

APRIL 2024



LAKES AREA NEWSLETTER

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Manchester M20 2BB
www.thebmc.co.uk

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This is our second Newsletter and highlights two meetings of the Lakes Area, which are coming up shortly.

Please contact Ron Kenyon to submit any comments, suitable information or articles. ron@jaggedlakes.plus.com

RIGHT TO ROAM/OUTDOORS FOR ALL

Special BMC Lakes area meeting Wednesday, 17th April 2024

Location: La Sportiva Room, Kendal Climbing Wall, 7:00 for 7:30

Ken Taylor gives some food for thought about the subject in his article in this edition of the Lakes Area Newsletter.

More details on BMC website-<https://community.thebmc.co.uk/Event.aspx?id=4569>

If you do want to come, it's vital that you book a spot to avoid disappointment. Follow the link to Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bmc-lakes-area-outdoors-for-all-panel-discussion-tickets-868308483047?aff=oddtcreator>

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2ND MAY 2024 - LAKES AREA MEETING

The Lakes Area meeting will be held in the Keswick at the Kong Climbing Wall on Thursday 2nd May 2023 (note: NOT Wednesday). Full details will be sent out in due course and further information will be found on the BMC Website.

We hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter. We would welcome information and suitable articles for future Newsletters to help update BMC members in the Lakes area and beyond.

APRIL 2024



RIGHT TO ROAM / OUTDOORS FOR ALL



The expansion of public access rights is back on the agenda again.

Ken Taylor (BMC Hill Walking Rep for the Lakes Area and member of the Access Management Group and its predecessors) gives some food for thought on the subject below.

You too, have a chance to air your views at a specially-convened meeting of the Lakes Area. It's at Kendal Climbing Wall, starting at 7.30pm on Wednesday 17th April. As well as an Intro from Ken, speakers include:

- Dr Cath Flitcroft (Head of Access and Environment at the BMC);
- Lee Schofield (author of Wild Fell, ex-manager of RSPB Haweswater and now employed at Lowther Estate);
- Adam Briggs (National Farmers' Union).

Paul Ratcliffe, recently appointed CEO of the BMC will be in attendance, too, and will no doubt want to add a few words of his own. If you do want to come, it's vital that you book a spot to avoid disappointment – follow this link: [BMC Lakes Area - 'Outdoors For All' Panel Discussion](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bmc-lakes-area-outdoors-for-all-panel-discussion-tickets-868308483047?aff=oddtcreator) (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bmc-lakes-area-outdoors-for-all-panel-discussion-tickets-868308483047?aff=oddtcreator>).

The following comments are from Ken Taylor to help open the debate. These are his opinions and opinions may vary, but this is the object of the debate!

Twenty-five years ago, I was in the midst of the most important consultancy project of my working life – assessing for the then Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions the economic pros and cons of 4 options for delivering increased opportunities for public access to the countryside. The outcome was the first part of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW). It was the launch-pad for me to set up my own freelance consultancy business.

I would never have thought then, that a quarter of a century later, history would repeat itself. In 1997, Labour was expected to take over after a long period of Tory rule. Lobbying by Ramblers, British Mountaineering Council (BMC) and others had resulted in the Labour party including in its manifesto a commitment to bring about an increase in public access to the countryside of Great Britain. Circumstances are now very similar and the Labour party is being lobbied hard to add a similar commitment for their 2024 manifesto.

There have actually been several campaigns running in parallel, with varying demands. Emerging as the front-runner is 'Outdoors for All' – a campaign espoused by 42 outdoor organisations, including the BMC, whose website provides details of the campaign demands. The 'Right to Roam' campaign group has a more radical view. Outdoors for All contains some very good ideas, many of which would clearly provide some good outcomes.

