



BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting, 20th March 2010

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Item 6: Chairman's Report

As I mentioned in my last Report there is plenty of room for optimism in British Caving. I did also mention in that Report that I am beginning to understand the modern complexities of British caving politics.

Having now been in the post of Chairman for a year, I feel I understand a little more but, it is not all good. As cave and caving enthusiasts we have to remember that the most important aspects to us are, the cave and underground conservation and our fellow human beings including, cavers and other connected people, such as landowners.

It seems to me that there are definitely cavers arguing for argument sake, and people struggling to see other people's points of views. Many who are currently getting obsessed with the finer points of access agreements, equipment detail etc., should stand back and review their positions very carefully and do what is good for caves, cavers and caving.

Notwithstanding these bureaucratic matters, the Ghar Parau applications for foreign expeditions this year were some of the best we have ever had, and I am sure during the next year we will see some wonderful cave discoveries.

Recently I was invited to attend one of the meetings discussing the extension of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. I was particularly interested in the opinion of the farmers and landowners. Interestingly, all those present were friendly towards caving and very keen to see an extension of the National Park. The main discussion centred around the name of the extension as the Park will connect the Lake District National Park and the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

The farmers and Landowners seem to me to be more sympathetic to cavers than they have ever been. We need to do everything we can to keep and increase that healthy attitude.

Andy Eavis, March 2010

Item 7: Secretary's Report

Constitutional Amendments: A major area of work this year has been preparing the Constitutional Amendments for consideration today under Item 23. If the amendments are agreed by the AGM, they must then go to a full postal vote of the membership before they are fully ratified. There will be a considerable cost – both in terms of money and my time!) associated with this but it is an important part of the ratification process. I intend to post out the information in the form of an 8-page A5 booklet with a letter on the front and a voting slip at the back.

General Correspondence: The volume of these I receive is low. I try to deal with them all fairly swiftly.

Advertising for New Posts: A year ago our Child Protection Officer resigned and we were left with nobody on Council having the time to take it on. As an interim measure Council appointed me to be our named person in the event of allegations being made about our members. I am concerned that we are still without an official Child Protection Officer and wonder if the time has come to advertise among the wider caving community for somebody to step forward. Perhaps there are other jobs we should be advertising for at the same time ... media-liaison and individual member reps are two that spring immediately to mind?? It would seem logical to me that the posts of Child Protection and Media-Liaison Officers be co-opted annually by Council.

Cancellation of January's Council Meeting: It was with considerable reluctance that Andy and I decided to cancel the January Council meeting. However, we feel it was the right decision at the time. This left us with the difficult decision of how to proceed with items that would have been discussed at that meeting. Most issues could be left until a future meeting and I thank the various members of Council for their patience with this. There was an attempt to discuss an issue by e-mail, but this proved difficult. Hopefully we will not need to cancel a meeting in the future.

2010: Although I may regret saying it, there is the possibility that I might have some more time on my hands in 2010-11. I hope to begin the process of rationalising our structure and begin pulling together a Manual of Operations.

Damian Weare, March 2010

Item 8: Treasurer's Report

No report received.

Item 9: Conservation & Access Officer's Report

No report received.

Elsie Little, March 2010

Item 10: Acting Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report

The last E&T Committee meeting was on Saturday 10th October, the main business of the day was to review the CSCC "Document of Concerns". The minutes of that meeting, together with E&T's response to the CSCC paper were written up, agreed by the meetings attendees, and circulated to E&T, BCA Exec and CSCC on the 13th October. At the time of writing, it is disappointing to report that:

- there has been no response from CSCC resulting in the cancellation of the January 23rd E&T meeting.
- despite a protracted email exchange, BCA National Council have not been able to resolve this dispute.
- E&T believe that the correct procedure for acceptance of the IPTD is for BCA National Council to formally agree the document especially since DCA, CNCC, DCUC and CCC (CCC: subject to a minor change on the "applicability" of the scheme), have all formally agreed the IPTD.
- in real terms, the lack of progress in resolving this issue has lost E&T about 9 months productivity.
- the candidate who offered to stand as E&T Convenor at this AGM has withdrawn stating "BCA National Council does not support the Equipment & Techniques Committee. As a result of the inaction and lack of leadership shown by the National Council I no longer wish to stand for the position of E&T Convenor".

