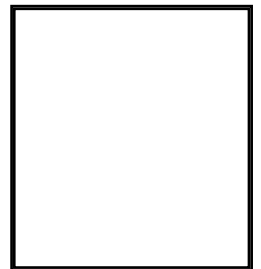


The **Derbyshire Caver**

No. 124

Caver Killed While Digging
Owl Hole Dig Update
Caver and Bat Workshop
New "Caves of The Peak District"
Old Tor Mine Clean-up



The newsletter of the
DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

£1.50

THE DERBYSHIRE CAVER

Spring 2006

No. 124

EDITOR:

Paul Lydon, Hefford House, Main Street, Winster, MATLOCK DE4 2DH
Tel: 01629 650482 Email: publications@theDCA.org.uk

Material for inclusion can be sent hand-written, phoned in, sent on disk or e-mailed. Subscription to this publication is £7 for four issues, see back page for details. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the DCA.

The DCA website is at: www.theDCA.org.uk

Cover Photo: What happens when a rope is cut! Photo by: Adam Evans

Editorial	3
Peak Cavern Round-up	4
News From Around the Peak	7
Old Hole Dig Update	8
Caver and Bat Workshop	10
DCA Matters	11
Caver Killed While Digging	13
New "Caves of the Peak District"	13
Old Tor Mine Clean-up	14
Training Event in Aid of DCRO	15

Dave Edwards & Associates

OUTDOOR DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Moss View House, 54 Brown Edge Road, Buxton

DERBYSHIRE. SK17 7AG

Tel / Fax 0845 226 1963 Mobile 07808 181801

VAT REG NO. 758107225

CLIMBING TECHNICAL SKILLS TRAINING

TO THE HIGHEST STANDARD

SRT, RIGGING, SELF RESCUE AND LADDER
& LINE

CLASSIC CLIMBING TRIPS TO THE VERCORS
TRAINING & ASSESSMENT FOR THE LCMLA &
CIC SCHEMES

Just give us a call to discuss your
training requirements.

The DCA is known as one of the leading British regional caving organisations, if not The leading organisation, when it comes to training. You only have to look at the annual caver training event, the DCA Cavers Workshop, organised by Training Officer Nigel Atkins to appreciate that. And for a whole day of excellent training in a choice different caving-related activities such as Ladder and Lifeline, SRT and Photography the cost is just £10 each for the day. Where else can you get a day's worth of training, by qualified experts, for anything, for only £10?

Why only £10? Money for training comes from the British Caving Association. Not just for this annual event, not just for the DCA, but for all of British caving. The British Caving Association (and before the BCA was formed, the National Caving Association, the NCA) in the past, obtained grants from the Sports Council and more recently, UK Sport.

For example, for the year running from 2003 to 2004, UK Sport gave £20,000 for safety and training. This money comes from a pot supplied by the Exchequer and the Lottery Sports Fund. However, in 2012 the Olympics will be held in London, so emphasis is being put into sports which are associated with the Olympics and winning medals.

And what of the remainder, such as Caving, Mountaineering, Hang and Paragliding, etc. who were supported in the past? At a meeting in May 2005, UK Sport proposed that any non-Olympic sports which were to receive further funding would have to have "a track record of medal success" and "established athlete pathways leading to a performance opportunity at a GB/UK level" and those that didn't meet this criteria would have their funding phased out.

So, where does that leave caving? Well, for the next financial year, 2006/7 the total will be £7,000. And after that? NOTHING.

If you have anything to say or contribute, please send it to the Editor (email or post) and it will be published in a future Issue.

by Wayne Sheldon

PEAK SEASON

The 2006 Season ended in March 2006, so if anybody would like a trip into the system for their club or themselves when the next begins in October, they should contact John Beck at the usual address on the rear of this Newsletter.

Public Liability insurance is required for access to the system and evidence needs to be shown to the keyholders before your trip.

PEAK/SPEEDWELL ACTIVITIES p AUTUMN 2006 p WINTER 2007

Exploration in the system is now flourishing again with cavers as well as divers trying to find new passages and re-exploring passages/avens that were looked at in the past, hoping that the past explorers missed something.

The Flatmate, Far Sump Extensions

In the summer of 2004 Rob Eavis and Robbie Shone resumed digging at the end of the Flatmate in Minor Sump Passage. Since then Rob has been on 8 trips with Robbie or Dave Harley enlarging the end. So far we have made about 30m of progress, all of it flat-out. At the present end it has divided into two smaller passages making work even slower, but the draft is still enough to keep them keen!

Western Highway, Far Sump Extensions

Rob Middleton, Jeff Wade, Rob Eavis and various other members of SUSS have been working here most weeks since the Autumn, either from JH or TITAN. About 10-12m of fill has been removed and the roof seems to have levelled off slightly. Hauling takes up most of the effort and the air runs out in about 3 hours but it generally rejuvenates enough each week.

Mud Hall, Speedwell Mine

Over the past year Robbie Shone and Robert Eavis have been up Pilkington's working on a small rift in the floor at the end of the southerly trending passage from Mud Hall. On 19th February, 2006 Katie Dent, Dave Harley, Dennis Jump and Rob enlarged it enough to pass through. It entered a large 10m high aven about half way up. A passage at the bottom went for about 10m stooping height before closing down in a calcited rift which has a voice connection to one of the lower Pilkington pitches. Free-climbing up the aven led to an 8m round, 1.5m high chamber with nice formations but no ways on.

Rocky Tube, Peak Cavern

On 30th January, 2006 Katie Dent and Rob Eavis squeezed into Rocky Tube, just off Galena Chamber, to climb the unclimbed aven at the end. This went up for about 10m before levelling off into a small tube at the top, which went horizontally for about 4m before breaking out into the side of the bottom pitch of the NCC Shafts, about 10m off the floor. I put in a few bolts and descended to the floor, where a visual connection was made with Katie back at the bottom of the aven through a small hole.

Treasury Sump, Peak Cavern

John Taylor, Simon Cornhill and Jim Lister over the course of two dives replaced the dive line through the sump and the belay hanger on the Speedwell side of the sump. The Eldon lads, while the divers were away, sandbagged a large terrace into the sand/gravel slope.

Ink Sump, Doom's Retreat Exploration

A long term project has begun beyond Ink Sump where divers Jim Lister and John Taylor are looking to dig in the Doom's Retreat choke. Before this occurs on a regular basis, some preparation work has been occurring in Ink Sump. Several trips have been made to sort out the line. Several ropes have been

installed in Doom's Retreat to protect the climbs.

