

COUNCIL OF SOUTHERN CAVING CLUBS



A constituent member of the British Caving Association

Minutes of the Open Meeting held on Saturday 9th September 2006

1. ATTENDANCE (9, 7 eligible to vote)

Steve King (CSCC Secretary, SBSS Obs/SMCC), Chris Whale (CSCC Treasurer, SBSS), Chris Binding (CSCC C&A Officer, Cheddar CC), Andrew Atkinson (CSCC Bolting Coordinator, UBSS Obs), Phil Hendy (Wessex CC Obs), Alan Dempster (Avon Scouts), Graham Mullan (UBSS), Graham Price (Cerberus SS), Rob Norcross (Moles CC).

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (5)

Alan Gray (CSCC Chairman, ACG), Alan Butcher (CSCC Training Officer, SMCC), Dave Cooke (CSCC Webmaster, Wessex CC), Tim Francis (MCG), Linda Wilson (UBSS).

In the absence of AG (who was participating in the Bristol Open Doors Day) Phil Hendy was invited to take the Chair.

The Meeting also noted that the former CSCC, and current BCA, Treasurer Jonathan Roberts was getting married later the same day! The CSCC sends its best wishes to the happy couple.

3. APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The Secretary explained that he had added this item because in the period since the AGM he had been contacted by some clubs that he had subsequently invited to take out direct or secondary membership of the CSCC.

The Treasurer confirmed that the Hades CC had paid for secondary membership. The Meeting therefore welcomed them into the CSCC. Hades CC are BCA Members but affiliate to the Cambrian Caving Council.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record. The Minutes were signed by the Acting Chairman.

5. ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Item 5 – SK to further pursue the issue of Bolting Certificates with the BCA.

Item 8.3 – SK to ask *Descent* to amend the SLUGS advertisement.

Item 10.10 – CB to pursue and arrange the capping of Star Mine.

Item 13 – AA/DC to upload the missing P-bolt details to the CSCC website asap.

Item 15 – CB/SK to arrange and announce the CSCC padlock changeover.

Item 20 – Treasurer to confirm the CSCC subscription rates.

Taken under Item 13.

Done.

Taken under Item 10.

Done.

Done.

Taken under Item 9.

6. OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no other matters.

7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman was not present and had not sent any report.

8. HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

8.1 - Publications received

BCA AGM Minutes, Mar 06

BCA Financial Statement, year to Dec 05

BCA Council Minutes, Mar 06

Agenda for BCA Council Meeting, Jun 06

BCA Council Minutes, Jun 06

Derbyshire Caver #124

DCA Council Minutes, Apr 06

DCA Information Circular, Apr-Jul 06

Agenda for DCA Council Meeting, Jul 06

DCA Council Minutes, Jul 06

8.2 - Correspondence

There is a new contact for Taunton Caving Club:

Bob Partridge, 4 Backham Cottage, North Curry, Taunton, Somerset, TA3 6ND.

The contact for the Hades CC (see Item 3) is:

Peter Mason, 14 Upper Belgrave Road, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 2XH.

CSCC Members are asked to amend their records accordingly.

Also, Mick Norton (ACG, BDCC, MCG) wishes it to be known that his email address has changed to bullbrook@btinternet.com.

The Secretary said that he had also been in contact with the Croydon CC as their website incorrectly claimed that the club was a member of the CSCC. The Croydon Chairwoman had responded promising to have the website corrected. (*This matter had actually been brought to the attention of the Secretary by a CSCC Club member*).

9. HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer said that the Current Account stood at £142.04 and the Reserve Account at £2150.03. He added that he had also just received notification from the BCA Treasurer that the balance of the 2006 regional grant, amounting to £275, would be paid shortly. Otherwise the Treasurer said that he had received little correspondence.

The Meeting noted with concern that the "summit meeting" of the Regional Treasurers had still not taken place, and that none was scheduled. The 2006 grant has therefore been based on figures for 2005.

