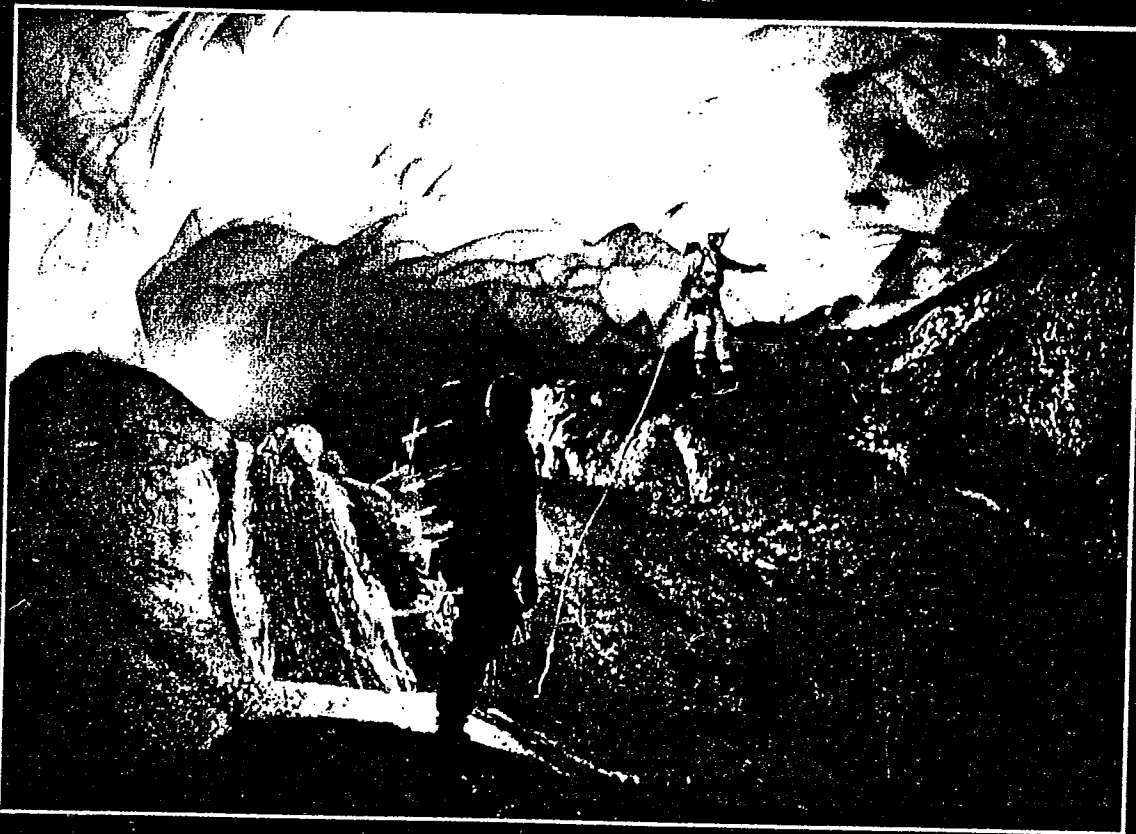


# UBSS



NEWSLETTER  
Vol 8 N<sup>o</sup>. 3

November 1992

## Editorial

Welcome to this the first Newsletter of the academic year, and as usual it is packed full of gossip, scandal and expedition (holiday) reports. Also, welcome to all those new members who joined at Fresh - you made a good move! If you want to come caving, come along to Crockers Pub on Tuesday evenings at 9.30 or give us a ring. Any articles, gossip or cartoons for Newsletter would be greatly appreciated, send them to me c/o The Speleological Society, University Union, Queens Rd, Bristol, or by internal mail to the Geography Dept (mark it P/G). If you are on e-mail, my address is [farrant@uk.ac.bristol.gma](mailto:farrant@uk.ac.bristol.gma) Now the disclaimer; The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the committee.

*Andy Farrant*

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### Cover Photo.

Kverkfell, Iceland. An ice cave in the Vatnajokull icecap, formed by a hot spring emerging under a glacier. (Reproduced from a postcard.)

## Gravel

It's Official! A Newsletter Exclusive! Alison and Bill are now an entity, as predicted in the last issue of Newsletter. A Peanut Butter massage is obviously the way to Bill's heart. Funny how Alison waits until Bill moves to Imperial College though.

Nilesh is putting in a strong bid for UBSS Driver of the Year award, after various incidents in the past few months. Unlike Matt however, Nilesh has yet to crash.

Amazing fact No 270.

Andy Farrant has been caving in Yorkshire.

Amazing fact No 271.

Eve has been caving.

Well, it had to happen. Rachel has found (or is it overpowered?) herself a man, well, of sorts. Steve Cottle has finally succumbed to her charm (sic), and without the excuse that he was pissed/stoned at the time. So why Steve? Was it his sexy moustache, his trendy baseball cap, or was Rachel just after free light hire?

### UBSS Health Warning

Drinking with Rachel can seriously damage your credibility (and your jeans). On no account sit within spilling distance of Rachels pint, or you will suffer the consequences.

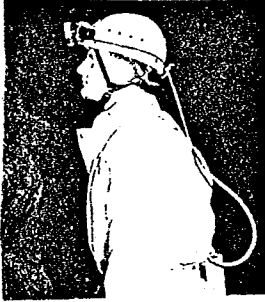
Maypole Inlet in OFD is claiming it's usual number of victims, with 4 UBSS members performing aerial acrobatics in the space of a week. Top marks however go to Chris Pepper for his superb display of how to break your finger in the streamway. Luckily, the Hero Doctor was on hand to put the said finger back into place.

### Job Wanted.

Male, 22, wants job in officious position. Will consider anything involving Permits, Rachel, Speleoscene or drinking. Previous job experiance, UBSS Secretary. Please contact 8 Brighton Road, Redland.

### Missing Person

Has anyone seen this man?



Chris Bennett, aged 25, last sighted at the BCRA conference accompanied by two men. Any information, please contact the Chemistry Dept. A reward of a signed copy of his thesis has been offered for information leading to his submission.

The archeologists were back in Cheddar last month, with Chris Stringer (who's big in Hominids) and Andy Currant (who's just big) having a dig. Unfortunately, their rate of progress is even slower than that of the GB dig. Current estimates reckon on a breakthrough to GB sometime during the next interglacial.

Congratulations to Jo Wright (a geology postgrad) for carrying on a great UBSS tradition by spewing up on Mike Simms' carpet during her first week in Bristol. They obviously train 'em well at the Imperial College Caving Club. Her latest exploits involved crashing into a car while cycling home after particularly good party, and ending up concussed in hospital.

Andy Farrant has been told by the Mendip Rescue Organisation not to be rescued. The reason - he's too long to fit in the stretcher (which seems to be designed for the average Wessex member). As a result of this, the MRO will take a saw on all rescues from now on, to make sure that the victim fits the stretcher.

A subgroup to the EDSS is being formed, consisting of all those who couldn't get through the Organ Grinder in BS17. Membership is to be anonymous, but Tim Parish is rumoured to be the new secretary, assisted by Steve Cottle.

A.B. (Hero) Doctor writes



Love.

A very serious complaint, often bought on by alcohol, drugs or Peanut Butter massages. In severe cases, Siamese Twin like symptoms can occur, leading to a complete withdrawl from caving and marriage. If symptoms persist, consult your family planning officer.

The Mendip Rescue Organisation is on full standby. The reason? Kathy Sykes is back...

