



## Council Meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 Minutes

via Zoom

19.45 pm to 22:15 pm

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**Next Meeting Important Agenda Items**

2 <sup>nd</sup> February 7.17 pm
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## Council Positions, Attendance and Report Status Table

### Voting Positions

Position	Name & Initials		Atn (y/n)	Report Status	
				Last	New
<b>BCA Executive</b>					
Chairman (2018- 2021) 3 years	Phil Rowsell	PJR	Y	02/12/2020	Yes
Secretary (2019- 2022) 3 years	Russell Myers	RM	Y		
Treasurer (2020 - 2020) 3 years	Howard Jones	HJJ	Y	02/12/2020	Yes
<b>Group/Club Representatives</b>					
Position 1 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Hellie Adams	HA	Y		
Position 2 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Josh White	JW	Y		
Position 3 - (2020-2022 - 2 years)	Lydia Leather	LL	Y		
Position 4 - (2020-2022 - 2 years)	Idris Williams	IW	Y		
<b>Individual Member Representatives</b>					
Position 1 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Pete Knight	PK	Y		
Position 2 - (2019-2021 - 2 years)	Martin Hoff (See notes)	MF	Y		
Position 3 - (2020-2022 - 2 years)	Jenny Potts	JP	Y		
Position 4 - (2020-2022 - 2 years)	Andrew McLeod	AM	N		
<b>Chairs of Standing Committees</b>					
Training Officer (2018-2021 - 3 years)	Nigel Atkins	NA	Y	02/12/2020	No
Equipment and Techniques Officer (2020-2023 -3 years) Co-opted	Mark Sims	MS	Y	04/11/2020	No
Conservation & Access Officer (2019 – 2022 - 3 years)	Will Burn	WB	Y	02/12/2020	Yes
Publications & Information Officer	Rostam Namaghi	RN	Y	18/08/2020	No
<b>Regional Council Representatives</b>					
Cambrian Caving Council	Stuart France	SF	Y		
Council of Northern Caving Clubs	Andrew Hinde	AH	Y		
Council of Southern Caving Clubs	Linda Wilson	LW	Y		
Derbyshire Caving Association	Wayne Sheldon	WS	Y		
Devon and Cornwall Underground Council	David Jean	DJ	Y		
<b>Constituent Body Representatives</b>					
William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust	Richard Vooght	RV	Y		
Association of Caving Instructors	Stephan Natynczuk	SN	Y		
National Caving Scout Active Support Unit	Tony Radmall	TR	Y		
British Cave Research Association	John Gunn	JG	Y	02/12/2020	Yes

National Association of Mining History Organisations	Steve Holding	SH	Y		
Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs	David Botcherby	DB	Y		
Cave Diving Group	Claire Cohen	CC	N		
British Cave Rescue Council	Emma Porter	EP	N		

**Note** Dave Botcherby CHECC representative is standing down forthwith and being replaced by Jennifer Ryder in attendance at the meeting.

## Non -Voting Positions

Position	Name & Initials	Atn (y/ n)	Report Status		
			Last	New	
<b>Working Group Convenors</b>					
Information Technology	Ari Cooper-Davis	ACD	Y	18/08/2020	No
Youth and Development	Josh White	JW	Y	18/08/2020	No
CRoW Annual	David Rose	DR	N	04/11/2020	No
Qualifications Management Committee (QMC)	Juliet Parker-Smith	JPS	Y	02/12/2020	Yes
Vision	Hellie Adams	HA	Y		
Radon	Gethin Thomas	GT	Y	02/12/20	Yes
<b>Additional BCA Appointments</b>					
Insurance Manager	Howard Jones	HHJ	Y	02/12/2020	Yes
Membership Administrator	Wendy Williams	WW	N	04/11/2020	No
Safeguarding Officer	Chris Boardman	CB	Y		
Training Administrator	Mary Wild	MW	N		
Library Representative	Jenny Potts	JP	Y	02/12/2020	Yes
Newsletter Editor	Davis Rose	DR	N		
UIS Representative	Andy Eavis	AE	Y	02/12/2020	Yes
FSE Representative	Ged Campion	GC	Y	02/12/2020	Yes
Rope Testing	Bob Mehew	BM	N	02/12/2020	Yes
Artificial Cave	Katie Eavis	KE	N		
QMC Representative 1	Phil Rowsell	PJR	Y		
QMC Representative 2	Chris Boardman	CB	Y		
Observers	Nick Williams	NW	Y		

## Agenda item 2: Acceptance of the 4<sup>th</sup> November Meeting Minutes

The minutes were accepted unanimously on a proposal from JP seconded RV.

## Agenda item 3: Matters arising

1. Radon - GT introduced his additional report and following detailed discussion it was agreed on a proposal from the Chair that a working group comprising GT, WB, PK, AE, and CB be formed to consider the issues raised regarding further survey work and report back to Council in time for the Summer season. All in favour with one abstention – CB.
2. JW proposed, second H.A. that all future voting be recorded by name – agreed unanimously (see attendance list above).
3. GC introduced his FSE report regarding cost/benefit including a proposal, second LW to retain the WG which, after discussion was accepted unanimously (see attendance list above).
4. IYKC – JG reported

### Action plan

Issue	Who	By when	Signed off
Radon group – Working Group to form re further survey work	GT	Before Summer Season.	
Contribution to Mick Day Memorial	Secretary	As required	
Distribution of IC Anchors by CNCC	AH	03/12/2020	
Training Proposals outstanding from December Meeting	RM	02/02/2021	

## Agenda item 4: Chairman's Report

The Chair reported on two BCA initiatives to stimulate caving in the Summer ahead one based in Yorkshire and the other to the PSM system in France for which he requested Council support. The Yorkshire event would require funding from BCA whilst the PSM event would be organised on a self-funding basis and both events would be open to all cavers.

After some discussion the Chair proposed, seconded by TR that approval in principle be given for the Yorkshire event subject to a budget being submitted which was carried with 3 abstentions HA, AH and RM .

The Chair proposed, second HA that a BCA event be held at the PSM and which agreed unanimously.

## **Agenda item 5: BCA Treasurer Report**

The Treasurer HR added to his report a reference to a sum of £3000 which would be paid to Yorkshire Dales Guides as part of the Stories in Stone initiative.

## **Agenda Item 6: BCA Insurance Managers report**

The Insurance Manager had nothing to add to his report.

## **Agenda Item 7: Other Reports**

In the absence of DR CRoW Convener, SF gave an update of the situation to date whereby the legal team were submitting an appeal to the Appeal Court on a no time cost but a £500 Court administration fee. He gave an account of how we had reached this position.

In the interests of time the following reports were taken as read with no issues arising:

International Year of Caving and Karst

Library

FSE dealt with in matters arising

QMC and the Training Officer's Report, by agreement were carried over into the next item.

## **Agenda Item 8: Training Officer and QMC**

The Chair outlined the Executive's Report on Training previously circulated and proposed consideration of each recommendation for adoption, deferment or rejection.

SF reported feedback from Cambrian CC which was in summary to separate QMC from BCA and set itself up as a self-regulating body comparable to other constituent bodies such as BCRA or the Scouts. It was pointed out what a very significant undertaking this would be and after further discussion HR proposed that a Working Group be formed to consider the matter and report back to Council before the next AGM and in the meantime continue to discuss the proposals before us, second NA and agreed with 2 abstentions LW and LL.

### **Proposal 1.1 forming a Training Oversight/Liaison Group**

The Chair put proposal 1.1 to form a Training Oversight/Liaison Group to the meeting, after some discussion it was agreed to change the title to Training Liaison Support Group proposed from the Chair, second TR and carried by majority with none against and 6 abstentions NA, JW, WS, JR and SF.

The original proposal 1.1 to form this Group (now named Training Liaison Support Group) was put to the vote and agreed by majority with none against and 7 abstentions RN, AH, JW, JR, LL, WB and WS.

### **Proposal 1.2 Equalisation**

In introducing this proposal, the Chair clarified the standing of QMC and Training Committee. QMC is a Working Group established by Council and Training Committee is a full committee established by an AGM. A discussion ensued about the logistics of changing a Committee which

would need approval by an AGM. It was agreed to defer a decision on this proposal to another meeting.

### **Proposal 1.3 Appointment of Convenors**

After discussion about the relevance of this having regard to 1.2 it was agreed by a majority with one against, SF and 5 abstentions NA, WB, JW, RN and WS on a proposal from the Chair second LW to the methodology within the proposal for the appointment of Convenor/Officer within the respective group.

