

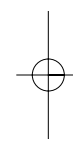
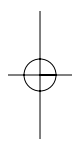
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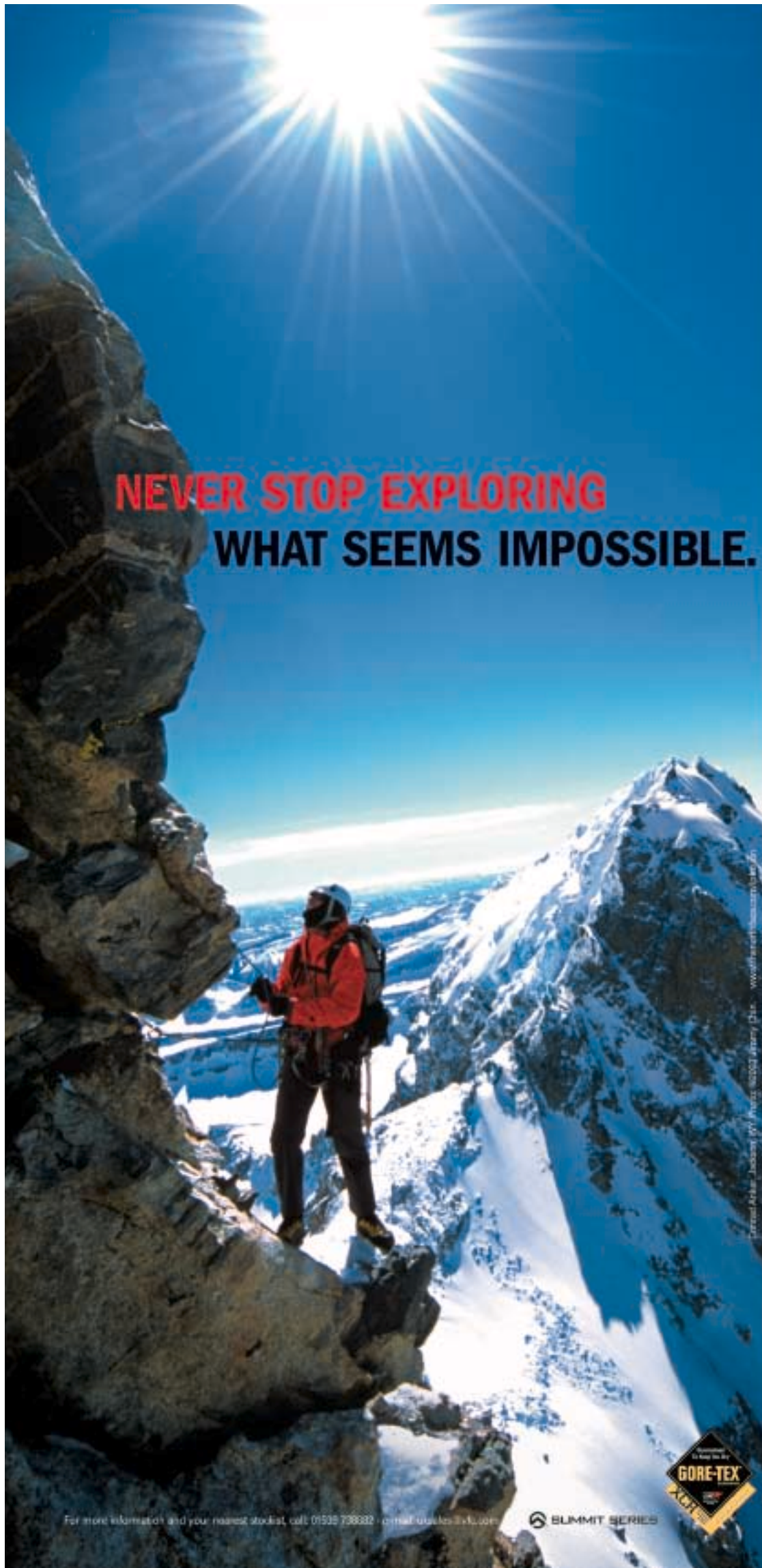
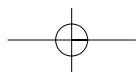
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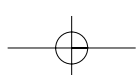


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**WELCOME TO ISSUE 32**

**Summit** is the membership magazine of the British Mountaineering Council. The BMC promotes the interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers and the freedom to enjoy their activities. The primary work of the BMC is to:

**Negotiate** access improvements and promote cliff and mountain conservation.

**Promote** and advise on good practice, facilities, training and equipment.

**Support** events and specialist programmes including youth and excellence.

**Provide** services and information for members.

**BMC**

177 - 179 Burton Road,

Manchester, M20 2BB

Tel: 0870 010 4878

Fax: 0161 445 4500

members@thebmc.co.uk

www.thebmc.co.uk

President: Mark Vallance

Chief Executive: Dave Turnbull

Summit Editor: Alex Messenger

**EDITORIAL**

Contributions for Summit should be sent to the Editor Alex Messenger at the above address or alex@thebmc.co.uk. Every care is taken of materials sent for publication, however these are submitted at the sender's risk. The views expressed within are of the contributors, and not necessarily the BMC.

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# foreword

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## The webs we weave

... and another thing, following on from the phone calls I referred to in Summit 31 - all those emails! I feel bad about not replying to them all, and must admit to a pang of guilt when I put them in the trash bucket. Although there is a smug smile of delight when I press the 'empty trash' command and all those problems disappear in an instant.

But it's not emails that are having a profound effect on the way organisations such as the BMC operate - it's the web. Once the preserve of the few, its growth has been staggering, it is the forum of the future. At present there don't seem to be any rules, which means that sometimes people get the wrong end of the stick or misunderstand each other. You can't hear their tone of voice, detect the irony, the humour, whatever. But at least I have my own personal rule - count to ten before replying to anything!

There is a new club of dedicated climbers who haven't yet applied to join the BMC, but I know they intend to. Actually they haven't got a name, but because they constantly weave their threads on the web, I'd like to call them the 'Anaraknids' but they'd probably take offence. Their purpose is to challenge the BMC's voting procedures whereby the clubs, or more accurately, a few clubs, can dictate to the rest of the membership, especially the new majority of Individual Members, such things as subscriptions levels.

This new club has a mammoth task in organising a disparate group of Individual Members - who don't want to join a club - into a group that could out-vote the clubs! Will it happen? I hope so, since although I believe that club members are fair-minded people, the 'block vote' is so far past its sell-by date, that it is beginning to stink. My own opinion is that only those who have made a personal choice to join the BMC - that is Individual Members and 'Full' Club Members - should have a vote.

The BMC's Future Policy process is looking at the membership structure, the concerns of the Individual Members and the democratic procedures of the BMC. So now is an ideal time to make your views known, on a post card, or of course by email? Why do I have this feeling that the phone will get busy again - not to mention my inbox?

Mark Vallance  
BMC President

(TOP) Mark Vallance, looking battered after the EGM.

**ON THE COVER:** Steve McClure on the E5 6c pitch of *Twenty One*, on the West Face of Idlorssit Havn Tower, Southern Greenland. Just one of the successful trips supported by the BMC/MEF this year. Steve is leading, nearing the end of long unprotected traverse - as you can tell from his eyes! Credit: Nick Boden.

## GOT AN OPINION?

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# letters

## BERGHAUS PRIZE LETTER WINNER

### HAVE FAITH

I'm writing to declare my support for the BRYCS! On the one hand I'm a 46 year-old trad climber, having started in 1972, with my roots being in New England's fine climbing tradition. As you can appreciate, climbing then was a bowline on a bite, sans harness, body belays, nuts and hexes. We learned by doing the old traditional means, outside, on rock.

Now on the other hand, I'm the father of four daughters ages 14, 12, 9, and 7. All are climbers; they are also eager participants in the BRYCS. Through indoor climbing and bouldering they have learned good technique and best practice. The comps have given them goals and an appreciation for the discipline involved. I only wish I had such resources available when I started. The bottom line is that all are in love with climbing, be it indoors, outdoors, sport, bouldering, or even ice. It's all good! And it's all because of the indoor climbing walls and facilities, since living in London there's no real alternative. I can understand the fear of traditionalists in the BMC, that plastic will become the heartless soul of climbing in the UK. Fear not. Climbing evolves just as any other sport does, but the draw of the outdoors is timeless and powerful. These kids will learn well, grow, and climb real rock. Have faith! That's been my experience anyway, as well as other friends whose kids participate in the BRYCS.

In the meantime, I've taken to the indoors for fun and training, as well as outdoors for a bit of sport climbing. I've become far more relaxed on these "issues". These are not in the same league of ethical dilemmas such as the bolting wars witnessed in the 80's. These new concerns are trivial. The point is it gets new people, young or old, climbing. And that's good for the BMC and like-minded organizations, with strong values rooted in the outdoors and preserving the essence of wildness and adventure.

Jack Tracy



### GET IT TOGETHER

I would like to contribute to the BMC debate with respect to youth and competitive climbing. It's obvious that any sport that does not attract young people will die. Climbing does attract young people, and the growth of indoor walls has accelerated this.

The traditional approach to learning, in which experienced climbers help the youngsters still flourishes, at least at my local climbing centre in Nottingham, and the interaction between the youngsters themselves, and between them and the experienced climbers is a joy to behold. Not only is there climbing benefit, but also the successful bridging of age and social divides. As the sport's representative body, the BMC must be involved in this vibrant youth climbing scene if it doesn't want to lose touch with the grassroots.

With regard to competitive climbing, like it or not it is here to stay. There are a significant number of climbers who want to test their skills against the best in the world. This has always been the case, but now we have a World Cup and associated feeder competitions, such as BBC, BICC and for youngsters, BRYCS. Again, for the health of the sport in Britain the BMC must be involved.

I suggest that climbing takes a leaf from other sports in the development of its teams. It is essential to have the competition team,

but all successful sports have realised that strength in depth is vital. For climbing this should start at local level, helping kids to develop for the BRYCS competition at their local climbing wall. The BMC has a regional structure, so why not take some of the best from the areas, and not just the BRYCS qualifiers, into an area training programme? The best from the regions then populate the national squad. I suspect that this is in the embryonic stage at the moment, but it needs significant expansion.

To support this the BMC should develop coaching within the sport. Both training for coaches, and physical, mental, and skills programmes for kids. Parents should know that the people to whom they entrust their children are competent. This will need to be financed. If the number of magazines, and the huge number of adverts inside them are anything to go by, then there is money in the sport. If the BMC doesn't have the fund raising expertise in-house, then it needs to get hold of someone who does, and get them going.

So BMC come on, get the coaching organised, build on the enthusiasm of the regions and help many more climbers, especially young ones, develop to their full potential. And let's not fool ourselves, if the BMC does not evolve with the sport, then some other body will fill the vacuum.

Tony Stock

### UNEQUAL TREATMENT

I was astounded to hear of the outcome of the recent EGM. Individual membership up by £2.50, unemployed and student individuals up by £2.75, family membership up by £5.50, student club affiliation up by £1.85 per member, yet what of club affiliation? No increase.

And all this carried on the club block vote! Now, I could almost accept this on the basis that members of clubs don't receive the same benefits as individuals, but then I see that these same people have voted themselves an upgrade to full membership for 40% less than everybody else pays. I'd be very keen to hear if any of the clubs representatives who voted for this disproportionate change can justify their actions, other than by "because we could". I wonder how many of their members support their representatives' vote? I am appalled.

Mike Swann

### CRAGS FOR ALL

I've been a climber for thirty years, and a teacher for many of those, and hold all the 'usual tickets' for someone in my position (ML, SPA, MIA training). In common with colleagues, I enjoy taking young people to the crags and introducing them with care, and consideration, to the delights of British cragging.

On a recent mid-week trip to the Roaches, five of my students were top roping The Sloth, when a climber arrived on the scene and commented, "I'm just wondering about the ethics of such a move". One of my students asked me what he meant, and I found it difficult to answer, since I firmly believe that youngsters who cannot yet lead should still be allowed a classic challenge.

It was pleasing to see one of my students 'cruise' the route after all this, and I have no doubt that this young man will eventually lead such a route. But I have been faced with this 'leading vs. top roping' attitude for several years now. The experience of simply attempting routes as demanding as The Sloth is a wonderful stimulus for youngsters, and yet I am often faced with sarcastic comments from other climbers who somehow see many climbs of VS and above as the preserve of the leader only.

I would like to add that we never 'hog' a route and I believe that one hour of use, for instance, could not be classed as such, especially on a quiet day. Some climbers would do well to remember that they were once beginners and give these young people a break. The world of rock climbing would be a better place if everyone appreciated and respected the needs of others, more especially with the growing numbers that we see in the outdoors.

Chris Davis



## World Cup @ Ratho

Yes. Not only is Ratho (the National Rock Climbing Centre for Scotland) finally open, but it's hosting the UIAA World Cup Final on the 4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> December. The World Cup will be the most prestigious climbing event ever held north of the border and is being supported by Event Scotland and sportscotland. Set to attract over 200 competitors from more than 20 nations, the World Cup is also being filmed for a 50-minute television broadcast by BBC Scotland. The men's Bouldering Finals are likely to be the highlight of the weekend for UK talent, with no fewer than three possible British finalists. Scotland's Malcolm Smith has recovered from injury and, being on home 'rock', will be highly motivated to re-establish himself on the World Cup podium. Andy Earl (pictured) and Mark Croxall have also shown the kind of form this year that could see either of them reach the finals.

And it's not just competitions either, lectures and films from a range of adventure sports will intersperse with the action and there will also be a variety of exhibitors and shops. A range of ticket options are available, for more information see [www.adventurescotland.com](http://www.adventurescotland.com).

**(TOP)** Andy Earl on The Crack, Bowden Doors, Northumberland. Andy could well make the World Cup final this year. Credit: Steve Crowe.



## Shame of the Clubs

So read the title of a very angry thread posted on the BMC Areas forum late in the evening after the BMC EGM. By the end of the weekend 60 posts were added, and a week later it had risen to nearly 300. The majority of the contributors were expressing surprise and despair at the EGM's outcome and deep concern about the sinister 'block vote'.

The EGM was called to agree subscriptions for 2004 following concerns raised by clubs at the AGM earlier in the year, and was the subject of much prior speculation. Were the "evil clubs" going to exploit the Individual Members, or could a last minute amendment from the ukclimbing gang save the day?

Well, it began easily enough with the President and Treasurer reassuring members that the BMC is set to record a healthy surplus in 2003, the first time since 1999, and that the BMC had received a favourable report from UK Sport following a detailed corporate governance audit in August. So far so good.

But then onto the tricky business of voting for the resolutions. Subscription increases were agreed for individual and student members, but held for club members at their present level. This last point is what caused the most heated exchanges of the day, with many of the Individuals present accusing the clubs of not financially supporting the BMC.

This argument does have some truth, although club members will only receive a single issue of Summit from next year, which will go some way to reducing overheads. Those keen to receive all four issues (go on, you know it makes sense), will be offered the club upgrade path to full membership, again at a discounted rate of £9.50. This again annoyed the Individual Members, and Dave Musgrove, former BMC President led calls for a fairer membership structure to be put forward at the next AGM.

Several Individual Members including Kate Cooper (a.k.a. gingerkate) and Alan

James (Rockfax) repeatedly presented the case for greater equality in the subscriptions. This received sympathy from some club representatives, but with fixed instructions from their members most were powerless to make any decisions on the day. But the question remains - has the block vote seen it's day? Well, a shellshocked BMC President Mark Vallance commented afterwards;

*"The EGM was tough. Yes, the BMC was set up by the clubs, but the Individual Members now outnumber Club Members. The clubs have made an enormous contribution to the BMC's work over the years, but the requirement of an EGM to use the block vote is now being questioned by many members. The BMC must strive to represent the whole of its membership. I don't know about 'the shame of the clubs' but we certainly need to implement a membership structure and voting procedure that are fit for the BMC in the 21st century. The current Future Policy Review process provides an ideal opportunity to consider what changes are needed, and I'd encourage everyone to make their views known."*

So there you have it. If you'd like to find out more about the BMC and its long-standing relationship with the clubs, turn to page 14 for our feature article. Meanwhile, Ken Wilson has some views (as always!) in Last Thoughts on page 62. And remember, the BMC forums on ukclimbing are open 24 hours a day to air your thoughts on any aspect of the organisation or work areas. It may be becoming a bit of a cliché, but getting involved really has never been easier.



## Alpine Adventures 2004

### Planning some Alpine action next season?

Let's face it - if you're thinking of heading to the European Alps, you'd better do it fast before the whole lot melts away. So get that cheap flight booked and come along to the BMC Alpine Lecture Series in partnership with Sprayway, taking place in March. Presented by UIAGM mountain guides Rich Cross and Al Powell, the lectures will cover the best areas to visit, the best times to go (about twenty years ago?), kit advice, safety, hazards and how to improve your skills. Plus a dollop of expert advice gained over years of experience. As both lecturers are exceptionally motivated and talented mountaineers you can also expect enough entertaining tales of alpine adventure and mis-behaviour to inspire even the most dedicated armchair mountaineer. So whether you're planning your first alpine season or head-

ing back to tackle something more ambitious, this should be your first stop for advice.

#### BMC ALPINE LECTURES 2004

**Bristol:** 9th March  
**Southampton:** 10th March  
**London:** 11th March  
**Sheffield:** 16th March  
**Liverpool:** 17th March  
**Newcastle:** 18th March

*All lectures start at 6.45pm. Advance ticket bookings from the BMC office in January, or purchase on the door. Prices: £4 members / £6 non-members. For advance group bookings, buy 10 tickets for £25 and each ticket thereafter £2.50. See website for full venue information.*

### SPRAYWAY BICC 2004

Dates and venues have just been announced for the Sprayway British Indoor Climbing Championships. This national series of leading competitions is always popular, and a great chance to see if you can qualify for the British team, or simply sit back and watch some of the best climbers in action.

**Round 1: Awesome Walls** 24th Jan  
**Round 2: Sunderland Wall** 21th Feb  
**Round 3: Ratho** 13th Mar

Entry forms are available now from the BMC office or website.

*Thanks to all the sponsors: Sprayway, Troll, Red Chili, Entre Prises, OTE, High, Bentley's Chartered Accountants, High Places & the Awesome Walls Climbing Centre.*

### On the Road

A quick round up of the lecturers who are whizzing up and down the country to keep us entertained this winter:

**Berghaus:** Three of the world's leading climbers, Thomas and Alexander Huber and Leo Houlding, will be teaming up next year to tour the UK. [www.berghaus.com](http://www.berghaus.com)

**Heason Events:** 30 multimedia presentations around the country, featuring Ian Parnell, Ben Heason, and Steve McClure. See page 43 to win tickets. [www.heason.net](http://www.heason.net)

**Rab:** Al Powell and Rich Cross present "Fear and Loathing", cutting edge mountain adventures in Nepal and Peru. The gnarly Peru adventure was featured in Summit 31. [www.alpine-guides.com](http://www.alpine-guides.com)

### North Wales Bolt Fund

The North Wales bolt fund is up and running, sponsored by DMM and the Beacon climbing wall. A drill and bolts will be held at the Beacon, so if you're keen to help out by replacing existing bolts on the Orme, then drop by and pick it up.

### Gorge Project Kicks Off

The BMC and Climbers' Club supported project to secure summertime access in Cheddar Gorge has started. Over thirty climbers turned up at the Bristol Wall on Sat 1st November to express their unanimous support for the project.

The idea was initiated by climber and Cheddar guidebook writer Martin Crocker who is now acting as co-ordinator on behalf of the BMC. A Working Group of local climbers (including 'veteran' Bristol climbers Steve Findlay and Matt Ward) has been set up oversee proceedings. The target crags for summertime access include Acid Rock, Sunnyside Terrace, Sunset Buttress and Brainbiter Wall. High Rock is also on the list although the car park presents an obvious issue. It is hoped that some new crags will be open on a trial basis next summer.

### Scottish Avalanches

This coming winter the MCoFS are running a series of one-day Avalanche Awareness courses based in the Cairngorms. Aimed at the general winter hill goer, the courses are non-certificated and will be suitable for anyone wishing to increase their knowledge of snow and avalanches, learn which areas to avoid and improve their understanding of reports and forecasts. Each course will consist of an indoor introduction to avalanche theory followed by a practical session on the hill. There are three courses; 3rd & 10th Jan, and 17th Feb. Price is £30pp. For more information phone 01738 638 227.

### £500 of Páramo for free!

Páramo is giving away £500 worth of its outdoor gear every month via a new website competition. Visitors to the newly updated Páramo website simply have to answer five questions about Páramo correctly and submit their entry for a chance to be one of the month's winners. You can enter every month, with no limit to the number of times you can win. So get online now and visit [www.paramo.co.uk](http://www.paramo.co.uk).

### South West Meeting

Following on from some very positive discussions about the future of the SW area, a meeting for interested parties is being arranged for early next year. Look out for details on the BMC website and at Bristol Wall.

### Ski Mountaineering

The UIAA-ISMC Ski Mountaineering World Championships are on the 2-6th March in Val d'Aran, Spain. If anyone is interested in competing for Britain, contact [graeme@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:graeme@thebmc.co.uk)

# latest news

## Conville Mountain Skills

Two one-day Jonathon Conville Trust Mountain Skills Workshops will be taking place in spring '04. The final dates and venues have yet to be confirmed, check BMC website for details.

