



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Open Council Meeting, 22 October 2016, 10am, Monyash Village Hall

MINUTES

Present:	Officers:	Chairman	Wayne Sheldon (WS)	
		Secretary	Jenny Potts (JP)	
		Treasurer	Angus Sawyer (AS)	
		Conservation Officer	Christine Wilson (CW)	
		Access Officer	Gary Noble (GN)	
		Legal & Insurance Officer	Peter Mellors (PM)	
		Projects Officer	Pete Knight (PK)	
		Newsletter Editor	Mike Higgins (MH)	
		Clubs:	Orpheus C.C.	Boyd Potts (BP)
		Individual Members:		Alan Brentnall (AB)

1. Chairman's Welcome:

WS welcomed members.

2. Apologies for absence: Establish Quorum.

2.1 Apologies received from: Equipment Officer, Bob Dearman; Training Officer, Nigel Atkins; Shropshire Scout Caving Team, Idris Williams.

2.2 Quorum: The meeting was quorate with 7 officers present plus the Chairman.

3. To Approve Minutes of the previous Council Meeting: (16 June 2016, previously circulated).

3.1 PK asked to amend the name of his Club to D.C.M.C. With that amendment included it was proposed:

That the Minutes of DCA Council meeting 16 June 2016 be approved. Prop. P.Knight, Sec. B.Potts. **Agreed**

4. Matters Arising Therefrom: (Note that some of these issues may be dealt with in Officers' Reports.)

- | | | | |
|------|-----------|--|---------------|
| 4.1 | 4.1 | Review DCA Fixed Aids Policy: JP and BD liaising. Still in progress. | BD, JP |
| 4.2 | 4.3 | Level behind Bateman's Shaft - P-bolts required: Drill repairs repairs awaited. Refer to item 6.7.1. | BD |
| 4.3 | 4.4 | Devonshire, shafts in the wood: Possible shaft capping needed. Refer to item 6.4. | GN, NA |
| 4.4 | 4.5 | Manifold bolts required: Progress. Refer to item 6.7.1. | BD |
| 4.5 | 4.6 | Odin Mine: Progress towards re-opening. Ongoing. In discussions with N.T. | AR |
| 4.6 | 4.7 | JH Leviathan Pitch: Awaiting drill repairs. Refer to item 6.7.1. | BD |
| 4.7 | 4.8 | Eyam Dale House Cave access: Progress with new keyholder.
WS has made contact with landowner. There is now a garage on the former parking area and electronic gates so the old access route is not possible, however he is content for access to the cave. It will require email advising of visit in advance, and Derbyshire key access and new route to cave to be sorted by AB. All information will be put on DCA online guide, including map. | |
| 4.8 | 4.9 | Eldon Hole - Ground anchors renewal: Progress. Refer to item 6.7.1. | PK, BD |
| 4.9 | 4.11 | Christmas Swallet & Snelslow Swallet: Progress towards access. Refer to item 6.4 | PM |
| 4.10 | 4.13 | Bolt Installation - Progress re. new bolting approved 20/6/15 (Rowter, Peak Cavern Assault Course); recalibration of Hydr jaws, etc. Refer to item 6.7.1 | BD |
| 4.11 | 4.15 | EuroSpeleo2016: Derbyshire "camp" progress. Written up in DCA Newsletter by BP. | |
| 4.12 | 4.16 | Hazelbadge Cave: Access progress report: Refer to item 6.4 | PM |
| 4.13 | 4.17 | EuroSpeleo2016 stand for DCA: Refer to item 6.1. | |
| 4.14 | 6.3.2 & 3 | UCF minutes on DCA website. Refer to Item 6.3 | |
| 4.15 | 6.4.2 | Online Access Guide. Refer to item 6.10. | |
| 4.16 | 6.5.2 | Derby Lane Traffic Restriction. Refer to item 6.5. | PM |
| 4.17 | 9.2 | Website Doman Names. Refer to item 6.2 & 6.3.3. | AS |

5. Election of New Members. No applications received.

6. Officers' Reports

6.0 Special Report re. Suicide Cave Problems *(Written report tabled by CW.)*

Continuing problems noted. Agreed we should go for a sign rather than a gate on the large entrance. JP had suggested an "information sign" which may have better results than a "don not" sign and suggested something similar to an interpretative sign which has just been installed just inside an entrance by Cambrian Caving Council. (Details available from the CCC Conservation Officer.) Also worth pursuing whether toilets at Speedwell Cavern could be open longer by arrangement with N.T. CW will follow this up. **ACTION: CW**

6.1 Secretary *(Written report tabled.)*

6.1.1 JP notes this report is for information. Agreed to recycle the outdated 2012 "Peak District Access & Rigging Guide". Confirmed BD has backup stocks of CoPD.

