



British Caving Association

Minutes of BCA Training Committee meeting held Monday, 19 May 2008
Staffordshire Council Staff Club, Stafford

The meeting commenced at 10:05 am.

1. Present

Graham Mollard (GM)	Training Officer
Tom Peacock (TP)	Chair of National Co-ordinating Panel
Tom Redfern (TR)	ACI Rep
Nigel Ball (NB)	Chair of CIC Panel
Bob Mehew (BM)	Chair of Equipment Committee (ex officio)
Juliet Parker-Smith (JPS)	Association of Heads Rep
Karen Slatcher (KS)	Training Administrator

2. Apologies for Absence

Nigel Atkins	Training Officer, DCA
Sue Mabbett	CCC Rep (apologies given following the meeting)

GM welcomed to the meeting Juliet Parker-Smith as representative for the Association of Heads and Bob Mehew as Chair of the Equipment Committee.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 8 December 2007

3.1 **4.5 Out of Date Qualifications** – Second sentence - should be TP not TR.

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

4. Matters arising

4.1 **4.1 Geology & Karst Booklet** – NB has shown John Forder's notes to John Gunn for him to check it. Apparently there is incorrect information in the document, specifically where it talks about "dissolution into calcium bicarbonate", it should be dissolution into free ions. John plans to amend the document but has not had time to do so yet and it cannot be printed until this has been done. GM suggested that a diagram in Arthur Palmer's book, which shows the true cycle, could be used as this is more easily understandable. There will need to be a compromise anyway for the difference in knowledge level between LCMLA and CIC, but links to extra information could be added for CIC.

Whilst this is being checked, other information on geological formation in caves and all the BCRA publications should be checked as well. **GM to raise with Les Williams and Dave Judson.**

4.2 **Hidden Earth** – GM explained the reasoning for this decision to BM.

4.3 **4.5 Out of Date Qualifications** – TP said that the South Wales Panel has a meeting coming up soon. One thing that will be discussed is that some TAs running revalidations have been asked by instructor-cavers why there is a need for them to have done a certain number of personal caving trips.

It was agreed that a minimum of two days per year is vital and is one of the strengths of the scheme, but there is some flexibility and TAs should use common sense if a candidate is only one or two trips short of the number required.

KS to send information to all TAs. If there is little or no experience, then the candidate should be allowed to do the revalidation, but with a rider that they will not receive their Section 5 until they have shown written evidence that trips have been done within a certain time period (ie two/three months).

4.4 **4.9 Evaluation Form** – GM has a form to be discussed at NCP.

4.5 **4.10 Southern England Panel** – Some paperwork was eventually found regarding Robbie Warke. He has now been accepted back on the Southern England Panel, but will need to start the probationary process again.

4.6 **5.7 Training Fees** – Having lost the sports grants, Training Committee did not break even in 2007. We need to ensure that we are self-financing in future years. BM said that the accounts were

presented in a different format, so it was not entirely clear what the shortfall was, although it appeared to look bigger than it actually was.

JPS proposed that Training Committee seek control of budgeting, book-keeping and presentation of the accounts for the Training Committee, to assist the Treasurer in his role.

4.7 **6.2 Dave Elliot's Publication** – He is still looking for an illustrator for his publication.

4.8 **6.7 CIC Trainer/Assessors** – The six applications were passed to NB at this meeting.

GM proposed that NB travels to South Wales for the selection group to meet, seconded by TR, all in agreement.

5. NCP Report

5.1 **Overuse of Gorges** – Dena Proctor raised this issue and was to attend a meeting at Plas y Brenin on 9 April, as a representative of Plas Dol y Moch OEC. JPS said it was a discussion forum to look for a way forward, whether this means cutting back on numbers in groups or number of visits there is a need for use to become sustainable because of the conservation issues.

GM added that there has been a prosecution of an instructor and a centre in Scotland, which may raise use of gorges in the future.

5.2 **5.1 Gorge Walking** – There was some debate about whether there should be a qualification and it was felt it should be left on hold for now, but in the meantime Dena Proctor had put a document together. Regionally, instructors such as Coach Level 5, CIC and MIC at centres are putting together Codes of Practice for specific sites and this is seen as a better option than a 'generic' qualification.

