



# DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Council Meeting, 10 am. 4 November 2006, Monyash Village Hall

**Present:**

**Officers:** Chairman Bob Dearman [BD]  
 Vice-Chairman Terry Jackson [TJ]  
 Secretary/Treasurer Jenny Potts [JP]  
 Conservation Officer Dave Webb [DW]  
 Legal & Insurance Officer Pete Mellors [PM]  
 N/L Editor / Publications Officer Paul Lydon [PL]  
 Assistant Secretary/Planning Liaison Officer Chris Broome [CB]

**Club Representatives:** Chesterfield C. C. Frank Beasley [FB]  
 Eldon P. C.: (Bob Dearman)  
 Masson C. G.: John Highfield [JH], (Chris Broome)  
 Orpheus C. C.: Karen Slatcher [KS], (Jenny Potts, Paul Lydon)

**Individual Members:** Stuart Gibbs [SG], Tony Gibbs [TG], John Sephton [JS], (Bob Dearman, Terry Jackson, Pete Mellors, Jenny Potts, Karen Slatcher)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies received from: Nigel Atkins (Training Officer), Iain Barker (Access Officer), Dave Cowley (Equipment Officer), Wayne Sheldon (Projects Officer), Andy Tickle, Dave Jones (Orpheus CC).

Chairman confirmed the Meeting was quorate and commenced at 10.00am.

**2. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING, 1 JULY 2006:** *(Previously circulated.)*

*That they be accepted as a correct record.* Prop. T.Jackson, Sec. D.Webb. **Agreed unanimously.**

**3. MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM:**

3.1 3.3 **Officer Posts for DCA:** JP had drafted the following suggestions:

That 5.1.a of the DCA Constitution (Election of Officers ...) be deleted and replaced by the following:

**5.1.a** *The following Officers shall be elected by nomination and majority vote at each Annual General Meeting to serve for one year: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer. Additional officers shall be elected to cover other aspects of the Association's work, the posts required shall be agreed by the Council Meeting prior to the Annual General Meeting. Retiring Officers shall be eligible for re-election. Any elected Officer may co-opt an Assistant or Liaison Officer to assist in his work, providing that such appointments are made known to the Association. Any additional Officers who may be deemed necessary for the efficient running of the Association may be co-opted at General Meetings to act for the remainder of the year.*

*It is further suggested that the following officers in addition to those named in the first sentence of draft 5.1.a. above be elected for 2007/8: Legal & Insurance Officer, Conservation Officer, Access Officer, Projects Officer, Equipment Officer, Training Officer, Publications Officer/Newsletter Editor, Cave Registry Secretary, Assistant Secretary.*

It was proposed P.Lydon, sec. S.Gibbs and **Agreed unanimously.**

***"That the amendment to Const. 5.1.a suggested by J.Potts (see above) be adopted by Council and formally proposed as an amendment to the Constitution at the AGM in 2007; and that J.Potts' suggestion re. officer posts to be elected at the AGM 2007 (see above) be adopted as a proposal from Council to the AGM 2007.***

3.2 3.5 **Water Icicle Shaft in woods:** See Projects Officer's Report, (5.3 below). PM said there have been some minor collapses on Mr. Wells' land noted by Chatsworth Estates and these will be investigated and a report made by PM.

3.3 3.6 **Lathkill Head Upper Entrance Capping:** See Projects Officer's Report, (5.3 below).

3.4 5.5.b **Garden Path Access:** PM is working with DW and IB to streamline the access procedure. Noted DCA must work with Chatsworth and Natural England; a licence for scientific work is required. DCA is required to control access and to have sole responsibility for keys.

3.5 3.9 **P.8 Car Park:** Work has now been completed to everyone's satisfaction. BD had liaised with Derbyshire County Council re. capping 2 shafts and filling the 3rd. (shallow) one. TJ noted that the shafts were not in PD.M.H.S. records.

3.6 3.16 **Titan Dig Surface Restoration:** Dave Nixon had written to JP giving the cost of hiring skip to remove spoil, etc. as £150.

***"That DCA funds the cost of the Titan Dig Surface restoration in full."*** Prop. J.Potts, sec.D.Webb.

**Agreed unanimously.**

Noted that there was to be an item on Titan on the BBC 1 North programme ***"Inside Out"*** at 7.30pm on Monday. TG noted that this was an excellent conservation project.

