



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of DCA Council Meeting

10am. 22rd June 2013, Monyash Village Hall

- Present:**
- Officers:**
- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Chairman | Bob Dearman [BD] |
| Vice-Chairman | Terry Jackson [TJ] |
| Secretary | Jenny Potts [JP] |
| Treasurer | Wayne Sheldon [WS] |
| Asst. Access Officer | Karen Slatcher [KS] |
| Legal & Insurance Officer | Peter Mellors [PM] |
| Projects Officer | Dan Hibberts [DH] |
| Equipment Officer | (Bob Dearman) |
- Club Reps:**
- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Darfar P. C. | Melissa Milner [MM] |
| Masson C. G. | Paul Chandler [PC] |
| Orpheus C.C. | Boyd Potts [BP], Ewan Cameron [EC], (Jenny Potts) |
- Individual Members:** David Webb [DW], (Bob Dearman, Jenny Potts, Wayne Sheldon, Karen Slatcher, Peter Mellors)

1. CHAIRMAN’S WELCOME & QUORUM:

The meeting was quorate with 8 officers present.

2. APOLOGIES:

Apologies received from: Nigel Atkins (Training Off.), Chris Broome (Asst. Sec.), Paul Lydon (N/L Editor), Alan Brentnall, John Cordingley, Elaine Hill, Graham Marshment (B.V.T.), Andy Tickle (Derbys. Pennine C.)

3. TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING: (23 February. 2013, previously circulated).

That the Minutes of the previous Council Meeting be approved.

Prop. B.Potts, Sec. T.Jackson. *Agreed unanimously.*

4. MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM AND FROM THE MINUTES OF THE AGM:

Actions arising from AGM 23-2-13

- 4.1 6.3.c **Investigate moving funds into fixed term bonds:** See Treasurer’s report below.
- 4.2 6.4.c **Convene UCF Meeting, 17-5-13:** This had been done.
- 4.3 6.5.c **Negotiate access to Christmas Pot & Snelslow Swallet:** See 6.5.a and Treasurer’s report below.
- 4.4 6.8.d **Sort Devonshire gate frame & step ladder:** See Projects Officer’s business below.
- 4.5 6.9.b **Arrange for DCA plaque to be fixed to lids:** BD reported that a stainless steel plaque is ready to be fitted on Nettle Pot lid, others to be made as required. **ACTION: BD, DH**

Actions arising from Council 23-2-13

- 4.6 4.1 **Water Icicle - Install bolt fitting on lid to enable it to be fastened down:** Done by Orpheus C.C.
- 4.7 4.2 **Find a volunteer to take on Access Officer post:** Ewan Cameron had volunteered his services. (Noted that this was a co-option until the AGM in 2014 when an election would take place.) **Ewan Cameron** was proposed for the post by J.Potts, seconded by T.Jackson and accepted.
- 4.8 4.3 **Find a volunteer to take on Asst. Conservation Officer post:** See 4.14 below.
- 4.9 4.4 **Waterways Swallet Cave Conservation Plan - finish writing:** See 6.4.g below.
- 4.10 4.5 **Oxlow Farm Land & Fawcett Rake - check shafts and cap if required:** See 6.4.f below.
- 4.11 4.8 **Review DCA Fixed Aids Policy in consultation with CNCC:** Ongoing. **ACTION: BD, JP**
- 4.12.a 4.10 **Advise members on purchase of CO2 meters:** Alan Brentnall had provided advice which JP had circulated to members and has since provided JP with an update of the current situation. AB has agreed to take over the DCA meters. Noted that currently the levels in Water Icicle are about normal. Nettle appears to be OK. In his update AB had raised another matter with JP:
- 4.12.b **Removal of gear from pre-rigged pitches:** AB had identified this from UKcaving as a matter of concern. There was considerable discussion on this 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 J.H. Bitch Pitch, which is part of a BCA trial and is being monitored by BCA - but still check this before use.)

JP would ensure this advice was circulated as widely as possible.

ACTION: JP

- 4.13 4.14 **Lathkill Head Top Entrance - Provide new waterproof box for Log Book:** KS reported new box now available but not yet placed. DH offered to place this at the top of the pitch, in its old position, i.e. just inside the entrance at the top of the pitch.

