

The British Caving Association

NEWSLETTER

BCA UPDATE – SUMMARY OF JANUARY

COUNCIL MEETING & AGM

The BCA AGM took place on 28th March and, somewhat predictably, attracted the same old faces. Many thanks to these and, to the rest of you, where were you?

Once again BCA's Officers were very busy in 2008 and, as with all BCA meetings, the Officers' Reports are available in full on the BCA website and the draft Minutes will be available shortly. However, for those of you who don't want all the detail, here are what I consider to be the most important points from the January Council Meeting and the March AGM:

1) Changes at the Top

After some 27 years as Chairman of initially the National Caving Association, and latterly of the British Caving Association, Mick Day has stepped down from this pivotal role. Mick is replaced by Andy Eavis, who can be contacted at: *chairman@british-caving.org.uk*.. Fortunately Mick will remain on BCA Council for the foreseeable future as an Individual Member Representative allowing him to continue to support British Caving from a somewhat less involved position.



2) New Constituent Body

The Association of Scout Caving Teams has recently been formed with the aim of promoting caving as an activity within the Scout Movement. The

ASCT was accepted as a Constituent Body of the BCA with a permanent place on BCA Council. This should be beneficial to both BCA and the ASCT. The ASCT Representative is Idris Williams, former Training Officer and latterly Club representative to BCA Council.

3) BCA Finances

During the banking crisis the Treasurer, David Cooke, transferred BCA funds so that we did not hold more than £50,000 with any one bank. He is currently investigating another Savings Account for the excess funds. The insurance premium has been renewed and is fixed for three years, subject to no claims. The cost is £30,825 per annum, representing a 3% increase over 2008, but giving us stability over the next couple of years.

The Finance Committee has produced a document setting out how BCA will fund Regional Councils. This is currently being ratified by the various Regional Councils. As part of this, it is proposed to remove the membership fee for Funded Access Bodies to save money going around in circles.

4) Child Protection Policy Update

In an attempt to clarify our position on children and young persons in caving, BCA Council published the following statement following the October 2008 Council Meeting: "The BCA is committed to removing barriers to participation for children and young persons who wish to start caving." We also began a full review of the existing BCA Child Protection Policy. This was led by Idris Williams on behalf of Council and several amendments to the existing Policy were agreed at the AGM.

The new Policy is intended to more accurately reflect BCA's approach to Young People and it also includes an update to one of the references. The new Policy is available from the BCA website and more developments in this area are expected over the coming year.

David Judson has stood down from the role of Child Protection Officer and, as an interim measure, all related enquiries should be directed to the BCA Secretary, Damian Weare.

5) Training News

For years BCA's Training Scheme has received grants from the Sports Council. Unfortunately this funding dried up a couple of years ago to make way for potential medal-winning sports in 2012. As a result the Training Committee, led by the Training Officer, Graham Mollard, have worked hard to restructure the BCA Scheme so it no longer relies on the subsidy. The number of registrations for both the CIC and LCMLA schemes continues to be healthy with fees increasing by £5 this year. Break-even was achieved last year meaning the BCA Training Scheme is now self-financing. Well done Graham for a lot of hard work in making this possible!

Training Committee is also working on an article on flooding, following the recent spate of flooding-related incidents and near-misses in the Dales. It is hoped that this will help reduce further incidents.

Graham Mollard has attended several meetings on behalf of BCA, including The Yorkshire Dales Rocksport Access Committee and a meeting of all the National Governing Bodies, hosted by Skills Active.

6) Equipment News

The replacement for the Eco-anchor, called a PECO anchor, has been ordered from BCA's supplier in China. In tests, its performance mirrors

that of the Eco-anchor and should prove a worthy replacement.

A small committee is currently reviewing the BCA Anchor Scheme, following extensive consultations. A drill has been purchased for Derbyshire and several Eco-hangers placed to replace old spits.

All rope samples submitted for testing in 2008 have been tested and reports submitted.

