



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Annual General Meeting, 10am, 24 February 2007, Monyash Village Hall

Present:

Clubs:

Eldon Pothole Club	R.S.Dearman [BD]
Masson Caving Group	J. Highfield [JH], D.Webb [DW]
Orpheus Caving Club	B.Potts [BP], Paul Lydon [PL], M.Hogg [MH], (J.Potts)
T. S. G.	W.Sheldon [WS]

Individual Members:

R.S.Dearman [BD], T.Jackson [TJ], J.Potts [JP], (W.Sheldon [WS])

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME, ESTABLISH QUORUM:

1.1 **Welcome:** R.S.Dearman, DCA Chairman, welcomed members to the AGM. He paid tribute to Roy Paulson, Honorary Member of DCA, who had died earlier in the week. It was noted also that Pete Mellors, DCA Legal & Insurance Officer had recently been in hospital and was recovering slowly.

1.2 **Quorum:** The meeting was quorate with 4 club representatives and 4 individual members present..

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies recd. from: Officers: Nigel Atkins (Training Officer); Iain Barker (Access Officer); Dave Cowley (Equipment Officer); Pete Mellors (Legal & Insurance Officer); Chesterfield C.C. (Frank Beasley); Crewe C.P.C. (Ralph Johnson); Individual Members: John Cordingley, Karen Slatcher.

3. APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS GENERAL MEETINGS:

3.1 **Annual General Meeting, 25 February 2006:** *(Previously circulated and on the DCA website; taken as read.)*

That the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 25 February 2006 be approved.

Prop. W.Sheldon, Sec. P.Lydon. *Agreed unanimously.*

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

No matters arising from the minutes.

5. ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS:

5.1 **Individual Member:** David Wall, prop. J.Potts, sec. D.Webb. *Agreed unanimously.*

6. OFFICERS' REPORTS: *(The Annual Officers' Reports and Accounts were tabled and would be included with the published Minutes in due course.)*

6.1 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

R.S.Dearman gave his report verbally and congratulated all those involved for their work in making it a very good year for DCA. He expressed his thanks to the Officers for their work on behalf of members.

6.2 SECRETARY'S REPORT: *(Written report tabled.)*

6.1.a DW enquired whether there would be reference to SSSIs and RIGS in the Handbook. There would be detailed information on these in the new Caves of the Peak District and the Handbook would indicate whether sites were classified under either heading.

That the Secretary's Report be accepted. Prop. M.Hogg, sec. T.Jackson. *Agreed unanimously.*

6.3 TREASURER'S REPORT AND ACCOUNTS: *(Written report and accounts tabled.)*

6.3.a BD asked about monies due from Natural England for work completed by DCA; JP explained that about £1150 had been spent in the the 2006 financial year, for which the paperwork had been sent in early in 2007 and which was due to be refunded by Natural England shortly. JP explained that there should be no problems in funding other conservation & access expenditure through BCA. BD queried the inclusion of "printing and copying" as expenditure on "materials" in the accounts. JP agreed that, whilst this was appropriate for the administrative work of the Secretary, it would be better if this were included with post/phone/email expenditure for other officers so that materials for practical access work were identified separately. JP would re-cast the Accounts before publication so that all "paperwork" was included under a general administrative heading for officers other than the Secretary.

6.3.b JP noted that, following the death of Roy Paulson, who had done all DCA's printing, we were now searching for alternative methods of producing Handbook and Newsletter.

That the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Prop. T.Jackson, sec. P.Lydon. *Agreed unanimously.*

6.3.c The Treasurer gave a brief update on the financial situation at present. All was well and the funds due from Natural England were expected soon.

6.4 CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT: *(Written report tabled.)*

6.4.a DW queried when the promised bolt placement in Nickergrove would be done to allow this to be used by instructed parties. This was in the hands of the Equipment Officer, Dave Cowley, who was currently working away from home. Noted that DCA had already approved the placing of the Y-hangs in the Wet Inlets in Giants and in Oxlow and these awaited DC's attention.

6.4.b DW reported that it had recently been suggested that there was again some bad air in Knotlow Mine, despite reports from the Environment Agency that there appeared to be less pollution now. The Meccano Passage area would be checked.

6.4.c DW noted that there continued to be an excessive amount of "spam" email traffic to the conservation and access officers.

That the Conservation Officer's Report be accepted. Prop. T.Jackson, sec. W.Sheldon. *Agreed unanimously.*

6.5 ACCESS OFFICER'S REPORT: *(Written report tabled.)*

6.5.a TJ queried the access position at Holme Bank Chert Mine, current Handbook details may be out of date. He would contact IB and also the original phone no. listed.

