

# COUNCIL OF SOUTHERN CAVING CLUBS



A constituent member of the British Caving Association

## Minutes of the Open Meeting held on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2007

### 1. ATTENDANCE (9, 7 eligible to vote)

Alan Gray (CSCC Chairman, ACG), Steve King (CSCC Secretary, SBSS Obs/SMCC Obs), Chris Whale (CSCC Treasurer, SBSS), Dave Cooke (CSCC Webmaster, Wessex CC), Chris Binding (CSCC C&A Officer, BCA DIM), Alan Butcher (CSCC Training Officer, SMCC), Alan Dempster (Avon Scouts), Graham Price (Cerberus SS), Toby Maddocks (BEC).

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (4)

Graham Mullan (UBSS), Linda Wilson (UBSS), Phil Hendy (WCC), Les Williams (CSCC Equipment Officer, Wessex CC).

### 3. APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The Secretary said that he had been contacted by the Treasurer of Kent University Caving Club informing him that KUCC were joining the BCA and wished to affiliate to the CSCC. A copy of the KUCC Constitution had been enclosed. AG asked SK if he had a recommendation to put before the Meeting. SK replied that that he recommended that the CSCC *approve* the application. This was agreed.

**ACTION: SK to respond to the KUCC.**

### 4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chairman. In addition the amended (as described therein) Minutes of the December Meeting were also signed.

### 5. ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

#### September

Item 10.2 – CB/DC to put some photographs of the Star Shaft capping on the website.

Item 13.5 – LesW to deposit the replacement chain in Swildons as soon as possible.

#### December

Item 9 – SK to raise the inadequacy of the BCA's indemnity cover with the BCA.

Item 9 – CB to incorporate the WCMS 'one-off' costs into the C&A budget for 2006/7

Item 10.10 – GP & CB to make a joint site visit to Little London Slocker.

Item 10.10 – CB to report back to the CSCC on Little London Slocker.

Item 13.3 – AA/CB to provide DC with an updated list of CSCC bolts for the website.

Item 13.4 – DC to place a note on the website about the Blacknor bolts.

*Ongoing.*

*Ongoing. See Item 10.*

*Taken under Item 16.*

*Done.*

*Taken under Item 10.*

*Taken under Item 10.*

*Done.*

*Done.*

### 6. OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no other matters.

### 7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman did not have anything to report.

### 8. HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

#### 8.1 - Publications received

BCA Council Agenda & Officers Reports, Jan 07

DCA Information Circular, Aug-Nov 06

Derbyshire Caver #125

#### 8.2 - Correspondence

There is a new contact email for Bill Chadwick (BDCC): [w.chadwick@sky.com](mailto:w.chadwick@sky.com)

There is also a new contact for the Wimps & Y Anchors (WAYA):

Reita Fisher, 57 Cranley Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 2JW. [guildfordgrp@csma-netlink.co.uk](mailto:guildfordgrp@csma-netlink.co.uk)

CSCC Members are asked to amend their records accordingly.

Tim Francis had forwarded a request that the MCG had received from one Rod Ward ([rod@rodspace.co.uk](mailto:rod@rodspace.co.uk); <http://www.rodspace.co.uk/>) who was writing Wikipedia pages on the Mendip Hills, including their caves (see for example [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caves\\_of\\_the\\_Mendip\\_Hills](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caves_of_the_Mendip_Hills)), and was looking for additional information and pictures to use.

It was felt that whilst this was an impressive undertaking, a lot of information was already in the public domain (for example, on the CSCC web page and those of some individual cavers) and the CSCC simply did not have the resources (or in some cases the

copyright) to service requests of this nature. However this did not preclude CSCC Member Clubs, or their Members, from offering assistance individually.

### 8.3 – Membership Issues

As noted in Item 3, KUCC have joined the CSCC (subject to their BCA application being approved). In contrast, SK said that he had been notified that the University of Portsmouth CC had “*pretty much collapsed this year*” though the correspondent hoped it might revive in future years.

