

West Bromwich Mountaineering Club Newsletter



April 2018

This month's photo: Snowshoeing in Aosta Valley, by Ken Priest

2 Noticeboard

3 Coming up

4 Ice Climbing in Cogne
By Mel Evans

6 Imagining Britain's Lost Glaciers
By John Edwards

7 Coach meets
Sunday 8th April - Dufton
Saturday 12th May - Brecon Beacons

9 AGM Calling Notice

Dear Readers

One last reminder that subs are now due! The membership fee is £27.50 and can be paid either by cheque or by bank transfer.

Huge thanks as always to this month's contributors: Dave Jones, John Edwards, Hilary Jones, Mel Evans, Nigel Tarr, Glen Mountfort, 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.

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

Welcome new member!

WBMC would like to welcome new member Hannes Truter to the club. We hope that you have many eventful days with the club in the mountains.

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.



Membership fee deadline

Please note 31st March 2018 is the deadline date for membership fees to be paid. If fees are not received by this date, membership will be ceased.

New premises

Just a reminder that the club has moved its base to the Cricketers Arms, 43 Trinity Way, West Bromwich, B70 6EA. All Thursday evening meetings are held there.



The pub's website is <https://thecricketersarms.pub>. It has a large room that we can use for indoor evening meets, discos, Christmas get togethers etc, is family friendly, and offers a full menu - see <https://thecricketersarms.pub/best-steakhouse>

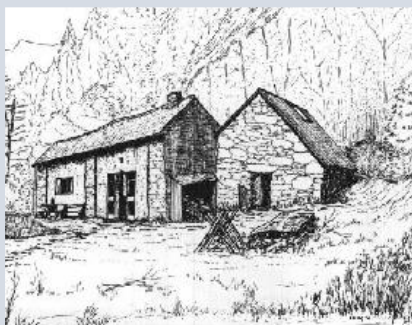
Its owner is very friendly and welcoming. What's not to like? Please pass the message on...

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 (07807 930996 or glenmountfort80@gmail.com or via Facebook messenger). I'm happy to drive from Wolves, so please get in touch.

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 5th April – 8pm Indoor Slideshow

The last indoor slideshow of the year will take place on Thursday 5th April 2018 at the Cricketers Arms.

Hilary Jones will be doing a presentation on her trip to the Italian Dolomites Alta via 1 hut, with a trek through World War 1 southern front – where the original *Via Ferrata* was set up. Please come along and show your support.



**BMC MIDLAND
AREA MEETING
Wed 18th April 2018**

8.00pm at Old Edwardians Sports Club, Streetsbrook Rd, Solihull B90 3PE

Followed by talk "A Winter Traverse of Toubkal" John Edwards will recount how the idea of a long weekend in Morocco led to 27 West Bromwich Mountaineering Club members summiting the highest peak in North Africa in winter. Plus free finger buffet

Wednesday 18th April – 8pm BMC Midland Area Meeting

The BMC Area Meetings provide the chance for club members to influence future BMC policy. Usually there is a "big name" speaker after the meeting but, because the one intended couldn't make the date due to a new addition to her family, John Edwards was 'roped in' to provide the evening's entertainment and show other clubs what can be achieved on a long weekend with a little planning and minimal financial outlay.

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>

Or you can sponsor us the good old-fashioned way by cash or cheque – just contact any member of the team.

Ice Climbing in Cogne

By Mel Evans

With photos by Ken Priest



The week had more than lived up to expectation but, on this final day, the invite to join a snowshoe expedition was simply a step too far. Instead I found myself on an extremely welcome bench in the Village square. The sky was a cloudless blue, a blue unique to snowy mountain landscapes. Kids were enjoying introductory sliding activities on the flat valley floor. Older 'kids' in their latest fashions worked off excess calories on manicured cross country trails. Even older 'kids' were simply enjoying the relaxing mountain atmosphere. I sat there, a quiet observer, content to simply watch and not be involved. I was totally knackered!

Six days earlier, together with Graeme, Pete and Ken, an early Sunday flight to Turin followed by a 90 minute drive north had seen us deposited on the northern boundary of the Gran Paradiso National Park in the small village of Cogne alt 1534m. It was lunchtime, a cross country ski race was just finishing, a deep blanket of snow covered everything, the sun was out, it was magical and so it stayed for the week.

