



BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting, 24th. March 2007

OFFICERS' REPORTS FOR THE YEAR 2006-07

Item 6, THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, WILL BE PRESENTED SEPARATELY

Item 7 - ACTING SECRETARY'S REPORT

When I took over as Acting Secretary in August 2006 I felt that the most urgent problem to address was the apparent lack of communication, both within BCA Council and between BCA and its members. Hence I made this my first priority and have worked to address this - Officers and Council members have responded well to my pestering, questioning and string of emails and I believe the situation is much improved. I have requested written reports from Officers for Council Meetings so that these can be attached to Minutes, which in turn are now all posted on the BCA website, thanks to the BCA Webmaster. This has ensured that BCA's business is much more transparent to its members, particularly to those who have internet access. However we still have some way to go - I would like to see summary reports from Officers in every BCA Newsletter to keep members up to date on progress.

A real worry was the link between BCA and its members, which suffered badly from the illness and then resignation of the former Membership Administrator in April 2006. Thanks to the hard work of Glenn Jones, who took on the Membership Administrator post in September 2007, and to the Newsletter Editor, Jim Cochrane, all initial material for the 2007 BCA AGM reached members in good time via the BCA Newsletter in December. Thanks to the efforts of Glenn and the Office staff at Conformance, the BCA AGM Agenda was posted to all members before the February deadline. Also, all information on nominations received has been posted on the website. So this year we've got that part of our administration right and, hopefully, members will appreciate our efforts.

I have worked with Glenn and with David Gibson of BCRA to update our BCA/BCRA membership records - a process which Glenn has detailed in his report and which has taken an inordinate amount of time - and we are beginning to see light at the end of a very long and convoluted tunnel.

I have also begun to sort out the past BCA papers from meetings so that there are complete and ordered files of documents relating to both BCA AGM's/SGM's and Council Meetings and also to the various Special Committee Meetings. I hope to leave all this in good order for my successor.

It was with great sadness that I learned of the death of Roy Paulson in February this year. Roy was responsible for printing much of NCA's output of booklets, including NCA SPELEOScene (which I edited for the 10 years 1993-2003), and NCA official papers sent to members. He also printed the BCA Handbooks and all BCA's official papers for circulation until December 2006 - all this work being done at cost, almost as a hobby, and to a very high standard. Few members will have appreciated just how much he did for BCA, and before that for NCA, as well as for BCRA and other caving organizations. In all my dealings with him he was unfailingly helpful; I regarded him as a good friend and will miss his kind advice.

I have found the past 6 months hard going as there are many other activities in which I am involved and I have had to juggle priorities to try to cope. However, it has been encouraging to see new people become involved in BCA activities and I feel we are now moving forward towards our aim of becoming a real "one stop shop" for cavers with a substantial presence in the outdoor activities world. I am grateful to all those who have helped me and, in particular, to Mick Day for his support and backing. I wish my successor well.

Jenny Potts, 21st. March 2007

Item 8 - ACTING TREASURER'S REPORT

The surplus on the year is £6K down from £16K in 2004. This is largely explained by the reduction in grant income that we received from UK Sport and Sport England. Next year, and for the foreseeable future, we will receive no further grant aid. It is worrying to note that the grant we will lose (£11K) is greater than this year's surplus. I expect 2007 to run at a deficit. Steps will need to be taken to ensure that 2008 isn't also in deficit. Simply put that means an increase in our subscriptions or a reduction in expenditure or both.

It is good practice to periodically review the organisation's reserves to decide on an appropriate level. The reserves are there so that the organisation can weather unforeseen events. However those reserves should not be so high as to be regarded as hoarding. By far the biggest influence on our accounts is the insurance premium. I intend to set the reserve to allow for a doubling of that premium overnight. Worse than that struck us in 2003! So rounding up to the nearest £5K, it is Premium (£30K) times two plus Insurance Policy Excess Fund (£22.5K), giving a Target Reserve of £85K. This should be compared with the Total Reserves figure of £74K, shown on page 3 of the Accounts.

