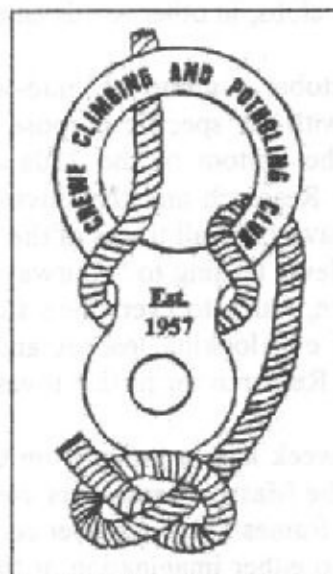


# C.C.P.C.

## Newsletter 69.

### March. 2001.

[www.ccpc.org.uk](http://www.ccpc.org.uk)



#### DCRO Training Day at Whitehall.

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November saw the annual DCRO "do" at Whitehall Outdoor Activities Centre, Buxton. As usual AG, Janet and Hugh had racked their brains to come up with new "problems" designed to tax the minds and bodies of those taking part. We began by looking at a "Dave Webb/Alan Keen" video of last years proceedings-it had already been pointed out that it would not help in any way with this years problems but it certainly proved to be amusing and entertaining.

My group began by rescuing an "unconscious casualty" who by some strange mishap had marooned himself on a tiny island in the middle of a fish pond which just happened to be surrounded by a high voltage fence. Fortunately he had trussed himself up in a sked stretcher which was a blessing in view of the lack of space on the island. As we approached someone commented that he bore a remarkable likeness to John Major. (Apparently Tony Blair was "otherwise engaged" in discussions on thwarting the possible disruption planned following the refusal to remove the excessive tax on calcium carbide!) In no time at all (actually within milliseconds of the allotted one hour deadline) my team had erected a Tyrollean traverse along which two intrepid members of our group gained access to the casualty enabling him to be hauled up to then along the line to comparative safety. Much to everyone's disappointment no one ended up taking an early bath in the pond which was probably shark infested!

We found problem 2 in the indoor climbing wall which, due to the appalling weather, was about the only "dry" activity of the day! Apparently the DCRO store had burned down overnight and we had to produce a "shopping list" within a £5000 budget to restock it. In addition we had to build a tower entirely out of newspaper and sticky tape which would be judged against the erections of the other groups!

At this point an excellent lunch was prepared by the DCRO catering core (Chuck, Margaret and Len) setting us all up for the afternoons activities.

Our next activity took place on the "kiddies" assault course. Unfortunately two of our team members had been "struck blind" on route to the course and had to be manhandled around it without anyone touching the ground. (Our "blind" team members seemed to perform better than their sighted brethren!)

On to the "real assault course" which struck fear into the hearts of many of our saner members as they flew through the air some considerable distance above the ground.

By now it was going dark, blowing a gale and chucking it down.. We were given an orienteering map with no controls on it but we did have a radio. Our intrepid leader, who was ensconced in the caving store (in the dry I might add!), had a map with controls and fortunately a second radio. Unfortunately



AG was listening in so cheating was out if the question. Fastened together by cows tails we blundered through the undergrowth in the pouring rain (which caused our map to dissolve!) and gathering gloom getting thoroughly confused and lost but managing to collect all but one of the clues which enabled us to launch our distress rocket. Despite the weather an entertaining day and the chance to meet cavers from other clubs, in other words an excellent social occasion.

#### Knotlow-the saga continues

On 19 October a group of "mid-week geriatric" cavers from Crewe and Masson cubs went into Knotlow with the specific purpose of sampling the "slime" that had been observed growing on the rocks at the bottom of the 210a couple of weeks previously. (A meeting with English Nature, Limestone Research and the Environment agency had been planned later in the day.) It had been raining heavily and all traces of the slime had disappeared from Waterfall Chamber but was evident in the coffin level leading to "Fourways" A sample was taken and duly presented to the meeting by Dave Webb when, much to everyone's surprise, it was seen to contain not only the grey slime but a large number of evil looking leaches and some albino fresh water shrimps!! The jar was confiscated by Limestone Research for further investigation.

