



CLUB NEWS

C.C.P.C. Newsletter for March 1996

Guess who got stuck with the job?
Just when you think that its safe to go
out again ZAPP!!!!!!!

As I recall the events went something
like this. "Hello Keith, I am not feel-
ing to good at the moment as I have
done my back in".

REPLY..... "Ha-Ha-Ha you stupid
sod, fancy doing that"

"Yes it is really painful (sob-sob) I
have just returned from the physio-
therapists, she says I will probably
never be able to climb Mont Blanc
again, would you be so kind as to give
my apologies at the meeting tonight?

Oh by the way if anyone asks I do not
wish to stand for any elected office."

REPLY..... "Oh I am sorry to here
that, maybe it's because you are such
a fat git that your spine cannot take
the weight anymore."

"Thanks Keith, goodnight."

(THE FOLLOWING EVENING)

Ring.....Ring..... "Hi there it's
Ralph, noticed that you were not at the
meeting last night but Keith said it
would be OK to put you down for
the....."

THANKS A LOT KEITH !!!!!

Anyway enough frivolity, first of all I
am sure that I speak for everyone in
thanking all the people who have been
involved in the running of the club
over the last year. Some people are
still doing the same job, while others
have passed on the torch after years of
sterling service.

Thank you all for a job well done.

I am sure you will forgive me for sin-

gling out one person from so many,
but as I am now donning the mantle of
editor I feel that a special vote of
thanks should go to 'Caddy' for an
excellent job of producing the 'News-
letters' in the past. He will be a hard
act to follow, so I do not intend to try.
Instead I shall attempt to bring some-
thing of my own style to the 'Newslet-
ter' which I hope you will approve of.
Most of us have serious jobs in the
real world and my idea of a hobby is
something you enjoy doing.

I have a tendency to see humour in
most things and no doubt that will be
reflected here and there in the newslet-
ters, however serious matters will not
be trivialized. I hope that they will be
enjoyable to read and a point of con-
tact for those members who cannot
make it to the meetings. The last thing
I want is to be the main contributor to
it's contents, or to scour loads of
magazines in desperation in order to
fill several pages of things that I may
think are interesting, but I am more
than willing to be the recipient of all
or any items you wish to send me and
I will gladly EDIT your contributions
and try to produce interesting 'News-
letters'.

Please send me anything that you may
consider of interest to the rest of the
club, it may be an account of a good
trip, something amusing or serious
that has happened to you, good advice
or information, interesting facts, good
places to buy things from, cheap or
excellent accommodation for holidays
or trips. items wanted or for sale. in-
teresting photographs (not those rude
pictures that I sometimes inadvertently
come across on the internet), sketches
of routes or rigging, the list is end-
less. To make things easy you may ei-

ther (1) post to my address (2) speak
to me on the telephone (3) telephone
me at work if its more convenient,
remember to ask for me, say you are
from the caving club (otherwise I may
think you are trying to sell me some-
thing). (4) put an item onto a floppy
disk using any of the Microsoft
'WORD' programmes. (5) Fax me
your article (Write 'caving club' on
top of page). or (6) Just give me the
item at the next meeting. If you send
photographs or sketches try to re-
member that I have to reproduce them
in black and white so a good contrast
is important. Don't worry if your arti-
cle, photo, sketch etc. is a bit tatty it is
often possible to doctor it a little,
likewise you do not have to be literary
genius to have items included, just
give me the bones of the article and
we can kick it around.

Now having said all that..... PLEASE
do not feel offended if you submit an
item and it is not used, don't think
"sod him, I sent him something and he
didn't use it" There may be many rea-
sons, some items are best retained until
you have enough to make an article
from them, while others may not be
suitable at that particular time, other
items that have a good shelf life can be
held back to fill in when things are
quiet.

So please post items to me,
T.G. Smith, 6, Milton Crescent,
Talke, S-O-T. Staffs. ST7 1PF
Phone me at home on 01782-785893
At work on 01538-373116
Fax me on 01538-373141
That's it then, so here goes.

First of all here is a brief resum'ee
of the minutes taken at the A.G.M.
8-30 p.m. on the 8th, January 1996

(1) Chairman's Report: by Brian, a busy year with plenty of trips, but some trips were not supported by club members.

(2) Secretary's Report: by Mark, nothing much to report, but a question was raised as to whether the club insurance is up to date. This needs to be checked.

(3) Treasurer's Report: by John Shenton, a full report was made detailing income, expenditure, balance etc. The club finances are healthy. (£1086 spent / £1402 received)

A FULL REPORT IS INCLUDED ELSEWHERE IN THIS NEWSLETTER

(4) Training Officer: Sharon would like someone else to take this on. Some suggestions were made, but this was not resolved.

