

BCA Newsletter

Number 21 - July 2015

This newsletter was originally only published as a web page but has been re-created as this PDF in July 2019.

Chairman's Introduction

It is with great pleasure that I sit down to write this brief note to introduce the July Newsheet. After years of BCA never quite getting communication with members quite right, Robin Weare has stepped up to the plate and produced four excellent Newsheets in quick succession. He deserves our heartfelt thanks and encouragement. Robin, please keep up the sterling work, and readers, please help Robin by sending him contributions for future editions.

Our recent Annual General Meeting was held in the Forest of Dean in conjunction with the British Caving Rescue Council. The fact that the event went so well was thanks almost entirely to the British Cave Rescue Council and in this Paul Taylor undoubtedly played a much larger role than most. Again we are most grateful, both to Paul and BCRC.

The AGM saw me elected to my third term as Chairman. This post has a three-year tenure and in that time I promise to give my very best to British Caving.

Perhaps the most important item to be discussed at the AGM was CRoW, last year's poll and our response to it. The meeting agreed that BCA would work to seek clarification from National England and DEFRA, and BCA Council has now appointed Tim Allen to work alongside me in this regard.

Following the recent poll, the question of BCA being able to contact its members via the internet continues to be very widely discussed. Your Chairman is quite proud to be a computer dinosaur, but even I see the potential benefits to democracy if our membership is better engaged. In this respect I urge everyone to send us their email addresses. We promise not to betray your trust and, if you are not happy, you can unsubscribe at any time.

Work on organising EuroSpeleo 2016 continues apace and it promises to be a wonderful caving week. I know from my trips to and with foreign cavers that there will be many people attending and we will be doing everything to show how great British Caving really is. Online bookings will open shortly with substantial advance discounts, so keep your eyes peeled.

BCRA seems likely to soon pull the plug on Speleology, our joint publication since BCA's inception. While this is a shame, we are fortunate that we do still have Cave and Karst Science, Descent and this newsheet. It is clearly crucial that these continue strongly and meanwhile we will explore how to best move forward.

Finally, Hidden Earth is not far away and I look forward to seeing as many people as possible in Churchill. Keep an eye out for the Euro Speleo website and early-bird discounts, and advanced notice that the 2016 BCA AGM will be held on 5 June 2016 on Mendip, in conjunction with the popular DigFest.

Andy Eavis, BCA Chairman

BCA Online Launched

Cookie has undersold this in the first sentence as I know he's put in a huge effort to get it up and running. I now declare an interest as I want the newsletter to be read by as many of our members as possible so first click the button and either log in or provide your e-mail address. Then please opt in to receiving the newsletter. [Editor]

There has been a small but significant addition to the BCA website. BCA is determined to make better use of email and has started asking for email addresses as part of the membership renewal process. That has been going well

with over 60% of members providing their email address either via their club or directly. The most notable item to be sent electronically will be the quarterly Newsletter but might also include event announcements, product safety warnings, access updates, insurance etc.

There is a problem though, and that is the problem of permission. The last thing BCA wants is to spam its members. So to receive anything other than administrative email you will need to opt-in. To do that go to the main website (www.british-caving.org.uk) and click on the "BCA Online" option top right hand side. Then click on "Request Login Details", fill in your email address and click the green submit button. If your email address is found the system will send you an email with a link to allow you to set your password and log in. If your email address isn't found please follow the instructions on the screen.

Once you have logged in you can click on "Email Preferences" to opt-in and receive the BCA Newsletter direct to your inbox. Please note you can opt-out of email communication at any time by using the same screen.

Whilst there you can also quickly click on "Your Profile" to check that BCA has your correct contact and insurance details.

If you have any questions or comments please contact BCA Online Administrator (David Cooke).

Hidden Earth Donation

The Hidden Earth team, have announced that, from the surplus of the 2013 event, they are able to make a donation to the Ghar Parau Foundation (GPF) of £3000. GPF is a sub-charity of BCRA that distributes grants towards caving expeditions. In due course, some of the surplus from the 2014 event will also be distributed.

Eurospeleo 2016

From 13-20 August 2016 the European Speleological Federation meeting ('Eurospeleo') is coming to the Yorkshire Dales. The event is being jointly organised by BCA and the Hidden Earth team and, as it will be everything that is normally Hidden Earth but on a much bigger scale, it will replace next year's Hidden Earth.

