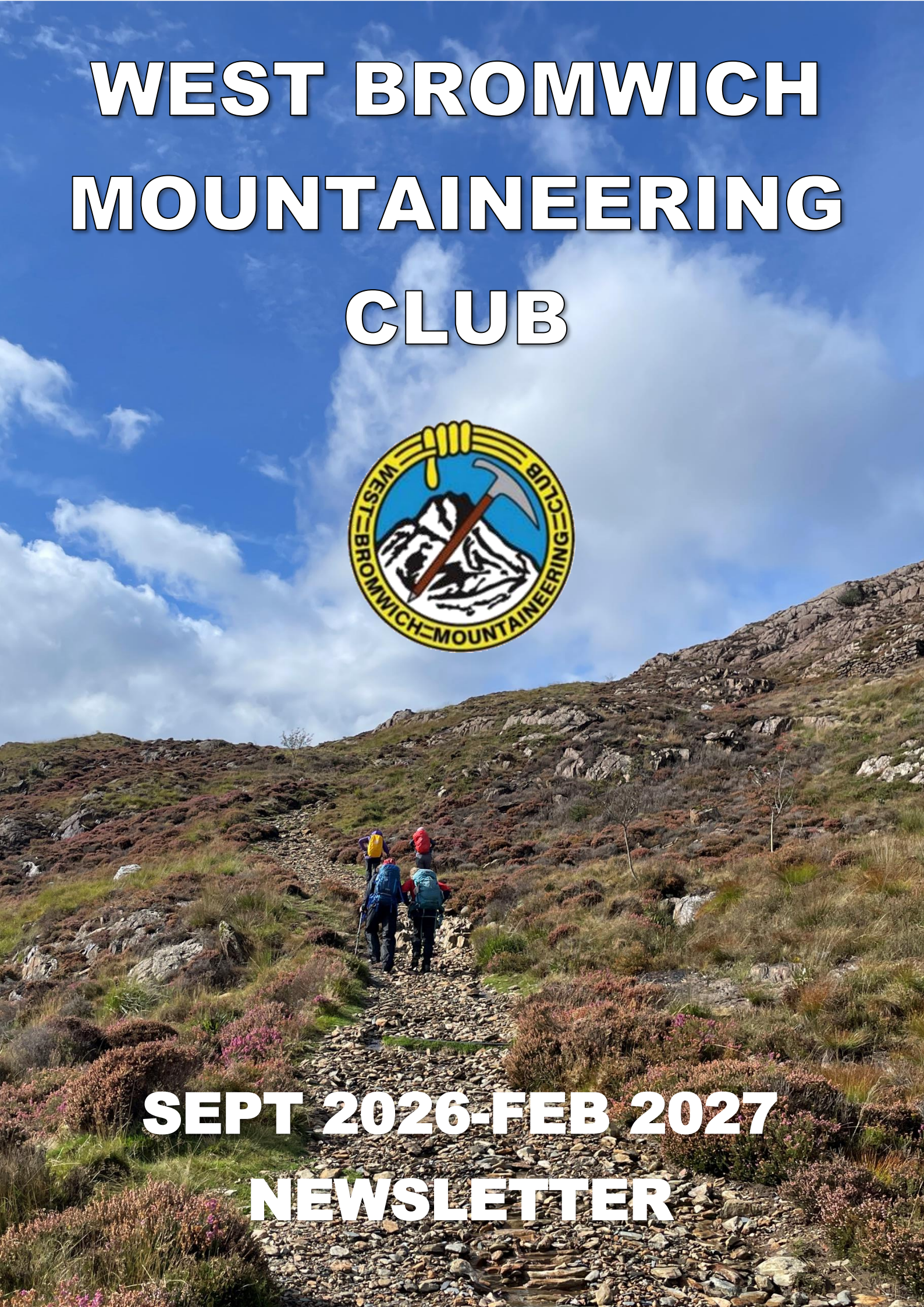
WEST BROMWICH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



SEPT 2026-FEB 2027 NEWSLETTER

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News

Club news

- This is a BUMPER edition of the newsletter — thank you for your patience whilst the editor was unable to use her hands!
- To keep prices low for our paid members, non-member coach fees have increased to £30 from September.
- To ensure priority for members, coach bookings open for 7 days to members only before opening to non-members. Coaches can be booked up to 3 meets in advance.
- Members are encouraged to set up a Direct Debit via GoCardless for membership renewals, to reduce the administrative burden on our Treasurer — see the briefing below.
- 238+ members and counting! A warm welcome to everyone who has joined the club over the summer.
- The club has proudly donated £320.42 to the Nepal disaster collected on the coach and at the Red Lion plus £105 from the TocH meet to Coniston Mountain Rescue.
- Thank you to Ryan Pang for plotting routes for the January coach meet. Is this something you would like to see more of going forward? Would you find it helpful to access GPX files of routes on the website? Let us know!

Cover photo: Sarah Wheatcroft, Women's weekend

GoCardless briefing

> From 2027, WBMC is changing how annual membership fees are collected. Our preferred payment method will be GoCardless, via a recurring Direct Debit collected on 1st December each year (or the nearest working day) and remaining in place for future renewals.

Claire Hammonds (Treasurer) and Darren Beards (Membership Secretary) are administering this change. This will:

- Automate the collection of membership fees.
- Allow time to reconcile payments and follow up outstanding renewals.
- Enable the Membership Secretary to complete the BMC membership submission during February.

From September, members received an email titled "West Bromwich Mountaineering Club would like authorisation to take payment from you." Click Authorise to set up your Direct Debit — payments are processed securely through GoCardless. No payment will be taken until 1st December (or the nearest working day), and GoCardless will send a notification three working days before your payment is collected.

Please let Claire or Darren know if you've changed your email address, or if you're a new member and haven't yet provided one. When you receive the GoCardless authorisation email, please respond promptly. If you pay for grandchildren or other family members without a separate email, or have another query, please contact Claire or Darren. If you want to opt out of this, let Claire know and she will remove you from the email reminder list.

Members without an email address should continue to pay by BACS or cheque (payable to WBMC, posted to Claire Hammonds).

Claire Hammonds: clairehammonds@btinternet.com, 07761 571464, 18 Muirfield Close, Bloxwich, Walsall, WS3 3XF; **Darren Beards:** darrenbeards@gmail.com, 07484 615257

Regular meets and socials

Committee meetings / social nights at the Red Lion

Thursday 15th January, 12th February. 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 from ~8.30pm for a drink & a chat (or meal), as you can (almost!) guarantee others will be there.

Christmas Social — Thursday 17th December, The Red Lion

Our Christmas social meet this year will be a quiz, led by our Chairman Dave, along with an informal bring-and-buy sale; members are welcome to bring along mountaineering gear they'd like to move on.

Quiz entry: £3, with all proceeds going to the fundraising appeal for the Nepal disaster.

Members are encouraged to donate all, or some, of the proceeds of the bring and buy sale.

BMC Midlands Area Meeting & AGM — Thursday 19th November, The Red Lion, 7.30pm

In collaboration with WBMC! Free to attend. A relaxed evening for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers from across the Midlands to catch up with friends, meet new people, discuss the BMC, and vote in next year's Area Committee. Lisa Barge, Chair of the BMC Board, will be sharing her Everest story.

Indoor meets at the Red Lion

10th December, Paul Brindley & Dave Nock: Our trip to Nepal.

8th January, Tony Emms: The West Highland Way.

Come along for stories of adventure, some food, drink and chat with the club.

Indoor climbing

Join the "Rock Climbers" WhatsApp group within our community for more information or to arrange to join.

High Places, Kidderminster: Members climb at High Places, Wyre Forest Leisure Centre, Sirverwoods Way, Kidderminster DY11 7DT, weekly on Tuesday afternoons/evenings.

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

Coach meets

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?

Date	Destination
Sunday 13th December	Roaches + Christmas Dinner
Sunday 10th January	Llanberis / Snowdon
Sunday 7th February	Patterdale / Helvellyn

Reserve your seat with Nigel Tarr (07703 345729) or book via the website — you'll 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 £30, Under-18s & full-time students £10. To book your seat contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729 or book on the website.

