

**DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION - REPORTS FOR 2 NOVEMBER 2013****Item 6.1 - Secretary's Report****Communications**

Since the June meeting I have emailed all members with the following items:

- News of the death of Ralph Johnson
- Thanks for help with Cliffhanger
- Details of DCA Training Courses
- BMC Petition re. Stanage Edge
- Devonshire Mine work updates
- News of theft of rope from a pitch
- Minutes of the June Council Meeting and Agenda for November Council Meeting
- Information Circulars 2013/3, May-July and 2013/4, July-October

I have posted the Minutes, Agenda, Training Course details and the two Information Circulars to Associate Members and those other members/contacts who do not have email access or who wish to receive printed paperwork - 22 by post each time.

I have also made use of *UKcaving.com* to keep cavers in general informed about Devonshire Mine work, theft of ropes, updates on bolting of Cliff Cavern, DCA involvement in Defra's plans for Bio-diversity Offsetting, the Pindale Caravan Site planning application and various other issues re. access to caves. Mel Milner and Terry Jackson have also been posting to keep cavers informed on DCA matters and we receive a positive response to this. Thanks also to Mel for maintaining the DCA website and posting relevant information there; it is noticeable that some queries and requests for sales publications are now reaching me via the website.

**Devonshire Mine**

I have spent much time communicating with the various people involved in the work on Devonshire Mine to keep everyone informed, answer queries from non-DCA members who don't check on UKcaving and to ensure that the PICA Secretary was kept up to date with progress. Thanks to Vin Machin for keeping all his PICA members informed. A formal Mines Inspection of Devonshire is due on 13th. November and this should help to clarify if any additional work is needed, over and above the work already identified to stabilise the surround to the gate, to enable the continued use of the site for instructed caving.

**Sales of Caves of the Peak District**

Sales had slowed down at the beginning of the year but are now starting to pick up again. The Treasurer is kept informed of progress.

*Jenny Potts,  
DCA Hon. Secretary,  
31/10/13*

**Item 6.2 - Treasurer's Report for 2nd November 2013 Council Meeting****Current funds up to the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2013 are:**

Deposit a/c: £16,580.97  
Current a/c: £604.53  
Total: £17,185.50

There is a list of payments in and out of the accounts since the Council Meeting June 2013:

<b>Payments in:</b>		<b>Payments out:</b>	
Membership Fees:	£12.00	Conservation and Access Work:	£542.24
COPD Income:	£674.00	COPD Expenses:	£52.00
Bank Interest:	£32.22	General Admin:	£42.50
Conservation Plans:	£11.90	Newsletter / Publications Expenses:	£23.33
Handbook Sales:	£7.00	Cliffhanger 2013	£164.39
Cliffhanger 2013 Expenses (From BCA)	£164.39		
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>£901.51</b>		<b>£824.46</b>

### **Caves of the Peak District**

Sales of COPD have started trickling through again.

### **BCA Core Funding**

We haven't received the core funding for 2012 yet but the accounts have been finalised by the regional treasurers and payment should be made shortly.

### **Conservation and Access Work / Funding**

Paul Ibberson, the BCA Treasurer was putting the following to BCA Council regarding the claiming of travelling expenses for conservation and access work, this was for consideration:

*One other significant action outstanding has been the issue of travel expenses for volunteers on C&A work. This has been batted around between various interested parties, but remains a fairly vexed issue. Whilst we have a general consensus that we should try to ensure volunteers are not financially disadvantaged, I can only conclude that it is potentially a liability of such unknown magnitude that I feel unable to recommend anything other than providing for travel expenses to be allowable within the annual "self-certified" limit (currently £500). There is a slight problem in that some C&A travel has already been paid (or recommended to be paid) in excess of that level, but I take the view that this commitment should be honoured and a line drawn thereafter. I would, however, leave the option for any Regional Council which feels it has a specific, significant C&A volunteer travel situation to approach the Finance Committee with a project funding request as with normal RCC arrangements. There is no guarantee that further funding will be forthcoming, but at least this will give the possibility of support in line with the general aim. I will be asking that Council endorse this position.*

I'm not sure what the outcome of this proposal was. It's basically saying that we need to apply up front with a budget for projects and get it approved by the finance committee, prior to the work taking place. This can be done, the conservation and access team need to be aware of this and ensure any projects come through me, and we apply for funding prior to doing the work.

For the current financial year, 2013. We have spent £850.85 under the conservation and access banner. The year isn't over yet. £438.38 has been spent on Manifold Valley Conservation work, which is more than half of the current expenditure. I can only claim back £500 of this from BCA, as a big fuss has been made this year by other regional councils so we will show a loss next year on what we can claim back from BCA. On previous years, this would have been covered by the Natural England funding we received for SSSI Work, but funding was stopped for this year. The only thing we can say is that funds built up over the last eight years from previous SSSI work paid for by Natural England, will now cover the cost of this Manifold Work.

