



# BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

## Annual General Meeting – 14 June 2015

### OFFICERS' REPORTS

#### **Item 5: Chairman**

*Verbal report to be given at the meeting.*

*Andy Eavis, June 2014*

#### **Item 6: Secretary**

**CRoW:** There can be little doubt that *the* issue of 2014 was CRoW and specifically whether or not the CRoW Act applies, and if not, should apply to going underground. Because of the strength of feeling on both sides, and the importance of the issue to members, Council felt a clear yes/no-style referendum was appropriate. This was carried out towards the end of 2014 and the result, published in early January, saw 61.9% of the votes supporting the notion that BCA should “*campaign for The Countryside and Rights of Way Act to apply to going underground*”.

BCA's response to this is ongoing and, technically speaking, not the subject of this report for 2014. However, for members' general interest an initial meeting with DEFRA and Natural England was held at the end of January. It was felt that the most effective course of action at the moment is likely to lie in close liaison with both Bodies, rather than clear opposition to their approach.

Indeed their existing guidance has been “clarified” a number of times in recent years and it is reasonable to assume that further “clarification” may be forthcoming if handled correctly.

In this respect careful diplomacy and measured pressure are key. This is not something we are going to achieve overnight, or indeed in the next few months but it is clear that this is currently the best way to bring about the desired result.

While this is going on, we will also be taking the opportunity to prepare our case, should our work with Natural England and DEFRA prove fruitless.

**Membership Restructuring:** A roadmap to simplifying our membership structure was presented to the March 2014 Council Meeting. This split the process into three clear stages:

- 1) Initial Preparations
- 2) Implementation of Universal Individual Membership
- 3) Financial Rebalancing following stage 2.

Stage 1, the initial preparations, is the most demanding of these stages and it is pleasing to report that it is now well underway. BCA is a complex organisation but I hope that I will be able to report further progress at next year's AGM.

**Secretary Position:** Next year will be the end of my third three-year term as Secretary and I have made it clear that I will not be standing again. I take this opportunity to remind everyone that I will not be changing my mind!

*Damian Weare, May 2015*

## **Item 7: Treasurer**

The last year has been very much a case of "as you were" in terms of the treasury/accounting side of the Association and this year's AGM report will bear significant similarities to the previous one. As reported 12 months ago, whilst opportunities to improve the process undoubtedly exist, I have not been able to progress things as I would have liked. Hence the 2014 Accounts have been prepared on the same basis and platform as those for 2013. There remains an ideal position of spreading the investment of the capital fund to reduce risk, although whilst the main deposit remains with Barclays we can at least take the view that the risk is small. Improving the return on investment is still something of a forlorn exercise, but should be an objective that is kept very much under review as the financial institutions continue to move the goalposts on a regular basis.

As this report is being compiled, the 2014 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 2014 Accounts, I can report again that the broad picture is very similar to the previous year. There have been no fundamental departures from the basic setup and operation of the main areas of activity. Certain transactions have impacted on the detail, but the overall scenario remains the same. The Association continues to more than meet its running costs and the Reserves position remains sound for the current view of future activities; any new funding matters can thus be considered accordingly. As noted earlier, there remains the dual objective of squeezing a greater return from the cash reserve whilst at the same time minimising and spreading the investment risk. However, the current investment climate still does not lend itself to that scenario; it remains the case though that to ensure opportunities are not missed, Executive should be authorised to transfer deposits as required if suitable products are brought forward.

In terms of the 2014 position, Subscription income was unchanged during the year. Against this, the cost of administering membership fell slightly which meant that the overall surplus increased. General subscription expenses returned to normal levels after equipment costs were charged in the prior year. General Association running costs increased notably when compared to the previous year, but this was solely the impact of the costs of the CRoW ballot. Conservation and Access expenditure increased for much the same underlying reason.

Training Services once more ran a deficit during the year. Mostly this came about due to a cyclical reduction in Training Scheme registration income. It is anticipated that this element will return to more normal levels in 2015 and it remains the case that over the years a cumulative surplus has resulted from these activities. Costs for Training were broadly in line with prior years. Caver Training costs increased in the year due to support of both the Voluntary Sector and increased awards for recreational caver training.

Publications costs were reduced as Handbook and Newsletter costs were Nil in the year. Costs for Speleology included the balance of previous issue preparation. E&T expenses were in line with the previous year. Meetings & Conferences included the AGM Party Weekend – this led to both increased income and increased expenditure but the net effect was that costs exceeded revenue and an alternative solution is obviously the plan for 2015. Web Services costs reduced and this allowed for a small surplus in the year. Funding of Expeditions (via the Ghar Parau Foundation) and the British Caving Library has continued at the same level as previous years and Regional Council funding has reduced following significant project work charged in 2013. The 2014 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 £5,799, against which a tax credit of £298 is realisable, thus leaving a net addition to reserves of £6,097. The tax credit arises from the net loss arising when taxable income is set against the Training Services deficit. It is anticipated that the resultant tax asset will be realisable against future profit and it is held on the balance sheet accordingly. The new insurance deal at the end of 2014 involves a significant reduction in the excess position, but for the time being it is my intention to keep the Sinking Fund at its previous level and the position can then be reviewed once a new Treasurer is in place.

On the latter point, I noted last year that I was willing to remain in post for the next 12 months. I can now confirm that the changes in personal circumstances and/or duties required to extend that timescale have not materialised and it is time to hand over to someone else to take the Association's finances forward.

*Paul Ibberson, May 2015*

## **Item 8: Conservation & Access**

**Eurospeleo Forum:** Since the last meeting I have represented BCA at the Eurospeleo Forum- Baille Herculane, Romainia. (22-24 August 2014). I gave a presentation to the European Cave Protection Symposium and attended the ECPC committee meeting. There are clearly some difficulties in coordinating principals and procedures across dozens of different countries which are at different evolutionary stages of conservation management and education. However, there were plenty of useful examples of practical conservation measures displayed in the poster salon and via presentations. The ECPC is starved of people prepared to undertake officer posts in these austere times. I was offered and declined a co option onto the ECPC executive.

The cost of flights and transfers were met by Natural England. I will be making a claim from BCA to meet accommodation costs. I would encourage BCA to send Conservation Officers from other RCCs to present at future events. I feel that the British experience of conservation is of value to ECPC.

**CRoW:** The CRoW and Caving debate has generated a huge amount of correspondence in my inbox. I apologise if I have kept anyone waiting too long for a response. The emails I have received on the subject have all been civil, well considered, and useful contributions.

I would like to thank the CRoW Working Group for undertaking a huge amount of work on behalf of BCA and the C&A Committee.