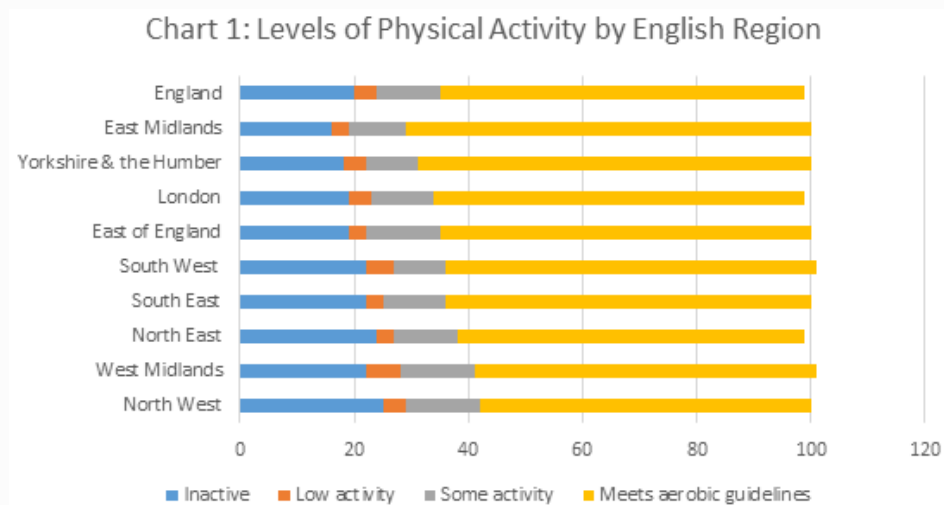
First on the list though, is a proposal to extend the CROW Act provisions. I shall come clean and admit that I'm not convinced at the wisdom of this proposal. In the North West, we have a lot of access land already and, on a busy bank holiday weekend, it seems like we have more than enough visitors. We certainly have too many that behave irresponsibly, as we saw in the post-lockdown summers of 2020 and 2021.

So, I ask myself "What is the problem this proposal seeks to solve?" To use the modern parlance, 'I get' the logic of outdoor activities being good for us and a key contributor to good mental and physical well-being. I also 'get' that we have a problem. Some 9.25m people in the UK are of working age but are 'economically inactive' (i.e. of working age but not seeking work), with an increase amongst those in the 16-35 years age bracket. In 2022/23, around 3.5m people were in touch with secondary mental health, learning difficulty and autism services (of which nearly a third were under 18). But, is an extension to rights of public access to the countryside the solution?



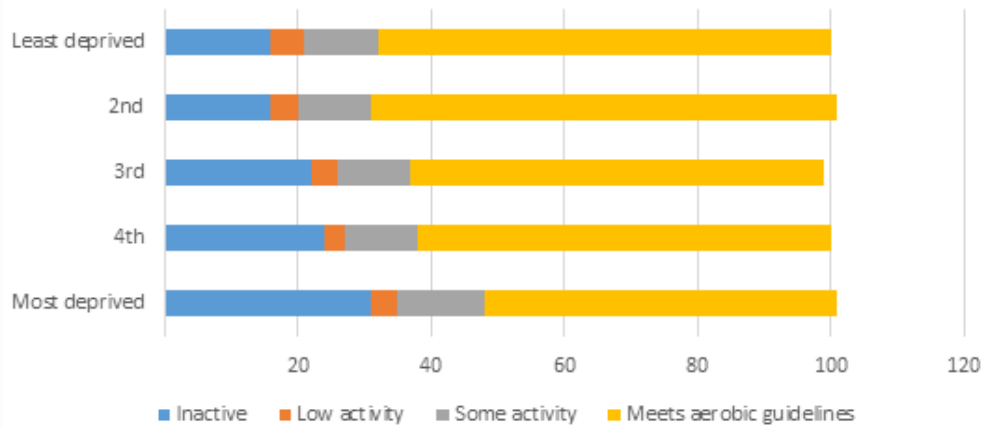
Let's remember, we already have access to 8% of land in England under CROW. We also have, or will have access to a strip of coastal land. Added to this are around 220,000 km of public rights of way shown on OS maps (admittedly some not much used). There are around 7,500 km of canals, most of which have permitted access to towpaths. There are around 4,008 country parks in England. There are many more informal opportunities. Admittedly, the distribution of these opportunities is not uniform. Natural England reckon that 80% of people who live in towns and cities do not have access to 'green infrastructure' within 15 minutes of their home. NE is trying to implement a plan to change this by boosting access opportunities in urban areas. This is in accord with some of the Outdoors for All proposals.

