

WEST BROMWICH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



**MAY/JUNE 2026
NEWSLETTER**

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NEWS

Club news:

- The Malcolm Collins award was given at the AGM jointly to: Dan Bow, for one of the most sustained climbing days ever attempted by a WBMC member, Claire Hammonds for the hard work she does for the club despite a couple of very difficult years, and Geordie Hind for his volunteering in training and upskilling in the club.
- April scrambling weekend was cancelled due to lack of interest. Please sign up as early as you can to these events if you want to make sure they go ahead!

World news:

- A new direct line up the South Face of Chimborazo in Ecuador (6,241m) has been climbed for the first time. The route was described as alpine-style, with unstable rock, ice and sustained steep snow slabs.
- The Khumbu Icefall on Everest has proved challenging this year with a serac deemed likely to fall over most potential routes. A path has been opened now but the season is going to be short and busy.

Climbing, hill walking and mountaineering can provide life-long physical, social and mental health benefits through exercise and adventure in amazing environments. The BMC recognises these activities involve a risk of personal injury or death. Participants should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

Cover image: Graeme Stanford, Chris Barnett & Ken Priest, Sentries Ridge

Have your say/Get involved

Volunteer roles:

The club needs more involvement from members for events to be successful. Get in touch via committee@wbmc.org if you are interested in:

- Leading walks on coach meets
- Planning and leading evening outdoor meets
- Organising scrambling weekends
- Anything else that might be fun!

Coach meet destinations:

The committee invite suggestions for new future coach meet destinations. The meet card for 2026 is set with some regular destinations but if you have ideas for new places to try please write in. Please consider that a drop off and pick up will have to be “coach-friendly”, if you’re not sure why not have a chat with Nigel on the next coach.

Newsletter:

If you want to see your adventure, past or planned, in the next newsletter, contact Sophie on sophsky@gmail.com or WhatsApp 07980510356. Please send max. 5 photos and some text to tell me what you did, I’m happy to edit but need something to work with. Please, no videos...!

REGULAR MEETS AND FUTURE EVENTS

REGULAR MEETS

Coach Meets:

Sunday 10th May - Ogwen

Saturday 13th June - Langdale/Ambleside

Sunday 12th July - Arans

Coaches leave West Brom at 7am to give 5-7 hours on the hills. Multiple stops mean linear walks are often possible. If you don’t fancy a long walk, how about a social day in beautiful surroundings, ending in the pub?

Reserve your seat with Nigel Tarr (07703 345729) or book on www.wbmc.org as early as possible. You will be guaranteed a great day on the hills or an amble through beautiful villages, with a chance to win a bottle of wine in a free coach raffle. You can now pay for the coach meet by card on the coach!

Fares: Members £25, Non members £25, Under 18’s & Full time students £10

[To book your seat contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729 or book on the website.](#)

Cancellations after the Wednesday prior to the coach meet will still be charged £10 and failure to turn up without cancelling means the full coach fare will still be expected from you. This includes if you have said “yes” to Nigel on the previous meet!

Evening outdoor social walks:**Thursday 7th May - The Sheepwalks at Enville, Sarah Wheatcroft leading**

Meet at 6:15pm at the Cat Inn, Bridgnorth Road, Stourbridge, DY7 5HA ready to start the walk at 6:30pm, prompt! This will be a circular route through the Enville Estate. Up to Sheepwalks hill around to St Mary's Church dropping back down to the Cat, it's around 2.5 hrs. A shorter walk can be had by the walk up to the Hill and back which would be a bit quicker so decisions will be taken on the night. Back to the Cat Inn after for drinks.

Thursday 11th June - Sedgley Beacon round 2, Neil Loydon leading

Meet at The Beacon Hotel, Sedgley DY3 1JE from 6:00pm for a 6:30pm start. It will be either a ~2.5 or ~4 mile route depending on forecast and 'appetite', taking in the second half of the route that the club 'abandoned' (preferring the dry, warm interior of the pub, for the pouring rain lol) at the end of the last season!

Thursday 9th July - Compton, Wolverhampton, Dave Helyar leading**Committee meetings/social nights at the Red Lion:****Thursday 14th May, 18th June, 16th July**

Committee meetings start at 7.30pm. Members are invited to listen in as observers - pop along to 190 All Saints Way, B71 1RH. Otherwise come along at ~8.30pm for a drink & a chat (or meal) as you can (almost!) guarantee others will be there, drop a message on WhatsApp to be sure.

Indoor climbing:**High Places, Kidderminster:**

Members climb at High Places, Wyre Forest Leisure Centre, Siverwoods Way, Kidderminster DY11 7DT weekly on Tuesday afternoons/evenings. If you want to be added to the WhatsApp group for these meets or want more information, please feel free to get in touch with Pete Poultney 07779 366905 or peterpoultney@hotmail.co.uk.

See <https://www.placesleisure.org/centres/wyre-forest-leisure-centre/centre-activities/climbing/> for more details.

Redpoint, Birmingham:

Members climb at Redpoint Climbing & Bouldering Centre, 77 Cecil Street, Newtown, Birmingham B19 3ST at 6:00pm Mondays and 10:30am on Thursdays. If you want to be added to the WhatsApp group for these meets or want more information, please feel free to get in touch with Darren Groutage (Thursdays) 07973 405348/wbmc.dg@outlook.com or Darren Beards (Mondays) 07484 615257.

See <http://www.redpointbirmingham.co.uk/> for more details.

BMC Presidential talks:

Dom Oughton, President of the BMC (which he insists is not as grand as it sounds!) will be talking about Big Wall climbing including El Cap at Redpoint, Worcester on Thursday 7th May at 7:00pm and about completing 'Hard Rock' at Awesome Walls, Stoke-on-Trent on Friday 8th May at 7:00pm (both free to attend).