Due to recent meets having a waiting list, cancellations less than 7 days prior to the trip, or no-show means the full coach fare will still be expected from you unless there are extenuating circumstances, at the discretion of the chair. This includes if you have said "yes" to Nigel on the previous meet!

Sunday 13th December — The Roaches + Christmas Dinner



Get ready for a festive outing on our annual Christmas coach meet to the iconic Roaches in the Peak District! Rising dramatically above the Staffordshire moorlands, this stunning gritstone escarpment offers something for everyone — from exhilarating 8–12 mile linear ridge walks with sweeping views across Hen Cloud and Lud's Church, to gentler circular routes through the surrounding countryside.

After taking in the crisp winter air (and donning your best reindeer antlers, festive jumpers or Christmas apparel!), we'll gather at The Knot Inn, Rushton Spencer, Cheshire (SK11 0QU) for our traditional three-course Christmas meal at 4pm.

Pick-ups: West Bromwich, Edward Street Car Park, 7.00am (B70 8NL); Penkridge, ST19 5AS, 7.20am (ST19 5AS). **There will be a breakfast stop at Stafford services.**

Drop-offs: Upper Hulme (SK 01440 61019); Leek; The Knot Inn (SJ 93997 62325), for circular walks from that area. **Returning from The Knot Inn, Rushton Spencer only.** We should be back in West Bromwich at about 8.30 pm.

Required maps: OS 1:25,000 OL24 Peak District – The White Peak; OS 1:50,000 Landranger 118 (Stoke-on-Trent) and 119 (Buxton & Matlock).

Cost: Coach £25 members / £30 non-members. Meal: 2 courses £26.00, 3 courses £32.50 — so £51.00–£57.50 for members, £56.00–£62.50 for non-members, depending on how hungry you are!

Suggested routes:

Route 1) Linear from Upper Hulme - approx 20km and not led 704m ascent. Route has not been reccied so strongly suggest taking a map. The estimated time is 8 hours so recommended for strong walkers only. Start at Upper Hulme, take the track north past Dains Mill to a junction SK 0137 6166, turn left past

Well Farm and up onto The Roaches, continue past Bearstone and Hangingstone Farm to Danebridge. Cross the river via the road and turn right at SJ 9645 6521. After half a km turn left to cross a road and continue to another minor road at SJ 9578 6528. Follow the road NW until Bennettshill SJ 9521 6640 and turn left. Turn right at Lower Greaseley and up to Nabbs Hill. Follow the footpaths to SJ 9441 6724 and turn left, take the Gritstone Trail on the first left south to Hawkslee. Continue along the Gritstone Trail, turning left at Dumkins, Cross the River Dane and take one of the 2 southerly paths, both lead to Rushton Spencer.

Route 2) linear from Upper Hulme - 16km and not led, 495m ascent, again not reccied.
As Route 1 at Wincle Grange SJ 9562 6534 take the SW path to Dumkins SJ 9492 6477. Follow the Gritstone Way S as Route 1.

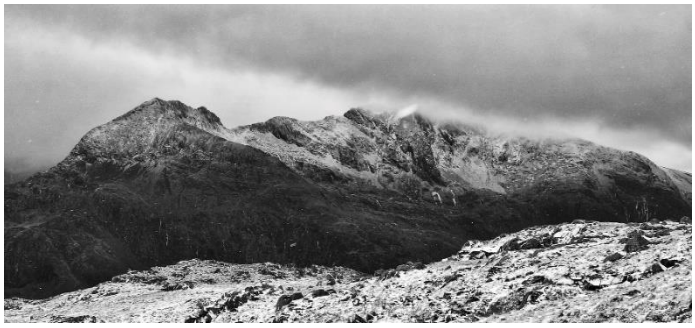
Route 3) circular (led) and easy - 14km, 217m ascent.
Start at Rushton Spencer and go S on the old railway past Rudyard Reservoir. Go past the bridge and turn right at SJ 9605 5752. Turn sharp left and follow the Staffordshire Way to the Visitor Centre cafe for a short stop. Continue along the Staffs Way for half a km then turn left at SJ 9485 5854 with Horton Lodge on the left. At the road turn right and follow it round a bend and take the path at SJ 9417 5880. Go past Birch Trees Farm, Barns Lee and Great Hough to a minor road SJ 9290 6132. Turn right, over the cross road and follow the road to SJ 9319 6205. Tale the path on the right through the churchyard. Take the left hand track which should lead to the Knot Inn.

Menu

Starters: Soup of the day, crusty bread (v)(vea)(gfa); Whipped chicken liver parfait, quince jelly, rye crackers (gfa); Creamy blue cheese mushroom gratin, garlic sourdough toast (v)(gfa).
Mains: Staffordshire roast turkey with all the trimmings (gfa)(dfa); Old English sausages, horseradish mash, roasted roots, crispy kale, Wincle ale gravy; Roasted leek, sage and chestnut gnocchi, crispy kale, crushed hazelnuts (ve)(gf)(df).
Desserts: Crumble of the day, custard (vea); Warm chocolate brownie, chocolate sauce, pouring cream; Selection of ice creams or sorbets (gfa)(vea).

Please pay the coach and meal cost together into the Club account (sort code 08-92-99, account 65487846, reference CFXM12 and your name) or via the website (wbmc.org/coach-meets), then email your meal choices to Jan Cox at jannycox3@gmail.com. Payment and meal choices need to be received by 1st December 2026. Many thanks to those who have already paid!

Sunday 10th January — Llanberis & Snowdon



A classic winter meet — with hopefully better weather than 2026 (IYKYK).

You must have ice axe, crampons and suitable boots if you plan to go above the snow line. You must have a torch and suitable clothing for all walks.

Depart: 07:00 – West Brom, Edward St; 07:20 – M54 J2

Drop-off: Pont Cyfyng (735572); Capel Curig (721582); Ogwen (648603); Llanberis (583598)
Pick-ups: Llanberis (583598); Nant Peris (606584); Pen y Pass (647556); Capel Curig (721582)
Required maps: OS 1:25,000 OL17 Snowdon/Yr Wyddfa; OS 1:50,000 Landranger 115

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 Llyn y Foel (713547), from where you can climb the SE ridge of Moel Siabod (Grade 1 scramble of Daear 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 café open before pick-up.

From Capel Curig — Route 2) The Glyders and their Eastern ridge (10 miles/15km). From Capel head west and follow the ridge to Gallt Yr Ogof (685586), continuing 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). Ascend Glyder Fach (656583), followed by Glyder Fawr (642580). Descend south to Pen-y-Pass, or if you sort it with Nigel, walk down the road to the Pen Y Gwryd Hotel (check it's open first!).

From A5 near Llyn Ogwen/Idwal Cottage — Route 3) Tryfan and the Glyders (9 miles/12km). A tough route in winter with up to 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 the west side of the lake to climb Y Garn's east ridge to the summit (631596), then north to Foel-goch (629612) — or miss out Y Garn and take the old A5 road on the west side of Nant Ffrancon, climbing Foel-goch via «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), or variations thereof depending on how many peaks you want to include!

Sunday 7th February — Patterdale



A classic winter meet — returning to dropping off at Kirkstone Inn this year as the road has reopened, for those who want to explore Red Screes instead of Helvellyn.

You must have ice axe, crampons and suitable boots if you plan to go above the snow line. You must have a torch and suitable clothing for all walks.

Depart: 07:00 – West Brom, Edward St Car Park (B70 8NN); 07:20 – Penkridge, ST19 5AS

Drop-off: Kirkstone Inn (401081), Glenridding (386169), Patterdale (395159)

Pick-ups: Glenridding (386169), Kirkstone Inn (401081)

Required maps: OS 1:25,000 OL5: The Lakes North East

Suggested routes

From Glenridding — Route 1) Catstycam & Birkhouse Moor (8.5 miles, 2600ft ascent). Take the path on the south side of Glenridding Beck and follow it all the way to Red Tarn. Make a right towards Swirral Edge, then a sharp right just before the edge to ascend Catstycam. Retrace your steps back to Red Tarn and continue straight across the Beck to the Hole in the Wall (359155). Follow the dry stone wall to Birkhouse Moor, with a small out-and-back detour to the summit cairn. Regain the path and follow it to meet Mires Beck, which leads back into Glenridding.