My feeling, though, is that we don't have a 'supply' problem but more of a 'demand' problem. In Cumbria, we have 7,645 km of public right of way and 213,700 ha of open access land - plus all the other access opportunities. (I haven't sought similar data for the rest of the North West region of England but is almost as equally well-blessed as regards access.) Yet, if you look at levels of physical activity (see Chart 1 below taken from NHS data), the North West has the lowest proportion of adults meeting the NHS guidelines for exercise.

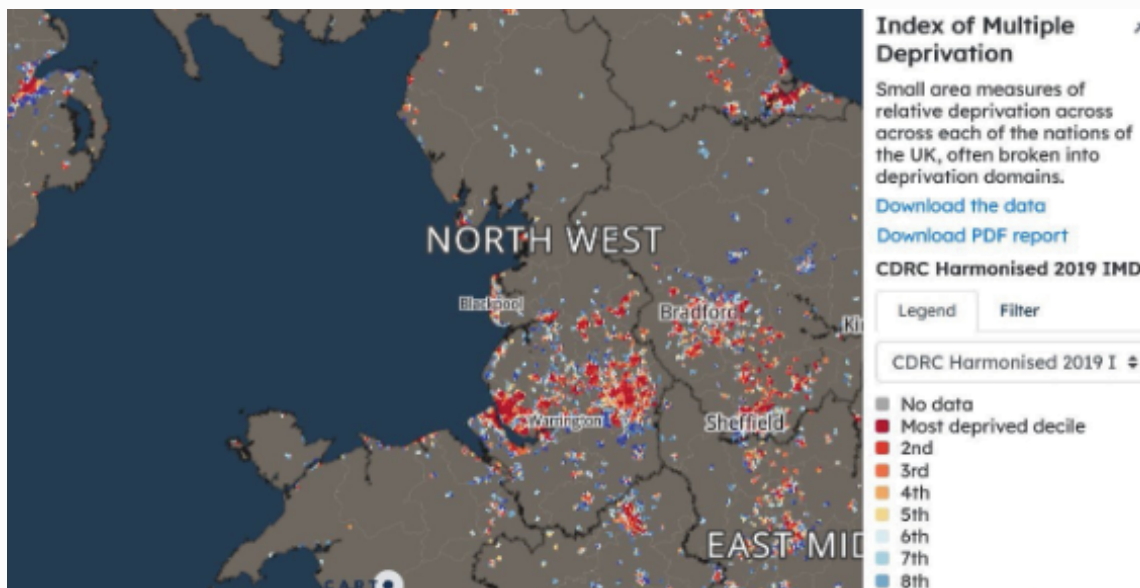


So, why is this? If we examine the patterns of physical activity across demographic groups, we find that significant differences in activity levels exist in relation to level of 'deprivation'. As seen in Chart 2 below, people living in areas of highest deprivation are least active and people in areas of lowest two quintiles of deprivation are the most active. It may come as no surprise to learn that the North West has more areas in the highest decile of deprivation than anywhere else in the country (see map. For the full UK picture, see the IMD map available via the link given in the footnote).

Chart 2: Physical Activity by Index of Multiple Deprivation



Further, activity levels differ amongst different ethnic groups, with those that identified as White British most likely to be physically active (47.2%), and those that identified as Black (35.5%) or Other (38.5%) less likely to be active.



I doubt if the extension to access rights will promote much change in these statistics. What it will do is create much resistance from owners of riparian land – land adjacent to rivers and lakes. Imagine the furore that will arise if a public access strip is required along the east side of Windermere, or along the length of the River Derwent. Yes, there will be rules and regulations that can mitigate the worst problems (and compensation?). But, it ain't going to be simple to implement, or cheap!

The proposals are silent on what additional rights the organisations are seeking over CROW access land (existing and the additional land). With groups representing open water swimmers, canoeists, bikers and campers as signatories, we can expect some expansion of rights will be sought. Wild camping is on the BMC wish-list but how will this work? Advocates are formulating guidelines for the definition of wild camping such as:

