

# The Dodger's Dispatch

The last Millennium Edition

December 2000

Another year bites the dust, another AGM passes and some new faces on the Committee. "What's that?" you say, "changes on the committee! Yes its true, Simon has taken over from Andy as Chairman and Doug has joined for the first time. The full line up for 2001 is as follows:

Simon Dillon (Chairman and Tackle Master),  
Colin Davison (Secretary),  
Nigel Dibben (Treasurer),  
Alan Burgess (Recorder),  
Len Gee (Librarian),  
Bill Booth (Lamps),  
Pete Johnson,  
Doug Kidd,  
Allen Berry,

Membership figures (as at the end of the AGM) stand at:

Honorary Full Members.....	3	Full members.....	71	Life.....	2
Hon. Associate.....	4	Associate.....	11	Family member.....	2
PAID/HON. MEMBERSHIP	93	PROBATIONARY .....	2		

And another shock ... subscriptions have been raised at the AGM to £8 full and £4 associate. Subscriptions are due on 1<sup>st</sup> January and should be paid by the end of March. If you have not already paid, then please send the money to the Hon. Treasurer (payable to "DCC") or hand it to me when I am next at the Edge. You will receive a membership card in exchange.

## SAFETY ON THE EDGE

*The AGM ratified a set of rules to ensure that operations by the Club at Alderley Edge meet the safety standards required by the Club. These rules are attached to this newsletter and everyone should read them as they will be enforced by the Committee and the Club. This is a summary of them:*

- *Take responsibility for your own safety and the safety of others.*
- *Don't start digging without telling the safety committee and appointing a dig leader.*
- *In some cases, you must also wait until the National Trust and others have said yes.*
- *Follow any sensible advice you receive.*

*In particular, dig leaders (called "deputies") will receive a set of "Safe Systems of Work". You should keep to these as the safety committee will use them to judge whether digs are being run safely and will report failures to the committee and general meeting. If anyone disagrees with advice given or the content of a "Safe System of Work", they must not ignore it but must speak to the safety committee or main committee.*

## DIGS AND DISCOVERIES – ALDERLEY AND DERBYSHIRE

Paul and Steve have been busy exploring the new find at the West end of Engine Vein. Digging has stopped over Christmas. The new find has a date in it from the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but the nature of the workings suggests they were dug earlier. Malcolm and Phil have been pushing on with the dig at the East end of the Vein where the temporary roof was replaced in the summer. This dig has now been connected with the rest of Engine Vein but the shaft between the two sections, which slumped a bit in 1999, needs to be cleared by some very careful work. Simon and Allan have been busy at Rowter and elsewhere in Derbyshire. Rowter has long been a target for the DCC and must go ... *one day!*

## DIGS AND DISCOVERIES – YORKSHIRE

Up in Yorkshire, Colin, Pete Kellaway and Tony Brocklebank have made a voice connection between 'Compost Series' and 'Fanny's your Aunt' in Kingsdale Master Cave. Descent of the pitch at the end of the new streamway is being left for drought conditions, if we ever get them again. The pitch head needs enlarging and this involves lying flat out in the stream-bed to drill shot-holes, fire caps and clear spoil. It's also beyond a rather tortuous flat out section which could be a little bit dangerous in flood. New pressure is being put on them from diggers on the far side of the hill who have had success in another section of the 'Three Counties System'. A link through Gragareth would blow the Taffies out of the water in the battle for the longest cave system in UK.

Seven years after the Derbyshire Caving Club Rocket, the midnight air-raid, the exploding rocket at their diggers' dinner, and finally the Sand Caver Golf Challenge, the Bradford Pothole Club have finally honoured the DCC by asking Colin to be guest of honour and make a speech at their Annual Dinner next year.

**Alderley Edge Mines Open Day** To make a change from the last few years and try to revive wider Club interest and attract partners, husbands and wives, Andy suggested an idea, supported by the Club at the AGM, of changing the format of the open weekend in April. Final plans have not yet been drawn up but the current thinking is to use the Club's generator (which saves hire charges of £250), open Wood Mine with donations only (no fixed fee), and then to set up various demonstrations of Club activities in Sand Cavern and the passages around it. These could include digging, abseiling and prusiking, use of ladders, a mineral display, the chemistry of copper extraction, short trips with caplamps, bouncy castle, face painting (Sorry, I'm getting carried away here!), etc. Setting up will be quicker than in former years and the hope is to involve as many club members as possible. There will be an underground barbecue on the Saturday night.

