

# Oxford University Cave Club

## Michaelmas 2014 TGM

### Minutes

Attendants: Steve Roberts (SR) – President, John ‘Jack’ Williams (JJW) – Secretary, Jeremy Welch (JW) – Treasurer, Oliver Robshaw (OR) - Junior Treasurer, Simon Goddard (SG) – Gear Officer, Tim Guildford (TG), Lou Maurice (LM), Olaf Kahler (OK), Rosa Clements (RC), Frances Pope (FP), Josh Vaughn (JV)

Apologies for absences: Thomas Leung (Chairman), Alex Diwa (Trip secretary), Fleur Loveridge

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

### Unresolved from TT14's TGM

**New college school gym for SRT training** - in the Trinity TGM minutes, the comment of ‘ask again next term’ was made. Assume Jeremy may need to ask the college some point again this year?

JW will ask again this term. SG will ask David White about where we can use on Wednesday evenings. SG further suggests using trees near the sports center.

**Pod's fund** – ‘Simon, Tim and Lou will discuss this for the start of academic year of 2014/2015’ was written in the Trinity TGM minutes. Is there any progress, or may need further discussion? Some progress has been made – the coop bank has a potential account, and there needs to be a form filled in by Lou and/or Si. SR suggests that 3 signatures are best. SR is happy to be a signature. Main issue is filling in the form and getting a letter from the committee saying what the Pod fund is for and authorising them to administer it. SR is authorised to write said letter. Idea of Pod fund is that any student can apply for up to £200pa for caving related expenses. Not available to fund first caving weekend. It would not be suitable for it to be a committee-run fund because hopefully the people who use the fund will be committee members and that would be a conflict of interest. Not normally available to visiting students but that's not out of the question. SR suggests that it could be an automatic subsidy to exped fee for everyone that meets the criteria. LM says that there would be an annual cap of £500-1000, which could be modified at the discretion of Lou and Si. Training also comes under this umbrella. SG suggests an official training weekend with Tony Seddon. SR says that there might also be some funds left over in the hands of Graham Naylor, so we should contact him and ask about combining the funds. SG says that Pod's sister Serena would like to organise a get-together in mid-December.

**Free undergraduate membership** - This is TG's idea to increase undergraduate membership. JW is unconvinced. FP says that payment for membership is a committing factor in joining a

club. JW is also concerned about insurance. The membership fee is currently in place because it subsidises the trips and pays for kit etc. OR thinks that the price is reasonable.

SR: if the club is asking Sports Fed for money, they'll look unfavourably on us if we aren't making any money off our own back

JW: Trip fees are more of an issue. Last 2 trips have been fine money-wise, Yorkshire is more likely to make a loss. Lots of people paid membership last year.

*TG is happy to drop the discussion.*

JW: if it helps membership, we'll reconsider it again another time.

FP: Knee pads would be a better way to spend money. Potentially also loyalty cards. I volunteer to run this.

SR: membership isn't decided by finance.

LM: a more structured training scheme would be more of an incentive to come along, citing people in the pub as a source. Building skills is motivational. Certain trips would be eligible for people who've achieved a certain level of skill.

SR: We should move on now.

**Poster** – It was decided a poster need to be made and Emma Preedy was in charge. It seems that nothing has been done so far. Since the fresher high season will pass very soon, it would be good to put up posters to encourage new student to come and try caving.

OR: a friend of John Pybus is sports officer and sends out emails to students about sports events every week, she may have a list of similar people and we could send out mass emails instead of a poster.

SG: What about personal emails?

SR: best time to do this is the beginning of HT, when people might be more convinced to come, rather than when people are winding down at the end of MT.

**Gear** - a session on gear maintenance/rope checking/ladder coiling for new members was mentioned but not followed up on.

General consensus is that this is still a good idea, and could happen in a bar or a pub on a Wednesday evening, casually. Some of it can be done on the weekends – this could be done now to inspire gear discipline into new novices. No action needs to be specifically taken, but there should be more involvement in maintaining gear on weekends.

## Committee members' reports

### **President (Steve Roberts):**

- Very little to report. There was a successful President's Invite. The weather was lovely and caving and walking and drinking and eating got done.

### **Chairman (Thomas Leung):**

- The club managed to run properly without my presence in Oxford – down to the fact that other committee members who are in Oxford all work together and help me to get things done. Thanks everyone!
- As mentioned earlier (also in Jeremy's report), it will be handy to get some pull-up roller banner to be used during freshers' fair. If there is no objection on this, I will proceed to ask for designs and think of the best dimension to be made. A suggested budget will be good (around 70 pounds each in UK for reference).

