



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Council Meeting, 10 am. 23 June 2007, Monyash Village Hall

Present:	Officers:	Chairman	Bob Dearman [BD]	
		Secretary/Treasurer	Jenny Potts [JP]	
		Conservation Officer	David Webb [DW]	
		Projects Officer	Wayne Sheldon [WS]	
		Legal & Insurance Officer	Pete Mellors [PM]	
		Publications Officer	Paul Lydon [PL]	
		Asst. Sec. / Planning Liaison	Chris Broome [CB]	
		Club Representatives:	Eldon P. C.:	(Bob Dearman)
			Masson C. G.:	(Chris Broome)
			Orpheus C. C.:	Boyd Potts, (Jenny Potts)
			T.S.G.:	(Wayne Sheldon)
Individual Members:		Karen Slatcher [KS], (Bob Dearman, Pete Mellors, Jenny Potts, Wayne Sheldon)		

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies received from: Iain Barker (Access Officer), Dave Cowley (Equipment Officer), Paul Johnson (Torne Valley C.C. & DCA Webmaster), Frank Beasley (Chest. C.C.)

Chairman confirmed the Meeting was quorate and commenced at 10.15am.

2. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING, 28 APRIL 2007: (Previously circulated.)

That the Minutes be accepted as a correct record.

Prop. W.Sheldon, sec. D.Webb. *Agreed unanimously.*

3. MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM:

3.1 3.1 **Water Icicle Shaft in the wood:** Refer to item 5.3 below.

3.2 4.1 **Derbyshire Try Caving Day:** JP explained that it had been impossible to organise a Derbyshire Try Caving Day on the date suggested by BCA's Youth Development Officer. Some people had signed up at the BCA Stand at the Outdoor Show in March for a "taster" caving trip led by various caving instructors and these had gone ahead successfully, apart from one in Derbyshire, which had been cancelled. Other people had signed up asking for information on caving in various regions and the lists for each region had been circulated to clubs willing to help. Noted that Orpheus CC had emailed all 38 people on the "Peak List" inviting contacts and had no response.

Sheffield City Council were holding an adventure sports weekend called **Cliffhanger** at Graves Park on the weekend 14/15 July and SUSS had offered to run a caving display there; they had the use of the Hidden-Earth "Speleololympics" rig, a "squeeze machine" and access to rigging for SRT demonstrations. The SUSS organiser would welcome help from interested cavers from any club and JP had included his contact details in the Information Circular 2007/4 (just printed) and also some information on the Cliffhanger event and its website.

3.3 6.5.b **Garden Path Access:** Refer to items 5.2, 5.4 and 5.5 below.

4. ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS:

JP reported no current applications but one club possibly interested. See also Secretary's report (5.1 below).

5. OFFICERS' REPORTS:

5.1 Secretary/Treasurer's Report: (Written report tabled.)

5.1.a JP reported that further Individual Subscription payments had arrived or been promised since reminders had been sent out.

5.1.b JP explained her intention to ask for contact details for clubs which had advised BCA that they had a secondary interest in caving in the Peak District but which were not currently DCA members. Some were known to visit the region regularly and it would be to DCA's benefit to have them as members. The meeting agreed to this approach.

5.1.c JP reported in detail on the Regional Treasurers' meeting with the BCA Treasurer on 10 June. It was generally felt that the new funding setup was working well and BCA was now beginning to work efficiently as a national body for caving. Noted that it would be to DCA's benefit financially if as many as possible of its individual members were also Direct Individual Members (DIMs) of BCA. Noted that those DIM's who belonged to a club paid nothing to their club for P.L. insurance as they were insured directly by BCA.

PM queried how DCA Officers were insured, given that the regional councils paid nothing for their membership of BCA. JP stated that, as far as she knew, our Officers were insured by BCA solely for their work in connection with DCA but not for ordinary caving trips. PM agreed to raise this query directly with BCA's Insurance Manager in order to satisfy his concerns.

5.1.d JP had notified BCA Treasurer of expected expenditure on making safe the new shaft which had recently opened up near J.H., as reported by WS in an email to her during the previous week. The BCA Treasurer had already confirmed that he saw no problems over funding necessary work.

