



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Council Meeting, 10 am. 1 July 2006, Monyash Village Hall

Present:

Officers: Chairman Bob Dearman [BD]
 Secretary/Treasurer Jenny Potts [JP]
 Conservation Officer Dave Webb [DW]
 Projects Officer Wayne Sheldon [WS]
 Legal & Insurance Officer Pete Mellors [PM]
 Assistant Secretary/Planning Liaison Officer Chris Broome [CB]

Club Representatives: Orpheus C. C.: Boyd Potts [BP], (Jenny Potts)
 Eldon P. C.: (Bob Dearman)
 Masson C. G.: Mike Higgins [MH], (Chris Broome)
 T. S. G. (Wayne Sheldon)

Individual Members: John Sephton [JS], (Bob Dearman, Jenny Potts, Wayne Sheldon)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies received from: Iain Barker, Nigel Atkins, Dave Cowley, Paul Lydon, Terry Jackson, Dave Jones (Orpheus CC), Glyn Brown (Challenge the Peak). Chairman confirmed there was a quorum and the meeting commenced at 10.15am.

2. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING, 22 APRIL 2006: (Previously circulated.)

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

3. MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM:

- 3.1 3.2 Knotlow Pollution Monitoring: See Conservation Officer's Report. (5.2 below)
- 3.2 3.5 Interpretation Boards for Cave Sites: DW and JP had this in hand.
- 3.3 4.1 Officer Posts required for DCA: BD and JP had this in hand.
- 3.4 6.2.a Loose Block in Oxlow Shaft: See Conservation Officer's Report. (5.2 below)
- 3.5 6.2.b Water Icicle - re-open shaft in wood: DW reported that Ralph Johnson has offered to help radiolocate the site. Noted that there must be a check on who owns the land where the shaft is found to be before any action is taken to open it and that PM should be consulted as to possible Chatsworth interest.
- 3.6 6.2.c Lathkill Head Upper Entrance taping: WS and IB have this in hand to do. Noted that BD is already in consultation with EN over procedure for clearing loose rocks or rectifying a dangerous situation in caves or mines in SSSIs. Noted also that such dangers need to be identified as far as possible in advance so that EN could be approached and DW's advice sought before action has to be taken.
- 3.7 6.3.a Garden Path Access system: See Legal & Insurance Officer's Report. (5.5 below)
- 3.8 6.3.b Waterways Swallet Car Park: Rubbish had been cleared by Keyhole C.C. and Orpheus C.C. members. Keyhole C.C. members were at the site regularly and were keeping an eye on things and were in regular touch with the farmer concerned. PM reminded members of the need to ensure the conditions of access were adhered to.
- 3.9 6.3.c P8 Car Park: See Access Officer's Report. (5.3 below.)
- 3.10 6.4.a Castern Wood and Thorswood Mine access agreements: See Legal & Insurance Officer's Report. (5.5 below)
- 3.11 6.5.a Dowse Hole work funding: See Projects Officer's Report. (5.4 below)
- 3.12 6.5.b Ashford Marble Mine re-taping: See Access Officer's Report. (5.3 below). PM reminded WS that the 3-year licence was due for renewal in October 2006 and all outstanding works should be complete by then.
- 3.13 6.5.d Agreement with EN re. safety matters in SSSIs: See 3.6 above.
- 3.14 6.6.b Bolting placements and checks: Referred to in Equipment and Training Officers Reports below and under Conservation Officer's business. (5.2.f below.)
- 3.15 8 & 10.4 Cave Discovery Fund payments and new funding: See Secretary/Treasurer's Report. (5.1 below)
- 3.16 10.1 Titan Dig surface cleanup: So far no financial assistance has been sought but the offer from DCA has been noted by those involved.

4. ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS:

JP reported no applications at present.

5. OFFICERS' REPORTS:

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

- 5.1.a Individual Members' subscriptions: of the 9 members being chased, 2 had now resigned and 1 had paid up so far.
- 5.1.b DCA Conservation Publications sales: In reply to DW, JP reported steady sales of all conservation publications with particular interest in the Manifold/Hamps Audit at present. No large stocks were held but more copies were printed quickly by Roy Paulson, as required.
- 5.1.c Geocache in Winnats Head Cave: JP explained in detail the problem which had arisen and the steps she had already taken. Concern was expressed by members present as to the possible legal implications regarding safety and access which had clearly not been appreciated by those who had placed this geocache. JP was already in contact with Chairman of the GOGB and, now support had been given by BCA, BCRA and the officers and members of DCA, she would approach GOGB formally and ask that the geocache in Winnats Head Cave be removed and that the GOGB should advise its members that in future caves should not be used for this purpose.

