

*Royal Forest of Dean Caving
Club*



*Newsletter 139
March 2010*

Forest of Dean Caving Club

Newsletter 139 *September 2010*

- Page 3.** Editorial, Diary Dates
- Page 4.** Cave Rescue Practice, Parking at Old Ham, A Light Treat for Christmas
- Page 5.** The Lighter Side of Cave Rescue, Trafalgar Tunnel
- Page 6** Ongoing Work at Symonds Yat
- Page 7** NAHMO seminars
- Page 9** Committee Minutes

Committee for 2010

Chairman	Jan Karvik
Secretary	Chris Stott
Treasurer	Andy Clark
Librarian	Nicola Bayley
Tackle Officer	Seb Hall
Newsletter Editor	Malcolm White
Meets Secretary	Dan Sandford
Other member	Nick Negus

Co-opted Positions

Club FODCCAG Reps	Dave Tuffley & John Hine
Wet Sink Secretary	Andy Clark
Otter Hole Secretary	Nicola Bayley

RFDCC Web Page

www.rfdcc.org.uk

Editorial – Malcolm White

The first newsletter of the new year and again it's a full one. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed and keep those articles coming in.

I have received three very interesting articles from Paul Taylor detailing the trip to Montenegro, his rainwater harvesting system and his trip on the boat servicing light ships. Unfortunately (and I'm sorry about this Paul) they're just too long for the newsletter so if anyone would like a copy then please let me know and I will forward them to you.

Malcolm White
10 Westover Court
Churchdown
Glos GL3 2AA
01452 859202
malwhite@blueyonder.co.uk

Diary Dates

Cave Rescue Practice - Emmer Green 7th March
NAHMO Research Framework seminar Snibston Discovery Park 10th April
Carnforth Sunday 25th April
Joint Cave Rescue Practice with West Brecon – 1st June

March Cave Rescue Practice – Paul Taylor

Emmer Green Chalk Mine in Reading on **SUNDAY MARCH 7th 2010**

You might ask why are we going to Reading? Well in fact when all of the country was split up so that coverage was provided in every county by a Cave Rescue Team. GCRG was given a vast part of the Thames Valley Police Area and within lies Reading and in Reading there are a number of Chalk Mines. Not all are open but Emmer Green is. The entrance shaft is approximately 20m deep and there is a small amount of workings running off the bottom of the shaft.

Although the shaft is equipped with a fixed ladder please bring your SRT Kit with you. The SECRO chaps are going to provide the casualties. The scenario being that we have been called to the site following the report of an underground accident. We will need to carry out a search to locate the casualties, deal with any First Aid requirements and then undertake a carry back to the shaft and then a haul up the shaft to the surface. So there will be plenty to be done both on the surface and underground. If you have not been to this site before and I certainly haven't then it is an ideal opportunity to see somewhere different and help GCRG and SECRO Expand their working knowledge.

Parking at the mine site is very restricted so please contact Paul Taylor for directions to a car park that is adjacent to the area and we will either run a shuttle with the GCRG Land Rover or people can walk. I appreciate that this is quite a way away so would suggest that vehicle sharing is a good idea.

The meeting time is 10.30hrs so I would suggest a departure time from Gloucester / Cheltenham area of around 08.15hrs should get you there in plenty of time. In light of the recent weather that we have been experiencing please make sure you bring suitable clothing for being out on the surface as the hauling is going to be undertaken from the top of the shaft.

Please could you let either Pete Turier or Paul Taylor know if you are intending to attend via either secretary@gcrg.org.uk or chairman@gcrg.org.uk . We could do with around 15 – 20 of us to attend so please support the event if you can. There is also another mine nearby that is not normally open and our contact within SECRO are hoping that this can also be visited. I am hoping to arrange for overnight accommodation in a scout hut that is adjacent to the mine for the Saturday evening but unfortunately this has not yet been confirmed. However if you would be interested in going up to Reading on the Saturday please keep in touch with me so that should the accommodation become available I can let you know. Should this not work out I plan to be driving up in the GCRG Land Rover on the Sunday Morning and would be happy to offer a lift to a couple of people.

Please support this very interesting GCRG / SECRO Event.

Parking at Old Ham – Malcolm White/John Hine

I'm relaying the gist of a 'phone conversation I had with Mole so my apologies if I have got anything wrong. It appears that at a recent Wednesday night trip there were a lot of cars present at the usual parking place and a couple of cars were parked on the tarmac leading into the entrance to the chicken farm. A lorry calling at the farm had trouble turning into the farm and I believe rude words were heard! If you are visiting Old Ham it would be prudent NOT to park on the tarmac leading into the farm gateway. Yes, it ought to be wide enough but we don't want to annoy our neighbours or find our wing mirrors have been broken off.

