



## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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### BMC South West Area Gathering

Meeting held on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2016, 7pm  
@ The Nova Scotia Inn, 1 Nova Scotia Place, Bristol, BS1 6XL

Attendees: Matt Goater (Chair), Philip Wilson (Sec), Dave Fisher (Clubs rep), Simon Fletcher (Avon rep), Gareth Palmer (National Council Rep), Richard Nadin (Climbers' Club), Iain Butterworth (Mendips rep), Bruce Manning, Annabel Tall, Barry Donovan, Corrinne Shane, Libby Houston, Dan Donovan & one other (name on signing in sheet illegible).

### Meeting

1. **Welcome & Apologies for Absence:** Matthew Goater welcomed everybody to the meeting. Apologies were received from Martin Crocker, Trevor Smith (SW Hill Walking rep), Colin Knowles (National Council), James Mann, Gordon Jenkins, Jeremy Dyke, & Jerzy Wiczorek.
2. **The Previous Meetings Minutes & Any Matters Arising:** These were reviewed for completeness and accuracy & signed off as an accurate record of this meeting.
3. **BMC Area Briefing Notes:** These were presented to the meeting by the Chair (see Appendix A).
4. **Feedback from National Council:** Presented by National Council rep Gareth Palmer. Highlights of interest were:
  - Responsible Night Bouldering without disturbing others (noise and light pollution). Guidelines to be issued.
  - Local Rescues @ Bosigran Commando Ridge & Dewerstones. The responses and actions of the Coast Guard & Ambulance Services. Dave Hillebrandt looking into this.
  - BMC Annual General Meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2016 @ Castleton Youth Hostel (talks from local SW climbing legend Frank Cannings) with lots of hill walking, climbing and lecture activities & Annual General Meeting. Members invited to attend this event.
5. **Brean Down Discussion:** This motion proposed by Mark Davies for lower-offs above trad routes to avoid plant life damage at the previous Bristol meeting was not discussed, as Mark was not present to brief the meeting as to his detailed proposal.
6. **Proposed Clean Up Plan Suspension Bridge Buttress (Avon):** This proposal put forward by Barrie Donovan was accepted as necessary, however the meeting thought it unlikely that it would be accepted outside of the winter season by Natural England. Will be re-visited in October 2016.
7. **28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016 BMC Scrub Clearance (feedback):** Extended thanks were expended to the BMC for sponsoring the event (food & brush cutter hire),

Libby Houston (botanical expertise), Allan Howells (catering), Tom Rodgers (brush cutting), Gloucester Mountaineering Club, Avon Mountaineering Club, Four Points Climbing Club, Andy Holden, Avon Wildlife Trust (provision of equipment), Bristol University Conservation Volunteers & Becky Coffin (Bristol City Council) and many others for making this event our most successful yet. All paths to and below climbs were again cleared, together with large parts of surrounding areas, by 40+ volunteers. Bristol City Council also cleared below Giants Cave Buttress (ivy, etc) as a separate exercise, which was also much appreciated.

## 8. **Access & Any Local Issues (Climbing & Hill Walking)**

- **Available Cheddar Gorge Rep Position:** Matt Goater reported that Martin Crocker had resigned as BMC Cheddar Warden and that no replacement had come forward for this policing role. This part time paid position (half days on key summer Bank Holidays) involves checking climbers' liability insurance, raising awareness by talking to climbers about insurance (required to climb in Cheddar Gorge) & some route maintenance (seasonal bolt hanger removal and re-instatement on some routes). Interested parties should contact Rob Dyer, BMC Access Officer @ [robd@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:robd@thebmc.co.uk).
- It was reported by Martin Crocker that Hugh Cornwell has left employment with Cheddar Caves & Gorge. The new appointee is Jon Hill.
- **Fairy Cave Quarry Easier Routes Extensively Cleaned:** Iain Butterworth thanked Terry Gifford (local resident and Fairy Cave Quarry champion) for his excellent and lengthy work in doing this.
- **Fairy Cave Shotgun Incident:** Iain Butterworth reported that shotguns had been heard being fired in this Triple SSI. The police are keen to find out who this is. An entry has been made on the BMC Regional Access Database to this effect. The caving community are also involved in trying to find out who this is.
- **Holcombe Quarries:** Iain Butterworth informed us that the owner of the quarry has now gained planning permission for holiday lets development here and will now probably sell it for some other party to develop.
- **Resignation Mendips Rep:** Iain Butterworth reported that he is to step down as Mendips Rep in November 2016 due to personal reasons. Action Point: Matt Goater is to inform Rob Dyer (BMC Access Rep) of this. Iain was thanked by all present at the meeting for all his hard work in this role.
- **Devils Jump Access Issue:** Jeremy Dyke reported that this natural outcrop in the Cheesewring area has had its surrounding farm land sold (through which climbers access it). Climbers have subsequently been turned away. Jeremy is working on this and will involve Rob Dyer (BMC Access Rep).
- **New Avon Guide:** Available September 2016.
- **Cornish Climbing Festival 2016:** To go ahead organised by Gareth Palmer.
- **Proposed Lundy Climbing festival 2017:** Still planned to go ahead, organised by Gareth Palmer.
- **Fly Wall Potential Development (far right hand end):** Gordon Jenkins reported via Matt Goater that he wants to look at developing the area right of his route 'The End of The affair' (and clean this route). The route has had only one repeat ascent since 2009 according to UKC. This is in conjunction with a Wye Valley Sports Climb guide that he is authoring.
- **Hill Walking:** Trevor Smith reported via Matt Goater that the BMC Mend Our Mountains campaign would involve footpath regeneration to Nunn's Cross to the Isle Barrows path on Dartmoor.

