

The Derbyshire Caver

No. 129



DCA at "Cliffhanger - 2008"
Conservation Efforts at Jugholes
The Bagshawe Cavern Entrance Project
Lathkill Garden Path Access Procedure



The newsletter of the
DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

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The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the DCA.

The DCA website is at: www.theDCA.org.uk

Cover Photo: Dudley CC squeeze box at "Cliffhanger 2008" Photo by: Boyd Potts

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THE DCA - WHAT WE DO AND HOW TO JOIN US DOING IT

The aim of Derbyshire Caving Association (DCA) is to protect the caves and promote good caving practice within the Peak District and surrounding areas. Membership is open to all clubs, individuals and outdoor activity providers with an interest in caves and caving or mine exploration. Check out the DCA website for further information. Membership enquiries to the Secretary (see last page).

The Derbyshire Caver (the newsletter of the DCA) has been in uninterrupted publication for over thirty years and is of paramount value as a forum for cavers in the Peak District. The Editor welcomes contributions from all cavers, whether DCA members or not. News, articles, etc. should be posted or emailed to him at the above address, or give him a ring.

The Derbyshire Caver is posted free to DCA members; non-members may subscribe by sending a cheque for £7 (payable to DCA) for four issues, to the Secretary/Treasurer (see last page). Some back issues are also available for sale. Half-page adverts are £5 per insertion.

Current issues of The Derbyshire Caver are available from the following outlets:

Hitch'n'Hike, Bamford The Old Smithy Teashop, Monyash
Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath

Diary Dates

Speleological Union of Ireland Symposium

25th - 27th October
Lower Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh

DCA Council Meeting

Saturday 1st November 2008
10:00 AM Monyash Village Hall

BCA National Council Meeting

Saturday 9th January 2009
Baptist Hall, Alvechurch,
Worcestershire

DCA AGM

Saturday 21st February 2009
10:00 AM Monyash Village Hall

BCA AGM

Saturday 28th March 2009
Baptist Hall, Alvechurch,
Worcestershire

British Cave Rescue Council Conference

8th - 10th May, 2009
The Nightingale Centre,
Great Hucklow, Derbyshire

15th International Congress of Speleology

19th - 26th July 2009
Kerrville, Texas, USA.
www.ics2009.us

Fight For Life - The Neil Moss Story

A Film by Dave Webb

Some written comment and reviews of the DVD:

"It was fascinating and everyone I've talked has been really impressed with it!" (K.D. SUSS)

"Very well done with the Neil Moss film, I was captivated from beginning to end!" (M.B. BPC)

"What a superb piece of film....I am now in my 85th year and memories came flooding back - I would dearly wish to see all the old folks and share a pint or two." (J.L. Spain)

".....fascinating and well worth the wait!" (J.H. Peak Cavern)

"Brilliant, riveting! Should be on mainstream TV!" (F.B. CCC)

"...the first account since George Cooper's articles that has offered any sensible and objective account of the events. Impressed." (J.Mc. Safariquip)

"...a well-researched, evocative film, packed with interviews from surviving participants and images taken at the time....a very creditable thought-provoking film...." A.J.

"The standard of the filming is better than many professionally produced documentary films seen currently on TV, and (his) knowledge of his subject matter and feel for the story have produced a film which deserves a wider audience than just the caving world." J.P. (DCA)

"...a well researched DVD (which) gives a vivid and thought-provoking impression of the trip and the rescue attempts and their ultimate failure. It also asks the question, would the outcome be the same today?" (R.H. CPC)

The story of the attempted rescue of Neil Moss from Peak Cavern in March 1959.

**DVD 50 mins. Price £14.95 from caving shops or post free from:
Dave Webb, 3, De Vere Gardens, Woodthorpe, Nottingham NG5 4PH
Tel: 0115 8401109**

Call-out to Peak Cavern

On Tuesday 22 April 2008, a party of five experienced cavers descended Titan on a trip intending to take them into Speedwell Cavern, through Colostomy Crawl and then out of Peak Cavern. On arriving at the Mucky Ducks they decided that the way through had sumped and was impassable. They then retraced their route intending to exit via JH which they knew to be rigged. When they had not surfaced some two and a half hours after their ETA, the alarm was raised for DCRO. A search was started with one DCRO team entering Peak Cavern (where the Mucky Ducks were found to be not sumped) and other teams entered via Speedwell Cavern. Team members were also sent up to JH and Titan entrances with radios. Some two hours after the call-out had been raised, one member of the missing party emerged at JH to report that his companions were following some way behind but one of them was exhausted and would need assistance. A small DCRO team went down to help and JH was rigged for hauling to complete the operation.

