

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

FOR EVERY HILL WALKER,
CLIMBER AND MOUNTAINEER

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2023 was a year of uncertainty and challenge which will impact us for some time but my hope is that the financial challenges faced in 2023 will be a catalyst for positive change in how the BMC operates and the role it plays across our community of activities.

We went into the year with some momentum of 'recovery' from the impact of Covid through 2020-22 but 2023 did not deliver the promise we hoped. The details are in the Chairs Report, but ultimately the Board were unable to react quickly enough to a very complex situation; much of which originated years ago; despite the desire and effort they put into addressing the issues. I can only apologise for my part in not being able to move things more quickly.

Despite a challenging year the BMC has still been delivering on the ground and I remain encouraged and thankful for the volunteers, staff and partners involved in our activities.

International collaboration across areas from safety to trail mapping, is imperative

to our wider community. I am therefore very proud that we were able to host the joint EUMA and UIAA spring conference in Leeds, welcoming our friends from across the world, and that the BMC is once again seen as a key player in the UIAA, EUMA and IFSC family.

We also saw great progress within our International Committee, where a change in the grant criteria has started to open grants up to a wider field of potential recipients, supporting more aspirant mountaineers to gain the experience they need to progress on to achieving their goals. Like all our committees, most of who are widely 'uncelebrated' I am grateful for the beneficial work they delivered across our breadth of activities and interests.

We are first and foremost a membership organisation, here to support and represent members but in this changing world there is a growing wider community of participants, and those interested in our activities, many of whom may not even know we exist. The BMC has a role in representing the interests of all participants, reaching out to them,



THE BMC HAS A ROLE IN REPRESENTING THE INTERESTS OF ALL PARTICIPANTS, REACHING OUT TO THEM, SUPPORTING THEIR JOURNEYS AND WELCOMING THEM INTO OUR COMMUNITY OF VOLUNTEERS, CLUBS AND CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS



Photo credit: Lena Drapalla

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

supporting their journeys and welcoming them into our community of volunteers, clubs and campaign supporters. Making sure we are relevant and visible is a priority, and a key part of this was phase one of our digital and website migration with a new platform and resource for hillwalking participants. I look forward to the remaining website migration in 2024. Our focus must continue to be on raising awareness of the BMC, and the important work we do amongst this community of 3.7m regular hillwalkers and 375,000 regular climbers.

The potential opportunities that exist within the hillwalking and indoor activity spaces to improve our representation is clear. There are promising initiatives such as our collaboration with the YHA Festival of Walking, and the development of a junior club programme. We were also a founding supporter of the LGBTQ+ ClimbOut Festival, which was a huge success. But our ambition has exceeded our ability to deliver in 2023. The answer however must not be to lower our ambition. At our core we are a representative body, and we must all strive to represent the

diversity of participants through positive actions to welcome everybody. At this time we clearly must be strict in our focus on the areas that will have the biggest impact, but without losing our ambition to be more representative and visible in the community.

On issues such as access we are uniquely placed through our network of experts or position of influence to react and respond to situations that impact our community. In July 2023 Kilnsey Crag was put up for sale. The BMC, representing the community, were able to secure support for a bid and while unsuccessful it gave credibility with the new owners to ensure access was preserved. Similarly at Sirhowy, the BMC coordinated the community in a crowd funding initiative and despite not purchasing, we have funds to manage the crag with an owner who recognises the value the climbing community brings. It is clear this is an area we must continue to do more in.

I have always been an advocate for all our competition disciplines, the variety is a sign of the health of our sport and



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

breadth of community. Olympic inclusion has given competition climbing much focus but we have also seen progression in para, Ski-Mountaineering and Ice Climbing who do not have the luxury of Olympic funding but have relied on dedicated volunteers to achieve impressive results on the international stage. I was lucky enough to attend the UIAA European Cup that was hosted in Glasgow in February, supported by the BMC and delivered by the Scottish Dry Tooling Club. The event was an enormous success for competitors and spectators.

I have always advocated and tried to ensure members are informed of decisions and reasons for decisions as far as possible. It is not easy and we have not always got it right, but I am pleased that towards the end of the year as a Board and organisation we stepped up with our member engagement, as we navigated the difficult evolving situation. It is important that my successor and the Board continue to improve our communications and transparency and that members engage through the Members' Council and Areas to have their say and contribute to the direction of the BMC.

The BMC represents many different groups with diverse needs and priorities which will not always align. But we do have many common objectives and values and as is the mountaineering tradition when things go wrong it is always better to combine resources, not look only to our immediate companions; we are stronger and better when we work together. In 2024 we need to do this and I hope we all will.

Andy Syme
BMC President



Photo credit: Veronica Mäkeläinen

THE BMC REPRESENTS MANY DIFFERENT GROUPS WITH DIVERSE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES, BUT WE HAVE MANY COMMON OBJECTIVES AND VALUES. AS IS THE MOUNTAINEERING TRADITION; WE ARE STRONGER AND BETTER WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER



Photo credit: Sam Pratt

CHAIR'S REPORT

The past year to 18 months has been an extremely difficult and challenging time for the BMC and for me personally in my position as Chair of the Board of directors for the BMC.

Ultimately the Board of Directors is required to take ultimate responsibility for the business performance of the BMC and for that and on behalf of the Board I offer my apologies – and this is not just about financial performance it is about leadership and behavioural failures across the whole organisation and over many years.

In 2023 the BMC posted a loss of £625k leaving the organisation with reserves of £217k, which given the scale of the BMC is unacceptable.

People and Behaviours

During the year since the AGM in 2023 there has been substantial changes within the leadership team of the BMC:

- The resignation of the CEO and CFO from the leadership Team.
- The appointment of a new CEO.

- The loss of the Senior Independent Director.
- The resignation of both the Head of Performance and the Head Coach from GB Climbing.
- Long term sick leave of key staff.
- The contracting of an Interim Financial Director.

The appointment of a new CEO and of an Interim Financial Director leaves the BMC with a more commercial and a stronger financial focus than has been the case for many years.

It should be noted that each of these moves has required substantial amounts of Director and Board time and accounts for much of the focus of the BMC Board during the past year.

One of my lasting impressions of the year is how behaviours which are consistent and meet the BMC codes fundamentally impact outcomes. This is equally applicable to Directors, Staff and Members. During the past year I have seen multiple examples of where the



Photo credit: Adam Vaughan



Photo credit: Sam Pratt

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underlying message had validity, but it failed to land because of the behaviours of those transmitting the message and their inability to focus on material issues.

Going into the forthcoming year I will expect an improvement in behaviours across those parts of the organisation that I can influence. I hope that Councillors and Members will look at good practice within the Board and Staff and emulate that.

Root causes of the failures

Many of us come from a generation where escaping to the crag, fell and mountain, be that in the UK or overseas was a way to escape the ever increasing strictures of an organised life determined by others – we went to the mountains for freedom - Sadly that is increasingly difficult.

This has implications for how an organisation is led and managed in the 2020s. In hindsight our relatively cavalier approaches to business many years ago are no longer acceptable. For instance, the fact that the BMC has never had a proper 'Contract Management System' is at least in part accountable for well over £250k of

the losses. What goes with that is a failure to formally document every agreement and have in place the necessary contracts – which for the BMC goes back many decades and is accountable for even more losses. During the forthcoming year the BMC will put in place a proper contract management system.

During the past year the BMC has faced new challenges around Insurance:

- In June 2023 the BMC was faced with a change in staffing at one of its underwriters, and as a result and overnight the BMC was no longer permitted to sell travel insurance. The shutdown lasted a month and cost the BMC approximately £42k. The service was restored at the very end of July when the BMC became the appointed representative of P J Hayman with an identical product to that provided before the shutdown
- In November 2023, two members of the BMC were unfortunately involved in an accident which led to a major claim against the BMC 3rd party liability insurance with huge implications for

the premium that the BMC pays in both 2024 and beyond.

2023 was the year when the ambitious growth targets of reaching 100,000 members by the end of the strategy period clearly became untenable. Whilst each year the membership targets were reset downwards, it became clear that even the target set during the 2023 budget planning was unachievable. This with the loss of insurance income in July 2023 led to the first restructure and redundancies.

