

BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION



The meeting of the BCA National Council was held at
10:30 am on Saturday 4th October 2008 at Alvechurch Church Hall, Alvechurch

Present

Mick Day (MD)	BCA Chairman
Dave Cooke (DC)	BCA Treasurer/Cave Registry Sec
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Acting 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 Cons. & Access Officer
David Judson (DJu)	Liability & Insurance Officer/BCRA Representative
Les Williams (LW)	BCA Publications & Information Officer/BCA Webmaster
Mike McCombe (MM)	Cambrian Caving Council Representative
Glenn Jones (GJ)	Council of Northern Caving Clubs Representative
Jenny Potts (JP)	Derbyshire Caving Association Representative
David Jean (DJ)	DCUC Representative
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	Ass Caving Instructors Representative
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO 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
Mike Clayton (MC)	BCA Newsletter Editor
Nick Williams (NW)	BCA Insurance Manager

The meeting commenced at 10:45am.

1 Chairman's Welcome & Address

MD welcomed members to this Council Meeting.

2 Apologies

Apologies had been received from: Owen Clarke (OC), Chris Jewell (CJ), Toby Maddocks (TM), Clarke Friend (CF), Alan Finch (AF) and Andy Eavis (AE).

3 Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 21 June 2008 (previously circulated)

- a. A discussion took place about the issue of "Applications for Club Membership" (paragraph 3) being removed from the agenda, at what point a club becomes a member and the implications of this if insurance is urgently required. Agreed that a club will become a member at the time the membership is paid but this is subject to ratification and application form will need to be amended to reflect this. GJ to make Council aware of clubs that are provisionally accepted to allow any concerns to be raised.
- b. The addition of paragraph 11(c) was agreed.
- c. Paragraph 16 (a) should read, "GJ had reported ...chased up by DJu".
- d. Paragraph 18 (c) was amended to read, "DC was looking into the possibility of BGS hosting the Registry. DC would write to the various Regional Cave Registry Secretaries to appoint a primary registrar for that area" and the letter would go via the Regional Council Secretaries in the first instance.
- e. The minutes were signed as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising from the National Council Meeting of 21 June 2008

Paragraph 7 is still to be resolved. SF has indicated that he wishes to resign from post.

BCA Secretary: Proposal that DW be co-opted into post of BCA Secretary.

Prop: BM, Sec: GM. **Agreed unanimously.**

Officers' Reports

5. Chairman; CCPR & Bingo Lotto (Written report tabled)

Bingo Lotto: (i) A new series is due to commence in 2009. MD will provide a summary re Bingo Lotto for the Newsletter to provide clubs with information to allow a decision to be made as to whether they wish to participate. (ii) BCA has been awarded £1022.29 as a result of the trial exercise. Agreed at the last meeting that funds received through Bingo Lotto would go to support the Y&D programme. BCA contributed £500 towards Cliffhanger and this money could also be used for the Outdoor Show.

6. Secretary (Written report tabled)

- a. **Meeting Minutes:** JP proposed that the April 2008 minutes which have now been produced with the assistance of several Council Members are accepted. It was agreed that attendance at the meeting needed to be verified, and it was noted that Arthur Champion and Joe Duxbury were not present. Further, the dates for BCA Council Meetings for 2008-9 need to be corrected.
- b. **Communication:** DW thanked all who had provided reports in advance of the meeting. DW added that he wants to improve communications for members and will be producing an article for the Newsletter.
- c. **General Correspondence:** DW has been trying to point enquiries/requests for information in the right direction. BM suggested that we need to appoint suitable persons to deal with these requests. NW thought not practical to have a Press Officer but suggested useful notes should be on the website. NW pointed out that he receives a considerable amount of junk mail and uses his discretion as to whether to pass the information on and asked Council for endorsement that this is acceptable. Prop: BM, Sec: DW. **Agreed unanimously.**
JP had been contacted by ITV as wanted to know if any caving clubs would be interested in ITV makeovers. The issue of passing on details and data protection was discussed. It was suggested that if members expressed an interest or there was a potential money-making value, then members may be interested but no further action would be taken, unless members were interested.
- d. **AGM:** DW confirmed that he had liaised with MC about ensuring that deadlines would be met for the AGM, members need to be notified by 4 January 2009. It was agreed to use the Newsletter to communicate the AGM Notification together with subscription details. DW to liaise with LW and upload the AGM Notification to the website

7. Treasurer (Final BCA Accounts for 2007 and BCA Funding of Regional Councils document tabled)

- a. **Audited accounts:** (i) Para 2 (a) – DC advised that work is ongoing re the multiple payment of insurance for CIM's, carried forward from 2006 as a creditor of £7300. There is no quick way to identify the members who have made multiple payments and it is complicated due to variations in names, the data held does not uniquely identify individuals plus there was no end-to-end list when GJ took over in 2006 and members at this time had not been provided with a unique number. Agreed that GJ would send a standard letter to all CIMs explaining that if they wish to make a claim for multiple payments, then they must confirm this and provide the necessary information. DC is to draft a statement that such claims would be considered up to a set period of time (at least 6 months). (ii) Proposal that the audited accounts presented at this meeting be accepted for 2007. Prop: BM, Sec: JP. **Agreed unanimously.**
- b. **2009 BCA membership rates:** Proposal that the 2009 subscription to be set at the same rate as for 2008 subject to there being no extraordinary increase in insurance premium, in which case BCA Executives are to be empowered to make a decision. Prop: BM, Sec: DC. **Agreed unanimously.**
- c. **Budget for 2009:** DC invited Chairs of Groups to put forward a budget for coming year:

(i) Regional Councils	£5000
(ii) C&A	£500

It was noted that conservation work that is being undertaken through Regional Bodies may be funded independently, rather than centrally through BCA. In certain regions, there is considerable regional funding from other sources like English Nature, through partnership-working, and that this used to be shown in the accounts under a specific heading, but now this is not so clear in the accounts. DC to review accounts to see how this can be shown more clearly. It was suggested that members should be made aware of the amount and sources of funding that Regional Bodies have received via the Newsletter.