Carbon Monoxide Reported at Long Rake Mine, Bradwell Moor

On the weekend of 24th/25 May 2008 two cavers were taken seriously ill with Carbon Monoxide poisoning in Long Rake Mine on Bradwell Moor. The source of the Carbon Monoxide is not known and DCA were advising that cavers should not descend Long Rake until

further notice.

Collapse at Bull Pit

As reported by Steve Knox of CCPC at the end of April. A large section of cliff face on the western side, about 10 metres high, by 3 metres wide, had collapsed into the base of Bull Pit, between Perryfoot and Winnats Pass. This was thought to have occurred some time during the past winter. The mass of rock had been separated from the bedrock behind, due to the action of tree roots. Two "dark recesses", visible from the field above, are blind. The largest one closed immediately to a natural fault only a couple of centimetres wide, while the other was only a shadowy hollow. The whole area of the fall is extremely loose and shattered. The two old digs in the bottom of the pit are still both open, although would need a major effort to clear out washed in debris.

Theft at Giants Hole

It was reported that the payment box in the car park for Giants Hole was broken into around the 24th of May. A lockable white metal mail box had been installed for fees to be paid but this was then stolen! This has since been replaced by a black metal mail box. You can pay by cheque (made payable to "Peakshill Farm") and this may make the thieves less likely to pay return visits in the future.

Peak District Caving Info website 10th Birthday

Hitch'nHike's "Peak District Caving Info"

website celebrates its 10th birthday. See <http://www.peakdistrictcaving.info/>. Congratulations to a very useful caving resource for cavers in the Peak District.

Rockfall Affects Nickergrove Mine

It has been reported that some cavers experienced some significant rock fall in the "50 shaft" (the shaft with a big log at the top) in Nickergrove Mine, Stoney Middleton. It seemed to come from one of the passages approximately one third of the way down and was made up of three or four rocks about 30cm across.

Donatella's Aven Extension in Peak cavern

In May Rob Eavis free-climbed the main aven to a height of 17m but unfortunately found no way on, although a lead vein was found. Rob Middleton then bolted across into the small vadose canyon at the west end of the chamber which lead into a very small passage (named "Shedder") which continued for 40m with a few squeezes and sharp bends. It then descended through a series of ducks to emerge in the roof of a large chamber (4m by 6m by 6m high). At the far side, a waterfall from passage in the roof flowed down a passage with unstable boulders to a sump, only 8m further on.

Next month, in June, Jim Lister (C.D.G.) was accompanied by a team of eight from S.U.S.S. down Titan and up the +100m of fixed rope to the new extensions. The team split into two: one to complete the survey

up the fixed ropes to the Mud Sump, and the other to push the few remaining leads. This was an evening trip extending well into the following day.

The dive gear proved awkward through Shedder, as Jim's wetsuit now testifies. Unfortunately the sump was blocked by mud at the bottom of an 8m slope, and although Jim had a series of attempts to dig through, no continuation was found.

Meanwhile Rob Middleton bolted up the waterfall in the chamber to the roof passage, and this was explored up a series of short cascades to another sump, which was found to be very small. Fortunately the two Robs managed to lower the sump by 15cm without too much effort so there was potential to syphon it dry, and so a return was planned.

Just before the top sump a 10m high rift was free-climbed by Rob Eavis, and although some excellent dogtoothed floorspar and chert flakes were found, again no continuation was found.

Ladder at Surprise View in Peak Cavern Removed

As reported by Alan Brentnall: At the beginning of July there were a number of reports concerning the poor condition of the Surprise View fixed ladder. It was inspected on Saturday 12th July and deemed to be in such a poor condition that it was removed from the pitch. This fixed aid will be replaced as soon as possible but in the meantime cavers visiting the system will either have to rig it (resin anchors in situ) or use the Galena Chamber route, if the ladder hasn't been replaced.

More Discoveries in Waterways Swallet

Andy Foster of Keyhole Caving Club reports that another large chamber has been discovered in Waterways Swallet in June.