## Test Pilots wanted

In September 2002 Haglöfs launched its pan-European "Test Pilot" Scheme. So successful has this been that there are now new test schemes taking place on different products each season. Outdoor enthusiasts are invited to apply to become part of the testing team, then 50 entrants are selected across Europe to test a garment over a given period of time. Each entrant completes a report which is then fed back to the design team in Sweden. The fourth scheme has just been launched together with Perseverance Mills for the Haglöfs LIM Down jacket, to apply just fill in the form at [www.testpilotswanted.com](http://www.testpilotswanted.com).

## Sheffield Area Photos

We're looking for photos for the new Sheffield Area guidebook. This covers Wharnccliffe to Burbage Valley (not Stanage!). If you've got any great shots then just get in touch with [niall@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:niall@thebmc.co.uk).

## Christmas Holidays

The BMC offices will be closed from 12.00 noon on Wednesday 24th December until 9.00am, Monday 5th January 2004. But don't worry, you can still take out travel insurance online during that time, and you will be fully covered.

## Competition Winners

Well done to all the winners in Summit 31, and thanks for entering. The response to the Flora of the Fells book giveaway was incredible, over 500 entries, but only the first 20 could grab a free copy. But strangely, the Boreal Boot competition received a much lazier response, despite being for a £135 pair of boots! Anyway, Claire Moulder from Reading walked away with them. Nice one Claire. So, there you have it, higher value competitions don't necessarily get flooded with replies - why not get entering the Extremities one on page 12?

## New Venue for NE

A new venue has been found for some of the NE Area Meetings; The Forester's Arms, Coatham Mundeville, GR NZ 287206.

## Jack Jackson Apologies

The general editor of 'The World's Great Adventure Treks', as featured in Summit 31, was incorrectly credited as James Jackson. His name is actually Jack Jackson, and he's a long-time BMC member, there was no getting away with it!



What's your view on Scottish winter climbing? Is the "Scottish Winter Ethic" part of your unconscious psyche? Do you walk to the bottom, climb upward on-sight, no rests, no top-roping, no bolts; on a line that has a 'winter' appearance? Or does your idea of the future of winter climbing involve the ascent of classic mountain rock climbs,

## Cold Ethics

### What's happening to Scottish winter climbing?

quality rock routes that rarely, if ever, become wintry. What about pegs and bolts? Is it OK to place pegs, or do you think that bolts now have a place on mountain crags to push technical standards to the limit? And how about headpoint ascents of routes such as The Tempest in Glen Coe or Logical Progression at Arrochar?

Whatever your views, have your say on what makes Scottish winter climbing special at the world's biggest indoor ice climbing venue. John MacKenzie, (McofS president / prolific new router) will be chairing the debate, with speakers including Chris Cartwright (traditional enthusiast), Scott Muir (traditional ethics / drytooling), and Kevin Howett (rock climber / conservationist). So turn up to the Ice Factor, Kinlochleven, 29<sup>th</sup> Dec at 8pm. And to tempt you further, there's a prize draw for all those taking part in the debate.

(LEFT) No question that this route is in condition, but that's not always the case. Credit: Al Powell.

## ManCom Summary

**For the 8th October.** Reports were given by the Area Committee representatives. The Treasurer summarised the financial situation and reported that the BMC is currently on target to end the year with a surplus of approximately £80K. It was confirmed that UK Sport had awarded the BMC the full grant for 2004-2005 but the award for competitions and performance had been phased out. It was reported that in the recent corporate governance and grant monitoring audit carried out by UK Sport the BMC had achieved the highest level of approval awarded by UK Sport, but that many issues still needed to be addressed. The Committee endorsed the Peak Area's wish to take over the management of Horse-shoe Quarry subject to detailed negotiations with the Peak National Park. A report was given on the main topics of discussion at the recent Mountaineering Co-ordination Group meeting held in Ireland. A

report on recent discussions of the Future Policy Review was given, and the draft Terms of Reference were circulated. It was reported that a temporary, part-time Youth Officer had been appointed to finalise the Child Protection Policy and procedures for running and managing youth events. Two new clubs were accepted for membership. The next Mancom meeting is on 6th December at Plas y Brenin.

## Summit Magazine in 2004

It's good and bad news for Summit. Good news first, issue 33 will be a bumper 80 pages long, full of all the usual, plus some great new features. This will be sent to all members. Now the bad news for all you club members, that's the only copy you'll be getting unless you take the very tempting upgrade offer (see flyer for details). So do consider upgrading and continuing to get Summit - how could you live without it?!

## Area Meetings Calendar 2003/4

Month	Area	Meeting Name	Date	Time	Venue	Notes
Dec	NE	Area Meeting	12th	7.30pm	Forester's Arms	
Jan	NE	Area Meeting	19th	7.30pm	Forester's Arms	
Feb	NE	Area Meeting	16th	7.30pm	Forester's Arms	
Mar	NE	Area Meeting	13th	7.30pm	Forester's Arms	



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## ALL BUFT UP

### Upland paths – best practice for a sustainable future?

The BMC acts as secretary to the British Upland Footpath Trust (BUFT) which in its hey day produced the landmark publication 'Mending Our Ways', giving needed best practice advice on upland footpath work and restoration. Recently, BUFT has been relatively quiet, but there is still strong support for it to have a major role in promoting best practice in upland footpath management.

As a result the BMC and partners are organising an event to look at how BUFT may promote such best practice in the future. A mini-symposium has been arranged for the 31 January 2004 at Plas y Brenin in Wales

to discuss the future of upland path work, and the role that BUFT can fulfil. The symposium is aimed at professionals in the field, but all those with an interest are welcome to attend. If you are interested in attending, or would like to suggest a future role for BUFT, please contact Graham Lynch at the BMC on 0161 438 3333 or [graham@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:graham@thebmc.co.uk)

(LEFT) Charlotte Manwaring mountain walking in Glencoe.  
Credit: Alex Messenger



### PEAK DISTRICT

#### Bamford

Concerns have been expressed over the increasing use of Bamford without calling to ask for permission, and in accessing the site via the wall/fence and not at the stile. Climbers should note the following access arrangements, which are posted on the Regional Access Database on the BMC web site.

*Bamford is open for climbing from 1 October to 15 April providing climbers seek permission from the moor keeper Chris Bush (Tel: 0114 2630892) or from Heath Taylor, Mappin Cottage, Moscar, Sheffield, S6 6GL, enclosing a stamp addressed envelope. Climbers should park in the upper lay-by and access the moorland by the official footpath (look out for a marker post and stile). Please do not block gateways or obstruct the road. No dogs please.*

#### Horseshoe Quarry

The BMC Management Committee agreed at their meeting in October to the principle of the Peak Area taking over management of Horseshoe Quarry in a partnership project with the Peak District National Park Authority.

#### Black Rocks

The crag clean up at Black Rocks, organised by BMC Access Rep. James Simpson, was a huge success. 13 people from the Derwent Mountaineering Club turned up and collected eight full bin liners of rubbish. If you are organising a crag clean up and want to promote it, then do let us know.

### REGIONAL ACCESS DATABASE

**Don't rely on guidebooks! For the latest access info check out the Regional Access Database (RAD) on [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)**

### SOUTH WEST

#### Church Hill Rocks & Goblin Coombe

"No Climbing" signs have mysteriously appeared at these two sites - the BMC is investigating

#### Cheddar Gorge

On November 1<sup>st</sup> a meeting was held to discuss proposals for increasing access to Cheddar Gorge during the summer months. Unfortunately Summit had to go to press before the meeting had taken place, but check out the BMC website for updates.

### SOUTH EAST

#### Bulls Hollow

Following on from the agreement at the Southern Sandstone open meeting in May Graham Adcock has now put together a plan to improve Bulls Hollows for climbing, by cutting back vegetation. The main players are hoping to complete the cutting work in November or December, but will be keen for help and support to help move/remove their cutting efforts. If you are interested in helping out, get in touch with Graham Adcock at [bullshollow@adcock.clara.net](mailto:bullshollow@adcock.clara.net)

#### Eridge Rocks

Following on from a site meeting in October between the BMC and Sussex Wildlife Trust who own the site, the BMC have agreed to raise the profile of our best practice information at the site. The Wildlife Trust is also going to undertake a review of the bryophytes on the site during the early spring. When the survey has been completed the Trust and the BMC will review the areas in which climbing is currently banned. Please make sure you climb with a long sling and take a carpet, or some such, to protect the rock.

### YORKSHIRE

#### Woodhouse Scar

The gem of Woodhouse Scar on the edge of Halifax can easily be overlooked, but for a quick evening's cragging or bouldering it is a great spot. Calderdale Council are looking to improve the site for community use, including climbing. The BMC and Calderdale MC met those involved from the council to discuss the thinning of trees at the base of the crag to allow more light and air onto the crag. The council are also going to remove some of the trees along the top of the crag to improve the view for local residents; this may affect some of the top belays. Those trees that are currently used for belays will not be removed in the short term.

A community group will be formed to help manage the site and it is likely that climbers will be asked to help remove some trees and vegetation from the rock face. Watch the BMC website for more info. If you are interested in getting involved contact [clare@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:clare@thebmc.co.uk)

#### Mytholm Steeps Quarry

Also in the Calderdale area, the council have been asked to notify climbers that Mytholm Steeps Quarry is structurally unsafe.

### WALES

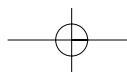
#### Worlds End

The owner of Worlds End has written to the BMC to ask that climbers refrain from bolting this crag. The owner is currently happy for climbing to take place, but does not want the natural feel of the area spoilt by bolting.

### WANTED:

#### BMC Access & Conservation Officer

The BMC are seeking a new Access & Conservation Officer to start early in the new year. If you are interested please email [lucy@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:lucy@thebmc.co.uk), we will send you a job description and further information as soon as it is available.



eVENT® Fabric wins European Outdoor Award for Innovation



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Martin Aguilar, Spokane, USA

"I don't know a better material... it's amazing how this fabric changes an outdoor activity! Whatever you do, eVENT® breathes for you."

Ralph van Gulick, Friedrichshafen, Germany

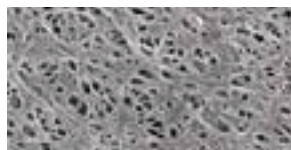
"I have worn and tested a huge number of fabrics in my time, but I have never worn anything as impressive as the new eVENT® fabric. It's instantly comfortable and was able to cope with the most demanding conditions and use. Congratulations Lowe Alpine, this fabric will be pretty hard to beat!"

Justin Hussey, Wiltshire, UK

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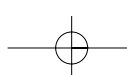
The eVENT® Fabrics membrane vents moisture vapor straight through



View all other comments at [www.lowealpine.com](http://www.lowealpine.com)

## Participating Dealers:

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Alfriston, Hike & Bike:	01323 871861	Carlisle, Freetime:	01228 598210	Kingston-upon-Thames, Cotswold Outdoor:	020 8549 9500	Oban, Outside Edge:	01631 566617
Ambleside, Field & Trek:	01539 434350	Chelmsford, Field & Trek:	01245 283999	Leamington Spa, Lockwoods:	01926 339388	Oldham, Paul Braithwaite Outdoor Sports:	0161 620 3900
Aviemore, Ellis Brigham:	01479 810175	Chester, Ellis Brigham:	01244 318311	Leyburn, The Walking Shop:	01969 625375	Oxford, Touchwood Sports:	01865 725220
Aviemore, Mountain Spirit:	01479 811788	Chester, Field & Trek:	01244 340666	Liverpool, Ellis Brigham:	0151 709 6912	Portree, Island Outdoors:	01478 611073
Bath, BCH Camping:	01225 460200	Cirencester, Cotswold Outdoor:	01285 860123	London, Cotswold Outdoor:	020 8743 2976	Reading, Cotswold Outdoor:	0118 987 5177
Belfast, Jackson Sports:	028 9023 8572	Croydon, Field & Trek:	020 8680 8798	London, Ellis Brigham:	020 7395 1010	Sheffield, Hitch & Hike:	01433 651013
Betws-Y-Coed, Cotswold Outdoor:	01690 710710	Dorchester, Great Western Camping:	01305 266800	London, Ellis Brigham:	020 7937 6889	Shrewsbury, SMC High Sports:	01743 231649
Betws-Y-Coed, Ultimate Outdoors:	01690 710555	Exeter, Taunton Leisure:	01392 410534	London, Field & Trek:	020 7224 0049	Skipton, George Fisher:	01756 794305
Bournemouth, Cotswold Outdoor:	01202 529123	Farnham, Breaking Free Ltd:	01252 724347	London, Field & Trek:	020 7379 3793	Slough, Field & Trek:	01753 554252
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Bristol, Ellis Brigham:	0117 974 1157	Glasgow, Naturebound:	0141 353 6737	Manchester, Cotswold Outdoor:	0161 236 4123	Stevenage, Countryside:	01438 353086
Bristol, Quip-U For Leisure:	0117 955 8054	Gloucester, Field & Trek:	01452 416549	Manchester, Ellis Brigham:	0161 834 7278	Stoke-On-Trent, Mountain Fever:	01782 266137
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BMC Insurance is available instantly online from [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk) or call the office on **0870 010 4878** for help in finding the right policy for you.

## WIN THESE MITTS...



## Extremities Mitt

£60

Terra Nova Equipment has re-launched the Extremities clothing accessory range for this winter, and has introduced a brand new, lightweight climbing mitt. The Lightweight Mountain Mitt is a modular, waterproof Gore-Tex mitt, suitable for expeditions and winter hiking. The mitt features gel finger and knuckle protection for comfort and flexibility, a fully taped shell of 3-layer Gore-Tex XCR Seon, and the palm of "High-Grip" synthetic leather. So put an end to numb hands and get hold of a pair before you fall off your snowboard this winter. The mitt retails at £60 and is available from all good outdoor shops, or see [www.terra-nova.co.uk](http://www.terra-nova.co.uk) for stockists.

### WIN ONE OF 10 PAIRS!

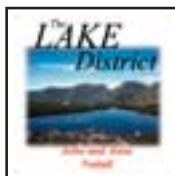
Summit has 10 pairs of these mitts to give away. Yep, that's right, 10 pairs, RRP £60. So what are you waiting for, just answer the following question:

**Q. What are the three Terra Nova Equipment brands?**

Answers on a postcard to the BMC Office or email [summit@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:summit@thebmc.co.uk). Winners will be published in Summit 33. Closing date is 10/01/04

## The Lake District CD

£15.99



The most comprehensive multimedia guide ever to the area, *The Lake District* has just been improved with bigger pictures, improved video and more panoramas. It contains a wealth of articles on the fells, lakes, tarns, villages, people and history, all hyperlinked together for easy exploration. And for planning those walks, over 120 routes are described, ranging from short explorations of the tarns to tougher mountain expeditions. For more details and to buy online see [www.nuttalls.com](http://www.nuttalls.com)

### WIN A FREE COPY

The first five correct summit readers to be pulled from our magic hat will win a free copy of the Lake District CD. Just answer this easy question:

**Q. What is the name of the other top on Sca Fell?**

Since this is, after all, a competition for a CD-ROM, please just email your answers to [summit@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:summit@thebmc.co.uk). Old fashioned postcards won't cut it here. Closing date is 10/01/04



## Uncovered Rock

£12.95 + p&p

Mike Robertson has a go at merging two great obsessions; women and climbing. Is he successful? Well, you'll just have to buy it and see, since we weren't brave enough to put a full picture in Summit. Could this be the ideal Christmas gift for the climber who has everything? See [www.uncovered-rock.com](http://www.uncovered-rock.com) for ordering, or email [calendar@uncovered-rock.com](mailto:calendar@uncovered-rock.com).

## Members Handbook

Free to members

No, we haven't forgotten to print it, the 2004 BMC Members Handbook will be included in your March Summit. Plus if all things go to plan this will be a bumper 80 page issue, actually looking like a normal magazine for a change. Maybe. The Members Handbook was introduced for the first time this year, and contains all the information you need about the BMC, Walls, Clubs, Course Providers, accommodation and more.



## Suunto S6

£300

Another desirable Christmas present from Suunto. The S6 has been redesigned for skiers, now coming in black with a black face and "techno blue" figures – designed for easy reading on the slopes. It comes with the usual ability to tell the time, plus compass, barometer, altimeter, ski chronometer, and a clinometer to measure slopes. So now you can say with certainty that "my watch tells me that this slope is too steep" and scuttle off back to the bar. The price for such a handy excuse is equally steep, but then again, it looks pretty good too. See [www.suunto.com](http://www.suunto.com) or phone 01294 316 306 for stockist information.

## Scottish Huts

£3.00

The "Directory of Scottish Mountaineering Huts and Other Accommodation" is now available. This little booklet does exactly what it says on the tin – i.e. provides details of club huts north of the border that are available to southern raiding parties (providing you're a member of course). Send a cheque payable to "MCofS" to The Mountaineering Council of Scotland, The Old Granary, West Mill Street, Perth, PH1 5QP, and they'll dig one out for you.

## CONDITIONAL LOVE

Not emigrating to New Zealand? Nevermind, take solace in accurate winter reports:

[www.sais.gov.uk](http://www.sais.gov.uk)

The SportScotland Avalanche Information Service. One site to definitely check.

[www.scotmountain.co.uk/weather.htm](http://www.scotmountain.co.uk/weather.htm)

Mountain Innovations have started up their winter conditions reports again. Register online for a conditions report email.

[www.ukclimbing.com](http://www.ukclimbing.com)

Check out the winter forums on ukclimbing for conditions, gossip, and the occasional slanging match.

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

Some detailed route reports, with photos.

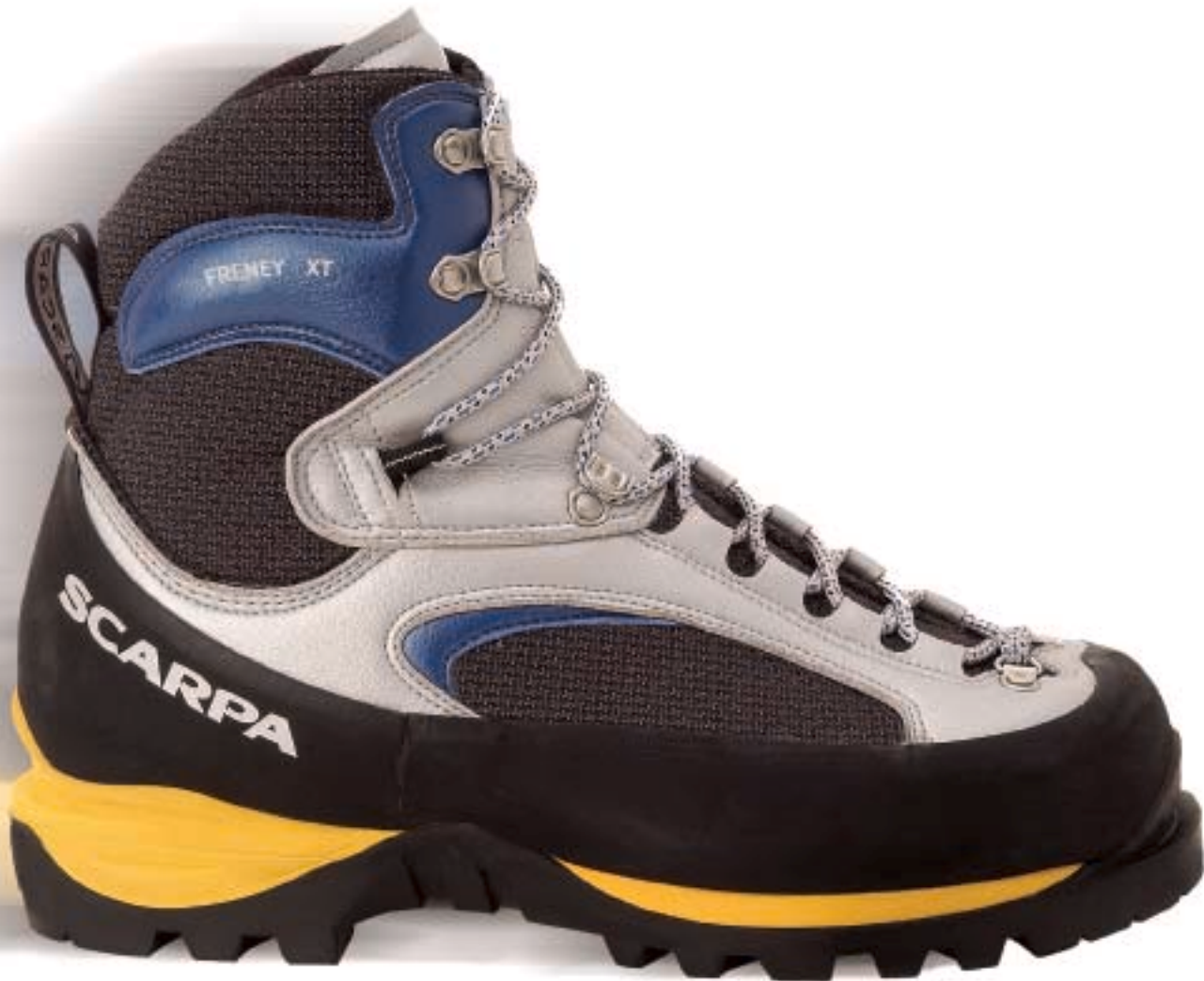
[www.crag-conditions.com](http://www.crag-conditions.com)

A new contender, based on the idea of people uploading current conditions pics. Will it last? We shall see.

