

## **CSCC Equipment Officers Report AGM 2011**

### **Equipment & Techniques Committee Meeting Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March - Alvechurch**

The meeting was attended by myself and Dave Cooke. Due to the potentially contentious nature of one of the agenda items I felt that it was prudent to have someone else with me who had a more detailed knowledge of CSCC's history with the BCA Anchor Placement Scheme.

The item in question was Item 6 on the agenda and read "*CSCC participation in E&T activities*".

An excerpt from the minutes of this part of the meeting is below:

#### *CSCC Participation in E&T activities*

*NW explained that this item had been tabled following a request from CNCC and DCA. On behalf of CNCC, GJ explained that they had requested this to be added to the agenda because the response which CSCC had made to the letter requesting return of the E+T equipment had left them wondering what CSCC's relationship with the Committee is. In the view of RD, GJ and LS, CSCC should withdraw from the committee completely if it was not going to recognise the authority of the Committee to control the equipment held in its name.*

*FL explained that CSCC has voluntarily withdrawn from the Anchor Replacement Scheme but not from the Committee as a whole. CSCC were of the view that the equipment belongs to BCA as a whole and that therefore only BCA Council should have the right to request its return. RK said that he did not feel sufficiently well briefed to comment on the issue between CSCC and the other representatives but that he viewed that it would be a shame if CSCC were forced to withdraw from the committee, a view which was echoed by AL and BM. NW said that he found it odd that CSCC should withdraw from the bolting programme but that it should still seek to influence the content of the policy in areas other than those which are the contentious ones which CSCC have problems with. The policy is a political as well as a technical document and although there may be sound technical contributions which CSCC could make, in the current circumstances the political considerations outweigh the technical ones and it might be better if CSCC refrained from any comment on the policy in this forum.*

*Following further discussion, GJ proposed the following motion:*

*"Until CSCC formally agree to participate fully in E+T activities, they should withdraw from attending E+T meetings". BM suggested a compromise might be to restrict CSCC's right to vote on matters relating to the policy. GJ said this had been considered but in view of the fact that CSCC seemed to be determined to ignore the will of the Committee, this option was not considered to be a viable alternative. A vote was then taken, the result being three for and three against the motion. The Chairman therefore used his casting vote in favour of the status quo, and the motion was defeated.*

### **BCA Council Meeting Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March - Alvechurch**

Regarding the request for the return of equipment by the BCA E&T Committee, Hayley Clarke (CSCC Secretary) sent a letter to Nick Williams (E&T Convenor) stating the position of CSCC and stating that we would only return the equipment at the request of BCA Council. This matter was referred to the following council meeting. Prior to the meeting, Nick Williams circulated his officers report and due to the proposal contained in it, a response was drafted by myself and Dave Cooke and circulated to officers for comment. The excerpt of Nick Williams Officers report and the full CSCC response submitted to BCA are included below:

#### *Equipment & Techniques Committee Convenor's Report*

*1. Copyright: Les Sykes and Bob Dearman have made a declaration of the transfer of their interest in the copyright of the BCA Anchor Replacement Policy (which they wrote). A copy of their statement is in Appendix 1.*

*While I think it should be acknowledged that this is a significant step, in that it is I believe, the first time that copyright has actually been assigned to BCA for anything which is published in its name (a matter which Council may wish to consider in the broader context of all BCA publications at another time) the conditions of the transfer raise some problems in our current circumstances.*

*If we accept the document on the terms it contains then we have a problem with the fact that significant sections of the Policy, including some of the drawings, have been plagiarised by CSCC for their own document, which has itself been published in circumstances which do not meet the conditions set by the transfer of copyright. Les and Bob may expect us to take action on this point (although it should be noted that they have themselves failed to take action to date). If we refuse to accept the transfer then we may well find ourselves without a policy document.*

*I am afraid I do not have a solution to offer Council on this matter, other than to suggest that Council should note the transfer document and request that E+T Committee work to resolve the issues which arise from it. Some will see this as a cop-out although I do not agree: I think it puts the discussions back to the forum where there is the best chance of them ultimately being resolved and prevents Council from wasting time on a fruitless discussion which might well result in other unintended consequences.*

*2. Equipment currently in the possession of CSCC: I need to draw Council's attention to the correspondence between the Committee and CSCC (Appendix 2) regarding the return of equipment which was passed to CSCC for their use as part of the anchor replacement programme. The correspondence itself is self-explanatory, although it should be noted that my letter to CSCC was issued on the basis of a properly constituted resolution that the request be made for CSCC to return the equipment.*

