

Mr Simon Litchfield

### **Introduction**

Secretary of the British Mountaineering Council in the North East.

Nationally over 85,000 members and more than 250 affiliated clubs the BMC is recognised by the government as:

*the national representative body that champions the interests of climbers, hill walkers, mountaineers<sup>1</sup>.*

We serve to

*protect areas from developments that damage their landscape character and detract from their recreational and amenity value.<sup>2</sup>*

Not just nimbys: work with developers of windfarms, the MOD and forestry, so that their activities and developments do not impact our sport and users.

How I became passionate about outdoor pursuits:

- Inner city comprehensive school in Sheffield. Scouts took me to the Peak District. Learning to enjoy and respect the countryside.
- Met HRH when attained Queens Scouts award. Therefore this is not about the queen, or who is proposing this. It is about the negative impact that and the disrespect that industrial imposition will have.

Newcastle University:

- Joined the Mountaineering Club. Taken to Great Wanney and was in awe at the landscape. **Then, just as now climbing and mountaineering was not just about vertical ascent. It is about the overall package and the inspiring places it take you. Without the need for a monument, I was inspired.**
- Became President of the club: after trips to Great Wanney over 100 freshers paid to join.
- Fell walking society was the biggest society in the university.
- Both clubs: first generation students from estates in Sunderland or Newcastle,
- Students took a similar journey: inspired to be taken from an industrial cityscape and discover the wild beauty and respect it.

### **Not wild challenge<sup>3</sup>:**

- *Great glens of Scotland: scots pines were cleared for hunting and the industrial revolution. Lakeland fells landscape shaped by sheep farming for thousands of years.*
- ***Imagine you grew up on an estate in the city. Stand on Great Wanney or Cold Law say that it is not wild or inspiring.***

Sophistry being used by the appellant used to claim the Wanneys are not wild.

### **Geography**

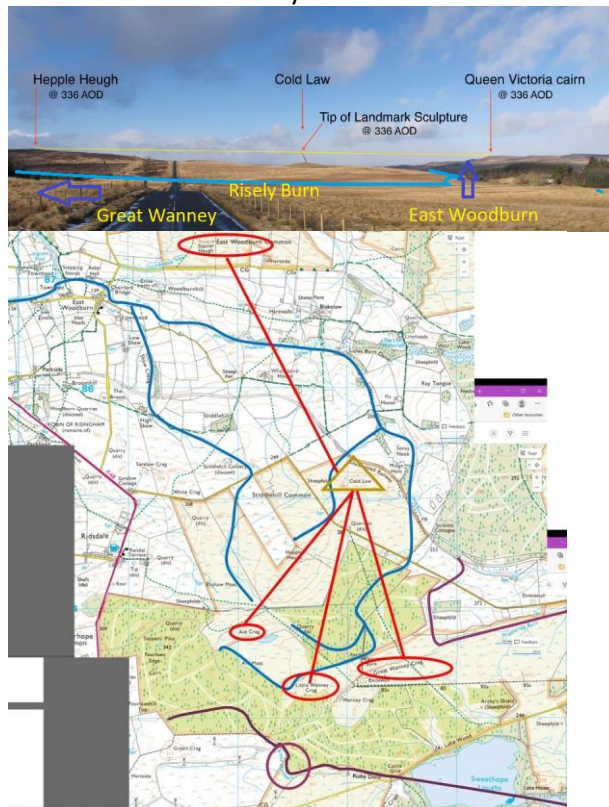
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<sup>1</sup> [BMC Governance \(thebmc.co.uk\)](http://thebmc.co.uk)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> 13.5.1 "Section 3: Area History and Context, the landscape in which the development site sits is one with a mixed rural and industrial history. Whilst it is rural, i.e. it is not urban, it is not 'wild' but rather is a managed landscape and has been under the influence of human activity for thousands of years.

- Tit hill belongs to the Wanneys. OS map shows the river that springs closest to Little and Great Wanney is not the Wansbeck. It is Risely Burn, which a mile later flows past Cold law and into the North Tyne.



**Wanneys:**

- Regionally important for walkers and climbers, with East Woodburn, Little Wanney, Aid Crag and Curtis Crag. The jewel in the crown is Great Wanney, one of the few Northumberland Craggs that is nationally known by climbers.

**Consultation:**

- No direct consultation from the Elizabeth team with mountaineering groups.
- BMC online poll of members (majority against) and meeting unanimous vote against the initial proposal. Prior to this meeting it was again discussed it at an area meeting: voted unanimously opposed it.

Not used for brevity:

~~Legitimate concerns raised by climbers and hillwalkers. Elizabeth Team said:~~

~~it is difficult to see how any climber ascending the Crag would have any view of the Landmark given that he would have his back to it~~

~~International national women's day and women! Women walk and climb too. The dismissive demonstrates no effort made to consult with, or understand the motivations of users of this area.~~

**Visual impact:**

Mr Strachan opening statement: ‘

‘the claims of the visual impact as distorted’

YouTube videos they have produced, you can see the crags from Tit hill.

Viscount himself says on these videos (and I quote)

“It is very significant in relation to the landscape”<sup>4</sup>

### **Walking and climbing**

If it were walking and climbing just about the physical motion upwards we do it in an indoor shed or a gym.

Climbing guides: opening chapters: flora, fauna, respecting bird bans and the natural environment. No hammering of metal into cracks, the ethic is to leave no trace. Unlike the industrial scar this will leave.

Sport England statistics:

- walking for leisure is the largest sport in the UK (still growing)<sup>5</sup>
- Adventures sports: growing by c.a. 500k a single year.
- Climbing is an Olympic sport likely to grow further.

### **Cycling**

Ascendant team cherry picking. They flag the Tyneside Vagabonds<sup>6</sup> cycling group who meet in local cafes.

- Cyclists want quiet roads and beautiful surroundings.
- Rusting Corten steel monument in the North East already available for cyclists.

Mend our Mountains

- 2018/19 campaign. Raised £800k in donations. Viral in outdoor press. To redress damage caused by the increasing popularity of hill walking. Mending visible footpath scars and erosion.
- Elizabeth proposal wilful scaring of the iconic Wanneys, because it goes against so much that people go outdoors for.

### **Conclusion:**

Hillwalkers, climbers, fellrunners, road and mountain bikers do have the luxury of living in a rural idyll. We get to see rusting, quasi industrial metal on a daily basis. But that is why thousands BMC members, and other walkers, climbers, cyclists, runners leave the city, to go to the wilds of Northumberland.

- Its not okay to pave paradise and put up a parking lot
- Its not is okay to slice into the countryside to leave our mark with a supersized rusting pastiche of the angel of the north.

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<sup>4</sup> [Viscount Devonport explains The Elizabeth Landmark - YouTube](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Activity levels at record high before coronavirus pandemic | Sport England](#)

<sup>6</sup> 3.3 It is expected that cycling clubs such as Northumbria Cycling Club and Tyneside Vagabonds would add Elizabeth Landmark as a destination to their event calendar. One of the main meeting places for the Tyneside Vagabonds is a café located in Elsdon, an 8-mile cycle journey from Elizabeth Landmark. Most of cycle journeys for local clubs vary from 30 – 100 miles, making Elizabeth Landmark an easy day trip from the wider area such as Newcastle (30 miles), North Tyneside (36 miles), or Corbridge (18 miles) where there is a cycle café which serves food and sells cycling kits and spares

On behalf of walkers, climbers, fell runners and mountaineers, both locally and nationally, I hereby humbly object to this, in the strongest terms. Thank you.