



COUNCIL OF SOUTHERN CAVING CLUBS

A constituent member of the National Caving Association

NCA REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT TO THE CSCC MEETING 10TH MAY 2003

NCA AGM

I attended the NCA Annual General Meeting on 22nd March 2003. A part from all the normal business of the meeting, officer reports, electing officers etc, the following items are of concern to the CSCC.

No new Secretary was forthcoming to replace Guy Smith, nor a Publications and Information Officer to replace Graham Mullan who have both stood down. Applications for the jobs to Mick Day, the NCA Chairman.

In order to retain its Sports Council grant the NCA needs conduct a survey of cavers to assess the proportions of women, disabled and ethnic minorities. The National Council are well aware of the inherent problems and that the answers obtained might not help our cause, yet the survey is necessary. There is a simple form to be filled in by your members. It can be obtained from David Cooke or the NCA website (www.nca.org.uk) and should be returned to the same or the NCA Chairman.

English Nature has started "logging" SSSI caves in other regions with the help of local cavers.

Sport England is restructuring to a more regional basis. As a consequence we might like to consider inviting a Sport England representative to CSCC meetings.

Restructuring insurance is on going. This is now being handled directly by the BCRA Chairman and Treasurer. The final structure and charges is likely to be known late in the day due to the way the insurance company negotiates. Clubs should stay abreast of developments since it will have a significant impact upon their subscription rates and may well require changes to their constitution. Nick Williams letters in the last two copies of Descent give an accurate state of play.

The NCA voted to wind itself up in favour of the British Caving Association (BCA) as soon as practicable. The current deadline is early 2004. The BCA Prospectus outlining the new organisation has been widely distributed and comments are invited. More of this below ...

Hub Meeting

I also attended The Hub (The committee that is managing the birth of the BCA) meeting on 27th April 2003. At last the committee is becoming more focused on the nitty-gritty but there is still plenty to resolve.

The chief bone of contention is the voting structure. I've produced an open letter giving the pros and cons of the various options. The CSCC's position subsequent to our SGM on 22nd February was that club block voting was the first choice and one caver, one vote (OCOV) was our second choice. After discussions with the BCRA Chairman and others it is clear that BCRA will not accept club block voting and the merger of NCA and BCRA would fail. Therefore we are left with our second choice. The BCRA's Chairman has indicated support for OCOV but the Hub still prefer the two-house system. I'll continue to argue for OCOV. A new option of banded voting has been introduced which needs consideration.

A draft BCA constitution has been produced based upon the existing NCA constitution. Items to note are:

- The voting structure needs modifying. See above.
- There is a new requirement that Officers are BCA members. Since Officers are elected I don't see that this is necessary. Lets be inclusive rather than exclusive.
- Election of Officers has been moved to the AGM rather than postal ballot.
- There are 4 individual representatives on National Council and 4 club representatives. Is this the best system?
- The National Council's power to prevent motions being put to the AGM is removed. A good thing.
- The Regional Councils veto is removed. Comments please.
- It is proposed to have new posts of President and Vice-Presidents. Should add some colour to the new organisation.

I've mentioned before that the CSCC will probably need to alter its constitution to recognise that it gets its members and funding via the BCA. This arrangement has now has a catch phrase – "Constitutionally Aligned Bodies". It also became clear that the CSCC's constitution would be subservient to the BCA's constitution since

the CSCC is a member of the BCA. Clauses concerning Regional Councils are to be considered for insertion into the BCA's constitution.

It is proposed that the BCRA acts as trustee to hold BCA assets in place of the current four trustees.

It is currently proposed that club and individual members have 1 "free" RC membership. The idea that individual members should not be forced to select a Regional Council but the money goes to BCA to be distributed by grant was neither rejected nor adopted. This is of concern to the CSCC since we do not have a class of individual member.

Its financial structure is work in progress.

The position on access was clarified since the BCA Prospectus document is misleading:

- Providing the individual / club is a bona-fide BCA member, access should be obtainable, as per local agreements overseen by Regional Councils, Clubs etc
- All commercial providers of caving instruction should be full members of BCA
- Outdoor activities centres and groups should be supported providing they contribute towards the regional title.

David G Cooke
10th May 2003