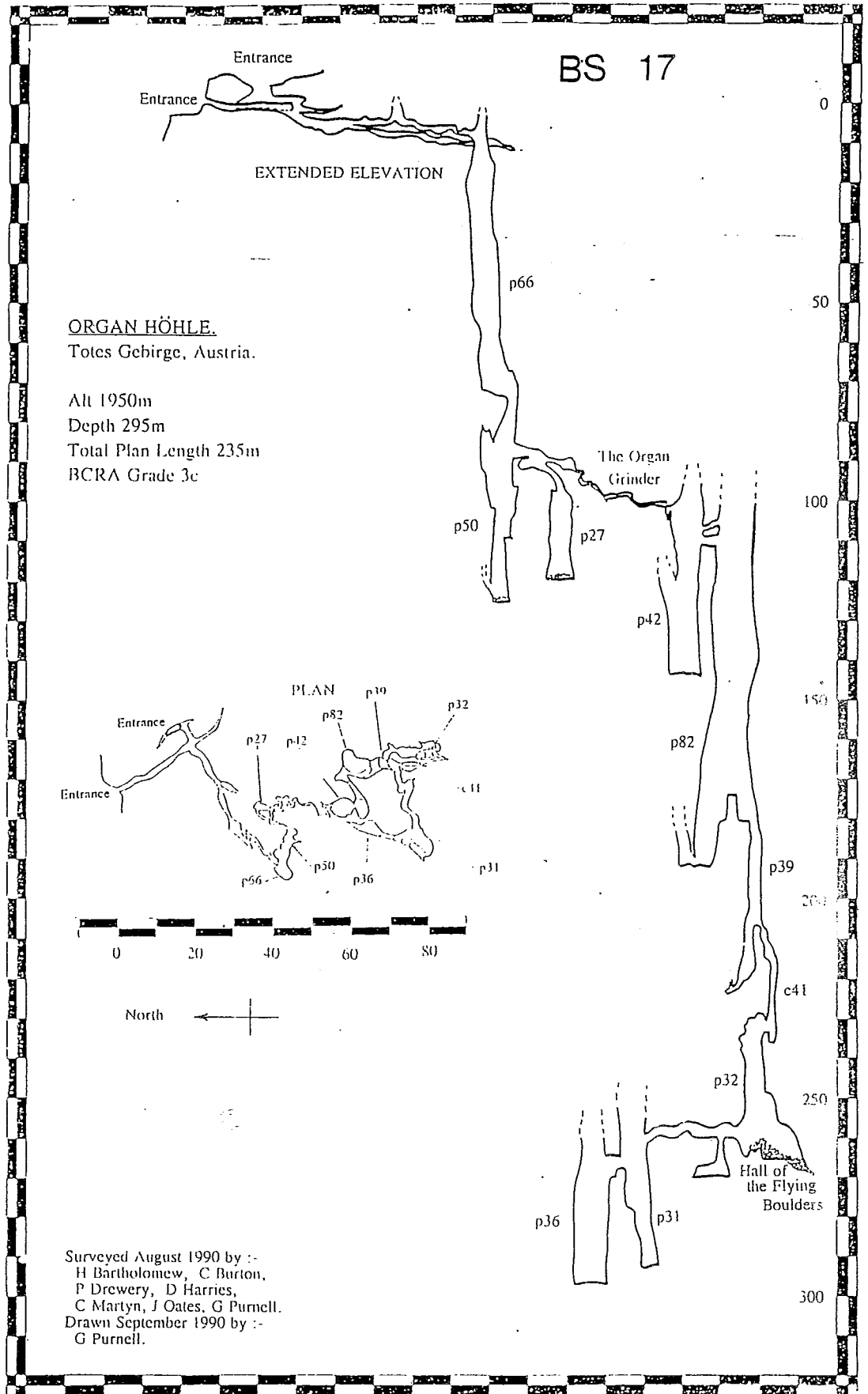


UBSS



NEWSLETTER

VOL 6, No 3

NOVEMBER 1990.

Editorial

Welcome to all the newcomers to the club. If you haven't been caving yet, it's not too late to come along.

