



Minutes of BCA Council Meeting held on Saturday 20th June 2009
at Alvechurch Church Hall, Alvechurch

Present:

Andy Eavis (AE)	BCA Chairman / BCA UIS Rep.
David Cooke (DC)	BCA Treasurer / Cave Registry Sec
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Secretary / Handbook Editor
Elsie Little (EL)	BCA Conservation & Access Officer
Graham Mollard (GM)	BCA Training Officer
David Judson (DJu)	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
Les Williams (LW)	BCA Publications & Information Officer / BCA Webmaster
Chris Jewell (CJ)	BCA Youth & Development Officer / CHECC Rep.
Mike Clayton (MC)	BCA Newsletter Editor
Nick Williams (NW)	BCA Insurance Manager
Glenn Jones (GJ)	BCA Membership Administrator / CNCC Rep.
Jenny Potts (JP)	BCA Publication Sales / DCA Rep.
David Jean (DJe)	DCUC Rep.
Mike McCombe (MM)	Cambrian CC Rep.
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	ACI Rep.
Dave Pettet (DP)	ASCT Rep.
Alan Finch (AF)	WPCST Rep.
Boyd Potts (BP)	Club Rep.: Orpheus Caving Club
Bernie Woodley (BW)	Club Rep.: South Wales Caving Club
Charles Milton (CM)	Club Rep.: Combined Services Caving Association
Emma Porter (EP)	Individual Member Rep. / BCRC Rep.
Mick Day (MD)	Individual Member Rep.
Dave Checkley (DCh)	BCRA Library Steering Group

The meeting commenced at 10:45am.

1. Chairman's Welcome

AE welcomed members to this Council Meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Idris Williams, Steve Holding, Clark Friend, Bob Mehew, Ged Campion.

3. Applications for Club Membership

GJ reported 3 new applications for membership – Buckinghamshire Scout Caving Team, Darfar Potholing Club, JSMTW(R) Caving Club – all paperwork and money correct.

4. Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 28th March 2009 (previously circulated)

Proposal: *That the Minutes from 28th March 2009 be accepted as a true record*

Prop: JP, Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

5. Matters Arising for the Minutes of the last Council Meeting

Item 8 – GJ wrote as instructed. The person did not reply and has since joined as a DIM.

Officers' Reports

6. Chairman's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

Proposal: *That the Chairman's Report be accepted*

Prop: DW Sec: JP *agreed unanimously*

7. Secretary's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

Proposal: ***That the Secretary's Report be accepted***

Prop: LW Sec: DP *agreed unanimously*

8. Treasurer's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

8.1 Audited Accounts:

DC: In discussion with the Auditor, it was felt that "Training" profit may well be taxable, so the figures have been amended to represent this. However, there is some uncertainty about this because we are not actually intending to make a profit. **DC to clarify this with Inland Revenue.**

DJ: Have we added to the insurance reserve at all?

DC: We have not.

NW: We need to be able to cope with the excess on the Public-Liability premium and also allow for sudden and dramatic changes in premiums in the future. We should be putting money on one side to allow for this. NW would like to see £50k in the reserve by the end of the current 3-year insurance agreement. **DC to discuss with NW and come up with a formal proposal by the next meeting for moving money into the insurance-excess fund.**

NW: What is the "association income" heading in the accounts?

DC: This is mostly bank interest. We currently get about 2% which, in the current climate, is good.

GM: Where does the £2,300 under "Caver Training" expenditure come from? **DC to check and report back to GM.**

AE: There are constitutional issues with regard to the late appearance of accounts. **DW to investigate.**

8.2 Cave Heritage Account:

DC: What should we do with about £200 sitting in an old Cave Heritage Account held by Tim Gilson.

Proposal: ***The £200 Tim Gilson holds in Cave Heritage Fund be transferred to BCRA.***

Prop: NW Sec: DC *agreed unanimously*

DC to liaise with Tim Gilson and Julian Griffiths

8.3 Changing Bank Mandates:

Proposal: ***The Bank Mandates be updated and the resolutions contained there within be adopted so that the signatories are as follows:***

- ***HSBC BCA Account: Andy Eavis, Damian Weare, David Cooke, Nick Williams***
- ***HSBC BCA No 1 Account: Andy Eavis, Damian Weare, David Cooke, Nick Williams***
- ***HSBC BCA Training Account: Andy Eavis, Damian Weare, David Cooke, Graham Mollard***
- ***NatWest BCA (Paying-in) Account: Andy Eavis, Damian Weare, David Cooke, Nick Williams***
- ***Standard Life BCA (Deposit) account: Andy Eavis, David Cooke, Nick Williams***

Prop: DC Sec: DW *agreed unanimously*

DC to update Bank Mandates

8.4 Hidden Earth:

LW: LW has received a request from Ged Campion for 8 free tickets for foreign delegates to attend Hidden Earth for General Assembly Meeting of the FSE. Hidden Earth's policy is that there is no discount unless delegates are actually working for the event. Hidden Earth would, therefore, like BCA to sponsor the delegates.

A discussion followed about whether the money should be returned to BCA in the event that Hidden Earth makes a profit.

LW: Any profit is the result of the hard work of the volunteers and is either invested in Hidden Earth or donated to a good cause such as Ghar Parau..

AE: There is a worldwide precedent that the hosting nation funds official delegates (named by the FSE).

DJ: It is a finite cost that won't grow.

Proposal: ***BCA will fund the entrance fees of the Official FSE Delegates to Hidden Earth.***

Prop: JP Sec: DJ *agreed unanimously*

DC to liaise with LW and Ged Campion re: funding for FSE Official Delegate tickets.

8.5 Direct Debits:

GJ: Can we assume we are not doing Direct Debits?

DC: It is simply too expensive, costing around £2 per transaction.

