

WEST BROMWICH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



**NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025
NEWSLETTER**

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NEWS

Club news:

- ♦ A new club record has been set for highest mountain summited, by Wesley Marks with his epic climb of Manaslu. Read all about it on p15/16.
- ♦ At the time of writing, Paul Brindley and Dave Nock are out in Nepal, trekking the Everest High Passes over three weeks, including the infamous Three Passes - Kongma La (5,535m), Cho La (5,420m), and Renjo La (5,340m). They are raising money for Mary Stevens Hospice and you can donate by clicking [here](#).
- ♦ Open Ascents are offering 50% off all winter skills/climbing courses to club members.
- ♦ On the subject of Club books, the last 12 copies of "The First Fifty Years" book, produced by the late Nev Tandy, Bob Lister (now in the Lakes it seems) & Geoff Hill (still a member) have come to light. They are being held by Nigel Tarr and are available at just £10 so please contact him if you would like a copy - or a second copy! Once these go only digital copies will be available.

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.

World news:

- ♦ The Ice Factor in Kinlochleven is planned to reopen in 2027 after a community interest company, Point Five, has been set up to try to save it. It will be the only centre in the UK to offer ice climbing, bouldering, sport climbing and dry tooling under one roof.

BMC MATTERS:

As well as our next Winter slideshow on the 27th Nov, being a joint BMC event, there is a meeting and slideshow the week before in Shrewsbury, featuring the renowned mountaineer, Victor Saunders: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/en/bmc-midlands-area-meeting>

There are also several "Club Support Seminars" coming up that any member of a BMC-registered Club (which WBMC is) can attend for FREE via Zoom. Just register your place via their website www.theBMC.co.uk to receive the Zoom link nearer the time.

These are:-

18 November 2025. "Money Matters: Raising Money"

12 January 2026. "Understanding Combined Liability Insurance for Affiliated Clubs" *

8 May 2026. "New Student Committee Members".

*There are also Webinars on this topic recorded in October 2024 and April 2022 available to view online at any time as well as the following:-

"Dealing with Serious Incidents" (May 2023)

"Being a More Inclusive Club" (April 2022)

& "Children, Young People, Families and Clubs" (April 2022)

If you want to contact the BMC to make any comments as a Club Member you can do so by emailing Clubs@theBMC.co.uk

REGULAR MEETS AND FUTURE EVENTS

REGULAR MEETS

Coach Meets:

Saturday 8th November - Tarrens & Cadair Idris

Sunday 14th December - Hathersage/Christmas

Sunday 11th January - Llanberis & Snowdon

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.

Sunday 4th January - Mitch's (car) meet: The Wrekin

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?

Evening indoor meets:**Thursday 27th November, Red Lion, B71 1RH**

November's indoor meet will be an exciting joint evening with the BMC area meeting as Neil Loydon has invited Rolfe Oostra to speak. Rolfe has been leading expeditions globally for more than 30 years. He has led expeditions to six of the 8,000m peaks: Manaslu (summit) in 2013; Mount Everest in 2007 (North Col), 2015, 2016 (summit) and 2019; Lhotse (no summit) in 2016, Cho Oyu in 2016 (2 summits in 24 hours) and 2018, Gasherbrum II in 2022 and Broad Peak in 2022.

Rolfe will share his gripping stories about climbing in the Indian Himalayas. He'll take you to Kang Yatse 2, one of the most accessible 6000-ers on the planet. Rolfe will also talk about the rarely climbed Nun Peak, a technical 7135m Himalayan giant deep in the mountains of Zaskar. To top it off he will share tips and tricks on how to do these epic mountains yourself.

Thursday 18th December, Red Lion, 7:00pm

Christmas social. Enjoy some drinks, Indian food and maybe something fun and Christmas themed!

Committee meetings/social nights at the Red Lion:**Thursday 13th November, 15th January**

Committee meetings start at 7.30pm Members are invited to listen in as observers - pop along to 190 All Saints Way, B71 1RH for the start, or does as some others do and arrive a bit earlier to eat there. Otherwise come along at ~ 8.30 pm for a drink & a chat (or meal) as you can guarantee others will be there.

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.

Also 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 12 noon on Thursdays & Saturdays. 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 07973 405348 or wbmc.dg@outlook.com

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

SPECIAL EVENTS

Skills weekend:

14th November 2025 - The Hut, Plas Gwynant, Snowdonia

A weekend to sharpen up your Navigation and other skills so you are fully prepared for the British Hills.

Aim: To equip Club members and potential members with the skills, confidence and competence to walk in the British hills and mountains.

Course content includes:-

- Clothing and equipment
- Navigation skills using a map and compass
- Route planning
- Mountain weather
- Mountain hazards and avoidance
- Dealing with emergencies and rescue teams.

Contact Geordie Hind on 07505-364318 or email him on geordiehind@gmail.com

Annual Away Dinner:

Arriving Friday, 20th to 22nd March 2026 - Aysgarth Falls Hotel.

We enjoyed the venue so much this year we have rebooked the Aysgarth Falls Hotel in the Yorkshire Dales National Park for our annual Away Dinner in March.

The hotel is right on the doorstep of the beautiful Aysgarth waterfalls, with various routes to explore, including a 4- mile walk to Bolton Castle and around Wensleydale. For the more adventurous there are the Yorkshire 3 Peaks not far away. As always, this is a social event, meeting in the bar on Friday evening for drinks, and enjoying an A la carte Dinner on Saturday evening – the menu to be confirmed nearer the time. There are just 6 of 15 rooms remaining: **Superior double £425 x 3 (one dog friendly) , Suite Bed and Breakfast x 1 £495, Deluxe King Bed & Breakfast £472, Cottage Apartment Bed & Breakfast £495 x 1 (dog friendly)**. N.B. These rates are for a total of two nights stay, with breakfast on both mornings, A 3 course dinner and disco and based on two sharing) The hotel have a number of brand-new luxury garden suites that I have enquired for -price TBC. To secure a room, a deposit of £50 per person is required to secure your room with full payment due by 28th February. Please use the code AD2026.

If you require dinner at the hotel on the evening you arrive at the hotel (Friday 20th) please let Sarah know. Bookings, queries or expressions of interest to Sarah Wheatcroft please via s.e.wheatcroft@googlemail.com or on 07398365990. To see the venue check out aysgarthfallshotel.com.

COACH MEET

SATURDAY 8th NOVEMBER: TARRENS & CADAIR IDRIS

Something a little bit different! Visit the popular Cadair Idris or some of Snowdonia/Eryri's forgotten peaks for a bit of quiet.

Depart: 07:00 – West Brom., Edward St Car Park (B70 8NN)
07:20 – M54 J2

Drop Off: Minffordd (729113)
Abergynolwyn (678069)
Dolgoch Hotel (652047)

Pick Ups: Abergynolwyn (678069)
Minffordd (729113)

Required Maps: OS 1:25,000 **OL 23** Cadair Idris & Llyn Tegid (Bala lake),
Snowdonia
OS 1:50,000 **Landranger 124** Porthmadog & Dolgellau



Suggested Routes:-

From Minffordd

Route 1) Cadair Idris to Abergynolwyn (11.5 miles/18.5km, 3500ft ascent)

Follow the path into woodlands, curving left to Lyn Cau on emerging. Just before the lake (721124) take the left fork up a stoney track to the rim of the cwm. Turn west and onto the summit of Craig Cwm Amarch (711121), curving north with one sizeable descent before rising to Penygadair (711130) - the highest point of "the chair of Idris". Then head west and north west to Cyfrwy (794134) then double back a short way to pick up the Pony Path west, leading to Carnedd Lwyd (683135). Continue following the path below the crag, turning left at Twll yr Ogof (659114). Head south to pick up the path through Bodilan back to Abergynolwyn.