### **Proposal 1.4 Complaints and Concerns**

The Chair recommended deferring action on this and referring the matter to the Constitution and Manual of Operations Working Party for consideration.

### **Proposal 1.5 Website Training Pages**

The improved changes to the Website regarding Training were acknowledged and endorsed.

### **Proposal 1.6 Name changes**

Immediate difficulties with the changing the name of QMC were identified as new certification bearing this title had just been issued to all award holders in Britain. The Chair proposed, second PK and carried by a majority with 1 against; HJJ and 3 abstentions; SF, RV, and WB deferring action to change the name of QMC until a later date.

Following further discussion the Chair proposed, second SF and carried by a majority with none against and 6 abstentions; NA, TR, WS, JW, HA, and WB that the name of Training Committee be changed to Recreational Training Committee.

### **Proposal 2.1 The BCA Coaching Scheme Convenor**

Training Officer NA proposed deferring this to consider the effect of the change of name to Recreational Training Committee by the Committee, second TR, and carried by a majority with none against and 1 abstention; WB.

### **Proposal 2.2 BCA Coaching Scheme Working Group make-up**

After some discussion about numbers and make-up of the current Training Committee, the Chair, second NA, proposed withdrawing this proposal which was carried by a majority with none against and 3 abstentions; TR, WB and LW.

### **Proposal 2.3 BCA Coaching/Training Events**

The Chair described the comparison between QMC with identified systems and procedures in place for how events take place and (Recreational) Training Committee with none, particularly with regard to payment. Following a detailed discussion when issues of conflict of interest and transparency were raised, the Chair, second HA, put the proposal to the meeting and it was carried by majority with 8 for; RM, JR, LW, PK, JW, HA, SN and JP. 4 against; SF, SH, NA, IW and 9 abstentions; AH, LL, DJ, RN, WB, WS, RV, TR and HJJ.

### **Proposal 3.1 BCA Qualification Scheme Working Group make up**

Following some discussion on this proposal it was felt that with the lateness of the hour, the Chair, second IW, proposed that this and the following proposals i.e. 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1 and 4.2 be deferred to a later date which was agreed unanimously.

A proposal from the Chair, second LW, was carried by majority with none against and 2 abstentions; WB and IW to defer consideration of The Training Officer's Report to a further meeting.

In winding up the meeting, the Chair paid tribute to Dave Botcherby who was standing down from his role as CHECC Representative, for his work on Council.

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm

### **Agenda Item 9: Standardisation of BCA Processes and Documentation**

Deferred to a further meeting.

### **Agenda Item 10: Any other business**

Formation of a Northern Ireland Regional Council

Deferred to a further meeting.

### **Agenda Item 11: Date of next Council meeting**

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 at 7.15 pm .

## **Appendices**

### **Reports:**

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William Burn

Conservation and Access Officer

Report to BCA council for meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December

The first few months of this post have been me finding my feet. I am reading a lot, emailing a lot and gathering information and starting to feel more comfortable.

This is what is going on currently:

1. C&A approval and access related spend  
The C&A committee has approved spending for specific future access projects amounting to approximately £9600.
  - The projects entail:
    - Entrance stabilisation and installation of grille at Manor Farm Swallet (CSCC Project)
    - Repairing flooring at Manor Farm Barn, Priddy (CSSS Project)
    - Gating and CSCC keying three mines at Shipham at the request of Shipham Football Club (CSCC Project)
    - Gating of caves at Blakes Farm (CSCC Project)
    - A gate for Compton Ochre Mine + fittings (CSCC project)
    - Grassington Moor mineshaft fencing (CNCC/Grassington Mines Appreciation Group)
2. I have reworked the email contacts lists for the C&A officer so that future volunteers will have everything they need. I have also started getting in touch with organisations related to caving that also work on C&A for other outdoor sports in a bid to keep abreast of other issues. I will shortly start work on the C&A section of the website.
3. The BCA has applied to become a Natural England Nature Recovery Network Delivery Partner. I envisage this generating goodwill – I also see it as caver's responsibility to monitor and conserve our natural (caving) heritage. We are well placed to assist Natural England in this. This has entailed a significant amount of catching up with our national SSSI caving audits (some fascinating reading!). More information:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network>

If there is any other pressing issues that need to be brought to my attention please do not hesitate to contact me.

William Burn

C&A Officer

[conservation@british-caving.org.uk](mailto:conservation@british-caving.org.uk)

Tel: 07878054636

## **Constitution and Manual Operational Group Report.**

An initial kick off meeting was held on 20th November. A quick discussion of ideas and how the group will tackle the challenge took place with Members reviewing the documents. There are many things that need to be tackled some of which can be addressed as time progresses and be included in a better Constitution and Manual of Operations e.g. Conflict of Interest policy, the Complaints Procedure, Disciplinary Procedures etc. Many of the Corporate identities to be hopefully agreed will also be covered by operating procedures within the Manual of Operations.

The intention of the Work Group is to take a bite size chunks approach when tackling this task, and bring these chunks to Council when ready, rather than expecting Council to review, debate and eventually accept a single document for revision.

Phil Rowsell  
C&MoO Review Group Convenor



Main passage of C8 Cave, Krong No Volcanic Field, Dak Nong Geopark (southern Vietnam), EuroSpeleo Project ESP 2017-10.

Photo: Takeshi Murase



**This Newsletter is issued by the Bureau of the European Speleological Federation (FSE)**

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## Editorial

Regrettably, most speleological activities are again on hold due to the second wave of the problematic Covid-19 pandemic. While everybody hopes that this nightmare will soon be over, we would

like to share some recently received information with all of you.

Please forward this Newsletter as widely as possible to caving clubs and individual cavers.

### The FSE Bureau

## FSE Virtual General Assembly 2020

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the FSE Bureau organised, for the first time in the FSE history, an electronic General Assembly (GAM) through a ZOOM video conference on Thursday evening 24 August 2020.

17 member countries attended the GAM and discussed the activity reports of FSE's Bureau, Commissions and Workgroups, as well as the budget. Voting was done through an electronic voting form provided by the FSE Bureau.

A GAM report and the results of the online voting were made available to members.

Although the meeting worked out very well we sincerely hope to meet in person again at the next GAM that will be held during the 18<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Speleology in Le Bourget-du-Lac in France in July 2021.



The UIS is glad to share with you volume 62-1 of the UIS Bulletin. To all who contributed materials and all readers: we really appreciate your comments and suggestions in order to improve upcoming issues.

The PDF interactive format can be downloaded by clicking on the link:

<http://www.uis-speleo.org/downloads/uis-bulletins/uisb621.pdf>

## FSE Partners



## Cave and Karst related events

Only limited information for the last months in 2020 and for 2021 is provided below, as most of the conferences and speleological camps planned for summer/autumn 2020 have been cancelled or postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For more detailed information please consult the list of European caving events at the FSE website:

<https://eurospeleo.eu/images/stories/docs/bureau/European%20agenda%20of%20speleological%20events%2027-05-2020.pdf>

No reliable information on events outside Europe can currently be provided.

