



Minutes of BCA Council Meeting held on Saturday, 2nd October 2010
at British Caving Library, Glutton Bridge

Present:

Andy Eavis (AE)	BCA Chairman / BCA UIS Rep.
David Cooke (DC)	BCA Treasurer / Cave Registry Sec / British Caving Library Rep.
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Secretary / Handbook Editor
David Judson (DJu)	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
Graham Mollard (GM)	BCA Training Officer
Les Williams (LW)	BCA Publications & Information Officer / BCA Webmaster
Elsie Little (EL)	BCA Conservation & Access Officer
Nick Williams (NW)	BCA Insurance Manager / Equipment & Techniques Officer
Glenn Jones (GJ)	BCA Membership Administrator / CNCC Rep.
Jenny Potts (JP)	BCA Publication Sales / DCA Rep.
James Collings (JC)	BCA Youth & Development Officer
Mick Day (MD)	Individual Member Rep
Boyd Potts (BP)	Club Rep.: Orpheus Caving Club
Owen Clarke (OC)	Club Rep.: Cwmbran CC
Mark Williams (MW)	CSCC Rep.
Idris Williams (IW)	ASCT Rep.
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO Rep.
Charlie Milton (CM)	Club Rep.: Combined Services CT
Stephen Read (SR)	SUI Rep.
Ged Champion (GC)	FSE Rep.
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	ACI Rep.

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: Chris Jewell, Emma Porter, Mike Clayton, Clark Friend, Bob Mehew, Alan Finch, Dave Checkley, David Jean & Bernie Woodley

3. Applications for Club Membership

GJ reported an application with correct paperwork and payment from "Buttered Badger Potholing Club", "Derbyshire Scout Caving Team" and "North Wales Miners Association Trust Ltd".

Proposal: *to accept the "Buttered Badger Potholing Club", "Derbyshire Scout Caving Team" and "North Wales Miners Association Trust Ltd" as Member Clubs*

Prop: GJ, Sec: DW *agreed unanimously*

4. Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 5th June 2010 (previously circulated)

NW: Item 16: Implies that NW made the decision to charge SUI £500 on his own. In reality this went through BCA Executive. Amend "was reduced on this basis by NW to £500" to "was reduced on this basis by the Executive to £500".

Proposal: *to accept the amended Minutes from 5th June 2010 as a true record*

Prop: JP, Sec: NW *agreed unanimously*

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

GJ: Item 15: GJ sent the information via an e-mail address that had incorrect forwarding. This has now been rectified, but JC's work has been delayed as a result.

Review of Action Log

Action 6: DC: Ongoing

Action 18: JP: Unsellable, but has been donated to our landlords at the BCL for use. This is worth it for the goodwill.
 Action 20: AE: Nothing done to date, but we will deal with this in the not too distant future.
 Action 24: CM: Ongoing.
 Action 29: CJ not at meeting. Progress to be advised at the next meeting.
 Action 34: DC: appears to have been done, but DC to advise CJ that the link to Try Caving is wrong.
 Action 35: DW: Complete
 Action 36: DW: Ongoing
 Action 37: IW: confirms that the wording is “a suitably qualified person”. For rope work, this would need to be a CIC, but GM has paid a doctor for a First Aid course recently, for example.
 Action 38: CM: Ongoing
 Action 39: CF: Done
 Action 40: JP: Done
 Action 41: DW: Done
 Action 42: DC: Completed during the meeting.
 Action 43: CF: Done
 Action 44: JC: Covered under “Matters Arising” - ongoing
 Action 45: GC: to be dealt with under FSE report later
 Action 46: LW: set up - CJ now needs to populate.

Officers’ Reports

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

AE: will attend Regional Council Meetings if told when they are.
 LW: CSCC Meeting is on 6th November.
 AE: Many thanks to LW for Hidden Earth. It was an excellent event.
 LW: Numbers were very similar to the previous year.

Proposal: ***to accept the Chairman’s Report***

Prop: DW Sec: JP *agreed unanimously*

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

7.1 Constitutional Amendments Ballot

NW: How many failed items were returned?

GJ: Around 100 at present. There were only a couple of clubs without any address information, but there were many people without postcodes etc.

NW: Could the numbers of returns be included in the Membership Administrator’s report next time?

Action 46: GJ to include information about returns from the Constitutional Ballot in his next report to Council.

NW: Do we know the cost of the ballot?

Action 47: DC will work this out the Ballot Cost for the next meeting.

Proposal: ***to accept the Secretary’s Report***

Prop: GM Sec: GJ *agreed unanimously*

8. Treasurer’s Report *(written report circulated)*

8.1 Budgets & Subscription Setting

DC: Has suggested last year’s figures in his report. Are people generally happy with those?

NW: E&T might be looking at spending as high as £6k. There has been an underspend in the last few years, and a chunk of next year’s spending will be on a set of anchors, which will last for several years.

DC: RCCs’ budget has been raised slightly because there is a backlog of CSCC claims.

JP: Is the money for the British Caving Library a fixed fee of £10k, or is it worked out at 2/3 of the running costs? The reason for asking is that running costs are lower than anticipated.

DC: The idea was that we provide a grant and BCRA top it up. This should be reviewed at some point though.

JC: Youth & Development may well be higher because we are looking at attending the Outdoor Show. There is also some money to spend on Cliffhanger.

JP: Cliffhanger is, in principle, free to visitors once people have paid their entrance fee. Several events within it actually charged this year. JP is to investigate the chances of us making a small charge for next year.

DC: The £1k for the Outdoor Show will be allocated to the “Meetings & Conferences” heading. The “Youth & Development” heading looks like being £500.

NW: Currently has a transit full of a cave donated by Entre-Prises Ltd. Should we buy a trailer and where should it be stored? We now appear to have three caves and it might be sensible to have a trailer that could be used by all three caves.

AE: We might be able to get a sponsor for this too.

LW: Hidden Earth has had to hire a refrigerated trailer on occasions in the past. Maybe this could be borne in mind if we are buying a trailer.

