OFFICERS' REPORTS TO DCA COUNCIL MEETING, 16 APRIL 2005

ITEM 6.1 - HON. SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

Communications

Since the AGM I have circulated by post/email and, thanks to the DCA webmaster, placed on the website:
In early March:

Information Circular 2005/1, Jan/March 2005 (*Which included dates of meetings booked*.)
Cavers Workshop 14/15 May 2005 Booking Form / Circular on Training Events
DCA Constitution as revised at the AGM (*Note there is an error in 6.1 of the printed version*.)

In early April:

Agenda for DCA Council meeting 16/4/05

In addition I have recently contacted the 15 Individual Members (out of 63) whose sub. for 2005 had not been paid and have already received 3 more payments.

The Minutes of the DCA AGM for 2005 are now ready to be circulated and will go out with the printed Annual Report as soon as possible after this Council Meeting. The Publications Officer reports that The Derbyshire Caver, No. 122, should be ready for the end of April.

Membership of DCA

I have had two expressions of interest, one Individual and one Associate. I have replied to these and await results. I have drafted the revised DCA application forms now that Club and Associate join by paying a sub. to BCA and will now put these three separate forms for Clubs, Individuals and Associate Members on the website with the necessary explanatory notes.

It is proving rather difficult to follow up payment of Club and Associate Member subscriptions to BCA, as we need to do to ensure that we still know which are entitled to be considered paid-up members of BCA/DCA. BCA Membership Secretary has agreed to send an updated list of group and associate members to regional secretaries each month, which will help a great deal.

Because of the enormous workload on the Insurance Manager and Membership Secretary at the start-up of BCA, membership forms for Clubs were not available until mid-January (there were two types: one for clubs not insuring with BCA and a different one for clubs insuring with BCA, which latter included the insurance application form). In consultation with DCA's Legal & Insurance Officer, I sent the appropriate version of these to all DCA member clubs at the end of January. To date, according to the list received from BCA Membership Secretary on 12 March, only 16 of DCA's 35 Clubs are on record as having paid BCA so far. Hence I will now begin to chase up the remaining 19 who, following a change to CNCC's constitution following the establishment of BCA and the "one stop shop", will not be eligible to receive CNCC permits until they have paid BCA.

Associate Member forms for BCA did not become available until the end of March and I have posted copies of these to all DCA Associate Members but do not expect that any payments will have got through yet. Again, I will have to check and follow up when I receive the next list from BCA.

As reported at the AGM, I have already received £800 from BCA in fees for the expected 55 club/associate members of DCA for 2005.

Financial Update

Current balances are:	Current Account	£ 281.45
	Deposit Account	£7685.41
	Total	**£7966.86**

Of this, £3126 is insurance premiums held pending payment over to Perkins Slade and approximately £62 is owed in payments to Officers that I know of. We have now received a total of nearly £1960 from EN for work on the Gautries/Sheepwash/Waterfall clean-ups plus mesh for capping shafts in SSSIs. Our thanks go to the team of enthusiastic workers under the direction of Dave Webb who have "earned" this for us - their donations of volunteer labour represent a surplus, after costs of the work have been paid, of around £500.

Jenny Potts, 15 April 2005. Hon. Secretary/Treasurer

ITEM 6.2 - CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT

1. Conservation Work

1.1 Devonshire Mine. On March 24th 2005 a small team including John Barnatt and myself visited the mine armed with wire and other brushes with the express intention of removing a few spray painted direction (this way out!) arrows. Although they came off easily enough there were far more than expected and were so far beyond the main chamber that they could only have been done by so-called "cavers".

1.2 Youd's Level. A similar defacement has taken place at the bottom of Deep Shaft in Youd's Level and large spray-painted names have appeared - "Dale, Russ, Wilco, Rod - 2004". These are a literally only inches away from ancient miners inscriptions of 1796. Again this could only be experienced cavers as it requires quite an effort to get to this point. They will need to be removed with care.

Caution! Whilst doing survey work recently in Youd's we noticed that a stack of deads at the side of a passage in the area of Clay Shaft (Jants Mine) is on the point of collapse. Please be careful until a working party can be got up to stabilise it. I have placed a notice in the Museum and in the entrance shaft.

1.3 Hillocks Mine SSSI. On Tuesday 12th April work is to start on replacing the old rusty oil drums of the entrance adit to Hillocks Mine with nice smooth plastic piping. Ralph Johnson and a team from Crewe CPC have kindly volunteered to do the work and the project is funded by English Nature as part of their ongoing Conservation Grant-Aided Projects Scheme in partnership with DCA. It is intended to cause a minimum of disruption while work is underway but please take extra care for the time being.

1.4 Ecton Hill SSSI. Len Kirkham has been commissioned to cap some old shafts on Ecton Hill and the small balance of last year's budget was spent on providing him with some steel meshing.

2. Shaft Capping.

A meeting between project consultants ENTEC, and stakeholders was held recently at Endcliffe at which Jenny and myself were present. The meeting was well attended and ENTEC were able to gather a wide variety opinion to take away with them to use when presenting their proposed new shaft cap designs. We hope to have a draft copy of their guidelines for further discussion by the end of May.