Installing ourselves in a self-catering apartment in the heart of the village we quickly made contact with groups from Bromsgrove, North Wales, Liverpool, et al., and, since a few were beginning their second week, the chat soon turned to climbing matters, in particular, as to what was in 'nick'. Our 'Producer of Plans', disappeared-reappeared- disappeared to finally reappeared after fifteen minutes with a plan for our first day. I was still taking in the scenery!



Morning saw Graeme off with Vic to Lillaz Cascades for an intro to ice climbing. Judging by the way he was still buzzing when we saw him that evening it must have been some introduction. Pete and I accompanied Ken and Steve into Val Valnontey before continuing on foot through what can only be described as a winter wonderland. It was totally still with large snowflakes slowly floating through the misty atmosphere. Small patches of blue sky suggested better weather was only hours away but for now we concentrated on the trail ahead. The only sounds were of our own making. Occasionally markers at the side of the track pointed to where, on the steep valley sides, named climbs could be found.



After an hour we left the track, crossed the narrow valley floor, and headed for the very steep mountainside. At this point we met four glum looking climbers, retreating; "didn't fancy that first pitch today". I took a quick look at Pete to find him glancing back. That glance said it all. Another 30 minutes and we stood directly below what we now knew was a twenty metre vertical wall of solid ice. This time mere glances were not enough, words were required. "Bloody hell" or words to that effect best described my thoughts. I uncoiled our ropes at the base of "Valmiana" a four pitch 210m route. With no fuff we were off, Ken and Steve climbing parallel lines on single 60m ropes. Up and over this vertical wall, which proved to be the crux, they went to belay after about 50m. I found this wall totally exhilarating and not as strenuous as it looked remembering of course that I was not stopping to organise protection. The remainder of the climb was less severe in terms of slope but far more severe in terms of calf muscle pain. The permanent belays were obvious and consisted of a mixture of tat and bolted chains which, after tying the ropes together, allowed for a fairly speedy abseil descent at the end of the day. What a magnificent introduction to ice climbing.

Ice Climbing in Cogne (continued)

The next day I joined Cliff from Bromsgrove and spent six hours with a guide mainly on one 20m cascade in the Lillaz Gorge. Initially on top ropes we climbed a multitude of lines of varying difficulty before leading and using ice screws for the first time. The others were again in Val Valnontey this time on "Sentiero dei Troll" a 350m 8 pitch route. Again the belays were bolted. With time running out they abseiled out after four pitches and enjoyed a second visit to what became a favourite mountain watering hole.



Day three saw Ken again in Val Valnontey on Fuimana de Money, a Grade 3+ ice route. On his return that evening his major comment concerned the lack of bolted belays which meant their belays and abseil descent relied on the famous Abalakov method! Looking to have an easier day Pete, Graeme and myself spent a few hours in a roadside gorge climbing a couple of single pitch 20m ice routes equipped with lower off tat. However, a combination of tiredness, rising temperatures and straying off-piste, soon had us recovering in a local tavern.

The Lillaz Gorge is an amazing place. It contains a series of waterfalls at an altitude of 1600m to 1800m only 20minutes from the road. The topmost fall is 50m high at 50 - 70 degrees, the next 20m at 80 degrees falling into a beautiful amphitheatre, the third 15m at 70 degrees before the final 45m cascade at up to 85 degrees. When climbing it was possible to bypass the first fall by taking a

side ravine up a series of short 4-5m ice steps. This bypass proved to be an excellent training ground and a route I loved to solo. Our final two climbing days were spent on these frozen waterfalls in what had now become fabulous weather. Confidence improved by the hour; Graeme, Pete and myself arrived with very little experience never having led on pure ice and hardly ever having used ice screws but we left each having completed quite a few leads on Grade 2/3 water ice.



On a personal note I'd had five hard climbing days and so my final day's laze in the village square was, I felt, just reward. For me the week had been a complete success. To climb as many metres on water ice would take many years in the UK. The weather couldn't have been better and I'd ended up with a group who were not only excellent company but who were quite willing to pass on information and freely give of their time. It had been a great week.