*CSCC's response was presented to the E+T meeting on 12th March. The Committee found it regrettable that CSCC has failed to recognise the authority of the Committee to retain control of its own equipment. Feelings at the meeting ran sufficiently high that a motion was proposed that "Until CSCC formally agree to participate fully in E+T activities they should withdraw from attending E+T meetings". This motion was hung with three votes in favour and three against and so it was defeated on the basis of my casting vote as Chairman in favour of the status quo. Although the motion was defeated, the strength of feeling which underlies it should not be underestimated and I regret that this matter will remain an issue until both sides can grow out of their current unerring ability to pick a fight while failing to see the wider consequences of their actions.*

*I am prepared to permit my name to go forward as Convenor of the E+T Committee for the next three-year term, and so will doubtless have to return to these issues on the Committee in due course. However, with regard to the particular issue of the return of the equipment and anchors currently held by CSCC, I am instructed to ask Council to take a decision to resolve this matter.*

*Council will clearly wish to discuss this before attempting to reach a decision. In order to save time in the meeting, and in the expectation that a vote will be required, I propose the following Resolution:*

*"That Council affirms the authority of the Equipment and Techniques Committee to retain control of equipment and supplies which are held by it in the name of the Association. Council requests CSCC to respect the content of the letter dated 21 October 2010 from the E+T Convenor, and return the equipment forthwith".*

*Nick Williams, March 2011*

## *Council of Southern Caving Clubs (CSCC) Position Relating to the Return of Bolting Equipment & Sundries*

### *Copyright*

*The CSCC feels that it should reply to the E&T Convenor's report. We feel that BCA would be unwise to accept copyright via the letter submitted by Bob Dearman and Les Sykes (Appendix 1). In fact, the content of the letter does not transfer copyright and is so restrictive and conditional that in effect it assigns copyright to Bob Dearman and Les Sykes. Copyright of the IPTD document is unclear in law as well as in fact and would require a court case to determine if copyright lies with BCA or with Bob Dearman and Les Sykes. If BCA accepts the letter, then copyright is definitely with Bob Dearman and Les Sykes. BCA may well have given away their copyright.*

*In fact, the issue of copyright and indeed the accusations of plagiarism may in the near future no longer be valid, as at the last E&T Committee meeting a vote was taken to refuse to supply any of the anchors purchased by BCA from Jonathan Simms to CSCC or share any of the testing data, even though at the previous E&T Committee meeting a vote was taken to allow the supply of anchors for use in Matienzo which would not be part of the scheme (see minute 9.0 from 11th September 2010 E&T Committee meeting). Therefore, CSCC are now forced to seek an alternative anchor which will most likely have a differing recommended installation method, requiring the CSCC documents to be updated and further diverging the two schemes.*

*CSCC are happy to support Nick Williams suggestion to work together with the other members of the E&T Committee to resolve the copyright issue. However, it is worth noting that the reason for the similarities between the documents arose due to a sincere intent on the part of CSCC to work to harmonise the IPTD and the CSCC scheme into a single program once differences of opinion had been resolved.*

### *Equipment currently in the possession of CSCC for the purposes of anchor placement*

*As a result of the current differences of opinion regarding the technical content and distribution of the IPTD, the CSCC temporarily withdrew from the BCA Anchor Placement Scheme. The CSCC then published a set of interim documents to allow us to fulfil our member obligations and place bolts in the Southern Region in a controlled manner until a resolution to the situation could be found. These bolts are being placed for the benefit of all cavers and not just CSCC member clubs.*

*The main reasons for the withdrawal of CSCC from the BCA anchor placement scheme were:*

- a) Restricted availability of the document for approval: Due to the way that CSCC is structured, only the club member representatives hold a vote, not the CSCC officers. Therefore, approval of any document can only be reached following consultation with the club representatives and by default the committees of those member clubs. CSCC also feels that any document of this nature should be freely available to all BCA members.*
- b) Assessment and revalidation procedure: We accept that it is within the scope of the scheme to assess an anchor placers ability to place an anchor. However, we do not feel that it is the responsibility of the scheme to assess their other skills, including SRT and rigging. In fact the assessment of the scheme had evolved to "self-appointed expert" status, where officers of BCA were approving their own professional fees in direct contravention of BCA's Constitution.*
- c) Technical inadequacies: The IPTD focuses solely on the use of a single type of resin bonded anchor, in the type of limestone found in Yorkshire and Derbyshire. It is widely accepted that differing rock types require differing types, numbers and locations of anchors to provide a safe placement. Put simply, the formulaic application of the IPTD methods in differing rock strata and type may lead to accelerated failure. Furthermore, as BCA has officially trained and validated the people carrying out these anchor placements, it retains at least partial liability. In addition, only mechanical wear has been considered as a failure mode, not corrosion.*

