

**Minutes of the meeting of the Equipment Committee held on 13 June 1998 at the County Staff Social Club, Stafford.**

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**1. Administrative:**

1.1 Present: Nick Williams (Convenor); Jenny Potts and Mark Lowe (DCA); Adrian Fawcett (CCC); Glenn Jones and Les Sykes (CNCC); Owen Clarke (Rope Tests); Les Williams (CSCC); David George.

1.2 Apologies for absence: there were none.

1.3 Minutes of the last meeting: accepted without amendment.

**2. Anchor Replacement Issues**

**2.1 Regional reports**

2.1.1 CCC: no anchors replaced recently but some to be placed shortly at Dinas Rock for SRT training purposes.

2.1.2 CSCC: some anchors placed in Gough's cave, others to be placed in Rhino Rift and at Split Rock for SRT training. CSCC propose not to do systematic replacement of anchors - replacements will be made only as required.

2.1.3 CNCC: programme of replacements is continuing: probably eight significant caves left. Now have plans to re-examine some of the earliest sites since placements might be improved.

2.1.4 DCA: have placed about a dozen anchors in Hillocks Cave and Giants Hole. Giants ones are mainly to replace earlier poor placements.

2.2 LS told the meeting that he did not propose any updates to the installation procedure at this time. The 10mm placements are performing without apparent problems and there is a reduction in the number of loose anchors. The placement puts the loop of the anchor so close to the rock that the anchor looks very like a small staple.

2.3 Some of the bolts placed with the Hilti HITC50 resin appear not have the holes full - there is a gap along the top of the resin in the hole. Even so, those which have been replaced (e.g. in Rowten Pot) have been extremely difficult to remove so this does not seem to be a major safety issue.

2.4 Records had been brought to the meeting only by DCA and CSCC. These were circulated without adverse comment. AF and LS said they would bring their records to the next meeting of the committee. ACTION: LS/GJ; AF

2.5 Purchase of the testing equipment from Hilti was noted as ongoing, DG said that he had now made a hydraulic puller which could be used for testing and removing anchors, so the Hilti equipment may no longer be needed.

2.6 No action has been taken to place anchors in a test bed in Tommy Taylor's Cave, but about 12 test anchors have been placed in Yordas Cave, some underwater.

2.7 GJ queried the status of the Ecoanchor within the Anchor Replacement Programme since the programme does not explicitly state that only the Ecoanchor is to be used. After some discussion, it was concluded that since the training is an integral part of the programme, and training is only provided for the placement of the Ecoanchor, the Ecoanchor remains the only type of aid which can be placed under the Policy. However, this does not preclude other anchors from being used in the future, so long as the requirements for performance and training can be met. The coverage of fixed aids other than anchor points is the purpose of another policy which is the subject of a later agenda item.

2.8 The issue of the validity of the anchor tests started by CNCC as regards the placement of the anchors in other types of limestone was raised, and it was agreed that the provision of test data relevant to particular rocks must be the responsibility of the relevant people in each area.

### **3. Rope testing programme**

3.1 OC reports that progress was being made with the development of the test programme. Specifically:

- Tests are now being performed with the 100kg mass
- Test on 9mm and 8mm ropes have been started
- Results have indicated that the results from wet ropes are significantly lower than those for dry ropes, so all tests are now done with the rope wet.
- It will be necessary to appeal for further test samples shortly.

3.2 A discussion on the need to have consistent samples on which to base a series of tests ensued. It was agreed that £50.00 should be spent on the purchase of samples of Beal and Bluewater ropes to determine the strength of new ropes. A further £250.00 was agreed for the purchase of a reel of 10mm Edelrid Superstatic which is to be split into six equal lengths and given to a number of clubs along with record sheets which will provide an accurate life history for the rope. GJ said he would draft the record sheet (ACTION: GJ: appended to these minutes: see 98d0812).

3.3 GJ produced a rope which used for anchor replacement programme. The rope has been heavily abused, rarely cleaned, has Epoxy on it and still has the hangars tied in the knots. OC will divide this into lengths and test it to see what difference (if any) there is in the strength of the different sections of the rope. ACTION: OC.

3.4 Action on the Ropes Booklet was little, but LS pointed out there was now some good basic material on the CNCC web site.

3.5 It was agreed that to request a donation of £5.00 per rope from clubs requesting rope test results would not be unreasonable and would help raise money to fund the purchase of more samples.

3.6 OC said he was still looking for the load cell for the rope testing rig, which has been mislaid. ACTION: OC.

### **4. Standards news**

4.1 NW tabled reports from Ben Lyon and from CEN regarding the meeting in January between members of CEN/TC160 (professional roped access equipment) and CEN/TC136 (sport and leisure equipment) at which NCA had helped BMC to fund a delegate. It appears that the meeting did not

result in a meeting of minds between the two different camps, but this is the start of a process, and it would appear than in many respects the sports equipment experts have the upper hand. Copies of the reports are appended to these minutes.

## **5. Fixed aids policy**

5.1 Good progress was made on the development of a first draft of the policy, a copy of which is appended to these minutes. (See 98d1002).

## **6. Other business**

6.1 JP suggested that the Committee could be providing a valuable means for rescue teams to publicise any lessons resulting from rescues and accidents. NW agreed to contact BCRC to make suggestions in this regard. ACTION: NW

6.2 LS complained about the length of time it was taking to get expense paid by NCA central funds. NW said he understood finances were very tight because of problems with the Sports Council grant, but he would investigate and report back. ACTION: NW.

6.3 LS informed the meeting of a potential danger concerning the use of Petzl Collinox and Batinox anchors when placed in the floor where the person belayed to them walks over the top. Under some circumstances, an unsecured karabiner can be made to open and come free without the knowledge of the user. CNCC have issued a warning notice, and it was agreed this should be circulated in Speleoscene.

## **7. Next meeting**

7.1 It was agreed to hold the next meeting in the middle of November, probably the same Venue or close by.

7.2 There being no further business, the meeting closed at 14:50.

N. Williams

Convenor

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