E&T do not currently have a Convenor.

E&T deplore the inability of BCA National Council to quickly and efficiently resolve this internal issue which has been dragging on since the June 2009 BCA meeting.

PROPOSAL: In order to resolve the current situation, and given that DCA, CNCC, DCUC and CCC have already formally accepted the IPTD, I propose that this meeting *formally confirms* that the current IPTD, (entitled PERMANENT RESIN BONDED ANCHORS - INSTALLATION PROCEDURE, TRAINING & DOCUMENTATION) Issue 4 - Updated 23rd March 2009, is accepted as the standard BCA document on Eco-anchor installation.

On a positive note, CNCC held an Anchor Training Workshop in February and CNCC now have five additional installers and E&T have an additional Trainer. The next E&T meeting is provisionally planned for early April, although several factors may result in the cancellation of the meeting. An Anchor-Training Workshop has been arranged for early May for DCUC.

Glenn Jones, March 2010

a) Rope Test Officer's Report

Only two ropes were submitted for testing during 2009, consisting of 5 samples. These were processed in a timely manner. Owing to family demands, the Rope Test Rig was not taken to Hidden Earth in 2009. This probably accounts in part for the reduction in samples submitted. Several enquiries have been received but it would appear that the inability to offer advice on the meaning of the results and the acceptability for continued usage has deterred people sending their samples in for testing.

Discussions have been held with one group over testing ropes placed in a mine for loss of strength but no samples have yet been submitted for testing.

A sample of one manufacturer's new 9mm SRT rope was tested and found to survive 25 Fall Factor 1 drops with a 100kg mass when dry but only 9 Fall Factor 1 drops when wet. In contrast, a set of 4 samples of a different manufacturer's new 9mm SRT wet rope only managed to survive 4 drops on average! A sample of 10mm polypropylene rope has also been tested dry and did not survive the first Fall Factor 1 drop.

Although the topic of the Long Term Rope Test results has been on the agenda of the Equipment and Techniques Committee for several meetings, time has not been available in the meetings for debate. A number of points have been made in the mean time, including the increasing use of 9mm rope and the validity of using Fall Factor drops of value greater than 1. (The claim is that using values greater than FF1 place a much larger stress on the rope.) As a consequence, a scientific program of work is being created to answer some basic questions such as the validity of the Fall Factor concept for short length rope with knots in. A calibrated load cell has been constructed which works in the Bradford Pothole Club's rope test rig and produces force with respect to time data for a rope arresting a falling mass. Work is on going to process this data into force distance data which will enable one to calculate the energy absorption. My thanks go to Roy Rodgers

for his continued support in this work, to Bob Mackin for providing access to calibration equipment, to Nick Williams for checking electronic equipment and to the Bradford Pothole Club for access to their rig.

Bob Mehew, March 2010

Item 11: Training Officer's Report

2009 has been another busy year, LCMLA registrations are down on last year by about 7%. This can be attributed to many possible reasons but I suspect more persons working in Centres are going for site-specific assessments through their Technical Expert.

- 186 persons registered for LCMLA.
- 47 persons assessed at level one.
- 13 persons assessed at level two.
- 74 persons revalidated at level one.
- 22 persons revalidated at level two
- 3 persons reassessed core skills at level one.
- 16 CIC registrations.
- 4 persons gaining CIC.

During the year there have been many issues debated at NCP and Training Committee, the main developments are listed below.

Policy Changes and Information

SRT Skills at Level Two: Candidates at Level Two will be expected to have basic personal SRT skills before undertaking a Level Two Training course. SRT Skills for Leader Progression will now be incorporated into all Level 2 Training courses across the country, but assessment will be optional. Normally SRT for Leader Progression will be assessed with Module 3 and Module 4. However, those who do not wish to undertake it within the initial assessment process may add Module 5 later.

John Cliffe and Graham Mollard each hold six SRT kits, which may be used for training purposes, but these must be booked in advance.

