

BCA Newsletter No 29

April 2017

Edited by Robin Weare



Chairman's Introduction

I am very much looking forward to the AGM weekend, which, if it is anything like the last one to be held in Castleton will be very enjoyable; low priced beer, good food and lots of partying with many other cavers has to be good.

The AGM on Sunday 11th June promises to be a very important and interesting affair.

There are a number of issues on the agenda including several proposed changes to the constitution. These will, in fact, be the first substantial changes since the BCA constitution was originally drafted.

It is very important that people remember what BCA stands for. There are a significant number of BCA personnel on the council who do an enormous amount of unpaid voluntary work on behalf of British cavers.

The constitutional changes are designed to help the membership in a number of ways, such as improved access to caves and streamlining the democratic processes. It is recognised that the existing system is not perfect and these constitutional changes are a step towards improving it.

As Chairman, I will do all I can to try and improve the performance of the British Caving Association. I would be very grateful if all our members can keep in mind what is best for British caving in general.

Andy Eavis
BCA Chairman

BCA's AGM & Party Weekend

BCA Secretary, Simon Brooks, tells us that the 2017 Annual General Meeting of the British Caving Association will once again take place as part of a weekend of activities. This year's event will be held in Derbyshire over the weekend of 10/11 June and based at the Rotary Centre in Castleton, as it was in 2013 when the series started.

The Weekend

The programme starts with registration from 7pm on Friday 9th June with a Speleo Bar available until late.

On Saturday there will be opportunities to go caving, visit the British Caving Library at Glutton Bridge or to attend an interesting and informative collection of talks and walks organised by BCRA with a bar and music in the evening.

There is a choice of bunkroom-style accommodation £10 (Saturday night) £15 (Friday and Saturday) or camping on site (£5 per tent). Beer will be £2.50 per pint, there will be no charge for the disco and there is no entrance fee.

For further information, accommodation bookings, or just to let us know you're coming, please e-mail: l.barrett@british-caving.org.uk

The Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of BCA will start at 10.30am on Sunday and in addition to the normal business of an Annual General Meeting there will be a whole host of proposals to amend the constitution to consider.

The agenda can be seen and downloaded from the website [here](#)

The normal business will include several Officer and Council Appointments – all of which will be open to open to nominations from the floor of the AGM.

Treasurer (Currently Robin Weare Acting)
Equipment Officer (Currently Nick Williams)
Publications and Information Officer (Currently Les Williams)
Two Club Representatives (Currently David Cooke & Faye Litherland)
Two Individual Representatives (Currently Bernie Woodley & vacant)

The present (acting) incumbent of the Treasurer's post took it on because he has the necessary skills and someone had to. He has authorised me to say that he is very conscious that it is desirable for the age profile of the BCA Executive to be a little lower and that he encourages any suitably qualified and interested younger member to contact him to find out what is involved. [Editor]

The constitutional proposals stem from the 2016 Annual General Meeting when the two proposals to change the constitution were deferred – partly to allow for further consideration of their wording and also to allow Council the opportunity to propose other changes which they considered to be necessary.

This was to a great extent due to the cost of the membership ballot which is required if the AGM passes any proposal which requires a constitutional change.

As part of the deal by which one of the proposals was withdrawn it was agreed that any CRoW related effort would concentrate on conservation and landowner relations until further proposals were put to the coming Annual General Meeting.

The proposals were previewed in the January newsletter but we now have a few more and all are set out in the document which can be seen and downloaded from the website [here](#)

Hidden Earth

Hidden Earth will be back on the weekend of **29 Sept to 1 Oct 2017** at [Churchill Academy](#) in the Mendips. The Hidden Earth website will be updated with more information later in the spring.

Conservation Code & Minimum Impact Guidelines

Conservation & Access Officer, Andrew Hinde, has reported with some dismay on what appears to be the very poor impact of recent publications.