5.1.e DW explained that he had now arranged for the production of masters for DCA publications formerly printed by Roy Paulson and a new batch was currently being printed by Gedling Borough Council.

5.1.f JP said that the subjects referred to in the recent letter to her from PICA Chairman, Phil Baker, (Suicide Cave problems, Jug Holes bolting and Giants pull thro') would be dealt with under the appropriate officers' reports.

That the Secretary/Treasurer's Report be accepted. Prop. D.Webb, sec. P.Mellors. *Agreed unanimously.*

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

- 5.2.a **Suicide Cave:** JP suggested that, regardless of other issues, it might help avoid the situation of cave entrances in Winnats Pass being used as toilets if there were public toilets nearer than the centre of Castleton. Those at Speedwell Cavern were believed to be for the use of show cave patrons only - possibly there could be co-operation between N.T. (the owners of Winnats Pass) and the show cave owners on this, having regard to the large number of visitors, including children, attracted to the area. The subject of Suicide Cave problems would be dealt with more fully under the Legal & Insurance Officer's Report.
- 5.2.b **Jug Holes:** There was some concern that, with the additional visitors enabled to take part in through trips in the mine if the awkward traverse were to be bolted, the extra traffic in other areas might have an effect on the stability of these areas of the mine. Noted that the mine was to be included in Dave Carlisle's next mines inspection for PICA. *It was agreed that, subject to assurances from Dave Carlisle as to the stability of the areas which might incur increased usage, DCA would be prepared to place Eco-anchors.*
JP noted that, although PICA had offered to fund the placing of the bolts, DCA would no longer itself be funding the installation of Eco-anchors. Under the new arrangements all such placements were funded by BCA and the hangers and resin were supplied to DCA by BCA free of charge as required. It would be more appropriate if PICA were to ensure that all its members, whether centres or freelance instructors, were members of BCA as this is where the funding was coming from.
- 5.2.c **Carleswark:** Noted PICA's concerns that some areas were becoming slippery through overuse. DW would have a look at the area but this was not felt to be a matter with which DCA could concern itself.
- 5.2.d **Ashford Marble Mine:** DW and John Barnatt had visited the mine recently and had not noticed any "white blobs" on the walls.
- 5.2.e **Devonshire:** Noted that the standards of leadership of groups in Devonshire mine (as reported by Ralph Johnson) were not a matter for DCA unless their activities were likely to affect the access situation.
- 5.2.f **Nickergrove:** BD and Bryan Hartshorn had agreed on the positioning of 6 Eco-anchors to protect the traverse and a further 2 to enable the shaft to be rigged. There was a possibility of further placements to allow for some Level 1 and Level 2 instructed trips. BD would co-operate with DW re. features to be protected and the bolt installation would go ahead as soon as all issues had been dealt with.
- 5.2.g **Oxlow Cavern - "loose block":** Inspections by several cavers had failed to find the block complained of by PICA members. The complainant would need to point out the suspect block if DCA were expected to take action.
- 5.2.h **Garden Path:** WS confirmed that the taping in Dreamtime had been inspected and was OK. He would check whether any further areas required taping before access arrangements could be made.

That the Conservation Officer's report be accepted. Prop. C.Broome, sec. K.Slatcher. *Agreed unanimously.*

5.3 Projects Officer's Report. *(Written report tabled.)*

- 5.3.a **Bolting:** WS noted that bolting will take place shortly in several cave and mine sites previously identified as needing action.
- 5.3.b **Water Icicle Shaft in the Woods:** No action to locate this had taken place as far as he was aware. PM noted that Mr. Wells and Chatsworth Estates must be kept informed before any action was proposed as they might be concerned that the proposal could lead to another cavers' entrance into the series. PM would ensure that they were advised that no access would be required but we simply wanted to locate the entrance to ensure that there was unobstructed airflow through the mine and, if necessary and with their permission, to carry out work to enable this. WS and PM would liaise on this.
- 5.3.c **Lathkill Head Upper Entrance:** WS confirmed that the taping had been checked and was OK. BD reported that, since complaints had been voiced, he had placed "a bit of tat" (i.e. not to be use for hanging your weight on) on the deviation below the pitch head to ensure that those unfamiliar with the entrance could more easily find it.

