



# British Caving Association

Minutes of BCA Council Meeting, 10.30am, 13th. January 2007, Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch

<b>Present:</b> Mick Day [MD]	BCA Chairman
Jenny Potts [JP]	Acting Secretary BCA; DCA Secretary/Rep.
David Cooke [DC]	Acting Treasurer BCA; Club Rep. Wessex C.C.; BCA Cave Registry Secretary
Andy Pryke [AP]	BCA Equipment Officer
Idris Williams [IW]	BCA Training Officer
Elsie Little [EL]	BCA Conservation & Access Officer
David Judson [DJu]	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
Les Williams [LW]	BCA Publications & Information Officer; BCA Webmaster
Glenn Jones [GJ]	BCA Membership Administrator; CNCC Treasurer/Rep.
David Jean [DJe]	Pengelly C.S.T. (DCUC Rep.)
Steve Holding [SH]	NAMHO Rep.
Alan Finch [AF]	Pengelly Rep.
Chris Jewell [CJ]	CHECC Rep.
Boyd Potts [BP]	Club Rep. Orpheus C.C.
Owen Clarke [OC]	Club Rep. Cwmbran C.C.
Emma Porter [EP]	Individual Member Rep.
Simon Froude [SF]	Individual Member Rep.
Bob Mehew [BM]	BCA Rope Test Officer
Graham Mollard [GM]	Observer (Nominated as BCA Training Officer)

## 1. Chairman's Welcome:

MD welcomed members, including GM as a "new face".

## 2. Apologies:

Apologies had been received from: Sue Mabbett [SM], Cambrian C.C. Secretary/Rep.; Steve King [SK], CSCC Secretary/Acting CSCC Rep.; Clark Friend [CF], BCA Radon W.P. Convenor; Jim Cochrane [JC], BCA N/L Editor; Nick Williams [NW], BCA Insurance Manager; Damian Weare [DW], BCA Handbook Editor for 2007-8.

## 3. Applications for Club Membership:

None.

## 4. Minutes of Previous Council Meeting (7 Oct. 2006): *(Previously circulated and on website.)*

*Agreed unanimously that the Minutes were a correct record.*

## 5. Matters arising from the Minutes of 7 Oct. 2006:

- 5.1 5.3 **Outstanding invoicing for web hosting:** LW reported this was complete up to end 2005.
- 5.2 5.4 **BM's Draft P.R. and Media Protocol:** Deadline for comments would be the end of March 2007. *Agreed. All Council Members reminded to check and send comments to BM by deadline.*
- 5.3 6.2 **Venture Extreme:** MD reported discussions still in progress.
- 5.4 8.2 **Proposed registration of BCA as a C.A.S.C.:** MD reported situation of national governing bodies under this legislation was unclear. One NGB had been refused registration. DC suggested BCA does not seek a ruling from Inland Revenue at present. BP noted that, from his experience obtaining registration for Orpheus C.C., amendments to existing constitutions would almost certainly be required. JP said she intended to investigate registration for DCA as a local (and therefore community-based) organisation, which may set a precedent.
- 5.5 8.3.d **Income from CIMs:** See item on AGM Agenda.
- 5.6 13.1 **Information on new Fire Regulations for Club Hostels:** Suggested notes on regulations could be put on BCA website; BCA Membership Administrator could email hostel-owning clubs to draw attention to this; also brief mention could go in BCA N/L.
- 5.7 15.1.a **Temporary Membership:** GL had contacted NW re. this problem and its effect on Club recruitment. Advice would be forthcoming from Insurance Manager shortly.
- 5.8 19.3 **Circulation of Regional Council Minutes to all cavers:** Noted that, in addition to DCA and CSCC, Cambrian C.C. and DCUC now had Minutes on their websites. CNCC Minutes would be on their new website, due to go live at the end of January. This has achieved full transparency for regional business on behalf of BCA

## 6. Chairman's Business: *(Written report tabled.)*

*Report noted.*

Re. C.C.P.R.: MD explained the "Best of Both Worlds" was a conservation-based initiative. Members noted in particular MD's comments that BCA should expect to have to be entirely self-funding in the future as official funding appeared to be based on criteria which we either could not meet or which would consume too much of our limited efforts to make it worthwhile.

**7. Acting Secretary's Business:** *(Written report tabled.)*

7.1 *Report noted.*

**7.2 BCA A.G.M. Preparations:** These were well in hand.

7.2.a **Draft Agenda approved** - it would be updated as per. items, nominations, etc. received by JP by 20 January.

7.2.b **Voting:** Noted that voting at 2007 AGM by Individual Members (both DIMs and CIMs) and Group Members would be by means of "voting cards" issued at the meeting to members paid up for 2007. The Agenda would make this clear. JP would act as Teller to hand out the two colours of voting cards and GJ would ensure up-to-date lists of those who have paid for 2007 would be available at the meeting. Noted that the Agenda would be posted to all Group and Direct Individual members registered for 2006 and it would also be on the BCA website. JP and GJ were liaising on arrangements for postal circulation of BCA AGM Agendas.

