Plymouth Caving Group

Newsletter and Journal
January 2015



Lydia in a kibble in the mine at Ystrad Einion *photo Alex Heath*

Issue Number 156

Editorial

The last Newsletter was only back in November but, since then, such a lot has happened that it now seems quite a while ago. Most of this issue, in contrast to the last one which favoured Devon caves, is devoted to the trip to North Wales that we made in November and so is largely devoted to mines.

Since the last Newsletter the club has gained at least 10 new members and it is pleasing to see that everyone is actively involved in club activities supporting both the underground and social activities such as the club Christmas Dinner, this year attended by 26 members.



PCG Christmas Meal 2014 *photo Paul Gregory*

Sorry Neil, your eyes were closed in both the pictures Paul sent to me, and Keith looks as if he has had a few pints already.

As I write this editorial we have just had a Tuesday evening trip to 3 localities, two mines in Cornwall and some caves near Chudleigh, together attended by 23 members. Some of you are about to go to South Wales, I am off as the Devon and Cornwall Underground representative to the British Caving Association meeting near Pershore in Worcestershire and some of us are off to see the final episode in the Hobbit trilogy. A lot going on.

Next month we all have an opportunity to participate in the way our club is run. There is a notice later in the Newsletter about the Annual General Meeting but do get there if you can. It is not just a boring meeting but a way of sharing ideas about the sorts of things we would like to see happening in the coming year as well as being a review of the successful year we have just had.

Anyway, until the next Newsletter enjoy your trips underground.

David Jean

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Results of the British Caving Association Vote

Just before Christmas, those of you who had been members of the club since before October had the opportunity to take part in a BCA ballot, the results of which are shown below

19th December 2014

BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION CONSULTATIVE BALLOT 2014

Our report of voting for the above ballot, which closed yesterday at noon, is as follows:

Question:
Should BCA, on your behalf, campaign for The Countryside and Rights of Way Act to apply to going underground?

Number of eligible voters: 6,085
Total number of votes cast: 2,270
Turnout: 37.3%
Number of votes found to be invalid: 4
Total number of valid votes to be counted: 2,266

Result
Number voting YES ..... 1,402 (61.9% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO ..... 864 (38.1% of the valid vote)
TOTAL 2,266 (100% of the valid vote)

Electoral Reform Services can confirm that, as far as reasonably practicable, every person whose name appeared on the electoral roll supplied to us for the purpose of the ballot:-
a) was sent the details of the ballot and
b) if they chose to participate in the ballot, had their vote fairly and accurately recorded.

The chairman of the BCA, Andy Eavis, made the following comment in his report to the BCA Council

"As Chairman I have thought long and hard over the attitude I should adopt to recent results of the CROW poll. It's tempting to think that a comparatively small majority in favour of CROW applying to caves is the worst possible outcome of the poll. However, there is an entirely different way of looking at it:
If CROW does apply to caves, potentially cavers will have a much bigger say in how access and conservation are controlled. That could be very good for caves and cavers providing it is organised and administered very well. That is our challenge, and that is coupled with the challenge that if we are going to fit in with our membership's wishes (or within the majority of our memberships wishes), we have to get 70% of our individual members and 70% of group members in favour of changing the Constitution. So as I see it, BCA council has to put forward a robust proposal for improving access and conservation with CROW applying to caves. If we can do that and convince our individual members and club members that is the situation, I think we can improve the whole position with cave conservation and access.
In the right circumstances it must be correct for caves to be administered by people who love, understand and use the fantastic resource of caves in Britain."

In response to this I asked if by caving it meant all underground activity was covered. Most felt that generally mines would complicate any negotiations. I was supported by the NAHMO representative who stated that at some stage mines would need to be included. This was agreed. It appeared that a large number of no votes came from the South West as both the Devon and Cornwall Underground Council and the Council of Southern Caving Clubs position was to maintain the status quo and vote no. It also appears that many of those who had a prime interest in mines also voted no so the debate goes on.

