

The British Caving Association

NEWSLETTER

The National Caving Library and Archive: Bringing it all together

The BCRA Library and Heritage fund has recently been established. As with the Ghar Parau Foundation (1973) it is a BCRA linked charity with its own trustees, but coming under the overall BCRA umbrella and within BCA. It has two separate, but closely allied jobs to do:

1. To pull together, catalogue and make available in the most easily accessible way the national caving library.
2. To pull together, archive and make available in the most easily accessible way the national caving archive.

What is the difference between library and archive? The difference is, I am afraid, rather subtle. The library is a working collection of, for the most part, books, surveys and reports, representing the knowledge base of the caving community. The archive is a collection of historical documents that when put together in a logical order tell a clear and understandable story about an organisation and/or activity (i.e. the sport/science of caving in Britain).



In both cases we have still not found a satisfactory and affordable permanent base for the material. We are currently pursuing a location in Yorkshire (near Grassington) for the library and a location near Nottingham for the archive. Our part-time paid librarian, Janet Nash, is responsible for the library side. I have been asked to co-ordinate the archive and David Checkley (BCRA President) is overseeing both activities.

We have a number of good caving friends who work for the British Geological Survey (BGS), now located at Keyworth near Nottingham. Together we are trying to persuade the powers that be at the BGS that the national caving archive would fit well with the material that they already have and that they should take it under their wing. The Yorkshire and Derbyshire records both contain a considerable proportion of metalliferous mining records because in specific locations the caves and mines are closely connected. All concerned feel that this would be a very sound and satisfactory home for our archived material, but there is a great deal of work still to be done before this is effected.

For our own sake, as well as any organisation that might be persuaded to assist us with the long-term conservation of our archive material, we need to adopt a single, easily understood archive routine. The hierarchical system used for the Simpson Yorkshire records should be the same as that used in Derbyshire for the Aubrey Glennie material, the Gordon Warwick material etc.

Like most of us in caving, I am new to the archiv-

ing business. To me the key words appear to be simplicity, clarity, logic and flexibility. Coupled with considerations of physical geography and personalities/organisations, a subtle balance has to be struck across all of these parameters. Since caving tends to be mostly focused on distinct geographical areas, my hierarchy is:

- A. **Regional viz.** D = Derbyshire
 I = Ireland
 M = Mendip
 S = Scotland
 W = Wales
 Y = Yorkshire

B. **Personality/Organisation**

At the moment we are dealing particularly with the Eli Simpson/BSA archive, because volume wise it represents the largest single proportion of material to hand and it most probably covers the longest timespan (c. 1900—1970). Lesser collections to hand come from Gordon Warwick, Aubrey Glen-nie, CRG and BCRA.

Since this is unlike philately where there is already a well researched catalogue, known beginning and end points, flexibility is important because, with time, it is very difficult for even the most knowledgeable person to guess what else is going to show up to be fitted into the archive, or even how much of it there will be.

My numbering system thus starts at 100 followed by the regional index letter. I have tackled the Simpson Yorkshire record books first because they look like they are the largest single archive unit that has consistency in itself; thus the batch that came from Lancaster last December has been archived 101Y *et seq*, and the first of the boxes that have come from the late Roy Paulson have been labelled and archived 201Y. This one now has 8 volumes in it and these are archived 201Y-A to 201Y-H. There is, for instance, in box 201Y an envelope containing diverse legal documents that require individual listing in order to

have any meaning; a sub-list pasted on the outside of this envelope is headed 201Y-H and lists the 11 items in geographical location, then date order, thus 201Y-H.1. *et seq*. I propose to look at the Derbyshire record books next and they will be labelled as 101D *et seq*. (with 100D being the file reference for the index page).

The guidance provided by BS 5454:2000 “Archiving....” is being followed as closely as is practicable, e.g. size of boxes, use of portfolios and tubes, arrangement on and of shelving etc.

As and when the national caving archive moves into its long-term home, we hope that many others will wish to have their own, or a proportion of it taken in and absorbed into the archive, but there is a great deal of work to be done before we reach this stage. I can only profess to be something of an expert on the Yorkshire archive. Others will be needed to work on their own region, but I do feel strongly that our overarching endeavour should be to ensure that we end up with one co-ordinated archive that uses similar systems covering all of its interconnected pieces.

