



## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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### BMC South West Area Gathering

Meeting held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2015, 7pm @ The Nova Scotia Inn,  
Harbourside Bristol. [View Link In Google Maps](#)

#### Present: (16 legible signed in attendees)

Matthew Goater (MG) - Chair	Philip Wilson (PW) - Sec
Simon Fletcher (SF) – Avon Rep	Dave Fisher (DF) – Clubs Rep
Tracy Rodford	Ian Butterworth (IB) – Somerset Rep
Libby Houston (LH)	Su Paton
Barry Donovan (BD)	Annabel Tall
Martin Crocker (MC)	Peter Crowther
Allan Howells (AH)	M Basle
Mark Davies (MD)	Guy Percival (GP)

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

(MG) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Dan Donovan, Iain Peters (IP), Colin Knowles, Gareth Palmer (GP), Trevor Smith (TS), Colin Knowles & Gordon Jenkins.

#### **2. Election of Officers (AGM)**

See the separate minutes contained in Appendix B.

#### **3. Annual Review 2014/2015**

See Appendix B.

#### **4. The Previous Meetings Minutes & Any Matters Arising**

##### **a) Highlights (outlined by MG):**

Feedback On Progress with the BMC Web Site, the Cornish Climbing Festivals 2015 & 2016, The Lundy Climbing Festival 2017, Letter of Thanks from ACT for ClimbBristol Volunteers, Review On Dewerstone 5 Hour Accident Rescue & Torbay Quarries bolt belays were outlined. The minutes were then reviewed for accuracy and completeness and signed off.

##### **b) Any action points carried forward from the last Bristol meeting:**

Sea Walls & Main Wall Sunday Parking Access On The 19th April 2015. AH asked whether Rob Dyer had spoken to the commercial organisations regarding parking on this day. PW & MG thought that this had been done, but agreed to check. Action Point: MG & PW to check with Rob Dyer that this was indeed done and reply to AH.

#### **5. BMC Area Briefing Notes & Hill Walking Report:**

The BMC Area Briefing Notes were read out by MG (see Appendix A notes attached).

MG read out the hill walking report provide by (TS) from the BMC Hill Walking Group. The most popular highlight of local interest was whether the group would classify Dartmoor as a 'hill' or not. Many at the meeting thought that they should!

#### **6. Feedback From National Council:**

GP reported the following via MG:

- I. The healthy state of BMC membership (this is exceeding 80k for the 1st time, with 54k being individual members, over 90% of which paid by direct debit).
- II. The BMC AGM for 2016 will be held at Castleton YHA on Saturday 16th April 2016.
- III. BMC supplied strops will be placed at Vicarage cliffs by local climbing volunteers.
- IV. Planning has started for the Cornish Climbing & Hill Walking Festival 2016 & for the Lundy climbing festival 2017 by GP & IP.

**7. Proposed Plans For A Lundy Climbing Festival 2017:**

See point 6 IV.

**8. BMC 2016 Avon Gorge Scrub Clearances:**

This was agreed and set for either Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> or the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016 (before the end of the scrub bashing season 1<sup>st</sup> march 2016), pending LH availability. LH also confirmed that the University of Bristol Conservation Club had been in contact about wanting to be involved. This request came through Becky Belfin (Natural England). Action Point: LH agreed to confirm their involvement. MG is to do the Method Statement & Risk Assessment once LH confirms date availability. DF is to approach local climbing clubs for help.

**9. Debate: Bolting @ Snuff Mills (Oldbury Court Estate):**

MD & GP presented a proposal for amending the south west bolting policy to allow routes bolted in the Snuff Mills quarries to be post humorously 'legitimised'. This is for inclusion in the new area guide book currently in production. See Appendix C for this proposal.

They added that these consist of around 10 new routes on the quarried Grey Leaning and Little Leaning Wall that were not (or likely to be) climbable due to their low quality in any other format (either trad or highball bouldering style).

They also asked for bolt lower offs on trad routes in the quarries where topping out is not possible.

MG & PW said that presently the bolting agreement states that (from memory) no bolting is to take place on Frome sandstone, but added that it does not mention quarried Frome sandstone. Equally the bolt policy allows for bolting in quarries and lower offs to be placed on these and some trad routes where top outs are not possible (it would be courteous if/where possible to inform the 1<sup>st</sup> ascensionist(s)).

LH said that this area contained a rare fern locked in a perpetual juvenile life stage (due to its poor living conditions). Action Point: LH to investigate whether these were affected and report back if this is the case.

The meeting was asked whether we should amend the current bolting policy to clarify and/or sanction this bolting action. After debate (covering the above points) the meeting voted on and unanimously agreed to allow these bolted routes to stand, pending botanical investigations by LH as well as any lower offs.

