



British Caving Association

Minutes of the National Co-ordinating Panel held on Monday, 2 June 2008
at Staffordshire Council Staff Club, Stafford

The meeting commenced at 10:05 am.

1. Present

Tom Peacock (TP)	Chair & ALO – South Wales Panel
Graham Mollard (GM)	Training Officer
Dena Proctor (DP)	ALO - North Wales Panel
Tony Boyle (TB)	ALO – Northern Panel
Dave Baines (DB)	ALO - Derbyshire Panel
Tony Smith (AS)	ALO – Southern Panel
Karen Slatcher (KS)	Training Administrator

2. Apologies for Absence

Steve Tomalin (ST) ALO – Forest of Dean Panel

3. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 4 February 2008

- 2.1 **2.2 Weather & Flooding booklet** – DB clarified that his thesis was put together using the same style and layout as an article in Caves & Caving, rather than the content of the article.
- 2.3 **Insurance** – DP queried a point missing from the minutes that John Cliffe had said that he was able to get insurance from Jardine Lloyd-Thompson for £120. DP had been quoted more than £500. GM said that this would be discussed later – see 8.
- 2.4 **11.1 Accidents & Near Misses** – End of third paragraph reads “this is standard MIA practice” - this should be removed as it is not correct.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1 **3.4 Robbie Warke – Southern England Panel** – He is now going through a probationary period before being accepted back onto the panel as a full Trainer/Assessor.

There was some discussion about accepting people onto panels after they have left. GM said that they would need to reapply to the panel in question and they would then decide what was required of that person before being accepted back. He also said that if someone had been removed from a panel by the Training Officer for some disciplinary reason, they would need to apply to the Training Officer first.

- 3.2 **7.2 Geology & Karst booklet** – John Forder’s booklet had been shown to John Gunn by Nigel Ball and he felt that the section on the process of dissolution is inaccurate. In the past this process has been “dissolution into calcium bicarbonate”, but strictly speaking this should be dissolution into free ions. John Gunn plans to amend the document but has not had time to do so yet, so it is on hold for the time being.

GM to liaise with Les Williams and Dave Judson to check that BCRA documents are correct.

GM has recently spoken to John Cousins of MLT UK about the way they have done drawings on ropework. John responded that they have illustrators who do this and he is happy to pass on the details.

The difficulty will be making this process easily understandable as over complication is not needed either. There has been some new research into cave formation and ageing generally, which also needs to be incorporated. A useful new geology book written by Andrew Palmer called “Cave Geology” is available from Amazon.com and is recommended.

- 3.3 **8.2 Trainer/Assessor Workshops** – South Wales - May/June 2009. N Wales 10-11 October 2009
Barry Ellis [KS to chase Steve Tomalin for a TA Workshop for Forest of Dean for Nov/Dec 2008.](#)

- 3.4 **11.1 Accidents & Near Misses** - Mandatory use of a travelling rope for Level 2 was ‘proposed’ by GM at the previous meeting, but most of the Training Committee were against it becoming mandatory.

5. Training Committee report

- 5.1 **People who attend Revalidation Workshop without sufficient experience** – This was discussed in depth at the recent Training Committee meeting and it was felt that if a candidate's personal experience is short by one or two days then they should be allowed to attend the workshop. Their paperwork should be withheld until they have done the appropriate number of days within a certain timescale to bring them up to the minimum – it does not matter if they go out of date in the meantime. This is referred to as an “incomplete revalidation”.

However, if they have very little or no experience, then they should not be allowed to attend a workshop and their paperwork should be sent to GM for him to make the decision.

- 5.2 **Training Fees** – Having lost around £9K from Sport England last year Training did not quite break even and may not this year. GM is loathe to put up the fees as hopefully revalidation workshops will make a difference this year. Wherever possible, we need to ensure that we make a profit on each workshop. GM is happy to accept claims for ‘reasonable’ costs for hire of rooms, but not hire of minibuses.