### **Additional Saving Account / Bonds**

I haven't managed to find time to visit any banks yet and follow up Boyd's advice but I'll aim to do it prior to the AGM.

### **DCA Subs for 2014**

As there is no increase in BCA insurance costs so BCA subs are staying the same for 2014, I'd suggest we keep DCA subs the same for 2014, i.e. £10 for a non BCA member or £7 if you are a BCA DIM.

*Wayne Sheldon  
DCA Hon. Treasurer  
23/10/13*

## **Item 6.3 - Conservation Officer's Report**

In the last few months, I have finished the Cave Conservation Plan (CCP) for Waterways Swallet which is now on the DCA web site. I have convened and chaired the latest UCF meeting in October, then distributed the minutes along with a copy of the Bagshawe Cavern CCP for comment. It was generally felt that the addition of some photos would enhance it, also adding information on the connection to the resurgence cave. (And maybe an updated survey or at least a copy of the survey from page 25 in Descent 205? Copyright would need to be established and permission to reproduce the survey.)

I have liaised with the National Trust and other organisations on various issues, received a list of folders and files on conservation held by Dave Webb and also the CCPs for JH and the White River Series. The JH CCP needs updating to reflect that it has since been connected to Peak/Speedwell and could also benefit from some photos. The WRS CCP is missing its photos of the features being monitored.

I have also received the Cave Works Form for Longcliffe Mine in the Castleton SSSI which will form part of the bid for funding next year.

It should have been noted early this year that several extra important sites in the Manifold Valley that NE agreed should be monitored haven't been and might have provided support for funding this year. Those sites are Limepits (West Ecton) Mine, T-Pot and St. Bertram's Cave.

Finally, I have recently submitted DCA's response to the Biodiversity Offsetting green paper, this was based largely on the excellent one from the CNCC.

*Melissa Milner,  
DCA Conservation Officer.*

**Appendix Re. Item 4.12.a of DCA Minutes for 22 June 2013**

**Notes on Cave Atmosphere Monitoring for the 02/11/13 DCA Meeting**

1. No problems with CO<sub>2</sub> have been reported so far this year.
2. Some sampling has taken place in various locations, specifically Nettle, Knotlow, Giant's, Bagshawe, Peak and Lathkill.
3. Where CO<sub>2</sub> has been a problem in the past (Nettle, Knotlow, Bagshawe), levels are around 1.5% - about 1% lower than last year, when problems were being reported.
4. The Nettle sampling trip was identical to last year's session, in an attempt to determine the efficiency of the new lid. Metering was done using Crewe's O<sub>2</sub> meter and DCRO's CO<sub>2</sub> meter.
5. I have received no requests to use DCA's meters from other cavers or clubs.
6. I have received very little response to the letter recommending the use of O<sub>2</sub> meters; presumably because conditions seem OK this year.
7. I now have two DCA meters.
8. DCA's Sperian PHD6 meter (O<sub>2</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub>, LEL) which has some problems (quote for fixing deemed too expensive) but could possibly be used in conjunction with another meter.
9. DCA's Crowcon Gasman CO<sub>2</sub> meter seems to work OK, but has gone beyond the date where it should be recalibrated. Consequently, I tend to use it in conjunction with Crewe's O<sub>2</sub> meter so that readings can be verified.
10. Currently, the software which controls the calibration of the Crowcon meter doesn't work, and I am in contact with the manufacturers to sort this out. When this problem has been rectified, we will still need a bottle of sample CO<sub>2</sub> to enable calibration to take place.
11. As hinted in 4 above, DCRO have an identical Crowcon Gasman CO<sub>2</sub> meter, but they have similar calibration problems, and their meter is also calibration-date-expired. Once I sort out the software issue for DCA, I should be able to apply the same remedy for DCRO, and hopefully both organisations will be able to share the cost of calibration gas.

*Alan Brentnall  
29 Oct 2013*

**Item 6.5.i - Access Officer's Report**

**Apologies**

Deepest apologies for being unable to attend the meeting due to work commitments.

**Jug Holes gate inspection**

Having looked at the gate at the lower entrance for Jug Holes in the Matlock area we have found that you can still bolt the gate shut by bypassing the hole in the door and just using the bolt and chain fix the door to the wall. However this is only a temporary solution to the issue, it needs re-threading ASAP.

**Christmas Swallet & Snelslow Swallet**

After making two attempts to contact Steph, introducing myself and asking for the chance to meet to talk about the possibility of future access to both caves, I have received no correspondence back. This matter has now been given to other members of DCA to deal with!

