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Shute Shelve Cavern, Mendip. Photo by Linda Wilson.

Welcome to the second edition of the CSCC Newsletter and my first as Communications Officer. There's certainly been plenty going on in the region recently, from access and bolting to digging and rescues...

I'm sure few have managed to avoid news of the recent rescue of an injured caver from OFD, resulting in the longest underground stretcher carry in British caving history. I was proud to join the MCR contingent along with 43 other volunteers from the team to support what was ultimately a very successful rescue operation. As for many on the team, the casualty was a friend and a caving partner, so it was with some apprehension that I first entered the cave, however despite his injuries, George was in remarkable spirits, which he maintained throughout his ordeal. On behalf of the CSCC, I would like to wish George all the best for a speedy recovery and I look forward to seeing him underground again in the near future.

In the meantime, I look forward to seeing you all at the next general meeting of the CSCC, this Friday, 19th November at 19.00hrs via Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89971296850>

Meeting ID: 899 7129 6850

One tap mobile

+443300885830,,89971296850# United Kingdom

Agenda and officers reports are available in the usual place on the [CSCC website](#).

Peter Hall CSCC Communications Officer

comms@csc.org.uk

A letter from the Chair

Dear Southern Cavers,

It is just over a year since I first chaired a CSCC meeting, and as such this is a good time to take stock of how things are going. I became chair in an atmosphere of controversy, and I stood at the AGM in May on a platform of improving the transparency of how CSCC does business, increasing participation and improving relations with the BCA. I would like to think that progress has been made on all fronts, though there is still much to do.

On the subject of transparency, the most important change has been to create a communications officer role so that we can better ensure that news of all the good stuff that CSCC does can be disseminated not just to our member clubs but to all those affected by what we do, and this second edition of the CSCC newsletter is a great example of this. This communication is to my mind vital if we are to meet the second of my personal aims, that of increasing participation as more people are likely to get involved if they are aware of all the good that CSCC does for southern cavers.

On the front of participation, I felt that over the last 20 or so years that CSCC had drifted into a clique where limited participation (average voting attendance at general meetings was just 8) resulted in a few people being able to control the agenda and the result of any vote. This is in no way intended to be a slight on those who sat on the council in that time, but lack of external interest led to limited participation and as a result poor representation of southern cavers. In the time since I have been Chair the average voting attendance has been 12, a modest increase though more participation would be very welcome. It should be noted that we currently have 34 members and it would be wonderful to see more of these attending regularly. I don't think I can take credit for this increase, I think a large factor in this has been the move to virtual meetings which means they are more accessible to those who would otherwise have had to travel, it also means timing can be more flexible. An added bonus has been that several people have commented that they have found that the virtual meetings are far less intimidating, and I would hope that those who attend CSCC meetings would agree that there is now a more respectful atmosphere than at some times in the past. In addition a motion was passed at the AGM to investigate how CSCC might better represent those who cave in the south but are not members of CSCC member clubs. Work is ongoing and expect to see more of this in coming months.

In the case of relations with the BCA, I think giant strides have been made despite the turbulence apparent within BCA council and executive over the last year. For too long CSCC had a somewhat toxic relationship with BCA, not only often in opposition to national policy but frequently expressing that opposition in less than constructive ways. I would like to think that over the last 12 months that CSCC has again become a functioning part of BCA, providing constructive input to council and a number of working groups and standing committees. Being constructive doesn't mean agreeing with everything BCA does, but it does mean stating concerns respectfully and accepting democratic decisions. Rebuilding such relationships is not easy and has taken as much effort from BCA as it has from CSCC.

So final message from me is I hope that CSCC is moving in the right direction, if you disagree let me know, or even better come along and get involved! CSCC is your organisation and the officers and club representatives are here to do what you want us to.

Finally I have to say thanks to the wonderful team of officers who do all the real work for CSCC. We have a cracking team at the moment, and we have a vacancy for a treasurer for which a willing volunteer would be most welcome.

A busy month for MCR



Rescued: George Linnane in Sendero Luminoso in War of the Worlds North, Ogof Draenen. Photo by Mark Burkey, used with his kind permission.

After a quiet year, [Mendip Cave Rescue](#) received two call-outs in quick succession. On 21st October MCR were called out to an overdue party in Eastwater Cavern, trapped by rising floodwater. Less than four weeks later MCR volunteers were back on call assisting in a major operation after SWCC member George Linnane was badly injured after a fall in OFD.

