

**THE FOYAL FOREST OF DEAN
CAVING CLUB**



DECEMBER 2005

NEWSLETTER No 131

Forest of Dean Caving Club

Newsletter 131 December 2005

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Editorial

At long last we now have a chairman and secretary because of late things were slowly falling apart compared to what they used to be. The old enthusiasm had all but gone and the club was fairly rudderless. The new committee has some things to get sorted, like making the club more positive and enthusiastic for the members. But a club is only as good as the sum of its members, so it is everyone's job to help get the job underway. For instance, can you help by sorting out the route of the traditional New Year's Day walk or are you content to let someone else do it again? Its jobs like this that will help us breathe life back into the club.

Finally, it is that time of the year again when subscriptions are due. Please help Andy Clark out by either giving him the money in the pub on Wednesday night, or send it to Andy Clark, Sunshade Cottage, Lower Redbrook, Monmouthshire
. NP25-4AL

You know you have to pay the money every year so be prepared this time and make his job a whole lot easier as he has enough hassle sorting the insurance coverage out.

Committee for 2005/2006

Chairman	George Price
Secretary	Sue Corston
Treasurer	Andy Clark
Librarian	Nicola Bailey
Tackle Office	Seb Hall
Newsletter Editor	Dave Tuffley
Meets Secretary	Greg Jones
Other member	Tim Hemming

Co-opted Positions

Club FODCCAG Reps	Dave Tuffley & John Hine
Wet Sink Secretary	Andy Clark
Otter Hole Secretary	John Hutchinson (of Hades CC)

RFDCC Web Page

www@rfdcc.org.uk

FOREST NEWS

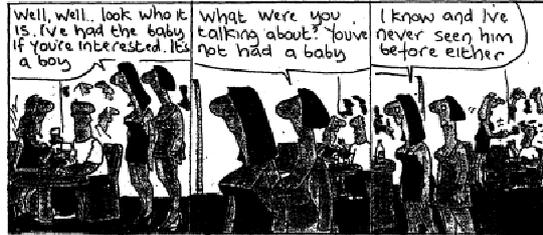
A warm welcome to the Club for the following people:-

Sue Corston	01531 821402
Nicky Pollard	01594 560646

Club AGM November 2005

A few new faces on the committee this year and thankfully we have a Chairman and Secretary, something we have desperately wanted for some time as the Club has been like a ship in a storm– and it had shown quite badly.

The new committee will look at streamlining the way the club is run with some rather new proposals put forward by Greg Jones. However, the club was unable to digest the extent of the new proposed changes and therefore the committee will go away and study them and there may be a extra-ordinary general meeting sometime in the near future.



Club Web Page

Is there anyone out there that can help the committee by keeping the club web page up to date. Since Andy Bell has relinquished this duty, the site is a stale 12 months behind the times and certainly could do with updating. The contact details are now incorrect and we need to be a bit more professional if we want to use a web page

The Dropper

The lads at the Dropper are getting all of a twitch recently. They are down deep underground in the region of 40 metres plus from the entrance and bit more cave development started to appear at last.

One night recently in the pub pulses were racing because a small piece of passage was uncovered at the bottom of the shaft (Clement's End)

It appeared to be about 5 metres in horizontal length but not high enough for cover access and was not very safe either. Still, it was a start

The lads have had a bit of a problem with access to the site. The locks on the steel barriers have been changed by Forest Enterprise to a higher standard security lock. This means that their bog standard F.E. key is now useless. After an approach by the Dropper diggers and a bit of enquiry by FODCCAG, it has found that the High Meadow Woods are a favorite target for deer poachers who use these barriers for access, hence the change in locks. It now means that access is now to be gained via the barrier at Symonds Yat car park. Unfortunately due to the long ongoing poaching problems it appears that this situation with the locks will go on for a long while yet.

(See later details on scaffold clips)

Findall Trip 18th May 2005

Dave Tuffley

George Price had a brainwave and suggested that as the year up until now had had a really dry start then the Findall Mine Level might still be dry and be worth a trip to go and have a look. For those who are unaware (and they must be few) the water levels in the Forest mines are at their lowest depths in the wet winter months, and conversely, at their highest height in the dry summer months. It was well worth the gamble as a few of us, namely George Price and his son Simon, Dave Newman, Seb Hall, Carl Banfield and myself, all had forgotten about the mine's muddy features and steepness.

