

# CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PROVISIONAL MEMBERS (2016)

### History

The Society in its present form was constituted in October 1959 from two groups: one was a former society of the same name founded in October 1956 whose founder members had caved as part of the 1st Chelsea Boy Scouts and the other was the London Spelaeological Group which was formed in 1938. In 1964 CSS acquired a cottage called Whitewalls above Llangattock in South Wales from which it bases activities in that area. The cottage has 16 bunk beds, gas central heating, cooking and washing facilities, as well as a garden for camping. An extension to the cottage creating an upstairs library room, two showers, new toilets and a cave rescue store room was added in recent years.

### Membership

The Society currently has around 100 members, encompassing a wide range of abilities from complete novice upwards. The members are now spread across the whole of the UK, and a few who live abroad continue their membership. Those based in the South East of England are now a minority within the club. New members must be at least 18 years of age and they join on a provisional basis for six months until they become known to the club and then are usually voted up to full membership. Associate membership is available for people who just want copies of club publications but do not intend to participate in caving activities. Joint membership is available for two full members living at the same address receiving one copy of club publications. There is no 'joint-provisional' category of membership. All members must also be part of the BCA public liability insurance scheme. There are different rates for active and non-active cavers. Because BCA insurance always covers a period ending 31<sup>st</sup> December it often extends beyond the provisional membership period.

### Indoor Meetings

The Annual General Meeting is held once a year, usually on the last Sunday in each January, at a venue near Whitewalls and there is an annual club dinner in a local hotel the evening before the AGM. The club no longer holds any meetings in London as very few members are now based there. The AGM elects a new committee (often the same people continue) to run the club for the coming year.

### Weekend Caving Trips

The Society runs regular underground trips, using club equipment, to caving areas around Britain. In addition, foreign caving expeditions are sometimes organised by members. These are advertised on the club website, in the newsletter, and via an email mailing list. One weekend of each month is a "club weekend" at Whitewalls or elsewhere. There will be caving trips and sometimes other above-ground entertainments like a summer barbecue, kayaking, mountain biking or walking trips, a bonfire party and a curry night. The club has leaders, keys and permits for local caves such as Agen Allwedd, OFD, Dan-yr-Ogof, Daren Cilau, Craig a'r Ffynnon and Ogof Capel. Use of Whitewalls costs £2.50 per night to provisional and full members. Non-CSS guests pay £5. Many full members hold a cottage key on a semi-permanent basis while provisional members may temporarily borrow a front door key from the Cottage Warden or Secretary.

### Publications

The Society produces a quarterly Newsletter that is posted free to all members. This is a high quality glossy magazine with photographs and articles written mainly by members. Other publications, such as Records and cave surveys, are printed from time to time and are sold to members at reduced rates. Newsletters can also be received by email and back issues are available on the website. A member list is produced once a year with periodic updates: this is issued to all members usually each January. You can choose how much contact information to include about yourself in this members list, but it is helpful to list at least one phone number and an email address as well as your home address so other members can contact you easily.

### Library

The club owns an extensive library of caving publications which may be borrowed by full members. The library room at Whitewalls is accessible to all full members, and is now operational although some cataloguing and stocking of shelves is still ongoing.

### Website / Forum

The Society has a web site [www.chelseaspelaeo.org.uk](http://www.chelseaspelaeo.org.uk) which contains up-to-date information about the club, its activities and lists external bookings for the cottage. The website also links to a members forum which is often used to arrange mid-week trips and to circulate late breaking information. The forum can be found at: [cssmembers.proboards.com](http://cssmembers.proboards.com) Please join it using your real name as it is a private members-only forum.

### Subscription rates for 2016

Associate:	£24 (Year)	Full:	£30 (Year)
Joint Full:	£40 (Year)	Provisional:	£10 (any 6 month period)

**BCA "active caver" insurance rate** (rates current at time of writing)

1 year	£17 (if joining between 1 <sup>st</sup> October and 31 <sup>st</sup> March)
9 months	£12.75 (if joining between 1 <sup>st</sup> April and 30 <sup>th</sup> June)
6 months	£8.50 (if joining between 1 <sup>st</sup> July and 30 <sup>th</sup> September)

For non-active insurance (cavers who never go underground), the annual rate is £6, however provisional members need to be insured as "active cavers". These premiums are passed directly to BCA on your behalf.

The club financial year begins each October 1st but provisional members may join or re-join at any date, and must also pay the appropriate rate for BCA active-caver public liability insurance. The British Caving Association (BCA) operates this insurance scheme for cavers through their clubs. If you are a member of another BCA caving club then you may already have BCA insurance. In this case you will not need to pay again: please indicate this and complete the relevant details on the membership form. All club members need to be part of the BCA insurance scheme. It ensures that British caving runs smoothly and many access agreements can remain in place.

**How to become a member**

New provisional members wishing to join should send a cheque payable to *Chelsea Spelæological Society* along with a completed membership application form (below) to the Secretary. You will then start to receive club Newsletters and the handbook containing all the other members' contact details. If you do not have a cheque account then contact the Treasurer or Secretary to ask for the club's bank account details to pay online instead.

