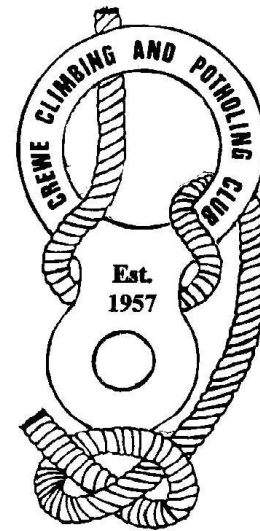


C.C.P.C.

Newsletter 82

Autumn 2004

Log on to www.ccpc.org.uk



A personal Tribute to a Fine Caver: Tony Reynolds (died 23 May 04)

Tony Reynolds died following a 20metre fall on 20 May 2004, he was a member of CCPC for over 30 years. We met as a result of a common interest, our passion for caving & we have been friends ever since. We didn't always see eye to eye, come to think of it we rarely saw eye to eye, in fact if I was being totally honest I'm not sure we ever saw eye to eye!! Someone once said to me that if Tony was alone in a room he would probably argue with himself.

Club members will remember all those AGMs when we could guarantee that motions would never go through unopposed when Tony was present. Tony could make Victor Meldrew sound positively angelic. He loved a good argument and I'm sure he felt disappointed if he had left a meeting without having managed to provoke a heated debate over at least one issue. There were only two colours in Tony's reasoning, black & white. Grey did not exist. There were always two sides to an argument his & the wrong one.

Since his death many club members have rang me and as usual we got around to reminiscing about "the old days". Inevitably we ended up discussing our most memorable caving experiences and almost without exception Tony was present. If a hard trip was planned Tony was on it, normally carrying more than his share of the gear. By the way there is no truth in the rumour that from time to time he carried my share!

It sounds corny to repeat the well-worn phrase "when the going gets tough, the tough get going" but in Tony's case it was absolutely true. Maybe it was his training in the marines which he joined at the tender age of seventeen seeing action in several countries including Borneo. He was like a marshmallow, hard on the outside but beneath that hard outer layer as soft as snow. He thought the world of his family- but I suspect he never told them.

I remember on one occasion having to call out the Cave Rescue to Tony & Rob Heath who, along with a couple of other cavers, were trapped by high water in Giants Hole.

Once released from their watery situation unperturbed they exited in record time helping the rescue team carry out the gear.

There are numerous examples of Tony's consideration for others, I'll quote a couple. Over 20 years ago we were planning a trip to the Gouffre Berger. A young lad named Kev Mountford wanted to go but the team decided he wasn't up to it. Tony took him under his wing and 6 months later Kev was the youngest person to bottom the system. Needless to say Tony was there first having done far more than his share of the donkey work.

A decade later 3 brothers joined us & each have told me on many occasions that without Tony's help, advice and patience they would never have become the experts they are.

He avoided being in the limelight, he never expected thanks, in fact he positively shunned any compliment or praise, it would have embarrassed him. He had his reputation to live up to, the Vinnie Jones of the caving world. I for one will miss him dearly and I know that I'm not alone. One of our members put it far better than I can when he said "a light in or lives has gone out".

At his wife Elaine's request his funeral was not a sad occasion. Not wishing to be a burden he retired from caving to pursue his other interest, mountain walking, as you would expect the steeper and harder the better. I received the news about Tony as I was embarking on one of our favourite walks over Tryfan. A sheer coincidence? or was it?

Maybe we should regard him as fortunate. His nature would not let him adopt a sedentary lifestyle. He died doing something he really enjoyed. For those of us remaining the sadness will fade. I am absolutely convinced that the memories will not.

Ralph J. June 2004.

The Reynolds Girls would like to thank everyone at CCPC for all their continued support, messages of sympathy and donations especially Ralph for the tribute he paid to Tony. Everyone has commented on how accurate he was and how well he portrayed Tony.

We have collected £1000 for Epilepsy Research and Parkinson's Association which I'm sure they would put to good use.

Tony loved potholling and later walking without this he wouldn't have been him. Dying the way he did was the most gracious way he could have gone.

Thank you all once again

Elaine, Meg, Emma and Katie

Borehole Swallet.

