



**Minutes of BCA Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 15th June 2014
at Dalesbridge Centre, Austwick, Settle.**

Present:

Andy Eavis (AE)	Chairman / UIS Rep. / Individual Member
Paul Ibberson (PI)	Treasurer / Individual Member
Damian Weare (DW)	Secretary / Handbook Editor / Individual Member
Les Williams (LW)	Publications & Information Officer / Webmaster / Wessex CC Rep. / Individual Member
Nigel Ball (NB)	Training Officer / Individual Member
Nick Williams (NW)	Equipment & Techniques Officer / Insurance Manager / Individual Member
David Cooke (DC)	IT Working Party / Cave-Registry / Web Services / Cheddar CC Rep. / Individual Member
Jenny Potts (JP)	Publication Sales / DCA Rep. / Individual Member
Bob Mehew (BM)	Rope-Testing / Individual Member
Dave Checkley (DCh)	BCRA Rep. / Individual Member
Helen Brooke (HB)	CHECC Rep. / Individual Member
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	ACI Rep. / Individual Member
Owen Clarke (OC)	Individual Member
Henry Rockliff (HR)	Individual Member
Fleur Loveridge (FL)	OUCR Rep / Individual Member
Ged Champion (GC)	FSE Rep / Individual Member
Chris Jewell (CJ)	BEC Rep. / Individual Member
Boyd Potts (BP)	Orpheus CC Rep. / Individual Member
Idris Williams (IW)	ASCT Rep/ Individual Member
Martell Baines (MB)	Individual Member
John Wilcock (JW)	Individual Member
Andrew Hinde (AH)	CNCC Rep.
James Begley (JB)	CSCC Rep./Individual Member
Ian Cross (IC)	BPC Rep./ Individual Member
Kay Easton (KE)	Individual Member
David Gibson (DG)	Individual Member
Edward Easton (EE)	Individual Member
Allan Richardson (AR)	Individual Member
Emma Porter (EP)	BCRC Rep.
Dave Tyson (DT)	CCC Rep.
Stuart France (SF)	
Tim Allen (TA)	Individual Member
Ian Peachy (IP)	ULSA Rep./Individual Member
Helen Sargeant (HS)	Individual Member
Simon Brookes (SB)	Individual Member
Robert Scott (RS)	CPC Rep. / Individual Member
Dave Brook (DB)	Individual Member
Alan Brook (AB)	Individual Member
Kristian Brook (KB)	Individual Member
<i>[Gill Jordan (GJ)</i>	<i>Minute taker]</i>

The meeting commenced at 10:42.

1. Chairman's Welcome

AE welcomed members to this Annual General Meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Steve Holding, Bernie Woodley and Jim Davis.

3. Applications for Club Membership

There are no new applications since the last Council Meeting.

4. Minutes of the 2013 Annual General Meeting (previously circulated)

4.1 Proposal: *That the Minutes from 16 June 2013 be confirmed as a true record*

Prop: HB, Sec: JP *agreed unanimously*

4.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the 2013 AGM

None.

Officers' Reports

5. Chairman's Report

I suppose it is appropriate to start this report by saying how well I think the AGM weekend went last year at the Rotary Centre, Castleton. I thank everybody who helped, particularly BCRA Officers and other individuals who helped with many aspects of the organisation, particularly Slug, Basher and Damian who continues to work above and beyond his duties. We had a great deal of fun at a very well-attended AGM weekend. I am sure this one at Dalesbridge will be equally successful.

A lot has been going on in the individual Committees under BCA and I will leave them to report separately under their particular headings. Clearly the Training and Access and Conservation Committees, not to mention Equipment and Techniques etc have been very busy.

Also within the Regions a great deal of work is going on particularly with Access and Conservation.

The magazine Speleology has had another copy and it is hoped that a further one will be published soon. Many thanks to Dave Gibson and his team for their efforts here.

Hidden Earth went very well last year, so continued thanks to Les Williams and his team for their hard work.

BCRA and the Library continue to work very well and there have also been some excellent science meetings - many thanks to John Gunn, Dave Checkley and their team for this.

The subscription structure is under review not to mention Access and Commercial Caving!!

On a personal level it is possible that I shall miss Hidden Earth this year which will be the first time for many years but it's quite likely I will be in Australia attending an International Climate Change meeting.

I must finish by thanking the entire Council of BCA for an enormous amount of constructive work. Many people in addition to those already mentioned have put in great efforts. I thank you very much indeed and continue this thanks into the Regions and thank all Regional Officers for the work that they do towards British Caving.

Andy Eavis

Proposal: *that the Chairman's Report be accepted*

Prop: BP, Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

6. Secretary's Report

Fortunately 2013 was generally a quieter year for me, and probably Executive in general, than 2012. This allowed us to focus a little more on the bigger picture and I think some useful progress was made here. Most of this, though, is preparatory work and, therefore, unlikely to bring any noticeable benefit for another couple of years.

Council Members: *June 2013 saw the appointment of several new young and enthusiastic members to Council. One has unfortunately been unable to attend meetings, but the contribution of Matt Wire and Henry Rockliff in particular has been fantastic and we are very grateful to them both.*

Access & Commercial Caving: *Following concerns expressed by the Training Committee, early in 2013 we carried out a consultation on access and professional caving. It was pleasing to see a huge response from across the country and the submissions allowed us to put together a proposed statement. This also received much comment and a revised version was agreed by Council in early 2014. This reminds cavers of BCA's guiding principles in trying to achieve access as widely as possible when negotiating. It also aims to support any cavers negotiating access arrangements with landowners to understand the different types of "commercial" caving in the hope that a blanket ban on "all commercial caving" can be avoided. My thanks go to all those who took the time to submit views.*

AGM Reporting Year: *The 2013 AGM tasked Council with clarifying what should be reported at the AGM and, in particular, whether it was the 12 month period from AGM to AGM (i.e. June to June), the calendar 12 months, or some combination of the two. Council has concluded that the 2014 AGM is fundamentally to report on the calendar year 2013,*

but also decided members would probably also appreciate a brief comment on the most recent events in the first half of the next year. Hopefully this clarifies the situation.

Simplification of BCA's Membership Structure: A fair amount of background work has been carried out over the last 12 months or so on possible ways to simplify our existing membership structure and, thus, improve it for the years ahead. This has not yet reached any definite conclusions but there is a proposal under Item 25 of the Agenda relating to this.

Secretary Role 2016 and Beyond: I should like to remind members that I am unlikely to be in a position to continue as Secretary beyond the end of my current term in June 2016. We are therefore in need of someone else to step up - that should be plenty of warning for people to polish their excuses!

Damian Weare

It was generally agreed that DW should be able to step down from the post of Secretary after 8 years in the role, but there were no volunteers at the meeting.

SF: With regard to access, the Constitution states that it "should be obtained and granted as freely as possible". Could you clarify whether this refers just to recreational cavers' access or also to commercial caving?

DW: It is a direct quote from the constitution and relates to all "responsible cavers". Therefore access should be as inclusive as possible. We must also recognise, however, that the will of the landowner is absolute.

SF: There is a conflict of interest.

IP: We need to be careful not to exclude Outdoor Centres.

HB: Allowing people into larger systems is important.

SF: Agrees that the widest possible access is desirable. If there is overuse, we will sort it out when it happens.

HR: Access may need to be limited to one group per day.

Proposal: **that the Secretary's Report be accepted**

Prop: HR, Sec: LW agreed unanimously

7. Treasurer's Report

A year ago I had hoped that by the time of this AGM I would have been able to make at least some inroads into the process of improving the "back office" element of the Treasurer's job. Foremost amongst the objectives was the implementation of a basic software package to improve the efficiency of the transaction recording procedures of the Association. Sadly, and largely due to time constraints, this step forward was not achieved and the Accounts for 2013 have been prepared on the same platform as previously (i.e. Excel spreadsheets). There has been some progress made in terms of the style of record-keeping, but the desired outcome remains a fair way off. Similarly, despite a significant amount of time spent during 2013, the joint objective of spreading the investment risk whilst also increasing the return on the cash reserves has also proved elusive. It is uncertain when the latter of these objectives is likely to be materially more feasible in the short term, although the former remains under review.