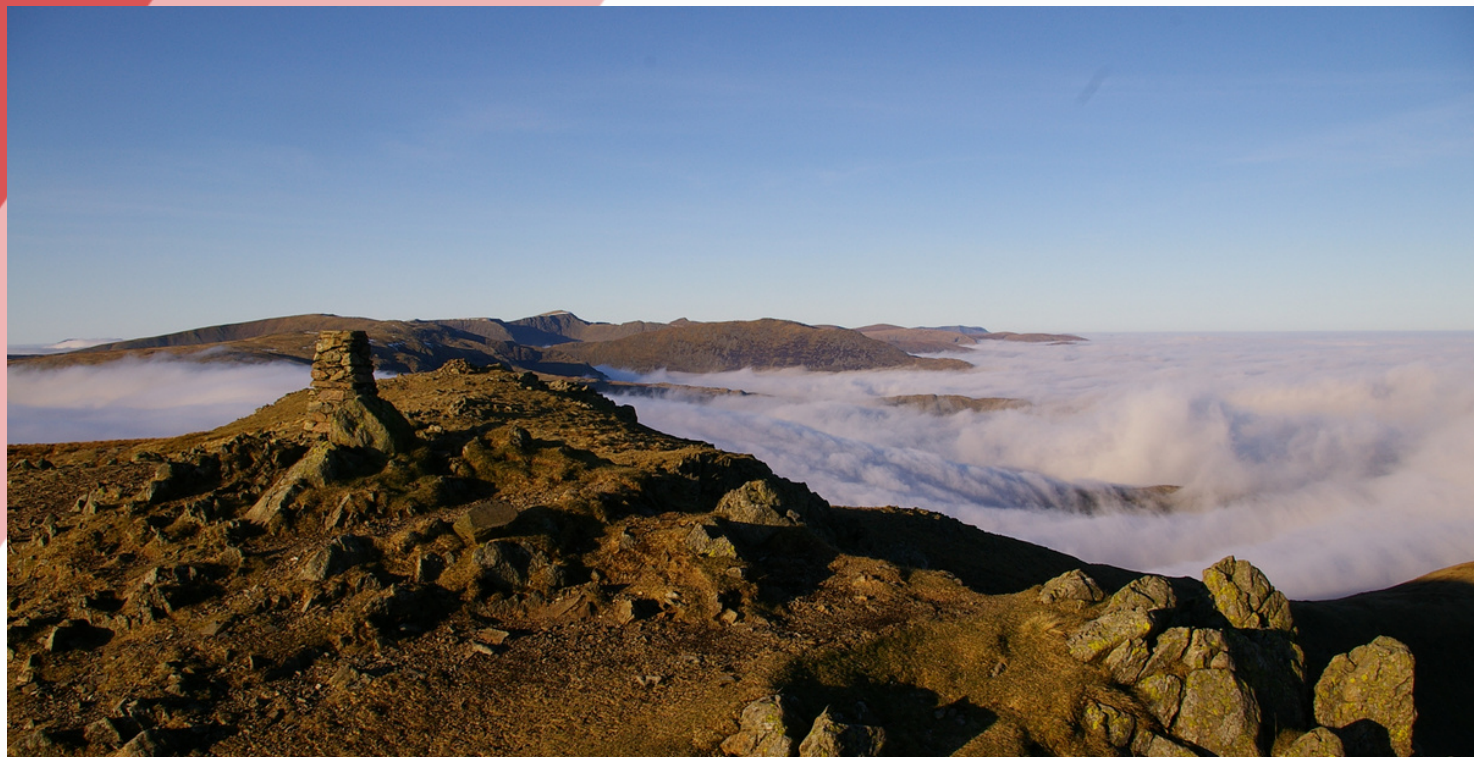
- You must be 500m/1000m/out of sight* of habitation or 30/45/60 minutes' walk from a road*;
- No more than one/two* tent(s)
- No more than 2/3/4* people
- No more than 1/2/3* night(s)
- No fires/no moving of stones to make fires/only stoves to be used*
- Leave no trace of your stay

(* = delete as preferred)

I think that could be a tricky message to sell to aspiring wild campers.

My preference would be for these outdoor organisations to do more to stimulate responsible access to the countryside. Julian Glover undertook a review of National Parks and AONBs (now 'National Landscapes') in 2018/19 at the request of Defra. He made a wide range of useful recommendations but the one that caught my eye was Proposal 8 "A night under the stars in a national landscape for every child". It needn't be up on the high tops either; Richard Leafe floated the idea of something approaching this for the Lakes in 2019 but was shouted down. Opportunities are still out there, such as 'Nearly Wild'. If we could focus on delivering a meaningful and memorable experience to every child, hopefully instilling a sense of appreciation of our 'wild' places and how to behave in them, it would be a great result.