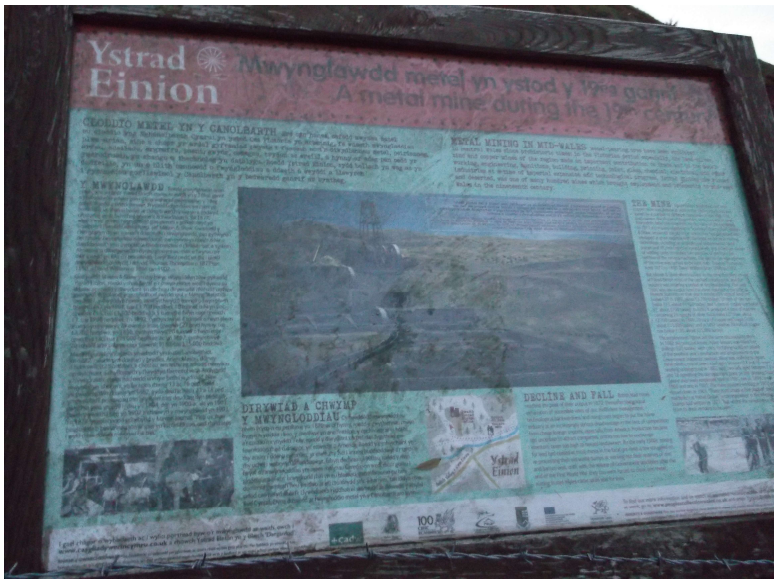
David Jean

Ystrad Einion

On the way to Snowdonia we decided to call in on a copper mine en route. Little did we realise that there was more than one Furnace and, for a long while, we were heading for the wrong one! Thus we reached the mine just as daylight was fading. Ystrad Einion is a lead-silver, zinc and copper mine on a NE-SW lode and is one of the most northerly metal mines in Ceredigion, situated in Cwm Einion (Artists Valley) near the village of Furnace on the Dovey estuary. Mining had been carried out here in a small way since the 18th century, but the main period of activity came in the final decades of the 19th century, when Lancastrian entrepreneur Adam Mason leased the land from the Pryses of Gogerddan and sank over £3000 in state-of-the-art equipment.

Ystrad Einion was a relatively small mine; a report of 1891 notes just 11 miners working at the site, 9 men labouring underground and 2 lads, aged between 13 and 18 above ground. It also proved spectacular unprofitable, with minimal, if any, returns. In 1891 the mine produced 5 tons of silver bearing lead (value £37), 10 tons of zinc ore (value £15) and 5 tons of copper

ore (value £7). The mine was closed in 1903, when much of the machinery was sold or scrapped.



David Jean

The above ground remains of the mine have been consolidated and are accessible to the public. We were unable to have a good look at this due to darkness but the earlier group who went straight there had a good look around. Here processing to recover the metal ore took place. Water provided the main source of power and was brought to the site via a leat running off from the River Einion 2km up stream. The wheel pits for three waterwheels survive, one wheel powered the pumps and winding drum at the main shaft head, another powered the stone breaker and crusher machinery in the crusher house, where lumps of ore bearing rock were reduced to a manageable size, and the third powered the jiggers and buddles which sorted and separated the metal ore. Other features of the site included waste tips, two stone ore bins, a blacksmiths shop, an ore store, an elaborate system of settling troughs and ponds to purify the poisonous wastewater, a gunpowder magazine set away from the other buildings and a series of tramways together with an incline that transported ore, waste and other materials around the site.


