

Fairy Cave Quarry 2010/11 Climbing Access Agreement

The BMC has negotiated with the landowner and secured an access agreement for climbers. Climber access will commence on Tuesday 13th July when the padlock on the gate will be changed to a combination lock.

Local cavers maintain their relationship with the landowner through the Fairy Cave Management Committee. This group are responsible for the day-to-day recreational management of the quarry. They have been extremely supportive of climber's efforts to secure access and without their support it is very unlikely we would have negotiated access. Ian Butterworth, BMC SW Access Rep for Mendips & Somerset, has been co-opted onto the Management Committee but the cavers will continue to have overall responsibility for the recreational use of the quarry.

The agreement is initially for a 12 month trial period and is based upon climbers meeting and observing some basic rules.

- The gate must not be left unlocked at any time.
- Climbers should do their bit towards ensuring the quarry environment is kept as clean as possible, if you see any litter please take it away with you.
- The only people with permission to be within the fenced area are cavers and climbers. If you find other people in the quarry the landowner would like you to ask them to leave.
- Young and inexperienced climbers should be closely supervised at all times. Some parts of the quarry are clearly unstable and potentially dangerous for the unaware.
- The quarry forms part of a larger SSI and as such Natural England are involved in monitoring some rare flora and fauna within the quarry. These include Crested Newts in and around the ponds, Peregrine Falcons and Ravens which nest within the quarry, bats which roost in some of the caves [these caves have seasonal restrictions during the winter preventing caving] and rare Orchids.
- Movement around the top of some areas of the quarry is now much more difficult. In the very near future new belay stakes, slings and maillons will be installed so that safe abseil descents can be made from all areas. Please do not remove these fixtures. If you find any missing or feel there should be other fixed belays in place please email Ian Butterworth.
- Parking is difficult at FCQ. The cavers have a small car park which they keep locked but for the present climbers will have to park on the roads and pull offs. Large articulated lorries use the road past the quarry so park carefully to avoid obstructing the road. There are a couple of places where cars can be parked well off the road but one is part of a gateway into a field. Please don't obstruct this gateway. Just a few hundred metres Northwards along the lane is a junction where the road widens and it is possible to safely park several cars. A quick look at the area OS map will help to identify a network of footpaths in the area which will help avoid having to walk on the narrow lanes.

- The cavers maintain a small fund which is used to maintain the caves and quarry environment. Cavers and caving clubs pay a small contribution when using the quarry. We are not asking climbers to pay to climb but if you would like to contribute towards the cost of the fixed equipment within the quarry and maintaining as pleasant a climbing environment as possible. Ian Butterworth has established a bank account and will accept any contribution however small.
- In order to maintain our good relationships with the cavers it is important to be friendly and be supportive should the need arise.

The landowner acted to meet his responsibility for public safety by fencing off the quarry and erecting large steel gates. Cavers, who have a long standing 'official' arrangement with the landowner and are largely responsible for the day to day upkeep of the quarry, have access to the quarry through a padlock and key system. This padlock will be changed to a combination lock during the morning of Tuesday 13th July 2010. The combination for the padlock can be obtained by emailing Ian Butterworth, the BMC SW Access Rep for Mendip & Somerset, at fcq@btinternet.com stating your name, contact details and membership of any climbing clubs or BMC. [BMC membership is not a condition of entry.] Ian will return the combination padlock code. He will maintain a list of those who have been provided with the code so they can be informed should it be changed.

It will be the responsibility of all climbers and cavers using the combination to ensure the code does not escape beyond the two communities.

Ian Butterworth
BMC Access Representative for Mendip & Somerset.