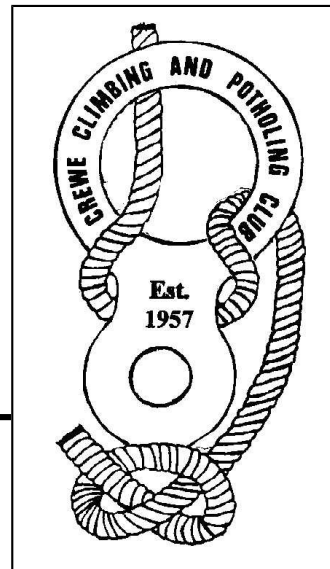


C.C.P.C. Newsletter 99.

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DCA/BCA SRT Workshop for Club Training Officers

This was a workshop which was run by DCA's Training Officer, Nigel Atkins, at Wharfedale House, Swadlingcote, on Sunday 15 February 2009. In attendance from CCPC were Patsy Price, Ron Price and Alan Brentnall.

The idea behind the workshop is to encourage a level of quality training in caving clubs without these clubs necessarily having to resort to using a CIC for all SRT training (which is currently the official BCA line).

It isn't a new set of certificates – simply a set of principles upon which to base club training such that cavers can develop their skills within the less formal atmosphere of club caving. In practice, it's a logical way of looking at practices which already exist.

The accent, as ever, is on safety and conservation. Clubs should try to ensure that all SRT training involves techniques which are safe, and which preserve the caving environment. As long as these two basic factors are catered for, then the training should not be too prescriptive – it should leave freedom of choice regarding type and make of equipment, and also regarding specific techniques.

The scheme divides SRT training into three levels, and the idea is that a caver should be trained to a particular level by suitably experienced cavers. This should then be followed by suitable caving trips which reinforce that training so that the caver is eventually comfortable and proficient at that level.

Note that this is specifically SRT training. Prior to taking the Level 1 training, a caver should have experienced several caving trips, and these trips should have included some easy pitch work – including abseiling.

The three levels are described as follows:-

Level 1: At this level, the caver should be able to kit him / herself up correctly, and, under the supervision of an experienced caver, be able to safely follow simple traverse lines, to prussic, to reverse prussic and to abseil simple (no rebelay or deviations) pitches.

[Note that reverse prussicking is introduced at the earliest level. It is considered that the ability to go and come down a rope without getting off at the top and without switching to abseiling is a fundamental investment in technique.]

Level 2: At this level, the caver should, under the supervision of an experienced caver, be able to pass deviations and rebelay, and should be capable of dealing with more advanced traverse lines. The caver should generally be more self-reliant and confident.

Level 3: This level addresses problem-solving and some self-rescue techniques and should result in a caver who is totally self-reliant, capable of de-rigging pitches and who can make judgement calls on rigging matters. Generally the caver should now be a handy and useful member of a caving team.

Caving Equipment. It was stressed that a tyro caver will rely heavily upon the knowledge of more experienced club members when it comes to kit. Ideally, there should be some club equipment which can be borrowed while the novice decides what he / she needs to buy, and hopefully this club equipment would represent whatever different options are currently available. It is essential that this equipment is of a suitable standard – in particular cowstails should be checked regularly for abrasion and wear, they should have well-dressed, tight knots and they should be replaced at least every 12 months.

I was recommended this course by Nigel back in December 2009 because he thought that I would find it interesting and informative, and, indeed, I found much food for thought. Unfortunately we started the day quite late and some very interesting and thought-provoking discussions meant that the whole syllabus couldn't be fully covered - but I am sure that we all got the general idea, and that we each picked up something new to bring back.

Although I am not CCPC's Training Officer, I have, like many other members, often found myself in a position where I was effectively training somebody else – at one of the Upper Limits sessions, or on a CCPC trip underground, for instance. Newer members will rely on old hands to pass on to them good techniques which they will be able to use during their caving lives to enhance their experience and to improve their safety. I think formalising the process of training and staging it in this way is a very good idea – it would help a member to understand more what his / her capabilities are, and it will also help more experienced club members put together inspirational trips which encourage and challenge members so that they can develop their caving without having all the epics and nightmares which used to be so common!!!

Alan Brentnall.

It's a pity that so few clubs and training officers (if other clubs have them) showed such little interest in the topic of "training beginners". Editor.

Hope you all have had a good Xmas, once you've recovered from New Year celebrations and bought your new diary you might want to enter the following information.

Wot's On in 2010.

Jan. 4 AGM, 10 Old Ash Mine 16 Buffet meal, 23 Roaring Hole,
Feb 1 Mtg, 7 Swinsto, 6-13 Morocco, 27 Lloyds Spar Mine
Mar 1 Mtg, 21 DCRO trng, 27 Oxlow,
Apr 11 Easegill, 12 Mtg, 24 Slaughter Stream
May 3 Mtg, 9 Provi-Dow, 29-30 Nenthead
Jun 6 Hardrawkin/Sunset, 7 Mtg, 19 Pip-Link
Jul 3 DCRO rmg, 4 Smeltnill, 5 Mtg, 17 Pwl Dwfn
Aug 1 Notts Pot, 2 Mtg, 21 Stoney Mid,
Sept 4 Dis Pot 6 Mtg, 12 Ireby Fell, 18 DCRO trng +mtg & meal 25 Notts 2

Oct 4 Mtg, 10 Red Moss, 23 Swildons,
Nov 1 Mtg, 14 Peak Cavern, 27 Easegill,
Dec 5 Bull Pot, 6 Mtg, 18 Jack Pot.

These are the trips (and meetings) arranged so far. Regulars will know that many other trips take place mid-week and weekends. These are arranged on an ad hoc basis, usually through the Yahoo group. If there is something missing that you are desperate to do then contact Darren – but you may have to wait till 2011 if a permit is required.

NB. The “Yahoo Group” has been updated – if you have inadvertently been removed then get in touch and Jenny will send you another invite. How will you know if you’ve been excommunicated?- this will be the last e mail you get via Yahoo! If you don’t get any more in the next week or so you know what to do!

Advance warning: A group of us plan on spending 2 weeks in Kazakhstan in August 2010. The plan is to do some “high-level” trekking with maybe the odd peak thrown in. Cost should be “less than £1000” plus flight (about £500). Interested? Get in touch.

Hope you have a cold, muddy, wet but enjoyable 2010!!