Route 2) Cadair Idris via Gau Graig, circular (8.5 miles/14km, 3000ft ascent)

Head up the footpath parallel to the A487 to the lay by (753135) before picking up a footpath west. A steady climb leads up to Gau Graig (744141), the easternmost peak on the Cadair plateau. Then head south west and west to Mynydd Moel (728137) before reaching Penygadair. From the summit, follow the reverse of Route 1 to return to Minffordd.

From Abergynolwyn

Route 3) Tarrenhendre & Tarren y Gesail (10.5 miles/17km, 2800ft ascent)

Up the steep path opposite the Railway Inn head towards Nant Gwernol Station. Follow the line of the old railway above the river and up through the forest as you reach the gorge. Continue to the summit of Tarrenhendre (683042) then follow the fence down easterly skirting the forest, the path goes ENE to a col and then turns left heading steeply north-north west to a summit marked by a trig point and a small stone shelter (711059). Continue north and east via Foel y Geifr to Tarren y Gesail before following the path back to Abergynolwyn.

This will be a led walk by John Edwards, weather dependent!

From Dolgoch Hotel

Route 4) Tarrenhendre (6 miles, 1800ft ascent or 10.4 miles, 2800ft ascent)

Head South, then fork left North before a sharp double back to contour around Mynydd Tan-y-coed. Take a right fork south-east to the summit of Tarrenhendre, then follow route 3 to Tarren y Gesail (long) or reverse the beginning of route 3 (short) to return to Abergynolwyn.

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.****

COACH MEET**SUNDAY 14th DECEMBER: PEAK DISTRICT WALK & CHRISTMAS DINNER**

Continuing the tradition of a 3-course meal at the end of the December walk, arrangements largely the same as last year! Note, Penkridge then West Brom in the morning.

Please book with Nigel for the coach AND Sarah Wheatcroft with menu choices (07398 365990 or email s.e.wheatcroft@googlemail.com). **Payment of £60 for the meal and coach should be sent in advance.** 40 people maximum, first come, first serve.

Depart: 07:00 – Penkridge
07:20 – West Brom., Edward St Car Park (B70 8NN)
Drop Off: Hathersage (coach will be parked in Castleton for the day)
Pick Up: Hope (SK 172834 or postcode S33 6RH)

Required Maps: OS 1:25,000 **OL 1** Peak District The Dark Peak
OS 1:50,000 **Landranger 110** Sheffield & Huddersfield, Glossop & Holmfirth

Suggested Routes:-

All from Castleton. There will be a led walk with Dave Hellyar.

Route 1) Cave Dale, Oxlow Rake, Mam Tor & Lose Hill (11 miles with lots of stiles and some slippery rocks). Follow the Limestone Way south through Cave Dale and over Old Moor. Turn right through a gate at SK 133807 through Oxlow Rake and turn right along Old Dam Road SK120796. Turn left up the cycleway SK116798 to SweetKnoll, over Wyatts Plantation to meet a track at SK123814. Turn right and go left at the next intersection towards Oxlow House, cross a minor road SK127827 and over Windy Knoll, over the next minor road and up the track/road to the path SK125834 up to Mam Tor and Hollins Cross. Take this path and follow the ridge over Lose Hill and descend via LoseHill Farm. Keep right at SK159847 to avoid as much road as possible. Once on Edale Road keep right into Hope and The Old Hall Hotel is at the next junction.

Route 2) Cave Dale, Mam Tor & Lose Hill (7 miles & fewer slippery rocks)

Follow the Limestone way as route above but before Old Moor at **SK135813** turn right. Turn right again at **SK134812** and follow the track to the minor road at **SK127827**. From here follow the route above over Mam Tor, Hollins Cross and Lose Hill back to Hope.

Route 3) Losehill Hall Loop (A 2.3 miles amble north of the Castleton / Hope road)

Go north up Hollowford Road, turn right past the cemetery at **SK 147834** towards Losehill Hall. Continue along this track, past Spring House Farm and at the next fork keep right into Hope.

Old Hall Hotel Christmas menu:

Starter	Main	Dessert
Chef's homemade soup of the day with fresh crusty bread (GF opt, VG)	Roast free range turkey & roast goose fat potatoes with pigs in blankets, chestnut stuffing & winter vegetables (GF opt)	Traditional Christmas pudding with brandy sauce (VG)
Chicken liver parfait with sourdough bread and fig chutney (GF opt)	Pork loin and Derbyshire black pudding with bubble & squeak mash and wholegrain mustard cream sauce	Dark chocolate and blackberry brownie with vanilla ice cream and chocolate sauce (GF)
Blackened cajun fish taco with avocado and lime crema	Pan fried loch fyne salmon with crushed baby potatoes kale & creamy beurre blanc sauce (GF)	Sticky ginger pudding with butterscotch sauce and vanilla ice cream (VG)
Wild mushroom and thyme pâté with crusty bread and watercress (VG)	Wild mushroom and spinach linguini in a white wine cream sauce (VG)	Cheese & biscuits A selection of local cheeses with homemade winter chutney, supplement £2.50

MITCH'S (CAR) MEET

SUNDAY 4th JANUARY: ROUND (AND OVER) THE WREKIN

Again the same as last year after it had to be cancelled due to a blizzard! Hopefully we have better luck this year.

Meet: 10:00 –Ercall Lane Car Park, Wellington, Telford (TF1 2DY)

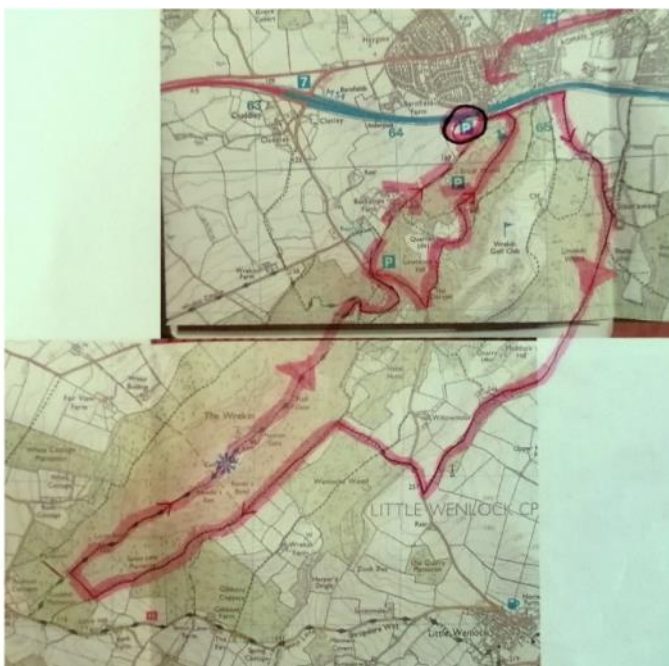
Grid Ref SJ 646 103 Free to park. ~ 40 miles from Birmingham, Exit M54 at Jn 7 due to the new one-way system.