GM asked the panel for their thoughts regarding BCA taking control of training courses in the same way that revalidation workshops now run. TP responded that the South Wales panel would be against this from a financial point of view and this appeared to be the general view. GM said that a figure for running each course would need to be worked out that was mutually acceptable.

- 5.3 **CIC Trainer/Assessors Applications** - Six applications have been received Les Sykes, Phil Baker, Andy Lewington, Tom Peacock, Duncan Morrison and Daryl Godfrey. Nigel Ball now needs to organise a meeting for himself, Mick Day and Juliet Parker-Smith to review the applications.

One of the previous aspirant TAs has not progressed and GM/KS will be writing to them.

- 5.4 **DB - Mines Assessor** – To be discussed at a later date.

- 5.5 **3.2 Overuse of Gorges** – DP reported that at the meeting on 9 April Ray Woods, Chief Ecologist, had made a presentation, which clearly showed how many sensitive species are involved. Doug Oliver of CCW, said that although they can restrict access to gorges, they do not want to, but they prefer to educate people and monitor use. One of the commercial providers, whose organisation takes stag parties etc into the gorges, made his point very well about what they do and requested that they be told where the sensitive areas are so that they can avoid them. Snowdonia Active, also presented on behalf of education organisations. Ashley from WCA talked about an extreme canoeing event which had been refused access by CCW (which is apparently illegal under European Law). CCW responded that they have no problem with the canoers, but that it was felt that there would be a lot of damage by the spectators.

Actions included Ray Woods putting together booklets and CD presentations on ecology so that all are informed. Doug Oliver and CCW will be running awareness events in the gorge so that the areas to avoid are known. All interested parties will be involved in monitoring and will offer statistics on their own use.

- 5.6 **CIC Scheme Changes** – Some changes have been proposed and endorsed by Training Committee to ensure that the scheme is run on a professional basis and that CIC Trainer/Assessors follow the scheme. A copy of the outline that Nigel Ball has put together for Module 1 was circulated. [KS to scan and email this to all ALOs.](#)
- 5.7 **Complaint from CIC Candidate** – GM had a complaint from a CIC candidate on a CIC Revalidation Workshop about another candidate making derogatory remarks about LCMLA, which were not stopped by the CIC Trainer/Assessor running the workshop. GM will be making some changes to the Trainer/Assessor Agreement that will ensure that this does not recur.
- 5.8 **New CIC Trainer/Assessor** – Richard Hill has now been accepted as a CIC Trainer/Assessor.
- 5.9 **Stephan Natynczuk** – He has now been accepted to train and revalidate at Level 2 LCMLA.
- 5.10 **Caving Manual** – A publisher called Alex Stilwell have approach GM to see if BCA would like to be involved in putting together a training manual on caving. GM has agreed and has sent a breakdown of chapters he thinks should be included.
- 5.11 **Representation to HSE following accidents** – GM has a meeting tomorrow with HSE to discuss how incidents are investigated and who HSE should be looking to for advice - not directly involved with

the specific incident, but with regard to good practice and the history/hydrology of where the incident took place. This was mentioned in GM's annual report to Council.

AALA, (AALS) together with Gavin Howat of HSE, have been given specific responsibility for looking at a way to respond following incidents involving adventure activities and how to put information out into the public domain. They want GM to be involved in that working party and hope to involve Training Officers from each discipline.

DP has put together a working document for a (A6?) flier as a response to the email from Marion Dunn's email. Although it appeared that Marion was acting on behalf of CNCC and CRO, it would now appear that this is not the case.

- 5.12 **Applications for Exemptions** – Emma Holman has been given exemption from Level 1 and Level 2 training as she has attended equivalent Joint Services courses.

Joel Corrigan's application for exemption from Level 2 and CIC training was turned down. He spoke to GM last week and suggested that he can put together another application. KS stated that his Level 1 is out of date.

