



Photo: Austin Knott.

# PEAK AREA NEWSLETTER



April 2018  
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## Rocking Chair

Rob Greenwood



**Before we begin there's some important admin to run through, namely the date of the next meeting, which has moved back a week to 11 April.**

The reason for the change in date is due to a report that is being put together by National Council, and which will outline their thoughts on the final report of the Organisational Review Group (ORG). The ORG report has taken thousands of voluntary hours to compile and outlines a range of far-reaching recommendations that they believe are necessary to

modernise and improve the operations of the BMC. Areas (i.e. us) will then get a chance to comment and feedback on the report before it goes back to National Council, then back to the areas, then on to the AGM.

In light of all this, the AGM too has been bumped back – to 16 June – so make sure you've got the date in the diary.

In the meanwhile, I hope to see you all in Grindleford on the 11th!

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Next meeting: Wednesday 11 April, 7.30 p.m.  
The Maynard, Grindleford, S32 2HE



#MendOurMountains launch walk: descent to Castleton.  
Photo: Austin Knott.

## Access News

Henry Folkard



**This month looked like it was going to bring not much to report ... but then! Many climbing venues and walking areas remain fairly trouble free, while at others access issues seem to keep recurring. One such place is Ravensdale.**

Ravensdale is one of the best situated crags in the White Peak, and one of the relatively few from which you can't actually see a road. It lies within a National Nature Reserve that gives an outstanding assemblage of flowering plants, not to mention an exceedingly rare moss. It also hosts a wide range of birds, and has recently been recolonised by ravens and peregrines.

The crag itself is in open access land, though this only extends to the foot of the crag. The usual access route, originally a concessionary route for climbers, but now

widely used by walkers, is from a small parking area adjoining Ravensdale Cottages, through what used to be some open areas of calcareous grassland, but is now well wooded. Natural England (NE) declared National Nature Reserves open access land a couple of years ago.

Climbing is pretty seasonal, the crag being little visited, if at all, during the winter period. As I write you could not actually get across the stepping stones at the bottom, even if you wanted to. Perhaps Ravensdale is at its best on summer evenings. There seems to have been a history of antipathy towards climbers, and indeed anyone else setting foot in the reserve, by a person or persons living in the cottages. In recent years 'No Access' signs have appeared, forged, quite convincingly, to look like official NE signs – confusing as there are from time to time agreed restriction signs which may be left in place, seemingly for as long after the expiry of any agreed restriction as NE can get away with.

But the worst manifestation of this

antipathy towards anyone enjoying that part of the national park was some years ago now, when companions of a seriously injured climber asked to make an urgent 999 call from one of the cottages. Permission was refused. It was necessary to get into Cressbrook before making the call. The climber died from his injuries.

As ravens returned in increasing numbers to the Peak a few years since, old nest sites were once again populated, and that on Via Vita was no exception. Initially a fringe of sticks was visible on the ledge below the last pitch of Via Vita, but after several weeks with no bird being visible I took a closer look. No bird, nor any substantial sign of nest building. In subsequent years there was nesting, and appropriate restrictions were agreed with NE, without too much difficulty. There is no problem with agreeing reasonable restrictions. No nest failure attributed to climber disturbance has occurred.

NE officers come and go. Generally speaking in the Peak we have a constructive relationship with the five or six we have contact with at any one time, though they don't all sing from the same hymn sheet when it comes to agreeing an area that needs to be restricted. Because conservation is important it does not mean that recreation has no value and can be comprehensively brushed aside on the back of, often overstated, demands for restrictions. And NE do, after all, have a statutory remit in respect of access however marginalised this may appear to us to be in the approaches of some NE officers. The conservation ethic is increasingly embedded in the BMC's approach to access, as indeed it should be.

A couple of years ago Rob Dyer was able to negotiate a reasonable restriction with the then NE warden after Niall Grimes and Dan Middleton did some demonstration

climbs that proved there were significant areas of the crag that could be left open without causing any disturbance to nesting birds. The nests were successful.

This year NE has demanded a precautionary restriction across the whole crag in case a peregrine or raven shows interest in nesting there. Nowhere in the country does the BMC agree precautionary restrictions, because they have been shown time and again not to work. You can't reliably second guess where a bird will choose to nest. We had that tussle in the early days of ring ouzel restrictions before we agreed a reasonable protocol that respected everyone's enjoyment as well as the wildlife. Just as the approach Rob negotiated at Ravensdale was successful, so has the approach of following the least restrictive option been at Stanage and all across the country.