Breakthrough in Bagshawe Cavern

As reported by Sam Townsend: On July 31st, after 4 years of digging, Sam Townsend and Bog Bergmann, accompanied by Dave Cowley, John Taylor, Jules Barrett, Sam Pemberton and Jon Pemberton all of Eldon Pothole Club, pushed through the choke in "Sams Dig" up into a large rift chamber in Bagshawe Cavern, Bradwell. This was christened "Paternity's Fault" after the fact that nearly all the diggers have had children during the course of the dig, which had been a bit of a hindrance.

Sam and Jules free-climbed an estimated 50 meters up the rift (a bit like the West Swirl Passage in Oxlow Cavern, but steeper). Unfortunately the rift appeared to be blind at the top, although there seemed to be a floor-level continuation which draughts but would require some serious digging.

DCRO Search for Missing Dog

A dog had been missing since Saturday 12th July somewhere in the vicinity of Speedwell Cavern and Peveril Castle and Edale Mountain Rescue Team had been searching the area on the following Sunday and Monday without success. Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation was contacted to assist in the search, especially any underground locations, on the Tuesday, 15th July.

Appropriately, a dog from SARDA (Search and Rescue Dog Association), found the missing animal some five metres down Longcliffe Vein. Two Edale MRT and DCRO Team members retrieved the dog back to the surface much to the owner's relief.

Call-out at Giants Hole

On Tuesday 21st August, an instructed group of three (two novices with an instructor) encountered difficulties when one of the novices was unable to climb Garlands Pot on ladder in what had become very high water conditions. The novices were taken to Chert Hall to wait while the instructor went for help. A DCRO team of 14 attended and brought the novices up Garlands Pot and out to the surface.

Vale Tony "J Rat" Jarratt

Sadly Tony Jarratt died during the weekend of 30th/31st August after an illness. Tony was an active caver and digger in the Peak District some years ago and had been a member of the Pegasus Caving Club.

The One Mile Prusik

Rob Eavis of SUSS managed to prusik up Titan several times on Saturday 6th September and raised money for Cancer Research UK. Unfortunately Rob chose a very wet weekend in the Peak and conditions were very wet! Rob still managed to last 7 hours on a rope and prusik 1,630 metres!

DCRO Called to Help Calf in Shaft Collapse

On Monday 15th September at around 4 p.m. the call went out to help with a calf which had fallen into a hole in a field near Winster. A hole had opened in the field and the 3 month old calf had fallen some 40 feet into a narrow rift passage.

Members of DCRO attended to assist along with officers from the RSPCA and Police. There was a large amount of rubbish beneath the soil over the hole which made it very difficult to stabilise the sides. A local with a JCB arrived at the farmer's request and with direction from DCRO, the loose material

was removed and the sides of the hole stabilised.

Once made safe, two DCRO members abseiled down to see if the calf, weighing an estimated 150 to 200 kg, could be extracted. It turned out, unfortunately, that this was not possible due to the calf's position in the rift passage and due to the material which had fallen down and partially buried it. On advice from a vet, the calf was put out of its misery humanely.

The hole was temporarily covered and the site was tidied and equipment put away just after midnight.

Vale Jim Eyre

More very sad news from Bert Bradshaw - President of the Northern Pennine Club. Jim Eyre died on 17th September in Blackpool Hospital.

Jim will be remembered fondly not only for his excellent books and cartoons but for his great humour. A member of the Northern Pennine Club, Jim was also a founder member of the Red Rose (1946) and was its first President, a post he held for many years.

Vale Jack Myers

Sadly Jack Myers also died recently, on Sunday 14th September. Younger cavers may not have known him but he co-wrote that marvellous book "Underground Adventure" (with Arthur Gemmell) and in recent years he served the Northern Pennine Club as vice president.



DCA at "Cliffhanger - 2008"

Cliffhanger is the outdoor sports exhibition, hosted by Sheffield City Council, in Millhouses Park on 12th & 13th July 2008. The event aims to promote the uptake of outdoor pursuits in Sheffield and numerous outdoor stakeholders are involved, including the BMC, Climber Magazine, Decathlon, Edale Mountain Rescue, Sheffield Kite Fliers, Sheffield Scouts, Sports Pulse and the University Of Derby. The British Caving Association (BCA), through the Derbyshire Caving Association, were again invited to participate in this event. It's an important point that, once people have paid their entry fee to Cliffhanger (accompanied U16's are free), all activities on offer are free to anyone who wants to have a go - so it's a great chance to do some recruiting for your particular sport.