7) The British Caving Library

The BCRA has invested considerable sums of money over the past year or so in setting up the British Caving Library at Glutton Bridge, Buxton. They have employed a professional librarian (Janet Nash) to lead the project and the majority of the huge backlog is now sorted and the catalogue is now available on the excellent library website.

BCRA presented the AGM with a business case for future financial support from the BCA to ensure the Library can continue in its current form. The AGM was, however, not convinced that this was sufficiently detailed and requested that BCRA give the matter greater thought. BCA intends to consult its membership on this important matter over the coming year.

8) Youth & Development News

A group led by Chris Jewell has made considerable progress recently on improving the Try Caving website. Clubs are requested to review their entries on the site and to provide a link to it from their own club websites.

BCA is investigating various options for an artificial cave that could be taken to the various Outdoor Shows we attend throughout the year. Chris is leading this work and is pursuing several promising avenues at present, including a competition for the best design.

9) Membership News

The 2009 renewal process began on 1st December 2008 when all clubs were emailed the 2009 renewal papers and a copy of their club's 2008 membership spreadsheet. Clubs without email, or incorrect email addresses were sent this information by post and Direct Individual Members received a copy of their renewal papers with the December newsletter.

Considerable work has been put into streamlining the renewal process so that it is as efficient as possible. As part of this DIMs can now apply and pay for membership online thanks to the work of David Gibson, Glenn Jones and David Cooke.

For the statisticians among you, in 2008 BCA had 440 Direct Individual Members, 5221 Club Individual Members and 172 member clubs, access bodies and associates.

10) Foreign News

BCA is represented abroad in a number of capacities. Andy Eavis, as President of the UIS and BCA's international representative, attends numerous meetings around the world. Ged Campion represents BCA at the European Caving Federation (FSE).

BCA will be hosting a meeting of the FSE General Assembly at Hidden Earth this year. We are also investigating the possibility of hosting the 2011 Eurospeleo Forum, but this is in the early stages.

Damian Weare
BCA Secretary

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 Contacts for 2009-2010

Chairman: Andy Eavis
Tidesreach, Redcliff Road, Hessle,
North Humberside HU13 0HA
07860 513790
chairman@british-caving.org.uk

Treasurer: Dave Cooke
3 Starr's Close, Axbridge BS26 2BZ
01934 733260
treasurer@british-caving.org.uk

Secretary: Damian Weare
2 The Barn, Sal Royd Road, Low Moor,
Bradford BD12 0JN
secretary@british-caving.org.uk

Conservation & Access Officer: Elsie Little
Hennoyadd Villa, Abercrave, Swansea SA9 1UR
01639 730331
conservation@british-caving.org.uk

Equipment Officer: Bob Mehew
8 Dunbar Road, Hillside, Southport PR8 4RH
01704 569107
equipment@british-caving.org.uk

Legal & Insurance Officer: David Judson
Hurst Barn, Castlemorton, Malvern WR13 6LS
01684 311057
legal@british-caving.org.uk

Publications & Information Officer:
Les Williams
51 Churchill Road East, Wells BA5 3HU
01749 679839
publications@british-caving.org.uk

Training Officer: Graham Mollard
Micawber, Yew Bank, Skipton Road, Uteley
BD20 6HJ
01535 691587
training@british-caving.org.uk

Youth & Development Officer: Chris Jewell
28 Hathereleigh Gardens, Potters Bar EN6 5HZ
07970 923959
youth@british-caving.org.uk

Remarks by the new BCA Chairman

As the new Chairman of the BCA I thought it appropriate that I should make some initial comments in this first newsletter of my term in office. I would like to start by thanking my predecessor Mick Day for the excellent work he has done over many, many years. I think he has done an excellent low profile job in steering British caving through difficult territory to the position it's at today. He is going to be a difficult act to follow, but I am delighted to say he has agreed to help me during my term in office.

A number of people recently have asked me many questions about my ideas and the way forward for BCA and what changes I am going to make etc, etc. My answer is, that I am going to listen and learn before making any decisions. Many of you know I have been out of British caving politics for a long while and although I am going through a steep learning curve I am sure I need to listen to many people before trying to make any changes.

