

# The Dodger's Dispatch

Special non-caving edition!

March 2001

## EDITORIAL

Sadly, this is a non-caving edition following the spread of the Foot and Mouth crisis. NCA, DCA, CNCC, NAMHO and others have all recommended a stop on cave and mine exploration. The National Trust also have a policy of stopping visits to their sites so Alderley Edge is now closed to all visits by the club except for true emergencies. If it is essential that a member should visit the mines at the Edge, you must speak to Paul Rutter and follow the disinfecting routines laid down by the Trust. One result is that the Open Weekend in April is now in severe doubt as we will need a few weeks to get the Wood Mine ready. The Committee will make a decision in the next week or so. We can only hope that the spread of Foot and Mouth ends soon so that we can all return to normality. Pity the poor farmers though who will still have to live with this for months or years to come. However, we have the Dinner to look forward to in June and, hopefully, the epidemic should have cleared by then.

## DERBYSHIRE DIGGING

Allan e-mailed me this report recetly. A small team (Allan, Neil and Simon) is digging in Aladdins Crawl above the Rift Sump in Carlswark Cavern. This began in August 2000 when Allan and Neil were on a routine trip and started to investigate potential digs around Rift Sump. Aladdins Crawl is completely choked with layered mud and is extremely easy to dig without special equipment. The dig does not look to hopeful on the survey but the diggers feel it has good prospects and it is enlarging slightly. The dig at Rowter is still active with the same team in operation. Contact Allan for detail. ([Allan.Berry@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk](mailto:Allan.Berry@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk))

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- |           |       |  |
|-----------|-------|--|
| April     | 21/22 | - Open Weekend at Alderley Edge ( <b>provisional date, likely to be deferred, watch the website or notice board at the Edge</b> )<br>( <a href="http://www.derbyshirecavingclub.org.uk/work_open_days.htm">http://www.derbyshirecavingclub.org.uk/work_open_days.htm</a> ) |
|           | 30    | - QGM at Stockport at 8 pm [deferred from March, replaces the Committee Meeting]<br>( <a href="mailto:Secretary@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk">Secretary@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk</a> )   |
| May       | 29    | - QGM at Stockport at 8 pm ( <a href="mailto:Secretary@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk">Secretary@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk</a> )  |
| June      | 2     | - Paul and Donna marry   |
|           | 23/24 | - Dinner weekend in Yorkshire (see below)  |
| July      | 30    | - Committee Meeting at Stockport at 8 pm ( <a href="mailto:Secretary@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk">Secretary@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk</a> )  |
| August    | 20    | - QGM at Stockport at 8 pm ( <a href="mailto:Secretary@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk">Secretary@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk</a> )  |
| September | 1/2   | - Open Weekend at Alderley Edge  |
|           | 22/24 | - NAMHO conference at Avoca in the Wicklow Mountains, Republic of Ireland<br>( <a href="mailto:parkesma@tec.irigov.ie">parkesma@tec.irigov.ie</a> )  |
| October   | 12/14 | - BCRA conference at Buxton ( <a href="mailto:enquiries@hidden-earth.org.uk">enquiries@hidden-earth.org.uk</a> )   |
| October   | 29    | - Committee Meeting at Stockport at 8 pm ( <a href="mailto:Secretary@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk">Secretary@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk</a> )  |
| November  | 26    | - AGM at 8 pm ( <a href="mailto:Secretary@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk">Secretary@DerbyshireCavingClub.org.uk</a> )   |

Any comments, items for the next edition, volunteers to be editor, etc. to me, please.  
Nigel Dibben, on [Dibben@aol.com](mailto:Dibben@aol.com))

## ANNUAL DINNER

Plans are being finalised for the dinner and caving/walking weekend in Yorkshire on June 23 and 24. The Dinner will be at the Pheasant Inn at Casterton (between Kirkby Lonsdale and Casterton Fell) with accommodation available at the Inn or at a nearby campsite. Contact Pete Johnson for details. B&B at the Inn should be £25 a head. The dinner menu is:

Starter: Country soup or Pate (choose on the night)  
Main course: Grilled chicken breast or Shoulder of Lamb (**please say which when you book**)  
Dessert: Strawberry and meringue  
Coffee etc. followed by Disco

The meal will cost £15 a head inclusive of wine on the table. Please send bookings to me (Nigel Dibben) as soon as possible. **Remember to say which main course you want.**

## ENGLISH NATURE AND ENGLISH HERITAGE

“What have these got to do with caving and the DCC?” I hear you say. EN already has control over our digging at Alderley Edge and EH may soon have control **as well**. This is just to introduce these two bodies and explain how they affect the Edge.

English Nature looks after Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and all the mines on Alderley Edge lie within an SSSI. Before digging, we have to tell EN what we are going to do in case it could damage the geology of the site, which they protect. If they agree, they send their approval and digging can start. Since January this year, it has become an offence to damage an SSSI and we have now to wait until we receive EN's approval for a “potentially damaging operation” to take place. All this means that it is even more important to tell the Committee if a dig is proposed at the Edge so that EN approval can be obtained.

English Heritage looks after sites of historical interest, often referred to as Scheduled Sites. EH are working on the Scheduling of parts of Alderley Edge. Information is scant at present but we are aware that the treatment area at West Mine is “Part 3” so what are parts 1 and 2? Probably Saddlebole and Engine Vein. Anyone who has watched Time Team will know how strict EH are and that failure to obtain their consent could lead to some very expensive restoration. We will keep you posted on developments. Doug has met the local officer of EH and Nigel has spoken to a consultant who is preparing the scheduling for EH.

## ALDERLEY FINDS

This is a reminder that finds in the mines at Alderley Edge belong to the landowner, generally the National Trust (except for West Mine). The finds of real interest are mining tools and any item which could help date the mines, such as coins or contemporary pottery. The National Trust is keen to know where all the finds are so if anyone has any artefacts from the Edge in their private collections, could they send me details so that they can be added to the records. The information I need is:

- Description, preferably with a picture
- Size
- Where, when and how found (please be as precise as possible)
- Where the find is now and what condition it is in

I have some record forms that you can use. These would make the job of maintaining a permanent record easier so please let me know if you want a small supply.

## RECENT WORK AT ALDERLEY EDGE

Digging at Timber Shaft has now reached the point where the shaft is secure with a concrete capping about 3m below the surface. Work had started on raising a shaft above this and excavating/back filling until stopped by Foot and Mouth. Nigel Dibben and Pete Johnson did most of the work preparing the shaft for capping and Steve Mills is in charge of the excavation. However, the regular diggers would like to thank the hardworking team who mixed and moved 5 tonnes of concrete one Friday in February. Preparation work in Sand Cavern in Wood Mine has proved interesting with the finding of original miners' planks and a pile of ore still in situ.

## New warden at Alderley Edge

The new warden, David Standon, at Alderley Edge is now in place and getting to know the Edge. He has already been down Engine Vein with Phill and has met a number of other members. Please take care to show David that we are a responsible club and do all you can to preserve the good relations we have with the National Trust. Paul Rutter, Countryside Manager for Alderley Edge and various other Cheshire properties, now works from Alderley Edge so we can expect him to take an even closer interest in our activities. One job he would like when the Foot and Mouth has cleared is for us to tidy the materials stored in “Richard's Yard”. We can still keep materials there but we need to get rid of some rubbish and move the stores back to give more space for the NT.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you have not paid yet, please send me your Annual Subscription for 2001 as soon as possible. If you get this by post, then a cross here  indicates that you still owe your subs!