



Minutes of BCA Council Meeting held on Saturday, 12th January 2013
at The Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch

Present:

Andy Eavis (AE)	BCA Chairman
Paul Ibberson (PI)	BCA Treasurer
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Secretary / Handbook Editor
Elsie Little (EL)	BCA Conservation & Access Officer
David Judson (DJu)	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
Nigel Ball (NB)	BCA Training Officer
Nick Williams (NW)	BCA Equipment & Techniques Officer
Les Williams (LW)	BCA Publications & Information Officer / Webmaster / 2016
Jenny Potts (JP)	BCA Publication Sales / DCA Rep.
David Cooke (DC)	BCA Cave-Registry / IT Working Group / Individual Member Rep.
Helen Brooke (HB)	BCA Youth & Development / CHECC Rep.
Bernie Woodley (BW)	Club Member Rep.
Owen Clark (OC)	Club Member Rep.
Emma Porter (EP)	Club Member Rep.
Mick Day (MD)	Individual Member Rep.
Faye Litherland (FL)	Individual Member Rep.
Ged Campion (GC)	FSE Rep.
David Jean (DJe)	DCUC Rep.
Mike McCombe (MM)	Cambrian CC Rep.
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	ACI Rep.
Idris Williams (IW)	ASCT Rep.
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO Rep.
Graham Mollard (GM)	Observer

The meeting commenced at 10:30am.

1. Chairman's Welcome

AE welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Dave Checkley, Clark Friend, Glenn Jones, Chris Jewell, Bob Mehew and Boyd Potts.

3. Applications for Club Membership

The Nenthead Mines Conservation Society has provided the correct paperwork and payment to become a BCA Member Clubs.

Proposal: *to accept the Nenthead Mines Conservation Society as a Member Club.*

Prop: NB, Sec: HB *agreed unanimously*

4. Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 6th October 2012 (previously circulated)

DW: The date of the next meeting should read "2013" not "2012".

GC: On p14 it should say Euro-Speleo *Congress* not *Forum*.

Proposal: *to accept the amended Minutes from 6th October 2012 as a true record*

Prop: BW, Sec: OC *agreed unanimously*

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the last Council Meeting

Review of Action Log

Action 36 (Manual of Operations): Ongoing

Action 54 (Liaise with SUI):

NW: SUI has a new Chairman and he and NW have exchanged correspondence. NW is hoping to be able to assist them.

NB: There are still some issues about recognition of qualifications.

Action 117: NB to contact NW about Irish Qualification recognition.

Action 83 (Produce Asset Register): Ongoing

Action 97 (T/As working as Individuals):

NW: This was discussed at TC and the meeting agreed it would be a standard part of Trainer/Assessors' (T/A) appointments.

GM: In 2007 TC threw that out as it was felt that it was not BCA's responsibility to check such things.

NW: We seem to have changed our view.

GM: A few years ago GM arranged a professional insurance policy because BCA was not willing to arrange it itself. Since BCA was unwilling then, some people don't see that BCA should be checking it. It will also give Mary Wilde extra work.

NW: The principle was discussed at Training Committee (TC) and Mary did not express any concerns about the workload involved in looking at a certificate at that point.

GM: This also raises issues with other corporate centres being used to host events.

NW: TC is best placed to discuss this, not us. The meeting in October was not well populated so it seems sensible that the issue be revisited.

GM: It is not a legal requirement for us to view certificates.

NW: Yes, but there is potentially some liability for BCA if one of its T/As was not covered. There did not appear to be any real resistance in TC, but if that is not the case, then TC should reconsider it.

GM: Is absolutely clear that all covers working professionally should have their own cover, but does not feel we need sight of it.

Action 118: NB to put the issue of BCA having sight of T/A's insurance documents on the agenda for the February Training meeting.

Action 102 (BCA Award Holders' BCA Membership):

DW: We are getting to the point where this can be implemented.

NW: Has a conference call booked between himself, Mary Wilde and Glenn Jones on Monday and will hopefully have a clearer idea then of whether this is doable by the end of the month, but it may need to be put off if there are issues we are not aware of.

GM: Believes that holders of BCA qualifications should be full members and pay the going rate. Does not believe in short-cutting it. Other organisations insist on you staying a member.

NW: We left it to the TC to come up with a decision, which they did. GM's view is not the view of that meeting, but the meeting was not well attended. If this is a view held by a number of TC members, we may need to put off implementation.

GM: TC tend decide things that are in their own interests, rather than BCA's.

NW: We need to be seen to listen, rather than railroad it.

PI: We could decide to put off the whole thing until the general review of membership that will be taking place this year.

DW: It would be nice if we could include it in the general review of membership, but if we need it to happen now, then so be it.

NW: We could delay it by simply make a statement that all Training Scheme members are members for the time being. We can then put off the discussion.

Proposal: to delay until 2014 implementation of the requirement for Award Holders to pay to join BCA and in the interim all Award Holders shall become basic members to include a full vote and insurance cover for their non-professional activities.

Prop: NW Sec: DW *agreed unanimously*

SN: How will Award Holders know they are now members?

NW: The benefit is more to BCA and the landowners than the individuals. The thinking behind required membership is two fold: that Award Holders should make a contribution to the Organisation (and it is perfectly possible that they already do so through their existing fees); the other aspect is making sure we have a joined up landowner-indemnity scheme so that everyone who has anything to do with BCA is covered. This also reduces the possibility of individuals coming to an arrangement with landowners to the detriment of BCA.

LW: Has no problem with us, as the Awarding Body, requiring Award Holders to be members. However a substantial chunk of professional cavers are already club members.

NW: It would be helpful to have some views from professional cavers on costs of other Governing Body qualifications.

IW: The ASCT would be happy with the requirement to become members, but would not wish to pay more.

LW: Could we simply extend our existing scheme for assisting the Voluntary Sector to include this?

Action 104 (Ask at TC for Potential CP Officer): Ongoing

Action 105 (Review of CP Guidance): Ongoing - see Legal & Insurance Report.

Action 108 (Erin on Speleology Distribution): Complete - see Post-Meeting note in October 2012 Minutes.

Action 109 (Review of Subscription Structure): Ongoing

Action 110 (Ask students if able to help at Library)

HB: They suggested having a dedicated weekend with some time being spent on the Saturday learning to catalogue etc.

NW: Could that be combined with the AGM?

Action 118: HB and JP to liaise over students helping at the Library.

Action 111 (Electronic Copies of previous Speleology)

NW: Already has them in his archives, so can pass them across to LW at lunch. *Complete*

Action 112 (Costed Proposal for Try Caving Lights)

HB: E-mailed Dave Ryall (at Lyon) but has not had a reply yet. Probably needs to try contacting Lyon directly.

GM: Lyon are becoming quite reluctant to give out discount deals after quite a bit of abuse of some in the past.

Action 113 (Adopt a Club Scheme) see Youth & Development Report

Action 114 (Insurance Benefits Summary to send to Clubs)

DW: DJu prepared a statement which was e-mailed out by GJ to member clubs with their renewal paperwork. DW and GJ took the decision between them that the hassle of posting a paper copy for each member together with the club membership cards outweighed the benefits, as most would receive it if sent by e-mail anyway.

Action 115 (Summary of Landowner Insurance Benefits) Ongoing

Action 116 (Update of Try Caving Leaflets) see Youth & Development Report

Officers' Reports

6. Chairman (written report previously circulated)

First of all I should like to repeat my thanks to Les Williams and his team for an excellent Hidden Earth. It was very remiss of me to miss it off my last report, particularly as I think Hidden Earth gets better and better - full marks to the team.

A number of us have visited Lancaster with the thoughts that this might be the venue for the European Meeting in 2016. We are now working on confirming the dates. We are hoping that there will be up to 1,000 attendees and we should be producing fliers and other publicity material to distribute at the International Union Congress in Brno this July.

A fair bit of activity has been going on within the regions, particularly with regards to access, so thank you to the various people who have been handling this. Also a number of sub-committees have been busy. Again thank you to the numbers of people involved with these. No doubt they will be mentioned in individual reports.

Having investigated the circumstances surrounding the apparent impasse in Equipment & Techniques, I am clear that we are not going to gain anything from further debate: it is time to move on. I have reported on this separately.

While in China recently I spent some time talking to Erin Lynch about her role as Editor of Speleology. She is very keen to continue the role and has various plans for improving its punctuality in the future. Since my return I have also talked to somebody about being a British contributing editor. I am meeting him on the 11th January to progress this further. Erin was very apologetic about her performance and had a number of good reasons why it had been delayed in the past, but with the help of a British editor she is convinced it can get back on schedule in the future.

Finally, a belated Happy New Year to all members of the British Caving Association Council. Thank you very much for your work in 2012 and I look forward to continued activity during 2013.

Andy Eavis

AE: Has since spoken to the potential UK-based Speleology commissioning editor and there is progress.

The Chairman's Report was accepted without discussion.