3.7 5.1.c **Geocache in Winnats Head Cave:** See Secretary's Report, (5.1 below).

3.8 8.2 **Radon in Derbyshire Caves:** JP read out the report made by Clark Friend (Convenor of BCA Radon Working Party) to BCA Council on 7th. October which referred to the matter raised by JS. Investigations were being carried out by various people and organisations and JS's consultant was liaising with Prof. J.Gunn. It seemed likely that the number of people potentially affected might be too small to be statistically significant.

3.9 5.3.c **DCA Website/emails:** It appeared there were still problems with excessive numbers of spam emails reaching officers via the ***theDCA.org.uk*** domain name. PL suggested that he could liaise with the DCA webmaster over ways to disguise the website links.

**4. ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS:**

JP reported no applications received.

**5. OFFICERS' REPORTS:**

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

Geocaching: JP noted that she still had to contact the Chairman of the GAGB re. amending the guidelines for placement of geocaches.  
*That the Secretary/Treasurer's report be accepted.* Prop. C.Broome, sec. K.Slatcher. *Agreed unanimously.*

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

5.2.a Knotlow Lid: DW had to get the new nuts for the Knotlow lid made specially as they were a non-standard size. PL noted that the nuts were often left loose. JP suggested that captive nuts might be used in future to avoid them being lost or dropped. Also suggested that it might be better next time to replace the studs with standard ones to make it easier to obtain spare nuts.

5.2.b Holme Bank Chert Mine: Reported apparent excessive use noted but we needed to know who this might be before action could be considered. TG said he thought there might be a college using H.B.C.M. to do a mine surveying course and he would try to check this. There is no system at present for users to log in before a trip so there were problems in identifying who was visiting and how often. DW and PM would try to collect information and identify whether there actually is a problem to be addressed.

5.2.c BCA Youth & Development Campaign: Comments from PICA were noted. JP had sent copies of both BCA leaflets: *"Try Caving"* and *"So, You Want to Go Caving?"* to all DCA members. She pointed out that they were aimed at different "audiences".

5.2.d RIGS: TG had gone through the original 200 RIGS sites to identify whether they contained caves; he had then recommended an additional 23 sites be added. TG and PM had done a great deal of work in establishing boundaries of sites to ensure only relevant areas were included. All this information had been submitted to the Derbyshire RIGS Group and TG had kept paper and electronic copies. It was extremely disappointing to find that none of the information had been included. TG noted that his original submission had been accepted but then subsequently lost. JP asked about the status of these RIGS Groups and to whom they were responsible - it seems they are voluntary groups but their recommendations are part of the official planning process. DW had now invited the Derbyshire RIGS Group to send a representative to DCA UCF meetings in the hope that this would improve liaison.

5.2.e Bolt Placements: JP noted that she had raised the issue of Eco-anchor placements not authorised by DCA with a CIC she believed might be responsible for some additional anchor placements. She had explained that it was essential that no additional unauthorised placements be made because DCA was known to inspect and maintain all Eco-anchors placed with their approval and there was a possibility of confusion as any non-DCA anchors would not be part of the inspection and testing regime. For this reason, it was DCA policy to remove any anchors which appeared and which had not been placed under the DCA programme.

5.2.f Creswell Crags: Interpretation panels were being considered by DW and JP suggested that material from the new *BCA "So, You Want To Go Caving?"* leaflet might be useful.

5.2.g Crematorium Pot: TJ noted that the query about "waste disposal" did not relate solely to "stewardship areas" but may refer to any land where there are "cross-compliance" issues and any farmer can ask for "exemption". This is something we need to be aware of but it should not cause problems for cavers involved in digging projects.

*That the Conservation Officer's report be accepted.* Prop. T.Gibbs, sec. C.Broome. *Agreed unanimously.*

**5.3 Projects Officer:** *(Wayne Sheldon had sent apologies for absence and his written report was tabled.)*

5.3.a Slop Moll: BD reported on the practical work being carried out which was due to be completed shortly.

5.3.b Carleswark Cavern: FB reported that much general rubbish had been cleared by Chesterfield C.C. and that Centres using the cave were also beginning to take a part in removing any rubbish left by others.

*That the Projects Officer's report be accepted.* Prop. P.Lydon, sec. J.Sephton. *Agreed unanimously.*

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

PM noted that there was a possibility of improving the terms of the BCA Public Liability Insurance when it was renewed for 2007.