If anyone has any scandal, gossip, news, cartoons etc for newsletter, they can be given to me either in Crockers, the Speleo Rooms in the Union, or at 31 Cotham Vale. Also if anyone has any spare tape, (e.g like that used at roadworks), we would welcome some to tape off the formations in G.B. Lastly, on a more personal note, whoever took my copy of Descent at the Bonfire weekend, can I have it back, please?

All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the committee. Copy date for the next Newsletter is 26th Jan. 1991.

Andy Farrant

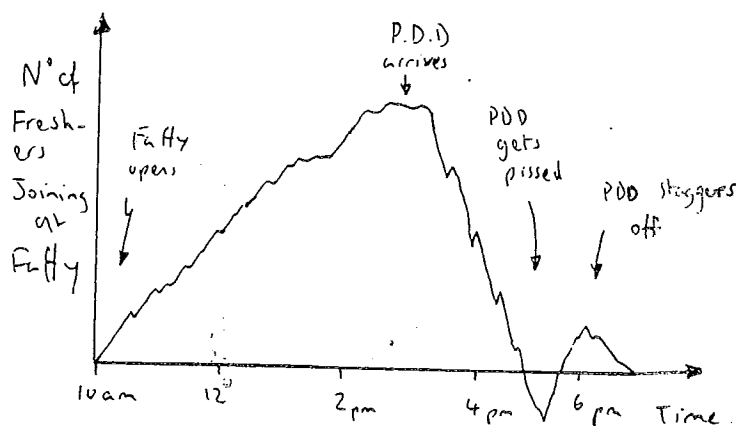
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Gravel

An interesting phenomena was noted at this years Faffy. The rate of Freshers joining the club is inversely proportional to the amount Paul Drewery drinks. And the more Paul Drewery drinks, the worse his hangover gets. I wonder why.....?

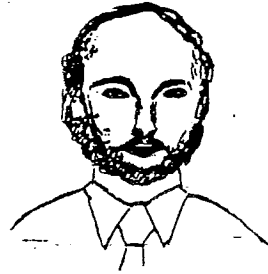


Tony Boycott notched up his first Pub rescue on Bonfire weekend, to assist the barman who fell over and hurt his knee. As a result, the P.R.O will be formed, (the Pub Rescue Organisation), with Jim Hanwell as Pub Warden, and consisting of all those who drink on Mendip.

At last Paul Drewery has got himself a job, of sorts. After four years studying for a Degree in Mechanical engineering, he ends up measuring meat in a meat packing factory, alas only for one day. What next, a road sweeper? Answers on a postcard to the Editor

Archeologists at Cheddar have unearthed a fantastic neanderthal skull. It was discovered by the eminent Dr. Chris Stringer, whilst sitting in the Galleries pub. However the owner of the skull was rather unwilling to part with it, as it was still attached to the rest of his body at the time.

A.B. Doctor writes.



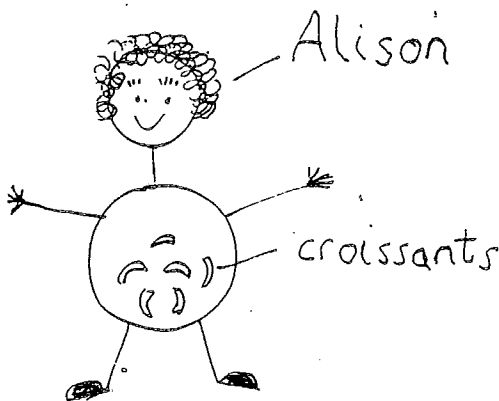
Ed 'Eh bah gum' Bailey is mounting a challenge to Joe Oates as to who is the U.B.S.S. pisshead of the year, after a session at the hut on the Bonfire weekend. Not surprisingly, he didn't want to go caving the following day. Steve Cottle is also in the running, after trying to 'drink himself sober' on the Freshers weekend. Needless to say, it didn't work, better luck next time, Steve.

DIGGINITUS

This rather contagious disease usually afflicts Mendip cavers, and can be quite serious. Sufferers end up usually in squalid hopeless digs, and often need large doses of Dr. Nobels Linctus to sedate them. It can spread rapidly, and has been known to be fatal. If symptoms appear, consult your Doctor.

