

West Bromwich Mountaineering Club Newsletter



April 2020

This month's photo: An old photo of a member self isolating (by the late Ken Winkett)

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Part 1, by John Edwards

Hello readers,

I hope you're all safe & well, and finding ways to distract yourself from being unable to get out into the mountains. I have replaced the (currently unnecessary) "Coming up" and "Coach meets" sections with additional articles, kindly provided by John, Graeme, and Mel.

If you have anything that you'd like to be featured in next month's newsletter – whether you have an interesting tale to tell about a trip you went on, or are planning a trip for the future, anything at all – send it to newsletter@wbmc.org (or through our website if it's an article) before the 6th of the month.

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

Cheers,
Joe

The WBMC meeting place



Horse & Jockey
49 Stoney Ln,
West Bromwich
B71 4EZ

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

Note that indoor meets are still at The Cricketer's Arms

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 Members!

A warm welcome to Matthew Baker, Olivia Ives and Isaac Latham who joined us recently. We hope they are able to enjoy a long and happy relationship with the club once the COVID-19 crisis is over.

David Tart *An obituary by his son, Matt*

I'm sad to inform you that David Tart passed away on Tuesday night. As you may know, over the last year he has had a fight with a series of aggressive cancers, and he lost that fight this week. He was cared for all the way through at home, accepting about his fate, grateful for his time on earth and peaceful at the end. One of his great loves was being in the hills, and I know he valued the companionship and memories of his time with the West Bromwich Mountaineering Club. He met lifelong friends there, and told stories of his experiences in the club constantly. We enjoyed the evening meets. Not much more to say, it was a big part of his life.

Obviously, with the current pandemic, there are practical issues surrounding his funeral. It is on Tuesday, 2nd June at 11am and will be live streamed over the web so that everyone who wants to attend can do so remotely without breaking social distancing. We are still arranging details, but plan to forward an order of service and access information by email closer to the event.

WBMC AGM

As you will be aware the current restrictions made it necessary to cancel the March AGM. We do not know for how long the social distancing measures will last so the committee, after much online discussion have decided to circulate, by email, the reports that would normally be presented at the AGM and also announce the next committee members and president. The minutes of the 2019 AGM and the constitution have already been mailed to you (and posted to those without email addresses).

You will shortly receive an email (again posted to those with an email address) which includes all the reports and the 2020/2021 committee members and president. All committee and president nominations are in order and were proposed, seconded and unopposed.

This means that the essential business of and AGM has been completed and when possible an EGM will be called when the 5 Ordinary Committee places and the Malcom Collins Award can be confirmed and members can meet to discuss WBMC issues and vote on motions which will be notified before the EGM.

In order to validate the AGM we do need members to propose and second the accuracy of the 2019 AGM minutes. The constitution also requires at least 25 members to accept that they have received and read the reports. Details of how to do this will be sent with the reports.

Many organisations find themselves in a similar situation and have resorted to a virtual AGM. In 2021 we intend to return to a conventional AGM, circumstances permitting.

WBMC Committee

Hut donations



Members - £6.00
 Guests - £10.00
 5-17 - £4.00
 Under 5s - Free

Stamped addressed envelopes are provided in the hut for payment.

To book

Email our Hut Secretary Pete Poultney:

hut-secretary@wbmc.org

Please contact Pete *before* going to the hut.

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

A Thank You from the committee

By John Edwards



The whole Committee, and especially the Membership Secretary, would like to thank all those members who paid their subs for 2020 so promptly. At last count (paid-up) membership stands at 204, with around 21 still to renew or lapse / leave the club. Paid-up is in parentheses because not everyone has to pay a fee to remain a member!

Newer members might not realise that once they reach the age of 70, provided they have been Ordinary members for at least 20 years, they can apply to the Membership sec to become (shock-horror to those who don't feel that old!) Veteran members and no longer be obliged to pay an annual membership fee.

