

## **BMC Sandstone Open Meeting - 23 October 2016**

Present: Malcolm McPherson, Ian Munro, Emma Harrington, Daimon Beail, Frank Shannon, Adrian Paisey, Oliver Hill, Robin Mazinke, Sarah Goodman, Martin Walker and Bob Moulton (Chair)

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

BM welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies had been received from: Rob Naylor, Tim Skinner, Karen Vaughan, Mike Vetterlein, Mike Braines, Graham Adcock, Mick Canning, Sarah Cullen

### **2. Minutes of the 15.05.16 Meeting**

Approved for accuracy as far as anyone could remember.

### **3. Harrison's Rocks**

BM reported for HRMG on behalf of SC:

#### **a) Access to the top of Isolated Buttress**

At its recent meeting HRMG had discussed the first year of the trial period of leaving things as they were. Strong views had been expressed both for and against putting up a bridge. HRMG recognised that during the trial year, some damage had been done to the rock by people abseiling off and by heavy use of the easy approach route. HRMG agreed to continue the trial for one further year under specific conditions and then to make a decision on this issue. The conditions are that in future instead of leaving his access rope up all day for others to use, FS should only leave it up while he was climbing on the buttress and a notice would be put up on the landward side telling climbers that the bolts are not to be relied on for this purpose and that the BMC consider that this method of protecting access to the buttress to be unsafe. It was suggested that the ledge on the access route should be treated with resin, if possible before the winter. MW offered to help Steve Jackson do this. **Action** BM to speak to SJ

#### **b) Cement Work**

The report from an MSc student at Portsmouth University has been received. The report concentrated on stabilising bolt placements, but HRMG's interpretation of the report is that the MasterRoc MP 320 Accelerator recommended as a grout for the bolts will help with stabilising cemented in rope grooves. In any case, putting in new replacement bolts is a priority for HRMG rather than new cement work, though no doubt the latter will be necessary for the future. It will be necessary to repeat the survey of the existing rope grooves at a frequency yet to be determined. The two jobs cannot be done together. A full test of the bolts at the Rocks was completed in the summer.

#### **c) Anchors (Bolts)**

Now that the report had been received as above, a number of outstanding bolts would be placed using the recommended grout.

d) **Resin Work**

Progress had been slower this year due at Harrison's to adverse weather conditions on the periods that SJ had planned to do the work and at Stone Farm to MW's back.

There was a discussion as to the relative merits of the resin (shellac/furniture polish) as used by SJ and MW and in the past by MV, wood hardener as used by climbers known to FS and PVA as used by RM and others. It was agreed that a trial of the three different methods could be set up on the slab below Isolated Buttress. **Action** HRMG

e) **Woodland Management year 5 (of 13)**

The area between *Long Layback* and *Pig Tail Slabs* is being cut this November, with the volunteer work weekend set for the following weekend (date subsequently known to be 26th/27th November) to clear up the arisings, put down brash and repair revetments. Work now also needs to be done on maintenance of areas cut in previous years: sycamore saplings need to be cut, bracken needs to be controlled probably by spraying, further work is needed on the Himalayan Balsam, and it is intended to plant species of low-growing trees. It was hoped that many of the sycamore saplings could be cut down, particular in the corridor area below the Rocks during the volunteer weekend. MMcP reported that Birchden Cottage at Forge Farm had been bought by the owner of the neighbouring oast house, and that he had objected to the woodland plan; BM said that he knew that SC would be introducing herself to him in due course, both as a neighbour and to talk about the Himalayan Balsam in his field,

4. **High Rocks**

- a) No problems were reported, which was probably due to the reduction in climbing and particularly bouldering that was taking place under the new access arrangements.
- b) It was noted that the bolts on Hut Boulder almost certainly were overdue for testing, and it was agreed that this would be an opportunity to speak to the owner when arranging to do this. It was clarified that the responsibility for the safety of the bolts was the BMC's and not the owner's. Action BM to contact Rob Dyer to establish when the bolts had last been tested.
- c) High Rocks Continuation Wall: BM reported that he was asking Rob Dyer if he had made any progress with seeking an access agreement with the owners, the Woodland Trust, as agreed at the open meeting on 18/10/16. BM reported that GA had met up with someone involved with the Woodland Trust who was going to look into the matter.

5. **Bowles**  
Nothing to report.
6. **Bulls Hollow**  
Nothing to report.
7. **Eridge Green Rocks**  
DB reported on the continuing problems with graffiti and ant-social behaviour.
8. **Stone Farm**
  - a) MW raised the question of the two stumps currently used as belays above Stone Farm Crack and The Face, which he was still prepared to use as belays but others weren't. After the stumps are removed or fall down it was hoped that the exposed rock will be good enough to put bolts in.
  - b) There were still problems with barbeques. RM reported that the sign that he had put up had lasted between two and six weeks and that it had then been burnt!

### **The Sandstone Code of Practice**

- a) BM reported that the minor revisions to the Code itself had been agreed for some time as reported to the previous meeting. However, in response to increased bouldering activity (also discussed at the previous meeting) , consideration was now being given to replacing the Sandstone Bouldering Ten Commandments, adapted from Simon Panton's early 2000's document, which is part of the Code by an adaptation of the BMC's Bouldering Sense. Copies of both the BMC document and the proposed adaptation were handed round.
  - b) The wording 'Do not use toothbrushes or boulder brushes' was endorsed by the meeting and support for this from this line from Ben Read and other boulderers was also reported. There was agreement that the item about using cloths should be deleted (as this was open to interpretation) and that 'remove tick marks' should be replaced by 'Don't place tick marks'. EH suggested adding 'and will help you climb better' after the clean your feet item. Since the Sandstone Bouldering Sense needs to apply to all the Sandstone outcrops and not just to Harrison's and Stone Farm, discussions as to the final wording are taking place with Bowles Rocks to ensure that they are happy with it although the indications were that this would be the case. **Action HRMG**
  - c) There was support for a campaign to publicise the final Bouldering Sense wording amongst London and other climbing walls. DB offered to help with the imagery of the final document.
9. **The SVG Website** (<http://www.sandstonevolunteers.org.uk/>)

Nothing to report.

10. **The Steve Durkin Sandstone Trust** (<http://www.sdst.org.uk/>)

Nothing to report.

11. **Any Other Business**

In view of the low attendance at the meeting, ideas were discussed to improve attendance. Ideas included: varying the start time, having a strict time limit for the meetings, strict chairing, and streamlining the agenda to put an emphasis on the important items. No conclusion was reached.

12. **Date of the Next Meeting**

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2017 in the same venue. Start time 6 pm.

*Bob Moulton 1/11/16*