

Short Roping Workshop Lake District Based CPD

Friday 28 September 2012

Location: Great Langdale, Cumbria.

Participants:

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|---------------|--------------|----------------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| Robin Andrews | Robin Beadle | Harold Edwards | Brian Hall | Jon Morgan | Rocio Siemens |
| Phil Poole | Alun Powell | Stuart Miller | Dave Green | Alan Hinkes | Nick Kekus |

Objectives: Review of current practise

- Roping up-methods for different guiding situations
- Dealing with different terrain & problems
- Review and discussion on recent research and practice

Report:

We all met at the Old Dungeon Ghyll car park and headed off to Raven Crag. The weather was overcast, mixed with showers some heavy, giving damp conditions and greasy rock.

The format of the day included discussions on current practise and practical applications.

We used the terrain on either side of Raven crag splitting in teams of 3, with 2 teams taking each side of the crag.

Our discussions highlighted a number of practical issues these included; the use of a less bulky knot for tying into the middle. Consideration was given to efficiently varying the distance between the middle and last person. This is particularly applicable when negotiating short steps or moving on to steeper terrain.

The taking of hand coils opened up several debates. Locking off coils causing crushed hand was a concern. Using a dynamic technique with two hands with a kink in the rope of the downhill controlling hand was strong and offered flexibility.

On long uniform slopes of snow or in icy conditions we considered not taking coils. Instead having a fixed hand loop (overhand or figure 8) held in a bent position high on the chest – NZ technique. The rope should be tied off to the harness in a low position. The distance of the fixed loop should be such that if the arm is stretched out downhill tension comes onto both arm and harness together.

The problem associated with steep lowers using a tied off 'Italian hitch' and a redirected 'Italian hitch' at the middle person was considered. Using a krab clove hitched just above the isolation loop would stop the krab sliding down and applying load through the middle person.

There was some discussion on use of the 'Telepherique Method' for large groups to negotiating short sections of steep snow or ice. Options for using belay plate, ropeman or similar device or Prohaska knot. Though it was thought using a klemheist would be just as effective and not require carrying additional equipment.

Conclusions:

Changes to our outline itinerary confirmed the group were aware of not being lured into heuristic traps! Our plans to venture on to higher terrain were thwarted by heavy rain, so we swapped groupings again and negotiated different descent routes to the warmth of the ODG and further discussion over a pint.

We had a group whose experience spanned 40 years of guiding and so it was a great opportunity to bounce ideas off each other and share both positive and negative experiences.

Some sobering statistics from reports in the European Alps is that 72% of accidents, where the direction is known, occurred during the descent. In most cases in the Alps for Guides there is no alternative, short roping is an essential part of guiding. Conditions on the day were particularly wet and the rock greasy. This reinforced the need to adapt techniques to minimise the risk.

Nick Kekus

30/09/12