An investigation has taken place into the uptake of the new 6 point Conservation Code and the Minimal Impact Caving Guidelines on RCC and Caving Club websites. The results were very disappointing. In light of this the documents were distributed again to RCC secretaries on February 2nd 2017 asking that they pass these codes on to club secretaries and webmasters requesting that they be given a prominent and permanent position on club websites. At present the number of club websites with any conservation information can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

I would like to thank Jenny Potts and Chris Binding for assistance with research at regional level. I hope to be able to announce some improvement when this task is repeated after 6 months.

Anchors & Conservation

Nick Williams, BCA's Equipment & Techniques Officer, explains the action taken to resolve conservation concerns over the installation of anchors.

Following on from some work done by Richard Vooght of DCUC on sea water corrosion resistant anchors, it was recognised that the conservation concerns over the existing Bolt Products 8mm diameter rod twisted shaft anchor might be answered by moving to the 6mm diameter rod version. (The concern relates to whether the anchor can be removed whilst preserving the location for subsequent use.) Work to date indicates that the 6mm version may not address these concerns. As a consequence, we have been looking for alternative anchors.

CNCC have recently agreed to fund the purchase of a batch of IC anchors for use in CNCC area caves. These anchors are expected to cost significantly more than the 8mm BP anchor which is the current 'standard' for use outside the CNCC patch. E+T have said we will refund CNCC to the same cost per anchor as we currently pay for the BP anchors, with the possibility of paying the balance if a way can be found to make the IC anchors available to other regions. It is understood that CNCC have ample funds with which to pay the extra. Expenditure for the purchase of resin and expenses for training will be met in full by BCA.

BCA's 2016 Accounts

As a subject this is desperately boring to almost everyone – and that includes most accountants. For those unhappy few who love the detail it will be found in the full accounts which will be published in the lead up to the AGM but it is possible that a potted round number version might be of general interest so, wearing my “Acting Treasurer” hat:

Our Income came from two main sources. We collected about £99,000 from members but as £5,000 of that was on behalf of BCRA our own subscriptions were £94,000. We also received about £2,500 in deposit interest.

We spent about £13,000 running the membership system and the Public Liability insurance premium, which is a membership benefit, cost us £39,000.

That leaves £44,500.

We spent nearly £8,000 on general administration. That includes the cost of meetings, secretarial assistance, subscriptions to international bodies and a recent initiative to spread the word more widely by way of advertising in Descent.

We are now down to £37,000.

The professional training scheme cost about £16,500 to administer but much of that was offset by £15,000 income. Recreational training grants were £500 – but more money was available if only it had been claimed.

Expenditure on the anchor and rope test programmes came to a little over £3,500, which included the cost of refurbishing the rope test rig.

Youth development, publications and maintenance of the artificial cave cost about £500 and claims from regional councils were a little over £3,000 - much of which was for conservation work.

Direct Conservation & Access expenditure was £2,000 which included the production and publication of the Minimum Impact Guidelines and the updated Caving Code.

Web services for BCA, regional councils and other connected organisations cost us rather less than £500 after offsetting the amounts earned from other users.

With something under £26,000 of our income remaining we made the usual donations of £10,000 to BCRA to assist with the cost of running the British Caving Library and £5,000 to support expeditions.

That left us with a surplus of £10,000 or so which is added to our reserves for the inevitable rainy day.

Members' Statements of Health

Following an enquiry from a club secretary our Legal & Insurance Officer, Bob Mehew, has been musing about the merits or demerits of a question on a club membership application form which asks potential members if they have 'any medical or physical disabilities' Bob stresses that these are his preliminary thoughts but that the key point is that it is unnecessary to ask the question if the club places a condition of membership that member declare any appropriate medical conditions to trip leaders.

The Equalities Act 2010 requires (I heavily paraphrase) persons to make reasonable steps to avoid disabled persons being at a disadvantage. Disabled persons include those with medical conditions whether obvious or not. (Persons also specifically include clubs with over 25 members.) Whilst I find it difficult to see what might be considered reasonable steps in respect of modifying a cave, I can foresee some situations where it would be reasonable to undertake some additional actions. A simple example would be supplementing the degree of support in a party to facilitate taking a blind person on a trip. So in some cases it might be reasonable, in other it would not. As an aside I can foresee that reasonable steps can be taken in respect of disabled persons not being disadvantaged in a club hut.