That the Secretary/Treasurer's Report be accepted. Prop. C.Broom, sec. W.Sheldon. **Agreed unanimously.**

5.2 Conservation Officer: *(Written report tabled.)*

- 5.2.a Nickergrove Mine: Work is currently delayed because of the illness of the person who is do the engineering construction.
- 5.2.b Hillocks Mine: The surround to the loose roof area is not a full height wall, just something to stop the unwary approaching the area.
- 5.2.c Shaft Capping Guidelines: DW is pressing EN to get Derbyshire County Council to complete the work they have already been paid for by EN as we need the final guidelines available for use.
- 5.2.d Cave Conservation Monitoring CD Rom: DW said a new and updated version of the CD Rom from EN was available for anyone involved in the work who wanted one - he would take "orders" to pass on.
- 5.2.e Cave Conservation Monitoring Co-ordinators needed: Sam Townsend was suggested as someone who might be willing to take on Bagshawe & Bradwell SSSI - BD would approach him.
- 5.2.f Eco-anchor Placements in SSSIs: DW was concerned that this might be happening without input from the Conservation Officer. It was pointed out that, although some suggestions had been brought to the previous Council Meeting in the form of an email received by BD, no decisions had been made on any completely new placements and DW (who had not been able to be present) had been advised of the suggestions as soon as possible after the meeting. JP quoted section 3 of the "DCA Fixed Aids Policy", which emphasised the need for the Conservation Officer to be told in advance of any meeting of any proposals so he could investigate and advise. Noted that Garden Path bolting had been done under the direct supervision of John Taylor when he was Conservation & Access Officer. The entire stock of DCA Eco-anchors was held by BD, who would not release any for installation without the necessary approvals. The following proposals for eco-anchor placements had been made:
 - i) Filthy Five in Giants Hole: These would be replacements for existing spits which were corroded. DW would check and, subject to his recommendation, DCA would go ahead with these.
 - ii) Winnats Head: The climbs up in the streamway had once been bolted and ropes fixed - all were now disintegrating and it was proposed that the spits be replaced. DW would check these and, subject to his approval, DCA would go ahead. JP noted that we would be installing a pull-thro' on a climb-up with all that implied - DCA does not place fixed ropes.
 - iii) Nickergrove Traverse bolts: DW had already approved these so DCA would go ahead.

That the Conservation Officer's Report be accepted. Prop. C.Broom, sec. P.Mellors. **Agreed unanimously.**

5.3 Access Officer: *(Not present but written report tabled.)*

- 5.3.a Re-taping Ashford Marble Mine: WS confirmed the re-taping is being done with the new-type tape and that the red-and-white tape would be kept for use in indicating areas of potential instability.
- 5.3.b Castern Wood / Thorswood Mine access agreements: IB has this in hand, working with PM and Mike Salt. (See also Legal & Insurance Officer's Report, 5.5.)
- 5.3.c Email direction to Access@theDCA.org.uk: DW queried whether this direction still operated, as an email believed to have been sent to this address had not reached either himself or IB. JP would check with the DCA webmaster and ensure that, although it had been superseded by the directions conservation.off@... and access.off@..., it still forwarded to IB and DW so information was not missed.

That the Access Officer's Report be accepted. Prop. J.Potts, sec. W.Sheldon. **Agreed unanimously.**

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

- 5.4.a EN Contract for 2006/07: JP asked WS to note that, as DCA Treasurer, she had not received confirmation in writing from EN of the amount agreed for the Contract; the papers she had signed did not specify an amount. WS and DW believed this should be in the SSSI Monitoring Meeting Minutes, which had not yet been circulated. WS would follow this up. Other papers necessary to complete the Contract had now been provided by BD and PM so JP would send them on to EN.
- 5.4.b Garden Path taping: BD noted that the taping must be exactly as it had been left over 2 years before when the new security locks had been installed by DCA and the bolting had been done. BD reported no keys had been borrowed so no-one had been down since then.
- 5.4.c Dowse Hole: WS produced photos of the work done at the site. All paperwork was being completed for presentation to EN. Noted that the £500 Earthwatch Grant, which had originally been intended for Dowse Hole, now needed to be spent on another site which was not on the EN Contract works list. BD suggested that there was a shakehole currently full of rubbish near "Son of Nettle" which would benefit from being cleared. BD and WS would look into this.

That the Projects Officer's Report be accepted. Prop. B.Potts, sec. P.Mellors. **Agreed unanimously.**

5.5 Legal & Insurance Officer: *(Written report tabled.)*

- 5.5.a Liability Insurance: There were still problems with DCA members receiving their paperwork and cards but Nick Williams was putting every effort into getting the databases updated and the papers out. PM suggested that, if anyone still had queries, they could contact him for an update on the position.
- 5.5.b Garden Path: Noted again that the new locks and keys obtained and installed by BD on DCA's behalf were secure and could not be copied. PM stated that, under the agreement with Chatsworth, DCRO were to have a key which would be kept in the Equipment Store at Bakewell Police Station. BD would check that all keys on the list to be provided by PM were issued. Noted that keys for normal scientific visits would be available only through IB once the new access procedure was in place, which we hoped would be as soon as possible. PM was in consultation with IB and DW on this.

