



Hundreds of crowded climbers are seen slowly making their way up the summit of Everest close to where British climber Daniel Paul Paterson, 40, and his guide went missing on Tuesday

Three cover shots this time (l to r) Sad News; Great News & Congratulations!! & Ridiculous!

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2 – 4	Noticeboard / Future Events	<p>Sadly the committee had to agree with Nigel's request to cancel the Rhinogs coach as he only had 13 people booked on the coach by June 2nd and the Club stood to lose over £500. He has to let Robinsons know the Monday prior to any Meet as this is when they place the coaches & drivers for the week ahead &, if he didn't, we'd be charged. At £25 a seat for members we thought the coach was still a real bargain (other companies ask £65-70 for a day out if you book with them!) but to try and encourage more people to book the committee have decided to trial NEW, EVEN LOWER, PRICES FOR COACH SEATS FOR THE SUMMER !!! It seems more & more people (wimps?) are leaving it to the last minute to book in case the weather forecast is poor, which puts the monthly Meets at risk so this will hopefully prevent this happening again this year. BUT PLEASE BOOK EARLY if you know you want to be on the coach!! You'll find a questionnaire on coach meets inside – please complete it.</p> <p><u>STOP PRESS: WBMC MEMBER WESLEY MARKS SUMMITS BARUNTSE</u> On 25th May I received a message from Wesley Marks with the photo of him in the Himalaya (above) standing on top of Baruntse. At 7162m (23,497 ft) this represents the highest summit ever reached by a WBMC member! He went out there with 8K Expeditions to attempt the peak as part of his preparations to eventually climb Manaslu, the 8th highest peak in the world at 8163m (26,781 ft) More inside!!</p>
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<p>This Newsletter was produced by John Edwards. Thanks to those members who got in touch and contributed information. Articles are ALWAYS welcome so please feel free to write an account of your recent adventures or trips, especially if they involve other Club members. Equally if you spot something interesting about the mountains please get in touch with John via jaejed@hotmail.com Also check out our Wikipedia entry https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bromwich_Mountaineering_Club</p>		

The Club Discount Code is now AF-BMC-M75

NOTICEBOARD**WELCOME**

A very warm welcome to new provisional members Darren Beards & Matthew Whitehouse. We hope you will both enjoy having fun with WBMC and that the Club will become an important part of your lives.

PROGRAMME OF FUTURE EVENTS:**COACH MEETS TO THE HILLS :-**

Sunday 21st July – Braithwaite Coach

Sunday 11th Aug – Cadair Idris & Barmouth

Sunday 8th September – Coniston Fells

Reserve your seat with Nigel Tarr (07703 345729) and be guaranteed a great day on the hills or an amble through beautiful villages.

These leave W. Brom at 7am & usually return around 9 – 9.30 pm giving ~7 hrs on the hills with linear walks often possible. If you don't fancy a long walk why not come along for a social day out?

EVENING OUTDOOR MEETS (2 – 4 mile walks, starting ~1830 & ending at a pub) :-

Thursday 18th July Mystery Tour with Geordie Hind. Actually it's an **8km circular walk at Hanbury!** Arrive 18:15 for a 18:30 start at the Car Park (£2) located off the B4090 at GR SO915 631 (WR9 7DU or slant.irritable.pelting on What3Words). The route takes in the Worcester/Birmingham canal & the N T's Hanbury Hall but a shorter route is available by walking south down the canal. It will visit the "Eagle & Sun" pub, which will provide meals if there are sufficient takers. A short walk from the pub will take us back to the car park. If you require a meal, contact Geordie Hind on 07505364318 or geordiehind@gmail.com with your choice by Thursday 11th July.

Thursday 8th August Sandwell Valley led by Rob Allen. Starting from Sandwell Park Farm Car Park B71 4BG (Grid Ref SP018913) at 6.30pm. Meet from 1815 for the 6km walk around the Country Park including up to the gun emplacements. Food & drinks at The Red Lion afterwards & recommend you book if you want food as the pub can get very busy.

Thursday 5th September Wyre Forest or maybe Kinver Edge led by Dan Bow

COMMITTEE MEETINGS & SOCIAL NIGHTS AT THE RED LION (B71 1RH) :-

Thursdays 25th July; 15th August & 12th September Committee meetings start at 7.30pm & observers are welcome. Otherwise come along at ~ 8.30 pm for a drink & a chat or meal.

INDOOR CLIMBING AT "HIGH PLACES" (KIDDERMINSTER CLIMBING WALL)

A group of WBMC members have been indoor climbing at High Places, based at Wyre Forest Leisure Centre, Siverwoods Way, Kidderminster DY11 7DT on the **last Tuesday of every month from 6 to 9.30pm** They have a WhatsApp group that enables them to keep in touch and if you want to be added to this group or have more information about who goes, cost etc please feel free to get in touch with Pete Poultney 07779 366905 or peterpoultney@hotmail.co.uk Also see <https://www.placesleisure.org/centres/wyre-forest-leisure-centre/centre-activities/climbing/> for more details of how folk can use the Centre.

INDOOR CLIMBING AT "REDPOINT" (BIRMINGHAM CLIMBING CENTRE)

A group of WBMC members has started indoor climbing every week at Redpoint Climbing & Bouldering Centre, 77 Cecil Street, Newtown, Birmingham B19 3ST at **12 noon on Wednesdays & Saturdays.** They have a WhatsApp group that enables them to keep in touch and if you want to be added to this group or have more information about who goes, cost, standards etc please feel free to get in touch with Darren Groutage via 07973 405348 or dgroutage10@outlook.com

Also see <http://www.redpointbirmingham.co.uk/> for details of how folk can use the Centre / registration and the various courses they offer.

WEEKENDS & OTHER MEETS :-**CLUB TRIP TO SLOVENIA 6th - 13th JULY (NON-MEMBERS ARE ALSO WELCOME)**

There are now 13 individuals booked to go to Kranjska Gora in Slovenia for a week in July and anyone is welcome to join the group. Kranjska Gora is a pretty town in the Julian Alps and there is mix of activities available, including some good climbing & via ferrata. Some booked are planning to do some fairly hard hikes like Triglav, Mangart, Prisank or Spik and others are interested in something more relaxing. Jan Cox will lead one optional easy ascent to the border with Slovenia, Italy and Austria where the challenge is to get at least one limb

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in each country before heading of to a hut in Austria for coffee & cake! There will be another optional led walk around Sleme at the top of the Vrsic Pass. But folk are free to do their own thing. We can keep in touch via WhatsApp regarding daily activities. There are loads of easy 8 to 20km (less if you use the bus) local walks along the valley. It is also possible to hire a vehicle or taxi if groups want to go further afield like Lake Bled or rafting on the River Soca. Folk are responsible for their own travel arrangements and accommodation. Kranjska Gora is about 45min by taxi from Ljubljana airport (takes longer by bus). There is a plentiful range of accommodation in the town and two big supermarkets as well as various eateries. The food is good and the beer cheap. For those who want an easy life Tui are offering a room with breakfast and evening meal in the 4* Best Western (with pool) in Kranjska Gora, including flight from Birmingham and hotel transfer for £870 pp (price accurate on 28/12/23). Let me know if you have booked or are interested/looking for a roommate and I'll add you to the WhatsApp group.
Jan Cox jan_cox@tiscali.co.uk

CLIMBING WEEKEND AT THE HUT 12th-14th JULY

New committee member Dan Bow is hosting a weekend in July that anyone who is a competent trad climbing leader is welcome to attend. Members who are not used to leading are also welcome providing they come as a pair where the other person is a competent trad leader. He has also got 4 spaces for people who want to learn some of the skills of outdoor climbing. They don't need any outdoor experience but do need to have the skills of an indoor climber (i.e. can belay and tie in) as a minimum. If you are interested please get in touch with him via 07969 741112 or dan@pinnacle-adventures.co.uk

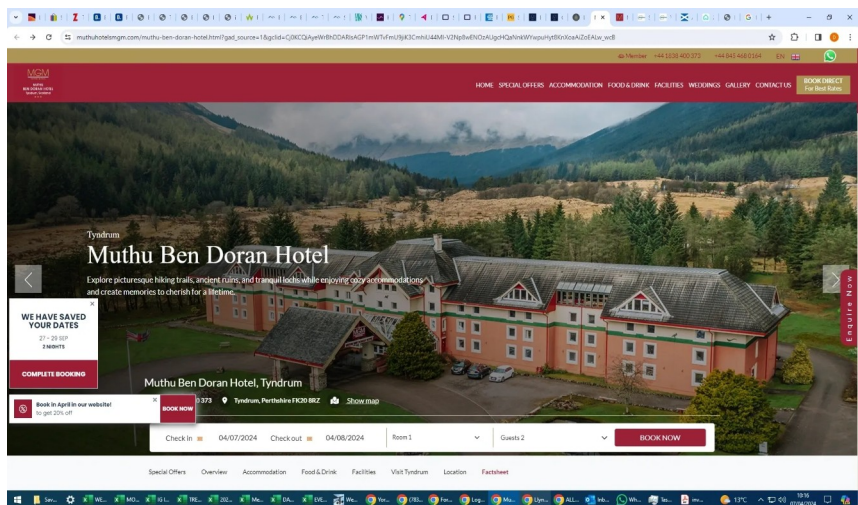
If you haven't got the skills to attend this weekend but want to learn them Dan has managed to get a deal with the climbing wall at Wyre Forest Leisure Centre for their basically indoor competency course. WBMC members can do each session for £10.50 so £31.50 for the course, which is slightly better than half price!! These sessions run Tuesday and Thursday evenings and they need to book by emailing annaliese foster@placesleisure.org

SCOTTISH CORBETT WEEKEND AT TYNDRUM 27 - 29th SEPTEMBER 2024

The "Amazing WBMC Event of 2024" will be a late-summer Scottish Weekend at the beautiful location of Tyndrum, when Andy Brown will be attempting his last Scottish Corbett.