From Patterdale — Route 2) Striding Edge & Helvellyn (9 miles/14km, 3500ft ascent). Follow a track to where it turns right over Grisedale Beck (383157), then climb steeply up to the “Hole in the Wall”, which marks the start of Striding Edge — an airy Grade 1 ridge that can be challenging in winter conditions for the uninitiated. A short descent to a col at the end is followed by a steep final climb to the summit 'shelter' and trig point (342152). Continue N to Lower Man (337155) and Whiteside (338166), then take the lower path down to Glenridding Common (352166). A good track leads you past the Youth Hostel (366174), from where you head down Greenside Road to warm up at the Traveller's Rest in Glenridding.

Route 2b) Striding Edge & Swirral Edge: Follow Route 1 to the trig point, but as you head north keep an eye out for the branch right with a short steep (and potentially slippery) path down onto Swirral Edge — another Grade 1 scramble but a slightly shorter ridge than Striding Edge. Descend to Red Tarn, then fork left to follow the beck back into Glenridding. Due to its position, Swirral Edge can be more prone to amassing snow and ice — check conditions before committing. This route can also easily be reversed, to do Swirral then Striding.

Special events

BMC Night Navigation Skills — Wednesday 18th November, Rubery, Birmingham

Come and learn some micro night-navigation skills on the hills just outside Birmingham, led by **WBMC member**, BMC walk leader and NNAS-qualified navigation tutor Frank Bruce.

Meet: 18:45 for a 19:00 start (session approx. 2 hours). Boleyn Road, Rubery, Birmingham B45 0LG (OS grid ref SO 97927 78192) — meet at the road junction opposite the Crematorium entrance.

The walk covers around 4km (2.5 miles) and 125m (680ft) of ascent on the Waseley Hills — easy grading, with some steep slopes, wooded areas, fences to handrail, and pacing practice, using OS Explorer Map 219 (1:25,000).

Cost: a £2 donation towards BMC hill walking projects (contact the organisers in advance if you can't pay, and they'll include you free of charge).

What to bring: sturdy, water-resistant boots, layers, waterproofs, hat, gloves, food and water for 2 hours, a headtorch (essential), and OS Explorer Map 219.

Over-18s only; well-behaved dogs welcome on a close lead (note this when booking). Free parking on Boleyn Road; bus 63 from Birmingham Digbeth Moor Street Queensway (stop MS23) runs to the Frankley stops on Boleyn Road. No facilities on site.

> Book via Eventbrite (search “BMC hill walking skills night nav midlands”, or see the link on the BMC event page). If you can no longer attend after booking, let the BMC know so your place can be offered to someone else. Contact Frank Bruce directly on frank.bruce@btinternet.com if you're unsure about your ability or kit.

Updates will be posted on the BMC Midlands Facebook page (facebook.com/BMCMidlandsArea).

Mitch’s meet? Volunteer needed! – 3rd January 2027, tbc

The traditional new year “Mitch’s meet” is on the meet card for 3rd January but with nobody confirmed to lead it! This is a friendly, low-key and local car meet. Last year a group went for a walk around the Wrekin to blow away the cobwebs. If you could lead a walk there this year, get in touch!

Ice climbing trip — 17th–24th January 2027, Cogne, Italy (Contact: Graeme Stanford)

Cogne is a beautiful small alpine town, located in the Aosta Valley on the edge of the Gran Paradiso National Park, considered one of Europe's premier ice-climbing destinations. It offers hundreds of icefalls, reliable (or as reliable as anything is these days) winter conditions, and easy access to climbs within short approaches from the valley.

This is a multiple club trip, as in previous years we've had members of Bromsgrove, Worcester, Banbury and The Vagabonds MC join us. While primarily an ice climbing trip, the area is perfect for skiing, snowshoeing, walking or just sightseeing, so it's thoroughly recommended for non-climbers too, as there's plenty to do. Due to the logistics and cost involved, this is very much a self-arranged trip, in that it's up to you to decide how you get there, where you stay, etc. Once there, we all tend to meet up for drinks, meals, and discuss what we're going to get up to. Most tend to eat out twice and self-cater the rest of the time. Usually, the final night is a group meal somewhere. We had 30 one year! WhatsApp is great for this kind of trip. I also recommend an app called 'Splitwise' to manage group costs. In recent years, due to uncertain conditions, there has been much discussion about 'staying flexible' for these trips — not booking flights etc. til the last minute, being prepared to change dates and/or venue etc. If you have the flexibility to do this, I recommend it. This trip however will remain on these dates as for myself and most of the other already interested

parties, we simply don't have the flexibility to keep the dates as a moving target — work, life etc get in the way. Cogne is also a mecca for cross-country skiers and a popular place for Italians, so we don't want to risk finding poor accommodation choices due to late booking.
How to get there: Cogne is reached by flying into Turin, hiring a car, and driving north on the E612/E25 to Aosta (toll road), then heading south on the SR47 to Cogne. Most of the journey is motorway, then a good but winding road up into the mountains to Cogne. Jet2 run reasonably priced flights from Birmingham to Turin.
Where to stay: Personally, I recommend finding accommodation in Cogne itself rather than Valnontey or Lillaz. Both outlying villages have little if any nightlife, whereas Cogne has multiple bars and restaurants and the best pizza restaurant (Bar Licone) in the area. There are many air B&B options, and popular hotels/guesthouses include: Hotel La Barme (Valnontey), Hotel Bouton d'Or (Cogne), Hotel Bellevue (Cogne), Chateau Royal Residence (Cogne), Les Nigritelles (Lillaz).

Specific information about climbing in Cogne

La Barme Hotel, in Valnontey, keeps a 'climbing book' for people to record their climbs in — a very handy tool for gauging what climbs are being done and what the conditions are. You don't necessarily need to go there to read it, as the entries are published online at iceclimbingcogne.com — just click 'ice conditions' and look for the most recent entries. The website also has PDF maps of all the climbs in the Valnontey and Lillaz valleys, as well as an avalanche bulletin.

Cogne's ice climbing is concentrated mainly in two major valleys:

1. Valnontey: This is the largest and most famous ice-climbing sector in Cogne. It has long multi-pitch icefalls, steeper lines and more technical routes. Beautiful south-facing approaches but cold, shaded routes.
2. Lillaz & Valeille: Closer to the village of Lillaz and easily accessible. Lillaz Sector has: Cascata di Lillaz (WI3) — one of the most famous beginner-friendly multi-pitch routes (often very crowded), short approach (10–20 minutes), good for practice and moderate climbing. Valeille Sector: more varied difficulty: WI3 to WI5+.
Season: Mid-December to late February (with good conditions often extending into mid-March, depending on temperatures). It's reliable because of the cold, high-altitude (~1,500m) valley, with many shaded north- and east-facing walls and consistent freeze cycles. January is usually the most reliable month.

Experience and equipment

If you're interested in ice climbing, note that experience will be required unless you have arranged to come with someone who is planning to 'show you the ropes' (pardon the pun), as we can't guarantee how many people will be going with the experience to keep beginners safe. There are a couple of indoor ice climbing venues in the UK where you can have a go to see if it's for you — Ellis Brigham stores in London and Manchester both have ice walls, as does 'The Toolbox' in Glasgow ('The Ice Factor' in Kinlochleven is where I started but it's currently closed). If you wish to access paid instruction in the area, you can find links to guides at iceclimbingcogne.com/partners.