In light of the Yes vote in the CRoW ballot I have undertaken the following action point: *Continue to explore ways to effectively protect our more fragile sites.*

I have been instructed by the C&A Committee to review the many caving codes that are in circulation. The C&A Committee concluded that the current Cave Conservation Code was too long and the Minimal Impact Caving Code was severe in its tone and over prescriptive. With the help of a few committee members I have drafted a shorter and more compact 'Caving Code' plus a 'Minimal Impact Caving Guidance' which expands on the themes within the Code. I think it is important that we have an internationally recognisable MIC Guidance that will be familiar to delegates of the Speleo 2016 event.

The current draft of the Code and Guidelines can be found in the appendix. Drafts of these documents have been reviewed by C&A committee members and BCA Council. The drafts have now gone to RCCs and Constituent Bodies for consultation.

The script will be part of a pdf with colour photos, illustrations and useful hyperlinks. The photos should support the text and enhance understanding. It is proposed to have flier and poster versions of the Code for caving huts and pubs.

I can report that the C&A committee has not met since November 2014 but I feel that it has been working effectively via email on matters that require our attention. I would expect to convene a meeting of C&A before the 12 months are up or as soon as our work load demands.

**Regional CC Conservation Activities:** The Regional Caving Council websites contain updates on local cave-conservation activities. A huge amount of effort has gone into conservation projects.

On a personal note I believe we owe a debt of gratitude to these individuals and groups who make such a valuable contribution to protecting our underground heritage. The best way to express that gratitude is to join in and do your bit, or start your own conservation project.

*Andrew Hinde, May 2015*

### **Item 8a: CRoW Working Group**

The CRoW Working Group is now in abeyance, pending progress from the BCA Chairman's discussions with NE and Defra. It can be called back into action by the BCA C&A Officer if he thinks there is a need.

*Jenny Potts, May 2015*

### **Item 9: Equipment & Techniques**

The Committee met on 5 April and 2 November in 2014.

It is good to be able to report that both DCA and CNCC are now participating as proper members of the Committee once more. The Speleological Union of Ireland (SUI) has also been accepted as a member of the Committee and as a participant in the BCA anchor scheme although they have thus far been unable to send anyone to the meetings.

The supply of Bolt Product Type 316 anchors has remained sufficient to meet demand, though the reserve stock levels remain low. Following discussion, E&T agreed to adopt the Bolt Product Type 304 anchor for locations where the potential of chloride stress corrosion cracking is considered to be acceptably low. This enables installers to make use of the more than adequate reserve stock of Bolt Product Type 304 anchors held by BCA. Work has started to look at alternative anchors based on High Corrosion

Resistance (HCR) steel and Titanium to cope with sites where the potential for Chloride Stress Corrosion Cracking is high - e.g. in mines and at sea side locations.

Presentations were made to the Committee on the development of a new resin anchor by Simon Wilson. (Details can be found at his web site at [www.resinanchor.co.uk/](http://www.resinanchor.co.uk/).) The work is a significant contribution to the field (and it is noted that E&T adopted the IC anchor at its meeting on 15 March 2015). These presentations started two strands of work by E&T. The first was to investigate a replacement resin which was not styrene based. A test bed was set up in South Wales to test a proposed new resin but work has carried over into 2015. (It is noted that the completed work in 2015 supports the adoption of the chosen resin.) The second strand of work focuses on the conservation impact of replacing anchors. It has been noted that in testing Bolt Product anchors, a substantial proportion (well in excess of 50%) extracted using the rig, spall the surrounding rock to a sufficient extent that the location of the hole would not be suitable for reuse. By contrast, the IC anchors rarely spoil the location. We have started to look into alternative extraction methods for Bolt Product and DMM anchors.

Testing of anchors in alternative rocks has taken place in Devon and further work is planned. A programme of work was also funded to test a range of anchors in several different types of North Wales slate. The range of anchors chosen reflect the different ones already in use in North Wales as well as the Bolt Product and IC anchors. The work was completed in early 2015 and a report is in preparation.

Work on developing advice for other fixed aids has ceased following a lack of contributions on the topic.

*Nick Williams, May 2015*

## **9a) Rope Test**

Activity on rope testing matters were much reduced in the year owing to a pre occupation with other caving matters.

24 samples of rope have been received and tested in 2014. Curiously only 7 of these were received at Hidden Earth, a much lower number than usual. A further 6 lengths of rope have been received during 2014 but have not yet been tested as yet. In part this is awaiting other developments. Of those sample tested, I have now had my first sample which failed without surviving any drops. I have held back testing the remaining rope from which this sample was taken until the Bradford rig is available to maximise the information obtained from the samples. But it is noted that the 10mm diameter rope had been left in a cave for some 15 years. Given other ropes have survived better after similar lengths of time in cave, I offer no comment.

Part 2 of the Long Term Rope Test is nearing completion in getting ropes used to a pre-determined amount. One rope awaits return before testing of the used samples can commence.

The experiment on hand lines continues with 8 samples remaining in place and continued to be monitored. One sample failed to be located in the agreed position and has subsequently been lost. A further sample was withdrawn from service in late 2013 when it was found to have worn. (The sample had been placed as a hand line on a climb. The length was such that the free end dangled in a stream when under high water conditions which injected movement into the whole rope.) Another sample used on a Tyrolean was returned in 2014 following the rope being deliberately cut mid location by vandals.

The work on different Cows Tail Knots has not been progressed during the year.

No work has been undertaken on the static rig during 2014.

Work on the instrumentation of the Bradford Pothole Club's rig has made very slow progress during the year. A new method for measuring rope extension has been developed but installation and testing has only recently been undertaken. This has held back other development work.

*Bob Mehew, May 2015*

## **Item 10: Training**

One of the reoccurring discussions at Training Committee over the last twelve months has been the disappointment in the number of BCA caving clubs applying for training grants. The criteria for approving grants have been recently looked at and a decision has been made to simplify the process and make it more inviting. This information will be added to the leaflets that have been produced for caving events.

There is an increasing level of conversation at meetings about the time that is required to travel to NCP, CIC and Training Committee and it is very strongly felt that video conferencing should be developed for this. It is acknowledged that there would be a cost to BCA in setting it up around the UK, but it would make the meetings easier to attend and hopefully get more attending. The CIC Panel have been doing this for over a year and it has improved things enormously.

During the past twelve months, Training Committee has responded to a request from Council to review its current structure and functionality with a view to improving it. The Training Officer put forward a view to Training Committee as to how things could be changed but when voted on, the majority of people thought that things were ok as they currently were and did not need to be changed.

During last year, an enquiry came from two independent organisations asking about award schemes for children who participate in caving. This is an on-going situation and we hope that we can put something forward within the next six months.

