



Looking west from Kinder.
Photo: Austin Knott.

PEAK AREA NEWSLETTER



July 2021
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Rocking Chair Andy Reeve



Howdy stranger! It's been a while ... at least, it feels that way to me. When I last wrote one of these I was minded to write a poem expressing the reawakening of both spring and my clumsy limbs remembering how to climb outside; now the longest day is behind us.

Without a doubt the recent highlight in the BMC-sphere has been our local access rep Louise Hawson being awarded the Lord Greaves Award. I couldn't mention this before because Louise didn't know about it until she was ambushed with the award at

the last meeting. If you weren't there, you missed out on seeing the very humble Louise looking rather embarrassed (much to my glee, sorry Louise)! I'm not aware of anything quite like a repeat of this at the coming meeting, but then even if there was, I wouldn't be able to tell you, would I? So you'd better come along just in case!

I'm still missing the social aspect of the in-person local area meetings, but I'm hopeful that we will be able to return to these in the not-too-distant future. This time we have Mike Cheque – not a man to ever miss an opportunity for a natter – showing off his photography and regaling us with the stories which go with them. He'll be good at this: I can honestly say that while walking in to Shining Clough with him I didn't manage

Next meeting: Thursday 8 July, 7 p.m.
The Internet. Register [HERE](#).

to get a word in edgeways.

Anyway, that's enough waffle on me taking the mickey from a mate. What else has been going on? The multiply postponed area hill walk took place, Mend Our Mountains have mended our mountains, and there is the usual full gamut of access developments to hear about to help you plan your climbing and walking around.

Access News: General

Henry Folkard

What are the main access problems for both climbers and walkers at the moment, and can we do anything about them?

For both, there is the common problem of accessibility, which has been getting worse for a while – that is to say the problem of simply getting to where you want to go. Partly it's a matter of more yellow lines, caused by lots of people wanting to go to the same places; partly by more pay and display, which not everyone likes and so avoids (whether in the town or in the country); and partly it's not being able to go on the hill at all if you do get to where you want to go.

We all understand the Covid-related problems, but the result is that the Peak may not seem a hugely welcoming place. There is as yet no indication of when measures that were supposed to be temporary will be relaxed, and for some local residents the impact of high volumes of people arriving by car and parking all over the place is a significant problem, and, they might say, an impediment to them going about their normal everyday business.

For others, people arriving by car are an income opportunity where income generation may be a prime focus as other funding sources diminish: looking after open country is not achieved at nil cost by anyone.

Particularly in the northern Peak, the closure of vast areas of open moorland on contiguous estates, quite legally, for 28 days (for management purposes) during the grouse breeding season has a cumulative effect akin to closing the national park. None of the closure signs tell you where you can go – perhaps because there isn't anywhere.

For people desperate to get out of cities and enjoy the countryside these restrictions are an infuriating hassle on what was going to be a day of innocent enjoyment, away from it all.

For people keen to be part of a community who enjoy the same thing as they do it's important to be wherever the place to be is, which might be a new bouldering venue, or a body of water for wild swimming (over 100 wild swimmers at Barbrook Reservoir the other day) or a mountain bike route that has to be timed.

We have a big problem in a crowded place which may or may not ameliorate if restrictions ease. To the various authorities one might say, 'think outside just your area of responsibility to the wider impact'. What do you expect anyone who has mobility problems to do if there is no reliable public transport and you are strapped for cash? What will be the impact of your parking restrictions on wildlife and conservation by moving a parking problem down the road with yellow lines or pay and display, and changing normal patterns of human passage? Is the priority in a national park to achieve unimpeded traffic flow, as fast as it can go? Is there not a better way to manage moorland than blanket exclusion (though remember closures do not affect public rights of way)? Is there not room for some joined-up thinking?

