

# BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION



The meeting of the BCA National Council was held at:  
10:30 am on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2009 at Alvechurch Church Hall, Alvechurch

## Present

Mick Day (MD)	BCA Chairman
Dave Cooke (DC)	BCA Treasurer / Cave Registry Sec
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Secretary / Handbook Editor / Individual Member Representative
Graham Mollard (GM)	BCA Training Officer
Bob Mehew (BM)	BCA Equipment Officer / Rope Test Officer
Elsie Little (EL)	BCA Conservation & Access Officer
David Judson (DJu)	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer / BCRA Representative
Les Williams (LW)	BCA Publications & Information Officer / BCA Webmaster
Mike McCombe (MM)	CCC Representative
Glenn Jones (GJ)	CNCC Representative
Jenny Potts (JP)	DCA Representative / BCA Publication Sales
David Jean (DJ)	DCUC Representative
Alan Finch (AF)	WPCST Representative
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	ACI Representative
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO Representative
Chris Jewell (CJ)	BCA Youth Development Officer / CHECC Representative
Boyd Potts (BP)	Club Representative: Orpheus Caving Club
Idris Williams (IW)	Club Representative: Shropshire Scouts Caving Club
Bernie Woodley (BW)	Club Representative: South Wales Caving Club
Emma Porter (EP)	Individual Member Representative / BCRC Representative
Charles Milton (CM)	Individual Member Representative

The meeting commenced at 10:40am.

## 1 Chairman's Welcome & Address

MD welcomed members to this Council Meeting.

## 2 Apologies

Apologies were received from: Nick Williams & Mike Clayton.

## 3 Applications for Club Membership

GJ queried how he should proceed with regard to those clubs who had joined BCA during 2008, but had not actually been officially ratified by BCA Council. It was agreed that all those who joined since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 should be brought by GJ to Council for ratification. For 2008 members GJ should approach Council about only if he has an individual concerns but otherwise Council is happy to consider them all officially ratified.

## 4 Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2008 (previously circulated)

The minutes were signed as a correct record.

## 5 Matters Arising from the National Council Meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> October 2008

No matters arising

## Officers' Reports

### 6 Chairman (Written report tabled)

### 7 Secretary (Written report tabled)

- Meeting Minutes:** Proposal that the April 2008 Council Minutes be accepted. Prop: JP Sec: BM *Agreed unanimously.*
- CNCC Pirating Allegations:** DCA had received no information from CNCC regarding the clubs accused of pirating. GJ

reported that this had been dealt with by the CNCC themselves and that they were happy with the outcome.

## 8 Treasurer (Written report tabled)

- a. **Officer expenses:** It was suggested that an extra column be added onto the attendance sheet so bank details can be provided to DC. **Action: DW to amend next attendance sheet.**
- b. **Auditor:** **Action: DC to approach Bill Tolfree.** EP advised that another possibility is Heather Simpson, Dudley CC.
- c. **Insurance premium:** This has been renewed and is fixed for a three year period. BM advised that the terms of this should be checked so we know whether there is a “get-out” clause.
- d. **Membership system:** David Gibson has been paid as a contractor for the work on the membership system. **Action: DC to clarify the ownership of the intellectual property rights in relation to the work that David Gibson has undertaken.**
- e. **Approval and contracts for employees/contractors:** The appointment of a paid contractor raised issues about whether Council should be providing prior approval before (i) new/replacement employees are agreed and (ii) where a contract for the provision of services is above a certain value, as these are demands on BCA’s money. In the case of 8d above, MD advised that if the report is adopted, Council is accepting this arrangement but need to have clear protocol for future arrangements. MD advised that for a number of years, he was the signatory on employment contracts but this no longer the case. It was noted that prior to agreeing the appointment of the new Training Administrator approval had been sought and obtained from Council. LW added that he thought that NW had been given authority to employ for Membership Services. **Action: DC to produce a protocol for such arrangements to include: 1. No person shall be employed by BCA without Council’s prior approval having been sought 2. No person shall have a contract to provide services to BCA without Council’s prior approval having been sought, where the cost of the services to be provided exceeds £XX.**
- f. **Regional Council Funding document:** DCA confirmed that they were happy with the document, CNCC is reviewing this next week. DC explained the proposals for FABS and once feedback is received from all of the Regional Councils, he will update Council and seek approval of the document in March, as the next Finance Committee is in May.
- g. **Library Funding Request (Written report tabled under Any Other Business - The British Caving Library and Request for BCA Financial Support):** Both of these documents were discussed at length, in particular the latter and JP explained that she was not asking for a decision about the amount now but whether in principle, BCA would be able to financially support the British Caving Library. The capital outlay has been funded by bequests and running costs are estimated at £20,000 for the first year, and assistance is currently being sought from the Peak Park and local showcaves, as well as BCA. Other possible sources of finance were suggested: (i) whether the library could be part-designated as a records office as government support may be available (ii) given the amount of mining material, whether NAHMO could contribute (SH advised that NAHMO does not have significant financial resources but may be able to access other funding) (iii) depending upon who owns the materials and copyright, whether any materials could be re-printed as a possible funding stream. It was noted that BCA has taken over one of BCRA’s major funding streams ie the insurance process but to be able to consider this request fully, it was concluded that Council needs to discuss the financial plans with BCRA, in particular running costs. Proposal that web services are provided to the British Caving Library at no cost. Prop: LW, Sec: DW. **Agreed unanimously.** It was then suggested that this should be broadened to include any BCA website, such as Ghar Parau, Hidden Earth, BCRA, SIGs if hosted on BCA web services but this is not to include Regional Councils. Proposed that web services are provided to the BCA and all subsidiaries at no cost where hosted via the BCA’s web services. **Agreed unanimously.**