SPECIAL EVENTS

Scrambling/hut weekends:

5th-7th June, Club Hut (Wales)

No plans yet but the club hut is reserved for walkers, scramblers and climbers to meet and have fun. If you would like to reserve a space, or offer to lead any activities please contact Sarah Wheatcroft via s.e.wheatcroft@gmail.com or 07398365990.

4th-6th September, Toc H Chapel Stile, Langdale (Lake District)

With a capacity of 20, this is first-come first-serve for bookings, there are 8 places left. Walkers, climbers and scramblers welcome. To secure a place please pay £45 into the club accounts ref CSWKend and contact Claire on 07761571464 to confirm booking. The cost covers 2 nights accommodation plus 2 cooked breakfasts and an evening meal Saturday night. Can you let Claire know if you are vegetarian please .

Pembroke Trip:

21st-25th May, Porthclais Campsite, St Davids

We have visited Pembroke for several years now as a joint club trip with Bromsgrove and Banbury based at Porthclais farm campsite which is less than 5 minutes from the nearest single pitch sea cliff.

People come along for as many nights as they want and enjoy the walking ,climbing, beach activities or just chill, the atmosphere on the evening is great with cooking around the campsite or walk to the local pubs

Book the campsite independently to suit your own availability. 07970439310

Gower Trip:

16th-18th May*, Pitton Cross Campsite

Another firm favourite in our calendar. Pitton Cross campsite has been booked with a West Brom reference number of 30172.

Again, other clubs join us for this multi activity long weekend which includes swimming and body boarding as well as the usual coastal path walking and sea cliff trad and sport climbing. Fish and chips and pub meals and a cheese tasting (with Port) evening on the campsite. *Book to suit your own availability.

Contact Ken on 07779 908708 for more information on this or the Pembroke trip.

European week:

24th-31st July, Dolomites

Based in Badia, between Corvara and Pedraces, this is a fantastic area for climbing, mountaineering, via ferrata and walking. It is however very popular and books up quickly! As the trip is on a self-arranged basis, anyone thinking of attending, is advised to make their arrangements for travel and accommodation such as Air B&B ASAP. For any advice, contact Tony Emms (07793 008582 membership-secretary@wbmc.org).

COACH MEET**SUNDAY 10th MAY: OGWEN**

Depart: 07:00 – West Brom.,
Edward St Car Park (B70 8NN)

07:20 – M54 J2

Drop Off: Pont Cyfyng (735572)
Capel Curig (721582)
Ogwen (656603)

Pick Ups: Ogwen (656603)
Capel Curig (721582)



Required Maps: OS 1:25,000 **OL 17** Snowdon/Yr Wyddfa
OS 1:50,000 **Landranger 115** Snowdon/Yr Wyddfa

Suggested Routes:-**From Pont Cyfyng****Route 1) Moel Siabod (6 miles/9.5km, 3500ft ascent)**

Follow the track to a disused quarry (717555) then continue to Lyn y Foel (713547) from where you can climb the SE ridge of Moel Siabod (Grade1 scramble of Dear Ddu) . From the summit (705546) descend via the NE ridge to GR 713565. Then continue through the forest to Plas y Brenin & Capel Curig where there might / might not be a cafe open before pick-up. Online route for GPS: <https://www.osola.org.uk/rides/OSHubMap.php?f=moel-siabod-via-daer-ddu.gpx&t=moel-siabod-via-daer-ddu.gpx>

From Capel Curig**Route 2) The Glyders and their Eastern ridge (10 miles/15 km)**

From Capel head west and follow the ridge to Gallt Yr Ogof (685586) and continue over Foel Goch (678582) and past Llyn Caseg-Fraith (670584). You should get a classic view of Tryfan's east face from here (made famous by Poucher). You can then ascend Glyder Fach (656583) followed by Glyder Fawr (642580) . Descend south to Pen-y-Pass pick-up or if you sort it with Nigel walk down the road to the Pen Y Gwryd Hotel (but check it's open first!)

From A5 near Llyn Ogwen/Idwal Cottage**Route 3) Tryfan and the Glyders (9 miles/12 km).**

A tough route with 2 grade 1 scrambles possibly. Climb to Tryfan summit (664594) by N. ridge or Heather Terrace. Then climb to the summit of Glyder Fach (656583), possibly by the Bristly Ridge scramble. Continue along the plateau to Glyder Fawr (642579) and descend as in route 2.

Route 4) Y Garn, Foel Goch, Mynydd Perfedd & Elidir Fawr (optional).

For the longer route go into Cwm Idwal and follow west side of the lake to climb Y Garn's east ridge to summit (631596) Then north to Foel-goch (629612). Or you can miss out Y Garn and make the route shorter by taking the old A5 road on the west side of Nant Ffrancon and climb Foel-goch by « the mushroom garden » & its east ridge, Y Llymllwyd. Then north to Mynydd Perfedd (623619) and descend SW to the narrow Bwlch y Marchlyn which leads to the rocky summit of Elidir Fawr. Descend SSW to Nant Peris to avoid the Penrhyn slate quarries & inclines.

Fares: Members £25, Non members £25, Under 18's & Full time students £10

To book your seat contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729 or book on the website.

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LONG COACH MEET**SATURDAY 13th JUNE: AMBLESIDE/LANGDALE VALLEY****Depart:** 07:00 – West Brom., Edward St Car Park (B70 8NN); 07:20 – Penkridge**Drop Off:** A591N of Windermere station (SD 414987)

A593/591 Jn Ambleside (SD 372036)

Chapel Stile (SD 321053)

New Dungeon Ghyll (SD 295064)

Pick Ups: New Dungeon Ghyll (SD 295064)

Chapel Stile (SD 321053)

Ambleside Bus Station (LA22 0BZ or SD375044)

*Rydal Water from Loughrigg***Required Maps:** OS 1:25,000 **OL 7** English Lakes SE AreaSuggested Routes:-**From N Kendal****Route 1) Western End of The Dales Way (9.5 miles & 970ft ascent)**

Road or footpath to Burneside and cross R. Kent to hit Dales Way. This follows river to nr Staveley, then roads & tracks to Bowness – SO TURN NORTH TO WINDERMERE @ SD 423971 to pick-up.

