

# OFFICERS' REPORTS TO BCA COUNCIL MEETING, 7 OCTOBER 2006

## Item 6.1 - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Many current interrelated administrative problems arise from personnel difficulties, most of which can be dealt with under the appropriate Officers' Reports/business.

However, most central is the loss arising from withdrawal of UKSport funding. DMJ wrote to the Sports minister (R. Caborn) and received a reply from a minion one month later indicating that policy is set in stone.

Sport England have yet to finalise policy, but have deputed CCPR to execute a new review process, Self Assurance, which BCA cannot feasibly undertake until the current hiatus in membership administration and finance is resolved. It may then be possible to resume some form of grant aid to Training Admin if we are prepared to jump through hoops and successfully do so. AALA are strongly committed to moral support of funding of governing body schemes training schemes. Some body within DFES may be a suitable alternative source of funds which AALA might help with. Welsh SC continues its support for Cambrian CC, but there may be adjustments to be made in future allocation. Support from Scotland & N. Ireland might also be pursued.

CCPR have developed two schemes which will shortly be implemented to assist non-SC funded but recognised governing bodies such as BCA.

1. The Big Lottery Fund application; initially, CCPR made a case for £900,000 of lottery funds which they would then be responsible for awarding to GBs according to rules not yet defined. They were told to rethink it to a figure above £1,000,000. It is clear that at present CCPR staff regard BCA as a likely recipient of a small part of such a sum.
2. A new Lottery/Bingo scheme, based on a Swedish model. Weekly tickets at £2.00 will provide 3 bingo cards and one raffle number. Key features will be a large number of smaller prizes (50% of take), purchaser participation and direct donation of a proportion of the take to two or three named "good causes" each week. One of these will always be a Sports GB such as BCA. The idea is that members will encourage those they know to participate during the appropriate week! (?!?!). If this is established, it should begin end January 2007! Neither may allow funds to go to activities overseas i.e. expeditions. But support of UK activities may allow us to divert BCA funds to expedition support.....

Which brings us to the vexed question of what to do with the indeterminate but large sum of money being raked in by BCA. Clearly, we must

- a. account in detail for this.
- b. produce a viable budget relevant to BCA's needs, with a view perhaps to establishing an entirely self-supporting financial structure.
- c. progressively reduce the subscription levels with a view to increasing participation and delivering services which are better value for money. All of us support this in principle; we need to achieve it in practice. Perhaps Bob will point the way....

*Mick Day, Hon. Chairman  
7th. Oct. 2006*

## Item 7.1 - ACTING SECRETARY'S REPORT

### Communications

It is clear that we have a problem with communications, both with our members and within BCA Council. Part of the problem re. our members is related to the difficulty in producing an up-to-date list of members and this is being addressed. More worrying is the lack of communication within BCA Council and we do need to address this - it isn't enough to assume that, because some action is reported in the Minutes of a Council Meeting, those who were not present will know exactly what has transpired and understand their part in it. We need to talk to each other by phone or email and ensure that everyone who should be involved is clear about what is going on.

Hidden Earth should have provided a good opportunity to be in direct contact with members but, being on the BCA Stand all weekend, I found myself trying to answer many queries re. membership and insurance with insufficient information at my disposal. This needs to be addressed next year so that someone with detailed knowledge is available to answer members' queries face to face. My thanks to Boyd Potts and Mick Day who helped set up the stand and provide backup during the weekend.

My thanks to Paula, who has provided information to get me going to deal with the Secretary's business for as long as it takes to find a new permanent Secretary, and to Mick Day, for his encouragement and support.