## 9 Conservation & Access Officer

- a. **Access to the Coast:** EL reported that this is progressing slowly.
- b. **FSE and WD66:** EL expressed her concerns about the lack of responses and feedback from the FSE, in particular in relation to the WD66 Declaration (Written declaration on protection of caves as a cultural, natural and environmental heritage). BCA needs to be kept aware so can be involved and express opinions. It was agreed that there had been a lack of communication both ways between BCA and Ged Campion (Vice President of FSE) and a failure to brief GC on BCA’s position in relation to issues such as conservation. **Action: Officers to provide a brief about their roles to GC.** Noted that GC has not previously been on Council distribution lists but is now. **Action: DW to ask AE and GC for minutes of the respective meetings that they attend.**
- c. **Brazil:** DW advised that he had received correspondence about cave conservation problems in Brazil. **Action: DW to research, respond if appropriate and possibly pass to Descent and Newsletter.**

## 10 Equipment & Techniques Officer (Written report tabled)

- a. **PECO Anchors:** The PECO anchors are being laser-etched with “BCA”, so that they can be positively identified.
- b. **Email address:** BM reported to LW that there has been a recent problem with an email not being received to his BCA email address, although it normally works. **Action: LW to check**

## 11 Training Officer (Written report tabled)

- a. **Finance:** Council noted GM’s concern and accepted that there is a risk that the Training budget may show a loss in 2009, particularly if fees are not raised on the cost of revalidations. As a consequence of Council noting this, GM withdrew his request to raise the cost of revalidations.
- b. **Child Protection:** Proposed amendments to the BCA Child Protection Policy that had been discussed at the Training

Committee were circulated. IW and GM explained that the policy was an all inclusive policy, covering both recreational club caving and professional led activities. DJu thought that the Policy is now being viewed as a Training document, whilst the BCA membership consists of mainly amateur cavers. SH added that the Policy needs to be a template that Clubs can adopt. DJu asked for someone to take over the role of Child Protection. MD thanked DJu for his work on the Policy. Previous feedback provided on this Policy has been that the document needs to give out positive recommendations and it was felt that the proposed amendments achieve a more positive view. Minor amendments to the Guidance Notes were suggested and it was noted that there were some grammatical errors that needed amending. It was proposed that the amended para 2.05 and 4.02 be accepted. Prop: BM, Sec: GJ. **Agreed unanimously.** **Action: IW to revise the Guidance Notes in light of the suggested changes.** EP advised that CPC had not received a response to the feedback that they had provided in relation to the Policy some time ago and MD apologised for the lack of response. The post of Child Protection Officer was discussed and it was agreed that Child Protection matters would be dealt with by the Secretary on behalf of the Executive.

- c. **Porth Yr Ogof:** The circulated document was discussed at great length. It was suggested that the leaflet is used as a leaflet for explaining about Deep Water Techniques without being site specific. GM advised that this document was to be withdrawn.

## 12 Publications & Information Officer

- a. **Webmaster's Report:** Web services are now hosted ourselves, so we can offer better facilities with the back up being the responsibility of the site owners. DC added that with the new provider, the charging can be restructured. More services can be provided for the same price and this is important as in the past, customers have been lost as we could not offer all of these services. This needs to be advertised to Clubs via the BCA Newsletter, Handbook and Descent. The mail server is also about to be moved, and this means that BCA email addresses will be reallocated, let LW know if there are any problems. This should result in a reduction in spam. Out-of-office replies can also be used and emails will also be accessible via the web.  
**AGM material:** This is not being sent out with any publication but will be sent out separately by DW, once GJ has passed on a mailing list.
- b. **Newsletter Editor's Report (Written report tabled)**
- c. **Handbook Editor's Report (Written report tabled)**
- d. **Speleology:** LW was not sure of the next publication date, although he noted that it should be published four times a year.

## 13 Legal & Insurance Officer

Nothing further to report, as already covered.

## 14 Youth & Development Officer (Written report tabled)

- a. **Website:** CJ advised that some of the leads from the Try Caving website are referred to the ACI website and suggested a system ought to be put in place to pass enquiries onto instructors. The issue of referring leads to specific caving areas was discussed and SH requested that additional regions are added or a mining option is available, as most mining clubs are not based in mining areas.
- b. **Budget:** Agreed at £1,000.

## 15 Membership Administrator's Report (Written report tabled)

- a. **Membership Renewal Process:** GJ thanked David Gibson for all his work on the membership system. The only negative comments about the Process have been about the complexities of the paperwork. GJ pointed out that the Newsletter was sent out later than he anticipated but all agreed that the timing was okay and would be acceptable if the Newsletter is sent out at the same time next year.
- b. **Membership of constituent bodies:** The process of constituent bodies such as CHECC becoming a member of BCA was clarified, as IW reported that a new Association has recently been formed to promote Scout caving. The process is to write to the Secretary, sending a copy of the constitution and this is then considered at the AGM, as this type of membership implies representation on Council.