**22-25 April 2021**

**14<sup>th</sup> Int. Symposium on Pseudokarst** - Świętokrzyskie Mts, Poland - <https://14pseudokarst.wonders4you.com/>

**13-16 May 2021**

**Annual meeting of the German cavers** – Truckenthal/Schalkau (Thuringia) – no website yet

**14-18 June 2021**

**28<sup>th</sup> Int. Karstological School: Regional Karstology-Local and General Aspects** - Postojna, Slovenia - <https://iks.zrc-sazu.si/en/>

**22-24 June 2021**

**Eurokarst 2021** - Malaga, Spain - <http://www.eurokarst.org/>

**25 July - 1 August 2021**

**18<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Speleology** - University of Savoie Mont Blanc, France - <http://uis2021.speleos.fr/>

**11-14 July 2021**

**Karst Record IX (KR9) Conference** - Innsbruck, Austria - <https://www.uibk.ac.at/congress/kr9/news/2017/kr9-postponed-to-2021.html.en>

**25 July - 1 August 2021**

**18<sup>th</sup> Int. Congress of Speleology** - Le Bourget-du-Lac, France - <http://uis2021.speleos.fr/>

**NEW DATES: 28 August - 3 September 2021**

**19<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology** - Catania, Sicily, Italy - <http://www.19isvetna.com/>

**30 September - 3 October 2021**

**26<sup>th</sup> Int. Cave Bear Symposium** - Reiss-Engelhorn-Museum, Mannheim, Germany - [doris.doeppes@mannheim.de](mailto:doris.doeppes@mannheim.de)

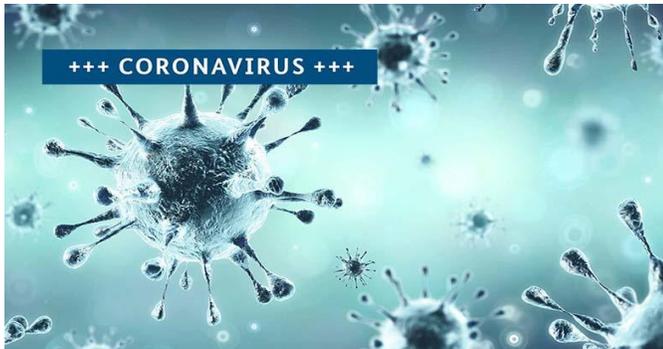
**NEW DATES: 26-30 October 2021**

**6<sup>th</sup> EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium "Assessing, monitoring and protecting cave biotopes and geotopes through Natura 2000 or similar programs in Europe"** - Vilm Island/Baltic Sea, Germany - information at

<https://www.facebook.com/events/438983103449721/>

**29 October - 1 November 2021**

**Speleo Kamaraton 2021. International Meeting** - Marina di Camerota, Salerno, Italy - <http://www.speleokamaraton.eu/>



## UNESCO adds ten new cave/karst related Geoparks to the list

In August 2020 UNESCO designated 15 new Global Geoparks, of which 10 were listed partly for their caves and/or karst resources. They are:

- Discovery (Canada)
- Xiangi (PR China)
- Hantangang (Rep. of Korea)
- Dak Nong (Vietnam - see page 3)
- Yangan-Tau (Russia)
- Rio Coco (Nicaragua)
- Lauhanvuori-Hämeen kangas (Finland)
- Djerdap (Serbia)
- Granada (Spain)
- Maestrazgo (Spain)

This would not have been possible without the work of many speleologists and karst scientists who explored, documented and published these important areas.

More info at: <https://en.unesco.org/news/geopark-2020>

## BERGER 2020 camp successfully conducted (EuroSpeleo Project 2019-15)

High hygienic standards and a strict distancing concept enabled the organizers of the 2020 camp at Gouffre Berger to host 320 speleologists from 11 countries in July/August 2020.

Traditionally, the members of the event contributed to the cleaning of the cave. This time the old "Bivouak Mélusine" at -950 m was targeted by the clean-up teams and over 200 kg of rubbish were taken out of the cave and properly disposed.

Also, at -750 m in the Salle Eymas, scientific work was done with mapping and sampling sediment deposits (rhythmites). Laboratory studies are expected to yield new data about the time, periodicity and conditions of the sediment deposition.

The camp was supported by the Fédération Française de Spéléologie (FFS), the European Speleological Federation (FSE), as well as FSE's equipment sponsors Aventure Verticale, and Scurion.

## EuroSpeleo Project ESP 2017-10 contributed to new UNESCO Geopark in Vietnam

EuroSpeleo Newsletter July 2018 reported about a lava tube documentation project which targeted the Krong No volcanic area in Dak Nong province of southern Vietnam.

The longest pyroclastics of SE Asia are found in the extensive lava field, including 1,067 m long C7 Cave.

The comprehensive report compiled by the project participants covered all the 49 caves known in the area with a total of underground passages of 10.1 km. The project's report, also sent to UNESCO, proved very helpful to support the application of the local authorities to become a Global Geopark.

In consequence, UNESCO officially recognized the now called Dak Nong Geopark as the third Global Geopark in Vietnam in August 2020. The new Geopark covers nearly the whole province of Dak Nong and includes many other scenic, historic and ethnic sites worth visiting.

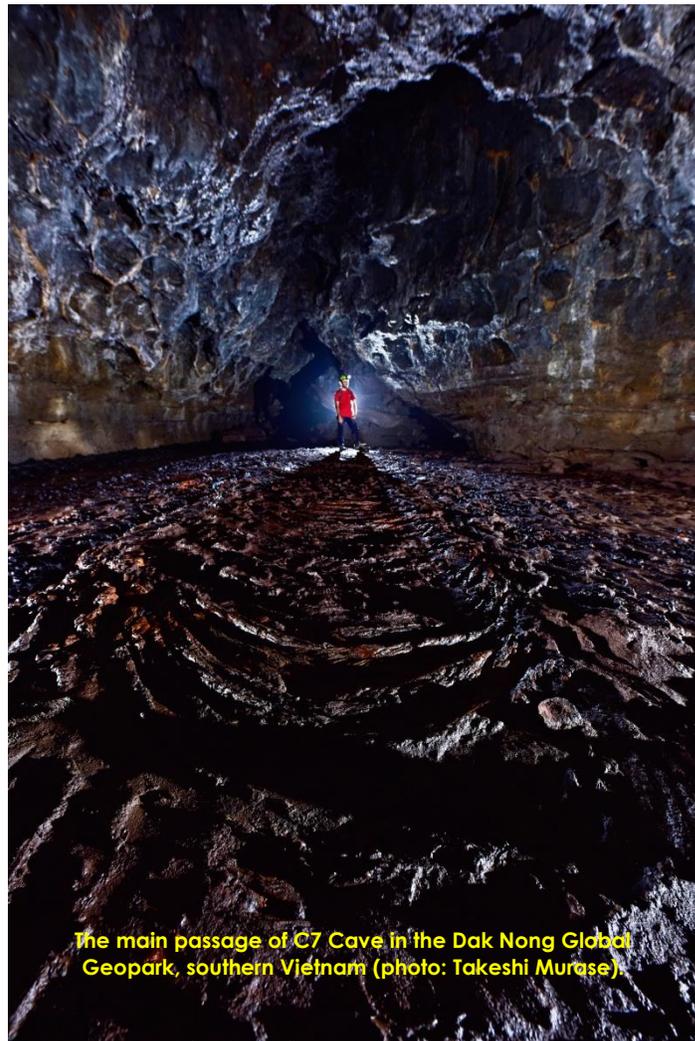


## The International Year of Caves and Karst 2021

Next year will be the International Year of Caves and Karst. The European Speleological Federation FSE fully supports this initiative. This will be the biggest and most important speleological event ever. Your participation as part of the global cave and karst community is crucial. The purpose of the International Year of Caves and Karst (IYCK) is to teach the world about the importance of caves and karst. Public understanding and support of caves and karst is currently very limited. As a result, funding, protective regulations,



**Please send info on all your international events (expeditions, congresses, symposia etc.) to [contact@eurospeleo.org](mailto:contact@eurospeleo.org)**



The main passage of C7 Cave in the Dak Nong Global Geopark, southern Vietnam (photo: Takeshi Murase).

and opportunities for exploration, research, and management are also very limited.

The International Union of Speleology (UIS) has declared 2021 as the IYCK in a major effort to make the world aware of how caves and karst are valuable to all people. To make this possible, the UIS is calling on all of its member countries and other organizations to begin with planning a series of public lectures, programs, demonstration of caving techniques, and other activities for 2021.

The IYCK website is now open at <http://www.iyck2021.org/>. It is designed to teach the public about caves and karst, and so it has a great amount of educational information. It also has information on how to become involved in the IYCK. Please send the activities you plan for the IYCK to <http://iyck2021.org/index.php/contact-us/> so we can post them on the "Events" page of the website. Have a look at the "Partners" page, and if your organization is not listed, send your logo and website address and you will be included. If you know of organizations that should be involved, please contact them. The website will continue to be updated, so bookmark the URL.

The IYCK has incredible potential to advance speleology in many and great ways, but only if we all work together to make it possible.

## The SPELEOMEDIT Project: Speleology of the Mediterranean, call for participation

As a contribution the International Year of Caves and Karst 2021 (IYCK) the Speleological Society of Italy, in collaboration with TETIDE, introduces a publication project on karst and caves of all countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The book is foreseen to be presented at the 18th Int. Congress of Speleology in France as well as the international Meeting "Kamaraton" in Italy in 2021.

