



# Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

## General Meeting 13 February 2010, Hunters Lodge Inn, Priddy

PRESENT	APOLOGIES
Graham Price (Chair/Cerberus obs)	Chris Binding (Training Officer)
Hayley Clark (Secretary/MCG obs)	Les Williams (C&A Officer/WCC rep)
Dave Cundy (Treasurer)	Mark Williams (BCA Officer)
Alan Gray (ACG rep)	David G Cooke (Webmaster/ ChCC rep)
Alan Dempster (Avon Scouts rep)	Idris Williams (Shropshire Scouts Caving Team)
Mike Richardson (MCG rep)	
Chrissy Price (Cerberus rep)	
Alan Butcher (SMCC rep)	
Nick Williams (BCA)	
Faye Litherland (BEC rep)	

### Meeting started at 10.08am.

#### 1)

- 1.1 GP commenced the meeting diverting from the Agenda by explaining the resignation of Andrew Atkinson from the CSCC as Equipment Officer on 04<sup>th</sup> February due to the arguments over the procedure of placing anchors. He introduced Faye Litherland who had expressed an interest in taking over this role. She believes her background as a Chemical Engineer is a good basis for pushing forward the CSCC issues with the BCA document - the Permanent Resin Bonded Anchors - Installation Procedure, Training and Documentation (IPTD document).
- 1.2 GP also introduced Nick Williams of the BCA who had been asked by Andy Eavis to attend this CSCC meeting to try to resolve (before the next BCA meeting in March) the ongoing issues that the CSCC have with the aforementioned IPTD document. It was decided to deal with the issues raised first in the meeting to then allow Nick Williams to return home to Derbyshire. Nick Williams' aim was to ascertain if a compromise could be established in the meeting today, or if it needs to be pushed forward to the next BCA meeting. NW is concerned that at present no progress is being made towards an IPTD which is acceptable to all parties, and is keen to get the process moving on.
- 1.3 GP briefly summarised the ongoing concerns with the IPTD document being restricted. He reiterated that it is not possible to consult on a document whilst those who are legitimately part of the consultation are not allowed to see it. Since 05<sup>th</sup> February the CSCC Officers have been given permission to read the document but have been asked not to distribute for wider circulation. As the member clubs have not seen the IPTD, this makes it impossible for CSCC to make official comments. The CSCC wishes to see the IPTD document de-restricted and then circulated to as wide an audience as is necessary to enable the CSCC to represent the opinions of the member clubs.
- 1.4 GP also briefly outlined the second CSCC concern regarding the IPTD document, which highlights the need for a person to be SRT competent in order to be able to place anchors. On Mendip due to the nature of the caves, ladders are far more widely used therefore the CSCC wish the wording to be altered to not specify SRT competency.



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- 1.5 Various issues were discussed including that the document was political and not procedural, therefore rewording and putting out to the caving community would reverse this. NW outlined issues with the document being widely available due to restrictions imposed by the Data Protection Act.
- 1.6 Insurance is a major concern, it was thought that if the CSCC were to pull out of the BCA scheme that anyone placing anchors would not be insured. FL pointed out that on page 2 of the BCA policy document found at the link below,  
[http://britishcaving.org.uk/membership/BCA\\_PL\\_policy\\_document\\_2009](http://britishcaving.org.uk/membership/BCA_PL_policy_document_2009)  
it clearly states contrary to this and that an individual would be insured for bolting. NW confirmed that this is correct.
- 1.7 FL stated that having read the IPTD document that she believe it to be three separate documents not one. Breaking it down she explained her thoughts,
  - Document 1 being sections 1-5: - guidance on how to install anchors. This information needs to go to those trained to place anchors but will not necessarily be of interest to the caving community.
  - Document 2 being section 6: -standard inspection, where everytime an individual uses an anchor they should check its condition before using it, this information should be in the public domain due to the nature of what is stated.
  - Document 3 being sections 7: - end :- anchor management, which CSCC need to know and be involved with but will not necessarily be of interest to the caving community
- 1.8 There is need for guidance and not rules as there will always be variations depending on the regional area of the caves, type of rock etc. If the rules are too rigid then it could result in each caving region having their own rules/guidance on anchor installation and moving away from a national scheme.
- 1.9 The meeting concluded that the matter needed to be sorted as soon as possible so that things can move forward. NW will push the issues in the meeting after the BCA AGM in March, if the CSCC proposals are still rejected, as the bolting scheme does not fit Mendip caves the CSCC will withdraw from the scheme as minuted in the meeting on 05.12.09. The CSCC will then seek to harmonise a standard by introducing an interim scheme and then possibly returning to the BCA scheme in the future when it applies to Mendip caves. **ACTION FL to draft new guidance for anchor installation and email to the secretary to circulate to the club reps and officers ASAP for further discussion at the May CSCC meeting.**

## 2) Minutes of the previous meeting (05.12.09)

Last paragraph 9.8 the word **ATLAS** appears three times and should all be in upper case. The second sentence needed the words "present at the meeting" added. The paragraph should now be amended to read as follows.