8.6 The British Caving Library:

The Library Steering Group has put together a Business Plan which was presented to the Meeting in advance and DCh also brought an additional strategy for the income side of the Library. DCh then spoke in favour of the Business Plan.

DCh: The National Library has existed for a long time but the material was rarely used, uncatalogued and people were generally unaware of its existence. When Roy Paulson, the BCRA Librarian, died it became apparent quite how much material there was when it had to be put into storage. Thanks to the huge efforts of JP and BP, a lot of valuable material was saved. This then gave BCRA a chance to look to the future.

There is a distinct difference between the Library and the Archive – the Library is published material, whereas the Archive is original, unpublished material such as photos, hand-written notes and surveys. The Archive cost is expected to be very little as it will be housed permanently by the British Geological Survey (BGS) at Keyworth, Nottingham, where it will be properly archived.

Over the years the Library has benefitted from a steady supply of foreign information and donations from individuals and clubs, made on the understanding that BCRA would look after them.

The internet seems to be key to the future and has attracted a younger generation of cavers to become interested in the Library, particularly through the audio archive which has had over 5,000 plays. It is important to remember that caving has two dual aspects – sport and science.

The Library has considerable costs associated with it. In the short term BCRA has reserves but at present rate of spending (about £14k per year) BCRA funds will run out in 6 years time. By far the biggest cost is the trained librarian who works on a contractual basis. Initially she was working 20hrs per week but this has now reduced to 10hrs with the support of an assistant paid at a lower rate for 5hrs per week. Use of the Library is increasing rapidly and this will almost certainly need more librarian time. BCRA have received a grant from Natural England, but it takes considerable amounts of work to chase up funding.

DJ: Is the Library currently dependent on the goodwill of the librarian and might costs rise in the future should this situation change? DCh - Yes potentially.

DP: Might future increased use render £14k inadequate? DCh - Yes potentially, but unlikely.

DJ: The library at WPCST receives some requests from authorities, building companies etc. and they pay for these. It might be sensible to charge at the British Caving Library for such services otherwise it may find itself fielding the WPCST queries.

DC: Which financial year are BCRA looking for funding, 2009 or 2010 and how much are they after? DCh replied that this is flexible and to be discussed. Half of the operating costs would be great.

DC: We can afford to fund the Library. Without it we would probably be able to reduce subs this year, but we could choose to spend this money on the Library instead. DC also queried whether BCRA would also be looking for C&KS funding at some point in the future. DCh replied that they would not.

MD: Back a decade or so ago when discussions first began about the future of British caving, the plan was for BCRA to reduce and BCA to take on a greater role and, for example, be responsible for a Library. It has never really developed beyond this, but BCA probably has a moral position here and cannot really escape it.

JP: 2 RCs have come down fully in support of the Library. The feeling at the DCA meeting was very positive indeed and there is a real feeling of goodwill. There are also considerable numbers of volunteers appearing.

AF: Based on his experience of 30 years of the WPCST Library, it is important to note that sustainability might well cause anxiety in the future.

GJ: In principle everyone thinks that the Library is a good idea and there is no need to keep selling it.

CJ: DCh's input is much appreciated. The Library needs some strong input in the future if our money is to be used wisely.

DCh: JP will lead the Library Steering Group in the future.

LW: The Library is for the benefit of all cavers and we should be supporting this wholeheartedly. The cost is about £2.50 per member per year for £14k.

CJ: An update on progress at Council Meetings would be appreciated. BCRA Rep has never attended.

LW: We need to see ourselves as the leading partner in the funding of the Library. It should be OUR library and we need to publicise it.

NW: The lack of financial rigour in BCRA's Proposal is concerning. We need a firm concrete proposal with real figures at the October meeting. The membership will also not easily stomach an increase in fees.

Proposal: *BCA make an immediate commitment to the British Caving Library of £5k for this year with funding of £10k for 2010, subject to ratification at the October meeting.*

Prop: NW Sec: EP *agreed unanimously*

NW: At the end of that period BCRA would be expected to return to BCA with a firm proposal. This proposal will give BCRA some stability.

DC to liaise with Julian Griffiths, BCRA Treasurer on detail of transfer.

Proposal: ***That the Treasurer's Report be accepted***

Prop: AE Sec: NW *agreed unanimously*

9. Conservation & Access Report (*written report circulated*)

DJ: Someone from The National Trust may well be available to speak at Hidden Earth.

NW: Can anything received on Landowner Liability please be forwarded to NW? **EL to forward any future information.**

Proposal: ***That the Conservation & Access Report be accepted***

Prop: LW Sec: DC *agreed unanimously*

10. Equipment & Techniques Report (*written report previously circulated*)

10.1 CSCC Paper (*Appendix 2 of Reports*)

GJ: GJ is extremely disappointed and frustrated that CSCC have chosen to present this paper at BCA National Council. Concerns of this nature should, in the first instance, be addressed to the Equipment Committee, and only escalated to National Council if there is no satisfactory response from E&T. It is equally frustrating that the E&T Convener offered to attend the CSCC AGM to answer queries of this nature (he was in the same building!) but for whatever reason, this offer was not taken up. I make this statement as I consider all the points raised in the CSCC document to be trivial issues which really should be addressed to E&T.

DC: Suspects a lot of this is simply bad communication. The only issue of substance is probably the Anchor Installation Manual document. How widely available is it?

GJ: It is the Training Manual given to anyone on the course and has been so for 17 years. It is not likely that it will be given to anyone who asks for it, but it is available to E&T Committee members and Council Members on request. CSCC E&T Rep saw the last draft and it was discussed at the last E&T meeting.

DC: Why is it withheld?

GJ: Nobody has ever suggested it should be made available so the previous *status quo* has been maintained.

