

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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NORTH WEST AREA

Meeting to be held in hybrid format, at the Tonge Moor Cricket Club, Bolton and online via Zoom
on Tuesday 25th April 2023, 7pm.

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1. Welcome and Attendance

In Attendance: Steve Riley, Amina (**BMC**), Martin, Agustin Guardiola (**NW Area Chair**), Alex Owens (**Cheshire and Merseyside Access**), Les Ainsworth (**Lancashire Access**), S Woodward, Stuart Holmes (**Youth and Walls**), Lucy Rawcliffe, Alison Athroll, Tom Seddon, Tim Greenhalgh, Liam Keating, Skye Keating, Noah Meadow, Carl Spencer (**Director**), Bill Beveridge (**Member's Council**), Matthew Thompson, Andy Say (**Member's Council**).

2. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting held on 25th January 2023

Minutes were not uploaded to the meeting listing. Agustin to chase this with the head office.

3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

None

4. Reports from area representatives

Access - Lancashire

Hoghton estate unfortunately will not be renewing access arrangements for climbing and did not accept our suggestion. However they are open to discussions with us in future.

Castle Quarry in the Croags - we have not been given access, though were assured we would have access to this would be amended. The review process looks like it is starting now but this will take a few years (approx. 3).

Note: A small areas allowance was previously used to remove the bid for this access, not quite clear why but they agreed after the 10 year review the access would be reviewed.

Round Barn has had some cleaning and improved pathways below the terrace walls.

Trawbarrow has suffered a rock fall on the far right end. Some clean up work has been done, but this is likely to be more unstable and due to fall fully. Martin commented on this. Right of baby walker expected to fall apart.

Routes are not affected but the rocks are loose. Currently a red and white tape has cordoned off the area but others have been seen still using this area. Attempts were made to get this

Mugwump and the red wall had some loose blocks above. Advisory on loose rocks and trees/shrubbery.

A tree at the bottom of Aladdin's sailors that has been removed in agreement with AONB.

AONB and Les have met about other climbing areas and Trawborrow.

Warton main has some rocks that are looser on the terrace to make it safer. Iceberg to 3rd world. Plan to put abseil station on trees and rocks for top pitch. On Plastic iceberg there is an old stake and staple but there are plans to replace with an additional.

Some restrictions are in due to early nesting due to ravens and peregrins that are sitting on eggs. This should be shared information.

Wilton Crags: Himalayan Balsam and rhododendrons. **Action:** a crag clean up needs to be arranged.

Noggarth - Alison Athroll

Actions from previous meeting:

Assess routes to determine if they have been retro-bolted and whether they should have the bolts removed.

Feedback from a cross-section of the climbing community who have climbed at Noggarth was collated. It was concluded that in the majority of cases, removing the bolts would leave the routes unprotectable/dangerous. Many of the routes have bolts and pegs and not always at the frequency expected of a sports route. Assign grades taking this into consideration – either sport or trad.

The routes far right of Resurrection Slab have no trad protection and were originally recorded as sports routes. They are outside the scope of this review

Each route has been individually assessed, and feedback gathered from the climbing community, resulting in a recommendation for the fixed gear and grading of the route. Route grades (traditional or sport) have been assigned.

For 3 routes the recommendation is to remove the bolts, they are:

- #5 Noggin & #8 Anonymous Eliminate on Central Slabs & #14 Resurrection, Resurrection Slabs.

The proposal for these 3 routes will be voted on at the next area meeting, taking place on the 26th of July online. There will be 3 independent votes, for each route, with the format "For", "Against",

"Abstain". During the quarantine period (between now and the 26th of June) please take the opportunity to climb the routes to form an opinion, and feel free to reach out to Alison to discuss.

Detailed information for each route considered can be found in the Appendix.

Action: To share the information online for public knowledge and to allow people to reach a decision during the grace period. Voting to take place on the 26th of June.

Access - Cheshire & Merseyside

No issues or changes to any of the areas crags.

Halsey multiple visits were made and this is highly vegetated and has a lot of small crumbled rocks overall. **Request** for a big clean up and would need considerable work. **Suggestion:** There is a BMC crag fund to support having some extra support, professionals needed, or kit.

