building has been raised again. Some climbers

who were climbing at Shooter's Nab within the open access area were warned off first by a drone, which hovered overhead and shouted at them, and then by a policeman. The climbers prudently withdrew, though it was subsequently established that they had been well within their rights.

In Longdendale, the status of boulders that have been there for a while and make parking difficult for Tintwistle Knarr, and are supposed to be temporary, is being questioned.

Further south parking remains a problem in many villages in the Hope Valley, as does the speed of traffic through the villages, about which local parish councils have been complaining. Police have issued lots of speeding fines recently. Louise is in touch with the Highways Authority about the particular problems at Yarncliffe Quarry. At Millstone a loose boulder was removed. There are, and always have been, other loose boulders there, and in places a lot of loose stone around the top of routes. Loose rock is an inevitable hazard associated with climbing in the outdoors, and especially at

places like Millstone where the nature of the geology makes brittle and shallow layering of the surface rock liable to fracture.

There have been two cases where agreements made by the BMC to protect wider access, and shown on RAD, have been breached. In one, at Rivelin, two separate instructor-led groups of six were present at the same time. It is now some years since that agreement was made with the owner regarding use by groups, and there has been no contact with him since, but where we do make an agreement it is as well to keep it. Likewise, a sport route was established on Tissington Spires in Dovedale, contrary to an agreement with the National Trust about establishing new sport routes. Apparently, it is not at all a bad route, but the hangers are blatant and, according to one report, would be visible from outer space. The National Trust want them to be removed, and this is in hand, but we have also requested that replacement with a low-visibility alternative might be considered. Once the offending fixtures have gone we hope to return to that request.

So much for 2020: what a year! Let's hope for something better in 2021.

Area-Specific Updates

Louise Hawson

Stanage

Those of you who have been able to get out to Stanage recently will have noticed new fencing along the path from Hooks Carr (Popular End), with heather brash along the fence, and some resurfacing along the path itself. This is to stop path widening which was leading to significant erosion and loss of vegetation and habitat. The fencing will remain until the vegetation has re-established. See photo on previous page.

The Options Appraisal has been stalled pending the outcomes of the budget reviews

and re-organisation at the Peak District National Park. As a result, investment plans for the hall, Cruck Barn and other assets on the estate are on hold.

The Management Plan review has begun, and BMC reps are involved in the sub-group that is designing new five-year objectives under the key management plan themes.

Under normal circumstances, the Stanage Forum Open Meeting would have happened on 31 October, giving individuals and organisations an opportunity to have their say on the future of the estate. That's not possible this year, so instead the forum has created a short 'newsletter' update, and a website with presentations and reports on key themes and areas of work. There is also a Q&A facility on the website where you can ask questions or raise issues. If you have a view or question about the current situation of future plans for the estate, please take the time to review the information on the website and post your question. The site will go live on 31 October. www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/projects-and-partnerships/stanage/stanage-forum-2020

Matlock area

There have been a couple of reports of climbers in Dale Quarry, Wirksworth, being confronted by a local resident who has also posted on UKClimbing.com concerning access. It would be helpful if anyone who experiences further issues there gets in touch with Ian Milward (or any other member of the access team).

Also, a reminder that Willersley Castle is undergoing a change of ownership. Access to Wildcat and associated crags in the Willersley Castle grounds may therefore come under scrutiny at some point, so the existing 'low profile' advice to climbers accessing these crags should be closely observed and any contact with landowners reported.



Tier 2 bouldering at Stanage.
Those were the days.
Photo: John Coefield.

Climbing News & Gossip

Dave Parry

I write this as a fugitive, having fled the Tier 3 gulag of South Yorkshire. The government has rightly pegged the rising cases nationally on outdoor recreation, and specifically Sheffield's walkers and climbers for the many Stanage-related COVID outbreaks of late.

As such, we now can't cross the county boundary into Derbyshire, instead having to get our COVID-secure kicks at pubs/offices. So, for the time being, instead of frequenting the coronavirus breeding grounds of the Eastern Edges, I have gone into hiding at a safehouse on the outskirts of Barnard Castle. Hence, I apologise for the quality of this column – it's hard to concentrate under constant threat of a knock at the cellar trapdoor from the corona Stasi. If the column reads as unfinished, you can assume I have been victim of an extrajudicial rendition to detention at a busy Rotherham hairdressers.