- Open for discussion: after talking with Simon at the freshers' weekends, there is an idea of having two freshers' weekend in south wales (SWCC). Water level in Swildon is very unpredictable and the caves around Mendip are in general quite small and short (and most caves are not walking distance), which may not be best for freshers. We have the advantage of staying right next to a big system in South Wales.  
SG thinks this is a good idea. RC thinks more leaders would come to SWCC. LM also lends her support. TG, SR also thinks this is a good idea. TG suggests SRT training in the quarry. We can discuss this next year, but it seems to be the general consensus that we should have 2 SWCC trips instead of an SWCC and a Mendip trip.
- Yorkshire weekend – Simon has a concern about safety of doing SRT during the Yorkshire weekend for fresher. Those who attend the SRT training may not be able to do SRT in caves. We need to emphasise that freshers who join the Yorkshire weekend do not necessary have to do SRT. There are many opportunity for horizontal caving as well.

### Secretary (John Jack Williams):

- Good turnout for the freshers' trips and pubs so far (apart from last week's pub, I hear).
- Massive thanks to everyone who has helped out with teaching, transport and organising the freshers' trips - I think everyone enjoyed themselves on both trips.
- Naturally, some freshers are keener than others - to encourage them to stay in the club, I suggest emailing them about the upcoming Yorkshire trip first and giving them priority.  
People seem to agree with this. SG is concerned that Yorkshire is treated as an SRT trip and people get worried about it. Yorkshire doesn't necessitate SRT so we should make sure novices get that message, and SRT trips are not appropriate for people who've only done caving once before. SR suggests that we explicitly mention this in the trip leader's email announcing the trip. RC says we shouldn't rule out SRT. SG agrees but reinforces his point. Overall message: we need to communicate clearly what's involved with the trip. LM says that with Wednesday training sessions would allow us to do SRT. We will discuss the Yorkshire trip's existence later.
- Although it's super early, some novices were interested in exped at the fresher's talk, so ideally we'd foster that interest, possibly with some kind of "exped through the years" talk in Hilary.  
SG notes that it doesn't have to be about the Ario expedition – it could just be exped caving. LM suggests a talk a term. We get free membership with OUEC so we can organise talks through that. JJW will publicise this. Olaf, Tonya, and Lou all have talks they'd be willing to give. Olaf also thinks Chris has a talk. SR would like to see a talk on the work done by OUCC in the UK. JJW will email the OUEC about this.
- Once again thanks to Thomas for his help & reminders of what I'm meant to be doing and to everyone else for putting up with it when I forget.

### Meets secretary (Alex Diwa):

- Michaelmas Term trips have so far been very well attended and popular with novices.
- No hiccups with accommodation/transport/permit arrangements so far.
- Thanks again to everyone (particularly Meet Leaders) for their cooperation and willingness to help out, especially for the Freshers' Trips!
- See separate sheet for trip reports.

### Treasurer (Jeremy Welch):

- See report on separate sheet.  
Things that need money spent on them: new knee-pads, maybe helmets, oversuits and undersuits need repairing. JW has protected the data of our members (not given them to Sports Federation)

because members have not agreed to us giving it away to people. JW also wants to buy some roll up screens for freshers fair etc. This would mean creating a design.

#### **Gear Officer (Simon Goddard/Emma Preedy):**

- Will give comments regarding gear situation during TGM
- Committee needs to contact Emma to encourage her to come caving – she has recently inquired about coming but the trip was full. Would it be less daunting if she didn't have to worry about looking after the gear?
- SG has made wellie racks.
- Please can we make sure kit gets hung up properly to dry – it does take 2 weeks to dry.
- SR and SG have both washed all of the undersuits.
- Some of the undersuits are not worth keeping any more due to wear. We should aim to replace them next term or the term after. RC's Tom has given SG contact details of someone who can repair suits.
- Tony is looking into deals on new helmets.
- SR: oversuit shortage is more pressing than undersuit shortage. Wellies are also lacking in sizes 4-7. RC mentions that there isn't a great size range of oversuits either – especially very big ones. SG will repair the repairable things and then reassess the situation. Beaver oversuits (basic, cheap) will probably do for this.
- SG suggests the large scout tents that no longer have any poles should be sold on ebay if they're saleable. Everyone agrees.
- TG has donated 3 prussik bags, 2 spreaders, & tape to replace the current tatty tape. Everyone is grateful.
- OK suggests buying kneepads. Everyone agrees to kneepads.

#### **Safety Officer (Simon Goddard):**

- No real incidents, just one minor one but they came caving the next day.
- Quite a few discussions with David White that he wants to be reassured that we run safe weekends, so more paperwork is being done and more official/formal reporting to the University is being put in place, e.g. how to call cave rescue, how to report incidents to Sports Federation – info in front of log book.
- SRT kits have all been updated this (calendar) year. We don't know what happens to the cows tails and shock cords so we should replace them each year. Simon is now logging every replacement to the kits.
- SRT kits need to be kept together, and separate from the rigging kit – karabiners do not need to be taken from SRT kits to be used for rigging as happened in Wales. SR suggests using a piece of kit that ensures you have to untie the karabiner to remove it from the cowstail as an incentive to keep the kit together.
- Simon has also started a guideline for SRT training and trainers. Unsure if that will be an official club document. NB they are guidelines, not compulsory.
- SG would like to store information about gear/gear replacement online somewhere. SR will arrange this if SG sends him the information.