ACTION: DH

- 4.14 **Co-opt Conservation Officer to serve for remainder of year:** As DW had not had any volunteers, JP and WS had approached Mel Milner to see if she would be willing to take on the post. She had agreed to do so.

That Mel Milner be co-opted to the post of Conservation Officer for the remainder of the year.

Prop. J.Potts, Sec. W.Sheldon. *Agreed.*

DW said he would liaise with MM to transfer material.

5. ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS:

- 5.1 **Club members: Darkside Caving & Mining Club and Derbyshire Pennine Club.** Noted both are member clubs of BCA. Accepted as DCA members.

- 5.2 **Individual Member: Peter Knight.** Prop. J.Potts. Accepted.

- 5.3 **Associate Member: Derbyshire County Council Adventur Mobile Activities Team.** Noted they are an associate member of BCA. Accepted.

- 5.4 Noted that list of current members should be circulated to the officers.

ACTION: JP

6 OFFICERS' REPORTS:

- 6.1 **Secretary's Report:** *(Written report tabled.)*

That the Secretary's report be accepted. Prop. P.Mellors, Sec. D.Hibberts. *Agreed unanimously.*

- 6.2 **Treasurer's Report:** *(Written report tabled.)*

- 6.2.a **Overspend on BCA grant:** WS explained the "overspend" on the BCA grant and a query was raised about the attitude of other regional councils re. the payment of travelling expenses: some did not pay travel expenses but it was confirmed that DCA would continue to do so. Both WS and JP felt there were valid reasons why DCA's conservation & access expenses were high in comparison to other regions and would work to produce a document for presentation to BCA and the regional treasurers explaining our position.

Concern was expressed at Natural England's position and future under the government review; JP had been told it was likely to be combined with other bodies (Environment Agency, etc.) and will continue to be under the remit of DEFRA. Noted that DCA is funding work for N.E. and would expect this to be repaid in due course. BD explained how access work in Lathkilldale is, in effect, being funded from materials supplied by N.E. for the moment. BP noted the need for a high profile for DCA and BCA in this respect.

- 6.2.b **Allocation of money for projects:** DW asked how we allocate money for projects and whether we could budget in advance; this was difficult as we needed to react to problems as they occur. Queried whether it is possible to reclaim from National Trust for the amount spent on work in the Manifold Valley.

- 6.2.c **Funding for work on sites used primarily by instructed groups:** Noted that P.I.C.A. had agreed to fund 50% of the expense of the work on Devonshire Mine gate. Noted that Mouldridge Mine was a similar site and it was believed that the original gate had been installed by PDMHS so they might wish to be involved in repair work.

That the Treasurer's report be accepted. Prop. T.Jackson, Sec. K.Slatcher. *Agreed unanimously.*

- 6.3 **Conservation Issues:** *(DW reported verbally.)*

- 6.3.a **Liaison with Natural England:** DW was happy to continuing to liaising with N.E.

- 6.3.b **Pindale Quarry proposal:** There is a proposal to Peak Park Planning Board to built a 30-place caravan site in Pindale Quarry, which is an SSSI with two caves in the quarry. DW is following this up with N.E. JP is contacting

John Beck to confirm the exact position of the caves in relation to the proposed caravan site. The deadline for comments to Peak Park is 30th. June. **ACTION: DW, JP**

6.3.c **Masson Quarry sale:** The sale had taken place on 6th. June and it is believed to have been bought by a local farmer. N.E. have a watching brief on this but at present no-one knows who the new owner is. **ACTION: DW, JP**

6.3.d **Waterfall Swallet:** The farm is for sale and Waterfall Swallet is featured as an asset as part of the land. We need to keep an eye on this and should liaise with Mark Noble. **ACTION: DW, JP**

6.3.e **Hungerhill Swallet:** DW is meeting with Derbyshire County Council re. the site and there is now a proposal to re-direct road runoff away from the swallet. Progress may depend on funding available to the Council. DW will continue to keep watch. **ACTION: DW**

6.3.f **Boulder Pot:** DW queried whether anyone was making use of the site now it had been re-opened. BP said that Orpheus C.C. was and others were also interested.

6.3.g **Bones found in Underhill Cave:** DH said these were believed to be relatively modern animal bones.