7. Secretary (written report previously circulated)

2013 AGM: *In a change from previous years the AGM will be held on Sunday, 16th June at the Rotary Centre in Castleton. It will be part of a whole weekend of activities, including a cave science event (in conjunction with BCRA) and a party on the Saturday. In this way we hope to attract more of our members to the AGM. We thank Council Members in advance for the extra*

distance many will have to travel this year, but hope everyone will enjoy the weekend while they are there! The key now is to advertise the event as widely as possible. To this end in the next few days I will be posting an initial note on the UKCaving forum, have put a section in the next Newsletter (due by the end of January) and will contact Descent. The key will be encouraging the locals to attend, and I am sure DCA will do what it can to help with this.

We intend the event to be self-financing with prices for accommodation and food set at appropriate “break-even” levels. As this will depend very much on the numbers attending, and for this year this will be almost total guess work, there is a real risk of making a loss. To this end Andy Eavis has very kindly agreed to underwrite the event for 2013.

BCA is renting the whole venue and then sub-letting the camping and beds. I will deal with the bookings for this, so please remember to contact me, preferably by e-mail, particularly if you are hoping to have a bed rather than camp. At this stage we are not fixing the prices, but as a guide indoor accommodation is not likely to exceed £10 per night and camping will be in the region of £1 per person per night. Food will be extra, but again priced at a “break-even” level.

Disciplinary Procedure: *Following a number of instances in which we have had to use the Disciplinary Procedure agreed by last year’s AGM, it has become clear that we need to amend it. The relevant section of the existing procedure is:*

[...] BCA Executive will then appoint someone to investigate the circumstances and determine whether or not the matter should be treated as a formal disciplinary matter.[...] Any formal disciplinary matter will be heard by a Disciplinary Panel. This Panel will usually be either the appropriate Standing Committee or National Council depending on the nature of the matter. However, if the matter is sufficiently urgent, it will be dealt with by BCA Executive following their normal Method of Working.

[...]When the arrangements for the Disciplinary Panel have been finalised, the individual, group or associate member will be written to at their last known address advising them of the complaint made against them, the time, date and location of the Disciplinary Panel, and inviting them to state their case, either in writing, in person or both. They will also be given the option of appointing someone else to represent them. A period of 30 days shall usually be given between this and the formal hearing, although in some cases, particularly those relating to safety, this may be reduced. [...]

The problem with the above seems to be the jump between an investigation by an appropriate person and a “Disciplinary Panel” with all that the name implies. In fact it seems that in many cases what may well really need to happen is a more thorough cross-examination of the evidence, which itself may potentially lead to no further action being taken. In light of this Andy Eavis and I are of the view that our Procedure would be more sensible with an additional stage: an Investigatory Panel. Specifically I would like to put forward the following alternative to the above section, with a view to it being considered and developed before the March Council Meeting and then put to this year’s AGM for approval:

BCA Executive will then appoint someone to carry out an initial investigation into the circumstances before deciding how to proceed. If it is felt that there may be a case to answer, then a full Investigatory Panel will normally follow. This will usually be the appropriate Standing Committee, National Council or Executive depending on the nature of the matter. However if the matter is sufficiently urgent, it will be dealt with by Executive following their normal Method of Working.

From the outset Executive will appoint a Chair of the Appeals Panel who must ensure they are not involved in any way in the Investigatory or Disciplinary Panel.

When the arrangements for the Investigatory Panel have been finalised, the member will be written to at their last known address advising them of the complaint made against them, the time, date and location of Panel, and inviting them to state their case, either in writing, in person or both. They will also be given the option of appointing someone else to represent them. A period of 30 days shall usually be given between this and the formal hearing, although in some cases, particularly those relating to safety, this may be reduced.

Following the Panel, the member will be written to again, usually within 14 days of the Panel, outlining the outcome and giving the opportunity for appeal.

Outcomes of an Investigatory Panel

Each case should be considered individually with available outcomes including:

- clearing of any misconduct, potentially also including an apology to the member;
- words of advice;
- a verbal warning;
- a written warning;
- escalation to a Disciplinary Panel.

Disciplinary Panel

Should either the initial investigation or the Investigatory Panel conclude that available evidence is sufficiently robust and serious in nature, then a Disciplinary Panel should be convened. This will follow the same procedures as the Investigatory Panel, but the potential outcomes are more far reaching.

Outcomes of a Disciplinary Panel

Each case should be considered individually with available outcomes including:

- clearing of any misconduct, potentially also including an apology to the member;
- words of advice;
- a verbal warning;
- a written warning;
- suspension of membership for an appropriate period;
- expulsion from BCA.

Complaint: *a complaint relating to the conduct of one of the Local Panels was investigated and dealt with according to our Procedure. Broadly it was found that the Panel should not have behaved as it did, but since no guidance had really been available to its members beforehand, no action was taken against the Panel Members. Instead Executive apologised on BCA's behalf and work is ongoing to reduce the chances of something similar happening in the future. In the shorter term this will take the form of an Executive statement outlining protocol for Local Panels, the NCP and the CIC Panel which will be released shortly.*

Casterton Fell Access Breaches: *I reported to the last meeting that there had been three potential breaches to the Casterton Fell access agreement by BCA member clubs. Following investigation Executive is satisfied that only two of these actually took place. In fact both clubs have admitted to their member or members caving in caves covered by the Casterton Fell Access Agreement without permits and then subsequently publishing trip reports on the internet. Both clubs co-operated fully in the investigation, apologised, assured us it will not happen again and removed the offending trip reports from their websites. One of the Clubs has also provided a letter to Council which is included in Appendix 1. We need to decide today how we should react in accordance with BCA's Disciplinary Procedure.*

HMRC Information Demand: *We received a letter for HMRC demanding details of all our Award Holders and had 30 days to reply in full, or face fines. No doubt this is to aid investigations into people who are not paying the appropriate tax. Once I had verified that it was indeed genuine, Mary Wilde dealt with the request extremely efficiently. The time involved was far from trivial and she deserves our thanks for her work on this.*

Newsletter: *I have pulled together some content for a newsletter to be compiled by David Gibson. Details are given under the Newsletter report.*

Damian Weare

AGM Arrangements

HB: 'Slug' from the BEC might be willing to do breakfast if asked. CHECC will happily provide any pans or equipment needed for this.

Disciplinary Procedure

AF: It may be better if the name "Investigatory Panel" were changed to "Review".

LW: There seems to be approval. Do we now need to take this to an AGM or can we just agree it at Council?

JP: Would it be better that this meeting recommend the AGM approve it?

AE: Should the AGM simply ratify the changes annually?

GM: Is concerned that the Procedure should be cleared by a solicitor.

Action 119: EP to try to find some free legal advice.

MD: Is presuming we have a section about escalating items to external bodies, such as the Police.

DW: This still exists. What is presented in the Report is the section of the existing Policy we wish to amend.

Disciplinary Panel

[SH, who was appointed as Chair of the Appeal Panel, left the room for the duration of this section.]

DW summarised the circumstances relating to the two clubs. The meeting concluded that both clubs had indeed breached the access agreement, but subsequently co-operated fully in our investigations, apologised and have taken steps to ensure a similar breach does not occur in the future.

Action 120: DW to write to both Clubs thanking them for their co-operation and for the action they have taken so far, but also outlining BCA's concern at the breach of an access agreement and formally requesting that it does not happen again.

HMRC

JP: Will the fact that Mary Wilde has done this once, now save time with any similar requests in the future?

DW: Probably not. It apparently took Mary a lot of time.

NW: The request was probably more down to checking up on Centres and their PAYE arrangements, rather than to catch people operating on a "cash in hand" basis.

The remainder of the Secretary's Report was accepted without discussion.

8. Treasurer (written report previously circulated)

Since the last meeting, a fair proportion of my available time has been spent dealing with HMRC and certain banks; a frustrating and annoying time to-ing and fro-ing over various issues. As a result, forward progress hasn't been quite as much as intended, although day-to-day matters have been kept ticking over. As planned, formal Finance Committee discussions took place in November and funds for 2011 RCC claims were distributed in December. A couple of areas for discussion have arisen from this funding round, of which more later. Very little progress has been made on the new accounts package, but this can be integrated at a later date so I am happy that there was no glaring necessity to have had it in place as at 1 January. As far as the investment review discussed at the previous Council meeting goes, the landscape has changed somewhat in that the level of deposit interest on offer generally has fallen significantly over the interim period. Hence there is not the same current discrepancy in return on investment and the reallocation of funds can be considered at greater length. Nevertheless, I remain of the opinion that the reserve should be spread more widely to reduce the overall risk and will continue to look for the best way to achieve this.

Other outstanding actions are either ongoing or still to be dealt with and these will be addressed as time permits. However, there are 2 specific issues which I would like Council to consider in January. These are as follows :-

Firstly, I have been in discussion with the Sport and Recreation Alliance regarding the level of their subscription fee for 2012/13. This was previously based on membership numbers and calculated out to about £35, but we were charged the minimum of £75. The current fee basis has been changed to Turnover (with a minimum of £100) and our point on the scale means a fee of £125. Whilst the numbers are small, I feel the 67% increase to be totally unjustifiable in the current climate and have pointed this out to S&RA. They are unwilling to accept that the fee is anything other than Turnover based hence I ask that Council consider whether we feel our continued involvement is appropriate.