- SG will meet David White soon and ask about training location.

### **Librarian (Steve Roberts):**

- Business as usual.

### **Website (Steve Roberts):**

- Business as usual here too.

### **Plans for next term:**

No hiccups with accommodation/transport/permit arrangements so far. Open for suggestions.

### **Any other business**

DTT : It seems that there is no/limited submission for the DTT. May need to discuss further.

Frances was going to do DTT but work got busy. It needs to be a personal enthusiasm thing. New logbook is looking good.

JJW adjourns meeting.

**Alex Diwa's** report on past caving trips: (continue from continued from last AGM report)

### **Trinity Term 2014 (Cont.) (Refer to last Trinity TGM report for previous trips)**

14th June 2014 (7th Week)

Meet Leader: Rosa

Day trip to Draenen. 4 OUCC members in attendance with 1 novice who had never been caving before.

### **Michaelmas Term 2014**

25th/26th October 2014 (2nd Week)

Meet Leaders: Alex and Simon

Freshers' Trip to South Wales. 13 OUCC members and 14 novices stayed at the SWCC hut over the weekend.

Trips covered on both days included OFD I, OFD II and Cwm Dwr, with one non-novice group tackling OFD III to Smith's Armory.

8th/9th November 2014 (4th Week)

Meet Leaders: Thomas and Oliver

Freshers' Trip to Mendip. 8 OUCC members and 12 novices stayed at WCC hut. Trips were made to Swidon and the Burrington Combe area (Goatchurch, Sidcot, Pierre's) on Saturday. A team made a trip to sump2 in Swildon on Sunday while two groups went to GB (Bat passage).

15th November 2014 (5th Week)

Introductory SRT Training for novices at Wolvercote Bridge

5 novices in attendance. Chris and Gavin led the training, and Alex assisted here and there. All novices felt comfortable abseil and prusik, became familiar with SRT gear and practice, and all successfully tackled a tricky hanging rebelay at the end of the training session.

**Upcoming Trips:**

22nd/23rd November 2014 (6th Week, Michaelmas)

Meet Leaders: Rosa and Jack

CHECC Forum in South Wales near Gilwern.

29th/30th November 2014 (7th Week, Michaelmas)

Meet Leader: Olaf

Varsity meet with CUCC. 20 beds booked at Bull Pot Farm. Permits for Lancaster Hole, Top Sink, Bar Pot & Flood Entrance Pot (Saturday), County Pot & Wretched Rabbit (Sunday).

**Oxford University Cave Club**  
Michaelmas 2014 Termly General Meeting  
Treasurer's Report

**Balances**

Main account £2943.98 (29<sup>th</sup> October 2014)

Local Account £235.00

Cash in transit from University Stores: £788.00 (recently transferred)

Held in cash by Senior Treasurer:           £72.41

The positive balance of the Club accounts is maintained for this period with a bank balance for the end of October similar to the amount at the last TGM in Trinity Term. The £788 credit from the University Stores is approximately matched by the cost of trips so far paid out.

Activity in the Club's accounts over the Long Vacation was fairly low, and there was nothing exceptional to report.

**Accounts**

The accounts were submitted to the University Sports Federation. No comment was received, and the payment of the annual grant is seen as an acceptance all is well with them.

**Operations**

The use of the University Online stores for the collection of trip and subscriptions continues to be an effective mode of collection of funds. Although some cash has been collected, usually from non-Oxford residents who travel independently, the amount of cash collected remains low, especially from new members. We should continue to use this method of collection for as much trip income as possible and will aim to use the online system for the collection of subscriptions as last year.

No progress has been made with regard to further reviewing the new Sports accounting system. Use of this system is not a mandatory requirement at this stage.

There is still a higher-than-reasonable loss of equipment; whilst the Club can currently afford to make some minor replacements (and will seek to do so when required), members should ensure that all participants on trips appreciate that mislaying equipment (or raiding SRT kits for karabiners) is an expensive diversion.

**Proposed Expenditure**

In order to increase visibility at the Freshers' Fair, it is proposed that the Club purchase two pull-up roller banners. These are easy to transport and are self-supporting – and can therefore be used in the Examination Schools. They provide material at head height, and are reusable from year to year (subject to the judicious choice of graphics). These should be purchased as soon as possible, as there is rarely time and resource to sort this out when they are actually needed.

Jeremy Welch

17<sup>th</sup> November 2014