

Scarborough

November Newsletter. 1997



Caving Club

4 members and 2 guests were present at the informal meeting of 13 November held at the Buck Inn, Wreton. Apologies from Mark, Nial, Shaun and Jamie.

The club has bought a new rope to replace an 80ft being retired at the end of the year. The replacement rope is a 25m Marlow and was bought at a special price of 90p/mtr £22.50 in total. It has been decided that the other longer lengths of rope which the club intends to retire are to be replaced with Edelrid. The 180ft and 140ft ropes will be replaced with 200ft and 150ft lengths at an approximate cost of £127 to the club. Several of the clubs tacklesacks are in a bit of a sorry state and need replacing or repairing where necessary. Two sacks are going to be replaced, the small red one and the medium blue one which contains "big red" at a cost of £10 each. Two other sacks the small yellow one and the medium blue/green are going to be repaired at a cost of £5 each.

Old, Fat and Past It Pot (OFAPI). The club thank Ernie Shield and Pete Ryder for producing an excellent survey for us and we also thank Chalky for writing an equally excellent report including an explanation of OFAPI.

The club would like to thank Pete Shaw for writing an article which was entered into the Scarborough Evening News on Saturday 8th November. The article (copy enclosed) details the extension of Kirkdale Cave by several of the clubs regular diggers. A full survey and report has also been compiled by Pete and Chalky which has been submitted to Descent and to Caves and Caving.

The club also thanks Richard Wilsdon for his information on caving in the Vercors. There are now only 3 places left for the trip. Richard would also like to remind people to get their deposits in early to avoid the Christmas rush, cash and cheques made payable to R. Wilsdon are both excepted. Further information can be obtained from Richard on 01751 432953.

Don't forget to return your completed trip request list as soon as possible so that next years permits can be applied for.

Reports.

Saturday 18th November. Stream Passage Pot. Report by Jerry.
Attended by Rob, Living Joke and Myself.

This trip was originally arranged as a through trip to Flood Entrance but as there was only 3 of us we could only do the one and Stream Passage was picked as that one.

Both Living Joke and Myself had attempted this trip once before and had been beaten back by the cold at the top of the third pitch. This time things were different. The day was hot and the sky was clear, we walked up the valley from Cold Coats and found the pot straight away. Dropping down three oil drums in the entrance brought us to the top of the first pitch (20ft) this was immediately followed by ankle to knee deep water for 500 feet. By the time I had reached the second pitch my feet were freezing as I had forgotten my wetsuit socks. Rigging the second pitch was a lot easier compared with the previous time I had done this pot thanks to the permanent hangers the deviation is still hard to find though. The third pitch was also no problem thanks to the permanent hangers and the pot was soon bottomed. At the bottom of Stream Passage we chose to turn left heading away from Main Chamber. This passage was very much like the old east passage to Henslers Mud Hall but smaller and after a lot of wading in mud a flat out crawl was reached. The crawl lead to a small chamber with a small outlet crawl, I cautiously went in feet first and after about 8 feet it seemed to get a little bigger and developed an echo. At this point I started to slide down a calcite slope on the way caught a small stal in my left hand and barely gripped a small ledge with my foot to find that I was on the brink of swinging out over a 40 foot drop. I had a very lucky escape and fortunately lived to tell the tale. After recovering from My near death experience we exited from the pot in the same as we entered but in reverse.

The rift is some twelve feet wide in places and fifty feet high but with its own unique characteristics; the main part of the rift bellies out with the smooth curve of the undercut walls covered in a white deposit. It also has classic slip rift features - dodgy boulders as big as a car, several climbs and gymnastic events - a brilliant find in such a short space of time!. The slither down had seemed fairly easy, but the return was interesting, to say the least.

Yet again, the job of going to the pub had to be done, and over a cool glass of black sheep, the topic of surveying the rift was discussed, and we thought the best thing to do was to get the professionals in. I made a few phone calls to the right people for the job, and the following week this skilled group of experienced cavers arrived. The founder members of the M.S.G. have been a great inspiration to us over the last five years or so, and have helped us to realise what a great activity caving is. It really doesn't matter if your mid life has settled around your waist and you are just about to croak - you can still cave!

The three had travelled a long way and had gone to some trouble to help us out yet again, and they looked into the hole we had brought them to see. First one then another tried to get in and failed - the punishment showing in their faces proved too much. They failed where we had succeeded. We discussed naming the pot, and on the way back to the pub it came to us - OLD FAT AND PAST IT seemed just to fit.

We talked in the pub, not daring to mention what the name was - at least until they had surveyed it for us. We agreed to enlarge it to eighteen inches and ring them when the job was done. The following week we completed the task and have a brilliant survey. My thanks to Robin Sermon, Pete Ryder and Ernie Shields for the inspiration, the survey and the name.

