

DCA
Annual
Report
2020

7.1 Chairman Report –

It has been a very busy year for DCA, undertaking a number of projects / tasks by various officers, these are reflected in the relevant officer reports.

Bob Dearman is standing down as equipment officer, after 7 years in this role. This also includes 25 years as chairman which he stood down from in 2013, that 32 years of service in an official capacity. Bob will be very hard to replace, but he isn't going anywhere so is wealth of knowledge will be available to us at any point. I am glad to report that we have a capable replacement for the equipment officer role, with his own ideas. He has been assisting Bob all year and gradually taking on the tasks.

Pete has been doing a great job in co-ordinating the projects and in many situations, being the lead on the project. This shows the strength in depth that we have in terms of willing volunteers, and Pete's skills in encouraging them to take part in the many projects we do. Wardlow Sough is an example of what we can do and what can be arranged when required. Conservation and access has been on the agenda, even without officers in the position, Phil's additional reports show the amount of work going on in the background. Alan Brentnall agreed to be acting access officer at the last council meeting, he has taken to it like a duck to water, he has got his teeth stuck in at various sites, and I know he intends to continue this year.

Phil has carried on documenting mines / caves in the background, adding to the cave registry. Between Phil, Angus and Myself, we are developing our online presence. As Angus says, the Peak District Caving Site (PDC) needs a redevelopment and the addition of content. Mike eludes to in his report, that the DCA newsletters are being scanned and placed on online.

Mike has put a great load of effort in in going through the constitutions, to put worthwhile changes in place. Thanks also for doing the membership and circulating the correspondence to all member of DCA.

Shirley and Martin Long have been documenting the surveys / maps from the John Beck / Doug Nash collection for DCA. I know we are reaching appoint now where scanning / placing them online will start, this will tie into the redevelopment of the PDC site.

We have a wealth of volunteers who help us on the various on the ground projects that Pete arranges, I do hope this continues which I am sure it will. It volunteers on the backend roles in positions such as secretary and conservation officer where we need the help. I can't do what I want to do while I am currently covering these roles as well.

Thanks to all officers and volunteers who have helped this year in running the association.

Wayne Sheldon
07/02/2020

7.2.1 Secretary Report –

Thanks to Jenny Potts and Alan Brentnall who have acted as minute secretary this year. Myself and Angus are covering the DCA secretary email address, and dealing with items accordingly, while Pete Knight tends to deal with the posts we receive via Facebook. See membership secretary report for outgoing correspondence, thanks to Mike for doing this.

Wayne Sheldon
30/01/2020

7.2.2 – Membership Secretary –

Individual membership of DCA currently stands at 38 members plus 2 honorary members. At the time of writing, 11 individual members who normally pay by cheque or bank transfer are yet to pay their subscription for 2020. Payment of subscriptions by standing order will not be in until February.

Associate members are static at 8 and club members remain at 33. There is 1 prospective member whose application will be considered at the AGM.

I have recently been in touch with BCA regarding cross-checking that our Associate Members are also BCA members, as required by the DCA Constitution, in the same way that I checked Club members prior to the last meeting. There is no online listing of BCA Associate members as there is with BCA Club members, but they are looking into including this information in a forthcoming revamp of their website.

Over the last 3 months I have circulated information to members on various issues, including the Agendas for this meeting and the following Council meeting, information about the BCA 2020 AGM and Party Weekend, the BCA ballot result, problems with fixed ropes in Eldon Hole, and the new access arrangements for Snelslow Swallet.

Since the last DCA Meeting on 16th November 2019 I have scanned 4 issues of The Derbyshire Caver and these have been uploaded to the DCA website by Angus.

Mike Higgins
27/01/2020

7.3. Treasurer Report –

Annual accounts as provided. Income and expenditure remain stable with some distortion of income from the delayed payment of the 2018 BCA grant. Publication costs have continued to decline with the move to online distribution of the "Derbyshire Caver".

Banking

We have yet to close the RBS account. Alan Brentnall and Pete Knight are both now signatories and Jenny Potts is no longer a signatory for the Lloyds account.

I am willing to stand as Treasurer for the new year.