(5) Meets Secretary: Darren is willing to carry on, but again raised the issue of members not supporting club meets.

(6) Newsletter Editor: Tracy can no longer continue due to pressure of work. Terry was suggested as a replacement, although he was not present so this is not confirmed. (See editorial, Ed.)

(7) Tackle Officers: Ralph reported that his store had 'miles' of rope, and a few ladders plus an assortment of hangers etc.. Mark's store is also well stocked. Ralph mentioned that the Club has been offered 450' of new (10mm) Beale rope for £100, but as this rope is not well liked this is not being taken up.

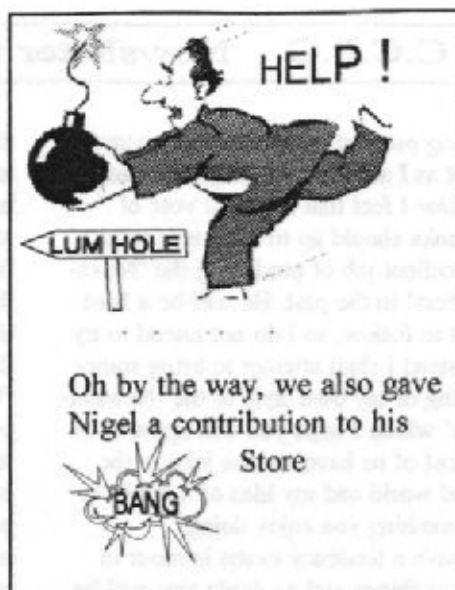
(8) The above officers were accepted for the coming year, subject to the points made in 4 and 6.

(9) Membership Fees: Following the resolution made at the A.G.M. held in January 1995, the club fees were raised by 'the rate of inflation' as agreed. This was taken to be an increase of 50p. on each category of membership. Discussion concerning reducing the number of categories of membership to two (Full and Concessionary) was put off until the next AGM. (1997), as the

required prior notice had not been given.

(10) There being no other business, the meeting was closed.

Article contributed by Colin Knox



Oh by the way, we also gave Nigel a contribution to his Store



If you pay your subs before the end of March 1996 You will save as follows. Joint Membership £31.00 (£26) Save £5.00, Full Membership £19.50 (£15.50) Save, £4.00 Associate Membership (no vote) £15.50 (£13.50) Save £2.00, Junior Membership £13.50 (£11.50) Save £2.00, Pupil Membership £9.50 (£8.50) Save £1.00, Student Membership £13.50 (£11.50) Save £2.00, Unemployed Members £9.50 (£8.50) Save £1.00 It is proposed that at the next AGM all categories other than Joint and Full memberships will be rationalised at one new rate.

THE ACCOUNTS OF CREWE CLIMBING AND POTHOLING CLUB 1995

<u>EXPENDITURE =</u>		£	p
Newsletter		14	34
Guide Expenses		240	12
Equipment		465	50
Expenses		10	76
Subscriptions		91	00
Bolt Fund		254	50
Book		10	00
		1086	22
<u>INCOME =</u>		£	p
Membership		577	00
Guide		535	95
Gear Hire		67	00
Sales (Gear)		185	00
Badges/Stickers		5	00
Clothing		30	00
Journal		3	00
		1402	95

Income for 1995 = £1402-95 Expenditure for 1995 = £1086-22
Leaving = £316-73 on the year. Cash in hand plus money in the bank left a Balance of £561-55 We also have money on deposit.