From Windermere**Route 2) Wainwright's First Lakes Peak – Orrest Head (2 miles & 400 ft ascent)**

It's just 20 minutes to the top (SD414993) via leftmost of 3 drives that leave the main road opposite railway station. Make a circuit by heading N to minor road, then left and left back to railway station near last pick-up.

Route 3) Sour Howes (SD428032) & Sallows (SD437040) (9 miles & 2,000 ft ascent)

Stay E of Kirkstone road to Allen Knot (a NT earthwork at SD414011) & hit Longmire & Garburn tracks & back over the Wainwrights from the top of the pass (SD436044) and return to Windermere where you started +/- Orrest Head.

From Ambleside**Route 4) Loughrigg Fell – over & around (6.5 miles & 1,400 ft ascent)**

Cross the River Rothay at SD372046 and there's paths galore but don't miss the summit at SD347051

Route 5) Wansfell Pike (SD394042) & Baystones (SD403052) (5 or 7.5 miles & 1,450 ft+ ascent)

Head E to Stockgyll Force & up first Wainwright, then NE to second and on to Idle Hill (SD046059). Then turn Left to return to Ambleside town via left side of Stock Gyll or Right to reach Troutbeck paths that lead S to Kirkstone junction.

From Rydal**Route 6) Fairfield & Red Screes (12 miles or less & up to 4,300 ft ascent)**

Up lane beside Rydal Mount & fork left at gate to rocky Nab Scar & Heron Pike (SD356083). Then N over Great Rigg to Fairfield (SD359118). Turn right to Hart Crag (SD368113) & Dove Crag (SD374105) from which you could head back south to Ambleside. Or continue to Little Hart Crag (SD387100) +/- Red Screes (SD396088) before heading SSW down the ridge to Ambleside.

From Grasmere**Route 7) Helm Crag +/- the Easedale Round (8 miles & 2,300 ft ascent)**

Take the Easedale Road and well marked path off right to the lovely summit of Helm Crag (SD327093). Return to Grasmere via path to N and then E if you fancy an easy day or continue over to GibsonKnott (SD319099) and Calf Crag (SD302104). Continue W to the col & then head back to Grasmere over Easedale's Tarn Crag (SD304092)

From Thirlspot**Route 8) Helvellyn & Seat Sandal (9 miles & 3,700 ft ascent)**

Climb to Raise summit (SD343174) and then S over White Side, Lower Man to Helvellyn (SD342151). On to Nethermost (SD344142) & Dollywagon (SD346131) Pikes before dropping down to Grisedale Hause. Head

COACH MEET**SUNDAY 12th JULY: ARANS/ARAN FAWDDY**

Depart: 07:00 – West Brom., Edward St Car Park (B70 8NN)

07:20 – M54 J2

Drop Off: Llanuwchllyn (880299)

Bwlch Oerddrws Car Park on A470 (803170)

Dinas Mawddwy (Layby) (858147)

Pick Ups: Dinas Mawddwy (Layby) (858147)



Aran Benllyn seen from Aran Fawddwy on a good day

Required Maps: OS 1:25,000 OL 23 Snowdonia - Cader Idris area

Suggested Routes:-

From Llanuwchllyn

Route 1) The Arans Traverse North to South (~21 km/13 miles)

A long but great day out on the hills! Head south of town towards and where the road turns sharply NE near the river turn south along a track and after a couple of cattle grids take a bridleway on the right. After a few stiles the bridleway veers right but you should take a grassy path left alongside a wire fence, over Garth-Fawr (875284). The path climbs steeply over grassy moorland up the western slopes of Moel Ddu & Moel Ffenigl, then gets rockier as height is gained, passing Llyn Pen Aran to the summit of Aran Benllyn (867243). This is a fine summit perched on the edge of a cliff where there will hopefully be views of Bala Lake / Llyn Tegid to the N and Aran Fawddwy to the S. Take the path that leads due south to Aran Fawddwy, where a trig point marks the summit (863 224). Continue S before descending SE to a cairn, with a log book to sign ((863213). The path narrows & descends eastwards to the col at Drws Bach before ascending to the flat top of Drysgol (870213). Then descend by good paths SW to Cywarch (853187) & follow lanes some distance to Dinas Mawddwy and the Y Llew Coch – a very Welsh pub.

Route 2) The Arans Traverse North to South + Glasgwm (& maybe Foel Benddin) (24km/15 miles)

As Route 1 but instead of veering eastwards after Aran Fawddwy summit, descend SW for a considerable distance before the steepish ascent of Glasgwm (836194). From here one could retrace one's steps to a path which descends north of the Craig Cywarch cliffs steeply down into Cwm Cywarch where it's road walking down to Dinas Mawddwy. Or you could stay high going south then east round the S end of Craig Cywarch to go over Y Gribin (844176) and then on to Foel Benddin (854166) followed by a steep pathless descent directly to the caravan / camp site just N of the pub in Dinas.