And for us, the experienced recreational user, what can we do? First off, representative organisations like the BMC, the Ramblers and Ride Sheffield can be part



BMC Area hill walk on Mill Hill in June.
Photo: Peter Judd.

of the solution rather than representative of the problem. Recent BMC campaigns on fires, barbecues, litter, wild camping and the like, and sundry videos, have led the way on this. It can be in the nature of authorities to be directive. They may achieve more by talking to each other and more to the user groups too. It's not just the authorities' problem, it's ours too, but if we are not seen as part of the decision-making process any sense of shared responsibility is diminished and the chance of shared solutions lost. We all have to reflect carefully on how we enjoy the countryside, what we want it to look like, how everything will be paid for, and what our own responsibilities towards general conservation and enhanced biodiversity beyond our particular specialist interest might be.

It's not all doom and gloom: there are rays of hope like the Sheffield to Manchester bus that goes over the Snake and allows you to walk over Kinder on National Trust land, held for ever for everyone, and come back by train from Edale, and there are places

where we can and do talk together like the Sheffield Moors Partnership. Individually, we can all make our own contribution by thinking about where we go, and when; how we share information in a way that minimises mass impact; and showing consideration to others who are enjoying the area in different way, or living and working there. But there is no easy answer.

Nationally, we have to be concerned that the government has published the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, apparently ignoring the numerous responses to its consultation which, as an article in the Open Spaces Society magazine puts it, 'expressed massive opposition to the proposed new authoritarian powers'. The article continues, 'the bill creates many new criminal offences which could affect our rights to peaceful protest and our ability to camp on land. Much of the wording is ill-defined and thus would result in uncertain outcomes. We fear that, even if it does not endanger innocent walkers, riders and cyclists (as government claims it will not)

the bill could create a climate of hostility in the countryside with people nervous of exercising their rights for fear of doing the wrong thing, and landowners having a new confidence to challenge them.

'In 2010 environment ministers withdrew financial support for permissive access in agri-environment schemes and 58,500 kilometres of path disappeared. There are promises from Defra, but is there joined up thinking from government on those promises, and on the value of outdoor recreation, when we have HS2, the £27-billion road programme, the wrecking of the planning system all set to destroy those promises, along with ancient woodlands, green spaces and treasured landscapes'. Do the public have any role in determining what public goods their public money will buy under the new Environment Land Management Scheme, or is that determination to be left solely in the hands of farmers?

In the world of access there is quite a lot going on both locally and nationally, and to answer my opening question, one can too easily despair there isn't much we can do about it. It is with huge regret that the sad news came through of the sudden death of Tony Greaves – Baron Greaves of Pendle – who was one of our BMC Patrons. He was a shining champion of our interests, and his contribution to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act back in 2000 has given us all some of the freedoms we now enjoy – a proud legacy indeed.

We are still working on our position paper on Rewilding, which we hope to have available for a future meeting so that we, as key major stakeholders, can give our views on how the landscape we cherish evolves in the future. Incidentally, it is now very unlikely that beavers will ever be introduced into the Burbage Valley; they could not co-exist with the huge number of dogs that are exercised,

on and off the lead, in the valley. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust is however set to introduce beavers at a site at Willington, further south in the county. Elsewhere at Burbage and on Houndkirk there is likely to be some rewetting of the peat. This will be better for biodiversity, better for wildfire control, better for hydrology and better for carbon capture, though it will make the experience of walking over the wetter areas, if that is what you decide to do, different. There may also be a closure – with adequate proper notice – of parts of the Burbage Valley for the purpose of making a film. This prospect was raised at a meeting of the Sheffield Moors Partnership and BMC, Ramblers and Sheffield LAF all agreed that the potential benefits to the area in terms of income for conservation outweighed any temporary inconvenience. There would, however, be adequate warning that this was going to happen, if it is.

The public inquiry into the infamous green matting on Midhope Moor, Mickleden Edge is to be held in July. This will be held virtually. The BMC has already made written submissions – an earlier inquiry had to be postponed – and we will be making additional written comments now. On a recent visit to the site Peter and I noted how the matting was breaking up through exposure to ultraviolet light and depositing small pieces of plastic on to the moor, presumably for ever as it will be impossible to remove them, or until birds, like red grouse, eat them. The gist of our submission will be that over and above its negative impact on a protected landscape and the self-evident fact it is not fit for purpose, laying the matting there was a flagrant breach of statutory planning control, by which we are all bound, shooting estates included. The earlier decision on Rushy Flat Dike seems to us to be directly relevant as that was also the imposition on the



Mend our Mountains detail on the Great Ridge.
Photo: Peter Judd.

landscape of a track to grouse butts without planning permission.