## 16 Insurance Manager's Report (Written report tabled)

- a. **Limit of Indemnity:** DJu advised that he is in full agreement with the limited being GBP2m.
- b. **SUI:** Council agreed to absorb the additional 500 Euro payment.

## 17 Radon Working Party Convenor's Report

No report submitted.

## 18 Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report

Nothing to report

## 19 International Representative's Report (Written report tabled)

- a. No one except JP appeared to have received this report. **Action: DW to circulate this report.**
- b. **FSE Report (Written report tabled)**

- c. **Eurospeleo Forum Organisers in 2011:** LW needs to speak to AE as not clear what the Eurospeleo Forum is. Noted that due to a lack of resources, BCA is unlikely to be able to support such an event unless it can be combined with Hidden Earth.

**20 Any Other Business**

- a. **Apologies for AGM:** GM gave his apologies.
- b. **Porth Yr Ogof:** GM advised that he had forgotten to mention this earlier but HSE in Cardiff has reviewed a copy of this document and has provided positive feedback.
- c. **Hidden Earth 2009:** The venue is not yet confirmed, but it is likely to be the last weekend in September and located in Mendip.

**21 Date, Time & Place of next meeting**

The next Council Meeting will follow the AGM. The BCA AGM will be held on Saturday 28 March 2009 at 10.30am at Alvechurch Church Hall, Alvechurch.

*Meeting ended: 4.30pm*

DRAFT



# BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

## Council Meeting, 10<sup>th</sup> January 2009

### OFFICERS' REPORTS

#### Item 6: Chairman's Report

I have little to add to my report of the meeting in October. Matters raised there are in the process of resolution and currently the subject of other Officers' reports for this meeting. The CCPR Outdoor Pursuits Committee meets on 4<sup>th</sup> February; I shall try to attend. It has become clear to me that I have unnecessarily delayed the receipt of the BingoLotto proceeds by failing to leave the appropriate forms with Cookie at our last meeting.

*Mick Day, January 2009*

#### Item 7: Secretary's Report

**Meeting Minutes:** Following discussion at the October 2008 Council Meeting I have now amended my "bare-bones" minutes of the missing April 2008 Council Meeting Minutes. These are shown in Appendix 1 and I hope Council will now be able to accept these as accurate so they can be published along with the other Meeting Minutes.

**Communication:** As promised at the last Meeting I summarised the Officers' Reports to Council for the December Newsletter. Hopefully this will help to inform our members about our work and, assuming Council is happy, I intend to do this following each quarterly meeting.

**CNCC Pirating Report:** As requested by the last Council Meeting I wrote, after consultation with BCA Executive, to the individuals who had admitted pirating. They responded immediately thanking Council and seeking to assure us that it would not happen again. I have acknowledged this and recommend Council take this no further at the moment.

I also wrote to the Club accused of pirating requesting their comments. Their reply included a letter sent to the CNCC shortly after the incident. They accepted responsibility and listed the action taken against the members in question. I, therefore, sent them a similar letter to that sent to the individuals who had admitted pirating. Again, I recommend Council need take no further action here.

BCA Executive also produced a statement on Access which was published on the BCA Forum, UKCaving, in Regional circulars and Descent. It reads as follows:

It is a stated aim of the British Caving Association to "support members [...] in obtaining, ensuring and maintaining access arrangements at a national, regional and club level". We would like to remind members that landowners have the right to grant or withhold access to caves and that this right remains regardless of whether the cave entrance lies on "CROW Access Land" or not.

As a result considerable work is often put in to creating Access Agreements. This is done to ensure continued access for members and also remove the burden on landowners and tenants from floods of cavers knocking at their doors. Unfortunately BCA is aware that a number of vital and sometimes delicate Agreements are currently being compromised by some cavers and clubs ignoring them. If we are not careful this could well result in the collapse of these agreements and all BCA members will lose out as a result.

Therefore, Club and Individual Members are requested to check the current access situation for all caves they intend to visit. As guidebooks are sometimes out of date, it is recommended that information is always checked with Regional Council websites or the up-to-date version of the BCA Handbook (available free from the BCA website). Updates to access arrangements are also to be found on the BCA Forum and BCA and Regional Council Newsletters. If any doubt remains, Regional Access Officers should be contacted.

**Child Protection Statement:** Following the instructions of the October Council Meeting BCA Executive produced and published a statement on Child Protection as follows:

In order to clarify our position on the participation of children and young persons in caving the British Caving Association Council Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October adopted the following statement:

"The BCA is committed to removing barriers to participation for children and young persons who wish to start caving."

I am today writing to The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the NSPCC making clear BCA's position in this respect and BCA is now launching a thorough review of the current Child Protection documents.

As stated above I also wrote, as requested, to the DCMS and the NSPCC. Again the statement was published on the BCA Forum, UKCaving.com, in Regional circulars and in Descent

**General Correspondence:** Following a member's suggestion I have recently written to British Airways pointing out that caving does not appear on its standard list of permissible sports and requesting that it be included. Hopefully this will be successful and in the future expeditions will automatically receive an additional baggage allowance. I obviously intend to write to other major UK airlines soon.

