

Minutes of the N.C.P. meeting held on 26th February 2004
at Stafford 10.00am.

1 Present: Nigel Atkins, Dena Proctor, Tony Smith, Tom Redfern, Pat Ramsden, Duncan Morrison, Graham Mollard (chair).

2 Apologies for absence: Dave Edwards, Dave Baines, Idris Williams, Eric Hoole.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2003 were read and approved.

4 Matters arising: C.I.C. handbook: D.E. has circulated what is hopefully the final copy to the C.I.C. panel, there is a C.I.C. meeting on the 19th March when these will be ratified.

4.1 There is now a C.I.C. mines module which is already in operation in N.Wales. Thanks go to Dave Carlisle, Dave Edwards and all others involved.

4.2 Traverse Lines at level 1 and 2: D.E. has circulated a form of words as asked at the last meeting, D.M. who missed the last meeting questioned whether traverse lines were necessary at level 1. Chair explained that this had been agreed at the last meeting and was not open to discussion only whether we agreed D.E.'S words. The panel then accepted the wording, which is:

BASIC LEVEL 1 TRAVERSES.

The rigging and use of securely anchored traverse lines for both protection and/or as a handrail. Such traverse lines in the context of the level 1 Scheme are purely to keep the novice on a good ledge system or away from a hazardous area (e.g. a drop or fast water) and to prevent the possibility of a fall. Novices may be attached by just a load bearing belt and karabiner or cowstails but a slip or fall must offer absolutely no possibility of suspension in free space or entrapment in fast water.

LEVEL 2 TRAVERSES.

This includes the rigging and use of traverse lines to protect horizontal climbing moves in the cave/mine. A full sit harness should be worn and cowstails and/or karabiners used to connect the caver to the traverse rope. A slip or fall carries the possibility of the novice temporarily dangling in free space.

5 THE HANDBOOK.

The meeting raised the following points that they feel need changing, all points were passed unanimously:

The cover photo of the caver on the ladder is unacceptable, there appears to be no harness just a belt. We want a ladder photo but it must promote best practise. We would also like a photo of children enjoying themselves underground, a mining photo and finally a photo of speleotherms. I have asked panel members to send photos to myself by the end of March.

Sections 4&5 (notes for trainers/assessors & notes for administration) do not need to go into the handbook that goes to the candidates. They are available on the Web sites if candidates need to see them. We recognise that the intention was to have complete transparency but it is just not necessary.

Section 4.3.3.3 this was a problem from the outset but we have run with what is in the handbook for eighteen months and it is still a problem. The meeting agree that the wording should read:

The course will have a "Training Course Director" who must be an N.C.A.

Approved Trainer/Assessor. The Training Course Director is responsible for the overall delivery of the training and should play a full and active role in all aspects for the duration of the course.

A maximum ratio of 1:6 applies to LCMLA Level 1 training courses and 1:4 for Level 2 training courses. When these above ratios are exceeded then additional staff should be drawn only from one of the following.

- a) Other N.C.A. approved Trainers/Assessors.
- b) Prospective Trainer/ Assessors.
- c) C.I.C holders with experience of involvement in LCMLA training courses at the relevant level.
- d) An LCMLA Scheme Trainer/Assessor appointed as an expert with specialist knowledge in the exploration of abandoned mines.

Section 4.4 page 59 Vadose - corrosion should be corrosion.

A section needs to be included to allow for the downgrading of C.I.C. to LCMLA level 1 or 2. It should read: C.I.C's wishing to downgrade must initially contact the Technical Training Advice Service Provider. If the C.I.C. is in date then they will be expected to attend a six-year re-validation. If the C.I.C. is out of date then the Technical Training Advice Service Provider will make a decision as to whether the downgrade can be accepted. All C.I.C.'s downgrading will be expected to register with the LCMLA Scheme.

Section 3.4.1d should now read: Once an assessment has been started it must be completed within one year. The validity of any assessment module will lapse after twelve months and any such module may have to be repeated. Further discussion took place on just how much leeway would be accepted, the general consensus accepted that over one year but under two goes to the Technical Training Advice Service Provider. Over two years would need exceptional circumstances and must go to the N.C.P.