David Judson, BCRA Conservation Officer

Progress with the National Caving Library and the National Archive

Janet Nash, a professional librarian, has been working for twenty hours a week for three months on cataloguing the national collection of books and journals. This material is housed in part in the local studies library in Matlock and part in two storage units in nearby Ednaston. Janet is based in an office that BCRA has hired in Cromford, just south of Matlock. The total bill for Janet's wages, storage and office is approximately £20,000 per year, which is at present being paid by BCRA funds.

Mixed in with the books and journals, in the hundreds of boxes in storage, we have found many fascinating records, photographs and negatives from the early days of caving in Britain. This material was collected by the BSA and other individuals and is an important part of Britain's caving heritage. There are approximately 15 metres of shelf space of this material and we are currently trying to find a suitable home for it. Discussions with the British Geological Survey (BGS) are at an early stage, but we believe that there is a chance that they will offer suitable storage within their temperature and humidity controlled archive. Once we have a home for this material I believe we have a good chance of getting money from the Heritage Fund to pay for storage and digitisation of key documents. I have been in discussion with the Lottery regarding our application. Making key elements of this material available to the public via a web site will be costly, but will be the first step towards creating a national caving archive. This archive will bring our caving history to life and make it available to the public for the first time.

Janet has catalogued all the books and many of the journals on a free software package and is about to purchase a suitable professional software system. This will bring us into line with other similar libraries including the BGS. We have an outline for the library website, which will give access to the catalogue and have set up a library steering group, that has had it's first meeting. There have been two working parties at Ednaston and we now have a good idea of what is in the majority of the boxes. We are making good progress, but need more help and sources of funding to cover the establishment of the library and archive. As members of the British Caving Asso-

ciation, our national body, I hope that you will do what you can to support the library and archive. I will try to keep you updated on progress with this exciting project and welcome any support or feedback.

Dave Checkley, BCRA President

Late News 1st May 2008:

Agreement has just been reached with the BGS - they will be pleased to house the national Caving Archive, and detailed work will now proceed towards this end. Dave Judson.

Mendip Caving 2008 6th to 8th June 2008

A weekend of fun and excitement co-ordinated by CSCC. All welcome.

Friday Evening - Welcome at the Hunters - Bring your own slides, digital pictures or videos to show. Sign up for trips or just to socialise.

Saturday - Regional talks, regional council training, led trips to Mendip's less accessible (leader) caves, chariot race, barbecue, stomp/ceilidh, late bar.

Sunday - Led trips, regional council training, MRO coffee morning and rescue store open day.

Accommodation at the Mendip huts (book direct) or camp at Eastwater Farm or Mendip Heights. More info from our website <http://www.mendipcaving.org.uk> when it becomes available.

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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.

Chairman's Report.

BCA AGM 2008

This year has been a bad year for me personally, in the sense that I have not completed even the minimum of work that would enable me to report with satisfaction; but I am here. I did not appreciate the extent to which I was frankly, knackered!

I attended a meeting in London of the CCPR Outdoor Pursuits Division on Wednesday 10th October. I learned that:

- **CCPR** is increasingly being used by Sport England and UK Sport to co-ordinate distribution of limited funding to Governing Bodies (such as BCA) excluded from access to the main Olympic pot.
- **The impact and Improvement Fund;** £250,000 (Sport England). For agreed projects rather than subsidy of recurring costs. We are already too late for 2008.
- **The International Influence Strategy** (UKSport); replacing the IRIS system with a grant via CCPR; will involve more targets and projects.
- The publication of a **Manifesto: Learning Outside the Classroom** (DfES) was reviewed and contrasted with recent Govt. pressures on volunteers to participate in vetting procedures and much other bureaucracy. Many GB's reported an increasing tendency to restrict age for Club membership to 18 years or more!
- **CCPR Access Policy:** CCPR has a long-standing history of supporting members' desire for increased access to land and water. One of CCPR's key

strategic priorities is to secure sustainable access to land and water for sport and recreation, underpinned by good practice in outdoor and adventurous activities. The initial draft document merits further work to satisfy as wide a range of members as possible. Also DEFRA has just published the draft Marine Bill, including provisions on access to the English coast.