**AGM:** Notification of the AGM has been given to members via the Newsletter. It has also been posted on the website. The remaining deadlines will be met. I will be standing down as Individual Member Rep. as I do not feel it is appropriate to hold this role as well as that of Secretary. Therefore, at the AGM the following Officials and Officers will be elected:

- Chairman to serve for 3 years
- Training Officer to serve for 3 years
- 2 club reps to serve for 2 years (currently Bernie Woodley & Idris Williams)
- 2 Individual Member reps to serve for 2 years (currently Charles Milton & Emma Porter)
- 2 Individual Member reps to serve the remaining year of a 2-year term

Anyone intending to stand should note that requirements for proposals in the December Newsletter or speak to me. These need to be with me by the end of Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January.

*Damian Weare, January 2009*

## **Item 8: Treasurer's Report**

- It is the end of the financial year. If you have any outstanding expenses, please forward them.
- I can pay Officer expenses by electronic transfer. Please supply me with your bank account details if you wish.
- I'm struggling to find an Auditor. If anyone knows a caver with accounting qualifications who could be press-ganged, preferably in the South West, please let me know. There is a small remuneration.
- During the banking crisis I transferred funds so that we didn't have more than £50,000 with any individual bank. I'm now looking for another savings account for the excess funds.
- I have raised all the 2008 Web Services invoices.
- The insurance premium has been renewed, fixed for three years, subject to no claims. The cost is £30,825, a 3% increase.
- David Gibson and Glenn Jones have been working on improving the membership system, moving more of it online. Davis has also been helping Glenn with processing the journal subscriptions. It was decided that it was proper to pay David for this work.
- The Regional council Funding document has been circulated to Regional Councils. An amended version based on the replies is available [here](#).
  - It sets out how the BCA Finance Committee will fund the Regional Councils.
  - It starts with the principles:
    - to ensure the funding is spent for the benefit of all BCA members.
    - that the best value for money has been achieved. From that flows a list of allowable costs. BCA aims to pay 100% of all allowable costs. For C&A the bulk of expenditure, up to the first £500, is paid automatically. Above that there is a mechanism to help BCA budget.
  - It is proposed to extend the funding to those Access Bodies that are acting as extensions of the Regional Councils. For example Dan yr Ogof CAC. They are to be called Funded Access Bodies (FABs). This would not include single-club access bodies.
  - It is also proposed to waive the insurance fee for FABs to save the money going around in circles.
- The Library Funding Request and Jenny's Fund Raising document need to be discussed.

*Dave Cooke, January 2009*

## **Item 9: Conservation & Access Officer's Report**

No written report submitted.

## **Item 10: Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report**

Equipment and Techniques Committee met on 8 November. A report was received that the replacement to the DMM ECO Anchors, known as the PECO anchor, had been axially pull tested and showed they were as good as the ECO anchors. E&T had therefore agreed to go ahead with negotiating an order for a large number of PECO anchors from the supplier.

The revision to BCA's Eco Anchor scheme had been discussed at the meeting and it was agreed that a small group would draft a revision to the scheme based on work discussed and their expertise.

Following a review, it was agreed to purchase a drill for use in Derbyshire. This has been completed.

Derbyshire have placed some anchors to deal with a failure of a spit and completed some other placements using their (carefully hoarded) stock of ECO anchors.

Following some discussion, the committee felt that further consideration was required before future work on rope testing should take place. Dave Elliot has supplied the results of some of his 1980's rope test work. These have been tabulated and graphed and, as has been reported, show a consistent trend in reduction in static strength, peak force and number of drops survived between new, clean used and muddy used ropes. (However, some of the ropes would not have met BS EN 1891:1998 even when new!) All ropes submitted for testing in 2008 have been dealt with and reports issued.

*Bob Mehew, January 2009*

## **Item 11: Training Officer's Report**

### **Numbers**

- 216 registrations for LCMLA
- 23 registrations for CIC
- 39 persons have undertaken assessment at level 1.
- 12 persons have undertaken assessment at level 2.
- 84 persons have revalidated at level 1.
- 31 persons have revalidated at level 2.
- 7 persons have done a level 1 core skills assessment following an out of date award.
- 1 person has done a level 2 core skills assessment following an out of date award.

### **Revalidations**

LCMLA revalidations in the new format appear to have been quite successful this year raising a net profit of £1915.00, and CIC revalidations have raised £810 net profit. This give BCA a total net profit of £2725.00.

The overall gross deposits for 2008 are £19129.00 with a small amount of income still outstanding.

The system of panels informing the training administrator of at least three revalidation dates twelve months in advance has not been well received in some panels, who would be happier running the system as it was, however all but one panel has come in line with the new procedures. This will probably mean that this year I have to insist that the panel and the Trainers and assessors of that panel abide by the BCA procedures or cease to be Trainers and Assessors which would be unfortunate.

### **Finance**

Training committee agreed to raise registration fees by £5 at all levels, feeling this would be sufficient this year. Personally I disagree, we have raised the fee we are paying Trainers and Assessors for running revalidations from £150.00 to £175.00 plus a maximum of £25 for hire of rooms etc. I feel that we should also raise the cost of revalidations which are only every five years by £5.00 to £70.00. I would ask Council to sanction this rise with immediate effect.

### **Child Protection**

Following the last Council meeting Idris Williams and Jenny Potts asked that this issue be discussed at Training Committee. It was in fact already an agenda item. Idris agreed to look at changes necessary to ensure that the policy was an all inclusive policy covering both recreational club caving and professional led activities. This is submitted to Council as a separate item.