3. National Trust and Access Meeting.

Paul Mortimer from the National Trust South Peak Estate Office has invited representatives from DCA C&A team and our Insurance Officer to

attend a regional Cave and Mine Access meeting to be held in Birmingham on Thursday 19th May 2005. We are told that this is part of a review process, the purpose of which is "to look at issues at local level and arrangements in place at present", and they are keen to involve "user groups" (cavers and mines historians etc) at the start of any review.

Information gleaned will be passed on to higher level and form part of later discussions at national level.

I have agreed to do a short presentation on how we (DCA and club cavers) work with the National Trust on conservation matters, and Pete, and also hopefully Ian, will offer their contributions. I believe it to be a positive step.

4. Bat Workshop.

Jo Poll of English Nature in collaboration with Alan Walker of Poole's Cavern and the Cave Conservation Monitoring Group is to convene a Bat Workshop at the cave in July to bring together bat workers and cavers. I believe that this will present an ideal opportunity to not only learn more about our "furry flying friends" but to discuss and air issues of concern to both groups. There are only ten places available for cavers (and an equal number of bat workers) and I ask the meeting for advice as to who would get the most out of such a coming together. Names to me please. Perhaps an invite in the DCA Circular?

5. Giants Approach track.

The track from the road to Giants car park is in a very bad way and Ralph Johnson has approached Mr Baldacci with a view to utilising and spreading the pile of limestone chippings currently residing in the car park. He is naturally behind the idea but of course the work will be of benefit to all of us. Young fit volunteers to assist ageing and infirm "coffin dodgers" half a day mid week will be very welcome. Please contact myself or Ralph on 0115 8401109 or 01782 515753.

Dave Webb April 2005. DCA Conservation Officer

ITEM 6.3 - ACCESS OFFICER'S REPORT

A very short report!

STONEY MIDDLETON.

I Still havent found out who is trying to buy the lower end of the Stoney Middleton cave-bearing crags; I haven't given up though.

P.8. PARKING AREA.

After negotiation with Derbyshire County Council they have agreed to purchase an area of land a matter of a few meters from the original parking site for cavers use. I have a site meeting to attend but in reality this is a good result and I will be accepting it on DCA's behalf.

The new car park is a short distance towards Sparrowpit, just beyond the small pond. The area is to be designated for the use of cavers and rescue vehicles only.

At present work has halted temporarily on the old car park alterations (I think they are having landowner problems!) and cavers are parking on the new stone track which runs parallel to the road, the construction of a new dry stone wall will soon prevent this.

THORSWOOD.

Mike Salt is putting the finishing touches to this, then Pete Mellors and myself will put an access agreement in.

Iain Barker, April 2005. Access Officer

ITEM 6.4 - LEGAL & INSURANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Liability Insurance

Members subscribing to the DCA scheme are reminded of a number of important requirements which I first set out in a letter to applicants last October. Club membership records must be kept up to date and the names and addresses of new members sent to me at the time they join (the extra premiums involved will be due for payment at the end of December this year). I need to have details as soon as possible of any incident affecting an Individual or Club which could conceivably lead at some stage to a claim being made for negligence, libel & slander, or error of judgment. A useful suggestion is for clubs to keep an Incident Book. Members should not admit liability with regard to any such incident. The requirements are part of our contract. Failure to observe them could result in refusal by the Insurers to meet a claim.

National Trust

Arising out of contact made in compiling the Manifold/Hamps Audit, the National Trust is to review its policy on cave access and conservation. A meeting is being called in Birmingham on May 19th. Since legal and insurance issues are to be addressed as well, I am invited along, and Iain Barker, who can't attend, has asked me to represent DCA's access interests. At present I am trying to persuade the Trust to accept a wider regional caver representation at the meeting than is envisaged, so the meeting can achieve its declared aims of exploring regional conservation and access needs and, through a greater knowledge of caving organisation and activity, agree mechanisms for better management.

Working at Height

I have received a copy of a recent Health & Safety Commission press release confirming that the proposed Work at Height Regulations "will not apply to the provision of instruction or leadership in caving or climbing by way of sport, recreation, team building or similar activities". This represents a triumph of common sense and of intense lobbying at national level. The rest of us are indebted to a dedicated few for their perseverance on this one.

Peter Mellors, April 2005. Legal & Insurance OfficeR

ITEM 6.5 - TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

The Outdoor show in Birmingham was held on March 18th, 19th & 20th 2005. At one stage, the caving stand had 4 instructors on it all promoting DCA! Me and Matt Robbins were promoting the EPC (Eldon Party Clowns, well I thought I was all paid up didn't I!) This show is so full of lectures and events that most people just pass by, however many thanks go to Matt Robbins for giving up 3 days to generate interest in caving at the show. Thanks also to Petzl and Karrimor for their help again this year.

BCA CAVERS WORKSHOPS 2005 at the Upper Limits Climbing Centre, Longnor.