• **BingoLotto:** Launch of a TV game show raising money for grassroots sport and recreation. For some time, CCPR has been working with Intelligent Gaming Solutions (IGS) on its plans to introduce into the UK its interactive TV game show, BingoLotto. The show has been operating successfully in Sweden for many years and, in the process, has generated tens of millions of pounds for sport. BCA should take advantage at least of the introductory period of this new opportunity. Members who may have seen the initial game shows on the Virgin digital channel on Friday evenings may shrink from such an objective.

Mick Day, BCA Chairman

British Caving Association

The Old Methodist Chapel

Great Hucklow

Buxton

SK17 8RG

Equipment and Techniques Committee.

BCA AGM

The main focus for 2007 has been the Anchor programme, and what has been called the Rhino Rift incident. In terms of the anchor program this has had the following threads;

Discussion paper on updated standards

- Their application to the scheme
- Impact on existing anchors
- Testing
- Installation program

Testing of Anchors

- Singing Rock anchor, Fisher resin, and K-mark resin. Results could not be matched with the DMM anchor, mostly due to recommended installation method, and poor performance of resin in damp/wet conditions.
- 100kg drop tests in Yorkshire. Testing of anchor and resin bond.
- DMM anchor, and potential replacement. Nick Williams sources replacement anchor for testing.
- Vercors test bed for extremes of heat and cold, to see affect on anchor and resin.
- Anchor testing put on hold due to the death of Stu Goodwill.

Rhino Rift incident

The incident in Rhino of a repeatedly reported loose anchor, led to following actions:

- Closure of the cave.
- Testing of the anchors in Rhino and other CSCC caves.
- Closure of further caves, pending the Rhino

investigation (further anchors found suspect).

- Testing of anchors in the Yorkshire test beds (mainly to test the pullers and calibration).
- Stitch drilling of the reported anchor (this proved that the substrate was the issue).
- Testing of anchors in Devon. Anchors tested with oil on them, and testing of anchors in Chudleigh, Mountbatten.
- Discovery of issues caused by the anchor pullers. The differing angles of pulling had a dramatic affect on the results of the test.
- Holes in the record keeping for the Rhino anchors (1 anchor inspected and passed twice, that did not exist).
- Holes in the CSCC records. No record of installers being updated with latest techniques (notching the holes).
- Holes in the anchor scheme. No training given for the use of the pullers – leading to difference in the regions.
- Re-opening of the cave. Statement produced in June and caves re-opened.
- Replacement program for all affected anchors (not for safety but for aesthetic reasons).

Presentation of results at Hidden Earth

Bob and Andy presented the results of all the above at Hidden Earth 2007.

Many thanks for the support of the committee, and in particular to:

Bob Mehew, Les Sykes, Andy Atkinson, Stu Goodwill, Glenn Jones for all their practical support, and to Fisher Resin, Total Access, & Nick Williams for providing free materials (anchors and resin), to help take the programmes forward.

Andy Pryke, BCA Equipment Officer

Rope Testing Service 2007

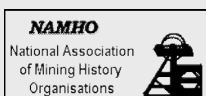
In 2007 some 46 samples of rope were tested and results provided to their owners. Unfortunately, 35 of these samples had been received in 2006, a reflection of the poor quality service which has been provided, though all samples received in 2007 have been tested by the end of the year.

The rope test rig was taken to Hidden Earth at Tewksbury in September and thanks to its location, provided an attraction to many people. A number of useful discussions were held as a consequence.

The rope test rig was also taken to a CIC workshop in late September where a lecture was given and samples of tape were tested. Contrary to expectations, the type of tape tested showed considerable strength to the drop test and indicates a potential area of further work.

No progress was made on the remaining 2 ropes returned under the Long Term Rope Test program nor on a proposed program of work on new rope which has the aim of characterising the rope test rig's testing procedure (the procedure departs from that used in the British Standard in several ways which it is thought gives rise to a more severe test).

