

The British Caving Association

NEWSLETTER

NCA's Long Term Rope Tests

Back in 2000 NCA started off a Long Term Rope Test. The concept was simple, to see how different usages of an SRT rope affected the strength of it. So 230 m of 10 mm Edelrid Super Static SRT rope was purchased, conditioned and then cut into seven 2.5m and seven 30m lengths. The seven 30m lengths were then loaned out to caving clubs for them to use up to a specified number of usages (200, 350, 500, 650, 800, 950 and 1100). Usages were defined as one prusik up or one abseil down a rope.

The 2.5m lengths were tested to provide a reference strength long before the other ropes were returned. Strength was measured by the number of drops survived by the rope using a 100 kg mass falling through a sequence of increasing fall factors from 1.0. The results of this work showed a surprising range of values which brought into question the old adage that a rope was OK for further usage if it survived 2 drops. Even more worryingly, several of the used ropes showed that the variation along the length of the rope meant that taking a sample of rope from the end of the rope would not provide a representative sample of the whole rope. So testing a sample of rope from the end of a length is not necessarily a good

enough guide to its overall strength. We need a non destructive test.

Return of the ropes proved not quite as easy as envisaged! One club suffered such a turn over in members that all knowledge of their rope was lost! Another managed to lose their rope in a river when washing it! So that left five ropes. However a third club managed to accidentally cut their rope so they returned a reduced length. Three clubs decided that their ropes were so well worn before they reached the specified usage that they should not be further used, so the ropes were returned. And the other club somehow failed to managed to reach the target number of usages (although as it turned out this was a bonus). So we got back ropes with 89 (v 200), 325 (v 650), 381 (v 1100), 455 (v 950) and 799 (v 800) usages. The results from all ropes showed a dramatic reduction in strength. Even the low usage ropes only managed to survive 2 or 3 drops. This is in line with work done on dynamic ropes (see [http://www.theuiaa.org/upload_area/files/1/About Ageing of Climbing Ropes.pdf](http://www.theuiaa.org/upload_area/files/1/About_Ageing_of_Climbing_Ropes.pdf)) which also shows a substantial reduction on rope strength in its early usage. Quite what the implications are for SRT ropes is not that clear. Normally an SRT rope does not see fall factors at 1.0 let alone higher, similar to dynamic ropes. What it does see is an extremely large number of small or even micro fall factors due to the bounce in prusiking (or poor abseiling).

One of the confounding factors in this work is the age of the ropes. Whilst seven years is not that old for a rope and the usages were almost all confined to the first two years, it is not clear if a rope's strength might be more affected by age if it has been used as opposed to a rope which has not been used in its early life. Another possible confounding factor is the impact of rope condition-



ing and the inevitable "conditioning" during usage by its repeated soaking.

Clearly further work is desirable but quite how it should proceed is unclear. The range of ropes and the time taken to achieve the usages all point to a need to look at alternative means of aging rope. Another area which needs consideration is whether it is acceptable to keep using an SRT rope to a high number of usages provided one throws the rope away if it does see a high fall factor for some reason (such as if one accidentally drops onto the rope at the pitch head) needs to be debated. The results were presented at the 2008 Hidden Earth and will be written up in a future edition of Speleology.

Thanks are due to a large number of people and Lancashire Underground Group, Yorkshire SS, Sheffield University SS, Wessex CC, Crewe CPC, Orpheus CC and Swaledale Outdoor Club.

Bob Mehew

BCA Equipment Officer & BCA Rope Test Officer

Children & Young Persons

In order to clarify our position on the participation of children and young persons in caving the British Caving Association Council Meeting on 4th October adopted the following statement:

"The BCA is committed to removing barriers to participation for children and young persons who wish to start caving."

I am today writing to The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the NSPCC making clear BCA's position in this respect and BCA is now launching a thorough review of the current Child Protection documents.

Damian Weare
BCA Secretary
9th October 2008

Access Agreements

It is a stated aim of the British Caving Association to "support members [...] in obtaining, ensuring and maintaining access arrangements at a national, regional and club level". We would like to remind members that landowners have the right to grant or withhold access to caves and that this right remains regardless of whether the cave entrance lies on "CROW Access Land" or not.