6.1.2 **That the Secretary's report be accepted.** Prop. P.Knight, Sec. C.Wilson. **Agreed unanimously**

6.2 Treasurer *(Written report tabled.)*

6.2.1 New account will be progressed when addresses of signatories are stabilised. **ACTION: AS**

6.2.2 **That the Treasurer's report be accepted.** Prop. P.Knight, Sec. G.Noble. **Agreed unanimously**

6.3 Conservation Officer *(Written report tabled.)*

6.3.1 PM queried who has established land ownership of the parking space on the road opposite New Bath Hotel in Matlock, CW has Land Registry map but AB notes that there are no signs warning of no parking although a resident had placed no parking cones blocking off the road. PM suggested it might be possible to negotiate use of the area owned by the Hotel. JP pointed out that the parking place was used by locals accessing the swimming pool. PM suggested that cavers should continue to park in the usual place until advised by the owner of NBH that it should not be used. Until further notice, continue to use the site but if anything is said advise DCA.

6.3.2 PK suggested monitoring SSSI sites could be notified on UKcaving to ask for volunteers for particular sites. All the ones on the SSSI website need doing and we could tag these to show when they have been done. **ACTION: CW**

6.3.3 AS report re. Domain Names (Ref. 4.1.17).

That AS arranges to pay for the domain name when it becomes available. Prop. J.Potts, Sec. P.Knight. **Agreed**

6.3.4 CW suggests that a UCF report should be on the open section of the DCA website but not the actual minutes. Agreed to set up an Officers' section of the website to host UCF Minutes and other sensitive information. Access to be by a username and password. **ACTION: CW, AS**

6.3.5 **That the Conservation Officer's report be accepted.** Prop. M.Higgins, Sec. B.Potts. **Agreed unanimously**

6.4 Access Officer *(Written report tabled.)*

6.4.1 JP commented that this seems a very positive report.

6.4.2 **Holme Bank:** PM said that he was not aware that GN had spoken to the brother (of the owner of **Holme Hall Mine**). GN had accidentally met with this person the previous afternoon. It appears that it is possible to talk to the owner in person but that he does not respond to friendly letters or emails send by PM or to letters from Chatsworth Estate. Important that PM, PK and GN liaise of this issue. **ACTION: PM, GN**

6.4.3 CW said she agreed with GN's approach re. **Hazelbadge**.

6.4.4 PM and GN will liaise over contacts re. **Snelslow/Christmas Pot**. **ACTION: PM, GN**

6.4.5 **That the Access Officer's report be accepted.** Prop. P.Mellors, Sec. P.Knight. **Agreed unanimously.**

6.5 Legal & Insurance Officer *(Written report tabled.)*

6.5.1 **Insurance and Risk Management:** Noted that BCA's insurers have asked for clarification on how cavers deal with the risks. Agreed that PM should send in his paper, "Access Control and Risk Management", to BCA.

6.5.2 **DCA Container.** PM and PK agree that it seems the container is now secure at Cavendish Mill. Suggest that cavers should always call in at the Reception Office before accessing the container.

6.5.3 **That the Legal & Insurance Officer's report be accepted.** Prop. B.Potts, Sec. M.Higgins. **Agreed unanimously.**

6.6 Projects Officer *(Written report tabled.)*

6.6.1 **Eldon Hole Ground Anchors.** This really needs to be progressed a.s.a.p. and PK has been in contact with Dan Hibberts and Bob Dearman. JP proposes that we should ask DH to quote for his time to do the job and pay him as DCA has already agreed to pay for the materials. Access to the drill is the crucial issue so, if DH is not able to do the job, DCA can hire a drill for PK to do the job. CW notes NE may be able to fund work if there is an underspend at the end of their financial year so there could be financial help available. **ACTION: PK, BD**

6.6.2 **That the Projects Officer's report be accepted.** Prop. B.Potts, P.Mellors. **Agreed unanimously.**

6.7.1 Equipment Officer *(Not present, no report supplied. Notes from Jules Barrett tabled.)*

6.7.1a **Drill Repairs.** PK had been copied in to email with NW and believes the drill is now serviceable.

6.7.1.b **Garden Path:** New topo has been done and is on the DCA Access website.

- 6.7.1.c **Bateman's Shaft:** Situation still unknown but known 5 bolts were required. The gate itself is complete. **ACTION: BD**
- 6.7.1.d **Manifold Bolts:** MH said that some rigging bolts need replacing. Also bolts securing lids on pothole in river bed need replacing with stainless bolts and MH is doing this himself. MH will ask Pete Ray about the list of rigging bolts needed and copy this to BP to ensure some progress using OCC's trained installers. **ACTION: MH**
- 6.7.1.e **JH, Leviathan:** No action needed for the moment as non-P-Bolts are in good condition and are used and inspected regularly by cavers descending.
- 6.7.1.f **Bolt inspection etc.** Leave this to Jules Barrett to progress and check at the AGM in February on what has been done.
- 6.7.1.g Thanks to Jules for providing the information.