Bob Mehew, BCA Rope Test Officer



The 2008 conference will be held at the Scottish Mining Museum (Lady Victoria Colliery site), Newton Grange, Midlothian, over the weekend of 11th to 13th July 2008. In addition to the conference presentations, there will be surface and underground site visits - these will be in the Edinburgh area over the weekend but it is anticipated that there will be trips to other parts of Scotland during the following week. Details are available on www.namhoconference.org.uk.

Membership Administrator's Report. BCA AGM

2007 Membership as of 31st December 2007:

DIMs: 351 (299 caving and 52 non caving) 288 of which are also BCRA members
Joint: 86 (75 caving and 11 non caving) 50 of which are also BCRA members
CIMs: 4977 (3964 caving and 1013 non caving)
Clubs: 154 (73 of which are also BCRA members)
Honorary: 9 (all BCRA members)

Associates: 13

Access Groups: 6

2008 Membership as of 4th April 2008:

DIMs: 301 (208 caving and 93 non caving) 167 of which are also BCRA* members
Joint: 64 (not had time to break down these numbers)
CIMs: 4452 (3372 caving and 1080 non caving)
Clubs: 144 (47 of which are also BCRA members)
Honorary: 7 (all BCRA members – 2 are yet to confirm)

Associates: 7

Access Groups: 6

**BCRA DIM's also receive a BCRA "Gold" card*

DIMs continue to join at very short notice urgently wanting proof of membership for the following weekend as they "have a trip planned to OFD, D-Y-O, Milwr Tunnel, Titan" (delete where not applicable). I do my utmost to satisfy these requests, but sometimes the lead time is really too short, so I email membership numbers as applicable. Feedback suggests members are happy with this.

We have also had an alarming number of people attempting to join BCA as DIMs when really they wanted LCMLA registration. Karen and Les have spent some time re-arranging the BCA website home page to remove any perceived confusion.

Glenn Jones, BCA Membership Administrator

Training Officer's Report.

BCA AGM

2007 has been an extremely busy year for NCP, CIC panel and Training Committee (TC).

NCP has seen the introduction of the new five year revalidation workshops which are organised and run by BCA, with all profits going into the training account. These have, at long last, centralised the revalidation process standardising the input on courses and hopefully ensuring that more people undergo revalidation.

NCP have also been proactive in producing the draft recommended "good practice" code for Porth Yr Ogof deep water which has yet to receive the support of Cambrian Council or the BCA Legal and Insurance section. Training Committee, and NCP feel that both were being obstructive in this matter. The document has been shelved as one of general release however it is in circulation in Outdoor Centres who use PYO and has been well received. It is also being used on LCMLA training courses. A new booklet on weather and flooding, and a new set of assessment question papers are also close to completion. The booklet on Geology is to be reworked following discussions with Prof. J. Gunn.

CIC panel have met three times in the past twelve months with much time spent looking at training course duration, content and prerequisites prior to attending training. Following much deliberation they requested that TC approved the following changes;

- Increase the length of training courses to a minimum of four days.
- That all candidates must have been assessed at LCMLA level 2 with SRT for leader prior to attending a CIC training course.
- That all candidates must submit their log book

pages to the chair of CIC prior to beginning assessments.

- That revalidation should be via a one day workshop rather than two days.
- That the number of CIC trainer/assessors be increased, M. Day, J. Parker Smith and N. Ball to oversee.

The programme of work for CIC panel for the coming year includes re-looking at the CIC syllabus content with a possible view to streamlining it, setting up more specific module content checklists to ensure standardisation of assessments and developing a new marking system which will enable the whole four module assessment to be more integrated rather than each module being seen in isolation.

Training Committee has considered all suggestions coming from CIC panel and NCP and in the main have supported all changes. Training Committee is still poorly attended specifically by the Caving Regional Councils with only DCA being present at any TC meeting in the past twelve months. We have put meetings at both weekdays and weekends but with no improvement in attendance. I would welcome any further suggestions to improve the attendance of Regional Councils at Training Committee meetings. We do discuss topics at TC which have an impact on Regional Councils but if they do not have representatives on TC then they really cannot complain if left out of discussions.

