

C.C.P.C.

Newsletter. February 1997.



Well here it is, the first newsletter of the new year (the clubs 49th!) Sorry it's going to be a bit boring but we are attempting to tighten up the insurance angle (please read the attached letters carefully) bring the members list up to date (anyone not on this is not insured!) and to clarify the constitution, all boring stuff I'm afraid. Hopefully the next issue will be in a more light hearted vein but this is largely dependant on contributors. (i.e. YOU!!!)

Possibly the most important single issue is that if you have not paid your subs by the end of the April meeting you will not be insured under the clubs policy!!! OK, you may never need it but ...!! Also, if you are taking non members caving it is in both your interests that they become temporary members and pay the appropriate fee. Forms should be available soon.

And now for the most important bit ... Caving. Darren has arranged the following for your enjoyment, a truly magnificent selection!

15 FEB J.H.

23 FEB Swildons Hole

9 MARCH Long Kin East/ Rift Pot (exchange)

MARCH 29-30 Short Drop, Gavel. Sunset Hole.

APRIL Ogof Draenon.

APRIL 27 Tatham Wife

MAY 3 Oxlow/ Maskhill (exchange)

MAY 18 Marble Steps

MAY 24/27 OFD etc.

JUNE 8 Swinsto/ Simpsons (exchange)

JUNE 21 Little Hull

JUNE 28 or 29 Aggy

JULY Pippikin/ Link (Paul and Ralph are banned from this trip!!)

JULY 19/20 Whitescar ... Sell Gill

19 JULY GOUFRE BERGER (2 weeks aprox.)

The list goes on and on ... but just to make certain you read the next issue ... you'll have to wait!!

Saturday, 4th. January 1997:

'Freefall' or 'Un-advanced S.R.T. Techniques'

The Players: Colin Knox, John Preston and Paul Nixon (extending his knowledge and experience of S.R.T. in the care of two skilful exponents of the art).

Due to the snow, cold weather, laziness, etc. we decided to give Yorkshire a miss and have a simple trip down Knotlow Mine instead. We could have a look at where the iron ladder used to be, and check the pollution level, and after all, what could go wrong?

ACT 1: It was bitterly cold on the surface so I rigged the rope for the first pitch with a Y-hang from the two eye bolts, backed up to the main lid-locking bolt, and quickly disappeared down the shaft, taking the rope to rig the second pitch, while John checked Paul's S.R.T. rig and then supervised his descent once the rope was free. (Sounds O.K. so far !)

I took the end of the rope through to the top of the second pitch, rigging it as a traverse line via a bolt on the right hand wall to the first bolt of the Y-hang pair, then set up the second rope with a neat Y-hang from the bolts and dropped the end down the pitch. Since the deviation bolt on this pitch parted company with the wall some time ago, you now need a long sling or a length of rope so you can use one of the two original eye bolts (put in for ladders) on the opposite side of the Chamber. As John had our length of rope I had to wait for him to arrive, so Paul and I sat chatting about safety (joke !!).

ACT 2: John fixed the deviation rope to the eye-bolt and let the karrabiner end hang down into the rift, while I fed the S.R.T. rope round my 'Stop' and through the extra-friction karrabiner clipped through my main harness maillon. Everything O.K., so I unclipped my cow's-tail and descended slowly into the top of the rift to the end of the deviation. The next part is what I did and what I THINK happened.

The deviation was slightly too long so instead of just clipping it and continuing to descend, I stopped to adjust it. I settled myself comfortably in the rift, feet on one wall and back on the other and shortened the deviation. Mistake 1: I DIDN'T lock-off my descender first. All the time I was chatting away to Paul about how to pass the deviation safely (joke !!). Happy with the deviation, I reached down with my right hand and grasped the S.R.T. rope firmly, then squeezed the 'Stop' handle closed with my left hand; AND HIT THE BOTTOM ! My feet had still been against the wall so I fell horizontally about twenty feet and landed with my back across the angular boulders on the floor of the chamber. The next seconds (minutes ?) are missing, but then I realised that John was shouting from above. He couldn't get on the rope to descend because, oddly enough, when I hit the bottom I let go of the 'Stop' which then locked onto the rope, leaving it tight between the bolts and my inert mass. John rigged a second rope (the one we had for the third pitch), but by then I had managed to free my 'Stop' so John used the original rope to come down to assist me. The obvious question is WHY did I fall ? As everything was still correctly attached when I was lying at the bottom, I can only assume that when I had sorted out the deviation I reached down and firmly grasped a rope which was not the S.R.T. rope at all !! Mistake 2: I DIDN'T KEEP MY ATTENTION ON WHAT I WAS DOING OR CHECK THAT I HAD THE CORRECT ROPE ! It sounds incredibly stupid, but that seems to be