At the time of writing, the 2013 Accounts are being scrutinised by our Independent Examiner. A draft copy has been prepared for circulation with the Officers' Reports and I expect these to be confirmed by the Examiner and then formally signed off at the AGM.

With respect to the 2013 Accounts, once more the broad picture is similar to the previous year. There have been no fundamental departures from the basic setup and operation of the main areas of activity. Some financial variations are noted below, but the overall scenario remains that the Association continues to more than meet its running costs. The Reserves position remains sound for our present view of future activities and any new plans can be considered accordingly. As noted earlier, there remains the dual objective of squeezing a greater return from the cash reserve (an ongoing trial in the still difficult climate of falling deposit interest rates) whilst at the same time minimising and spreading the investment risk. As previously noted though, dealing with financial institutions remains a challenge and swift action on a decisive mandate is essential to ensure opportunities can be grasped before they are withdrawn or watered down. With this in mind, I intend to seek an explicit mandate from the AGM to authorise BCA Executive to transfer deposits as required to obtain best returns on investment subject to those returns being with reputable (?) UK institutions.

In terms of the numbers, there was a modest increase in Subscription income during the year. Against this, the cost of administering membership also increased and the overall surplus reduced slightly. General expenses increased predominantly as a result of a non-recurring office equipment purchase. General Association running costs were comparable to the previous year, but a slight reduction in revenue fed through to the net deficit. Conservation and Access expenditure related to a direct central purchase – other C&A costs are generally funded through the Regional Caving Councils.

For the first time in a number of years, Training Services ran a small deficit during 2013. Slightly reduced income from the various certification and revalidation schemes was accompanied by higher costs of providing them, although it must be noted that the net deficit is small compared to the net surplus year-on-year. Caver Training costs increased in the year due to support of the Voluntary Sector.

I am pleased to report that Publications costs increased materially when compared to the previous year; this of course is due to the revival of Speleology and is a trend we hope to see continue! As forecast, E&T expenses were considerably reduced from the previous level given the sourcing of replacement anchors had been accounted for in 2012. Meetings & Conferences saw the inaugural AGM Party Weekend – this increased both income and expenditure but the weekend itself returned a breakeven position. Web Services costs reduced at the same time as income rose and the net effect was to more or less eradicate the deficit. This trend should continue into 2014.

Funding of Expeditions (via the Ghar Parau Foundation) and the British Caving Library has continued at the same level as previous years, but Regional Council costs have returned to more normal levels after the 2012 accrual. The 2013 charge comprises outstanding funding claims for the year as drafted by the Regions and accrued accordingly. Further consideration of these claims will be undertaken shortly by Finance Committee and appropriate reimbursement made in due course. Thanks are once again due to the Regions for providing the necessary information on a timely basis.

Overall, the position for the year is that the Association recorded a surplus of £7,597, upon which £483 of tax is payable, thus leaving a net addition to reserves of £7,114. In light of the expiry of the long term insurance deal at the end of 2014, it is my intention to add £5,000 to the Sinking Fund and then review the position further once the result of renewal negotiations is known.

Finally, with regard to the AGM and the issue of election of Treasurer, I must inform the Association that at this time I am unable to commit to a full 3 year term. I am willing to remain in post for the next 12 months (or alternatively until a replacement can be found), but beyond that I would need a combination of changes in circumstances and/or duties to enable me to devote the time required to maintain and improve the workings of the financial side of BCA.

Paul Ibberson

PI: The accounts were approved by the examiner last weekend. Income is up due to an increase in Club Individual Members (CIM) numbers. There is scope for increasing spending on Speleology. 2013 deposits are with Barclays but the interest rates are poor. We are attempting to place funds in a “better” deposit account. A clear directive is needed to spread the deposits around to increase interest.

LW: Asked for clarification, and also asked that the oversight regarding this should be with the Executive. We need an endorsement that the Executive will make the decision and that overall responsibility is with the Executive.

BM: Do our accounts identify what our reserves are?

PI: The reserves are the cash account balances.

BM: Is this meeting content that three people are responsible for the accounts? All reserves are under these three names.

BM: Decisions need to be made with/by two people.

JP: Should we be transferring money between accounts only?

LW: Trust is the key - trustworthy people only should be elected.

Proposal: *that, with regard to the Association’s cash deposits, BCA Executive be delegated to transfer funds to spread risk and increase return subject to the transfers being made to safe deposits with UK institutions.*

Prop: PI, Sec: BM *agreed unanimously*

Proposal: *that the 2013 Accounts be adopted.*

Prop: HR, Sec: DC *agreed unanimously*

Proposal: *that the remainder of the Treasurer’s Report be accepted.*

Prop: BM, Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

8. Acting Conservation & Access Report

Bat Licenses: *The “problem” of cave leaders requiring a level 1 bat license at a Devon cave has been resolved. After a few enquiries to Natural England advisers in the South West, a statement from NE Wildlife and Licensing was forthcoming which has clarified the situation to everyone’s satisfaction. There are no implications for other regions. This was a site-specific local difficulty which is now resolved.*

Biodiversity Offsetting: *I have co-ordinated responses to the Government consultation on the possible introduction of Biodiversity Offsetting. The responses were restricted to sections relevant to Cave and Karst and did not cover species-specific sections. I would like to thank the Regional Caving Councils for submitting their response in such a short timescale.*

Government Review: *The Government's Tri-annual Review of Natural England, Forestry Commission and Environment Agency has led to the decision to keep all 3 Bodies as independent institutions. The DEFRA Minister has called for all 3 Bodies to work in partnership to deliver more efficient processes and better outcomes for the Natural Environment.*

Thanks again to the Regional Councils for submitting responses to the consultation.

Bat Conservation Trust: *I represented BCA at a teleconference with the Bat Conservation Trust on the latest developments in WNS in UK bat populations. The BCT are issuing updated guidance through Descent Magazine and will issue a statement for the BCA website.*

Update from BCT:

Just to let you know that Chris Howes, editor of Descent magazine, is including a short report about the continuing hunt for Pd in the UK in next edition of Descent magazine. Chris has done a great job in keeping his readership up to date with the discovery of the fungus in the UK earlier this year and the on-going issues in North America as well as the European situation. (Thank you very much for helping us with the right contact Andy, much appreciated.)

I thought it would also be useful to give you a quick update on where we are with the hunt for Pd in the UK. Dr Sébastien Peuchmaille (now of the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology) has provided us with sampling kits to collect sediment and surface swabs from for 25 sites across the UK. Samples will be collected during January and February as part of normal hibernation survey visits. These will then be processed by Sébastien and his team. Hopefully we will be able to sample some additional sites in 2015 as well. We selected the sites based on the number of bat species as well as individuals recorded but also to give us as wide a geographical spread as possible. Our latest guidelines for bat workers and carers are also up on the BCT website (www.bats.org.uk/pages/about_bats-white-nose_syndrome-586.html). If you would like any more information or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Helen.

Lisa Worledge (Partnerships Officer)

Cave Conservation Handbook: *This NCA publication was published in the 1990s. A lot of the information regarding statutory bodies is understandably out of date. However, the Handbook still contains a lot of relevant and useful information. Should this publication be updated? Would a pdf be acceptable? Would anyone volunteer to help the author/editor in reviewing?*

Access v Environment Debate: *I have represented the caving interests at a public seminar on 'Access versus Environment' at UCLAN. The speakers were a disparate bunch but the general consensus was that there is room for everyone – so long as the environment comes first. This debate also covered concepts such as "psychological ecology" and "we are the environment". Laugh? I nearly bought a round! Nothing to further the knowledge of cavers here, I'm sorry to report.*

A better report can be found in Descent 237.

Andrew Hinde

AH: Abstracts have been sent to the European Cave Protection Forum and AH hopes to be delivering his paper, which will be funded by Natural England.

LW: Relating to White Nose Syndrome (WNS), the USA has announced the closure of certain caves for the next five years.

AH : Evidence of WNS has been seen in Southern England.

LW: We need to be aware of developments with WNS. Over reaction could close caves unnecessarily.

AH: Cavers need to report any evidence of the disease and not be concerned about hiding anything.

