



# DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Council Meeting, 10 am. 22 April 2006, Monyash Village Hall

**Present:**

<b><u>Officers:</u></b> Chairman	Bob Dearman [BD]
Vice Chairman	Terry Jackson [TJ]
Secretary/Treasurer	Jenny Potts [JP]
Access Officer	Iain Barker [IB]
Projects Officer	Wayne Sheldon [WS]
Equipment Officer	Dave Cowley [DC]
N/L Editor/Publications Officer	Paul Lydon [PL]
Assistant Secretary/Planning Officer	Chris Broome [CB]
<b><u>Club Representatives:</u></b>	
Orpheus C. C.:	Boyd Potts [BP], (Paul Lydon, Jenny Potts, Karen Slatcher)
Eldon P. C.:	(Iain Barker, Dave Cowley, Bob Dearman)
Masson C. G.:	John Highfield [JH], (Chris Broome)
<b><u>Individual Members:</u></b>	
	Karen Slatcher [KS], (Iain Barker, Bob Dearman, Terry Jackson, Jenny Potts)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies received from Dave Webb and Pete Mellors. Chairman confirmed the meeting was quorate.

**2. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING, 22 OCTOBER 2005: (Previously circulated.)**

*That they be accepted as a correct record.* Prop. P.Lydon, Sec. W.Sheldon. *Agreed unanimously.*

**3. MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM:**

- 3.1 5.1 BCA Membership details: See Secretary's report.
- 3.2 5.2.b Knotlow Pollution Monitoring: Nothing further heard.
- 3.3 5.5.b Giants Hole cable Y-hangs: (See also 6.6.b.iii below) Cable-and-ring permanent Y-hang in Upper Series already installed by BD and DC. Noted that one will need to be installed in Oxlow for the Pull-thro' plus another extra bolt.
- 3.4 6.1 BCA loss of Sports Council Grant: Noted other avenues for funding were being followed up.
- 3.5 8 Interpretation Boards for cave sites: No progress yet.

**4. MATTERS OF IMMEDIATE IMPORT ARISING FROM THE AGM:**

- 4.1 Officer Posts required for DCA: JP and BD put forward different ideas on how the Constitution might best be amended to allow the election of appropriate officers to cover the Association's business. Agreed that the matter should be under consideration this year with a view to the November Council Meeting agreeing a proposal to be put to the AGM for amendments to item 5.1 of the Constitution.

**5. ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS:**

Associate Members: **Turnaround**, Prop. JP. *Accepted unanimously, subject to BCA membership.* Noted that they have a website: [www.turnaround-care.co.uk](http://www.turnaround-care.co.uk)

**6. OFFICERS' REPORTS:**

**6.1 Secretary/Treasurer:** (Written report tabled.)

JP noted that an individual had requested details of DCA membership and she had also provided him with details of a local club.

Noted that the training events this year had been part funded by BCA.

WS noted that English Nature would be funding conservation work in SSSIs this summer.

*That the Secretary/Treasurer's report be accepted.* Prop. D.Cowley, sec. C.Broome. *Agreed unanimously.*

**6.2 Conservation Officer:** (Apologies sent but written report tabled.)

BD reported that Dave Webb was now out of hospital and members were pleased to hear that he was progressing well and the prognosis was good.

- 6.2.a Loose block in the Oxlow shaft: JP reported that this had been mentioned at the PICA meeting which she and DW had attended. DC would check on this but no-one else present knew anything about it.

- 6.2.b Water Icicle: It was suggested that the shaft in the wood could be opened to improve ventilation even if it were not used for access. It was not known who owned the wood. IB would investigate.

- 6.2.c Lathkill Head Upper Entrance: BD noted that the slab brought down had been very loose, in a position where it could not be avoided, and that it created a real danger to those descending the shaft. Noted that the taping needed to be re-done.

*That the Conservation Officer's report be accepted.* Prop. P.Lydon, sec. I.Barker. *Agreed unanimously.*

**6.3 Access Officer:** (Written report tabled.)

- 6.3.a Garden Path: IB stated that the access system was being updated to make it simpler to apply. Noted that a visit would be required to assess the cave for rescue purposes and also to take photos.