CAVING TRIPS

13th. Jan. 1996

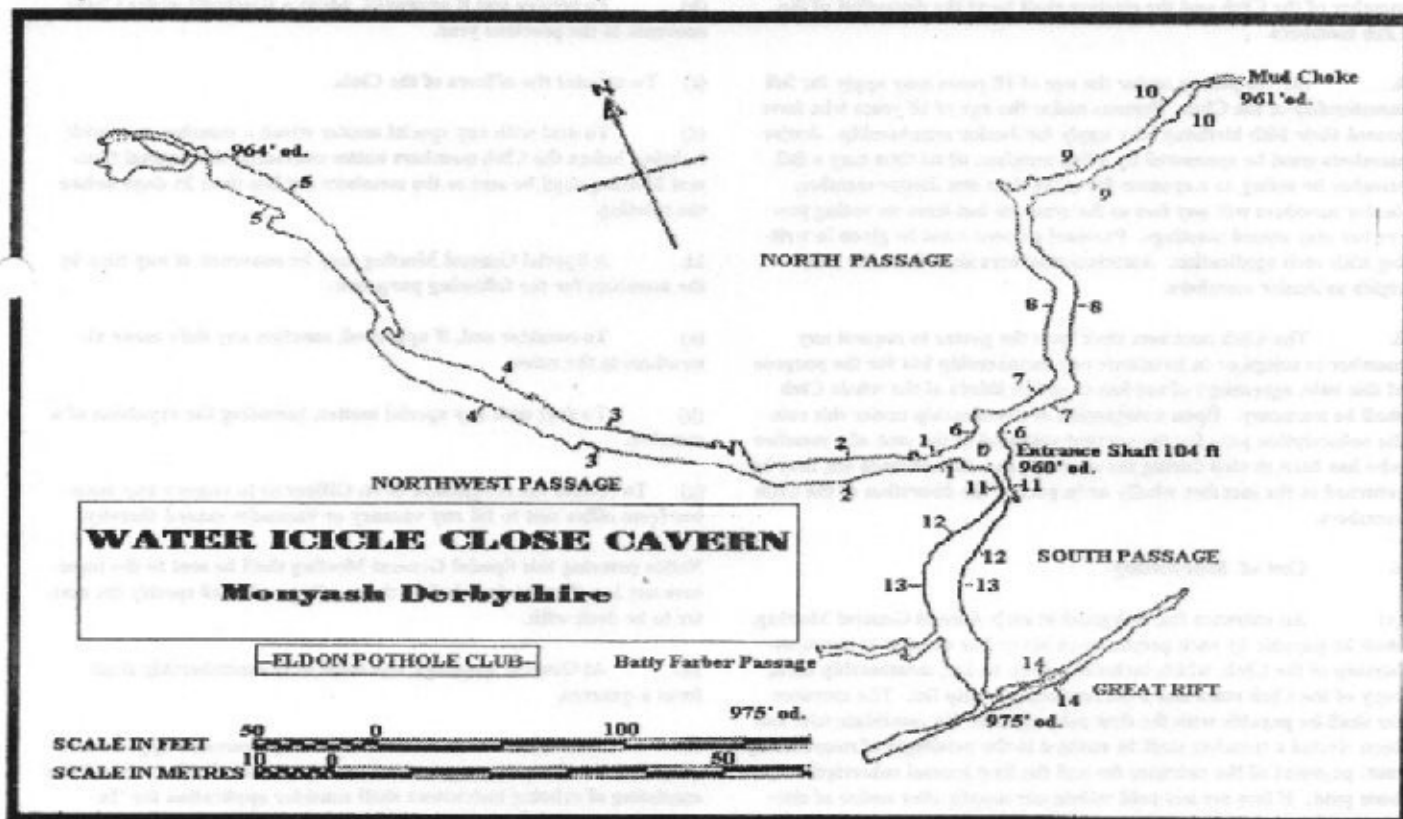
Water Icicle Close Cavern, Derby.

NGR 1610 6460

This was intended to get the year off on the right foot by actually getting out and doing something. I collected John Preston and Tim Campbell and we set off, intending to look at a choked rift in North-west Passage of Water Icicle. We had the usual drama of following the wrong farm track out of Monyash, and then, having found the right track, we had to abandon the car a little short of the track-end due to iced grass! The top of the shaft has been stabilised since our last visit (years ago), and we appreciate the hard work put in. There is a single, fixed scaffold pole across the shaft, but unfortunately no back-up belay point in the concrete, so you need a second rope to back-up to the nearest tree, about 20m. away (or take an extra long rope to rig the shaft). It is a good, clean, dry shaft, with enough room to be comfortable, without being intimidating, despite its depth of 32m.. There are many spits placed in the shaft walls, but the only ones I thought necessary were two placed about 6m. from the shaft bottom,

where the shaft breaks into the roof of the natural passage. I used them for a 'Y' hang, where a couple of small ledges make the change-over comfortable. We were happily taking photographs when Ralph and Sharon arrived. During the following three hours we explored the three main passages, and the many small shafts and tubes that have been excavated over the years (YES, someone had already dug out 'my' choked rift, and NO, it didn't lead through into a vast extension!) The most dramatic area is the aven at the end of North-west passage, where a fixed rope leads up a shattered wall to the base of a suspended boulder choke. There was a second rope/cable hanging down, that we had been happily pulling on, which we discovered was tied to the key-stone holding the choke in place! We left the area very carefully indeed. Climbing up in the Great Rift we got high enough to be surrounded by dangling tree roots, with our back-up belay somewhere overhead. More crawling down digs, no more photos (dead camera), and we were back at the shaft and were able to exit without difficulty.

Steve Knox



9/10 For effort Steve, good composition and not too many spelling mistakes, but map making needs a little more attention to detail. (I have always wanted to do that, Ed.)