6.3.h **Proposal re. Magpie Mine and the River Lathkill:** A report had been commissioned by the landowners to find out whether it would be possible to return the river to its former condition of almost year-round flow, thus improving the fishing, by mitigating the effect of the driving of Magpie Sough. The report suggested that partly blocking the sough would probably have some effect and the query among cavers had been whether this would affect access to some caves in the area by raising the water levels. Copies of the report were available on the web; KS had a full 200+ page printed copy. It was noted that N.E. were involved and would notify DCA if there were any issues. DW and KS would continue to keep watch. **ACTION: DW, KS**

6.3.i **Paper Pulp above Stoney Middleton Dale:** JP raised the issue of the posting on UKcaving about paper pulp stockpiled between Hucklow and Foolow near the watershed of Stoney Middleton Dale and Bradwell catchments. DW would contact the Peak Park about this as an agreement about limitations on stockpiling paper pulp had been reached after the problems at Peak Cavern. **ACTION: DW**

That Dave Webb's report be accepted. Prop. W.Sheldon, Sec. K.Slatcher. *Agreed unanimously.*

6.4 Projects Officer's Report: (DH reported verbally.)

6.4.a **Helpers:** DH thanked Bob Dearman and Gordon Wirksworth who had been helping him with practical work on site.

6.4.b **Castleton Moor Shaft:** The shaft opened up by the Credit Crunch Exp. Had now been tidied up but a new lid was needed. **ACTION: DH & Co.**

6.4.c **Nettle Pot Lid:** New lid now installed, it incorporates a bat-friendly air vent and is also safe for farm animals.

6.4.d **Lathkilldale work:**

i. **Aqueduct Level:** the "cat-flap" door now fitted with a bolt which needs adjustable spanner to undo it.

ii. **Level behind Bateman's Shaft:** The level was going to have a gate fitted but DH suggests it may be better to stabilise and bolt shut the existing grill on the shaft - this will be checked. **ACTION: DH & Co.**

6.4.e **Devonshire:** This job is next in line to do but it is suggested that we should ensure that the owner is made aware that work will be done a.s.a.p. Substantial work needs doing to remove loose rock and enable the gate to be properly bolted shut, including: rebuilding the loose rock step down, straightening the door frame, fixing it solidly into the surround and ensuring that the bolt works properly. Advice will be sought from Adam Russell, PDMHS Conservation Officer. **ACTION: DH & Co.**

That the Projects Officer's report be accepted. Prop. K.Slatcher, Sec. T.Jackson. *Agreed unanimously.*

MM arrived at this point and tabled her written report on project work in the Manifold Valley area.

6.4.f i. **Waterways Swallet:** The entrance grid and the stile leading into the entrance compound have been stabilised and repaired. The Cave Conservation Plan was now finished except for the section on the exploration potential but MM had received no replies to her enquiries to Keyhole C.C. Suggested that MM contact Mike Salt of Eldon P.C. or Dave Ottewell of the Environment Agency, both of whom knew the site well. (Noted that there had been an attempt at diving the Sump.) **ACTION: MM**

ii. **Work on sites in the Manifold Valley:** MM reported that the following sites now had new lids installed to prevent rubbish washing in from the river or danger to the public: Redhurst Swallet, T-Pot, Wednesday Pot, Magic Mushroom, Ladyside Wood Resurgence and Darfar Pot. Other sites requiring work were: Lees Pot, Shilling Pot, Weir Swallet, Weag's Bridge Resurgence, Magic Mushroom Resurgence and Hollybank Adit (where the gate installed by PDMHS had been vandalised). **ACTION: MM**

That M. Milner's project work report be accepted. Prop. T.Jackson, Sec. B.Potts. *Agreed unanimously*

iii. *That a Vote of thanks be given to M. Milner for all her hard work in the Manifold Valley area.*
Prop. D. Webb, Sec. J.Potts. *Agreed unanimously.*

6.5 Access Work:

6.5.a **Christmas Swallet and Snelslow Swallet:** WS drew attention to mention of these sites in his Treasurer's report. There may be a requirement for DCA to supply a BCA Insurance Landowner Certificate and there is likely to have to be a designated route to the sites from the existing parking for Giants Hole. EC commented that the tenant who farms the land is content that there should be access. EC will liaise with WS, NA and PM to put the agreement in place.
ACTION: EC, WS, NA, PM

6.5.b Reports from K.Slatcher:

- i. **Water Icicle:** The arrangements for visits the new extensions were working well.
- ii. **Garden Path:** No requests for trips since September 2012.
- iii. **Ashford Marble Mine:** This had been checked by P.Mellors recently and no new tell-tales had been placed since the work done to extract a small amount of stone for restoration work on Chatsworth Estate buildings. Insurance details were needed from a couple of Centres to complete the list to send to Chatsworth.

