



The Three Ships, Birchen Edge,
Photo: Glynis Judd.

PEAK AREA NEWSLETTER



March 2020
peak.area@thebmc.co.uk

Rocking Chair

Andy Reeve

For about two decades now, climbers, walkers and the BMC have been instrumental in helping to shape the way that Stanage and the North Lees Estate is managed. The big news at the BMC Peak Area Access Team HQ (Louise Hawson's kitchen) is that the Peak District National Park Authority have just finished consulting on the future management of the estate.

Despite being variously referred to as Stanage, the queen of gritstone, the jewel in the crown of the Peak District, and Spinach Edge/the Godhead (now there's a niche reference for the climbing nerds), the

whole estate has suffered with a reduction in input and forward-thinking approaches to maintaining the special features which we all enjoy. See Louise's piece in this newsletter about the work done by the access reps and stay tuned as I'm sure this will continue to be an important item on our agenda in the coming months.

On a brighter note, there is plenty to celebrate: 20 volunteers had a day improving Horseshoe Quarry (the access path, not the routes, unfortunately) and were rewarded by more cake than they could eat; the BMC hill walking event is on 13-15 March; and springtime is now just around the corner. To be fair, I've been saying this for months, but this time it's gotta be true!

Next meeting: Wednesday 18 March, 7.30 p.m.
The Norfolk Arms, Ringinglow, S11 7TS



Hazel Findlay on *The Right Unconquerable*, Stanage.
Photo: John Coefield.

Access News

Henry Folkard

Dark Peak

Exeter University have been awarded the contract for the feasibility study for the beaver project at Burbage (and surrounding areas), and work on this will begin 'quite soon'. This will start as a desktop study, initially anyhow. It is scheduled to finish by the end of the summer.

By the time of the area meeting work will have started on the major refurbishment of the cafe and shop at Longshaw. Any of you wondering why the main car park is closed sometimes, it is because it's windy: National Trust (NT) have to close it for health and safety reasons when winds exceed 55 mph – though of course you can still access the estate from anywhere else.

The Eastern Moors Partnership have finished the work on the fence, and access points, at Millstone, and have now asked for volunteers to help with some further work. A site meeting has been provisionally

arranged with BMC and Peak Climbing Club representatives just before the area meeting to assess exactly what needs to be done. If additional volunteers are needed we will hopefully have details at the area meeting.

There is a miscellany of other items from around the Dark Peak. A bird survey has been completed for Natural England (NE), but some of the results need to be reassessed to make sure methodologies are comparable with earlier studies, particularly for curlew where numbers were higher than expected. NE ask that if you are out and about on the moors and see burning taking place on deep peat, you report this to them. Burning may still be allowed on dry heath, so there is no need to notify them about that.

Various tree planting work is underway around the Eastern Edges at Ramsley, Redmires, on NT land and at Sheffield Lakeland, and some felling is programmed for the Redmires area. Vandalism and raves have caused problems at Lady Canning's and on Blacka Moor. The Police have been active in controlling illicit off-roading activity, while

a spate of car thefts has been reported in Derbyshire – the majority of vehicles involved have been ‘go faster’ Fords.

Ride Sheffield is pursuing their proposals for a new bespoke biking facility at Redmires, with support from Sheffield City Council, to complement that at Lady Canning’s. Their efforts thus far have been beset by a range of problems, some of which still persist.

Moors for the Future have secured an extension on time, but not of money, for another year for MoorLife 20. The emphasis will be on engagements and scientific outcomes. Capital works are on schedule: it may be possible to do more, but this will largely depend on what can be afforded. The rate of exchange between sterling and euros will be crucial. Post Brexit, they will continue to work in partnership with water companies and others, but European funding will cease.

Spirit of Kinder: 25 April

This year’s event will be on 25 April in the Engine Hall of the People’s History Museum, John Dalton Street, Spinningfields, Manchester. The start time is 2.00 p.m., so if you are coming turn up any time after 1.30 p.m. It is scheduled to run till 4.00 p.m.

Either Stuart Maconie, the Ramblers President, or Andy Burnham, Mayor of Manchester, will open the event. Andy Burnham has said he hopes to be able to get there but won’t know for sure till nearer the event.

The keynote speech will be by Kate Ashbrook of the Open Spaces Society. Other speakers include the Woodcraft Folk, Maxwell Ayamba of the Sheffield Black Men’s Walking Group, and Yvonne Witter, of Mosaic – also a PDNPA Member. Their theme will be involving BAME communities in the great outdoors.

