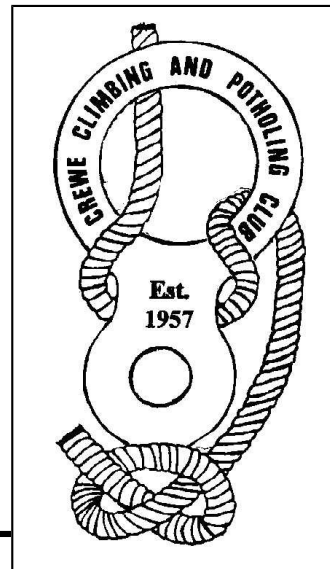


C.C.P.C. Newsletter 95.

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Winter 2008.



Mallorca - espeleologia con cerveza

As many CCPC members already know, Mallorca is a great place for caving. Although it is more associated with Sun, Sangria and San Miguel, the hills of Mallorca are formed by folds in the limestone which have a tendency to leave huge domed chambers between the strata – very heavily decorated with huge speleothems, often with no signs of a watercourse. Look beyond Palma and you see a caver's playground ... although San Miguel still features!

Kinder CC (more a bunch of mates than a caving club – but including several Crewe members) has been visiting the caves on this Balearic Isle more or less every October for the past 5 years or so. This year was no exception – here are a few notes of our adventures. Photographic records can be seen on:-

<http://picasaweb.google.com/alanbrentnall4>

Sunday 12 October. The first day out, and the consensual decision was to have the whole party doing a massed hike into the forests west of Pollensa to seek out the entrance of Cova de Can Sion. This is a very beautiful cave hidden high on the wooded hills above and beyond a large farmhouse (Can Sion). Des Marshall's book says to park near the farm, and we have done that in the past, but this time we were prevented from approaching by a locked gate. It seems that the estate is being split up into plots for luxury villas. Luckily, we found somewhere else on the estate to park – future cavers may have to walk in from a parking space on the main Pollensa to Inca road, some 2 Km distant, but it is a very attractive and interesting cave; well worth the walk.

Well, as often before, we lost our way while trying to find the cave but, as luck would have it, on a hillside above the end of *The Wrong Track*, Lofty and Howard both spotted cave entrances which looked worthy of descent. There were three in all – two small and earthy, but very well decorated, and one much longer and deeper – splitting into two large distinct fissures, each with incredibly white wall curtains. None of the caves showed any sign of human entry (save a broken pot urn seen in the longer one) but all had been used as animal dens – in fact the deeper one had large (cow and goat) bones well inside it, which made us wonder what animal it might have been. Howard named these new caves Mar-113, Mar-114 and Mar-115 ... a naming convention based upon a silly address he had to make up to

satisfy the car rental firm the previous day! Almost as imaginative as P8, when you think about it ...

Eventually, Sion itself was found – a huge single chamber sloping away with the curve of the bedrock, but divided by many enormous stal columns and breakdown blocks. The left side of the cave appears to be a major bat roost, with much evidence of guano and blackened calcite. Sadly some of the prettier and less accessible chambers appear to have been badly vandalised since our last visit.

Monday 13 October. Today, Howard was struck down by the Inca Foxtrots, and several others need a rest after yesterday's hike, so a smaller party, consisting of Alison, Brian, Lofty and yours truly, went onto the spectacular Formantor headland to visit a new (to us) cave – El Forat 502. The approach to this "Avenç" takes a paved donkey track which used to serve the lighthouse, and zigzags steadily through the maquis over a col leading to a hillside where a small entrance beneath a bush atop a limestone arête eventually reveals a pitch of 30m. The pitch is equipped with some spits (but not quite enough) and gives a very airy but technical descent via a vast 15m x 2m x 2m stalagmite which leans casually against the wall in the blackness of a huge chamber at the foot. The floor of this chamber is filled with large boulders and breakdown, and there are the usual vast quantities of Mallorcan stal – some of which are also quite rotten, and some of which have been smoothed into weird shapes. Like other large collapse chambers hereabouts, this chamber curves over a domed floor, the far side of which overhangs (yet more collapse) into a further pretty chamber where we rigged a pitch to explore.