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO INCLUDE A COPY OF OUR CLUB RULES SO THAT EVERY MEMBER HAS A COPY. IF YOU THINK THAT THERE ARE RULES THAT SHOULD BE CHANGED OR MODIFIED, PLEASE RAISE YOUR VIEWS AT ONE OF THE MEETINGS PRIOR TO THE NEXT AGM.

CREWE CLIMBING AND POTHOLING CLUB RULES

1. (a) The Club shall be called the 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 furthering of these objectives the club may arrange some recreational and money raising activities for the benefit of the club.

2 (a) The officers of the club shall be:- Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer one or two Equipment Officers and Training Officer. 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 members shall be liable upon any contract entered into and for any financial liabilities incurred by an Officer of the Club upon the express authorisation of the Club members and for these purposes the Officers of the Club shall be agents of the Club and of all the members.

3. Every candidate for membership shall be proposed by a member of the Club and the election shall be at the discretion of the Club members.

4. (a) No person under the age of 18 years may apply for full membership of the Club. Persons under the age of 18 years who have passed their 16th birthday may apply for Junior membership. Junior members must be sponsored by a full member, at no time may a full member be acting as a sponsor for more than one Junior member. Junior members will pay fees as for students but have no voting powers but may attend meetings. Parental consent must be given in writing with each application. Associate members shall have the same rights as Junior members.

5. The Club members shall have the power to request any member to resign or to terminate any membership but for the purpose of this rule, agreement of not less than two thirds of the whole Club shall be necessary. Upon termination of membership under this rule the subscription paid for the current year and in the case of a member who has been elected during the current year, the entrance fee, may be returned to the member wholly or in part at the discretion of the Club members.

6. Cost of Membership

(a) An entrance fee, as agreed at each Annual General Meeting, shall be payable by each person upon his or her election to the membership of the Club, which includes a Club badge, membership card, copy of the Club rules and a current membership list. The entrance fee shall be payable with the first subscription. No candidate who has been elected a member shall be entitled to the privileges of membership until payment of the entrance fee and the first annual subscription has been paid. If fees are not paid within one month after notice of election has been given the election shall be void.

(b) An annual subscription, as fixed at each Annual General Meeting shall be payable by all members upon the 1st January each and every year. Payment of the entrance fee and annual subscription by any person accepted as a member after 1st October in any year

shall cover his membership to the 31st December in the following year, without further payment of subscriptions. New members joining before 1st October in any year shall pay 'pro rata' for the remaining months of the year.

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

8. The members shall have the power to alter the rules, but no such alteration shall take effect until the same has been confirmed at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting convened for the purpose.

9. The members shall have power to make regulations governing the conduct and affairs of the Club and its members providing the same are not inconsistent with these rules.

10. A General Meeting of the Club shall be held in each year not later than the end of January to transmit the following business:-

(a) To consider and, if approved, sanction any duly made alteration to the rules.

(b) To receive and if approved, adopt a statement of the Clubs accounts of the previous year.

(c) To appoint the officers of the Club.

(d) To deal with any special matter which a member may wish to bring before the Club members notice convening the Annual General Meeting shall be sent to the members not less than 21 days before the meeting.

11. A Special General Meeting may be convened at any time by the members for the following purposes:-

(a) To consider and, if approved, sanction any duly made alterations to the rules.

(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 covering this Special General Meeting shall be sent to the members not less than 14 days before the meeting and shall specify the matter to be dealt with.

12. At General Meetings, one third of the membership shall form a quorum.

13. Instruction:- The Club shall be empowered to appoint suitable Club members to carry out instruction on its behalf. A committee consisting of existing instructors shall consider application for 'Instructor and Assistant Instructor'.

These rules are as amended by the Annual General Meeting, January 1983.

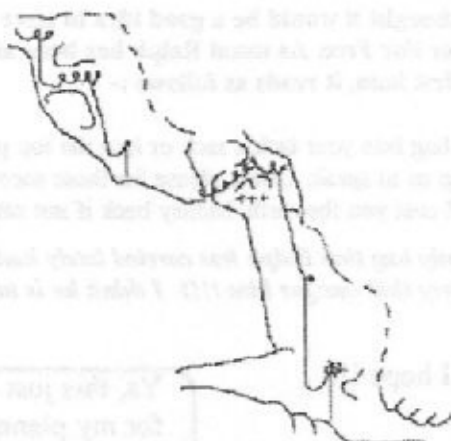


WARNING!!!!!!!! DODGEY ANCHORS

The following correspondence was recieved regarding
LITTLE HULL POT From Les Sykes of the N.C.A.

