

# **C.C.P.C.**

## **Newsletter.**

### **Oct. '98 No.59.**

#### **Meets. October-December.**

**October 10. GG-Dis.**

**October 11. DCRO search  
and rescue. Ald. Edge.**

**November 1 DCRO Whitehall.**

**November 8 Pant Mawr.**

**November 21 Notts Pot and DCRO.AGM. Nov.28 Peak. DCRO**

**December 5 Tatham Wife and DCRO Xmas dinner.**

**December 13 Darren Cilau.**

**Congratulations to Ruth and Gideon for increasing the potential membership by one! .. A little girl.**

**Whalf Shaft (part 3 .. or is it 4?) On arriving back from Zermat I received a message to say that Whalf shaft had "collapsed! Further examination showed that the bottom 1/3 of the ginging had collapsed. Remedial work has started with Nigel in the driving seat. Anyone willing to help will be more than welcome. Ed.**

**We now have TWO designs of "designer" tee-shirts. CCPC ones at £6 and DCRO ones at £6.50. See Ralph.**

**Everyone must be aware by now of the reports of "gas" down Knotlow. Nigel has investigated this and it would appear that CO2 is the most likely culprit. Incident have been reported in Hillocks close to Meccano Passage. If you feel breathless or ill ... come out!**

## Coast to Coast "off-road" Cycle Ride.



OK so you're sick of hearing about it ... well it's over, all apart from the collecting of money of course!!! If you managed to persuade any of your contacts to chip in (or still can if you wish!) and haven't handed the money over to Ralph then now's your chance.

Ralph has promised not to pester you again so this could be your last opportunity to contribute. Don't delay ... act today!

As you probably know Nigel moved his old address.(empty we hope) The another. If you live in the Kidsgrove before the price of property



house recently, leaving his "bang store" at bad news is he's considering building area now could be a good time to sell plummets!!

DCA/NCA are holding a workshop 17 and 18 October at Pindale Farm, Castleton. Cost £10 per person per day. These are highly recommended. Ladder and line. SRT intro. SRT advanced. Cave Rescue and First Aid. Cave Geology, Mines Study. Cave Photography. Maggie has already signed up so if you want to share a lift she's the one to see.

Darren and Ralph are off to Aconcagua (a big hill in Argentina!) in February '99. Anyone wishing to join them is welcome.

## "Coast to Coast" the official version.

Bank holiday weekend, forecast for a high pressure, excellent sunny weather,... couldn't be better!!

A very early start saw us in Osmotherley, North Yorkshire. Leaving me to do all the work (pitching the tent, sorting out the bikes, sunbathing etc.) Darren and Andy set off to dump one of the cars in Robin Hoods Bay on the coast. 1 ½ hours they returned! And we then had the prospect of cycling back off road!!

Enthusiastically we set off at about 12.30 .. uphill as usual. The ride across the North York moors was excellent.

A minor highlight was when I bent finger negating the need for a main highlight occurred as we were lead of course!) when I couldn't was a female absolutely stark not I was hallucinating I shouted to point!!) to discover that he too had got closer (rather unsteadily by this high speed with only one eye on the was starkers. At this point she saw heather which was enough to bum which was still on view as rider and rather myopic he had Takes all sorts I suppose. Needless and being the gentlemen we are, we destination which we finally reached at about 8.30 p.m. .. knackered.



managed to hit dirt straightening out a hospital visit to do the job for me! The cycling merrily along (with me in the believe my eyes. There in the distance naked!! In order to check whether or Andy (Darren was well behind at this seen the apparition. Sure enough as we time since riding along a rough track at terrain is not recommended) there she us approaching and took a dive into the conceal some of her but not her large Darren rode past! (being a rather slow missed most of the entertainment!) to say, intent on completing our route continued riding on towards our



Saturday morning was spent largely on road and was uneventful. Leaving Keld at about 4 p.m. to collect our car led us along a really spectacular bridelway. The descent was really steep and it was along this section I felt something amiss with my bike. Closer examination revealed a rim worn through by the brake blocks! The last 10k had to be completed on road with the rear brake disconnected and the tyre partly deflated. Needless to say it pored down and we got thoroughly soaked. Galloping saddle soreness was also beginning to attack particularly for Darren who doesn't wear padded shorts (it spoils the cut of his designer shorts!) A swift call home and Mark was persuaded to bring out a replacement bike the following morning.