### **Porth Yr Ogof**

This document has been circulated as a separate item; Training Committee, NCP and I feel it is time for Council to take a final decision on this point. We all feel that advice on 'Good Practice' whether general or site specific is one of the remits delegated by Council to the Training Committee, NCP and the Training Office. It is clear from written communication with the National Park and their legal advisers that they have no problem with the document.

### **Flooding**

NCP, CICP and Training Committee feel there is a need for the Training Office to make a response generally and more specifically to LCMLA holders on the number of flooding incidents over the past twelve months. Unfortunately Descent published an article that appeared to say that two thirds of the fifteen rescues in the Dales in the past year were 'led groups', this is not the case. What it should have said is there were three flooding incidents in Long Churn and two of these were led groups.

There have been an incredible number of near misses involving some led and many recreational cavers in the twelve month period many of which would have made Mossdale look insignificant. At present there appears to be a general complacency that it won't happen to me, or the Lemming thinking that if they have gone down it must be alright, or just a total misunderstanding of the significance of water to caves. Hopefully the article I am writing will be finished soon and published, we will also send it to all LCMLA holders by E-Mail.

## **Training Administrator**

Mrs. Mary Wilde has been appointed as the new Training Administrator to replace Karen from a short list of four. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Karen for ensuring a smooth and supportive transfer.

## **Meetings**

I have represented BCA at the Yorkshire Dales Rocksport access committee where the review of CRoW Act was discussed and its implication for cavers. BMC pushed very hard initially for crag access to be included in the original act, which it was. It appears that at review cave access may be able to be included with the right representation.

I attended a meeting of all NGBs and users in London hosted by Skills Active. Skills Active seems to be controlling some of the funding available through UKCC. But are still pushing only Coaching Awards. There may be a way forward in that BMC have suggested a meeting of interested NGBs to possibly develop a coaching unit that may be interchangeable between awards.

*Graham Mollard, January 2009*

## **Item 12: Publication & Information Officer's Report**

No written report submitted.

### **b) Newsletter Editor's Report**

There is very little to report other than the newsletter #10 made it out before Xmas and the deadlines for AGM notification etc! Suggest after the AGM for the next newsletter (#11) to report all the changes!

*Mike Clayton, January 2009*

### **c) Handbook Editor's Report**

Nothing to report since last meeting. However, looking forward, I intend to have the 2009-10 Handbook completed and ready for printing within a fortnight or so of the AGM. To meet this deadline, I will be sending out a request that Officers, Constituent Bodies, Regional Councils etc review their existing entries in the middle of February. However, if anyone would like to do this earlier, they are very welcome!

*Damian Weare, January 2009*

## **Item 13: Legal & Insurance Officer's Report**

No written report submitted.

## **Item 14: Youth & Development Officer's Report**

### **Website**

Mandy Fu (MUSC) is helping me make some additions to the Try Caving website, namely re-designing the interactive map for accessing caving clubs in various geographical regions.

We have also changed some of the content on the home page and re-skinned the website giving it a fresh look and feel.

Stu Gardiner is also going to let me use some of his excellent caving photographs to improve the appearance of the website.

Ian Ball (YSS) has agreed to assist with answering emails.

I have emailed all the clubs with a message to update the website and another plea to add a reciprocal link back to trycaving.

### **Google and Webstats**

In 2008 we had 6,487 unique visitors which was 3% increase on last year's total

However the average time on the website had decreased by 11% and the bounce rate is up by 23%

This means we are getting more people on to the website but they are not getting drawn in by our content.

It was looking at these webstats which prompted me to make the recent changes in order to improve these numbers. However in doing so I made a mistake - I removed the webstats monitoring html from the website so there is a sharp dip in stats after the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec

I have also noticed a worrying development in the last couple of days. We were placing somewhere on the second page in Google searches for "Caving". Now we are nowhere to be found. When changing the template I made a change (now rectified) which may explain this and I've now resubmitted the website to Google so I have my fingers crossed. This is disappointing however as it looked like we might be getting close to discontinuing the adwords we pay for.

## Artificial Cave

No progress made. However RE Jenny Potts' email there is definitely scope for something simpler, more robust and transportable than the YHA cave. Not sure whether it should be self contained like the "Speleobox" or assembled on site.

## BCA at Outdoor Shows etc

We have not had a request from the Outdoor Show to attend this year. There has been a change of management and I suspect this is the reason. I've not pursued it this year as feel that we would be better off sorting out our own cave and attending in 2010.

Shows or events which BCA could have a presence at:

- Outdoor Show 2010
- Cliff Hanger 2009
- CLA Game Fair
- Wales and Border Counties Game and Country Fair (Crickhowell)
- Priddy Folk Festival
- Adventure Travel Show March 2010

## Scouts

I cannot claim to have made any great advances myself here but it does appear that the new creation of an association of scout teams will improve things. Idris and I have been exchanging emails recently and I look forward to assisting this new association in any way I can.

## Leaflets

Jenny Potts has 2/3 of a box left and I have 3/4 of a box remaining. I would revise the estimate to 2125 leaflets approx remaining.