DC: Training income is slightly down this year, but this may end up balancing out due to lower costs arising from less revalidation courses.

DC: Last year's surplus was about £23k and next year's appears to be about half this due to additional planned spending. We could therefore choose to reduce subs by a few pounds.

GJ: We haven't increased them due to inflation over the years and will probably need to put them up in the future. It is, therefore, sensible to keep them the same now.

JC: Are insurance premiums likely to rise at any point?

NW: We are on a fixed deal at the moment, but a potential rise would occur if we chose to increase our liability to £5m. Because of our insurance reserves, we can cope with a 100% rise before we need to go back and recover it from our members.

NW: We do, of course, pay tax on our surplus.

AE: It would seem sensible to keep it where it is.

Proposal: *that our subscriptions for 2011 remain at the same level as 2010.*

Prop: DC Sec: GJ *agreed unanimously*

Single-Signature Accounts

NW: Currently statements arrive at Great Hucklow and are read by NW before being passed on to the Treasurer.

LW: Any safeguards are as much to protect the Treasurer as anything else.

AE: DC should maybe take this away and propose a form of wording for the next meeting. **Action 48: DC to draft proposal for next meeting for regulating the use of single-signature accounts in line with our new Constitution.**

MD: Is this about one individual signatory, or one from within a list of approved people?

NW: Currently payments are made by DC, NW, GM and Sue the Office Manager at Great Hucklow (under NW's authority). Mick Day remains a signatory.

AE: This is an important point, as there have been issues with other national caving bodies around the world.

DW: A full outline of our current financial arrangements should be an essential part of the Manual of Operations.

Proposal: *to accept the Treasurer's Report*

Prop: GM Sec: BP *agreed unanimously*

9. Conservation & Access Officer's Report

EL: There are two things to report. Firstly the European Conservation Initiative has been signed on our behalf by DW and returned to the FSE. Secondly the Bat Conservation Trust has become quite anxious about White Nose Syndrome in bats. EL has represented BCA at a meeting with the Bat Conservation Trust, who were very concerned about the impact of caving on this. This has generally been around for a while, but there has not been any mass mortality here yet. No real research seems to have been done to date. EL believes that there is nothing to indicate that the problem will accelerate in the UK. We have agreed with the Bat Conservation Trust that we will publicise the information generally. There is also an article in the new *Descent* about sensible precautions. **Action 49: GC to put EL in touch with the European group who have been doing work on this.**

DW: Has uploaded a factsheet from the European Group to the BCA website.

SR: SUI has uploaded a document but they have had no real contact from anyone beyond this.

LW: How does the SSSI legislation fit in with this? Is it possible for NE to ban access to SSSIs?

EL: Yes.

AE: We do need to be particularly careful cleaning gear when caving internationally.

Action 50: EL to prepare some further information to be passed to DW for the BCA website.

Proposal: *to accept the Conservation & Access Officer's Report*

Prop: LW Sec: DJu *agreed unanimously*

10. Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report

NW: A useful meeting has been held. NW feels we made good progress on the anchor situation. Details are available in the Minutes. **Action 51: DW to add draft Minutes to the website (including updates sent by e-mail).**

a. Rope-Test Officer's Report

Proposal: *to accept Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report*

Prop: JP Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

11. Training Officer's Report (*report previously circulated*)

- GM: CIC trainers are self-employed providers. They are only paid by BCA for revalidations. BCA took this over 18 months ago and BCA are paid by the candidates and we then pay a set figure to the T/As for running the courses. This is administered by the Training Administrator. CIC Trainer/Assessors are, therefore, working on behalf of BCA, rather than employed by BCA. Training courses and assessments are not part of this system, and are done privately.
- NW: Do we attempt to influence the fees for these, or are they set by market forces?
- GM: Different trainers will work for different amounts.
- NW: Candidates also pay a registration fee, which does come to us.
- GM: The registration fee is £45 for LCMLA or CIC, and £55 for LCMLA and CIC together. Those who register do not currently have to be members of BCA. A lot of NGBs do require membership for accreditation.
- LW: Is there a good reason for this, given that we give grants to the volunteer sector?
- GM: These are really a gesture.
- LW: Is there a requirement on university clubs to have trained leaders?
- JC: Some universities have gone down this route.
- CM: There are discounted fees for the BMC if you are a member. Requiring membership does ensure people receive updates and information.
- NW: This is done through the revalidation process.
- LW: Is it possible to get important information out to qualified people in the short term, given that revalidations are every 3 or 5 years?
- GM: We do disseminate information by e-mail, but it relies on people keeping their contact details up to date.
- IW: Was initially of the view that membership was a good idea, but has changed his mind over time, because it encouraged more people to become qualified, rather than using their Technical Advisor as an alternative route. Many of these people are poorly paid and need to hold many different Governing Body qualifications. This is similar in the voluntary sector, such as Scouts.
- AE: The requirement to join may be something to put to the AGM. This could be done via a voucher for a discount on the registration fees.
- GM: We need to ensure we have as many people as possible involved in our Scheme and may be shooting ourselves in the foot if we did go down that road.

Role of Training Officer

- GM: BCA needs to identify what it wants from the TO, and this will probably come under the Manual of Operations. It has never been defined as to whether it should be simply as a convenor of meetings, or to actively develop the Scheme. Every other GB has a paid role. The main input over recent years has come from two Committees: the LCMLA and CIC panels. The CIC panel is probably too large and this slows down progress. Training Committee no longer fulfils the role it was set up for, as it does not represent the recreational side of caving.
- EL: The problem is that it is held mid-week.
- IW: The weekend has been tried, but this proved difficult for the professional cavers and the recreational cavers still didn't attend.
- SH: The problem is that the TC should not be professional. Despite this the RCCs tend to send professional cavers, rather than recreational cavers. SH has stopped attending since the meetings moved to mid-week.
- NW: The Scheme has proved very successful in the past. If there is duplication of effort at certain layers, than maybe these layers need removing. Ultimately overall control lies with BCA Council, which is voluntary. What we need is a review of the structure and, as a basic principle, sub-committees can be a duplication of effort. We seem to have 12 months to develop this, as GM is willing to stay on for 2011.
- GM: This needs to begin with what BCA wants from its Training Officer. At present GM has quite a lot of integration with other Bodies, but this does bring financial implications for BCA. Many of these meetings are based in London.
- NW: Considerable progress has been made in making the Training Committee financially self-supporting. This is to be applauded.
- SH: We have an excellent professional side and a weak system for recreational training.
- BP: As a club rep, is concerned that there is no obvious fast solution for getting funding for a training event.

