



BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

177-179 Burton Road
Manchester M20 2BB
www.thebmc.co.uk

Tel: 0161 445 6111
Fax: 0161 445 4500
Email: office@thebmc.co.uk

BMC South West Area Gathering

Meeting held at 'The Old Smithy', Welcome, Bideford, Devon, EX39 6HG on Friday the 5th September 2014 @ 7pm.

Present & Signed In:

Matthew Goater (MG) - Chair
Gareth Palmer (GP) - National Council
Sally Smith
Iain Peters
Mike Virtue
Frank Cannings
Peter Saunders

Philip Wilson (PW) - Sec
Trevor Smith
David Hillebrandt
Mark Kemball
Dan Donovan
Paul Russell
Mark Garland

1. **Welcome & Apologies for Absence.** (MG) welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked members whether they minded the secretary recording the minutes electronically for later paper transcription. There were no objections to this. Apologies for absence were accepted from Colin Knowles & Stu Bradbury.
2. **The Previous Meetings Minutes:** These were reviewed for accuracy & completeness and signed off.
3. **Review of The Cornish Climbing Festival:** Iain Peters outlined this event which was a great success as follows:
4. **Review of The Bristol Climbing Festival:** Iain Peters outlined this event which was a great success. Gareth Palmer (organiser) & Frank Cannings (speaker) were officially thanked for making the event such a success. The CC was also thanked for allowing us to use their hut as a venue. Also thanks to all the sponsors. Catering & food was excellent. Disco was too late as the rest of the festivities overran. 100 people attended from all over the southwest and beyond. There were problems with camp fees (advertised at £5 per night, CC wanted £12,. The BMC kindly agreed to pick up the shortfall). There were problems with stealing raffle prizes from one individual. The person concerned has apologised to Matt Goater & Gareth Palmer verbally and by email. It was agreed to beef up security on prizes to remove this temptation at any future events, as the event grows annually in popularity & size. It was agreed to reply formally by email to him, formally accepting his apology, but stating that he would not be welcome at the 2015 Cornish Climbing festival in view of his current behaviour.
Action Point: Matt Goater & Gareth Palmer to email our reply to the individual concerned.
5. **Review of The ClimbBristol Climbing Festival:**
Matthew Goater, outlined this event with between 200 – 300 people attending (estimated), which was a great success. Both the honorary Mayor & Mayoress (both BMC members) attended and did a climb, together with past

climbing activists and organisers who were presented to the Mayor & Mayoress. This all helped to raise our profile with BBC news (Radio) & ITV (TV) in attendance. The festival was also held in conjunction with the BMC's 70th anniversary celebrations. A huge thanks was extended to all our sponsors that included RedPoint, DMM, Taunton Leisure, Undercover Rock & Bloc.

6. **The Culm Coast & South Devon Fixed Gear Policy (following preliminary discussions at the last meeting):**

Before debate, Mark Kemball and Iain Peters related the sad news that Craig Harwood was killed yesterday falling off Caravanserai at Compass Point and that a peg he clipped adjacent route Brutal Dub failed (see Point 8 Access & Local Issues).

Frank Cannings made the point that safety was paramount and that individuals climbing on the Culm expected to stay safe while undertaking this activity, and that this should be our focus in this fixed gear debate. All present agreed.

This document was then reviewed and debated (see the associated Culm Coast & South Devon Fixed Gear Draft Policy). Mark Kemball said that this document covered both the Culm Coast & South Devon (the coastal cliffs from Baggy Point to St Ives & South Devon). Philip Wilson apologised for referring only to the Culm Coast in the published agenda. It was re-iterated that any vote following this debate would be held at a future local meeting.

The document presented by Mark Kemball was debated in area order as follows:

a) North Devon and Cornwall:

Belay & BMC Type Abseil Stakes: Dave Hillebrandt is holding three and will place them as required (Screda Point).

Stainless Steel Abseil Points: Tat at top of Lower Sharpnose, Gull Rock & Vicarage Cliffs to be replaced with stainless steel abseil points following wide debate (including UKC). Iain Peters and Mark Kemball confirmed that Lunakod had been done, with Fey proposed to be done (if feasible).

Gull Rock Marsland confirmed that he would like cables to be equalised to a central point to replace the current static rope, which will deteriorate.

Stu Bradbury's email was read out making his case for keeping the tat at these venues.

