

THE BMC AND HILL WALKING



THE BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL (BMC) WORKS FOR HILL WALKERS AND MOUNTAINEERS. OUR WORK RANGES FROM SAFETY AND GOOD PRACTICE IN THE HILLS TO TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ADVICE, AND MANAGING ACCESS TO OUR COUNTRYSIDE FOR THE BENEFIT OF RECREATION AND CONSERVATION. THE BMC PROVIDES INFORMATION AND SERVICES AND ACTS AS A LINK BETWEEN MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS. HERE IS AN UPDATE OF OUR WORK FOR HILL WALKERS.

LOBBYING GOVERNMENT AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

One of the most important functions of the BMC access and conservation work is to respond to and lobby government on issues and legislative plans affecting hill walkers and mountaineers.

- **Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA):** Over the past 12 months, the BMC has worked with MPs and Peers to lay down amendments to the coastal access clauses of the MCAA, which received Royal Assent in November 2009. The coastal access duty set out in the Act will see the establishment of an English Coastal Path and a margin of land along the length of the coast with a right of access for open-air recreation. The BMC is also lobbying the Welsh Assembly Government to develop framework powers and adopt a statutory approach to wider coastal access in Wales.
- **Ten year review of the CROW Act 2000:** The BMC was closely involved in the implementation of the CROW Act. It is nearly 10 years since the commencement of the Act and the BMC has been in discussion with Natural England to ensure that re-mapping of open access land includes those areas that were mistakenly excluded during the 1st phase of mapping.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS AT A LOCAL LEVEL

The BMC works closely with land managers, conservation organisations, government bodies, representative bodies and other private and public organisations on a variety of issues. In particular, the BMC has worked closely with:

- **Ministry of Defence** – to increase access opportunities on MOD land, including the establishment of a footpath around Range West in Pembroke
- **Yorkshire Dales National Park** – to help finance restoration and re-vegetation of footpaths on Whenside and Ingleborough
- **Natural England** – supporting proposals to extend the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks
- **Upland Path Trust** – the BMC is a founder member of this Trust.

AND NATIONALLY...

- Working with the **Ramblers** to ensure the new access rights under the MCAA 2009 are properly and sensibly implemented on the ground
- Acting as a key partner in the development of the **Mountain Safety Forum** in England and Wales to discuss issues relating to mountain safety and promote good practice.

CAMPAIGNING AND REGIONAL PROJECTS

Two campaigns which illustrate the work of the BMC are:

- **Vixen Tor, Dartmoor National Park:** The Ramblers and the BMC have campaigned for the footpaths leading to the Tor to be designated as public rights of way. Following the collation of user evidence, Devon County Council recommended the Definitive Map be modified so as to designate the ways as public
- **Longstone Edge, Peak District National Park:** The Longstone Edge Coalition, a national group of eight campaigning organisations including the BMC, has successfully urged Government to save the Peak District National Park from quarrying destruction.

ACCESS & CONSERVATION TRUST (ACT)

ACT funds projects to improve access and to protect mountain and cliff environments. In the past four years, over 50 projects have been supported, including the successful running of the Stanage bus service in the Peak District and a litter pick of Mount Everest. If you have an idea for a project, from local footpath work to information leaflets, ACT might be able to help – contact cath@thebmc.co.uk for more details.





GOOD PRACTICE GUIDES AND PUBLICATIONS

The BMC produces good practice publications and organises training events, helping walkers and mountaineers develop their knowledge and personal skills. These include:

- a series of Green Guides, including the *Green Guide to the Uplands* which gives good practice advice on issues such as hill walking, paths, sanitation and transport;
- website and *Summit* magazine articles on good practice including advice for dog walkers in the countryside, wild camping and the law, transport initiatives and hill skills;
- the 'Essentials' series of DVDs, outlining skills and techniques needed for mountain activities. The series includes films on *Hill Walking*, *Winter Mountaineering*, *Alpine Mountaineering* and *Off Piste Skiing*;
- and the award-winning series of *British Mountain Maps* published by *Harvey Maps*. The series of 1:40,000 scale maps includes the *Lake District*, *Snowdonia*, the *Peak District* and *Scotland*.

TRAINING AND SKILLS ADVICE

The BMC offers advice on the skills and techniques required to go hill walking and mountaineering safely and responsibly. These include:

- discounted hill walking courses for BMC members at Plas y Brenin, the *National Mountain Centre* in North Wales and access to the *Mountain Leader* and *Walking Group Leader* qualifications;
- alpine walking and climbing courses on the annual *BMC Alpine Meet*;
- and hill walking meets for young people and their parents, run by the BMC's *Area Youth Coordinators*.

BMC MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS FOR HILL WALKERS

When you join the BMC you will also be gaining access to a great range of benefits. These include:

- £10m *Worldwide Civil Liability Insurance* & £10,000 *Personal Accident Disability Insurance* (Individual members only);
- access to *BMC Travel and Activity Insurance* – comprehensive cover designed for hill walking, climbing and mountaineering in the UK, Europe and Worldwide;
- retail Discounts – 10% discount in over 600 outdoor shops;
- and *Summit*, the BMC members' magazine – distributed to your door every quarter, full of climbing, mountaineering and hill walking related feature articles, news, reviews, offers and advice.



PRIORITIES FOR 2010

The BMC will continue to raise the profile of hill walking, working in partnership with others, and ensure people are able to enjoy the countryside in a responsible way. For example the BMC will:

- run a BMC Conference entitled '*Understanding the Uplands; Shaping the future for recreation and conservation*', aimed at countryside managers and policy makers;
- host a reception, in celebration of Welsh Mountaineering, at the *Welsh National Assembly* in Cardiff;
- ensure Natural England's coastal access scheme is carried out successfully and fairly – working with local access authorities, the Ramblers and BMC volunteers;
- and develop a portfolio of BMC research projects into access and conservation; working with academic and conservation organisations on issues which affect hill walking in the UK.

GET INVOLVED

There are currently a number of issues of concern to BMC members including topics such as the location of wind farms and better access to our coast. If you wish to get more involved and help the BMC continue to make a difference on the ground, please attend your local BMC area meeting.

The BMC is looking for keen hill walkers to become access volunteers and help us work on the ground with local partners. For more information contact martin@thebmc.co.uk

Key BMC contacts:

Regional issues (England): cath@thebmc.co.uk Regional issues (Wales): elfyn@thebmc.co.uk Getting involved/volunteering: martin@thebmc.co.uk