The six of us ventured down with a bloody long 60metre rope for the pitch, only to find that we had all forgotten that Andy Lougher had once permanently donated a rope that was still hanging in the infamous pitch. We all eventually clambered down into the big chamber above the level. Carl doing a technically spectacular 'Flying Angel' abseil, but unfortunately he forgot it had to be done with the aid of the rope and he ended up in a wet, muddy and crumpled heap at the bottom of the pitch.

Much to everyone's surprise the water was about 2 metres below the floor of the level, which has got to be a first for many a long year. The rest of the party headed south through the boulder collapse, whilst I foolishly went north through the boulder ruckle on my own to get some digging tools at the northern end dig face. These tools had been underwater for best part of about five years, so it was about time they came out.

On the way back from the dig I foolishly decided to try to force my way up through an impossible rib crushing hole, thinking it was the way I came in (Oh no, it wasn't!!) having thought that I was stuck here for eternity, I sensibly decided to have another look about for the exit. Thank God I found it and soon heard the soothing voice of Dave Newman who had decided to come back and see if I was all right.

The rest of the gang finally found their way back and we collectively made our way back up from the level and out. I had decided that the rope we brought in could stop there, but Seb, the hero, lugged it all the way back out. He is now the proud owner of one sixty metre rope for his trouble.

It was a good trip, one I would have thought impossible at this time during most normal years. I have decided it ought to be another five years before I go again. If the dry weather continues through the summer then the water level in the winter should be well down, we'll see.

Brinchcombe Iron Ore Level

The dig at the terminal fall is now underway after nearly the whole 120 metres of level beautifully carpeted by sheets of corrugated steel being laid down to allow easy access over the sticky mud. The end dig has currently gone through the 500mm deep mud and rock mixture for a few metres prior to the actual collapse. This is to allow some access height to the face both for digging, hauling and for safety in the case of a sudden retreat. The sides are being supported with the ubiquitous steel sheets and retaining steel scaffold bars in order to prevent the mud slumping back down in the excavated area, which it has done several frustrating times. Like the Dropper, a fair bit of scaffolding will shortly be in place here. A framework of scaffolding covered with corrugated sheets is planned as a 'cut and cover' exercise at the front. This will allow spoil to be thrown up over the framework and not have to be hauled out.

Thanks go to Seb Hall, George Price, Maurice Febry, Carl Banfield, Dave Tuffley and Ladi Broadman are the chief protagonists, apologies for forgetting to mention any others

Otters in Brinchcombe Limestone Level

On 18th August Seb Hall and two Robs went into the level and in the area of large boulder break down in the main level, heard a strange animal noise. An otter made its way out from the boulders and soon indicated its displeasure at being disturbed by the cavers. There were also other noises coming from amongst the boulders so it appears there is a family in there. For those who do not know Cinderford Brook runs directly in front of the entrance and a few people have seen small trout in the pool by the bridge. Maybe the trout are not there anymore and are surrounded now by a hairy coat. A recent article in the local paper just the other day explained the otters are making a strong comeback in the Forest of Dean, well this proves it is correct. Please try not to disturb the creatures unnecessarily. Kingfishers have been seen in the brook as well so the foul pollution so long seen in the past has truly been stopped.

Trowditch Iron Ore Level

The salmon hatchery situated in the buildings adjacent to the level have illegally raised the water in the level. It was found by Dave Tuffley & Seb Hall when they removed the concrete cover over the mine level entrance shaft. The hatchery was told specifically not alter the water level by the Forest Enterprise Land Agent at a site meeting when it was pointed out to the persons operating the hatchery, that the concrete cover prevented the removal of a casualty if someone fell down the entrance scowl on the hillside above. The water is estimated to have risen about 3 metres and the action of the water could cause scouring and a potential collapse within the level. The hatchery is now defunct and the buildings are up for sale. Forest Enterprise have spoken to the estate agents, William Parry Richards of Ross-On-Wye, who handled the sale and have advised them to tell the purchasers that the water must be lowered back to its original depth
Tenders had to be submitted by Friday 16th September 2005.