Required Maps: OS 1:25,000 **Explorer 242** Telford, Ironbridge & the Wrekin
OS 1:50,000 **Landranger 127** Stafford & Telford



Route: ~ 7 miles SW through Limekiln Wood then N over Little Hill (761ft) before squeezing through The Needle's Eye to The Wrekin trig (1335 ft). Then down through Heaven & Hell Gates. and take the easy way back to the cars along Ercall Lane or finish off with a bang by visiting the summits of Lawrence's Hill (758ft) and The Ercall (869ft).

After the Walk Meeting Place: The Wickets Inn, 240 Holyhead Road (TF1 2EB) Probably from about 3.00pm This is a family & dog-friendly pub & restaurant run by Debbie & Lance. Cask Marque accredited, they offer an excellent variety of drinks & great quality home-cooked food. See <https://wicketsinn.com/our-menu> for details of their Winter Menu. However, their Sunday Menu can change from week to week so we may not know the actual choices available until a week before.



- COME ALONG TO BLOW AWAY THE CHRISTMAS COBWEBS AND RAISE A GLASS TO JOHN MITCHELL & OTHER DEPARTED WBMC STALWARTS -

COACH MEET**SUNDAY 11th JANUARY: LLANBERIS & SNOWDON**

A classic winter choice, note that winter gear should be worn and carried. You must have ice axe and crampons with you if you plan to go above the snow line.

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)
Llanberis (583598)

Pick Ups: Llanberis (583598)
Nant Peris (606584)
Pen y Pass (647556)
Capel Curig (721582)



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

*Photo from Llanberis meet Jan 2024,
stolen from Stewart Shaw/facebook*

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 in winter 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.

From Llanberis**Route 5) Snowdon by the Llanberis path (9 miles/12km).**

A straightforward walk close to the railway track. Just follow the crowds!

Route 6) Llechog, Moel Cynghorion, Foel Gron & Moel Eilio (10 miles/15km).

Go up Victoria Terrace to hit the Llanberis Path & divert to the left to summit Llechog (606568) Descend & cross railway to rejoin main path and turn off right before Clogwyn Station along the line of an old tramway. After 1/4 mile descend to Llyn Du'r Arddu & pass to left of lake before climbing to Bwlch Cwm Brwynog (590557) & up S ridge of M. Cynghorion to the grassy top (587564). Follow the ridge W, then SW & a wall up to Foel Goch (570564) & Foel Gron (560569). An easy descent NW & 400 ft ascent gets you to Moel Eilio (556577), then N & NE back to Llanberis. Or if you want to avoid 3,700 ft of ascent go an anticlockwise shorter route and just do Moel Eilio & Foel Gron, then descend to Llanberis on the path that goes N from the col at 573559.

Have your say!

Pat Mullett Donation

The Club has received a legacy of £2,000 from the late Pat Mullett's estate and she stipulated that "she wanted this to be used to encourage young people in outdoor activities." Whilst this is an admirable aim and a very generous gesture it is also rather vague so the committee would like to survey the membership for their views, particularly on the following:-

- 1) How should the word "young" be interpreted? What do you feel she would have meant by this?
 - a) under 16 b) under 18 c) under 21 d) under 25
- 2) Should this be a rigid, never-to-be-broken rule? Yes / No
- 3) Remembering that we presently only have 4 (I think) Junior members in the Club do we:-
 - a) hold this in reserve until one of these has a need for a course or equipment?
 - b) use it to try and attract more young members into the Club? eg by giving them free places on a meet.
 - c) Look to use it outside the Club but in the local neighbourhood by trying to help youngsters in Sandwell schools gain Duke of Edinburgh experience, with the help of their teachers of course, or by helping those from Sandwell learning to climb on indoor walls? Could this include buying them some gear or subsidising their travel to outdoor venues?
- 4) Should some of it be used to purchase equipment that the Club would hold for young people who need it, remembering always that we would need somewhere/someone to hold it securely and be responsible for maintaining it?
- 5) Have you got any other ideas? Have you got an idea of something you could run to support young people getting active outdoors that would need money to run it? If so please send these, and your answers / views on all of the above either in writing to the Secretary, Sarah Wheatcroft, 163 Tiled House Lane, Pensnett, Dudley DY5 4LL or to the whole committee by email titled 'Pat Mullett Donation Survey to committee@wbmc.org

2027 is the Club's 75th Anniversary

The Club celebrated its 50th year of existence in 2002 so in a couple of years time it will hit another major milestone. Your committee are already planning for a summer celebration in Snowdonia and a local Dinner Dance in West Bromwich, probably sometime in November. As soon as the dates and outline details for these are known they will be publicised in the Newsletter so that folk can make a note of them in their diaries as it would be a shame if anyone had to miss out of what should be great events. Just as in the Golden Anniversary year there are plans to produce a book giving details of what club members have been getting up to over the years, this time in the form of a "75 year Timeline".

If you have any other ideas of how the Club could celebrate this, what some would call "Diamond Anniversary" please get in touch with any member of the committee. Do you think something like a car sticker would be useful, or bios with the Club's name on them? What about a 2027 calendar with Club member's photos on it, or a special badge or brooch or lanyard? In 2002 we managed to get 50 Members on 50 Peaks one day in June – should we try and get 75 Members on 75 Peaks or would getting 75 members on top of Snowdon at the same time make more headlines for the media? Or are these too difficult? Surely there should be some mountaineering event?

And please remember old or ex members you may still have got contact details for - we wouldn't want them to miss out hearing about things.

Timeline request

The "Timeline" this would obviously include an updated list of the Malcolm Collins Award recipients as well as the names of people who have served on the Club's committees in various roles over the years. It may also include a summary of the last 40 years or so of Coach Meet venues and the Coach Kings & Queens as well as details extracted & summarised from the Club's "50 Years" book and Newsletters over the years. But John Edwards would like to give every Club member the chance to have a mention in the "Timeline" which could end up looking something like:-

"2022:

January: After Mitch's Meet using cars, the Coach Meets returned and for the first time in 3 years the Club was able to run a full programme of 12 coaches. The Newsletter contained the note "You can now travel with confidence (provided you've been vaccinated) as Robinsons' coaches now have the same anti-viral filters in their ventilation system that are used by airlines". A charge of £10 a seat for "newbies" was tried to see if it would attract more passengers & members.

February: Ken Priest, Pete Poultney, Chris Dean, Graeme Stanford & Dave Holland (from Bromsgrove MC) had a successful ice climbing trip to Cogne in Italy. There were 2 Winter Mountaineering Skills course put on by Geordie Hind. The first, "Planning Ahead", took place at the pub in West Brom and the second "Practising Skills" took place on the slopes of Aonach Mor during the Scottish Winter Week."

So, if you have any achievement you feel worthy of inclusion, mountaineering or otherwise, please get in touch with John (jaejed@hotmail.com 07837198) giving the year the event happened and hopefully the month & date/s (or season if you can't remember exactly). Thanks in anticipation.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

President: John Edwards	07837 198355 jaejed@hotmail.com
Chair: David Hellyar	07547 126286 (new no.) hellydav@live.co.uk
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COULD THIS BE YOUR CHANCE??? FEEL FREE TO VOLUNTEER	

September Committee Minutes

Present: David Hellyar, Darren Groutage, Nigel Tarr, Sarah Wheatcroft, Neil Loydon, Luke Wills, Will Read, Tony Emms, John Edwards.

Apologies: Claire Hammonds, Fred Hammonds. August minutes proposed by Nigel Tarr – accepted by Darren Groutage.