the only possible reason for what happened. Of course, if I had locked-off correctly then I would have had to un-lock, so I would have automatically been holding the correct rope. The possible 'other' ropes I might have grasped are: (i) Safety link, hand-jammer to harness, (ii) Long cow's-tail, (iii) Foot loop, between loop and hand-jammer. (i) and (ii) are both connected to my main harness maillon on my right side, and my foot loop and hand-jammer were clipped together with a karabiner then clipped out of the way on my right side. In each case pulling on these ropes would probably have felt O.K., I'll check this out later when I can move.

ACT 3: Back to the story. Apparently when John reached me I was making horrible groaning noises as I lay, half on my side, among the boulders. Well, wouldn't you ? IT HURT ! After a general prod around John decided I wasn't going to die immediately, and by this time I was a bit more coherent, and had decided that after a rest I'd be O.K., so Paul came down to join us (considerably more slowly than his noble instructor !). While I checked out which bits of me were working (obviously not my brain), John and Paul went down to the top of the third pitch and back, so Paul could see what he was going to miss ! As I was basically still functioning, although very numb in some areas (brain again ?), I decided to start out without waiting for the others and very slowly and painfully climbed the second pitch, using a sort of Quasimodo, one legged method, interspersed with gasps and groans. It was much harder than I expected, especially passing the deviation, as most bits on my right side had stopped working, but I eventually reached the bolts and clipped in to the traverse line. John and Paul below expressed their opinion of my efforts in all sorts of colourful language, mostly based on John's thoughts about having to prussik past me if I had got stuck part way up. Once they were up, Paul set off up the entrance pitch, trailing the third pitch rope, while John de-rigged the second pitch. Meanwhile I was crawling through to the bottom of the entrance shaft, which just about finished me off.

ACT 4: The plan was simple. We joined a second rope to the end of the one Paul had trailed as he climbed out, then John climbed out trailing the joined rope behind him, thus leaving a loop hanging down the shaft to me. All the other gear was suspended, just clear of the floor on the S.R.T. rope. Paul's end of the rope was anchored to an eye-bolt then John rigged a hand-jammer between an eye-bolt and the bottom of the Y-hang at the top of the shaft for his end of the hauling rope to run up through.

(Remember, when using two ropes joined together for this hauling rig, the knot must be on the side of the loop between the casualty and the hauling team, and they will need to detach and re-attach the safety jammer at the top, to allow the knot to pass.)

When everything at the top was ready, I attached my trusty Petzl swing-cheek pulley to the bottom of the loop and to my main harness-maillon, then with a pull from above I was able to stand up and rig my chest and foot jammers to the S.R.T. rope. I had intended to help the haulers by climbing, but I just couldn't do it, so they had to just haul me up, while my jammers slid up the S.R.T. rope. After a very smooth and steady ascent I stopped just below the lid while John reached down and pulled up the S.R.T. rope and gear from below me to remove the

weight. Because of the constriction of the lid the only way out was a direct lift until I could be lowered into the snow (some people have no consideration !).

ACT 5: It is a long way from Knotlow entrance back to the car (parked in the usual place), believe me ! Eventually we got back, got changed (that's when you find out who your friends are !), and went home, by which time I'd decided that maybe the National Health Service did deserve my custom after all. Several hours later, having been prodded and poked, and X-rayed in a split paper nightie from all kinds of strange angles, I declined their kind offer of accommodation and went home. The final verdict is a fractured 4th 'something' vertebra, lots of bruises in the pelvic area, and 'sprung' ribs on the right side ! (About eight weeks to get back to normal, if I avoid lifting or other strenuous activity.) I asked them if they wanted to do a brain-scan, but they said there was no point as I clearly hadn't got one.

