



NEWSHEET

Catching up with Publication Dates!

The forthcoming journal 69 (December 2007) looks likely to be published in January 2008, and so we will then be back on target for publication, more or less. A draft contents list, showing what you can expect in journal 69 appears on page 2 of this issue.

The issue you are reading now (journal 68, Sept. 2007) has obviously been delayed by rather longer. We had considered skipping an issue, just as we did between J62 (Dec 2005) and J63 (June 2006). However, this seems to cause problems for some people (especially librarians) so we have decided to produce this thin 'stop-gap' issue, which was edited by David Gibson; giving Rob a chance to finish off J69. This issue contains little more than some AGM reports, but these are important because we have significantly altered the way we run the Group, as explained later in this news-sheet.

Apologising for the late arrival of the journal seems to be a current theme and we would like to reassure our readers that the fact that this journal is late and very thin is not a certain indication of its imminent demise – a full-size journal is following closely behind.

Changes to Subscription Payments Internet Renewal

In Journal 65 (Dec 2006) we announced plans for automating some aspects of CREG's administration. It is still our long-term plan to streamline operations by ceasing to issue detailed renewal paperwork. Those of you who do not have Internet access will receive the paperwork by post, so please make sure you have told us that you need it. (In any case, the address label of your journal mailing will include a message inviting you to renew, and the basic information you need appears on page 2 of each journal).

Payments by Credit Card

For some time, we have been considering whether to cease to offer the facility for subscriptions to be paid by credit card directly to BCRA. Not only is this expensive in commission charges, but it causes administrative nightmares for everyone involved in the process. It is not that it is inherently difficult, just that we are all volunteers with limited time at our disposal. We have delayed making a decision on this, but it now seems as though BCRA will finally be forced to abandon this method of payment because of new regulations introduced by the credit card companies, which are intended to reduce fraud. The regulations place strict limitations on how the customer's data can be handled. The merchant's procedures must be audited and there are heavy fines for non-compliance. For a small volunteer-based organisation such as BCRA, the simplest course of action is therefore to cease to operate a credit card account, relying instead on customers using online credit card facilities provided by third parties.

Therefore, from 1 Jan 2008, CREG can no longer accept subscription payments by credit card that are made by post or telephone. If you wish to pay by credit card you should use the online facilities of PayPal or NoChex. See [caves.org.uk / payments / creg](http://caves.org.uk/payments/creg) for further information.

Front Cover: Gareth Kennedy of the Cambourne School of Mines experiments with Zigbee, Bluetooth and other 2.4GHz wireless links in a former railway tunnel at Ashbourne, Derbyshire. This work was part of a project with the Mines Rescue Service, carried out with a financial grant from the European Commission's Research Fund for Coal and Steel. **Photo: David Gibson**

Standing Orders

The BCRA Treasurer informs us that there are some people who are paying Bank Standing Orders to BCRA under an old arrangement. BCRA has not accepted Standing Orders as a valid method of paying membership for two years. Unfortunately, because of the nature of these payments, BCRA is unable to cancel them nor is it able to trace them via the issuing bank.

If there are any CREG members who are still paying a standing Order to BCRA (e.g. for the now-obsolete category of Associate Membership) we would be grateful if you would contact your bank to arrange for the cancellation of the payment. Any such payment that is received by BCRA will not entitle you to any membership benefits and will be treated as a donation.

Changes to CREG Operations – Committee Abolished!

As noted above, we have significantly altered the way the Cave Radio & Electronics Group operates. At the 2007 AGM, a procedure was brought into place that essentially dissolved the Group and returned its assets to BCRA. At a subsequent BCRA Council meeting, officers were appointed to run CREG operations. This new 'administration team' is listed in the masthead information on page 2. At the same time, Council agreed to ring-fence CREG's funds. Details are on page 4 but here is a summary of the changes.

CREG's operations will continue in much the same way as before, except that there is no longer the formality of a 'committee', and an 'AGM'. CREG's operations are now similar to the way that other activities of BCRA are managed – i.e. the periodicals Speleology and Cave & Karst Science, and the Hidden Earth event and the Science Symposium. None of these require formal 'committees' so why should CREG? Instead these activities report directly to BCRA Council, which is now what CREG will do. Members' control will henceforth be exercised at BCRA's AGM.

The CREG team considers this a very positive action for ensuring CREG's future. With the emergence of the British Caving Association and with BCRA now fully focussed on science and technology it makes sense for BCRA to bring the Special Interest Groups under central control. CREG is leading the way – and we expect the other SIGs will follow. This new model for the SIGs allows them to seek assistance from a wider pool of people because a 'management team' is not restricted to being 'a committee of BCA members'. A more loosely-assembled 'CREG management team' is possible because BCRA Council now holds the purse-strings. Of course, what matters – at the end of the day – is not how we are constituted; it is whether people are prepared to put in some work for the Group, by writing for the journal and organising events.

It should, perhaps, be pointed out that most of our readers are 'subscribers' and very few were actually 'members' of CREG, with voting rights. These members have not been disenfranchised because they still have control of CREG via their BCRA membership. Also, we have been careful to act in strict accordance with our constitution in these matters. Please feel free to write in with your comments on these developments, but please *do* read the AGM report in full first!

Diary Dates (see bcra.org.uk)

BCRA Cave Science Symposium	Loughborough	8 March
BCRA Cave Technology Symposium	Mendips	19 April
Cave Surveying Group Field Meeting	Mendips	18-20 April
Hidden Earth 2008 – National Caving Conference		no date