6. Weather & Flooding booklet for LCMLA Syllabus

- 6.1 DB has not initiated any contact with Steve Long and due to unforeseen circumstances has not had time to do anything further. He hopes to make a start whilst on holiday over the summer. GM suggested that something, possibly a new chapter, be added to incorporate the effects of changing weather patterns and specifically some of the localised, catastrophic flooding that has been experienced recently. A recent article in a walking magazine on the "Effect of global warming on walkers" may be useful.

At the recent South Wales Panel meeting Des Marshall wanted to know what had happened to work he and others had done on this in the past (Jo Ellis had spend 500 hours producing SRT drawings). GM was able to confirm that he has at least some of Jo's drawings, but does not know what happened to any text.

GM said that he has been given a copy of a PowerPoint presentation by Tony Flanagan, that was filmed by someone parascending near Ingleborough, of what happened at Long Churns on 11 May.

DB said that he had requested photos to add to the booklet, but has not received any to date. GM responded that at Training Committee it had been agreed that there should be a library of flooding photos. This will be added to a public area of the ACI website until such time as a similar area can be set up on the BCA website. **GM to speak to Les Williams regarding this.**

KS to send an electronic copy of DB's scanned document to GM and also to Steve Long of MLT UK.

7. Code of Practice for Deep Water in Porth yr Ogof

- 7.1 TP reported that although it had appeared that this document would need to be shelved, Training Committee felt that it should be put forward to Cambrian Caving Council (CCC) once again for them to make a definitive response on the last few small changes. **TP to send the latest draft to the Honorary Secretary of CCC as a final draft.**

8. Multi-Activity Insurance including Cavers

- 8.1 GM had contacted Jardine Lloyd Thompson (JLT) regarding a possible multi-activity insurance cover for LC&MLs, CICs and Trainer/Assessors. They responded that they were willing to put together a policy and GM has been quoted rough figures of £140-£160 for £2M of cover and £170-£190 for £5M. GM is now awaiting a response and hope that BCA Council will approve it.

9. Do we need a Cave Leader Training Board?

- 9.1 GM asked whether NCP needs to consider becoming a separate entity again, completely self sufficient from BCA so that decisions are made by the professionals who run the schemes.
DB put together a brief SWOT list and this was talked through and discussed.

Strengths

- Control of the LCMLA and CIC schemes is with the people who are running them.
- Experience of the people involved.
- Enthusiasm of the people involved.
- Get away from perceived and apparent BCA negativity towards professional cavers.

Weaknesses

- Can it be financially viable?
- Small client group compared to other activity bodies.
- Distances us from BCA and club cavers.
- Would need an administrator – GM suggested that this would be still be KS.
- Lose caveat of BCA.

Opportunities

- More assessors could get more involved.
- To be freer to operate in a professional manner without hindrance from a minority of BCA members who appear not to understand or appreciate the work of professional cavers.
- To get proper insurance for TAs/candidates.
- To develop the product even more for the needs of the users and respond to future changes.
- To have freedom to apply for new funding.
- To tweak the schemes to take into account a ‘coaching’ element.

Threats

- Some non-active/out of date TAs may have to either modernise their approach or leave the scheme.
- Central control could be a problem for running training courses.

The Training Committee would still remain as the co-ordinating body. The committee has recently included the BCA Equipment Officer, a Heads of Centres rep and GM hopes there will also be someone from an advisory body. All training courses would have to become included, but NCP could set the cost of payment to the Trainer and course dates would be worked on a rota basis, as they now do for revalidations.

- 9.2 **Panel Meetings** – All Trainer/Assessors should attend at least one panel meeting a year. If this does not happen the panel should notify the Training Officer.

10. ALOs Regional Reports

10.1 Derbyshire

Weather & Flooding document – see 6.2 second paragraph. Des Marshall had queried this at the South Wales Panel meeting as well.

NCP Terms of Reference – The panel agreed with these, but had asked DB why they were asked to check them? TP responded so that as many people had been asked as possible. Not just NCP/TC making decisions. To get broader view.

TA Workshop – This will be on Saturday 13 September, venue Edale YHA and DB will be running it. TS to send a copy of the minutes of the Southern England workshop to DB as an example.