- 6.3.b Waterways Swallet: A burnt-out car left in the car park had now been removed by the authorities. It may be worth considering installing a bolt (requiring a "Derbyshire Key") on the gate to reduce misuse of the car park. BP and JP said they would be visiting the site tomorrow.

- 6.3.c P. 8 Car Park: This is due to be finished shortly so IB would follow up to ensure the promised parking for cavers is there.

*That the Access Officer's report be accepted.* Prop. D.Cowley, sec. T.Jackson. *Agreed unanimously.*

**6.4 Legal & Insurance Officer:** (*Apologies sent but written report tabled.*)

6.4.a Staffs. Wildlife Trust: Noted that negotiations were going on to deal with Thorswood Mine and the Castern Wood Adits together.

6.4.b BCA Insurance scheme: Noted that PM and Nick Williams were working together to improve the provisions of the scheme.  
*That the Legal & Insurance Officer's report be accepted.* Prop. I.Barker, Sec. T.Jackson. *Agreed unanimously.*

**6.5 Projects Officer:** (*Written report tabled.*)

6.5.a Dowse Hole work being done by Eldon P.C.: Noted that there may be some funding available to DCA from this.

6.5.b Ashford Marble Mine: IB noted that this needs re-taping with new tape but suggested the red-and-white tape could stay to identify areas where there was a possible danger from stacked deads, etc.

6.5.c Project Priorities: It was stated that priorities for work were set on the basis of SSSI monitoring but that if funds were available when work on SSSIs had been completed then other work could be funded.

6.5.d Lathkill Head Upper Entrance - loose rock: BD noted that the loose rock in LHUE had been brought down deliberately in the course of a safety inspection for Chatsworth Estates. Suggested that we need an arrangement with E.N. so that safety aspects can be dealt with on the spot without delay.

*That the Project Officer's report be accepted.* Prop. I.Barker, Sec. P.Lydon. *Agreed unanimously.*

**6.6 Equipment Officer:** (*Written report tabled*)

6.6.a Members were pleased to note that all P-bolts checked so far were solid, even though some had been installed over 10 years ago. DC reported that the "bridge", provided by BCA for use with the Hydrajaws Tester already on permanent loan from BCA, made things much easier, provided it was set up correctly. JP suggested that DC contact Bob Mehew (who had supplied the equipment on behalf of BCA) and the BCA Equipment Officer, Andy Pryke, to confirm that the equipment was proving extremely useful. DC agreed to do this.

BD reported that Nick Williams had constructed a new charger for the battery pack for the drills, for which BD already had the invoice and was due to collect the charger shortly. NW's work was appreciated and JP took the invoice and would ensure it was paid promptly.

*That the Equipment Officer's Report be accepted.* Prop. PL, sec. WS. *Agreed unanimously.*

6.6.b BD had received an email from Adam Evans suggesting some new P-bolt placements and some others where he felt the placement needed to be checked. BD read out AE's email and members considered each suggestion in turn:

- i) J.H. Mine: AE queried the placement of some of the P-bolts, in particular a deviation which he felt was badly placed. Members present agreed with his comments. *Agreed DC would check and, if necessary, arrange for the replacement of any badly placed P-bolts in J.H. Mine.*
- ii) Jug Holes: AE asked that P-bolts be placed to enable a line to be placed on the Traverse. Noted that this subject had been discussed at length at a previous meeting and the feeling at the time had been that this was unnecessary as there are existing natural belays; noted also that some professional instructors had opposed placing bolts here. *Confirmed that members felt P-bolts should not be placed on the Traverse in Jug Holes.*
- iii) Giants Hole, Wet Inlets: Noted that it was not felt appropriate to install a pull-thro'. Instead, as this area was in regular use by instructed parties, we would place a cable-and-ring permanent Y-hang (as had already been done at the descent from the Upper Series into the Crabwalk). AE had suggested replacing the 8mm spit in the centre of the traverse with a P-bolt as there were already P-bolts at both ends. *Agreed to install a cable-and-ring Y-hang on the pitch in Giants Hole Wet Inlets and also to replace the 8mm spit at the centre of the Traverse with a P-bolt.*
- iv) Oxlow, East Chamber: AE suggested the rigging setup here was poor with a badly-placed deviation; old 8mm spits are still in situ. *Agreed DC would check the situation, including the deviation, and arrange for the replacement of any 8mm spits with P-bolts.* Noted that it is DCA policy to remove existing 8mm spits when P-bolts are installed to avoid a "rash" of bolts at pitch heads.
- v) Nicker Grove Mine: AE suggested that, now the mine had been inspected and agreed by PICA as suitable for use as a venue for instructed parties, the traverse over the shaft head part way along the passage needs P-bolts installed to enable a traverse line to be placed for protection. JP confirmed that this had been suggested at the PICA AGM. *Agreed P-bolts be placed to protect the traverse in Nicker Grove Mine.*
- vi) Bagshawe Cavern: AE suggested that P-bolts should be placed to create a short pitch useful for training purposes. Noted that Bagshawe was not open to cavers in general - it was a show cave and payment was required for access - whereas DCA's Fixed Aids Policy required P-bolts to be placed only in sites open to all cavers and we cannot pay for P-bolts on a private site. *Agreed that, as it was due to be the venue for a Bolt Installation Training session, any P-bolts could be installed as part of the training.* Noted that any P-bolts would replace the spits installed in the area.
- vii) Suicide Cave: AE requested that more P-bolts be placed in Suicide to provide a more varied training site. Noted that the existing bolts in Suicide had been placed to provide a training site - members were unsure why more were wanted and felt such requests should come from PICA. *Agreed to refer the matter of extra P-bolts in Suicide Cave to PICA and await their recommendation.*

*That the Equipment Officer's report be accepted.* Prop. I.Barker, Sec. P.Lydon. *Agreed unanimously.*

**6.7 Newsletter Editor:** (*Verbal Report.*)

PL reported that the next Newsletter was due out shortly.

It was suggested that the Newsletter should carry an item on the Eco-anchor testing work currently being done by DC. DC agreed to provide an article and photographs.

**7. B.C.A. AGM REPORT:**

BP had also been present at the BCA AGM and he supported JP's positive assessment of the meeting.

**8. APPROVE CAVE DISCOVERY FUND AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Noted that the CDF Panel recommendation was for a maximum grant of £69 towards the cost of the work in Owl Hole. The diggers had reported that bats had already moved into the new areas of the cave while digging was in progress. Noted that the cave was not in an SSSI or RIGS and it was suggested that it could be made a RIGS. The Conservation Officer would be consulted on this.

*That the recommended grant of £69 be awarded to Orpheus Caving Club for their work in Owl Hole.*

Prop. C.Bröome, sec. K.Slatcher. *Agreed unanimously.*

**9. CONFIRM DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING:**

9.1 Next Council Meeting: 10am, Saturday 1st July 2006 at Monyash Village Hall. Booked.

9.2 Further Council Meetings and AGM 2007: Council Meeting on 4th. Nov. 2006 and AGM on 24 February 2007 both already booked for 10am at Monyash Village Hall.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

10.1 Titan Dig surface cleanup: BD suggested that DCA should help with some funding towards the cost of tidying up the surface site, e.g. pay for a skip to remove waste material. Noted that the diggers had not approached the DCA Cave Discovery Fund but were covering all the considerable costs themselves. There was general agreement that DCA could offer funding if asked.

10.2 "Caves of the Peak District", progress towards the new edition:

10.2.a IB gave an outline of what had been done so far. We have photos for the cover of the book but need more suitable ones for inside. Some surveys still need to go to John Beck to be re-drawn as necessary. We were aiming for a late spring 2007 launch.

10.2.b BD reported that he has approached a commercial printer to cost out printing 1000, 2000 or 3000 copies in a similar format to the new "Caves of County Clare". He awaited a quote.