Manchester Community Choir will provide musical interludes, which will be interspersed with activities hosted by Edale Junior Rangers to demonstrate their

commitment to open access and the environment in years to come.

Refreshments will be available. The BMC, National Trust, Ramblers, Moors for the Future, Mosaic and others will provide stalls and/or visual displays.

See you there.

Stanage Consultation

Louise Hawson

The BMC submitted a response to PDNPA’s consultation on the Options Appraisal of the built assets on Stanage Estate – including North Lees Hall, the Cruck Barn, the campsite and Cattiside Cottage. Our key concern was that the proposed options focused solely on the revenue-generating potential of these assets, and not on the role they play in delivering the overall vision and purpose of the estate. This lack of a holistic approach to managing such an iconic landscape left many concerned that the appraisal – and the very real need of the national park to meet difficult financial targets set by government – would lead to the effective break-up of the estate.

We have received assurances from the PDNPA team that this is not their intention, and that the future of these assets will be considered within the vision for the estate agreed by the Stanage Forum in 2015. We will continue to work with them to make sure the views of the BMC and its members are taken into account and also understood at Member level.

The consultation closed on 3 March. At the time of writing we were seeking a meeting with the PDNPA team to discuss our response and our views on the future of the estate as a whole.

For a great summary of the consultation and our response see the article on the BMC website: www.thebmc.co.uk/the-future-of-stanage-have-your-say



Burbage Valley tree planting.
Photo: Peter Judd.

Hill Walking News

Peter Judd & Austin Knott

Area walk from Hayfield 4 April 2020

Our hill walking representatives and some members are organising the first of this year's Peak Area walks for Saturday 4 April. The plan is to meet outside Hayfield Information Centre, next to Hayfield Bus Station, Hayfield, High Peak SK22 2ES at 9.50 a.m. for a 10.00 a.m. start.

The walk will go on to Kinder Scout, across to Harry Hut and return to Hayfield via Lantern Pike. It's about 13 miles (21 kilometres) and uses mostly established paths and tracks; some are a little rough and eroded. The ground might be boggy in places and there may be some minor streams to cross, so you'll need water-resistant footwear, preferably boots, clothing appropriate for the weather conditions and sufficient food, snacks and drink to see you through a day's hill walking.

It would be helpful to have names of likely attendees ahead of time, if possible. If you think it likely you'll come then please spare a moment to email area hill walking representative Austin Knott:

austin@walkthemoorlands.co.uk

If you can't make the this walk but are interested in future events please drop any of our hill walking reps an email (see page 12) or keep an eye on the BMC Peak Area Facebook page.

Unauthorised encampments

At the area meeting in January there was a discussion about the government's consultation on measures to criminalise the act of trespassing when setting up an unauthorised encampment in England and Wales. While ostensibly this appears to be targeted towards a small proportion of the travelling community there was a fear expressed that there could be unintended

consequences, as witnessed in Sheffield with peaceful protesters against the removal of highway trees being charged under trade union legislation. This concern, that loosely worded new trespass legislation could be used to discriminate against the outdoor community, was backed up by a warning that access rights have been hard fought for but could be easily lost.

The BMC's Access & Conservation (Policy) Officer, Dr Cath Flitcroft, has now written an article on the BMC's website explaining the position that the BMC is taking and includes a link to the full response to the consultation:

www.thebmc.co.uk/encampments-and-trespass

Don't Lose Your Way

While we're thinking about access rights it's heartening to see that The Ramblers have launched a campaign, Don't Lose Your Way, to encourage walkers to search online for unrecorded rights of way.

It's estimated that 10,000 miles of paths across England and Wales could be lost forever if they're not added to the definitive map by 2026. Government legislation passed in 1949 required most local councils to draw up a 'definitive map' of all the footpaths, bridleways and byways in their area. So in law it is the definitive record of where a right of way is located. Back in the post-war era some parishes mapped their rights of way meticulously while others weren't as thorough.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act included a commitment to 'extinguish' any pre-1949 paths not included on definitive maps by 2026, so introducing a deadline for rights of way to be claimed or lost forever.

The Ramblers have produced an online tool to help with this, so if you've a bit of spare time and have an interest in helping to identify missing paths, then visit:

dontloseyourway.ramblers.org.uk

Tree planting with Eastern Moors in Burbage Valley

Over the last five years the Eastern Moors Partnership has been planting areas of new trees on both Houndkirk Moor (a woodland restoration project) and in the Burbage valley. The planting phase is now coming to an end and an extraordinary 9,000 trees have been planted over that period! The aim is to extend native woodland down the Burbage valley and provide a food source for ring ouzels and more.