Mark Cope, of Chesterfield C. C., volunteered to act as co-ordinator for a mixture of clubs to put on a DCA stand and activities in 2008. The aim was to attract children to take part in various fun activities related to caving and at the same time provide information to older teenagers and adults who would be interested trying out caving with a view to joining a caving club. So we had a team of cavers from



The DCA plot
Photo by Dave Webb

BCA funded DCA to transport the Speleo-Olympics obstacle course (famous from Hidden Earth) from Mendip, where it is stored at the Wessex C.C. hut, to Sheffield and back. Lee, the 'inventor and builder', not only kindly agreed to lend it to DCA but even came up to the Wessex to give Boyd and Jenny Potts, who collected it, a quick lesson in how to assemble it all. Wessex members Les and Wendy Williams helped to organise this for us and drum up manpower to load it into the huge van we'd hired to take it all up to Sheffield, along with the new DCA 'Stand Shelter tent' we'd bought in Gloucestershire on the way down to Mendip. We also collected some of the BCA 'Try Caving' promotional material and the Wessex caving dummy, who spent her time dressed in caving gear and hanging from a tree in Sheffield.

Mike Clayton and Emma Porter brought along Dudley C.C.'s adjustable 'Squeeze Box'. Mark Cope and Dennis Jump provided ropes and other gear for SRT demonstrations plus ladder and harness to give people a chance to try ladder climbing. Dave Webb brought along a stack of his caving DVDs, a TV, a DVD player and a generator to run it all, so we could run caving films continuously inside the stand tent. We had a stack of BCA caving leaflets on a table inside the tent: 'So, You Want To Go Caving' and 'Try Caving' plus DCA information sheets giving contact details for local clubs all over the Peak District and surrounding areas and details of books and websites



Bridget and Claire looking after the Dudley CC Squeeze Box!
Photo by Dave Webb

Chesterfield C.C., Dudley C.C., Masson C.G., Orpheus C.C. and SUSS, plus some climbing friends of Mark's who helped us set up on Friday evening.



The Dudley CC Squeeze Box
Photo by Boyd Potts

which would provide further information for older people. We also had the BCA exhibition stands set up inside and outside the tent with caving posters, surveys and other information on them. DCRO had lent us a couple of 3m square caving 'banners' with photos of cavers climbing up pitches, and these were hung over the big van and from the trees below the SRT demonstration course.

We set up the Speleo-Olympics as a timed 'race' for pairs to carry a tackle bag through the obstacle course and back and, to generate a bit more interest, offered Hitch 'n' Hike vouchers on both days for the fastest U16 and adult pairs. This resulted in some real 'needle', with pairs of youngsters hanging around to join the queue again for another go as competitors shaved seconds off times - the youngsters being far faster than the adults through the course and several pairs setting times under 2 minutes on both days. There was a queue from the 10.30am start right through to the 6.30pm close on both days, with adults cheering on their children and children cheering on their parents - altogether over 100 pairs went through on each day with times ranging from under 2 minutes to over 7 minutes. Kids as young as five years old were romping through and we had some mixed teams too: father/son, mother/daughter, uncle/nephew, mother/son and even a father/daughter team, where the feisty daughter hauled her slower (and fatter) father bodily through the final V-squeeze.

Equally busy was the ladder climb: a 30ft. ladder rigged from a big overhanging tree and operated by Mark, Dennis and Tony Walker, who fitted the climbers with helmet and harness, life-lined them up and lowered them down. Again a queue formed and, apart from a few short intervals when an SRT demonstration was on, the activity never stopped all day for both days - there must have been several hundred, mainly children, who had a great time

climbing up and being lowered down in a harness afterwards.

The Dudley 'Squeeze Box' was in great demand too, requiring two cavers to stand on the edges to hold it down and prevent it moving as 'squeezers' fought their way through or removing/replacing spacer-blocks to alter the squeeze height. A number of pairs of cavers worked away on this right through both days as literally hundreds of people had a go. Toddlers thought this was great fun as they shot through faster than the grown-ups but even some 'macho' lads had a go and surprised themselves with how small a gap they could get through.