According to our records your club has booked a permit for the above cave for 1996.

There have been a number of failures involving the 'M8 self drilling anchor' in Little Hull Pot. The failures have occurred in the lower traverse on the second pitch, this traverse should be deemed unsafe and the high level traverse as indicated (opposite) can be an alternative, it must be stressed that these anchors have not been tested. You are reminded that the 'M8 self drilling anchor' should be thoroughly checked



before use and subsequent loading, it should also be backed up with further anchor points. Unlike the Eco anchor there is no liability insurance with the M8 anchor, it is the responsibility of each caver to check the anchor and placement before loading. The C.N.C.C. has programmed Little Hull Pot into the anchor replacement programme for early 1996, you are asked NOT to place additional or replacement 'M8' anchors.

Good Caving
Les Sykes.

C.C.P.C. IN THE SPOTLIGHT



The following is an extract from the DCA Annual Report For 1995 presented to the AGM on the 3rd February 1996.

The Association's Balance at the end of the financial year was approximately £420 down on the previous year, in part accounted for by the excess expenditure on the 'Bolt Fund', whose deficit of over £150 is being met by the general account for the time being. At one point in the year this deficit rose as high as £400 but further income from the 'Peak Rigging Guide' has helped to reduce it. In fact this is a tribute to the energy and hard work of those who have been installing hangers this year - a tremendous effort which deserves our thanks. Those involved see the end of the task in sight now with all the major sites nearly completed and little more remaining to be done other than a few minor sites and maintenance. (Unless someone spoils it by finding another 'Big One'.) Income will continue to come from sales of the 'Peak Rigging Guides' and the Association owes a particular debt of gratitude to the Crewe C.P.C. for their initiative in producing this and making the profit available to the DCA 'Bolt Fund'. Jenny Potts 7/1/1996

SALE

The following is a list of things for sale. I thought it would be a good idea to have a section in the newsletter covering Items for Sale, Items Wanted, Swap's or For Free. As usual Ralph has been able to start me off, but I must confess to being slightly suspicious of the first item, it reads as follows :-

'Drink containers, Simply stick the flexible bag into your tackle sack or into the top pocket of your rucksack, leave the poly pipe accessible so that drinks are on tap so to speak. Offers please for these second hand items (one owner, little used) Similar items from outdoor shops will cost you the earth. Money back if not satisfied'.

*Now call me a sceptical b*****d but the only bag that Ralph has carried lately had N.H.S. stamped on it, and even he could not persuade somebody else to carry that one for him !!!! I think he is taking the p**s (Ed.)*

The next items look genuine enough, I hope !!!!

Ex German Army, 'Gortex' bib and brace over trousers (As used at Stalingrad) Only £38 per pair, any size available.

New fleece lined mitts £11 per pair.

New sweat shirts, £10 each.

Chemical suits £10

New rugby shirts, £10 each.

Gloves £1-50

Fleece trousers £5 per pair.

'F' cells £6.50

See Ralph For Details

Ya, this just what I want for my planned invasion of Biddulph Moor.



IT'S PARTY TIME

Eldon Stomp

16TH OF MARCH 8-00 TILL LATE

AT BULL IN' THORN

WITH "ZZ BIRMINGHAM"

TICKETS AT £3-00 FROM BOB DEARMAN

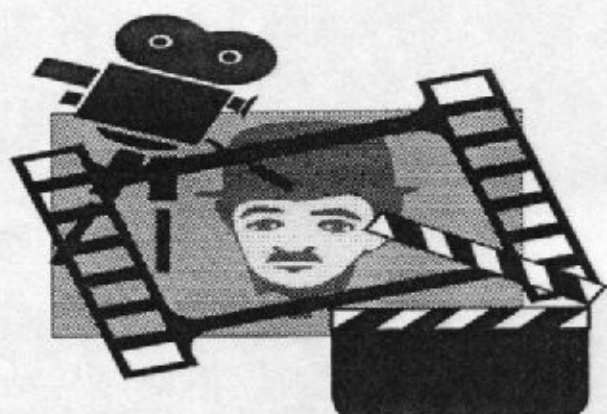
ROLL UP FOR THE MYSTERY TOUR

RESCUE PRACTICE ON THE 10th OF MARCH

MEET UP AT THE CAR PARK FOR P.8. (JACKPOT) AT 10 A.M.