Work has also been carried out in Lake Passage, mainly by the Eldon Pothole Club, moving of rocks and boulders with a view to increasing the flow so that in times of flood, the quarry tailings will be washed out so visibility will return to how it was in the 80's when the divers had clear visibility in the sump.

A bit of digging at the end of Quink Sump has seen this connected this through to the pool adjacent the Ink Sump dive base, opening up the passage between Ink and Quink sump will help to increase the flow in the sump.

Diving reports can be found in the CDG newsletters.

Traverse of the Spods, NCC Shafts, Peak Cavern

The Traverse of the Spods, NCC Shafts, Peak Cavern was climbed into in March 2004 and explored to the end where a short rift passage leads to two ways on: at low level the passage soon ends whilst at high level a body-sized tube can be seen which emits a draught. However, a hanging calcite blockage blocked access to this. Looking closely at this, you could see that this choke was in a roof tube, with water dripping down through it. Listening closely, you could hear falling water beyond, so this offered us encouragement.

During January and early February, 2006, Marcus Evans, Dave Otterwell, Wayne Sheldon and Ann Soulsby returned to the extension to attack this choke. Over the course of two trips, action with an hammer and a chisel rewarded us with a small opening into the base of this aven, this being about 45cm wide, 2 metres long, and was climbed for about 9m to a rock bridge where we were stopped by a rock, calcited in across the rift. But beyond this it could be seen that the aven continued upwards in similar dimensions, for at least 6 metres until a bend in the aven blocked the view. The rock couldn't be moved at the time due to time constrictions. The sharpness of the rock all the way up the aven showed that nobody had been here from above and there was a draught and small stream running down it, so this offered us encouragement. Exploration continues.

Mummy Inlet, NCC Shafts, Peak Cavern

In early 2005, Mummy Inlet was spotted above the second down pitch of the NCC Shafts, about 7 metres above it where the roof of the shaft closes into a rift. This was climbed into by Wayne Sheldon accompanied by Glyn Roberts and Ann Soulsby but the entrance to the rift proved to be too tight for us.

Due to other commitments, I didn't return until the autumn of 2005. This time, Dave Harley and Rob Eavis from SUSS came along for the trip, with the aim of getting through this restriction. Rob went up to the constriction, the slippery nature again hampered progress, but determination by Rob enabled him to pass the constriction. After about 2 metres, he emerged into a 4 metre high rift. The rift got smaller downwards while at the level of the squeeze, after 5 metres it led to a pile of boulders; behind this there was a fossil gour pool and a tiny hole that omitted a slight draught. The rift continued vertically above this for 8 metres in a 60cm diameter tube. At the top, the tube closed up while calcited boulders blocked the way on back over the squeeze. There doesn't seem to be any scope for further exploration so the rift will be de-rigged in the near future.

An article will be appearing in a future TSG journal about the NCC Shafts.

Diving in Halfway House, Peak Cavern

Whilst waiting for optimum conditions to continue work in the main feeder in Far Sump, John Cordingley has been re-investigating various other sites previously written off. The Halfway House Sump (downstream from the Five Arches) is a roomy tunnel ending at a wall of sediment after 50 metres. Just before this point the water goes off into a low unexplored slot under the right wall (en route to the Resurgence). The destination of the main tube is unknown, hence the interest in this area. This slot was recently passed after what is basically a 7 metre long flat-out squeeze which took three dives to sort out safely. Beyond is a bigger rift passage which then divides into a narrow continuation rift heading south and another tight bedding heading south-east. This represents 12 metres of progress, which feels very committing. During these dives two buckets and several timbers from the old show cave jammed in the restriction were removed, which may help reduce flooding of the existing show cave.

In the deep water close to the above sump is Styx Inlet Sump, discovered in the 1980s and previously

followed for a few metres southwards to a low silty bedding. John has now passed this bedding (following a short dig) and the passage enlarges again beyond. Progress with laying line is being made slowly and carefully as once forward movement stops the vis lasts about 2 seconds. The current limit of exploration here is 15 metres in. The passage is of interest because it is out under the east side of Cave Dale and may be feeding in water from Di r t l o w Rake to the south. Further details and a survey of the area will appear in the next TSG Journal.

Small Muddy Passage in Galena Chamber

About 4 metres up the West wall of Galena Chamber, on the same line/vein as the Wind Tunnel but heading South away from it is a passage. This was climbed up to again at the end of February 2006 by Wayne Sheldon and Glyn Roberts but it was found that this had been previously explored; a small muddy passage which reduced in size.

Collated by Wayne Sheldon

"Sidetrack Cave" Video and "Shout!"

There are two videos out with ALL PROFITS going to DCRO:

"Sidetrack Cave" is a 20-minute film of this recently discovered, well-decorated system filmed before the inevitable damage that will take place. (It also avoids you having to struggle through the entrance crawl!)

"Shout!" runs for 26 minutes and portrays a typical Cave Rescue call-out. It was filmed over a three-year period. If you've been on a Rescue Practice during that time, you're probably in it! Something to show the grandchildren!

Both films cost £7.00 plus 80 pence P&P.
Contact Ralph Johnson at RJohnCave@aol.com

*"In
days of old when men
were bold and helmets weren't
invented" ...*

OK so I'm rambling on a bit but following the release of the "Giants Hole" video/DVD a number of "old timers" who were involved in the early explorations and modifications have contact me with tales to tell and photographs and slides of the unadulterated system.

If anyone else who has with archive material that could be included in a sequel (should that be prequel?) could they please contact Ralph Johnson email: RJohnCAVE@aol.com

News From Around the Peak

Peak Cavern: White Feather Aven Topped

Descent 187 (page 15) briefly reported on a bolting project directly above an airspace 350 metres into Far Sump in Peak Cavern. White Feather Aven was named in the 1980s (after a song on a 'Marillion' album) and has been a loose-end ever since. It was climbed over three trips in Autumn 2005 and is 12 metres high; further details will appear in the January 2006 issue of the CDG Newsletter. A phreatic tube at 7 m height trends towards Salmon's Cavern (in Far Sump Extension) but ends at a point restriction after a short distance. There are no passages leading in the opposite direction towards Cavedale. The aven was therefore completely derigged and the next project has already been started . . .