Young Bristol had rejoined as Direct Members (see Item 9). East Sussex Scouts CC, who were Direct Members in 2006, have joined the BCA in 2007.

Information from the BCA Membership Administrator indicated that as of 1<sup>st</sup> February, 5 Clubs had renewed with the CSCC as their primary affiliation, 2 Clubs had renewed with the CSCC as their second choice (one of these, CDG Wales has not previously been a member of the CSCC), and 1 Club (Shropshire Scouts) had put the CSCC as its fourth choice Regional Council. Many more renewal applications were however still being processed.

Along with continuing Direct Members this meant that a total of 11 Clubs had formally joined the CSCC so far in 2007.

DC (who is also the Acting BCA Treasurer) said that at the recent Meeting of Regional Council Treasurers he had been surprised to learn that the CSCC was now the only Regional Council levying an additional membership subscription on BCA Member Clubs that wished to affiliate to a Regional Council *other* than as their primary affiliation; so-called *Secondary Membership*. (Typically, Secondary Members are non-geographic Clubs with interests in several Regions). DC said that in the interests of equity and brotherhood he wished to put a proposal before the Council:

*“That CSCC reduce its subscription rate for Clubs joining the CSCC as their secondary Regional Council from the present £3 to £0 to bring the CSCC in line with all the other Regional Councils”.*

*[Note of clarification: The £3 subscription for Secondary Membership was first raised at the December 2004 Meeting of the CSCC, and was put into practice after the February 2005 Meeting. The sole intention was to cover the cost of the additional administrative burden on the CSCC that came from Secondary Members – postage, etc. Secondary Members are presently accorded the same rights and status as Primary Members. In 2005 the CSCC had 1 Secondary Member out of 29 Clubs. In 2006 it had 3 Secondary Members out of 32 Clubs.]*

Whilst those present understood the reasons behind DC’s proposal, there was a good deal of debate. Among the issues raised were that if the subscription were reduced to £0, *any* BCA Member Club could ask to join the CSCC. Whilst this could be argued to be a positive thing, concerns were expressed about the effect this might have on the quorum at CSCC AGM’s/EGM’s (currently set at 25% of Members) and on the transaction of business requiring a vote (because a CSCC Member Club has the power of veto; non-geographic Clubs could theoretically, for example, block motions from geographic Clubs). The CSCC is also the only Regional Council that controls widespread access to its caves with a key. Significantly expanding the membership therefore has cost implications.

DC suggested that the CSCC could just set the secondary subscription rate to £0 for a couple of years, see if this did cause any particular problems, and deal with them accordingly. However others were not very happy with this. AB suggested that if the subscription was reduced to £0 then the right to vote should be removed from Secondary Members. DC objected to this, pointing out that Secondary Members were not a “second class” of membership; just normal BCA Member Clubs with interests in more than one Region - it was the BCA that was forcing them to choose a (primary) Region.

*[Note of clarification: from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 the BCA Membership Administrator is actually recording the order of regional preferences indicated by Clubs as they renew their Membership. This was requested by the Cambrian Caving Council who, uniquely amongst Regional Councils, get funding from the Sports Council for Wales for all BCA Member Clubs that affiliate to the CCC whether or not they do so as their Primary Region! The BCA, however, only recognise the Primary Region.]*

There was a consensus that something had to be done about the Secondary Membership issue, but that it clearly required more thought than was possible within the time constraints of the Meeting. AB therefore made a proposal:

*“That this Meeting go away with a view to bringing before the AGM a set of proposals to deal with the issues surrounding Club regional affiliations.”* Proposed: AB. Seconded: GP.

Carried *nem. con.* with 1 abstention.

SK said that he and AG would draft a paper on the issues for circulation amongst those present, with a view to finding a consensus on proposals to put before the AGM.