Pre-Assessment Experience: The minimum experience expected before a candidate may progress to assessment is as follows: -

For Level 1: candidates who are ready for assessment at LCMLA Level 1 will have experience amounting to an absolute minimum of: -

- One year's caving with at least 30 trips in at least 10 different systems across at least 2 different regions.
- 5 of these trips should be quality days.
- A proportion of these trips should be as a leader under supervision.
- Some trips may be above and beyond the remit of level 1.

For those wanting a mines award the minimum experience is: -

- One year mining with at least 30 trips including 5 quality trips in mines of different types, i.e. metal, stone and /or slate.
- A proportion of these should be as a leader under supervision.
- Some trips may be above and beyond the remit of level 1.

For Level 2 an additional 30 underground trips all of which should be in vertical cave systems. 5 of these should be quality days.

Definition of Quality Days: A quality day should satisfy at least 4 of the following criteria: - Exploration of a new route or cave (new to the candidate that is):

1. Incorporates at least 4 to 5 hours of underground exploration.
2. An experience that develops an individuals caving knowledge, skills and awareness.
3. Incorporates caving skills above the level of the candidate's qualification.
4. Of the candidates own making i.e. the candidate is to lead the trip, or it is one done with peers and not led by an external source.
5. For level 1, involves the application of vertical skills, digging or exploration. For level 2 an extension of vertical skills, digging or exploration.
6. Exploration of caves with a streamway that responds to rainfall.

Prerequisites for Revalidation: The new prerequisites for Revalidation are shown below. These will be phased in during 2010 and T/As will need to use their discretion when considering a leader for Revalidation. T/As should look for guidance from the Training Officer where they are unsure whether or not to allow a leader to undertake revalidation. However from January 2011 these prerequisites will become compulsory.

At level 1 and 2 the minimum experience required is as follows:

- 20 trips leading groups in caves reflecting a cross section of the difficulty of the caves on the candidates list, and
- 10 different personal exploration trips, of which 5 must be quality days. These may be repeats of trips done in the previous 3 year period. (See section 6.2.2 for definition of quality days).

Out Of Date Qualifications: T/A's must refer **all** requests for revalidation where an award is over 12 months out of date, to the Training Officer.

Cave to Mine and Mine to Cave Transfer: There is no administration fee payable to the BCA for Module 6 (Cave to Mine and Mine to Cave Transfer).

As from 1st January 2010 undertaking this module will also have the effect of revalidating an award.

New Military Panel: In 2010 a new panel is to be introduced. This panel will operate in the same manner as other panels but will only manage military candidates and leaders. Many of the Military qualifications have now been recognised as having parity with our own, namely LCMLA level one and two training and assessment and CIC training. This panel was agreed upon but has caused some irritation in other panels. When panels were set up many years ago those involved in doing so automatically became Trainers and Assessors. New Trainers and assessors now have to jump through numerous hoops to be recognised and resent four military personnel being given this status without having to jump through the hoops. All four are CIC holders of long standing and are MOD employees.

Fees for Candidates and Leaders: Fees for candidates and leaders are shown in the table below, changes are shown in red. As some bookings may already have been taken for Revalidation Workshops for instance, there will be a grace period until the end of January 2010.

Item	Fee
LCMLA Registration	£45.00
Combined LCMLA & CIC Registration	£55.00
LCMLA downgrade from CIC Scheme	£25.00
CIC up-grade from LCMLA Scheme	£25.00
LCMLA Revalidation Workshop	£75.00
LCMLA Core Skills Reassessment	£20.00
CIC Revalidation Workshop	£75.00
CIC Revalidation Workshop - Course Director	£15.00
CIC Mines Module	£15.00
LCMLA Trainer/Assessor Annual Fee	£35.00
LCMLA Prospective Trainer/Assessor Annual Fee	£15.00
CIC Trainer/Assessor Annual Fee	£35.00
CIC & LCMLA Trainer/Assessor Annual Fee	£50.00
CIC Prospective Trainer/Assessor Annual Fee	£15.00
LCMLA Additional Cave and/or Mine Sites	£20.00
LCMLA SRT for Leader	£20.00
LCMLA Transfer Award to include new region	£20.00
CIC Revalidation Course Director BCA Admin Fee	£15.00
CIC Modules Exemption application	£30.00
LCMLA Training Exemption Fee	£30.00
LCMLA Combine Modules 2 & 4 Fee	£30.00

Fees Payable to T/As: The fees payable to T/A's for CIC and LCMLA Revalidation Workshops was discussed in detail at the last Training Committee Meeting. The new fees and expenses payable are: -

- £200 for a course director or assistant leader.
- A maximum of £50 expenses for the course director to cover items such as room hire.

