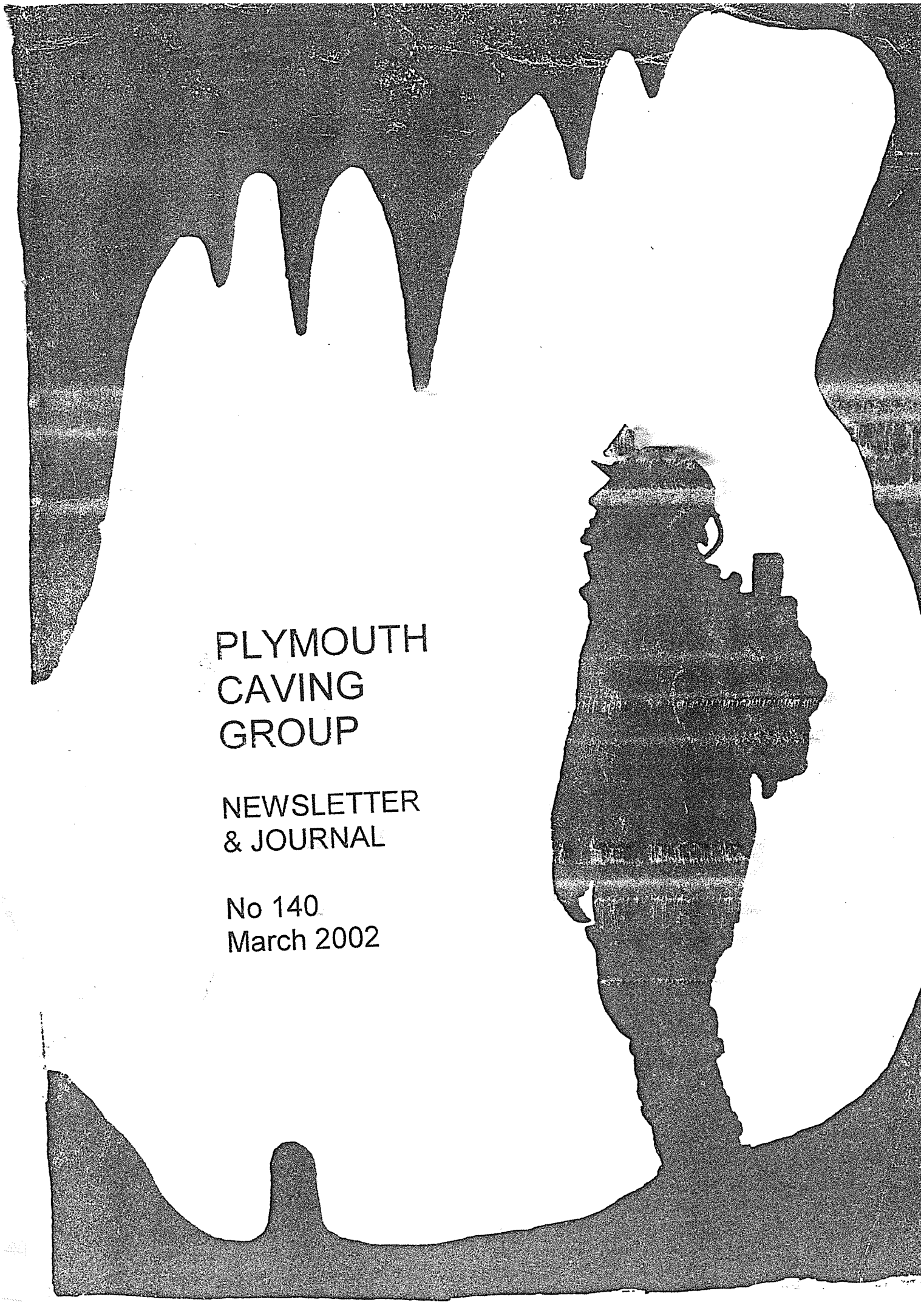


PLYMOUTH CAVING GROUP

NEWSLETTER & JOURNAL

No 140
March 2002

Plymouth Caving Group

Newsletter
No 140

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For **enquiries regarding Plymouth Caving Group** please contact the membership secretary, Colin Smith, 15 Bearsdown Close, Eggbuckland, Plymouth PL6 5TX Telephone 01752 511316 Mobile 07957 258022

Plymouth Caving Group meet at the Thistle Park Tavern, Cattedown, normally on the first Thursday of the month for a committee meeting, at 8 pm. This is open to all.