**Nickergrove Mine**

After reports from Pete Knight CIC about a rock collapse in the last small climb down I, supported by members of the Orpheus C.C. Thursday night group, spent 2 nights working to remove the very large boulder and restore access to the full trip.

**Other Issues**

Other ongoing issues at Masson are being talked about on UKcaving Forum and the need for access talks in the future may well be high, depending on who the land is sold to and what they intend to use the land for.

I have had a lot of requests for caves in the P8 area to be talked about.

*Ewan Cameron  
DCA Access Officer  
31 Oct. 2013*

## **Item 6.5.ii - Assistant Access Officer's Report**

### **Ashford Black Marble Mine**

No Single Use cards have been issued since June and the Regular User system appears to be working well. All outstanding insurance documents have been chased up and all but one received - the person in question has been warned that they will lose access if they don't send a copy of their PL insurance.

A Regular User has come to light that was not on the list I was originally given and a copy of current insurance obtained. I have now updated the list of Regular Users and also issued an updated card.

There has been one new application for a Regular User card from Colum Walsh of Twin Peaks Outdoor Activities and a card has been issued.

Two ex DCA Conservation Officers hold keys for the mine - Tony Gibbs and Dave Webb - should these be collected back in?

### **Garden Path**

There have not been any applications to visit Garden Path since June, but a trip was undertaken on 4 August 2013 by myself and Paul Lydon to check the condition of the cave - nothing had changed in the previous twelve months.

Bob Dearman is currently the key holder for Garden Path - will/should he continue to do this after stepping down as DCA Chairman in Feb 2014?

### **Water Icicle Close Cavern, gated extensions**

After a very slow start to the year with one trip in January, there was a brief rush to book at the end of the year. A group was taken in in September, and two more groups are booked for November and December. Digging progresses slowly and sporadically at the bottom of the Elevator.

Results from samples taken from the cave in January 2011 are still not quite ready for publication as interpretation of the results has proved complicated.

### **My role within DCA**

After a great deal of deliberation, I have decided to step down from the Assistant Access Officer's position at the AGM in February. This is largely due to increased pressure at work, but also because I only ever intended to take on ABMM and Garden Path as a temporary measure and I will have been looking after them for two years in 2014.

I will continue as the contact for WICC for the time being at least until such time as the Conservation Plan is completed.

I will also continue to take minutes for the UCF meetings while Mel settles in, but will step back from that at the end of 2014.

*Karen Slatcher,  
24 October 2013*

## **Item 6.6 - Legal & Insurance Officer's Report**

### **Eldon Hill Quarry**

Some cavers have been unclear about the terms governing restoration of access to the Quarry, so I have submitted additional information for display on DCA's website (my thanks to MM for prompt attention to this). I have also responded to at least one email enquiry for more details. I propose to do periodic checks on the use being made of the logbook I have installed on site. I made one such visit in early August and am pleased to report a promising start. I feel I should make clear again that Chatsworth and their tenant do not want the site given wide publicity. Our monitoring is intended (a) to record the level of visiting and (b) to encourage cavers to log their efforts at exploring and digging for new finds.

### **Lathkill Upper Entrance**

A condition of Chatsworth's licence here is that all visitors fill in the logbook. The book and pens have now been placed inside a Daren drum hung from the frame in the hope they'll remain dry (my thanks to BD for this). In August the evidence suggested no one had made an entry in the logbook since October 2012!

### **Chatsworth Site Reports**

After welcome feedback from KS and BD I was finally able to complete reports due on the state of the Lathkill Upper & Garden Path Entrances and submit them to Chatsworth as required under the Licence terms. The reports rely on inspections being done each year, and responsibility for these inspections is a matter for Council to rule on. I have drawn up a checklist of items for annual inspection at each of the sites concerned.

### **Waterways Swallet Licence**

I note this continues to be renewed routinely at the end of September by Okeover Estate office. I recently brought the Licence terms to the notice of the Chairman of the Speleological Union of Ireland as a possible model for use at Reyfad Pot in County Fermanagh, but, although he seemed keen to pursue the matter, I don't know if the terms proved helpful to him.

### **National Trust & Waterfall Hole**

I see no reason why the National Trust's open access policy to caves and mines where there is no competing interest cannot be extended to Waterfall Hole. Liability at the site is now the Trust's concern, as I understand it, and not the farmer's, and parking appears to be the only real problem.