Angus Sawyer
31/01/2020

Derbyshire Caving Association – Annual Accounts

Income and Expenditure for the financial year ending 31st December 2019

Expenditure	2019	2018
General Administration		
Travel	51.30	0.00
Post	0.00	190.84
Phone / Email	0.00	0.00
Materials, printing, copying etc.	168.55	292.70
	219.85	483.54
Conservation and Access		
Travel	538.54	392.39
Post / phone / email / administration	0.00	0.00
Materials	715.88	2329.91
	1,254.42	2,722.30
Cave Conservation Plans / UCF		
Travel	9.00	0.00
Post / phone / email / paperwork	0.00	0.00
Materials	0.00	0.00
	9.00	0.00
Equipment, Anchor installation etc		
Travel	19.80	0.00
Post / phone / email / paperwork	0.00	0.00
Materials	296.18	0.00
	315.98	0.00
Publications		
1. Includes BCA Funding from 2018	232.90	503.23
Conservation Audits	8.36	19.67
Caves of the Peak District	0.00	2.14
Other	0.00	0.00
Website expenses	38.38	0.00
	279.64	525.04
Training, PICA Liaison, Youth Development		
Travel	0.00	0.00
Post / phone / email / administration	0.00	10.00
Training Events, Instruction etc.	750.00	450.00
Youth Development: Cliffhanger etc.	0.00	0.00
	750.00	460.00
SSSI Conservation work for Natural England		
Projects funded in 2018/19	0.00	171.62
Projects funded in 2019/20	1206.87	
	1,206.87	171.62
Cave Conservation Emergency Fund	0.00	0.00
Cave Discovery Grants	0.00	0.00
Donations to other organisations, causes etc.	0.00	0.00
Bank Charges	0.00	0.00
Exceptional Items	0.00	0.00
Total Expenditure	4,035.76	4,362.50

Derbyshire Caving Association – Annual Accounts

Income and Expenditure for the financial year ending 31st December 2019

Income	2019	2018
Subscriptions & Entry Fees (ind. members)	350.00	374.00
Publication Sales		
Newsletter "The Derbyshire Caver"	184.60	201.60
Conservation Audits	55.20	26.40
Caves of the Peak District	653.00	823.60
	892.80	1,051.60
Donations		
(from members)		
to General Fund	23.00	42.05
to Cave Discovery Fund	0.00	0.00
to Cave Conservation Emergency Fund	0.00	0.00
(from non-members)		
to Youth Development Fund	0.00	0.00
	23.00	42.05
BCA Grants		
Core Funding (admin and C & A)	3605.05 1	0.00
Training	750.00	450.00
Youth Development	0.00	0.00
	4,355.05	450.00
Awards and Grants from non-caving bodies		
Natural England SSSI 2018/19	200.00	3896.38
Natural England SSSI 2019/20	2281.90	0.00
1. Includes BCA Funding from 2018	0.00	0.00
	2,481.90	3,896.38
Caver Training Course Fees	60.00	0.00
Other	5.80	0.00
Total Income	8,168.55	5,814.03
Cash flow		
Total cash assets brought forward	23,337.60	21,908.41
Income	8,168.55	5,814.03
Expenditure	(4,260.30)	(4,386.50)
Interest in deposit accounts	0.00	1.66
Total cash assets carried forward	27,245.85	23,337.60

Derbyshire Caving Association – Annual Accounts

Balance Sheet for the financial year ending 31 December 2019

Assets	2019	2018
RBS current account	0.24	310.24
RBS deposit account	0.01	1.01
Lloyds current account	24,963.70	23,444.51
Cash	0.00	30.00
Accounts receivable	2,281.90	0.00
Total assets	27,245.85	23,785.76
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	0.00	(448.16)
Total cash assets less liabilities	27,245.85	23,337.60
Note that the balance carried forward includes:		
Cave Discovery Fund	313.29	313.29
Cave Conservation Emergency Fund	1,002.66	1,002.66
Publications (valued at nominal trade prices)		
Cave Conservation publications	0.00	84.00
Caves of the Peak District	7,189.00	7,662.00
	7,189.00	7,746.00
Total Assets at 31 December	34,434.85	31,083.60

Notes 1. Includes BCA Funding from 2018

7.4. DCA Webmasters Report

DCA website

The DCA web site now has issues 108 to 152 of the Derbyshire Caver available

All but one of the conservation audits. Thanks to Mike Higgins for his continued work scanning old issues. The listings now include content details and publication dates.

Peak District Caving

The site has had little development this year, apart from continued registry updates and entrance photographs. In the coming year it is intended to refresh the site design.

Angus Sawyer

31/01/2020

7.5. Access Officer Report

1. I took over as acting Access Officer in November 2019. This report covers the period since then, up until the AGM. There will have been issues and actions concerning access prior to this date.
2. Perryfoot Cave, Dr Jacksons and P1 Swallet. On 06 November 2019, I visited Tor Top Farm to discuss access to these caves with the new owner, following problems reported on a visit the previous week by Prof. John Gunn. The new owner had seen the DCA Cave Registry entries on-line and was concerned about cavers parking at the Kennels car park, as this would disturb the dogs. When it was pointed out that cavers usually didn't follow this advice, but parked at the Perryfoot car park, he agreed to permit access so long as cavers used the Perryfoot car park, entered his land using the gate on Rushup Lane and gave him advance warning so he could ensure that no free range dogs would be in that field.
3. Waterways Swallet – Okeover Estate. On 17 November 2019, a new gate was installed by Scott Bradley and Pete Knight. Further work on the gate was done on 30 November 2019 when a group of volunteers from Crewe CPC and TSG met at Waterings Wood to do the annual maintenance of the cavers' car park. As well as the usual cutting back of vegetation, the group also installed land drainage and a soak-away, under the direction of Scott Bradley, to address problems with vehicles getting stuck in the car park in wet weather conditions. At the swallet itself, the fencing and stile was inspected; the fence was still intact, and the stile was found to have been repaired – I haven't yet found out who did this work. Still to do is the replacement of the spits on the handline pitch into Toad Haul with BP bolts.
4. Rookery Mine (Ashford Black Marble Mine). On 08 January 2020, I visited Roberts' Store following a report that one of the two keys held at the shop wouldn't unlock the mine (although it was thought that it may work inserted into the other side of the lock) and also to ensure that the owners of the shop had my contact details to keep me informed about the ongoing sale of the shop. It turned out that there was only one key as both keys had been taken by person unknown "some time before Christmas" but only one of the keys had been returned. I tried the key in the lock, and it would work in either direction but, from the outside it was possible to push the key too far, which would prevent the key from operating, and this may have been the issue. I need to look into replacing the missing key, and also having a master copy not kept at the shop.