GM: Send it straight to GM.

Manchester Hole Document

GM: The document was produced for the Manchester Hole court case. AALS now wish to use the document as a “lessons learned” document. Does Council wish to endorse this as a BCA guidance document? Our T/As are regularly giving guidance at training sessions, so it is GM’s view that we can give guidance.

LW: What matters is whether the authors of documents are the recognised experts in a field.

GM: If we do endorse it, then this will be put out to those who have LCMLA entitlement to use Manchester Hole and Goyden Pot.

GJ: What is the process for accepting any BCA document?

MD: Council represents each Constituent Body and, therefore, everyone is being consulted at Council.

DJu: This is a unique document for a unique situation and this should be mentioned explicitly in the document.

LW: The IPTD from the E&T Committee is a Training Manual that the RCCs will have to abide by, whereas this document is a site-specific document.

NW: Presumably RCC Reps have some autonomy and can decide whether something they are asked to vote on would have any serious questions in the body they represent.

JC: The advice in there is site-specific and surely we do not need to publish this document as such.

GM: We are asking for an endorsement, rather than the publishing of it.

DC: All documents are better if they have been peer-reviewed and, therefore, the logical body to look at this would be the Training Committee.

AE: This is an excellent document and we should agree to endorse this document.

Proposal: *that BCA endorse “The Hydrology of Goyden Pot and Manchester Hole” document by Graham Mollard*

Prop: GJ Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

GM: BMC have a list of “Court-Ready Technical Experts” for different situations. It seems that it may be a good idea to draw together a group for different aspects, such as explosives, digging etc.

LW: BCA has been asked about correct use of footwear in the past.

NW: In the past this has been dealt with by simply passing the request to the TO.

DJu: The Manual of Operations probably should include a policy for ensuring any such people are appropriate.

Action 52: RCCs and anybody with a potential interest to ask for suitable people to be on the list of “Court-Ready Technical Experts”.

GM: Should we wish to, we could then co-ordinate a training course in giving evidence in court.

Proposal: *to accept Training Officer’s Report*

Prop: LW Sec: JP *agreed unanimously*

12. Publications & Information Report

LW: The P&I meeting has not yet happened, but should be doing so in the next 2 or 3 months.

a. Webmaster’s Report (*written report circulated*)

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

LW: Might it be a good idea for GM to put something in the next newsletter about the lack of representation on Training Committee? **Action 53: GM to put something in next newsletter about the lack of representation by recreational cavers on the Training Committee.**

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

DW: Should we continue to publish the Handbook following on from the AGM now that the AGM has moved to June? This will mean the Handbook isn’t published until about August in future.

MD: It will be most accurate following the AGM, and should stay as such.

Proposal: *to accept Publications & Information Officer’s Report.*

Prop: GJ Sec: BP *agreed unanimously*

13. Legal & Insurance Report

DJu: Nothing to report that won’t come up elsewhere.

Other Reports

14. Youth & Development (*written report previously circulated*)

Outdoor Show

GM: May be worth talking to Entre-Prises Ltd about sharing their stand.

JC: The cave might need looking at to avoid putting people off caving. There are some quite realistic sections!

LW: The last event was a very good one and we should try to make it happen again, especially given the recent positive publicity on the television and elsewhere for caving as a sport.

JP: We need to be careful that the free space isn't offered by the Outdoor Show dependent on us bringing the YHA cave as it is likely that this won't be available.

AE: Let's try for free space first and then discuss with Entre-Prise Ltd.

University

JP: The starting point is getting people to join BCA.

JC: Some universities do not perceive much benefit from joining. There is also a completely new set of personnel every 3 years.

Cliffhanger

JP: Do we want to contribute?

Proposal: *That we give £500 to subsidise the DCA's attendance at Cliffhanger 2010.*

Prop: NW Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

IW: On a point of information Scout caving does continue beyond the age of 25. You can become a leader, or join a Scout Caving Club.

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

Prop: LW Sec: BP *agreed unanimously*

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

GJ: Currently CIM+ do not have their own colour of card. Should they?

LW: As there is no difference between CIM+ and DIM entitlement, suggest they both have red cards.

Proposal: *to accept Membership Administrator's Report.*

Prop: JP Sec: CM *agreed unanimously*

16. Insurance Manager's Report

NW: There have been no claims. Not yet in discussion with the broker about renewals, but they don't like looking at this until December. SUI would like us to reconsider last meeting's decision. We have to pay an extra premium associated with insuring those members of BCA who are based in the ROI. At the last meeting we decided to ask SUI for all of this money. Since being told of this, SUI has approached NW and asked BCA to reconsider this. NW welcomed Stephen Read from the SUI to the meeting.

SR: Thanks for the opportunity for letting SUI come to the meeting. SUI has about 175 members, of which 4 or 5 universities are members, as well as the Shannon Group in the North and the Clare Group in the South. SUI see being affiliated with BCA as being very important, particularly for members in the North who often cave north of the border. SUI have FFS insurance and this came about because many people are also members of the Rescue Team and, as there is no equivalent cover to your Home Office insurance, we needed FFS personal-accident insurance. The FFS insurance covers the ICRO members, but SUI are unclear about the cover it provides beyond this. BCA insurance gives cover for meetings and the SUI members are all registered as non-caving members. The membership is useful to access caves, including in Clare. FFS does not provide PL cover.

