



Annual General Meeting 2010 - Notification

The Annual General Meeting of the British Caving Association will take place at **10:30am** on **Saturday, 20th March 2010** at the Baptist Church Hall in Alvechurch.

Items for the Agenda, plus **nominations** for posts on BCA Council must reach the BCA Secretary no later than midnight on **Saturday, 16th January 2010**.

At the AGM the following Officials and officers will be elected:

- Secretary to serve for 3 years
- Conservation & Access Officer to serve for 3 years
- Legal & Insurance Officer to serve for 3 years
- Equipment & Techniques Officer to serve the remaining year of 3-year term
- 2 club reps to serve for 2 years
- 2 Individual Member reps to serve for 2 years
- 2 Individual Member reps to serve the remaining year of a 2-year term

Nominations should be sent to: *British Caving Association Hon. Secretary, Damian Weare, 2, The Barn, Sal Royd Road, Low Moor, Bradford BD12 0JN.*

Nominations for these posts must include:

- the post the candidate wishes to stand for
- the name, address, phone number and membership number of the candidate
- the signature of the candidate
- the name, membership number and signature of the proposer
- a brief election statement of a maximum of 300 words in length.

Member Clubs should ensure that their members are aware of these arrangements.

Following the above deadline, the Agenda and Election Statements will be sent to all Group and Direct Individual Members by 6th February 2010.

BCA Group Members should note that for the purposes of voting at the AGM the BCA constitution requires that Groups may send one voting representative. This representative must bring with them a **letter signed by a club officer** giving them the authority to represent that group.

Damian Weare
BCA Secretary

Summary of BCA Council Meetings

BCA Council had two productive meetings in June and October and a number of long-term projects have made considerable progress. Here is a summary of the most important developments. As always, a full version of the Minutes together with Officers' Reports can be downloaded from the BCA website.

Membership: Membership figures remain broadly inline with previous years and are generally healthy with the one area of slight concern being the generally low numbers of Direct Individual Members (DIMs). BCA welcome 3 clubs - The Buckinghamshire Scout Caving Team, Darfar Potholing Club and JSMTW (R) Caving Club - as members, bringing the number of Member Clubs to 149.

Constitutional Changes: Council intend to take a number of proposed constitutional amendments to the 2010 AGM, to be held on 20th March. As it is necessary to ratify these by postal ballot of all members, representing a considerable cost, this is something we have been reluctant to do for a while. The result is a number of issues that need resolving. The proposals are currently being finalised and will be published along with the Agenda in January.

Change to 2010 Membership Options: Individual cavers currently have the choice of joining BCA as either a Direct Individual Member (DIM) or through their Caving Club as a Club Individual Member (CIM). Joining as a CIM is the cheaper option and gives most of the benefits of DIM membership at the minimum possible cost because the Club agrees to handle the associated paperwork and also pass on important information on BCA's behalf. Consequently CIMs do not receive any BCA publications themselves.

For the vast majority of cavers CIM membership is the preferred option with over 5200 CIMs but only 432 DIMs last year. However, Council believes there are a number of CIMs who would like to contribute towards and receive their own copies of BCA Publications but who, for reasons of convenience, have chosen so far to remain as CIMs. As such we are providing a further option for club cavers in 2010 – a CIM+ category with all the benefits of DIM membership but arranged through the Club.

Obviously this will bring a small additional workload for Club Officers and, as such, will be a purely opt-in facility for those Clubs who choose to make the service available to their members. In practice, though, for the majority of Clubs the extra effort should be minimal – a small change to the club membership form, a small amount of extra accounting and forwarding to members a summary of CIM+ membership, provided by BCA's Membership Administrator, Glenn Jones.

For 2010 renewals, in addition to a few other minor amendments, there will be an additional field on the club membership spreadsheet that is returned annually to Glenn. Clubs who choose not to offer CIM+ membership can simply leave this field blank and continue as they always have done.

Any queries about this or any other membership matters should be directed to Glenn Jones via membership@british-caving.org.uk.

Continued Over...

Finances: The 2008 Accounts have now been audited and are available from the BCA website. The surplus from 2008 is to be used to boost the insurance reserve. This is necessary because the Public-Liability Insurance Scheme has an excess of £5,000 for each claim made against it rising to £10,000 for any claim involving explosives. Therefore, we aim to ensure we have sufficient funds to cover two claims in one year as well as the cost of a year's premium. We also aim to have a General Reserve equal to one year's turn-over and in another few years, should have achieved both of these goals.

