

Update on Great Orme Retrobolting of Trad Routes

1. Background

- a. The NWBF carries out inspections, adding/replacing lower-offs and replacing bolts like-for-like as required on existing routes. This programme is required as part of the access agreement that preserves access to climbing around the Marine Drive. In some cases, lower-offs are added to protect clifftop flora from disturbance. This is vital work, hard graft and worthy of gratitude. The BMC contributes financially to this work as do local guidebook sales.
- b. In recent years a number of traditional climbs on the Great Orme have been retrobolted where previously the climb relied on a mix of leader-placed natural protection and/or occasional old fixed gear. This retro-bolting is not required as part of the access agreement and is separate discretionary activity.

2. Examples of retrobolting trad routes (since 2014 guidebook)

St. Tudno's Upper Tier:

1. Rest and Be Thankful, E2 (2 old pegs, thread - not needed nor in place. Approx 9 perfect placements for leader-placed protection)
2. And All Hell Broke Loose, E2 (old peg - not needed. Approx 9 pieces of natural protection)
3. Pile Driver, E1 (approx 9 pieces of natural protection)
4. Thank You Johnny, E2 (Some dispute about the line but listed as retro-bolted on UKC, approx 9 pieces of natural protection)

Tram Station Crag:

1. Catwalk Direct, E2 (2 old bolts, could have been replaced by 1 new bolt. Approx 5 pieces of natural protection)
2. Three Musketeers, E1 (1 thread - not needed. Approx 9 pieces of natural protection)
3. D'Artagnan, E1 (previously 1 old bolt. No replacement bolt needed, approx 7 pieces of natural protection (wires and cams))
4. A Quick Tick, HVS
5. Sunday Bloody Sunday, E2 (1 old bolt)
6. Bosnia Or Bust, HVS (1 old bolt)
7. Blood From The Quinn, E2
8. Carboniferous Walk, E1

LPT: (All routes now bolted)

1. Twisting By The Pool, E4 (1*) First route put up at LPT. Approx 6-8 pieces of natural protection.
2. Jacuzzi Jive, E4 (1*) previously 1 bolt.
3. New Moon On Monday, E3

Excursion Wall:

1. Beaverbrook, E5 (previously a peg at the crux)

String Of Pearls:

1. White Seam, E3

Black Wall:

1. Pure Mania, E3 (1*) - Retrobolted by Mel Griffiths 2020 (Source: Dave Lyon)

Small Bore:

1. Michelle's Pillar, E1

3. Concerns

- a. There is a lack of transparency in the consultation carried out and in who is managing this retrobolting work. Is the work overseen by the NWBF team?
- b. What are the criteria being used to decide if an existing route should be retro-bolted?
 - "Neglect and lack of attention" are sometimes cited as justification in discussion on social media, but have any attempts been made to publicise newly cleaned trad routes before considering consultation on possible retrobolting?
 - Are all non-starred / 1* trad routes on the Orme candidates for retro-bolting? Note that assessments of quality are always subjective and guidebook write-ups with no stars can dissuade climbers from seeking out climbs which may have received 1 or 2 stars by another team of authors.
- c. Lack of transparency in plans for future work - What work is proposed for 2023?
- d. Lack of clarity in the funding of equipment when replacing trad routes with sport routes.

4. Questions for BMC Area Meeting

- a. How are decisions reached to retro-bolt trad routes? Is there any evidence of consultation, as per spirit of the 2021 Fixed Gear guideline document?
- b. How is such discretionary re-equipping being funded? Is this all using private funds or does it draw on BMC funds, either via the NWBF or via other grants?