

# Scarborough

## October Newsletter. 1997



Caving Club

Due to the lack of response to Septembers meeting and the lack of participants for this months meeting, which was cancelled it has been decided that for a trial period only the meeting/informal gathering will be held at The Buck, Wrelton. These meetings are going to be held on Thursday nights after the regular digging trips which occur most Thursdays. The first meeting will be on Thursday 13th November and then on the first Thursday in each month.

At the end of this year the club will have to retire 5 ropes as they will be getting on a bit now. The ropes planned for retirement are the 80ft edelrids x2, 90ft edelrid, 140ft edelrid and the 180ft edelrid. Hopefully we will be able to sell off the ropes as tow ropes or similar to assist in the purchase of replacements. Unless there are any objections the ropes will be replaced with Marlow rope which at the moment is a less expensive alternative to the Edelrid rope. The new ropes will most likely be direct replacements for the ones retired with one exception, one of the 80ft may be replaced with two ropes of a shorter length which may prove to be more useful for long multi pitched trips such as Quaking Pot.

It has come round again to sort out the trip list for next year. This year we would like you to fill out the form enclosed giving your name, 3 permit requests and 2 non permit requests. Hopefully this will be a better system as when the permit list is completed the name of the person who requested the permit will be also published. This is to try and make sure that the people attend the trips they asked for.

The proposed trip down Rowten Pot on 29th November is guaranteed to be an extraordinary trip, weather permitting. It is planned provided the weather is suitable and the water levels are reasonable to free dive the 3 sumps; 8.2m, 3.6m and 1.8m in length. After negotiating the sumps which all have hauling ropes and will be checked by a diver first you come out in Kingsdale Master Cave. Jamie has offered to de-rig the pot but would require a helper if the dive takes place.

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*Scarborough Caving Club is a member of the Council of Northern Caving Clubs*

Forthcoming Events.

Sat 1st Nov	Free. Meeting now moved to Thurs 13th.
Sat 8th Nov	Long Kin East (grade 4 permit trip).
Thurs 13th Nov	Meeting. The Buck Wrelton after digging trip.
Sat 22nd Nov	Newby Moss Pot (grade 4 permit trip).
Sat 29th Nov	Rowten Pot (grade 4).
Thurs 4th Dec	Meeting. The Buck Wrelton after digging trip.
Sat 6th Dec	Free. Meeting now moved to Thurs 4th.
Sat 13th Dec	Langcliffe Pot (grade 5).



Permit Request 1998.

Name	.....
Permit Trip 1	.....
Permit Trip 2	.....
Permit Trip 3	.....
Non Permit Trip 1	.....
Non Permit Trip 2	.....

Please return as soon as possible to Mark or Jerry.

# Abseiling Safety

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## Accidents and Incidents

The Medical Advisor to BCRC makes reference in his report for 1995 to ". . . a steady two or three falls per year when cavers (all novices) using a Petzl Stop descender have panicked, squeezed the handle vigorously and then plummeted. We have had no fatalities yet but a fair number of fractures". A few years ago a novice halted part-way down a pitch, moved about, accidentally knocking in the handle of the Petzl Stop, and dropped several metres before the Stop held again - sustaining compressed vertebrae. Petzl literature advises specifically "*The lever is for on/off safety controls. When abseiling the speed of descent must be controlled by holding the free end of the rope below the descender*".

An incident has recently been reported to NCA Equipment Committee in which a rack became detached from the karabiner linking it to the harness - the caver fell the last 20 ft. of the 3rd. pitch in Knotlow, leaving the rack still hanging on the rope 20 ft. up. Luckily there were no injuries other than shock and severe embarrassment and there was apparently no damage or distortion to either rack or karabiner. (In this case the karabiner was checked before descending the 1st. pitch and the rack was left attached whilst moving between the pitches, short distances involving some stooping and scrambling, but was not checked before descending the 2nd. or 3rd. pitches.) In 1982 a novice at SRT attempted to descend the main shaft of Gaping Gill - unsure how to deal with the weight of rope preventing him moving, he took out the 3rd. bar of the rack and effectively "free fell" to his death. (Following this most racks now have a device which prevents the 3rd. bar being taken out.)

