



British Caving Association

Minutes of BCA Training Committee held on Tuesday 13th October
at Staffordshire Council Staff Club, Stafford

The meeting commenced at 11:05 am. The delay was due to an accident on the M6

1. Present

Graham Mollard (GM)	Training Officer
Tom Peacock (TP)	Chairman of National Co-ordinating Panel
Nigel Ball (NB)	Chairman of CIC Panel
Nigel Atkins (NA)	DCA Training Officer
Juliet Parker-Smith (JPS)	Association of Heads Rep
Steve Higgins (SH)	Joint Services Mtn Trng Wing
John Cliffe	Co-opted
Mary Wilde (MW)	Training Administrator

2. Apologies for Absence

Idris Williams (IW)
Tom Redfern (TR) (was unable to arrive in time due to traffic jam)

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2009

The minutes were accepted.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Level Three

GM stated that this had now been rejected and any remaining requirements would be covered by the CIC scheme.

4.2. Emergency Card.

GM explained that an initial run of 1000 cards had been produced and examples were given to committee members. Sponsorship for future runs is being sought and any sponsoring organisation will be able to have its logo on the cards. **SH** asked if the cards were to be sold and **GM** explained that they were to be free. **MW** said they were being included in registration packs. **TP** added that **MW** is to arrange for them to go out to new BCA insurance subscribers and **GM** said that this had already been set up.

4.3 Revalidation.

NB said that the Derbyshire panel had discussed 'routes to revalidation'. There used to be a number of ways of revalidating involving up-skilling and assessment but at present only completing L2 re-sets the clock. There was a proposal that module 6, (cave to mine or mine to cave module) which is a practical assessment including a local vetting element, should be an alternative method of revalidation.

NA said that it would need to be specified on the day that module 6 was taken that it would count as revalidation too. **GM** asked the meeting to consider if module 6 would reset the clock for Level 1 or /and Level 2. There was a general discussion, which was generally in favour as long as T/A's are able to use discretion. There was a possible issue that this might

have the effect of diluting the number of Revalidation Workshops but **JP-S** felt that this was unlikely, as it would only be taken up by a few leaders.

GM then called for a vote and all being in favour the proposal was agreed and will come into force from 01/01/2010.

4.4 CIC Mines Module

GM said that the 1st mines module will take place this weekend and **NB** has done the 1st training course. Ian Rennie is to do the assessment in slate mines and then metal mines. **TP** noted that Dave Baines has been doing some 1 to 1 CIC training. **NB** stated that if candidates had already achieved 'Level 1 Mines' for two types of mine, they would not need to undertake the CIC mines training and could go straight into assessment.

4.5 T/A's

Simon McCabe application has been approved.

4.6 SRT Training

TP said that SRT training had been discussed at the recent NCP meeting. It was noted that not all panels were in agreement with across the board SRT training. The main objection though was not to introduction of this element but to the fact that the decision had been made by the TC. **GM** responded saying that panels do not make policy; it is the remit of the TC.

A general discussion took place in which the general feeling was that standardisation of L2 training was beneficial and that if people were slightly over trained this would not be a problem.

Further discussion then took place regarding the way the decision had been made. **TP** said that in theory, if panels were to vote on a proposal and reject it, that proposal could still be adopted via the TC. As the TC asks the panels for input their views should be acted upon.

GM said that he had discussed the SRT training with the Derbyshire panel members who had individually agreed with it. It was noted that the Southern England panel was unhappy with the decision. **TP** stated though, that if there had been a panel vote the proposal would have been sustained. **NA** reiterated the view that national scheme must be standardised.

GM summed up and stated that the decision had been made and would be introduced from 01/01/2010.

5. Basic Level One Leader

GM explained the background to this item. It was the view of two T/A's from the Southern England Panel that the scheme at present was not meeting the needs of leaders who simply lead trips in very low risk caves with no rope work required (such as Tom Taylor's Cave). The proposal was to introduce a Basic Level 1 qualification (BL1), which would not incorporate rope work and would restrict the leader to very basic caves.

There then followed a lively and extensive discussion during which the pros and cons were raised. These can be summarised as follows.

GM said for the proposal that there was a danger that not implementing BL1 would result in some leaders leaving the scheme, and that he was aware of actual examples of people in this position. He felt that it was in the interests of caving to retain as many leaders as

possible in order to ensure the provision of safe and professional training etc. There is also a financial implication arising from the loss of leaders from the scheme.

J P-S said **against** the proposal, that the introduction of BL1 would be in effect a dilution of the scheme. She felt that the BCA already has low expectations and that the BCA should not simply be endorsing 'safe' caving but also encouraging the provision of 'quality safe caving'. She felt that BL1 would encourage leaders to take the easy option.

It was felt that the ACI (Association of Cave Instructors) would take the view that BL1 would effectively be a watering down of the BCA scheme. But **GM** pointed out that it was simply meeting the needs of a small group of leaders and that it was better for them to remain under the auspices of the BCA. **TP** felt that BL1 would result in a significant number of leaders taking that option and reiterated the views of **J P-S** that the BCA should encourage safe *and* quality cave leadership.