*Jenny Potts, 5 Oct. 2006  
Acting Secretary, BCA*

## Item 8.2 - PROPOSAL THAT BCA REGISTER AS A COMMUNITY AMATEUR SPORTS CLUB (CASC)

Appended is a short item I am putting to Descent for publication. I have had one very positive reply from contacts about the benefits of being a CASC. I also have had one suggestion about de-registering namely one dissolves the organisation and creates a new one with a slightly changed name. So there is a route, albeit a costly one, out of BCA being a CASC if it subsequently turns out to be needed to de-register. It now seems to me that it is to BCA's benefit to be registered under CASC so as to reduce our tax bill to zero. It would also have a contributory effect on our VAT position (though I have yet to construct a defence of not registering for VAT) in that it would negate the question as to why BCA is not registered either under CASC or as a charity. Although I do not understand the benefits of becoming a charity, I sense for the time being that the current situation where by BCRA might be prepared to act as a charity on BCA's behalf is sufficient.

I therefore recommend the topic be raised at the next Council meeting with a view to obtaining Council's Ok to register. I am not sure about the implications of when one registers v tax exemption, but presume leaving it to the AGM would cause BCA to incur at least one year's worth of tax on the estimate of £300, namely £57.

*Bob Mehew, 27 Sept. 2006*

### Changes in Tax Rules may hit Clubs

Many Club Treasurers may not, like me, follow the budget to see whether the Chancellor makes any changes which affect their club. This year the Chancellor decided to do away with the nil rate band on Corporation Tax, which simply put means that if an organisation made less than £10,000 trading profit, then it did not need to pay tax. Of course many clubs may never have even thought about their tax position. This removal of the nil rate band from 1st April 2006 means that all clubs will have to give it some consideration. Being a club is slightly different from being an organisation which is trading, most notably since membership fees are not considered part of trading. But bank interest payments are part of trading, as would be receiving money from the use of the club hut or advertising space in your journal. For example, although BCA had a turn over of £63,000 in 2004,

only £300 was considered to be trading income and liable for Corporation Tax. (The rest was membership fees.)

One way to avoid this charge is for your club to be a Community Amateur Sports Club or CASC. The CASC scheme is a half way house between being and not being a charity for recognised activities such as caving. So far only four caving clubs have taken the opportunity to register under the scheme (Craven Pothole Club, Grampian Speleological Group, Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club and Technical Speleological Group). Being a CASC entitles the club to limited exemption from Corporation Tax on trading gains, the limit being currently set at £30,000 and also on all bank interest. Also, CASC status enables a club to claim Gift Aid on "non subscription" donations. An additional benefit is that a CASC can obtain mandatory relief on rates from their local Council, presuming the club has some where which requires rates to be paid. So far no down sides have been identified with registering as a CASC, though there is no way of de-registering. (It would appear that the only way to de-register is to wind the club up.) There are certain requirements which the club will have to demonstrate, perhaps the most onerous being the need for an acceptable constitution. Further details on the CASC scheme can be found at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/casc/index.htm>. The other alternative is for a club to become a charity which appears to have more onerous conditions.

For clubs which decide to not register as a CASC, then you will have to pay Corporation Tax on bank interest as a minimum. Whether the banks will switch interest payments from being exempt of tax to net of tax is unclear. Although the burden of filling in a Corporation Tax return is not that onerous (well not after the first one), the small additional burden of registering for CASC status may be worth the effort in the long run. It is not possible to give detailed guidance on what can be considered as trading and what can be omitted, so the best advice is to consult with an accountant who has some expertise in dealing with charities, clubs etc. Try asking your local Voluntary Services Council if they have the names of any such persons or a larger club on your locality (especially clubs with a bar which means they have successfully dealt with this problem).

### Item 8.3 - BCA BUDGET FOR 2007 – A PROPOSAL

Whilst completing the accounts for the dissolution of NCA in August, I suddenly realised that the assets of BCA had grown to over £67,000 at the end of 2005. Given there had been little appearance of work being done by BCA in the first half of 2006 together with the resignation of the membership secretary which has resulted in a substantial saving as well as the joining of the previously DCA insured clubs, my guess is that BCA may well achieve a surplus of approaching £80,000 by the end of 2006. I view this potential position as grotesque and likely to give rise to a serious question as to the fitness of BCA to survive in 2007. In order to minimise this possibility, I decided in an individual capacity that I would put together a budget for 2007 and attempt to get BCA to sign onto it at its October 2006 Council meeting.