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| (iii) E&T | £4000 |
| (iv) Training | Break Even |
| (v) Recreational Caver Trainer | £2000 |
| (vi) Voluntary Sector Support | £1000 |
| (vii) GPF | £5000 |
| (viii) Youth & Development | £3000 (provisional) |

DC advised that the previous year this had been set at £3,500 but not clear as to what had been planned for next year (Outdoor Show, Cliffhanger, leaflets, meetings etc) and whether CJ has asked for a budget – provisionally given £3000.

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|------------------------|----|
| (ix) Legal & Insurance | £0 |
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Publication requirements were discussed for "Underground Britain, Legal & Insurance Issues" and whether publications could be printed on demand and also produced on the web. As there is currently an adequate stock, any amends/re-printing will not take place before 2010.

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| (x) International Liaison | £500 |
| (xi) Web Services | Break Even |

- d. **Finance Committee Meeting:** (i) To ensure consistency, a document entitled "BCA Funding of Regional Councils" has been produced. DC asked for this to be reviewed by Regional Councils and to forward any comments by May 2009, prior to the next

Finance Committee meeting. It was pointed out that the document refers to "scrutinised" accounts but further down asks for "audited" accounts. (ii) DC advised that there is a proposal in the document to extend BCA funding to selected Access Bodies and it was agreed that Regional Councils need to provide feedback on this proposal by the next meeting.

- e. **NCA domain name:** This was sold for £250 to the National Council for Archiving.
- f. **NCA trustees:** Still outstanding, DC to action as still in existence and needs to be sorted out formally but constitutional amendments are required first. It was noted that the deadline for proposed constitutional amendments is 24 January 2009.

Adjourned: 12.47pm, re-commenced 1:56pm

8. Conservation Officer

EL gave a verbal report.

- a. EL advised that various issues are pending and she is being assisted with international aspects by someone based in Derbyshire.

9. Equipment & Techniques Officer (Written report tabled)

BM reported that Chinese eco-hangers had been installed in Ingleton Quarry and on the Sunday before Hidden Earth, tests had taken place. The anchor performed as expected until the tester broke. The tester is currently being repaired, but as of 28KN it has not moved.

10. Training Officer (Written report tabled)

- a. **Training Administrator:** GM asked if MD could formally write to Karen Slatcher to express BCA's thanks for her work. GM added that she had been a great help to him. Will need to appoint a replacement and this will be undertaken by a panel of three, NW, GN and KS under the same contract.
- b. **Finance:** Training expects to break even this year.
- c. **Mines inspections:** GM expressed concern that Dave Carlisle has been working on behalf of BCA for the past two years without being insured. NW confirmed that he is now covered under the new Jardine Lloyd Thomson (JLT) policy.
- d. **Recreational grants:** Advised that there has been a greater take up for the year to date but that a lot of recreational cavers are still not applying for training grants – there is £500 still available for this year.
- e. **PI Insurance:** Cover now available through JLT for BCA-qualified cavers (trainers, assessors, LCMLA's working within remit of BCA schemes) and JLT is funding a mail shot to this group. A discussion followed and it was agreed to endorse the policy, but this does not mean that BCA-qualified cavers have to have this specific insurance.
- f. **Waterproof card:** Will ask Council to approve before issue but no copy available at the meeting.
- g. **Training Committee:** GM suggested that financially prudent to run TC and NCP meetings together. MD advised that this is a training matter, but added that should there be non-professional cavers wanting an input this may need to be reviewed.
- h. **"Navigating Deep Water in Porth yr Ogof" document:** Council was not able to comment on this document, as it was agreed that a final draft of the document needs to be available at the next Council Meeting for review. MD pointed out that views of other committees may also need to be sought.

11. Publications & Information Officer (Written Report tabled)

LW now has the licenced copy of Adobe InDesign as it is not required by the Newsletter Editor.

- a. **Webmaster's Report:** JP pointed out that some pages of the BCA website are extremely out of date, for example the Legal and Insurance page was last updated on 23 April 2006 and asked that the information is removed. BM asked to update the re-direction for the Equipment Officer. LW agreed to update.
- b. **Newsletter Editor:** MC requested articles for the Newsletter by 16 November 2008, a lack of content had been the reason for the delay. The newsletter will be distributed in December 2008.
- c. **Speleology** - no report received.
- d. **Handbook Editor:** nothing to report.

12. Legal & Insurance Officer

Child Protection Policy Review: After discussions relating to a paper from Jenny Potts re Child Protection Issues, it was agreed to adopt the following statement, "The BCA is committed to removing barriers to participation for children and young persons who wish to start caving". Current Child Protection documents are to be reviewed.

13 Youth & Development Officer (Written Report tabled)

- a. **Artificial cave project:** The idea of creating an artificial cave was discussed. GM suggested could look at Enterprise who may be able to supply bolt-on cave sections – GM will ask his contacts. BP asked whether costs have been considered eg for people to make the cave, to store it etc. Agreed that need to see proposals and figures from CJ.
- b. **The Outdoor Show:** Noted that the dates for the Outdoor Show, 27-29 March 2009 will clash with BCA AGM.

