



## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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### BMC South West Area Gathering

Meeting held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015 @ The Nova Scotia Inn, Harbourside  
Bristol @ 7pm

#### Present:

Matthew Goater (MG) - Chair  
Simon Fletcher  
Rick Sowards  
Terry Gifford  
Tom Palmer  
Lizzie Barrow  
Phil Orwell  
Trevor Smith  
Peter Crowther  
Mark Davies  
Frank Cannings

Philip Wilson (PW) - Sec  
Rob Dyer  
Dave Fisher  
Dan Donovan (DD)  
Allan Howells  
Kevin James  
Nathan Christmas  
Sally Smith  
Tim Burrow  
Libby Houston

#### **1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence.**

(MG) welcomed everyone to the meeting (21 attendees). Apologies for absence were received from Gareth Palmer, Colin Knowles, Ian Butterworth, Martin Crocker, Gordon Jenkins & Iain Peters.

#### **2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting & Matters Arising.**

The minutes were reviewed then signed off as present and correct.

#### **3. ClimbBristol Project**

Matt Goater reported that the part time Project Officer post ended on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015. It was proposed that two informal open meetings be held annually to tackle forthcoming issues (scrub clearance and route pegging). Nathan Christmas said that he was discussing informal conservation issues with Libby Houston. An October 2015 Climb Bristol Open Meeting was accepted for interested parties. Action Point: Action an October 2015 Climb Bristol Open Meeting.

#### **4. Cheddar Gorge Latest**

Rob Dyer reported that he was to hold an imminent meeting (tomorrow) with the National Trust regarding commercial group use on National Trust land, at which the North side would also be represented.

#### **5. Access: local updates (climbing and walking)**

- i. Main Wall: Simon Fletcher reported that the 2015 Peregrine ban is lifted with immediate effect as the birds are nesting on the other side of the gorge this year.
- ii. Unknown Wall: Rob Dyer reported that the landowner who owns the land at the crag bottom is still concerned about climbing liability issues and will not allow access over his land. The crag itself is owned by Bristol City Council who are happy to allow climbing access. The landowner has no objection to climbing as long as they do not access the crag via his land. It was pointed out that anyone wishing to climb here could consider abseiling in.

- iii. Leigh Woods Side of Avon Gorge: Libby Houston & Simon Fletcher reported that they were holding a meeting with the National Trust and other parties to discuss new routes here.
- iv. Goblin Combe: Rob Dyer reported that a request for a meeting by Groundworks staff to discuss climbing issues here will now not go ahead as he cannot get Groundworks staff to attend a meeting despite repeated attempts.
- v. Fairy Cave Quarry: Iain Butterworth, reported on a forthcoming Arts Festival (3rd – 18th October 2015, 11am to 6pm) that would affect climbing access. This would involve the installation of an audio sculpture in the quarry and access by the public to it. Climbing will not be allowed between 11am to 6pm on these dates. Parking will also be difficult. Climbing after 6pm during this time will probably be possible.
- vi. Wye Valley: Rick Sowards reported on the successful clear up in the Wye valley of scrap metal and rubbish. He confirmed the continuing access ban at Tintern Quarry and confirmed that Peregrines may be nesting in the Go Wall Pedestal Area and that signs are in place at the crag bottom.
- vii. Compass Point Devon: Iain Peters reported that the whole cliff face is unstable at Compass Point from Crimtyphon to Dreadlock Holiday and advised people not to climb these routes.

## **6. Cornish Climbing Festival**

This has been scheduled for the 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at the Count House, Cornwall. Attendance will be pre-paid at £30 per person. This includes food, accommodation, Saturday night lecture and a guided walk on the Sunday by the National Trust warden. Tickets will be available on-line via the BMC. The event is being organised by Gareth Palmer and Iain Peters. Action Point: Add this event to the BMC Community Site, organise ticket sales via the BMC web site.

## **7. New Routes At Snuff Mills Frome Valley Sandstone**

This area consisting of mainly quarried sandstone with some natural bluff. Martin Crocker (via email) and Mark Davies reported on the bolting of around 10 lines in the quarry that contravenes the current BMC non bolting agreement for this area. The crag is owned by Bristol City Council. This issue was discussed and will be tabled for debate and subsequent vote at the next South West Area Bristol meeting (October 2015). Action Point: Include this item for debate in October 2015 BMC SW Area Agenda.

## **8. Hill walking Rep's report**

Trevor Smith (SW Area Hill Walking Rep) reported on the BMC Hill Walking Group, whose aim was to make the BMC the natural home for hill walkers. He added that we are still awaiting policy on how to proceed from this body, which would be forthcoming shortly.

## **9. Area Briefing Note**

The BMC Area Briefing Notes were read out (see Appendix A for copy).

## **10. Any Other Business**

- i. Brean Down: The issue of retro-bolting was again raised and discussed, as was the perceived problem of belaying at the sandy top of the crag (requiring a pre-placed rope). It was confirmed that bolting these routes could only occur only if permission to do so has been received from the 1st ascensionist. Rob Dyer confirmed that he had a meeting with the National Trust regarding Brean Down on other matters.