Pex Hill there was a bike thrown off the hill and this hit a climber. Climber is in recovery and there are some police and emergency services patrols for that area. It has some regular issues with other members of the public having antisocial behaviour and a frequent climbing area.

West Darby Cuttings has been cleaned up by the council and is now climbable.

Clubs

No update for clubs

Hill Walking

Hillwalking has been focussed on conservation walks. Winter hill has invasive species clearance and the lakes. Kinder and hayfield upcoming walks (See slides). Additional walks upcoming in Eryri (snowdonia), forest of bowland and working with other clubs such as rucksack club again (hopefully). Mend our mountains events are also coming up.

Footpath repair events are now fully booked for the year.

contact: Stevecharles25@gmail.com for more volunteering clean-ups, upland restoration projects, ideas for walks etc.

More walks to be organised by and link up with Rose (national elective for walks) to further promote these. The walk organised last year at Wilton fest didn't get much uptake but aims to promote this further.

Youth and Walls

- Bolton and Chaston rock over have been opened recently.
- Closure of wall Roefield near Clitheroe (discussions were had, but they needed the space for exercise space).
- English boulder cup in January at the rockover and all positive feedback.

5. A New Vintage at Winewall – Matthew Thompson

Brilliant short film by Matt about some new routes at Winewall.

6. Update from The Guidebook Team - Matthew Thompson

Guidebook team - The team and Rick have started to do rewriting the guidebook and formatting these.

Next steps some major and minor crags need to be written up with more up to date information. **Need more photos, and crag writers.** If anyone would like to help. Those that have local crags or those they are familiar with and enjoy visiting crags, please reach out.

Crags in need of writing or pictures: Wiltons 1, 2 and 3 are in need, Cowmouth quarry (near blackstone edge), Readyshore Scout, lumbuts quarry, denham quarry, fairysteps. Lancashirerock@outlook.com (rick and Dave).

Request: Format, accessibility request for guidebook. This has already been taken into account and being factored in.

Additional consideration of the descriptions, to be concise, accurate and unambiguous, so people aren't struggling to understand the description and avoid being too creative leaving open to misinterpretation and risk. All stars are being reassessed on their current quality of this. Local climber recommendation for climb, or personal favourite. The stars will stay to avoid overuse of the rockfax top routes only.

Route render could be used to put pictures of routes together if there is difficulty getting the full picture. There is also some money for collecting some photos that are good quality (from Andy at the members council). Getting a nice mixture of shots, day to be arranged when the weather is dry.

Wilton 1 - needs to be sidelined due to the BMC currently looking at the land management and other aspects. With this being BMC owned Stuart informed us that there is a need to check current quality of stakes, routes and general of the crag first. No big changes expected, just removal of pegs expected and some replacements due to it being used a lot.

Cold Measure rock - end of may there will be a day adding in lower offs. Need to clear enough for a lower off. There will be a need to get a bird check and get a work permit to check first. Dates will be shared with Lancashire rock and others to support.

7. Andy Say co-option to the Members' Council

Andy Say co-option to the members council - Vote on poll and show of hand.

Has already had 11 years experience working with BMC on the national council and as NW area rep.

- For: 14
- Against: 1
- Abstain: 4

Result - Andy Say was Voted in (FOR) to members council.

8. Report Update from Members council - Carl Spencer, Bill Beveridge, Stuart Holmes

Initial recent discussions have been focussed around Dartmoor but no update on that at present.

Significant review of CCBG competition climbing group, an expanded role of GB climbing. Safeguarding issues and managing safeguarding that need to be addressed. The board will be actioning areas to improve, following suggestions to a second phase of this plan.

A governance review by sport england to check finances are appropriately assigned, all appropriate feedback on this.

There are areas for governance that need to be improved and go back to sport england to go forward. Some areas for concern in this but resolutions have been identified for this report to go back.

Other concerns - should be looking closely at the memberships money and how that is assigned. As members representative, this has been voiced and will continue to do so.

Please look at these at your own discretion

Recent and upcoming meetings

Coaching conference recently took place.

