

CCPC



Newsletter No. 25

September 1990

BERGER UPDATE

Please take carefull note of the Berger dates 1st - 10th JULY. The 1st July is on the Monday of the second week of Potterd Holidays. This date was offered to us 18 months ago and was the only one available for the yeay during this period. Hopefully we will be able to get in a day or two early.

Several members have asked "What will it cost?" as a rough guide

Return ferry, car + driver	£110
Return ferry, 2 passengers	£ 55
BCRA insurance, 3 members	£ 75
Petrol (@ £2:00 per gallon)	£110
	£350 div. by 3 = £117 pp
Optional extras	
AA *****	£ 40
Motorway tole, one way	£ 15
	£ 55 div. by 3 = £ 18 pp

No decission has yet been taken on wether participants should 'chip in' towards gear costs.

If you camp on the plateau there are no camping fees. Conditions are basic ie no toilets but there is a spring for water. Food is about the same price as here but tinned meet is hard to find so I suggest taking a few tins of meet, coffee, tea, squash and powdered milk with you. A couple of days 'emergency food' will not go amiss in case you arrive on a bank holiday. Also, don't forget food for underground.

Drinking in bars is expensive (about 80p for 1/3 pint) but red wine (which will double up as paint stripper) is cheap, as is bottled beer - less than 50p a litre. In 1983 we spent many a happy evening around the camp fire getting totally sloshed for less than £2.

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OXLOW UPDATE

Good(ish) News! Mr Rowland has (sort of) resumed access to Oxlow Mine, Nettle Pot, Maskhill Mine and Mountbatten Pot. As from the 1st September, he will allow "regulars" down (whatever that means!) so if you have a season ticket, bowel disorder or whatever else it is that makes you 'regular', Bob's your uncle.

No one has talked about cost directly, but it is thought that this may be as much as £1. Ralph is planning to go for a 'trial run', so he'll keep us posted.

BADGER SETTS

The High Peak Badger Group, which protects badgers when their setts are endangered or they are injured on the road, has asked that any sightings of badger setts be reported to them. Any sightings and a grid reference if possible should be reported to Vic Pearson on (0298) 78711. He adds that people should avoid disturbing badgers as 1) they are now protected by law with very heavy fines for people deliberately injuring them and 2) they are vicious bastards.

LANCASTER HOLE: FIXED LADDERS

CNCC have advised that the fixed ladders in various parts of the Lancaster/ Easegill system are to be removed on safety/ conservation grounds. If anyone plans a trip, check first with the CNCC as you may have to adjust your tackle list.

P8 LADDER

DCA have thanked CCPC for stabilizing the ladder which bypasses the second pitch.

THEIVES

'Ralphs trailer' (which really belongs to Staffs County Council) was stolen from Ron Becketts farm on 20th August. Please keep your eyes open; any information would be most welcome. No doubt it has changed colour by now - it's lid hasn't been taken but it's size should give it away.

HERNE HILL CAVE, MALTBY

The cave entrance is in the corner of the car park behind the Gateway Supermarket in Maltby and it now has a door and padlock. Do NOT ask at the Supermarket for access. The key is in the hands of Mrs Alice Rogers, 7 Petal Close, Maltby, Rotherham S66 7HJ. Please telephone beforehand to check when it is convenient to call on (0709) 812035.

CONGRATULATIONS

To CAROLE and GEORGE on the birth of a son, GEORGE ASHLEY at the end of July.

CAPTION COMPETITION NO 5

RESULTS



All replies agreed that Iain is a dirty git. Be carefull what you touch down mines, all that glitters is not gold!

Best replies were:-

Iain "And here we have a fine example

Iain "When you forget your Mars Bar, you've just got to improvise -

Wendy " I told you that it was a stupid idea,

Any further contributions gratefully received.

A DAY OUT IN DERBYSHIRE

I suppose my day began at midnight on Saturday 27th January. I was in the pub with Chris and Mark and Mark and I were keeping an eye on each others pints, making sure that we didn't consume too much Marstons Pedegree because we wanted to be up early for a trip to Lancaster Hole on Sunday morning. Chris and Mark dropped me home around 12:45 am, and having been so good all evening I went straight for a drink when I got home. I learned during Sunday that Mark had done the same - so much for taking it easy in the pub!

Well 7 am dawned, the alarm burst into life and I was about to drift back to sleep having turned the dreadful noise off when I remembered I was supposed to give Mark a ring to make sure he was up and getting ready to travel to Yorkshire.