As a result, considerable work is often put in to creating Access Agreements. This is done to ensure continued access for members and also remove the burden on landowners and tenants from floods of cavers knocking at their doors. Unfortunately BCA is aware that a number of vital and sometimes delicate Agreements are currently being compromised by some cavers and clubs ignoring them. If we are not careful this could well result in the collapse of these agreements and all BCA members will lose out as a result.

Therefore, Club and Individual Members are requested to check the current access situation for all caves they intend to visit. As guidebooks are sometimes out of date, it is recommended that information is always checked with Regional Council websites or the up-to-date version of the BCA Handbook (available free from the BCA website). Updates to access arrangements are also to be found on the BCA Forum and BCA and Regional Council Newsletters. If any doubt remains, Regional Access Officers should be contacted.

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Annual General Meeting Notification

The Annual General Meeting of the British Caving Association will take place at **10:30am on Saturday, 28th March 2009** at the Baptist Church Hall in Alvechurch.

Items for the Agenda, plus **nominations** for posts on BCA Council must reach the BCA Secretary no later than midnight on **Saturday, 24th January 2009**.

At the AGM the following Officials and officers will be elected:

Chairman to serve for 3 years

Training Officer to serve for 3 years

2 club reps to serve for 2 years

2 Individual Member reps to serve for 2 years

2 Individual Member reps to serve the remaining year of a 2-year term

Nominations for these posts must include:

the post the candidate wishes to stand for

the name, address, phone number and membership number of the candidate

the signature of the candidate

the name, membership number and signature of the proposer

a brief election statement of a maximum of 300 words in length.

Nominations should be sent to: British Caving Association Hon. Secretary, Damian Weare, 2 The Barn, Sal Royd Road, Low Moor, Bradford BD12 0JN.

Member Clubs should ensure that their members are aware of these arrangements.

Following the above deadline, the Agenda and Election Statements will be sent to all Group and Direct Individual Members by 14th February 2009.

BCA Group Members should note that for the purposes of voting at the AGM the BCA constitution requires that Groups may send one voting representative. This representative must bring with them a **letter signed by a club officer** giving them the authority to represent that group.

Damian Weare

BCA Secretary

BCA Contacts for 2008-2009

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Please note: The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the formal view of the British Caving Association.

BCA and BCRA 2009 Renewal Process

You will have seen elsewhere in this newsletter that the 2009 membership fees for both BCA and BCRA will remain the same as for 2008, that is, there is no increase for 2009 membership, apart from the cost of BCRA Caves and Karst Science which increases by £2.00.

Please note that you do not have to be a member of BCA or BCRA to receive Speleology or Caves and Karst Science. It is possible to subscribe to both Speleology and Caves and Karst Science by following this link: <http://caves.org.uk/payments/bca/forms> and using form M4.

Direct Individual Membership (DIM):

DIMs (including joint membership DIMs) are invited to renew their 2009 BCA and where applicable, BCRA membership, with the form M1 included with this newsletter (please see leaflet D1 for an explanation of membership fees and benefits – also enclosed).

It is also possible to renew on-line (using Paypal) by going to the BCA website and following the membership links to form M1, or going direct to:

<http://caves.org.uk/payments/bca/forms>

Please note that we no longer accept Standing Order/Direct Debit or credit cards as methods of payment.

BCRA Honorary Members:

Honorary Members of BCRA will be receiving a letter requesting confirmation that they wish to continue to receive publications. The letters should be signed and returned as appropriate.

Clubs (and Club Individual Members – CIMs), Associate Members and Access Groups:

Clubs, Associates Members and Access Groups should have already received their membership renewal packs by email. If any club or group has not received their renewal pack, please email me at membership@british-caving.org.uk.

Clubs will have received the 2009 renewal form (form M2) and a copy of their 2008 membership spreadsheet. There are four additional fields in the 2009 version: "Adult male", "Adult female", "Under-18 male", "Under-18 female". The club just has to insert an "x" in the appropriate column as necessary. These fields are required by some Regional Caving Councils as they have to supply this information to various bodies as part of their regional funding (for training, access, projects, conservation etc).