**ACTION: SK/AG to draft a paper on the issues surrounding Club regional affiliations.**

### 8.4 – AGM Issues

SK said that as he had telegraphed at last years AGM he would be standing down as Secretary at the AGM in May. He added that this was completely non-negotiable (!) and that a new Secretary would need to be found!

*[I need to free time in my non-work life so that I will be better able to deal with two important but challenging and time-consuming projects at work over the next 3 years. SK]*

All of the other Officers had indicated that they were prepared to continue in post for another year, with the exception of the Representative to the BCA Council for which there was no current incumbent (SK has been fulfilling the role on an ad-hoc basis).

#### **SITUATION VACANT – CSCC Secretary**

The CSCC is the Regional Council of the BCA with responsibility for caves and caving in the South of England (excepting Devon & Cornwall). It comprises approximately 40 Member Clubs.

The Council requires a motivated, conscientious, and organised volunteer to assume the role of *Honorary Secretary* from the AGM in May 2007. Duties include arranging, attending and minuting the four Meetings of Council held each year in Priddy, distributing Minutes to Member Clubs, maintaining membership records, and dealing with general correspondence.

The post of Secretary is key to the successful functioning of the Council and provides an opportunity to be involved in the key issues facing caving in the region.

Whilst not essential, access to a word processor, email, and printer would be highly desirable.

Anyone interested in this post is requested to contact Steve King, the present Honorary Secretary, through [secretary@csccl.org.uk](mailto:secretary@csccl.org.uk) before May 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### **9. HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Treasurer said that with the clearance of the cheque from the BCA reimbursing last years C&A expenses the Current Account stood at £553.55 and the Reserve Account at £3676.00. A cheque for £15 had also been received from Young Bristol in respect of their Direct Membership for 2007. CW added that he would be sending the accounts to Clive Owen for scrutinising very soon.

The long-awaited Meeting of the BCA Treasurer (DC) and the Regional Council Treasurers took place in early January. CW said that the 'take home' message was ostensibly that BCA could not commit to writing blank cheques but that at the same time it did not seek to unnecessarily limit the work of the Regions. To that end DC had indicated that BCA would automatically grant the Regional Councils up to £500/year for C&A work, but expenditure in excess of this would need to be properly costed and a grant requested through the BCA C&A Officer as at present.

CB welcomed this but asked DC if, for example, he was successful in obtaining a grant but then could not spend it in that financial year, would he have to re-apply for the unspent funds. DC said not.

CB then asked whether funds granted for one project could be used on another if the project for which they were granted could not go ahead for some reason. DC said that this would not be acceptable. However the £500 could be used as a float on the new project. DC suggested that it was therefore perhaps wise not to commit all of the £500 too early in a financial year.

**ACTION: CW to get the CSCC accounts scrutinised and approved before the AGM.**

#### **10. CONSERVATION & ACCESS OFFICER'S REPORT**

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

##### **10.1 – C&A Report:**

**Thruppe Lane Swallet:** The water is sinking further upstream compared to where it used to; now, even in apparently low water conditions, Perseverance Pot is most unpleasant in cold wintry conditions.

**Withybrook Slocker:** Graham and Chrissy Price have done a very good job of cutting back the overgrowth on this impressive stream sink; it has become something of a local *cause celebre*. Somerset Highways need to remediate the road as it is subsiding and following this, the sink will need some major rebuilding works; the silt traps were full and therefore have been ineffective for an unknown period, resulting in large amounts of silt deposition within the cave blocking a considerable amount of passage. Mending the water course will reroute water into the silted cave and probably result in entrainment of this during flooding conditions. GP added that approximately 2 m<sup>3</sup> of silt had so far been removed from the cave and that work was ongoing. Dr. Stanton, in connection with digging activities in the 1990's, had previously stated his belief that silt entering Withybrook Slocker could result in blockages downstream; perhaps causing Conning Tower Cave to back up and contributing to more regular flooding of Withyhill Cave in Fairy Cave Quarry. GP confirmed that negotiations were in hand with various external bodies as to responsibility for the engineering works and that it could cost as much as £50,000 to remediate the watercourse and highway!