This year NE is intransigent. The BMC has said we will not agree their precautionary restriction. This is a tragedy, and totally unnecessary. It sets back the progress we have made in working together to common purpose, and reaching consensus through dialogue, by light years. The idea that conservation is about targeting recreation users – who actually cause only limited, if any, threat to breeding populations and don't kill anything – evidently still persists, while raptor persecution on the moors, declines in upland wader populations and massive declines in farmland species appear to be regarded as less problematic.

There are big problems for peregrines in both the Dark and White Peak. In the former, these are nothing to do with climbers or walkers, and everything, it is widely supposed, to do with gamekeepers on grouse moors. In the latter, the problem is theft of eggs and chicks for sale to falconers. Both are serious, both are

criminal. So why make an enemy of climbers and mountain walkers? Why not be positive and use their eyes and ears to help observe, and effectively police, areas which cannot otherwise be patrolled?

Perhaps if NE can't discharge their statutory duties in respect of access the funds they receive from central government for that purpose should be relocated to an organisation that can.

That's how it is at the time of writing, though things may change as some discussions are ongoing. And don't blame the national park for restriction notices which bear their logo. They have no option but to comply with NE's instruction.

To other news ...

At **Masson Lees** there have been reports of materials being dumped in the quarry, and uncertainty about why this is happening or what the implications are. Some discreet enquiries are ongoing, and we may know more by the time of the meeting, but current indications are that there is no significant need for concern at the moment.

The BMC has objected to the retrospective planning application for the ghastly green plastic matting that has been laid across **Midhope Moor**, and, when the proposal is determined, our views, along with those of many other objectors, will be taken into account. A word of warning if you do walk on it: it makes a very slippery surface underfoot and if you fall and injure yourself you will not be the first.

We have also objected to current proposals regarding the **A628 across Woodhead**, and round Mottram and Tintwistle. This is a difficult matter as traffic round Mottram is desperate, but doing what you can to increase it will hardly alleviate it. There is nothing about improving public transport I believe, and if you did get to Glossop faster, what would you do then?

The proposals seem piecemeal and ill-thought through with the only vision being more roads everywhere – dual carriageways across Woodhead, with presumably Snake next, then Tideswell Moor, and increased congestion on narrow feeder roads and across the moors – not to mention the impact of increased traffic flows on the villages to the east of Woodhead.

Landscape, and major impacts like the effects of noise and pollution, seem to have had little consideration while the consequences of a dual carriageway on north/south walking routes is essentially ignored. It is not just walkers who will suffer there, but wildlife too. Access to the countryside, and for local people, is apparently ignored. The focus is very much at an inter-city level only. There certainly is a problem which needs a solution, but that solution is not to be found in these proposals.

A climber returned from **Rollick Stones** to be greeted by police, accusing him of trespass, a bizarre state of affairs since had there been trespass it would have been a civil matter, not a criminal one. At the moment I have no more details than that so cannot speculate further. Suffice it to say the Rollick Stones are on open access land, and the guidebook approach via Torside car park and Wildboar Clough is correct. You can also access open country from the small car park by the bend in the B6105 as it crosses between Torside and Woodhead reservoirs, where the station used to be.

What you can no longer do is park or drive (or walk) along the track that runs under Skew Bridge, past some cottages, where there is a clay pigeon shoot. Private land extends behind the cottages and is similarly a no-go area. The BMC did challenge the mapping of this fairly small area as 'no access' at the time of CROW, but we lost that rancorous appeal.

A visit to the north of the Peak, probably encompassing the area round **Chew**, is planned in the spring for our local access reps, and mountain bikers' access reps, with the PDNPA's access and rights of way team, to assess surface erosion and unlawful use on footpaths and concessionary paths, along with damage to access furniture. If there are particular instances of damage or serious erosion problems you know about, or illegal use that is becoming established, please let me or Mark Warwicker know. There are general complaints, but rather less at the moment that is specific.