In addition to the accidents and incidents noted above, there are many other "near misses" which are not recorded, either because there was no injury sustained, or because the caver concerned effected a self-rescue. It is important that these "near misses" are reported to the Equipment Committee as the knowledge obtained enables modifications to equipment and techniques which may prevent accidents in the future.

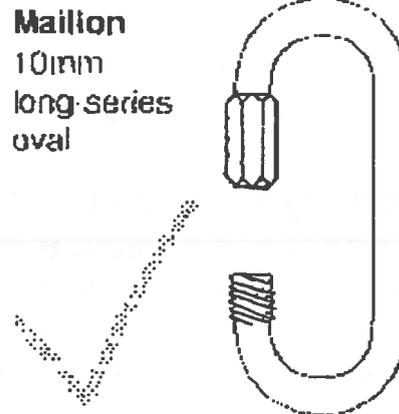
## Training and Safeguarding

Both Petzl Stops and racks are devices which need some training in their use if they are to be used safely and to the best of their capabilities. You need to practice on the surface, where you can see what's happening and can get down safely if it all goes pear-shaped! The "training" may be from Fred, your mate in the club, who's been doing it for years and he'll show you how . . . But does he really know what he's doing, or has he been using unsafe practices for years and just been lucky to get away with it? If you rely on a club-mate to show you how, be sure that he has sufficient experience to understand not only how the device works, but also what can go wrong if it is accidentally misused. Alternatively you could decide your life is worth a little money and attend one of the SRT beginners' workshops now widely available. Your Regional Council Training Officer will be pleased to help and can offer advice on suitable courses or clubs can arrange their own with a grant from NCA.

Safeguarding an abseiler underground is not always easy. Top-roping is seldom practicable due to constrictions at the pitch head and in any case, is really only feasible for short and simple pitches with no obstructions or re-belays. Using a shunt is really for the expert and

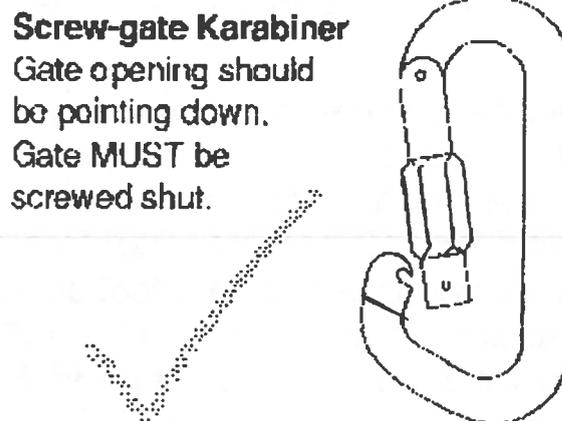
## Your Choice?

### Maillon ?



it should be minimum diameter 10mm Probably the most suitable is an alloy 10mm long-series oval.

### Karabiner ?



screw-gate "D". Make sure the gate opening is pointing downwards so that, if the sleeve is loosened, it will tend to screw itself shut.

**Whichever you use, if you leave the descender attached to your harness, always check the security of your system before you descend a pitch.**

