

Ghar Parau Foundation Meeting – 21st February 2010, Held at Conformance Ltd, Great Hucklow, Derbyshire.

Present:

Andy Eavis (AE) – Trustee & Chair
Nick Williams (NW) – Trustee
Paul Ibberson (PI) – Treasurer
Wookey (W) – Elected Member
Phil Rowsell (PR) – Elected Member
Ed Waters (EW) – Elected Member
Hilary Greaves (HG) – Elected Member

1. Matters Arising

- a. EW Agreed to take minutes in the secretary's absence.
- b. It was agreed to add the following items to the agenda;
 - i. Fundraising & Publicity
 - ii. Tratman Award
 - iii. GPF committee processes

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from;

Roo Walters (RW) – Secretary
Dave Judson (DJ) - Trustee
Allan Richardson (AR) – BCRA Foreign Secretary
Dave Cooke (DC) – BCA Treasurer

3. Minutes of the Meeting 27th September 2009

PR Noted that the minutes stated that GPF Christmas cards would be prepared and ready for selling by this meeting. He stated that though he was prepared to do this task, he had not agreed to this timescale.

PI noted that no feedback had been received from the Mount Everest Foundation (MEF) with respect to the application for MEF funds for the Vietnam expedition. DJ to contact MEF to find out what has happened, and to ensure good links remain between GPF/MEF.

W noted that no one on the GPF committee had contacted him at Christmas time with regard to reminding him to update the application forms etc. He noted that work was now underway, but behind schedule. He requested another reminder to this effect in one month. **Action: All GPF Committee members to remind Wookey about application form / website updates by 12st March 2010.**

4. Matters Arising

No specific matters were raised at this stage. All matters arising from previous meetings are dealt with under the appropriate agenda headings.

5. Finances

PI presented the accounts for the year ending 31st December 2009. PI noted that interest rates are still very low, hence returns from the fund are correspondingly low. A major donation has been received from York University Cave & Pothole Club (YUCPC) due to clearance of a defunct expedition bank account. The Hidden Earth income of £3000 represents money from the 2007 & 2008 events. The BCA income of £5000 includes £1000 held over from the previous year.

The fund income is therefore £10,659. Awards of £1000 were partially balanced by £600 of grant retentions, thus leading to the net GPF grants of £400. £300 was awarded as four Alex Pitcher Awards of £75 each – some feedback has already been received. The £500 China Caves Project (CCP) was for the single such award made last year. The £5000 of BCA awards is as discussed at the meetings last year.

The fund was incremented by £589 during the year.

The cash flow forecasts show there is sufficient to put another £1000 into bonds. PI also suggested that the further £2000 to come from Hidden Earth 2009 should also be added to bonds in the hope that interest rates will rise to the 4-5% level in the near future. This would provide approximately £2,000 to distribute.

AE Noted that although growth of the fund was a worthy aim, it should not be at the expense of distributing money to a good list of applications at this round.

PI then suggested the following funds should be made available for distribution;

- £ 900 of interest as GPF awards.
- £1000 of BCA awards brought forward from previous year
- £5000 of BCA awards from this year

He also suggested that some of the c.£1000 in the bank could be made available this year. It was also suggested that the single China application could be funded entirely via the CCP. It was also noted that only one advanced notification for the second round had been received (Ethiopia), though PR stated that he knows of two further potential applicants (Burma & China). PI therefore suggested that £1000 of BCA funding be deferred to Round 2, and that £1000 of the GPF bank funds be set aside to cover Round 2 also. Any such funds remaining after Round 2 could then be used to increment the fund.

This then provided £5900, plus any CCP awards, to distribute during this round. This also allows the £2000 from Hidden Earth 2009 to be invested in the fund.