From John
Cordingley

DCRO Search for Missing Man

On Wednesday, 18th January, DCRO were asked to assist in the search for a missing man whose car had been parked on the road between Treak Cliff Cavern and Odin Mine for some days. There had already been a search of a two kilometre circle around the parked car and in view of the number of obvious cave and mine entrances in the area by Mountain Rescue Teams and they requested DCRO support.

Twenty-three team members attended and checked the better-known and/or obvious entrances in the locality. As the missing man was not known to be a caver, the searches were carried out only to the limit a non-caver without tackle might have reached on purpose, or by accidentally falling. No sign of the missing man was found. The man turned up a few days later on Friday, 20th January having been recognised on his way back to his car.

DCRO Call-outs at Peak Cavern

The DCRO received a report on Sunday, 29th January, that a party of cavers were possibly overdue after a trip into the White River series in Peak Cavern. After a preliminary check before a full call out was started, the missing cavers were located in Castleton village, safe and well after a longer than expected trip.

On Saturday, 25th February there was another party on a through-trip from JH was reported overdue. The reason turned out to be due to a member of the party having difficulties on the Block Hall rebelay resulting in the trip taking longer than expected. The call-out was received as team members and the vehicle were attending a farewell evening at the Wanted Inn, Sparrowpit. The licensees, Christine and Mike, staunch supporters of DCRO during their time at the Wanted Inn were moving

on. DCRO team members, together with the DCRO vehicle, arrived on the scene as the overdue party exited the cave.

Caver Killed by Rock Fall

A caver was tragically killed on Saturday, 25th April while digging in Astonhill Swallet near Pikehall. See the story in this Issue for more details.

Action at St. Valentine's Sump, Giants Hole

A group of cavers, including Sam Townsend of Edlon Pothole Club have been attempting to lower the water in St. Valentine's Sump to allow progress towards the Filth Five Pitches. They have been attempting to set up a syphon system using a length of hose.

New - Online Weather Readings Available for Perryfoot Area

A Rain Gauge and Mon/Max Thermometer have been installed at Sparrowpit, just west of Perryfoot and the swallets of P8, Giants Hole, etc.

The readings are available on the Cave Diving Goup's website at <http://www.cavedivinggroup.org.uk/cgi-bin/vishtml>. So, if you are planning to cave in the area you can now see how much rain there was in preceding days.

From Wayne Sheldon

TSG Go Pink!!

A group of cavers from both Eldon P.C. and T.S.G. decided to do a bit of redecorating downstairs at the Chapel, the T.S.G.'s H.Q. The colour chosen: a vivid pink! Apparently it actually looks quite nice... but may be a bit shocking first thing in the morning after a late night on the ale!

Diving in Bagshawe Cavern

Members of Eldon P.C. have been carrying out work in Bagshawe Cavern's upstream sumps. Old sections of diving line left from past dives including Steve Tucker in 1992 and even possibly by Martyn Farr back in 1977 during the first dive, were removed by Jim Lister.

Hidden Earth Returns to The Peak

This year's "Hidden Earth", the UK's annual caving conference, hosted by the British Cave Research Association and the British Caving Association for the benefit of all cavers makes a return to the Peak District caving area.

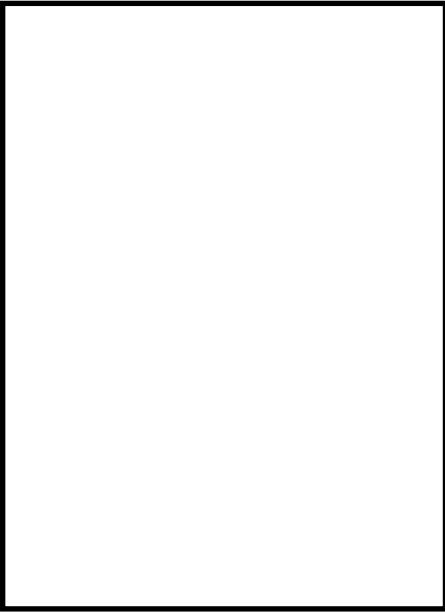
"Hidden Earth" takes place on 22nd to the 24th September in the market town of Leek. Leek is about 12 miles south of Buxton (the venue for 2001's "Hidden Earth"), on the edge of the Derbyshire Peak District.

With thanks to Hitch'n'Hike's web site

Don't forget to visit Hitch'n'Hike's excellent web site on

www.hnh.dircon.co.uk

Owl Hole Dig Update



Flowstone Cascade in new Chamber
Photo by Simon Brooks

'Cascade Chamber'.

From here the draught was found to be coming from the floor of the chamber which has led to another shaft being sunk. This has followed a route between boulders and a solid rock wall to reach the current dig face at a depth of around 15m below the floor of the chamber and some 28m below the floor of Owl Hole itself (November 2005). Work continues and the draught continues to be cool, steady and outward flowing that linked with glimpses of voids between boulders is encouraging the diggers onwards and downwards.

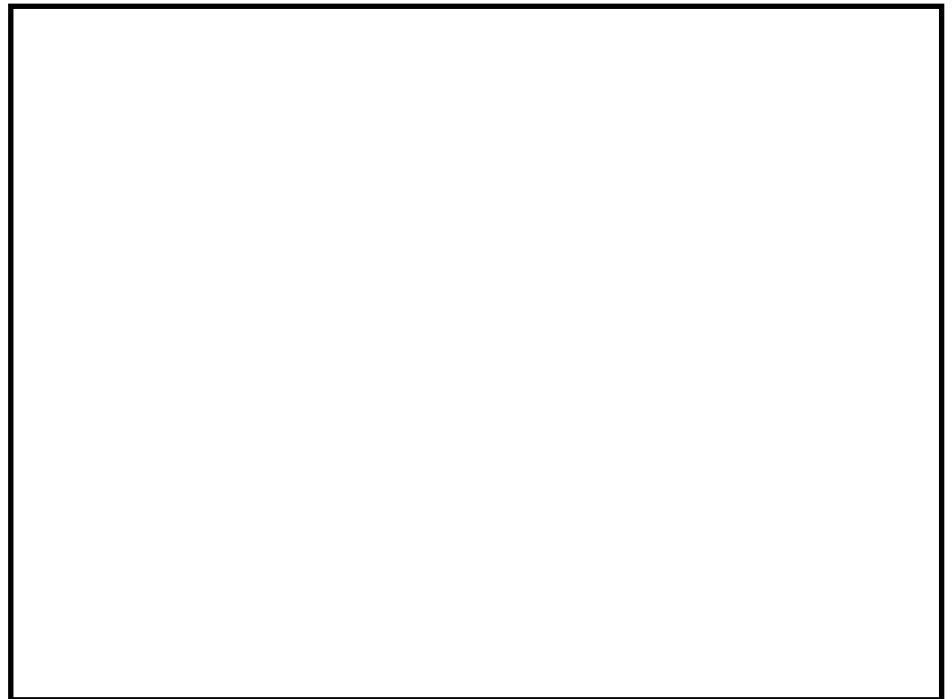
These recent extensions have added around 42m to the length of Owl Hole giving it a cumulative passage length of 259 metres and

by all accounts. With in excess of 60m depth potential remaining before the expected water table is reached digging continues.

