

RESCON

BRITISH CAVE RESCUE COUNCIL
Conference 2019

Priddy

6-8 September



Hosted by



www.caverescue.org.uk



www.mendipcaverescue.org

British Cave Rescue Council Conference

6th - 8th September 2019, Priddy

Welcome to Priddy, in the centre of the Mendip Hills.

Cavers, and cave divers, have been coming to Priddy for many years, with Mendip Cave Rescue (MCR) proud to be the second oldest cave rescue organisation (formed just a year after the Cave Rescue Organisation) and the Cave Diving Group (CDG) also undertaking a lot of early dives in nearby Wookey Hole.

ResCon is the BCRC Cave Rescue Conference, a gathering of cave rescue volunteers (and others) to discuss and practice cave rescue techniques and meet other cave rescue team members.

ResCon Information

ResCon is based at Ebborways Farm, a basic campsite on the edge of Priddy. ResCon has a separate field, set back from the road. The campsite is equipped with water taps and we have arranged for some toilet facilities to be installed on site for the weekend. There are no showers or electric hookups on site, although if you want a shower then there are a number of caving huts a short distance away where a hot shower can be found.

ResCon will be centred around a marquee, to be found on your left as you enter the field, and most activities on site will be based in the marquee. Beyond the marquee there will be a smaller, but just as important, tent that contains the bar for the weekend. On the right as you enter the field will be a reception and registration tent.

ResCon will be an event with wristbands, and all delegates will be given a wristband when they arrive and check in. The wristband will be used to demonstrate to the catering and bar staff that you have bought a ticket. The wristbands should survive a couple of short caving trips, but if you have problem then please return to the registration tent and you will be issued with a replacement.

Practical sessions will be located in a number of local caves, with a number of sessions based at Wookey Hole, a showcave based just down the hill from the campsite. Wookey Hole have kindly allowed us to make use a number of areas within the showcave. Please note that to give us an indication of numbers, there will be sign-up sheets for all the practical sessions in the registration tent.

ResCon 19 Friday Timetable

16:00 Site open for conference delegates to arrive, complete registration and pitch tents etc.

18:00 – 00:00 Bar open for the sale of refreshments

19:30 Opening session, with welcome from James Heappey (MP for Wells), Peter Dennis (BCRC Chairman) and Martin Grass (MCR Secretary)

20:30 Ploughmans buffet served

21:00 Showing of archive films featuring Mendip Cave Rescue, Cave Diving Group training and previous BCRC rescue conference events

00:00 Close

ResCon 19 Saturday Timetable

Activities during Saturday will be split between the main marquee at Ebborways Farm, and nearby at Wookey Hole Caves where there will be a number of training sessions taking place. In the afternoon a number of practical sessions at other nearby cave locations will be taking place.

Ebborways Farm

08:00 Breakfast, and registration area open

10:00 Presentations, including

10:00 How to Find a Needle in a Haystack (Neil Reaich & Mark Jenkinson, MCR)

10:45 CO2 Monitoring in Mendip Caves (Stuart MacManus & Martin Grass, MCR)

11:30 Crime Scene Awareness (Piers Hallihan, SMWCRT)

10:00 – 16:00 Lyon Equipment Demonstrations and Kit Discussions

10:00 – 12:00 MREW Casualty Care Continual Development Signoff

12:00 – 00:00 Bar open for sale of refreshments

13:30 Practical Sessions, including

Underground Communication (Sludge Pit Hole)

CO2 Monitoring (Cuckoo Cleeves)

Updated Slix Stretcher Discussion (Wessex Tower)

16:00 Exploration of the World's Deepest Cave and the Race to Escape It (Robbie Shone)

17:00 Wessex Challenge

19:30 Hog Roast / Vegetarian alternative

21:00 "Seatrees" Local band

00:00 Close

Wookey Hole

09:30 Arrive and prepare diving equipment

10:00 Surface control procedures for divers

10:30 – 14:30 Practical Sessions, including

Evacuation of a Diver through a Sump

Transportation of Equipment through a Sump

Hauling and Rescue Rigging

Use of Cave-link

Full Face Mask Familiarisation

15:00 All rescue team members to have exited from the cave

15:00 Classroom session, including Observations & Evidence Gathering Recovery of a Drowned Diver

Note that unless indicated otherwise, all sessions are suitable for all cavers. None of the sessions in Wookey Hole on Saturday will be in locations which are inaccessible to non divers and the cave diving group invites non divers to participate in order to facilitate understanding of cave diving.