During 2023 the BMC installed a new accounting system. Whilst the physical implementation of the system was successful, the implementation of the new processes and training of staff in the use of the system was lacking. This contributed to a lack of financial control, especially within GB Climbing, explaining the problems associated with VAT.

A Chair's view of the next three years

Some years ago, Queen Elizabeth II said that the Royal Family had had an "Annus Horribilis". 2023 was that "Annus Horribilis" for the BMC.



Photo credit: Alex Messenger

CHAIR'S REPORT

Recovery from 2023 will take several years and I believe that a reasonable recovery programme is as follows:

- 2024: Stabilise the finances and wider organisation. During the second half of 2024 engage with the wide stakeholder community, including members and start to develop the strategy for the next 5 to 10 years
- 2025: Build out the financial strength of the BMC, work a lot more powerfully with our partners and after the AGM formally approve the new strategy
- 2026: Embark on a period of growth both in terms of membership but also around impact locally, nationally and internationally

The focus for 2024-25

- Put in place transparent finances which are regularly reported, underpinned by clear processes and systems and which all leaders within the organisation have been trained on and are able to use effectively

- Restructure the Board Committees including a dedicated committee considering Risk Management and probably audit at a Strategic (Board) Level.
- Put competition sport onto a sound footing using the model that has been very successfully applied within other sports. "Commissions" dedicated to individual disciplines.
- Rebuild relationships with UK Sport and Sport England which have been tested through the events of the past 2 years. This will require the BMC to improve its governance and move towards what is expected of the organisation under "The Code for Sports Governance"
- Work on improving the relationship between Members' Council, the Board and the staff.

I close by encouraging you to read this Annual Report and consider how you can help the BMC succeed.

Roger Murray
BMC Chair



**I ENCOURAGING YOU TO READ
THIS ANNUAL REPORT AND
CONSIDER HOW YOU CAN HELP
THE BMC SUCCEED**



INCOME

Income Summary 2023 – £4.872M

a. £2.59M of Membership Subscriptions comprising £2.07M from individuals and £0.53M from affiliated clubs

b. £0.95M to support the activities of GB climbing including £0.42M funding from UK Sport and £0.20M from Sport England

c. £0.52M Sport England Grant Income to support the development of BMC's and partners activities

d. £0.56M Trading Income of which £0.43M derived from Travel insurance sales

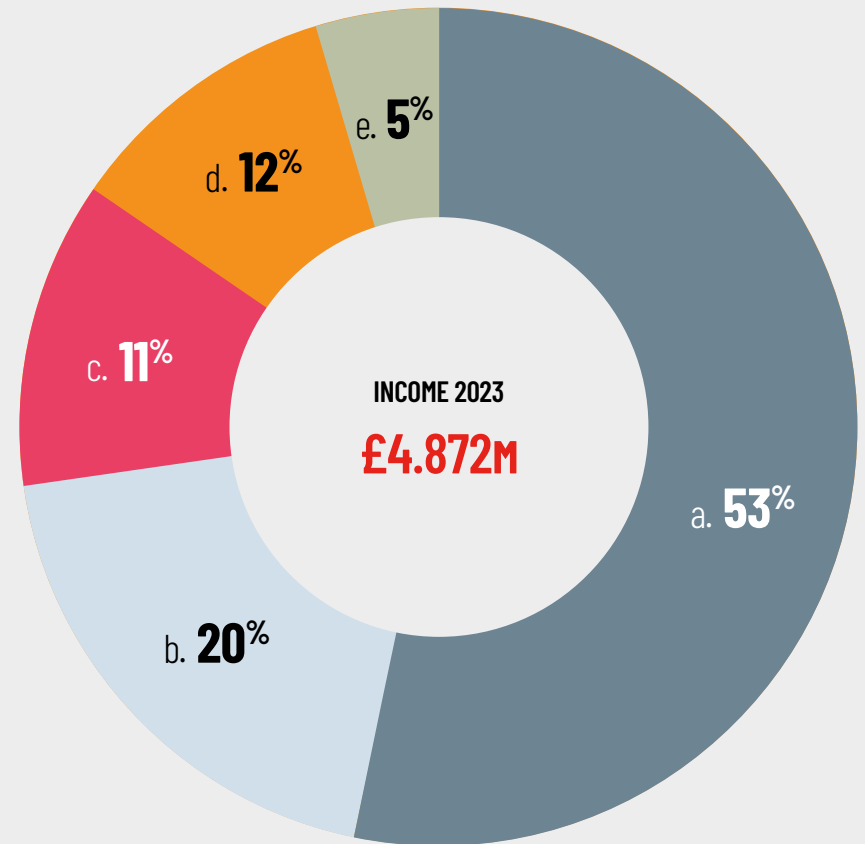
e. £0.23M of Other Income including income from Partnership agreements

Income has increased by **18%** comprised mainly of grant increases and the subscription increase

Key

- **a. Membership Subscriptions**
- **b. GB Climbing**
- **c. Sport England Grant**
- **d. Trading income**
- **e. Other income**

Income 2023



EXPENDITURE

a. £1.12M of Membership Support Costs including the costs of the Liability insurance

b. £0.80M of Marketing and Communication costs, including IT costs

c. £0.96M of Administration Costs including governance costs, AGM and Area meeting support

d. £1.51M of GB Climbing costs including expenditure relating to grant funding of £612k.

e. £0.31M of Access & Conservation Costs including Managed sites

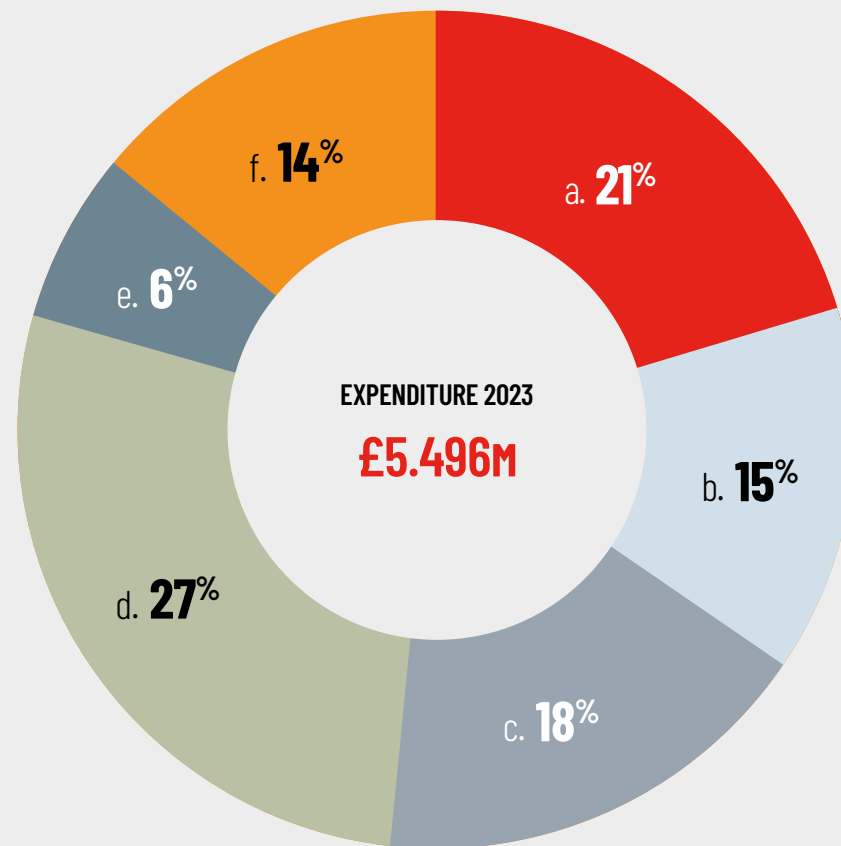
f. £0.75M of Sport and Community Development costs

Key

- **a. Membership and trading costs**
- **b. IT, MarComms costs**
- **c. Admin and Governance costs**
- **d. GB Climbing costs**
- **e. Access and Conservation costs**
- **f. Sport and Community Development costs**

Costs have increased by **25%** from 2022 predominantly due to the increase in grant funded activities

Expenditure 2023



FINANCIAL REPORT

Summary

The BMC made a larger than expected loss of £625k in 2023.