He had also approached BCRA (through Nick Williams) with a view to them funding publication using their available funds, so keeping the money in caving. Noted that BCRA does have plenty of expertise in publishing books. Emphasised that it would be marketed as a "DCA publication" but there could be a special price for both DCA and BCRA members.

10.2.b PL suggested that publishing via the internet could give flexibility.

10.2.d IB stated that he saw the book as a chance to promote DCA with positive information about what DCA has achieved. He is also looking into advertising revenue to help fund publication and suggested that a charge of £200 per full page advert. might be reasonable. Noted that the 1991 edition contained 6 full-page adverts. There was discussion on how the new book might be promoted via websites.

10.3 DCA Handbook, new format:

10.3.a Agreed that the new DCA Handbook should be ready before the new CoPD and that it should have a visual link to CoPD in the style of cover, even though it would be an A5 booklet. We should aim for publication in January 2007.

10.3.b Agreed that much of the material currently in the Handbook, e.g. conservation, explanation of SSSI status, etc. ought to be in CoPD. The Handbook should carry mainly information which would possibly be subject to change on a relatively short timescale, e.g. address updates, access details, rigging guides, etc.

10.3.c Agreed that there was a need to re-draw the rigging and bolting sections to ensure that they were up to date and correct. Pitch and rope lengths must be re-measured.

10.3.d Agreed that JP and TJ would re-format and check the main access section ready for publication. PL would co-ordinate the rigging guide section.

10.4 Cave Discovery Fund - seeking new sources of funding:

JP pointed out that, following the change in funding of DCA, we could no longer ask for a "levy" on subscriptions from club and associate members so it would be inequitable to charge individual members a "levy". In future the only source of new income to the Fund would be from donations. It was suggested that, when officers' travel claims were donated, this could be directed towards the Cave Discovery Fund. JP would arrange this.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1.00pm.

*J.E.Potts, Recorder*

**APPENDED TO THESE MINUTES AND FORMING PART OF THEM IS THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT:**

**Officers' Reports to the DCA Council Meeting, 22 April 2006:**

a. Item 6.1	Secretary/Treasurer's Report
b. Item 6.2	Conservation Officer's report
c. Item 6.3	Access Officer's Report
d. Item 6.4	Legal & Insurance Officer's Report
e. Item 6.5	Projects Officer's Report
f. Item 6.6	Equipment Officer's Report
g. Item 7	Report from B.C.A. AGM
h. Item 10.2	Caves of the Peak District Update

**OFFICERS' REPORTS TO DCA COUNCIL MEETING, 22 APRIL 2006****Item 6.1 - HON. SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT****Communications**

Since the Annual General Meeting on 25 February I have circulated by post/email to all members and, thanks to the DCA webmaster, placed on the website at the end of March:

Information circular 2006/2, February/March 2006  
 List of Officers, Trustees and Cave Discovery Fund Panel Members for 2006/07  
 Minutes of Annual General Meeting 25 February 2006  
 DCA Annual Report and Accounts for 2005 as presented to the 2006 AGM  
 Agenda for DCA Council Meeting 22 April

**Membership of DCA**

On 3 April I received from the BCA Membership Secretary a complete list of all Club and Associate Members who have paid their BCA subscriptions for 2006. This enabled me to check on the DCA members and I have since posted reminders to the 6 clubs (out of 31) and the 12 Associate Members (out of 17) who have not yet paid BCA. I have already been contacted by two of the Members to say they have now paid and I will continue to monitor the status of the other non-payers. BCA does not send out subscription renewal reminders for at the start of each year and this is causing problems for some Outdoor Centres (Associate Members) who require an invoice in order to be able to make a payment; I shall take this up with BCA as soon as the new Membership Secretary is in post.

I also sent reminders to the DCA Individual Members who had not yet paid their subs. direct to DCA this year and note that 46 of the 61 due to pay have now paid, including 14 who are also BCA Direct Individual Members. This gives us a total of £411 in Individual Member subscriptions so far this year.

I have received two recent enquiries about DCA membership, resulting in an application for Associate Membership to be put to this meeting.