After a photographic session in the lower chamber (where, incidentally, we totally missed the way on, which was down through a huge boulder choke in splendid Winnatts Head fashion) we re-ascended onto the "dome" and explored along the sides of the chamber. Unfortunately, before we could fully explore everything, we had "*a bit of an incident*" involving Brian, a broken hand-hold and a 5m fall.

At the time, things looked pretty grim. On the downside, we were somewhere in the middle of a vast, complicated, boulder-strewn chamber with a not-very-straightforward 30m pitch barring the route between us and the surface, where we would still have a two kilometer walk to the nearest road – plus the handiest rescue team is somewhere in mainland Spain. However, judging by the sheer volume (in every sense of the word) of profanities coming from our casualty, consciousness levels were obviously quite good – and the big advantage of caving with Brian is that he comes complete with copious amounts of analgaesics and anti-inflammatories.

The main source of pain was Brian's ankle, but at this point we were not sure whether he had suffered a fracture, a dislocation or even a combination of the two – and we certainly didn't want to remove the boot at this stage. While Brian was acting as his own anaesthetist, Lofty produced a Sam Splint (buy one now – if you ever need a splint, you won't regret it) and, between us we managed to find enough gaffer tape and wide insulating tape to mummify Brian's ankle.

Looking around the nearby jumble of boulders, I was pleasantly relieved to see our main rope not too far away so, relying heavily upon Brian's good leg, it wasn't too difficult a journey to the foot of the pitch. The plan was for me to ascend the pitch first, stopping just above each rebelay. Brian would then follow me up, juggling as best he could on his good leg, while I gave him a top rope through a traxion – with a pulley and spare jammer to hand, should I

need to resort to a full Z rig. Lofty would come up behind Brian (not tandeming – but he could have done that if necessary to provide extra assistance) so we could use him as a counterbalance on the haul rope, although we never needed to. Alison came up last, de-rigging and bringing out any extra gear.

The plan succeeded, Brian ascending the pitch pretty much under his own steam – I only extended the traxion to a full Z rig to cover the top section which, as often is the case, was quite slimy, and it was with no small amount of relief that we regained the surface. When we finally got to Port de Pollensa, Brian reckoned that he had suffered a dislocation which had re-engaged (an old injury, apparently, which is a story in itself) – but, now the adrenalin was ebbing away, he began to feel all the bruises from everything else he had hit on the way down his long fall. We all agreed that San Miguel was the order of the day!!

Tuesday 14 October. Brian decided, not surprisingly, to have a rest day, Dee joined Howard in succumbing to the Alcudia Quickstep and Lofty and family went for a drive to the lighthouse at the end of the Formentor Peninsular.

Alison and I drove out to Lluc (pronounced “Yuck”!) where we hiked up to the Coll des Prat, just beyond the ruins of some ice houses, so that we could scramble up onto the ridge of Puig Massanella – the second highest mountain on Mallorca (you’re not allowed to climb Puig Major, the highest, because it is infested with military paraphernalia and out-of-bounds to civies). The scramble, although fairly easy, turned out to be a bit more serious than we were expecting, and we were glad we had brought a rope. The scenery around these parts is very spectacular – lots of limestone interspersed with various plants (pretty, but prickly!). We were very fortunate to see a pair of black vultures lazily window-shopping along the limestone pavements as we descended towards our starting point.

Wednesday 15 October. Amazingly, everybody felt fit enough to go out and cave – so we headed off in a loose (like we couldn’t actually see each other) convoy towards the Alcudia Peninsular. Here we drove along a forest trail in the Parque de Victoria and then walked across to the coast just by Cap de Menorca where we could climb down a series of rocky ledges until we were just above the Mediterranean Sea. Here a square cave entrance reveals the Cova de Tancada, a disused show cave (complete with steps and walkways – but no lights) with an official sign warning against the use of candles and torches. We have seen evidence of candles in many other caves in Mallorca, and can understand why they should be banned because of soot and general litter; torches, we decided, must refer to the flaming variety, and nothing which might resemble our Petzl Duos!

