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THE DERBYSHIRE PENNINE CLUB.

THE Derbyshire Pennine Club is formed for the organisation of the sports of rock-climbing, cave-exploring and hill-walking.

The committee is as follows:— President, Mr. J. W. Puttrell (Sheffield); Vice-President, Mr. W. Smithard (Derby); Hon. Secretary, Mr. Henry Bishop, Avon House, Fieldhead Road, Sheffield; Mr. G. F. R. Freeman (Sheffield); Mr. Percy Pearson (Sheffield); Mr. R. M. Archer, B.Sc. (Derby); Mr. R. Holt (Didsbury).

Important work has recently been undertaken in the exploration of the Jug Hole at Snitterton, near Matlock:—

“Amongst the many geological features of Derbyshire, the Jug Hole will doubtless rank as one of the most interesting to the student of nature. It possesses the double characteristic of a stalactite cave and a water-swallow. Little information could be gleaned of the Jug Hole locally except that it was rumoured there was a deep lakelet below, and, if this was once safely crossed, the sight of a beautiful chamber would amply reward the daring investigator. Matlock, on the Midland line, is the most convenient railway station, and from there it is about thirty minutes' walk to the upland village of Snitterton, over the north side of Masson.

The actual opening of the Jug Hole, some 50 feet wide and 100 feet long, runs due north and south into the hillside, and resembles, in miniature, the grand entrance to the Peak Cavern, Castleton. The great arched roof, 100 feet high, composed of massive and apparently dangerously-poised blocks, presents a splendid appearance as one stands on the

top of the steep scree bank. The reverse view from within the deep recess, however, is even more imposing, as the jagged side walls and overhanging roof are seen silhouetted against the sky. An examination of the lower rocks, &c., reveals striking evidence of the erosive and corrosive power of water.

Our first visit to the Jug Hole was an impromptu one. Upon the next visit, however, a party of five spent several hours underground, but failed to elucidate anything definite regarding the main cavern, or swallet. Several weeks later, a fully-equipped party (including the owner of the land) took up the work, when 700 feet of rope, a 140 feet rope ladder, &c., were requisitioned. The line of search on the east side of the entrance was continued. Entering a low opening on hands and knees, we crawled like human crabs up a steep and narrow passage, ultimately arriving at the lip of a chasm. It was down this chasm that, on the last occasion, one member descended part way, attached to a rope. Having now placed the rope ladder securely into position, the same explorer again essayed a descent. It proved, however, a 'dead end,' so the swinging ladder was hauled up. Then, during the ensuing half-hour we made merry round the crackling camp fire, and partook of lunch. Next, picking up our impedimenta, we steered toward the rear, or the extreme end of the entrance, past two uncovered shaft-mouths, then due south, to another opening or shaft, about 20 feet deep.

Before reaching the latter, however, it was absolutely necessary for each man to literally force his way through a small aperture, a veritable needle's eye, certainly no place for a Falstaff.

Whilst negotiating the latter shaft we encountered an upward current of very cold air, which we accepted as a good sign of 'favours to come.' We now entered a small but lofty opening, then clambered down into a narrow rift, and passed on until we arrived at a tiny streamlet, which we followed downward along its rocky bed until it disappeared in a pot-hole. We commenced, hereabouts, to clear the 'choke' of loose rock, but soon found that the water-channel beneath

was too small even for the slimmest member of the party to enter. Just ahead, the passage ended in a cul-de-sac. Apparently, then, our only course was to return the same way we had come. The leader, however, as a forlorn hope, as well as out of curiosity, crept into a narrow crevice between two huge detached boulders on the left, when, finding that a series of openings indicated a through route to somewhere or other, the party slowly followed. To hurry, hereabouts, amongst this chaotic heap of rocks might easily have spelt disaster, for some of the latter were finely balanced, and set at a dangerous angle. Upon emerging from between the boulders we heard the noise of running waters, and, carefully making our way down a steep muddy slope, we reached the juncture of two streamlets. What an uncanny spot, and yet how interesting! Who, for instance, expected seeing the aforementioned streams flowing so calmly between the high banks of silver-grey deposits of decomposed toadstone, probably the thickest in Derbyshire? It was now the abode of peace. At flood-time, however, the cavelet would be pandemonium itself, for here the rush and roar of the subterranean waters would be terrific!