It's a labour-intensive task. So one Saturday in February a group of BMC Peak Area volunteers who had been recruited by Kim Leyland at January's Peak Area meeting joined some of Kim's ring ouzel monitors and other volunteers to plant the last few holly and rowan saplings in an already partially planted area of rocky ground just off the Green Drive, only a short distance down from the existing coppice of ancient oaks whose twisting, curling trunks and branches grace an area just under the edge.

Trees already planted here in recent years include oak, silver birch, downy birch and hawthorn. Temporary fencing keeps any sheep and cows out but doesn't deter deer unfortunately as deer have a particularly sweet tooth for rowan apparently, so let's hope not too many find their way in! (They don't like alder and birch though – the things you learn when out with Eastern Moors rangers.)

Our task was to plant rowan and holly, trying to keep them close to, but not quite on top of, some of the existing partially established oak saplings (the holly might offer just a little shelter to the oaks as they develop). The rowans mostly went among the boulders themselves to give them a little shelter. We had to take particular care with our rowans, prior to planting, too. Their delicate roots can very quickly and irrecoverably dry out even in a light breeze, so they only came out of their plastic sacks at the very last minute.

This phase is about double planting, to make up for later failures. Our saplings didn't go in protective plastic (biodegradable) tubes this time, partly to reduce plastic usage and waste, but also because strong winds acting on such tubes can sometimes snap young saplings, leading to failures.

Tubes had been used for some of the existing planting and do provide a helpful microclimate and some protection, not least from herbivores intent on nibbling them to death. Indeed, in deep bracken (such as that found at the other site on Houndkirk) plastic tubes are particularly worthwhile as they make it possible to find the saplings later and also stops them being suffocated by dense bracken.

While this is the end of this tree planting phase, there may be other opportunities to help out on Eastern Moors. We'll keep you posted of any we hear about.

Sphagnum moss planting at The Roaches/Hen Cloud

Throughout March there are various opportunities to volunteer to help restore some of the fire damage that occurred on The Roaches estate in 2018. If you google 'Roaches moss planting' you should find dates to choose from being offered by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust/Moorlands Climate Action on Saturdays and Sundays and by the South West Peak on some weekdays.

As this work is taking place on open moorland on The Roaches in the winter, weather conditions may be chilly and wet so you will need to ensure you are properly dressed with warm and waterproof clothing and footwear, plus a hat and gloves. All equipment will be provided and it is understood that there will be some warm drinks, although we'd advise taking a packed lunch and hot flask.



Burbage Valley
Photo: John Coe field.

Climbing News & Gossip

Dave Parry

OK, you know how these things usually play out. I typically open with an excessively verbose few paragraphs where I moan about the terrible weather. Well this time is going to be different. I don't need to bang on about the weather, we all know what it's been like, and to be honest I've now run out of creative ways to whinge about the abysmal meteorological situation.

You'd think that just as a piano keyboard offers the composer an infinite number of permutations and combinations of notes, melodies and rhythms with which to express themselves, the Apple Bluetooth keyboard ought to offer the newsletter editor an infinite number of ways to complain about the recent inclement climatic conditions, to lament the recent incessant rain, high winds, flash flooding and melting wet snow. But no, in fact it turns out there are only a finite number of ways you can whine about the most unproductive climbing winter in living memory culminating with the February with the highest level of rainfall since records began. So, since I've already exhausted those avenues in previous newsletters you'll be pleased to be spared such a blatantly self-indulgent opening few stanzas this time around.

However, despite the above there are some Peak District goings-on to report, testament to the never-say-die attitude of the finest new route/problem developers money can buy. At the winter suntrap of Wharnccliffe (assuming there is any sun, which there hasn't been) Mark Rankine has done an E5 6c line on wall to the right of *Cannae* on Long John's Stride. *My Fez* apparently has a bouldering crux, well protected by a Rock 1. Maybe a good one

for anyone heading there to sample some Jon Fullwood's recent bouldering development while dodging the Peak weather?

