



BMC Cymru

May 2013

IMPORTANT DATES

Access and Conservation News

by Elfyn Jones, Access and Conservation Officer (Wales)

North-Wales Limestone

A reminder that the annual school and bank holiday restrictions are in force – no climbing before 6pm above the Marine Drive on bank holiday weekends and between July 15th and Sept 8th.

The development of a new crag for sports climbing high above the West Shore has created a bit of a furore amongst conservationists. The crag sits on a slope which is very important for nationally rare flowering plants and is one of the reasons for the site's designation as an SSSI. We are awaiting a survey to see if climbing can continue without damage being caused to the plants. In the meantime - a plea from CCW and Country Park staff – please get in touch before developing any new crags or doing any crag clearance. It is an offence to remove or damage any vegetation or modify (inc. drill bolt holes!) without formal consent within an SSSI.

A very big thank you to Roger Bennion, Andy boorman, Pete Bailey and Dave Lyon who turned up to help clear some rubbish that had been illegally fly-tipped down the cliff above LPT.

Slate

Had reports of an altercation between some climbers and security staff below the Rainbow Slab area, which involved the Police being called. Apparently some climbers decided to descend from the Rainbow area through the Power station – into and through the secure area and when confronted by security staff, things got a bit heated. A reminder that access arrangements for climbing within the whole of the quarry area is still very fragile and on no account should climbers descend below the Rainbow Slab area or enter the secure area adjacent to the power station.

Rhoscolyn

No new developments on the access situation – the land agents acting for the landowners (a private family trust) have questioned by letters the rights of people climbing on the cliffs but have so far not been able to attend a site meeting nor has there been any other correspondence. Climbing and access for other activities such as picnicking, fishing, bird watching, etc. seems to be continuing without objection at the moment.

Next Meeting 4th June

The June meeting of BMC Cymru Wales (North) will take place on Tuesday 4 June 2013 at 9pm at The Lilly, West Shore, Llandudno.

A late(ish) start in order for people to savour the delights of North Wales Limestone prior to the meeting.....

Amongst the items to be discussed will be include Hydro works on Snowdon, camping in the pass and 'wild car camping' in general in Snowdonia, update on Nant y Moch, update on Glynrhonwy, update on the fixed gear situation/discussion, the appointment of a BMC Hillwalking Officer – and there's plenty more.

Free food (veggie and non veggie) from 8.30pm on a first come, first served basis

All are welcome.

Snowdon Waymarkers

Following a debate at the Local Access Forum the Park has decided to proceed with erecting standing stone waymarkers at popular path junctions on Snowdon – with the intention of reducing the number of incidents that occur when walkers get lost on Snowdon. BMC Cymru had agreed to this in the past but now an additional two waymarkers are being erected – one on the approach path to Crib Goch and the other at Bwlch Ciliau at the start of the steep section of the Watkin Path.

Hydro-schemes within Snowdonia

There are a number of hydro schemes proposed or underway with the Snowdonia National Park that members may wish to debate – in particular the possible impact on the landscape, any access issues, impact on the character of a site against the gains in the production of renewable electricity.

- National Trust Watkin Path scheme
- Derwent Hydro's Cwm Llafar/Cwm Caseg Scheme
- Aber community proposal for a scheme at Anafon (northern Carneddau)
- Possible two separate scheme for the lower Ogwen
- Another three small schemes in Nant Gwynant by the NT.
- A possible scheme in the Pass based on the stream flowing out of Cwm Glas.
- And of course Glynrhonwy....no news or development on this and Gwynedd Council cannot say if/when the planning application will be discussed by their planning committee.

No more CCW.....

We are used to dealing with CCW (Countryside Council for Wales) on issues to do with conservation and permissions for new routing, etc on SSSI's. As of April 1st a new body has been formed in Wales which completely takes over the roles of Forestry Commission, Environment Agency and CCW – all of which have now been disbanded. The new body is called Natural Resources Wales (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru) and despite the reassurances that recreation and conservation will remain a major part of their work programme there are worrying indications that the new body is more concerned with regulatory processes, flooding and fishing licences! Only time will

tell if the good relations and informal approaches taken in the past when inadvertent or accidental damage or breaches of SSSI regulations have occurred will continue or if the new organisation will move towards a more prosecutive and formal approach.