*d) Skills prerequisites: The IPTD requires that all covers wishing to be considered for training must be competent in SRT and rigging techniques. CSCC feels that the SRT competence of the individual is irrelevant unless the anchors are being placed for SRT purposes. If the anchors are being placed for ladder and lifeline (more common in the CSCC region) or rescue purposes, then it is those skills and competencies which are relevant, not SRT.*

*At a meeting of the Equipment & Techniques (E&T) Committee held on 11th September 2010, the members attending stated that the equipment supplied to CSCC for the purposes of bolting belonged to the BCA Anchor Placement Scheme, not the E&T Committee or BCA, and voted for its return from CSCC.*

*This matter was discussed at the next CSCC meeting. We feel that the equipment belongs to BCA, not to the Anchor Placement Scheme. How can the equipment belong to a scheme that has no Constitution, Officers, bank account and has been entirely funded by BCA? It was the feeling of the meeting that as the CSCC was still part of the E&T Committee, part of BCA, and still placing anchors on behalf of BCA for the benefit of all BCA members, we have a legitimate requirement to retain the equipment. In fact it would be nonsensical for BCA to request the return of the equipment to the E&T Committee, only for CSCC to purchase new equipment to be funded by BCA.*

*The CSCC believes that the resolution effectively expelling CSCC from the E&T Committee, tabled and voted upon at the last E&T Meeting was against the BCA constitution with reference to section 7.2. This concern was raised at the meeting. Fortunately the resolution failed, but if it had succeeded it would have had far reaching implications for BCA.*

*The CSCC continues to support the work done by the Equipment & Techniques committee in all areas. The letter submitted as appendix 2b was not intended to denigrate the workings or function of the E&T Committee, but was simply stating our response to the request made to us as appendix 2a.*

*In light of the above, we suggest a counter proposal:*

*“The council affirms that ultimately it retains control of all equipment bought by BCA. Therefore, as CSCC are continuing to provide a service on behalf of BCA for the benefit of all covers, they shall retain the equipment currently in their possession.”*

An excerpt of the minutes of the BCA council meeting discussing this issue is included below:

*10. Equipment & Techniques Officer’s Report (written report previously circulated)*

*NW: Is the response presented in Appendix 3 an official CSCC Position?*

*DC: It has been agreed by the CSCC Officers as well as it is possible to do within the time scales.*

*NW: Does not view this as a particularly helpful way of dealing with things. What has happened is that people have found themselves pushed into various corners and it would seem appropriate that dust is allowed to settle. The best thing Council can do is disband the E&T Committee, as the potential ramifications of this issue for BCA as an organisation, far outweigh the impact of disbanding the E&T Committee.*

*CJ: It seems that CSCC don’t agree with the decisions of the E&T Committee and have decided to bring this to Council. This does not set a very good precedent for BCA.*

*DC: We are trying to help the process forward.*

*NW: Doesn’t feel this document helps move the position forward.*

*GJ: Feels the issue with the IPTD is history. We have come to an agreement to disagree and CSCC have decided to take themselves out of the Anchor Scheme. As a result E&T felt it was appropriate to request for the return of the equipment. The IPTD document is not relevant here. However it is appropriate that Council endorse the democratic position taken by one of its committees.*

*CJ: What will happen if Council decides something today? Will CSCC agree with it?*

*FL: It is our intention to do so.*

*DC: Does have concerns about the democratic way that E&T has reached decisions.*

*AE: Became involved in this whole issue a year ago and met some very intransigent people at the time. Feels most of this is technical detail that shouldn't be brought here.*

*DC: The issues being debated here are BCA's copyright and also BCA's equipment. The business has been brought to Council by E&T, rather than CSCC.*

*NW: E&T reports to Council and if a Member Body has a disagreement with a decision made, it is proper to bring it to this meeting.*

*DC: The former Committee was not fit for purpose, but there are serious concerns about disbanding it.*

*GJ: In what way was it "not fit for purpose"?*

*DC: CSCC feel that the Committee has co-opted people to stack the votes, so that CNCC and DCA in effect have 2 votes each.*

