

BCA Newsletter No 26

July 2016

Edited by Robin Weare



Chairman's Introduction

It's now three weeks since the BCA AGM and the new officers are beginning to settle in to their positions. There is clearly a lot to do with BCA over the next year or so.

Euro Speleo is only a month and a half away and we have well over 1000 delegates, it's looking very good and the organisation is now coming together, let's hope above all else for good weather. At Euro Speleo we will have the entire bureau of the International Union of Speleology who will use the event as their annual meeting, so it's an opportunity to meet cavers from all over the world. In addition, we will be welcoming the European Speleological Federation with members from all over Europe.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the out-going BCA officers. Paul Ibberson is retiring as Treasurer, Dave Judson who has done many roles within British caving bureaucracy and worked extraordinarily hard over the last 50 years or so, we thank you very much indeed for all your efforts. Finally, I should like to particularly thank Damian Weare for all the work he has put in as BCA Secretary and the support he has given me personally over many years - I shudder to think how we would have managed without him.

Thank you to Robin Weare for bringing this newsletter together. I look forward to seeing you all at Euro Speleo

Andy Eavis
BCA Chairman

New BCA Officers

There were several changes to appointments at the 2016 Annual General Meeting.

Simon Brooks is now Secretary of BCA; Robin Weare is Acting Treasurer and Bob Mehew is Legal and Insurance Officer.

Council is also pleased to welcome Pete Hall, of the Cheddar Caving Club, as an Individual Member Representative and John 'Mole' Hine as a Club Representative. Idris Williams, having stepped down as the Association of Scout Caving Teams representative, returns to Council in his new role as Club Representative.

The updated list of Officers and Council Members and their contact details is [here](#).

BCA Council Meetings

Council meetings are held after the AGM and then at approximately quarterly intervals. Although voting is restricted to members of the Council all BCA members are welcome to attend and join the discussion.

The meetings in 2016/17 start at 10.30am on 1st October 2016, 7th January 2017 and 25th March 2017 and will be held at The Red Lion, Alvechurch B48 7LG.

The 2017 Annual General Meeting will be held at the Rotary Centre, Castleton on 11th June 2017 as part of the 2017 Party Weekend.

Proposed Constitutional Changes

There were two proposals to amend the BCA constitution at the recent AGM. The first would allow proxy voting at general meetings and after much discussion the original proposal was withdrawn in favour of

Proposal: This meeting approves the principle of proxy voting and directs Council to develop a form of words that best fits the Association to then be presented at a future General Meeting.

This proposal was passed by both houses.

The second proposal was to amend the wording of the first sentence in item 4.6 of the Constitution and once again there was considerable discussion which resulted in the withdrawal of the original proposal in favour of

Proposal: To remit the issue of section 4.6 of the Constitution to Council for consideration to return with a properly worded proposal presented at the next General Meeting. Meanwhile BCA will concentrate on conservation and landowner relations.

This proposal was passed by both houses.

The meeting was conscious that any constitutional amendment passed at a general meeting would require ratification by a costly ballot of both houses and that a review of the constitution had been pending for some time. It is now up to Council to ensure that the review will be completed in time for full proposals to be considered by the 2017 AGM.

Full details of the discussions which took place are recorded in the draft minutes.

Eurospeleo 2016 Update

The event is now very nearly upon us with over 1,000 tickets sold!

There is room for more and there is [still time to book!](#) A discounted rate of £100 is available until 31st July 2016, the final date for advance bookings.

The Banquet is nearly full - if you'd like a ticket just [contact the bookings manager](#) who will be happy to arrange one for you.

Day Visitors will be welcome if there is space available. Day tickets will not be on sale in advance and are strictly “subject to availability”. The rates have now been set at:

- £20 (access to all day and evening events) including overnight camping
- £10 evening only (including overnight camping)
- £5 evening only
- £5 caving only

Daytime Activities

There will be plenty to do every day, both indoors and outdoors:

Caving, of course, in some of the best caves in Britain

At the venue, there will be a caving ‘reception desk’, where copies of all the cave descriptions will be available to take away as a printed page. Clear polythene bags (or maybe a laminator) will also be available to give protection underground. Copies of all the main local guidebooks will be available to view and for you to take additional notes. The surveys of several of the larger caves systems (including Ease Gill Caverns and the Gaping Gill system) will be on display. Experienced cavers from the area will be available at the ‘reception desk’ to help with planning your day out.