The book will include the physical geography/geomorphology, hydrology, speleology, biospeleology of the area as a whole. It will be a fundamental contribution to create a common awareness of the karst and caves of the Mediterranean, strengthening the bonds between cavers and karst researchers while supporting the protection of karst and caves.

The publication will be in English as a PDF file and will be translated into all the languages of the contributing countries, thus being a communication tool for each participating country. Currently, 17 of the 21 Mediterranean countries have joined and we hope that the remaining countries (Malta, Monaco, Montenegro and Syria) will join soon.

For more information please contact us at [tetide@speleokamaraton.eu](mailto:tetide@speleokamaraton.eu)

## Urgent calls for the 18<sup>th</sup> Int. Congress of Speleology in France

The 18th International Congress of Speleology (25th July to 1st August 2021) will be organised by the French Speleological Federation FFS on behalf of the International Union of Speleology UIS and will take place in Le Bourget-du-Lac in the Savoie region: <https://uis2021.speleos.fr/>

Before and after the congress the FFS is planning to organise pre- and post-camps. The European Speleological Federation FSE agreed to the FFS and UIS to **ask clubs and organisations in member countries to also organise such pre- and post-camps** to provide an opportunity for cavers from outside France and Europe to get acquainted with European caves and karst and to give a European dimension to the congress. We would like to invite not only the neighbouring countries of France but all FSE member countries to organise a camp before or after the congress in the Savoie. Proposed activities are exploration or traditional speleology, canyoning, cave diving, scientific internships, photography ... or cultural tourism and/or speleo-culinary, either above or below ground, all in accordance with speleo and canyoning codes of conduct. For more information, the conditions and the application form please read this document:

<https://u.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=XZRjfOkZMWLuxiS3Ke5e07rhb76Sa4DTfTUV>. The application should be sent to [camps@uis2021.speleo.fr](mailto:camps@uis2021.speleo.fr) Upon approval you will be notified and information about the camp will be published on the above-mentioned congress website.

Lets make this congress a real exhibition of European cave and karst activities for all the cavers to come to France next summer.

## News about the UIS congress 2021 in France

The deadline for early bird registration has been extended from 31st Dec. 2020 to 24th of Jan. 2021. Get your tickets with a discount of more than 25%:

<https://uis2021.speleos.fr/infos/inscriptions-au-congres/>

You can now book your mid-congress excursions for Wednesday 28th of July 2021. You can choose from one of the 21 excursions offered. There are limited places. Prices are given per participant and include return transport from the congress site, picnic and entry to paid sites (tourist caves, monuments, etc.). See:

<https://uis2021.speleos.fr/programme/excursions/>

During the congress there will be a UIS film festival. All information on submitting a film, participation and the program can be found here:

<https://uis.explos.fr/en/bienvenue-sur-https-uis-explos-fr-english>

The campsite for those who would like to stay in a tent or a motorhome is situated a 5-minute walk from the congress venue. The price is 5 € per night and per person:

<https://uis2021.speleos.fr/infos/hebergements/>

For the Scientific Conference about 580 abstracts have been submitted for the 20 symposiums. There will be a great choice of presentations during the congress! For those who submitted an abstract, please do not forget to submit your paper of 4 pages before the 31st Dec. 2020. Information at: <https://uis2021.sciencesconf.org/>





**The winner of FSE's EuroSpeleo Protection Label 2020 is:  
Phreatic Project: Cave diving at the service of Science and Environmental Protection**

The non-profit project *Phreatic* was born in 2014 with the aim of boosting the concept of citizen science, fostering the interaction between cave divers and researchers in the field. In essence, creating a network of cave divers capable of cooperating with scientists and delivering reliable results working in extreme environments. Generally, scientific research is not conducted in such areas due to the complexities and possible dangers posed by the environment. The perfect sites for this experiment were the coastal cave systems of the Gulf of Orosei, Sardinia (Italy) where, every year, dozens of volunteer cave divers from all over the planet carry out campaigns dedicated to exploration, sediment/water sampling, cave mapping, geo referencing of paleontological remains, documentation and video production.

During the past six years, the dedication of about 50 volunteers, specialised in cave diving and surveying, dry caving, photo/video production and 3D modelling has already supported the work of scientists of the Italian Institute of Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA). Two investigative paths have been studied: the first - never before tested in temperate cave environments - is the research on benthic foraminifera, microscopic shells that are environmental and ecological indicators in transitional habitats; the second is related to the documentation and analysis finalised to the conservation of Mediterranean Monk Seal bones (*Monachus monachus* included in IUCN red list of threatened species) found in Bel Torrente Cave and dated back to 5,000-6,500 years ago. Other important activities in the seasonal campaigns of the Project are the mapping of the springs with modern technologies (MNemo and Suex Sinapsi DPV systems) and production



of underwater cave 3D photogrammetry, as a new means to represent such environments and make them accessible to the general public.

Over the years, *Phreatic* volunteers co-authored scientific publications, held presentations and organised photo exhibitions for cavers, general public, schools and universities across Europe, UK and USA. The project gained also the attention of Italian mainstream newspapers and social media.

The stimulating outcomes led to the idea of expanding the model and the approach of *Phreatic* Project Sardinia to other areas of the Mediterranean basin, where coastal caves present a similar scenario. Unfortunately, they also present similar threats in terms of anthropic impact and tourism, which makes them ideal candidates to become marine protected areas. *Phreatic* long-term engagement is, indeed, to strengthen the synergy between scientists and cave divers in order to contribute to achieve the UN sustainable development goals with a focus on the ones related to biodiversity in the life below water and actions against climate change and pollution.

In the next years *Phreatic* will continue primarily its work in Sardinia, supporting new different researches and scientific partners, such as "Dive for antibiotics" Project (Strathclyde University, UK) and the Italian geologists of University of Chieti. From the beginning *Phreatic* is partnering with Global Underwater Explorers ([gue.com](http://gue.com)) organisation and Project Baseline initiative ([projectbaseline.org](http://projectbaseline.org)), with the sponsorship of local administration Comune di Dorgali and Italian Speleological Society (SSI).

The next session of the Project will include Scurion lamps, kindly donated by our ESPL sponsor.

Website: [phreatic.org](http://phreatic.org) - Facebook Page: Phreatic

## **The European Federation of Speleology (FSE).**

This report sets out to explain what the FSE is about. It may read as a justification for the UK continuing to be a member of the Federation, but I guess that would be the case as I volunteered to represent the BCA delegate and work on the FSE bureau.

### **UK Delegates;**

Ged Champion (Delegate).

David Botcherby (Vice Delegate).

### **Background;**

The FSE has 32 members and coexists with UIS but acts as a regional body in Europe to encourage collaboration between European cavers, promote initiatives and activities within speleology. It does this mainly by organising working commissions, events and offering grants to expeditions and projects.

### **FSE commissions**

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#### **European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC)**

The work of the ECPC has been fundamental in rallying support when a cave or caving area is under threat. In the past there has been example of private companies threatening to quarry away caves or karst areas for commercial reasons. The commission has also lobbied support from MEPs around issues of water purity in karst areas which have been at risk of contamination. In this way the FSE acts as a pressure group to influence the outcome of decisions that may/will have an impact upon caves and Karst. ECPC has provided information that has helped inform changes in law and official directives. Work has been done at Eurospeleo events/ conferences to showcase good practice where protection and conservation issues are concerned. Previous access and conservation officers from BCA have attended events in Europe to illustrate good practice in the UK. The commission awards an annual Cave & Karst Protection label to projects that have been particularly outstanding, e.g. Sardinia project this year.

#### **European Cave Rescue Commission (ECRC)**

Set up to encourage collaboration in cave Rescue across Europe. ECRC works closely with European Cave Rescue Association (ECRA) which is an association cave rescue groups can join. ECRC tries to take a more overarching role in encouraging collaboration even when groups are not members of ECRA. ECRC helped provide information & coordination in the Reisingen Cave rescue in Germany in 2014 and again in the Thailand rescue a few years ago when a school party was trapped.

### **Annual Fees and costs**

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We currently pay an annual fee of 690 euros to be a member of the FSE. The fee is calculated on a sliding scale according to the size of a countries caving community. Countries that have 5,000 cavers or over will pay this amount. The UK along with France and Spain has over 5,000 cavers, Italy has under and pays 520 euros and Germany even less cavers pays 360 euros and so on. As one of the "big three" the UK has had a permanent presence on the FSE bureau, so we are able to directly influence policy, which is one way of getting value for money. The majority of the funding from annual fees goes towards grants offered by the FSE as "Eurospeleo Projects"

BCA has provided travel expenses for the FSE delegate to attend some of the annual General Assembly Meetings, but these are never outside of Europe.