PI also noted that at present there are £650 of retentions outstanding awaiting expedition feedback forms from 8 expeditions. **Action: PI to remind each of the expedition leaders to return feedback forms.**

6. Awards

AE stated that a better committee synopsis is required prior to the meeting. He noted that several, inconsistent, synopses had been provided by several committee members. A final version was only made available on the morning of the meeting. This had produced confusion. In future a single, accurate, and timely synopsis is essential. This is the duty of the secretary. AE suggested discussing each expedition, in the order provided by RW's synopsis prior to deciding the awards.

Prior to this PI asked about Alex Pitcher Awards, noting that in previous years the committee has tried to fund all applications. EW suggested funding all eight applications at the same level as last year (£75 each). PR raised concern that the committee would be "fixing" the Alex Pitcher Award level, which could cause problems in years with a large number of applications. NW stated that the level of Pitcher award funding would be examined on its merits each year.

GPF2010a-001 CUCC Austria

W noted that for a university expedition that there are only two students attending. PI noted that last year's expedition has provided full feedback, including the Alex Pitcher awards. AE noted that the expedition has a large number of people involved. NW noted that a good level of GPF support may encourage more students to attend. He also noted that this is a significantly more experienced team than previous CUCC Austria expeditions, with ambitious objectives. NW also noted that the scientific aspects (namely bat research) were worthy of support.

GPF2010a-002 Culiembro, Spain

W noted that this is a hard pushing trip involving diving and climbing. PI noted the lack of feedback from last year's expedition. PR was surprised by this, as Chris Jewell has a good record of publication (indeed the expedition report is available) *Post meeting Note: PR contacted Chris Jewell with reference to the lack of feedback. It appears that an attempt was made to send the feedback form, but IT issues had prevented this. Chris will forward a completed form to PI in the near future.* PR provided background to the expedition, involving climbing beyond 5 sumps, and further sumps to push. NW noted that it is a strong team. PR noted that all members are employed.

GPF2010a-003 Tianxing, China

AE noted that only a small proportion of the team are UK nationals (5 out of 17), and that 3 of the UK cavers live in China. However, this is a good project with a strong team.

GPF2010a-004 ICCS Vodna Sled, Slovenia

W noted that the team includes lots of students, including 4 on their first expedition and two Alex Pitcher applicants. HG noted that the university financial support enjoyed by previous ICCC expeditions has been totally cut. EW noted the excellent track record of publication. W also noted that these expeditions were becoming tougher, with deep camping required.

GPF2010a-005 YUCPC Durmitor, Montenegro

AE noted that this is a new group pushing into a new area with very exciting prospects. HG noted the high number of students, therefore deserving support. W noted that this expedition had similar hallmarks to the first SUSS expedition to Crete, and therefore deserved good support to encourage further. AE noted minor concern over the level of experience of the team.

GPF2010a-006 EPC Kelmend, Albania

PR noted the combined climbing / caving nature of the expedition, and questioned the proportion of each activity to take place. AE noted that this area required a significant amount of surface work to establish potential, but indications are very good. W noted the problems previous expeditions have had with security and theft in Albania.

GPF2010a-007 SUSS White Mountains, Crete

PR noted the excellent track record in discoveries and publication that SUSS have built up over the past few years. W noted the large number of students on the trip. AE noted that the proposed area is very good, with at least two good ongoing leads.

GPF2010a-008 OUCC Sima la Chapa, Spain

HG noted the disappointing number of students on this years expedition, and the difficulty in getting them to sign up early. W noted that the expedition had still managed to include 6 students, and had made 2 Alex Pitcher applications. HG noted good potential, with a new entrance discovered by the Spanish, which they have now handed to OUCC. AE noted concern over the plans to purchase and sell a vehicle as part of the expedition budget.

GPF2010a-009 Joe Duxbury, Montenegro

PI noted that feedback had been received from last year's expedition, and that the team has open leads to return to. PR noted that this is a team of fully employed people, possibly needing less support than students. PI noted that this expedition was located about 150km (a long way) from the YUCPC team.