Brian and Jim continue to work on this promising dig on Stanley Moor. Progress has been somewhat restricted by Brian's enforced visit to Germany.

Robert Farmer 1964-2004.

Sadly we have to report the death of Rob Farmer on July 1st 2004.

After a spell caving with friends that began in the early 90s, almost six years ago Rob became a member of CCPC where he rapidly rose to the position of training officer. Despite being diagnosed with a serious illness he continued in this role and despite suffering considerable discomfort was active to within a few weeks of his death. In addition to putting his rope access training into good service with CCPC he helped run a “self-rescue” course for DCRO. Despite being unwell at the time he refused to stand down but was persuaded to run a theory session rather than the practical one he had planned. Whenever he was too unwell to go underground on an exercise he was active on the surface. I distinctly remember getting a “ticking off” when, knowing he was not well, I omitted to call him out on a “shout”. He rightly pointed out that his presence on the surface meant that someone else could have been released for more urgent duties underground.

He died following a long illness that he bore bravely and with dignity. Not once was he heard to complain, he always kept a positive outlook and remained a committed caver to the end.

Our thoughts go out to his partner Mandy and to his family.

Ralph Johnson. July 2004.

£1200 was collected in memory of Rob and this was presented to NSRI on Thursday 30 October at Rob’s favourite pub The Princess Royal. Paul, Ann & Ralph were there - the place was packed.
--

“Peak Plummet”-is this a new sport?

Many years ago the Peak District was famous for the “Derbyshire Rope Trick” that kept DCRO busy for quite a while in the early days of SRT. Eldon Hole was the most popular venue and participants would ab down the 180 ft shaft only to discover that they hadn’t got a clue how to prussic out. Nothing too serious and anyway DCRO needed the practice! Things went quiet for a while but recently a new sport has come to the forefront, the “Peak Plummet”.

This usually takes place on a bank holiday weekend, normally a Monday, the favourite venue being Garlands Pot in Giants. The idea is to see how fast one can descend using a Petzl Stop (or “Go” in this case). On a more serious note there have been three accidents there in the last few months all doing exactly the same thing in exactly the same place- what’s going wrong? I have been closely involved in five accidents when casualties have been using Petzl Stops so I thought I would present the facts in the hope that someone will come up with some answers. Three of the incidents involved DCRO and in the other two the team were strong enough to carry out a self- rescue although in retrospect this is probably unwise.

Three of the incidents concerned experienced cavers, I would describe the others as one moderately experienced and one beginner. In each case the descender had been threaded correctly (since it was still on the rope) In the three most recent accidents in

Giants I can only assume (but I may be wrong) that it was incorrect use of the brake that caused the free-fall, in one case the caver was also using a Shunt that also ended up at the bottom of the pitch still on the rope. Interestingly the casualties remember little of the precise details prior to the fall and none at all during or immediately after it.

One very experienced caver and a close friend of mine stopped at a deviation (Knotlow pitch 2- into Pearl Chamber), passed it, and then grabbed his cow's tail instead of the main rope while pressing the brake resulting in a fall of around 5 metres sustaining severe back injuries. Apparently the descent is too fast to allow one to release the brake and stop the fall.

Another moderately experienced colleague of mine fell on Shadow route in Ireby Fell Cave. She stopped just short of a rebelay and needed to descend a couple of feet in order to clip in her cows tail. Unwisely she pressed the brake without holding the main rope "falling" about one to 1 ½ metres into the loop of rope again sustaining serious back injuries.

All the casualties required hospital treatment or hospitalisation but all or apparently will make a full recovery. I know of one other case where a very similar incident happened with an experienced caver on Dome Route in Lost John's but there were no injuries.

My personal opinion is that a Petzl Stop is still the safest abseil device, and I've tried all except the Whaletail. For what it's worth I always introduce novices to the device by abseiling with a Petzl Bobbin before progressing to a Stop, if you haven't got one then lock-off the brake. The novice can easily be protected from the top of the pitch (as long as there are no rebelays) by holding the rope beneath them to form a loop. Having an assistant at the foot of the pitch is less reliable even if their reactions are lightning quick and they are not distracted by other events taking place. If you don't believe me give it a try but please avoid trying it on Garland especially on a bank holiday weekend.