Training Courses – It had been agreed that a cave and mine training course will now be three days.

Revalidation Workshops – Saturday 27 September, run by Vin Machin and Saturday, 22 November run by Daryl Godfrey.

Next Panel Meeting – Will be on Saturday, 13 September in the evening, following the Trainer/ Assessor Workshop. Any assessor who attends the workshop is welcome to join the Derbyshire Panel meeting.

Lighting – See 11.1.

10.2 North Wales

New members – Des Marshall has been voted to join the panel. He will need to work alongside another Trainer/Assessor on one Level 1 and one Level 2 training courses before starting his probationary period. Alan Braybrooke’s application was welcomed, but he did not attend the meeting.

North Wales sites without inspection reports – The list of cave/mine sites which KS had asked DP to update provoked a huge amount of discussion about those sites that do not have an inspection report,

but the list was left as is and it is up to Trainer/Assessors which sites are added to a candidate's ticket. What is most important is that candidates' attention is drawn to the rider on the Section 5.

NCP Terms of Reference – These were discussed and appear to be fine. Training Committee was also discussed and DP was perturbed that most panel members had little idea of what Training Committee does and did her best to rectify this. Mike Cousins asked about a MLT Board equivalent. The question was also asked as to why there are several levels of meeting.

Revalidation Workshops – DP - Saturday, 6 September 08, Chris Jowett – Saturday, 13 December 08, Mike Cousins - 13 March 09, DB – TBA September 09, Barry Ellis - TBA December 09.

Mine Inspections – Dave Carlisle had inspected the following:

Wrysgan – The Level 5 route was condemned as one of the tell tales on the slab had fallen out and others were found to be loose. DP asked him for an alternative in and out of Level 6 and Mike Cousins is painting stones today to show this route.

Bwlch Plwm – Stones in a stope will be dropped on 9 June.

Parc - Level 3 is OK for group use. Access to be agreed with the Forestry Commission.

Aberllyn – This has been condemned for group use, but may possibly be used for training use.

Henddol –

Penarth – The entrance has been condemned and it will be necessary to dig for a new one.

Ogof Llanymynech -

Pandora – Andy Cornford will be putting in a resin bar in the roof near the bottom entrance.

Bat Group check area

Access Issues –

Rhiwbach – Has been open since 16 March following an insurance issue.

Site Specific Assessments – Des Marshall raised the point that panel do not engage in work to do with site specific assessments. After some discussion it was agreed that there are occasions when this is alright.

PowerPoint - DP has put this together to update presentations when training.

10.3 South Wales

Weather & Flooding document – see 6.2 second paragraph. Des Marshall had queried this at the Derbyshire Panel meeting as well.

Revalidation Workshop – DM – Saturday, 24 January Level 1 at Storey Arms or Hamps Centre.

Trainer/Assessor Workshop – Richard Hill will be running a workshop in May 2009.

Core Skills Assessments – Richard Hill requested clarification that the only charge to be paid to BCA is the £15 admin fee. This was agreed by NCP.

Hydrology in Bridge Cave – This appears to have changed recently as clear water has been seen coming out of the side wall and almost sumping the passage, while the usual muddy water was in the entrance scoop.

Joining the Panel – There was some debate about another member (a recently qualified CIC) joining, how they should apply, how the panel agree whether to take them on etc. It is up to each panel to set their own criteria for taking on new panel members.

Mines – Blue Stal Mine and Black Hole are assessed by the local panel although not a mines panel. However, all those wishing to have access to these mines should be aware of, and pay into, the scheme for mines inspections, which is available from Juliet Parker-Smith. John Cliffe is worried that some centre staff may not be aware of tell tales etc.

Avens in Porth – The general concensus is that a Level 1 LCMLA who has an MIA or MIC is fine to use the abseiling avens if their Technical Advisor is happy with that. But the main aven, where it is free hanging, should not be used unless the clients are using climbing harnesses, definitely NOT improvised harnesses.

Lighting – See 11.1.