Ralph informs me that the venue of this rescue is a surprise, he would do wouldn't he?. Possibly to allay the fears of all us silly sods who spent over four hours attempting to negotiate the sarcophagus of 'King Tutankhamun' all the way out from the first pitch in P.8. a couple of years back, (actually it was that red plastic stretcher from D.C.R.O. but I still think my first description is more accurate). The last time 'Dee' was the victim, and we nearly succeeded in drowning her on the way out. Ralph assures me that the rescue is not in P.8. this

time and when asked he indicated that Keith and I would fit into it OK. Now incredible as it may seem, 'Dee' has volunteered again, this is her third time at being strapped into a stretcher and roughly handled by men in weird clothing. I am beginning to worry about her. I can still recall her plaintive cries as we struggled to pass the stretcher through a particularly awkward section in the freezing cold stream bed in Poole Cavern " Keith can you get your tackle out of my face? " a reference I hope to his 'rack'.



LIGHTS ! CAMERA ! ACTION !

Well not exactly, I was rather put out to discover that they said "running up" instead. What am I on about? why the B.B.C.s reconstruction of the rescue at 'Mandale Mine' for the 'Police 999' series to be shown sometime in March/April. Now I do not wish to denigrate the efforts of everyone who turned up on the day, my own contribution to the rescue was to arrive in time to eat a portion of fish pie with beef gravy as served up by those connoisseurs of good food, the 'Fire Brigade Catering Corps'. Thankfully the rescue went well and after ripping the top off the capped 'engine shaft' the lads who had entered through the 'sough' made contact and walked them out. I can only speak for myself but as I recall it was a far cry from the 'RECONSTRUCTION' that went something like this :-

Scene 1. Act 1.

Knee deep in snow, in the middle of December, Knot-low Mine, opening the lid on the 210'.

" E'r you do know that it was the middle of the hottest

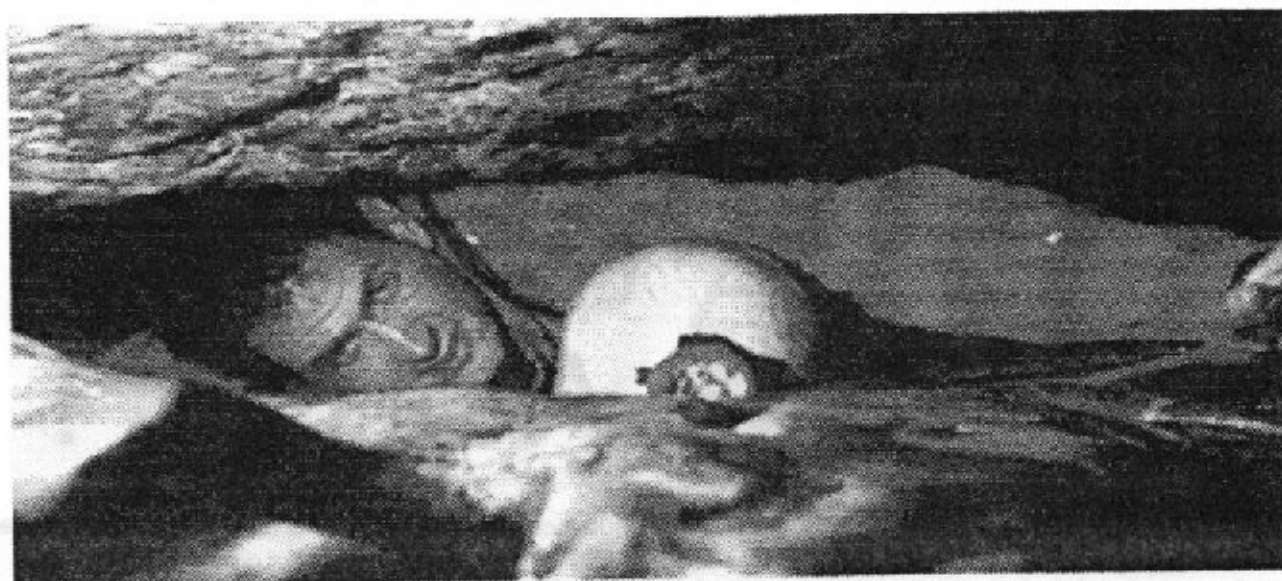
summer on record and it was a solid concrete cap that had to be *hacked to pieces*, and not a *steel lid that you can open* ". " Yes yes, but my mother is hardly likely to know that is she ? " came the reply from our 'director'.

At this point my belief in the integrity of the Beeb was shattered, can this be true, would it not follow the truth to the 'enth' degree ? *no it bloody well wouldn't*, we had firemen lifting lids in fields, while erstwhile potholer's strolled onto the scene as if by accident. The final straw for me was when our 'director' asked Kev if he wouldn't *normally* have a 7lb sledge hammer with him ! and duly dispatched him down the shaft with one on his back. What next ? no, don't tell me, we all fail miserably in our attempt to rescue the trapped youths, but by a miracle, Snow White and the seven dwarfs who have been entombed in the mine, have dug themselves free and come across the youths and lead them to safety, anyway that's how I think it will end but I could be mistaken, at least the fish pie wasn't bad but the gravy..ug.