THE BMC LAKES AREA NEEDS YOU!

The BMC is the national body for climbing, walking and mountaineering for England and Wales. There is a diverse membership with a wide spread of activities, including:

- rock climbing: trad, sport and bouldering
- indoor climbing with recreation through to international competitions
- walking on fells and mountains
- mountaineering on foot and ski and various means throughout the world

The BMC and connected organisations are involved in:

- access and conservation
- lobbying and communications with Government on related matters
- mountaineering and climbing clubs
- mountaineering and climbing insurance
- climbing competitions
- climbing walls
- owning and looking after crags
- mountain heritage - with Mountain Heritage Trust
- mountain and climbing training - with Mountain Training
- personal protective equipment technical standards - Technical Committee

**THE BMC LAKES AREA
NEEDS YOU!**

**Vacant positions:
Chair and Secretary**

**Please contact Ron
Kenyon if you are
interested in helping
with the BMC Lakes Area.**



There is a dedicated head office in Manchester with staff at the hub of the organisation, however there are many members who volunteer in numerous ways, such as:

- Directors of BMC
- National Council of Members
- Chair and Secretary of Areas around the country
- Access Representatives - help with access and similar issues
- Other area representatives with links to clubs, walking groups and climbing walls who can feed back issues to the main body of the BMC

The BMC can seem somewhat unwieldy, but it is amazing what it is involved in and deals with - usually behind the scenes!

The BMC is split into various Areas, each of which have meetings throughout the year. Members are very welcome to come along to these to express any concerns and find out what has been going on. The Lakes Area covers the area of Cumbria, including the Lake District, which is one of the most popular mountain areas in the UK and in which there are roughly 1,600 BMC members.

We had the recent Lakes Area AGMs in October and January and set the scene for the coming year. Most positions have been covered, however the following positions are open if you are interested in 'doing your bit'.

POSITION VACANCIES

Chairman - there was an offer from a prominent local members but he is immersing himself in what should be an interesting autobiography of his life. This is an important and interesting position

Secretary - A similarly important position. We would welcome someone stepping forward.

More vacant positions below.

Election of officers for 2023/24 at AGM

Area Chair:

Position vacant

Frank Bennett standing as temporary Chairman

Area Secretary:

Position vacant

Ron Kenyon took on temporary acting secretary position



Area Treasurer:	Ron Kenyon
Area National Council Representative: Others welcome to take up a position on the National Council	Dave Brown
Area Access Coordinator:	James Bumby
Area Access Reps -	
i. South Lakes:	Christian Dodsworth
ii. Kentmere and Longsleddale:	James Bumby
iii. Duddon and Eskdale:	Position Vacant
iv. Wasdale, Ennerdale and St Bees:	Richard Outhwaite
v. North Lakes:	Richard Outhwaite and Ron Kenyon
vi. East Lakes and Eden Valley:	Ron Kenyon
Climbing wall representative:	Christian Dodsworth
Area Youth Co-ordinator:	Position vacant
Club Representative:	Anne Chevalier
Hill Walking Representative:	Ken Taylor
Newsletter editor:	Marjolein Thickett
Park planning representatives:	Richard Outhwaite and Ken Taylor

NEW ESKDALE ROCK CLIMBING GUIDE



The FRCC has just published a new definitive rock climbing guide to Eskdale. This covers the wealth of climbing along the length of the valley from the crags of the lower valley such as Brantrake, Bellst and, Hare Crag etc. up to the impressive mountain crag of Esk Buttress and many more in between.

There has been a lot of recent development of short crags in the Harter Fell and Hard Knott area. With the crags on the Duddon Valley side of Harter Fell, there must be more individual crags on Harter Fell than any mountain anywhere.

Needless to say the guide is now available at climbing shops and online.



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NEW BOULDERING WALL

at Lakeland Climbing Centre, Kendal



Announcing UNIT 34, the new bouldering extension at Kendal Wall which opened 7th March 2024.

Lakeland Climbing Centre's, Kendal Wall has been at the forefront of climbing, not only in Cumbria but nationally from a historic point of view. The opening of this new facility brings the total bouldering space to over 700m² and brings state-of-the-art climbing to the Lake District!

