



Inspecting the repaired Ringing Roger.  
Photo: Austin Knott.

# PEAK AREA NEWSLETTER



January 2019  
peakarea@gmail.com

## Rocking Chair

Rob Greenwood



### Happy New Year!

**It only seems like five minutes since the last meeting, but here we are just a few weeks away from the first Peak Area meeting of 2019.**

We've got an exciting programme of speakers lined up this year, kicking off with Carey Davies, the BMC's Hill Walking Development Officer, who's going to talk about the influence of writing on his career in the outdoors. Carey is a frequent contributor to *The Guardian's Country Diary* and a former assistant editor at *TGO Magazine*. His adventures have taken him across the world,

yet he's still firmly rooted in the UK, having walked extensively throughout the British Isles.

Looking further ahead, the RSPB's Raptor Persecution Team will attend our March meeting, and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Tim Birch at our June meeting (TBC); Tim will be talking about the trust's ambitious rewilding plans throughout the Peak. In September we've managed to persuade the man, myth and legend Stu Bradbury to do a talk (quite a feat, as he's got to drive all the way from Cornwall to get here!). Stu's exploits along the south-west coast are the thing of legend – check out his 'Hostile Terrain' article on UKClimbing and you'll see what I mean.

So, you can't accuse us of having a dull year lined up (and I haven't even mentioned November's quiz)! See you there.

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Next meeting: Wednesday 23 January, 7.30 p.m.  
The Maynard, Grindleford, S32 2HE



Stanage Plantation.  
Photo: John Coefield.

## Access News

Louise Hawson

### Stanage

Andrew McCloy, new chair of the Peak District National Park Authority, attended the last meeting of the Stanage Forum Steering Group, and made clear his commitment to the forum and the estate. I'm sure we'll continue to have 'robust discussions' on key issues with the national park, but in Andrew we have a chair who understands and values the role of the BMC as a stakeholder and partner.

We're still unclear on the level of staffing and resources for the estate this year, but we've made strong representation that the estate ranger post – ably filled by Mark Anderson – must continue as a full-time role. We're working with the estate team on a management plan to support this.

Updates on key issues and projects:

- Planning permission has been sought by Sheffield City Council and Ride Sheffield for a new mountain bike track in the Redmires plantation. The BMC responded to the consultation supporting the proposal, as long as potential conflicts between mountain bikers and walkers on Long Causeway are mitigated through design, signage and information on responsible use.

- Proposals to make improvements to the parking at High Neb, which were discussed at the last meeting, may run into issues with planning. We will keep working on this to get a better solution. It's particularly important given plans to promote the Long Causeway as route for those with mobility issues to access the top of Stanage.

- Ring ouzels won't start arriving until late March, but we'll start to recruit volunteers for this year's monitoring project on Stanage, Burbage and the Eastern Moors in the next couple of months. Keep an eye out for information on the BMC's website and twitter feed.

We'll be promoting other volunteering opportunities up on the estate throughout 2019. If you're a member of a club (climbing or otherwise!) that might want to get involved, then let one of the access team know and we'll put you in touch with Mark.

- Finally, we're keeping an eye on the situation with parking fees and enforcement at Hollin Bank (Plantation). Check the **BMC's Regional Access Database (RAD)** for the latest information.

### **Peak District Local Access Forum**

The LAF advises the national park authority on access and rights of way issues, from the perspective of key stakeholders and user groups. A couple of key issues of interest from the last meeting:

The Glover Review of Protected Areas is consulting on whether the protections for national parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are still fit for purpose, what might be done better and what changes will help. The meeting discussed the importance of responsible behaviour by users and guidance on good practice. The BMC has a history of providing positive guidance to its members (for example on wild camping), and it seems this role is likely to become more important in the future. The review will report in 2019.

A workshop in January will look at how the national park can better manage the impacts of events – from the Chatsworth Show to local fell races – on the landscape, infrastructure and residents of the park. Although the BMC won't be directly represented, the LAF representative will share our views about charging and licensing schemes, and the benefits of well-managed events for the economy, people and the landscape. We'll provide an update at the next area meeting.