DC: Formally requested that it be made available.

GJ: It will be discussed at the next E&T Committee.

DC: What is the process for approval of the *BCA's PERMANENT RESIN BONDED ANCHOR SCHEME* document?

GJ: It is being presented by BM at the meeting today as Appendix 1 of the Reports document.

LW: CSCC need removal of SRT competence because some pitches on Mendip don't require SRT. Therefore competence is not necessary.

GJ: To date the objections have not been adequately explained to the E&T Committee.

NW: Competence of the Installer is an integral part of the safety of the Scheme and of the Insurance cover for the Scheme. The removal of the word SRT would not be appropriate.

DC: What is the availability of the test data on BCA-installed ECO-anchors?

JP: The DCA meeting discussed this at length. The installation data is extensive and unnecessary for publication. What is necessary for cavers is published in the Rigging Guides issued by CNCC and DCA.

DC: What is needed that currently is not published is the last test date.

NW: Industrially this would be important, but it is not necessary according to the procedures adopted by the Installation Procedure.

DC: The CSCC will submit these concerns in a written document for the consideration of next E&T meeting.

10.2 Resignation of E&T Officer

JP: Thanks Bob Mehew for all his work and JP understands his resignation.

AE: GJ has offered to go forward until the next AGM in a caretaker capacity.

Proposal: ***To formally co-opt GJ as the Equipment & Techniques Officer until the next AGM.***

Prop: DW Sec: MD *agreed unanimously*

Proposal: ***To accept E&T Report but to send BCA's PERMANENT RESIN BONDED ANCHOR SCHEME document back to the E&T Committee.***

Prop: JP Sec: GM *agreed unanimously*

DC to submit CSCC's concerns to next E&T meeting.

11. Training Report (*written report previously circulated*)

11.1 Funding Requests:

GM: Can we confirm my request for £200 for safety cards plus money for a further 6 SRT kits for use in SRT training?

A discussion followed about numbers of cards. It was decided to increase the number of cards printed initially to 500.

GM: The first 500 cards will go to caving shops and it is hoped that sponsors will be found for about 5,000 later to issue via Descent.

DC: Could we pop a website address on the card?

GM: Probably. **GM to investigate possibility of adding website address.**

Proposal: **To accept Training Officer's Report.**

Prop: BP Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

12. Publications & Information Report

LW: Speleology is imminent. We currently have little input into either the production or the content of it. **DW to liaise with Erin Lynch and request that she includes us in her requests for articles.**

We are investigating a potential change of printers as Pagefast are not providing the service we would like at present. **LW to liaise with DW and David Gibson on this.** The new Radon book is held up a present awaiting confirmation of a technical point. It is intended that it will be published in a print-on-demand format.

a. Webmaster's Report

LW: About half of the 50 odd domains including the BCA's own website have been moved to the new server. DC is handling the move.

b. Newsletter Editor's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

c. Handbook Editor's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

Proposal: **To accept Publications & Information Officer's Report.**

Prop: GM Sec: DC *agreed unanimously*

13. Legal & Insurance Report

Nothing to report at this time.

14. Youth & Development Report

CJ: Chris attended the CHECC expedition training weekend run by Joel Corrigan at National Welsh Climbing Centre. It was very good and the site is amenable to use by other cavers.

There have been some issues with Google rankings and the Try Caving website. Chris believes this is because the site has been hacked in to. He is working on a fix.

There have been some requests from websites such as www.trymysport.co.uk for information on caving. Many thanks to Stu Gardiner for the photographs Chris has used.

Google seem to believe Try Caving is a commercial site and we are, therefore, not being charged VAT. We have told them but they have not yet managed to charge us.

Proposal: **To accept Youth & Development Officer's Report.**

Prop: BP Sec: GJ *agreed unanimously*

Other Reports

15. Membership Administrator's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

GJ: Over lunch GJ, CJ and DW came up with the idea of a CIM+ as a way of increasing DIM membership. This would have the same benefits as a DIM but would be registered by the club with its CIMs. It is hoped that this may prove a more convenient approach for existing CIMs to upgrade their membership and, therefore, lead to an increase in DIMs. A further BCRA upgrade option could also be made available.

JP: We need to be careful to canvas the opinion of club membership secretaries. An opt-in facility seems to be appropriate in the first instance. **An explanatory article put together by GJ and DW to be sent to clubs.**

CJ: The 2009 CIM numbers appear substantially lower than 2008. Is it expected that this will improve over the year?

GJ: It is difficult to know since we do not have the equivalent figures for this time last year.

Proposal: **To accept Publications & Information Officer's Report.**

Prop: MD Sec: BP *agreed unanimously*

16. Insurance Manager's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

16.1 Financial-Services Organisations:

NW: Summit Financial Services was set up a while ago by a climber/caver to try to provide cost-effective life cover for climbers. They would like to extend this to cavers. Summit was originally aligned with Lonsdale but has now switched to Sutton Financial Services. However, Lonsdale would also like to continue to offer similar services. BMC have positive experiences with it and currently this brings them £6k-£7k per year income with their 70,000 members. It has, however, taken a while to bring such a level of financial reward. This may also make obtaining life assurance easier for our members.

Proposal: ***Council considers endorsing life cover from Lonsdale and Summit Financial Services a sensible idea and would like NW and DC to negotiate further.***

Prop: NW Sec: LW agreed unanimously

16.2 Disciplining Members

NW: We do not appear to have a meaningful procedure for dealing with disciplining members. In any event we should certainly not be removing insurance cover from members. NW also wonders if RCCs have a standardised procedure for dealing with such circumstances? Do any RCCs already have a policy and do they wish to get together to discuss it? **RCCs to nominate someone to liaise with NW. NW then to draft some wording and liaise with RCCs.**

GM: There is a similar issue facing Training Committee. A procedure exists but it needs formalising.