If you didn't want to wait that long, and you'd been a member for at least 5 years, you used to be able to stump up 10 times the annual membership fee and apply to become a Life member and, again, no longer have to worry about renewing every year. However, the committee are not entertaining any new applications for life membership until it has consulted the membership, as the financial implications of leaving things as they are could be very damaging for the Club.

WBMC is very indebted to its 'Veterans' as they have been members since the Club's early days when it sometimes struggled to stay afloat. It was their voluntary giving of their skills, labour & financial aid when necessary that helped make the Club, particularly the Hut, what it is today.

Likewise, in the past WBMC has been very pleased to welcome Life members (as I say this category of membership is currently suspended pending a review by all members) for these individuals had effectively acknowledged that the Club is so important to them that they will want to remain a member, and in many cases play a part in the running, of WBMC until their dying day.

However, although there is a certain 'kudos' about being a Life or Veteran member, by no means everyone who loves the Club does apply to become a 'Vet' or 'Lifer'. Many feel they can better show their support through staying an Ordinary member and paying a regular annual amount. That is not to say that Veterans' and 'Life members do not do this either. Around 25% of them give donations-in-lieu-of-membership, usually in the early months of the year at the time when membership subs are due,

and this makes it much simpler for the committee to make a claim for Gift Aid from the Government. Members may (or not) have forgotten that one of the reasons we became a Community Association Sports Club was so that we could replace the 'lost income' on our savings due to collapsing interest rates by securing some Gift Aid.

Our claim for the 2019 financial year has just been made and is slightly higher than that for 2018. Additionally, it looks like we will be able to secure even more income from HMRC when we complete the Gift Aid return for 2020, as more people have given gift aided donations this year. To this end the committee would like to publicly acknowledge our gratitude and our thanks to (in alphabetical order):- Ray Cooksey, Bob Duncan, John Edwards, Bob & Carol Franklin, Don Simpson, Annette Stokes, Ann Tandy, John Wagstaff, Tony Watson, Ursula Woodhouse & 2 others who wish to remain anonymous, for their thoughtful and generous donations over the past couple of years. These donations are proving to be increasingly important in these times of rising costs. For example BMC affiliation, which provides vital protection to the committee and members, is based on our total membership number, regardless of whether they are in Young, Junior, Ordinary, Life or Veteran categories, and whether they pay membership fees or not, so every little helps.

Cairngorms Report

9th – 14th March 2020

By Graeme Stanford
With photos by Ken Priest



This year's trip to the Cairngorms saw a step change in the way we accommodate ourselves. Instead of booking a bunkhouse for the group we all booked into the Youth Hostel in Aviemore. They have great facilities there and it's relatively cheap.

Day one was the usual confusing affair of different groups doing their own thing. Ken, Pete, Dave and Mark headed for the youth hostel a night early so they could get a day's climbing in on the Monday. Chris and I drove to the youth hostel simply to stash our kit in the lockers there then we headed to the watersports centre at Loch Insh. We left the car there (£5 to leave it there overnight) so we knew it would be safe and began the long walk-in to Glen Feshie.

We walked a few miles on tarmac and arrived at the Auchlean farm after dark. Headtorches on we set off along the glen towards the south. It's around 5 km from the roadhead to the bothy at Ruigh Aiteachain, our objective for the night, and it should be simple. Unfortunately there has been a lot of erosion and the path has been washed away in places so route finding was a challenge. We arrived to find two photography students from Dundee already there and we had a pleasant chinwag over dinner. The bothy is highly recommended and has a freshwater spring behind it and simple toilets.

In the morning we set off up onto Mullach Clach a Bhlair (first munro of the week) and then set a course towards Sgor Gaoith. The weather was a mix of white out and clear views with wind, snow and showers... driech.... We carried on along the ridge to the Argyll Stone then found an awkward descent into the valley into Rothiemurchus forest and the long slog back to the car.