### **Eastern Moors and Burbage**

Henry Folkard

There isn't much to report from the Eastern Moors or Burbage since the last meeting, though it is anticipated a number of management issues will crop up a bit later in 2019.

A couple of years ago there was a lot of discussion about activity on National Trust land that could be deemed to be commercial activity – like climbing instruction for which clients paid an instructor. Commercial activity is excluded from open access arrangements under CROW. This was not a Peak thing exclusively, but common to all such activity on all National Trust property – and was a much bigger issue at places such as Purbeck than it was here.

The matter was never completely resolved then, and it has now re-emerged: the question as it came to me was whether or not a permit was required if instructing at Lawrencefield, but this was in fact essentially the same item. Before Christmas the Trust's countryside manager readily agreed to meet with the local AMI co-ordinator and myself to see what practical arrangements we could propose for the Peak – and Rob Dyer from BMC head office will join us too.

Both the countryside manager and I think it should be perfectly possible to sort something out which is of benefit to all parties without any imposition of financial or bureaucratic penalties for either. Hopefully there will be something to report back at the next area meeting.

There should also be something to report on a proposed Winnats event at the end of April, but the meeting at which details will be agreed is a bit later in January, after this newsletter's deadline – watch out for details on the BMC website.



Below Mam Tor.  
Photo: Roger Fanner.

## Hill Walking News

Peter Judd and Austin Knott

### The BMC's first Hill Walking Symposium

The Hill Walking Symposium took place here on our own patch at Losehill Hall, Castleton on the last weekend of November. Over 50 people attended, including a good number from our own area, as might be expected, but we were also pleased to have representation from every other BMC Area too. We even had our own homegrown president, Lynn Robinson, on hand to welcome everyone.

This event was run as an experiment, having a real mix of activities on offer over the weekend, to see what might grab people's imagination. Some excellent short workshops were delivered on Saturday with a diverse range of topics, including: organising clean-ups and path repairs; how to lead a successful BMC hill walk (delivered jointly by our own Peter Judd and fellow hill walking area rep Chris Stone from the

London and SE Area); protecting and celebrating the upland landscapes; how to deal with incidents and hazards in the hills; and navigation in the hills: hints and tips.

One of the highlights of the event was a very lively debate that took place on Saturday afternoon delving into both access improvements for walkers and the legalities around wild camping, clearly both issues of major concern to adventurous hill walkers. The key points to take away from this included just how fortunate we are to already have such a good public rights of way network (despite local government underfunding meaning maintenance, signage and repair of same are increasingly being neglected), and the excellent additional open access gains achieved via the 18-year-old Countryside and Rights of Way Act. However, BMC Access and Conservation Officer for Policy, Cath Flitcroft, explained that an interesting opportunity presents itself presently as the government rewrites legislation around both agriculture and the environment in preparation for leaving the

European Union. Such work will likely radically change how subsidies are targeted and there are signs the government just might choose to incentivise environmental improvement and along with this also incentivise improved public access. While we may not have the same freedoms of access that are enjoyed in Scotland, our situations are different and while pushing for a Scotland-like freedom to legally wild camp might at first seem attractive, there may (given the present tolerance of discrete, low-impact, wild camping above the last wall line by most landowners and managers in our mountainous areas) be more to lose by agitating for a legalising of our current practice than there is to gain. This is because it would draw attention to what currently happens in a way that could just as easily lead to a strong lobby building to not only oppose changes to the advantage of wild campers but might also lead to a breakdown of the current tolerance already mentioned.

Sunday morning began with a very powerful, well-argued and evidenced presentation discussing the moorland restoration work of the Moors for the Future Partnership and its many benefits, given by their manager, Chris Dean. Amongst many interesting points here are just two. Our Peak District upland sphagnum moss peat bogs are pretty much at the southern extreme of where such a bog is capable of being self-sustaining. Should global warming lead to many of the climate changes that have been predicted, then we could lose them from the Peak District altogether. He also explained that while the flooding suffered by places like Glossop a few years ago was distressing, our streams and river systems can actually cope with quite high levels of flooding already, it only takes a relatively small improvement in water retention up on the moors to move from such rivers overflowing to the same

rivers being able to stay within their banks. They already have good evidence that the present gully blocking and rewetting of the moors has already led to a noticeable slow-down of rainwater runoff.