14 Membership Administrator's Report (Written Report tabled)

- a. **FSE request for member clubs' email addresses:** Agreed that to forward email contact details could be a data protection breach and that an article would appear in the Newsletter to provide Clubs with information to allow them to make the choice as to whether to forward their information.

- b. **Numbers of people caving:** GM suggested that BCA membership forms are provided to people who have/are taking BCA qualifications. Agreed that BM and GM will produce words for an invitation to join BCA. A suggestion was made that subs could be kept static for BCA members and increase if non-BCA member – DC to review figures.

15 Insurance Manager's Report

NW gave a verbal report.

- a. Noted that the Public Liability Policy renewal was covered earlier.
- b. NW had previously reported that Speleological Union of Ireland (SUI) was requesting confirmation that the BCA Insurance covers them. This has now been resolved, as Zurich UK has purchased a policy with Zurich Ireland at no additional cost to us.
- c. **Mine Inspections:** As discussed earlier, Dave Carlisle is covered, and this is on an assessor policy. The cost will come out of the PL budget.
- d. NW sought Council's approval as to whether the Equity Questionnaire is still necessary. Agreed to make no changes at present, as it is believed that CCC requires it.
- e. Policy excess was discussed, at present it is "the first £5,000.00 of each and every claim but the first £10,000.00 of each and every claim relating to the Use of Explosives. Subject to available funds, BCA will pay all but the first £2,500.00 of this excess in any claim". Agreed that if a claim arose, an ex-gratia payment could be made but this would be decided at the time by Council.
- f. NW thanked GJ for all of the work he has done.
- g. "All risks" policy has just been renewed at £1,000 for the year and a considerable proportion of that includes HE equipment.

16 Radon Working Party Convenor's Report (Written report tabled)

LW asked whether there was any further progress with the Radon book. BM reported that time is required to go through paperwork, including a NSS paper on radon. LW asked for consideration of epidemiological reports and lung cancer.

17 Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report

DC gave a verbal report.

- a. DC delivered a presentation at Hidden Earth about the National Cave Registry.
- b. **Mendip Cave Registry:** DC reported that Tony Jarratt's caving logs have been scanned in so that they can be made available on the internet.

18 International Representative's Report (Written report tabled)

- a. **FSUE X-GAM Meeting Report:** GJ attended this meeting, as Ged Campion (GC) was unable to attend. Agreed that need to ensure BCA receives feedback from these meetings and the BCA agenda would be expanded to include updates from FSE and DW would contact GC to advise him of this.
- b. It was suggested that the International Representative's Report could be put in the Newsletter.
- c. **European Speleo Forum:** AE has suggested that we ought to consider being involved in the European Congress in 2016, (a larger version of Hidden Earth, as against the UIS Congress which is very scientific). LW agreed to contact AE to discuss further.

19 Any Other Business

- a. CNCC Pirating Report: Various issues in relation to piracy were discussed. DW to draft an "Access Statement" and, after agreement among the Executive, to publish as widely as possible. DW to write to named individuals asking them to follow agreed access procedures in future. DW to write to named club asking them to give their side of events. BCA to deal with DCA member clubs.
- b. GJ reported that Dr Farrer's wife had died last week.

22 Date, Time & Place of next meeting

Confirmed that the next Council Meeting will be held on Saturday 10 January 2009 at 10.30am. The BCA AGM had been booked for Saturday 28 March 2009. All to take place at Alvechurch.

Meeting ended: 4.54pm



BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Council Meeting, 4th October 2008

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Item 4: Matters Arising (Cliffhanger Event)

The Cliffhanger Event in Sheffield, for which BCA gave us financial support for some transport costs, took place on 12th & 13th July 2008. Basically, it was a good event which attracted interest from literally hundreds of young people who wanted to have a go at activities related to caving. It gave BCA and DCA some excellent publicity and gave us a chance to give out sensible information to people who wanted to take up caving as well as give details of contacts for local clubs.

Altogether we spent £1097.71, of which £496.96 was refunded by BCA. I will forward a detailed breakdown of costs to Dave Cooke.

Jenny Potts, October 2008

Item 5: Chairman's Report

Policy Matters: During the summer holidays a number of inter-related queries arose which require resolution in the near future. In order to establish the extent of disagreements or otherwise I circulated a summary document to some of the more directly involved officers intending to enlarge the circulation; but events have snowballed such that the fundamental problems are now all presented to this meeting within particular officer's reports. They include: Site-specific advice; Training and Insurance; the different perspectives of Conservation and Training axes.

Access; particularly, PYO and the above; but the responsibility of BCA in support of Access Controlling Bodies has loomed above the horizon.

Membership responsibilities re under-18s; arising from the circulation to member clubs of the DCMS document on Child Protection. A number of individuals and bodies directly involved with Training and Education have raised concern about the unhappy choice of words in item 1, whilst disregarding the qualifications stated in items 2 & 3 and in a subsequent paragraph.

BingoLotto: BCA has (as have all other participating Governing Bodies of Sport) been awarded £1022.29 as a result of the trial exercise with this new form of public gambling. The claim forms have been circulated and it seems that we can eg simply offset most of the expenses of the Cliffhanger Event.

Future editions of the programme will permit tickets to be purchased via a major high-street retailer OR through participating sports clubs, thus:

"Since the end of the pilot there has been a lot of 'behind the scenes' work going on which we believe will result in an even greater success of the show in Series 2. Series 2 will be launched in February 2009 with the intention of running for at least 42 weeks. The show is likely to move from its previous slot on a Friday night, and will now be shown on a Sunday.