The attempt will be made on BEINN CHUIRN on Saturday 28th weather permitting & the walk will start directly from the hotel so no car driving is involved. If the weather is too bad to attempt the summit we will have Sunday to reconvene and try again. The Saturday evening is planned as a Social meal in the Hotel where we can all eat together. This will be a standard fare 3 course meal. It is then envisaged that people can make their own way home on the Sunday or stay the Sunday evening if you want to by informing the hotel yourself.

A two night stay has been negotiated at Muthu Ben Doran Hotel (FK20 8RZ) tel: 01838 400373 for the price of £55pp on the Friday and £75pp on the Saturday as this includes an evening meal. Single supplements are + £30. Most rooms are twin with a few doubles, so first come first served for any double rooms. The Plan is to all meet on Friday 27th September and make your own way to the hotel. If you are interested in attending it is **up to individuals to book with the hotel direct & they have said that booking by email is preferable using a group Code of G2125** along with Reservation No **103157** to reservations.cc3@muthuhotelsmgm.com If you can give them your full name & telephone no. (and the full name & tel no. of the person you will be sharing with if you are sharing) and they will contact you to take the payment. The deposit is £60pp and the reference is still 'Mountaineering club'. The FULL balance MUST then be paid by 30th August 2024.



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Once the deposit is paid, could you please contact Darren Groutage (07973-405348) or info@wbmc.org so he can organise Names and Numbers on the trip?

WOMEN’S WEEKEND AT THE HUT FRIDAY 13th – SUNDAY 15th SEPTEMBER

Always popular and a great culinary success so we’re told, the 2024 Women’s Weekend organiser is again Vanessa Biddulph so contact her (07709 514180) to secure your place for a weekend of walking, eating and possibly wild swimming & male-dissing.

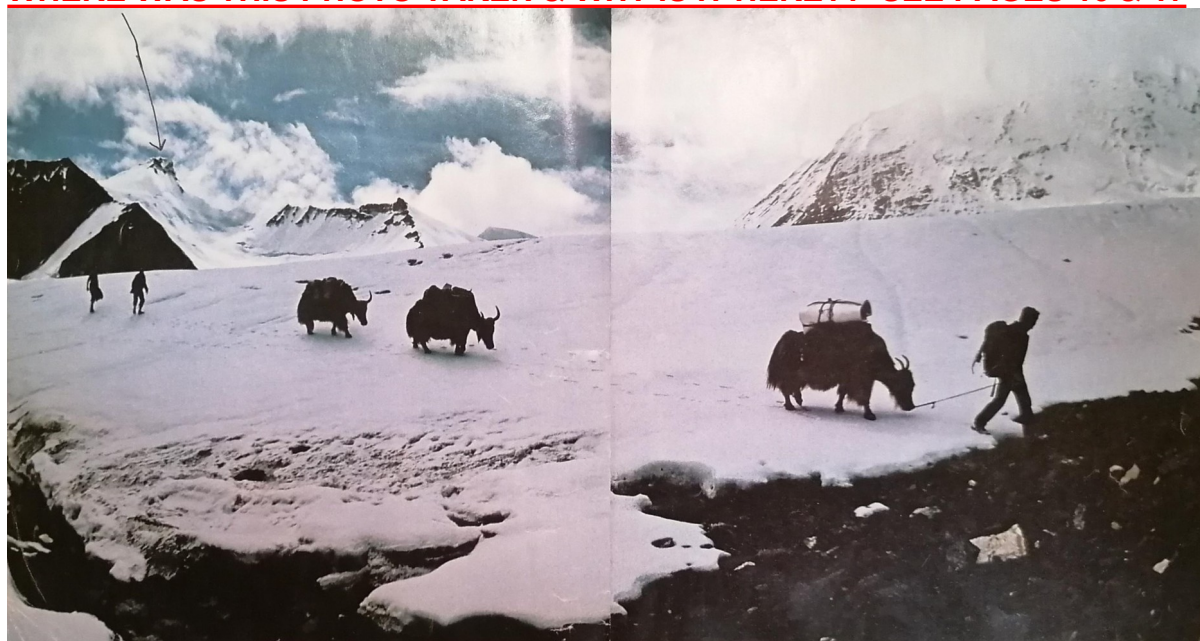
TRAILFEST WEEKEND Friday 27th - Saturday 29th September

The first of 2 weekends for those who like running. Contact Pete Poultney (07779 366905) for more information and how to book your place on the event and in the Hut.

CYCLING WEEKEND FROM THE HUT Friday 18st – Saturday 20th October

Jonathan Howells (07859 932389) will likely to be hoping to encourage the Club’s cyclists to “get on their bikes” & enjoy some spectacular Snowdonia scenery on this autumn weekend which is based at the Hut.

WHERE WAS THIS PHOTO TAKEN & WHY IS IT HERE?? SEE PAGES 16 & 17



A REMINDER OF YOUR 2024/5 COMMITTEE & CONTACT DETAILS

President: Mike Thompson	07773 944316	sir.m.thompson1940@icloud.com
Chair: David Hellyar	07732 051073	hellydav@live.co.uk
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Secretary: Jan Cox		secretary@wbmc.org
Treasurer: Claire Hammonds	07761 571464	treasurer@wbmc.org or clairehammonds@btinternet.com
Membership Sec: Tony Emms	07793 008582	membership-secretary@wbmc.org or toniemms@aol.com
Hut Secretary: Fred Hammonds	07527 744481	hut-secretary@wbmc.org or f.hammonds@btinternet.com
Coach Secretary: Nigel Tarr	07703 345729	tarnigel@gmail.com
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Will Holmes	07866 516844	will.holmes1@yahoo.co.uk
Jonathan Howells	07859 932389	jhowells42@gmail.com

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SUNDAY 21st JULY: BEAUTIFUL BRAITHWAITE COACH MEET**Depart West Bromwich:** 7:00am Edward St

Car Park (B70 8HU)

Pick Up: ~7:20am Penkridge**Drop offs:** Scales (340268)

Keswick A66/A591 Roundabout (264244)

Braithwaite (236236)

Pick ups: Braithwaite (236236)

Keswick Coach Station (264234)

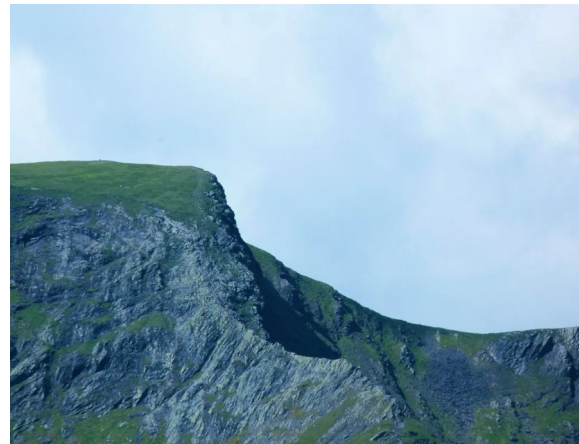
Scales (340268)

Required maps: OS 1:25000 Outdoor Leisure

No4 The English Lakes NW -Ennerdale & Derwent

No5 The English Lakes NE -Ulleswater&

Haweswater

*East end of Blencathra with Sharp Edge in foreground***Suggested Routes:****FROM SCALES Route 1 : Blencathra via Sharp Edge** (Approx 15km / 9.5miles)

From Scales Farm (340268) follow the path past Mousthwaite Comb (344275) and then turn NE to Scales Tarn (9329281). As you arrive, Sharp Edge is the obvious Ridge on the skyline, this is your next destination- an easy Grade 1 Scramble except that the rock slopes the wrong way! At the top an easy walk takes you to the top of Blencathra. Then continue along the grassy ridge to Knowe Craggs (312270). Finally head NW to footbridge over Glenderaterra Beck (296278) and then climb to the path junction of the Cumbria Way (293279). Follow this South past Lonscale Craggs and eventually into Keswick.