## *The Social Scene*

As the readers of the Dodger's Dispatch know well, this year has seen a bit of a revival of social activity. In June, the Club celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> year with a Dinner Weekend in Derbyshire attended by over fifty members and guests. Then in the autumn there was the traditional firework party at Alderley Edge and in November a Curry Evening in Stockport. Apart from these events, members have taken part in the INTER-NAMHO conference in Cornwall, the Forest 2000 Symposium in Gloucestershire and the BCRA Conference at Bristol. Next year, plans are afoot to repeat the success of the summer camp'n'dine with an event in June in Yorkshire and another Stockport event in November. As well as this, Andy proposed that the April Open Day at Alderley should be enhanced by a social get together for all the Club on the Saturday evening.



**The Web** The Club website is up and running again and now includes two separate but linked sections covering the Derbyshire Caving Club and the Alderley Edge Mines. Comments, suggestions and items to include would be welcomed by Nigel. There are "spaces" in the site for insertion of dig and expedition reports. The site uses some of the pages developed by Charlie

Cleary on his Alderley site.

The sites are: [www.DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk](http://www.DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk) & [www.TheAlderleyEdgeMines.org.uk](http://www.TheAlderleyEdgeMines.org.uk)

With a lot of members now having access to the Internet, a list has been prepared of members e-mail addresses. If anyone wants a copy or wants to be added to the list, let Nigel know (send an e-mail to: [Dibben@aol.com](mailto:Dibben@aol.com)).  
*Members on the list will receive this newsletter by e-mail to save on postage and copying.*

## "What else could we do on a Sunday afternoon??" (by Kerry McGUIGAN)

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2000. Today turned out a little different to the normal Sunday on the Edge.

When Channel 4 began life it promised its viewers it would provide programming with a difference, it would veer from the norm and wouldn't be afraid to take risks. We are about to see if it lives up to that promise as 3

otherwise reasonably sane members of the DCC have decided to try and secure a place on Scrapheap Challenge; a game that will stretch their talents to the limit and put their ingenuity, friendship and sense of humour to the test. For this we can ultimately blame Charlie – instigator and general team co-ordinator. And the team itself ... Malcolm (Ferret) Bailey, Paul (Mole) Morrison and Ian (Big 'E') Roberts who, at the time of going to press, are working together under the title of "The Troglodytes".

It all began sitting in the warmth and reasonable comfort of the surgery, completing forms, taking inside leg measurements with steel tape measures, and answering a barrage of probing questions – Familiarity with engines? Never on the first date! Then it was out into the elements (cold and wet by this time) and down to the new shaft at Engine Vein to film a video to introduce and "sell" our intrepid threesome to the powers that be at Channel 4.

Charlie, now elevated to the position of director, senior cameraman and sound recordist, appeared kitted out like the true professional – a large hat and a video camera wrapped in a black bin bag to keep the rain off. All he lacked was a megaphone and director's chair. Some gentle coaching ensued ("What, no idiot boards?" "How many takes do we get?" "Doesn't your camcorder have autocue Charlie?") Being a video some action was needed so, one by one, each of the team was required to emerge from the top of the shaft and do a brief chat to camera – name, rank and special talents. All went well. Only one retake after Big 'E' shot out of the shaft like a rat up a drainpipe taking the director completely by surprise ("I was only trying to look enthusiastic").

On to the next sequence – a masterpiece of timing and co-ordination. Ferret and Mole were to appear in the landrover towing the winch and drive up to Big 'E' who would then direct them through the gates and together they would uncouple the equipment, whip it up the hill and erect it over the shaft. Execution was flawless. Were these really the same men who had just done in minutes what normally takes them half a morning with time out for bacon booty breaks, deliberation and general conversation? Apparently so. They proceeded to lower the hook into the shaft and winch up a bucket full of spoil from deep below, all to a running commentary provided by Ferret. Then the whole lot was dismantled ("An erection in reverse" according to the aforementioned Ferret) and it was all rounded off with a group shot, much good humour, and a lot of finger crossing.