Having dragged myself as far as the 'phone and establishing that Mark was awake and raring to go, I decided that the next thing I needed was coffee and 'Nurofen'. I then got myself dressed, organised my gear and settled down to wait for Mark.

Then came the call. 'Go back to bed, there's too much snow in Yorkshire - the trip is off!' I didn't need telling twice and was half ready for going back to bed when Mark added that there was a local trip to Knotlow arranged by the Derbyshire Caving Club. Well it was better than nothing and as we didn't have to leave until around ten - it appealed so I agreed with Mark for him to collect me later and went back to bed for a couple of hours sleep during which I dreamt about caving.

We arrived at Knotlow in a snowstorm and started wondering what time the pubs opened. We decided that as we still had a while to wait, we would have a go at the main 210' shaft. The people we met up with there had decided to do the climbing shaft. We talked about doing an exchange trip. We got changed in the barn and headed for the top of the shaft. By this time my hands were so numb - I knew I'd be in for an interesting trip, I couldn't feel my fingers so holding the rope to control my speed down was going to be fun!

I followed Mark down without too many traumars but met him several feet from the bottom, clipped on to the ladder -

a look below revealed that further descent was impossible - unless you fancied a swim. The chamber was flooded by a good 9' of water.

As soon as I was safely clipped on to the ladder - Mark set off back up to the surface again. I followed as soon as I could, singing at the top of my voice in an effort to forget how cold I was.

By the time we had both surfaced and explained to the guys from the DCC why an exchange trip wasn't possible and changed we were both cold and hungry so decided a pit stop at the Hobbit was called for where we indulged in brandy and butties and a warm against a radiator.

It was on the way back that we got talking about the cave Liam had been excavating in Cressbrook Dale, which I had been to once. We decided to take a look. We drove to one end of Cressbrook Dale - which happens to be near a superb pub - The Three Stags Heads. The area didn't look right for Liam's cave - but the pub looked inviting so we stopped for a swift half while I tried to recollect where to go looking next.

I wish that we'd skipped the Hobbit and gone straight to the Three Stags Heads. When we arrived a folk music session was in progress and we took our halves of No 3 and went to listen and watch. It was a good job they stopped serving not long after we arrived and the folk session wound up, otherwise we would have ended up having to get someone to pick us up and drive us home.

Elated with the good music we set off along Cressbrook Dale by car, looking for landmarks I would recognise from my trip there with Liam.

Eventually we found the right area, parked the car and set off to look for the track down to the cave. Only problem here being that the river was in flood (and quite spectacular) but the cave was on the opposite bank somewhere - I couldn't remember exactly where although I knew it was somewhere near. Eventually we decided to cross the river and set out to look for likely places. We thought about walking across a tree trunk blown across the river - but it was far too slippery and the current in the river being very fierce we decided not to risk it. But there again, we were determined to cross. We found a relatively shallow area and with the aid of a broken branch used as a walking stick, we made our crossing.

The 'well hard' section ('well arsed' section - Ed) of the Crewe definitely took over here - I mean wading across a stream which was a good 2 - 3' deep in shoes, socks and jeans was madness so we took them off and held them above our heads. The water could be described as bracing. I could think of other ways to describe it but they may not be printable. And of course the only problem with making such an horrendous journey in one direction is that you have to repeat the exercise to get back again and I couldn't immediately recognise the exact area I was looking for. With feet cold and wet and the knowledge that we'd have to cross back again there didn't seem much point in putting shoes and socks back on again so we walked 50 or so yards over brambles, rocks, leaves, twigs and shite (Liam, when were you last here?) Eventually we found what

we were looking for.

There are three possible entrances to the system Liam was interested in - two of them were impossible to explore as we needed lamps and they were in the car - several hundred yards down the road and on the other side of the river. We tried to explore them with Mark's fag lighter, but after some time trying, we gave it up as a bad job. The third, which I explored back last Summer whilst there with Liam had a torrent of water gushing out. I wouldn't have explored it today even with a lamp and diving gear.

At this point, as it was dark and it was trying to snow we thought we had better head back to the car. The journey back across the river was torturous. Our feet were so numb that we couldn't feel anything and were never sure whether we were standing on the river bed or about to sink into a deep pool. We'd left our walking sticks back fifty yards or so where we had originally crossed and there were no broken branches to make use of here.

Well we made it back without a ducking, managed to climb the steep bank back to the road without slipping back too many times and headed for the car and home.

