



Great views from Kinder.  
Photo: Austin Knott.

# PEAK AREA NEWSLETTER



January 2020  
peakarea@gmail.com

## Rocking Chair

Andy Reeve

**Happy new year, reader, and welcome to my first introduction to the Peak Area newsletter.**

Ana – the new Peak Area secretary – and myself are both very grateful for the support, although I was slightly alarmed by how fast the previous incumbents vacated their seats when given the opportunity. In seriousness, the contribution of Rob and Becky over the past few years has been immense, and I'm still somewhat nervous of the size of the boots we need to fill. Indeed, we've already been reprimanded for booking the first meeting of the year too early (sorry, Dave), although I hope

I can spin that as being a product of exuberance from being so early in our roles, rather than incompetence. I suppose you can judge that in the coming months.

Despite a few years of turbulence in the BMC as a whole, the Peak Area is still going strong. There should be some tasty items on the agenda in the coming months, and we've been in touch with a good variety of interesting speakers with a few people lined up already. First up will be Steve Franklin, combining multi-pitch climbing with multi-hill walking and multi-amusing anecdotes (he didn't tell me that, so I hope that hasn't put too much pressure on).

I can't wait.

Next meeting: Wednesday 15 January, 7.30 p.m.  
The Norfolk Arms, Ringinglow, S11 7TS

# Access News

Henry Folkard

**At the last area meeting it was reported that Natural England (NE)/DEFRA had called a meeting on the ten-year-late Decadal Review of areas mapped as open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) (2000). Cath Flitcroft attended for the BMC and has given the following feedback.**

Civil servants, who had called the meeting, were not in a position to say what a future government might do (the meeting was called before the December 2019 general election) but they could and would advise ministers.

Maps needed to be reviewed by 2024/2025. Current mapped areas will be considered at the time of the review, along with potential new areas. In coastal areas the new coastal margin rights will replace CROW rights. There was a call for a new methodology to be adopted that is based on landscape features and less so on botanical mix of habitat. Small areas of land (parcels under five hectares) should now be considered, but appeals under the original methodology would not be revisited. The appeals process for coastal margins is working well and a similar process could be applied elsewhere.

NE agreed they will need to consider the extent to which trees that are now present on open access land are mapped. One suggestion was to draw a distinction between natural woodland and commercial plantations. CROW, as opposed to public rights of way, might be used to connect different parcels of open access land. This would potentially benefit wildlife as well as people.

A new approach was needed to how people access information online. There

was a need for consistency in messages. There was also potential for new signage. It was agreed a coastal access scheme style approach to mapping open access would be best. One advantage of this could be clarification of the distinction between natural and man-made features, which currently clouds the position on disused quarries.

Cath also undertook to feed any current mapping errors to DEFRA, so if you are aware of any, please do let us know.

On the **Glover Review** of national parks, DEFRA said it could take up to a year to respond formally. While the review has been generally welcomed it has also been said it is lacking in detail and mechanisms. It also fails to argue for adequate mainstream funding for national parks, suggesting these should be entrepreneurial.

The latest bulletin on the current **Moors for the Future** work period states that 840 bales of heather brush have been spread; 13,150 metres of geotextile laid; 5.5 hectares of bare peat re-vegetated; 3,650 gully blocks installed; 28 hectares cut to increase biodiversity; 244 hectares of sphagnum planted and 55 hectares of invasive species controlled. Quite an achievement, much of it thanks to help from volunteers – but there is still a terrific lot more to do!

The Eastern Moors Partnership has announced a consultation on the woodland planting around **Ramsley Reservoir**. If you have any views on this, please let me know.

There is no update on **moorland tracks** since the last area meeting

# Climbing News & Gossip

Dave Parry

**They say that no news is good news, and this edition of the newsletter hopes to prove that conclusively. The timing of the first meeting of 2020 being just after the Christmas break, along with the worst autumn weather anyone can remember, have conspired to give me little to write about, and little time in which to write it. So although it's tempting to pass humorous comment on Simon Lee's latest (and admirable) quest to reduce the number of kneebars on Ben's Roof down to single figures, I am going to shelve any mention of actual recent ascents until the next edition, and instead editorialise about The Joker Block Incident.**

As some of you will have seen, in December some person or persons unknown took it upon themselves to roll the starting block away from ultra-classic problem *The Joker* at Stanage. I'll cut to the chase: moving the starting block is nothing less than an act of pure vandalism, plain and simple. It's a long-established problem, iconic and unique, first ascent Jerry Moffatt; it's one of the most famous British boulder problems of the last 30 years. Nobody has the right to erase this problem from existence. It's no different to chipping holds off. The starting block incidentally is critical to the nature of the problem, and moving the block robs everyone of the opportunity to do the problem, and gains us absolutely nothing (as the block was never in the way of the harder low start, *The Ace*, anyway). As nobody has come clean and owned up to their actions we can only guess at possible motives.

