

MINUTES OF THE NCA EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON SATURDAY 3rd June 1995  
AT THE SHREWSBURY ARMS, EASTGATE STREET, STAFFORD

The participants assembled outside the locked door of the Staffs C.C.S&S.C. AT 11:00. At 11:20 the decision was taken to go to the Shrewsbury Arms, just down the street, where we were greeted by the landlady and had a quiet corner to hold our meeting and drink our drinks. We can recomend it to other committees with strong caving (cash conserving apart from alcohol) attitudes.

1/	Attendance	Owen Clarke	NCA Equipment Officer	(Voting)
		Adrian Fawcett	C.C.C. Equipment Officer	(Voting)
		Les Williams	C.S.C.C. Equipment Officer	(Voting)
		Mark Lowe	D.C.A. Anchor Placing Team Representative	
		Les Sykes	C.N.C.C. Secretary	

- 2/ Apologies for Absence were received from Jenny Potts and Ivan Wooley
- 3/ After the addition of Sykes after Les in section 4.1, the minutes were approved as a true record of the January 28th Meeting.
- 4/ The letter received from Mr. R. Laybourn of Hilti G.B. was read out. Les Sykes commented that in subsequent telephone conversations Mr. Laybourn reversed his recommendations after being informed about the nature of caves and mountain limestone. OC commented that a written document can only be overturned by a subsequent written document. LS will contact Mr. Laybourn again.
- 5/ LS stated that placings are continuing and that no anchors have become in any way defective in the last two years in the North.

At this point the difficult problem of proof testing was discussed. Even more time was spent on this than on whether must or shall is a better way of conveying a specific, binding instruction. The discussion ended without a consensus being reached, but hopefully the exchange of information will enable a better understanding to be reached on both sides.

- 6/ ML reported that there had been six faulty achors placed in Derbyshire which were attributed to the use of an inadequately cleaned detergent squeezy bottle for the flushing water. OC questioned how the defective anchors were able to rotate if the holes had been grooved in accordance with diagram 3, Page 3 of the Permanent resin bonded anchor Installation guide lines updated 26.07.1994. LS replied that these written instructions are merely a guide and can be modified at the discretion of the placing team based on verbal information given during the training session.
- 7/ LW reported that 15 Anchors had been placed in the Mendips without any indication of weakness. The only problems were the attitudes of some cavers resistant to any innovation.
- 8/ It was agreed that no action would be taken on the verbal reports of defective anchors.

continued overleaf.

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- 9/ Many minor textual amendments were made to the NCA Bolting Programme Draft 2 (now Anchor Placement Programme) and some more significant changes. The significant changes were
- 3.1 Removal of the recording of the names of site selectors and the reason. (Placer already identified and too much paperwork).
  - 4.2 Removal of the alternative stating that proof testing is undesirable, leaving the situation that proof testing must not affect the anchor strength, and be simple and safe and properly documented.
  - 8.1 Overall documentation to be kept by the association, no location specified.
- Les Sykes agreed to co-operate with Nick Williams to produce the revised document.
- 10/ It was agreed that no changes would be made to Permanent Resin Bonded Anchors. Training, Testing and Documentation (26.07.94) at this date.
- 11/ It was agreed that no changes would be made to Permanent Resin Bonded Anchors. Installation /Guide Lines (26.07.94) at this date.
- 12/ Due to the absence of unexplained failures it was agreed that no consideration is required on prevention of defects.
- 13/ OC reported on rope testing and the report given after testing, which includes a statement of whether the rope is suitable for continued SRT use, and, if so, when the rope should be sent for retesting. LS suggested that a clear statement must be made in future making it clear that the report only applies to the 2.5 metre test length, and that it is the responsibility of the sender to ensure that this is visibly the worst part of the rope.
- 14/ The meeting was against applying a fixed charge for rope testing because of the risk of stopping the essential supplies of ropes to be tested from which a large number of results can be drawn to compensate for the imprecise nature of the information on use. The appeal for donations has yielded £75 this year, which is not too different from the result of a £2 per test charge. The action of the NCA Treasurer in removing money from the Rope Testing Fund without prior consent or even discussion with the Equipment Committee was sharply criticised, even though the reason for this understood.
- 15/ The decision on the date of the next meeting was left until after the NCA council meeting, in case a unified approach was required.
- 16/ Les Williams made the excellent suggestion that he should be given as early as possible some indication of the points that would be discussed at the next Equipment Committee meeting, so that he could obtain the views of CSCC members on these points.

All decisions were reached by consensus rather than by voting. This was a conscious decision on my part, since consensus correctly reflects the majority of activists at the meeting, whereas the rules of the NCA would have produced a voting majority of interested onlookers, which would not have been appropriate in these circumstances.