The main reasons for these losses are grouped as follows:

Item	£
1. Reconciliation of grants relating to GB Climbing and poor controls of budgets resulting in additional cost to the BMC.	361,284
2. Inaccurate accounting of VAT resulting in additional cost to the BMC.	61,420
3. Profit reconciliation across several areas including bad debtors and fees for services owed.	62,037
4. Loss of insurance income in July 2023.	41,627
5. The costs of restructuring, redundancies, and staff departures due to not tracking ambitious growth targets.	102,816



THE ORGANISATION

The BMC needs to evolve to ensure we continue to safely govern and administer the organisation whilst developing the financial and other resources needed to support growth.

Our values:

- Community
- Adventure
- Sustainability
- Aspiration
- Respect



Photo credit: Lena Drapella



Photo credit: Alex Weissenberger

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THE BOARD

The Board is ultimately responsible for the BMC governance, finance and strategy. They set the vision for the organisation and meets about 10 times per year to assess performance against financial and other performance indicators.

During 2023, Board meetings took place with all current Board Directors attending 93% of meetings. All meetings were quorate, and a record of meeting minutes is available to members.

Decisions Taken and Actions Performed

Key actions since the 2023 AGM are:

- Board recruitment – Two council nominated directors have joined the BMC since the 2023 AGM (Andy Say and Trevor Smith);
- Focus on people leadership including approving, directing and managing several redundancy and complaints processes.
- During the gap between the previous CEO (Paul Davies) and the new CEO (Paul Ratcliffe) the Directors formally matched up with members of the

Senior Leadership Team and provided direct support and guidance.

- There has been a focus on Safeguarding with the Safeguarding Manager appearing in front of the Board twice and approval of both Child and Adult Safeguarding Policies
- The Board agreed that the many components of Safety across the BMC had to be brought together. The start of that process was a meeting in April 2024
- There have been substantive problems with Insurance during the past year and the Board has been heavily involved with the guidance and decision making associated with the issues of Travel Insurance, 3rd Party Liability and Personal Accident Insurance.
 - Travel Insurance stopped overnight in July 2023 because of withdrawal of Underwriter. Board agreed that the BMC become the appointed representative of PJ Hayman
 - 3rd Party Liability – 2 members of the BMC involved in an accident which led to a major claim with huge implications for the premium that the BMC pays in both 2024 and 2025+



Photo credit: Sam Hunt



Photo credit: Lena D'Alipaglia

Photo credit: Sam Platt

THE BOARD

- Decided to continue Personal Accident cover, likely to review as part of future Membership Offers
- Decisions related to competition climbing. This has included but not limited to:
 - Leading the negotiations with UK Sport around the Management and Operation of Grants.
 - Approval and Support to the “Listening Sessions”
 - Providing guidance and direction to the restructure of GB Climbing
 - Putting in place and approving the findings of a Board led review of the Unit E contracts. (The Unit E contract was terminated)
 - Approving the UKS Submission and preliminary programme and budget for the Los Angeles Cycle Elite Programme
- Focus on financial management, albeit with late and what we know to be erroneous data. This has led to the Board approving the “Course Corrections and associated redundancies in 2023”, the appointment of an Interim Financial Director in March 2024, Further cost reductions and redundancies in 2Q 2024.
- The Board have received guidance and training around Risk Management in order to raise the understanding of all Directors to a minimum level. At each QPR the operational Risk Register is presented to the Board. In 3Q 2024 a Board Committee will be put in place which will oversee Strategic Risk and it will be led by a Board Director.
- Support of the Board on improving the relationship between the Board with Senior Leadership, Staff and Members’ Council.
- With the change in CEO, the Board decided that developing the next >5 year strategy period will start in 3Q 2024.
- Throughout the year the Board have been informed and supported the engagement with current and future commercial sponsors.



Photo credit: Alex Messenger



Photo credit: Fifi Tam



SPECIALIST COMMITTEES

There are 17 Board committees, the BMC classifies them into 'Standard' and 'Specialist' committees and some highlights of their work in 2023 includes:

Clubs' Committee

Chair: Peter Saleniaks

At the end of 2023, there were 25,568 members across 212 general and 49 student clubs, a 2.3% increase. Amendments to the BMC Articles of Association in 2022 enabled a pilot project for indoor youth clubs, paving the way for new club offerings.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Chair: Mohammed Dhalech

The EDI Committee are responsible for the delivery and direction of the BMC EDI Strategy and Diversity Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). Delivering events, creating education and training resources, signposting to funding opportunities, and creating membership offers capable of empowering everyone to take part in our activities. The EDI Committee work across six priority areas around inclusion: gender, race, LGBTQ+, disability, mental health, and youth.

Hill Walking Group

Chair: Peter Judd

The HWG supported BMC Access staff on Dartmoor wild camping issues and the broader support of backpacking. The group encouraged development of the "Outdoors for All" manifesto and participated in a related video highlighting access barriers. They also assisted in the "Everyone Exploring the Hills Safely" proposals, developed with Mountain Training and Plas-y-Brenin, and continued dialogue with Sport England to support hill walkers.

They worked with the EDI Manager and committee chair to explore greater diversity in clubs and develop a more inclusive membership offer.

They hosted "Get Stuck In!" conservation volunteering events, including multi-day footpath repair projects in the Lakes and Eryri, and single-day sphagnum planting and invasive species removal in the Peak District. Contributed over 100 person-hours to upland conservation. Additionally they aided the Local Area social hikes leaders in the Lakes, Peak, and North West.

Huts Group

Chair: Lynsey Mcauley

The group achieved several milestones, including the appointment of a new Chair, hired a Hut Warden for the Don Whillans Memorial Hut, and finalised Environmental Sustainability guidance. A comprehensive huts survey was completed to address the needs of huts. The group undertook collaborative efforts with other BMC committees with consultations on 'holiday lets' in English and Welsh jurisdictions, advocating for huts and influencing government policy. Initial findings from these consultations highlighted mountaineering huts as a significant concern, awaiting ministerial decisions.

International Committee

Chair: Aaron Hodgson

The committee welcomed a new chair, Aaron Hodgson, to the committee and evaluated expedition grant funding, deciding to only award grants to those who offset their carbon footprint. 14 expeditions were granted the BMC Expedition Grant fund (£7,800) as well as two female expeditions were awarded £600 from the Julie Tullis



Photo credit: Adam Vaughan

SPECIALIST COMMITTEES

Memorial Award. Along with the Alpine Club, we supported the Young Alpinists Group (YAG) to enhance safety and skills for young alpine climbers globally.

Land Management Group

The LMG, supported by a part-time Property Manager, managed maintenance and improvements across BMC's land holdings. They secured funding at Horseshoe Quarry to restore wildlife habitats and conducted bolt inspections with the Peak Bolt Fund. Tree safety inspections and remedial work were carried out at Craig Bwlch y Moch, Tremadog, and Horseshoe Quarry. Belay bolts were tested at Harrison's Rocks with BMC technical staff and new signage was installed at Crookrise. There was continued Japanese Knotweed treatment at Wilton.

The group considered new acquisitions including Kilnsey Crag, Yorkshire, and two South Wales sites. Despite raising significant funds, competing bidders secured these properties. A local crowdfunding effort raised over £20k for Sirhowy crag, demonstrating

climbers' interest in site purchases and providing hope for future opportunities.

Technical Committee

Chair: Spenser Gray

The UK representative actively participated in UIAA SafeCom and the CEN Working Group for Mountaineering Equipment, resulting in improved safety equipment. An incident reporting and near-miss scheme was implemented to disseminate community learning widely. Additional initiatives included a bolt workshop for ClimbBristol volunteers and equipment checking sessions at the Student Seminar, now expanded as workshops at local climbing walls.

The other BMC Specialist committees are:

Access Management Group

Chair: Andy Tickle

Training, Youth & Walls Committee

Chair: Andy Newton

Further details of the Specialist Committees work in 2023 can be seen in the Annual Governance Statement.



