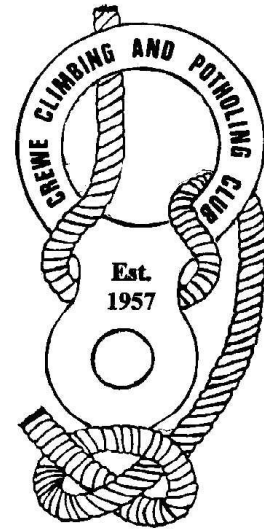


C.C.P.C. Newsletter 107. Autumn 2012

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EDITORIAL

Dear all,

I have volunteered to take the Newsletter back from Ralph (I edited it for four years back in the 90s). During my previous stint as editor, I had to write/invent 95% of the articles due to apathy on the part of other members; everyone at the time said that they enjoyed reading the NL, but no one could be bothered to write it!

Nowadays, there is a small but productive core of key authors who submit excellent articles on a fairly regular basis, making the NL interesting, informative and a pleasure to read.

However, if every member made the effort to write up just one trip a year (it doesn't have to be a major expedition – describing an evening trip down P8 can be interesting and spur others on) it will take some pressure off our regular contributors and at the same time, breath fresh life into the NL.

Please send you articles for inclusion to mark@lovatt7468.freeserve.co.uk

Life Above Ground or The Bit In-between – Hedi Hardhat

Sunday PM

Out of cave. A bit late. Phone home just in time to stop family dividing up my assets.
Tired but feel great, relaxed and happy. Drive home.
Stop for fish and chips with muddy face, helmet hair and half of Wales under fingernails. Frighten natives.
Partially unload car and haul muddy, wet gear up to 2nd floor flat. Dump bags on floor in kitchenette.
Check phone messages and email. One glass of wine knocks me unconscious.
Drop clothes in a pile for washing. Fall asleep in bath. Put muddy rope in bath to soak before bed.

Monday AM

Tired. Lie holding alarm, pressing snooze button until remember pending visit to client.
Open overnight bag just wide enough to find items required to prepare for work.
Suit/files/computer/grown-up face. Disappear without a backward glance at muddy pile.
Must remember not to book in clients on Monday morning.
Park muddy Rover next to client's pristine Jag, one muddy welly leaking brown water onto back seat.
Unsuccessfully try to convince client that crumbled suit is linen.

Monday PM

Arrive home to muddy pile and muddy rope in bath. Still tired.
Open post from Saturday morning and today. Neatly place it on pile of post from last week.
Look at muddy pile from weekend and open washing machine.
Step over pile to consider food.
Do washing up from Saturday morning and search for ready meal. Invent banana and pate pizza, trimming green bits off pate first. Pizza too large for oven, so trim off edges until oven-shaped.
Clean last week's dried mud out of bucket.
Second glass of wine brings on uncontrollable yawning. Muddy ropes in bath moved to washing machine. In bath for 8pm. Bed by 9pm.
9.45pm realise that I am still holding my book but have actually been asleep for half an hour.

Tuesday AM

Wake up with alarm. Out again? Bugger.
Suit/files/computer. Step over muddy pile with renewed vigour.
Some of mud has washed off car or been rubbed off onto suit and car doesn't look too bad.

Tuesday PM

Dump bag with files/computer etc and check post and emails.
Empty wet-bag by turning it upside down in front of cooker.
Sort items into 'clean' items for washing machine or 'muddy' pile for bucket whilst preparing dinner.
One wet- sock missing.
Invent a stew with anything left in the fridge. Wonder at slightly gritty, chewy consistency of stew and worry about missing wet-sock.
Three glasses of wine and sleepy enough to head for bath by 9.

Wednesday AM

Awake before alarm. Working from home today, yipee!

Slight smell of mildew hangs in the air.

Collect washing pile and 'clean' gear into washing machine and switch it on.

Intersperse work with cleaning mud off kit in bucket. Freshly washed kit goes onto draining board.

Trip over dry-suit which is still 'unclassified' on wet-bag on kitchen floor.

Can't be bothered to go down two flights to empty bucket and leave mud to settle. Pour off 'clean' water into sink at regular intervals.

Wednesday PM

Start dinner and clear drying kit from draining board, across white rugs to window sill.

Empty washing machine draping clean furry etc around flat to dry.

Four glasses of wine and still awake at 10.30pm.

Thursday AM

Awake before alarm. Bound out of bed full of the Joys of Spring.

Client due! Quickly categorize dry-suit as 'washing machine' and hide it in said appliance.

Gather drying clothing and start new pile in study.

Pour more 'clean' water out of bucket and hide bucket of drying mud behind settee.