- 6.5.b BP raised the matter of the state of the lid at Rowter Pot. The shaft top needed renewing altogether as the frame was rusted and the lid broken. Noted that the farmer had offered to help with welding if needed. This could be referred to the Projects Officer.
- 6.5.c PL raised the matter of the lid on J.H., which needed a method of fastening it open to avoid accidents when it slammed in the wind. Again, refer to Projects officer.
- 6.5.d WS stated that he would be doing the safety check at Lathkill Dale Upper Entrance (as required by Chatsworth) and will also check the state of the deviation.
- 6.5.e BD would check with Nick Williams re. possible sources of printing for Caves of the Peak District.
- 6.5.f PL mentioned the phantom "loose block" said to be in the Oxlow shaft. A PICA member had offered to visit the shaft with a DCA Officer to point out the problem.

That the Access Officer's Report be accepted. Prop. B.Potts, sec. T.Jackson. *Agreed unanimously.*

6.6 PROJECTS OFFICER'S REPORT: (Written report tabled.)

- 6.6.a WS reported that the Oxlow Stiles had now been done and the paperwork passed to JP for processing.
- 6.6.b DW reported that the stile at P8 had been done. The route markers to P8 needed re-doing.
- 6.6.c DW expressed his thanks to WS for the excellent work done under his guidance, particularly the Slop Moll job.

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

6.7 TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT: (Written note tabled.)

JP explained that Nigel Atkins was working this weekend and had sent a very brief note with his apologies. Basically, all was well and training events were continuing.

6.8 LEGAL & INSURANCE OFFICER'S REPORT:

- 6.8.a JP explained that PM had been ill and had only just come out of hospital earlier in the week so she gave a verbal report on his behalf. He was still waiting for the Landowner Insurance certificates for Chatsworth and Okeover Estates; both he and JP had asked the BCA Insurance Manager about these and a reply was awaited.
- 6.8.b DW reminded members that the updated access arrangements for Garden Path were awaited.

6.9 PUBLICATIONS OFFICER: (PL gave a verbal report.)

- 6.9.a PL stated that the next Newsletter, no. 126, was in progress but he was short of material. He felt it was a pity that material relating to Derbyshire was being published elsewhere with nothing in our own Newsletter. He noted that we were now looking for alternative methods of printing the Newsletter.
- 6.9.b PL stated that the "Rigging Guide" section of the Handbook was now under way following investigation of suitable ways of depicting anchor placements.

That the Publications Officer's Report be accepted. Prop. I.Barker, sec. B.Potts. *Agreed unanimously.*

6.10 EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT:

- 6.10.a BD gave a verbal report on Dave Cowley's behalf as DC was working away from home, having just returned from 5 weeks abroad. The anchor testing programme is continuing with all 300+ tested so far passing the tests. There was a further programme of work to do including: installation of the Y-hangs in Giants and Oxlow; some additional Eco-anchors in Giants Hole (as previously agreed); checking and possibly re-rigging the Millers Chamber climb up in Eldon Hole.
- 6.10.b Noted that the installation of the Eco-anchor in Nickergrove Mine was urgently required.
- 6.10.c The dangerous lower crawl in Suicide Cave had been blocked by boulders, although some had since been pulled out. It had been suggested that these be cemented into place to avoid accidents.

7. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION:

- 7.1 Initially proposed after discussion by DCA Council on 4th. November 2006.

Delete section 5.1.a and replace by the following:

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.

Proposed B.Potts, sec. T.Jackson. *Agreed unanimously.*

- 7.2. Initially proposed after discussion by DCA Council on 4th. November 2006.

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.

Proposed W.Sheldon, sec. J.Highfield. *Agreed unanimously.*

8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

- 8.1 *That the Officers be re-elected en bloc.* Proposed B.Potts, sec. J.Highfield, *Agreed unanimously.*

- 8.2 The following were duly elected:

Chairman: R.S.Dearman,	Secretary: J.E.Potts,	Treasurer: J.E.Potts,
Access Officer: I.Barker,	Conservation Officer: D.Webb,	Training Officer: N.Atkins,
Equipment Officer: D.Cowley,	Legal & Insurance Officer: P.T.Mellors,	Publications Officer: P.Lydon,
Cave Registry Secretary: J.Beck,	Assistant Secretary: C.Broome,	Projects Officer: W.Sheldon,
Vice-Chairman: T.Jackson.		

9. ELECTION OF THREE ORDINARY MEMBERS OF THE CAVE DISCOVERY FUND PANEL:

Proposed from the floor that the existing members be re-elected.

Members of CDF Grants Panel: I.Barker, T.Jackson, B.Potts. Agreed unanimously.