The Gaynor Arnold appreciation society is still going strong. Prospective applicants must apply in writing to the editor at the usual address.

A member of the UBSS was spotted recently stal bashing in Cheddar caves. Oddly enough the tourists didn't seem to react to someone going round the cave armed with a lumphammer and chisel knocking off bits of stal. The editor would like it known that the person wishes to remain anomous, but for the usual fee will divulge the persons identity (a well known member of the Univ Bristol Stal smashers society)

Well it had to happen. Trevor and Sarah are soon to become proud parents to the UBSS's youngest member. The birth is due at the time of next years Wessex Challenge, so it's going to be a baby buggy race with nappy changing and bottle feeding obstacles.

Technology has finally arrived in Westbury-on-Trym. The Hero Doctor has just bought a ansaphone. It is rumoured that the message will be: "The Doctor is not in at the moment, please take two asprin and phone again in the morning".

Linda Wilson would like it to be known that from now on she would like to be referred to as a 'Fluffy Bunny', as this is what she is known as in the office. Quite why a 'Fluffy Bunny' is unknown. Perhaps 'Savage Rottweiler' would be more appropriate? Any suggestion can be sent to the editor at the usual address.

The editor would like to point out that any rumours about Hannah and Dutch men are just malicious gossip spread

by Alison. So what did happen in Corsica?? Answers on a Postcard to the editor

The jungle vines in Mulu have been glowing hot with rumours that Dave Gill is to get married to a local girl sometime in the summer. The heat has finally got to him.

At last - the Mendip diggers dream come true. Cave guides at Cheddar caves are being paid to dig! The dig site has even been vetted by the Health and Safety executive. Plans are afoot to install lighting, a kettle and music. The only problem - the dig will only link back into the showcave.

\*\*\*\* Editors Note \*\*\*\*

Please note that the contents of Gravel are not intended to be malicious in any way, and should not be taken seriously. However, if anyone wants something kept quiet, the editor is willing to withhold publication for the usual fee of 1 pint of Butcombe per item.

## WESSEX CHALLENGE 1992

The theme of this years Wessex challenge was 'Pirates'. The challenge is basically a chariot race and pissup involving all the Mendip caving clubs. This years challenge involved a treasure hunt for clues around the Minories, followed by a race over North Hill culminating in a boat race across the Minories pools. So it was that a valiant bunch of UBSS pirates did borrow a surf canoe from the Canoe Club and set forth for Priddy in search of buried treasure. After a long trip seeking out clues on land around the Wessex hut, and getting bollocked by a local farmer, the race for the treasure was on.

The ACG bathtub soon took the lead, but was soon overtaken by the WCC and the BEC. After the usual fisticuffs and hand to hand fighting up the hill, the team reached the minories. Here, Cap'n Miners sallied forth passing the BEC (busy fighting the ACG) and launched the boat onto the stormy minories ocean. The ACG were next - and promptly sank. Alan Grey acting like a true Captain and going down with his bathtub. So it was that Cap'n Miners, assisted by able seawoman Garrard and the Moscow caving Club got to the treasure floatin' in the middle of the lake. **Disaster!** - this meant we had WON!! thus having the honour of organising the event next year. After throwing Andy F into the pool for the hell of it (The bottom was very squidgy - Ed), the victorious team headed to the stomp for lots of beer, food and dancing, with Charlie and Andy F performing the Bat Boogie, done while hanging upside down from the rafters of Priddy Village Hall.

All in all - an excellant do. Thanks to the Wessex for orgainzing it.

P.S. We need all the help we can get to organize it next year, which will be sometime in June '93. Please contact Andy Farrant or Alison Garrard.

## THE HON SECS BIT

Firstly, a warm welcome to all our new members. Already we have been twice to the Mendips and once to Yorkshire and Wales - see the write-ups in this newsletter. If you still haven't been to any meetings, and are wondering why you gave your fiver away, don't despair! Just turn up at Crockers Pub after 9.30pm on a Tuesday and introduce yourself.

Secondly, many apologies for the incorrect dates in the handbook. As some may have noticed, there is a weekend trip that appears to be leaving on a Tuesday - the correct dates are published below. If you want to come on any of the trips, either just turn up on the Tuesday before and sign up, or phone one of the people in the Handbook.

## THE HUT

The hut still needs some maintenance doing to it. As well as cleaning and painting the ceiling, the drain appears to be blocked. Despite the skilled use of carbide and matches by some people, it resisted all attempts and now needs more serious attention. Also, the toilet needs renovating before someone falls in. Therefore we hope to organise a maintenance weekend sometime this or next term. Please watch the noticeboard for details.

## CALENDER FOR 1992/93

31st Oct. (SAT) GB Rescue Practice

7/8th Nov. (SAT/SUN) BONFIRE WEEKEND. Party the weekend away at our hut on Mendip. Food, bonfire, fireworks, beer etc. There may even be some caving - stranger things have happened.

12th Nov. (THURS) Committee Meeting. 9pm at The Stables.

21/22nd Nov. (SAT/SUN) S.WALES WEEKEND. We are staying at the Croydon Caving Club's hut - come for two days of sensational caving. The pub is also only 30 feet away!

26th Nov. (THURS) Sessional Meeting. Come to a Lecture on some aspect of caving - to be arranged.

16/17th Jan. (SAT/SUN) S.WALES WEEKEND. Another action-packed stay with Croydon. We also have a permit for OCAF cave.

6th/7th Feb. (SAT/SUN) DERBYSHIRE WEEKEND. A fine caving area which we don't seem to visit very often. We also have a permit for Peak Cavern - an opportunity not to be missed.

This is by no means all the trips we are going on - the best way to find out what's going on is to come to the Tuesday meetings.

Tim Parish.

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## JACQUES (TOM) BRASEY

Many members of the club will be saddened to hear of the death of Jacques Brasey in a cave diving accident in the Dordogne. Jacques, known as Tom to his friends, was a highly experienced cave diver and a respected postgraduate student at the University of Freiburg, Switzerland. Although not a member, his involvement with members of the society began when he was working for a short time in the Geography Dept dating some stalagmite from the Atlas mountains. He went on several caving trips with the society during his stay in England, as well as extending Lancaster Hole with John Cordingly. He was due to carry on his research in the Geography department in November. Tom was one of the nicest and most friendly, unassuming people you could hope to meet, and he will be sorely missed by cavers, cave divers and academic colleagues alike.

Andy Farrant.

## CAVE REFERENCES IN JOHN AUBREY'S MONUMENTA BRITANNICA

Tony Boycott

John Aubrey was born in Easton Piercy in Chippenham, Wiltshire on 12th March 1626. His father was a wealthy landowner, and in 1642 he went to Trinity College Oxford, and in 1646 he started studying at Middle Temple. His studies were interrupted by the Civil War, but his life became dedicated to the study of what would nowadays be called archaeology. After the Restoration in 1660 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1662, and in 1663 he visited Stonehenge with Charles II, who commissioned him to write a book on the monuments of England. This was his main work for the next 30 years (1665 to 1693) but was never published as Charles died in 1685 and he was subsequently unable to find a publisher. The manuscript was deposited with Robert Hooke at Gresham College, Oxford on 11th August 1690 and is now in the Bodleian Library. He died in 1697.