That the Legal & Insurance Officer's Report be accepted. Prop. W.Sheldon, sec. B.Potts. **Agreed unanimously.**

5.6 Equipment Officer: *(Not present but written report tabled.)*

DC's excellent work was noted with appreciation; he was completing the testing at a great pace. Almost half the 400+ bolts installed by DCA had so far been tested and all had passed, including those placed as far back as 1992. BD noted that some bolts appeared to "move" but, when tested with a 6kn pull straight out using the Hydrajaws test equipment, were solid; this was apparently due to the resin "flexing" slightly.

That the Equipment Officer's Report be accepted. Prop. B.Potts, sec. J.Potts. **Agreed unanimously.**

5.7 Training Officer: *(Not present but written report tabled.)*

- 5.7.a Training Events completed: JP noted that much of NA's report was a summary of a series of excellent training events he had organised which had already taken place. He had also listed a series of upcoming events which she would publicise. His detailed report of the Bolt Training Event would be published in the DCA N/L.

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5.7.b Bolts and Spits in Giants: NA's report referred to some newish 8mm spits in Giants placed by persons unknown but it was not known where these were. DW would check with NA as to where these had been placed.

That the Training Officer's Report be accepted. Prop. J.Potts, sec. B.Potts. *Agreed unanimously.*

5.8 Assistant Secretary / Planning Liaison Officer: *(Verbal report.)*

5.8.a Derbyshire County Council Minerals Development Plan: CB gave details of the consultation process being undertaken. DCC were suggesting that there were sufficient reserves in existing permissions to provide crushed limestone rock for 15+ years. It was further suggested that, if more reserves were needed in the future, the following sites were possibilities: Crich, Grangemill, Birch Vale (near Hayfield, gritstone) and Bolsover (magnesian limestone). There was a query whether work at Crich, which would deepen existing quarries by a further 50m, might affect historic mining remains. Suggested John Barnatt would be the person to advise. The general feeling was that the Development Plan was a sensible document and that it should receive DCA's support. CB would liaise with Terry Jackson and would put forward a positive response to the consultations.

5.8.b Peak District National Park Management Plan: JP reported on another planning consultation taking place. This was concerned mainly with the general uses of the National Park, recreation, etc. She would respond to the consultation document.

That the Assistant Secretary's Report be accepted. Prop. J.Potts, sec. W.Sheldon. *Agreed unanimously.*

6. BCA COUNCIL MEETING REPORT: *(Written report tabled.)*

JP stated that her report was mainly for information but she wanted to bring some points to the attention of members:

6.1 Revalidating Bolt Installation Qualifications: BCA Council had asked that DCA "lead" on this as we had recently run a training course at which there had been discussion on this topic. Noted also that Mendip and South Wales were currently having problems because all of their trained installers were now "out of time". BD spoke strongly against the current 1-year interval as being far too short. A 3-year or even 5-year interval were suggested as being more realistic, given that re-training would have to take place if the techniques changed - though they had not done so in the past 14 years. Noted that none of the DCA-installed anchors had failed under test, even though some had been in place for 14 years. PM said there might be insurance implications since bolting was specifically named as one of the activities covered under the BCA scheme. Noted that other qualifications were subject to regular revalidation, e.g. LCMLA, CIC, First Aid, but these did not involve a specific single technique as did bolt installation.

Agreed that BD would take this forward in discussion with the DCA trained installers, Les Sykes and PM and would provide a definite proposal on this matter which JP could then put before the next BCA Council Meeting on 7th. October. JP asked BD to note that she would need to have the wording of the proposal well before 7th. October in order for it to be put on the agenda.

6.2 Sale of Minerals: DW asked what had been said by the BCA Conservation Officer re. the sale of minerals. JP said it was a minor comment in a brief written report about which no questions were raised; she suggested DW would be best to query this direct with the BCA Conservation Officer as we had these problems in the Peak District.

6.3 Youth Development: JP explained the push to try to bring more interested young people and students into caving - the clubs would have an important part to play in this and they would all be receiving information from Chris Jewell, who would be leading from BCA on this.

6.4 New Membership Secretary: JP stated that a new membership secretary had been appointed from a lengthy list of applicants and would be taking up his post later in the summer. BCA Council felt that the new postholder would bring a commitment to the "one stop shop" and this should ensure a more positive liaison with members in the future.

7. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING:

Fixed as 10am, Saturday 4 November at Monyash Village Hall.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

8.1 Caves of the Peak District:

8.1.a BD reported ongoing progress. He has a quote from Peak Press (based on a similar production to Caves of Co.Clare, with DCA supplying camera-ready copy and artwork) of £12,000 + VAT for 1000 copies with a run-on of £3,350 + VAT per additional 1,000 copies. Noted that we needed to know how many of the 1991 edition had been printed; JP would try to extract this information from past DCA accounts and correspondence with Dalesman since it would not be available directly now the firm had been taken over. BD said he had also been in discussion with the former Chairman of BCRA and there might possibly be some help from this direction. JP suggested that some individuals might be willing to put some of their own money into the project as a loan. She also suggested that BCA might be able to offer a loan.