The Bibliography:-our thanks go to T.R. for the work he has put in on this. He has kept it general and avoided being specific to set areas in the main. Any further recommended reading relating to set regions can be posted on the Web Site.

A section needs including to say that prospective Trainer/Assessors must attend one workshop in any period of two years.

4.3.3.2/3.2.1. should now read: Candidates should register prior to attending a training course. In exceptional circumstances registration will be accepted up to thirty days after the training course.

6 Trainer/Assessors not conforming to the standard requirements: There are still a number of persons who are Trainer/Assessors who do not fall into the norm:- Since this matter dealt with the circumstances of individuals the details are confidential but are summarised thus:- The Panel discussed these individual cases and agreed routes by which they could revalidate their awards. The matters to be recommended to Training Committee for ratification.

7 There are at present a large number of Trainer/Assessors who have not met the criteria to maintain their status. They have either not paid subs., not attended panel meetings, not attended workshops or not re-validated their awards. Or in some cases at least three of the above. There has been a shortage of workshops, some panels only hold one meeting per year, which can easily lead to prior engagements, and I understand that there may not have been enough re-validation workshops for C.I.C's. A.L.O's do not wish to police this situation,

it requires firm leadership from the Training Officer if this problem is to be overcome, otherwise we may as well kick the pre-requisites into touch and forget the assessors contract.

8. Assessors Workshops.
Derbyshire 28th March 2004.
Yorkshire 13th November 2004.
South Wales June 2004

9 Panel meetings: It has been agreed in the past that there should be a minimum of two panel meetings per year, this has not been the case in any area other than Yorkshire who religiously hold three per year. Idris had made it plain that he wanted panels to come in line with the minimum. After much discussion all the panels present agreed to do so and will hold their meetings as below:

Derbyshire 23rd March 04 and October date to be notified.

Yorkshire June 15th 04, October 14th 04, February 10th 05.

Mendip February 26th 04, October date to be notified.

South Wales no dates.

North Wales April and December dates to be notified.

It is important that I am notified of the missing dates as soon as possible.

10 The Role of the A.L.O's : This was a request from Idris that A.L.O's shared their perceptions as to what they felt their roles were. The A.L.O's present felt that the description in the handbook was quite acceptable, they were all adamant that they would not police the panels and that where there was a need for any Trainer/Assessor to be taken to task over their performance then that was the role of either the N.C.P. chair or the Training Officer. A.L.O.'s were willing to have a quiet word but that was where it stopped, after this as stated. They generally felt that these were not problems for the Technical Advice Service Provider to be involved in. Many felt that the requirements for Trainers/Assessors to jump through hoops was so open ended and has never been enforced that the whole situation was a shambles.

11 Dates and times of the next meetings: We have set the next three meetings as 12th July 04, 21st October 04 and 25th February 05 all at Stafford County Staff Club at 10.00am.

12 A.O.B. The Northern Panel at their February meeting accepted Paul Reinsh as an aspirant Trainer/Assessor, N.C.P. confirmed its agreement to this.

12.1 It was agreed that observation carried out by C.I.C.'s wishing to become Trainers/Assessors should count towards their tick sheet.

12.2 When the forms recommending the acceptance of an aspirant Assessor are reprinted the line that says one of the referees must be the A.L.O. should be deleted and replaced with the candidate must be proposed and seconded by members of the local panel. The A.L.O. then just signs it off.

12.3 Both Pat and Nigel Atkins have electronic copies of page 4a, It was agreed that these are totally acceptable for use in future by those who wish.

12.4 The Bibliography will be circulated to C.I.C. panel and then taken to Training Committee on 3rd April 04.

12.5 H.S.E.'s working at heights will go to Parliament on 19th July. Meetings are still going on and they have promised to take account that the climbers and we are working to what is considered best practise by our governing bodies.

There is also a questionnaire on H.S.E.'s Web site that we should encourage as

many as possible to complete. There appeared to be a fair degree of suspicious that H.S.E. could not be trusted.

13 The meeting closed at 3.00pm.