

The Dodger's Dispatch

More scribblings from
the Derbyshire Caving Club
(established 1960)



August 2009

www.DerbysCC.org.uk

EDITORIAL

It's time for another edition with the Annual Dinner planned for November, several trips under our belts, Malcolm's success on his bike ride, trips to Spain, the Yukon and elsewhere to report or to look forward to.

NEWS

So what's been going on? We have gained new members this year (welcome to all of you) including the Chairman's boss (is this an inside job?). Some members have renewed their membership after a few years off the books and we currently have 75 members made up of 4 Honorary Full, 1 Honorary Associate, 4 Life, 52 Paid up and 14 who still owe for 2009 (YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE, AND SO DO I!) There have been a range of mining trips this year as well as cave digging in the Dales at Braille Pot. Tony has been out to Spain (see his report later) and there were 6+ members in Matienzo this summer. Alderley work continues with Paul's high grade survey of West Mine (see picture to right), Phill and Elaine's work in the Museum and a very successful Open Weekend in April. A new potential dig at Engine Vein is being negotiated at present.



OTHER SOCIAL NEWS

On the social front, it's been a quiet period but we have the Annual Dinner to look forward to in November (see advert and booking sheet with this newsletter). Next year is important, it is – probably – our 50th anniversary as a separate club. We must plan for something special. There has been talk about a camping / B&B weekend in the summer in the Peak District, like the very successful dinner at Monsall Head in 2000.

BRAILLE CAVE/POT

Tony, Colin, Pete Kellaway, Simon, Richard and others have been kept at work in the Yorkshire Dales on Braille Pot in East Kingsdale. There are regular reports on the website and in the email forum. Anyone interested should contact Tony or Simon. If you cannot get access to email, why not contact someone who is on the list (there are over 30 members on the list) and ask them to let you know when something interesting is happening. (See picture on next page.)

ALDERLEY EDGE

The problems at Engine Vein seem not to have gone away completely so it has been decided that Wood Mine will be the venue for the autumn Open Weekend again. Despite this, Doug and others are working in Engine Vein to arrange better access to the area below the concrete which will enable visitors to see the Roman Level. The work was completed for Natural England (see report in last newsletter) and the Club received a generous payment for the report. If anyone is interested in seeing a copy, it is available on the website (go to Alderley/Information resources on the Club pages). Chris Carlon, whose book is now thirty years old, was up on the Edge earlier this summer with a group of young geologists. On a similar note, Alan Garner wrote *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* 50 years ago next year and a celebration is planned in October 2010 which will probably involve the mines in some way.

MELLOR MILL TUNNELS

Nigel and Dale Street helped a film cameraman make a film of the tunnels at Mellor Mill on behalf of the Mellor archaeological project. We've been promised a copy of the DVD at some time. There are several interesting tunnels and a fascinating day out was had by the two of us. (See picture to right.)

DEREK KENYON

Paul Stubbs has been keeping in touch with Derek who is seriously ill with cancer followed by a stroke. Our thoughts must go out to him, Julie, Martin and the rest of his family. If anyone wants to contact Derek or his family, I suggest they speak to Paul first.



ALDERLEY LEASE

We now have the complete signed lease, 18 months after it was due for renewal. I will take this opportunity to remind everyone that there are **conditions** and that they are not much tighter than before but we **must** comply with them. I'll put up a summary in the Surgery in due course. PLEASE REMEMBER NOT TO START ANY NEW WORK WITHOUT A WORK PLAN.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

This year, there has been no change in the caving insurance so full caving membership stays at £26, full non-caving membership remains at £15; associate members pay £5 less. Payment can be made by PayPal which costs the Club about £1 but I will save this by not posting out cards to anyone who pays this way. You can pay subscriptions at www.derbyscc.org.uk/club/members-payment.htm as well as one-off sums such as Alderley donations. There is also an on-line shop for Tee Shirts and badges!