8.1.b Handbook: JP had been in discussions with Roy Paulson on technical aspects of the layout of the Handbook to achieve the best results. She would liaise with Terry Jackson and with Paul Lydon, who was dealing with rigging diagrams.

8.2 Radon in Derbyshire Caves:

8.2.a John Sephton stated that he had now been diagnosed with terminal cancer and bone marrow tests had shown this was possibly related to radon exposure. He was aware that other Derbyshire cavers had been diagnosed with cancer, which might also be related to radon exposure, although only bone marrow tests would show this. His oncologist was working with Prof. John Gunn to look at issues raised. JS asked that DCA warn cavers of the possible dangers of radon exposure in Derbyshire caves.

8.2.b It was noted that cancer could be due to many causes and that radon levels were high in a number of areas in the Peak District and also in other parts of the country, resulting a far higher levels of exposure in people's own homes than would result from caving. Although Giants Hole had been widely quoted as having the highest radon level of any cave in the country, this level varied according to the time of year, the location in the cave, water conditions in the cave, the weather conditions outside the cave, and a number of other factors.

8.2.c Following discussion it was agreed that it would not be appropriate for DCA, as a non-scientific body, to issue warnings about dangers of radon in caves. NCA had published a booklet, "Radon Underground", which was in the process of being updated by BCA ready for re-publication, and it would be more appropriate for this to be used as a medium for any guidance thought necessary.

8.2.d PM said he had already brought to the attention of the Convenor of the BCA Radon Working Party, Clark Friend, certain concerns felt in the Peak about recent deaths from cancer of some local cavers. PM would follow this up and would suggest that the Radon Working Party be re-convened to look at this issue.

8.3 Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum:

Boyd Potts reported on recent initiatives by this body, on which he was one of the local representatives. It did not cover the Peak District but did cover parts of South Derbyshire which had caves and mines. Although its remit did not cover caves, it was currently looking into the possibility of increasing access to water, coasts and forests. It was also dealing with public rights of way and possible new routes to sites of specific activity, such as climbing areas, so might also be of help to cavers in the future.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1.42pm.

J.E.Potts, Recorder

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

Officers' Reports to the DCA Council Meeting, 1 July 2006:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| a. Item 5.1 | Secretary/Treasurer's Report |
| b. Item 5.2 | Conservation Officer's report |
| c. Item 5.3 | Access Officer's Report |
| d. Item 5.4 | Projects Officer's Report |
| e. Item 5.5 | Legal & Insurance Officer's Report |
| f. Item 5.6 | Equipment Officer's Report |
| g. Item 5.7 | Training Officer's Report |
| g. Item 6. | Report from B.C.A. Council Meeting (17 June 2006) |

OFFICERS' REPORTS TO DCA COUNCIL MEETING, 1 JULY 2006

Item 5.1 - SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

Communications

Since the Council Meeting on 22 April I have circulated: **DCA Newsletter No. 124** (thanks to Editor, Paul Lydon), **Minutes of Council Meeting 22 April 2006 & Officers' Reports and Agenda for Council Meeting 1 July 2006**. Thanks to DCA's webmaster all these items are now on the DCA website.

My apologies for the delay in circulating the Minutes from 22 April but I have been away. I hope to be able to circulate **DCA Information Circular No. 2006/3** shortly after this meeting and the Minutes, etc. as soon as possible thereafter. It remains to be seen what effect on our postage will come from the Post Office's change to charging by size of letter as well as by weight, starting on 21 August.

It was brought to my attention in May by a Derbyshire caver that a "geocache" **had been placed in Winnats Head Cave**. Having consulted with the DCA Conservation, Access and Legal & Insurance Officers, BCA Council and BCRA Council as well as having noted the views of a number of cavers expressed on internet forums, it is clear that opinion among cavers is overwhelmingly against such use of caves. I shall be asking the Chairman of the Geocaching Organisation of Great Britain, with whom I am already in touch, to ask that this geocache be removed and that the GOGB advises its members against placements in caves in the future.

Membership of DCA

I am awaiting an updated membership list from BCA to be able to check Club Member subscriptions as we appear to have 5 out of 31 who were not on the March 2006 BCA list as having paid. Associate Member subscriptions have also been followed up and invoices are now being sent to the 10 out of 18 I believe may not yet have paid. DCA is now dependent on the BCA database for its membership records for club/associate members and I know this is now being updated as rapidly as possible. I hope to have everything clear by the end of August.

According to my records, 9 out of 64 Individual Members have yet to pay for this year and I have just sent reminders to all these. A few outstanding have paid since my last report and we now have a total of £470 in Individual Member subscriptions.