The British Caving Library: Dave Checkley, BCRA President and Chairman of the Library-Steering Group attended BCA Council in June and gave an excellent presentation on progress with the British Caving Library. Currently this is being funded principally from a large bequest received several years ago, but BCRA face a real problem in that this is a finite source. BCRA's funds will be completely exhausted within the next 6 years at the current rate of spending and they urgently need a more sustainable way of funding this excellent initiative. In the short term Council agreed to contribute £5,000 and requested that a concrete proposal on the way forward be presented at the next Council meeting in October. When this had been presented to Council, Council agreed to funding of £10,000 next calendar year.

Equipment & Techniques: Bob Mehew has stood down as Equipment & Techniques Officer and Glenn Jones has been appointed to replace Bob in a caretaker capacity. Council is very grateful to Bob for his work and is pleased he is able to stay on a Rope-Test Officer.

Peco-Anchors: Following a successful revalidation workshop on 6th June Cambrian, Devon & Cornwall, Derbyshire and the North now have trained Peco-anchor installers and the scheme can move forward once more.

A document is in preparation outlining the Scheme but there have been some concerns raised by CSCC and these were discussed at the E&T meeting in October. All new Peco-Anchors will have BCA laser-etched onto them making them even more identifiable as BCA-approved anchors.

Training News: Training Committee has been working on a safety card for cavers, particularly those who are new to the sport. The card is shown on Page 12 and Council have agreed to fund an initial 500 cards for distribution to caving shops. Sponsorship is being sought for further cards in the future. A new booklet on

Weather and Flooding is in its final stages of preparation. Given the number of near-misses underground in the last few years, it is hoped that this will be on every caver's reading list. Revisions are also underway to the Local Cave and Mine Leader Award syllabus with the new version being published on DVD rather than paper allowing for the addition of all sorts of other relevant documentation.

Publications: Members have recently received the Annual Handbook, a newsletter and *Speleology*. Another edition of *Speleology* is imminent and the updated Radon booklet is also nearly complete. In order to improve the quality of *Speleology* Council has agreed in 2010 to fund a UK-based Commissioning Editor, as well as paying a small fee to the authors of published articles.

2016 European Caving Congress: BCA is seriously considering bidding to host the 2016 European Caving Congress. Although this seems a long way off, it will require considerable work from a large number of people, particularly the Hidden Earth team, and work will start soon on this.

Damian Weare
BCA Secretary

BCA and BCRA 2010 Renewal Process

For the third year in succession, BCA will not be increasing membership fees.

CIM caving:	£16.00
Student caving:	£8.00
CIM non caving:	£5.00
DIM (or CIM Plus) caving:	£31.00
DIM (or CIM Plus) non caving:	£20.00
DIM (or CIM Plus) caving + BCRA digital C&KS:	£43.00
DIM (or CIM Plus) non caving + BCRA digital C&KS:	£32.00
DIM (or CIM Plus) caving + BCRA paper C&KS:	£51.00
DIM (or CIM Plus) non caving + BCRA paper C&KS:	£40.00

Please note that you do not have to be a member of BCA or BCRA to receive Speleology or Caves and Karst Science. It is possible to subscribe to both Speleology and Caves and Karst Science by following this link: <http://caves.org.uk/payments/bca/forms> and using form M4.

Direct Individual Membership (DIM):

DIMs (including joint membership DIMs) will receive a letter inviting them to renew their membership in mid December. Providing their details as described on the letter (address etc,) have not changed, all they will need to do is pay. The letter will explain the various methods of payment. Please contact me if you do not receive your renewal letter by late December at: membership@british-caving.org.uk

Please note that we no longer accept Standing Order/Direct Debit or credit cards as methods of payment.

BCRA Honorary Members:

Honorary Members of BCRA will be receiving a letter requesting confirmation that they wish to continue to receive publications. The letters should be signed and returned as appropriate.