On other Thursdays we usually meet in the Seymour Arms (near the Art College) from about 9pm.

Trips to local caves and mines are held on alternate Tuesday evenings. Trips at weekends are held, often to other areas. Please contact the Meet Secretary (details below) for details.

The club has a stock of equipment including lamps, belts, helmets, rope, electron ladders and other equipment. Please contact the Tackle Warden (details below) for further details.

We also hold an extensive library of books relating to caving, mining, and related topics, maps, surveys, mine plans and Journals and newsletters exchanged with other clubs. For details please contact the librarian.

Plymouth Caving Group Subscriptions 2002
Full £12
Family £15
Junior/Student/Unwaged £6
Temporary £2

Club Officers 2002

President. Bob Cawthorne

Chairman. Alasdair Neill, 97 Mount Gould Road, Plymouth

Treasurer Patrick Hanlan, Demelza, Tremaba, dobwalls, Liskeard PL14 6JT

Secretary. Chris Kelland, 78 Durham Avenue, Plymouth PL4 8SR

Meet Secretary. Tom Miles Phone 07929 640293

Librarian / Recorder. Alasdair Neill, 97 Mount Gould Road, Plymouth

Rescue Warden Roger King, Old Orchard, South Milton, Kingsbridge, Devon

Tackle Warden. Colin Smith, 15 Bearsdown Close, Eggbuckland, Plymouth PL6 5TX

Membership Secretary Colin Smith 15 Bearsdown Close, Eggbuckland, Plymouth

The club has access to a sites for which keys are necessary including Radford, Afton Red Rift, Baker's Pit (currently closed), Devon Great Consols, Bedford United (Marquis Lode), South Tamar Consols, and Great Rock Mine. The club has leaders for Read's Cave (Derbyshire) and Dan yr Ogof.

Any contributions for the newsletter should be sent to:
David Jean, 13 Tor Road, Hartley, Plymouth PL3 5TE

Plymouth Caving Group
Annual General Meeting 7th February 2002

Present: - A. Neill (AN); P. Hanlan (PH); D. Jean (DJ); S. Daw (SD); T.Miles (TM) & C Kelland (CK)

Apologies: - R. King; T. Ford; A. Parsons & A. Ozane.

Minutes from the last AGM were read and agreed by the members present.

Officers Reports

Chairman's Report

Like all caving clubs and many similar organisations, the past year has been greatly affected by the dreaded foot and mouth. Unless in the previous outbreak in the 1960's this was rapidly responded to by a virtual suspension of the caving activities. This time it has been of course much more prolonged, and although we were able to restart some caving within a few months, it has only been in the past few months that access in South Wales and the Yorkshire Dales really returned to anything like normal.

Once Tuesday night trips resumed, these have mostly been quite successful, while progress on "alternate" Tuesdays has been made on a long-standing club dig. A number of mine projects have been ongoing in one case allowing access to an area "lost" due to collapse for many years and providing potential for a sporting exchange trip with further digging. Also on the mining front, several members are carrying out much historical research, and a long awaited special publication by one member is reportedly nearly ready for publication.

For those not so keen on mines or research, members have been caving recently on the Mendips, North and South Wales, and also in Yorkshire; however, we need a concentrated effort, from our Meet Secretary to organise, and from the rest of us to support, club meets apart from those on Tuesday nights.

On the access front, Bakers Pit is now fully open again, access administrated by DCUC. This, the premier cave in Devon, was "adopted" by the PCG many years ago. We should therefore continue to try and keep the cave in pristine state. DCUC has also taken on the task of trying to achieve an access arrangement for Phoenix. There appear to be proposals for land reclamation possibly involving shaft capping in the Tavistock area; we must press for our interest to be heard in any consultation regarding this.

Looking at the AGM minutes from a year ago, there were some very negative comments from one quarter about the future of the club. I think these were uncalled for; as long as the club has members actively caving, we have a newsletter, which appears regularly, and we have the equipment necessary to get out there, the club should be seen as carrying on with its aims. Yes it would be great to attract many new members (particularly young ones), and to be able to raise funds to substantially improve out resources. This of course requires enthusiasm to organise, which not everyone perhaps has – but we must all try to support anyone who is willing to put in the time to do this.

