

Annual General Meeting 2007

CREG's 2007 AGM took place at Hidden Earth 2007 on 22 September. Minutes by Rob Gill and reports from CREG officers.

Those attending

Seven people attended: David Gibson (elected as chairman for the meeting), Chris Trayner, Rob Gill (elected as recorder for the meeting), Dave Kelly, Earl Merson, Stuart France, Frank Tully. Apologies had been received from Richard Rushton.

Quorum

It was established that there were at least three BCA Direct and Club Individual Members present and that therefore the AGM was quorate.

Reports

Most reports had been circulated in advance with the agenda. The Chairman's report (RR) was presented in his absence; the Treasurer (DG) presented his written report; Rob Gill (as membership secretary and journal editor) gave his reports verbally and the previously circulated reports from the Publications Officer (CT), Commissioning Editor (John Rabson) and Equipment Officer (John Hey) were read into the minutes.

Report highlights

Chairman

- CREG, in co-operation with CSG, had held a Cave Technology Symposium on 14 April 2007. This had been a success and a similar event was planned for 2008.
- The 2006 CREG Prize had been awarded to Graham Naylor.

Treasurer

- This was an interim report as it was intended to move the CREG accounting year-end to 31 December to coincide with the financial year-end adopted by BCRA.
- Credit card payments were processed on CREG's behalf by BCA and this was proving difficult to administer.
- Some postage expenses required clarification.

Membership Secretary

- Subscriptions remained broadly stable at 120 including nine library and complementary copies.
- Membership (subscribers who were also BCA DIMs or CIMs) stood at 18.
- Online PayPal and Nohex payments had overtaken credit card payments and consideration was being given to withdrawing the credit card option as it was proving administratively difficult.

Journal Editor

- Pressure of other commitments has resulted in delays to the production of J67 (June). It had been printed and was expected to be posted by end-September.

- It was planned to issue an abridged J68 (September issue) under the editorship of David Gibson; with Rob Gill to edit J69 (the December issue) to be published as soon as personal commitments allowed.
- The editor expressed a desire to remain in post, however, was concerned that other pressures may limit available time. He will report on this matter to the management team early in 2008.

CREG Award

The Committee had decided that the 2007 award should be made to Phil Underwood with the following citation...

This year's CREG Award goes to Phil Underwood for his development of an electronic compass/clinometer/data-recorder for cave surveying; a device with, potentially, a large market; and one of tremendous use to cavers. Phil is one of several people who have been experimenting with instrumentation such as this, but Phil receives his award not only for the development of the device but for writing about it in *Compass Points* and the CREG journal. Phil's project shows innovation as well as significant mathematical, software and hardware skills and gives to cavers a highly-useful tool which, in combination with the continued developments in survey-drawing software that are happening, will make it easier for cavers to produce higher-quality cave surveys.

Election of Committee

No nominations for committee posts had been received by the constitutional deadline and, following discussion, nobody present was willing to volunteer to stand as a committee member for 2007-8. Consequently it was not possible to elect a committee to manage CREG's business.

Two clauses of the CREG constitution have particular relevance. Clause 5.2 states that "if it is not possible to elect two officers to the committee at a General meeting then BCRA Council shall have the right to enforce dissolution of the Group." Clause 6.6 states that "In the event of the dissolution of the Group, its realised assets after discharge of all liabilities shall be handed to the BCRA."

The people present at the AGM expressed a willingness to continue the production of a regular CREG Journal and to organise activities in support of CREG's aims. In this regard, an interim 'management group' was elected, comprising...

- David Gibson secretary/treasurer
- Rob Gill journal editor
- Chris Trayner publication/bibliog. roles
- Stuart France general assistance
- Earl Merson general assistance
- Donald Kelly general assistance

The view of the AGM was that we should request BCRA Council to approve the appointment of the above team at the earliest opportunity and to request that, at BCRA's next Council meeting, the question of CREG's assets be discussed. In this regard, the question is whether Council is willing to let the present management team continue to operate its own bank account, or whether Council would like the funds transferred to a BCRA account. In either event, as there is currently a team willing to carry on operating as the Cave Radio & Electronics Group, we would request that these funds be ring-fenced for CREG activities.

