

# CCPC



## Newsletter No. 24.

April 1990

### **MASKHILL, NETTLE AND OXLOW CLOSED**

No, unfortunately this is not an April Fool's joke, it's true!

Mr Rowland, the landowner, has finally had enough of people abusing his good nature and has closed all access to the caves and mines on his land. The circumstances, likely effects on cavers and possible solutions were discussed at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Derbyshire Caving Association held at the Railway Hotel, Buxton on Saturday 10th March 1990.

Mr P Mellors (DCA Conservation Access Officer) explained that he had first heard of the problem two weeks before the meeting and had gone to see Mr Rowland in the morning. Mr Rowland had told him that he was sick of cavers (both local and visitors) climbing over walls, breaking gateposts, leaving gates open, refusing to pay etc. The straw that broke the camels back was on Sat. 24th Feb when a group from Worcester told him to "fuck off" when he asked them for the fee for Nettle.

Bob Dearman (who chaired the meeting) and Ben had been to see Mr Rowland the week before and had been told that DCA and others had not done repair work as had been promised to his property. Mr Mellors said that DCA had no record of such promises. The meeting continued in this vein for most of the afternoon. Anyone who wants to know the details should buy me a pint.

The outcome of all this nastiness is that all three caverns are now closed. Anyone with any sense will keep well clear of Mr Rowland. He says that if anyone attempts to pirate the caves, he will fill them in (does he mean the caves or the cavers?) He has a large pile of railway sleepers and concrete in his farmyard and is quite capable of sealing all three entrances permanently. He doesn't want to even discuss the matter until June, and even then he might decide that he likes the arrangement. If he does decide to regrant access, fees will be made "comparable with those charged by Mr Watson" (ie £1. He says that he spends around £1000 a year repairing damage done by cavers and recoups around £200 from those good enough to pay the fee!) He also wants repair work doing by DCA including a new style (he doesn't like the Crewe one!)

All dealings with Mr Watson should be through Ben (who is the new DCA Access Conservation Officer following a vote). It was agreed that Mr Watson (Giant's Hole) should not be antagonised in case he decides to follow suit. DCA recommend that no one should consider a through trip as a rescue using Oxlow as the way out (as happened a couple of weeks ago) would be disastrous for caver/farmer relationship. Bob (who replaces Mr Sefton as DCA chairman, following a vote) will review the possibility of organising working parties to do repair work to Mr Rowland's property.

PS This is not the first time that Mr Rowlands has banned cavers from his land; he did it in 1965 and it was 6 months before he relinquished!

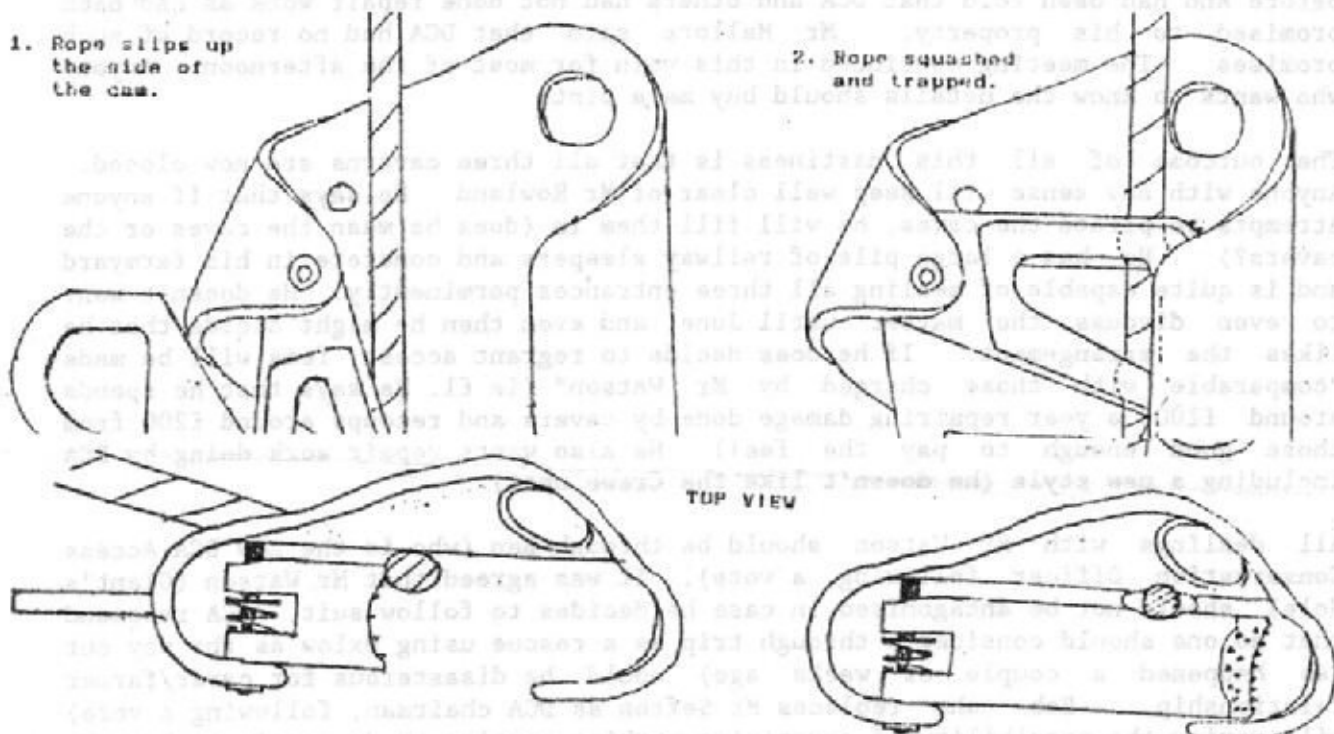
# NCA EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE

## EQUIPMENT INFORMATION REPORT

### JAMMING OF ROPE IN CHEST-MOUNTED CROLL

There has been a case of a caver getting a 9mm. rope jammed between the side of the cam and the main body of a Croll ascender. This occurred when transferring from lower to upper rope on a re-belay. The loop on the upper rope being short, the caver clipped into the base of the loop but on putting his weight onto the Croll the rope went up the side of the cam instead of the proper position. This left him in a difficult position.

1. The design of the Croll has for the past year been modified so that current models have a tighter bend on the groove which accommodates the rope, making this occurrence even less likely.
2. The incident happened on a 9mm. rope. It would have been impossible with a thicker rope. All Petzl cammed ascenders carry a recommendation that they be used with a rope of minimum diameter 10mm. (Because of danger of sheath damage in a shock load fall. This applies to any make of ascender.) Cavers using jammers with thinner ropes should be aware that they must use special care.
3. The incident was a direct result of transferring to a too-short rope tied at its base.
4. It may be worth observing that a more common problem is getting one's foot-loop stuck in the side of the cam of a chest-mounted jammer. This is particularly easy to do with a tape foot-loop and may provide an argument for using a rope loop.



PEAK CAVERN 1959 : A PERSONAL VIEW  
PART II. THE RECOVERY ATTEMPT

It was Easter weekend and we had decided to spend the holiday at Rowter Farm. Needless to say this involved a fair walk from Chapel with extremely heavy packs - no lightweight tents or gear in those days (remember men were men; we hadn't even allowed women into the club!) No one had transport other than bicycles.

Good Friday was spent getting there and Saturday caving. On Sunday morning, two of us walked down into Castleton and went directly to Peak Cavern. A fair number of other cavers were present including two Frenchmen (I later learned that one of these was Jo Berger).

It appeared that I was the only person present who had reached Neil Moss on the previous occasion and since I had my gear with me I joined the group descending the cave and my companion returned to Rowter Farm (on foot!) to fetch the others.

The trip to Moss Chamber went without incident but seemed to take ages. It was assumed that Jo Berger intended to descend the tube and help with the body recovery but his understanding of everyone's French seemed to deteriorate once he saw the actual hole and it was decided that a language problem added to the other existing problems was more than enough.

Yours truly seemed to be at the front of the queue again but this time Les Salmon (who was in charge of the operation) instructed me to take no risks whatsoever so I didn't even bother to remove my bulky outer garment and "goon suit".

I climbed about half way down the tube with a small hand winch, the idea being to try to pull up the electron ladder on which Moss was standing. I clipped one end to a rung at about face level and the other to a rung about 18" below my feet. The small winch pulled up about 3' of ladder before it began to slip - the idea wasn't going to work!

A junior hacksaw was passed down to me - hopefully if the ladder was cut Moss would drop through the constriction - a good idea but once again destined for failure.

Unfortunately I had cut the ladder at face level - how the hell was I to climb back out? A small point that had not previously occurred to anyone!! An attempt was made to pull me up - remember they had tried to pull Moss up two weeks previously and I was only  $\frac{1}{2}$  half way down (and  $\frac{1}{2}$  his weight). This too failed. Only one thing for it - brute force and ignorance.