SF: In South Wales inspections are carried out. Statistics from many years show that the bat population is strong and growing. Cavers are *not* affecting bat population.

DCh: Would like to make a proposal that Executive be empowered to fund research if it is felt necessary.

DW: Executive is already authorised to take action on anything that is considered more urgent than the next Council Meeting.

DB: We need to collate information so that we have it to hand.

DCh: If research is needed, BCA should be able to fund it.

AR: Regarding the Cave Conservation Handbook, better printouts need to be made available.

At this point item 19 was brought forward to this point in the meeting as DW would need to leave soon.

19. CRoW Working Party

JP : Work needs to be linked with conservation issues. What were the past roles of BCA and NCA? Do we wish to continue with what was started 16 years ago?

BM : The background work has been done as an individual *not* as part of BCA. There has been an offer of pro bono work by a highly-respected QC. Their opinion may conclude that there is a case... if so, we need to decide what will happen. The outcome may well be published and the key question is whether BCA should try to control the aftermath of this work?

AE: It seems that constitutionally the decision on whether or not we accept the proposal as made by BM lies with the Chair, as it missed the deadline for inclusion on the Agenda. There have been a number of representations from members who are concerned about this and AE feels we should postpone the motion and discuss it at a properly constituted Emergency General Meeting.

BP: Meeting dates should be arranged when all the people who have done the work are able to attend.

DW: Arranging a date when everyone is available may not be possible, as there are potentially a very large number of interested parties on both sides of the debate.

A general discussion about the democratic process and the Constitution took place.

DW: The Constitution has two slightly conflicting statements related to the motion. Firstly it states that all Agenda Items, including proposals for Constitutional Amendments should be made by, in this case, the end of March. It then goes on to state that items of Any Other Business notified in advance to the Chair can be accepted at the Chair's discretion. It is for this reason that there is debate about whether or not to accept the proposal today.

SF: Stopping the circulation of this issue in the press is impossible.

AE: Is firmly of the view that CROW *will* ultimately be found to apply to caving and does not see that this can be stopped or altered. We need to decide what our response to it will be, and what we will do afterwards. That is why an Emergency General Meeting is needed.

BM: The information in the reports document was available on the website six weeks ago. Surely that has given members sufficient time to consider their response.

AE : The Emergency General Meeting needs to be sooner rather than later.

DW: Members need to be given the opportunity to air their views and some may well have looked at the published Agenda, decided nothing was important enough for them to attend, and done no more. They may well not even know that a later proposal was then tabled via a Working Part report. This is a highly controversial issue and we must take care to be seen to be utterly transparent, whatever we decide.

JP: The report was submitted on the 5th May 2014 and was emailed to different people. Notification that there *was* a report was given to as many people as possible. This meeting needs to be the forum for discussion regarding this matter.

DC: The majority are happy with the status quo, but we need more time to think about the consequences. There are clearly constitutional difficulties in what is being discussed.

AR: BCA needs to be proactive.

TA: It is important to remember that independent cavers *have* been in touch with a barrister. Things are already moving.

HR: What are the benefits of moving forward today?

BM: We need to get National England on side.

HB: We need to show that BCA can be decisive.

AE: The outcomes relating to CRoW will happen *despite* BCA intervention.

NW: This item has been on the agenda since last year's AGM. Why waste time and resources on another meeting?

AE: Disagreed with NW and said that a further meeting could result in changes.

BM: An amendment to the proposal would be to take out part D which relates to legal advice.

DC: Setting up a working party is a good idea. BM's suggestion that BCA does *not* seek legal advice is a good one, as is the suggestion to strike out section D. We should negotiate with Natural England and Natural Resources Wales on behalf of BCA.

AE: We need to further investigate the CRoW Act.

HR: In the interests of clarity, perhaps someone can confirm whether the research carried out by a Working Party and its subsequent report actually be *used*? And, if so, in what way?

LW: No Working Party should do anything unless it is referred back to Council.

Proposal: ***that the meeting allows the Conservation & Access committee to follow up on CRoW.***

Prop: BM, Sec: IW *agreed unanimously in the Group member vote and with 1 abstention in the Individual Member vote.*

9. Equipment & Techniques Report

Meetings were held on 14 April 2013 and 10 November 2013.

BCA continues to support bolting in all Regions despite non attendance at the meetings by representatives of DCA and CNCC. Progress has continued with the Bolt Products anchor and we now have a clear process for testing and adopting anchors.

Following problems with the material used to manufacture the BP anchor and an investigation into the potential problem of chloride stress corrosion cracking, we feel we have a reliable means of checking the materials for any further bolts delivered and a much better understanding of the use of stainless steels in cave applications. The investigation into chloride stress corrosion cracking indicates this is not a major concern although we will continue to monitor industry thinking.

The Committee also started work on the selection and maintenance of other fixed aids (ladders, hand lines etc.) and the selection of alternative anchors which may be suitable for use in slate and other non-limestone rock types.

Nick Williams

a. Rope-Test Report

14 rope samples were received for testing during 2013, mostly whilst the rope test rig was being used at Hidden Earth. Due to other demands, testing was not completed until early 2014. All owners have been informed of the results.

I was asked during 2013 about differences between manufacturers' SRT rope. I do not attempt to keep up to date on new rope and its performance when new, given it will bear little relation to its performance underground. (It is a well demonstrated fact that wet rope is weaker than the dry conditioned rope required by the standard BS EN 1891:1998 for use in testing.) The advice I gave was that before one buys a rope:

- a) confirm it is manufactured to BS EN 1891:1998 (or European variants which may start differently from BS but will include EN 1891:1998) and beware of imitations (South Africa appear to offer a rope with a similar set of numbers for the standard but the standard appears to be quite different).*
- b) read the manufacturer's literature to find out what their unused shelf life is (often up to 5 years) and confirm the rope has not been manufactured years before the purchase date. If you are buying a reel/box, then the date of manufacture should also be printed on the end of the rope and on the packaging.*

A related query has recently been received about life expectancy. Phase 1 of the Long Term Rope Test (see tinyurl.com/rope-tests) indicates that the performance of SRT rope as measured by the dynamic drop test number of drops survived rapidly drops off with usage in line with work done on climbing rope. Phase 2 of the Long Term Rope Test looks at how this drop off in performance behaves at much lower levels of usage (up to 200 individual abseil or prusik uses). This phase remains in progress with two of the four ropes having reached their desired usage levels in 2013.

Following a thread on ukCaving forum bringing to cavers' attention a finding by the French Caving School highlighting a problem with the Bowline on the Bight (see <http://efs.ffspeleo.fr/techniques/noeuds> reporting that clipping into just one loop could cause the knot to catastrophically fail) some work was undertaken with Pete Knight and Roy Rodgers on the Bradford Pothole Club's and the Craven Pothole Club's Rope Test Rigs during 2013 to look at differences between alternative Y Hang knots. Testing was undertaken on single samples of the Double Bowline on the Bight knot, the Bowline on the Bight (ABoK 1080) knot, the Double Figure of Eight (ABoK 1085) knot, the recently invented the Karash / Fusion knot and the Alpine Butterfly (ABoK 1053) knots. (ABoK is the Ashley Book of Knots reference number.) No clear difference was identified between the knots. However neither could we replicate the original report of a loop slippage, even though it was clearly repeated by Pete Knight's work. The work was published in Descent.

It became clear during the year that the number of drops survived in a repeated dynamic drop test is not that useful a parameter. Consideration has been given to static testing and also single dynamic drop testing. BCA purchased a static tester capable of creating tensile forces of up to around 50kN and it is located at the Bradford Pothole Club's hut. BCA has committed funds to several improvements, including protective screens (to ward off flying metal pieces) but these await some spare time to implement, hopefully later on in 2014. A simple extension measuring device has been created for the static rig which requires refinement once the improvements have been completed. A single dynamic drop test is where by using higher masses and larger fall factors we can break the rope on its first dynamic drop.

Work in 2103 remained ongoing with our third attempt at measuring rope extension on the Bradford's rig. This has required several other developments to be achieved including providing for a better guide system to constrain the movement of the 100kg test mass in the horizontal plane whilst not slowing down its rate of fall. With a planned for confidence in measuring extension, we can then compute the amount of energy going into the rope to either damage or break it. There are known complications, including sample length, which will need to be further investigated before an

improved parameter can be specified.