Exactly a week later a group from Crewe were down Knotlow again, once again it had been raining heavily (The Masson pensioners were still recovering from their exertions and cleaning the mud off their Zima frames!) One member complained of a "sulphurous" smell in the entrance shaft but this was put down to either imagination or the after effects of last nights curry. By the time the group reached the Waterfall pitch the odour had increased in strength to the point where no one was prepared to descend the pitch (although one member did rig the traverse and set off down) The smell was described as "cow shit" by one and "reminiscent of a farm yard" by another more eloquent member of the party. The trip had to be aborted.

I think it prudent to continue to treat the lower reaches of Knotlow with respect and hopefully the problem can be remedied although, having dragged on for several years now, there does seem to be no immediate solution in sight. Having read the log book at the foot of the entrance shaft I suspect that not all parties are completing it on every trip. It might help if people could be a little more conscientious in filling it in in the hope that the more information we have the more likely we are to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion.-this applies just as much to parties NOT experiencing any problems as to those who do.

#### Cavers go missing in Monvash. (25 Nov 2000)

OK it was only a DCRO exercise but the idea was to make it as realistic as possible. Things were planned to start at 0930 and any early arrivals were diverted to Ed's café on the village Green to prevent them gleaning any information they might find useful! At around 0940 what appeared to be a funeral cortege of vehicles made its way up the muddy track to meet the DCRO van, Janet Miller (controller and tackle officer) and Ralph Johnson (controller and "brains!" behind the days activities). Although it was predominantly a "Crewe" exercise they were joined by members from Masson (including Dave Webb their world renowned video maker who was to film the event for training purposes-assuming Channel 5 were not interested!) and Tim Webber from SUSS.

The two controllers at the scene appointed Brian Edmonds as controller then promptly decided to "go on strike" leaving the group to get on with it ! Ably assisted by Nigel Cooper, who tried to keep tabs on what was happening and who went where, plans were laid. (not an easy task with at least 5 entrances to the interconnecting passages of Knotlow-Wharf and Hillocks!)

Mat Ryan's car (not again some might add!) had been found parked on the grassy triangle near Knotlow and two sets of clothing were in evidence. Apparently he had "gone caving in Monvash" the







**Santas Grotto!** Thanks to those involved with this DCRO fund raising Event especially Santa (Mark Lovatt) Ruddolph (John Martin) Tinkerbell (Brian Edmonds) anonymous Shepherd -minus sheep (Jim Shallcross) the National Elf Service (Ralph and Ben-ie. Jim jnr) and to the Parkinson family who got dragged in to help. The event took place in Pooles Caver and raised just over £860.00.

Comment of the day came when a nubile young (female) guide from Pooles Cavern sat on Santas knee and asked him "Wher's my present?" Santas reply was "You just sat on it!"



Getting in knots with your bolts changes? Can't change from abseil to prussik-and back again? It's time you saw the **Cave Safe Videos**. Whether your new to the game or an old hand it's never too late to brush up on your technique. Collect them at a meeting or ring Ralph. 01782 515753

**For Sale.** Bits n bobs of SRT kit, Petzl expedition carbides, knee pads, brand new Warmbac oversuit (XL) Various wet suits. Contact Ralph for details.

**Free to members.** Spares for miners lamps from bulbs to headpieces-ring and ask.



**Your club needs you .. and your money!** Subscriptions are due before the April meeting if you wish to qualify for your discount. Full members £16.50, Associates £8.25.

**Caving Abroad-2001.** If you are interested in caving abroad now is the time to speak up! The proposed 2001 trip to NE India fell through due to many people who were interested not speaking up leaving the organisers assuming that there were no takers. This resulted in me having to take Darren to Nepal instead!!! A trip to India could be arranged for Spring 2002 **BUT I DO NEED TO KNOW IN ADVANCE!!**

#### **Putwell Hill Mine. River Wye Catchment Area.**

Caves of the Peak District (1991): NGR 179 718. Grade II (Mine). Length: c.300ft. / c.90m..

Classic Caves of the Peak District (1997): NGR 179 718. Grade II-. Length: 170m., Depth: 30m..

**Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2000.**

Paul Nixon and I had already planned to visit this site at the weekend, when Ralph, Darren and I found we had a couple of hours spare at the end of another job ('Bull Hay' Mine) for a quick look before heading home. I parked opposite the cottages at Upperdale and got kitted up while Ralph and Darren parked further up the lane by the Monsal Trail. As we set off along the trail to the entrance I was surprised to see that neither Ralph nor Darren had brought any rope or SRT gear with them. They seemed convinced that the entrance was a twenty-foot climb down!

There is a completely blocked rift in the rock at the side of the railway cutting (P.D.M.H.S. sealed this about 1974), but climbing the slope above leads to a rectangle of fencing around an obvious depression surrounded by brambles and overhanging trees. Once over the fence, I carefully approached the edge



and found myself looking into the open top of a huge rift, a bit like Eldon Hole, with a floor visible about fifty feet below. There was definitely no way of free-climbing down the overhanging walls. Plan B: Ralph and Darren went back for rope and SRT kit.

Despite trying various alternatives, we eventually decided that we didn't have enough rope with us to make a safe descent, and anyway it was getting late in the day so instead, we set off to look for the upper entrance. Following the line of the workings up the hillside, I discovered one unlikely looking crawl at the base of the right hand wall of a mini-ravine, and Darren dived in to investigate. There was a passage inside with stacked 'deads', which led to the top of a shaft, but that was as far as he went. Meanwhile I had slogged up to the top of the hill, finding plenty of blocked workings, but no other open entrances. Clearly it was time to head for home.

Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2000.

Paul and I parked at Upperdale again, and after some problems with a local resident (see below) we set off for the open rift entrance. Paul was suitably impressed by his first sight of the hole, but less so by the slippery, heavily vegetated slope, which we had to work on to rig the descent rope. We settled on a tree outside the fence at the upper edge of the rift as our main belay, with a sling for a second belay round a tree much closer to the edge. A tree on the slope near the lower edge was used for a deviation to keep the rope off the wall below. Just as we completed the rigging, Darren, Matthew and Gareth arrived intending to install spits for a different descent route down the overhanging wall.

Leaving them to get kitted up, Paul and I went up to the passage Darren had investigated on the previous Thursday, as we were now sure it was the upper entrance. Paul led off, flat-out at first, then crawling, along a narrow passage with stacked 'deads' lining the left-hand wall. In places the stacks had collapsed into the passage, but there was plenty of room to pass, although some remaining piles looked very unsafe. After about fifteen metres we reached the top of a shaft (about 1 metre diameter), partly lined with more stacked 'deads', with some workings continuing beyond. There was a large, rusty hanger bolted to the wall over the shaft, with one protruding 'spit' and another hanger close by. Paul rigged the pitch using all three anchors, backed up to a dubious boulder protruding from the wall of the passage, and then he carefully descended. The pitch was only about six or seven metres deep, but had another pile of 'deads' stacked on a ledge part-way down. I followed, and found Paul exploring a large, forked passage, with plenty of collapse-debris around, and lots more, apparently defying gravity in the roof above !! This is not an area to sit around in for long.

The way on was down the other fork of the passage, to an awkward climb-down between fallen boulders, which led to the top of an impressive slope between the vertical walls of the main rift (the principal feature of the mine). This reminded me of the slope above the fourth pitch in Oxlow, except this one was made almost entirely of loose 'tailings', which had settled at the maximum slope possible. We rigged our remaining rope to a section of railway line in the boulders, and to a 'thread' between boulders, and I carefully descended the slope, sending showers of loose material to the bottom ahead of me. The slope reaches the lip of the Second Pitch, which immediately cuts back underneath making a free-hang. Even with no re-belay above me, the rope didn't reach the floor, and in any case it needed a Y-hang on the wall to avoid cutting the rope on the lip of the pitch, so I climbed back up to Paul. On his trip down and back, Paul spotted a couple of 'spits' in the left wall (looking down) but we still don't know if there are any actually at the pitch head.

Back at the top of the slope, as we de-rigged we could hear the voices of the others through a low, gritty crawl under the wall. I squirmed through and met Darren, Matt and Gareth just reaching the top of another steep slope, a sort of mirror image of the one we had just left. We decided to make the visit into two exchange trips, chatted about the route out, then headed our separate ways.