Please can I remind all clubs of the importance of using the membership spreadsheet proforma to update club membership throughout the year which ensures the quickest turn around of membership cards.

Glenn Jones

BCA Membership Administrator

Regional News & Access Issues

DERBYSHIRE

Regional Council—Derbyshire Caving

Association (DCA)

Hon Secretary: Jenny Potts, 3 Greenway, Hulland Ward, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 3FE

Tel: 01335 370629

Email: dca@theDCA.org.uk

Website: www.theDCA.org.uk

WARNING - CARBON MONOXIDE IN LONG RAKE MINE, BRADWELL MOOR

Two cavers on a trip in Long Rake Mine, Bradwell Moor, on Saturday, 24th May, encountered carbon monoxide at the top of the 5th pitch. They were very badly affected but managed to make it to the surface, where one collapsed and they had to call the emergency services to take them to hospital for emergency treatment. They had to be given oxygen and kept in until they had recovered sufficiently to be allowed home. Note that CARBON MONOXIDE poisoning was diagnosed by the hospital - the 2 cavers were very lucky to get out alive!

Warning signs have been placed at the shaft top and the farmer, Mr. Hadfield, is refusing permission for access for the time being. Please ensure that club members and caving colleagues are aware of the danger and please stay away for the present. DCA is investigating to try to identify the source of the problem and experts are helping. We will keep everyone informed of progress via the internet.

It would be helpful to know of any trips in Long Rake in, say, the previous 2 or 3 months (or even on the same weekend) and to know whether anyone else encountered any problems. Even knowing that there was NO problem on a certain date could be useful (we have already established that a visit on 4th April encountered no problems).

It has been pointed out that, if the incident is linked to fumes from the quarry percolating into Long Rake, then Bird Mine and New Venture Mine are even nearer to the advancing quarry face than Long Rake and should also be avoided.

CLATTERWAY LEVELS & SOUGH

Please note that one of the three entrances to the system is in the garden of Hollowbrook Cottage and, while the owners do not want to restrict access, they would like you to ask permission **before** you cross their garden. (Some groups doing a through trip have simply trampled through flower beds on their way out!). If you are intending to use the route through the garden, either for entry or for exit after a through trip, please ask permission beforehand and please use the path from the mine entrance that runs to the house and then up the driveway to the road.

WALES

Regional Council - Cambrian Caving Council (CCC)

Hon Chairman: Bernie Woodley

Email: chair@cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk

Website: www.cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk

NORTH

Regional Council - Council of Northern Caving Clubs (CNCC)

Hon Secretary: Les Sykes, 49 Manfield, Ashurst, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 6SU

Tel/Fax: 01695 728673

FOREST OF DEAN

**Regional Contact - Forest of Dean
Conservation and Access Group (FoDCAG)**

Hon Secretary, John Hine, The Grottage, 2 Cullis Lane, Mile End, Coleford, Glos GL16 7QF

Tel: 01594 833217

Email: mole@grottage.fsworld.co.uk

MENDIP

Regional Council - Council of Southern Caving Clubs (CSCC)

Hon Secretary, Carmen Smith, 12 Harbour Road, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 4AN

Tel: 01935 816267

Email: secretary@csc.org.uk

Website: www.csc.org.uk

The post of CSCC Training Officer is currently available and the CSCC Treasurer is looking for a successor to take over as soon as possible. Volunteers are sought and can contact the Secretary.

Swildons Sump 1 - Rope replaced:

The Sump 1 rope, reported at the beginning of the month as frayed, has now been replaced.

Goatchurch Cavern - Loose boulders:

Boulders have recently moved in Goatchurch Cavern, in the Water Chamber at the top end by the passage to the Drainpipe and also down the passage towards the Drainpipe.

CSCC is carrying out stabilisation works in this area. Please take care here and avoid the passage to the Drainpipe for the duration of the works. Please note that the boulder slope down from the Water Chamber is very loose as it has been undermined by the stream. Concreting works will be undertaken shortly.