Financial Update

Balances on 30 June are:	Current Account	£ 294.52
	Deposit Account	£ 4635.39
	Total	£ 4929.91

In addition to the bank balances above, I understand the Projects Officer still has an amount in hand from the £800 float he was given to fund project work, pending payment by English Nature. (We have agreed this is so that no-one working on DCA's behalf has to wait for payment of expenses or to fund materials or equipment hire fees out of their own pockets.)

The £69 **Cave Discovery Fund award** has been paid to Orpheus C. C. Since then donations have come into the fund amounting to nearly £72, which will be carried forward to 2007. There is £223.88 in the Fund available for award on the deadline date of 1 September this year.

Following the successful **training event for Eco-anchor installers** organised by Nigel Atkins and Les Sykes, DCA has paid £175 for 50 of the remaining anchors stocked by CNCC on behalf of BCA. (This gives us sufficient for replacement or new anchors for the foreseeable future.) It is my understanding that this training for 7 DCA personnel was funded directly by BCA.

Due to pressure of time, no **meeting of the Regional Treasurers** has yet been arranged by the BCA Treasurer but I understand he is considering paying a further tranche of our grant without waiting for the meeting to be arranged

Jenny Potts, 30 June 2006

Item 5.2 - CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT (April – July)

PICA.

The following are items that have arisen as a result of discussion at PICA meetings and follow the annual visit by the mines inspector – a requirement prior to taking leader-groups underground.

Nickergrove Mine. Plans for work on Dinsley Shaft submitted to English Nature have now been approved and work will commence shortly. The work is to be paid for by PICA.

The reported loose slab in the entrance shaft of **Oxlow Caverns** has not yet been located but is on the list of work to do.

Hillocks Mine.

A contingent of Coffin Dodgers have recently built a low boundary wall around the area of potentially dangerous loose roof slabs near the entrance in order to re-direct visitors away from the area and towards the far wall which is the more usual route.

Shaft Capping Guidelines progress.

I have tried in vain to press for completion of this important project, so far without success. However I shall continue to badger the various parties and I'm sure that having got this far and invested heavily financially along the way they will not wish it to fade away now.

CoPD.

I have re-written (with valued help from Mick Murphy of Natural England) the entire section on Cave Conservation in Derbyshire and have included maps showing SSSI locations and lists of scheduled sites and a write-up on the SSSI Cave Conservation Monitoring Scheme.

Knotlow Logger.

I have contacted Hannah Berry of the Environment Agency who has confirmed that the logger will be re-installed at the earliest opportunity. The delay has been caused firstly by the need for the ground water to warm up a bit, and secondly because the equipment has only just been returned from a thorough overhaul.

Knotlow Climbing Shaft Lid

DCRO request for enlargement – see Project Officer's Report.

Interpretation Panel at Creswell Crags.

I have not yet been able to establish the type and size of panel that is envisaged by English Heritage as we have not been in touch while I have been "out of circulation". The last time I spoke to John Humble (EH) the idea was for a panel to be erected at Creswell Crags to depict the motives, activities and conservation work of recreational cavers. It will be broadly based upon a BCA leaflet titled "So You Want To Go Caving" which I understand is currently being re-written.

Cave Conservation Monitoring Meeting.

Among the items discussed at the May 24th meeting were:

1. The availability of a new CD-Rom from Natural England with better surveys, and special features more accurately located.

2. A web site to be set up by Martin Milner on which monitoring forms and surveys can be downloaded and information on progress made available to all.
3. The need for a "push" to encourage more cavers to become involved in helping to complete and record the condition of special features in SSSI caves as an update to previous records. It is hoped to complete the work by the end of 2006.
4. We have co-ordinators for all SSSI areas EXCEPT Bagshawe and Bradwell SSSI and we urgently need a volunteer with knowledge of and interest in this important area. Please help by putting it about at club meetings that we need to fill this post. Names to me please.

New Bolt Placements.

Because of the potential impact on the cave environment of new or replacement hangers or artificial aids it is important that I am notified of all requests for new sitings and projects *in advance* of discussion by Council. This is to give me sufficient time to assess the likely impact of routes and placements, to visit the site if necessary, and to make recommendations. Many our caves lying within SSSIs contain noted vulnerable and geologically important features, whose whereabouts must be taken into account prior to installation.

Dave Webb, June 2006

Item 5.3 - ACCESS OFFICER'S REPORT

Due to various circumstances I have been rather inactive during the last few months; however, as usual, Pete Mellors has taken up the slack. Regarding the **P.8. car park**; the work is still to be completed and I have emailed the council for an explanation for this delay.

Castern Wood / Thorswood and the streamlining of the **Garden Path access** procedures will be dealt with within the next month. Wayne Sheldon and myself (with anyone else who cares to help) will be **re-taping Rookery Mine** within the next few weeks.