Look at trail of mud across room from draining board to window sill.

Consider getting a cleaner. Consider moving to a cleaner, downstairs flat. Consider getting flat-mate who likes cleaning. Consider changing white rugs for brown speckled rugs.

Attack white rugs with vacuum cleaner, give up and turn them over. Remarkably cleaner on the other side, even though I did the same thing last week.

Thursday PM

Club night DCC. Home 11ish. Cook, eat in bath, bed after 12pm. Late night!

Friday AM

Alarm continues even when bounced off wall. Manages to dent wall though.

Tired and unsettled but sit at desk gazing out of window. Email family my intentions for weekend.

Look at list of work to be done. Search the Internet for a B&B.

Start work, lose interest. Spend half an hour blocking off Friday and Monday mornings in diary to remind me not to book clients when tired.

More work. Check directions for weekend on Internet.

Try on new SRT kit over pin-striped suit and practice rescuing a large pot-plant via a z-rig from the table to the cooker. New window-cleaner appears at window. He is never seen again.

Friday PM

Start cooking and packing, using list to jog memory.

Missing wet and muddy wet-sock, still wet and muddy, found down side of washing machine.

Carefully wrap it in its clean, dry partner and pack neatly with other gear.

Brief search for dry suit. Found unwashed but now amazingly dry in washing machine.

Overnight bag still partially packed from last weekend. Job half done!

Saturday AM

Bounce out of bed at 5 or 6am for drive to next cave. Car positively clean after heavy rain.

Conclusion

One day I will be a 'real' caver. Stripping off gear after a trip underground = packing for next trip. No

need for lugging bags around, buckets, muddy rugs, lists for packing. After a few days it is dry anyway and any mud just drops off in the next cave.

Packing on white rugs



It shouldn't happen to an OAP!

This was likely to be my final trip to the bottom of Alum via LLChurn. Everything was going smoothly, my two cameras were functioning well and all the filming lights were fine despite the wet conditions.

We crossed the bridge without any sign of the "dangerous crack" that had been reported and reached the top of the next drop that looked wet. The deviation bolt on the far wall had vanished and we had no spits with us so the descent was performed slowly to reduce any wear on the rope. It was now getting very wet and we considered turning back. However we were so close and this was probably my last chance to visit the bottom and film the Diccan Waterfall. There always say "there's no fool like an old fool" so like the pillock I am I set off at speed rather clumsily down the hand line at high speed then managed to free fall the last meter or so into a deep pool having bounced a couple of times on the way. Wet through I then started to film Aggie as she descended the pitch to join Marek, Gareth and myself.

Gareth quickly rigged the last short pitch which he descended followed by P Marek. My plan was to film the two of them then film Aggie from the foot of the pitch. I followed Marek along the traverse, dropped onto my short cows tail, threaded my Stop descender then spent the next 5 minutes unsuccessfully trying to close it. I finally worked out that the handle had bent, presumably as a result of my fall on the previous steep slope and the damn thing wouldn't close! Too close to give up now I grabbed a spare screw gate and tied an Italian hitch while Gareth fumed away at the bottom wondering why the silly old fart was taking so long to ab such a short drop. Unfortunately I hadn't got a HMS krab so I used a standard oval one- but the hitch wouldn't reverse so I was trapped on the rope getting even wetter. Back to the drawing board I retied the hitch quickly joined Gareth then filmed Aggie on her way down.

Our little band quickly set off for the bottom, Marek took the hard wet way while Gareth Aggie and I used the dry rift on the left. The waterfall was impressive, whether or not my footage is of any use is anybody's guess.

That was it apart from a reasonably quick exit with Aggie, Marek and Gareth carrying all the tackle bags including my filming gear. OK before anyone says it I will--- "What's new"!

Ralph J September 2012.

CARE OF ROPE UNDERGROUND (Alan B)

All caving ropes are precious - our lives depend upon them working properly.

In order to keep these ropes doing their job correctly, they need to be cleaned after use, stored correctly and regularly inspected. We are lucky in CCPC because we have Equipment Officers who do all this for us. But we can all help too by looking after these ropes while we're using them on a caving trip. Usually this is done by good rigging practice and general care (not standing on ropes, and avoiding getting ropes unnecessarily dirty).

I have already touched on this in a recent article on de-rigging techniques, but even carrying ropes into the cave (and back out again!) needs to be done with care.

