



# British Caving Association

Minutes of the National Co-ordinating Panel meeting held on  
3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011 at Staffordshire Council Staff Club, Stafford

## 1. Present

Tom Peacock ( <b>TP</b> )	Chair & ALO – South Wales Panel
Dena Proctor ( <b>DP</b> )	ALO – North Wales Panel
Tony Smith ( <b>TS</b> )	ALO – Southern England Panel
Dave Baines ( <b>DB</b> )	ALO – Derbyshire Panel
Graham Mollard ( <b>GM</b> )	Training Officer
Nigel Ball ( <b>NB</b> )	Chairman CIC Panel
Steve Pope ( <b>SP</b> )	
Mary Wilde ( <b>MW</b> )	Training Administrator

The meeting commenced at 10:00

## 2. Apologies for Absence

Lee Paskin (**LP**)  
Tony Boyle (**TB**)

## 3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011

It was agreed that the minutes were a true record of the last meeting

## 4. Matters Arising

With regard to item 5 from the last meeting (Revise Level 2 Core Skills, Group Day and SRT for Leader Checklists), **TR** questioned whether 'releasable' should be used in relation to ladders and group abseil rope. After a general discussion, **GM** said we should be listing the most appropriate methods not the escape methods. **TR** said that in some circumstances 'releasable' would not be appropriate. **DP** said she would not fail someone who used an alternative but safe method of escape. **SP** added that in the scouts all abseil ropes must be releasable. It was proposed to leave the word 'releasable' in relation to ladders and a vote taken which was in favour unanimously. It was also agreed to add the word 'releasable' against Group Abseil Rope.

**MW** will send updated copies of the checklists to **TP** for checking.

## 5. Training Committee Report

### 5.1 Training Officer

**GM** announced that he was to stand down as Training Officer at the Council Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2011. **NB** will step down as Chair of CIC and take over as caretaker Training Officer until the next AGM.

**TP** responded by thanking **GM** and outlining his achievements over the last 6 years. **TP** said that the role of the Training Officer was a difficult one and had often been carried out without the backing of clear BCA processes and procedures. He had had to deal with several serious incidents such as that at Porth yr Ogof. He went on to list some of **GM**'s greatest achievements:

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1. Creation of the 'Weather and Flooding' document.
2. Creation of the 'Deep Water' document
3. Modernisation of the schemes, (which involved trying to get many people singing from a single song sheet). .
4. Development of a partnership between the BCA and the military resulting in scheme parity and an improved relationship. This involved some considerable personal time. On Graham's part.
5. Establishment of a higher profile for the training schemes within the BCA
6. Standardisation of the scheme and links with the Irish scheme.
7. Radical changes to the revalidation system, involving active participation every 5 years rather than simply a rubber stamp.
8. Better links with HSE and AALS.
9. Finally enhanced profile of the Training Officer Role.

**TP** proposed a vote of thanks, which was passed unanimously.

## **5.2 Meeting Structure**

At the last Training Committee meeting, amalgamation of the TC and NCP had been reconsidered. To summarise there were two conflicting views. Either the decision to combine the meetings should be upheld or the two meetings should remain but with tighter control over business and increased efficiency. NCP should have power to make decisions without constantly referring back to TC. Steve Holding from NAMHO felt strongly that both bodies should have power to make decisions. Although it had previously agreed by vote to merge the two meetings, this decision was overturned.

Finally Tom Redfern had proposed a vote of thanks to **GM** for his work as Training Officer.

## **5.3 Long Churn**

The details of the recent Long Churn incident and consequences had been discussed. The Northern Panel felt that they had not been fully consulted. **DB** said that all the information had been passed to Tony Boyle who may not have passed it on. **GM** made his decision based on all the information gathered and feedback from NCP members and Damian Weare. The two leaders are required to write risk assessments on all caves on their site lists and have been suspended for two months. In addition they must attend a flood awareness course being run by David Gallivan. The selection of this course was not done by **GM** but by AALS without consultation. **GM** is to write to AALS to express the concerns of the NCP.