Matters arising: 1. The £2000 left to the club by Pat were bequeathed with the intention of encouraging young members to/within the club. What do we class as young members? Under 18? What is the cut-off point in age? The consensus is that this will be up to the age of 21. How are we intending to implement the money? Suggestions are to approach the family to get an idea of how Pat saw the monies being spent. Ideas so far from the committee would be to invest the money on new equipment, Sarah suggested paying for membership and equipment for our younger members to attend a local climbing wall to give them the interest and skills in rock climbing. Neil Loydon disagrees with this as he feels that parents who want their children to do it will pay for this themselves. 2. Should the title be changed for membership? Decision made to Keep this as 'Prospective' to avoid changing the constitution. 3. If we make any changes to the current position of the Hut Trustees we would need to approach Sandwell Council. Committee have decided to leave the Trustees will be left as they are until we need to further address.

Treasurers report: reported to Sarah Wheatcroft in Claire's absence. Balance of current account: £21,243.56. Balance reserve account: £31,228.82. No outstanding bills. Hut building & contents insurance with Howdens insurance renewed £597.28 (policy renews from 12.9.25, up approximately £40 on last years). Progressing making tax digital compliance with Turbin and Turbin. All compliance checks done on club individuals and letter of engagement signed by me, David Hellyar and Darren. Joel will now get our online subscription set up for quick books (bookkeeping software). I will try to log in and open our account when I return from holiday 19.9.25 onwards; together with arranging training and giving authorisation from HMRC for Joel to view the club's corporation tax information. Renewed Electricity contract as discussed last committee meeting with Octopus Energy it will take effect from 29.9.25. Darren has asked whether we need an accountant just for the purpose of filing the corporation tax for HRMC's new digital platform as specific software is required that we do not have. can we have no further action until Darren has had chance to speak to his own accountant, David Hellyar has suggested that as Claire is doing the Treasurers job in her own time and feels she needs it then we should go ahead with the CT has to be filed 4 times a year do we need to file as a small charity?

Hut Secretaries report: reported to Sarah Wheatcroft in Fred's absence. Hut sheet No 7. 27/7 to 21/8/25. Donations £590.0. 69 nights used by 18 members, 8 guests & 1 child. August 25 electric bill £63.78. Hut expenditure to 6.9.25 =£5,430. Hut income to 6.9.25 =£4,705. Forecast hut expenditure to end year is £6,430. Forecast hut income to end of year is £6,205. Based on the above the hut should cover its expenditure for this year which includes the cost of the new heating system, winter logs to be purchased and hut building and contents insurance paid 1.9.25.

Membership Secretary: 213 members, 4 other interested people emails have been sent with no response as yet. Frank Bruce and Martin Saville are the 2 newest enquiries. The 4 outstanding are interested but haven't yet paid. We do need paper copies of membership

applications in the event of the loss of the onedrive, emails are not always responded to, so should we have a whatsapp route for new members? Enquiries are followed up with a telephone call. Tony is unable to see what membership fees have been paid until he has a notification from the Treasurer so if someone applies on the website, he is unaware. Potential members can apply online, but Tony prefers the old way as he has to contact them then and get the full details for BMC. People want to feel welcome and a call once the enquiry comes through is best, can we keep a first contact log so that we know how many enquiries we have had that haven't been followed up.

Coach secretary: 31 on coach, 2 no shows who did pay, Nigel gave coach £40 running a loss of was the driver short in his pocket, driver was unable to work on Monday, coach running a loss. Robinsons want another £150 to cover lost costs. Part of the £150 paid the coach driver total loss of £274 paid. Party of 3 guests on the coach became disorientated on Old Man and had to be brought down by MR, £95 in donations given to MR.

Hut matters: lease/purchase options - Disposable assets, the criteria states that even if we in a position to buy, the council would still need to advertise for sale and would not be offered directly to the club. Because of criteria I don't think we would qualify to have a community asset transfer Do we really want the responsibility of owning the hut and all that comes with it. Nigel is receipt of a quarterly invoice which as long as this is paid, hopefully the need for a new lease to be drawn up will be delayed. Concerns arising if the council need to come to the hut, they will value it far higher than we are paying. "Hut fund" status - If there is an opinion that the purchase of the hut is something that we will no longer consider, how are we going to utilise the funds, the hut sometimes needs costs spending on it, can we use the £30,000 to fund the hut instead of coming from the general fund. This will ensure that the membership costs remain low. Darren thinks that the £50,000 held by the club should make no difference as to where the money is spent. The Hut fund (£30,000) is gaining interest whereas the general account is not. 'Scrap the hut fund' and refer to the two accounts as the current and savings account. Propose that we completely disregard the thought of buying the hut. Cost of hut repairs comes out of general fund. Triangle of land - Ownership of the triangle of land, Unable to locate the deeds of the land, Might need to purchase through land registry, If we ever lost the hut we can camp on there, Pat tweedale.

75th anniversary: summer event. Date to be fixed and deposit paid. Wedding barn hire – prices provided in brochure (saved to One drive) For a full weekend Friday and Saturday night for 120 people the cost is £5995 which works out at £49.95 pp per weekend bringing their own tents. Bell tent hire optional – prices saved to One drive Suggestion is that the club will fund the catering and entertainment. Suggest speaking with venue for recommendations on catering, maybe a hog roast? Licensed bar for the evening of the event, only alcohol purchased can be consumed but BYO outside of the event, no corkage charged. The Venue is fully equipped with AV for a band or disco, with lighting and cordless mikes for speeches, we can decorate it to suit ourselves. I thought that it might be nice to have a slide show of historic club photos spanning 75yrs. They also have an option to plant a native tree at the cost of £75 to which you can add a commemorative plaque. Sarah will speak with the venue re; cost of deposit and recommendations for catering/band/disco. Suggested dates are the weekend of July 2&3rd or June 25th & 26th 2027 Winter -dinner 27th November 2027 The Hawthorns has been agreed as the best option for the dinner, Sarah will call and ask how much deposit is needed to secure the room.

Hut trustees: No change unless someone asks to be removed or is unable to qualify.

Any Other Business: Discussion around 1. Request from Graeme Stanford for funding towards an advanced Winter Skills course. We have contributed in the past when he undertook a Mountain leadership course. Questions arising were, if you pay for this training whom is it aimed at? climbing grade 3 & 4 and the specifics of what the course offers are not generally considered to be beneficial to the club members. Conditions in the UK are unreliable which means trips abroad. Darren applied for course a few years ago skills for beginners that was funded through the BMC not WBMC. Neil Loydon has expressed concern that the course is booked for the same week as the clubs Scotland trip in February which means that Graeme would be unable to prioritise attending a club event and that it is a concern that the course has been booked without approaching the committee beforehand. He also mentioned that the course is geared more towards personal development than leadership. Outcome: Any future assistance in courses of this nature will need to be applied for before booking and paying for. Sarah will contact Graham to ask what he is hoping for in terms of funding and what would he be willing to commit to and what skills he will be able to pass on before the committee makes a decision. 2. Coach fees – should we increase the coach fees for non-members to incentivise memberships? The risk is that by doing this the coach numbers would dwindle. 3. Nigel is sending the 2026 meet card to the printer to be available in 3 weeks time. 4. Concerns raised from September Coach Meet where three guests on the coach attempted a route on the Old Man of Coniston, despite being asked to join an experienced group they declined and had to be attended by Coniston Mountain rescue due to poor visibility and weather conditions. Should we be more proactive in asking people what their capabilities are? legally, we are not responsible but morally we are, Some Members are reluctant to lead walks due to potential blame being levied however, we are covered by BMC insurance to defend us in the event of being sued.