10. BCA AGM - 24 MARCH 2007: OUTLINE OF BUSINESS AFFECTING DCA:

JP explained the background to the proposal Item 22 on the BCA Agenda:

"To agree that, in so far as is possible, the subscription rates should be set so that members make a fair contribution to the direct and indirect services that they receive."

It was noted that, following the loss of Sport Council Grant, BCA itself was now funding conservation & access expenses in the regions, as well as Eco-anchor installation, training and administrative costs. Funding of publications to be sold was a matter for DCA itself.

"That DCA supports at the BCA AGM the proposal re. subscription rates." Prop. D.Webb, sec. B.Potts. *Agreed unanimously.*

11. APPOINTMENT OF DELEGATES/REPRESENTATIVES TO BCA AGM AND BCA COMMITTEES:

11.1 **DCA delegate to BCA AGM:** J.Potts was appointed. She expressed the hope that other DCA members would be there to make their own views heard and reminded members that the meeting was open to any member of a member club.

11.2 **DCA representative on BCA Council:** J.Potts was appointed.

11.3 **DCA representatives to BCA Special Committees:** The appropriate DCA Officer would attend C&A Committee [D.Webb], Training Committee [Nigel Atkins], Equipment Committee [Dave Cowley] and Legal & Insurance Committee [Pete Mellors].

11.4 **DCA representatives to other BCA working groups:** P.Mellors would liaise with the Radon Working Group and it was noted that PICA might have some input to this also. J.Beck would be the contact for the Cave Registry.

12. APPOINTMENT OF DELEGATES/REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

12.1 **SSSI Liaison Group:** DW and WS were appointed; **Underground Conservation Forum:** D.Webb was appointed, WS and JP would also attend.

12.2 **PICA:** D.Webb and J.Potts were appointed.

12.3 **Derbyshire Sport:** J.Potts was appointed. Noted that there could be Whitehall funding for some outreach work.

13. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR MEETINGS FOR THE COMING YEAR:

13.1 **DCA AGM 2008:** 10am. Saturday, 23 February 2008, at Monyash Village Hall.

13.1 **DCA Council Meetings 2007:** All at 10am on Saturdays at Monyash Village Hall: 28th. April, 23rd. June and 20th. October.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

14.1 **Try Caving Day:** Suggested that activities might be co-ordinated for the weekend of 16/17 June as 26/27 May appeared to be unsuitable for many people who would otherwise want to be involved. JP would co-ordinate if required and it was suggested that PL (Orpheus), WS (TSG), Ann Soulsby (Masson) would want to be involved.

14.2 **Titan work:** JP stated DCA already has the materials required for the work at Titan as part of the Cave Conservation Works contract with Natural England.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 1.25pm.

J.E.Potts, Recorder

APPENDED TO THESE MINUTES AND FORMING PART OF THEM ARE:

THE DCA OFFICERS' ANNUAL REPORTs FOR 2006

THE DCA ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31 DEC. 2006.

DCA OFFICERS' ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2006

HON. SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT

I was very sad to hear earlier this week of the death of Roy Paulson after a long illness. Roy has printed our Newsletter, the Handbook and all our paperwork since 1993 and in the process had become a real friend. He didn't just "print stuff"; he took a real interest and pride in what he was producing and was always suggesting improvements in layout and style, as well as checking our spelling. He was extremely proud to be able to offer us colour printing for the most recent issues of the Newsletter. We were delighted when he accepted Honorary Membership of DCA a few years ago in recognition of his contribution to the Association. DCA has lost a good friend.

As always, my thanks go to the other DCA Officers for their help and support in all aspects of my job. Communication between us is excellent and it makes an immense difference to this organization that we have a team of reliable and hard-working people prepared to give their time for the benefit of us all.

Membership

Following the appointment of Glenn Jones as BCA Membership Administrator, it has been possible to check on Club and Associate BCA membership for 2006 so I am confident these figures are correct - unlike the previous year, when the situation was chaotic.

Club membership has remained steady at 30, Associate Membership remains at 17 and Individual Membership had fallen from 62 + 2 prospective at this time last year, to 58 + 1 prospective this year. (3 Individual Members lapsed and 2 resigned.) All Club and Associate Members are also members of BCA and 16 of the Individual Members are also Direct Individual Members of BCA.

Communications

I sent out 4 Information Circulars in 2006 and have continued to expand the use of email for communications with members wherever possible, both to save money and to ensure that information reaches people more quickly. However, we should be aware that email communication is not infallible - there is a "great electronic black hole" somewhere - so I hope members and officers will chase up if they think they have missed out or not heard from DCA for some time. Having a new computer and broadband has made a tremendous difference for me, though not all members have internet facilities (3 of the Clubs and 14 Individual Members have no email that I am aware of) and quite a few of those who do don't yet have broadband, so I have to ensure that these members don't miss out on information.