Having spoken to Mick Day at Hidden Earth and receiving some encouragement, I have spoken to a small number of people to gain information from which I have drawn up a budget which is attached. The headline features of the budget are that membership subscriptions for 2007 should remain as for 2006, namely:

		Joining Date			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>DIM</b>	<b>caving</b>	£30	£23	£15	£8
	<b>non caving</b>	£20	£15	£10	£5
<b>CIM</b>	<b>caving</b>	£15	£11	£8	£4
	<b>non caving</b>	£5	£4	£3	£1

Clubs size	2006 basic	subs + journal
4 - 10	£20	£25
11 - 20	£30	£35
21 - 30	£40	£45
31 - 40	£45	£50
> 40	£50	£55

<b>Associate</b>	£45
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<b>Huts</b>	£50
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<b>Access Bodies</b>	£50
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<b>CDG</b>	??
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<b>EUG</b>	??
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This level of subscription would lead to a deficit in the 2007 budget of around £11,000. However, if many of the assumed activities do not take place, then the deficit will significantly reduce. I have also said that if persons identify other expenditures before or during 2007, then funding of these would be considered by BCA Exec.

Details of the calculations are attached. *(Separate document not included here.)*

Cookie has made the point that this budget effectively assumes that the surplus from the CIM subscriptions in past years can be used to underwrite deficits in areas other than insurance. (It should be noted that NCA bequeathed some £32,000 to BCA.) I acknowledge that this is a good point and one which was not considered by both the Hub and Council. I suggest there are two extreme positions, one in which CIMs opt out of paying for just BCA Newsletter, Handbook and Speleology and the other in which CIMs opt out of paying for all activities of BCA other than insurance. In such circumstances the insurance deficit alone would suggest a CIM sub of £12 (leading to an additional deficit of around £12,000). I therefore propose that Council accept that the 2007 budget may be set ignoring where a potential deficit is funded from and also initiates a consultation process to determine what range of activities it is reasonable for the CIMs to contribute towards in their subscription.

There are a number of minor points. The budget assumes that Speleology is funded wholly by BCA. I would recommend that Council should give authority to the Exec to let a contract for editing it if this comes about. Training is predicted to have a small deficit of £2,600 for its professional activities which may well be offset by the proposed increase in fees. (I confirm that training grants remain at £2,000.) I would also recommend that the training administration work should be moved from a contract base to a paid employee base. Conservation and Access includes a substantial amount for work in one region; other regions may also have as yet unidentified work.

Lastly, I intend to write a letter to Descent about the state of BCA finances reporting my efforts and the outcome.

*Bob Mehew, 6th. Oct. 2006*

### Item 10.1 - TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

Firstly apologies for my absence from the meeting, this being due to the fact that it clashes with a local Scout Event, The Longmynd Hike, a 50 mile 24 hour event over the South Shropshire Hills, which, now that I am too decrepit to take part in, I have been persuaded to run a check point on!

I have to report the following:-

**A: My resignation.** I stated at the AGM that I would not continue to the full term (shades of T Blair esq.). Effective from the BCA AGM in March I offer my resignation. I understand that there is at least one candidate prepared to stand for election at that time.

**B: The resignation of Pat Ramsden from the post as Training Administration Service Provider.** Pat has done this job in an exemplary manner for a number of years, and kept everybody involved in Training for the LCMLA & CIC on the straight and narrow during this

time. Pat now wishes to retire from this post, perhaps to spend more time on the golf course and more time with Paul now that he is semi-retired. I believe it is imperative that BCA proceed to advertising this post without delay, as it is crucial to the continuance of the National Governing Body Awards. The job description is available, however, I feel it would help the future Training Officer greatly if the function of minute taking at Training Committee meetings were to be added. Certainly I have found it difficult to simultaneously chair the meeting, take an active part in it and to take minute notes. Without an effective and conscientious occupant of the post the administration of the schemes will rapidly fall into disarray.