6.7.2 Cave Atmosphere Monitoring Report (*Written report tabled.*)

- 6.7.2.a **Excess CO₂** had been noted elsewhere in the country - JP noted reports from Mendip.
- 6.7.2.b **Different type of meter.** AB says that at present we could have one meter which will measure 5 gases instead of two separate meters to measure CO₂ and O₂. Price is likely to be the same as what we already have and it is believed there would be no problems in servicing, recalibrating, etc. AB recommends changing to the multiple use meter. **ACTION: AB**
- 6.7.2.c **That the Cave Atmosphere Monitoring Report be accepted.** Prop. M.Higgins, Sec. C.Wilson. **Agreed unanimously.**

6.8 Training Officer (*Apologies received. Written report tabled.*)

- 6.8.1 PK noted incorrect dates on Training Events calendar. JP will check with NA and correct all dates before circulating this.
- 6.8.2 BCA Training - leave to Item 7, BCA Report.
- 6.8.3 **That the Training Officer's report be accepted.** Prop. P.Knight, Sec. C.Wilson. **Agreed unanimously.**

6.9 Newsletter Editor (*Written report tabled.*)

- 6.9.1 JP congratulated MH on producing a series of very good newsletters. CW suggested there might be a special conservation issue. PK suggested a possible "technical tip of the month".
- 6.9.2 **That the Newsletter Editor's report be accepted.** Prop. A.Sawyer, Sec. P.Knight. **Agreed unanimously.**

6.10 Chairman's special report on DCA Cave Registry and Online Access Guide (*Written report tabled.*)

- 6.10.1 **List of volunteers.** Add to list of people, Karen Slatcher is doing the Dove. JP will amend report.
- 6.10.2 **Gazetteer.** AS suggests system for entering accurate grid references on reports coming in for the Access Guide. Also need to ensure that all the various system in use agree with each other. AS and AB will liaise.
- 6.10.3 New section of site needs to be turned on and WS will contact Matt Voysey to do this. AS has made the site more suitable for use on a smart phone. Also needs a facility to put photos on the site to identify entrances.
- 6.10.4 **Rigging Guides:** AS has re-drawn all rigging topos to match.
- 6.10.5 **That the Chairman's special report be accepted.** Prop. C.Wilson, Sec. B.Potts. **Agreed unanimously.**

7. Report from BCA Council Meeting 1 October (*Written report tabled by JP.*)

- 7.1 **New L&I Officer:** JP noted that this is Bob Mehew, who is taking the job very seriously.
- 7.2 **Subscriptions** for 2017: JP would notify members of BCA subscriptions in the next DCA Information Circular.
- 7.3 **Caver Training.** JP explained briefly the separation now to be made between recreational caver training and professional qualifications for Instructors and Cave Leaders.

8. Date & Venue for next Council Meeting

- 8.1 **AGM: Sat. 25 Feb. 2017, 10am at Monyash Village Hall.** Council meeting to follow immediately after the AGM.

9. Any Other Business

- 9.1 **Approve new UCF Const. and Cave Conservation Plan Production Methods.**
That the two new documents be approved to replace the earlier issues.
Prop. JP, Sec. BP. **Agreed unanimously.**
- 9.2 **Manifold N.T.** Paul Mortimer from N.T. had asked if anyone is willing to take over the work that Mel Milner did in the Manifold Valley help look after the caves on NT property. (Possible free membership of NT may be included.) Suggest that anyone interested to liaise with P.Mortimer - volunteers should contact CW in the first instance. **ACTION: CW**
- 9.3 **Christmas Pot/Snelslow.** CW has a phone no. for the owner of Peakshill farm land and will approach the him to enquire about the possibility of access to these sites. **ACTION: CW**
- 9.4 **Eurospeleo2016 Conservation article by CW.** Suggested that this would be an excellent item for a DCA Newsletter article. There might even be a special "cave conservation issue". Suggest it be sent out to DCA officers for their comments.

Meeting closed 13.05

J.Potts, Recorder

APPENDED TO THESE MINUTES AND FORMING PART OF THEM ARE THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS

Item 6.0	Report on Suicide Cave Problems
Item 6.1	Hon. Secretary's Report
Item 6.2	Hon. Treasurer's Report
Item 6.3	Conservation Officer's Report
Item 6.4	Access Officer's Report
Item 6.5	Legal & Insurance Officer's Report
Item 6.6	Projects Officer's Report
Item 6.7.1	Notes on Equipment Officer's Business
Item 6.7.2	Cave Atmosphere Monitoring Report
Item 6.8	Training Officer's Report
Item 6.9	Newsletter Editor's Report
Item 7	Report from BCA Council Meeting on 1 October

Item 6.0 - Suicide Cave Report

There has been a continued problem of littering and defecating, by passers-by, in Suicide cave, Winnats pass, Castleton and the area is a recognised tourist hot spot. There has been a proposal to gate it as a consequence of this.