With regards to medical conditions, there is possible value in prior disclosure. You may recall several rescues of epileptics (in 2006 see p4 #20 http://www.caverescue.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/2006_Report.pdf, and 2011 see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-shropshire-15771101>) as examples.

If the club asks and gets a truthful answer, then there is a duty on the club to take that knowledge into account in undertaking any trip with that individual. And the value becomes obvious as indicated in the above events.

The converse of not being told or an untruthful answer means that the club is not able to take that knowledge into account in undertaking any trip, unless of course the condition is obvious from other indications (such as a one legged person).

The case of someone suing the club (or more precisely the individuals in the club unless the club is an incorporated body) in such an event will inevitably depend upon the details. If the club was not aware of a condition, then it would seem difficult for the individual to win a case because they did not take the condition into account.

Four related points arise:

The first point relates to having asked the question in a membership form, how you comply with the even stronger protection requirements of the Data Protections Act 1998 on health matters. I have not researched the detailed implications but I fear they are significant.

The second point is how one copes with the medical matters which normally would be kept confidential and divulging the knowledge of the person's condition to trip member(s) on the 'just in case' principle. It crosses my mind that it might be better to ask all (and not just new) members to declare any 'appropriate' medical conditions to trip leaders.

‘Appropriate’ meaning something along the lines that; if the condition impacts on the individual, then there is value in other members of the party being pre aware in order to improve the effectiveness of the response. Such declaration could include identification of devices or medication (such as inhalers, epi pens or tablets) so others in the party know where they are and how to use them.

The third point relates to the impact on the club if it changes its position and ceases to ask the question. That is something I have not managed to think my way through.

The fourth point is the value of having a ‘participation’ statement on the membership form. The BCA one is as follows:

“The BCA recognises that caving, cave diving and mine exploration are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.”

It is of considerable value if similar words are on your membership form and that you hold a record of the fact that the person has read and accepted that statement. It is based on the common law principle that a ‘willing person cannot claim for injury’. It follows on the same basis that if you did not warn them, then they could claim they did not know so you are at a disadvantage in a court case.

A visitors view of EuroSpeleo

Having seen the film which USA visitors Mindy Filer, Andy Filer and Brian Louden had produced I asked for permission to link to it in the newsletter. I also suggested they might like to write a few words about their experiences. They sent what I can only describe as a very full report of their Eurospeleo experience which will also appear in NSS news later this year. The link is at the end of the report [Editor]

Proud of our American roots but yearning for a better understanding of the European methods of caving, we decided to expand our caving knowledge by attending Eurospeleo, held in the United Kingdom in August 2016. Attended by more than 1300 cavers from 36 different countries, it was easy to see new gear and observe other techniques. We all had various experience caving outside of the States before- in Romania, New Zealand, Mexico, or England. Along the way we handed out patches from our grottoes; Andy was excited to hand his York Grotto patch to members of the “other” York Grotto, or to point out that the Liberty Bell on Mindy and Brian’s Philadelphia Grotto patch was rung to celebrate our freedom from the country hosting us.



We were fortunate to be able to spend a full three weeks at Eurospeleo and its pre-and post-camps. These were set up very much like an NSS convention, with the pre/post camps being organized by various clubs.