In late 2013, Gethin Thomas borrowed the load cells and recording device used on the rope test rig to undertake an investigation into the forces created in tyroleans. This is an area I have been meaning to get a handle on for some while but have not had the spare time. During 2013 I have been able to obtain a computer program which computes the profile of a catenary curve as exhibited by a tyrolean for a stretchy rope. Gethin's work did indicate that a tyrolean may be a useful alternative approach to providing for a non-destructive test of the condition of a rope.

During 2013 I heard a report of a sudden unexpected failure of a rope left in a Mulu cave for only a few years. More recently in 2014, I tested one sample from a rope left in a UK cave for well over 20 years which broke on the first drop. This is the first sample of rope submitted to me for testing in over 10 years which has failed on the first drop! Subsequent testing of the remaining two samples awaits completing the upgrading of the Bradford's rig.

Work continued through 2013 on testing sufficient samples of knots to hopefully obtain statistically significant results to determine the difference between figure of eight, barrel and overhand knots as used in Cows Tails. The testing work was completed in early 2014 but the data is still being analysed so no statement can be made as yet about differences.

I wish to record my thanks to the Bradford Pothole Club, the Craven Pothole Club, Pete Knight, Alan Latchford, Bob Mackin, Steve Richards, Gethin Thomas and not least Roy Rodgers for their help and support in all of this work.

Bob Mehew

AE: A rope that had been left in Mulu snapped. It is thought that this was due to bat guano rotting nylon ropes. We need to submit a report about this.

Proposal: **that the Equipment & Techniques Reports be accepted.**

Prop: LW Sec: HR agreed unanimously

10. **Training Report** (written report previously circulated)

Both the Local Cave Leader and Cave Instructor schemes have continued to develop over the past twelve months, in terms of new cavers registering for the schemes, people qualifying within the schemes or revalidating the awards they already hold. The figures for 2013 are as follows:

Local Cave and Mine Leader Award (LCMLA)

Registrations 167

Level 1 assessments: 47, Level 1 Revalidations: 32

Level 2 assessments: 32, Level 2 Revalidations: 29

Cave Instructor Certificate (CIC)

Registrations 24

Assessments 2, Revalidations 24

Award Holder Membership: Currently some of the Award Holders are members of BCA, either as DIMs or CIMs, but some are not members. BCA Council approached BCA Training Committee in 2013 to propose a way for all Award Holders to become BCA members but this has not been resolved to date.

Training Administrator Workload: During the year the BCA Training Administrator expressed concerns about her work load increasing and some delays resulting from this. To resolve this problem, Council appointed an administrative assistant on a one year contract and to date, this has been working well.

Recreational Training Grants: A number of training grant applications were received throughout the year, some from Regional Councils and some from BCA member clubs. These were approved by Training Committee and it was strongly voiced that they wished more training grant applications were submitted for consideration.

Duty of Care: Having taken advice from a number of national organisations and H.S.E. regarding the Duty of Care that a BCA award holder may have when they observe safety issues that raise concerns with them, Training Committee have issued a statement to their Award Holders that they must fulfil their professional obligations and pass comment at the scene. Once this has been verbally delivered they have discharged their Duty of Care responsibilities.

Access to Caves: During the year, there has been an on-going problem in some Regions for providers delivering BCA training and assessment courses gaining access to suitable caves. Training Committee are pleased that access has been negotiated to some caves but feel isolated when trying to gain access to others. It has been reported to Training Committee that if access is not improved in certain areas, the survival of the BCA schemes will be in jeopardy in these areas. It is felt that not all regional bodies are offering inclusion for all when discussing access to caves.

Moderation & Centralised Appointments: The Training Committee feels that it is important for the BCA leadership and instructor schemes to be viewed as a robust programme of qualifications and as such it has introduced a system of moderation for all training and assessment courses that are run throughout the U.K. At the same time Training Committee also decided that it will organise the appointment of all new trainers and assessors for BCA's qualifications.

LCMLA Syllabus Rewrite: Training Committee has discussed the need for a re-write of the Local Cave and Mine Leader Award syllabus and supporting documentation. A person was approached, with approval from BCA Executive, to put together an initial draft on a voluntary basis and the request was accepted. Unfortunately this offer has now been withdrawn.

Professional Insurance: An ex-member of the Training Committee has spent many hours negotiating a new insurance policy for BCA award holder's public liability.

Recreational Caver Training Workshops: The initial steps have been made to organise a series of caver workshops that are open to all members of BCA member caving clubs and individual BCA members but initial response was somewhat disappointing due to a potential lack of interest. The Training Officer wants to offer opportunities to cavers for training and would like feedback as to what members would like.

Nigel Ball

LW: BCA should provide clubs with resources such as videos and papers, so that the clubs can train their own members.

NB: Agreed.

Proposal: **that the Training Report be accepted.**

Prop: HR, Sec: IW agreed unanimously

11. Publications & Information Report

LW: Nothing to add to what is under the separate headings.

a. Webmaster's Report

The new BCA website went live on the 31st Jan. Thank you to those who took part in the review. The new website is visually more appealing with a relatively uncluttered screen and more pictures. The new menu structure is easier to follow. It is easier for officers to update their sections of the website. Behind the scenes the technicalities of managing and maintaining the site is easier.

However much of the content is unchanged and out of date. Could officers please take the time to review their sections if they haven't done so already. I will update the pages if you feel unable to do it yourself but you must provide the words. If there is interest and time I intend to run a short training seminar on updating the website at the BCA party weekend.

There remains an opening for a website picture editor if someone could be found with an eye for an appropriate image.

David Cooke

b. Web Services Report

The BCA Web Server performed well during the year with only 2 unscheduled outages totalling 2.5 hours. There are 69 domains registered through BCA Web Services with 57 websites hosted. The BCA funds 17 of those websites including the Regional Councils, BCRA, BCRA's Special Interest Groups, the Caving Library and some of the cave rescue organisations.

The transfer of hosting accounts to the new server was completed. The commensurate reduction in costs has resulted in Web Services breaking even, as is the goal.

The savings have also been passed on in lower prices and a better offering to the members. The standard package costs £25/year. It is a fully featured package with unlimited mailboxes, unlimited bandwidth, 500MB disk space, php, mysql databases, etc, etc. Additional disk space costs £4/Gb/yr. This is a very competitive offering that continues BCA Web Service's mission to provide cheap, reliable, fully featured web hosting for our members.

The current on-going task is to upgrade the versions of php, mysql and apache on the server so that they remain current. This can cause compatibility issues with the hosted websites and therefore needs to be carefully managed to reduce any possible pain.

I would like to thank Katie Eavis for her excellent work recording and banking the money and also Karen Foxhall who stepped in whilst Katie was on maternity leave.

David Cooke

c. Newsletter Report

No report received.

d. Handbook Report

The Handbook is basically a directory of everything that is BCA, and includes a summary of all our services and

contacts. It is published annually as soon as possible following the AGM and is posted to all DIMs, CIM Plus members (who are in all but name DIMs anyway) and Group Members. It is also available as a free download from the website, where it is kept fairly up-to-date as the year progresses.

The 2015 Handbook (i.e. the one we produce this year and badge 6 months ahead) will be slightly delayed this year, basically due to my lack of time to date (my busiest time of year at work runs into the time when I should really start work on the following year's Handbook). Consequently it will probably arrive a few weeks later than in previous years, but hopefully no later than the start of August.

In truth I do not really have the time anymore to do all the things I currently do at BCA. As such I am looking to rationalise what I do so that the time I put in best reflects the benefits to the Association. The Handbook is one area where I do not feel the balance is right - it takes days and days of time, but in truth is probably only actually used by a small number of people. Instead the website receives very little of my time, but is undoubtedly used by many more members and potential members to search for information. Despite our IT Working Party's best efforts, our various Officers have not been persuaded this year to update their content and a lot of the site, while now looking fresh and smart, is actually out of date or poorly written.

