

West Bromwich Mountaineering Club Newsletter



May 2018

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Hello from the new committee!

Huge thanks as always to this month's contributors: Dave Jones, Glen Mountford, Graeme Stanford, Carol Atkins, Mel Evans, Nigel Tarr, and Ken Priest.

If you have anything that you'd like to be featured in next month's newsletter – whether you're selling gear, looking for a climbing or walking partner, you've seen an event that members might be interested in, anything at all – send it to newsletter@wbmc.org (or through our website if it's an article) before the 20th of the month.

If you've never written an article before, why not give it a go?

Cheers,
Joe

The WBMC meeting place

Cricketers Arms

43 Trinity Way,
West Bromwich,
B70 6EA

Join us every Thursday
night from 9pm for a
chat and a drink.



BMC
AFFILIATED CLUB

The BMC recognises that climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions.

www.wbmc.org

Cotswold Discount Code: AF-WBMC -K3

Noticeboard

New Radios available

The club have taken ownership of some very good quality radios that can be used in the mountains that have a very good range of signal. The committee believe that these are a great asset to ensure communication within groups.

These radios were used last month at Borrowdale and communication was taking place with two groups and also with our coach secretary in the valley. They are available to use by anyone going on trips or group parties.

If anyone would like to borrow them please contact Nigel Tarr. An appointed person needs to take ownership in collecting and returning to him.



Walking partner wanted

Glen Mountfort is looking for any potential mid-week walkers:

(e.g. Mondays or Friday availability) I often struggle with free time at weekends and family commitments so looking for people to walk with, either around the Midlands or possibly N. Wales. Glen Mountfort (glenmountfort80@gmail.com or via Facebook messenger). I'm happy to drive from Wolves, so please get in touch.

Anglesey cycling trip

I am thinking of cycling around Anglesey for a few days in the summer, if anyone is interested. Nothing crazy! No date fixed as this can be arranged to suit. Email me on ca_atkins@hotmail.co.uk, if anyone is interested. Carol

Climbing nights with the club

Do you hear all the banter about climbing and wonder what the fuss is all about? Do you see people at climbing walls and think you might like a go but don't know where to start?

This is a mountaineering club so it stands to reason there are climbers in the club. If truth be told there are not enough climbers in the club. I don't mean that from an elitist point of view. What I mean is that we would welcome other people coming and having a go. That leads to people taking it up and progressing on to traditional climbing (i.e. not climbing indoors but getting out on real rock and being responsible for placing your own protection.) As people progress they become possible climbing partners or leaders and that is the crux. Those that climb are always short of climbing partners and, as a club; we are very short of 'lead climbers'.

I'm in the early stages of this process and still a novice and, apart from a few 'have a go' sessions as a young man, everything I've learnt I've learnt through the club. More experienced club members sharing their time, advice and skills with me has seen me through to the first tentative steps of 'leading' and I've enjoyed (almost) every minute.

So if you read the above and would like to find out what it's all about... come along to the climbing wall at the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre in Kidderminster on the last Tuesday of every month. The club has a discount deal with 'High Sports' so club members get in for £5. All gear is available so you don't need to spend a fortune on gear before you even find out if it's for you or not. Club members who already climb will be there and only too happy to 'show you the ropes', as it were.

The climbing wall's website is here and the address and postcode can be found on the link: <http://www.high-sports.co.uk/climbing-walls/kidderminster.html>

Hut donations

Members - £4.00
 Guests - £7.00
 (Max. two guests per member)
 16 & under - £1.50

Stamped addressed envelopes are provided in the hut for payment.

To book

Phone or email Alison Whitehead:

07903 584450

hut-secretary@wbmc.org

Please contact Alison *before* going to the hut.

WBMC members can purchase a hut key from Alison at a donation of £4

Coming up

Thursday 10th May 2018 – 18:30 Outdoor Evening Meet – Clent

The first Outdoor Evening Meet of the year is on Thursday 10th May – Mike Smith will be leading a walk over Clent Hills.