While sorting out our various items of gear and having a brandy at home to warm us we agreed this had been one of our daftest, but most exhilarating days caving together for quite a while.

Gill

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BIRCHWOOD BRIDGE

Mentioned in May 1989's Newsletter was the Macclesfield railway bridge which had been converted by Liam and Mark to a climbing wall.

Birchwood also has a disused railway bridge which is suitable for SRT/self rescue practice. The bridge, like Macc's is approx. 30 ft high and out of sight of all houses with the nearby brickworks being the only feature (not on par with the gasworks but it will have to do!)

Belay points at the top are abundant as there is a heavy twin railed steel handrail which has survived the combined weight of myself and Nigel on the same rope on several occasions (so it must be bloody strong!)

The best side to use is the right side (Easterly I think) which sports two of the most 'bomb proof' rebelay's ever seen, kindly constructed by Caddy. On the support pillar I am in the process of placing spits to provide rebelay's, blind traverses etc.

If you visit the bridge, you will notice hangers on the higher up spits have been left in situ. They have purposely been left in by me so please leave them behind when you leave.

The left hand side has a large gas main running across it which was badly ruptured the last time I was there. This is why the right hand side is a slightly more sociable option, but be careful with the fag ends - you have been warned!

Access agreements are, do not abseil onto passing horse riders underneath as this is a popular bridle path. It

seems to me that we have as much right to be there as they do, so if we don't upset anyone by inflicting concussion on the odd jogger there will be no problems about using the bridge.

To get to Birchwood bridge, go to Kidsgrove town centre and follow the signpost for Tunstall/Hanley. Carry on straight through the traffic lights (police station on right) and up the bank. Half way up the bank is a left turn with a 'Steetley Brick' signpost. Follow this road to the end which is 50' after the brickworks turning. You are virtually parked at the top of the bridge.

PS It is not advisable to take the kids as they will be bored within ten minutes (unless they are budding taxidermists) and it's a real bitch washing the trampled in dog crap from the rope what they have stood in (Nigel will understand!) Lionel

CCPC XMAS DO 1990 (89)

For those who missed this highlight of the international social calendar, the club held its annual (Xmas) do on 17th March at the Rifleman, Kidsgrove. As usual, we were a little late (like this article!) missing Christmas by about 3 months (or were we 9 months early?) but whose counting? Lionel took on the enormous task of organising so most of the credit goes to him - take care Lionel, you might get landed with arranging the next one!

The photographic competition was won by John Smith (who was the competition organiser - and counter of votes!!) with a shot taken in Lower Long Churn. Incidentally, he also took second place with Ralph trailing in third. Thanks to all who took part - no doubt you stimulated all our budding David Baileys to get out their Box Brownies in anticipation of next years event.

Mark Lovatt ably hosted the Wally of the Year Award introducing a variety of entries for this prestigious competition which included Phils repeated attempts not to do Nettle, two 'vanishing key' attempts, one by John Shenton and a team entry which included Keith (and son), Lionel and Nigel.

Ralph had two entries, one for losing Swinsto (or was it Simpson's), a vital length of rope and half the CCPC all on the same day and the second for abseiling off the end of a rope in P8 - mere trifle in the fall of Marks attempt at a similar stunt on Main Shaft, Gapping Gill.

However, the highlight of this competition was provided by Kevin who nominated our compare Mark with an hilarious description of a bedroom farce which took place on the Llandudno weekend, the details of which are best censored. Evidently, Mark seems to have little or no recollection of this incident - nor of the rest of the weekend for that matter!!

In a last ditch attempt to clinch the trophy, Ralph left it at home but this failed to impress the judges so the clapometer results were taken as final. Mark was presented with the trophy.

Ralph

THE OTHER CAVES OF DERBYSHIRE
(Tinker's Pit, Axe Edge Moor)

Buxton was never famous for being a coal mining town. The reason for this is probably because it clashed with its image as a well-to-do spar and so the mining activities were not talked about. The average miner earned in a year what the average 'nob' spent in a night. Nevertheless, coal was mined from at least 1600 and the last official mine closed in 1919 (I know one farmer who still surreptitiously extracts the odd bucketfull for his own use). The main seams of what is known as the Cheshire Coalfield spreads from the Roaches to Walley Bridge and was mined as far West as Poynton.

The coal in this area is very poor quality and was not suitable for domestic use; It's main use was for fueling lime kilns and the top level coal was referred to as 'Big Smut'. The shales which overlie this coal are very tightly bedded and hence very crumbly and brittle.