As you might expect, the block-rolling attracted much discussion and speculation

online and at the crag. Some of it well-informed, some ill-informed, but finally the matter was settled by a midweek team of local activists who undertook to roll the block back uphill and seat it in a position as close as possible to the original. Hats off to those involved; order has temporarily been restored to the universe, at least for the time being. Let's hope this is the last time I have to report on this kind of thing.

Here's to a completely normal and unremarkable in any way 2020.

## Get in touch

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



## Hill Walking News

Peter Judd & Austin Knott

### Area Hill Walk – Early Spring

It may seem a good while off yet, but we are already making plans for an area hill walk that should offer particularly fine views. Pencil Saturday 4 April into your diaries. We plan to start and finish at the Sett Valley Trail car park (adjacent to the bus station) in Hayfield and are likely to take in Kinder Downfall, Lantern Pike and even a little history along the way. More details nearer the time.

### Government Consultation

Area members may be aware that the government is consulting on strengthening police powers in relation to illegal encampments – one proposed measure included in the consultation document is to ‘Criminalise the act of trespassing when setting up an unauthorised encampment’. Mention of this also appeared in the most recent Conservative Party election manifesto. There is concern within the

outdoor community that, as currently worded, this could encompass wild camping or roadside camping in vans, as practised by some who go walking or climbing. We hope to be able to give a verbal update on the BMC’s position at the area meeting in January. The consultation document can be viewed here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/844954/Unauthorised\\_Encampments\\_-\\_consultation\\_paper.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/844954/Unauthorised_Encampments_-_consultation_paper.pdf)

### Mend Our Mountains Update

Since our last newsletter Peter attended a site visit with national park staff and others to discuss the proposed repair works on Great Ridge, possibly the most heavily used upland footpath in the Peak. As with Cut Gate, this project is being managed by the Moors for the Future Partnership but with a different contractor for this site who happens to be the same one who made such a good job of repairing the upper part of the Ringing Roger path over on Kinder (a project



Peak Area Lantern Pike walk, April 2019.  
Photo: Austin Knott.

funded by the first BMC Mend Our Mountains campaign).

The works on Great Ridge seek to repair the heavily eroded section of path running along the ridge north-east of Hollins Cross and also section of badly damaged path at the base of and part way up the western side of Back Tor. The former will be mostly slabbed (similar to the present descent east from Mam Tor) and the latter mostly pitched. It will be necessary to import some materials (including the need to lift in some by helicopter) but the materials used will be in keeping with the surrounding geology. The end result will hopefully be a much more robust and less visually intrusive path that will cope with damaging water run-off much more successfully.

This work requires planning permission, so the Peak Area has written a letter in support of that application to the planners and the outcome should be clear early in the new year. This need for planning approval, and also some still-ongoing negotiation with associated landowners, means it has not been possible for this work to begin yet (as had

originally been hoped); indeed we were told that it may not now be possible to begin until next autumn, however we very much hope an earlier start can be made.

### **BMC National Hill Walking Weekend**

In the last newsletter we mentioned that plans are afoot to hold the BMC's second hill walking symposium weekend between 13 and 15 March in Ambleside. There will be a whole host of led walks, talks (including one by BMC ambassador Mary-Ann Ochota), outdoor skills and knowledge sessions and even an opportunity to discuss and debate what wilding (or re-wilding) of our upland landscape might mean (including a speaker from the Wild Ennerdale project) and its desirability or otherwise. We hope to see some of you there. To find out more (and to book on) visit:

**[www.thebmc.co.uk/hill-walking-symposium](http://www.thebmc.co.uk/hill-walking-symposium)**

Click on the *You can book onto the weekend* heading in that article to access the booking system.



# Peak Area Meetings: 2020

15 January, 7.30 p.m., Norfolk Arms,  
Ringinglow

18 March, 7.30 p.m., Norfolk Arms,  
Ringinglow

Future 2020 meeting dates and venues to be  
confirmed.

## Forthcoming Events

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

**Gary Gibson and Franco Cookson,  
Buxton Adventure Festival**

**21 January 2020, Buxton**

An evening with a Peak sport climbing  
legend.

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

**Sheffield Adventure Film Festival  
20–22 March 2020**

Presented by the BMC, ShAFF returns for  
another year with more great events and films.

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

**Peak Area Hill Walk**

**4 April, Hayfield**

Meet in Hayfield for a grand day out in the  
area. Some info on page 4, more to follow.

Keep an eye on the Peak Area Facebook  
page and BMC community page.

## BMC Peak Area Contacts

Peak Area Chair: Andy Reeve.

Secretary: Ana Wass.

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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](http://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-governance)