**Financial Update**

Balances on 31st. March 2006 were:	Current Account	£ 325.15
	Deposit Account	£5835.39
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£6160.54</b>

Following the closure of the DCA P.L. Insurance for 2005/06, all final premiums have been banked and all payments due to our former Insurers have been cleared.

We have received 3 grants from BCA so far this year: a total of £400 for two training events (one in November 2005) and £500 as a first instalment of our administrative grant for 2006. (The meeting of BCA regional treasurers is being arranged at which the administrative grant situation will be clarified.) Following the loss of BCA's grant from UK Sport it is not clear how or whether regional training events can continue to be funded in the future but I have received assurance that BCA will be paying for the training of DCA's Eco-anchor installers due to take place shortly. We have received a payment of £304.89 from English Nature in respect of work done on SSSI projects; my thanks to Wayne Sheldon who has taken over dealing with the paperwork for this under Dave Webb's guidance.

*Jenny Potts, Hon. Secretary/Treasurer  
21 April 2006*

**Item 6.2 - CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT (November – April)**

**Club Visits.** Things had been relatively quiet for a period with most of the year's projects completed, so I took the opportunity to make a start on visiting local caving clubs and in December visited the Chesterfield Caving Club to discuss the Cave Monitoring Scheme with them. I was very impressed with their commitment and eagerness to take on responsibility for the monitoring of the Stoney Middleton area and Wayne tells me that they have already become involved in a clean up project at Carleswark. Well done the CCC!

**Bats Group joint project work.** There have been two occasions on which I have worked with the Derbyshire Bat Group. In January we cleaned out two small "caves" in Knowleston Gardens which are to be grilled (with inspection access) and used as hibernacula for bats. The use of the caves by local "druggies" has been a cause for concern and our clean up involved the safe disposal of a number of hypodermic needles.

The work was commissioned by the Derbyshire Dales District Council and formed part of the plan to upgrade Knowleston Gardens, Pic Tor and adjacent areas in Matlock.

In early February a number of cavers and myself joined the Bat Group in their annual bat search in the Via Gellia. The results (number of bat sightings) compared to other years were disappointing and believed to be connected to a warmer than usual start to the year.

**PICA.** Meetings with PICA members seem to be becoming more regular, and Jenny and myself attended the Jan 25<sup>th</sup> meeting at Thornbridge. Members from Stanley Head have done restoration work clearing loose rocks from beneath the stemped arch in Spinney Level to give safer headroom, and a request was made for help to restore a shaft opening into Nickergrove Mine. (This has now been looked at by the "Coffin Dodgers" and plans submitted to English Nature for approval since the site is an SSSI.) A loose slab has also been reported in the entrance shaft of Oxlow Caverns.

**Lathkill Upper Entrance.** As was reported in the DCA Information Circular 2006/1 a large and potentially dangerous loose slab was levered out of the wall near the changeover point in the entrance shaft. An unfortunate and inevitable consequence of this was that the slab rolled down the slope in the Waiting Room and has reportedly caused some damage to the stal-coated boulders en route. It was also reported that the tapes marking vulnerable areas and pathways have become trampled and indistinct and this will be addressed in the near future.

**Shaft Capping Guidelines progress.** On February 17<sup>th</sup> a Stakeholders meeting was held to approve the final draft of the Guidelines. Unfortunately very few had received a copy so the meeting was not as fruitful as had been hoped. However completion is very close and the finished copy will be launched later this year.

**Water Icicle.** Dennis Jump and David Ross have prepared a very detailed report on Carbon Dioxide and Oxygen levels in all areas of Water Icicle Close Cavern with readings taken every few metres. I have copies that can be emailed should anyone wish to have a copy. The survey does highlight the potential benefits of opening up an old shaft believed to be in the woods to further improve ventilation.