Reports have been received from a number of Regional Councils about the caver training course they have delivered in the last twelve months and they include SRT, cave surveying, and bat studies. They all were attended well and they were very successful. Other Regional Councils have announced that they will be putting on a training event this later this year.

The BCA award schemes are still very much on going. New people are registering with the schemes and people are completing their assessments. Some people, although only a few, have let their awards lapse and have had to go through the Core Skills Reassessment process. A few people have left the schemes.

It is still felt strongly that the Local Cave and Mine Leader syllabus needs to be rewritten in a more streamlined way. The problem with this is that it is a huge job to be done voluntarily. Recently some funding opportunities have been identified and they are being looked into.

Within the last twelve months a parity of awards has been approved between the BCA Training Committee and the Speleological Union of Ireland.

The moderation of training and assessment courses is now underway and it is proving to be very useful process. This will continue in its current state until a national view is achieved.

There are still major problems of access to suitable caves for the delivery of training and assessment courses in South Wales. Much discussion has taken place on this topic and it is felt that BCA Council needs to give Training Committee support with this.

Training Committee is looking forward to the BCA Chairman attending the next meeting on Saturday 19 September 2015.

Since the last AGM in June 2014, the data for the training schemes up to May 2015 is as follows:

### **Local Cave and Mine Leader Award (LCMLA)**

Registrations 126

Level 1 assessments: 34, Level 1 Revalidations: 25

Level 2 assessments: 26, Level 2 Revalidations: 14

Core-Skills Reassessments: 8

Current Award Holders: Level 1: 463, Level 2: 252

### **Cave Instructor Certificate (CIC)**

Registrations 19



Assessments 3, Revalidations 22

Current Award Holders: 81.

### **Income/Expenditure for revalidation courses to April 2015.**

	<b>LCMLA</b>	<b>CIC</b>	<b>CSR</b>
2009	£1,887.00	£420.00	
2010	£459.97	£225.00	
2011	£179.60	£609.00	
2012	£2,151.00	£930.00	
2013	£1,606.97	£330.00	£150.00
2014	£840.00	£295.00	£150.00
2015	<b>-£29.07</b>	£320.00	£50.00

*Nigel Ball, May 2015*

### **Item 11: Publication & Information**

*Verbal report to be given at the meeting.*

*Les Williams, May 2015*

#### **11a) Webmaster**

The Google Analytics service was installed in June 2014. It gives an idea of how much the website is being used. It is also ideal for filling reports with reams of statistics! I'll keep it short. For the main BCA website, for the period Jul –Dec 2014 as a monthly average there were 6,286 page views, 1,856 sessions and 1,165 individual users. The average user viewed 3.39 pages and stayed for 2:44 minutes. The top 10 pages were: Welcome, Training Downloads, Training LCMLA Scheme, News & Events, About BCA, C&A News, Membership, Training, PL Insurance & Member Clubs.

In the first quarter (Jan-Mar 2015) as a monthly average there were 6849 page views, 2062 sessions and 1279 individual users. The average user viewed 3.32 pages and stayed for 2:39 minutes. The top 10 pages were: Welcome, Training LCMLA Scheme, Training Downloads, About BCA, Newssheet 19 (Jan 2015), Membership, News & Events, PL Insurance, Training, PL Insurance Documents.

So in summary the website is being used and that usage is pretty consistent over time.

There have been no radical updates to the software during the year although the diary is once again updatable by the Secretary and any other designated individuals. The ability was lost when the website was upgraded in Jan 2014.

I would like to thank the Secretary who wins the prize for the most regular updater in his sterling efforts to keep the content up to date. The next most regular updater is the

Training Administrator followed some way behind by the Rope Test Officer and the Insurance Manager. And that's it. I would like more Council Members to be updating the website. I'm always willing to offer help and advice. It really isn't difficult. Failing that I will post any content that is sent to me. The Newsletter fits into the latter category and I'm grateful to the Newsletter Editor for the regular injection of new and interesting content.

*David Cooke, May 2015*

## **11b) Web Services**

The BCA Web Server performed well during the year with no unscheduled outages. There are 72 domains registered through BCA Web Services with 58 websites hosted. The BCA funds 15 of those websites including the Regional Councils, BCRA, BCRA's Special Interest Groups, Cave Registry Data Archive, Caving Library and some of the cave rescue organisations.

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.

The general work of keeping the web server up and running, supporting the clubs and organisations that we host and doing the financial book keeping continues quietly in the background.

I would like to thank Matt Voysey and Les Williams for their help with the server and Katie Eavis for her help with the book keeping and banking.

*David Cooke, May 2015*

## **11c) News Editor**

Three editions of an online news-sheet have been published since the last Annual General Meeting. They appeared in November 2014, January 2015 and April 2015 and statistics suggest that the readership has increased with each edition.

The intention is to publish four editions each year and to time them to appear within a few weeks of each Council Meeting.

Whilst the nature of the regular content is a work in progress I do have a vision which is gradually taking shape and I hope it will be possible to bring the available facilities and the activities of BCA, the various Committees and the Constituent Bodies to the more general notice of the membership.

I particularly hope that when the Members' online contact management system is in place and operating smoothly it will be possible to use e-mail addresses to distribute BCA's News directly to each individual member.

*Robin Weare, May 2015*

## **11d) Speleology**

Clearly, I am having difficulty in keeping to schedule with Speleology and no issue has appeared since January 2014. Personally, I must apologise to the authors and contributors who are still sending me material. At the very least, I want to clear this backlog of material, even if it means placing it in an online-only version of the magazine.

In any debate on Speleology, I would highlight three salient points. 1) BCA advertised for a paid editor in January 2012 but failed to find a suitable candidate. 2) BCA Council's action 142, "to look at the future of Speleology", from the meeting of 11 October 2014, has not been followed up. 3) My comment to the 2014 AGM that "reliable volunteers, prepared to put in the considerable amount of time that is required, must step forward to implement any plan" has not resulted in anyone stepping forward. Speleology is actually a BCRA publication (although it is largely funded by BCA) and the situation has been discussed by BCRA Council, which has indicated that if I did not produce a proof version of issue 20 by the date of the BCA AGM (still a few days to go!), it would be time to "consider the future of the magazine". Even if BCRA decided to continue with Speleology, this might only be in some "ad hoc" fashion (perhaps as an online "pay as you go" publication) and it would still leave BCA in the position of needing to decide how best to service its membership. Does the membership need a publication like Speleology? What purpose is it supposed to serve? I (and others) have asked those questions, but they remain largely unanswered. It is becoming imperative that they are answered.