Clubs (and Club Individual Members – CIMs), Associate Members and Access Groups:

Clubs, Associates Members and Access Groups should have already received their membership renewal packs by email (renewal form M2 a copy of their 2009 membership spreadsheet and a blank copy of the 2010 CIM Proforma). If any club or group has not received their renewal pack, please email me at membership@british-caving.org.uk

Change to 2010 Club Membership Options:

Individual cavers currently have the choice of joining BCA as either a Direct Individual Member (DIM) or through their Caving Club as a Club Individual Member (CIM). Joining as a CIM is the cheaper option and gives most of the benefits of DIM membership at the minimum possible cost because the Club agrees to handle the associated paperwork and also pass on important information on BCA's behalf. Consequently CIMs do not receive any BCA publications themselves.

For the vast majority of cavers CIM membership is the preferred option with over 5200 CIMs but only 432 DIMs last year. However, Council believes there are a number of CIMs who would like to contribute towards and receive their own copies of BCA Publications but who, for reasons of convenience, have chosen so far to remain as CIMs. As such we are providing a further option for club cavers in 2010 – a CIM+ category with all the benefits of DIM membership but arranged through the Club.

Obviously this will bring a small additional workload for Club Officers and, as such, will be a purely opt-in facility for those Clubs who choose to make the service available to their members. In practice, though, for the majority of Clubs the extra effort should be minimal – a small change to the club membership form and a small amount of extra accounting. CIM+ members will still receive their membership cards via their club whilst BCA publications will be posted direct to the CIM+ member.

Continued Over...

The changes to the club membership form comprise an additional field on the club membership spreadsheet indicating that CIM+ is required, and if taking the additional BCRA membership, a gift aid field. Clubs who choose not to offer CIM+ membership can simply leave these fields blank and continue as they always have done.

Finally, the four fields in the 2009 version: "Adult male", "Adult female", "Under-18 male", "Under-18 female" have been reduced to two fields: "Gender M/F" and "Under 18 Y/N". These fields are required by some Regional Caving Councils as they have to supply this information to various bodies as part of their regional funding (for training, access, projects, conservation etc..)

Please can I remind all clubs of the importance of using the membership spreadsheet proforma to update club membership throughout the year which ensures the quickest turn around of membership cards.

Glenn Jones
BCA Membership Administrator

Any queries about this or any other membership matters should be directed to Glenn Jones via membership@british-caving.org.uk.

Please Note: the views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the formal view of the British Caving Association.

Remarks from the Chairman

Following on from my notes in Newsletter No.11 I can say that I have been talking to lots of people and formulating ideas. I am now on the BCRA Council and Dave Checkley Chairman of BCRA is on the BCA Council. We both intend to visit one another's meetings as much as possible, which should improve communications between our organisations. I am very impressed with the amount of energy displayed by the Officers of BCA and BCRA. With very few exceptions it would seem that everybody is very keen on improving things within and around caves, cavers and caving. There are very few argumentative ideas, most are very positive.

There is however a number of things which I know many people want adjusting. These will be reviewed in the coming months.

The International Congress in Texas was excellent. For my sins I have been elected for a second and final term as President. The few Brits who attended were much in evidence figuring in various competitions and presenting numbers of lectures. I visited several caves in the region, particularly memorable was the Caverns of Senora which was absolutely spectacular, one of the prettiest caves I have ever seen. The next Congress is in Bruno in the Czech Republic in Summer 2013, which will also be good.

I enjoyed my time at Hidden Earth and I know the record breaking attendance wholeheartedly enjoyed their time. Congratulations and thanks to the organisers of the Conference.

I look forward to Hidden Earth 2010.

Finally, I enjoyed a Cave Science Symposium at Manchester recently, and following from Sheffield last March I think starts to set a blueprint for the future.

ANDY EAVIS
BCA Chairman

Rope Testing – Some Thoughts

The Equipment and Techniques Committee briefly discussed the results of the Long Term Rope Test (LTRT) as reported in the last newsletter. In answer to an earlier question "What was the objective of the LTRT", the document setting down the LTRT trial stated "To provide a long term test on a known samples of rope in order to provide cavers with reliable data on the effects of use and ageing on SRT rope". The results (considerable impact with both light usage and moderate life time) are not intuitively acceptable and require further work to support them. Such work requires several points to be considered. Although the committee was unable to debate them in any details, it occurs to me that they are worth sharing with a wider audience for any views and opinions. The full paper is available at;

