

2nd May 1987

Cathedral Cavern

MEET REPORT

SATURDAY 2ND MAY TRAINING MEET AT CATHEDRAL CAVERN

Members Present.

A. C-P·Thomas..... Meet Leader.

Mark Scott

Sheila Barker

Guy Jones

Paul Tinewell

Robin Westerman

Chris Jones

Alistair Lings

Techniques Practised

Performance

AbseilingSatisfactory

PrussickingInefficient

Change over, prussik to descentStill need to be talked through these

Change over, descent to ascent.....Manoeuvres and in some cases physically assisted.

Techniques Outstanding

Rebelay ascent and descent

Passing rope join, ascent and descent.

Deviation.

Passing rope protectors.

Rigging Techniques.

At the end of the meet, personal S.R.T. gear check lists (to assist members on choice of gear to buy) along with references to S.R.T. technical books (for further study) were issued to those present.

Many thanks to A.L., C.J. and S.C-P-Thomas for generous loan of personal equipment and thanks again to A.L. and C.J. for kind assistance on the day.

Meet Leaders Notes

Apart from the initial abseil, all manoeuvres were practiced on a rope passed over the bough of a tree. The rope passing over the bough and down to a suitably belayed figure of 8, italian hitch or autostop, either of which can be locked off or used at will to release the rope in a controlled manner.

This system allows a long continuous prussic by releasing the rope gradually as the person 'climbs' or, if someone becomes hopelessly stuck on practising a manoeuvre, allows for quick and easy novice retrieval, by simply lowering them to the ground. Manoeuvres can be practised literally a few feet from the ground, novices feel more

comfortable than they would if 20-30 feet up and instructors are better placed to advise, give demonstrations, render physical assistance and generally check everything is in order.

At risk of being termed a pain in the bum, as indeed it has been said by some, I feel I must stress that a training meet of this nature, purely introductory as it is, qualifies those attending for nothing more than an opportunity to kill themselves. To give an example, three of those attending took ages (say 4-5 mins) to execute the simple function of unloading their chest ascenders. This, despite continuous advice and demonstrations. On two occasions members had to be physically released due to fatigue. This sort of thing of course is down to nothing more than lack of familiarity with equipment and perhaps a personal lack of dexterity, but this will still be the level of that members performance underground, on the ropes, if he/she is encouraged to get down there too early. To my certain knowledge one member, after a bad experience on the ropes (he simply got stuck, flustered and panicky, again through nothing more than unfamiliarity) had to turn elsewhere to get further rope and S.R.T. training, (the club at the time provided nothing more than the introductory meet). It remains to be seen whether the new two tier training will fill the 'Dexterity Gap' but if members were discouraged, or at least not encouraged, from exposing themselves ahead of their expertise, then I feel we would be better discharging our responsibility, that which we have to those coming in to the club entrusting themselves to our guidance.

NOTE

The performance of techniques practised is of necessity a generalisation intended only to give a general view of the performance of those attending.

Anton 1/6/87