## **5.4 GB**

Issues surrounding a breach of GB access rules by one TA had been discussed. **TS** said that the Southern Panel were unhappy about the access rules but did accept that they had been broken.

There was a perceived additional issue regarding BCA insurance. It was thought that the complainant was insured by the BCA but refused access to GB cave for LCMLA leaders for training purposes. It transpired that the complainant is an associate member and does not have BCA insurance

**GM** brought up the access issues at Council. This generated a lively discussion at the NCP with the conclusion that "professional" cavers gaining access for training purposes is a very delicate matter, which should be approached with caution.

## 6. Long Churn

**TP** posed the question 'What more can be done to prevent such incidents'? The issue is covered at training and revalidations and the flooding video is available. **TS** was in favour of sanctions for people who are aware of risks but fail to act upon that knowledge. **GM** summarised by saying that the leaders concerned did not access the correct weather forecasts and perhaps we could make that clearer. We should be promoting the use of the weather information on the CDG website. **SP** said that people know what they should do but just don't do it. He added that it was down to individual perception of risk. It is important that we make clear what the consequences of such incidents could be both to the group, the leader and the BCA. **GM** added that whether or not action is taken (by AALS) could depend upon where the incident happens. Of course action is always taken where an accident is serious or fatal. **SP** added that the HSE won't always be the enforcing authority and in some circumstances it would be the local authority. **GM** recently dealt with an incident at Beezley falls and a report was sent to the ICC (Incident Contact Centre). **MW** suggested that a positive message could be put out if a party decided against going underground in a similar situation. However it was felt that we would not know about such situations.

**TS** and **DP** requested a copy of the video. **DB** added that his book on Weather and Flooding is close to completion but he does not have a publisher. He also needs some photographs of South Wales and Mendip. He asked if **DP** and **TS** could provide any photographs. It was suggested that **DB** approach PESDA press or the BCRA regarding publishing, or even the BCA itself.

## 7. Site Specific Qualifications.

The standards regarding the Technical Advisor role are not clear. Training Committee has asked for a code of practice to be drawn up. Currently the role of advisor is carried out inconsistently. **GM** said that the code should be drawn up for working CICs and it would be best if this were under the auspices of the BCA. It was proposed to establish a working party to develop this code of practice and that John Cliffe may have valuable input.

After some discussion about who might be on such a working party it was agreed that there should be a CIC rep, plus **DP**, **DB** and **TP**. Input should be gathered from Steve Long and/or John Cousins, as well as consulting any similar codes such as that in place within the BTU. In addition, **MW** will scan and circulate the booklet produced by the NCA in 1999 entitled 'Report of the Technical Advisors Seminar'.

## 8. Interim Item – Mines Inspections.

**SP** had been invited to the meeting to discuss issues relating to mines inspections. **DP** had encountered some issues, for instance Dave Carlisle had refused to pass Bwlch y Plwm due to pitch lengths (although Gethin Thomas has rebolted the site).

**GM** said to **SP** that we must ensure that both LCMLAs and CICs are covered in reports. Dave Carlisle is still carrying out inspections. It had been proposed that the BCA pay **SP's** insurance to cover both LCMLA and CIC until he finally takes over from Dave Carlisle. **SP's** assessments consider suitability of a venue based on stability, ventilation and flood potential. Dave Carlisle will not assess mines for CIC usage. **SP** requested a copy of the CIC mines module syllabus. He also added that to do an inspection he requires a good plan or survey of the site in question.

**DB** said that the Derbyshire panel had discussed 'duty of care' when using mines and the use of mines without a current inspection. **GM** pointed out that uninspected mines should not be used for training those under eighteen years old or vulnerable adults. Everyone has a 'duty of care'

when using any mine. He added that this issue would no doubt arise again post AALS. Recent commercial mining accidents will add to the complexity and sensitivity of this issue.

**MW** raised an issue regarding site lists for certificates. Sometimes a site is listed that differs from the description on the 'master' list. This happens with mines and caves. **GM** said that the first port of call for all such queries is the ALO. **NB** said that site list inconstancy and master list management could be TA workshop topic.

