



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Information Circular 2016/1, Jan./Feb. 2016

NEXT DCA MEETINGS

Next meeting: AGM 2016 ON SATURDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2016

10am at Monyash Village Hall.

Followed by Open Council Meeting

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, T. 01335-370629

DCA Needs to elect a new Access Officer at the coming AGM

Ewan Cameron, DCA's Access Officer, is having to step down owing to pressure of work so DCA urgently needs to find a new Access Officer at the coming AGM. If you are interested, in the first instance please contact the DCA Secretary for an outline "job description". Thanks to Ewan for taking on this role for the past year.

Many thanks to Christine Wilson, who has volunteered to take on the role of Conservation Officer.

Access to Holme Bank Mine is in doubt

DCA has been warned that someone unknown has recently placed an extra padlock on the entrance to Holme Bank Mine, Bakewell in an attempt to prevent people accessing it using Mr. Oldfield's key.

Mr. Oldfield has been happy to allow access to the mine, asking only for a donation to a charity by people who use the key he continues to provide, so we have to assume he knows nothing of this new attempt to exclude cavers by placing an additional lock on the gate.

The mine is popular with instructed groups and also with cave divers, who use it as a training site, so DCA is now tackling this as a matter of urgency. It is thought that the problem may be related to a dispute over ownership of the mine so, for the time being, it is probably best if groups avoid the site rather than risk stirring up further antagonism. We will try to keep cavers informed while negotiations take place.

Garden Path Access Improvements

As a way of ensuring closer adherence to the spirit of the owner's license, access has now been streamlined. Interested parties are invited to email legal.insurance@theDCA.org.uk for a permit, giving brief details of party, proposed date of visit, insurance cover (BCA No.), etc. The applicant should also give a contact address and phone no. You will be emailed a permit to be printed out (plus a topo of the new rigging setup in the shaft now the platforms have been removed), - the permit can then be exchanged for a key from Bob Dearman at Chelmorton. This revised procedure will run for a trial year.

Please Note: it continues to be the case that a permit cannot be issued for trips which are for purely recreational purposes or for novice training. Take a camera with you, or a gas sampling device, or something.

Speedwell Pollution incident

We received a report on 25th. January of a very strong smell of diesel in the Speedwell streamway at the boulder piles - far more powerful than you usually get there. The cavers concerned went as far as Whirlpool Passage but did not enter the crawl due to the strength of the smell and they say that it was just as bad upstream. Checks were made on the surface in the area to try to locate a recent spill but nothing was found and it is suggested that it was most likely to be a historical 'pocket' of diesel, which had been washed through following the wet weather. Further checks during the following week showed no smell of diesel in the main part of Peak Cavern so it is hoped that this was a one-off 'blip' that has not caused any lasting damage.

DCA needs Cave Conservation Volunteers

Are you interested in furthering cave conservation in the Peak District? DCA are looking for volunteers to help out on an ongoing basis as area representatives.

Being an area rep involves acting as first point of contact for conservation issues in that area, particularly for those caves within SSSIs where monitoring is undertaken on Natural England's behalf, and liaising with DCA officers. There's also practical conservation work involved, both doing this yourself and coordinating/encouraging others to undertake work in your area. You would be expected to attend the DCA's Underground Conservation Forum meetings; these happen twice a year on an evening and are an opportunity to discuss matters with representatives of statutory bodies such as Natural England and the Environment Agency.

Currently, area reps are needed for three areas: Castleton, Bradwell, and Hamps & Manifold. Anyone interested in taking on one of these areas should contact the DCA secretary in the first instance.

Eyam Dale House Cave

There is currently building work going on in the vicinity of the cave and a new access arrangement is in the process of being sorted. We'll let you know as soon as possible.

Knotlow Engine Shaft lids

Many thanks to Pete Knight and Adam Russell, who have replaced the hinge bolts on the inner lid on the Knotlow Engine Shaft. Please make sure that, if you use this shaft, you close the inner lid behind you to avoid a sheep joining you on the descent. As always, please make sure that you bolt the main outer lid securely when you have finished your trip - a large adjustable spanner (a.k.a. Derbyshire key) is needed.

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.

Volunteers needed to help with DCA Projects

The DCA are seeking help with some projects over the coming months. If you think you can offer assistance please get in touch with the DCA Projects Officer, Pete Knight, projects@theDCA.org.uk. Ideally we'd like to hear from anyone who could manage the project with our support or from anyone with the specialist skills needed; however, all offers of help are welcome as Pete can get things going himself at some point.

Eldon Hole ground anchors

The ground anchors for the east and west routes are being replaced so at present some anchors still in place are unsafe to use. All unsafe anchors now have notices on them to warn of this and it is hoped to install the new anchors within the next couple of weeks - we'll let you know when the work is completed. Thanks to Pete Knight and his helpers for taking on this task.

The anchors for the north and south routes should be OK to use.

Damaged fixed rope in Damocles Rift, Eldon Hole

On 1st. February DCA received the following report of damage to a fixed rope in Damocles Rift, Eldon Hole:

"...on a trip to Damocles Rift in Eldon Hole last week I found that the upper-most section of the in-situ rope was damaged, with the sheath broken and starting to slip down the (intact-looking) core, a couple of feet below the knot. I tied the break out, and the new knot does not inconvenience the ascent, but the rope probably ought to be replaced."

(Many thanks to Stuart for reporting this.)

Please note that, as a matter of policy, DCA does not replace ropes left in-situ. The persons responsible for installing the rope are the ones who should maintain its safe upkeep and DCA has no idea of who they are.

DCA WEBSITE

Many thanks to Angus Sawyer who has volunteered to act as DCA's webmaster. He has recently renovated the website, making it more user-friendly and easier to navigate. All important access and conservation news is now being posted on there so it's worth checking regularly for changes and updates. (These are also being posted on www.ukcaving.com - again, worth checking regularly for other Peak District news.)

CNCC NEWSLETTER NO. 3

Check out the CNCC website at www.cncc.org.uk and read the latest CNCC Newsletter. There are quite a few changes to access arrangements and it's all good news!

EuroSpeleo16

The website for this major European caving event in Yorkshire in 2016 is <http://www.eurospeleo.eu/en>

From the home page, scroll down and click on the Newsletter logo and on the **EuroSpeleo2016** logo for the latest news on the **EuroSpeleo2016** event happening from 13th to 20th. August in Yorkshire. There is still time just time to register at the reduced rate. The major Dales caves will be pre-rigged as part of the event and the GG winch will be running all week.

FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER / NOTICEBOARD

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

8th. February 2016

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