A Light Treat for Christmas – Barry and Mary Dupree

What better way to escape the frantic people Christmas shopping than a retro trip underground!

Being relatively new to this caving lark and having never before seen a carbide lamp alight, we were keen to see what they were like. It was interesting to watch them gradually come to life after first being lit. About 20 people joined in the evening's enterprise. Extra careful preparations had to be made before descending Old Ham - fixing candles so they didn't fall over; carbide lights adjusted so they didn't set light to the person in front. Out of fear (born of inexperience) we wore old cotton clothes, no nylon or the like.

Once underground the carbide lights gave a warm white stable light. The group split up on various routes through Old Ham and we were intrigued by the effect of lively voices coming through the various passage ways. We quickly noticed how much we were slowed down and made less agile by

having one hand encumbered by the hand-held version of the light. Nevertheless we didn't fancy the helmet mounted types: old cavers must have had strong (or do we mean stiff) necks.

Our evening finished at the Rising Sun, which had its own excellent show of Christmas (electric) Lights ..looking so good in the absence of horrid sodium-yellow street lights. And there was a great buffet.

Thanks to Mole for offering loans of his carbide lights.

The Lighter Side of Cave Rescue - Courtesy of DCRO

Just to prove that there is more to cave rescue than extracting injured cavers I found a couple of interesting articles in the journal of the Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation.

Friday 19 June 2009 Nether Water Mine, Hazlebadge

DCRO were asked to go to the help of a six week old calf which had fallen into old mine workings. Local cavers had already been down at the request of the farmer and reported the animal to be alive. A DCRO team of a dozen attended and in an operation lasting nearly four hours they successfully brought the animal to the surface.

The calf was either very lucky or very skilful. It jumped an initial 4 metres or so down the mine entrance. Then it ignored the first underground shaft on offer in favour of descending the next (5 metres) - wisely without making use of a rather dangerous iron ladder. Now gaining in confidence it made its way to the top of the next pitch (21 metres) which it descended rapidly and again without using a rope cleverly avoiding terminal velocity with the little used (and rarely successful) ricochet method. One more adrenaline hit descending a final 9 metre pitch and it found a side passage in which to make itself comfortable while it tried to work out how to get back up. It is now believed to be looking for a good caving club. Any offers?

Thursday 20th July 2000 Jug Holes, Matlock

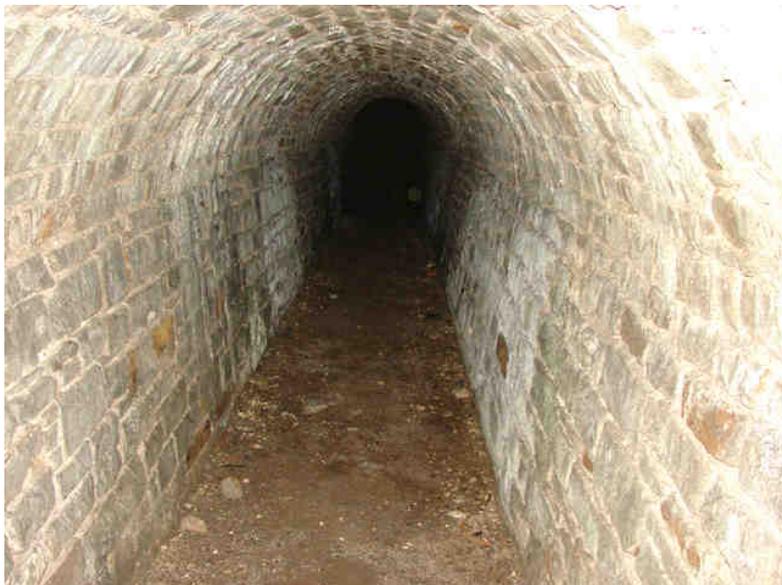
Three Youths from Bonsall were reported overdue on a trip into Jug Holes. They were reported to have entered the Lower Adit with the intention of coming out of the large entrance further up the hill. Two local team members were first on site and they went down the upper entrance quickly finding the missing party about a hundred metres into the system. The youths had become lost about an hour or so after entering the cave and their torches had failed one by one leaving them little choice but to stay put. They were cold but uninjured and they were helped out of the cave after the climb up to the upper entrance had been rigged to assist them. They were poorly equipped for the trip with inadequate lighting and clothing. Only one had a "helmet" - a rather fetching stainless steel kitchen colander with a broken string chin strap! They did not seem to have been put off caving but did agree to go better equipped next time.

Trafalgar Tunnel – November 2009 - Dave Tuffley, Pictures – Seb Hall

Sometime in the summer of 2009, Seb Hall took a walk along the Trafalgar Colliery site near Brierley. Walking along the tip in a southerly direction he heard some noises that came from some wild boar in the area. Coward that he is,(and I don't blame him either!) he decided to walk down the colliery tip toward the old railway line, and came across the entrance to an arched stone lined tunnel near to the old railway line going to the colliery screens. The tunnel was about 6 feet high but with a new-ish stone wall built partially across the tunnel preventing entry.