August Committee Minutes

Present: Dave Hellyar, Claire Hammonds, Fred Hammonds, Tony Emms, Neil Loydon, Luke Austin, Will Read, Darren Beards, Nigel Tarr.

Apologies: Darren Groutage, Sarah Wheatcroft, John Edwards.

Treasurer's report: Account has £20,868, with no outstanding bills to pay. Reserve fund contains £31,228. Bank signatories have been updated presently they are Claire Hammonds, Darren Groutage and Sarah Wheatcroft. Jan Cox has been removed. £51.62 has been received from the Easy Fund. The electricity contract for the hut comes to an end on 29th September 2025. The standing charge is £122 pa and the unit price is £29.41. We use less than 2500KW. In any new contract the electricity will cost more and the new offer has no standing charge, but will likely be £200pa more. It's difficult to predict the merits of the new deal until after the winter. The club insurance with Howdens is up for renewal. Last year it was £559.91 and we are presently awaiting the new figure. The precise reasons for this insurance and how it is linked to the BMC insurance needs clarification with Howdens. Neil and Claire will look into this and contact Howdens. HMRC has gone digital so there is an ongoing issue on making tax digital. There has been a donation of £2000 from Pat Mullet who recently passed away. The money is primarily aimed at supporting younger members and the committee needs to consider how this can best be accomplished.

Hut Secretary's report: From 23/6/2025 to 27/7/2025 there was a total of 73 nights booked by 30 people, comprised of 17 members and 13 guests. Two families had booked in but not many younger members. This generated a total of £764, averaging £10.46 per night. Nothing from Plas Gwynant regarding the anniversary arrangements.

Membership secretary's report: At present we have 211 members and potentially a further 4, once they have paid the new £41 membership fee. The 'Prospective Membership' category has been replaced with 'Introductory Membership' on the membership application form.

Coach Secretary's report: The Corwen/ Llangollen coach meet had 31 participants and made a loss of £130. There are presently 18 participants signed up for the next coach meet to Coniston.

Items discussed: 1) Triangle of land at the Hut. Neil Loydon stated that although ownership of this land was never recorded on the Land Registry, there must be a record somewhere of when this land was purchased from Plas Gwynant. Research is still ongoing to find out how this piece of land was originally acquired and any documentation relating to it. Neil, Sarah and Tony are to look into it at Sandwell Archives. 2) WBMC 75th Anniversary arrangements. There has been no further communication from Plas Gwynant regarding the proposed anniversary weekend event in the Summer of 2027 on their site, therefore an alternative venue at Llyn Gwynant Barns in Nan Gwynant is under consideration and was mentioned briefly but deferred for discussion at the next committee meeting. The venue for the 2027 Winter Anniversary dinner has yet to be decided. The Great Barr hotel is still under consideration, although The Hawthorns at West Bromwich Albion football ground was proposed as an alternative. Nigel will contact the Hawthorns to check availability and prices. 3) Any other business: Claire still has some gift aid forms for people to sign. The club hut has four trustees, two of these hut trustees need to be replaced. One of them no longer wishes to continue and the other one is no longer a member of WBMC.

Club trips

LONGER THAN USUAL IN THE PUB (or SWIRL HOW DOES IT AGAIN)

by Ben Fellmoel II

The weather forecast for Sunday 14th September was pretty grim with heavy rain & high winds due to spread in from the SW at around noon and, sure enough, when we first caught sight of the Coniston fells things didn't look too good to the 30 on board, with cloud down to 400m or so. Most still planned to visit the tops but, with my team featuring in a Premier League match with a 2pm kick off due to be shown on TV, I opted for possibly the easiest WBMC coach route I've ever done - a short section of the very scenic Cumbria Way from Torver northwards to Coniston. I soon encountered John Dale doing the same route and, as we continued together through campsites & passed the grim looking Coniston Hall, we had one of the strangest encounters I've ever had in the countryside. Near the shoreline we spotted a guy with what looked like 3 birds clinging to his hat. "They must be sewn-on stuffed or fake ones," I said but, no - as he started to leave the lakeside one of them moved a wing, so we waited as he approached us and found he was taking his 3 pet cockatiels for a walk! He said they enjoyed the open air and they were very tame: he even allowed us to have one perch on our finger and we could see that they were attached to a clip on his jacket via piece of cord attached to a small ribbon harness around their bodies - not the usual jesses around the ankles used in falconry. (Google "cockatiel harness and leash" and you'll see there must be lots of people doing this!!)

Anyway, the rain held off for much longer than expected and most folk reached their cloud-shrouded, windy summit-of-choice in the dry, only to be caught by the rain as they descended. However, 3 'coach newcomers' had a similar problem to that 2 of us 'coach regulars' experienced last year on Swirl How, that is how to get off on the correct route. However, whereas we descended and only realised a navigational error later, they decided to call the police who then called out the mountain rescue. This resulted in the 17.45 intended departure time becoming 20.30 because of driver Dave's hours. Nigel managed to contact the various groups that were refreshing themselves in The Black Bull, The Crown, The Sun & the Coniston Sports Club to let them know they didn't have to rush back and so, after a nice easy walk, I was able to enjoy 6 ½ hours in the pubs - chatting to friends and locals. The 3 came down safely if a bit chilled, thanks to the help of Coniston Mountain Rescue Team. Nigel swiftly organised a collection from passengers for the rescue team and gave the driver a larger than usual tip. We arrived back at West Bromwich a few minutes after midnight after an enjoyable, eventful, longer-than-usual Sunday day out in the hills.

PS The first Ben Fellmoel used to write articles for the Newsletter back in the 1990's. If any old member can remember whose nom-de-plume that was can they please let the Editor know.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE SEPTEMBER COACH MEET : DOWNLOAD AN APP

From John Edwards

The rescue mission and a photo soon popped up on Coniston Mountain Rescue Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1093716639539469&set=a.567958705448601>

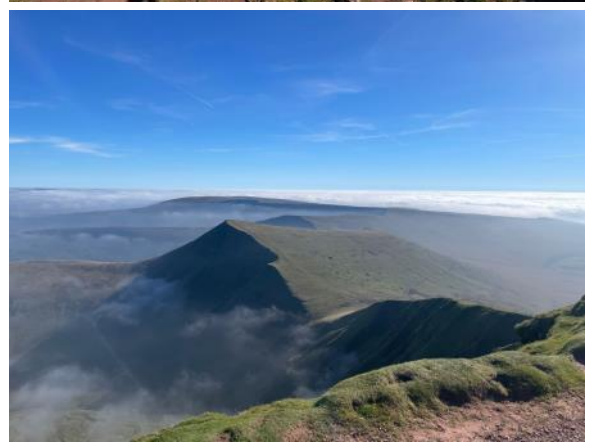
Fortunately neither the club nor the walkers were named, and the latter probably never realised that by calling the police that this would lead to a mountain rescue call-out. However, one of the comments mentions "you should be able to self-locate with one of the many free apps out there, find the grid ref on the map and navigate your way off the hill. Of course, you'd need to have downloaded the app and be able to use a map & compass"

I have forgotten the number of times I have now mentioned the "Outdoor Active" app to fellow walkers in WBMC and my Wednesday rambling group. It was first shown to me by a friend from Hong Kong, who pays for it, but I use the free version as I don't feel the need to save routes. I've found it useful in the fields of Warwickshire when there's no sign of the path that's marked on the map, nor the stile or kissing gate that would get you into the next field. I've also used it up in the clouds on Snowdon (where would you believe even Google maps works a bit!) and on Cader Idris to find the best path down into Dolgellau. I think it's a brilliant aid to help your navigation, along with the "OS Locate" app and would recommend everybody to have it (or something very similar) on their mobile. Wouldn't OS Maps be better I can hear some people suggesting? Well some might prefer the more colourful and familiar-looking OS maps but if I've got a paper OS map with me why duplicate this? Plus "Outdoor Active" uploads your position & the map far more quickly than the OS app does and sometimes shows additional tracks.