Proof that I do get underground! *Photo Toby Roberts*

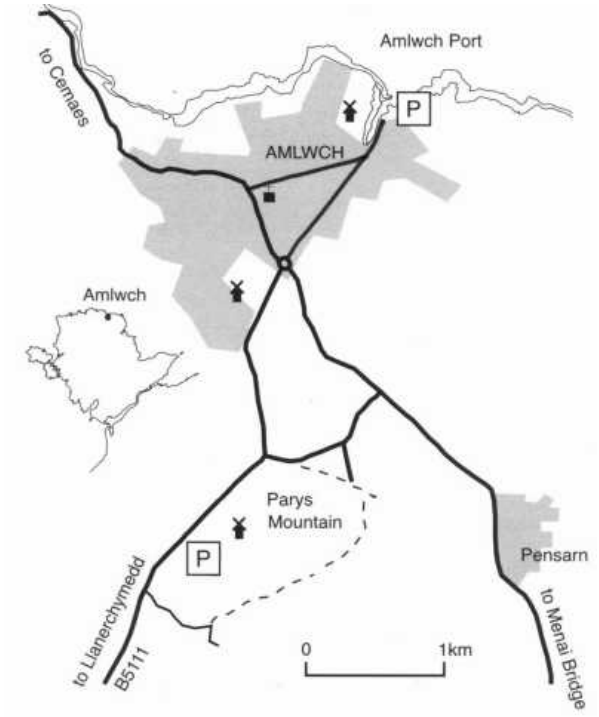


Toby Roberts

Below ground are 4 levels of workings, accessed through adits cut in the hillside and linked by a number of shafts that reached an ultimate depth of 50 fathoms. A 16 ft waterwheel (NPRN 415676) which operated drainage pumps and a winding drum survives below ground and is one of only two surviving in situ in mines. Two mining museums, including Morwellham, also have waterwheels but neither is original.

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales and
David Jean

Parys Mountain



Parys Underground Group

The Mona and Parys copper mines are located on Parys Mountain about two miles south of Amlwch in Anglesey. This was trip organised by Rick and took us early on the Friday morning to a windswept car park on Anglesey. There we met members of the Parys Underground Group who were to take the team into the copper mines which were linked underground. First we got an orientation as we stood in front of the vast open cast pit.


The open cast pit. The entrance is to the left of the stack in the background which is an old windmill *Photos Dave Warne*




The Mona Mine entrance
Photo Dave Jean



The remains of what was a five sailed windmill used to pump the mine. It now contains an exhibition including a map of the mine *Photos Dave Jean*

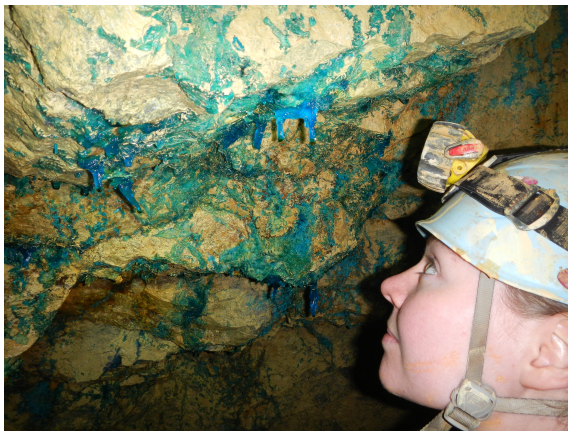




Underground *Photos Dave Warne*







Further underground photos Alex Heath

Croesor Rhosydd – The Through Trip

Both Croesor and Rhosydd are very large and extensive slate mines (or quarries, as they should be known) beneath the mountain of Moelwyn Mawr, North Wales. In the later stages of the mining of Croesor and Rhosydd both had boundaries that lay very close to one another. An ongoing dispute arose when each mine accused the other of crossing their boundary, effectively trespassing and 'stealing' slate. To settle the dispute they agreed to surveying by driving a short tunnel to connect the two mines. It was discovered that both mines had, in fact, trespassed! After the issue was settled it was decided to keep the tunnel open as it would aid ventilation and act as an emergency escape for both mines. This was effectively the point of the creation of the infamous Croesor Rhosydd Through Trip.

Both mines are deeply flooded. Croesor has only one adit (with the exception of a couple air shafts and the connection to Rhosydd). Rhosydd has several adits but it is believed that only one remains open today; no.9 adit. I say 'it is believed' because I have yet to experience the glamorous exit of Rhosydd no.9 adit instead of the *interesting* (to say the least) exit via climbing (or in my case, attempting to climb) out of one of Rhosydd's open pits (Twll, in Welsh) into the quarry.

Both these mines, like others, are ever changing and deteriorating. I was part of the previous Plymouth Caving Group organised Croesor Rhosydd Through

Trip and the change we saw in just two years gave us a stark realisation that in a short time this *epic* trip could easily be completely lost.