A new lockable manhole cover has now been fitted and keys will be issued when the water problem is resolved.

Social meeting Report

At February's Social meeting Nicola Bailey gave a talk on caving in the Meghalaya area, in North West India, which features some excellent video footage of the actual site in the jungle, along with some footage of last November's Multi Agency rescue practice at Hopewell Colliery. Comments received are that the talk was excellent and the video shot by Nicola was of an equally superb standard and were very professional – Well done Nicola

Treasure Hunt

An eventful treasure hunt was held on 6th June 2005 at the Speech House Picnic site. The treasure hunt course was firstly run in a circular route without any clues being taken with the participant. We were only told to watch out and be observant to what we could see. The questions would come when we all met back at the picnic site. There was a set of tie-breaker questions were also given out just in case we all drew level on nil points. The team with the least score being the ones to organize next year's event. A mass "Barbie" was then held where everyone stuffed their faces and drank copious amounts of wine and beer. A big thank you must go to Greg Jones for organizing the evening entertainment.

Social events for the future

The club joint Christmas social with GSS will be held at the Rising Sun, Moseley Green on Wednesday 21st December. Please bring along some sweetie things to help out and a prize for the draw for GCRG will be gratefully accepted

This is a heartfelt plea from the committee to the effect that we are struggling from month to month to get speakers to enthral you. So, if you know someone who can give us a talk on a suitable subject, please, please, please let a committee member know of them or you may be sitting in stunned silence all evening with the rest of the club

Posh at GCRG

For those who attend Cave Rescue practices, you will see a number of well turned-out people walking around the catwalk with some posh fleecies care of the GCRG. Paul Taylor et al had arranged the purchase and delivery of a quantity of about 40 “fleecies”, which should keep rescuers warm during those long idle periods during a rescue or, even after they have changed after exited a cold wet cave like Otter Hole

Kit for sale

Brian Weston, a now retired RFDCC member, recently gave Dave Tuffley, a box of caving kit to be auctioned off and the proceeds to be given to Cave Rescue funds. It consisted of a now defunct Ceag lamp with belay belt, Speleo Technics helmet mounted lamp with 2 batteries and charger, several sets of neoprene knee and elbow pads, a Kirby 4volt lamp charger and a Joe Brown helmet. Only a couple of phone calls and the lot was sold in a couple of days and GCRG made £55 for their funds. Thanks must go to Brian for his generosity.

Digging Resumes at Kelly's Lane Cave – Jan Karvic

The problem was finding a couple of available days to concentrate efforts on rearranging the base of the dig, installing scaffolding and blocking up with dry (more descriptively wet and muddy) stone walling. During the Xmas break the necessary time was set aside, and Jan Karvic, aided by Chris and Shane Nurden got down and did the business. Further scaffolding and walling still waits to be done, and will constantly be required as the dig progresses downwards. However, there are now various tasks that can be performed, depending on the numbers that turn up on any particular Wednesday evening dig.

The base of the dig now appears to be heading down through large clean washed scalloped boulders sporting a faint draft, which is a huge improvement on the previous 8 meters of solidly filled rocks and silt that we have previously persisted blindly on down through. The 10m concrete entrance shaft, drops 2m into the original 30m of cave passage, the dig drops 5.5m down a 45 degree ramp, followed by a 4.5 m shaft connected by a short ramp to another 4m drop, to the dig base at about 26m depth.

As an optimistic sideline, we have also being working the small passage heading off right at the top of the ramp, where 4m have been gained following the solid left wall. Ahead the encroaching boulders have left only a minimal gap continuing, so further progress here will be harder gained.

The bottom line is that Kelly's Lane Cave is now back on-line for digging, so it is hoped that the team will return in force once again, plus anyone else wishing to help out - please get in touch.

Miss Graces Lane Update - Jan Karvik

Activity at Miss Graces Lane Cave has continued unabated though out the system, with passages being pushed, climbed and dug, with varying degrees of success. Though it is still not uncommon for a few extra metres to be found, there has been no single find that has proved significant enough to propel me into drafting an update for some time.