Tell my wife and kids I love them, there's half a carton of passata in the fridge that needs using by the end of the week, and the password to the wifi router is CKAG9PWJ.

Big numbers first, and at Raven Tor the iconic 1990s power testpiece *Hubble* received a couple of relatively rare repeats, at the start of October from Mat Wright, and more recently from Buster Martin. Since this is 2020 and we're a good decade-plus into the kneepad era they both quite reasonably used a kneepad for an apparently marginal kneebar, and both seemed to reckon it doesn't really alter the grade – and it should be noted they are both more qualified than most to comment on this. Remarkably they both, Buster in particular, seem to have come in for criticism from some parties for this (despite kneepads now being totally ubiquitous), not least from former Peak Area news correspondent and long-time committed anti-kneebar advocate Simon Lee. I must admit I'm not an active member of the kneepad prohibition community (and it is a community) so I only

picked up on Simon's criticism via the Irony Watch Facebook group. But the road to redemption for Buster and Mat is clear – simply forego climbing at other crags and spend years sessioning *Hubble* with a kneebar-free sequence, and be welcomed back into the fold with open arms (assuming their Companies House records are all in order).

In less controversial limestone news, relentless lateral crimping disciple Haydn Jones capped off the summer by repeating monster traverse *Pedigree Chum* (about French 8c+) at Dog's Dinner Buttress, along with doing a load of new problem development there. I hope a topo for this stuff appears at some point as it really should be a more popular spot.

On the grit, prolific esotericist and crown prince of the complex sequence Jon Fullwood has added a few things of note at Cratcliffe. *Jimminy Cricket* is a roof mantel at Font 7a+ at the north end of the crag. *Hueco Arete* (Font 6c+) is the surprisingly overlooked right arete of Hueco Wall starting in the low break, unless anyone owns up to it being done before? Down at the *P Crack* roof under the main bit of crag, 73 (Font 7a) is the new direct sitter to 72, starting on a sharp fin feature. Jon has also added an extension start to *P Crack*, starting up 73. *Minted P* is Font 7b+ and in doing this Jon has cleaned up *P Crack*, so it's a good time to get down there and catch it clean. Finally, *Brain Drain* (Font 6c) is the slabby right wall of *Brain Dead*.

Also down Cratcliffe way, gritstone 8c merchant and heelhook warlock Ned Feehally reports a few additions. He has done a sit start to *Pincher's Wall* (an existing good/tricky Jon Fullwood Font 7a+) which goes in at Font 7c+. On the *Jerry's Traverse* block, Ned has added a sit start at the middle, finishing along the traverse at 7c, and over at the Stride he has added a Font 7c+/8a problem in the *Picalli's Pickle* cave. LH on a flake, RH in a pod and climb straight out via small crimps and a kneebar. Crucial beta is 'not standing on the floor', which will make sense when you're there.

On the impressive repeats front, one thing that caught my eye of late was the report of Billy Ridal repeating *Superman Sit-start*, *Keen Roof* AND *Fat Lip* all on the same day. I know the latter two problems see a relatively large amount of ascents these days (for the grade), but to do all three in one day must rank as a pretty rare day in the Peak; to knock off a Font 8b+ and two 8bs? Still it's not enough to cut through the background din of armchair kneebar axegrinding on social channels, which is a shame as it deserves some recognition. Good work, Billy.

Also on the limestone, over at the Peak's estranged Rotherham cousin Impossible Roof, Will Bosi has repeated Mike Adams' *Serenata* at Font 8c making that the fourth ascent. Now normally you'd expect either this or the previous paragraph to be the most impressive thing reported in a Peak newsletter but it's a strong field at the minute, as the next paragraph will make clear.

Unbelievably trumping both the above items in the impressiveness front, the Best Day Out Of The Autumn So Far medal goes to on-form crimp magician Aidan Roberts, who on his way to some big additions elsewhere in the country managed to 'tick Badger Cove in a session'. Yes, you read that right. This includes *Bewilderness* (Font 8b+) and *Dandelion Mind* (Font 8b) in a few goes each, having not tried them before. This is literally mindblowing stuff. Off the scale. He then did *Superman* in a couple of goes a few days later and did the sitter the same session. What you are witnessing here is British bouldering being noticed up to another level. It will be interesting see if there's anything left which is hard enough for Aidan in the Peak, or indeed the country. Incredible stuff.

Right I'd better go and swallow my SIM card before they trace this connection.

Get in touch

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



BMC volunteers on a recce near Kinder.
Photo: Peter Judd.

