

British Mountaineering Council

South West Area

Special Issue Area Meeting

Date of Meeting: 7.00pm Wednesday 27th January 2021

AGENDA

Purpose of Meeting

To discuss the unauthorised alterations to the approach and 'belays' in the area known to climbers generically as Anstey's Cove.

Very specifically this meeting will not cover the issues arising from the November 2020 meeting re. bolting. These minutes are recorded in Appendix viii for completeness as is the thread by the individual who admits/claims his responsibility, Appendix ix.

Background and Key Facts

1. In a recent thread on UKClimbing.com (Appendix i.), we became aware that changes had been made to the physical environment without consultation, agreement or approval.
2. The land is owned/managed by the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust (Appendix iv.).
3. It has a Natural England designation as a site of Special Scientific Interest (Appendix v.).
4. To the best of our knowledge, neither the owners nor Natural England were consulted.
5. Any work carried out without these approvals could be considered as a criminal offence.

Framework for Discussion

1. To establish that the British Mountaineering Council:
 - Has not endorsed;
 - Did not approve;
 - Does not comment with respect to the 'quality' of the changes to the site.
2. To agree a common position with respect to the way forward and approaches to authorities and stakeholders.

Appendices:

- i. [Link to UKC thread](#)
- ii. [Video of changes to crag area](#)
- iii. [Photos of Changes](#)
- iv. [Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust \(TCCT\)](#)
- v. [Natural England](#)
- vi. [Devon County Council](#)
- vii. [Torbay Council](#)
- viii. Anstey's Cove Bolting Proposal: Minutes
- ix. Copy of UKC forum post written by the individual who claims/admits to the 'changes'.

viii. Anstey's Cove Bolting Proposal: Minutes

Version 2.0

BMC SW Meet- November 3rd 2020

Considering recent events and conversations regarding bolting in the south west, and more specifically Anstey's Cove, the following proposal hopes to bring a balanced and sensible approach to the development and bolting. This gives consideration to the bolting guidelines as detailed in the Devon and Cornwall Fixed Gear Policy. As both a traditional and sport climber, this aims to bridge a gap between the two ends of the discussion, and allows decisions to be made on individual routes, rather than a blanket response and does not suggest revising the existing fixed gear policy for the area. The future is diverse, and it is my hope that both parties acknowledge and respect this, bringing a growth-mindset to their decision and the sport that we all love.

The justification and reasons for this proposal are as follows:

To create a more accessible sport climbing venue. The future of climbing is progressing, with a large number of people coming into the sport from a more diverse background and different pathways, at varied levels of competence. New lower-grade sport routes would support the sport becoming more inclusive and less elitist, supporting grassroot level climbing in the outdoor setting. It is of many people's opinions that Anstey's does not currently cater for introducing people into the discipline.

1. Definitions

Bolting is an emotive subject that often gets "lost in translation", therefore for the purpose of this proposal the following definitions will be used. The following definitions have been taken from a previous proposal to change the constitution for the Cumbria bolt fund, by Rick Graham.

1.1 Retro bolting: This is the placing of bolts on routes previously climbed without

1.2 Re bolting: Replacing bolts on a route on a like-for-like basis.

1.3 Re-equipping: When replacing bolts on an existing route, it is often impractical to reuse the original drilled hole or drill a hole nearby.

Sometimes holds fall off and change the optimal clipping position.

- Re-equipping a route may require more bolts than on the original ascent.*
- When the intention of the first ascensionist was to create a sport route with bolts and possibly a combination of manufactured and fixed gear, it is suggested that the route is fully re-equipped with bolts.*

2. Key considerations

i. The quality of rock in relation to the bolting of the route and the encouragement of traffic of that route and nearby route. Empire wall left side has seen several pieces of rock pulled off since the bolts have been placed in mid-2020 in this area, has seen an increase in traffic and people climbing after rainy periods, possibly without consideration for the difference in rock quality.

ii. By making the venue more accessible, consideration and acknowledgement needs to be given to the land, paths and potential increase in erosion. There is currently no agreement with the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust who manage the land, so sensitivity needs to be applied. Despite signage at the entrance to the venue, there are no known issues between climbers and the landowners. Access, environmental and land ownership considerations have a significant bearing on decisions about the use of drilled equipment. The BMC believes that care and concern for the crag and mountain environment is of paramount importance in such decisions.

iii. Impact on nearby surrounding routes, ensuring there is no impingement on existing routes.

iv. Positioning of bolts needs to be given for:

- a. redpoints and onsights when re-equipping and retro bolting a route;
- b. Ropes running over edges;
- c. Quality of rock.

v. The aspirations of current and future generations of climbers. UKC ascents should not be the sole indicator of the usage of a traditional route, due to many people not logging their climbs. However, it is fair to say that the majority of climbers visiting Anstey's Cove do so for the sport routes, rather than the traditional routes.

vi. The view of the first ascensionists. It is hoped that the first ascensionist if able to do so, consider their contribution to the future of climbing, as well as being respected for their historical and original contributions.

vii. The climbers to date who have been giving their time to bolt lines in the area, should be supported as best as possible. It would be great to see support from the BMC in the form of bolting courses in the area. The funding for the suggested bolting is likely to come from personal funds and/or the Portland bolt fund.

viii. If existing bolts are replaced, the old bolts should be removed/cut to avoid clipping of old bolts and unnecessary visuals on the natural area.

This proposal is very specific and does not address the more long-term progress of the sport.