It is possible to enter the cave by the small crawl so gating it would keep the general public at large out and at the same time allow unrestricted access to 'cavers'. But there a few people have concerns with this approach as we need to be careful that we don't appear make the cave experience exclusive for 'real cavers' only, i.e. excluding the walk in, inquisitive general public from this type of open cave. It is thought that we should really be encouraging cave inquisitiveness / cave awareness and inclusiveness not preventing it. Inclusiveness usually encourages ownership and having a desire to care for whatever it may be. Gating may antagonise folk and make them want to cause damage there or elsewhere.

It was suggested as a compromise that we try signage first. It would be an interesting exercise to try different types of signage that have been used across the country to see which is the most effective method for this clientele of the general public. Trying this does carry a risk. Interpretive signs tend to be the most favoured type. If signage and all else did fail then we may have to go with the last resort and gate it.

The proposed line to take will follow after discussions with NT landowner and UCF members.

Christine Wilson, DCA Conservation Officer

Item 6.1 Secretary's Report**Communications and Publications**

Since the June Council meeting, apart from circulating the Minutes and the agenda for this meeting, I have circulated 2 general Information Circulars in July and October. I have also circulated specific information on the parking issues in Matlock Bath to DCA members and have used UKcaving.com to advise Derbyshire cavers in general of problems relating to access or conservation.

In the event it was not possible for me to run a separate DCA stand at Eurospeleo2016 but copies DCA's "Caves of the Peak District" were sold from the Orpheus C. C. stand. In all we have sold 42 copies of CoPD so far this year, mainly at the trade price to shops; we still have around 730 copies in stock of the 2000 printed originally and it continues to sell at a steady rate.

I also deal with shop sales of the DCA Newsletter "The Derbyshire Caver" and, since the change to a coloured cover and the price rise to £2.00 per copy, we sell a steady 20+ copies of each issue through shops. We have 12 regular subscribers and copies also go to the British Caving Library, other Derbyshire libraries and to UBSS and SWCC libraries.

The "Peak District Access & Rigging Guide", issued free to DCA members, is now redundant since all the information is now displayed on the DCA website for free download. We have about 100 copies left of the original print run of 300 and I would propose that we now put these into recycling.

Boyd Potts is now able to print copies of the 5 DCA Cave Conservation Audits at cost but we need to ensure that we have the pdf masters of all these for him to use.

As always, my thanks to all the DCA officers who keep the supply of information coming and who work hard on behalf of Derbyshire Cavers.

Jenny Potts, 21-10-16

Item 6.2 - Treasurer's Report 22 October 2016**Account Balances**

As of 21st October 2016 the account balances are:

Unity Trust Deposit Account:	19,055.75
Unity Trust Current Account:	372.82

RBS Deposit Account:	1.00
RBS Current Account:	1.00

Total	19,430.57
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I have not yet opened a Lloyds account as previously discussed, however I intend to do this as soon as possible.

Cash Flow 31/12/2015 to 21/09/2016

Income	
BCA Grants: Youth Development	200.00
Bank Interest	13.15
Caver Training	40.00
Publications: CoPD	593.06
Publications: Handbook	3.50
Publications: News Letters	361.60
Subscriptions & Entry Fees	183.00
Total Income	1,394.31
Expenditure	
Bank Charges	18.00
Conservation, Access etc.: Admin	38.45
Conservation, Access etc.: Other	155.25
Donations	500.00
Equipment: Materials	77.60
Equipment: Travel	37.75
General Admin: Materials, printing, copying etc.	235.01
General Admin: Post	227.00
General Admin: Travel	8.65
Publications: Caves of the Peak District	6.93
Publications: Newsletter	915.50
Publications: Printing, postage etc. Conservation audits: Paper	50.57
SSSI Conservation Work: Projects 2014/2015: Materials	157.10
Training: Post, telephone, email etc.	0.80
Total Expenditure	2,428.61
Income less Expenditure	-1,034.30

Webmaster related issues.**Agenda Items****4.14. UCF Minutes on DCA website**

I have started discussing changes to the existing site to better incorporate SSSI monitoring and UCF material with CW I have started implementing some of CW's requests, and will include the UCF minutes.

4.15. Online Access Guide

The Online Access guide / Cave Registry is now live, and access has been setup for area registrars. The only issue that I have observed was that administrators were unable to change their own password, this was a software fault which I identified and fixed.

I have made a test version of the public interface, with the intent of making the guide more useable on mobile devices, if this is satisfactory I will find out if Matt Voysey is willing to incorporate the changes.

4.17. Ownership of domain names

The SSSI monitoring project domains are registered in the name of "Focusplus Developments Ltd.", the late Mel Milner's now closed company, with the registrar "Heart Internet". I have confirmed with Heart Internet that only Mel Milner's executors of heirs can transfer ownership of the domain name. Unfortunately we have not been able to arrange for this. The domain name peakcavemonitoring.org.uk expires on the 22nd November 2016. After this date we may be able to claim the name, which will involve a small sum of less than £10/year. If the DCA intend to retain this domain name I would like approval for this expenditure, and will attempt to gain ownership of the domains.

If the DCA gains ownership of the domain name, I propose that we discontinue the separate site and link the name to the DCA site.