STANDARD COMMITTEES

Competition Climbing Performance Group (CCPG)

Chair: Freddie Naish
(previously Paul Ratcliffe)

The CCPG convened four times, addressing key tasks such as appointing a new chair in August 2023, overseeing GB Climbing's finances and strategy, providing guidance on selection policies, advising on pathway changes, and engaging with athletes.

Health & Safety Group (HSG)

Chair: Mike Rosser

The group convened twice in 2023, with four additional sessions for a task and finish group focusing on the BMC's Event Approval system, involving collaboration with Mountain Training. They began the tasks of reviewing risk management for GB Climbing events and recruiting for new members to enhance expertise. They reviewed and enhanced the BMC's event approval system, delivered the lone working policy, implemented online health and safety training for staff and managed hybrid working for health and safety coverage.

Nominations Committee (NomCom)

Chair: Roger Murray

The Nominations Committee terms of reference were updated in 2023, after the AGM. The committee is constituted of five members: the chair of the board, three members considered independent with a minimum of two independent directors and a member of Members' Council. NomCom is empowered to advise on the structure, size and effectiveness of the board and the resource required by directors to perform their function. The company secretary also attends NomCom. Nominations Committee has met four times since the 2023 AGM

Remuneration Committee (RemCom)

Chair: Roger Murray

RemCom consists of the Chair and the Independent Directors, with secretariat support provided by the BMC's HR Manager. Rem Com has met twice since the 2023 AGM in order to agree the shape of the reward package for the new CEO and to agree the shape of the April 2024 staff reward package and specifically to review and approve the reward package for the Chief Commercial Officer.

Safeguarding Committee

Chair: Tim Miller

The committee supported the ABC with safeguarding guidelines and wall accreditation practices. The group has focussed on updating safeguarding policies, advising on agreements for safeguarding cases management, and providing support to affiliated clubs. Moving forward, the group aims to collaborate with clubs to enhance safety standards and provide ongoing support.

Y Pwyllgor Cymru – BMC Wales Committee

Chair: Neal Hockley

The committee continued to gain greater recognition for the BMC in the Welsh Government. Together with Mountain Training Cymru they wrote to the Sports Minister explaining the work of the BMC and its importance to Welsh Government priorities: including health and wellbeing, participation in sport and reducing accidents and environmental impacts in the mountains through training and information. The group met with Sport Wales officials to learn more

about their criteria for recognition and funding of National Governing Bodies.

The other BMC Standard committees are:

Finance & Audit Committee (FAC)

Chair: Iain Dickinson

International Strategy Group (ISG)

Chair: Zoe Spriggins

Further details of the Standard Committees Committees work in 2023 can be seen in the Annual Governance Statement.

CHARITIES AND TRUSTS

BMC Access & Conservation Trust (ACT)

ACT funded “Get Stuck In” away days in conjunction with the National Trust and organised by Hill Walking Rep Steve Charles and BMC Peak Area volunteer Peter Judd have proved a massive success, with events in the Peak District, Wales and Lake District filling up rapidly with BMC (and non-BMC) volunteers. Participants have repaired and created paths, prevented peatland erosion, planted sphagnum moss, cleared invasive species, scattered cairns and dug drainage ditches as part of the Mend Our Mountains campaign.

BMC Land and Property Trust (LPT)

LPT laid the groundwork for the renewal of LPT’s constitution. They continued to manage the BMC land assets in the best interests of its members, exercise good budgetary control, and to look at ways of raising funds so that we can continue to manage those assets into the future.



AREA REPORTS

The quarterly Area Meetings held in each of the ten BMC Areas covering England and Wales provide a platform for local volunteers and members to meet up, share information, and raise and discuss issues. Traditionally in-person meetings, the introduction of online meetings during the pandemic has now developed into a mix of in-person, online and hybrid both in-person and online meetings, increasing accessibility and flexibility in attendance. Out of the 10 local areas the BMC has, here are highlights of some of their work in 2023:

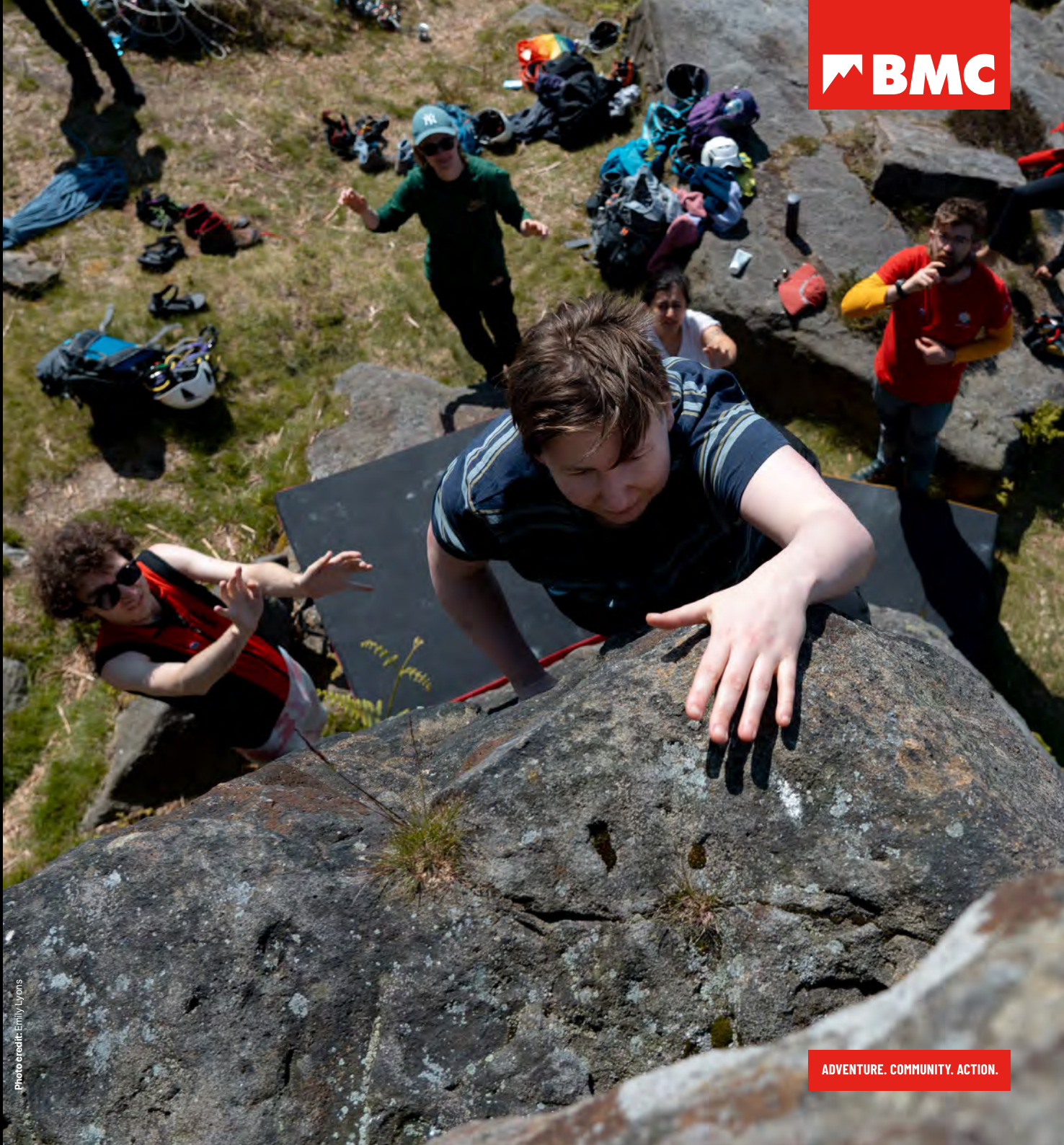


Photo credit: Emily Lyons

AREA REPORTS

Lakes

Chair: Mike Parsons

In 2023, we held five area meetings, initially chaired by Frank Bennett and later by Mike Parsons, highlighting the need for a new chair and younger participants. National issues, especially BMC insurance for Alpine cover, impacted local members.