That the various access reports be accepted. Prop. B.Potts, Sec. T.Jackson. **Agreed unanimously.**

6.5.c **Liaison between E Cameron and K Slatcher:** Agreed that KS would continue as Asst. Access Officer and deal with requests for access to Ashford Marble Mines and Garden Path, while EC would deal with wider access issues. They would both use the access-off@theDCA.org.uk email address as it would be clear from the context of any message which of them was to deal with it. Both would continue to liaise with the Legal & Insurance Officer, etc.

6.6 Legal & Insurance Officer's report: (Written report tabled.)

6.6.a **Chatsworth site reports:** KS had noted that no-one had been in Garden Path since September 2012. DH and BD will inspect Garden Path and Lathkill Head Upper Entrance and send reports to PM for onward transmission to Chatsworth.
ACTION: DH, BD

6.6.b **Eldon Hill Quarry:** PM reported that access is to resume from 1st. July and explained the conditions under which this is to happen, which include the requirement for public liability insurance (e.g. BCA PL insurance); access is probationary for the time being. PM will supply exact wording to be used for DCA circulars, website and UKcaving. PM noted that thanks were due to Ron Hammond for his excellent survey of the site, which had helped with negotiations.

6.6.c **Holme Bank Chert Mine:** Paul Chandler reported that one of the keys had gone missing so a new key had been supplied and anyone borrowing a key in future will be required to supply their contact details.

6.6.d **Outlands Head Quarry Cave:** DW reported that there was a project to try to re-open the cave entrance, now buried under infill in the disused quarry. Ron Hammond had tried to help but the quarry owner was not willing to allow access. DH offered to help liaise.
ACTION: DH

That the Legal & Insurance Officer's report be accepted.
Prop. W.Sheldon, Sec. K.Slatcher. **Agreed unanimously.**

6.7 Equipment Officer's Report: (Verbal report given.)

6.7.a **Bolt testing:** BD reported that CNCC & DCA are still testing bolts and now have the use of a 50 ton tensile testing kit installed at Bradford P.C.

6.7.b **BP Bolts:** BD reported that the first batch of the BP bolts supplied for use turned out on testing to have been made of 304 SS rather than the 316 SS ordered by BCA as most suitable for general use. It had now been accepted that the 304 SS batch would be suitable for use in most caves but that 316 SS would be required at some sites prone to flooding. A smaller batch for 316 SS bolts had been ordered by BCA and were being checked before use to ensure that they were, in fact, 316 SS.

6.7.c **Training for Installers:** BD had recently trained 6 new installers who would be working in the Peak/Speedwell system. There were other volunteers who had not yet received training and JP noted that we had, at present, only one person (BD) qualified to train installers and we should aim to have at least one more trainer.
ACTION: BD

That the Equipment Officer's report be accepted. Prop. K.Slatcher, Sec. M.Milner. **Agreed unanimously.**

6.8 Training Officer's Report: (Apologies sent.)

6.8.a JP explained on N.Atkins' behalf that he was running a DCA Training Course this weekend.

6.8.b **Cliffhanger:** BP said that the organisation of DCA's contribution was well in hand and NA would be setting up the Ladder Climbing session. However BP desperately needed more people to help run the other sessions on site in Sheffield. He would be circulating DCA again and would put an appeal on UKcaving.

6.9 Newsletter Editor: (Apologies sent.)

KS reported on behalf of PL that N/L no. 134 was in hand but that, as always, he needed more material.

6.10 Asst. Secretary / Planning Liaison: (*Apologies sent.*)

CB had reported to JP that nothing had come to his attention recently.