[www.scotlandonline.com](http://www.scotlandonline.com)

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# clublife

**F**rom upper class beginnings over a century ago to a modern thriving network, the club scene is part of the fabric of climbing in Britain. But how did this come about, and what is the relevance of clubs today? Derek Walker takes a look at what Chris Bonington described as “The backbone of British mountaineering”.

## Golden Beginnings

The period between 1850 and 1865 was traditionally known as the Golden Age of alpinism, when wealthy English climbers with their local guides were making first ascents of many of the major Alpine peaks. It was during such an ascent of the Finsteraarhorn in the summer of 1857 that William Mathews broached the subject of forming a club with E.S. Kennedy, and just a few months later in December 1857 at Ashley’s Hotel in Covent Garden the Alpine Club (AC) was born.

There were initially twenty members, all dedicated alpinists and well to do members of 19<sup>th</sup> century upper class society. From the start it was a serious, exclusive and men only club, holding regular meetings to discuss papers on mountain exploration, and in 1863 the Alpine Journal appeared for the first time. During the early years the Club was the dominant force in the development of the sport, although from the 1860’s other countries formed clubs of their own. However, unlike the AC these were open

to all who had an interest in the mountains, became huge organisations with thousands of members, built mountain refuges (huts) for their members and were organised into local sections. As early as 1854 C.E. Mathews, an early member of the Alpine Club and later president (1878-81) began to visit the Pen y Gwryd Hotel in Snowdonia for winter climbing and later to take part in the new pastime of rock climbing. In 1870 he formed the “Society of Welsh Rabbits”, but by 1897 it was felt that a more formal structure was needed, so forty members of the Society met to discuss the formation of a new club at the Café Monico in London. Within a year The Climbers’ Club (CC) was born, with Mathews as the first President. Of the 200 founder members about one third were already members of the Alpine Club but there were still mild rebukes from some of the AC old guard who did not look upon rock climbing favourably: “Why is it to the Alpine Club Our C.E.M. no longer keeps? Why should he found – himself the hub, A Climbers’ Club for chimney sweeps?”

***“Climbing is a sport that from some mysterious causes appeals mainly to the cultivated intellect. ‘arry or ‘arriet would never climb a hill.”***

Like the Alpine Club, however, the CC was, or appeared to be, for the next half-century or more an elitist organisation, and indeed in his speech at the first Annual General Meeting, Mathews stressed: “Climbing is a sport that from some mysterious causes appeals mainly to the cultivated intellect. ‘arry or ‘arriet would never climb a hill.”

It would take two world wars to change these attitudes and little could Mathews



(MAIN) Members of the Alpine Climbing Group, 1967. Martin Boysen, Mike Kosterlitz and Mick Burke on the Dru glacier looking at the W. face of Pic sans Nom. Credit: Robert Keates /Baton Wicks archive.

have realised the dramatic changes in climbing and society in the next century! The CC even had a Harry as its president in the 1970s, although admittedly he was a barrister. Meanwhile, north of the border, the Scots had formed their own national club in 1889 - the Scottish Mountaineering Club (SMC), much along the same lines as the AC. In 1892 the first English regional club, the Yorkshire Ramblers' was established. A modest name perhaps, but its members were far from content with mere rambling. Its first president was Cecil Slingsby, a major

(LEFT) An SMC group c.1900. Credit: SMC Archive. (RIGHT) Graham Brown, Frank Smythe, Ivan Walker, & Jack Longland (members of the CC & AC) below Cloggy W. Buttress 1927, prior to making the ascent of Longlands Climb. They were waiting for the arrival of Piggott, Eversden and Morley Wood. The first ascent was made by a slimmed down party of Longland, Piggott, Moreley Wood, Smythe and Eversden. Credit: Baton Wicks archive.





Members of the Creagh Dhu outside Jacksonville in the early 1950s. The Creagh Dhu lads were from the Glasgow shipyards and had little in common with the traditional clubs. Credit: John Cunningham/Baton Wicks Archive.

British climber and formidable Norwegian pioneer, and his daughter Eleanor later married one of the most influential figures in the mountaineering world, Geoffrey Winthrop Young.

### Men Only?

Just after the turn of the century in 1902, the Manchester based Rucksack Club emerged. Like the other early clubs this was strongly men only, and had a lasting reputation for powerful climbers and outstanding fell walkers and runners. It was a Rucksack Club team led by Fred Pigott that made the first ascent of the East Buttress of Clogwyn Du'r Arddu in 1927, and in 1922 another of their stalwarts, Eustace Thomas, broke the Lakeland Fell Record at the age of 53, took up alpinism the following year and amazingly became the first Brit to climb all the Alpine 4000m peaks!

Both the Wayfarers' Club and the Fell & Rock Climbing Club were founded in 1906 but were very different clubs. The Liverpool based Wayfarers' has steadfastly maintained its men only tradition (but for how much longer?), and in the 1930s its membership included many of the cream of English climbing; Kirkus, Hicks, Hargreaves and Edwards, who all honed their skills at nearby Helsby crag.

In contrast was the Fell and Rock, a mixed club right from the start, even if there were only eight women out of 164 members in 1907. Its main objective was "to foster a love of mountaineering and the pastime of rock-climbing in the English Lake District". The Fell and Rock's first president was the

***"Gosh, wouldn't it be jolly to have a Women's Climbing Club with not a man in sight!"***

famous mountain photographer Ashley Abraham and unlike the traditional Oxbridge and London bias of the AC and CC, membership was mainly made up of local businessmen and professionals. Meanwhile the first real gritstone climber J.W. Puttrel had been active with the Kyndwr Club, an offshoot of the CC, which was incorporated into the new Derbyshire Pennine Club in 1906.

### Rise of the Women

Despite being encumbered by the severe Victorian dress and moral codes, there were a number of tough determined women like Lucy Walker and Katy Richardson who had played a part in some of the major Alpine ascents of the nineteenth century, but of course they were barred from membership of the early clubs. In 1907 the Ladies' Alpine Club was formed with Mrs Aubrey Le Blond as the first president, but the Club was for "Ladies" and some just saw it as a junior affiliate of the senior male organisation, so it was not until after the First World War in 1921 that the first truly national women's club, the Pinnacle Club, was born.

It could be said that the Pinnacle Club was spawned by the Fell & Rock and the Climbers' Club, for the two founding women were Emily (Pat) Kelly, wife of the great Fell & Rock climber H.M. Kelly, and Eleanor (Len) Winthrop Young, who had recently married Geoffrey, president of the CC from 1913-1920. The story goes that a group of women climbers ventured on to the Milestone Buttress and one said "Gosh, wouldn't it be jolly to have a Women's Climbing Club with not a man in sight!" Pat Kelly had found the Fell and Rock still far too male dominated and Geoffrey encouraged his wife and Pat to press on with the idea of starting a women only club. So virtually as soon as Winthrop Young relinquished the presidency of the CC, his wife Len became president of the newly formed Pinnacle Club in 1921. The Manchester Guardian greeted the arrival of the women's club with an encouraging editorial, while the Rucksack Club composed a little ditty;

*"In nineteen hundred and twenty one  
The Pinnacle Club was first begun  
We smiled - we even thought it fun  
To chaff the Pinnacle ladies"*

All polite fun, but who uses the word "chaff" nowadays? Sadly Pat Kelly was to die the following year in a fall on Tryfan, but to this day the Pinnacle Club remains solidly women only and has always been full of outstanding women climbers; Dorothy Pilley, Nea Morin, Gwen Moffat, Jill Lawrence, and Angela Soper. For many years the Club has participated in and organised the highly successful rendezvous meets with women climbers from overseas.

### Class Barriers

Alastair Borthwick wrote in 1930 that "fresh air was still the property of moneyed men, a luxury open to few....hiking was the hobby of an enthusiastic handful, and climbing was a rich man's sport". Things were soon to change, however, and by the early 1930s a new wave of working class climbers was beginning to emerge, partly helped by the youth hostel movement and also by the widespread unemployment of the time. New clubs such as the Sheffield Climbing Club began to explore the Gritstone crags and the Creagh Dhu lads from the Glasgow shipyards began to climb on the Cobbler and in Glencoe. The members of these new clubs had little in common with the more affluent members of the existing climbing clubs but this process of social change was to increase dramatically in the years after the Second World War.

Until the war the Alpine Club had assumed the role of representing the interests of all British mountaineers, but it was during the war that the British Mountaineering Council evolved, largely due to the vision of Geoffrey Winthrop Young. Young (1878-1958) was one of the leading rock-climbers, mountaineers and alpinists of his age, as well as being a distinguished educationalist, writer and communicator. He first raised the idea of a single organisation to represent all mountaineers in Britain as early as 1907, and then again immediately after the First World War in 1919 when he was president of the Climbers' Club and suggested an advisory body of British clubs. But this was short lived and it was not until the Second World War when he was president of the Alpine Club (1941-1943) that his vision became reality. In his valedictory address to the AC in December 1943 he persuaded the majority (but not all) of members that the AC was no longer the appropriate body to represent British mountaineers. His successor as AC president, Leo Amery - the distinguished politician the Rt. Hon. Leo Amery whose other job was Secretary of State for India - continued Young's cause and within a year the BMC was born.

The BMC initially consisted of 25 clubs of which the following 11 were entitled to nominate a member of the committee: Alpine Club, Alpine Ski Club, Climbers' Club, Fell & Rock-climbing Club, Ladies Alpine



Club, Midland Association of Mountaineers, Pinnacle Club, Rucksack Club, Scottish Mountaineering Club, Wayfarers' Club, and the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club.

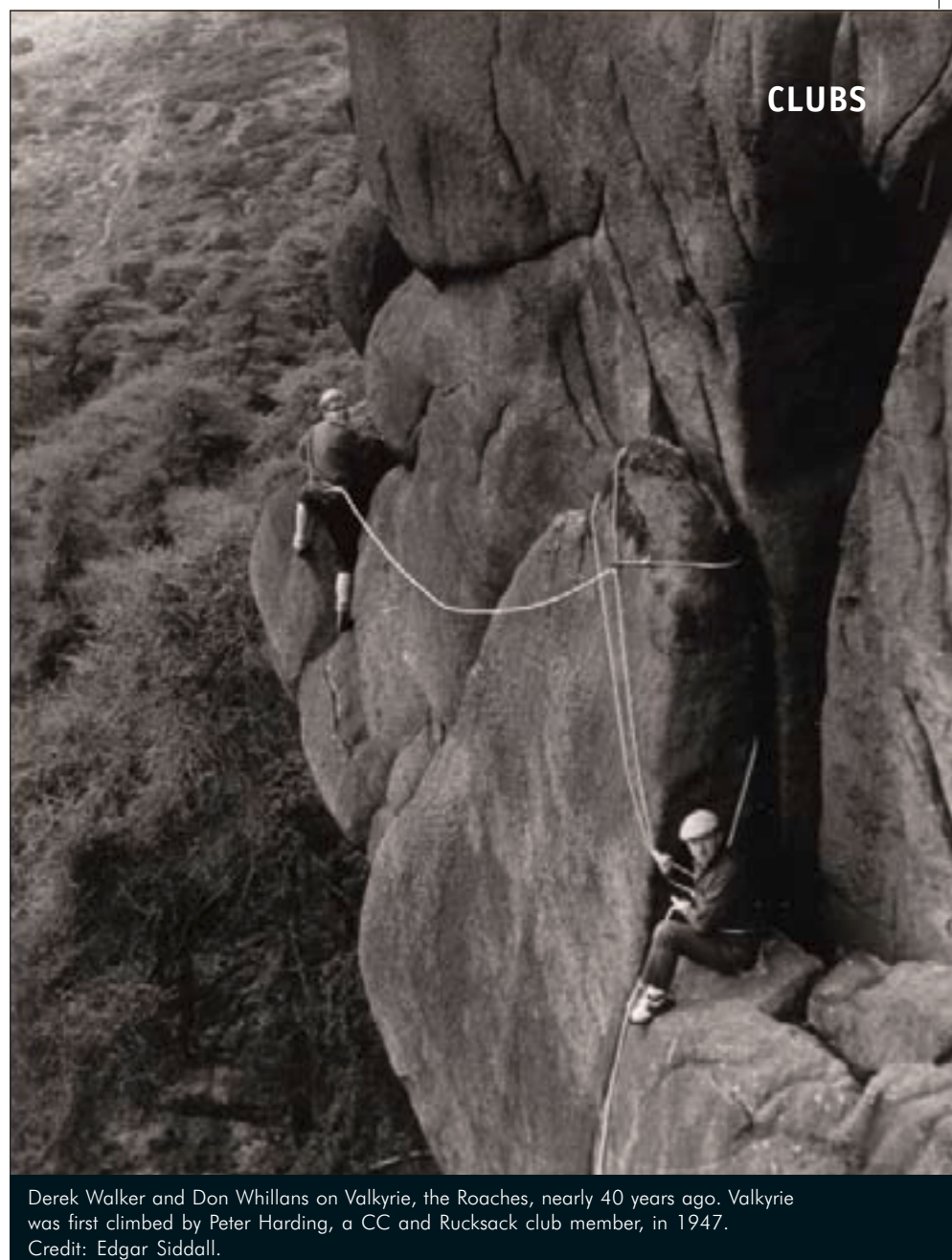
Young became the first BMC president (1945-47), and John Barford the first secretary. Within two years Barford had written a slim Pelican volume, "Climbing in Britain" which remarkably sold 125,000 copies, an impressive figure even by today's standards, reflecting the growing interest in climbing and the outdoors.

In the post war years the social revolution and this growth of interest were reflected in the number of new clubs formed, and the BMC had over 100 in membership by 1960. Among the most famous of the new arrivals was the Rock and Ice. This legendary club evolved from the Valkyrie club and became the dominant force in Peak and Welsh rock-climbing in the 50s with occasional raids to the Lake District and Scotland to pick the plum routes there too. But this was not a club in the previously "accepted" sense; no hut, no rules and no subscription. But that didn't matter when your club members included such stars as Joe Brown and Don Whillans, whose early routes were shrouded in myth and legend. The Creagh Dhu meanwhile kept up the Scottish end with a fierce reputation and impressive route tally, operating from their base at Jacksonville in Glencoe.

By the early 1950s the Alpine Club was beginning to feel the winds of change as a group of the leading young alpine activists, frustrated with the stuffiness, outdated rules and standards of the Club, formed a new organisation, the Alpine Climbing Group in 1953. This was a real landmark in the history of British climbing as it broke down the class barriers that had existed previously and included in its membership the best young alpinists, no matter what class or financial background they came from. For example, although most of the original members were from among the best university climbers, such as Nicol, Band, Chorley, Blackshaw, and McNaught-Davis, they also included 22 year-old Joe Brown and 19 year-old Don Whillans. Don was flabbergasted, not only to be asked to join, but also to be invited on to the first committee! And even more telling, there were also Women – like Gwen Moffat and Denise Evans.

### Huts

Starting from the 1920s some of the larger clubs had acquired huts for their members, a practice that has continued ever since and followed by many other clubs. Although the Rucksack Club had been the first to experiment with a hut in remote Cwm Eigiau in 1913, this did not survive the First World War, and the first and lasting hut in Britain is Helyg in the Ogwen valley. Described by George Borrow in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a "miserable hovel", the one room cottage was opened by the Climbers' Club in 1925. It was of vital importance in the development of Welsh climbing in that "Golden Era" between 1925 and 1939 as



Derek Walker and Don Whillans on Valkyrie, the Roaches, nearly 40 years ago. Valkyrie was first climbed by Peter Harding, a CC and Rucksack club member, in 1947. Credit: Edgar Siddall.

the base for a close knit group of climbers including Longland, Waller, Kirkus, Hicks, Hargreaves and Edwards. A few years later in 1930 the Wayfarers, having appreciated the success of Helyg, opened the first hut in the Lake District, the Robertson Lamb Hut in Langdale. And in 1937 the Fell & Rock followed suit with Brackenclouse, at a magnificent site at the head of Wasdale.

Now the Fell and Rock has five properties in the Lake District and two in Scotland available to its members. Apart from Helyg the CC has two huts in the Llanberis Pass, and other properties at Froggatt, Bosigran, Pembroke and Roy Bridge. According to the BMC Huts list there are now over 60 huts owned by Clubs and available to their members and bookable by BMC groups in England and Wales.

### Guidebooks

As well as providing accommodation, the "senior" clubs have provided an incalculable service to the climbing community by publishing the definitive guidebooks to most of the major climbing areas in the country. The exception was the Peak District, which has been covered for 40 years

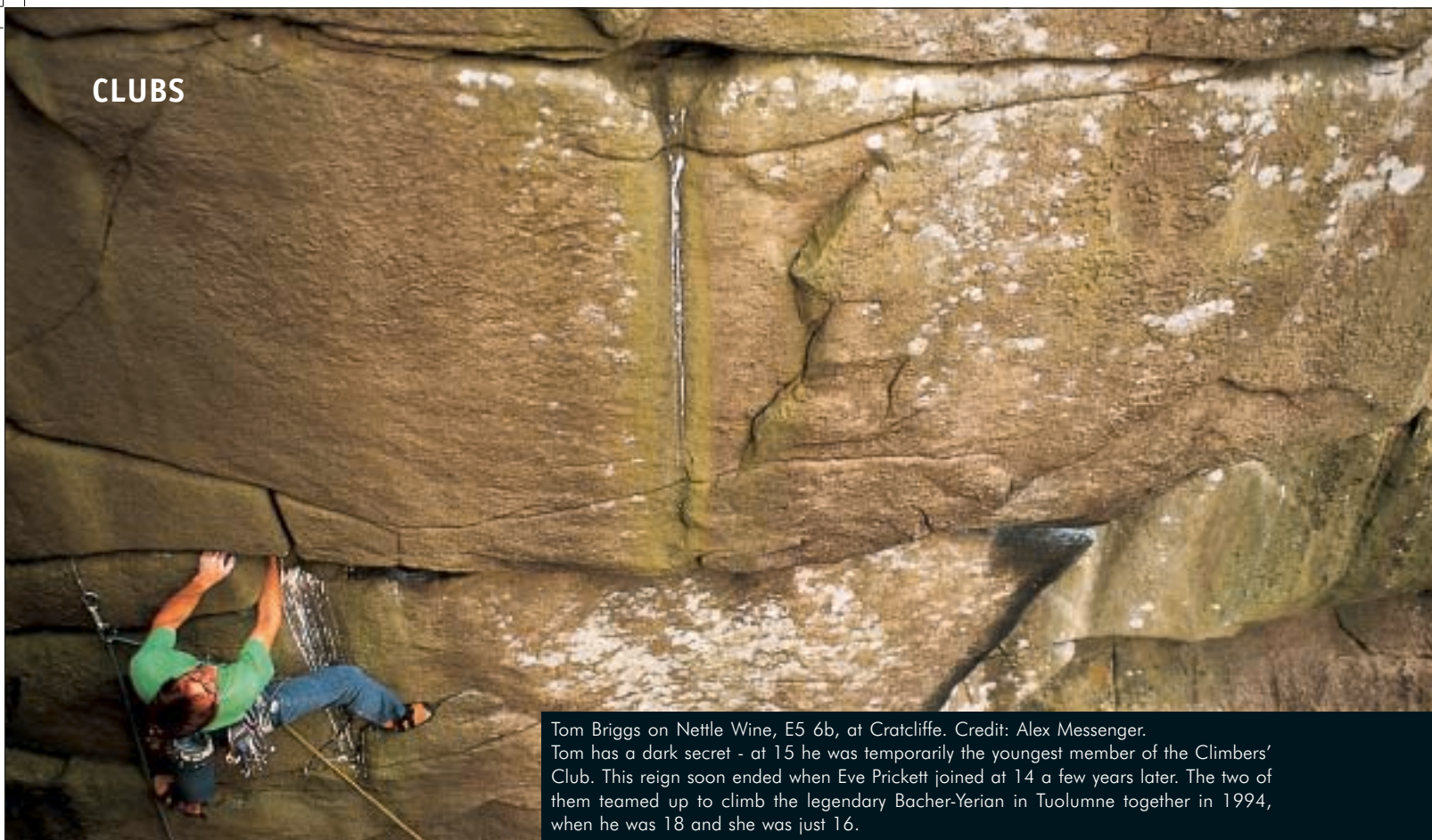
by the BMC Guidebook committee. Traditionally the Climbers' Club has carried out this work for Wales, the South West and South East while the Fell & Rock has covered the Lake District, and the Scottish Mountaineering Club has tackled Scotland.