From Bwlch Oerddrws car park

Route 3) Eastern Part of the Mid Wales Mountain Marathon (devised & run by our late Chairman Nev Tandy) (15.5km/9.5 miles)

Head South, climbing steeply to a ridge following a wall to a 659m spot height (795153). From here continue West to a col, then up over the north part of Cribin Fawr to the summit trig on Waun-oer (786148). Retrace your steps to the col you have just come up from and where the wall kinks (793151), leave it and head to Cribin Fawr summit (795153), then go round the top of the cwm to the top of Craig Portas (802141). Turn left at the wall T junction, descending to a narrow col with exposed cliffs to the left and follow the fence line all the way to the summit of Maesglase (817150) and its eastern top at 822151. Continue south on paths through heather moorland with cliffs on your left to the top of Craig Maesglase (827139) and then on round to the east at the side of a forest to drop down to some disused tips (837139). Follow the track north down into the valley and then head NE to the A470 main road (848159) from where a short road walk takes you to the coach at Dinas Mawddwy.

Fares: Members £25, Non members £25, Under 18's & Full time students £10

To book your seat contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729 or book on the website.

Cancellations after the Wednesday prior to the coach meet will still be charged £10 and failure to turn up without cancelling means the full coach fare will still be expected from you.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

President: John Edwards	07837 198355	jaejed@hotmail.com
Chair: David Hellyar	07547 126286	hellydav@live.co.uk
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Treasurer: Claire Hammonds	07761 571464	clairehammonds@btinternet.com
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February Committee Minutes

1. Apologies: John Edwards, Sarah Wheatcroft, Darren Beards

2. Minutes of previous meeting: Proposed Sophie Kellaway (SK), Seconded Will O Read (WOR)

3. Matters arising:

-75th anniversary: One 'inside event only, Hawthorns deposit paid, Great idea from John Edwards to assemble 75+ members of club on top of a mountain to celebrate – Mountains and date TBC

-Scrambling W/E 17-19th April

Action 1 - Agreed by majority, Hut weekends henceforth to be known as Hut weekends, not only Scrambling (i.e open to climbers and walkers too!)

George Starkey Hut was originally planned - Unavailable, Several other huts in Lakes tried by Tony Emms (TE) but so far, none available, and no accommodation booked, Should it move to North Wales where more huts? Consensus no. Should we try a YHA? Consensus yes. Coniston Holly How agreed.

Action 2 – Neil Loydon (NL) to draft message to be sent out asking members interested, to book into YHA ASAP and inform (TE)

-European week July, TE + 5 made accommodation and travel plans already

Action 3 – NL to draft message to Members 'Great area, but very busy ! Any members planning on joining, should make their arrangements ASAP ! Any advice required, speak to TE'

4. Officer reports: **Treasurer** - CA ~£28200, Feb coach paid, Hawthorns deposit paid, Large amounts to be paid – BMC ~£5200 & Away Dinner ~£2000, RA ~£31,570, Total balance – large amounts to be paid - ~£52,570, Attended BMC Huts Forum 07.02 on Zoom Welsh Revenue Authority (WRA) presented and reconfirmed that all club huts in scope at lower rate (currently 75p per night + VAT). Live nationwide 2027, Local authorities have to implement. **Action 4** – NL to share WRA slides to committee.

Hut Secretary - No new hut sheet, Email with water reading sent to Debbie Bacon and Jeff Handley at Plas Gwynant outdoor centre, Attended BMC Huts Forum 07.02 on Zoom, 'Advisable' to consider written Risk Assessments for Working Meets

Fire regulations clarified as much less onerous than was thought might be the case in Autumn 2025, Howdens recommend a Reinstatement valuation for the hut to ensure we're not under valued on the policy. **Action 5** – NL to share FR slides to committee; **Action 6** – Fred Hammonds (FH) to 'digest', seek clarification from BMC Huts Community where required and advise and implement any changes required. Electric installation due a check (every 5 years), Estimated cost ~£350 plus £100 PAT testing, We should expect (again) a lot of 'advisories' (C3s ?), Booked for 05.05.26. **Membership Secretary** - 202 Members today consisting of: Ordinary 171, Life 19, Junior 6, Veteran 12, Prospective 19, 19 2025 Ordinary Members have not yet renewed and the BMC payment deadline is 28th Feb ! Any payments after this time, will require significant work by Membership Sec! **Action 7** - TE to 'nudge' individuals via phone ASAP.

Coach Secretary - Patterdale, 37 on, Good day had by all, £65 loss. Clywdian, 17 booked on. **Action 8** – NL to draft message asking for volunteer to lead a walk. Nigel Tarr – Request Committee to consider if attendees joining from Charnock Richards should be charged a lesser amount ? Perhaps £15 ? Agreed by majority.

5. AGM-19/3/26. **Action 9** – NL to ask Sarah Wheatcroft (SW) to confirm she has all she needs for the Calling Notice

Chair (Dave Hellyar DH), Secretary (SW), Membership Secretary (TE), Hut Secretary (FH), Treasurer (Claire Hammond), Newsletter Editor (SK) all confirmed they are willing to stand again. **Action 10** - DH to ensure that, the Committee will need to reserve the right, to increase Hut and Membership fees, if external factors require them, to protect the long term sustainability of the club's finances, is included.

6. BMC. From email report sent in advance by NL (matters covered elsewhere not included): "There was a Clubs Insurance Webinar on the 12.01.26. I, Dave Coats, Gary Peasland (Gaz LP) and Chris Dingle attended and 'brushed off' our knowledge of this great support that BMC affiliation provides to clubs."

7. Newsletter: Trying to publish next addition ~end of Feb, SK needs any further info on next 3 coach meets (updates to pick ups/drop offs/stops enroute/led walks/etc) ASAP.

Feb ctd.