On **Kinder** the National Trust has said there will be no more grouse shooting. Elsewhere on their High Peak estate, grouse shooting will still be permitted, but not driven grouse shooting. The next meeting of the Kinder and High Peak Advisory Committee will concentrate on the impact of the extensive rewetting programme on Kinder and the knock-on effects for walkers and mountain rescue organisations. It is really a matter of understanding the implications of having, once again, a blanket bog that is in good condition, communicating and managing expectations, and how to get across the importance of understanding the topography when planning a route. If you have any views on this, please let me or Peter Judd know.

The **MoorLIFE** project now has about three more years to run. Who does what is always a bit confusing. A lot of the work is carried out by PDNPA's Moors for the Future Partnership (MFTFP), which is funded in part by the National Trust (NT), but the NT also accesses different funding pots to do very similar work on adjoining areas, within the same landscape, which for one reason or another fall just outside the MFTFP funded work.

There will probably be a celebration next year to mark the tenth anniversary of the

dedication of Kinder as a National Nature Reserve, with hopefully an announcement of an extension of the area covered by that dedication. This may encompass both revision of the NT's High Peak Moors Vision and Plan, and celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the 1949 Act.

Don't forget the **Spirit of Kinder Day** this year, which is in Manchester, at the Friends Meeting House, 6, Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS, on 21 April and starting at 1.00 p.m. Speakers include Kate Ashbrook, Jim Perrin and Keith Warrender, plus some music and poetry.

To finish, two snippets from the Lakes: on a typical Saturday night how many people would you expect to see streaming up Scafell Pike from Wasdale, all doing the Three Peaks? Answer: 800; and, I understand, the proposal for zip wires across Thirlmere has been withdrawn.

Then two books recently published about the Peak: *Kinder Scout: The People's Mountain* by Ed Douglas and John Beatty, published by Vertebrate; and *An Upland Biography: Landscape and Prehistory on Gardom's Edge, Derbyshire* by John Barnatt, Bill Bevan and Mark Edmonds, and published by Windgather/Oxbow Press. Even if it's not Christmas, it's well worth treating yourself to them both.

PS Congratulations to TerraFirma whose excellent work on the Cutthroat track is nearing completion. It's another example, as was the Ringing Roger track, of what can be done to restore badly damaged areas – and in this case they have done it during the most awful weather.



Ned Feehally on *Grune Holle* (7b+), Wharnccliffe.  
Photo: Jon Fullwood.

# Climbing News & Gossip

Dave Parry

**They say no news is good news. Well I can only assume whoever came up with that idiom had never sat down to write a Peak Area news report covering the worst two months of weather of the year. I can assure you it's not gonna be easy trying to pad this thing out to half a dozen paragraphs, but bear with me.**

During my tenure as news editor I have never had the misfortune to preside over such a non-newsworthy two months. Almost literally nothing has happened. Zilch. Sweet FA. Diddy squat. At this point should I be just making stuff up? Let's have a go at that then.

I hear *Burning Lark Sunset* has been getting a few repeats of late by Guy Incognito and Anne Onnimus, who confirm the grade if not the quality. Visiting Japanese climber Sum Yun Gai continued his recent rampage on the grit making the first on-sight of *Meshuga* the same day as mopping up the old Dawes' project Wizard Ridge, graded E11 7b and climbed with a side runner in *Offspring*, belayed by a Spanish guy who cycled to the crag at 4 a.m. Also, Alex Megos finally did *The Joker*. (Sorry if things got a bit implausible towards the end there.)

Back to actual ascents, let's see what we can find by raking through the sodden embers of the pissed-on bonfire that was the 2017–2018 Peak gritstone winter season. Orrin Coley apparently did *The Ace* and *Careless Torque* at Stanage on the same day recently, which is impressive not just as a tour de force of iconic hard grit bouldering, but also since presumably it required finding the only day since Christmas where it wasn't raining or snowing. Good effort, youth.

Ned 'finger healing up surprisingly quickly' Feehally has done a bloody-good looking line at Wharnccliffe, gifted to him by Jon Fullwood, who found it a bit too spanned to do himself. Near the Outlook area, *Kobe* is a leaning wall

coming out of a small pit/jumble, with big and involved moves on slopy holds with some fancy toehooking over left. Graded 7c+ ish. The BMC Peak Area Newsletter Editorial Team (which the cool kids are already calling TBMCPANET) took the liberty of checking this out in passing and can confirm it looks damn good. Jon Fullwood has some more new stuff up his sleeve at Wharnccliffe, including a few 7s at the Upper Tier area. Notable is *Platitude Inspector* – the best-named 7b arête I've come across in recent years – and also there is a good looking 7b+ called *Way Down in a Hole*. Full details of these and more will hopefully emerge online when Jon's finished his topo.

