



British Caving Association

Minutes of BCA Training Committee held on Monday, 8 September 2008
at Staffordshire Council Staff Club, Stafford

The meeting commenced at 10:15 am, slightly late due to flooded car parks and problems finding alternative parking.

1. Present

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|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Graham Mollard (GM) | Training Officer |
| Tom Redfern (TR) | ACI Rep |
| Idris Williams (IW) | Voluntary Organisation Rep |
| Barry Albutt (BA) | Joint Services Rep |
| Karen Slatcher (KS) | Training Administrator |
| Nigel Atkins (NA) | DCA Training Officer |

2. Apologies for Absence

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|---------------------|---|
| Tom Peacock | Chairman of National Co-ordinating Panel |
| Nigel Ball | Chairman of CIC Panel |
| Juliet Parker-Smith | Association of Heads Rep |
| Steve Higgins | CO Joint Services – sent Barry Albutt as his representative |
| Sue Mabbett | CCC Rep |
| Bob Mehew | Equipment Officer |

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2008

- 3.1 **11 Dates and Places of next meetings** - The May date should be May 2009, rather than 2008.
The minutes were accepted as a true record.

4. Matters arising

- 4.1 **4.1 Geology & Karst Booklet** – There has been no further progress with this. Les Williams knows of a geologist in the southern England who may be willing to take a look at the document.

- 4.2 **4.6 Training Fees** – The Executive have not agreed to Juliet Parker-Smith's proposal at the last meeting that Training Committee seek control of their own accounts.

LCMLA Revalidation Workshops - BCA currently pays £150 to Trainer/Assessors running these workshops. GM feels this is inadequate and would like to raise the figure to £175. TR said that ideally we need to try to keep candidates' fees down as much as possible.

Also see 11.4 AOB.

- 4.3 **4.8 New Aspirant CIC Trainer/Assessors** – Following interview yesterday, Tom Peacock and Duncan Morrison have been appointed as new aspirant CIC Trainer/Assessors. Phil Baker has also been appointed, but he will not begin the process for twelve months. The other applicants were unsuccessful this time.

Out of this process a suggestion has been made that the 'status' of each Trainer/Assessor should be reviewed on a 3 year basis, involving checking that they are still active and working within the LCMLA and/or CIC syllabus etc. This would be in addition to attending a Trainer/Assessor workshop. **Training Committee will need to discuss this at a later meeting.**

- 4.4 **5.6 Weather & Flooding Booklet** - Steve Long has agreed that BCA can use any of the written work from his book, but we need to contact MLT for use of the diagrams because they have the copyright for them. Tom Peacock is taking care of this. Steve has also said that if we do a hardback version in the future he would be keen to be involved.

- 4.5 **5.7 Caving Techniques Book** – GM has not heard anything from Alex Stilwell publishers.

- 4.6 **5.8 Revalidation Workshops** – An additional Workshop was organised in June for Northern England due to a large number of candidates needing revalidation. This has caused a some consternation among other panel members, because a Trainer/Assessor had to be sourced who was available, but it was necessary and may well happen again.