Giving consideration to the aims of this proposal, the general discussions and hopes for the area, as well as the BMC bolting policy, the following routes would be suitable for consideration of bolting:

Route Name	Grade	Suggested	Reason	FA
Time Bandits	6c+	Re-equip. Additional bolts required	Will make the route more appealing and accessible	D Thomas, N.White
Bandits End	6b	Re-equip. Additional bolts required	Will make ground-fall potential less.	Unknown
End of an Era	6a	Re-equip. 1 new bolt in between current last bolt and the lower-off	Avoided by many due to the final traverse move to the lower-off which has been dealt with by adding a sling in between the lower-off and final bolt.	N White, D Thomas
Eve	HVS 5a	New bolted lower off.	As most people lower-off here rather than top-out, a bolted lower-off may be more rigorous and suitable.	A Fuller, P Saunders; <i>AF has given consent to bolt the whole route should someone want to.</i>
Time Passages	HVS 5a	As above. Share lower-off	As most people lower off here rather than top-out, a bolted lower-off may be more	P Donnithorne, T Meen

			rigorous and suitable.	
Epoc	VS 4c	As above. Share lower-off	As most people lower off here rather than top out, a bolted lower-off may be more rigorous and suitable.	E Grindley, J Fowler
Era	VS 4c	As above. Share lower-off	As most people lower off here rather than top-out, a bolted lower off may be more rigorous and suitable.	E Grindley, G Higginson
St Gregory the Wonder Worker	HS 4a	Retro bolt. <i>To be voted on due to FA no longer being alive.</i>	Very sparsely protected. <i>Noted in the Bolting Policy that Pat Littlejohn would be open to the idea, though PL is not noted as being the FA in the SD Guide.</i>	M Springett, P Biven
Hell's Teeth	HVS 5a	Retro bolt	Protection is poor and loose – a scramble	Nick White, Jerry Grogono
Blazing Apostles	7b+ / E6 6b	Re-equip/retro bolt	Replace existing in-situ pegs/bolts and add more to make this a fully protected sport route	N White, N Campbell

New Routes

To complement the development of new sport routes, several new routes are currently being created, which will support this proposal. To-date, 2 new lines sandwiched between Tom's Wall (Boss of Choss) and Small Changes Wall, that have been cleaned and ready for bolting. These do not impinge on existing trad routes. There is scope for further bolting in this area.

Local bolt developers are supporting these new routes by providing time, drill and bolts both from personal funds and partly from the Portland bolt fund.

Recommendations

For this proposal to be acted on, the consent of the FAs needs to be sought in the first instance. The BMC can support the facilitation with open and non-bias communications. If the FAs are no longer alive or is incapable of consenting, support from the BMC would be required to gain consensus from climbers and have a vote. This is within the previous policy and should be adhered to, until another policy is written. A substitute individual would not be within these rules.

Separately, I would like to propose that the BMC South West region put a structured process policy in place for the proposal of any future development of routes in the area. This is recommended due to the lack of transparency and process made available in the writing of and submission of this proposal. Clarity on the BMC's regional reps communications and process outside of the meeting would be welcomed.

This proposal contains details to the best of my knowledge and research. Thank you for your consideration and time in reading this document.

Author
Tori Taylor-Roberts
November 2020

ix. Copy of UKC forum post written by the individual who claims/admits to the 'changes'.

it is I who has been doing the work. If anyone wants to discuss with me what I'm doing then you are welcome to find me down at the crag and discuss it in person.

I will however make a couple of points for you all to consider.

1. The entire site of Ansteys cove is a disused quarry. NOT A NATURAL ENVIRONMENT but a man made one. There is a large amount of physical and historical evidence to support this.

2. I have been climbing at the site since the early nineties. At that time there were zero trees in the valley below empire wall. There is photographic evidence to support this.

3. The walls below Empire of the sun show clear evidence of cutting and working by traditional, solid stone cutting, quarry techniques.

4. Whilst excavating the loose rubble I have continually found man made rubbish. Even at the deepest levels. In fact the deeper I dig the more large cut stone I find. Also broken glass, drinks cans and even toys. This is all spoil from the quarry and litter from the men who worked it. I have also found and removed a large amount of plastic bottles.

5. Last summer and autumn there were the largest numbers of visitors using the site ever seen. One day I counted over 50 around the site at one time. Often below Empire they would be 20 or more people. It was overcrowded and dangerous and needed work. Anyone who has climbed there regularly knows this. The site has seen little or no maintenance or improvement since climbing started there in the 70's. As the site is officially closed and off grid then the coast and countryside trust (who manage the site on behalf of Torbay council) are unable to work on the site without officially reopening it. That's not going to happen

because of the movement in the cliff much further down the path. Therefore it is the responsibility of the local community to do the work. So far the rest of the community have not contributed so I took the task upon myself.

6. I am NOT responsible for removal of any trees. I cut three branches off the trees below Might and main after witnessing another climber become entangled in them. A 'non climber' member of local community has been doing the tree cutting work. All by hand I would add. He approached me and told me how impressed he was with my work and said he wanted to help. He has requested that his name is not involved. I don't blame him.

7. So far I have spoken to over 100 visiting climbers. Some who did first ascents back in the 80's including Martin Crocker. The vast majority of been overwhelmingly in favour of what I have done which lead me to continue the work all the way to the top of the wall. Which was overgrown and the existing routes were not even accessible until I cleared the undergrowth.

I believe that what I am doing is for the best of the community as a whole.
if any of you want to discuss this like adults, in person, then come and find me. I won't entertain the kind of childish bickering I've read so far in this forum.