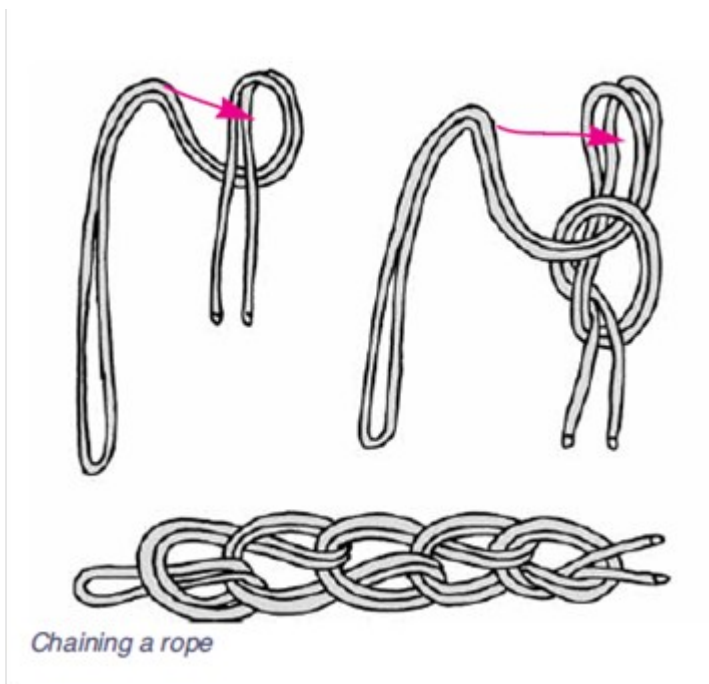
In his Article on Rope Care, Dave Elliot says :-

"Ropes should always be carried underground in a tackle sack. A well-designed sack, besides being far easier to handle than coiled ropes, largely protects the rope from damage. Surroundings are harsh and it makes much better sense to wear out the sack than the rope. A rope which is muddied on the way to the pitch, has the mud forcibly ground into it in use. Even fine silt rapidly wears out metal equipment and rope alike, and once embedded it is impossible to subsequently remove all the silt particles from the rope".

That is the ideal situation - whenever we go caving, we should always carry ropes in tackle bags.

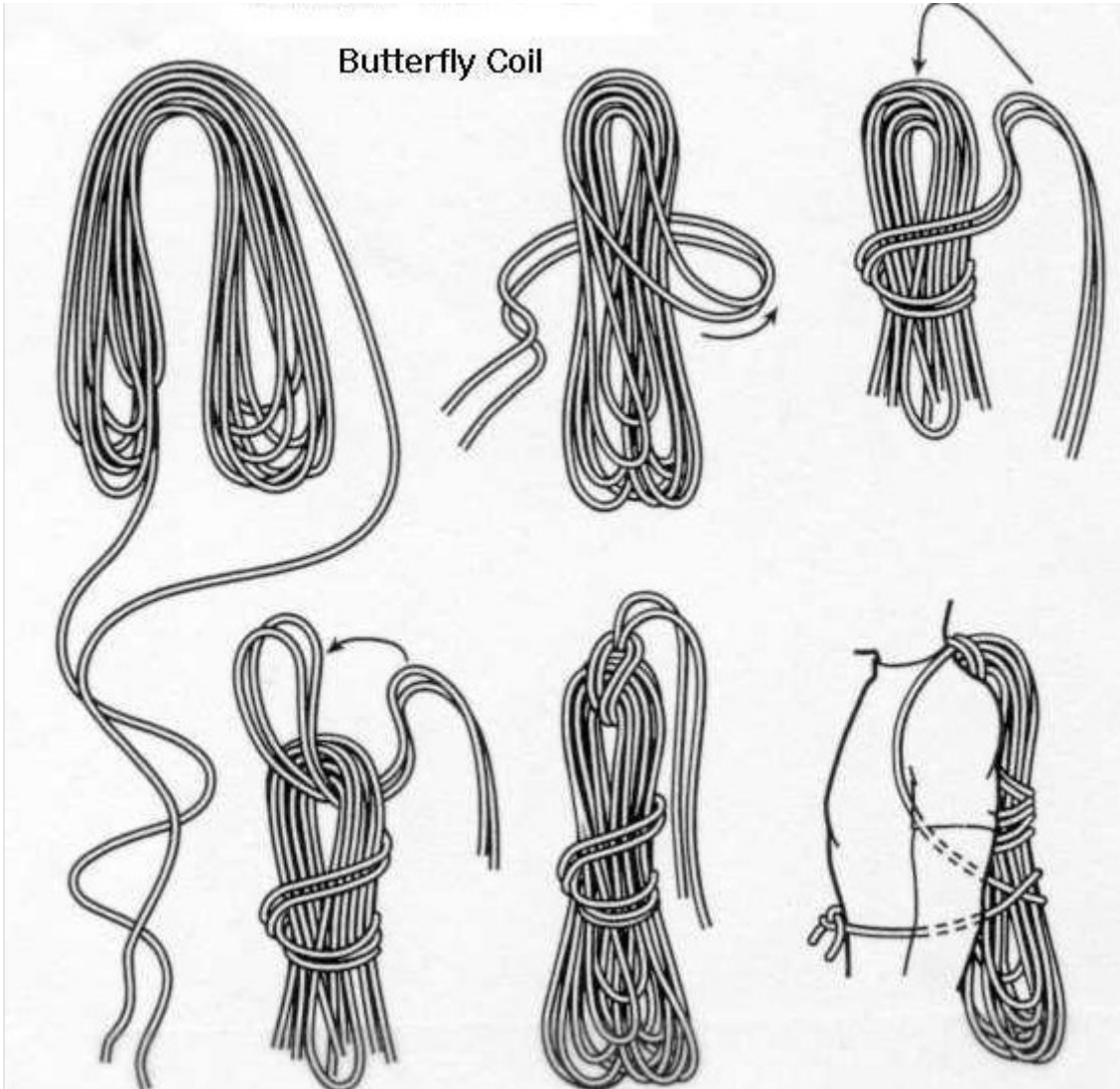
However, “always” is an absolute term, and we know full well that there are those odd occasions when the best laid plans for a trip gang aft agley and a rope that was carried in in a large bag of four ropes suddenly gets needed at some other location within the system. What do we do then?