## **Supporting cavers and encouraging collaboration**

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### **Eurospeleo Projects**

The FSE has set up and provides funding for what it calls “Eurospeleo Projects”. Since their inception in 2009 Eurospeleo Projects have provided grants to over 50 projects/expeditions organised by European countries. To encourage yet more applicants, conditions have been relaxed for projects requiring only 4 separate nationalities rather than five which was the criteria when the scheme started. Although there have been very few applications from the UK compared to other countries, records show that since 2017, approximately 200 British cavers have been involved in these projects. The FSE will award a minimum of 400 euros to successful candidates and they also receive equipment e.g. ropes and Scurion lamps. UK cavers have traditionally applied to Ghar Parau rather than Eurospeleo projects for expedition funding but Eurospeleo projects funding covers more than just expedition funding, it offers grants to support events, conservation projects and other caving related initiatives.

### **Eurospeleo Congress**

The FSE promotes this every five to six years the FSE helps organise and supports a Eurospeleo congress. The much praised and popular Eurospeleo 2016 held in the Yorkshire Dales was an example of the FSE’s value. If the UK did not have membership of the FSE, the event would not have been held in this country.

### **Networking**

The FSE is currently supporting a developing Joint UK/French initiative to organise a Speleo Youth Congress in Europe in 2022. By contacting delegates of the 32 countries the FSE has been able to provide details of the youth component of national organisations in these countries.

The FSE also networks with European cave research projects. Examples such as the Phreatic project in the latest Eurospeleo newsletter benefit directly or indirectly from FSE support. Recently, some UK early stage researchers were added to a proposal for a European-wide project on anthropogenic impacts on caves. This would not have happened without the FSE network.

### **Upcoming Events**

The FSE is making a major contribution to the UIS organised ‘International Year of Caves and Karst’ initiative, with the central UIS congress to be held in France next year. These events provide great important networking possibilities for individuals and groups to hear about expeditions, initiatives and scientific work.

### **Conclusion**

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The FSE already does a lot for the caves that many of us travel to in Europe and beyond, but if we really want to ‘get our money’s worth’ we could be doing more. There are several FSE projects that we as the BCA or individual UK cavers could be involved in. A suggestion from the latest newsletter is that the FSE is calling for European camps to be held in advance of the international congress next summer. As we’re already planning a summer event at this time, this is a bit of a no-brainer.

As well as a delegate for the BCA, I am a member of the FSE bureau and do a considerable amount of work as a volunteer on behalf of UK and European cavers. From my own experience of this work I

have found that other countries do look towards and respect the UK and its tradition as a major contributor to speleology. Membership of the FSE at least gives the UK an opportunity to influence and shape the direction of European caving. To isolate ourselves and withdraw from the federation would I believe be sad day for UK caving.

Ged Campion.

## **BCA Insurance Managers report to BCA Council December 2020**

### Liability policy Renewal 2021:

No further news since last Council. I expect to present a renewal report to the Executive shortly.

### Claims

We have two potential claims which we are discussing with the underwriters. This may impact renewal. BCA will pay the excess on the first claim by agreement and can decide whether to pay the second excess or not. Excess is £2,500.

We have written to the one claimant denying his claim. We have engaged with the lawyers of the underwriters to help defend the second claim.

### Brexit

Despite leaving the EU last December there is little clarity on how this will affect us from an insurance perspective as yet.

### BCA Travel insurance

I have just confirmed renewal of your Scheme with Antares. Obviously volumes weren't where we had hoped for the first year of the scheme, though this was mostly down to Covid-19.

Underwriters are pushing through rate increases on all of their Schemes and this will mean a 15% increase to the current premiums. This is in line with other travel insurance providers.

As far as Covid-19 is concerned, cover is limited to Medical Expenses as at present. Antares are not in a position to provide any cover beyond this section at this time.

HJJ December 2020

## The International Year of Caves and Karst 2021: Information for BCA Council Meeting 2/12/2020

The November 2020 EuroSpeleo Newsletter which the BCA Secretary has already circulated contains a good summary of the IYCK 2021 describing it as "*the biggest and most important speleological event ever!*"! Unfortunately as things stand that seems unlikely to be the case because Covid-19 has seriously impacted on plans and there is some talk of extending the event into 2022. As Andy Eavis has mentioned in his report there is a UIS Bureau meeting on Saturday 28 November which should shed more light on the latest arrangements. Whatever is eventually agreed the writer of the article in the newsletter is spot-on in stating that: "*The IYCK has incredible potential to advance speleology in many and great ways, but only if we all work together to make it possible!*". BCA and BCRA are both partners in the IYCK project and my hope is that we can use the IYCK in Britain to promote a positive image for recreational caving and to educate the public & decision makers about the scientific importance of caves and karst and hence the reasons that they should be conserved. Pre-Covid BCRA had been in discussion with the Association of British & Irish Show Caves (ABIS) about possible joint events to celebrate IYCK but that is all on hold pending an end to lockdowns. More positively BCRA have agreed with SUI that we will work together with the UK and Irish UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) Committees to prepare information sheets for the UGGp in Britain and Ireland that contain caves and karst: the English Riviera UGGp, the North Pennines AONB UGGp, the Fforest Fawr UGGp, the North-West Highlands UGGp, the Marble Arch Caves UGGp and the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UGGp. BCRA are also planning to host bi-monthly talks on a cave & karst topic which will run between a bi-monthly talk featuring each of the UGGp.

There is lots more information on the IYCK website: <http://iyck2021.org/>

John Gunn, 27 November 2020

## **Library Report to BCA Council for 2 Dec. 2020 (For Information)**

The British Caving Library continues to function with 3 people working on site and taking suitable precautions. Enquiries by email and phone continue to be dealt with but no visitors at present.

Katie Eavis's concentrated effort over the past year means we now have all our UK periodicals catalogued in detail for the first time ever. The duplicates sorted out as this was completed are being offered to other clubs with caving libraries and are already being sent on by "caver post" where possible.

Items of caving historical interest, particularly photos, are continuing to arrive and John Gardner is putting these onto the BCRA Archives website.

Jenny Potts, 27/11/20

# QMC report to Council – December 2020

- Like so many people in the UK and worldwide, 2020 has been a very difficult year for BCA award holders. The first national lockdown drew a halt to all work in the outdoors. More recently, Government exemptions have included work, training and education, and a few BCA LCMLA and CIC courses have been able to resume. However, residential outdoor centres remain closed for the foreseeable future. I thank BCA Executive for adding a voice to the 'Save Outdoor Education' campaign, with a supporting message on our website.

The pandemic and the vagaries and confusion which surround ever changing guidelines, has resulted in a plethora of enquiries into the personal situations of individual award holders. The bulletins which we have issued, with exec approval, have gone some way to assisting in clarifying the situation.

We have been keen to keep LCMLA and CIC up-date workshops programmed and to keep award holders engaged with the schemes. Thus trainer/assessors have run update courses with robust 'covid secure' risk assessments in place. In some cases, where travel or personal circumstances have made direct delivery undesirable, update workshops have been run using an on-line platform.

- Qualifications Management System

The online candidate management system went live at the beginning of September and has been very well received. Mary Wilde, our administrator, is delighted with the streamlining of her duties and many award holders have successfully engaged with the system. It has also given us the opportunity to ensure that all information which candidates receive, which would traditionally have been included in the award scheme handbook, is now both current and readily available.

With a change in the system, we still need to update information for trainer/assessors and for the administrator. The revised TA handbook will contain both the 'Professional Standards Policy' and 'Terms of Reference' for LCMLA area panels, which are currently being worked on.

- Resources:

I would like to extend my thanks to John Gunn and Andy Farrant, who we have engaged with to assist in the production of a geology document, which can be adapted for use at both LCMLA and CIC levels. John recently emailed an excellent and really useful document, completion of which is a work in progress.