Cave & Trip Descriptions are now online. Each trip has been timed and graded for wet weather, technical difficulty, caving difficulty and optimised for printing. Visit <http://eurospeleo.uk/caves/descriptions.php> from where you can print out the descriptions; connect to an area map and find separate pages of novice and wet weather trips.

Circular walks from the Dalesbridge Centre

Some suggested walks that can be done starting and ending at the Dalesbridge Centre (Eurospeleo), without the need for a car, are detailed on the Eurospeleo website and will be available as hand outs at the venue. There are descriptions of four harder, longer walks which should take a full day and four shorter/easier walks. These walks mostly revolve around the famous Three Peaks of Yorkshire (Ingleborough, Whernside and Penyghent).

Lectures, Workshops and Field Trips

There will be a series of lectures each day and it is hoped to have a good balance on all aspects of caving, including (but not limited to):

- Academic/scientific
- New explorations
- History/retrospectives
- Overviews of caving areas
- Teaching (e.g. survey/photography techniques)
- New equipment
- Personal memoirs
- Informal/Funny

There will also be a variety of hands-on practical **workshops**.

Although the official date has passed offers to run a workshop are still welcome. This can involve anything you wish; a scientific discussion, comparing caving technology (surveying or lighting equipment), training sessions; anything that would work well as an interactive round-table session.

There are a number of **field trips and guided events** already planned. These include:

- Geology walks
- Archaeological excavations
- Guided caving trips (either scientific or sporting)
- Local interests

Details of the programme of activities for non caving partners will be available from reception.

Early Evening Activities

The La Salle 3D Team - experts in 3D photography will be showing their films in the early part of each evening. They will be bringing all their kit and some truly stunning caving films presented in a totally new way. Those who have already seen some of their films tell us they are quite amazing.

The Bar – will be open pretty well all day every day and stocked with a variety of drinks including a range of beers from up and down the country, cider, lager, wines, spirits and soft drinks. Everyone attending will be provided with their own glass to take away as a souvenir.

Eating - The catering and banquet will be provided by [Chapman Holmes Catering](#) who have been established for over 25 years and have worked on some of the largest events in the UK. All food will be cooked fresh and to order and available throughout the day.

Later on

The bar will be open, food will be available and each evening in the Main Marquee there will be a different theme with something for everyone across the week. All entertainment is free for all delegates except the Banquet, which is by pre-booked ticket only.

Saturday 13th

Opening ceremony followed by Retrospect Bury (Live band) with DJ afterwards

Sunday 14th

Ceilidh with DJ afterwards.

Monday 15th

Quiz, Caving Games

Tuesday 16th

CHECC (Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs) night - the students take over!

Wednesday 17th

Banquet with speaker then disco (Basher and Eddie Sharp Pencil) till late. Note that the banquet needs to be booked with your ticket. If you have not booked it and would like to add it on, please contact bookings@eurospeleo.uk

Thursday 18th

60's and 70's disco with Basher and Eddie Sharp Pencil

Friday 19th

Presentation evening followed by Dance/Rave night.

Saturday 20th

Closing ceremony and Rock Night with Rockaholic and then disco with Basher and Eddie Sharp Pencil

and don't forget

The Trade Hall & Club Stands will be open all week, the normal wide range of competitions will be happening and the Craven Pothole Club Ltd will be operating their Gaping Gill winch all week (for delegates only and at a special discounted fee).

Other things to do

Join a dig with a difference - Ben Scar Cave Excavation

Under the Uplands is an exciting new project uniting archaeologists, researchers and Yorkshire's well-established caving community with the public to bring the region's distinctive cave archaeology to international attention. As part of the project, the DigVentures team will be excavating Ben Scar Cave, near Settle, Yorkshire, during the week of the EuroSpeleo Congress (15 – 21st August). Congress delegates are encouraged to come along as visitors or participants (free of charge). No previous experience of cave archaeology is necessary. This is no ordinary cave dig: there is no known record of any previous investigation in Ben Scar and the team will be using photogrammetry (3D digital photography and modelling) to record their finds and trenches, as well as offering all participants a taster session in this essential recording skill.