Secondly, a point arose from the RCC funding discussions concerning travel expenses for Conservation and Access claims. Some Regions claim under this heading whilst others do not and there seems to be a degree of uncertainty as to whether or not this element of cost should be reimbursed. The "Funding of Regional Councils" document doesn't really make this clear for C&A and there is a further question that if C&A travel costs are claimable, should that be for officers only or officers and volunteers? Having not been party to establishing the initial principles here, I seek clarification from Council on this point. (For the 2011 funding round, any such claims have been reimbursed provisionally, subject to the above clarification and if necessary will be adjusted along with the consideration of 2012 claims).

Looking to Q1 of 2013, other than the ongoing matters mentioned above, I expect to prepare draft 2012 accounts as soon as possible. These will then be updated with the effect of Finance Committee consideration of 2012 RCC funding claims and examined in good time for the AGM. As usual, I would ask all Council members to ensure that any items of income or expenditure relating to 2012 are notified to me a.s.a.p. but certainly before the March meeting.

Paul Ibberson

Sport and Recreation Alliance

MD: This was formally the CCPR and it presented a strong combined lobby when necessary. When the Sports Council was then set up by Government, it was claimed that it would represent the voice of the different sports, but the CCPR told them in no uncertain terms that they do not. It is often tempting in good times to think we do not need a strong voice, but there could well be times in the future when we do.

NW: Would like to present a counter argument to provoke discussion. Sometimes "charities" are really little more than businesses employing people who spend a lot of time justifying their jobs by sending e-mails. We need to consider who the key people are that we should be in contact with.

MD: At the moment we have a variety of appropriate contacts in those bodies where we may need an input, but we should bear in mind that this might not always be the case. Should we need it, this is *the* body to use to bring us into contact with lots of other Governing Bodies quickly. As there is only one of these bodies, MD recommends we continue our subscription.

GC: This is probably one of those umbrella bodies that is genuinely there to represent us.

JP: Feels it is one of those organisations where we might not be able to see a benefit at the moment, but it could be a very useful voice on our behalf at another point in the future.

GM: It might be more productive to re-establish our links with the Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee (AAIAC), who are a government-funded organisation.

Action 120: DW to investigate AAIAC and whether we might wish to become a member.

Travel Claims for C&A Work

- PI: There seem to be inconsistencies in whether we pay travel claims for C&A work and the Regional Council Funding document does not make clear how we should proceed. The normal situation seems to be that we should pay officers but not volunteers.
- JP: Feels it would be wrong to pay officers but not volunteers. DCA could try to get its volunteers expenses paid by NE. Whatever the outcome of today's discussion, DCA will continue to pay expenses, but would like to hope that BCA will choose to refund it.
- PI: Cambrian don't do it at the moment, but warn that there are potentially some significant expenses ahead of us if we agree to it.
- AE: Ideally it is left to somebody's discretion, surely.
- MM: There is an arrangement for the pre-authorisation of work. Should this include travel?
- FL: Obviously it will depend on the individual's contribution to the work.
- LW: We need to leave it to the local officers on site to decide if it is appropriate.
- PI: The limit of jobs that don't need notifying is £500.
- EL: Above that limit it was felt that there should be communal agreement on whether or not something is appropriate.
- DC: The budget is set at the October meeting and we have never reached that figure over the course of a year. We want to encourage work to take place.
- JP: Sometimes something will happen while work is taking place and it costs extra money to put it right.
- PI: The principle we seem to be agreeing is that volunteers should be paid travel expenses at the discretion of the relevant officer.
- DC: This is a significant change to what we have done in the past.

Action 121: PI to revise Regional Funding document to clarify our approach to C&A travel expenses.

The remainder of the Treasurer's Report was accepted without discussion.

9. Conservation & Access

- EL: Time pressures have limited work to the triennial review of Natural England. A consultation document exists and it requires a response from us. Much has happened in Wales already, which is probably as an experiment for elsewhere. The proposed new Body will almost certainly be led by the Environment Agency for anything relating to water, and in fact they are likely to be the lead Body generally, with the Forestry Commission and Natural England taking subsidiary places. EL will need to write separately, as the response proforma does not really help us make our points. Natural England has already been decimated. Monitoring of SSSIs has taken place in different ways around the regions. One area that they could easily hive off to a smaller quango-Body could be the caving element; this would not be helpful. It is doubtful we would be able to persuade them to be able to hive it off to the caving world permanently. We need them to understand, however, that we are the only ones competent to do the assessments underground and that ownership of the sites should be in public hands.
- LW: Understands the Government has officially not decided on anything yet and there is still a full spread of possible outcomes. Given this, we need to put together quite a strongly-worded letter.
- JP: RSPB's response is that the changes are unlawful. It explains that NE was set up by Parliament to ensure the countryside is managed for the future of the nation and is independent of government. The new plans show the body as no longer being independent.
- EL: The problem is that NE has been thoroughly emasculated over the years and the government will probably simply say that it is no longer suitable to handle its remit.

The remainder of the Conservation & Access Officer's Report was accepted without discussion.

10. Equipment & Techniques

- NW: There was an E&T meeting in October (which was not attended by reps from DCA and CNCC, although DCA sent an observer). The meeting unanimously agreed a document outlining the basic principles for the installation of resin anchors and leaving the Regions to add further details to suit their situation. This will protect BCA's interests from a liability point of view, while also giving a degree of flexibility. NW proposes presenting the document to the AGM to replace any previous documents. Once this is complete it seems sensible for Council to draw a line under the previous difficulties.
- FL: It was a productive meeting with each paragraph considered in stages and amended as appropriate. By the end we had a document that everyone agreed with.
- JP: DCA agreed the document at its council meeting on the basis that DCA will continue to stick with the IPTD but that

there is nothing in this new document that conflicts with us doing that.

[NW then read out the new document, included here in Appendix 3]

LW: Does this deal with anchors already placed, particularly with regard to the previous testing regime?

NW: We stopped regular testing of anchors a while ago, so this is not a problem.

Proposal: to accept the anchor-scheme document agreed at the October 2012 E&T meeting until it can be formally adopted by the AGM.

Prop: NW Sec: FL *agreed unanimously*

NW: Has been contacted by SUI and North Wales about resin anchors.

LW: Surely N. Wales should be communicating through Cambrian?

NW: Yes, and they are aware of this.

Statement from Andy Eavis

I have talked to a number of people in connection with what was perceived to go on in the Equipment & Techniques meeting in Autumn 2011.

It would seem to me that there is categorically no deceit, there was simply a misunderstanding. Nick and I were firmly of the belief that the agreement we had come to with the CSCC was that the IPTD document would initially be accepted as it stands for all bolts, but was a work in progress and at some stage at a future E&T meeting it would be added to allow for placements of other bolts for fixed aids, ladders and lifelines etc.

The representatives of CSCC, Dave Cooke and Faye Litherland, are convinced that their understanding was that we agreed it would be for SRT only, and other documentation would be produced to cover bolts for other purposes.

Nick's protective attitude was because he had slightly more emphasis in mind on adding to the IPTD in future than had been emphasised at the meeting.

I am convinced the whole problem revolved around a misunderstanding and a large element of overreaction. I hope we can move forward in a co-operative, non-confrontational manner and continue making British caving safer.

Andy Eavis

This has received the following comments:

1) I find this account is incomplete and thus misleading. Section 9 of the Minutes of the National Council Meeting held on the 24th March 2012 gives a more complete picture.

David Cooke

2) The report submitted by Andy Eavis under the above heading is incorrect. Andy states: "It would seem to me that there is categorically no deceit, there was simply a misunderstanding." The following statement is recorded in the minutes of the March 17th 2012 E&T meeting: "NW noted that he accepted he had made a promise to CSCC which he had not made clear to GJ, BD and LS in that he had distinguished between SRT anchors and anchors for other purposes." This statement was witnessed by all attendees at that meeting. It was further supported by the return of the IPTD copyright to its authors.

There was no overreaction. The response by CNCC and DCA was perfectly justified given that an officer of BCA had admitted to deceiving two Regional Councils.

CNCC & DCA

FL: Didn't respond to AE's statement when it was circulated by e-mail, but FL does not believe it is needed. It is simply a rehash of what has already been said.

AE: It is definitely time to draw a line under this.

NW: Sees the final opportunity to do this as being once the new document has been adopted by the AGM.

Bowline on the Bight

NW: This seems to be a hot topic on the UKCaving forum at present, but I am informed by the Training Officer and others with the requisite background in professional instruction that this is not actually new information.

Nevertheless BCA probably ought to make a simple statement about it.

Action 122: NW and NB to formulate a statement relating to the recent discussion about Bowline on the Bight knots.