- Expenses will only be paid via an invoice and receipts must be provided.
- These new fees seem to have led to further discontent, in that a number wish a much higher payment for their work. Again TC decided on the level of payment after I gave them the facts on the revalidation fees necessary to raise payments to T/A.

If any T/A is unable to work for this amount they should refrain from putting themselves forward to lead Revalidation Workshops as no exceptions to these arrangement will be made.

Out of Area Sites: T/As are reminded that it is their responsibility to get authorisation from an appropriate T/A where a candidate or leader has out of area sites on their Section 5 Award. The new S4B form provided a space to record where such authorisation has been gained.

The new syllabus for LCMLA level one and two is complete after twelve months' work. My thanks go to TC and Mary for their help in this task. The paper on "Weather and Flooding" is also complete with input from many. Mary has done a great job formatting all the separate inputs. Both documents will now be issued on CD which is being professionally produced at a cost of approx. 85p each whereas the last time the syllabus was printed they were £3.50 each.

The geology paper for LCMLA and CIC candidates is inhand I have agreed to take this job on.

I have attended several meetings of TO's of NGB's throughout the year looking mainly at common ground, particularly with regards to coaching.

These meetings are ongoing and will hopefully end up with a generic coaching module which will be able to be offered to LCMLA's and CIC's alike.

As some of you will already know, I will be standing down from my post as Training Officer from March 2011. There are many reasons for this but I will not go into them here.

I have a few persons in mind who may be interested in standing for the post but Council needs to consider several points.

- The TO's work load is extensive, about 1.5 days per week.
- The TO does the work that used to be done by the Technical Training Adviser, which was a paid role.
- The TO needs to be someone fully conversant with the workings of the scheme.
- They need to be willing and capable to represent BCA at NGB meetings.
- They need to be capable of developing change where they feel necessary and not become to frustrated when they get knocked back.
- They should be willing to attend any further meetings such as National Park access committees, where an input on behalf of the BCA is would be beneficial to the BCA.

I strongly recommend that whoever replaces me does so with some degree of remuneration for the work and the level of the work involved. We should remember this person is the public face of BCA's professional qualifications.

Finally all training and assessment reports are at long last electronic which makes life a little easier for Mary; hopefully CIC will follow this example soon.

Graham Mollard, March 2009

Item 12: Publication & Information Officer's Report

The last year has been relatively quiet on the P & I front.

There have been two Newsletters issued and a temporary change of Newsletter Editor whilst the Editor Mike Clayton has gone travelling. I am grateful to Ed Waters for stepping in and holding the fort until Mike's return.

Two issues of Speleology have been published since the last AGM, with the next one expected in March.

I would also like to thank Damian Weare for his sterling work on the BCA Handbook which is a superb resource for our members.

The revised Radon guide is nearer to fruition and it is my hope that it can be published fairly soon. It is intended to offer it as a free PDF download and as a print on demand publication in partnership with one of the print on demand services available.

I have also been involved (albeit only a little) in reviewing the latest edition of the LCMLA Handbook which is soon to be published by the Training Committee and also a booklet on weather which I believe is also imminent.

I also continue to maintain an archive of all the BCA publications to date.

I have enjoyed the role of P&I Officer and look forward to carrying on the work in the next year.

Les Williams, March 2010

a) Webmaster's Report

Very little has changed on the website this year from a design point of view. I intend to revamp it soon but have had much more pressing demands on my time so far. I would like to thank Damian Weare and Mary Wilde for continuing to keep the admin and training sections up to date, also thanks to the conveners of the special committees who have kept their sections updated with the latest minutes and news and the Newsletter editor for posting the latest Newsletters on line. On a site as large as this I could not even begin to keep it up to date so without their work it would soon fall out of date and useless as a membership resource.