Sunday ended with a range of different walks on offer. Chris Dean took a group to look at MFTFP's work up on Bleaklow, a navigation skills session was delivered on Kinder Scout, Peter Judd took walkers on a tour of limestone and gritstone geology during a walk around the Castleton end of the Hope Valley, and Austin Knott (along with Carey Davies) took walkers to see the past and future work of Mend Our Mountains by visiting the completed Ringing Roger project and also the site of the proposed work on Great Ridge.

This pilot event seems to have gone down very well with participants and good feedback has been received since. I think we can be confident that a further such national event is well worth considering and thoughts are already turning to doing so, maybe for 2020.

### **The next area hill walk**

A date for your diary: Austin and Peter have been asked by the BMC office to arrange a walk to coincide with the BMC's 2019 AGM which will take place in Buxton on the weekend of the 30th and 31st of March. The AGM itself will, we're told, be on Sunday, and the request for a walk is for the Saturday, starting and finishing in Buxton. Details will be announced via the Peak Area Facebook page and other channels nearer the time.



Raven Tor.  
Photo: John Coe field.

## Climbing News & Gossip

Dave Parry

**Here we are in the year of our Lord twenty nineteen; the distant future, utopian society, monorails, food in pill form. And it is with that rather jarring opening stanza that I welcome you, the reader, to the opening paragraph of the first news report of the year. I find myself writing this at a time which seems only minutes after I signed off the last one, most of the intervening days featuring the now-customary crap Christmas weather, so you'll excuse me for padding out this first bit with excessive verbosity in lieu of actual content. Still, the last of the mince pie-flavoured food pills has been successfully ingested so we must look forwards.**

Of course, in any utopian future world meritocracy rules, so let's have the big numbers up first. Top of the numerical stack is Orrin Coley, who's repeated *Voyager* low

start, Font 8b+, in the Peak's answer to Yosemite, the Burbage Valley. This comparatively elderly offering from Ben Moon is still one of the hardest problems in the Peak, certainly on grit, making it a coveted tick for anyone with the requisite finger strength and skin to throw at it.

Using thoughts of the comparatively elderly to neatly segue into the coming paragraph, I happily report that the aforementioned quinquagenarian renaissance-man Ben Moon continues to buck the trend of graceful age-related decline by making an ascent of *Evolution* (F8c+) at Raven Tor. At 52, this is not only remarkable simply because of age, but even more so because Ben failed to tick this route back in his prime in the 1990s. If ten years ago you'd have suggested Ben would do this route, and *Rainshadow*, and be close to doing *Northern Lights* at Kilnsey, it would have seemed a ridiculous suggestion. OK, you've got to remember that Ben was the best in the world, but still his return to top form in recent years

continues to inspire. Especially considering he's no stranger to injury and almost gave up climbing not that long ago. Also, personally speaking I can't imagine being in my fifties at Raven Tor in winter and being able to physically put enough clothes on to stay warm, let alone climb a hard route. Basically folks, there's no excuses now. As Sid Waddell might say, this is the greatest comeback since Lazarus.

Also at Raven Tor, Frances Bensley from Coventry has repeated modest Steve McClure's *Fat Lip*, which for those unaccustomed to the steep delights of the Raven Tor cave is a powerful Font 8b heel-hooking extravaganza. Frances becomes only the third British female to climb Font 8b, and as far as I know the first one to do so on British soil, which surely has to be big news. After all, we can all hop on a flight to sunnier climes for holiday grades, but it's bringing home the bacon at a damp and drizzly Raven Tor that is the true test. Sometimes people moan, wrongly, that standards haven't come on much since the 1990s, blah blah blah, but the top end of British women's climbing has really surpassed all expectations, in my personal view. Good effort, Frances.