8. Other business- Web advertising (Facebook paid adverts): From WOR's email (06.02.26) the potential can be seen Needs analysis and tracking, but likely resulting in Prospective Members at low cost (although WOR spending time on it) WOR to continue as has been, as considerable budget remaining from allocated pot (~£63 unused out of £500 allocated) However, WOR needs guidance on what demographic to target! A summary of various in person, email and WhatsApp discussions throughout the year is, anecdotally: the club is aging, it seems able to attract a good number of >40s and provide what they are seeking attracting and providing what the majority of 20-40 year old's seeks, seems more challenging for the club currently, is there anywhere we should focus advertising and have we thought through the implications fully, before doing so? **Action 11** – DH to ensure sufficient time in next meeting's agenda for the discussion required on this, to reach consensus. Away dinner – Places have become available and have been re-advertised. Agreed by majority: Need to push harder on getting next year's calendar agreed as early as possible, in particular where external accommodation bookings are required. To enable this, the club will have to trial paying more deposits (and placing club funds at risk) starting with: **Action 12** - TE to book High How in the Lakes for 26 people, for Jun 27 @ £260 a night. **Action 13** - George Starkey Hut in Patterdale for April 27.

March Committee Minutes

Present: David Helyar, Claire Hammonds, Neil Loydon, Fred Hammod, Darren Beards, Nigel Tarr, Darren Groutage, Tony Emms, Sarah Wheatcroft. **Apologies:** Sophie Kellaway, John Edwards Acceptance of Minutes from February 2026 proposed by Claire, seconded by Darren

Matters Arising: none

Officer reports. Treasurers Report – There is Currently £20,301 in the general account, BMC and affiliation fees paid. Away dinner paid, deposit for High House for June 2027 -paid £100. There is currently £31,570 in the reserve account. The electricity has been re contracted via an energy agency Green Energy . Current unit cost £0.2941 and standing charge £0.3343 will change to £0.2990 and standing charge £0.48 (excluding 5 percentage VAT). These charges will take effect from 30.9.26. The government has changed the way businesses are charged and all will face much higher standing charges from April 2026. This will represent a total increase of £65 per annum on current use but has been secured via a mini tender of providers that specialise in supplying small business users. Claire pays for events such as the Away dinner, Scottish week etc by BACS transfer, this is probably not the best option, it would be better to pay by Visa debit card just in case the company goes bump as we would have no protection via bacs transfer otherwise and will do this going forward.

Hut Secretary-Hut sheet 1 very late from 12/0/26 to 06/03/26. Very slow at this time of year. £415 over 39 nights , 12 members, 9 guests, 1 child. Electric bill is £56.49 still heard nothing about water bill from Plas Gwynant despite asking for it repeatedly. Received the new fire grate at no charge, Fred has made a stainless steel baffle plate. Fred has taken the faulty one and is going to modify it himself. Future consideration is to look at alternative heating options to burning wood. The 5 yr annual test coming up. Lights in shower room not IP rated 4 recessed fittings. Valuation reinstatement of the hut. How do we get it valued for insurance purposes? Local estate agents? We could use BMC and send floor plans of hut and interior for a basic valuation... is £199 inc vat for valuation in event that anything happens to the hut ie fire, damage. Note left at the hut to request that the racks for drying are empty at night as it's a fire risk. Hut fire regulations done by Ken Priest and is a full risk assessment. BMC are recommending that we have it carried out every 6 months rather than 12, anything else is not practical for us.

Membership Secretary- Paid BMC for 195 members , does not tally with onedrive list. 2 or 3 people unable to put on as we don't have full contact details. Matt Carroll, Alexandra Munns, Neil Whitehouse. These will need to be added to BMC pro rata.

Coach Secretary – Good day had by all. 38 people on the Clwydian March coach- £15 off the losses, charges taken off due to the bank transfers of 60p. Made a small loss of £30. 22 currently booked on next coach.

Member profile considerations: Who do we try to attract to the club? the recent online amount of activity has been very encouraging, however, if we come down in favour of only attracting 20-40 yr olds there might be some risk that this will put off people outside of that age range from joining but if we promote the hut it will facilitate the people interested in climbing, our hut is in a perfect location for all activities. Moving forward, the agenda will include making time to discuss future events at least 3 months in advance and a dedicated section of the minutes will include this. Should we promote a monthly hut weekend, doesn't need to be promoted by the committee, Tony is happy to organise hut climbing weekends, European week etc if someone else takes over the membership sec role. Form a loose group to collaborate with Tony to organise. Might act as a deterrent for people wanting to visit the hut, We need to put plans into place at least 2 years in advance, maybe we should say at the AGM that we need the members to support. 'don't forget' reminders to be put in every newsletter and push the planned events. Expand on what activities staying at the hut has to offer. Do you want to walk, to scramble, go paddleboarding, even the beach. Some of these things we have talked about before, Tony has tried booking places but unless you book well in advance, they are full. **Moving away from age related promotion to activity-based promotion.** Reality is that Climbing will attract younger members going forward, David is 81 and has come to the realisation that he can no longer do what he used to do 20 yrs ago but can do something else. He feels that the club has a vested interest in what the older members can be encouraged and supported to do. Fred advised that the best supported events within the club include the old timers weekend. We make sure that we don't clash with the dates in future, doesn't necessarily have to be in the meet card. The committee need to have someone to help end out advertising for future events and not rely on one person and this needs to be sorted out now. **Going forward.** Events in the Meet card calendar- we should (at least 2 weeks in advance) put the activities in the newsletter as a regular reminder and set aside time in the agenda for the planning of these and decide who is doing what. Huts/Cottages/ Campsites need to be booked a year in advance. Someone needs to back up Will with advertising, but who is going to do it? Can we put an advertisement in the Newsletter to ask willing people to put themselves forward to take charge of activities, like hut weekends, someone like Gary who has offered to do skills weekends. There is a lot of untapped potential within our member profile that we can potentially utilise. For our membership secretary to speak to potential members and list any previous experience/skills/knowledge and disseminate to the committee as required. Create a role for publicity/social media, Neil advised that there is a role for this on the charter in the constitution. Nigel advised that in the dim and distant past we had a social secretary that organised events such as the away dinner. We need to keep this separate as there's so much to do. Sarah has been organising this event for the last 2 years and the 75th anniversary at the Hawthornes. Nigel has had people booking to come on meets but we know nothing about them due to the facility of being able to book directly via the website.