Planning has started for a series of speleo camps to take place in Derbyshire, South Wales, the Mendips and Nenthead in the week before and the week after the main meeting.

The event itself will be a week-long festival of caving, hosted at the Dalesbridge Centre near Austwick in the Yorkshire Dales, and is likely to be attended by well in excess of 1,000 cavers over the course of the week from the UK and overseas. This is by some distance the biggest event in the UK caving calendar, and we are keen to encourage everyone to get this date in their diary, promote it within their club or caving circles, and attend for as much of the week as possible.

The event will include a daily lecture programme, bar, on-site catering and entertainment, training courses, a trade hall and conference banquet. Camping will be available on site. Around 30 of the Dales' most popular caves will be rigged all week to allow them to be enjoyed without encumbrance, and the PC Ltd winch will be in operation all week at Gaping Gill.

These are still early days, and the website content is still being added to but tickets will soon be on sale at, for a short period, a substantial discount. We would like to encourage all cavers to keep an eye on the eurospeleo.uk website, and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to get the latest news as things progress.

Hidden Earth

In case anyone actually needs to be reminded Hidden Earth 2015 will be held from 25 – 27 September at Churchill Academy. The website is hidden-earth.org.uk and online bookings will be available from 1 August.

This year, there is an online form to register your interest in giving a lecture or workshop.

BCA Party & AGM Weekend

Although quite appalling weather was expected all over the country, the Forest of Dean was mostly dry throughout the weekend and the Dean Field Studies Centre in Parkend proved to be a fine location.

The organisation of the event was mainly down to BCRC as we tied our AGM to their bi-annual conference and we were particularly grateful that they were able (and willing) to move the original date by a week in order to accommodate us.

About 160 were booked in for the weekend and many more turned up for just one of the days; there was a welcoming bar on Friday evening, a full programme of talks and demonstrations during Saturday and a transfer to the Barbeque Churn chamber in Clearwell Caves (in fact, an ancient iron mine) in the evening where a fine meal, a band and a range of ten local ales or ciders were enjoyed. Some participants enjoyed a swim before leaving and it is rumoured that there were streakers on the other bus.

Sunday's rescue practice saw nearly 100 people underground in four separate rescue scenarios and it is reported that everyone emerged safely.

The AGM attendance was probably less than it would have been without this alternative attraction but that didn't prevent spirited discussion on many of the agenda topics.

Andy Eavis was re-elected as Chairman and Nigel Ball as Training Officer, each for a 3 year term. Dave Cooke and Faye Litherland were elected as Club Representatives and Hellie Brooke and Bernie Woodley were elected as Individual Member Representatives, all to serve a 2 year term.

At the subsequent Council Meeting Rostam Namaghi was appointed as Youth and Development Officer, replacing Hellie Brooke who stood down. Hellie will instead handle Media Enquiries, succeeding Chris Jewell who stood down. Two new posts were created: Robin Weare was appointed Assistant Treasurer and will be helping the Treasurer by taking on much of the administrative part of his workload; and Tim Allen was appointed to the role of CRoW Liaison. There were no other changes to appointments.

Proposals considered and passed by the meeting included items to allow BCA to gain the views of the members on any future occasion without incurring the costs associated with the recent CRoW poll and, arising from that poll, to confirm that the existing Constitution allows us to seek clarification from DEFRA and Natural England on their existing guidance on the CRoW Act and its application to caving.

Devon & Cornwall

Jason Pain, the DCUC Secretary, has provided an update on recent events in the far West.

We recognise that our website is in need of an update to provide considerably more information than it currently does to support visitors to the south west. Hopefully, early in July, we should have a new website in place, which we will continue to develop - any constructive feedback welcomed.

To find out more details of Devon and Cornwall Caves and Mines please contact access@dcuc.org.uk or any of the local groups who are happy to share information about caves and mines in the area.

Officers elected for another year include: Dave Warne as Chairperson; Jason Pain as Secretary; Roger King as Treasurer and Access Officer; Rupert Goddard as Conservation Officer; David Jean as BCA rep; Web Master Keith Coventry; Equipment Officer is Richard Vooght; and Hugo Glasier from Cornwall Mine Explorers is Training Officer. We are pleased to have representation from Cornwall to the elected group and it is hoped this will help further develop links with our Cornish colleagues.