- 4.7 **5.9 Emergency Card** – Following a letter from Marian Dunn some wording had been put together by Dena Proctor for a credit card sized ‘Emergency instructions’ card, to be available for cavers from various outlets. This wording was circulated at the meeting, but has not been circulated widely yet. TR noticed a slight error in that “Dial 999 and ask for Cave Rescue” should read “Dial 999 and ask for Police, and then ask them for Cave Rescue”.
- 4.8 **6.4 CIC Scheme Changes** – Nigel Ball has virtually completed the first CIC Module, but it has not been published yet.
TR – A CIC Panel meeting should be arranged very soon as the last one was in November 2007.
Nigel Ball to arrange this asap.
- 4.9 **6.5 CIC Section 4B** – It had been previously agreed that a CIC Section 4B is necessary. **KS to send a draft copy to Nigel Ball for amendments/additions.**
- 4.10 **6.6 Complaint from CIC Candidate** - **KS still to add ethos wording to the Trainer/Assessor Agreement.**
- 4.11 **6.8 Aspirant CIC Trainer/Assessor** – The aspirant CIC Trainer/Assessor who was written to after the last meeting had responded saying that he had done a module with Dave Elliot, but that this information had not been passed on. He also added that he has 13 years experience of running courses and training at CIC level and was involved with the setting up of the scheme. He is very keen to continue the process, has approached all the CIC Trainer/Assessors and has been offered two courses in the last twelve months, one of which he was not able to attend. He is concerned that he will now need to compete with new aspirant CIC Trainer/Assessors.
KS said that part of the problem with both LCMLA and CIC Trainer/Assessors during the probationary period, is that she often has no idea of how far through the process they have progressed. TR added that there had been some unhappiness from CICs who applied at the same time and were not successful and were aware that one of the two people who had been successful did not appear to be moving through the scheme. As a result, it was felt that the letter needed to be sent. He suggested that the aspirant contact CIC Trainer/Assessors regularly in order to kept in mind for any courses that were coming up.
- 4.12 **9.2 Manchester Hole** – GM has not heard anything recently and Bewerley Park have not either. GM talked to Pam Waldron of HSE last week, but she was not forthcoming.
- 4.13 **9.3 Flooding Incidents in Caves** – TR reported that ACI does not want to have the suggested database of photos etc added to its website as it could be seen as counter productive.
BCA Executive has agreed (with one objection) that an Incident/Near Miss section can be added to the Training section of the BCA website. GM stressed that this will include no names of individuals/ clubs/organisations etc, just factual information and lessons learnt. Les Williams is happy for photos etc to be added to the website to illustrate the dangers. GM asked Andy Plimmer to remove his name from his PowerPoint presentation and has forwarded the revised copy to Tony Flanagan with some recent photos from Goyden.
TR mentioned a website <http://www.lessonslearned.org.uk/lfg.html> put together by Bob Barton, John Cousins and Marcus Bailie et al that may be a useful link for the web page.
- 4.14 **10.1 / 10.2 Exemptions** – There were two applications. The Level 1 and Level 2 Training exemption was agreed, but the Level 2 and CIC training exemption was refused.

10:40 Nigel Atkins joined the meeting.

5. NCP Report

- 5.1 **10.2 North Wales Area Panel** – GM spoke to Bob Mehew re anchors for slate. GM has made enquiries with Fixaid and showed the meeting a range of bolts etc. These meet the necessary requirements for axial and lateral pulls.
- 5.2 **10.5 Northern England Area Panel – Standards of Assessment** – This was discussed at the area Panel meeting in Feb, minuted incorrectly and subsequently correct. It involves an inconsistency in the Handbook on page 16, 2.5.1.d, which reads:

“The second part of the assessment for all Modules 1 to 6 requires a practical assessment at an appropriate location, normally underground. For Modules 1 and 3, the Trainer/Assessor will choose the site from one equivalent to the upper level of difficulty of the sites on the candidate’s list. For Modules 2, 4 and 6, the candidate should nominate a site from their submitted list and agree it with the Trainer/Assessor. However, for Module 4, the suggested site must be one with a vertical element. For Modules 2 and 4 the candidate will also provide their own group (5 minimum), group equipment and assistant leader. The duration of the assessment is at the discretion of the Trainer/Assessor and would normally consist of a full day.”

The second sentence should read “For Modules 2 and 4... rather than for Modules 1 and 3...

KS to circulate a letter as an addendum to the syllabus 2.5.1.d to this effect. There should also be an additional statement that a site for Modules 1 or 3 should be chosen to enable all aspects of the syllabus to be assessed, including short climbs at Level 1 and multi-pitch venues at Level 2.

Having addressed the issue of the level of the wrong modules being assessed, there also needs to be consistency across the country. Candidates need to be assessed somewhere that is similar to the top level of their list and in some areas this may be awkward, particularly at Level 2.

6. CIC Report

- 6.1 Nigel Ball was unable to attend the meeting due to work commitments.

7. Porth yr Ogof

- 7.1 **Letter from Cambrian Caving Council** – Following the BCA Council meeting, the issues were considered. All nine of the principal officers of CCC were of the opinion that they cannot endorse any site-specific advice. CCC does not recommend the use of the Porth yr Ogof resurgence.
- 7.2 **Email from Bernie Woodley, Chair CCC** – For information, in the last Training Committee meeting minutes, Ian Healey was mentioned as CCC Secretary, but this position has now been taken over by Mike McCombe.