Although I have been out of British cave politics, I have been involved in International politics and as you will realise from the last newsletter I am still President of the International Union of Speleology, with 2009 being Congress year there has been plenty to do on that front. Kerrville, Texas 19th July to 26th is the venue for the 15th International Congress of Speleology. Nearly 1,500 delegates are already registered from 45 countries, a spectacular speleological event.

I know chairing the International meetings will be of great help to me in chairing the BCA. I look forward to the future immensely; I want to listen to many peoples' ideas about how they think British caving should move forward. There are many, many topics for consideration. I guess I have to be one of the main ingredients in bringing these ideas together and doing what's best for British caves and caving.

It is interesting to note that we are without doubt still in the golden age of cave exploration. The recent British-Vietnamese Expedition has discov-

ered the largest cave passage in the World. It is fantastic to think that in 2009 there are still World record breaking caves to be discovered and not only depth records. Well done to the team and what will be next?

Andy Eavis
BCA Chairman

BCA Membership hits 10,000

During March the 10,000th membership number was issued to Rosie Hadfield of SUSS. A small presentation (and photo session for Descent) is being planned. To date, the current membership number is 10,105, that's over 3,000 new members through the books since September 2006.



HE 2009 - see back page

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.

BCRA NEWS



BRITISH CAVE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

The Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow, BUXTON, SK17 8RG ♦ bcra.org.uk ♦ UK Reg. Charity No. 267828

No More Paper Newsletters from BCRA

Last autumn, BCRA Council made the decision to discontinue the production of paper newsletters.

The intention was that the newsletter would be replaced by a web forum at bcra.org.uk/forum although BCRA Council is still seeking a volunteer 'news reporter' to write material for the forum. In keeping with this decision, no paper announcement was sent to BCRA members, although the fact was announced on the web site.

BCRA Council has also set up an Internet Mailing List that will be used for short announcements about BCRA events and to convey information such as the publication date of BCRA periodicals. You can sign up to this list by visiting list.bcra.org.uk or by sending a blank email to notice-subscribe@list.bcra.org.uk ■

Cave & Karst Science Online

C&KS 34(3) was mailed on 25 March 2009, and is now available online at bcra.org.uk/pub/candks.

Please note that from this point onwards, we will not be issuing any further postal reminders of online publication. If you are a BCRA member who has opted out of receiving the paper edition, and you want to know when the online edition is available, you should subscribe to the Notices list, as explained above, or else keep an eye on the web site.

You can find out the latest issue of BCRA periodicals by visiting bcra.org.uk/pub/schedules.html.

To access the online edition you will need the access info that was printed on your membership card.

Clubs and similar organisations that have opted for BCRA membership should also have received login credentials although, in some cases, we have been a little late in posting these. If you need the information please contact either Glenn Jones (membership@bcra.org.uk) or David Gibson (publications-admin@bcra.org.uk).

A club's BCRA membership entitles all its members to online access, just as they would be allowed access to the paper copy in the club's library. However, we do request that clubs refrain from publishing the access credentials (e.g. in a club newsletter, forum or blog). We suggest that an appropriate club officer (e.g. the librarian or secretary) ask their club members to request the information if/when they require it. ■

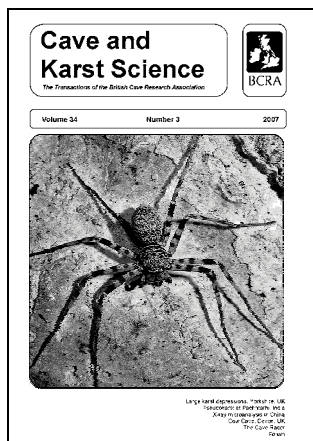
BCRA Publications Sales

After many years of excellent service, Ernie Shield has stood down as BCRA's Publications Sales officer. BCRA Council would like to extend to Ernie their sincere thanks for all the time and effort he has contributed; not least his attendance at Hidden Earth and many other BCRA events, and for the storage space he provided, comprising several garden sheds, as well as a large proportion of his garage and loft space.