There have been various enquiries from potential new members, some of whom have come along on trips and have joined.

Secretary's Report

The secretary reported that he was not happy with the way the club was heading, and with the failure to proceed with many ideas brought up at meetings. He also complained about lack of disclosure of correspondence with the chairman. In the light of this he felt unable to produce a report referring members to his report for the previous year which appeared in newsletter 137.

Treasurers Report

The secretary was unable to read this report. At the moment there is £255.48 in the current account and £556.45 in the deposit account. A further breakdown is currently unavailable.

Membership Secretary

Reported that there are 23 members.

Meet Secretary

No report handed in but verbally reported that successful Tuesday evening trips and trips further afield had taken place throughout the year.

Editor

No written report but verbally reported that the club had produced three Newsletters in the year as the committee requested. Thanks to all those members who made this possible by providing articles, which were all of a high quality.

Tackle Warden

This has been a fairly quiet year in terms of tackle use, primarily due to foot and mouth disease, so little in the way of additional wear & tear on the equipment. Having said that, some of the rope and rope bags were already quite worn and damaged. Over the course of the year I've managed to gather a few bits of scattered kit, thanks to all for their efforts in this matter.

The Tackle Store: - There has been much talk of the dampness in the store, but in the last year there has been little/no problem with damp. Due in part to what seems to have been a dry year; in addition I believe there has been some re-pointing of the stonework of the walls above the store. There is more room in the store now that the majority of the DCRO (Devon Cave Rescue Organisation) equipment has been moved to Buckfastleigh.

Rope: - In November I checked the ropes with a view to getting them tested. Cut 2.5meters from each rope, re-measured and re-labelled all but two of the ropes (two lifelines). A couple of the long ropes had damage along their length and so were cut at that point, good news - we have more ropes, bad news - we no longer have a 100m rope!

The test pieces were sent to Owen Clark, who is the NCA contact for rope testing, but as yet have had no results returned. I've tried to contact Owen to ask what's happening, even an indication that he received the rope, as yet no news.

In the mean time, as tackle warden I would strongly recommend that the ropes bought in the 80's be retired and some new rope purchased as a club priority.

Beware - The Rope measuring and re-labelling took some time and money, so to ensure it was only done once I've labelled the ropes as Tested 2001, this is not true until I receive the test results. So all members should be aware of the fact that no rope has been tested since 1995!

Tackle Bags: - We have enough bags for the gear we have, but some of them are reaching the end of their working lives, shoulder straps broken, tie rope missing, holes warn in the bottom rim etc. This is not a matter of urgent concern but we need to bear this in mind and think about preparing for replacement in the not too distant future.

Ladders: - One of the Electron Ladders (Lyon 89 9m Light 3mm) has quite heavy rust on the steel wire, I therefore recommend that it be scrapped, and if the committee deem it necessary, replace it.

Lights: - This has been the area of greatest improvement, but is not ideal. There are seven lights available for use, but the time each battery lasts varies from 5 to 14 hours. In addition on of the lamps has just developed an intermittent fault 'inside' one of the cells! Even with this I don't think the club needs to spend anything on lights unless we see a dramatic increase in new members.

Misc' Tackle: - The rest of the tackle is well used but no specific replacement imminent.

General Matters: - I've added some information boxes to the Tackle Return Record Sheets (reverse of the tackle Loan Record Sheets), this is for recording the number of Descents /Assents (the form has a typo and asks for Decent!) each rope was subjected too. I know this is the last thing people want to think about when they return rope, and may not know for sure, but as the NCA form says your estimate of use will be much closer to reality than my guess. This information is required no the NCA rope testing sheets, which in themselves are a bit like a Tax Return form to fill in. So your assistance in this matter would be much appreciated.

Rescue Warden

No report handed in but verbally reported that the club had carried out its DCRO obligations.

Library Officer

The library has seen well over a 100 additions in the past year, mostly publications received in exchange with other societies for PCG publications, and donations. We have not purchased any items during the year apart from one survey; there have been quite a few new mining and caving books released recently, which would be useful additions if we had the funds.

A few items have been borrowed during the year; I am sure more use of the library would be made if we had easier access, but this is not likely under the club's current circumstances.