Action: DG would write to BCRA to inform them of the situation.

The management team remains committed to carrying out CREG's activities, but it is its desire not to get bogged down with issues of 'committees' and it is its hope that the administration of CREG can be managed, in the future, by the BCRA Treasurer and the BCA Membership Officer, with members' control being exercised via the BCRA AGM.

In particular it was noted that C&KS is shipped to a significant number of non-member subscribers, as is the CREG Journal. This implies that the membership administration infrastructure is in place to deal with this situation – or that it will be by the time that BCA on-line payment is possible. It was also noted that incorporating CREG's accounts with BCRA's has been a long-standing requirement, and that this could remove a source of current administrative difficulty.

The new CREG management team felt that these were positive developments that would ensure the continuation of CREG, but without the 'baggage' of committees and constitutions that it has inherited from the early days of the SIGs. With the emergence of the British Caving Association and with BCRA now fully focussed on science and technology it was considered that it made sense to suggest that BCRA brought the Special Interest Groups under central control. This new model for the SIGs would allow them to seek assistance from a wider pool of people because a 'management team' is not restricted to being 'a committee of BCA members'.

Other Business

There being no other business the meeting was closed.

Appendix: Reports

Chairman (Richard Rushton)

This last year we are well on the way to publishing four journals, which is our aim for each year. Although the publication dates are a little erratic, the quality is certainly very high and I congratulate Rob Gill and his team on maintaining the high standards we have come to expect.

Earlier this year CREG members helped to organise the BCRA **Cave Technology Symposium**, which also offered the opportunity to interface with the Cave Surveying Group. It is noticeable that quite a few current electronics projects are aimed at making surveying quicker and more accurate. Hopefully this cross-group interest will continue and will lead to more projects and to more journal articles of interest to our members.

We presented the 2006 **CREG award** to Graham Naylor for his innovative work in digital radio design and his novel method of SSB generation. The CREG award is a valuable way of recognising good quality and ground-breaking work being carried out in our sphere.

The past couple of years, since my last report, have seen some large changes within the group. Overall volunteer-levels are very low at the moment, with a substantial proportion of the CREG activities being carried out by only a few people. We have implemented some new measures to make it easier for people to be involved. These include having committee meetings in cyberspace i.e. Windows Messenger. This has been reasonably successful, especially as it allows more direct contributions from our more distant committee members. However, the limited volunteer pool is still shrinking and so some further changes in the way the group is run and in the activities it pursues will inevitably have to follow.

Unfortunately, for personal reasons, I have resigned as both the CREG chairman and from the CREG committee. A forced change of job with a much longer commute and my general reduction in caving and electronics as hobbies have led me to the conclusion that I cannot contribute as much as I would like to the next phase of the Group's existence. However, I am still an eager subscriber to the Journal and will continue to look forward to reading about the new work being carried out in the caving and electronics world.

Treasurer (David Gibson)

This report was added to the minutes (see CREGJ 68, p6).

Journal Editor (Rob Gill)

This report was given verbally to the AGM and added to the minutes (see CREG J68, p4).

Membership Secretary (Rob Gill)

This report was given verbally at the AGM and added to the minutes (see CREG J68, p4).

DG added the comment: As an indication of the Group's activity; I can, from my Treasurer's file, give the SmartStamp breakdown for the postage of journal 66. See table below.

Item	Comment	Qty	Cost
J66 Renew A	Airmail	8	£12.00
J66 Renew E	Europe	10	£10.30
J66 Renew S	Surface	2	£1.54
J66 Renew UK	UK-mail	22	£8.80
J66 non-renew A	Airmail	11	£16.50
J66 non-renew E	Europe	16	£16.48
J66 non-renew 3E	Multiple-Eur	1	£2.08
J66 non-renew S	Surface	2	£1.54
J66 non-renew 3UK	Multiple-UK	1	£0.83
J66 non-renew shopUK	Shops	4	£2.40
J66 non-renew UK	UK-mail	41	£16.40
TOTAL		118	£88.87
World		23	19%
Europe		27	23%
UK		68	58%
TOTAL		118	100%
Renewals due now		42	

Mailing breakdown of journal 66

Equipment Officer (John Hey)

DG reported: John continues in the non-committee post of equipment officer, maintaining and repairing CREG's stock of HeyPhones and Pease beacons. The majority of this equipment is currently stored at Richard Rushton's house, as noted on the inventory in the accounts.