Also at Wharnccliffe, fingerboard czar and mantelshelf virtuoso Ned Feehally has added a variation finish to his own *Kobe* problem on the infamous 'plate of meat' block near the Outlook, a block which is apparently still tripe for development (note to proofreader: deliberate pun, not a typo, leave it in, it's going somewhere trust me). This new one is Font 8a+ and after the crux on *Kobe* heads right to finish around the right arête above a non-existent landing. I imagine the name of *Beef Manifold* may be a clue to the quality of line compared to the original (spoiler alert: beef manifold is a type of tripe, hence the earlier comment).

Ned customarily contributes a problem involving a huge move off a heel hook, which this time comes courtesy of *Evil Eye*, a sit start below *Superstition* at Burbage, weighing in at Font 8a+. It starts sitting on a block and finishes on the juggy break where *Superstition* begins. It leaves open the possibility to link the two, maybe one for a particularly bored and reckless next generation, given *Superstition* probably hasn't had any snow-platform-free repeats (which would bury this new problem anyway, should it ever snow significantly again). Ned also reports a couple of semi-topically-named things at Stanage, which conceivably could have been done before, but here they are for posterity. If anyone reading this has already done them please do write in to tell me (don't actually). *Stormzy* is a Font 7c sit-starting the ramp which continues into *The Storm*; *Stormy Daniels* goes straight up from the same sit start.

Another hotned of recent development (again, that's not a typo) is Duke's Seat near Chatsworth. This boasts a few trad routes and the boulders below are maturing into

a good set of surprisingly quick-drying problems. Jon Fullwood has done a good-looking Font 7b+ called *Pass the Duchy* – which one sharp-witted commentator described as looking like a Peak version of *The Keel*, only good – and Ned has done a line just to the left – *On The Left Hand Side* at an alleged Font 7c, but word is it may be harder. Another of Jon's new things here is *Unimpeachable*, a sit start to *Motion of Confidence* at Font 7b.

Jon's actually done a lot of unreported new stuff over the last year or so (see recent UKBouldering thread) which I'm not going to try and write up as I've got to be at work in about 11 hours, but I will pick out a few quality cuts. *The Horn* is a good Font 7b+ on the Matterhorn boulder at Baslow, the downhill-most arête from a sit start on low undercuts with feet on the left hand plinth, no blocks out right. This has had a few repeats now confirming the quality. (The wall just right of this from the same start was climbed by yours truly last spring at around 7c/+ named *Do I Make You Hörnli Baby?* but a previously glued key hold has apparently come off so might not be possible now.)

Also on Jon's list is *King Crab*, a Font 7b+ traverse at the Inch Test buttress in Watercum-Jolly which has been mentioned in a previous newsletter. *Ben and Jerry's Love Child RH* is a 7a+ at Robin Hood's Stride taking the Diamond Slab as a prow. Jon's old problem *A Fearful Orange* at Gardom's now has a proper sit start at Font 7a+. On a buttress not far left with an old green HVS flake in its upper section there are a few really good recent offerings too. *Chunky Doorstop Sit Start* is a Font 6c on the arête and climbs into the flake, and *Chunky Vision* is a 7a+ version climbing the arête on the same right-hand side avoiding the flake. This arête climbed via a french start on the left side is *2019 Vision* at 6c with a highball finish

up the arête and wall above. Finally *2020 Vision* is Ned Feehally's sit start to the previous problem, a top quality addition given 7c+ but anyone else who's been on it seems to think it could be harder.

Also at Gardom's, future Olympic gold medallist Jim Pope has repeated the E8 *Nah'han* and added a Font 7c to a buttress up and left of this, called *Over The Hill*. Sounds like one which is only a boulder problem if you don't fall off, and your spotters will want to be tied on, so you have been warned. Jim has also added an E7 between *The Igloo* and *Spanish Fly*, called *Eskimo Kiss*, taking the roof/arête to finish up the upper arête of *Lightning Wall*.

As a final reminder of the impending climate apocalypse, *White Wand* has been climbed entirely on the left-hand side as *Black Smoke* at E6 6b by Pat Hill. It's thought that this hasn't been done before, except during the epic snowdrift winter/s of about ten years ago, so this may be a first ascent of the full route off the deck. If you know otherwise, great.

Get in touch

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



Magnificent Walk in the eastern Peak.
Photo: FPD,

Friends of the Peak District News

National park starts key asset review Andy Tickle

The Peak District National Park Authority is unusual in owning a lot of land and property – over 6,000 hectares (15,000 acres, about five per cent of the PDNP area) and 350 buildings. These assets were acquired either for operational reasons or as a way of achieving the Park's twin purposes of conservation and recreation. Prior to the Peak District becoming a national park, the Friends had a similar history, acquiring swathes of land in the Peak – including the Longshaw estate, Winnats Pass, large parts of Edale, part of Stoney Middleton Dale, and key farms – to protect them from damaging development. Most were later passed on to the National Trust as a trusted, long-term custodian of the land.

