

CCPC



Newsletter

No.46

NOVEMBER 95.

CRESSBROOKDALE RESURGENCE.

Wednesday 4th October 1995 three members of Crewe Climbing and potholing Club, Tony Reynolds Neil & Tracy Conde, attempted the colossal 300 foot horizontal decent under the 200 foot cliff in Cressbrook Gorge. The aim of their mission, to remove all tools left in the cave before the great floods. Upon reaching the lower streamway sump, to their surprise, they discovered it had disappeared.

Disregarding any sense of terror and trepidation they decided to squeeze through the sump and discover what delights lay ahead. Neil proceed slowly through the tight squeeze in which seven weeks earlier had been a sump, but now was just sloppy mud resembling Noel Edmonds gunge tank. Ignoring all fears he pressed on, adrenalin pumping, followed closely by Cuddy and Tony who enlarged the squeeze ready for a quick exit.

What lay ahead was beyond all imagination, no massive system or pretty grotto, no slimy green ankle grabber or cousin to the loch Ness monster, just one hundred foot of low sandy passage down to another sump.

Oh well, Lumb Hole is now more than five times the length of Tony, Cuddy and Neil head to toe, in English Lumb hole has given up about one hundred foot of virgin passage.

If you would like to see this new extension, hurry before the water returns, expected within the next month.

FORTHCOMING MEETS.

NOVEMBER

Sun 4th Cherry Tree Hole, Yorkshire. Darnbrook & Cowside area
NGR SD 903700. Grade IV. Length 1.2Km. Depth 41m.

Sat 18th Nettle Pot, Derbyshire. Castleton area.
NGR 126819. Grade III-IV. Length 640m. Depth 180m.

Giants rescue practice. Volunteer wanted for the easy trip out...

Sun 26th Ireby Fell Cavern, Yorkshire. Leck Fell area.
NGR SD 673773. Grade III. Length 409Km. Depth 128m.

DECEMBER

Sun 3rd Peak Cavern, Derbyshire. Castleton area.
NGR 149826. Grade I-V. Length 8.9Km. Depth 170m.

Sun 10th Bull Pot, Yorkshire. West Kingsdale area.
NGR SD 702787. Grade III. Length 216m. Depth 79m.

Thanks for sniffing me out, pet

by SIMON TRUMP

A CAVER was rescued yesterday with only 30 minutes to spare by Britain's first underground sniffer dog.

Labrador Sophie led the way to potholer Simon Evans after six searchers had failed to find him.

The team burrowed through tons of sand and pulled him to safety using ropes.

Simon, 27, was cut off by an avalanche of sand 500ft underground for more than seven hours. Only enough oxygen remained for him to survive half an hour when

Dog saves potholer 500ft down

he was traced. He said yesterday: "It was scary—my life flashed before me. It seemed like I was stuck down there for days."

"Suddenly I felt something warm moving around near my feet but I never expected it to be a dog."

Simon, an electrician, of Ystradgynlais, Mid-Wales, added: "Sophie saved my life. I didn't have long left."

"I was in a section of cave which is hardly ever used so no one knew where to start looking."

Separated

Bachelor Simon had become separated from a colleague in the Dan-yr-Ogof cave system in Mid-Wales.

Sophie's owner Ashford Price, 53, said: "Sophie knew exactly where he was and as we got closer we could hear his feet tapping out a distress signal."

MY HERO

Simon Evans rubs noses to thank Sophie, who saved his life

Picture:
PHIL REES



TOUR DE FRANCE (ALTERNATIVE) 1995

Here we were yet again in Tardets in the foothills of the Pyrenees. We had taken a leisurely drive down taking in the local sights and copious quantities of red wine (for medicinal reasons!) Paul and family were camping as were myself and Marguerite, Steve (Alias Colin) and family were caravanning and John and Dil were roughing it in a luxury hotel while they awaited the keys to their equally palatial Gite!

No need to rush, it was Thursday and the Belgians were not due to arrive until Friday to do a PSM to Salle de Verna trip via the Tete Sauvage. We spent Friday sussing out some canyons the most exciting part being a close encounter with an adder. (the reptilian sort not the mathematical variety!) Paul and I also fitted in the first of many canoe trips where I managed to frighten myself to death during an encounter with an overhanging tree.