The slope led steeply down into the largest section of the rift we had yet seen, with the walls soaring up above us on either side, and far ahead the dim glow of daylight. There were several short climbs down where parts of false floors remained and we had to reach a lower level, and at one point we passed around the base of a large-diameter shaft, which disappeared into the darkness above. The base of the shaft is now an empty chamber, but it once contained a Worthington-Simpson Duplex steam engine and a Pulsometer steam engine, found buried under rubble and removed from the mine for preservation by P.D.M.H.S. in the early seventies. (Following their recovery work, P.D.M.H.S. closed the easy rift entrance, and re-capped the main shaft to the surface with concrete).

At the base of one short climb down were the remains of a broken wood and iron ladder. Passing a large hole in the floor, we plodded up a steep muddy slope to a high point where we could pause and look out into the daylight section of the rift, with the SRT rope hanging down the moss-covered wall ahead. I stayed at the top to take photos, while Paul slithered down to the bottom and clambered over the slimy tree trunks and deep, decaying leafy-ooze to the foot of the pitch.

There is a short underground section beyond the pitch, where the original workings were truncated by the building of the railway (now the Monsal Trail), and you can inspect the five metre high dry-stone wall, which sealed off the mine from the railway. (Above the wall was the original easy rift route in to the 'twenty foot climb down' listed in Caves of the Peak District, but now sealed.) Climbing out was straightforward, but quite impressive, and we had just de-rigged when the others arrived from the upper entrance. Altogether an excellent day out.

#### Tackle Needed:

Open rift entrance: 25m. SRT rope, plus 5m. rope to rig a long deviation.  
Upper entrance pitch: 15m. SRT rope (to allow back-up to boulder), one 8mm. bolt and hanger  
Second pitch (estimate only): 30 / 35m. rope (to rig from top of slope), six (?) 8mm. bolts and hangers.

#### Access:

Iain Barker's Book states: 'There are no known access restrictions'. However: On our Thursday visit I was closely watched by a resident from the cottages plus one other man, then later a passing farmer with cattle and a different 'local' with dogs stopped to chat in a friendly way. On Saturday the same two men watched from the side of the cottages, then one came over the bridge and demanded to know what we were doing. He was quite aggressive and clearly wanted us to leave, saying that he used to work for Chatsworth and that the mine was Chatsworth Estate property. He insisted that we had no right going in, and that we should 'phone the estate Office on Monday. We continued getting our kit ready while trying to placate him, but he stayed for at least fifteen minutes, the whole time going on about cavers trespassing, and about not wanting mobs of cowboys turning up 'if the mine gets publicised'. He also said that a group of cavers had been there two years before, and after he spoke to them they got their own back by breaking his T.V. aerial off the side of his cottage when they were leaving, costing him £80. Once again we saw the dog walker who was friendly and very interested in what was underground.

Later Ralph told me that Dave Webb was there with a group from Masson C.G. about five years ago, and they were so verbally abused by a local 'gamekeeper-type' as they were changing to go in, that they packed up and left, and haven't been back since.

Clearly the access situation is delicate, and I contacted Jenny Potts (D.C.A. Sec.) and Tony Gibbs (D.C.A. Conservation and Access Officer) to find out what is known about restrictions, rather than approaching Chatsworth Estates direct. Jenny replied that the site is part of Chatsworth Estate, and that permission is required. Details appear in the current D.C.A. Handbook. No reply from Tony.

References: *The Bulletins of The Peak District Mines Historical Society:*





*Vol. 4, pt 6, December 1971, pp 413 – 416 : an account of the discovery and removal of the smaller Worthington engine.*

*Vol. 5, pt 1, April 1971, pp 54 – 60 : a description of the surface remains, and the underground workings as known at that time. Includes survey and photographs.*

*Vol. 5, pt 6, October 1974, pp 335 – 340 : an account of the recovery of the removal of the second (huge) steam engine. Includes photographs.*

*Vol. 7, pt 6, 1980, pp 342 – 344 : not seen by me, but contains a survey.*

Steve Knox 18-12-2000

### **Cavers trapped by blizzard "rough it" in Cumbria.**

On New Years a group of CCPC cavers who must remain anonymous (and should know better) decided to abandon Ingleton for "a day in the Lakes". Forced down by a blizzard on the wrong side of the mountain they were unable to return to their car due to the state of the roads and weather. Fortunately a local resident took pity on them, housed them for the night in palatial surroundings with a New Year celebration thrown in to boot! Certainly beats stopping in a caravan with Kev!!