We currently host many club web sites as well as some cave-rescue sites, including BCRC. We also host BCRA's site, Hidden Earth's site, and all the regional councils as well as our own.

Amongst the more useful sites we host are The Mendip Cave Registry and Archive site, The Cambrian Cave Registry, along with their well-presented Cave Life site and also a site for the Dan yr Ogof Management Committee. The British Caving Library and audio archive is also hosted on our server and is proving to be an excellent and well-used resource for the caving community.

Thanks are also due to Dave Cooke for his work in migrating the hosted sites to our new server. By moving to our own dedicated server we are able to offer a fully-featured service to our members but still maintain it at a reasonable cost. It also puts us much more in control of our own destiny rather than being dependent on an external hosting company.

The migration work is very time consuming and as yet not completed. Work will continue next year.

Les Williams, March 2010

b) Acting Newsletter Editor's Report

No report received.

Ed Waters, March 2010

c) Handbook Editor's Report

The 2009-10 Handbook was delivered to members at the end of April. The online version has been updated several times since and a new password-based system introduced to try to prevent the capture of the e-mail addresses included. This appears to have been successful.

Work on the 2010-11 Handbook has begun but is a little behind schedule at present. I am, however, reasonably confident that it will appear, as previous years, by the start of May.

Damian Weare, March 2010

Item 13: Legal & Insurance Officer's Report

1. Public Liability Insurance Policy: At the moment we are in the relatively happy position of having just entered the second year of our "long Term Agreement" with Zurich, nevertheless Nick Williams and I still need to be ever-watchful and market-aware because we have no idea of what further disasters there might be lurking just around the corner. It's only a few years since (after "9/11" etc) that along with scrap-metal dealers, cavers were regarded as uninsurable, and this was for absolutely no logical and sensible reason!

2. Legal Watchdog: Along with all others in the outdoor activity areas, Duty of Care is a serious consideration. Fortunately, as an activity we have not been badly stung by it to date, but we have had some close shaves in the recent past. It gives me some relief to follow relevant cases through the higher courts and to find that by and large judgements in this area have been coming out on the 'sensible' side. The concept of people knowingly and willingly taking their own risk is becoming more widely accepted, but on the other side the 'claim-everything' culture has not abated and we need to be watchful of what is going on around us in the big bad world. Although we now have a Supreme Court this is little more than window dressing – the good old law lords will continue to make their (mostly) very wise judgements merely under a different name and in a different building.

3. Underground Britain – Legal + Insurance Issues (BCRA Cave Studies Series no.12): Built upon the substantial foundation laid down by a predecessor of mine in this post, Peter Mellors, with his *Legal Aspects of Access Underground* (NCA 1989), the first addition published in January 2003 sold well both internally and to outside bodies. The second addition (January 2006) is now sold out and the question arises as to whether there should be a third edition? Since 2006 I have been continuously updating the text file as relevant new legislation becomes law. Dealing with asbestos and the

national and ‘regional’ legislation relating to smoking are examples that concern many caving clubs. Personally I would vote to see a third edition published in the not too distant future:

- a. because it is a modest income earner for its publisher, BCRA, and more importantly
- b. because it has sold well to external bodies, e.g. Defence Estates and the National Trust, and to our fellow outdoor activists with which its subject matter is also relevant, i.e. it gives good PR for cavers!

We could publish on the web, but I take the view that this is something that would achieve more through the traditional paper publication route. Your consideration of this is now sought.

4. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) and what is following from it: CRoW 2000 was a major milestone that continues to affect the ever-changing relationship between outdoor recreationists and the full-time rural resident. In terms of legislative thinking the development of new legislation governing coastal access has presented a good opportunity to review some aspects of CRoW and the implementation of its essential detail through Statutory Instruments (SI) will need careful scrutiny, both for its own sake and through possible knock-on effects upon the many CRoW SIs that are now up for review. You might well say “*well there are no important caves on our coastal strip*”, but we are also concerned with disused mines, and our close partner here, NAMHO and its many member clubs are very concerned as to how all this is implemented and beds down. The coastal strip of Cornwall and Devon is hugely affected and we need to give NAMHO our full support in looking after this fine industrial heritage. Whether the third phase of this wave of countryside access, *access to inland waters*, comes about remains a matter of high politics, but we still need to remain vigilant!