I have made a start on putting the current list (nearly ten years out of date) on computer, which will allow it to be made up to date in the future. Unfortunately as many additions made since then have not been listed, to make an up to date list means going through the entire library stock, a long job, which should not have been necessary. There are a lot of items missing, including virtually all our collection of videos, and there is no record in the library of what people have borrowed over the last few years, which has made it impossible to keep track of where everything is since I took over the library at the last AGM. We have a good

library; please will people use it, but take care of what we have, much of which is irreplaceable.

Conservation Officer

No report handed in but verbally reported little activity in the year.

Assistant Tackle Warden

No report handed in but endorsed tackle warden's report.

DCUC Representative's Report

I am exceedingly annoyed with the DCUC regarding the level of communications. There has been NO communication for two years, which is appalling. The DCUC have been informed of Roger's position as representative and have failed to communicate with him.

Election of Officers

		Proposed	Seconded
President	Bob Cawthorne.	PH	CS
Chairman	Alasdair Neill.	TM	PH
Treasurer	Patrick Hanlan	DJ	AN
Secretary	Deferred	-	-
Meet Secretary	Tom Miles	PH	SD
Editor	Dave Jean	CS	TM
Assistant Editor	Vacant	-	-
Librarian	Alasdair Neill	PH	DJ
Membership Secretary	Colin Smith	DJ	SD
Conservation Officer	Vacant	-	-
Tackle Warden	Colin Smith	PH	SD
Assistant Tackle Warden	Selina Daw	PH	DJ
Rescue Warden	Roger King	CS	AN
DCUC Representative	Roger King	DJ	SD

Any Other Business

PH proposed that membership fees be increased to £12 per year, Student £6 and Family membership increased to £15. The newly elected committee passed this.

Temporary membership fees will be £2. This will cover a person for a maximum period of 21 days according to the insurance policy. If any temporary member decides to take up full membership within the 21 day temp' period, their £2 will be deducted from their full membership fee.

Selina Daw offered to be interviewed by a radio presenter regarding the promotion of the PCG.

Tom Miles reported that the current situation of the University Caving Club is "un-sure"; and that he will keep the PCG informed.

The meeting closed at 10pm.

Don't Forget

If you haven't already done so it is time to pay your

2002
MEMBERSHIP!

Destination: Ding Dong
Date: Sun 3-2-02
Party: Ali & Colin

In Brief:

This was meant to be a quick trip to look in Engine Shaft of East Luscombe mine, but once the ropes were in placed it was decided that the loose soil and rocks around the neck of the shaft made it a little unsafe. So Ding Dong was visited instead.

Details:

Before getting kitted up we had a quick walk up past Ding Dong to have a look at some walls, shafts and a quarry close by, the 300' Engine shaft of East Luscombe mine. Engine Shaft looks tricky but we'd give it a try.

As can be seen from the photo's we had a good go at getting into it. Ali tested the rope for free hang over the shaft, but due to the disturbed soil and rocks continuing to fall of their own accord, it was agreed that we shouldn't proceed with this little venture.
With an air of quiet disappointment we de-rigged and decided to divert to Ding Dong instead.

The decent down Dyer's Shaft was quite sporting, with a pipe halfway down delivering a watery shower perfectly onto us as we passed it and on to the bottom of the pitch.
The next pitch, a winze off set from Dyer's by about 10m was dry but muddy, dropping on to a pile of rotten, nail infested broken ladders (we did a bit of gardening at this point to make it a little safer).

We had a nice wet walk along the adit level, though the crosscut and up to a point blocked with loose spoil, thought to be below the shaft we'd been unsuccessful in descending earlier.

There were few stopes along the way, the largest one had some very unhealthy look timber keeping the deads up we didn't linger there for long.

Wading sometimes chest deep though ochre had taken its toll and so we made our way back to the winze and exited.