Ralph J.

It was no surprise to learn that Ralph failed to win the video competition at Hidden Earth. Some young upstart going by the name of Sid Perou took first prize!

Lime Kiln Mine.

Len's dig at this site came to a conclusion in September 04. What ARE we going to do on those long winter evenings, not to mention weekends? If you want the full unabridged details you'll have to buy the video, available from Ralph at a special discounted rate- or you can obtain a copy from most high quality outdoor shops (well some anyway!)

Rumour has it that Len has some more sites coming on line!

If you pop into Castleton Information Centre you may find yourself on display! Look at the caving film.

Ladakh 2004.

This summer yen intrepid explorers (all but one of them from CCPC) set off to climb Stok Kangri a 6000m peak in the Himalayas.

A 24 stop-over in Delhi tempted some to face a four hour drive to Agra to see amongst other things the Taj Mahal while the elderly members of the group spent a more leisurely day savouring the sites, sounds and smells of Delhi-particularly the main bazaar. The Agra group returned with loads of fine photographs and most of them with a touch of Delhi-belly!

Our first day in Leh, the capital of Ladakh was spent recuperating and dashing to the loo but fitter members (not necessarily the youngest) managed to visit the large stupa that, along with the old fort, dominates the town.

Day two in Leh was spent doing the usual touristy things, which involves visiting several gompas (monasteries) the largest housing around 800 monks. Several had pressing engagement and returned early to check out the hotel bathrooms!

Our first day on trek involved a pleasant walk in hot weather from Phey to Zinchen, a beautiful campsite by the side of a stream. The only downside was the toilet as the overflow was directed straight into the stream, fortunately downstream of the camp site.

Our next day was a b.....d! The climb to Yurutse should have been around 650m – well above the recommended maximum. Sadly due to problems finding water we ended up climbing well above Yurutse camping at 4550- a height gain of around a thousand metres. Several of us felt ill and Emma and Andy very ill. Andy was still also suffering from the bug picked up on route to Agra. The drop in temperature was very noticeable and this was one of the few nights when nobody chose to bivvy.

Next day sore a very sorry bunch struggling to make the Gandala pass with Emma and Andy on horseback. The only + side of camping so high was the reduced height left to reach the 4985m pass! Once there our troubles were not over, Andy took two steps and promptly fell over! Fearing the worst we decided he should loose altitude quickly so Paul and Gareth set off with Andy in order to accomplish this. Eventually he was transferred to horseback finishing the day's journey on this. Fortunately there were two doctors in the camp (both French) and both at some point examined Andy, I suspect he probably enjoyed all the attention. There was a unanimous decision to take a rest day (although our tight schedule only allowed for two on the whole trek) The evening and following day were spent in the river, consuming whatever alcohol we could get hold of and generally doing naff all.

Trek day five saw us walking up the beautiful Markha valley with a height gain of a mere 360m and one river crossing. By now Andy was much recovered. One of our horsemen lived in Markha and we were invited into his home where his wife and large extended family entertained us with chang (the local brew) and Ladakhi tea (a concoction of tea, salt and yak butter- best thought of as soup rather than “tea”) To repay them we donated a supply of Gareth's corporate tea shirts- by now all our camp staff and many of the residents of the villages we had passed through were similarly attired! We even managed to find some clothing to fit the toddlers of the family.

The walk from Markha to Thangutse took us over 7 hours, 740m of ascent and two river crossings, the second of which involved balancing across two tree trunks spanning the 10m wide river. Fortunately nobody fell in but judging by the subsequent

video was die more to good luck than skill! By now we were at 4400m but despite this many took the opportunity for a wash in the river- it was b.... freezing!

Thangutse to Nimaling was a steady plod with beautiful views of Kangyatsy (6400m) all the way. Some of us wondered if we had come to climb the wrong mountain. Sadly we had forfeited our planned rest day here for one at Markha so we couldn't even spend time exploring its base camp.