Our first week was spent caving in the Mendip Hills of southern England, near Cheddar. This camp was amazingly well organized by Chris Binding and the Wessex Cave Club. Their cave hut has a large kitchen, warm showers, clean up station, internet, bunks, caves and a caver's pub within walking distance (isn't that genius?), and our favorite- a drying room to hang our wet cave clothes; it was hard to beat the less than \$10/night to stay there. The first day we were met by Tony Seddon and his travelling gear shop Starless River. Although he sells items straight from his pick-up truck, you'd be hard pressed to find such quality and quantity of options in a full store, so we loaded up on new bobbins, suits, furies (imagine those children's footie red pajamas in an adult size with crazy patterns), and knee pads in hopes that only our accents, rather than our looks would be what made us stand out from the crowd. We would soon find out that other Americans were there, as well as cavers from several other countries. Unfortunately, the cavers from Ukraine and Iran who were registered had their visas denied last minute, an interesting cultural opportunity sadly missed. The Mendips is filled with many locked, horizontal caves, with most of the small drops rigged with cable ladders. Our first cave was perhaps the best decorated we saw on the entire trip- the Neverland section of Upper Flood Swallet was filled with pristine white formations, and foot wide cylinders they called pork pies (much more enjoyable than the namesake food, as we would later discover). The cave was pristine, as the narrow path was well-marked and we had to take off our muddy coveralls and brush off our boots before entering the area. Another wonderful cave was Swildon's Hole which is popular with divers, and has a nice "Short Round" (six hour) trip through sumps, and several other tight near sumps, where the Brits were kind enough to leave a few hole-filled buckets to help us bail water to allow for some breathing room. Also impressive was the Templeton dig, where several men looking for post-retirement adventure began digging 17 years ago. Now over 230 feet deep, the dig is an engineering marvel with multiple platforms, winches, and ladders. They are hoping to find master cave (i.e. borehole) that connects Swildon's Hole with Wookey Hole.

We visited a few other impressive caves, with our last day spent in Reservoir Hole, whose large chamber was only discovered in 2012, it has the largest room by floor area in the UK. It was well-decorated and prime example of new exploration done right. Interestingly, they currently explore sensitive parts of the room with drones so as to not disturb the formations and stir up dirt.

The Yorkshire Dales region in northern England hosted the main Eurospeleo event. Many tented at the event held in a large field but, we chose to stay in another cave hut run by the Yorkshire Subterranean Society. Our evenings were spent listening to stories of caving expeditions and a rather severe battle with histoplasmosis of the well-traveled and tenured Robin Weare, who organized and oversaw the event's pre-and post- camps. Similar to an NSS convention Eurospeleo had full-service catering, a bar, entertainment, vendors, more than 100 lectures, vertical competitions, lots of beer (130 barrels to be exact), numerous led trips, and excellent maps with detailed directions for self-led trips. They had rigged 176 vertical drops (which they call pitches) with nearly 4 miles of donated rope for the event. The ropes were 9.5mm and

10mm. Because of the long distances that the rope needed to be carried, and the sheer number of pitches, they typically use thinner, much lighter ropes than we use at home.

The area caves are extremely well equipped with hundreds of glue-in bolts, and rigged in the alpine style – with rebelays, re-directs, and traverses all of which placed to allow quick efficient navigation of the cave while minimizing rope wear. The bolts are placed and maintained by the CNCC, which is their version of our regional organization (ie. TAG, VAR, etc.).

Much different from the Mendips region, the Yorkshire area boasts mostly vertical, active stream caves. The caves were not locked, and the “right to roam” also meant that the caves were easily accessible, yet still very pristine given the large number of cavers they see. The vertical nature of many caves in the Yorkshire Dales also helps limit inadvertent damage or vandalism from the general public as well. Having been to the Dales before, we spent some time practicing rebelays and redirects with bobbins, and found the bobbins are simple to use, safe, and significantly faster than racks for the alpine style rigging typically found in England. Another nicety was the rigging was just off rock, so while frogging our feet would touch the wall and keep us upright. Not quite as efficient as a ropewalker, but pretty darn close.

We also purchased a few caving books which made potholing even easier by detailing exact locations, skill levels, rigging guides, access, and even how quickly the cave would become dangerous in Yorkshire’s notorious rainy and unpredictable weather. Because of how closely spaced the caves were, we often drove or took a short walk to several caves each day. We saw many cavers throughout the week, but the high level of competency on and off rope didn’t slow us down much.