*AG said that access was through **ATLAS** and that visitors would have insurance through BCA. He said that this information had been published in Descent but no one **present at the meeting** was aware of this nor had the information been provided to CSCC. LW explained the insurance situation clarifying that **ATLAS** could not provide landowner indemnity as it was not a member club of BCA or an 'access controlling body' which required payment of an additional premium. AG would pass this information to **ATLAS**. GP would be meeting KN to discuss the other matters and if appropriate would arrange a joint meeting with ML to clarify the cave access situation.*

GP proposed vote of thanks to HC for writing up the minutes of the last meeting within 2 days. Unfortunately the publishing of the minutes was then delayed due to unforeseen circumstances out of the Secretary's control.



# Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

Minutes were proposed by AG, seconded by AD and accepted with these amendments nem com.

## 3) Actions from previous meeting: -

- Item 2.6** LW to contact CB for ideas for training event at the fayre. **Ongoing. FL suggested LW contact Maxine Bateman to see if she would be willing to help organise the Cavers Fayre due to her past experience in helping to organise CHECC and Hidden Earth. ACTION LW to contact MB.**
- GP to remind Cerberus to organise Chariot race and to confirm time and location of the race. **Done. GP added Paul Hadfield is now the Cerberus contact for this event. ACTION LW to contact Paul Hadfield.**
- Item 2.7** SG reference the recently discovered mine on Draycott Sleights. **Ongoing.**
- Item 8.2** DGC to scrutinise the past accounts and Aubrey Newport to check these. **Ongoing.**
- Item 8.3** Steve King and Chris Whale to be removed as signatories on the accounts. GP, DC and HC to be added. GP to contact Natwest again to get confirmation as to whether internet banking is possible. **Done. In theory is possible but in practice DC confirms is not necessary.**
- Item 8.5** DGC to check accounts to see if CSCC have paid the dry stone waller for the works done to the wall near Swildons Hole. **Done paid in June 2009.**
- Item 9.1** Cuckoo Cleaves. LW /AN to liaise and sort out better gate. AN to update UK Caving & DGC to update website to say Cuckoo is open again. **Ongoing, LW to talk to landowner about the current gate as it was provided by the landowner. The gate is in good condition and there are many implications with replacing it with a new one and the landowner's permission is needed to continue.**
- Item 9.2** LW to look into new galvanised gate at Compton Martin Ochre Mine. **Ongoing.**
- Item 9.3** LW to look at ongoing issues with Coral Cave Lock. **Done, no current issues.**
- Item 9.4** LW to monitor access at Tynings. **Ongoing.**
- Item 9.5** LW to speak to landowner and BS/RW about cavers repairing the wall near Swildons. **Ongoing. LW has spoken to Robin Maine as the possible landowner, but there is uncertainty as to who is the actual landowner. Robin Maine is going to contact the other possible landowner and will get back to LW.**
- Item 10.2** MW to take the resolution passed last meeting (Minute Item 6.c) and a request to de-restrict the IPTD document to the next BCA National Council meeting. **Ongoing. Meeting cancelled due to adverse weather, carried on to next meeting on 20 March 2110.**
- Item 10.5** AA to seek AM and ET'S agreement and to contact the E&T committee to arrange a date for training in axbridge ochre mine. **Item postponed until issues resolved surrounding the IPTD document**
- Item 11.1** Is Wessex CC Tower available for use for BCA Training Events. **Yes, it is available.**

## 4) Other Matters arising from the previous meeting

None.