**C: At the AGM I was tasked with preparing a syllabus for a type of training scheme for recreational cavers.** I regret to report that due to other pressures I have made little progress with this.

**D: Another LCMLA Trainer Assessor has found it necessary to withdraw from the scheme, as he is unable to get insurance.** I quote from his resignation letter as follows "The final straw has been the withdrawal of my Professional Indemnity insurance cover relating specifically to the LCMLA scheme by my insurers .....who cover my Business ..... with a combined scheme. My broker has made it clear that a stand alone policy is unlikely to be economic if even obtainable" For obvious reasons I have removed the names of the insurers and the business from this quotation. I urge, plead and beg, yet again, for BCA Council to address this problem of insurance for BCA approved Trainer Assessors without further prevarication. If BCA are committed to the continuance of the LCMLA and CIC scheme then this issue must be resolved before the number of Trainer Assessors dwindle to such low numbers that the schemes are no longer viable.

**E: BCA Youth and Development Scheme.** It came as a surprise to me to find at "Hidden Earth" that there was such a thing. My observations at the launch were that there was little proposed to involve anyone, other than University Students, in this. The Campaign was based solely on the experience of an ex-university student. However there are other aspects to this.

**The Commercial Sector.** In addition to the very basic introduction/sampler to caving provided by many Outdoor Adventure Centres there are many providers who will build on this to provide training and experience to young people to enable them to join the Caving Community. Can arrangements be made please for simple links to these providers on the "trycaving" website.

**The Voluntary Sector.** The following is the text (with very minor amendments) of a report endorsed by Training Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2006. In this text it is proposed that BCA, actively and financially, encourage adult members of the Voluntary Youth Sector to gain National Governing Body awards in caving. The probable benefits of this are set out. The cost is estimated on a "best guess" basis, I ask BCA Council to consider, in the light of the financial position of BCA, if a greater annual sum could be allocated.

### **Training Committee 28<sup>th</sup> September 2006: Proposals for Youth and Development Campaign UNDER 18s**

The proposals outlined at Hidden Earth deal only with University Students and over 18s generally.

Training Committee believes that it is essential to make arrangements for encouraging under 18s to become involved in caving as early as possible. This can be achieved as follows:-

**A.** Caving Clubs have fought shy of allowing under 18s to take part due to perceived legal, insurance and child protection complications. BCA via it's legal and insurance section is requested to produce consistent, researched and simple advice/guidance to all BCA member clubs on the implications of having junior members of any age and the encouragement of young people generally.

**B.** A considerable amount of introduction to caving is already done by voluntary youth groups, in particular, The Scout Association, although others may be active.

There is concern among some about the quality/safety of some of this work, although much is exemplary. For voluntary workers there are enormous implications in time and cost in obtaining NGB qualifications. These being over and above training commitments in their own voluntary organisation and Training and Assessment in other activities.

These are:-	LCMLA Registration:-	Cost:-	£35	to BCA		
	LCMLA Level1 training.	Time:-	2 Days	Cost:-	£100	to Trainer
	Level 1 Assessment.	Time:-	2 Days	Cost:-	£250	to Assessor
	LCMLA Level 2 training.	Time:-	2 Days	Cost:-	£120	to Trainer
	Level 2 Assessment.	Time:-	2 Days	Cost:-	£250	to Assessor

Obviously BCA can do nothing to reduce the time factor, however, if this work were to be encouraged financially the results could be.

1. An improvement in the numbers of the young people coming from the voluntary youth sector into mainstream recreational caving.
2. An improvement in the quality of the introduction of the young people's safety and experience. (We all hear from time to time bad reports about the conduct of these groups).
3. A vast improvement in the image of BCA amongst the voluntary youth sector where, currently BCA is seen as at best disinterested, at worst actively putting obstacles in the way of people engaged in this work.
4. A strengthening of the LCMLA & CIC schemes with more people being involved.
5. An introduction into the ranks of Award Holders of more persons who are not "in it for the vast sums of money to be made" and a general improvement in the relationship between the professional caver and the recreational caver.
6. A small increase in members to Caving Clubs and the formation of more Voluntary Youth Sector Caving Clubs affiliating to BCA.