10. CONSERVATION & ACCESS OFFICER'S REPORT

The C&A Officer presented a comprehensive verbal report which is abstracted below:

- 10.1 - **Box Mine:** the gating has been completed by English Nature. Allen keys are held at the Quarryman's Arms, with a few other local cavers, many of the major Mendip Caving Clubs, the MRO, English Nature and the CSCC. The Allen key order code is available from canda@csc.org.uk on receipt of a name, address, contact number, and email address if available. This is simply so that the CSCC or EN can advise as wider section of the interested community as possible about any future access changes (temporary or permanent), bat conservation work, reports of unstable workings, etc.

Visitors are asked to note that it is a requirement that the gates be kept shut and bolted (*not just done up fingertight* – this is inadequate!) at all times. Visitors are also asked to be polite and courteous in their actions and to follow any instructions from the private landowners (and do let canda@csc.org.uk know if you are contacted by a landowner). Comprehensive up-to-date information about Box Mine can be found at the website www.darkplaces.co.uk. Please note that this site has nothing whatsoever to do with the CSCC, although it is run by a local caver.

The works at Box Mine did not incur any costs to the CSCC, all of the Councils Allen key purchases were refunded by English Nature on submission of receipts.

- 10.2 - **Star Shaft (formerly known as Star Mine Shaft):** this CSCC-funded major capping project has now been completed. The CSCC would like to gratefully acknowledge the help, freely given, of the following people who ensured that this project ran as smoothly as possible: Chris Binding, Les Davies (the Mendip Hills AONB Warden for grant aid), Mark Ireland, Paul Wakeling (for kindly and expertly fabricating the new entrance metalwork), Doug Harris, Alan Gray, Mick Norton, Hugh Tucker, Elaine Johnson, Justin Urch and his colleagues, and Steve Bambridge of Milbury Systems for his patience and assistance. The padlock on the cap requires the standard CSCC key.

A financial breakdown of the project is presented in Appendix 1.

There are photographs of the capping and it is intended to write a short article for *Descent* or similar. A low-grade survey has been done by the WCC.

PH expressed concern about the conservation of the old mining artefacts in the level near the bottom of the shaft (which is often flooded), and wondered whether a secondary gate could/should be installed to protect them. Those present thought this was a good idea. PH offered to take the matter up with the WCC Committee. This offer was accepted.

ACTION: CB/DC to put some photographs of the Star Shaft capping on the CSCC website.

ACTION: CB to pass some photographs and details to the Mendip *Descent* correspondent.

- 10.3 - **CSCC Padlock Changeover:** all CSCC standard padlocks on CSCC-controlled sites were changed on the 13th/14th July. The changeover went very smoothly and there were fewer problems than had been anticipated (only one group of cavers is known to have been inconvenienced). New keys have been sent to all paid up member clubs/organisations of the CSCC. Keys have also been provided to the MRO.

The sites involved are: Attborough Swallet, Balch Cave, Coral Cave, Chardswell Cave, Compton Martin Ochre Mine, Cuckoo Cleeves, Fairy Cave Quarry Cavers' Car Park, Five Buddles Sink, Flower Pot, Hilliers, Hillwithy, Loxton Cave (3), Loxton Quarry Cave, Nettle Pot, Priddy Green Sink, Singing River Mine, Stainsby's Shaft (fence and grille), Stock Hill Shaft, and Ubley Hill Pot.

Thanks are due to Graham Price for kindly organising the new padlocks. A further 22 padlocks are being held in stock.