7.2.c **Nominations:** JP had so far received formal written nominations for Training Officer: Graham Mollard, Prop. Idris Williams, sec. Jenny Potts; and for Treasurer: David Cooke, prop. Jenny Potts, sec. from the floor by Les Williams. Other nominations were awaited. The details of posts to be elected and deadline for nominations, as confirmed by BCA Council on 7 October 2006, had been advertised in BCA N/L no.7, issued in December 2006, and were on the website.

7.2.d **AGM Recorder:** JP stated that she would not be acting as Recorder for the BCA AGM; she had found a competent volunteer to do this.

**7.3 Correspondence:** Two items re. possible grants available to clubs would be sent to the N/L Editor.

**8. Acting Treasurer's Business:** *(DC gave a verbal report.)*

**8.1 State of Finances:** DC noted that BCA was not "rich", since £50K would shortly be taken out of the funds to pay for the PL Insurance and there would be no grant coming in from Sports Councils in future.

**8.2.a Finance Committee:** DC reported on the meeting of the Finance Committee (FC), attended by all five Regional Treasurers, held on 7 January 2007. (The Minutes would be issued shortly.) The purpose of the meeting was to agree on a process for dealing with funding of Regional Councils in line with the agreed list of "Core Functions" identified at the Regional Treasurers Meeting of November 2004. It had been agreed that funding will work as follows.

Upon request from the Regional Council Treasurers the BCA will pay the Regional Councils what they expect to spend in the year at the beginning of that year (The Budget Amount). This so that the money is in the Regional Councils account before it is spent, thus helping their cash flow. Once the Regional Councils accounts have been produced there will be a meeting, generally held in May/June, where the Budget is reconciled to the Actual Expenditure. Subsequent grant payments are adjusted so that ultimately the BCA funds the Actual Expenditure rather than the Budget Amount. Regions which accepted non-BCA clubs as fee-paying members of the Regional Council would have their BCA funding reduced in proportion.

Large Conservation & Access projects requiring BCA funding are treated differently. They will need prior approval by the Finance Committee in consultation with the Regional Treasurers. It is BCA's intention to fully fund all C&A projects. However BCA has finite resources. This system allows for scheduling and prioritisation of projects if it required. EL expressed concern that the Conservation & Access Committee would have no say in C&A funding at regional level. BP expressed strong support for the system agreed by the Finance Committee: that the Regional Treasurers should deal with C&A funding, since they were best placed to consult with their own regional C&A teams and agree expenditure to be funded nationally. It was agreed that the FC would seek the C&A Committee's opinion on the funding of individual C&A projects, but would not be tied by it.

Regional Councils were also given an automatic budget of £500 per year to cover all their small C&A projects, no prior approval is necessary. This was to cut out the bureaucracy for small projects such as replacing keys etc.

*Council supported the funding procedures agreed by the Finance Committee.*

**8.2.b Secondary Membership of Regional Councils by clubs:** This was discussed by the Finance Committee. It was open to any BCA member club to approach a R.C. to ask for Regional Council Membership, if such existed, and there was no barrier to a club approaching more than one R.C. to seek whatever special benefits might accrue. Currently the CSCC charges £3 for Secondary Membership, all other regional councils offer it for free. A proposal that the CSCC also offer it for free will be put to their next meeting. It was not expected that a R.C. would send, for instance, their own regional access handbook, to every club member of BCA. Access to particular sites was no longer limited by any R.C. to "their own members" - the "One Stop Shop" now operated in this respect - so it might be that some clubs were content not to be a member of a Regional Council. It was agreed that the Application (and Renewal) Form needs to be made clearer in this respect.

**8.3 Signatories to BCA's Bank Accounts:** Currently the main account signatories were Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. This had occasioned some delays because JR (Treasurer) and PG-W (Secretary) had been replaced by Acting Officers. However it was felt best to leave changing to new signatories until after the BCA AGM when the new Officers were in post. Noted that NW was a signatory for the Insurance Account. IW was a signatory on the Training Account, which would need to change after the AGM.

**8.4 Savings Account:** DC and BM had noted that there was a need for reserve funds to be held in an account which gave better interest than a standard current account.

*That the Treasurer research and identify a high interest account into which BCA reserve funds could be put.*

*Prop. B.Mehew, sec. J.Potts. Agreed unanimously.*

**8.5 Electronic Payment of Fees, Subscriptions, etc.:** IW noted that the Training Administrator was now receiving requests to accept payment of CIC and LCMLA registrations, etc. electronically. GJ noted that it would be advantageous for BCA to be able to accept electronic payment of BCA subscriptions as credit card payment was proving unsatisfactory. It was felt that BCA needed to be able deal with the type of payment where the identity of the payer and confirmation of payment made was clearly linked immediately without waiting for bank statements to appear. "Paypal" was one such payment system but there were others. DC felt that it would also be an advantage if BCA could pay over large sums electronically instead of writing cheques. Discussion disclosed that most such systems operated by one individual using a signature or password, as opposed to BCA's constitutional requirement: that all accounts have three signatories and a minimum of two of the three are required to make payment.