- ii. Sea Walls & Main Wall Sunday Parking Access On The 19th April 2015: Allan Howells highlighted the lack of parking due to the commercial charity abseils and Avon Rescue training on this day. It was pointed out that commercial organisations must liaise with Bristol City Council prior to holding their events (apparently not all did so) and that the Downs parking was also restricted due to council work. Action Point: Rob Dyer to speak to the commercial organisers, Matt Goater is to speak to Avon Rescue (via Barrie Donovan).
- iii. Clubs Rep: Dave Fisher (Clubs Rep), introduced himself as the new rep and added that he would be contacting these shortly to introduce and familiarise himself with these issues in the coming weeks.

#### **11. Date of Next Meeting:**

To be held on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015 7pm @ The Hawkins Arms, Zelah (see <http://www.hawkinsarms.co.uk/where-are-we/>). [View Link In Google Maps](#))

## **APPENDIX A (2 pages)**

**Area Meeting Briefing Note for Area Chairs & Secretaries – April 2015** A summary of some of the key BMC activities for the period Feb – Apr 2015

### **Access & Conservation**

- Joined a coalition of 27 UK organisations and charities to campaign for the protection and enhancement of Britain's landscapes.
- Publicised the dates of the 2015 briefings which enable access to Pembroke's Range West.
- Published good practice advice on developing new crags on the BMC website.
- Publicised seasonal nesting restrictions which come into place at crags all over the country in spring, and encouraged use of the BMC Regional Access Database (RAD).
- Recruited four new trustees for the BMC Access & Conservation Trust (ACT).
- Publicised an April Fool consultation on redevelopment of Horseshoe Quarry, which far too many people took seriously.
- Publicised the 'Stick up for Stanage' car sticker, which provides a year's free parking at Stanage in return for a £15 donation towards looking after the estate.

### **Climbing Walls**

- Publicised the dates of three 2015 BMC Route Setting Workshops.

### **Clubs & Huts**

- Publicised funding available to clubs for communications, equipment and instructor support.
- Publicised Sport England's new website designed to support those who run sports clubs.
- New courses for BMC club members added to the 2015 schedule.
- Publicised beginners' and new members' meets organised by Castle MC and Skyline MC.
- Publicised the programme for the BMC Clubs Seminar, to be held at Plas y Brenin on 25 April – places are still available, full details on the BMC website.
- Published advice on the BMC website on how to attract new club members.
- Ran the 2015 BMC Huts Seminar in March at the BMC office in Manchester.
- Publicised a weekend workshop supporting clubs who wish to train novice club members , to be held at Plas y Brenin on 16-17 May.

### **Competition Climbing**

- Reported on the British Ski Mountaineering Championships, held in France in February.
- Completed the regional rounds of the BMC Youth Climbing Series; the national final will be held on Saturday 25 April.
- Continued the search for a financial sponsor for the GB Climbing Team.

### **Equity**

- Announced the winners of the Women in Mountain Adventure Films competition, a new competition set up by the BMC and a range of other partners.
- Publicised women's nights and This Girl Can 'try climbing' events offered by climbing walls.
- Publicised the iDID Sign Climb System, a cross-disability communication method to increase accessibility in rock climbing for individuals affected by communication difficulties.
- To celebrate This Girl Can, launched an Instagram competition to win a climbing session with BMC ambassadors Shauna Coxsey, Hazel Findlay, Fran Brown or Molly Thompson-Smith.

- Signed up to the Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation, which sets out how sport can use its collective power to tackle mental ill health and the stigma that surrounds it.

### **Hill Walking**

- Announced BMC sponsorship of a temporary exhibition in Keswick celebrating the life and work of one of Lakeland's most recognised walking personalities, Alfred Wainwright.
- As part of the BMC's ongoing efforts to improve its work for hill walkers, several upcoming Area Meetings will be dedicated to hill walking.

### **International**

- Publicised an invitation from the Iran Mountaineering and Sport Climbing Federation for climbers to attend its Mt. Damavand International Youth Expedition.

### **Regional Development**

- Published an updated version of the London & South East Mountaineer mini-guide, an introduction to climbing, hill walking and mountaineering for people living in the area.
- Outdoor sport climbing courses for young people launched.

### **Safety & Skills**

- Publicised BMC scrambling courses in Snowdonia, subsidised by Sport England.
- Publicised the new Hill and Mountain Skills courses, launched by Mountain Training.
- Publicised advice on how to minimise risk of infection from tick bites.

### **Technical**

- Published a warning about dangerous 'imitation' crampons being sold online.
- Position statement on use of pegs in British climbing published.
- Publicised a recall of Climbing Technology crampons.

### **Youth & Equity**

- Publicised the 2015 BMC Regional Academies, which support emerging climbing talent.

### **BMC Organisation**

- Published a summary of the February 2015 meeting of BMC National Council.
- Published the 2014 BMC Annual Report, available online and in print format.

### **Membership**

- ☑ Exhibited at the Telegraph Outdoor Adventure & Travel Show in London in February.
- ☑ Promoted the Keswick Mountain Festival, to be held in May, at which the BMC will exhibit.
- ☑ Launched our 'Outdoor Election' campaign, encouraging members to quiz election candidates on outdoor issues.

### **Media**

- ☑ Passed 64k Likes on the BMC Facebook page, and 27k Twitter followers on @team\_BMC.
- ☑ BMC TV teamed up with Trail magazine to present 'Britain's Mountain Challenges', a new series of videos introducing Britain's best hard walks and easy scrambles.