Ice climbing often involves multi-pitch routes, and the descent from many routes involves abseiling back down the route, often as other teams are ascending (or vice versa) — so multi-pitch experience is essential. A very good reason to get out and get climbing this summer on club meets. Many routes in the area have bolt and chain belays already in place, which makes life easier. You will also need B3 boots and preferably C3 crampons (C2 will suffice on easier grade water ice, but not the harder routes), a pair of ice climbing tools / axes. Obviously harness, helmet, belay plate etc. Each climbing team will also require quick draws, ice screws, carabiners, slings and the kit and ability to make V-threads (abalakov threads). Oh, and don't forget ropes — 60m twin ropes required on most routes. Many club members have the required gear, so it's likely a lot will be available to borrow. There's also the option of hiring kit — I did some research, and the two shops in the group who appear to hire gear are Ezio Sport (no website, but phone +39 0165 74204 or e-mail eziosport2002@libero.it) and Le Paradis des Sport (+39 0165 74882 and leparadisdessport@mountain-shop.com). NB: make enquiries well in advance, as it's unclear 'what kit' they hire out.
Climbing guidebooks: Up until 2019 there was only 'EFFIMERI BARBAGLI - Cascate di ghiaccio in Valle d'Aosta' by Matteo Giglio, which is now rare as hens' teeth. While comprehensive, it's only available in

Italian. I recommend Cogne Selected Ice Climbs by Oxford Alpine Club (168 pages, English, ISBN 9781913167004) for its detailed maps and photo-topos of iconic areas like Lillaz, Valnontey, and Valeille. Coverage: the guide includes 400+ ice climbs ranging from single pitch to massive multi-pitch, covering Valnontey, Valsavarenche, and Rhêmes. NB: there will definitely be a couple of copies of this book in the group, so it's simple to sit in a nice bar talking about the next day's objectives and use your phone to photograph the relevant pages rather than spending £30 on the book.
Skiing: There is limited skiing available straight out of Cogne itself, and all equipment can be hired there. No driving required at all, but it is very limited. I recommend driving down to Aosta — you can park at the gondola station in the town, hire equipment, purchase passes etc right at the car park, then jump on the gondola up to the Pila ski resort (pila.it/en) if you want a rest day from climbing — this resort is perfect.

If you 'are' interested in joining us having read all that blurb, or just want some more information, my mobile number is 07846 281878, or e-mail grim212830@gmail.com. There is a WhatsApp group but it's not a WBMC one due to the mixed nature of the group. I can only add people who are already looking at going on the trip, so the multi-club chat doesn't get overwhelmed with WBMC stuff. I hope that makes sense.

BMC How to train novice club members in winter skills | Training weekend, tbc?

BMC subsidises 'train the trainer' training, for club members, at Plas y Brenin. A number of us are trying to help this happen in 2027 (potentially 6/7th Feb). If it runs, the WBMC will pay the fees of any member who attends, on the condition that they deliver a Winter skills or led walk day, for the club, using what they learnt. Paul Brindley has attended the Summer Skills version, and shared that it was very worthwhile!

Note: attendees should be proficient in their discipline/s before attending (e.g. be a proficient Winter walker, mountaineer and/or climber ahead of attending). Here is the link to last season's event - https://www.thebmc.co.uk/en/training-novice-club-members-winter.

Questions and/or to add your name to the list, please contact Neil Loydon.

Scottish Winter Week — 13th–20th February 2027, Coylumbridge Hotel, Aviemore, Cairngorms (Contact: Jonathan Howells)



Thanks to Jonathan and Vanessa Howells' organisation, we're once again heading back to the Cairngorms.

- £55 per person per night in a twin/double room (£110 per room, per night), with a £30 single-person room supplement making it £85/night for those not sharing. This price includes bed, breakfast & evening meal. Children aged 3–14 are charged at 50% when sharing with 2 adults.
- Breakfasts start at 7am, but stragglers coming down later aren't a problem. Evening meals start at 7:30pm.
- Dogs are allowed, maximum 2 per room, at a cost of £25 for the week, and are allowed in all public areas except the main restaurant.
- Free Wi-Fi is available in public areas and bedrooms, but smoking and vaping are prohibited throughout. There are 2 pools, a sauna and a gym, though the pool may close for a couple of days a week during low season.

To book, contact Jonathan on jhowells42@gmail.com (or 07859 932389) with your name and party details, and transfer one night's stay as a deposit into the Club's account with the payment code SWW26 plus your initial and surname. Full payment is due within the first two weeks of January. There's also a "Nev's Scottish Winter Week" WhatsApp group for news, updates and organisation.

Away Dinner — 19th & 20th March 2027, Aysgarth Falls Hotel

We're heading back to the Aysgarth Falls Hotel in the Yorkshire Dales National Park for our Annual Away Dinner. All 4 Cottage rooms, 2 Superior rooms and now 2 Hyllside Suites are dog friendly.

> **A 25% deposit is required to secure your room at the time of booking, with the full balance 4 weeks before the event. Please contact Sarah Wheatcroft on 07398 365990 or s.e.wheatcroft@googlemail.com to reserve your room.**

Room Type	No. Available		B&B Rate		Sat Meal x2		TOTAL
Cottage Dbl	2	£	292.50	£	76.00	£	**368.50**
Cottage Sup	1	£	341.10	£	76.00	£	**417.10**
Cottage Apt	1	£	401.40	£	76.00	£	**477.40**
Standard Dbl	2	£	306.00	£	76.00	£	**382.00**
Standard Twin	2	£	306.00	£	76.00	£	**382.00**
Superior	3	£	341.10	£	76.00	£	**417.10**
Deluxe	2	£	376.20	£	76.00	£	**452.20**
Junior Suite	1	£	378.90	£	76.00	£	**454.90**
House Suite	1	£	400.50	£	76.00	£	**476.50**
Hyllside Suite	11	£	585.00	£	76.00	£	**661.00**
Hyllside Spa	3	£	639.00	£	76.00	£	**715.00**
All rates are for 2 nights - 19 & 20 March 2027 B&B					Inc. Meal		

The B&B rates have a 10% discount from our current rates and I have calculated the Saturday night meal at £38pp; if any of the rooms were single occupancy that the rate would be £38 less.

Rates above are for 2 nights (19th & 20th March 2027), B&B, and include the Saturday night meal. The B&B rates have a 10% discount from the hotel's current rates; the Saturday night meal is calculated at £38pp — single-occupancy rooms would be £38 less.

Club trips / member articles

Trip Report: Saastal (Saas Valley) — 21st–29th July. Ryan Pang (& Neil Loydon)

Neil and I went out to Switzerland on 21st July for nine days. It was my first alpine season (actually, I only started rock climbing in the spring, lol), so we planned to pick easy objectives — which, combined with the effects of this year's heatwave on the mountains, caused us quite a headache in trying to identify suitable possibilities. Eventually we settled on Weissmies SE Ridge (4017m, PD) and Lagginhorn (4010m, PD-), both long rocky scrambles, as possibilities. PD sits near the easy end of the alpine grading scale, which felt like a reasonable place to start — not least as most of the F routes are glacier 'walks', which in a 'normal' year would be fine, but this year were more icy and crevassed than usual at this stage in the season, leading to several unfortunate incidents even before we headed out there.

On the way from Geneva airport, we rode the fast cable cars up the Aiguille du Midi in Chamonix to 3842m, to enjoy the views and start acclimatising. I lasted 90 minutes before I felt unwell and came down — my first taste of altitude sickness (or maybe just the quality of the Croque Monsieurs in the Midi café).



The effects of altitude — exhibition at the Aiguille du Midi

Neil said the exhibition on the effects of altitude at the Midi, which he enjoyed while I descended, was both interesting and informative. I didn't need it, as I was having my own firsthand experience, involving a grade 6/7 headache, lol.

Given acclimatising at the Midi had not gone too well, the next day we rode the Metro Alpin, the world's highest underground railway, up to Mittelallalin (3456m) to acclimatise, where I can report that we spent a very comfortable five hours sitting in the revolving restaurant before heading back down to sleep in the valley again (1559m). Acclimatisation is acclimatisation! And I did not want to feel like fainting and throwing up my breakfast again.



Relieved smiles in the revolving restaurant at Mittelallalin, headache gone and breakfast staying down. Allalinhorn in the background.

We walked up to the Almageller Hut (2894m) on the Thursday. The approach is ~7km with 1230m of ascent, but when operating, a short chairlift ride shaves off half an hour, and as well as the grand views there's some ironwork and rope bridges to navigate, plus an en-route hotel for refreshments — far from a boring slog! In fact, it was a good reminder of just how popular hut-to-hut hiking is, as the crowds in all directions were well and truly out.



After checking in at the hut and observing resting pulse rates, we resisted the attraction of the sport climbing on the Dri Hornli and rested as best as possible, ready for an 'alpine start'. We left for Weissmies at 04:45 on the Friday, and for many hours were somewhat ahead of guidebook time. However, ~3600m altitude started to take its toll on us, which combined with pitching a short chimney and then not being as smooth at moving together afterwards, ate up the clock. At about 3950m, seven and a half hours in and roughly 70m below the top, we decided it was prudent to turn round, as we were taking too long.