You can see why it might have been a show cave. There are masses of formations (curtains, gours, bosses, colonnades) in several linked chambers. We spent quite a long time trying to capture the size and beauty of the place. We assume that visitors to the cave would have arrived in a boat, and we think that the reason that it is no longer a show cave is because the regulations governing the Parque de Victoria won’t allow the kind of development which would be needed. A good thing, I think, as most of the folk we met in there and going there were not cavers like us, but folk happy to walk over to the cave and enjoy its beauty and its relative remoteness as a just reward for their efforts.

Thursday 16 October. One of Des Marshall’s documented caves is the Avenc de la Canal de la Coma Freda, this being a grand shaft below a limestone cliff at the back of a forest belonging to the Hotel Formentor. Des says that permission to descend must be obtained from the Hotel, and also that it is rarely given. In fact, several years ago, not having asked for

permission, a party of KCC was ordered off the land around this cave by an angry security guard – not actually at gun point, you understand, but that was probably because he'd left his machine gun in his landy.

Now, as we had newly purchased "Mallorca ballezas en la oscuridad", an up-to-date caving guide, and as it includes this cave, we decided that maybe things had changed and so, instead of joining the rest of the party in a bar after the Tancada trip, Alison and I walked up the long drive to the imposing hotel ... only to find it shut until next year. There were obviously people working there, but, without an open door, it was impossible for us to ask.

"What the hell," we said. "We'll do it anyway!" And so, we arose to find that more of our brethren had gone down with the Palma Violents ... and Brian was suffering badly from his non-ankle injuries.

Anyway, an early start saw Alison and I parking at the big car park below the hotel (still quite deserted) and, with all the heavy caving gear disguised as light rucksacks, we strolled the 2km along the road to the point of our previous ejection, pretending to be ramblers. Here we stood whistling, and looking skywards until there wasn't a car in sight before "hopping" (that's quite a euphemism, as the fence was enormous; quite a bit bigger than either of our inside leg measurements) over the boundary and scarpering into the woods.

The shaft is at the end of an overgrown forest track – you need to guess which bit of the cliff it lies beneath and then head towards it through a maze of goat tracks in the prickly maquis. But it is there – a wide pitch, 38m deep, with a natural limestone wall to prevent the local goats from falling into it. Unlike most Mallorcan caves which are rigged with spits (so you need to take hangers), this one has what they call parabolts – goujons. Unfortunately there aren't quite enough, but, fortunately, there are still enough of the old spits to beef up the rigging. A spit and a parbolt start the rig from the outside of the pitch wall. The rope then goes over the wall (protection is needed) and upwards to a rebelay from a second parbolt – in fact, you create a Y hang between this second goujon and the first pair. A rebelay lower down, which again needs a protector (although less so if you put a second krab on the parbolt to get the rope further out) clears the rest of the descent to the bottom.

The chamber below is impressive but not very extensive, and, because of the difficulty of access, the formations are the least spoilt I have ever seen on the island. They are fabulous – well worth all the hassle getting to the place. I only hope that, if access is improved, modern thinking will keep this cave as pristine as it is now.

Returning to our vehicle, we realised that we still had almost half of Thursday left, and so, after a quick bite back in Port de Pollensa, we headed over to the Boquer Valley and traversed the Cavall Bernat ridge. Anybody who visits Mallorca and is into scrambling must do this – it's a terrific (but easy) ridge with steep cliffs plunging around 1000' into the bay of Cala Sa Vicente. It is composed of very spiky limestone (a kind of white gabbro!!) and goes over two huge windows in the cliff. A lovely way to finish off the day was to descend from the last summit directly towards Port de Pollensa and past one of our favourite caves, the very pretty Cova de Cal Pesseo.

Friday 17 October. Part way through the week, we found that the bunch of climbers who were staying at the house next door included none other than Paul Gamble, a CCPC member. Together with another of the climbers, Colin, Paul joined us this morning to go and descend a cave over on the far side of the island, near Esporles. The KCC portion of the

group comprised Alison, Howard, Lofty, Brian and me and the hole we were to do was the popular Avenc d'en Corbera at Ses Rotgetes de Canet.