A final point: we all know there are more deer about (including muntjac and roe deer), and fewer sheep. Deer are vectors for ticks, and sheep to an extent controlled them as the ticks which fed on them were killed by toxic dipping. Beware as there are more ticks about on the moors than there used to be. Always check for Lyme disease when you get home, and seek medical advice if you suspect you have picked up an infection.

And that's all for now. Enjoy the summer.

Area-Specific Updates

Stanage

Louise Hawson

The National Park Authority has approved proposals to increase parking charges at Authority-owned car parks, including Hollin Bank (Plantation), by 16%, and to introduce charging at some car parks which are

currently free, including Hooks Carr (Popular), Dennis Knoll (High Neb) and Upper Burbage Bridge (Burbage North). The cost of a park-wide annual permit is proposed to be increased by 65%. There will now be an external consultation on the introduction of the new charges, although we don't know the timing of this. Keep an eye on the national park website and social media channels for more information.

Removal of the diseased larch from the Hollin Bank plantation is still planned for autumn 2021. As well as the closure of the bridleway (for which an alternative route will be signposted), this will mean closure of part of the car park for works equipment. We are asking the National Park Authority to keep us informed of the plans and liaise with us about communication with walkers, climbers and cyclists, and alternative parking provision.



The new Font 7a bulging wall at Two Tier.
Photo: Mark Rankine.

Climbing News & Gossip

Dave Parry

You know the drill by now; I usually begin with an into paragraph with some sarcastic take on recent events and/or weather. With that in mind, since the last Peak news the weather held pretty good, cool and dry for a number of weeks giving excellent conditions for gritstone routes. However, we didn't seem to see the slew of hard repeats that you might expect. Maybe this is just how it is these days; when the weather is unseasonably cool it catches people out, and nobody is willing to jeopardise their training plan and break a deadhanging block by actually going climbing. Gainz tho.

For a time, the oft-overlooked Wyming Brook main crag was the place to be this spring. A lot of the routes on the main crag were clean and chalked, and everything was bone dry. Mark Rankine did a great public service to fans of local esoterica by fully

cleaning off the top of the neglected but excellent route *Placid House*, meaning it now tops out on clean rock rather than requiring pulling on a sling to surmount the top. Mark also added a slightly more difficult right-hand finish at the same grade (E6 6c). Across the valley at Rivelin Quarries, Mark has added a direct start to *Delivered* to give *Arriving Somewhere but Not Here* at E7 6c. Further south Mark has done a peg-protected direct finish to an old problem of Jon Fullwood's at Bradley Quarry, *Wolf In Cheap Clothing*. The full route is called *Big Brad Wolf* and goes at E6 6c.

Speaking of the aforementioned trilobite prospector, Jon has been busy up on Bamford Edge on the section north of the *Ping Pong Pocket Rib*. These blocks have been picked over by a few people over the years but never recorded, but recently a few landings have been sorted out, new lines added, and there's now a very decent circuit of problems and a worthwhile destination for a day out. Some of the standout problems are *Pog Champ* (Font 7a+), which is a huggy prow sitter climbed direct, and lies about 100m left of *Ping Pong*

Pocket Rib. Then 20m left again is a tall face, the left arête being *Clem Fandango* (Font 7a) from low. The wall right again is *Hello Steven* (Font 7a+/b), trending left to join the previous problem for the last couple of moves. Those seeking out something a little harder might enjoy a tussle with timber retailer Ned Feehally's new one taking the wall left of *Something Silly* at 7c+/8a, called *Chinook*, albeit probably not one for the short-arse community (and it is a community).