Little progress has been made reaching out beyond the known bounds of the system, a particular disappointment was the far SSW end, where a push along a false floor beyond the deep rift, broke up through a flow stone squeeze into a sizeable 2m wide passage choking after only 8m. A 10m high aven was part bolted and part free climbed by Andy Harp and Jan Karvik in the hope there was an upper by pass, but it was concluded that there is little prospect of ever finding a way on from this vicinity.

Close to the SSW end is Plummet Junction, named after the climb that Steve Simpson attempted to follow Jan up, but ended up making a 4m unplanned rapid descent, fortunately only resulting in a couple of bruises to body and pride. The pitch was subsequently laddered and used on pushing, surveying and digging trips, by Paul Taylor and Jan exploring a varied upper series. This was accessed by crossing a tight exposed traverse section that even with the help of a psychological traverse line, left ones throat felling quite dry after every crossing. A connection, not without it's own difficulties, with another upper series was finally forged by Andy and Jan, and a dig down to a once heard sound of running water proved to connect down to another know passage, again for the foreseeable future, concluding further hopes in the area. However a couple of dig prospects in the SSW locality do still remain that when tackled, will hopefully permit exploration of the cave to continue in the SSW direction.

Wednesday night team digs have mostly been focus on the corner dig in Dog Passage, which finally broke up into a damp 3m chamber, which so far has only provided a connection to the end of the La La Slide, there is a small remaining hope that further progress upwards may give justification to all are efforts at the site. In the same area various other rummages have been made, a notable hopeful is the gradual pecking away at the 10m high-choked roof of Tubby Dungeon.

Recently some solo forays by Jan, in the Malli rifts area, gained various results. Firstly 8m of new passage was found just for the looking, under the left wall a few meters after taking the West turn out of Nurden Hall. A short dig in the floor of this revealed at pitch down into the Malli Rifts, however the top would need a little widening to pass through. A connection into the SE end of the Malli Rifts was dug from both directions, through to the base of the ramp leading up into Nurden Hall. Most importantly a connection was dug through to the head of the passage heading SE from the base of the 1st ladder, providing a convenient 1st ladder by pass. This is found by descending the crater on the left of the chamber after the West turn out of Nurden Hall, this point is now more directly reached by following a cleared ledge adjacent to the left wall of the chamber. The base of the crater has been gardened open, so one no longer needs to wriggle over the semi jammed boulders. At the crater base do not go left to the Malli Rifts, but descend right. Go over

the cemented rocks to drop into the top of the choked passage leading to the bottom of the 1st ladder.

Most recently we have been working a dig called The Breach, which is 1m wide by 8m high choked passage off the original section of Canyon Passage, opposite the traverse beyond the 1st ladder leading into the Original Canyon Passage. Initially the draft metre was used at all points up the height of the choke, getting no or negligible readings, except at the top. So charges were placed in the choked boulder roof, eventually Jan gained access into a top chamber 3m x 5m x 3m high. There is also 20m of damp rift passage headed off NW to a diggable restriction. On exiting the new chamber, the top of the choke moved under foot, had it collapsed there is a good chance the exit would have been blocked. The decision was taken to remove more material from around the head of the choke, before risking another visit. This proved easier said than done, taking a lot longer than expected. A roof tube in the passage was also widened, to give an upper access and a ladder pitch out of the reach of the choke. Once achieved the restriction at the end of the NW damp rift passage was dug through, hoping it would lead to more cave or a possible connection with the large chambers after the second ladder. There was no more open passage only another drafting choke, a rough compass bearing showed a directional divergence from the large chambers. There probably is a link, but the chokes from both sides look like long term digs and possibly 5 to 20 meters apart, we need to survey both sides to establish this. A link here would have been good as a much needed escape route from The Breach dig, and would have provided a second ladder by pass.

While routing around up in the large chambers beyond the 2nd ladder, Jan found/dug into 8 meters of new passage heading back SE, that drafted well and if dug would probably provide a 2nd ladder by pass, most likely to the top of the passage carrying on over the 1st ladder. This needs further investigation, as if it could be made user friendly there would then be a by pass to all the electron ladder pitches, which would have the definite long term advantage of not needing to leave the cave rigged and may help us with the cave development now by providing quicker access.