**Put on weight over Christmas? Can't get into your oversuit or harness? Had some new kit and want to dispose of the old stuff? Why not sell it (and any other surplus gear) either direct to the club or to deserving members by advertising in the Newsletter FREE OF CHARGE!**

### **PART 2 Putwell Hill Mine, River Wye Catchment Area: Postscript !**

Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

This was definitely our last trip down Putwell Hill Mine for the foreseeable future.

Paul Nixon, John Preston and I rigged the open rift (lower entrance), then walked up the hill and entered via the upper entrance. Plans to install new spits for the first pitch were quickly abandoned and we used the existing rusty hangers to rig. In the passage below Paul was almost speechless with pleasure at the sight of his first roosting bat, practically at nose level. From then on, every comment about passages was greeted by, 'Yes, but are there any bats ?'.

At the climb down between boulders, we went up instead, to check out a passage not noticed on previous visits. It was walking size for about twenty metres, to a working face, with the skeletal remains of a hawk on the floor at the end. This is a long way from daylight ! Down below Paul rigged the long slope: thread between boulders, plus railway line for a Y-hang, then across the slope to a spit about halfway down, then on to a spit at the lip of the free hang. The final spit was poor, so Paul spent a while hanging out over the pitch installing a new spit by hand, to make a good Y-hang. We descended and explored yet another section of the huge rift, clambering over rubble piles until we reached the inevitable collapse which blocked further progress. Back up the pitch, then a steady plod out to the daylight rift, with John poking his head down every likely looking hole. Outside I sat in the sun while John and Paul went back in the top entrance to de-rig the first pitch.

This mine is well worth a visit, but it is not a place for novices or for those of a nervous disposition. There are lots of anti-gravity boulders in the roof, and some of the stacked deads and slopes of tailings or waste rock are unstable. Take care.

Steve Knox 9-1-2001



### Carnival Aven/Corkscrew Aven.

On a bitterly cold Thursday in January Darren accompanied by Ralph placed new stainless bolts on the traverse to and up Carnival Aven. The pitch back down into the streamway near Far Curtain (Caves of Derbyshire) seems to be fictitious! Neither of the intrepid explorers will be revisiting the place in the near future since it has little prospect of being pushed, is squalid in the extreme and the return is "interesting". While the above bolting was taking place Matt decided to do a second trip up and back down Crab Walk to collect his abandoned kit (He's not having a good week-see Devonshire!) and to investigate Corkscrew Aven which was then measured for the next Rigging Guide. For some strange reason Brian (Griffiths)-who should know better at his age, decided on a long distance, solo swim along East Canal as far as the Filthy Five and back! A fairly lengthy but informative trip.

### CCPC Training Officer Vandalises Equipment!!

OK so he's been found guilty without a fair trial but he was caught "red-handed" (literally) -he was aided and abetted by the club equipment officer. It all took place on a "quick" bolting trip down Devonshire (for PICA/DCA) when the intrepid pair accompanied by various other reprobates (Dave Webb, Neil Wood and Mark ) were installing bolts to be used for beginners on instructed trips. Matt began by pulling the connector off the battery, an "accident" he tried to blame on Ralph's soldering-or rather the lack off. With an assistant holding the bare wires into the connector and moaning about slipping clutches in drills Matt continued to swing about in his harness while complaining about an unusual smell. At this point the drill, which was attached to Matt, burst into flames!! Fortunately (depending on ones point of view) Matt was undamaged but the same cannot be said of the drill! From memory the drill was bought when Liam was secretary (i.e. a good while ago) and has probably put in more 18mm holes than most. Both it and the NCA drill are getting long in the tooth and Nigel is looking out for a replacement.