Until the next thrilling episode!

see ya,

Chalky.

Going underground

Secrets of Kirkdale Cave unearthed by exploration

CRETS of the longest cave this side of the Yorkshire Dales have finally been unravelled by Scarborough enthusiasts. Kirkdale Cave, already known to be the largest underground system in the area, has now been extensively explored and mapped by the Scarborough Caving Club. The club's findings have revealed hundreds more

by Tom Curtis

feet of passages and previously unseen rock formations in its recesses under the Ryedale countryside. But the scientific survey may have knocked one local legend on the head – the cave probably cannot be used to make a through trip to nearby Kirkbymoorside.

Club member Pete Shaw said: "It's brilliant. We've doubled the known area and there is still a lot to explore."

Discovered in 1821, the limestone cave starts just west of Kirkbymoorside, in a quarry next to Hodge Beck.

Parts have been used for easy caving trips for many years, but the Scarborough club members have taken things many stages further over the last two years.

Clearing out narrow, blocked passages and pushing further and further from the entrance has increased the known length from about 570ft to more than 1,000ft.

The club has now collated its information to date and gone public with the results.

Mr Shaw said: "The old cave had become a bit rubbish-strewn and worn, but the new parts have some pristine formations that have never been seen by human eyes before. You can't describe the feeling when you're first in there."

But, despite the extent of its discoveries, the club thinks local folklore about disappearing at Hodge Beck and popping up in the Manor Vale caves in Kirkbymoorside is probably just that.

"You might get an animal through if there is a connection, but I don't think there's any way a human could manage it," Mr Shaw said. "It's nearly two miles and we think it's too narrow."

Club members believe the cave can be extended yet further, but need more time to achieve that. Painstaking digging – and controlled explosions – are needed to clear the blocked passageways.

Formed by the action of acidic rain water on limestone, scientists believe the entrance to the system was once inhabited by hyenas, who left gnawed bones of large numbers of other animals lying about.

● Pictured right exploring the passages of Kirkdale Cave are Scarborough Caving Club members Shaun Aconley (top) and Chalky Thomas.



34 Beech Walk
Eastfield
Scarborough

Tel: 583473

To ALL MEMBERS OF S.C.C.,

After a great deal of um's and ah's and pondering, I feel it is right for me to address some thoughts and feelings that have been on my mind for some time. Please forgive me if anything I say offends any of you, but as you all know I am not a person to mince words. I hope all of you are adult enough to take what I have to say and not bear any grudges. I say these things for the good of the club and to point out to you what is happening to the club at this present time. I do not intend to dictate, slag off, or 'point the finger' at anyone, both as a club or individually. Maybe some of you feel the same way as I do, I know one or two of you do but just won't say anything. Anyway on with the epitaph.

- 1) I feel both myself, and talking to others in the club that the club at the moment has turned into a "Fuck you Jack, I'm alright" club. I can't understand why not one person is man enough to just turn round and say "sorry but I'm off somewhere else with Fred Bloggs so I shan't be going on Thursday, I'll ring and let you know when I'm off next", but to not ring and say and not speak to me for months, I find very sad indeed!

I also find it hard that someone one minute can accept pay for 'juice' and the next tell someone else that they won't take me again because "I don't pay my juice money", what a load of crap. I have always payed or tried to pay my way on the day and if not on the day as soon as I've been able to.

I also find it hard to know why 'Gear' lent in good faith cannot be returned when finished with or when requested? I for one cannot afford to replace it as and when I need it.

Right thats the nasty bit over with.

- 2) I find it pathetic that the club can only manage between two and five people once a month for a short meeting, a good chat about caving and things and a bit of a 'Piss up' with mates.

At one time the club had between 15 and 20 members and where 17 or 18 turned up and talked openly and honestly to each other about caving or anything. Think about it? what do most of the top clubs thrive on? enjoying their caving, communication within the club between ALL its members ~~not only~~ by newsletter, but by word of mouth also, and probably what is most important, a good social life.

For Christs sake what happened to the Brewery trips, the pub crawls, the bands and the parties?

I speak, apart from 2 or 3 older members as someone who has more experience than most of you put together on both caving and clubs, and if S.C.C. as a club cannot get off its arse it will die within the next 2 years.

If this 'fuck you I'm alright attitude does'nt stop then any new members who join the club will fall into the same little click that think 'I'm doing what I want so Fuck you'.

I am grateful to have both run and be part of a good caving club. The members were the club and so was the caving, but S.C.C. as it is now is just 4 or 5 doing what they want.

I honestly know of 3 or 4 people that would join next week but for this.