As we gear up towards Series 2, we are now focusing on developing the appropriate society structures and financial distribution models. Once these models are further developed we will look to consult with all BingoLotto recipients to gauge your views and opinions. However, in order to develop these models we are now requesting that all BingoLotto recipients confirm with us the number of individual and/or club/league members within membership of their organisation."

This means that future income will be membership-related; thus the figures registered for membership (see report from Glenn) should correlate with the numbers registered with CCPR to calculate subscription (Cookie)!

The Lotto organisers are also trawling the web for Sports Clubs which they will email directly, with due regard to data protection issues!

"Famous• Cavers (i.e. "Celebrities•); is there such a beast known to anyone?"

Mick Day, October 2008

Item 6: Acting Secretary's Report

Meeting Minutes: In addition to the normal day-to-day business, since June my main focus has been bringing us back up to date with our Meeting Minutes. In almost all cases this has been achieved by either scanning or retyping paper versions. Unfortunately no record appears to exist of the April 2008 Council Meeting and, in consultation with several members of Council, I have compiled a "bare-bones" set of points discussed (see Appendix 1). I hope that this will be accepted by Council today as the best solution to a difficult situation. Assuming this is accepted we now have a full collection of Meeting Minutes on the BCA website for download.

Workload: I have now produced templates for everything I anticipate needing regularly and hope to have, therefore, reduced future workload to something that I consider manageable. I am, therefore, now confident that I can keep on top of the role in the future.

Communication: One area I do feel needs much more work is in our communications, both with each other and with the general membership. An obvious part of this is the preparation of written reports by Officers in advance of meetings. Not only does this help the flow of meetings but, perhaps more importantly, it seriously reduces the burden on the Minute taker both at the meeting itself and, most crucially afterwards. An additional and important benefit is that with written reports it is easy to find content for Newsletters and to publish draft Meeting minutes as soon as possible following meetings. To this end I will continue to hassle Officers!

As an incentive, however, if Officers provide me with written reports in advance, I will promise to select the most salient points myself for the next Newsletter, thus removing this burden from Officers. Hopefully this will then lead to improved communication throughout the whole organisation.

So, Officers, give me your reports in advance and I promise to get Les and Mike off your backs about providing content for Newsletters!

General Correspondence: There have been a small number of enquiries and/or requests for information since June and, in general, I have been able to respond to these within 24 hours. Of particular note are several queries from organisations interested in representing caving in one form or another - The Scout Association Magazine, FHM Magazine and Shiver, who describe themselves as "a production arm of ITV". It is good to see that caving is attracting media attention and, as far as I can tell from these requests, it is attention of a good kind!

Other communication concerned a request to disseminate an AALA Safety Alert about Gas Hazards in Mining and an e-mail expressing concern about the "under 18s in caving" letter.

The Future: my focus between now and the next meeting needs to be on ensuring we are ready for the various deadlines associated with the AGM. I do not anticipate any issues here and will liaise with Mike Clayton about the important deadline for the Newsletter if we are to fulfil our constitutional requirements. Beyond this I will continue to push Officers to provide written reports and will make a start on defining the Secretary's role and procedures necessary for the Manual of Operations.

Thanks: Considerable thanks are due to both Jenny Potts and Mick Day for their considerable support in helping me settle in to this new position.

Damian Weare, October 2008

Item 7: Treasurer's Report

No written report submitted.

Dave Cooke, October 2008

Item 8: Conservation & Access Officer's Report

No written report submitted.

Elsie Little, October 2008

Item 9: Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report

E&T Committee meet on 5 July 2008 with large agenda. Substantial items discussed included:

- The view was accepted that the techniques part of the E&T Committee's remit was to focus on the techniques of equipment installed in caves and not personal equipment.

- A paper was presented to the committee summarising the results of the responses to the Discussion Document on a Revision to the British Caving Association's Anchor Scheme. Two major points which came out were what did validation of SRT cover and an objection to the use of CICs to assess the competence of trainee installers. It was accepted that perhaps the coverage of what was to be validated was not clear. It was considered that it covers in detail the ability of the person to SRT, to rig a pitch and to identify the location for new anchors. Following discussion, the Committee was adamant about retaining the right by the trainer to check the competence of the trainee in SRT, rigging, identifying new anchor locations and installing anchors. A revised draft of the BCA Anchor Scheme based on the outcome of the discussion has just been offered to the committee for debate.
- The Committee accepted that provided the Chinese anchors meet the performance standards which the DMM Eco Anchors achieved, then it would be adopted as a substitute. Regrettably testing is still ongoing.
- A report was received on the results from NCA's Long Term Rope Test which showed that a dramatic drop off in the performance of an SRT rope in terms of drops survived even for as few as 100 usages. (The 5 ropes spanned between 89 and 799 usages. The samples for each of the 5 ropes averaged between 2 and 3 drops survived.) It was agreed to look further at low usage in 10mm ropes and also at smaller diameter ropes.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 8 November. The responses paper will be published after that meeting.

The rope test rig was taken to Hidden Earth and lectures were given on a new test bed set up in France by Glenn Jones (to look at the impact of extremes in temperature) the Long Term Rope Test and Responses to the Discussion Document by myself.

Bob Mehew, October 2008

Item 10: Training Officer's Report

It is with regret that we are losing Karen as Training Administrator after a two year period. She has been a major asset to the NCP, TC and the Training Officer and will be sadly missed. Undoubtedly without such a person the qualifications schemes would cease to exist. I would be grateful if Mick would write to Karen expressing BCA's thanks for her work.

