

Editorial – David Gibson

It is with a sense of déjà vu that I write this, as it is the second time in the last 10 years that there has been a long delay in the publication of *Speleology*; it now being two years since we last published an issue of the magazine. Also, this issue was supposed to go out in December, so that's not a particularly auspicious start to a 're-launch', but that's what you get when dealing with volunteers ... like me.

Those of you with long memories will recall that BCRA's previous *bulletin*, *Caves and Caving*, was getting increasingly expensive to produce, and so it was decided to change editorial direction and production method. I originally designed *Speleology* to be more 'spartan' in appearance than C&C, with its contents a little more formally defined. This was intended to make it easier to lay out by volunteers. The first issue, edited by myself, appeared in January 2003, but my production soon became irregular and Erin Lynch stepped in to take over from me. But, in a volunteer-based organisation, there are many causes of delays and disruptions that, unfortunately, 'just happen' from time to time and which can take a long while to rectify. In a move that surprised everyone, including myself, I have offered to step in to see if *Speleology* can be brought back on schedule – this may not be possible.

Bringing *Speleology* Back On Schedule

It is probably not a good idea to try to 're-launch' the magazine by printing material that is, in some cases, two years old. That has prompted me to consider producing an *online supplement* containing some of the older material. This will not be ready immediately but, before the end of February, *Speleology* 19 should be available online, as a PDF download, together with its online supplement. In addition to some 'catching up' – which will include Juan Corrin's Matienzo 2011 report and Charlie Self's Cave & Karst Science Explained articles – the supplement will include a list of the lecture abstracts for Hidden Earth 2013, and a couple of BCRA meetings reports from 2012.

I would like to put back-issues online too, but this needs a little more volunteer effort – see the Sits. Vac. notice below.

Of course, I just *know* that I will get complaints from people who will either take the view that online-only content is too ephemeral, or who will take the view that it's a snub to authors. I do have some sympathy with both these viewpoints but I need to be pragmatic. I know I share with several of my colleagues a deep sense of embarrassment at having persuaded

people to submit articles, which might not now appear in print. This is just one aspect of a larger problem, which is not unique to *Speleology* – if authors do not see their work in print they will stop writing articles and, if they do not write articles, the magazine will not appear. It's a vicious circle that is difficult to avoid at the best of times.

So... if you have submitted an article to *Speleology* in the past, and it has not been published, please contact me to find out if we still have it, and if you need to re-submit it. And if you are thinking of writing something, please do. You can either contact me directly, or one of our regional correspondents (see page 13).

What's in this Issue

Special Interest Groups

It is partly co-incidence, rather than a grand plan, but there are several mentions of cave archaeology in this issue and two articles on cave surveying. I have suggested this before... that *Speleology* could become a vehicle for at least some of the Special Interest Groups, to save them from needing to produce their own newsletter.

International Caving

Speleology has become a vehicle for reports of international caving. Some of the most enthusiastic of the contributors are those from David St. Pierre's Foreign Correspondents Group. However... I am not convinced that *Speleology* is the place for detailed news items on overseas caving. This is surely far better in an online blog? – something the UIS should be organising, perhaps? If *Speleology* is going to take international coverage seriously then I need some help with this – see page 37.

UK Caving Reports

What I *would* like to see in *Speleology* are more reports of UK caving. Not 'news' necessarily, since *Speleology* is not regular enough to be a news magazine; but articles *about* UK caves, caving and cave exploration. Perhaps we could consider serialising a forthcoming (or even a past) volume in BCRA's Cave Studies series, for example? Please let me have your feedback on all aspects of this magazine – either to me, or to BCRA's online forum [bcra.org.uk / forum](http://bcra.org.uk/forum) or to ukcaving.com. ■

A message from the BCA Chairman, Andy Eavis

I know it is a while since the last issue but I would like, at this point, to thank Erin Lynch very much indeed for all the work that she put in to the previous issues and I thank David Gibson and his team very much indeed for picking up the reins and agreeing to produce the next few issues. Initially David will be assisted by Hugh Penney, Nigel Ball and, of course, Erin Lynch.

This magazine is sponsored by the British Caving Association in close collaboration with the British Cave Research Association and, as such, it is aimed at the whole of the British caving public. Although we often get a bad press, the people who make up the bureaucrats of British caving put in an enormous amount of work on behalf of cavers and caves. Many of us feel that it is something we have to do – to give something back to the occupation that we love and which we have spent many years enjoying.

The executive team in the British Caving Association comprises Mick Day, myself, Damian Weare and Paul Ibberson. BCRA's honorary officers are John Gunn, Dave Checkley, David Gibson and Dave Gough. These people, along with all the other Council members, the Regional Caving Councils, all the working groups, organisers of meetings and so on, all work tirelessly on behalf of British cavers. Most ordinary cavers in Britain have no idea how much work goes on behind the scenes to give us access to as many caves as safely as possible; not to mention all the cave science, exploration and conservation work that goes on.

Finally, I should like to refer you to the websites of BCA and BCRA where there is a wealth of information and links to a number of other sites, including our excellent library at Glutton Bridge in Derbyshire, which contains a huge amount of caving literature; not only from Britain, but from all over the world.

Enjoy your caving!

Andy Eavis
Chairman – British Caving Association

Sits. Vac.

Speleology Online – we want to put *Speleology* back-issues online (probably for free access). It would be helpful if someone could first type-up a list of contents of each issue, together with the articles' 'standfirst' text, for our database. A related task is to re-compile the PDFs to an 'ebook' size and to chop them up into individual articles; naming them in accordance with our database convention. For this task you will need Acrobat, or an equivalent program that can re-distil PDF files.

Foreign News Editor – we need someone to collate and sub-edit the overseas news contributions. Please see the notes on page 37.

News in Brief

Writing for Speleology

We are always pleased to receive articles. We don't want to be too prescriptive, but here are some basic points that help to make things easier for us. (The older guidelines on the web site date from 2003 need updating).

1. Do not embed photos and graphics in your text – send everything in separate files
2. Name all your files sensibly – possibly with your name or a photo caption.
3. Refer to your photos in the text (e.g. "insert Smith-photo-3.jpg here").
4. Provide a document containing a list of photos and their captions.
5. If you are not used to submitting articles to magazines, please understand that we will inevitably need to edit your text. Even the most perfect text will need cutting if it is too long to fit. Therefore: once you have submitted your text please do *not* submit a new version without checking first. If we have already started work on your text we will need a list of corrections and *not* a fresh version of the entire text.
6. If you *do* re-submit anything, please never, *ever*, re-use a previous filename.
7. Photos need to be of a good size and quality. We need at least 350 pixels per inch, so logos (etc) lifted off web sites will usually be far too small. Please do not do too much tweaking in Photoshop and do not over-compress JPG images. Images straight out of your camera are preferred.
8. Cellphone cameras have lots of pixels but poor-quality lenses, which are seemingly often smeared with grease, sweat and dust. The photo may look great on your phone, but can still be too poor a quality for us to use. Please use a decent camera or, at least, clean your lens!
9. Graphics and cave surveys have to be at a much higher resolution than photos. We aim for 1200 pixels/inch. This may be far higher than you are used to dealing with, so please ask us for advice. Again, data lifted from web sites will be too low a resolution for us. Vector data is great [but not for my ancient software – DG]. Bit map formats should use non-aliased lines and all text should be in black, not coloured or shaded. We may ask you to alter the line thickness – a 1pt line is about 1/3 mm (or 17 pixels at 1200ppi). 6pt text is 2mm high (or 100px at 1200ppi).
10. If you have charts or graphs drawn in Excel we would prefer these to be supplied as Excel files, which we can manipulate; rather than as graphical bit-mapped exports. ■

Open Access to Cave & Karst Science Online

At the moment, we charge a fee to non-BCRA members who wish to access Cave & Karst Science Online, although we do make specific papers freely available where this is required. (See for example, the paper in vol. 40(1) by Gareth Farr and Simon Bottrell at bcra.org.uk/cks?j=118).

However, we have decided that, in order to support the Open Access initiative from Research Councils UK, and to encourage authors to contribute to C&KS, we shall be implementing free monthly access to C&KS Online for everyone. This is likely to happen 'in the near future'. There will still be a charge for annual access by non-members of BCRA. We have also decided that, in common with many academic publishers, we will request that authors from academic institutions pay a fee (or, if you like, make a donation) to BCRA in order to have their paper published. We will, of course, continue to accept papers from amateur and non-affiliated authors without any charge.

BCRA / Hidden Earth Cave Science Bursaries

In recent years BCRA has offered an annual award for Young Scientist of the Year. In the last couple of years there have been few applicants for this award, and so we have decided to discontinue it. In its place, we will set up a new scheme that will provide annual undergraduate research bursaries of typically £500 to help students with expenses associated with their honours dissertation research. This scheme is made possible by a donation from the national caving conference, Hidden Earth. The details of the scheme are still being explored, but are outlined at bcra.org.uk/research-fund#burs.

Hidden Earth Grants

In addition to Cave Science Bursaries scheme, BCRA Council is pleased to confirm the request of the Hidden Earth team to award £2,000 from the surplus of the 2012 Conference in Burnley to the British Cave Rescue Council in furtherance of research into establishing Système Nicola as a reliable underground to surface communication system. This is in addition to granting £3,000 to the Ghar Parau Foundation (a sub-charity of BCRA) from the 2011 surplus and a further £3,000 to GPF from the 2012 surplus.

BCRA Council also agreed with Hidden Earth's suggestion that that GPF should look at methods of distributing funds from Hidden Earth to fund UK Cave Exploration.

Distribution of the surplus from Hidden Earth 2013 will be announced in due course.

The BCA Forum Scanner

The BCA forum at british-caving.org.uk/phpBB3/index.php comprises nearly 20 public boards. Even the most visited ones – BCRA's News Forum, Hidden Earth, BCA Web Services and the CREG Forum – receive only sporadic traffic, so it can be a nuisance to have to remember to take a look from time to time, to see if there have been any postings.

The new BCA Forum Scanner does this job for you automatically. It checks the entire Forum every hour and will notify you by email if any of the forums have received postings. To use this facility, you need to subscribe to the BCA-Forum-Scanner Mailing List at list.bcra.org.uk. The forum scanner software posts the results of its scans to that list, which will then mail the messages to the subscribers. As with all mailing lists, you are responsible for maintaining your own subscription. ■

Diary Dates

Please note: the date for the Cave Science Symposium and the BCRA AGM, which was 18-19 October, has had to be changed *again*. As noted below, it is now 25-26 October.

22-23 February: Paperless Surveying Course at Bull Pot Farm.

The Cave Surveying Group, in conjunction with the Red Rose Caving and Potholing Club, is organising another course at Bull Pot Farm in the Yorkshire Dales. The course will concentrate on using Disto X and PDA units to collect survey data, which can then be used to draw a finished survey on a computer. The course is open to beginners and experienced surveyors but a good understanding of basic surveying principles will be very useful. Contact Andy Chapman andychapm@googlemail.com

23-26 May 2014: BCRA Cave Science Field Meeting to Buckfastleigh, Devon.

This is a joint meeting with the William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust, who will host the event. It takes place over the second long weekend in May, and pre-registration is required for attendance. See bcra.org.uk/forum or contact t.faulkner@bcra.org.uk for details.

13-15 June 2014: BCA AGM "party weekend" at the Dalesbridge Centre

Further details to follow in the Spring. BCA would welcome offers of help with the various activities. Please contact Damian Weare **secretary** @british-caving.org.uk. As part of the weekend activities, BCRA is hoping to organise a field trip to look at the Hydrology of Chapel-le-Dale.

26-28 September 2014: National Caving Conference "Hidden Earth"

This year it is at Leek, Staffordshire. See hidden-earth.org.uk, where info will be posted later in the Spring.

25 October 2014: BCRA Cave Science Symposium and BCRA AGM at Birmingham University

The Symposium will be hosted by Prof. Ian Fairchild and this year's theme is 'Speleothem studies'. Abstracts required by 15 August 2014. Attendance is open to all, without prior registration. See bcra.org.uk/forum or contact t.faulkner@bcra.org.uk for details.

CAVING IN THE DALES?

BULL POT FARM

Red Rose Cave & Pothole Club HQ

Accommodation available seven days a week. An ideal base for trips in the caves of Leck and Casterton Fells and Kingsdale



Look at our website for booking and more details:
<http://www.rrcpc.org.uk>

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