October coach

An amazing day in the Brecon Beacons for weather phenomena with temperature inversions (otherwise known as cloud inversions) and a Brocken Spectre! Pictures kindly shared by Darren Beards and Sarah Wheatcroft. The Brocken Spectre is picture from near the Tommy Jones Obelisk looking down the steep north face of Corn Du across the Cwm Llŵch valley.



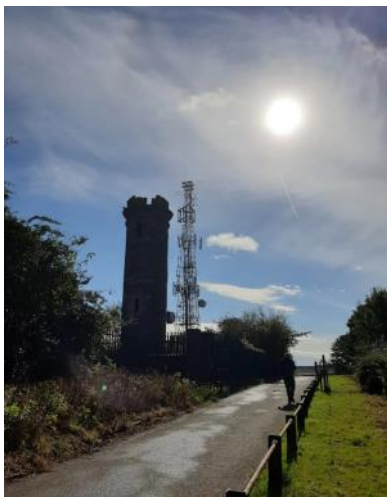
SHOCK HORROR: WBMC MEMBERS CAN'T EVEN CLIMB SEDGLEY BEACON!

Of the 26 people who turned up for the last Outdoor Evening Meet of the year I don't think even one managed to reach the 237m (778ft) top of Sedgley Beacon on what was supposed to be a 5 mile circular walk based on The Beacon Hotel in Sedgley! Amazingly many had turned out for an evening walk in September without proper waterproofs and torches!

The weather was partly to blame, as was the organiser's decision to walk in a clockwise direction, for which he humbly apologises. If he had known what the weather & walkers were going to be like he would certainly have chosen to do the walk in an anticlockwise direction which would mean that Beacon Hill would have been climbed first in full daylight, followed by the beautiful path that goes south from Greenleighs to Ettymore Road.

As it happens the start of the tunnel-like path at Ettymore Road was the farthest that most folk got to, as darkness descended around 8.15pm and the heavens opened with a downpour. One by one, small groups peeled off and headed back to the warmth & hospitality of the pub, home to the excellent Sarah Hughes beers which are brewed round the back. It was great to see some old faces that just turned up to the pub to socialise, some of whom hadn't been seen for a year or two. Also several completely new faces who had seen the walk advertised on the BMC website thanks to the efforts of Neil Loydon. This posting had 698 viewings in just 3 weeks or so and the 4 places bookable by non-members through Eventbrite were all taken up, so it seems this is a great way to widely promote Club activities providing someone is prepared to put themselves down as the leader of a led-walk (covered by the BMC's third party insurance of course).

So apologies once again that the wide-ranging view of the lights over the West Midlands from the highest point in Sandwell was not seen, nor perhaps the most attractive footpath on the walk. If anyone would like a copy of the route map (shown at a small scale here) and the written route description so that they can complete the route at their own convenience, please feel free to email me at jaejed@hotmail.com and request I send these to them. Thanks to everyone who turned out and made the evening an enjoyable social occasion in spite of the weather.



John Edwards : BMC Volunteer (with badge & logo'd buff to prove it!)

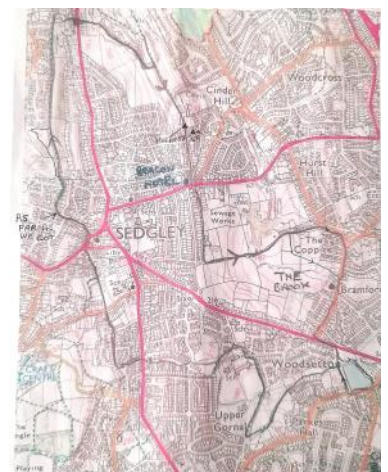


Photo shows the top of Beacon Hill with the gritstone tower which is probably a folly built by local quarry owner Mr Petit in 1846, although some say it was used as an astronomical observatory by Lord Wrottesley (photo by Sheila Burchall)

Member activities

New Heights in the Himalayas: Manaslu summit Wesley Marks

On the 25th September Wesley Marks, reached the summit of Manaslu, at 8163m the world's 8th highest mountain. Wes, originally a 'Brummie', born in Handsworth but growing up in Kings Norton, has been a proud 'West Bromer', for several decades, after moving to the town through a job at Cadburys in Oldbury. Wes's passion at school was sport, especially cross country running, an interest which he carried on into adulthood, morphing into road running and he completed numerous marathons but didn't know anyone into mountaineering or climbing until a former partner introduced him to it in his 30's.

S: What drew you to Manaslu specifically?

W: I have always hoped to climb one of the 14, 8000m peaks. The three I considered was Cho-Oyu (the sixth highest mountain in the world), Manaslu (the eighth highest mountain in the world) and Gasherbrum II (the thirteenth highest mountain in the world). As I had already decided I wanted to climb in Nepal, that left Manaslu and Cho-Oyu. Although I was definitely tempted by the fact Cho-Oyu is just that bit higher than Manaslu. But on reading many mountaineering sources, I was much more interested in Manaslu, it simply sounded the more interesting and possibly the more challenging of the two. The more I read the more I was convinced Manaslu was the mountain I would climb.

S: How did you train your skills and fitness for this climb?

W: I had climbed at altitude before so I had developed all the necessary skills over time. (Aconcagua 6961m in Argentina in 2008) - (Razdelnaga in Kyrgyzstan 2018) are two examples. My problem was the amount of time that had passed from my then highest Aconcagua, to my attempt of Manaslu (first attempt 2024). 16 years is a very long time and add to the fact there is a big difference between being 48 and 64! My plan was to build up slowly. I started my training July 2023 (I also booked Manaslu climb start date August 2024) the first mountain I climbed and summited Cayambe 5790m (Ecuador) the 28th January 2024, then continued my training when I got back to the UK. Then I went on my next climb Baruntse 7126m (Nepal) which I summited 1st May 2024 and again continued my training when I got back to the UK. My thinking at the time was that I would be gaining the right amount of mountain fitness and all-round body fitness. With any kind of fitness, if it is not maintained consistently (if you don't use it you lose it) your fitness is not as effective. Mountain fitness takes into account altitude, terrain, mountain stamina (if you're out there for 30 days, you need to be able to walk no matter how the terrain or appropriate weather every day necessary) and most importantly mountain skills. What I had not taken into account, the recovery time needed after climbing above 7000m, before continuing training in the UK. That then led to my first attempt at Manaslu 8163m on which I did not reach the summit. I was stopped by the group leader on first rotation lower camp 1, supposedly I was too slow, although I totally disagreed with this decision. This decision bought much criticism to the group leader, which for me, unfortunately changed nothing.

S: Did you change anything after last year's attempt?