**Suspension Trauma:
first aid update**

Following a review of the current published medical literature, the HSE has issued revised guidance for the first aid management of suspension trauma (Orthostatic Shock).

No change should be made to the standard UK first aid guidance of ABC management. A semi-conscious or unconscious patient should be placed in a horizontal position (recovery position) even if the subject of prior harness suspension.

Previous first aid protocols suggested keeping the patient sat in an upright position to minimise the blood (and associated toxins) returning from the legs. It is now considered more beneficial to return blood and oxygen to the vital organs (heart and brain) than the attempt to limit toxins entering the bloodstream.

For more information on suspension trauma, see Newsletter No. 9 (page 14).

EQUALITY STATEMENT

The BCA will make its services available to all sections of sporting community, there will be no discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, creed, colour, occupation, religion or political opinion.

SUMMARY OF BCA COUNCIL MEETING 4TH OCTOBER 2008

BCA is a lot more active than many cavers think. Where we have probably been least effective in recent years is in communicating this with our members. In my new role as BCA Secretary, I intend to improve this by providing a quarterly summary of our activities. This is the first of these.

1) Financial Support for Cliffhanger Event, Sheffield

As part of the BCA's Youth & Development campaign, Council supported the DCA in running a stand at the Cliffhanger Event in Sheffield. This took place on 12th & 13th July and Jenny Potts, on behalf of DCA, reported that it attracted interest from literally hundreds of young people who wanted to have a go at activities related to caving. It gave BCA and DCA some excellent publicity and gave us a chance to give out sensible information to people who wanted to take up caving as well as give details of contacts for local clubs. Altogether DCA spent £1097.71, of which £496.96 was refunded by BCA to cover the transport costs associated with bringing the Speleo Olympics equipment from Mendip to Derbyshire.

2) Bingo Lotto

Bingo Lotto is a new form of lottery where the proceeds are given to Sports Bodies. BCA, through our Chairman Mick Day, was involved early on and we are now beginning to reap the rewards of this. As with other participating Governing Bodies of Sport, we have been awarded £1022.29. There are rules about how this money is to be spent and BCA has chosen to allocate the money to the Youth & Development Budget, allowing us to continue to support events such as Cliffhanger in the future. From BCA's point of view, at present Bingo Lotto seems to be a relatively lucrative proposition for not too much effort on our part. In light of reduced funding from other sources, this is most welcome.

Future editions of the Bingo Lotto programme are scheduled to begin in February 2009 and will allow tickets to be purchased via a major high-street retailer or through participating sports clubs with a 40% cut going to the clubs for the tickets they sell. Should any clubs wish to be involved in selling tickets, they should contact Mick Day for more information (chairman@british-caving.org.uk).

3) Secretary's Bit

Simon Froude has unfortunately had to step down from the position of Secretary and Damian Weare was formally co-opted into this role at the October Council Meeting. Emma Porter has also agreed to complete the Minutes of Meetings, making the role of secretary more manageable for a volunteer and allowing Damian to complete some of the jobs which have had to be neglected in recent years. All meeting minutes are now available from the BCA website. Summaries of our activities will also be published in this format in the newsletter every quarter to improve communication with members.

Damian reported that he had dealt with a number of queries from organisations interested in representing caving in one form or another - The Scout Association Magazine, FHM Magazine and Shiver, who describe themselves as "a production arm of ITV". It is good to see caving attracting media attention and, as far as we can tell, it is attention of a good kind!

4) 2009 BCA Membership Rates

It was confirmed that, subject to an unexpected huge rise in the insurance premium for 2009, membership rates would remain the same as for 2008. Thus caving CIMs will continue to pay £16, non-cavers £5 and student CIMs will be £8. Caving and non-caving DIMs will be £31 and £20 respectively. Club membership rates will also remain the same in 2009. The Membership Ad-

ministrator will be getting renewal information out to clubs and DIMs in the next few weeks.

5) Access to UK Caves

BCA has issued a statement clarifying the position with regard to access to caves in Britain and requests that all cavers take note of it. This is published separately in this newsletter.