Rope-Testing

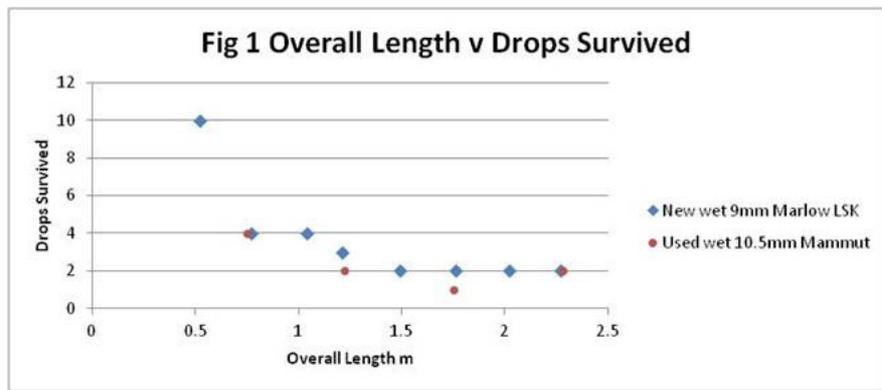
The Rope Test Rig was present at Hidden Earth (although it is admitted the Rope Test Officer was found asleep on the job) and a large number of sample were received and subsequently tested. The service has tested over 70 samples during 2012. A lecture was also given during the weekend on developments in rope testing, some early results and the impact of rope defects. Beal's 2012 catalogue provides a useful guide to checking ropes and significance of defects (see http://www.beal-pro.com/anglais/Cata_Pro_2012_GB.pdf).

Work on the Craven Pothole Club's Rope Test Rig (which can test samples up to 2.25m overall length) has demonstrated that the dynamic test parameter of drops survived is related to the overall length.

(The British Standard uses a 2m Overall length sample where as the BCA Rope Test Rig uses 0.8m.)

A debate on UKCaving forum has raised a question over the best combination of knots to use in a Cows Tail (figure of 8 and barrel verses overhand and figure of 8).

Funding of £600 is being sought to permit investigations into both areas.



Bob Mehew

NW: Suggests the request for £600 of funding be delegated to NW and PI.

Action 123: NW, PI and BM to liaise over BM's request for £600 of funding for rope-testing projects.

11. Training (written report previously circulated)

Figures: Since my last report in October 2012 a number of Local Cave and Mine Leader and Cave Instructor courses have been run and generated the following data for Council's observation:

Registrations: 45 (LCMLA), 3 (CIC)

Assessments: 13 (LCMLA Level 1), 3 (LCMLA Level 2), 1 (CIC)

Revalidations: 24 (LCMLA Level 1), 7 (LCMLA Level 2), 5 (CIC)

Membership for Award Holders: Training Committee were tasked with the job of deciding how Council's resolution of insisting that all BCA award holders were members of BCA and therefore were covered under the umbrella insurance policy for land owner's liability. At the last Training Committee meeting, this was resolved. A draft proposal has been put together and a vote of thanks is made to BCA Secretary for coming up with a statement for public release.

Administrator Workload: The Training Administrator has reported back to me that there has been an increase in her work load due to the centralisation of all Local Cave and Mine Leader Award revalidations. She feels that administration associated with compulsory membership, will also increase the workload.

She would also like to report that the new laptop purchased (the old one was past its best by date), along with new Microsoft Office Professional software, has improved things enormously.

Moderation: The Training Officer was invited by the Military Joint Service, based at Devell Barracks in Ripon, to observe one of their CVF courses as a way of continuing the moderation process. This was done over three days. Standards observed were broadly in line with those of the Local Cave Leader Level 1 and Level 2 training courses. Based on these observations, BCA will continue to issue LCML Level 1 and 2 training accreditation after the successful completion of a CVF course. The Training Officer will continue this process by observing a CVT course early in the new year and hopefully a CVI course too.

Recreational Training Grant: A training grant has been given to the Crewe Climbing and Pothole Club to the value of £100 to support a training course.

Nigel Ball

NB: Thanks to the Military for being very accommodating and welcoming.

Commercial Caving

SN: Wonders if BCA might release a statement that is more favourable towards commercial caving. BCA seem to be making it difficult for its Agents to do as BCA wants them to, i.e. to train cavers. Many access agreements preclude commercial use and this seems to apply to anyone running a training course. Surely it is in BCA's interests to provide safer trained cavers, but it seems that this is being hindered by a refusal to allow commercial use. Also wonders whether BCA might define "good" commercial activity. In some cases it seems to extend to college lecturers who are not necessarily being paid for the caving, but who are taking people on trips as part of the work.

LW: Hears what you are saying, but BCA is unfortunately not directly involved in access arrangements and our Constitution prevents us interfering in other people's affairs unless requested to do so.

MD: Over the years our view has been to leave things well alone. MD has spent time in the past trying to negotiate access to OFD to allow assessments on vertical work to be carried out on the same day as other assessments. However, at the time the OFD Management Committee felt that if the law requires that those at work are covered by the Health & Safety legislation, then their hands are tied. It would be in BCA's interests to be able to get around this.

- SN: There is no denying it is a can of worms.
- LW: Feels SN's request is missing the way BCA really works: Access Bodies make their own rules and nobody else can effectively influence them.
- FL: The obvious solution would be to write to the Body in question.
- HB: Is it not the case that we need Training Courses to take place in appropriate venues?
- DW: The Training Committee is best placed to define "commercial caving". It may well be helpful to people negotiating access in the future to have a short summary of different types of commercial caving in the hope that a blanket ban by the landowner is not the default position. However we have to recognise that landowners often do not want other people making money from *their* land.
- GM: Executive or Council should make a request.
- EL: A major issue with the Kay-Shuttleworth Estate is that SSSIs are being damaged and pressure is being put on the landowners by NE, who then naturally pass it down to us.
- NW: First of all BCA and RCCs should clearly take some responsibility for supporting the Training Schemes. Secondly under no circumstances should insurance be seen as an impediment to providing access to commercial groups. This is something we are dealing with. Finally there is a significant danger here that people should not ignore. If you come to an agreement with a landowner that precludes commercial caving, then there is nothing to prevent the landowner coming to their own private arrangements with commercial operators and our own recreational access may well suffer accordingly. We need to remember this, because it is the logical result of failing to support commercial caving activities. We could produce something reminding people of the issues around commercial caving when making access agreements.
- LW: It is not just Regional Councils, of course.
- SN: There are a number of Bodies set up to represent the interests of cavers.
- HB: Would suggest that BCA make a statement that it does not see training and assessment as "Commercial Caving" as such.
- MM: The S. Wales Local Panel came to Cambrian to enlist its support recently. Following this we sat down and produced a response containing six points, which are summarised as: 1) Training, either by clubs of professionals, is encouraged. 2) Cambrian cannot endorse anything that is contrary to the wishes of the landowner. 3) The degree of influence that Cambrian has varies considerably. 4) Access conditions that apply to individual agreements are for that body to decide upon. 5) Any trips involving training underground also need to comply with any other normal access conditions. 6) In case of an accident, liabilities may affect the liability of the landowner.

Action 124: Executive to prepare a statement on access and commercial caving for the next Council Meeting.

Following further information relating to the flooding incident covered in the Training Report to the October Council Meeting, a detailed investigation was carried out by a wider BCA Executive. It was concluded that the individual concerned acted as could have been reasonable expected and accordingly no further action has been taken.

Damian Weare

The remainder of the Training Officer's Report was accepted without discussion.

12. Publications & Information

LW: There is a potential volunteer for the Newsletter Editor.

a. Webmaster

Nothing to report

b. Web Services (written report circulated)

The service continues to operate efficiently with no outages that I am aware of in the last quarter. I've spent a fair amount of time making sure the book-keeping is up to date, chasing a few late payers and answering the odd support question.

My focus this period has been to complete the domain transfers from the Fasthosts webserver to the Memset webserver. Five domains have been successfully transferred, there are four currently being transferred and a further five remain.

David Cooke

c. Newsletter (written report previously circulated)

David Gibson has kindly volunteered – for one issue only – to put together a Newsletter. The time window for supplying content was quite tight, so I put together some stuff over Christmas on our behalf. Final proofs are due on or around the Council Meeting with the aim of the newsletters reaching members by the Constitutional deadline for AGM notification. Needless to say I have included a request for a full-time Editor.

Damian Weare

d. Handbook (written report previously circulated)

Work will begin on the 2014 Handbook in March. As usual I will need officers' co-operation in this. If anyone has noticed any

errors or can suggest ways of improving on this year's version, please let me know. It is worth pointing out, though, that any additional content will need to replace existing content, because we cannot increase the number of pages without having to move to large letter postage rates. This will be expensive.

Damian Weare

DW: At the moment we have different content on the website and in the Handbook. We probably ought to look at rationalising this.

The remainder of the Publications & Information Reports were accepted without discussion.

13. Legal & Insurance

DJu: Following on from the last Council Meeting a group has looked at the Policy document and made minor alterations. [This document was circulated at the meeting and a copy is included here in Appendix 4]. We are now looking at the more difficult Guidance Notes. DJu then circulated some suggestions with a view to them being discussed at next Council Meeting. [These are included in Appendix 5].

For the first time in 12 years we have been asked for some guidance on how to deal with a Child Protection matter relating to a member. In line with our Policy, DJu responded via Executive.

SH: Groups SH is associated with has used the BCA guidance in the past and it has been very helpful.

a. Insurance Manager

NW: We have renewed our Public-Liability Policy for the 3rd year of our 3-yr agreement. We also had a further approach from Perkins-Slade. There could well be drawbacks to what they are offering, but NW feels we ought to review where we are during this year so that we can make a decision in 2014 on who provides the best cover. Graham Mollard has offered to help with this task.

LW: Have you looked at travel insurance?

NW: Has not managed to progress with this. NW would need some help with this. GM has previously volunteered with this too.

The remainder of the Legal & Insurance Report was accepted without discussion.

