**RR Zoom meeting with guest Dave Turnbull, BMC CEO. 12 November, 2020.**

Meeting commenced 7.30pm. 20 members tuned in. David Symonds was chair and Jon Marsden was the host. Dave Turnbull gave a brief resume of his considerable mountaineering experience. (He did the trek to the Everest base camp as an 18 year old and recently did all the Welsh 3000ft tops in a very good time.) Having thanked Red Rope for inviting him, he proceeded to take questions from members.

First question was from Dermot McKibbin who asked, 'What advice would the BMC give to clubs to ensure that their members renew their subscriptions when they cannot visit the mountains and are subject to varying degrees of lockdown?' DT mentioned a variety benefits of BMC membership, such as third party insurance, access to the huts of other affiliated clubs, regular email updates regarding the outdoors, which have been particularly necessary this year, and a reduction of 15% in gear shops such as Cotswolds.

John Dickie then asked whether, considering that walking is generally seen as less accident prone than climbing, a case could be made for reducing the BMC clubs' insurance where hill walkers are concerned. DT replied that it would be too complicated for the insurers and that the premium was lower that it might be because of the number covered. The BMC had recently successfully claimed a huge amount from the insurers to support a young climber who had had a terrible accident, meaning they would not have been sympathetic to reducing the premium.

Barbara Segal asked whether the fact that Carey Davies had not been replaced meant that the BMC was now doing less to support hill walking. (Carey was the former hill walking rep. for the BMC.) DT pointed out that other BMC projects, such as Mend our Mountains and allied environmental concerns, involved close co-operation with walkers. Barbara and Dave agreed that there were many ways that the BMC was supporting walkers and that this should be made clearer on their website.

Sarah Bates asked a proxy question for her sister Becky about the position and occupancy possibilities of Mountain Club Huts and whether any might be closed long term. DT could not give much information about this unfortunate state of affairs but did say that he had only heard of one that would probably close, as things stood. Sarah also asked about the risk assessment rules for walks necessitated by covid, and pointed out that the advice from the BMC seemed very complicated. Sarah said that RR East Anglia had produced a slimmed down version of the risk assessment document and would submit it for BMC approval. David Symonds suggested that a separate list for walkers

and climbers would have simplified the instructions for both parties.

Dermot McKibbin asked what the policy of the BMC towards climate change issues would be when debated at the climate change conference at Glasgow in 2021. DT referred to his previous comments about environmental issues and mentioned that the BMC department concerned was headed by a woman who was highly qualified in this area. She was involved in a project to plant sphagnum moss in the Peak District; the moss takes CO2 out of the atmosphere. He went on to comment on how the National Parks have seen a big increase in use by the general public escaping from lockdown measures. Amongst these "escapees" were a significant number of the BAME community, a welcome development.

Janet Saunders voiced her agreement with DT's comments, noting that recently a group of young black women had formed a walking group called 'Black Girls Hike', publicising themselves on the internet. They were featured in the current edition of the BMC's 'Summit' magazine which Dave had to hand, proudly showing it on screen! She also shared her recent experience of using 'Meet-up' to launch some local walks. They attracted a lot of interest but couldn't go ahead because of lockdown. She will try again in future. Jon Marsden mentioned that he had been on some walks arranged via 'Meet-up' which he had enjoyed. It was asked if the BMC intended to focus any publicity towards encouraging wider participation by the ethnically diverse. DT replied that nothing specific was planned.

Gerry Mathews contributed to the theme about greater footfall on paths by observing that she had noticed many paths getting steadily wider through increased use, although she recognised that farmers now seemed to leave bigger margins round their field edges, enabling this tendency.

David Symonds thanked Dave Turnbull on behalf of the club for his helpful contributions and declared the meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Minutes by Dave Doody with contributions by Anne Maloney and David Symonds.

The full list of questions follows:

1. What advice would the BMC give to clubs to ensure that their members renew their subscriptions when they cannot visit the mountains and are subject to varying degrees of lockdown? **Dermot McKibbin**

(Dave has been asked to briefly clarify the benefits of the BMC insurance scheme for members of affiliated clubs as part of his answer and mention the situation regarding non-members on our walks.)

2. A related question: is there any way the insurance element of BMC club insurance could be lowered for club members who walk but do not climb? **John Dickie**

3. In response to a survey of BMC members in around 2012, 62% responded that hill walking was their primary mountain-related activity. Subsequent to this, in 2013 the BMC appointed its first hill walking development officer, Carey Davies, funded by Sport England. Carey's appointment, and his high profile in the organisation, made non-climbing members feel much more at home. Since Carey left the BMC in June 2019 he hasn't been replaced. We appreciate that funding was scarce at the time, and that this has obviously got worse during Covid, but according to your website the BMC now has 34 staff, but none with walking as a significant part of their brief. Has any work gone into fund-raising to support a replacement hill-walking officer and what other plans do you have for supporting hill-walking members in the future? **Barbara Segal**

4. Do you have any idea about the number of huts which will be restricted to weekend-only booking, how many will open only to their own club members and whether any are expected to close permanently? **Becky Bates**

- 5. What are the essentials for a 'Risk Assessment' - does it need to be in the usual 'table' format and does it need to be approved by anyone, for example the BMC? We don't have any climbers in East Anglia RR so we have prepared a simplified document (not in table form but easier to read) which covers all the pertinent points of the BMC Risk Assessment and includes advice on how to mitigate risks. Is this adequate? **Sarah Bates**

6. What does the BMC want to get out of the climate change conference to be held in Glasgow in 2021? **Dermot McKibbin**