NCP, CIC panel and TC have shown a great deal of concern during the past twelve months over HSE's and the Police's lack of contact with the NGB for Caving immediately following a major incident. I was asked by TC to try to change this situation. I approached Gavin Howat who is a senior HSE inspector with particular responsibilities for adventurous activities and who was particularly helpful with the Working at Heights situa-

tion. He agreed that, as with mountain incidents, the Training Officer of the NGB should be approached and that BCA should be involved in drawing up recommendations following the conclusion of an enquiry. I realise this may not always be the usual approach by BCA, but as the NGB we should be following the same lead as BMC and BCU. All three Committees will be spending some time in the coming year looking at concerns raised during the past few weeks by Committee members, independent CICs and Rescue Team members following the recent fatalities. I look forward to the Council's support in developing documents of good practice. One of these will be in close liaison with Steve Long from MLT UK.

The working party for the Yorkshire Dales National Park re: recreational and professional use of caves and crags has yet to meet but I am in contact with the chair of this group and will keep you informed of progress,

Financially I think we will just about have broken even this year, a major expense was the reprint of the LCMLA syllabus at a cost of £1598.00 for 500 but we still have about 400 in hand. Revalidations are starting to show a profit which hopefully will increase over the next twelve months. This is extremely important having lost the funding of Sport UK.

However on a more negative note Trainers and Assessors are still having problems obtaining professional indemnity insurance at a reasonable price to cover their work on behalf of the BCA. This is an area that my predecessor asked Legal and Insurance to pursue with some urgency several years ago, this matter is still pressing.

During the past twelve months there have been:

- 197 Registrations
- 66 Level 1 assessments
- 10 Level 2 assessments
- 61 Standard revalidations

- 30 5 year workshop revalidations
- 3 Core skills re-assessments
- 22 CIC registrations
- 4 CIC awards
- 17 CIC revalidations.

These figures are for the period Jan. 07 to Dec.07

G.N.Mollard, BCA Training Officer

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

Suicide Cave - Danger

A mines inspection took place in Suicide Cave on 17th October 2007 to check on the suitability of the cave for novice trips. Those involved had a good look at the boulder choke near the entrance and noticed that the boulders seemed to have dropped about 6 inches and there are new cracks and loose debris around the area. The access hole through the bottom of the choke is also smaller.

OPINION WAS THAT THE WHOLE AREA WAS DANGEROUS, VERY UNSTABLE AND IT SHOULD NOT BE USED.

Measures to stabilise the area are being considered but this may not happen for some time so please stay away until this has been done.

If you have any queries or problems about Conservation or Access in the region, please contact the Conservation Officer, Dave Webb, 0115 8401109, conservation-off@theDCA.org.uk; or the Access Officer, Iain Barker, 0114 2647561, 07710 689704, access-off@theDCA.org.uk.

WALES

Regional Council - Cambrian Caving Council (CCC)

Hon Chairman: Bernie Woodley
 Email: chair@cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk
 Website: www.cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk

Following the recent AGM, there has been a change to the CCC committee. The changes are as follows;

Chair: Bernie Woodley
 Secretary: Mike McCombe
 Treasurer: Robin Weare
 Training Officer: Sue Mabbett

Little Neath River Cave and caves lower down valley - 21st April 2008

It has been reported that a solvent probably diesel has contaminated Little Neath River Cave, there is no sign of such pollution originating at the farms and it is suspected it originates from 4 wheel drive vehicles in the river. For more information go to:

www.british-caving.org.uk/?page=149

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

The CNCC would like to draw to the attention of cavers the following access requirements;

Clubs visiting the caves and potholes of North Yorkshire where access controls are in place. These clubs must abide by the access agreements, that not only means applying for permits, but also approaching the cave by the agreed route, keeping the numbers of cavers within the constraints of the permit and where it states 'no

novices' there must not be any novices on the trip.

For clubs visiting caves that are not in the permits scheme, they must still abide by the agreed procedure, if a visit to the farm is required please visit the farmer and say hello. Where parking restrictions exist please do not park, if we inconvenience the farmer, then they will eventually inconvenience us.