Technically, the entrance and exit points of the trip aren't even a mile apart, and yet, it still proves to be a very challenging, enduring and not to mention thrilling trip. Not unlike you'd find in a Lara Croft scene! Something any adrenaline junkie underground explorer would enjoy.

Given the trying nature of the trip we knew how important it was to make sure we were fully prepared for undertaking the adventure. It was agreed that the group would consist of Lionel, Richard, Alex, Lydia and I. Given our previous experience we had an insight into what we needed and how long we needed to allow ourselves. We had additional matter of daylight hours to consider this time due to the time of year. Lionel took the lead ensuring we were packed and ready for our early start. We ended up with six bags packed full of ropes, metal work, SRT gear, food and water supplies, our dingy, a life jacket, slings etc.

After an early start and a hearty breakfast we headed off to see what delights Croesor Rhosydd had in store for us.

It was a bit of a grey start, which I was rather thankful for as our previous hike up to the entrance proved hot and sweaty – I was knackered before we even got to the entrance! Again, the climb uphill was quite arduous, just as I remembered.

We came to the Croesor adit and made our way in. You could tell it was a through trip as soon as you got into the mine due to the breeze flowing through the tunnel. This is what would cause us to chill down quickly if we were to stop for too long.



Photos Alex Heath

Due to our previous experience, we found the start (first pitch) of the Through Trip with ease. We were actually surprised at how little time it took us, but then last time we did spend a while searching and ensuring that we were going the correct way. We had to climb over old winding machinery workings at the bottom of the old incline and then on up the incline. We proceeded to climb.

To our left led into Chamber 1 East. The sheer size of this chamber is mind-blowing and our lights were almost 'eaten' by the darkness of this staggering chamber. I don't think it could ever fail to impress.

Looking down off our little ledge we were roughly 80ft from the boulder riddled floor and it was approximately another 20ft or more to the roof. The roof had clearly suffered several collapses leaving the boulder-strewn floor.

We kitted up with our SRT gear and turned our attention to rigging the pitch. There was clearly newer rigging and ropes in situ compared to what we were faced with last time we completed the trip, but thankfully we still decided to use our own ropes. We later discovered at least one large knot in the in situ rope.

The pitch was mostly a free hang after the initial climb over the edge. It eased our nerves that we knew this from our last adventure into Croesor Rhosydd. Richard was the first to take on the sheer drop, after rigging, followed by Lydia, me, Alex then Lionel. Though it was quite a sobering feeling peering over the sheer drop, we all enjoyed the abseil into the abyss of darkness.

By the time I'd touched down Richard had scrambled across the mass of boulders to check out and rig the next pitch down.

As we approached the opening to the next chamber we could see that it was another large abseil, roughly 70ft. Once again we opted for our own rope, which Richard rigged. This one had slightly more of an awkward start, which pinned you quite close to the rock face and wondering which side of the rope you wanted to be on. After that it came to another free hang. We made our way down the second abseil.

Having completed the two large pitches we knew it'd be quite an arduous task if we had to turn back and retreat the way we had entered due to inability to carry on or being faced with a collapse. This thought stayed with me throughout the adventure.

We felt as though we were making good time, but it was still early days.

This was a much smaller chamber and our torchlights lit up a small lake of crystal clear, aquamarine blue water and a ZIP WIRE!!! We used the pulley that was in situ on the steel cable that stretched the length of the lake of blue and over to a ledge on the other side. One at a time we zipped across with smiles on our faces – you are never too old for a good zip wire!



We moved along the wall to the next chamber to be faced with yet more crystal clear water (which looked extremely cold, I may add), but this time there was a suspension bridge crossing the water. One by one we hooked our cowstails onto the steel cable and walked across the bridge. The bridge dipped down into the water in the middle and moved about quite a lot. We each managed to hop onto dry land, though we did take this opportunity for some 'character building' for Alex – he was last across and we decided it'd be wrong if we all got over completely dry so a few stone splashes later we decided to move on to our next obstacle, all buzzing from the trip so far.