Iain Barker, 27/06/06

ITEM 5.4 - PROJECTS OFFICER'S REPORT

The funding for the EN work this year has been confirmed at £2500 that has to be spent before March next year.

The Dowse Hole Clean-up project was carried out a couple of weeks ago. A team of six tidied up the cave entrance, pulling a mixture of timber, metal, plastic pipes, old digging utensils and other associated items from the cave. The project lasted about six hours, filling a skip in the process and returning the cave to a more natural state. I have nearly completed the paperwork and will be sending this off to EN shortly. **Carlswark Cavern** has also been tidied up and again paperwork for this project will be sent off to EN in due course.

Sam Townsend from the Eldon has been onto me regarding £500 in funding he has received from **Earthwatch** that needs to be spent on a conservation type project but at the moment we are struggling to come up with a suitable project. Initially he wanted to spend the money on the Dowse Hole Cleanup but because that project was on the list of jobs that has arisen from the EN Cave Monitoring Project, we had to use the EN funding to fund this. With this money we have from Earthwatch, it would be good idea to spend the money in a non-SSSI area, as the money from EN has to be spent within the SSSI areas. Do others have ideas where we can spend this money?

Various other projects are in the pipeline as well, as part of this SSSI work; Slop Moll and some shaft recapping.

Ashford Marble Mine retaping - Myself and Ian Barker will carry this out within the next month. I will hopefully undertake **the Lathkill Head Upper Entrance Taping** on the same day, as I have offered to do this project for Dave Webb.

Work has been completed on the **Knotlow Climbing Shaft lid**. This has been undertaken to aid DCRO on cave rescues, as stretching an injured caver though the small opening of Knotlow Climbing Shaft has proved difficult, particularly with larger casualties. The square opening has been extended by about six inches to make a rectangular opening which should make rescues via this route much easier. The opportunity was also taken to point up the loose ginging around the shaft collar. The work has kindly been funded by the National Trust, (owners of the land) and was carried out by Coffin Dodgers Ralph Johnson, Steve Knox and Dave Webb.

Wayne Sheldon, 27/06/06

Item 5.5 - LEGAL & INSURANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Liability Insurance

The precise extent of the national cover remains to be determined. Without it work cannot begin on quantifying and costing the need for additional provision. Meanwhile we have our combined Certificate of cover with Landowner indemnity, albeit with a question mark against a number of provisions. I expect to be discussing matters further with Nick Williams once Nick has sorted out administrative problems following the resignation of BCA's Membership Secretary. I understand some clubs previously insured through DCA may still be waiting for confirmation of BCA cover and/or receipt of individual membership cards. If these problems persist, I advise club officers to contact me for help.

Chatsworth Licences

Final copies of the new licences for Lathkill Upper and Garden Path entrances have now been signed. The parties with a legal interest, besides Chatsworth and ourselves, include English Nature and Chatsworth's tenant at One Ash Grange farm. These parties should all have a key to the Garden Path, but access for cavers (which continues to be restricted to scientific trips) must still be via DCA's Access Officer. At my request the new licence provides for DCRO to have its own key.

Other Matters

I am advising on the legal aspects of DCA's copyright attaching to the forthcoming edition of Caves of the Peak District. Because of other pressures on IB & DW and my knowledge of the history of the sites, I agreed to investigate rumours of lost access at Wapping Mine along with new ownership of Cumberland Cavern entrance. In both cases I found nothing has changed. After JEP passed their query to me, I advised Hunshelf Parish Council of their options concerning insurance to allow public visits to a well on their land. Matters still to be addressed include revising the access procedure at the Garden Path, and negotiating access to Thorswood Mine and Castern Wood.

Peter Mellors, 29 June 2006

ITEM 5.6 - EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

Listed below is work completed since last report. (22/04/06)

1. Testing/Inspection of ECO-Anchors

37 No. Eco-Anchors in the following sites have been tested (axial pull to 6kn), and inspected:

Eldon Hole (East, and west routes); Knotlow Mine; Nettle Pot (Entrance, and Elizabeth shafts, Crumble, and Beza Pots)

CounMin060701

In total 190 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.

2.Anchor Placement Training

On 26/04/06 Les Sykes ran a lively and informative course covering the installation of Eco-Anchors in Bagshawe Cavern. Several DCA members were in attendance. Thanks to Les and Nigel Atkins for setting this up.

Dave Cowley, 27th June 2006

Item 5.7 - DCA TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

June 2006

Hi all. Due to unforeseen circumstances I have been out of action for a couple of months and the immediate future does not look very good for me at the moment. However, I will continue to fulfil my duties as training officer. Caving is about the only thing I live for at the moment!