*Chris Jewell, January 2009*

## Item 15: Membership Administrator's Report

### BCA Membership to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008

- DIMs caving: 388 (DIMs plus BCRA: 195)
- DIMs non caving: 43
- BCRA Honorary: 9
- CIMs caving: 4035
- CIMs non caving: 1186
- Clubs: 152
- Associates: 13
- Access: 7

### 2009 Membership Renewal Process

The 2009 renewal process began on 1st December 2008 when all clubs were emailed the 2009 renewal papers and a copy of their club's 2008 membership spreadsheet (the club CIM spreadsheet now has fields to identify under/over 18 and gender, as requested by some RCCs.) Clubs without email, or incorrect email addresses were sent this information by post. DIMs received a copy of the DIM renewal papers with the December newsletter (to save on a separate posting), which arrived around Christmas, slightly later than I had hoped. I seek the view of this meeting if the DIM renewal papers should be sent out earlier in future years.

To date (January 6th) 17 club renewals and 21 DIMs have been processed during December, although this week will see a significant increase on these figures.

Further to the meeting that we (Cookie, David Gibson and myself) had earlier this year, I have now reconfigured all DIM worksheets to the Grand Unified Format (GUF - TM David Gibson) so that incoming on-line renewal/payments that are supported by csv files can be cut and pasted directly into the card printing work sheets. (This involved many hours of version testing and email exchanges between David and myself during December until we had ironed out most of the bugs.) David has continued to work on this during early January, and I would like this meeting to recognise the amount of effort he has spent on this. The only down side to this is that DIM renewals that are posted to BCA HQ (at least 50%) need to be manually input to the on-line payments system (by me) to produce a csv file (rather than a cut and paste from the 2008 database). This is an extra stage in the process which will create a delay in processing some DIM cards, but once complete will be easier for 2010 renewals, and is a step in the right direction.

The small number of BCRA members who received their 2009 gold cards during December will be sent a replacement card during January, as from 1st January 2009, all BCRA gold cards contain a unique logon and password for accessing on-line BCRA services.

Looking forward, during 2009 we hope to extend the GUF concept to include all other classifications of membership (except CIMs) until we have just two membership lists to manage rather than 8 at present (although there will still be 8 separate spreadsheets for card printing purposes). This will enable the eventual migration away from an Excel spreadsheet to a "proper" membership database.

*Glenn Jones, January 2009*

## **Item 16: Insurance Manager's Report**

I do not have a great deal to report beyond what was said at the last meeting, or which has not already been covered by e-mail in the meanwhile.

I have confirmed our wish to renew the PL insurance for a three year deal with Zurich and I understand Glenn is well on the way now with sending out renewal notices. There is plenty of cash in the bank to pay for the renewal premium when it comes due at the end of January (and I have not even had the invoice yet).

SUI have confirmed that they wish to continue to participate in the scheme, but have indicated that they will have difficulty in stumping up the additional 500 Euro payment this year since they have already told their members what their 2009 subscription will be based on the decision which we made to keep the subscriptions unchanged from 2008 at the October meeting. 500 Euros is not a huge amount in the overall scheme cost (approx. GBP 30k) and I am inclined to think that we should just take this on the nose this year and not attempt to recover it from SUI. Since we have a reasonable level of certainty on when the 2010 premium will be, we can discuss whether we load the whole of this on to SUI or if we roll it into the overall cost of the scheme and recover it from all contributors when we agree the 2010 subscriptions in October.

I also concluded that there was no major pressure for an increase in the limit of indemnity to GBP 5m and so this has remained at GBP 2m. Again, I suggest there is no need for get into a long and involved discussion in Council about this now and that we review this in October.

*Nick Williams, January 2009*

## **Item 17: Convenor of the Radon Working Party's Report**

No written report submitted.

## **Item 18: Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report**

Nothing to report at present.

*Dave Cooke, January 2009*

## **Item 19: International Representative's Report**

There were various UIS meetings during 2008, largely aimed at preparing for the next international congress in Kerrville, Texas, in July 2009. During the first part of the year, there was a great deal of international discussion mostly by email/internet with the UIS online forum being used for the first time.

There were a number of UIS commission and regional meetings.

The first one, which I attended, was the European congress in Vercors from 23rd to 30th August. This was a grand affair, involving 2000 cavers with a lot of cave excursions including (it is reported) 500 people bottoming the Berger. It is suggested this may be the template for future 8 yearly congresses to work out of phase with the main UIS Congress which was traditionally held in Europe every eight years. A more detailed report on this meeting has already been submitted and also included here.

My next involvement with UIS was a Bureau meeting to coincide with the two-yearly meeting of the volcano speleological commission of the UIS in Jeju, South Korea, from 3rd to 9th September. Again, a detail report has already been submitted. The intensive two-day business meeting was dominated again by preparations for the International Congress but the importance of regional bodies and commissions was gently getting more prevalent. At the moment, there is a particularly good UIS Bureau which behind the scenes has been very involved with karst protection including setting up new world heritage sites in karst areas.

It is my endeavour as UIS president to try and expand on this into the future, to try and improve the general standing of the UIS in political, scientific and general caving circles. A great deal of email discussion has taken place along these lines with the Jeju meeting being followed up by a business meeting in Postonja, Slovenia from 3rd to 6th December where essentially the secretary,

treasurer and myself reorganised some of the financial arrangements and planned suggested improvements in the structure of UIS to be progressed at the International Congress in July.

At the International Congress, the venue for the 2013 Congress will be decided. Traditionally this would take place in Europe. As 12 months notice has to be given of an intention to apply for the Congress, the UK put forward an application as did the Czech Republic. Before the extended deadline, these were the only two applications received. My opinion at the moment would be that on the back of the undoubted success of the Vercors European Congress, we should consider hosting one of these in seven to eight years time and leave the very keen and well prepared Czechs to do the main international Congress in 2013.

