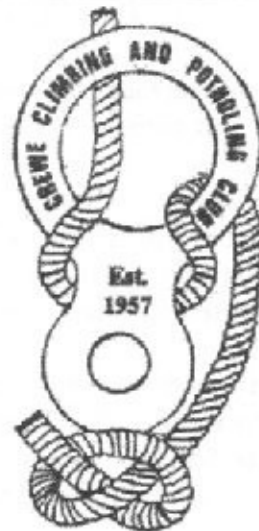


C.C.P.C. Newsletter 81 Summer 2004

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P bolts in Yorkshire.

Bolting is now complete in Meregill, Black Shiver, Vespers, Flood Entrance, Wretched Rabbit and is underway in Penyghent. Apparently Hurnell Moss has been done unofficially. (Oct 2003)

It's in the dog! ...continued.

Not content with causing mayhem underground the debonair gentleman described in the previous newsletter has turned his attention to mining ABOVE ground. On discovering an egg shaped structure on the Cheshire Plane (location top secret but you all know where it is!) he rang the county archaeological office – the conversation went something like this..

"I've found a magazine"

Telephonist. Yes sir, is it an old one.

"About 250 years old"

Telephonist. What the title?

"It hasn't got one"

Telephonist. All magazines have titles, it's printed on the front page.

"It hasn't got a front page"

Telephonist. Right sir, where did you find it?

"In the middle of a field."

Telephonist. In the middle of a field, the paper must be wet through-and you say its been there 250 years!

"Its not paper its made of stone, limestone."

Telephonist. I hope you don't mind me suggesting this sir but are you a fan of The Flintstones?

"Its made of rock and it was used to store powder.

Telephonist. What sort of powder?

"Black Powder"

Telephonist. BLACK powder!!! I think I'd better put you through to the psych... I mean archaeologist.

Needless to say the structure turned out to be a powder magazine over 200 years old.

DCRO's new vehicle – the story continues.....

The DCRO replacement vehicle project has been trundling on for a long time now but perhaps, just perhaps, the end might be in sight at last!

DCRO started seriously looking for a vehicle in the early 1990's and had a considerable stroke of luck when, just over ten years ago, the Craufurd-Stuart family of Buxton very kindly donated a (then ten year old) left hand drive Bedford van that they had used for many years for continental holidays.

The van was fitted out, given blue lights and a new yellow paint job, and was then put into service. Since that date in late 1993 it has done sterling work, carrying enormous loads to horrible places in awful conditions, not even whimpering (much) as successive drivers inflicted assorted battle scars.

By 2000 however, it was becoming clear that good old JYR 116W would not last too much longer and that a replacement would be needed.

During 60 odd call outs, 80 plus practices and countless fund raising and PR events a lot had been learned about what DCRO really needs from a vehicle. That, of course, didn't mean that the debate on what those lessons were was any less prolonged or less fierce. However a consensus was eventually reached and we were able to move on.

Why do we actually need a vehicle?

Well, firstly underground search and rescue (SAR) operations can require a lot of kit i.e.gear to tackle all the types of obstacles encountered underground, medical equipment to treat casualties, casbags, stretchers and/or harnesses to "package" them and then more gear to get them safely out. And then there's communications equipment for both surface and underground use, devices to set up over unstable shafts – the list goes on and on. So, the vehicle is needed as an equipment transport.

Running SAR operations can be a complicated process involving many people engaged in many tasks. It can be all too easy to lose track of people, equipment and events. Information, requests and demands flow in and out all the time and a central control point is essential. As there is rarely a handy building we have to supply our own base – so the vehicle is also needed for that.

And finally, we have to continue to be able to look after casualties in a warm and safe environment after we get them to the surface and before they can be transferred to the ambulance service. So thirdly we need the vehicle as a casualty treatment post.

This is a lot to ask of one vehicle and it has not been easy to identify one that is big enough and can carry the weight required whilst not being so big that the driver needs a special licence!

We started with a "wish list" that would have required the resources of Thunderbirds but gradually it was whittled down as we researched what was either essential or possible.

We looked to see if there was an existing "bespoke" vehicle (either new or second hand) that would do for all three roles. There wasn't.

We then looked to see what was available that could be adapted. Again the options were surprisingly limited. We considered starting with a chassis and getting a purpose built body but concluded that, whilst that was certainly one possible answer, a more realistic one was to stick with something that was basically "standard" and then get it professionally adapted and fitted out for our needs. After much debate a van in the Iveco range was selected as being the best option, although we had looked at all the options, including Landrover which, rather disappointingly, failed on a number of points. One school of thought considered that we should get a four wheel drive vehicle and another thought to do so would be likely to tempt some adrenaline fuelled driver to take it to a silly place and roll it. In fact, a detailed study of all the places we were likely to need to take a vehicle finally convinced us that four wheel drive was a luxury we didn't have to afford. We settled for diff locks as an affordable compromise.

Having determined on a vehicle and a broad specification of the many changes it would need we approached a local specialist and sought their advice and an estimate. They have been very helpful, and had recently already fitted out an Iveco van to an almost identical specification for a mountain rescue team "up North". We contacted the team and they declared themselves delighted.