Meet at The Hill Tavern, Adams Hill, Clent, DY9 9PS at 18:30 ready for an 18:45 start. Come along and support the club. The pub will be opening and selling cobs just for us.



Photo from wikipedia.org

Saturday 12th May 2018 – Midnight Walk The Walk London Marathon

Participants: Jo, Claire, Hilary and Dee (and 15K others!)
In 2018, between us, we have a new hip and 50th and 60th birthdays to celebrate. So, for one night only, we're swapping mountains for tarmac.



The theme for this year's Full Moon Walk is the Wild, Wild West - so we are the Wild Women of WBMC :-)

All the money raised from this Challenge event goes to extremely worthwhile cancer charities. They range from huge, long-term research projects over 40 years like The Generation Study of 100,000 women, to smaller community projects like the Helen Rollason Cancer Charity, the Christie Centre in Manchester, Scalp Cooling in NHS Trusts and Integrated Care in The Haven centres around the UK.

We invite you to donate whatever you can using the 'Give Now' button on our secure Facebook page – and please also share our page with friends and family:

<https://moonwalklondon2018.everydayhero.com/uk/wild-women-of-wbmc>

Upcoming Meets

We're still waiting for the meet cards to come back from the printers, so in the meantime, here is a quick summary of the upcoming coach meets.

Sat 9 th Jun (Long Meet)	Coniston
Sun 8 th Jul	Howgills
Sun 8 th Aug	Moelwyns
Sat 8 th Sep (Long Meet)	Yorkshire 3 Peaks
Sun 7 th Oct	Thirlmere

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Sat 10 th Nov	Cader Idris
Sun 9 th Dec	Abergavenny
Sun 6 th Jan 2019	Mitches Meet
Sun 13 th Jan	Ogwen
Sun 10 th Feb	Langdale
Sun 10 th Mar	Llanberris
Sat 13 th April (Long Meet)	Buttermere
Sun 12 th May	Peak District

Coming up

Saturday 19th May 2018

Plas Gwynant's 60th birthday

I am proud to announce that Plas Gwynant Outdoor Education Centre are crossing another milestone in our history. 2018 is a celebration of 60 years of adventures and creating memories of a lifetime. I take this occasion to thank each of you for being such an important part of our continued success. Without the support of this wonderful community we would never have continued for so many years.

What began in 1958 as West Bromwich's Adventure School has evolved into an Outdoor Education Centre fit for the needs of the 21st Century. We now provide adventurous activities for the children of Sandwell and beyond, staying true to original philosophy of providing opportunities for personal growth for young people by keeping many of the initial underlying values established in 1958. Our centre has countless achievements and accomplishments, especially the lifelong memories and impact it has had on those young people who have come through our doors since we opened.

Every year we hold a weekend adventure course for past pupils and staff and this year is no exception. We have therefore decided this would be a wonderful opportunity to recognise the positive impact that Plas Gwynant has

12th – 15th July

Gower Weekend



had on so many lives and open up the Saturday evening to local people in the community.

We are planning an evening of fun on Saturday 19th May at Plas Gwynant Centre, which will include a brief informative talk on the history of the centre, to coincide with a new book about to be published by Sandra Meredith. To help the celebrations along, we have a bar, food vendor and live music and games, a time to make new friends and see familiar faces.

Sadly, we are unable to offer overnight accommodation at the centre as this has been booked by the paying members of the weekend course.

Our success story remains incomplete without the support of our schools and groups. Not only have they made us a part of their lives but also helped us reach out to the rest of the world.

Anyone wishing to come along for the evening just needs to RSVP me so I can add their name on the guest list. This needs to be done before Friday 11th May as I am then away on annual leave.

Debbie Bacon, Centre Administrator

WBMC has a history of visiting the Gower since 1983 from my recollection and it's no wonder why when you see some of the stunning scenery and idyllic beaches. In fact, Rhossili is continually on the list of Britain's best beaches and is seen regularly on both calendar and tourist websites.

We now use an education centre with dormitory accommodation for up to 24 people and there is some camping space for smaller tents, then we will share the cost of the rental amongst the members. The more members we get there the cheaper it will work out.