The Cumbria Bolt Fund continued bolting routes, details at cumbriaboltfund.co.uk. We advocated against the potential closure of the Low Gillerthwaite outdoor centre in Ennerdale and saw Burlingtons' Elterwater Quarry tourist attraction application approved. The Area group also raised concerns about pollution in Windermere.

A successful BMC Youth Meet at the FRCC Hut at Rawhead saw ten youngsters participate. Thanks to all the helpers.

BMC Lakes Area Newsletters by Ron Kenyon and Marjolein Thicket are on the BMC website. A special May meeting, organised by Ken Taylor, focused on the Right to Roam/Outdoors for All campaign, featuring a panel discussion raising a spotlight on new campaigns.

We thank members who helped Fix the Fells, especially Steve Charles, and FRCC for hut use. Issues on Scafell Pike, including fatalities, led to discussions about supporting Wasdale MRT while aligning with BMC national policy.

London and South East

Chair: Olly Hicks-Pattison

After five years, Chris Stone stepped down as Area Chair, succeeded by Oliver Hicks-Pattison. We held four Area meetings, with hybrid and online formats, hosted by the Alpine Club. Mary-Ann Ochota joined an online meeting to discuss the Ridgeway at 50.

The Youth Climbing Series was a great showcase of climbers from the Area. Overall the London and South East Area just missed out on the top prize, although we did achieve a number of individual podiums.

Maintenance work at Harrison's Rocks improved safety, and a successful bluebell walk in Kent was enjoyed by members. Looking ahead, the Area focuses on hillwalking with a new series, Peak Bagging London and the South East,

guiding walks to each county's highest points throughout 2024.

Midlands

Chair: Darren Johnson

The committee has seen changes with a new Chair and Secretary bringing fresh perspectives. While our dedicated core of 12 members remains strong, we aim to broaden representation by engaging more voices and perspectives. To foster engagement, we've adopted varied meeting formats: in-person, online, and hybrid. Diversifying our styles aims to involve more members and facilitate meaningful discussions.

Notable achievements include archiving club documents to preserve legacies, developing a new route guide for climbers in the Leicester area, and Ian's continued invaluable input linking to the BMC committee, enhancing decision-making with his dedication and insights.

North West

Chair: Agustin Guardiola

We've alternated between online and hybrid meetings, with hybrid being the



AREA REPORTS

most popular. In 2023, we agreed on a Fixed Gear Guidance document for the North West Area and processed several proposals, including Winewall, Noggarth, and Headbutt Wall.

Regarding access, we continue to work on regaining access to Hoghton estate, work is ongoing to reach an agreement. Restoration events have been very popular, featuring invasive species clearance, fencing removal, moss planting, and participation in Mend Our Mountains events, which have been well attended by North West area members.

Online engagement has increased, especially on our Instagram account (@bmc_northwest) run by Steve Riley, which has also helped with member inquiries about open positions.

Alex Owens (Merseyside & Cheshire Access Rep) and Nicole Booth (Secretary) are stepping down at this year's AGM. Carl Spencer's term as a Member's Council representative ended in February 2023. Special thanks to all our volunteers: Bill Beveridge, Andrew Say, Steve Charles,

Les Ainsworth, Martin Elliott, Dominic Oughton, and Stuart Holmes. A huge thank you to Tim Greenhalgh for organising Wilton Fest's 10th anniversary.

North Wales/ Cymru Gogledd

Co-Chair: Tim Jepson

Throughout 2023, the North Wales region has been kept busy with the usual wide range of issues of concern to hill walkers and climbers. Luckily, we now have two excellent BMC officers, with responsibility for matters specific to Wales, who attend or report to all our area meetings. They have done great work on access both practically, and politically taking the argument for a 'Right to Roam' act direct to the heart of Welsh Government.

Funding for competition climbing and mountain training in Wales remains a problem, but work is being done to raise our profile in an attempt to get future, official recognition for BMC Cymru as the representative body in Wales. Attendance at meetings, now split 50-50 between on-line and in-person events, has not recovered since Covid and remains at a disappointing average of

about 20 members. During 2023 members participated in events involving litter removal, vegetation clearance, path improvement, a bilingual festival and climate change mitigation.

At the 2023 AGM, in the absence of any volunteer to take over the chair, it was decided to share the roles of chair and secretary between four members, each with responsibility for organising one area meeting. This is proving to be a positive move, but only goes part way to resolving the problem of finding volunteers to represent the area nationally; in particular, the area still lacks one Members' Council representative.

Peak

Chair: Andy Reeve

We began the year holding hybrid meetings at the Bamford Institute. Due to financial constraints, we moved to the Sir William Hotel in Grindleford, which generously offers free room use. To maintain this arrangement, we encourage purchasing food and drinks. Unreliable Wi-Fi led us to discontinue hybrid meetings, opting for in-person only.



Photo credit: Steve Charles

AREA REPORTS

We apologise to those affected, but the quality and character of in-person meetings have improved.

Access issues are frequently discussed, with the access rep, Henry Folkard, keeping us updated. Successes included shelving the proposal to flood the Upper Derwent Valley. However, the issue of grouse moor owners laying plastic matting on Midhope Moors persists, despite a Peak Park enforcement order following a public inquiry. Henry and BMC Access Officer Jon Fulwood continue to address these challenges.

South Wales / De Cymru

Chair: Dorian Thomas

The BMC has supported the area in developing a new fixed gear policy for the south Wales area. Several crags had caused some controversy and it was suggested that a re-write and review of the fixed gear policy was needed, to support the ethos of the area going forwards. Additionally the BMC worked to improve relations with the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and also hosted a talk at Kendal Mountain Festival with the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park on their decision to

prioritise the Welsh Language name for the park. Every year we meet with the Pembrokeshire Coast NP to discuss access and organise the dates for the briefings for Range West. 513 people attended the Range West safety briefings. We produced two Respect the Gower films on BMC TV

South West

Chair: Colin Knowles

The South West area of the BMC held four meetings last year, including two in person/hybrid. The focus remains on Access issues, notably Dartmoor Camping. Our Access Reps continue to collaborate with BMC staff Jon Fullwood and Dave Turnbull on ongoing issues such as the closure of Symonds Yat due to rockfall.

We are pleased to welcome new Access Reps: Paul Harrison, Simon Cardy (Lundy), and James Mann (West Penwith). We adopted a new Fixed Equipment policy for the Avon Gorge and elected Ben Darby as the new Access Rep, who also organised the annual Avon Bramble Bash to remove invasive plants.

In the coming months, we aim to improve communication with local clubs

and climbing walls, supported by newly elected Clubs and Walls Reps, Beau Belle and Gwen Bennion. Trevor Smith and Philip Wilson (Secretary) continue on the Members Council, with Trevor also serving as a Nominated Director.

Yorkshire

Chair: Will Points

The Yorkshire area has continued to work on maintaining access to both Limestone and Gritstone. Notably working with the estate owner at Slipstones to improve the parking situation. A crag cleanup was carried out at Shipley Glen. Bolting and development continues to be spearheaded on the Yorkshire limestone.

In the future we hope to continue to build our committee and network of active volunteers in Yorkshire. Plenty of crags on the clean up list for 2024!

The other BMC Areas are:

North East

Chair: Josh Petty





HEADLINES AND HIGHLIGHTS



ADVENTURE. COMMUNITY. ACTION.

GROWTH, ENGAGEMENT, SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Membership

We have a stable membership base, tracking close to previous years, year end figures. Individual membership numbers remain static, while we continue to see club membership continue to also grow 0.8% compared to previous year.

We ended the year with 83,571 members, a small increase of 0.7% on the snapshot taken at the end of 2022.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those members who have continued to support us, and returning and new members who have joined us during another year of significant economic uncertainty and inflationary pressures which have been challenging for so many people.

Membership and affiliation

- Individual Members: **58,003**
- Club members: **25,568**
- Affiliated Clubs: **254**
- Members under 25: **9,852** (12%)
- Gender balance: **63% male / 27% female**



Photo credit: Lena Drapella



Photo credit: Veronika Melkonian

GROWTH, ENGAGEMENT, SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Marketing and Communications

A focus of 2023 was building the foundations for growing awareness and engagement with the BMC. Underpinned by research at the end of 2022, we developed a clear brand framework, ensuring we can clearly and consistently communicate what the BMC does. As an organisation at the heart of the UK outdoor community, it is important more people are aware of, understand and support us. The updated framework allows us to present our work in a united way, whilst making people aware of the breadth of the work we do on their behalf. This has also contributed to the development of a clearer commercial partnership programme and our digital, data and website development.