The journey from Nimaling to Shang involved crossing the Kongmara La, at 5400m this was a height record for most of the group. Our Sirdar Dorje knew of a "short cut" so we stopped short at Chogeo (famous for a spring issuing acidic water) Late evening we experienced one of our few showers which didn't last long.

The short cut to Shang Phu seemed to take ages and involved crossing at least one pass at 4800m. At one point we thought we could see the horses being unloaded in the distance so we sat down anticipating the usual reception of snacks and tea on our arrival. We couldn't believe our eyes when no sooner had we settled down the horses were up and away. I suspect they were having their girth straps slackened after the steep descent from the pass. It turned out we had covered about ½ of our day's journey! During the night the campsite flooded, luckily it missed the tents and those bivouacking but the toilet suffered rather badly making a visit a rather aquatic experience.

The 7 hour journey from Shang Phu to Matho Phu involved crossing the Matho La (La= pass) at 4700 but by now we were all pretty well acclimatised. We had only left camp about an hour when Jen suddenly ran out of steam and I mean seriously of steam. We decided (much later) that Jen had been burning considerably more calories than she had been eating! She was confined to "horseback" for the rest of the day!

The route provided some of our best Himalayan scenery and we all arrived in good form, the last two to arrive being Tim and Ralph who were accompanied by hundreds of sheep and goats, in fact the goat herder left them to it while he stopped for a chat at an isolated camp site about 1k short of his "home" which was next to our site. We camped next to clear stream which was to be our water supply, unfortunately as soon as the sun got to work on the glacier feeding it it turned a dirty brown colour so our cook & sirdar had the unenviable job of carrying water a good couple of k.

Matho Phu to our base camp took around 8 hours with a height gain of 400m. On route we spotted a couple of herds of the famous blue sheep although several of us had serious doubts as they didn't look particularly sheep-like nor were they blue! The "official" base camp was rather crowded so we camped about 1k short and 100m below it. The nearby stream froze overnight.

Base Camp. A rest day while Dorje checked out the route. We were very unwilling to accept his advice when he said conditions were very good and we would not need axes, crampons or rope! Most of us opted for axes but all except Gareth decided to climb in summer boots carrying rather less gear than recommended for a 6000m summit in The Himalayas! Rather late in the day four of us decided to bivouac at Advance Base Camp (aprox 5200m) to shorten the ascent the following day. It proved to be a warm night (considering the altitude)

Summit day involved an early start (about 2am for the Base Camp & 3.30 am for ABC). The glacier proved very easy with no significant crevasses even in the dark. The glacier is followed by several hundred metres of shattered rock, which is a real drag, until the summit ridge is reached.

The ridge is around 300m of good rock apart from the final 50 or so metres to the summit where it deteriorates into shattered rock resembling a slagheap in the Potteries. This proves to be rather unstable and crosses several exposed gullies where a slip would have very serious consequences. In bad weather with powder snow these would be VERY hazardous.

We spent 30 mins or so sitting on the summit snow dome taking the usual photographs and two of the group placed prayer flags in memory of Tony and Rob who had both died shortly before our departure.

Cold began to take its effect despite the sun so we headed down to base camp collecting bivvy gear on the way. The descent was uneventful but the tail enders were delayed an hour or so at the beer tent at the official base camp.

That night the Ladakhis organised a celebration bonfire of donkey-dung while we provided the liquid refreshment. They (tried) to teach us their local songs and dances and we in turn taught them the Okekoke, Ten Green Bottles and, as the booze took hold, many other delightful songs of the western world. Sadly, with Ralph acting as interpreter, much was lost in the translation!

Base Camp to Stok. About 4 hours and downhill all the way with a beer tent at the end of the trail. The next few days were spent getting back to the UK via Leh and Delhi giving us ample time to soak in the bath and in the hotel swimming pool. An excellent experience with ALL the participants making the summit.

Ralph J.

Club fees 2004-2005.

Needless to say in our present society where litigation is becoming the norm insurance premiums continue to rise although the government is beginning to Address the problem (or at least discuss it and recently the House of Lords reversed a court decision to award considerable damages to a youth from Congleton who was paralysed while swimming in a lake despite "No Swimming" signs being prominently displayed.

Insurance for this year will cost £16.00 for ALL members.