Therefore I would rather put my time over the next year into sorting this out and reluctantly, therefore, am not going to volunteer to be Handbook Editor for an 8th year (I started in 2007). I am aware that this leaves the Publications & Information Committee (who appoint the Editor) with a problem, but I feel this is the best for the Association as a whole.

Damian Weare

DCh: Why does BCA need a paper Handbook? A web-based Handbook is surely the way forward.

DC: The paper Handbook is an historical record of the BCA.

e. **Speleology Report**

In 2003, Speleology was adopted by BCRA as its new bulletin, to replace Caves & Caving, which was getting increasingly expensive to produce. David Gibson originally designed Speleology to be easier and cheaper to produce by volunteers than C&C. When BCA was created, in 2005, it decided that it would like to use Speleology as its in-house magazine and so it offered to pay towards its production. As an acknowledgement of this funding, the strap-line was altered from Bulletin of BCRA to Bulletin of British Caving although BCRA remains the publisher.

Sadly, production of Speleology has been erratic and in an effort to try to bring it back on schedule, David Gibson took over as editor late in 2013 and oversaw the production of issue 19, with a cover date of December 2013. However, publication was delayed slightly and issue 19 was not shipped until February 2014 (but four weeks of that delay were due to our printers). Issue 20 has also been delayed, but it is expected that it will still be possible to publish the scheduled issues (20 to 22) in 2014.

David Cooke

Proposal: **that the Publications & Information Reports be accepted.**

Prop: HR Sec: NB agreed unanimously

12. **Legal & Insurance Report**

Access to Caves - Possible Revisions to the CRow Act or otherwise?

Clearly over the 13 years since the passing of this major Act of the UK Parliament we have learnt a lot about how best to deal with this sometimes thorny issue. It appears that the question of clear definition and its interpretation need to be revisited. (See also item 2 b. below.)

It might be that we should go for a change in the law within the framework of the current review, but in doing so we should be particularly mindful of allowing for specific exceptions, "where there is a settled written agreement between the landowner and representative caving bodies" — inclusion of words to that effect might be appropriate? (Because I fear that we would look extremely stupid to the outside world if we were not able to keep our own house in order **and more particularly be seen to be doing this**, I suggest that if there are doubts here then perhaps we should simply leave well alone? To be clearer, what I mean is that until UK Caving in all its various local/regional bodies is fully agreed and co-ordinated then it could be foolish to enter into debate on a wider platform.)

The Fracking Exploration Scenario - Possible Threats & Useful Spinoffs?

a. Widely based research, both in the USA and elsewhere, are all tending to suggest that there is likely to be little or no detriment to our areas of interest, but this is ongoing and we still need to keep our eye on the ball. The Bowland Shales have again been mentioned as a major potential source, as has "the Blackpool area", but since these strata, where still

extant, always overlie the Carboniferous limestones, extraction from them would be unlikely to affect the structural stability of caves. Water quality could be affected, but since this consideration will be of primary concern to water users, I do not feel that we need to stress about it. No cave containing areas have so far been mentioned in shale/gas exploration proposals within the U.K.

b. Recent utterances in Westminster arising from the increasing number of bitterly opposed fracking exploration applications might have useful spinoff for us. "There is a need for a change in the law in the relationship between access to underground resources and the ownership of the land above - the current need for landowner consent"! I intend to watch this possible 'development' very closely!

Acute Shortage of Housing across the UK - New Town/Village Proposals

Strangely, within hours of my reporting at our January Meeting announcements were made concerning the need for and possibility of a Third Generation of New Towns. Whilst only Ebsfleet, in Kent has been specifically mentioned, and more general areas, e.g. Sussex, Bucks and Oxons have been mooted I still think that we need to be vigilant and work closely with BCRA.

Whilst a third generation of New Town development would properly require primary legislation as its starting point, the thinking at this stage could well morph into the concept of new and/or extended or expanded villages (what does Prince Charles think?) and we should thus be both cautious and listening to all of this!

From the way that thinking appears to be developing here I suggest that caving interests across the Peak District might have the greatest need for our vigilance.

Our main caving/limestone areas are underwritten by the National Parks legislation, e.g. The Yorkshire Dales, and are likely to be much less at risk here, but almost anything can change when new primary legislation is being considered!

Global Warming - Concerns for Cavers and Caving

*The simple outcome so far as we are concerned lies in the term **erratic** weather, which in this context means unpredictable, or not as might reasonably be expected for the time of year. The recent repeated occurrence of high winds with heavy prolonged rainfall being just one example. Clearly the long-established equilibrium of our planet's weather system has been fundamentally disturbed, possibly by the 'affairs of man' but I suspect largely by much greater planetary/extra-terrestrial and/or solar-orbital activities that are totally beyond our control. All that can currently be said with certainty is that there is no sign of an end to this erraticism, and it might well get worse before it gets better, so, be prepared for anything!*

There could be beneficial changes to our caves, as occurred in Swildon's Hole on Mendip a few years ago, but more likely we just need to be even more cautious than hitherto about prevailing and impending weather conditions before entering active cave systems!

12a) Insurance Manager's Report

SF: The insurance policy is not clear and is difficult to explain to others. BCA appears to be acting as a broker and issuing insurance certificates.

NW: Pointed out that the BCA is not acting as a broker.

SF: BCA cover is for £5m but only £1m for pollution which may not cover certain eventualities.

NW: This policy is the best we could get but we are willing to discuss changes with the insurer if regional councils request them.

AE: We would welcome input from regional councils and others regarding this.

SF: Stated that he has reservations about the current policy.

Proposal: *that the Legal & Insurance Report be accepted.*

Prop: DCh, Sec: LW agreed unanimously

Other Reports

13. Membership Administrator's Report

Membership to 30 May 2014

DIMs (Caving):403 (Non-caving):47 (of which DIMs incl. BCRA: 247 (including 21 students), CIM Plus: 7

Honorary (BCRA): 7 (BCA): 1

CIMs (Caving): 3661 (Student): 536 (Non-caving): 878

Clubs: 166

Associates: 4

Access: 7

Membership Trends: The table below shows membership trends since BCA's formation. It is important to note that data for 2004 and 2005 is presented in a different format to that currently employed, but I believe the figures for those years are accurate enough for comparison. There is no reliable data for 2006.

815 new membership numbers were issued during 2013: 13102 - 13917.

	2004	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
DIMs	93	185	437	432	397	487*	505*	507*	513*
CIMs	3,523	3,909	4,965	5,216	5,115	5,296	5,435	5,397	5585
Clubs	89	140	153	152	160	166	189	159	186

*Including 21 CIM Plus members in 2010, 12 in 2011 and 9 in 2012 and 7 in 2013

Glenn Jones

Proposal: **that the Membership Administrator's Report be accepted.**

Prop: HS, Sec: BP agreed unanimously

14. **Radon Report** (written report previously circulated)

I had asked that the AGM consider possible reasons why we have had a lack of enquiries from cavers and allied organisations regarding radon, but it would seem there has been little debate. My twopenneth is that probably people are not fussed. When we carried out the first negotiations I used data produced by the then Chief Medical Officer which showed that Devon and Cornwall, which have the highest radon concentrations around the granites, did not have elevated occurrences of lung cancer, as might be expected. This is even taking into consideration that retired people move to the area. So, obviously there is more to it than initially meets the eye. The then NRPB thought that use of this type of data was unhelpful. Over the now 20 years since then we have not seen any significant reports of cavers dying of lung cancer over and above that which might be expected from smoking (which many did). Perhaps we are seeing the results of individuals carrying out recreational caving doing their own appraisals, deciding that they are not going into areas of exceptionally high radon concentrations on any regular basis and concluding there is little risk. The commercial caving companies have legislation to adhere to for the protection of their employees and clients, so all we can do is advise that the law is followed.

The HPA would appear to be still concentrating on their real, polonium-contaminated people and as the legislation has essentially passed to a European-wide body, it may be some time before the exposure levels are visited again. To all intents those set appear to be working. Despite the publicity we have given radon, I have had no enquiries in the intervening 12 months. It is possible that the new booklet is consulted and answers all of the questions but I have my doubts.