*That the Legal & Insurance Officer's report be accepted.* Prop. T.Gibbs, sec. D.Webb. *Agreed unanimously.*

**5.5 Access Officer:** *(IB had sent apologies and a verbal report was given on his behalf by BD.)*

5.5.a Access Officer Post: BD reported that IB was now willing to continue in the post of Access Officer following a difficult time at work during which other officers had helped to cover DCA matters.

5.5.b Thorswood: an access agreement was being organised with Staffs Wildlife Trust, and IB was liaising with PM, DW, WS and Mike Salt to achieve this.

5.5.c Garden Path: Taping and Eco-anchors needed to be checked ready for the revised access arrangements. IB, BD, DW and PM were involved in this. PM noted that Chatsworth rely on the information provided by DCA.

*The Access Officer's report was noted.*

*(Note: IB had attempted to email his report but his email system had failed. The report was received subsequently and is included below for completeness.)*

**5.6 Newsletter Editor/ Publications Officer:** *(Verbal report given.)*

5.6.a Newsletter Content: PL noted that he would like to print more on the work of DCA itself. He would also like to receive information to print in the Newsletter which people are currently sending to other publications or websites. TG offered to provide a report in instalments on the RIGS work in progress.

5.6.b Newsletter 125: This will be ready for printing once JP's review of DW's new video, *"Fight for Life"*, is received.

*That the N/L Editor / Publications Officer's report be accepted.* Prop. J.Sephton, sec. T.Gibbs. *Agreed unanimously.*

**5.7 Training Officer's report:** *(A written outline report on coming events had been received and was on the DCA website.)*

It was noted that there was a tremendous amount of work being done by the Training Officer and that a number of courses had been arranged for this autumn and the spring.

*That the Training Officer's report be accepted.* Prop. P.Lydon, sec. K.Slatcher. *Agreed unanimously.*

**6. CAVE DISCOVERY FUND:**

JP noted that no applications to the Fund had been received by the due date of 1st. September.

**7. BCA REPORT:** (*JP had tabled a written report.*)

7.1 BCA Council Meeting, 7th October: JP emphasised that she felt BCA was becoming more active now and was beginning to be accepted as working on behalf of all cavers. The new Membership Administrator was working on setting up a revised membership system to ensure that renewals / insurance would be dealt with smoothly and efficiently in 2007.

7.2 BCA Youth and Development Initiative: PL expressed concern that announcements were being made on the Try Caving website and in print which appeared to commit clubs to actions without sufficient discussion taking place first with the clubs most concerned. It was noted that a number of DCA clubs wanted to take part but many felt they had insufficient information available at present to be able to plan appropriately. It was hoped that Chris Jewell, who was leading on this for BCA, would try to make information available. JP pointed out that BCA's Child protection Policy and Guidelines were accessible on the BCA website

It was suggested that DCA itself could organise a training event for those clubs interested at which advice could be given over issues causing most concern, particularly in dealing with groups of young people. TG said he knew someone who dealt with this type of situation via a college and would seek his help to advise DCA.

Noted that the date suggested by Chris Jewell for the "Try Caving Day", 26/27 May weekend, would cause problems for Derbyshire clubs as many of the key people would be away from the area during the Bank Holiday weekend. It was agreed that we should try to find a suitable alternative date during the coming summer for a "Derbyshire Try Caving Day"; JP agreed to act as co-ordinator for this and the DCA Training Officer's help would be sought.

**8. CONFIRM DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING:**

Confirmed that the next meeting, the DCA AGM on 24th. February 2007, was already booked for Monyash Village Hall at 10am.

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

**9.1 Caves of the Peak District and DCA Handbook:**

BD reported that the new CoPD was virtually complete and should be on schedule to appear next spring. TJ, JP and PL were liaising over the new Handbook, to be called "*The Peak District Access and Rigging Guide, 2007*". It was noted that PL was planning a different type of rigging guide to the Crewe C.P.C. publication, with simplified diagrams. Noted that information such as rope lengths needed to be checked.

**9.2 Herne Hill Cave:**

TG reported that the access situation at the Herne Hill Caves, Maltby had changed and one cave was currently closed. He would pass detailed information on the current situation to JP, TJ and IB.

**9.3 Homo Britannicus:**

BD had received an email about this scheme. It was not felt to be worth following up.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1.45pm.