<http://british-caving.org.uk/equipment/Rope%20Testing%20v1%20a.doc>

a) impact of age of rope

The LTRT was conducted on rope which was tested at up to 8 years old (though usage having taken place during its first 2 years). Repeating the test for low usage on a much quicker basis would at least determine if low usage alone is so detrimental.

b) acceptable criterion for drops survived

The average number of drops survived was 2.4. The average standard deviation (SD) for the spread of drops survived was 0.6 (range of 52 values was between 2 and 4). Using the simple approach of 3 SDs covering 99.5% of results, this would imply that one cannot confidently state such a rope would survive one drop. Although 2 drops had previously been suggested as a suitable threshold, this was withdrawn on legal grounds. Also the British Standard (BS) uses 5 drops.

Further work could be conducted on the spread of drops survived along a used rope. It can be argued that usage will be less at the ends than in the middle (most pitches are rigged with surplus rope so the end is not used!). A number of used ropes have been acquired (number of trips is known but number on party is not) for testing. No doubt more ropes could be obtained.

c) other variations from the British Standard drop test procedure

A table showing all of the differences between the BS and the rope test rig procedures has been produced, see full paper.

Key points of difference include:

- Use of wet rope based on work showing wet ropes are weaker than dry
- Temperature effect is an unknown
- sample length is much smaller
- Not using an initial FF 0.3 drop (to reflect usage before a drop occurs)
- Not having a specific time requirements between drops (there are some indications that leaving the rope for even 10 minutes seems to allow it to recover some elasticity.) an incremental FF regime to make rope testing reasonable.

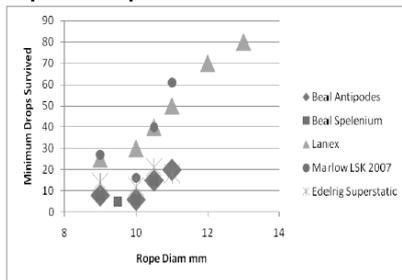
This last point reflects the fact that new ropes often well exceed the minimum number of drops at a constant FF of 1.0 survived requirement (typically between 10 and 20 with an outlier of up to 60). The incremental FF sequence is in fact two initial drops at FF 1.0, followed by the 3rd drop at FF 1.1 and so on.

Continued Over...

d) bias of Rope Test Rig

A question has arisen as to whether the small differences in the attachments on the rope test rig make a difference (the top attachment is 20mm diameter compared to 12mm for the bottom attachment). In addition, there are at least two different ways of tying a Figure of Eight knot which might cause differences in testing (whether the active rope is on the inside or outside as it leaves the knot influences the degree of bend that the active rope experiences). Data to date suggests there is no bias between top and bottom knot breaking. However, there is a small indication that the active rope on inside configuration of a figure of eight knot might be weaker than the active rope being on the outside.

e) impact of rope diameter



Note the 9 and 9.5mm rope is Type B rope and hence tested with a 80kg mass. 4 samples of a 9mm wet rope tested with a 100kg mass using FF 1.0 only survived 4.3 drops (values between 3 and 6). But Beal, Mammut and Edelrid publish life time usability data which is the same for all of their SRT ropes. So is there value in going for larger diameter ropes? There is also an increase in use of 9mm (and even 8mm) rope which raises the question as to whether the testing should be expanded to cover different rope diameters.

Views are welcomed on:
rope@british-caving.org.uk.

Bob Mehew

CHANGE IN EDITOR

For the next 12 months there will be a change in editorship of this newsletter, as the current editor is off caving across Northern Africa and the Middle East!

The new editor will be Ed Waters who can be contacted at the usual;

Regional News & Access Issues

DERBYSHIRE

Regional Council – Derbyshire Caving Association (DCA)

Hon Secretary: Jenny Potts, 3 Greenway, Hlland Ward, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 3FE
Tel. 01335 370629

Email: dca@theDCA.org.uk

Website: www.theDCA.org.uk

DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION (DCA) AT "CLIFFHANGER" 2009 EVENT, SHEFFIELD - 11/12 JULY 2009.

Saturday 11th July

In attendance: Paul Chandler*.