Trainers – These should not be worn underground. If trainer-type boots have ankle support then they are OK, but ordinary trainers are not adequate and Trainer/Assessors should use their discretion.

Face Painting/Mud – TP recounted a recent assessment he had done where a candidate's group had been invited to do some face painting (the candidate had subsequently failed for a number of reasons). There are serious conservation issues involved, but also from a safety issue it should be actively discouraged as should throwing mud and defacing caves by writing in mud etc. KS to send out a directive on conservation issues regarding mud writing, face painting, throwing of mud - defacing sites, bad practice etc. ALOs to take this back to Panels.

Experience – It was questioned whether the level is high enough generally for Level 1. Andy Lewington had pointed out recent accidents in Yorkshire with 'qualified' people leading groups. GM said that the Dow incident had been handled really well.

10.4 Southern Panel

Unfortunately there has not been a meeting yet this year as the earlier one was cancelled, but there was a Trainer/Assessor Workshop in March and the minutes have been circulated.

Stephan Natynczuk – He has now been passed out for Level 2.

Robbie Warke – He is now going through the induction process before being cleared to be full Panel Assessor again.

Rod's Pot / Bath Pot – This is now a through trip. It is one of those trips that requires Level 1 techniques, BUT the panel have refused to let someone at Level 1 have it listed on their Section 5, as it is a Level 2 trip. Church Pot in Goyden and Pyreanean Passage in Goyden are L2 for the same reason – the risk of being suspended in space.

Northern Panel

Meeting – The last one was held on 8 February 2008.

Prescribed routes – Level 1 routes in Goyden Pot and Level 2 routes into County/Wretched Rabbit have been marked up on outline maps. There are pitches in the Level 1 area, so the route should be clearly marked with "no pitches".

Standards of Assessment – At Level 2 there seems to be an issue with candidates being given caves on their Section 5 that are harder than those they are assessed on, which is not consistent with the syllabus – see 2.5.1.d) on page 16. Candidates should be assessed at the upper level of difficulty on their list on their Core Skills day. A Level 2 Group Day can take place in a one pitch cave. It was suggested that a candidate's list is approved in Modules 1 or 3, rather than Module 2 or 4.

Revalidation Workshops – There have been some issues with combined Level 1 and 2 workshops where the Level 2s needed more input. Some candidates were out of date, requiring a check with GM. The new application form is confusing candidates regarding the number of caving trips needed. KS to change. Some candidates claimed they had not been told they needed to revalidate and also that they had not received a reminder. There was also some confusion about who the candidates' application forms were to be sent to as it was understood that they needed to go to KS and the Trainer/Assessor running the workshop – they do not need to go to KS.

ANOther - 20 August 08, TB - 8 November 08, Tom Redfern - 13 February 2009.

Mines Assessor – DB had responded to the letter inviting him to join the panel as a specialist mines assessor and formally accepted.

New Panel Members – Paul Platt and Lee Paskin have been invited to the next panel meeting on 26 June.

11. Any Other Business

- 11.1 **Lighting** – GM raised the issue of what is appropriate lighting for a group day. This issue has arisen from at least two different sources. LED lights are now prolific and a candidate recently did a group assessment with a group using Petzl Tikkas. The Trainer/Assessor decided that this was not appropriate and failed the candidates.

This was discussed and it was felt that the decision has to come from the Trainer/Assessor deciding whether the lighting provided on the day is suitable for the site/trip involved. If it is not, then the trip should not go ahead and the candidate should be questioned about their choice of lighting later.

It was agreed that this should be taken back to Panel meetings for discussion, to see if Panels want a definitive decision. South Wales had already discussed this and felt that Tikkas were possibly not

adequate, but MYOs were. Petzl recommend that the MYO should not be used with children because of possibly eye damage due to the brightness of the light.

This will also be discussed at Equipment Committee and Training Committee.

11.2 **CICs with Local Mine Leader** – to be looked at another time.

12. Dates and place of next meetings

10:00am Monday, 6 October 2008

10:00am Monday, 9 February 2009

The meeting closed at 1:50pm.