CONCLUSION: It would be nice to be able to claim that this 'accident' happened because of gear-failure, or falling rock, etc., but the real reason was CARELESSNESS on my part. Fortunately I had the right people with me, and they reacted calmly and efficiently and got me out safely. John's thorough check of spine, pelvis etc. before he would allow me to move, would not have been done more professionally had a rescue team been involved. It would be interesting to see how easily a stretcher comes out through the entrance-shaft lid, it seemed quite small to me. Interestingly I've carried that pulley around for years and never used it, but according to John and Paul the hauling was EASY, and John seems sure that even on his own he could have pulled me up the shaft using the rig and pulley as we did. Anyway I was glad to be out and grateful for their efforts.

Colin S. Knox 5th January 1997.

For Sale.

Sweat shirts £11

Rugby shirts £9

Chemical suits £10

OK so you missed the opportunity to buy those" never to be repeated" fleece trousers or the Goretex gloves so don't be disappointed, don't delay .. act today ... ring Ralph. NOW

There is a prize for the first person to spot John Martin in his next (oscar winning?) T.V. appearance.

Holme Bank Chert Mine, Bakewell.

While your'e lying in bed reading this, Nigel is sweating blood in his garage- cum- bang -store fabricating the biggest "gate job" on record!!! No doubt some of you will be press-ganged into helping to fit this which is being done for DCA in order to maintain access to this interesting mine, shortly to be turned into a show "cave".

Time for a Spring Clean ?

Does anyone else get as frustrated as I do when you open 'Caves of The Peak District' to look up some less well-known hole ? You are often faced with a list of references at the end of the entry, including some with surveys, but getting hold of the original material can be very difficult, and may involve letters or personal visits to Matlock Record Office or Public Library. I've started to get my modest collection of publications and surveys sorted out, with the intention of making the information available to anyone in the Club. The first thing you discover is how little you have, so if anyone has odd copies of anything to do with caving, that they don't want to throw away, you might consider donating them to this collection. At the very least I'd like to get hold of copies of anything our Club has produced over the years, especially newsletters, recording the life of the Club.

My collection so far:

Bulletins of The Peak District Mines Historical Society:

Volume 5: Numbers 3, 4, 5, 6.

Volume 6: Numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6.

Special Publication No.2.: 'Lead and Lead Mining In Derbyshire'.

Caves of Northern Derbyshire, by Dave Elliot (1975/76):

Part 1: Eldon Hill.

Part 2: Giant's-Oxlow System.

Part 3: Perryfoot/Coalpithole.

Part 4: Rushup Edge Swallets.

Part 5: Treak Cliff Hill.

C.C.P.C. Newsletters:

1986: January.

1987:

1988: April/May. October.

1989: March. May. August. November. December.

1990: April. September. November. December.

1991: March. August. September. Christmas.

1992:

1993: March. May. October. November. December.

1994: February. April. June. August. October. December.

1995: March. June. August. November.

1996: January. March. April. November. December.

C.C.P.C. Gouffre Berger Expedition report 1983.

The Gouffre Berger, 1971 by A.C.Waltham. (reprint).

Giant's Hole, Castleton, Derbyshire, by L.B.Salmon. (reprint).

Eldon Pothole Club Journal: Volume 7, Number 3. (1970).

Has anyone got anything they want to donate or loan ?

Steve Knox

Public Liability insurance - providing cover for guests.

The Problem.

Only individual *members* are covered by a club's public liability insurance, not guests or anyone else who just happens to turn up. In these litigious days this has given rise to concern in some areas. One possible solution might be for BCRA to attempt to have their policy altered but a little thought shows that even if this were possible it is not practical because how does anyone know who is being covered, and when?

A club may or may not wish to have its guests covered by P.L. insurance, that is for them to decide. Club members are covered against costs arising from their proven negligence where the action causes injury or damage to another person even if that other is also a club member or a guest. The problem only arises if a *guest* is negligent and he has no money (or insurance) against which an injured person can claim - he might claim against the club. By insuring a guest you are protecting your club and its members as well as the guest.