*Dave Webb, Conservation Officer  
April 2006*

### **Item 6.3 - ACCESS OFFICER'S REPORT**

Very little to report since the last meeting. I have had the first application to descend the Garden Path, which is being processed at the moment. Following the tragic accident at Astonhill Swallet I have assurances from the farmers that access will not be affected

*Iain Barker, Access Officer  
19 April 2006*

### **Item 6.4 - LEGAL AND INSURANCE OFFICER'S REPORT**

#### **Liability Insurance**

I am asking Nick Williams to seek clarification of a number of provisions contained in the national Scheme. This is important if my idea of a combined Certificate of cover with Landowner Indemnity, which Nick approves of, is to be worded accurately. Once the precise extent of insurance cover is clear, work can begin on identifying what extra provision is desirable and establishing its cost. This would probably be done through BCA's L & I Committee.

#### **Chatsworth Licences**

Chatsworth has produced draft copies of the renewed licences for the Lathkill Upper and Garden Path entrances. Final copies have yet to reach me for signature. I am assured that the delay in forwarding these does not affect caver access to either site, which is permitted to continue as usual. By October renewal of the licence for the Ashford Black Marble Mine will be due.

#### **Other Matters**

I expect talks to begin shortly, with myself involved, on simplifying the access procedure at the Garden Path without compromising our obligation to limit visits to ones for scientific research purposes only. Talks are also due to take place soon, I understand, on drawing up an access agreement with Staffs Wildlife Trust regarding Thorswood Mine.

*Pete Mellors, Legal & Insurance Officer  
19 April 2006*

### **ITEM 6.5 - PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT**

Over the last couple of months, I have been in the planning stage of English Nature projects as part of the tidy-up work. I am going through the SSSI works list from the monitoring with a view to clearing the list. The main projects are:

The **Dowse Hole** tidy up is going to be undertaken by the Eldon Pothole Club over the next month, I am in the final planning stage for the project. **Walkers Grotto** will hopefully be undertaken at the same time so we can use the same skip.

As Dave said in his report, Chesterfield Caving Club are already involved in the SSSI project work, they are undertaking the work on **Carlswark Cavern**. They have already undertaken one trip bringing a couple of tackle bags of rubbish out of the cave and disposing of it at home. They are already planning the return.

Other work that I plan to undertake this year is Jughole Field Shaft – recapping of a shaft to the system. Slop Moll restoration work where a collapse of the wall as occurred. There are several other projects that may be undertaken depending if there is any money left.

There are various taping projects that I plan to do over the course of the year where materials and equipment will be provided. The areas planned are Peak Cavern, White River Series Taping; Winnats Head – Cornwall taping; Lathkill Upper Entrance Taping.

*Wayne Sheldon, Project Officer  
April 2006*

### **ITEM 6.6 - EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT**

Listed below is work completed since last report. (Annual Report 2005)

#### **Testing/Inspection of ECO-Anchors**

67 no. Eco Anchors at the following sites have been tested (axial pull to 5kn.), and inspected:

Giants Hole (Below Garlands), Maskhill Mine, P8.

In total 153 anchors have been tested and inspected. All have been found to be in good condition (at time of visit). The programme of testing and inspection is ongoing.

*Dave Cowley, Equipment Officer  
20 April 2006*

### **Item 7 - REPORT FROM BCA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 25 MARCH 2005**

I found the BCA AGM a very useful and sensible meeting with general agreement on most aspects of BCA's business. The main points raised were, as expected, the likely effect on BCA of the withdrawal of the UK Sport grant and how this would affect BCA's training schemes; and the problems of communications between BCA and its members. Various strategies were discussed to overcome both these difficulties.

Of particular interest to DCA is that, following Chris Broome standing down as Masson C.G. Club rep. on BCA Council, Boyd Potts has taken his place as Orpheus Caving Club rep. on BCA Council.

*Jenny Potts, DCA Rep. to BCA Council  
April 2006*

### **Item 10.2 - "CAVES OF THE PEAK DISTRICT" UPDATE**

Work continues; the archaeological cave database is now almost completely incorporated, the last sixteen years-worth of Descent "Derbyshire News" items are in and Bob has begun the search for a publisher/printer/financial backer (delete as appropriate when we've decided which route to take!).

I have been touting advertising with some success.

*Iain Barker*