MEETS LIST UNTIL END OF JULY 1996

March 16th	Gaping Gill
April 6th	Nettle Pot
April 21st	Little Hull Pot
May 4th	Rowten Pot
May 19th	Alum Pot
June 16th	Ogof Hespalyln
June 22nd	Hurnel Moss
July 6th	Swildens Hole
July 13th	Birks Fell
July 28th	Outsleets Beck

And talking of Alum Pot.....



Here is one I did earlier, the 'Cheese Press' Long Churn.

The above photograph was lifted off the 'Internet' and reproduced by kind permission of 'Lancaster University Speleological Society'. From time to time I have a look at the Caving News groups in the UK and in America to see if there is anything interesting going on. The last good one from the USA. was about a couple of guys who fell 600ft down a disused mine shaft in 'one of the Western states.' The local rescue teams would not attempt to retrieve the body's due to the fact that the timber shoring was falling off the sides all the way down, also large boulders were falling down the shaft. They in turn called in the 'National Mines Rescue' and they deemed it to be in imminent danger of collapse. Amazingly, after the rescue teams and the police had left the area, an uncle and another relative of the dead cavers borrowed some equipment (from an unknown source) and without any previous experienced abseiled the 600ft to the bottom and successfully retrieved the body !!!!

" I BET THEY DRINK CARLING BLACK LABEL."

This one made me chuckle, again it was from the 'States'.

Question:- "Hi guys, I am shortly going on holiday to France and I was wondering if any of you folks could advise me of a suitable cave to visit, it should have easy access and not require much equipment as I am only on holiday."

Reply:- From some rotten sod in Derbyshire who shall remain nameless.

"What about the *Terminal Sump in the Berger?*"

For anyone interested in the 'Internet' the addresses are:-

ALT. CAVING (this is a news group).
 WWW.COMPLANCS.AC.UK (Lancaster University)
 WWW.SAT.DUNDEE.AC.UK (Dundee University)

Looking through some old club journals that Ralph kindly loaned to me, I came across some interesting stories that should be worth a reprieve. As they date back a year or two it is possible that a lot of people will not have read them. I hope to include a 'Blast From The Past' story in subsequent newsletters and hope that you enjoy reading them as much as I have.

A NEW LIGHTING SYSTEM

By Cliff Jones, Volume 2. 1988

The Jones Lighting System started life quite coincidentally one day while I was trying to think of a way I could get myself a conventional type Carbide Lamp. These lamps have sprung up like mushrooms in the Caving Club and I was beginning to feel left out. Ideas for raising the money to buy one amounted to 2. Plan A: pawning the new stereo unit. Plan B: putting the Wife on the streets. Plan A got me nowhere as there were no pawn shops (Pom - yes; Pawn - no) in Stoke-on-Trent. Plan B got me a thick lip.

It was obvious that I couldn't buy a Carbide Lighting system with the funds in my pocket so, as someone once said "Necessity is the Mother of Invention", and as a good, portable, reliable, easily rechargeable lighting system is necessary for the G.B. trip I thought I'd invent one.

The candle in a jam jar idea was quickly dismissed as the jam jar was still full (the cut-priced, special offer, family sized jar of coconut and passion fruit flavour was proving not very popular in the Jones household).

My thoughts then turned to Methane Gas Lighting, but were again quickly dismissed, due mainly to the discomfort caused by the plastic pipe, and the fact that BASS SPECIAL PALE ALE might not be readily available in South East France.

Hydro-Electric power was tested, but abandoned. The waterwheel was difficult to mount, and the supply of water was spasmodic, but at last I was getting closer.

Two hours in the garage and I finally came up trumps (no, not methane gas again). The basic principle was for 2 slightly magnetized metal plates, one mounted on the inside of each knee, connected to a small belt mounted accumulator. (I can't disclose too many

details at this stage as the patent is presently pending). When walking these two metal plates brush together and pass an electric current via the accumulator, to the headset, and the whole apparatus is earthed through the wearers body.

Initial tests proved the theory and a dull glow at first brightened to an acceptable beam of light.

Success!! I mentally pictured the cash rolling in once the device was marketed, and the envious looks I would get from cavers with inferior lighting systems.

My joy was cut short abruptly. Due to the earthing system, the apparatus had to be mounted on the skin, so to speak, and wouldn't work if the operator was wearing trousers!