5. Proposed Abolition of This Post and The Legal & Insurance Committee: I note that at item 24 of our Agenda for the AGM on Saturday 20th March the abolition of this post has been proposed as well as the Committee itself. If this is a genuine effort to streamline BCA then it’s at best misguided and at worst extremely shortsighted. Unfortunately, rather like Radon, legal and insurance issues do not go away – we need to be ever watchful! I also find it regrettable that the first that I heard of this proposal was when I received the agenda papers. It does not seem to me unreasonable to expect that the matter be discussed at National Council and/or with the incumbent before such a proposal is made!

I believe that we are living in an ever-shrinking world where almost everything and anything might at some point interact with everything else. It’s one where vigilance of the ‘outside world’ is becoming more and more important, and thus one where sensible relationships with related others is also essential.

In recent years some of our important activities have been seriously threatened through *en face* Health and Safety driven considerations and we have needed to seek allies and with them take serious actions. The post is substantially that of a legal and insurance watchdog which costs the Association almost nil, what’s the point of abolishing it, what might we gain?

If you feel that I am not performing the watchdog task properly, or should be doing other tasks then please tell me, or otherwise appoint someone else to the post, but surely in this fast changing world it is folly to divest oneself of any layer of protection, however minor this might appear to be!

David Judson, March 2010

Item 14: Youth & Development Officer’s Report

Since the creation of this role in 2007 I feel things have improved dramatically and that caving numbers have turned a corner. A general shift in attitudes has helped this with clubs realising the importance of attracting new members and running events to take people underground. BCA’s position of supporting and encouraging this has help tremendously.

Caving in the media has also helped this and figures for the website show a dramatic jump whenever caving features on TV. In the future the BCA might consider the importance of this fact and how it is positioned to interact with Television and other media, to make best use of this.

Clubs have continued to run try caving weekends with the YSS leading the way. Chris Tate from the YSS has even started using the facebook group I created to get more people to their events.

Website: Compared with last year the website is doing more or less the same volume of traffic. However

I recently led a revamp of the website. These recent changes may have improved the average time on site and the number of pages viewed per visit. In other words I’m happy that people are spending more time on the site and using it in a more in-depth fashion.

Our main source of traffic is still from the Google adwords although it is my hope to ensure a naturally higher rank on Google to remove our reliance on this source of traffic to the website.

Website Data	Visits	Av. Time on Site	New Visits
Feb ‘07- Feb ‘08	8302	3.06mins	76.12%
Feb ‘08- Feb ‘09	7910	2.57mins	79.71%

Reciprocal links: I have worked to raise the number of reciprocal links to the website and will continue to do this.

Facebook: There is a Try Caving page on Facebook which currently has 33 members and is starting to generate a bit of interest.

BCA at Outdoor shows etc: We have not had a request from the Outdoor show to attend this year. There has been a change of management and I suspect this is the reason. I've not pursued it as feel that we would be better off sorting out our own cave and attending in 2010. Constructing our own cave is a large project and one which I feel would stand the BCA in good stead in the future.

Scouts: I cannot claim to have made any great advances myself here but it does appear that the new creation of an association of scout teams will improve things. Idris Williams and I have been exchanging emails recently and I look forward to assisting this new association in anyway I can.

Leaflets: Jenny Potts has 2/3 of a box left and I have 3/4 of a box remaining. I estimate that we have 2,125 leaflets approx remaining.