Other Reports

14. Youth & Development

With CHECC and other things the last part of 2012 has been busy!

With a group of others we have looked at "Adopt a Caving Club" and have a first draft proposal.

I have found someone to help look at the website but, although we've started discussing ideas, as yet we've not had enough time to sit down together.

I have stated at looking at leaflets (with thanks to Jenny for sending them to me). I have some ideas and will hope to bring things for Jenny to look at at the meeting.

Adopt a Caving Club!

- Members' rates for accommodation, but only for current students. This will mean that after you have finished your degree, masters, PHD you can no longer pay members' rates, and will then hopefully remember to join!
- Invitations to social events, club parties, BBQs etc
- Put the current Chair/ President of the Uni club onto the club's E-mail list
- Inclusion in club trips, expeditions as well as trips to local caves.
- A commitment to do two things together each year.
- A commitment to take the student clubs caving to help support and share expertise.
- Display an adoption certificate signed by both clubs.

The practicalities....

Getting clubs to sign up, so e-mailing clubs and getting them to contact me if interested.

Each club can only adopt or be adopted by one club.

Each club will be asked to put three clubs in the order they want to adopt or be adopted, they will also be able to express no preference. I will sit down and see how many we can match and draw from hats if there are clashes.

The hope to have the scheme up and running by June 2013.

So think about it, but I would like to launch the scheme by March this year.

CHECC: *We had our event. I am now Chair for the next two years and we made some Constitutional changes. If any one would like to see them, feel free to ask.*

We are hoping to make more from CHECC, making guidelines on good practice, having more meets through the year, as well as running more Training events.

Helen Brooke

HB: Has received a number of messages from people asking to be involved in the Scheme despite the only publicity being a line in the Council Minutes. This has to be a good sign. There are a number of Clubs that have these arrangements in place anyway, but there are also a number that need help to get it up and running.

IW: Why limit it to each Club only adopting one?

HB: It was felt that it could make it harder to build the necessary relationships if clubs are spread too thinly.

SN: What if there are two clubs who want the same club?

HB: Will look at it on a case-by-case basis.

EL: Should we really be dictating that two clubs cannot work together?

AE: We would generally wish to avoid dictating things to people unless we need to.

DW: Publicising this will be difficult, as we don't really have a Newsletter at the moment.

Leaflets

HB: The general feeling is that we need to make the leaflet shorter, because they are generally most effective with limited text.

LW: Don't forget the Try Caving website too. How quickly are we moving with the website? There have been some comments on the UKCaving forum about not being able to amend details.

HB: Is working on this.

Posters

HB: Would also like to produce posters with a blank section for clubs to add their own contact details with the idea that Clubs display them in local climbing walls and the like.

CHECC

HB: The CHECC Constitution has been rewritten and BCA has been named as the Body that will benefit if CHECC folds.

The remainder of the Youth & Development Report was accepted without discussion.

15. Membership Administrator

BCA Membership to 31st December 2012

DIMs 449 (caving), 41 (non-caving), 9 (CIM Plus), 7 (BCRA Honorary), 1 (BCA Honorary) (including 259 BCRA members)

CIMs 3867 (caving), 1011 (non-caving), 519 (student / U18)

Clubs: 159

Associates: 9

Access Bodies: 7

829 new membership numbers were issued in 2012 - 12272 to 13101

***New Clubs:** The Nenthead Mines Conservation Society has supplied the correct paperwork and payment in order to become a BCA member club.*

***Admin:** Following the gradual slowing down of the BCA Membership Administration XP processor, a new XP processor was installed in late November (we could not move to a Windows 7 environment as W7 drivers are not available for the card printer). Whilst back ups were taken before the migration, the actual migration took longer than anticipated due to a faulty parallel port card in the new processor which meant the old processor had to be fired up until the new one was repaired. But I am happy to report that since early December I have been working in a fast and stable environment.*

***2013 renewal process:** This started slightly later than planned as I wanted everything to do with 2013 to be on the new processor. Emails to Groups started going out on 7th December and DIM renewal letters were posted just before Christmas. Over the Christmas and New Year period 141 DIMs have renewed online and they have all been processed and posted (a significant number of DIMs have renewed by post - which are yet to arrive here in the shed). Also a large number of Groups have renewed online, and processing those will be my priority next week.*

Glenn Jones

DC: Could we please have the BCA logo on the membership card?

The remainder of the Membership Administrator's Report was accepted without discussion.

16. Radon Information

No enquiries received since the last meeting.

There has been a hiatus in the collection of the Nenthead radon data due to a breakdown in my communications with the HPA. My contact was away and the emails were not picked up meaning that the requested detectors were not dispatched. This has

been sorted out and once the Nenthead team have decided on their next visit, I hope that we will get some installed. There has been no progress with the Scottish team - they appear to be still working on the best strategy for placement.

Clark Friend

LW: Potential radon investigations going on in Matienzo. Maybe CF wishes to be involved in this.

The Radon Information Report was accepted without discussion.

17. 2016

LW: The October meeting put together a Working Party. It is good to note that generally people are very keen to help in any way they can. We are about to send a letter making an official request for a venue, which will then allow us to move ahead with other things. We are also looking towards putting together some official stuff for Millau in May.

The 2016 Report was accepted without discussion.

18. Cave Registry

The Cave Registry Data Archive (see cave-registry.org.uk) has been given a new clearer and easier to navigate front end. In addition to the existing data archives, each catchment has a page giving an overview of the work that is being done and by whom.

David Cooke

The Cave Registry Report was accepted without discussion.

19. IT

There has been a long-running problem automating the backup of BCA's website meaning the backups tended to be intermittent. After much research and experimentation I have overcome that problem. With the new scripts that Dave Gibson wrote and with Les Williams' help, we now have regular, automated backups to two remote locations. A small corner of our online Manual of Operations has been annexed by BCRA Council to record their own procedures and similar useful information.

The IT Report was accepted without discussion.

20. International Representative

Since the last Council Meeting in October I have done two trips in my capacity as President of the International Union of Speleology. The first was to Greece and Turkey with the International Show Caves Association. This is the first ISCA meeting that any President of the UIS has attended. It was extremely interesting and I will try and attend more in the future, albeit the next one is in Australia.

There were lectures on various aspects of show caves particularly on conservation. Then there were a number of show cave visits, again with talks by the managers and owners and their ideas on past and future development. Altogether it was an interesting meeting.

However there is a very sad postscript that, one of our main hosts, Giannis Zalavras, the boss of Perama Cave Ioannina was shot dead in his office by an intruder who also shot himself dead. So far no reason for the incident has been given, and a memorial trust has been set up for Giannis. I will be sending a personal donation.

The other function I have attended was the Tanyoujie in Fengshan County China. This was a celebration of the Leye Fengshan Global Geopark. For once the Chinese were paying all my expenses!

I travelled out to Guilin on Monday 19th November. I had four days meeting various old friends in and around the Karst Institute. I then travelled by car to Fengshan where I was looked after extremely well by the leader of the Geopark. I had to do a number of presentations which were translated into Chinese. There were many theatrical presentations including spectacular gymnastics etc. For a lot of the time I was accompanied by Erin Lynch who I talked to in connection with her role as Editor of Speleology.

My next International involvement will be around Easter when I go to Brno to help with final preparations for the International Congress in July.

Andy Eavis

a. FSE

Since the last report to BCA in October there has been little to report. The last General Assembly Meeting (GAM) was held at the Swiss National Congress of Speleology in Muotathal in Eastern Switzerland from 28th-30th September.

However, the following are being progressed:

- *International Caving Expedition database(ICE-db): a report will be finalised soon. A call for volunteers will be sent in order to help update the database.*

- *Shale Gas work group: The letter has been sent to the European Commission. No reply has been received. The letter will be sent again by registered post.*
- *Euro Speleo Projects: No applications from UK but very good applications from a number of member countries.*
- *Organisation of EuroSpeleo Forums :*

ES forum 2013: Millau near Montpellier (13th anniversary of FFS). BCA have provided history of UK caving to be put on poster.

ES forum 2013: 21st-28th July (16th UIS congress) in Brno, Czech Republic.

ES Forum 2014: Romania. Details will follow.

ES Forum 2015 Applications are invited. Bulgaria has expressed an interest.

European Congress 2016 will be held in UK

The next meeting of the FSE bureau will take place in Bruno in Czech Republic in July 2013

Ged Campion

GC: The only controversial part is really about Shale-Gas drilling, and this is partly because there is drilling on kart areas in parts of Europe whereas this is not something that we face. Tony Waltham reported a while back that in his view there is nothing for us to worry about in the UK. Our view is consumed at present by the overall European view. GC will continue to keep EL informed of how this progresses.

GC: Would be nice to see some applications for European grant funding for expeditions.

DW: This will be mentioned in the forthcoming newsletter.

The remainder of the International Reports was accepted without discussion.

21. Media-Liaison

Since my last report I can't say that I have anything to report. Think I might have had one or two phone calls as per usual but nothing out of the ordinary. The job continues to be a reactive one and I rely on cavers to generate their own publicity when they want it (and leave them alone when they don't!)

Chris Jewell

LW: There has been a massive amount of positive publicity about the discoveries on Mendip, including The Mail on Sunday and the BBC. This reinforces the policy change that came under BCA to actually publicise what we do.