All the time the activities were going on the various cavers involved were chatting to people, answering questions about caving and the films being shown, handing out leaflets, giving advice on clubs to contact, etc. Many people took the trouble to thank us and say how much they had appreciated our efforts and how much their children had enjoyed themselves. Lots of proud parents took photos of their kids climbing ladders, diving



The Speleolympics in action
Photo by Dave Webb

down the tube and hauling themselves out, squirming through squeezes, etc. and having a great time at 'pretend' caving. We were chuffed when the organizers contacted us afterwards to report that many parents had said to them how much their children had enjoyed their 'caving' - so hopefully there will be youngsters who will think of caving as something to have a go at for real in the future.

Particular thanks go to Boyd, Bridget, Claire, Dave, Dennis, Emma, Jenny, Larry, Mark, Mike, Tony and to Mark's climbing friends, who worked flat out to set up everything, run the activities during the weekend and take everything down afterwards.

Special thanks to Lee for the loan of Speleo-Olympics and to those from Wessex and DCRO who also lent us items and helped out.

Jenny Potts

Conservation Efforts Double-up at Jugholes!

Following several reports of the appearance of yellow spray-painted arrows in Jugholes, a team was assembled by John Barnatt consisting of members of PDMHS, Masson Caving Group and PICA.

The reports suggested that there were dozens rather than the odd one or two that had appeared in the past, and that this time they were concentrated in the Upper Series. And so, armed with an assortment of wire and bristle brushes the team descended - only to find that there was no trace of the offending arrows – just the odd patch of yellow paint here and there to show where they had once existed.

Whilst we wandered around with redundant brushes still armed and ready we mumbled quiet disapproval to ourselves at the lack of communication that had brought us here to "remove the removed".

However, thoughts of employing our wire-brushes on person or persons unknown for a wasted evening were soon dispelled as we came to realise that we in Derbyshire were indeed fortunate in having so many cavers who are committed to keeping our caves looking the way they should. Only a few years ago hardly anyone would have bothered.

At least our Derbyshire Bat Group member was not disappointed since there was ample evidence of bat presence (droppings), and a number of bats



John Barnatt brushing away at the remnants of the once abundant yellow spray-painted arrows, while a colleague searches in vain for others.
Photo by Dave Webb

sighted – and we were able to remove several large black spray-painted arrows in the mined section.

Thanks to all those who turned out and to the "team that went before" who must remain anonymous.

Footnote: A large population of Whiskered bats was once associated with Jugholes (Nash, D. Worley, N.E. 1977) and it is encouraging that the current numbers suggest that the site is once more finding favour despite the relatively high number of visiting cavers.

Dave Webb



Orpheus CC Digging News

After a rather wet winter that turned the Orpheus 'Dig of Choice' namely Democratic Dig into a complete 'Poo Mine', the Orpheus Diggers, led by Kenny Morton and Mick Chambers have turned their attentions back to Owl Hole. A dig was started in the rift below Crystal Pallas Chamber that leads to Gour Chamber. Regretfully after a promising start this began to close and head down in the direction of Gour Chamber itself. In Crystal Pallas Chamber a dig in the floor again closed after only a few metres and another dig in a rift (Pillar Pot), near to bottom of the short ladder pitch that leads into Crystal Pallas Chamber, has revealed a rift some 5 metres deep but again is looking less promising. Looks like it will be back to Democratic Dig when the weather dries up.

In the 1970's and early 1980's the Orpheus spend a considerable amount of time trying to dig through the large draughting collapse in the aven at the end of Northwest Passage in Water Icicle Close Cavern near Monyash. With time being at a premium in those days (plus the fact we liked a party), overnight weekend digging was common and resorting to old techniques such as 'firing' (lighting a huge bonfire next to a boulder to heat it up and then throwing



Kenny Morton digging in Pillar Pot, Owl Hole
Photo by Simon Brooks

water on it to crack it) were tried to get through the choke (Gosh we did have a lot of time on our hands in those days!). With the availability of modern battery drills and more scientific techniques for breaking and removing boulders the Orpheus have

once again turned their attention to Water Icicle after an absence of almost 25 years. In recent months a substantial amount of scaffolding has been put into the Northwest passage choke and the digging team of Keith Slatcher and Pete Collins with assistance from Karen Slatcher and Paul Lydon, are now ready to begin removing boulders and attempting to find a way forward. Unlike previous digging efforts the overnight digs have been deemed un-necessary and 'firing' hasn't even been considered.