7 BCA MATTERS: (*Written report from JP tabled.*)

7.1 & 7.2 Both BP and WS agreed with JP that the new format for the AGM had been a success and it was noted that a number of new, younger members had been elected to BCA Council. There were no questions arising from JP's report.

That JP's BCA reports be accepted. Prop. K.Slatcher, Sec. M.Milner. *Agreed unanimously.*

8 CONFIRM DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING:

8.1 **Next Council Meeting:** Confirmed as Saturday, 2nd. November. 10am at Monyash Village Hall.

8.2 **DCA AGM 2014:** Confirmed as Saturday, 22nd. February 2014. 10am at Monyash Village Hall.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

9.1 **Work load on officers re. practical side of conservation & access work:** JP expressed concern at the work load on DH and BD in particular and suggested that local clubs might be able to assist in areas of particular interest to them and could liaise with DH so that he knew who he could call on. Noted that there were already examples of this in operation: MM and Darfur P.C. carried out work in the Manifold area; Orpheus C.C. in the Monyash/Lathkilldale area; TSG in the Peak/Speedwell system and Chesterfield C.C. in the Stoney Middleton area. PICA members also offered help at certain sites important for instructed caving: Devonshire, etc. Other clubs could be encouraged to help in this way.

BD pointed out that it was important that DH and MM should have an input into all jobs carried out in the region to ensure there was sufficient expertise and that conservation issues were taken into consideration.

The meeting closed at 2.35pm.

*J.Potts,
Recorder*

APPENDED TO THESE MINUTES AND FORMING PART OF THEM ARE:

- a. Item 6.1 Secretary's Report;
- b. Item 6.2 Treasurer's Report;
- c. Item 6.4.f Report on Project Work in the Manifold Valley;
- d. Item 6.6 Legal & Insurance Officer's Report;
- e. Item 7 BCA Reports & Matters Arising from the BCAAGM on 16th. June.

DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION - OFFICERS' REPORTS FOR 22 JUNE 2013

Item 6.1 - Secretary's Report

Communications

During the months since the AGM on 23rd. February I have sent out the following to all members, by email where possible.

- DCA Annual Report for 2012 and Accounts for 2012 (Printed copy for everyone)
- Minutes of the 2013 DCA AGM and Minutes of the following Council Meeting
- Notice of DCA Caver Training Events for the first part of 2013
- Notification of Open Day at the British Caving Library near Buxton
- Notification of the death of Dave Allsop
- Notification of the BCA/BCRA Party Weekend in Castleton and the BCA AGM
- Warning about movement of the Boulder in Suicide Cave
- Club CO₂ meter recommendation from Alan Brentnall
- Information Circular 2013/2, March-April 2013
- Appeal for help with Sheffield Cliffhanger on 5/6/7 July
- Notification of Hidden Earth 2013 in Monmouth
- Agenda for Council Meeting 22 June 2013

All information circulated has also been posted on the DCA website - thanks to Mel Milner.

Between March and early June I have been out of action for a time and also away for 5 weeks so my thanks to all those who have fielded enquires in my absence.

Sales of Caves of the Peak District

Sales began to slow down at the beginning of the year but have now started to pick up again. The Treasurer is kept informed of progress.

*Jenny Potts,
Hon. Sec. 21/6/13*

Item 6.2 - Treasurer's Report

Current funds up to the 12th June 2013 are:

Deposit a/c: £15,843.85
 Current a/c: £1,232.63
 Total: £17,076.48

There is a list of payments in and out of the accounts since the AGM in February 2013:

Payments in:		Payments out:	
Membership Fees:	£81.50	Conservation and Access Work:	£331.64
COPD Income:	£233.70	General Admin:	£99.79
Bank Interest:	£13.22	Natural England Expenses:	£67.05
Natural England Grant:	£859.16	COPD Expenses:	£7.60
Newsletter Sales:	£42.00	DCA N/L Expenses:	£174.00
Handbook Sales:	£3.50		
Totals:	£1233.08		£647.58

Caves of the Peak District:

Sales of COPD have been very quiet since the start of April. We were expecting a slowdown in sales.

BCA Core Funding:

We haven't received the core funding for 2012 yet but the accounts have been finalised by the regional treasurers.

Conservation and Access Work / Funding:

For the last two years, I have overspent on conservation and access work.