Environment Act for Wales

A new Environment Act for Wales is likely to be launched in the autumn and could have far-reaching consequences for access and conservation. As well as empowering the new environmental body already mentioned above (NRW) the proposed Bill gives the opportunity for the Welsh Government to legislate for improved arrangements for access to the countryside and coast of Wales. The Welsh Government has indicated that current arrangements are too complex and restrictive and would like to move to a more "Scottish Outdoor Charter" approach. We are in discussion, both with other recreational bodies and the Welsh Govt to try to influence the content of the proposed bill – watch this space!

Other News

BRYCS - Welsh Final

A great turn out to the Welsh BRYCS final saw 69 strong youths make it to the first final at the new Beacon Climbing Centre. There were some fantastic performances in all the age categories; the boys group D and girls group C were particularly competitive. South Wales once again won the shield for the best performing area but North Wales for the first time in many years were able to challenge them; undoubtedly through the successes of the North Wales climbing academy that has been running now for approaching a year. We wish all the competitors the best of luck in the British finals in Ratho on the 15th of June!

Welsh Sports Association Overseas Expedition Grants:

Due to an extra £1,000 on the overall grant this year, and a remarkably low number of eligible applicants, individual grants were high. There were three climbing trips:

Ollie Burrows and Tom Ripley are attempting new routes in Patagonia this November - December. Wales Patagonia 2013: Awarded £3,000

David Reynolds is a partially sighted climber and this summer will attempt to make the first British partially-sighted ascent of the Matterhorn (with a guide). It might be the

first ever partially sighted ascent, though confirmation of this is difficult. Mind over Matter: Awarded £2,300



William Attridge is the only Welsh member of a six-man team planning to make first ascents in the Djangart region of Kyrgyzstan's Tien Shan. British 2013 Djangart: Awarded £800

Lindsay Griffin

North Wales Bolt Fund Appeal for Inspectors:

The NWBF benefits from money from the BMC by carrying out inspections of the Upper Pen Trwyn belays - this work is crucial to maintaining access to climbers on these very significant and popular crags. Over the last 6 years BMC money has paid for several quality battery drills as well as allowing the fund to bulk buy bolts, resin and other essentials enabling new routers to have access to cheap bolts and gear.

We need to keep a rolling program in force completing a third of the 200 belays each year - inspections are simple and require very little time but they do need specialist equipment and some basic training on the procedure and the reporting requirements. We need to get more volunteers trained up and willing to help as we can't rely on the old dogs doing it forever and we don't want to lose the income stream.

Can anyone willing please contact the North Wales Bolt Fund - northwalesboltfund@googlemail.com or ring Chris Parkin 07747801234

Thank you:

The Beacon and Indy climbing centres have both donated all the proceeds of their winter bouldering aggregates to the North Wales Bolt Fund which adds up to a fantastic total of £928. A big thank you goes to both walls for the sustained support they've shown over the last few years.

Chris Parkin

Prestatyn Climbing Wall

The main news from Prestatyn Climbing Wall is that we have now been approved as a NICAS Centre, delivering Levels 1-3.

Andy Boorman

Tremfest

The weekend of the 19th – 21st of April saw the BMC's Tremadog Festival ('Trem Fest') take place in North Wales. Originally the driving force behind this environmental event was Mike Raine. Now it is organised annually by Jim and Julia Kelly, along with Elfyn Jones, BMC Access & Conservation Officer for Wales.

The format of the event has remained virtually constant; volunteers from across the UK converge at Eric Jones' Café and undertake a variety of tasks such as, footpath re-construction, trimming undergrowth, litter clearance and cleaning pre-identified routes on the main crag.