*J.E.Potts, Recorder*

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

**Officers' Reports to the DCA Council Meeting, 4 November 2006:**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| a. Item 5.1 | Secretary/Treasurer's Report                      |
| b. Item 5.2 | Conservation Officer's report                     |
| c. Item 5.3 | Projects Officer's Report                         |
| d. Item 5.4 | Legal & Insurance Officer's Report                |
| e. Item 5.5 | Access Officer's Report                           |
| f. Item 7.  | Report on B.C.A. Council Meeting (7 October 2006) |

**OFFICERS' REPORTS TO DCA COUNCIL MEETING, 4 NOVEMBER 2006****Item 5.1 - SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT****Communications**

Since the Council Meeting on 1 July I have circulated: **Minutes of Council Meeting 1 July 2006 & Officers' Reports; DCA Information Circular No. 2006/3** and the **Agenda for Council Meeting 4 Nov. 2006 & the 2 new BCA leaflets**. Thanks to DCA's webmaster the Minutes and Information Circular are now on the DCA website. I have also asked for the amended details for access to Alderley Edge Mines to be placed on the website and this will be included in the next Information Circular, no. 2006/5, which I intend to send out as soon as possible after this meeting. DCA Training Officer, Nigel Atkins, has supplied me with a detailed list of forthcoming training events and this has been placed on the website and the information will be included in Information Circular 2005/5.

I included DCA publications for sale on the stand I ran for BCA at Hidden Earth and sold a number of items. Reference to DCA's Cave/Mine Conservation Audit series of publications will appear in a new BCRA publication on excursions on limestone areas of the Peak District.

The effect on our postage from the Post Office's change to charging by size of letter as well as by weight, starting on 21 August, has not affected the circulation of ordinary paperwork and may be to our advantage in allowing us to include more separate items with the next DCA N/L.

The "**geocache**" in **Winnats Head Cave** has been "archived" on the Geocaching Organisation of Great Britain's website so that the reference to it is no longer accessible, hence I assume that the ammo box itself has been removed from the cave. I shall be contacting the Chairman of GOGGB again to ask that the GOGGB amends its guidelines to advise its members against placements in caves in the future.

**Membership of DCA**

I now have an updated membership list from BCA, issued on 20 Sept. by the newly appointed BCA Membership Administrator, Glenn Jones, and this has enabled me to check that DCA Club and Associate Members are paid-up members of BCA. One club had not paid and, on following this up, I was informed the club had decided not to join BCA, meaning that their DCA membership also lapses. DCA therefore now has **30 Member Clubs**. There appear to be 3 out of the **18 Associate Members** still unpaid, though Associate Members were more difficult to check as some were listed by BCA as "Clubs" and others were listed by the name of the local authority under which they operate, rather than under the name of the centre. I am working Glenn on the last 3 queries and hope to resolve them soon.

I have now written to all non-paid-up Individual Members of DCA to remind them that their subscription is overdue. 2 have resigned as they have now joined a DCA member club and 5 have still not paid and have been removed from the list, leaving us with a total of **57 Individual Members** (including 3 Honorary Members), down from 63 last year. The total received in subscriptions from DCA Individual Members this year is £500, the 15 who are also Direct Individual Members of BCA pay a reduced subscription of £7.00 instead of £10.00.

**Financial Update**

Balances on 30 September were:	Current Account	£ 196.52
	Deposit Account	£ 5417.60
	Cash in Hand Sec.	<u>£ 56.95</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 5671.07</b>

In addition to the balances above, 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 received the £451.50 grant due from English Nature (now Natural England) to fund the work on Dowse Hole and work has already begun on other projects; being funded from the float for the time being. My thanks to Wayne for dealing with the necessary paperwork relating to these projects funded by Natural England.

There has been no other major expenditure since the July meeting so our balances are looking very healthy and there has been minimal income or expenditure since 30 September.

There has been no application to the Cave Discovery Fund by the due date of 1 Sept. but we have a separate application, already agreed in principle, for grant towards the cost of the surface clean-up at the Titan site.

No **meeting of the Regional Treasurers** has yet been arranged by the new BCA Treasurer but we have already received a further £300 administration grant from BCA, taking the total for this year to £800. It should be possible for us also to claim certain cave conservation/access expenses direct from the BCA Conservation & Access Group and I am compiling a list of expenses I believe may be eligible ready to make a claim at the end of the year.

*Jenny Potts, Hon. Secretary/Treasurer  
2 November 2006*

**Item 5.2 - CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT (July - November)****PICA.**

A few points from the meeting held October 17<sup>th</sup> 2006, which I attended.

