



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Information Circular 2013/3, May to July 2013

NEXT DCA MEETING

Open Council Meeting, Saturday, 2nd. November 2013, 10am, Monyash Village Hall.

Other meetings: AGM 2014, Sat. 22nd. Feb. 2014, 10am, Monyash Village Hall (followed by Open Council meeting).

TWO NEW DCA OFFICERS FOR 2013-2014

Many thanks to two people who have volunteered for vacant posts as DCA Officers - both have been co-opted to serve for the rest of the year:

Conservation Officer: Mel Milner - conservation-off@theDCA.org.uk

Access Officer: Ewan Cameron - access-off@theDCA.org.uk

Note that Karen Slatcher will continue as Assistant Access Officer, using the same email address as Ewan, and dealing specifically with requests for access to Ashford Marble Mine and Lathkill Head Garden Path.

CONSERVATION & ACCESS

If you have any queries or problems about Conservation or Access in the region, please email conservation-off@theDCA.org.uk, access-off@theDCA.org.uk or alternatively, contact the DCA Chairman on chairman@theDCA.org.uk or tel. 01298-85594.

Eldon Hill Quarry Access

From the start of July 2013 access is restored to what it was - with a number of caveats:-

The Quarry is part of the Castleton SSSI and all digging needs to be logged. To this end DCA has installed a box over the wall next to the entrance gate. The box (a modified ornate letter box actually, clamped to a bar with the key on a chain tucked out of sight in one end of the bar), contains a logbook, pens, and a survey of the quarry, marking and naming all the known caves and dig sites. Cavers are asked to record their visits and name the site visited.

New sites should be given a name and added to the survey.

At the farmer's insistence all vehicles must be parked on the lane and under no circumstances driven into the quarry or quarry area. His gate must be kept fastened and entry left clear at all times. Visitors need to understand they enter and explore the quarry entirely at their own risk but should carry proof of valid Public Liability insurance cover.

Dogs should be left at home.

Please note that access is probationary for the time being and dependent on how closely we all stick to the rules.

DCA is expected to ensure that all three parties - Chatsworth, the tenant farmer, and Natural England - are not inconvenienced or compromised by allowing cavers back into the Quarry. Both Chatsworth and Natural England need to know that due regard is being paid to the scientific interest of the site, hence the logbook.

If you have any queries, please contact Pete Mellors, DCA Legal & Insurance Officer, on

legal.insurance@theDCA.org.uk

Wharf Pipe Climbing Shaft lid

The lid on Wharf Pipe shaft is in need of repair as the weld has broken so it cannot be fastened down properly using a spanner. Orpheus C.C. has the welding job in hand and hope to be able restore the lid to working order shortly.

Devonshire Mine

There are continuing problems with the entrance at Devonshire mine: the gate does not shut properly, the gate frame is twisted and not seated properly and there are loose rocks immediately inside, below the entrance. There are no quick fixes for this and it will be a fairly major job to ensure that the entrance is stabilised and made hassle-free and that the gate can be restored to shutting properly and can be bolted shut. The work will be in hand, under expert direction, as soon as possible and we have volunteers who have offered to help. Just be patient a little longer please.

Jug Holes Adit

The bolt on the Jug Holes adit gate is not working properly - this entrance should be left bolted spanner-tight (a requirement of the landowner) but this is impossible at present. Work is in hand to sort this so be prepared and take a spanner with you when you visit Jugholes.

Lathkilldale Levels

A number of the gated levels in Lathkilldale have received attention recently from various DCA members so that gates close to public footpaths have now been made secure and all can be opened with the usual "Derbyshire Key" (a.k.a. a large adjustable spanner). Thanks to Dan & Bob and Boyd & Pete for dealing respectively with Aqueduct Level and Beresford Level; other sites are due to be dealt with shortly.

Waterfall Swallet

The land has now been sold and it is likely that access to the Swallet will continue. Until any new arrangements are in place, for the time being, stick to the advice given in DCA Circular 2012/4 and don't forget to email Mark Noble at eyam_explorers@talk21.com so he can advise the owners that cavers will be on their land.