The committee will normally consider voting provisional members up to full membership after 6 months by which time they should have become known to others both on caving trips and the occasional social event. You do not need to find a proposer and seconder as the committee will consider you automatically at its next meeting about 6 months after you joined as a provisional member. It helps us though if the people you have been caving with can send some supportive comments informally to committee members. Provisional membership can be extended for another 6 months, but only once, if a provisional member has been unable to become known socially and as an active caver within the club.

Once you have been approved by the committee as a full member, your name will appear in the Newsletter for the membership at large to comment if they wish to. Usually nobody does pass any comments, good or bad, and so you would then automatically become a full member one month after that Newsletter had appeared. In the unlikely event of there being any adverse comments from other club members, your application for membership would return to the next committee meeting for further discussion, and we would tell you that had happened.

The treasurer contacts the new full member to let them know the pro-rata full membership fee to cover the period until the next 30th September which is the end of the CSS financial year. The treasurer's decision about interim membership payments is final.

Once you have become a full member, then from 1st October in each year you will be on the same subscription charging basis as all the other full or joint members and you should pay the BCA insurance for the following calendar year at the same time as renewing your CSS membership for the coming fiscal year for the club.

If you live with someone else who is also a full member at the same postal address then you can choose to convert two full memberships into one joint membership where only one set of Newsletters is posted out, or convert a joint membership back into two separate full memberships, as you wish. The treasurer will work out what rebate or charge applies in these circumstances, and the treasurer's decision on the maths is final.

**Club database**

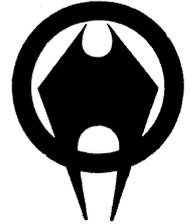
The club holds membership information and contact details on a computer database to facilitate administration. We never share information about our members, whether stored in the database or any other form of media, with any third parties except with BCA, for insurance purposes. The database is stored on a secure web server to which only key officers of the club have access.

From time to time you may be sent a copy of the database page with the details we keep about you. Please tell the secretary if anything is incorrect as it is important we keep this information accurate and up-to-date.

The club officers using the database include the secretary (for your contact details and status within the club), the treasurer (for your subscription and insurance position), the hut warden (if you have a permanent cottage key or you owe or overpaid any cottage fees), and the Records Officer (if you want paper newsletters posting out to yourself, or someone else on your behalf, and whether you want an email newsletter in addition to or instead).

You can choose how much contact information to disclose in the annual members handbook, for instance whether to include your email address or mobile telephone number. But these details might be useful to the committee for club administration purposes and so we encourage you to include them in the handbook. We try to keep a current paper list of members' next of kin in the library room at Whitewalls for the unlikely event of handling a serious incident, and this information is also in the club database but again you can choose not to give details of next of kin.

# CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

*Please send this form with a cheque for the appropriate amount made payable to "CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY" to the club secretary: Adrian Fawcett, 5 Ambryn Road, New Inn, Pontypool, NP4 0NJ. Please call Adrian on 07973 815050 if you have any questions.*

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone numbers: (home): \_\_\_\_\_ (work): \_\_\_\_\_  
(mobile): \_\_\_\_\_

Email : \_\_\_\_\_

Write "HIDE" against any contact details that you do not want shown in the **members handbook**, which is circulated to all club members each year and to new members when they join the club.

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ N.B. You must be 18 years of age or older to join CSS

Person to be contacted in an emergency (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Their address and telephone numbers: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Membership of any other caving clubs: \_\_\_\_\_

Caving experience: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any special caving interests: \_\_\_\_\_

BCA Insurance: Please tick one box below, as appropriate:

I do not require BCA insurance through Chelsea SS because I already have this insurance via \_\_\_\_\_ (club) BCA membership number \_\_\_\_\_

Joining between these dates:

1<sup>st</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> March  
(insurance runs to end of December this year)

1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> June  
(insurance runs to end of December this year)

1<sup>st</sup> July and 30<sup>th</sup> September  
(insurance runs to end of December this year)

1<sup>st</sup> October and 31<sup>st</sup> December  
(insurance runs to end of following December)

I require "active caver"  
insurance.

£17.00

£12.75

£8.50

£17.00

Amount payable: 6 months provisional subs £10.00 + £ \_\_\_\_\_ insurance = total £ \_\_\_\_\_

If you would prefer to pay online by bank transfer, bank account details are available on request.

Constitution Rule 9 of the 2009 CSS Constitution states:

*Every person whether a member or not, making use of the services of a guide or guides or taking part in any activity or expedition organised by the Society or in which any member of the Society shall take part, shall do so at his or her own risk, and he/she or his/her legal representatives or assigns or dependants shall have no claim or right of action against the Society or any member thereof in respect any damage, loss or injury sustained, including death, notwithstanding any negligence of the guide or any members of the body of members of the Society.*

I have read the Society's Constitution and made special note of Rule 9, shown above, and if my application is accepted, agree to abide by its terms and any amendments which may be passed by a Meeting of the Society's members. I also agree to my contact details being stored in the CSS database which will be used solely for the purpose of administering the club and for creating the members list booklet which is circulated to the other club members.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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