The first 1 ½ hours were spent cannibalising my two bikes to produce one that worked!! Eventually I had to abandon my £2000 Giant with its dual suspension and hydraulic brakes and revert to my (fairly decrepit) GT. The next part of the day went really well. At about 4.30 we decided to have an early finish and miss out the climb from Ambleside to Kentmere leaving it for the following day. A 4 day coast to coast was beginning to look unlikely and we had arranged to meet Paul, Ros Gideon and families in Brothers Water. (Sharon had also turned up intended to ride part of the route with us but that's another story!) The route from Kentmere to Shap was horrendous! The 12k took about 3 ½ hour of pushing, wading and carrying! Darren got into conflict with his bike which he abused something rotten. In reply the bike sent him over the handlebars and tumbling down the hillside. Andy and I thought it best not to even smile let alone laugh! The end result was, we never even saw Sharon, missed the pub meals so had to cook our own, were too late to grab a pint so we had yet another "fairly dry", "fairly early" night. Thoroughly knackered yet again we soon fell asleep but not before Darren had spent some time with his hand down his shorts presumably applying various creams and potions to his tender bits! Andy had solved his particular problem by shovelling handfuls of talc down his shorts at the start of each day.

Monday 6.30 the milk lorry rattled across the cattle grid inches from our tent. ... We wanted an early start anyway!! For the first time we dawdled and cooked ourselves a **proper** breakfast with real toast, beans and sausage (vegie!) The ride over Coniston Old Man was hard work. On our route we met a fellow biker wrapped in bandages and a sling walking down into the valley! He had had worse luck than us with one of his spills. Lunch at a café in Coniston followed by a leisurely ride back to Kentmere completed the cycling part of the day. That night it blew a gale and rained. Now you probably already know there's heavy rain and there's Lake District rain but did you know there's also Duddon Valley rain. By morning the hills fields and roads were awash ... and the wind was still very strong. Miraculously the tent had withstood the onslaught but was beginning to leak. A couple of mountain bikers had crossed Harter Fell the previous evening i.e. before the rain. They advised us that the conditions were bad. We advised them likewise about Coniston Old Man. Crossing it in the conditions dressed in cycling kit would have been suicidal ... we had to opt for the road, further but quicker and safer. ! 1/2 hours later through torrential rain we hit the coast!!

*I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Darren and Andy for helping me to complete this event (and for building me a replacement bike on the Sunday morning!) Darrens' navigation was immaculate and Andy's enthusiasm and wit saw us through when the going got tough. Many thanks to those of you who managed to get sponsors, a thankless task I know. I'll let you know the final amount when all the money is collected but I'm guessing in the region of £600. Thanks again, Ralph.*

30.5 mm of rain were recorded in Grange-over Sands last Monday (4th) between 10am and 4pm. Chapel-le-Dale seemed to be pulsing at about noon around Gods Bridge. Yordas was sumped to above the entrance doorway; the Dee in Dentdale was flooding onto the road; and Ingleton Waterfalls were closed when the rivers flooded over the paths. Caving during the rest of the week showed that Fall Pot in Lancaster Hole had been flooded; Kingsdale Master Cave had been sumped at Master junction; East Entrance Passage (KMC) had been sumped from 20 metres downstream of Swinsto Great Aven; the cascades above Swinsto final pitch had chest deep water; Swinsto below the Turbary Inlet had chest deep water; Alum Pot sump had backed up to about 30 feet deep with foam 3 metres above the final cascade. Quite impressive and Mondays flooding seemed to happen very quickly.

#### Flooding in the Dales.

A note from the "net" dated 12 Aug 98

I gather that it's hot and sunny everywhere else! Well, us int' Dales know it's a cool place to be.



On the meets list this was down as Diccan Pot/Alum Pot. The night before I'd seen Sharon at a BBQ, and got talking about the choice of venue and the torrential rain we'd been having - give it a miss she suggested. As it turned out the meet was changed, and as I'd already sorted out going out that day off I set at 7am to Brian's house. We met Ross and Paul, and set off up the motorway in Paul's car. I was pleased I was a passenger - hate driving long distances - and was to be even more grateful by the end of the day.

10am saw us in Inglesport cafe and we met up with numerous others (for some unknown reason I can only remember Gordon, John Martin and Rick), and then set off for Ireby. I had just bought 'Northern Caves 3' and eagerly read the description of Ireby Fell whilst in the car - it starts 'a favourite system for training, with short pitches and long but easy passages...'.