The proposal is, therefore, that the BCA Council approve the following measures to encourage voluntary youth groups to have BCA qualified leaders and instructors. For candidates who can prove an adult membership of a voluntary youth movement and membership of a BCA affiliated caving club that:-

1. The LCMLA registration fee is waived.
2. Each time a candidate achieves an Award at Level 1 or 2 BCA gives a grant to this individual of £50.

To safeguard this from abuse the Award Certificate is endorsed with the words "Valid only in the Voluntary Youth Sector". If the candidate were to leave the voluntary sector and enter the commercial or education sector this restriction could be removed by a refund on a sliding scale reducing to zero over 5 years.

**Effect on BCA Finances.** There are currently around 200 registrations per year, although there is no information on the numbers of these who are voluntary sector. A reasonable guess would be 10% and that these numbers would double if this scheme were introduced.

A reasonable estimate of the cost to BCA would be £4,200 per year (this assumes that only half the participants go on to Level 2).

There are of course many unknowns in this calculation and it would be necessary to monitor the commitment very closely and make the budgetary arrangements sufficiently flexible.

In the event of the LCMLA & CIC schemes having to become self-supporting due to the loss of Sport Council Grants the effect of this scheme will have to be taken into account.

**During the course of the Council it should be possible to contact me on my mobile phone 07802739183 for any clarifications to this.**

*Idris Williams, 29 Sept. 2006  
Training Officer, BCA*

## Item 11.1 - EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES REPORT

So far this year we have been unable to agree a date for a meeting, however this is now resolved and we will be meeting on Nov 11<sup>th</sup>. Whilst we have a full agenda our main topic will be anchors.

### 1. Anchors

We have all but run out of P Hangers and either need a new stock £6000, or to source a replacement which will need to go through a regime of type testing.

### 2. Anchor inspection

This is an area of both great debate and confusion, as we have 3 standards, and a requirement to pick our way through this to find the most appropriate standard for cavers

#### Standard 1

Stay as we are

Our regime has been to test the performance of the anchor and resin to destruction and propose the best way forward with this ( Note this is not a legislative requirement)

#### Standard 2

Adopt the UIAA standard.

Put crudely this is "fit it and forget it" policy, leaving the responsibility to the end user as to the safe use of the anchor

#### Standard 3

Follow the PPE directive

Test the anchor to a prescribed pull, if there is no creep then anchor is safe to use (However this requires a regular test regime, which caving would find impossible to keep up with)

We will propose a way forward from this, but before doing so consult with the likes of BMC, to try and ensure some form of consistency.

### 3. Anchor Installation

Currently we have an issue with lack of usable batteries for the drills, which puts future installations in doubt.

### 4. Equipment test

Finally we are being sent an LED lamp to test from Protector Lamp – Currently on trial with mine rescue in Mansfield.

*Andy Pryke, 6 Oct. 2006*  
*Equipment Officer*

## Item 11.3 - ROPE TEST OFFICER'S REPORT

Thanks to the good advertising provided by the Hidden Earth team, I now have 35 samples awaiting testing. All persons were warned that this would take a few months to deal with. A second of the 4 NCA Long Term Rope Test has been tested. 5 of the 6 rope samples survived only 2 drops, the 6th surviving 3 drops. Some back ground information is required before a formal report can be produced. The other 2 ropes await testing, as does another 700 m of rope!