After the drive, Brian decided that his injuries would make the descent painful, so he stayed on the surface and minded the kit. This enabled Paul and Colin to plunder Brian's gear to augment their climbing kit for the one and only pitch. This entrance pitch was quite easy, although a little airy, but I was still quite impressed at how Paul and, even more so, Colin tackled the rope work with their newly invented "SRT rigs".

The pitch gave access to an enormous daylight chamber which lead via boulders to the Sala de Guano which (you guessed it) was home to the local bat population. The formations were massive and pretty but, because of the popularity of the cave, there was evidence of graffiti – which was a shame, but, I suppose, only to be expected.

In the opposite direction a low (tight by Mallorcan standards) crawl (la gatera – from gato, which means cat) leads through to the very impressive Sala des Fang. This is the only large Mallorcan chamber which I have seen with a flat floor, and this is because this place occasionally takes a stream – and, when it does, it must be quite impressive indeed. It is a long meandering chamber which ends with an upwards ramp decorated with masses of large stalagmites and colonnades, where it is possible to do a circular trip through a series of grottos leading to the summit of the ramp. A further passage, some 10m up the wall half way along the Sala des Fang can be entered – but only by maypoling, or combined tactics. A broken rope hangs forlornly in the entrance, and we decided to leave this part for a future trip.

So that's it! – If you haven't sampled Mallorcan caving, I would recommend you do it while it's still cheap. The caving guide was bought for CCPC to use on future trips (as agreed at our April meeting) and I am hoping to provide translations and updates for the trips in the guide which we did. I also have loads of notes and other information which can be provided on CDs.

But don't forget that there are plenty of other things to do too while you are there – stacks of canyoning, hiking, scrambling and sport climbing (on this trip, Alison and I visited crags at Crevetta, Sa Gubia and Valdermossa in between caving trips) ... including the fast evolving sport of deep water soloing – something I feel which we cavers have been doing ... for years!!

Alan Brentnall.

There is a possibility that CCPC will be organising a trip to Majorca during 2009.

Garden Path Inspection.

A small group of our members spent a few hours down this well decorated cave which connects with both Lathkill Head Cave and Lathkill Upper Entrance. To round off the day some of them also did Lathkill Head which had been rigged by the Kelly family who sadly were unable to do Garden Path due to a breakdown in communications.

Simon T sends his best wishes. His condition continues to improve but it will be some time before he will be anything like active again.
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OUR DCRO

At CCPC's November meeting, Ralph discussed clashes between DCRO dates (training, exercises and fund-raising) and Crewe meets – he was hoping that there was a way that CCPC could draw up its calendar so that these coincidences could be minimised. I think that this is wishful thinking. Active cavers are busy chaps, and they do an awful lot more than official club meets – these are usually the tip of a very large iceberg. People have to choose ...

But, in my opinion, if you are having difficulty choosing between going to a DCRO session or going caving, the solution is easy. Go caving! The last thing I want to see is a DCRO made up of people who don't go caving! (Stop sniggering at the back, Johnson!)

A year ago, I had the misfortune to get struck down with some form of food poisoning while assisting with a led group in P8. It was the first (and hopefully the last) time that I encountered a cave rescue as a customer, and it was a very moving experience in every sense of the word. The sheer number of people involved ... in making sure that I was OK, that I got to the surface, that I remained comfortable throughout, that I went to hospital afterwards.

And not just the number of people – it was who these people were. Not some official, crack emergency services team – these were my friends, and many of these friends were Crewe members.

The whole episode brought home to me the fact that, if a caver has a problem while underground, then he either sorts it out himself, or else it will be other cavers who will sort it out for him. There are no other possibilities – no satellite beacon, no helicopter, no “just lower me off, please!”.

However, gone are the days when a cave rescue involved the local bobby going round the Castleton pubs asking any cavers who were drinking there if they would go up to Winnats because “we've a lad stuck”. I think television and the other media have raised expectations beyond those rough and ready times – but not too far, I hope.