- QMC response to BCA Executive document

- **Training Liaison group** - QMC welcome the parity offered to both elements of caver training. We hope that the role of a communication group will offer a channel to understand both similarities and differences in the contextual approaches to training. We note that the group is not intended as a hierarchal group and thus should not inhibit the extensive progress which has been made in the production of resources for award holders, over the past few years. At our last QMC meeting, it was suggested that should this group be approved, its effectiveness should be reviewed after a set period of time.
- **Website Training Pages** – Lack of clarity between the two branches of training in the past, were often as a result of confusing information displayed on the website. Ari has done a fine job, and now any wording likely to be put into search engines by those interested in pursuing a qualification, takes them to the appropriate part of the BCA website.
- **Name change** – September saw the launch of an on-line *Qualifications management system*, with all those registered with the schemes receiving administrative advice by email from the *Qualification management committee*. A name change at this stage would seem unnecessary and likely to add a source of confusion. QMC might not flow off the tongue, but it is what we are, a committee of volunteers who manage BCA qualifications.

- **BCA Membership issues** – If award holders are to be integrated into BCA membership, this needs to be done fairly, with due regard being given to the substantial amount that is already paid to BCA. Currently award holders pay £80 every 5 years. For this they receive access to the award schemes, but have no member benefits and have to provide their own insurance. BCA members pay £85 (£10 of which pays for insurance).

The award schemes are self-funding, often generating a small surplus for BCA

Many award holders are full members of BCA as well – numbers are not currently known.

An additional full membership fee would, in effect, double the cost of BCA membership to award holders, which seems unjust and will almost definitely lead to many exiting the scheme.

*Appendix 1* details the discussions between Nick Williams and Gethin Thomas when amalgamation was first discussed.

- **Complaints and Conflicts of interest** – Clarity for the whole of BCA is welcomed, and training should be viewed in a way comparable to all working groups and committees.

## **Juliet Parker-Smith**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **QMC Award Holders & BCA Membership Proposal**

BCA Council at some point (I believe around 2016) set a requirement for all Award Holders to become members of BCA. The earliest email reference I have for it is February 2018.

The requirement was passed down to QMC by Nick Williams and it was agreed to look at adopting this in context with the qualification management system. The topic of cost was set as being flexible, the motivations not being one of additional revenue for the BCA.

It's worth highlighting that within the adventure industry there is no legal requirement for an instructor to hold a qualification to lead groups underground (or for any of the other disciplines such as climbing, canoeing etc. for that matter). There is however a requirement that employers satisfy themselves that instructional staff are "current and competent" in the activities they deliver. Many employers choose the LCMLA awards as an appropriate measure of that "competence" and the CPD/update workshop element of the scheme required at 5-year intervals for LCMLA award holders and 3-year intervals for CICs satisfies the "current" requirement. However, there is an increasing number of providers who now choose to work through a site-specific validations system by-passing many National Governing Body awards.

One of the primary motivations for establishing an award scheme was a combination of wanting to ensure those being introduced to caving were done in a positive, sympathetic (both the cave environment/conservation and consideration with regards not putting someone off caving!) and safe way.

At present that are around 1,300+ registered with the BCAs Leadership Award schemes, around 1100+ of whom are current and qualified the others have registered with the scheme within the last 10 years, many of whom will not progress through the scheme and complete their assessment.

Many of the benefits afforded to BCA members are not applicable to award holders. The insurance scheme for example specifically does not cover professionally delivered instructed caving.

If award holders were required to become BCA members and pay the full BCA annual membership fee it is highly likely most award holders would choose not to. The qualification has already been achieved and so there is no benefit in retaining membership other than to access an update workshop, which employers could easily substitute through a combination of checking award holders' logbooks and if desirable paying a CIC or suitably qualified person to deliver their own bespoke CPD events. This would be particularly cost effective for most Outdoor Centers.

At present the majority of award holders who work for an Outdoor Education Centre will have the cost of their update workshop covered by that Centre (who will also incur additional costs in paying the award holder for the days work, and potentially a freelance instructor to cover the award holder's absence). Outdoor Centers are highly unlikely to cover an additional annual cost for award holder's membership, particularly in the current climate, and so pass the cost directly to the individual.

The only opportunity to check if an award holder has maintained their membership would be at the point of assessment or update workshops. The administration requirements to check that an award holder had maintained their BCA membership for the 5 years between achieving their qualification (or attending a previous update workshop) would be significant.

Training Services (that being how the award scheme has been designated within the BCAs annual budget presented to AGM, which does not include "caver training"), based on figures from 2004 to 2019 has generated a surplus to BCAs reserves in excess of £8.5k, on average and annual surplus of over £500.

Given this year's turmoil together with the implementation of the Qualification Management System there is no doubt income will dip significantly. However, to off-set that slightly on average between 2010 and 2018 over £1,700 has been attributed to travel costs, largely to those attending QMC meetings which have now shifted on-line. In addition, a significant proportion of QMCs income and expenditure is attributed to update workshops, which normally generate a modest income. Given many workshops have not taken place this year they have neither generated an income or expenditure. Those requiring an update workshop will still need to attend one so there's the potential for better attendance at workshops next year.

It is highly probable that asking award holders to pay the BCAs annual membership fee in full will result in a mass exodus from the award scheme, exaggerated by the current financial crisis those working in the outdoor industry are dealing with. Particularly if this is viewed as being forced upon them without any apparent benefit.

Do BCA Council wish to pursue this, and if so why? And for what benefit to award holder? It would be beneficial for QMC to have the rationale for this decision so that it can be passed on to award holders.

If BCA do wish to continue with this mandate, then the following may be an option to maintain award holders.

- For all new registrations BCA membership in full is provided until the end of that calendar year included in the current enrolment fee as it stands (note enrolment fees have gone up this year)
  - This would introduce those new to the award scheme with both BCA and the award scheme. Would resolve confusions by those first accessing the scheme with regards BCA membership and enrollment. And would provide BCA an opportunity to impress upon those new to the award scheme the benefits of becoming a member of BCA
- On qualifying: BCA non-caving membership would be provided (at no additional costs) for 5 years.
  - This in recognition of achieving the award. It's suggested award holders be given the opportunity to "top up" their membership fee to that of a full member if they want. Again, this to try and encourage award holders to join BCA
- At update workshop: BCA non-caving membership be provided for 5 years for LCMLA award holders and 3 years for CICs. Consider a nominal fee for membership e.g. £5 for LCMLA award holders and £3 for CICs to be added to the update workshop fee.
  - Again, with the option for award holder to top up their membership to full status on request.

# **Radon Working Group Report**

There are 2 points I'd like raise in relation to Radon for BCA Council to consider.

## **1) Further Sampling**

It is evident from the work BCA and others have supported with area monitoring that the only way to accurately assess the radon risk is by conduct area monitoring. In addition, the sites already sampled should be re-sampled periodically (between 3-10 years a period we have yet to define as a working group).

Of the caves and mines within the UK only a very small number have been monitored (we still have one set of sampling to conduct during the Spring 2021 at which point we'll need to update Radon Underground) as part of this project. Monitoring is not an easy process, dosimeters need to be ordered, placed within defined locations (within a short period of receiving the dosimeters) and recovered 28 days later. Monitoring should first take place during the Summer (as radon levels are generally accepted as being higher during the Summer) and then if level found to be high continued to reflect the other 3 seasons to gather an annual picture. All of which necessitate a commitment from those conducting the monitoring.

The question we have for Council; is should funding be made available to regional bodies/clubs to conduct further sampling on the condition that the commitment is understood and agreed?

If Council believe this to be something BCA should be doing to support cavers, I suggest a budget be allocated the Radon Working group to cover the cost of dosimeters and travel expenses for those willing to undertake the work on the understanding that those conducting the monitoring agree to do this properly, share the results, and understand the commitment.

Dosimeters cost around £25 each, the number of dosimeters needed will clearly depend on the complexity and size of sites monitored. I would suggest a budget of £500 per region be allocated enabling each region to monitor 1 site with 4 monitors for the year, plus £100 potential expenses. So, £2,500 a year, with the view to start next Summer and review the interest as well as consider a re-sampling programme.

## **2) Radon & Access**

It has been speculated for some time now that radon may present an issue with regards access should landowners be employers of any sort, due to the wording of the Ionising Radiation Regulations.

This is a complex legal question that if Council feel is of sufficient concern, I would suggest be raised with an appropriately qualified solicitor. If Council agree I would suggest we as a working group, together with the Access & Conservation group try to define the concern and seek professional guidance to address it.

Gethin Thomas  
Radon Working Group  
27<sup>th</sup> Nov 2020

## **BCA Rope Test Officer Report**

As mentioned in my report to the AGM, I have received one sample of rope to test and one enquiry (the impact of a medium sized vehicle running over a rope) so far during 2020. Due to personal circumstances, I have not been able to test the sample nor follow up on the enquiry.