And there you have it. An afternoon with the stars of the future. And my part in all this? Well somebody had to be down the hole to put the bucket on the hook!

They should know if they've been successful by the end of February, so watch this space. At least I'll be able to say "I knew them when ...."

(Autographed copies of the video will shortly be on sale to the general public. Cheques made payable to Charlie B. de Mille)

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

- April 2001 - 21/22 Open Weekend at Alderley (see article in this newsletter)
- June 2001 - Paul and Donna marry on 2<sup>nd</sup> June.  
- Dinner in Yorkshire proposed for later in June
- September 2001 - 1/2 Open Weekend at Alderley  
- NAMHO conference at Avoca in the Wicklows, Republic of Ireland. Club will probably hire a minibus.  
- BCRA conference

### **DCC AND DATA PROTECTION**

To comply with the Data Protection Act, members should be aware that their information is stored on a computer database used solely for mailing and accounting purposes. We might periodically issue a membership list to members to facilitate the existing informal information exchange, but the information is used for no other purpose. If you object to your name, postal address, e-mail address and telephone number being so used, then please inform the Honorary Treasurer.

Any comments, items for the next edition, volunteers to be editor, etc. to me, please. [Dibben@aol.com](mailto:Dibben@aol.com)

**SAFE AND LEGAL USE  
OF THE ALDERLEY EDGE MINES  
BY MEMBERS OF THE DERBYSHIRE CAVING CLUB**

**NOTICE**  
PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY  
AND RAISE ANY ISSUES WITH A  
MAIN COMMITTEE OR SAFETY  
COMMITTEE MEMBER.  
DON'T JUST BROOD ON IT!

The Club has decided to take steps to ensure the safety of its members working on mines at Alderley and to ensure the safety of the public whether visiting the mines or enjoying the Edge for any other purpose.

The same steps will ensure that the Club and the members abide by the rules set by the National Trust. If we break these rules, we risk losing access to the mines, for ever.

These rules are brief but they are backed by the following:

- 1 The Club decision to accept the rules.
- 2 The Constitution that binds members to follow the rules.
- 3 The Safety Policy, Organisation and Arrangements seen and approved by the Mine Inspector.
- 4 Safe Systems of Work drafted by the Safety Committee and reviewed by members.
- 5 Guidelines for the use of mines by NAMHO members.

Items 3, 4 and 5 are available in the Surgery and copies will be provided to anyone interested.

### **THE RULES**

- 1 Fundamentally, each member is responsible for his or her own safety and for the safety of anyone working with the member on a dig or members of the public visiting a mine.
- 2 Each dig will have a named leader (called the Deputy) and the Safety Committee must be told who is acting as Deputy for the time being. The Deputy will be given a pack containing recommended safe systems of work and details of the Club's safety policy and arrangements.
- 3 Safety advice or recommendations given by the Safety Committee, the Deputy or any other competent person, including fellow members, must be considered carefully.
- 4 No digging will start on the surface without prior approval of the Landlord (the National Trust).
- 5 These rules have been made under the Constitution of the Derbyshire Caving Club.
- 6 Anyone taking objection to an action or decision of the Safety Committee may in the first instance refer their grievance to the main Committee and, if still dissatisfied, refer the grievance to a full General Meeting.

### **HOW THIS WILL WORK IN PRACTICE**

Before starting a dig, speak to the Safety Committee. The Safety Committee will, with the help of all Alderley diggers, prepare and keep a list of digs and jobs that members can undertake.

The Safety Committee will see that a Deputy is named for the dig and then ensure that necessary permission is obtained from the National Trust and English Nature, where necessary. Without the necessary permission, no dig can start.

The Safety Committee members will check the mines on a regular basis and record any work that they find needs doing in the interests of safety or to preserve the historical features. Work that threatens member safety, visitor safety or mine features must be approved before it starts. Risk assessment will be carried out if the activity falls outside the range of activities already assessed.

"Safe System of Work" documents will be prepared by the Safety Committee. They will contain guidelines on good and safe practice that should be followed by members on digs at Alderley Edge.

The Safety Committee will report back to the Committee and General Meetings on the condition of the mines, current activities, safety and ideas for future work.

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