GPF2010a-010 Matienzo, Spain

NW noted that this is a team made up of experienced expedition cavers. PR & W noted however that the Matienzo trips have a fine track record of introducing young cavers to expeditions. NW noted that these expeditions have a terrific track record in exploration and publication. W also noted that these expeditions are open to anyone to join. HG suggested that GPF request that any award be targeted at the younger / more needy members of the expedition.

GPF2010a-011 Alan Baybrooke, Belize

PR noted that the team is made up of employed personnel. NW expressed scepticism of the team's ability to carry out objectives, citing underestimation of the difficulty of the terrain (from personal experience). PR noted that it is a reasonable team, but noted that the Belize authorities are requiring a heavy burden of archaeological constraints on the team. AE noted the good photographic ability of team members.

GPF2010a-012 MCG Sierra de las Nieves, Spain

EW explained the expedition, noting excellent local contacts. However, objectives are at the mercy of what the local cavers want the team to do. The team is made up of employed personnel. Though there are no students, there are several people on their first expedition.

GPF2010a-013 Jason Mallinson Pozo Azul, Spain

All were impressed at the technical difficulties of this expedition, requiring camping beyond a 5km long 60m deep sump, to quote from the application "*The equipment required for this type of expedition does not yet exist*" HG expressed confusion over the expedition budget, which seems very low, it is assumed that this does not include much of the equipment needed. EW asked about the political situation, re the EKPP push at the site last year. PR noted that the EKPP are no longer allowed access to the site after upsetting the locals. AE noted the very high quality of the team.

GPF2010a-014 Red Dragon, Malaysia

AE noted that no dates have been provided for this expedition. W noted that Tony Donovan is in the field now, can the GPF deal with retrospective awards? AE noted the very high budget for this venture. EW noted the application for a very large grant from the Sports Council for Wales, would a GPF award be sensible if the SCW grant is awarded? W asked how could the level of SCW award actually obtained be ascertained? NW phoned Elsie Little (Expedition nominated referee). Elsie noted that the SCW have yet to have a meeting, money is available but Elsie is not aware how many expeditions have applied. The expedition does include a very large area of unexplored limestone, and Tony Donovan is currently carrying out a reconnaissance. Elsie was not aware of expedition dates, only that it was for "later this year". PR phoned Martin Groves (named as an expedition member) for further details. Martin stated that the expedition would be in late July early August. Martin was unable to clarify the budget details, but did note that most diving equipment would be hired locally and that there were no large special costs associated with this expedition.

PR proposed that all eight of the Alex Pitcher awards be made, at a level of £75 each. This was agreed, leaving £5300 for distribution.

AE noted that this was possibly the best list of applications he had ever seen, with all applicants having a good case for support. This is very pleasing. This would however make dividing the funds difficult.

PR proposed an award of £200 for the Matienzo expedition. This level of award recognises that individuals do not need GPF support, but does

emphasise the GPF's ongoing support for this excellent project. That the level of award is less than last year is no reflection on the quality of the Matienzo project, but a reflection on the number and quality of other applications this year.

AE initially proposed no award for the Red Dragon expedition on the grounds that a large award is expected from the SCW. NW noted this, but suggested at least nominal GPF support would be welcome for this potentially exciting project. PR suggesting contacting Martin Groves / Tony Donovan in order to explain to them how to put their application together more effectively in future, in order to make it easier for the GPF to support further expeditions. AE suggested an award of £250, with £150 of this dependant on the size of the SCW grant. W proposed an award of £100 to show support for the project which was agreed by all.

HG proposed examining the remaining expeditions in blocks of similar ventures. She also suggested that those expeditions largely made up of students and young personnel would benefit from a higher level of support than those expeditions made up predominantly of employed personnel. This was agreed.

CUCC Austria & OUCC Spain were awarded £400 each. ICCS Slovenia and SUSS Crete were awarded £550 each, the higher award being due to the higher proportion of students on these expeditions. YUCPC Montenegro were awarded £750, the higher award due to the large number of students, and a wish to encourage a new team in a new area.