MM: DYOCave Advisory Committee has had similar issues and an additional section has been added to their Constitution.

Proposal: ***To accept Insurance Manager's Report.***

Prop: JP Sec: DJu agreed unanimously

17. Radon Working Party Convenor's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

Proposal: ***To accept Radon Working Party Convenor's Report.***

Prop: DW Sec: LW agreed unanimously

18. Cave Registry Coordinator's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

Proposal: ***To accept Cave Registry Coordinator's Report.***

Prop: BP Sec: GM agreed unanimously

19. International Representative's Report *(written report previously circulated)*

BP: What is happening with the International Congress?

AE: It will be run by the Czechs. The 2016 European Congress seems more appropriate for us. **AE to let UIS know we do not wish to continue our interest in hosting the International Congress.** We need to think carefully about 2016 at the October's Council Meeting.

a. FSE Report *(written report previously circulated)*

Proposal: ***To accept International Representative's Report.***

Prop: JP Sec: LW agreed unanimously

20. Any Other Business

20.1 CCPR

MD: If anyone based in London would like to be the CCPR rep, MD would appreciate them taking it over. **MD to send information on grant application process to DC and DCh.**

DJu: We have had considerable benefits over the years from attending CCPR meetings and MD has had a considerable input in this.

AE: Many thanks for everything you have done over the years and please continue doing it!

20.2 Bingo Lotto

MD: Bingo Lotto has become more complex and is likely to take a lot more work in the future. However it is possible the rewards could justify this. We need to keep our eyes on this. CJ and DC are both interested.

20.3 BCL Audio Archive

DCh: The BCL Audio Archive needs more recordings from around the Regions. Please encourage people to find a microphone and record their thoughts of older cavers and then pass them on to Sid Perou.

20.4 Manchester Hole Incident

GM: The Manchester Hole incident goes to court in January. This case has potentially serious implications for recreational cavers involved with minors.

HSE has instructed AALS to undertake site inspections on all Centres providing caving.

20.5 The Inventory

DC: MD has an aging PC belonging to BCA. Do we have a use for it? **MD to dispose of as he sees fit.**

JP: JP has an aging public address system that used to belong to NCA and is in the loft. **JP to pass to NW for storage.**

21. Date, Time & Place of next meeting

The next Council Meeting will be held on Saturday 3rd October 2009 at 10.30am at Alvechurch Church Hall, Alvechurch.

Meeting ended: 15:25



BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Council Meeting, 20th June 2009

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Item 6: Chairman's Report

As the new Chairman of the BCA I intend to spend a lot of time listening to people who have much more experience in recent British cave politics than I do.

I have had a number of meetings, formally and informally, and intend these to continue into the future.

I see no need for significant change within British caving, but there are subtle adjustments that need doing. The continued integration of British caving and the professionalisation of certain aspects. Channelling the undoubted capability and enthusiasm of many people into constructive progress is a worthy idea.

There seems to be a new upsurge in cave science, maybe encouraged by interest in paleoclimate which has resulted in funds becoming available for cave science research. This situation should probably be exploited for the good of cavers generally.

I continue to do International meetings in my capacity as UIS President so I will continue to bring back information from other parts of the world.

The Congress in Texas in July is still progressing very well.

Andy Eavis, June 2009

Item 7: Secretary's Report

This has been a relatively quiet period and, apart from the occasional e-mail query and general housekeeping, I have been able to concentrate largely on other caving-related jobs!

When I took on the role of Secretary I was very pleased to be able to give the responsibility of minute-taking to Emma Porter. Since then she has completed this horrible job with much diligence and I am very grateful to her. It has, however, become apparent to me that splitting the role of Secretary in this way is not as simple as I at first envisaged. There is an inevitable gap between the meeting itself and the Minutes being completed. As I have no record of what was decided at the meeting until I receive the Minutes, it has made it quite difficult for me to follow up some items between meetings. Emma and I have agreed that I will complete the Minutes from this meeting onwards and, on her return, I imagine she hopes I will continue to do so!

One item that has been affected by this has been the BCRA's request for funding for the Caving Library. I regret that I have been unable to liaise as I should have liked with either the BCRA or our members on this matter. I now intend to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

I have begun the process of considering Constitutional Amendments for 2010 AGM. To date I have had only one comment from others on Council. I intend to e-mail out a consultation document to Council members within the next month. I would welcome any thoughts or expressions of interest

Damian Weare, June 2009

Item 8: Treasurer's Report

The accounts are now audited and available to this meeting. My thanks go to Jane McCorquodale. None of the figures have changed from the accounts I presented to the last meeting. The Tax figure has now been calculated and the £7300 accrual against overpayments in 2004 has been moved to General Reserves as per the National Council's decision.

After discussion with the Auditor it was decided that the surplus on the Training Scheme was most probably taxable and the accounts have been prepared on this basis. I will be contacting the Tax Man to attempt to persuade him otherwise but the chances are slim. Interest earned is also taxable giving a total liability of £1,231 for 2008.

The British Caving Library proposal: personally I think this is a worthwhile project and we should do our best to make it work. We can afford to support this if we wish. I do have some comments/questions though.

- Is our membership happy to have their money spent this way?
- Are we getting the best value for money?
- £4.5k per annum seems rather a lot to be un-allocated.
- A commitment to 5 years seems a long time this early in the project. I would prefer 2.
- Is BCRA going to be seeking other funding from BCA in the future? For example a contribution to Cave & Karst Science?

- If the library manages to find extra funding will BCA receive a rebate?

The NatWest account (paying-in account) can now be managed on-line. Only a small balance is maintained here. The rest is placed in the Standard Life deposit account.