We continued on the most obvious route and found ourselves at the first bridge…one I'd almost forgotten about. Most of the deck of the bridge was missing and the parts that were left to walk on felt like walking on wet sponge, which was quite disconcerting. We crossed it one at a time and rather slowly. Even though we were attached by our cowstails we couldn't help be feel unnerved if our balanced was swayed a little from looking down at bottomless water pit below (or that is what it seemed like at least!).

All across, looking back, we were pleased that the first bridge was tackled with some ease yet we knew that we still had 'The Bridge of Death' to take on!!! Throughout the whole trip I couldn't help but question how the whole lot was ever rigged to start with and I found myself questioning the sanity of the original riggers!

The next challenge was getting ourselves off the platform we were stood on, over a drop into water around a corner and up onto the next level. There were steel cables and rope to clip our cowstails into. Richard went over first with much ease. I was next and although I started off well, I allowed myself to lose height and then didn't have the arm strength to pull myself up and over the ledge. Fear not, Richard came to the rescue and managed to pull me up – not

the most graceful, but it got me up. Alex, Lydia and Lionel got across with all grace still intact!

We pressed on, only to find ourselves face to face with (dun dun dun) 'The Bridge of Death'! This is the part of the trip that instilled the most fear in all of us. We stood there and analysed the bridge. It had changed quite a lot since the last time we completed the trip and it had different rigging. In fact, the new rigging made it seem somewhat safer, although the bridge itself seemed more decayed. The central support and half a beam were all that was left really. There was steel cabling and ropes which were rigged from the roof in the centre to the platforms either side. We would have to get height to change over in the centre to get onto the next section of steel cable and over to the other side. Below was a 20+ ft drop into icy blue water with vertical walls all around – a very daunting prospect!!



We decided we would need two long cowstails for this one and that we would definitely require steel karabiners or the steel cable would eat through our karabiners (this we found out last time).

Although three of us had combated The Bridge of Death before we couldn't help but feel anxiety rising within. We spent some time making sure everything was correct and that we were as happy as we could be with the situation. Starting with Lionel, one at a time we made our way across. As you stepped off the edge you found yourself free hanging off your cowstails. You had to reach up to the steel cabling and pull yourself along, which became a little more arduous when you got closer to the central rig and had to pull 'uphill'. Thankfully, we found that you could use what was left of the beam to stand on and get height to change over in the middle. The beam was unsteady, swayed a lot and was very decayed, but it did the job. We then found that we could slowly shuffle along the beam and onto the safely of the platform on the other side. We agreed that this was soooo much easier than the previous rigging we had been faced with. I think we all took a moment to commend not just ourselves, but also the 'hero' that had re-rigged the fateful

bridge. The platform that we were stood on was probably only 20ft long before it met another drop into crystal clear and very deep water! We decided that we deserved some much needed lunch and a sit down.

After refuelling we were ready for the next challenge. We peered over the edge of the ledge and out into another huge chamber. The bottom of the whole chamber was flooded and looked very cold and deep. There were various inflatables strewn in the water and several sunken dingys, which added to the reality of the situation. We knew that the other side of this chamber was the end to Croesor and the entrance to Rhosydd, although our lights couldn't stretch that far. We knew from last time that this challenge required the life jacket. We had to abseil down roughly 25ft into a wooden canoe, which sat on the top of the deep, dark, cold abyss of water. I know….a canoe!!??!! Last time a pulley system had been rigged where other group members would pulley the member in the canoe across to a little 'beach' at the other end of the chamber. Unfortunately, this pulley system wasn't working quite how it should. Richard managed to paddle the canoe over to the beach and then Lionel was able to pull it back across the water for the next member to abseil down into. Abseiling into a rickety old canoe is actually easier said than done, but we all managed to get across to the beach one at a time. This was actually good entertainment and we were all is good spirits, although a little tired from all the adrenaline!

Next we had to SRT up approximately 20ft and swing ourselves up to the left to gain access to the tunnel which lead through into Rhosydd. We passed through Croesor's last few chambers, which were smaller, and then up a steep route to enter into Rhosydd. Although we were aware of time and eager to find our way, we still took time to appreciate the workings and old industrial archaeology, which seemed rife.