Dave Carlisle (inspector of mines for PICA) was present and reported on the mines he had inspected.

**Mouldridge Mine:** he had no major concerns save the continuing use of the unstable "Banana Slide" in which he had placed out of bounds.

**Hillocks.** The new wall was OK but could do with extending further up slope to further discourage straying into the area of the unsafe roof.

Other points from the meeting. **Nickergrove Mine:** Work on Dinsley Shaft has now been completed by members of CCPC. The work had been paid for by PICA. Placing of belay points around shaft top needs careful consideration due to loose nature of ground - there are no convenient trees. The bolts on the traverse are not yet installed: Bryan Hartshorn and Adam Evans have offered to accompany Dave Cowley to advise on placement. **Suicide Cave:** Loose slab 20m in. DW to visit with Adam Evans to consider ways of dealing with this. **Jugholes.** Dave Carlisle led a discussion on the need for bolts at each end of the "bad step", a topic which has been previously discussed at length. Many still felt that if bolted the cave could be used by groups and may help to take pressure of other sites. In view of the majority view that it should be looked at again I offered to re-examine the site on a future trip. **Oxlow Caverns** the loose slab in the entrance shaft has not yet been located but is on the list of work to do. **Holme Bank Chert Mine.** Concern expressed regarding report from keyholder of exceedingly large numbers of groups visiting - sometimes up the 30 at a time with perhaps two or three coaches present. Apart from the logistics of controlling such large groups in a potentially hazardous environment it is not within the spirit of recreational caving to encourage such a practice. The keyholder himself has simply passed on his observations.

**Youth and Development Campaign:** I presented BCA's new initiative which was generally well received. However there was real concern regarding the lack of clubs to which to direct young people under 18 due to insurance constraints. There was also criticism of the leaflet "So you want to go Caving?" which was felt to be too "wordy" and lacking in impact.

#### **RADON.**

PICA are to devote some of their funds to testing some of the more frequently visited sites.

CCPC and Manchester University have conducted a survey of radon in Oxlow for a PhD thesis. Early results suggest high levels at base of second pitch and in West Chamber. I have asked for a detailed report when it becomes available.

#### **SHAFT CAPPING GUIDELINES progress.**

I have persisted in trying to resurrect this project and assisted by others have at last had some success. A "Publishable Draft" will be produced in the near future and will contain photos, logs (including DCA's) and diagrams etc.

#### **KNOTLOW LOGGER.**

The logger to monitor pollution episodes has at last gone in to Knotlow in the area of Fourways Shaft. A rain gauge has also been placed by The National Trust at Monyash farm to assist in interpreting results.

#### **INTERPRETATION PANEL AT CRESWELL CRAGS.**

Ongoing. Further discussions to be held at next UCF meeting.

#### **CAVE CONSERVATION MONITORING MEETING.**

The meeting scheduled for November 9th has unfortunately been cancelled due in part to reorganisation at Natural England. It is to be rescheduled to a new date in the new year. We now have representatives in all SSSIs

#### **NEW BOLT PLACEMENTS.**

I have confirmed by email to BD that the proposals to replace the corroded spits in Giants "Filthy Five" pitches and the climbs up to the streamway in Winnats Head cave do not conflict with the conservation interest and work can be put in hand. I also note that the work in Winnats includes the installation of a pull-through which I assume is to be placed on the aven/pitch immediately beyond the wet crawl and will replace the existing arrangement.

Nigel Atkins has confirmed to me that the unofficial placements at Garlands in Giants discussed at the last meeting are as follows - one high in roof above Garlands pitch head, and the second on the far wall opposite the pitch. Nigel added "...rumour has it that a 'Cave Instructor' may have placed them." I can confirm that it was NOT a member of the Derbyshire LC/MLA panel as they are supporting the Eco installation. So who does that leave who is operating in Giants?"

#### **CREMATORIUM POT.**

I was approached by Mark Brown (SUSS) and Elsie Little (BCA C & A Officer) to look into a situation that had developed regarding the spoil from the dig at Crematorium Pot. It appears that the Peak Park had inspected the field owned by Mr Hadfield in which Crematorium Pot is located and which is in Stewardship, and were unsure as to the classification of dig spoil and whether or not the dig could continue. I subsequently received a phone call from Fiona Hetheringham at the Peak Park and I have summarised her main points below.