Further relying on Ned for news, I can report he's added an absolute king line to the *Mossatrocity* block in Padley Gorge. *Moss Side Story* starts on the block to the right and crosses the roof perpendicular to the original problem to top out up the left wall. Maybe don't pull a sickie from work for that one. Also a new one at Gardoms at around the 7c mark is the wall right of *Two Headed Boy*. Beta from Ned as follows: 'Start up the hill, matched on a slotty break. Traverse left along some nasty thin slots and slopers with minimal (no) footholds. Finish up juggy breaks just right of the finish of *Two Headed Boy*.' Straight from the horse's mouth.

Limestone: no ascents what with February usually being the nadir of the limestone year, but I can report from evergreen development juggernaut Gary Gibson that he's sorted the access rope in from *Pocket Symphony* to *Majolica* on Beeston Tor.

At least Kinder Downfall has been 'in' for a few days, if you could get your car within two hours' walk of it. That's your lot. Let's just pretend this winter never happened. I'm off to cry into my Font guides. See you in British Summertime.

## Get in touch

Send your Peak area news, gossip or article ideas to me at: [peakarea@gmail.com](mailto:peakarea@gmail.com)



*Up to a Point, Wharnccliffe.*  
Photo: John Coefield.

## Rock Stabilisers/Sealants

Jon Fullwood

**Porous granular rock types, principally sandstone and gritstone, vary enormously in stability. On one end of the scale they are as hard and impervious as granite, at the other end they are little better than dried sand castles.**

While the worst rock is generally unsuitable for climbing, many climbs have at least some areas of relatively soft rock. This is often the case close to the ground where gravity-driven moisture within porous rock either finds its way out or hits saturated ground and sits there to fester. For this reason, boulderers are likely to come across soft rock frequently when climbing on these rock types. That said, softer bands are also common at higher levels where mineral composition favours weaker mineral elements or where there is a higher proportion of voids between grains. In some circumstances weathering processes produce

a hardened surface layer generally referred to as a patina. This hard patina can conceal much weaker rock beneath. Where a patina exists it typically only covers a proportion of a climb and differential weathering at the boundary produces many of the typical holds found on these rock types.

Climbing, even on immaculate rock and with flawless technique and perfect conditions, leads to incremental weathering. Where the rock is hard this will manifest as gradual polishing of the surface. Where the rock is softer it will be seen as erosion by gradual loss of grains. This is primarily caused by the normal use of footholds, with only the weakest most poorly bonded surface grains generally being dislodged by use as handholds. Water content has a well-known weakening effect on rock integrity, with near-surface moisture aggravating erosional grain loss. Tooth-brushing is generally a less serious cause of grain loss,



the exception to this being soft sandstone handholds not subject to use as footholds, in this case tooth-brushing, especially after rain can cause significant damage.

There is much that climbers can do to minimise erosion and polish, notably the avoidance of climbing on wet rock, climbing in clean boots, careful footwork, not using fragile handholds as footholds, thoughtful brush choice/use, or substitution with a rag to clean holds. Beyond this, I think climbers tend to view erosion either as a regrettable but inevitable side effect of the activity or overwhelmingly the result of other less considerate individuals. Having neatly assigned the damage to either a sad fact of life or somebody else's responsibility they are free to push on and turn a blind eye to the orange-brown scoops growing on the base of many of our finest crags and boulders.

There is however a fairly long if little discussed tradition of individuals taking proactive measures to prevent or arrest erosion by applying various stabilising substances to vulnerable surfaces. This has been sporadic and ad hoc and in occasional cases has probably done more harm than good. It's this potential for harm which has led to the subject never really being widely covered –when was the last time you saw a magazine or web article on the subject, or any guidance either way in a guidebook? This potential for harm is real, largely irreversible and it's only after careful consideration and with some trepidation that I offer practical advice on how it can be done.