In fact, the question of storage space is one that has had to be addressed urgently. Some of Ernie's stock has been moved to the new BCRA library premises at Glutton Bridge but, along the way, a large amount of it has been thrown away, as it was considered to be quite definitely surplus to requirements. The library committee has also approached caving clubs to enquire if they would like to take the opportunity to update their own library stock.

Jenny Potts, David Checkley, the librarian Janet Nash and others have put in a lot of work to relocate all the stock and to make an inventory. David St. Pierre must also be thanked for stepping into the breach during the transition period. The new arrangements for publications sales are as follows.

BCRA will no longer advertise a named 'publications sales officer'. Instead, enquiries made to publications-sales@bcra.org.uk or by post will be received by BCA staff at Great Hucklow, who will operate a 'triage' system to decide who in BCRA is best-placed to



C&KS 34(3) was published in March 2009 and is now available online.

handle the request. The reason for this procedure is that the stock is now distributed amongst several people (there was not enough room at the library) and enquiries differ greatly in complexity. Eventually, the online ordering system will be expanded and linked into the inventory so that orders are automatically routed to an appropriate person to handle. ■

Forthcoming Editions of Periodicals

C&KS 35(1 & 2) double issue, currently in press. Speleology 13 expected to go to press in mid-June.

Cave and Karst Science

The Transactions of the British Cave Research Association

Volume 36 Numbers 1 and 2 2008

Speleology

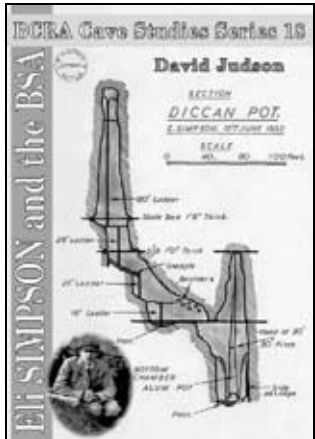
The Official Journal of the British Cave Research Association

Issue 12, May 2009

This news sheet was put together by David Gibson, even though I resigned as newsletter editor some time ago! BCRA is still seeking a 'news editor' for the online News Forum, and for contributions to the BCA newsletter.

Cave Studies Series #18

Eli Simpson and the BSA by David JUDSON



JUDSON, David (2009). *Eli Simpson and the BSA* [Cave Studies Series 18]. Buxton: British Cave Research Association. £5.50 plus postage. ISBN 0-900265-34-5. 64pp, A4, 95 photos and illustrations, index.

This new addition to BCRA's Cave Studies Series is an account of the speleo-collector 'par excellence', Eli Simpson 'Cymmie' (1884-1962), and the British Speleological Association (1935-1973) as rediscovered from BCRA's Archives

BCRA's Simpson Archive is a unique collection of speleological records, the greater part of which is currently of material collected and organised by Eli Simpson himself. It covers the period from 1900 to 1960, but it includes transcripts and references going as far back as the mid-17th century. It has also been added to by others, in the same style, up to about 1970. Its main coverage is Yorkshire (about 60% of the material) with other material from Derbyshire and Mendip, and a small amount covering other UK caving areas, as well as Ireland and abroad.

The author and compiler of this material, David Judson, knew Cymmie over the last few years of

his life and this gave him what is now, in 2008, a rare insight into this somewhat unusual man. Cymmie was an old man when the author knew him, but he was still full of life and was still fired by the twin urges of pure curiosity (i.e. the desire to find new cave), and the need to collect related papers. This very large 'jigsaw' was all in his head and, sadly, he never produced a written catalogue.

In this addition to BCRA's Cave Studies Series, the author's approach has been less to do with the scientific parts of the jigsaw and more to do with the human ones; the history of contributions to the science of speleology. The author considers that this demonstrates an intricate web of human interaction and a complex and fascinating one to unravel.

This book is available from BCRA for £5.50 plus £0.50 UK postage. See information below. ■

The aim of BCRA's Cave Studies Series is to provide an introductory text aimed at the sport caver who has become interested in some other aspect of speleology. The series editor is always willing to consider possible new titles to add to the series, and to discuss details with potential authors.