DC: In addition to a "Member Club" logo, it would be useful to have one saying "supported by BCA" to be put on websites such as the Library.

AE: In Brno BCRA will have a stand and AE has suggested that BCA might be involved in that.

DW: We should be using it to advertise 2016 too.

JP: Would like to use it to sell the new Yorkshire Dales book. Trevor Faulkner is already planning all sorts of things for the BCRA stand.

The remainder of the Media-Liaison Report was accepted without discussion.

22. British Caving Library Report

The Senior Assistant Librarian, Mary Wilde, and I are processing new material as it arrives but have a backlog of unsorted material to deal with. Because the mixture of catalogued material from the Matlock Library stacks (formerly home to the BCRA Library) is now combined with un-catalogued material collected from the home of the previous BCRA Librarian on the one site at Glutton Bridge, we decided in 2011 to completely re-catalogue the whole Library. All books have been dealt with and are up to date; UK and foreign periodicals are progressing and we have recently found a volunteer to begin work on modern surveys. Trevor Faulkner is reinstating and expanding BCRA's foreign journals exchanges. Work is progressing, albeit slowly, because of the limited labour force and time available - suitable volunteers are proving hard to find.

Jenny Potts

JP: BCRA's Yorkshire Dales book is now due by the end of Feb.

The remainder of the Library Report was accepted without discussion.

23. Any Other Business

None.

24. Date, Time & Place of next meeting

The next Council Meeting will be on Saturday, 16th March 2013 at The Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch.

The meeting closed at 15:15

Action Log (as at January 2013)

No.	Action by ...	Details of Action
36	DW	Put together a Manual of Operations
54	NW & DJu	Liaise with SUI with a view to helping them streamline their insurance situation.
October 2011		
83	PI	Produce an Asset Register and liaise with NW/EP over the total replacement value of our insured equipment.
March 2012		
97	NB	Liaise with NW and Training Committee with a view to implementing Council's wish that T/As work for BCA as individuals.
June 2012		
104	DJu & NB	NB to ask TC for potential Child-Protection Officer. DJu to consider other offers.
105	DJu	L&I Committee to look at current legislation and review BCA's existing Child Protection Guidance.
October 2012		
109	AE, PI and DW	Review our current subscription structure in conjunction with other key personnel and report to Council.
112	HB	Produce a costed proposal for the new 'Try Caving' lights.
113	HB	Produce a formal proposal to send to Clubs about the 'Adopt a Club' scheme.
115	NW, DW and DJu	Put together a summary for landowners of the insurance benefits relating to BCA access agreements.
116	HB, LW and JP	Liaise on updating the Try Caving leaflets.
January 2013		
117	NB	Contact NW about Irish qualification recognition.
118	HB and JP	Liaise over students helping at the Library
119	EP	Try to find some free legal advice.
120	DW	Investigate AAIAC and whether we might wish to become a member.
121	PI	Revise Regional Funding document to clarify our approach to C&A travel expenses
122	NW and NB	Formulate a statement relating to the recent discussion about Bowline on the Bight knots.
123	NW, PI and BM	Liaise over BM's request for £600 of funding for rope-testing projects.
124	AE, PI and DW	Prepare a statement on access and commercial caving for the next Council Meeting.

Appendix 1: Club Submission re: Casterton Fell

Dear Sir/Madam

Further to my emails to Damian last year, please allow us to put forward our version of events before the BCA council.

The events surrounding the trip were as follows:

Our original club trip was to head off to Ireby Fell Cavern to investigate a round trip. This summer being what it was and the weather being very unpredictable during that week, it was decided, at the last minute in Inglesport, to alter the plans.

With only 2 cavers attending, they thought their safest option was to head to Casterton Fell to look at Cow Pot, followed by a short trip into Bull Pot of the Witches. They had not applied for a permit for Cow Pot, taking the view that it was very short notice and it being too late (on the day). With hindsight, we could have applied for a permit during that week as a back up option, but this didn't happen and it's easy to consider the what ifs after the event.

In mitigation, we do normally apply for several permits for Casterton Fell caves at the start of the year as you will discover if you consult Alan Speight. But the idea of applying for last minute permits hadn't occurred to our two members on the day which is unfortunate.

The cavers who attended this trip: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Since this event, we have been far more cautious in where we cave and what we disclose publicly. We have also, as we usually do at the start of the year, applied for a few Casterton Fell permits which we hope to make good use of.

Our members are all aware of the grief that was caused last year and don't particularly want to be the subject of extended discussion on various forums again, so going forward, we will endeavour to source last minute permits, if necessary or possible.

The two members in question were warned about their decision making and are doubtless embarrassed about all the attention they brought on themselves, particularly on certain forums as I mention. We don't have an official sanction process in place in [REDACTED] but, after discussions, future incidents of carelessness will result in club privileges being withdrawn for set periods.

If any of the council wish to contact me or any members of the club, please refer to Damian or Glenn and we will be happy to assist.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Secretary

[REDACTED]

Appendix 2: CNCC Report

As the CNCC representative has declined to attend all BCA meetings until the current dispute is resolved, I have prepared a brief report for the meeting.

Item 7 from BCA reports: Both clubs co-operated fully in the investigation, apologised, assured us it will not happen again and removed the offending trip reports from their websites. Full details of their responses are included in Appendix 1. We need to decide today how we should react in accordance with BCA's disciplinary Procedure.

I have discussed this item with CNCC Chairman who agrees that as far as CNCC are concerned the matter is closed as was stated to the BCA secretary in October 2012.

Leck and Casterton Fells

Notes from the meeting with the land agents for Leck Fell and Casterton Fell, regarding the unauthorised use of their land for commercial gain 19/01/2013.

There is a new cattle grid being installed at the Fell gate on Leck Fell, CNCC has agreed to provide 2-3 tonne of limestone chippings to improve the parking for cavers when the installation is complete.

BCA member clubs are reminded that permits MUST be obtained for the private land where access agreements are in place. Failure to comply with the access requirements will eventually lead to possible loss of access to the land. Unauthorised access also makes negotiating the renewal of the agreements more complex. It is worth noting that the landholders and their agents do look at web sites, read Descent and other cave related material, they have a very good understanding of what is happening on their land. We all have a responsibility to gain the necessary permissions and respect the SSSI status of the caves we are exploring.

There are some changes to requesting permission for access to caves and ghylls in Barbondale. The requirement to contact the Estate Office Cowan Bridge for permission is changing and all caves and ghylls on land owned by the Kay-Shuttleworth Estate

will be managed through the CNCC. The change will be published on the CNCC web site.

Over the coming months the access pages on the web site will also be changing and the access information will be in a downloadable pdf. file format for each area with the more popular caves have entrance photos and a more defined approach description.

At the meeting the landowner's agents issued a statement on behalf of the landowners.

Statement issued by the landowner's agents for The Whelprigg Estate and the Kay-Shuttleworth Estate on 10 January 2013

This statement concerns the use of the Leck Beck head SSSI which includes Leck Fell and Casterton Fell and the cave systems thereon.

The landowners of Leck Fell and Casterton Fell are increasingly concerned that the existing access agreement between them and the Council of Northern Caving Clubs (CNCC) and the implication of the SSSI status are being abused and in some instances for commercial gain by parties with no ownership interests or agreements.

The parties above are establishing a protocol forbidding the use of their lands for commercial exploitation.

All existing agreements for recreational caving are not affected by this statement which will take immediate effect 10 January 2013. For further information contact the CNCC access Officer L. Sykes secretary {at} cncc.org or les {at} speleoadventure.wanadoo.co.uk

The CNCC has prepared responses to the YDNP management Plan and the natural England triennial review. Which have been sent to Elsie Little BCA Conservation Officer.

Les Sykes
CNCC Secretary
CNCC Training Officer
CNCC Access Officer

Appendix 3: E&T Anchor-Scheme Document

British Caving Association

Equipment and Techniques Committee

Association scheme for the placement of resin bonded anchors.

1. Scope

This scheme shall cover the use of resin bonded anchors for any purpose, including for ladder and line, SRT and other fixed aids.

2. Selection of anchor systems

From time to time, the Equipment & Techniques Committee shall make recommendations on the choice of anchor system to be placed for various purposes in UK caves and mines.

Regional Councils shall be free to use alternative anchors, but they must take responsibility for gathering the evidence required to demonstrate the safety of any system which they choose.

The results of any tests shall be reported to the Equipment and Techniques Committee.

3. Funding

BCA will re-imburse Regional Councils' expenses necessarily incurred in the placing of anchors in their region.

Applications for re-imbusement of expenses must be made via the Equipment and Techniques Committee.

In general, E&T will only fund the direct costs of placing anchors, i.e. the purchase of anchors, resin, drills and similar equipment. Travel and other expenses shall be borne by the Regional Council concerned but may be the subject of

funding from other BCA budgets.

From time to time, E+T may commit funds in support of testing programmes and other activities undertaken by Regional Councils and others on its behalf.

4. Location and use of anchors

Regional Councils shall establish a procedure to consider and approve the choice of locations for the placing of anchors within their regions.