## 5) Chairman's Report

- 5.1** No feedback has been received by member clubs regarding the Geopark discussed at the December meeting. **GP has requested that all member clubs do discuss**



# Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

**the issues around the Geopark, see previous minutes for details for discussion at the next meeting on 8 May 2010.**

- 5.2** GP attended the AONB meeting on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February. The meeting was to look at the structure of the AONB Group, to look for a better way forward for the partnership. CSCC are currently an Associate member which means they do not have a right to vote. There are however approx 48 members who do have a vote and the Partnership wishes to reduce this to around 15. It was noted that some organisations have more than one person attending who can vote, this will be reduced to one. Groups who will remain as voting members include Somerset Council, National Trust, Mendip Society and Parish Councils. It was discussed that there are currently several user groups who are not currently represented, this includes cavers and ramblers. For anyone interested in more information, a copy of the issues and options can be obtained from GP.
- 5.3** Both GP and HC had received email correspondence from the BBC regarding a campaign called Thrillseekers, to encourage people to take part in a new adventure sport e.g. abseiling, archery, mountain biking and caving. This venture was launched on Countryfile on BBC1 on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010, the BBC are contacting any organisation involved in adventure sports to promote taster sessions in their given field. It was agreed at the meeting that the CSCC would not take this any further than advertising it on the CSCC website, anyone wishing for further information should contact the CSCC Chairman or Secretary. **Post meeting note GP added this to the CSCC website on 13.02.10**
- 5.4** GP advised on reports he had received that there had recently been car break-ins at Ebor Gorge and Blackmoor Reserve. These were taking place during daylight hours and as yet no cavers cars had been targeted. People are advised to take extra care, be vigilant and not leave valuable on show when leaving vehicles unattended. **Post meeting note GP added a note regarding the above to the CSCC website on 13.02.10**
- 5.5** Update on Chelm's Coombe Quarry had been received by Alan Gray from Mark Lumley. He states that he has again checked with the landowner as to whether the current access arrangement through ATLAS/Mark Lumley is unchanged. The landowner confirmed this is the case and that he does not want to be contacted by any other channels. Mark Lumley is leading a trip in the next couple of weeks and if anyone else wishes to visit the caves in Chelm's Coombe Quarry they need to contact him or ATLAS. He also stated that if in the future an opportunity arises to discuss a longer term access arrangement involving CSCC he will discuss with the landowner. At present it is a delicate situation with the development of the quarry and needs to be handled carefully.

Rich Whitcombe had confirmed that access to the caves in the quarry was a private arrangement between Mark Lumley and the owner and nothing to do with ATLAS

## **6) Secretary's Report**

Nothing to report

## **7) Treasurer's Report:**

**7.1** Still waiting to receive the accounts from DGC therefore nothing to report.

**7.2** GP has 2 invoices to be paid, one for new locks and one for explosives used during the recent stabilisation work in Swildons

## **8) Conservation & Access Officer's Report**

**8.1** Darkplaces group are organising a clean up in the Cathedral in Box Mines on the weekends of April 10/11 and 17/18. The work is being carried out with the agreement of Natural England. Cavers are welcome to join in on these weekends, for further information contact Chris Davies or Les Williams.



# Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

- 8.2 There have been reports of pollution in Swildons. Exact location currently unknown but the smell of diesel/paraffin has been noticed on the round trip near Shatter Pot/Greasey Chimney.
- 8.3 There have been reports of ongoing issues with the keys/locks to Longwood and Rhino. Please ensure when using these that the keys are fully inserted into the locks before turning.
- 8.4 Cooks Wood Quarry, Holcombe is currently subject to a planning application to develop the site as a holiday retreat including the erection of 14 timber lodges, leisure and sport activities including a swimming pool, nature trails, car parks and access roads. The application was originally submitted in 2006, then delayed while the applicant provided additional information. The process has restarted with another round of public consultation, the deadline for comments being the 15<sup>th</sup> February. However due to the Planning Officer being on Annual Leave, additional time has been granted for the final receipt by Mendip District Council (MDC) of any third party representations.

The site concerns Browns Hole and several smaller caves. When the application was originally submitted, GP, LW, DGC and Chrisy Price visited the site to clarify the locations of known caves in relation to the proposed works. **ACTION GP to talk to LW and check previous minutes for original comments made on the planning application and then formally submit comment to MDC.**

## 9) Equipment Officer's Report.

- 9.1 See section 1 of these minutes
- 9.2 Recapped that the anchor policy needs to be sorted quickly as Mendip has caves currently requiring bolting. FL will put together a local policy based on the BCA IPTD document to be distributed to the club reps to be commented on at the next CSCC meeting.
- 9.3 The Secretary received an email from Chris Binding asking the meeting to research whether the 45 (approx) bolts listed on the CSCC website at the following link are still past their "test date". <http://csc.org.uk/Anchors.htm>. He points out that on this link, the Blacknor Hole bolts have been registered as lapsed and therefore are not part of the bolting scheme and hence require no testing, inspection etc. but remain usable. Is it a simple measure to make any out of test bolts usable by registering them as lapsed and therefore beyond the national anchor placement scheme?
- 9.4 FL stated that the test dates are irrelevant because if the bolts are tested and pass one day, it is possible a rock may fall and hit the anchor or for other reasons the anchors may fail a few days after testing. This has high liability issues for the CSCC. This takes us back to section 6 of the BCA IPTD document on Standard Inspection. For an individual to be using the anchors, they should understand rigging and check each anchor before using it. It is up to the individual to then report any suspect anchors to the CSCC to test them.  
  