The Publications & Information expenditure rose significantly this year. This is largely because BCA is now responsible for the costs of publishing Speleology rather than BCRA.

I've shown Web Services under a separate heading so that it can be more clearly assessed. I have also shown the £606 cross charged to BCA for the services it receives from Web Services. In other words BCA is also a customer of Web Services and that income should be shown to make a true assessment of Web Services even though the money never moves from the bank account.

Since the accounts were completed I have received a further £487 of income relating to 2006. There is a further invoiced amount of £205 that remains to be collected. So taking the two years together we have:

2005 Deficit	(£963)
2006 Surplus	£102
2006 Late Income	£692
Balance Deficit	(£169)

I have done a separate assessment and can report that the deficit can be entirely attributed to 2005. More clubs have signed up and 2006 is £12 in surplus.

So I can state Web Services is running in surplus. The cost to BCA of its websites in 2006 was £303 (half of £606). It should be noted that along with its own websites that it pays for all the Regional Councils websites and the Try Caving website. We also provide websites for the Cave Rescue Organisations at cost.

The Training income shows a dramatic jump. This is misleading. The jump is because the C & A Access fees are no longer deducted from the training income. In reality the training income fell by some £900. With the loss of grant income, Training should aim to become self financing. The policy, initiated last year, of incrementing the fees each year above inflation should be continued. Self-Financing might take a while to achieve but I think it is a good use of BCA's reserves to smooth the transition.

The Membership Administrator has done a huge amount of work to sort out the membership processes and systems. I intend to sit down with him and the Insurance Manager to review those processes in the light of what has been learned and see where we can improve next year. For example can we provide subscription payment by credit card or internet payment facilities. As well as the reviewing the manual systems I want to start the process of computerising those that are amenable to it, starting with those that will give us maximum reward for minimum effort. It is a significant task, possibly with significant costs, but one which I think is essential to provide our members with the service they expect.

I intend to review our financial services. The highest priority is to place our reserves in a high interest account. I also feel it is time to move to internet banking, one advantage is that would allow me to maximise the amount of money in the high interest account. However that has constitutional issues relating to the number of signatories on the accounts.

I look forward to a busy year.

David Cooke, 23 March 2007

ITEM 9 - CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT

The group has continued to work on conservation and access matters with the aim of knitting together the documentation and efforts of caving and mining interests. We would like all members to consider that, while caves and mines are materially different and sometimes covered by different legislation, the 2 communities are very small and mutual support will be in all our interests. It may be worth members considering if constitutions and other documentation actually provides for the best mutual support.

As progress towards "Access to the Coast" progresses we have made regular input to the developments. In Wales we are being left behind England in that our coastal access is to be only a linear path while England is to have a coastal strip. If all continues on its present course the new access will not contribute to extra caving and mining rights but will be restricted to surface activities, as in CROW, part 1. We will still need to arrange for local access permissions as before.

As the programme of access to water is rolled out to inland waters this would appear likely to continue to be the case. I have attempted to register with the authorities that we are actually recreational water users, albeit generally invisible, and I would appreciate if Regional Bodies (et al) would keep a watch for opportunities to ensure we are not forgotten in this context. As water resources may diminish in future, we cannot afford to risk being viewed as unseen nefarious activists, water stealers or water polluters!

We have continued to work with the Bat Conservation Trust and agreement has been reached for us to confer with them to re-write the section of their new draft manual which is not yet acceptable to caving and mining interests and is ill considered on grounds of safety. Happily, the practice of bat workers on the ground is better and in the main they do confer well with the local cavers and seek our advice. Centrally and in the Regions much good work has gone into raising good will in this area of conservation.

We continue to work with the National Trust over the update to their "Caving and Mine Exploration" guidelines. Slow but steady progress is being made.