Well if we intend to carry the rope underground, where crawls, tight squeezes and suchlike are likely to try to unravel the rope, then I would chain or plait the rope. This can be done by first doubling the rope, as shown in this diagram, so that you are chaining two strands, or by doubling it twice, giving four strands.



If, on the other hand, we have a straight-forward trip through big passages, or if we’re on the surface, then using a Butterfly Coil to hank and carry the rope would be a good idea.

Lastly (and I know that some would see this as being a very rare occurrence in CCPC), when a rope is too long for a particular pitch, the extra rope should be kept above and out of contact with the dirty floor by making sure that it is packed away in a tackle bag. Again, if no tackle bag is available, we can use the Butterfly Coil technique, applying it as in the diagram, but stopping at the next to the last figure and rearranging the two free ends, one of which will be the main rope up the pitch, but the other can now be hitched around the bite to prevent the Butterfly Coil unravelling and falling on the floor.



**Albania Caving Expedition in the Accursed Mountains
Kelmand Province,
2012 (Ade)**

“It is strongly recommended dont travel to Albania, in particular the north and specifically the Kelmand due to instability, robbing and chance of getting caught up blood feuds”, Dave tells me on the way to the airport, are we going I ask??, Kelmand Dave says with a grin, but worry Luigi the guy we are with is honour bound to us as long as we are staying we wont get our throats cut, or anything else. Instead they appeared to be satisfied with slitting the throats of sheep round the back of the bar instead and then feeding them to us, all very



Oct

that you

province
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the local
the M11
where
province
don't
staying
protect
with him
robbed

charming and tasty, and washed down with very good beer at 1 euro for a large glass, most satisfying!!

Setting the Home Office aside and ignoring all there advice as ones does when on an adventure, the people are warm and friendly and very hospitable, the accommodation was basic and the food simple but at 25 euro per night full board and plied with as much beer, wine and Raki (the local spirit) included it amounted to amazing value compared to what we are use to, in fact during the whole ten days I only spent 350 euros and that was everything including a hotel at the airport for one night and transfer to and from the airport (6hrs each way), flights were about 300 euro.

The journey from the airport is impressive as the last 30 miles or so took over 2hrs going over two passes along rough tracks and roads passing lots of Karst offering climbing and caving potential, and general mountaineering and walking trips.

There are a number of caves from a handful of previous expeditions already established by Eldon PC, many of these discovered on the first day of prospecting and pretty significant at 200m plus deep, the cave that showed real potential from the previous year was Vaso first



discovered 1995 this is still showing much potential but the last trip down there a year ago came to the opinion that it was bottomed, the cave was still rigged so we set off down armed with drill, bolts and some additional rope and a vague idea of what the last years extensions were like and expecting to be at the bottom in a couple of hours, 4 ½ hrs later we were at the top of the last pitch after an awkward rift the cave was now perhaps 300m deep, we came to the conclusion that there was a way on but involved digging at the bottom of the last pitch or a way around the back over a rock bridge, we seemed to be starting to getting into bigger passages indicating that we might be getting into a main system as the smaller inlets come together. We made our way out at this point but the cave is an excellent trip with easy pitches the biggest at approx 50m and easy big passages, there is lots more exploration to be done here at the

bottom and at side passages. The



altitude of Veso is 1650m, and the bottom of the valley 1270m so we must have been roughly at the level of the valley floor and still going down.