Most booklets are currently priced at £4.50 each, although #18 is **£5.50** and the earlier issues (3, 5, 7-14) are available at a discount price of £3.50. (Spring 2009 prices). Postage is £0.50 to UK and £1.00 for overseas orders.

Cheques should be made payable to BCRA and sent to **BCRA Publications Sales, The Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow, BUXTON, SK17 8RG**.

Alternatively, you may pay at paypal.co.uk to the account name paypal.publications@bcra.org.uk

Further information is at bcra.org.uk/pub/cs

BCRA to Appoint a Paid Library Assistant

Due to the workload required in the library, BCRA Council has decided to appoint a part-time paid assistant to the librarian. At the same time, it is likely that the librarian's hours will be reduced as

the nature of the work progresses from skilled to less skilled duties. The funding for this post comes, essentially, from BCRA's Balcombe bequest, because the revenue from subscriptions is currently barely enough to cover the cost of supplying Cave & Karst Science.

For an organisation that is ostensibly run by volunteers this appointment brings to **six** the number

of staff that are remunerated by BCA / BCRA and reflects the situation that, even in such a small organisation, volunteers with sufficient free time are difficult to find. ■

National Caving Library

Progress continues to be made in sorting and cataloguing. Sid Perou has been adding more material to

the audio archive, which now has over sixty recordings of famous cavers. Just go to **caving-library.co.uk** and click on the Audio Archive button on the top right. You can then sit back and listen to some great tales by some past and present cavers.

A full report on the library will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Speleology*. ■

Karst Science Field Meeting: The Norber Erratics

Wednesday 24 June 2009
Norber, Yorkshire Dales

BCRA is organising this one-day field meeting in the Yorkshire Dales, which will comprise a classroom session and a field excursion. The meeting will review and evaluate various hypotheses on the formation of the pedestals beneath the glacial erratic boulders at Norber, near Austwick in the Yorkshire Dales.

The meeting will be jointly led by Dr Helen Goldie, Dr Brian Parry

and Professor John Gunn, who have each studied these and other pedestal rocks and recently published their findings about the several different processes involved.

Programme: Meet at 10am at the Dalesbridge Centre. There will be an introductory talk followed by shared travel to Norber Brow and Investigation of various sites at Norber. Please bring your own packed lunch. After the meeting, there will be further discussion at the Dalesbridge Centre and the

meeting is expected to finish at around 4pm. Further details, including a recommended reading list, can be found on the News Forum at **bcra.org.uk / forum**.

Pre-registration is requested for this event. To do this, please contact Trevor Faulkner, 01625 531558, **t.faulkner@bcra.org.uk** ■

Apologies if this notice arrives after the date of the field meeting, which was advertised on the BCRA web site and in *Descent* magazine. Due to the decision to cease publication of paper newsletters, wider coverage was not possible in the time-frame available.

*A glacial erratic boulder
at Norber, near Austwick
Photo: David Gibson*



@BCRA

Please note that this is a list of *contact* addresses, rather than a list of officers and the posts they hold. If you need further information, please contact the secretary. BCRA officers can usually be reached by e-mail with an address of the form *initial.surname@bcra.org.uk*. Contact addresses are also listed on our web site at *bcra.org.uk*, which contains information about BCRA and links to information about BCA. In the list below, ✧ denotes changes to the information printed in BCRA newsletter 9, May 2008.

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP INFO ✧ *caves.org.uk / payments / bca* ✧

GENERAL ENQUIRIES *bcra-enquiries @ bcra.org.uk*
BCRA LIBRARY DEPOSITS *bcra-librarian @ bcra.org.uk*
PUBLICATIONS SALES *publications-sales @ bcra.org.uk* ✧
The Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow, BUXTON, SK17 8RG.
01298 873810 (fax 873801)

REGISTERED OFFICE (UK registered charity, number 267828)
The Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow, BUXTON, SK17 8RG

BCRA EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN *bcra-chairman @ bcra.org.uk*
Steve Whitlock, c/o the Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow,
BUXTON, SK17 8RG ✧