MLT are in agreement that there is no need for a qualification and the scheme that Dave Horrocks, of Scottish Combined Rock & Water, had been putting together has not progressed since last October.

5.3 **Procedures for accepting people to Panels** – TP asked whether there were any 'recommended' procedures for this and GM responded that each Panel has their own procedures and that there are no specific recommendations.

5.4 **Terms of Reference for NCP** – These are already in the LCMLA Handbook and NCP were happy with them.

5.5 **Terms of Reference for Training Committee** – **KS to ask Jenny Potts is she is aware of any old Terms of Reference for Training Committee.**

GM is still concerned that few people attend Training Committee meetings as it needs input from other parts of BCA. BM advised that if Training Committee is doing something important, then it should probably be put to Council to give other committees a chance to discuss it.

5.6 **4.6 Weather & Flooding Booklet**- GM hopes that Dave Baines will have this finished by the next NCP meeting on 2 June, when it can be circulated to the area panels.

5.7 **Caving Techniques Book** - GM has had a request from publisher, Alex Stilwell, to see if we would be interested in contributing to a caving techniques book. GM has said yes and is waiting for them to get back to us. Both the Weather & Flooding and Geology & Karst booklets could be included.

5.8 **Revalidation Workshops** – Des Marshall now has a date for a Revalidation Workshop on Saturday 24 January 09.

When taking bookings, if numbers go beyond six, then it is fine to bring another Trainer/Assessor in. It is possible to use a qualified CIC for Revalidations as long as the Trainer/Assessor is 'in charge'.

5.9 **11.1 Fatalities and Near Misses** – Marian Dunn had written to GM, apparently on behalf of CRO and CNCC, asking Training Committee to put together a document on good practice. GM has subsequently spoken to Les Sykes and Phil Haigh and although they both felt that what she said was valuable, they had also said that she had no remit to represent CRO. TR confirmed that she had felt that something should be done, but that CRO had felt that it was not their place to this and had suggested that she should approach BCA.

TR added that the learning points from the Long Churns fatality were attempting to escape from a flooding system instead of sitting it out and being attached to a fixed rope in flooding conditions.

TR queried the minute regarding GM's proposal that "it is mandatory to take along an emergency travelling rope" and whether this would become mandatory. GM said that it was a suggestion that this

be added at Level 2. TR and NB maintained that use of a travelling rope should be suggested to candidates, but use of it should not be made mandatory.

6. CIC Report

- 6.1 **Panel Meeting** – This had to be postponed because more than half the panel could not attend. A new date has not yet been set, but will be shortly.
- 6.2 **CIC Figures** – Since the last Training Committee meeting there have been 13 new registrations and four new CICs who have completed CIC Assessment – Martin Jackson, Chris Boardman, Joe Gittins and Kate Duffus.

- 6.3 **Applications to become a CIC TA** – There have been six applications received from Les Sykes, Phil Baker, Andy Lewington, Tom Peacock, Duncan Morrison and Daryl Godfrey. **NB, JPS and Mick Day to arrange to meet to review these.**

- 6.4 **5.2 CIC Scheme Changes** – NB has had some feedback that there is a discrepancy in the way that some modules have been assessed from one assessor to another. He has put together a system that is more structured, giving better feedback to the candidate about how they have performed and producing a good evidence base for later Trainer/Assessors. To date he has looked at Module 1 and picked out from the syllabus the areas that are checked. This module should be done on the surface rather than underground. There is a scoring system from 1-4 (Unsatisfactory / Satisfactory / Good / Excellent) and each part, ie life-lining, knots etc is given a score. Candidates need to attain at least Satisfactory (2) in every area, Unsatisfactory (1) is not acceptable and will mean a fail or deferment. BM said that historically Trainer/Assessor skills were not set out and now is the time to tighten this up. This system gives the candidate's next Trainer/Assessor the chance to reassess any areas that appear to be weak. He also suggested that as there is an NVQ in Training and Assessing, it may be worth looking at this for 'ideas'.