On to the grit now and let's check in with the gritstone offerings of fingerboard supremo and mantelphile Ned Feehally. True to form Ned reports that he's done a couple of mantels through Andy Harris' traverse *The DTs* at Stanage. Both at present unnamed, one on the left, one on the right through a vague scoop, both in the low Font 7s. Nice to have a couple more problems to tempt people away from the Plantation and along to this block. In complete contrast Ned has done a line to the left of *Legend of the Potato King* at Baslow, starting in the same place but veering left above a better landing to an easier finish. Around Font 7c, might be a

good one for those spring after-work sessions when Baslow really comes into its own as a great evening crag.

A rediscovered Jamie Lilleman prowl problem *Honalee* (Font 7b) at Chatsworth Edge seems to have had some attention of late, with a pre-emptive retroclaim coming in from Ben Bransby. Boasting some apparently quality fridge-hugging, Ned has also chimed in with a right-side-only version at around Font 8a with a highball finish. Might be enough here to attract a few folk back to Chatsworth now? Ned also repeated Andy Banks' *The Militant* (Font 7c+) from years back that presumably can't have seen many ascents.

Finally from Ned, the long-awaited finish to the one-move-sort-of-not-really-a-problem *Long's Lock* at Burbage West. This one weighs in at Font 7b+ and is pretty high with a not great landing. Named *Dread Lock*, slopey finish using the blunt arête. Personally I'm gonna stroke my big long beard and from the comfort of my armchair declare that 7b+ seems perhaps a touch cautious for that one, but time will tell.

Incidentally, if you've not heard it Grimer did a podcast with Ned recently (a 'wadcast' surely) which is well worth a listen. Check it out if you get the chance. Sound of the summer.

### Get in touch

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



An old bolt removed from Water-cum-Jolly.  
Photo: Mark Rankine.

## Peak Bolt Fund Update

James Jacobs

**The Peak Bolt Fund (PBF) has been hard at work in 2018 raising funds, buying gear and doing the dirty work of re-equipping sport climbs around the Peak.**

Donations have continued to be good this year. My hope is that climbers will see new bolts replacing old on Peak routes, and through our publicity (Facebook, blog, this article, UKClimbing article, word of mouth, etc.) realise that this is the work of the PBF and will be moved to donate. Donations exceeded £1,000 in 2018, with the bulk coming through PayPal. However, we also placed collection buckets in climbing walls around the Peak that brought in a significant amount of money over the summer. In the spirit of competition here are the scores ... Climbing Works: £9.38; Foundry: £39.36; Redpoint Birmingham: £65.32; Awesome Walls Sheffield: £170.39! Take what you will from these figures. Cash has also been

handed over directly to Seb Grieve who has a skill for emptying climbers' traditionally deep pockets.

Donations over the last two years have just about covered our costs. In 2018 we purchased close to £1,000 worth of bolts, most of which have been placed. A similar-sized order is planned for 2019. Glue, drill bits and replacing worn-out tools also contribute towards our costs. We plan to purchase a second drill this year which should address logistical problems with sharing one drill between a group of keen bolters.

Climbers should see a yearly donation to the fund as a positive way to give back to the community and ensure we all have well-bolted routes to climb. If you climb on Peak sport, then you will certainly have benefited from the activities of the PBF.

If we can continue the current level of donations then we can continue to sustain the current level of rebolting.

A big thanks to anyone who has donated in 2018.