6) Child Protection Policy Review

In order to clarify our position on the participation of children and young persons in caving we adopted the following statement: "The BCA is committed to removing barriers to participation for children and young persons who wish to start caving." BCA is now also launching a thorough review of our current Child Protection documents.

7) Equipment & Techniques

Work is ongoing with regard to finding a replacement anchor for the DMM Eco Anchor. It has been agreed that, provided it replicates the tests performed on the DMM Anchor, a Chinese-made version of the DMM Eco-Anchor will be the approved replacement. Testing so far indicates that it performs consistently as with the DMM Eco-Anchor.

The other major area of work by the Equipment & Techniques Committee is on updating the procedures surrounding the placement of anchors. A summary of responses to a proposal document have been discussed by the Committee and the Committee wishes to retain the right by the trainer to check the competence of the trainee in SRT, rigging, identifying new anchor locations and installing anchors. A revised draft of the BCA Anchor Scheme based on the outcome of the discussion has recently been offered to the committee for debate.

A report was received on the results from NCA's Long Term Rope Test which showed that a dramatic drop off in the performance of an SRT rope in terms of drops survived even for as few as 100 usages. (The 5 ropes spanned between 89 and 799 usages. The samples for each of the 5 ropes averaged between 2 and 3 drops survived.) It was agreed to look further at low usage in 10mm ropes and also at smaller diameter ropes. A talk on this topic was also given at Hidden Earth.

8) Training Committee News

It is with regret that we are losing Karen Slatcher as Training Administrator after a two year period. The position has been advertised with the new appointee hopefully in position by the end of October.

With the removal of Sports Council subsidies, Training Committee has had to work hard this year to ensure the various training schemes break even. This has meant a number of changes and Graham Mollard is pleased to report that the year has continued to be busy with almost all the new five-year revalidations being over subscribed. This has grossed an income to BCA of over £5000 for a cost of £2900. However trainer/assessor costs do need to be increased and the fee will, therefore, rise to £175 per day and the cost to the candidate will rise to £80. Other changes to registration fees are in the pipeline and will be adopted from January. To date there have been 172 registrations for LCMLA, 40 newly qualified LCMLAs, 17 CIC registrations with 4 finishing assessment.

The Training Officer, Graham Mollard, has managed to negotiate a policy with Jardine Lloyd Thompson to cover BCA-qualified personnel in their day-to-day work. The policy is endorsed by BCA but remains a Jardine Lloyd Thompson policy.

The take up of recreational training grants for the

year to date is £1100 with another £400 in the pipeline. This is an improvement on last year, but there is still some money available for club training events. Training Officers are strongly encouraged to apply for funding. It is definitely not an onerous process and the money is available to be spent.

The Training Committee has appointed three new trainee CIC Trainer/Assessors - Duncan Morrison, Tom Peacock and Phil Baker. The Training Committee has also finished the work on a waterproof card to be freely available in caving shops about good practice in general. It is intended to be issued when caving equipment is hired and when new equipment is purchased.

Finally, Graham Mollard has been in the process of developing relationships with AALS and HSE with regard to procedures to follow in the event of accidents underground. A great deal of information has been shared with HSE, in this respect, to educate them as to the complexity of caves and their hydrology.

9) Website Update

BCA has had a number of issues with our current web hosts over the last year and we have now purchased our own virtual server giving us total control over the hosting of our sites. Les Williams will be migrating the various sites over one at a time, but this is likely to take some time. This should result in an improved web presence.

10) Youth & Development Update

Chris Jewell presented his future plans to BCA Council. These include finding someone to take on the basic admin of the Try Caving website and also moving it onto the BCA servers. He would also like to find a group of people who can answer the incoming Try Caving emails. This will then allow him to focus on other projects, including creating a compact and easily transportable arti-

cial cave to use in preference to the YHA cave at events such as the Cliffhanger Show. He also hopes to promote BCA at more outdoor shows and exhibitions and via the numerous outdoor websites, magazines and publications many of which approached us at the Outdoor Show last year. Chris would also like to work more closely with the Scout Liaison officer to examine the way in which the BCA can offer greater support for Scout groups and to re-issue the Try Caving flyers and posters.