Neil contemplating whether boots secured on the sides was the best idea for a narrow rope bridge approach?



Me heading up, while things were going well/before we got the rope out



Neil shortly after starting down head down at ~ 3900m

A few minor 'detours' on the way down meant that, safe to say, even without summiting, we did not maintain — let alone beat — guidebook time on the way back. But the weather was fine and settled, and we knew cold Weissbier and a hot dinner awaited us at the Almageller Hut.

After another night of wishing I'd packed ear plugs, we walked down to the valley on the Saturday. Somewhat footsore and with tired muscles, we didn't feel up to getting straight into another similar route on the Lagginhorn, so we parked that plan, cancelled the Berghaus Hohsaas (3142m), which was where we would have started from, and took more nights at the Hotel Adler in Saas-Grund instead — somewhat worse for the wallet, but much more comfortable!



Felskinn Glacier with two 'great options' – Walk in snow, with less chance of slipping, but directly under several active rock falls, or walk on the 'skating rink', with a cliff at the lower edge?

Sunday was wet, so we took the Spielboden cable car up and walked back down to Saas-Fee in the rain as 'active recovery'. At least Neil saw a marmot (or so he claimed). At this stage, with the Lagginhorn indefinitely parked for this trip, we hired via ferrata kits in Saas-Fee and asked the shop what routes they'd recommend, including the recently re-equipped one above the Britannia Hut. We'd seen reports online of rockfall on the glacier crossing to the hut, but were 'reliably informed' it was a simple snow walk — though we should wear something more substantial than trainers if we wanted dry feet.

On the Monday we took the Alpin Express up to Felskinn (2989m). The normal way across to the Britannia Hut goes over the glacier, and once we were up there we did not agree with the shop's advice! With no crampons or ice axe, we went back down to Morenia (2550m) and walked up to the hut (3030m) the long way instead. Then we did the Britannia via



Heading back to the Britannia hut, from the end of the via ferrata



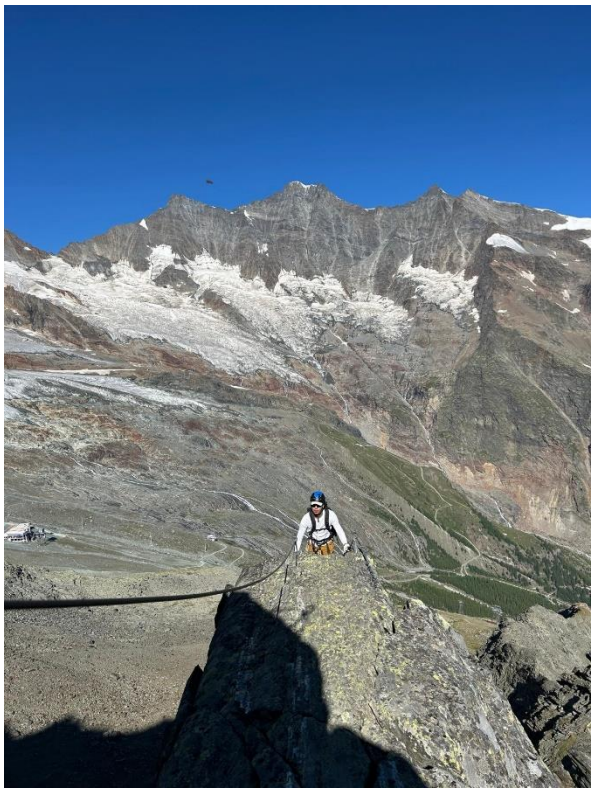
Mid-route on the Britannia via ferrata

ferrata, K3 to K4 — the harder of the two we did. On the Tuesday we went up to Morenia and did the Mittaghorn via ferrata, K2 to K3, about 470m of cable, finishing on the 3143m summit. Both days we started early and were back down by mid-afternoon.

Neither of us had done via ferrata before, and both of us enjoyed it more than expected — perhaps because the two we did were quite high and really in amongst the magnificent mountains in this part of the Alps. The protection never stops, so you can climb steeper ground than you would ever solo. The Mittaghorn route is described on the Swiss Alpine Club website as suitable for beginners, and I'd agree — it gets you to a 3,143m summit with a full view of the Saas four-thousanders, and any fit club walker with a head for heights could do it. One warning: the Plattjen lift wasn't running this summer, so we had to walk from 3143m down to Saas-Fee at 1800m.



Summit of the Mittaghorn from our hotel and up close (3143m)



Me enjoying the Mittaghorn via Ferrata and it's views (e.g. the 4 4000m mountains in the background L to R, Taschorn, Dom, Lenzspitz and Nadelhorn

For those who don't know this fantastic part of Switzerland: one of the many great things is the SaastalCard. Your accommodation issues it to you, against the visitor's tax, and in summer it covers every cable car in the valley plus the PostBus, free, for your whole stay. The only exception is the Metro Alpin up to Mittelallalin, which needs a reduced supplement of about CHF 50 — so that was the one lift in the valley we actually paid for all week.



Thanks to Neil for his company. We both felt lucky to have gotten anything done safely out there, given the heatwave and its effects on the mountains, let alone to have had a great time in the process — and we're already looking at heading back ASAP.

A hard part of an alpine trip is finding someone to go with. The club is where you find that person. Neil and I climb together because we're both members here. The Monday evening session at Redpoint and the outdoor days that members arrange through the club WhatsApp groups have people at every level, and quite a few of them are thinking about the Alps. If that's you, come along and say so. There are more people here looking for an alpine partner than you'd guess, and they're looking for you too.

Club Hut Climbing Trip — 31 July–1 August. Jack Robinson.



The club hut was put to good use over the weekend of 31 July–1 August, with a good mix of new members getting their first taste of outdoor climbing and more experienced members heading out for some multi-pitch routes.

Saturday

Saturday saw two brand-new club members head out to Tryfan Bach for their first outdoor climbing experience. They spent the day getting to grips with the basics of outdoor climbing and building confidence on the rhyolite rock, which provides some excellent, friendly climbing at the easier grades.



We'd also like to give a special thanks to Darren Beards for holding our weekly indoor climbing meets and helping introduce our newest members to climbing.

Meanwhile, the rest of the team headed over to the Moelwyns, where we tackled a selection of multi-pitch routes around Moelwyn Mawr, including Slick & Chic and several V-Diff routes. The area is characterised by the volcanic geology of the Moelwynion, alongside the distinctive slate landscape left behind by the area's extensive quarrying history.

It provided a good day of varied climbing, with plenty of exposure and some excellent views across the surrounding mountains.

Sunday

Sunday took us to Craig y Tonnau, where the approach provided its own little adventure — the path was particularly overgrown and we almost walked straight past the turnoff! Once at the crag, we climbed a selection of routes including A Hard Severe, Diane's Approval (V-Diff), Robin's Nest, and Dentist's Slab (V-Diff).

Craig y Tonnau is an unusual little crag, with volcanic pillow lava giving the rock its distinctive wavy and featured character. It made for a fun change from the mountain crags and offered a different experience.

Overall, it was a great weekend for the club, with perfect weather and new members getting their first experience of outdoor climbing while the rest of the group enjoyed some quality routes around the Moelwyns. We concluded with a wholesome outing on Sunday with the entire team — a successful weekend all round.

Chapel Stile Bothy Weekend, Langdale — 4–6 September 2026. Claire Hammonds.

Eighteen club members enjoyed a superb weekend at Chapel Stile Bothy in Langdale. Here is a brief summary of the activities.

Friday

A group set off from the bothy on a five-mile walk to Cathedral Cavern. They explored caves in the old quarry and passed the condemned hut that some members had used in the 1980s.

Saturday

Ian Merther, Paul and Sam Read, and Jack Smith crossed Crinkle Crags via the Bad Step before continuing to Three Tarns. The “young 'uns” headed up Bowfell, while the “old 'uns” descended via The Band to the Old Dungeon Ghyll for a well-earned pint.