OUTDOORS SHOW 2006

I sponsored the caving stand at the Outdoor show in Birmingham on March 17th, 18th & 19th this year. Petzl were not there this year, however, they did come up with the goods to sponsor me and so did Keith Lewis at Speleo Technics, Peli cases and Dudley of Dragon Caving Equipment. For those who probably do not know yet, Dudley has sold up and is going to enjoy his long awaited and well earned retirement. I'm sure I speak for all British cavers buy thanking him for his excellent equipment, personal service and dedication to our sport and for all his support over the years with caving events such as Derbyshire's Cavers Fair, etc. Nice one Dudley, on behalf of all DCA members, a big thank you and enjoy your retirement. Your legacy will go on for a very long time!

DCA CAVERS WORKSHOPS 2006 AT THE UPPER LIMITS CLIMBING CENTRE, LONGNOR.

Dates: Saturday & Sunday March 11th & 12th 2006

Saturday: 9.30am on a cold March morning, which was great as I had set up the majority of this event indoors.

Iain Rennie who has worked with us for a few years now on this event ran the Ladders, Lines & Ropework session. There was a variety of caving experience from his group which made for a very active session. All of this was held indoors and they worked through their lunchtime!

The SRT advanced practical session was run by myself and we went off to P8 which had lots of water in running through it! Fortunately we worked the pitches above the first pitch which also gave me opportunity to check the 8mm bolts up there with a view to maybe replacing them in the future with eco hangers. I'm not keen too keen to do this at the moment as this area provides classic rigging for 8mm spits which is needed for cave leader & instructor training and assessments. The condition of them is fine and their positions are spot on!

The team were keen to cover pitch rigging and re-belays etc. They even helped me bring out all that rusty angle iron between the 'Electric Ferret' and 'Bonza' pitches! These 2 pitches are not on any of the available topo's as I don't think many people know they exist! If you want a topo of this section, see me after the show!

Sunday: A 9.45am meet on a snow threatened day! Iain had a small group for his session and I met up with my lot to head off for P8 again.

None of this group knew of the stuff in the roof and they had a brilliant time circuiting around between the 'Boney' and 'Far Flats' pitches. One of the team even knew Nick Bonell, the caver I was with when I first bolted the Boney pitch and promptly named it after him!

We then looked at a rescue situation and were all very impressed when the 'Electric Ferret' pitch was rigged and used to haul someone up 'Idiots Leap' completely dry, even though there was more water in the cave than yesterday!

My personal thanks go to the following: Iain Rennie, Matt Robbins, Dave Williams, Becki Atkins for the admin and Ken Weston for the venue. Thanks also go to everyone who supported the event.

DCA SRT UNDERGROUND TRIP - Date: Sunday July 16th 2006

This day will be of an informal nature with emphasis on personal techniques improvement. The trip 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.

SRT TRAINING COURSE - Date: Saturday & Sunday August 5th & 6th 2006

There is a 2 day SRT training course for those who may not be able to get training through their clubs. I have some new Petzl toys to give away (or sell off depending on my mood swings!)

PRE-ASSESSMENT DAY FOR CAVE LEADERS

I did one of these back in January and one of the takers has just got his level 2 award.....nice one!

This is an excellent opportunity for DCA members to test themselves out. There is never a formal charge for this day to DCA members, however I will be expecting a donation made payable to DCA's funds.

SRT RIGGING AND SRT RESCUE COURSE - Date: Saturday & Sunday August 5th & 6th 2006

This Course is available only for SRT proficient people and it has limited places so please book early. I will apply for a grant for this so it could be a cheapie for you. First come first served!

BOLTING PROGRAMME

10.30am and a full breakfast at the newly opened Wardlow Mires café. Our trainer for this course was Les Sykes. The DCA team was Dave Cowley, Bob Dearman, Dave Williams, Tim Holling (Orpheus), Alan Walker & myself.

The first hour was spent updating everyone on current trends and me firing off as usual about replacing 8mm bolts instead of putting eco hangers to the side of them. T Pot also joined us for this debate and his views were very welcome and useful.

The team made good use of Les and bombarded him with loads of questions. Indeed, I think Les was quite impressed by our enthusiasm and passion for the work we do in DCA. I was personally grateful that he made the time and effort to arrange this day for us, I have known Les for many years and his own enthusiasm for the work he does is fantastic.

The team then departed for the cave. I chose Bagshawe Cavern as the venue for a number of reasons. We had the room to move about at the top of the Dungeon Pitch and see what was going on. The 8mm bolts in the roof were in the right position and their sites could be replaced. The bolts put in would be genuinely used by cavers and not stuck on some quarry wall.

The start of the traverse gave us an interesting scenario and we deliberated on whether to put 2 bolts in or 1? The decision to put just one in was decided as a second could be put in later and a natural back up could be found further down the passage. The 8mm I placed years ago in the rift was left as was, I don't think many people know its there anyway!

Les was amused at how long it took me to remove the 8mm bolts! We agreed to disagree on this topic as the DCA team were unanimous in my approach and even though Les is a big guy, there were more of us than him!

On returning to Wardlow, a meeting was held to discuss how we move forward and what work needs to be done first. I agreed to replace the 2 bolts in Giants on the approach to Garlands Pot as these had already been approved by DCA from a request from DCRO and PICA. The subject of removing some bolts also came up and this needs to be presented to the next DCA meeting.