Thanks are due to our Webmaster, Paul Johnson, who has continued to maintain a useful and informative website which is updated regularly from the Information Circulars and other sources.

The New Handbook

We have ceased to update the old Handbook and are now working on a new "Peak District Access and Rigging Guide" to be issued free to all DCA members. This is designed to complement the new "Caves of the Peak District" which should be coming out later this year. My thanks to Terry Jackson, Paul Lydon and Pete Mellors for their help in producing this - my own contribution is behind because of other commitments but I hope to be back on speed shortly and the new Handbook should be with you in late spring.

Contacts with Other Organisations

David Webb and I continue to attend PICA meetings - a valuable point of contact with the caving instructors and centres.

I continue to attend meetings of the Derbyshire Sport and Recreation Forum, now renamed "Derbyshire Sport" but it appears now to be concentrating on competitive sports and "built facilities". I intend to ensure that there will continue to be a link with outdoor recreation as this is a vital aspect of this region's attraction to all active people.

My contacts with BCA have perhaps been somewhat closer than I would have liked as I took on the post of Acting Secretary in August 2006, when the previous Secretary resigned due to ill health.

This has taken up an immense amount of my time as I have been working with the new Membership Administrator and with BCRA representatives to resolve outstanding membership issues, in addition to communications with BCA Council, organising and minuting Council Meetings and getting out the official paperwork for the BCA AGM in March. I have made it clear that I will not continue with this after the 2007 BCA AGM on 24th. March and offer my apologies to DCA members if I have been behind in dealing with DCA business in consequence.

*Jenny Potts,
DCA Hon. Secretary, 23 February 2007*

HON. TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT

On the face of it, the situation doesn't look good: we made a loss of nearly £2000 this year, as opposed to excess income of nearly £3000 in the previous (15-month) year. However, a closer inspection shows that much of this is due to inflated income last year (DCA P.L. Insurance) and a late call for payment of final premium this year, which we had expected to pay at the end of last year. We no longer run an insurance scheme ourselves so, from now on, we shall have a clearer picture of our more normal activities undistorted by huge incoming and outgoing insurance payments.

We also have the situation where our work on SSSI conservation carried out for Natural England is dealt with on a contract which overlaps our financial year end. Hence we have carried out work late in 2006 for which we have incurred expenses but have not yet been refunded for these - we are due around £1150 very shortly. The rather large amount held as cash in hand by the Projects Officer at 31 December 2006 has now almost all been spent on projects which reached completion in January and February, for which we will be refunded shortly. My thanks to Wayne Sheldon for his impeccable record-keeping on the various projects, and DCA's thanks should also go to the volunteers themselves for all their hard work, in often gruelling conditions, undertaken on behalf of us all.

Increased expenditure in other areas: conservation & access and equipment/anchor installation, reflects increased activity. Expenditure on general administration has dropped sharply - mainly due to increased use of the internet as opposed to post. Another sharp drop is in the costs of producing the Conservation Audits - all the actual production work was done in previous years, now we are able to sell the publications and need only print a few more at a time to keep up with demand.

Our thanks go to Sam Townsend for passing on his Earthwatch Award, worth £800, to DCA for the Cave Conservation Emergency Fund. Also, to those who have donated various expenses to either DCA general funds or to the Cave Discovery Fund.

BCA has now held a meeting of its Finance Committee, consisting of the BCA Treasurer (now Dave Cooke, taking over from Jonathan Roberts, who resigned in October) plus the 5 Regional Council Treasurers. We have agreed a process for funding the Regions from BCA: "core funding" will cover administrative costs and conservation & access costs; in addition the BCA Equipment Committee intends to fund anchor installation direct in future and training is already being funded by BCA. Hence, we now have a clear system for funding all Regions for costs incurred by them on behalf of all cavers, leaving each region to cover the costs of items which benefit only their own members. Thus DCA must cover the costs of our publications as well as Cave Discovery Fund grants and other items which are available free only to DCA members. For those who want to know more, Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting together with all other Committee, Council and AGM Minutes are now posted on BCA's website.

*Jenny Potts,
DCA Hon. Treasurer, 23 February 2007*

CONSERVATION OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT

Introduction.

Unfortunately my activities during 2006 had to be curtailed due to health considerations, although activities livened up a bit towards the end of the year.