2011 - Overspent by £238.91
 2012 - Overspent by £687.52

BCA have paid both these amounts out of the budget but the regional treasurers have raised concern about this, the BCA Treasurer has asked us all to think about spend this year and apply for additional funding if rather than going over our agreed limits. The agreed limit for conservation and access funding is £500.

This was brought up in the BCA Council Meeting last Sunday. There were only two associations in attendance at the meeting, the main issue is travelling expenses, one association doesn't apply for travelling while we do and we made it clear to the meeting that projects wouldn't get done if it wasn't for expenses. BCA Council was in agreement that volunteers shouldn't be out of pocket for work they undertake. The issue is the rising costs of work undertaken and that BCA are likely to go over budget this year, the rising costs are due to the amount of work we and other associations do in a year.

The CSCC have put in a request in for a projected spend to the regional treasurers for 2013, this comes to £2393.60. He was asking if the finance committee would sanction this level of spend. Several of the treasurers said that was too much money to commit early on. One of the regional treasurers highlighted the hefty hit last year on funding, this is a remark at DCA and our over spend. Paul Ibberson, BCA Treasurer says the total budgeted spend for all RCC expense claims for 2014 is £5k so the above request was a large chunk. BCA want to leave it to the regional treasurers to sort out, I will be sending an email to all regional treasurers and the BCA Treasurer to highlight our spending and why we undertake this work, following our council meeting.

For the current financial year, 2013 within DCA. £343.11 has been spent on conservation and access. £249.24 of this has been spent on Manifold Valley Conservation work. 81% of this is travelling expenses. £100 worth of materials did come out of the 2012 Natural England Budget. This only gives us £156.89 for the remainder of this year. A further five visits are planned for this year, so that could be a further £75 of funding to be used.

Grants for SSSI Conservation Work:

Natural England has confirmed to DCA that there will be no funding provided for 2013/2014 financial year. This has also happened in the Yorkshire Dales. This is obviously a major disappointment for us. As explained above, BCA can provide additional funding for project work throughout the year on top of the usual admin / conservation and access funding but in order to get this, a project would need quoting and submitting to the finance team for approval prior to the project taking place.

We need to discuss provision for project budgeting this year out of the DCA Funds.

Additional Saving Account / Bonds:

I was tasked at the AGM to look into bonds alongside Boyd Potts, I have spoken to Boyd and he has given me some advice and some leads to follow.

Wayne Sheldon
DCA Hon. Treasurer, 17/06/13

Access Work:

Nigel Atkins paved the way for me with the tenant farmer at Peakshole Farm to negotiate access to Christmas Swallet and Snelsnow Swallet. An email was sent on the 23/04/13 to Steph Howarth, she responded on the 24/04/13, asking me to confirm the sites and locations of these; which I did on the 24/04/13. Steph was going to speak to the landowner. No response has since been received so I followed it up on the 14/05/13, and to date, I have had no response. I have been in contact with Nigel Atkins again; hopefully he can speak to Steph, as he made the original contact.

Item 6.4.f - Project Work in the Manifold Valley Area

Summary of Conservation work done or needed in the Manifold area – Spring 2013

Waterways Swallet entrance works

Work has been done on the entrance grille by myself (assisted by Rob Thorne of Darfar PC on occasions) over the past couple of years. 1. Making sure it could be bolted down as per the access agreement with Okeover Estate. 2. Repairing the stile so cavers could gain access easily and 3. Cutting apart a collapsed dead tree which was damaging the wire fence around the site, the maintenance of which is also a requirement of the access agreement with Okeover Estate. The entrance nuts DO NOT need removing completely, just loosen them enough to allow the metal retaining plates to be swivelled off the grille and access can then be easily gained. Just note how the grille is positioned before undoing the nuts and replace it in the same position. I am going to put some Duct Tape around the top of the bolts to stop the nuts being removed. The cave needs another visit and the features of interest photographed as a baseline record of their condition. (To be done soon.)

Redhurst Swallet entrance works

In late April 2013, a new entrance, just a couple of metres upstream from the existing gated entrance (easily opened with a spanner!) was found to have been excavated by persons unknown. (Rob Thorne of Darfar PC informed me of this as he lives in Alstonefield and goes running down the valley.) Once inspected, it was filled in by myself and Emma Key and later concreted by myself. (Concrete funded by the National Trust.)

