

1987

Meets Secretary's Report

We have had a very full programme in 1987 consisting of 26 meets, including the Easter meet to Snowdonia and weekend meets at Nenthead and at Swaledale. In addition there were five evening meets during the summer months.

The most important event of the year was the discovery last Boxing Day of the ladderway in Simons Nick leading to Dead Dog Passage and which, after a good deal of hard work, and a timber lined dig some sixteen feet deep, led to the rediscovery of the Top Level Extension. This exciting development generated many extra visits to explore, survey, and photograph the workings. There were many artifacts, including an ore tub of an interesting design, the only complete one so far found at Coniston, which was discovered in a precarious condition buried in rubble on a false floor in imminent danger of collapse. It was excavated, the floor rebuilt and the tub put back on the rails. Woodends Rise was discovered, together with the oaken plug supposedly holding back Levers Water and connections were made to Arête Chamber and on the Middle Level and Grey Crag Level horizons. This exploration is still continuing and only two weeks ago an ore chute was cleared to connect the Top Level Extension with Brow Stope, thus making an escape route available from either system. A plaque has been placed at the dig on Top Level which reads 'This Extension to Top Level was opened by Cumbria Amenity Trust in January 1987. Please ensure that all artifacts remain in situ for the enjoyment of others.' Members wishing to participate in exploration work at Coniston should make themselves known to the coordinator, Peter Fleming.

The weekend meet at Nenthead also generated a spate of extra visits and detailed exploration in Smallcleugh has resulted in the discovery of new ground. Members to contact are Mike Mitchell or Gordon Gilchrist.

The average number of participants at meets was 12, although numbers varied from none at all on one occasion to 18 each at the Paddy End Through Trip and at Carrock Mine. The Red Dell through trip, a full SRT meet, also attracted 18 members. The use of electron ladders has more or less been discontinued, apart from the occasional short pitch such as the bottom of Greenside where its use saves time. Surface walks attracted below average attendances, though an exception was an evening walk around the Troutbeck Park Slate Quarries which was attended by 15 members. I would welcome information on what kind of meets people want, suggested venues and volunteers for the job of Meet Leader. This year 22 out of the 26 meets held were led by only 6 individuals, with four others leading a meet each. Two of the latter were suggested by members who also volunteered to lead them. These were the visit to the recently dug open Gutterby No.3 Pit by Albyn Austin and a visit to the slate quarries in the Honister Pass area by Alistair Cameron.

I have produced a set of notes which are intended as a guide for Meet Leaders, covering their responsibilities before, during and after a Meet, details of the insurance arranged through NAMHO and a statement of CAT policy regarding the finding of artefacts and

these have been circulated to all the Meet Leaders for the first half of 1988.

There has been a reappraisal of the Grading System and this is printed on the back of the Meets List. It was decided to keep the categories of Easy, Difficult, Severe and Exploratory. The main change is the inclusion of prussicking pitches in the D category by the designation D/SRT. Members participating in Exploratory meets should be fully self sufficient in terms of both equipment and expertise and be able to exercise their own judgement.

We now have a First Aid Kit, provided by Dr. Merrin, which, in the event of an injury underground, is intended to provide basic First Aid prior to the arrival of outside assistance it is to be kept with the rest of the tackle and should be taken to the car park or to the mine entrance at the discretion of the Meet Leader. Guy Jones has provided a set of tokens which can be used for a tally to ensure that everyone who goes in also comes out and these will be kept with the first aid kit.

One of the requirements of a Meet Leader is to provide a report of the meet for inclusion in the log book, so that we have a permanent record of our activities. This entails quite a bit of time and effort on the leader's part and it is a pity that these reports are not read by the membership. I do try to take the book to social evenings, but only a part of our membership lives close enough to attend these and for those that do there is only time for a casual inspection. It seems to me to be desirable that these Meet Reports should be published in the Newsletter and I have undertaken to send copies to the Editor. I appeal to Meet Leaders to send me their report in time for inclusion in the issue of the Newsletter following their meet.

Looking ahead to 1988, the Meet List until next July is now available and I hope it will provide a balanced program. There are sixteen meets covering all grades and including the Easter meet in Wales which will be based at Bettws y Coed. There is a weekend in Derbyshire and another at Nenthead and there are four Wednesday evening meets. There is a Training Meet in February at Ben Lyon's indoor practice wall and I hope that as well as beginners coming to learn SRT, there will also be improvers coming along to practice.

The Boxing Day Meet this year is a departure from that published in the last Meets List. The Committee has voted to support a project at Coniston Old Man Quarries to conserve the turbine house below Low Water and the Brake House at the top of the Moss Head Cableway and we have approval from the owners and landowners. Both these interesting buildings are rapidly falling into decay and will be lost unless something is done to preserve them. They need to be cleared out, the machinery replaced as far as possible in its original positions, some walls need to be restored and others need to be capped with a layer of mortar. When the work has been completed we hope to put a small explanatory notice on each building. The sites are quite accessible and the cost and the amount of work required is not great. We hope to make a start next Boxing Day and this may be combined with some exploration of the many large slate closeheads in the area. Meet at the Barrow Mountaineering Club Hut, as published in the meets list.