To answer those points, one must also consider BCA's other 'services' – a paper newsletter and a paper handbook are being replaced by online information. Should BCA start up its own online publication, to replace Speleology? If BCA were to abandon the concept of an in-house magazine and reduce the membership fees accordingly, would that be such a bad thing? Although my own interest lies in a high-quality paper production, I do think that an online publication – well managed (and not by me) – could be successful, with contributors posting their material directly online.

*David Gibson, May 2015*

## **Item 12: Legal & Insurance**

## **Item 12a: Insurance Manager**

Things seem to have changed in the insurance business since the difficult days of 2003 and by the end of November 2014 we had several firms chasing our business. I issued a challenge to those interested that they should review the information available on our web site and make us an offer which they felt matched or exceeded our existing cover. Following correspondence, we eventually ended up with offers of insurance from the existing insurers (Zurich, via brokers Anderson Ashcroft), from Perkins Slade (the BMC's insurer, who have been after BCA's business for decades) and newcomers Endsleigh Insurance.

Despite feeling significant loyalty to Anderson Ashcroft we finally decided to move the business to Perkins Slade. This was for a number of reasons, the main ones being:

- Slight price advantage: a few hundred pounds cheaper than Anderson Ashcroft, rising to potentially a couple of thousand if we increase the limit of indemnity to £10m;
- Per head pricing model which will better protect us against future changes in membership numbers;  
Single insurer for the full £5m cover;
- Easy and low cost increase in limit of indemnity should we decide that £5m is no longer sufficient;  
Marginally improved cover, including Directors and Officer's cover which provides better protection for libel/slander and financial mismanagement;
- Significantly lower excess than the previous policy (although note that essentially this was matched by Anderson Ashcroft in the negotiations);
- Better cover for pollution incidents (although, again, this was matched by Anderson Ashcroft);
- Better alignment with the BCAs' professionals scheme which is already provided by Perkins Slade;
- No-cost inclusion of landowner/occupier's indemnity for clubs/ACB's with significant land lease/ownership;
- Easy availability of a property policy for clubs with huts;
- Better backup/support to Members in respect of queries and information about the policy.

I would like to place on record my thanks to our previous broker, Anderson Ashcroft in Preston, and in particular, their principal John Anderson who made a very good fist of retaining the business in a field which is not their specialism, and who has accepted our decision to take the business elsewhere with good grace. It was a very close decision and I would thoroughly recommend anyone looking for commercial cover to contact Anderson Ashcroft for a quote, but in the end it was clear that the best interests of British cavers will be served by moving the business to Perkins Slade who specialise in the field of sports governing body cover. Thanks also to Endsleigh Insurance who also made a serious effort to win the business.

I would also like to thank Pete Mellors of DCA who assisted me by attending the meetings with the potential insurers and helped to ensure we got the best deal.

On a final point it's worth noting that it became pretty clear early in the discussions that the work done in 2003/2004 to establish the BCA as one-member one-vote organisation with a clear identification of each individual member helped immensely with our credibility when it came to negotiating with the insurers. Furthermore, work done on training by the Cave Diving Group and the Explosives User Group figured highly in the insurers' perceptions of caving as an acceptable risk. It's a nice change to find that cavers are now seen as good business in the insurance world and we used this to our advantage and gained a much better deal for cavers as a result.

*Nick Williams, May 2015*

### **Item 13: Membership Administrator**

#### **Membership to 28 May 2015**

DIMs (Caving):431 (Non-caving):43 (of which DIMs incl. BCRA: 200 (including 33 students), CIM Plus: 5

Honorary (BCRA): 4 (BCA): 1

CIMs (Caving): 3,819 (Student): 438 (Non-caving): 877

Clubs: 171

Associates: 5

Access: 8

**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.

903 new membership numbers were issued during 2014: 13,917 – 14,820.

	2004	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>DIMs</b>	93	185	437	432	397	487*	505*	507*	513*	535*
<b>CIMs</b>	3,523	3,909	4,965	5,216	5,115	5,296	5,435	5,397	5,585	5,564
<b>Clubs</b>	89	140	153	152	160	166	189	159	186	190

*\*Including 21 CIM Plus members in 2010, 12 in 2011, 9 in 2012, 7 in 2013 and 3 in 2014.*

*Glenn Jones, May 2015*

### **Item 14: Cave Registry**

My thanks to Andrew Atkinson for the work he puts in to the Data Archive and the following report.

The BCA Cave Registry Data Archive goes from strength to strength with the survey areas recently added Cotswolds and Forest of Dean and significant updates to China. Yorkshire appears to be used the most and by the most people. A new Biology data repository now exists, with the Haxelton spread sheet as its main data at the moment; there are signs of others wanting to use it. It was always envisage that other data would also be stored on the archive, it is good to see it happening as more people realise it is a useful collaboration tool that happens to archive, I am sure we will see more of this type. The total size of the archive now stands at 18GB.

There continue to be rumours of more regional online registries but none have so far appeared. I remain ready to provide help and advice. The Mendip Cave Registry and Archive has generously offered a copy of their software to any regional registry that would like to use it.

Work on the National Cave Index is slowly progressing. The idea is to provide a website with a searchable index of UK sites which will result in links back to the regional registry and other cave related websites. This will provide a way of accessing the existing distributed datasets rather than attempting to build a monolithic central registry.

*David Cooke, May 2015*

### **Item 15: IT Working Party**

By far and away the biggest project this year has been the development of the online members' contact management system. It needs a name that isn't a sentence so unless there are strong objections, I propose to call it "BCA Online".

BCA Online will allow members to login under their own membership number and set their own email contact preferences. They can change their email address and password as necessary. They can review their membership details (membership status, insurance status, address, etc) as held by BCA. If those need to be updated they can email the Membership Administrator. Behind the scenes there are routines to sanity check and upload the latest spreadsheets provided by the Membership System. Members will be notified of changes to their profile by email.

This provides BCA with a verified and maintained list of email addresses and crucially, to remain legal, the consents to use them.

The system is installed with the current membership data (Individual CIM & DIM, no Group members just yet) at <http://members.british-caving.org.uk> (note no www). It has been tested by me and some members of Council (thank you) and is ready to go live. I can see no reason not to announce it to our members in the next Newsletter; a Newsletter that can now be emailed directly to those members who wish to receive it. Of the 5268 records, 3282 have email addresses (62%) which I think is a very good start.

BCA Online incorporates the page to update the BCA Diary. By using the authentication system of BCA Online I can choose who has permission to update the Diary. This is a good example of how other services can be built into and upon BCA Online. There are plenty of possible enhancements. One is to provide online voting, that could save BCA £1,000s. Another possibility is to help with the mailing lists that the Training Administrator looks after. BCA Online is also a cornerstone of the proposed Membership Restructuring and no doubt will need enhancing to support that change.