The agreements, both permit and non permit have been agreed with the landholders and Natural England. These agreements are in existence for the benefit of everyone and offer protection to the environment that we want to explore. If any clubs are unaware of the access arrangements for any area, the information is online at www.cncc.org, or in a copy of the CNCC handbook, or contact the CNCC secretary who will print off the areas required.

Failure to comply with a set of fairly simple rules will result in caves being closed. Access to one cave has already been withdrawn because of cavers visiting it when they were asked not to by the land owner. We must remember, most of the caves are on private land, it is easier to get them closed that reopened.

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@csccl.org.uk
 Website: www.csccl.org.uk



The French Federation of Speleology (FFS) and the Speleological Federation of the European Union (FSUE) are hosting the fourth European Speleological Congress (ESC) in Lans-en-Vercors (south east France) in August (23rd - 30th).

The convention will take place in the spectacular setting of the Vercors National Park, an area famous for its history of cave exploration and one of the most mythical karst regions of Europe. Cavers from Europe and elsewhere are invited to attend the event which is intended to be a speleological convention of quality in a festive, friendly caving context, enabling all European cavers to meet and exchange ideas and experience.

The list of sessions available is too long to list here, but includes photography, exploration, rescue, diving, art and a speleo bar featuring beer and food from all over Europe (go to the website for further detail:<http://www.vercors2008.ffspeleo.fr/>).

BCA will be actively supporting this event and has purchased 40 (full) registrations and 10 (accompanied spouse/partner) registrations at a reduced rate so that UK cavers can register in pounds sterling via BCA. The registration fees are £28.00 full and £18.00 for an accompanied spouse/partner. If you wish to register via BCA, please send an email to membership@british-caving.org.uk with Vercors 2008 in the subject line containing the following information for each person registering:

Forename, surname, contact email address, class of registration required, total amount you will be paying. You will need to send payment to BCA's Great Hucklow address (see this newsletter). But hurry, because registrations are going quickly.

The Vercors National Park is a limestone plateau some 50 miles (N/S) by about 35 miles (E/W) and is located just south of Grenoble in the French Alps. The main towns and villages are situated at about 4,000ft ASL, whilst the dramatic, unbroken east ridge touches just under 8,000ft ASL at the Grand Veymont. Politically and commercially, the National Park is two distinct areas separated by the Bourne Gorge (an interesting drive!) Whilst nowhere in the Vercors can be considered overtly touristic, the north is more commercial and does cater more for the tourist trade, mainly due to the importance of Corrençon (and Villard), Meaudre and Autrans as major skiing resorts. The countryside is also more dramatic than the south, with the magnificent Grand Moucherolle (second highest peak in the Vercors) dominating the skyline from just about anywhere. Whilst all towns and villages in the park have their own local shopping, the only supermarket within the park is located in the north (the Intermarché at Lans-en-Vercors) which also has the cheapest fuel.

Generally, caving in the Vercors is (due to the geology) split into regions. In the north east (from the Moucherolle up to the Sornin Plateaux) the caves are deep and demanding and weather dependent. In the north west (Autrans and Meaudre areas) there are many fine systems (Meaudre is the new "hot spot" for new caves, with

a significant discovery being made just about every year). In the south, the Herbouilly Plateaux contains many caves of varying depth and difficulty and is the subject of a guide book of its own (now sadly out of print). The area bordering the Vernaison river valley contains many caves of varying difficulty, including the impressive Luire system just south of St. Agnan, which resurges at the Bournillion (the largest cave entrance in Europe). And in the south west (the area between Vassieux and Lente) a number of new caves have recently been discovered.

The guide books for the area are Speleo Dans le Vercors Tome 1 & 2

The Vercors also has possibly the finest show cave in Europe – the Choranche, situated next door to the Grotte de Gourmier, a superb river cave equipped with cables for use as you traverse up stream above waterfalls!

The Vercors also has a number of excellent canyons to descend (including the 400m absolutely vertical Moulin Marquise across the valley from the Choranche show cave) and of course some excellent walking.