CounMin060701

My personal thanks go to the following: Les Sykes for his enthusiasm and friendship, Peter Revell for the venue & Dave Cowley for having to put up with me!

BOLTS IN GIANTS

I have spotted 3 newish 8mm spits in Giants recently. Any one know who put these in and more importantly - WHY? I am to replace the 2 spits on the left wall approach to Garlands and Iain Rennie and myself have come up with what we feel would be an ideal set up for DCRO in the future - watch this space.

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 August 5th & 6th 2006

Date: Saturday & Sunday September 2nd & 3rd 2006

Local Cave/Mine Leader Award Training (level 2)

Date: Saturday & Sunday September 2nd & 3rd 2006

Date: Monday & Tuesday November 19th & 20th 2006

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

This are all by arrangement and can be done on a 1 to 1 basis if needed.

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

This are all by arrangement and can be done on a 1 to 1 basis if needed.

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

Date: Sunday August 13th 2006. These are also run by arrangement and can be done on a 1 to 1 basis with module 5 included if needed.

CAVE INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATE SCHEME

Hey, guess what. I have been accepted as a trainee trainer and assessor for CIC. I will personally make sure that no one else coming through the scheme has to put up with all the bollocks that I had to endure. Maybe now we can all work in harmony and put caving back to where it should be - the most exciting, beautiful, breathtaking and exhilarating activity in the WORLD!

DCRO FUND RAISING EVENING WITH WHITESNAKE & ROCKAHOLIC.

On Saturday July 22nd, Whitesnake are supporting Rockaholic at Conkers outdoor theatre in Moira, South Derbyshire. This is a Greek style amphitheatre and will be a fantastic night featuring, Queen, Bon Jovi, Whitesnake, Journey, Guns n Roses etc. I have both bands permission to shake some buckets around the audience to raise funds for DCRO. This event will be busy so please get there before 7.30pm to get a seat etc.....

CAVING ON TOUR 2006/2007

This is my 20th year in professional instructed caving since moving to the Dales in the summer of 86 to work as senior instructor for the Dales Centre in Wharfedale. I am in talks with my sponsors Petzl, Keela etc to go out on the road to climbing & mountaineering clubs to promote caving. I will be filming some pretty amazing speed caving etc to couple up with other film clips over the years. Anyone wishing to get in on this - phone me!

Nigel Atkins, 30 June 2006

Item 6 - BCA COUNCIL MEETING REPORT (17 JUNE 2006)

Items dealt with at the meeting - note these are not comprehensive "minutes", just notes of items I felt to be of particular interest to DCA:

Loss of Sports Council Grant: The Chairman is in consultation with CCPR in an attempt to obtain some funding to support the BCA Training Schemes which are effectively run to satisfy the legal requirements set by the government. It appears BCA may be required to jump through some time consuming and expensive hoops with no guarantee of funding at the end. It may be better for BCA to simply fund training itself from other revenues.

Secretary will be stepping down this October: Paula Grigich-Warke has health problems and will be stepping down at the next meeting. A new BCA Secretary is urgently needed. Paula has dealt with numerous enquiries from members chasing non-appearance of membership cards and publications.

Treasurer: He reported that BCA is currently in a healthy financial situation. He wishes to stand down next year so BCA will need a new Treasurer from March 2007.

Conservation Officer: Reported problems with sale of minerals taken from caves/mines. BCA supports objections to use of caves for "geocaching".

Equipment: BCA Equipment Officer not present. **Noted that there is concern over the system for revalidating qualifications for bolt installers - an interval of one year is generally felt to be too frequent. Suggested DCA, having run a recent bolt installers training course, should take the discussion forward and make a definite proposal in time for the 7 October BCA Council meeting.** JEP would take this forward.

BCA Newsletter: Noted that the BCA N/L promised for end of May has still not appeared. Editor claims to be short of material.

Insurance Manager: Nick Williams explained progress in sorting out insurance and members database since the Membership Secretary resigned in May. He is aware of the problems and delays and has himself taken on the job of sorting things out before the new BCA Membership Secretary takes on the post, probably at the end of August. (Nick's own secretary is currently dealing with the database under Nick's supervision and this is being funded by BCA.) In future there will be closer links between the Insurance Manager and the Membership Secretary so that problems are not allowed to develop. The job. spec. will be re-cast to allow for a wider remit and BCA Council approved the appointment of the new Membership Secretary.

Youth and Development: It was agreed that we needed a push to interest more suitable people in caving, particularly students. Chris Jewell of the Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs will lead on this and the first public moves should be made at Hidden Earth. There will be a campaign of posters and leaflets to be distributed and also moves to enlist the help of clubs in encouraging people with an interest to take up caving.

Jenny Potts, DCA rep. to BCA Council. 29/06/06