*8.5 Contd. over >>>*

*The Acting Treasurer was asked to investigate and report back to Council on possible payment systems and account types which might overcome the problems identified.*

- 8.6 **BCA Web Services Funding:** DC noted that the BCA web services were currently financed by personal credit card. This should now be changed to funding by BCA itself.
- 8.7 **Visa Account:** DC suggested that it might be possible to transfer the BCRA Visa Account to BCA to enable BCA to accept payment for items by credit card. He would investigate this.
- 8.8 **Accounts for Year 2006:** BM was drawing up the BCA Accounts for 2006. He reminded Council that claims due for 2006 should be made as soon as possible so that all bills can be paid by the end of January 2007.
- 8.9 **Appointment of Auditor:** BM reminded Council that an Auditor needed to be appointed and he believed he had found someone willing to act.

*That Mr. Wright of Liverpool C.V.S. be appointed to be auditor for the BCA 2006 accounts, subject to his agreement.*  
Prop. D.Cooke, sec. J.Potts. *Agreed unanimously.*

Noted that DC should contact Mr. Wright formally to ask for his agreement.

- 8.10 **BCA's Paid Employees' conditions:** EP noted that under new government regulations, Holiday Entitlement for BCA's paid employees will be increasing. This may have implications in the drafting of their employment terms.
- 8.11 **AGM motion re. Members' subscription rates:** After discussion it was agreed to amend the wording of the motion to the AGM to read:

*"To agree that, in so far as is possible, the subscription rates should be set so that members make a fair contribution to the direct and indirect services that they receive." Prop. D.Cooke, Sec. J.Potts.*

AP noted that there should be explanatory notes to clarify to Direct Individual and Club Individual Members what is meant by this proposal. The notes could go on the website and possibly be circulated with the Agenda. Suggested that the FAQs re. membership/insurance currently on the website might be confusing and could possibly be taken down till an amended version can be posted.

## 9. **Conservation & Access Officer's Business:** *(EL gave a verbal report.)*

### 9.1.a **Progress towards objectives:**

Coastal Access: No progress. Comment that there were, in any case, few caves on coasts which would be affected by possible access legislation.

Minerals planning: EL still had to write letters.

Geocaching Guidelines: No progress.

National Trust: Little progress and NT now appeared to have reverted to referring to NCA instead of BCA.

*That the Conservation & Access Officer be authorised to write to relevant national conservation and access oriented bodies to say that BCA has taken over from NCA.*

Prop. B.Mehew, sec. C.Jewell. *Agreed unanimously.*

- 9.1.b **Conservation information on BCA website:** EL was reminded that there was still no information re. conservation on the BCA website.

### 9.2 **UK Cave Conservation Emergency Fund Constitutional Revision:** EL had heard nothing re. the revision currently in progress through BCRA.

## 10. **Training Officer's Business:** *(Written report tabled.)*

### 10.1 **Report noted.**

- 10.2.a **Guidance for Clubs considering taking U18's caving:** General view expressed that there was an urgent need for guidance in addition to that already available in the Child Protection documents on the BCA website. During discussion it was pointed out that:

- U18's must be insured if they are members of a club but this could be at a reduced fee.
- "Try Caving" Initiative is urgently in need of simple guidance since clubs are being encouraged to accept new members.
- Noted that, provided an acceptable person signs to say that they accept parental responsibility for the U18, it is possible for an U18 to join a club.
- There is guidance available from C.P.S.U.'s re. "Duty of Care".
- Clubs which accept U18's as members should have their own stated policy on how they deal with this.
- Training Committee should be consulted on any amendments/improvements to BCA's Child Protection Policy and Guidance.
- There should be some standard guidance re. vulnerable adults or children joining any amateur organisation.
- The person who has signed to say they accept parental responsibility for an U18 must be present at any club activity involving that young person.

- 10.2.b *The Legal & Insurance Officer was requested to produce Guidance for a Child Protection Policy which was aimed specifically at giving advice/guidance to caving clubs who wanted to enable U18's to join their club.*

This needed to be written in simple and unambiguous terms.

- 10.2.c BM consulted with the BCA Insurance Manager by phone during the discussion and reported that NW was in favour of the motion now to be proposed re. a reduced subscription for all U18 Club Individual Members:

*That the class of Student Member be expanded to include all U18 club members and that this be retrospective to the start of 2007.*

Prop. S.Holding, sec. B.Mehew. *Agreed unanimously.*

- 10.3 **Appointment of new Training Administrator:** IW reported that a suitable person had been identified to take over from Pat Ramsden, who wished to retire. The person would be meeting Pat Ramsden next week to discuss the post before accepting.

**11. Equipment Officer's Business:** *(Written report tabled.)*

11.1 **Report noted.**

- 11.1.a AP drew attention to the Minutes of the Equipment & Techniques Committee Meeting held on 11th. Nov. and now posted on the BCA website.
- 11.1.b AP said that P-anchors were no longer available from DMM as the material from which they had been made was no longer available. NCA/BCA had previously bought the last of the DMM stock for use by BCA-trained installers.
- 11.1.c AP reminded members of the information re. anchors now on the website and on web forums and asked that regional officers draw the attention of their members to it; consultation deadline was end of March. It was hoped eventually to have all anchor details on the website so cavers could check the status of anchors installed under the BCA scheme.
- 11.1.d It had been agreed at the Equipment & Techniques meeting that drills and installation gear would in future be provided by BCA itself for use in the regions.
- 11.1.e The hydraulic test rig was to be rebuilt to enable the checking of test beds in the regions.
- 11.1.f It was suggested we check what anchor systems are in use in other countries to see if they have in place something which we could learn from. Noted that the mountaineering standard is not particularly helpful in this respect.
- 11.1.g Noted that testing was needed in different rock types as anchors were being installed in mines as well as in limestone caves.