At the Breach dig, the plan of emptying the chamber at the top of the choke to reveal the other passages that should exist, continues to prove more complex than it sounds. There was a shattered pillar that was possibly holding up vast quantities of roof, which was the 1st problem that needed to be taken out. Even with the new high-level access there is a chance that a mega roof collapse (which is a possibility) could seal the dig like a tomb. Surprisingly it took several attempts to bring it down, leaving the roof looking even more unstable. The pillar leaving a hanging area of smaller choked rocks and mud, leading to the next obstacle a huge gravity defying boulder, with another one levitating against it, both of which possibly providing some key to the stability of the roof of the whole of the chamber. When dealt with, the hope is that the stability of the roof etc. will eventually resolve, so the dig may be worked with the risk level dramatically reduced to a more normal comfort zone.

There still remain numerous oddments that require adding to the survey data, but it is fair to say that the total horizontal distance of passage remains at about 4 km.

General Election filming

The club was contacted in the few weeks just before the general election in May 2005 and was asked if it could provide cavers for interview on general election topics of concern. The film company concerned was non-political and wanted to interview “interesting groups” apart from the usual boring people that are seen to follow the prime minister or leader of the opposition about. We were asked if they could film and interview a group of cavers just inside a cave and they were to be asked what were their current concerns i.e. the economy, the NHS, policing, education, Poll Tax etc.

Could they film us next Friday? Oh yes, when? Well it would be in the daytime to fit in with the film crew, of course. What about the film crew fitting in with the cavers then? Not possible, sorry. Will the cavers get anything for being interviewed on “tele”? Um, No.

Well as cavers have to earn a living and would either have to have day’s holiday, or loose money, we told the film crew it was also not possible, sorry and to politely sod-off.

Anyway the film company persevered again and Paul Taylor eventually sorted out a motley crew including Johns Hine and Elliot who sat in the entrance to Wet Sink and talked about the Poll Tax for all of 90 seconds. They got less than their deserved 15 minutes of fame, however they must thank Tony Blair for the opportunity, I’m sure he must have quaked at the thought of the forthcoming evening’s broadcast

Club Scaffold Clips latest

The Dropper lad were getting very concerned recently because their supply of scaffold clips had run out and they really needed to get some more or the dig would come to a stop. At a committee meeting it was decided to spend some of the club’s money and get a big batch of them and share them out amongst the various digs that are going on. We have managed, via Barry Hemming and his mate Garry Waskett to get hold of 400 clips of various types, mostly 90 degrees and swivels. These are being safely kept by Barrie, and because they have been purchased for the various digs it does not mean you can just drive up and grab half a tons worth. You are expected to play the game and just get what you need and not grab as much as you can get away with.

Its funny really, when you ask for help to get things you can never get much help. But once you have got something, everybody wants to grab it all at once..

Brinchcombe Level tubing

About a couple of years ago Greg Jones spotted a batch of heavy-duty convoluted steel tubing in someone’s field. As a club we managed to get hold of them for free and put it all up at the Cave Rescue Depot. A large length was eventually used down at the Brinchcombe Iron Ore Level’s entrance. However, due to the total length of the entrance tubing now being too long and exiting was made very difficult, the last length was removed and placed outside by the spoil tip. The tube has now disappeared from the site, nicked by someone else. Well, it must have taken the thieves a good struggle to get the 2½ feet diameter by 8 feet long tube up the very steep bank and onto the parking area adjacent to the dig. If it meant that much to them, well they can keep it for their effort and it saves us having to remove it to keep the site tidy. Cheers lads.

Gating of Box Stone Mine

Box Stone Mine, if you have not already heard, is to have all its points of access gated. English Nature (EN), who have a statutory duty to protect the bat colony there, have, after discussions with the landowners, decided to place gates at all known access points into the mine during 2005. This is not to prevent bona fide cavers from entering the mine, but typically to prevent idiots lighting a large fire in the mine causing the fumes to kill all the bats in the place and doing other stupid things. Fires have indeed been lit in there in the past so this is not an idle supposition. There is no suggestion that cavers are responsible for any antisocial behavior.