Riverside Swallet top entrance works

After its discovery on December 9th 2007, I placed a hinged gate on top of it (recycling part of a folding aluminium ladder!) as there is a 60ft (20m) pitch (two actually) right under the gate. This year I managed to finish it all off and make it secure from members of the public.

T-Pot entrance works

The entrance to this 700ft (212m) long cave had been repeatedly damaged on bank holidays. (Only 10m or so from the public footpath.) So a DCA supplied grille and other materials were installed on site and the entrance made secure again by myself. (But accessible with the usual 'Derbyshire Key'. i.e.- Adjustable spanner!)

Wednesday Pot entrance works

The new DCA-supplied grille on this 180ft (56m) long cave has now been concreted properly in place by myself. Just needs a little bit of concreting to finish it off.

Magic Mushroom Resurgence works

The temporary metalwork over this 10ft (3m) deep shaft, which might link to the cave passage between Ladyside Pot and Weag's Bridge Resurgence, was replaced with a DCA grille, etc. and made safe by myself. (i.e.- Bolted down, etc.) The water might actually come from a completely different source though! (i.e.- Darfar Pot or River Hamps water.) Just needs a small amount of concreting to finish it off.

Ladyside Wood Resurgence works

The same has been done by myself and Pete Ray of Darfar P.C. to these two resurgences which not only issue water from Deepdale Shacks way up on the hillside near Grindon, but also flow to the Hamps Rising at Ilam. (Positive test done by Pete Mellors in the 1990s, I think.) The water might also be supplemented by Darfar Pot or River Hamps water. (Cement on site.)

Darfar Pot entrance works

The flimsy and 20 year old grille and frame have been supplemented by a proper modern galvanised frame and DCA grille, which is now bolted shut to stop kiddies who might go up there from falling down the 3 x 25ft (8m) pitches just inside the entrance.

Lees Pot entrance works

Just needs a small bit of concreting doing to prevent further erosion of the entrance. (Postcrete on site.)

Shilling Pot entrance works

Just needs the manhole cover over it bolting down.

Ladyside Pot entrance works

The grille over the entrance manufactured and installed by me around 2006 has recently been wire-brushed and repainted with Black Hammerite where necessary by myself and will last years now. A small amount of concreting needs doing around the downstream edge of the entrance.

Weir Swallet entrance works

Needs the DCA-supplied angle iron drilling and bolting around the supporting metal bar. A metal strip to do this has already been purchased. It just needs cutting in two, folding over the other metal bar and drilling/bolting in place. (Possibly needs a little concreting too.)

Weag's Bridge Resurgence

A small amount of concreting needs doing here.

Hollybank Level

The site, between Ecton and Hulme End (and only 10m from the public footpath), has had its gate locking mechanism vandalised, (sawn in two) and the wall broken down, so needs a member of PDMHS contacting as I think they installed the gate. Have told Dave Webb about this at the DCA council meeting as he is a director of PDMHS, I believe. (And sent him photos of the damage.)

It is also intended to install P-Bolts / Eco-hangers in Ladyside Pot, Darfar Pot and Riverside Swallet top entrance so they comply with BCA insurance policies, once I receive my instalment training from DCA.

Also, some discrete laminated notices are going to be placed near or on some of the cave entrances (and previously approved in principle by NE), (facing away from any public footpaths and), informing people of what they are and requesting that they are not damaged as they are in a Site of Special Scientific Interest and regularly monitored.

Finally, finish off the cave monitoring for the National Trust! (Nan Tor, Beeston Tor, Oldpark Hill and Hoo Valley.)

Report by Melissa Milner, June 2013.

Item 6.6 - Legal & Insurance Officer's Report

Eldon Hill Quarry

Following a fruitful meeting between DCA (PM & DW), Chatsworth (their Deputy Agent & Surveyor), and Natural England (Dan Abrahams), I have arranged with the tenant farmer for access to be restored from the start of July. As the Quarry forms part of the Castleton SSSI, DCA will be expected to monitor digging and to this end I am installing on site a box with survey and logbook for cavers to fill in. The farmer has made a few stipulations of his own. Full access terms will be posted online by the end of the month.