Simon Brooks



Pete Wagstaff and Ashleigh Richardson (Kenny's Grandson) digging in Crystal Pallas Chamber, Owl Hole
Photo: Simon Brooks

DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

LATHKILL GARDEN PATH

ACCESS PROCEDURE

This site is still kept locked and subject to access for scientific purposes only, in accordance with the conditions of DCA's licence from Chatsworth.

However, this can include one-off photographic and similar trips that are not purely recreational in nature, as well as the more usual extended research or exploration projects.

Cavers with a valid interest in visiting the site are asked to use the following procedure:

1. Apply to the DCA Access Officer for access details.
2. Return a completed form together with proof of current liability insurance.
3. Obtain a key as directed and follow the designated surface route to the entrance.
4. Return the key as directed.

DCA officers are readily approachable for advice on any aspect of visits to the Garden Path.

Some projects may be eligible for support from the Cave Discovery Fund.

July, 2008

CLATTERWAY LEVELS and SOUGH

Please note that one of the three entrances to the system is in the garden of Hollowbrook Cottage and, while the owners do not want to restrict access, they would like you to ask permission **before** you cross their garden. Some groups doing a through trip have simply trampled through flower beds on their way out! If you are intending to use the route through the garden, either for entry or for exit after a through trip, please ask permission beforehand and please use the path from the mine entrance that runs to the house and then up the driveway to the road.

The Bagshawe Cavern Entrance Stope Project

The work that the Eldon Pothole Club have been doing at Bagshawe Cavern near Bradwell is drawing to a close and as the denizens of the entrance stope appear blinking back into the sunlight this would seem like a good time for a round up.

Bagshawe Cavern began life as a lead mine known as Mulespinner Mine and was operated as a tourist attraction during the second half of the last century. More recently, the late Peter Revell ran 'adventure caving trips' for individuals and groups but most of the time the Cavern was empty as the associated buildings fell into disrepair. The Eldon Pothole Club have enjoyed an excellent relationship with the Revell family for many years and much of the club's exploration effort has been focused on pushing the known limits of the Cavern whilst taking on the day-to-day maintenance of the cave and surrounding area. When custodianship of the Cavern passed to Peter's daughter Amanda, the DCA and the Eldon Pothole Club sought to work out an access agreement that would meet the needs of the Revell family whilst promoting the conservation of the cave and securing the future of recreational caving at Bagshawe. All parties agreed that making the Cavern more generally available for instructed trips would be desirable and Eldon members Jules Barrett, Sam Townsend, John Taylor and Bob Dearman started the ball rolling towards the end of 2007. Before Bagshawe Cavern can be used by members of the Peak District Caving Affiliation (PICA) it has to pass a safety inspection



Jules Barrett rigging the Tyrolean in the stope
Photo: Rob Eavis

and October 2007 saw the organisation's consultant engineer peering sceptically up into the roof of the mined entrance stope. A substantial list of issues was identified mainly centred around loose-looking rock that exists high up in the roof above the steps.

A plan was hatched which would involve casting five concrete slabs in the roof above the steps to protect anyone below from rock fall. By February 2008 the equipment, materials and manpower had been assembled and work began on the weekend of the Bradwell Dale SSSI Clean-up on the 9th of February. Scaffolding was built in the stope to allow access to the area directly underneath the boulders in the roof. A generator on the surface powered a big 110v drill which was used to drill holes for steel bar which would later be used to reinforce the concrete. By the end of the day the steel and wooden shuttering for the largest two slabs was in place high in the roof.

Throughout February and March a number of evenings were spent installing the rebar and shuttering for the other three slabs. The Eldon had previously delivered large quantities of concrete into the entrance stope

whilst building a set of concrete steps to replace some rotting wooden ones. With recent memories of bucket-carrying still fresh in the mind someone came up with the bright idea of using Tyroleans to deliver the concrete from the surface to the stope. The first Tyrolean was built from the entrance to the area of the first and second slabs and the first day of concreting was planned for Saturday 5th April. The day went very well and by late afternoon the first two concrete slabs had been cast. During April a number of evenings were spent removing the shuttering from underneath the concrete, rearranging



Kibble full of concrete
Photo: Rob Eavis

scaffolding and finishing the shuttering on the

bottom three slabs. By the end of April there was a huge appetite for getting the job finished as better weather arrived and summer projects beckoned. With the main protagonists unable to agree a weekend to finish the concreting, the only solution was to see what we could do in an evening. The final session was planned for the evening of Thursday 1st May with the highly ambitious goal of casting the remaining three slabs in one evening. Another Tyrolean was built below the first which would be used to move concrete yet further into the stope and deliver concrete into the area of the fourth and fifth slabs; finishing touches were put to the shuttering and we were ready.