Saturday we did Canyon d' Althagneta a superb trip culminating in a multiple pitch of 10 30 and 30 metres. Now those good at maths will be able to work out that the 50m rope recommended in the guide isn't long enough to use on a pull thro' of this size !!! Out came the bits of tat and Paul was launched into space. We found out later that it can be done on a 50m rope if the bolt changes are used ... if you can find them! The most exciting part of the trip for Steve came later when I persuaded the group to finish off the trip properly by continuing to follow the river and not the tourist path out of the Kakoucter Gorge. Now Steve can't swim and when he took out his buoyancy aid it was knackered! We (particularly he) spent an interesting session passing several DEEP pools in convoy with some very heavy waterlogged rope bags and an even more waterlogged Steve who wasn't even wearing a wet suit! Steve and James finished off the day by completing the canoe trip Paul and I had done the previous day. Armed with hindsight they missed "my" tree completely.

Sunday.. time to see the Belgians... I was to find out that they had got SC3 booked not the Tete Sauvage. That was the good news 'cos I hadn't done it, the bad news was that they had already rigged it and had set off on their one and only thro' trip several hours previously. (Keen these lads!) Fortunately they had rigged Couey Lodge as well! (I said they were keen!) A quick chat and Couey Lodge was on for the following day. Nothing else for it we spent the day climbing site seeing and canoeing the next stretch of river. Those who have visited Tardets may recall a barrage in the town centre. We inspected this prior to our descent and decided it was possible (just) At the last moment Paul decided it wasn't, decided to abort, failed and went over it backwards UPSIDE DOWN!, much to the surprise and amusement of the locals. My descent was interesting but less spectacular. I don't know if the events are linked but the following day the river and barrage were modified by a large Hymac!

Monday. Couey Lodge, at least it was for John and I. For some reason the others decided to opt for the Atlantic beaches. Most of the Belgians were derigging SC3 (we declined to join them.) and several were recovering from their thro' trip or the after effects of some celebration or other. John and I had the place to ourselves. The cave was rigged to the bottom of the entrance pitches. (250m) This part consists of a few short pitches and climbs (loose) into a massive large open rift consisting of pitches of 65 and 55 linked by 4 of 5 shorter ones. Not wishing to be critical I can only describe some of the anchors as "interesting" and some of the backups as "could be better" I particularly found the part on 9mm "exciting". We both found the trip excellent. I spent the rest of the day prospecting the access points to various canyons while awaiting the arrival of my sunburnt colleagues.

Tuesday was filled in with a bit more canoeing and biking. Wednesday we did Canyon D'Oilloki. Less exciting than our previous excursion (the ropes were long enough for a start) but nevertheless well worth a visit and better than the guide infers. Water levels were low but in wet weather this could be really interesting. John called to inform us that Michel had agreed to join us on an "upstream" trip in the PSM.

Thursday Paul and I completed our first "incident free" descent of the next stretch of river. Were we improving or was it getting easier?

Friday morning 8 am and by some miracle all three cars arrived in St. Engrace within seconds of each other. In typical Michel style we reached the entrance in well under the hour. (I secretly hoped the rest of the trip was going to be a little more leisurely.) It turned out to be a splendid trip as far as the bottom of the Lepinaux shaft. It is quite well marked now, much better than on my last thro' trip so I reckon that even CCPC should have little problem in negotiating the system! If anyone wants a trip let me know. The trip can be done in as little as 8 hours but 12 to 15 is probably more realistic (On the Bradford trip this summer one member took 36 hours!)

The day was rounded off beautifully with a meal for the 12 of us at Michels home in the foothills of the Pyrenees,and we wonder why he never visits Britain. (You should see the view from his lounge window) Eventually we staggered off to bed, a truly memorable day.

Saturday, Paul and family left for home while Steve and self (and families) left for Chamonix via Carcassonne (castles, canoeing, caving, canyoning and Minervois, the Med (swimming!) Nimes (canoeing, caving) and the Vercors. (Hence the title of the article.)

While everyone recovered from the journey I fitted in a couple of VTT routes and a number of walks were done. Only one thing left to do ... Mont Blanc de Tacul, we didn't manage to fit it in last year. One of the easier 4000m peaks it consists of a 300m descent followed by 730m of ascent (WITHOUT ACCLIMATISATION) This of course means that not only is it uphill on the ascent, it's also uphill on the descent. If you don't believe me ask Steve.