That the Projects Officer's report be accepted. Prop. P.Mellors, sec. C.Broome. *Agreed unanimously.*

5.4 Access Officer's Report. *(Not able to be present but written report tabled.)*

- 5.4.a **Waterways Swallet:** PM noted that it is a requirement of our access agreement with Okeover Estate that we provide a replacement lid. This must be "bat-friendly", hinged to prevent it being removed altogether and it must be accessible to cavers via a nut and adjustable spanner. DW said that he already had stored a number of sections of the special grid used elsewhere in the Peak which were in a frame - one of these would almost certainly be suitable but he did not know the size of the entrance to be covered. It was suggested that the club currently digging at Waterways, who had made considerable extensions to the cave (Keyhole Caving Club), might be the best people to approach to carry out the installation - they must, in any case, be advised that a bolted lid was required before the work was carried out. JP, who maintained contact with the club, undertook to approach them about this.

That the Access Officer's report be accepted. Prop. B.Potts, sec. K.Slatcher. *Agreed unanimously.*

5.5 Legal & Insurance Officer's Report: *(Written Report tabled.)*

- 5.5.a **Suicide Cave:** There was general agreement that action was needed to prevent vandalism and misuse of the site and, as far as was practicable, to safeguard those instructed parties and other cavers who had a legitimate reason for visiting it. PM had set out in detail his concerns about measures being contemplated and these concerns were felt to be justified - the situation was very sensitive. It was emphasised that DCA was, in general, against the gating of natural caves and did not wish to set a precedent at this site on National Trust land. However, it was felt that Suicide Cave could be considered a special case because of its easy access and its position in a crowded tourist area.

It was agreed that DCA should try to arrange a meeting on site between PM and DW (representing DCA), a representative of PICA and the National Trust (the Landowners) at which a way forward might be agreed. PM and DW would make the necessary approaches.

That the Legal & Insurance Officer's report be accepted. Prop. W.Sheldon, sec. P.Lydon. *Agreed unanimously.*

5.6 Equipment Officer's Report: *(Verbal Report given.)*

- 5.6.a Dave Cowley was not able to attend so BD gave a verbal report on his behalf. Both had recently attended a meeting of the BCA Equipment Committee, the minutes of which were awaited.
- 5.6.b **BCA Anchor Discussion Document, "Assessing competence of installers":** BD's attention had been drawn to a 30-page discussion document placed on the BCA Equipment & Techniques website which suggested, in paragraphs 57-60, that installers should be checked for their competence by CICs, who would be paid to do this - the cost implication being around £750 per year to BCA. CSCC had discussed this at their AGM and had stated its total opposition to a scheme requiring the accreditation of amateur cavers by professionals. BD read out the relevant sections of the Discussion Document and the feeling of members was strongly in support of CSCC's view as expressed in a resolution in their Minutes, which had been copied to DCA.