The first CC guidebook was published in 1909. This was to Lliwedd, the most popular cliff at the time, and close to the Pen y Gwyrd and Pen y Pass hotels, the year after came "Climbing in the Ogwen Valley". Nearly 100 years later the Club is still carrying out this work and presently there are fourteen titles available, including the new Merionydd guide. The Fell & Rock began slightly later in 1922 but since that time its volunteer teams have produced a continuous series of guidebooks and at present there are seven available. Members of the Alpine Climbing Group and the Alpine Club weren't to be left out either, and began producing guidebooks to the Alps from 1957; currently there are eight in print, including the new Bernese Oberland guide.

### Recent Developments

In 1968 the founder clubs of the BMC lost their automatic committee places when a

## CLUBS



Tom Briggs on Nettle Wine, E5 6b, at Cratcliffe. Credit: Alex Messenger.  
Tom has a dark secret - at 15 he was temporarily the youngest member of the Climbers' Club. This reign soon ended when Eve Prickett joined at 14 a few years later. The two of them teamed up to climb the legendary Bacher-Yerian in Tuolumne together in 1994, when he was 18 and she was just 16.

new constitution introduced an area committee structure. Individual membership was introduced in 1974 but the growth of individual members was very slow and in 1989 there were only 5000 individuals compared with some 260 clubs with about 22,000 members, but this was set to change.

In the last 15 years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of individual members, especially after 1997 with the introduction of Summit magazine, and now at the end of 2003 the individual membership has reached 34,000 outnumbering the total club membership of some 30,000.

Yet there has also been a considerable growth in the number of clubs affiliated to the BMC. There are now 370 BMC Clubs, from Lands End to Carlisle, from Northumbria to East Grinstead. The vast majority are small informal groups which meet in the week at the local pub, have evening meets at the local crag or wall and get together at weekends. Nearly half of all clubs have less than 50 members and nearly another quarter less than 100. And despite some dire warnings that membership of the larger clubs would decline, most of them are growing steadily with the Alpine, Climbers' and Fell & Rock clubs all having about 1200 members.

People are joining the clubs at a much later age but they are continuing to climb for much longer - climbing has become a sport for life. When I joined the CC in 1960 in my early 20s straight from University, there was a much greater need to belong to a club than - for shared transport to the mountains, cheap hut accommodation, information, meeting like minded people and finding climbing partners. The Climbers' Club then had in its membership many of the best young rock climbers of the day, Banner and Bonington from the mid 50s, Crew, Ingle and Boysen in the early 60s, and the

Holliwells a few years later, so for many aspiring young climbers, this really was the place to be. But equally, a lot of climbers also gave up climbing early, particularly when the pressures of family life weighed against a then potentially very dangerous sport.

Nowadays most people joining the larger clubs are in their 30s or 40s, generally committed climbers who have been around a long time, and are often a member of another local club. The average age of new members to one major club is now 43 compared to the average age of 24 in the 1950s.

And over the last 30 to 40 years the major clubs have moved on and shed much of their former elitist image. Women were admitted into the Alpine Club in 1974 and into the CC the following year. Jancis Allison who had taken part in the Gogarth exploration of the early 60s and had made the first female lead of Vector became the first female president of the CC in 1990. Hilary Moffat was the first woman Fell and Rock president in 1986, the same year that Denise Evans took the job for the AC. The Rucksack Club finally began to admit women about ten years ago and now there are hardly any men only clubs left. There is also now little difficulty in joining one of the major clubs, although in most cases a simple formal application is required and clubs will usually look for commitment and a proven track record.

It has been from these older clubs, and especially from the Alpine and the Climbers' Club that the major office holders of the BMC have come. A glance at the BMC 50 year History will show that of the 22 BMC presidents to date, 17 have been members of the AC and 14 of the CC. Members of the other older clubs like the Rucksack Club and the Fell & Rock have also been prominent in filling many other senior posts. Most of those who have held positions within

the BMC will also have had a track record of service within their own clubs. They will have the confidence of their peers and are of a "known" calibre. The major clubs are proven institutions and part of the fabric of climbing society whether we like it or not. Their membership which often includes leading establishment figures and a pool of people with exceptional expertise in the law or environment, has helped to protect our "freedoms" over the years when other interests might otherwise have imposed rules and regulations on a dangerous sport like climbing.

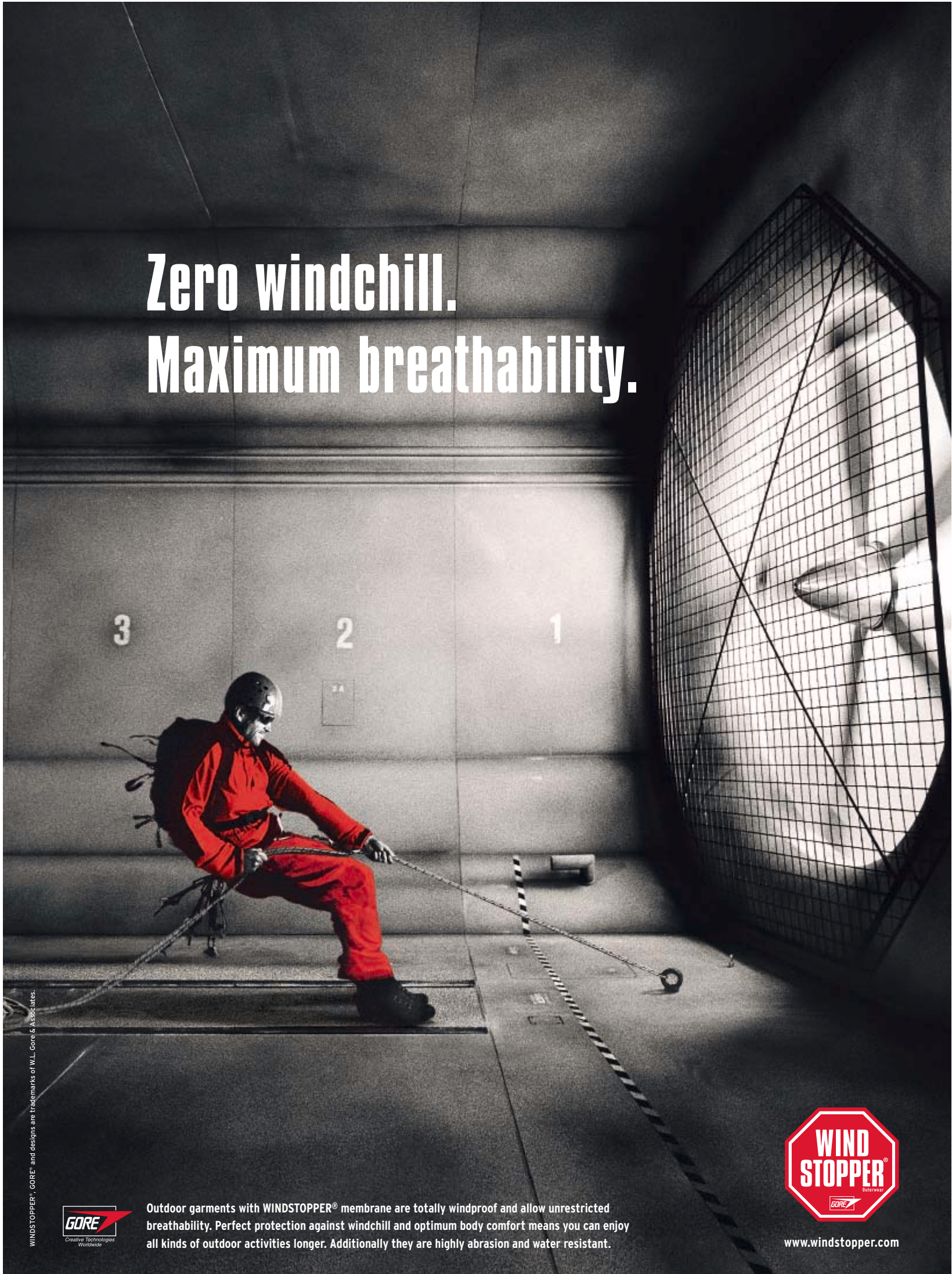
The question is whether this is a trend set to continue. With record levels of Individual Members and the web allowing easy and passionate discussions about all aspects of the BMC's work, there may come a time when the BMC president is not a member of any club. Disconcerting for some perhaps, but no more so than the idea mere decades ago that women might enjoy climbing too... II

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**Derek Walker** was BMC General Secretary from 1989-95 and President from 1999-2002. He joined The Climbers' Club in 1960, the Alpine Club in 1964 and the Fell & Rock in 1986. In earlier life he was a member of the University of Bristol M.C. from 1957-60 and also RAFMA, and later from the mid '70s to mid '80s was a member of the Wayfarers'. He is still a very active climber.

**Note:** This article was written before the contentious club subs issue arose, and was never intended to be piece of "pro-club propaganda", but a historical overview of how British climbing has evolved.

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## NATURAL LINES

**Breaking out of the circular rut with linear walks using public transport. By Jon Sparks.**

What's the finest ridge-walk in the Lake District? It depends what you like, but if you want to stride out for hours, staying as high as possible, then there's no question: it's the Dodds and Helvellyn. This great ridge keeps you above 750 metres for over 10 kilometres. Most of the walking is easy, the views are fabulous, and peak-baggers will appreciate the tally of eight summits. So why doesn't it appear in every guidebook and classics list?

It can only be because, oh dear, it's a linear walk. But hang on, the A591 runs along the base of the ridge for most of its length, doesn't it? And isn't there a bus service? In fact, this particular route (555) is the backbone of the Lakeland bus network, with services roughly hourly throughout the year: disembark at Bridgend and begin with Great Dodd, taking a look at Castle Rock of Triermain on the way.

Routes like this are one of the best reasons for using public transport. There are lots more: I'm sure every reader is familiar with the economic and social arguments. But dwelling solely on these makes it all too easy to feel that using public transport is something we *ought* to do - or, all too often, something that other people ought to do - as if it necessarily involves hardship and sacrifice. My point is that people who don't use public transport are missing out. Buses, trains - and boats too, in the Lake District - offer us a different, and frequently better, walking experience.

Yes, you can use public transport to access many of the classic 'circular' walks. You'll feel virtuous - smug, too, when the car parks are overflowing - but this is only the beginning of what you can do with public transport. Unfortunately, most guidebooks give sketchy details, at best. Many barely acknowledge that it exists. And the vast majority are locked into the circular walking mindset, where every route must start and finish at a car-park.

Hence *Car-Free Cumbria*, which began as one book and evolved into two slim volumes, *North* and *South*, offering 30 one-day walks plus a five-day expedition right across Lakeland, all of them linear. I could have described any number of circular walks, too, all easily accessible by public transport, but they were already in loads of other books, even if many neglected to tell you how to get there.

As I studied timetables and maps, I realised afresh how easy it was. There were just so many possibilities in most parts of the district. Admittedly there were very sketchy services to some of the western valleys - the Duddon, Wasdale and Ennerdale - but it was a different story elsewhere. A number of seasonal services targeted specifically at walkers helped bring places like Buttermere and even Haweswater in reach. But the majority of the walks relied on regular, year-round services. Of the 31 walks, 21 were possible year-round and 17 were possible seven days of the week throughout the year.

There was a special quality to the walks, too. Beginning the day with a ride on the Ratty railway or a wooden launch was always a treat. But even when the transport was a regular, workaday bus, the walks felt *different*. Setting out to walk from A to B adds a particular flavour: these walks were more like journeys. As I wrote in the Introduction, 'there is nothing particularly natural about walking in circles. We are all descended from nomads, and walks that go from place to place appeal to something deep within us.'



“...we are all descended from nomads, and walks that go from place to place appeal to something deep within us.”

If that sounds a bit mystical, consider this. If your idea of a comfortable day's walking is, say, twenty kilometres, then a circular walk is unlikely ever to take you more than seven or eight kilometres from where you started. Go linear and you at least double this range.

Most circular walks are rounds of a single valley, or take you up and down the same side of the same hill or group of hills. Go linear and for the same effort you can traverse a major ridge, cross a few passes, go from one valley to another. You can even start on the edge of the district and walk in to its heart. And if you want things easy, catch a bus to the top of Honister or Kirkstone Pass or Dunmail Raise and do a walk with more down than up.

The Helvellyn traverse is one of the great year-round classics. Another possibility based on the same key 555 bus is the walk from Keswick to Ambleside over Ullscarf, High Raise, and half a dozen lower tops. Despite its lower altitude, this is a much tougher proposition than the Helvellyn route, but there are plenty of places to bale out - yet another advantage of not having to get back to your car. This walk could be at its best in winter, but only if the bogs of High Tove and High Seat are frozen. (See *High* 232, March 2002, for a summer description.)

The 555 also opens up a traverse of Skiddaw. To my mind this is simply the best way to do the mountain: up by the elegant Ullock Pike ridge, down by the 'Pony Track',

with its fabulous views out over most of Lakeland. Save the empty spaces 'Back o'Skiddaw' for a separate journey, from Mungrisedale to Bassenthwaite. (But if you want to do it in winter, you'll have to go on a Saturday.) I didn't put this one in the books but it's a mouth-watering prospect, and there are lots more like it.

It's not all about peak-bagging, either. Borrowdale is a natural for linear walks, high or low, and has a great bus service. The southern part of the district is particularly rich in routes over the lower fells. These come into their own when clouds blanket the higher tops, but should not be underestimated: the walking can still be rough and challenging. A personal favourite journey from Coniston to Dungeon Ghyll via Yewdale Fells, Greenburn, and Blea Tarn. There's no big-name summit, just the marvellous unsung viewpoint of Hawk Rigg, but the whole walk is fascinating. Perspectives change all the time, in a way that high ridge-walks rarely manage.

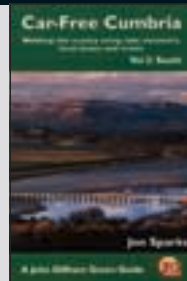
Another gem explores the moorland and forest east of Coniston Water. This is definitely at its best on a clear day: the views over Coniston Water to Dow Crag and the Old Man are unbeatable. Not to mention that the route is virtually trackless in parts. You'll see few, if any, other walkers for most of the way.

This is just one more plus point for the linear approach. Breaking out of the circular rut can take you away from the less liberated crowds. Of course it would be a thor-

oughly good thing if more people discovered the advantages of using public transport. But then some of these quiet corners wouldn't be so quiet any more. I guess you can't have everything. II

### Exclusive Readers Offer

If this has whetted your appetite for some linear walking, then get hold of these two great volumes; *Car Free Cumbria North*, and *South*.



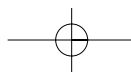
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(LEFT) Borrowdale, looking south from Castle Crag. (ABOVE) Helvellyn and the Dodds - walkers on Nethermost Pike. Both: Jon Sparks.



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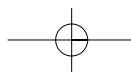
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# TOOLED UP

GET THE EDGE THIS WINTER BY RICH CROSS



Scotland's winter mountains can be as challenging and uncompromising as any other mountain landscape in the world. Gale force winds, zero visibility and numbing cold are an integral part of the average Scottish day, and then there's the climbing - deep powder, rotten ice, soggy turf - why do we bother?

A good question, and often, if you have travelled from London for the privilege you won't bother again. Now and again though, if you're in the right place at the right time, atop the summit plateau of Ben Bhan, alone at the end of a perfect day with the sun sinking behind the distant Cuillin of Skye, there's nowhere quite like it. As with all mountain activities, experience is the key to operating comfortably and efficiently, however, some common sense hints and tips can go a long way towards making life easier.

## WHEN AND WHERE TO GO

It used to be the case that only the wise and experienced predicted the weather and conditions accurately for a successful trip to the icy wastelands. Nowadays we have a

wealth of information at our fingertips, and although it's taken much of the mystery from the sport, we would be fools to ignore it in the name of tradition (that tradition being to waste countless weekends driving for ten hours only to go hill walking in the rain!). The web can give us accurate weather information, avalanche reports, and even which areas/routes are in good condition. Remember though that Scotland can be fickle, and things can change rapidly overnight. It's often a good idea to stay flexible in your choice of venue, deciding where to go at the very last minute if possible. This is where the art of interpretation is still useful and can turn a borderline weekend into a brilliant trip. For some useful hints on interpreting weather and conditions refer to the intro section of the excellent compilation guide book, 'Scotland's Winter Climbs' (SMC) or Martin Moran's 'Scottish Winter Mountains'.

## CLOTHING SYSTEMS

Clothing for Scotland needs to be incredibly versatile and most importantly, warm when wet. I think on the worst Scottish days there isn't a chance of staying dry, even with the best waterproofs known to man, so great attention needs paying to the insulating layers of your clothing system. Fleece and fibre pile are the traditional layers and are hard to beat, modern windproof fleece with fancy membranes just takes ages to dry and doesn't provide as much insulation. Interestingly, many Scottish Mountain Guides use Nikwax Paramo products. The fast drying/fast wicking properties are ideal for the Scottish climate, and this is the kind of ethos you should be aware of when choosing your layering system. One of the best luxury items you can take on the hill is a belay jacket. Many manufacturers make this type of jacket, which is basically a duvet jacket with synthetic insulation and a large hood that fits over a helmet. Used on long cold belay stints it makes life tolerable, and is ideal for emergency use also. Gloves are another item that need careful thought. I always carry at least two pairs and some spare mittens. Fingers really suffer in the cold moist Scottish hills, despite trips to Patagonia in winter, the worst hot aches I've ever had have been in Scotland!

Boots are perhaps your single most important piece of personal equipment. Leathers have gained great popularity over the last few years and can be great on mixed routes, especially on the East where the climate tends to be dryer. If I'm climbing on the Ben however plastics are always the first choice to deal with the bogs, streams and

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long days of ice bashing, where they are far more supportive and waterproof.

### OTHER GEAR

Winter climbing can demand a whole new set of kit to deal with the very specific conditions you will encounter. Dry treated ropes are essential to prevent them from freezing up like wire cables, and 60 metre double or twin ropes give you the edge when tackling long ice routes on the Ben or Creag Meagaidh. They give extra reach to find the best rock or ice for placing a belay, and allow you to climb faster through longer pitches. A nappy style harness such as the Black Diamond Bod is convenient for putting on whilst wearing crampons, or while stood on steep ground (you shouldn't be!). They are also great for answering those calls of nature whilst half way up point five gully...

Ice tools are a personal preference but bear in mind they will probably see as much contact with rock as ice in the average season, so make sure you have mixed picks fitted, which tend to be more durable than the slimmer icefall picks. I always wear a full spec helmet in Scotland, not a flimsy polystyrene affair that will crumple if you get clobbered by a chunk of falling ice. It also gives you somewhere to store your goggles to stop them getting squashed, inside the cradle of the helmet! On uneven ground and especially on descents, walking poles can be useful and really save your knees. Black Diamond poles with the flick lock system can be shortened with a hacksaw so that they fit in your sack easily whilst climbing instead of wrapping themselves around slings and ropes at every opportunity.

### NAVIGATING

Navigation is crucial in the Scottish mountains and is one place where the average climber can come unstuck. The key is planning and practice, practice hones the skills and planning allows you to utilise them efficiently under the worst conditions. Before even leaving the car have a clear idea of how to get to the cliff, and more importantly how to get down again. Having a few notes inside your map case, with crucial compass bearings, distances and pacing/timings for each navigation leg is a good idea. This means that when you pull over that cornice onto the white hell of the plateau, you can get straight on with the job, this is no place to be refolding your map! I always take two maps on the hill, one being a laminated A5 cut-out of the area with standard approach/descent bearings and distances etc written on the back. This easily fits into any pocket and is totally weatherproof. The other one is kept as a backup. Its handy to have a compass that can be attached to you in some way, and

**(LEFT)** Rich Cross practicing what he preaches on the first ascent of Thor (V,6) at Beinn a Dothaidh, Bridge of Orchy. **(RIGHT)** Kenton Cool on White Magic (VII, 7) at Coire an Sneachda. Both credit: Al Powell.



# GET THE EDGE THIS WINTER

with pacing beads on the attaching cord for those tricky short nav. legs. Your watch should also be accessible, maybe on your rucksack shoulder strap instead of your wrist, as you may need to use it intensively for timing. It goes without saying that each person in the team needs their own navigation equipment in case you are split up, and remember, GPS is a useful supplement to your skills not a replacement.

## APPROACH

When you are approaching a cliff take every opportunity to check out the general topography and your descent route, as you never know when the mists may roll in. Make a mental note of obvious landmarks to help with your descent and walk back to the road. This kind of attention to detail can really aid your navigation and has saved lives.

On the approach it's always better to stop sooner rather than later to put on crampons and harnesses etc. Anyone who has tried to gear up on a 40-degree slope can tell you this. Pick somewhere with shelter from the wind, put on any extra climbing layers, then tackle all the fiddly jobs like putting on harnesses etc whilst fingers are still warm from the walk. Try and do all your jobs in one stop to save precious time, which also means you have fewer opportunities to get cold.