TP queried how many caves in S Wales would come be applicable to BL1 and gave the example of Eglwys Faen.

JC said that in the Mendip Goatchurch might be a candidate but this cave does have its own risks even though ropes are not required, thus illustrating that cave selection might be problematic.

TP wondered if some T/A's were driving BL1 in order to increase their workload.

SH asked if there were any statistics to support the perceived need for BL1.

GM said that there are no actual stats but he does know of at least 6 Mendip leaders who would leave the scheme if BL1 were not implemented.

NA said that the fact that LCMLA is site specific anyway negates the need for BL1

SH was in agreement with the arguments against put forward by **J P-S**

GM could see some merit in BL1 but emphasised that he was putting forward the views of a panel rather than his own.

TB was able to see arguments on both sides. It would raise more money for the BCA and satisfy the needs of those for whom the current revalidation criteria are too onerous. However he did agree with **J P-S** that the current revalidation requirements are low. **TP** pointed out that this is to change soon with the introduction of the 30-day/quality-trip requirement.

GM said that the decision lay with the TC.

TB asked what the structure would be and **GM** replied that the details would have to be defined once and if agreement was gained to proceed.

GM did state that the caves selected would have to be those with no active streamway and no sections needing rope work. **TP** added that remote caves should not qualify.

NA agreed with **J P-S** and thinks the BCA should encourage leaders to take our current award with its site-specific aspect.

TP felt that if the proposal went to the NCP it would be rejected. But **GM** pointed out that it's a policy decision and if accepted it would only go back to NCP for the selection of appropriate caves.

NB felt that some areas might just not deliver BL1 and **TP** said there was a risk that candidates might find a cave that meets the criteria for BL1 and ask for BL1 to be applied to that cave. **JC** added that this might under-mine panels.

J P-S thinks BL1 would endorse people who don't cave frequently thus delivering safe caving days with little quality. She did agree with the revalidation philosophy.

SH questioned whether such trips could even be deemed safe if the leader does not cave frequently.

GM said it was not a watering down of the scheme but instead BL1 was an additional element.

J P-S said the South Wales panel was against it and **NB** added that the Northern Panel was also against.

SH could not see enough evidence of demand. **J C** said people don't revalidate for many reasons but how many drop out for this reason? Much money has gone into scheme but would the extra money needed to set it up be justified by demand?

GM highlighted that if rejected it was possible that the scheme would lose an area.

GM summed up and called for a vote. With 1 in favour, 4 against and 2 abstentions the proposal was rejected.

SH suggested that the idea should perhaps be looked at again some time in the future but only if statistical evidence of demand was available.

6. Recommendations for Military/Civilian Compatibility

It was agreed to take this item next as **JP-S** had to leave early and her views were key to the discussion.

GM explained that much work had been done by **SH** and **J P-S**. **J P-S** had submitted a report in which the scheme was generally seen as good. Most things other than the group day were seen to have parity with the BCA scheme. There would be a need to introduce a Military group day using local people for assessment.

SH presented a diagram that showed areas of parity and will email a copy to **MW**.

J S-P suggested that a new military panel would help with the current issue around assessor overload. She also noted that candidates log books generally showed a lot of experience.

SH said it would be run very tightly but some small anomalies would have to be ironed out.

It was noted that the prerequisite for the Military scheme is zero but that if the candidate wished to gain the LCMLA award they would have to fulfil LCMLA prerequisites.

GM would like some courses to be moderated at first.

A discussion then followed regarding the potential implementation of a Military Panel. **SH** said that there were some Military candidates coming through who would be able to deliver the schemes. It was generally agreed that a Military Panel should run in the same way as other panels but would be ring fenced to work solely with Military candidates.

TP suggested that a Military panel should have some external members too and **GM** said he would be happy to attend. **NB** said that it would be good if members of this new panel attended T/A workshops in other areas and **J P-S** added that this should perhaps apply to all T/A's.

GM called for a vote and suggested that he would establish at a later date the details of how the new panel would operate and how any areas of non-parity between the schemes are managed.

GM put forward the following proposal for a vote.

'Do we accept that there is parity between the Military and BCA qualifications up to and including incorporation of mod 5 having an external client base, and subject to the drawing up of criteria for the new panel and assessors'.

As all were in favour the proposal was carried.

At 12:30 **J P-S** left the meeting.

7. LCMLA Handbook Update

GM asked the meeting to consider proposed changes to the LCMLA handbook. After consideration of the first few changes at the meeting it was decided that rather than discuss the handbook, copies should be sent out to all TC members by Friday, and comments returned to **MW** within seven days.

8. Revalidation.

There was a discussion regarding proposed changes to the criteria for revalidation.

GM proposed '30 days caving which much include at least 10 trips of a personal nature. It is important that the candidate continue to develop their wider personal caving experience and as such 5 of their caving days should be of a quality nature'.