*NW: The Committee has followed standard voting procedures for a BCA Standing Committee.*

*DC: Originally a document was produced by the Committee that BCA Council couldn't view. This is wrong.*

*FL: Feels there is actually a lot of common ground and there is potential to move forward. FL would be very sad to see the Committee disbanded. FL has faith in the technical competence of the Committee and believes there are ways around the current difficulties. There have been technical suggestions that have been made and the ownership of the document is making this difficult. If people can step back a bit, and look at CSCC's additional information, there is a way forward.*

*GJ: The document produced by CSCC in response to the IPTD had something like 10 areas of concern. Only 2 of these were not altered following discussion at the E&T committee. These were SRT competence and publishing. There are compromises available that may get around some of this. However if you are working above a hole, E&T believe you need certain skills to make sure you are safe while doing this.*

*IW: There is obvious middle ground here and arbitration seems the sensible way forward.*

*AE: To some extent we thought we were doing this when NW took on the role of E&T Convenor.*

*NW: People have been put into corners and this has been very unhelpful. NW could have taken a stronger line with the various parties, but tried to delay the process as long as possible to provide time. Regrettably CSCC chose to put forward a response today. Likewise, on the other side of the debate, the copyright issue has been brought up. NW feels his position is now untenable, as none of this was put past him first.*

*FL: Was being constantly asked to respond from many areas, and felt under considerable pressure to do so.*

*JP: We need to separate two issues here, one of which is copyright and one of which is equipment. The copyright issue does not need dealing with now. However CSCC have removed themselves from the national*

*anchor placement system all together. Therefore it would seem reasonable to expect them to return the equipment.*

*IW: We are missing the important part here. We used to have a national anchor scheme and we are discussing the side issues here.*

*JC: Could we have a standard set of instructions with regional variations if appropriate as appendices?*

*AE: The two real issues here are tiny.*

*JC: From the point of view of copyright I have no ownership of a document I produce at work.*

*LW: Actually the authors want to transfer the rights to use the document, but all control of the document rests with the authors. This is not a transfer of copyright at all.*

*GJ: If the publication were made available on the BCA website, but not in a printable format, would this help things?*

*LW: We cannot speak for our members.*

*DC: A rep is generally empowered to agree to things unless instructed differently by the Committee they represent. They are also allowed to say that they don't feel able to express a view.*

*LW: At the moment our members haven't discussed the document contents because they haven't been allowed to see it. Thinks the problem might be cleared in this way though.*

*CJ: People need the authority to make a decision if arbitration is going to work. Otherwise it doesn't. Suggests CSCC and E&T empower someone to make a decision on their part.*

*MC: Was it the intention of the wording about being "competent in SRT", actually that people should be competent to protect themselves while installing anchors. If this is the case, perhaps the wording should be that there should be "suitable fall protection"?*

*DC: If you can deliver the document being on the website, CSCC would probably be willing to accept this resolves one of the main issues.*

*NW: There is a simple understanding to the SRT issue, and this is to confine the word "SRT" to SRT placements. There is other business, such as fixed aids, for E&T to deal with too. The non-SRT issue could be dealt with then.*

*AE: Should we now have an E&T Special Committee to try to take this further?*

*NW: Are people willing to accept me as arbitrator? Do CSCC need to go back and take everything to their members?*

*FL: Would you be willing to have technical discussions?*

*NW: Yes, but we would also need to have individual discussions first.*

*SH: People are not in a position to make decisions here today. These need to be dealt with later, but the aim must be for agreement.*

*GJ: Currently CSCC don't support E&T. We need an endorsement of E&T's authority. This can be with timescales or something else as appropriate.*

*FL: Will happily withdraw CSCC's proposal if NW is willing to withdraw his.*

*BP: Could we take the first line of NW's proposal?*

*NW: Would like to remove the word "forthwith" and replace it with "... if requested by the arbitrator."*

*Proposal 1: "Council authorises the E&T Convenor to act as an arbitrator in the concerns of the IPTD, provided the document is made available on the web in a non-printable format at the earliest convenience."*

*Prop: LW Sec: IW agreed unanimously*

*Proposal 2: "Council affirms the authority of the Equipment and Techniques Committee to retain control of equipment and supplies which are held by it in the name of the Association. Council requests CSCC to respect the content of the letter dated 21st October 2010 from the E+T Convenor, and return the equipment if requested by the arbitrator."*

*Prop: NW Sec: FL agreed unanimously*

*Action 70: NW to oversee the implementation of resolutions relating to the E&T Committee.*

Therefore, the current status is that we still hold equipment for the purposes of placing anchors on behalf of BCA and are waiting for discussions with Nick Williams to resolve the issues surrounding the BCA Scheme and IPTD.