Most impressive in Yorkshire was Gaping Gill, at 322ft, it’s the deepest open air pit in England. After an hour hike to the entrance, we dropped the pit, explored, and then gladly paid the 5 pounds it cost to be winched out the top. The winch service is a fundraiser the nearby Craven Pothole Club runs every year. After 11 days straight of caving, often more than one cave in a day, it was easy to justify taking the “easy way” out. We found out the following week that the cave flooded and had 80ft. deep water on ground that had no water when we were there. Our next trip - a pleasant through-trip from Simpsons Pot to the Valley entrance had 13 vertical drops to spice things up.

But our favorite trip was the Diccan to Alum Pot through-trip. With beautiful views, moss covered walls, and sun beams poking through the trees at the exit, it felt like we were hobbits in a Tolkien novel. We visited a half dozen other caves throughout the week.

Our final week was spent in South Wales, where caves were again primarily horizontal. We were warned our first couple weeks of caving that the Welsh were “mad,” and by this, I mean the British meaning for the word, not the literal. After rattling off the list of caves we had done in the weeks prior, we were immediately invited to take on some of the more challenging routes in Ogor Ffynnon Ddu (we didn’t pick the spelling, it’s a Welsh thing, most just call it OFD). OFD is a 31-mile (and still growing) cave system and nature preserve, the deepest in the UK, and was within walking distance our cave hut. The South Wales Caving Club purchased 10 row homes where quarry workers had once lived, and converted it into their large cave hut. Our first trip was led by Tony Baker who took us over wide, muddy

traverses, where we chimneyed across long 4ft. wide gaps that would drop 80ft down into rushing waters. We spent several days in that cave, each one very different than the last. The lower passages were black marble looking tunnels, with a roaring river, and deep water-filled holes big enough to force us to jump in at times. Other trips into OFD included a trip to the columns and other popular formations, a through trip from the lower entrance to the top entrance, and a trip through the marble showers. Our hardest and perhaps best trip was made on the last day to Dan Yr Ogof. The front portion is a famous show cave, but the rest of the cave is a tiring but rewarding trip through rooms filled with ceiling to floor soda straws, endless formations in the aptly named "cloud chamber", borehole passage, river tubing, and a full on cold stream swim back to the show cave. Sadly, our cameras weren't doing so well (one having been run over by their mother's car shortly before the trip), so very few photos turned out. After that we cleaned up our gear and headed to London for the flight home.

We planned a full schedule for our visit, and we sure got it. The event took its toll on us with twenty-four trips, five thousand feet on rope, and dozens of miles caving.

While they don't hold EuroSpeleo quite as regularly as Convention we'll be keeping our eye out for the next one. For anyone interested in getting out and about, we highly recommend making your way over to the UK or attending any number of the excellent caving events in Europe.

For a more interactive showing of our trip, visit the following link to a short video we put together: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXMY533gK0k>

Anchor pre use inspection

Problems arising from the discovery of loose anchors are discussed by Nick Williams, BCA's Equipment & Techniques Officer.

Following revelation that some 20 anchors in the Dales were loose, a short reminder was issued via Descent and Regional Caving Councils to cavers undertaking SRT to carry out the pre use inspection. (The 20 anchors amount to around 10% of the anchor placed in the identified caves.)

The BCA Equipment & Techniques Committee did discuss changing the advice on this pre use inspection process. The most significant change was to remove the allowance of a small amount of movement or anchor with respect to resin or rock. The new advice is awaiting agreement on several other points.

A request was made to regions for placement records. We are grateful to DCA for promptly responding to this request. Their data has permitted a statistical analysis of replaced anchors within the Derbyshire region. The analysis is still ongoing but the preliminary indications are that there is no clear evidence to support one expressed concern that anchors placed using the original resin pre 1996 are becoming loose due to aging of the resin. Failures have occurred in anchors placed in all types of resin over their early years of life.