Tinker's Pit is situated on Axe Edge Moor, almost at the side of the Buxton to Congleton road (A**) about 100 yards past where the road leaves the Macclesfield/Buxton turnpike. The land belongs to the Chatsworth Estate, so it is probably a waste of time to ask for permission. There are actually two adits next to each other, both surrounded by rotted barbed wire fences. The one which is closest to the road is full of rubbish. As this is not a popular picnic area, I presume that the rubbish was imported especially for the purpose of discouraging exploration.

The second adit, about 50 yards East of the first has at some time been capped and was probably entered by a very short shaft before this collapsed. The action of a small stream has undermined the cap which now lies in the bottom of the developing shake hole.

One afternoon I was returning from a Derbyshire trip and had all my gear so I thought I would just have a poke about in the entrance.

The passage is an easy crawl fluctuating in height from about five feet to 18 inches. The nature of the rock gives the impression that one good fart would bring the roof down. This made me quite nervous. The stream which enters the mouth of the mine soon disappears down a nasty looking sump to the right but a gallery continues to the left. There are loads of side passages and the layout is very rectangular indicating

'Stall and Pillar' mining.

I followed the obvious(?) route into a very strong draught for about 100 feet before I came to a very loose section where quite a lot of the roof had come down. All the changes in direction had me completely disorientated but I got the impression that I was under the road and the noises I heard may have been traffic up above. At this point, the old bottle went and I retreated with the intention of revisiting the workings with someone else for company.

Friends from the Eldon later told me that the stream had been dye tested some years previously but the resurgence could not be located. The coal field is drained by at least four soughs and the two which discharge into the River Goyt were not checked. Another (The Dukes Sough) is rumoured to be more than two miles long. In dry weather, the water table is said to be two hundred feet below the surface.

The Eldon also set off a smoke bomb to see if the strong inward draft (it was outwards when I was there!) could be seen to surface. The smoke disappeared without trace!

I couldn't honestly recommend this mine, it's a miserable place and obviously floods to the roof sometimes, it's unsound, may contain methane gas and isn't even near a decent pub. However, there may be potential for any kamakazi cavers!

Mark L

Four Ways Shaft, Sunday 1st July 1990.

The 'Little Dragon' is not fool-proof. Kev fooled it and it wouldn't work. I have made one work on the surface a few months ago, but couldn't remember how. Instructions do come with the box but to me at least, they seem a little vague and incomplete.

We strapped the victim into the harness OK, but neglected to put him back in the sled before hauling him up the shaft. Fortunately, he reached the surface in one piece.

Other things worth noting were:-

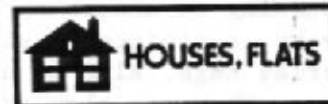
2) The practice was transferred to Fourways Shaft from the 210' Shaft due to there being a dead sheep in Waterfall Chamber. I partially descended the 210 and the air was virtually unbreathable. The situation was slightly better in Fourways but the smell was carried through by the coffin level.

Lionel pointed out that "If one of them buggers hit you on'th back of'th neck, yd' know abaat it!" We don't know if the sheep fell through the open lid or was thrown down by the farmer, but it was suggested that some precaution should be taken in mineshafts to prevent particularly stupid sheep from divebombing cavers. Mark

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&
&      USEFUL TIPS FOR CAVERS No 5
&      (Neil Conde)
&
&
&  When derigging Lost Johns, it is
&  best to tie the empty tackle
&  sack to the bottom of the rope
&  before you prussik up. This
&  way, you don't have to rerig the
&  pitch to go back for the sack.
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SECOND HAND gear required.
Phone (0625) 26946.

GREAT ORME: INTERIM VISIT

16th June 1990

Chris was in Conway for the weekend and I went along for the ride. On Friday night I called in at the Wedgewood, Llandudno, to see if any of the GOES lads were in. Barry told me that another CCPC member had stayed a few weeks back, "A lad with not much hair and a woman old enough to be his mother." I discretely changed the subject.

The next day I 'phoned Phil Smith. "He's in bed, ring back about tea time" said a female voice.

"But I want to go caving"

"OK, try again in about an hour"

Phil was as helpful as ever and with superhuman effort, dragged himself from his pit and put the kettle on. After making several phone calls, he rearranged a trip planned for Wednesday so that I could join in. Thanks Phil.