I've investigated using a Direct Debit Bureau such as fastpayltd.co.uk however the costs remain prohibitive. £375 set-up fee, £1.75 ea. amendment fee. £0.50 ea. collection fee.

I have updated the Expense Forms to request bank details. I have found paying directly in to officers' bank account is generally easier all round. Can I please remind Officers to use these forms rather than various scraps of paper.

FSE's General Annual Meeting is being held at Hidden Earth this year. Delegates attending GAM only will not be charged. Those attending GAM and HE will be charged half price. Does BCA wish to subsidise any further discounts to our foreign friends?

Dave Cooke, June 2009

Item 9: Conservation & Access Officer's Report

Since last meeting only 3 items have been monitored centrally.

CRoW is being revisited. Little substantial change will have implication for us, but use may be helped by possible relaxation of landowner's liability.

The Heritage Protection Bill is proceeding and I see nothing that should disturb us in it. However, as areas of the country do have different procedures locally, we may find the same difficulties as still remain with the National Trust (i.e. local interpretation sometimes being more restrictive than intended centrally). The overarching concepts of listing and conserving sites are welcomed.

Coastal Access continues well, but I stress we will still need to make private arrangements for underground access. I expect soon to take part in more detailed face-to-face discussions with DeFRA about the systems they will put in place.

Elsie Little, June 2009

Item 10: Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report

E&T met on 21 March. A revision to the anchor installation procedure document (entitled PERMANENT RESIN BONDED ANCHORS - INSTALLATION PROCEDURE, TRAINING & DOCUMENTATION) was discussed and following a number of small amendments, was agreed. The decision of the previous meeting (8 November 2008 Item 5) was reaffirmed that this document should only be distributed to those who attend a training course (plus the Regional Coordinators).

A second newly drafted document was tabled (entitled BCA's PERMANENT RESIN BONDED ANCHOR SCHEME) for discussion. The intent of this anchor scheme document was to provide a description of the scheme for general issue. The meeting proposed a number of amendments to the document. The meeting agreed that following updating, the document should be reissued to all E&T members for comment. The meeting also agreed that if there were no comments, the document would be given to BCA's Council for information at its June meeting. (It was also proposed to publish it on the web site and elsewhere following the Council meeting, subject to comments.)

A number of questions were received from one person to the anchor scheme document (and to the installation procedure document). I personally made an offer to meet to discuss those questions and also appear at the CSCC AGM, but this offer was not taken up. Although I understand that some questions remain, it has been agreed to issue the scheme document to Council for information and publish it on the web. The document is shown in Appendix 1.

An anchor placement revalidation / training workshop was successfully carried out on 6 June. Cambrian, Derbyshire, Devon & Cornwall and Northern regions now have trained installers.

Owing to holidays, the next E&T meeting will not take place before October.

A number of members of E&T Committee are upset with my performance as Chair. It is also clear that one region is deeply unhappy with some of the work of E&T Committee. The amount of hassle (some of which is justifiable) associated with the role is now aggravating my health problem. I am therefore resigning from the role of Chair of Equipment & Techniques Committee with immediate effect.

Bob Mehew, June 2009

a) Rope Test Officer's Report

No report submitted.

Bob Mehew, June 2009

Item 11: Training Officer's Report

- From the 1st January 09 to the end of May 09 there have been :
 - 99 LCMLA registrations
 - 18 level 1 assessments
 - 9 level 2 assessments
 - 38 level 1 revalidations
 - 12 level 2 revalidations
 - 2 core skills reassessments
- T. Peacock met with the National Park in South Wales to finally attempt to put the Porth yr Ogof document to bed. There was little progress with the Park still saying they did not want people to use the resurgence even when they accept it is used on a regular basis. However they did ask Training Committee to produce advice for all deep water in PYO but not to mention the resurgence. This is being completed at present.

A copy of the original document has been lodged with Mr Philip Rogers at the Neath Coroner's Office.

- NCP and the TC have been working on a safety card for the past few meetings. This, if it gets Council's approval, will be a free hand-out available in all Caving shops etc. It will be encapsulated to assure longevity. The cost at present looks to be about 35p each, the main cost being the encapsulation. I would ask publications to fund this project initially but will seek sponsorship to enable large numbers to be produced. This project came about in response to a request from the CNCC's Conservation Officer.

A copy of the document is here:

- Finally the weather and flooding document is virtually finished it just needs the diagrams bringing up to a professional standard and this will be finished by the end of July 09. I again will be seeking funding from publications to cover its production.
- The LCMLA syllabus is due to be rewritten and this is already underway. The new syllabus will be produced on DVD at a fraction of the cost of printed copies. Approximate costs look about 65p.

ARE YOU CAVING TODAY? Have you checked the following in relation to your cave?

P
L
O
W

Previous weather and water conditions for preceding few days.
Ground conditions, e.g. wet, dry, frozen.

Local knowledge of both cave and catchment area. How does the cave flood, e.g. seepage or swallet/sink? Where to sit out a flood? Does it flood immediately after rain or a number of days later? How well do you know your chosen route? Have you a guide book, survey or a party member who knows the route/cave well?

Observation What is actually happening :- is it raining? Are thunder clouds building over your catchment area? What do local cavers think? Is everybody else coming out when you are going in?

Weather forecast – Have at least two highly specific weather forecasts for your area/cave. Remember, forecasts are usually very accurate. Weather may arrive a bit later or earlier than predicted! Have a safe wet weather alternative.

IF IN DOUBT... STAY OUT!

If you are happy that the weather and cave are OK for your trip, have you...