Other Activity

On the 12th September the DCA website was being flagged by Google as dangerous because it was providing links to another caving related site that was hosting malware. I took action to temporarily remove the offending links and remove the warnings and also arranged to remove the malware from the linked site.

*Angus Sawyer,
Hon. Treasurer & Webmaster*

Item 6.3 - Conservation Officer's Report

Underground Conservation Forum 19th Oct 2016 report

This was the UCF's 30th Anniversary. The first meeting of the 'SSSI Cave Conservation Regional Management Committee' was held on the 26th September 1986. In 2003 it became the UCF. Since then much has been done. Dave Webb wrote a report in March 2013 "The Work of the Underground Conservation Forum" which gives a bit of background to the formation of the UCF and outlines work done to date. This document was circulated to UCF members and it is our intention to publicize a revised version in the DCA circular/newsletter and on the web to mark UCF 30th Anniversary.

Dan Abrahams of Natural England has tried his utmost to gain funding for the DCA and applied for £3000 for 2017 but unfortunately it has not been granted. We shall continue to monitor caves and with DCA funding continue with conservation project work. We may need to consider the future and ensure we plan for any project work needing resources.

NE have also changed the monitoring regime for our cave systems so that the frequency of monitoring is based on its risk at being damaged. At some point I shall be giving Dan a list of caves in categories with this in mind.

It has been 6 years since caves were last monitored and it is time to do all of the SSSI caves again. It is hoped folk will be as willing to help with this task as before. (Forms/surveys are available on the DCA website and need returning to me).

Prof Andrew Chamberlain, University of Manchester archaeologist, gave an interesting talk on bones found in caves the Castleton locality and how they got there. More recently a bones have been found in Speedwell by 'Moose' (see report in Descent 252) and in Victoria Aven, in Peak cavern by members of the TSG. (In both instances the bones were only removed as they were likely to be damaged if left there. They were given to Andrew to identify and date. The Cliff Cavern/Speedwell bone was from a very rare 'Woolly Rhinoceros' and the Victoria Aven one from a large ungulate. He is still examining and dating these bones. Andrew will be writing a report and it will be available for all to view very soon. (Mark Richardson also found what may part of a red deer antler in the Eldon dig.)

There have been a number of reported cases of littering and graffiti:

Waterways Swallet's main chamber has white spray paint markings and other rubbish and Wapping and Cumberland has also succumbed to tea-light littering, etc. again!

Suicide Cave in Winnats pass was reported by PICA as containing vast amounts of rubbish and human faecal material. This appears to be an ongoing problem and gating it was a suggestion but there are also ongoing discussions about forms of signage. Gating may be the last resort if this fails. The proposed line to take will follow after discussions with NT landowner and UCF members.

Many thanks to those that have alerted others, via 'ukcaving', or word of mouth about these problems thanks also to those that have already started to help clean it up.

Bats:

Derbyshire and Staffordshire Bat groups have been busy with Autumn swarming work in the Via Gellia and at Jugholes and they have just finished. 34 bats were caught and recorded at Jugholes and their species composition examined. They will now be out and about helping the North Staffordshire team finish their work at mine entrances which require cave savvy bat folk! Jess Eades and Steve Roe will be producing a summary report of work done over the years and will give it to Mike Higgins for publication in the DCA newsletter. They will also be running Bat Awareness courses in the New Year. Dates will put out via various media: 'ukcaving', Derbyshire Caver and in the DCA circulars.

Repair work/conservation work:

Orpheus have cleared the vegetation in Waterways Swallet car park and Boyd Potts has managed to source a new wooden gate to replace the old one.

The Whirlpool traverse in Speedwell has been fixed by members of the TSG and others.

Dave Ottewell and Helen have made a start clearing some of the rubbish out of Waterways Swallet.

Many thanks.

Access:

There is an issue with parking at the newly owned New Bath Hotel in Matlock and also a newly owned house at the northern end of the lane. Cavers and climbers, for a long time and before the Hotel went on sale, parked alongside the lane next to the hotel. It has been established that the new Hotel owners own this 'parking land', i.e. it is not public car parking. The DCA as a consequence request that cavers visiting caves in the vicinity, like Cumberland and Wapping or Devonshire, park at the public pay and display car park near Temple mine until further notice.

There is a new access arrangement for Eyam Dale House cave. Details will be made available soon.

Eurospeleo week:

4th Eurospeleo Protection Symposium - 'Caves and Karst - Protection and Conservation under EU Law'

An interesting 3½ day event during Eurospeleo week. Talks, slideshows, workshops and field trip. A 'Food for thought- cave life of the year' report is available.

Website:

I have begun liaising with Angus Sawyer to modify the Access and Conservation and SSSI monitoring bits of the DCA website. We hope to use some of the same format as on the recently revamped CNCC website and also include more sections on archaeology, mining history and cave life and an easier means of accessing information on digging.