- 10.4 - **Brownes Folly Mine:** All entrances to this mine controlled by the Avon Wildlife Trust are presently blocked. There does not appear to be any prospect of cavers being granted access for the foreseeable future.
- 10.5 - **Surface digging in West Twin Brook Valley downhill from Goatchurch:** the situation here has been resolved and the site restored. The MHAONB Warden and the UBSS have been notified. No evidence of culprit's identity was forthcoming.
- 10.6 - **Cuckoo Cleeves:** a site visit was made to check the amount of fencing which needs doing (livestock have been getting in the depression). It was noted that some work is also required on the dry stone walling, although this would also benefit from some of the hawthorn being cut back. The lid (as previously reported) is now in a very poor state of repair. Dave Morrison has

kindly offered to provide a concrete ring (from either Templeton or, more likely, Gibbet's Brow) to raise the entrance above ground level. PH has been in contact with the owner and has things in hand to organise the ring/entrance. Doug Harris has offered to do the fencing for a fee. Some of the fencing recovered from Star Shaft could probably be reused here. However vehicular access will be required to the site and there is some uncertainty over who owns the field. Investigations are ongoing.

ACTION: Anyone who knows who owns the field in which Cuckoo Cleaves is situated to please contact CB/PH.

- 10.7 - **Conning Tower Cave:** the entrance (which is on a CSCC key) has been vandalised twice in recent months – it has now been replaced but left unlocked to prevent further damage. (The Fairy Caves Management Committee asked for the entrance to be gated to stop people falling into the hole).
- 10.8 – **Hillwithy Cave:** this is now also fitted with a CSCC standard padlock.
- 10.9 - **Rhino Rift:** the “loose bolt” sign has been removed following inspection of the bolt.
- 10.10 - **Longwood Valley:** the area investigated as a potential dig has been remediated.
- 10.11 - **GB Cavern:** the padlock was reported as damaged early on the late May Bank Holiday Friday – someone had forced the wrong key into the lock which had then snapped off. Though it initially appeared that the cave would have to remain locked for a couple of weeks (the Charterhouse Caving Company representative was leaving on holiday that afternoon) and the CSCC Secretary announced as much on the CSCC Email List (to try and warn as many potential Bank Holiday visitors as possible), the lock was actually replaced on the Friday evening as a result of a heroic joint exercise by members of the WCC/CSCC.

[For the record, the original report was made by a member of the ACG to the CSCC C&A Officer who in turn notified the CCC Representative.]

- 10.12 - **Hunter's Hole:** loose slabs in the arched roof between the two pitches have been taken down.
- 10.13 - **Singing River Mine:** the recent re-ginging (cementing) works were checked and found to be successful.
- 10.14 - **West Twin Brook Adit:** the combination lock was smashed during August but has now been replaced. During a site visit on 4th September it appeared as though there may have been movement of the large shored boulders approximately 100m in. SK seemed to recall that the CSCC had been given details of a Mines Inspector and said he would check and pass on to CB.

ACTION: SK to look for details of a Mines Inspector in the records.

- 10.15 - **Swildon's Hole:** sadly acts of overt vandalism took place in the Barnes Loop, and elsewhere in the cave, on the evening of 31st August. The police have been informed, there is evidence for them to pursue, and they are investigating with a view to a prosecution at the time of writing. Most of the broken stal has been recovered to the WCC Hut where it is being glued back together, but re-hanging it in the cave will be challenging.
- 10.16 – **Coral Cave:** a report has been received that the lid needs attention. This needs further investigation, but the cave is in a SSSI.
- 10.17 - **Gibbet's Brow:** The Secretary read out a report from AB – “*I have met with Kate Jefferies at Gibbet's Brow and she is happy to give permission for the dig as it does not, as yet, connect with Lamb Leer. We will have to provide a conservation plan if and when it does connect but, at the moment, EN are happy with the situation.*”
- 10.18 – **CSCC C&A Expenses Claim to the BCA:** this was held over after the AGM until the final costs of the Star Shaft project were known, but it will shortly be sent to the BCA C&A Officer.

[Note added in proof: a report was received from Mick Norton (MCG C&A Officer) on 17th September that “the route to the monster stuff in Upper Flood Swallet has collapsed.”]

11. TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

The Training Officer was not present but had sent a report:

“On the training front, apart from the [BCA] training minutes forwarded by SK I have had no other information from any source. I am not sure that training@csc.org.uk is working as I have had nothing forwarded. My email is alanbutcher@btconnect.com but any other address such as mail@alanbutcher.co.uk should also reach this primary address.

All in all on the training front nothing to report but it would be nice to perhaps think about some form of training event in 2007?”

ACTION: DC to investigate whether training@csc.org.uk is working correctly.

[Note added in proof: AD has provided details of the HSC consultation on the Work at Height (Amendment) Regulations which can be downloaded at <http://hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd204.htm>. Comments are required by 31st October.

The summary states: “You are invited to comment on the proposals for the way in which the Work at Height Regulations will apply to those paid to lead or teach others in climbing or caving activities...These proposals have been produced in close collaboration with the Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee working group responsible for work at height issues. They include:

- *draft amended regulations that resolve the outstanding issues identified by the sector relating to double rope working; plus greater clarification that single rope working is permissible under the regulations; and*
- *detailed guidance drawn up in conjunction with sector experts on the application of the amended regulations to those paid to lead or instruct climbing and caving activities.*

The draft regulations propose a test of an 'equivalent level of safety' such that adherence to national governing body guidelines for climbing or caving should be sufficient to comply with these regulations."]

12. EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

The Equipment Officer was not present and had not sent a report.

13. BOLTING COORDINATOR'S REPORT

13.1 – **Bolting Certificates:** there have been some useful discussions between AA and Les Sykes on the issue of bolting certificates since the AGM and the matter appears close to being in a form that can be put before the BCA Council.

ACTION: AA and Les Sykes to finalise the bolting certificate proposals and put before BCA Council.

13.2 – **Revalidations:** AA, CB and Alison Moody (AM) have been revalidated since the AGM with bolt placements in Diamond Chamber in Gough's Cave.

13.3 – **Thrupe Lane Swallet:** CB and AM subsequently placed two P-hangers at the head of Perseverance Pot. The opportunity was also taken to investigate Lateral Pitch. The existing spits here are in such a poor state that there is effectively no access to the bottom of Atlas Pot from the streamway. This route will therefore need rebolting and is seen as a higher priority than the Slither Pot route (the bolts for which are not visible and are assumed to be plugged with mud). Andy Sparrow has identified an improved rig for Lateral Pitch. Every attempt will be made to place these bolts before the end of December when the current CSCC stock of glue goes out of date.

ACTION: AA to coordinate a date, or dates, for bolting Lateral Pitch.

13.4 – **Blacknor Hole:** the Bolting Coordinator noted that the bolts here had just gone out of validation, but added that he was also aware that there were potential access difficulties with this site. This was confirmed by several present at the Meeting. *Cavers should note that it may be some time before the bolts can be inspected.* It was suggested that Kevin Hilton could be asked to investigate the access situation.

[Note added in proof: Subsequent to the Meeting Ed Waters of the SMCC volunteered to investigate when next visiting family in the area. SK]

13.5 – **Swildons Hole:** The Blue Pencil chain still needs to be replaced. (It is hoped that it can be placed in the entrance series attached to a notice asking cavers to take it down the cave with them. The bolting will then be done when it arrives at Blue Pencil!)

ACTION: LesW to deposit the replacement chain in Swildons as soon as possible.

The C&A Officer said that on a recent trip to Black Hole Series he had noted that the ring anchor on the far side of the pitch had been rigged with a ladder in such a way that it was taking a lateral load. He wondered therefore if it should be replaced with a P-bolt or removed altogether. After a short debate it was decided to leave the ring anchor in place, but *cavers should note that it is not there for rigging ladders from; it is only there to aid the pull across.*

14. WEBMASTERS REPORT

The Webmaster was not present but had sent the Secretary some items to raise:

14.1 – **Hunters Lodge Inn Sink:** following a complaint from a CSCC Club member, Hunters Lodge Inn Sink has been added to the CSCC access web pages.