Dan Donovan said that he agreed with Stu Bradbury's comment that wild places should not have abseil cables, but that the areas proposed were not wild.

Iain Peters made the point that incoming tide escapes were difficult and dangerous for novices as the tide comes in extremely quickly.

Dave Hillebrandt said Upton Slabs could be a further candidate.

Dave Hillebrandt said a warning could be posted regarding abseiling from fixed equipment in the forthcoming guide.

Dan Donovan said that the lifespan of these cables would probably be between 10 to 20 years.

No objections were raised to the proposal for chains to be installed at the above referenced locations only (other than Stu Bradbury).

Pitons: These should only be placed where adequate protection is not available. It was pointed out that these degrade quickly. Iain Peters pointed

out that one option is to place and remove pegs following ascents. It was also felt that dangerous pegs should be replaced or removed. He also made the case for a fixed equipment database (UKC type). The merits of having pegs on Wreckers Slab (removing the rotten ones versus removing all was also debated). It was pointed out that removing all pegs would mean less ascents of this classic route. **Action Point:** Mark Kemball agreed to review the wording here.

b) Inland Cornwall (including the Cheesewring and the Cornish coast east of the Lizard):

Barney Carvers points which have been incorporated into the document were discussed and reviewed.

c) Dartmoor Granite: (CC guide in preparation and Nick White's guide). This section of the document was discussed e.g. the same approach as for inland Cornwall i.e. no fixed protection on any natural granite outcrops, with bolt protection being acceptable in inland quarries, providing it does not affect existing routes. Retro bolting is acceptable with the permission of the first ascensionist or if this is not possible consensus.

d) South Devon: This section highlights the current situation in this area. Pete Saunders led the discussions. He pointed out that bolted routes existed side by side with traditional routes.

Frank Cannings confirmed the technical point that he was not approached for permission to bolt his route 'The Mitre', but didn't propose removing them.

e) Conclusion: Mark Kemball said that this policy (if accepted) would now define what practices were acceptable in these areas. He added that if anyone deviated (or wanted to deviate) from this position, then they should agree this at a future BMC meeting. He proposed to vote for this at next local meeting (The Quay Exeter) and if approved this policy would appear in the guides to these areas. This was accepted by all present. **Action Point:** Mark Kemball is to review his document and copy it to Philip Wilson to publish with the final draft of these minutes (within the week).

7. **The Proposed 2015 Cornish Climbing Festival:**

Iain Peters proposed doing this using the Llanberis Tradfest 2014 model e.g. prepaid for a fee (£20) and limited in numbers e.g. 80 to 100. The Count House could then be hired for a fixed fee. This would also cover marque hire. He proposed a similar host date to 2014 e.g. in July, tides permitting. The idea of extending the dates to Friday, Saturday, Sunday & possibly Monday was also debated.

8. **Access & Any Local Issues.**

Iain Peters announced the sad news that Craig Harwood (prominent and well respected CC & BMC member), fell off Caravanserai at Compass Point and was killed on the 4th September 2014. The meeting formally passed condolences from the South West Area to his partner & 2 step daughters. Craig was instrumental in the rebuild and refurbishment of the Count House (as architect and CC member). He also served on the BMC hut committee among others. Thanks were also passed to Mark Kemball for looking after his belay partner after the accident.

9. **Any Other Business:**

a) A special single issue meeting will be held in the community room of the Swanage Fire Station on Friday 26 September 2014, starting at 7.00pm, to discuss the proposal to bolt the route 'Fuel My Fire' in the Unknown Ledge sector, which is in the bolt-free zone in the Cattle Troughs area of Swanage, as requested by area rep Marti Hallett. A vote will be held following

discussions at a second local area meeting to Swanage and not at the same meeting, to allow both sides to reflect on this debate.

- b) Trevor Smith reported that the BMC is currently deciding how to support climbers, mountaineers, hill walkers & Ski Mountaineers in equal proportion to subscription numbers. Currently the thinking is that hill walkers are subsidising climbers. This could also involve bids for increased Sports England funding. There was concern as to how hill walkers could be accommodated in South West Area meetings.
- c) Paul Russell (The Quay Climbing Wall) asked whether youngsters could attend future meetings. The meeting attendees confirmed that they would welcome this.

10. **Date of Next Meeting (TBA):** The Nova Scotia, Bristol in November 2014.