So why do I think it is worth the inherent risk? Firstly, because the amount and extent of erosion is increasing, largely due to the continued and growing popularity of bouldering, this damage vastly outweighs any done thus far by poor quality or inappropriate sealant use. If stabilising is effective it can help to slow if not stop further damage. Secondly, because there is

an increasing awareness and use of stabilisers; and I think incomplete knowledge in the wrong hands is a bad thing. Thirdly stabilising has been carried out for long enough now to be considered tried, tested and very effective in appropriate circumstances. There are boulder problems on grit and sandstone which would have been rendered unclimbable long ago, not to mention permanently visually scarred, were it not for the preventative stabilising that has taken place.

My experience of rock stabiliser is mostly limited to super glue. I have tried a proprietary product marketed as Stone Seal in the past but found this to be much less effective. I've also used two part resins to refix broken holds but this is off subject really and these aren't suitable as stabilisers. I do think there is a case for actively repairing some of the worst damage that already exists, however this would require some proper trialling of suitable fill materials and again is beyond the scope of this article.

### **Super glue**

Super glue, AKA cyanoacrylate, is an initially monomer acrylic resin that rapidly polymerises in the presence of water (specifically hydroxide ions), forming long, strong chains, joining the bonded surfaces. Mainly used as an adhesive in many domestic, industrial and medical situations, it has useful properties which make it the best option for treating certain types of holds. Its continued use as an adhesive and rock stabiliser by palaeontologists on soft fossils would suggest there is some scientific basis for selecting it as stabilising treatment on rock. It has been used on both grit and sandstone in the UK on a small scale for at least ten years now with decent results to date.

## Pros:

- Its low viscosity means it is very good at penetrating between the pores of granular rock, so stabilisation has some depth to it rather than being a surface coating liable to flake off due to weathering. In practice, it actually penetrates well on softer weaker rock and poorly on hard well-bonded surfaces where it is unneeded anyway.

- It doesn't include a solvent as part of its ingredient list, so unlike many other potential stabilisers it does not have a tendency to migrate to the surface as it cures.

- A poor void-filling capacity means that if applied conservatively some degree of the rock's natural porosity is preserved. Loss of porosity can lead to a glazed, low friction surface texture with low moisture (sweat) absorbance which is particularly undesirable on sloping handholds.

- It dries clear meaning a treated area does not change much in appearance. Exactly how much depends on the nature of the rock being treated – treatment will show up more on a very plain homogenous area of rock.

- It dries clean, leaving no greasy residues.

- Very rapid drying time allows a treated hold to be used quickly without picking up dirt or chalk.

- As curing is moisture dependant it does not require bone dry rock in order to be effective. However, it will not penetrate saturated rock.

- Small-scale use over more than a decade has proved long-lasting erosion prevention properties on holds which had previously been rapidly eroding.

- It is cheap and readily available. Bargain stores often sell multipacks of 5ml tubes for £1–£2.

- Application is quick and simple (see below).

## Cons:

- Application can reduce hold friction, especially if done badly. In marginal cases this could render a hard move impossible.

- Tubes have a 12-month shelf life if unopened and one month once opened. Past this time the glue will increase in viscosity which will reduce its ability to penetrate the rock and tend to leave a non-porous glaze on the rock surface. Sealed tubes stored in a domestic freezer will however last indefinitely without degrading.

- Fast drying time means you have to be ready with a dabbing rag to clear away any excess before it dries. Failure to do this may mean a thick glazed layer or a dried-on dribble running down from the hold.

- It cannot be brush applied so is pretty much unusable for the underside of undercuts or roofs.

- Application direct from small (5–25ml) tube via tiny applicator nozzle renders it impractical for stabilisation of larger holds or areas of rock.

- During drying toxic fumes are liberated. This is generally not a practical problem given the scale of use and the outdoor context; however, cyanoacrylate reacts strongly with cotton and other fibres/powders which can release more significant quantities of fumes. For this and the following reason textile gloves are best not worn when applying super glue.

- The above-mentioned reaction is exothermic and can result in burns if for instance you were to spill a whole tube in your pocket.

- As it usually says on the tube, 'bonds eyes and skin in seconds'. Take care. In practice, the worst that has happened to the author is a burst tube getting thoroughly stuck to a finger, requiring some very careful work with a Stanley knife to remove!