The C&A Group has been conscious for some time that the old codes (MICC and Ethical Caving Code) needed reviewing and ideally condensing into one apposite document. We are doing this and will present the re-draft to the next Council Meeting for consideration and, hopefully, for adoption.

I would like to thank all Regional Representatives and individuals who have put considerable effort to the political, practical and educational aspects of conservation. Our public image is improving as is the care taken in and of our caves and mines (demonstrable by locally effected SSSI Condition Audits).

My greatest regret this year is that there is still an uncontrolled sale of minerals stolen from underground sites. Policing such theft and sale will take more resources than the political will seems to support at present.

Elsie Little, 17th March 2007

Item 10 - EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES REPORT

Anchors

The decision to go with the DMM anchor has had to be revisited due to DMM ceasing production, to this end we have been contacted by Emma Porter, whose partner who is both a caver and an access worker, and whose company is the UK distributor for Singing River equipment.

Through this route we have been supplied with 20 anchors F.O.C, for evaluation

We will be looking to place these as test beds and to see how they perform, we have been assured that they can match the DMM price, and we have also enquired about having BCA laser etched on the anchor.

It is likely we will require further anchors, and to do a comparative test against Fixe, and Petzl stock.

Anchor Inspection/Installation

The documents have been placed on the BCA site under Anchor Discussion, and all interested parties have been contacted, to seek their consultation, to date there has been low take up on this!

This discussion will close at the end of March, after which we will have a further meeting to finalise the way forward (Anchor type permitting)

3 new Hilti drills have been purchased (TBC), which will be distributed as per the minutes of the November meeting.

We are still seeking to recover and to refurbish the hydraulic test rig from Stu, so this can be used for the test beds, as well as for use at Hidden Earth.

Andy Pryke, Equipment Officer, 14th. March 2007

Rope Test Report

The rig was taken to the 2006 Hidden Earth event when a number of samples were tested. A very large number of samples were received at the event. Regrettably, I have not had time to test them since then due to other demands. I have also not been able to test the store of NCA's Long Term Rope Test samples which I hold or the sets of new and used ropes. Given a commitment I have made to the anchor program of work, I have doubts about the extent to which I can catch up on this back log.

Bob Mehew, Rope Test Officer, January 2007

Item 11 - TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

Training Grants

Take up of these has been a little better this year, although the majority of Regional Councils do nothing to take advantage of this. Now that funding is established as a definite amount each year without the continued uncertainty of funding it will be easier to promote these.

This year it was intended to organise a major training event in a region, however, it proved impossible to get contacts within the region's clubs with whom consultation could take place to establish their needs. Now that the BCA membership is on a better footing I hope my successor will get more success with this.

Free SRT training at Hidden Earth, but this time separate from the main hall to avoid the jeers of spectators, was arranged but the uptake was very poor, probably due to the lack of inclusion of this in the advertising. Also at Hidden Earth novice trips with a qualified leader, aimed at the spouses and offspring of attendees, was organised. Again take up of this was poor.

Training Awards

Early 2006 saw the issue of the Cave Instructors Handbook, delays occurring due to the many small errors found whilst proof reading and changing from NCA to BCA. Substantial changes to the Mine Module were also needed following the death of Dave Edwards.

A new edition of the Local Cave and Mine Leader Handbook is in preparation and will shortly be available. The major change being incorporated is the move to a 5year revalidation by workshop system intended to simplify and make more consistent the current complex arrangements.

The temporary arrangements for Training Technical Advice have now become permanent in view of the loss/reduction of Sports Council, with the Training Officer fielding enquiries and seeking advice mainly from the Chairmen of the National Coordinating Panel and the CIC panel.

During the year a further 2 CIC trainer assessors have been selected and are in the process of completing their apprenticeship. CIC workshops by which the CIC holders re-validate their awards on a three yearly basis have been reformed and it has been found able to reduce them to one day from two. By leaving the charge to candidates the same, although costs have decreased, it has been possible to ensure that these should now break even. Previously they were running at a substantial loss, which did not matter when Sports Council grants were available.