The new facility also has a gym area and an extensive range of carefully crafted blocs set over a superb range of grades and angles!

Whether you've been climbing for years or would like to give it a go, this new bouldering facility caters for all abilities. But don't take our word for it, check it out for yourself!

To celebrate the opening, we are also offering discounted bouldering only annual passes and a limited number of special discount cards, so grab yours before they're gone! More details: www.lakelandclimbingcentres.co.uk





CLUB NEWS:

THE YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS' CLUB



Above: Imogen Campion making first ascent of Rosa Canina 6a Runestone Quarry.

1st photo: Secluded Low Hall Garth nestling below the slate quarries.

The **Yorkshire Ramblers' Club** (YRC), as the name suggests, was a product of the Victorian era, formed in 1892 and pre-dated only by the Alpine club in England. Made up mostly of well-to-do Yorkshiremen, it set out to explore the crags, caves and fells of the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District and further afield. Throughout the years many notable cragsmen and mountaineers filled its ranks. Cecil Slingsby renowned for his exploration of Norwegian mountains and the numerous 'Slingsby's Chimneys on Scafell, Ben Nevis and Armscliff climbed with the likes of Puttrell, the Keswick brothers, Botterill, Coolidge and many more pioneers of that time. Later Claude Frankland, arguably the greatest cragsman of his age, was an active member of the club in the 1920s, putting routes up on Armscliff such as Frankland's Green Crack, Central Route and his forays to the Lakes led to further development of Esk Buttress and other Lakeland crags.

The club has always had a tradition of encouraging members to be multi-skilled in mountaineering, climbing, caving and skiing and indeed Frankland, a keen caver, told Fred Piggot 'he preferred to spend his summers caving and reserve his climbing to less favourable seasons'. Remarkable when one considers his achievements!



Undaunted by the lofty achievements of so many of the earlier members, the club has continued to flourish and has a regular, and often ambitious, meets program: there have been numerous expeditions to the Himalayas and the Andes to climb new peaks and explore rarely visited valleys and glaciers. The club has also mounted caving expeditions to Iran, Oman, Turkey and China in pursuit of new length and depth records. In 1998, members of the YRC joined with a French group to push the Gouffre Mirolida, a deep system in the French Alps, to a new world record depth of over minus 1600m. The first cave in the world to reach a mile in depth.

The YRC has two club huts, one in Clapham in the Yorkshire Dales and the other, Low Hall Garth (LHG) in Little Langdale. The climber's section of the club has been busy over the last six years or so developing sports routes in the slate quarries that abound in Little Langdale but also many of the limestone crags in the Dales. We are supported by both the Cumbria and the Yorkshire Bolt Fund.

People who know of it would probably agree the LHG is a gem of a hut for activities in the South Lakes. Its location is marked as 'Climbing Hut' on the Ordnance Survey map for the area, an accolade rarely afforded to club huts in the Lake District. The hut/cottage is leased from the National Trust together with the barn opposite and we have been custodians since 1950. Access to the hut by road has become problematic more recently because of the state of the lane leading from the Conistone road. However, last year the National Trust took over as custodians of the section from the ford to our cottage, so it is hoped this will be kept in good order in the future.

Further information about the club is available on our website: <https://www.yrc.org.uk/> and includes an online booking facility for huts and details of all forthcoming meets.



Tom Spencer making an early ascent of Runescape 6a, Runestone Quarry

THE BMC ACCESS NETWORK

The BMC Access Network was set up in July 2022 as:

- A collective of people involved with the BMC's access, conservation & environmental work across England and Wales.
- The start of a more connected and integrated access community across the BMC.
- A regular opportunity for networking and information sharing, and to participate in specialist Q&A sessions with invited experts from external organisations.

The Network is aimed at:

- BMC Area Access reps & Hill walking reps, Area postholders (chairs, secretaries etc), members of the Access Management Group, the Land Management Group, Members Council, the Access & Conservation Trust, the Land & Property Trust, Mountain Training reps and others with an interest.
- Invitation to be extended to prospective new volunteers once the Access Network is established.

It currently holds regular monthly zoom call (1-hour max) convened and chaired by the Head of ACES with support from external specialists.