5. Duchy Reports. While on my visit to Ashford on 08 January, I inspected the mine and access route, and I am preparing a report for the Devonshire Estate. There appears to have been no ABMM report for 2019. Reports for Lathkill Head Cave (Upper and Garden Path entrances) have been written and submitted in previous years by Pete Wagstaff, and Pete has agreed to continue doing this in future.
6. Access General. I'm hoping to build a file of contact details for landowners/tenants for the caves we have in our area. I'm also trying to create a card or small leaflet to leave with landowners/tenants with generic contact details for DCA Access so that they have a point of contact for any cave/caver related issues – I'm also hoping to include DCRO contact details for advice on cave rescue issues, animal rescue etc.
7. Other Access Issues. I am aware of certain ongoing issues (Great Masson Cavern, Gentlewoman's Shaft, Devonshire Cavern, Long Rake Bradwell Moor, Holme Bank, Bottle Pot) but only the background. I need to be aware of the current situation (who is doing what) with these issues, and current expectations. I'm sure that there are also other issues.

Alan Brentnall
15/01/2020

7.6. Conservation Officer Report

This position is vacant. Thanks to Adam Russell who has been keeping the Underground Conservation Forum meeting running smoothly. A detailed report can be found about each meeting in the June and November 2019 Council meetings.

Additional Reports from Phil Wolstenholme, 03/02/2020:

Longcliffe Mine Update

The repairs within Longcliffe Mine have now been completed and the hauling tripod and most of the associated materials have been removed. The hillock is steadily grassing-over, and the surface site is gradually returning to a more 'natural' look. The inspection requested by the National Trust raised no further issues over access and discussions on how that might work are ongoing, albeit slowly. As a compromise arrangement for their original request for me to guide every trip for a year, it was agreed that I would guide representatives from all the major clubs or groups in the area, and then they would be able to guide subsequent club trips subject to the final access arrangement being implemented. I recently delivered a basic Conservation Plan and caver-visits Risk Assessment to the National Trust, along with an indexed photographic record of all the archaeological features underground in order that they (we!) can make regular assessments of 'wear and tear' of the mine.

As the TSG have an ongoing dig at the lowest point of the system it is anticipated that the site will stay rigged for the present time, but a rigging topo for the DCA anchors installed so far has been produced, and will be updated as further anchors are installed on the other routes.

Odin Mine Update

As part of the inspection recommendations, and as per current DCA requirements for double-anchor belays, additional DCA P-anchors are now being installed in Odin, after Scheduled Monument permission was granted by Historic England in December 2019. At the time of writing five anchors have been installed underground (but not yet tested) over the floor-collapse in the Little Shaft Vein top stope which originally halted access. Due to the loose and crumbly condition of the remaining vein material on the cheeks of the stope, no further anchors could be safely installed, leaving a large span between the anchors which may present a rigging hazard, and so a permanent swaged stainless

cable traverse system may have to be the preferred solution for rigging this obstacle. Horizontal Y-hangs are in place at each end of the system for maximum strength. Several easy ledges allow a safe stance whilst crossing the hole, but a discussion needs to be had on whether we make this 'easier' to cross, given the proximity to the entrance. The NT wish to install a warning sign at the entrance discouraging non-cavers to enter, and suitable PPE equipment being a necessity for visiting. It may be worth us installing a further notice at the traverse dissuading cavers from descending the collapse! Two further anchors were installed outside in the gorge below the 'tree pitch' down from the path to enable a pull-through descent of the gorge to be made if necessary, but it was felt that the combination of the higher tree, the large tree root and the single P-anchor provided enough security to rig ropes or ladders down to the entrance from above.

We plan to install a further sequence of anchors and four 'Via Ferrata' steps on the former 'handline climb' to enable a rigger to climb the pitch and then install a SRT rope or ladder for following cavers – this removes the need to leave a fixed rope in place and also makes 'illegitimate' visits much more difficult. As the site cannot be gated and locked there is a limit to what we can do to dissuade idiots but removing fixed ropes from the main up pitch is a start. Obviously, this will make all visits to Odin slower, but it is a site that should be treated with respect.

