

Cheddar Gorge Climbs **Appendix 3: The Cheddar Gorge Climbing Project** (guidebook page 169)

The Cheddar Gorge Climbing Project ran from autumn 2003 to spring 2005. It was conceived and executed by Martin Crocker under a management agreement with the BMC, and endorsed by the owners of the South Side cliffs of Cheddar Gorge, Longleat Enterprises (trading as Cheddar Caves & Gorge). The Project's aims were:

1. To restore some of the best-quality climbs in Cheddar Gorge. Many routes had fallen into a vegetated and neglected state or had been seriously affected by essential rock safety work carried out by the landowner.
2. To seek an extended access arrangement on the South Side cliffs that would not limit climbing to the inhospitable winter months.
3. To fulfil the great potential of Cheddar Gorge as a vibrant climbing venue without compromising other interests and land-uses, and while keeping consideration of any public safety implications, in particular, to the fore.

The Project was supported by BMC funding together with significant contributions from The Climbers' Club Colin Kirkus Guidebook Fund, and underpinned by a substantial amount of voluntary work by the project manager during and preceding the Project.

Much assistance was given by a Project Steering Group of local climbers voted-in at the BMC's South West Area Annual General Meeting in 2003. As well as getting its hands dirty on the cliff, the group also decided questions on ethics brought before them. The group comprised: Ian Parsons, Haggis Harris, Ian Butterworth, Richard Nadin, Steve Findlay, and Matt Ward (2nd). Advice on ecological issues was provided by climber and ecologist Libby Houston.

Landowners demonstrated enormous goodwill in relation to the Project. In partnership, Cheddar Caves & Gorge actively supported the Project by providing staff to manage the road during route-cleaning work and by allocating significant management time to the consideration of access proposals. The National Trust welcomed discussions in the wake of the CRoW Act 2000, which paved the way for the generous yet prudent arrangements on the North Side that now apply.

The hardware needs of the Project were aided by various businesses, agencies, climbing clubs and the many individuals who contributed to the Cheddar Gorge Climbers' Bolt Fund or who otherwise supplied essential gear. They included: the British Mountaineering Council, Undercover Rock, T&T Adventure Ltd, Snow and Rock, CAN Geotechnical Ltd, Taunton Leisure, and Sedgemoor District Council.