Fiona has been very helpful in this matter and I am prepared to accept her judgment on the matter. Essentially there is a need by all parties to consider the conservation of what is archaeologically, geologically and ecologically important in and around dig sites, and in the case of Crematorium Pot this is now being done.

The ruling only applies to land within the Park boundaries and Pete Mellors is to look into the situation outside the Peak.

*Summary: Fiona confirms that her discussions with the necessary authorities, including the Environment Agency, have led her to conclude that the SUSS dig at Crematorium Pot presents no special problems and she will advise Mark Brown to this effect and suggest that he liaise with Mr Hadfield direct.*

*"The issue of dig spoil centres upon a new EU directive that requires farmers to adopt a more considered approach to the disposal of waste on their land, but "agricultural waste" can be exempt. Disposal applies particularly to land in stewardship schemes where random disposal of waste may damage ecologically sensitive sites, as is the case with regard to the particular species-rich field in which Crematorium Pot is located. Sites such as this are comparatively rare and the vast majority of digs will not be affected in the same way, and liaison with the landowner or farmer will normally be all that is necessary (a procedure that is widely adopted as best practice at the moment).*

*The majority of farmers already possess the necessary exemption certificates (issued at no charge but should be in place by deadline of May 1st 2007) which allows them to "redistribute" or to move "agricultural waste" such as dig spoil, around the farm, and Mr Hadfield should be no exception. Of course once any waste is removed from the boundaries of the farm in question then it becomes an entirely different matter, and a different set of rules apply for its disposal. However this is an unlikely scenario for the majority of digs and in the case of Crematorium Pot spoil can be disposed of away from the sensitive area or simply used to restore farm tracks or level ground following agreement with the farmer.*

*(Incidentally this latter use in levelling ground is somewhat contentious since the filling of "holes" is not specifically excluded in the new directive and could theoretically allow the farmer to infill swallet holes, mineshaft depressions and other features - as he always could of course!)*

*All new EU directives of this nature have a tendency to be unnecessarily complicated and as such can be open to individual interpretation. "The devil is in the detail" and the definition of what constitutes waste that has been decided for Derbyshire may not apply elsewhere; it may be wise not to pursue the authorities too rigorously for an exact definition of what constitutes "agricultural waste", and just how far we continue to pursue this as a legal matter is open to debate."*

#### **RIGS GEOCONSERVATION PROJECT.**

The local RIGS group is embarking upon a review of all the RIGS sites in Derbyshire and the Peak. An official list of 23 approved RIGS cave sites was omitted from the circulated list but following some prompting this has now been corrected. Tony and Stuart Gibbs spent a great deal of time and effort listing all the cave sites he considered should be designated as RIGS but it now appears that all this information has been lost! I shall be liaising with Tony in the near future to see what sites can be added.

#### **EARTHWATCH.**

Sam Townsend of EPC has been awarded £800 by "Earthwatch" to spend on a conservation project in Derbyshire. For several months now we have been looking for suitable sites (outside of the boundaries of any SSSI) on which to spend the money. I finally suggested a clean-up of the area around the swallets on Stanley Moor and Sam is to seek confirmation that this is acceptable. The project will include work to re-open Perseverance Pot and we have had an offer from CCPC to take this on.

I understand that Sam is to liaise with Jenny on the financial aspects of the project.

**DERBYSHIRE MINERALS SITE APPLICATION.**

I have written to the Derbyshire County Council as follows and Chris Broom and I are liaising on this:-

**Derbyshire Minerals Site Allocation Development Plan**

**Further comments**

1. The DCA supports the DCC's view that no new quarries should be opened. We furthermore support the DCC on restricting where possible extensions to existing quarries and to encourage greater use of secondary and recycled aggregates in the construction industry. We understand that similar views are supported by the Environment Agency.

2. There is no specific mention in the literature of our Lead Mining Heritage and the need to conserve important mining remains that clearly exist outside the Peak Park boundaries. Some of the proposed extensions, for example at Crich, where as I understand it the proposal is to extend and deepen by 50m, could have a serious impact upon archaeologically and historically important lead mines in the area.

I would also draw your attention to a document published by the Peak District National Park Authority titled "The Lead Rakes Legacy" which although concerning itself mainly with sites in the Peak Park, would nevertheless make essential reading for those responsible for defining extraction and boundary limits.