The position for Training Administrator has been advertised with the new appointee hopefully in position by the end of October. Karen has agreed to work alongside the successful candidate to smooth the transition.

The year has continued to be busy with almost all the new five year revalidations being over subscribed. This has grossed an income to BCA of over £5000.00 for a cost of £2900.00. However trainer/assessor costs need to be increased and I propose to raise the payment to £175.00 per day and raise the cost to the candidate to £80.00. Other changes to registration fees are in the pipeline and will be adopted from January. To date there have been 172 registrations for LCMLA, 40 newly qualified LCMLAs, 17 CIC registrations with 4 finishing assessment.

It was with a high level of disbelief that I discovered from Dave Carlisle that he has been working on behalf of the BCA carrying out mines inspections for the past two years without being insured. He has continually asked that his status as far as insurance is involved was put in writing to him and has continually been informed verbally that he was covered under the BCA policy; however that was not the case. The consequences for Dave had a claim arisen would be unthinkable. I have arranged with Nick that Dave will now be fully covered under the new policy with Jardine Lloyd Thomson at a cost of £189.00. Where the cost comes from is still to be decided.

As is obvious from above the JLT. Policy is now up and running it is available for any person qualified via a BCA qualification. JLT have agreed at their cost to mail shot all LCMLAs/CICs and T/As with a glossy brochure setting out the offer.

The take up of recreational grants for the year to date is £1100.00 with another £400.00 in the pipeline. This is an improvement on last year.

There will be a new T/A contract issued for January 09 which will be for a period of three years, it will be renewable but leaves open the door not to renew if the T/A has not done any work or their work is not in line with the ethos of the schemes. This will apply to LCMLA as well as CIC trainers and assessors. Trainer and Assessor fees will rise in January, LCMLA/CIC T/As will now pay £80.00, LCMLA T/As will pay £50.00 and CIC T/As will also pay £50.00.

The Porth yr Ogof saga still continues:

- The Lawyers for the National Park have no problems with our document. Neither do the Officers of the Park we contacted.
- AALS are completely in support of the document.

- HSE are completely in support of the document.
- NCP and TC wrote and finessed the document with input from the panels.
- It is also generally felt that clients of instructors in the broadest sense should be informed as to what is good practice. Without the knowledge it is difficult for them to make informed judgements.

NCP/TC and I ask for this council's acceptance of this document.

Three new trainee CIC T/A have been appointed. They are Duncan Morrison. Tom Peacock and Phil Baker.

TC have finished the work on a waterproof card to be freely available in caving shops re: good practice in general. It will also be issued when caving equipment is hired and when new equipment is purchased.

Looking further ahead attendance at TC at present is limited to those involved in professional caving with no representation of the regional councils except for DCA. All other attendees also attend NCP it would appear financially prudent to run the two meetings together. If Councils decide to attend it will still only have a maximum number of fourteen. This is purely a suggestion and has not as yet been run past NCP or TC.

There has been a great deal more work taking place but nothing firm to report back on. TO is still in liaison with AALS and HSE to develop relationships that could be productive towards good practice and lessons learnt. A great deal of information has been shared with HSE in an attempt to educate them as to the complexity of caves and their hydrology.

Graham Mollard, October 08

Item 11: Publication & Information Officer's Report

No written report submitted.

Les Williams, October 2008

Item 12: Legal & Insurance Officer's Report

No written report submitted.

David Judson, October 2008

Item 13: Youth & Development Officer's Report

Since the last meeting I have had little activity except the usual answering of emails sent to the try caving website. Therefore I plan on using this report to describe the current position of the Try Caving Campaign and summarise my plans to move this project forward and consolidate what we have achieved.

Current Position

Website: The Website continues to function well. Few new clubs appear as I feel we have reached saturation point but I get emails from people using the website probably once a week. Unfortunately the statistics / counter module doesn't seem to be working so I'm unsure exactly how many hits it is getting. I will need to get this fixed.

Google Adwords: See Appendix 2. I need to claim this money back - £189 in 12 months. There is a daily maximum set on the account as well of £1.

Flyers: I have a single box remaining. I am unsure if there are any more Try Caving flyers left.

Outdoor Show: I have been unable to get the list of names collected at this years Outdoor show to conduct any following up advertising / marketing.

Try Caving events: Individual clubs – most notably the YSS are conducting events and use the website to promote these. Mass regional events have proved unpopular, although I did try on Mendip to get something going.

Plans for the future:

- Find someone to take on the basic admin of the website and move it onto the BCA servers. Also find a group of people who can answer the incoming try caving emails – consequently releasing me from this basic admin burden.

- Undertake a project to create a compact and easily transportable artificial cave to use in preference to the YHA cave. Something along the lines of the Speleo Olympics but with a more realistic cave appearance. Ideally in the form of a kit which can be taken apart and assembled onsite.
- Promote BCA at more outdoor shows and exhibitions including getting cavers to act as speakers/presenters at these events.
- Promote caving via the numerous outdoor websites, magazines and publications etc... many of which approached us at the Outdoor show last year.
- Work more closely with the Scout Liaison officer to examine the way in which the BCA can offer greater support for Scout groups.
- Undertake a plan of re-issuing/supplying the try caving flyers and posters – this time with a stricter and more controlled view of where they are going and how many etc... With a view of maintaining a constant supply at some key locations rather than distributing them adhoc.