In addition to the 'ground-force' tasks, the event also provides a superb opportunity for a social gathering of climbers of all ages. Supported by a large number of local retailers and national climbing gear manufacturers, Trem Fest offered a free 'Lucky Dip' prize draw, free camping at Eric's, free tea, free cake, free beer and a free audio-visual lecture on the Saturday evening. This year, Rob Greenwood, the BMC's latest recruit (East of England Development Officer) stepped up to the podium and gave an amusing talk on the highs and lows of his climbing exploits over the last few years, both at home and abroad.

In total, this year's event attracted just over sixty persons completing this valuable conservation work, helped by copious amounts of early spring sunshine on the Saturday. Local area events like Trem Fest illustrate admirably how BMC member's funds are being put to good use on both a practical and social level. This ensures not only continued access to our UK crags but also goes towards preserving and maintaining our highly important climbing 'heritage'.

Jim and Julia Kelly

[A big thank you is extended to Jim and Julia Kelly for organising this year's event as well to the companies and people that supported the event]

Pembroke News:

North Pembroke Guide is now in shops and Range West (the last in the series of

definitive guides) is imminent. Excellent job done by all involved particularly Paul Donnithorne and Emma Alsford, Nigel and Helen Barry and John Willson who does all the technical layout stuff!

There was a good turnout for the first Range West briefing on Good Friday but not a lot of activity out there since – it would be great to see more climbers taking advantage of the hard fought access opportunities. The next briefings are Saturday May 25th, or Saturday July 27th 09.00 at Castlemartin Camp. The next period of no firing is 8th – 16th June when there should be full access for climbing in the Ranges but there will be a big military exercise from 17th June – 2nd August when both Range East and Range West (incl. St. Govans Head) are shut except for weekends.



Range East and West will be open (no firing) for August 3rd – 31st.

We are hoping to place a few more belay stakes in Range West at the end of the summer when the army EOD team are on site to check for buried ordnance – please contact steve@pembrokeshire.ac.uk if you know of a site where there is a real need for a belay stake (no natural anchors) above worthwhile climbing.

Steve Quinton

Pembroke Nesting Restrictions

There are a couple of slight adjustments to seasonal restrictions as birds are starting to settle into nest sites very late due to the cold winter.

Range West:

New Restriction at Arch Zawn no climbing on the Arch itself ('Anaemia' to 'Archology').

Climbers can access the Iron Age Fort south face via the arch but are asked to keep quiet and minimise time spent under the Arch.

Restriction 'D' = 'Another one bites the dust' to 'Discovery'

Restriction 'J' = 'Big Loosay' to 'Address Book'

Range East:

The Castle – just 'White Knight' is restricted

Bosherston Head – restriction is from 'Star Wars' to 'The Deerhunter' – also, please minimize disturbance if climbing across the other side of the Leap entrance ('Myola' area) which faces the nest site.

Trevallen – the birds seem to be back in the traditional nest site so restriction is 'Meat Loaf' to 'Breaking the Habit' as marked by red pots.

Steve Quinton

Mountaineering Commission of UIAA meeting April 21-22

The UIAA is the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation and it provides services and coordination at an international level for the benefit of the mountaineering community. Recently the Mountaineering Commission met to discuss various issues: the BMC was represented by Doug Scott, and Steve Long, chair of the Training Standards Panel. Doug Scott produced a report for the BMC which contains some elements that may be of direct interest to BMC Cymru members:

"Personally I can vouch for the whole-hearted support the Traditional Values Working Group has received from [this] Commission... Many useful points were raised and recommendations suggested towards helping Federations preserve rock in its natural state for Traditional Climbing.

"They have thus given their support to preserving Traditional Values by taking a stance on preserving rock in its natural state for Adventure Climbing as well as opening up the debate on competition climbing in the high mountains. In the document we have just prepared there are definite suggestions made for helping Federations with all matters concerning mountaineering including route setting on sport climbs in a safe and ethical manner."

Steve Long