Kitted up and on the upwards walk I was thinking 'great, downhill when we get out', even though it was a long way. Everyone made their way down the concrete pipe, with Brian, Ross, Paul and myself as the 2nd group. All nice and straightforward. We went along the 'top' - no problems yet. Ross was doing all the hard work up front and called to me how to manage each section. "Abseil down, swing into the window, sit on the rock and then off again down but not to the bottom". I knew exactly what I should be doing. Abseil down, pull the "loose" rope in with one hand and clip myself into the bolt, then get off the rope. Sounded reasonably easy, and I'm sure it should have been. But no, as I pulled in the "loose" rope I couldn't quite reach the bolt, so should have swung out again and descended another foot or so. Silly me, I pressed hard on my descender and 4 or so foot of rope shot through it depositing me very quickly on a rock.

Brian's version of events is that he thought there was an owl down that cave, making all the noise. I'm sticking to my story and, how shall I put it, shouted out a bit! Ross had thought a tackle bag had fallen but soon realised it was me. Paul should have been next down but obviously couldn't get as I was still on the rope. Ross made his way back to me in what must have been only a couple of minutes, or lifetimes to me. We weighed up the pros and cons and decided that we'd get out ourselves rather than have me waiting about for hours for cave rescue. No way was Ross going out of my sight, or grip for that matter, once he was with me - I wasn't going to let go. Paul and Brian had sorted out a pulley system and with Ross holding tight up I went. The passage entering the cave had been easy, but now every step upwards was made at Paul and Brian's expense (Ross was derigging). Paul knelt down in front of every uphill step, I stepped on his back and Brian pulled me up. We made good progress and I was pleased at how quick we got to the concrete pipe. Once Brian had pulled and Paul pushed me up that, daylight and a short lie down. Paul made off down the hillside to get the car as close as possible. Brian and Ross helped me at a slightly slower speed.

Paul had managed to reverse his car most of the way up the lane. At this point I think they must have drawn straws and Paul came off worst as the one to help me dress. Gordon had emerged by this time and we related the story to him. Back down the lane, with Ross and Brian having to walk, so we didn't rip the bottom out of Paul's car altogether (when do I get the bill Paul?). Off we set down the motorway to the N. Staffs A. & E. We rang John (my husband) who came straight out, so at least Ross, Paul and Brian didn't have to hang around any more.

The outcome was a fractured sacrum (lower back), displaced disc, and some other more 'personal' problems - DON'T ASK!, a weeks stay in hospital, and quite a few weeks at home. At the time of writing I'm driving again. Back to work in September probably.

It only remains for me to say a GREAT BIG THANK YOU to ROSS, PAUL AND BRIAN. If ever you're going to fall make sure you have these 3 with you. I can't thank them enough and would give them a great big hug but I think they'd run off. John sends his thanks to them as well for looking after me. The only problem remaining is if anyone will let me in their group next time down or am I a liability - we'll see if anyone turns up.



We arrived in Zermat Tues. pm. This (or rather what was left of it) was designated a rest day! Tents were put up meals prepared and ale consumed.

**Wed.** saw us on the first train to Zermat ready for an assault on the Breithorn, the easiest of the 4000ers. To



save time we decided to eat in a café or collect food on the way. Needless to say no where was open! The climb was on snow and fairly easy but we struggled due to lack of acclimatisation (all except Bronwyn who was fresh from Nepal) Darren felt sick, luckily Bronwyn had some nausea tablets in her sack. To add a bit of interest we decided to complete a traverse of the first part of the ridge which was a little "hairy", the remainder being easy. After a short stop for refreshment (and for Darren to be sick!) we practised our crevasse rescue techniques on Bronwyn who in future will know better. They are best described as rusty! The fairly short SLIGHTLY uphill walk back to the Klein Matterhorn cable car station left us breathless and

totally exhausted, all except Bronwyn of course. Apparently our acclimatisation programme was running behind schedule! Still we should be OK for the Matterhorn TOMORROW! That night we found that the occupants of the tents behind us were Mick and Pete from "Five Towns." Who says the art of communication is dead!