The Rule Book has really got to Steve 'Officious Bastard' Cottle. It is rumoured that to wash up at 31 Cotham Vale, you need to have a Permit, wear proper washing up gloves, and to of washed up a least 3 times before, with no more than 6 people in the Kitchen at any one time.

Alison Garrard in France.



Sarah has been doing a bit of 'private' research recently. Using Trevor as a Guinea Pig, crosses were drawn in permanent black ink all over his privates, (when flaccid,) to try to ascertain where the 'extra' skin comes from. However, more research needs to be done, so Gaynor has offered to be a research assistant. They would like some more subjects to experiment on, any volunteers?

Andy 'Digger' Farrant has finally gone mad. He admitted dreaming about the G.B. Dig, and how it was to break into massive virgin passage, and emerge in his front garden in Cheddar. Ah well, one can only dream.

Yet another UBSS member has joined the illustrious ranks of those who have problems getting through Bang squeeze on the Round Trip in Swildons. John Hutchins managed to get his backside well and truly wedged, just like a few other people I could mention.....

Hon Sec's Bit

Welcome to all the new members of the UBSS. The first weekend saw a large number of novices showing enthusiasm to caving and even more than usual caving on the following Saturday. Anyone who has not yet been can still come along to Crockers to arrange their first trip or come to the Bonfire weekend 3/4 Nov. (details on the notice board).

The summer expedition to Austria saw a good success with BS 17 going to -295m. Charlie Self continued into international speleology with a trip to Russia in April, a trip to Spain and then onto the Pseudokarst Congress in Czechoslovakia. Russia was also the destination for Dick Willis and he will be speaking at one of the forthcoming Wilderness Lectures (See notice board for full details of the programme).

South Wales weekend will now, due to unavailability of cheap accommodation, be a single day trip, with trips into most parts of the system. on Sunday it is proposed to go to the hut to practice ladder climbing, lifelining and rigging in anticipation of a well organised trip to Yorkshire

Yorkshire weekend will now be on 9/10 February to coincide with permits for Lost Johns Cave and Notts Potts.

Mike McHale has also arranged permits for the following dates: Lost Johns 22 Dec. 9 Feb. 10 Aug.

Notts Pot 22 Dec. 9 Feb. Gingling Hole 11 May.

Persons wishing to have a permit must contact Mike for a permit as it must be displayed on Leck Fell.

Lights are currently available from myself at 31 Cotham Vale at £1 per time. Tackle store keys for loan may also be obtained here.

G.B. dig ^{was} ~~is currently~~ DRY, any volunteers to help push the limits of the cave should contact Andy Farrant.

Please note that all members of the trips should have a valid Charterhouse permit (free from a secretary) and the party size must not be larger than six!

Equipment Order.

For all new (and old) keen members we have a tackle and equipment order to be placed at Quip-U with a discount. To order equipment see Nigel Lester at Crockers or 31 Cotham Vale before November 15.

Steve Cottle
31, Cotham Vale.
Tel:- 738713

If any one is willing to help with the U.B.S.S. Museum, Chris Hawkes, the museum curator is often up on Tuesday evenings, before Crockers. If interested, give Chris a ring on Wells (0749) 870474.

WARNING!

Don't leave any valuables in your car while you are caving, or if you do make sure they are securely locked up, especially if you are down G.B., as Nigel had all his clothes, money, cheque cards and keys stolen from the car while he was down G.B. a few weeks ago.