Chris Jewell, March 2010

Item 15: Membership Administrator's Report

BCA Membership to December 31st 2009

DIMs (caving): 353 (DIMs plus BCRA: 216)
DIMs (non-caving): 36
BCRA Honorary: 8 (with one deceased during the year)
CIMs (caving): 4008
CIMs (non-caving): 1107
Clubs: 160
Associates: 13
Access: 5

2010 Membership Renewal Process: The 2010 renewal process began on 7th December 2009 when all clubs, Access Bodies and Associates were emailed the 2010 renewal papers and a copy of their clubs 2009 membership spreadsheet (the 2010 club CIM spreadsheet now includes an option for CIM Plus) Clubs without email, or incorrect email addresses were sent this information by post. DIMs were posted renewal papers, which arrived just before Christmas, slightly later than we had hoped.

BCA 2010 Membership to 8th March

The following have been processed:

DIMs (caving): 286 (DIMs plus BCRA: 189)
DIMs (non-caving): 35
BCRA Honorary: 7
CIMs (caving): 3060
CIMs (non-caving): 840
Clubs: 131
Associates: 4
Access: 3

So far, we have 5 CIM Plus including one that was previously a DIM.

New Clubs: The following clubs have supplied the correct paperwork and payment in order to become member clubs of BCA: Reading University Caving Club (previously members in 2007); Cundurrow Mine Group; Ogoffydd Jeunesse; The Tees Valley Caving Group; and Nidderdale Adventure Club.

Membership Trends: I have produced this table to analyze membership trends since the formation of BCA. It is important to note that data for 2004 and 2005 is presented in a different format to that currently employed, but I believe the figures for those years are accurate enough for comparison. There is no reliable data for 2006.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
DIMs	93	185		437	432	397
CIMs	3523	3909		4965	5216	5115
Clubs	89	140		153	152	160

Additionally, David Gibson has run a program to compare the situation with this time last year, and it is surprising what a high turnover of members we have had in the last year - 40%. He writes:

Of the present 387 DIMs (as of 10th December) a staggering 145 were NOT members in 2008. Conversely, in 2008 there were 157 DIMs who did NOT renew their membership in 2009. There are a couple of obvious, but nevertheless only speculative, conclusions that can be drawn from this (for example, how many converted to CIM?).

A question for Glenn and myself, now, is whether we should write to these 157 people (or whether BCRA would like me to write to the 68 BCRA members) and invite them to renew. The list includes some surprises - for example one current BCRA Council member was not a member of BCRA for the whole of 2009. As things stand, he won't be receiving a renewal notice. Also, some "well-known" names from the world of caving did not renew their membership in 2009.

Glenn Jones, March 2010

Item 16: Insurance Manager's Report

1. The PL Scheme: This has been renewed without any difficulties. I have yet to receive any significant feedback about the possible shift to GBP 5m cover - please can regional representatives keep this on their radar and ensure we are ready for a discussion at a Council meeting later in the year.

2. Financial-Services Provider: In consultation with the Treasurer, we have agreed to appoint David Hallam of Summit Financial Services as the BCA endorsed financial services provider. This followed a period when several people contacted me looking for advice on whom they should contact for this type of service. I pointed them at both David and the competition, Lonsdales, and the feedback was that they were very happy with what David offered them. Summit are the provider used by the BMC.

Nick Williams, March 2010

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

This year had been different from last year, when there were no enquiries from external people or bodies. The enquiries this year were mostly asking about the experiments that had been carried out for the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) in the Agen Allwedd and Eglwys Faen systems on the Llangattock escarpment in South Wales. Eglwys Faen is a cave widely used by outdoor groups and so this has attracted attention. My conclusion is twofold. First, that last year I was somewhat remiss in not publicising what we do better. Second, we may have a hint that we should perhaps carry out a study on those caves that are popular with outdoor groups. The enquiries over the years have largely been related to outdoor activities rather than individuals wanting to know about exposure to radon. Is it time that BCA is seen to provide a service to the professional caving world? It also appears that there is some form of assistance needed by the Services in the pipeline as I have already been approached as to whether I would be willing to give help in a matter, but have not yet been told what.

The update of the Radon booklet has progressed with Bob Mehew opening a dialogue with HPA. Hopefully we are now at a point where we can finish this off quickly.

As usual, I have asked the HPA about any future action in our direction and it appears that we are still not a priority. Bob Mehew has indicated that there is a discrepancy between the different radon values quoted for caving vs exposure for the public and so it is right that we should have some debate over whether we voluntarily reduce this levels that we work to or not. After all, we have a recommendation of $10^6 \text{ Bq m}^{-1} \text{ h}^{-1}$ from the HPA and they are the Regulatory body in the UK.