Cavers visiting this site cave are requested to take great care not to damage formations in the upper sections of the cave and to take great care generally in the lower parts of the cave as some of the boulders are still settling (particularly in the most recently dug sections). Visitors are also reminded to replace the new gate giving access to the 'Owls Bottom Chamber' and the shafts into 'Cascade Chamber'. Better still visit the site on a Sunday afternoon when you may even get a guided tour from the diggers!

Over the latter part of 2004 and most of 2005 a regular team of diggers led by Kenny Morton and Mick Chambers from the Orpheus Caving Club, Derbyshire have continued to spend most Sundays trying to find the elusive 'Upper Dove Master System' that must exist (we hope!) below Owl Hole and Dowel Dale. Activities over the last 12 months have focused on what appears to be a large boulder choke that extends below Owl Hole itself rather than the various leads within the new 'Crystal Pallas Extensions' discovered in early 2004. Spurred on by an encouraging cool outward draught progress has been steady involving the careful 'capping' and removal of large boulders and the installation of a ridged scaffold cage to ensure everything left remains in situ.

On the weekend of 23/24th April 2005, at a depth of some 12 metres below the current floor of Owl Hole itself access was gained to a chamber 7m long by 4m wide and 6m high. This contained an impressive 6m high and up to 2.5m wide flowstone cascade that runs from ceiling to floor down one wall of the chamber resulting in the chamber being christened



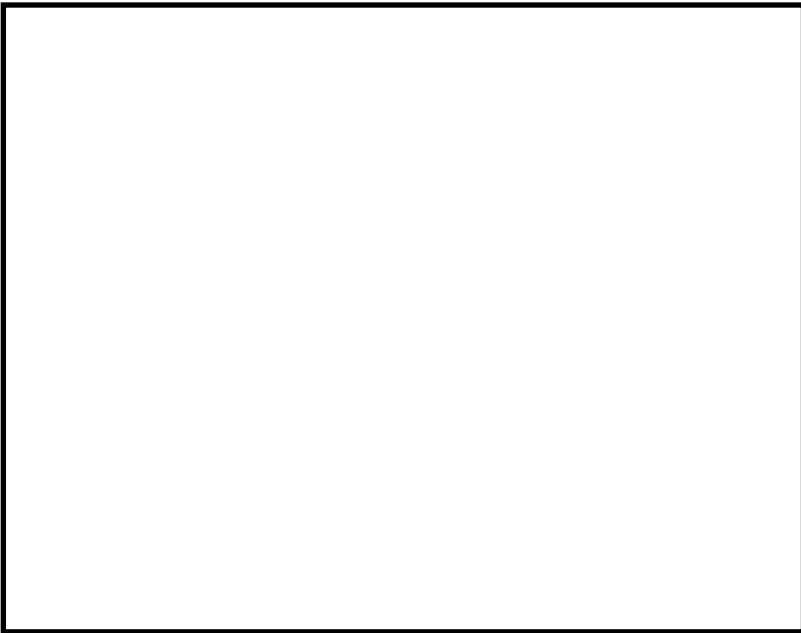
Mick Chambers in break-through point
Photo by Simon Brooks

a vertical range of 38.6m.

Observations and evidence collected to date suggest that the main Owl Hole is actually one large boulder filled shaft and if all the rocks were removed Owl Hole would be a surface shaft 25m long, 11m wide and in excess of 40m deep. Not quite up to Titan standards, but a good size hole

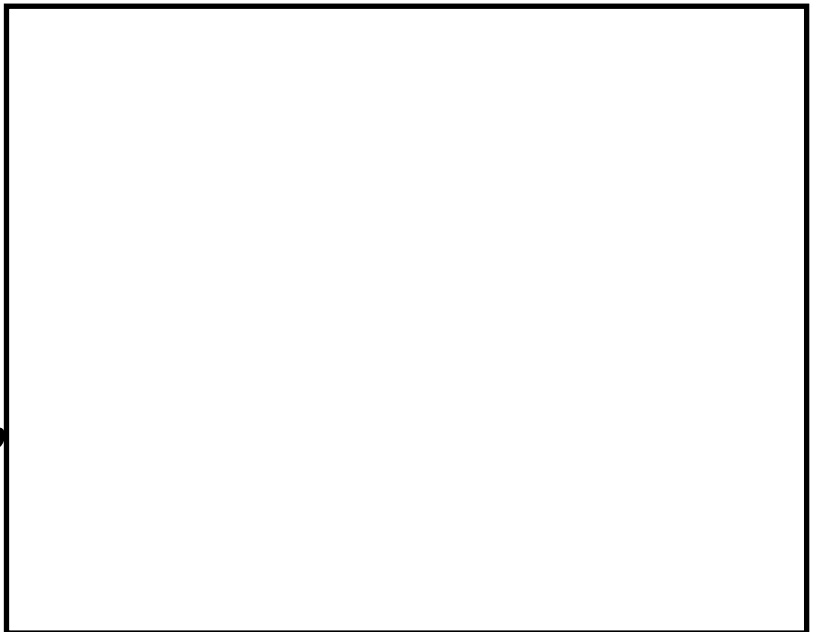
Once again the Orpheus Caving Club would like to record its thanks to Bill and Roland Etch and families on whose land the cave lies for allowing access to Owl Hole.