The Council of Southern Caving Clubs (CSCC) is participating in discussions with EN over the proposed future access arrangements. CSCC have urged EN to seriously consider unrestricted but **controlled** access throughout the year, as it is a large mine complex and disturbance will therefore ought be kept to a minimum. A potential center point for collection of access keys is not decided upon yet so things are still fairly fluid. Watch the caving press for further details.

Box Stone Mine Stop Press 9th June 2005

The actual gating of the mine is being put off until September to allow further discussion on the access arrangements

Otter Hole Wardens meeting

An Otter Hole Warden's Meeting was held at the Rising Sun, Moseley Green, on the 9th May. The term Otter Hole Leader has been dropped and to be replaced by the newly named Otter Hole Warden. It was felt by those at the meeting, that the new name was more accurately descriptive of the role formerly called a leader.

Conservation issues were discussed in depth and are to continue as before. Leaders, sorry Wardens, are still required by the club so if you feel that you would like to contribute something constructive and want to be a warden then please see John Elliot or pass your enthusiasm directly to John Hutchinson as RFDCC wardens are getting thin on the ground, and after all we did open up and develop this beautiful cave.

Forest Symposium

On the 18th & 19th June 2005 another of those famous Forest Symposiums was held at English Bicknor Social Club in glorious sunshine. The format was along similar lines of the other events and Miss Grace's Lane Cave held center stage due to the latest extensions and finds there. There was something for all tastes both underground and above grounds, with field trips as far away as Tintern to study the limestone geology of the Wye Valley region. Dragon Caving Gear were there to force you from your well earned cash and burn a hole in the plastic and there was plenty of Freeminer real ale to lubricate the palates in the bar in the evenings. About 80 people attended and enjoyed themselves and the event was as good as it always has been.

Geevor Tin Mine Dave Tuffley

My wife and I spent a couple of days as guests of Pete and Pet Blake in St Just, down in the toe end of Cornwall at the end of October 2005. (Pete is a past member of RFDCC). As he lives about 3 miles from Geevor Tin Mine, a mine that is open to the public, I decided to make use of this opportunity and give the place a visit.

Both Pete and I decided to go on the trip and soon the head frame of the mine came into view as we entered the car park. We paid our £7 entrance donation – please note that the site is run by a charitable trust that let you make a donation so that they can claim some money back in tax relief. We were soon inside and kitted out with a safety helmet each.

The upper part of the mine, where the office buildings are, is full of artifacts, photographs and models of everything that is connected with tin mining. Here you slowly saunter and take it all in at your leisure. There is a projection room where a video is running continually giving a history of tin mining throughout Cornwall.

Expecting to go down the shaft in the cage we headed along the marked route and came to the Winding House where a great winding engine stood silently and unaccompanied by any winding man at the controls. As the trips around the mine had only just started we thought that the shaft trips would start in a while. We next went into the processing plant where the ore is crushed and washed to remove any waste rock. The machinery is quite complex and as the mine ceased production in 1990 it was as quiet as the graveyard. It was here that we were told that an underground trip was about to depart, so we quickly skipped this part and headed to the muster point.

Here we met a guide called Dave and a German woman and her two sons who were about to depart on the trip. Dave was an ex-tin miner who worked as a ‘tutworker’ underground and was responsible for driving the stope workings and mining the vein of tin ore. We were taken to a small building where we were all issued with a cotton smock to protect our outer clothes, and we left any valuables and coats securely locked away. A quick chat on a hand-held radio to say that the building was locked and secure and then we off down the hillside. It was obvious that we were not going down the shaft.

Dave explained that the underground trips are some old workings of a mine called Wheal Mexico. It was supposed that some Cornish miners had emigrated to work in the Mexican mines but had returned to Cornwall and opened up this mine and thus gave it its unusual name (– it is said that at the bottom of every mine you will find a Cornishman). We were taken to the entrance of a narrow adit with a locked gate. We had no caplamps so Dave, having unlocked the gate, threw a switch and some dim lights came on in the passageway, and in we all went. The first section was well timbered and the timbers were erected and then covered over with waste rock. The passageway through the rock was quite narrow and barely more than the width of a man’s shoulders as there was no wasted removal of rock here because the cost of candles and explosives was stopped out of the tin miner’s wages. It was so narrow that two miners would have a job to pass one another.