**Hunters Hole:** Following reports of loose rocks in the arch beneath the pitches, leading to the lower part of the main chamber, three significant blocks of rock were dislodged. Cavers should note that the cave can actually become mildly active in wet conditions, resulting in an enduring likelihood of loose material around the pitches.

**Upper Flood Swallet:** The MCG have been supplied with a further 10 rolls of conservation tape and have signalled their intention to reimburse the £26.50 cost of same.

**Little Crapnell Swallet:** A report received stated that the fixed ladder at the entrance has corroded and a rung is loose. LesW has offered to investigate with a view to repair.

**Singing River Mine:** The entrance gate has corroded in one corner and could be forced open, bypassing the lock. **It needs to be looked at by someone with metalworking skills, please contact [canda@cscc.org.uk](mailto:canda@cscc.org.uk) if you can help.**

**GB Cavern:** Whilst checking a report of the padlock being seized (1<sup>st</sup> February) it was noticed that the metal flap secured by the padlock has been damaged/folded, presumably in the attempt to force an entry. **Again, this could benefit from remedial engineering by someone with the requisite skills. Please contact the Charterhouse Caving Company Secretary ([graham.mullan@wotcc.org.uk](mailto:graham.mullan@wotcc.org.uk)) or [canda@cscc.org.uk](mailto:canda@cscc.org.uk) if you can help.** The damaged lock was replaced by DC on the evening of 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

10.2 - **C&A Projects Team Proposal:** CB said that he would like to have the Council's permission to organise regular weekend C&A events (say, three per year) whereupon an open invite would be extended to any volunteers willing to assist in worthy C&A projects requiring greater manpower than he alone could muster. As a reward to those that assisted, CB said that he would like to provide a BBQ from C&A expenses. The Meeting welcomed the initiative, noting that if there were difficulties in using earmarked C&A funds for the BBQ the cost could be met from the CSCC's other funds. Examples of the sort of projects currently requiring significant manpower are at: Cuckoo Cleaves (where the wall needs rebuilding and fencing needs erecting), and at the Lost Cave of Loxton (where significant concreting is necessary at the entrance). **Any volunteers who would like to sign up to become a member of this ultra-inclusive C&'A-Team' are requested to contact [canda@cscc.org.uk](mailto:canda@cscc.org.uk).**

10.3 - **Cave Name Plates:** CB is looking into the possibility of having more up-to-date cave entrance signs fabricated for the more popular Mendip sites. These will be separate from the MRO 'call-out' signs but possibly ordered at the same time.

10.4 - **Cave Damage Update:** There was no further news from the Police regarding the Swildon's Hole incident. However, on or around 19<sup>th</sup> January the gate in Aveline's Hole was forced. It has now been fixed courtesy of the MHAONB Warden/Dave Speed. This incident has been notified as a crime via the local police so that these cave-related criminal acts are officially noted for regional and national crime statistics.

10.5 - **Compton Martin Ochre Mine:** The entrance was reported as corroded and was kindly fixed by LesW after a plea was sent out for someone with the necessary engineering prowess. Fred Tye of Cotham Caving Group volunteered to examine and report on any sections of the Mine which might require maintenance using the in situ supply of telegraph poles (delivered for this purpose) and CB agreed that the CSCC C&A budget would refund any relevant and reasonable expenses he incurred. Subsequent to his recommendations, a working party will need to replace any rotten supports. Anyone interested in this as a little project should contact [canda@cscc.org.uk](mailto:canda@cscc.org.uk).