- i **1.** *That DCA supports the motion re. accreditation of anchor installers passed by CSCC at their AGM on 19th. May 2007, and recorded under item 12 of the Minutes of that meeting.*
Prop. B.Potts, sec. P.Lydon. *Agreed unanimously.*
- ii It was considered that, in addition to supporting CSCC's motion, DCA should express in positive terms what it believed an appropriate procedure to be.
- 2.a.** *That DCA believes that decisions on the placement of Eco-anchors should be taken by consensus of a group of cavers having different areas of relevant expertise and experience; whose competence is recognised by the regional council; and who personally inspect the suggested placement area.*
Prop. D.Webb, sec. C.Broome. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 2.b.** *That DCA considers that it is inappropriate for such varying areas of expertise to be assessed by a C.I.C.*
Prop. D.Webb, sec. B.Potts. *Agreed unanimously.*
- iii The Secretary said that she would ensure that DCA's views and the 3 motions passed were brought to the attention of the BCA Equipment Officer and to other regions' Equipment Officers.
- 5.6.c **Giants Hole "cable & ring" Y-hang:** JP had received a letter from the PICA Chairman stating that, at their last meeting (at which neither JP nor DW had been able to be present as DCA reps.) his members had expressed concern about the "cable & ring" Y-hang installed by DCA at the climb-down into the crabwalk. PICA members had claimed that the karabiner could "flip through the ring" when it was used as a pull-thro'. PICA had asked that, as a solution to overcome this, a maillon be super-glued onto the ring allowing use by both instructors and cavers.
- i Both JP and BD expressed disbelief at this claim from PICA. The meeting adjourned for 10 minutes to enable JP and BD to give a practical demonstration in miniature (using a 5mm maillon, nylon cord and large key-ring) in an attempt to replicate the alleged problem. The demonstration confirmed that, using the standard pull-thro' rig, it was impossible for the maillon to flip through the ring when the "live" cord was under tension. It was also clear that the topology of the system is such that it is impossible for a correctly-rigged, full size pull-thro' to behave in the manner claimed.
- ii Members felt that adding a maillon to the existing rig would be both unnecessary and create confusion, particularly as more "cable & ring" Y-hangs had already been made to install at other appropriate sites in the Peak. It was a priority to investigate first whether there actually existed a problem which required a "solution".
- It was agreed that further trials be conducted after the meeting (i.e. later that same afternoon) using an, as yet uninstalled, "cable & ring" Y-hang with a full-sized rope and karabiner to investigate whether there is, in fact, a possible problem.*
The results of the trails would be reported back as soon as possible.
- See addendum to these Minutes giving the results of the investigation.**
- 5.6.d **Knotlow - Rusted Maillons at the Meccano Passage pitch:** JP had received an email from Ralph Johnson suggesting that the rusty maillons currently on the Eco-anchors on the Meccano Passage pitch be replaced by stainless steel ones and had offered to do this himself. Noted that the pitch was regularly rigged as a pull-thro' by cavers doing through trips involving Knotlow, Hillocks and Wharf Pipe so it might benefit from a "cable & ring" Y-hang at some time in the future. In the meantime, replacing the maillons would be sensible. JP would contact RJ to thank him for his offer and ask him to go ahead.
- 5.7 Training Officer's Report:**
Not present and no report supplied.
- 5.8 Publications Officer:** *(Written Report tabled.)*
- 5.8.a **Derbyshire Caver No. 126:** Available at the meeting to hand out to those present. Noted that the good quality digital printing had been very successful although it had cost about 1/3 more than previously.
- 5.8.b **A3 80gsm paper:** Noted that Mrs. Paulson now had unwanted A3 paper bought by Roy before his death. KS might have a use for it so JP would enquire and liaise with her.
- 5.8.c **Vote of Thanks:** A vote of thanks was accorded to PL for his good work on the latest Newsletter.
- 5.9 Asst. Secretary / Planning Liaison Report:** *(Verbal Report given.)*
- 5.9.a **Derbyshire Co. Council Notification List:** CB said that he had written asking for DCA to be put on Derbys. Co. Council's notification list for planning applications. DCA was not "entitled to be consulted" but could be notified that an application existed. He had already noted that Slintertop Quarry, above Via Gellia, were applying to extend the time they were allowed to work although not to extend the area worked. It was noted by other members that we needed to be on the notification list for Staffordshire Moorlands D. C. and also for the Peak Park - CB would contact them. T.Jackson was already dealing with the High Peak Area.
- That the Asst. Secretary's report be accepted.* Prop. W.Sheldon, sec. K.Slatcher. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 5.9.b **Long Tor Mine:** DW noted that there was a potential problem with road-works above Long Tor Mine. CB would check.
- 6. BCA REPORT:**
- 6.a **BCA Council Meeting, 9 June 2007:** JP gave a brief report. Most matters had been dealt with already in the Secretary/Treasurer's under Membership and Funding. BP noted that he had attended that meeting as a Club Rep. for Orpheus Caving Club and had been pleasantly surprised by the constructive and co-operative approach shown by those attending; he felt the new BCA system was beginning to work well.
- 6.b **Equipment Committee Meeting:** BD reported on the BCA Equipment Committee Meeting he had attended with Dave Cowley. Of particular note was that it had been agreed that proof testing of Eco-anchors would no longer be required other than once about 1 week after installation.
- 7. DATE & VENUE OF NEXT MEETING:**
Already confirmed as **10am, Saturday 20th. October at Monyash Village Hall.**
- 8. CAVES OF THE PEAK DISTRICT & ACCESS AND RIGGING GUIDE:**
- 8.a **Printing:** Printing needs sorting urgently for both publications. BD was dealing with CoPD. Noted that printing the A&RG would need re-thinking as it seemed likely that we would have to supply it in electronic format to a printer, rather than as printed paper masters. JP would investigate further with assistance from PL and others.