Chris Jewell, October 2008

Item 14: Membership Administrator's Report

I have very little to report, my work load has decreased dramatically and subsequently, applications and renewals are being processed within days.

Queries have started coming in about 2009 membership fees and it is hoped that this meeting will be able to agree the rates for next year.

The European Federation of Speleology are building an email database with an email contact for each caving club in Europe. They have asked me to send them a list of all UK club email addresses. I am not prepared to do this without authorisation from National Council as it is unclear to me how this fits with the UK data protection law.

Following Dave Checkley's after-dinner talk at Hidden Earth (where he mentioned the decline in the number of people caving) I have produced the above table in order to analyze membership trends since the formation of BCA. It is important to note that:

- data for 2004 and 2005 is presented in a different format to that currently employed, but I believe the figures for those years are accurate enough for comparison.
- there is no reliable data for 2006.
- figures for 2008 are to 30th September.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
DIMs	93	185		437	406
CIMs	3523	3909		4965	5067
Clubs	89	140		153	152

Glenn Jones, October 2008

Item 15: Insurance Manager's Report

No written report submitted.

Nick Williams, October 2008

Item 16: Convenor of the Radon Working Party's Report

The summary of the first set of experiments in Agen Allwedd and Eglwys Faen have now been published in Descent. I have continued to work on Agen Allwedd and Eglwys Faen (with CCW funding) and so far, halfway through a six month experiment we have had all detectors returned, all with high readings. In summary AA is running at an average concentrations of ~10,000 and EF at about 4000 Bq m³. The readings are very consistent.

This might suggest that the recent 12 months of wet weather following a long period (several years) of dry weather when the water table dropped, is now recovering and driving radon out of the fissures below the water table.

I have had no other requests from any one regarding radon.

Clark Friend, October 2008

Item 17: Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report

No written report submitted.

Dave Cooke, October 2008

Item 18: International Representative's Report

VERCORS 2008: This event was a spectacular success. More than 2,050 cavers representing 37 countries attended. There were 2000 visits underground, 3000 passages through the "palettes", "speleobox" & "speleobranches". Greg Jones represented UK cavers on the record breaking "Tyrolienne Pierrot Rias" (TPR) of 1150m and Lee Langden won the competition to undertake the "Traversée Couffin-Chevaline".

The Congress was managed by 150 volunteers. There were over 200 presentations and 300 films and photos. The European Congress enabled the creation of European workgroups through the sharing of speleological experiences between the 37 countries that were present.

Future Events:

BCA has issued a statement of interest to apply for ICS 2013. It does not commit BCA in any way and we still may not apply for the congress – we may apply for the 2009 European Congress instead – see below.

FSUE X-GAM Meeting Report – August 26th 2008

I was volunteered at short notice to attend the above meeting as the UK delegate (Ged Campion – FSUE Vice President) was unable to attend. The following are what I considered to be some of the more pertinent conclusions:

- The proposal for proportional voting was discussed but failed to be agreed at the voting stage. I don't think proportional voting would benefit the UK as the FSUE fee would nearly double and a single delegate would only be allowed one vote plus two proxy votes, so to get the maximum votes we would need to send two delegates, which to me, seems unlikely!
- It was agreed to change the name of FSUE to FSE (dropping the "Union")
- A new treasurer (Manuel Freire from Portugal) and vice-secretary (Alexey Zhalov from Bulgaria) were elected
- FSE are looking for a host for the 2009 Euro-Speleo forum (500 euros available for this) but I think we have already put this up on UKcaving

It is apparent that there is no formal feedback to BCA National Council. I have offered to put Elsie Little in touch with Christane Grebe (European Cave Protection Commission). There is also an intention to issue a European Caving License in the future (although I suspect it is more wishful thinking at the moment as I don't believe they have considered how to implement and manage such a monster). But I was not aware of this initiative and I think it would receive serious resistance in the UK.

Glenn Jones, October 2008

Notes on FEALC Congress, Puerto Rico - July 29th to August 4th 2007

Followed by reconnaissance trip to Kerrville, Texas, USA to look at the venue for the next UIS International Congress.

AJE attended the Congress and Bureau meeting in his capacity as President of UIS. The seminar was held in an old military establishment in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico.

There were lectures on Monday 30th and Tuesday 31st. The Wednesday saw an excursion to the Camuy River Cave system. Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd were again lectures with Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th being meetings of the UIS Bureau. Notable events during the lectures were a number of papers on conservation and the karst environment in Central and South America and a number of interesting bio-speleology papers bringing in such things as insect eggs that live dormant for 200 years ! Paulo Forti gave a couple of papers on mineralogy including something on the huge crystal cave in Mexico, at Naica. Several papers on world heritage applications and situations were presented including a great paper by Paul Williams on Paleo-Climatology and what can be learned from cave sediments and stalagmites. Pat Kambesis talked about exploration in local caves in Puerto Rico, including caves on the island of Mona.

The UIS meeting then started on August 4th and 5th. Everybody except one vice-president (Alexander Klimchouk) and one adjunct secretary (Roman Hapka) attended. Clearly the Bureau meeting concentrated on the 15th ICS to be held in Texas and George Veni gave updates as to how the planning was progressing. There is a proposal for an official UIS flag to be passed from one Congress to the next. None of the presented samples were considered to be particularly good however the best of the bunch was accepted with some discussion about colour. Further changes to this will be progressed.