March ctd.

AGM: Usual agenda, David -One of the points is about the hut, at the last AGM the committee suggested changing the name of the 'hut fund' , we were tasked with spent some time looking back at the records to establish exactly what the position is in terms of buying the hut and have spent the last year investigating the history of the hut fund, looking back at the records. Contemplating buying the hut is not a viable option for a multitude of reasons. In 2007 Geoff Hill proposed and was seconded by Nev Tandy that the 'Hut fund' formally designated for the purpose of purchasing the hut but could be used to purchase any mountainous hut in any location of England, Wales or Scotland and didn't have to be our present hut, motion passed in favour. Our President John Edwards position is quite relaxed about not using the money to buy the hut but we need to ensure that the money is not squandered. There are a number of opinions in relation to this money that has been donated for the purchase of the hut not being spent for this purpose but there are others who are equally vociferous and against holding on to the funds when membership rates are going up. The proposals for the Malcolm Collins Award are to be read out in full, not just the names or a brief sentence summary. Please see below the communication sent by our President for consideration in his absence – this has been reiterated by Mr Chairman at the meeting and shared with the committee via email. "(1) I have certificates for Coach King and Queen that could be presented at the AGM along with a bottle of wine for each winner. (2) In the September minutes it seems that the Committee decided to 'scrap' the Hut Fund and start calling it a Reserve Fund. From what I saw in Sandwell Archives recently (attached & already circulated) it seems this might well be going beyond the Committee's authority. Because it was set up by a motion (proposed & seconded by Geoff Hill & Nev Tandy), that it seems was agreed by the membership at the 2007 AGM as reference is made to setting this up in the March 2007 Newsletter and a "Hut Fund" suddenly reappears in the audited accounts a year or so later. I hope to be able to see the AGM minutes next time I visit the Archives to confirm the vote. The motion makes it clear the Fund is not just there for the purchase of the Plas Gwynant Hut but for any suitable building in an appropriate area should one become available - or necessary if we lost the use of the Hut. But that any such use would also need to be agreed by the membership at an AGM or EGM. I think it would, therefore, require a motion & vote at an AGM (or EGM) to repurpose the Hut Fund and use it for other things - a committee just can't decide this when they feel like it at a monthly meeting. And, as I think Dave intends, the possible acceptable future uses would almost certainly need to be stated to ensure the money is not just squandered or frittered away."

In conclusion To put to the vote at the AGM. We do not have to come up with a solution to this tonight but should be put as a consultation to the club to potentially put forward a list over the next 12 months of options to consider. Tourist tax affecting the hut- just for information David has responded to the consultation doc that came out in 2023. He has read it and written to the Welsh revenue authority to seek clarification as the tax is geared towards visitor accommodation used for commercial purposes. He has outlined to them that we lease the hut from Sandwell Council. The club is not a business and is not used to make money. Members are able to make donations for the purposes of maintaining the property. If the tax does come into force this will not happen for the next 2 years anyway. Fred asked the question- are we willing to go in with other clubs to buy a shared hut? We can't use the triangle of land owned by the club for camping as it's a National park and no facilities.

BMC - Neil Loydon: Train the Trainer event Supporting Novices for hillwalking/climbing /scrambling in early June. Would we reimburse anyone from the club doing the course using either the sum of money set aside for the purpose of training or to use some of Pat Mulletts donation Cost is £95 with Plas y Brenin, runs every year, how many can we have on the course, reasonable number would be maybe 4? Newsletter advertisement for the course offering financial assistance. Neil is drafting a piece to put forward.

Future Events April indoor meet - Darren is asking David Nock if he would be interested in doing a presentation on the trip to Nepal that he and Paul did last year. May outdoor meet – Sarah is leading a circular walk starting at Enville Sheepwalks. This was well attended in July last year.

AOB David raised the issue of a Meta copyright email received by Committee – this is spam. Darren has asked whether coach fees should be more expensive for non members, the general consensus is yes.

AGM

The AGM was held on 19th March and attended by 34 members.

Committee was elected with the same membership as 2025 with the following changes: Darren Beards as membership secretary, Tony Emms as meets coordinator, Wendy Morris and Jan Cox as ordinary members.

Member trips

Scottish Classic Winter Climbs, with Plas Y Brenin - Graeme Stanford

I booked on this course to both boost my experience and confirm my knowledge. Having done a couple of Scottish winter climbs at grade III, and dozens of Water Ice climbs (in Rjukan and Cogne) up to WI IV (Happily leading WI III climbs) I wanted to take the next step.

The reason I chose a course, rather than just leaning on club members experience, was simple. I've been on so many Scottish week's where the weather has been rubbish, the right people haven't been available at the right time, or we've just had a 2+ hour walk in to find conditions aren't right. Going on a course (or just hiring a guide) gives you access to local knowledge and people who have inside information on what is or isn't doable at the time. That coupled with the assurance that they are well qualified to ensure you get the very best out of the time and conditions. I've used Plas Y Brenin many times and the full board hotel scenario was an additional bonus. They were the clear first choice for me and I was not disappointed.