Ghar Parau Allocations

The Ghar Parau Committee met on the 26th March 2017. Total money to allocate for the year 2017 was £6,100 from BCA and £1,200 from GPF. £50 was allocated to the Tratman Award, and £1600 BCA and £450 GPF retained for Round 2 Awards, leaving £4500 BCA and £700 GPF to be distributed in Round 1. China Caves Project is a separate fund and dealt with separately. The following awards for Round 1 were made:-

Expedition and location	Feedback	BCA	GPF	China Caves	Alex Pitcher	Total
Hualta Resurgence 2017 Mexico	Well prepared and exciting technical project to a longstanding objective with potential for significant discoveries. Will be very interesting to see the results of the secondary objective.	£500				£500
Alantus Subterranean Landscapes Greece	The expedition seems reasonably well organised; application reasonably researched and presented from a young not well known team. Hope the trip provides some good discoveries which are documented and published in the appropriate caving media.	£350	£150			£500
Mulu Caves 2017 Malaysia	A large team of generally old veterans doing a mixture of remote and easy exploration. No doubt the results will be good, but a great shame more young people are not encouraged to go on this expedition to learn from the great experience present. It is an expensive place to go channeling grant money to some younger members might increase their numbers. * The GPF grant was substantially reduced as the expedition received a £2000 grant from the Mount Everest Foundation		£100*			£100*
Thailand Krabi Family Expedition Thailand	Interesting concept of "a family expedition" but, as seems to have been proven by last year's trip, may be a good combination of allowing cavers with young families to still do expeditions whilst also making it fun for the children who will be the next generation of cavers. Expedition seems well organised with firm objectives. One negative comment – the application (specifically the personnel section) was incompletely filled in and needs to be improved for future applications.	£600				£600
Pozo Azul 2017 Spain	Another crack at Pozo Azul, pushing a system that is at the forefront of cave diving in the world. Flying the flag for British caving. Will be well planned and executed. We look forward to seeing the results.	£850				£850
Ario Caves Project 2017 Spain	A large team with good exploration experience. There are a reasonable number of younger people who will benefit from the experience, but very few students going to benefit from a good expedition. Nice to see the Ario project having a major revival.	£800			2 * £75	£800 + £150
Treviso 2017 Spain	Some realistic although potentially quite tough objectives for this expedition, especially as it is only two weeks. The team seems suitable for the task with plenty of hard Dachstein veteran experience.	£500			1 * £75	£500 + £75
CUCC Austrian Expedition 2017 Austria	A well-established expedition returning to continue exploration of a large system with good chance of success. Students from several different clubs attending their first expedition. This will provide excellent expedition training as well as allowing students to cave with more experienced cavers.	£900			2 * £75	£900 + £150
Napo 2017 China	Small team of mostly older cavers with good expedition experience. The application lacks real information about the area or research. They could contact HMG to borrow a lot of the equipment and save money.			£700	1 * £75	£700 + £75

A Scout's SRT Training

Most cavers will remember the adverse comments about the Chief Scout's televised visit to Long Churn a year or two back. Perhaps this report from Robin Sturgess, an Explorer Scout from Boreatton, will go some way to counter the negative impression of Scout caving which some may have gained.

In March I went to the Arthog outreach centre in Wellington to learn about and train to use the Single Rope Technique (SRT), a way to abseil into caves and climb back out again. At the start of the day we met Alan and he talked us through how the kit worked. Then we were handed ropes and we had to tie them in the right knots. We put on our harnesses and other equipment in the training room then went through to the climbing wall next door.

We sat on a bench and watched Alan as he showed us how to attach our jammers on to the rope and climb it using our jammers. The way down was a bit more difficult because we weren't using Petzl stops initially. Alan then made us get up one at a time and we had to climb the rope like he did. Most of us found it quite easy but a few had some difficulties that Alan helped them out of. After that we tried going up by ourselves on ropes that were against the climbing wall.

When we had reached a certain height, we came back down again. When we all had mastered that we moved onto using our stops to go down because it is much easier and quicker than using our jammers to descend. Next we went to the platform above the climbing wall by going up the stairs. When we got there, we hooked onto ropes with our cows tails so if we fell we wouldn't fall down the climbing wall. We went over how to thread onto a rope with a Petzl stop, then we abseiled down the climbing wall one at a time. At the bottom, we learnt how to change from our jammers to a stop in the middle of a rope. After that we spent the rest of the day going up and down the ropes honing our skills for use in the cave we were to visit the next day.