The meeting backed a proposal by FL to have the test dates removed from the CSCC website and replace with a clear message advising the individual to check each anchor before using. It was also decided that on the website it would be useful to have a column reporting any bolts/anchors that have been reported as dodgy. The only concern was how removing these test dates could affect our insurance. **ACTION FL to contact NW regarding insurance and if ok to remove test dates from website and add note about standard inspection. FL to add column for dodgy bolts.**
- 9.5 At present there is no proper application system for clubs to apply for the bolt placement in a cave. **FL to create form to be added to CSCC website.** These can then be received by the Secretary or the Equipment Officer.



# Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

- 9.6** Immediate placement of bolts (if necessary) can be approved by the Equipment Officer but it is preferred that a request be put before a CSCC meeting or by email to all Officers if there is a long wait for the next meeting. Control needs to be maintained over the number of bolts being placed
- 9.7** The only person who could place bolts was Andrew Atkinson although this may now not be the case under the BCA document. However, the CSCC is happy with the guidance notes to be produced by FL for AA to use this guidance to demonstrate to others a method of placing bolts. It is NOT training, merely guidance on a safe way to place anchors. As mentioned in point 1.6 of these minutes, they will be covered by insurance in doing so.
- 9.7** The meeting gave a vote of thanks to Andrew Atkinson for all his hard work during his time as the CSCC Equipment Officer.

## **10) Training Officer's Report**

See attached report. (Appendix 1)

GP to talk to CB to see if he will reconsider his resignation.

## **11) BCA Rep's Report**

The last meeting was cancelled due to the snow. It was hoped that the issues raised by the CSCC could be discussed and resolved by the BCA by email due to the time gap before the next meeting on 20 March 2010. Unfortunately the issues were too contentious and the emails were getting out of hand, it was decided to stop the emails and wait for the March meeting.

## **12) Webmaster's Report**

None received

## **13) Forthcoming Events.**

BCA AGM Baptist Hall Alvechurch 20 March 2010

BCRA Cave Technology Symposium Horton in Ribblesdale Village Hall 17 April 2010

NAMHO Conference Miners Institute Coalpit Heath Bristol 4-6 June 2010

## **14) A O B**

None

**Next Meeting: 08 May 2010 at 10am Hunters Lodge Priddy**

**Meeting Closed: 12:02pm**

## **Appendix 1**

Training Officers Report

I'll be standing down at the AGM from the role of training officer on the grounds that clearly no-one wants any training as I've received no interest from any clubs and no response from my earlier SRT outline ideas email to other CSCC officers.

Chris Binding

CSCC Training Officer's Report, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2010

Dear All,

I am standing down at the AGM from the role of training officer on the grounds that no-one appears to want any training as I've received no interest from any clubs, nor even a response to my earlier SRT outline ideas email to other CSCC officers on 11<sup>th</sup> December (copy below).

It is perhaps also worth noting that it now appears that the Wells Blue School indoor caving wall is not, as previously indicated, closed down due to being out of warranty/test. However, it apparently costs £8 per hour to hire (telephone enquiry 4-2-10) and is open from 9:00am to 5:00pm on Saturdays, equating to a day rate cost of £64. Availability is limited and it needs to be pre-booked which means a financial commitment exists AHEAD of getting a good number of people to sign up for attendance. These chicken-and-egg hurdles are a fundamental stumbling block, I feel, to getting any non-underwritten training event organised; there are two solutions – one is to run training events commercially on a pre-booked basis and the other is for proposed events to be guaranteed/underwritten in advance. The paperchase associated with the second option means the former is to be preferred and I shall be looking into organising something along these lines in due course – to avoid any perceived misuse of mailing lists means that such an event, if scheduled, will be notified to the wider caving community via the UKCaving forum, rather than the CSCC emailing list.

Yours faithfully,

Chris B

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[Copy correspondence, 11-12-09]

Dear CSCC Officers,

Some thoughts regarding SRT training (I'm assuming that's the kind of training most likely to be wanted but am happy to revise the "curriculum" - although Ladder/Line training would still require a tower of some sort).