To have any hope of finishing we would need at least nine cavers working flat out. When I arrived at Bagshawe there were already five cars in the car park; an excellent start. All the usual suspects had turned up plus some new faces and by 6:00 p.m. the Tyroleans were rigged and kibbles full of concrete had begun to roll down the ropes. Two cement mixers and three people on the surface maintained a steady supply of concrete to the entrance. Here, two cavers loaded the kibbles onto the first Tyrolean which took them so far down the stope. Two more cavers at the kibble swap took the kibbles off the first Tyrolean and loaded them onto the second before sending them down to the area below the third slab. Here two cavers removed the kibbles from the Tyrolean and distributed the concrete to others filling the shuttering with concrete. Despite a nervous time when it looked as though we might not have enough cement, the job was finished with time to spare. Later in the evening

we cleared the stope of surplus timber and scaffolding before heading down the road to the Bowling Green pub.

The following week the shuttering was taken down to reveal the last three slabs and all the redundant wood and scaffolding were removed. With the concrete slabs built in the roof all that remained was to put a grille over a hole in the steps and a barrier across the mine workings at the bottom of the steps. This has now been done and I'm very pleased to say that the work is



Jim Thompson mixing concrete on the surface
Photo: Rob Eavis

now complete.

The effort made by the Derbyshire caving community has been tremendous with over five hundred man-hours of work clocked up. In fact this figure probably underestimates the total contribution as a good deal of work has been done away from the Bagshawe site in preparation and sourcing equipment. In addition to the contribution of manpower a few people have provided specialist equipment, materials and skills and without their help we could not have got this project off the ground.

We hope that our decision to carry out the work will be vindicated by organised groups and cavers visiting Bagshawe Cavern for sporting trips. In addition to the work to stabilise the roof in the stope, the car park has been extended to accommodate around ten cars and trees around the



Bob Dearman on the way out of the stope with an empty kibble
Photo: Rob Eavis

site have been thinned to let more light into the

area around the entrance. A new conservation plan is in place which will hopefully protect the Cavern's many formations and other features of interest from damage. Bagshawe's unusual history of highly restricted access and gating has protected much of the cave to a large degree. It is essential that group leaders and cavers visiting Bagshawe are mindful of the delicate nature of the cave and take every possible precaution to ensure that no damage is caused.

On the 29th July 2008 the EPC are organising an evening for local caving instructors/LCMLA holders for a tour of the cave. The Custodian will be around to discuss access arrangements and there will be the opportunity to look at the Conservation Plan in detail. Anyone who anticipates using Bagshawe Cavern for group caving in the future is encouraged to attend. Contact Jules Barrett (email: jules@orionmountaineering.com) to register interest. For access and other information about Bagshawe Cavern visit www.eldon.org.uk.

Thanks to all the people listed below who have helped with this project:

John Taylor (EPC), Bob Dearman (EPC), Sam Townsend (EPC), Phil Burke (EPC), Andy Davies (EPC), Dave Whiteley (EPC), Clive Hockenhull (EPC), Dan Hibberts (EPC), Chris Schofield (EPC), Jim

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Jules Barrett

DCA Matters

NEXT DCA MEETING

DCA Council Meeting Saturday, 1st November 2008.

DCA AGM 2009: Saturday, 21st February, 2009

All Meetings start at 10am. at Monyash Village Hall. The Hall will be open from about 9.30am with tea, coffee and biscuits on tap. The Old Smithy Cafe, next to the Pub, does an excellent breakfast from about 9am.