Christine Wilson, Conservation Officer

Item 6.4 - Access report

Devonshire: uncovered shafts in woods GN/NA to arrange date with new owners in half term week to visit and decide on action.

Christmas Swallet / Snelsow: GN to get contact details of owners agent from PM to contact regarding potential access

Holme Bank: GN met Holme House owner's brother and passed on mobile number to arrange visit to discuss access issues. Owner is concerned about: "kids" breaking in the lower entrance and getting injured and liability problems.

Hazelbadge: CW has decided to let this rest a while until the owner is more comfortable with access, as he has a lot happening at present with boundary issues.

Gary Noble, Access Officer

Item 6.5 - Legal & Insurance Officer's Report

Holme Bank Chert Mine

There is still no sign of a resolution of the dispute over access to the main entrance. I have written to the new resident of Holme Hall stating DCA's position and asking for his views on restoring access but have had no reply. Chatsworth have had a similar experience, I understand. Meanwhile, in the Top Quarry the dodgy entrance known as No. 8 has at last been welded up (courtesy of Nick Williams) and stonework has been built up (courtesy of the Projects Officer and team) to obscure the metal drum and piled up tubs that for so long have been a feature of this way in and out of the Mine. Sad to report, the combination lock on the authorised entrance in the same quarry has gone missing once again.

Derby Lane, Monyash

I have spoken to the Rights of Way team at the National Park Authority and been told that the proposal to close Derby Lane to traffic won't now go to Committee till early November.

Castleton Street Parking

I have heard nothing about whether the proposed new restrictions are to go ahead. In the absence of background information from TSG I felt unable to submit a viable objection on DCA's behalf.

DCA Container

As predicted, I received no reply to my letter to British Fluorspar. I did make clear in the letter that in the event of no reply DCA would take it British Fluorspar has no objection to the container remaining where it is.

Insurance & Risk Management

In response to the request for something in writing, I have compiled a paper on the steps DCA takes to manage risk on its patch. (See below.) I would be glad to hear if Council has any objection to my submitting the paper to BCA and the Broker.

P.T.Mellors, Legal & Insurance Officer

DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION ACCESS CONTROL AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The Association's role as a Regional Caving Council is not one primarily of controlling access underground. The Association (DCA) negotiates with local landowners and land managers to secure and maintain access for cavers from across the country who have some affiliation to a recognised representative body.

The only sites where DCA has total control over access are the Ashford Black Marble Mine and the Garden Path entrance to the Lathkill Cave system. At both these sites a permit system operates because the owner insists on DCA keeping tight control over who enters. By its nature this system of control minimises the risk of entry by inexperienced persons who are not members of a group that is familiar with the risks posed by underground exploration in general or by the site in particular. DCA is required to inspect both sites regularly, implement safety measures where and when necessary, and submit an annual report to the owner.

At certain other sites in the region DCA has, at the owner's request, fitted gates or lids that can only be opened by means of a large adjustable spanner (a so-called "Derbyshire key"). This again acts as a risk management device in keeping out the curious and the casual visitor or passer-by.

All other sites fall into the category of either open access (i.e. no gates or lids but mostly requiring the owner's permission) or entry by means of a key held by the owner or his agent. Here risk management resides in the project work DCA undertakes for the owner by way of repairs and maintenance both above and below ground, and in the information the Association disseminates widely through its website, its regional Guidebook, its Access & Rigging Guide, its Circulars, its quarterly Newsletter, and other publications. DCA also has input into the codes of safe caving practice compiled and periodically updated by the national body (the British Caving Association) and has its own written policy on the installation and maintenance of Fixed Aids (such as anchor bolts for SRT use).

Conclusion. Whilst DCAS is not set up as an access control body as such, it does clearly play a role in helping to ensure that all cavers visiting caves and mines in the region are aware of the risks attached to particular sites and that these risks are minimised by virtue of the information DCA circulates and the project work it does in the interest of safer caving.

P.T.Mellors, Legal & Insurance Officer, October 2016.

Item 6.6 - Project Officer's Report

Since the previous report I have been very busy with my main work and I'm afraid there is very little DCA stuff that has occurred over this period.

The DCA Container now seems less at risk as we have asked the Mill if they wanted it gone and had no reply to date. I have installed 2 small DCA signs on the container front. Both are hard plastic and display ownership info and contact details. I suggest we leave things as they are for now as the container appears secure at its current (no rent) location.

I understand Pete Mellors has been undertaking some sterling walling work at the Holmebank top quarry.

As far as I am aware (4.3) the new ground anchors are still awaiting installation at Eldon Hole. Dan H was waiting for good weather to install them. I am surprised that this has not happened as now we're on the countdown to the next spell of poor winter weather. Perhaps Bob D would be kind enough to see what the state of play is here.

I have received a few requests for materials for digs and gates from the DCA store and have offered some grill recently to secure an adit near Bradwell.