## PROTECTION

Finding good protection in winter can be a real black art. On ice you are dealing with an incredibly variable and at times unreliable medium, and experience is the only way to judge the quality of an ice anchor. On rock you are often up against frozen mud, ice choked cracks and frozen in spikes, and inventiveness is a great ally. The average winter rack is badly abused, as nuts often get hammered into icy cracks until the wires fray, so it's a good idea to have a dedicated set of wires and hexes. Old style hexes are great if you drill them to reduce the weight, and this also helps them to bite in icy placements. Thread them with 5.5mm dynema cord, so the knot can be

tied inside the body of the hex to keep them neat, and this is also less likely to be chopped if tapped with an ice tool. Cams are of limited use in winter unless the rock is very dry, as they don't bite on ice. Pegs are great when cracks are very icy and nuts don't seat properly, they can be threaded with short loops of 4mm cord to make racking onto 'biners and selection much easier. Ice hooks are a revelation for Scottish mixed climbing as they are incredibly versatile, they can be hammered into mud banks, tapped into grass filled cracks or slotted into very icy nut placements. As part of the winter rack they go places where nuts and pegs just wont do.

## LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

As in the Alps or greater ranges, climb cool and belay warm. If you overheat too much whilst climbing you dehydrate and lose performance, and also your clothing becomes soaked and loses insulating power. An ideal solution to this is carrying a synthetic duvet jacket to pull on at belays. Also remember to look after your hands, as they will cool rapidly as soon as you stop. If you carry mittens the put them on at belays and put your gloves down the front of your jacket to stop them from freezing up.

This requires discipline when you're knackered but will improve the quality of your experience by keeping you more comfortable. Remembering to eat and drink is sometimes difficult, especially if the weather is bad, but is crucial to your performance and comfort. Warm drinks such as blackcurrant juice are always more palatable than water and a good lightweight flask can be made by wrapping a nalgene bottle in Karrimat and duct tape. This will keep fluids warm for four or five hours without the weight of a large flask.

## CLIMBING TECHNIQUE

Climbing with crampons and ice tools requires skill and judgement, especially when you need to start really pulling on your tools on steeper terrain. Stupidity and blind faith can be short-term assets, (it's often

been said that to be a good ice climber you need your brains removed) but ultimately will leave you in big trouble. Climbing in crampons requires a great deal of poise, which isn't easy with spindrift crashing on your head and the rope snaking down through mediocre protection. Moving your feet around on ice or rock edges can easily dispatch your front points, and you with them, so precise careful movement is required. Similarly tools need to be weighted evenly and statically to prevent ripping in marginal placements. A test pull from the shoulder gives a good idea about the placement, and if it rips then at least your other tool isn't shock loaded...One of the great things about Scottish climbing is the way it makes demands on your entire body for progress. Watch a good winter climber on mixed ground and they will use knees, hips, elbows and shoulders etc in a remarkably controlled and graceful way.

Climbing leashless has really taken off on the continental icefalls and even been taken to the big mountains. In Scotland I think the disadvantages outweigh the advantages for most climbers, when you consider trying to grip hard with bulky insensitive gloves. For hard mixed climbing it may be worth exploring, only remember not to chop and change too much, as sooner or later you will drop a tool and it won't be on a leash! Establish a good communication system with you partner as often you will be out of sight and if the weather is bad, certainly out of earshot.

## AND FINALLY..

I'll stop now, since there's only so much you can learn from reading an article. So it's fingers crossed for a white Christmas, but if you're unsure about your abilities, consider going on a winter skills course - it could be a very wise investment. ||

**Rich Cross** is an IFMGA Guide, and runs Alpine Guides International, along with Twid Turner, Al Powell, and Jon Morgan. For private guiding and expeditions, and lectures see [www.alpine-guides.com](http://www.alpine-guides.com)



The end of the day - dusk from Buchaille Etive Mor. Credit: Al Powell.



# WHITE WAY

STAYING ON TRACK BY ANDREW BATEMAN

Winter navigation can be tricky business. Familiar features masked by snow, hidden dangers, and short days make it essential to get it right first time. Stack the odds in your favour.

## ROUTE PLANNING

The key to a good day out starts with the planning, and in winter you might have to opt for less ambitious objectives than normal. Shorter days, difficult conditions, wearing crampons and carrying a heavier pack will all slow the pace. In addition you may take a less direct route to swing by more obvious way-marking points and avoid danger areas. When planning, take care to avoid hazards, and other more subtle traps. Boul-

der fields for example are best avoided. A thin covering of snow on large boulders can make things tricky, whilst deep snow can see you falling into voids between the boulders - time consuming, energy sapping, and demoralising.

Plan regular short breaks to keep alert and well nourished with food and drink, 80 minutes of walking followed by a 10 minute break works well. A stop of this length is quickly used up adjusting clothing, eating etc, but any more and you will start to chill. If you do get cold whilst walking, do something about it, don't just assume that the next ascent will warm you up. Coldness can all too quickly seep into the most important navigational tool of all, your mind, and cause a serious navigational error.

## THE MAP

Well, you need a map, but what scale is it to be? A 1:50,000 map is usually best. This has twice as many grid northings as a 1:25 000, thus making it much easier to find an appropriately positioned grid northing when taking a bearing. The wealth of terrain information (e.g. loose rock, outcrops) on some 1:25,000 scale maps also obscures the contours. In winter this extra information is often irrelevant anyway as it's all buried. There is also some simplification of the contour lines on the 1:50,000 scale. Again this lack of fine detail acts in favour, filtering out minor features whose presence is likely to be obliterated by snow. The map should be easily accessible, instantly usable and weatherproof - an ideal solution is a 1:50,000 map and an A5 sized map case. This is manageable in high winds, small enough to fit into a jacket pocket, yet an adequate area is displayed.

## THE COMPASS

Look for a compass that has an adequately sized transparent base plate (10cm plus in length), a magnifying glass for examining contour detail, and romer scales to help minimise mental arithmetic. Remember that a compass can be very sensitive to interference, either in storage or out on the hill. Live wires, ice axes & trekking poles, cameras, mobile phones, and even under-wired bras can all affect the needle.

## OTHER EQUIPMENT

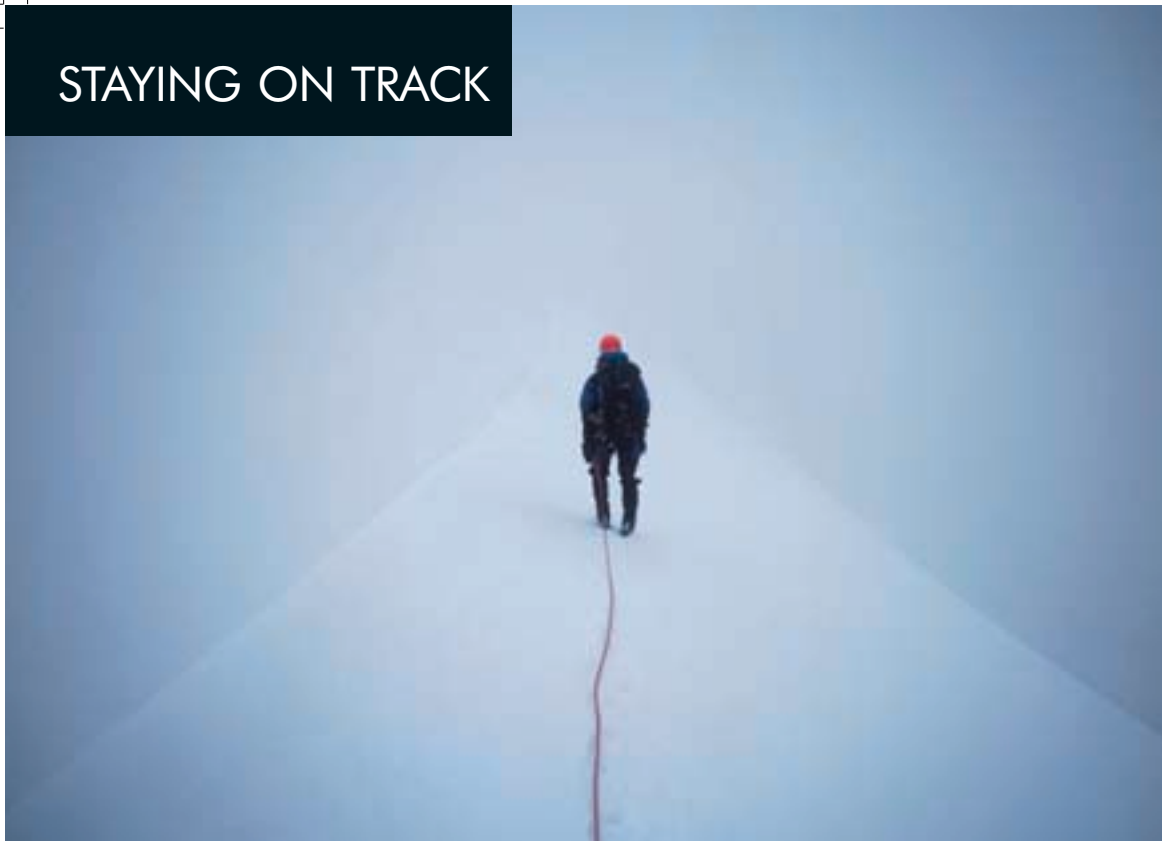
The key thing is to make things as easy as possible for when you're on the hill. Invest in a decent pair of ski goggles, without them winter navigation can be purgatory. Use a halogen bulb in your head-torch to give yourself white light, as the yellower light produced by standard bulbs causes the orange contour lines to "disappear".

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**(LEFT)** In bad weather don't be tempted to put the map away, it's even more important to keep track of your location.

Credit: Martin Hartley

## STAYING ON TRACK



### MENTAL ARITHMETIC

You'll have more on your mind than maths, so keep mental arithmetic to an absolute minimum. There are three ways of doing this:

- Use the romer scales (the scales on the side of your compass).
- Use some method to count paces. It's surprisingly difficult to keep count when counting large numbers -and easy to forget when you're interrupted. A hand held tally counter solves this problem.
- Use a time-pace matrix with pre-calculated times and double pace figures.

### THE NAVIGATION

If you abide by the principle of "a compass should be left at the bottom of your sack and only be brought out in an emergency", then you are guaranteeing an emergency! But you shouldn't rely solely on your compass for determining direction whilst ignoring terrain features, the hallmark of a good navigator is knowing when the use of a compass is necessary. Good navigation requires understanding and monitoring the five elements of mountain terrain; gradient, slope aspect, features, distance and direction.

The first two elements are represented solely by the contour lines. Symbols represent a few major features but again the majority are denoted by the contour lines: cols, ridges, valleys, corries, knolls, etc. Once you can identify different gradients, slope aspects, and features from the map and relate them to the ground you can then move on to establishing distance and direction. To back up the map work there are compass techniques to confirm direction and timing, and pacing to confirm distance.

Learn to recognise and identify as many localised contour features as possible such as sudden changes in gradient, knolls, spurs, bays, etc. The more of these you can identify, the more waypoints you have and hence the shorter your navigational legs can be. Make sure you catch features to their full advantage, and play it safe by making use of

Which way now?. Credit: Martin Hartley.

attack points, collection features and aiming off where appropriate. This is all part of minimising the effects of error, a 10% error in distance or direction over 500m is a quarter of that over 2km, so aim to keep your legs to below 1km.

Be wary about navigating to water features in winter. Stream channels are often completely filled in with snow, leaving no surface indication of their presence. Shallow lakes can freeze solid, become loaded by snowdrifts, and all trace of them is hidden, and the shallow margins of deeper water can behave similarly.

### TIMING

With the difficulties associated in achieving accurate timing and pacing in winter it's well worthwhile comparing the various times/pacing values to gauge your accuracy. For example, the distance of the leg is 800m and you estimate you will be walking at a speed of 4kph. This will give you a time of 12 minutes. On completing 11min 15 sec walking you find that the lie of the land is indicating you have reached your waypoint. A quick reference to the 'crib chart' shows you that 11 min 15 sec lies between your estimated time and 10 mins 40 sec, a time derived from the slightly quicker speed of 4.5kph i.e. confirming you're pretty much on target.

SPEED (km/h)	DISTANCE (m)										TIMINGS (mins:secs) -										
	1000	975	950	925	900	875	850	825	800	775	1000	975	950	925	900	875	850	825	800	775	
5	12	11:40	11:20	11:10	10:50	10:30	10:10	9:50	9:40	9:20	4.5	13:20	13	12:40	12:20	12	11:40	11:20	11	10:40	10:20
4	15	14:40	14:15	13:50	13:30	13:10	12:45	12:20	12	11:40	4	15	14:40	14:15	13:50	13:30	13:10	12:45	12:20	12	11:40
3.5	17:10	16:40	16:15	15:50	15:20	15	14:30	14:10	13:40	13:15	3	20	19:30	19	18:30	18	17:30	17	16:30	16	15:30
3	20	19:30	19	18:30	18	17:30	17	16:30	16	15:30	2.5	24	23:20	22:50	22:10	21:40	21	20:20	19:50	19:10	18:40
2	30	29:15	28:30	27:45	27	26:15	25:30	24:45	24	23:15	2	30	29:15	28:30	27:45	27	26:15	25:30	24:45	24	23:15

A time-pace matrix. Credit: Mountain Innovations.

You can also instantly see how much more time you have left to go if you were actually walking at the slightly slower speed of 3.5kph. The big advantage of this cross-referencing is that it allows you to be very responsive to changing walking speeds and pace rates over differing terrain.

### AND FINALLY

Check your bearings, etc, before you walk on them - even the best sometimes make mistakes! ||

Mountain Innovations run navigation and skills courses, and supply a range of navigational aids. They also operate a winter conditions email report, see [www.scotmountain.co.uk](http://www.scotmountain.co.uk) for more details.

..same pedigree..



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HERITAGE





# DEATH ZONE

**It's OK. You've got Everest over-exposure. It happens. After two years of articles about the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, it's to be expected. And you're not the only one.**

So when Rheged rang to invite someone from Summit up to look at the new Everest Exhibition, I squirmed. Someone meant me, since well, that's all there is. And I really didn't want to see more of Everest, there was a possibility I might pass out. But after dodging calls and inventing holidays, I found myself outside the gates of Rheged one grey Tuesday morning. And consoling myself with the slight chance of a free lunch, I stepped inside.

It only seemed a week ago that Tony Blair was fighting off the Foot and Mouth protesters to snip the official opening ribbon here, and that I'd carted Mallory's boot up from London in the back of my rusty old Polo. Poor Mallory, he must have spun in his grave at that one – what a bad way to end up, your boot in my boot. I was startled out of my daydream by Robin Ashcroft, madly enthusiastic manager of the Helly Hansen National Mountaineering Exhibition and walking Everest fact book.

He spotted the fearful look in my eyes and whisked me up the escalator, dragged me along the walkway, and pushed me through the door. Gingerly opening my eyes, the first surprise was that everything had changed. Until now I'd simply assumed that "The Everest Exhibition" was just a side-show. A few posters, bits of a pioneer, that kind of thing. But as usual, I was wrong. The whole of the exhibition had been replaced, new graphic panels, new exhibits, different videos. They'd even managed to squeeze a crevasse in.

But I still felt queasy. There were pictures of Everest literally everywhere, and lots of words too. And videos. And a film. And, god no, a model. I gulped and feigned interest as Robin pointed out all the essential bits and bobs. Passing the amputated toes, he was still going strong, some people spend hours, days in here he claimed. Hmm. Must be OAPs permanently lost, condemned to an indoor Everest circuit for the rest of their lives.

But I nodded enthusiastically, and we continued until he suddenly exclaimed "I

say, sorry, got an appointment – I'll leave you to it. Do stay and have another look round won't you?" This time without Robin, I thought I'd try a different tactic, that of actually reading the graphic panels. This was a good idea, I was being educated. I now knew where Everest was, how high it was, and a few other essential facts. And as I stood there, staring at the panels, some sparks of interest fired up. It belatedly clicked that the exhibition wasn't really about Everest; it was about the people who climbed it.

People like Tom Stobart. Famous for his mug being held by Edmund Hillary for a classic picture, I'd seen his name a thousand times but never really knew much about him. He was the filmmaker on the 1953 trip, and there he was; long-ish blond hair flopping over eyes, squinting through a film camera. Oh my god, look at his life; "...fell in love in Romania...escaped the German Army....overland through Africa...sailed round the world...filmed Everest....met the Queen". I suddenly felt deeply inadequate.

And that was the key. After Tom Stobart it was all easy; Mick Burke's down suit, Mallory's watch, Doug Scott's tattered long johns after his epic descent off the Ogre. It was all here in one place, the actual mementoes of all the legendary events, almost hard to believe. Now I was sucked in, and started paying more attention to the mountain itself. Come to think of it, it did look quite impressive. Fantasy Ridge? That sounded interesting, where was that? And unclimbed too. Hmm, maybe I should go ice climbing sometime?

Feeling somewhat more at ease, I nipped into the shop to flick through the comments in the visitors book. Most simply stated "inspiring" or "fantastic", and despite all my preconceptions, I had to agree. Getting back into the car and returning to the office all rang a bit hollow now, I wanted to do a Stobart instead. Time to look for a flight to Romania.

- Alex Messenger.

(LEFT) Dougal Haston climbing in the icefall on Everest in 1975, he subsequently reached the summit.

(RIGHT) High on the South West face of Everest. Both credit: Nick Estcourt/Bonington Picture Library.

## THE TOP OF THE WORLD

Everest "The Top of the World" Exhibition is situated at Rheged, near junction 40 on the M6 near Penrith. It is the perfect way to spend a wet day in the Lakes, especially if combined with a film in the IMAX cinema. A varied range of speakers is also featured over the winter season, from Chris Bonington to Colin Prior and Pen Hadow. Phone 01768 868000 or visit [www.rheged.com](http://www.rheged.com) for more details. BMC Members get a discounted entry rate to the exhibition.



## AT ANY COST?

**There have been a lot of wild rumours about Rheged and the BMC. But exactly how much did the BMC contribute? Here are the facts:**

- The idea for a National Mountaineering Exhibition was suggested by BMC member Barbara James at the 1996 AGM.
- The Mountain Heritage Trust (MHT) was formed and began looking for a suitable location. The Rheged Discovery Centre was being completed, and the Trust decided that this was the right space at an excellent rate. A successful bid was made for European funding (£227K) and Mountain Exhibitions Limited (MEL) was set up.
- John Sunderland, designer of Yorvik Viking centre was engaged and over the next year the project came together.
- The BMC paid no contribution to the project, apart from a £3K initially to fund a feasibility study. In the first year MEL paid the BMC £20K to cover staff time and incidental expenses.
- In July 2001 the exhibition opened but visitor levels were affected by Foot and Mouth. They did not recover during 2002 to levels expected in the original business plans.
- During this time the BMC lent MEL £152K to help the exhibition through this start-up and difficult period.
- In June 2002 the BMC opened negotiations with Westmorland Motorway Services (WMS) to transfer the assets and liabilities of MEL to WMS as it had become apparent that the exhibition could be managed much more effectively by Rheged.
- The deal was completed and £50k received. Two further payments of approx £100K total are due to be paid by 2005.
- The BMC has written off the cost of the second year's staff time and incidental expenses as £20K.
- An independent report was instigated into how the BMC had come to loan the money to MEL. The investigators were satisfied that everyone involved had acted in good faith with the best interests of the organisation at heart.

**As it currently stands, it cost the BMC £20K (and a few headaches!) to create the Helly Hansen National Mountaineering Exhibition. That's less than 50p per member to provide a showcase for some of mountaineering's great artefacts.**



# MOVING MOUNTAINS

Peter Kariuki and Kelly Kioko were respectively nine and ten years old when I first met them. I noticed Peter because he was trying to pick-pocket me and Kelly was acting as decoy, a little African boy with the biggest smile in the world standing in front of me with his hand out begging for money. We were in a large urban slum in Nairobi and the vast, clattering market was heaving with people. I was on their turf; they knew it, I knew it and they held all the cards.



Journeys from the Nairobi slums to the summit of Kilimanjaro.  
By Gavin Bate.

But it's Peter and Kelly who talk now of that moment with great passion. I managed to persuade them that pick-pocketing me wasn't such a good idea and instead they might give me a guided tour of their 'home'. It wasn't much. Peter lived in a five-foot square tin shack with his grandmother and sister, and Kelly curled up on pavements or in doorways to sleep. It turned out that Peter was a gang leader, a sort of Artful Dodger, with all the savvy and survival instincts of a street urchin and Kelly was his lieutenant. Together they made a formidable team, begging and stealing.

I was travelling around Africa, on a pilgrimage of my own to discover the wonders and beauties of that dark continent, and in the course of four years I kept on coming back to Kenya. I had been helping out with overland truck companies on the Cape Town – Nairobi run, and fell in love with the country. Peter and Kelly quickly became my closest allies in the turbulent world of shantytowns and it was through them that I 'became' a street kid. Ducking around the city at night, watching the muggings, the fights, the horrors and the heart-wrenching sights. Learning the street lingo called Sheng, squatting on the rubbish tips where the kids hung out drinking petrol, sniffing glue and eating wood chips. Any intelligent person with a conscience could hardly not be moved. So I rented a 'house' in Kibera, the so-called slum of Africa.

(TOP) Kilimanjaro from the East. (RIGHT) The mighty Kilimanjaro, 5896m. Both: G. Elson / Mountain Visions. (LEFT) Kelly Kioko had to learn to read and write from being a street kid. He became an avid reader and is now fully educated. Credit: Gavin Bate.