Now comes the exciting part. Just as we were crossing the final snowfield towards the Aiguille de Midi there was a tremendous noise from up above close to the Cosmic ridge and a LARGE boulder detached itself from the cliff heading in our direction! It landed once breaking into smaller pieces with one about the size of a family saloon heading straight for us. This one had definitely got both our names firmly stamped on it! Linford Christy would have been impressed with the way we covered the next 50 meters, wearing crampons and carrying a full pack! There was nowhere to go ... no crevasses, ... no boulders ... no cover anywhere we both just kept on running. With lungs about to burst we finally came to a stop as the boulder came to rest right where we had been standing. We just looked at each other, grinned sheepishly, thanked our lucky stars then plodded up the steep slope to our destination. A nearby French couple commented "Vous avez Bonne chance au jourdhui!" which roughly translated means "You lucky sods. We thought you'd bought it there duck!"

Back at the ranch Steve and I consumed a fair amount of liquid refreshment to replace the adrenaline consumed earlier. (As if we needed an excuse)

Having had enough of the white stuff we decided to head for some "white water" but not until we had fitted in one more VTT ride. We aborted our trip to the sports crag in Chamonix when we found the entire population of France there, with instructors(!) having three (yes 3) beginners on the rope all climbing at the same time. We couldn't bear to watch! As a point of interest the foot of the crag was littered with debris and snow, the remains of an avalanche which killed a spectator watching the climbers in Spring of this year. For those familiar with the area a section of the Petit Balcon Sud is also missing, again as a result of excess snow and subsequent thaw last Winter.

Our journey North took us to the Parc de la Foret d'Orient, unfortunately the drought had taken it's toll on the water levels so after a nights rest we continued home ... after all someone's got to finish bolting Long Rake!