Further anchors are planned to be installed (for double belays) at the entrance, Chippendale Rift, the handline climb in the Cartgate chamber, and the belays down to the Bell Chamber. The 'final pitch' down from the Bell Chamber will be inspected and a decision made as to whether this is worth keeping on the rigging topo. It may also be worth considering installing anchors in the 'left hand' entrance, which is deeper and narrower, but more straightforward, cleaner and may make a rescue easier. There is a floor-hole to cross just beyond the pitch. Although the NT wish visiting cavers to stick to the popular 'tourist route', it is planned to inspect all the other pitches in Odin to make an updated decision on whether they are suitable for access. It is possible that the long-planned resurvey and exploration of the further reaches could be reinstated one day.

In January myself, Alan Brentnall and Eddie Mason visited the Mam Engine Shaft with the original 'key' and an endoscope to try and investigate the mechanism for locking (and opening) the lid, which was installed by PB Smith sometime in the 1980s. Sadly the lid is heavily rusted but still firmly locked by a steel latch of some sort (though it was possible to raise it an inch), and it is impossible to engage whatever method was originally put in place to un-latch this lid. Given the importance of the site and the need to inspect all entrances (and potentially provide a way in to the further reaches) I would like to propose that a replacement lid with an access hatch be installed (assuming the NT are happy), at some point in the early summer, to allow the large amount of concrete that will be required to be mixed and cast without interference from the public. As the site is a separate scheduling area to the gorge entrance it is likely that this would need another permission granting from Historic England to do the work, but as there is literally nothing of significance to damage, this is anticipated to be a formality.

Wayne Sheldon
03/01/2020

7.7. Project Officer Report -

Since my last report to council, I have been working with Nige Atkins and Adam Russel to cover the roles currently vacant at DCA (Access & Conservation). Between us we have managed to keep everything moving but the Association would greatly benefit from filling these roles, even with a co-opted member, as soon as possible. I continue to administer the new Ashford Black Marble Mine access system and it is being used without problem.

Mandale Mine

No further reported issues with gates being left unsecure. I still need to replace one of the notices that had been ripped off.

Wardlow Sough

All seems to be running smoothly with access, although it is likely to be underwater for a while yet.

Snelslow Swallet

Taking over the arrangements for the clear-up, I managed to sort 2 days with a large team of local cavers to drag all the digging debris out of the cave and move it to a skip in the Giant's car park. I issued a full report on this job on the 15th Nov 2019.

Devonshire Mine

Adam Russell + helpers have begun the work of repairing the pack wall around the original entrance. I have extended the offer of DCA support, but the job seems well in hand at this time. My thanks to Adam for saving me a series of very long drives from New Mills to start sorting this out.

Ashford Black Marble Mine

I have handed the permit system over to Alan B now, but I am happy to act as a second person whenever he is away and unable to respond to requests.

Mouldridge Mine

Nigel Berry and I made a visit to sort the gate frame on the 2nd of December 2019. We drilled the frame and resin fixed several long rods into the bedrock around the gate. Once the resin had set, the gate was much firmer in the adit. Some further work would be nice here to reinstate the stonework around the gate frame, but I would like one of the regular users or some locals to take that on. It is only cosmetic work to hide the steel bars that we have installed, the gate is (hopefully) now secure for the long term.

Action Register Items

32 – Ongoing. I finally have the 1x1m grill from Longcliffe but have yet to take it up to the Stub Scrin shaft.

48 – Ongoing. No new options yet. No contact from Terry at the quarry.

68 – Completed. All my Project Officer files are now in the Google Drive. I have also uploaded all the recent Access Officer files and supplied Alan B with the link to access them.

Please see my additional document regarding the purchase of a set of DCA shaft access equipment.

I will be standing for a further term as Projects Officer, unless another suitable person wishes to take on the role.

Pete Knight
18/01/2020

7.8.1. Equipment Officer –

During the past 12 months I have been involved in a gradual transfer of skills, process and equipment from Bob Dearman with a view to being proposed for the role of Equipment Officer at the upcoming AGM.

Bob has kindly provided me with an excellent suite of records and information relating to bolting within the Peak District and I have been reviewing this recently and looking at how I can support the bolters over the coming year with the provision of bolt installation.

Accordingly, over the next few months I intend to provide a secure area online where I can share with bolters the various forms, processes and reference procedures for bolting in the DCA region.

As part of this I intend to create an E&T asset register so the DCA can be kept up to date with what equipment and bolts we hold in stock and its condition, and I have also been party to brokering an agreement between the TSG and the DCA to store all E&T equipment securely at the TSG in a dedicated storage area. This will hopefully be discussed at the upcoming AGM.

To aid in the response of enquiries raised through the public channels, I plan to create an active issues register, where bolting requests and maintenance issues are recorded online, where we can all review this data and action as required.

