



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Information Circular 2009/1, November 08/January 2009

NEXT DCA MEETING

DCA, AGM 2009 - 10am. Saturday, 21st. February 2009, Monyash Village Hall

The hall will be open from about 9.30am with tea, coffee & biscuits available. The Old Smithy Café next to the Pub does an excellent breakfast from about 9am. (All meetings start at 10am. at Monyash Village Hall.)

The AGM will be followed immediately by a brief Open Council Meeting.

ELECTION OF DCA OFFICERS AT THE AGM TO SERVE FOR 2009/10

As agreed at the Council Meeting of 1 November 2008, elections will be for the following posts: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Conservation Officer, Assistant Conservation Officer, Access Officer, Projects Officer, Legal & Insurance Officer, Equipment Officer, Training Officer, Publications Officer/ Newsletter Editor, Cave Registry Secretary, Assistant Secretary.

Nominations may be sent to the Secretary in advance or may be made at the meeting. If the nominee will not be present at the AGM, the proposer and seconder should ensure that the Secretary has the nominee's consent in writing before the meeting.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2009

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS: Subscription for 2009 is £10.00, reduced to £7.00 for those who are Direct Individual Members of BCA. Cheques, payable to DCA, should be sent to the Hon. Secretary/Treasurer at the address below. Those who pay by Standing Order will have their bank account debited on 1st. February.

CLUB AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: Club and Associate Members pay nothing to DCA itself but are required to be current members of BCA. Full details of BCA Membership are on the BCA website at www.british-caving.org.uk.

EQUIPMENT OFFICER

Many thanks to Jules Barrett who agreed to be co-opted as DCA Equipment Officer from 1st. November 2008 as Dave Cowley had to stand down owing to family and work pressures. You can contact Jules on Mob. 07730-981857, or by email at equipment@thedca.org.uk.

OXLOW SPITS REPLACED BY ECO-ANCHORS

The three spits at on the watershed between the 4th (ramp) pitch and East Chamber itself have now been replaced by Eco-anchors. The rig into East Chamber is one back-up and traverse followed by two for a Y-hang. These were placed by Jules Barrett and then, 24 hours later, tested with our rig and passed.

KNOTLOW 210' ENGINE SHAFT RE-BELAY

DCA received a report re. possible loose anchors at the re-belay at the end of Chain Passage: that the resin bolt rotates more than it should and that the hanger rotates on the non-resin bolt. This is being checked and any loose anchors will be replaced.

JUG HOLES TRAVERSE

Eco anchors have been placed, at the request of PICA, to enable instructed parties to be safeguarded.

CONSERVATION & ACCESS

If you have any queries or problems about Conservation or Access in the region, please contact the Conservation Officer, Dave Webb, 0115-840-1109, or Asst. Conservation Officer, Wayne Sheldon, 01226-710368, both at conservation-off@theDCA.org.uk; or the Access Officer, Iain Barker, 0114-264-7561, 07710-689704, access-off@theDCA.org.uk.

ACCESS & DIGS IN SSSIs

The situation regarding digs in SSSIs was widely publicised several years ago in a leaflet produced jointly by DCA and English Nature titled "Do You Dig Caves", which concerns digging on land which is designated an SSSI and which the landowner has a statutory duty to protect. If you wish to dig for new cave or modify an existing cave entrance within the boundaries of an SSSI, you must ask Natural England first - who will then contact the landowner and obtain consent for the work on your behalf (assuming the dig will not cause damage to any special features). The procedure is usually very quick and painless and *is not new or complicated* and many digs in our region have gone through it, including the Titan dig. To our knowledge none have been refused.

The consequences for access to caves/mines on land owned by a landowner who was discovered to have allowed a dig in an SSSI which had not been consented to by Natural England could be disastrous for us all. The law applies also to work underground if it is likely to destroy features for which the cave has been listed, and these cave specific features, plus boundary maps for all SSSIs, are reproduced on the Cave Conservation Monitoring site at www.peakcavemonitoring.org.uk.

For help or advice on digs and/or work in SSSIs please contact Dave Webb or Wayne Sheldon. DCA would be grateful if clubs in our region could make their membership aware of the correct procedures.

GIANTS HOLE

The money box is still suffering from theft and vandalism (it has recently been smashed altogether). DCA will be contacting the owner to see if we can devise a more reliable and hassle-free system of payment. Trespass fee is £3.00 per head and note that cheques, payable to "Peakhill Farm", are safer than cash - if you pay by cheque it foils the thieves! Please keep the DCA Access Officer, Iain Barker, informed of problems.

YOUTS LEVEL POLLUTION

Very serious pollution has again appeared in Youts Level. It is being investigated urgently but you are advised to stay away for the time being - we'll keep you informed.

"BAD AIR" IN CAVES AND MINES

DCA quite often receives reports of "bad air", i.e. Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) in caves or mines in the region. This is most likely to occur in downward-sloping dead-end passages where there is no air flow, or in the lower parts of a system where the air is relatively static, because CO₂ is heavier than air and tends to "settle out". It can also be the result of rotting organic matter, such as old woodwork in mines or organic matter dumped into shafts. In some cases, where there have been regular or continuing reports, DCA has placed a notice at the entrance to the system advising of the possible presence of CO₂.

Normally there are relatively obvious warnings of its presence: breathing becomes laboured and you puff and pant; you get a headache; moving and climbing requires extra effort; if you try to light a match or cigarette lighter they either will not light at all or will not stay lit. This is a clear reminder that you need to get out of the affected area and into fresh air as quickly as possible, where you should normally recover. If you remain for a lengthy period in an atmosphere of high CO₂ you will eventually become unconscious and may die.

There have been a few occasions where someone has abseiled down a newly discovered mineshaft into a high concentration of CO₂ and immediately become unconscious and, in one case, died. If you are intending to investigate a mineshaft which has not been descended in recent times, be very wary and take precautions: if possible test the shaft beforehand by dropping flaming paper; abseil slowly and check at intervals with a lighter or matches; have a back-up team ready to haul you out swiftly in case of emergency.

Water Icicle: There have been occasional unexplained incidents of apparent excess CO₂ in Water Icicle so a Log Book is being installed for people to record comments. If the Log Book itself indicates what information is wanted, i.e. weather conditions, etc. as well as whether CO₂ is believed to be present, we should accumulate information fairly quickly.

Nettle Pot: We have recently received a report of quite bad CO₂ problems in Nettle Pot in the Dratsab area below Beza and Crumble Shafts. If you do visit this area of Nettle, be wary and be ready to turn back if you find yourself being affected.

Knotlow: After years of problems the main parts of Knotlow now seem to have cleared. However, there are still occasional reports of high CO₂ levels in Meccano Passage so be wary. There is a Log Book still in place so please continue to use it, even if it is to record that no problems were encountered.

CARBON MONOXIDE

Please note that CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) is NOT normally present in caves or mines but has been recorded recently in Long Rake, Bradwell Moor where it may be due to the proximity of the quarry and associated exhaust gases from machinery or explosives. This must be taken extremely seriously as it is potentially lethal! Carbon Monoxide gives no warning of its presence and, even if you are able get out of the affected area fast, you will continue to deteriorate and will require hospital treatment if you are to survive.

For this reason you are advised that the following should be regarded as closed to all access for the foreseeable future: Long Rake, Bird Mine, New Venture Mine.

FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER / NOTICEBOARD

www.theDCA.org.uk dca@theDCA.org.uk

25 January 2009

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