Phil took me to see the vast amount of work which had been put in on the surface around Ty Gwyn shaft. GOES, at their own expense, had hired some heavy plant and were removing all the recent backfill from the prehistoric workings. The site is much bigger than anyone had guessed and is threatening to undermine the road. It is very reminiscent of Engine Vein (Alderley Edge, also an ancient copper mine). They are also archeologically cataloging and excavating the site. Their professionalism and enthusiasm is amazing; it's not suprising that their presentations are so good! I was treated to a guided tour of the site, several cups of tea and a root around in their 'finds' collection which included bone knife handles, animal bones, stone mauls and articles of unknown use or age.

Early evening, I returned with Phil, his brother Rob and another GOES member to have a poke around Roman Mine. The labarynth is entered via a 50' shaft. Phil belayed the rope to the bottom of the shaft ("some bastard might pull the rope up") and we set off.

Roman mine is like an adventure playground. It consists mostly of walking and stooping passages and has several chain ladders, free-climbable shafts and plank walkways across open shafts. It is very dry and much too

warm for an oversuit. Features of note are a lot of very neatly stacked deads, strange needle like growths, some beautiful mineralisation and a lot of mining artifacts.

Phil bolted a shaft for a planned through trip and left me to have a wander around. Most of the passages I found turned out to be blind but I was nervous about wandering too far as the place is a three dimensional maze.

Later, I was taken to see some of the most interesting of the artifacts. One of these was a pair of clogs. Apparently, the superstitious minners were very wary of upsetting the 'knockers', a kind of trogladite leprachorn who inhabited the mines. If a miner found a particularly rich seam, he would leave a gift for the knockers for leading him to it. The miners came across evidence of knocker activity from time to time when they broke into previously unknown workings which had been dug without explosives and sometimes contained animal bones. These clogs, which were not worn out, had been left on a specially constructed clay pedestall, apparently for the knockers.

We watched Phil struggle up a wall of deads to where a miners inscription had been found on the ceiling but decided not to follow him on account of it being dangerous(ly close to closing time). During our exit from the mine, Phil got us lost; only a minor lost but enough to preserve his reputation.

Everywhere was shut by the time we emerged so we went straight to Barry's. I got lost on the way (it's contageous!) and went via Conway.

Thanks again to the Welsh lads and I look forward to seeing them again soon.

Mark

GREAT ORME II : THE ULTIMATE DIRTY WEEKEND!

Just when you thought that you had got recovered from the last hangover, there's a return trip being organised to break the last bar record.

Arrangements between myself and the GOES to see further workings of the Old and New Mines (see 'The Great Orme Copper Mines', Don Smith) such as the 'Performer Adit' are now taking place.

Once again, it will provide a superb two days of scientific, archeological and historic interest plus the great social aspect which anyone who attended on the last visit will undoubtedly agree with.

The datws areset for 21st 22nd & 23rd September1990. See Lionel for details.

SHUGBOROUGH

The date for this years BBQ is 29th September 1990.

Dear Bob

Having carefully studied your letter to reluctant members of EPC offering a transfer to CCPC, I must point out that those having been a member of EPC (or even having considered being a member of EPC except under the effects of extreme intoxication) would probably disqualify individuals from becoming members of CCPC on several points, not least being their questionable sanity.

However, if you are having problems with some of your members, we would consider helping you out of your difficulty by loaning you Tony Reynolds (for a limited period) or by supplying them with the appropriate forms and references for either 'Orpheous' or TSC on the strict understanding that our name must not be linked in any way with those of existing or past EPC members.

GREWE CLIMBING & POTHOILING CLUB
(Est. 1958)

Yours in caving,
Pete Tom
(adviser to CCPC on collecting
outstanding club fees).

***** STOP PRESS *****

The dates for the Great Orme bash are now 14th, 15th & 16th

***** STOP PRESS *****

BCRA

National Caving Conference

September 22nd - 23rd

Manchester

Umist

ADMISSION

Individual members of BCRA	Rate
Saturday and Sunday	£6.00
Saturday only	£3.50
Sunday only	£3.50
All others	Rate
Saturday and Sunday	£9.00
Saturday only	£5.50
Sunday only	£5.50

RENOLD BUILDING

DOORS OPEN

9.00am
till
5.00pm

SATURDAY
and
SUNDAY

LECTURES

VIDEOS

COMPETITIONS

TRADE STANDS

CLUB STANDS

Plus

ENTERTAINMENT

FOR

SATURDAY EVENING

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