Full membership is set at £16.00 and Associate membership £8.00. Associate membership is aimed at members living some distance away who are unable to take part in many club activities, they are not allowed a vote at meetings and can only use club gear when accompanied by a "full" member.

Fees are due at the end of October, after that you will not be insured unless John M receives a cheque!. Members who can prove they are already insured through another club or directly with BCA do not need to pay the insurance again. All paid up members will receive a membership card that will state whether or not they are insured by CCPC.

Hire of Equipment.

All **full** members are entitled to use club equipment without charge, please return it promptly in a clean/dry condition. It is important that metal items are not stored overnight in tackle sacks with wet rope.

All prospective members are entitled to use “personal gear” on three occasions without charge. After that the following charges will apply.

Helmet.	£1.00	Lamp+belt	£1.50
Oversuit	£1.50	Harness	£1.50
Descender.	£1.00	Croll & chest harness	£1.00
Cow’s tails	£1.00	Hand jammer/footloop	£1.00

These prices are “rock bottom”! It is hoped that once new members have taken up the sport then they will gradually build up their own stock of personal gear.

Meets.

15 Oct DCRO GM 7.30pm The Anchor	Oct. Titan and Peak Cavern (Derbys)
Oct Box Stone Mine (Bath)	
Nov Marble Sink/Pot (Yorks)	Nov Lost John’s (Yorks)
Dec. Peak Cavern (Derbys)	
Jan Swinsto-Simpsons (Yorks)	Jan Meregill (Yorks)

Members will/have received dates from Meets Sec (Jen) Any problems ring or e mail.

Plans are afoot for a “quickie” to Dent de Crolles (and possibly Grotte de la Diau) in 2005 making use of cheap air flights to Geneva then car hire to cave. A long weekend should be enough for either trip.

It was decided to hold a “rescue practice” in The New Year. ALL members are welcome to attend. If anyone has any suggestions of the aspects we should cover please let Ralph know. DCRO have been asked to send a rep. To the Jan meeting to explain why they want the CCPC team on the Central team list. It is important that we keep our list up to date, for one reason HnH have requested a list of team members as they qualify for an **extra** 5% discount on purchases

Credit, Where Credit is Due !

While looking over the ‘Summary of Accounts for the Year 2004’, produced by John Martin for the A.G.M. in October, I was interested to see where the Club income actually comes from. As expected, most income is from membership subscriptions, including Temporary Membership fees, and donations made by Honorary Life Members: Total :- £545.25.

The second largest income amount is made up of payments from Members for insurance (£335.75), however, as this is then paid out again to the insurer it makes no real contribution to the lasting balance.

The two remaining income sums (not counting the £6.93 interest on the Deposit Account) are £207.00 from the continuing sale of Rigging Guides, and £249.10 from the hiring out of gear.

Most Members will be well aware of the considerable efforts made by a small group of dedicated individuals, several years ago, to install permanent ‘P-bolt’

anchors on the more popular S.R.T. routes of the Peak District. C.C.P.C. Members were involved in much of this strenuous and time-consuming work, and subsequently a number of those Members collaborated to produce the first edition of 'The Peak Rigging Guide', giving clear descriptions of S.R.T. routes, and topos (rigging diagrams). The Rigging Guide has gone through a number of editions since that time, each with modifications, and continues to be the essential S.R.T. hand-book for visiting cavers to the Peak District. Every individual copy of the Guide is now produced by just a couple of Club Members, who print off the pages and covers, assemble everything in the correct order, bind it all together, and then, of course, the copies have to be delivered to retail outlets or dispatched by post to individual purchasers. All done voluntarily, in their own time. Phew !! Paul Holdcroft, it seems, is highly efficient with the Comb Binder, while Ralph has mastered the photo-copier at a local educational establishment, which will remain nameless.

All profits from sales of early editions of the Rigging Guide were donated to the D.C.A. Bolt Fund, but once the major expenditure of bolt installation was over, profits were given to D.C.R.O. for a while. Eventually it was decided that C.C.P.C. should benefit from the profits, and since then sales have generated a steady income for the Club. (£207.00 in the first nine months of 2004).