Tucked amidst serene mountains, Alltshellach Guest House sits on Loch Leven's shores. With 37 en-suite bedrooms, amenities like hairdryers, tea/coffee facilities ensure comfort. Savour meals at cosy eight-person tables. Unwind in the heated pool, spa, lounges, bar. Awarded 4-star Visit Scotland rating. Plas Y Brenin take over the whole hotel for six weeks, so every guest is on a PYB winter course of some description. This makes for some interesting conversations at meal times. The hotel is comfortable. I had a room to myself (at a £150 extra charge) which was extremely comfortable. The food was great, and plenty of it, there is a secure drying room for all that wet kit and a proper boot dryer. All meals, including packed lunches every day, are included in the course price. This includes dinner on the last night and a hearty breakfast before you leave. That way no-one is trying to make long journeys, tired, after the final day's adventure.

As with pretty much all PYB courses day 1 starts with an overall admin briefing followed by meeting your instructors. Then everyone splits into their courses for a meet n greet and a chat about objectives and expectations etc. Before anyone goes anywhere there is much discussion about weather, conditions, route options and most importantly the ability, fitness and experience of the group. There were six of us on the 'classic winter climbs' course so, at a ratio of 1:2 we had three instructors. The objective for day one was Stob Coire Nan Lochan with the understanding that final route choice would be made at the crag once we could see actual conditions and see just how many others were up there.

I'm sure many club members have made the ascent up towards that area. My guide, a 35-year-old climber from Milngavie, called Graham McGrath () told me that the walk in was known locally as 'The Hurt Lochan' which is very apt. Once up into the snow line it became obvious that visibility was pretty much non-existent, but the weather was calm and still. We geared up at the foot of the crag and split up. The other two groups headed for Twisting Grooves (IV 5 **), Twisting Gully RH (IV 5 **) and we went for Ordinary Route (aka Reaburn's route) a IV 5 **. Visually the area was in stunning winter garb. The snow wasn't bomber hard, but the rocks were all covered in rime ice, and it looked fantastic. The climbing was at the top end of my comfort zone and getting used to the winter mixed scenario (hardly any runners and very uncertain placings for ice axes) took a while but I was soon enjoying the climbing. The downside to being on a popular route was sharing it with two teams ahead and one more catching us up. There were delays on belays while we waited for slower groups to move on. Once on the top we headed down the buttress back into the Lochan and retraced the long slog back down into Glencoe.

After dinner, each evening, we'd meet with the guides for a wash up of the day and a discussion about the next day's objectives, weather, avalanche report etc. Given conditions we had a plan for Tuesday.

At the belay high on 'A Journey to the East, Coire an Dothaidh.



The top section of 'Raeburn's Route IV, Coire nan Lochan. Note the three groups on belays ahead of us.



At the belay high on 'A Journey to the East, Coire an Dothaidh.

After breakfast we had a final briefing then headed towards Bridge of Orchy to walk up into Coire an Dothaidh. My groups target was a mixed / ice climb called Taxus III, 4 ***. After a much easier walk in than the day before we geared up in the Corrie



Top roping ice climbs in Coire Daimh

then headed up towards the crag. It was already obvious that, once more, we were at the back of the queue. When we got to the foot of the first ice section of Taxus there were already at least three teams ahead of us. Sadly, we had to move to the left and tackle A Journey to the East, III *, a 260-metre mixed route which joins Taxus above the best bits. Once again, the conditions were good, but we experienced more delays on belay's finally topping out at sunset. The walk out was done with headtorches, and we finally got back to the hotel at 7.30pm... thankfully they're used to this so dinner was waiting for us. Taxus remains on my tick list but next time it will be an early morning approach.

The discussions about climbing objectives for day 3 were definitely affected by weather and avalanche risk. We set off towards Bridge of Orchy again, but this time turned to the South heading for Beinn Udlaidh. There is a great deal of climbing in Coire Daimh. It's a relatively short, 1 hour, walk in but quite steep through the forest. Once in the Coire the vista opened up but it was clear the wind was high on the tops and most wider routes had considerable cornices at the top. The main route we were heading for, once again, had multiple groups queueing so we headed along the crag looking for alternatives. The

next best alternative already had streams of snow pouring from the bottom and we could see the swirling spindrift higher up. After consideration one of our three groups headed for the only route that looked half safe. The rest of us decided to set up three top ropes on an ice clad crag lower down and spend a few hours ice climbing training. It proved to be a good decision as a gully above us avalanched with the runoff passing about 50 metres away. We put on belay jackets and spent an effective few hours going through climbing technique, building anchors, v-threads etc. This was one day when we actually made it back to the hotel in daylight.

Day 4, Thursday, proved to be one of those special days that you know will stick in your memory. Wind and avalanche risk were considerations again, so we headed for 'The Buckle'. The area where Curved Ridge (III****) sits was fairly sheltered and at first was actually in the sun. One of the guys was sitting out the day so I had my guide to myself. The walk in is pleasant and there was plenty of banter as we started up. PYB head instructor, Keith, was along for the first part of the day to assess how the guides were managing their clients etc but it was all very relaxed. Once we'd geared up one of the guides took his pair up onto North Buttress, IV***, while Graham and I and the other group continued up onto Curved Ridge. As hoped it is a fantastic mixed route. There was a fair bit of snow on it which increased as we climbed. As we went up the conditions went down with wind rising and spindrift increasing but this just added to the atmosphere. The top section was a white wonderland of white rocks and snow. We had to contour around the top of the snow gully on the higher section to avoid windslab but once we were onto frozen snow it was perfect. Two ice axe belays further up and we put in a final belay just below the summit. Topping out into the weather it was the usual swift gear sort out, goggles on, take a bearing and start the descent. We had to bypass the



normal descent, Coire na Tulaich, as it was at risk of avalanche at the top, and head further round down the buttress towards Creag a Bhancair. Ironically, we got a text when we were halfway down to tell us that the avalanche had already happened and we could have descended the normal way... typical... The meeting on the Thursday night basically consisted



of a list of extremely limited options. The temperature had been rising through the week and Thursday night's forecast was for a dump of snow followed by heavy rain and another rise in temperature.