11) 2009 Membership Fees

As always our insurers are unable to provide a quotation for our Public Liability Policy until a few weeks before the premium is due. This makes it difficult for BCA to set its membership fees in advance. However, conversations with the insurers suggest they do not anticipate any major rise for 2009. Therefore, unless there is a huge, unforeseen rise in the premium, BCA will keep membership fees for 2009 the same as for 2008. Caving and non-caving CIMs will, therefore, be £16 and £5 respectively with students remaining at £8 and DIMs' fees will remain at £31 and £20 for cavers and non-cavers respectively.

12) Radon-Working Party Report

The summary of the first set of experiments in Agen Allwedd and Eglwys Faen have now been published in Descent. Clark Friend has continued to work on Agen Allwedd and Eglwys Faen (with CCW funding) and so far, halfway through a six month experiment we have had all detectors returned, all with high readings. Clark is continuing to analyse this data at present.

13) Foreign News

BCA is represented abroad in a number of capaci-

ties. We are currently investigating applying to run either a future European Caving Congress or the 2013 UIS International Congress here in Britain. Andy Eavis, as President of the UIS and BCA's International Representative, reports in this newsletter on some of the meetings he has attended on our behalf.

Damian Weare

BCA Secretary

UIS International meetings

Notes on FEALC Congress, Puerto Rico - July 29th to August 4th 2007 (followed by reconnaissance trip to Kerrville, Texas, USA to look at the venue for the next UIS International Congress).

Andy Eavis attended the Congress and Bureau meeting in his capacity as President of UIS. The seminar was held in an old military establishment in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico.

There were lectures on Monday 30th and Tuesday 31st. The Wednesday saw an excursion to the Camuy River Cave system. Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd were again lectures with Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th being meetings of the UIS Bureau. Notable events during the lectures were a number of papers on conservation and the karst environment in Central and South America and a number of interesting bio-speleology papers bringing in such things as insect eggs that live dormant for 200 years! Paulo Forti gave a couple of papers on mineralogy including something on the huge crystal cave in Mexico, at Naica. Several papers on World Heritage applications and situations were presented including a great paper by Paul Williams on Paleo-Climatology and what can be learned from cave sediments and stalactites. Pat Kambesis talked about exploration in local caves

in Puerto Rico, including caves on the island of Mona.

The UIS meeting then started on August 4th and 5th. Everybody except one vice-president (Alexander Klimchouk) and one adjunct secretary (Roman Hapka) attended. Clearly the Bureau meeting concentrated on the 15th ICS to be held in Texas and George Veni gave updates as to how the planning was progressing. There is a proposal for an official UIS flag to be passed from one Congress to the next. None of the presented samples were considered to be particularly good however the best of the bunch was accepted with some discussion about colour. Further changes to this will be progressed.

Visa issues were discussed as well as many other aspects of the Congress. The karst information portal (KIP) was mentioned by George Veni which is going to be a website where an enormous amount of speleological literature is available. The UIS Code of Ethics was talked about in some detail including the Slovak/Venezuelan issue. The prizes for posters, greatest explorations and books were discussed. It was decided that this time only the poster prize would be awarded. The others could be reserved for when something particularly spectacular is discovered or published. Brochures are going to be printed. The Atlas of Greatest Caves was discussed and the UIS would like to be involved with it. Interaction with the European Federation and Federation of Latin American Countries and the Caribbean and association with the International Show Caves Association were all discussed. David Somers from ISCA was present who said that show caves wanted to remain involved with the UIS.

Work for an efficiency of the UIS Bureau was discussed and the need to use the internet more. Many of the commissions were also discussed and key occasions using national bodies and the caving press in addition to national delegates.

Internal regulations were laterally finalised and approval was given to Fadi Nader to buy a 200 gb hard drive to store archives. Proceedings were discussed. Finances were discussed and cooperation between UIS, UNESCO and IUCN. More discussion on World Heritage and Sites. Jose Labegalini will coordinate and edit a book on the history of the UIS. Deadline for the draft manuscript is the next Bureau meeting in 2008.

Various things were agreed to be supported by the UIS including an expedition to Iran, the Italian Federation producing a number of PowerPoint presentations on speleology to be available free of charge on the website and a number of World Heritage matters.