Fortunately with this being an 'outdoors event' the weather stayed fine all day. The DCA Information Stand tent was erected, with invaluable help from a number of young, but competent volunteers from "Cliffhanger" event crew. Inside the DCA Stand tent, a large table displayed a varied selection of leaflets on both caving (BCA 'So, You Want To GoCaving' & 'Try Caving', also DCA Information sheets), local mine exploration, et al, plus a large survey of the 'Peak - Speedwell - JH - Titan' system was also laid out. Also displayed in the stand tent, were a few (A4 size) colour pictures of local mines, plus one of 'Titan Shaft!', some cartoon caver posters and a large DCA Contacts sheet containing details of local caving clubs in the Peak District and surrounding areas. Unfortunately, the remainder of the grass plot allocated to the DCA was rather conspicuous by its 'blank look', the 'Star attraction' of the DCA Stand in 2008, namely the "Speleo-Olympics" Obstacle Course, was absent, due to insufficient volunteer support! Despite the thousands of people visiting "Cliffhanger" on the Saturday, visitors to the DCA Stand were few and far between!

Sunday 12th July

In attendance: Paul Chandler, Nigel Atkins, Dennis Jump, Ann Soulsby, Robin Stiffin, Martin Grayson, (Dr) David Ross & Larry Blanchard.

What a difference a day makes! Eight of us in attendance today, and in addition to the DCA Information Stand tent (plus BCA display panels, set up both inside & outside the tent), one of the adjacent large trees, was rigged for Single Rope Technique (SRT) demonstrations and Ladder climbing for members of the public, under supervision of a qualified instructor. Martin had also brought along his 'Cave Diving' equipment for display. Once again, we were very fortunate with the weather, with only a very short, light shower.

The 'ladder climbing' was extremely popular from opening to closing time, with over 100 children, some 'tiny tots' (interestingly no adults!), climbing to the top of the ladder and then being lowered down in a pre-fitted harness. If DCA participates in this event in 2010, two 'ladder climbing' rigs would be preferable. During the course of the day, there were a small number of visitors to the Information display tent.

One of the visitors to the stand tent, was an employee of 'Hayfisher Productions', a film company, who were making a video production of the "Cliffhanger" event for possible broadcasting on Sky television! There was a possibility of the DCA Stand appearing on the production, but in the event no filming took place on our stand!

Continued Over...

My thanks to Nigel, Dennis, Ann, Robin, Martin, David and Larry (most of those present, belonged either to Masson Caving Group or TSG or both, two local caving clubs). Also thanks to some friends of Martin & Larry for their invaluable assistance, dismantling the DCA Stand on the Sunday.

Finally, thanks to Peak District Mining Museum (PDMMS) for loan of display table, Goodluck Mine Preservation Club supplying barrier rope and last but not least, Jenny Potts (DCA).

*Note: With the 'Speleo-Olympics' Obstacle Course being advertised in "Cliffhanger" programme, Matt Heason (Event organiser) had requested a DCA presence on the Saturday, to answer queries regarding its none appearance, hence my attendance.

Report: Paul Chandler (Masson Caving Group)

DCA Stand Co-ordinator.



The "British Caving Association Newsletter" is the copyright property of the BCA. Parts of the newsletter may be copied and distributed within the caving community on the condition that the BCA Newsletter is credited as the source.

WALES

Regional Council – Cambrian Caving Council (CCC)

Hon. Chairman: Bernie Woodley

Email: chair@cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk

Website: www.cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk

NORTH

Regional Council – Council of Northern Caving Clubs (CNCC)

Hon Secretary: Les Sykes, 49 Manfield, Ashurst, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 6SU
Tel/Fax: 01695 728673
Email: les@speleoventure.wanadoo.co.uk

Whitewell Pot Entrance

The entrance to Whitewell Pot in Bowland has suffered a lot of erosion and subsidence over the years and was in serious danger of collapse.

Thanks to a CNCC intervention funded by Natural England and work by members of Northern Boggarts, BPC, BCC and RRCP, a large diameter pipe, fitted with rungs and a gate secured by a chain with C links, now slopes down to the otherwise sealed entrance.

Pipes and land drains attempt to deal with the waterlogged area next to the pot which was the major cause of the problems. The pipe is accessed via a stile in a new fence. Ground and entrance conditions required the use of a self-supporting single length of twin wall pipe laid at an angle, instead of the traditional vertical shaft with shoring. Thanks to all those responsible for the initial design, procurement of materials, skilled building work and the many hours of voluntary labour. Visitors are urged to honour the CNCC access agreement and respect the wishes of the keeper in keeping the site low profile.