### **Most suitable for:**

- Stabilising broken holds
- Solidifying soft sandy rock
- Halting erosion on scooped footholds

### **Unsuitable for:**

- Sticking holds back on, due to low shear strength
- Reinforcing loose holds
- Larger holds/areas
- Undersides of overhanging features

### **How to apply:**

1. Assess the suitability of the hold for stabilisation. If the hold is already stable and not subject to grain loss during normal use then **DO NOT TREAT**. This can be tested by either standing on a hold and checking your boot for grains, or in many cases simply rubbing the rock with your thumb. Vulnerable holds are usually obvious. If you are not sure, **DO NOT TREAT**.

2. Check the hold is reasonably dry. Damp is fine (see above), wet isn't.

3. Clean the hold of chalk and dirt, with a toothbrush as a minimum and water if necessary (allow time to dry). Remember any residual chalk will be permanently stuck in place!

4. Counter to the above, if treating a freshly broken hold or bright scoop (often brown/orange against dark brown or black surrounding rock) rub moist dirt into the hold to improve the colour match between the damaged area and the surrounding rock.

5. Before applying glue make sure you have a suitable rag on hand. Drying is very rapid and you don't want to be scrabbling around looking for one while the clock is ticking.

6. Open a fresh tube of glue. 5ml tubes are the best and cheapest option. At about 10–20p a tube there is little excuse for using old half tubes which may well have started to go syrupy.

7. Squeeze tube lightly and apply with a rapid 'spotting' motion across the surface. This allows slow gradual application without the risk of excess dribbles. This method also means you can apply only to loose-looking spots with little patches of patina left untouched. You can also half-seal a hold like this, which in many cases is all that is required to halt erosion.

8. Use a cloth to dab up any excess which does not quickly soak away. This helps avoid a glazed finish and feathers the edge of the treated area making it less visible. Try to do this quickly and in one or two passes, more than this and you risk cloth fibres being left stuck to the rock. Some rags are better at not shedding fibres than others; obviously brightly coloured ones are going to leave more of a mess if you get it wrong. And don't use tissue: it will stick to the rock.

9. Check the treated area is dry before risking putting your chalky hands on it. This will vary according to conditions but should only take a few minutes if you have ragged off any excess properly. You'll know it is dry if you push a thumb into the area and no spots of wet glue come away on your skin.

10. Check the hold has stopped eroding as per point 1. Add extra glue to unsealed spots if needed.

If you're thinking about carrying out hold stabilisation on your local crag, please give the BMC access team a call first to discuss; contact information is on the BMC website: [www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-staff-list](http://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-staff-list) and [www.thebmc.co.uk/list-of-bmc-access-reps](http://www.thebmc.co.uk/list-of-bmc-access-reps)

# Hill Walking News

Peter Judd and Austin Knott

**The Peak Area hill walking fraternity were at the forefront of the walk to help publicise the public launch of the #MendOurMountains Make One Million (MOM2) campaign and run as part of the Sheffield Adventure Film Festival.**

On 10 March, 31 hill walkers of varied abilities, experience and nationalities descended upon Castleton to take part in a celebratory walk along the Great Ridge. While the event was organised by BMC Hill Walking Officer, Carey Davies, and his Mend Our Mountains assistant, Inigo Atkin, the walk was led by our very own BMC Peak Area Hill Walking Rep. Peter Judd, assisted by Austin Knott (Peak Area HW Rep), Matthew Bradbury (BMC Independent Director and Access and Conservation Trust chair) and Jon Garside (BMC/MTE Training Officer).

Setting off in clag the route was amended to take account of the conditions and the size of group, aiming for the ridge via the Old Road and the Little Mam Tor landslip continuing up Mam Tor. Descending from the trig point to Hollins Cross the mist lifted to reveal the spectacular view of the Edale and Hope valleys.

PDNPA's Mike Rhodes was in attendance and pointed out the damaged sections of path and explained the work planned for one of the Peak District's two projects that will benefit from the campaign. The walk was supported by BMC Hill Walking Ambassador Mary-Ann Ochota, who mingled seamlessly through the group explaining the MOM2 campaign and the impact it would have in the Peak District and the other national parks involved in the campaign.

At Lose Hill, Peter described to the group the desire lines from that summit down to Edale End, pointing out the various ridge lines dropping away from the hill. Henry will be delighted to learn that Peter outlined how the BMC local access volunteers were pressing the case for a concession route. The group were also intrigued to learn about G.H.B. Ward – after whom the summit, 'Ward's Piece', is named – and his Sheffield Clarion Ramblers club.