Back in the chamber, Jo Berger asked if he could take some photographs and he was given permission on the understanding that they be handed to the police for use at the inquest. (His understanding of pigeon French seemed to have improved by this point).

A number of shots were taken including one of Les Salmon in the tube and one of an attempt to pull up the body. As we were just out of bodies I was assigned to go back into the tube while a group of cavers 'demonstrated' a recovery attempt.

By the time we had finished the chamber looked decidedly empty and much of the debris from the rescue had been removed. We collected what we could then set off for the entrance which was reached at about 11 pm. Jo Berger handed his camera to the police.



The cave entrance and village, previously a hive of activity was like a ghost town. Feeling deserted and dejected I changed and set off on the lonely walk back up Winnats Pass to the camp site. I found the pass eerie in the cloudy moonlight and was glad of a short lift in a Land Rover as I neared the top.

I approached the camp site to find it not only silent but totally deserted. I found out later that the others were being treated as lords by the villagers. They turned up with stories of hot baths, hotter meals and cold beers - I was not impressed! To add insult to injury I learned later that Jo Barger had removed the film from the camera handed to the police - the prints appeared in "Paris Match" a few days later.

Ralph



# CHRISTMAS COMPETITION ANSWERS

Dear Marje

I have spent the last couple of decades or so perfecting the technique of getting other cavers to carry all the gear (including mine) when all of a sudden a young upstart who hasn't been caving more than five minutes uses the old "self detaching karabiner" trick to abandon his gear in order to save prusiking up the 210. Not satisfied with leaving his gear behind, he shouts to his companions to recover it then promptly chucks it into 30' of water!!

As though this wasn't enough he persuades 't'owd man' to HELP him recover it then times his arrival to avoid actually going underground! Surely anyone with any moral fibre whatsoever should spend some time perfecting these techniques which should be used with great subtlety and not treated in a light-hearted manner which can only bring disrepute on exponents of this art form.

Can I suggest that our Training Officer arranges instruction for new members in order to avoid repetition of this incident!

Dissatisfied

(Name and address withheld)

# USEFUL TIPS FOR CAVERS No 2 (Phil)

Marje says

This lad has obviously learned from your example and you should be very proud of this enterprising technique. You do not say in your letter whether he was late getting to the mine because he was lost, but I suspect that if he's trying to emulate you, he probably was!

Anyone who believes the myth that the water level in the 'Giant's Windpipe' doesn't fluctuate should have been down on Thursday 26th January - it was completely sumped!

# BCRA CONFERENCE

& &  
 & USEFUL TIPS FOR CAVERPS No 3 &  
 & (Phil) &  
 & If you attempt Nettle Pot AGAIN &  
 & a week later and forget your &  
 & helmet AGAIN, don't get drunk in &  
 & the Three Stags Heads instead &  
 & and p\*ss against my car door &  
 & AGAIN!!! &  
 & &

This year's National Caving Conference  
 will be at UMIST on 23/24th September.

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A CONFERENCE ON RADON IN BRITISH CAVES  
 is being organised by the BCRA/NCA Cave  
 Radon Working Party for Saturday, 19th  
 May. It will be held at Manchester  
 Polytechnic and registration is likely  
 to cost about £4. There will be talks

detailing the situation in Peak District caves  
 following measurements and monitoring during this  
 winter and a representative from the National  
 Radiological Protection Board will discuss radon's  
 relationship to health. There will also be time  
 set aside for discussion. Further particulars  
 from: John Gunn, Limestone Research Group,  
 Manchester Polytechnic, Chester St, Manchester M1  
 5GD.


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The St ALBANS CAVING CLUB wish to join us at the  
 Berger. It would be a good idea if we did a bit  
 of caving with them beforehand to get used to each  
 other. Anyone interested should contact:  
 Mark Goodwin, 57 Lincoln Way, Harlington,  
 Nr Dunstable, BEDS (05255) 2815.

Their meets list for the next few months is:

7/8 April	Flood Entrance
28/29 April	Eldon/Nettle (???????)
19/20 May	Rift/Large
16/17 June	Meregill/Rowten
21/22 July	Bull Pot/Easegill

I'm sorry that several articles which were  
 submitted have not appeared in this issue, I  
 accidentally corrupted the disc with them on. I'll  
 try to salvage them for another issue. Mark.