Chatsworth Site Reports

After completion of Chatsworth's work to remove a modest amount of stone, I have compiled and submitted the usual report on the state of Ashford Black Marble Mine. However, I still need help with feedback from inspections at the Garden Path and Lathkill Upper Entrances to enable me to do the reports now due on these two sites.

Holme Bank Chert Mine

There is a possibility DCA may be asked to conduct some members of the Devonshire family round the Mine before the year is out. Meanwhile I am anxious to ensure, in conjunction with the site tenant, that the access procedure continues to work

smoothly and that adequate steps are taken, where necessary, to make entrances safe against unauthorised entry.

Farmers' Liability

After my fruitless correspondence with the NFU Mutual earlier this year at both local and national level, I have not yet found time to take the matter further. I feel we need to liaise more closely on this one with the BMC which deals with the same issues. The problem for farmers may well lie with the extent to which they feel they cannot rely, as the law requires, on the willingness of cavers to accept the risks inherent in their activities.

Sale of Caving Sites

Not strictly my domain but I think we should keep a closer eye on this and be in a position to know facts rather than rely on rumour and online speculation. Masson Hill Quarry and Waterfall Swallet are currently cases in point where access could be put at risk by a change of ownership.

*Peter Mellors
Legal & Insurance Officer, 19/6/13*

Item 7 - BCA Reports & Matters arising from the BCA AGM on 16th. June

7.1 BCA Council, 16 March 2013

I was unable to attend this meeting, although Boyd Potts was there on behalf of Orpheus C. C. I have the Minutes and it appears there are no major matters arising for us.

7.2 BCA AGM & Council Meeting, 16 June 2013, at Castleton, Derbyshire.

A new venture was to have a **BCA/BCRA Party Weekend**, i.e. BCA AGM in conjunction with BCRA Field Trips. Accommodation, camping and food were available at the venue; bar on Friday evening; Saturday was BCRA Field Trips, followed by a talk on a caving expedition, then a pig roast, band and bar; Sunday was the BCA AGM followed by brief BCA Council meeting. Most of those present felt things went very well and it was certainly the best attended BCA AGM for many years with a number of younger faces present. (Next year will be a similar event based in Yorkshire and the intention is to rotate round the regions.)

I felt the AGM was a very useful one with new faces asking pertinent questions about the running of the organisation and 5 new younger people elected to BCA Council as Club reps. or Individual Members. (Following the sudden death of Elsie Little the previous week it was agreed to defer election of Conservation Officer, for which she had been proposed, and to co-opt a volunteer at the October BCA Council Meeting.) The meeting also appointed a new Commissioning Editor for the BCA magazine *Speleology*.

There was considerable discussion on grants for Conservation and Access work, as highlighted in the DCA Treasurer's report. I have since agreed with Wayne that we will put together a document explaining DCA's position and indicating why we believe our costs will always be necessarily high in comparison to other regions.

Two documents were put before the AGM and approved:

- Association Scheme for the Placement of Designated Anchors;
- Updated Child Protection Policy (which now includes "vulnerable adults");

Other documents discussed were:

- Proposal to the AGM re. Access to Caves on Land Covered by CRoW Legislation in England. (Which I put forward and which was accepted. *See Appendix below.*)
- Access & Commercial Caving.

Copies of all the documents mentioned above are available to view at our meeting.

The Council recommended that, to allow better consideration of BCA Officers' reports, they should be available on the web in advance of the AGM in June and it was agreed that the aim would be for them to appear in March/April and refer to the previous year up to that date. The Accounts would be presented for the previous calendar year with updates to March. It was also agreed to continue to rotate the AGM around regions but to keep a central venue for Council meetings: a new venue in the Midlands, near Pershore, was suggested as the cost of the venue used up to now has increased dramatically.

I was appointed as the Convenor for the CRoW Investigation Working Party and have already begun to seek views from BCRA, CNCC and DCA on how the information might best be collected. I aim to have at least an interim report ready for the October BCA Council meeting.

Boyd Potts and Wayne Sheldon were also present at the AGM and Boyd is a member of BCA Council so they may have comments to add to mine.

*Jenny Potts,
DCA Rep. to BCA AGM and BCA Council*