Secondly, he wanted to “*make it clear to your committee that it is the landowner’s position that the Porth yr Ogof resurgence is not to be used by cavers. It would be unwise to go against the wishes of any landowner who otherwise places no further restrictions on cave access*”.

The point was made that in the past CCC, CCRO and the National Park have all sent letters to Education Authorities regarding the dangers of the resurgence in Porth.

GM plans to respond in writing.

8. Multi-activity insurance including covers

- 8.1 GM has agreed an all inclusive insurance policy (including person to person cover, full public liability (as long as acting as an individual), written and verbal instruction cover and equipment failure cover (not equipment loss) with Jardine Lloyd-Thompson at two levels:

For CICs and Trainer/Assessors an annual fee of £189 for £5M cover, with an add-on for climbing/mountaineering (given proof of an appropriate qualification, ie SPA, MIA or suitable experience) at a rate of £214 per annum;

At LCMLA level, a total insurance including climbing (if SPA) at an annual fee of £210 for £5M cover and £169 for £2M cover.

Any person being insured must be working within the BCA schemes.

NA asked that a vote of thanks be given to GM for the time and effort spent in sourcing this cover.

KS will shortly be provided with proposal forms, all the information from JLT and stamped/franked envelopes so that she can mailshot everyone on the LCMLA and CIC databases.

9. 2008 Training Grants

- 10.1 Nigel Atkins for DCA/BCA
19-20 January 08 - SRT for club cavers – agreed £210.
9-10 February 08 – Event held at Upper Limits for PDMHS (Peak District Mines Historical Society) –

agreed £210.

29-30 March 08 - National Workshops – agreed £350.

Oct 08 - PDMHS – agreed £100.

10.2 Les Sykes for Elysium Underground Group, Kelso, Roxburghshire

Oct 08 – SRT Basic Rigging – Yordas/Valley Entrance or Jingling Pot Lateral Cleft – agreed £100.

Nov 08 – SRT Basic Rescue – Yordas/Valley Entrance or Jingling Pot Lateral Cleft – agreed £100.

KS to ask for a completed training grant form and report/invoice after the event.

10.3 Martin Jackson for YSS, Yorkshire – Basic SRT

The course has taken place, but **KS** to ask them to complete a proper training grant form and invoice.

KS to change the name on the form (which still shows IW as Trng Officer) and update on the website.

10. Representation to HSE following accidents

GM met with Pam Waldron (Senior HSE Inspector for the north and northeast of England) and David Green (HSE Inspector based in Leeds) on 3 June. He feels it was a beneficial meeting because he was able to give them more information than they originally had and make them more aware of the complexity of caves.

Following on from the Craven College situation and the Manchester Hole investigation, they did not seem to be gaining relevant information from the right sources. They have accepted that in future in ‘normal’ circumstances if there is an incident where they need further information, they will contact the BCA Training Officer and have also agreed that the BCA Training Officer and/or others should be involved in the publication of any ‘lessons learnt’, which agrees with the views of Marcus Bailie and Gavin Howat. GM has asked that TR be involved when this takes place.

TR mentioned a recent occurrence where HSE put out a statement regarding a private outdoor centre and an incident where a child became unclipped from the rope while climbing, but not how this happened, so that nothing could be learnt from the incident.

GM said that Gavin Howat, who is the HSE link to AALS, and Marcus Bailie have been tasked with getting a group of people together who will oversee lessons learnt after an investigation has taken place. Hopefully this sort of input could speed up procedures, whether prosecution happens or not.

GM has given feedback on a couple of points in the minutes that he felt were incorrect and is now awaiting a revised version.

There will be another meeting that will involve, GM, TR, Gavin Howat and Marcus Bailie.

Following the meeting the Improvement Notice on Craven College was lifted.

11. New Section 4Bs

As we needed to print new Section 4Bs with some urgency, GM and KS made some small additions to the form:

In the Undertook area:

- removing “Standard Revalidation at Third Year” and “Leadership Development Revalidation at Sixth Year”;
- adding “Initial” to “Assessment” (ie Modules 1-4) and “Revalidation Workshop at Fifth Year” and “Core Skills Reassessment Following Out of Date Qualification”.

