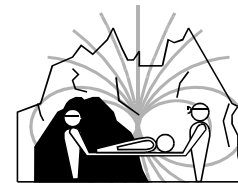


Launch of the HeyPhone

The HeyPhone has now been issued by the BCRC to rescue teams. **Mike Bedford** reports.



www.bcra.org.uk/creg/



Pete Alwright (right) receives one of the CRO's HeyPhones from BCRC Equipment Officer, Jopo

Throughout the last twelve months, one man has spent countless hours at a workbench, soldering iron in hand, populating 150 PCBs with almost £5,000 worth of components. That man is John Hey, designer of the new BCRC radio which now carries his name. And the task which he undertook was the electronic construction of 50 units with a further batch of 16 to be completed by the Summer. But a practical cave radio is more than just a set of circuit boards. So, in league with John, Jopo has also been hard at work over the Winter, building the cases and constructing or obtaining all the periphery equipment such as antennas, batteries and microphones.

The new rescue radio, now the HeyPhone, has been a topic of discussion in the BCRC and CREG for years now. So the BCRC's AGM, held on 1st April, was significant. No longer was the new radio just a concept; for the first time people could get their hands on the equipment, indeed a number of rescue teams took delivery of their units. Actually, six units had already been delivered to the West Brecon Cave Rescue Team and the units had already been on their first rescue – see *HeyPhone in Action*.

The BCRA AGM also involved a presentation, to John Hey, in recognition of his work on the new radio project.



BCRC Chairman Bill Whitehouse (right) make a Presentation to John Hey in recognition of his work on the HeyPhone

CREG



The First six HeyPhones come off the Production Line

HeyPhone in Action

Jopo reports on first rescue use.

On Saturday 24th February three experienced cavers entered Daren Cilau, Llangatock, Powys to undertake a two-day trip and camping overnight in the cave at the Hard Rock Café – a long-established and well-provided site some 4km into the system. At 23.30 Saturday one of the party sustained a dislocated shoulder while visiting the Blue Greenies formations beyond the Restaurant at the End of the Universe camp. The shoulder would not reduce and it took some ten hours for the party to return to the Hard Rock Café camp.

After making the injured caver comfortable in a sleeping bag, and fed and watered, the two fit cavers started out from HRC at 09.30 Sunday 25th and exited the cave at 14.30. The callout, via the emergency 999 service, came at 14.50 and the first rescue team entered the cave at 18.20. The medical team entered at 20.00 Sunday and included the cave rescue doctor, who is an orthopaedic registrar. Direct communications through the rock from surface to casualty were made at 01.00 Monday using the HeyPhone which was issued one week before. At 03.00 surface control were informed that the shoulder had been reduced and the medical team would be leaving the HRC at 05.00 with the casualty walking. A huge feeling of relief was felt at Control since a stretcher carry from HRC could have taken up to three days and probably included modifying some passageway, in particular the entrance crawl – something we are quite capable of, but very averse to doing. The casualty's progress was relayed to the teams elsewhere in the cave via FrancePhones running over thin cable which were established as far as the pitches and they also expressed their delight at the news! The entrance crawl, by the way, has a permanent tough telephone cable installed to speed up installation and improve reliability of rescue communications.

The casualty took some 4 hours to reach the 70ft pitches where he was hauled up in a sit-harness with an SRT barrow boy, then lowered down the other side. Crossing the pitches removed a psychological barrier and the casualty then seemed to go into overdrive, and we were astonished at the rate he progressed, considering the difficulty of the terrain. The casualty had a short rest at the food station established at Big Chamber Nowhere Near the Entrance while surplus, and knackered, rescuers exited the cave. A small team of fresh cavers with an advanced first-aider went in to assist the casualty through the entrance crawl if required. He required very little assistance and indeed caught up with some of the rescuers who had set out before him.