SECRETARY *secretary @ bcra.org.uk*
Ursula Collie, Greencroft, Hospital Road, Scorton, RICHMOND,
DL10 6DT. 01748 811438

TREASURER *treasurer @ bcra.org.uk*
Julian Griffiths, c/o the Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow,
BUXTON, SK17 8RG

PUBLICATIONS EDITORS

SPELEOLOGY
EDITOR: Erin Lynch *speleology @ bcra.org.uk*
[China] +86 134 5241 4994 Skype: erin.lynych ✧
OFFICE: David Gibson *d.gibson @ bcra.org.uk*
12 Well House Drive, LEEDS, LS8 4BX. 0113 248 1218.
Fax 0870 164 0389

CAVE & KARST SCIENCE
John Gunn *j.gunn @ bcra.org.uk* ✧
Limestone Research Group, GEES, University of Birmingham,
Edgbaston, BIRMINGHAM, B15 2TT
David Lowe *d.lowe @ bcra.org.uk*
British Geological Survey, Keyworth, NOTTINGHAM, NG12 5GG.

CAVE STUDIES SERIES *cave-studies @ bcra.org.uk*
David Judson, Hurst Barn, Castlemorton, MALVERN, WR13 6LS.
01684 311057

FUNDING

CAVE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE *research-fund @ bcra.org.uk*
David Checkley, 36 Copperfield Road, CHEADLE HULME,
SK8 7PN. 0161 439 4387
✧ *bcra.org.uk / research-fund*

GHAR PARAU FOUNDATION *gpf-enquiries @ bcra.org.uk*
Roo Walters, Mill House, Lazonby, PENRITH, CA10 1BL
✧ *gharparau.org.uk*

UK CAVE CONSERVATION EMERGENCY FUND *j.whistler @ bcra.org.uk*
Joanne Whistler, 1a Elsie Street, KEIGHLEY, BD20 6BA.
07764 685621 ✧

SCIENCE /

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

✧ *bcra.org.uk / sig*

BIOLOGICAL RECORDER *cave-biology @ bcra.org.uk*
Graham Proudlove, Dept. of Zoology, The Manchester Museum,
MANCHESTER, M13 9PL. 0161 200 3111

CONSERVATION OFFICER *conservation @ bcra.org.uk*
David Judson. See under *Cave Studies Series Editor*.

CAVE RADIO & ELECTRONICS SIG

ENQUIRIES: John Rabson *creg-enquiries @ bcra.org.uk*
Maré-le-Bas, 58800 CERVON, *France*. +33 (0)3 86 20 25 50
EDITOR: Rob Gill *creg-editor @ bcra.org.uk*
61 Cross Deep Gardens, TWICKENHAM, TW14 4QZ.
020 8892 8852

CAVE SURVEYING SIG

ENQUIRIES: Andrew Atkinson *csg-secretary @ bcra.org.uk*
31 Priory Avenue, Westbury-on-Trym, BRISTOL, BS9 4BZ.
0117 962 3495
EDITOR: Anthony Day *csg-editor @ bcra.org.uk*
Anthony Day, Fagervollveien 3, N-3023 DRAMMEN,
Norway. +47 32 83 62 64

EXPLOSIVES USERS SIG *n.williams @ bcra.org.uk*
Nick Williams, The Hall, Great Hucklow, BUXTON, SK17 8RG.
01298 873807

HYDROLOGY SIG, SPELEO-HISTORY SIG
These groups have now been dissolved

OTHER FUNCTIONS

PRESIDENT *bcra-president @ bcra.org.uk* ✧
David Checkley, 36 Copperfield Road, CHEADLE HULME,
SK8 7PN. 0161 439 4387

MEETINGS SECRETARY *meetings-secretary @ bcra.org.uk*
Paul Mann, 1a Elsie Street, KEIGHLEY, BD20 6BA.
07957 606548

FOREIGN SECRETARY *foreign-secretary @ bcra.org.uk*
Allan Richardson, 87 Hacking Drive, Longridge, PRESTON,
PR3 3EP. 01772 783194