The definition of quality days below is taken from the minutes of the Northern Panel Meeting

A "quality" caving experience should satisfy at least four of the following criteria: -

- Exploration of a new route (new to the candidate that is...)*
- Incorporate at least 3 to 4 hours of underground exploration*
- An experience that "stretches" an individuals caving knowledge, skills and awareness*
- Incorporates caving skills above the Level 1 range of skills*
- Of a candidates own making (i.e. not a led experience such that they are being taken caving*
- Involves the application of vertical skills*
- Exploration of "active" cave systems'*

At 13:30 **NA** left the meeting

9. National Co-ordinating Panel Report

TP said that an NCP meeting took place last week and was well attended. A question had been raised regarding when the 'quality trips' criteria would be implemented and **GM** responded that this would happen from 01/01/2010.

The NCP asked for the TC minutes to be issued in a timely manner and go to all ALO's. **GM** agreed for this to happen.

The flooding and weather document was discussed and some changes made including the addition of more local examples. **GM** asked for some photographs to be added to the document and he is to send any he has to **MW**.

9.1 Panel Reports

North Wales. Des Marshall is now a full member of the panel and has applied to be a mines rep for the Forest Of Dean. **JC** queried which mines he would be using as there are none in the forest with valid inspections.

Derbyshire. Des Marshall has resigned from the Derbyshire panel.

The fee for Revalidation Workshops and expenses was discussed at the Derbyshire panel and the NCP. It was felt that £175 not enough if there is a limit of £25 for room hire. **GM** said

that if the TC increases fees then he could raise expenses. **GM** asked the meeting to suggest what the fee should be and it would be considered at the next TC.

Dave Baines had agreed to broker a meeting between Steve Pope and Dave Carlisle regarding the future of the mines inspection role. Dena Procter had added at the NCP that Dave Carlisle was aware of the Steve Pope offer and was happy to discuss it further.

J

Jez Parr was ratified as a full level 1 and 2 T/A on the Derbyshire Panel.

After some mines trips with Cornwall cavers, Dave Baines raised the possibility that in the future there may be demand for a new area covering Cornwall. .

Southern. The panel wished for a reduction in the number of panel meetings per year to two. Initially this was agreed but on reflection at the NCP **TP** felt that this would interrupt the flow of business between the panel and the NCP. After some discussion at this TC it was stated that there must be three meetings per year and **MW** was asked to ensure this went into the new edition of the handbook.

JC is to establish is Steve Tomalin wants to stay involved with a panel.

9.2 Timing of meetings.

The NCP set dates for the next 3 meetings in advance. This should allow the panels to arrange their meetings before NCP meetings, i.e. once the minutes of the previous NCP had been issued. It was requested that the minutes of the NCP Meeting go direct to all panel member once checked by **TP**. **GM** agreed. The minutes will remain as DRAFT until ratified at the subsequent meeting.

10. CIC Report

NB said that the Panel meeting planned for last week had been postponed. He is still trying to set a new date.

The CIC scheme is ticking over. **NA** is now a full T/A for CIC and Phil Baker is starting his apprenticeship.

NB wanted to remind everyone that his authority must be gained before CIC assessment can start. **MW** added that there is now a logbook page produced which documents that this has been done. **MW** was asked to send a warning letter addressing this issue to one Trainer Assessor, signed by **GM**.

The CIC handbook is being rewritten and should be ready by January.

MW stated that we would soon run out of CIC handbooks and a CD would be went out as a temporary measure.

11. Teaching Training and Coaching Concepts

There was a discussion about the place in the LCMLA scheme for training and coaching skills. **NB** said that at CIC level the main weakness in leaders is ability to teach and it is a personal technical ability course rather than a teaching course. We should put more focus into assessment of the candidate's ability to instruct and coach.

The meeting discussed whether and how teaching and coaching skills should be introduced into the LCMLA scheme and whether this should come from the top down, i.e. starting with the T/As, or be introduced within an LCMLA training module.

NB suggested that a ½ day on skills acquisition is set up for selected T/As with the tutor fees coming from the BCA. **GM** said this would have to go to the BCA exec. **NB** is to establish what it would cost to put on a 1day workshop.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 TP is to discuss with **SH** a report of military activity in the White Horse area of Porth yr Ogof.

12.2 A draft document has been produced by the AALS and is available on their website, giving advice on combined water and rock activities. **MW** is to send this to all T/As for feedback by 30/10.

12.3 SRT kits are now available in the North for anyone running CIC courses or LCMLA assessments. 6 SRT kits are also available the South.

12.4 Grants

Crew Caving Club has applied for a grant of £100 to run a basic SRT course for new members.

Crew Caving Club has applied for a grant of £100 for a basic first aid underground survival course run by Dr Brenan Sloane on 10/10/09.

Shepton Mallet Caving Club has applied for a grant on £168 for a course on SRT rescue techniques to be run by Chris Binding. There will be 12 places on this course.

All three requests were granted.

13. Dates and Place of Next Meetings

Tuesday 8th December 2009 (**SH** gave his apologies in advance)

Monday 10th May 2010

Sat 16th October 2010

The meeting closed at 14:10