

The Dodger's Dispatch

March 2006



Member's name and address inserted here

SUBSCRIPTIONS

At the recent QGM, the rates for 2006 were set at £10 full members and £5 associate members. Although this is an increase, it is eased a bit by the insurance having dropped a bit so the rate for non-cavers is £5 and for

cavers (including Alderley diggers and access to West Mine) is £15. Added to subs, this means that most members will pay £15 or £25. Life members who want to go caving need to pay £10 (the difference between the two insurance rates). Full details are given on the Club web pages. **This year, the BCA has sent out all the plastic cards in advance and I have to send back the "unsold" ones by the end of MARCH so if you are going to maintain your membership and have not paid yet (see below), please send me your subscription as soon as possible.** If you will find it difficult to pay in time, contact me NOW.

Nigel Dibben – Hon. Treasurer

NEWS

Simon and friends are actively working in Fatigue Pot near Stoney Middleton. They may be looking for help from other thin members. Work at Alderley is subdued but the staging in Holly Shaft of the Cobalt Mine has been repaired by Steve Mills. Malc's tank is now a shed and awaiting camouflage. We have also promised to plant some holly bushes to hide it. The Saga Louts had their annual outing to Brinlow and Wood Mine recently and Tony is now threatening to take them CAVING next year! Tony and Sue are well ahead with planning the Mallorca caving trip so if you want to go but have not yet made your mind up, drop Tony a line (I think he may be away at the moment). The Magpie weekend is in a couple of weeks' time and will include some caving and walking as well as the Social event. Pete C is still active with the MUSC group and I am sure he would welcome some DCC members who want to do some serious Yorkshire stuff. Recent trips have included Marble Steps and Lost John's.

Social events

The Magpie weekend is on April 1 and 2. We have the PDMHS cottage booked and also access to one of the Black Marble Mines. Pete C has the details. Bill B has arranged a meal for the Saturday night in Monyash and we will probably arrange for a taxi service to get back to the hut. The squeeze machine will also be dusted down for the weekend at the specific request of Allan B who wants to show us all how skinny he is. Allan, don't forget that Jock's Séan can go through with his legs bent double underneath him!

NEW MEMBERS

Three from Standon Bowers have joined as Associate members: Chris Dillon, Kit Preston and Richard Walklate. Denis Stubbs is now a full member. There will be an opportunity to meet many of the Standon Bowers team on Friday, 28 April when we will be running a familiarisation trip for them down Wood and Engine Vein (probably).

OPEN WEEKENDS

Next Open Weekend is April 22 and 23. All members are welcome, in fact are needed, as the Open Weekend has received extra publicity this year from Granada and the National Trust. There may even be a bit in the Manchester Evening News. Most visitors will do the normal Engine Vein trip but some trips will also be taken up the Hough Level. We have already taken 23 Internet bookings for the weekend.

FATIGUE POT TRIP REPORTS

“Once again the mad crew set out on a little trip, a return visit to Fatigue Pot. We had decided that it was time to look at all possible digs and see if they were worth doing, or put this cave to rest and head for pastures new. So on Sunday the 12th of February, with drill charged, enough Hilti caps to bore a tunnel direct to Osama Bin Laden’s hide out cave we head underground. We were armed with knowledge about previous digs and that a river could be heard below. After a short while we arrived at a tight squeeze, Alan and Neil made their way through, I needed to make a very slight modification to it to get through, and it was still bloody tight. A bit of a double back on yourself leads into a small chamber, on the right of this is a set of mud gour pools without a mark on them. We are now very close to the very tight squeeze. Alan takes his battery pack off and swaps helmets, as mine is a helmet mounted battery. I follow behind as far as I can get so I can help to spot for him if he needs to reverse out. After a bit of grunting Alan gets into a small chamber, he finds the so called drafting hole with a river in it, all of a sudden there came fu\$% sh%\$ C”*T bleep bleep bleep bleep, well you get the picture, “bloody hole with a draft, my arse”, also no sound of a river. It was a hole with a solid bottom and no way on. Oh we did laugh a lot. Alan comes out of that passage and heads off down a slope head first, with ease it has to be said, a yell is heard, “come this way, there is a tube looks promising if we dig at it”. I try to follow down the slope, I attempt head first, and no way will my body fit, I try feet first not a chance, even while chanting the, think thin mantra! Neil has a go and the same thing happens to him. Alan shouts back “its not that tight, anyway I’ll make my way out to you”. A call comes out of the dark, “err Neil shit I’m stuck mate, no I really am stuck”. After pulling on his arms and stretching him by a few feet Alan is free. We find no draft in that part of the cave and the air is very still, so we sack the idea of digging here. We head back to look at the North West crawl, this gets very tight at the end and is almost impossible to turn around at the end of it. I get part way into the passage and start to dig down, I want to see how far below the silt the natural floor is, I am lay flat on my front with the roof against my back, and Alan is near me to help clear any spoil. It was very easy going through silt infill, all of a sudden I spotted a claw around 1 ½ inches long, then shortly after we came across a few other bones including a skull. These bones were around 6 inches under the gravel and were on the natural cave floor. As the cave has not been active for a very long time period, it looks as though these are not of a recent mammal that has died in the cave, also it would be impossible for it to get to this part of the cave as there is a rift to climb up to reach it We stopped digging packed our gear and made our way out through, what I must say is the most smelly cave entrance I have ever been in. We have come to the conclusion that it would not be worth digging in this cave at the moment, but being the mad crew we tend never to rule things out.

“The bones that we found on our last dig a few weeks back were given to Doug Kidd. He reported back that the bones were not that old and that the skull was off a ferret or such like, the other bones all being from different animals. The fact that the bones are not that old, got us scratching our heads as to how they got under silt in a tube deep in the cave, as it would seemed that the cave has not been active for many a year, this cave seems to be hiding something from us and we are determined to find a way on. We have already ruled out two places to dig, so we head to near where the bones were found. We decided to dig in a rift passage that links with the tube that had the bones in. The rift has a large part of the roof that has fallen in, but with a small squeeze around the bottom of the collapse. We pick this to start a dig. The floor is very easy going to dig and we soon make headway. A draft can be felt near where we are digging but it is one of those that you can not pin point, its exact location. After around four hours we have dropped the floor by a few feet and made headway of around twelve feet. We will keep digging in this section of the cave; if this gives us no joy then we will move to another section that we think may also be promising. With no other caves on this side of the valley there is great potential to find a large system; there are also some very large scallops on the cave walls so at one time this system must have taken a large amount of water. Keep an eye on this space with luck this Derbyshire cave will go. And it would be nice if someone joined us for a dig.”

By Simon Dillon

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

April 2006	1/2 – Magpie weekend 22/23 – Open Weekend: Engine Vein 24 – Committee Meeting 28 – Standon Bowers visit to the Edge
May 2006	Mallorca expedition 22 – QGM
July 2006	24 – Committee Meeting
August 2006	Matienzo expedition 21 – QGM
September 2006	2/3 – Open Weekend
October 2006	23 - Committee Meeting
November 2006	Dinner – venue and date to be fixed
December 2006	11 – Annual General Meeting 12 – Chairman’s Birthday – I think he’s buying

Any comments, items for the next edition, volunteers to be editor, etc. to Nigel Dibben