It was then back to Castleton for some post-walk refreshments organised by Inigo.

Please think of ways you might support the projects within the campaign. There's an increasing amount of information on the BMC website and on various social media. For example, take a look at Carey's article for ideas here: [www.thebmc.co.uk/7-ways-to-make-a-difference-for-the-mountains](http://www.thebmc.co.uk/7-ways-to-make-a-difference-for-the-mountains) And keep an eye out for further events and in-campaign promotions during its longevity. Talking of further events, those present at the last Peak Area meeting will have heard Peter suggest a head-torch walk to light up sections of Great Ridge in support of MOM. This idea has since been taken up by Carey and Inigo centrally and may well turn into something much bigger. However, details are still being finalised, so watch this space!

PS Some will recall that at the last Area meeting a Great Ridge by head torch event was proposed for Mend Our Mountains. This idea has been taken over by the MOM team centrally and expanded upon considerably. It's now set for the evening of Tuesday 22 May. Put it in your diary! Please do email your interest to: [mendourmountains@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:mendourmountains@thebmc.co.uk)

# Go Rock Climbing Outdoors

Castle Mountaineering Club

**Go rock climbing outdoors in the Peak District this April or May with the Castle Mountaineering Club. Meet fellow climbers, find out more about the club and learn how to progress from indoors to outdoors.**

These weekends provide the opportunity for potential new CMC members to find out more about the club and meet fellow climbers with a range of abilities and ages.

It can be daunting to move from the security of the climbing wall to placing your own gear, setting up a safe belay, and working out where a route goes in the outdoors. Joining up with a mountaineering club and its club members, who have been there before and often have many years' experience, can ease this move. Members are able to offer informal advice, mentoring and climbing partners, while club membership provides access to BMC training courses.

## Dates and locations

First meet:

20 April – Indoors: Awesome Walls, Sheffield, from 6 p.m. onwards

22 April – Outdoors: Burbage North, from 10.30 a.m. (meeting at the Upper Burbage Bricar park)

## Second meet:

11 May – Indoors: Awesome Walls, Sheffield, from 6 p.m. onwards

13 May – Outdoors: Stanage Popular End from 10.30 a.m.

## What you need

Ideally you will have, as a minimum, climbed indoors, have your own harness, belay device, helmet and shoes and can tie on safely and belay someone competently.

However, the club has some equipment which will be available on both weekends. If in doubt, please speak to Andrew (see below).

## Who we are

Castle Mountaineering Club members undertake a wide range of activities including rock climbing, mountaineering, walking, trekking, skiing, ski mountaineering, ski touring, cycling and mountain biking. We are a sociable and supportive group with a lot of combined experience. What unites us is our love of the outdoors, whether it's the great countryside on our doorstep in the Peak District or adventures further afield.

If you would like to join us on one of our weekends, it is important to contact us in advance, to let us know your details, in case we have to inform you of a change of venue, due to bad weather.

For more information, please contact the CMC membership secretary Andrew Milne: 0114 268 6605

[www.castlemountaineering.com](http://www.castlemountaineering.com)



Photo: Pate O'Donovan.



Photo: National Trust.

## Industry on the Edges: the Peak District's millstones

Chris Millner, Area Ranger, Longshaw Estate

**If you have ever been 'lucky' enough to have had to move a large piece of stone by hand, then you have some idea of what the millstone makers of centuries past had to wrestle with. As National Trust rangers on the moors we got quite good at walking half-tonne flagstones on their edges, lifting and flipping them over with help from steel bars and wooden blocks – and a brick-sized rock was all that was needed to spin them around when balanced. Luckily for us we only had to move the things a few metres as a helicopter usually did 99.9 per cent of the job.**

I guess millstones are as old as the grains that needed to be ground. One of the first types was the saddle quern, a shallow dish-shaped piece of stone where the user pushed another handheld stone over the

top to wear the grain into flour. While restoring dry-stone walls in the Dark Peak we have over the years found a few beehive quern stones; these are the shape of half a sphere and are around one foot in diameter on the flat circular side. They would sit on top of another flat stone and be rotated right and left by a wooden handle fitted to a hole in the quern stone. The grain would be trickled through a hole cut through the centre. So far we have only found broken querns, just quarters of spheres, worked on one part to create the shape, roughly broken along one side with the remains of the central hole, and the rock worn smooth on the base from hours of milling. These beehive querns date from around the time of the Bronze Age, and were used right through until after the Romans left. They were even produced on a commercial scale, with a quarry at Wharncliffe near Sheffield

producing a find of around 500. From Saxon times onwards simple quern stones gave way to larger water, wind and animal-powered millstones.