The next Council Meeting is planned for June 29th in Plymouth. All the DCUC meetings are open to anyone interested in the underground of Devon and Cornwall.

The Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs (CHECC)

CHECC is a set of initials which has turned up quite regularly in the last ten years or so and the current Chairperson, Thomas Starnes, tells us about the Council and what it does. He's not mentioned the forthcoming newsletter which he tells me will be a little less formal than this one. I'm very much looking forward to the first issue.

The Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs (CHECC) was formed at the first British University caving club's seminar, held in Wales in 2002. The purpose of the Council is to support student caving in the UK and this happens in a number of ways which are outlined in this article.

One of the Council's core aims is to facilitate communication between university caving clubs. This is achieved by several means, the most notable of which has to be the annual CHECC Forum which takes place in November. The Forum typically attracts between two and three hundred student cavers from around twenty university clubs for a long weekend of caving, games, competitions and presentations. The event generates a melting pot of student cavers and serves to foster relationships between the various university clubs. Many caving trips, digs and expeditions have their roots in a chance encounter over a friendly drink at a CHECC Forum event.

Last year the Forum took place at the Gilwern Outdoor Centre in South Wales. Unusually for a CHECC Forum there were enough beds for all, and no cold November camping was required. Over 250 students attended the event, and trips were run in various caves along the Llangattock Escarpment and further afield across in the Brecon Beacons. I believe one group even ventured as far west as the Black Mountain for an Ogof Pasg – Ogof Foel Fawr through trip. A few keen cavers even braved the Daren Cilau through trip as well.

At Gilwern, 175 attendees attended the AGM which was a great turnout. At the AGM, Hellie Brooke stood down as Chairperson and I know her infectious enthusiasm and dedicated passion to promote student caving will be sorely missed by a great many people. Hellie continues to provide support and advice, and is a great asset to the student caving community. I am delighted to have taken on the role of Chairperson and am currently fulfilling my first of three years in this position. Stuart Alldred was also reinstated as the Training Officer and I look forward to working with him to provide training and facilitate safe caving across all university clubs. The Gilwern Forum also included a CRoW debate which was I'm pleased to say was well attended. CHECC actively contributed to the CRoW debate and cast votes which were channeled through Hellie as the BCA Youth and Development Officer. The debate was just one example of a topical issue sparking thoughtful discussion between student cavers and this debate continued to take place on social media.

Social media plays a significant part as a medium of communication among young cavers, and the CHECC Facebook page currently has 595 members many of whom use the group to share news items of special interest to the student caving community, and to organise and publicise university club trips. We are now talking with Tim and Jane Allen about how we can encourage adoption of ukCaving.com as a means of communication by the student demographic, and how ukCaving can best serve the needs of student cavers.

CHECC is about much more than just the annual Forum. The Council runs training events and offers advice to higher education clubs who need help with insurance, risk assessments and developing leader schemes. Every year competitions are run including cave photography, surveying, art and literature with great prizes provided by generous sponsors. If you would like to donate a prize for one of our competitions please get in touch. All sponsors get their logo printed on the back of the annual CHECC T-shirt which is seen by hundreds of student and 'grown up' cavers.

The Council also supports the regionally-organised Northern CHECC and Southern CHECC training events which take place in spring. This year the events took place at Bullpot Farm and Mendip, respectively. Training workshops are run on a voluntary basis at no cost, and the student caving community is indebted to the committed individuals who run

training workshops every year. If you can offer a training workshop or presentation, please get in touch – we'd love to hear from you!

We are looking forward to working with the BCA Training Officer to channel additional funds into training opportunities for university clubs. By their nature, university clubs' membership levels can fluctuate dramatically from year to year, and one of the primary functions of the Council is to keep skills and experience within clubs so that they can continue to operate safely and effectively.

If you would like to get in touch with CHECC, please drop an email to check@checc.org. We would be more than happy to hear from you.

White-Nose Syndrome

What does the discovery of the white-nose syndrome fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* in the UK mean?

As most cavers will know white nose syndrome has been identified in the bat population of North America and although the fungus is present in Europe, including the UK, there have been no fatalities associated with WNS. Helen Miller of the Bat Conservation Trust explains.....