There's a handful of considerations:

Wessex Tower - can put in about 4 roped pitches, venue outdoors (therefore not an all-weather facility and probably best used in late spring/summer): facility presumed to be free of charge

Undercover Rock, Bristol - can put in at least 4 roped pitches (maximum number of people being trained at once is also 4), all weather facility: approximately £60 for the

venue, includes use of classroom: not available at weekends

Weekend training would most likely cost more, with local Caving Instructors needing to charge their time to offset loss of usual work income (but note that weekday training would be very competitive, especially outside of the high season)

I have not yet spoken with Andy Sparrow to enquire what he would charge his time at, midweek, weekend and off-season as compared to high-season.

However, certain guestimates can be done:

Assume the day fee for training is £160 (i.e. £40 per person being trained, assuming a group of 4).

Add to this the £60 for the use of an all-weather venue, i.e. Bristol Undercover Rock, and the grand total per person being trained becomes £55 for the day.

BCA will part-fund training, according to the guidelines (taken from BCA website, below):

- No funding for events leading to qualifications in the commercial sector.
- Funding is not generally available for capital equipment.
- Maximum grant aid will generally not exceed 1/3 of the overall cost of the training. Where overall costs do not exceed £100 the full cost may be granted. The committee reserves the right to 100% fund BCA organised events.
- The Training Committee reserves the right to monitor the quality of the training.
- Payment of grant will not be made until a satisfactory report of the event has been received from the promoters.
- The Training Committee may offer “pump priming” of events which can then become self-financing.
- The Training Committee may support minority interests.
- Grant will not normally be made for the training of Cave Rescue Team members in Rescue techniques

From this it can be seen that it would be reasonable to expect a grant of at least £70, meaning the individual trainees would need to stump up about £35-£40 each for the day.

Given there are significant limitations on the numbers that can attend an indoor (or even WCC-tower-based) event, it would be an ideal opportunity to pass on higher technical skills as these require more detailed explanation and greater application/repetition, therefore SRT Rescue techniques would fit the bill nicely - although please note Cave Rescue Team members appear to be precluded (list above, last point).

What would be useful now is if CSCC Officers can indicate whether they support what may appear to be a somewhat elitist training event, viz:

**SRT RESCUE TECHNIQUES**

4 spaces only

SRT competence a pre-requisite

No Cave Rescue members

Winter weekday training date - probably mid-January or February (or both, or more...

if demand is high the event could repeat as many times as required)  
Cost £40 per person (excluding grant aid)

I need to declare a conflict of interest, too. I am registered with Undercover Rock as an approved CIC who can use their facilities - at present I do not know whether Andy Sparrow is similarly registered but no doubt he could organise this for himself; therefore if such a proposed training event was to go ahead using the Bristol venue it would be delivered by me.

However, if CSCC believe that any training should be of a simpler nature, delivered to a large group and at a lower cost per head, then we would be looking at a late spring/summer event, probably using the Wessex Tower and Split Rock (Andy Sparrow and myself could then work in tandem, one CIC at each location); this could be a weekend date, which would probably suit the majority of recreational cavers (but our costs might be significantly higher as we would have to keep our diaries clear and would need to offset the loss of a day's income from our other usual sources); such an event could be an Intro/Intermediate SRT training event with, say, 8 people at the Wessex Tower and a further 8 at Split Rock; two CICs would probably cost around £400 for the day but with 16 people being trained and no venue overheads, a BCA grant of £130 would bring the cost per person down to under £20 per person (assuming it was well attended). However, please note that we could NOT provide SRT kits for that many people! - since people would be expected to bring their own SRT kits this also rather assumes they're beyond the stage of requiring introductory SRT training and hence seems to support the idea of providing advanced training - i.e. rescue!

Your thoughts on this would be much appreciated,

Christopher Binding FRGS, CIC, ACI, Caving Leader/Instructor

## **EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT**

**As agreed by the CSCC I asked the E+T for training for 3 CSCC people. To cut a long story short. As CSCC have not ratified the latest anchor scheme, they are not willing to train CSCC people. As a result of this, I have decided not to contact the 2 suggested people, before the politics has been sorted. With no trained people under the new scheme no new anchors can be placed, plus the drill is still on holiday in Scotland.**

**As Hayley will have seen from the emails there is a bit of a debate about which scheme we are operating, or if we are in a scheme at all, which could put the question of if the anchors currently on Mendips are 'usable' (sorry best word I could think of.) I think that I have only seen the end of a series of emails**

**The E+T meeting was postponed as not much could be achieve with the Mendips not ratifying the latest anchor scheme.**

**Andrew Atkinson**