14.2 – **Web Discussion Forum:** a CSCC Discussion Forum has been added to the BCA Website (<http://www.british-caving.org.uk/phpbb2/viewforum.php?f=17>). Cavers are encouraged to use it. The CSCC Officers are using it for announcements!

14.3 – **Mendip Google Map:** Bill Chadwick of the Bracknell & District CC has created an excellent interactive map of cave locations on Mendip which also provides the access details (<http://www.bdcc.co.uk/mendip.html>).

14.4 – **Digital Access Data:** Bill Chadwick took the CSCC web-based access data for his interactive map, though he told the CSCC what he was doing. However this had raised questions of copyright and how much control the CSCC wanted over its information. The Webmaster therefore proposed that:

The CSCC should make its data freely available for copying (csv, xml) subject to the following conditions:

1. *That a "Copyright © CSCC year. This data is available from www.csc.org.uk" notice is displayed;*
2. *That a date is displayed showing how current the data is;*
3. *That access information can be displayed without location information, but location information cannot be displayed without access information;*
4. *That digital data supplied by the CSCC must not be re-distributed.*

The Meeting endorsed the Webmasters proposals, however there were some questions:

It was wondered how easily updated access details could be distributed to third-party users? CB wondered whether it would be possible for him to directly update access/NGR information on the CSCC website? And it was pointed out that sometimes cavers would visit a cave and find that the CSCC access details were wrong or out-of-date; there should be some obvious route for them to feed back the new information (at present some might tell the C&A Officer, others might tell the Webmaster, etc). A 'button' or link on the access pages for 'Update our details', or similar, should perhaps be provided?

ACTION: DC to consider the questions above and report back.

15. ASSISTANCE TO UNIVERSITY CLUBS

15.1 – **Update on the Proposal for a University Club Training Event on Mendip:** following the discussions at the AGM in May SK and CB had booked the weekend of 18th/19th November for the first CSCC University Caver Training Event, and SK had advertised it to the email distribution list he had got from the CHECC in December 2005.

By return SK had been contacted by Chris Jewell, the originator of the CHECC, who was unhappy at the timing as the CHECC had apparently been planning their own events around the same time (though these had not actually been advertised). CJ also felt that the CHECC should be involved in the CSCC event and that it should be open to all University Clubs, not just those in the CSCC Region. After some discussion SK and CJ reached an agreement postponing the CSCC event until the Spring 2007.

However SK said he would like the Meeting to reconsider whether the event should still go ahead, and if so, what the format and attendance should be. Mindful of the Training Officer's earlier comments there was strong support for staging an event, and the CHECC offer of involvement in it was broadly welcomed. But the Meeting also strongly felt that a Regional Council should not stage 'National' events; that was the business of the BCA. SK's email of May had actually closed with the sentence "*Priority for places will be given to (in order): University Clubs that are members of the CSCC, University Clubs in the CSCC Region, and then University Clubs from outside of the CSCC Region*". This was judged to be a wholly appropriate limitation on the participants. It was further felt that places should only be available to those members of those University Clubs that were actively arranging trips, with a limit of 3 people per Club. This, it was felt, would keep the event to a manageable size.

ACTION: SK to liaise with AB and CJ on a CSCC Spring Training Event.

15.2 – **BCA Youth Development Initiative:** SK said that he had noted that the June Meeting of the BCA Council had received a presentation from CJ advocating a BCA "Youth and Development Campaign" timed to be launched at Hidden Earth 2006. SK said that CJ (and presumably the CHECC) certainly appeared to have put some thought into the proposals which had two strands: one targeting University Clubs, and the other targeting 'regular' (BCA) Clubs and what they could gain from closer ties to the University Clubs. Several present asked if they could see the proposals.

ACTION: SK to distribute the BCA/CHECC Youth & Development Campaign proposals.