After walking, climbing, querying, investigating and proceeding on through passages and chambers we found ourselves faced with a Twll with daylight pouring in. We knew that last time we were eager to escape the mine and found ourselves climbing out the Twll. We then discovered that we were in the quarry and had to build ourselves makeshift steps to climb our way out. This time, instead, we were determined to find the no.9 adit and exit with ease. Since we had made great time compared with last time we made the group decision to search out Rhosydd's no.9 adit.

We searched high and low, in and out, around and about and yet we could not seem to locate no.9 adit. We walked passages and climbed up and down any inclines we could find. Slate inclines are horrible as the whole floor moves beneath you. The expression 'one step forwards, two steps backwards' comes to mind. After some searching we questioned whether no.9 adit could of fallen victim to a collapse and decided it might just be best to climb through one of the Twlls. That is what we did.

After quite an uphill scramble through what seemed like a slate jungle, we found ourselves out in mizzly daylight, stood in the quarry (once again – déjà vu from two years previous) on a grassy ledge, looking up to try and find a

suitable way up and out onto the grassy slopes of Moelwyn Mawr. Although we had technically completed the through trip, we were aware that it was far from over as we were faced with the task of escaping the quarry we found ourselves in.

Because it was so wet beneath foot, any rock face that looked climbable was extremely wet, had runoff pouring down it and was covered in green algae, which was as slippery as a banana skin in a cartoon! Eventually Alex managed to free climb one of the slippery rock faces and managed to escape the quarry after a quick crawl through a nice peaty bog! Thankfully Alex had taken a rope which the rest of us could us to aid us up the slope. Lydia made it up and Richard took an alternative route (which didn't look very appealing), leaving Lionel and I to climb up and out of the quarry. My lack of grace hit an all time peak at this point when, after several attempts of defeating the slippery slope, I found myself sideways, face down into the green algae runoff rock face!! Believe it or not, with the aid and moral support of Lionel, I managed to get up and over the grassy verge. I was quickly followed by Lionel who decided against the face down and damp approach I'd tried!!

We all looked at each other, smiled, laughed, and sighed a breath of relief – we had defeated the Croesor Rhosydd Through Trip once again. We all eagerly stood and started to make our way back to the Croesor entrance so that Richard and Alex could go and de-rig our ropes from the two large pitches. After a few slips, slides, giggles and trip evaluations we found ourselves at the entrance once again. The boys disappeared to de-rig.

The cold was really setting in so we were very glad when Richard and Alex popped out the Croesor adit with ropes in tow. We all made a hasty descent down the hill and back to the car with beaming smiles on our faces whilst eagerly discussing our trip.


Put an X where Lionel is!

The Croesor Rhossyd Through Trip is a well-known and famous trip and I can certainly say it is the most exciting and fun-packed underground trip I have ever done. I can honestly say that I thoroughly enjoyed the trip and despite its

challenging nature, I'd go back again and again. Thank you to my teammates that day – what a fantastic, emotion packed, laughter filled and exciting trip!

Laura Milroy

North Wales Caving Trip Through the Eyes of a Newbie

Hello Everyone

Recently I attended the group's trip to North Wales on the Saturday and Sunday. It was great to see such a successful group in action, with member from the deep south of Cornwall to as far afield as Bangor!

The first trip I attended was Parc Lead mine and the Second was the slate mine/quarry at Blaenau Ffestiniog

It was an eye opening experience for me being relatively new to the caving scene. I have spent many days trekking over Snowdonia, above ground and know Snowdon and the surrounding area very well. To see it from below ground was brilliant and having done a little bit of research I know there are many more places to visit in subsequent trips.

Parc Lead mine

The popularity of which cannot be understated, with our group meeting with two other large groups. It got quite congested at times!!

With my fellow group members telling me it's a good trip and with the mine being the biggest I had visited so far, it had a lot to live up to and it didn't disappoint! We started off the trip descending half a dozen old ladders down to the lower levels of the mine with the idea of doing some SRT work to get us even further down.