Claire Hammonds, Fred Hammonds, Paul Brindley and Darren Groutage followed the Cumbria Way, climbing Side Pike and Brown Howe before returning to Chapel Stile via Elterwater. They enjoyed excellent views of a moody Pike o'Blisco, Crinkle Crags and Bowfell, as well as beautifully clear views across to Langdale Pikes, Harrison Stickle and Pavey Ark. On route, they had to squeeze through a very narrow gap, bringing back memories of Andy Brown's famous tight squeeze.

Kerry Poston and Becky Green started at Stickle Ghyll and climbed Pike o'Stickle (709m), Loft Crag (682m), Harrison Stickle (736m), High Raise (762m) and Stickle Tarn (473m), covering 12.78 miles.

Vanessa and Jonathan Howells cycled from Chapel Stile to Grasmere. They took a bridleway up to Grisedale Tarn before returning via the Traveller's Rest.

Mike Nicholls, Nigel Tarr and Dave Hellyar drove over Hard Knott Pass to Ravenglass, stopping at the Roman fort on the way and later visiting the Station Café in Ravenglass.

Bill Douglas and Tony Emms walked up Oxendale, over Brown Howe and along Crinkle Crags to Three Tarns, then descended via The Band to Stool End and the Old Dungeon Ghyll.

Charles Brecknell took a relaxing walk along Langdale Valley, recovering from the demands of the previous day's walks.

Sunday

After the bothy had been cleaned, one group drove to Ambleside to meet former club member Bob Lister before heading home. Others walked along the river to Skelwith Force and back, while a third group walked from the bothy to Rydal caves and got picked up at the Badger Inn in Rydal.

A great weekend was had by all.

Women's Weekend — September 2026. Claire Hammonds.

Ten club members enjoyed this year's annual Women's Weekend, and it was lovely to welcome some new and younger members.



The journey down was rather unpleasant, as we were greeted by horizontal rain and gusty winds. The following morning, we awoke to more rain and strong winds, so we decided to stay at a lower level. We walked over the copper mines to Nantmor before continuing up the Glaslyn. By 11am, the rain had stopped and the sun had come out. On our way back, we stopped in Beddgelert for coffee before returning to the hut.



On Saturday evening, we enjoyed a feast featuring a wonderful selection of homemade dishes. On Sunday, three of us climbed Y Aran, while another group paddled in the plunge pools and a couple of members went swimming in the lake. Despite the wet and windy start, it was a very enjoyable weekend.

October coach meet to Ribblehead & the Y3P. From "the Ghost on the coach"

A full-ish coach of 47 enjoyed a day of lovely weather…. for the 5th month in a row !! Most got dropped off in Ingleton and, after heading up & over Ingleborough, ended up in Horton in Ribblesdale at 'The Crown'. A few members went up Pen-y-Ghent from Horton. Darren B walked with Aksels Binouskis & Reem White who posted on Facebook:

> *"Somewhere in the Yorkshire mountains, surrounded by rocks, clouds, and absolute silence… I realised that the higher I climb, the smaller my worries seem. Funny how the mountains never promise to make life easier, yet somehow they make everything feel lighter."*

I think most WBMC members will agree with that comment. There were plenty of high jinks on the summit trig point too as you can see from some of the photos!







Saturday Coach Meet, 7th November — Capel Curig, Moel Siabod & Beddgelert (not quite the Moelwyns!). John Edwards.

The Meet Card listed this coach meet as 'The Moelwyns', which in the past has meant dropping off and picking up at Tanygrisiau, so I dug out OS Outdoor Leisure Maps 17 & 18 expecting to tackle the eponymous Moelwyn Mawr & Bach. But once everyone was seated on the coach, the meet — for reasons still unknown — metamorphosed into one to Capel Curig, Pen-y-Pass, the hut, and Beddgelert.

Given that, getting off at Pont Cyfyng to do the Daear Ddu Grade 1 scramble up Moel Siabod seemed the best bet (handily, it needed the same two maps), and around half of the 33 on the coach agreed. Hang on a minute — weren't we told the coach was fully booked over a month ago? Apparently, because it fell on a Saturday, some people found they had to work unexpectedly, while others cancelled for various reasons — possibly including the pricey £8.50 all-day parking fee, which caught some people out, between a lack of change and the parking app only wanting to charge 40p until 8am!

Anyway, we set off with Gary driving and made good progress to Shrewsbury, where we picked up Teresa Chilles, and on to Corwen, where the café was predictably rammed, being a Saturday.



The famous "Don't Feed The Penguins" sign at Llyn y Pengwiniaid

A large party of walkers was already setting off from the spectacular rapids next to the A5 as we arrived at Pont Cyfyng, and it wasn't long before we were all breathing heavily, shooting uphill at Rob Allen and Bill Darling's pace. We were amused by the "Don't Feed The Penguins" sign at what I never knew was called Llyn y Pengwiniaid, then, after a short boggy section, we were soon getting hands-on — literally — with the southern "Black Earth" ridge up the mountain.



Getting hands-on with the southern "Black Earth" ridge

For the Jamil twin sisters, Leyla and Iman, on their first coach meet, this was also their first scramble — in fact, their first mountain! But with encouragement from Nabeel, Wesley and Teresa, and regular halts from Fred and Claire, they coped admirably, and shortly after 1pm we arrived, patted the trig point, and posed for photos.



Trig point celebrations on the summit of Moel Siabod

The weather was remarkable for November — no rain, not a breath of wind, though sadly no real sunshine, so coats stayed on as we had lunch in the nearby summit shelter. The descent to the Tyn-y-Coed Inn, with its majestic stagecoach, was relatively straightforward, if a little slippery in parts, and we made it down before dark — despite missing three signs telling us we were on a private drive, until right near the end!

Others had got off at the hut and visited Craflwyn and the National Trust woodland (with its Dragon bench) before being picked up in Beddgelert, having done the led walk with Paul Brindley, while a smaller group climbed Yr Aran.

Shortly after 6.45pm we set off for home, arriving back in West Brom just before 9pm, having had a great day out.

Committee

Several roles are currently vacant or changing hands: Will Read has stepped back from his Ordinary Member role and from running the club's social media (thank you, Will, for everything you've put in!). Darren Groutage is resigning as Vice Chairman at the next AGM, and Sophie is looking to step back as Newsletter Editor. We're also after a Website Administrator/Email System Coordinator. If any of these sound like you, do get in touch with any committee member.

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Vice Chair	Darren Groutage	07973 405348	wbmc.dg@outlook.com
Secretary	Sarah Wheatcroft	07398 365990	secretary@wbmc.org / s.e.wheatcroft@googlemail.com
Treasurer	Claire Hammonds	07761 571464	clairehammonds@btinternet.com
Membership Secretary	Darren Beards	07484 615257	membership-secretary@wbmc.org / darrenbeards@gmail.com
Hut Secretary	Fred Hammonds	07527 744481	hut-secretary@wbmc.org / f.hammonds@btinternet.com
Coach Secretary	Nigel Tarr	07703 345729	tarrnigel@gmail.com
Meets Coordinator	Tony Emms	07793 008582	toniemms@aol.com
Newsletter Editor	Sophie Kellaway	07980 510356	sophsky@gmail.com/newsletter@wbmc.org
Ordinary Member	Jan Cox		jan_cox@tiscali.co.uk
Ordinary Member	Luke Austin	07563 213571	Ljaustin00@gmail.com
Ordinary Member	Neil Loydon	07985 735639	neil.loydon@gmail.com
Ordinary Member	Wendy Morris	07950 836862	wendymorris@btinternet.com
Ordinary Member	— vacant —		

Committee minutes

June committee minutes

Attendance: David Helyar, Darren Groutage, Fred Hammonds, Claire Hammonds, Darren Beards, Neil Loydon, Sarah Wheatcroft, Wendy Morris, Tony Emms. Apologies: Jan Cox, John Edwards, Will Read, Nigel Tarr, Luke Austin, Sophie Kellaway.
Minutes: Minutes of the May meeting proposed by Claire Hammonds, accepted by Darren Beards as a complete and accurate record.
Matters arising: None.
Treasurers report: Current account balance stands at £22,433 (May). Strategic reserve fund stands at £31,888 (May). Gift aid: £2,281.01 received, thanks to Claire and John. Veteran and life members, who do not pay, have donated £650 with only a few losses. Approximately £1,400 is expected from 2027 claims; new UK taxpayer members need to sign a form. June coach: 31 attended, a loss of £220; an average of 38 is needed to break even. Fuel prices are slowly coming down. Claire is gathering information on GoContactless from clubs already using it; a date will be set to align with the BMC's end-of-February deadline.
Hut Secretary report: Hut sheet 4 (24/04-18/05): 58 nights, £485 in donations. Hut sheet 5 (21/05-07/06): 80 nights, £748.50 in donations. Five-year EICR completed and passed; C3s not yet required. Surge protection to be retained following storm burnout, quote awaited. PAT test completed: £117 inc. VAT. Ken is completing a Fire Risk Assessment; an annual check on LPG rubber hoses is recommended, at £90 per annum. Insurance due for renewal in September; Fred holds the hut plans, photos and valuation. Working weekend, 24th/25th July: approx. 7 attending so far.
Membership Secretary: WhatsApp groups cleaned up and non-members removed. Shortfall of 26 members not registered with the BMC; Clodagh currently on holiday. 223 members; 3 new members have attended Redpoint for indoor climbing and the coach. Two non-members remain subscribed to the BMC and cannot be removed from the list.