Culiembro was awarded £300 and Pozo Azul £600. Though Pozo Azul has a lower number of man days, the committee recognizes the extreme nature of this expedition, and its need for serious support.

EPC Albania was awarded £450 in recognition of the large team, and the exciting nature of the area to be visited. Belize receives £300 due to the high expense of reaching this remote area. MCG Sierra de las Nieves was awarded £200 in order to support a new team. Joe Duxbury's Montenegro expedition was awarded £300.

7. UK Exploration / Digging Fund

W introduced the idea, and some background of the donor who is a keen digger. HG noted that the donor wished to support cave exploration, but was keen not to support people going abroad – particularly by air. AE noted that in principal this is a good idea, but questioned whether the GPF is the right body to administer it. PI agreed, noting that the committee's expertise is in foreign caving, not digging. PR/NW both noted the difficulties in deciding a priority list for supporting digging projects. NW stated that the GPF is focussed on expeditions, and that the EUG may have a better match of experience to administer this. He also noted that the GPF does not have time to administer this fund in addition to the expedition awards (which takes a full day). NW recommended that the BCRA may be better placed to do this. AE agreed that this fund should not be a part of the GPF business. PR questioned whether

the donor had suggested that conservation was a priority? NW replied that the donor had stated that the money would be for specific purposes or equipment. NW also noted that the CSTR1 would not be an appropriate mechanism to deal with this either. PR questioned whether the EUG would be a good body to administer this fund? NW suggested contacting the donor in order to clarify the idea. W & AE both felt that the current proposal contains sufficient clarity already. AE suggested that if the GPF could not run this fund, it could help the donor take the idea forward. NW agreed, suggesting that the GPF have a structure and experience in administering funds, but lacks the expertise of the UK digging scene. AE stated that this needs to be discussed with the BCRA. NW stated that it was a shame that the donor had not been invited to this meeting. AE proposed a meeting be set up with the donor, NW, AE, PR and Dave Checkley (BCRA). **Action: PR to contact the donor and propose the above meeting.**

8. 2009 Tratman Award

EW proposed the second edition of "The Complete Caving Manual" by Andy Sparrow. NW noted that 2009 had been a poor year for publications, and that this was the only realistic option. AE suggested that in a poor year it was not necessary to make an award. EW proposed a vote for the above book, two votes for, 3 against and 2 abstentions. Therefore no Tratman award is to be made this year.

9. Fundraising & Publicity

PR noted the lack of progress on the legal review of the GPF will codicil. A lawyer is needed to review, and PR has been contacted by BCRA with a view to doing this. PR asked whether the GPF should cooperate with BCRA on this? NW suggested that using the BCRA would be the best bet to sort this out. **Action: NW to contact Julian Griffiths of BCRA to find out what has happened to date.** PR asked whether the GPF would be better going alone on this? Being part of a BCRA codicil may reduce the funds GPF receives, and may increase the bureaucratic burden. **Action: NW/AE to contact Dave Checkley to review progress and discuss BCRA funding the legal advice.** PR suggested that once the document is complete, that we could include in Descent as a flyer. NW envisages a document with a tick list of cave related organisations to make bequests to.

PR noted that the GPF Christmas cards are underway, and should be ready for the Mendip Cavers Fair in June. **Action: PR to produce GPF Christmas cards by Caver's Fair.**

Hidden Earth / Cavers Fair – EW stated that work is underway to produce a stand for each of these. Some material will be circulated for comment soon. **Action: EW to produce stand material for Caver's Fair and Hidden Earth.**

HG asked about the proposed lecture tour noted in the minutes of the last meeting. AE noted that £500-£1000 can be made per lecture based on the CCP experience. PR noted that this is a large amount of money by GPF standards. AE stated that a great deal of work is required if a significant audience is to be obtained. Due to other pressures he would not be able to

think about this at present, thus it is on hold until next year. **Action: AE to provide ideas on GPF lectures at next February's meeting.**