Half way down I'm informed I need to use some old metal pipe work to slide down the bottom section of this decent. I may have looked cool and collected

but I was thinking there was no way that rusty old pipe is going to stay attached to the mine wall with 14 stone of ugly me swinging around on it! Needless to say to my amazement it stayed attached without so much as a creak and I survived!



Pictures of Parc Mine *Dave Warne*

At this point we got to the shaft we needed to descend down to continue our trip though the mine. I volunteered myself as first to descend. It wasn't very far and having never used SRT equipment before I was keen to try it out much as I could. After being shown how to safely to attach myself to the rope, looking very professional, I began to lean out over the edge, slowly at first building up the confidence to lean back. I pressed the descender lever and….just hung there. I pressed it again and again without budging an inch.

The rest of the group are stood watching politely thinking look at this guy, too scared / amateur to descend 4 or 5 meters! After convincing them it wasn't me and it was the equipment, we discovered the rope was too thick / swollen to run through the descender properly and so, much to our disappointment our trip was cut short.

Another highlight for me after exploring the rest of the accessible parts of the mine was seeing the large mechanical horizontal and vertical shafts that used to operate within the mine, of which the vertical shaft couldn't be fully viewed as it extend so far up and into the darkness, an impressive piece of engineering for sure.

Blaenau Ffestiniog, Slate Quarry

After a quite steep climb / walk / scramble up and over the slate piles to reach the workshops of the former slate mine I had a chance to have a good look around at the various machines and processes that used to carried out, in order to turn a piece of slate out of the ground into a useful product. There was enough machinery and equipment abandoned in position to get a real feel for how the workshop would have looked in full production. In addition to the workshops we got to see a view of the manmade water courses and the a

building at the entrance of the mine the latter of which house the large engines used to pull the carts up and out of the mine.



Toby Roberts

After the old entrance had been blocked up, the group set about finding alternative ways down to reach the mine entrance building. My chosen route down was not the easiest of routes to say the least. Having convinced a few poor souls that “it’s fine, everything will be fine” I began climbing down.

The entrance was huge and inside were massive chambers, each one cut to a similar shape and size and descending into a darkness that even our head torches couldn’t penetrate. Much of the machinery and equipment that had once been used on a daily basis was still in place along with carts that still ran on the tracks.

The sign off

After the trip I arrived home knackered, having only been there for 2 days. Some people did 4 or 5! But with the feeling that doing the full trip next time is a must! If you enjoy caving and haven’t tried a trip like this I recommend it. For me the best way to sum it up is taking all your best trips over the course of say 3 months and then doing similar trips to those over a long weekend, only with beer, breakfast, great views and better caves to see!!

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in making it such a good weekend for myself. The organisers, the drivers, the cooks and the generosity of the group and individuals that leant me the gear I needed to take part in some great trips.

Lastly before I sign off one of the key lessons I learnt over the course of the weekend; Before my first caving trip with the group I told a few friends I was going to try caving. They’re response was that caving was for weirdo’s. Well I can confirm that yes we are a weird bunch. But not as weird as those that don’t like caving!

Thanks for reading

Mike Saw

Disused Bomb Store

After a fantastic day out visiting Llechwedd Slate Mine followed by a meal at Pete's Eats, we finally made our way back to the hut to chill out for our last night in North Wales A short drive and three gates later we were sitting in the kitchen with a cup of tea when Keith gets a message from a friend giving the location of a WW2 bomb store Toby had been researching earlier in the day. The engine was almost running before sound of the email died and off Keith and I went to try and find the location in the dark. After a short drive we found ourselves on the edge of a huge quarry looking down on a concrete forecourt with no way down and the sound of children playing in the distance. At this point we decided to call for reinforcements and we were joined by Toby, Richard, Alex, Lydia, and Dave Poldon, all suited and booted ready for a look around the historic site. We worked our way round the perimeter and found our way down onto the concrete floor of the quarry, facing us was a two storey frontage with delicate arches and brickwork. This we found out was the rebuilt front of the bomb store built after the front part of half of the store had collapsed while still in use from the weight of the slate piled on the roof to conceal it.