**11.2 Boulder choke stabilisation.** OC queried whether there was any intention to research suitable material for long-life stabilisation of boulder chokes. It was confirmed that it had been agreed in the past that this was not an appropriate matter for national investigation.

**12. Publications & Information Officer's Business:** *(LW gave a verbal report.)*

- 12.1.a **Publication of articles giving a "BCA viewpoint":** LW reminded members of the requirement for the BCA Executive and the Publications & Information Officer to validate, before publication, all statements by officers and others intended to give a "BCA viewpoint".
- 12.1.b **Publications & Information meeting:** LW drew attention to the Minutes of the joint BCA/BCRA Publications & Information meeting, now posted on the BCA website. Procedures had been agreed for circulation of periodicals, liaison with printers, publication sales, publication policy, etc.
- 12.1.c **Summary Annual Reports from Officers:** Reminder to all officers that the Acting Secretary required their Annual Reports, summarising their business during the year, to be sent to her as soon as possible to enable her to compile the Officers' Annual Reports for the AGM to be published on the BCA website well before 24th. March 2007. Noted that the Treasurer's Report and Accounts would not be ready till later.
- 12.1.d **BCA Publication Policy:** It was confirmed that BCA's policy was that its publications should be "an information service to cavers". As much as possible of its output should be published on the BCA website for free download with paper copies provided at cost if required

**12.2 BCA Website:** LW noted that the BCA website continued to evolve and that it was up to the individual officers concerned to "populate" their own section of the website.

**12.3 Newsletter Editor's Report:** *(JC had tabled a written report.)*

12.3.a **JC's Report noted.**

12.3.b **Items required in next Newsletter:** Noted that there were a number of items in N/L. no.7 requiring updating/amending for the next Newsletter:

- Return address on circulation envelopes should be the current Membership Administrator;
  - Membership Administrator's official (Great Hucklow) address should be quoted, not his home address;
  - Reference to CIMs being able to upgrade to BCRA membership should be updated to record that CIMs must first upgrade to DIM status before they could join BCRA;
  - BCA Publications Sales list required updating;
- LW and JP would ensure these points were dealt with.

**12.4 Handbook Editor's Report:** *(DW, who would be editing the 2007/08 Handbook, had tabled a written report.)*

12.4.a **DW's Report noted.**

12.4.b **Deadline for entries:** Members were reminded that DW hoped to have draft entries from officers/regions by the start of February.

**13. Legal & Insurance Officer's Report:** *(Written report tabled.)*

13.1 **Report Noted.**

13.1.a **P. L. Insurance Offers:** DJu noted that we had received only two offers to choose from when renewing BCA's insurance for 2007 but the situation re. P.L. insurance did seem to be easing.

**13.2 Objection to item in written report:** Both BM and JP pointed out that the sentence (underlined by JP) in DJu's report: "I am pleased to say ... completely fictitious!" was incorrect and asked that it be removed; BM said that the sentence called into question published BCA accounts for previous years, which showed that "Underground Britain, Legal & Insurance Issues" had outsold other items; JP pointed out that the sentence implied that her BCA publications sales records for 2006 were in error. DJu declined to remove the offending sentence, stating that he had not intended to cast doubt on BCA's published accounts, but rather the inference drawn from the figures by BM; he also stated that "UB, L&I" was a joint BCA/BCRA publication and had not been BCRA's best-selling item.

The Chairman pointed out that, whether the inference drawn by BM from the sales figures was right or not, the actual BCA sales figures as recorded by BM and JP could not be called into question. BM had stated, accurately, that BCA had sold more copies of "UB, L&I" than of any other of its publications. So, to that extent, DJu was incorrect to claim that the report by BM referring to

**13.2 Contd. over >>>**

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sales figures “was fictitious”.

DJu again refused to remove or amend the sentence objected to. BM asked that it be minuted:

*that DJu accepted that the BCA Accounts for previous years were not in question.*

**14. Try Caving Initiative:** *(CJ gave a verbal report.)*

14.1.a **Try Caving Website:** CJ circulated a paper giving details of number of the “hits” on the website, showing that it was very successful in attracting people seeking advice on caving. Noted that the BBC broadcast featuring “Titan” had generated a great deal of interest in caving and the Try Caving website was well suited to answering these queries. So far 46 clubs had registered with the website indicating that they would like to be involved with the initiative and would welcome newcomers to the sport.