For many years now, I have been set on standing down, but have been persuaded not to. As I said last year, I commenced work in this post in 1994 and I had wanted to leave the post in a position that I thought was sound and going in the right direction. In my opinion it is wrong for someone to stay in post too long as turnover brings new ideas and impetus. The time has now come for me to say enough is enough.

I thank all those who have provided considerable help over the years. I have enjoyed the time and hope that it is considered that I have done an acceptable job.

Clark Friend

Proposal: **that Clark Friend be thanked for all the work he has done in relation to Radon.**

Prop: NW, Sec: LW agreed unanimously

Proposal: **that the Radon Report be accepted.**

Prop: NW, Sec: LW agreed unanimously

15. **Cave Registry Report**

The Cave Registry Data Archive (www.cave-registry.org.uk) continues to grow at a pace. It is currently some 7.5GB of data. It is important to realise that the archive is more than a simply a good place to backup your survey data but is also a tool to actively manage and help coordinate the work of current surveying projects.

There continue to be murmurings of more regional online registries but none have so far appeared. I remain ready to provide technical advice and hosting software if required.

David Cooke

Proposal: ***that the Cave Registry Report be accepted.***

Prop: LW Sec: HR *agreed unanimously*

16. IT Working Party

The main work has been the new BCA website which is now live. For details see the separate report.

The TryCaving website has been moved lock stock and barrel to the BCA web server. Thanks must go to the Bristol Exploration Club for hosting the website until now and to Chris Jewell for his assistance. The website was www.trycaving.co.uk, whilst that address still works it is more properly www.trycaving.org.uk since TryCaving is not a company. The .org.uk address should be used in any future publications, etc.

With thanks to Nigel Ball and Mary Wilde I now have the Training Database requirements documents and examples of the current training databases. Once I have completed my review of those, I will propose a way or ways forward for the Training Committee's consideration.

I feel the BCA Forum is under-utilised by Council and the various committees and working groups. I remind you that it is there, as are the mailing lists. The Training Committee are making good use of video conferencing, another useful tool to aid communication.

Work continues with the project to develop email communication with our members. Assuming it is passed, the proposal at Agenda item 25 to review the membership structure relies heavily upon this project succeeding. I'm concerned that this and other BCA IT projects are developed using a compatible framework and coding standards to minimize future maintenance and support costs.

David Cooke

Proposal: ***that the IT Working Party Report be accepted.***

Prop: HB Sec: BP *agreed unanimously*

17. Youth & Development

HB: Has emailed extensively re this, but has yet to receive any replies. Student information has been produced. HB proposed a vote of thanks to Gonzo for putting it together.

Proposal: ***that the Youth & Development Report be accepted.***

Prop: HR Sec: IW *agreed unanimously*

18. 2016 Working Party

LW: We are in the process of securing the venue. Experts are needed in various fields and volunteers are needed.

Proposal: ***that the 2016 Working Party Report be accepted.***

Prop: HR Sec: IW *agreed unanimously*

19. International Representative's Report

Since my last Report to the AGM in 2013 there has been an International Congress in Brno in the Czech Republic this as anticipated went very well with a very good turnout from British Cavers. We were indeed the third biggest contingent after the Czech Republic and the United States.

I know all the British people attending enjoyed themselves thoroughly and I think the various vendors did good business and had a very good time.

We are all looking forward to the next UIS International Congress in Jenolan Australia in July 2017.

I had to stand down as President of the UIS having done the maximum amount of years. I was however made an Honorary President which was interesting seeing as some time ago I voted against this being an institution, but now find myself as one of only two Honorary Presidents. I was very surprised and somewhat honoured. I do intend to go to further UIS meetings hopefully including Jenolan Australia this October. Now that I have finished my term in UIS office my International commitments have been somewhat less, although I do keep in touch with everything going on within that organisation in my capacity as Honorary President.

At the moment the main subject being discussed on International circles is conservation and access, particularly quarrying which seems to be a problem all over the world.

There are three International meetings involving cave conservation, one in Auckland New Zealand at the beginning of September, one in Melbourne Australia at the end of September and then the UIS meeting in Jenolan at the end of October. I intend, if at all possible, to go to all three.

Arrangements for the European Congress in England in 2016 are progressing which is now only 18 months away. We can confirm Dalesbridge as the venue, much work has to be done.

Andy Eavis

a) **FSE Report**

Since the last years report to the AGM there has been one bureau meeting and a **General Assembly Meeting (GAM)** of the FSE both of which took place in Casola Italy on 2 November. Over 2,000 cavers attended the Casola event and delegate attendance at the GAM was good. A number of officers presented for re-election and the incumbent president, Juan Carlos Lopez from Spain stood down. I was persuaded to stand for President and had not anticipated competition from my Bulgarian colleague, Alexey Zhalov. However, despite there being quite a few proxy votes from Eastern European countries supporting Alexey, I was elected by a comfortable margin. As a result of my Vice Presidency post becoming vacant, Micheal Laumans (Germany) was elected as new Vice President. Olivier Vidal (France) was re-elected Secretary General, Henk Goutier (Netherlands) Treasurer, Ernst Geyer (Austria) Vice Treasurer. Alexey Zhalov remained Vice Secretary. However, in May Alexey resigned from his post so this position is vacant and candidates are being sought.

Two new countries, Albania and Turkey, were voted into the FSE at the GAM. The FSE now has a membership of 27 countries.

Article 12 of the Constitution was hotly debated. This allows non delegates to stand for positions on the FSE Bureau. This article was adopted by the FSE following the UIS's decision to include this approach in their internal regulations. At the moment Olivier Vidal is not supported by his national organisation the FFS (the French Federation) who are unhappy with this situation. However, countries voted overwhelmingly to retain article 12. Only France was against and Greece abstained.

The next Bureau meeting and General Assembly meeting will take place during the 9th ES Forum 2014 in Baile Herculane, Romania between 22nd & 24th August 2014. The FSE has now launched a **Facebook page at www.facebook.com/eurospeleo** to facilitate good communication about news, events etc.

The website www.eurospeleo.eu has had a complete upgrade after the previous web masters departure. Grotto Centre, a European cave registry group have contributed significantly to this facelift.

The next **Euro Speleo Magazine** will be published this month. The Editor Mihaela Micula (Romania) is doing an excellent job of putting this together.

A representative of the FSE (Ernst Geyer) attended 1st International Geosciences Congress 2014 in Tehran & Hamadan, Iran in February. It was attended by approximately 150 foreign scientists and experts. Cavers from South Korea, Pakistan, Italy, France, Poland, Turkey & Austria attended this event.

Eurospeleo Projects (ESP): There have been some very good awards for Eurospeleo projects. British cavers were involved in the publishing of Cave Pearls of Meghalaya and 'Speleological days'

Some feedback on ESPs last year. The table below is from the annual ESP report and outlines the expeditions/projects that received funding support and countries participating.

Project Name and Location	Participating Countries
ESP 2012-13 Exploration of Caves in Mt. Athos , Greece	BG, GR, RUS, TR
ESP 2012-15 Book publishing of Cave Pearls of Meghalaya	CH, GB, RO, D, IRL
ESP 2012-16 Northern Lao – Euro Cave Project 2013	D, NL, RUS, I, CH
ESP 2013-02 Camp Berger -1112	FR, HUN, B, SLO, OAE, B&H, CAN
ESP 2013-03 Expedition Banski Suhodol '2013	BG, RS, RO, GR, CZ
ESP 2013-04 Balkan Speleological Conference '2014'	BG, GR, RO, TR, RS, SLO, AL, CRO
ESP 2013-05 5 th FSE Exploration Camp of Chamois Cave	FR, HUN, I, D, RUS,
ESP 2013-06 Training course for perfection	FR, Ethiopia, OAE
ESP-2013-07 Exploration of Greece's second deepest cave	GR, FR, RO, SLO, D, CH, E
ESP 2013-08 Exploration of Caves in Mt. Athos , Greece	BG, GR, RUS, UA, SR
ESP 2013-09 Speleological days	B, NL, FR, D, GB

Organisation of EuroSpeleo events over next 3 years

ES Forum 2015 Applications will be invited. Bulgaria has expressed an interest.

European Congress 2016 will be in the UK.