If you are out climbing on any of the gritstone edges from Stanage to Chatsworth you are guaranteed to find a millstone; the Chatsworth grit series of rock has been hewn from the outcrops and shaped into millstones for centuries. In 1240 Matthew de Hathersage, lord of the manor of Hathersage, had a water mill by the River Derwent, and his tenants were required to have their corn ground at the lord's mill. In 1466, two millstone makers, William Wethington and Jankyn Stonhewer, are recorded as being employed by the Eyre family of Padley to cut millstones at Yarncliffe. From various accounts, it's estimated that it took around two weeks to chisel out a single millstone, with the job often frustrated by natural flaws in the rock.

Up until the late 1700s the making of millstones was carried out by a family or as a small commercial venture. There are many small 'delves' or quarries with narrow ramped routes to them, to help get stones out. The stones, often up to two tons in weight, were manhandled out of the delves and then dragged by horse-drawn sledges to the nearest road or track. They could then be put into pairs with a wooden axle, or loaded on to large carts – on Stanage a cart used to transport millstones had a chassis made of tree trunks, and four stout wheels with iron rims. Turnpike tolls were for 'a pair of stones drawn by five horses or beasts'. At the height of the trade many Peak District millstones made the journey to Chesterfield and then to the port at Bawtry, where they could be loaded on to boats for shipping to Europe.

Into the 19th century the making of millstones became concentrated in the areas providing the best quality of stone, including

Stanage and Millstone edges. The workforce became more full-time and cart tracks were constructed, along with workshops and stores; the stones were sold on by the quarry owner or through a merchant. The fortunes of the industry waxed and waned, with better French-made stones taking over the milling of flour and cheaper Peak District stones being used more widely to produce everything from paint to paper pulp. Some of the last stones made were due to go to Gothenburg, Sweden in 1939, but they never made it. Instead some of these stones became markers along the roads that enter the Peak District National Park.

Abandoned millstones can be found everywhere on these gritstone edges in all states of manufacture, from roughly cut slabs that have just had their corners rounded off, to rows of them stacked neatly waiting for the cart that never came. Many are now hidden away among the birch and gnarly oak trees, as nature steadily reclaims this boulder-strewn workshop.

For more information about the National Trust's work in the Peak District, please email: [peakdistrict@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:peakdistrict@nationaltrust.org.uk)

# Peak Area Meetings

2018

11 April, 7.30 p.m.  
The Maynard, Grindleford

23 May, 7.30 p.m.  
The Maynard, Grindleford

5 September, 7.30 p.m.  
The Maynard, Grindleford

21 November, 7.30 p.m.  
The Maynard, Grindleford

## Forthcoming Events

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

**BAF: John Beatty and Claire Carter**  
**11 April, 7.30 p.m.**

**Buxton Opera House**

Don't fancy the BMC Peak Area meeting on the 11th because Bobby 'let's talk about ORG, baby' G usually lets things drag on a bit? Then this evening with legendary photographer John Beatty might be right up your street... Find out more:

[www.buxtonadventurefestival.co.uk](http://www.buxtonadventurefestival.co.uk)

**Mend Our Mountains, Torch-lit Walk**  
**22 May**

**Great Ridge, Hope Valley**

Email [mendourmountains@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:mendourmountains@thebmc.co.uk)  
for more information.

**BMC Mountain Medicine Weekend**  
**9-10 June**

**Outside, Hathersage**

Now in its third year, the BMC Mountain Medicine Weekend returns to Hathersage on 9 and 10 June 2018. Find out more:

[www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-mountain-medicine-weekend-2018](http://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-mountain-medicine-weekend-2018)

## BMC Peak Area Contacts

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Next meeting: Wednesday 11 April, 7.30 p.m.  
The Maynard, Grindleford, S32 2HE