14.1.b In view of the importance of the Try Caving Initiative to BCA’s future development:

*It was Agreed to co-opt Chris Jewell as BCA’s Youth Development Officer, reporting direct to National Council.*

14.2.a **BCA presence at the Outdoor Show, 16-18 March 2007:** CJ circulated a paper giving a detailed breakdown of cost of the Try Caving initiative so far and estimated costs for hiring the artificial “Cave” as a major part of a BCA stand at the Show plus other incidental costs involved. His paper included a photo of the “cave” in action at the 2006 show as part of the YHA stand and an artist’s impression of how the BCA stand, incorporating the “cave”, might look in 2007.

*It was agreed that CJ should go ahead with plans to incorporate the artificial “cave” into a BCA stand at the Outdoor Show in 2007.*

14.2.b **Raising BCA’s profile:** CJ outlined other ways in which he intended to try to raise the profile of caving at the Outdoor Show: A large hanging banner and two “roller” banners advertising BCA were being made, which would have continued use at other events in the future. He was investigating the possibility of a speaker to give an illustrated talk on caving at one of the theatres. There would be a free entry for BCA/caving in the Show Guide. He hoped to attract cavers to attend the Show by offering a reduced ticket price for BCA members.

14.2.c **Practical Points re. the Outdoor Show:** A number of helpers would be needed to set up the stand on Thursday evening, man it during the weekend and dismantle it on Sunday evening - volunteers were being sought and a number of members present volunteered to help as required. Entry for helpers and car parking arrangements needed to be clarified.

14.2.d **Desired Output:** Noted that BCA was committing considerable expenditure to this initiative, including the Outdoor Show, so expenditure on the Try Caving Weekend will have to be reduced in order to stay within budget. In order to justify the total expenditure on the Try Caving Initiative, any resultant increase in numbers involved in the sport must be quantified; CJ would be required to produce figures for a review later this year.

14.3.a **Try Caving Weekend:** CJ reported that plans for this were under way. There was some concern that clubs might incur excess expenditure on insurance in order to be able to cover their participation. BM proposed that:

*Any insurance costs for BCA clubs running the Try Caving Weekend be paid by BCA. Agreed.*

14.3.b **Risk Assessment:** Noted that a Risk Assessment was sensible for any group running an event which involved non-members. BM had produced a draft which was on the website for discussion.

**15. Membership Administrator’s Business:** *(Written report tabled.)*  
*Report noted.*

15.1 GJ confirmed that the membership situation was gradually being clarified but there were still problems to overcome before the process was complete.

**16. Insurance Manager’s Business:** *(Written report tabled.)*  
*Report noted.*

16.2 **CSCC Proposal re. limit of indemnity:** *(Paper from CSCC Secretary tabled.)*  
There was concern that BCA should not be committed to reimburse, without question, excess costs incurred by an Access Controlling Body. It was felt appropriate that these might be considered for reimbursement but that payment should not be automatic. It was suggested that it would be more helpful to offer guidelines and advice from the Legal & Insurance Officer and Regional Councils on how to deal with what were considered to be excessive or inappropriate demands from Landowners, etc.

**17. Radon Working Party Business:** *(Written report tabled.)*  
*Report noted.*

**18. Cave Registry Business:**  
No report.

**19. International Representative:**  
No report.

**20. Agree date of next Council Meeting:**  
Confirmed as immediately following the AGM. Business will be: to agree Council Meeting dates for the coming year; to co-opt officers as necessary for the coming year.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 3.20pm.

*J.Potts, Recorder*

**APPENDED TO THESE MINUTES AND FORMING PART OF THEM ARE THE FOLLOWING REPORTS:**

- a. ITEM 6 - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
- b. ITEM 7 - ACTING SECRETARY'S REPORT
- c. ITEM 10 - TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT
- d. ITEM 11 - EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT
- e. ITEM 12.3 - NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT
- f. ITEM 12.4 - HANDBOOK EDITOR'S REPORT
- g. ITEM 13 - LEGAL & INSURANCE OFFICER'S REPORT
- h. ITEM 15 - MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT
- i. ITEM 16 - INSURANCE MANAGER'S REPORT
- j. ITEM 16.2 - CSCC PROPOSAL RE.LIMIT OF INDEMNITY
- k. ITEM 17 - RADON WORKING PARTY REPORT

**Item 6 - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

I have no formal report to make, but have several items which will come up under other officer's business on the agenda, summarised below. **Venture extreme.** I have not completed the specified non-committal letter of support, but have exchanged emails with Steve Jones on a personal basis.

**CASC registration.** I have been trying to get a definitive "yes" or "no" to the question of NGB eligibility for this status. So far, only an assertion that one of the Wrestling GBs has been refused, on the basis that it does not satisfy local objectives.

**CCPR.** OPD meets next on 21st February. There are concerns about:

- Working at height final text
- Support for the "Best of Both Worlds" Initiative
- Budget cuts to Natural England
- Basis of eligibility for funding from the "Improvement Fund", the device established to supplant Sport England support to

Governing Bodies. We would not be eligible until we have completed the Self Assurance process, so would not be able to obtain funds until end 2007. These would be tied to several objectives which I believe would be extremely onerous.

"Bingo Lotto" may be a much more liberal source of funds, if it happens.

In this context, the question of establishing a responsible but adequate self-funding regime is now extremely important.