A European congress could be a lot of fun with less science than the international congress, more caving and would fit politically.

I look forward to further discussions on this in the future.

*Andy Eavis, January 2009*

## **Item 19a: FSE Report**

### **1) Vercors 2008**

Two bureau meetings, a General Assembly Meeting (GAM) and a Public Meeting took place at the Vercors 2008 event in August last year. Unfortunately I was unable to attend the bureau meetings but Glenn Jones agreed to attend the GAM for the UK and reported back to BCA Council in September. The minutes of the two bureau meetings have not been complete yet but will be available on the FSE web site soon. I will send copies to the BCA Secretary as soon as they are published.

### **2) WD 66**

Since August a considerable amount of time has been spent preparing the ground for a public campaign behind the WD 66 Declaration (Written declaration on protection of caves as a cultural, natural and environmental heritage). This has been worked on by a Cave Protection Commission legitimised by the FSE. (The FSE has a number of commissions working on various cave related issues).

Although the draft was published in June it was only available internally in the European Parliament. It was initiated by cavers but driven by MEPs from Germany, Hungary, and Spain. The impetus was from the experience of Praileaitz Cave in Spain which despite containing Palaeolithic drawings failed to get sufficient protection. The declaration was subsequently converted into a report requiring 393 signatures by MEPs to be successful.

Despite requests to all European caving organisations / bodies for support and a well-organised campaign in November and December in Brussels to raise the profile of the issues surrounding cave conservation insufficient signatures were obtained. The results were as follows.

### **Final Result for WD 66 (Total number of signatures: 140)**

Country	Number of MEPs Signed	Total number of MEPs	% of total MEPs
Belgium	4	24	17
Bulgaria	12	18	67
Czech Republic	1	24	4
Denmark	3	14	21
Finland	4	14	29
France	9	78	12
Germany	16	99	16
Greece	10	24	42
Hungary	6	24	25
Ireland	3	13	23
Italy	13	78	17
Latvia	1	9	11
Lithuania	3	13	23
Luxemburg	1	6	17
Netherlands	2	27	7
Poland	11	54	20
Portugal	7	24	29
Romania	11	35	31
Slovakia	2	14	14
Slovenia	6	7	86
Spain	5	54	9
UK	10	78	13

(No signatures from Sweden, Austria, Estonia, Cyprus and Malta)

The table demonstrates the wide disparity between countries such as Slovenia which returned support from 86% of MEPs and Austria, for example, providing no signatures at all.

The Cave Protection Commission will continue to raise the profile of cave protection issues and believes the next steps are:

- Forming a new working group of MEPs (to include existing three from Hungary, Spain and Germany)
- Encouraging cavers/organisations/bodies in countries to showcase 'best practice' re cave protection
- Organising a workshop on cave protection for newly elected MEPs in Sept 2009
- Encouraging cavers to lobby their respective MEPs for support in future.

#### Comments

If WD 66 had been successful it is not clear whether this would have affected all caves or just certain caves. The UK is clearly ahead of the game where cave protection is concerned eg, SSSI's, 'areas of archaeological significance' and also new Heritage Protection Bill likely to become legislation.

Could new legislation restrict access to caves or cave digging activities? Perhaps it is better to be pro-active and influence the direction of travel. For example, in the Dales a new post of Cave Conservation Adviser (employed by Natural England) has been recruited. YRC (my club) are currently discussing project plans for our digs on Ingleborough with the adviser, initiated by the landowner, Reginald Farrar.

Wherever caves are found in whatever country they deserve protection.

#### 3) Request for Eurospeleo Forum Organisers in 2011

The FSE are currently looking for Forum organisers to host a Eurospeleo Forum in 2011. The last Speleo Forum was organised in Seville in 2006 and formed part of the World Games in Seville. There will, of course, be a UIS congress in Europe in 2013.

#### Comments

Would BCA have capacity to organise/host Forum in 2011?

*Ged Campion, January 2009*

## **Item 20: Any Other Business (The British Caving Library)**

#### Update on Progress

##### British Caving Library

Members of BCRA have been working hard over the past year to sort out the British Caving Library - the national library. We have employed a professional librarian (Janet Nash) to lead the project and she has done sterling work and been invaluable. The majority of the huge backlog is now sorted and the still incomplete catalogue is now available on the library website - <http://caving-library.org.uk/> During 2009 cataloguing will be completed and the Library Steering Group would like to know your thoughts on the website, the catalogue and future directions for the national library.

##### British Caving Archive

Hidden in the library boxes were many scrap books relating to the exploration of British caves by the BSA in the 1920's, 30's and 40's. These often hand written volumes, contain photographs, maps and surveys of our caves and are an invaluable resource that needs both to be protected and made available to the caving public. We hope that this material will form the basis of the British Caving Archive and will be safely stored by the British Geological Survey in Keyworth, Nottingham. It is hoped that a selection of this archive will be made available online on the BGS website once we have raised the money to pay for the digitisation. We again would appreciate your thoughts on this archive.

*Dave Checkley, January 2009*

#### Request for BCA Financial Support

Here is a copy of an email from BCRA's Librarian, Janet Nash, to Nick Williams, with a suggested job description for an assistant to help with what is now termed the "British Caving Library", (formerly the National Caving Library) which is managed by BCRA on behalf of BCA.