Take the children inside a lime kiln

An information pack with details of child friendly caves and walks, local play areas, swimming pools, show caves and climbing walls will also tell you where to find the Hoffman Limekiln - just a few miles from Dalesbridge.

The Hoffmann kiln was built at Langcliffe, near Settle, in 1873. It is an industrial scale lime kiln which was constructed for the Craven Lime Company. It has 22 individual burning chambers and being fairly unique to Britain is well worth visiting.

Visit the Rope Testing Rig

Work has been progressing for over 6 years to develop instrumentation on the Bradford Pothole Club's rope test rig (see CREG Journals 75 and 90). That development work has almost been completed and the rig is now entering operational mode. An opportunity to see the rig in operation will arise during EuroSpeleo 2016 when a field trip will be organised to the Bradford's garage. Meanwhile, details of the development work can be found [here](#) .

BCA Online - A Plea to Club Secretaries

BCA Online was successfully launched at the beginning of June 2015. BCA Online allows members to login under their own membership number and set their own email contact preferences. They can change their email address and password as necessary. They can review their membership details (membership status, insurance status, address, etc) as held by BCA. If those need to be updated they can email the Membership Administrator. This provides BCA with a verified and maintained list of email addresses and crucially, to remain legal, the consents to use them. This mailing list has been used to distribute the BCA Newsletter to members since Issue 23, Oct 2015.

Unfortunately fewer than 10% of members have registered to receive the Newsletter. BCA Online is being continually improved with particular effort being spent on tidying up the records and spotting inconsistencies in the submissions from the clubs

We are particularly keen to communicate better with our members but of the 6,022 member records only 3,795 have email addresses (63%), only 478 have opted in for the Newsletter (8%) and only 124 (2%) have registered online.

Will you please help us by including the following item in your next newsletter or by sending it directly to the members of your club.

By supplying BCA with an email address, members can receive administrative email that is necessary to run BCA/BCRA, for example renewal notices. But to receive other more promotional material, such as the Newsletter, members must also register with BCA Online and update their email preferences accordingly. This slightly frustrating way of working is as a result of the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (PECR), an act passed with the laudable but vain attempt to protect us from spam.

Hopefully more members will opt in as time passes. The process isn't difficult – go to the main website (www.british-caving.org.uk) and click on the “BCA Online” option top right hand side. Then click on “Request Login Details”, fill in your email address and click the green submit button. If your email address is found, the system will send you an email with a link to allow you to set your password and log in. If your email address isn't found please follow the instructions on the screen.

*Once you have logged in you can click on “Email Preferences” to opt-in and receive the BCA Newsletter direct to your inbox. **Please note you can opt-out of email communication at any time by using the same screen.***

Whilst there you can also quickly click on “Your Profile” to check that BCA has your correct contact and insurance details.

BCA's Accounts Explained

BCA's 2015 accounts are attached to the draft minutes of the AGM. Here, retiring Treasurer, Paul Ibberson, gives his observations in plain English.

Once more the broad picture is very similar to the previous couple of years. There have been no fundamental departures from the basic setup and operation of the main areas of activity. Certain transactions have impacted on the detail, mostly the impact of several large and non-recurring costs in the prior year, but the overall scenario remains the same - the Association continues to be in the healthy position of being able to comfortably meet its running costs for the time being and the Reserves position is strong in light of the current expectations of foreseeable requirements.

Subscription income was in line with the prior year. Against this, the cost of administering membership fell slightly once more; reduced insurance premiums were the main driver here. General Association running costs reduced with the absence of the costs of the CRoW ballot which was charged in 2014.

Training Services again ran a deficit during the year. The noted cyclical reduction in Training Scheme registration income failed to cycle back into balance and whilst the costs of this area of the Association were constant, income was insufficient to achieve the budgeted breakeven position. Further discussion of the detail of these matters is planned between the Treasurers and the Training Officer and details of any review conclusions will be presented to Council prior to the 2017 Budget process.

Caver Training costs reduced somewhat in the year, although it should be noted that further support of both the voluntary sector and recreational caver training has been occurring in the early part of 2016.

Publication costs were dramatically reduced with no charges for either the Handbook or Speleology, although some costs were incurred for the final paper version of the Newsletter prior to its reinvigoration in electronic format. E&T expenses were increased with notable costs attributable to the anchor programme being charged.