PW & MG said that they would look at the BMC South West bolting, to see whether this would need to be amended to incorporate this vote. Action Point: MG & PW to look at this and amend as necessary.

**10. Access & Any Local Issues**

Unknown Wall Climbing Ban Still In Force: SF & MC outlined some progress with the landowner, but the latest sticking point is Bristol City Council (BCC) has now said that they still do not want us to climb here, pending surveys, etc. MC said that we need the BMC to keep the pressure on Andrew Gordon at BCC, rather than just accepting the ban. Action Point: Rob Dyer to be asked to be more proactive by MG & PW.

Holcombe & Fairy Cave Quarries Art Festival Installations: IB reported that these art installations (October 2015) was well received and supported by the climbing community.

Fairy Cave Quarry Accidents: IB reported that this was gaining a reputation with the rescue services for climbing accidents (latest was a broken leg on the slab).

Fairy Cave Entry Combination Key: IB reported that this combination key given out to climbers has just topped 1000.

Vallis Vale Quarry Velvet Bottom Access: IB reported that his attempts at mediation to gain climbing access to this fenced off quarry with the owners Hansons had been fruitless and all avenues had been exhausted. IB added that he had no immediate plans for any future access negotiations.

Avon Guide Sea Walls Muddy Streaks: MC, mentioned the muddy streaks caused by abseiling, which was gradually making the route underneath, impossible to climb (mud & polish) and said that he would add appropriate wording in the new guide concerning this. This was approved.

Cheddar: MC summarised the position regarding non-liability insured climbers climbing here for the last year. MC said that his statistics come from his bank holiday BMC sponsored warden role. Last year 10% of climbers 'interviewed' by MC were not insured, with a further 5% not being fully insured (e.g. Alpine Club type members liability insured up to £ 3 million & not £10 million offered by the BMC type insurance). MC added that these figures have improved since last year. MC also said that he was giving up this role at the end of 2015, should anyone wish to take it on.

Coblin Combe: MD asked whether anyone knew who had removed the large tree at the bottom of Bifur on Eagle Rock. No one present knew anything about this.

Brean Down: The position of lower offs (for convenience and to protect the fragile sandy eco system above some routes (contributions by AH, MD & LH) was discussed. MD said that this was especially relevant with a new guidebook in the pipeline. Action Point: It was agreed to table this as a full agenda item at the next Bristol meeting.

#### **11. Any Other Business:**

Supported Outdoor Activities

12. **Date of Next Meeting:** January 2016 (probably Exeter). Date & Venue to be confirmed by MG & PW.

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

**Area Meeting Briefing Note for Area Chairs & Secretaries: November 2015** A summary of some of the key BMC activities for the period Sep – Nov 2015

### **Access & Conservation**

- ☐ Produced a draft response to the Welsh Government's consultation on improving opportunities to access the outdoors for responsible recreation, and requested feedback from members.
- ☐ Supported Friends of the Lake District's campaign against National Grid's proposal to erect 50-metre tall pylons through 24km of the Lake District National Park, and encouraged members to sign up to the campaign.
- ☐ Publicised the third annual Real3Peaks Challenge, a co-ordinated volunteer clean-up event for the three highest peaks of Scotland, England and Wales, held on Saturday 10 October.
- ☐ Publicised a new access route for Wilton 3, agreed with the quarry owners, Bolton Gun Club, to improve safety on a live firing range.
- ☐ Publicised a series of drop-in sessions and a seminar organised by the Snowdon Partnership, to enable people to contribute ideas for the management of the UK's most popular mountain.
- ☐ Publicised some major changes to access arrangements for Pembroke's Range West and Range East, as well as the 2016 Range West safety briefing dates.
- ☐ Welcomed the decision by environment minister Liz Truss to grant extensions to the Yorkshire Dales and Lake District national parks, but expressed concern that the plans could be delayed by details to be announced in the November 25 spending review.
- ☐ Encouraged members to vote for the BMC in the awards run by The Great Outdoors magazine, in which we have been shortlisted in the Campaigner of the Year category.

### **Clubs & Huts**

- ☐ Published good practice advice on the BMC website for student climbing clubs planning freshers' meets.
- ☐ Reported on the 50th anniversary and the reopening ceremony (following refurbishment work) of the Glen Brittle Memorial Hut on Skye, which is owned by a trust on behalf of the BMC and the Mountaineering Council of Scotland.
- ☐ Due to demand, extended the pilot project to support student clubs taking novices outdoors by providing climbing and hill walking training sessions with instructors to February 2016.
- ☐ Publicised the 50th anniversary of the Mountain Bothies Association.

### **Competition Climbing**

- ☐ Held the British Lead and Speed Climbing Championships, as well as the final round of the IFSC Paraclimbing Cup, at Awesome Walls Sheffield (3-4 Oct).
- ☐ Reported that sport climbing had been proposed as a new sport for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games by the Tokyo 2020 Additional Event Programme Panel; the final decision will be made by the International Olympic Committee in August 2016.