DCRO now operate policy where those that wish and have the time to train and meet regularly do so, retaining key rescue skills in a core group. This enables a wider group of experienced cavers (who would, quite rightly, prefer to spend their time caving) to be drawn upon whenever extra numbers or specialist skills and knowledge are required.

Personally, I think that this model is an excellent compromise between the old days when anybody with a stinky was press-ganged into helping and the new *Mountain Rescue* approach where everybody has to be an *expert* in everything. I actually think that MR could learn quite a lot from our methods.

But the point of all this is to get cavers to remember that DCRO isn't an external body – it's not a “THEM”, it's an “US”. We cavers have to do our own rescuing, however it's organised, whatever it's called. But we don't need to turn it into a full-time job. Cavers should recognise that it's our DCRO and put into it whatever they can afford to put into it.

Even if you can only attend one training session a year, or even one tin-rattling session a year, it all adds up and keeps our DCRO available for the day when it is needed the next time.

Alan Brentnall.

Dabbling in Stoney Middleton Dale: 2nd December 2008

Four of us turned up for a mid-week mess about, mainly aimed at recording the positions of existing resin-anchors, and checking the length of rope needed to rig each pitch.

Nickergrove Mine: SK 2155 7596

We started with Nickergrove, and walked up Cucklet Delph to the obscure Didsbury Shaft entrance (or 'exit', as it is more often used in that way).

For those who don't know the site, this used to be a scruffy shaft-top on a steep slope, with a partially collapsed lid. The shaft was about 15m deep to a few short, blind workings, but only 5m below the entrance, a major passage leads away into the rest of the mine. In order to make this a more attractive proposition for instructed groups, a few CCPC Members worked on the entrance here back on 14th September 2006, when we fitted a steel-mesh platform across the shaft at the side-passage level.

Alan B. and I rigged an SRT rope for our exit later, using a couple of convenient trees as belays, then returned to the Adit entrance, nearer the road, where we joined Ralph J. and Ron P.

The Adit Entrance (apparently also known as the 'Chitterling Venture') route leads easily to a junction, with a muddy hole in the floor down to blocked workings. Turning right, the passage passes a side level on the right, where a tight squeeze leads to a short shaft to daylight. The obvious route soon reaches the main internal shaft, crossed by a massive log, which occupies the whole width of the passage floor. There are three resin-anchors before the shaft, and three after, to enable a traverse line to be rigged (again, intended mostly for instructed groups) although it is easy to cross over without. We didn't go on at that level, although there is a large rift chamber further on, and the mined passage continues much further, in places having been shored up, before eventually reaching a working face.

We rigged an SRT rope on the internal shaft, using a pair of resin-anchors for a 'Y-hang' with the third traverse resin-anchor as back-up (- there is also a huge, ancient, metal staple set into the wall nearby).

Alan descended the shaft to the bottom, just to get the rope length (15m.), but did not continue along the lower level into Clay Chamber, where a timbered and oil-drum lined shaft used to lead down into the Nickergrove Streamway, between two sumps. Last time I was down there (at least ten years ago) the bottom drum had slipped, making the exit extremely tight and unpleasant, so by now (unless repaired) I expect it is impassable.

Alan climbed back up the shaft, to a side level about 8m. below the top, which was our route onward to the Didsbury Shaft exit. A resin-anchor just inside the passage allows the bottom of the rope to be secured, but as we intended to recover our rope from above, later, we didn't use it.

With Alan in the passage, the three of us descended and followed. The passage is easy, with occasional small workings above or below, and leads to an easy climb down (two resin-anchors for use with novices – 5m. rope). Just beyond, the passage appears to slope down into a very small hole. It is tempting to let the uninitiated try to force themselves through, but the actual route goes vertically up, through a round 'manhole', into a continuation of the passage above. Very soon afterwards a large rift chamber is entered, cutting the line of the passage at right-angles.

I have always been intrigued by a patch of dead leaves on the floor here, and daylight can be seen in one corner, far above. Previous attempts to find this spot on the surface have failed due to the mass of brambles and other scratchy and stingy vegetation which covers the slope throughout the summer.