**Thursday.** After a very leisurely start the hut walk to the Hornli took 2 hours. From the footpath the route to the hut looks desperate and beyond it impossible. Actually it's not too bad. The weather was poor, cold and windy with poor visibility but the forecast from our campsite owner was for good weather Friday. In places the footpath has been repaired with metal panels equipped with a hand rail. Parts of this have been damaged by minor rock falls, a reminder of our unstable environment.

After a mediocre meal (Cheese if you are vegetarian!) and a few beers we retired. I don't think any of us slept well with the prospect of the following days events.

**Friday.** 3.30 am. A scant breakfast and we were off, Kev tied to Bronwyn and Darren and I roped together. There were lights on the mountain "miles" in front of us, I suspect some of the guides start early to avoid the riff-raff. Darren and I were soon left well behind partly due to straying off route but mainly to me being keen to treat almost everything as a "pitch" instead of climbing solo or as a roped pair but without using belays. The first time I used my ATC to belay Darren (who up to this point had led without my support!) I dropped it, cursing as it tinkled away into the blackness below.

interesting I thought as I converted to overtaken by a group of 3 un-roped terribly impressed with my grasp of roped-up and were treating the climb steep but not nearly as exposed as I was leading everything and that I had slip didn't bear thinking about. About and Kev on their way down. At first I that they had been advised that at their



This should make belaying and abseiling Italian hitches. At one point we were Catalans also off-route. They didn't seem their language! It wasn't long before they had as seriously as I was! The rock was poor and expected. Nevertheless I was glad Darren the security of a rope. The consequences of a 50m below the Solvay hut we met Bronwyn thought they had "topped" it but was told rate of climbing it would take another 6

hours to the summit! .. and Darren and I were 30 minutes behind them!! By this time the guides were beginning to trickle back down with their clients, presumably having finished the route. We BRIEFLY discussed the possibility of a night in the Solvay but the prospect of a night without adequate equipment, little water (and no prospect of replenishing our supplies) and no weather forecast very soon led us to the only sensible conclusion. In addition it had become obvious to Darren and I that our 30m rope was going to be too short on some of the abseils on our retreat. We would have to descend as a group of 4 using Kev's rope in the main. Amazingly the descent took longer than the climb! Even more amazingly, while sitting idly gazing into space and contemplating a forced bivvy (actually I was belaying Darren at the time) I spotted my ATC perched precariously on a very unstable scree slope on the lip of an overhang with "miles of space beneath it". Suitably protected Darren recovered it! Yet another favour owed!! We arrived back at the Hornli hut at about 5pm, far too late to make a dash for the last cable car. Our round trip had taken us about 13 hours! Mike and Pete turned up as we were about to eat and had to listen to all our horror stories. Another poor meal followed, the "choice" for vegetarians being cheese yet again. I retired at about 9.30, Darren at 10 ish and K and B sometime during the early hours.



**Saturday.** We had decided against breakfast, got up at 8-ish (B and K reluctantly!) and set off down for the Schwartzee cable car station arriving just in time to meet the hoards of tourists on their way up. We arrived back in Tasch (our camp-site) at about mid-day, the afternoon was spent packing for the Haute Route planned for the following day. This apparently was our rest day! To aid our recuperation Kev had spotted a "Stomp" advertised in the village so after our evening meal we were all forced to attend. In true British spirit vast quantities of beer were consumed and as usual Kevin livened up the proceedings with his dance routine well supported by Bronwyn who even managed to persuade Darren and yours truly to join in **briefly**. Darren and I left "early"-ish finding great difficulty in negotiating the bridge across the fast flowing river! We could hear the river but couldn't see it! Following a minor skirmish with a motor cycle (who never even saw us as he drove at high speed **between** us) we reached camp at about 3 am. and promptly crashed out. Presumably K and B arrived somewhat later.

**Sunday.** Kevin and Bronwyn eventually emerged. Apparently the wild evening had played havoc with Bronwyn's ankle which she had recently injured in Nepal. There was no chance of starting the Haute Route today. At long last we really were going to have a rest day!! Unable to cope Darren and I decided to walk into Zermat, about 2 hours distance. On route we saw our first chamois and what I later think was a marmot. A swift tour of the shops, most of which were shut, a visit to the cash point, a swift drink at a pavement café and we were on our way back to Tasch.