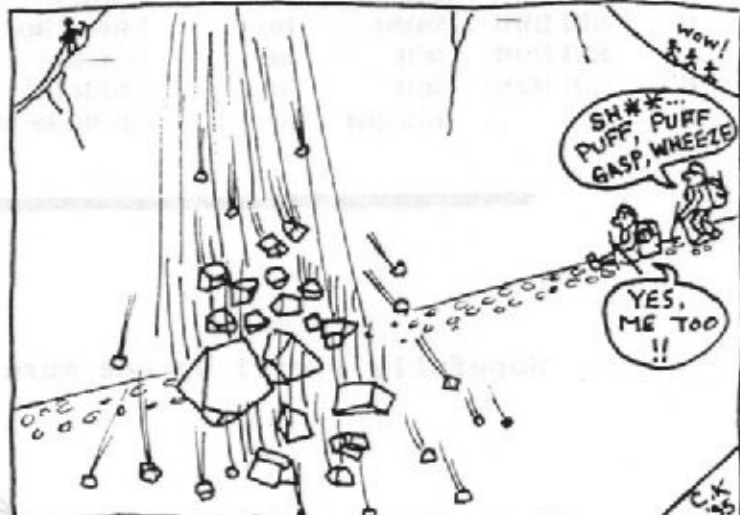
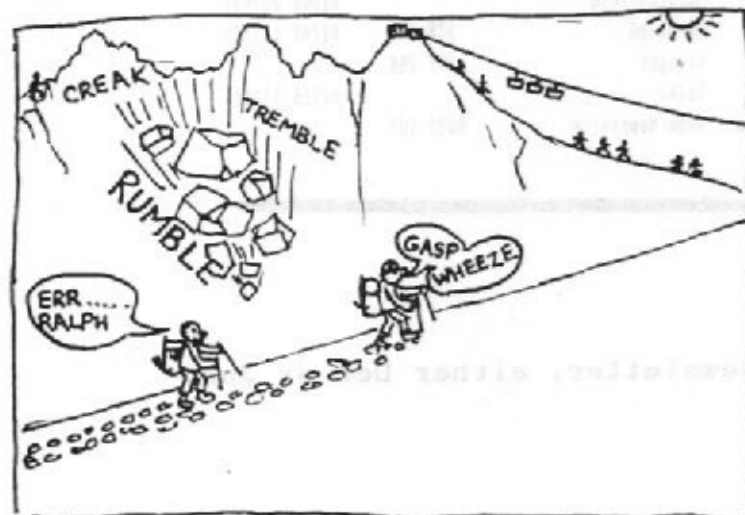
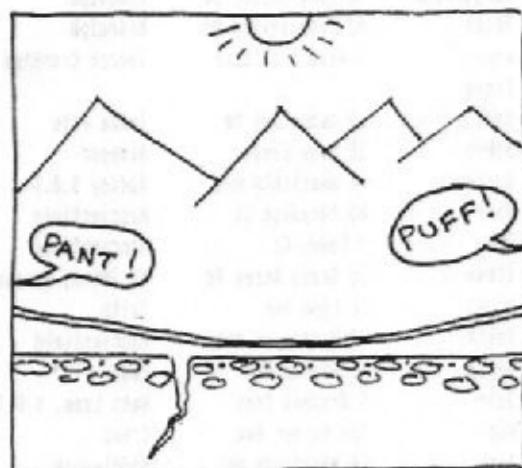
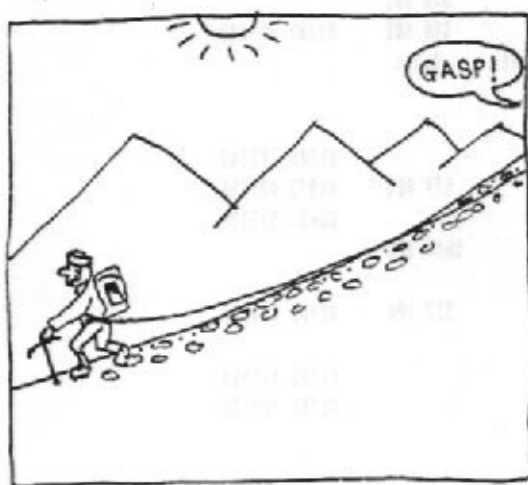
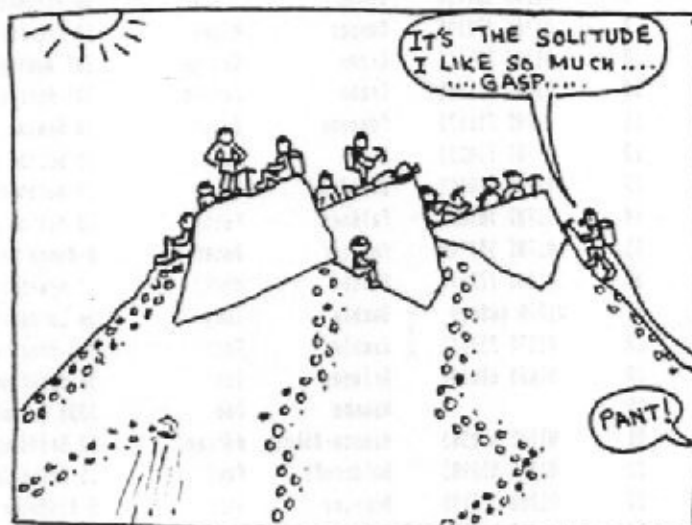