I have been convenor now for some considerable time but, if it is the wish of the AGM, I am happy to continue.

Clark Friend, March 2010

Item 18: Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report

No report received.

David Cooke, March 2010

Item 19: International Representative's Report

At the end of January I attended a Executive Meeting of the UIS at Postonja in Slovenia. Here the UIS have their official office in the Slovenian Karst Research Institute.

There were various financial matters to sort out, particularly in connection with a considerable inflow of finance from the International Congress in Texas.

In addition, the UIS publications were reviewed and the groundwork started as preparation for the full Bureau Meeting in Slovenia 12th-13th June 2010.

An overview of what all the UIS Commissions were doing was undertaken and again reports will be prepared for the June meeting.

On the caving international scene in May there is a European Caving Forum in Hungary, in June an Ice Caves Conference and celebration in Austria followed by the Caving School 13th-20th June 2010 in Postonja Slovenia.

During 4th-8th August is the Cuba Congress by the Federation of Latin American Countries.

The International Show Caves Association has its Congress in Slovakia between 20th-24th October and there is a Vulcan Speleology Meeting in Australia towards the end of the year.

Anybody wanting any more information on these can find at the UIS website or contact me personally.

Andy Eavis, January 2009

Item 19a: FSE Report

There is not too much to report since last time. We are currently organising the General Assembly Meeting (GAM) which will be held on 8th May this year in Budapest. This will be a Euro-Speleo Event celebrating 100 years of Hungarian Speleology. I recently did a slot in Descent advertising this event.

A draft copy of the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) strategy is currently out for consultation and I guess that Elsie will have been in touch with Ioana Meleg about feedback re: BCA policy. I know they have been in contact since Hidden Earth.

We are currently receiving renewal of membership fees for FSE. I know Cookie is aware of this. They are due by 31st March.

Ged Campion, March 2009

Item 20: British Caving Library Report

1. Personnel: The resignation of Janet Nash, the BCL Librarian, at the end of 2009, was noted by BCRA Council, who recorded its gratitude for the work she has done to establish the Library at Glutton Bridge, and for her offer to continue to advise in a consultant capacity into 2010.

Mary Wilde has been offered the post of BCL Senior Library Assistant, with an initial 10 hours per week, and has accepted, subject to a trial period of 3 months to be reviewed by herself and the Library Steering Group. Mary, who will continue in the BCA Training Administration post, had been working 5 hours per week as an Assistant to the Librarian since July 2009 whilst Janet worked 10 hours per week.

The changes in paid staffing and reduction in total hours worked will have the effect of reducing the projected expenditure in the BCL Business Plan 2009-14.

Jenny Potts was appointed BCRA Library Coordinator by BCRA Council in November 2009.

2. Glutton Bridge Rent: BCRA has negotiated a rent for the two years to end 2011, which acknowledges the additional storage area provided with the library room itself, at an increase of £5 per week over the previous rent. This gives an overall increase of about 3% but with the rent guaranteed to remain stable for the next 2 years.

3. Library Facilities: The Library now has a wi-fi link, (thanks to Nick Williams for setting this up) so both library computers can now access the internet. This also enables visitors who bring their own laptops to the Library to use the internet and to access the Library Catalogue online; volunteer workers can now email directly to the Library's main computer the files resulting from any cataloguing work they have carried out in the Library.

We now have an up-to-date Samsung colour laser printer/scanner which enables us to be much more efficient in dealing with enquiries.

4. The Library On-line: The Library website continues to be well used, particularly the Audio Archive. There are some problems with the current on-line catalogue and these are being addressed.

5. Use of the Library: In addition to enquiries dealt with by email, phone and letter, the Library has hosted groups of enquirers wishing to research particular topics using the facilities we have on site. This is organised using either the Library staff or myself and has been very successful, particularly since the reports produced are then donated to the Library.

Jenny Potts, March 2010

Item 21: Reports from BCRA, Regional Councils etc

No reports received.