*[Note added in proof: Fred Tye has completed his report on stabilisation works which would benefit Compton Martin Ochre Mine and CB has already spoken with Chris Davies about the project. He is very happy to take it on and get his Mines Team onto it in due course. Doug Harris has also agreed to do some work there too.]*

10.6 - **Cuckoo Cleaves:** A working party assisted the landowner, Wayne Starsmore, during the weekend of 6-7<sup>th</sup> January to install his new entrance pipe/lid (courtesy of WCC and WS's father, respectively). Volunteers from WCC and ACG generously and capably spent two days clearing away the old damaged entrance, delivering and installing the new pipe, and landscaping the area. Approximately 38 man hours of effort was logged. Cement and gravel was purchased by WCC for which the CSCC will organise a reimbursement. Further work is still required in order to replace damaged fencing (CSCC has a budget for this) and rebuild the remaining fallen sections of dry stone wall (some of which was previously done by CB). To this end a working party will be created when the clocks change and the ground is less boggy (these are unrelated instances!); see Item 10.2.

10.7 - **Brownes Folly Mine:** Stuart Hales of AWT contacted CB to ask whether he knew of a suitable local person with extensive knowledge of the site who could act as a potential site manager (part of the conditions laid down to AWT by HSE recommendations) so that access to this site could be restored. CB proposed Chris Davies for the role and has liaised accordingly. It is understood that one/some of the entrance gates have been forced since they were welded shut the other year.

10.8 - **Little London Slocker:** A site visit with Graham and Chrissy Price in attendance occurred shortly after the last CSCC Meeting. As reported in December, Somerset Highways have routed a storm drain to deliver water to the swallet rather than letting it run into Oakhill causing potential flooding. This additional water supply at the swallet entrance will probably result in increased settling/movement of the doline, especially since the installation of the piping uncovered a large void formed by a poised boulder (although the space looks enticing it is clearly unstable and, as a swallet, has all the hallmarks of a digging team's nightmare). GP reported that after *considerable* negotiation Somerset Highways have subsequently engineered two new shaft entrances, to the tune of approximately £2,000. Both entrances have been gated and access is through the Cerberus SS. Apparently the H&S procedures in place whilst the contractors did the work were a sight to behold...!

10.9 - **BCA Redraft of the old NCA Conservation & Ethical Caving Codes:** BCA are gradually updating a lot of the old NCA literature and C&A is in the fore. The BCA C&A Officer has called a Meeting of Regional C&A Officers for 10<sup>th</sup> February at which the Conservation & Ethical Caving Codes will be examined. CB said that he could not attend the Meeting (he will be working) but that Linda Wilson (UBSS) had kindly offered to represent the CSCC instead. CB has nonetheless submitted some observations, additions and alterations to the old NCA codes for consideration by the Meeting.

*[Note added in proof: Due to adverse weather conditions the Meeting was rescheduled to 17<sup>th</sup> February.]*

10.10 - **Cookswood Development:** DC said that he understood that Natural England *had* objected to the proposed development. He added that he had not yet made any comment himself, but probably would.

10.11 – **Swildons Blue Pencil Chain:** The Meeting noted that the replacement chain had still not been fitted. As LesW was not present it was not known where the chain was. CB said that he had now received a number of emails commenting on the poor state of the present chain. AG said that the replacement really must be fitted as a matter of urgency and certainly before the AGM!

*[Note added in proof: SK spoke to LesW later the same day. The chain was at Les' house but he agreed to bring it up to the WCC as soon as he could.]*

CB asked that if anyone knew of a supply of fixed ladders suitable for use (eg, for the Lost Cave of Loxton entrance) please could they contact [canda@csc.org.uk](mailto:canda@csc.org.uk).

DC said that Phil Hendy was asking if anyone knew who was digging in Ebbor Gorge? The area around the entrance is apparently quite unsightly and can be seen from Tower Rock. No one at the Meeting had any knowledge. Local archaeologists were suspected. **If anyone has any information on this dig, please can they pass it to Phil Hendy or [canda@csc.org.uk](mailto:canda@csc.org.uk) so that a quiet word can be had.**

## 11. TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

The Training Officer had nothing to report.