Imagining Britain's Lost Glaciers

Adapted by John Edwards with kind permission of Peter Roberts & the UKHillwalking website



A walking friend often used to tell me that if Ben Nevis were just a hundred or so metres higher it would still be glaciated and if we look closely at the mountains we can still see the marks of the ice that carved them.

Now thanks to the artistic guesswork of geography teacher Peter Roberts we can perhaps get a better idea of what the Ben and other peaks might have looked like in the past. Of course during the height of the last Ice Age many of our mountains were mere nunataks sticking up from the ice sheet, so that UK would look much as parts of Antarctica do today, but at some point in the last 10,000 years ago maybe they did look somewhat like the images attached, more of which can be seen on the website by following the link below.

Peter has walked, clambered & run over the mountains of Britain & Ireland and, like many of us, he often wondered how they might have looked in their icy pomp.

As he puts it in the UKHillwalking article (https://www.ukhillwalking.com/articles/features/imagining_britain's_lost_glaciers-10207)

"Wandering in the vast corries below Ben Nevis, driving up the A5 to Llyn Ogwen or setting off for upper Eskdale, England's finest valley, my mind's eye has often squinted through the rain to picture how our mountains once were. That cliff, that ridge, the hanging cwm above the void, that pile of stones by the river's bend, and the grassy flats in the valley bottom all are in some way the product of the ice."

Fiddling around with PowerPoint one day, he tried to imagine Ben Nevis as it was and, with some subtle control of the mouse and the simple drawing tools that were available under 'shapes', he discovered he could make a fair stab at replicating couloirs, bergschrunds & crevasses, as well as the glaciers themselves as they tumbled out of Coire Leis and Coire na Ciste. So he took a photo of the Ben's north face and started applying his new-found skills. *"The kids loved it: 'Sick!' is the best compliment a teacher can receive these days. And they may even have learned something from my efforts. I know I did. The next step was to find some usable and adaptable photos from around the UK and Ireland"* As well as the images below, if you go online you can see how Bla Bheinn, the northern Cuillin, Scafell's, Cairngorms, Helvellyn, Ben Lui, Liathach & Macgillycuddy's Reeks might have looked 10,000 years or so ago.



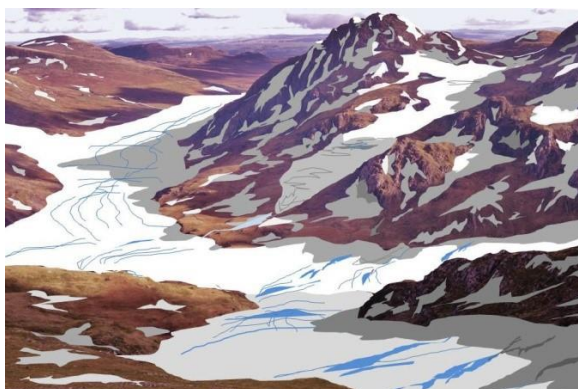
Ben Nevis in the 21st Century - some years no snow survives through summer © Dan Bailey



Ben Nevis with added glaciers. Accessing routes might've been tricky, but just think of the conditions © Peter Roberts



Tryfan and the Glyderau owe their shape to the ice age © Creative Commons CC0



So here they are with the ice age treatment © Peter Roberts

Coach Meet – Dufton

Sunday 8th April 2018

Depart

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

07:20 – Penkridge

(Coffee break at Charnock Richard services)

Drop off

Tebay (A685 island nr M6 Jn 38) (616048)

Newbiggin-on-Lune (703054)

Brough (795147)

Dufton (690250)

Pick up

Dufton (690250)

Tebay (A685 / B6260 roundabout) (616048)

Required maps

OS 1:25,000 Outdoor Leisure 31: Teesdale

or OS 1:50,000 Landranger 91: Appleby-in-Westmorland

Suggested routes

FROM KESWICK:

Route 1 – Bretherdale & Roundthwaite Commons

Cross over river and under motorway to Roundthwaite village. Climb to Jeffrey's Mount (1240ft) NY 60437 02332 and continue W along ridge to Pipers Hill (1591ft) NY 55867 04580. Return via path in Borrowdale valley or over tops to Whinell Beacon (1549ft) NY 57351 00295 & Grayrigg Forest (1621ft) SD 59867 99801 before descending to road. *13 miles (21 km) with around 3,000 ft of ascent if you follow the ridges!*

Route 2:

Uldale Head (1745ft) NY 64039 00009 and other NW Howgill summits to suit.