*Dave Webb, DCA Conservation Officer  
November 2006*

**Item 5.3 - PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT**

I have been away for the last couple of months but while I have been away, I have had the Slop Moll project running. (see below)

**Slop Moll:**

This project has been running over the last month under the leadership of John Taylor and Nick Williams, with at least three or four days spent re-building the walls. A team comprising a handful of Derbyshire cavers, notably Eldon, SUSS and a few from TSG have been doing this. The team says that they have a day left to do and the project will be finished. Once this is complete, I will pull all the paperwork together and get it off to Jenny so she can forward it to English Nature.

**Carlswark Cavern:**

I spoke Frank Beasley from Chesterfield Caving Club in September, he says that they needed to spend one more half day doing another tidy up then Frank would get the paperwork to me and I would complete it and get it to Jenny so she can forward to English Nature.

**Taping at Ashford Marble Mine & Lathkill Head Top Entrance:**

I must admit that I have been a bit lax when it comes to this but I have spoken to Dave Webb and we have agreed that we will both carry the work out before Christmas.

**Water Icicle Shaft in Woods:**

Ralph Johnson is going to carry out radio location from the bottom of the shaft in order to locate the shaft top within the woods.

**Shaft Capping:**

English Nature have asked us to use some of the shaft capping materials that we have in stock at Magpie Mine, so in the early New year I am going to get quite a few shafts recapped with the money we have remaining.

*Wayne Sheldon, Projects Officer  
22 October 2006*

**Item 5.4 - LEGAL & INSURANCE OFFICER'S REPORT**

**Liability Insurance**

With just two months of the Policy cover left before it expires, there are grounds for a hard look at the extent of the national liability insurance provision. It seems I am not alone in holding this view. Nick Williams feels the market has now eased sufficiently for BCA to look again at its needs and to negotiate the best cover to match them. I am currently liaising with Nick to help bring provision into line with needs.

**Staffs Wildlife Trust**

Negotiations are underway to produce an agreement acceptable to the Trust for access to Thorswood Mine and Castern Wood adits. Iain Barker, Dave Webb and Mike Salt are involved in helping achieve a satisfactory workable outcome.

**Ashford Black Marble Mine**

The 3 year access Licence expired last month and Chatsworth has agreed to renew it for a further 3 years. I am grateful to Iain Barker for prompt completion of this year's safety inspection and report. Access to the Mine is unaffected whilst I wait to receive the paperwork to confirm renewal.

**Land Stewardship & Waste Management**

There has been a minor panic, now hopefully sorted out at source by Dave Webb and the Peak Park's Monitoring Ecologist together with the landowner and the diggers concerned, over the potential impact on surface digs of Land Stewardship Schemes and Agricultural Waste Regulations. Stewardship schemes involve farmers in signing up to long term agreements to protect ecologically sensitive parts of their land. At the same time the new Waste Regulations impose constraints on the way farmers can dispose of waste, which includes the spoil from cave digs (where spoil is brought to the surface). It is one extra thing for cavers to keep in mind when approaching farmers in our region to open or reopen surface digs. Where farmers are unclear about their legal position in permitting diggers to disturb the land, DCA may be able to help sort out the problem.

*Peter Mellors, Legal & Insurance Officer  
1 November 2006*

### Item 5.5 - ACCESS OFFICER'S REPORT

The annual inspection of the Ashford Black Marble Mine has been completed with no undue surprises. A spare key and logbook have been issued to the shop. Wayne Sheldon is to liaise with Dave Webb regarding re-taping sensitive areas.

Pete Mellors is coordinating the Thorswood access agreement and has produced a draft for Staffs Wildlife Trust to examine.

The inspections of the Lathkil Upper and Garden Path entrances will be completed within a few weeks.

The licence renewal for Waterways Swallet passed without any problems this year.

C.O.P.D. continues slowly but is still on track for completion in the spring, many thanks to John Beck for much graft on this.

All in all, access is OK.

*Iain Barker, Access Officer  
3rd. November 2006*

### Item 7 - REPORT ON BCA COUNCIL MEETING, 7 OCT. 2006

#### 7.1 BCA Council Report:

The Council Meeting was well attended and very positive and I felt a great deal had been achieved in moving BCA forward.

