

# BCA's Youth and Development Campaign

At the December BCA meeting the decision was made to launch a youth and development campaign.

The campaign is about removing all the obstacles to starting caving and continuing to cave, not about 'selling' caving to people and simply recruiting more cavers. We want to help people who are interested in caving. Along the way we hope the publicity generated will also benefit caving by making the general public more aware of what caving is about.

The campaign will be launched at **Hidden Earth 2006** and will tackle the issue in from two different directions:

- **Encouraging non cavers who are part of the general public**
- **Supporting University Cavers and their clubs and encouraging people to continue after University.**

- **To encourage non cavers we have produced leaflets explaining how to get involved in caving and these will be sent to outdoor centres, outdoor shops, show caves etc..**
- **There is also a website at [www.trycaving.co.uk](http://www.trycaving.co.uk) for prospective cavers to find out more and clubs to advertise.**
- **We are sending out this letter to all the university clubs to explain why it is important to work closely with regular clubs and how to go about it. A similar letter is also going to the regular clubs to encourage them to become more involved with the university clubs.**
- **The result of this for university clubs should be an increase in member numbers but hopefully also some new university caving clubs starting up. To assist in this process we have produced a guide to starting a university caving club, which will be sent to all universities without a caving club.**

**Prior to this all caving clubs in the country will be receiving this letter to explain what the BCA is doing and help them prepare for the campaign. This is because it is not enough for the BCA to promote caving – clubs must be open and willing to accept people as well.**

# Building a Closer Relationship with Regular Clubs

**A large number of the people who start caving at university stop when they leave and one of the best ways to avoid this is getting them involved with a regular club.**

**There are lots of things a university club can get from a regular club such as advice, the benefit of experience, knowledge and skills. There are also the obvious activities such as being invited on caving trips, expeditions, and digging projects.**

**The combined affect of these over a long period of time is that the University club becomes a more active, more knowledgeable more experienced club, which in turn makes the club more prosperous and popular.**

**Finally overall it will keep more people involved with caving!!!!**

## For the Individual

When people leave university many of them **move away**, which means **away from the caving club**. Suddenly all the peripheral activities such as going to the pub mid week disappear and they become **left out of club activities**.

Alternatively some stay close to university and involved with club activities, helping out and looking after the club. However this can become a massive burden for ex-members making sure the club doesn't fold, worrying about it and spending all their time teaching and training. **At the same time as they aren't learning any new skills or getting involved in new projects so they may get burnt out, bored and tired.**

By joining a regular club they get the opportunity to keep caving regularly, with people in the same situation as themselves, with a club whose activities rotate around caving areas. **Plus they can get involved with new projects, meet new people and learn new skills so they are motivated to keep caving.**

At the same time the **uni club doesn't have to suffer** because they can stay involved through a regular club and therefore help the uni club even more. They can become the **link with their old uni club and help pass on skills and experience**. In fact their contact becomes even more valuable as they learn more and gain experience and they can make sure their uni club gets involved with projects and trips abroad, ensuring a healthy caving club.

## For the Club

**Slowly but surely the experience level of the club increases and it becomes more active, more ambitious and more attractive to prospective members**

When fresher's join they realise they are part of something big which extends beyond University and people are **more likely to keep caving** after they've left university and moved away.

The regular club becomes a **meeting ground for old members and the current club**. This means you can still benefit from the **experience of the older members – whilst allowing them to move on**.

These means your club is not dependent on a few 'old lags' – you are associated with a whole club!!

One objection might be that if all the older members move on the university club loses – but this is avoided by being involved with the club they move on to.

## Practicalities

- **Anyone who is leaving this year or next – get them to join a regular club!! Then they can become the link to your uni club.**
- **Speak to the regular clubs. They have received a similar letter to this one, from the other perspective.**
- **Ask to go on trips and expeditions with regular clubs.**
- **Come to the Youth and Development presentation at Hidden Earth on Sunday at 12.15 in the Peak lecture theatre**

### **What about insurance?**

Members of regular clubs should have BCA public liability insurance and your members will have BCA insurance and/or students' union public liability insurance.

### **Will Students Unions and Universities object to mixing with regular clubs?**

BCA advice is that University clubs should seek guidance from experienced cavers and this association can only be seen as a good thing.

However it is not recommended that you be totally reliant on outside help – your club needs to remain independent and you have the ultimate responsibility for your members.