Andrej Mihevic was asked to consider serving on the Bureau after the next general assembly as a special representative since he is based in Postonja where the UIS offices are.

The next Bureau meeting will be at Jeju island on 6th -7th of September 2008. The Bureau meetings then finished and AJE, PB, FN went on with GV to Kerrville to inspect the venue for the next ICS.

Sheider University was visited on 8th August where facilities were inspected and a number of the organisers met with. Relevant items in connection with the ICS were:

- The price will be kept as near to \$150 per delegate as possible. It isn't the normal fee for an NSS convention
- Excursions priced from \$200 upwards
- A list of helpers for the congress was to be prepared by GV which has now recently arrived (25.09)

- The organising committee is going to release a list of competitions (still pending) on Oct 1st

Facilities were considered excellent although the whole place is rather small for a 2000 + person congress. Particular items to be noted are:

If numbers do get as high as expected, marquees and even blacked out air-conditioned marquees will have to be rented to accommodate the extra people. The biggest auditorium is 700 seats and many of the cafes, restaurants, lecture rooms are small. The university has normally only 900 students. The accommodation in halls of residence is excellent and it's expected that much will be taken for participants and there are plenty of excellent camping areas on the campus near the river that runs through the site. Generally things look good. Nervous about too much Speleo competition! and Americanisation of the Congress and shoe-horning into facilities and lack of emphasis on certain aspects of science particularly poster sessions but these things have been pointed out to the organisers and hopefully they will react accordingly.

Report on European Congress of Speleology, Lans en Vercors, August 2008

This Congress was held in grand style with more than 2000 delegates. The village of Lans en Vercors turned out to be an excellent venue, although things were far too scattered.

The week-long congress started with a world record Tyrolean of 1.2 KM. Many people took part in this which crossed a side valley of the Bourne Gorge and was certainly pretty impressive.

Numbers of simultaneous lectures were presented, in total well over 300. There were pictures competitions, multi media presentations etc. Much of it on the lines of a UIS Congress.

There was one very large marquee for the multi-media presentations and another for the Speleo bar which was surrounded by stands from different clubs and organisations serving a variety of food.

Although the weather was terrible in the first couple of days, it then improved and the better weather lasted for the week.

Many caves in the Vercors were made available to delegates and it is reported more than 500 people got down the Gouffre Berger.

Much of the organisation was imperfect and this imperfection carried on into the published programme which had all the vital information but in a completely indecipherable fashion.

Overall impression was an occasional congress like this is very well received and very enjoyable. A scheme to have one of these between European UIS Congresses would seem to make sense with a Speleo forum on a much smaller scale every year.

Report on UIS Bureau Meeting 2008

Venue: The two yearly meeting of the volcano-speleology commission of the UIS in Jeju, South Korea

Present: President Andy Eavis, Vice President Pavel Bosak, Secretary General Fadi Nader, Adjunct Secretaries Stein-Erik Lauritzen, Paul Williams, Kyung-Sik Woo and George Veni. Also were past presidents Paolo Forti, Julia James and Jose Ayton Labegalini.

There were three observers David Summers, president of ISCA, Jean Pierre Bartholyens, president of UIS Protection Commission, and Claude Mouret from the FSS.

The meeting opened in the Sunshine Hotel on Saturday 6th September.

Chairman and President opened the meeting and the agenda was approved as prepared by the Secretary General.

List of actions from the last Bureau meeting in 2007 in Puerto Rico were approved.

Agenda items discussed included:

- Report on FEALC Congress in Argentina
- Report on Baltic Speleological Congress and General Assembly of the European Union
- A meeting in Paris of the Bureau of the European Union attended by the Secretary General and President of the UIS.
- Report on the European Congress in the Vercors.

George Veni gave an update on the 15th ICS in Kerrville Texas next year and it would seem that things were generally going as per plan.

A discussion took place as to the language to be used in the Proceedings. It was decided that everybody would be encouraged to submit in English because of the cost and time taken to translate foreign papers into English. If people could not be persuaded to submit in English they would be told that there would be no guarantee that their paper would be translated in time to make the Proceedings so they may be published without them.