	 TOYS	
	OVERSUITS For sale.	
	Available most sizes	
	with a variety of	
	fastenings. Green	
	only. Around £12	
	depending on design.	
	Lionel	
	SEX!!! There, that got	
	your attention didn't	
	it! Why not be	
	amongst the few and	
	write an article for	
	the Newsletter? Tony	
	has had three	
	published so it can't	
	be that difficult!	
	Mark	
	SWEAT SHIRTS With Club	
	Logo. All sizes £7.00	
	Ralph.	
	WANTED Charlady (sorry	
	girls) charperson for	
	light cleaning duties,	
	Oxlow 3rd pitch. Tony	
	'T' SHIRTS as above.	
	White £3.50, Coloured	
	£3.80 Ralph.	
	DURACELL BATTERIES	
	Suitable for 'Petzel'	
	Headsets, £1.90 Ralph.	
	WANTED - Social Worker	
	for Kev. Demelza	

IF LEAD is a &  
 RADON DAUGHTER &  
 ????? &  
 IS TONY A &  
 RADON GRANDAD &

& &  
 & USEFUL TIPS FOR CAVERS No 4 &  
 & (Mark) &  
 & If whilst in Maskhill Mine, John &  
 & Gillett shouts "Bring that &  
 & tackle sack down", he means the &  
 & one with the rope in it and not &  
 & the empty one! &  
 & &

## MEETS LIST 1990

Lionel has arranged the following meets for this year

January

Sun 28th Lancaster/Easegill

## February

Sun 11th Penyghent Pot

Sun 25th Out Sleets Beck

March

Sat 10th Swinsto's

Sun 25th Juniper Gulf

April

Sun 15th Christmas Pot/Grange Rigg

Sat 28th Little Neath River Cave

## May

Sat 12th Providence/Dow Pot

Sun 20th Simpsons Pot

## June

Sun 10th Ogof Ffynnon Ddu\*

Sun 24th Little Hull Pot\*

July

Sun 15th Otter Hole\*

Sun 29th Lost John's

## August

Sat 4th      Gaping Ghyll

Sun 19th Meregill

September

Sun 9th Notts Pot

Sun 23rd Large Pot

## October

Sun 14th King Pot

Sun 28th Black Shiver

## November

Sat 10th Hunt/Shrapnel Pot\*

Sat 24th Marble Sinks

## December

Sun 2nd      Rift Pot

\* Subject to confirmation by Access Secretary.

[illegible]

## A CHANGE OF LUCK!

I was involved in a series of unfortunate mishaps whilst caving over the Christmas period (eg bumping my new car, having a friend break her leg, meeting Kev etc). The last of these (I hope!) was when my tackle sack uncoupled itself from my harness whilst descending the 210' shaft in Knotlow. It whistled down about 100', hit the water with an enormous "BOOM", floated for a minute, then gently spiraled its way to the bottom of the 30' flooded level.

"Oh Sh\*t" thought I. A couple of weeks earlier I had attended a self rescue course at 'Whitehall' and had been so frightened by all the stories of what was bound to go wrong on caving trips that I had gone out and bought loads of gear to cover all possibilities. One possibility I had overlooked was 'what do you do if you drop all this fancy new gear down a flooded shaft?' Must write and ask them about this one!

The rest of the trip went pretty well. Robert and Lenka followed Kev and Sara down the Waterfall Pitch (Roberts first deviation, Lenkas first SRT trip!). Gill and me derided the Climbing Shaft and all else went OK. We did get the car stuck in the mud, but we didn't crash it/run anybody over/get struck by lightning etc.

When Ralph rang, I knew that my luck had definitely changed! He had had a word with Ron Becket and Ron volunteered to dive the shaft. Magic, all my Christmas presents would be found again!

Ron had already retrieved my bag by the time that I arrived at Knotlow on the Friday afternoon. All I had to do was help lifeline a small school party out of the climbing shaft!

Many thanks to Ron and Paul Shelton for rescuing over £100 worth of gear and to Ralph for borrowing the diving bottles etc. I hope everyone involved shares my new run of good luck! Mark



## CURRENT LOCAL ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

### HOLME BANK CHERT MINE

Following the death of the recent owner, Mr Hilderbrand, access arrangements for this mine have changed. Contact Smith Runners Ltd, ie the firm with premises at the mouth of the mine (tel 0629 812636) and ask for Mr Ken Bond or Mr John Wilmot for the key. If you return from the trip after the factory has closed down, slip the key into the letter box of the green and black building by the old weighbridge. Please park considerately. For weekend access, contact Mr Lawrence Moseley, New Lumbford Cottage, Bakewell. Talks are under way to make this arrangement more flexible so please don't upset anybody!