LIBRARIAN *bcra-librarian @ bcra.org.uk*
Janet Nash, c/o the Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow,
BUXTON, SK17 8RG
✧ *caving-library.org.uk* ✧

INTERNET: WEB SITE EDITOR *webmaster @ bcra.org.uk*
INTERNET: EMAIL FORWARDING *postmaster @ bcra.org.uk*

TRUSTEES / COUNCIL MEMBERS

U. Collie, T. Faulkner, J. Griffiths, D. Judson, J. Potts,
A. Richardson, D. Checkley, S. Whitlock. ✧

Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report (BCA AGM 2009)

At the first meeting of the committee in 2008, the membership was expanded by co-opting several notables and other interested parties. In addition, it was agreed between the Training Officer and myself that we would sit on each other's committee in an ex officio capacity to ensure maximum information transfer between the two committees. The committee also reviewed its potential span of work and links with other bodies such as the BMC and British Standards.

Whilst the remit of the Equipment and Techniques Committee covers all equipment used in caving and their associated techniques of usage, work undertaken by the committee during 2008 has focused on anchors and SRT ropes. The grand plan to undertake a range of tests on anchors was completely overturned by the tragic death of Stu Goodwill early in 2008 in an unrelated caving accident. Stu, who was a member of the CNCC Technical Group, built a substantial and very flexible anchor test rig some years ago as part of a final year project for his degree in response to the need of the group to be able to test anchors. (It should be recognised that the BCA (formally NCA) anchor scheme was based upon the work of CNCC Technical Group in developing the DMM Eco anchor as the replacement for spits and other anchors which were wearing out in the Dales.)

Stu's rig was used in 2007 to test some of the range of anchors being investigated to replace the DMM Eco anchor which is no longer being manufactured. Plans to complete this work in 2008 have been put on hold until the rig can be obtained from Stu's widow. However, another tester was "borrowed" and tests on the Peco anchor show that it performs to similar standard in axial pull out tests to DMM Eco anchors and has the same safety features in that the anchor shows

deformation of the head before being released from the resin (see http://www.cncc.org.uk/tg_test_5.html for more detail). On the basis of these tests, BCA has now acquired some 200 Peco anchors which have BCA's name engraved on them and is negotiating the purchase of a large batch to cover several years of anticipated usage.

Work on revising the BCA Anchor Scheme has made slow progress during the year. Following the consultation process which finished in 2007, a paper was presented to the Committee on the results (see <http://british-caving.org.uk/?page=129>). Two key areas needing improvement were identified and a host of useful supplementary information was acquired by the consultation process. The areas of concern were what did validation of SRT competence cover and an objection to the use of CICs to assess the competence of trainee installers. It was accepted that perhaps the coverage of what was to be validated was not clear. The committee clarified that SRT competence covers in detail the ability of the person to perform the SRT technique, to rig a pitch and to identify the location for new anchors. Following discussion, the Committee was adamant about retaining the right by the trainer to check the competence of the trainee in SRT technique, rigging, identifying new anchor locations as well as installing anchors. Drafting of the revised scheme continues.

Glenn Jones gave a lecture at Hidden Earth 2008 on some anchor work he had undertaken in France. This included the setting up a test bed for Eco anchors to provide information on their capability of withstanding extremes of temperature in both summer and winter.

I must record my thanks to members of the committee for their efforts on both the physical and paper based work fronts, as well as making positive contributions to some complex discussions.

Bob Mehew, February 2009

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

James Halls' Over Engine Mine (JH)

The area around the top of Bitch Pitch has deteriorated significantly during February 2009. The angle iron and rock platform that used to aid progress to the Y-hang at the end has completely gone. Work is being planned to return the pitch head to its previous state and stop the slope below deteriorating.

Jug Holes, Upper Entrance

A report has been received that a large boulder has fallen in this shaft and there are other indications that the area has become unstable. The advice is to avoid this area until DCA/PICA have investigated.

Long Rake Mine, Youlgreave

Some cavers recently visited this mine and found it full of fumes, almost certainly from an engine working on the surface. Please note that this mine is part of a working site on private land and there is no agreed access.