Members council meeting due in the coming week and follow up in a few weeks time.

AGM due on the 11th and members council meeting the following day.

Tony Ryan - Many thanks for the years of service from the team and members. Tony has recently left the BMC.

9. Upcoming Events

Date of next meeting – 26th July (online)

Hill walks 2023 calendar needs to be finalised

Restoration

- Winter Hill - Rhodo clearance in November
- Edale - 15th June with national trust
- Kinder / Hayfield - 5th september and 4th november for Rhody Bashing

Footpath repair events

- 7th to 9th June 2023, Lakes, Accommodation FRCC hut, Langdale
- 16th to 18th August. Snowdonia, accommodation Nant Gwynant NT
- 18th to 20th September. Snowdonia, Accommodation Nant Gwynant NT

10. Any other business

Suggestion for BMC north west to communicate to the members council if there are further issues that need to be discussed.

A document in the archives (in the chat) on crag inhabited management that may help with managing maintenance.

AONB - discussions of digital handbooks and possibly handing over guidebooks such as a digital archive for this. Trialing systems and working out how this can suitably be done with the members council

discussion. Anything within BMC print apart from Lancashire will be documented. BMC is a partner of the WIRED. Print will be done but there is going to be a move towards some digital resource. Copyrights of descriptions and images will need to be factored in and an undertaking to create original descriptors (for those more elaborate). Lists and databases of routes are also copyrighted and there needs to be some acknowledgement, discussions and proper placement of the routes that were before, and how or what can or can't be included in new guide books.

Les made a point that the copyright of Lancashire rock laid with the BMC and the owners. Anything that gets developed, there will need to be some trial and error of some future guides and technology used before going out to the public.

Les suggested maybe a selected guide of favourite routes or best routes that may be favourable but may also be a bigger undertaking.

Note: Area walks are advertised on the BMC website. Also on the facebook groups and pages. Also area volunteers such as Rosie may also have her own as a walk leader.

Appendix

Noggarth Fixed Gear detailed assessment

At the latest area meeting Alison Athroll provided an update to the review of routes at Noggarth that appear to have been retro-bolted (ie when the route was established and recorded there were no bolts present). See the attached photos for detailed assessment. Each route has been individually assessed, and feedback gathered from the climbing community, resulting in a recommendation for the fixed gear and grading of the route. Please make sure to pay attention to the column titles when reading the detailed assessment. The assessment for the majority of routes was that the bolts should be left in. Route grades (traditional or sport) have been assigned.

For 3 routes the recommendation is to remove the bolts, they are:

#5 Noggin & #8 Anonymous Eliminate on Central Slabs & #14 Resurrection, Resurrection Slabs.

The proposal for these 3 routes will be voted on at the next area meeting, taking place on the 26th of July online. There will be 3 independent votes, for each route, with the format "For", "Against", "Abstain". During the quarantine period (between now and the 25th of June) please take the opportunity to climb the routes to form an opinion, and feel free to reach out to Alison to discuss.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS & PROPOSALS SINCE JAN 23 MEETING

Action from last meeting:

Assess the following routes to determine if they have been retro-bolted and whether bolts should be removed:

- *Central Slabs: Novocaine, Extraction, Fang, Canine, Nogg, Garth, Anonymous Eliminate, Barrowford Mantel, Cutting Edge,*
- *Hawthorn Slab: Springfield*
- *Resurrection Slab: All routes*

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ The routes far right of Resurrection Slab (Angel & Gabriel) have no trad protection and were originally recorded as sports, therefore they have been removed from the scope of this review.
- ▶ Feedback obtained from a cross-section of the climbing community who have climbed at Noggarth.
- ▶ Conclusion: Removing the bolts would leave the majority of routes unprotectable/dangerous.
- ▶ Many of the routes have bolts and pegs and not always at the frequency expected of a sports route.
- ▶ Assign grades taking the above into consideration - either sport or trad.
- ▶ The tables on the next 2 slides provide a summary of each route assessment.