Another scenario may be a guest without suitable insurance wishing to join you on a visit to a cave where the access agreement specifies suitable cover being held. A visiting overseas caver perhaps or a potential new club member. How do you provide it? (BCRA insurance cannot be issued to an individual, only to clubs and their members.)

The Answer.

Because all your individual members are insured it is only necessary to introduce some form of temporary membership of your club. Then all those guests that you wish to be covered by P.L. insurance can be granted this temporary membership and they will be insured. The cost, conditions and privileges of this membership are for the club to decide (benefits will probably be severely limited or even nil) except that for practical reasons it must be valid for no longer than fifteen days. Ordinary club members are declared when the insurance is taken out but obviously it will not be possible to declare the number of temporary members at this time and they will have to be paid for at the *end* of the year. (There is an alternative. It is for each person to become an Associate Member of BCRA; this takes a couple of weeks but is then valid for twelve months. It costs £3.)

The Practicalities.

1. If your club does not already have some form of temporary membership, establish it in accordance with your constitution (or other form of 'governing document'). Remember, that to qualify for insurance cover under this scheme temporary membership must not be valid for more than fifteen days; amend the details of any existing temporary membership to comply with this requirement if necessary.
2. Supply BCRA with a certified (by a club officer) copy of your club constitution showing that temporary membership exists, or a certified copy of the minute of the meeting that established such a class of membership.
3. Maintain accurate records of all your temporary members showing name, address and period of membership. A copy of these records will have to be sent to BCRA at the end of each insurance year and at any other time on request from BCRA.
4. When applying each year for insurance cover a club must notify BCRA that they have temporary members and that they undertake to pay the necessary fee at the end of the year.
5. The insurance fee for each temporary member will be the same as that levied for every other member.

Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club Constitution
(Amended 6th. January 1997)

1. The Club:

- (a) The Club shall be called Crewe Climbing and Potholing Club.
- (b) The Club is established to provide the opportunity for underground exploration and its associated sciences, climbing and associated activities. In the furtherance of these objectives the Club may arrange some recreational and money-raising activities for the benefit of the Club.
- (c) Throughout this document 'the Club' shall mean the Full and Associate members, as defined in Section 3 (below).

2. The Officers:

- (a) The officers of the Club shall be :- Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, one or two Equipment Officers, Training Officer, Meets Secretary, Social Secretary and Newsletter Editor. The officers of the Club shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting, and, subject to termination of office by resignation or otherwise, shall remain in office until their successors are appointed at the Annual General Meeting following their appointment. The retiring officers shall be eligible for re-election.
- (b) All Full or Associate members shall be liable upon any contract entered into, and for any financial liabilities incurred, by an officer of the Club acting upon the express authorisation of the Club members, as approved at a general meeting of the Club, and for these purposes the officers of the Club shall be the agents of the Club and all the members.

3. The Members: There will be three classes of membership:

- (a) Full members - being persons over the age of eighteen years, who have been duly proposed, seconded and accepted by a quorum of members at a general Club meeting, and who have paid the appropriate entrance fee and subsequent annual subscriptions. Full members will have full voting rights, and will be entitled to stand for election as an officer of the Club, and to propose changes to the Club Constitution for consideration at the A.G.M., or at any other meeting properly convened to deal with any special matter. Full members will have the right to borrow, and use, without charge, Club equipment in the care of the Club equipment officer/s. Full members must form at least 50% of the membership of the Club.

The Club reserves the right to grant Full membership for life, without payment of annual subscriptions, to individual members in recognition of outstanding service to the Club.

- (b) Associate members - being persons in the following categories, who have been duly proposed, seconded and accepted by a quorum of members at a general Club meeting, and who have paid the appropriate entrance fee and subsequent annual subscriptions:
 - (i) Persons under the age of eighteen years who have passed their sixteenth birthday. Such persons must be sponsored by a full member, and must provide parental consent in writing before they are granted associate membership. In due course such persons would be eligible for full membership in the normal way.
 - (ii) Persons who live sufficiently distant from the location used for Club meetings (30 miles+) as to make it impractical for them to be able to attend meetings and to take a full part in the social life of the Club.
 - (iii) Persons who, by virtue of age, infirmity or inclination are no longer active cavers, but who wish to retain their link with the Club.

