



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Information Circular 2015/3, May-August 2015

NEXT DCA MEETINGS

**Next meeting: Open Council Meeting Saturday, 24 October 2015
10am at Monyash Village Hall.**

Other Meetings: Saturday, 27 February 2016 - AGM 2016 + Open Council Meeting

MELISSA MILNER

We were shocked and saddened to hear that Mel Milner, DCA's Conservation Officer, had died suddenly of a heart attack in late July. Our condolences go to her family and friends at such a sad time.

Mel had been part of the Derbyshire caving scene for many years and was DCA Secretary for the 6 years 1983 to 1988. She was fanatical about cave conservation and took over as DCA's Conservation Officer in June 2013, a post in which she will be much missed. Prior to that, for many years she had been closely involved in cave conservation for DCA, assisting David Webb when he was DCA Conservation Officer, and she had set up the DCA SSSI Monitoring website for us. She was also the driving force behind the Darfar Potholing Club, which concentrated its efforts in the Manifold Valley, and influenced its members in taking on cave conservation work throughout that area.

In addition Mel was DCA's Webmaster and completely revamped our website a few years ago as well as keeping it up to date with minutes, news and access information. As many of you will know, she was also a regular correspondent on UKcaving and, through this, was well known to many cavers around the country who have a particular interest in cave conservation. Many tributes have been posted on the forum by cavers who had never even met her in person.

The funeral will be on Thursday 20th August at 12.00 in the main (Canarvon) chapel of the Bretby Crematorium.

Donations in memory of Mel to the British heart foundation, c/o

Co-op Funeral service, 8 Borough Road, Burton on Trent, Staffs. DE14 2DF

CONSERVATION & ACCESS

If you have any queries or problems about Conservation or Access in the region, please for the time being email Jenny Potts on secretary@theDCA.org.uk, tel. 01335-370629 or Ewan Cameron on access-off@theDCA.org.uk, tel. 07966-184308.

Eldon Quarry Access

Persons unknown stole the lock and chain from the gate into Eldon Quarry some time in May. The farmer is aware and, for the time being, the gate is secured by baler twine and he has no problem with cavers entering quarry under the usual conditions: i.e. no cars to be taken into the quarry and fill in the Log Book in the box each time. The farmer has warned that any vehicles seen in the quarry will be reported to the police so, if you come across anything untoward, please let Pete Mellors know by emailing legal.insurance@theDCA.org.uk.

Waterfall Hole

The work there is now complete, special thanks to Pete Mellors and Pete Knight for spreading the hardcore on the parking spot. There is now space to park several vehicles safely off the road. Just one point of clarification: the National Trust own the Hole and cavers are NOT required to seek permission before making visits unless they plan to open a major dig there (the site is a SSSI!). NT would prefer that the existence of the parking spot is not widely advertised outside caving circles.

Eldon Hole

The dig in Eldon Hole is going well with plenty of willing hands on the job and technology being brought to the problem of the construction of a timber and scaffold shaft. This aims to stabilize the route through from the foot of the Main Shaft into the Main Chamber and also hopes to reach the deep shaft believed to exist which continues from the base of the Main Chamber, eventually reaching running water at some unspecified depth.

A full report on the project and the progress to date was put before the DCA Council Meeting on 20th. June and we approved the application for funding the project up to the £1000 applied for. The funding will be paid in stages on completion of the work and presentation of receipts.

Axe Hole

The fallen boulder, which blocked the entrance to Axe Hole, was "persuaded into fragments" and then removed by the efforts of a number of cavers. At the request of the farmer the hole has now been capped by an unlocked grid which will prevent his cattle falling into the hole. There is no intention to lock this grid or install a bolt to secure access.

Titan Shaft

Work is still ongoing to stabilise the shaft and restore access. We'll try to keep you informed on progress.

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 equipment@theDCA.org.uk or T. 01298-85594, or DCA Projects Officer: Pete Knight, projects@theDCA.org.uk or M. 07812 038233.

SRT route in the Rowter Pot extensions

The DCA Council Meeting of 20th. June has approved in principle the placement of PB bolts in the new extensions to Rowter Pot to provide a safe SRT route. This will take some time to organise but work should start later this year.

Peak Cavern, Assault Course

The DCA Council Meeting of 20th. June has approved in principle the placement of PB bolts on the Assault Course in Peak Cavern. This will take some time to organise but work should start later this year.

Whalf Climbing Shaft - Pete Knight reports:

Some of you may be aware that there has been an area of unstable and potentially dangerous deads/ginging in the Whalf Climbing Shaft.

A quiet but relentless team of cavers have over the last few weeks made this area safer again by underpinning and rebuilding the pack and applying a bit of cement. Great thanks go to Alan Brentnall, Ann Soulsby and Roy Rodgers (with a supporting cast in the background no doubt) and a personal thank you from me for removing one of the jobs on the VERY long DCA projects list.

As with all old mines, please be aware of the packwalls and ginging around you and take precautions to keep people out of the firing line below! Safe caving everyone and please get in touch with the DCA should you spot something that needs our attention or wish to be added to our list of willing volunteers for jobs like this as and when they come up.

BUTTERED BADGERS RECEIVE A DCA CAVE DISCOVERY FUND GRANT

Buttered Badgers have been awarded a DCA Cave Discovery Fund Grant for their work in opening up the major new extensions in Rowter Pot. This has extended the depth of the pot from -79m to -182m and, via the Icecream Trail, added the huge new chambers: The Crystal Orechasm, Hourglass Aven and The Throne Room. A detailed account of the discovery appeared in Descent no. 239 and a shorter version in The Derbyshire Caver, no. 136.

CLIFFHANGER 2015, SHEFFIELD 10-12 JULY

Many thanks to all the cavers from various DCA clubs who assisted during the event at Millhouses Park, Sheffield. Volunteers helped to collect the DCA "cave" from its store and set it up on Friday afternoon, returned it there on Sunday evening and helped to run the attraction for literally hundreds of children (and a few older adventurers) all day Saturday and Sunday. The Ladder Climbing ran very successfully on both Saturday and Sunday, after being set up and run by Colum Walsh and his helpers on Saturday and then run by Nigel Atkins and his helpers on Sunday. Pleasing to report that around 20+ older people enquired at the DCA stand tent for information on how to go caving and were given advice on joining local caving clubs. More news and photos in the next DCA newsletter, The Derbyshire Caver.

WINNATS PASS CLOSURE 18 - 28 AUG 2015

From http://splitapps.derbyshire.gov.uk/road_closures/ :

Close Winnats Pass, Castleton from its junction with Arthurs Way To Its Junction With Rushup Edge (windy Knoll). To Facilitate Renewal Of Cattle Grids. Diversion: Arthurs Way - A6187 - B6049 - A623 - Rushup Edge - Windy Knoll & Vice Versa.

Thanks to Paul Lydon for spotting this and bringing it to everyone's attention via UKcaving.

So access will be possible from the Buxton side via Sparrowpit to Giants, Oxlow, Nettle, Maskhill, Rowter, P8, Gautries, etc.

To get to Castleton and Peak Cavern from the Buxton side by the main road you will have to go via the "Wanted" at Sparrowpit, Peak Forest, Lane End crossroads at Tideswell, Bradwell and Hope (or you can try one of the various minor road cross-country routes).

And, of course, vice versa if you want to reach the Giants/Oxlow/P8 area from the Sheffield side.

FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER / NOTICEBOARD

<http://www.theDCA.org.uk>

14 August 2015

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