

Derigging from Campl to Aldo's.  
(By Boyd Potts)

As the Westminster lads were due to derig back as far as Campl by Saturday afternoon, five of us headed into the cave at about 8p.m. on Saturday evening. We arrived at Campl a couple of hours later after stopping for a chat with Dave and Shirley St. Pierre who were on their way out. Unfortunately the derigging party had not arrived, so we brewed up and waited. Many brews and catnaps later Andy arrived with some of the tackle. By now it was midnight so some decided to eat and sleep before going any further, which cut out any hope of our derigging completely as far as Aldo's.

Andy, suffering severely from 'Nappy rash', changed into plastic bags, with a sweater as 'Long John's' and other bizarre gear before heading out with Russell and Paul Bates. The last two carrying large loads to Aldo's.

Early in the morning we met the rest of the W.S.G. at 'Balcony' and helped them to carry gear to Campl. Then leaving them to rest, we carried as much as we could up the boulder slopes and pitches to the bottom of Aldo's. I think that, except for personal and camping gear, and the tackle on the pitches, we moved everything to Aldo's and some items even further, before surfacing into daylight at 7a.m. A pleasant walk through the woods in the early morning took us back in time for breakfast at the campsite.

The Final Stages of Derigging the Gouffre Berger.  
(By Ralph Johnson)

For some strange reason I was nominated to organise the derigging, probably because I was missing when a 'volunteer' was needed! The main objective seemed to be to try and get it completed before everyone disappeared. Already the names of other caves in the Vercors were being bandied about and even things like Mont Blanc and caves in Norway were being discussed. The lure of the mountains and the Riviera were also attractive propositions.

Several informal discussions took place to formulate ideas. Eventually a meeting was called to take place on Friday morning which I managed to miss being "overdue"...a common phenomenon in the Berger. Anyway, as I exited on Friday evening accompanied by the two Tonys, the Westminster derigging team passed us in the other direction heading for Campl where they aimed to spend the night before going to the bottom.

Saturday passed slowly with everyone except the Westminster lads reaching the surface. We estimated that the detackling team would reach Campl at about 10p.m. so a team led by Boyd Potts set off at about 8p.m. leaving Tony Reynolds and myself to man the phone. This proved to be a tactical error on my part...if you disagree you should hear Tony Reynolds snore!! The timing of the detackling team was spot on, but they were in for a four hour wait, interrupting Tony's snores but not his sleep at half hourly intervals with regular phone-ins. Eventually the Westminster lads arrived and Boyd's team consisting of Russell, Duncan, Simon, and Paul Bates, began lugging the gear back to Aldo's whilst the bottoming team slept off their exertions, except for Andy who decided to continue out wearing a pullover and a poly carrier-bag Jockstrap under his oversuit due to wetsuit rash. This unusual undersuit was all that could be mustered at Campl to replace his wetsuit, and as an amusing event was only surpassed by Phil's accident in a furry suit (not his own!) due to 'Berger Belly'!