Alan volunteered to stay behind in the dry (it was freezing cold on the surface) while the rest of us continued to the Didsbury Shaft. Two resin-anchors mark the exit from the rift chamber; a vertical tube, which is actually much easier than it looks, and only requires a rope for

novices (12m.) The tube drops into a level, one way being partially blocked by a number of rocks which at one time were causing concern halfway down the tube ! In the other direction the level leads easily a short wall of 'deads' up to a continuation to daylight at the steel-mesh platform in the Didsbury Shaft. Getting out was easy, using the rope rigged earlier, although it is not too difficult to free-climb if you are confident on rock (at least, it is now that the shaft below is covered over).

I struggled up the slope above, much further than I had expected, and found a narrow slot beneath tree roots, leading into the top of the rift chamber shaft. My shouts were answered by Alan's whistle from below, confirming that it was the correct place. It would be good to claim this as an unknown shaft, but the galvanised man-hole lid jammed across the opening, and initials and an arrow, carved on the tree above the hole, make it clear that someone has been this way before !!

Ron nobly went back to the cars for another length of rope, while Alan and Ralph joined me at the shaft top, then, with Ron back, we rigged it and Alan squirmed inside and disappeared. Ron followed, then it was my turn, and I took a few photos of the giant spiders and their egg sacs on the way down, and saw a couple of bats, way off to one side. About 5m. from the bottom, a careful swing-traverse to one side allowed me to look round the corner onto a large ledge with what looked like another level going off at the back. There was too much debris at the edge to risk scrabbling in, especially with Ron and Alan directly below, but it might be worth a look in the future. Most likely it will be just another level of the main passage that we had followed from the rift chamber to Didsbury Shaft.

The description here is intended to show how straightforward this trip is, with the opportunity for some basic SRT practice, and a little simple route finding.

Back on the surface, we de-rigged and had lunch back at the cars, then wandered round to Merlin's Mine for a quick look at the resin-anchors there.

Merlin's Mine: SK 2177 7591

Being purists, we rigged and descended the 7m. shaft entrance (3 resin-anchors, for 'Y-hang' and back-up – 10m. rope required), then went as far as the second pitch (3 resin-anchors, for 'Y-hang' and back-up – 15m. rope required) which Ron rigged, then had to descend as he dropped a Karabiner to the bottom !!

Another excellent day in the dark.

Colin 'Steve' Knox. 4th December 2008

Postscript to Nicker Grove Mine: Sunday, 7th December 2008

After a wander round Holme Bank (see below) a group of Members relocated to the lay-by (well, muddy verge really) opposite the entrance to Cucklet Delph in Stoney Middleton. We particularly wanted to check out the ledge 5 metres above the bottom of 'Hillside Shaft' (- we've got to call it something for now, but if anyone knows the proper name I'll be glad to change it !)

Ron and Darren set off to rig 'Hillside', while Ralph and Ann Austin dropped a rope into 'Didsbury Shaft' to use as an exit later. Meanwhile I took Patsy for a through trip, in the Adit, and out via Didsbury. Ralph and Ann followed us through (I'd have been neater with the rigging if I'd know Ralph was behind me).

When we reached the bottom of 'Hillside', Ron and Darren were still playing. With a bolt installed to make access to the ledge possible, Darren was attempting to enter the narrow passage at the back. From his description later, it seems he managed to squeeze through a tiny gap (only a few centimetres wide) beneath a jammed boulder, then squirmed and wriggled forward for metres and metres (at least), before deciding to leave further original exploration to a fully kitted out expedition.

This is claimed as a significant extension to Nickergrave of, er, well, we didn't actually measure it, but it was definitely, well , some passage. We'll just have to go back and take a film crew (Ralph, at least) and some survey gear (a ruler). Back on the surface we decided we might as well complete the set by rigging and descending the 'Upper Shaft Entrance' as well. This is located up and right of the Adit Entrance, through vertical jungle. Our trusty spanner was not needed, as the sturdy frame holding a metal grill, fixed in place by four bolts, could be lifted off in one piece. Underneath a vertical section of fibre-glass tube, has been neatly fitted into the top of the shaft [I'm pretty sure John Beck had a hand in this, back in the Spring of 1996 – neat job whoever it was]. The nearest tree has to be used as a belay (about 5 metres away), with a rope protector at the edge of the tube. Ron went down, while I went back in via the adit, to recover the rope off the Main Internal shaft. I could hear muffled sounds from the linking passage, so crawled along as far as the squeeze. This is a very, very tight slot in the floor, linking the passage I was in with the one Ron had landed in at the foot of the pitch. Eventually Ron arrived at the other side of the slot, directly below me, but there was no chance of either of us passing through. Ron managed to force his helmet through, but that was sideways, after he had taken it off !

