

Oxford University Caving Club

Michaelmas TGM 2013

Minutes

Attendants*: Steve Robert (SR) – President, Thomas Leung (TL) – Secretary, Olaf Kahler (OK) – Meets Sec, Jeremy Welch (JW) – Treasurer, Rosa Clements (RC) – Women’s Officer, Oliver Robshaw (OR), Frances Pope (FP), Alexander von Lautz (AL), Andreas Klocker (AK)

NB: Committee reports are in Black and comments are in blue.

Apologies for absences

Simon Goddard, Ben Hudson, Tim Guilford, Louise Maurice

Matters Arising from the previous AGM

- None as the secretary concerned.

Committee members’ reports:

President (SR)

- Regrettably, despite organising the President’s Invite meeting this year, because of family circumstances I was unable to go myself. However, it was very well attended and much caving was done, including the rare and exotic collectors’ piece Robinsons pot. I have already made a provisional booking for the old Schoolhouse for next year, for the weekend starting 10th of October. Everyone please note, so that I won’t get complaints throughout the year of not telling anyone when the next President’s Invite meet is! Unfortunately, the owners of the Old School House complained that it was not left in a very good state at the end of the weekend – regardless of the ins and outs of this, it is very important that next year we take very great care to leave the place in pristine condition so as not to compromise our being able to use the Old School House in future. Other than that, the President has done very little since the last report in the way of caving, or indeed of organising caving for anybody else – clearly improvement is needed in future.

Chairman (BH)

- Due to my absence I can't really do much in the way of a report. However as far as I know all the sportsfed requirements have been completed and all is well.

Secretary (TL)

- Freshers fair is again a great success this year. Thank you all who helped doing shifts, Steve who organized the backboard, and Jeremy who did the printing.
- Socials this term were well attended so far with old members as well as some freshers (3/4 average).
- About 10 OUCC member and three freshers joined the expedition talk given by BH.
- 14 freshers joined the SRT training.

Meets Sec (OK)

- Trips are going ahead and are well attended, as always in Michaelmas Term. A detailed report is attached further down.
- The online signup system seems to work very well. It would be good to keep it going as it is, and to pass on knowledge about how to run it and feed it with new information, unless Jeremy is happy to keep doing that. Also it would be good if meet leaders could get automatic email notifications whenever a booking is placed, or somehow have an interface to see the bookings as they need it.

Trips remain this term.

- Derbyshire, 23./24.11.2013

CHECC weekend

- Yorkshire, 30.11 & 01.12.2013

Varsity match with CUCC

See reports of past trips at the end.

Treasurer (JW)

- See report on separate sheets.
- OR elected to be the junior treasurer. Details of position will be further discussed with JW. Contact detail on web site may need to be amended.
- JW will put in a grant application for replacing screw gates and spreaders.
- JW reminded trip leaders to email him the name of freshers who go on their second trips, so that he can arrange BCA insurance for them.
- SR acknowledged JW for setting up the online order system.

Gear Officer (No committee member, reported by TL)

- The kits condition reported in based on freshers' weekends.
- The hut has been recently tidied up by members and kits condition is pretty good.
- The club has 'lost' several screw gates and SG has purchased 10 brand new ones for the club.
- Ladder spreaders were all gone. There is only one left in the hut. SG is planning to buy 6 new spreaders for later use.
- All helmets and lights are being labelled 'OUCC'.
- Some Pod's caving kits, e.g. oversuit, undersuit and wellies, are being put into use by the club, e.g. in the freshers weekend.
- Two oversuits were being repaired by Tonya, including a zipper and a ripped ass...
- Two oversuits are in non-repairable condition.
- RC volunteered to be the gear officer until 2014 AGM.
- Although the gear officer may not know immediately what gears were taken just before caving weekend, it was suggested that gear officer should always had a general idea about what sorts of kits being kept at the hut, e.g. by going to the hut once a week to have a quick look.
- Some of the missing screw gates may be in-situ in Xitu, SR commented the club should not lend any more kits to expedition as it caused so much confusion this summer.

Librarian / Archivist (SR)

- Nothing major to report, the club library continues to accumulate the usual journals, and if any significant book arises I have asked the Treasurer to order it on behalf of the club. The catalogue on the web is reasonably up-to-date. As ever, books can be borrowed; and if articles from journals we hold are required, let me know and these can be most easily sent by my scanning in the relevant pages and emailing them.

Webman (SR)

- Not many updates since the last report; DTT has been kept up-to-date, and expedition reportage has been maintained. Information about freshers' trips and meets was up on the web in good time (I hope) and links were set up to the web-based trip booking system established by Jeremy. So I hope that the website, while not the most flash-bang out there on the Internet, is at least functional for what the members require of it.