Calendar for 1990-91

- 31 Oct Sessional meeting by Dave Irwin on "The Exploration of
Wed St. Cuthbert's Swallet." This is one of Mendips longest
 caves. Starts 8:00 pm Spelaeo Rooms.
- 3,4 Nov Bonfire Weekend- Caving on Mendip followed by a bonfire
 and fireworks at the hut. See notice board for details.
- 17 Nov South Wales day trip to O.F.D. Minibus leaves union at
+ 9:00 . SIGN up early!
18 Nov Ladder training on and under Mendip.
- 5 Dec Sessional meeting "New Mexico 1990 including the
Wed Carlsbad Caverns." By Chris Howes who is one of the
 countries best cave photographers so there should be
 some good slides. 8:00 pm Spelaeo Rooms.
- 8 Dec Christmas Dinner. Details later on the notice board or
Sat in the pub.
- 22 Dec Lost Johns and Notts Pot Permits available.
- 27,28 Jan South Wales Weekend staying at the Croyden Hut.
- 10,11 Feb Yorkshire Weekend with Lost Johns and Notts Pot.
- 3 Feb Sessional Meeting "Cave Diving Beneath the Cheddar
Wed Gorge " by Rob Palmer. 8:00 pm Spelaeo Rooms.
- 9 Mar A.G.M. Plus a talk by Charlie Self on "Mineralogy in
Sat Caves." Starts 4:00 pm Spelaeo Rooms.
- Followed by...
Annual Dinner - see Secretaries
- 8 May Sessional Meeting "Flint knapping."
- 11 May Gingling Hole Permit.
- 10 August Lost Johns Permit.
- As well as the above events, we meet every Tuesday in the
Upper bar (if it's open-ed) of Crockers Pub on Cotham Hill from
about 9:00 pm to arrange other trips.

Useful Addresses

Steve Cottle	Hon. Secretary	31 Cotham Vale	738713
Andy Farrant	Newsletter Editor	31 Cotham Vale	738713
Nigel Lester	Tackle Warden	31 Cotham Vale	738713
Graham Mullan	Hon. Treasurer	38 Delvin Road, W-on-T	502556
Linda Wilson		38 Delvin Road, W-on-T	502556
Tony Boycott	Librarian	14 Walton Rise, W-on-T	507869 (home) 663587 (work)
Charlie Self		4 Tyne Street	541728
Alison Garrard	Secretary (after Christmas only)	3 Alma Road	736898
Chris Bennett	Member in Charge of Photography	77 Cotham Brow (Basement Flat)	427496

Care of Tackle

When you go up and down a pitch in a cave, your life may well depend on the tackle that you use. *So it must be looked after!* Which means cleaning it when you've finished with it.

Metal equipment (such as wire ladders, tethers, and krabs) should always be washed clean of mud, and inspected for rust and fraying wire. This is a simple and quick job, and there is no excuse for not doing it!

Ropes MUST be washed clean of mud. If this is not done then the mud will start to work its way inside the core of the rope where it can cut the fibres without be seen. Once clean, ropes should be *properly* coiled or chained, and then hung up to dry. Caving ropes should never be coiled in a way that puts twists in the rope, as this makes them very hard to sort out again - especially underground.

Possibly the quickest way to ruin tackle [apart from taking it down a cave!] is to leave it in a pile after a trip, and forget about it. Always clean it immediately - before the rust sets in.

And don't forget - when you sling the ropes into the car boot, keep them away from caving lamps (lead-acid, NiCad, NiFe, and carbide), and well away from your spare oil and petrol can. All these things will ruin a rope instantly.

If these simple rules are stuck to, caving tackle is extremely reliable and will last for years.

MOANS FROM THE TREASURER

Graham Mullan

The following members have still to pay their subscription for the current session. Will they please do so A. S. A. P.

M. P. Gibbon, R. Hutton, P. J. Johnson, P. Moody, J. M. Rogers.

In addition, the following still owe £3, as they have yet to send updated Banker's Orders.

J. C. Allen, I. H. Cassely, N. Collings, N. Dallman, J. H. Drinkwater, H. Freiderich (B.O. received) R. T. F. Marsh, C. A. Marshall, S. A. F. McArdle, P. I. McLaren, D. J. H. Nuttall, D. Savage, (B.O. received) S. Trudgill, D. Waddington, J. Whicher, & G. D. Witts.

It is possible that some of these oversights are due to people having moved without notifying us of their new addresses. If, therefore, you are in touch with anyone on this list please ask them if they are receiving their newsletters properly.

Many members have signed Deeds of Covenant by which we manage to reclaim from the Inland Revenue the tax paid on their subscriptions. If any member has not signed one of these and wishes to do so, please contact me. Those of you who are higher rate tax payers are particularly recommended to do so; we only get the basic rate element of the tax, you get the rest back yourselves!