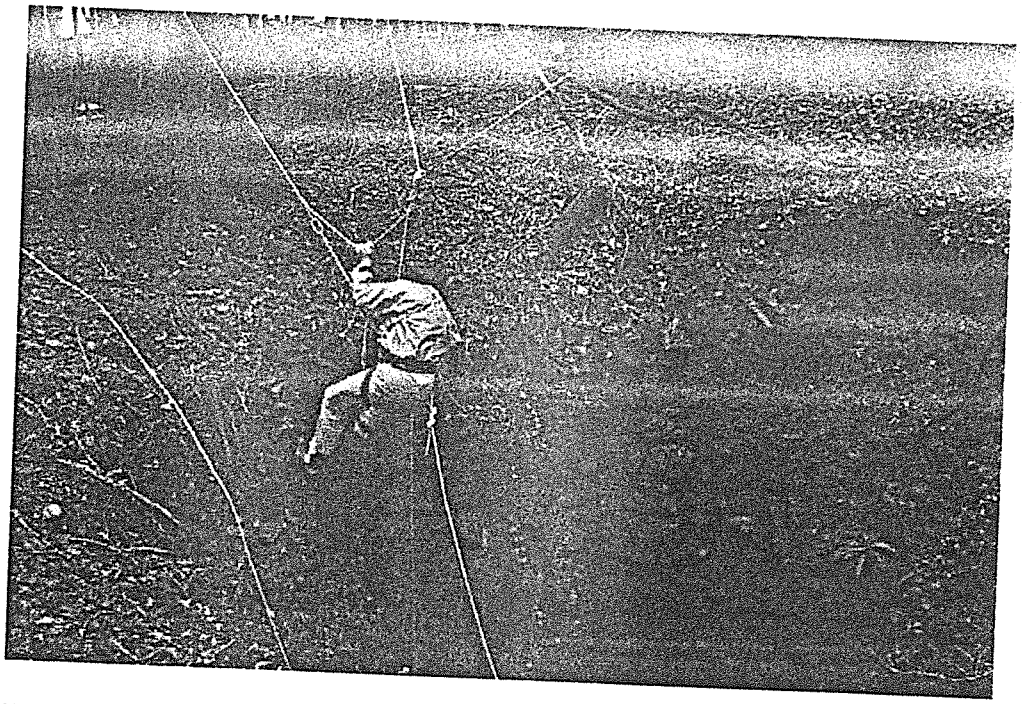
On the way out, the 'shower' on the first pitch cleaned the worst of the gritty mud collected on the way up the second pitch - which was nice - and a satisfied drive back to Plymouth after a good day underground, even if it did look like we'd been 'Tangoed'.

Thanks to the Estate management for granting permission for the trip.

Colin G Smith

p.s. Check out the PCG Web Site:

www.plymouthcavinggroup.freeserve.co.uk Under - Diary - Sun 3 Feb 2002



Engine Shaft

If members would like their copy of the
NEWSLETTER
To be delivered by e-mail then just let me know
At davidjean@tinyworld.co.uk

The advantages include

- Delivery will be hot off the press
- Illustrations will be in colour
- The print will be sharp and not photocopied

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY (140)

BRISTOL EXPLORATION CLUB. Belfry Bulletin 51.6/511. Jordan, New Mexico, French caving glossary, Stock House.
BRITISH CAVE RESCUE COUNCIL. 1997 AGM Agenda.
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Hidden Earth 2001. Insurance details 2001-2
CARN BREA MINING SOCIETY Newsletter 46 (2001). Great Work, Milwr Tunnel. 47(2001). Florence Mine, Croft Shaft.
CHELSEA SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 42.12 (2000) 43.2,3,7,8/9,11,12(2001) 44.1,3(2002)
CORNWALL COUNTY COUNCIL. Land Reclamation Strategy 1999-2000 Incorporating the Tamar Valley.
CRAVEN POTHOLE CLUB. List of Record available 1949-1990.
Record 64 (Oct 2001)
CROYDON CAVING CLUB. Pelobates 81 (Dec 2001).
DEVON CAVE RESCUE ORGANIZATION. The Stretcher. 2001.
DEVON MINERAL MINING CLUB Journal 2.3 (2001).
DEVON SPELAOLOGICAL SOCIETY DSS News 24(2001). 25 (Sept 01). Nun's Cross tunnel. 26 (Feb 2002).
EAST CORNWALL MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION Luckett appeal invite.
INSIDE EARTH No. 1 1996.
KENT UNDERGROUND RESEARCH GROUP Newsletter 69,70,71 (2001)
NAMHO Minutes, Publications received /5/2001. Minutes Sept 2001. Newsletter 41 (2001) Notice of meeting Sept 2001.
NCA Speleoscene 45,49, 2001.
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC 179.3 (1991). Lecheguilla Cave.
PEAK DISTRICT MINING HISTORICAL SOCIETY Book list. Museum flier.
PENGELLY CST Newsletter 82 (2001). Gaping Gill 1909. Lost Valley (nr Lydford) adit. 83(2001) 84 (2001). Afghanistan, Milwr Tunnel.
PCG newsletter & Jnl 138,139
ROYAL FOREST OF DEAN CAVING CLUB Newsletter 126(2001)
SHROPSHIRE MINING CLUB Below 2001.1,2,4.
Annual Journal 7
Minutes etc June, July, Aug,Sept,Dec 2001
SOCIETA SPELEOLOGICA ITALIANA. Speleologia 44, Sept 2001.
SOUTH CROFTY plc. Report & Accounts 2001.
SOUTH WEST OF ENGLAND RESCUE ASSOCIATION. Minutes, Incident Reports etc 1991-1994.
SOCITEA SPELEOLGICA ITALIANA Speleolgia 43(2001)
SOUTH CROFTY plc. Report & accounts 1994.
South Crofty Past, Present & Future
SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB. Newsletter 1-2(1952); 3-6(1953); 7-10(1954); 11-13(1955); 14-18(1956); 19-21(1957); 22-25(1958); 26-30(1959); 33(1960); 35,36,38(1961);39-42(1962); 43,45(1963); 46-48(1964); 49 (1965)
SPELEOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS 38 1999.
TREVITHICK SOCIETY Newsletter 114 Aug 2001;115 Nov 2001; 116(Feb 2002). Journal 28 (2001). Trevithick in S. America. Durfold Clay Works.
UNIVERSITY OF BRISTO SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY. Proceedings22.2,2001. Thailand, St Cuthberts hydrochemistry, Doolin mines

WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY Cattedown Reclamation, Plymouth. Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation 1993
WESSEX CAVE CLUB Journal 26.276 (Sept 2001)
WEST BRECON CAVE RESCUE TEAM. The Way Out Vol 1 issue 9 Summer 2001
WESTMINSTER SPELAEOLOGICAL GROUP Newsletter 2001/2 (2001). Cuba.

PLAN OF CHACEWATER MINE, 1813.

Tracings of Mine Plans:

CORNWALL
Blue Hills Mine RIC: HJ/8/9
Buzza R75
Wheal Culyack & other Bounds RIC: HJ/8/7
Great Pell Bounds CRO: V/P 28
Wheal Kitty Tin Ltd RIC: HJ/8/1-4
Wheal Sarah A87
Spearne Moor R285A
Wheal Vyvyan CRO: V/P 26

DEVON
Devon Burra Burra R98C
Wheal Fortescue (MRO Devon 6)
Furzehill Wood R124B
Wheal George & Charlotte (Tavistock Woodlands offic per Trish Browning)
Lydford Consols R281A
Sigford Consols R224C
Standcombe R143E
Longwood / August Survey MCG 1982

MATIENZO, SUMMER 2001

Over about four weeks this summer saw caving by at Matienzo by a small number of cavers, with the usual families etc in tow, probably about 50 people come and go, mainly from Britain, with some Canadians, a Dane and our Catalan friends joined us for the last week of the expedition. The PCG were again represented by Ali and the Cawthornes. Over 1.5 km of new passage was discovered. Bob and Lloyd Cawthorne were out from the start and managed to locate a considerable number of new caves, and visited Agua, Arenal, Coberruyo, Patatal, Comediante and other caves. Bob's brother Ted travelled out on the same ferry from Plymouth as Ali.

Before I arrived there was a considerable amount of new exploration achieved; 1338 was connected to Coteron - so is now 26 km long- and Hidden Hole went. In the latter cave the top of the first pitch was opened up to allow normal sized cavers in, and the tight top of the previously unexplored pitch was opened up. This pitch proved to be 60m deep, dropping into large passage.

The trips I went on were mainly in two caves; a few days were also spent checking out various holes on the hillside above the South Vega system. The usual numbers of new holes were located, some with interesting draughts. A couple of days were spent in Praying Mantis, where a pitch was descended to a tight slot which was opened up using a power chisel. Unfortunately the strong draught proved to come from a very narrow rift with no prospect of

widening for some distance. There are other interesting holes nearby. We also did a photo trip in Uzueka, as far as the start of the Gorilla Walk.

In the South Vega System, a trip to Sump I in Renada - one of the first major explorations by the British in the early 1970's - revealed a number of wide open passages missed by the earlier surveyors. These included a series of 2 to 3m diameter phreatic tubes ending at sumps, passing under Mega Hall.