I include some statistical information on the take up of the awards. The figures show a steady small increase once again across the board.

The running of the Award Schemes would not be possible without the able assistance of the Area Liason Officers Panel Chairmen and members of the various panels to whom I extend my thanks.

I should also like to single out Pat Ramsden as Training Administration Service Provider who keeps us on the straight and narrow with the records and often carries out work above and beyond her contract.

Pat has announced her intention to withdraw from this and a suitable replacement is being inducted.

A continuing cause for concern is the difficulty that Trainer Assessors are experiencing in obtaining insurance cover. I was hopeful that the BCA insurance could be extended to cover their work and I fear that if this is not achieved soon the smaller independent Trainer Assessors will be squeezed out in favour of those employed by large activity centres.

General

I was asked to draw up a scheme whereby recreational cavers could assess their knowledge and ability against some kind of "syllabus". My progress has been slow on this but a volunteer has been found to flesh out my list of topics.

No progress has been made in preparing a booklet of advice to cavers on weather and flooding; a lot of good information is out there but there is a reluctance to agree to its publication.

Idris Williams, January 2007

BCA Training Section Statistics for 2006

Trainer Assessors

LCMLA Trainer Assessors	2004	2005	2006
Prospective	7	7	8
Approved	38	39	37
Total	45	46	45
CIC Trainer Assessor			
Approved	7	5	5
Prospective			2
Total	7 (5)	5 (4)	7 (6)

Figures in brackets are also LCMLA Trainer Assessors

Trainer Assessor 2006 training course statistics

(NB – there may be have been other training courses that BCA admin has not been notified of)

LCMLA Training Courses	2004	2005	2006
Level 1 Cave	36	46	35
Level 1 Mine	3	7	6
Level 1 Cave & Mine	5	7	4
Level 2 Cave	9	17	6
Level 2 Mine	2	1	3
Level 2 Cave & Mine	1	0	1
CIC Training Courses	2004	2005	2006
	3	3	3

LCMLA Trainer Assessor assessment statistics

(NB – there may be other assessments that BCA admin has not yet been notified of)

These figures are very approximate

	2004	2005	2006	
LCMLA awards	105	82	65	2 or 3 assess modules
Standard Revalidation	38	87	63	1 assess module
Leadership Development Revalidation	36	43	34	1 assess module
Modification to existing LCMLA	11	9	9	1 assess module

There have also been 6 early revalidations for 2007

- Assessments for Cave & Mine Level 1 award requires 3 assessment modules, although assessment for Mod 1 and 6 are sometimes assessed on the same day and sent in on the same Section 4B
- Assessment for Level 2 to include SRT for Leader requires 3 assessment modules, although Mod 3 & 5 are often assessed on the same day and sent in on one Section 4B
- The revalidation may have actually taken place in the previous year, as a revalidation can be done up to 12 months early
Revalidations are often done late and these are not shown.
- 1 or 2 modules towards an award may have been assessed in the previous year, and only the Module 2 or 4 in the current year.
There are 51/37/39 Section 4Bs from 2004/5/6 where the award has still to be completed, or re-taken as deferred (4/8/6) or failed (5/3/5).
There are 17/17/22 Section 4Bs from 2003/4/5 that are now out-of-date as the assessments for an award have to be completed within 12 months.

LCMLA 2005 statistics

Registered for LCMLA	2004	2005	2006
LCMLA	241	254	203
Including Combined LCMLA & CIC	18	19	11
Gained LCMLA award			
Level 1	87	56	51
Level 2	18	26	15
Standard Revalidation	38	87	63
Leadership Development Revalidation	36	42	34
Modification to existing LCMLA award	11		

Valid LCMLA award holders at 547 555 589
(Paperwork outstanding will add a few new awards and revalidations as yet unknown)

Cave Instructor Certificate statistics

Registered	27	28	15
(Including 18/19/11 combined LCMLA & CIC as listed above)			
Gained CIC award	1	5	6
Revalidated CIC award	20	21	17
Valid CIC award holders	60	63	67

There are also a few CIC Holders whose awards date from the early days and have no expiry date. It is not known how many of these are still active and have never re-validated.