Visa issues were discussed as well as many other aspects of the Congress. The karst information portal (KIP) was mentioned by George Veni which is going to be a website where an enormous amount of speleological literature is available. The UIS Code of Ethics was talked about in some detail including the Slovak/Venezuelan issue. The prizes for Posters, greatest explorations and books were discussed. It was decided that this time only the poster prize would be awarded. The others could be reserved for when something particularly spectacular is discovered or published. Brochures are going to be printed. The Atlas of Greatest Caves was discussed and the UIS would like to be involved with it. Interaction with the European Federation and Federation of Latin American Countries and the Caribbean and association with the International Show Caves Association were all discussed. David Somers from ISCA was present who said that show caves wanted to remain involved with the UIS.

Work for an efficiency of the UIS Bureau was discussed and the need to use the internet more. Many of the commissions were also discussed and key occasions using national bodies and the caving press in addition to national delegates. Internal regulations were laterally finalised and approval was given to Fadi Nader to buy a 200 gb hard drive to store archives. Proceedings were discussed. Finances were discussed and cooperation between UIS, UNESCO and IUCN. More discussion on World Heritage and Sites. Jose Labegalini will coordinate and edit a book on the history of the UIS. Deadline for the draft manuscript is the next Bureau meeting in 2008.

Various things were agreed to be supported by the UIS. Including an expedition to Iran, the Italian Federation producing a number of Powerpoint presentations on speleology to be available free of charge on the website and a number of world heritage matters.

Andrej Mihevic was asked to consider serving on the Bureau after the next general assembly as a special representative since he is based in Postonja where the UIS offices are.

The next Bureau meeting will be at Jeju island on 6th 7th of September 2008. The Bureau meetings then finished and AJE, PB, FN went on with GV to Kerrville to inspect the venue for the next ICS.

Sheider University was visited on 8th August where facilities were inspected and a number of the organisers met with. Relevant items in connection with the ICS were:

- 1 The price will be kept as near to \$150 per delegate as possible. It isn't the normal fee for an NSS convention
- 2 Excursions priced from \$200 upwards
- 3 A list of helpers for the congress was to be prepared by GV which has now recently arrived (25.09)
- 4 The organising committee is going to release a list of competitions (still pending) on Oct 1st
- 5 Facilities were considered excellent although the whole place is rather small for a 2000 + person congress. Particular items to be noted are:

If numbers do get as high as expected, marquees and even blacked out air-conditioned marquees will have to be rented to accommodate the extra people. The biggest auditorium is 700 seats and many of the cafes, restaurants, lecture rooms are small. The university has normally only 900 students. The accommodation in halls of residence is excellent and it's expected that much will be taken for participants and there is plenty of excellent camping areas on the campus near the river that runs through the site. Generally things look good. Nervous about too much Speleo competition ! and Americanisation of the Congress and shoe-horning into facilities and lack of emphasis on certain aspects of science particularly poster sessions but these things have been pointed out to the organisers and hopefully they will react accordingly.

Returned from Kerrville Fri 10th August.

Report on European Congress of Speleology, Lans en Vercors, August 2008

This Congress was held in grand style with more than 2000 delegates. The village of Lans en Vercors turned out to be an excellent venue, although things were far too scattered.

The week-long congress started with a world record Tyrolean of 1.2 KM. Many people took part in this which crossed a side valley of the Bourne Gorge and was certainly pretty impressive.

Numbers of simultaneous lectures were presented, in total well over 300. There were pictures competitions, multi media presentations etc. Much of it on the lines of a UIS Congress.

There was one very large marquee for the multi media presentations and another for the Speleo bar which was surrounded by stands from different clubs and organisations serving a variety of food.

Although the weather was terrible in the first couple of days, it then improved and the better weather lasted for the week.

Many caves in the Vercors were made available to delegates and it is reported more than 500 people got down the Gouffe Berger.

Much of the organisation was imperfect and this imperfection carried on into the published programme which had all the vital information but in a completely indecipherable fashion.

Overall impression was an occasional congress like this is very well received and very enjoyable. A scheme to have one of these between European UIS Congresses would seem to make sense with a Speleo forum on a much smaller scale every year.

Report on UIS Bureau Meeting 2008

Venue: The two yearly meeting of the volcano-speleology commission of the UIS in Jeju, South Korea

Present: President Andy Eavis, Vice President Pavel Bosak, Secretary General Fadi Nader, Adjunct Secretaries Stein-Erik Lauritzen, Paul Williams, Kyung-Sik Woo and George Veni. Also were past presidents Paolo Forti, Julia James and Jose Ayton Labegalini.

There were three observers David Summers, president of ISCA, Jean Pierre Bartholyens, president of UIS Protection Commission, and Claude Mouret from the FSS.

The meeting opened in the Sunshine Hotel on Saturday 6th September.

Chairman and president opened the meeting and the agenda was approved as prepared by the Secretary General.

List of actions from the last Bureau meeting in 2007 in Puerto Rico were approved.

Agenda items discussed included:

- Report on FEALC Congress in Argentina
- Report on Baltic Speleological Congress and General Assembly of the European Union
- A meeting in Paris of the Bureau of the European Union attended by the Secretary General and President of the UIS.
- Report on the European Congress in the Vercors.

George Veni gave an update on the 15th ICS in Kerrville Texas next year and it would seem that things were generally going as per plan.

A discussion took place as to the language to be used in the Proceedings. It was decided that everybody would be encouraged to submit in English because of the cost and time taken to translate foreign papers into English. If people could not be persuaded to submit in English they would be told that there would be no guarantee that their paper would be translated in time to make the Proceedings so they may be published without them.

In any case, everybody must submit an Abstract in one of the UIS official languages plus English.