Simon Brooks



General audience shot in Pooles Cavern reception area with Jo Poll from English Nature introducing session.
Photo by Dave Webb

Photos from the
Cavers and Bats
Workshop at
Poole's Cavern



Alan Walker (left) shows group round Poole's after workshop.
Photo by Dave Webb



Dave Webb doing a presentation to workshop "from a caver's perspective"
Photo by Dave Webb

Caver and Bat Workshop at Poole's Cavern

Report on Caver and Bat Worker Workshop – Poole's Cavern July 6th 2005

Arising out of comments made at Conservation meetings with English Nature and during joint annual bat surveys with members of the Derbyshire Bat Group (DBG) it was felt to be high time we organised a get together to air some of our views at a joint meeting.

There is and has been for many years wariness on the part of cavers to report bat sightings for fear that the result could be closure of the cave or mine to recreational cavers. Many bat workers on the other hand are mystified about what we get up to underground and what drives us to venture into what could be considered a somewhat dangerous environment; although of course there are some bat workers who are also keen cavers.

The evening was organised by Jo Poll from English Nature with Dave Webb, Derbyshire Caving Association's Conservation Officer, and Pete Bush from Derbyshire Bat Group, rallying round for support from the respective communities. The meeting was kindly hosted by Alan Walker of Pooles Cavern but due to space considerations numbers were limited to ten bat volunteers and ten cavers.

The evening was introduced & facilitated by Jo, with "PowerPoint" presentations given by Debbie Worland for English Nature, Pete Bush for the Derbyshire Bat Group, and Dave Webb for the Derbyshire Caving Association. There were plenty of handouts and a lot of interaction between the both groups. Alan kindly opened up the Cavern for us to do a bat search. The stroll through was very enjoyable but the timing was not ideal for the bats, although there was the usual evidence that the cave is used as a roost. Once

outside it was a different story and the bat detectors were crackling away almost non-stop. increase understanding amongst all parties.

The feedback I got was very positive and the friendly atmosphere on the evening was conducive to some frank exchanges. The main purpose of the meeting was to raise awareness with both the Bat group and the Cavers about each others activities set within the context of the current legislation. Although this was no doubt achieved, it obviously brought to the fore certain issues that will require further discussion.

The main points of the discussions are detailed below:

1. The need for the law to be interpreted in a flexible way, where appropriate, with regard to access to caves and mines where bats have been sighted, providing principles of behaviour have been agreed to ; it was felt that this flexibility in interpretation would encourage greater reporting of sightings. It is axiomatic that reporting a sighting currently carries a risk that many do not feel is worth taking.

Literature such as English Nature's "Focus on Bats" was initially perceived to be less positive towards access, but the publication needs to be read in the context that it was aimed at, i.e. the wider public and not specifically the caving fraternity.

It is hoped that the issues discussed in meeting, such as this, will provide an opportunity for local groups to feed views in that can subsequently be considered in any future publications.

2. There was some discussion about caving activities which may affect bats and their associated timing, i.e. when are the best times to avoid visits to particularly sensitive sites. . We hope that by working together we might find the answers to these questions and

The meeting provided a very useful first step towards understanding each other's needs and interests, as ultimately all parties attending want the same thing, i.e. conservation of the caves - for all users, bats and cavers alike. There is still a long way to go; meetings such as this are hopefully the way forward and there will doubtless be others in the future.

By continuing to work together we hope to achieve a greater understanding of the issues involved in cave conservation amongst all cave users. Thanks to all who gave there views so freely and look forward to further fruitful discussions in the near future.

Many thanks to Alan for his kind hospitality.

Pictures by Dave Webb
Derbyshire Caving Association -
Conservation Officer.

A copy of Bat Conservation Trust publication " Bats Underground" was reproduced in the last issue (No. 123) of The Derbyshire Caver and I welcome your comments on it.

Co-written by D Webb
(Derbyshire Caving
Association) & JPoll
(English Nature)

DCA Matters

NEXT DCA MEETING

AGM (open to all DCA Members): Saturday, 1st July 2006, 10am. at Monyash Village Hall

The Hall will be open from about 9.30am with tea, coffee and biscuits on tap. The Old Smithy Cafe, next to the Pub, does an excellent breakfast from about 9am.

Remember that Council Meetings are open to ALL members.

Meetings arranged for the coming year, all at 10am on Saturdays at Monyash Village Hall, are:

Council Meetings
4th November 2006

AGM
24 February 2007

MANIFOLD VALLEY CAVES - ACCESS UPDATE

Firstly, many thanks to Martin Milner who has been working on restoring entrances and improving access to the Manifold Valley caves. A number of cave entrances are actually in the bed of the river and these have been affected by stones and rubbish washed in by flooding or by curious members of the public poking around and dropping rocks in to "see how far they go". Martin has been liaising with the National Trust on installing grilles or manhole covers, as appropriate, to prevent this problem.

Darfar Ridge Cave now has a locked lid to protect delicate formations, which have recently been cleaned and taped. For access, please contact the South Peak Office of the National Trust for permission: either phone 01335-350503 during working hours or email ilampark@nationaltrust.org.uk to arrange to collect a key.

If farmland needs to be crossed to access caves in the main sink area, such as Darfar Pot, ask permission at Dale Farm; though access can be gained along the dry river bed in summer.

Some caves already, or will shortly, require a "Derbyshire key": a large adjustable spanner to undo the bolts holding a grille in place. Don't forget to replace any bolts after your visit and please ensure that they are done up tightly so that they cannot be undone by fingers alone. Sites in this category include Darfar Crag Swallet, Mill Cave and Pot, Hoo Valley Mine, Redhurst Swallet.

WATERWAYS SWALLET

Bolts will shortly be installed on the lid of Waterways Swallet, which in future will require a "Derbyshire key" to obtain access -usual system, please replace and tighten the bolts after your visit. This is being done at the request of the landowner to ensure that there is no danger to the public. Advance permission is not required to visit the cave -simply park in the designated area (not on the roadside) and follow the directions given in the DCA Handbook on page 2:12.

UK CAVE CONSERVATION EMERGENCY FUND

The constitution of the UKCEF is currently being looked at with a view to updating it. The aim is to make the Fund more accountable and to encourage cavers to make use of it and also to donate money to it to help others. There is a new website giving details of how the fund works and what it has been used for in the past: www.ukccef.org.uk. (Note that this supersedes any former website.) Remember that a loan of £1000 from this fund in 2001 solved a "cash flow" for DCA and enabled us to carry out the work on Jug Holes. The loan was repaid, together with a donation of £50, as soon as DCA received its grant from EN.

HIDDEN EARTH 2006 COMES TO THE PEAK DISTRICT

Hidden Earth 2006 will be held on 22nd. -24th. September at Leek High School, Staffs.