## 9. Lighting

**TP** asked for views on the best types of light to use with groups, as there are several new products available.

FX's are reaching the end of product life. Petzel do not recommend their products for group use. **GM** uses the Pixar 1 that has its limits but does have long duration. The Pixar 2 costs £32.50 plus VAT and is more than adequate for underground use. It is not rechargeable but lasts for 6 to 9 hours on the middle setting. The Pixar 3 lasts for 6 hours.

**DP** recommends the Trog light, which weighs 150gms and lasts for 15 hours with a bright light. It does not fit on all helmet brackets but they are addressing this. It is suitable for use with children too. It is light in weight due to its plastic construction but the lens does scratch. As it is a sealed unit the lens is not replaceable. It costs about £57 and is rechargeable, plus it can be recharged in a car. **GM** said that the Pixar 2 on low is brighter than the Trog, plus the Pixar has both spot and diffuse settings.

**DB** suggested the KS light from Germany that comes with a normal bracket but also an additional bracket for a Petzel helmet.

It was also suggested that some new miners lamps from China might be worth considering. At £45 including a charger they are good value and can be used by children. .

**TS** asked about a new Petzel light but **GM** said it costs £250.

Finally the caving lamp from LEDcaving.uk. was suggested which costs about £70.00.

## 10. Hot Topics for TA Workshops.

**TP** identified the following topics from area panel meeting minutes: -

- Security belt/heavy duty belt.
- Access and access law.
- Teaching leadership (coaching) on training courses.
- GPS navigation.
- S4Bs – how to complete them correctly.
- L2 traverses – getting someone off a rope.

These ideas generated a somewhat convoluted and lengthy discussion. The key points were: -

GPS could be used on courses and assessments but it would be necessary to be ensure the candidate could use traditional methods too.

**GM** said someone had been trying out the use of the CIC point system on LCMLA technical skills at L2. This was being used alongside standard assessment methods.

**NB** L2 traverses - getting people off in emergency situations. The CIC panel had given this much consideration and there was a view that the aim should be to 'make safe' rather than evacuate, (i.e. cut and lower). Much discussion followed. It was pointed out that there is an ever-narrowing void between L2 and CIC and **DB** questioned whether this mattered or not. Cut and lower was considered appropriate in most circumstances but there might be a need to ascend or descend some way before doing this. The use of a spare rope and protraction devices were debated.

## 11. Regional Panel Reports.

**11.1 DP** reported from the North Wales Panel meeting, which took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> September. The Forestry Commission and the BCA have set up the Snowdonia Mines and Conservation Group headed up by Gethin Thomas. It will control access on behalf of the Forestry Commission, give us access to more mines and increase the number of people who get access. **TP** said this had been raised at the South Wales Panel meeting too and the Cambrian Caving Council were concerned that the BCA was taking over access control.

Revalidation Workshop Dates have been set up (10/12/2011, TBA April 2012). There is currently only one candidate booked in on 10<sup>th</sup> December.

A TA workshop will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> December and **DP** is expecting 5 or 6 people to attend.

**11.2 TP** reported from the South Wales Panel meeting that took place on 29<sup>th</sup> September. A contact is now in place to will act as liaison between Sennybridge and us. The Army use caves in a different way to ourselves but if either party wish to raise an issue they will be able to do this via Neal George This will also allow us to share information about cave conditions such as loose boulders. It is possible that we might invite Neil to join the Training Committee.

The Long Churn incident had been discussed.

In the Waterfall area of Bridge Cave, the hole is getting bigger and taking more water. The cave is therefore liable to faster flooding. It is thought surface boulder must have moved but there is no new entrance.

Llygad Lluchwr has been defaced with graffiti.

**TP** asked whether his panel needed to run a workshop in 2012. **MW** is reviewing the TA workshop schedule and will advise **TP**.

Rich Hill and Toby Dryden have a cheap supply of FX2 bulbs.

The Black Hole may be opened again in the future. **GM** asked who would be placing the bolts and **TP** is to find out.

The following dates have been set for revalidation workshops – 2/2/2013 Andy Lewington, TBA May Dave Ludlam. (Rich Hill may alter his 2012 date.)