Pseudogymnoascus destructans (Pd) (formerly known as *Geomyces destructans*) is a soil loving fungus that causes white-nose syndrome in North America. Since its discovery in a cave in New York State in 2006, white-nose syndrome has been associated with the death of more than 5.7 million hibernating bats, and despite efforts to limit its effect, it continues to spread.

In Europe this discovery caused great concern. What might it mean for our own bat species? Was the fungus already present here and if so, would we also start to observe mass mortalities amongst our European species? Or was there a chance that this fungus could be brought over to Europe from North America and therefore affect our bats? This prompted a resolution of EUROBATS (International Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats) which provided a series of recommendations for countries signed up to the Agreement to consider. This included setting up surveillance programmes and considering precautionary measures such as those used in North America (decontamination procedures and cave closures) to try to limit the spread of the syndrome should it be discovered here.

In 2009 the fungus was discovered in Europe, on a hibernating bat in a cave in France. The fungus has since been identified in a further 16 European countries including the UK but importantly without the associated syndrome that has caused the deaths in North America. It is thought probable that European bats have a resistance to the fungus, possibly evolved over thousands of years of exposure. In North America Pd is a novel pathogen and so native species do not have the same resistance to the fungus. It is thought that the fungus was accidentally introduced to North America from Europe.

In 2013 the first positive cases of Pd were confirmed in the UK. We now have confirmation that the fungus is present at five sites in South East England and an additional site in the East of England (confirmed in 2014). The positive cases come from a combination of passive and active surveillance. As has been observed in continental Europe only the fungus has been identified and therefore it is thought that our bats have the same resistance to the fungus as seen in the rest of Europe.

Looking forward, the UK is continuing with its passive and active surveillance programmes to better understand the distribution of the fungus across the UK. The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) is also continuing to work with government and key parties (including caving contacts) to ensure that contingency plans are in place should they be necessary. However, in the UK current findings do provide us with a high degree of confidence that our bats are resistant to Pd and therefore precautionary measures will not be required.

Cavers in the UK can help with this ongoing work by reporting any observations of the fungus (on hibernating bats) to the Bat Conservation Trust on 0345 1300 228. We would also ask cavers to consider decontamination procedures of caving equipment and clothing if travelling outside of the UK.

Digging on SSSI cave sites

Andrew Hinde, the BCA Conservation Officer, has asked that attention is drawn to the CNCC's new Guidelines - How to get permission to dig on a SSSI leaflet. Many of the cave systems in the Dales are designated SSSIs, but the leaflet is relevant to anyone seeking to dig in a SSSI throughout England, or indeed anywhere else as it contains useful advice on conservation in the event of a new discovery or breakthrough.

Recent Developments in Anchors

Anchors have been on the BCA's Equipment & Techniques Committee agenda for many years. Bob Mehew and Nick Williams discuss the background and recent developments

Realising the major problem with spits wearing out or failing in use, CNCC spent some considerable effort in the early 1990s developing a replacement anchor. They chose the DMM Eco resin anchor as being suitable, achieving high strength to both axial and radial pull out forces. The system was offered to the then NCA and adopted around 1995. Although the mountaineering anchor standard (EN 959) was published *after* the first placements of anchors under the NCA scheme, the anchor meet the standard's requirement for axial (15kN) and radial (25kN) pull out.

The demise of the DMM Eco resin anchor some 10 years ago lead to a prolonged search for a suitable replacement. The thinking was to retain the distinctive style of the Eco head along with the use of resin to glue the anchor into the rock. NCA had obtained a large stock of the Eco anchors so the matter was not urgent, but thoughts then did not anticipate a 10-year delay. There was nothing on the market then which was similar to the Eco but a few alternative resin-based anchors did exist. An offer to organise the manufacture of a replacement 'Peco' anchor in China was followed up and the pre-production batch performed to expectation. Regrettably a potential problem was identified in the first production batch and testing revealed a weakness. After long deliberation BCA's Equipment and Techniques (E&T) Committee decided to not adopt the Peco anchor and recommended the replacement of those Peco anchors which had been placed in caves.

An alternative anchor manufactured by Bolt Products in Germany was then identified. A key difference between the Bolt Products anchor and the Eco was that it is manufactured by cold bending suitably stress-relieved stainless-steel rod. This does leave higher stress levels in the head and shank. In 2010 a concern over chloride stress corrosion cracking in stainless steel was raised. A detailed review of papers on this cracking mechanism and consultation with the British Stainless Steel Association indicated that two of the three required factors (the presence of chloride ions above 200ppm and temperatures above 25 Centigrade) were unlikely to be present in UK caves.