Progress has been made on the appointment of a Training Administrator and a 2007 contract for the Speleoscene Editor. The costs of these contracts lead me to be parsimonious about a secretarial assistant until we know whether we can find a new Hon secretary and can establish a secure basis for income from which this contract can be funded.

*M.C. Day, 12 January 2007*

**Item 7.1 - ACTING SECRETARY'S REPORT**

I have concentrated on trying to improve communications between members of Council and between BCA and BCRA and in ensuring that, as far as is possible, the basic secretarial administration runs as well as I can manage. I am already doing too many other jobs and am conscious that I have not the time to devote to the BCA Secretary post. However, I shall try to hand things over in good order at the AGM in March and would warn members of Council that I shall not be continuing as Acting Secretary beyond then; though I shall, of course, give every possible assistance to whoever takes on the post.

It is clear that many enquirers who would once have written, phoned or emailed BCA officers are now obtaining their information directly from the BCA website. This is far more efficient in terms of time and cost but places an onus on all officers to ensure that their website is both up-to-date and correct. Sadly, despite a number of reminders to the Conservation Officer, including a phone call in November pointing out the urgent need that information, (such as a current version of the BCA Conservation & Access Code) be placed in Conservation section, this page remains completely empty. The introductory page to the Legal & Insurance section is also out of date, though the Child Protection documents in this section are correct. It would be helpful if all officers informed Council whenever they updated their pages or placed a set of Committee Minutes or other papers on their section of the BCA website so that we could all stay up to date.

Thanks are due to Glenn Jones for his excellent work in getting the Association back onto a nearly straight course so that I have not had to deal with queries on membership but have felt confident in referring all such to him. I have had very little correspondence from outside the Association but have been able to pass on what I have received to others better able to deal with it or to the Newsletter Editor for wider circulation to members. Thanks are due also to the Newsletter Editor, who succeeded in getting out Newsletter No. 7 in good time so that it arrived with members well before the constitutional deadline for notification of the AGM.

*Jenny Potts, 11 January 2007*

**Item 10.1 - TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT**

Since my last report Training Committee has overhauled the revalidation process for both the Cave Instructor Certificate and the Local Cave and Mine Leader Award.

The changes are summarised as follows:-

**Cave Instructor Certificate.**

Formerly the CIC was revalidated at three yearly intervals by attending a two-day workshop. After consideration it has been decided that all the ground could be adequately covered in a one-day workshop. This has had the advantage of reducing the costs of the workshops and it is hoped that from now on this item will break even.

### **Local Cave and Mine Leader Award.**

Formerly this was revalidated on alternate 3 years by either a Standard revalidation or a Leadership Development revalidation.

The Standard revalidation amounted to little more than a Log Book review and update on any changed conditions at the nominated sites.

The Leadership Development revalidation could be achieved by a plethora of routes such as further training or assessment attendance at a one-day workshop or a one to one day with an Assessor. In practice this has led to a lot of confusion about the requirements and coverage of the revalidation.

The new system will involve Revalidation only by workshop at 5year intervals, although it will be possible to revalidate a Level 1 award by obtaining a Level 2 award or by progress on assessment for a CIC. This new scheme is being introduced in a phased manner.

### **Gorge walking.**

The introduction of a scheme to grant a similar award to the LCMLA for gorge walking was investigated. After consultation with BMA it was decided to let this drop. The whole subject of mixed "rock & water" is quite complex covering such items as gorge walking, ghyll scrambling, canyoning and coast-earing, there was originally a fear that BMC were going to introduce a scheme unilaterally and that BCA expertise in this field would not be involved. However, the discussions with BMC resulted in the agreement that neither NGB would proceed in this matter without involving the other and also that in current circumstances there would be little demand for such an award. The matter has been abandoned.

### **Aid to Voluntary Youth Sectors.**

The Training Officer has written to the Headquarters of all the organisations of which he is aware informing them of this scheme and has also attended, as BCA rep, a meeting of Scout Association Cave Leaders in Derbyshire. This meeting only had a few attendees but some interest was shown.

It is hoped to put something on the BCA Website soon.

*Idris Williams, 8 January 2007*

## **Item 11.1 - EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES REPORT**

### **Anchors**

We have decided to stay with P-hangers as they are known and respected in the caving community. Les Sykes has been asked to get a quote from DMM; expected cost £6000.

### **Anchor Inspection/Installation**

We have proposed to adopt the mountaineering standard, this will require us to type test new test beds, which would be 3 test beds: 1 North, 1 Wales, 1 Mendip. These test beds will be required to show performance to the mountaineering standard. We wilol also pull one test bed of anchors placed with HitC50 resin o see if these meet the standard.

Prior to doing this work a discussion document (on the Web) will be circulated to interested parties so as to allow for wide consultation. This consultation focuses on:

- Anchor type
- Placement
- Type testing
- Inspection
- Installer/Inspector, Nomination, Training, Validation/Re-validation
- Record keeping
- Plus more - so please read and feedback through the dedicated email address.

Existing Anchor and inspection records, to be centrally held, after compiling we propose to put them on the web, via an online database.