W: Back in the UK I decided to take a good look at my experience on Manaslu and myself, the aim to see if I could have reached the summit of Manaslu if I had not been stopped. I concluded I could. I realised I would have to approach the climb differently in 2025 from the way I did in 2024, as a lot of my original problems and difficulties had been met. I did not have to worry about mountain fitness in any way, because my experiences in 2024 had given me all that.



Wesley Marks, Manaslu summit



*Camp 1, from a scenic view point,
second rotation*

W, ctd: As I saw it, my two main concerns were ensuring I maintained my physical and mental fitness, and to go with the right company. Choosing the company was easy enough, as I was successful in Baruntse 7126m climb the company I went with 8K, so I chose the Kathmandu based 8K. But choosing which company is a very small part of it. What I needed from 8K was someone to ensure my pace was appropriate at all times in all weather. So the package I had with 8K was 1to1. One Sherpa to one client. The myth that if you have a Sherpa you are guaranteed to summit is pure rubbish, your Sherpa is your guide in all things related to the mountain and nothing else, if you are not capable of reaching the summit for whatever reason you will simply not reach the summit.

So that left my other problem: how to ensure I gave myself the best possible chance of reaching the summit, and this meant looking at my training. On the whole I was happy with my training for the climbs I made in 2024 - after all I reached the summit of Barunste 7126m using existing training methods. Realising I still needed to add just over 1000m though meant possibly needing to gain even more strength and endurance. I decided to adapt my present training while keeping the majority, while increasing the amount of hours I would train in an average week (where training includes hill walking of every kind in all kinds of weather).

I first started to adapt some of my HIIT sessions. I felt one of my most successful adapted sessions was a walk/run. I would start at the Hawthorns, run up and down stairs six or seven times then walk to the next station (Kenrick Park) then run up and the stairs six or seven times then walked to the next station (Trinity Way). I continued this process until I reached Black Lake, and sometimes back again! This HIIT session helped increase both my Endurance and my Stamina while at the same time as increasing leg strength. I also added hot yoga which was away to help with flexibility, mobility and whole-body strength and it clearly worked well enough to reach the summit!

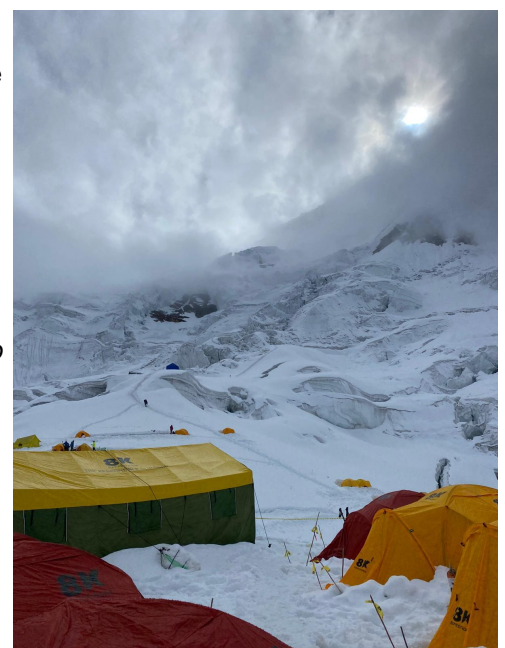
S: So tell us about your time on the mountain and summit day, how did you feel knowing you had succeeded?

.....To be continued!

Wes will be doing an indoor meet, date to be confirmed, to tell us the answers to these questions and more!

John Edwards, current President of WBMC and holder of the Club's altitude record for 18 years until 2024, extended his congratulations to Wes and the rest of the 8K Expeditions team, saying "WBMC has a proud history of members successfully reaching high summits overseas, with teams & individuals planting the Club flag on Mount Fuji, Mont Blanc, Mount Elbrus, Kilimanjaro, Aconcagua and 7041m Lhakpa Ri amongst others, but Wes' Manaslu success is the first time a Club member has breached the 8,000m ceiling - a new record for the club which I think could last for many years to come. But, who knows? It might incentivise others to make an attempt to go one better on one of the 7 higher summits."

Challenge extended!



*Camp 1, the business end
first rotation*

Red House Bothy October 2025 by Fred Hammonds

A trip organised by Andy Brown who unfortunately couldn't get there due to a suspected Covid infection.



So Rob Allen, Bill Darling and myself headed to the bothy from the Linn of Dee car park for a short Bike ride in about 7kl on a very good track I had

the trailer and wood supplied very kindly by Andy 👍. About 45 minutes later we're at the bothy complete with composting toilets which 2 people

can sit side by side if you don't like the Dark 😂.

There are 8 beds in total and a very good wood burning stove which we had a huge 2ltr+ kettle constantly on the boil with water from the river Dee. First morning cycling 7.5kl to the start of the hike 2 Munros Càrn an Fhìdhleir and An sgarsoch 15 kl round trip with good weather and views on the summits.

Back at the bothy for a beer or 2 we were joined by 5 more guests who

were happy to share a lovely fire 🔥 temperature of 22 degrees and a couple of beers made for a comfortable evening. Next morning Rainy start with another 5kl ride in we headed up a beautiful glen complete with waterfalls to the first Munro Beinn Bhrotain the weather had deteriorated and we were in a white out no views light failing a gale blowing we decided to give the other Munro a miss and descended back down the glen happy to get out of the mist and wind. Cycle back to one of the best



Bothys in Scotland for food beer whiskey and another lovely fire 🔥 all of which you have to carry in yourself to make a comfortable 3 nights stay. Next morning cycling out in glorious sunshine and head to Bramare youth hostel for a night before heading back home. Thanks to Rob and Bill great long weekend and Andy for the idea, who's all ready planning for a trip up there.



Club Climbing Activity Overview by Neil Loydon

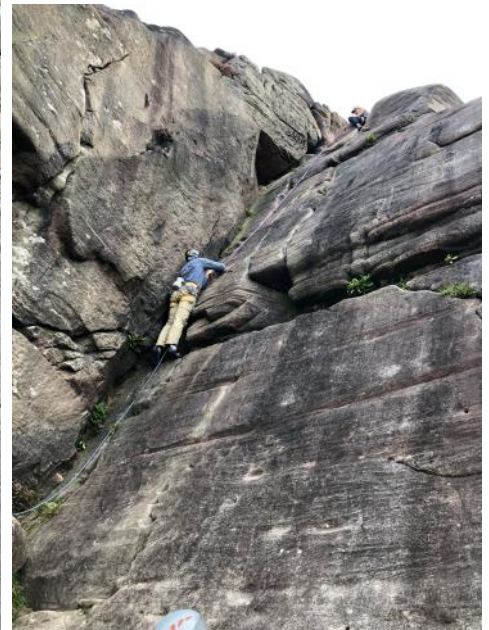
Since submissions for the last issue, there have been a few ad hoc, weekend climbing outings, organised by members. Whilst logistics and weather have 'confined' these to the Peak district, they've been enjoyable and valuable days on the rock.

On 6th September, I, Ian Merther, Luke Austin, Will Read, and daughter Marlow (9.5) made it to the Roaches, to give Marlow her first taste of outdoor climbing, where we had a decent days climbing on the Chalk Storm area, just to the rear of our (well strictly speaking, the BMC's, but as it 's our BMC...) Don Whillans Memorial hut (<https://www.thebmc.co.uk/en/the-don-whillans-hut-a-history>).

After 'burning' all the grown ups off in her training shoes, Marlow confirmed that she was a fan of this outdoor climbing lark !