I have submitted an information request to bolters held on the database and have had positive responses from the majority. I have been using this information to decide on the way forwards with bolting projects with regards the resources available - I will write back to all who have responded in due course - thanks for your responses so far.

Phil and Pete have recently installed a number of bolts in Odin which has been the first “major” bolting project since taking over. There is still work to be done here including the provision of staples which I have ordered these from Bolt Products to allow this project to progress. Other kit that has been ordered includes the genuine 4 flute Hilti bits for the installers to use.

Asides from Odin, there are a number of projects “in progress” and hopefully with the changes proposed above will it make it easier to see and manage these and respond quickly.

I will be holding a refresher day for the bolters in Spring - we will run through the ITPD, the equipment, and look to understand from the installers how to best progress the bolting scheme.

Hopefully we should see the pace pick up from my end over the coming months and so I look forwards to sharing these developments with you.

Scott Bradley
05/02/2020

7.8.2. Cave Atmosphere Monitoring Annual Report

1. Problems reported. No problems of high CO₂ have been reported during the year.

2. Equipment. As reported previously, the GMI PS500 meter was damaged when it was lent out for a dye-testing exercise, and this mishap has caused me to re-think the circumstances of lending out this expensive equipment. Happily, this monitor is now working once again, although I haven't managed to adjust the alarm settings yet. But I am now able to read the logs using DCRO's infra-red link and software provided by GMI.

3. Other issues. During 2019, I replaced the waterproof notepad in Knotlow Cavern at the foot of the Climbing Shaft, which is used to record air quality by visiting cavers, and I also replaced the ineffective ballpoint pens with diver's pencils, as well as encasing the pad and pencils in a waterproof container within the ammo box. On 14/01/2020 during a de-rigging trip in Knotlow, I checked the notebook, and recorded our visit. There were no other entries at that time.

4. Measurements. Because of the broken meter, it wasn't possible to take measurements for almost half of the year. Fortunately, it has been a good year for air quality in our caves and mines, and no emergency readings needed to be taken. However, had there been any bad reports, we would have been able to borrow the necessary equipment from DCRO. Since the repair of the meter, measurements have been taken at Knotlow Cavern, Water Icicle Close Cavern, Lathkill Head Upper Entrance, Odin Mine, Cumberland-Wapping, Robin's Shaft and Rookery Mine. Now we have a working meter, I'm taking the opportunity to measure the air in some of the places where we haven't any records. Measurements of carbon dioxide during this period were mostly very low, and there were no instances where methane, hydrogen sulphide or carbon monoxide were detected.

Cave/Mine	Date	Surface Oxygen	Oxygen	Carbon Dioxide	Location
Knotlow Cavern	18/06/2019	20.90			Surface Reading
Knotlow Cavern	18/06/2019		19.70		Meccano/210 Junction
Knotlow Cavern	18/06/2019		20.00		Whalf end of Meccano
Water Icicle	23/11/2019	20.90		0.04	Surface Reading
Water Icicle	23/11/2019		20.00	0.08	Foot of Entrance Shaft
Water Icicle	23/11/2019		19.20	2.27	Gate
Lathkill Head Upper	10/12/2019	20.90		0.00	Surface Reading
Lathkill Head Upper	10/12/2019		20.10	1.88	Climb below Waiting Room
Odin	11/12/2019	20.90		0.00	Surface Reading
Odin	11/12/2019		20.30	0.34	Parallel passage right of pitch
Cumberland/Wapping	17/12/2019	20.90		0.00	Surface Reading
Cumberland/Wapping	17/12/2019		20.90	0.04	Throughout
Robin's Shaft	07/01/2020	20.90		0.04	Surface Reading
Robin's Shaft	07/01/2020		20.20	0.80	Foot of shaft
Rookery Mine	08/01/2020	20.90		0.04	Surface Reading
Rookery Mine	08/01/2020		20.90	0.04	Throughout

Alan Brentnall
15/01/2020

7.9. Cave Registry Secretary Report –

The Cave Registry is up-to-date and working fine, with some new sites recently added. Thanks to submissions by some eager cavers, and occasional checks myself I've been able to accurately update several grid refs for various sites, some of which are occasionally some way out from actuality, though dense undergrowth has often hampered GPS readings. This will continue as time (and attention) allows. Some further mine sites from previously inaccessible areas may be added soon depending on condition and access.

Several new entrance photos have also recently been submitted and these are being added to the Peak District Caving website. Further related micro-guides for various sites will be updated as time allows, but I'm only able to update sites I personally know about – if anyone can think of micro-guides that need updating, or of ones that don't exist and they would consider producing one, please let me know.

Phil Wolstenholme
03/02/2020

7.10. Training Officer Report –

Well, I actually made it to 30 years as the DCA's training officer! I remember that DCA AGM very well back in 1990 in Buxton at the railway Pub upstairs when Bob Dearman became the DCA chair and I was duly elected as the TO. I have had some brilliant years in this role, and I am proud that Derbyshire cavers and instructors have worked well alongside each other for all of that time. We have been the flagship regional caving council for training in those 30 years and have never missed any of those long and tiring BCA (NCA as it was) training committee meetings. I have been proud to be under the guidance of many NCA/BCA training officers and now I fill those shoes of those that have given so much to our loved sport.