408.

This cave was first explored in the early 1980's, down some pitches into large chambers. At Easter we entered the passage leading to the first pitch, noting a good outward draught (on a cold day) and discovering fragments of a large pot. This has now been reconstructed by Santander museum, and is probably Bronze Age. A party explored the old cave at Whit, but could not locate the draught, although a small extension was made by climbing up into a tube over the first pitch.

Our first trip in the summer saw a large party carrying ladders, rope, maypoles etc to the cave, and using the maypoles to gain a ledge near the top of the first pitch. This entered a passage carrying the draught, which immediately opened out over the top of a chamber in the old cave. A 20m long traverse passed this to gain 30m of passage ending at a pitch.
The next trip saw this laddered (10m deep), beyond which was another deeper pitch for which we did not have enough tackle.

Another trip four days later saw this pitch descended on SRT, a 15m descent with a rebelay on a large ledge. At the bottom a small stream sank in a slot carrying draught. Above this a large ledge was gained by combined tactics, from which a draughting passage eventually choked. Part way up the climb, a route regained the stream and ended in a low bedding carrying the draught. I dug out the end, to reveal a small hole through which falling water could be heard. I dug out the floor below this, which started rocks falling somewhere below apparently down a pitch. The others having joined me, this hole was made big enough to pass. A rope was rigged just in case, which was fortunate as immediately below was a pitch thought to be 30-40m deep. Ahead was a chamber with further deep holes all surrounded by mounds of rubble. I started clearing this.

Next day saw the dig opened up to an easy hands and knees crawl, and several hours gardening before the pitch was deep enough to descend. This proved to be a free hanging descent of 30m, on which a long deviation was rigged to avoid any falling debris. This landed on a large ledge, beyond was a considerably deeper pitch. The whole could be rigged as one big free hang from further forward, but this would require much more gardening.

The second part of the big pitch was descended on the next trip, being again a free hang from a large Y-hang rebelay on the ledge. The total depth proved to be 86m, also a 4m descent to gain the Garden at the top.

At the foot of the pitch the cave degenerated to a short section of meander, pushed through a tight squeeze to the head of a pitch estimated at at least 30m, left for next year. Various windows in the shaft included one which may pass over this shaft, but is very muddy.

The total surveyed length of the cave is 400m and depth 121m.

458 Hidden Hole.

Following the break through into large passage here, I went on two pushing trips in this cave. On the first we first went along a very well decorated passage which ends in a large rift. At the foot of this a short pitch was descended, but only dropped into a further short section of rift.

Back near the base of the 60m pitch, a traverse leads down through some low sections to a large passage. This contains a rift in the floor which was dropped but beyond the a bolt climb would be required to get further at this level. To the left a complex maze with numerous holes in the floor was entered.

Another trip saw a traverse made around the right side of the large passage, which ended in tight draughting rifts. A number of pitches in the floor were explored, but many more remain for another year. This cave has been surveyed to 710m long and 118m deep.

Alasdair Neill.

Important Notices

Subscriptions for 2002 are now due

Planned Meets:

The University has preliminary planned at caving trip to South Wales for the long weekend of Friday 3rd to Monday 6th May 2002. All PCG members are welcome to attend the long weekend. Further information can be obtained from T. Miles 07929640293.

19th March 2002. Radford Caves. Meet Bretonside bus station 19.00 hrs. Contact A. Neill 07808486507.

2nd April 2002. To Be Arranged. Contact T. Miles for details. T. Miles 07929640293.

10th April 2002 DCRO Training Event, Crest Hill, Buckfastleigh 19.30 hrs

16th April 2002. DGC Mine. Meet Bretonside bus station 19.00 hrs. Contact A. Neill 07808486507.

12th June 2002 DCRO Training Event, Crest Hill, Buckfaastleigh 19.30 hrs

For access arrangements for members to Bakers Pit please contact either Colin Smith, Ali Neill or Chris Kelland.

The next committee meeting will be at Thistle Park Tavern on **11 April 2002** at 20.00 hrs

The advantage of receiving an e-mailed Newsletter is that this edition is being e-mailed to those members who requested this service on Wednesday 13 March. The newsletter will not be printed until Tuesday 19 March and distributed w/e 23 March. If you wish to receive an e-mail copy in future let the editor know on davidjean@tinyworld.co.uk.