For further information go to www.hidden-earth.org.uk

BCA PAID POST

Following the resignation of Lynne Bailey, BCA is looking for a new Membership Administrator. The post is that of a home-based, part-time employee of the Association, with BCA providing equipment and materials and paying expenses plus a salary calculated on the basis of hours worked. Duties include responding to BCRA and BCA members' queries via e-mail, post and telephone, issuing membership cards and maintaining membership databases. Pay is competitive for the type of work concerned.

For details and to express an interest in the position, please contact Nick Williams at the BCA office: Old Methodist Chapel, Great Hucklow, Buxton. SK17 8RG. It would be helpful if anyone interested could contact Nick as soon as possible; preferably by 10th. April but not later than 14th. April.

NEWS FROM BCA

BCA Website: www.british-caving.org.uk

The BCA website continues to grow and now has an extensive section on Equipment including details on bolting with P-hangers, care of equipment and ropes, rope testing, etc. Well worth checking out by both individual cavers and club tackle officers. There are now a number of on-line forums you can join, including one on regional councils. All forums are moderated and you will need to register before you can make a posting. Don't forget that BCA is also offering web-hosting for caving clubs and individual cavers at special rates. For details of this service, contact the BCA webmaster: [webmaster @ british-caving.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@british-caving.org.uk).

BCA Grant Aid

Despite the planned withdrawal of all UK Sports Council grant aid to BCA later this year, for the present grants towards caver training courses are still available. Nigel Atkins' very successful DCA/BCA Cavers Workshop, which took place on 11/12 March this year, has been grant aided by £300 from BCA and the grant is already in DCA's bank account. DCA has also now received £500 from BCA as the first instalment of its administration grant for 2006, replacing the Club and Associate Member subscriptions which used to be paid direct to DCA. This is all part of the "one stop shop" whereby Clubs and Associate Members pay a subscription only once, to BCA, and BCA in turn funds the expenses of the regions on behalf of all cavers.

BCA Membership Card problems

There are still problems with the issuing of Individual and Club BCA Membership cards, which also provide proof of insurance. BCA is aware of the problem and is making strenuous efforts to solve it but, if you have any immediate problems over proof of insurance, please contact the DCA Secretary.

Hidden Earth is the UK's annual caving conference
The 2006 conference will be on 22-24 September at Leek High School, Staffordshire
See www.hidden-earth.org.uk

Caver Killed While Digging

In a tragic accident on Saturday 25th March, 2006, David Briggs, a caver from Ripley, was digging in Astonhill Swallet near Pikehall when a large rock fell from the roof and landed on him. Apparently the cavers digging in the cave had been down a 5 metre or so shaft from the surface and had been digging a horizontal passage and reached a restriction. David had been investigating another possibility in the opposite direction when when at about 11 a.m. a large rock fell from the roof of the passage and pinned him to the floor. His companions were unable to release David and had quickly exited to call for help. They reported hearing the noise of a second rock falling in the cave.

The DCRO were called out to assist and Paramedics who are experienced cavers confirmed that David was dead.

In an operation lasting about 7 and a half hours, the body was recovered using a JCB to dig down to where he had been trapped.

This was the first caving death in Derbyshire for 15 years.

He was unmarried and had no children.

His mother Margaret and twin sister Kathryn said: "Although we are very upset about the death of our son and brother, we get some comfort believing that if he had to go any way, he died doing the thing he loved."

Caves of the Peak District - New Edition!

Iain Barker, Bob Dearman and John Beck of the DCA have started work on bringing out a new edition of Caves of the Peak District. It's 14 years since the last one and several new discoveries have been made in that period. We aim to get the completed book at the printers in the early spring of 2006 and to have any hope of achieving this we need all the help we can get.

In order for the new book to be as up-to-date as possible, we need as much information as we can get from every individual and club who has worked in the area since 1991. Everything from a one metre extension to a known cave, to a brand new hole; to maintain the information available to cavers of the future, as well as the present, it all needs to go into print or much will be forgotten. If your club, or any individual cavers you know of have made even the smallest dig or advance please can we have the details? Even abortive digs need to be recorded to maintain the record.

The way to report your activities/discoveries is simple; just write it up in the same format as an entry in the current Caves of the Peak District and e-mail or post it to;

DCA Access Officer
Iain Barker
56 Thornbridge Crescent,
Birley,
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S12 3AE

Email: iainbarker@peakland.freeserve.co.uk
Tel: 0114-2530112

However insignificant your contribution may be, please submit it all the same, who knows what a future caver may make of it.

Thank you very much for your time and trouble, I look forward to hearing from you in the very near future, Iain

WANTED

Photos for the forthcoming edition of "Caves of the Peak District".

Have you any photos which could be included in the new Edition? If so, please send them (electronically if possible - if not then by post - and they will be returned when finished with) to Iain Barker (see above for details).

Old Tor Mine Clean-up (and Door Easing)

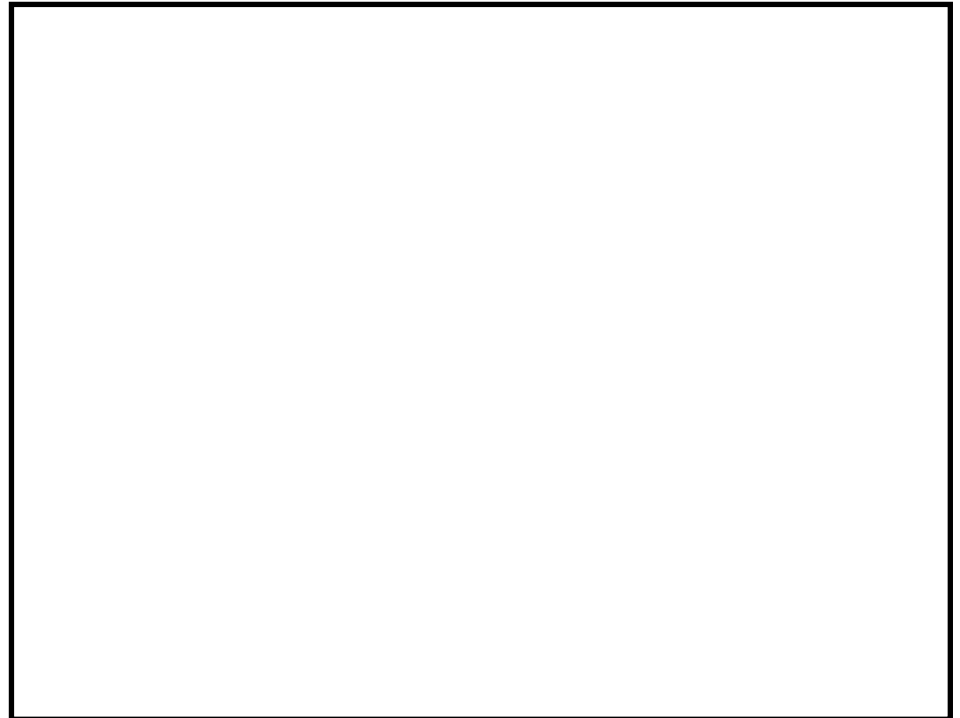
Armed with a clutch of black bin bags, Wayne Sheldon, John Barnatt and myself faced a January blizzard for the final DCA grant-aided project of the year - a clean up of Old Tor Mine in Winnats Pass. But our good intentions almost came to nought when, following a two hour struggle with the door, we were still outside in the bitter cold wind and sleet, and we were on the point of giving up when the door finally yielded. Somewhat late in the day we eventually managed to fill six bags with assorted rubbish which leaves the mine in a much more respectable state.