I received a telephone call from Nick Williams late on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May to advise me that he had held a meeting with Bob Dearman who had not agreed to publish the IPTD on the web as per the above proposal, but that the document would be made available to CSCC officers, member reps and their clubs for comment.

However, one area which is still in contention is the requirement for SRT competence when placing anchors rather than simply that the installer must protect themselves whilst working at height.

It is the hope of BCA that CSCC will now approve the document and move forward. Unfortunately things are rarely that simple. I have currently seen no evidence of the due diligence conducted with the BCA anchor supplier Jonathan Simms. I am concerned that the manufacturer is not conducting the performance testing and that this is being done by BCA who have no control of the manufacturing process or selection of test pieces and will be by default accepting liability in the event of an incident. I am especially concerned that BCA has reached this position when there are manufacturers in the market place who will supply similar anchors with all of the appropriate testing and acceptance of liability.

As a result I have requested the following information from Nick Williams to satisfy this council that BCA has conducted appropriate due diligence in selection of a supplier and that the manufacturing process is safe, controlled and repeatable:

1. The information recorded on the batch manufacturing sheets and a completed sample document showing operator sign off and process reference documents.
2. A list of materials processes and copies of the written procedures for each of those processes.
3. A list of any international standards used during the manufacturing process.
4. A sample thermocouple trace for the annealing process and confirmation that a trace is kept as part of the batch record for each batch.
5. A copy or summary of any internal testing procedures and sample results.
6. What is a standard batch size?
7. What percentage or number of each run do you take as samples for testing?
8. Which portions of the run are these test samples taken from (start and end of run or start end and midpoint sample)?
9. How long do you keep the test pieces and results for?

10. How do you ensure reproducibility within the batch?
11. What is your procedure should any of the test pieces fail the standard tests? Supply copy of written procedure.
12. Is a mill certificate (3.1B) or certificate of conformity supplied with each batch?

## Progress with Current Anchor Placement Projects

The following anchor placement projects are in progress:

Swildons, Black Hole: Approved by CSCC, Scope agreed by FL and DGC, six anchors required

Swildons, Shatter Pot: Approved by CSCC, Scope agreed by FL and DGC, two anchors required

Parfitts: Approved by CSCC, Scope agreed by FL and GP, two anchors required

GB Cave, Ladder Dig: Requires CSCC Approval, Scope agreed by FL and DGC, two anchors and chain set required

White Pit, 40 Backs: Requires CSCC Approval, Scope to be agreed

White Pit, Prophecy Pot: Requires CSCC Approval, Scope to be agreed

White Pit, St Alactites: Requires CSCC Approval, Scope to be agreed

Charterhouse Cave, Hall of Time: Requires CSCC Approval, Scope to be agreed

Charterhouse Cave, Jet Pitch: Requires CSCC Approval, Scope to be agreed

## New Equipment Purchased

A new drill and Peli Case have been purchased for CSCC use. This is a Bosch Compact 36V Lithium Ion SDS Hammer Drill. New drill bits have not been bought yet as which ones we buy will be determined by the discussions on the new anchor supplier.

## New Anchor Supplier

Following CSCC's decision to voluntarily temporarily withdraw from the BCA Anchor Placement Scheme and the subsequent decision of the BCA E&T Committee to refuse supply of anchors purchased by BCA to CSCC, I have been investigating alternative sources of anchors for use by the CSCC Anchor Placement Scheme.

I have been having extensive conversations with a supplier in Germany called Bolt Products. The owner Jim Titt is English and has done a lot of design work for DMM (BCA's previous anchor supplier). More information can be found at [www.bolt-products.com](http://www.bolt-products.com). I have gone through the due diligence process detailed above with Bolt Products and am satisfied that they have sufficient process control and test history to allow us to confidently use their products. In addition, they make recommendations for anchor lengths based on rock compression tests, which means that the liability for anchor selection lies with them. I have not reproduced the due diligence information here as it is commercial in confidence. However, if anyone is interested I can go through the information with them off line.

For our anchors I propose that we use the twisted leg 8mm design in 316 stainless steel. Bolt products also supply chain sets etc. which is useful considering the variety of challenges we face here on Mendip with fixed aids.