Report: Antony Brown.

WARNING: Bolts in Rift Pot (Allotment).

It has been reported that the bolts in Rift Pot are in poor shape with useable ones in short supply. Avoiding rub points is currently difficult or impossible. Because of geological problems, installation of Eco hangers would be problematic and for this reason Long Kin East was Eco anchored and provides a safe route to the same destination.

Report: Antony Brown.

Gunnerfleet Cleanup.

Gunnerfleet Cave is a short but interesting cave with some nice formation but used as a rubbish dump for the last fifty years. One entrance was completely blocked with fridges, asbestos, sheep dip containers and hundreds of syringes used by farmers for animal welfare, not to mention the annual depositing of dead sheep and lambs. Andrew Hinde, Natural England, tackled local farmers to cease dumping and Kay Easton with ten volunteers from Bradford Pothole Club, Black Rose and Northern Boggarts spent two days removing two and a half tons of rubbish and transporting it to a skip. The asbestos was later removed by a specialist firm at great expense. Well done to everyone who turned up to transform Gunnerfleet back to its original condition.

Report: Pete Monk

FOREST OF DEAN

Regional Contact – Forest of Dean Conservation & Access Group (FoDCAG)

Hon Secretary: John Hine, The Grottage, 2 Cullis Lane, Mile End, Coleford, Gloucestershire GL16 7QF
 Tel: 01594 833217
 Email: mole@grottage.fsworld.co.uk

MENDIP

Regional Council – Council of Southern Caving Clubs

Hon Secretary: Hayley Clark, Hilltop, Windwhistle Lane, West Grimstead, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 3RG
 Tel. 01722 710338
 Email: secretary@csc.org.uk
 Website: www.csc.org.uk

Equality Statement

<p>The BCA will make its services available to all sections of the sporting community, there will be no discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, creed, colour, occupation, religion or political opinion.</p>
--

Acting Newsletter Editor: Ed Waters
 Hilltop, Windwhistle Lane, West Grimstead, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 3RG.
 Email: newsletter@british-caving.org.uk

WARNING

Swildons Hole Entrance

There has been considerable movement of boulders near the entrance of Swildons Hole. This movement has affected the route into the cave, making it somewhat more difficult. There is a route which allows access to the cave with considerable care, but please keep up to date with developments through the CSCC website;

<http://csc.org.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=news:start>

Reports: Les Williams via CSCC Website

British Caving Association

The Old Methodist Chapel

Great Hucklow

Buxton

SK17 8RG

CAVER SAFETY CARDS

ARE YOU CAVING TODAY?

Have you checked the following in relation to your cave?

- P** **Previous weather** and water conditions for preceding few days.
Ground conditions, e.g. wet, dry, frozen.
- L** **Local knowledge** of both cave and catchment area. How does the cave flood, e.g. seepage or swallet/sink? Where to sit out a flood? Does it flood immediately after rain or a number of days later? How well do you know your chosen route? Have you a guide book, survey or a party member who knows the route/cave well?
- O** **Observation** What is actually happening :- is it raining? Are thunder clouds building over your catchment area? What do local cavers think? Is everybody else coming out when you are going in?
- W** **Weather forecast** – Have at least two highly specific weather forecasts for your area/cave. Remember, forecasts are usually very accurate. Weather may arrive a bit later or earlier than predicted! Have a safe wet weather alternative.

IF IN DOUBT... STAY OUT!

If you are happy that the weather and cave are OK for your trip, have you...

- ? Checked your team's competency, fitness and health for *this particular trip*?
- ? Have you the appropriate personal and technical kit and the knowledge and ability to use it correctly?
- ? Have you got an emergency kit such as spare light, whistle, first aid kit, spare food and clothing, survival bag/group shelter, spare rope, knife, etc?
- ? **If it goes wrong have you left the following details with a *responsible, knowledgeable person*?**
- ? Participants' details
- ? Cave name, grid reference, location and intended route
- ? Parking place and car registration
- ? Time of entry and *call out time* if no contact has been made
- ? Contact details – mobile numbers



Remember to contact the above person when you re-emerge.

WHO ARE YOU GOING TO CALL...?

Dial 999 and ask for POLICE and then CAVE RESCUE