Glenn Jones

The Outdoor Show

Birmingham NEC 14th—16th March 2008

The Ordnance Survey Outdoor Show is now a well-established annual event in the outdoor calendar and once again this year, volunteers from all over the country converged at the NEC to support the BCA.

Our stand was dominated by the impressive YHA artificial cave, which is so big that it arrives in many pieces (like a 3D jigsaw which then has to be put together) on two articulated lorries! Apart from the lack of mud and the fact that it is dry, it is quite realistic, complete with squeezes, a rope climb and the sound of running water!

The cave proved to be a huge attraction and there was a constant queue of keen would-be cavers ready to face a challenge. As well as the artificial cave, Nigel Atkins was entertaining the crowds on ropes, BCA volunteers were on-hand to advise how to “try caving” and to take contact details for those who wanted more information.

This show was an excellent opportunity to promote the BCA and caving, and our thanks must go to all those who provided support and assistance for this event.

Emma Porter, BCA Individual Rep



Photo by Mike Clayton

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.

The Frederik Hammel Prize

Dear Caver Friends,

It's a great pleasure for the French Federation of Speleology (FFS) to inform you of the opening of Frederik Hammel Prize to all European cavers this year, in the frame of the European Speleological Congress "Vercors 2008", organised by FFS under the patronage of the European Speleological Federation (FSUE). The prize was created in 1990 after the tragic death of Frederik Hammel in the Gouffre Achama Lezia (part of the System Saint-Vincent in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques in France) on August 1st 1988. You can find more details about this accident on:

http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fr%C3%A9d%C3%A9rik_Hammel

The Frederik Hammel Prize is aimed at rewarding work which has a bearing on accident prevention or cave rescue techniques. Such work, presented in writing, must be innovative and applicable to caving in general. It is awarded every second year among the FFS. This year, on the occasion of the European Congress, the Prize is open to all European cavers, who are members of a national organisation of the FSUE, including European non-EU countries. The total amount of the Prize has been raised to 2000 euros for this year.

The candidates (individuals or cavers groups) who want to apply to the Frederik Hammel Prize 2008, should write their candidature either in French, or in English, in both case with a summary in French.

The files are to be sent:

by post mail to:
FFS - Prix Frederik Hammel
28 rue Delandine
F-69002 Lyon
(France)

- or by email to:
secretariat@ffspeleo.fr

with an email title "Candidature - Prix Frederik Hammel 2008"

The candidatures should arrive to FFS headquarters before July 15th 2008 at 4pm. The laureates of the Frederik Hammel Prize 2008 will be awarded by a European jury on the 29th of August 2008, during next European Speleological Congress in Lans-en-Vercors.

The details of the rules governing the award of the Frederik Hammel Prize are available on:

<http://fsue.ffspeleo.fr/main6/prix-frederik-hammel.pdf>

The content of the application file is detailed at article 9. For your information, the former laureates of the Prize are named on:

<http://fsue.ffspeleo.fr/main6/otherawarded-projects.html>

Should you have any further question about the Prize, please contact the Frederik Hammel Prize Delegation at:

frederik-hammel.award@eurospeleo.org

If you need to check whether your country is a member of the European Speleological Federation (FSUE), in order to know if you can apply, you can contact the FSUE officers at:

contact@eurospeleo.org

We wish you good luck for the mounting of your application,

Best Speleological Regards,

Bernard THOMACHOT & Olivier VIDAL
Délégué aux Prix Fédéraux & Délégué FSUE
Fédération Française de Spéléologie (FFS) &
Fédération Spéléologique de l'Union Européenne (FSUE)

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Suspension Trauma or Suspension Induced Shock Syndrome

An E Mail recently appeared in my In Box reporting an unusual case of possible suspension trauma. Suspension trauma or as it now proposed to be known, Suspension Induced Shock Syndrome, is the situation where a person suspended by some means can become unconscious in a short space of time and create subsequent medical problems. The suggested name change comes from the simple fact that actual trauma is not required to induce the problem. A reasonable explanation of the problem can be found at <http://alpineclub-edm.org/accidents/SuspensionInducedShockSyndrome.htm> with more detail at <http://www.suspensiontrauma.info/>. A good summary of the literature up to 2002 can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/research/crr_pdf/2002/crr02451.pdf. The topic came back into the limelight because of the Temporary Work at Height Regulations. Little further research seems to have been undertaken, the most recent paper (see <http://emj.bmj.com/cgi/content/abstract/24/4/237>) being about the possible need for more research!