John Fowles and Rodney Legg published an annotated edition of the manuscript in two volumes (Fowles & Legg, 1980 & 1982) with reproductions of parts of the original manuscript and annotations and transcriptions alongside each other. The books are divided into three parts:

### Volume 1

Part 1 *Templa Druidicum*  
Stone Circles  
Druidic Additions

Part 2 Camps  
Castles  
Military Architecture  
Roman Towns  
Pits  
Horns

### Volume 2

Part 3 Barrows  
Urns  
Sepulchres  
Ditches  
Highways  
Roman Pavements  
Coins  
Embankments and Drainage



Several cave visits are recorded, although unfortunately it is not possible to tell the dates of the visits directly from the manuscript. They can sometimes be inferred from contemporary references.

Some of the cave references are grottoes and chalk pits and have not been listed here. Direct quotations from Aubrey's manuscript are given in italics, in page order, with comments beneath each section in ordinary type.

*In the High Peak between Chapel-en-le-Frith and Castleton is a high hill called Mam Tor about which are many works. On the top was a camp (supposed Roman), a very fair ring on top of the hill. Near to the said hill about the years 1668 or 1669 was found in digging lead ore the bones of an elephant, by the people supposed a giant. Part of the skull and two of the teeth are in the custody of Mr Wright of Longstone near Bakewell of a very prodigious magnitude.*

*This hill is called the Trembling Hill and looked on for one of the wonders of the Peak, the old banks and works on top of the hill every day running down in small quantities as if a mole raised them, yet the hill is never less, or the valley the more filled up.*

*About half a mile from there is Castleton, a pretty large village where is that strange cave at the foot of a hill under the Castle called the Devil's Arse in the Peak, so spacious that several poor people have habitances in the mouth thereof, where they receive their light and the main peak is the general covering to them; and their habitances paled by stone walls about 4 feet high.*

*Near Buxton in the Peak, where the bath is, is another strange cave called Poole's Hole. The entrance is at foot of the hill and when within, the cave of a great height and wideness.*

*At a village called Eldon is another strange deep pit which has been attempted to be plumbed, but never could the bottom be found, although Mr Cotton, father of Mr Charles Cotton now living, in the time of \*\*\*\*\* let a man into it several hundred fathoms; but by reason of the damp and fume of the minerals of the earth he was deprived of his senses in the coming up, and could give no perfect account thereof.*

*I do not know where the elephant bones were found. There are many descriptions of Peak Cavern before this date as early as Gervase of Tilbury in 1211 (Shaw 1979 p15). The reference to Eldon Hole is the descent by George Bradley in about 1600 (Leigh 1659, in Shaw 1965). \*\*\*\*\* is illegible in Aubrey's manuscript, but presumably refers to Queen Elizabeth I.*

*In the rock (below the British fortification [the camp at Clifton, Bristol]) is a cave called the Giant's Hole, now hardly accessible:- where are found still sheeps' bones, which are brought thither by foxes, as at the caves in the rocks by Plymouth. Perhaps that cave might heretofore have been an anchoritage or hermitage, like that in the rock at Cromwell's Park in Gloucestershire.*

*The dropping of the water here does petrify. Within the Giant's cave are petrified pendant drops, pendant like icicles: it is not known, how far one may goe here underground; but at some length, they find a dampe [water filled passagel].*

*Opposite to St. Vincent's Rocks are two other such caves, whose names I have forgot; they are under the Roman Campe [Borough Walls or Burwalls at the Western end of the Suspension Bridgel]. In the stones here, are frequently found petrified shells like cockleshells, but twice as big.*

*At the foot of St Vincent's Rock is the Hotwell, which is as warm as blood. It doth admirable cures for ulcers in the kidneys, the stone, and the chaude-pisse [gonorrhoeal] By evaporation it yields a ..... I did precipitate it with a strong lixivium [water impregnated with alkaline] of potashes, and found in the bottom a fine white powder like nitre.*

*Opposite to this well is Scarlet Well, a lusty spring, which is extremely cold. I could not then come to it, to experiment it. Query its virtues and query the height of St Vincent's Rock.*

Giant's Cave, Scarlet Well & Hotwell are all mentioned by William Wyrcestre after his visit on 12th September 1480 (Nicholls & Taylor 1881). Giant's Cave was also known as Foxes Hole, and St Vincent's Hermitage was either in the cave or close by. The cave is smaller since the rocks were removed to ease the passage down the gorge. This is the first record of Burwalls Cave (two entrances, directly under Burwalls Camp).

I do not know the whereabouts of the Cave referred to at Plymouth; the Bone Caves at Oreston were not discovered until the building of the breakwater in 1816 (Dawkins, 1874 p 13 & 317, Horne 1817).

Volume 2 Part 3 p 1060-1

*Cheddar cliffs near Axbridge in Somersetshire are of a stupendous height, some as high as Paul's tower [St Paul's Cathedral, London], and in length about a mile or mile and a half. The breadth of this crack, or space between them, is about the breath of Cheapside. The stone is a limestone; which they burn for lime. Between these rocks at the end toward Axbridge do run a pretty stream, which drives eleven mills within a mile.*

*In the caverns of these rocks are such pendants of petrified stone, as at Okey Hole, near Wells. The caverns of both these places are unsearched, and run far underground. I have been in one of these caverns of Cheddar half a quarter of a mile or better, it runs thus [the drawing shows a cavity rising into the cliff, with "o" representing the entrance, and "a" to "b" the horizontal line, extended from ground level outside].*



*In this crooked cavern is a kind of candy-like crust, which (perhaps) is a coarse natural saccharum Saturni [literally 'sugar of Saturn', Saturn being the alchemists name for lead, so lead acetate in modern terms], by the dropping of the water, which is impregnated with the Lead of Mendip. Yew trees grow plentifully on these rocks.*

Wookey Hole was well known & reported by many visitors the earliest of which was William Wyrcestre (Balch 1947 p47 & 50) and which have been well reviewed by Shaw (1966).

The position and survey of the cave at Cheddar fits Long Hole, and the first published description of this that I am aware of is in Collinson (1791), although it is probably the cave at Cheddar mentioned in Beaumont (1681); "To enter into this Cavern, before you reach halfway up this valley, you must ascend about fifteen Fathom on those Rocks which bound it to the



East. This Cavern is not of so large an extent as the former [Wookey] neither has it anything peculiar in it; there is no current of water, nor does water drop so freely from the Roof as generally in other Caverns, wherefore the spars appear not of so lively Colours as commonly elsewhere."

The description and thoughts on the mode of origin of speleothems in Long Hole is in contrast to the contemporary belief that they were formed by vegetative growth (Beaumont 1676).

Volume 2 Part 3 p1062-3

*Mr John Beaumont of Stony Easton in Somersetshire digging a lead mine in Mendip, near him, about a hundred foot deep, (or better), they found a hole in rock, big enough for one to creep into. With much ado, and twelvence reward, he persuaded a boy to go in and search, who after a little while came into a great cavern as big as the Royal Exchange and as high or higher, all vaulted with glorious pendants (sc [illicet = that is] of Sparre) that glister like crystals. There is no prince in the world hath so glorious a room; nor any room so ill an avenue.*

This is Lamb Leer cavern, explored by John Beaumont about 1670 (Beaumont 1681, quoted in Shaw 1962) but the story about the boy is new.

Volume 2 Part 3 p1066-7.

These pages consist of a pen and ink wash drawing of the Cheddar Gorge, looking westward down it, with the Quantock Hills in the distance. An opening to the caverns is shown in the bottom left [= Sayes Hole]. The notes are intended to aid Streater in his proposed painting.