MENDIP NEWS

by Linda Wilson.

UBLEY HILL POT and COW HOLE.

In the last Newsletter, I reported that access to these caves had been lost as the landowner had filled in the depressions in which the entrances are situated. At the time of reporting, it was not known whether access could be regained, however, matters have progressed considerably since then and both caves have now been re-accessed. The work was carried out by the Council of Southern Caving Clubs (C.S.C.C.) acting in conjunction with the landowner, Mr. Lovell. C.S.C.C. provided and paid for the concrete pipes used for the entrances and the lids for the shafts and Mr. Lovell arranged and paid for the mechanical excavators needed to dig down to the original entrances.

Both entrances were originally piped, with lids on top, but there was some doubt about their exact location within the depressions, and after a few months growth of grass, there was even some doubt about the exact location of the depressions! Doubters said it was an impossible task and would end in disaster as nothing of this scale had ever been attempted before on Mendip - or anywhere else for that matter, but C.S.C.C.'s new Conservation and Access Officer, Dave 'Tusker' Morrison took no notice and just got on with the job.

On Saturday 29th October, a 29 ton Hymac with an 18ft reach arrived at Ubley Hill Pot at 8am and under Tusker's guidance had uncovered the original entrance by midday. Work then started on the addition of the new pipes and as each one was placed the depression was re-filled around them. The job was started and finished the same day.

The following weekend, a slightly smaller Hymac with a shorter reach arrived at Cow Hole early on Saturday morning and proceeded to dig itself into a hole, by cutting a working platform half way down and moving onto this, to enable it to reach the old entrance, 25ft down. The re-excavation was completed the same day and on Sunday, the pipes were inserted and the depression back-filled.

A new lid has been installed on Cow Hole and another is being made for Ubley Hill, the purpose of these is to keep livestock out of the holes. For the present, the caves have not been re-opened for general access, as it is believed that some stabilisation works are required to the unpleasant boulders ruckle above the main pitch in Cow Hole and as yet, the internal state of Ubley Hill is unknown. It is hoped that both caves will be declared officially open in the near future and once this happens, Mr. Lovell is happy for the old access arrangements to continue i.e. he prefers visiting cavers to call on him first (at Ubley Drove Farm, the extremely neat bungalow on the right hand side of Ubley Drove, next to the farmyard) so that he can check that the lid has been properly replaced after the visit.

Remember that the entrance pitches are now much longer than as detailed in the guidebooks: the entrance to Cow Hole now needs 45ft of ladder, with 50ft needed for Ubley Hill. Belays have not yet been fixed in the pipes, but again, it is hoped that this will be done before access is thrown open to all and sundry.

It is rumoured that a notice will be painted half way down each shaft, saying "Have you got enough ladder?", with a further one 10ft on, saying "Are you sure?".

On a political front, Mr. Lovell has been served by the Local Authority with an Enforcement Notice, requiring the removal of the off-site fill placed in each depression, but he has appealed against the order and it is likely to be several months before this aspect of the matter is resolved. However, it was the unanimous opinion of those cavers present at the re-excavations that although the loss of the depressions was regretted, it was not thought to be practicable to restore the depressions to their original states. It is also possible that the caves, in particular the main boulder ruckle in Cow Hole, would suffer from a complete re-excavation, which might even result in the permanent loss of access to the cave due to internal collapse.

UBLEY WARREN POT.

The two entrances to this small system, thought to be the only genuine through trip on Mendip, were filled in by the farmer in May. It is believed that he told some visiting cavers of his intentions, but they never passed the information on, so he thought that no-one would object. As soon as C.S.C.C. became aware of the situation Tusker visited the landowner, Mr. Quick and reached an agreement with him to allow us to re-access both entrances. The fill in both consisted of farm debris only and cannot therefore be the subject of any planning action. On this occasion, C.S.C.C. paid for both the pipes and the Hymac and the entrances were reopened on the weekend of the 13th and 14th of October. The entrance to Nettle Hole now consists of large boulders placed to form a free-climbable shaft and the other entrance now has a further two pipes over the original 20ft shaft, making a present total of about 26ft. It is likely that the latter depression will be filled further by the farmer so two more pipes have been left there to be added when necessary.