The new brand framework can be customised to reflect our activity areas of hillwalking, mountaineering, indoor climbing and rock climbing, while providing a consistent link back to an overarching BMC identity. As part of the work, our positioning statement succinctly describes what we do, how we do it, and who we do it for: Adventure. Community.

Action. For every hill walker, climber and mountaineer.

This identity work was integrated into a new hill walking website launched at the start of 2023. The website was built on a new content management system which will underpin a full British Mountaineering Council website migration, including integration with our data platform, currently in development for launch in summer 2024.

Getting our voice heard is important, whether promoting crag clean-ups or gold medals on the climbing World Cup circuit, our social media content had a reach of 8.13 million across Facebook, Instagram and X.

Our most successful marketing campaign of 2023 was Outdoors for All. Launched across web, press, social and email we amassed a social reach of 154.3k and scored 149 pieces of media coverage. This campaign highlighted BMC research which demonstrated that whilst the outdoors may be free to access it is not equal.



Photo credit: Lena Drapella

THE BMC ONLINE IN FIGURES

SOCIAL MEDIA:
FOLLOWERS (GBC AND BMC): **289.5k**
REACH: **8.13 MILLION**

WEB:
WEB USERS: **931k**



Photo credit: Niall Gimes

GROWTH, ENGAGEMENT, SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Hill Walking

We launched a new, mobile-friendly Hill Walking website featuring guides, resources, and inspiration for hill walkers and scramblers. It includes 31 how-to films in the Hill Walking Essentials playlist, and the OutdoorHer hub for advice on health concerns like menstruation and menopause in the outdoors.

In Autumn, we partnered with YHA for its Festival of Walking, offering free, supported walks from YHA locations across the country. BMC volunteer guides led five social walks in the Peak District, Lake District, North York Moors, and Northumberland, providing advice for new hill walkers. We also set up BMC Hills 2 Oceans litter-picking hubs at 24 YHA hostels, enabling visitors to help remove litter from hills and crags.

Indoor climbing

The BMC supported the development of Mountain Training's forthcoming Bouldering Wall Instructor award and contributed to the ABC Wall Accreditation scheme. We launched the "Your Climbing Counts" survey to understand the coaching needs and motivations within the climbing community. Additionally, we focused on expanding the Fundamentals provider workforce to improve national coverage and enhance our support network.

Rock Climbing

The BMC made significant strides in protecting and enhancing climbing environments. We informed climbers about nesting restrictions, organised 16 crag clean-ups, and produced "Respect the Rock" videos to educate members. We supported diverse climbing festivals across the UK, fostering community and celebrating top climbing spots.

Our campaign for greater access aimed to extend upland climbing freedoms to lowland crags, crucial for local climbers. Our access representatives and volunteers worked to resolve issues, negotiate with landowners, clear loose rock, and maintain equipment. We began designating our land holdings as access land to ensure perpetual public access.

Mountaineering

To promote equality, the BMC has created two support streams for expeditions: one for elite mountaineering and another for underrepresented groups and individuals for whom the trip would be a significant personal development milestone.

-  HILL WALKING
-  INDOOR CLIMBING
-  ROCK CLIMBING
-  MOUNTAINERING

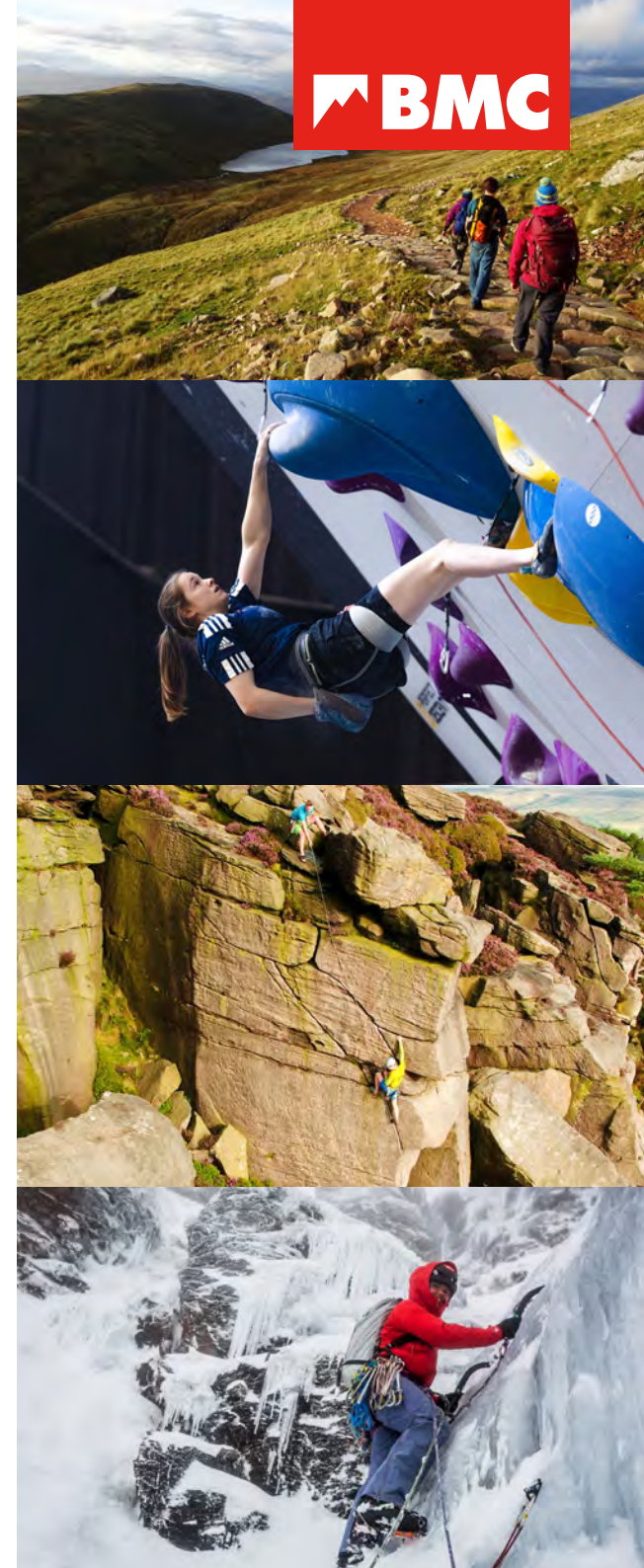


Photo credits: From top: Adam Vaughan / Sam Pratt / BMC / Jessie Leong

EVENTS

The popularity of volunteer-led Area Festivals continued to grow in 2023. Last year, five festivals were hosted across England and Wales, which saw a celebration of local climbing, walking, history, and culture.



Photo credit: Veronica Melkonian

AREA FESTIVALS

BMC Hongian Ffest highlighted the diversity of climbing, scrambling, and hillwalking in North Wales/Gogledd Cymru, promoting mental health and well-being in the outdoors while embracing Welsh language and traditional names.

The BMC Pembroke Climbing Festival showcased Pembrokeshire's sea-cliff climbing, featuring workshops, speakers, yoga, and fundraising for charity.

The BMC Gower Climbing Festival, which will be going into its 15th year, sold out with 350 tickets and engaged 30 volunteers, donating £2000 to rescue charities.

The BMC Northumberland Walking & Climbing Festival in mid-June highlighted the Cheviot Hills' opportunities, hosting the BMC AGM.

BMC WiltonFest celebrated its 10th anniversary with climbing, guided walks, masterclasses, yoga, and talks, attracting over 100 climbers to Lancashire's Wilton crag.