The Chairman reported that, despite extensive discussions with Sports Councils, there is no hope of BCA's grants being restored and, after a small grant for the early part of next year to allow time for BCA to find alternative sources, we shall be on our own. This means BCA itself will have to fund the CIC and LCMLA Training schemes, which are ultimately for the benefit of society in general rather than ordinary club cavers, and that there will be no more money for expedition funding. A scheme called "Venture Extreme" has sought support from BCA for its plans for a centre in Sheffield devoted to encouraging outdoor pursuits. It was felt there could be advantages for BCA in this, including support for expedition funding, but we needed to investigate carefully what was involved so the Chairman will be taking this further.

The BCA Secretary has had to resign due to persistent ill health and I have temporarily taken on the role of Acting BCA Secretary to ensure that all is in order for the AGM next year, when I hope a new volunteer will come forward. It was accepted that the position is probably too onerous for one person who is also doing a full time job so it has been agreed to look at the possibility of appointing a paid "general secretary" to deal with basic administration.

The BCA Treasurer, Jonathan Roberts, has also stood down owing to professional and personal pressures; Dave Cooke agreed to take on the role of Treasurer and is already in post. Bob Mehew, formerly NCA's Treasurer, produced a draft budget for 2007 which was discussed at length and agreed by BCA Council. Work which should have been carried out during the past year has not been done, partly due to problems with personnel - both over-stretched volunteers and the resignation of the Membership Secretary, leaving BCA to run without one for several months. Thus BCA had more money in hand than expected and Council agreed to set a deficit budget for next year and to maintain the membership fees at the same level, hoping that the cost of insurance will not rise but believing BCA has enough in hand to "cushion" any rise which might occur.

The BCA Conservation & Access Officer was not present and no written report had been sent. There was no content re. C&A on the BCA website pages and this was felt to be disappointing. It was left to regional conservation & access officers to take up the matter of the C&A Committee's apparent lack of action, though it was accepted that there had been phone/email discussion during the year.

The Training Officer reported that Pat Ramsden, who has provided the administrative backup for the training schemes, is wanting to stand down in early 2007. This is an important post and will be advertised as soon as possible. It was agreed to make available a "training bursary" to assist people from the Voluntary Youth Sector who need to obtain LCMLA. This is initially for one year and will be kept under review.

The Equipment Officer reported that the Committee is planning a meeting in early November with the subject of Anchor installation and testing high on the agenda. BCA's Publications and Information sector is gaining an increasingly high profile with the new version of "So, You Want To Go Caving" published, a volunteer to take over the BCA Handbook from next year, problems with the N/L being resolved and the website use growing.

The new Membership Administrator is concentrating on getting things right for a good start to next year as well as resolving the many anomalies left this year re. membership lists, issue of cards, etc. Already more up to date lists have been issued to regional councils and many problems have been resolved. He has also issued to clubs the "templates" for electronic entry of club membership lists ready for issue of CIM membership/insurance cards in 2007. The Insurance Manager used the staff at his office to complete the issue of membership/insurance cards and has nearly cracked all the outstanding issues, though a last few remain to be resolved.

**Note that Minutes of BCA Council Meetings are now posted on the BCA website as soon as the first draft has been agreed by Council so, if you want to know more about what is going on, check the website. I can also post a copy of the draft BCA Minutes to any DCA member without internet access.**

#### 7.2 BCA Youth and Development Initiative:

Chris Jewell, of the Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs, has led on this and has produced the new leaflet "Try Caving", to be placed in showcaves, shops and possibly some outdoor centres. He has also set up a website: [www.trycaving.com](http://www.trycaving.com) which interested non-cavers or novice cavers can use as a primary information source. Clubs who are interested are urged to check out the website and, if they want to be involved, register and place the relevant information about the club so that people interested in taking up caving know who they can approach. Chris was aiming initially at encouraging students to join their university club and for the university club to maintain links with independent caving clubs; however it has become apparent that the initiative has wider implications, in particular the position of clubs which wish to accept "junior members" below the age of 18.

Chris is also trying to promote a national "Try Caving" day on the Spring Bank Holiday weekend, May 26/27 in 2007 - timed to coincide with the winch meet at Gaping Gill in Yorkshire, and hoping that clubs in all regions will be able to take part. **DCA itself may wish to get involved in this.**

The leaflet "So You Want To Go Caving" and its updatable insert was not, strictly speaking, intended as part of Chris's initiative, but was designed as a general handout for clubs to pass on to interested people who approach them and want further information, to be handed out to applicants registering for the LCMLA scheme and also for outdoor centres to hand out to students who have tried caving on a course and want to take it further.

*Jenny Potts, DCA Representative to BCA Council  
3rd. November 2006*