- ? Checked your team's competency, fitness and health for *this particular trip*?
- ? Have you the appropriate personal and technical kit and the knowledge and ability to use it correctly?
- ? Have you got an emergency kit such as spare light, whistle, first aid kit, spare food and clothing, survival bag/group shelter, spare rope, knife, etc?
- ? **If it goes wrong have you left the following details with a responsible, knowledgeable person?**
- ? Participants' details
- ? Cave name, grid reference, location and intended route
- ? Parking place and car registration
- ? Time of entry and *call out time* if no contact has been made
- ? Contact details – mobile numbers



Remember to contact the above person when you re-emerge.

WHO ARE YOU GOING TO CALL...?

Dial 999 and ask for POLICE and then CAVE RESCUE

- Steve Higgins, the Officer in charge of the Joint Service Mountain Training wing at Ripon, presented the new military Caver training schemes to both the NCP and TC. He is seeking a higher level of comparability with the BCA awards. With this in mind I was invited to attend their expedition to Northern Spain at the end of this month to observe several of the new schemes. I am unable to go through work pressure but Juliet Parker Smith will be attending on my behalf.
- For some time there have been differences between Panels as to the content of level 2 training courses. It was agreed at TC the content must be standardised. Therefore from January level 2 training courses will include SRT for leader as well as double lifelining with ladders. This may well make training courses longer in some areas but Northern England have been delivering this course for several years over a two and a half day programme.
- HSE has instructed AALS that they must carry out a practical inspection of all centres that offer caving on their programmes.
- There are to be some changes to the CIC starting in January 2010:

- There will be a maximum of two assessors per candidate.
 - The first module will now be an extended underground day.
 - The second module will be of two days duration and cover a surface check out of vertical skill and the second day will cover a classic vertical trip with problem solving.
 - The third module will be the coaching module where it was felt the candidate should not necessarily provide their own group as this can lead to them choosing the easy option of teaching basic SRT. It was important that candidates could assess the needs of their group whether it is rigging techniques or advanced rescue work.
 - There will be a maximum of a three-month window in which to complete the assessment.
- The new CIC mines module was agreed by TC and D. Baines and Dena Proctor were accepted as new CIC mines assessors.

Graham Mollard, June 2009

Item 12: Publication & Information Officer's Report

No written report submitted.

Les Williams, June 2009

a) Webmaster's Report

No written report submitted.

Les Williams, June 2009

b) Newsletter Editor's Report

By the time of this meeting I hope that members have received a copy of the latest BCA newsletter (issue 11). Thank you to all those who contributed to it.

My aim is to publish issue 12 by mid September, before Emma and I head off on our big trip and giving my replacement, Ed Waters, as much time as possible to produce issue 13. My usual plea goes out to all to provide any news etc for inclusion in the next issue of the newsletter.

Mike Clayton, June 2009

c) Handbook Editor's Report

650 copies of the 2009-10 Handbook have been printed and delivered to DIMs, Clubs, Associates and Access Bodies. 3 copies have been donated to each of the main caving shops for sale and the file is available as a free download from the BCA website. I have invoiced the various advertisers and am awaiting payment.

This year I secured a cheaper printing deal from a Wakefield-based firm, Charterhouse, who are keen to take over our other printing jobs at a reduced cost. I have been impressed by their service (and their delay in invoicing me!)

Damian Weare, June 2009

Item 13: Legal & Insurance Officer's Report

No report submitted.

David Judson, June 2009

Item 14: Youth & Development Officer's Report

No report submitted.

Chris Jewell, June 2009

Item 15: Membership Administrator's Report

2009 BCA Membership (as of 16/06/09):

- DIMs caving: 290 (DIMs plus BCRA: 193 - includes 8 Honorary)
- DIMs non caving: 33
- BCRA Honorary: 8
- CIMs caving: 3785

- CIMs non caving: 1072
- Clubs: 149
- Associates: 13
- Access: 5

Year end analysis of membership:					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
DIMs	93	185		437	432
CIMs	3523	3909		4965	5216
Clubs	89	140		153	152

- 1) 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
- 2) There is no reliable data for 2006

New Clubs: The following club has applied for membership. They have submitted the correct paper work, payments and constitutions: Buckinghamshire Scout Caving Team

Admin:

- I have printed club membership cards for YSS (at .30p each) and have had enquiries from two further clubs.
- I am now managing the Anchor Installer database on behalf of the Equipment and Techniques Committee (which includes issuing cards to accredited installers)
- My work load (and therefore hours) has now reduced considerably now that most renewals have been completed.

Glenn Jones, June 2009

Item 16: Insurance Manager’s Report

The PL scheme continues without major issues, largely thanks to the capable efforts of Glenn.

I have secured an extension of the limit of indemnity to £5m for the weekend of Hidden Earth since this is a requirement of the venue. The £105 additional premium for this will be recovered from the HE budget. I enquired about whether this extension could be permanently incorporated into the policy, but have been told that this is not possible.

The all-risks policy has been reviewed and updated to ensure that adequate cover is in place for the equipment held in storage at the Wessex Cave Club HQ on behalf of Hidden Earth, and for the equipment at the library in Glutton Bridge. In anticipation of the appointment of a Library Assistant have also had the employer's liability extended to ensure that employees of BCRA are covered.

We have received two separate approaches from organisations (Summit Financial Services and Lonsdale) which wish to offer BCA members financial services including life cover. Both organisations have links to the BMC. In return for our endorsement and the use of the BCA logo on their literature, we would receive an introducer's commission of 10 - 15%.

I will bring copies of the proposals from each company with me to the meeting. I will also see if I can speak to someone at BMC about their side of this in advance of the meeting.

Council needs to decide whether we should, in principle, enter into an agreement with one or other organisation, and if so, who should be empowered to negotiate and agree a deal.