Why should BCA members subsidise Irish cavers? This will mean an extra £15 per head to join SUI because we are small. There are more than 5,000 members in the UK and spreading this cost between everyone will cost only about 50p per head, and will ensure access in Ireland, something which is used regularly by British cavers.

NW: 20 of the SUI members are resident in N. Ireland and would, therefore, be covered anyway.

GJ: Do you use your non-caving card to get access to the entrance to the caves, and FFS cover while caving? As you have "non-caving" insurance, we cover SUI as an organisation, but not the individual cavers when caving. Where does your cover come from if, for example, you have a rescue in a cave and the fire service damage the land during the rescue?

SR: Unable to confirm this.

SH: Wonders how Mines Heritage Trust of Ireland operate?

GJ: They are caving members of BCA.

NW: SUI are insured currently because we have agreed to insure them. However this does not need to be the case in the future. Maybe we should request that SUI treat all of their members as "caving", rather than "non-caving". This would bring in the additional money required to cover their surcharge.

GM: Discussions are virtually finished in agreeing full parity between the LCMLA Schemes and we will be running the first CIC course in the ROI next year.

EL: Can you clarify why the FFS Scheme is being run alongside BCA Scheme?

SR: To bring personal-injury cover for those involved in ICRO, plus personal accident cover.

NW: Wonders if it is possible to get one insurance policy from our providers that removes the need for FSS cover at all.

Action 54: NW and DJu to liaise with SUI with a view to helping them streamline their insurance situation.

DJu: At the last meeting DJu was against us subsidising SUI. However has been swayed somewhat by the argument that British cavers benefit from it by caving in Ireland. We must be careful, though, about how it will look to many of our members if we just subsidise it.

AE: We probably should deal with this year, and look towards assisting in streamlining in the future.

DJu: The biggest risk to our underwriters is member-member claims, and SUI do not seem to appreciate the costs of this.

NW: We should absorb the cost of the £2k additional we must spend to insure ROI-resident cavers, but SUI should be paying for their “caving” insurance.

EL: This has a parallel with the discussions we had with the Explosives Users and we all benefit, in that we all benefit from it and we should, therefore, consider this in the same way.

SH: If we do ask SUI to pay as “caving” members, they will still be paying the same amount, pretty much as if we asked for the £2k surcharge. Are you sure they can pay for this?

NW: It will be much easier to sell it politically to members if we say that they are being treated the same as every other BCA member.

Proposal: *We request that SUI members are treated in exactly the same way as British cavers, with members who cave joining as “caving” members and we make no further surcharge in respect of surcharges.*

Prop: NW Sec: LW agreed unanimously

SR: The Irish Caving Conference is 22nd-24th October 2010 and everyone is invited.

Proposal: *to accept Insurance Manager’s Report.*

Prop: GJ Sec: BP agreed unanimously

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

Proposal: *to accept Radon Working Party Convenor’s Report.*

Prop: LW Sec: MW agreed unanimously

18. Cave Registry Co-ordinator’s Report

Proposal: *to accept Cave Registry Co-ordinator’s Report*

Prop: NW Sec: LW agreed unanimously

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

a. FSE Report

2016 Congress

GC: There is a process and the Bureau feel we are really jumping the gun and should wait until we are 3 or 4 years before the event in a similar way to the UIS. GC is prepared to try to force the issue at the next Bureau meeting, but is unlikely to have a final decision for the next 12 months. **Action 55: GC to try to force the issue of the FSE Bureau agreeing to our 2016 EuroSpeleo Congress.**

LW: There is a huge amount of work needed to do this well. Six years is not a great amount of time and we need to be able to get the ball rolling as soon as possible.

AE: Could we put together a professional-looking flyer in advance of the next FSE bureau meeting? **Action 56: LW to put together a professional-looking flyer in advance of the next FSE Bureau meeting.**

Proposal: *to accept International Representatives’ Reports*

Prop: GM Sec: OC agreed unanimously

20. Media-Liaison Officer’s Report (written report previously circulated)

Proposal: *to accept Media-Liaison Officer’s Report*

Prop: LW Sec: GJ agreed unanimously

21. British Caving Library Report (written report previously circulated)

Proposal: *to accept British Caving Library Report*

Prop: GJ Sec: OC agreed unanimously

22. Any Other Business

IMG Sports Technology

GJ: The other day GJ was asked by AE to look at “IMG Sports Technology Group Limited”, who charge 6% to gather the data on members but then leave it to us to do the further work. Following this “InterCard” then called and asked what requirements we had for card printing and offered to provide a quote shortly. Is this an attempt to outsource?

AE: Was approached by IMG and attended a breakfast in Loughborough. At Hidden Earth various people thought it was a really good idea and AE asked some people to investigate. If it looks like it might be interesting, AE will report back to Council.

GJ: People are concerned it might not provide a very good service.

23. Date, Time & Place of next meeting

The next Council Meeting will be held on Saturday, 15th January 2011 at 10.30am at The Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch

Meeting ended: 15:15

Action Log – October 2010

No.	Action by ...	Details of Action
6	DC	Update Bank Mandates.
20	LW, NW & AE	To set up sub committee to consider expenditure on <i>Speleology</i> .
24	CM	To pass info from MoD Radiological Department to CF.
29	CJ	To contact Gavin Newman about stock media footage of caving.
34	CJ	To contact organiser of “Thrill Seeker” and ask for weblink to be changed to Try Caving website.
36	DW	To put together a Manual of Operations
38	CM	To continue to liaise with CF over previous 10 years of military radon-dose data.
44	JC	To analyse membership data over the last few years and try to find a pattern.
46	GJ	To include details of returns from Postal Ballot in the January Membership Administrator’s Report.
47	DC	To work out the cost of the Postal Ballot and report at the January meeting.
48	DC	To draft proposal for next meeting for regulating the use of single-signature accounts in line with our new Constitution.
49	GC	To put EL in touch with the European Group who have been doing work on White Nose Syndrome in bats.
50	EL	To prepare some further information on White Nose Syndrome to be passed to DW for the website.
51	DW	To add Draft E&T Minutes to the website (including updates sent by e-mail).
52	Various	RCCs and anybody else with a potential interest to ask for suitable people to be on the list of “Court-Ready Technical Experts”.
53	GM	To put something in the next Newsletter about the lack of representation by recreational cavers on the Training Committee.
54	NW & DJu	To liaise with SUI with a view to helping them streamline their insurance situation.
55	GC	To try to force the issue of the FSE Bureau supporting our EuroSpeleo Congress in 2016.
56	LW	To put together a professional-looking flyer in advance of the next FSE Bureau meeting.



BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Council Meeting, 2nd October 2010

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Item 6: Chairman's Report

Since the last Council meeting I have attended a number of BCA-related meetings and I intend to go to more in the future.

Please can people let me know about meetings and I will try to be there (if wanted). After recent discussions with various Council members I realise I still have a lot to learn, acronyms included!!

I went to all the BCRA Science meetings and thought them excellent. I think the mid-week problem must be addressed.

I have done some work on future Council vacancies and if anybody else is thinking of resigning at the next AGM, please can they let me know.

I plan to work with Damian on the statutes and have had a series of meetings with people on British Caving Structure. We will produce something for the AGM.

Finally I thought Hidden Earth was great - full marks to Les and his team and thanks from all of us for their hard work.

Andy Eavis, October 2010

Item 7: Secretary's Report

Postal Ballot: This has been completed and we generally received some very positive feedback along with ballot papers. I can confirm that all the proposals have been accepted by the membership and the Constitution has, therefore, been amended. It was pleasing to note several comments about how nice it was to think that BCA valued its membership enough to consult in this way. The full results are as follows:

Proposal	Individual Members					Group Members				
	For	Against	Abstain	Total	% For	For	Against	Abstain	Total	% For
1	259	2	1	261	99.2	23	0	0	23	100
2	256	6	0	262	97.7	22	1	0	23	95.6
3	257	3	2	260	98.8	21	2	0	23	91.3
4	258	3	1	261	98.8	22	1	0	23	95.6
5	253	7	2	260	97.3	23	0	0	23	100
6	256	5	1	261	98.0	22	1	0	23	95.6
7	261	0	1	261	100	23	0	0	23	100
8	258	3	1	261	98.9	23	0	0	23	100

As a result of proposal 5, I think we now probably need to pass at least one retrospective resolution on single-signature accounts. Perhaps Cookie should draft something he considers appropriate for the next meeting?

Website Calendar: I note that there has been little, if any, activity updating the calendar, as requested last meeting. I will clearly have to become a bit more proactive in cajoling people!

Manual of Operations: I regret to report that apart from Cookie setting up a wiki to use for this, and some initial planning on my part, we have not managed to progress with this yet. As soon as Andy and I can arrange a convenient time to meet, work will begin.

Damian Weare, October 2010

Item 8: Treasurer's Report

The tax for 2009 has been paid (£1,505). The Tax Return has been completed and returned.

This meeting should set the budgets for the forthcoming year. I propose some figures below based on last year's budgets. These can be amended by the meeting, as required.

C&A	£500	Recreational Caver Training	£2000
E&T	£4000	Voluntary Sector Support	£1000
Training	Breakeven	GPF	£5000

Youth Development	£500	Web Services	Breakeven
Meetings & Conferences	£500	Regional Councils	£6000
L&I	£0	British Caving Library	£10000
International Liaison	£500	Speleology	Current +£5000

This meeting needs to set the subscription for 2011. Our subscription income for 2010 to date in £88k, compared to £88k total for 2009. Training income to date is £12k compared with £13k for the same period in 2009. The conclusion is that our key incomes are basically the same as last year.

Most of our costs are broadly the same as last year, however there are some significant additions. We now need an extra £5k for the Caving Library. I expect the E&T expenditure to be higher with the re-starting of the bolting programme. We set aside an extra £5k to improve Speleology. Interest rates continue to fall with reducing our income from savings. The insurance premium will remain the same other than any decision we make with respect to SUI (see Insurance Manager's report).

Last year we made a surplus of £23k. The extra costs mentioned above will have it to somewhere around £10k. That potentially allows up to a £2 reduction for our CIMs and DIMs. However my recommendation would be to leave the subs as they are, thus avoiding the confusion that will inevitably be caused by change. The £16 DIM fee divides into convenient amounts for members joining part way through the year. Will anyone notice a £2 reduction?

David Cooke, October 2010

Item 9: Conservation & Access Officer's Report

No report submitted.

Elsie Little, October 2010

Item 10: Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report

No report submitted.

Nick Williams, October 2010

a) Rope Test Officer's Report

Nothing to report.

Bob Mehew, October 2010

Item 11: Training Officer's Report

Future of Training Committees: At the last meeting I was able to attend I made it quite clear that I would not be standing for re-election as Training Officer. I thought at that time there were at least two persons who would take the work forward. It is now evident that neither of these people is willing to stand for the post. This leaves a difficult decision which I have pondered for several hours. In the end I feel I cannot leave the post to fall into stagnation. Therefore if nobody suitable puts themselves forward for election I will be willing to stand again. However I do feel there are some major changes necessary.

There are three bodies that contribute to the LCMLA and CIC schemes. They are the National Co-ordinating panel, The CIC panel and the Training Committee. Each have three meetings per year. The first two panels are responsible for developing ideas brought forward from the local panels or from the Training Officer. These two panels have been responsible for virtually all the work which has taken place over the past three years in partnership with the Training Officer.

The Training Committee no longer fulfils the role it was set up for. Originally it was to represent The Regional Councils, NAMHO, CDG, Pengelly Trust etc, as well as the BCA professional qualifications. This is no longer the case. At present it only represents the LCMLA, CIC, ACI (already well represented in the former two groups) and AHOC. In its present state it virtually duplicates the NCP and CIC panels. This is an expensive luxury that may not be any longer warranted, and an amalgamated body would be more productive. If Regional Councils etc are willing to get re-involved, then it may be worth protecting the status quo.