Some further works are needed to re-gain access to both parts of the system, as the entrance passages are blocked with cow shit. This work is now under way.

The driving force behind all this work was undoubtedly Tusker, who has put in an enormous amount of effort, firstly in the negotiation process, secondly in making the necessary arrangements and thirdly in being present throughout all three weekends to ensure the satisfactory completion of the work. Without him it is doubtful whether any of the caves would have been re-opened. He was helped by various club members, primarily from the Wessex, the B.E.C and the U.B.S.S. and special thanks go to the digger drivers, who handled the enormous machines with incredible precision and worked all day on each occasion with hardly any breaks. Needless to say, without the co-operation of the landowners, access to all three sites could not have been achieved.

Several hundred pounds have been spent by the C.S.C.C. (mainly on the latter site), on behalf of its member clubs and cavers in general to reopen the caves, but whether this has been worth the effort will probably never be known. Will you visit the caves, will you simply feel happier knowing that you can visit them if you want to, or do you simply not give a damn? Its probably a good job Tusker didn't bother to ask this question before

doing the work. The caves certainly come into the 'collectors item' category, but each of the three is important in its own right and serve as a timely reminder that depressions such as these are being filled in all the time on Mendip, sometimes legally, sometimes illegally and cave sites, both actual and potential are being lost. If you know of any such activity, for goodness sake, let the C.S.C.C. know so that the landowner can be approached in an attempt to preserve access. (Your easiest contact with C.S.C.C. is probably through me, as for my sins, I'm still Chairman.) IF YOU DON'T TELL US, WE MIGHT NOT FIND OUT UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE!

.....And now for something completely different Oxford University Cave Club have dug their way in a further 300 metres in DALLIMORE'S CAVE. A tight squeeze enters an old abandoned stream passage. In ROD'S POT, the M.C.G have dug their way into a new chamber, sloping steeply upwards for about 50ft. The extension is horrendously muddy and the slope above the breakthrough point has a tendency to slump. Exercise care when visiting the chamber, but it's worth a look.

LIBRARY NEWS

by Tony Boycott

A new large glass-fronted bookcase has been acquired for the main library, which will enable me to reduce the crowding in the other bookcases, and hopefully display some of the books from the stack room.

The following books are missing from the library and have not been signed out:

THE DARKNESS BECKONS by Martyn Farr

LIVING UNDERGROUND by David Kempe

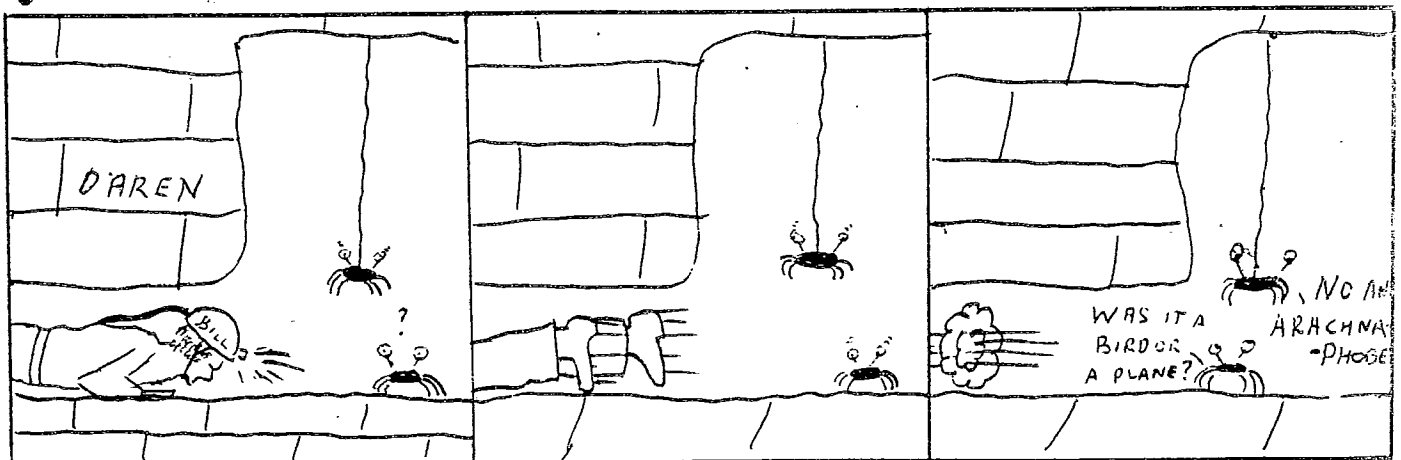
CAVING EXPEDITIONS by Dick Willis

MANUAL OF CAVING TECHNIQUES by Cave Research Group

If anyone knows where they are or has them, please let me know. Anonymous parcels welcome!

Can I please remind members to sign out books and journals with a legible name and address, and make prior arrangement with me if you want to borrow anything for more than four weeks.

Troglobite



CSCC Caver Training Weekend

13th-14th October '90

10.30am on a Saturday morning saw myself and various other interested bods in the back room of the Hunters Lodge Inn for the first day of the CSCC training seminar on cave photography (Saturday) and SRT (Sunday).

The day on the theory and practice of cave photography was led by Graham Crisp. A short introduction into the lure of underground photography (which to him meant the 4D's [Damp, dirt, dark, and desperation]) was followed by an illustration of what is possible with a audio-visual trip into Otter Hole. After coffee and biscuits (most necessary as I hadn't had any breakfast), Graham went on to discuss equipment; cameras, flash guns, tripods etc and to pass on a few good tips eg. date all batteries at purchase to estimate remaining life, or to paint ammo boxes white internally to facilitate location of small easily lost bits. There followed a a pictorial illustration of lighting techniques and associated problems. Then at last ... food, hounds and beans and a few pints later we were back for a discussion on composition and aesthetics - summed up as, be creative, use colour, water and lighting for effect and impact. Around 3pm another coffee break and thence to Reads Cavern for a practical session below ground. 15 or so budding photographers queued to get down the hole - just like the 20 in Swildons on a Saturday! The emulation of real photographic trips was so good that after 5 shots or so, no remote flash sensors were working so we resulted to unsynchronised flash photography or the 3, 2, 1, fire method.

Later back at the Hunters an excellent slide show (or as I should say, Audio-Visual presentation) from various contributors was enjoyed by all, ending with the photographic tale of the underground journey from Swildons to Wookey - on a bicycle! A fine and funny end to a most informative day.

Sunday morning (after a good breakfast today) we arrived at Swallet Farm for the second day of the event - the SRT "seminar". Upon arrival we espied Chris, Steve, Ed and Bill; suding the desire to leave again we joined the rest divided into 2 groups. The total novices were given a introductory lecture and then let loose in the trees, while the more experienced got straight down (or should it be up?) to swinging about practicing rebalays and changeovers etc. Lunch at the Hunters and then back for some more advanced stuff like rigging.

In all it was a good weekend with quality lectures and enthusiastic speakers. This rubbed off, I was under ground with a camera again on Monday! Well done CSCC for organising such an enjoyable and informative event.

GP.

The UBSS Freshers Weekend.

As usual, this was held on Mendip, camping over night at the hut, and as usual (or so I'm told!) was a great success. It began at the union at the unearthly hour (especially after a Friday night) of 10am! We sat around here for a long time looking at each other, until someone said "Hey, why don't we go caving?". at which point we left!

We drove to Mendip in strange variety of vehicles, and finally arrived at the hut. After rushing around allocating ourselves bunks, which as it turned out, didn't make much difference, we finally got to the stage of being ready to go caving, however we had to go through the compulsory stage of sitting around until someone has the idea of actually leaving!