Remember that Council Meetings are open to ALL members.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES WITH DCA

For information on all DCA Training Courses and events, contact DCA Training Officer, Nigel Atkins, 01283-210666, 07831-449909, training@theDCA.org.uk

USE OF BRIDGE 75 ON THE MONSAL TRAIL

If your club is interested in making use of this abseil/SRT training facility, please contact the DCA Training Officer, Nigel Atkins: Tel. 01283-210666, Mob. 07831-449909, training@theDCA.org.uk

INSTALLATION OF ECO-ANCHORS

If you have any queries about Eco-anchors installed in the region, please contact the DCA Chairman, Bob Dearman, 01298-85594, 07855-920087, chairman@theDCA.org.uk



Adventure Activities Licensing Authority Safety Alert Number 1 – Mine Exploration, Gas Hazards Issued: 24 July 2008

Background

On 17 July 2008, an adult caver became unconscious, apparently due to a lack of oxygen, soon after entering a disused coal mine shaft. Despite prompt efforts by his companion on the surface and the rescue services, he died in hospital three days later.

This alert has been issued to remind adventure activity providers who offer mine exploration of the gas hazards that may be present in old workings. Others who participate in mine exploration may find this information useful.

Gas Hazards

Old mine workings are poorly ventilated and may well contain atmospheres that are very low in oxygen. This is most likely in unventilated blind ends, shafts and other dipping workings. Variations in atmospheric pressure can affect any natural ventilation and the distribution of gasses in the workings. Oxygen deficient air can kill very quickly after entry and, if not immediately fatal, can impair the victim's judgement and physical ability to escape this hazard.

The risk of encountering oxygen deficient air is particularly high in old coal mine workings since oxygen reacts with coal to reduce the oxygen and increase the carbon dioxide content of the air. A similar effect can occur in some other mines, notably those that worked ironstone.

In coal mines, there is also the risk of methane; producing flammable and potentially explosive atmospheres.

Other Hazards

There are also the more obvious hazards of unstable ground, hidden voids and shafts as well as flooding. Coal measures strata is unlikely to remain stable without support for long after the mine's abandonment.

Action by Activity Providers

In accordance with advice from the Coal Authority and HSE's Mines Inspectorate activity providers should not be taking groups into old coal mine workings as they are inherently too dangerous.

Where other abandoned mines are used, providers should review their risk assessments to ensure that gas hazards are considered. Where appropriate, providers may need to make use of portable gas-monitoring equipment. The users need to be trained in its correct use and the monitors need to be calibrated and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Useful References

Coal Authority – deals with surface hazards arising from past coal mining activities such as open mine entries or ground collapse. 24 hour emergency number – 01623 646 333. Web - www.coal.gov.uk .

Mines Rescue Service Limited – can provide training on testing for gas in mines.

Providers should direct enquiries about this alert to their AALS inspector.

MASSON CAVING GROUP

30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Masson Caving Group was originally founded in April 1979 by a small number of local cavers based around Matlock Bath. Almost 30 years later and still going strong the Group is now pleased to invite all current members, ex-members, friends, family and associates to a weekend get-together to celebrate 30 years of successful caving.

The weekend get-together will be held between:-

Friday 8th and Sunday 10th May 2009

at the Dalesbridge Centre, Austwick, North Yorkshire

Activities planned so far include a social evening including 3 course sit-down dinner on Saturday night, an informal campsite barbeque on Friday night, plus caving and walking activities over the weekend.

Accommodation is available in the Dalesbridge bunkhouses or campsite, and prices per person are listed below (includes 2 nights accommodation and the Saturday night meal/social). Alternatively, arrange your own B&B locally and just pay to attend the Saturday night meal/social.

Accommodation Type	Price Per Person	Details
Bunkhouse	£36	2 nights in the bunkhouse (8th and 9th May) plus Saturday night meal/social
Camping	£18	2 nights in a tent plus Saturday night meal/social
Caravan/Camper Van	£20	2 nights in a caravan plus Saturday night meal/social (hook up/awning etc cost extra see www.dalesbridge.co.uk for details)
	£10	Saturday night meal/social only

It promises to be a very enjoyable weekend offering a chance to catch up or get acquainted with Masson members past and present, reminisce over the club's 30 year history, and get involved in some outdoor activity in the fantastic setting of North Yorkshire.

To book your place, or for more information, contact Amanda Clements on 01724 345029 or at amandaclements2000@yahoo.co.uk.

Please note we will need to have your booking and full payment in by
Saturday 8th November 2008

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Bob Dearman is temporarily filling this post. See above for details.

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