Saturday Presentations

How to Find a Needle in a Haystack (Neil Reaich & Mark Jenkinson, MCR)

The geographical area that Mendip Cave Rescue cover includes the abandoned Bath Stone mines, over towards Box in Wiltshire. These Stone Mines are both complex and potentially unstable, leading to a number of call-outs in recent years where parties of underground explorers have been

lost. This has led to the MCR Stone Mines team coming up with a new method of searching a complex series of passages for a (possibly) missing party that may be ill prepared for their trip.

CO2 Monitoring in Mendip Caves (Stuart MacManus & Martin Grass, MCR)

A number of Mendip caves has historically had issues with "bad air", usually interpreted to be an increase in CO2. Over recent months, some monitoring of a number of sites has been taking place to try to help increase our understanding of this issue. This monitoring has included the use of standard commercially available detectors, along with the development of a home made detector, which has led to some interesting results.

Crime Scene Awareness (Piers Hallihan, SMWCRT)

Most cave rescue incidents are, fortunately, relatively straightforward and are resolved without any serious incident. However, on the rare occasions when the incident is more serious, it is important to remember that the scene of the incident may be treated as a scene of crime, whilst investigations can take place. Piers Hallihan, from South Wales Police, will give a presentation on the things that cave rescue teams should consider when dealing with a potential crime scene.

Exploration of the World's Deepest Cave and the Race to Escape It (Robbie Shone)

Robbie Shone has been on a number of caving expeditions to remote parts of the world, where rescue would be difficult. Normally these expeditions pass without incident, but occasionally things can go wrong, and in September 2018 he was exploring and photographing at the furthest reaches of Veryovkina, the deepest cave in the world, when a flood pulse came through.

Observations & Evidence Gathering / Recovery of a Drowned Diver (John Volanthen & Andy Torbet, at Wookey Hole)

Classroom session to consider the steps and process around gathering evidence in the event of a drowned diver before considering the possibility of an underwater body recovery exercise.

Saturday Practical Sessions

Underground Communication (led by Tony Haigh & Estelle Sandford, at Sludge Pit Hole)

A session with the various underground to surface communication systems that are currently available to cave rescue teams, including the cave-link text messaging system, the Nicola 3 radio system (running the latest firmware), and the original HeyPhone and micro-heyphone. This session will have some people underground and some people on the surface.

Note that Sludge Pit Hole has a short ladder just inside the entrance, which will be rigged for the weekend, and those going underground will require a belay belt or suitable harness.

This session will be repeated on Sunday.

CO2 Monitoring (led by Stuart MacManus & Martin Grass, at Cuckoo Cleeves)

A session with the various gas monitoring and detection devices that are currently available to cave rescue teams, following on from the presentation earlier. There will be the "Four Gas" and "Five Gas" monitors, generously donated to cave rescue teams by Honeywell Analytics earlier this year, plus the use of a home made detector as described in the earlier presentation.

Note that Cuckoo Cleeves has a short ladder at the entrance, which will be rigged for the weekend and those going underground will require a belay belt or suitable harness.

Warning: Cuckoo Cleaves has been chosen as the location for this session since there can be poor air quality in this cave, with a high build up of CO₂, and people going underground should be aware of the symptoms of CO₂ poisoning.