*Bob Mehew, 27 Sept. 2006*  
*Rope Test Officer*

## Item 12.1 - YOUTH AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE REPORT

**Website:** 25 registered clubs

### Stats:

	Hits	Visitors
<b>Total</b>	8487	402
<b>Today</b>	365	24
<b>Week</b>	3043	161
<b>Month</b>	8026	394
<b>Year</b>	8487	402

### Flyers

		Quantity - boxes	
<b>Yorkshire</b>	Alan Speight	1	1800
	Jess Hart	3	5400
<b>Derbyshire</b>	Jenny Potts	2	3600
<b>Mendip</b>	Andy Manners	1	1800
	Chris Jewell	1	1800
<b>Wales</b>	?	1 3/4	3150
	Ian Holmes	1/4	450
			<b>18,000</b>
	Scouts	1/4	450
	Bernies Café	1/2	900
	Independent Hostels	1/4	450
	Random universities	1/4	450
		<b>11.25</b>	<b>20,250</b>

The above numbers are only approximate and we have actually only printed 20,000 flyers.

So far the response from Wales has been very poor. I will be taking a box of flyers with me to SWCC on the 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Nov and hope to leave them with someone there. We do also not have anyone from the Forest of Dean.

I have probably over supplied Bernies with flyers but do not see this as a problem as they can always be redistributed and I have instructed Jess Hart to hold back a box in Yorkshire.

#### **Launch at Hidden Earth:**

The presentation was rather poorly attended (most of the crowd were student cavers I personally knew) however the idea was well received by those that were there and many people were very positive about the initiative. The stand did receive some attention during both days and I answered lots of questions. Finally Les was kind enough to incorporate a slide with a launch announcement into the opening presentation which means people have at least heard of what we are doing.

#### **Costs:**

<b>Expenditure:</b>	20,000 Leaflets	£1210
<b>Income (sponsorship):</b>	Speleotechnics	£100
	Warmbac	£50
	Lyon (Petzl)	£200
<b>Total Expenditure:</b>		<b>£860</b>

#### **Future:**

1) Article for Descent to further publicise the campaign.

2) Distribution of flyers, follow up on work being done and check progress.

3) Website – continued development and modification. Including FAQs and Simple explanations on the following topics:

- Child protection

- Insurance and temporary membership

For these I need the BCA to clarify its policy and produce a simple set of guideline.

4) Outdoors shows such as the Ordnance Survey Outdoors show at NEC 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> March 2007 <http://www.theoutdoorsshow.co.uk/>

5) National Try Caving Event: The concept is to get each of the main caving regions in the UK (Mendip, Yorkshire, Wales, and Derbyshire) to hold try caving events on the same weekend. They will essentially be separate events with joint advertising. Also, running everything on the same day/weekend should generate some media attention. See if we can get TV crews, celebrities etc.. involved.

Suggested date: Weekend 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> May. Weekend of the BPC winch meet which is in effect already a “trycaving” event. By rolling it in with an existing event we are already making organisation simpler.

*Chris Jewell, 5th. Oct. 2006*

### **Item 13 - LEGAL & INSURANCE OFFICER'S REPORT**

#### **New/Amended Legislation**

I have been keeping a watching brief on new legislation that will, or might impact upon our activities. In the case of the proposed Work at Height (Amendment) Regulations, through close liaison with climbers and others similarly affected, we have been successful in having these additional regulations drafted very much to our satisfaction. This has been mainly thanks to our Training Committee and its friends and allies.

#### **CSS 12: Underground Britain: Legal + Insurance Issues**

I have been continuously updating this text in readiness for the publication of the Third Edition (most probably in 2007 or 2008). The above item is now fully referenced, together with the NERC Act, the Compensation Act, the Commons Act and the new Regulations pertaining to hostels (caving club headquarters, etc).

It is thus a matter for Council's guidance as to when there are so few copies of Edition 2 remaining that we decide to go ahead with the Third Edition.

#### **New/Amended Legislation**

I have also been following relevant caselaw through the higher courts in the areas of Duty of Care and Due Diligence and am currently working on an advisory note covering these.

#### **Child Protection: Policy and Guidance Notes Documents**

These were updated to “BCA” and put on our website in March, but seem to have disappeared! I am trying to find out what has happened here and to correct this.