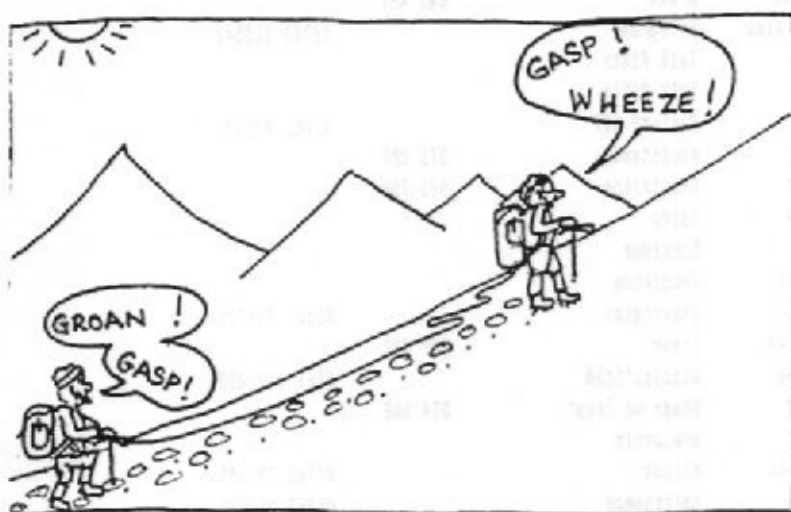
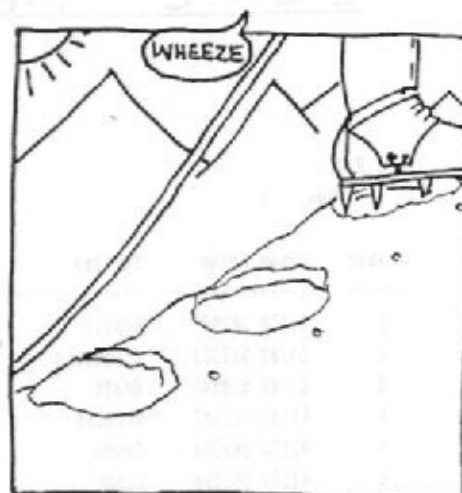
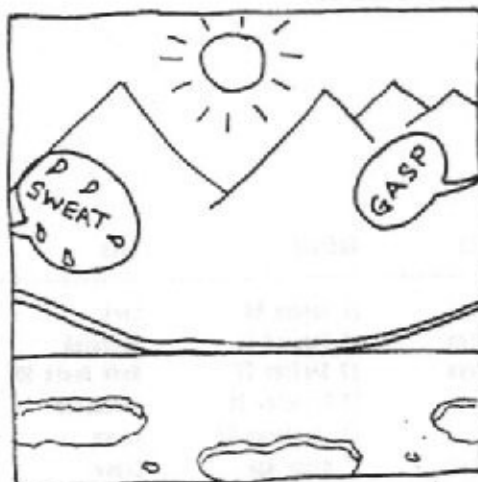
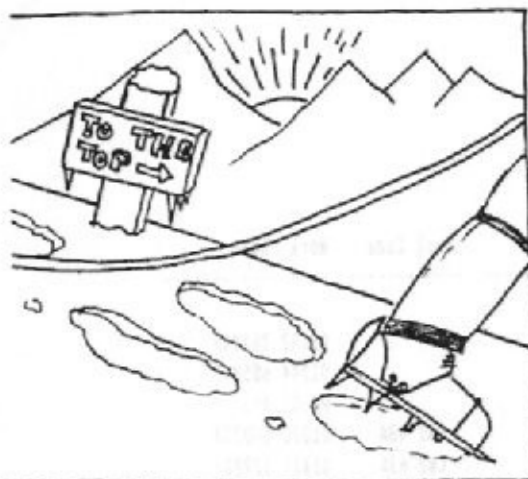
JRJ '95