Not so long ago Old Tor was ungated, and every man and his dog popped in to exchange an empty lager tin for a bag of Blue John crystals. The crunch came when someone attempted to remove the precious mineral on an industrial scale and the mine was gated to protect what little remained and the key lodged with the National Trust office at Edale.

As far back as I can remember opening the gate on Old Tor Mine in Winnats Pass has presented a challenge that would thwart even the most seasoned safe cracker. Struggling with a wobbly piece of metal in the shape of an ancient car starting-handle and a tiny safe key, you are required to turn each of these in opposite directions and if you are lucky the door opens - but of course it is seldom that easy. Being a discarded bank safe door means that tolerances are minimal, and corrosion or grit always conspire to jam the heavy steel door in its frame.

The door favours the brave and forceful, and in fine weather it often inexplicably yields; but in an

Note: The National Trust has a signing-in book to record visitors to the cave, and instructions on



icy Winnats blast and with fumbling frozen fingers it seems to defy all attempts to gain entry despite vengeful assaults with all manner of pointy metal tools and hammers.

Enter Len Kirkam and an assortment of Coffin Dodgers armed with a gas metal cutter and a bag of serious tools. Amid a shower of sparks and small explosions the half-inch thick steel yielded and the trouble-spots were cut away with almost surgical precision. For good measure a hole has been cut out of the metal surround to allow access for bats, and following re-assembly the door was lubricated and tested and now works perfectly - in all weathers and with minimal effort.

how to operate the keys. All other previous access arrangements are unchanged.

The mine is in Castleton SSSI and is listed for its mineralogy.

For those wishing to learn more of this and other nearby Blue John mines, and for an account of the history and uses of Blue John, I can recommend Trevor Ford's superbly researched little book on the subject, Derbyshire Blue John, Landmark Publishing Ltd. Price , 5.95

Dave Webb

Training Event In Aid of DCRO

In late March, Caving Instructors and DCRO members Jez Parr and Adam Evans held a training and fund raising event in aid of Derbyshire Cave Rescue.

With a full compliment of eight cavers from around the UK, it raised £280 for DCRO.

Focused toward Single Rope Technique rescues for cavers, the day was spent looking at the skills required and reasons why fast effective rescues are important when caving vertically. Topics such as preventative training, limitations and multiplicity of personal SRT equipment and Harness Pathology were covered.

Everybody involved seemed to enjoy the day and gained lots of useful information.

Many thanks to Pindale Bunkhouse for use of their facilities, and to www.outdoorinstruction.co.uk for loan of equipment.