NB said that the document can also be used as evidence of the professional development of that candidate. The scoring system will work better for some modules than others, ie Module 1 lends itself to a scoring approach, whereas Module 2 is more about soft skills. This means there will need to be a subjective overview from the Trainer/Assessor. BM suggested testing how well Module 1 works before tackling the Modules looking at 'softer' skills

Training Committee are in agreement that this is the way forward and support Nigel Ball to continue these changes.

- 6.5 **CIC Section 4B Assessment Record** – NB requested that there now be a new triplicate Section 4B put together for CIC assessments and this was agreed.
- 6.6 **Complaint from CIC** – GM had a complaint from a CIC candidate on a CIC Revalidation Workshop about another CIC candidate making derogatory comments about LCMLA. This was one issue, but also the CIC Trainer/Assessor running the workshop allowed it go on and on. In fact there was more than one candidate who was unhappy about this. GM feels that CICs have a responsibility to support the scheme and so do Trainer/Assessors and all at the meeting agreed. GM asked whether people should only be allowed to assess CIC if they are already hold LCMLA.

TR suggested updating the Trainer/Assessor agreement that is signed each year and make more of the issue of bringing the scheme(s) into disrepute.

BM suggested that this complaint is fed back to the CIC Panel. This could be done by email and noted at the meeting. He agreed that the Trainer/Assessor agreement could be amended, but suggested that it be carefully worded and that the 'disrepute policy' for BCA be checked and also the CIC syllabus.

- 6.7 **Completed CIC TA** – Richard Hill has now completed his CIC Trainer/Assessor probationary period and is now recognised by Training Committee as a full CIC TA.
- 6.8 **Aspirant CIC TA** – The other probationer chosen eighteen months ago, has unfortunately not made a start on the process. It was agreed that there were mitigating circumstances but that he now needs to make a substantial start on the process before the end of the year and complete observation of a minimum of two modules by then. **KS to put together a letter to him to this effect.**
- 6.9 **Probationary CIC TAs** – The CIC syllabus refers to the number of 'days' required, but this should actually be 'modules' and should be changed when the syllabus is revisited.

7. Porth yr Ogof

- 7.1 TP has put together a document detailing the dangers of deep water in Porth yr Ogof and specifically the resurgence where most of the fatalities have occurred. From the start he got input from various people on the South Wales Panel and various others. The document was passed by NCP, then Training Committee and went as a working document to Council, after which Cambrian Caving Council (CCC) came back with objections. TP has worked with CCC to try to iron out the issues, but since then David Judson, Legal & Insurance Officer, has also stated that the document will not be allowed to go to print due to insurance issues. The main objection from both parties appears to be that the document is specific to Porth yr Ogof and not generic for deep water. TP said that the only option now appears to be to write a generic document, but he is unhappy about that.

Training Committee asked GM to write to Ian Healey (CCC Hon Sec) and ask for the document to be put back to CCC and officially accepted or rejected. Once CCC have responded, GM should then take their decision back to Council.

8. Multi-activity insurance including covers

- 8.1 GM said that there have been difficulties for Trainer/Assessors etc to get insurance as at a reasonable rate. This problem has been pursued by previous Training Officers. GM contacted Jardine Lloyd-Thompson (JLT) and enquired about a policy that could be made available to all Trainer/Assessors, all CICs and all LC&MLs, which should also be multi-activity cover and would cover those working for BCA and those working on behalf of BCA.

JLT responded saying that they could produce a policy and were willing to make it all encompassing, for a range of adventure activities. GM asked for two levels of cover - £2M and £5M - and he believes the cost would be something in the region of £140 for £2M and £160-£170 for £5M. This would give professional indemnity (public liability), person to person insurance (one student to another) and product indemnity (failure of equipment) cover, but not personal accident cover. There will hopefully be cover for European caving and possibly a World cover as an add-on to the policy.

GM is now waiting for JLT to come back to him, but it looks fairly hopeful as it is not dependent on minimum numbers and he hopes that BCA Council would approve it, as it would give a reasonably affordable way into the scheme. JLT's paperwork could be circulated by the Training Administrator via registrations and revalidations.