Enquiries to all in sundry drew only blank stares off everyone so the only answer was to go and have a look in it. Permission was gained off the Deputy Gaveler, John Harvey, and a group of enthusiastic club members set off to explore it one Wednesday night

A flame safety lamp was lowered on a length of string, over the inside of the wall to test for black damp. It proved to be safe to climb over into the tunnel. The sides of the tunnel tapered strangely inwards slightly on both sides, which is unusual as they are usually parallel to each other. Anyway, a short walk of about 20 yards brought us quickly to the other end, which was completely backfilled with colliery waste. The tunnel had 1 Greater and 5 Lesser Horseshoe Bats hanging from the sides, which should guarantee that the tunnel is not destroyed in the future. Anyway the trip was very short and was rounded off with a long traipse around the Serridge Enclosure until our feet got sore, and so finally we cleared off to the pub.



Ongoing work at Symonds Yat Swallet. Paul Taylor.

Monday December 28th 2009

Just in case Malcolm has not spotted it my last report on work at SYS should have read November 2009 and not 2010 (Oops – Ed.).

Since then a further three trips have been made to the site.

The first was soon after we had had some considerable rain and the sink hole we had excavated on the other side of the Swallet area to take the stream had become none operational for two reasons. One, a large quantity of stones had been placed in the stream bed by children and this had sent the water back to the gated shaft and secondly the sheer volume of water that had come down and the debris that it had brought with it. With water still flowing into the entrance work was need to sort this out and the original sink hole was reopened along with an additional two others. Slowly we allowed the water to enter these holes and they handled all the flow easily and it was not long before only the drips in the shaft were left. Further work was left until our return.

This time we were a party of four with Tony and I being joined by Gareth Jones and Dave Brooks. The Tripod was soon retrieved from the shaft and set up and after an initial problem of getting the well buried hauling rope, pulley and bucket out we were soon hauling out debris from the bottom of the shaft and reopened the ongoing route down into the cave. A good draught could be felt and a brief examination showed well water worn and clean rocks.

Unfortunately the weather played its hand and we did not return again until late December but were this time joined by Steve Tomalin. Equipment was soon set up and hauling was underway in earnest with a good qty of debris and rocks removed from the base of the initial shaft to open up the route between this area and the next. This made quite a difference and prompted Paul to venture a bit further down through the boulders to view the route on. With young children likely to read these words it would be inappropriate to repeat Paul's words regarding what he saw but to say it looked doggy is enough. But I am sure you know what was probably said.

It has been mentioned earlier that it has been some considerable time since the site has been investigated and during that time vast quantities of water have flowed through the system. It was only now with this further investigation that the true extent of what has been happening has come to light. The site and route down through the boulders was never the most stable of locations and reading the reports and looking at the surveys and the names that had been given to the various sections it was obvious that it was not great.

The previously undertaken concreting work by the GSS many years earlier had had the desired effect of knitting all the upper shaft area together as a solid mass. However below this a large void had been created by the movement down wards of the rocks and boulders below. This has left the upper section almost completely suspended in mid air and with very little support. The ongoing lower section has although still with a view through it collapsed in and the route down is through a very narrow slot past a large wedge shaped rock which if knocked out would result in entombment for anybody below it and a more likely certain death.

Unfortunately to continue the work / exploration of the site would necessitate a major civil undertaking and although this is not outside the bounds of possibility it would need to be balanced against what would be gained.

The reports and surveys say it all and the decision was taken to exit the site and not undertake any further work. This is a great pity as I know there are many including myself who have not been into the cave and would have been very pleased to see it opened back up.

At the present time the gate is still locked up but there seems little point in leaving another perfectly good lock on the gate just to get destroyed. It is therefore the plan to remove the lock and replace it with a large Nut and Bolt which will be secured in such a way as to make it impossible to get off with out cutting which was what was required when the old lock was removed and the recent work got underway.

Symonds Yat Swallet 1 Cavers 0

The Research Framework for the Archaeology of the Extractive Industries in England (Mining and Quarrying)

NAMHO has embarked on a project which will benefit mining history and help with the making of decisions about future archaeological research and the heritage of mining landscapes in England. Crucial to its success will be the support of NAMHO members, who it is hoped will wish to become involved.

The Research Framework is a two-year project, jointly funded with English Heritage, which will enable NAMHO groups and individual members to contribute towards and help influence research priorities. It will also provide guidance towards conservation and education strategies, and raise awareness of historic extractive industries as part of the wider heritage agenda. At its core will be a coordinated effort to collate the results of previous archaeological research, which will provide the information needed to achieve these wider aims. NAMHO members can support this project by helping with the supply of this information and by contributing to discussions at the series of regional seminars planned for next Spring and Winter/Spring of 2011. Members with regional or specialist expertise, who are willing to provide contacts and advise on less well-known sources of information, are particularly encouraged to attend these seminars.