## 12. EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

The Equipment Officer was not present but had asked DC to direct the Council's attention to the consultation initiated by the BCA E&T Committee (see Item 13).

## 13. BOLTING COORDINATOR'S REPORT

The Bolting Coordinator was not present and had not sent a report, however SK had been copied in on some email exchanges.

13.1 – **Rhino Rift Bolt Tests:** On 15<sup>th</sup> January, AA and a friend called Jon (who most certainly deserves this mention in dispatches) undertook the testing of every P-bolt on Pitches 1, 2 & 3 in Rhino Rift (over a dozen P-bolts in total). All of the P-bolts were visually inspected (as were any spits nearby that might conceivably also get used in a rigging scheme, and the pieces of 'angle iron' on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Pitches) before being subjected to a straight pull of 6 kN\* for 2 minutes using the CSCC Hydrajaws Pull Tester (which is a registered and calibrated piece of equipment). All of the P-bolts *passed* the pull test, even though a few exhibited a very small (c. 1 mm) amount of twist movement<sup>§</sup>. The spits/angle iron were not tested.

These tests were performed following the posting of an extended sequence of comments from cavers on various Web Forums, many of which intimated that several bolts were "...very LOOSE". These tests clearly show that this is *not* the case.

Another contributor commented "*Public forums are exactly the place that concerns such as these should be aired*". Whilst the CSCC would in no way wish to deny cavers the right of free speech, what it would say to this individual – or anyone else who is genuinely concerned about the security of a P-bolt in the Region – is that the bolt will get inspected/tested a lot quicker if they take the trouble to inform the CSCC directly ([bolting@csc.org.uk](mailto:bolting@csc.org.uk)) rather than hoping someone might spot their posting. The CSCC Officers do not have the time to regularly check Web Forums!

The CSCC would also point out that *not all* the P-bolts in the Region are its responsibility; those that *are* can be viewed on the CSCC Website ([www.csc.org.uk](http://www.csc.org.uk)).

\* To put this force in perspective, if the pull were vertically downwards, 6 kN would be roughly equivalent to the anchor suspending 600 Kg (or 94 stones in old money!).

§ Cavers should note that bolt placement practices have changed since the Rhino bolts were originally installed. These days a small 'lip' is cut in the rock to 'seat' the head of the anchor and reduce the likelihood of it twisting; this was not the practice when the Rhino bolts were placed.

13.2 – **Bolts at Star Shaft:** When Star Shaft was capped last summer the CSCC placed two P-bolts at the top of the shaft for rigging protection (they are not 'hang' bolts). Cavers should note that these bolts are set in concrete and, as such, are *not* covered by the BCA Bolt Placement Insurance Scheme (because concrete has not been type-tested by the NCA/BCA as a substrate). They are however the responsibility of the CSCC and will be listed on the CSCC Website together with a note about their special status.

AA had indicated that he intended to test the bolts to 10 kN. Though the testing was welcomed, those present queried the force that was being proposed (given that underground 'hang' bolts in limestone were only being tested to 6 kN; see above). AA was asked to clarify his reasoning on this.

**ACTION: AA to furnish DC with the necessary information and note about the Star Shaft bolts to update the Website.**

**ACTION: AA to explain why he intends to test the Star Shaft protection bolts to 10 kN.**

13.2 – **BCA E&T Committee Consultation on Anchors, their Installation & Testing:** The Equipment & Techniques Committee of the BCA has started a review of the NCA/BCA Eco-anchor (P-bolt) Scheme in response to changes in legislation since the scheme was first introduced some 15 years ago. Also, in that time over 4500 anchors have been placed countrywide under the Scheme and keeping these regularly tested – to comply with the Best Practice incorporated into the Scheme -is now becoming a major challenge. In all of this caving is not alone; the climbing/mountaineering and industrial rope access communities face similar issues and have their own 'standards'. The BCA is now considering the best way forward for caving.

