



British Mountaineering Council

177-179 Burton Road, Manchester M20 2BB

t 0161 445 6111

f 0161 445 4500

e office@thebmc.co.uk

w www.thebmc.co.uk

Mr R T Middleton
Assistant Coroner
The Coroner's Office for the County of Dorset
Town Hall
Bournemouth
BH2 6DY

19 January 2017

Dear Sir

RE: Liam James Day, RTM/02336-2016/LJ

Thank you for your letter dated 14 December in relation to the Regulation 28 Report concerning the death of Liam Day.

The BMC is the representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers. A small number of climbers engage in deep water soloing and there is good practice advice about the activity on our website and in climbing guidebooks.

The BMC notes all matters of concern within the report relating to Liam, namely that he:

1. was climbing with no safety line
2. was not wearing a lifejacket or buoyancy aid
3. was not [sic] wearing clothing that offered no warmth in the water
4. was not [sic] on his own
5. had no means of requesting help such as a whistle, a waterproof phone or marine VHF radio
6. had left no specific instructions as to where he was intending to climb and what time he would be home

Our thoughts on the above are outlined below.

1. There is a very long history of roped climbing on Britain's sea cliffs. Conversely, and by its very nature, deep water soloing is climbing without a rope, with the water being used to absorb the impact of a fall should one be taken. As noted in the report, no trauma was found to Liam's body.

(It is important to note that deep water soloing, where the idea is to complete a climb and so not to fall in the water, is a completely different activity to tombstoning, which involves intentionally jumping into the sea, often from piers and other artificial structures. Tombstoning is not an activity that the BMC represents).

2. Wearing a lifejacket or buoyancy aid whilst climbing would not be practical, and due to its size and weight would likely increase the probability of the climber falling. A buoyancy aid could also present the added risk of neck trauma, as the climber would decelerate faster than if they were not wearing a buoyancy aid.

working for climbers, hill walkers & mountaineers

Patrons: Sir Chris Bonington CBE, Lord Chorley, Mick Fowler, Lord Greaves, Pat Littlejohn OBE and Doug Scott CBE.
Registered in England and Wales a Company Limited by Guarantee N° 2874177.

3. The Regulation 28 Report notes the 'dangerously low temperatures in coastal waters' that climbers and others enjoying coastal activities may not be aware of. The BMC shares this concern and will make climbers aware of this serious risk in our guidance, including the phenomenon known as Cold Water Shock. The BMC will also raise this with guidebook writers.

4. A BMC article from 2014 notes one golden rule for deep water soloing, to never go alone. In our updated advice we will ensure that this vital message is brought to the fore.

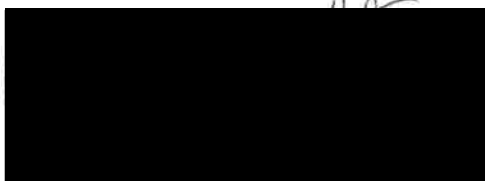
5. In guidance on our website, the BMC can note the importance for climbers to consider how they may summon assistance when deep water soloing. However, as the golden rule is never to go alone, other members of a climbing party should be in the vicinity to assist another climber.

6. The BMC's reading of the report suggests to us that Liam telling others of his plans would unfortunately not have saved his life. Whilst not noted in the report, had Liam left a note of his plans his friends and family may have been spared some distress when he did not return, and the rescue services may have been able to focus their search more effectively.

The BMC will also highlight this issue in our guidance, suggesting that climbers consider telling others of their plans and their expected return time.

This very sad incident has led us to review the guidance we provide, and we will be acting upon the report as noted above.

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area. Above the box, there are faint, handwritten initials that appear to be 'AA'.

BMC Deputy CEO