Coach report: 31 on the June coach, a loss of £220. The coach braked sharply to avoid a car that stopped suddenly on a narrow road near Chapel Stile, causing Tony, who was conducting club business at the front and not seated, to fall onto the driver's console and damage the plastic fascia around the heating system. Tony was not seriously injured. Robinsons will not charge for labour and have asked the club to pay for replacement parts; the committee agreed to reimburse on presentation of an invoice, pending confirmation of costs before deciding whether to claim on insurance. Seatbelts should be worn at all times except during toilet breaks and when taking cash payments at the services. Departure was delayed by 40 minutes due to members held up whilst climbing. Given low take-up, long coach meets may need to be reconsidered; Saturday meets incur an £8 parking fee and the Langdale coach costs £950. The onboard raffle was won by Jo Cheung.
Future events: Scrambling weekend run by Ken, 31st July/1st August. Weirside, first weekend in September. Arrans coach meet, 12th July. Toc H fully subscribed (plus one), accommodating 21 people. Six scrambling weekends proposed (3 in Wales); Toc H and Borrowdale booked, with Dave to book a further Toc H date in April 2027. Possible locations: Port Nellen (May 2027), Cologne (ice climbing, Graham), Pembroke (Ken, no dates yet). Overseas events take over a year to arrange and need early planning.
Newsletter: Sophie is continuing but is actively seeking a replacement due to time constraints.
BMC: Nothing to report.
AOB: Jack Robinson co-opted onto the committee as social media and video editor.

July committee minutes

Attendance: Apologies: Wendy Morris, Fred Hammonds, Jack Robinson.
Minutes: Minutes of the previous meeting proposed by Darren Groutage, seconded by Claire Hammonds.
Matters arising: Repairs to Robinsons coach (see Coach Secretary and AOB).
Treasurers report: Current account stands at £24,628 after the July coach fee; strategic reserve £31,888. GoCardless charges clarified at 1% (41 memberships = 61p per transaction); can be used to collect 2027 membership on recurring direct debit, and for new members thereafter, simplifying collection from 1st December. Existing members will need to complete a DD mandate by email from September; a dashboard will let Claire and Darren B cross-reference payments, with a link added to the website. A website upgrade to WordPress is needed to support this, at greater cost; Claire to set up the account and draft a newsletter article. GoCardless is intended for all payments (coach, membership, etc). Gwynedd visitor levy information forwarded by Neil is relevant.
Hut Secretary report: Hut sheet 6 (5th June-4th July): 50 nights, £476 in donations. Hut reinstatement completed: £210. Revaluation (inc. VAT) £275,043; current insurance £245,000, leaving the hut underinsured by £30,000. Revaluation to be reinstated in 2029. Awaiting reply from LPG and electrician re surge protection — needs chasing. One complaint received regarding cleanliness.
Membership Secretary: 232 members, an increase of 9 (8 new, 1 returning). BMC membership nearly sorted.
Coach Secretary: 33 on the coach; invoice of £930 paid, a loss of £170. 7 already booked for next month. Return location caused some confusion; clearer instructions needed. Query raised over whether Evita received a refund for her son, having paid £25 instead of £10.
Newsletter Editor: August coach meet to Cadair Idris, drop-off and route details in the newsletter. September meet to Coniston (previous plan available). Yorkshire Dales meet suggested at Horton-in-Ribblesdale. A new newsletter editor is needed as Sophie is stepping back. John has requested an advert for the club's 50th anniversary book.
Future events: 24th-31st July: European week in the Dolomites (6 attending); concern raised over inexperienced climbers on European/Scottish trips — skilled members needed to lead ice climbing trips, or guides to be hired. August: 6th, outdoor evening meet (no volunteer yet); 9th, coach to Cadair Idris/Barmouth (routes in newsletter); 13th, social meet at the Red Lion; 14th, Chairman's Challenge weekend not going ahead. September: 4th-6th, scrambling/climbing weekend; 10th, outdoor evening meet at Clent Hills, led by Frank Bruce; 13th, Coniston coach meet (repeat route in newsletter); 17th, social meet; 18th-20th, women's weekend (in newsletter); 25th-27th, Trailfest. October: 8th, indoor meet; 11th, coach to Yorkshire Dales (Horton-in-Ribblesdale); 15th, social meet; 16th-18th, cycling weekend (more information needed). November: 5th, indoor meet; 7th, Moelwyns coach; 12th, social meet; 13th-15th, skills weekend; 21st, curry night. December: 10th, indoor meet; 13th, coach to the Roaches; Christmas meal deposit of £450, organised by Jan, not yet paid; 17th, Christmas social.
75th Anniversary (2027): Sarah has created a new OneDrive folder for 75th anniversary events. Summer event removed unless aiming for 75 people on Snowdon. Winter event: dinner at The Hawthornes, Saturday 27th November 2027 - DJ £384, Millichip Suite half-day hire £1,080, three-course banquet for 70 at £35/head (£2,940), total £4,404; no deposit required for corporate bookings but full payment due 4 weeks prior. Annual Away Dinner (19th-20th March 2027): quotes requested from Briery Wood (Ambleside), The Swan (Grasmere) and Bolton Abbey (North Yorkshire) — moved to August agenda.
BMC: Discussion on raising membership prices. Base camp get-together at YHA Castleton (11th-13th September), geared towards volunteers, with organised walks, climbs and slideshows.
AOB: Will is resigning from the committee; thanks given for his contribution. The visitor levy appears inevitable and is not worth pursuing further. Accountability for the coach dashboard damage remains unclear; Robinsons have emailed Claire and Nigel with pricing, the part being sourced from Germany, and it is not yet known whether the coach needs to be taken out of action pending an invoice. Howdens to be alerted for guidance; Darren Groutage to contact both Howdens and Robinsons. 12 copies of the newsletter sent by John via Documail: £33.12. Membership price increases to be discussed at the next meeting.

August committee minutes

Attendance: Apologies: Wendy Morris, Tony Emms, Luke Austin, Jack Robinson.
Minutes: Minutes of the previous meeting proposed by John Edwards, seconded by Darren Groutage.