#### **Insurance**

I have been working closely with our Insurance Manager, Nick Williams, to maintain the three existing policies (Public Liability, Employer's Liability and All-Risks (Equipment)) and, hopefully, ensure that these are able to continue for 2007 in the best possible terms available in the market. If one dare say so, the whole market place does seem to be settling back into some semblance of normality after several years of freak behaviour following “9/11”, etc.

I am prepared to continue for a further period as L+I Officer, if this is the wish of Council.

*David Judson  
6 October 2006*

#### **Item 14 - BCA MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT TO NATIONAL COUNCIL**

Whilst I have been in post from 1st September, it was not until September 13th that I was in a position to collect the BCA PC and associated peripherals, (including many large cardboard boxes - currently stored in my garage). I have installed a LAN at home, and the BCA PC is now up and running and on-line. I have installed the latest version of Norton Internet Firewall, a side effect of which is massive reduction of spam (although that could also be the benefit of connecting direct to Demon).

My main concern (as CNCC Treasurer) has been the lack of "output" from the membership database during 2006. To this end I have contacted all Regional Councils (and also David Gibson) requesting information on what is required from the membership database, in what format and frequency. To date, I have had replies from DCA and CCC and understand that a meeting has been arranged for November 18th to discuss publications, to which I shall be attending.

In response to DCA (and CNCC) I have collated and issued an up to date "paid up" list of all BCA member clubs, DIM's, Associate Members and Access Groups, which I will continue to issue monthly. In response to CCC, I have put together a list of all clubs, whose indicated "prime" caving area is CCC and also updated that list with current contact information.

Whilst I have been able to answer many of the emails received, those emails with specific insurance queries I am forwarding to Nick for an "official response", but keeping the replies in an "Insurance FAQ" folder, so that in future I shall be able to answer similar queries myself.

However, my main "background task" has been making sense of the huge amount of information held on the various spreadsheets, with the obvious aim of improving Membership Services to cavers and Regional Councils in the future. This can only be accomplished once CSCC and DCUC confirm what (if any) information they require from the membership database.

Finally, at the time of writing, I am in discussion with Nick as to the best way of dealing with the back log of membership cards for 2006.

*Glenn Jones*  
*British Caving Association Membership Administrator*  
*27th September 2006*

#### **Item 16 - RADON WORKING PARTY REPORT**

The only thing that I have to bring up is the matter that Pete Mellors raised with me some time ago - that of the concept that the RWP should be re-convened to investigate the concerns that there may be cavers in Derbyshire that are now dying of lung cancer.

I had concerns about the possibility of getting hold of medical data from which to make a balanced judgement. I raised the matter with Mick Day and in his opinion it would be a valid reason to restart the RWP and he suggested that we might have access to enough medics who might be able to obtain data for some form of epidemiological study.

I have done some more digging about (very slowly, I regret) but most of the studies are with mining personnel and so is no advance on what we already know. My first impression would be that the numbers of people involved in caving is too small to come to a conclusion that can be used in wider context.

Thus, in summary, I think that we should attempt to gain some data and see where it leads, but be prepared to accept that the sample is relatively small.

*Clark Friend, 4 Oct. 2006*  
*Convenor, Radon Working Party.*

**Note:** Clark has also provided a draft of the new Radon Underground booklet, emailed separately to Council. A printed copy will be available at the meeting on 7th. Oct.

#### **Item 18 - INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT**

I have just got back from the USA to find your email reference the Council meeting tomorrow.

Had I had more time, I would have done you a UIS/International Officer's Report. The main thing that is occupying my time in that direction at the moment is the aftermath of the UIS Congress in Greece last year - I am still trying to get the Proceedings out of the Greeks.

There was a UIS Bureau meeting in Beirut, Lebanon (!) just before the war broke out which I attended on 17th to 22nd April. There was also a European Federation meeting in Seville that Ged Campion attended on 14th to 16th September. I was not able to go unfortunately.

Next year there are a series of meetings in Puerto Rico and the US in connection with the next UIS Congress in the States.

*Andy Eavis*  
*6 Oct. 2006*