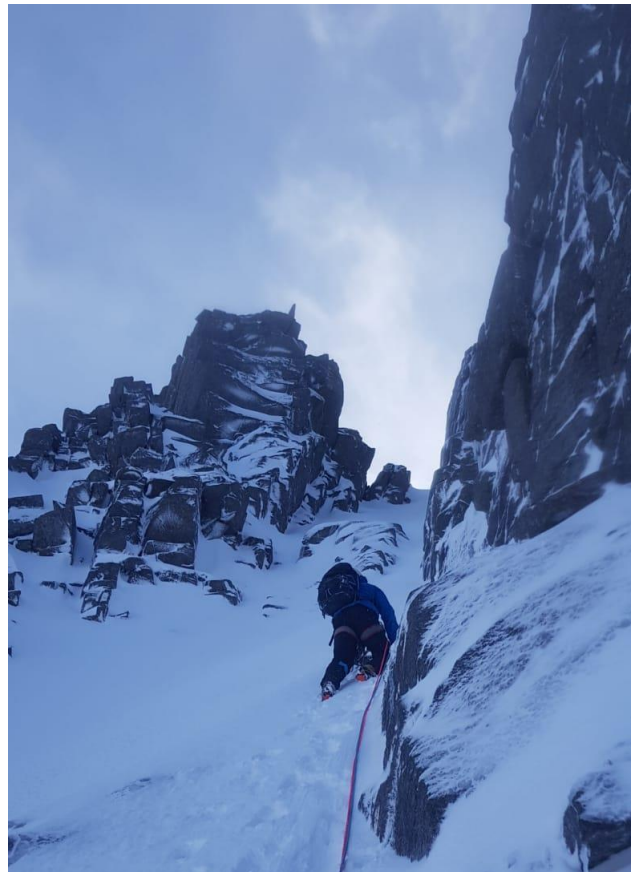


Whilst me and Chris were on our route, Pete, Ken, Dave and Mark (from Bromsgrove club), went up into the corries and climbed Hidden Chimney (a grade 3 with a great top pitch) and Jacob's Edge a pleasant grade 2.



BRMC member Mark belaying Pete Poultney

The following days saw a mix of weather and activities. Ann and Angie joined us for the rest of the week after an eventful stop over at Gratna green where they were asked to act as witnesses (and film) a wedding – this must be a first on any WBMC meet!



Cairngorms Report (Continued)



We all had a mixture of eating in and eating out to fill the evenings up. We walked in to Coire an t Sneachda and beat a path up the snowbank of the goat track, walked along the coire rim then descended another snow bank at the other end. On one of the days Ken led Pete and I up a climb called Fiacail couloir. It had an 18-inch deep layer of fresh snow on it so it was hard going having to kick through in order to find a firm purchase.

The final day saw the remaining group (Ann and Ang had to head home) head up on to the plateau to Coire Domhain to spend a night in snowholes. Ken, Dave and Mark 'ski toured' in while Pete, Chris and I walked. Needless to say, the walkers arrived first. We spent a few hours digging and excavating before setting down for the night. Mark was still digging well into the night and Ken was having nightmares about the turd he had uncovered like some horrendous smelly fossil!

The final morning saw us all retreat to the ski centre at Cairngorm for the last time before showers, shampoo, and the fleshpots of Aviemore... well... the pub. All in all another successful trip. A good mix of activities. The usual unpredictable Scottish weather and great company... Roll on next year.



Postponed Meetings & BMC News

By John Edwards



The Committee reluctantly took the decision to cancel the AGM, due to be held on 26th March, after the first of Boris Johnson's warnings of restricted movement to prevent the rapid spread of the virus was made on TV on 18th March. This was done via voting on WhatsApp but with the Government's announcement a week later, that people should only leave their homes for essential food shopping & one exercise trip per day, we would have been unable to hold the AGM even if the Committee hadn't decided to cancel it.