Updated Slix Stretcher Discussion (at Wessex Tower)

The Slix Stretcher has long been in use by cave rescue teams as a method of packaging and safely transporting an injured casualty. Cave rescue teams have been working with React (the manufacturer of the stretcher) on a number of improvements to make the Slix stretchers more applicable for cave rescue, with improvements to the design for C-Spine immobilisation and the head support of casualties and changes to the hauling positions. The final prototype will be available over the ResCon weekend, and this session will be held at the Wessex Tower to check these changes and improvements one final time.

Transportation of Equipment through a Sump (led by Josh Bratchley, at Wookey Hole Chamber 9)

The handling and packaging of equipment for transportation through sumps. Equipment which can get wet as well as items which cannot often need to be transported through sumps. The latter can be carried in specially constructed 'dry tubes' which can withstand being submerged to significant depths. All items being carried whether wet or dry need to be packed and weighted correctly. This is an opportunity for both divers and non-divers to experiment with this equipment. Bulky items such as drills and cave radios can present a particular challenge with interesting options.

Hauling and Rescue Rigging (led by Andrew Atkinson, at Wookey Hole Chamber 9)

A practical session to look at various methods of rigging to safely manoeuvre a casualty in stretcher around underground vertical drops. The session will include rigging a basic haul, a counterbalanced haul and a tyrolean. This session is aimed at both divers and non-divers.

Cave rescuers wanting to be involved in the rigging and hauling elements of this session will require a harness and cowstails.

Evacuation of a Diver through a Sump / Full Face Mask Familiarisation (led by Chris Jewell & Andy Torbet, at Wookey Hole Resurgence)

A session to explore the current thinking around evacuating a diver through a sump and how to practice this process. Using the resurgence pool at Wookey Hole, cave divers and cavers will be able to practice the transition from on land stretcher carry to underwater transportation. The session will then move on to looking at the currently available cave rescue full face masks as well as a 'positive pressure' mask similar to those used in the Thailand cave rescue. Non divers are welcome and encouraged to participate in this session.

Saturday Other Sessions

Lyon Equipment Demonstrations and Kit Discussions

Lyon Equipment will have a display area with the ability to show, demonstrate and discuss items of kit close up with people throughout the weekend, including a quad-pod and tri-pod, basket stretcher and a full range of small items.

MREW Casualty Care Continual Development Signoff

The Mountain Rescue England & Wales Casualty Care Course now includes a number of Continual Development elements, leading up to the exam, practical assessment and qualification that lasts for three years. All Casualty Care qualified cave rescue team members are expected to be able to indicate a basic level of proficiency in a number of skills in the period leading up to the exam and assessment. Mendip Cave Rescue will have some equipment available (and suitably qualified

medical experts) to allow casualty care cave rescue team members to demonstrate their proficiency and get sign off for a number of skills.

Wessex Challenge

The Wessex Challenge will be held, starting at approximately 17:00. This is a team obstacle course race that is held every couple of years, as a social occasion between Mendip Caving Clubs. This year the challenge will have a rescue theme, and visiting rescue teams are encouraged to take part.

Seatrees

"Seatrees" are a local band playing electric and acoustic guitars (including the ukulele), drums, bass & harmonica. They play a mixture of rock, folk and pop cover tracks, along with some original tunes which have built up a loyal following in the Somerset area.

ResCon 19 Sunday Timetable

Activities during Sunday will be split between the main marquee at Ebborways Farm, and nearby at Wookey Hole Caves where there will be a full scale rescue exercise taking place, involving the extraction of an injured diver from beyond a sump in the cave.