**Sorry!** I must apologies for getting ALL the credit for the clear up in Hillocks! I have tried to put the matter right. Apologies once again to all those involved. Grovel, grovel! Ralph.

And-in case you have forgotten SUBS ARE DUE! Full £16.50, Associate £8.25. If you wish to receive hard copies of this stimulating and informative production your subscription must be up to date. Copies via the internet are less of a problem as they cost us nowt! If you are not receiving an electronic copy make sure we have your email address. If you ARE receiving one and no longer wish to email Ralph or Matt and get yourself removed from our list.

CCPC are now the proud owners of a generator and submersible pump. We also have a hand (bilge) pump. If you can make use of these on an underground project you only have to ask.

### Giants Hole

On a recent trip into Giants where we had planned to do a little work towards the next edition of the Rigging Guide, a group of us decided to "have a look" up Boss Aven. The route starts with an "interesting free" climb out of the streamway, which Steve led, followed by a pitch of around 15m split by a large ledge-the bottom section is free climbable. Steve shot off up the rope which was badly worn to say the least, it had no sheath whatsoever in two places!! He then proceeded to climb the next section up a sloping ramp through a tight squeeze into a large chamber with a roped climb leading to the top of the aven. It is well decorated and definitely well worth a look. The old rope has been replaced and the spits replaced with 10mm SS expansion bolts so you will not need to change your underwear during the trip!





### News in Brief.

Devonshire Mine has been bolted and now has a couple of pitches suitable for beginners. Funded by PICA

Bull Haye Mine has been bolted and is an excellent training venue. Funded mainly by Dave Edwards and Associates.

The lock on the escape route in Holme Bank Chert Mine was vandalised and CCPC were asked if they could deal with it as a matter of urgency. Nigel has sorted this.

Jim and Brian E. have started work on the entrance slope in Oxlow.

Matt is fantasising about digging (yes digging!) at the far end of Hypothermia Crawl!! This could have less volunteers than "Rob's Dig"!

Matt is organising (assuming he's not still down Hypothermia!) trips to Scotland (May 2001), Majorca (Aug 2001) and India (Feb 2002) Give him a ring.

### Meets. March to June 2001.

5 March CCPC meeting.

24 March Clatterway

2 April CCPC meeting

8 April Diccan/Alum

24 April Tues DCRO training

6 May Long Rake

19 May Birks Fell

26-28 May Stackstead Farm

3 June Milwr Tunnel

10 June Knotlow -Hillocks.

1 July Rowten etc.

14 July Agen Allwed

4 Aug Pillar Hole LKW

8 Sept Ogof Hesp Alyn

22 Sept Tearsall Breeches Brightgate

Oct 13 Magnetometer.

11 March Juniper plus something for beginners.

7 April DCRO AGM

22 April White Scar

7 May CCPC meeting.

4 June CCPC meeting

16 June Gaping Ghyll-S.Passage.

2 July CCPC meeting

22 July Outsleets Beck

19 Nicker Grove.

15 Echo

Oct 7 JH

Oct 28 Water Icicle.



Reminder  
Please  
Wash kit  
before  
returning  
it.

*P.S. The usual advice to new members. Only the "official" trips (about 2 a month) are listed here. There are normally trips every weekend plus mid-week evenings and full days. Contact John about official trips and Matt or Ralph about mid week ones. Interested in the weekly Pooles Cavern dig? Ring Brian or Jim. If you want an up to date list of phone numbers contact Matt.*

**Marguerite would like to thank members for the flowers.**

Need a new headtorch? Ralph has located a source of headtorches suitable as an "emergency back up" underground or on the surface for biking, camping, orienteering, hill walking etc. They fit into a small BDH, are elasticated (similar to a Petzl) waterproof (sort of) include 2 AA cells and a spare bulb. At under a fiver that can't be bad-but hurry.

Plus-if you are desperate for somewhere to go!!!

Eldon Stomp, 7 April, Bull I Thorn, £3.50, Free camping.

Sun, sea, sand, stal(!) That well known international film maker Dave Webb is showing a "Caving in Majorca" film. The Bell Inn, Cromford, Tuesday 27 March. 7.30. Ring Matt for details

