

Cheddar Gorge: enhanced access for climbers in 2019

Leon Troake, operations manager for Cheddar Gorge & Caves, with the agreement of the landowner, Longleat Estate, has agreed to trial an extended climbing season for selected crags in the gorge.

The new arrangement will be predicated on crags included only in the current Cheddar Gorge Climbs guidebook by Martin Crocker.

All the crags east of and including The Reservoir Walls - Eden Crack Area will be open to climbers throughout the year. Currently all these crags are part of the Summer Season access agreement. We agreed having inspected them that they are low risk in terms of threat to passers by.

A more complex agreement will be trialled on three crags in the middle section of the gorge. These are Ginsberg Wall, Yew Tree Wall and Horseshoe Bend Buttress. These will continue with the Summer Season access arrangement set out in the guidebook and the BMC Regional Access Database. However at the moment access is withdrawn on the 1st of July until the 1st of September. The new arrangement would allow climbing to continue through July and August in the evenings only from 6pm. We also agreed on inspection that these crags present a very low risk to the public.

The new agreement would be trialled for 2019 and reviewed at the end of the season, in October.

Although the agreement does make access slightly more complex to adhere to, it is a very positive step. Cheddar Gorge & Caves, encouraged by the willingness of most climbers to adhere to the current arrangement are showing themselves to be happy to allow this increase in access. However it is for a trial period of one year. It is therefore really important that we all make every effort not to be tempted to exceed the new limitations.

Mark Courtiour, BMC Cheddar Gorge Climbing Warden