Dan yr Ogof Conservation Advisory Panel

Bulletin for Wardens, March 2020

Welcome to this bulletin which includes information on current cave access, fixed aids and conservation and includes matters that arose at our latest DYOCAP meeting. This is being emailed to all wardens and keyholders and will also be placed on the website. A precis of matters arising at our future meetings will be also placed on the website either in the form of a bulletin such as this or in a compact form.

1/ New keyholder

Paul Quill is now a local keyholder. He lives in Abercrave and is often available midweek. His home number, 01639 731407. Mick and Judy Day have retired as keyholders and we thank them for their many years of service. The full list of keyholders is at: http://dyo.org.uk/keyholders.html

2/ Essential access procedures

- The local key holders are under strict instructions not to issue keys to anyone unable to show a valid permit. Security is a prime concern to the showcave management, so please do not put keyholders in the awkward position of having to refuse you. Likewise, during opening hours, ticket office staff will require a valid permit and a pre-trip form. Please use the latest version of the pre-trip form, available at http://dyo.org.uk/forms/Pre-Trip-Declaration.pdf
- All pre-trip forms, whatever the time of year, are to be posted into the ticket office at the turn-stile, so that management can easily check that any car left in the car park when the showcave closes belongs to cavers. If a car is left in the showcave car park at the end of the business day, the assumption has to be that there are visitors missing in the caves and a thorough search has to be undertaken, which takes showcave staff ***two hours*** when they should be going home. The old letter box is no longer to be used.
- You must display a dragon logo when parking at the showcave complex when caving in DYO, Pwll Dwfn, or Tunnel Top, or going walking. Others are expected to pay! There is a logo on the DYO website and several on the second page of the pre-trip form though any dragon will do!
- You must make your own callout arrangements (though please note your callout arrangements on your trip sheet). At weekends you are welcome to use the destination board at SWCC even if not staying there.
- The padlock on the cavers' gate at the main showcave door is a robust design but nonetheless requires careful handling. In particular, please make sure the key is fully inserted before attempting to turn it.
- Showcave visitors enjoy interaction with cavers, which enhances their 'authentic' feeling of visiting a proper cave. Please answer questions (even daft ones!) and feel free to engage in conversations about the cave beyond (without tempting them to cross the fence, of course…). Always turn your lights out and concede right of way to visitors in the narrow bits of the Showcave. Also please exercise discretion when changing in the car park before or after caving.
- We are fortunate to enjoy continued access to one of Europe's finest caves by courtesy of the showcave management. Please help maintain goodwill by being thoughtful and considerate.

3/ DYOCAP membership changes.

Andy Freem has stood down as Conservation Officer, though remains as Chair and Treasurer. The new Conservation Officer is Phil Knight and David Eason has joined the Panel team to assist Phil.

/continued

4/Cave Conservation

- Many of you know that in 2018, drilled stone footholds were bolted to the wall, and the handline was improved, to facilitate the crossing into Flabbergasm Oxbow. Wardens report that this works well though some further improvement of the handline and bolts is planned.
- Parties are obviously taking care to respect tapes but please restore any tapes found dislodged.
- Footprints in Hangar Passage date from pre-taping exploration and initial photography. They serve as a reminder of the importance of keeping to the taped routeways as they cannot be removed without creating further damage.

5/Fixed Aids

- It is important that wardens, and individual cavers, check all installations prior to use and satisfy themselves that they are happy to use them.
- It has been agreed that the ropes on the exposed traverse between Windy way and Birthday Passage, will be adopted by DYOCAP and replaced as soon as practicable. The rope above Rising into Windy Way is already adopted.
- It has become very difficult to maintain the rope on the pitch down to the Great North Road and it is therefore essential that all parties intending to visit DYO 3 supply their own rope and de-rig as they exit. Currently there is a rope on the pitch but this will be removed shortly without further notice.
- A whiteboard at the base of the G.P. fixed ladder to record which end of the Green Canal to find inner tubes, has worked to an extent. Dry markers were of no use so a pebble marker system has developed. Four more inner tubes have been placed at the Canal and new pumps have been obtained. Please do not discard punctured tubes, which can be repaired. Pumps should be available at the Green Canal, so please warm teams up with a bit of inflation if necessary!
- Recently a rope has appeared on the short but awkward climb from Gerard Platten Hall into the lower Series. This is not a maintained aid, its presence cannot be relied on, and it should be checked before you or any of your party might wish to use it.

6/ **Access issues**

The 16km. or so of DYO is but a small part of the concealed Giedd drainage system. Many generations of cavers have attempted to breach substantial geological obstacles to gain access to what would be a spectacular discovery. Digging on the Black Mountain now requires specific permission from the land-owners Welsh Water, via the Brecon Beacons National Park as their agents. Currently one dig in the area has been authorised by BBNP. Some of the land has SSSI status, which requires permission also from NRW; to date, no permission has been granted for digging on the SSSI. Any dig on the SSSI directly above the known cave could possibly create a new entrance to DYO. This would lead to the showcave's insurers requiring caver access via the showcave to be terminated but happily this remains a remote possibility! We are pleased to report that normal access arrangements are unchanged and cavers enjoy excellent relations with the showcave management.

7/ Dan Yr Ogof Survey

In the absence of a complete re-survey of the cave, Clark Friend is collating information from a range of sources to create an interim survey for general use. This uses relative altitude-based colour coding, much praised in the most recent OFD survey. Hopefully it will be available later this year.

8/ and finally…

If you have any comments or queries, or items which you wish the panel to discuss at its next meeting, please email the DYOCAP secretary via the website.

Happy caving!

From the DYOCAP team