*Peter Mellors  
Legal & Insurance Officer*

## **Item 6.7 - Equipment Officer's Report**

As has been previously reported the BCA E&T Committee ordered 2000 anchors from Bolt Products with a specification that they should be manufactured in 316 stainless steel (SS). Also on the agenda at E&T was the potential failure mode of SS anchors through chloride stress corrosion. On inspecting the delivery note it appeared that 304 SS anchors had been dispatched although Jim Titt, the MD at Bolt Products assured E&T that it was just a typo. To confirm the grade of SS received, tests conducted on the batch to confirm the presence of molybdenum, a component of 316, showed negative results. For information, 304 SS is a grade not containing molybdenum used for most climbing applications except those liable to be affected by saline. Its resistance to chloride stress fracture is considerably less than 316SS. It is not known whether BP's supplier sent the wrong grade and BP acted in good faith or whether the confusion came from BP itself. In DCA's sphere of operations there are potential situations where high chloride concentrations are likely to occur. It is known that average soil concentrations are in the order of 50ppm, paper pulp concentrations are typically 130-140ppm and winter run off from roads can be very high. Also in the Peak District, fluoride in the same periodic group as chloride, is a feature of many vein cavities which carry drainage. From a safety point of view I found it unacceptable to use 304SS anchors on our patch and informed E&T of the decision. A similar objection was lodged by CNCC.

Since then a small batch of 316SS anchors has been dispatched by Bolt Products to E&T and its authenticity confirmed. These have now been distributed to the regions and DCA has received 50 of them. Hopefully this should carry us through until the problem of the 304SS anchors is sorted out.

Henry Rockcliffe, one of DCA's trained anchor installers, has now been supplied with all necessary equipment, resin and anchors to re-bolt Cliff Cavern in Peak as soon as water levels permit access.

*Bob Dearman  
1/11/13*

## **Item 7.1 - Report from BCA Council Meeting, 5th. October**

*Note that these are only my own brief notes on those matters I felt were of particular relevance to DCA. The Minutes of the meeting, including all the reports, will be posted on the BCA website in due course.*

The meeting took place at the new venue in Pinvin, near Redditch and, as the BCA Secretary was not able to be present, I was asked to act as Recorder for the meeting.

### **BCA Conservation & Access Officer**

It was agreed to co-opt Andrew Hinde as BCA C&A Officer for the rest of the year. Andrew is CNCC's Conservation Officer and has worked with DCA in setting up SSSI monitoring on the Dales; he has also been involved in the re-opening of access to Fairy Cave in Weardale after many years of closure due to quarrying.

### **Commercial Caving**

The Secretary's report referred to the draft BCA leaflet for landowners on "Commercial Caving". There have been complications in some areas where landowners or access agreements refuse all access to what they class as "commercial cavers", irrespective of the type of caving or caving instruction taking place.

### **Treasurer**

There was some discussion on the BCA Budget for 2014, in particular payment of travel expenses for C&A work. Some regions do not pay this as a matter of principle; I stated that DCA did offer to pay travel expenses and would continue to do so. Also noted that, as there was no projected rise in insurance fees for 2014, all BCA subscriptions would remain as for 2013.

### **Equipment**

Noted that we were now attempting to obtain supplies of 316SS BP bolts for use by regions; some were now available but more were needed a.s.a.p.

### **Training**

The T.O.'s report included the following statement:

*Much discussion time has been spent at Training Committee regarding the Duty of Care an award holder may have if they observe what they consider to be bad practice by other cavers whilst underground. Advice has been sought from Health and Safety Exec and based on that, a statement has been released to all award holders explaining that they do have a Duty of Care and as such they are obliged to make comment. Once they have done this they have discharged their Duty of Care.*

Noted that workshops are being planned for recreational cavers.

**IT Working Party**

The new and updated BCA website is already taking shape but it was noted that the “Try Caving” website badly needs a complete update. After discussion it was agreed that BCA would seek to institute email communications with its individual members as this was both cheaper and more efficient than the present system, though it was noted that there were some security and data protection issues to be overcome.

**CRoW Working Party**

As Convenor of the W.P. I explained what information is being collected on access and conservation in English regions and why. Noted that at present CRoW legislation does not apply to access to caves and the projected 2019 E.N. review will only cover mapping. Agreed that it may require a change in the law if, after all relevant information has been collected, BCA does decide to push for caves to be included.

**BCA AGM for 2014**

This will be at Dalesbridge in Yorkshire in mid-June and will follow a similar format to this year’s BCA/BCRA Party Weekend in Castleton: BCRA field trips on the Saturday, a slideshow/film presentation and BCA/BCRA Party on Saturday evening, followed by the BCA AGM on Sunday.

**Eurospeleo 2016**

BCA will be hosting the EuroSpeleo 2016 event, based in Yorkshire and planning for this is well in hand.

*Jenny Potts,  
DCA Rep. to BCA Council*