*I took the draught of this prospect to show Mr Streater (that painted the scenes for the playhouses), who liked it very well, and intended to have painted it, but shortly after died of the stone, 1680.*

Assuming that this drawing and the survey of Long Hole were done on the same visit to Cheddar, the survey must have been done before 1680. It is thus the earliest known survey of a cave in the British Isles although unpublished until 1982. Pen Park Hole, surveyed by Captain Collins on 18th September 1682, (Southwell 1683), is the earliest known published survey.

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ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY OCTOBER 1992

Tony Boycott

- Chelsea Spelaeological Society Records Volume 20: Caves and Tunnels in South East England. Part 10. 1992  
 Caves and Mines of the Sychrydd Gorge K Jones 1992  
 Красные Пещеры. А. А. Щепинский Caves of Crimea Симферополь «Таврия» 1987  
 Giant Caves of Borneo M Meredith & J Wooldridge Tropical Press 1992  
 Who was Aveline anyway? Mendip's cave names explained. 1992  
 Rich Witcombe Wessex Cave Club Occ Pub  
 Hot Springs of Bath Investigations of the Thermal Waters of the Avon Valley. Ed G A Kellaway Bath City Council 1991

FUN 'N' FROLICS IN THE YORKSHIRE DALES

16th-18th OCTOBER 1992

FROLIC-ERS: Mat, Emma, Rachel, Steve, Tim, Topher, Miranda, Julian, Alison, Bill, Pippa.

I was asked (or did I offer?) to write up the Yorkshire weekend so I started trying to remember the names of the caves we did and the correct caving jargon in order to write it properly (after all, 4 weeks ago I thought 'Tackle' and 'Hand Jammer' were warther wood words). And now I discover that "Oh, no, no-one wants to know about the caving, just write about the pub and that sort of thing and make it funny" (Anon). Gulp, here goes...

Friday Steve and Julian drove up early to do Swinsto's (enthusiastic or what?), meanwhile the rest of us left later and bombed it up the country in time for last orders at the Marton Arms in Ingleton. Glug, glug, time for another? Great, glug... and back to the caravan site to our 2 'luxury' caravans. Steve and Rachel, and Bill and Alison wandered off to one of them and Julian followed, foreseeing the obvious attraction of being rocked to sleep. Well, it was that or Topher's socks. Not a difficult choice on the whole!

Saturday Frosty morning. Fried breakfast courtesy of Tim and Bill (thanks chaps). Julian went handgliding while the rest of us went of to Ingleton for King Size Mars Bars and furry suits. Mat, Emma, Miranda, Tim and Pippa drove over to Clapham to do Bar Pot through to Gaping Ghyll while the remainder went off in the direction of Swinsto's (again). At last, a chance to do some real SRT down a real cave - ooh, the excitement of it all. Mat rigged. We squeezed down the first pitch of 10m, then trundled along a bit before descending the second pitch of 37m and that was just super, smashing, great. Walked through into the Gaping Ghyll chamber which was spectacular but pretty dangerous though with people above chucking rocks down. Back up both pitches "no, puff, I'm not tired, pant, I'm just admiring the view, wheeze..." and emerged just as it was getting dark so legged the 2 miles back to the car and met the others by chance at the chip shop in Ingleton. They'd all finished Swinsto's ages ago and had spent the afternoon in the pub.

Once back at the caravan the lights were dimmed and Steve's 24-candle-lit B'day cake, lovingly made by Rachel, was admired by all for about 10 seconds before being leapt upon. (Did Steve actually get a piece?) Steve later remembered that he was in fact only 23, reckon it was the moustache that confused him! Off to the pub for copious amounts of Yorkshire Bitter and pizzas. Then back for tea, toast and bedtime stories, namely extracts from 'Northern Caves II'. Topher took his socks off and we unanimously decided it was time to call it a day.

Sunday Leisurely lie in. Fried breakfast. Sunday papers and that sort of thing until midday. Steve and Rachel challenged Topher and some bearded chap to a race which was excitedly accepted, the former doing Simpsons and the latter, Swinsto's (again) so they all departed and for the record, the Simpsons duo won. Bill and Alison went off to watch Julian handgliding but apparently it snowed so they spent their time sheltering under the wings.

The Bar Pot group from Saturday decided (eventually) on Sell Ghyll, near Horton-in-Ribblesdale. Walked the mile up there only to discover I'd left my chest jammer in the car so stormed back to get it, decided on a short cut back, met a red-faced farmer, decided the longer route was best after all and got back to the cave entrance to find Mat patiently waiting for me.

Tim rigged this time. There were 3 pitches, the first involving a rebelay. The other 2 were pretty straight forward (well, come on, we're dab-hands at SRT now) and at the bottom we wandered about a bit and crawled through a few passages before ascending back up to the top. Back to the car, quick change, 20 yards down the roads ... FLAAAARP ... "Oh, no, we've got a puncture". Everyone out, everything out of the boot, carbide powder everywhere, chaos, half an hour later ... caravan.

Everyone had gone save Bill and Alison who were wondering if they should go and search for us. Packed up. Back to the Marton Arms for scrumptious burgers (try the 'French' ones, they're yummy!) - had a bit of an ordeal with the waitress involving numerous sachets of ketchup! Left at 9pm for Bristol, Miranda to Northumberland and Bill to London after a truly excellent weekend. Hope we can go there again soon, PLEEEASE. Thanks to all the organisers.

Pippa Gilbert

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\*\*\*\* STOP PRESS \*\*\*\*

As we are going to press, reports are coming in of a significant new find on Mendip. Whitepit, one of Tuska's Hymac digs just outside Priddy has 'gone'. After digging down 20 m, approx. 60 m of passage has been discovered. It appears to be an old high level phreatic passage, which is well decorated, ending in draughting boulder choke. Prospects appear good, especially as the cave is probably 150 m directly above Swildons '15'!

## Pierre St. Martin 1992

*Steve Cottle*

Also during our travels we planned a visit to Pierre St. Martin, which was the 7th deepest cave in the world. The actual work of arranging permits had been carried out by Phil Romford of the BEC but as for unexplained reasons no-one from the BEC actually turned up! There was however just enough people and just enough rope to complete the trip, Bill and I having brought 600m of Austria rope with us and Grant of Derwent Mountaineering Club having brought over 300m with him. Fred Davies had arrived early and after two days of wandering over the lapiaz had managed to locate the entrance SC3 Gouffre du Beffroi, Belfry Pot or Segnutegviakio Letzia depending upon which language was in current use. By Monday all 14 people had arrived and most had looked at DS30 Couey Lodge, a nearby hole that went down to over -700m although nobody actually got any further than the end of the bottom pitch at -305m. Having had some interesting pitch lengths quoted to us for DS30 I took it that all pitches in SC3 would also be of the incorrect length. So having sorted out the ropes two groups left to rig the entrance series down to -400m whilst another group left to carry the boats into the Tunnel Du Vent. Marcel, Ken Dawes and Chris Kerr (from Tennessee) joined me on the first rigging trip down to the top of the Belfry a 92m pitch where we were relieved of our duties by more of the DMC. Meanwhile in a place over 10 kilometres away Bill had walked up to the EDF tunnel, the artificial exit for the cave, with Fred, Chris Baker and Pete. At 11am they started in through the seven large halls that make the type of caving in this region typical, very large boulder strewn chambers. Unfortunately Chris twisted his back early on and was then helped out by Fred leaving Bill and Pete to continue on to place the boats. Route finding in the large halls was such an immense problem that by 10 pm (nearing to a mandip cavers out-in-time for a swift half) Fred left to find assistance. Bill new that the french pubs opened late so used this as an excuse to get familiarise himself with the whole of the route. (As well every bit that wasn't on the route as well? -ed).