## CULTURE

My house became a home for about eight years and in that time I began running trips up Mt Kenya and Mt Kilimanjaro. I also started my own safari company in Kenya, and it became a feature of my little expeditions to always take the clients into Kibera for a dinner of roast goat (nyama choma) and a few bottles of Tusker with the locals. I was well known in the area so everybody was safe.

Most assume that a slum is a desperate, chaotic mass of humanity beset with crime and squalor, but that is far from the truth. Imagine a society where people live so close, where the only way to survive is to work and live together in harmony. Just like the old villages, slums have elders too, with committees and the like. Crime is low. Anyone who steals would be quickly found out and caught, and anyway, there's not a great deal to steal. No, it's the tourists who get to experience the fun of being robbed in broad daylight! Mind you, the way you see them walk around with handbags swinging, you'd imagine they were asking for it. Desperate measures call for desperate means and a lot of people in Africa are desperate. Families to support, rents to pay, food to buy. It's not easy.

### Desperate measures call for desperate means and a lot of people in Africa are desperate.

When my clients came back from a successful climb of Kilimanjaro or a lovely safari in the Masai Mara, I would take them to my house for tea and we would go out for dinner. It was always the most fascinating time of the trip and people would come away with deeply altered perspectives.

I started sponsoring kids a long time ago, Peter and Kelly being the first two, and worked in slum schools to get an idea of how tough the teachers had it. And it was tough. Over time I got to know the families, the communities and about the lifestyle. I discovered that it is inordinately complicated, a world of continually spiralling debt and credit. You borrow to survive one day, yet you share what you have. Giving back borrowed money takes months and any single person will maybe have fifty or sixty debts to contend with. Life becomes one stressful juggling game of payback and survival. If you get a job then the responsibility to support everyone in your family is obligatory; if you don't help then you will be ostracised. Getting a job can be more stressful than doing nothing.

I decided to use my company to fund the school fees. Then, when I started building small clinics and training centres, it all became a bit expensive so I had to think of other ways to get the money. So I climbed Everest. Twice, actually. Both times I got to within 100 metres of the top but it raised a lot of money, and sitting on that big hill I really valued the extra motivation that those kids gave me.

Anyway Peter and Kelly grew up. They went to primary school and shone. Given the chance, that mental sharpness and savvy that kept them alive on the streets is exactly what pushed them straight to the top of the class. Peter has a gift though; he's no ordinary kid. There is a presence about him that is almost unsettling, a wisdom beyond his years, a knowledge in his eyes that burns with passion and fire. If that sounds daft then hold your laugh. Someone once put it into words. "He seems to reach into your soul".

Now, years later, things have moved on apace. Peter and Kelly have recently finished secondary school and Kelly is in college studying computers and tourism. This summer I gave him his first job working on a number of safaris. How he wowed the clients! That big smile is still there, and now he moves about them with ease and assurance. "Watch your watch madam", he'll say, "I wouldn't keep your wallet in your back pocket like that sir". They all love him. When he tells them his story they gape.

Peter is going to work with the United Nations as a trainee. His ambition is to 'help my people' and he knows the only way to do that is by getting close to the source of power, where the decisions are made. I am his mentor in this process, but it will be a case of the student outstripping the teacher.

Over the years about 1800 children have passed through this programme I set up with the help of my Kenyan friends. It's heart-



Dawn at Gillmans Pt., Kilimanjaro. Credit: G. Elson / Mountain Visions.

ening, and never-ending. Nowadays I still go through the slums but now it is the ex-street kids who approach the glue sniffers and give them the chance. The clinics are ever busy, the schools bustling. My little house is never empty and I still take my clients for nyama choma and a bottle of Tusker. Everyone knows I use my expeditions to raise cash, and it's an endless source of fascination to children who have never seen snow.

This year Kelly trekked to Point Lenana on Mount Kenya with me and when he stood there gazing out over the horizon, the dawn, the splash of light on the clouds thousands of feet below, his eyes shone with tears. It was a far cry from lying in a gutter. He hadn't found it easy though and there was understanding about this game of climbing that some of us do. "This is nothing", I said, "there's lots of bigger hills out there." So Peter and Kelly came to me, moving together still as a team. Was it possible, they asked, for us to try and climb Kilimanjaro? It would, they said, be a great celebration of their lives. A sort of analogy of the high achievements they had already reached. Well, they didn't exactly use that word but I got the point. And I was hooked on the idea. So many people who stand on top of Kilimanjaro with me talk of benchmarks in their life, turning points and life-changing moments. But we live in a world of choice and freedom and opportunity. To Peter and Kelly the roof of Africa may as well represent the moon.

Kilimanjaro is not hard, not technically hard anyway. But a lot of people fail. And it's easy to understand why when you go back again and again and see the number of people racing up in four or five days. Take your time and have the luxury of at least two complete acclimatisation days and the success rate rockets. I've had 100% in the past three years because I take seven days to climb it. It's a bit more expensive but then surely it's worth it after coming all that way? And why munch on gorp when a nice fresh chicken stew can be had? I think having my own staff and company helps; I'm sure of the porters I use and being a charter member of Tourism Concern means that I'm committed to their happiness and rights, as much as the safety of my clients.

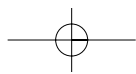
Trekking through five distinct ecosystems, from the wet and atmospheric forests resembling a scene out of Lord of the Rings, to the astonishing glaciated crater rim and of course the famous summit sign. The roof of Africa. For people who hike regularly, who have the kit and a good sense of humour and teamwork, it's there for the taking. Not that the summit is all there is to focus on. A good meal of roast goat in Kibera has its moments too. ||



#### YOUR CHANCE TO GET INVOLVED

If you would like to come with me and Peter and Kelly in August next year then I am looking for a team, but here's the deal. I'm trying to raise money for my charity, Moving Mountains, so I only ask that people help me and I'll help them get to the top. Contact Gavin Bate on 02890 701476 or email: [office@adventurealternative.com](mailto:office@adventurealternative.com).

(LEFT) Gavin Bate on Everest 2002.



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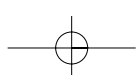
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# ideas that matter

By Graham Lynch, BMC Access & Conservation Officer



**So, you're administering a charitable Trust and a graphic designer rings up saying they want to help you win a 50,000 Euro prize, what do you do? Well - anything they ask of you!**

And so it was when Lucy Choules of estate68 called and described the 'ideas that matter' competition. Run by Sappi, a global paper manufacturer, this awards grants to charities wanting to get a print based publicity campaign up and running. Cue a month's worth of effort here and at estate68 readying our entry - it has been an aim of ACT for some time to initiate a poster campaign promoting environmental best practice in the outdoors, especially for bouldering.

I'd love to be able to say we were successful in our attempt, unfortunately the only UK winner was the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. However, this doesn't take away from the Access & Conservation Trust being an 'idea that matters'; ACT is the only charity funding environmental work at crags and in the uplands across the UK and Ireland, and so has a vital role in looking after the countryside.

[acesstrust.org.uk](http://acesstrust.org.uk)

'Ideas that Matter' aside, the big news on the publicity front is that the ACT website

is alive - see [www.acesstrust.org.uk](http://www.acesstrust.org.uk). Here you can read the latest news on ACT, find out more about the projects we have been involved in, make a donation on-line, follow links to our partners and supporters, and even suggest a project you think the Trust should be funding.

It's not all been disappointment on the fundraising front this year, our corporate supporters are introduced on the next page and include clubs and commercial operations. Individual, grass roots involvement is also vital to keep the Trust thriving and to give climbers and walkers a sense of ownership of the work it carries out. It's good to see so many BMC members donating money via the form in the Member Handbook or on their membership renewal forms. And if you are a tax payer, please tick the GiftAid box to let us claim money back from the tax man and make more of your generosity - after all GiftAid is already worth several hundred pounds for ACT.

## projects

First up this year was the 2003 Access Focus and Seasonal Restrictions leaflet, check out [www.thebmc.co.uk/outdoor/rad/Birds2003.pdf](http://www.thebmc.co.uk/outdoor/rad/Birds2003.pdf) to see a copy. This is becoming something of a regular, giving access and conservation information for England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland and list-

ing BMC negotiated seasonal nesting restrictions on crags. 4000 of these beauties are printed each year, and sent to clubs, outdoor centres, walls, shops and the training boards. This is a vital source of information for climbers, and a great way of showing how the Mountaineering Councils are fulfilling their responsibility to spread good practice.

## rural development

The real flagship projects this year have without doubt been our rural development initiatives - we've even had an appearance on the telly! The efforts in question are the Climbing Huts Information Project (CHIPs) and the Lake District Visitor Payback Initiative. Foot and Mouth Disease made it clear just how important outdoor recreation is in supporting rural economies in places such as the Lake District and North Wales. With these projects we are looking at how we can all relate better to local communities in our favourite places.

CHIPs is based in North Wales and has investigated how to provide information to people staying in club huts and bunkhouses. This is aimed at getting visiting climbers and hillwalkers to make more use of local outlets and services, be it buying food or finding alternative activities for a rainy day.

(TOP) View of Great Langdale from Swinescar Pike. Credit: Jon Sparks



**BMC**



**rockfax.com**

The Lake District project started with the idea of asking the local people of Langdale what visiting climbers should do to help. Two key initiatives came out of this consultation - *Closer Contact*, where we are looking at how clubs with huts in Langdale can stay in touch with the community, and the *Youth Involvement Project*. This has been very exciting - one of the key messages was that the youngsters who live in the hills often don't have the opportunity to enjoy them. But this project has got them out walking, scrambling and climbing to see what it's like.

Sometimes it's the small things that can help iron out or prevent an access problem. To this end ACT has helped fund signs giving access and conservation advice to climbers at two venues, Craig yr Aderyn (Bird Rock) in Wales, and at Portland. Also small, but rather heavier is the belay boulder that has been installed above Porth-y-Ffynnon, a popular group use venue in North Pembroke that was getting trashed by stakes and associated cliff-top erosion.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code will have a much greater impact when it arrives

next spring, embodying good practice in Scotland and hopefully influencing the situation in England and Wales too. With this in mind ACT was pleased to fund three days of research into the implications the Code has for climbers and walkers. This research has been used to inform the responses made by the BMC and MCofS to consultation on the draft Code. To finish on a more practical note - ACT has again funded rock repair work on the southern sandstone crags of Kent.

### thank you's

Once again **The Climbers' Club** have weighed in with a substantial contribution to ACT. The Climbers' Club is a national club with about 1200 members. The club owns several huts around the UK, and produces guidebooks to a number of climbing areas, as well as organising regular meets for its members. **The BMC** also produces guidebooks, principally covering the Peak District, and 5% of the cover price of these goes to help fund the work of ACT.

**The Association of British Climbing Walls** represents the interests climbing centre owners and managers, including The

Foundry, The Edge, The Leeds Wall, Mile End, Lakeland Climbing Centre, Glasgow Climbing Centre, Alien Rock, Calshot Activity Centre, Rope Race, The Rock Face, The Castle, Undercover Rock, The Beacon, Inglesport Wall, The Nottingham Centre, High Sports and Arethusa. Welcome on board as Gold level ACT supporters for 2003.

**Cleveland Mountaineering Club** are another new and major ACT supporter for this year. This club, one of the biggest in the North East of England, celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year, so we hope that's been a success! The club caters for a wide variety of activities, mainly to members in the Teesdale area and has a hut in Patterdale.

Back to climbing guidebooks again - **RockFax** this time, producing highly visual guides to popular destinations in Europe and the USA. A proportion of the cover price of the guidebooks covering the Peak District goes to ACT.

**Lowe Alpine** are the key sponsor of the BMC Winter Lecture Series. On the back of last year's lectures, Lowe were able to donate to ACT - thanks to them and all this year's corporate supporters. II

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# urbanRock BRYCS '03

Behind the scenes at the final with Graeme Alderson

**It hardly seems like yesterday, shaking hands with Al Price the manager at the Leeds Wall. Saying, "thanks, it was great, glad it all worked out." Walking away relaxed, no need to worry about next year – after all it's Ian Fenton's job now.**

Spring comes around, Ian Fenton leaves and the BRYCS file gets thrown back onto my lap. But no need to unduly panic, the final will be at Ratho, the new Scottish super-wall, all will be shiny and under control. Well almost. Come September and the phone rings; "Er, sorry about this Graeme but we can't guarantee being ready on time."

Chill, deep breath. OK, better let the world know and wait for the grief from everyone...and predictably it starts. Apparently I should have known that Ratho wasn't going to be open, and should have had a plan B. I quickly needed a plan B - who could help at this late stage? Answer was the WICC, the only place that's big enough. I reached for the phone.

With three weeks to go the last regional rounds had finished. With results collated it was just time to do the mammoth mail merge and get those invites out. But first; organise the British Bouldering Championships, help sort out the World Cups at Ratho, get the Team to Switzerland, get them to Bulgaria, then order some T-shirts and trophies.

Sunday night, Less than a week to go. Damn. I guess that I've organised too many big events, I seem to be getting complacent - or am I just getting old and forget-

ful? I'd completely overlooked the prizes. Whoops - that won't go down too well. Well the sun always shines on the brave, or some other mixed metaphor, and the next day was the annual trade bash at Harrogate. Voila - stacks of prizes all in one day.

Three late nights on the trot getting the paperwork sorted, load the car then head off to Wales. For once its sunny at the Welsh International Centre, I'm almost happy to be here. Time to check how the route setters are getting on. Fine except we suddenly changed the running order for the whole show. Fine, that's 200 timetables in the bin. Start again. Wow, this is well relaxed, maybe we're finally getting it sorted. Time for one last check of the problems.

"Who set this? You can't have two number 3 problems crossing each other, they'll be climbed at the same time. Oi. Jamie! Stew!" Bless, it's their first really big comp, they'll learn. Andy Long saves the day, and before we know it, it's 10pm and all is ready to go.

The next morning there's nothing much to do until the registration closes, so I wander around recruiting a few spare judges/chaperones/belayers. Then it's ten minutes of pure mayhem as I brief the crowd, get everyone split into groups and we're off - 150 kids and at least as many parents/



Young climbers at the BRYCS final.  
All credit: John Arran.

grandparents/brothers/sisters. Man, its chaos. But from chaos comes order! The odd little problem during the day, the odd disputed judging call, the odd crack but generally it worked well, this year the fat lady was well and truly singing by 8pm.

It wouldn't have happened without all those who got involved. So big thanks to the legions of volunteers who worked miracles (sorry if I haven't got around to thank you letters by the time you read this!), the Welsh International Climbing Centre for baling us out at very short notice, DMM, Troll/HB Climbing Equipment, Lyon Equipment and High Places for donating the prizes. But special thanks are reserved for the one person that really made it possible - Sandy Ogilvie from urbanRock in London. Go and spend your cash in his shop, he's a very nice man. ||

#### MORE INFORMATION

Full results of the BRYCS are on [www.danecourt.kent-telephones.com/brycs2003results.htm](http://www.danecourt.kent-telephones.com/brycs2003results.htm). And for photos see [www.thefreeclimber.com/brycs03.htm](http://www.thefreeclimber.com/brycs03.htm)



## James Owen. Mountain rescue



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A photograph of a person climbing a rock face. The person is seen from the back, wearing a white t-shirt and dark shorts. They are positioned on the right side of the frame, clinging to a grey rock. The background is a dense forest of trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and brown. The sky is not visible, suggesting a canopy of trees above.

# WALKING DANGEROUSLY

**Volunteer for the BMC?  
You'd never catch me  
doing that; it's all sitting  
around in pubs arguing  
over bits of paper isn't  
it? Yep, that and putting  
up new E9's. Summit  
takes a look at Ben  
Heason and his work at  
Froggatt for the forth-  
coming BMC guidebook.**

**I**f writing up an established crag for a guidebook, most of us would be tempted to wander along, check it was still in the usual place, that none of the buttresses had suddenly fallen over, take a picture or two, then retire happy to the café – job done. The alternative is a lot more scary. Wander along, decide all routes require accurate descriptions and grades, climb all routes, then fill in any outstanding gaps. Ben Heason decided that plan two was the only option. And with just 12 routes left to go, he's keen to finish the job as quickly as possible. This approach, whilst obviously very commendable in its attention to detail, does have a few stumbling blocks. The thorny problem of making the second ascent of "Toy Boy" (E7 7a), was one such block, but after six or seven days of work, Ben unlocked the sequence and managed to psyche himself up for the solo above a bone breaking landing.

So what does it take to be able to come within a whisker of ticking Froggatt? Well,

some uncompromising boldness is useful, since he climbed many solo without spotters or mats, and strict ethics are handy, although sometimes inconvenient – he generally aspires to climb without pre-practice or prior inspection. And don't despair if you're not climbing E9 just yet, it appears that E2 will do the job...

At a ripe old age of 21 Ben experienced his first taste of hard grit with a solo of *Obsession Fatale* at the Roaches, a bold E8 6c slab with a highball friction crux. Back then ascents of E8's like this were infrequent, and usually confined to the elite, but what made this ascent unusual was the fact that his hardest on-sight climb prior to this was E2!

He'd only tried the route out of curiosity, and surprised himself by top roping it cleanly on his second attempt. Although still falling off one in every three or four attempts on a rope he felt confident, and promptly soloed it. At the time he'd expected a long apprenticeship through the





Ben Heason contemplating downgrading Oedipus Ring Your Mother (E4 6b), at Froggatt to HS. Credit: Alex Messenger.

grades, ticking the classic routes and maybe one day leading an E5. Obsession Fatale however, made him realise that with more experience and strength there was no limit to what could be accomplished.

Ben's confidence grew and grew, but he says, with hindsight, "I was becoming a little reckless, pushing my limits too close to the edge". After a few weeks of excellent weather during the winter of '97, and several hard on-sights under his belt, he says, "I felt indestructible". And whilst making an on-sight solo attempt of "Narcissus", a classic E6 arête at Froggatt, his momentum came to an abrupt halt, costing him two broken ankles.

With the wonderful benefit of hindsight he now considers this accident one of his most important learning experiences in climbing, giving him plenty of food for thought – not to mention time to polish

up his Nintendo skills! Less than six months later he had climbed his second E8, but more importantly he'd returned to Narcissus and climbed it, without any top rope inspection and without mats or spotters. He says, "I needed to bury the ghost, to be able to move on with my climbing". His accident had forced about the self-realisation that, for self-preservation reasons, in order for his climbing to progress he would need to work on his weaknesses, namely his power and endurance. He said, "the possible consequences of becoming even bolder were not an appealing option".

The following year, he found himself yet again pushing the limits back on the grit. His on-sight solos of Epiphany (E6/7), and Monopoly (E7) in September '99 started to turn heads, and after a couple more years working his weaknesses, he was ready to really push his ambitions. It was during the winter of 01/02 that he really made his mark, and captured attention with his seemingly unstoppable momentum, making numerous hard ascents (mainly on-sight and solo) of gritstone test pieces past and present.

Starting in October he soloed Jerry Moffatt's "Renegade Master" (E8 6c). This was followed by on-sight solo ascents of "Jasmine" (E6/7 6b) at Bamford edge, "Desperate Dan" (E6/7 6b) and "Deathwatch" (E7 6b) in a day at Ilkley, North Yorkshire and another on-sight solo of "Jumping On A Beetle" (E7 6c) at Black Rocks. This was followed by headpoint ascents of "Feeding the Pony" and "Angels Share", both hold-less friction E8 7a slabs at Black Rocks. At Froggatt he made a good start on his guidebook work by soloing "Bud" (E7 6c), "Art Brut" (E7 6b) "Dick Van Dyke Goes Ballistic" (E7 6c), and added two new routes "Firecracker" (E7 6b) and "Chin Grinder" (E6 6c).

His form continued into the new year, culminating in a memorable day at Curbar in which he headpointed the classic arête, "End of The Affair" (E8 6c) and flashed "Slackers" (E6 6b) and "Moon Madness", E7 6c. This string of ascents had a suitable finale when he added his hardest ascent on gritstone - a new E9 7a called "Ozbound" to Froggatt just days before he left for a nine-month trip to Thailand, Australia and New Zealand. Despite this solid tick list, he claims to be somewhat baffled by all the attention that grit receives throughout the climbing community, saying "most routes on grit aren't like real climbing, they're more like bouldering in a dangerous place, and sometimes the bouldering is more like 'difficult walking'".

Few expected him to continue to make the headlines on his big trip, but he took the opportunity to prove to himself that he wasn't just a "difficult walker" and put his cool head to good use. In Thailand he soloed numerous routes on Tonsai wall, including "Phet Maak", a classic F8a with a reachy crux high above the ground. Moving on to Australia he took no time adapting to the more physical nature of the climbing, bagging a satisfying collection of on-sights.

The most notable being "Journey Through Nicaragua" and "Contra Arms Pump" in the Grampians. Both climbs are graded

Aus 30 (8a+) and are protected by mainly trad gear. Ben made the first ever on-sight ascent of "Journey Through Nicaragua" commenting that "it felt relatively straightforward, about E7 6c". "Contra Arms Pump" on the other hand nearly ended in disaster and Ben considers it "probably my best ever effort – and it needed to be..."