2/12/2020

## BCA Training Officer Report December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020

### BCA Training Officer's November report

This needs to be read and accepted, as there was no time to do this at the last council meeting. The training officers proposals below need to be looked at and voted on as I am trying to set up dates for talks next year and QMC are publishing documents.

### The BCA Training Problem

Having spent the last 3 years as training officer (1 year acting) I have been in a position to observe the activities of training in BCA and listen to concerns from everyone involved. It is clear to me that the problem is in the management of BCA training and accountability. There is no problem in the function of training committee and I see no problem in the function of QMC. If either of these groups need help, they ask for it and get it.

The training officer is in constant communication with BCA members, regional training officers, other members of the training committee, BCA trainers and assessors and Area Liaison Officers of their panels who ask for guidance and advice on training matters. I have been on training committee for 30 years so I am very experienced and qualified to do this. When appropriate, concerns and complaints are directed to the chair of the QMC or exec. This maybe informal as it is not written in the training officers remit, however it does work and concerns are listened to and acted on. The communication between training committee and QMC work very well which is what I reported in my previous reports to council.

My advice to council is let the training officer do his job, trust the training committee and the QMC to continue working together and support them.

The 'Acting' BCA Training Officers Report to the June 2018 AGM identified the BCA Training Problem with a Solution and was accepted by the AGM.

This is quite simple: - *LEAVE EVERYTHING EXACTLY AS IT IS AND STOP MESSING WITH IT!*  
*Copy at the end of this report.*

The BCA Training Officer Report October 2018 confirmed that the BCA Training Officer is responsible for training in the BCA. *Copy at the end of this report.*

### Training Officer Proposals for BCA council December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020.

Questions to be discussed at BCA council regarding the terms of reference of the training officer in the November report.

### Council to vote on the following 4 proposals :-

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#### Proposal 1

Option 1

**BCA to confirm the status of the training officer in the award schemes.**

**The training officer is convenor of the training committee, member of the QMC and fulfils any duties, responsibilities and accountability in place in the BCA awards and the award scheme handbook set up and approved by BCA council.**

If option 1 is passed, the training officer will work closely with QMC and constantly review this situation with improvements and recommendations directly to council and the AGM of any proposed changes in the future. The training officer remains in place to uphold the award schemes.

Option 2

**BCA to remove the status of the training officer in the award schemes. The Convenor of the QMC will assume all of the responsibilities and accountability in place of the training officer. The training officer remains in a supporting role in the QMC and the link between QMC and training committee.**

If option 2 is passed, the training officer will work closely with the QMC and constantly review this situation with improvements and recommendations directly to council and the AGM of any proposed changes. BCA council may wish to consider that the QMC is accountable to the BCA by the way of changing the status of QMC from a working party to a **standing committee** of BCA council.

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## **Proposal 2**

**BCA council continue to support the BCA training officer running talks and workshops for expenses only all over the UK.**

These are held at caving clubs, climbing walls and outdoor centres promoting the work of the BCA. These sessions have been extremely successful and encourage individual cavers, mine explorers, clubs and outdoor enthusiasts to come along and see what BCA has to offer, look at equipment on display, observe safe techniques that are demonstrated and talk about how they can get involved more with BCA.

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## **Proposal 3**

**BCA to agree to pay the £220.80 insurance cost for the new mines inspector.**

Many of us believe this to be in BCA's best interest and an excellent investment for BCA in the future. This does not come under QMC or training committee. Cornwall is a new area that has been developed by myself and a team of BCA TA's. The user group in the area are in close partnership with the Cornwall mine explorers and opening up opportunities for new explorers. The insurance cover will be for the next 12 months and will ensure that BCA has access to all new mines reports in the future when undertaken everywhere in the UK.

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## **Proposal 4**

**BCA council to recognise the BCA training officer as the manager of training in the BCA.**

This is to ensure that BCA training has a focal point with immediate effect to deal with any problems of training within the BCA. The training officer often receives emails of concerns relating to training and these are always dealt with and/or forwarded to the appropriate department. If this was in place, proposal 3 could have been dealt with weeks ago and would have not needed to have been brought to council.

The current training officer is a CIC trainer assessor with full knowledge of the award scheme and has 30 years experience in the training committee. This can be reviewed in the future if a new training officer takes over and does not hold the CIC award.

This function of the training officer can be removed in the future at any time when council is satisfied that training committee and QMC are fully functional and accountable or an oversight group is established.

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## **BCA Training Committee**

We would like to welcome the newly appointed CSCC training officer Dave Keegan who has spoken with me about setting up training events in Southern England.

The exec have commented that the training committee is too large. I would like to remind council that when the chair of QMC and the training officer abandoned myself and Richard Hill in 2016 to look after the QMC, training committee was just the 2 of us. We now have a CNCC and a CSCC training officer in place for the first time.. ever! I recommend that council support training committee and the training officer in all that it does in the future. When training committee brings in a co opted member, it is because they value their experience and appreciate their help and support in the work that TC does on behalf of BCA. With covid, training committee and the regional training officers have not been able to run out any more events, however these are in place ready to roll out as soon as we are able to.

## **BCA Training Committee November 2020**

### **Standing members**

Nigel Atkins	(NA)	BCA Training Officer & DCA Training Officer
Richard Hill	(RH)	CCC Training Officer
Dave Keegan	(DK)	CSCC Training Officer
Ian Patrick	(IP)	CNCC Training Officer
Vacant		Devon & Cornwall rep (BCA TO standing in temporarily)
Rob Watson	(RW)	CHECC Training Officer
Steve Gray	(SG)	BCRC rep - <i>New for 2020</i> (approved by Jim Davis)
Graham Derbyshire	(GD)	ACI rep
Jo White	(JoW)	BCRA Rep
Steve Holding	(SH)	NAMHO Rep
Tony Radmall	(TR)	Scouts Rep (not attended in last 12 months)

That is BCA Training Officer + a representative of each constituent body and each regional council

### **Co Opted members**

Kevin West	(KW)	DCA coaching scheme
Dave Baines	(DB)	Abandoned Mines expert
Josh White	(JRW)	BCA Youth & Development Officer
Hellie Adams	(HA)	BCA Visions Group
Mark Sims	(MS)	BCA Equipment Officer

## **BCA Execs training document**

The training officer was not involved with this document. A draft version was delivered at a meeting with the chair of QMC a couple of weeks ago and I supported in principle the idea of an oversight group if it is in the best interest of the QMC with regard to quality control and only if approved by council. This document presented to council is an updated version of that document which is the first time I have seen it. It includes some positive ideas however there are parts that I and other members of training committee do not agree with.

Training committee has had no input in this document and has not had time for all of its members to receive feedback in time for this report. Training Committee suggest that this document is looked at the next council meeting to allow more time for discussion.

## **BCA Coaching**

There is no BCA coaching and no BCA coaching scheme in place at the moment. There is a coaching scheme in DCA which is to be shared and looked at with other regional training officers so that all the regions have an agreed and accepted 'good' practice guidelines when teaching.

## **BCA Training Events**

The BCA SRT masterclass in November run by the BCA training officer is being run for expenses only. The BCA training officer does not get paid when running training sessions on behalf of the BCA.

Nigel Atkins. BCA Training Officer 27/11/20  
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### **Taken from previous reports for reference**

### **Taken from the 'Acting' BCA Training Officer Report June 2018**

#### **BCA Training Committee**

Looking back at the last 12 months, myself and a small group of dedicated regional training officers have kept training committee afloat with regular meetings and numerous conversations by phone and email. We have flown the flag for BCA and introduced a fresh input into club training. A big thank you goes to Nick Williams who sets up these meeting on web ex and 'coaches' us on how to keep us on line. Without Nick's help in the last 12 months, we would not have been able to achieve this with such ease, thanks Nick. The Training Committee is now 15 people strong with representation from equipment specialists and cave rescue. We are also providing SRT training to the standard required for entry into the BCA qualifications.

The work of this committee has become all things training in BCA now apart from the qualifications themselves, which is QMC.

#### **The BCA Training Solution**

This is quite simple: - **LEAVE EVERYTHING EXACTLY AS IT IS AND STOP MESSING WITH IT!** Everything was working fine until after the AGM last year when things got changed and arguments started. This is all down to individuals changing things to meet their own agendas, without transparency or democracy. The result of this is that BCA was not told the truth about certain and important changes.