So after a good days fester the trip was set and we (Bill, Marcel and I) left camp at 8:30. At 10:30 Bill started to descend and decided he wanted to rereg the whole cave. This Marcel persuaded him not to do as we didn't have enough time and the small rub points could not be helped. I also decided that I didn't have enough time or energy to carry my camera through the cave so wisely left it at the top of the Belfry. The initial rope lengths had been incorrect but only such that the last pitch Liberty Bell needed rigging. The pitches had some amazing acoustics with clear words being spoken from the top of the Belfry to the bottom all 96m and the aptly named Liberty Bell was a fine 54m free hanging pitch. From the base of this pitch began the long walk to the Salle de la Verna and the exit. The first part of the traverse was not very big but contained some very interesting wind directed stalactites. After an hour we reached the impressive Salle Cosyns where Tete Sauvage enters and by this stage the cave was already taking on large proportions and the streams that we occasionally crossed were getting bigger. After Salle Suisse and a waist deep traverse through water we entered the Grand Canyon. This section of stream was over a kilometre long. It had superbly fluted walls and meandered marvellously along its length. Most of the time it was over 10m wide, over 30m tall and shallow until it neared the end where the very cold water reached the parts that other cavers try to keep dry! This lead us to the Marmites so named due to the marmite jar shaped pot holes. Here we had lunch

Mars bars, fruit cake, biscuits with condensed milk and Marcel had octopuss followed by octopuss soup warmed in a carbide flame. Just as we left here Andy, Nick and Pete caught up with us and decided to have lunch, note it was 6:30pm. So we left to find the lakes and were soon lost. After a short while we found the lakes and blew up another boat to cross them. Andy, Nick and Pete passed us here as they were wearing wetsuits or as Pete found out the wetsuit was wearing him! It was here that we parted company as the boat was having a little trouble getting through the lakes Bill decided to wait for the last group and help the boat through. Marcel and I continued to the Tunnel Du Vent where after a little problem, we couldn't find the boat, continued to blow up the 3rd boat and went through together. The Tunnel Du Vent is also aptly named as the wind just blew us through the 20m section of deep water. Now we had to try to find our way out through the big halls.

This starts being a problem if you have neither Bill who knew the way or the description from the book! So by following the markers that Bill and Pete had left Marcel and I left the small parts of the cave behind and travelled through Salle Navarre, over 100m wide to the base of the Lépineux shaft where Marcel Loubens fell to his death. All the time through these larger sections we followed a trail over some very large boulders whilst never quite being sure of the sides of the cave let alone the roof that obviously in the past deposited itself over the floor! Continuing through the large chambers of E. Catseret and Loubens leads to the impressive Métro. This chamber is 600m long, 30m wide and 40m high and follows a river for most of its length, although Andy, Nick and Pete did their best to circumnavigate the whole of the Métro before they realised their mistake. Meanwhile time was getting on and so was the cave. Another two large halls were passed before we entered Salle Chevalier, 400m long but at the end of this I recognised the entrance to Salle de la Verna. This impressive chamber is about 250m in diameter and over 100m tall from roof to floor thus making it the fifth largest chamber, by surface area in the world. The whole of the Pierre St.Martin stream enters from Salle Chevalier and sinks in the floor after a series of cascades over 80m high. From here we left the cave via the Tunnel EDF and met the others in the EDF hut outside. It had taken us 16 hours to complete the distance of over nine kilometres and drop of nearly 1000m but a little knowledge of the route would have been useful. Meanwhile Bill was in full training as he guided the other group out whilst carrying out all three boats, one of which had punctured in the Tunnel giving Stuart an early bath. After 19 hours they emerged to find 5 cavers asleep in the hut all of whom awoke to run / walk / fall down the hill for the next hour. At 6:30am four of the cavers drove off from St. Engrace to fetch more cars and I was left to sit around and watch the sun dawn on a new day in the Pyrenees and rise majestically over another six tired cavers wandering gently along the road. It had been a splendid trip.

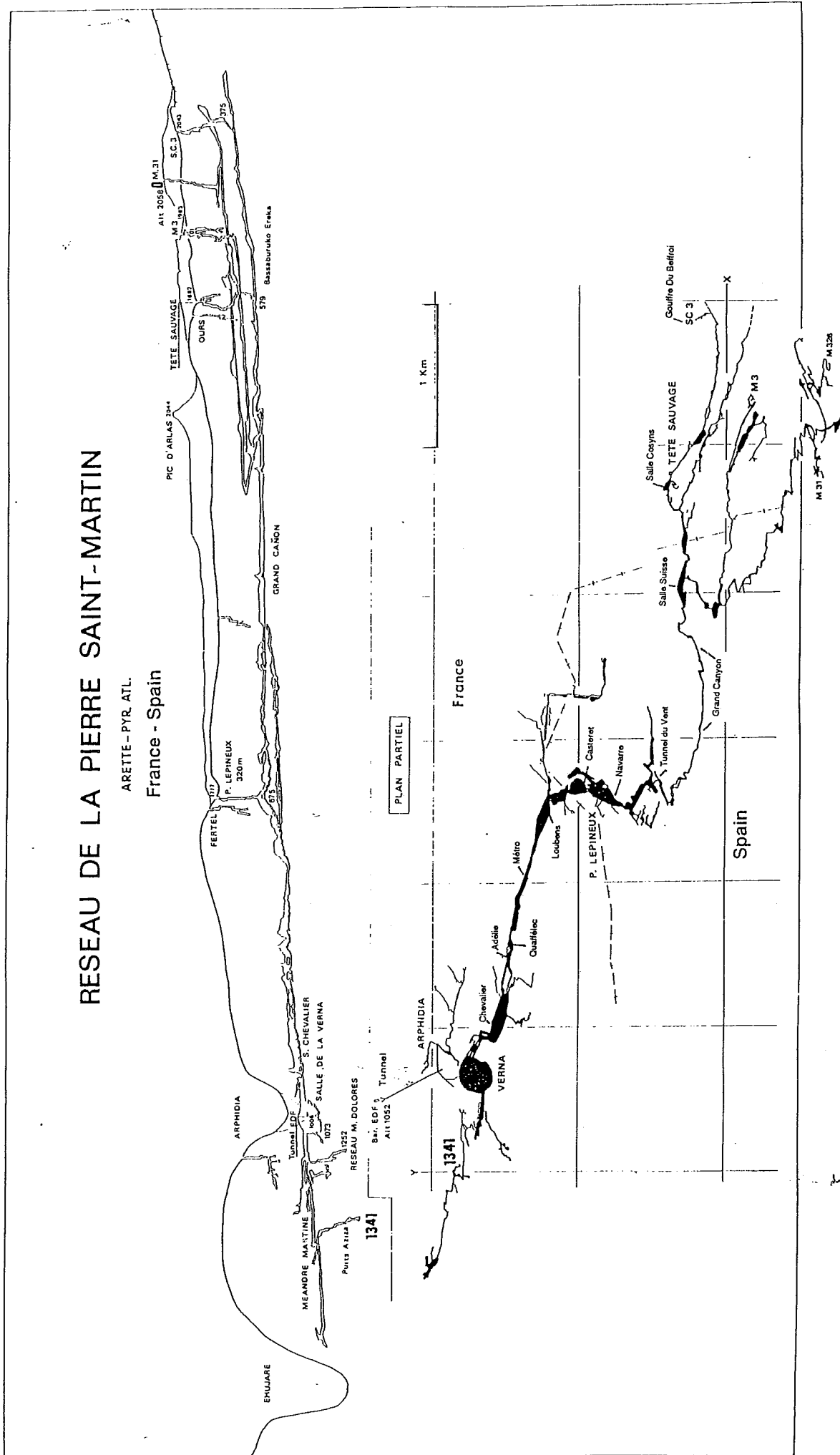
That day saw very little activity in the camp but a good time was had by all at the dinner held that evening to celebrate Fred and his wife's 35th wedding anniversary.