It gives us easy access to both beach and climbs where club members can join in an array of activities such as rock climbing both trad and bolts; swimming, body boarding, rounders/cricket, coastal path walks and jogging. (Wetsuits that appear to have shrunk since last year are on view unfortunately) What's not to like?

It's a great social weekend with a pub at Worms head within walking distance and a communal fish and chip supper al fresco back at the centre with a chimenea blazing away (there's usually some beer and wine as well) on the Saturday night

So why haven't you booked? For further details contact Ken Priest via e mail: ken.priest@live.co.uk

Aonach Eagach Winter Traverse



By Mel Evans

Back in the day I started life as a runner. After a few years of competing I joined Tipton Harriers only to be informed that the rules of the day prevented me from representing them during the first year of my membership and that during that first year I was only allowed to wear the famous green and white hoops if the race was abroad! This ridiculous ruling saw me travel to Scotland for the first time. I entered the annual Ben Nevis race. During this first drive to Fort William the Aonach Eagach was pointed out. To a young kid from the Black Country the Glencoe landscape was a complete revelation and, in particular the serrated ridge high on the north side of the Glen made an indelible impression on my memory.

A lifetime later, having become a member of WBMC, I began entering Glencoe on a fairly regular basis to walk and in later years to climb but always the Aonach Eagach eluded my attentions. The nearest I got was three years ago when the summit of Am Bodach was reached. On that day the weather was fine, but a combination of waist deep powder snow and the late hour saw our party turn around with the usual philosophical, "it will still be here next year". Sensible, but as the years roll by one eventually begins to realise that fitness will sooner or later prevent a return. Therefore when I was recently asked if I wanted to add a day onto this year's Cairngorm week and climb in Glencoe my immediate reaction was; "yes, if Aonach Eagach is a possibility." Pete, Graeme and Tony agreed to team up for what is often described as, one of the best mountaineering expeditions in the UK. With Ken and Dave volunteering to drop us off on their way to climb "Crowberry Gully" on Buachaille Etive Mor all we needed was the weather.

In absolutely perfect conditions and with a good forecast for the rest of the day the Mountain Gods were certainly smiling on this Monday morning as we were deposited on the A82 at the western end of the ridge. The plan was for an East to West traverse before dropping down to the col below the Pap of Glencoe and hitting the road between the YHA and the village of Glencoe where we would reunite with our transport. It was a great climb to the summit of Am Bodach. The sky was brilliant blue, a slight breeze from the east stopped us overheating in the strong early morning sun and, with the snow above 650m in superb condition a constant pace was maintained to land us on top a little before midday.

After refreshments and photographs we ambled along the narrow ridge leading towards our first munro, Meall Dearg. Within 100m the ridge at our feet dropped abruptly. We had read that leaving Am Bodach might require an abseil, one glance and we knew that to continue a rope was essential. Sloping ledges on the north side of the nose led down in an exposed position to an equally exposed stance equipped with abseil tat. At this point a young local appeared from nowhere. He dropped

down to the stance, chatted as he grabbed the tat to look over the descent route, exclaimed, "not today", climbed back to the ridge never to be seen again.

The route continued along an easier stretch before confronting us with an extremely delicate cornice spanning a very deep gully. Crossing this provided another rush of adrenaline but finally the summit of Meall Dearg arrived. Now we could clearly see the onward route bristling with pinnacles, rock faces, smaller flakes and notches. The way looked so narrow. It gave the impression that one slip would land one back onto the A82 in double quick time. It was brilliant scrambling country. Slowly but surely we climbed along this formidable array of spikes. There was no rush, each problem solved methodically in what were beautiful conditions; by this time even the breeze of earlier in the day had disappeared. It was perfect.

By the time we reached Sgorr nam Fiannaidh daylight was rapidly fading. The horizon was turning vivid red through to purple. The moon, only a few days old, appeared to be guiding us by throwing gentle shadows across the descent snowfields. Final rays of light from a darkening western sky were beautifully reflected in the calm waters of Loch Leven, in turn this light was superseded by the twinkling electric lights of Glencoe village. With all light from the west finally extinguished head torches lit the final rocky paths.

