

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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South West Area BMC Meeting

Meeting held on Saturday 9th January 2016 Starting 7pm @ The Quay Climbing Centre, Haven Road, Haven Banks, Exeter, Devon, EX2 8AX. [View Link In Google Maps](#)

Present: Matt Goater (Chair), Philip Wilson (Sec), James Mann, Adrian Parsons, Gareth Palmer (National Council Rep), Philip Ellis, Colin Knowles (National Council), Corinne Shane, Tom Bunn, Trevor Smith (Hill Walking Rep), Bob Watson, Neal Heanes Area Rep), Lee Bartrop, Stu Bradbury, Dave Hillebrand, Patrick Moore, Mike Virtue, David Coley, Iain Peters, Mark Kemball, Jon Wilson & Will Hornby, Natasha L'Cerd, Pete Saunders, Chris Abbott & Sally Lisle. Advanced apologies to anyone whose name I have spelt incorrectly.

1. **Welcome & Apologies for Absence:** These were received from Pete Greening, Simon Fletcher (Avon Rep) & Rick Sowards (Wye Valley Rep).
2. **The Previous Meetings Minutes & Any Matters Arising:** These were read out and signed off as a complete and accurate recording of this meeting.
3. **BMC Area Briefing Notes:** Presented to the meeting by the Chair (see Appendix A for these).
4. **Feedback from National Council:** Colin Knowles reported back on the last National Council, which included the annual review of the work of all the Specialist Committees. Items touched on included:
 - a) The bid for climbing to be included in the 2016 Olympics.
 - b) A planned conference on Climate Change in Sheffield in March 2016.
 - c) The Wired Guide climbing guidebook series.
 - d) Reassurance over liability cover if a bolt placed by a volunteer fails.
 - e) The NC agreed to the acquisition of the crag Crook Rise, and minutes later agreed the current Land Acquisition Policy should remain in force.
5. **Proposed Development of Trebarwith Quarry North Cornwall:** Iain Peters & Mark Kemball, presented their proposal that this slate quarry could be a good candidate for a sports climbing venue in North Cornwall (on its solid blank slate walls). They stressed that at present no development work had taken place. This was then discussed for 45 minutes. Various arguments (both pro and anti) were made. Broadly summarised these were:
 - a) Is this a sea cliff or not (set back from the sea due to quarrying, non tidal but outside the coast path?
 - b) Cornwall is special. This development is in a wild and remote area of outstanding natural beauty, which is no place for bolted sports routes. Do we really want a sports climbing venue on CROW National Trust land that extends for hundreds of miles around the Cornish coast.
 - c) How would accidents and rescues be carried out in this remote area if it became a popular sports climbing venue?
 - d) Why not just top rope the routes.
 - e) This would breach the current no bolts on coast precedent.

- f) This would be the thin end of the wedge. Countered by the argument that this is not true as any such development would be agreed at BMC SW Area meetings.
- g) Low grade sports routes are badly needed in North Cornwall to encourage young climbers to climb outside.
- h) Bolts will corrode due to winter sea spray from winter storms.
- i) Are there any rare plants and animals likely to be affected? Thought not due to slate no supporting a wide ecology. There are however what are thought to be Raven nests.

Action Point: Iain Peters & Mark Kemball agreed to survey the quarry main wall to determine ownership, any ecological considerations, arguments for and against, the likely number of new routes and whether these climbs could be put up as traditional climbs with natural protection. They agreed to report back to the next SW Area meeting with this (probably at Zeelah) should they wish to proceed further.

Matt Goater (Chair) stressed that should this happen no decision would be made until a single issue meeting could be arranged at a pub near the venue (which would incorporate a site visit beforehand for interested parties). This would follow any presentation at the next meeting.

6. **Proposed Plans For A Lundy Climbing Festival 2017:** Gareth Palmer said that he was waiting for an email reply from the Landmark Trust and that this would be a week long festival and that the BMC were keen for this to take place. Hill walking possibilities on Lundy were also discussed.
7. **Cornish Climbing Festival 2016:** This was discussed for the Lizard. Date and venue proposals to be investigated by Iain Peters. Trevor Smith (Hill Walking Rep) added that there was good walking on the Lizard.
8. **BMC 2016 Scrub Clearance:** Still taking place as per the last meetings minutes.
9. **Access & Any Local Issues:**
 - a) **Portland Cuttings Area Clean Up:** Neil Heanes (Area Rep) reported that he is to help co-ordinate local climbers in a clear up of the boulder field below the Cuttings (contains rare lichen). Rockfax is kindly supporting with a donation. This is in conjunction with Dorset Wildlife Trust
 - b) **Telegraph Hole & Meadfoot Quarry:** Pete Saunders reported that he was now not going to place bolts as on investigation suitable alternative rock anchors were found.
 - c) **Brief from BMC Hill Walking Rep:** Trevor Smith (Hill walking Rep) reported.
10. **Any Other Business:**
 - a) **South Devon Mountaineering Club Greenland Trip:** publicised their July 2016 trip to Greenland, which is open to non-club members. Costs would be £1600 + food. Anyone interested should contact d.awly@bath.ac.uk for further details.
 - b) **Dewerstone Accident:** Dave Hillebrandt reported that the Ambulance services needed a single point of contact from the 3 mountain rescue teams operating on Dartmoor. He is to speak to them to arrange this.
 - c) **Bosigran Commando Ridge Accident:** Climbers crag bound with injured ankle. The Coast Guard rescue took a long time (didn't access casualty on cliff). Casualty eventually self-rescued to grass ledge/path and the awaiting Coast Guard.
11. **Date of Next Meeting:** Zeelah in May 2016 (actual date to be arranged).