December 2016, the QMC chair and the training officer very abruptly 'abandoned' the training committee leaving myself and one other to pick up the pieces. This is all in the minutes. At this time, BCA sort of had 2 training officers in place, the one signing into the June 2017 BCA AGM (the traditional, National training officer) that moved over to the QMC and my temporary 'convenor' of the training committee. If it wasn't for myself sorting this out, training committee would have folded instantly as no one else was interested, however I have always been there to help BCA.

At the 2016 AGM Nigel Ball was reappointed as the training officer, nothing had changed and he continued with QMC in this role. I was fine with this and happily continued to run training committee concentrating on recreational caving as like many of us in BCA, we trusted our officers to work with integrity, honour in a professional way. However, The training officer role was 'removed' from QMC almost as soon as QMC got started.

At the October BCA council meeting, the chair of QMC informed everyone that the 'Training officer' did NOT have a role on QMC, this is in the minutes. The chair of QMC also reported from QMC about more changes to be made, however, as training committee now had members in it from QMC, I was fully aware of what QMC was doing and I knew that these changes were in fact the opposite of what QMC wanted. The chair of BCA brought me in at this point to clarify what QMC was actually doing. The day after this meeting I had QMC members phoning me for clarification and they were not happy with what the chair had reported as they were not the proposals of QMC at all. Following this meeting, I was also contacted by members of council who were also concerned.

In January 2018 after the chair of QMC had stood down, members of BCA council and QMC worked very hard with me to establish what had gone wrong. It was at this point when the truth about the training officer role became clear. You can imagine how concerned we all were to find out what had been done.

It has taken me 5 months of dedication to BCA and a promise to the chair of BCA that I would work with what we have in place and I have finally done it. We now have a good working solution and the only confusion out there up to the last QMC meeting was the role of training officer on the QMC which was only confirmed to them only 2 weeks ago.

### **Proposal: *BCA Training Committee***

Leave everything as it is and do not mess with it anymore. This is a dedicated group of volunteers working hard on behalf of BCA. They have unanimously confirmed that they **DO NOT** like the change in title to include the word 'recreational' so a vote for any more changes is a vote against this committee.

### ***Actions that were voted on at BCA Council meeting Saturday January 6<sup>th</sup> 2018***

*- To fully support the working of the BCA Training Committee*

To propose any changes to training committee without any consultation with them is in breach of what was agreed in January. Training committee should be reporting to BCA what brilliant work they have and are doing, not being told what to do by people not involved.

Maybe you should vote for 'Professional' Training Committee as they are providing training at a professional level. Training is Training.

BCA has an opportunity here to launch training to the masses as it should be done. BCA Training Officer should be the person to head this up and co ordinate these training activities. We are waiting for BCA to vote in a full training officer and give training committee their full support and I urge you to do so before enthusiastic volunteers lose interest and vote with their feet.

### **Proposal: *BCA Training Officer***

Leave the BCA Training Officer as it is and do not mess with it anymore. I have worked really hard on behalf of BCA to establish what was working before and get things back on track, which is working now. The word 'recreational' is already in place as the training committee rep on QMC so a vote for any more changes will cause even more confusion. You will see that the training officer has been working hard promoting both the training committee and the QMC during the caving club talks, LC/MLA and CIC updates, cave rescue workshops and with retailers and manufacturers alike. This is your 'National Training Officer' and you are free to do whatever you decide to do with it.

I have done everything I have been asked to do and more. I am now drained of all enthusiasm. I have been lied to, shouted down, accused of not understanding the system, told to 'push off' and had to undergo some difficult conversations with my friends in QMC. If this is how BCA officers are to be treated by trying to do their job, I want no more of it. All I have ever asked for is to have those brackets removed from my title. If I am to be the last of the 'National Training Officers' then I have been proud to represent BCA in this way.

## **Taken from the BCA Training Officer Report October 2018**

### **BCA Training Committee**

This is looking very healthy and we have no problems to report at all. The membership is strong and we have a team of very experienced and dedicated volunteers.

### **BCA Training Officer**

There has been confusion with this role outside of BCA. The role in the past has been too great for a volunteer to take on and in the past, paid part time positions have been created to ease this workload. To split this function to training committee and QMC just has not worked. I have been prepared to do this as a volunteer and so far I am on top of things. However, in the future more demands may come back to this role if any training functions can not be met by volunteers. Andy Eavis has spoke in the past that training may need a part time paid 'director' of training or manager. I am happy in the short term to take this on as I have the qualifications at the highest level, the experience of training committee, an active trainer and assessor in QMC although I am not in the commercial sector any more and the training officer is also a member of the CIC panel.

**Proposal To BCA Council:**

To confirm that the BCA Training Officer is responsible for training in the BCA.

In the future, to review and consider the training officer role as a part time paid position if the demand becomes too great for a volunteer to continue.

## **BCA Treasurer Report to BCA Council December 2020**

Current bank balances: as at 25/11/2020 was £250,000. Of which £120,000 is in medium term interest bearing accounts and £85,000 is in a short term deposit account. I am holding more in the current account than usual due to potential CRoW legal fees.

Unusual spend since last Council:  
£11k on CRoW legal fees

### Budget 2020:

October 2019 Council meeting approved a budget for 2020 which had a deficit of £10,000. In January we approved significant expenditure on extra PL cover (£9k) and Adventure Academy project (£5k) and radon (£1k). Since then we approved £12,000 on the first batch of CRoW legal fees. Council have approved a budget of £60k for CRoW legal fees and if we lose the case (worst case scenario), the deficit for 2020 is likely to be in the order of £75k currently.

### Budget 2021:

Was approved at the November council meeting and a clean version is on the BCA website

### Interest rate:

Continues to be at a record low , hence any interest earned will be much less than in prior years.

### Regional accounts:

DCA claim is outstanding to date for 2019.

### CRoW financial situation.

A previous Council meeting agreed we could spend up to £60k pursuing this claim on the basis of its details and likely impact for UK caving as a whole. To date we have invested £30k in the legal proceedings, of which £23k has been paid. A further £7k will be paid in December 2020. Should we win the case most of the costs we incur will be refunded. At present we are within budget with the proceedings.

HJJ December 2020

## BCA UIS Report for meeting on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020

Within the UIS Covid-19 continues to cause serious problems and casts a cloud of uncertainty over arrangements for the International Year of Caves and Karst and International Congress for next year - 2021.

There is a UIS Bureau meeting on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November which might shed more light on the latest arrangements for 2021.

Currently, the opening ceremony for the International Year of Caves and Karst which was due to take place in Paris on 26<sup>th</sup> January has now been postponed, but the celebration year itself is still programmed to go ahead.

The International Congress due to be held in Savoie Mont, July 25<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> August is still programmed to go ahead. There are however some problems with the congress, and this could be updated at the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup>. I will report in person on this to the BCA meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

While the pandemic is affecting programming events so severely it is difficult to know what will actually happen next year. The UIS website is trying to keep up to date with changes, please go to [www.UIS-speleo.org](http://www.UIS-speleo.org) for the latest information.

Recently the KR9 conference, which is another excellent scientific conference, organised by Gina Moseley in Innsbruck University was postponed from July 2020 to July 2021. It has now been postponed to 2022.

Please keep an eye on websites to get an idea what is going on, particularly when things start opening up.

There have been some question marks over whether the BCA should support British involvement in the UIS. From my point of view, I think it is very important that British caving keeps an international involvement. We are one of the biggest groups of cavers in the world and have an opportunity to put forward the British perspective on things. The UIS has a long involvement in worldwide cave and karst protection including making sure show caves are developed sympathetically, doing as little damage to the caves as possible.

Some offshoots to the British involvement are, we are able to get permission to some of the countries that many other people can't visit. These contacts are made with caving groups in difficult countries such as Iran, Russia, Central America etc.

Expenses for British delegates being involved with the UIS have never been claimed and indeed the annual subscription to UIS for many years were also not passed onto the BCA. As long as British cavers want to travel to many countries around the world, have a say in international caves and karst conservation, and it doesn't cost the BCA very much money, I can't see that there is a problem.

Please note that I intend standing down at the next UIS International Congress. I am the Honorary President for life so I will personally keep an involvement and will generally visit bureau meetings at my own cost, as I have always done in the past.

**Andy Eavis**  
**26<sup>th</sup> November 2020**