8.4 **Access Information:** PL said that the Hitch 'n' Hike website was no longer showing access information. We should therefore drop the reference to this on the DCA website and put up basic information temporarily on the DCA site (pending publication of DCA's A&RG). We should also contact H'n'H and ask them to refer to the DCA website. JP would deal with this with the assistance of TJ and the DCA webmaster.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:
None offered.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 14.15pm.

J.E.Potts, Recorder

Giants Hole "Cable & Ring" Y-hang. (See item 5.6.c above.)

Following extensive testing above ground at the Orpheus C. C. Cottage later that afternoon by BP and BD, it was agreed that no problem with the DCA Cable & Ring Y-Hang could be found. It functioned without fault and exactly as it was designed to do. In case there was "something peculiar" about the particular installation in Giants Hole, BP agreed to carry out further tests on that rig in situ on the Sunday.

BP and a colleague from Orpheus C.C. carried out tests on Sunday in Giants Hole, confirming that the Cable & Ring Rig installed there functioned correctly. A series of photographs were taken showing the Y-hang in use, demonstrating exactly what happened to the rope/karabiner/loop of the single rope pull-back system in use with the large ring. A document, illustrated by the photos, is now on the DCA website for the inspection of anyone concerned. (Note that anyone is welcome to download and circulate the information, provided that the source is acknowledged.)

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

Officers' Reports to the DCA Council Meeting, 23 June 2007:

- 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 Access Officer's Report
- e. Item 5.5 Legal & Insurance Officer's Report
- f. Item 5.8 Publications Officer's Report

ITEM 5.1 - SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

Communications

The Minutes of the Council Meeting on 28th. April have been sent out, together with the Agenda for 23 June. There has been little time to do more since I have been away for a month during May/June.

I am now getting together Information Circular 2007/3, May/June 2007 and may even be able to send it out with the DCA Newsletter: "Derbyshire Caver, No. 126" this weekend.

Membership

I have identified all those Club (4) and Associate (10) Members who have apparently not yet paid their subscription to BCA and have now sent reminders. In this I am grateful for the help given by BCA's Membership Administrator who is making impressive headway with a huge job. I have also identified the remaining 12 DCA Individual Members and sent them a final reminder - a number paid up after an initial reminder a few weeks ago.

I would now like to approach those organisations which have indicated that DCA is their "2nd. region of choice" on BCA membership forms - some of whom have not approached DCA for membership. The extra membership link with DCA will benefit both us and them as they will receive information on the Peak area more quickly than otherwise and they may also be able to supply information to us.

Finances

Current balances are: Bank	Deposit Account	£ 6662.31
	Current Account	£ 410.93
	Total	£ 7073.24
	Cheques not yet presented	£ 44.00
Cash in Hand:	Secretary/Treasurer	£ 9.52

I understand that the Projects Officer still has some cash in hand from the float he was given for ongoing projects. The only major expense since April 28 has been payment for printing N/L 126 at Ashbourne Secretarial & Printing Services, which came to £118.40 - less expensive than we had feared but still a substantial increase on Roy Paulson's rates.

BCA grants to DCA: The BCA Treasurer and Regional Treasurers had a very productive meeting on 10th. June. The procedure now agreed is that the regional treasurers (by their own choice) will cover the expenditure for their region for each year and will then submit their audited accounts to the BCA Treasurer at a meeting to be held each June. BCA will then refund in full expenditure on administration and conservation and access; with a deduction for non-BCA members applied to postage/printing part of administration costs. (DCA has 39 non-BCA individual members out of its total of 104 members overall; hence it receives currently 63% of this aspect of its administration expenditure - all else is paid in full.) Any expenditure incurred on Eco-anchor installation will be funded separately by BCA Equipment Committee who are now supplying all anchors and resin to the regions' approved installers. Training grants will be available from the Training Committee - as they have been in the past. DCA still has a sum due from BCA for last year's expenditure, for which we received some funding in advance; however it seems less complicated if both BCA and the regional treasurers are paid annually "in arrears" from now on. In my view this system is now up and running sensibly and is a vindication of the "One Stop Shop" idea for cavers - we just need to encourage as many organisations and individuals as possible to join BCA.