Appendix A: Area Meeting Briefing Note for Area Chairs & Secretaries: January 2016

A summary of some of the key BMC activities for the period Nov 2015 – Jan 2016

Access & Conservation

Published two new green guides, one for walkers and one for climbers, providing advice to groups on how to minimise their impact on the crags and hills, as well as on other users.

Re-launched the Cwm Idwal Winter Conditions information service, providing live air and ground temperature readings from Cwm Idwal and Clogwyn Du, enabling climbers to check conditions before travelling.

Examined the potential impact on the outdoors of the government's Autumn Statement, which set out plans for departmental spending over the next five years.

Interviewed Ruth Bradshaw, policy and research manager at the Campaign for National Parks about the potential impact of new rules which permit fracking to be carried out below national parks and other protected sites.

Clubs & Huts

Publicised our 2016 training weekends for club members wishing to learn new skills in first aid, sea cliff climbing, scrambling, navigation and winter walking and climbing.

Climbing Walls

Produced the 2016 BMC Climbing Wall Directory, listing public-access walls in the UK & Eire.

Competition Climbing

Held the BMC Open Youth events; lead climbing at the Leeds Wall, and bouldering at the Climbing Works in Sheffield.

Held the final two rounds of the BMC Paraclimbing series; round 3 at Newcastle Climbing Centre in November, and round 4 at Manchester Climbing Centre in December.

Announced the Climbing Teams that will represent GB for 2016 in Lead and Boulder events at both Junior and Senior level; also selected team and squad members for the GB Paraclimbing Team.

Publicised the dates and venues of the three rounds of the 2016 BMC Youth Climbing Series.

Four members of the GB Ice Climbing Team competed in the opening round of the 2016 UIAA Ice Climbing World Cup, held at the Bozeman Ice Climbing Festival in Montana, USA.

Publicised the 2016 British Ski Mountaineering Championships, to be held at Thollon-les Mémises in France on 31 January.

Publicised the 2016 calendar of BMC climbing competitions.

Equipment

Publicised a warning issued by the UIAA (the International Climbing Federation) about stress corrosion cracking in stainless steel climbing anchors in warm, coastal locations around the world.

Published a new online guide to choosing, using and looking after a climbing harness, available as a free PDF download.

Hill Walking

BMC volunteers led a walk in the Peak District, which in spite of strong winds, rain and a dash of hail, attracted 21 walkers for a day in the hills and discussions about what hill walkers want from the BMC.

Safety & Skills

Held the 2015 BMC Winter Lecture Series, in six locations around England and Wales in November, which were attended by over 950 people.

Publicised our 2016 two-day trad climbing courses for 14-17 year olds, and our one-day sport climbing courses for 11-17 year olds.

Publicised Mountain Training's public consultation of its indoor and outdoor climbing qualifications.

Publicised our winter skills courses, subsidised by Sport England and based at Plas y Brenin in North Wales.

Publicised the 2016 Ready to Rock outdoor climbing courses for young people, adults and families, also subsidised by Sport England and based at Plas y Brenin in North Wales.

Publicised the dates of the 2016 BMC Coach Education & FUNDamentals workshops.

Publicised our second series of BMC TV winter skills videos, produced in association with the AMI, Lowe Alpine and DMM.

Youth & Equity

Held the second BMC Disability Symposium, which examined the latest best practice in giving people the skills and support they need to introduce people with disabilities to adventurous activities.

BMC Organisation

Attended the annual Kendal Mountain Festival; held a press briefing, at which we launched Mend our Ways, a major 2016 campaign to raise funds to maintain the hill and mountain footpaths. Hosted a special event which included a showing of Operation Moffat, a new BMC TV film inspired by climbing life of Gwen Moffat, Britain's first female mountain guide; the film won two awards at the festival – Best Climbing Film and People's Choice.

Published draft minutes of the December National Council meeting on the BMC website.

Welcomed the publication of the government's new sport strategy, Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation, and its recognition of the important role of outdoor recreation in getting more people active.

Awarded honorary membership to Angela Soper and Gwen Moffat, the first female recipients of this award.

Led tributes to John Ellison, BMC competitions volunteer and founder of Climbers Against Cancer, who passed away in December.

Membership

Asked BMC members to nominate candidates for the 2016 BMC George Band Award for Exceptional Voluntary Contribution to Mountaineering.

Revealed the results so far of our monthly outdoor survey, in which members tell us where they go, what they do and what they spend during a weekend of walking and climbing. In the first five months, over 2,000 members completed the survey, which we will continue to run during 2016.

Teamed up with Supercover Insurance to provide members' only access to Gadget Cover for as little as £4.99 a month.

Publicised improvements to BMC Travel Insurance, including a new annual policy with 60day single trip limit, and reduced rates for couples, families and single parents buying annual multi-trip policies; also offered reductions on premiums for Alpine & Ski European cover for the winter season.