Enquiries officer (John Rabson)

DG reported: John continues in the non-committee post of 'CREG contact', providing an initial point of contact for all enquiries. John has also been acting as a 'commissioning editor' for the journal although his recent ill-health has led to his needing to reduce this role.

Bibliographer (Chris Trayner)

The post of Bibliographer traditionally includes (merely for practical convenience) the task of posting the CREG Journal whenever it is printed, plus handling orders for back issues.

The Bibliography of Underground Communications has been on hold for several years now. There have always been higher priority tasks than updating it, though I still intend to do so some day. More recently, David Gibson's online index to CREGJ articles, and Pete Cousins' searchable database has removed some of the urgency.

Posting of the Journal every time it is published runs smoothly. Our printers, Kall-Kwik in Bradford, deliver the print run to my house without charge, which is a great help. The software mechanism to produce address labels, renewal inserts and so on has changed completely. The old one was written originally by Bill Purvis, with modifications by myself, and has served us well for many years. David Gibson has produced a new mechanism based on the Royal Mail's SmartStamp facility, whereby he prints address labels with what constitutes a stamp. This runs very smoothly and saves me significant time. The transition from the old to the new mechanism went without hitch, thanks to careful preparation.

I continue to maintain stocks of back issues and to post them when required. The Committee has been discussing for about ten years whether to run down paper stocks and move to a print-on-demand, and keeping an eye on the scene. We have now started to implement this.

We are not re-printing out-of-print issues, at least not in the sense of taking them to a printer. Rob Gill has scanned as PDFs many of the issues (those now out of print) and I print them on a laser printer as needed. Of the un-scanned back issues, the more recent ones can be turned into PDF from the Word files; the others will be scanned in due course.

Web Site Editor (David Gibson)

A couple of years ago, the CREG web site was re-written and migrated across to BCRA's web pages. The URL **creg.org.uk** now redirects to **bcra.org.uk / creg** and the URL **heyphone.org.uk** redirects to **bcra.org.uk / creg / heyphone**. The domain **heyphone.org** has been allowed to expire. The HeyPhone section of the CREG web site has been marked as "no longer maintained".

A dedicated password allows FTP access to be restricted to CREG's pages, to allow them to be updated separately to BCRA's main pages. Similar restricted access has been arranged for **bcra.org.uk / csg**, which was migrated from Andrew Brooks' site at about the same time as the CREG pages.

The domain **creg.org.uk** was registered on 3 Sept 2005 and is renewed until 3 Sept 2009. The domain **heyphone.org.uk** was registered on 17 Dec 2005 and is (at the time of writing) renewed till 17 Dec 2007 although, by the time of the AGM it is expected to be renewed till 17 Dec 2009. The domain **bcra.org.uk** was registered on 11 Apr 1999 and is renewed till 11 Apr 2009.

The main CREG web site currently attracts little interest from any CREG person wishing to maintain it. David Gibson provides minimal maintenance, but this *does* include the journal bibliography pages, which are maintained via a set of PHP scripts and a database. This saves quite a bit of tedious messing about: when a new journal issue is published the only files to be uploaded are 1) a text file listing the contents in a prescribed format (e.g. **j67.html**) and 2) an image of the front cover (e.g. **j67.jpg**). All the work of presenting the data in a formatted list, announcing that an issue has been published etc, which you can read on the journal home page, is generated automatically by the scripts.

A HeyPhone discussion forum has been created on the BCA web site, see **british-caving.org.uk / phpbb2**. This is expected to be the vehicle for announcements now that the HeyPhone site is no longer actively maintained.

As a footnote to Chris's report, we do eventually, plan to put PDFs of past articles on the web site. The preparatory work for this is being done by David Gibson, initially in preparation for the online version of Cave & Karst Science. Once the C&KS pages are running, the same software will be used on the CREG site to provide PDFs of articles.