9. **Any Other Business:** Dave Fisher reported that a Clubs Seminar is to be held at the BMC Annual General Meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2016 @ Castleton Youth Hostel.
10. **Date of Next Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> May 2016, Zeelah Cornwall (venue still to be arranged)**

## **Appendix A -Area Meeting Briefing Note for Area Chairs & Secretaries: March 2016 (2 pages)**

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

### Access & Conservation

Launched Mend Our Mountains, a major crowdfunding campaign aiming to raise more than £100,000 to repair damaged paths on some of Britain's most popular peaks in eight national parks.

Publicised the 2016 Range West briefing dates, and updated information for access to both Range West and Range East.

Local volunteers carried out clean-ups in Bristol's Avon Gorge (Main Wall scrub clearance) and at Morecambe Bay's Humphrey Head Point (in preparation for a re-bolting programme).

Publicised a serious and substantial rockfall threat on the first pitch of the popular route "One Step in the Clouds" at the BMC-owned Craig Bwlch y Moch (Tremadog); the loose blocks were subsequently removed.

Publicised good practice advice for climbers undertaking night-time bouldering sessions.

Hosted a panel discussion at Sheffield Adventure Film Festival, 'Meltdown', on climate change and how it might impact on the outdoor experience.

### Clubs & Huts

Publicised the financial support available to clubs in 2016 to develop websites and newsletters, purchase club equipment and provide instructor support; a total of £21,000 has been secured from Sport England.

### Competition Climbing

Secured a two-year sponsorship agreement with Berghaus for the GB Climbing Team. Berghaus will provide clothing for the 75 climbers in the senior and junior teams when they compete in regional, national and international events.

Held the regional rounds of the BMC Youth Climbing Series; the Grand Final will be held on Saturday 23 April at EICA Ratho, near Edinburgh.

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

The rescheduled 2016 British Ski Mountaineering Championships were held in February in Glencoe, having originally been planned for January in France, but cancelled due to bad weather.

### International

Held the bi-annual BMC International Winter Climbing Meet at Glenmore Lodge in the Cairngorms.

Allocated £13,000 of grant funding to support a range of exploratory and innovative expeditions; also allocated the annual Julie Tullis Memorial Award, a grant to assist deserving female mountaineers or any disabled climbers or mountaineers, both male and female, to achieve their climbing or mountaineering ambitions.

Publicised information and precautionary advice for travellers from the UIAA (International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation) about the Zika virus.

Publicised the 2016 Women's International Climbing Meet, jointly organised by the Pinnacle Club and the BMC, to be held in North Wales in June.

### Safety & Skills

Held our first-ever webinar (online talk), presented by nutritional therapist Lucinda Whittaker on how the food we eat impacts upon performance when climbing, walking or mountaineering.

Publicised the 2016 BMC Alpine Skills Lectures, to be delivered by Steve Long and Calum Muskett at six venues during April and May.

Published Backcountry Essentials, a series of 'how to' videos on skills and techniques for backcountry skiing, on BMC TV.

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

Publicised a weekend course of UK and high altitude first aid, organised by BMC honorary medical advisor Dr David Hillebrandt, to be held in the Peak District in June.

### Youth & Equity

Ran the Women in Adventure film competition for a second year; the winner (Kosmos – There And Back Again by Heather Swift) was announced at the BMC Women in Adventure Network event held at the Sheffield Adventure Film Festival in March.

Publicised the launch of Deaf Climbing UK, a deaf-led organisation dedicated to increasing deaf access and participation in rock climbing.

Encouraged women to become more actively involved with the BMC by volunteering locally and nationally through BMC Area activities and specialist committees and working groups.

### BMC Organisation

Published the 2015 BMC Annual Report in a new easy-to-digest four-page format; available to download from the BMC website.

Distributed the 2016 BMC Member's Handbook with the Spring issue of Summit; the new look handbook explains how to make the most of membership and get involved with the organisation, and also brings the work and people of the BMC to life in a series of articles.

Reported the death of BMC Patron Lord Chorley and acknowledged his significant contribution to the mountaineering and broader outdoor world. □ Analysed the 2016 Budget and its possible impact on outdoor sports and the environment.

Ran a Spring promotion on BMC Rock Insurance policies, specifically targeting the European 'Sun Rock' market.

### Membership

Added Outdoor Fitness magazine to the selection of discounted magazine subscriptions