All that was left was to detackle and to take a look back in the Salle de la Verna which was impressively lit up by a local French group who have a generator and lighting installed there. Our thanks go to all those who went to Pierre St.Martin and made the trip a great experience. Also to the Tratman fund for its grant towards the whole of our French caving expedition and to Phil Romford for organising the initial PSM trip.

# RESEAU DE LA PIERRE SAINT-MARTIN

ARETTE - PYR. ATL.

France - Spain



## FRESH SQUEEZE - MENDIPS WEEKEND

Seeking something a little different and challenging to do in our final year, Andrew and I were confronted by the spelaeological society stand at the fresh squash.

We were rapidly persuaded to join, and that evening we decided over a pint (or six!) in the Epi. to go on the freshers mendip trip next morning. This did not seem such a good idea at eight'o clock the next morning, but we finally made it to the union and equipped ourselves with a pair of wellington boots each.

After a nerve-racking drive in the minibus (no offence Nilesch !) we arrived at the club hut, which looked like a derelict woodman's hut, but which has actually belonged to the club for over fifty years. Base was quickly set up and the dummy hung ceremoniously from a tree to discourage trespassers!

Caving equipment was supplied, and we set off for our first trip - Swildon's Hole. There followed three hours of scrambling, crawling, dangling on ladders, and generally getting cold, wet and happy. Tim demonstrated the first sump, but that was as far as us novices could go.

Having emerged and changed, lunch was long overdue, so we all headed off to a cafe to recover and swap experiences.

Later, in the evening, following a delicious stew cooked by Charlie (which didn't contain any mushrooms) we set off, en-masse, for the pub. No more needs to be said about this except for the fact that we drank all the on pump beers dry... Back at the hut we were 'treated' to a rousing chorus of club songs, and a lemon curd fight which got a bit to messy for most of us.

On the sunday those with the worst hangovers stayed in bed, but Andrew and I set off eagerly for a trip down GB, accompanied by Andy and Jo who are both geology postgrads, and so we were bombarded with fascinating information about cave geology. The stalactites and other formations were very impressive, and a fine trip was finished off with a good crawl back through the Devil's Elbow.

In the afternoon there was a session of SRT practice at the hut. This was most instructive, and also good fun, although Simon must add that Jo's harness was dangerously tight and nearly caused permanent injury!

The whole weekend proved most enjoyable for all, and we will both be going again soon.

Simon White and Andrew Woodward

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### FROM THE "PROCEEDINGS" EDITORIAL TEAM

The following material formed the last part of the "Austria 89/90" expedition report submitted for publication in Proceedings. For some strange reason it was excised by the referees, but we feel that it contains material of great interest to the Society, and should therefore appear here:

"In 1992 Organhohle was pushed to a remarkable 842 m, and the following year a one man Welsh expedition reached a record 18,495 m. This was not all as he had abseiled off the bottom of the rope and a body recovery expedition in 1994 had to use a hot air balloon, laboriously dragged through the OrganGrinder by a team of willing sherpas, to descend the new main shaft. It was bottomeed at a depth of around 72 miles, where, to their considerable suprise, the intrepid explorers found the body they had come to rescue alive and well, and living off fossils and gnawed bat bones. He was loth to leave his new habitat, and was only persuaded to to return to the surface on the promise of first bash at the expedition stash and a free PhD for discovering a new species, namely himself. Unfortunately even the most skilled surgeons, ably assisted by Rentokil, were unable to remove his furry suit.

The next year everyone came to their senses and went to the seaside for their holidays."

## France 1992

Or

More French Caves. Part 3.

Steve Cottle

Having done a large number of show caves and a few of the wild caves in the Dordogne pointed out by Linda in the last newsletter Bill and I headed off to the eastern Pyrenees. (One of the caves in the Dordogne not in the last newsletter was Igue de Sol. It is part of the Lacave system and is reached by a 65m abseil into passage 20m x 20m cross section that stretches for about 1.5 kilometres and has some fantastic formations, see photos for proof!)

So on arrival in the eastern Pyrenees we stayed at camping municipal in Foix but later found a better camping à la ferme near to Tarascon sur Ariège. The caves visited were as follows with the discounts gained by using some membership cards that Graham had made up for their trip. Thanks also to Chris Hawkes who provided information on the caves in this area.

### **Grotte de Niaux.**

Situated about 3 miles south of Tarascon Sur Ariège and has a wealth of Magdalenian paintings. The tours were restricted to 20 per tour, 1 tour every 45 minutes and were conducted using only lead acids. This was due to the fact that the cave is in the grips of conservation to such an extent that some of the 17th century graffiti simply has 4 concrete posts with mesh fence around it! The Salon Noir though is an impressive sight with many good paintings of bison, horses, deer and Ibex.

Reservations (☎ 61.05.88.37) are essential as we had to wait 2 days for a trip and price 25F no reductions for a 1 hour trip.

### **Grotte de Lombrives.**

This cave is around the mountain from Niaux to which it connects. It had an impressive entrance and some interesting formations. Its passage shape was superb with long phreatic tubes and a magnificent Cathedral, floored with gour pools that was lit up spectacularly in front of us as we were on the first tour. This too had 17 century graffiti along with such formations as the mammoth. Cost 28F no reductions, duration 75 mins (longer 3 hour speleo tours available) but the best show cave in the area.

### **La Riviere Souterraine de Labouiche.**

Norbert Casteret had been here so we decided it couldn't be too bad. The trip consisted entirely of being pulled along in a boat by a mad but never the less fit guide for over 1.5 km of river passage interspersed with a few changes of boat at the cascades. Not a bad trip and it made a change. Cost 35F reduced to 28F in the mornings.

### **Grotte du Maz D'Azil.**

Driving back to Foix from La riviere souterraine de Labouiche the road winds its way through the impressive pyrenian scenery and then into Maz D'Azil! For 1/4 Of a mile the main arch of this cave (high enough to bungy jump!) takes both river Arize and the road. By actually walking into the cave a show cave leads of that contains many archeological remains from the Moustarain to Azilian eras.

### **Grotte de Bédeilhac.**

Five kilometres north of Tarascon Sur Ariège another enormous entrance contains grotte de Bedéilhac. This too contains Magdalenian carvings and paintings and like Maz D'Azil was used in WWII as a factory for aircraft. Cost 27F reduced for students to 20F and duration 75 mins.

Having been reading a bit of Casteret in France we also decide to go for a walk up to Grotte de la Cigalère. This is however closed with a better gate than even Tuska could produce! Four foot thick concrete walls and a six inch thick steel door. Get into that!



