

## **BMC position on dry-tooling**

### **For discussion at the August / September round of BMC Area Meetings and by National Council on 21 September**

Note: This paper refers to dry-tooling on outdoor crags in 'summer' conditions; it does not refer to mixed climbing or dry-tooling in winter conditions or to dry-tooling in climbing walls.

#### **Background**

Dry-tooling is a form of climbing which takes place on outdoor crags and indoor climbing walls using ice axes and crampons. Dry-tooling has increased in popularity over the last 5-10 years and currently (2013) there are at least 10 established outdoor dry-tooling venues in the UK and 10 or so climbing walls with bespoke dry-tooling facilities. In addition there is a Scottish dry-tooling competition series and occasional small scale dry-tooling competitions at individual climbing walls.

Dry-tooling typically occurs on overhanging quarried rock (or other rock faces generally unsuitable for conventional rock climbing) and usually involves the use of fixed equipment and drilled / manufactured axe and crampon placements.

Examples of 'summer' dry-tooling venues include White Goods (North Wales), Telscombe beach cliffs (Brighton) and Newtyle Quarry (Scotland).

#### **Purpose of paper**

In April 2013 a group of climbers in the Lake District removed the bolts from a newly developed dry-tooling venue (the Works) due to a range of concerns related to the spread of the activity and its impact. 'The Works' received substantial media attention at the time and highlighted the fact that the BMC does not have a formal position or policy on dry-tooling as an activity. The BMC National Council considered this at its meeting of 15 June and agreed that a discussion paper should be produced for consideration by the Areas; it was felt that this should take the form of a series of questions.

#### **Points for consideration by Areas**

1. Does dry-tooling on outdoor crags have a place in British climbing?
2. Is it acceptable for dry-tooling to take place on established rock climbs?
3. What should be the criteria for defining whether a venue is suitable for dry-tooling or not?

For example:

- Should dry-tooling be carried out on quarried rock only?
- Should it be acceptable to dry-tool old aid routes?
- Should it be acceptable to dry-tool routes that could be climbed as trad or sport routes?
- Should it only be accepted on crags with little or no value for conventional rock climbing? (if so – how should 'little or no value' be defined).