MATIENZO

Half a dozen members made it to Matienzo and dug above Torca La Vaca hoping to make an alternative entrance. Kieran has been exploring virgin cave and we hope for a fuller report for the next newsletter (HINT). The editor/treasurer didn't make it beyond Bordeaux on the drive down when his car packed in so don't expect a detailed report for a while!

NAMHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE, MATLOCK

The conference was held at Matlock but I do not think anyone from the Club attended. However, we hosted a number of trips down the Alderley mines and we have received thanks from PDMHS (the organisers) for the support given. Thanks are due in particular to the individual members who led or accompanied trips on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

MALCOLM'S BIKE RIDE

Malcolm Bailey completed his ride from Lands End to John O'Groats in June. He raised over £2000 for his chosen charities: DCRO and Christie's Cancer Hospital. Congratulations Malcolm and thanks to all those who helped him make it a success, especially his daughter Rachel who accompanied him by car.

CAVING IN SOUTHERN SPAIN

Tony posted this item recently on the email list.

Back in December Sue and I spent a weekend with Steve Calvert (Tiny) looking for cave on the Torcal Mountain near Antequera in Andalucía. Last week we went back for a few days.

*We spent the first day in the Subetica National Park and did the show cave trip into the Cueva de los Murcielagos (Cave of the Bats). The exit of this (which we found first) draughts like a b*****d. The show trip goes down about eighty metres, has seven hundred steps, bats flying all round the entrance, human and bear remains (looks like the same bears thigh bone Billy found in Pig Nut Cave a couple of years ago – could be his other leg) and a few cave drawings. Highly recommended trip if anyone's in the area!*

The following day we headed for an unnamed cave on Torcal which Steve had found at Christmas with a view to descending it. It had seemed new, but there are active Spanish cavers in the local villages and a shiny new bolt had appeared at the entrance, which had been opened up slightly, followed by several by three more underground. The entrance drops into a high wide rift, via three short pitches, landing on a mud floor. There are two places which take water, and a crawl which needs pushing. Total depth is around 30 to 40 metres, but it does look diggable. The rift is perhaps thirty metres long, and the far side of it needs checking as well. Just a shame we didn't get back to it sooner. The resurgence for this is a long way below and around 2.5km away.

The following day we went back to a shaft we found in December, when we hadn't any gear with us. This appears to be the main sink for quite a large depression, and looks good, perhaps four or five km from the resurgence.

The entrance pitch is about six metres landing on a boulder floor with several narrow descending rifts dropping further down. One of these was open for about another ten metres down to where it became too tight (for me) but would dig. We focussed on a second one, which was draughting. We managed to dig under a narrow restriction, digging fairly sharply down a slope. At this point boulders starting trundling down and could be heard rolling quite a way. Beyond the constriction is space to stand in the rift and then a six foot climb down to a step, ahead the rift is open but narrow, to the right it is blocked, but to the left heading back under the entrance shaft is a vertical squeeze. Sadly this was not Tony size, or diggable, and needs widening. I could see past it into a wider section, to a hole in the floor, and rocks dropped into this carried on dropping again. We've called the cave Fence Post Hole after our prized digging tool. If all the various slots unite, which they probably will, this one feels as though a couple of hours could see a significant new cave. To be honest for a smaller caver it's already open.

The one problem we do have is that it seems we should probably have a permit. If anyone (Nigel????) fancies taking this on for me I'd really appreciate it, my Spanish simply isn't good enough. We're not too sure what would happen if we get caught without one (it is in National Park land) if it's only a slap on the wrist no problem but I don't fancy getting banned from Spain or a week in a Spanish cell! I think the request would be better coming from the club.

We've come up with a cunning plan to get snappers and Hilti caps out there, and hopefully will be heading out again later in the year. If anyone fancies it let me know. We've slowly built up a basic SRT kit but could do with another ladder, more rope and a second set of SRT kit if possible. You can only get so much in hand luggage!

Tony

Any comments, items for the next edition, volunteers to be editor, etc. to
Nigel Dibben