Photos Wayne

We made our way to the bright yellow steel door that was the obvious way into the store only to find it locked up tight. Faced with this disappointment the rest of the group wandered off to explore the surrounding area while Lydia took one more look at the door. “What sort of lock is it” I asked. After a quick check “An open one!” she replied, and so we were in! Beyond us was a long tunnel stretching off in the distance! Walking through revealed the shear scale of the place, glancing through the arched doorways on either side we could see chamber after chamber! We made our way through past graffitied walls, old and new, ranging from the predictable ‘Kev Waz Ere’ to almost Banksyen pieces of art sprayed onto the walls.



We reached the back of the store and found another solid door, one that didn't open but did have a small cut out, leading into an old adit for the quarry, an emergency way out perhaps; the old impressions of wooden sleepers were still clearly visible in the floor. There was a platform in front of the door for the railway line that served to deliver and remove the deadly contents of the store through a sliding yellow metal door at the far end. We then made our way to the stairs leading up to the second floor; the floor plan was the same as the ground floor but with two amazingly almost complete elevators, with working doors that wouldn't have looked out of place in a period drama. After a quick look round upstairs we made our way back outside closing the door to this amazing place behind us.



Looking around the outside we could see the sheer scale the place, it would have been twice the size when first built! We followed the old railway line into

the end wall of the quarry as far as it went and then explored another smaller tunnel that was perfectly sized for a narrow gauge railway.



With the night wearing on, and the drive home the following day on our minds, we headed back to the hut for a warming cup of tea sitting round the fire sharing the stories of the night's exploration.

Wayne Pearson

Membership 2015

This is to let you know that your Plymouth Caving Group Membership needs to be renewed for 2015.

Your BCA (British Caving Association) insurance expired on the 31st December 2014.

The BCA is keeping the insurance element of your membership the same for 2015 as it has been for the past few years. At the moment, therefore the renewal of your membership will be £26 for the year but it could be increased at the AGM in February.

Most members have already renewed their membership but for those who haven't yet done so please see either Dave Warne on a Tuesday evening or contact Rupert Goddard direct to renew.



You never know, renewing your membership you could find yourself like this lucky member!

Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 17th February
Rick Stewart is presenting a talk on The Road to Messines – Underground warfare on the Western Front 1915-17
for the Trevithick Society at Liskeard Town Hall at 19.30

Wednesday 18th February
Plymouth Caving Group AGM at Moorcroft at 19.30
see the notice on the next page

Saturday 16th May
An event will be held at Chudleigh Rocks which will include plenty of opportunity for SRT practice as well as a competition between Bernard and Alex. A barbecue is also planned to make this the complete fun day out.



Plymouth Caving Group

Annual General Meeting
To be held at Moorcroft
Wednesday 18th February 2015 at 19.30

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the last AGM, 19th February 2014
   These minutes have been previously circulated
3. Officers Reports
   a) Chairman
   b) Secretary
   c) Treasurer
4. Other Committee Reports
   This is an opportunity for officers to present a brief resume of their work in 2013, if they so wish
5. Election of Officers
6. Election of Other Committee Posts
7. Any Other Business
   This for exceptional items only
   - Constitution change - Proposed rewording for Section 9 – 'Membership and Subscriptions' of the Constitution:

"**All club members join as a provisional member for a period of 6 months. The purpose of this to assess your attitude and suitability for caving with Plymouth Caving Group. The committee reserves the right to refuse membership to any individuals, without giving reason, who they feel does not have due regard to safety and The Caving Code."**

This will be followed by a film reviewing our caving and mining activities in 2014. The film has been made by Wayne.

Further Activities

Plymouth was very heavily bombed during the Second World War and, as a result there are a number of underground shelters. The other evening we were pouring over a map of these sites with Dan in the pub. A few then departed the pub to visit a disused shelter and Dan came up with these photos. One of them is quite poignant showing the drawing of an aeroplane. I am sure visiting such underground sites will be included in our future activities. We already visit disused railway tunnels.



Photos Dan Snaith