On arrival I realised I had left my wallet in the bar!! Unbelievably when the campsite owner rang the bar it had been handed in!! ... but it contained several hundred pounds in various currencies, my credit cards etc., would it be in tact? we would have to wait and see. My instructions were to wait at the railway station and ask the drivers as they arrived if they had been handed my wallet! Needless to say few of them spoke any English or French. After several negative attempts the bar was contacted again and I was to learn that my wallet had been put on a "through" train but had been traced and would be put on yet another train for the return journey! Mick and Pete arrived shattered having done the Matterhorn, a round trip of 18 hours!

Since it was Sunday and we had failed to shop Bronwyn decided to make a meal from the left-overs while the 3 of us would eat out. Unfortunately my meal had to be interrupted every time a Zermat bound train pulled into the station. The meal was mediocre, we were over-charged, the service poor but amazingly the wallet eventually arrived in tact.

**Monday.** Well Bronwyn's ankle was still no better so after giving Mick a quick lesson in the complexities of driving my Jeep the three of us were sat in Macdonalds (Zermat) yet again stoking up on what could be our last decent meal for some time. Mick and Pete were heading for Chamonix possibly to do Mont Blanc and had agreed to take my car and Bronwyn with them. The weather was glorious as we set off on the 4-5 hour trek to the Scobiel hut. No "jump-start" this time, Shank's pony all the way. The walk is fairly pleasant despite going through an area decimated by hydro-electric schemes and what I assume is extraction of the glacial sediment. However it is uphill all the way particularly the last section which looks impossible until the footpath is located. The views of the Matterhorn are outstanding. The hut is new and stands on a grassy Alpine meadow with views that are stunning. A fairly popular location with tourists we were not alone, the terrace being dominated by a group of Italian climbers all sporting the most amazing tans which were the envy of Darren! Chamois and marmots could be seen nearby. A brief discussion with the warden convinced us to modify our route for the following morning. She seemed horrified when I pointed out our proposed route over the Stockji.

The evening meal was incredible, even the veggie one! We found out later that the cook was Nepalese, spending part of the year in Switzerland and the remainder back home. His talents wouldn't go amiss in a high class restaurant. We even got a reasonable night's sleep and breakfast was above average. The forecast was for thunderstorms after mid day. It was tempting to use this as an excuse to remain yet another night in this excellent hut but by now Kev was on a mission. A leisurely start at 5am began down a fairly precipitous path which led onto the glacier which was covered in debris. I found the path intimidating and tried not to contemplate the consequences of a slip which was rendered highly possible in the half-light. As we reached the glacier and set off up the STEEP moraine we could see the Italian group following in the distance. The moraine eventually gave way to rock and a short gully led onto a steep footpath which gave way to even steeper scree. We were amazed at the agility of the group of chamois as they covered the unstable terrain at incredible speed. Our route led us back towards the summit of the Stockji, the Italians chose a route that intersected ours at a lower altitude.

Donning crampons we set off down onto the glacier, for some unknown reason I had elected to take the lead. Within 10 meters I had put my foot through the first snow bridge! "Not a good start." I thought to myself. Less than 10 minutes later I went through the second! This time I realised it was a big one as I lay floundering there with one foot dangling in space. Lying flat to spread my weight I began to crawl cautiously in what I thought was the direction of the far side. I was in fact crawling **ALONG** the snow bridge but was soon corrected by



Darren who was following me. I was glad of the tight rope. The glacier became steeper and the climb to the col seemed to go on for ever. We were overtaken by one of the Italian groups, the remainder bringing up the rear. The weather began to deteriorate becoming much colder with decreasing visibility as the first groups travelling from the Bertol hut came into view well wrapped up to keep out the weather.

On reaching the col d'Herens the Italians set off for the Tete Blanche, we continued in the direction of the refuge. Well it should have been in the direction of the refuge but a certain member of the group for reasons best known to himself decided not to follow the well worn prints in the snow but to set off at right angles!! The visibility got worse, the slope steepened to a point where it began to look precipitous in front and we were obviously in the middle of a crevasse field, none of which fitted in with the map! Another member of our group who again must remain anonymous claimed to have seen the hut a short distance in front during a rare moment when the cloud lifted! Time for the GPS I thought as I stopped to put on a jacket. It was by now very cold and extremely windy and the thought of an imminent thunderstorm did nothing to boost my moral! Heated discussions took place as the GPS took what seemed an age to locate itself. Eventually our position was determined and a bearing set back in the direction we had come, UPHILL this time in the direction of the "motorway" of footprints left about an hour previously! I gingerly crossed the first crevasse asking Darren to keep the rope taught. Darren did the same with Kev waiting impatiently in the rear. We set off but hadn't gone more than a few yards when a scream came from the back of the group, I turned to see Kev's head and shoulders popping out of the crevasse I had so carefully crossed. "Patience is a virtue"



