

# BCA's 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.**

- **We have produced leaflets explaining how to get involved in caving and these will be sent to outdoor centres, outdoor shops, show caves etc..**
- **These point people to a website [www.trycaving.co.uk](http://www.trycaving.co.uk) for prospective cavers to find out more and clubs to advertise.**
- **All University caving clubs will be getting a pack about how to become more associated with regular clubs.**
- **All regular 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**

**The BCA is trying to start the ball rolling on an issue which is a major concern to the caving community. We do not pretend to have all the answers, this is just the start – the real work will have to be done by you - but we are here for support.**

# University Caving Clubs need your help!!

## Help University clubs by:

- **Sharing skills, experience and knowledge.**
- **Giving them opportunities to take part in projects and trips.**
- **Providing membership after University.**

University cavers often rely on knowledge being passed down through the years but as members leave, this knowledge is often lost. At the same time there is even greater pressure on uni clubs in terms of training and safety today. If University clubs can show that their skill levels are high, due to training with regular clubs this can help them.

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. By getting people involved with UK projects (digging, surveying, conservation etc..) or expeditions abroad they will get a wider appreciation of caving and are more likely to keep taking part.

Regular clubs need new members and University clubs are a good source of keen young cavers often with a reasonable level of experience. If we want to have expeditions abroad and digs in this country then caving needs fresh blood. We don't want clubs to die off with all their associated history.

When cavers leave University they often move away from their University town and lose touch with their uni club. If they do stay involved then they don't learn new skills or get involved with new projects and slowly lose motivation. The burden of responsibility for the club falls on their shoulders and the club can stagnate.

By building a closer relationship with uni cavers a club can ensure a source of new members and make sure caving continues to flourish, whilst at the same time help university clubs gain experience, skills and fend off legislative threats.

- **Remove barriers to someone joining. E.g. don't expect them to attend a committee meeting at a time they can't possibly make or be proposed by a group of cavers who will never take students caving.**
- **Create a university liaison officer**
- **Invite them on trips and expeditions**
- **Is there a University club in your home town? Then go along and meet them. If you drive to a caving region they will always appreciate an extra car.**
- **Contact a university club who stays at your hut regularly and suggest you adopt the club!**
- **Offer a discount rate for membership for current students**
- **Contact CHECC (Council of Higher Education Caving clubs) [www.checc.org](http://www.checc.org)**

## **Welcoming new cavers or those who have never tried caving**

**Contrary to popular belief caving has not declined because the ‘youth of today are a lazy playstation generation’ In fact statistics suggest that outdoor pursuits and adventure activities are thriving.**

Membership of the BMC and the Ramblers Association continues to increase. Every year more and more students take gap years to go on expeditions to rebuild huts and dig for water, trek through mountains and take part in adventure sports. Finally the adventure activity market is booming. Everywhere there are adverts for companies running outdoor activity courses.

However the nature of outdoor pursuits has changed drastically. Today’s society is a time poor one where people prefer to dip in and out of activities. They are less likely to commit to spending every weekend caving. Instead they want something they can pick up now and again. Caving is likely to become just one activity done in conjunction with several others.

These people may have the initiative to seek out a caving club but when there are so many other activities competing for their time they will pick those which they see first and which are easiest to become involved with.

- **How does someone start caving?**
- **If they contacted your club and said they had “been caving once and wanted to join the club” or had “never been at all but wanted to try caving” – how would you respond?**
- **Do you have novice trips and weekends?**
- **Would it be intimidating for someone new to come to your hut for a weekend if they didn’t know anyone?**

**University clubs introduce large numbers of people to caving every year because:**

- The club is actively looking for new members so people feel welcomed.
- A group of novice cavers can all join together so they know they won’t be the only new one.
- The trips will be suitable and equipment and training will be provided.
- There are no hoops to jump through prior to joining.

**Regular clubs may not be able to replicate all of the above conditions but they can probably learn something.**

# [www.trycaving.co.uk](http://www.trycaving.co.uk)

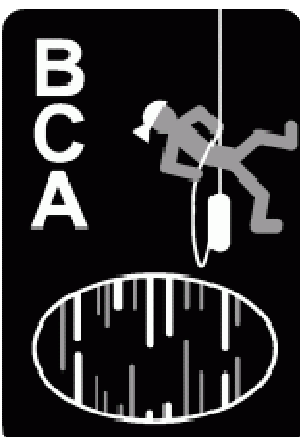
Is a new website for anyone who is interested in getting into the sport. The concept is that it will provide a single place for all prospective cavers and current cavers to meet.

- Register your club and contact details
- Write a short description/advert for your club
- Advertise novice events (trips and training sessions) on the calendar
- Talk to prospective cavers in the forum (hosted by UKcaving.com)
- Put a link to [www.trycaving.co.uk](http://www.trycaving.co.uk) on your club website.
- Have any questions about this campaign – find out more on the website

## Launch at Hidden Earth 2006

There will be a presentation on Sunday at 12.15 in the Peak Lecture Theatre.

Please come along to find out more about the campaign and how you can be involved and ask any questions you have.



[www.british-caving.org.uk](http://www.british-caving.org.uk)



[www.checc.org](http://www.checc.org)