'Hitch and Hike' still donate their retailer's profit to D.C.R.O..

'Gear Hire' generated £249.10 for the Club, but what does this really mean ? The detailed breakdown shows that this income was generated from Ralph's instructing activities, on six occasions since February 2004. Ralph has chosen to hire basic equipment from the Club, to supplement his own stock, for use with his instructed groups, and has paid the commercial rate, rather than hire from Dave Edwards or from Caving Supplies. Of course, there will be a degree of 'wear and tear' involved, but suits, helmets, belts and lamps were originally obtained by the Club in order 'to provide the means to introduce novices to the sport of caving'. Taking a small, novice group into the entrance chamber of Hillocks Mine, or into Devonshire Cavern is unlikely to result in major damage to equipment, and in any case, there is no point having the kit if it isn't being used. I certainly don't envy Ralph the continuous job of cleaning, storing and maintaining Club kit, which he has carried out for more years than most of us have been caving ! Luckily Ralph's water is not metered yet, but his electricity certainly is, and I don't remember seeing any charges levied against the Club for the many hundreds (yes, HUNDREDS) of hours of lamp charging he has carried out to ensure there are always charged lamps available.

It is only through the efforts of individual members, often happening quietly in the background, that our Club continues to exist at all. We all have our own specialist skills which we can use, both for our own satisfaction, and for the benefit of the rest of the Club. Sometimes Club projects bring these skills to the attention of the rest of us in a very physical and practical way. I am thinking particularly of recent jobs such as the metal lids and grilles produced so skilfully by Paul Nixon and Nigel Cooper, but of course, other Members have fulfilled this same role in other projects. I am still amazed to see metal worked, and joined together, so easily.

Len Kirkham seems to have the kind of 'engineering mind' that turns apparently impossible tasks into a series of straight-forward steps, although there might be the odd winch, pump, cable, or even JCB in the solution

somewhere ! This talent is well illustrated in Ralph's most recent video production: 'Astbury Hydraulic Lime Company', which tells the story of recent explorations at Lime Kiln Mine. It is good to see so many Club members on the video, using their specialised skills to solve particular problems, or just their general muscle-power and enthusiasm to keep things going.

It doesn't really matter who does most or least, or who leads and who follows. Some individuals have technical knowledge that leaves others baffled (they certainly baffle me !), or they have physical strength and endurance that allows them to continue working, when I'm just looking for an excuse to go home !

There are divers and diggers, welders and wallers, surveyors and scientists, photographers, film-makers, sherpas, ferrets, readers and writers, computer nerds and engineers, and ALL of them CAVERS. Some just want to have fun, and enjoy the social side of a few drinks and a good gossip.

Ultimately we all have skills and knowledge that we can contribute, and it is through the exercise and variety of those talents that we, and Club Members before us, have made C.C.P.C. the nationally well-respected organisation that it is today.

As one Club member said the other day,

"We are just a bunch of mates who enjoy caving together".

Doesn't that really sum it all up ?

So finally, to end this rambling account, I'd like to say THANK YOU to everyone in the Club, for whatever they do, did in the past, or will do in the future, to keep things going. Remember this started with a look at the balance sheet produced by John Martin – thanks John.

(We've had Road-Rage, Shopping-Rage, and no doubt other rages, but lets try to avoid Club-Rage if we can.)

John F. Kennedy's famous statement to the nation (U.S.A.) is often 'borrowed' and modified by others, and I make no apology for doing so again here:

"Ask not what your *Club* can do for you. Ask instead what you can do for your *Club*". – you'll get back what you put in.

Steve Knox, October 2004

Shafts on Ossom's Hill, Wetton, N. Staffs.

About 3 years ago The National Trust asked CCPC (via Len of course) to inspect a suspected collapse of old mine workings on Ossom's hill. The ground had given way as a slurry spreader was being driven across a field. Following on from this incident the NT asked us to inspect and advise on several adits on NT land in the Manifold area but excluding Ecton. Some of these have now been gated by The Coffin Dodgers.