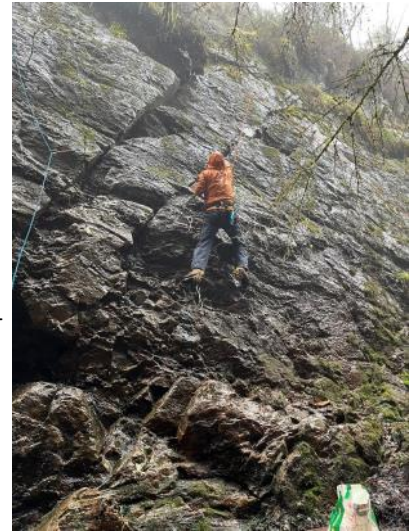
- L: Graham contouring into the frozen gully on the upper section of the route.
- R: The guide and clients of our other group swapping from belay to 'moving together' further down the route behind us.

So Friday morning saw us parked in the North Face Car Park and donning full water-proofs as it was persisting it down. We climbed into the forest to a hidden crag at Creag Dhubh. The crag is bolted and has anchors at the top and has been developed for 'dry tooling' which is basically rock climbing but with crampons and ice axes. It sounds pointless but is actually great practice for mixed climbing and, in reality, a session like this would have been useful 'before' the course. It was a good day anyway. We did a few routes in the pouring rain and everything got covered in mud. The mud was dealt with in the river as we walked back to the car park.

This final day was rounded off by a trip to the Clachaig Inn for a couple of beers and a debrief of the week. The obvious questions are 'was it worth it?' and 'did you get what you wanted out of it?'. The answer to both is a resounding yes. Financially the course cost me £1465 but this included 6 nights full board in the hotel, all transport during the week, 5 days guided mountaineering etc. The whole week was full of discussion and reinforcement of avalanche risk assessment, winter skills, ropework, anchors and belays, route choice etc. The course comes with an expected level of experience and then pushes you just a little bit further.

If you're interested, but don't feel ready for this step, then I recommend the 'Scottish Winter Mountaineering' and Scottish Advanced Winter Mountaineering' courses. The next step up is 'Scottish Introduction to winter Climbing' (they do a Women only version of this course and the 'Scottish Winter Skills' course aswell.) I spoke to people, during the week, who were on all of these courses and they were all having a really positive experience. <https://pyb.co.uk/scottish-winter-courses/>

This trip was supported by the Club's Training Fund - get in touch with the committee if the training fund is something you would like to explore for your mountain journey.



Me climbing in the pouring rain at Creag Dhubh.



Hut Weekend - Tony Emms

On the 27/28th March, ten members of the club gathered at the hut in Nant Gwynant for a scrambling/climbing weekend. Saturday morning, six members consisting of three pairs, set off to climb 'Sentries Ridge', a grade 3 scramble on Craig y Bera, Mynydd Mawr, above Rhyd-Ddu. The remaining four as one group tackled 'Snakes and Ladders', in the Dinorwig Slate quarries. Both groups enjoyed

a fine day out, although a little cold and windy, with a couple of short hail storms thrown in during the sunny intervals. On Sunday morning we awoke to heavy rain, set in for the day, so after a late breakfast we all headed home, more than satisfied with what we had done on Saturday.



At the top left and on the cover you'll see Sentries Ridge, the other photos are of 'Snakes and Ladders', just a sample of the 280 or so photos we took!

Climbing March/April - Neil Loydon

22nd March – Not Shorts Weather! lol

With chances of a dry, but cool and windy day, several cars of climbers – Neil, Will, Geoff, Ian, Ryan and new member Matt, headed to Windgather. After successfully navigating the crux of the day (parking), they split into two teams, and traversed back and forth on the busy crack, completing various favourites Neil finally managed to get a good place in the queue and get on High Buttress Arête lol. A good day was had by all, but despite Matt's instance that they were 'just the job', none of the rest of the party were convinced that it had been a 'shorts day' lol.

11/12th April – Club Hut in North Wales



Matt seconding High Buttress Arête



Geoff leading, belayed by Will; (Ian modelling?)

The weather was 'uncooperative for climbing or scrambling' on the Saturday, but cleared enough on the Sunday, that two pairs - Ken and Wil, Graeme and Carl, could enjoy an outing on the popular 3 pitch Slick in the Moelwyns.

25/26th April - One Weekend/National Park, Two Days, Three Parties/Crags, ? Climbs

Taking advantage of the incredible forecast for the weekend just past, parties from the club headed out on both days, to various venues across the Peak. Saturday, Neil, Will and new member, Jack, headed to the Roaches, to give Jack his first taste of outdoor climbing for ~8 years. The trio had a good day, with only mild sunburn being experienced, ticking several popular routes! Sunday, Neil, Will and Ryan headed to the (to them) hidden gem of



Neil on Wilderness Gully East

Wilderness Gully East in the Chew Valley area. Parking was more of a challenge than expected, but the walk in from Greenfield if anything added to the whole experience. The next surprise which was even more welcome, was how dry the line was, with no flow at all and only a few patches, mostly near the top, being damp and slippery. ~185m, of fun Grade 3S(ish) scrambling, <15 miles from the centre of Manchester! In parallel, Geoff, Adari and sister headed to the popular limestone venue of Harborough Rocks, near Wirksworth. Again making the most of the weather to tick off quite a few of the popular lines there.

Interested?

These were just a few, alongside the weekend written up elsewhere in this edition, in a series of pre-planned and ad hoc trips since we last went to press. If you are keen to get into/back into climbing then get in touch with Darren Beards (07484 615257) to see about meeting up at the Monday evening climbing session at Redpoint Birmingham and *(Neil Loydon is determined to see you)* getting outdoors!



Adari following at Harborough Rocks



Jack following at The Roaches

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