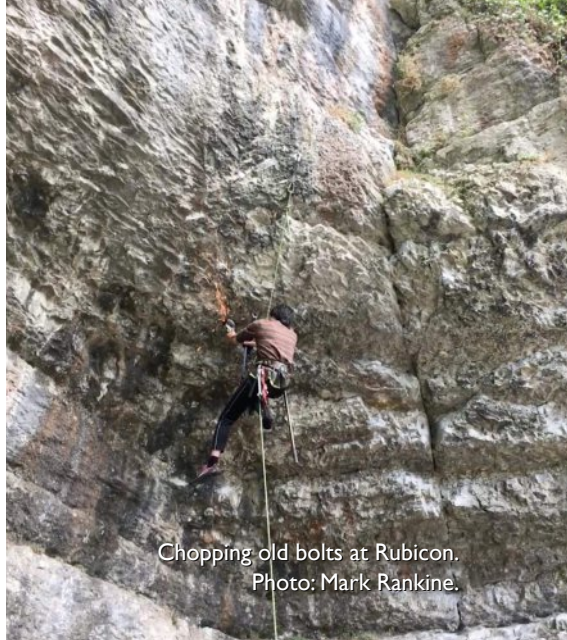


The PBF is always looking for new volunteers; we support volunteers as best we can but ultimately we're a small volunteer group and this is a fairly thankless task that you'll be doing on your own! A good example from 2018: Vince Smedley contacted the PBF about some corroded single-bolt lower-offs in Intake Quarry. The PBF provided Vince with the kit he needed, Dan Middleton of the BMC provided some training and Vince was able to sort out four routes on the Take Away Wall area. Contact us via email or Facebook if you'd like to get involved (details below).

Another way to help out is to report bolts that might need replacing, with as much detail (and ideally a photo) as possible. We picked up on a UKClimbing logbook comment about cracked rock around a bolt on the route *Rubicon*. The suspect bolt was chopped and has been replaced with two new bolts above and below the location of the old bolt.

An article about bolting in the Peak wouldn't be complete without mentioning Gary Gibson. As ever Gary makes the PBF work pale into insignificance. You can find out about his extensive bolting and crag cleaning at his website, and you can also donate to his fund: [www.sportsclimbs.co.uk](http://www.sportsclimbs.co.uk)

Now on to the routes that have received the PBF treatment in 2018. An extra-dry summer has meant the cleaning, rebolting and climbing of some of the usually wet routes on the far left side of the Chee Dale Cornice. These include: *Masculine Power Trip*, *Malcolm X*, *Last Eggs*, *Monday Club*, *Wright On*, *Trampled Underfoot*. Work on The Embankment continues with a few more routes now sporting PBF bolts. Done this year: *Stone The Loach*, *Secret Gudgeon Society*, *Arachonothera* and *Prawnography*. The Nook has been popular again due to the dry weather, and if you like short routes why not check out the rebolted *Life in the Old Log Yet*.



Chopping old bolts at Rubicon.  
Photo: Mark Rankine.

Reports of cracked rock around the top bolt on *Rubicon* led to two new bolts replacing that one. The neighbouring route *Totally Awesome* sports new bolts and *The Sissy* has a new lower-off. Meanwhile further down *Water-cum-Jolly*, *Coming Up For Air* at *Moat Buttress* has new bolts, and two routes at the *Water-cum-Jolly Cornice* have been rebolted: *The Disillusioned Glue Machine* and *Goldcrest*.

And going slightly further afield the popular routes of *The Big Take Out*, *Blue Moon Night*, *Chop Suicide* and *Les Chinoise* on *Take Away Wall* at *Intake Quarry* now all have double-bolt lower-offs.

For more information, or to donate, please get in touch:

Email: [thepeakboltfund@gmail.com](mailto:thepeakboltfund@gmail.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/thepeakboltfund](https://www.facebook.com/thepeakboltfund)

Blog: [thepeakboltfund.blogspot.com](http://thepeakboltfund.blogspot.com)



## National Trust Update: January 2019

Luke Barley

**Everything's going smoothly ... perhaps a little too smoothly! After last winter's work programme was seriously disrupted by snow and we spent the summer on high fire alert (if not actively fighting fires), the last couple of months and this grey, mild weather have seen the National Trust ranger teams making good progress on our major conservation projects. It can't last ...**