FROM KESWICK ROUNDABOUT Route 2 : Little Man & Skiddaw + other tops if desired

Follow the road from the roundabout (264244) to Briar Rigg (267241) and follow the Cumbria Way past a car park (283255). Start climbing steeply to the summit of Little Man (266278) continue on a good path to Skiddaw. Descend the very steep West face of Skiddaw to Carlside Tarn (256283) and if time permits walk out to Ullock Pike. Retracing your steps climb to the summit of Carlside and descend south to Millbeck (256262). Follow the road into Applethwaite and follow the Allerdale Ramble (265255) back into Keswick. (Approx 16km-10miles)

FROM BRAITHWAITE Route3 : The Coledale Horseshoe (Approx 17.5km-11miles)

From Braithwaite ascend the long ridge to Grisdale Pike (199226). Descend the ridge to Hobcarton Crag following the edge to Hopegill Head (186222). Descend south and then climb over Sand Hill to Coledale Hause (189211). From here walk SW to the top of Grassmoor. Leave the summit and continue East over Crag Hill, down the Scar and over Sail. At the col (205205) you have two choices depending on the time available, either ascend Causey Pike (219209) then descend to Stoneycroft (233213), this leaves a short road walk into Braithwaite. Alternatively from the col descend via Stile End (221219) back into Braithwaite.

REDUCED PRICES FOR THE SUMMER !!**Fares: Members £19, Non members £20, Under 18's & Full time students £10****To Book Your Seat contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729***Should you cancel after the Wednesday prior to the coach date a £5.00 fee will be charged.**Failure to turn up without cancelling and the full coach fare will be expected from you.***The Club Discount Code is now AF-BMC-M75**

SUNDAY 11th AUGUST : COACH TO CADAIR IDRIS & BARMOUTH**Depart West Bromwich:** 7: 00am

Edward St Car Park (B70 8NN)

Pick Up: 07: 20 –Service Road M54 Junction 2**Drop offs:** Dinas Mawddwy (856150)

Minffordd (729113)

A470/A493 (714182)

Barmouth (610158)

Pick ups: Barmouth (610158)

Dolgellau (728180)

Cross Foxes (766166)

Required maps: OS 1:25000 Outdoor

Leisure Map No 23 Snowdonia – Cader area

or 1:50,000 Sheet 124 Dollgellau area

Suggested Routes:**FROM DINAS MAWDDWY****Route 1 : Climbing on Craig Cywarch (10 km / 6 miles)** A chance for rock climbers to get an early drop off (& late pick-up) and head for the climbs 5 km north of the village.**Route 2 : Nev Tandy's Mid Wales Mountain Marathon – First Section (19 km / 12 miles)**

A great linear walk made possible using the coach. Walk up to Bwlch Siglen (837137) , then West & North to Maesglase (top now at 817150). Then turn South West to the narrow ridge of Craig Portas (802141),

then North across the flat tops of Cribin Fach & Cribin Fawr (795153). Then SW again to col (790150) and on to Waun-Oer (786148). Then drop down NW to Cross Foxes to await coach at hotel or, if you're feeling fit, use the minor road to get yourself to the Dolgellau pick up (728180)

FROM MINFFORDD**Route 3 : Cader Idris via Cwm Cau (14 km / 8½ miles)** The 'Classic route' starts beyond the gateposts by heading up steeply through woodland before emerging and curving left to Lyn Cau. Just before the lake (721124) take the left fork up a stony track to the rim of the Cwm. Turn West to reach the summit of Craig Cwm Amarch (711121) before curving North with one sizeable descent before rising to the summit – Pen Y Gadair (711130) with its shelter. Leave 'Idris's Chair' by heading E across the range to reach Mynydd Moel & Gau Graig to join the path going NW to Dolgellau at 754151 – a more 'interesting' route than the 'Pony Path' according to Mel.**Route 4 : Cader & the ridge West (19 km / 11½ miles)** If you want to finish by the seaside check with Nigel first ! If OK for pick-up follow Route 3 to Pen Y Gadair summit (711130) but then head West along **Nev's Mid Wales Mtn Marathon – Final Section** ie the grassy ridge over Tyrrau Mawr (677136) , Craig Y Llyn (660115) & Braich ddu (645121) before dropping down to Blue Lake (621121), & Friog (618127) using rights of way before a final 2km of road to Fairbourne parking (611136)**Route 5 : Cader Idris from the East (15 km / 9 miles)** Start at lay-by on A487 (753135) and head for white post (755151) before turning West to climb onto Gau Graig (744141) the easternmost peak on the Cader plateau with great views. Then SW & W to Mynydd Moel (728137) and on to Pen Y Gadair (711130). Descend to Dolgellau (728180) via Pony Path or the badly eroded Fox's Path.**FROM FAIRBOURNE****Route 6 : Coastal Walking & Bird Watching on the Mawddach Estuary (various distances)**

Take the edge of estuary path to Morfa Mawddach station and cross the 150 yr old bridge to Barmouth which should now have re-opened. Or carry on 'The Mawddach Trail' to Mawddach Crescent & Arthog, perhaps visiting the waterfalls before returning via paths or main road.

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SUNDAY 8th SEPTEMBER: CONISTON FELLS COACH MEET**Depart West Bromwich:**

7:00am Edward Street Car Park (B70 8NN)

Pick up: 7.20am in Penkridge**Short Break:** M6 - Charnock Richard Services**Dropping off at:** Torver (284 942)

Coniston (303 975)

Picking up at: Coniston (303 975)**Required Maps:** OS. 1:25000 Outdoor Leisure Map -No.6. The English Lakes -South Western area (plus Map No. 7 – South Eastern area for lower level walks in the Tarn Hows region)**Suggested routes****(N.B. A LED WALK WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON THE COACH)**

Route 1: Dow Crag & Old Man (19km/12miles) Leave the coach and head N to Old Quarries (278960) & onto the Old Walna Scar Road (274965). Head on up the cove to Goats Water - you could go up the RHS of the tarn to Goats Hause (265983) but a more spectacular route is to take the path on the LHS & head up to the mountain rescue post and the foot of Easy Gully. The East face of Dow Crag is very spectacular and not for walkers except for this steep but relatively easy breach, which heads diagonally upwards to exit just south of the summit of Dow Crag (262978). Then go N, then E, to Goats Hause & uphill in a SE direction to the summit of Coniston Old Man (272978). From the summit head E then NE (273977) & descend to Lows Water (275981), pass through old mine workings & cross path junction (284981) to Miners Bridge (293980). Keep on RHS of beck through the farm past the Sun Inn & into Coniston. If you wish to bypass Easy Gully or "bag" more tops, continue along Walna Scar Road, cross stream (271964) to path junction on RHS (258964). Follow path over Brown Pike (260966) Buck Pike (262972) to Dow Crag summit..

Route 2 : Old Man , Swirl How & Wetherlam (14km/ 9 miles) From Coniston follow the paths to the Miners Bridge (294980), and continue past Crowberry Haws to Low Water (275982). A steep path now leads to the summit of The Old Man of Coniston (272978). From the summit head N along the ridge to Swirl How (273005). Descend steeply to the East down the rocky Prison Band & continue on up to Wetherlam (288011). Descend the grassy ridge to Furness Fells (292000) & continue on vague paths to Hole Rake (293991). From here good paths lead down to Coppermines Valley & Coniston.

Route 3 : Old Man & Swirl How (11km/7 miles) Proceed as for **route 2** along the main Coniston ridge to Swirl How (273005) then descend steeply to the East down the rocky Prison Band to Swirl Hause (278008). From here take a more direct route South past Levers Water (282994) and along the Coppermines Valley back to Coniston..

Route 4 : Relatively low level to Tarn Hows (10km/6 miles) Head along roads to Shepard's Bridge (304976) and then hit the Cumbria Way to Tarn Hows. Then to the A593 at Oxen Fell High Cross (328017) and return to Coniston by paths that run to the right of the road.

Route 5 : Wetherlam (14km/ 9 miles) Head NW to Miners Bridge (295981) and then take the path through the disused quarries that lead to Hole Rake (293991) and then reverse route 1 to the summit of Wetherlam (288011). Leave the summit along the NE ridge and descend until you hit the path in Greenburn (295023) which heads off E, then S To Tiberthwaite (306010) from where minor roads lead to the A593 and a footpath running parallel to this takes you back to Coniston.