Ebborways Farm

08:00 Breakfast, and registration area open

10:00 Presentations, including

10:00 Medical Session (led by Brendan Sloan, DCRO)

11:00 Livestock and Animal Rescue (Julian Carter, SMWCRT)

11:30 BCRC Online Incident Reporting (Richard Vidler, SECRO)

12:00 SARCALL

12:30 Challenging Rescue Scenarios (Simon Flower, MCR)

10:00 – 16:00 Lyon Equipment demonstrations and kit discussions

12:00 – 17:00 Bar open for sale of refreshments

13:30 Practical Sessions, including Underground Communication (Sludge Pit Hole)

17:00 Close

Wookey Hole

10:00 Arrive and prepare diving equipment

10:30 Rescue Exercise

Evacuation of an Injured Diver from Chamber 22 of Wookey Hole

Note The rescue exercise will start in Wookey Hole chamber 22, which is only accessible by divers, but dry cavers will be required during the exercise, to assist with hauling and stretcher carrying to the surface. One of the areas that the exercise will focus on is the co-operation between the diving and non-diving rescuers.

Sunday Presentations

Medical Session (led by Brendan Sloan, DCRO)

Brendan Sloan is the BCRC Medical Officer, and will be leading a series of shorter presentations to cover a number of medical related topics, including

- Lessons Learnt from Curtain Pot Incident
- Update from BCRC Medical Weekend
- New BCRC Medical Training Equipment

Livestock and Animal Rescue (Julian Carter, SMWCRT)

South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team have been involved in a number of animal or livestock rescue incidents recently, some of which have been prolonged and high profile. Julian Carter will be discussing how SMWCRT deal with animal rescues, and will include a showing of a recent sequence shot for the BBC programme "Kate Humble: Off the Beaten Track" where they rescue the presenters sheep dog "Teg" from a disused mineshaft.

BCRC Online Incident Reporting (Richard Vidler, SECRO)

Richard Vidler will be discussing the recently developed BCRC On-line Incident Reporting tool, including how to use it to record any incidents that cave rescue teams have been involved in, and what is planned for future releases.

SARCALL

SARCALL is a messaging tool that is now used by a number of cave rescue teams (and the calling authorities) to help manage an incident. This will be a brief session demonstrating how SARCALL can be used, including a log of the messages that have been sent so far during the rescue exercise concurrently taking place in Wookey Hole.

Challenging Rescue Scenarios (Simon Flower, MCR)

Most cave rescue incidents are, fortunately, relatively straightforward for the local cave rescue team to handle. However, there are a few rare occasions when there is a serious injury to a caver in a challenging cave where the rescue is anything but straightforward. Simon Flower will lead a "table top" session, where there will be discussion around how a team should handle such a scenario. The scenario used for the discussion will be local to Mendip, but the points raised by the discussion will be applicable to rescues from challenging caves in other cave rescue team areas.

Sunday Practical Sessions

Evacuation of an Injured Diver (led by Chris Jewell, starting from Wookey Hole Chamber 22)

A full scale rescue exercise, with the extraction of an injured diver from Wookey Hole chamber 22 through a sump and then carried out the surface. The start of the exercise will require diving cave rescuers (beyond the sump) and non-diving cave rescuers (to rig a haul line to manoeuvre the injured diver out of the water). A full briefing will be made on the morning of the exercise, but this exercise will be an excellent opportunity for non-diving cave rescuers to understand aspects of a diving rescue scenario.

Cave rescuers wanting to be involved in the rigging and hauling elements of the rescue exercise will require a harness and cowstails.

Underground Communication (led by Tony Haigh & Estelle Sandford, at Sludge Pit Hole)

A session with the various underground to surface communication systems that are currently available to cave rescue teams, including the cave-link text messaging system, the Nicola 3 radio system (running the latest firmware), and the original HeyPhone and micro-heyphone. This session will have some people underground and some people on the surface.

Note that Sludge Pit Hole has a short ladder just inside the entrance, which will be rigged for the weekend, and those going underground will require a belay belt or suitable harness.

This session is a repeat of the session held on Saturday.

Sunday Other Sessions

Lyon Equipment Demonstrations and Kit Discussions

Lyon Equipment will have a display area with the ability to show, demonstrate and discuss items of kit close up with people throughout the weekend, including a quad-pod and tri-pod, basket stretcher and a full range of small items.