It falls in the duties of the DCA TO respond to demand of the clubs and individual cavers to help set up training in many aspects of caving. My main focus is to encourage and support clubs to run their own training to a high standard, as you know, I am a big believer that training should be provided by caving clubs for their members. This is achieved by either running a workshop directly for the club, setting up a workshop with a specialist trainer or training up their own training coaches. Continuity in techniques is important so that cavers don't get confused with differing opinions about things. This is where the workshops are so valuable to be able to help keep techniques to a high and approved standard.

DCA Caver Workshops

DCA has for the last 30 years run lots of successful caver training workshops in various topics such as SRT training, SRT rigging, rescue and specialist subjects such as photography etc. Some of which have run at a loss if the numbers were short. If we make any money, the proceeds go back into the pot to cover any shortfalls. Sometimes, individual cavers are not able to attend organised club events or clubs themselves do not have anyone at the appropriate level to run training in certain topics. The DCA training workshops for these people provide valuable opportunities and I encourage everyone to support them in any way they can.

BCA Training Officer

I was duly elected as the BCA training officer in 2018 for 3 years. Year 1 was very much a shake down and trying to hold things together through some very difficult politics. Year 2 was setting up training committee again with a fresh start and now we are into year 3, we are seeing the fruits of our hard work with BCA training events happening all over the UK. The makeup of the BCA training committee is the strongest I have known it for many years with input coming in from all of the regional councils and a couple of areas that don't have a regional council plus input from the university clubs, equipment and access committees. I get all sorts of questions regarding use of equipment and I am collating all the BCA statements from the past to update them and introduce into the new BCA Coaching Guidelines for Cavers.

Coaching Guidelines for Cavers

BCA is in a very strong place for recreational caving and has increased its training grant this year. The training committee have been looking at the DCA scheme and have BCA's approval to create caver training coaching guidelines for recreational caving at national level. These will all be based on the DCA scheme that has been up and running for many years. Thanks to Kev West and the late (and most admired and respected) Dave Elliot for their input with this. Dave's name will be on the new handouts and guidelines given out on coaching courses.

BCA Caver Workshops

At the last council meeting, BCA put more money into recreational training with a plan to run National Caver Training workshops all over the UK for any individual BCA members to join in on. We are in the process of setting these up with the regional training officers and dates will go out as soon as they are confirmed.

REPORTS ON 2019 EVENTS

These are the workshops that were run last year:

2 x SRT Introduction Workshops

2 x SRT Rigging Workshops

2 x mine exploring Workshops

2 x Weather & Flooding Workshops

2 x cave leader Workshops

3 x SRT accreditations - Cavers feel more confident to move onto the more specialised workshops and training courses, SRT rigging & rescue etc. More accreditation days will be run in 2020.

BCA National Workshops

SRT Rigging workshop - Derbyshire. BCA funded national event

Date - Sunday March 23rd 2020

The perfect workshop for those who are proficient using SRT and wish to improve their SRT rigging skills, pick up tips from qualified BCA instructors etc. Those attending will be expected to demonstrate full S.R.T to a high standard.

Digital Cave Photography Workshop - Derbyshire. BCA funded national event

Date - Sunday March 1st 2020

The perfect workshop for those who are interested in capturing those exciting and 'not at all' posed caving shots. This is being run by Rob Eavis. Limited places left.

SRT Introduction Training (Single Rope Techniques) - Derbyshire. BCA funded national event.

Date - Saturday & Sunday March 21st & 22nd 2020

If you have never done any SRT before, this course is the perfect introduction for you. If you want to get the best information on techniques and equipment, then this course is essential to pick up modern techniques before you buy your ideal SRT set up. All SRT equipment is provided.

Caving Coach Workshop (formerly the Caving Club Training Officers Workshop)

Date - Saturday March 30th 2019

This is THE workshop for 'Training the Trainers', which we run every year. Many clubs already have a Club Training Officers to whom it usually falls to organise and supervise training for newly joined novice cavers. We have now opened this workshop up to allow anyone to attend who is involved with caver training.

DCA Coaching Scheme

Coaching Workshops

These workshops are designed to introduce the skills of coaching and look at the teaching of the Training Syllabus modules. These are essential workshops for experienced cavers considering registering for the Coaching Scheme. Please contact us for the criteria to attend this workshop.

Coaching Workshop - (Level 1 of the Coaching Scheme)

Vertical Cave Leader Workshop - Derbyshire (Level 2 of the Coaching Scheme)

A practical workshop ideal for cavers already or are thinking about taking others on simple vertical (Non SRT) caving trips.

SRT Coaching Workshop - Derbyshire (Level 3 of the Coaching Scheme)

A practical workshop ideal for cavers already or are thinking about teaching others SRT.