The next UIS Congress will be in Sydney in 2017.

Ged Campion

Proposal: ***That AE and his family be thanked for all AE's hard work as International Rep.***

Prop: HR, Sec: IW *agreed unanimously*

LW: Thanks to Gavin Newman for giving his time to produce the 2016 promotional video.

Proposal: ***that the International Representatives' Reports be accepted.***

Prop: LW, Sec: HR *agreed unanimously*

21. **Media-Liaison Report**

It has been a quiet year. When the post was created several years ago there was a time period where my telephone number was very prominent on the BCA website – so much so that I ended up receiving numerous calls completely unrelated to media enquiries. Since we have raised the prominence of the main BCA number I have certainly had fewer phone calls but I assume that the office in Great Hucklow is receiving these instead?

I am currently treating my role as a reactive one. It is clear to me that there are cavers who certainly don't need BCA to help them work with the media – they know exactly what they are doing, have their own contacts and are used to answering questions when the members of the press contact them.

However I do wonder whether that means there are BCA members or Officers who would like assistance when it comes to dealing with the media and whether there is an opportunity to be more proactive here.

Chris Jewell

CJ: Is getting fewer phone calls. More are directed to Mary Wilde and NW. Calls come in from TV company reps who are then put onto the appropriate people.

LW: The caving scene has gained benefit from media coverage. The public are more engaged and positive. We should be proactive in engaging with the media.

DCh: Has had contact from the BBC re. cave Science/ exploration but it has come to nothing.

SF: Is there scope here for NB re. training? Advice was given during a recent training session relating to how to deal with the press. Developing media handling skills is important e.g. speaking in front of the camera.

CJ: If people need advice, they can contact CJ. Journalists can also be directed to CJ.

Proposal: ***that the Media-Liaison Report be accepted.***

Prop: BM, Sec HB *agreed unanimously*

22. **British Caving Library**

Cataloguing the Collections: *Work continues on re-cataloguing the entire contents of the Library - necessary because of the huge backlog inherited when BCL was set up in 2008 and the transfer to Glutton Bridge of the former BCRA Library (with its out of date printed catalogue) from the Matlock Local Studies Library in 2010. The old BCRA Library filled some 70+ m of shelf space at Matlock; in contrast we now have over 200 m of shelf space plus map chests, filing cabinets, cupboards, etc., all on the one site at Glutton Bridge.*

UK periodicals: *we now have a complete list of all 330+ sets of UK caving periodicals we hold and so far approx. 30% of the sets have been catalogued in detail for every single item contained.*

Foreign Periodicals: *virtually all the foreign periodicals on our list of 55 exchanges with BCRA publications are now catalogued in detail plus some 50% of other foreign periodicals.*

Books: *there is no backlog and new items are added to the catalogue as they come in.*

Expedition Reports: *We have a growing collection of expedition reports classified by country.*

As far as we know other material in the collections had never previously been catalogued although some of the following items were found in the BCRA Library.

Surveys & Maps: work on cataloguing these is now well in hand with the help of volunteers and we continue to receive donations of many more items.

CDs, DVDs etc.: *these are gradually being catalogued as they arrive.*

Photographic material: *some has been catalogued and some has even been scanned and is on the BCRA Archives website; however, we need an expert volunteer to help deal with the remainder of the very large collection.*

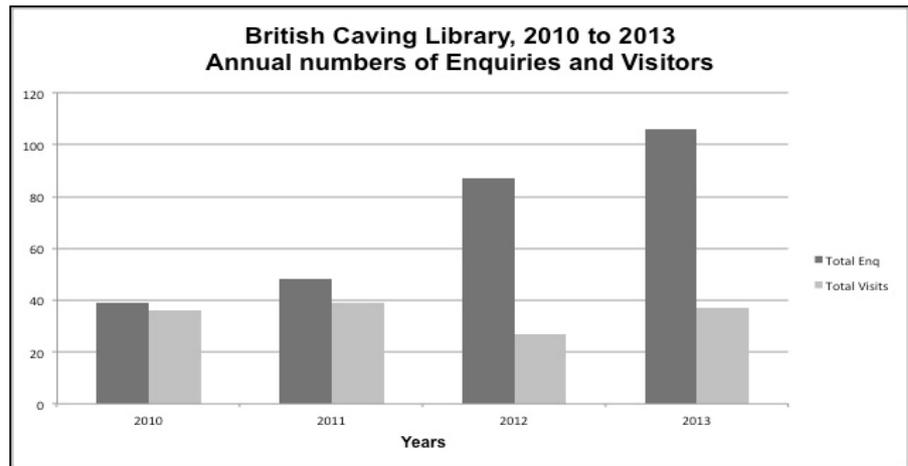
Donations / Liaison: *We continue to receive donations from many cavers, ex-cavers, their families and friends, so all areas of the Library collections are growing, including a sizeable amount of archive material. We try to ensure that duplicate items are passed to other caving libraries to complete their collections and other libraries, in turn, supply missing items for our collection.*

Enquiries: *We collect information on numbers of enquiries and visitors and regularly report these figures to BCA and*

BCRA Councils. Where visitors contact us in advance we find and collect together the items requested to enable them to make maximum use of their time at the Library. Visitors may bring their own laptops and make use of the Library WiFi or are welcome to make use of our own computer, scanners and copiers. Prior to 2008, when we moved into the Glutton Bridge premises, there had been almost no enquiry service and no records were kept; there were no on-line facilities and we know from the old visitors book that visits to the BCRA holdings at the Matlock Local Studies library were in single figures per year. The graph below illustrates the position at the end of 2013 following the consolidation of all the collections at Glutton Bridge in 2010 - rising to a total of 143 enquiries and visitors in 2013.

Cavers are now able to use our on-line facilities, which include: the Audio Archives, the BCRA Archives website, the Librarian's Facebook, the On-Line Catalogue, etc.

Other Visitors: We have space for groups to visit the Library and it is now regularly used for meetings of caving organisation committees. We hope to increase this service and also to enable some supervised public access.



Jenny Potts

HB: The caving library now has a team of people working there, and it will continue to grow and thrive.

DCh: There is a meeting on the 20th June to discuss putting the archive online.

Proposal: **that the British Caving Library Report be accepted.**

Prop:AR, Sec: BM agreed unanimously

23. Reports from BCRA, Regional Councils etc

Council of Southern Caving Clubs

JB: Sludge Pit is now open. Nine Barrows - work is in progress. White Pit is next on the list.

British Cave Rescue Council

EP: Had its event in April. Pete Alwright has stepped down and Emma Porter is now the new secretary.

Derbyshire Caving Association

BP: Is BCA willing to back the Cliffhanger event again financially?

Cambrian Caving Council

DT: We have a new Secretary and Chairperson. We are sorting out access agreements for G. Forest. We are also meeting with the Ramblers' Association and BMC.

Proposal: **that all the above reports be accepted.**

Prop: LW, Sec: CJ agreed unanimously

24. Election of Officers

24.1 Treasurer: Paul Ibberson (Prop: NB, Sec: LW) *elected unopposed.*

24.2 Equipment & Techniques Officer: Nick Williams (Prop: DW, Sec: AE) *elected unopposed.*

24.3 Publications & Information Officer: Les Williams (Prop: BP, Sec: FT) *elected unopposed.*

24.4 Conservation & Access Officer: Andrew Hinde (Prop: DCA, Sec: DW) *elected unopposed*

24.5 2 Club Representatives: Owen Clarke (Prop: GC, Sec: HR) and Boyd Potts (Prop: JP Sec: LW) *both elected unopposed*

24.6 2 Individual Member Representatives: *there being no nominations, the positions remain vacant (but see AOB).*

Other Matters

25. Proposals

Proposal: **this meeting requests that BCA Council consider the best way of simplifying the existing membership structure and begin its implementation.**

Prop: DW Sec: AE

Amended Proposal: *this meeting requests that BCA Council consider the best way of simplifying the existing membership structure for ratification at next year's AGM.*

Amended proposal agreed unanimously

AE: The proposal is ok, but ratification will be difficult.

DG: It needs to be rationalised rather than simplified. For example, joint members can't be abolished. Some constitutional things may change.

26. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Proposal: *that Richard Johnson be appointed as Independent Examiner for the 2014 Accounts.*

Prop: PI Sec: BM *agreed unanimously*

27. Date of the Annual General Meeting for 2015

Proposal: *that the 2015 AGM be held on 14 June at 10.30am.*

Prop: BM Sec: IW *agreed unanimously*

28. Any Other Business

a) Individual Representatives:

Proposal: *that Kristian Brook be appointed as an Individual Member representative.*

Prop: DB, Sec: GC *agreed unanimously*

Meeting ended: 14.40

**BRITISH
CAVING
ASSOCIATION**

Financial Statements for the Year
Ended 31 December 2013

**BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2013**

	2013	2012
	£	£
INCOME		
Subscriptions	102,098	98,707
Association	2,863	3,193
Training Services	22,544	22,726
Publications & Information	300	696
Meetings & Conference	1,470	0
Web Services	1,550	1,339
TOTAL INCOME	<u>130,825</u>	<u>126,661</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Subscription	61,120	55,658
Association	4,818	4,810
Conservation & Access	500	0
Training Services	22,978	22,134
Caver Training	600	233
Publications & Information	6,544	5,100
Equipment & Techniques	1,855	5,912
Youth Development	120	128
Meetings & Conferences	2,049	685
Web Services	1,580	1,793
Regional Caving Councils	5,717	9,325
British Caving Library	10,000	10,000
Expedition Programme	5,000	5,000
International	347	631
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>123,228</u>	<u>121,409</u>
<u>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</u>	<u>7,597</u>	<u>5,252</u>
TAX	483	811
<u>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR AFTER TAX</u>	<u>7,114</u>	<u>4,441</u>

BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2013**

	2013	2012
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks	0	0
Debtors and Prepayments	1,282	428
Balances at Bank and cash in hand	211,224	191,415
	<u>212,506</u>	<u>191,843</u>
LESS: CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors and Accruals payable within one year	39,123	25,574
NET ASSETS	<u><u>173,383</u></u>	<u><u>166,269</u></u>
 REPRESENTED BY RESERVES :		
General Reserve		
Balance brought forward	106,269	101,828
Surplus for year	<u>7,114</u>	<u>4,441</u>
	113,383	106,269
less transfer to Sinking Fund	<u>5,000</u>	<u>0</u>
	108,383	106,269
 Sinking Fund - insurance policy excess	65,000	60,000
TOTAL RESERVES	<u><u>173,383</u></u>	<u><u>166,269</u></u>

Approved on behalf of the Executive Committee

A Eavis, Chairman_____
Date**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2013****1 Accounting Policies****a) Basis of Accounting**

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and under historical cost accounting rules.

b) Equipment

Equipment is charged in the accounts in the year of purchase.

c) Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

2 Additional Notes

- a) BCA is required to cover part of the insurance policy excess itself, in order to make membership attractive. This is the purpose of the 'sinking fund'. The sinking fund should be able to cope with paying the excess for two claims and a doubling of the premium in one year. With premium renegotiation due at the end of 2014, the value of the sinking fund reserve has been increased by £5,000. The position will be further reviewed at the end of 2014 once renewal details are finalised.

BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2012

	2013	2012
	£	£
Subscriptions		
<i>Income</i>		
Subscriptions	102,098	98,707
<i>Total</i>	<u>102,098</u>	<u>98,707</u>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Premium	39,444	39,404
Employment Expenses	8,981	7,589
General Expenses	7,096	3,377
Travel	0	0
Refunds, Adj, Unpaid	557	100
BCRA Subscriptions	5,042	5,188
<i>Total</i>	<u>61,120</u>	<u>55,658</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>40,978</u>	<u>43,049</u>
Association		
<i>Income</i>		
Interest received	2,242	2,143
Broker Commission	608	891
Donations, Sundry	13	159
<i>Total</i>	<u>2,863</u>	<u>3,193</u>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Secretarial	751	1,147
Financial	0	0
Travel	2,260	2,204
Subscriptions	1,355	774
Insurance	452	685
Ballot	0	0
Sundry	0	0
<i>Total</i>	<u>4,818</u>	<u>4,810</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(1,955)</u>	<u>(1,617)</u>
Conservation & Access		
<i>Income</i>		
<i>Total</i>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Secretarial	0	0
Travel	0	0
Conservation Support	500	0
<i>Total</i>	<u>500</u>	<u>0</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(500)</u>	<u>0</u>

Training Services**Income**

LCMLA / CIC Schemes	22,434	22,681
Publications	110	45
Total	<u>22,544</u>	<u>22,726</u>

Expenditure

Employment Expenses	8,196	8,514
General Expenses	4,090	4,505
Travel	1,942	1,833
LCMLA/CIC Training	8,458	6,960
Refunds, Adj, Unpaid	292	0

Stock @ 1/1/13	0	
Less Closing Stock @ 31/12/13	0	322

Total	<u>22,978</u>	<u>22,134</u>
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Surplus / (Deficit)	<u>(434)</u>	<u>592</u>
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Caver Training

Income	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
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Expenditure

Recreational Caver Training	215	233
Voluntary Sector Support	385	0
Total	<u>600</u>	<u>233</u>

Surplus / (Deficit)	<u>(600)</u>	<u>(233)</u>
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Publications & Information**Income**

Publication Sales	180	536
Advertising	120	160
Total	<u>300</u>	<u>696</u>

Expenditure

Secretarial	0	0
Travel	0	0
Handbook	1,242	938
Newsletter	664	412
Journal	4,638	3,750
Total	<u>6,544</u>	<u>5,100</u>

Surplus / (Deficit)	<u>(6,244)</u>	<u>(4,404)</u>
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Equipment & Techniques		
Income	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure		
Secretarial	50	0
Travel	325	269
Anchor programme	874	5,298
Rope-Test programme	606	345
	<u>Total</u>	<u>5,912</u>
	<u>1,855</u>	<u>5,912</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(1,855)</u>	<u>(5,912)</u>
Youth Development		
Income	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure		
Youth Development	120	128
	<u>Total</u>	<u>128</u>
	<u>120</u>	<u>128</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(120)</u>	<u>(128)</u>
Meetings & Conferences		
Income		
AGM Weekend	1,470	0
	<u>Total</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>1,470</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure		
AGM Weekend	1,467	0
Artificial Cave	418	306
Cliff Hanger	164	379
	<u>Total</u>	<u>685</u>
	<u>2,049</u>	<u>685</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(579)</u>	<u>(685)</u>
Web Services		
Income		
Web Services	1,550	1,339
	<u>Total</u>	<u>1,339</u>
	<u>1,550</u>	<u>1,339</u>
Expenditure		
Web Services	1,580	1,793
	<u>Total</u>	<u>1,793</u>
	<u>1,580</u>	<u>1,793</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(30)</u>	<u>(454)</u>

Regional Caving Council Expenditure		
Income	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure		
CCC claims	583	2,165
CNCC claims	553	1,746
CSCC claims	2,393	1,692
DCA claims	1,054	2,935
DCUC claims	1,134	787
<i>Total</i>	<u>5,717</u>	<u>9,325</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(5,717)</u>	<u>(9,325)</u>
British Caving Library		
Income	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure		
Grant	10,000	10,000
<i>Total</i>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(10,000)</u>	<u>(10,000)</u>
Expedition Programme		
Income	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure		
Grants to Expeditions	5,000	5,000
<i>Total</i>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>5,000</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(5,000)</u>	<u>(5,000)</u>
International		
Income	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure		
Grants to Reps.	347	631
<i>Total</i>	<u>347</u>	<u>631</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(347)</u>	<u>(631)</u>
<i>Total Income</i>	<u>130,825</u>	<u>126,661</u>
<i>Total Expenditure</i>	<u>123,228</u>	<u>121,409</u>
<i>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</i>	<u>7,597</u>	<u>5,252</u>
Tax		
<i>Prior Year Adjustment</i>	0	86
<i>Current Year</i>	483	725
	<u>483</u>	<u>811</u>
<i>Total Surplus / (Deficit) less Tax</i>	<u>7,114</u>	<u>4,441</u>