Although it had been a long day we continued not to rush; it was just as if everyone was at peace with their own achievements and with the mountain landscape they had become part of.

During the week I asked the group to reflect on this memorable day; Pete was still in awe of the night sky he had witnessed. Graeme continued to remember the sustained exposure. Tony remembered that in eight previous crossings he had never once had to abseil. For me there was not one especially memorable episode, (although that first abseil stance certainly made me stop and take stock), but the day as a whole that will live with me forever.

Dave and Ken also enjoyed a successful day. They topped out at 2.30pm to be informed by a local that, "a day like this is a day in a thousand" referring to the weather. Later this statement took on even greater significance when they realised they would have to spend an unplanned few hours in the Clachaig Inn waiting for our return. A successful day indeed.

Sincere thanks to everyone.

Mel

Feshiebridge Trip

March 2018

By Graeme Stanford



For the third time, back in March, a contingent of the club headed for Scotland on, what is fast becoming, the 'second Scottish week'. No hotels on this trip however. No spa, no sauna, no swimming pool and no waiter served three course meals... but... Using the lodge means you can use the pool, spa, sauna etc. at the McDonald Hotel in Aviemore.

Feshiebridge Lodge is a bunkhouse close to Aviemore which is owned by the Royal Air Force. It provides bunkbed accommodation with fully fitted kitchens, washrooms etc. a drying room and even, dare I say it, free Wi-Fi. There is even a menagerie to enjoy as badgers, red squirrels, partridges and Geordies are frequent visitors. All in all it makes for a well accommodated base from which to seek out adventures across the Cairngorms. The Wi-Fi didn't stop conversation but did allow us to check weather and avalanche forecasts instantly and share photos etc. at the end of every day.

We booked the lodge for five nights at a measly £50 per head. The standard plan being drive up Monday, four full days on the hills, drive home Saturday. This wasn't enough for some and two groups left early to have some fun in Glencoe on the way up. The group I was in stayed at the 'Scottish Youth Hostel' in Glencoe on the Sunday night. After having dinner in the Clachaig Inn we had an early night in advance of a full day on Monday.

Monday morning dawned to beautiful sunshine so we set off up Glencoe in Dave's van. Dave and Ken dropped four of us on the A82 below Am Bodach before heading for 'The Buckle' to tackle Crowberry Gully. The four of us set

off up Am Bodach, our objective for the day being the notorious Aonach Eagach ridge. Me, Mel Evans, Pete Poultney and Tony Emms had as memorable a day in the mountains as you could wish for, For all the right reasons. The weather was beautiful, there was plenty of snow on the ridge, the views were incredible and no-one pooped their pants (although I think I came the closest!) It was a 13 hour day 'tarmac to tarmac' with a headtorch descent and we were met on the road by Ken Priest and Dave Holland who'd had an equally exciting, if shorter, day.

Once we'd all passed on our tales of 'Daring Do' we headed for Aviemore and Feshiebridge Lodge. Tony was sharing my car and we stopped in Fort William for Chips (as you do) so we didn't get to the lodge until after midnight. Quick cup of tea and then bed.

Tuesday's plan saw various groups (there were 16 of us) doing different things. 'The Geordies' were heading off to bag some Munro's. Ian Merther had to visit Aviemore to hire some boots as he'd unpacked his to find the sole was falling to bits. Dave and Ken were heading to the Fiacail buttress to do a winter climb. The biggest group set off with Ken and Dave but then broke off to tackle the Fiacail Ridge.

Once up the ridge and onto the plateau we split further with Sue Goddard, Jo Tansey and Rob Cox heading off in the direction of Ben Macdui. Tony, Pete and I headed along the plateau and then back down to the car park. We were still a little tired from the long day before.



Feshiebridge Trip (continued)

Wednesday again saw multiple groups heading for multiple objectives. Pete, Mel and I headed back to the Fiaicill Buttress to climb 'Fiaicill Couloir' under the watchful eyes of Ken and Dave. On the walk in it quickly became obvious that the winds were going to be an issue. I was nursing a foot injury and turned back near the climb. Mel and Pete decided the winds were too strong and also turned back but Ken and Dave pressed on. Once back in the ski centre we saw that the wind speed on Cairngorm summit was over 60mph with even stronger gusts. Ken and Dave completed their climb but didn't hang about on the top and were soon back in the valley.