16. BCA MATTERS

The Secretary said that both he and DC had been unable to attend the meeting of BCA Council on 17th June and he did not know if LW had attended. Nonetheless, SK said that there were some matters to report on:

16.1 – **Change of BCA Membership Administrator:** Lynne Bailey, previously the long-time BCRA Membership Administrator, had formally resigned as the BCA's Membership Administrator in the late Spring. This had the unfortunate consequence of delaying the issuing of insurance cards to some BCA Members, particularly those transferring in from the (by then) defunct DCA insurance scheme. The BCA advertised for a new Membership Secretary and received a number of replies which were considered by a panel comprising the BCA Chairman, Secretary, and Insurance Manager, and an ex-officio member of the BCA Council. As a result a new Membership Administrator was appointed over the Summer. It is Glenn Jones, former Treasurer of the CNCC and well-known to many cavers for his AV sequences at Hidden Earth.

16.2 – **Resignation of the BCA Secretary:** more recently Paula Grgich-Warke has been forced to resign as the BCA's first Secretary due to ill health. Jenny Potts, the DCA Secretary, has taken over Paula's duties on a temporary basis until a new Secretary can be appointed. (If anyone is interested in taking on this unpaid, but high-profile, position please get in touch with the BCA as soon as possible).

[On a personal note I would like to say that only the few of us that have attended BCA Council Meetings know what a sterling job Paula did for British caving, and the fledgling BCA, in her short time as BCA Secretary. Though not a native of these shores, she took on the role when no one from these Isles would; a sad indictment of the poor regard in which the national governing body of our sport is held. I hope CSCC Members will join me in wishing her a speedy recovery. SK]

16.3 – **Media Relations:** the Manchester Hole tragedy of November 2005 highlighted a number of shortcomings in the BCA's ability to respond to, and interact with, media desperate for information. Bob Mehew has now prepared some guidance notes for BCA Officers on what to do if asked for an interview.

17. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Hidden Earth 2006, September 22nd - 24th 2006, Leek, Staffordshire.

BCA Council Meeting, October 7th 2006.

BCA Newsletter copy deadline, November 15th 2006.

BCA Council Meeting, January 13th 2007.

BCA Annual General Meeting & Council Meeting, March 24th 2007.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Secretary brought a new website <http://www.lookupsport.com/> to the attention of the Meeting and suggested that Clubs might like to consider registering with its search engine. The stated aim of the website is to become "THE place to come to find anything sports related".

AD noted that it was the second year running that the September CSCC Meeting had clashed with the Bristol Open Doors Day. The Secretary apologised, but said that when he had proposed the dates at the AGM in May there had not been any objections – which was curious given that the Chairman was himself participating in the Open Doors Day! It was suggested that perhaps AG could give advance notice of the Open Doors Days.

ACTION: AG to provide dates for Open Doors Days in 2007 as soon as possible.

19. DATES OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETINGS

(all at the Hunters Inn, Priddy, 10:30)

December 2nd 2006
February 3rd 2007
May 5th 2007 (AGM)

APPENDIX 1

Balance Sheet for Star Shaft Capping

Costs:	
Capping sections inc. VAT	£1,410.00
Entrance lid materials	£ 114.70
Post Mix	£ 11.90
Cement	£ 10.45
Crane assistance	£ 10.00
Sundry items from Maunders Builders Merchants*	£ 35.83
Grass seed (no receipt)	£ 1.40
Jubilee clip (no receipt)	£ 1.00
CSCC Total	£1,595.28
Grants:	
AONB Hills Warden grant for cap installation	£ 470.00
Project Total	£2,065.28
Funds provided from CSCC in advance of project	£1,650.00
Balance due for repayment to CSCC	£ 54.72
(Paid by cheque to CSCC Treasurer during the meeting, 9 th September 2006)	

* Expenditure on replacement lock at West Twin Brook Adit included.