Apart from two spaciouly placed bolts at the start, the route is protected by traditional gear which is extremely pumpy to place (the route is normally led after top rope practice with pre-placed protection). Ben however missed a crucial blind gear placement. After failing to place the cam in the blind crack Ben tossed it over his shoulder, opting to push on instead in an attempt to preserve some strength for the rest of the route. With an Australian grade of 30 (8a+) he says "basically it felt like I was on-sight soloing an 8a/+ sport route - completely at my limit". Luckily he was successful.

Before finishing his Australian adventure he made the second ascent of an E8 6c gritstone style arête called "Orca", and des-

*"most routes on grit aren't like real climbing, they're more like bouldering in a dangerous place, and sometimes more like 'difficult walking'".*

(BELOW) Toy Boy, E7 7a, Froggatt. First climbed by Ron Fawcett, the tenuous slab had been attempted by many strong and talented climbers, yet remained unrepeated for fifteen years. Credit: Ian Parnell.



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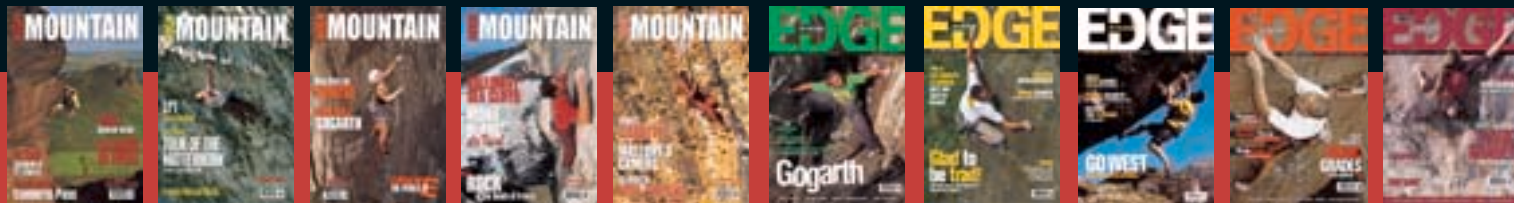
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Ben Heason with a rope on for once! On Ramp Art E5 6b, Froggatt. Credit: Carl Ryan.

patched a few more F8a's, as well as plenty more trad climbs, including the mega classic "India" (7c+) at Arapiles. Stopping off in Thailand on the way home he made good use of his new found route fitness, on-sighting yet more F8a's and soloing "Old Chicken Makes a Good Soup" (8a+) and "Cara Cangreso" (8b). This achievement is put into context by the fact that this is his hardest route with a rope on! The fact that he chose to solo it indicates just how much confidence he now has in his own ability, both mental and physical.

However since arriving back in Britain he has been plagued by injuries, the most se-

rious resulting from playing basketball! Only able to climb about a dozen times over last winter, many would have expected him to lose all form. But after a few months off, he marked his return in style with a flash solo of "Paralogism" (E7 6c) - his only 'beta' for the route had come from watching the "Hard Grit" video footage. Crossing one of grit's largest roofs "Paralogism" has had few ascents, and all of them before had taken place after top rope practice. In his typical style he set off solo, with no spotters or mats for protection, just total commitment and faith in his ability. *"The crux moves were physically slightly easier than I thought, but the dynamic moves were a bit more committing than I'd expected!"*

Now seemingly injury free and fresh back from new routing in Greenland, he's been making good use of the recent Indian Summer with some further stylish ascents in Mallorca and Lundy. Ben admits he's getting properly psyched again and is looking forward to another winter on the grit - one of the main aims of course, is to finally finish those 12 remaining routes at Froggatt.

When probed further about his guidebook marathon, he explained; *"it turned out to be a bit more effort than I'd first envisaged, but equally I enjoyed doing it more than expected. I really got involved with the whole process, as well as getting into the crag itself. It helped give me some extra motivation through the bleak winter months, when I was trying to repeat as many of the routes as possible. It's no secret that the BMC aren't the most affluent of organisations, so I'm happy that I've been able to volunteer my services".* II

**Ben Heason** is currently preparing himself to enter the world of public lecturing. On January 11<sup>th</sup> he starts a ten day, ten city tour of the UK presenting a multimedia show called "Walking in a Dangerous Place". See below for details.

## NEW CLIMBING WINTER LECTURE SERIES:

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All three climbers will lecture in Birmingham, London, South Wales, Bristol, Bangor, Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds, Penrith and Edinburgh. All lectures will start at 7.45pm Tickets will cost £4.50 if bought

in advance, online via [www.heason.net](http://www.heason.net), and £5.00 on the night. Buying three tickets, one to each of the tours, online and in advance, will cost £12.00.

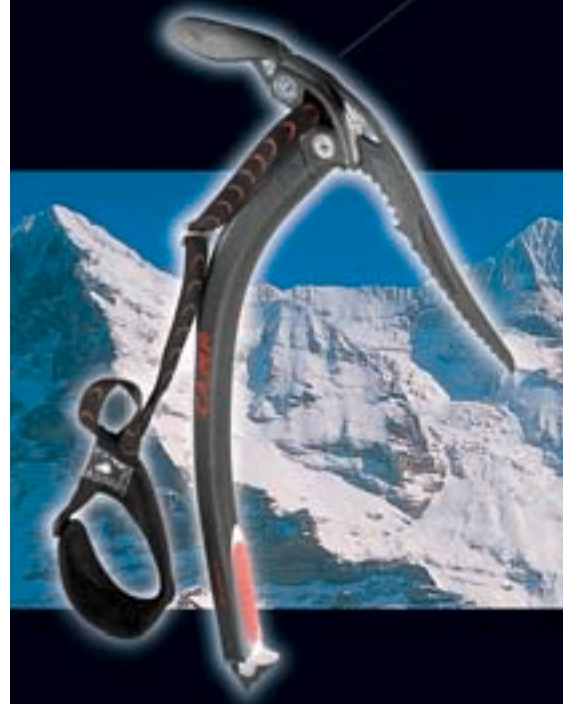
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## EXPEDITIONS



**Mount Vancouver:** The two man team of Paul Knott and Erik Monasterio took two attempts to succeed on the unclimbed North Peak of Mount Foresta 3341m.

# Expeditions '03



**The BMC (through funding from UK Sport) and the Mount Everest Foundation continue to provide financial support to expeditions, climbing new routes and visiting unexplored mountainous regions of the world.**

This support is often the key factor in making any of these trips a viable proposition, whether it is leading mountaineers seeking to challenge themselves on the steepest faces of the greater ranges or first timers heading off for an equally personal challenge of their own. And remember, if you've got something planned for 2004, then don't forget to apply!

### Alaska:

#### North East Tokositna

Two big lines in a round trip of just two and a half weeks from the UK. Malcolm Bass and Simon Yearsley climbed the two obvious couloir systems on the South Face of Kahiltna Queen. Both climbed in lightweight single-push style with ice to Scottish V and each taking approximately 20 hours to the summit. Both routes were predominantly snow and bullet hard black ice.

#### Kichatna

This strong team of Stuart McAleese, Olly Sanders and Mike (Twid) Turner succeeded on "the most amazing ice line any of us had ever seen" to produce *Supa Dupa Couloir*,

ED 3 on The Citadel 2579m. 21 pitches long, 17 of which were Scottish V or above and with the couloir rarely more than a few metres wide.

#### Mount Vancouver

The two man team of Paul Knott and Erik Monasterio took two attempts to succeed on the unclimbed North Peak of Mount Foresta 3341m. Returning from the ascent they had to rely on GPS waypoints to find their base camp as full storm conditions developed. They then turned their attention to their primary objective, Mt Vancouver which they had last attempted in 1999. Unfortunately the glacier had changed considerably over that time and was now too crevassed and dangerous for their considered route.

#### British Foraker

Full of their usual eagerness Rich Cross and Jon Bracey raced up a number of acclimatisation peaks including the Moonflower Buttress on Hunter, West Buttress of Denali and a rapid 24 hour round trip of the West Ridge of Hunter. Fit and confident for their main objective - the 2000m S.E. face of Mt

Foraker - they were disappointed to find the only viable line heavily threatened by a large serac. An attempt at the consolation prize of the Infinite Spur was then foiled by a long spell of bad weather.

#### British Central Alaska Range

Unable to attempt their original objectives on North Face of Thunder Mountain and the N.N.W. Face of Denali the pair of Paul Ramsden and Guy Willet succeeded with a more than adequate consolation prize by climbing a new route on the Fathers and Sons Wall. *Great White Fright* was climbed in a single push lightweight style, taking 50 hours round trip and graded Alaskan 5 or ED with technical difficulties of Scottish V.

#### South America & Antarctica:

#### Maestri-Egger February

Thwarted last year due to an injury to Leo Houlding, this year the team of Alan Mullin and Kevin Thaw faired even worse and were unable to even reach the base of the mountain due to the weather. It seems they are nothing if not determined and already have plans to return next year - could it be third

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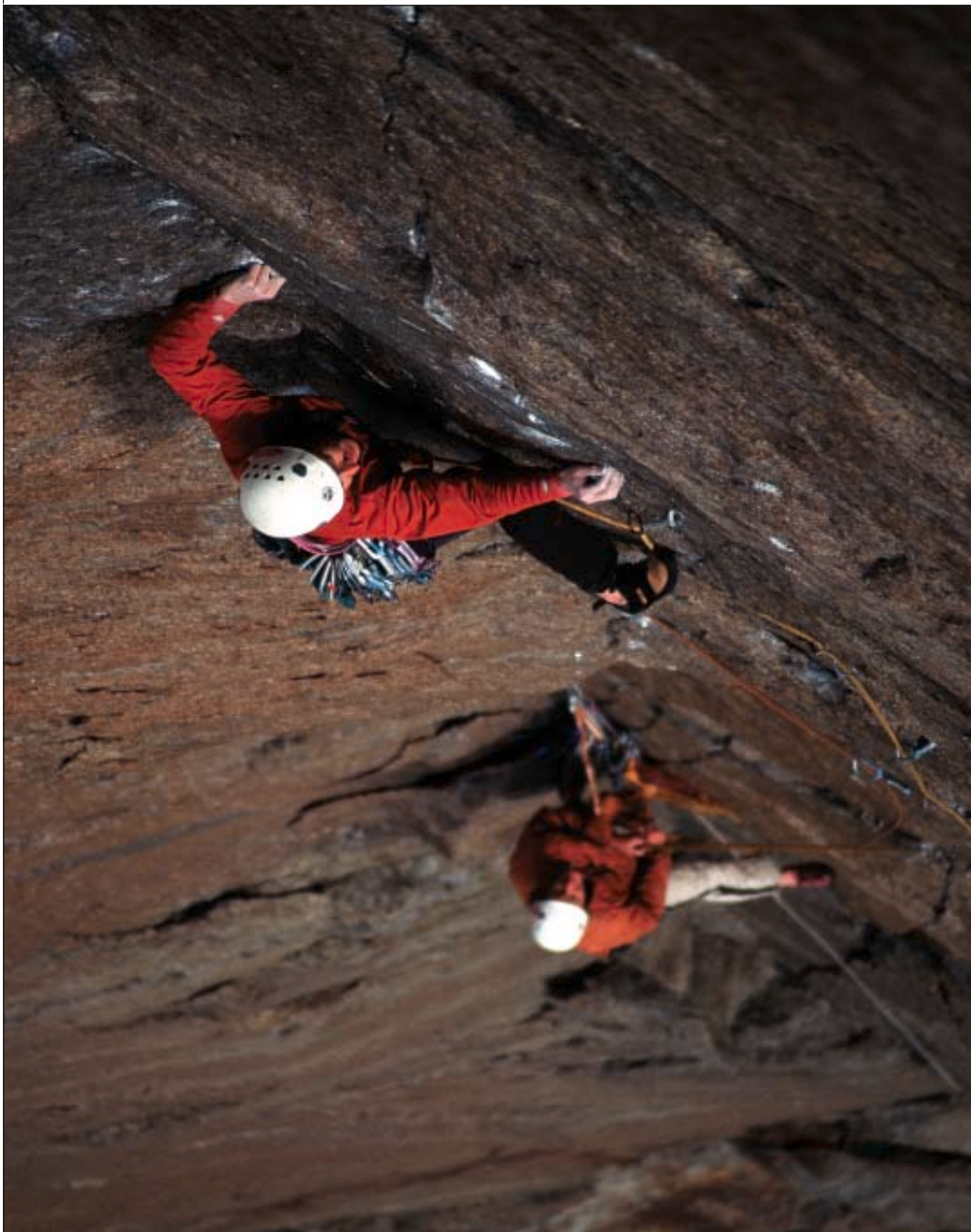
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**Prins Christian Sund:** Tom Briggs, Adrian Jebb, Nick Boden and Rob Mirfin succeeded in freeing the Slovenian line *Ujarak VI,7+,A3* to produce *Waiting for the Sun*, 23 pitches with cruxes of E7, 6b and 7c+ on the West Face of Idlorssit Havn Tower, Southern Greenland. Here Adrian Jebb is on the E7 6c pitch. Credit: Nick Boden.

time lucky in their audacious attempt to free the line and solve the mystery as to whether Maestri and Egger succeeded on North Face of Cerro Torre in 1959.

#### **Womens Cerro Torre**

Airlie Anderson and Brittany Griffith had hoped to make the first all-female ascent of the Compressor Route on Cerro Torre. Like Mullin and Thaw they were beaten by some of the worst weather in years and got no further than the base of the route. Will they be as keen to return as the boys?

#### **South Georgia**

Dr Alun Hubbard continued his sail/climb expeditions along with Tim Hall, Dave Hildes, Stewart Holmes, Hamish Millar, Grant Redvers, Davie Robinson and Martin Stuart. The team sailed from Cape Horn intent on various mountaineering explorations on South Georgia. Early in the sail the engine was immobilised and they then suffered horrendous weather throughout the entire

period, which turned it more into a battle of survival. 160 kph winds and a pressure drop of 40mb in five hours saw all the tents blown away, forcing them to bivi in snow holes. An attempt on Mt. Paget was sensibly aborted at c. 2450m and various other objectives were similarly abandoned due to avalanches and other objective dangers. A real adventure then!

#### **Jirishanca Re-match**

After being avalanched from a couloir on the lower slopes of Jirishanca in the Cordillera Huayhuash of Peru last year, the team of Al Powell and Nick Bullock returned to find safer conditions this year. Above they found sustained technical and often poorly protected climbing that included chandeliered ice, unconsolidated snow and rotten rock. Three days for the ascent and a further day to descend produced *Fear and Loathing* which weighed in at a hefty ED3, Scottish VII+ or French VII/6+.

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## EXPEDITIONS



**British Australian Torssukatak Spires:** Jon Roberts, Dewi Durban, James Mehican and Richard Sonnerdale went new routing in Southern Greenland. First ascents of E2 show that you don't have to be an elite climber to get BMC/MEF support.

### Tepui

John and Anne Arran made a return trip to Venezuela along with locals Ivan Calderón, Henry Gonzales and Alfredo Rangel. Access through the jungle to the base of any of the towers proved very difficult, and they were forced to retreat from the 1000m overhanging face of Angel Falls due to illness of one team member. They then changed their targets to a first ascent of the 600m Acopan tepui. Over six days they succeeded in producing an entirely free 21 pitch route with difficulties to a conventional E6 6b and a less conventional J3 – jungle climbing that involved using vines and any other hanging vegetation to aid progress.

### Puscantupa Norte

On Puscantupa Norte in the Cordillera Huayhuash of Peru, Mark Pretty, Nic Sellars and Sam Whittaker succeeded in repeating the French route, *Pasta Religion*, F7a+ climbed in 2000, to easy ground below a huge cornice. This involved 12 pitches (all except one of which were climbed onsight) up to E6. They had then hoped to open a

new line to the right, but lack of time and the mainly crack-less rock with unreliable protection stopped them.

### Greenland:

#### SMC Greenland

Stephen Reid, Hamish Irvine, Colwyn Jones and Jonathan Preston headed to Dansketinde 2930m in the Stauning Alps. Following a few days of mixed weather and some reconnaissance trips, they next made an attempt on the S. Ridge, but abandoned this at a steep wall at two-thirds height. Changing their focus they made a successful ascent of the S.W. Ridge in 17½ hours at a grade of TD-. After more bad weather, another attempt was made on the S. Ridge: this time they were more fortunate, and in a round trip of 30 hours the ridge was climbed at TD+

#### Wales Greenland

This all female expedition of Sue Savege, Di Gilbert, Rosie Goolden, Catrin Thomas and

Justine Curgenvén planned to explore and climb new routes in Schweizerland. Delayed by poor weather for three days en-route to base camp, they then had nine clear days before the bad weather returned. During this time, they climbed new routes on the S. Ridge of Tupilak, 2264m, two new routes on Pt. 1760m (The Coven), and two on Pt. 1720m, and repeated the S. Pillar route on Rodebjerg, 2140m

### Knud Rasmussen Land

Knud Rasmussen Land is one of the least visited areas of East Greenland so gave plenty of scope for the team of Bob Dawson, John Diplock, Mark Diplock, Jan Lancaster and Steve Long to explore and make first ascents. They soon discovered that the rock was extremely friable, so as far as possible kept to snow and ice routes up to Scottish grade III. Operating from three different camps, over a 20 day period, they made the first ascent of 20 peaks at the eastern end of the glacier, the highest being 2620m.

### Southern Kangerdlugssuaq

A ski-equipped Twin Otter from Iceland landed Brian Davison and team close to their intended base camp at 1700m, in a snow basin at the head of the Nordre and Søndre Parallelgletschers. From here, a number of sledge trips were made to climb in the vicinity. A total of 35 peaks up to 2600m were climbed, all thought to be first ascents.

### British Australian Torssukatak Spires

Jon Roberts, Dewi Durban, James Mehican and Richard Sonnerdale headed to the increasingly popular Cape Farewell area for their first visit to Greenland. A new 1350m E3 5c route *The Cruise Line*, was achieved on The Thumbnail (first climbed by Ian Parnell and team in 2000). Two peaks also received their first ascents, with *Called into Question*, 450m E2 5b and *The Cripple and the Tortoise*, 200m E2 5c A1. All routes were climbed free and on-sight without the use of fixed ropes, pegs or bolts.

### Prins Christian Sund

A team of eight extremely talented rockclimbers headed to Prins Christian Sund in Southern Greenland in search of big hard trad routes. Ben Heason and Simon Moore succeeded in freeing a variation to *Wonderful World*. 23 pitches climbed on-sight over two days with pitches to E6 6b. Tom Briggs, Adrian Jebb, Nick Boden and Rob Mirfin succeeded in freeing the Slovenian line *Ujarak VI,7+,A3* to produce *Waiting for the Sun*, 23 pitches with cruxes of E7, 6b and 7c+. Finally Steve McClure and Miles Gibson succeeded on the main corner line of the face to give *Twenty One*, 23 pitches up to E7 6c. Climbed over eight days with fixed ropes used to half height. All the above are on the West Face of Idlorssit Havn Tower.

### Scottish East Greenland

Malcolm Thorburn and Douglas Campbell returned to the area they last visited in

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1999. First task was to find the pulks and equipment they had stashed at the edge of the ice cap four years ago! Successful in that, they were then hampered by poor weather and conditions that had changed considerably over the years. They were still successful in climbing five peaks, three of which were first ascents.

#### Scottish Lemon Mountains

Graham Stein along with nine others flew in to explore the area around the Hedgehog Glacier in the Lemon Mountains of Eastern Greenland. Unfortunately due to poor conditions they had to be dropped 35 km from there intended landing site necessitating a far longer ski approach and return at the end of the trip. Despite poor snow conditions and two storms a number of new routes were established mainly around PD.

#### China and Tibet:

##### British Mt Grosvenor

Mick Fowler, Andy Cave, Neil McAdie and Simon Nadin visited the Daxue Shan Range of Sichuan Province hoping to make the first ascent of Mt Grosvenor by its steep N.W. Face. Fowler and Cave had to abandon the central couloir on day three due to a dangerously loose rock barrier. Nadin and McAdie had to abandon their line on the right of the face due to continuous spin-drift. An interesting aside was that the team found themselves sharing their 3800m base camp with the tents of 100 locals out collecting caterpillar fungus – apparently a valuable aphrodisiac.

##### British Da Kangri

John Town, Derek Buckle, Alasdair Scott and Martin Scott hoped to climb Da Kangri (6270m) an elegant double-peaked mountain in Toling Dechen county, in the south of the Nyanchen Tangla range of Tibet. Satellite photographs and Russian military maps were used to navigate their Land Cruis-

ers up back roads to establish Base Camp. After considering the options they settled for a hanging valley which led to the foot of the N.W. Face. After placing two intermediate camps they reached the summit in about 6¾ hours climbing, descending the same way and grading the route D+ /TD-.

#### Central Asia & Far East:

##### British Kyrgyz-Kuilu

This expedition was intended to enable as many members as wished to celebrate the fiftieth birthday of the Chester Mountaineering Club, so had to cater for a wide range of abilities. Being little visited, the Kuilu-Too Range of Kyrgyzstan was therefore selected as the venue, as it gave opportunities for exploration and first ascents of a range of peaks in excess of 4000m. Operating as five separate teams, the 14 member team led by Dr Robin Gibson achieved successes on seven different peaks between 4100m and 4780m, and from PD to D.