### ASHFORD MARBLE MINE

This is under the jurisdiction of the Peak Park Board and negotiations have been going on between them and the National Caving Association. So far, the PPB have avoided the issue of a licence to member organisations, preferring to sell the site to a third party.

### YEW TREE CAVE

A site meeting and discussion was held recently between the Nature Conservancy Council and Notts Wildlife Trust (who lease the area and run it as a Nature Reserve). The outcome is that the cave is to be gated, access arrangements to be announced later.

### HAZELBADGE CAVE

If you are interested, contact Keith Bentham and he will arrange a trip. Please don't bother the farmer at Hazlebadge Hall!

### MASKHILL, NETTLE and OXLOW

Ha ha! If you even look over the gate the farmer/DCA will shoot you!

### OWLETT HOLE (Matlock Bath)

Access free via Mining Museum.

## BOLT FAILURES

There have been several reports of bolts failing in Yorkshire caves in recent months, resulting in one serious injury. A caver received injuries due to shock loading though his backup belay held. The failures seem to fall into two categories. 1) threads being stripped in the anchor and 2) the rock itself failing. In one case, a chunk of rock pulled from a wall with the anchor still in it. Some natural belays which have been used for years have also disappeared recently.

Fault 1) seems to be a result of people overtightening hangers, although I was warned by Dave Elliot (the man himself!) that even a well maintained spit only has a lifetime of 15 years and some of them must be coming up for a birthday soon.

As for fault 2) it seems that some failures are due to people placing anchors too close together, thus weakening the rock. CPAE recommends that bolts should never be less than 6" apart (who bolted Nettle?!). Placing a new bolt next to a knackered old bolt is probably more dangerous than using the old one.

The NCA Equipment Committee are currently investigating whether a better alternative to spits can be found. In the meantime, make sure that everything has a bomb-proof backup.

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### PETZLE ECRIN HELMETS

Ben Lyon has reported to the NCA Equipment Committee that there has been problems of cradle rivets coming away on a small number of Petzle Ecrin Helmets. This is confined to one batch which reached the shops around mid-1989 and was due to a rivet fault which only became apparent after use. Anyone who has one of these helmets which is showing symptoms of rivet failure should return them to Lyon Equipment, Rise Hill Mill, Dent, Sedbergh, Cumbria, LA10 5QL.

## THE OTHER CAVES OF DERBYSHIRE

On the South bank of Bullhay Dale is a large mine adit (Approx. grid ref. 103702). It is visible from the road (A5270 which turns East off the A515, Buxton/Ashbourne road). It is best reached by parking near the farm and following the public footpath until the mine is in sight and the farmer is not.

The entrance is very obvious, you could drive a double-decker bus through it and access is easiest in the left hand corner. This appears to have been the haulage level where calcite was removed from the workings. This short level passes under several ore shoots in the roof. From the end of this level, a rickety and probably original ladder leads into the main part of the mine. This is a huge cavern open at one end and with a roof supported by pillars. Take great care here (especially if you don't have a lamp) to avoid the seven ore shoots which form deep holes in the floor.

Following the line of the shoots leads back to the entrance via a 25ft open air pitch. The opposite direction leads through a vast gallery for about 400 ft and ends in a pool. The roof is a good 50 ft above in places and is supported by two large pillars. Three shafts can be seen entering the roof and like a coffin level which surfaces above the mine entrance, appears to belong to a much older lead mine which has been intersected. The mine appears to be very modern and still has electric light bulbs and cables in place.

Again this is not really worth a special visit but is interesting enough if you are in the area anyway. A trip could be accompanied by a very pleasant afternoon stroll down Deep Dale. The place is probably of more interest to mining historians than cavers and would probably be graded as 0 if it was in the Caves of Derbyshire.

Mark L

## CAPTION COMPETITION NO 4

### RESULTS

What an insensitive load of bleeders! Poor Iain lay in agony and all you can do is send in funny captions. Anyway, these were the best.

Jane "Hey, they're my knickers!"

Kev "No they're not, they're my underpants!"

Kev "I don't know what was in that bottle but it sure tasted funny."

Any further contribution gratefully received.