Nick Williams, June 2009

Item 17: Convenor of the Radon Working Party’s Report

There is nothing on the Radon Front to report other than the results of the radon experiments carried out with CCW on Llangattock have been presented at the Management Committee and will be posted in Whitewalls. I intend to do another Descent article on them when I can get round to it.

I need to liaise with Bob Mehew about a visit he wanted with HPA. We had agreed that June would be a useful time and I now need to sort out a time suitable to Bob and then see what HPA can do.

Clark Friend, June 2009

Item 18: Cave Registry Co-ordinator’s Report

I have recently helped Cambrian Post the latest version of their registry online. I’ve updated their software to make the process easier.

Mendip Cave Registry and Archive have been working on the archive aspect. The log books from Westinghouse Apprentices Association Caving Section and John Aylott from the Chelm’s Coombe Caving Club have recently been posted.

Dave Cooke, June 2009

Item 19: International Representative's Report

Recently I have attended two very interesting meetings. The first was Sardinia, the venue for the 2009 Italian Conference called ICNUSSA, the ancient Italian name for Sardinia. The Conference venue was Urzulei in the centre of the area surrounded by limestone. This was the first time I had ever been to Sardinia and I didn't realise what a spectacular place it is. Corsica to the north is granite whereas a lot of Sardinia is limestone. Not only are there very good caves but also there is a long history of various types of mining. The Conference had well over 1,000 delegates. They had more or less taken over the town and had numerous displays and demonstrations in public buildings, schools etc., throughout the town. I had been invited to participate in the General Assembly of the European Federation of Speleology and Ged Campion also attended. I am sure Ged will give a full report on this meeting. Sufficient to say that it was intended to cement relationships between UIS and the European Federation. This I think took a step forward with a lot of common ground discussed and ways forward for the future. There will be a next meeting between these organisations in July in Texas.

We have applied for hosting the International Congress in 2013. My personal opinion is we should not pursue this and instead look towards a European Congress in Britain in 2016. Only seven years away!

The other meeting I attended was the Hypogene Speleogenesis Symposium in Ukraine. I was there on the invitation of Alex Klimchouk who is Vice President of the International Union of Speleology and a great friend. Politically it was useful if I attend this meeting as President of the UIS. In practice, the scientific meeting was superb. The proceedings are available for anybody who is particularly interested. This area of the Ukraine that we visited has many of the longest gypsum caves in the world at Chernivtsy.

Here the gypsum caves are formed by up flowing waters in an artesian principle from a highly porous sandstone underlying the gypsum - fascinating science. Hypogene which means "water moving upwards" is now thought to account for a considerable portion of cave development both in warm waters from deep-seated sources and cool waters in a artesian principle.

Several gypsum caves were visited including Zoloushka, which is in Moldova which contains some of the largest passages of any gypsum cave. There were huge areas of roof very sparsely supported.

The entrance to the longest gypsum cave in the world - Optymistychna - was also visited. Altogether the Conference over the 12th-17th May was an excellent introduction for the International Congress in Texas in July.

Andy Eavis, June 2009

Item 19a: FSE Report

Since the last report submitted to the BCA, the most important developments have taken place at Icnussa 2009 which was the meeting of the Italian National Caving Conference in Sardinia at the beginning of May this year. The Bureau meeting was held on 2nd May 2009. Although a range of discussions took place, the most important points are summarised as follows.

- **Political balance between UIS and FSE:** The Bureau fed back on the very positive experience of Vercors 2008 where the spirit of co-operation between the UIS and the FSE had been excellent in sharing the work on a number of commissions/projects that both organisations were developing. From the FSE point of view, these were;
 - Cave protection
 - Expedition database (Andy Eavis to raise with BCA)
- **UIS Congress in Kerrville, Texas:** The FSE will make a stand and banner to promote European caving.
- **Cave Protection:** the next meeting of the Protection Committee will be held at the Balkan Camp on 24th June in Antalya, Turkey.
- **Membership status of the FSE:** Currently there are 21 countries that are members of the FSE with a few new ones including Armenia and Norway. Turkey has delayed its application because of changes in internal structures. The issue of what constitutes Europe was discussed and it was decided that the Council of Europe of 1947 would be used to define the boundaries of Europe
- **Euro-Speleo Projects:** A range of projects continue to be financed and there have been a number of requests for new projects including;
 - Expedition in Laos
 - Hungarian cave rescue
 - Lithuanian expedition to Georgia

Following the very successful Vercors 08, additional money has been awarded to Euro-Speleo projects (E8,500). Minimum amounts for projects will be E400 although there will be no ceiling on maximum amounts awarded.

- **European Cave Day** The Protection Committee wanted a date to be organised in October or November but this was not finally agreed because it was felt that more discussion was needed about the format and content of the day and how it would be co-ordinated across so many countries.

- **General Assembly Meeting (GAM)** The next meeting of the GAM will take place at Hidden Earth on 26th September 2009, preceded by a FSE Bureau Meeting. The Hidden Earth conference organisation group has agreed that rooms can be made available to house the GAM.

Official Registration of the FSE. It was agreed that the official registration of the FSE should be at Luxembourg. This was for reasons of continuity.

Ged Campion, June 2009

Item 20: Any Other Business

CCPR Outdoor Pursuits Division Report

I attended the OPD meeting held on 3rd June at the Friends Meeting House opposite Euston station.

Much the largest block of email material comes from the CCPR. Only a fraction is of interest to us, but it needs to be sieved! The use of email today means that any one can review the docs. However, CCPR acknowledges a single named representative of each member body in order to provide a democratic structure for meetings of its divisions (BCA is a member of the Outdoor Pursuits Division, OPD). I have been our rep for many years, largely because as a London resident my attendance was cheap both in time and cost. This is no longer the case. If a Home Counties or London-based successor could be found who was prepared to attend the three meetings annually, I would gladly relinquish the position. Until that happens, it is best to continue as at present even if I do not attend all meetings, in order to keep our position as an active participant; votes at elections etc are assigned to me personally rather than to BCA!. It might be a useful goad to include CCPR Rep amongst our specifically-listed agenda items.