Points of discussion

- Future arrangements for the Pod leatherman award (for dedication) which BH had it at the moment but will probably soon be due to move on.
- SR suggested the Leatherman award can become part of the Lemming award.
- BH will keep this award until the 2014 AGM, and then move on to the next award winner.
- An indoor SRT training venue has been suggested and one of the options is the 'New college School gym'. Lou is keen to sort this out so that we can organize more training at term time. However, more opinions are welcome. (see also Lou's comments)
- JW will contact New College.
- Pod's thing (see also Lou's comments)
- JW and SR commented a list of Pod's stuff, with a briefly description, is good to have, especially it will be easier to circulate by email, instead of pictures.
- RC (as the gear officer) will create the list by going through Pod's stuff again.
- It is agreed that, if part of POD's kit is being used by the club, no donation is required, as this fulfil the aim of 'Pod's outdoor kits are being put into good use' and Pod agreed to donate his kits to the club. While individual OUCC member would like to acquire part of Pod's gears which are in very good condition, a donation is highly recommended.
- Pod's fund (see also Lou's comments)
- Documentation of exactly how much money is necessary.
- Tim Guilford proposed the following: Free membership for undergraduates.

I would like to propose that OUCC considers making membership for undergraduates free. I think this would be beneficial to the club because it might encourage more students to join, and generally make caving more affordable for them. I don't see it as a significant financial burden on the club because there are very few student members already (from whom we would lose future revenue). If lots then joined someone might argue that we were effectively losing lots of revenue, but of course this would not be true if the reason for their joining was the free membership!

I (Tim Guildford) favour free membership over reduced or temporarily free membership because it is administratively simple, easy to communicate, and clear.

- JW questioned are we going to pay the insurance part as well.
 - SR commented if there is no membership fee for undergraduate, there is no way to recognize members.
 - RC suggested, instead of free undergraduate membership, subsidise training weekend may be an option.
 - AL, as an undergraduate, commented it was the skillful side which is attractive, and didn't think reduce membership would help.
 - SR suggested that money may not be the key reason which limited undergraduate subscription, but it is the nature of caving, e.g. cold, wet, dark, which pull them off.
 - JW suggested the possibility of day trips.
 - SR is happy to offer lift for day trips.
 - RC worried about the social aspect regarding day trips
 - AL commented if 13 people were attended the SRT day training, there is a chance for day trip.
 - More discussion is needed before making decision.
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- Lou's proposed and comments related to SRT training, Pod's things, and Pod's fund.

I (Louise Maurice) propose thanking TL for all your hard work recently. I think the club would have stopped functioning without your efforts.

SRT training : this is in the agenda already but I am still very keen to sort out a venue and have regular SRT training in the week (and then go on to the pub after). Most uni clubs do this. People should really be doing at least 2 training sessions on the surface before doing SRT underground, and if people are doing well we can always do more advanced training (belaying, rigging, rope rescue etc.). I think training would help new cavers to progress, and feel that they are developing skills, and would be a focus to bring people together in the week. I am happy to try and organise some of this once we work out a venue.

Pod's things: There is still a lot of stuff belonging to pod in our house if people would like to look through and see if anything is useful to them (small donation if they want to, but not obligatory, most important that this stuff is used) then they can come round to 98 holywell st before/after the pub meets this term. I will send an email about this to the lists within the next week.

The pod fund: Pod has left some money to help the club. I am discussing how this will work with his friend Grace who discussed this with Pod before he died. I have talked to the most recent undergraduates in the club and got their advice on what would be most useful for students. I hope to have the fund set up by the new year. I will write about the Pod fund and how people can apply to it and put this on the OUCC website.

- Socials, i.e. pubs for 2014 HT
- Secretary's decision for Pub
- Need to organise annual dinner.

Plans for next term:

1./2. February (2nd week)

South Wales: SWCC or WSG, caves : OFD or Aggy/Craig-a-Ffynnon/...

15./16. February (4th week)
Joint OUMC/OUCC weekend North Wales
OUMC has their favourite climbing hut there
Trips could be made to Croesor-Rhosydd (easy SRT) and Cwmorthin

1./2. March (6th week)
Derbyshire: TSG, Caves: Maskhill/Nettle/whatever...

8./9. March (7th week)
Yorkshire: Greenclose, YSS or Brackenbottom, Caves: Gaping Gill, Leck Fell, ...

Date of next meeting

- 6th or 7th week of 2014 Hilary term.

OK` s report on past caving trips: (continued from last TGM's report)

Trinity Term 2013 (Cont.) (Refer to last Trinity TGM report for previous trips)

Yorkshire, 01./02.06.2013

10 OUCC members went to Bull Pot Farm in Yorkshire. Various variants of the Great Easegill Traverse were accomplished, from Top to Mistral and Pippikin and from Pippikin to Top and Wretched Rabbit. On Sunday a short trip to Bull Pot of the Witches was done.