So what is there to tell? Well, the nominations received by the deadline advertised in the calling notice were as follows:

Chair

Mel Evans - proposed by Gary Winton, seconder Sarah Winton

Vice-Chair

Geordie Hinds - proposed by Mike Smith, seconder Jan Cox

Secretary

Jan Cox - proposed by Tony Emms, seconder Dave Hellyar

Treasurer

Liz Reynolds - proposed by John Edwards, seconder Hilary Jones

Membership Sec

Wendy Morris- proposed by John Edwards, seconder Bill Douglas

Coach Sec

Nigel Tarr - proposed by Hilary Jones, seconder Jim Tansey

Hut Sec

Pete Poultney - proposed by Bill Douglas, seconder Dave Coats

Newsletter Editor

Joe Priest- proposed by John Edwards, seconder Julie Atkinson

President

Mike Thompson - proposed by Keith Dawes / Mary Duncan / John Edwards / Janet Dawes / Jan Cox, one of whom will surely say they'll second!

Elective Committee

John Edwards - proposed by Mike Nicholls, seconder Hilary Jones

Mary Duncan - proposed by Bella Reynolds,

seconder Andrew Jones

Mike Smith: - proposed by Mike Thompson, seconder Jan Cox

Phil Matthews - proposed by Andrew Jones, seconder Bella Reynolds

There was also one citation for the Malcolm Collins Award.

As there was only one nominee for each position the people above will form the new committee, once approved at a general meeting. The exception might be for Elective Committee where there will need to be a vote if more than one additional person is nominated from the floor at the general meeting.

The 2019/20 committee are continuing for the time being, until a General Meeting can be arranged and are discussing issues via email, 'WhatsApp' and 'Zoom'. We hope that Dave Jones will be able to attend to present his Chairman's Report, and all other officers their reports, as soon as possible, maybe via email or in the Newsletter, or maybe at the re-arranged AGM.

As Dave has not stood for re-election this year, we need to record our thanks to him here for his 4 years of dedicated service to the Club since taking over from Andy Brown in 2016. He has worked tirelessly to keep our presence on the internet high, and has always been on the look out for possible sources of financial help for the Club.

As many will know 2 WBMC members serve in posts for the Midland Area BMC. Dave Jones serves as the Area's Hill Walking Representative and John Edwards is the Area Secretary. The BMC Area Meeting that was due to be held in March was also cancelled but their AGM was held last November and congratulations are now in order to our retiring Chairman, Dave Jones, on becoming one of the 2 Area Representatives on the BMC National Council. This very important senior role involves attending 4 or 5 all-day, sometimes 2 day, meetings each year, with lots of papers and briefings to wade through, so it does involve a lot of work.

Although he though he had completed his maximum tenure as Area Secretary, John Edwards found that the limit was 6 years so, as there were no other volunteers, he has the job for a final year and is currently getting excited by the thought that he now has a maximum of 3 more meetings to do Minutes and Reports for!

Old Photos from Ken Winkett

Part 1

By John Edwards
With photos by Ken Winkett



Between Vilma & John Mitchell in the corners are several old members of the club at the hut and enjoying Christmas at Pat Mullett's Snowdonia home. Sadly some are no longer with us but I can spot Mal & Janet Vaughan and Nigel. Can you

identify them and the others? The photos were given to me by Ken Winkett's family after his death when I was Chairman and now seems as good a time as any to share them with everybody. There'll be some more next issue.



My Lockdown Wishlist

My goals for the end of the year

By Mel Evans



If there's one thing I admire about Ken it's his enthusiasm for the next climb and so true to form a recent phone call began, "*Mel, we must go to Cornwall in the autumn, there's this climb, 'Right Angle', it looks a proper adventure*".

Ken's been in this climbing game for a fair few years and yet he's still the first to be looking past our present problems to the next adventure. For so many reasons I tend to agree that now definitely is a time to be sitting down and planning. It's all too easy to fall into the trap of spending time and energy dwelling on what might have been. So Ken, I'm with you all the way. Here's my initial list, let's give that 'Rat' a feed to remember!

Since I'm deemed to be in an 'at risk' category I've gone for a list where the social distance rule should be fairly easy to achieve.

To get the legs going my initial post-lockdown walk will be along a favourite beach. Aberdyfi to Towyn in less than perfect weather should blow a few cobwebs away. The beach is huge and always quiet so it will be a perfect first venue.