10. GPF Committee & Administration

AE asked W how the new application forms are progressing. W replied that after a late start (see Item 3), progress is now underway on an update. The new forms will be more attractive, but more significantly will be in the form of a proper database allowing automatic generation of the summary sheet and archive. W questioned whether the application process should be open for anyone to see, or whether application forms should only be visible to applicant and GPF committee? NW suggested that if a login were required then this could be used for fundraising activities. PI suggested that applicants should be made to log in, but anyone browsing the site should be able to do so. W noted that open applications may encourage people to apply to join expeditions. AE suggested that application forms should be kept secret until the meeting, when they should then be published. NW noted that have any form of secret application could introduce technical complexity. AE stated that the website and application process need to make the GPF appear more professional. He would also like to see all application data packaged and delivered to committee members a few days before the meeting, rather than a drip feed as the applications are made at present. NW asked if the proposed solution would prevent anyone from editing an application? W replied that the applicant will be provided with a login to prevent others from editing the application. HG suggested that it might be best to give applicants the option of whether the form should be open or restricted until the meeting when it will be published anyway. AE noted that once the meeting was complete, anyone "poaching" and expedition would be exposed anyway. W suggested then that the default application will be open, but that a "keep secret" button will be provided. AE noted the concern of RW with respect to the pace of the website and application form update. **Action: W to contact RW to discuss application form update.** PR suggested that W be provided with a deadline for the updates to be completed. W suggested that two months should be sufficient. **Action: W to complete application for update by 21st April 2010.** NW noted that RW's concerns are more presentational than functional. AE noted that a clear format, with key information at the start when printed is essential. NW stated that presentation is critical, and asked W whether he is best placed to do this aspect, or whether someone with a graphic artist background is needed. W replied that RW would be welcome to sort out the format if it is still considered to be inadequate by end of April (see above). PR stated that a better front end is required for the website. W noted that the current work is improving the infrastructure of the site, which should make presentational updates much easier in future. NW noted that the application form still has DJ's address on it. **Action: W to remove DJ's address from the application form.** W stated that the new website would have the feedback form online, and that this will be open – not hidden. AE noted that the site must state the application deadlines clearly (several applications were received post deadline for this meeting) and that the automatic summary is needed. W noted that the summary will be produced automatically as the applications come in.

AE queried the status of the elected members, who serve a four year term on the committee. They are (in order of election)

Wookey – Elected 2006 expires 2010
PR – Elected 2007 expires 2011
EW – Elected 2008 expires 2012
HG – Elected 2009 expires 2013

NW noted that in the past there has been a desire to have a Cave Diver on the committee, with a wish to have some form of formal connection to the CDG. At present this is more than adequately covered by PR & HG.

AE noted that W is up for re-election in February. NW asked W if he wanted to remain on the committee, noting that if he did not want to then he could still be co-opted to carry out the IT functions. W stated that he would be happy to step down, unless it would be difficult to find someone to replace him. EW suggested that a recent graduate from one of the university based expedition teams would provide welcome new blood to the committee. NW agreed and suggested Jarvist Frost of ICCG as a suitable candidate. **Action: NW to contact Jarvist to see if he would be willing to stand.** PR and HG noted that there are a number of promising candidates. **Action: PR/HG to discuss a list of suitable candidates to approach should Jarvist be unwilling to stand.**

AE noted that prior to this meeting, he was unsure who carried out which functions. Prior to this meeting summary sheets had been produced by DJ, W and RW. These had been contradictory and caused confusion. W noted that this is the secretary's responsibility. **Action: RW to produce summary sheet prior to September meeting.**

11. AOB

PI asked for a final examination of the awards. This was done, and no changes made.

Date of Next Meetings

2010 Round 2 – At Hidden Earth, Sunday 26th September 2010, Time TBC
2011 Main Meeting – At Conformance, Sunday 20th February, 11am