

BMC Cymru Wales – Access Report – Autumn 2021

Crag access – coastal sites

Seals appear to be pupping in increased numbers at many sites this year, especially along the north Wales coast and Pembrokeshire. There have been issues (hopefully not climbers!) with visitors trying to get close to young pups on beaches, taking close-up photos and walking dogs close to seals. There have been numerous reports of the mother being scared off into the sea, with the pup following, before they have sufficient energy or ability to swim properly. This is essentially a death sentence for the young pups, as once the mother swims off they are unable to fend for themselves or the drown as they have insufficient fur or fat to sustain themselves in open water. If seals are hauled on beaches, coves or below crags – please do not approach and do not abseil into those venues. If you believe seals are in distress or pups have been abandoned, then please call the British Divers Marine Life Rescue on 01825765546 or out of hours on 07787433412.

Craig y Forwyn Llysfaen

Access to this iconic limestone venue continues to be an issue. The owners of the central section wish it to be made clear that they do not give permission for people to access this part of the crag and if they see climbers here it's likely that their staff will instruct people to leave. BMC have been in touch to try to negotiate a long-term agreement to allow climbing here but the owners have informed the BMC that they are not in a position to discuss access until they have completed the redevelopment of the caravan park and that they will approach the BMC when they are ready to look at the issue again.

Craig Bwlch y Moch – Tremadog

Sadly, most of the Ash trees at Tremadog are suffering from Ash die-back. This means that for the safety of the highway and for liability issues, as the BMC owns Craig Bwlch y Moch, further felling of roadside trees will occur here over the winter. Elsewhere, climbers should avoid using any ash trees for belays, abseil or anchors of any sorts. Ash die back essentially rots the tree from the inside out and failure of even large stems and trunks can be immediate and catastrophic.

Pembroke Range West

The online Range West briefings have proven to be very popular and successful for climbers wishing to climb on the live firing Range West part of Castlemartin cliffs. However there have been a few instances of climbers not following the instructions in the video, in one case actually driving a private vehicle onto Range West and a few cases of climbers claiming not to know the purpose of the cliff top “red pots” indicating no climbing areas due to nesting birds.

It is imperative that all climbers view the video before completing the registration form and follow the instructions before entering Range West.

Llanberis Pass and Ogwen Parking Issues

In 2021 the local authorities and the National Park, with funding and support from Welsh Government, initiated a parking restriction programme along the A5 Trunk Road and in the Llanberis Pass area. This was in response to congestion, illegal parking and blocked roads, community concerns and police complaint, mainly during key times. Additional buses were also provided from Bethesda and Llanberis. The project is an interim measure to deal with the additional levels of visitors due to the Covid pandemic and we expect to hear of and be consulted on any new initiatives going forward. BMC and other recreational users were not consulted (only informed) regarding these initiatives that were put in place for 2021, and with National Park officials publicly stating that “tough decisions” around traffic management in these areas need to be made in the future, it’s hoped that recreational bodies such as the BMC will have the opportunity to have a voice in future plans.

Cwm Ely and Dimbath crags

Access to both of these venues were suspended by the land owners – attempts to organise meetings with the landowners of these sites to agree future access have not been possible yet this year as the landowners have not been able to agree meeting dates. Achieving an agreement for access at Dimbath is looking more promising than Cwm Ely at this time but both of these venues are on the list of venues where BMC will be looking to gain an agreement.

Craig y Gesail – Tremadog

Working with the National Park, new signs, stiles and a slightly amended approach path will be in place here from late autumn 2021. The landowner allows parking for a limited number of cars on his land, immediately by the cattle grid but it is imperative that cars do not block the farm track and do not drive up to the farm.