

Equipment and Techniques officers Report 2017

Another reasonably quiet year on the E & T front. BCA E&T committee have again been dealing with anchor issues, been aware of equipment recalls and the concerns of durability and wear rates of items of rope ascent equipment.

We are currently revising the advise on anchor inspection for cavers and as yet these details are not quite finalised. Once the wording has been agreed this advise will be widely distributed together with a reminder on details on how cavers in the region can request anchor placements under the BCA scheme.

A number of regions, including Cambrian, have been continuing anchor testing on twisted shaft anchors of both the existing BP (Bolt Products) 8 and a new 6 mm diameter anchor of the same design. Concerns regarding conservation issues at the end of life of these anchors are being considered. Extraction without damaging the rock and the possibility of reusing the existing (undamaged?) hole are being investigated. Whilst I'm pleased that removal of these anchors is not easy we need to consider the future. Anyone is more than welcome to get involved with this and any future test programs. I'm currently testing at Penwyllt "Party quarry".

With conservation and replacement concerns E&T are investigating alternative designs to the BP twisted shaft replacement. Although there has been approval of the IC anchor, the manufacturer is currently unable to meet demands and only the CNCC region has the benefit of these anchors. However they do meet the criteria regarding BCA requirements, require a smaller diameter hole and can be extracted without damaging the rock.

I have only had requests for anchor placements in OFD at the Columns pitch and for the "step across" on the route to the Northern Lights in OFD2. A reminder of the availability of the placement scheme in the region will be forthcoming.

Cambrian Caving Council currently has 5 approved BCA anchor installers distributed throughout the region.

I'm happy to continue as the Cambrian Caving Council E&T Officer if elected to do so

Vince Allkins

CCC E&T officer