If you reflect back to the Dec 94 issue of the Newsletter, I was willing to step down as News Editor and give somebody else a go. But luckily nobody else wanted to do it, so I was more than willing to carry on. Over the three years I have been the Editor I have really enjoyed doing it, (even though I was press ganged into it at a meeting I didn't attend).

Unfortunately this time I AM stepping down. Due to my personal circumstances I am finding it increasingly harder to find the time to compile it. Thanks to all the people over the years who have helped in one way or an other, especially Mark Lovatt, for without him there would not have been a Newsletter for he did all the photo copying. I hope there is somebody in the Club who will take over, because it would be a great loss to all of us if it ceases to be.

Thanks again for all your support and I am sorry
I can't carry on with it... Tracy Conde.
(Cuddy to them who do not know my real name)

ONCE UPON A TIME.....



C.C.P.C. MEMBERS

C.C.P.C.
Page 1

Member	Home Phone	Surname	First	Address	Town	Post Code	Work Phone
1		Arnold	Alison				
2		Brandwood	Sharon				
3		Bratt	Melvyn				
4		Brookes	Jane				
5		Conde	Neil				
6		Conde	Darren				
7		Conde	Tracy				
8		Cooper	Nigel				
9		Crane	George				
10		Crane	Carole				
11		Edmonds	Brian				
12		Evans	Ross				
13		Evenden	Ruth				
14		Falkner	Keith				
15		Forster	Peter				
16		Foster	Hick				
17		Gamble	Tony				
18		Gamble	Paul				
19		Grindey	Ian				
20		Hanson	Dee				
21		Hanson-Abbot	Adrian				
22		Holdcroft	Paul				
23		Housley	Ian				
24		Johnson	Marguerite				
25		Johnson	Ralph				
26		Jose	Andy				
27		Knapper	Fiona				
28		Knapper	Andy				
29		Knox	Steve				
30		Lear	Gordon				
31		Lowatt	Mark				
32		Martin	Ric				
33		Miles	Steve				
34		Mobley	Nigel				
35		Morris	Colin				
36		Mountford	Kevin				
37		Preston	John				
38		Reade	Pip				
39		Reynolds	Tony				
40		Schofield	Greg				
41		Shenton	John				
42		Smith	John				
43		Smith	Terry				
44		Willingham	John				

Redacted

Hopefully I will do one more Newsletter, either Dec or Jan.

SOME POINTS FOR CAVE RESCUE TEAM MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

Mike Fanning, of the Lake District Search & Mountain Rescue Association recently produced some comments regarding liability of team members over possible claims of negligence whilst conducting rescues, together with other matters that he felt ought to be brought to the attention of their members.

As the remarks made are just as relevant to members of Cave Rescue Teams the W.B.C.R.T. Executive thought it a useful exercise to bring the information to the attention of the members of the various Clubs who form the W.B.C.R.T. whose members could be called on to assist in a Rescue, either in our own area, or in another area where they may be caving or live.

Some of the following comments have been taken verbatim from Mike's notes, or adapted to suit the purposes of this article.

NEGLIGENCE

The difficulty of giving any specific guidance with regard to the question of negligence is that the subject is largely a theoretical area, and until tested in court will remain so. There would appear that there is no reason in law why an action against members of a cave rescue team should not succeed. In the case of a registered charity, such as W.B.C.R.T. any action would be brought against the trustees, and cannot be defended without the permission of the charity commission.

Given that the success of such an action would deal a devastating blow to voluntary mountain and cave rescue teams in this country, it is to be hoped that any court considering such an action would dismiss the action on the grounds that to allow it to succeed would be contrary to public interest.

However, although this would at the current time appear the likely scenario, it should not encourage complacency. Any caver asked to assist in a cave rescue should ensure that they are adequately trained to carry out any task or treatment they are contemplating.

It should be realised how important that the first action in any rescue incident is to follow the correct procedure for contacting the police, as only then will cover on the police insurance policy take effect. Without carrying out this procedure, it could be argued that any action was being undertaken outside the auspices of the team by a group of individuals and any liability held by the persons concerned. W.B.C.R.T. is currently looking at the question of public liability insurance over and above the insurance that is obtained from the police.

Bearing the above points in mind it would perhaps be useful to outline the principles of the law of negligence and how it would affect a cave rescue team and its members.

Negligence is proved where a court is satisfied:

1. That the injured party was owed a duty of care by the defendant;
2. That the defendant has failed to discharge that duty;
3. That the defendant's failure has caused a loss or injury to the injured party that can be attributed to the defendant's failure.

All three elements must be proved to establish the defendant's negligence. The standard of proof is on the balance of probabilities - i.e. was it more probable than not that the defendant was at fault.

Dealing with each question in turn:

a. Duty of care?

There is no duty upon a cave rescue team to undertake the rescue of any person. However, the moment a team accepts a call for assistance the duty of care will be established. There is still no obligation for a rescuer to place his life in peril whatever the circumstances. A recent court decision concerning a delayed rescue undertaken by the Coast guard service lends weight to this decision.

b. Failed to discharge duty?

In practice, an injured party will allege medical malpractice on the part of his rescuer, or a failure in the mechanics of the rescue itself.

To answer whether such a failure has occurred, the court must establish a standard against which to judge the actions of the rescuer. The relevant standard may be any of the following, when placed in the same situation as the rescuer:

- i) The ordinary reasonable man;
- ii) The ordinary competent caver;
- iii) The ordinary, skilful, careful and competent cave rescue team member;
- iv) The ordinary skilled man exercising and professing to have that special skill.