For scrambles; what about the Llech Ddu Spur? Approach along Cwm Llafar, secluded even in the height of summer, into the small but beautiful Cwmglas Cwm, what a place for a bite to eat, tucked away beneath the cliffs of Carnedd Dafydd and then up to the short, narrow ridge which leads to the summit dome

Mynydd Du provides an easy angled descent ridge. This route is possible in any weather and is always deserted.



Llech Ddu Spur, by Garry Smith (thebmc.co.uk)

As a second scramble Clogwyn y Person Arete fits the criteria and, with an approach via the 'Parson's Nose' will provide the perfect post lockdown

scramble/climb. The quietest descent will be down the Cwm Glas Spur to pick up the outward path. Even in normal times this side of Snowdon is deserted so the two-metre rule should be no problem and, as a bonus, the rock is great.



Clogwyn y Person Arete, by Garry Smith (ukscrambles.com)

I've noted that your climbing wish list includes 'Phantom Rib'. With only a 50m walk to the base of this route and with a single 60m abseil back to base, it certainly has appeal. However, after climbing the sister route with you last year, I think you'll agree, two-metre belay ledges are not a feature of this particular cliff! Instead I'm going for Lliwedd and either 'Horned Crag Route' or 'Avalanche/Red Wall/Longland's Continuation.' Both are classic routes on a cliff that's guaranteed to be deserted.

As a wild camp then it must be the Rhinogs. I've always wanted to complete a traverse of the Rhinogau over a couple of days so it will be a real adventure. If the weather's not playing ball then it must be a return to the Welsh 'Nuttalls' which I started many years ago. The ones I've still too climb are all rather obscure and to complete them would provide me with a perfect challenge.

By-the-way 'Right Angle' does look a fantastic adventure, I wonder if it's likely to be busy?

Mel.

Do you have a lockdown wishlist? Some achievable objectives: days out, walks, scrambles, climbs or wild camping spots you would like to do before the end of the year. Email newsletter@wbmc.org!

A WBMC Timeline

Part 1

By John Edwards



Going through the box of 'old WBMC documents' that has ended up in my garage I've come across a copy of the 1st ever WBMC Bulletin, which advertises the club's early 1954 programme. I thought it might be interesting to try and put this and other 'finds', along with the facts found by others around 20 years ago and published in "*The First 50 Years*" book, into context as a, hopefully accurate, timeline of major club events, spread over several newsletters.

1949 onwards: Geoff Robinson, Peter Woodward & other staff from Lyng Junior School take pupils camping at Whitsun, staying at the National Forest site near Beddgelert.

1951 - January: Bert Wright, a keen mountaineer & member of The Climbers' Club, becomes 'Organiser of Physical Recreation' for West Bromwich LEA. On hearing about Lyng School's activities he decides to set up a Sandwell Schools Camping Programme during the summer months at the same site. Bert also decides to run a mountain training course for teachers at Helyg with the help of some fellow Climbing Club members as instructors.

Sat 27th October: Ray Vaughan, Hughie Young, Keith Treacher, Peter Woodward, Geoff Robinson & around 4 other folk from the Midlands (incl. Frank Thompson & Harry Barlow?) meet at Helyg to spend the Half Term Week holiday scrambling, rock climbing and learning navigation skills. At the pub one night - either the Pen-y-Gwryd or the old Royal Hotel (now Plas-y-Brenin) - Hughie Young, a Scottish teacher, suggested they "maybe could start a mountaineering club".

Late 1951 - 1952: Regular mountaineering weekends are held at Tyn-y-Shanty.

1952: Sunday 13th January: First club meet is held at Long Mynd and Stiperstones.

Thursday 31st January: First (?) Indoor meet at West Bromwich YMCA. This was the date on which the first Club subscriptions were collected. The club later switched to the Star & Garter on the High Street in West Brom.

Sunday 17th February: Second club outdoor meet, destination not known.

Saturday 15th March: First club meet in Wales (according to Ray Vaughan).

Thursday 16th October: First WBMC Annual General Meeting held at West Brom YMCA.

Thursday 16th December: First 'official' WBMC Management Committee meeting is held in Harry

Barlow's office. He was a member of West Brom Education Committee.