5. Training of installers

Regional Councils shall ensure that all persons placing anchors on their behalf are appropriately trained and experienced to ensure that:

anchors are placed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.;

the choice of location of the anchor is appropriate for the caving techniques it is expected to support;

the persons placing the anchor are able to ensure their own safety while placing the anchor;

records of the placement are made in accordance with this scheme.

Regional Councils shall maintain a list of persons authorized to place anchors on their behalf within their region. Those persons shall be Individual Members of BCA. The list shall be reviewed annually with a view to deleting from the list persons who have insufficient recent training or experience in anchor placement or are no longer Members of BCA. Regional Councils shall take responsibility for the training of persons who will be authorized to place anchors on their behalf. Training shall be undertaken in an organized manner against a written syllabus. The E&T Committee shall regularly review the information at its disposal and inform regional Councils of any identified need for retraining or changes in procedure.

6. Record keeping and reporting

Regional Councils shall establish a procedure for recording the details of anchor placements, including at least:

- The location of the anchor
- Who placed it
- When it was placed
- The type of anchor
- Batch and/or serial numbers of the anchor and resin

Records shall be kept by the Regional Council and a copy shall be given to the E+T Committee.

7. Inspection of anchors and reporting of defects

Cavers using anchors shall be responsible for checking each anchor prior to use on each and every occasion.

Anchors placed under this scheme shall not be subjected to regular periodic inspection.

Regional Councils must have in place a reporting mechanism which permits cavers to report unsatisfactory anchors. The mechanism must be publicized so that it is widely known about and easy to use.

Regional Councils shall investigate reports of unsatisfactory anchors within a reasonable time period and shall take action to decommission and/or replace any anchors which are found to be unsafe.

Regional Councils shall provide a report on each such investigation to the Equipment and Techniques Committee.

Document agreed by the E+T Meeting on 28 October 2012.

Appendix 4: Proposed Amendments to Child Protection Policy

British Caving Association (BCA) CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This Child Protection Policy document, and its accompanying Guidance Notes, are issued strictly for the guidance of caving and mining clubs and societies and individual members that constitute the main membership of the Association. Members and organisations controlled by Local Authorities, **the Armed Services** and other external organisations are expected to have their own policies, guidance and working rules/arrangements that are entirely their own responsibility for developing, administering and updating within the same legal framework as the Association. **These will normally be assumed to take precedence.**

1.00 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 1.01 BCA recognises the requirements of the Protection of Children Act 1999 (PoCA) and subsequent legislation affecting children, young persons **and vulnerable adults**.
- 1.02 PoCA includes “children”, that is under 16’s, and “young persons”, that is 16 to 18s as well (further referred to here with equal meaning as “young persons” or “children”).
- 1.03 PoCA takes in sexual, emotional and physical abuse and also “neglect” (which includes all aspects of failure to ensure the safety of young persons **and vulnerable adults**).

2.00 POLICY STATEMENTS

- 2.01 BCA recognises the importance of the welfare of young persons **and vulnerable adults** and their right to protection from abuse, as set out in section 1.00 of this document.
- 2.02 BCA recognises its duty of care to young persons and vulnerable adults for the actions of its trustees, officers and agents.
- 2.03 BCA will take all allegations of child abuse seriously and will respond to such allegations quickly.
- 2.04 BCA considers that in any caving or mine exploration activity safety of the participants and conservation of the cave are of paramount concern at all times.
- 2.05 BCA encourages the participation of young persons in caving and mine exploration, provided that:
 - a. The introduction of caving to these persons is carried out by suitably experienced adults; and
 - b. it is done in a progressive manner attuned to the physical and mental capacities of the participants; and
 - c. the conservation requirements of this unique environment are fully stressed as an integral part of educational development of the individual.

3.00 BCA: ITS TRUSTEES, OFFICERS AND AGENTS

- 3.01 If BCA receives an allegation of child abuse against one of its trustees, officers or agents, then it will treat it as a potential criminal activity and report it to the police.
- 3.02 In addition, one or more members of the Executive (Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer) will immediately be informed and will then take prompt action, as an Executive Body, to consider such matters as suspension of awards/benefits and all necessary further actions.

4.00 BCA; RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEMBERS

- 4.01 BCA recommends that in any activity involving children **and/or vulnerable adults**, whether training or caving or preparing for caving, there should be at least two adults present at all times.
- 4.02 BCA recommends that where **regular** caving and/or caver training activities involving children **and/or vulnerable adults**, are planned, then guidelines such as those set out in *Child Protection in Sport Unit, Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport* should be followed for the selection, vetting and recruitment of the participating adults.
- 4.03 All adults involved in **regular** activities with children **and/or vulnerable adults**, should be made aware of best practice in responding to alleged or possible abuse as set out in the above publication (see 4.02 above).

BCA CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE NOTES

1.00 INTRODUCTION

The Childrens Act 1989 and more specifically the Protection of Children Act 1999 (PoCA) set out a general duty of care for all adults with respect to children and young persons who have not reached the age of 18 years. BCA itself has specific duties binding upon its trustees, officers and agents and with respect to holders of Caving Instructor Certificates and Local Cave & Mine Leadership Assessments, see 6.01 below. It also has a rather different duty which is to endeavour to provide guidance on what to do, what not to do and upon currently perceived good practice to all of its member caving clubs and other related organisations. It is this latter function that these guidance notes are intended to address. They are issued closely following best current advice from the specialist national organisations/bodies and are reviewed by Council from time to time.

1.01 APPLICATION and RELEVANCE

These notes have been written for the benefit of member organisations, caving/mining clubs, regional caving councils and national specialist bodies for the benefit of their, trustees, officers, workers, agents and individual members. The extent and degree to which they apply, or are applied will depend very much upon the size of the organisation and the scope and nature of its particular activities. A small caving club for instance, which has no involvement with persons under 18 years of age will need to have less concern than a larger organisation with one or more groups who regularly involve persons under 18 years, or a Youth Adventure Trust whose raison d'être is the development of young persons.

1.02 POLICY DOCUMENT REFERENCE

These guidance notes are an expansion of the Association's brief Child Protection Policy document as first approved in 2001, and updated 2012-13, and should be read in conjunction with that document. They were approved by the AGM 06.2013 and are an important adjunct.

1.03 FUTURE TRENDS and UPDATES

The Association intends to maintain contact with the four national organisations mentioned at 1.00 above, especially the CPSU, and looks to these organisations to keep it informed about such matters as new trends in patterns of child abuse and current best practice in dealing with them.

2.00 GENERAL DUTY OF CARE - The Legal Framework and What it Means

2.01 The Protection of Children Act 1999 (POCA) places a broad duty of care upon **all adults** where the abuse of children, or possible abuse of children is concerned. The term "children" for this purpose includes all young persons under the age of 18 years.

2.02 If your organisation is involved in any **regular** activities which involve under 18's in caving or caver training then you are advised to read on and follow the guidance offered here. By **regular** we mean such activities that involve **the same adult or adults** more than two or three times each year.

N.B: the word regular and this definition of it is important here, we are not talking about occasional trips that are arranged by random adult club members from time to time.

2.03 POCA clearly spells out "abuse" as including "sexual", "emotional" and "physical" abuse and also "neglect". Neglect in terms of caving must be taken to include failing to ensure physical safety, adequate/appropriate nutrition and protection against hypothermia, drowning, rock-fall, injury through falling, etc.

2.04 It should be recognised that any adult who is in charge of children may place themselves in a position of special trust whereby abuse in other spheres of a child's life such as the home may be disclosed to them and this must also be handled appropriately.

N.B: most child abuse takes place in or near the home setting and is usually perpetrated by close relatives and/or adults well known to the child.

2.05 Where 'employment' is concerned PoCA makes no distinction between paid, part-time, contract or totally volunteer persons. All are covered by his legislation. In the caving/mining club setting this taken in not only club trustees and officers but additionally all club members who regularly take responsibility for children and

young persons, (under 18's), in caver training activities and/or the caving environment under the general auspices of their club.

3.00 SPECIFIC ADVICE RELATED TO TRAINING & ALL CAVING ACTIVITIES - GOOD PRACTICE AT ALL TIMES

In all activities, whether above ground training or within caves and potholes it is considered good practice that there should always be more than one adult present. Where there are a number of children or young persons involved then the ratio of adults to children should be carefully considered bearing in mind the precise nature of the venture being undertaken. Where there is any element of doubt about this advice should be sought from more experienced cavers, from the appropriate Regional Caving Council or from the BCA.

3.01 THE CAVE ENVIRONMENT

Before planning to take children into caves careful consideration should be given to the three factors set out at 2.05 of the Policy Document, (physical & mental maturity, environmental awareness and cave conservation). The trip should then be arranged accordingly, bearing in mind the nature of the cave, the experience of the adults, the physical and mental abilities of the children concerned and the prevailing weather and ground conditions (as appropriate), in preference to such factors as what the adults wish to do.

3.02 SPECIAL RISKS IN CAVING

It is recognised broadly that young persons are considerably more susceptible to such debilitating processes as hypothermia, dehydration, and 'exhaustion-exposure' syndrome than even similarly experienced adults. This is due to a number of inter-related factors such as lack of body fat development and mental determination. With particularly thin individuals the ratio of body surface area to volume will be very high and is a major factor in their heat loss rate. These considerations should always be born in mind when planning caving trips with young people and continuously monitored throughout the duration of the venture. There were four recorded deaths of young persons arising from these sorts of problems in the 1946 to 1989 period in British caving. Improvements in available clothing have greatly reduced this risk in recent years, but such kit is specialised and expensive and may not always be worn by young persons on early trips into caves, see Frankland, 1995.