Unfortunately there has been no progress on the Online Training Database for which I apologise. The next step is with me and my priority has been BCA Online although in some mitigation, BCA Online could be seen as a precursor to an online Training Database. I need to recruit a volunteer programmer (PHP, cakePHP & MySQL experience please).

Having thought long and hard about the best way to manage the IT Working Party's work I've decided there should be a steering-group comprising the Executive, the Committee & Working Party Chairman and the odd co-opted member. I hope to hold virtual meetings using video conferencing to avoid the expense and time of travelling. The steering-group's job is to take a high-level view of the projects considering usefulness, progress, priority and resources (human and financial). The actual project work will be done by small teams setup for each project who will report to the

appropriate committee or working party. A page summarising the current position can be seen at: [http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=it\\_working\\_group:start](http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=it_working_group:start).

*David Cooke, May 2015*

## **Item 16: Youth & Development**

2014-15 has been a year when not huge amount has happened, but the key things that have been achieved in youth and development this year have been.

- Republication of Try Caving / So You Want to Go Caving Leaflets. With the help of Gonzo we've taken the key things from both, amalgamated them, and updated them. 5,000 were produced. If anybody would like any please don't hesitate to ask as there is still a good store left.
- A talk was given at Hidden Earth about student caving and rescue numbers about disparaging the myth that student cavers are responsible for all rescues called "Can Students Cave?"
- There has been one adoption from the Adopt a Caving Club scheme between the Shepton Mallet and Plymouth University Caving Clubs. Any other clubs interested in partnerships or adoption should get in contact and hopefully we'll have some more successes in the coming year.

If anyone is interested in being Youth and Development officer I'm willing to stand down or if anyone has any ideas, inspiration or initiatives please don't get hesitate to get in touch. I'm currently no longer the chair of CHECC, but they have a great committee with Thom Starnes as the new chair and I know that they're keen for anyone who wants to help out in student caving to get in touch.

*Hellie Brooke, May 2015*

## **Item 17: 2016**

*Verbal report to be given at the meeting.*

*Les Williams, May 2015*

## **Item 18: International Report**

*Verbal report to be given at the meeting.*

*Andy Eavis, May 2015*

## **Item 18a: 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 Baile Herculane in Romania during the 9th EuroSpeleo Forum, organized by the Federatia Romana de



Speologie (FRS) in August 2014. The event and delegate attendance at the GAM was good.

A number of officers presented for re-election and the incumbent general secretary Olivier Vidal resigned from his post. He was not supported by his national organisation the FFS (the French Federation). Michael Laumans (Germany) remains Vice President Henk Goutier (Netherlands) Treasurer, Ernst Geyer (Austria) Vice Treasurer. Alexey Zhalov who was previously Vice Secretary resigned earlier in the year. Ged Campion is currently president until re-election of the post in 2017.

Therefore as things stand there is a vacancy for general & vice secretary. It has meant that the remaining four Bureau members have been extremely busy with almost daily exchange of e-mails and many telephone consultations. It is the sincere hope of the bureau that the existing vacancies can be filled during the 2015 General Assembly.

In terms of membership fees approval has been given to 31 countries except Macedonia who didn't pay their fees. The next Bureau meeting and General Assembly Meeting will take place on Saturday 30th May 2015 in Pertosa – Auletta in Italy at the Euro Speleo Forum hosted by the 22nd National Italian Congress. (I will try and provide an update for the BCA AGM).

During the last General Assembly some FSE Statutes were changed. These changes, together with other statutory changes over the recent years, were officially registered at the seat of the FSE in Luxembourg in 2014. Although facing severe constraints with regard to its staffing, the Bureau was able to launch a comprehensive reform of the EuroSpeleo Projects (ESP) in December 2014, following time-consuming deliberations. The new ESP guidelines and the new application form are available since December 14th on the FSE website and all national delegates were informed about the changes. (Table below gives more detail of participation). In the same way the Bureau was also able to conclude on a less major update of the EuroSpeleo Forum guidelines which is now also available on the FSE website. The new guidelines clarify several issues which led to confusion in the past and also results in a reduction of the fee that a EuroSpeleo Forum needs to contribute for the EuroSpeleo Projects fund of the FSE, which is now set to 1 EUR per paying participant of a EuroSpeleo Forum.

At the UIS Bureau meeting in November 2014 in Sydney, Australia the application of the FSE to become the first associated regional speleological organization to the International Union of Speleology (UIS) was approved. This affiliation does not result in a fee to be paid by FSE to UIS but in nomination of a delegate with no voting rights to ensure the contacts and the exchange of information between FSE and the Bureau of the UIS are established. FSE president was nominated European delegate to the UIS. The contact from the UIS to the FSE will be the UIS General Secretary Fadi Nader.

The FSE Facebook page, updated regularly by FSE treasurer Henk Goutier, can be visited by everybody even without a registration on Facebook. The page is continuously visited by thousands of cavers and non-cavers thus representing an excellent outreach for European speleology. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/eurospeleo>.

With the help of our partners of the WikiCaves organization we are able to update the FSE website on a regular basis, The FSE has offered help to WikiCaves to promote their activities to the European caving community. Members of the Bureau participated at the following national caving events: Hidden Earth 2015 in Leek (UK), 52nd congress of the Fédération Française de Spéléologie 2015 (Saint-Vallier de Thiey), the annual conference of the Austrian Speleological Association (Gams bei Hieflau, October 2014), the FSE will be represented at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of UIS in June in Postojna by the president Ged Campion.

The Euro Speleo funding for expeditions since the last GAM have enabled cavers to participate in a number of expeditions around the world including Bulgaria, Greece, Laos, Thailand, Philippines and Mozambique. The table shows there has only been 5 UK cavers involved in the 11 granted projects. It would be good to see more UK organised expeditions apply for ESP grants but the general feeling is that many UK expedition leaders tend to apply for Ghar Parau/China Projects funding first and do not always meet the criteria of enough non UK nationals taking part in the expedition/project.

No	Country	Participants
1.	Switzerland	20
2.	Bulgaria	20
3.	Greece	19
4.	Germany	18
5.	Belgium	10*
6.	France	9*
7.	Austria	7
8.	Slovenia	7
9.	Serbia	7
10.	Luxemburg	6
11.	Netherlands	6*
12.	Romania	6
13.	United Kingdom	5
14.	Turkey	5
15.	Spain	4
16.	Poland	3
17.	Slovakia	2
18.	Portugal	1
19.	Ireland	1
20.	Hungary	1
	<b>IN TOTAL</b>	<b>157</b>

*\*Participation might increase as expedition planning reaches completion.*

### **Timetable of EuroSpeleo events over next 3 years that involve the FSE:**

- European Congress 2016 will be in the Yorkshire Dales, UK (hosting the ES Forum).
- ES Forum 2017 Dryanovo, Central North Bulgaria, northern slopes of the Balkan Mountain.