By now we were getting tired but at least we were on the right track. Even Kev had to admit to being grateful that I had decided to carry the GPS. At last the hut came into view as did the Italian group who were once again in front despite having climbed the Tete Blanch. The Bertol hut looks impenetrable! Being perched on top of a rock pinnacle it is reached by climbing up a series of fixes chains and ladders bolted into the rock. I suppose the climb is about 30 m and is definitely exposed. The hut itself is claustrophobic and to make matters worse we were sharing a room with the Italians! Darren became particularly concerned as the one next to him (with the all-over tan) spent a considerable time oiling himself while grinning at Darren in a most delightful manner! The views outside would have been stunning if it wasn't for the low cloud and the tiny balcony was a cold place. The only entertainment came from a group of youngsters who were having an introductory climbing lesson on the cliff to the side of the hut. We were all horrified at the apparent lack of safety procedures bearing in mind the exposed nature of the site. The threatened storm never materialised, just as well with us perched on top of this pinnacle in the middle of nowhere. The vegie meal was once again cheese!

We were first to leave the hut at 5 am after a pathetic breakfast. The climb down the ladders certainly got the adrenaline going but wasn't as bad as expected. Darren and Kev set off down the steep snow and later the steep scree with the agility of mountain goats, I followed more like an over laden camel! Contouring round we managed to gain the glacier much higher than we intended for which I was very grateful since every metre lost meant it had to be regained later. As we stopped for our second breakfast and a wash etc. the Italians overtook us.

We made really good time up the Haut Arola glacier and as we stopped to don our crampons on the steep icy section leading up to the col de l'Eveque the Italians passed us for the last time, much to Darren's relief. By now Kev and I had persuaded Darren that we could miss out our stop at the Vignettes hut and push on to Chanrion, two days in one! Kev even spotted a short cut ... need I say more. The first attempt resulted in scaling a steep ice cliff which Kev led followed by a tedious plod up to the col proper. We all agreed that the real short cut was definitely "on" since it sliced a couple of K off our journey in addition to missing out some ascent. Needless to



say we came down the "wrong" side of the snow field leading to some interesting crevasse crossings and an even more interesting descent down VERY steep UNSTABLE scree! On looking back the easier (southerly) route was obvious... but not from above! We joined the Ottoma glacier which was a downhill plod for a good six K to the terminal moraine which led to a most unlikely looking footpath through a narrow gorge. None of us managed to spot the path later described in the guide which saves losing height which has to be regained. At one point the path had been swept away but could be regained by a precipitous detour high above the river. The

narrowest point of the gorge contained a small but impressive hydro-electric scheme with water roaring through it at an impressive rate. The final inevitable climb to the hut was about 1 ½ K and 150 m, it seemed to last for ever. As we lay in the sun recovering with a cool beer (or two) groups of tourists, school children scouts etc.



began to arrive in droves! The warden was most helpful, spoke excellent English and was highly impressed with our walk from "Bertol" particularly since we had done it in about 11 hours. She informed us that the normal walk to the bus stop took 3+ hours but she expected us to do it in 2!!!

**Wednesday 7am**, a leisurely start after the usual breakfast of coffee and dry bread! No one would confess to having picked up the map the previous evening. Kev (who was later found in possession of the map!) couldn't even remember the previous evening! Blindly we followed the obvious route down which needless to say ended in a dead end with cliffs all around. Now anyone in their right mind would have either retraced their steps or consulted the map (which was well hidden in Kev's sack) Not us! We set off down what looked like me to be a convex slope on very steep, but luckily dry, grass. As the hillside became steeper Kev and I followed a likely looking path but Darren decided that was too easy and he continued down the hillside which apparently became even steeper and was best described as "interesting". Meeting up on the "road" we set off for Mauvoisin, a tiny village at the head of a valley beneath a dam which is almost 200m high. I couldn't believe it when I saw 2 base jumpers launch themselves off the top! Neither Kev nor Darren believed me until they did a repeat performance (K and D had been inside a tunnel running through the hillside the first time)

The bus arrived on time and 45 minutes later we were on the train for Martigny and Chamonix, a journey which took us a further 10 hours but this did include a 3 hour wait for a connection which gave us the opportunity to sun ourselves outside a bar. (Kev was of course tea total!) Arriving in Cham we were to learn that Bronwyn had gone to the "Albert Premier" and Mick and Pete were somewhere on Mont Blanc. The rest of the week (ie one day) was spent idly shopping and recuperating before driving back home. Incidentally Mick and Pete successfully completed a traverse of Mont Blanc.