Dates: **Saturday & Sunday May 14th & 15th 2005**

The usual SRT skills sessions are going well, however a bit more pushing is required for the photography and rescue sessions.

SRT CAVING TRIPS

These will be of an informal nature with emphasis on personal techniques improvement. The trips will be run by a CIC holder and all of the

ropes etc will be provided. I will sponsor these trips with insurance cover and lend any kit that you need. These trips are not an introduction to SRT, however they are perfect for newcomers or old hands wishing to pick up on techniques etc. The 2 new dates are being held in the Yorkshire Dales and the first will be run in the awesome ALUM POT. All routes will be rigged (by you if you like!) so this is a perfect opportunity to:

- Brush up on your personal vertical caving
- Pick up SRT rigging tip
- Cave with others at a similar skills level
- Visit one of the most classic vertical potholes in the country
- Be subjected to some pretty bad singing!

Date: Sunday April 24th 2005 – SOLD OUT
New date: **Sunday June 5th 2005 – Alum Pot, Yorkshire Dales**
New date: **Sunday July 20th 2005 – Eldon Hole**

SRT Master Class Weeks

These classic caving weeks provide an ideal opportunity for cavers to enjoy the thrills of such systems as Gaping Gill, Juniper Gulf, Meregill Pot etc. Learn about rigging & flooding whilst enjoying the exhilarating experience of Britain's largest and most spectacular potholes. Useful words and phrases for the week include, Awesome, Epic, Plumentos, it's BIG, it's wet, WOW, amazing, who's round is it? Mini bus transport has been arranged from Derbyshire so drinking is allowed! There will be a mixture of Derbyshire and Yorkshire caves and the programme will be arranged around the interest of those attending.
Date: **Monday to Friday August 8th to 12th - 5 day Classic Caving week**
Date: **Monday to Friday September 19th to 21st - 5 day Classic Caving week**

CAVING CLUB TRAINING SCHEME

I have applied to the BCA training committee for a grant towards a 2 day training course in advanced SRT. If you are a club training officer, or thinking of becoming one, please get in touch. Dave Edwards was an inspiration in putting this together and I will be forever grateful to him for his ideas and input.
Date: **Sunday & Sunday August 13th & 14th 2005**

SRT WORKSHOP

An SRT training day is planned for Saturday July 21st and will probably be held in Longnor. Although there will be no charge for this except to cover the costs of the climbing wall, I will however expect donations to DCRO!

SRT TRAINING COURSE

There is a 2 day SRT training course for those who may not be able to get training through their clubs.
Date: **Saturday & Sunday June 25th & 26th 2005**

PRE -ASSESSMENT DAY FOR CAVE LEADERS

This is an excellent opportunity for cavers who have attended training courses or club training officers to test themselves out. There is no formal charge for this day to DCA members, however I will be expecting a donation made payable to DCA's funds.
Date: **Sunday June 3rd 2005**

SRT RIGGING AND SRT RESCUE COURSE

The ease and safety of descending vertical caves relies totally on the person doing the rigging as the rope is the sole pathway up and down the pitches. When a pitch is rigged it is not just for the rigger but for the rest of the team, so it is extremely important to provide a safe and efficient hang for the rope. The pitch must be rigged fluently, safely and free from rub points etc. OR NOT AT ALL! and there can be no room for mistakes. The courses are designed and run for those who are proficient in personal S.R.T. Refresher S.R.T. days are available at low cost to people who wish to attend rigging courses.
This Course is available only for SRT proficient people and it has limited places so please book early.
Date: **Saturday & Sunday July 16th & 17th 2005**

LOCAL CAVE/MINE LEADER AWARD SCHEME

The following are dates of BCA training courses and assessments running in the Peak District

Local Cave/Mine Leader Award Training (level 1)

Date: **Saturday & Sunday May 28th & 29th 2005** Date: **Monday &Tuesday August 1st & 2nd 2005**

Local Cave/Mine Leader Award Training (level 2)

Date: **Tuesday & Wed. May 17th & 18th 2005** Date: **Monday & Tuesday September 26th & 27th 2005**

Local Cave/Mine Leader Award Assessment (level 1, Module 1 cave core skills)

Date: **Tuesday May 10th 2005** **Date: Tuesday June 7th 2005** Date: **Tuesday July 12th 2005** Date: **Monday August 15th 2005**

Local Cave/Mine Leader Award Assessment (level 1, Module 1 mine transfer)

Date: **Wed. May 11th 2005** Date: **Wed. June 8th 2005** Date: **Wed. July 13th 2005** Date: **Wed. August 17th 2005**

Local Cave/Mine Leader Award Assessment (level 2, Module 3 vertical skills)

Date: **Thursday May 19th 2005** Date: **Tuesday June 7th 2005** Date: **Wed. July 13th 2005** Date: **Tuesday August 16th 2005**

BOLTING PROGRAMME

I have applied to the BCA for a grant, however I was told that these are arranged through the regional bodies. I have now arranged a Derbyshire course. Date: **Sunday June 26th 2005**

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