

## **Ding Dong Work Meet, 9th & 10th June 1984**

Members present. Sat: Martin Maher, M. Mitchell, Alan McFadzean, John Crammond Mark Wickenden, Max Dobie, Ken Battersby, Alan Westall, Chris Jones, Lindsay Harrison.

Sun: As above less A. Westall & C. Jones and plus Eric Holland & Dave Blundell.

### **Sat. 9<sup>th</sup> June:**

As testimony of the higher standards of ability achieved by C.A.T. members, (no doubt due to the success of Little Langdale S.R.T meet), the grade of 'E' appended to the Ding Dong work meet by Alan must have presented no challenge to the majority of members as they decided to give it a miss. Nevertheless there was plenty of stimulus for excitement with a little danger perhaps, as lengths pipe weighing approximately ten hundredweight dangled ominously on the end of chains and S.R.T. rope.

The day started with Alan and I collecting a generator from Vibroplant at Barrow to run the two electric welders provided by Martin and myself. Martin was a little late arriving but the top of his Mini was eventually spotted just above the blades of grass coming across the field. When he got to the shaft top and emptied his car you would have sworn Pickfords had arrived, for out of this Mini came a gigantic winch with two equally gigantic chains, welding plant and tools, crow bars and winch bars, several hundredweight of metal 'D' hoops and assorted chunks of steel for welding to the pipes, a number of S.R.T. ropes and accessories, various other objects of dubious identity and of course his lunch.

Work was soon under way and the first problem was the texture of the green plastic coating on the pipes. This was so hard that it had to be chiselled off in order to weld the lowering hoops on. John played an important part in this operation. The next problem was to secure the winch in such a position that the 50 ft. cable was long enough to reach down a 35 ft. hole and yet far enough away to be safely anchored and not follow the pipe down, should our enthusiasm to 'get on with it' prove greater than our ability. A chain block was then secured to the trusty tree, the first hoops welded on and we were ready to start.

The children who long ago christened No- 45 pit "Ding Dong" may have unconsciously looked into the future for it was DING DONG all damn day! However, the first and longest pipe was only a few feet down when it was found that the winch cable had got inadvertently twisted on the drum (some said it was MY fault). This meant relieving the cable of its weight for a short time. We attempted to haul the pipe back but this tended to pull the winch anchors out of the ground, so we decided to see if S.R.T. rope is all it is cracked up to be and tied our huge pipe onto a rope, eventually managing to transfer the weight from the steel cable. The rope used was made up of two lengths knotted together and as the load was taken up it squeaked, stretched and groaned ominously. (At this point, for some reason, several people found work to do elsewhere and left the immediate area.). The operation was successful. Soon the winch was back in command and the pipe on its way down (and people came back). When the pipe was a few feet from the bottom and in a vertical position the chain block tree, working opposite the winch, was used to swing the pipe

into the correct position over the manhole in the concrete platform. Mark and Ian then went down to make the final adjustments and the pipe was dropped into position. This method proved very successful and was used throughout the job, achieving bulls eye accuracy on all but one occasion.

Having got three pipes into position and one joint welded (Some back-filling was done at this stage to stabilise the work so far and Mark Ceremoniously threw the first chunk of old car back down the shaft), at about quarter past ten, feeling quite satisfied and rather tired, we went to The New Inn, but apparently one of the local 'wee' doggies was quite unimpressed and peed on Martin's boots.

### **Sun 10<sup>th</sup> June**

A glorious Sunday morning found everybody ready for action again. John was poised ready with hammer and chisel and Alan had got the generator back on site. It had been removed for safe-keeping overnight. Mark arrived later looking like he'd slept in a play pen with an Old English Sheepdog (said he'd just come from choir practice!)

The pies soon began to roll down and the air turned blue with welding fumes ascending from the steadily growing 'chimney'. Sparks showered down inside and outside the pipes as the joints were welded from both sides. Since I was working below Martin, I got quite worried that my mop of golden hair might go up in flames! Alan and Max both showed their skill at welding and Max taught Mark how to pick up a hot welding rod bare handed (Mark's bare hand, that is!). The rest of the old cars and scrap were dumped down the hole during the course of the day and it became apparent that it is going to take a lot of filling to bring to the surface. Any suggestions for filling?

The pipe installation was completed and welded by about 9pm and as you will see when you visit, Eric's measuring leaves nothing to be desired – he even allowed for the amount the tree would grow in the time since the concreting (he says).

I think that everyone working on this project has shown what can be done with enthusiasm, but I think a special thanks is due to Martin Maher for the effort he has put in and the equipment supplied or loaned by himself or his father and without which this part of the job may never have been completed.

This space is reserved with apologies for you to fill in the names of people I have missed.

Stuart Cole

Mike Mitchell.