Pete Knight, Projects Officer

Item 6.7.1 - Equipment Officer's Report

In Bob Dearman's absence, Jules Barrett has been able to answer some of the queries from Matters Arising:

J.B. I haven't been able to do much over the summer but am ready to go during the winter. I've added detail as I know it:

4.3 Level behind Bateman's Shaft - P-bolts required: Drill repairs repairs awaited.

J.B. I THINK the drill is now fixed; the last couple of things I did at the end of last winter I used my own kit. I haven't been involved in any bolting here.

4.5 Manifold bolts required - understood Bob was in contact with Mike Higgins over this.

J.B. I can't help with this but haven't heard anything about it so would assume nothing happened.

4.7 JH Leviathan Pitch: Awaiting drill repairs

J.B. This appeared on the list but to be honest I don't expect this to happen any time soon. As far as I'm concerned it's super low priority. The anchors on the alternative Leviathan pitch were raised as an issue after one of them was reported loose - removed and replaced. They are currently a mixture but there's nothing wrong with the others as far as I know and the nature of the rigging there means that even if an anchor was to fail it is unlikely to cause serious harm.

4.9 Eldon Hole- Ground anchors renewal: Progress. - understood Bob was liaising with Dan Hibberts but Pete Knight has heard nothing from either Bob or Dan.

J.B. Don't know anything about this.

4.12 Bolt Installation - Progress re. new bolting approved 20/6/15 (Rowter, Peak Cavern Assault Course); recalibration of Hydrajaws, etc.

J.B. Not sure - I only have time to get involved in these projects in the winter and will be ready to go from middle of December. Rowter is probably the first on the list. I'll speak to Bob when he's back from climbing.

Platforms were removed from Garden Path and new anchors installed to facilitate SRT descent.

Thanks to Jules for clarifying some of these points, he will be getting in touch with Bob when he's back from abroad.

Item 6.7.2 - DCA Cave Atmosphere Monitoring

1. Problems reported. There have been no reported problems since the last DCA Meeting.

2. Measurements. It has not been possible to measure air quality during this period owing to equipment failure.

3. Equipment. As stated in the previous report, the CO₂ meter needs replacing, and, since the meeting, the O₂ meter has also failed. Both these meters have lasted for at least their expected lifespans, and replacements are being currently negotiated by Dan Murray.

Had any problems been reported during this period, I would have been able to use DCRO equipment to take any necessary measurements.

Alan Brentnall

Item 6.8 - DCA Training Officer's Report

Bit of a tough year for everyone it seems.... There are some good people coming through the ranks at the moment and I will do everything I can to keep them busy next year. Next year I celebrate 30 years as an instructor... (blimey, and I'm only 40 years old!!!!!!!)

Devonshire Cavern.

I have spoken to the new owner who is keen for DCA to look at a couple of shafts on her land. Gary Noble and myself will look into this hopefully next week. Peter Knight is away in Wales at the mo. so won't be around but has sent his best wishes for us to carry on and sort it.

BCA Training Committee

At the last meeting, the BCA training officer stood down from the training committee to concentrate on the professional awards. The BCA training committee always looked to be made up of professional cavers and with the exception of DCA (which I have always attended for the last 26 years) does not represent the regions and sport caving. The club scheme that presently sits within DCA and is run by training officers or approved trainers and assessors of approved clubs may now go national with a southern CIC and a Northern CIC now in talks with me about how to promote this.

SRT TRAINING COURSE

There is a full blown 2 day SRT training course for those who may not be able to get training through their clubs. Includes all kit, ropes, instruction & insurance etc. There are follow up trips for those who are not able to make some club trips.

Date: **Saturday & Sunday January 21st & 22nd 2017**

BCA Training Grants

At the last meeting, I secured 3 more grants for DCA and the following workshops are now available:

DCA Basic SRT Workshop

This workshop is available only to anyone interested in SRT and is ideal for first timers or those with some experience wishing to progress.

Date: - **Saturday December 3rd 2016**

DCA Specialist SRT Rigging and Rescue Workshop

This Course is available only to SRT proficient people and it has limited places so please book early. First come first served!

Date: - **Sunday December 4th 2016**

DCA SRT Underground Master class

Another of these days will be of an informal nature with emphasis on personal techniques improvement. The trip will be run by a CIC holder and all of the ropes etc will be provided. I will sponsor these trips with insurance cover and lend any kit that people need. These trips are not an introduction to SRT, however they are perfect for newcomers or old hands wishing to pick up on techniques etc.

Cave Photography Workshop

I am keen to set up another of these workshop type days in Cave Photography and am just waiting for a reply from 2 people I have approached to get back to me with a date... so if you want to learn from one of the best in the business, get in touch.....

CAVING CLUB TRAINING SCHEME - Training Officers Workshop

The BCA training committee is now committed to club training and our DCA scheme will be launched Nationally at the end of this year ready for 2017. If you are a club training officer, or thinking of becoming one, please get in touch.

The workshop will look at training and assessment procedures in the 'Caving Club Training Scheme' and techniques as well as personal development. A must for anyone thinking about teaching caving to others.

Good caving.