Also we have asked Les to get a quote for 3 new drills and consumables - £2000 estimated. We also propose that BCA accrue to replace the drills every 3 years. This is about the length of useable life before new batteries / repairs become prohibitive.

We are also seeking to recover and refurbish the hydraulic test rig from Stu, so this can be used for the test beds as well as for use at Hidden Earth.

*Andy Pryke, 12th. January 2007*

## **Item 12.3 - NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT**

2006 saw the production of only two newsletters, no's 6 and 7. It was intended that we produce on a quarterly basis, though unfortunately sheer lack of material and contributions hampered progress.

I must thank, however, both the DCA and CSCC reps for their continual supply of minutes and local materials, an input recognisable in the relevant area news sections! Thanks also to Bob Mehew whose articles often dominate the official content of the Newsletter. It is notable that there never seems to be any news from the North or Wales, perhaps the two largest caving areas in Britain. Surely there must be noteworthy cave conservation issues or access news...

I am assured that problems with the mailing list have been ironed out by Glenn (Membership Sec). All dealings with the printers Pagefast are now centralised through David Gibson (Editor Speleology) to save confusion!

For this year I am planning on three issues if material and time permits (more if feasible). Publication dates remain hard to pin down as setting an inclusions deadline seems, in the past attempt, to have resulted in having no inclusions.

If people are finding the online pdf file too large to download quickly I'll try to supply Les with a smaller, less high definition version.

I feel that the Newsletter is useful but could aim a little more broadly, for example, in advertising more the work of the 'trycaving' scheme, CHECC, more training reports and perhaps the odd actual caving report from a BCA sponsored project/expedition (I realise this may fall outside the 'official' beaurecratic stamp, and I don't want to tread on Speleology's toes).

*Jim Cochrane, Jan. 2007*

## Item 12.4 - HANDBOOK (2007-2008) EDITOR'S REPORT

Work is now well underway on the Handbook for 2007-8. Many thanks are due to Dave Judson for the time he spent helping me out initially and the new 2007-8 Handbook, although completely revamped from 2006, will owe a great deal to his previous work.

The biggest change will be that I am trying to make the Handbook better reflect what the BCA does for its members. As such I hope to give more space to Training, Equipment, the Rope-Testing Rig and the National Cave Registry, while moving a lot of the Policies & Guidance Notes to the back of the Handbook.

By the end of this weekend Officers and Representatives will have received detailed requests for information for inclusion, together with deadlines. These are coming a few weeks later than I would have liked, but it took me longer than anticipated to be able to make a start on the Handbook. In the light of this, I will be asking Officers if they would rather I wrote their section for them to check. I will also make clear that should they miss my deadline, I will do this anyway to ensure publication on time.

Publication dates are based around the AGM in March to allow any changes made at the AGM to be included. The Handbook will, therefore, be sent to the printer (Roy Paulson) on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> April, two weeks after the AGM. As Roy estimates printing will take about a week, the Handbook should be ready for distribution by Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April.

If anyone has any suggestions on any aspect of the Handbook, I would be very pleased to hear them.

*Damian Weare, 12 January 2007*

## Item 13.1 - LEGAL & INSURANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

### 1. Public Liability Policy

Nick Williams and I have worked closely together on this throughout the year, firstly maintaining and encouraging contacts and possible offers and then seeking and negotiating with a number of brokers over offers and possible offers. The market has quite clearly relaxed over the past 12 months or so, enabling a genuine competitive market place once again. We did thus end up with two offers to choose from and the executive were happy to accept our proposal to move to a new broker, Crossley Morris, and a new underwriter, Zurich Commercial Ltd for a marginally reduced premium with improved conditions for 2007.

### 2. Professional Indemnity (PI;E&OE) for Paid Instructors

We think that we might well be a step nearer to dealing with this long-outstanding matter with our moves at 1. above, but the urgency of sorting that one before the end of December has meant that this remains to be resolved at a later date.

### 3. The Other Policies

The travel policy continues to be run for us by an independent broker, recently changed to Towergate Risk Solutions Ltd, and web site details have now been transferred to the new address. The All Risks policy (equipment and HE kit) has been transferred to Crossley Morris and renewed to October 2007 at a slightly increased premium.

### 4. Underground Britain – Legal + Insurance Issues

This is being updated on a continuous basis with a view to a third edition when current sales dictate. Any suggestions on new/updated information are always welcome. I am pleased to be able to say that a recent report by Bob Mehew to the effect that this is BCA's best selling publication (leading to the conclusion that insurance and legal matters are most pressing on cavers' minds) is completely fictitious! I repeat that in my view a third edition should only be published when sales of the second edition are pretty well exhausted, but this does leave the question of what should or should not be made available on our web site as an open issue?

### 5. Duty of Care

Following circulation by the CPSU (NSPCC) last summer of a paper on Duty of Care in Sport I produced a draft paper more focused upon caving and the outdoor world. Unfortunately 'expert' feedback on this has been both patchy and conflicting and I have thus not felt able to publish anything as yet.

### 6. On-going Review of Relevant Caselaw

I am assisted by a number of people in this, particularly Linda Wilson and Paul Deakin, covering duty of care, nature conservation and landowner/occupier/access areas. Contributions from other interested parties are always welcome.