Publications: DCA will continue fund its own publications, both those issued free to its own members (DCA N/L), and may also produce and sell publications to the general caving public - as we have done for some years now.

Jenny Potts, 22 June 2007, DCA Secretary/Treasurer

ITEM 5.2 - CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT (APRIL - JUNE 2007)**PICA.**

Unfortunately neither Jenny nor myself were able to attend the last meeting. However a number of points were raised that require DCA input and I thought it best to copy the relevant sections of the minutes into my report.

Cave/Mine Conservation & Access Issues

Suicide Cave: PICA members following original agreement with DCA after bolts placed ie. using as training SRT venue and removing litter. Ralph reported problems with litter and human excrement, also public removing small blocks set up by DCA to deter access.

Proposals: put on list for Dave Carlisle to check boulder choke when he does Mines Survey and possibly have DCA install a spanner gate.

Action: PB as PICA chairman to write to DCA and state that PICA keen to reuse as novice trip as soon as rocks are stabilised and outline our support for a spanner gate.

Odin Mine: several blocks of smashed blue john seen at entrance.

Carlswark: MW expressed his concerns at Miners' entrance, shiny steps becoming hazardous and roots almost sawn through by ropes, takes ages for primary groups to access.

Proposals: PICA members look for possible solutions when next at venue and bring to next meeting, ask Dave Webb for his opinion when he next visits.

DF regularly uses ladder for adult groups, making quick and easy access.

Ashford Black Marble: EA reported daubs of white paint 4cm wide, bring to Dave Webb's attention.

Health & Safety Issues

Recommendations on mine surveys: arrange with Dave Carlisle to visit Merlins, Knotlow, Mouldridge and Jug Holes (in addition to Suicide cave - see above and Hells Well Devonshire - see below!) in autumn 2007. PB to contact Dave.

Urgent bolts needed in Jug Holes. Action: Phil to contact DCA and remind them that bolted hanging line was agreed. (*Note: This is still under consideration- see below.*) PICA to offer funds to assist process.

Devonshire Cavern, above Hell's Well. RJ emailed concerns about scout group in "unsafe" section, he offered them contact details for PICA but neither PB or SP heard from them. PB referred to article on Scout Assoc. caving in recent issue of "Descent" magazine.

Action agreed: Hell's Well Area to be inspected by DC in autumn 2007.

Nickergrove bolting: PB has emailed Jenny Potts at DCA and agreed bolting asap. PICA team installing radon monitors to suggest bolt placements.

Pull through in Giants at end of Crabwalk: PB and others expressed concerns about the use as pull thro' anchor when group instructing as differentiated from normal caving use. The DCA ring placement, although much better than before, could allow a krab to flip through it when used as a pull thro' on a single rope and a solution would be to super glue a 10mm maillon on to the ring allowing use by both instructors and cavers. Action: PB to write to DCA stating how PICA would like to reduce the size of the ring and discuss the use for cavers and instructors.

Hillocks. Wall still to be extended.

Oxlow Caverns: The loose slab in the entrance shaft has not yet been located.

Jugholes. Bolting of the "bad step" still to be re-assessed.

SUICIDE CAVE

Further to the above PICA notes I have discussed the issues with Pete and Iain and concluded that the best course of action was to suggest to the NT (cave owners) that we met up to discuss the best way forward. I have already put this in motion. It is hoped that a PICA representative will be able to attend.

GARDEN PATH

Pete and I have met and we expect to complete a full access and conservation document very soon.

UCF MEETING May 3rd 2007

Meetings are now well- attended and I am pleased to say appear to becoming well-established, fulfilling the intended role of bringing individuals and groups together to discuss and action matters of concern in our underground environment. Minutes are available for viewing on request.

Dave Webb, June 2007, DCA Conservation Officer

ITEM 5.3 - PROJECTS OFFICER'S REPORT

Natural England: We still haven't heard about any budget for this financial year from Natural England. We do have a cave conservation and monitoring meeting in the next few weeks so hopefully we should get to know then, if we have any budget or not.

J.H. Crewe Caving & Potholing Club have placed a peg and in-situ rope at the top of JH entrance shaft so this can be tied back when open.

Lathkill Head Top Entrance: The survey for the Entrance was undertaken after the last meeting.

P.8. Route Markers: I still need to replace the markers on route to P8, a job which will hopefully be undertaken before the winter.

Rowter Hole Shaft Top Rebuilding: Rowter Hole now needs to be planned so we can get on with the project in the Autumn so I will start by pulling the team members together in order to do this and start the planning stage.

Water Icicle Shaft in the Woods: Nothing has been undertaken on the Water Icicle Shaft in the woods, I thought it was in hand but it isn't so I will arrange to get this shaft radio located in the near future, as nobody seems to know where it is.

Wayne Sheldon, June 2007, DCA Projects Officer

ITEM 5.4 - ACCESS OFFICER'S REPORT

Quiet!

Garden Path: Pete Mellors and Dave Webb have been kindly working on a simplified access procedure for the Garden Path, We have two parties interested in doing work at this site; one is Phd research and Ralph Johnson will be filming down there as part of a new film on the Monyash watershed. Both are very valid projects and I believe, deserve our full support.

Ashford Black Marble mine has seen some extra traffic; the BCRA carried out a surveying course there and I have issued permits to several clubs. The replacement taping has been carried out, thanks to all concerned. DCA came in for some stick over this after a photo appeared in Descent. Comments ignorant of the real situation were posted on the UK Caving forum which I believe I corrected on a forthright manner.

Waterways Swallet still awaits its new lid but there is time to do this before the summer runs out.

Many thanks to Bob and others for doing the Lathkill Upper Entrance Inspection for me.

I finally had surgery on the 18th June so hopefully by the end of July I should be able to shoulder the bulk of my responsibilities again; in the meantime, to all those Officers and Derbyshire Cavers who filled the breach - cheers.

Iain Barker, 19 June 2007, DCA Access Officer,

ITEM 5.5 - LEGAL & INSURANCE OFFICER

Lathkill Upper Entrance

My thanks to Bob Dearman and Wayne Sheldon for checking this site for the state of things below ground whilst I checked the logbook and lid and oiled the securing mechanism. This combined effort enabled a full report to be compiled which I subsequently mailed to Chatsworth.

Garden Path Entrance

Work is continuing on streamlining the access procedure, in an effort to encourage more use of the site. The work is being shared between Iain Barker, Dave Webb and myself. Visiting for scientific purposes has always allowed for one-off trips as well as extended projects and cavers with an interest in the site may not have fully appreciated this.

Suicide Cave

I see the following legal and other implications for DCA in making the cave "safe":

- Any measures involving rock movement or stabilisation taken without the authority of the owner (in this case the National Trust, I presume) could make DCA liable in the event of an injury or fatality occurring in the "modified" area
- Measures taken with the owner's authority could still incur liability for DCA as well as the Trust, but a court would be likely to take account of their scale, purpose and effectiveness
- A notice outside and/or inside the cave warning of the dangers would be deemed to represent a sensible and reasonable measure, especially if in tandem with a scheme to stabilise part of the cave
- A barrier at the entrance or inside would be deemed to represent a reasonable step on the owner's part to warn of dangers beyond, but would not be legally necessary unless stabilisation was on a scale to bring it under mining legislation. A barrier erected at the entrance of a natural cave could, of course, signal to the National Trust that all natural caves in their ownership incur liability and need gating, and this is not currently the case in law.

Peter Mellors, June 2007, DCA Legal & Insurance Officer

ITEM 5.8 - PUBLICATIONS OFFICER'S REPORT

After a delay since the last Issue due to a last minute flurry of material and also needing to arrange printing, the latest Newsletter has just been published.

It would be nice if there could be more submissions directly related to the DCA and the various work done in the recent past such as bolt testing, etc.

Paul Lydon, June 2007, Publications Officer / Editor