Ned has also climbed the left arête of the *Suavito* block at Gardom's South. There's two versions of this, one copping left into a pocket, one going more direct, both in the Font 7c to 8a range with a poor landing. Does look like a great line though if you can neutralise the landing. If you're after something with a nicer landing then at Burbage South Ned has done a direct start into *Hell for Leather* on Millwheel Wall. Depending what guide you read this may or may not be the line previously credited as *Hell For Leather*, but it's about Font 7c into an easier finish, which seems a far cry from the original grade of E4 6b so it remains a bit of a mystery where that route originally went.

A few more recent Fullwood contributions include (but not limited to) a few problems on a boulder under Curbar, in the *Art of White Hat Wearing* neck of the woods. Notable is a fridge-hugging type prow from sitting given the genius name of *Fridge Magnate* at Font 7a+. The left arête climbed a little further left, and the left sidewall, are both 7a on their own. And literally yesterday as I write this, Jon did an arête just above the road under the Froggatt hairpin boulder, *Elephants Gerald* is a Font 7a+ arête with a slopy landing on a buttress a way left of the one with *Isla Grace* on.

On the limestone a few sport routes have gone up on Church Buttress in WCJ Dale. Details can be found on Gary Gibson's website (www.sportsclimbs.co.uk). Incidentally, I notice Gary has a new guide out for Harper Hill with funds going to bolting

activity at that crag – worth a look if you're that way inclined. And from here we segue neatly into limestone retrobolting, this time fairly uncontroversially, as Simon Lee has fully equipped an old, neglected trad route of his own at Two Tier. *Ghee Force* is now F7a+ with a few new bolts, and 'two stars', although it's probably not uncharitable to suggest that you might buy *Ghee Force* at my estimation of its quality, and sell it at Simon's estimation of its quality, and realise a healthy profit*. Just to clarify, I know Simon doesn't mind being the butter the odd joke by the whey (this sentence is a better ghee pun than you're giving it credit for).

Adjacent to *Ghee Force*, Mark Rankine and Matt Ferrier have done a few problems up to the half-height ledge. *Malnutrition* start is Font 5+, the rib Font 6a+, the groove Font 6c and the bulging wall is around Font 7a. Worth knowing about if you're ever there with a pad to boulder the start of *Entrée* and fancy something else to go at.

Back on the grit, earlier in the spring Toby Wright climbed *Sentinel Prow* at Chatsworth at E6 6b (or very highball 6c/7a ish), which is sort of the prow between, and possibly using holds on both of, *Sentinel Groove* and *The Train Now Standing*. And, finally, Peak newsletter layout supremo and Spanish guitar virtuoso John Coefield did a more direct finish to *Grease Lightning* (which itself is a left finish on *Electrical Storm*) at Burbage South. This is called *HiiiiPower* (Font 7b+), and ideally you'll want a few pads – get to it before the top-out gets dirty again.

*(Apologies to the former honourable member for Buckingham for shamelessly stealing that putdown.)

Get in touch

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



Mend Our Mountains action on the Great Ridge.
Photo: Glynis Judd.

Hill Walking News

Peter Judd, Austin Knott & Vikki Hughes

With summer finally here, the Peak District's hills and valleys are looking particularly green, there's abundant foliage on the trees, grasses standing tall and bright green fronds of new bracken are uncurling to mask off those broad areas of brown and orange that otherwise give our hills their distinctive and varied colour pallet during autumn, winter and spring.

Meadows kept free of livestock (especially those that have not been ploughed and re-seeded in recent years) are rich with wildflowers just now. A wander up Ridgeway Side, above Hathersage, or down into the meadows below The Grouse Inn near Froggatt, for example, offers a rich array of such flowers: clovers, buttercups, oxeye daisies, vetches, germander speedwell, bird's foot trefoil, lady's smock and cow parsley, to name but a few.

On the moor tops there are carpets of heath bedstraw, patches of tormentil and even

the first purple flashes of heather flowers to be seen. Keeping an eye on the ground is not just about avoiding tripping over! There are birds to hear and see, with curlew, skylark and lapwing much in evidence recently, especially when you stray near their nesting spots – don't forget to take the hint and not linger: move away!