FROM NEWBIGGIN

Route 3: Randygill Top (2047ft) NY 68713 00038 and other NE Howgill summits to suit.

FROM BROUGH

Route 4: Little Fell and the new Nuttalls Long Fell & Tinside Rigg NOT POSSIBLE DUE TO FIRING ON WARCOP RANGE

FROM DUFTON

Route 5: A Hump, a Tump & a Marilyn! Head out on lane to climb Knock Pike (1306ft) NY 68592 28248, cross over to Browber Hill (1703ft) NY 70575 27537 then a big down & up to Dufton Pike (1578ft) NY 69987 26629 (or reverse order) *6 miles (10 km) with 594 metres ascent.*



Photo from bluefoxwalks.com

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.

Route 6: Top of the Pennines

Follow the Pennine Way north to climb Knock Fell (2605ft) NY 72139 30237, Great Dunn Fell (2782 ft) NY 71038 32156 and if time Little Dunn Fell & Cross Fell (2930ft) NY 68718 34335 Return same route. *Up to 16 miles (25 km) with 865 m (2290 ft) ascent.*

Route 7: A tough 3 Nuttall Circuit

Bridleway to R of Dufton Pike & up Threlkeld Side and right at top to trig on Backstone Edge (2293ft) NY 72592 27698. Then NE to shooting box nr Great Rundale Tarn and then just W of N to Knock Fell (2605ft) NY 72139 30237. Then 3 miles of pathless grouse moor to ruined trig on Meldon Hill (2516ft) NY 77166 29079. Head SE to High Cup Nick and return to Dufton along Pennine Way. *15 miles (24 km) over grouse moors with 2585 ft ascent.*

Route 8: Pennine Way to High Cup Nick

Head east along the Pennine Way to the spectacular viewpoint@ NY 746262. From High Cup Nick it is possible to summit Murton Fell (2215ft) NY 75318 24624 as this is just outside the Warcop Danger Area & Murton Pike (1949ft) NY 73487 23105. Or descend into High Cup Gill and return to Dufton via minor lanes. *9 miles (15 km) with 2000ft ascent if you do the tops*

May Coach Meet – Brecon Beacons

Saturday 12th May 2018

Depart

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

07:20 – Service Road Junc 2 M54

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 Llwh 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.

AGM Calling Notice

As from the Honorary Secretary

Dear Member,

West Bromwich Mountaineering Club (WBMC) Annual General Meeting

Calling Notice – Thursday 12th April 2018

The Cricketers Arms Public House, 43 Trinity Way, West Bromwich at 7.30pm

The 2018 AGM of the WBMC will be held at the Cricketers Arms Public House on **Thursday 12th April 2018 at 7.30pm** prompt. Most officers of the Club are elected annually and nominations, in writing should be with the Secretary at least 7 days before the AGM. Nominations should be proposed and seconded by a full club member and indicate the willingness of a person to serve, if elected. Please note the President is elected for a five year term, and is not due for election this year.

The positions are:

- President
- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Honorary Treasurer
- Honorary Secretary
- Coach Secretary
- Hut Secretary
- Membership Secretary
- Social Media Publicity Officer (a new role)

Nominations for the 4 elected seats of the Management Committee may also be proposed in the same way, or may be proposed from the floor at the AGM. In the latter case the nominee must be present in person and express their willingness to serve, if elected. Alternatively, a written expression of such willingness may be produced to the Chair prior to the AGM.

All of the above positions are open to any full member.

The **Malcolm Collins Award** may be awarded each year for “*outstanding endeavour in mountaineering or service to the Club*” Nominations for the Award should be in writing, and seconded, and forwarded to the Secretary prior to the AGM.

Honorary Secretary

AGM Calling Notice

Nomination Form for the AGM- 12th April 2018

Nominee

Committee Position

Proposed by

Seconded by

Form to be with the Honorary Secretary (Sue Goddard) before 5th April 2018.