Incident 21st October 2021: Mendip Cave Rescue were called by [Avon and Somerset Police](#) via SARCALL at 00:49 on 21st October 2021, concerning an overdue party visiting Eastwater Cavern in Priddy. A mixed group of 5 cavers were trapped beyond the entrance boulder ruckle due to rising floodwater. Mendip Cave Rescue

improvements in the weather. This allowed a group of 4 from Mendip Cave Rescue to enter the cave, locate the trapped party and escort them out of the cave. They were unharmed and were taken back to the [Wessex Cave Club HQ at Upper Pitts](#) to change and warm-up (thanks to the Wessex for their hospitality). The incident was closed at 04:28 and was attended by 7 MCR members in total.

Assistance with an incident 6th November 2021: Mendip Cave Rescue were informed at 16:57 on Saturday 6th November 2021 and put on standby for a major incident in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu ("OFD"), a major cave system in South Wales. A caver had sustained significant multiple injuries after a fall, at approximately 13:00 in the Smithy area of the cave and a protracted rescue had commenced, coordinated by our colleagues in [South & Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team](#). Over the course of the following 48+ hours, numerous MCR members attended the incident, working alongside members of other cave rescue teams from across the country, and assisted in slowly and carefully moving the casualty along the streamway and up and out of the OFD top entrance. The casualty was successfully taken to the surface and handed over to the waiting paramedics at 19:45 on Monday 8th November, approximately 55 hours after he had sustained the fall. Throughout this rescue, the casualty had shown remarkable resilience and we wish the casualty all the best for his recovery.

This incident was the largest cave rescue in the UK for many years, and attracted a large amount of media attention from various media sources, including the [BBC](#), the [Guardian](#), [MREW](#) and the [Metro](#). South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue have provided more details on their page.

J-Rat Digging Award 2021

J Rab

DIGGING AWARD 2021

Includes the presentation of the award to the winning team for 2021 followed by talks/presentations from entrants plus a Mendip digging update.

There will also be displays from active digs and recent finds.

Submissions over 50m in length by 31st Oct to: m.grass@btinternet.com

Keep on diggin'

Graphics by Gofzo

Saturday 20th November From 19.30hrs

Long Room Hunters Lodge Inn

It's that time of year again and entries have now closed for the annual digging award which will be held on 20th November in the 'long room' at The Hunters Lodge Inn, Priddy from 19:30hrs.

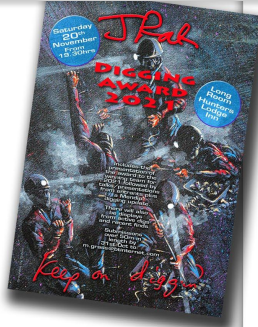
In addition to presentation of the "Golden Shovel" for the longest surveyed cave discovery of the year, guests will also be treated to posters, presentations and videos from many of the other active digs in Mendip and Scotland. Rumour has it, there may even be an update on the many recent discoveries on Portland.

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A Christmas Present for the digger in your life!?

Limited Edition Signed Prints by Mark 'Gonzo' Lumley

After the organisers received numerous enquiries about the background painting on the 2021 J'rat Digging Award poster, prints will be ordered on December 1 and available to those who have pre-ordered and paid in time for Christmas.

To pre-order contact Estelle. estellesandford@gmail.com before **28 Nov** and leave your email address.

Specify whether you want the 'Digging' or 'Ropework' print.

Free collection from Estelle on Mendip or add £5 p&p (Additional £5 for tube and small parcel fee. Mainland UK only).

A4 - £10 or A3 - £18.

(A4 - £15 or A3 - £23 if postage required)

If requiring p&p please also leave your full postal address



You can also buy both prints as a pair for a reduced price.

A4 - £18 or A3 - £34.

(A4 - £23 or A3 - £39 if postage required)



Lightfast prints on 250gsm art paper.

Painted from original sketches drawn during digs etc.

Cash or bank transfer. 20% of sales will be donated to Mendip Cave Rescue

Rhino Rift re-bolted



Andrew Atkinson working in Rhino Rift. Photo by Bartek Biela.

in Rhino Rift, following unauthorised work in the cave that left this route in a dangerous condition.

For years, the little frequented 'Right-Hand Route' in Rhino remained on 'spit' type anchors. However, during the summer, persons-unknown took it upon themselves to re-bolt the route using 'through-bolt' anchors. These unapproved anchors were inspected and found to be wanting, forcing a quick decision by CCC Ltd to ask CSCC to upgrade the route to approved IC resin anchors ('P-hangers'), before an accident occurred.

Where possible, the original spits and unapproved anchors have been removed entirely, however where this has not been possible, visiting cavers should be aware that only the new IC resin anchors should be used.

The newly re-bolted Right-Hand Route now provides a sporting alternative to the 'Direct Route' for more experienced SRT enthusiasts.