##### Eagle Ski Club Ak Shiirak

Steve Wright, Mike Sharp, Joost van der Valk and Dave Wynne-Jones had planned to make a ski traverse of the entire Ak Shiirak Range of mountains in the Kyrgyz Republic. However heavy snow and avalanches blocked their intended route of access to the Karu Su valley. Manhandling all supplies to an alternative entry point they were able to penetrate the range as far as the Kara Su glacier. Making ski ascents of several peaks to 4600m they were able to confirm the potential of the range for ski mountaineering.

#### Not Yet back:

British Aguilera 2003  
British Annapurna III S.W. Ridge  
Virgin Summits - Tibet 2003  
Khumbu 2003 Alpine Style  
Midnight Sun 2003  
British Qomo Lhari 2003

#### ABOUT BMC / MEF EXPEDITION FUNDING

BMC grants are only made possible through funding from UK Sport. To meet the criteria for consideration for a BMC award teams must be attempting innovative ascents in remote mountain environments in 'good' style. Most expeditions will also be considered for the Mount Everest Foundation (MEF) award. The MEF's criteria is slightly different to that of the BMC's. Their main concern is the exploratory nature of the expedition rather than the technical difficulty, and applications from medical and environmental expeditions or research proposals are also considered.

#### How to Apply

The BMC conducts its interviews in conjunction with the MEF and applications for BMC funding are made via the MEF's application system, the BMC does not have a separate grant application form. Expedition organisers are strongly advised to meet MEF

application deadlines (31st August and 31st December). However the BMC understands that in exceptional circumstances it may not be possible and will accept applications directly up to the 15th February in the year of the proposed expedition, as long as they are submitted on MEF forms. Expeditions applying directly to the BMC will not be eligible for MEF funding and should be aware that they can only be assessed on the information they provide on paper. For this reason the level of BMC support may be significantly less than if they had applied through normal MEF channels.

For further information and application forms for BMC/MEF awards, contact: **Bill Ruthven, Gowrie, Cardwell Close, Warton, Preston, PR4 1SH, or visit [www.mef.org](http://www.mef.org). The application deadline for 2004 expeditions is 31st December 2003.**

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## WALK OF THE ISSUE

pocket mountains: the cairngorms

# Sgarsoch from Glen Tilt



This is one of 40 circular walks which feature in *The Cairngorms* by Nick Williams. Published by Pocket Mountains Ltd and available from all good bookshops, priced £5.99.

Leachdann Féith Seagachain and the Tarf Water

**An Sgarsoch** (1006m),  
**Carn an Fhìdhleir** (994m)

Walk time 6h40 + detour 40 min

Height gain 800m

Approach and return 3h40 bike

Distance 20km + 32km approach and return

OS Map Landranger 43

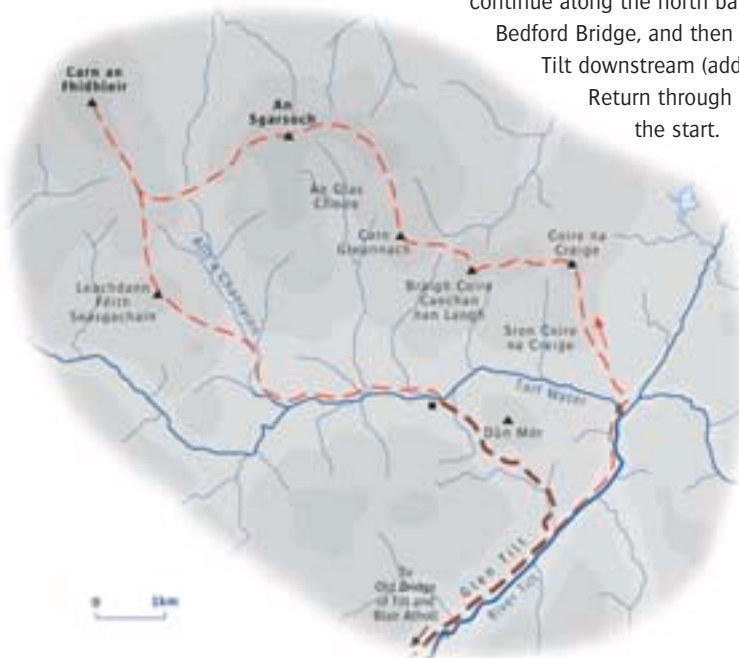
**A strenuous circuit in very remote country. The long approach is best made by mountain bike. A river crossing on return is optional, but bypassing it will add time to your journey.**

Start from the Atholl Estate car park in Old Bridge of Tilt (GR874663). Take the track (marked Private Road) from the right hand side of the house opposite the car park. This runs the length of Glen Tilt, crossing and recrossing the river higher up. Follow the track past a forest lodge and to a junction 3km beyond the end of a narrow forest: here, the track leaves the River Tilt to climb northwards while a path continues along the glen (GR971775). Leave bikes here: walk times start from this point. Take the path by the river. After 2.5km, this meets the Tarf Water where the Bedford memorial bridge crosses the falls. Leave the Tilt 100m after the bridge to climb vague switchbacks northwards to flatter, boggier terrain. Continue

northwards up the increasingly pronounced ridge of Sron Coire na Creige. The ground around Coire na Creige is littered with cairns, relics of a time when this area was much more popular. Follow the ridge and the county boundary west over unusually firm ground to Bràigh Coire Caochan nan Laogh. Descend northwest, and climb to Carn Greannach. From here, follow the long westward sweeping arc around An Glas Choire to the flat summit of An Sgarsoch (GR933837) (3h40). Descend the southwest ridge to a bealach, and then climb grassy slopes

westwards to join the south ridge of Carn an Fhìdhleir. [Detour: walk NNW to reach the summit, and return along the same ridge (add 40 min).] Keep the high ground, and descend south to Leachdann Féith Seagachain before dropping into the wide glen of the Allt a'Chaorainn towards the Tarf Water. Follow this east for 2.5km to the remains of a bridge and a barn on the opposite bank. Ford the river here to reach a good track, which is easily followed across the bealach under Dùn Mór and down to the River Tilt (6h40). [Variant: if the Tarf cannot be crossed, continue along the north bank to the Bedford Bridge, and then follow the Tilt downstream (add 40 min).]

Return through Glen Tilt to the start.





## Mount Everest Foundation Fiftieth Anniversary Souvenir Karabiners

29<sup>th</sup> May 2003 will be the Fiftieth Anniversary of the First Ascent of Mount Everest by Ed Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, and the Mount Everest Foundation is proud to commemorate the occasion by offering Souvenir Karabiners for sale. These karabiners are normal strength fully operational karabiners produced by HB Climbing Equipment of Wales, one of the leading manufacturers of mountaineering hardware in Britain, but carry a special imprint : **1953 - EVEREST-2003**

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The Outdoor Adventure Show is another Brand Events creation, the same people that brought you the Ordnance Survey Outdoor show with Climb '03. The Ordnance Survey show is of course happening again this year, on 2-4 April at the NEC, and will be featured in the next Summit, but this is a new addition to the calendar to help you get through the dark winters down south. So what's going to be there?

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(ABOVE) Jon "The Gimp" Partridge cranking at Higgarr Tor. Credit: Alex Messenger.



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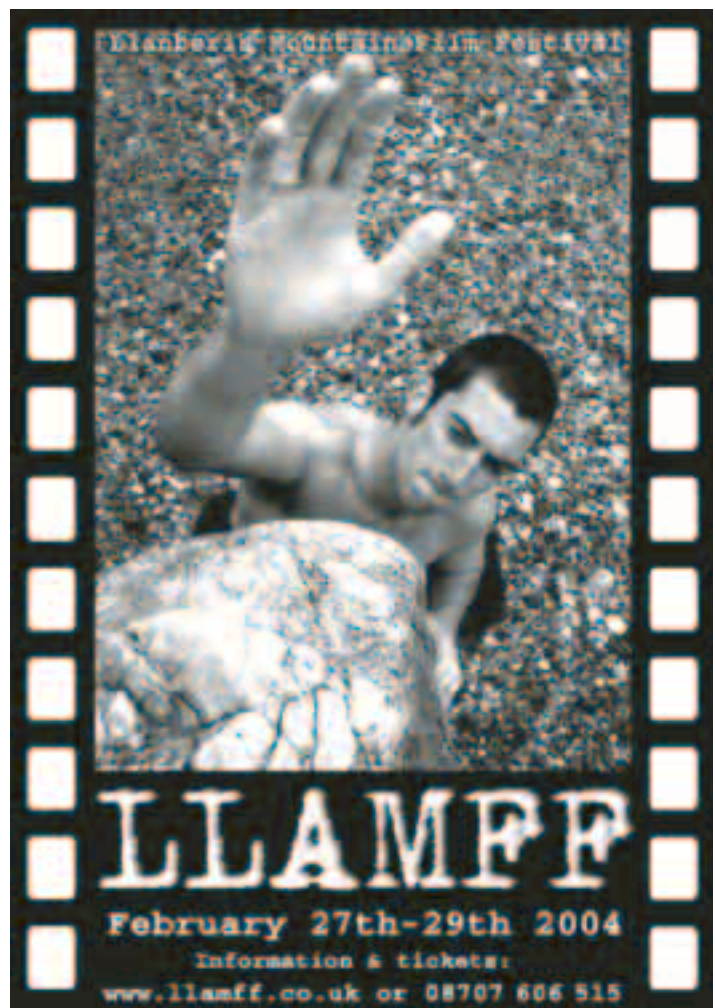
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## Llanberis Mountain Film Festival

**27-29 February**

The Llanberis Mountain Film Festival is returning for a second year following the fantastic success of '02, and this time it's set to be even better. A great programme is shaping up, including the North Wales premiere screening of "Touching the Void", and "the Best of Kendal" Plus varied work from John Redhead, Mark Reeves, Colin Goodey, Eric Jones, the Pritchard/Heap team, and international contributors. This year also sees an expanded range of speakers, from alpinist Al Powell, to paraglider Bob Drury and bouldering know-it-all Simon Panton. It's set to be a great weekend, so see [www.llamff.co.uk](http://www.llamff.co.uk) for full details.

## Scottish Winter Climbing Performance Seminar

**21-23 February**

Based at Glenmore Lodge this is primarily a hill based, 'hands on' weekend. In past years some of the key climbers involved have included Johnny Baird, Mark Charlton, Rich Cross, Andy Cunningham, John Lyle, Scott Muir, Andy Nisbet, Mike Pescod, Al Powell, Jon Preston, and Ollie Saunders. Although the word 'performance' can sometimes put

people off, no matter what your experience there are lots of top tips and handy hints to pick up. From leading strategies, moving fast on mixed terrain, winter anchor and belay options, through to seconding some hard snow plastered mixed routes. Whether you are just starting out in the Scottish winter scene or an established activist, the 4<sup>th</sup> Scottish Winter Performance Seminar has something to offer everyone. Check out the website for further updates at [www.glenmorelodge.org.uk/events/winterseminars](http://www.glenmorelodge.org.uk/events/winterseminars).

## Chicks Unleashed

**12 - 14 March**

Chicks Unleashed is a winter mountain seminar for women, based at Glenmore Lodge. It aims to bring together women of all abilities who share a passion for the mountains and would like to further their mountaineering or climbing skills in an all female environment. During the weekend there will be three clinics available to participate in: Skills, Mountaineering and Climbing. All the clinics have been designed by women and will be led by some of the most experienced female mountaineering instructors around. There will be free gear trials and an auctioning of some of this gear on the Sunday evening. Money raised will go towards 'White Mountain Dreams' - an exciting new

charity currently being set up in Scotland to encourage women in to the hills. For full details check out [www.chicks-unleashed.co.uk](http://www.chicks-unleashed.co.uk).

## Mountain Literature Fest.

**27 March**

The 17th International Festival of Mountaineering Literature is returning to Bretton Hall Campus where Royal Robbins will answer the question 'Who is the best American climbing writer?' and Kathryn Bridge from Canada will talk about the life of Phyllis Munday. Watch out for further details on the festival website at: [www.festivalofmountaineeringliterature.co.uk](http://www.festivalofmountaineeringliterature.co.uk)

## BMC AGM 2004

**24 April**

Advance notice! The BMC AGM 2004 will be on Saturday 24 April 2004 at Bristol Grammar School. Friday evening activities and the Saturday evening dinner will be at the Holiday Inn, Bristol.

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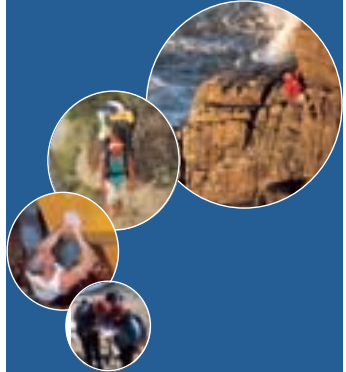
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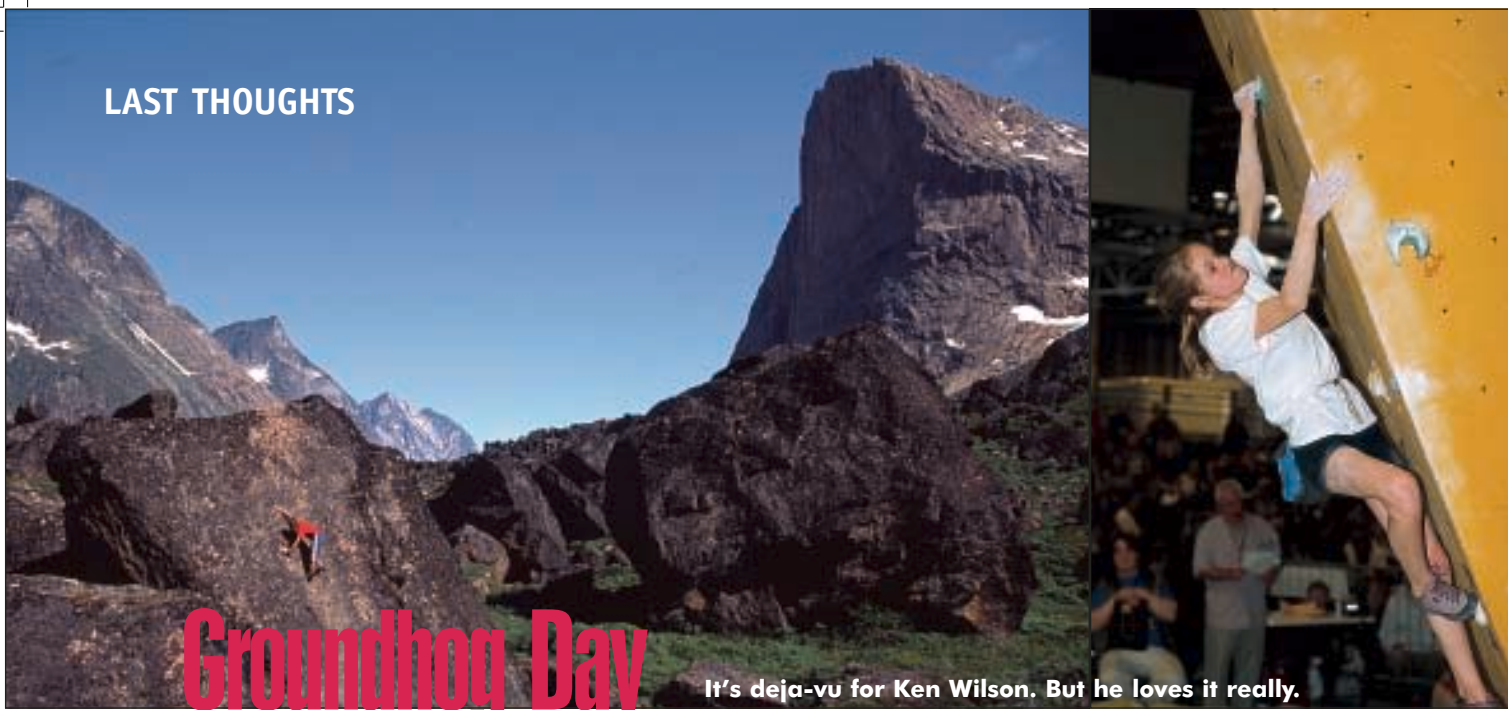
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# Groundhog Day

It's deja-vu for Ken Wilson. But he loves it really.

After three years of financial deficits and rumblings of discontent from both individual members and the major clubs, our national body is undertaking a Future Policy review. This is a process where a few luckless souls are locked away and told to make a searching review of past and present, and attempt to fashion general policies to guide the BMC for next few years.

Do we need more or less insurance? Should we continue to publish guidebooks? Should the BMC be seeking to take on new tasks or consolidating frugally behind its necessary duties? How do we revitalize the Areas where there are many crags and access issues needing local support? What should be the main work areas? The BMC needs the answers to these types of the questions to enable it to make the key decisions for the future.

For me this is like a Groundhog Day. I took part in the review of the early 1970s under Alan Blackshaw when the move to Manchester was made and the process of challenging the certification policies of the training bodies was begun. The Groundhog emerged, sniffed the air, liked it and we had 10 years of reasonable governance. In the early 1980s the icy winds of discontent were blowing again and under the Chairmanship of Wil Butler the process was far less radical. Tightening and retrenchment was the order of the day then – trying to put some sort of brake on the never-ending pressure to expand. The Groundhog sniffed the air, emerged, but under protest. In the late 90s we had a range of policies (some good, some more questionable) made “on the hoof” so to speak, with questionable judgement about their long-term wisdom. But now a new winter of discontent is back, subs are going up (well, except for clubs...) and there are rumblings of concern and a series of expensive and near disastrous “adventures”. I wake up again in the cold political steppes of future policy and stumble from meeting to meeting trying to unravel our seemingly perennial problems.

But what part does the “average” person have to play in this process? Most, quite sensibly, will wish to ignore tedious politics and just get out climbing. But conversely we now have a group of opinionated web-based activists champing on the bit about everything the BMC does, debating it *ad nauseum* on the ukclimbing site – a process thus far exuding much heat but rather less light.

In the hope that there are those interested enough to contribute some genuine wisdom to the debate I have been charged with the task of *provoking* you into letting us know your views. A good example of this was provided recently when Lyndon Gill started bombarding me with emails saying that the BMC was in danger of commending policies that would result in club climbers and particularly university climbers needing to take a training course and get insurance cover before they could introduce others to climbing. Clearly this would mark an ominous advance of badges and testing into mainstream climbing.

So what is wrong with present policies? What should we abandon? What should be taken on board? What could we do better? What are we doing well? Are there any exciting new ideas that we should be considering? Or is the mandate merely to do the essential and do it better?

To give you a provocative sampler I have one “idea” that I am keenly advancing to anyone who will listen and may send some of you into apoplexy: We now have the technology to build artificial cliffs and edges that look and feel like the real thing. There is no reason, given political and fund raising skill, why we cannot get some built in suitable cliff-starved but useful locations (such as near the southern end of the M1). Such cliffs could be established in the same manner that make natural cliffs so successful: in fine locations with nice views, facing the sun and with a no rules, no payment and a natural protection regime – a Burbage North near Milton Keynes, an Almscliff on the North Orbital, an Idwal Slabs in Oxfordshire – the possibilities are endless!

Others on the Future Policy Group have their plans as well. But what is your vision for the future? Let us know! The 10 area consultation meetings are proving very informative, but if you missed out then just use the web, John Horscroft is monitoring the BMC forums with a keen eye and reporting back from the front line.

If general themes emerge we will have to take note, and if there is some particular pearl of wisdom that is offered, be prepared to be dragged kicking and screaming to one of our meetings to expand on your idea. Who knows, you too might become enmeshed in the BMC and in thirty years time be groping through mid 21<sup>st</sup> century mountain problems in a continuing Groundhog Day of recurring themes. I bet you just can't wait. II

**Note:** This is a personal view by Ken Wilson. Ken loves arguing, visit the BMC forum on ukclimbing.com if you do too...

## THE FUTURE POLICY STEERING GROUP AIMS:

**Future Challenges.** Defining the main challenges facing the BMC over the next 10 years. Advising how the BMC should address these issues. This includes international, national and regional issues.

**Activities and Priorities.** Reviewing the BMC's priorities (access, training, youth, competitions etc) and sub-committee structure.

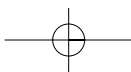
**Volunteers and Staff.** Reviewing the relationship between volunteers and staff within the BMC. Advising how the BMC can better support volunteers and an appropriate level of staffing.

**Membership Structure.** Reporting on the BMC's membership structure and the relationship between the costs and benefits of club and individual membership. Making recommendations for a future membership structure.

**Management Structure.** Advising on any necessary improvements to the BMC management structure.

**On the Group:** Bob Moulton (Chair), Andy Cave, Miriam Denny, Anna Gregory, John Horscroft, Paddy O'Neil, John Mason, Iain Peter, Kate Philips, Ian Smith, Dave Turnbull, Mark Vallance and Ken Wilson.

(LEFT) Miles Gibson bouldering in Greenland. Credit: Nick Boden.  
(RIGHT) BRYCS competitor at Climb '03, NEC. Credit: Messenger.  
Same sport, just different locations, but some believe young people shouldn't be encouraged to climb. What do you think?



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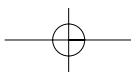
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