Meetings & Conferences costs were much reduced in light of the jointly hosted AGM Party Weekend. The costs associated with the provision of Web Services were higher in the year and this resulted in a small overall deficit. Funding of Expeditions (via the Ghar Parau Foundation) and the British Caving Library has continued at the same level as previous years and Regional Council funding was in line with the prior year.

Overall, the position for the year is that the Association recorded a surplus of £19,481. From this surplus £15,000 has been transferred to the Insurance Reserve. The latter is a re-designation of the Sinking Fund which better reflects the true purpose and has initially been funded to the level of approximately two years of premium.

Conservation Publications

Andrew Hinde, BCA's Conservation & Access Officer, tells us of two important new publications from the Conservation & Access Committee.

The Minimal Impact Caving Guidelines have now been published online and can be accessed from the BCA website. We have also printed 2,000 paper copies in the form of a leaflet. Half of these will be distributed at EuroSpeleo and the remainder will be sent to the Regions for distribution.

The BCA C&A Committee have been working over the past year to re draft the Caving Code. This used to be 12 paragraphs long and clearly had little uptake by cavers or their institutions. The new 6 point Cave Conservation Code is short, memorable and hopefully more effective.

1 Cave with care and thought for the environment.

2 Disturb nothing whether living or geological.

3 Avoid touching formations.

4 Keep to marked routes and never cross conservation tapes.

5 Take nothing but photographs.

6 Do not pollute the cave, leave nothing behind.

We would like to see this Code distributed as widely as possible by Regional Caving Councils and Caving Clubs. We would ask that all older versions of the Code are withdrawn from websites and publications where ever possible.

The new Cave Conservation Code can be downloaded from the [BCA Website](#).

BCA's Website and Cave Registry Archive

Dave Cooke is BCA's webmaster; he tells us

In 2015 as a monthly average there were 5986 page views, 2055 sessions and 1436 individual users of the main BCA website. The top 10 pages were: Welcome, Training LCMLA Scheme, Training Downloads, About BCA, Membership, News & Events, PL Insurance, Contact BCA, Training, PL Insurance Documents, Member Clubs. The website is being used and that usage is pretty consistent over time.

The Cave Registry Archive has continued to grow and is now a substantial 25GB in size. Some of the many hosted projects and data sets include the Cheddar Catchment, Matienzo, the DYO Catchment, Leck Fell and Three Counties, County Clare, Lathkill, Mynydd Llangattwg, Sarawak, Wookey Catchment and Thailand. If you have survey data that needs a home, go to cave-registry.org.uk for further details.

Youth & Development Projects

BCA's Youth & Development Officer, Rostram Namaghi, has ambitious plans for the coming year, some of which are well advanced. His programme for 2016/17 includes:

- A caving club handbook, detailing what has worked for other clubs in the past, common problems, and most importantly how to avoid problems down the line (currently in its second draft, it will be published in September).
- Starting up Speleology Research Groups and making a national network to keep scientists in caving.
- Improve SRT training in clubs by offering training on how to train at Northern and Southern CHECC. Should this be successful, then it may be extended to the national forum.
- A guide to Caving Clubs in Higher Education for the student interested in caving will be released at the same time as the caving club handbook.
- Identify any mountaineering clubs that wish to develop caving sections and offer support and help plan their fresher season.

Cave Access Update

Ogof Fynnon Ddu (South Wales)

Those who don't belong to a club with an annual permit can now apply for an OFD permit online via the OFDCMC's [new website](#).

Applicants are asked to bear in mind that the role of permit secretary is a voluntary one and to allow at least two weeks for an application to be processed.

Access to Caves in the Upper Dove area (Derbyshire)

Note that the Etches family at Dowall Hall Farm have requested that cavers stay away from caves on their land for the moment; this includes Etches Cave, Dowell Cave, Dowell Dale Side Pot, etc.

This does NOT apply to Owl Hole: there is no need to ask at the farm to visit Owl Hole but park sensibly on the grass verge a little way down from the Hole. Be careful not to block the tractor turning circle immediately before the gate at the top of the dale and, on no account, park on the grass alongside the unfenced road further on (land belonging to Greensides Farm). If you visit caves on land belonging to Stoop Farm, e.g. Bottle Pot, please call at the Farm first to ask permission.

Please note: The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the formal view of the British Caving Association.