Just before Christmas the E&T Committee initiated a wide-ranging consultation on the back of almost 60 pages of detail and evidence about the present Scheme, how it came into being, how it operates, and most importantly, how it might change in the future. This documentation can be downloaded from the BCA Website at <http://www.british-caving.org.uk/?page=129>.

The CSCC encourages its Members to read and respond to the consultation (how to respond is detailed on the web page above) **before the end of March 2007**. Remember, the outcome of the consultation will determine how the P-bolts you use in the future will be placed and inspected/tested!

#### 14. WEBMASTERS REPORT

The Webmaster had nothing to report.

#### 15. ASSISTANCE TO UNIVERSITY CLUBS

**CSCC University Club Event:** CB, who has generously taken on the organisation of this event, said that things were coming together. Chris Jewell had passed on the Chair of the CHECC to Maxine Bateman of Southampton University CC and so CB had contacted her instead. Before Christmas she had promised to organise a list of potential attendees but CB said that he had not had any further communications from her or the CHECC since then.

CB said that he would give presentations on the CSCC and its C&A work. Copies of the CSCC Access Handbook will be distributed, along with some other literature from the BCA. And Tim Francis has kindly agreed to give an illustrated talk on the Saturday evening on the new Upper Flood Swallet Extensions. This will be open to all-comers. In addition CB hoped to borrow enough kit in order to run a trip.

CB was asked how many University Clubs had so far confirmed their attendance. CB said that none had actually confirmed, but then it was not a necessity (though he conceded some idea of numbers would be useful). CB added that he could be quite flexible in how he actually worked the weekend, depending on who turned up. It was felt that one last push at advertising the Event would be useful. TF's talk will go ahead regardless.

**ACTION: CB/SMK to use whatever contacts they have to promote the University Club Event.**

*[Note added in proof: As of 7<sup>th</sup> February at least 14 delegates from 4 Universities have expressed a strong interest in attending. A fifth contingent is probable, possibly also a sixth.]*

#### 16. BCA MATTERS

There had been a Meeting of BCA Council on 13<sup>th</sup> January. DC & LesW had attended but SK was too ill.

16.1 – **BCA Indemnity Limit:** SK reminded everyone that the previous CSCC Meeting had considered the plight of the WCMS who had been forced to incur additional expense by extending a separate Public Liability Insurance policy they held (which provided £5M of indemnity) because a Landowner would not accept the BCA policy (limited to £2M of indemnity). SK had subsequently written to the BCA Council on behalf of the CSCC to ask whether the indemnity limit on the BCA policy could be increased to prevent such instances. He had also asked whether the BCA would reimburse the WCMS expenses in this matter.

SK said that in a series of email exchanges with Nick Williams, the BCA Insurance Manager, and David Judson, the BCA Legal & Insurance Officer, it had become clear that whilst it was of course *possible* to increase the indemnity limit, the cost was significant; in round terms it would add £2 to every BCA Members subscription. It was the view of NW and DJ that most cavers would not consider this a reasonable price to pay for access to a small number of additional sites (mostly located outside of the major caving areas). In addition, NW had grave concerns that to adopt this course of action would put the BCA even more at the mercy of the insurance industry. It remained his view that £2M was perfectly adequate and he had even managed to convince some Landowners/Organisations, that had initially asked for £5M, of this. NW noted that in this respect the actions of some other National Governing Bodies had been less than helpful to the cause of the BCA. SK said that he had therefore conceded this point.

DC said that in respect of SK's other point, the BCA Council decided that it would *not* reimburse the recurrent costs incurred by Access Control Bodies that had to seek alternative PL insurance cover. This was seen as setting a dangerous precedent. However the BCA Council *did* agree that the one-off costs incurred by the WCMS in securing and managing the site in question could be viewed as legitimate C&A work and therefore could be grant-aided to some extent.