I decided that this was a minor setback, and set to work, cutting, snipping and gluing until I was ready once more, resplendent in matching wetsuit jacket and SKIRT! I was more than satisfied, especially with the hem of the skirt, a modest 3" below the knee, the generating plates could not be seen.

It was a little later that evening when the doubts began to filter through. Would my mates go caving with me dressed so strangely? Do Butch cavers wear skirts? No, my nerve was weak and I had to come up with something more acceptable. In desperation I took to the bottle (or rather the hand-pump) and consoled myself. I had just downed my eighth pint of Tartan when the idea struck. "EUREKA!" I shouted. "TARTAN BITTER!" I dashed home as fast as hands and knees could go.

Ferretting around in the garage, I soon found what I was after - several half finished tins of paint of assorted colours. Before long I sat back and admired my neoprene KILT (of somewhat dubious tartan). Who could deny my

Scottish heritage (I was born in Stirling) and as long as T. Reynolds didn't follow me in any tight crawls or up a ladder, I was home and dry.

The next step was to test my invention in conditions I was likely to meet underground, so donning my apparatus I entered the darkened bathroom. I filled the bath with cold water and added a few ice-cubes for good measure. Stepping in at first was uncomfortable, until the water entered my tartan wet socks and warmed up (I had painted the socks to match the kilt).

Rubbing my knees together brought the faint initial glow to the head piece, but before the beam penetrated the darkness, the icy water reached the parts icy water normally would if one is wearing the kilt in the true Scottish tradition with nowt underneath. I leapt out of the bath, howling in agony, clutching what was left of the 'wedding tackle' and only after several hours of ministering with warm towels could I persuade anything to show again. I went to bed a disconsolate man.

Not feeling much like sleep, I reached for something to read. Laying aside 'Armchair Gardening' and 'The Water Diviners Weekly', I picked up an old copy of Playboy and thumbed through the adverts.

"EUREKA!" (again). The gods had smiled on me again, for there right between 'Naughty Nora' and 'Buxom Betty' (inflatable chess tutors) was just what I needed.

Its normal (?) use was difficult to understand (at first) but suffice it to say that it looked like a cylindrical sponge, about 8" long with a hole running through the middle, and was battery powered. £11.95 was cheap at the price especially as it could be 'returned if not fully satisfied'. (I've since learned that this means it can be returned if it's not fully satisfied).

I was to allow 28 days for delivery, but the plain brown package dropped through the letterbox three weeks later. I started to work straight away, and threaded a length of heating element around and along the 'sponge' and connected it to my knee-powered accumulator. (The heating element came from an old electric blanket).

The warmth given off by the little gismo was more than was necessary and enough to bring a rosy glow to my cheeks.

I should add at this point that I did not alter the original components of the 'sponge' and when batteries are inserted it throbs, vibrates and jiggles about just as it is meant to. The main advantage of this dual role may not be fully realised at first so I should explain. Imagine, if you can, falling off a ladder and breaking your leg. Obviously you're in trouble, as your light will go out as well. NOT TO PANIC! Insert the batteries, turn it on, and by the time the Rescue team arrives you'll be smiling from ear to ear!! What ORGANISATION!

N.B. You will have noticed the lack of technical data when describing the above lighting system, and you will appreciate the reason being that to divulge all now might prejudice the pending patent.

Negotiations are about to start with Phil Brown, who I hope will stock Neoprene Kilts at Caving Supplies in assorted tartans, but applications for the actual lighting system should be made direct to me.

Thanks to Chris Faulkner for the typing.

Well I enjoyed it, in the next issue we will have an exiting trip to 'Axe Hole'

and an erie story about using bats for communication in caves !!!!!



And Finally Don't Forget The Christmas Do

Ralph is pulling his hair out trying to get you lot to tell him if or not you are going to the knees up, so here are the details again. Pull your bloody fingers out and contact him as soon as possible.

Venue = Rudyard Lake Hotel which is within staggering distance of the 'Sea Scout Sailing Site' where accommodation can be made available for those who do not want to drive, for the absolutely ludicrous price of £40 for the bunkhouse, divided by the number of people sharing it. Tickets for the do are £9.50 with a starter at extra cost.

*"There's a grotty little bunkhouse to the north of Kathmandu,
There's a load of drunken cavers in the town.
And puking in the lake we have that bunch of s**ts from Crewe.
While the sleet, and hail, and rain, are pi***ng down."*

With apologies to Rudyard Kipling

Well that's it for this one, sorry it was a bit thin, but I need your input. I hope you enjoyed the style, if not, say so and give me an indication of how you want future newsletters to be.

As Keith said when he read it "Once you put it down, you find it hard to pick up." Thanks Keith.

Good caving, Ed.