Adam Evans

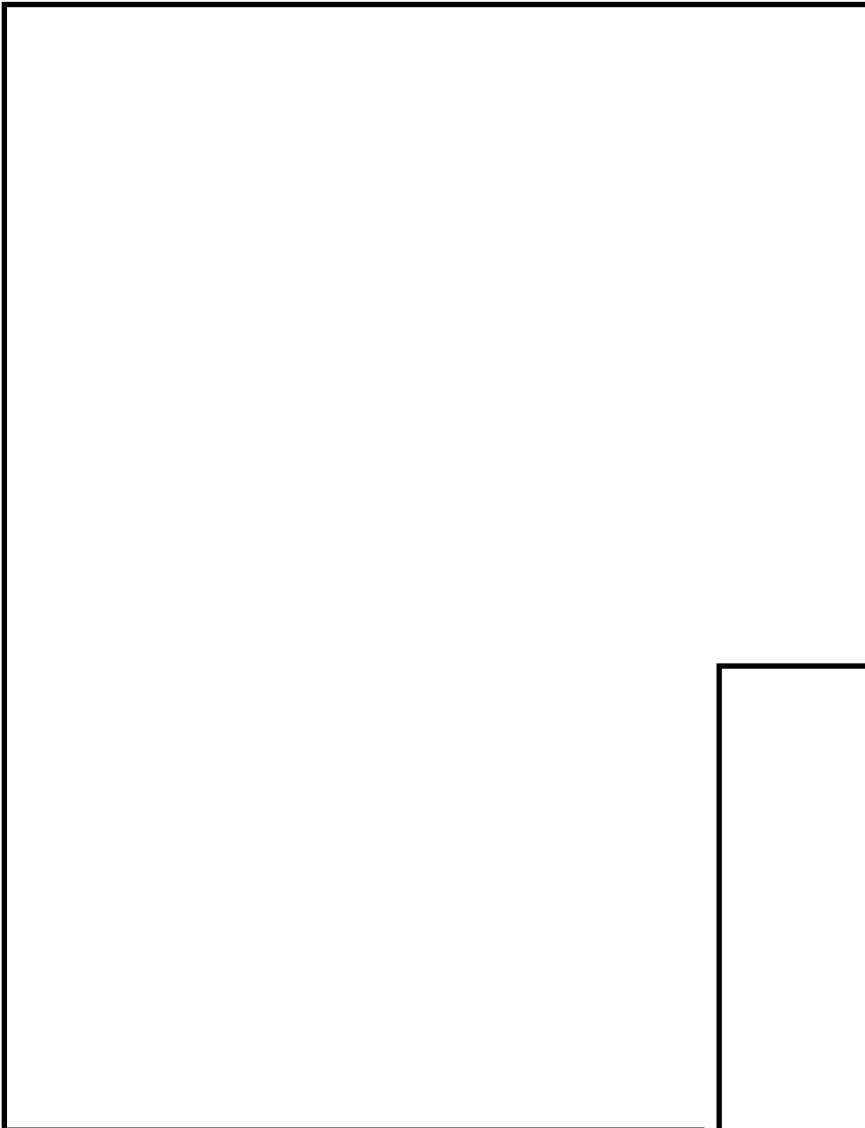


Photo by Adam Evans

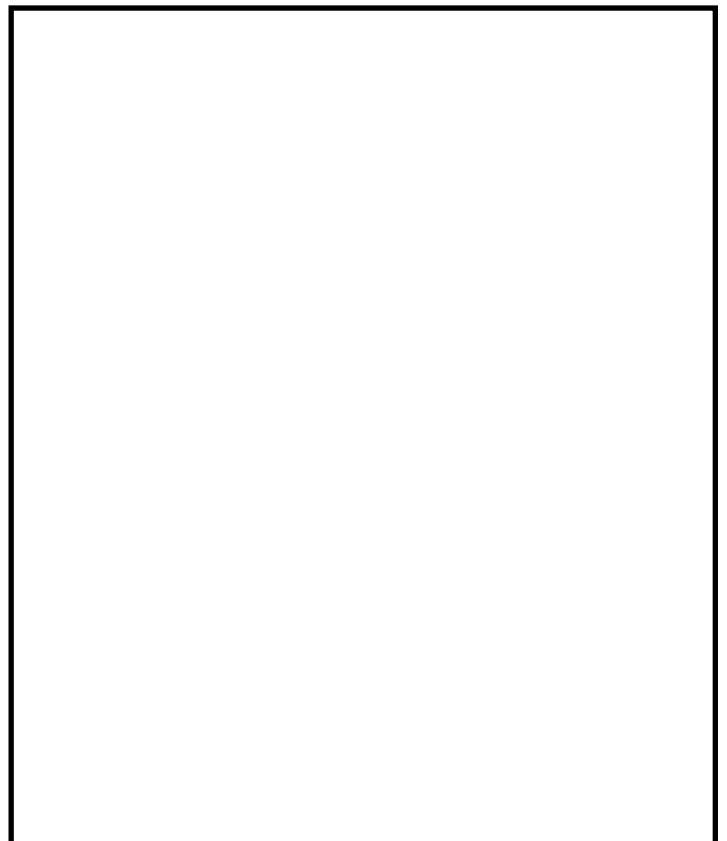


Photo by Adam Evans

DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION OFFICERS FOR 2006-2007

Chairman: Bob Dearman
The Green Cottage, Main Street, Chelmorton, Buxton SK17 9SL
Email: chairman@theDCA.org.uk Tel. 01298-85594, Mob. 07855-920087

Vice Chairman: Terry Jackson
New House Farm, Chapel-en-le-Frith, High Peak, Derbyshire SK23 0QL
Email: vice-chair@theDCA.org.uk Tel. 01633-750647, Mob. 07966-219997

Secretary/Treasurer: Jenny Potts
3 Greenway, Hulland Ward, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 3FE
Email: secretary@theDCA.org.uk OR dca@theDCA.org.uk Tel. 01335-370629

Assistant Secretary: Chris Broome
"Carpathian", Dale Close, Bonsall, Matlock, Derbyshire. DE4 2AY
Email: asst-sec@theDCA.org.uk Tel. 01629-824512

Newsletter Editor / Publications Officer: Paul Lydon
Hefford House, Main Street, Winster, Matlock, Derbyshire. DE4 2DH
Email: publications@theDCA.org.uk Tel. 01629-650482

Training Officer: Nigel Atkins
Wharfedale House, Springfield Close, Midway, S. Derbys. DE110DB
Email: training@theDCA.org.uk Tel. 01283-210666, Mob. 07831-449919

Cave Registry Secretary: John Beck
Glebe Cottage, The Hillock, Eyam, Derbyshire. S30 1KB. Tel. 01433-631732
Email: john.beck12@btinternet.com

Equipment Officer: Dave Cowley
12 Norton Hammer Lane, Sheffield, S8 0PB
Email: equipment@theDCA.org.uk Tel. 0114-255-1285. Mob. 07956-560055

Conservation & Access Team

Conservation Officer: Dave Webb
3 De Vere Gardens, Woodthorpe, Nottingham NG5 4PH
Email: conservation-off@theDCA.org.uk Tel. 0115-840-1109

Access Officer: Iain Barker
56 Thornbridge Crescent, Birley, Sheffield S12 3AE
Email: access-off@theDCA.org.uk OR access@theDCA.org.uk Tel. 0114-253-0112, Mob. 0771-068-9704

Projects Officer: Wayne Sheldon
7 Paterson Gardens, Stocksbridge, Sheffield, S36 1JR
Email: projects@theDCA.org.uk Tel. 0114-283-1606, Mob. 07941-211209

Legal & Insurance Officer: Pete Mellors
"Fairview", Station Road, Edingley, Newark, Notts. NG22 8BX
Email: legal.insurance@theDCA.org.uk Tel. 01623-882515

Email: dca@theDCA.org.uk Website: www.theDCA.org.uk

THE DCA - WHAT WE DO AND HOW TO JOIN US DOING IT

The aim of Derbyshire Caving Association (DCA) is to protect the caves and promote good caving practice within the Peak District and surrounding areas. Membership is open to all clubs, individuals and outdoor activity providers with an interest in caves and caving or mine exploration. Check out the DCA website for further information. Membership enquiries to the Secretary (address above).

The Derbyshire Caver (the newsletter of the DCA) has been in uninterrupted publication for over thirty years and is of paramount value as a forum for cavers in Derbyshire. The Editor welcomes contributions from all cavers, whether DCA members or not. News, articles, etc. should be posted or emailed to him at the above address, or give him a ring.

The Derbyshire Caver is posted free to DCA members; non-members may subscribe by sending a cheque for £7 (payable to DCA) for four issues, to the Secretary/Treasurer (address above). Some back issues are also available for sale.

Current issues of The Derbyshire Caver are available from the following outlets:
Hitch'n'Hike, Bamford The Old Smithy Teashop, Monyash
Peveril Outdoor & Travel, Castleton Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath