



Membership Report

These figures are based on the recent mailing of Speleology 14 and exclude all consideration of Club Individual Members of BCA. The precise figures will have altered slightly in the last few weeks. Figures in parenthesis are the figures for December 2008.

Membership figures (see table overleaf)

BCA has **527** (608) members of which **514** (595) are voting members. Of those, **352** (437) are individual members and **162** (158) are Group members.

BCRA has **264** (305) members of which **262** (301) are voting members. Of those, **202** (249) are individual members and **60** (52) are Group members.

Regarding Speleology, **50** (57) of BCA's Group members have opted out of receiving Speleology, and the **74** (90) joint members only receive one copy per couple, so the number of copies of Speleology mailed to members is **440**, (506) compared with **490** (563) BCA newsletters.

Regarding Cave & Karst Science, **54** (73) members (including **8** (16) joint members) have requested not to receive the paper edition, and a further **28** (30) joint members only receive one copy per couple, so the number of copies of C&KS mailed to members is **196** (217), compared with **246** (282) newsletters.

Overseas members are few. The majority of members are UK-based; only **10** from Western Europe and **5** from outside Europe

Membership Trends

It is very difficult to deduce trends in the membership figures because a significant number renew very late in the year – only when they require insurance. It seems clear that, despite a drive by BCRA to contact lapsed members, the figures are continuing to fall.

My view from the membership office is that the BCRA 'hard core' may be remaining constant, but that we are picking up fewer and fewer 'casual' members. BCA DIMs that used to renew their BCRA membership have since opted for the 'no paper' option, and then opted for no membership at all. My personal view is that, whilst such a person may wish to express his support for BCRA by joining, he is less likely to do this if there is no tangible benefit. If he opts out of receiving the paper edition of C&KS, what *practical* benefit does BCRA membership give him?

Subscription figures (see table overleaf)

For Speleology a total of **71** copies are mailed to 'non-member subscribers' of which 10 are agency subscribers (e.g. libraries and institutions), **22** are private individuals and **39** are free-issues (see below). The total print run for Speleology is therefore **511** plus what is required for shops, stock and journal exchanges (see below).

At present only five shops (Bernies, Inglesport, Penyghent Cafe, Hitch-n-Hike and Crickhowell Adventure) take copies, and these outlets only take five copies each. Since Ernie Shield resigned, shop sales have not been pursued and it could be that a marketing effort is required here.

For Cave & Karst Science a total of **93** copies are mailed to 'non-member subscribers' of which **34** are agency subscribers (e.g. libraries and institutions), **34** are private individuals and **25** are free-issues (see below). The total print run for C&KS is therefore **289** plus what is required for stock and journal exchanges (see below).

Overseas mailings are significant. The number of overseas addresses in the subscriber database is **75**. I have not broken this down into Speleology and C&KS but in terms of countries it is **25** to Western Europe, **11** to Eastern Europe and **39** to Outside Europe. In Western Europe the leader is Germany, with **8**. Outside Europe we have **7** going to Australia and **23** to the USA.

Free-Issue Subscriptions

To avoid getting bogged down in detail, figures are approximate.

For each periodical, we are required to issue six copies to the legal deposit libraries. Three go to the BCA and BCRA archives and a

further 6 or so to BCA/BCRA officers. It could be argued that these are superfluous but they are, in fact, a good 'check' on procedures and most find their way back into stock anyway.

Speleology free-issues 19 'editorial' copies – mostly to regular correspondents and authors, although the 'regional correspondent' network is not operating efficiently at the moment, and an additional volunteer co-ordinator could be put to good use here.

C&KS issues free-issues 6 'editorial' copies at the moment, although it is not currently clear to me exactly what these are for.

In addition – *and not included in any of the figures above* – are 20 author's copies. The procedure of issuing each author with 20 reprints of his paper could be considered as archaic now that we are issuing PDFs and it may be that we can curtail this practice.

The remaining free-issue copies are three journal exchanges – see below for further information.

Journal Exchanges

BCRA used to exchange publications with over 200 clubs and societies. However, in many cases we did not receive much in exchange. The list has been 'purged' and 'revised' on a number of occasions – most recently by the librarian, Janet Nash, and Dave Checkley's library team. There are now about 50 exchanges which, apart from three organisations, *are not included in any of the figures above* because, currently, the exchanges are not operating.

The next exercise by the Membership Team will be to re-incorporate these exchanges into the database and to supply all the missing back-issues that these organisations require. An additional volunteer could be put to good use here.

Publications Cost

There has been some discussion recently about the cost of publications and how it affects the journal exchanges and the BCRA membership fee. There are a number of points to observe.

Speleology is printed by offset-lith – a conventional wet ink process – and most of the cost is associated with machine set-up, which means that the 'run-on' cost, and therefore the cost of providing free-issue copies, is low – perhaps only 50p.

Cave and Karst Science presents a completely different situation. Because of the low print run, BCRA has pursued a policy of print-on-demand using, in essence, a colour laser printer. This means that once the 'loose ends' of journal exchanges and authors copies are sorted out, we will only print the exact number of copies that we need. Importantly, the run-on cost is the *full cost* of each issue, so each free-issue copy costs over £3.00.

Calculations of BCRA's membership fee have tended, in the past, to be made by looking at the overall cost (e.g. the printer's invoice, the editorial assistant's fee and so on), offsetting this against income from subscriptions and producing a figure indicating a shortfall of several thousand pounds a year. A clearer picture may result if we stick to the principle of 'print on demand' and the principle that 'people must pay the cost of a paper copy'. It is then much easier to see a) where the current £12 membership fee goes, and b) how the £8 additional cost of a paper copy arises. Put simply, it is clear that, with those figures, members who are not receiving the paper copy are subsidising those who do receive the paper copy, and everybody is significantly subsidising the journal exchange copies.

Because the journal exchanges are all overseas, the postage is significant and the cost of each exchange, when the editorial assistant's fee is included, it comes to nearly £20.

Later in the year I will prepare a more accurate picture of the costs, which should enable BCRA Council to get a better feel for the required level of the membership fee, as well as the level of journal exchange subsidy that we might wish to pursue with BCA.

David Gibson – BCRA Publications Admin.

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BCA Membership figures

BCA individual members	352	(437)
BCA Group members	162	(158)
BCA non-voting members	13	(13)
total	527	(608)

BCRA Membership figures

BCRA individual members	202	(249)
BCRA Group members	60	(52)
BCRA non-voting members	2	(4)
total	264	(305)

Speleology mailing figures

Speleology mailing base	527	(608)
<i>less</i> Group opt-out	-50	(-57)
<i>less</i> joint members	-37	(-45)
total mail to members	440	(506)
<i>add</i> agency subscribers	10	
<i>add</i> private subscribers	22	
<i>add</i> free-issues	39	
total print run	511	

does not include journal exchanges or shop copies

C&KS mailing figures

C&KS mailing base	264	(305)
<i>less</i> paper opt-out	-54	(-73)
<i>less</i> joint members	-14	(-15)
total mail to members	196	(217)
<i>add</i> agency subscribers	34	
<i>add</i> private subscribers	34	
<i>add</i> free-issues	25	
total print run	289	

does not include journal exchanges or author' copies