A rigging topo is available on the [Charterhouse Caving Company website](#).

New anchors in Swildon's

Following a successful application to the CSCC by Jake Baynes ([CSCC Newsletter - May 2021](#)), the Equipment Officer, Andrew Atkinson has installed 5 No. IC resin anchors in Approach Passage in Swildon's Hole, protecting the previously exposed traverse above the streamway.

A rigging topo will be made available in due course.

Access to Singing River Mine

The CSCC would like to remind cavers of the recent suspension of access to Singing River Mine, following a change of ownership.

An agreement is currently being negotiated with the new owners to ensure the best possible continued access for cavers; in the meantime please avoid visiting the site and keep an eye on the [CSCC website for any access updates](#).

BCA news



CSCC's BCA rep, Linda Wilson, reports on the latest national news.

The first contested election for the post of BCA chair was held in October, with acting chair Russell Myers being declared the winner after a period of electronic voting. Russell received 308 votes, with 266 for contender Rostam Namaghi. The uncontested post of secretary went to Allan Richardson and Steve Grey is now the newly elected Training Officer. Nigel Atkins and Josh White were voted in as Individual Representatives.

The proposal to merge the Training Committee and the Equipment Committee was passed, despite opposition from the Training Committee. How this will work in practice has not yet been determined. CSCC still has both an Equipment Officer (Andrew Atkinson) and a Training Officer (Dave Keegan) and these roles are unaffected by the change at national level. Andrew and Dave will continue to work together on all relevant matters and when the situation with the merged committee becomes clearer, they will work out how best to represent CSCC's interests in these areas at national level.

All options under the complicated proposal regarding s10.1 of the constitution (the 'non-interference' clause) failed to reach the necessary 70% threshold for constitutional change, so all three options failed, as a result, this clause remains unchanged. The Various other constitutional amendments were all passed. [A full breakdown of the results can be found on the BCA website.](#)

The date of the next BCA council meeting has not yet been set, as Howard Jones (Treasurer and Insurance Manager) has recently had surgery following an injury, which has delayed matters. It is likely that the next meeting will be held in December. I will circulate the papers by email when they are available.

Russell Myers has provided a short statement following his election, in response to a post on the UKcaving forum, and Russell has sent this for inclusion in this newsletter. I look forward to working with Russell on BCA Council as CSCC's rep, and very much support his comments. The recent OFD rescue shows that when it matters, cavers from all across the country pull together (quite literally!).

Linda Wilson CSCC BCA Representative

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A few words from the BCA Chair



Russell Myers. Photo extracted from him with the usual threats and menaces!

CSCC have received the following note from BCA's new chair, Russell Myers.

This is written by way of a response to a post elsewhere by my competitor Rostam Namaghi following the results of the election for the position of BCA Chair.

Commiserations to Rostam as the “first proper loser in BCA history” (his words I must emphasise, not mine); fortunately, I did not overestimate my support and worked my socks off to win, a competitive streak I have found in myself. It is a trait I will pursue in continuing to work as BCA Chair for the benefit of the British caving community in its entirety with the conviction to apply my style of chairing.

I disagree with Rostam’s assertion that the vote reflects how divided caving is at the moment, I think it came down to a straightforward question of how many cavers did I, or my friends and acquaintances know, to influence the vote rather than the politics of the day; the personal touch! Dave Rose in summarising the “hustings” podcasts commented on how similar the two of us came across with our replies to the questions put to us.

I feel it is important to recognise the difference between “division” and “opinion”. We are not going to agree with one another all the time but must have the good grace and respect to recognise that and agree to disagree but not fall out about it to the extent where these issues become personal and create division; the case for my way or no way is not how we can progress.

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repeating it often enough and some of it will stick. My advice is to ignore it and any of the “muck raking” from the past, the future is bright, the past is behind us; there is a great wide world of positives out there which we need to embrace.

At the end of the day, it is all about caving which is our common thread and a very strong one at that; once a caver, always a caver with all the attributes that bestows on an individual, resilience, fortitude, stoicism and a whole lot more creating a strong sense of adventure. We all share these traits, there are no divisions in caving.

You need look no further than the recent Three Counties Grand Traverse, what an achievement; not a dissenting voice amongst 50 or so cavers on the day plus all those involved in the run up to the attempt beforehand, all united in a common goal, a potent “tour de force” demonstrating the best of British caving and what we can achieve united.

To reinforce my message, I take issue with Rostam on the matter of “division” but I wish him well in the future and thank him for his service to BCA and the caving community at large which I promise to serve to the best of my ability.

Kind Regards
Russell Myers
Chair
British Caving Association

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