Photo credit: Lena Drapella



Photo credit: Frankie Dewar



Photo credit: Frankie Dewar

FOLLOWING ITS SUCCESS IN 2023, WITH OVER 200+ ATTENDEES FOR THE INAUGURAL EVENT, CLIMBOUT WILL EXPAND IN 2024, FURTHER INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF LGBTQ+ OUTDOOR CLIMBERS



Photo credit: Mike Hutton

BMC IN THE COMMUNITY

ShaFF / Women in Adventure

In early 2023, the BMC celebrated the winners of the 2022 Women in Adventure film competition with a special screening at ShaFF, followed by a filmmaker workshop led by four professional adventure filmmakers, engaging 40 prospective filmmakers. The 2023 Women in Adventure film competition received 25 exceptional entries, with seven films awarded at the Kendal Mountain Festival later in the year.

Tales from Everest

To commemorate 70 years since Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary's historic Everest summit, the BMC presented a sold-out carnival featuring words, performances, art, and food, creating a vibrant atmosphere.

Torchlight Fest

Sponsored by Cotswold Outdoor, the national Torchlight Fest, organised by the Camping and Caravanning Club and the BMC, provided an opportunity to introduce the BMC to a new audience.

ClimbOut

In support of ClimbOut, the UK's inaugural Queer Outdoor Climbing festival, the BMC engaged with over 200 attendees, celebrating LGBTQ+ climbers and fostering inclusive outdoor spaces.

Kendal Mountain Festival

The BMC hosted the Women in Adventure Awards at Kendal Mountain Festival, screening 25 films and recognising seven outstanding entries. Additionally, BMC Breakfast Club events and engaging talks on topics such as the Right to Roam and Welsh place names attracted a diverse audience, further showcasing the BMC's commitment to adventure and community.



Photo credit: Mike Hutton

ACCESS, CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

We promote the freedoms, rights and responsibilities of climbers and hill walkers, work on their behalf to influence legislation and policy across England and Wales, campaign on the climate crisis, access and environmental issues, and ensure that the BMC leads by example in all aspects of environmental impact.



ACCESS, CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Dartmoor's Landmark Victory

In a ground-breaking ruling, Dartmoor stands as a beacon of wild (backpack) camping freedom. This achievement reaffirms the BMC's belief in responsible camping and has thrown a much-needed spotlight on wider access rights to all our green and blue spaces.

Preserving the Upper Derwent Valley

The BMC's opposition, alongside conservation groups, led to the shelving of plans to extend Upper Derwent Reservoirs, safeguarding the valley's integrity.

Outdoors for All

We continue our thought leader and influencer work through our contribution to the "Outdoors for All" coalition, signing up to the manifesto, and seeking to extend responsible access to more green and blue landscapes.

Sirhowy

After a fantastic Crowdfunder campaign where over £20,500 was raised to buy Sirhowy Crag in South Wales, the BMC was unfortunately unable to bid at auction for the crag. However, due in part to this high profile campaign and attempt to buy the crag we have now been granted full access to climb at Sirhowy which is fantastic news. Permission has been given to take down the 'No Climbing' signage and erect signs directing climbers to the climbing areas and about crag etiquette. So the BMC have saved money not having to buy the crag and these funds have now been added to the BMC Land & Property Trust to protect other crags for climbers throughout England and Wales.



Photo credit: YDNEA / Swanher / Gamet Photography

ACCESS, CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Access Land Film

Access Land advocates for a future where access to nature isn't a privilege but a right. This work sits right at the heart of the BMC by ensuring access to our outdoor spaces is high on the national agenda alongside other important issues related to outdoor activities.

Environmental Stewardship

Through its Green Guides series and "Into the Hills" campaign, the BMC promotes environmental responsibility among hill walkers, climbers, and mountaineers, collaborating with partners like YHA and Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Net Zero by 2040

Committing to reach net-zero emissions by 2040, the BMC expands its Climate Project initiatives, including seagrass planting with Seagrass Ocean Recovery and sphagnum moss planting with Moors for the Future.



WE CONTINUE OUR THOUGHT LEADER AND INFLUENCER WORK THROUGH "OUTDOORS FOR ALL" SEEKING TO EXTEND RESPONSIBLE ACCESS TO MORE GREEN AND BLUE LANDSCAPES

Photo credit: YDNPA / Christopher Wernick



ADVENTURE. COMMUNITY. ACTION.

SPORT DEVELOPMENT

The focus of our sport development department is on building the core capabilities within the BMC of Safeguarding, Clubs, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Indoor Walls and Partnerships.



Photo credit: Alex Messenger

ADVENTURE. COMMUNITY. ACTION.

CLUBS

Club Development efforts focused on various areas, including enhancing the student club network through training and awareness initiatives.

Webinars and the Student Safety and Good Practice Seminar at Plas y Brenin saw increasing attendance, surpassing pre-COVID levels, buoyed by favourable weather. Additional training sessions such as Training Days for Committee Members and How to Train Novice Members weekends at Plas y Brenin further enriched the club network's skills.

A significant milestone was the launch of the Youth Club pilot program, enabled by changes to BMC Articles in 2022, allowing broader community club affiliations. The full program rollout is slated for 2024.

Despite some small club closures, many new clubs sought BMC affiliation, some experiencing rapid growth; notably, two clubs registered over 200 members after affiliating in 2021.

Regarding education and learning, the BMC conducted various courses, workshops, and published guidance to foster skill development. Though the number of facilitated courses was fewer due to resource constraints, there's a commitment to focused development in this area going forward.



Photo credit: Sam Pratt

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

In 2023, the BMC made significant strides in advancing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) across all its activities. We launched a new EDI Strategy in May, supported by an action plan to drive systemic change in hill walking, climbing, and mountaineering. The strategy and our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) are nearing final approval by Sport England.

We successfully supported ClimbOut2023, the UK's largest LGBTQ+ climbing festival, bringing together nearly 200 climbers. Additionally, we developed "Creating Inclusive Environments" learning materials for BMC volunteers, Mountain Training providers, and members. An EDI education resource, "Creating Safe and Inclusive Environments," was created and will be tested at the MT Conference in April 2024, with plans to offer it as an online e-learning course.

Policy updates, including the EDI Policy, Trans Participation Policy, and Equality Impact Assessment templates, are in final draft stages awaiting governance approval.

The BMC continues to strive for equity across our activities and for more diversity in those that work, volunteer, participate and support. Whilst the outdoors is inherently inclusive, it is not yet completely accessible for all.



Photo credit: Fifi Tam

VOLUNTEERING AT THE BMC

Volunteering at the BMC

The BMC depends on the support of hundreds of volunteers, and recognises their vital contribution to our work through annual awards. These awards recognise the invaluable dedication of individuals who have contributed their time and efforts to our thriving community.

From competitions to committees and festivals, their work has helped support participation, and connect local areas while building safe and inclusive spaces for all, supporting and celebrating climbing, hill walking, and mountaineering across the UK.

- **George Band Award:**

David Farrell

- **Rehan Siddiqui Award:**

Robert Dufton

- **Young Volunteer of the Year:**

Agustin Guardiola

The BMC began using volunteer management system Volunteerio to simplify the process of recruiting and managing our volunteers across the organisation.



FROM COMPETITIONS TO COMMITTEES AND FESTIVALS, VOLUNTEERS' WORK HAS HELPED SUPPORT PARTICIPATION, AND CONNECT LOCAL AREAS WHILE BUILDING SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SPACES FOR ALL



Photo credit: /Steve Charles

POLICY

Safeguarding & welfare

The BMC is leading the way in safeguarding, offering expert advice and ensuring all safeguarding courses delivered are sector-leading and fit for purpose. We ensure that we cover the needs of our varied activities, protecting coaches, volunteers, and participants alike.

In 2023 we have written a Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Statement and updated Safeguarding Policies for Children and Adults, completed and passed the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) Safeguarding Audit, completed the Ann Craft Trust Adult (ACT) Safeguarding Review and conditionally met it, delivered a Partnership Safeguarding Seminar in conjunction with Mountaineering Ireland and Children First Scotland, worked with and shared expertise to funded partners (ABC, NICAS and MT) to ensure a consistent message with safeguarding across the sector and developed a sector specific tutor led Safeguarding Course.

Policy review and implementation

The BMC Governance and Compliance Manager maintains a policy schedule on behalf of the Board. Policies are reviewed at least bi-annually, or as and when they are deemed necessary by the Board, Executive or other workforces.