Hill Walking News

Peter Judd, Austin Knott & Vikki Hughes

Hill Walking Area Reps' Annual Report

In February, we joined other BMC volunteers helping National Trust with tree planting at Burbage; we prepared and recced an area walk from Hayfield (ultimately stymied by the pandemic, see below); we organised a clean-up around Dovestone Reservoir for the BMC's Hills 2 Oceans campaign; we kept in touch with the project managers responsible for both the Peak District Mend our Mountains path repair projects; we supported and promoted locally the BMC's #NoMoorBBQs campaign; we represented Peak Area hill walkers at the BMC's access reps' information gathering conference calls (held regularly by the office during periods of lockdown); we represented the BMC at a Sheffield Moors Partnership meeting; and we helped our access volunteers contribute to a number of local and national consultations on a variety of access topics.

Mend our Mountains

It's over a year since Peter attended the most recent on-site consultations with project managers (Moors for the Future Partnership staff) for each of the two BMC Mend our Mountains campaign-funded footpath repair tasks. At that time it was hoped work on both projects would start that autumn and be finished earlier this year; however a whole host of problems (planning applications, landowner permissions, need for further archaeological investigations to name but a few) meant this wasn't to be. It's been a long wait.

Great Ridge: the project officer tells us they now have planning approval and he has also secured all the necessary access agreements to undertake the work. He is finalising plans to protect any sensitive archeology that risks being disturbed too (did you know that there are a number of possible prehistoric burial cairns dotted along that ridge?). They've not yet been able to set a firm work start date, but say that they are aiming to have all aspects of the

work completed by the end of April 2021, which is good news!

Cut Gate bridleway: the project officer for that one tells us she believes work will start, at the National Trust end (that's the Slippery Stones end that climbs up onto Margery Hill), in November – great news! Hopefully, we'll be able to get some photos of work in progress to show all the contributors where their money has gone.

Area Hill Walk

We've been teasing about an area hill walk since the start of this year; indeed we had a walk (set to be from Hayfield) all planned for April, only to have to postpone as the first lockdown restrictions bit down. With the easing of restrictions over the summer we thought we would give it another go this autumn. Having studied the BMC's additional guidance for event organisation in the light of Coronavirus (complying with this satisfies one of the permitted exceptions to the government's rules that would otherwise limit group sizes to just six), revised and recced our route (it's a good'un), secured formal event approval from the BMC office and we were all ready to announce this walk would go ahead just a week ago when news broke that Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire were to be moved to 'Very High' alert status and have Tier 3 restrictions imposed! Tier 3 restrictions include a request to avoid travelling into and out of Tier 3 zones (other than for a few limited reasons – work, education and caring responsibilities). While the walk itself isn't in Tier 3 (yet!), many of our likely walkers, and at least one of our leaders, do live in Tier 3 areas. So, this has led us to decide that it would be better, yet again and with heavy hearts, to postpone. Argh! One day maybe, one day ...

Another upland conservation event

Some of you will remember our very successful sphagnum moss planting day, held with National Trust, last autumn up above the Upper Derwent. Indeed, some of you kindly took part! We very much hoped we could do something similar again this autumn, but this has proved not to be possible. As you will probably know National Trust (along with many other charitable bodies) is facing significant financial losses, and job losses too, as a consequence of the continuing pandemic. (May we record here our sympathies with, and concern for, all the excellent local National Trust staff with whom we have had the pleasure of working in recent years, during this difficult time for them.) This situation has made it hard for our National Trust contacts to identify an opportunity to take up our offer of help. They have told us they cannot offer an opportunity to help with sphagnum planting this year (partly because the chosen planting sites this winter are so remote and current circumstances mean they cannot just pile us all into Land Rovers to move us closer to site). They have, however, suggested that opportunities to do some upland tree planting or maintenance, at more accessible locations, may be on offer later in the winter. We'll keep you posted.

A little bit of tidying up

Lastly, a big thank you to one of our access volunteers, Mark Warwicker, who joined Peter for an evening's BMC #Hills2Oceans clean-up around Dovestone Reservoir just after the last area meeting. Between us we filled four H2O sacks with rubbish cleared from near Binn Green car park and below Ashway Gap. Peter has a stock of six BMC supplied litter pickers if anyone fancies organising their own socially distanced H2O clean-up, simply get in touch with Peter to borrow them.