- *(The next UIS Congress will be in Sydney in 2017)*
- ES Forum 2018 will be in Sazkammergut, Upper-Austria.

*Ged Campion, May 2015*

### **Item 19: Media-Liaison Report**

*Verbal report to be given at the meeting.*

*Chris Jewell, May 2015*

### **Item 20: British Caving Library**

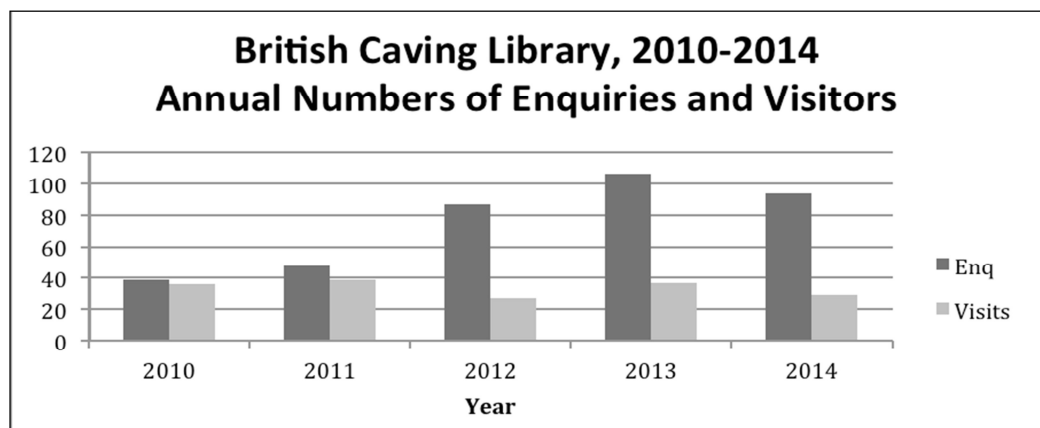
The Library was set up in 2009 as the British Caving Library, supported by both BCA and BCRA financially, and managed by BCRA. It evolved from the original CRG Library, hosted in a member's house, via the former BCRA Library (hosted after 1980 by the Local Studies Library at Matlock, Derbyshire), to its present status as a complete Library and information centre in its own rented premises at Glutton Bridge, Buxton, Derbyshire.

At the time of the death of BCRA's Librarian in 2007, the Library consisted of about 70m of shelf length of UK and foreign periodicals and books (no surveys) and with only a printed catalogue dated 2004. The Local Studies Library was open only on weekdays and occasional Saturday mornings for visitors and the BCRA collection was squashed into an unpleasantly hot and dusty underground book stack where there was no room to work, so visiting enquirers had to bring publications out to the main public library room. The Local Studies Library staff dealt with enquiries on behalf of BCRA and records kept at Matlock indicate that there was very little use.

BCRA set up in the Glutton Bridge premises in July 2008 and we began work on an uncatalogued mass of BSA/CRG/BCRA material held since 2005 in a storage facility with no working space; at the same time we continued to maintain and improve the collection at Matlock. In 2009 BCA agreed to a 5-year Business Plan committing it to assist in funding the Library as the British Caving Library. In May 2010 BCRA was told that the Local Studies Library was moving to new premises and there would be no room for the BCRA Library, so we took the opportunity to move it to Glutton Bridge and combine the two collections. We achieved the move in a couple of months and since then we have gone from strength to strength with Library use increasing dramatically.

We have evolved to have over 200 m of shelf length in total (and are looking to add more), plus filing cabinets and metal cupboards for secure storage and 4 large map chests for surveys. We have a team of volunteers working with a paid Librarian (who works one day a week) so we now have a Library website, an on-line catalogue, Archive and Audio-Archive websites and a Facebook page with over 500 followers both UK and foreign. We can be open at any time, by arrangement with the Librarian, and visitors are welcomed. We deal with emailed and phone enquiries, providing scans or photocopies as required for both UK and foreign enquirers, so we now have an international reputation. The Library has comfortable working conditions with its own computers, scanners, printers, etc. for visitors to use, or they may come with their own laptops and make use of the Library Wifi.

Work by the Librarian and volunteers continues on re-cataloguing the whole collection of books and



periodicals, as well as reports, surveys, photographic items and an increasing amount of archive material. We continue to receive donations of material, including up to date periodicals, from a number of British Clubs and receive around 50 foreign periodicals in exchange for BCRA's Caves & Karst Science. We have also received generous donations of publications and equipment (printers, scanners, computers, etc.), from a number of interested individuals and organisations. We have links with many British Caving Clubs which have their own Libraries so there are regular exchanges of duplicate material to build up resources around the country.

The Library hosts committee and Council meetings for BCRA and BCA and can be made available for other meetings of up to about 12-15 people. Because of its situation in a limestone area with caves nearby we hope that it may be possible in the future to host field trips or educational visits.

Given our record of achievement since 2009, I would ask that BCA confirms its intention to continue to support the Library financially for the foreseeable future.

## **Item 21: Constituent Bodies, Regional Councils etc**

### **a) CHECC**

Last November I succeeded Helen Brooke as the Chairperson of the Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs (CHECC) during the AGM in Gilwern. Hellie will be a tough act to follow, but we have a strong and dedicated committee as well as a growing membership ranging from first year students to zealous alumni. With the annual flux of students exact membership levels are impractical to pin down, but there are currently 16 university speleological clubs which actively participate in CHECC. In excess of 250 students attended the annual CHECC Forum in November, with 175 of these participating in the AGM and a high proportion also attended a special CRoW debate lecture. CHECC actively contributed to the CRoW debate and cast votes which were channelled through the BCA Youth and Development Officer. The debate was just one example of a topical issue sparking thoughtful discussion between student cavers nationwide. Many individuals choose to participate in discussions on social media; the CHECC Facebook page currently has 595 members, many of whom use the group to share news items of special interest to the student caving community, and to organise and publicise university club trips. CHECC also supported the regional Northern CHECC and Southern CHECC events last spring. The success of these events is testament to the dedication of the organisers and volunteers who put in so much effort to provide entertainment, catering and quality learning opportunities including surveying, photography and ropework, and to whom we are all indebted. In the following year I look forward to working with BCA, particularly the Training Officer and Youth and Development Officer, to promote opportunities for students and to forge and maintain lasting relationships between the CHECC demographic and the rest of the British caving community.