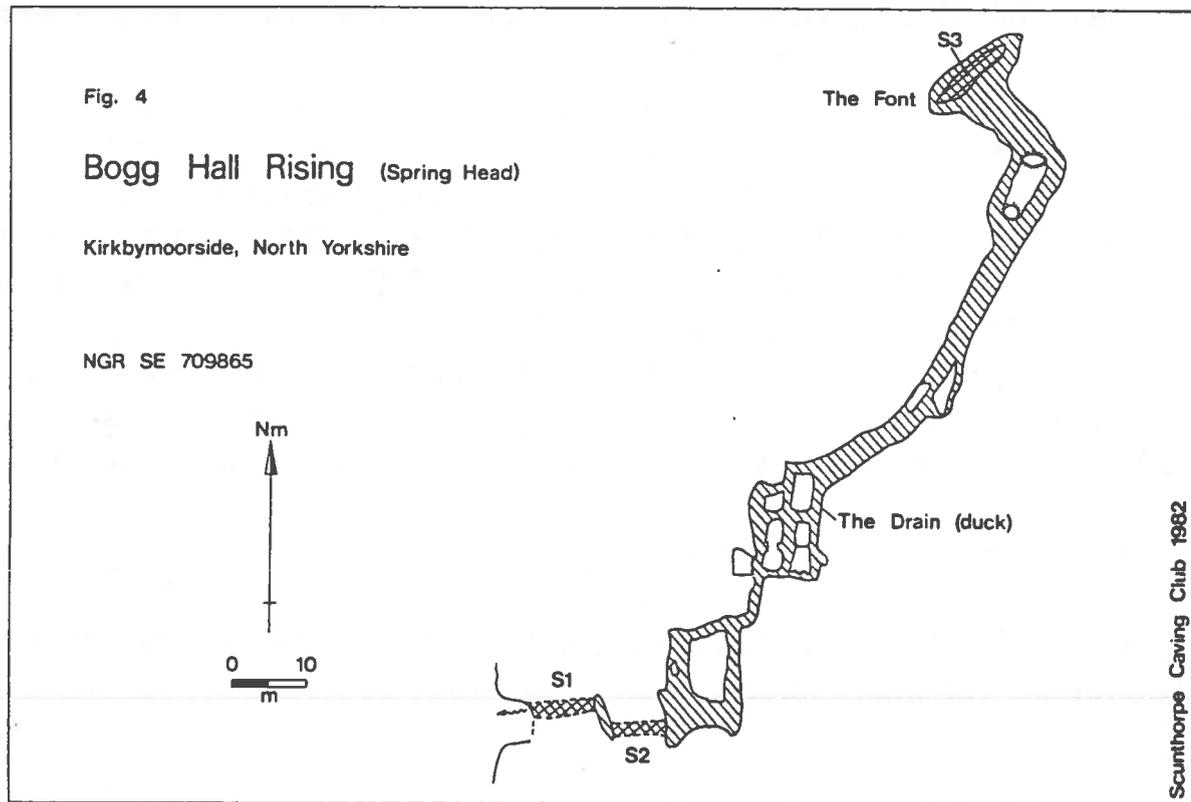
### References:

1. "SRT" by Dave Elliot, published by Troll, 1986.
2. The current Petzl catalogue (Contact Lyon Equipment, Dent, Sedbergh, Cumbria, LA10 5QL.) Includes detailed diagrams and advice on use of their equipment. Every item of Petzl equipment sold has an accompanying safety leaflet.

Fig. 4.

A large resurgence located on the east bank of the River Dove.

The water resurging here comes from several impenetrable sinks in the river bed just over 1km to the north at SE 708875. There is no appreciable height difference between these sinks and the entrance to the cave. The cave also reputedly carries water from Hutton Beck, a neighbouring valley to the east, via sinks at Water Swallows Wood (SE 709881).



Sump 1 is a dive of 9m in a bedding plane 3m wide and 1m high. It surfaces in an airbell formed on a cross rift. Sump 2 is quickly passed after a further dive of 9m. Two passages lead off from here: both soon unite and enter an area of collapse with tight, waterlogged passages between the blocks. A duck, The Drain, passes through the collapse into a larger continuation that enters a lake chamber (The Font) after about 60m.

The Font is formed on a cross rift and is approximately 13.5m long and 6m wide. Here water wells up from Sump 3, a vertical rift in the centre of the lake. This vertical rift passes a ledge at -6m and has been forced to a depth of 17m with difficulty. Here the rift appears to close down but a separate passage, as yet unexplored, leads downwards at a steep angle.

In high water conditions the powerful flow of water makes it difficult to enter the cave.

#### References:

- (1) CDG Newsletter 60:22, 1981 (see Spring Head report)
- (2) CDG Newsletter 66:10 - 11, 1983 (with sketch plan)
- (3) CDG Newsletter 64:10, 1982 (with sketch plan)
- (4) BCRA Caves & Caving, No. 18, 1982, p 3 (with sketch plan)
- (5) CDG Newsletter 93:22, 1989
- (6) MSG Journal, No. 3, 1970, p 23