To summarise the web sites, if one's limbs remain immobile for a while, then the blood starts to pool up in them. The movement of blood is further hindered by straps cutting into the limbs as occurs when sitting in a harness. After sufficient time, the nature of the blood pooled in a limb has changed so that it now contains higher levels of toxins. In addition, the apparent loss of blood from the rest of the body can cause the body to respond by making you go unconscious. The time scale for this series of event to occur is variable. SuspensionTrauma.info suggests between 5 and 20 minutes, the review finds a variety of times extending out one hour (for a special type of harness), but it also notes that some persons reacted within one minute. It is emphasised that the reaction may either be going unconscious (fainting) or suffering symptoms of blood pooling or other problems (notably volunteers suffering rising levels of pain in the test position). The E Mail reported a recent experiment being conducted in Australia found the victim starting to have problems within 40 seconds of taking up a jack knife position being suspended from a rear

anchor point of a recreational harness.

The real problem occurs when you release the blood and it flows from these pooled areas, back to other parts of the body. This blood can deliver its high levels of toxins to your vital organs and damage them. It has been called the Reflow Syndrome. The way to minimise this problem is to keep the patient body upright but their legs flat out and minimise their movements. The Suspension Trauma web site suggests that the patient should remain in this position for 30 minutes.

The key learning point is that somebody in a harness could start to get into trouble within a minute or so of ceasing movement, so it is vital to have a recovery plan available at almost an instance notice. As for when one should take precautions against Suspension Trauma, well it all depends upon what has happened. But one thing is clear, if the individual is unconscious, then taking care of breathing is top priority.

Bob Mehew



This year the conference will be held on the 26th—28th September 2008 at:

Prince Henry's Grammar School

Otley

West Yorkshire LS21 2BB

www.hidden-earth.org.uk

Dates for your Diary

COURSES, CONFERENCES, EVENTS ETC 2008/2009

MEETINGS 2008/2009

May 17 2008	CSCC AGM, Hunters Lodge, Priddy 10.30am
Jun 20 2008	CNCC Meeting, Hellifield Village Institute, Hellifield 8:00pm
Jun 21 2008	BCA National Council Meeting, Baptist Hall, Alvechurch, Worcestershire 10:30am
Jun 28 2008	DCA Council Meeting, Monyash Village Hall, Monyash
Oct 4 2008	BCA National Council Meeting, Baptist Hall, Alvechurch, Worcestershire 10:30am
Nov 1 2008	DCA Council Meeting, Monyash Village Hall, Monyash
Jan 10 2009	BCA National Council Meeting, Baptist Hall, Alvechurch, Worcestershire 10:30am
Feb 21 2009	DCA Council Meeting, Monyash Village Hall, Monyash
Mar 28 2009	BCA Annual General Meeting, Baptist Hall, Alvechurch, Worcestershire 10:30am

EVENTS 2008

Jun 6 - 8 2008	Mendip Caving 2008, Priddy, Somerset.
Jul 11-13 2008	NAHMO The Annual Mining History Conference, Scottish Mining Museum, Lady Victoria Colliery Site, Newton Grange, Midlothian
Sept 26-28 2008	Hidden Earth, National Caving Conference and Exhibition, Prince Henry's Grammar School, Otley
Oct 25-27 2008	Speleological Union of Ireland Symposium, Lower Lough Erne, Co Fermanagh

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Check for further details and other international events on the UIS Speleo Calendar at:
<http://www.uis-speleo.org/calendar/events.html>.

Aug 23-31 2008	IV European Speleological Congress, Lans-en-Vercors, Isère, France
Jul 19-26 2009	15th International Congress of Speleology, Kerrville, Texas, USA

Hidden Earth 08



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**National Caving Conference
and Exhibition**

26-28 September 2008

**Prince Henry's Grammar School,
Otley, West Yorkshire**

photo:- Robbie Shone