3.03 WEATHER CONDITIONS

Weather conditions in British Caving can be the most unpredictable factor of all. In some caves it is the rainfall that occurred over the catchment area yesterday, or even earlier that will determine the likelihood of flooding. Where there is a long exposed walk to and/or from the cave entrance this can present the most serious risk of hypothermia in young persons. All of these sorts of factors should be carefully considered before taking children or young persons on a caving venture.

3.04 MENTAL ATTITUDE

Some children may give all outward appearances of being fully competent and comfortable in the caving environment but inwardly be quite the opposite. If a serious request is made for a return to the surface it should be dealt with in all reasonable expedition.

3.05 YOUNG PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The three factors spelt out at 2.05 of our Policy cannot be stressed too strongly to any person seriously considering caving for young persons in special needs groups. Established caving clubs who are approached by adults with a view to taking advantage of their caving skills to introduce such groups to the underground environment should not be afraid of saying "no"!

3.06 RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION

Most large caving clubs have their own residential accommodation and/or take part in events involving the use of accommodation owned by other outdoor organisations. Special vigilance should be taken in these circumstances where young persons are involved.

3.07 APPROACHES FROM EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Caving club officers are advised to be cautious about approaches for caving trips and/or caver training schemes from external organisations e.g. Local Authorities, the Armed Services, Youth Clubs and the Police etc.

Whilst they may be seen as sound routes for recruitment of new members, they might also bring with them child protection issues that are an unwanted burden. In any such dialogue the question of the organisation's own written child protection policy and guidance should be asked and it should be understood that such matters are important and should be observed. (See BCA Child Protection Policy document intro. Paragraph.)

3.08 VULNERABLE GROUPS

Since 2006 UK legislation has been added to the Child Protection portfolio to take in so called "vulnerable groups". This extends the previous legislation to cover all adults that are regarded as being of reduced mental or physical capacity. The same common sense approach should be taken with such newcomers/novices as is advocated with children - see 3.01 - 3.08 above.

4.00 SELECTION/RECRUITMENT OF INSTRUCTORS/TRAINERS - CAVING ORGANISATIONS

Caving is mainly a volunteer led activity. Further, most cavers are mainly motivated to explore, to dig, to dive, etc, rather than to lead, to organise, etc. Thus when it comes to finding people to take on such responsibilities as training it is more commonly a matter of persuasion, encouragement and sheer arm-twisting by their peers than one of recruitment or selection.

4.01 GENERAL CAUTION

In these circumstances one can only issue a note of general caution. Beware of the those volunteers who appear over-zealous in their willingness to train young people and **never** allow them to get involved in such activities alone.

4.02 SELECTION and RECRUITMENT

In organisations where selection and/or recruitment do become necessary then the clearly tabulated guidelines set out at 2.1 to 2.4 of Law (2000) should be meticulously followed. These involve the whole gambit of Job Specification, Application Forms, referencing procedures and prior consent to investigation.

5.00 ACTIONS FOLLOWING DISCLOSURE - GENERAL NOTE

It is not the responsibility of anyone involved in the sport or science of caving, whether within BCA, a Regional Caving Council or a member club or other affiliated organisation to take responsibility for the resolution of any child abuse matter or to make a judgment of any sort. Such responsibilities rest with the police, the DPP and the courts, acting upon the advice of the designated professionals, Directors of Social Services, the NSPCC and with the co-ordination of such agencies as the police Family Support Unit and the Area Child Protection Committee.

5.01 RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL ADULTS

It is however the responsibility of all adults to take necessary actions to ensure that the appropriate agencies are made aware of allegations once they have been made. Any person so reporting an allegation of child abuse is advised to retain a written record of their report, together with the date, time and relevant details of the person reported to.

6.00 NCA's OWN REPORTING PROCEDURES

6.01 TRUSTEES, OFFICERS and AGENTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

In the event of an allegation being received with respect to a trustee, officer or agent of the Association this will immediately be passed to the Legal & Insurance Officer, (as the designated person for CP purposes), who will in turn contact one or more members of the Executive. This will then be reported to the appointed person of the relevant Area Child Protection Committee and the relevant local police force for their advice and action.

6.02 CIC and/or LCMLA HOLDERS

In the event of an allegation being received with respect to a current holder of a Cave Instructor Certificate or a Local Cave & Mine Leader Assessment the same procedure (as 5.01) will be followed excepting that the matter will be reported directly to the relevant Police Force for advice and action.

7.00 REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR CLUBS and INDIVIDUALS

7.01 PROTECTION OF ADULTS

Although false allegations against adults tend to be rare they do occasionally occur and due care must be exercised by colleagues at all times when dealing with disclosure.

7.02 GEOGRAPHY and LOCALITY

Because of the regional and local nature of British Caving all allegations should be dealt with locally so far as this is practicable.

7.03 POINTS OF CONTACT

Depending upon the size and nature of your organisation, reporting of allegations should be through the pre-established contact with the Family Support Unit of the local police force, the Social/Childrens' Services Department or the NSPCC - whatever has been agreed following consultation with these agencies/organisations beforehand as being the most appropriate first step in your particular location and set of circumstances.

7.04 SMALL CLUBS

With small caving clubs whose constitution does not allow membership below the age of 18 years, (not uncommon), there may be no need for any action here at all.

7.05 LARGER CLUBS and ORGANISATIONS

With the larger long-established caving clubs, where second and third generation young cavers might be regular activists and digging and/or exploration sub-groups are regularly at work, then the appointment of a Child Protection Officer, as a designated person is recommended as a sound idea. Our recommendation is that an agreed officer should read the key Primary Guidance Documents listed at 8.01 below and report back to the club's committee of management for a formal decision on how to proceed. Appropriate actions will depend very much on the detailed nature of the particular club, of its membership composition and how it operates.

7.06 SPECIALIST/YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Organisations specialising in youth activities, whether specifically caving or where the caving is just a part of a wider portfolio of outdoor pursuits, are advised to develop their own procedures and the whole gambit of formalised staff selection procedures and activities related to incident/abuse disclosure. If felt appropriate, this Policy document may be adopted or suitably adapted.

7.07 CONFIDENTIALITY

In all matters related to the recording of personal information and its transmission to others confidentiality should be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 2000.

8.00 REFERENCES and RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

8.01 GENERAL ADVICE/INFORMATION

If you are in doubt or unsure in any way about your responsibilities for Child Protection, or of how your club should act then ask - if in doubt consult! With respect to sporting activities the CPSU is the most appropriate body: Child Protection in Sport Unit, 3 Gilmour Close, Beaumont Leys, Leicester LE4 1EZ tel: 0116-234-7200 More generally the NSPCC might be most appropriate: their helpline is: 0800-800-500 and both have useful websites: www.sportprotects.org.uk and www.nspcc.org.uk

8.02 PRIMARY GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

Dept.of Health. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ACT 1999 - A Practical Guide to the Act for all Organisations Working with Children. www.doh.gov.uk/scg/childprotect.
Law, Sue, 2001: Child Protection, Policy & Implementation Procedures - guidelines for governing bodies of sport and local authorities April 2001 Coachwise Ltd, Leeds, 46pp. (Available from Coachwise, Units 2/3 Chelsea Close, off Amberley Road, Armley, Leeds LS12 4HW.)
NSPCC, 1998 PROTECTING CHILDREN - a guide for sportspeople. ISBN 0-947850-50-3: 96pp: £6.99.
Sport England. SAFEGUARDING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN SPORT - Towards a Standard for Sport in England: July 2001: 28pp.

8.03 OTHER READING

Avon and Somerset Constabulary (1999) CHILD-SAFE: Protecting Young People in Sport and Organised Groups. Tel: 0800-389-7695.
Childcare (Northern Ireland) OUR DUTY TO CARE: principles of good practice for the protection of children: Available from Childcare: tel: 01232-234499.
Frankland, J, 1995: Accidents to Cavers: in Judson, D, (ed.) Caving Practice and Equipment, : BCRA & Cordee, Leicester: 295pp.
Home Office (1999) CARING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE VULNERABLE? Guidance for Preventing the Abuse of Trust. Home Office Sentencing and Offences Unit: tel: 020-7273-2985.

8.04 RELEVANT UK LEGISLATION

- Childrens Act 1989.
- Human Rights Act 1998 - particularly affects 'authorities' (BCA being "The UK authority" on caving!)
- Disability Discrimination (Meaning of Disability) Regulations: SI 1455: 1996.
- Protection of Children Act 1999 - A substantive Act for the protection of children/young persons, with residential care at its core.
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005 - considerably amends and updates the 1995 DD Act.

The foregoing forms the main base of CP legislation across the UK, but has been widened to take in vulnerable adults by the following:

- ** Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 - mostly concerned with barring and vetting, whilst bringing in responsibility for all persons that can be regarded as more than averagely vulnerable.
- ** Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007.

** Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

** These now form the main current legislation relating to vulnerable persons.