Holiday Caving

South Wales, 22./23.06.2013

A total of 9 OUCC members went to Ogof Draenen. 3 went digging in the Yellow Van Passage, camping underground, 3 went to Geryons Lair on Saturday, and 3 went on a short daytrip near the entrance on Sunday.

Forest Of Dean, 06.07.2013

3 OUCC members went on a daytrip to Slaughter Stream Cave.

Michaelmas Term 2013

Yorkshire, 12./13.10.2013

President's Invite

A record number somewhere between 40 and 45 or so OUCC members went to the Old School House, Chapel le Dale. Trips were made to Gingling Hole, Robinsons Pot, Easegill, Nott 2, Dismal Hill, Simpsons, Gaping Gill and others.

South Wales, 26./27.10.2013

About 10 experienced OUCC members and about 15 novices stayed at the SWCC hut. A variety of trips was made into the OFD system, restricted by high water levels in the streamway.

Mendips, 09./10.11.2013

About 7 experienced OUCC members and about 13 novices stayed at the SMCC hut. Trips were made to Goatchurch and Swildons on Saturday and to G.B., Eastwater and Goatchurch on Sunday.

Derbyshire, 23./24.11.2013

About 9 experienced OUCC members and 3 novices signed up for the CHECC weekend in Castleton.

Oxford University Cave Club

Michaelmas 2013 Termly General Meeting

Treasurer's Report

Balances

Main account £1153.02 (20th November 2013)

Local Account £220.00

Cash in transit from University Stores: £1912.97

The overall effective balance of the main account (£3065.99) is notable mainly in terms of the very high credit figure (30 Nov 2012 £1644.97); some of this can be explained by the University Stores income reflecting income for trips not yet completed (and therefore no expenses have been made). A more effective comparison will be possible at the end of Michaelmas Term when all income and expenditure for the term has been processed. However, given that the usual costs of a trip are in the small number of hundreds, and not all trip fee income is included in these figures (especially for the Yorkshire Trip), it would appear the state of the finances is good. The income included £300 grant from the Sports Federation, and also £235 from John Pybus.

It should be noted that it does not take very much to change the balances quite considerably – at one stage, it looked like the latest trip would require last-minute transport reconfiguration at considerable cost, due to illness. In the event, this was averted, but could have made a significant difference to the state of the finances.

Accounts

Accounts will be submitted to the Sports Federation after Trinity Term 2014. This requires a request to be made, but it is easier to complete them over the Long Vacation.

Operations

The Club accounts for 2012-13 were submitted to the Sports Federation over the Long Vacation, and accepted.

The biggest operational change this term has been the introduction of the Online Stores process for the collection of trip and subscription fees. This has considerably simplified the tracking of payments for trips, eliminated the risks of promised payments by transfer not being made and clarified expenses for trips by making more of them explicit claims.

The system allows payment to be collected for trips, allows the setting of the number of places to be permitted, and provides for a confirmation of each payment to be emailed to a designated person.

There is a small charge applied for the University Stores administration; in October this was 0.87% of the income.

Whilst being most useful in Michaelmas Term when there are a large number of freshers, the benefits of using this process throughout the year is a much greater ability to ensure payments are made, and a reduction in the cash being handled on trips. Although a small number of freshers cancelled their booking and required a refund, these were all carried out before the Wednesday preceding the trip, and in some cases the payment was carried forward to a future trip. This means the problem with no-shows on the Friday night has been effectively eliminated.

It will be necessary to confirm some guidelines following this first term of operation, including a refinement of the policy on refunds, confirmation that everyone who is going on a trip makes a payment in advance, and on expectations that claims for expenses are promptly processed.

The Proctors continue to require the appointment of a Junior Treasurer who is a current undergraduate or graduate. The Club has not had such a person since the start of Michaelmas Term, but plans are being worked to resolve this. This would also provide a second point of contact for the University Stores Admin.

The Sports Federation would accept a further grant application for this term. However, we have successfully applied for these funds on a number of occasions recently, and the Club needs to decide if there is a case for a supplementary application which is supposed to be for costs that were unforeseen at the start of the year.

Requests for subscription payments will be sent out in the Christmas Vacation; to some extent the timing is dependent on the BCA's mailing confirming the insurance costs; these payments will be collected via the University Stores, and should massively simplify the compilation of the insurance payments to BCA; it should be noted that a number of members, quite closely associated with the Club, did not pay subscriptions last year; this does not affect the insurance position, as they generally have individual insurance, but can make a notable difference to revenues. Many old members continue to make 'donations' via standing order, and these are appreciated and helpful.

The Sports Federation are promoting a new accounting system. The Treasurer has been shown the new system, and has access to review it. It would provide a more comprehensive account to the Sports Federation (and may at some stage become mandatory); the system separates what is owed from what is paid, so would require the more care in allocating receipts against the liabilities or otherwise of the members. This process has already started with use of the University Store.

Jeremy Welch

20th November 2013.