Off-loading chairman's correspondence is proving more protracted than expected. Copying on to others is not so difficult; stopping it arriving much more so! Quite apart from chair@- and chairman@- email addresses, many circulars give no hint of the destination address employed or its source. Passing received mail to others is not too onerous; but it does not necessarily affect the various databases which are the source of the contact details of other bodies.

Bill Renshaw has for some years been the BMC rep to the OPD; he has now been elected OPD's deputy chairman and is well placed to represent our interests in the event that we lack a rep from time to time.

The CCPR has just announced the launch of the Impact and Improvement Fund 2009-2010. It is cooperating with Sport England to administer this grant scheme to which National Governing Bodies (NGB) such as BCA can apply for funds in support of particular objectives. It appears to be based on an annual grant round rather than the old four-year plans and the first tranche is to be awarded to applications made before mid-July 2009 for expenditure before the end of March 2010. Any interest to any current BCA projects?

The BingoLotto saga continues. The next series of the "show" will now take place in the Autumn, when ticket sales will be available at the checkouts of a large national supermarket. No fewer than 27 different beneficiary Societies, each with specific approved objects, have been created as funding recipients. Future beneficiaries may pursue projects appropriate to one or more or all of these societies. Funding will be earned in proportion both to participation in Societies and the actual membership numbers of the body. The work involved in navigating this structure is substantial; for the present I have left BCA at a minimum participation level in order to see how the new series pans out. We can always jump through all the hoops for a subsequent series if a suitable scheme can be identified. Anyone want to review the scheme?

Mick Day, June 2009

Appendix 1: BCA's Permanent Resin-Bonded Anchor Scheme

General

Eco/Peco resin bonded anchors that are to be included on the BCA anchor scheme insurance must only be installed by cavers who have been trained under the scheme approved by the British Caving Association and have the authority of the Regional Council.

BCA E&T Committee will agree the procedure for installing anchors under the scheme.

Regional Caving Councils (RCC) should appoint Regional Co-ordinators for anchors. Regional Co-ordinators will advise BCA Equipments and Techniques (E&T) Committee of all trained competent installers. Regional Co-ordinators will issue any revision of installation procedures to all competent installers.

BCA will ensure that adequate insurance is in place to protect the personnel involved in the placement of anchors and in the administration of the scheme.

The primary document covering the scheme is that issued to installers and Regional Coordinators entitled "Permanent Resin Bonded Anchors Installation Procedure, Training & Documentation".

BCA E&T Committee may conduct audits of the scheme.

Installation

Installers must be competent in SRT, rigging and identifying new anchor positions and must be approved by RCCs. Such persons will be trained by BCA appointed trainers. Following initial training, all qualified installers must attend every three years a workshop to be re-validated.

Records

The Regional Co-ordinator or deputy will keep records of all anchors placed under the scheme plus records of their inspection. The Regional Co-ordinator will also keep records of any defect reports made and their follow up. The BCA Membership Administrator will keep a record of all trained installers.

Inspection

All anchors should be checked before use. Twist the anchor using the fingers, while observing any movement. Slight flexing or rotational movement (+/- 1mm) of the anchor is acceptable. The following points should be checked before using or loading the anchors:

- Looseness or fracture of the rock in which the anchor is placed.
- Grooves or abrasion inside the curvature of the anchor (i.e. the inside contact area of the anchor).
- Obvious damage to the anchor or placement from rock fall.
- Excessive rotation of the resin within the drilled hole.
- Rotation of the anchor within the resin.
- Fracturing of the rock within 20cm of the anchor placement.
- Egress of the anchor from the resin or resin from the drilled hole.

E&T Committee, June 2009

Appendix 2: CSCC concerns about E&T Committee's Bolting Procedure

Following the CSCC AGM May 16th it came to our attention that there has been a proposal from the E&T committee to make Training Procedures for Installation of Eco Hangers under the BCA scheme only available to people who are trained.

The CSCC believes to avoid the problems of the past, open publication supported by distribution list, is the best practice method. CSCC does not support the need for such documents to be kept secret, particularly as the BCA is not operating at Industry level, where this practice is only undertaken to protect commercial advantage and profit.

Furthermore CSCC believe that there are errors and issues that need clarification in the current (v3 Feb 09) Permanent Resin Bonded Anchors Installation Procedure, Training & Documentation, the crucial issue of the expiry date only covers one form of labelling out of the 2 types that have been in circulation to the current installers, however, are not privileged to the documents therefore cannot fully assess this.

It is also noted that Permanent Resin Bonded Anchors Installation Procedure, Training & Documentation is the Primary Document of the scheme, therefore how can it be only given to people that have attended the training course.

CSCC seeks to encourage the use of an online-meaningful List - of all bolts placed under the BCA scheme as to their current test status. This would aid a sport caver in determining a bolts suitability or not. Without this there is no way for a caver to tell, as it is know that identical anchors where sold openly for many years.

The CSCC is also worried about the audit trail for the installation of the anchors, while the openness will help, surely a central record kept and available to a selected group is critical for such a safety and insurance liability

CSCC would like further information as to why the E&T has reinstated the pulling test method after the placement of new bolts, having dismissed it 2 years ago as damaging the anchors, before it goes any way to accepting the new Anchor scheme..

The CSCC would also like to see the word SRT removed from the installation procedures were it states "Installers must be competent in SRT, rigging and identify new positions....."

The CSCC questions how the anchors already placed will be brought into the scheme under the new testing system under the proposed scheme.

Carmen Smith, CSCC Secretary