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UK HILLWALKING INTERVIEW WITH BMC CEO PAUL RATCLIFFE

Towards the end of May CEO, Paul Ratcliffe, announced the BMC had made a £650,000 loss in the 2023 financial year! Paul only took up his position in February 2024 so Rob Greenwood of UK Hillwalking website interviewed him to hear about how he plans to tackle this latest bad news, along with other systemic issues at the organisation. The 30 minute interview recording can be viewed on You Tube at

https://www.ukhillwalking.com/news/2024/05/an_interview_with_bmc_ceo_paul_ratcliffe-73687?utm_campaign=ukh_2024_22&utm_medium=email&utm_source=ukh_newsletter & a precis follows:-

Rob Greenwood: Paul, when we first arranged to do this interview a month ago the idea was to give you the platform to introduce yourself, your background, how those first few weeks were at the BMC & what your plans were for the weeks ahead. Obviously, there's been a slight change of plan because last week, the audit was released announcing a huge deficit for 2023 of £625,000 pounds, but I still think it's worth starting with how those first few months have gone.

Paul Ratcliffe: Yeah, it feels quite a long time ago that I was sat in the pub in Grindleford before the Peak Area meeting. If I look back on the 5th of February, my plan when I started was really to build a lot of engagement with the community, to really understand the finances and get a grip of it & galvanise the team internally - to start to build a team during that first three months.

The starting point as I understood it with the finances, we were probably at around a £280k loss, which was significant in itself, but it felt doable and to move reserves to around £600k by the end of the year. And then the last 3 weeks as we got towards the final stages of the audit, to find out then that we're at a £625k loss put a different perspective on it. But being a competitor used to sitting on the start line and starting from zero every single time, it just sort of resets the starting point for me and it's about working towards a different marker for the longer-term scores.

R.G. I can imagine that when you started you were almost expecting you'd have an uphill struggle with a small deficit but then when the audit news came through you realised that the hill was now significantly steeper. How will you go about rectifying what has got to be one of the key issues for the foreseeable future - balancing the books?

P.R.: Well, step one is really understanding it. Then it's "what you can do about it?" To be clear the main cause was a misunderstanding of how grants operated and misbudgeting them. It sounds really difficult to understand how that's come about - and that's probably traced years back in terms of how the UK Sport grants are understood. So step one is to get clarity on that and what it means to operate them within the budget and the means to do that. The other cause was inaccuracies in VAT estimates of around £61k. We're going to have an internal VAT audit now to look at the last few years to see if there's any other changes that need to be made.

The 3rd reason is that we have £52k of overspend because of mismanagement of contracts & bad debtors. So it's about doing things in the right way. If we're setting up contracts, how are they monitored, how are they reviewed, how are they established? And the insurance last year was a critical one, you'll have seen this year as well we had another one where from the first of November last year, no one in the BMC was on the Financial Conduct Authority until I was put on, so I had to pause insurance which costed us another £18k. So it's about getting proactive in these things and getting proper business ways of working in place now.

And the last one you would have seen - the term "course correction", which I'm not a fan of. Redundancies, people leaving, restructuring was significant at £115k loss. So it's getting all these things shipshape & having a budget we can operate to that's within our means now.

R.G.: One of the things that came out of the open forum meeting last night was the importance of having a head of Finance and Operations to work with you to, as you say, to get the books balanced, the books in shape. Now what's the timeline for that?

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P.R.: We've had some challenges within the finance team and we've been short of staff. So I'm very grateful for UK Sport in advising me in terms of somebody who's best in the system. So we've contracted support in financially from a different sport that's going to take us through a different process and a different way of setting up our budgets and monitoring our budget. So hopefully this stands us in good stead for the for the longer term. And during this phase, we're looking to recruit a Head of Finance & Operations and get them in place for the back end of the summer. I need to make sure we can fit these roles within the budget or not spend money that we've not got at this moment in time.

R.G.: *Now the awkward question: Basically, who is to blame? Is it the board? Your predecessor & the CFO have both gone. You described, I think, a 'systematic failure' or bad management. What are your views on blame and who is, for instance, left on the board and what they should do?*

P.R.: My personal philosophy is you never attach blame to people. I think there's always got to be a collective responsibility. And I think it was the phrase 'systemic failures' and you trace it all the way back from how the contracts were set up with UK Sport and how the grants were established to then how the budgets had been set each year to the budget controls. So there's got to be a collective responsibility for those things. And I know it sounds awful, but you can only ever learn and put systems in place to improve and that's where I'm coming in now. And I'm very fortunate - I think I've got a board who are good advisors to me, it's a collective approach, they're good sounding boards and they want to make a difference and they want to make a change from here on as they've been trying to do over the last 12-18 months as well.

R.G.: *One of the perceived areas of overspend is in GB Climbing. Could you tell a bit about how that team has grown in recent years & what measures have been taken to rein that back in?*

P.R.: Yeah, first of all, I'm fortunate to work with some brilliant staff and brilliant, brilliant coaches in GB climbing, and I think we're in a position where actually performances can grow and the system can grow. I think looking back it perhaps grew a little bit too quickly and in a budget that wasn't there to sustain the amount of staff and the Performance Centre Unit E. We had 4.6 roles that have left since the end of 2023 and with the Unit E Performance Centre, that gives you an indication that we're probably running at circa £200k over the budget. So it's a very difficult situation. So my first step is to get the grants in line to reduce the impact on membership money coming in and we have to operate within our means, within the grant. That's meant difficult decisions for athletes, for coaches in terms of what we can do and what we can't do.

R.G.: *You've come from a canoeing background and you were Head of Performance at British Canoeing. British Canoeing is different from the BMC in many ways, but one of them is that it stemmed from a 'supporting athletes' perspective and later moved into access, whereas the BMC is rooted within access and obviously recently came into - well, relatively recently came into - the competition side of things. What are the differences between the two organisations from your experience?*

P.R.: British Canoeing started in 1936. It was set up for competition, for the Olympic Games, and it's then carried on that tradition, but it's moved into access and participation, whereas the BMC started as a representative body in 1944 and it's grown into this competition phase. So I think both are probably crossing over. You have to learn to move with the times and deal with the modern way, I think, of doing things. British Canoeing is probably grappling with a reduction in members on the competition pathway, whereas we're looking at how we expand and grow that side of things as an entry into into the sports that we love. It doesn't mean if someone's coming into the competition side that they don't go and enjoy a lifelong love of climbing. So I think for me those two crossovers where everybody's loving what they do and enjoying what they do, as an organisation I think we've got a huge role to play in amplifying all the different strategies and parts and parcel of what is the broad church of the BMC. We've probably just not quite found the way of handling that

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yet within the BMC but I hope over the longer term we can be much better for GB Climbing - part of it and better together. **Then came a section about the Olympics**

R.G. *And in terms of membership, what's the direction of travel at the moment? Is it an upwards direction, downwards direction or is it sort of plateauing?*

P.R. So in terms of clubs we're growing, I think we're probably around 336 and then in terms of individual members, we're probably down around 800 on the year so far, but for me, given the climate we've been operating in and some of the cultural issues we've had I think we're pretty stable compared to a few other sports that have lost more members given the cost of living crisis.

I think our first job is to actually take better care of the members that we've got.

R.G. *What would you say to those who have cancelled or at least put on hold their membership for the time being? Can you get them back into the organisation?*

P.R. We've had so many emails even over the last week, some +ve ones, some -ve / cancelling. We're following up with each one of them individually. Our Head of Membership, Arun, has been with us for 20 years and what we're doing is the personal touch; customer service. Finding out why, talking about the good stuff that we're doing, giving them a door back in. So no matter what, we're treating them as people, using a people-first philosophy; putting members at the heart is the way I want to operate. So that's the way we go about it, in a personal way.

There were another 4 pages of transcript so if you want to read the full interview you ought to go online. Also from the BMC.....

MEET THE BMC MEMBER CLIMBING THE SEVEN SUMMITS, FROM SEA LEVEL.

BMC member Madalin Cristea, known as Cris, from Romania, has become the first person to summit both Aconcagua and Kilimanjaro from sea level and back again. He is currently attempting to be the first person ever to climb up and down each of the world's seven summits (the highest mountain on each continent) from sea level - climbing every metre of the mountains up and down.

For Aconcagua, this meant walking 500km across Chile and Argentina. He even had to cross the Andes mountains. For Kilimanjaro, it meant walking 800km across Tanzania and camping in the savanna. We asked Cris about his fantastic challenge to find out more about the adventure so far and how we can all follow his progress. What gave him the idea?

"In my early twenties, I felt very lost. I was stuck in a job I hated with no plans or prospects for my life to improve. Only when I read Bear Grylls autobiography did things start looking up. Bear's story of climbing Everest inspired me to want to climb the seven summits - the highest mountain on each continent. A few years later, I was climbing my first ever mountain. For the next seven years, I was driven by the idea of climbing the seven summits. But over COVID my goal started to evolve. Climbing the seven summits had become very popular. It now felt like the guiding companies were doing much of the heavy lifting to help their climbers reach their goals. I wanted a bigger challenge so I doubled down on my goal, opting to start and end at sea level. A feat never done before."