Central Slabs & Hawthorn Slab

Routes requiring specific assessment of retro bolting and appropriate grading nomenclature (sport or trad)										
#	Section	Route Name	Year of ascent	Grade in earliest topo	# bolts	# pegs	Assessment	Considered grade IF ALL BOLTS removed	Recommendation	Proposed grading
1	Central Slabs	Novacaine	2018	HS 4b	4	0	Insufficient trad protection	E1 4b	Leave bolts	Sport, F4
2	Central Slabs	Extraction	2018	VS 4c	3	0	Insufficient trad protection	E1 4c	Leave bolts	Sport, F4+
3	Central Slabs	Fang	2017	HVS 5a	1	2	Mostly trad gear (pegs, slings). 1 bolt protecting the upper slab	E1 5a	Leave bolt.	Trad, HVS 5a
4	Central Slabs	Canine	2017	HS 4b	3	1	Insufficient trad protection	HVS 4b	Leave bolts.	Sport, F4
5	Central Slabs	Noggin	2017	HVS 5a	1 (old LO)		One bolt remaining from an old lower off 1.5m below top. Confirm if there is gear in the crack at that point.	HVS 5a	Confirm there is gear placement at bolt position & remove bolt if so.	Trad, HVS 5a
6	Central Slabs	Nogg	Traditional	VS 4c	3	0	No trad protection on direct line. Adventurously bolted.	E1 4c	Leave bolts	Trad, VS 4c
7	Central Slabs	Garth	Traditional	VS 4b	4	1	Insufficient trad protection	E1 4b	Leave bolts	Sport, F4
8	Central Slabs	Anonymous Eliminate	Pre-2019	HVS 5a	2	2	VS 5a crux low down protected by peg. 2nd peg about half way. 4b runout to top (if bolts are not there). Option to step left to use peg on adjacent route in the upper half. Appears to meet the criteria for removal of bolts, agreed at BMC NW mtg Oct 2022	HVS 5a	Remove the 2 bolts	Trad, HVS 5a
9	Central Slabs	Barrowford Mantel	2016	VS 4c	3	0	Couple placements for trad gear. No trad protection at crux (the mantel). 2nd: Micro-cam reqd in break where a peg used to be. Uncertain if it would hold a fall. 3rd Bolt. Also a cam placement extended with sling around the corner on right, near to the next bolt. 4th Bolt. No trad gear.	E1 4c	Leave as hybrid route making use of bolts and trad placements.	Trad, VS 4c
10	Central Slabs	Cutting Edge	2017	HVS 5a	2	1	Insufficient trad protection	E1 5a	Leave bolts	Sport, F5+
11	Hawthorn Slab	Springfield	2021	VS 4c	3	0	Insufficient trad protection	E1 4c	Leave bolts	Sport, F4+

Resurrection Slab

Routes requiring specific assessment of retro bolting and appropriate grading nomenclature (sport or trad)

#	Section	Route Name	Year of ascent	Grade in earliest topo	# bolts	# pegs	Assessment	Considered grade IF ALL BOLTS removed	Recommendation	Proposed grading
12	Resurrection Slab	Ascendancy	2019	HVS 5a	2	1	No trad protection in upper part.	<i>E1 5a</i>	Leave bolts.	Trad, HVS 5a
13	Resurrection Slab	Restitution	2019	VS 4c	4	0	No trad protection on direct line. Requires stepping right to place gear in adjacent VD crack. Contrived.	<i>VS 4c</i>	Leave bolts.	Sport, F4+
14	Resurrection Slab	Resurrection	2019	E1 5b	3	1	Sufficient trad protection. Fixed rope around tree as a lower off - needs replacing.	<i>HVS 5a</i>	2 bolts have been removed. Remove remaining bolt. Replace fixed rope lower-off.	Trad, HVS 5a
15	Resurrection Slab	Chipmunk	Traditional	HS 4b	0	0	Trad protection available.	<i>HS 4b</i>	None	Trad, HS 4b
16	Resurrection Slab	Heavens Above	2019	HVS 5b	2	1	Bolts in the upper part where there is no trad protection.	<i>HVS 5b</i>	Replace fixed rope lower-off	Trad, HVS 5b