Thursday saw a change of pace. The Geordies, as stoic as always, were off to increase their Munro tally even more. They took Mel with them in an attempt to curb their enthusiasm (Mel was hoping, in vain, for an easier day). Tony, Sue, Jo and I decided to attack the north face of Aviemore High Street but then to walk back along a 10 mile forest route. Pete, Ken and Dave decided to have a late start and walk up on to Carn Ban Mor and spend a night in some snow holes left by Glenmore Lodge courses. They ended up sharing the 'facilities' with a course.



Friday morning Tony Emms and I set off to walk up Carn Ban Mor and on the drive in we saw the snow-holers coming the other way in the van. Their plan was to collect Mel and then start the long drive home as Ken had an important date with a plumber.

Once everyone was back and scrubbed up on the Friday evening we made the short walk to the Loch Insh centre where we had a table booked for the whole group. We had a fine nosh up and finished up with a brisk headtorch walk back to the lodge. Nick showed us a woodsman shortcut so we were soon back in the warm sipping whiskey and regaling each other with tales of our adventures.

Much as with the club hut the last morning consisted of a cleaning session before everyone said their goodbyes and began the long drive back to normality. Everyone had a thoroughly good time as we have every year and I think the same faces will return next year but there is plenty of room for more. The area is bursting with things to do from mountain biking and walking in the valleys to mountain walking and climbing. There's also a plethora of skiing options.

Feshiebridge is closed next winter as the RAF have obtained a grant to knock it down and build it anew from the ground up. But this won't stop us as the Army have a similar facility at Rothiemurcus, near Glenmore lodge, so I will be booking that for a club trip on or around the same week. We will return... why don't you join us?

May Coach Meet – Brecon Beacons

Saturday 12th May 2018

Depart

07:00 – West Brom. Edward St Car Park (B70 8HU)

07:20 – **Penkridge** (Apologies for the misprint last month!)

Drop off

Pencelli (094250)

Storey Arms (983203)

Pick up

Storey Arms (983203)

Tair Bull (995260)

Required maps

Landranger Sheet 125 - Bala And Lake Vrnwy

Explorer OI23 - Cader Idris And Llyn Tegrid



Photo from beacons-npa.gov.uk

Fares

Members £20.00

Guests £22.00

Under 16's and full-time students – £8.00

To book contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729.

Should you need to cancel do so no later than the Wednesday prior to the coach date or a £5.00 fee will be charged. Fail to turn up and the full coach fare will be expected.

Suggested routes

Route 1 (18km/11 miles)

From Pencelli follow the road west, then turn left at the second road junction, (090251) follow this a while then leave the road (081245) and start the steady climb SW over Gist Wen (064218) to Bwlch Ddwyalt (055203) the path now follows the cliff edge to Fan Y Big (036206) a steep descent west to Bwlch Ar Y Fan is followed by a steep ascent to Cribin (024213) another descent and climb takes you to the highest summit in the national park Pen Y Fan (012216) from the summit a short walk leads over Corn Du (007213) to Bwlch Duwynt (006210) before dropping to Storey Arms and the coach alternatively after Corn Du descend to the Lyn Cwm Llwhc and head north until reaching the road and the TAIR BULL.

Route 2 (23 km/ 14 miles)

Nuttall baggers might like to follow route 1 but where the ridge narrows at Rhiw Bwlch Y Ddw Yallt (057206) veer off left to climb to the summit of Waun Rydd (062206) then head SE for just over a mile to Alt Lwyd (079189) retrace your steps to the Bwlch then left to Bwlch Y Ddwyalt (055203) and onto route 1 again after Corn Du (077213) head NW to Tommy Jones Obelisk (000218) then follow bearing 260 to Y Gyrn (989216) then follow a fence south to a path junction (990211) which descends gradually to Storey Arms.