An anchor policy was painfully hammered out by the E&T Committee from discussions and debates over a number of years and eventually accepted by BCA. Because of the way the standard was worded (only one anchor need be tested and in concrete) an acceptance criterion was defined by E&T Committee requiring a sample of anchors and resin placed in limestone to be tested and that 95% of the results exceed the threshold of 15kN axial pull out. Tests showed that the Bolt Products Type 316 Stainless Steel anchor (GP8-100-16A4) achieved this criterion and the anchor was accepted by the E&T Committee in 2012. The similar Type 304 Stainless Steel anchor was adopted more recently for locations with low potential for the presence of chloride ions. Work is now underway looking at two types of anchors for use in locations with known chloride ion concentrations (notably by the sea) and results are expected by the end of 2015.

Over the past year Simon Wilson has developed a [<http://www.resinanchor.co.uk/>] new resin anchor]] and submitted evidence to the E&T Committee for it to be designated at a suitable anchor. Simon's work pointed out an alternative resin which led to a piece of work conducted in South Wales. That showed that an alternative resin manufactured by Fischer was also suitable for use in caves and in wet environments (the resin was placed in holes

filled with water). In addition Simon's work highlighted a potential drawback of the Bolt Products anchor, namely simply pulling the anchor out of the rock caused sufficient spalling to make most locations unusable. This is a conservation concern and work is now in hand to look at alternative means for removing end-of-life Bolt Product anchors based on core drilling.

In 2012 and 13 work was undertaken by Gethin Thomas and others to look at some of the anchors placed in slate. On the back of this work a proposal was made to E&T Committee to fund several test beds of several types of anchors currently used in North Wales slate beds. The Committee agreed and the work has been completed with a full write up awaited. The preliminary analysis indicates reasonable confidence in both Goujon and Collinox anchors already in use and that Bolt Products and IC anchors are confidently expected to achieve the criterion for E&T to designate their use in North Wales slate.

BCRA News

Help Needed

Gina Moseley is looking for some help with inserting 2014 UK entries into the BBS Speleological Abstracts database. She has all the information that needs to be entered, but it is a rather time consuming process, and with current work commitments cannot manage it all on her own.

If you think you can spare a bit of time, half an hour up to a few hours, it would be really appreciated. Please reply to g.moseley@bcra.org.uk.

Cave & Karst Science: Layman's Summaries

For some time now, Charlie Self has been preparing his "Layman's Summaries" of some of the papers in Cave and Karst Science. These were intended to appear in Speleology but, clearly, the irregularity of publication has prevented this. However, all the Layman's Summaries are available online.

The C&KS contents listing pages include links to the Summaries. Additionally, the overview page at <http://bcra.org.uk/cks> now indicates which issues of C&KS have one or more Summaries associated with them.

CREG Journal 90 now published

Journal 90 of BCRA's Cave Radio and Electronics Group has now been published and was mailed to subscribers on 27 June. The online version is now available to download. This is free to BCRA members. Non-members will need to purchase an annual CREG login for £4.00. For information please go to <http://bcra.org.uk/creg>

CREG Field Meeting

The Cave Radio & Electronics Group field meeting will be in Ingleton on 22-23 August. For information, please sign up to the CREG-announce list at <http://list.bcra.org.uk> or keep an eye on the CREG forum at <http://bcra.org.uk/cregf>

Diary Dates

(see <http://bcra.org.uk/forum> for details)

1. 22-23 Aug. Cave Radio & Electronics Group field meeting, Ingleton
2. 25-27 Sept. Hidden Earth. Churchill Academy, Churchill, near Bristol.
3. 31 Oct/1 Nov. Science Symposium & BCRA AGM weekend at Manchester Museum.

Exploring the Limestone Landscapes of the Cumbrian Ring

This book - the latest in BCRA's Cave Studies series - will be available in July. Those who attended the Cumbrian Ring field meeting at the end of April were each given a pre-publication draft copy. The published First Edition will be very similar to this, with some slight updates, as a result of a final proof-reading exercise. When the book is published, the web page <http://bcra.org.uk/cs20> will contain a list of corrections to the draft edition.