Item 12 - PUBLICATIONS & INFORMATION OFFICER'S REPORT

The P & I committee has met this year to resolve problems of communication with the printer, caused by the confusion of too many different people being involved. We have nominated David Gibson to be the only point of contact between BCA, BCRA and the printer. So far this seems to have worked well.

BCA produces various publications and we agreed that we would generally make these available on the Website as free downloads and also sell them as printed copy on a print on demand basis.

This year has seen the publication of a revamped "So you want to go Caving" leaflet to replace the out of date and out of print NCA version, and a new, updated "Radon Underground" is in preparation. We are also looking at updating "Guidelines for University Clubs".

BCA's Website is looking a lot better, with most Officers now having put some info about their area of remit into their section of the site. This will always remain a work in progress as new info, minutes and other stuff is produced by the various Committees and Officers. It is my intention to give the site a bit of a makeover in the next few months to brighten it up a bit and to add more informative content on subjects such as Radon and Weil's Disease.

BCA needs to improve communication with its members and this will remain a priority in the forthcoming year. Part of the solution is for the Newsletter to be published on a more regular basis and also guidance needs to be given to member clubs, on which information should be disseminated to their members. Officers of the special committees need to be more proactive in sending stuff to the editor as well. The Newsletter looks very good and Jim Cochran should be thanked for his hard work on this.

We have also found a new Editor for the Members Handbook, Damian Weare. Damian has worked very hard and is close to being ready to go to the printers with this year's copy, he is just waiting for up to date information from the AGM - new officers details, etc. The handbook should be with members within a month of the AGM.

Thanks are due to the outgoing editor, David Judson, for his sterling work since the first handbook was produced.

It was sad to hear of the recent passing of Roy Paulson. Roy carried out a lot of our printing on such things as the Members Handbook and also the LCMLA and CIC Handbooks. He was a friend to many at BCA and he will be greatly missed.

Next year will bring many challenges and I look forward to them, I hope I am up to the task.

Les Williams, 21st. March 2007

Newsletter Editor's Report

I have nothing in particular to report, other than that No.8 is under way and I'm aiming to get it to David Gibson by the beginning of April for publication by mid-month (David is aware of this).

If as a result of the AGM you wish to include material or delay the Newsletter please let me know. At Present I don't have enough material to fill the space! I continue to put the Newsletter together as and when I get copy! There are some events that need advertising sooner rather than later; I'd prefer

not to delay too long; Also I'm away for the first half of May on a trek in China!

Jim Cochrane, 21st. March 2007

Item 13 - LEGAL & INSURANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

1. Public Liability Policy

Nick Williams and I have worked closely together on this throughout the year, firstly maintaining and encouraging contacts and possible offers and then seeking and negotiating with a number of brokers over offers and possible offers. The market has quite clearly relaxed over the past 12 months or so, enabling a genuine competitive market place once again. We did thus end up with two offers to choose from and the executive were happy to accept our proposal to move to a new broker, Crossley Morris, and a new underwriter, Zurich Commercial Ltd for a marginally reduced premium with improved conditions for 2007.

2. Professional Indemnity (PI;E&OE) for Paid Instructors

We think that we might well be a step nearer to dealing with this long-outstanding matter with our moves at 1. above, but the urgency of sorting that one before the end of December has meant that this remains to be resolved at a later date.

3. The Other Policies

The travel policy continues to be run for us by an independent broker, recently changed to Towergate Risk Solutions Ltd, and web site details have now been transferred to the new address. The All Risks policy (equipment and HE kit) has been transferred to Crossley Morris and renewed to October 2007 at a slightly increased premium.