The aim was to enable discussions on a wide range of topics that might include:

- Focus on local and regional 'on the ground' issues.
- Key issues facing BMC volunteers involved with negotiating access with individual landowners and agencies including the National Trust, RSPB, National Parks, English Heritage, NRW and Natural England.
- Occupiers' liability, dealing with increased participation, the legal framework for access (CROW, MCAA, Public Rights of Way), nature conservation designations and protections.
- Specialist Q&A sessions with representatives from the National Trust, National Parks, legal professionals and the statutory authorities involved with countryside management.
- Discussion of practical projects to manage and restore climbing and upland areas.
- How to get the message out – connecting with climbers and walkers on environmental good practice.

External agency contacts have participated including representatives of Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, National Trust, RSPB, Yorkshire Dales National Park and Rewilding Britain. The most recent event at the beginning of March featured guest Prof Alastair Driver, Director of Rewilding Britain. The key points raised are summarised as:

- Rewilding is the large-scale restoration of ecosystems to the point where nature can take care of itself.
- It aims to reinstate natural processes and, where appropriate, missing species – allowing them to shape the landscape and habitats.
- Traditional nature conservation practices on their own aren't enough to achieve significant wildlife recovery in Britain.
- Many rewilding schemes involve a shift from grazing sheep in favour of lower densities of cattle.
- Generally speaking, access is compatible with and encouraged on rewilding sites.

The next session is scheduled for 8th April and is 'Managing access in the USA - lessons and perspectives for the BMC. Special guests are Jenna Winkler of the US Access Forum and Meg Evans from the South Eastern Climbers Coalition.

Annual Climbing Restrictions

In February, the annual meeting was held involving BMC national and local access representatives and LDNPA, Natural England, National Trust and John Muir Trust to discuss the annual voluntary climbing restrictions to safeguard nesting birds. Also discussed was the promotion of the restrictions. The RAD is a major publicising tool, but also there is the signage on site. 26 locations were discussed with a particular interest in nesting Ravens (1st March to 31st May) and Peregrine Falcons (1st March to 30th June). Also worthy of mention are the restrictions at St Bees for nesting sea birds which are in place until 31st July.

THE MOUNTAIN HERITAGE TRUST



The Mountain Heritage Trust (MHT) is a Threlkeld-based charity set up in the early years of the century to house, preserve and catalogue some of the most significant historical material relating to British climbing and mountaineering including archival material; books, magazines and journals; and museum objects like climbing equipment and clothing. We are an independent charity who are currently delighted to receive BMC funding for our core operations.

Since our founding, we have been unique amongst British collections of mountain heritage in employing a full time professional archivist. The current Collections Manager is David Johnston-Smith, who has been in post for two years.

More mature readers may remember the National Mountaineering Exhibition at Rheged, from which some of our collections arose, and we have also previously had exhibition space at Keswick Museum. In 2024, our collections have already appeared at a Sandy Irvine exhibition at Shrewsbury School, and will soon be seen at Merton College, Oxford and at Wray Castle here in the Lakes, where the National Trust will be holding a significant Everest related exhibition from June.



APRIL 2024



We have recently greatly enlarged and enhanced our Board of Trustees who are now developing our strategic aims and working towards a future where our collections can be experienced by all. In the medium term we seek to have a permanent exhibition space, but more immediately, all of our collections are available to researchers at our offices in the Blencathra Field Studies Centre.

Please view our website <https://www.mountain-heritage.org/> for further information about the Mountain Heritage Trust.

Our catalogue is available online <https://calmview.co.uk/mht/calmview/>

As we seek further funding to enable us to make progress with our valuable work, please do consider making a donation <https://www.mountain-heritage.org/donate>

You can follow our social media accounts on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

If you feel you have any material to donate, or if you might be interested in future volunteering activities, do please let us know. The Collections Manager at the MHT can be contacted here:

+44 (0)1768 779911

enquiries@mountain-heritage.org

David Johnston-Smith

WITH THANKS TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED

We hope you enjoyed this edition, which was put together by Ron Kenyon and Marjolein Thickett.

If you would like to submit any articles for the next edition of the BMC Lakes Area Newsletter, please email to Ron Kenyon.

ron@jaggedlakes.plus.com