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Cris grew up in a small town in Romania on the foothills of the Carpathian mountains and used to hike with his parents weekly, but it wasn't until he was 23 and living in London that he climbed his first mountain, Mount Olympus (2918m) in Greece. He met his now-wife later that year and she became his adventure buddy, going on hikes together every chance they could. Cris continued: *"Four years ago, we started a YouTube channel to help raise money for my goal. Since then we've hiked and climbed around the world including; Slovenia, Slovakia, Guatemala, Mexico & Italy. In July last year we climbed Switzerland's highest mountain, Dufourspitze (Monte Rosa) and in August one of Georgia's highest*



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mountains, Mount Kazbek at 5,054m. Living in flat London, it is hard to prepare for the mountains. My training involved doing multiple strength and long, slow cardio sessions a week as well as regular hikes with a heavy backpack.

Aconcagua was my first of the 7 Summits. I flew to Chile on New Year's Eve and started by the sea in Concon on 1 January 2024. The hike to the entrance of Aconcagua park took 7 days but climbing the mountain took much longer. I summited and walked back to the sea in Concon by 28 January. All in all, I hiked over 500km.

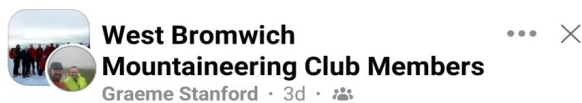
Only a few days later on 3 Feb, I set off for Tanzania. It took 4 flights & an 8 hour bus to reach the seaside town of Tanga. The walk from Tanga to Moshi (the town at the base of Kilimanjaro) took 11 days, the mountain only six days. I finished back in Tanga on 2 March, having hiked over 800km.” Things he learned?

“Many! On my way to Aconcagua my backpack was too heavy. At 12.5kg before food and water I could feel the weight taking a toll on my body on top of the daily mileage and incline. On my Aconcagua trip I also didn't eat enough. By the time I finished, I had lost 8kg. My family and friends were shocked when they saw photos of me.

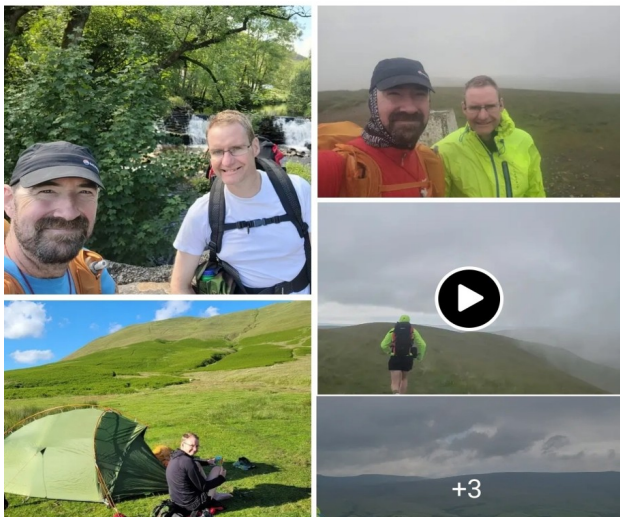
Aconcagua was the harder of the two for me for sure. I struggled with the altitude, lack of sleep and exhaustion a lot on the mountain. Kilimanjaro felt like a holiday in comparison due to the amazing support of our mandatory guides and porters.”

Cris is making documentaries on each of his climbs & you can find them on his YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/c/TraintoSummit> and the same 'handle' is used on Instagram & Strava. There's some great footage on there! And he's looking for team members interested in joining him for one of his next trips! Just reach out!!

WHAT SOME FOLK HAVE BEEN DOING



Chris Dean and I have entered the SLMM (Saunders Lakeland Mountain Marathon) next month. The race is an orienteering challenge over two days carrying full camping gear etc and using no electronic navigation aids at all... oh and you don't know each days route till you get to the start line 😊
This weekend we did two previous SLMM courses as a training weekend. 27 miles, 7284 ft of ascent over two days with a wild camp in the middle... heading home now... drained 🤔



With **Tony Emms** An Teallach including the traverse of the Corrag Bhuidhe pinnacles and (please forgive me my lord) Lord Berkeley's seat. A great day with magnificent atmospherics. Don't mention the rho...see more



👍 Graeme Stanford and 15 others

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COACH MEETS - LIFE BLOOD OF THE CLUB OR A RELIC FROM THE PAST?
PLEASE SEND US YOUR VIEWS!!!

Newer members might find this hard to believe but in the 1980's & '90's if you hadn't booked on the coach by the Wednesday after the last one - ie within 3 days! - you would inevitably find yourself on a long waiting list – that's how fast the coach seats were snapped up by members! The 2001 Foot & Mouth hiatus brought an end to those halcyon days & full coaches have been a rarity since then. It has been necessary to cancel one of the monthly coaches in each of the last 2 years to prevent the Club incurring very significant losses, so maybe it is time to consult the membership again, although I should point out that the Committee has no intention of changing anything at the moment but will be monitoring & reviewing the situation with a view to acting promptly if necessary.

Maybe these cancelled meets were the result of too many members being on holiday or otherwise engaged, coupled with the trend to leave booking until the last minute so folk can get a better idea of the weather forecast, rather than the "come what may, I'll be on the hills testing my waterproof gear" attitude that used to prevail. The same could apply to the June Scrambling Weekend at Patterdale which, surprisingly, had a poor take up and will have cost the Club money. We've also heard of another group that has a coach leaving the West Midlands at 6am every month with cheaper seats than WBMC's and it is generally full. So please, have a think about some of the following **multichoice questions** and send your answers, anonymously if you wish, to newsletter@wbmc.org headed "Coach Questionnaire"

- 1) Do you think ~£20 per seat is ? a) too high b) too low c) about right d) price is irrelevant
- 2) I prefer Coach Meets to be on a) Saturday b) Sunday c) doesn't matter to me
- 3) Re Long Coach Meets which give you more time on the hills (or time for a sociable meal) but get you back to the West Midlands around midnight? a) I Like b) I Dislike c) OK occasionally
- 4) Are most Coach Meet venues? a) too far b) too repetitive c) about right
- 5) Should Coach Meets be available a) every month b) every other month c) every 3 months d) alternate with car meets to more local venues ?
- 6) If a Coach Meet has to be cancelled, would you still like to go on the Meet in private cars sharing petrol costs if this can be arranged? a) Yes b) No c) Maybe d) only if it is local-ish
- 7) Are there too many other Club Weekend Activity events on the programme between the coach meets? a) Yes b) No c) Don't Know d) I think the balance is about right.
- 8) I go on WBMC coach meets? a) every one if I can b) any month I am free - ie around half of them c) once or twice a year d) I don't go on coach meets (because...)

Comments / Amplification (if you have time to share these we'd love to hear them)

In the meantime, PLEASE book as early as you can to prevent future Coach Meets being cancelled unnecessarily.

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WESLEY MARKS SETS A NEW HEIGHT RECORD FOR A WBMC MEMBER!

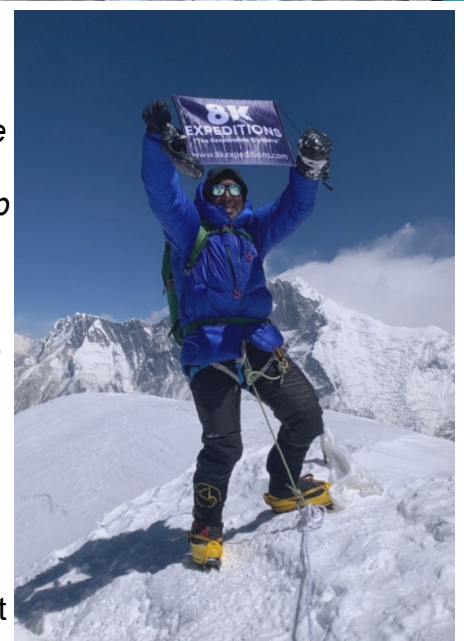
Probably not many WBMC members will know or remember that Wes successfully climbed Aconcagua (6,961 metres / 22,838 ft) back in 2008. That was his last high altitude summit, although as reported on page 12 of the Jan/Feb '24 Newsletter, he has made at least 3 attempts to go higher since then, but was thwarted by bad weather every time. He has hopes of becoming the first WBMC member to summit an 8,000 metre peak by attempting the 8th highest peak in the world, Manaslu (8163m), sometime this autumn - it is one of those mountains you can only climb from the end of August through to early October.

His current trip to the Himalayas this spring was about ensuring he was still able to successfully take on summits of around 7000m and above "as 16 years is a long time!" As you can see from the cover photo he went with "8K Expeditions"

(<https://8kexpeditions.com>) and arrived in Kathmandu on the 12th April. Wes told me "The summit day was very hard. Out of 14 of us attempting to climb Baruntse this spring, only 4 of us made it to the 7162m (23,497 ft) summit !!