4. Underground Britain - Legal + Insurance Issues

This is being updated on a continuous basis with a view to a third edition when current sales dictate. Any suggestions on new/updated information are always welcome. I repeat that in my view a third edition should only be published when sales of the second edition are pretty well exhausted, but this does leave the question of what should or should not be made available on our web site as an open issue?

5. Duty of Care

Following circulation by the CPSU (NSPCC) last summer of a paper on Duty of Care in Sport I produced a draft paper more focused upon caving and the outdoor world. Unfortunately 'expert' feedback on this has been both patchy and conflicting and I have thus not felt able to publish anything as yet.

6. On-going Review of Relevant Caselaw

I am assisted by a number of people in this, particularly Linda Wilson and Paul Deakin, covering duty of care, nature conservation and landowner/occupier/access areas. Contributions from other interested parties are always welcome.

David Judson, 14 January 2007

Item 14 - "TRY CAVING" INITIATIVE REPORT

Over the past 12months the Youth and Development scheme has been launched at Hidden Earth and 20,000 flyers created along side the www.trycaving.co.uk website.

In 2007 this work has continued with the continued development of the website, the sponsoring of Google Ad words, attendance at the National Outdoor show (last weekend) and the planning of a national 'Try Caving' weekend (26th-28th May).

Most recently our presence at the Outdoor Show was a great success. We were able to partner with

the YHA in bringing a large artificial cave and the popularity of this feature the previous year meant we avoided paying for the large floor space. We were given a generous 10x15m pitch which we endeavoured to make the most of by creating a small theatre displaying caving DVD's via projector, using the Dudley caving club squeeze machine and Nigel Atkins was able to do his usual on rope antics to draw the crowds in.

The success of this event is down entirely to all those who helped me out because without their assistance we wouldn't have even got the idea off the ground.

I look forward to the Try Caving weekend and hope to continue to build on the success we have already had.

Chris Jewell, Youth and Development Officer, 21st. March 2007

Item 15 - MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

I have been in post from 1st September, and as part of my "on the job training", my main "background task" continues to be making sense of the huge amount of information held on the BCA PC. I am also documenting the "end to end" process for membership administration, so that future job holders will be able to understand the role more easily.

A significant amount of time during late 2006 was spent in discussion with all Regional Caving Councils (and also David Gibson) requesting information on what is required from the membership database, in what format and frequency, so that I could re-design the membership database (based on output requirements) in readiness for 2007 membership renewals.

Key highlights during this period (mid September '06 - mid January '07):

- (In response to DCA and CNCC) I collated and issued an up to date "paid up" list of all 2006 BCA member clubs, DIMs, Associate Members and Access Groups
- (In response to CCC) I have put together a list of all clubs, whose indicated "prime" caving area is CCC and also updated that list with current contact information
- Created a new Club and CIM proforma spreadsheet (based on the new membership database) and emailed to as many clubs as possible, given that there was no electronic distribution list (that I could find) on the BCA PC
- Produced a mailing list for BCA newsletter. I updated the September mailing list that NW pulled together, checking for duplications and adding new members as appropriate.
- Produced a mailing list for C&KS: I was fortunate to "find" a C&KS mailing list for May 2006 buried in the BCA PC. As far as I could, I have checked the mailing list for duplication and other obvious errors. The mailing list was sent in the format that it was created in, however, I have saved a duplicate version in a more manageable format which I intend to use in the future.
- Produced a mailing list for BCRA newsletter which needed to be sent to as many current and "lost" members as possible. To do this I combined four separate spreadsheets, (latest BCA newsletter list, latest C&KS list, 2004 BCRA members list that I "found" in the BCA PC, and a list of all 2006 BCA DIMs) removing duplications, and amending address fields (the BCA DIM list was all in one column). This list was also used for the BCA/BCRA renewal letter (combined with the BCA AGM agenda). The amount of effort required to produce this mailing list was ridiculous, due to the lack of maintenance of the membership database during 2006.
- Assisted in the envelope stuffing for the AGM agenda - a very labour intensive task

