

Treasurer's report to CSCC AGM, 8th May 2004

1 Balance sheet

A balance sheet is attached for income, expenditure and assets during calendar year 2003.

2 Administration

Thanks to a NCA grant for £400 relating to previous years' activity including £200 towards Star Mine work, we ended the year with a surplus on income. We are very grateful to Mendip Caving Group for a recent grant of £130 towards cave conservation. We administered NCA subs in our region during 2003, on behalf of the National Caving Association. We agreed an increase in subs at the 2003 AGM, and this took effect at the start of 2004. Unfortunately the income benefit from this was immediately eroded with the need to pay £100 for CSCC insurance. In 2003 I gave advance notice that I might resign this year. It is now 2004 and I shall be resigning at the AGM.

3 Membership and income

42 clubs paid subscriptions for the year 2003, including 2003's subs received in 2002. Since then, East Sussex Scouts Caving Team has had to suspend membership because of lack of support, and there has been a slower rate of renewal in 2004 than in previous years. As I write (4th May) only 32 clubs have renewed for 2004. Recent years' problems affecting caving (foot & mouth, university club constraints, and latterly the insurance scare) are continuing to have a significant effect on participation levels. The following clubs are hereby reminded about 2004 subs:

Avon & Somerset Constabulary Caving Club, Barnet Caving Group, Combined Services Caving Association, Cotham Speleological Society, Hewlett Packard Caving Club, Southsea Spelæological Society, Surrey Youth Caving Group, University of Portsmouth Caving Club, WAYA CC incorporating ISG.

4 National Caving Association

There is a separate NCA sub, £15, and £60 for constituent bodies including CSCC. NCA membership in the CSCC area is similar to our own: 39 of the 42 clubs paid for 2003. We are grateful to NCA for granting £400 to CSCC in January 2003 towards 2001 and 2002 access and conservation expenses. Unfortunately, because of further changes in NCA eligibility rules, no CSCC work in 2003 was eligible for grants.

5 Looking ahead

The end of 2003 saw the start of the British Caving Association, initially to manage caving insurance. BCRA and NCA members during 2004 were granted free membership of BCA, though of course insurance had to be paid for. 2005 or 2006 now looks like being the earliest year when BCA extends its links with the regions, with titling from subscriptions by BCA members who nominate CSCC as their primary region. My 2003 AGM report and the paper "*Funding the Regions*" took the view that we might have about 35 club members in that scenario. I do not see titling being higher on average than £15 per club, though there might be banding (between £10 and £20) to allow consistency with other parts of Britain.

As we currently operate we require 'steady state' income of roundly £800 a year, including costs of insurance. The £800 includes provision for some CSCC involvement in funding shaft work. On that basis, the income gap is now about £170 per year after allowing for insurance costs. I do not propose that we increase subs again this year, as they were only increased last year, and we are now around the norm for larger regions. I do however propose that we now agree to implement individual membership from 2005, having agreed the principle at the 2003 AGM. Provisionally we should aim for a £10 sub for individual members. The BCRA in particular has a large number of individual members, some of whom may want to tithe their membership to individual regions as the BCA links develop. I would hope that this source of income would be useful to CSCC.

6 Reserves

I was asked at a recent CSCC meeting about the 'right level' of CSCC reserve funds. These are now around £3500-4000. The simple answer is that there is no 'right level' – we are simply better able to intervene and help than if we didn't have the fund. The attached table (after the balance sheet) shows that overall sources of reserve income have effectively dried up – the main gain was in the period 1997-2000. So the reserves are a finite resource. With farming land costing £2000 or more per acre, reserves could quickly diminish if just one major cave entrance suddenly needed large scale CSCC intervention. With the current fund level, CSCC now has the flexibility to support a range of projects, if it chooses to.

JR / CSCC 4 v 04