We decided enough was enough and packed up for the day. All good fun.

Colin 'Steve' Knox. 8th December 2008

Meets 2009 (including DCRO training events.)

4 Jan Carlsark 18 Jan SRT course 24 Jan Lancaster-Easegill	8 Feb Washfold 8 Feb DCRO training 21 Feb Simpsons
3 March Sell Gill 21 March Knotlow-Hillocks 22 March DCRO training	1 April DCRO training 5 April Ireby Fell 5 April Depart for China (2-3 weeks) 18 April GG-Stream Passage 25 April DCRO training and AGM
3 May Poachers Cave 8-10 May BCRC conference. Gt Hucklow 16 May DCRO street collection Matlock 23 May Whitescar	7 June DCRO street collection Castleton 14 June Meregill. 14 June DCRO Emergency Services Buxton 27 June Nanthead
4 July DCRO training & BBQ 12 July Birks Fell 19 July DCRO Gt Huckow Fell Race 25 July Rumbling Hole	9 Aug Little Neath 12 Aug DCRO training 22 Aug Marble Steps
5 Sept DCRO street collection Buxton 6 Sept GG-Flood Entrance 8 Sept DCRO training 19 Sept Eldon Hole 19 Sept DCRO training, team mtg., supper 26 Sept DCRO street collection Bakewell	14 Oct DCRO training 25 Oct Peak Cavern
8 Nov West Mine 11 Nov DCRO training 21 Nov DCRO Whitehall 29 Nov JH	2 Dec DCRO training 12 Dec Cwmorthin 19 Dec DCRO pub collection

Remember- there are many mid-week and weekend trips taking place on an ad-hoc basis. Keep an eye on the Yahoo site for information.

Anyone interested in a trekking/mountaineering trip to China in April contact Ralph. There are 2 options, a 2 week or a 3 week stint.

Reminder. There is a one-day SRT training course at Parson's House near Hathersage. The cost will be a fiver, there are two options "Introductory" where we will look at basic skills (including problem solving) and "advanced" which will concentrate on self- rescue from the pitch head and mid rope. All those who attended the previous course found it well worthwhile. The course will be subsidised by the BCA and from the "Rob Farmer Memorial Fund". Our guest instructor will be Daryl Godfrey director of Acclimatise.

Training Grants.

Members are reminded that all those attending a cave-related training course not leading to a professional qualification are eligible for grant aid. Rob Farmer left us a considerable amount of money in his will to be used for cave-related training, if Rob was still around he would love to see this money being put to good use.

Membership and insurance for 2009.

Izzy is busy trying to sort out the insurance ASAP so PLEASE make sure you get in touch NOW. Once you have paid Izzy you are insured but it is rather comforting to receive your official notification (and proof) from the BCA. With tens of thousands of cards to produce it obviously takes Glen Jones of BCA some time to sort out the printing of the cards (all in his spare time and unpaid- hence the low cost of insurance) but the sooner we send the money in the sooner we get the cards. Those paying late WILL be insured (once they have paid) but it can take much longer to receive notification from the BCA. In the meantime your CCPC membership card will suffice- as long as Izzy records you as having paid there is no problem.

Have a good Xmas – hope to see you in the New Year, preferably in the dark (underground!)

Put those dates in your diary NOW. You will receive regular updates via Yahoo as usual. If you haven't signed up to Yahoo contact Jenny Drake ASAP. jennydrake@lineone.net . There are no strings attached – it's just a simple and efficient way of keeping members informed. If, at a later date, you wish to remove yourself from the group it's as simple as joining it.