Route 3 (9 km / 5.5 miles)

From Storey Arms walk down the road to a car park and find the start of the path (988198) the path climbs to the col of Bwlch Uwynt then a short steep section takes you onto Corn Du (007213) and finally Pen Y Fan (012216) retrace your steps to Corn Du and descend to Storey Arms.

Route 4 (14 km / 8.5 miles)

From the storey arms head SW to climb the ridge of fan fawr (970193) the summit is a small pile of sandstone blocks not the trig point half a mile to the east! Then head NNE over bleak moorland to a depression from where a path leads to the impressive cliff of Craig Cerrig-Gleisiad. The summit is at the left hand side of this (961218) continue north to the trig point on Fan Frynych (958228) then off down the track on the NE ridge at a wall junction a permissive path goes south and then east to a picnic spot by the A470 the road will get you quickly back to the Storey Arms, or take the path to your right on the opposite side of the road and climb to Y Gyrn (989216) then follow a fence south to a path junction (990211) which descends gradually to Storey Arms.

June Coach Meet – Coniston

Saturday 9th June 2018

Depart

07:00 – West Brom. Edward St Car Park (B70 8HU)

07:20 – Penkridge

(Short stop at Charnock Richard Services)

Drop off

Torver (284942)

Coniston (303975)

Pick up

Coniston (303975)

Required maps

Os 1: 25000 Outdoor Leisure The Lakes No 6 and (263977)

South Western And South Eastern Areas No 7

Suggested routes

Route 1 (19km / 12 miles)

Leave the coach and head North to Old Quarries (278960) and onto the Old Walna Scar Road (274965). Head on up the cove to Goats Water – you could go up the right side of the tarn to Goats Hause (265983) but a more spectacular route is to take the path on the left side and head up to the mountain rescue post and the foot of easy gully. The East face of Dow Crag is very spectacular and not for walkers except this steep but relatively easy breach which heads diagonally upwards to exit a little to the south of the summit of Dow Crag (262978) then it's North then East to Goats Hause and uphill in a south east direction to the summit of Coniston Old Man (272978) from the summit head East then North East (273977) descend to Lows Water (275981) through old mine workings cross path junction (284981) continue to Miners Bridge (293980) keep on RHS of beck through the farm past the sun inn!! Then down to Coniston.

If you wish to bypass Easy Gully continue along Walna Scar Road, cross stream (271964) to path junction on RHS (258964). Follow path over Brown Pike (260966) Buck Pike (262972) to summit of Dow Crag.

Route 2 (16km / 10miles)

From Coniston follow the paths to the miners bridge (293980) and continue past crowberry haws to lows water (275981) a steep path now leads to the summit of Coniston old man (272978) from the summit head n along the ridge to swirl how (273005) descend steeply to the e down the rocky prison band and continue onto Weatherlam (288011) descend the grassy ridge



Photo from wikipedia.org

Fares

Members £20.00

Guests £22.00

Under 16's and full-time students – £8.00

To book contact Nigel Tarr on 07703 345729.

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to Furness Fells (292000) and continue on vague paths to hole rake (293991) from here good paths lead down into coppermines valley and back towards Coniston.

Route 3 (11km / 7 miles)

Proceed as route 2 along the main Coniston ridge to swirl now (273005) then descend steeply to the e down the rocky prison band to Swirl Hause (278008) from here take a more direct route s past levers water (282994) and along the Coppermines Valley into Coniston.

Route 4 (10km / 6 miles)

Head on the roads to Shepard's Bridge (304976) and then hit the Cumbria way to Tarn Hows hit the A593 at Oxen Fell High Cross (328017) and return to Coniston by paths that run to the right of the road

Route 5 (14km / 9 miles)

Head NW to Miners Bridge (295981) and then take the path through the disused quarries that lead to Hole Rake (293991) reverse route 1 to the summit of Weatherlam (288011) leave the summit along NE ridge and descend until you hit the path in Greenburn (295023) which heads off E then S to Tiberthwaite (306010) minor roads lead to the A593 and a footpath running parallel to this takes you back to Coniston.