Matters arising: Facebook has not been maintained since Will stepped back; Jack Robinson's planned takeover did not happen, and a new volunteer is needed. Membership fee increase carried over from July's meeting. Darren has spoken to Howdens and partly completed a form notifying them of the coach incident, keeping it generic and without names, on the advice to do nothing further until Robinsons approach the club. On the most recent coach, far fewer passengers were seen standing or walking about while moving.
Treasurers report: Current account stands at £24,563, after paying the August coach bill and a BMC bill for new member subscriptions of £318.80. Balances for Toc H and the 2027 event have been paid. GoCardless brief sent out this week; Claire has set up the account and Darren has the details ready to send out. Profit and loss circulated, showing a loss of £400; this is broadly typical for this point in the year, with no extremes. The coach is expected to show a profit this month. A loss was made on Scottish week, down to the accounting treatment. Discussion on whether to pass on the roughly £10 BMC fee increase per membership to members, by charging an extra £1, or absorb it within the club; the Chairman noted concern over how the membership might react. The BMC fee will be £31.70, to be voted on in September regarding any inflationary increase, with the lower measure favoured; collection begins 1st December 2026 for the following year. The AGM agreed that prices could rise in line with inflation; the vote was to absorb the cost of the small rise.
Hut Secretary report: No hut sheet available at present; hut lease paid to 24th July. Electricity bill paid. 9 attended the hut working weekend, with all spare wood chopped. Good turnout for the climbing weekend, with 10 attending. The LPG check did not go ahead as the contractor failed to attend; Stuart will carry it out instead. The reinstatement renewal price, on OneDrive, is £654 per annum, based on a full rebuild valuation of £275,000. All actions are complete except the fire extinguishers. Hut income currently exceeds hut spending by £1,700; the committee agreed to allocate £600 towards a new bench, with Fred to source composite benches, which do not rot, at £550-£650.
Coach Secretary: Coach invoice of £930, £260 off the deficit; 51 on the coach. The day went well, though the return was delayed; better communication is needed, and an announcement will be made that seatbelts should be worn. 44 already booked on the next coach; the committee will wait before booking the 54-seater, as the regular driver, Gary, only drives the 49-seater, and the newer coaches have limited hold space for luggage and bikes. The Chairman would prefer to keep Gary and the smaller coach, as it better suits the club's needs. Members have priority booking for 3 days, after which non-members can book from the Thursday. Overbooking beyond the 49-seat limit is permitted, provided those affected know they are on a reserve list. The Chairman asked whether all coach bookings could go through the Coach Secretary, noting that younger members tend to prefer booking via the website.
Membership Secretary: 238 members, an increase of 6 on last month, with a hope of reaching 250 by year end. Darren speaks to new members at length about their experience, which has been very encouraging.
Future events: Christmas coach meet to the Roaches/Macclesfield — details in the WhatsApp group; a choice of two courses at a reduced price, with a deposit required once bank details are provided; notice to go in the newsletter. Away dinner: venue confirmed as Aysgarth Falls again for 2027, as rates remain reasonable compared with other venues; rooms blocked out and a WhatsApp group created, with details sent to Sophie for the newsletter — 4 rooms already reserved as of the Thursday of advertising. Upcoming coach and evening meets: Clent Hills, 10th September, led by Frank Bruce; October indoor meet — John to present on Nepal (Tony and Hilary to be asked); Coniston coach meet, 13th September, with a led walk to Tarn Hows by Sarah.
Newsletter: Content needed — 3 coach meets, with volunteers needed for the next 2, club logo gear (John to send details), away dinner, skills weekend run by Geordie, quiz, bring & buy sale, and confirmation of whether Trailfest is going ahead.
Publicity: Nothing to report.
BMC: Nothing new to add; Basecamp Fest coincides with a coach meet.
AOB: Query raised over whether apprentices receive a reduced coach rate. Discussion on getting 75 people on top of Snowdon as a group to celebrate the club's anniversary, possibly with a coach and hut/camping accommodation, suggested for spring 2027. Training criteria submitted by Ken Priest to be discussed, aimed at building enthusiasm for climbing and protecting the club. A new newsletter editor is needed.

September committee minutes

Attendance: Apologies: Fred Hammonds, Claire Hammonds, Luke Austin, Sophie Kellaway, John Edwards, Darren Beards.
Minutes: Minutes of the previous meeting: Not accepted.
Matters arising: Resignation of a committee member (see Other Business).
Treasurers report: General account balance £25,422.10, including the Coniston trip invoice (£1,005), paid on Monday 14th September. Strategic reserve account balance £31,888.15. GoCardless emails sent to all members: 18 active direct debit mandates set up, including 4 committee members, 2 declined, and 176 pending a response. Darren is chasing around 16 missing emails and 4 that keep bouncing; reminders will go out week commencing 21st September, and the committee was asked to encourage members to respond, whether setting up or declining, to avoid ongoing chasing. A proposed change in accounting policy, moving from income and expenditure to receipts and payments, was agreed as sensible given early payments now being received for the December 2026 coach and, in the coming months, for January-March 2027 coaches, 2027 membership, Scottish week and the Away Dinner; the rise in electronic coach payments has increased the treasurer's workload in reconciling payments against QuickBooks. A £100 donation from Tony Watson was received and banked in August; the Q2 Easyfundraising payment of £28.36 was received on 13th August. The Chapel Stile weekend (4th-6th September) went well: 18 attended, though all 20 places were paid for. Once Toc H confirm the final balance, the account will be settled; an estimated surplus of £135 has been agreed for donation to Mountain Rescue and the Nepal Disaster Appeal, and John is to provide a donation contact.
Hut Secretary report: Hut sheets 7 and 7a (6/7-8/8): £720 in donations; electricity bill £93.31. The annual Gas/LPG check has been completed by Stuart Shaw, with a landlord certificate supplied — the first time this has been tested to comply with regulations; a

carbon monoxide alarm has since been fitted in the mezzanine roof space. The annual fire extinguisher test is the only outstanding item, expected on 25th September.

Membership Secretary: Membership stands at 243, an increase of 5 since the last meeting. New members include Tommy Kam and Jojo Choi, friends of Ryan Pang and regulars at Redpoint meets where Ryan taught them to belay, now attending coach meets and booked for October and November; Aksels Binovskis, a colleague of Rahima Nuralah, who confidently completed the Grade One Scramble of South Rake on Dow Crag despite no hill walking experience; Damian Lathall, who joined after being impressed by the club website; and Nabeel Malik, a former guest on coach meets, now a member.

Coach Secretary: A good day was had by all; 48 on the coach, with £66.50 off the £1,005 deficit, though it remains unclear whether the account is in arrears. The coach fee now includes a fuel supplement, raising the cost from £950 to £1,005 (£55), as diesel prices continue to rise.

Matters arising: Darren Groutage has tendered his resignation as Vice Chairman from the next AGM; he also covers publicity, emails and the website, so a successor will need to take these on. Darren to prepare a summary of the role for the newsletter; the committee has 6-7 months to fill the position, as well as the Newsletter Editor role. Chasing content for the newsletter and website remains a challenge; the committee agreed it would never be entirely straightforward but needs better communication and organisation. Members who volunteer for a task should see it through rather than delegate. Any member-organised events or tasks should be written up for social media and the website. Positions to fill: Vice Chairman, Newsletter Editor, Website Administrator, and Email System Coordinator. The outdoor evening meet to Clent, organised by Frank Bruce, was well attended, with members bringing friends and family and one BMC member joining — a good choice for a sunset walk.

Future events: Indoor meets — Thursday 8th October, John presenting on his trip to Nepal; 19th November, a combined meeting with a BMC Everest presentation; Tony to present on the West Highland Way; David Nock's Land's End to John O'Groats achievement suggested but not yet confirmed; fundraising planned for the Nepal disaster appeal.

Newsletter: Sophie has been unwell, so the newsletter has not yet gone out.

Publicity: With Jack having left, there was discussion on whether to outsource some publicity work and pay for social media adverts. Will has offered to continue updating the website for now; Darren has also discussed this with Rohima.

BMC: The BMC Basecamp Festival was a good weekend of walking and climbing among members; the award ceremony featured many of the country's top climbers and walkers speaking and taking part in a Q&A. The BMC Midlands area, spanning Herefordshire to Leicestershire and Staffordshire to Northamptonshire, has around 10,000 members, many potentially within the club's catchment; worth considering an article in Summit magazine on the club and its coach meets, as part of its 'club traditions' series, to reach potential new members. Neil has added this to his to-do list (important, not urgent).

Other business: The Chairman noted that, as established club practice, any proposed change should be raised, discussed, and put to a vote by the committee. Changes to the coach booking process had gone ahead without committee approval; this will be discussed in full on the October agenda, to allow everyone time to consider the changes beforehand, and the Chairman did not wish to discuss it in full at this meeting. Some committee members expressed frustration over the planned discussion, and the meeting became heated. The Chairman then set out his reasons for wanting a full discussion: Claire is finding the payments difficult to manage; the established practice of booking only after the previous coach meet is no longer being followed, with people now booking well in advance; the Chairman would prefer this not to continue past December until the committee has fully discussed it; bookings are not all going through the Coach Secretary, leading to situations where the coach has been overbooked and some members believe they have a seat when they do not; and too many advance bookings risk leaving new members unable to get a seat and unhappy as a result.