## Photographic Conservation for Cavers

by Chris Howes FRPS

Throughout the development of sport caving, exploration has been documented by photography. Many of these pictures contain information that is invaluable to the speleo historian, or those studying the effects of caving on a system, and provide interesting visual documentation of techniques and methods long past. The same is true of photographs taken today: in years to come, these will form the documents sought after by new generations of cavers.

However, without proper care these photographs will (and are) becoming damaged and destroyed. These notes are intended as a guide for any caver who has possesses photographic materials (prints, negatives, film or transparencies), whether this is part of an old collection on a caving club library, or modern photographs taken by the caver. The principle factors leading to damage are discussed, and methods of storage and conservation. Different books give a variety of recommended figures as to humidity or temperature; the following is an average taken from a range of sources.

### **Types of photographic material**

Photographs (not including those printed in ink) may exist as:

1. Negatives (based on glass - plate negatives - or celluloid, both colour and b&w)
2. Black and white prints on a variety of 'paper' (which may be fibre-based or resin-coated plastic)
3. Colour prints (nb: some older 'colour' prints may be hand-coloured b&w originals)
4. Transparencies ('slides'): Lantern slides are slides based on glass
5. Cine film (older types may be on a nitrate base rather than celluloid)

### **The structure of a photograph**

It does not matter what type of photographic material is involved, those that cavers are likely to come into contact with all have the same essential structure: a base support material coated with a light sensitive layer of silver salts in gelatine. Deterioration can therefore occur to the support material, the processed silver, or the gelatine carrier.

### **Deterioration**

Deterioration can be caused by several factors:

1. Physical damage due to, for example, harsh handling
2. Poor processing leading to degradation as chemicals react over time
3. Poor storage

The first of these is obviously controllable; photographs should be stored with protection in mind and the more valuable images copied for study or publication, rather than handling the original. The second will usually be

outside the control of the caver; deterioration, if recognised, can at least allow a copy to be made that will sometimes permit an improved image to be obtained. However, the third factor is the greatest 'unseen and unrealised' threat; a great deal of damage can result from poor storage, and proper conditions are essential.

### Environmental conditions

There are four environmental conditions that must be guarded against in storing photographic materials:

1. High temperature
2. Incorrect humidity
3. Light
4. Chemicals, solvents and other pollutants

Realistically, to protect photographs to the full, expensive equipment is required that also renders the pictures difficult to inspect as they have to be sealed in cold storage. However, by considering the most damaging aspects of the environment, a compromise that will greatly extend the life of a picture can be found.

### Temperature and humidity

The objective of any storage is to slow down the chemical deterioration of the materials used to manufacture the photograph. To this extent, temperature and humidity interact. Ideally, low temperatures are best for storage - the colder the better, to the extent of deep freezing film. However, this prevents viewing and is not recommended as there are also associated high humidity problems. Contrary to popular belief, while high humidity is one of the most damaging aspects of storage, totally dry conditions are also not suitable.

When humidity is high, the gelatine layer of a photograph will swell and, at 'room' temperature, will provide perfect conditions for fungal growth. For this reason, keeping slides in glass mounts (anti-newton or otherwise) is a poor method of storage, as fungus has an ideal opportunity to grow without the slide being permitted to dry out. However, if humidity is too low (by using silica gel as a drying agent), gelatine layers can shrink and crack, especially on glass plates. A realistic compromise is to aim for:

- a. Keeping photographs at a constant, cool (10°C to 15°) temperature
- b. A constant relative humidity of between 25% and 35%

### Light

Light is an extreme damaging agent, especially to colour dyes used in all forms of slides and prints. A colour print made from a negative (as opposed to prints from slides) will fade rapidly in light. Kodak use an end point of a 10% fade of a yellow (or magenta) dye in a slide to indicate poor storage; such fading will occur in only a couple of years, even in the dark, if the slide is kept in the warm. Cumulative projection of only an hour can have the same result. Colour slides, of any make, are the most vulnerable form of photograph to light damage (b&w material is far more

stable). However, Ektachrome is more stable than Kodachrome for projection, but Kodachrome is better for long term, cool storage.

Store all photographs in absolute darkness; restrict projection of colour material; never leave slides on a light box; do not store in glass mounts.

### **Pollutants**

Any pollutant gases such as sulphur dioxide will cause discolouration of prints. Bear in mind that solvents are released from chipboard, plywood and paint, and will damage photographs in short periods of time, reacting with the silver content to produce a 'silvered' image. Thus, give thought to the storage container: pvc slide wallets are damaging to slides as they release solvents, for example. Metal filing cabinets are good storage containers as no solvents can be released.

### **Cine film**

All the above factors also affect cine film, but with older films made on cellulose nitrate there are added problems in that the base material is unstable and inflammable. They must not be kept in a sealed metal film container as gases build up and increase the rate of deterioration. The only means of conservation is to copy the film; take care as, without proper care, the original can burst into flame without warning.

### **Recommended storage**

The best storage is therefore:

1. Cool temperatures
2. Controlled relative humidity
3. Absolute darkness
4. Archival storage media

Within reason, the first three can be achieved with a little care and thought, without any undue expense or difficulty. However, the fourth may be considered as essential for long-term storage to be effective, but will entail some expense.

Two products are recommended:

1. Storage envelopes made of inert material
2. Storage boxes or slide wallets of inert material

Envelopes are made from either archival (acid-free) paper or transparent (polyester) 'plastic', boxes from lignin-free conservation board. The former allow the print to be viewed and handled without harm, the latter to keep them protected without damaging chemicals being involved. A number of suppliers of these materials can be found, with prices of boxes ranging from around 50 (contains around 100 prints in envelopes) and polyester sleeves from around 10p for postcard size.

It is worth noting that slides kept in slide boxes may not be protected from light, and the box itself may not be archivally acceptable. However,

kept in the dark, a cool temperature, and under controlled humidity, modern (E6) slides can be stored safely for many years without damage; older transparencies are more liable to fading.

Lastly, if you can arrange it, copy all prints onto b&w film and store the negatives. This is cheap, forms a backup in case of future damage such as flooding, fire, or loss, and allows prints to be made for publications without risking the original.

#### Further information

For archival materials a free catalogue can be requested from:

1. Conservation Resources, Unit 1, Pony Rd, Horspath Ind Est, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2RD. Tel: 0865 747755.
2. Secol Ltd, Howlett Way, Fison Way Ind Est, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1HZ. Tel: 0842 2341.

A free guide to conservation can be requested from:

1. Kodak Ltd, Customer Relations, Hemel Hempstead, Herts

Ask for reference E30: Storage and care of Kodak films and papers

For further reading:

1. Kodak booklet *Preservation of Photographs*, reference F30  
This contains details of correct archival processing as well as storage and methods of copying material
2. Kodak book *The Book of Film Care*, reference H23  
Deals with cine film
3. MARTIN, Elizabeth. 1988. *Collecting and Preserving Old Photographs*. Collins, London. 160pp

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#### RAUFARHOLSHELLIER

*Andy Farrant*

Back in the balmy days of summer, myself and Ro Charlton, (another postgrad from the Geography Dept) decided to go cycling round Iceland for a few weeks. Well, it's better freezing in Iceland than freezing up a mountain in Austria. As some of you will know, Iceland hasn't got a single bit of limestone, but what it does have is lava tubes. These are formed by hot liquid basaltic lava flowing out from volcanoes, which cools, forming a crust on top of the underlying lava. The lava underneath remains hot and liquid as it is insulated. Eventually the lava drains out, leaving a hollow lava tube behind. Raufarfellshellier is one such lava tube, about 20 kms southeast from Reykjavik, just off the main 'road' (roads in Iceland are worse than those in Ireland - if they exist at all). The entrance is a collapsed portion of the tube, about 10 m wide and 5 m high. This leads into a gorgeous piece of passage lit by three holes in the roof, with mist condensing above snow drifts on the floor. Donning our cycle helmets and Petzl Zooms (you have to improvise!), we set off up the passage. Just inside the dark zone, an amazing array of ice 'stalagmites' confronted us. Looking back to the entrance presented an amazing picture as the light shone back through the ice. Further in the ice decreased, but the passage continued 10 m high and wide for about 3/4 km. Wierd lava stalactites decorated the walls while the lava floor was often convoluted into 'ropey' (pahoehoe) shapes.