**11.3 DB** gave the report from the Derbyshire Panel meetings.

John Geeson has completed his CIC mines module.

Andy Smith has left the panel and **GM** has joined.

**11.4 TS** gave the report from the Southern Panel.

Two meetings have taken place this year so far and access to GB cave was discussed at both (already covered at this meeting)

Site lists were discussed. Some sites may be on awards, which do not currently have access. They will stay on these lists as access could be regained. **MW** said that all mines awards state the following: -

'Inclusion of the above sites does not infer any guarantee of safety or right of access. Note that a mine site has to be inspected and passed by a mining engineer before use with parties of children'.

Simon Mullens raised the need for more approved routes. Now John Whiteley has retired there may be an increase in requests for SSQ's.

**11.5** As **TB** was not present there was no report for the Northern Panel,

Before the meeting closed **GM** thanked everyone on the NCP members for their hard work over the year.

The action register was not reviewed.

## **12. Next Meetings**

Mon 6<sup>th</sup> Feb.

Mon 7<sup>th</sup> May

Mon 1<sup>st</sup> Oct.

## NCP Action Register

No	Action	By	Deadline	Done
	05/10/2009			
029	DB to broker a meeting between Dave Carlisle and Steve Pope.	DB	ASAP	Ongoing
030	GM to approach Ben Lyon for emergency card funding	GM	ASAP	
031	MW to create a copy of the emergency card for the website.	MW	By Next NCP	
032	Glossary / local Terms document. All ALO's to produce a document reflecting their region and send them to MW to collate in table format	ALOs	ASAP	
033	MW to collate Local Terms document	MW	ASAP	
034	MW to email T/As requesting photographs of caves in dry and wet weather for the Weather and Flooding doc.	MW	ASAP	
037	All NCP members to send photocopies of any suitable diagrams to Nigel Ball for the Geology Document	ALL	ASAP	
038	MW to send out approved site lists to panels for review.	MW	ASAP	
039	GM to ensure the North Wales SRT exemption proposal be put forward at the next TC meeting	GM	10/05/2010	
	04/10/10			
040	<b>GM</b> to canvas regional reps for their views on their involvement at the TC.	GM	January 2011	
041	MW to provide ALO's with lists of award holders due to expire	MW	November 2010	
042	GM to circulate a list of geology document photo requirements	GM	ASAP	
043	MW to check that all lists of local mining terms have been received.	MW	ASAP	
044	DB to check if there are any safety implications were Dave Carlisle's reports 'pirated'.	<b>DB</b>	By next meeting	
045	MW to set up a simple T/A workshop application form.	<b>MW</b>	ASAP	
046	TP and GM to agree any core items to be covered at the next round of T/A Workshops	<b>TP/GM</b>	ASAP	
047	MB to follow up the 'lights of' issue in PYO.	<b>MB</b>	Next meeting	
	31/01/2011			
048	Raised the issues of automatic cancellation of LCMLA Revalidation workshops at the next TC meeting	<b>MW</b>	15/02/2011	

049	<b>MW</b> was reminded to send the Training Committee minutes to the ALO's.	<b>MW</b>	Ongoing	
050	Clarify with <b>GM</b> the precise details of the proposed LCMLA/CIC exception for on candidate	<b>MW</b>	ASAP	Done
051	Does contribution by email count as having attended a T/A workshop – discuss with <b>GM</b>	<b>MW</b>	Next meeting	
	03/10/2011			
052	<b>MW</b> will send updated copies of the L2 core skills checklists to <b>TP</b> for checking.	<b>MW</b>	ASAP	
053	<b>GM</b> is to write to AALS regarding Long Churn incident concerns	<b>GM</b>	ASAP	
054	<b>MW</b> to scan and circulate the booklet 'Report of the Technical Advisors Seminar'.	<b>MW</b>	ASAP	
055	<b>NB</b> to send a copy of the CIC mines module to <b>SP</b>	<b>NB</b>	ASAP	
056	<b>MW</b> to advise TP regarding the need for a TA workshop.	<b>MW</b>	ASAP	
057	<b>TP</b> is to find out who is placing the bolts in The Black Hole	<b>TP</b>	ASAP	