Most days ended with some prospecting in the limestone Karst with some very deep shake holes and plenty of leads to follow up, we came to a clearing in the forest with an ancient grave at one end, Dave spotted something in a leaf covered hollow, he pulled few leaves away and a big draft was uncovered, both him and Barnie were at it like a dog looking for a bone leaving no room for me so I wondered up the slope a little to be met by a wave of cold air issuing from a leafy edged hole about 3m x 1m and about 10m deep, I let them carry on digging for 5 minutes or so before I said, forget that boys, look at this!!, you couldn't even throw leaves down there as it just blew them straight back out, we chucked some rocks down as you do but only rolled around a corner but definitely drafting a real hooley!!

We came back the next day armed with rope etc and I went down the entrance, after a small chamber there was a slope to the top of a 20m pitch which was quickly rigged, this went on for quite a number of pleasant easy pitches until we came to a massive chamber with a lot of unstable boulders at the edge of the pitch, we made these safe and I descended to the bottom which turned out to be about 35m but the chamber went up to about 80m when we fired a disto leg up it.

A small rift follows and a big black hole, get me a rock I cried and hurled it down, it was a few deep booms then nothing, then a few more booms!!, this was undoubtedly a begun of more than 100m easily, but no more rope.

The next day we descended the deep chamber which opened out to be huge, we bolted a number of pitches to a ledge but ran out of rope at 30m from the bottom arghhh!!, this puts this chamber at approx 150m deep from our entrance into it and substantially higher above, there looked to be other inlets again indicating that we were entering the master cave, from what we could see the chamber ended in a boulder floor with a rift heading off but still drafting so hopeful, we didn't survey the big chamber but estimate the overall depth of the cave to be up to 270m which puts the bottom at approx the same elevation as Veso when you take the different altitudes of the entrances into account, all very interesting stuff indicating the strong possibility of a master cave and streamway.

The caves are predominately dry, with no running streambeds on the surface, our new cave Taluski as it is now called, shows signs of lots of water running down the pitches during the extremely heavy thunderstorms that occur in this area we reckon this is not the place to be in wet weather, as for a resurgence well there is none known of any significance that would match the number of caves in the area, I believe the nearest big resurgence is in another valley in neighbouring Montenegro some way away and a lot lower, let your imagination run wild!!

Setting the caving aside, the Accused mountains are amazing and unspoilt, with potential for climbing scrambling, ridges etc, there are now some marked trails but the paths are vague and the terrain is not to be underestimated as it is that complicated



with rifts and drops etc, getting from A~B can be like crossing a heavily crevassed glacier, but the scenery is fantastic.



This is also definitely not the place for an accident, there is no rescue service of any kind, have an accident below ground, and well...., above ground no doubt the locals would help but they have no technical expertise or local caving or climbing enthusiasts to help out, and the nearest hospital is in Tirana.

Another trip is planned for next year to explore Taluski and follow up other leads, but we really need more people to aide exploration and or explore their own cave and act as backup, as it would have been extremely re assuring to know that at least there was someone on the surface who knew where we were and could organise a rescue!!

DISCOUNT!

Cotswold discount cards will be supplied to all members at the next meeting. Those who cannot attend the meeting will receive theirs by post along with their 2013 insurance cards. If anyone needs one urgently get in touch ASAP. The cards will entitle you to 15% discount at any Cotswold Camping store, you MUST show your card.

Once again thanks must go to Steve K for organising this excellent offer.

UPCOMING MEETS

Wed 17th Oct 2012

Sat 20th Oct 2012

Sun 4th Nov 2012

SRT. Tight in places.

Sat 17th Nov 2012

routes.

Sun 25th Nov 2012

Sun 2nd Nov 2012

Sat 15th Dec 2012

Sat 22nd Dec 2012

Sat 19th Jan 2013

welcome.

DCRO Training - medical - details later.

Giants Hole, Derbyshire. Round Trip.

Big Meanie/Death's Head exchange, Yorks. Serious

Alum Pot/Diccan Pot exchange, Yorks. Various SRT

DCRO Exercise - Home Bank Chert Mine - bad air.

Peak Cavern, Peak District - multiple routes.

Bull Pot, Kingsdale, Yorks. Classic SRT system.

DCRO Carol Singing & Pub Collection in Buxton.

DCRO Induction Day - multi-activities & skills - all