Manifold Valley Work

Thanks to Mel Milner and her colleagues from Darfar P.C. who have recently made safe the following entrances close to the footpaths in the Manifold Valley: Redhurst Swallet, T-Pot, Wednesday Pot, Magic Mushroom, Ladyside Wood Resurgence, Darfar Pot plus also sorting out the stile and lid at Waterways Swallet. (All entrances require a Derbyshire Key to open them - please close the lids spanner-tight when you leave.) Further work is planned on other entrances at risk from the public's "interest", which sometimes amounts to vandalism.

Suicide Cave Boulders are still moving

There continue to be warnings about unstable boulders in Suicide Cave at various sites, some of them old problems, some new. Most problems are posted on UKcaving shortly after they happen so it may be worth keeping a watch on this.

Horizon on Fracking

Below is the link for the BBC Horizon Program which members of the TSG helped to make possible. An interesting program in general, caving bits are shown in the intro and from around 10min 30secs in.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b02zldds/Horizon_20122013_Fracking_The_New_Energy_Rush/

Thanks again to Martyn Grayson, Alan Brentnall, Ann Soulsby, Colum Walsh, Simon Mee and Geoff Wood (Orpheus). The link will be available for the next few weeks, so enjoy.

TSG have asked Horizon to burn a copy onto disc so they can keep a copy for the library.

EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY

If you have any queries or problems about Equipment or Safety in the region, please contact the DCA

Equipment Officer: Bob Dearman Tel. 01298-85594, Mob. 07855-920087, Em. equipment@theDCA.org.uk or

DCA Projects Officer: Dan Hibberts projects@theDCA.org.uk, Mob. 07846-526463.

Removal of gear from pre-rigged pitches

DCA has discussed at its recent Council Meeting the matter of removal of gear from pre-rigged pitches and what to do if the gear was felt to be unsafe.

It was agreed that to remove the gear without informing the owners or attempting to return it to them was, effectively, theft. It was also suggested that it was preferable to supply your own gear for pitches and avoid using in-situ rigging which others have placed. The consensus arrived at was the following advice:

- i. **If it is necessary to leave a pitch rigged because of ongoing work, try to ensure that local cavers know about this via regional council website, UKcaving or note left on gear at pitch head. If possible leave the gear so that it does not obstruct cavers wanting to rig their own gear.**
- ii. **If you come across unsafe gear, leave it in place or, if no-one is below and you can do so, pull it up and leave it at the head of the pitch so that unsafe sections of rope can be seen. Contact the owners if possible and advise that their gear appears to be unsafe. Advise DCA and other local cavers of the situation.**

Note that, as a policy, DCA does not rig handlines or fixed ropes to the P-bolts it installs - it is your responsibility to check before using anything found pre-rigged with rope. (The exception is the fixed line on traverse before the head of JH Bitch Pitch, which is part of a BCA trial and is being monitored by BCA - but still check this before use.)

Dan Needs Your Help

There is a tremendous amount of work being done to maintain access for cavers in the Peak District and Dan Hibberts, the Projects Officer, is under great pressure. If anyone is able to offer practical help and has some expertise and/or suitable kit to help with installing lids on shafts or making safe gates on levels, Dan would like to hear from you.

CLIFFHANGER 2013

DCA would like to offer its thanks to all the Cavers and friends who helped to set up, run or dismantle the DCA stand at the Sheffield Cliffhanger. We were kept busy with Ladder climb, BCA and DCA caves and an information tent over the whole weekend. Hundreds of kids participated but also quite a few adults expressed an interest in caving in the future. Altogether we had 36 volunteers from a variety of local clubs giving up half-days, whole days or even the whole weekend. Without all the help the event would not happen.

Boyd Potts.

ITC OUTDOOR FIRST AID COURSE

There is a course with A2E running on 15-16 October in Hope for those who are interested. Cost is normally £120 but reduced to £110 if you book via Andy Tickle: email andy@cprepeakandyorks.org.uk. For further information checkout the website www.a2efirstaidtraining.co.uk or email cara.firstaid@yahoo.co.uk

FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER / NOTICEBOARD

www.theDCA.org.uk

15th. July 2013

*Hon. Secretary: Jenny Potts,
3 Greenway, Hulland Ward, Ashbourne, DE6 3FE
Tel. 01335-370629
Email. secretary@theDCA.org.uk*