JRJ July, '98

## DANGER WITH GROUND LEVEL ANCHORS

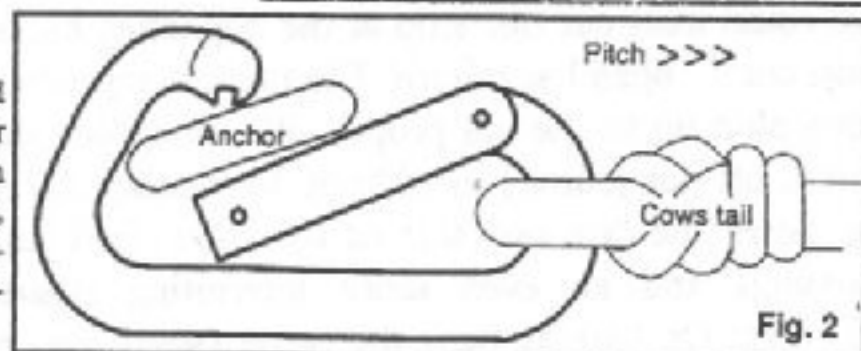
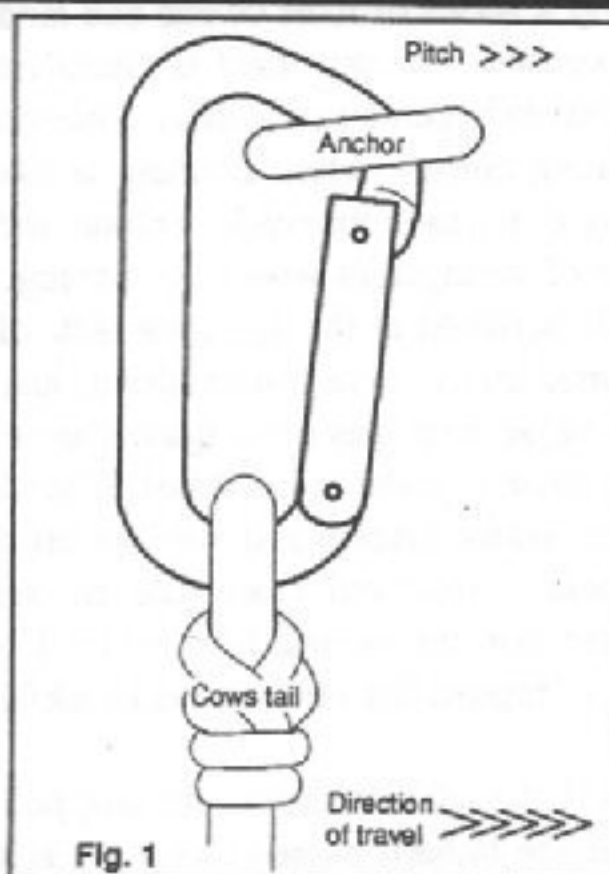
After a thorough investigation the CNCC Technical Group is issuing the following warning. It concerns the use of the following permanent anchors: Eco anchors, Petzl Safety Bolt, Fixe 'glue in', Collinox, Bat'inox.

In certain locations it has been necessary to locate the anchor placement at ground level; e.g. Rowten Pot entrance pitch, Cow Pot entrance pitch, Juniper Gulf entrance pitch at the north end.

After an intense investigation the following points have arisen. When an anchor is clipped into at ground level and progression to the entrance drop is made by keeping low, it is possible for the attachment karab. to become detached from the anchor. A similar result may occur using anchors which have been placed below waist height on traverses and not correctly aligned with the direction of loading. Figs. 1 and 2 illustrate what may happen.

### PRECAUTIONS

When using anchors placed in rock at ground level or anchors which have not been placed correctly on traverses, e.g. too low or wrong alignment, certain extra precautions need to be observed:



### In-house training.

In addition to the NCA and DCRO training sessions mentioned elsewhere Sharon is planning some "Dave Edwards" sessions. Talk to her now if you are interested.