1953: 1st week June: Bert Wright agrees with the Central Council for PE that WBMC would help put on a "*Focus on Mountaineering*" programme of film shows in February 1954, to encourage people to visit the hills and possibly join the club.

Thursday 26th November: 2nd WBMC AGM is held at the YMCA, St Michael's Street, West Brom. The agenda and minutes for this meeting are still available to read and state that the club funds totalled £52.3.11 and the total membership was 27. The question was raised as to whether the Club should continue to subsidise meets when there were insufficient members to fill a coach (some things never change!) It was agreed that membership cards should be printed and it was suggested that the club badge be incorporated in the design. Members were asked to submit their designs to the Secretary, so maybe the badge wasn't exactly the same back then as it is today? Bert Wright proposed a bulletin be sent round to members every 3 months. Harry Barlow said that at the next general meeting on 10th Dec, he was going to suggest that the entrance fee be abolished and the annual subscription be reduced to 7/6 as he felt the present amounts were deterring people from joining.

Tuesday 1st December: The management committee meeting held at 29 Sandwell Rd (Pete Woodward's house) agreed that 100 membership cards be printed, without the 'club crest' on the cover to get them printed quicker. Badges were likely to be too expensive. Tickets for the "*Focus on Mountaineering*" event at The Grammar School, West Brom on Thurs 11th next Feb were available and WBMC could have all the publicity it wanted. Displays of photos taken on meets and of mountaineering equipment were suggested. Four new members were approved and the content of the 1st club newsletter agreed. Read it on the next page!

1954: Friday 29th January: Committee meeting increased membership card order to 200 and get a quote for 100 badges to a design submitted by Barry Phillips: "*lapis background, dark blue mountain, green surround and with ice axe in gilt*" from Fattorini & Co.

To be continued...

WBMC Timeline Part 1 – Bulletin No. 1 from 1954

WEST BROMWICH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB – BULLETIN NO. 1.NEW MEMBERS.

Since the 1st December, 1953, the following ladies and gentlemen have been elected Members of the Club:-

Miss S. M. Dudley	Mr. E. Hutton
Miss J. M. Cole	Mr. R. Lloyd-Davies
Miss P. Lloyd-Davies	Mr. A. H. J. Newbury
Mr. C. D. Eaton	Mr. E. Nuttall
Mr. F. Purcell	

MEETS.

Meets have been held as follows:-

Outdoor:

23rd January – Bridgnorth – Kinver via Highley and Arley – 18 Members present.
21st February – Dovedale – A full coach!! 31 Members present.

Indoor:

14th January – Mr. E. H. Hutton gave a talk on the Pyrenees – 24 Members were present.
11th February – "Focus on Mountaineering", at the Grammar School Hall. Most Members were present. A display of mountaineering equipment caused considerable interest.
25th February – Mr. J. Abbott of the Ramblers' Association (Midlands' Area) gave a talk (with film strip) on Access to Mountains, Footpath Preservation, and the History of the R.A. – 19 Members were present.
11th March – Mr. R. K. Mullett gave a talk on his recent ski-ing holiday in Austria – 20 Members were present.

DISPLAY BY W.B.M.C. AT ARTS & CRAFTS EXHIBITION.

At the invitation of the Principal of the West Bromwich Evening Institutes the Club Management Committee agreed to display mountaineering equipment at the Arts & Crafts Exhibition, held in West Bromwich Town Hall, on the 26th and 27th February.

Mr. H. Barlow, J.P., kindly agreed to be responsible.

A letter has been received thanking the Club and especially Mr. Barlow and the other Organisers for the most interesting display. The equipment attracted considerable attention and was a real asset to the Exhibition.

Thanks are due to Mr. P. Woodward for the loan of most of the equipment.

MARRIAGE.

The Club gives its best wishes to Mr. R. K. Mullett and Miss Pat Lloyd-Davies who are to be married on the 3rd April.

MEMBERSHIP FEES.

Now, if not sooner, is the time to pay.