For the duration of my time as Training Officer I have felt that the BCA should go down the route of all other NGB's, that is with an employed Training Officer. When Idris was Training Officer I was Chair of NCP and also took the role vacated by Dave Edwards's untimely death. It soon became evident that the role of Technical Training Officer was quite time consuming, and since becoming The Training Officer it has continued to take more time. This is due to the scheme being further developed and the production of documentation to support recreational cavers, LCMLA and CIC. At the present time I see no let up in the work load which averages approximately eight hours a week with six of those spent dealing with Technical Training Advisor questions or representing BCA at meetings of NGB's, Skills Active, local panel meetings and the development of LOTC.

Some may say that attendance at such meetings is unnecessary, however as Training Officer I need to stay in tune with what other providers of national qualifications are doing and how Government demands i.e. LOTC, HSE, AALS and Adventure Mark with have

an effect on our clients.

I would ask the Executive to consider all my thoughts. I understand that any changes towards the Training Officer becoming an employed role would necessitate advertising the post.

Cave Formation / Geology Document: The new cave formation/ geology document is well in hand as is a further paper on deep water survival.

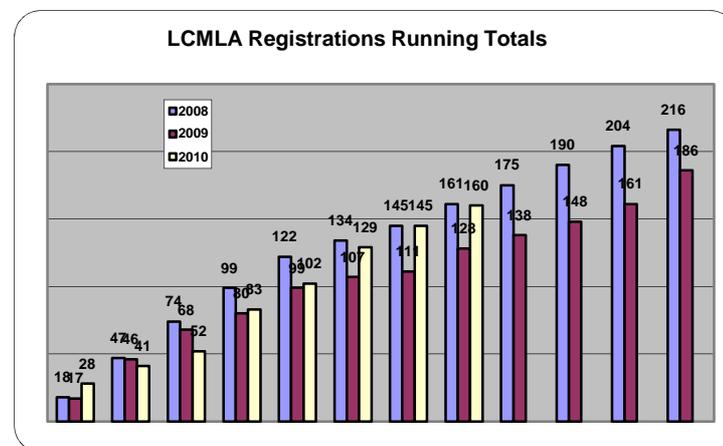
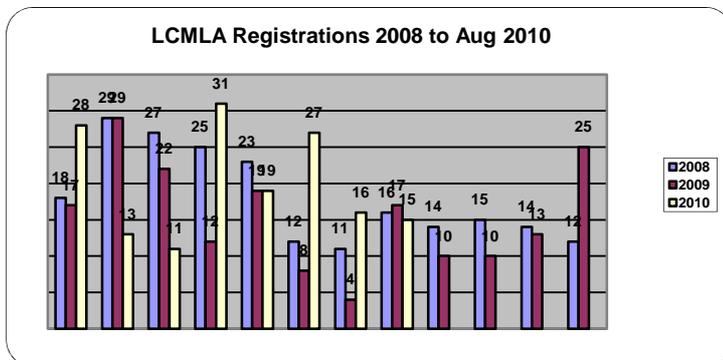
Manchester Hole Case: As the Executive was aware, I was asked by North Yorkshire County Council to be available as Technical Expert in the recent Manchester court case. Solicitors acting for North Yorkshire County Council asked me to produce a document on the hydrology of Manchester and Goyden Pot (appendix 1).

Marcus Bailie of AALS has approached me with a request to use this document as a lessons learnt paper. I have no problems with this request. The paper was not put forward as a BCA publication but I presented to the Executive to see if BCA wished to endorse it. This is another example of AALS and HSE taking seriously the products of BCA professional cavers.

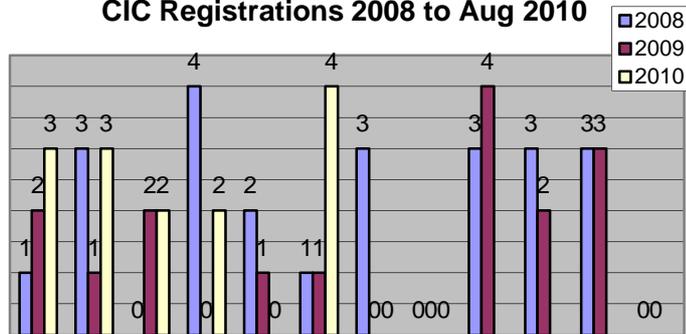
Revalidations: We have had some problems this year with some revalidations not being financially viable. People have provisionally booked meeting minimum numbers to make courses viable then withdrawing at the last minute. This has meant that some revalidations at LCMLA and CIC have run at a loss. Many CIC and LCMLA holders are continuing to work even when their qualifications have expired, relying on the twelve month window to allow them to revalidate. I intend to remove this facility, if they do not revalidate before their due date their qualifications will become null and void and they will be expected to undertake a reassessment module. Both CIC and LCMLA holders must realise that working outside their due date invalidates their insurance and in the case of an accident would leave them totally unprotected.

Grey Mare’s Tail Gorge: I received the Sheriff’s report on the fatality in the Grey Mare’s Tail gorge. This appeared to suggest that only MIC’s were accepted as Technical Experts for gorges. I have since followed this up confirming that CICs are seen as appropriate Technical Experts for non high mountain gorges and canyons.

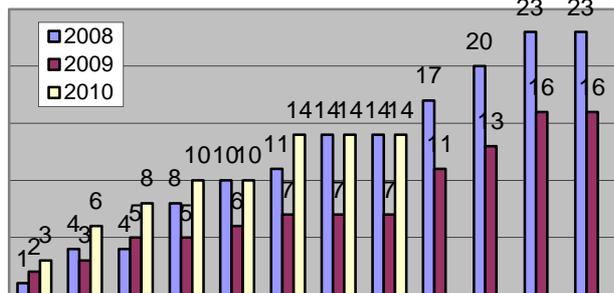
Registrations: The figures for the past three years for registrations seem to be reasonably constant. 2008 – 161; 2009 – 135; and 2010- 160. These are the figures up to the end of August each year. CIC registrations are: - 2008 – 10; 2009 – 7; and 2010 -14. Again these figures to the end of August in each case.