The first task will be to undertake a comprehensive review of existing archaeological data. Initially this will involve exploring county historic environment records (HERs) and collating bibliographical sources but also vital to the success of this project will be the expertise and knowledge contributed by NAMHO members.

The scope of the project will include all archaeological data associated with mining and quarrying under the following general headings:

Energy Minerals: coal, oil shale, lignite etc

Metals: ferrous and non-ferrous

Bulk Minerals: building stone, aggregates, lime, sand, gravel etc

Other Industrial Minerals: evaporites, clays etc

Miscellaneous minerals: graphite, arsenic, talc, abrasives, pigments etc

The assessment will include surface and underground archaeology of all periods of extractive activity, from prehistoric flint mines to 20th century gravel pits. Infrastructures, such as mineral railways, water supplies and aspects of smelting will also be covered, as well as the social impact on the landscape of extraction, including housing and other material evidence of mining communities.

Once the resources have been collated the next process will be to evaluate the data and the results will be used to inform discussions on a range of issues. Mainly however, we hope to identify:

- strengths and weaknesses in the existing record for the archaeology of mining and quarrying, in particular any conspicuous gaps in our knowledge
- skill shortages in areas needed to further the study of the topic
- common themes in the study of the different extractive industries, including cultural impact, underground archaeology, conservation and education

After the evaluation, the focus will turn to how these issues may be addressed through targeting future research and establishing where priorities for investigation and the allocation of resources may best lie. Through this process the research framework, informed by the results of the resource assessment, will incorporate the views and aspirations of a wide community of researchers.

If you wish to assist the steering group please contact the Project Director, Dr Peter Cloughton at P.F.Claughton@exeter.ac.uk If you have data or expertise to offer or would like to contribute to the seminars please contact the Project Officer Phil Newman at projectofficer@namho.org Details of the seminars will be available soon. Please check regularly on the NAMHO website for information and updates - www.namho.org

Minutes of RFDC committee meeting 8th February 2010

Present

Jan Karvik (Chairman) JK

Chris Stott CS

Dan Sandford DS

Nick Negus NN

Nicky Bailey NB

Apologies

Andy Clark AC

Seb Hall SH

Malcolm White MW

In attendance

John Hine JH

- Minutes of the last meeting, NN proposed & DS seconded them as correct
- Matters brought forward:
 - ❖ Wigpool locks, not yet resolved, **JH** agreed to follow up & resolve with Greg & the landowner
 - ❖ Bank mandate, CS added but we need to take off some old names & add new – JK, **AC** is taking the appropriate action to tidy it up
 - ❖ Cave rescue, next event is 6th March in Reading, & there is likely to be a joint practice with West Brecon on 1st W/E in June (TBC) **MW** to circulate in newsletter & we should take every other opportunity to let people know, including new members / people with no rescue experience
 - ❖ Surveying kit, this needs to be followed up --- **SH** to follow up with Paul Taylor & report back
 - ❖ Kit list on the website – not yet resolved **SH**
 - ❖ SRT practice, need to publicise that Steve Tomalin is available to run sessions & his contact details are on the website – he must be contacted beforehand to arrange though
 - ❖ Oakwood Deep Mine, **JH** is arranging appropriate signage

New matters

- Website discussion. The meeting acknowledged the work put in by Andy Harp & noted that it was used a lot & proved to be a good contact point for new members (& the BBC it seems). Again where appropriate people should pass into Andy that his work is appreciated & valued
- **JH** to send NB some FODCAG detail & NB will précis if appropriate & add to the website
- BBC Drop Zone, we will follow this through to see where it leads, but we will be cautious about putting in a lot of effort with little perceivable return
- Countryfile programme in FoD, JK is meeting them on the 9th Feb to discuss possibilities of filming a dig
- New members – agreed that members could be approved between meetings by e-mail **JK** is to amend / update the application form
- For a trial period it was agreed that decisions between meetings could be made by e-mail. If there is a matter that is contentious Committee members can ask for the decision to be held until a face to face meeting is held.
- Social speakers, agreed a maximum fee of £50 would be available, CS & JK can agree without reference to the committee, amounts in excess of this must have Committee approval
- Montenegro expedition, £50 contribution was agreed
- Social trip for July, we are going to go Canoeing – hopefully – we need to circulate members & ask for numbers (**MW**)
- Decent mag., Sue Corston details should be substituted with CS (**CS**)
- Otter Hole, phone line is installed, the kit either end now needs to be sorted (Dave Appling)

New Members

David Dickson

Pete Morgan

- Date of Next Meeting May 10th