Since budget cuts began in 2011, the NPA's property portfolio has been under pressure to downsize. Notable 'disposals'

(through long leases) included the Eastern Moors estate (to the National Trust and the RSPB) in 2011 and the Roaches (to the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust) in 2013. Disposal of North Lees/Stannage was overwhelmingly rejected by NPA members in 2013, yet the intervening years have seen its management remain in the doldrums, compared with the stakeholder-led partnership for the adjoining Eastern Moors.

Since 2017, the NPA has been working on a new asset management plan, which was recently approved by the Authority. There is much sensible – and necessary – thinking within this as the properties owned by the NPA present great opportunities to continue to contribute to national park purposes, yet bring with them the burden of repairs, investment to meet climate change (carbon reduction) targets and staff costs in terms of management. Over the next four years, the bill will probably be £3.5 million. If the finance is not available

(and it is rumoured that their central government grant may be cut in future), then disposals are not ruled out. However, although the new plan suggests that further disposals may be inadvisable or inappropriate, it proposes five key assets are reviewed in the near future.

In order of priority these are the Warslow Moors Estate, Aldern House (the NPA's current headquarters in Bakewell), Fieldhead (campsite and info centre/Moors for the Future base in Edale), North Lees/Stange estate, and then 'Other properties'. Consultation on options for Stange/North Lees has already begun and which we, the BMC, the Stange Forum and many others are concerned about.

So what do the Friends of the Peak District think? As in most complicated things, context is everything. Hearteningly, the new asset management plan is predominantly positive: committing to deal with the backlog of repairs, finding funds for future pro-active maintenance and prioritising key investments such as mitigation against climate change. On the flip side, government pressure will likely come in the form of reduced funding and a policy that local authorities should not keep surplus property unless they are valuable public assets. We were also concerned when a recent set of minor properties were put straight to open market without consideration of community interest. We and others intervened and, happily, key sites (often cultural heritage assets) were withdrawn from sale. We hope some lessons have been learned.

The next couple of years will obviously be challenging financially and a property portfolio worth up to £30 million is not to be sniffed at. We believe we should be open – as the Authority already has been in relation to the Roaches and Eastern Moors – as to ownership. The key issue is their

management and thus the delivery of better, 21st-century outcomes for the Peak District National Park.

Note: Andy Tickle also chairs the BMC's Access Management Group, its specialist committee on access, conservation and environmental issues. The views here are however those of the Friends of the Peak District.

Friends of the Peak's Magnificent Walk 2020

This year's annual FPD Magnificent Walk fundraiser will be located on the Eastern side of the Peak District, near Sheffield.

There are some magnificent gritstone edges to explore, and some beautiful locations to visit. As always, the challenge is to see the best of our wonderful national park, while getting the smallest number of people lost, and keeping everyone safe! The area is scenically important, associated with a lot of walking history, and – like it says on the tin – promises to be a magnificent day out.

This year we're planning three walks: the usual 21-mile and 12-mile routes, but we are also adding a 5-mile walk – so there should be something for everybody. We also have a cunning plan to make sure everyone gets some flapjack this year!

We hope to see many of you on the walk, but if you'd rather help out, as a marshal or with the administration, please contact julie@friendsofthepeak.org.uk

Date: Saturday 16 May 2020

Start/finish: The Three Merry Lads, Redmires Road, Sheffield, S10 4LJ

Tickets: £15, on sale online (£20 on the day)
www.friendsofthepeak.org.uk/event/magnificent-walk-2020

Peak Area Meetings: 2020

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

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

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

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

Forthcoming Events

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

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

Peak Area Hill Walk 4 April, Hayfield

Meet in Hayfield for a grand day out in the area. More info on page 5.

BMC/BMMS Mountain Medicine Weekend

6–7 June, Outside, Hathersage
Run in partnership between the BMC and the British Mountain Medicine Society. The weekend is a practical course run by mountain medical and pre-hospital professionals. Its primary aim is to teach non-medical people important skills to prevent, recognise and manage illness and injury in the mountains.
www.thebmc.co.uk/mountain-medicine-weekend

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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