DC also said that SK's proposal that the BCA produce a 'guidance note' on negotiating access, complete with arguments as to why the £2M limit was sufficient (and that could be used on Landowners), was well received.

*[Please see the Minutes of the BCA Council Meeting held on January 13<sup>th</sup> for the formal position of the BCA on this matter.]*

**ACTION: SK to respond to the WCMS.**

**ACTION: WCMS to supply the CSCC C&A Officer with an itemised and supported claim for the one-off costs incurred in respect of Bedlams Bank Quarry.**

**ACTION: CB to formally lodge a claim for grant-aid for the WCMS expenses with the BCA C&A Officer.**

16.2 – **Other Feedback from the BCA Council Meeting:** DC said that the Council had agreed that the £8 subscription rate for 'students' would now apply to all 'under-18's'. Also, a proposal would go before the AGM in March to allow some of the surplus from the Insurance Scheme to be spent on other areas of the BCA's work. This was being proposed because the Scheme had now amassed a sufficiently large 'sink fund' to cover the policy excess in the event of a claim and there was a view that the surplus would benefit caving more if it was spent, rather than if it was left in a bank account.

## 17. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CSCC University Club Training Event, February 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> 2007.

“An Illustrated Tour of the Upper Flood Swallet Extensions” with Tim Francis, MCG  
Hunters Lodge Inn, February 24<sup>th</sup> 2007, 20:00 hrs. *A small donation towards the hire of the Function Room is requested.*

Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show, NEC, 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> March 2007 - <http://www.theoutdoorsshow.co.uk/>

BCA Annual General Meeting & Council Meeting, March 24<sup>th</sup> 2007.

BCA ‘Try Caving’ Weekend, May 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> 2007 - <http://www.trycaving.co.uk/>

Bristol Open Doors Day, September 8<sup>th</sup> 2007 - <http://www.bristoldoorsopenday.org/>

## 18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The BCA will have a stand, including an artificial cave – at the **Outdoors Show** at the NEC in Birmingham in March. Volunteers are required to help man it (in return for discounted entry). Anyone interested in helping out should contact Chris Jewell, the BCA Youth Development Officer, at [casjcave@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:casjcave@yahoo.co.uk) as soon as possible.

Chris Jewell is also coordinating the National ‘Try Caving’ Weekend, May 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>. The dates have been chosen so as to deliberately coincide with the annual BPC Winch Meet at Gaping Ghyll in the Dales – arguably the original ‘try caving’ opportunity for the general public. However this year the BCA would like Clubs across the country to open their doors, organise events and run simple trips for anyone who turns up to see what caving is about. See <http://www.british-caving.org.uk/phpbb2/viewtopic.php?t=208> for more information. The BCA will promote the weekend. Clubs that are insured by the BCA *will* be covered under the terms of the BCA policy *provided* that they collect the names and addresses of any participating non-members.

The Meeting judged that that the CSCC itself did not have the resources to take on the organisation of ‘Try Caving’ events across its region, though it will do what it can to assist Member Clubs. The CSCC appeals to its Member Clubs to give generously of their time, expertise and resources to make this weekend a success. If your Club *does* decide to do something, please let the CSCC know!

The BCA have issued some ‘Guidance on Running a Caving Trip Event’. Copies are available free from the CSCC Secretary, [secretary@csc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@csc.org.uk).

## 19. DATES OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETINGS

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

19<sup>th</sup> May 2007 (AGM)

**NB: Subsequent to the Meeting it was pointed out that the already long advertised date of the next CSCC Meeting, 5<sup>th</sup> May, fell on a Bank Holiday Saturday. Following extensive consultation, both amongst the Officers and with the Club Representatives, it has been decided to move the AGM to the date above. The CSCC apologises for any inconvenience this may cause.**

September 2007 (tbc)

December 2007 (tbc)

February 2008 (tbc)

May 2008 (tbc)