CIC Registrations 2008 to Aug 2010



CIC Registrations Running Totals



Graham Mollard, October 2010

Item 12: Publication & Information Officer’s Report

No report submitted.

Les Williams, October 2010

a) Webmaster’s Report

The number of domains continues to grow with Chesterfield Caving Club and North Wales Miners’ Association Trust now hosting on our servers.

David Cooke, October 2010

b) Newsletter Editor’s Report

The next newsletter is due and I need some content. Please help!

Mike Clayton, October 2010

c) Handbook Editor’s Report

Nothing to report at present.

Damian Weare, October 2010

Item 13: Legal & Insurance Officer’s Report

No report submitted.

David Judson, October 2010

Item 14: Youth & Development Officer’s Report

Website: I have upgraded the trycaving website to Joomla 1.5, the new website will be uploaded next week. One I have tested it on the BCA server I will get trycaving.org.uk moved to point to it and get it indexed by Google so that it sits higher in the search results. I will then move trycaving.co.uk over to point to the same website. I think that in the long term trycaving.co.uk could be dropped in favour of trycaving.org.uk

National Outdoors Show: Chris has been contacted about the National Outdoor Show and I think it would be a good idea to attend. I

am going to look into what needs to be done to get a BCA stand

University Caver retention: Caving in the UK has 2 large organisations that recruit cavers: universities and Scouts. However both these organisations have limited life spans. 3 or 4 years for University and up to age 25 for the Scout Association. Apart from a few, such as SUSS and UBSS, many university cavers leave caving after they have finished their course because they can no longer be part of the University club. I would like to start a club affiliation scheme so that these cavers have a link with a real caving club.

James Collings, October 2010

Cliffhanger 2010: Cliffhanger in Sheffield, is now the premier open air outdoor activities event in Britain, attracting 20,000 people this year. DCA was asked by the organisers to put on a caving stand, as we have done for the previous 2 years.

DCA decided this year that we would not spend a large amount of money transporting the “Speleolympics” to Sheffield as we did in 2008, although the owner kindly offered to make it available for us. Instead, we had an offer from an interested caver to build an artificial cave suitable for children and this went ahead with great success. The “ASS” (Artificial Speleological System) was in use non-stop for the whole weekend with some children making several trips through it, despite having to queue for some time. This marvelous construction is a flat-pack assembly which, when put together, gives some 40 ft. of crawling and climbing with cave “scenery” painted inside; the children are given a helmet and light and make their own way through. The total cost of this was £425 and we shall be able to use it at future Cliffhanger and other events and also will also make it available for other caving clubs running events involving the public in the Peak District and surrounding area.

In addition to the “ASS”, we had a 30ft. ladder climb with the ladder hung in a tree - our youngest participant was just two years old - and a photo of a child climbing the ladder appeared in the Sheffield Telegraph report of the Cliffhanger event. Again, there were lengthy queues of children wanting to have a go throughout both days. Dudley Caving Club kindly lent us their “Squeeze Box” and this operated non-stop throughout the weekend with adults and well as youngsters trying it out. We also had a stand tent set up with caving videos showing, plus posters, photos and information on caving and local caving clubs for older visitors interested in trying caving for real.

A total of 12 caver volunteers ran the DCA stand, some camping on site and spending their whole weekend at the event, from setting up on Friday evening to packing up on Sunday evening.

The total cost to DCA of putting on the event was £870 and a copy of the accounts has been supplied to the BCA Treasurer and to the Training Officer and Youth Development Officer. We would welcome a contribution towards this cost from BCA.

Jenny Potts, October 2010

Item 15: Membership Administrator’s Report

BCA Membership to 28th September 2010

DIMs caving: 384 (DIMs plus BCRA: 230)

DIMs non caving: 42

BCRA Honorary: 7

CIM Plus: 21

CIMs caving: 3994

CIMs non caving: 1143

Clubs: 151*

Associates: 9

Access: 4

*June figure (156) was incorrect as I neglected to subtract the 11 duplicate entries required to identify those clubs whose address for cards is different to the address for publications.

New Clubs: The following clubs have supplied the correct paperwork and payment in order to become member clubs of BCA: “Buttered Badger Potholing Club”, “Derbyshire Scout Caving Team” and “North Wales Miners Association Trust Ltd”

Query: Should we have a unique colour card for CIM Plus members?

I assume that this meeting will set the 2011 membership fees?

Glenn Jones, October 2010

Item 16: Insurance Manager’s Report

No report submitted.

Nick Williams, October 2010

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

I have liaised with Bob over the book and I think that we are approaching agreement. There are one or two things to polish off and, hopefully that is it. Otherwise, no approaches for guidance.

Clark Friend, October 2010

Item 18: Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report

Nothing to report other than I will soon be writing to Regional Councils for help in assigning registrars to all areas of the country. I plan to have a system based on the county boundaries. We need to decide what to do where one county is covered by more than one Regional Council. There cannot be overlaps for the cave/mine numbering system to work.

David Cooke, October 2010

Item 19: International Representative's Report

As president of UIS I have been handling a great number of emails (slowly!!)

During the last few months there have been several international meetings, including an International Training Camp in Sardinia, a Vulcan (lava tubes) Speleo meeting in Australia, Speleo Hungary etc. If I went to all the meetings it would be continuous.

I did attend the UIS bureau meeting in our offices in Slovenia and the FEALC (Federation of Latin American Countries) in Cuba.

A lot of effort is aimed at the next Congress in the Czech Republic in 2013 There will be a bureau meeting in the Czech Republic next spring.

I am going to an International Show Caves Association meeting in Slovakia in October.

Finally I note that the European petition on cave protection was completed and signed by us.