Nigel Atkins. DCA Training Officer

Item 6.9 - Newsletter Editor/Publications Officer's Report

Publication of *The Derbyshire Caver* has continued to meet my four issues per year target and sufficient content has been received to fill the maximum sixteen pages per issue that postage costs allow. By the time you read this you should have received the Autumn 2016 issue no 142 and I haven't had to write anything myself this time to fill up the space! As always, more articles would be welcome – DCA members, please, please consider putting metaphorical pen to paper.

Feelers have already been put out for possible features for the next issue – no time to sit back and rest – and, apart from anything else, all being well the next in Dave Webb's excellent series of articles should be ready.

Other commitments have meant that little work has been done during the summer on the production of the index of the Newsletter from the first issue in 1962 up to the present time. However, now that winter is fast approaching this will be something that can usefully occupy me on those long wet dark cold days when the outdoors doesn't look so attractive.

My sincere thanks to everyone who has submitted articles or photographs for publication over the last 12 months – please help me out by keeping that material coming.

Mike Higgins, DCA Newsletter Editor/Publications Officer

Item 6.10 - Chairman's Report on DCA Cave Registry and Online Access Guide

The online access guide has been online now for the last few months and is going very well. Updates have been coming in and they are getting updated when required.

The only area that isn't online is Hamps/Manifold. Robert Thorne and Peter Ray have undertaken work to locate the entrances for me and they will show me where they are so we can get a more detailed grid reference for the site. I still need to undertake this walk. I will aim to get this data ready in the next few months.

We have volunteers for the following catchments:

Castleton - Phil Wolstenholme
Bradwell - Sam Townsend
Lathkill - John Gunn
Derwent South - Mike Higgins
Buxton - Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club
Stoney Middleton - Will Whalley
River Wye - Angus Sawyer
Alderley Edge - Olly King
Dove - Karen Slatcher

Adam Russell is keeping any eye of the mines across the region. I keep an eye on the other catchments.

Thanks very much to the volunteers who have undertaken work for us. As usual if any body wants to volunteer to help on updating the online access guide, please get in touch with me via the DCA website.

The photograph and bibliography archive part of the site also needs to be turned on. Now it's the Autumn, I'll start looking into this again.

Derbyshire Cave Registry and National Cave Database:

No work has been done on updating the database to incorporate the Derbyshire Cave Registry with the online access guide throughout the summer. This is something that I will start looking into over the next few months and start liaising with Matt Voysey and John Gunn again. Angus has been looking at the data with a view to merging it together.

We still need a volunteer for Derbyshire Cave Registry Secretary.

Wayne Sheldon, (Chairman)

Item 7 - BCA Council Meeting Report

BCA Council met briefly after the AGM in June and then held its first proper meeting on 1st. October with a new Secretary, Simon Brooks, and a new Treasurer, Robin Weare. There were two issues which I felt would be of particular interest to DCA members: subscriptions for 2017 (which I reported on in the most recent DCA Information Circular) and the Training Committee changes.

It was also agreed that there needed to be a number of amendments to the BCA Constitution; discussions about these have already begun with a view to having a draft version in time for the January meeting of BCA Council so that they can be formally proposed at the BCA Council meeting in March in time for the AGM. Note that changes to the Constitution require to be confirmed by a ballot of all BCA members and, for the time being at least, this will require a postal vote costing of the order of £6,000 - BCA hopes eventually to be able to move to electronic voting system.

Next year's BCA AGM will take place on Sunday, 11 June, at the Rotary Centre Castleton during the BCA Party Weekend.

Subscriptions

It is likely that the cost to BCA of its Public Liability Insurance will rise for 2017, though it is not yet known by how much. It was agreed that BCA had sufficient resources to cover the expected deficit on individual members' insurance contributions for the year, so the cost of BCA insurance for Direct Individual Members and Club Individual Members will remain the same for 2017, although it is likely to rise for 2018.

However, it was agreed that insurance will need to rise for 2017 for caving clubs and also for clubs with a Club Headquarters building. As there is a sliding scale, dependent on the number of members in the club, the amount will vary - for the largest clubs the rise is likely to be of the order of £25 for 2017, while for smaller clubs the rise will be much lower.

Training Committee Changes

The BCA Training Committee as was has now split to become two separate organisations, one dealing with professional caving qualifications, the other dealing with recreational caver training.

The separate body dealing specifically with professional training qualifications, will be rather on the lines of the Mountain Leader Training Board and, I assume, will become a constituent member of BCA in the same way as, for example, CDG. Mary Wilde will continue to provide the administration services for this new body.

There will still be a caver training function aimed at recreational cavers and able to award grants for caver training courses and, presumably, this will have at its head a new-style BCA Training Officer and representation from the regional councils. I assume it will also need some kind of administrative help if it is to be able to deal with grant aid requests from clubs. This reconstituted BCA Training Committee is in the process of being set up and Nigel Atkins is taking the lead.

Jenny Potts, DCA Rep. to BCA