Since mid January, my main task has been processing membership renewals. This process is tedious but necessary in order to build an up to date membership database. It involves "cleaning up" the incoming club and CIM proformas (the "IT literacy" of some clubs is disappointing, and

very frustrating!), checking membership numbers, building a file for card printing and finally linking the individual spreadsheets to the master database. Until I have completed the build of my new office (shed at the bottom of the garden - I'm not making any money out of this!) cards are printed at Great Hucklow (I email the file to Great Hucklow and then drive over in order to feed the card printer). Currently there is a 4 to 6 week turn around on card production as it is simply not worth travelling to Great Hucklow unless there is a significant number of cards to print (see below - looking to the future).

DIM card production has a (worst case) 6 to 8 week turn around, as the DIM applications and cheques go direct to Great Hucklow and I receive a CD of the previous months applications early in the following month (e.g., I receive a CD of the January applications early/mid February). I then have to manually copy the DIM information from the scanned original on the CD into the master database, which is then copied and sent to Great Hucklow in time for another visit to print the cards (see below - looking to the future).

Current membership status (as of March 15th):

- DIMs: 68 based on cards issued (there are more in the "pipeline")
- Clubs: 108 based on banking information and spreadsheets received (not always the same thing!)
- Joint: 4 (couples) based on cards issued
- CIMs: Approx. 1600 cards have been issued, but there are at least that much again waiting to be printed
- Access Bodies: 4
- Associates: 4

I continue to receive around 20/30 emails a day, the majority of which I can deal with without checking with NW. I am also sending insurance certificates on request. Whilst I have been able to answer many of the emails received, those emails with specific insurance queries I am forwarding to Nick for an "official response", but keeping the replies in an "Insurance FAQ" folder, so that in future I shall be able to answer similar queries myself.

Looking forward: I anticipate that most of March and April will be taken up with producing membership cards. Once this activity is reasonably complete, I will continue to integrate the individual club spreadsheets into the "master" membership database.

As mentioned previously, I am building an office and when complete, I will move the BCA PC (and several boxes of "stuff", currently in my garage), into the office. At that time I intend to move the card printer from Great Hucklow to my office, and issuing cards can then be on as "on required basis" rather than the bulk processing that happens at the moment.

Although these last few months have been a bit manic due to the amount of work required to re-build and populate the membership database at the same time as the membership renewals, I'm confident that the effort spent will make the renewals process much more streamlined in the future.

I feel that I am becoming reasonably familiar with the day to day management of the membership administrator role, but there are some outstanding issues which still need to be agreed and processed. These include:

- subscriptions for publications
- electronic fund transfer
- on-line membership renewal
- agree and document process for "missing" publications

Glenn Jones, 16th. March 2007

Item 16 - INSURANCE MANAGER'S REPORT

I got back from Mulu in Mid February to a mountain of work and it also transpires that my own movements and those of Glenn have been such that I have not yet been able to sit down with him and review where we are up to. Nevertheless, I am aware of some disquiet in the membership, and also that there appears to be a backlog of cards and membership acknowledgements which have not been cleared. I will be discussing this with Glenn at the earliest possible opportunity.

I am also aware that we need to be less reliant on a single individual, both because it would appear the workload exceeds what one person can handle but also because I want to introduce some diversity to cover for sickness and holiday absence. I have been discussing this with Karen Slatcher and I'm hopeful that she will be able to provide part of the solution but I am also aware that she has limited availability for the next few weeks.

On a wider and more positive note, I would report that we have obtained a renewal of the policy at a marginally lower premium than for 2006, and that therefore my reservations regarding the early setting of the subscription were (happily) unfounded. I will continue to work to obtain stability in the policy so that we can plan ahead but I would urge council never to become complacent about our ability to obtain renewal terms in tough times for the insurance market.