In any case, everybody must submit an Abstract in one of the UIS official languages plus English.

A cooperation between UIS and UNESCO was discussed at some length and Fadi Nader had had a certain amount of success with this.

The meeting was pleased that David Summers of the International Show Cave Association attended the meeting and looks on it as a new round of cooperation between the ISCA and UIS.

The Code of Ethics was discussed at great length and Julia James and others are continuing to overview this and I promised to rewrite the section on expeditions getting permission to go into certain countries.

I signed the agreement for the karst information portal which the Americans have set up and are keen on others being involved. It is essential that it is not solely an American thing.

Fadi spoke at length on the UIS Bureau Forum.

The Commissions were discussed and it was decided that this should come more strongly under the Vice Presidents' auspices, there should be a vice president of administration who looks after the commissions and a Vice President of operations who looks after publications. This must be discussed at our Bureau meeting in Kerrville.

Pavel spoke on finances and it was decided that Pavel, Fadi and Andy should meet in Slovenia and talk about finance issues.

Jose Labelagalini spoke at length on his book and Paolo Forti presented his PowerPoint presentation which will have one version under the UIS auspices and his all singing, all dancing one about Caving. It is mainly organised by the Italian Speleologists.

An update from John Pierre Bartholyens on protection was followed by requests from a number of countries to become members.

The disappearance of the Cave Biology commission, who some years ago set up a separate commission, was discussed and this must be gone into further in Kerrville where we should encourage commissions to get stronger and to back within the UIS umbrella.

Fadi spoke about his children's book and potential financing from UNESCO.

Future meetings including International Congress in Kerrville, Texas, USA; FEALC Congress in 2010 (4th to 8th August) in Cuba with a potential meeting of the Middle East Region in Turkey in 2011.

Under Any Other Business, Julia James and Paul Williams presented their list of potential World Heritage Sites. Julia also spoke about prizes where it looks at the moment that there will only be a poster prize, one for science and one for a people's prize.

Andy Eavis, October 2008

BCRA NEWSLETTER CEASES PUBLICATION

A few years ago, in response to feedback from members, BCRA Council made the decision to issue a newsletter to inform the membership of recent decisions by Council, together with reports of future plans and general news about the Association. The current newsletter editor, David Gibson, resigned earlier in 2008 because, not being a Council member, he felt that he was not at the heart of BCRA's operations. Unfortunately, no volunteer has come forward to replace him so BCRA Council has decided to cease publication of the newsletter on paper.

Instead of publishing on paper, BCRA Council plans to post its news items on the Internet on one of BCA's Forum pages. To get there, go to bcra.org.uk/news and follow the link. BCRA news should also, of course, appear in the BCA newsletter but this will require someone to collate the items and forward them to the BCA newsletter editor. This post of "BCRA newsletter sub-editor" is still vacant. Anyone interested in this job should contact the BCRA chairman or secretary.

Dates for your Diary

COURSES, CONFERENCES, EVENTS ETC 2008/2009

MEETINGS 2009

Jan 10 2009	BCA National Council Meeting, Baptist Hall, Alvechurch, Worcestershire 10:30am
Jan 16 2009	CNCC Committee Meeting, Hellifield Village Institute, Hellifield
Feb 21 2009	DCA Council Meeting, Monyash Village Hall, Monyash
Mar 28 2009	BCA Annual General Meeting, Baptist Hall, Alvechurch, Worcestershire 10:30am
Apr 25 2009	CDG AGM, Wales
May 16 2009	CSCC AGM, Hunter's Lodge, Priddy

EVENTS 2009

Jan 1 2009	Columns Open Day, Ogof Ffynnon Ddu
Apr 17-19 2009	BCRA Cave Technology Symposium, South Wales
July 19-22 2009	NAMHO Conference, Matlock

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

July 19-26 2009	15th International Congress of Speleology and NSS Convention, Kerrville, Texas, USA
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Check for further details and other international events on the UIS Speleo Calendar at:
<http://www.uis-speleo.org/calendar/events.html>.

British Caving Association

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Buxton

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