*David Judson, 10 January 2007*

## Item 15.1 - MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

My main "background task" continues to be making sense of the huge amount of information held on the BCA PC. I am also starting to document the "end to end" process for membership administration, so that future job holders will be able to understand the role more easily. Thanks to Les Williams, I have enabled the BCA host spam filtering service, and this, in conjunction with the Norton Internet Firewall and the benefit of connecting direct to Demon, has resulted in a reduction of spam emails to around 30 a day, a huge improvement. A further benefit of the BCA hosting service is the "out of office reply".

Based on feedback from the Regional Councils and the requirements for mailing lists, I have redesigned the overall membership database, and used extracts to send to clubs to use for their membership renewals. This will hopefully be a one off exercise, and this time next year, it will (hopefully) "just" be a matter of updating the master database. Whilst I agree with comments I have received about the suitability of using Excel for this purpose, it is currently all we have, and I intend to make it as easy as possible to manage.

Key highlights for this reporting period:

- **Mailing list for BCA newsletter.** I have updated the September mailing list that NW pulled together, checking for duplications and adding new members as appropriate.
- **Mailing list for C&KS:** I was fortunate to "find" a C&KS mailing list for May 2006 buried in the BCA PC. As far as I could, I have checked the mailing list for duplication and other obvious errors. The mailing list was sent in the format that it was created in, however, I have saved a duplicate version in a more manageable format which I intend to use in the future.
- **2007 membership cards:** Between Christmas and the date of this meeting, I have collated and printed 1346 membership cards. They are broken down as:
  - DIM: 4
  - CIM: 1313
  - Club: 29

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I continue to receive around 20/30 emails a day, the majority of which I can deal with without checking with NW. I am also sending insurance certificates on request.

**Looking forward:**

I anticipate that most of January and February will be taken up with producing membership cards. Once this activity is reasonably complete, I will continue to integrate the individual club spreadsheets into the "master" membership database.

*Glenn Jones, 10 January 2007*

**Item 16.1 - INSURANCE MANAGER'S REPORT**

As previously advised, please offer my apologies for the meeting on Saturday at which I am afraid I will not be present since I will be preparing to leave for Mulu early on Sunday morning

I do not think I have much to report which cannot be covered by Glenn and Idris. Basically, we have obtained a renewal on the PL scheme at a marginally lower cost than last year, through a new broker, and progress has been made with the appointment of a new Training Administrator. Glenn seems to be making good headway with sending out cards for CIMs and I understand arrangements are being made to send renewal letters to DIMs.

I have briefed Dave Judson on a couple of other issues which may arise so he will be able to convey my comments if appropriate. If anything desperate comes up, I will probably be available on the phone (01298 873800 / 07702 995135).

I'm intending to try to go through some pending e-mail enquiries this evening and tomorrow so there may well be other comments on specific issues in my replies and I'll copy you on anything of significance to Council.

Have a good meeting.

*Nick Williams, 12 January 2007*

**Item 16.2 - CSCC PROPOSAL RE. LIMIT OF INDEMNITY UNDER BCA INSURANCE SCHEME**

At its last Meeting in December the CSCC considered the plight of one of its BCA members. In securing continued access to some sites for the benefit of all bona fide cavers/mine explorers it had found it necessary to extend the schedule of a non-BCA insurance policy it already held for a different site. This policy provided for £5M of liability (the BCA policy provides £2M cover) which was a specific stipulation of the landowners agents for the sites in question. The additional premium amounted to approximately £120 and the fee for the new licence amounted to £250.

The CSCC had considerable sympathy with predicament of the Club in question; it does not seem right that they should be out of pocket because the national policy was not adequate for their needs.

I was actioned by the Meeting to write to Council and enquire whether the level of cover on the BCA policy could be raised to £5M. In a useful exchange of emails with Nick and Dave J it is apparent that this is not really an option (it would add approximately GBP2/capita to the BCA sub, and sets the dangerous precedent that we would find more and more access agreements stipulating £5M; it would be a downward spiral).

I would therefore like to change the topic of the discussion before Council.

On behalf of the CSCC I would like to propose that Council adopt a stance that in those instances where an Access Control Body cannot secure an access agreement within the scope of the BCA insurance policy, Council will reimburse the EXCESS costs incurred by that ACB (including any annual costs). That is the general principle I would like discussed; I recognise that if adopted there are likely to be conditions! Also, and related to this, I think it would be very valuable if Council could produce some guidance notes for RC's/ACB's on how they might successfully argue the case for the scope of the BCA policy with landowners.

*Steve King, CSCC Secretary, 11 January 2007*

**Item 17 - RADON WORKING PARTY REPORT**

Regarding the matter that Pete M raised earlier over radon.

I have spoken to our Cave Rescue doctors and there is little chance of an ordinary member of the public getting hold of medical records. A Public Health Officer or another medic could do it.

I have remembered that there is a person Tony Denman, at Northampton General hospital that works on radon. I am trying to contact him to put him in touch with PM.

Otherwise, apologies for being away - SWCC Committee and a WBCRT rescue practice.

*Clark Friend, 11 January 2007*