P8 rock fall warning

There has been a fall of rocks in the area of the Flats in P8. One block, which is about 1m across, is stuck in the rift. It currently sits solid in the rift but it is unsupported and pinned in by a small knobble of rock. It has potential to drop onto anyone below and would land in the stream and the bend just after the obstruction you have to climb over en route to the 1st pitch.

DCA will be arranging to move this rock to the

passage floor below. In the meantime, be wary of this area.

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
Email: les@speleoadventure.wanadoo.co.uk

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@cscc.org.uk
Website: www.cscc.org.uk

CSCC AGM – 16 May 2009

The CSCC AGM was held on 16 May 2009 and the following items were discussed under Any Other Business.

Mendip Cave Survey Scheme

A meeting was held on 24 April 2009 and it was agreed that the scheme should be wound up since the surveys were rarely requested or used and the majority of surveys were out of date. It was agreed that the Mendip Cave Registry and Archive (MCRA) would make the surveys, covered by the scheme, available as free downloads from their web site.

MCRA

The latest edition of the Bibliography has now been uploaded with entries to March 2009.

The meeting was informed that the web site had been updated to include Westinghouse apprentices and John Aylott's log books and also downloads of Dave Irwin's Catalogues of ephemera and postcards of Mendip caves with the exception of Wookey and Goughs. Behind the scenes, the registry databases have now been combined and there is now an on-line faculty for Registrars to update their area. To incorporate the surveys as downloads will require an additional 39M worth of web space and to add Dave's catalogues of Wookey and Gough's will require an additional 355Mb. Also the photograph gallery is nearly complete which will also require additional web space, this should not be extensive since the photos will be displayed as thumbnails.

Since the MCRA web space is funded by the CSCC this was discussed and it was agreed that an additional 1Gb would be provided at an annual cost of £10.

Fernhill Cave

After just over a year of digging, the ATLAS team explored Fernhill Cave on Monday evening, a large chamber with a few formations leading to Curtain Chamber which is highly decorated. Unfortunately due to quarry blasting in the 1960's, about

18 inches of the large curtain is broken off with the remnants laying on the floor, but it is still about 3 feet long with bands of white and brown. There are also about 30 other curtains, undamaged and quite spectacular. Due to the positioning of the formations, Curtain Chamber is very vulnerable to damage.

Fairy Cave Quarry Committee will assess the cave for leadership rules.

Chelm's Combe Quarry Caves

Reynold's Rift is only blocked by a couple of large boulders so re-opening will only require a minimum effort. The vulnerability of the three caves in the quarry was discussed since none of the caves are gated and they contained some good formations. It was agreed that these caves should be gated and funding for this, by the CSCC, would be dependent upon access via the CSCC key.

Actions – Alan Gray to determine if the new quarry owners would allow access via the CSCC key and also Alan to determine a cost to supply and fit the three gates.

Newsletter Editor: Mike Clayton
37 Woodcroft Avenue, Tipton, West Midlands
DY4 8AE newsletter@british-caving.org.uk

Hidden Earth 2009

Hidden Earth 2009 is returning to Churchill School, Mendip on the weekend of the 25th -27th September 2009.

Admission fees are unchanged for the past 5 years (£15/£15/£25; Saturday/Sunday/Weekend), with a discount for booking in advance (£13/£13/£22; Saturday/Sunday/Weekend). Bookings open on the 1st June 2009 and this can be completed online or by post.

Throughout the daytime there are lectures, competitions and workshops to attend. On Saturday evening there is a dinner (£14 and advanced booking is necessary) with Bryan "Scoff" Schofield as the after-dinner speaker, followed by the infamous Stomp with live band Rockaholic (£5 entry). As usual the bar is run by cavers so there is no chance of it running out, but you could always try to drink it dry!

Come along and join in at Hidden Earth 2009. More information is available at hidden-earth.org.uk. Hidden Earth is run entirely by volunteers, and we are currently looking for more people to help out with running the bar, the lecture theatres and the tech team. If you think you could be of help with these or if you have any other skills you would like to volunteer then please e-mail;

enquiries@hidden-earth.org.uk