Associate members will have no voting rights at Club meetings, and will not be entitled to stand for election as an officer of the Club, except by invitation. Furthermore, although associate members will be entitled to free use of Club equipment when in the company of full members and on Club trips, they will not otherwise be entitled to borrow equipment from Club equipment officers.

- (c) Temporary members - being persons involved in Club activities, who are neither full members nor associate members. Such membership will be granted to persons attending Club caving trips as the guest of a full or associate member, or to persons approaching the Club as individuals or as members of a group. Such temporary members will be required to complete an appropriate application / registration form and to pay the appropriate fee in order to cover insurance costs, and any other charge levied by the Club, before going underground. Temporary members will have no other rights as Club members, except as stated here, and no temporary membership shall exceed a period of fifteen consecutive days.

4. Membership Subscription:

- (a) An entrance fee, as agreed at the A.G.M., shall be payable by every Full or Associate member on their acceptance. Payment of the entrance fee will entitle the new member to a Club badge, a membership card, a copy of the Club constitution and a current membership list. Associate members who subsequently become full members will not be required to pay a second entrance fee. The entrance fee will be subject to annual review.
- (b) Full members will pay an annual subscription which will be determined at the A.G.M., and which will be subject to annual review (increases will be linked to the rate of inflation).
- (c) Associate members will pay an annual subscription which will be half of the full membership subscription.
- (d) Temporary members will pay a subscription determined at the A.G.M., which will be sufficient to satisfy any additional insurance premiums chargeable against the Club, plus any charge the Club may wish to add for depreciation of equipment or other costs
- (e) No candidate who has been elected as a Full or Associate member shall be entitled to the privileges of membership until payment of the entrance fee and first annual subscription has been made. If fees are not paid within one month after notice of election has been given, the election will be declared void.
- (f) Annual subscriptions, as determined at the A.G.M., shall become payable by all Full and Associate members at the January meeting of the Club, each and every year that membership continues, and payment must be made by the end of the April meeting. Payment of the entrance fee and annual subscription by any person accepted as a new member after 1st October in any year shall cover membership to the end of the following year without further payment of subscription.

5. The Club shall have the power to request any member to resign, or to terminate any membership, but for the purpose of this rule the agreement of no less than two thirds of the Club shall be necessary. Upon termination of membership under this rule any entrance fee or annual subscription paid for the current year may be returned to the member, wholly or in part, at the discretion of the Club.

6. The Club cannot be held liable for any personal injury, or for damage to the property of any member, whatever the cause of the injury or damages.

7. The Club shall have the power to make regulations governing the conduct and affairs of the Club providing the same are not inconsistent with the constitution.

8. The Club shall have the power to alter the constitution, but no such alteration shall take effect until the same has been confirmed at the A.G.M. convened for the purpose. Any proposed changes to the constitution must be notified to an officer of the Club, in writing, by the end of the November meeting. All Full and Associate members will be notified of any such proposals before the December meeting to allow discussion, and the issue will be decided at the A.G.M. in January.

9. The Annual General Meeting:

An A.G.M. of the Club will be held in each year, not later than the end of January. Full and Associate members will be notified of the A.G.M. not less than twenty-one days before the meeting, which will conduct the following business :-

- (a) To receive and, if approved, adopt a statement of the Club's accounts for the previous year.
- (b) To receive other officers' reports.
- (c) To appoint the officers of the Club for the new year.
- (d) To consider and, if approved, sanction any duly made alterations to the constitution.
- (e) To deal with any special matter which a member may wish to bring before the Club.

10. A Special General Meeting:

An S.G.M. may be convened at any time for the following purposes :-

- (a) To consider and, if approved, sanction any duly made alterations to the constitution.
- (b) To deal with any special matter, including the expulsion of a member.
- (c) To receive the resignation of an officer, or to remove any member from office, and to fill any vacancy or vacancies caused thereby.

Notice of the meeting shall be sent to all Full and Associate members not less than fourteen days before the meeting and shall specify the matter to be dealt with.

11. At general meetings one third of the Club shall form a quorum.

12. The Club shall be empowered to appoint suitable Club members to carry out instruction on its behalf.

This constitution is as amended at the A.G.M. held 6th. January 1997.

Colin S. Knox 7.1.1997.