In the This Page Covers area:

- adding “Module 4a – Abseil for Group” and shuffled the modules around so that Level 1 is on the left with the Transfer boxes below and Level 2 is on the right.

In the Result area:

- Added an “Incomplete Revalidation” box for those candidates who attend a revalidation workshop but did not have sufficient personal or group experience and are set a time period in which to gain an agreed amount of experience. They will not receive their Section 5 until they are “Passed”.

The decision was also made to enable the form to be used for reporting on candidates at a Training Course and will supercede the Section 4A, which is currently completed, plus the blue Training Log Sheet. Section 4As will only now be used by the Training Officer and the Training Log Sheet will become obsolete. The reasoning behind this decision was that currently Training Log Sheets are filed

separately to the rest of the candidate's paperwork and this makes tracing a training course awkward if not difficult.

All agreed that it made sense to keep paperwork together, but TR raised a query about the fact that most Trainer/Assessors print their training course Section 4As and that this would no longer be possible using a triplicate form. GM suggested using sticky labels to be added to each part of the triplicate form as an alternative.

14. New Training Administrator

Following KS giving notice at the beginning of July, it has been proposed that this position now become full time, based at Nick Williams' office in Great Hucklow, with three days a week for training administration (a little more than the 17 hours per week average currently required) and two days a week for support for the Membership Administrator, which mostly involves scanning.

KS feels that there is a big difference between the two jobs and that this may or may not be a good thing. She feels that it may be best for the Training Administrator's position to remain separate and that there may be a clash of priorities from January to April/May when both jobs would be extremely busy.

TR asked about Nick Williams' involvement as 'line manager' to the Training Administrator.

A Job Description and Person Specification for the Training Administrator's position were handed out and a couple of alterations suggested.

KS to make the amendments and email to Nick Williams for an advert to be placed in a local paper.

12. Any Other Business

- 11.1 **NA: Completed LCMLA TA Iain Rennie** – Having recently completed the process with Iain, NA had rung everyone on the Derbyshire panel to check that they were happy for him to bring Iain's paperwork to this meeting.

All agreed that Iain Rennie be accepted as a full Level 1 Trainer/Assessor.

Phil Baker has also completed this process but NA had not received any paperwork from him so this will have to wait until December.

- 11.2 **NA: March 2009 DCA/BCA National Workshop** – GM agreed to support this event for 2009 with a training grant to a maximum of £500, dependent on the number of other applications received.
- 11.3 **NA: Hidden Earth** – NA had been asked by Les Williams to offer training at Hidden Earth and he asked whether Training Committee had been approached. GM said that Dena Proctor went last year, but was not given any space to run the proposed SRT training event, so reluctantly Training Committee had decided not to attend in the future.
- 11.4 **GM: Finance** – In 2007 Training Committee had a deficit of roughly £2,000. GM has the feeling that in 2008 there may be a slightly bigger deficit and for this reason is asking people for suggestions re how best to raise more income. He plans to put these changes into effect in January 2009 at the start of the new financial year.

Dave Baines suggested an admin fee for training courses. Candidates on an MLT training course have to buy a sticker to prove that they have taken the course and this might be an option for adding a fee.

Adding a separate admin fee to training courses or Modules 1 to 4 (currently covered by the registration fee) was suggested, but overall it was felt that this would over-complicate administration and add to the Administrator's workload and that it would be best to keep the schemes as simple as possible.

Overall it was thought that the best and simplest course of action was to put up the registration fee. IW said that he had researched finances when he was Training Officer and at the time it appeared that all costs needed to go up by around 33%. The schemes, particularly LCMLA, have changed since, but a 33% rise would mean a figures of £60 for LCMLA registration. It was also suggested that the CIC registration could go up quite a lot more as it is only a nominal fee of £20 if paid for separately.

TR also suggesting putting up the charge for revalidations to £70 (£55 + £15).

All to consider these proposals and others ready for the December meeting when GM will bring figures to show the financial position at that time.

13. Dates and place of next meetings

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| 10:00am – Monday, 8 December 2008 | Staffordshire Council Social Club, Stafford |
| 10:00am – Monday, 18 May 2009 | Staffordshire Council Social Club, Stafford |
| 10:00am – Monday, 14 September 2009 | Staffordshire Council Social Club, Stafford |

The meeting closed at 1:15pm.