So, we had a vehicle type, a specification for its adaption, a firm willing to do it and an estimate of the overall cost, which split pretty well 50/50 between vehicle and adaption costs.

Now came the next bit – raising the £42000 to pay for it.

Actually, since the late 1990's DCRO members have been working hard to raise extra money for a replacement vehicle so that when we started the vehicle appeal last October we reckoned that we already had about half the amount we needed. Since then we have applied (or will be applying) to all the sources we could think of who could help and the response so far has been most encouraging. Local firms, charities, other fund raising groups, organisations (including one caving club) and individuals have so far donated between £6000 and £7000.

However we still have £14000 to go before we can go ahead. Can you or your club do anything to help? How about a running some sort of fund raiser?

Whilst I hesitate to use the word insurance in view of the recent difficulties – remember - the best kind of practical life assurance you and your friends can have as cavers is to support your local cave rescue organisation and ensure that it is as efficient as possible!

If you can help – and we do hope that you can - please contact one of the following:

Bill Whitehouse (chairman) on [REDACTED] Ralph Johnson (treasurer) on [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] or Mark Loftus (secretary) on [REDACTED]

Duck Race.

As part of our effort Ralph is selling ducks @ £1. You all know the score- you buy a duck & if it wins the race you get £100.00. (£50 for second & £25 for third.)

New emergency lighting- but its not cheap.

When gently shaken, a high strength magnet passes smoothly through a wire coil efficiently generating electrical energy. A heavy-duty capacitor stores the energy and delivers power to a bright white LED - just 30 seconds of shaking provides 20 minutes of light!!

Superior to a battery, the capacitor will never corrode, can be re-charged several hundred thousand times and will power the LED even under extreme hot and cold temperatures.

Equally impressive, the solid state LED is practically unbreakable and has a rated lifetime of tens of thousands of hours; in total darkness the NightStar® illuminates a 12ft diameter area from a distance of 50ft. The state of the art components are all contained within a lightweight polycarbonate casing, which is waterproof, corrosion proof, and virtually indestructible.

Only £33.95 including postage and packing. www.jknightelectrical.co.uk

Meets.

If you have any trips you are bursting to do give Jenny a ring or e mail her.

Trips arranged so far include:

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|---|-----------------------|
| 9 May Ingleboro' Cave | 23 May New Goyden |
| 5 June Bagshaw Cavern | 12 June Ogof Draenen. |
| 19 June Yorks weekend (to include 3-Peaks walk. | |
| 26 June Holme Bank Chert mine | 4 July DCRO Training |
| 10 July DCRO social Miners Standard. | |
| 11 July Milwr Tunnel (N Wales) | |

A reminder- trips are often arranged at short notice and scarcely a week or weekend goes by without something cropping up such as one of Len's "dry & dusty pits" to something a bit more taxing with "The Wednesday Crowd". We even slipped in a "quickie" down Titan last weekend- it can only be described as "awesome"!

PS. Some of our trips are well attended, we had 9 members & one strug from Masson down Titan, others are less well supported. We struggled to get a mere handful for S. Wales & its not just the difficult/distant 'oles. We get requests to put on easier stuff for novices & again we often struggle to fill the trip. It's YOUR club so why not come out to play?

Bits n pieces.

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| Margaret Fenton is running a 10k in aid of 'women against domestic violence'. If anyone feels inclined to sponsor her you will find her address on the membership list. |
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On the digging front-Len keeps us busy with various "pits" and we have a group busy in Hillocks, usually on a Wednesday evening. Jim & Brian are busy working in Otter Hole (Stanley Moor) which they hope will link with their dig in Poole's Cavern. Now is the time to join them on a Tuesday evening before winter returns- not that inclement weather makes any difference, they worked right through last winter.

DCRO call-outs this year are running at record levels with five shouts in the first 14 weeks of the year! The most recent was to Garlands where a caver abseiled "off the wrong rope" on Garlands sustained back injuries. Despite it being a bank holiday enough (just) personnel were mustered to do the job fairly efficiently with five members of CCPC ending up on site. Other incidents took place in JH, Titan, Ambergate (gritstone fissure) and Giants again!

Oops spoke too soon! Tuesday we got a call to rescue a dog- it "escaped" before we got there and Bank Holiday Sunday Garlands Pot claimed yet another victim for the same reason as the previous two (Petzl Go as opposed to Petzl Stop). Being a bank holiday we struggled for numbers but eventually 4 CCPC members arrived on site swelling the total number to around 20. The injuries were sadly predictable- damage (compression fracture) to lower back.

If you would like copies of the minutes (Jan- April) and/or a members address list please let Ralph know. These are available by post or e-mail the latter being more economical to distribute.

Len hits Rock Bottom.

On a recent epic pumping session Len, Darren & John reached the end of the dip in Lime Kiln Mine. there will be a full report later. Sadly when Ralph went to film the water level had risen preventing access the final adit (Can't say I'm sorry looking at the state of the mud in the incline!)

Darren is desperately trying to persuade Len NOT to explore the passage running in the other direction (under the lake- time will tell!)

If you want a look down now's your chance, once exploration is finished the ladders will be removed and the entrance capped.

The team are now moving on to Hill House and the Manifold area.