Back-issues of *Speleology* now online

Back-issues of *Speleology* are now available online. Thanks are owed to Adam Walmsley for preparing the contents lists. The remaining contents lists will be available before too long. PLEASE NOTE: To access this online publication you will need a valid BCRA user-id. Non-members can purchase one for £8/month.

BCRA Secretary, Dave Gibson, adds:

I cannot mention *Speleology* without mentioning the very long delay since an issue was last published. *Speleology* is a BCRA publication (although it is largely funded by BCA) and BCRA Council will be discussing the subject at the next Council meeting. It is expected that BCRA Council will vote to cease to produce *Speleology* as a "periodical, for issuing to our members" and will start to investigate how BCRA's needs could be met in other ways. I will report on the outcome of that discussion as soon as possible. For a more detailed discussion, please read the *Speleology* topic on the BCRA News Forum at <http://bcra.org.uk/forum>

Cave Studies Series Editor wanted

BCRA publishes an occasional series of booklets - the Cave Studies Series. For many years, Dave Judson was the Series editor. Dave has now stepped down and we are seeking a replacement. We do not want to be too prescriptive in what we are asking for and, rather than Editor, it may be that we are seeking a Project Manager. If you have book-editing skills and are interested in managing book publication projects, please read the description at http://bcra.org.uk/pub/cs_editor.html. We are looking for someone who is willing to take on a senior role that involves both managing the projects and doing most of the editing and layout work. Needless to say, there is no payment for this post.

BCRA Treasurer

Our Treasurer, Dave Gough, has indicated that he would like to step down at the end of this year, so we are seeking a new treasurer for the Association. The treasurer is responsible for book-keeping, preparing the annual accounts and liaising with the Charity Commission. Even if you have no experience of the issues involved in being the Treasurer of a charity, it is still possible that you could help with the simpler task of book-keeping. It is also desirable for there to be a "hand-over" period. If you are interest in volunteering - at any level – please contact us as soon as possible.

CNCC News

CNCC have just released their second in a series of new newsletters. It includes news of the recent acceptance of a new constitution document, as well as reminders of the new arrangements and contacts for Leck Fell, Penyghent area and Ingleborough Estate (all previously communicated).

Details on recent installations of anchors in Rift Pot, Washfold Pot, It's a Cracker and the Magic Roundabout in Easegill are included as well as conservation and training news. A summary of the current access situation at Fairy Holes is presented, demonstrating the ongoing efforts to secure future access to this cave.

Possible Congestion in Derbyshire Caves July 26th to 31st

There is a large international Scout camp at Chatsworth towards the end of July 2015 and one of the activities that will be offered is caving. The numbers are being limited to avoid issues of cave conservation and overcrowding. Each group will be led by two experienced cave leaders. The party size being planned on is not more than 10 in an individual group with a maximum of two groups in the morning and two groups in the afternoon. They plan to use ****Carlswark**** (Gin to Noughts & Crosses) on Sunday 26th (pm only)-Monday 27th (am and pm) and Wednesday-Friday 29th-31st (am and pm). On the Tuesday, similar size groups will be in ****Bagshawe****, and ****Giants****. This is virtually identical to the arrangements which were in place for the Peak camp in 2010.

Cave Access Update

Axe Hole (Derbyshire)

Thanks to Pete Knight and a sterling gang of helpers, access to Axe Hole is now restored.

The entrance now has a protective grill to prevent stock falling into the hole but the grill is not locked or fastened down, it simply needs to be lifted to allow access.

Eyam Dale Parking (Derbyshire)

Cavers often park on the space next to the electricity sub-station in Eyam Dale near Stoney Middleton. This is not normally a problem provided that the gates are not blocked. It has recently been made clear by electricity board employees that people, possibly 'cavers', often park in front of the gates, and if necessary the electricity board will drag vehicles out of the way, and leave them on the highway. Apparently the sub-station is one of the most important in Derbyshire, and access may be urgently needed at any time. So please be aware that access seems to be a sensitive issue at the site. Alternative parking can be found 100m uphill towards Eyam at a layby opposite Flower Pot.