*Thomas Starnes, May 2015*

## **Appendices**

- 1) 2014 Accounts
- 2) Draft Caving Code
- 3) Draft Minimal Impact Code

**BRITISH  
CAVING  
ASSOCIATION**

---

Financial Statements for the Year  
Ended 31 December 2014

---

**BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION  
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014**

	2014	2013
	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions	102,010	102,098
Association	2,915	2,863
Training Services	16,407	22,544
Publications & Information	64	300
Meetings & Conference	2,065	1,470
Web Services	1,159	1,550
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b><u>124,620</u></b>	<b><u>130,825</u></b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Subscription	57,287	61,120
Association	8,555	4,818
Conservation & Access	323	500
Training Services	20,646	22,978
Caver Training	1,055	600
Publications & Information	4,833	6,544
Equipment & Techniques	1,890	1,855
Youth Development	104	120
Meetings & Conferences	4,244	2,049
Web Services	1,131	1,580
Regional Caving Councils	3,323	5,717
British Caving Library	10,000	10,000
Expedition Programme	5,000	5,000
International	430	347
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b><u>118,821</u></b>	<b><u>123,228</u></b>
<b><u>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</u></b>	<b><u>5,799</u></b>	<b><u>7,597</u></b>
<b>TAX</b>	<b>(298)</b>	<b>483</b>
<b><u>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR AFTER TAX</u></b>	<b><u>6,097</u></b>	<b><u>7,114</u></b>

BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2014

	2014	2013
	£	£
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors and Prepayments	1,581	1,282
Balances at Bank and cash in hand	211,872	211,224
	<u>213,453</u>	<u>212,506</u>
<b>LESS: CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Creditors and Accruals payable within one year	33,973	39,123
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u><u>179,480</u></u>	<u><u>173,383</u></u>
<b>REPRESENTED BY RESERVES :</b>		
General Reserve		
Balance brought forward	108,383	106,269
Surplus for year	<u>6,097</u>	<u>7,114</u>
	114,480	113,383
less transfer to Sinking Fund	<u>0</u>	<u>5,000</u>
	114,480	108,383
Sinking Fund - insurance policy excess	65,000	65,000
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<u><u>179,480</u></u>	<u><u>173,383</u></u>

Approved on behalf of the Executive Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
A Eavis, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

**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.

**2 Additional Note**

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. 2014 renewal negotiations resulted in a transfer of provider and the reduction of the excess payable. However, a prudent view has been taken and the sinking fund maintained at the previous year's level. This position should be further reviewed at the end of 2015 to determine if any adjustment is appropriate.



BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 DECEMBER 2014

	2014	2013
	£	£
<b>Subscriptions</b>		
<i>Income</i>		
Subscriptions	102,010	102,098
<i>Total</i>	<u>102,010</u>	<u>102,098</u>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Premium	39,444	39,444
Employment Expenses	8,277	8,981
General Expenses	4,457	7,096
Refunds, Adj, Unpaid	46	557
BCRA Subscriptions	5,063	5,042
<i>Total</i>	<u>57,287</u>	<u>61,120</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>44,723</u>	<u>40,978</u>
<b>Association</b>		
<i>Income</i>		
Interest received	2,664	2,242
Broker Commission	87	608
Donations, Sundry	164	13
<i>Total</i>	<u>2,915</u>	<u>2,863</u>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Secretarial	297	751
Travel	2,053	2,260
Subscriptions	669	1,355
Insurance	477	452
Ballot	5,059	0
<i>Total</i>	<u>8,555</u>	<u>4,818</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(5,640)</u>	<u>(1,955)</u>
<b>Conservation &amp; Access</b>		
<i>Income</i>		
<i>Total</i>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Secretarial	120	0
Travel	203	0
Conservation Support	0	500
<i>Total</i>	<u>323</u>	<u>500</u>
<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>(323)</u>	<u>(500)</u>

**Training Services****Income**

LCMLA / CIC Schemes	16,302	22,434
Publications	105	110
<i>Total</i>	<u>16,407</u>	<u>22,544</u>

**Expenditure**

Employment Expenses	8,283	8,196
General Expenses	2,845	4,090
Travel	1,672	1,942
LCMLA/CIC Training	7,692	8,458
Refunds, Adj, Unpaid	4	292
Publications	150	0
<i>Total</i>	<u>20,646</u>	<u>22,978</u>

*Surplus / (Deficit)* (4,239) (434)

**Caver Training**

<b>Income</b>	<i>Total</i> <u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
---------------	-----------------------	----------

**Expenditure**

Recreational Caver Training	920	215
Voluntary Sector Support	135	385
<i>Total</i>	<u>1,055</u>	<u>600</u>

*Surplus / (Deficit)* (1,055) (600)

**Publications & Information****Income**

Publication Sales	44	180
Advertising	20	120
<i>Total</i>	<u>64</u>	<u>300</u>

**Expenditure**

Free Leaflets	458	0
Handbook	0	1,242
Newsletter	0	664
Journal	4,375	4,638
<i>Total</i>	<u>4,833</u>	<u>6,544</u>

*Surplus / (Deficit)* (4,769) (6,244)

<b>Equipment &amp; Techniques</b>		
<b>Income</b>	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Secretarial	0	50
Travel	258	325
Anchor programme	1,572	874
Rope-Test programme	60	606
	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>1,890</u>	<u>1,855</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	
	<u>(1,890)</u>	<u>(1,855)</u>
<b>Youth Development</b>		
<b>Income</b>	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Youth Development	104	120
	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>104</u>	<u>120</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	
	<u>(104)</u>	<u>(120)</u>
<b>Meetings &amp; Conferences</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
AGM Weekend	2,065	1,470
	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>2,065</u>	<u>1,470</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
AGM Weekend	3,658	1,467
Artificial Cave	394	418
Cliff Hanger	192	164
	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>4,244</u>	<u>2,049</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	
	<u>(2,179)</u>	<u>(579)</u>
<b>Web Services</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
Web Services	1,159	1,550
	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>1,159</u>	<u>1,550</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Web Services	1,131	1,580
	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>1,131</u>	<u>1,580</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	
	<u>28</u>	<u>(30)</u>

<b>Regional Caving Council Expenditure</b>		
<b>Income</b>	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
CCC claims	348	583
CNCC claims	390	553
CSCC claims	1,443	2,393
DCA claims	858	1,054
DCUC claims	284	1,134
	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>3,323</u>	<u>5,717</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	
	<u>(3,323)</u>	<u>(5,717)</u>
<b>British Caving Library</b>		
<b>Income</b>	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
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>
<b>Expedition Programme</b>		
<b>Income</b>	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
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>
<b>International</b>		
<b>Income</b>	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Grants to Reps.	430	347
	<i>Total</i>	
	<u>430</u>	<u>347</u>
	<i>Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	
	<u>(430)</u>	<u>(347)</u>
<i>Total Income</i>	<u>124,620</u>	<u>130,825</u>
<i>Total Expenditure</i>	<u>118,821</u>	<u>123,228</u>
<i>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</i>	<u>5,799</u>	<u>7,597</u>
Tax <i>Current Year</i>	<u>(298)</u>	<u>483</u>
	<u>(298)</u>	<u>483</u>
<i>Total Surplus / (Deficit) less Tax</i>	<u>6,097</u>	<u>7,114</u>

## **Caving Code 3rd Draft**

- 1 Cave with care and prior thought.
- 2 Disturb nothing without consulting other cavers.
- 3 Avoid touching formations
- 4 Keep to marked routes and never cross conservation tapes.
- 5 Take nothing but photographs.
- 6 Do not pollute the cave, leave nothing behind.

# **Minimal Impact Caving Guidelines**

6th Draft March 2015.

## **Introduction**

Caving is a fascinating recreational activity which attracts the interest of a diverse range of people and groups, who all benefit immensely from the experience. However, some caves and some areas within them can be sensitive to human interference. By following the few simple guidelines set out in this booklet the cave environment can be conserved for future generations to enjoy

This code is divided into two sections, one relating to general cave visits and the other relating to the exploration of a newly discovered cave or section of cave.

## **General Cave Visits**

1. Every caving trip has an impact. It is important to select a site to visit that is appropriate to the group and type of trip being undertaken. Certain caves are less susceptible to damage and more suitable for novices. Advice is available from the Regional Caving Council or local clubs.
2. Where a Cave Conservation Plan is in existence abide by the recommendations contained therein for the conservation of the cave.
3. The party size should be appropriate to the vulnerability of the cave. The more vulnerable the cave environment, the smaller the party size needs to be. Cave Conservation Plans may stipulate a minimum and/or maximum party size. Access Controls Bodies may also limit party size at some caves.
4. Cave as a team. Help each other through the cave and ensure that party members stay together. Stragglers may take the wrong route and enter vulnerable areas.

5. Cave at a sensible pace for the party. You will see and enjoy more, and there will be less chance of damage to the cave and to yourself. This especially applies when one is tired and exiting a cave.

6. Take care yourself and constantly watch when your party members are moving towards sensitive areas such as relict sediment deposits and speleothems e.g. stalagmites, stalactites and flowstone. Warn party members before they are likely to do any damage.

7. If there are novices on a trip, make sure that they are always close to an experienced caver, so that the experienced caver can help them when required e.g. in difficult sections

8. Keep tackle bags and packs as small as possible and transport them carefully.

9. Stay on marked or obvious paths. If no paths are marked or none is obvious take particular care. If in doubt, do not proceed further.

10. Learn to recognise sensitive cave deposits or features that may be damaged by walking or crawling on them such as cracked mud floors or flowstone floors.

11. If it appears necessary to walk or crawl on a sensitive floor do not proceed. If others appear to have walked over it, confirm that this is the route before proceeding and then only proceed with the utmost care having removed boots and other clothing as necessary. Remember that someone may have previously mistaken this for the route and further damage should be avoided.

12. Throughout a cave the established marked routes must be used. Single tracks should be followed and care taken to avoid the spreading of mud. Mud-throwing or modelling is unacceptable.

13. Restore any missing or damaged marker tapes or route markers. If not possible, report the problem to the appropriate Regional Caving Council as soon as possible. Also report any instances where tapes or markers appear to be ineffective.

14. Treat all cave wildlife with respect, watch out for them, and avoid disturbing them. Also avoid directly illuminating cave wildlife if possible. Bats are protected by law.

15. Ensure that all foreign matter is removed from caves. This includes human waste. If long trips are to be made into a cave, ensure that containers for the removal of liquid and solid waste are included on the trip inventory. The use of carbide is strongly discouraged as it causes soot deposition on the cave roof and speleothems.

16. If any damage or degradation is noticed report this to the appropriate Regional Caving Council as soon as possible.

17. CAVE WITH CARE.

## **New Cave or Extension Explorations**

1. Modification of cave entrances and passages, including changing water levels in sumps or ducks and diversion of streams, should only be undertaken after all possible effects have been assessed and the appropriate permission obtained from the landowner. Any modifications must be the minimum required. The long term impact of any work and materials used must be considered. If the site is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest or a Scheduled Monument, a 'Consent' will also be required from the Statutory Conservation Body.

2. Use the cave survey to ensure that all alternative routes are examined prior to crossing sensitive or fragile areas. It may not be necessary to enter some areas as they can be by-passed.



3. Do not enter new cave or passage if you do not have the equipment required to undertake the minimum recommended activities of surveying, taping and photography.

4. Make a full photographic record before any other work is undertaken or visits made which are likely to result in any damage or deterioration. Copies of the photographs should be placed in a suitable library for safe keeping and submitted to the regional cave registry or caving council for record purposes.

5. Discuss taping and route marking within the party and ensure that all ideas are evaluated before marking is undertaken and before the sensitive area is crossed.

6. If a sensitive area must be crossed, reduce future damage by defining a distinct minimum practicable width of path using conservation tape.

7. Scientific investigation should begin as quickly as possible. Advice may be sought from the British Cave Research Association. The existing microbiology of the new cave, both fungi, bacteria, and a world of protozoa, will almost certainly be irreversibly contaminated on the first trip. If cave microbiologists are available then include them on initial explorations so that they may collect uncontaminated samples.

8. Bones or other archaeological material should not be moved at all unless under imminent threat. Collection should only be undertaken with permission from the relevant Statutory Conservation Body if the cave is a Designated Site. Photograph any find in situ if possible and contact the Regional Caving Council for advice. It is unlikely to hold up explorations beyond a few days whilst an archaeological record is compiled.

9. Collection of specimens, which must be approved by the appropriate statutory authority, should be kept to the minimum required for study purposes only.

10. Camping in a cave should only be considered when intending to undertake a specific speleological or conservation objective. All human introduced wastes, including carbide, foodstuffs and excreta, must be removed from the cave and disposed of properly.

11. Caves must not be disfigured by unnecessary marking, including 'direction arrows'. Survey markers should be small and inconspicuous.

12. Make a plan right from the beginning to remove all redundant equipment upon completion of an exploratory dig. If the dig fails "to go" provision should be made to clear up before all interest is lost. Leave the dig in a safe and tidy condition. Seek help from other cavers if necessary.

13. Instigate the production of a Cave Conservation Plan.

14. CAVE WITH CARE.