At the present time no decision exists directly affecting cave or mountain rescue. It would be prudent to assume the standard as being that set out in iii) above. However, the more specialised the techniques used by the rescuer then the more likely it is that the relevant standard will be that of iv).

c. Loss or injury?

The injured party can only succeed with his action if he or she can demonstrate that they have suffered loss or injury as a result of an action, or inaction, on the part of the defendant. Their condition must deteriorate as a direct result of the defendant's intervention. This will always be a simple question of fact.

As stated at the beginning, until such time as a case is brought to court it is difficult to know what the outcome of any action would be. It is better to be aware of the potential and plan for it, rather than stumble along hoping we would not be the test case.

PERSONAL MATTERS AFFECTING CAVE RESCUERS

1. Wills

Every person in the UK should have a will. Cave rescue can be inherently dangerous and the family of a Team member killed in the course of duty, so to speak, will receive a not inconsiderable sum via the various insurers involved. Suffice it to say that the current intestacy laws would be woefully inadequate in this situation. This, in turn, will cause further - avoidable - heartache for the family involved. The cost is not too great; a couple should be able to obtain wills for less than £60 + VAT.

2. Endowment/Life Insurance/Accident/Medical Policies

A great many Team members, certainly those with mortgages, will have one or the other such policy. Failure to notify the insurer of that member's involvement in cave rescue, or failure to pay any increased premium will void the policy should the member be injured/killed whilst on a rescue. This would cause horrendous problems to a member who is unable to work, or to his surviving family in the event of his death. The advice to the insurance company should be specific of rescue work over and above pure caving activity. It would be

wise to get confirmation that you are covered in these situations in writing, in order that there could be no way the insurance company could deny having been told at a later date.

3. Individual Vehicle Insurance.

Those Team members who may travel in their own vehicle to the scene of a callout should notify their insurer of that fact or run the risk of finding their cover limited to 3rd party only in the event of an accident.

Alan Wood: Hon Treasurer - West Brecon Cave Rescue Team

I am informed that Dave Nixon and co. Have linked J.H. and Peak. I've been promised a trip in the Autumn. (JRJ)

Hopefully we should be resin bolting Block Hall once the Speedwell season begins again. We hope to do "Moosetrap" at the same time. Volunteers required.

"The rescue that never was". DCRO failed to contact us to rescue a caver trapped near the entrance in Ladyside pot. About 4 fire tenders arrived plus the Rope Access team, an ambulance, the Air ambulance and countless bobbies. Apparently he was extracted without difficulty!

For those who haven't heard Edelrid can't find anything wrong with our "faulty" rope so it's back in circulation! This doesn't explain the unusual damage to the sheath. Tests on Marlow continue.

Maskhill - Revised Rigging

Ralph Johnson notes that if you are doing Maskhill Mine you are advised to add approximately 10% to the rope lengths quoted in the "Peak Rigging Guide" to allow for new rigging using the DMM Eco-hangers recently placed. He also notes that you need to take care on the slope leading to the "Balcony" at the foot of Murmuring Churn as there are numbers of loose boulders on the slope leading to the pitch head, perhaps someone could do some "gardening". At present all "deviation slings" are in situ, please leave them there.

Reports of Possible Defective DMM's

There have been some reports of "loose bolts" in Maskhill - they have been checked and all are OK (don't forget that DMM's do flex slightly in use). If you are doubtful about a DMM, report it to Mark Lowe (0161-330-5111) or Ralph Johnson (01782-515753) with a note of:

1. the name of the cave or mine; 2. the route on which the defective anchor was found; 3. the traverse or pitch name/number; 4. the anchor number; counting from the start of that group of anchors.

You should always check the rigging you use, whether it's a DMM, a spit or a natural belay, to assure yourself that it is OK to use it. If you have any doubts, please continue to report them as above.

Knotlow Pollution

Yes, it's still with us! Reported again within the last week - presumably still the same delightful stuff, just a bit older now, as it still hasn't cleared. The wet weather may help in due course but the cause is still there and we are in contact with NRA to try to solve the problem permanently.

Eldon Hole - Route to 2nd Chamber

Discussion on the possibility of stabilising this will take place at the DCA Council Meeting on 28th. and a decision will be made on whether such a project is desirable or affordable.

