

WEST MIDLANDS ROCK 1995

ACCESS AND CONSERVATION

by Peter Stacey

The crags and outcrops within this guidebook cover some of the most beautiful and fragile areas in the West Midlands. Like many other parts of the countryside where climbers play, access and conservation increasingly come into the equation when deciding where to spend a day's climbing. Many hours have been spent in trying to resolve multiple difficulties and to ensure that the most satisfactory solution available to all parties concerned has been reached. This has not always been to the benefit of climbers and we have had only ourselves to blame on several occasions where restrictions have now been imposed. We all therefore bear a collective responsibility to ensure that we do nothing to jeopardise access agreements.

The access situation for crags in this guidebook have been checked as far as possible with the relevant landowners and authorities. THIS IN NO WAY IMPLIES ANY RIGHT OF ACCESS TO CLIMB AT ANY CRAG. Climbers should check that there have been no alteration to access agreements. Such alterations will be published in the climbing press, the B.M.C. access news sheets and in local outdoor shops. In particular, the agreements for Ippikins Rock, Grinshill and Llanymynech Quarry are of particular importance. These agreements are comprehensively covered in the relevant sections and need to be strictly adhered to.

There is a wealth of interesting flora and fauna in this area for everyone to enjoy in addition to the climbing. Shropshire is geologically diverse with various limestone, sandstone and volcanic rocks within its borders. This variety is reflected not only in different climbing styles, but also in a wide range of plants and wildlife, many of which are subject to protection under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. This protection can be, and often is, enforced by penalties arising from criminal prosecution. Climbers generally have a history of abiding by access agreements and behaving in a way which

helps to protect the crag environment. However, the following general points should always be taken into consideration along with any points made specific for each crag.

1. Check for alterations to access agreements either in the climbing magazines, by contacting the B.M.C, or the Midlands Area Access Officer.
2. Take all litter home, including chalk wrappers, finger tape, broken laces etc. Please take home any litter you find and leave the crag cleaner than you found it.
3. Keep to the approach described, unless notified otherwise. Short-cuts over walls or fences will result in the loss of local goodwill. Be sensible when parking.
4. Respect the right of others to enjoy the countryside. Shouting, foul language or other anti-social behaviour are unacceptable.
5. The B.M.C. spends much time, effort and money in sorting out access problems. Many climbers take their freedom for granted and often without considering the hours that both local volunteers and national staff put in to maintain access or to resolve problems. Please support them. If you encounter an access problem contact either the Midlands Area Access Officer or the Access Liaison Officer at;

The British Mountaineering Council,
177-179 Burton Road,
West Didsbury,
Manchester
M20 2BB
Telephone 0870 010 4878
Fax: 0161 445 4500
Email: office@thebmc.co.uk

ORGANISED GROUPS

Unfortunately, access agreements have been complicated by the use of several of the crags by organised groups. In particular, at Ippikins Rock the National Trust are very concerned at the damage that has occurred as a result. As part of the new access agreement the National Trust have therefore requested that organised groups DO NOT USE the crag. Similarly, the Hardwicke Estate have requested that Grinshill is not used by organised groups. At other crags, Carreg y Byg for example, current access arrangements could be jeopardised with persistent use by organised groups. Several crags have a history of group use and are therefore more suitable sites; **High Rock** at Bridgnorth, **Cul-de-Sac Quarry** at Llanymynech, **Pontesford Rocks** and **Fairy Glen Quarry**.

Reproduced from West Midlands Rock (1995). The contact details for the BMC have been updated.