English Nature have now been reorganised and renamed Natural England (NE) and although our contacts remain largely unaltered the process has meant a temporary cessation of activities involving them, such as SSSI Cave Conservation Monitoring meetings. This will hopefully be rectified during 2007.

Also put on the back burner temporarily were the UCF meetings, but I am pleased to say that they were restarted in October with a record attendance.

I have been involved in considerable discussions, which included Pete Mellors, with a representatives of the Peak District National Park Authority and SUSS on the problems of disposing of dig spoil from their dig at Crematorium Pot. The problem has been sorted amicably at local level.

I am finally able to report the completion of the Shaft Capping Guidelines with which I, on behalf of DCA, have been involved for the past three years. We hope to launch the publication very soon.

PICA meetings have also started on a regular basis and Jenny and I have attended on your behalf forging what I believe to be very good relations with this gathering of Cave Instructors and Leaders.

Projects.

The team have been kept busy with a variety of major projects planned last year under the NE/DCA grant-aid scheme and Wayne Sheldon has done an excellent job with a great team at both Dowse Hole and Slop Moll (see Wayne's report).

I have been involved in more mundane, but none-the-less important, projects with the Crewe Coffin Dodgers, mending and reconstructing stiles at both Oxlow and P8, often in appalling weather conditions. We also blocked off the lower entrance in the boulder choke in Suicide Cave for safety reasons pending a more permanent solution and I have also placed warning signs at both ends of this route. We have also spent time constructing a drystone wall in Hillocks to direct cavers away from the loose slabs in the roof near the entrance.

Wayne and I have at last re-taped the "pretties" in Ashford Black Marble Mine, reducing the amount of "roadworks" tape in the process.

I am still planning to visit further caving clubs in the coming year to discuss monitoring and other conservation issues – and of course to encourage clubs to appoint their own conservation officer and recruit new members under the BCA's Youth and Development Scheme.

*Dave Webb, Conservation Officer
February 2007*

DCA ACCESS OFFICER'S REPORT

Very quiet on the access side since the last report.

A small number of issues await attention; Holme Bank Chert Mine requires a new lock fitting on the "Escape Gate" at the northern end of the quarry and the inspection of the Lathkill Upper Entrance still awaits completion.

Any jobs that require me to go caving will have to await the NHS as I'm waiting for surgery at present.

COPD

The new edition has almost reached completion. A few photographs to go through and a bit of writing on my part, re-drawing the line maps and surveys on John's part. We need a definite on who is publishing very soon (now would be better) so that we can find out which format certain things (adverts etc) will need to be created in. This is holding the project up at the present.

*Iain Barker, Access Officer
17 February 2007*

PROJECTS OFFICER'S REPORT

It's been a very busy year for me in terms of projects, mainly involving the NE/DCA grant-aid scheme. The projects undertaken over the last year were: Dowse Hole, Carlswark Cavern, Slop Moll, Rowter Hole, Oxlow Stiles and we have also brought some shaft lining material for the Titan Shaft.

Carlswark Cavern: - A clean up of this cave, bringing out loads of rubbish, old digging equipment etc.

Slop Moll: - A collapse had occurred to the right hand bank (when facing the rising). Natural England offered to fund the cost of stabilising the banking from NE/DCA grant-aid scheme. A team under the leadership of John Taylor spent five days building a series of walls in steps to re-stabilise the banking.

Rowter Hole: - A project where several bags of accumulated rubbish from the bottom of the entrance shaft was pulled out of the cave.

Oxlow Stiles: - There are three stiles that lead to the mines/caves that are located on the Oxlow House Farm Land, these were showing the signs of many years of usage by cavers and being exposed to the elements. Ralph Johnson and Steve Knox have undertaken repair/maintenance work to these stiles over the course of several days. A stile on route to P8 was also fixed at the same time.

Re-taping projects: - As Dave's report said, we finally undertook the taping in Ashford Black Marble Mine but since then I have heard there is a little more to undertake, raised at a recent PICA meeting. The taping in the waiting room of Lathkill Head Top Entrance will be undertaken next week. A project that is planned this year is the re-taping of the White River Series, Peak Cavern. This project has been on the cards for the last few years but I have begun preparations for this to be undertaken late Spring.

Reports for all these projects have or will appear in the DCA newsletters/information circulars. I have several projects in mind for 2007/08 assuming that we receive a grant for funding from Natural England. These involve tidy-ups as well as shaft capping projects.

*Wayne Sheldon, Projects Officer
17 February 2007*

TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

Not much to say what hasn't been said except that I am looking at raising funds to get the rope at the NEC again this year. The cavers workshop could still do with a few more takers, as usual.

*Nigel Atkins, Training Officer
23 February 2007*