*Library Assistant required for 5 hours a week. Salary £?? per hour (I'd suggest around £7-8 per hour, depends what you pay for other jobs). Starting January 2009  
Main responsibilities:*

*To assist Librarian with sorting journals, checking for duplicates at Glutton and Matlock and recording stock information To assist with maintenance of collection of books and journals on both sites – initially this might include cleaning, moving materials around on shelves and transferring boxes between sites.*

*Person specification:*

*Some computer literacy though training will be given on library catalogue*

*Good eye for detail and accuracy*

*Willing to work at either Glutton Bridge or Matlock Local Studies Library as required*

At present BCRA is funding everything to do with the Library, including £4000+ a year at present for rent of the 1000 sq.ft. premises at Glutton Bridge (which came into use on 1 July 2008), the salary of the Librarian for 20 hours per week, sundry expenses in moving books, shelving and furniture to the new site, computer hardware, the telephone/broadband system, etc. This is estimated at around £20,000 for the first year.

From the 2 years from June 2005 until June 2007 BCRA paid out £1000 per year to house the collection of archive and library material collected from Roy Paulson, the previous BCRA Librarian, at a storage facility near Derby. From June 2007 BCRA increased this to £2000 for two rooms for storage of all the material collected from Roy's house after his death in January 2007. BCRA also paid around £1200 for suitable racks on which to shelve the material.

BCRA paid out over £2000 to hire and furnish a one-room office at Cromford for 9 months to enable the Librarian to start work on sorting and cataloguing the material. The new professional Librarian, Janet Nash, was appointed to start work in January this year. The Derby storage facility and the Cromford office were relinquished when everything was moved to Glutton Bridge on 1st. July this year.

This is a tremendous financial commitment on BCRA's behalf and I would like to suggest that it is now time for BCA itself to begin to make a contribution to the work which is intended to benefit all cavers. Specifically, would BCA consider funding all or part of the wages of the Library Assistant (which Nick suggests should be around £6.25 - £6.50 per hour) for 5 hours per week?

Janet has now "broken the back" of the sorting and cataloguing, with help from a number of volunteers who are continuing to work on new Library website, cataloguing archive material, etc. It is intended that the Library Assistant will undertake the bulk of the clerical work entailed in maintaining the records and also keep the Matlock site in good order, as this is where part of the Library will continue to be housed in the County Council's Local Studies Library and is open to all comers.

I appreciate that BCA Executive cannot make a decision on this now, but would ask that you consider the desirability of my suggestion so that, if it is thought appropriate, a suitable proposal can be put to the next BCA Council Meeting.

***Jenny Potts, January 2009***



# British Caving Association

Draft Summary of BCA Council Meeting, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2008, Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch

**Please Note:** The minutes taken at this meeting have unfortunately been mislaid. The meeting was only short and followed on immediately from the BCA Annual General Meeting. Below is a list of the main items agreed.  
**Damian Weare, BCA Secretary (January 2008)**

<b>Present:</b>	Mick Day (MD)	BCA Chairman
	Simon Froude (SF)	BCA Secretary
	Dave Cooke (DC)	BCA Treasurer
	Elsie Little (EL)	BCA Conservation & Access Officer
	Bob Mehew (BM)	BCA Equipment Officer
	Les Williams (LW)	BCA Publications & Information Officer
	David Judson (DJ)	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
	Chris Jewell (CJ)	BCA Youth & Development Officer
	Glenn Jones (GJ)	BCA Membership Administrator / CNCC Rep.
	Mike Clayton (MC)	BCA Newsletter Editor
	Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Annual Handbook Editor / Individual Member Rep.
	Charles Milton (CM)	BCA Individual Member Rep.
	Emma Porter (EP)	BCA Individual Member Rep. / BCRC Rep.
	Boyd Potts (BP)	BCA Club Rep. (Orpheus CC)
	Owen Clarke (OC)	BCA Club Rep. (Cwmbran CC)
	Bernie Woodley (BW)	BCA Club Rep. (SWCC)
	Idris Williams (IW)	BCA Club Rep. (Shropshire Scouts)
	Jenny Potts (JP)	DCA Rep.
	Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	ACI Rep.
	David Jean (DJe)	DCUC Rep.
	Alan Finch (AF)	WPCST Rep.
	Steve King (SK)	CSCC Rep.
	Mike McCombe (MM)	Cambrian Caving Council Rep.
	Andy Pryke (AP)	

## 1) Dates for BCA Council Meetings for 2008-9

Council Meeting dates agreed as: Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2008; Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2008; Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> January 2009. All Council meetings to be held at Alvechurch Baptist Church Hall, starting at 10.30am.

## 2) Appointment of Additional non-elected officers for 2008-9:

- Youth & Development: Chris Jewell
- Newsletter Editor: Mike Clayton
- Annual Handbook Editor: Damian Weare
- International / UIS Representative: Andy Eavis
- Radon Working Party Chairman: Clark Friend
- Insurance Manager: Nick Williams
- Rope Test Officer: Bob Mehew
- Publication Sales: Jenny Potts
- Cave Registry Co-ordinator: Dave Cooke

## 3) Sheffield Cliffhanger Event:

Council agreed to JP's request for funding the transport element of DCA's participation in Sheffield Cliffhanger event on 12<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> July.