A group of overgrown shafts on Ossom's hill appeared to be interesting and recently a dig was carried out to locate the collar of a possible drawing shaft.. The shaft was in a fenced enclosure but after the removal of a trailer load of barbed wire and other rubbish, the collar of the shaft was not found but a partly open shaft was located about 40 yards away. This shaft had a generous overhang of earth clods that were held together by barbed wire, hundreds of bottles, jars, tins etc. It looked promising.

We rope up and removed what rubbish we could and gardened the rest down the shaft. No ginging had been necessary as the steeply dipping limestone outcropped just below the grass and looked safeish.

I was elected to go down the shaft first. This decision was based on the argument that “we don’t know how deep it is, we don’t know how much rope you want but if 200’ is not enough we’ll send you some more and, anyway it’s your turn Darren!” It’s awful what the youngsters do to us old Coffin Dodgers these days. So it was over the edge for me.

About 50’ down it began to get dark, I had forgotten my lamp. After much muffled mirth and poking of fun the others condescended to lower a lamp and belt to me. Before the lamp was lowered a sweepstake was held on the odds of me dropping the lamp before I could strap it under my harness etc.

At about 80’ down the shaft opens out to about 15’ diameter. It bottoms out at about 120’ onto a pile of farm rubbish, some recent, which almost fills the chamber at the bottom of the shaft. A level 4’ wide follows an east/west trending fault which hades about 20 degrees and which has been worked for lead.

Two stages of working are evident. The level at the bottom follows the fault to an easterly forefield. Westwards along the mined fault there is a climb down through the rubbish and under a rock arch, the purpose of which is unknown, that ends in a vertical wall of clay with a small shaft in the top about 30’ up. An east tending flatwork some 10’ wide and 4’ high can be seen but no amount of swinging on the rope allowed a better view.. To the west another level can be seen with sleepers in situ. Clearly, as the shaft reached the lead vein, the upper levels were worked at shaft bottom, when they were exhausted sinking continued to the present level.

There are 7/8” diam. shot holes in the shaft and these appear to be contemporary with the 1750-1800 workings, possibly Gilbert’s trials.

We look forward to another trip down this shaft to survey it, photograph it and to retrieve Darren’s tackle bag etc. that I dropped down the shaft.

The team on this exploration were, Len Kirkham, Steve Mills, Darren Conde, John Shenton and NT employees Frank and Paul.

Len Kirkham.

<p>Congratulations to Tim Campbell who now holds the Mountain Leader (Summer) certificate. He joins a growing band of members with professional “outdoor” qualifications.</p>
--

Bits n Pieces.

Been in Lathkill Dale lately? Have a look at Bateman House (and shaft) £150.000 (yes 150 thousand!) has been spent on this- this includes travelling expenses to the CCPC members involved!

I have an excellent article on the hazards of radon. If anyone wishes to read it let me know. It is fairly technical but gives some consolation to regular cavers. One of the "worst" venues is Hillocks- erring on the side of caution one would have to spend 20+ hours underground in the system over a one-year period to receive unacceptable doses of radon. Ralph

There has been some concern recently amongst club members and cavers in general re "health and safety issues". Recreational cavers are not subject to these regulations- they only apply in the workplace. Interestingly it looks as though the HSE regulations which apply to rope access workers will not apply to caving/mountaineering instructors when at work. However they must adhere to what is considered "best practice" by their national body (BCA, BMC). You may recall discussions on SRT becoming DRT and snow bridges having to be treated as "fragile surfaces".

All cavers should do their best to conform to what is considered "good practice". This would apply to the use of lifelines on ladder pitches. It would be regarded as foolhardy to supply a novice with a set of SRT kit and rope without giving them some advice and training beforehand. It has been suggested that CCPC set up a "buddy system" to help integrate new members and to initiate them into the skills of caving.

Just for the record- the lid on the climb up to JH has been repaired and a new section of ladder installed. Several people have been involved in this, the main work being done by Len and Andy Banner.

The Lead Legacy- prospects for the future.

A 100+ page document available free from the PDNP, assuming they have copies left! If you can't get one you can BORROW mine. An excellent bedtime reads. Ralph.

And finally: If you have received a copy of this in error (i.e. you asked to be deleted from the mailing list) please accept my apologies and let me know so that the appropriate action can be taken. Ralph
--