We left camp 2 at 11pm on 30th April and I got to the summit on Wednesday 1st May at around 10am (right) The weather for the whole climb had been great, but as we started down from the summit the winds picked up to the point where we could not stay at camp 2, nor even at camp 1. We had no choice but to go all the way back to Base Camp. This made a very long, close to 24 hours, day of ascent & descent. We then had a rest day at Base Camp before starting on the 4-day walk to back Lukla airport. We were then stuck there for 2 days due to bad weather but a flight straight to Kathmandu from there saved a 4 hour drive at the other end. Because the weather had been great for most of the trip and there were no problems with acclimatisation, I arrived back in Birmingham on May 11th, 3 days earlier than I had expected."

I think everyone would agree this was a great achievement by Wes and we all wish him well for his attempt on Manaslu later this year. <https://8kexpeditions.com/package/manaslu-expedition-8163m-8th-highest-mountain-on-the-planet>

**RECENT CLUB ACTIVITIES**

Facebook and Instagram devotees will probably have picked up that there have been lots of Club members active in the hills & crags of UK recently (Torridon, Pembroke, the Gower, Boots & Beers etc) but no articles or summaries have been forthcoming for the Newsletter so I will just be copying some screenshots here & there to give folk a flavour. Most are of the weekends WBMC shared with climbers from other

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Mountaineering Clubs but the group shot was up at Shildaig at the end of May. Many Belshaw uploaded it and wrote "West Bromwich Mountaineering Club wild yurt party. From left to right....Dave Hellyar, Phil, Andy Snape, Mandy Belshaw & a highland cattle thingy, Jan Cox, Bill Douglas & Tony Emms. They ate and drank a lot." !



West Bromwich Mountaineering Club is in **Pembroke, United Kingdom.**

28 May 2024 · 🌐

A few photos of our trip to Pembroke where we joined Bromsgrove and Redditch, Banbury and Rugby in a joint climbing meet.

~By Ken Priest



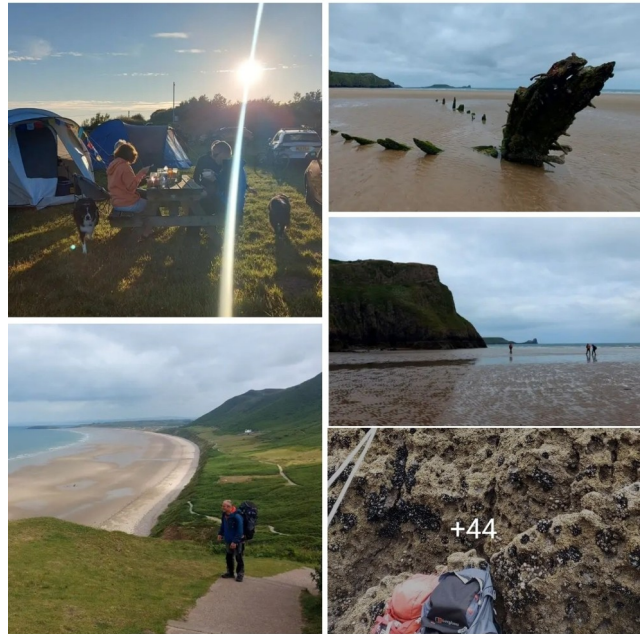
👍 BMC Midlands area and 8 others



Peter Poultney is with **Cliff Brock.**

9h · 👤

Few pics from our annual visit to the Gower. With West Bromwich, Bromsgrove, and Banbury Mountaineering Clubs..



👍❤️ Graeme Stanford and 19 others



👍❤️😄 8



Cliff Brock is with **Ken Priest** and **7 others** at **Pitton Cross Caravan & Camping Park.**

9h · 👤

Great weekend at Pitton Cross campsite with the **Banbury Mountaineering and Climbing Club**, Bromsgrove and Redditch club and the West Brom bunch. Warm, wet, sunny, sandy, beery,



👍 Graeme Stanford and 27 others

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AN INSPIRING STORY FOR JOGGERS, RUNNERS & INDEED ALL OF US

As some readers will know I ramble in the West Midland countryside most midweeks with the Wednesday Walking Club based in Shirley. Recently one of our members, Dan Kennedy, showed me the article below in the North Worcs magazine "The Village" (May 2024) about his daughter, Sam Boswell, of whom he is justly proud. Not only has she regained an amazing level fitness after a major cancer operation but she's written a book about it which some folk may be interested to read!

MY RACE TO RECOVERY

Village athlete Sam Boswell was leading her Ironman UK age group by 40 minutes when pain slowed her to a walk . . . almost two years later, she tells of the cancer that brought a new challenge to her life.

YOU may have seen previous reports published in *The Village* magazine from my triathlon races, including Ironman and various World and European championships as part of Team GB.

In 2022, I entered Ironman UK, hoping to repeat my achievement in 2016 of winning my age group at this race and qualifying for the prestigious Hawaii Ironman.

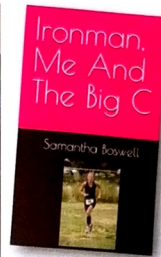
The Ironman is a long-distance triathlon, starting with a 3.9km swim, followed by a 180km bike race and finishing with a 42km marathon distance run . . . only a win would qualify me for Hawaii.

I trained very specifically for this event and preparation went well. On race day, I was comfortably first in my age after the swim and cycling legs, with a lead of around 40 minutes on second place.

Surprisingly, at the age of 51, I was also sitting second lady overall. With the cameras on me in transition, I started the run feeling strong.

But heading up the first steep climb of the run, I felt a sharp pain in my abdominal area. I had not experienced anything like this in training, despite replicating the course as closely as possible.

The pain became worse further into the marathon, and my only option was to resort to walking. I finished second in my age and tenth woman overall.



Sam's book – available on Amazon.



Left: Sam holds a 5kg ball showing the weight of the tumour.

Right: Sam crossing the line carrying the unwelcome 'guest' in 2022.

Disappointed not to take first place, but recovering quickly, I decided to look forward to 2023 and go again.

The week after the race, I noticed a large mass in my abdominal area, where the pain had been. Thankfully, after swift action by my GP, I was referred for urgent scans, comforting myself with thoughts that it couldn't be anything too serious – I had just raced an Ironman!

Three weeks later, my husband and I were sitting in a consulting room being told I had cancer in my abdominal cavity. The shock was made so much worse by the fact we had to return home and break the news to our 16-year-old son.

I had surgery to remove a 5kg mass and spent two months in the Queen Elizabeth hospital in Birmingham recovering from the biggest surgery performed by this hospital.

The surgeons believe the cancer had been there for a long time and were shocked I had raced Ironman carrying such a huge cancer around.

Due to its size, it was necessary to lose a kidney, adrenal gland, part of my bowel, the psoas fascia, part of my abdominal wall and part of the aorta.

When I finally returned home, I was still suffering with considerable pain, with a drain fitted through my back and into my abdominal cavity and I walked with a constant stoop.

For months, I worked on my walk-

ing strength and improving my posture. Now, just over a year on, thanks to the incredible surgery performed by my consultant and the wonderful help and support from friends and family – and my sponsor Elliott Nash Ltd – I am back racing.

Having to pinch myself at the thought of this, I wanted to write a book on my experience, with the aim of giving hope and help to others.

Ironman, Me and the Big C covers how I ventured into Ironman racing, it details training and racing advice and then how I used my training methods to recover from the huge surgery and lengthy stay in hospital.

If I never race Ironman again, it really doesn't matter; so long as that thing never comes back, I will be happy.

But with hope and prayer, I am thrilled to be back training and even standing on a start line again with a number on my back.

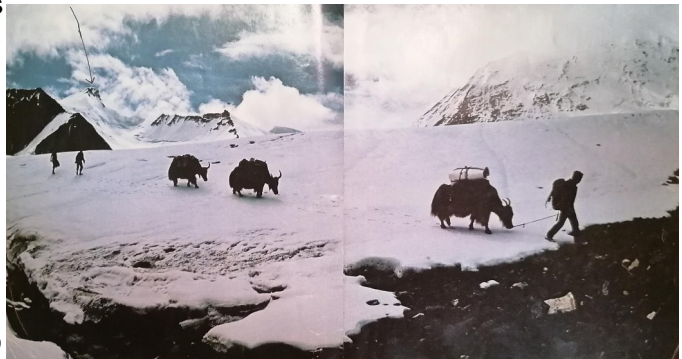
The book is self-published and available on Amazon in both paperback and Kindle versions.

I hope it may help others, whether to provide confidence and advice to someone wanting to try a triathlon or someone struggling with positive thinking or recovering from illness.

I will also be creating a JustGiving page. If I stay clear and well, the hope is to complete some events and races to raise funds and awareness for Sarcoma UK and this very rare cancer.

THE FIRST SOLO ASCENT OF EVEREST BY REINHOLD MESSNER

De-cluttering and looking through old papers because we are moving house, I stumbled across an article from Oct 1981 National Geographic that I'd kept for 2 reasons. The first was it started with a great shot of yaks carrying gear towards Everest, with Lhakpa Ri (7043m), the peak I climbed 25 years later, in the top left corner (arrowed). And the second was it was an account of Reinhold Messner's unique achievement in the annals of mountaineering – the only solo ascent of Everest without oxygen!