The next day we went down a cave called Knotlow Cavern in Derbyshire. We met up at a local café and then drove to a layby near the cave and climbed into our caving suits and harnesses. Meanwhile Alan and Idris had given us instruction on how to get to the cave as they had gone to start setting up the ropes for us to abseil down. When we had changed two of us went to the cave to meet Alan and start going down. We went in sets of twos every 10 minutes so it gave us time to go down but there weren't people waiting and getting cold outside the cave. We went down both pitches smoothly and saw the waterfall in the cave which was amazing then we headed on out using our SRT kit. Nobody had any problems only fun.

I found that weekend really useful and I am now confident to go into a cave and use the kit.

The work of the ECPC commission

Ged Campion is the UK representative at the FSE where a lot of things are happening. He tells us about the successful outcome of a recent initiative.

The FSE, through the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) is now a member of the Board of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) in Brussels and thus directly involved in the EEB decision-making. Bärbel Vogel occupies this job for the FSE. ECPC is active in the EEB workgroups “Water” and “Biodiversity”. The “Nature Alert” campaign of EEB, is striving to maintain the strong European nature protection standards. ECPC was present at the EEB General Assembly in Vienna in September 2016 with a representative and an FSE/ECPC poster presentation.

Lost Caves of Britain now online

Mendip Cave Registry and Archive has set up a YouTube channel to make the collection of historically important early caving films in the Wells and Mendip Museum/UBSS/Cave Cine Archive easily available to interested cavers.

Among the VHS cassettes at Wells and Mendip Museum is a film made by NCA in 1981. Although “Lost Caves of Britain” is 36 years old, its message is still relevant. Copyright now vests with BCA and at the last meeting of BCA Council it was decided to allow the film to be added to the channel.

The MCRA YouTube channel can be accessed by following the link from the MCRA website - mcra.org.uk or directly at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0q7vtrmMkD3xr3akBW0YGg>

Caving Publications Looking For Good Home

The British Caving Library, situated at Glutton Bridge, just south of Buxton, has a number of duplicate publications (both books and journals), which are surplus to requirements. If you are interested and would like to check what is available, email the Librarian at bcra-librarian@bcra.org.uk

Cave Access Update

Mouldridge Mine (Derbyshire)

It has been reported that the slope leading up to the Banana Slide in Mouldridge Mine has collapsed and there is no way through.

This area should be avoided until there has been further investigation.

Herne Hill Caves (Derbyshire)

Access to Herne Hill Cave no.1 has been re-established after door repairs and the fitting of a new lock. The new access procedure can be found in the DCA online access guide.

Holme Bank Chert Mine (Derbyshire)

The owner of nearby Holme Hall is refusing ALL access to Holme Bank Mine, regardless of which entrance is used. DCA is taking up the matter urgently with Chatsworth Estates, who are understood to own the land around the site.

DCA will seek to resolve this situation as quickly as possible but, in the mean time, have to reluctantly suggest that cavers avoid visiting the mine save as outlined below so that there is no risk of a confrontation with the owner of Holme Hall.

Joe Oldfield is agreeable for cavers to use his office car park at weekends and weekday evenings to help prevent further confrontations with the owner of Holme Hall. It means cavers can park and change out of sight of the Holme Hall entrance. Note the concession does not apply during weekday office hours.

If you do this, please only use Entrance 2, which is just behind Joe Oldfield's office (do not try to use Entrance 1 which is closer to Holme Hall).

Thanks to Joe Oldfield for his help which at least allows limited access for the present. DCA is still working to regain full access to Holme Bank Chert Mine but it is proving problematic.

Clydach Gorge Cave Closures (South Wales)

Nant Rhin and Pont Gam caves will both be closed, along with their associated access paths, from March 2017 to June 2017 due to blasting operations for the A465 east-bound lane rock cutting.

Ogof Capel and Ogof Gelynnen caves and footpaths will be closed from July 2017 to October 2017 during the removal of overburden above these caves for the new road construction of the west-bound lanes."

Please note: The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the formal view of the British Caving Association.