Andy Eavis, October 2010

Item 19a: FSE Report

The last meeting of the bureau took place in May this year following a General assembly meeting (GAM). This was held in Budapest at 'Speleo Hungary' celebrating 100 years of organised Hungarian speleology. A report on the event was submitted to BCA in June. The next meeting will take place on 30th October at Casola, Valsenio, Italy. The provisional agenda is as follows:

1. Welcome of participants and thanking host of the event for inviting bureau.
2. Update on the 27 EU member countries and European non-EU countries + fee payment
3. Submission of 2009 and 2010 Bureau meeting reports
4. Membership of the FSE in European Environmental Bureau (EEB) (www.eeb.org)
5. Report of the workgroup on Open-air competitions European rules and related decisions
6. International Caving Expeditions database (ICE db) : Vote on FSE-UIS Agreement
7. Applicability of UIS code of ethics within Europe
8. Report of the White Nose Syndrome (WNS) workgroup & approval of the proposals
9. Euro Speleo Forums 2011, 2012 & 2013 and 2016 European Congress
10. Annual fees 2011 & 2012
11. Provisional Budgets 2011 & 2012
12. Futures Bureau meetings 2011 & 2012
13. AOB

Comments

BCA has recently been asked to support the petition to stop trade, import and export of cave contents. The BCA secretary has contacted all council members to canvas support and will sign on behalf of the BCA.

Three Euro Speleo Forums have been agreed from 2012 to 2013.

- ESF 2011 - September : Malaga – Spain
- ESF 2012 - October : Muotathal – Switzerland
- ESF 2013 - May : Millau – France

Approval is being sought for the UK to host the 2016 European Congress. At the last FSE bureau members were enthusiastic about the UK proposal however it seems that a process for candidature has to be followed. In normal circumstances the call for the European Congress is sent to national organizations three years before the event ie 2013. The bureau then assesses the applications, if there are a number, and make a decision. It is generally felt that more than four years in advance is too premature and could exclude other countries. For example the UIS congress hosting country is decided four years before the event. However, I will propose at the

forthcoming bureau in Casola that we expedite an early call and take a decision at next year's GAM in Malaga.

I accept that this delay in knowing the outcome is not helpful regarding advanced planning etc and I will force the issue as much as I can at the forthcoming bureau.

In any event I guess this does not prevent us from advertising our interest/desire before that. For example, we could send information about a 'proposal' for 2016 via the FSE delegates list deleg@eurospeleo.org

Ged Campion, October 2010

Item 20: Media-Liaison Officer's Report

This role has really started to take off and (because it is expedition season) lots of cavers have been doing a very good job of getting themselves in the press, some with my involvement but others on their own. Most weeks I have been getting a phone call regarding BCA now that my mobile number is on the website.

- Times of India – answered questions but pretty sure an article did not happen
- Trek and Trail Magazine – arranged advert to run alongside article
- Body Fit magazine – gave interview and arranged for photos from Rob Eavis to be used
- Pathfinder magazine – Helped Stefan write article about becoming a caving instructor
- Mail on Sunday – Culiembro connected to Xitu
- BBC – Put breakfast news in touch with Tim Allen about the Three Counties stuff
- BBC – Went and gave short radio interview for BCA on Three Counties (done at very short notice and broadcast as 'Clive Jewell' – not impressed!
- WNYC – New York-based public broadcast radio station wanted cavers' perspective on Chilean Miners trapped – suggested politely that this was not really our sort of thing!
- BBC Thrill Seeker – wrote text and got photos from Steve Sharp for webpage

as well as lots of other short enquiries including: BBC asking about suitable locations for filming; BBC asking for surveys of Three Counties; random bloke asking about artificial caves and one other asking LCMLA questions.

I still need to populate the BCA website with some information for press and Media enquiries and now that expeditions are over for the minute, I should have some time for this.

Finally the Outdoor and Leisure show phoned on Thursday so we should consider if we would like to go in Feb 2011. I've already explained that there is no point trying to sell us floor space and that we'd want to go with a similar arrangement to previous years.

Chris Jewell, October 2010

Item 21: British Caving Library Report

Re-organisation: We began the re-organisation of the Library on 20th June and this has been our priority since then. Firstly, racks were moved, new top shelves fitted and library shelving donated by the Matlock Library rebuilt to give us a completely new layout and increase the available shelf length from around 70m to over 200m. To assist in this we rented an upstairs office in the Glutton Bridge building for a total of 9 weeks to enable us to store materials ready for use. Map chests and other furniture were moved and the Librarian's work-space re-arranged to make better use of the available space and maintain the "meeting area" and visitor work-space, which is in regular use. All this has been achieved by a number of volunteers who have put in over 200 hours' work to complete the re-organisation of the Library room by the end of July, at a total cost of just over £900.

Since then the Senior Library Assistant and volunteers have brought over from Matlock all the books, all UK periodicals and the first batches of the foreign periodicals so that the Matlock site is now no longer in use. All existing books are already on the Library catalogue but the periodicals are having to be completely re-catalogued to provide data in a form the Librarian can use and for input to the online search facility. This is time-consuming but necessary and work is progressing with the help of volunteers.

Library usage and the Library at Hidden Earth: The Senior Library Assistant has set up a Facebook page for the Library in addition to maintaining regular "Librarian's News" on the Library website. This has increased interest in the Library and the Facebook page now has a number of followers. The number of visitors, including foreign cavers, is increasing, as is the number of donations of material to the Library brought by these visitors.

The Library presence at Hidden Earth this year and the "Lucky Dip" boxes of duplicates attracted large numbers of "dippers", who donated cash amounting to nearly £120 as well as donations of a number of important new books and other publications. Contact was made with several club librarians and arrangements made to exchange UK publications to our mutual benefit.

Finances: Over £17,000 was spent by BCRA in 2008 to get the Library up and running but this had reduced to £11,700 in 2009 and

BCA agreed to help with the future funding. This year the amount spent appears likely to be about the same, even including the re-organisation costs. It seems a good time to re-visit the Library Business Plan 2010 to 2014 to compare our progress and update the Plan in the light of that progress.

Jenny Potts, October 2010