A cooperation between UIS and UNESCO was discussed at some length and Fadi Nader had had a certain amount of success with this.

The meeting was pleased that David Summers of the International Show Cave Association attended the meeting and looks on it as a new round of cooperation between the ISCA and UIS.

The Code of Ethics was discussed at great length and Julia James and others are continuing to overview this and I promised to rewrite the section on expeditions getting permission to go into certain countries.

I signed the agreement for the karst information portal which the Americans have set up and are keen on others being involved. It is essential that it is not solely an American thing.

Fadi spoke at length on the UIS Bureau Forum.

The Commissions were discussed and it was decided that this should come more strongly under the vice presidents' auspices there should be a vice president of administration who looks after the commissions and a vice president of operations who looks after publications. This must be discussed at our Bureau meeting in Kerrville.

Pavel spoke on finances and it was decided that Pavel, Fadi and Andy should meet in Slovenia and talk about finance issues.

Jose Labelagalini spoke at length on his book and Paolo Forti presented his Powerpoint presentation which will have one version under the UIS auspices and his all singing all dancing About Caving. It is mainly organised by the Italian Speleologists.

An update from John Pierre Bartholyens on protection was followed by requests from a number of countries to become members.

The disappearance of the Cave Biology commission who some years ago set up a separate commission was discussed and this must be gone into further in Kerrville where we should encourage commissions to get stronger and to back within the UIS umbrella.

Fadi spoke about his children's book and potential financing from UNESCO.

Future meetings including international congress in Kerrville, FEALC Congress in 2010 – 4th to 8th August in Cuba- with potential meeting of the Middle East Region in Turkey in 2011.

I promised to do more work on regions and globe needs scrutinising but we already have the federation of Latin and central American countries. The FSE, the Middle East and a Pacific Rim, North and South, and North America are further possibilities.

Under Any other Business, Julia James and Paul Williams presented their list of potential World Heritage Sites. Julia also spoke about prizes where it looks at the moment that there will only be a poster prize, one for science and one for a people's prize.

It was agreed that I should get back the 1000 euros I paid to the European Congress.

It was generally a very good meeting with no awkward people being less than constructive.

Andy Eavis, October 2008

Item 20: Any Other Business (CNCC Pirating Report)

CNCC has requested BCA action in following up pirating issues on Leck Fell.



British Caving Association

Draft Summary of BCA Council Meeting, 5th 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, Acting BCA Secretary
August 2008

Present:	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 (DJu)	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)	
	Joe Duxbury (JD)	
	Arthur Champion (AC)	

1) Dates for BCA Council Meetings for 2008-9

Council Meeting dates agreed as: Saturday, 9th June 2007

Saturday, 13th October 2007

Saturday, 5th January 2008

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 12th-13th July.

Appendix 2: Google Ad-Words

30/09/2007 – 30/09/2008

247291732	247291732	10457272							
Keyword	Status	Current Bid ▼ Max CPC	Hide Settings Sort by: Bid URL	Clicks	Impr.	CTR	Avg. CPC	Cost	Avg. Pos
caving	Active	£0.12	▼ Settings £0.12 Max CPC	1,645	173,449	0.94%	£0.09	£140.11	3.0
potholing	Active	£0.10	▼ Settings £0.10 Max CPC	265	19,996	1.32%	£0.10	£25.77	3.0
caving club	Active	£0.08	▼ Settings £0.08 Max CPC	177	9,158	1.93%	£0.04	£7.56	1.7
cave club	Active Ads rarely show due to low quality score	£0.08	▼ Settings £0.08 Max CPC	3	3,367	0.08%	£0.06	£0.19	2.4
british cave	Active Bid is below first page bid estimate of £0.20	£0.08	▼ Settings £0.08 Max CPC	27	2,764	0.97%	£0.07	£2.01	3.2
find a caving club	Active	£0.07	▼ Settings £0.07 Max CPC	0	6	0.00%	-	-	1.9
caving clubs	Active	£0.06	▼ Settings £0.06 Max CPC	241	3,089	7.80%	£0.05	£11.27	2.0
Potholing club	Active	£0.06	▼ Settings £0.06 Max CPC	17	1,060	1.60%	£0.04	£0.65	3.2
what is caving	Active	£0.06	▼ Settings £0.06 Max CPC	14	880	1.59%	£0.04	£0.50	1.5
go caving	Active	£0.06	▼ Settings £0.06 Max CPC	19	510	3.72%	£0.04	£0.68	3.2
find caving	Active	£0.06	▼ Settings £0.06 Max CPC	0	15	0.00%	-	-	4.6
want to go caving	Active	£0.06	▼ Settings £0.06 Max CPC	1	8	12.50%	£0.06	£0.06	4.3
join caving club	Active	£0.06	▼ Settings £0.06 Max CPC	0	0	-	-	-	-
joining a caving club	Active	£0.06	▼ Settings £0.06 Max CPC	0	0	-	-	-	-
cave clubs	Active Bid is below first page bid estimate of £0.15	£0.05	▼ Settings £0.05 Max CPC	11	4,936	0.22%	£0.05	£0.50	2.6
British caving	Active	£0.04	▼ Settings Default Max CPC	7	819	0.85%	£0.03	£0.22	2.2
caving trips	Active	£0.04	▼ Settings Default Max CPC	2	272	0.73%	£0.03	£0.06	5.8
Content network total	Off			0	0	-	-	-	n/a
Search Total	On	Default £0.04	[Edit]	2,429	220,329	1.10%	£0.08	£189.58	2.9
Total				2,429	220,329	1.10%	£0.08	£189.58	2.9