Waterfall Hole Parking Area (Derbyshire)

The area around Waterfall Swallet is now owned by the National Trust but they don't own the layby site so there was some investigation first to see if the work could be undertaken by DCA. Finally, the small car parking area has been cleared of scrub, courtesy of a digger loaned to DCA by Nick Williams and the hard work of a number of people; Terram geotextile matting has been laid and hardcore has now been delivered to the site. The hardcore has not yet been spread so, if you visit Waterfall, please consider taking a rake to finish the job. Thanks to all involved in a fairly epic task.

Owlet Hole Mine, Matlock Bath (Derbyshire)

PDMHS are suspending the access agreement on Owlet Hole Mine until further notice. This is due to the padlock on the shaft entrance having been broken off, it has been secured in a temporary manner but there will be no access until a long-term solution to its security is put in place. We'll try to keep you informed.

Devonshire Mine (Derbyshire)

After a report of problems with the door at Devonshire Mine, a recent visit by a group found that the door was wide open. The group was able to close it once they were all inside. When they came out, they closed it with no problem. In fact turning the shaft anticlockwise with a spanner it locked first time, and seemed a bit easier than it used to be. Please ensure when you enter and leave that the door is closed, it is imperative we do so if we are to avoid problems of future access, please make sure everyone is aware of the problem.

Eldon Quarry (Derbyshire)

Persons unknown have recently stolen the lock and chain from the gate into Eldon Quarry. The farmer is aware and, for the time being the gate is secured by baler twine and he has no problem with cavers entering quarry under the usual conditions: i.e. no cars to be taken into the quarry and fill in the Log Book in the box each time. The farmer has warned that any vehicles seen in the quarry will be reported to the police so, if you come across anything untoward, please let Pete Mellors know by emailing [legal.insurance \[at\] theDCA.org.uk](mailto:legal.insurance@theDCA.org.uk).

Suspect Bolts in Suicide Cave and Giants Hole (Derbyshire)

There is a problem in the 1st pitch area of ****Suicide Cave****. This is the 3rd P-bolt on the left wall as you approach the 1st pitch head, the right hand one of the Y-hang. The bolt and visible resin rotate a few degrees in the hole although it could not be extracted or rotated further with a karabiner. It has been reported to the Equipment Officer and will be looked at closely with a view to replacement.

In Giants Hole at Garlands Pot one of the back-up anchors appears to be loose. This is the first P-bolt you encounter on the left wall of Giants as you approach Garlands Pitch, the left one of the pair of back-up anchors in the recess.

This bolt rotated with its visible resin; again it has been reported to the Equipment Officer so it will be looked at closely with a view to replacement.

Rowter (Derbyshire)

A loose P-anchor has been reported in Rowter Shaft. This is the RH bolt on the re-belay. It has been checked and was due to be replaced during the week beginning 16 March.

Consideration is being given to P-bolting the new extensions in Rowter Hole - this will be up for discussion at the DCA Council Meeting on 20 June.

Eldon Hole Belay Stakes (Derbyshire)

Report from Pete Knight on 2 April on the state of the Eldon Hole ground anchors:

Once I'd kicked a bit of soil out the way to expose the base of the posts I gave them all a visual and 'kick' inspection. The following were my observations:

North route – Both anchors in good condition. An old rusty maillon that was occupying one hole has been removed.

South route – Single anchor looked in okay condition.

East route – Both bollards showed signs of corrosion. The base of bollard marked 'C' was particularly bad. Recommend DO NOT USE. Treat bollard 'D' as suspect too.

West route – Both bollards showed signs of corrosion. The base of bollard marked 'A' was showing large amounts of corrosion. Recommend DO NOT USE. Bollard 'B' should be thought of as suspect too.

Pridhamsleigh Cavern (Devon)

Early in April reports were received from a number of sources, about what appeared to be a new crack in the ceiling of Bishops Chamber in Pridhamsleigh Cavern.

Roger King (DCUC Access Officer) investigated at the time, and found what ****we believe to be a new crack**** (or at least an old small crack was on the move) ****in the roof has opened up at a right angle to the open end of the trench in Bishops Chamber****. We have continued to monitor the situation both visually and via small movement monitors, and the area seems to have settled once again.

We continue to advise users to be cautious in this area, and would ask regular users to help monitor the situation and report to the DCUC Access Officer any observations.

The DCUC Access Officer's e-mail address is access@dcuc.org.uk

DCUC will continue to monitor the situation and advise further as appropriate.