SRT Pitch Rigging Coaching Workshop - Derbyshire (Level 4 of the DCA Coaching Scheme)

A practical workshop ideal for cavers already or are thinking about teaching others SRT Pitch Rigging.

Nigel Atkins

05/02/2020

7.11. Newsletter Editor / Publication Officers Report –

The first year of my tenure as editor of The Derbyshire Caver has been fairly quiet, with only two issues produced instead of four – this has mostly been down to a lack of available content delivered, though we've featured several important conservation jobs in both of the published issues – Ecton and Longcliffe Mines in the first issue and then Wardlow Sough and Cumberland Cavern in the second – with a feature on the Snelslow Swallet clean-up already delivered for the next issue. Requests for content online (on UK Caving and AditNow) have produced almost zero response for both issues.

The main hindrance here is plainly the relative abundance of titles in a very niche market and the lack of significant news on a quarterly basis as clearly not many cavers actually explore new sites or work on projects. Descent will always tend to get the best stories, due to it being national and in full colour (in print, though there is no online version). The PDMHS Newsletter is also always searching for new content, at least in the mining sector. In addition, online club websites (public and private) are publishing many exploration stories or regular updates direct. So, it's a challenge to get enough content to fill an issue that is generally valuable and interesting rather than just padding, and so I'd prefer to release issues when it's genuinely worthwhile. The second issue produced included some great exploration content, and that is always something worth chasing from other cavers, as new sites in Derbyshire are what keep the buzz alive. Additionally, Jenny's article in the early Giants exploration was very useful as it bridged the 'knowledge gap' for many more recent cavers.

I made a few (very slight) updates to the look and feel of the front cover and will consider any further updates that may work.

Phil Wolstenholme

03/02/2020

7.12. Publication Sales –

Caves of the Peak District:

Despite having been printed in 2010, this continues to sell steadily, mostly via 3 trade outlets, bringing in a total of £693 this year. Sales have averaged 65 per year for the last 7 years and we have a stock sufficient to cover a further 8 years at the same rate of sales. It is for DCA to decide when a new edition should be brought out, bearing in mind the lead time for producing this, and it would be possible to sell the existing copies, remaindered, at a reduced price and still cover our costs while a new edition is in production. (We would, of course, need to inform our traders in advance when we decide to do this.)

Cave Conservation Audits:

Of the 5 Conservation Audits published by DCA, two copies have been sold this year, one from existing stock and one printed to order by me (using supplies bought for this purpose in 2017). Stock of the printed publications is now down to just 2 copies of the Masson Audit and sales of printed copies are now minimal; however, the information contained in these audits is important and should be freely available. It was agreed last year that these should now (with the exception of the Stoney Middleton Audit), be placed as pdfs on the DCA website for free download but with the option of purchasing a printed copy at cost.

DCA Newsletter “The Derbyshire Caver”:

This is now produced online and also as printed copies to maintain a profile for DCA in shops and Libraries. We had 14 paying subscribers for printed copies in 2019 (£10.00 for 4 issues posted); plus a further 13 printed copies sent free of charge to Libraries, including some club libraries, the British Caving Library and two local authority libraries. Shop sales are on a trade sale-or-return basis so the takings for the 3 issues 149, 150 and 151 have come in during 2019 and, the total sales, at nearly £50, cover the costs of production.

Jenny Potts
28/01/2020

7.13. British Caving Association Update –

This has been a very busy and varied year. All Minutes of Council and Annual General Meetings are on the BCA website for those who want to see the details.

Other reports have been provided throughout last year and can be viewed in the DCA Council minutes.

January 2020 Update:

The result of the ballot result saw the removal of the club vote.

Claire Ross has been appointed Conservation and Access Officer; the meeting was in favour of appointing her. She may not have the relevant Caving experience behind her but with the team of regional conservation officers and other members of council can guide her. As it was pointed out, no willing volunteers have come forward except Claire, so it's better to have somebody in the role.

Jenny Potts has been appointed an individual membership representative to council. I have taken on the role of a DCA representative to BCA Council.

Council has agreed to increase the liability from 5 million to 10 million, giving a mandate to Howard, the treasurer to speak to brokers.

The mandate that was voted at the 2019 AGM hasn't been adhered to, Cookie had been under pressure from Council. Due to the wording of the AGM proposal that was passed by the AGM, basically this hasn't been adhered to, so the meeting took a vote on Cookie being removed as the conveyor of the IT Working a Party. This was upheld and Gary has been given the job and needs to report back to council with proposals at the April meeting.