### **Hill walking**

- ☐ Launched a new series of short films on BMC TV documenting five of the greatest hill walks in the Lake District, in partnership with the Telegraph, TV presenter Mary-Ann Ochota and Marmot.
- ☐ Publicised an invitation for members to join a winter walk in the Peak District being organised by area volunteers on Saturday 28 November.

## **Guidebooks**

- ☐ Lake District Rock, published by Wired Guides, a collaboration of publishers including the BMC, CC, FRCC, SMC and YMC, won the best guidebook award at the Banff Mountain Film and Book Festival.
- ☐ Publicised the new Gogarth South guidebook by Groundup, the companion guide to Gogarth North, published in 2009.

## **International**

- ☐ Reported that the Nepalese government is considering the introduction next spring of a ban on Everest for climbers who haven't previously climbed at least one 6,500m peak, as well as a ban on disabled, old and young climbers.
- ☐ Produced updated travel insurance advice for trekking in Nepal in autumn, as the Himalayan nation prepares for the tourist season following the destructive earthquakes in April and May.
- ☐ Teamed up with the Mountain Club of South Africa to run a trad climbing exchange between the two countries in 2016, and advertised for 10 UK climbers to participate in the exchange.

## **Safety & Skills**

- ☐ Publicised the 2015 BMC Winter Lecture Series, to be held in six locations around England and Wales in November.

## **Technical**

- ☐ Publicised a recall by DMM of some of its locking karabiners.

## **Youth & Equity**

- ☐ Following on from the success of last year's competition, teamed up again with WomenClimb and ShAFF to run the Women in Adventure film competition and put more adventurous women on the big screen.
- ☐ Publicised the second BMC Disability Symposium, to be held in the Lake District on 28-29 November, which will examine the latest best practice in giving people the skills and support they need to introduce people with disabilities to adventurous activities.

## **BMC Organisation**

- ☐ Organised the annual walk of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Mountaineering, which took place on 18 September in the Peak District on the Edale Skyline, and was attended by a record number of nine MPs and Peers.
- ☐ Published the draft minutes of the September National Council meeting on the BMC website.
- ☐ Encouraged members to ask their MPs to attend a parliamentary debate on the economic value of outdoor recreation, held on 28 October; 20 MPs from six political parties took part in the Westminster debate.

## **Membership**

- ☐ Volunteers in the North West hosted the third annual WiltonFest (5 Sep), and on the same weekend volunteers in the North East held a clean-up festival at Peel Crag. Volunteers in South Wales hosted the seventh annual Gower Climbing Festival (11-13 Sep).
- ☐ Promoted a 12.5% online discount for European Rock travel insurance policies purchased in October.
- ☐ Published information and advice for older members on the BMC website, to help them bring down the cost of travel insurance premiums.

## APPENDIX B (a half page)

### **BMC South West Area AGM Minutes**

**Annual Summary & Review:** Matt Goater (chair) gave a brief report of the past years activities and detailed the meetings held (January Exeter, March (Bristol), May (Cornwall, September (Devon) & November (Bristol) as well as the notable actions/highlights/successes/progress achieved this year.

**Annual Elections of Officers:** Matt Goater thanked all for their efforts this year as follows: Simon Fletcher (Avon Access Rep), Ian Butterworth (Somerset Access Rep), Rick Swards (Wye Access Rep), Marti Hallett (Dorset Access Rep), Jay Jackson (South Devon Access Rep), Jeremy Dyke (Cornwall Access Rep), Rick Abbott (North Devon Access Rep), Dave Fisher (Clubs Rep), Trevor Smith (Hill Walking Rep), Gareth Palmer & Colin Knowles (National Council), Philip Wilson (Secretary) & Matt Goater (Chair).

Following this they were all unanimously proposed and seconded in post for the forthcoming year.

Matt Goater confirmed that the posts of Chair and Secretary would be rotated to new personnel after the 5 year stipulated BMC tenure in one year's time at the next AGM. Anyone interested should feel free to contact us.

**AOB:** As there was no further business, the AGM closed and the area meeting continued.

## APPENDIX C (a half page)

### **Bolt policy for Snuff Mills Bristol**

Nov 2015

The proposal is to allow bolting in the quarries\* at Snuff Mills Park, to allow sport routes to be created where no trad routes can be attempted due to lack of any natural protection and also any bolt lower offs on trad routes in the quarries where topping out is not possible.

\*The quarry areas are from the Big Grey Leaning wall area to the Little Grey leaning wall area.

No bolting on the natural buttresses to be allowed in Snuff MillsPark or any other crags in the Frome Valley.

Mark Davies & Guy Percival