In 1950 China barred Westerners from entering Tibet so Messner & Habeler's 1978 Everest ascent without bottled oxygen was from Nepal. However, in 1980 the barred gateway to Everest's northern slopes and Mallory's "Magic Highway" up the Rongbuk Glacier re-opened and, immediately after 2 Japanese teams had scaled the peak from Tibet, Messner & Canadian climber & journalist Nena Holguin followed and set up a high base camp at 6,500m (21,325ft) on Qomolangma (Tibetan's name for the "goddess mother of the world"). This sounds to have been the spot used by the Adventure Peak team I was with in 2006 for our highest camp and is where most teams today pitch before they climb to the North Col.



In 5 am darkness on 18th August 1980 Messner set off on his greatest adventure while Nena manned the camp. As he wrote "this time there were no porters, no fellow climbers, no bottled oxygen, no radio even – I was attempting to climb the highest mountain on earth completely on my own." He was lucky for 2 hrs after setting off for the North Col, 500m above this camp, a snowbridge on his pre-recced route collapsed and his

fall into a crevasse was only stopped by a tiny ledge. He extricated himself with his only climbing hardware – ski poles, ice axe, an ice screw & a rock piton - and carried on. At 7,500m he could feel himself slowing considerably and he told himself he must not become exhausted as the next 2 days would be even more strenuous. Under the weight of his 15 kg (33 lb) rucksack that contained tent, sleeping bag, stove, fuel, food & climbing gear he would have to stop every dozen steps or so and gasp for breath - something I remember doing at 3,000 ft lower altitude :-). At 7,800m he found a good bivouac spot and, having completed more than his target 1,200m ascent, trod down the snow until its surface was firm. He could see Nena's tent way below so guessed she could see him with her telephoto lens. Even at this altitude the heat was causing more problems than the cold – the sun was drying him out & his throat felt parched & burned. He squeezed 2 drops of Japanese



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herbal plant oil onto his tongue & gained some instant but brief relief. Apart from aspirin & a couple of sleeping tablets this was the only medication he carried. In a wind from the NW (a good sign) that gusted 50mph he had difficulty pitching the tent and even more difficulty forcing himself to cook and eat – and drink the rest of the 4 litres water per day that was essential to prevent dehydration. Cooking done he lay in his sleeping bag with his clothes on & dozed until the morning sun on Aug 19th hit the tent and began melting the frost on the inner walls. He packed, left half his food & a gas cartridge to lighten his load a little and set off – the weather was good and he knew he had to hit the top the next day. He moved slowly for the first 50m then, feeling fresh, got into a rhythm for a hour or so until he hit knee-deep snow. Slowly he crossed the Great Couloir, first reached by E.F. Norton in 1924. At 3pm he checked his altimeter and was dismayed to see it showed only 8,220m (26,060ft). An hour later he was further on but only 30m higher when he managed to find a snow-covered rock ledge on which to pitch his tent for his 2nd bivouac. He slept with his bulky, double-layered plastic boots on as they were damp with perspiration and he didn't let them or his feet freeze (frostbite had claimed most of his toes on Nanga Parbat in 1970, an expedition that also killed his brother).



The morning of August 20th was clear but the clouds were closing in. Should he risk going up into a possible storm or go down in defeat? He decided to push on and try to climb the final 600m, leaving everything in his tent bar crampons, ice axe & camera. Unencumbered without a rucksack he found climbing was easier, much easier and he made his way up a physically taxing but not too technical snow gully in the Couloir. Going left of a dark rock wall he stood just below the peak and “climbed instinctively, not consciously for the next 3 hours. The clouds opened for brief moments, giving fleeting glimpses of the peak against the blue sky”. Suddenly just after 3pm he saw the aluminium tripod! “There it was – the blessing of proof, the curse of desecration, on that supreme place of solitude – barely peeking out of the snow, a piece of cloth frozen around the top. The Chinese had anchored it there at the highest point in 1975 to make exact measurements”. He had reached the highest point on earth for the second time and again he couldn't see anything of the views; but this time it simply didn't matter. He stayed only 40 minutes getting photographic proof of his achievement and then set off down, reaching his tent at the 2nd bivouac in just 3½ hours.



He tried to prepare soup but hadn't the strength to drink. He didn't really sleep during the night, nor was he totally conscious. At the crack of dawn he brewed some tea but as quickly as he swallowed the drink it came back up. So at 7.30am, packing only his camera, extra woolen mitts & a 2nd pair of sunglasses into his rucksack, and leaving everything else behind, he set off on a direct route downward & across the North Face, aiming for the North Col. He was hidden from Nena's view until 10.30am when she saw him “looking like a drunken man”. She knew he needed help and went out to meet him on the glacier near their high base camp. Within minutes he lay in the tent while Nena applied ice packs to his forehead for the heat exhaustion he had suffered and got can after can of fruit juice into his dehydrated system. After around 10 minutes he began to regain his senses – as he himself admitted he'd been at his limit!



(Right) Nena Holguin's photo of Messner on his return

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SCOTTISH HILLWALKERS TOLD NOT TO CALL WOMEN HIKERS 'SWEETHEART' OR 'DARLING'

A Facebook post by Nic Arb of the Long Distance Walkers Association popped up on my laptop recently <https://www.facebook.com/groups/theldwa/permalink/10160112622299352/?mibextid=rS40aB7S9Ucbxw6v> and I thought it worth reproducing here as it contained a summary of an article that Simon Johnson, the Telegraph's Scottish Political Editor, wrote on 16th June, based on what Dr Richard Tiplady, who has climbed nearly 200 Munros in Scotland, wrote in a recent "Scottish Mountaineer" magazine. It's contents are well worth reading by WBMC members, both male and female, although surely we "blokes" in the WBMC don't do any of these things?!?

"Do not call women hillwalkers "darling" or "sweetheart" or lecture them how to read a map", new guidance for mountaineers in Scotland has advised. Dr Richard Tiplady said "the dominance of white middle-aged men like me in Scotland's hills is obvious and it is unacceptable". When he had met solo female walkers often they were "the only two people for miles around." and he questioned how he should behave in a "non-weird way" that makes "the mountains feel as a safe & inclusive place for them to be in." Based on "horror stories" provided by women about "the ways that they had been treated by men on the hills" he produced a list of guidelines / action points to make women feel more comfortable.

He told the 16,000 members of Mountaineering Scotland in their magazine that this was *"not the 1970s"* and it was inappropriate to greet them with *"Hello, darling!"* or *"Hello, sweetheart!"* Men should *"take the hint"* if a lone woman tells them they want to stop for a break and *"you carry on"*. *"Don't hang around in the car park while a woman is kitting up and then assume that you can accompany them,"* the trainee mountain leader said.

He advised male hillwalkers not to talk down to their female counterparts, as they probably can read a map! *"If they ask for advice about kit or their route, be polite without being condescending. But don't offer advice if you're not asked for it,"* he added. Dr Tiplady said that a *"brief chat"* about the hills, the weather and the man's intended route is fine but *"don't ask what route they are taking."* If a male mountaineer is walking fast and catches up with a solo female walker, he said they should say a *"brief hello"* and keep going and should not *"slow down to walk with them"*. He also said that they should *"never ever"* offer to walk with a lone woman *"to keep you safe"* as this *"rings major alarm bells"*. Equally men should never camp near a solo female hillwalker, even if they are in the best location.

Dr Tiplady, who has a doctorate in leadership development from Glasgow Caledonian University, said he devised the guidelines after a chance meeting with a female hillwalker he knew in Glen Shiel in the Highlands. Renate Powell, the wife of Damon Powell, the former chair of Scottish Mountain Rescue, asked him to walk the route with her. But she may have been *"uncomfortable"* if he had approached her and made the same suggestion. Mrs Powell then posted an account of their conversation on the Facebook page of the Scottish Women's Walking Group. She asked women to *"recount their horror stories"* about the ways in which they had been treated and sent Dr Tiplady a *"flavour of some of the discussion"*, which he said had made *"sobering reading"*.