I fully endorse a move to hypothecate some of the future income from insurance contributions of CIMS to non-insurance related matters, but I would not be happy if we were to raid our existing pot of money for this purpose (except, possibly, as a loan), The funds we have are sufficient to cover the possibility of any likely claims excess, provide a float for the purchase of the policy before funds come in from the membership and provide a buffer for unexpected increases, but there is no slack for other purposes, and in any case we will be acting contrary to the promises we have made to the membership if we take past income and use it in this way.

Nick Williams, 22nd. March 2007

Item 17 - CONVENOR'S REPORT, RADON WORKING PARTY

Unlike last year we did have a few enquiries regarding problems on radon. The major one was just before Christmas when the BBC contacted me. At that time they were proposing to film a series on underground Britain. This has progressed and is well into the planning stages with several reconnaissances having taken place. Some of the planned sites have radon data but many do not. They will thus need to carry out some radon measurements that we may then be able to benefit from. There was also an approach from DCA regarding the perceived number of deaths in the Derbyshire area due to lung cancers. I contacted a Dr A. Denman at Northampton General Hospital, who has published on such matters related to caving, thinking that he might be sympathetic, but have had no reply.

The modification of the BCA booklet *Radon Underground* in the light of the IRR (1999) was finished draft is ready for further consideration prior to publication. The preparation of the draft of the radon section for the *Guidance to University Caving Clubs* leaflet has also been completed.

It was reported last year that the HPA (NRPB as was) had an Advisory Committee due to report on the various risk factors associated with radon exposure and associated Action Levels. This body has not yet reported (delay due to excitement over Polonium), whilst it is likely that there will be a revisit of the all the recommendations as a part of the implementation of the Committee's report due to the delay there may be some modification. It is still anticipated that it will include recreational caving, although we are not regarded as a high priority. However, presently, the agreed annual limit of 106 Bq m⁻¹ h⁻¹ is still considered to be appropriate as this approximates to a value in mSv that is below the IRR (1999) limits for workers exposed to radiation.

The extension of the compilation of radon data from caves in the various regions of the UK is

ongoing. Currently, the CCW are hoping to carry out some more experiments in caves in Llangattock.

If it is the wish of the AGM, I am happy to continue as the convenor.

Clark Friend, 13th February 2007

Item 18 - CAVE REGISTRY COORDINATOR'S REPORT 2006

The Cambrian Registry and the Mendip Registries are about to be published. I am in discussion and providing assistance to both of these groups as what extent they also wish to publish it on the web.

The majority of the website design work of the National Registry is complete. I did have a programmer lined-up to implement it; however that didn't come to pass. I'll redouble my efforts to find a programmer this year.

David Cooke, 23rd March 2007

Item 19 - INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

The aftermath of the UIS International Congress in Greece 2005 continues to occupy a significant amount of my time and I continue to pursue the organising committee over the publication of the Congress Proceedings. We are promised these will be available soon but I have not been given a firm publication date. I may have to visit Athens to close this matter.

The last UIS Bureau meeting was held in Beirut, Lebanon, April 19th to 20th, shortly before hostilities with Israel broke out last year. Clearly the main topic of discussion was the next international Congress to be held in Kerrville, USA, in 2009.

In addition, there was a considerable amount of discussion about international incidents in various countries where expeditions are not following the correct procedures in obtaining permission to visit caving areas. Particularly controversial was a Czech Republic trip to Venezuela where the Czechs worked with one group in the country and there is another caving group complaining about the situation. Venezuela is yet another country with more than one body claiming to internationally represent the nation.

I was unfortunately unable to attend the European Federation meeting 14th to 16th September in Seville, but Ged Champion was there to represent British caving interests.

Preparations are currently being made for the next UIS Bureau meeting – to be held at the FEALC Congress in Puerto Rico (July 29th to August 4th). I will be attending this meeting. This will be followed by a meeting in the United States with the organising committee of the next UIS Congress in Texas 2009 which I will also attend.

Andy Eavis, March 21 2007