Once prices come back, information can be circulated and then, once any fine tuning of the scheme has been done by Training Committee, it can be taken to Council for approval.

Some documents were produced several years ago and BM will send these to GM.

9. Representation to HSE following accidents

- 9.1 Following the fatalities at the end of 2007 and early 2008, CIC Panel had queried with GM why BCA, as a National Governing Body, were not responding to these events. Following briefing from CIC Panel, GM contacted Gavin Howat, the senior HSE Inspector overseeing recommendations following the Manchester Hole incident, and he also agreed that HSE should be able to consult with BCA as an NGB for advice on good practice. Gavin Howat, together with another HSE Inspector, Marcus Bailey, have been given a brief to look into this.

Following the recent Dow Cave incident, GM wrote to Pam Waldron, Principal Health & Safety Inspector based in Leeds, suggesting that caving professionals liaise with HSE inspectors. Ms Waldron responded and a meeting has been set up on 3 June, which also includes David Green. GM and Gavin Howat hope to form a small group of people who can decide on a way forward for a joint approach from the two organisations. GM feels that arranging a meeting is a major move forward for HSE and is hopeful that something can be worked out. Gavin Howat has the responsibility for this and he is happy that something is set up, initially on a local basis, but then extending into a national working party.

Training Committee intend that whatever a local decision may be, they will be consulting across all the caving regions via NCP etc.

- 9.2 **Manchester Hole** – A QC (from Crown Prosecution Services), a Barrister, John Cliffe, David Green and John Gunn went underground in Manchester Hole recently to decide whether there is a way forward for the prosecution or not.
- 9.3 **Flooding Incidents in Caves** – TR reported that there have been many incidents recently involving flooding, such as in Manchester Hole, Dow Cave (when water reached a depth of 17ft in the entrance), Valley Entrance which was full to the entrance barrels and recently Long Churns on 11 May, which flooded in a similar fashion to Ibbeth Perrill where rain/hail fell at the extreme of the catchment area of the cave, rather than over it.

The Long Churns event was very swift and substantial, with evidence that water in the lower streamway was within 8-10” of the roof, the stream down the fossil passage had 22” of water in it, Plank Pool was washed out, the slot to St Paul’s crevice was foaming in a huge stopper filling most of the slot, debris was level with the Cheese Press, water came through Diccan and overflowed with the connecting crawl at 18” deep and flowing. This all happened within less than an hour of the storm over Ingleborough, with levels of 33mm and 50mm of rain/hail being recorded in that area.

TR commented that some people are inclined to think that the weather has changed and some think that we, as cavers, have become complacent, but he suggested that Training Committee needs to re-emphasise the dangers with regard to flooding. GM suggested collecting a database of good photos from during/after an event. **TR to see whether these could be added to a public access part of the ACI website. Panels to contribute photos.**

10. Any Other Business

10.1 **Applications for Exemption** – Two applications had been received:

- Emma Holman had requested exemption from Level 1 and Level 2 training as she has attended equivalent Joint Services training. This was agreed.
- Joel Corrigan had requested exemption from Level 2 LCMLA as a whole and CIC training. This application was turned down because the scheme does not work in this way and Joel’s Level 1 qualification is also out of date.

10.2 **Section 4B** – KS said that the LCMLA Section 4B Assessment Record forms are beginning to run low and proposed the following changes to the “Undertook” area before they are reprinted:

- add “Initial” to Assessment in the same area, to denote Modules 1 to 4 when they are first assessed;
- remove Standard Revalidation at Third Year and Leadership Revalidation Workshop at Sixth Year and replace with “Revalidation Workshop at Fifth Year” and “Core Skills Re-Assessment following out of date qualification”;

11. Dates and place of next meetings

10:00am – Monday, 8 September 2008	Staffordshire Council Staff Club, Stafford
10:00am – Monday, 8 December 2008	Staffordshire Council Staff Club, Stafford
10:00am – Monday, 18 May 2008	Staffordshire Council Staff Club, Stafford

12. Addendum to minutes, not reported at the meeting

12.1 Stephan Natynczuk has now been approved by GM to assess Level 2 modules and revalidations as well as Level 1.

The meeting closed at 2:20pm.