Will follows on Prow Crack Variations (HVD)



Luke follows on Prow Corner (VD)



Will following on Leg Stump (Diff)



Left to Right - Andy, Marlow, Will, Neil, Geoff

On our next two trips, we took advantage of the good weather slightly further north, and braved the 'huge' (100m ?) walk in to Windgather. The first trip on 18th October, saw three generations of club climbers and their children connecting and sharing a day on the rock, which was rather lovely. I, Will and Marlow, were joined by the growing 'Northern Outpost Team' of Andy Morley (Summer duties only) and Geoff Brown (lifer, with no signs of time off for good behaviour !). Despite the venue reliably living up to it's name and the weather having turned decidedly Autumnal, a good day was had by all, traversing left to right, picking off routes at will, whilst avoiding a couple of large (university ?) groups !



Kris leads Chockstone Chimney (Diff), while Will belays and Dave offers verbal encouragement



Kris attempts to get the feeling back in his fingers before following on another route

After such a great day, and with another weather window coinciding with a weekend, I, Will and two club mates from Wolverhampton MC (Kris Baker and Dave Mantle), repeated the trip up to Windgather the following weekend (25th October). Whilst we packed the cars in the pouring rain, and drove out of that, literally chasing a rainbow, the brighter skies did little to raise the temperature in the face of a strong northerly, and another great, but 'chilly' days climbing was had by all !



A quieter Windgather than the prior weekend. Anything to do with the temperature maybe ? :-)

What's the saying ? There's no such thing as wrong weather . Just wrong clothing ? Well I'm taking no chances ! lol

So that's just a few of the climbing trips that club members, family and friends have managed, since the last time the Editor's last deadline ! It did not seem that strange, that while we were on the rock on the last of these, that this year's first Winter routes were being done in the Cairngorms, highlighting that especially in this age of climate change, the overlap between the seasons is greater than ever, and probably the key to being a 'happy climber' is embracing that, and keeping rock shoes, chalk bag, ice axes and crampons all to hand, all year round !

All of the trips above, were organised via the Club's WhatsApp Community. In particular, and despite their names, the two climbing Groups we currently have ('RedPoint Indoor/Outdoor Climbers' and 'WBMC—Indoor Climbers'). This is not to exclude anyone, but just the way it's worked out. If you are at all interested in getting outdoors, rock and/or Winter, then do join them, say Hi, and say when you are free. If you can't join them for any reason, drop me a line, so I can keep you updated on any plans I see being formulated.



Geoff leading up Heather Face (HVD 1 star) with Marlow's snazzy new climbing shoes in the foreground, the wearing of which, meant she even further embarrassed the adults ! lol

Andy following

R.I.P. Ann Tandy (1/7/1932 - 3/10/2025): A tribute by John Edwards.

Ann Tandy, the wife of long-time Chairman Nev Tandy, sadly passed away peacefully on the Isle of Man on Friday 3rd October, aged 93. She was very well looked after over her last few weeks by the hospital in Douglas, kept company by many friends and family. She slipped away whilst sleeping at around 11:30pm.

Ann was a member of WBMC for over 50 years and was very active with the Club until she & Nev moved back to her 'home island' in 2008. She remained a WBMC member to the end, even though she could not attend events, as she loved reading about what other members were doing in the copies of the Newsletter she received by post.

I first met Ann in September 1971, long before I joined WBMC, when I first completed the Across Wales Walk, which was organised by West Birmingham YHA Local Group of which I was a member. She often volunteered to help marshal checkpoints on these, while husband Nev walked them (& his record of 33 AWW completions has only been matched this year!). We also met up on the occasions when I was tempted to do one of the Challenge events that she help her husband Nev to organise for over 40 years : The Reservoir Roundabout in January and The Mid Wales Mountain Walk in April and it was thanks to the latter event in 1986 that, after Nev suggested I would enjoy West Brom MC & its coach meets, I first attended a WBMC Meet the following April.

It was at the AGM in January 2004 Ann that received the 2003 Malcolm Collins Award after being proposed by several people including Sue Judge, John Hipwood, Mike Nicholls, Hilary Jones & Mike & Emily Smith *"in recognition of her lifetime of mountaineering achievement, including completing many TGO Challenges across Scotland & for keeping up with Nev in spite of her eyesight problems."* The nomination went on to say: *"Those who only know Ann as the chairman's wife would, we are sure, be amazed to learn that in her early days as a Club member she took part in the Welsh 1000m race and was personally responsible for WBMC winning the Women's trophy on several occasions. More recently she completed the Tour of Mont Blanc twice, the second time with a damaged cartilage, 200 miles of the GR10 in the Pyrenees, walked in the Picos de Europa in northern Spain and backpacked for 3 weeks in the Auvergne region of France. In 2002 she climbed the Breithorn (4000+ m) and, of course, she continues to attend regular coach meets, hut weekends and Scottish weeks, where she has bagged her share of Munros."*

When Nev got early retirement Ann did not say "Good, now you can take it easy" but instead, rather predictably for her, "Good, now we can do the Challenge". She was of course referring to The Great Outdoors across Scotland Challenge. She has now completed this three times and is taking part again in May this year. The route you take for the Challenge has to be registered with the organisers and when he was still Munro-bagging Nev was prone to throw in one or two he couldn't resist, making the Challenge even harder. Two of Ann's nominees, Mike Nicholls & John Hipwood, completed a route across Scotland last August and found it considerable harder than they expected. They returned full of admiration for Ann and determined to nominate her for this award. Despite all her achievements, Ann is quiet and unassuming. Her failing eyesight makes it impossible to judge the definition on rocky ground resulting in constant tumbles from which she gets up with never a grumble, giving the impression she is made of rubber. We know Ann will go on achieving for years to come but believe she is long overdue for this award and hope the meeting agrees." (taken from the March 2004 Newsletter).

Indeed in May that year she and Nev set off on another TGO Challenge self-devised route across Scotland but unfortunately Ann suffered gastroenteritis after 4 days and had to retire, although Nev completed the 185 mile route (including 15,000 ft ascent) from Mallaig to St Cyrus near Montrose in 14 days.

Carol & I have fond memories of the time Ann & Nev called in to see us at our 'residence secondaire' at Tayac-Les Eyzies while they were passing by on their swanky motorbike and when we popped in to see them at their new home on the Main Road at Union Mills, Isle of Man, in June 2009 after we had walked the Raad ny Foillan coast path around the island and they joined us on a stroll down one of the fairy glens.



The last time I heard from Ann was when she sent me a card in November 2023 saying how much she enjoyed "getting the W. Brom Newsletter which you produce especially *"The 10 lives of John Edwards"* (!) in the most recent Newsletter. *I love reading about where people have gone (and where they are going). You are obviously still getting out and about – congratulations! I wish I could – even walking is hard now as my legs ache a lot. Sorry about my writing - it's even worse than it was!"* She went on to say that she was sending a cheque to the Treasurer for next year's subs (& a bit extra for Club funds) – something that was not necessary for her to do as she had been one of the Club's Veteran members for a long time. But that was typical of Ann, she still held the Club close to her heart and paid to remain a member even though she didn't have to and could not attend events.

Her funeral was held on the IOM on Friday 24th October at Kirk Braddan with donations in her memory going to the charity Sight Matters (<https://www.sightmatters.im/>). She was a lovely lady and will be fondly remembered by all who knew her.

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