In the Dark Peak the MoorLIFE 2020 work continues with lots more areas of heather to cut and sphagnum to plant, all with the aim of varying the moorland habitat – and consequently improving it for wildlife, carbon sequestration and water management. Those with an interest in birding or conservation will know that hen harriers successfully nested on National Trust land last summer – unfortunately two of the chicks

disappeared in suspicious circumstances once they moved away to private land elsewhere after fledging. Jon Stewart, the National Trust's General Manager for the Peak District, said: 'For all those who care about our wildlife and our national parks this is really very sad and extremely disappointing news. We are trying to work with grouse shooting, and Octavia and Arthur were born on a moor managed for grouse, but the satellite tagging is showing that as things stand long-term success will only come if all those with influence work together across the uplands. If this isn't possible and soon, everyone is going to have to face some very difficult decisions.'

Longshaw rangers have taken the next steps in restoring the wood pasture by planting trees spaced well apart so that they'll grow into giant, spreading, landscape specimens. Wood pasture is one of the



National Trust White Peak rangers planting trees.  
Photos: National Trust.

richest habitat types with trees and grassland co-existing, along with all the wildlife that depends on both. The rangers have also started work on a tree nursery to grow our own trees from local seed – this has been funded by our woodland appeal, so a big thanks to everyone who's donated, including the running clubs and races that chose the appeal as their beneficiary. If your club would like to raise money for the Peak District appeal, please get in touch!

The White Peak rangers have also been using appeal money wisely to plant hundreds of trees in the 'coupes' or open spaces created by our management work in the ravine woodlands. Native species like lime, field maple, oak and alder will replace ash (the main species found in these woods) as it starts to decline due to ash dieback disease. The planting made a pleasant change from felling – which takes up a huge amount of our time in winter – and is very rewarding in completing the cycle of the woodland management project. We also worked in partnership with Derbyshire

County Council to repair the riverbank by the Dovedale stepping stones, which had washed out and caused a hazard when the river was high. It should now be possible to safely get off the stones whenever they're not flooded!

Finally, rangers and colleagues have been busy with the day-to-day upkeep of the two Peak District farms the National Trust bought last spring. Greensides (near Buxton) and High Fields (near Calver) are very rich in wildlife due to their previous management and when they came up for sale the Trust stepped in to ensure this continues forever. We're currently planning for the future of both farms, where, as ever, nature conservation and appropriate public access will be at the heart of what we do. We hope to report on our plans and share some of the special wildlife found at these places in the near future.

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

2019

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

20 March, 7.30 p.m.  
The Maynard, Grindleford

12 June, 7.30 p.m.  
The Maynard, Grindleford

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

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

## Forthcoming Events

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

### Sheffield Adventure Film Festival 22-24 March, Showroom Cinema, Sheffield

ShAFF is back, and this year it's presented by the BMC. Loads on, as usual, including the Women in Adventure film competition and the BMC's 75th birthday bash. BMC members get 15% off all tickets.

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

### BMC AGM and Peak Area Hill Walk

30-31 March, Buxton  
The BMC's 2019 AGM will be held on Sunday 31 March at the Devonshire Dome. Things all kick off at 12 noon. And the day before, you can join Peter and Austin for a circular walk from Buxton. See page 5, full details to be announced shortly.

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

## BMC Peak Area Contacts

Peak Area Chair: Rob Greenwood.  
[robgreenwood@bmcvolunteers.org.uk](mailto:robgreenwood@bmcvolunteers.org.uk)

Secretary: Becky Hammond.  
[becky@bmcvolunteers.org.uk](mailto:becky@bmcvolunteers.org.uk)

Peak Area Reps (your voice on the BMC National Council):  
David Brown and Alison Cairns.  
<http://community.thebmc.co.uk/peak>

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

Peak Area Hill Walking Reps:  
Peter Judd and Austin Knott.  
[Peak10roam-bmc@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Peak10roam-bmc@yahoo.co.uk)  
[austinjknott@gmail.com](mailto:austinjknott@gmail.com)

Peak Area Newsletter Editorial:  
Dave Parry and John Coefield.  
[peakarea@gmail.com](mailto:peakarea@gmail.com)

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The Maynard, Grindleford, S32 2HE