Youth Caving and Conservation Project, an initiative based in the Yorkshire Dales between the ages of 12 – 21, who live within a commutable distance of the Ingleborough Dales. It will provide educational sessions, training and trips. These would occur on a weekly basis (one mid-week evening 3 times a month and 1-2 full weekend day trips a month) between the months of March to November with

optional extra dates during school holidays. The youth caving program would be delivered by Yorkshire Dales Guides (YDG) who will provide a regular social meeting place, training facility, cave safety equipment, training and instruction to the participants and recruit assistance by volunteers and visiting parties i.e. cave rescue personnel, experienced cavers, cave explorers etc. The project is 56.2% funded (of £12.7k). So, they've already got £7k from Stories in Stone. This means the match funding is asking for the remaining 43.8%. So, we are talking funding in £5.6k. £3.8k is for equipment. Provided that this procured by Youth and Development directly, our estimate of the potential saving would be £1000. The other £1.8k is for training, day trip instruction and marketing. BCA council passed this funding request.

Wayne Sheldon
DCA Rep. to BCA
28/01/2020

Appendix 1:

Snelslow Swallet, Peakshill Farm

DCA Projects Officer additional report to OCM 16/11/2019

Earlier in the year, Nige Atkins managed to open a dialogue with the landowner of Peakshill Farm. Traditionally, access has only been granted to Giant's Hole on this land. It is my understanding that at some point in the past, cavers had convinced the owner that the other caves on the farm were dangerous and no one should be let it them. The owner did exactly that and access to the sites has been refused ever since. DCA agreed to undertake an inspection visit to caves and report back on what work would be required to make them 'safe' with a view to restoring access.

DCA turned its attention to Snelslow Swallet first. In May 2019, Nige Atkins and Pete Knight took a visit here, possibly the first official one in 30 years. The volume of digging debris and old timber to be removed was assessed and a plan for installing BP anchors was hatched. During the summer months, Pete Knight, assisted by Luke Brock (TSG) and Alan Cash, installed BCA BP anchors on the main route down the cave. These were tested shortly after and passed for use. The anchors they replaced were Spits, where the hanger and sleeves had been left in contact for so long, they were horribly rusted. With safe anchors now available, a rigging guide was drawn up and the next stage of the plan could be arranged.

After a summer period that seemed to fly by in moments, autumn arrived, and winter was soon on its heels. There seemed to be only a small window left of 2019 and the Projects Officer found himself with a gap in the diary. Agreeing to take over arrangements for the clear up operation, a call to arms was sent out in late October and a huge response from local cavers was received. In the first week of November, the scaffold tripod that has been at the TSG's Longcliffe dig was removed and transported away for some maintenance. It was loaned the DCA for the clean-up which required hauling rotten timber, conveyer matting and all sorts of digging waste up a 40m shaft from Snelslow's main chamber to the surface above.

On the 8th of November, a team of DCA volunteers descend on the farm. A skip was delivered, the tripod was carried over and installed on the shaft top and the old steel lid was opened following sustained hammering effort. Pete Knight, John Geeson and Gordon Fiander then descended the main route through the cave, rigging up ready for the weekend and smashing everything that was not natural cave down the bottom of the main chamber. The steel ladders ricocheting down the

walls in a shower of sparks were a highlight. Alan Brentnall, Roy Rodgers, Scott Bradley, Pete Wagstaff, Nige Atkins and Louise McMahon completed the remaining tasks on surface, before retiring to the warmth of home or the TSG Chapel.

On the 9th of November another crew assembled and trudged over the cold, soggy ground to the Snelslow Shaft. After getting a team inside, and some teething problems with the haul system, eventually loads of steel ladder, rope, wire and rubber matting were being pulled to the surface. Around 2:30pm the final load was raised, and the underground team began their exit. The plan was to spend the next hour or so running a few loads across the near-1km field of mud and puddles back to the skip before leaving the rest for the next day. Owing to the sheer determination of the volunteers to finish the task that day so they did not have to come back to the freezing cold, muddy gruelling task of another day, the whole pile of debris was dragged, shouldered and kicked across to the car park before nightfall. We probably filled 6 out of the available 8 cubic yards in the skip. Present for day 2 were Beth Knight, Alan Brentnall, Roy Rodgers, Ann Soulsby, David Botcherby, Julian McIntosh, Pete Wagstaff, Jenny Drake, Sam Mitchell, Steve Pearson-Adams, Angus Sawyer, Zac Holland, Mark Gration, Louise McMahon & Pete Knight.

Thanks go to TSG for the loan of their tripod. Scott Bradley for the loan of almost everything else. Spanset Ltd for the rope to rig the cave throughout the project and builder Ric' for the flyby rubble sack delivery.

An access route map has been created for the DCA Registry and Roy Rodgers and Alan Brentnall have already made plans to build a stile to enable a swifter access route avoiding the worst of the deep mud. But this will not happen before spring next year.

Once again DCA and the Projects Officer are indebted to the volunteers who came out on a freezing weekend for no pay to undertake gruelling physical labour in a mucky field. DCA could not hope to achieve these things without you!

This project is part of a process of negotiation with the landowner and access is not yet open to this cave. The Projects team now hands this over to Nige to get the final thumbs up from the owner before access can be announced. We hope that it won't take long to sort now, but please do not consider Snelslow open for trips just yet.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/peakinstruction/albums/72157711748161382>

Pete Knight
15/11/2019