CPRE Update

Our tempo of work has not lessened during Covid-19, in fact we are exceptionally busy, but unfortunately the ‘traditional’ fundraising opportunities have all but dried up. Here are updates on some of our work, for more, please visit our website: www.cprepsy.org.uk

Sheffield Green Belt: in addition to responding to Issues and Options Paper of the Sheffield City Plan, we also provided specialist support to the Friends of the Loxley Valley in their campaign opposing a plan for 300 homes to be built on the old Hepworths Site.

Environmental damage: We have continued our support of the PDNPA in enforcing the enforcement order on the illegal track across Midhope Moor.

Pylon undergrounding: The application by National Grid and strongly supported by us to remove several kilometres of pylons adjacent to the TransPennine Trail at Dunford Bridge was approved. This is the culmination of a 10-year campaign for pylon removal in our finest landscapes.

Climate change: We continue to liaise with and be supportive of Hope Valley Climate Action who are hoping to gain government funding (via the Rural Community Energy Fund) for an options analysis of wind and solar in the Hope Valley. We also engage with them on sustainable transport initiatives.

Renewables: Sustainable Hayfield have also found a second potential solar site and asked us for a ‘screening opinion’. Their scoping work for their ideal site in Birch Vale is ongoing.

Transport – ‘Low Carbon Travel for Longdendale’ (alternatives to A628 dualling): we continue to fundraise for our project here, our online survey about the

future of Longdendale aims to capture a broad perspective of views on the future of the valley.

Climate emergency: Through virtual meetings we continue to engage with the northern transport activists, Derbyshire Climate Coalition, Hope Valley Climate Action Group and others on addressing the short- and long-term impacts of Covid-19, and the climate emergency.

Glover ‘Landscapes Review’: a year has passed since the Glover Review was published, and we remain part of a wide body of environmental organisations pressing DEFRA for action on the recommendations therein.

Stannage Futures: PDNPA reported the findings of its consultation on future options for the built assets of the North Lees Estate. In general, most respondents favoured a model of investment and continued NPA ownership though our concerns regarding the lack of a holistic plan and the need for wider partnership was echoed by many others. More refined options will now be developed, albeit even more slowly because of Covid-induced resource limitations, with decisions being made by the authority sometime in 2021. We are working closely with the Stannage Forum and others to find answers.

Archive project: with Heritage Lottery Fund support we continue to archive the history of the charity which, amongst many other things, includes the original maps of the planning process for establishing the National Park, and thousands of photo slides of people and place from the 1930’s to the present day.

Peak District Boundary Walk: we have had a flurry of interest in the walk both from day walkers, continuous rounders, and ‘fastest known time’ runners. We’re beginning to look at a second edition of our guidebook to the walk. We have also had a short film made to promote the walk. Cont ...

Peak Area Meetings: 2020

4 November, 7.30 p.m., The Internet.
Register [HERE](#).

Engagement: during these extraordinary times we have had new and renewed conversations and engagements with a broad church of people and organisations in the Peak District and South Yorkshire across all manner of topics from 'the usual ones' like litter, parking, and overcrowding, to renewable energy, Vito the vulture, and what a post-Brexit and post-Covid landscape looks like.

Back to the future: the charity was founded in 1924, and in 1927 it became a branch of CPRE. For a variety of reasons, we have 'returned to our roots' and our membership, and all of our web and social media presence will be as CPRE Peak District and South Yorkshire aka CPRE PDSY.

We'd be really grateful for your support.
www.cprepdsy.org.uk

Forthcoming Events

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

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, most events have been cancelled or postponed. For the latest information on forthcoming events in the Peak Area, please keep an eye on the BMC's community pages.

BMC Peak Area Contacts

Peak Area Chair: Andy Reeve.
peak.area@thebmc.co.uk
Secretary: Ana Wass.
bmcpeakareasec@gmail.com

Peak Area Reps (your voice on the BMC National Council):
David Brown and Alison Cairns.

Access Reps Co-ordinators:
Henry Folkard and Louise Hawson.
henry.folkard@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
louise.hawson@gmail.com

Peak Area Hill Walking Reps:
Peter Judd, Austin Knott and Vikki Hughes.
Peak10roam-bmc@yahoo.co.uk
austin@walkthemoorlands.co.uk
vikkihughes@btinternet.com

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

The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) is the representative body that exists to protect the freedoms and promote the interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers, including ski-mountaineers. Find out more: www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-governance