Looking ahead, we observed the united streams flowing west-north-west, along the base of the rock. Halting for a few moments, we took our bearings, and also note of our immediate surroundings, with the result that two routes presented themselves. Up-stream a tempting course offered, but, deciding to act on the recognised principle of following a stream to a finish where possible, we straightway attempted the low-roofed passage, through which the waters disappeared. Meanwhile an inquisitive member of the party crept into a circular hole up on the left, and quickly reported that this was the most practicable route forward. We accordingly deserted the waterway, but, after crawling a distance of 30 feet or so, we came in sight of the stream again, and were able to walk erect along its bed.

Hereabouts, by the echoing sound of our voices, it became evident we were nearing an extensive and lofty chamber. On

our right, traces of stalactitic formation on walls and sloping roof were visible; hitherto the whole place had been singularly devoid of calcareous deposits.

Still continuing along the stream, we entered a somewhat circular-shaped chamber, 100 feet in diameter, and from stream to roof measuring 180 feet high. Overhead, hundreds of fragile straw-shaped stalactites, interspersed with many scalloped-edged curtains, decorated the slanting roof, and on the floor were specimens of stalagmite bosses. The *pièce de résistance* of the whole scene, however, was on our left, a lofty lava-like mass of calcareous matter, which stretched nearly 150 feet upward, tier upon tier, towards the high roof, at an angle of 30 degrees, a grand adamantine cascade. Ascending the 'cascade,' we observed its regular horizontal lines and ribbed markings, also its mirror-like pools of the clearest water, beautifully enriched with fine coral-crystalline deposits.

After an interval for photography, we renewed our investigations. The stream, hereabouts, disappeared down a narrow recess on the right. Whether we should make its acquaintance again was doubtful. Going forward on hands and knees, through a low passage on our left, we arrived at the narrow portal of a steep sloping stalactite chamber, so low that we had to wriggle and slide down on our stomachs, feet first, not the pleasantest of operations, especially when one stuck involuntarily in a water hollow! Pressing on, carefully threading our way between stalactites and stalagmites, some as white as driven snow, we were agreeably surprised to reach our old friend, the stream. Now we passed splendid specimens of 'beehive' formations, and, closely following the steeply-inclined bed of the stream, eventually arrived at the Ultima Thule of our exploration by the stream route, an oval-shaped siphon in a narrow opening in the rock-joint, about one-fourth the size of its namesake in Giant's Hole, Castleton. An hour later we were back again in the outer world, having discovered another and slightly easier exit. The general direction of the Jug Hole swallet is west-north-west, and its total length 650 feet, whilst the stalagmitic

cascade, nearly 150 feet high by 100 feet broad, is probably the largest in Britain."

On February 23rd, a strong party assembled in Peak Cavern, Castleton, to continue the excavation of a water-worn passage which has for some time occupied the attention of the Club's cave section. Some work was also done in the pot-holes of the roof.

The Eastertide meet was at Curzon Lodge farm, near Brassington. The scrambles on the Harborough and Rainster rocks are always enjoyable; but, not content with rambles and climbs, the members essayed the excavation of some foundations, conjectured to be Roman, at the foot of Rainster rocks. These operations resulted in the discovery of traces of a roadway; and some Roman coins, with a fibula, or brooch, and fragments of pottery, were unearthed. The results are so satisfactory that, although the work is outside the professed aims of the Club, it is hoped shortly to continue the investigations.

The week-end, April 27th-28th, was spent at Alport, near Bakewell. Robin Hood's Stride and Cratcliff rocks were visited, and some fine rambles added to the enjoyment of the members.

Prospective arrangements include a visit to Stanage rocks, near Hathersage, an all-night walk, and a ramble from Chinley to Edale, *via* Mount Famine.