Dr Tiplady said: *"On those occasions when I have met a solo female walker, either on the route or at the summit cairn, I have often been conscious of how my behaviour might help her to feel safe (or not), as potentially the only two people for miles around. "How should I behave in a non-weird way, so that (as a representative of the dominant majority on the Scottish hills – a white, middle-aged, middle-class male) I do what I can to ensure that women experience the mountains as a safe and inclusive place for them to be in?"* He added: *"The dominance of white middle-aged men like me in Scotland's hills is obvious and it is unacceptable. We are used to having power, so let's use it for the benefit of others, and maybe even give it away."*

There were some very interesting & revealing comments to the Facebook post, many of them amusing eg "Why just in Scotland? And why only men? Where I'm from in Scotland, we'd not use these terms anyway, you'd get "hen/son", from men and women!" To read the

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original Telegraph article, with its slightly woke title see

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/06/16/scottish-hillwalkers-told-not-call-women-hikers-sweetheart/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR0UVezZoZUWGCg1tRS8C5ZzH6XkSdf711vWDEm8fZWglWSBcflbltlxVxU_aem_n0wfg_vc9grvHt3TV6xog

[WSBcflbltlxVxU_aem_n0wfg_vc9grvHt3TV6xog](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/06/16/scottish-hillwalkers-told-not-call-women-hikers-sweetheart/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR0UVezZoZUWGCg1tRS8C5ZzH6XkSdf711vWDEm8fZWglWSBcflbltlxVxU_aem_n0wfg_vc9grvHt3TV6xog)

MINUTES WBMC COMMITTEE MEETING 13th June 2024 @The Red Lion 7.40pm start (Note May's committee meeting was cancelled due to the fact that it would have been non-quorate due to illness and other apologies from committee members)

Present: Rob Allen, Claire Hammond, Nigel Tarr, Dave Hellyar (Chair), Fred Hammond, Darren Groutage, Mike Thompson, Will Read,

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Jan Cox, Tony Emms, John Edwards, Jonathan Howells, Geordie Hind

2. **Acceptance of May 2024 minutes.** The last meeting was cancelled as it was not Quorate so there are no May minutes. The April minutes were taken as read by the Chairman

3. **Matters Arising** The Chair opens and moves straight to the officer updates.

4. **Officer updates** **Treasurer**

Club balance is £44,818 as of 13/06/2024 SAVINGS Account balance is £30,482 and there was £14,336 in the general account.

We received a payment from Easy fundraising of £34.60 Andrew Brown & Geoff Hill are to be removed as serving authorized officers and Mike Smith is to be taken off the signatories of the club bank account as they are all no longer serving committee members. Darren Groutage is to be added as a new authorized Bank signatory. It was noted that Coventry Building Society should soon be taking over the Co-Op bank.

Membership Secretary

Although Tony was not present we did discuss the George Starky hut bookings. It was decided for future Club bookings a non refundable deposit (if none can be claimed back) must be paid by all members & non-members. The event should be properly advertised and full monies must be received by a date specified by the organizer well in advance. It was noted that Tony was worried that he personally may have been "out of pocket" and was willing to pay the shortfall himself. The committee agreed this would never happen.

Newsletter

Although John was not present it is hoped the next Newsletter will be out by the end of June 2024.

Website/Publicity

Darren said that over the past few months we have had 4-6 people enquire about the club and a becoming a member which is great news. We all need to keep abreast of any enquiry coming into the Club so we can encourage as many new members as possible.

Hut Secretary

Fred said between the 1st April to 21st April 2024 61 nights had been booked at the hut with a Donation of £603. From the 22nd April to 31st May 2024 69 nights had been booked with a Donation of £516. These Donations were from 31 different people. The Portable Appliance (P.A.T) Testing was carried out on 28 items at the hut for a cost of £40.80 which is very reasonable. One item failed which is due to be replaced. Fred would like to say a big thank you to everyone for looking after our Hut.

Coach Secretary

Unfortunately, the Rhinogs meeting in June was cancelled due to only 11 people booking on the Coach. Nigel said that in May there were only 20 people on the Long Saturday Coach meet to Patterdale in the Lake District. The Club lost roughly £500 on this meet and a discussion was had about the viability of Long meets. A suggestion was made that a survey / canvas of the members should be conducted to see what they wanted most from the Coach meets.

Led Walks were discussed. Darren G said we need 12 people (from club & committee) to do the next year's Led walks, so we have names & dates organized. 1 day a year for one person should hardly be a burden in a club of our size and shouldn't be a problem.

After much discussion about Meet venues, Led walks, Coach fares, Long meets, What other clubs do or charge, Advertising the Coach meets, Facebook advertising, Letting members in other clubs know about us, it was decided to trial new Coach fares for at least 2-3 months on the basis of £19 for members and £20 for non members.

5. **BMC** Ian Wyatt is the BMC organizer of the Midlands BMC Clubs Network.

6. **AOB** The Chairman gave a speech at length about what some people had inadvertently called The Hut Fund Bank Account, which seemed to have mistakenly got called this for some reason quite a few years back. It was unanimously decided that it will be called by its proper name The "RESERVE fund bank account. Although not always possible, it was agreed that ultimately the committee should try and keep this figure above £30,000. The reserve fund is there precisely as that and is to be drawn upon only when the club seems fit and proper to do so. This was proposed by Dave Hellyar (Chairman) and Seconded by Mike Thompson (President). A major discussion then took place about the future direction of the club which is obviously ongoing but the main areas are:-

1. The future shape of the club
2. How important are member numbers
3. What we actually do
4. How do we attract new members
5. To be more Pro Active in shaping the club
6. How to take the club forward
7. What do we offer to members

Mike Thompson stated that Mike Bamford had passed away earlier this month and wanted any members that knew him to know this. After an apology Mike T then left due to another engagement.

Meeting finished 2100

Date of next meeting 25/07/2024 The Red Lion. 1930

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Notes on the BMC Midland's Clubs Network Meeting 18th June 2024

from Ian Wyatt, Volunteer, Midlands Area: Clubs Representative & Members Council Councillor
We had a really stimulating and interesting discussion at the last Clubs Network meeting, with representatives from Solihull MC, Mountain Club Stafford and our Area Chair in attendance. Thank you all for contributing to the discussion points raised by local clubs:-

- How are clubs managing the holding and distribution of medical and ICE information. Specifically on meets where access to information may be time crucial and network availability may be limited? Do clubs pass on details of members medical conditions such as Angina, diabetes, history of stroke etc to meet leads or held only centrally?
- How are clubs managing numbers of new members on meets where climbs may be more committing such as sea cliff or multipitch climbing. *i.e.* if novice numbers exceed experienced numbers or if they arrive without appropriate gear due to their inexperience etc?

The clubs present are both looking into generating and encouraging members to carry ICE (**In Case of Emergency**) information. Mountain Club have set up a working party to look into this and Solihull MC will join them in this exploration (Action: IW to share Rob & Ant contact details so they can work together [complete]). Perhaps develop a model that could be shared initially at the Midlands Area. All agreed it would be good for clubs to carry standardised information in agreed location (*i.e.* rucksack lid). Mountain Club also looking 'Call Out' procedures in case members late back on a trip and/or to 'close off' a trip to ensure everyone is safe during and at the end of the meet. Area Chair suggested that this could and should be standardised through the auspices of the BMC. He also added that at the start of a meet clubs could check that everyone has brought the ICE card and if not simply jot down the details there and then before setting off on activity.

The issue of GDPR was raised numerous times during the discussion and getting a steer from the BMC would be really useful to work though this, indeed could be a national level discussion. A general feeling at the meeting that the BMC have 'over read' GDPR legislation.

Discussion about how to manage new and/or returning climbers. This led to discussion about appropriateness of venues & the ratio of beginners to experienced climbers. Rob mentioned he used to make use of a model from the Eagle Ski Club to assess venues from various perspectives & skill levels required to attend the meet; effectively rating a venue. This can be applied to walking as well as climbing meets. Moved on to discussion about new member meets, and assessing suitability of meet to club member. However, there is still an element of self assessment and there can be some risk associated with members overstating their own ability. Some discussion of addressing this through the membership application process: proposer/second; wall belaying competence, signed off by a wall, etc.; arrange sessions with paid instructors. However, clear problems and tensions are present in all these topics and availability/willingness of more experienced members to support new members - unresolved question here on how to address this issue. This discussion is the beginning of a journey of finding workable ways forward, no perfect solutions but a recognition that a way must be found to resolve the concerns around these points.

A reminder that the BMC promotes subsidised courses which could be promoted to clubs.

A few member comments on the BMC AGM:-

- 1) Complaining voices from one percent should now be moved on from but the complaints taken seriously.
- 2) BMC needs to communicate more clearly about what it is doing for members, and those that are not yet members.
- 3) A general mood of good will towards the BMC trying to better but so far little evidence to show progress.
- 4) BMC vision is still unclear, too much discussion on finance. What is the BMC for?
- 5) Recognition of huge problems at BMC seen as positive as it means that the organisation is working to correct things.
- 6) BMC presentation is too climber focused.

Finally, the question of whether or not we should try to arrange an in-person meet at a Club Hut was touched upon. If we did this it would probably mean having our meeting on the Saturday evening & attendees enjoying their activities during the day. Please let me know (i.wyatt5@me.com) if you have any thoughts about an in person meeting for a weekend away at a club hut, or an evening meeting at a local wall/cafe/or some such?

(Ed: I must have missed or overlooked this meeting and I am not sure if any member of WBMC attended. It sounds as though they didn't & I think this looks bad.)

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