Area Walk from Hayfield

It took a long time to come to fruition, but our first Peak Area walk since the pandemic began took place in June. The hill walking reps were rewarded with a lot of interest in the walk and a great turnout, including the BMC's new CEO, Paul Davies!

The walk started from Hayfield, climbed up on to Kinder Scout via Cluther Rocks following the edge path in an anti-clockwise direction to a lunch stop near Kinder Downfall, continuing through Sandy Heys to Mill Hill and Burnt Hill before returning via Middle Moor and the Snake Path. The walk provided an opportunity for discussions on the role of the BMC, the famous Kinder Trespass and the fascinating story behind an aircraft wreck we passed.

The hill walking reps were grateful to Jason Johnstone and Michelle Martin for providing extra leadership support on this walk. Everyone contributed on the day too, with members willing to mix and point out points of interest, and importantly there was enthusiasm for more Peak Area walks, (see below).

Great Ridge Repairs Completed

The end of May saw the long-awaited completion of the second of the Peak District's BMC Mend our Mountains funded projects when contractors laid the final reclaimed sandstone slabs on Great Ridge, completing the last stretch of new paving to reach Hollins Cross. The mix of techniques used (paving, pitching – on steeper sections such as the lower section of Back Tor – and some aggregate path work) stretch for 500 metres, in two sections, repairing some of the most worn parts of this extraordinarily popular route. They provide a more robust and sustainable surface that should encourage walkers to stay on the path and off the increasingly eroded margins, for years to come. Peak Park Conservation Volunteers have been along since, distributing appropriately selected seeds, to encourage regeneration of plant life on areas disturbed by the work.

Moors for the Future Partnership, who have expertly and sensitively managed the work on behalf of the Peak District National Park, point out that most of the slabs used have come from paving reclaimed from former northern mills. Before that they were, of course, themselves quarried from similar grit/sandstone hillsides to those on which they have now found their new purpose – a pleasing closing of the circle!

BMC Peak Area volunteers made an inspection of this work recently and our view is that it has been done to a good standard and in sympathy with the location. A very pleasing outcome for all those who contributed to the crowdfunding or attended the Light Night line of head torches event three years ago.

A number of water-diverting barriers have been positioned strategically across some of the repaired sections to divert rainwater off the path (water flow being a major means by which path erosion occurs). Perhaps we walkers need to take it upon ourselves to keep an eye on these channels and periodically clear the inevitable debris buildup, that will otherwise compromise the effectiveness of these important defences? Anybody up for helping with that?

Area Walk, August: interested?

After the success of our walk from Hayfield in June, we have plans for another walk, this time straddling the national park boundary and taking in Tegg's Nose and Shutlingsloe. We've picked Saturday 14 August for the walk and will announce full details via the Peak Area Facebook page (and by other means) nearer the time. If you'd like a nudge when we start taking bookings then please email Peter: peak10roam-bmc@yahoo.co.uk

A Volunteering Opportunity

After our popular sphagnum planting volunteering day with National Trust a couple of years ago, we're pleased to announce there'll be another opportunity to help NT's Kinder and High Peak Estate rangers this autumn. Those who wander over the moor tops around the Snake Pass (and even those who drive along that route) cannot help but notice the progressive intrusion of self-seeding Sitka Spruce and other invasive species all poking out above the moor tops. NT have asked us to provide a team of volunteers willing to help them rip up and remove some of these unwelcome intruders that would otherwise colonise the area, under their direction and with the necessary tools provided, on Sunday 26 September. We're not asking for a commitment to come just yet, but would welcome expressions of interest. please email Peter: peak10roam-bmc@yahoo.co.uk

Peak Area Meetings: 2021

8 July, 7 p.m., The Internet.
Register [HERE](#).



Forthcoming Events

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

Peak Area Hill Walk

Tegg's Nose, Saturday 14 August

See page 9 and the Peak Area Facebook page for more information.

Invasive Species Removal

Snake Pass, Sunday 26 September

More info about this volunteering opportunity on page 9.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, many events have been cancelled or postponed. For the latest information on forthcoming events in the Peak Area, please keep an eye on the BMC's community pages.

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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