We made it to the Wheal Mexico shaft, which was inclined at 15 degrees to the vertical. Ladders were seen placed against the shaft walls and several mannequins of miners were seen on the ladders either going up from the depths or coming down from above. The tin lode was about 75mm wide, surrounded by a sandwich of quartz rock about 300 thick total, the rest of the rock being granite. We then went up a cross-

measures adit until we came to another lode and saw other miner mannequins reputed to be working in the typical tin mining environment.

The ore was wound up to the surface where women workers, or bal-maidens, would cart the ore to the stamps where the ore and rock would be crushed to release the ore. This work was very exposed in the wind and the rain, and the women were so hardened that Dave said you certainly would not want to pick an argument with any of them unless you wanted a split lip.

It was here that one of the German boys suddenly fainted and collapsed onto the floor. Panic ensued and he was carried out about 30 metres to the outside, He soon came around and was happy to be left with his mother whilst Pete, Dave and myself selfishly went back in to finish off the trip. Because the trip was interrupted the next trip was soon catching us up and in the constricted place we had to quickly move on and finish the trip.

Handing back in the smocks, time was marching on and so we did not have time to finish the trip back around the processing plant and so left Geevor behind us as we made our way to a local pub to meet the womenfolk for lunch.

Some may think £7 is lot to pay the visit but the site is unique and there is a lot to the site and some lovely views out over the cliffs to the Atlantic Ocean. If you want to pad out the visit there is also the adjacent Levant Mine a few hundred metres away with its typical Cornish engine house and chimney-stack. It was here at 3 p.m.on 20th October 1919 that the infamous man-engine shaft rod broke where the cap joined the beam and precipitated 31 miners to their deaths down the shaft. The men that already ascended could hear the screams of the men as they plummeted downwards. This place is only a site you can walk around even though the building and head frame still exist and at this time of year is quite ghostly and quiet. There is no charge to visit this latter site and the views are quite breathtakingly lovely even on tempestuous days. The Levant workings went out under the sea and latter on when Geevor took over the mine they had to seal off a couple of areas of the seabed due to water getting in to the old workings

Levant closed in about 1930 due to another periodic recession in the tin industry and Geevor closed in 1990 when the price of tin fell to around £3,000 a ton. The break-even price for the Geevor mine was about £5,000 a ton and thus it forced the end of an ancient tradition. It is doubtful with the cyclic prices of tin whether any of the Cornish tin mines will ever re-open as the cost of refurbishment and development would be too speculative for anyone to risk their venture capital here again

And finally.....

AN AMERICAN tourist in London decides to skip his tour group and explore the city on his own. He wanders around, seeing the sights, and occasionally stopping at a quaint pub to soak up the local culture, chat with the lads, and have a pint of Guinness. After a while, he finds himself in a very high-class area...big, stately residences... no pubs, no shops, no restaurants, and worst of all... NO PUBLIC TOILETS.

He really, really has to go, after all those pints of Guinness. He finds a narrow side street, with high walls surrounding the adjacent buildings and decides to use the wall to solve his problem. As he is unzipping, he is tapped on the shoulder by a London Bobbie, who says,

"I say, sir, you simply cannot do that here, you know."

"I'm very sorry, officer," replies the American, "but I really, really HAVE TO GO, and I just can't find a public toilet."

"Ah, yes," said the Bobbie, "Just follow me".

He leads him to a back "delivery alley", then along a wall to a gate, which he opens. "In there," points the Bobbie. "Whiz away SIR, anywhere you want."

The fellow enters and finds himself in the most beautiful garden he has ever seen. Manicured grass lawns, statuary, fountains, sculptured hedges and huge beds of gorgeous flowers, all in perfect bloom.

Since he has the cop's blessing, he unburdens himself and is greatly relieved. As he goes back through the gate, he says to the Bobbie "That was really decent of you... is that what you call "British Hospitality?"

"No sir", replied the Bobbie, "that is what we call the French Embassy."