During 2023, the the following policies were approved :

- Reporting concerns guidance - adults
- Reporting concerns guidance - children
- Safeguarding Adults policy
- Safeguarding Children policy
- Safeguarding statement
- Credit and cash policy
- Expenses policy
- Financial delegations documentation
- Lone working policy
- Procurement policy
- Code of Conduct policy
- Sickness absence policy

- Access management group ToR
- Family Leave Policy
- Hut Group ToR
- Athlete health policy
- GB Climbing Squad Selection Framework
- GB Climbing Team Selection Framework
- GB Annual Performance Strategy
- England Annual Benchmarking Strategy
- England Regional and England National Selection Framework

UK Anti-doping

In conjunction with UK Anti-doping the BMC have delivered six online anti-doping sessions to the GB Climbing team. On top of this we have also delivered a staff anti-doping season whilst information sharing with our wider community via social media and email. One athlete is in the national testing pool.



Photo credit: Sam Pratt

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships:

Funded/Reciprocal

The influence of the BMC is being felt through the revamping of the 'Partners Assembly': a sector-wide coalition of outdoor organisations committed to delivering impactful, collaborative projects. Recognising the inconsistency in safety messaging in the outdoors, the BMC-led group is working to ensure that hill walkers receive clear, consistent safety messages, thereby reducing the burden on Mountain Rescue teams and the risk of accidents.

Plas-y-Brenin

We set-up a reciprocal membership offer with Plas-y-Brenin: everyone attending a course at PyB will be offered free BMC membership, and our members receive discounts on seasonal courses.

OutdoorHer

Another example of collaborative success, co-designed with Mountain Training, this online resource designed to support women and girls, has been extremely successful.

Yorkshire Dales National Parks Authority

We signed an MoU, which has resulted in a bespoke version of our booklet 'Into The Dales', aimed at new hill walkers and encouraging greater diversity.

Work continues with our Funded Partners, MTUKI, MTE, NICAS & ABC.

Partnerships:

Organisation and Membership

Our partnerships with Recommended Outdoor Retailers Cotswold Outdoor and Snow+Rock saw them add Mend Our Mountains as a charity on their Pennines on the Till campaign. The campaign raised £34,214.89. These vital funds will go directly into funding restoration work on our paths and trails, so that they remain accessible, safe and sustainable for generations to come.

Working with Komoot, Strava, FATMAP, AllTrails, Abel & Cole we've developed new offerings to our members.

We continued our partnerships with La Sportiva, Serious Climbing and SecurIt.



Photo credit: Sam Pratt



Photo credit: Alex Messenger



GB CLIMBING AND PERFORMANCE

GB Climbing is an internal department of the BMC, working to fulfill our role as National Governing Body for climbing, paraclimbing, ice climbing and ski mountaineering.

GB Climbing stages and partners to deliver high-quality events for competitors, manages the national teams and supports talented athletes and works with the climbing walls sector.



Photo credit: Lena Drapella / IFSC



CLIMBING COMPETITIONS

The competition season kicked off with the Four Nations Cup Series, featuring eight competitions in collaboration with Mountaineering Ireland and Climb Scotland, encompassing lead and bouldering events. The British Climbing Championships showcased Boulder, Lead, Speed and Paraclimbing competitions, followed by the Junior British Championships for Lead and Boulder.

A notable highlight was the inaugural standalone Junior British Lead Climbing Championships held at Big Depot Leeds, marking the first time juniors had their own spotlight separate from seniors. The British Para Climbing Series featured two rounds of roped climbing. The year culminated with the Youth Climbing Series, uniting nearly 1,100 young climbers across multiple venues nationwide, offering an entry point into the competitive climbing scene.

Volunteers played a crucial role in the success of our domestic competitions, with 55 individuals contributing across various roles such as scoring, route judging, and belaying. Their dedication is integral to the growth of our competitions calendar, and volunteering with the BMC offers a rewarding opportunity to engage with the sport and be part of the BMC Team.

British Championships	Male	Female	Total
Junior Bouldering	146	115	261
Bouldering	69	37	106
Lead, Speed and Para	54	31	108
Junior Lead and Speed	64	79	143

Four Nations	Male	Female	Total
English Boulder Cup	152	152	304
Welsh Boulder Cup	125	118	243
English Lead Cup	53	80	133
Welsh Lead	43	73	116
Welsh Paraclimbing	10	4	14

Youth Climbing Series	Male	Female	Total
Round 1, 2, 3 & 4	467	467	934
Grand Final			242



INTERNATIONAL CLIMBING COMPETITIONS

Senior and Junior Team

Internationally, our athletes on the senior squad were able to experience competitions at the European Continental Cups, World Cups, and a World Championships in Bern.

Paraclimbing

In the paraclimbing team, several athletes made finals. Abbie Robinson won gold medals at all three World Cups and came away with her 4th consecutive World Championship crown. Joanna Newton won her first medal in Innsbruck, at age 56. In the Paraclimbing World Cup in Bern, seven additional athletes made finals with four taking medals. Several athletes self-funded participation in the Ice Climbing World Cup and World Championships events, achieving our best-ever results.

Olympics

Toby Roberts Qualified for Paris 2024 with Laval win. GB Climbing's Toby Roberts rounded off a formidable season with a victory at the 2023 European Boulder and Lead Olympic Qualifier event in Laval, France. This historic victory sees Roberts secure the first male Olympic quota place for Great Britain. Roberts will be the second GB athlete to compete in the climbing competition at the Olympics following Shauna Coxsey who placed 10th at Tokyo 2020.

Ice Climbing

The BMC and The Scottish Dry-Tooling Club hosted the seventh round of the UIAA Ice Climbing European Cup in Glasgow.

Internationally, the GB Team won five medals in Utrecht. At the Ice Climbing Continental Open Willis Morris took silver and bronze in the Seniors and in the Continental Open Youth Cup the team had a plethora of talented performers who podiumed. Kasha Ogilvie took the gold in the female U18 category, after her previous gold in Brno. Robbie Gorn finished in the top spot in male U18s at just fifteen

years old. Nessa McShannon won silver in the female U20s category after her gold medal in Brno. Rory Watson brought home a silver medal in the male U20s category.

Ski Mountaineering

Since its formation in May 2023, the BMC SkiMo Steering Group has been dedicated to establishing a selection and training support system for elite athletes, aiming to field a GB SkiMo team in the ISMF World Cup, World Champs, and the 2026 Winter Olympics, while also boosting grassroots participation.

Year one focused on assembling a skilled volunteer team covering coaching, marketing, and management. Developing training and selection criteria, forging connections with UK representative bodies, and engaging athletes were priorities.



DEVELOPMENT

Policy development

Significant progress has been made in refining the 2025 GB and England Selection processes, building on lessons learned from developing the 2024 documentation. Challenges along the way provided valuable insights into stakeholder engagement and consultation. Subsequently, the focus shifted to crafting the Athletes Health Policy, involving extensive collaboration with the working group, CCPG, and BoD. Alignment with UK Sport and IFSC athlete health requirements was prioritised, demonstrating our commitment as the sport's NGB. Collaborative efforts secured confidence in the developed documentation and processes. Encouraged by these successes, we're replicating the same approach for the 2025 selection processes, emphasising transparency, inclusivity, and continuous improvement to better serve athletes and stakeholders.

Coach Development

The Coach Development strategy focused on collaboration with funded partners and sports councils, with key milestones achieved in the Indoor Climbing Workforce Review and the contribution to UK Sport Futurology sessions. The Coach Development Framework was promoted at Climbing Conference and through Communities of Practice, alongside the launch of a Co-branded Learning and Development Platform. Over 65 coaches attended the 2023 Coaches Conference, with representation from across the UK and partner organisations.

Seven coaches received support through the GBC insitu coach development program, with additional support from UK Sports Coaching in High-Performance Sport and the Female Coach Leadership Development Programme. The launch of the 'Personal Coaches Community' and the 'Competition Coaching Collective' provided avenues for ongoing support and collaboration among coaches, with monthly Coffee Clubs and quarterly Community Calls facilitating discussion and updates.



Photo credits: Top and Bottom: Sam Pratt

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