The cave is quite well known and was surveyed in 1971 by the Shepton Mallett Caving Club. There are now a large number of caves which have been discovered, including one which drops into a volcano via a 100 m shaft in the crater. There is even a guide book - if you can read Icelandic! Anyone fancy an Icelandic caving expedition?

## Weekend at the BCRA Conference

I had an utterly ludicrous idea of getting up at five in the morning to drive to Bradford with AndyF and DaveF (Henrietta's man from Cambridge) in time for the start. Bill's car went up too, but was driven by Steve because Bill and Alison wanted to catch up on some sleep. Not surprising really; the route goes M5, M6, M62, M606 and deposits you in the middle of Bradford four grim hours later. Fortunately I had a flask of smelly coffee to keep me going throughout the day.

There were some talks and there were some boring talks. You get the impression you have to have gone to a couple of previous conferences before you can tell which is which just by glancing at the program. I hate lecture theatres where the exit door is in the front of the room next to the speaker so you are effectively trapped until it finishes. As a guideline, expedition talks are good and theory talks can be appalling so seek advice accordingly. One of the reasons why cave formation remains a mystery to this day is that the best brains have evidently not been applied to it.

In the program there is a half hour gap every one and a half hours. This is intelligent as speakers are always over-running their allotted times often because they have droned on for the first twenty-five minutes about, say, the two different ways you can fold limestone and carboard and shown four of their fifty-four slides when they are given the five minute warning. And when there is a good speaker up front the slide projector breaks down. The third way to over-run is to be Martyn Farr and work yourself up into a frenzy and go down on your knees begging for cavers to come help him with his connection dig between Agen Allwed and Daren Cilau. He was later dragged away to sign a contract with an American evangelical television station.

Big expo talks I saw were: Central Vietnam (lots of pics of bomb shaped bits of scrap metal plus beautiful river cave slide sequences accompanied by ersatz Southeast Asia bing-bong music), North Vietnam (lots of rain and mud and big caves in the cone-karst), and Mulu (photos of AndyF with a beard and descriptions how the rain forest near the entrance is about to make way for a Holiday Inn and golf course to which tourists will travel by helicopter). There were none from US or Russia and no foreigner's expo reports.

Small expo talks included SUSS in Turkey (funny little caves which they themselves thought were ace), UBSS in Austria (some people), and CUCC in Austria (lots of people in the audience); the discrepancy occurs because lots more Cambridge people go to the conference than Bristol people. It's been months since I was last reunited with my Cambridge lot. They were in the bar already by lunchtime trying out this new beer called "Gaping Ghyll" specially brewed for the occasion.

In the evening was the "Stomp!" to which most people went to drink more Gaping Ghyll beer. Alison dragged people onto the floor to dance to this barn music band. Steve bought an entire round for everybody with AndyF's money on the excuse that everybody else had bought a round already. Later on came the "real" band which is supposed to play loud rock music you can really get down to. They were called "Gaelforce" and was comprised of drums, two electric guitars and a violin. Aaaaaaaauuuurrrrgh! Every time the guitars and drums began a song which sounded promising the violin stepped in and piercingly went: "Diddly diddly dudly diddly diddly diddly diddly" without pausing on and on and on until the very end every single time. I tried to put in a brave effort of jumping up and down on the dance floor but was not half-way drunk enough. The violin had a sobering-hang-over effect like that of a police siren coming to get you. I could not beat it. I ran madly back and forth between the Cambridge group and the Bristol group until I fell down on the floor. The Bristol lot got

driven to Halifax by Bill to stay in a free nursing home common room, the Cambridge lot generally slept under walkways and I crashed out in my car.

By lunchtime the next day they had sold out of Gaping Ghyll. There were a few caving region round up reports. I take it the Mendip one was about bits that have been dug in the past year. The Dales one was about bits that have been dived in the past year. Jim Eyre did a funny talk but missed his microphone most of the time.

There were some reported visual sightings of the Chris Bennett during the day.

Special mention goes to a couple of films by Guy Meauxsoone shown in the main auditorium. The projector broke down at the beginning of the first one. Fortunately the chap who had brought them along knew this was going to happen and had brought his own spare projector--not going to be reliant on shit BCRA audio-visual equipment. They were stunning. Lots of shots of colourful french men bouncing on the ends of strings over monumentally huge waterfalls. Proper stuff.

I sat through the prizes while Andy farted off with the others back to Bristol. Someone from Cambridge won two photography prizes (one prize was a whale-tail which comes under the heading: "very worthless piece of SRT gear only good for passing on as a prize to someone else who you don't know") and another won two SRT race prizes. And CUCC won the prize for their "contribution to the theory and practice of cave surveying"--that's a turn out for the books as we have always been considered a bunch of complete dossers.

I hear that next year Bristol is the venue for the BCRA conference. No doubt someone is drawing up plans to serve "Stoke Lane Slocker Scrumpy" at the bar and have a digging race instead of an SRT race. All I ask is make the slide projectors work and introduce the speakers to the new technology called the digital watch. And can we have Motorhead on Saturday night?

### Special Announcement

Congratulations to Trevor Mosedale and Sarah, who are expecting their first baby sometime next June. On behalf of all the society members, I would like to wish you the best of luck - and look forward to seeing the clubs youngest 'caver' next summer.

### NCA Training Event

The National Caving Association is holding a training weekend on the 5-6 th December, at Buckland House, Crickhowell, South Wales. Courses on offer will include amongst others;

- Ladder and Lifelines
- SRT Training
- Water tracing
- Underground Videos
- Basics of cave formation

These will be active courses, designed to get you involved.

If you wish to go, or want more information please contact Alison Garrard asap as she has the booking form.

## GOING DUTCH

I can imagine you all now chuckling at me now I have gone back to my country without caves. I am talking like a Dutch uncle to you. Although we don't have any potholes over here, we pretend to know something about SRT and safety anyway. One sunny day, some people from my club decided to test their cows tails. Most of the ropes tested were between 1 and 5 years old. Having set up a rig in which the ropes could be tested with a factor two fall, the outcome was rather disconcerting. Most snapped after the first test. The one year olds occasionally withstood a second fall. The engineers of this project retreated to the pub for some meditation and some Dutch courage. After this Dutch treat, they came up with the following Double Dutch knot (see diagram). Since I am a Arts student, I struggled trying to translate the Manual of How to Tie knots and got all wound up. So I decided in the end it wasn't worth it. I'm sure you engineers can figure it out for yourselves. Make sure you tie the knot in the right order, for otherwise you might end up with a slip-knot. The rope must be at least a 9 mm and replace it every year - your life is worth more than a couple of quid. according to body length, a rope 3 to 3.5 m long is needed. Good Luck!

*Marcel Dijkstra.*