The first cave I went to was Cuckoo Cleaves (Just near Hunters - nice!), with Linda. Changing by the side of the road was an interesting experience, as was the walk through a field of large, angry looking cows! The cave, however was far more interesting. In other words it was damp, muddy and not stunningly beautiful! "Oh dear!" says I, "Perhaps I should have stuck to Adventure Caving at Cheddar." However, right at the bottom, several feet underground, was a very emaciated toad, who really didn't look very happy at all, so somebody donated a glove, and my first ever cave rescue was underway! He looked a lot happier upon reaching the surface!

After this experience, we headed for Hunters for lunch, along with lots of other drunken cavers! After this me and another fresher got caught up in a cave rescue (2nd one of the day!) since we were driving around the caves with Tony Boycott, when a call out came from Swildons Hole. I have never driven down country lanes as fast as that before!. Unfortunately, this left us on Priddy Green wondering what to do for the next few hours, while Tony did his hero trip, although I gather that the rest of the team did lots of caving. We were eventually rescued by Linda, to arrive back at the hut in time to eat the last sausage!

The evening began with lots of new faces arriving, who hadn't been around during the day. Whilst I was wondering what they were there for, somebody started cooking a very large stew, and someone else broke out the scrumpy (ah ha, that's what it was!). The stew gave an excellent stomach lining for the cavers' favourite pastime - drinking, followed by lots of drinking, followed by a visit to the pub for more drinking, followed by lots of silly singing and finishing up with lots of falling over!

The next morning saw some very sorry faces, except for Steve's, which didn't see the light of day until afternoon! It seemed that the only people who were keen to go caving were those who hadn't done much before (what does this tell you?). Eventually, a (rather large) team was organised by Chris and Nigel to go to Swildons Hole!

This was a very enjoyable trip, except for the lack of water in the stream! However, Nigel still managed to get himself soaked by jumping into anything which looked vaguely wet, as well as demonstrating how good his wetsuit (and his ego!) was by swimming through sumo 1 and back again, whilst Chris struggled to stop everyone else doing the same! The most exciting part was waiting at the 20ft pitch whilst hundreds of other cavers came down.

This was the last trip of the day, and after packing up the hut, we all headed home, only of course, after someone had the bright idea of doing so!

WESSEX CHALLENGE 1990

This years 'Wessex Challenge', was on the theme of Civil Wars, which seemed quite appropriate, as most of the previous years challenges ended up in civil warfare between the various local caving clubs. It was held in and around the Priddy Mineries, adjoining the 'Belfry'. (B.E.C. H.Q)

The Team

Representing the :

Russian Communist Revolutionary Party	Charlie Self
French " " " " "	Trevor, Hannah and Sarah
The I.R.A.	Steve Cottle, Paul Harding, Graham, Toffer and William.

and, of course, the Club ~~Wheelbarrow~~ Guncarridge.

It was a hot summers night, when all that could be heard across the mineries was a gentle rustle of bullrushes, and nothing disturbed the beautiful tranquil scene, until that is, the Challenge started.

Four chariots left the Belfry, followed by hordes of drunken cavers, dressed in Civil War regailier, (any civil war seemed to do - from Spanish to CSCC v. CNCC) all in full battle cry. The B.E.C. were plotting a U.B.S.S. victory, but the A.C.G. had other plans, (Phew - ed) as the chariots raced to the lake. The U.B.S.S. 'definitely no win' policy seemed to be paying off as the Shepton chariot fought its way past. At the lake the A.C.G. were already swimming across the lake, while our team decided who was to jump in and retrieve the baton. Linda solved the problem by stripping off to the undies, and jumping in, only to find that the Shepton had taken all the batons. Never mind, on down to the ariel runway, and by this time the A.C.G. were well and truly in front, while the B.E.C. football firing guncarridge did a bit of target practice on Steve, as he hurtled down the ropeway. Sarah tried to be original, and do it hanging on with one foot, while upside down, only to crash into the opposite bank. By this time the A.C.G. had crossed the finishing line, and were the victors and thus have to organize next years event, followed some time later by the U.B.S.S., in second place for the second year running. Butcombe and food were soon consumed in vast quantities, followed by the usual fun and games, ending up with us crashing out under a moonlight sky.

Next years event is hosted by the A.C.G. on the 1st June, at Priddy Village Hall, the theme being 'Star Trek'. Tickets available nearer the time, off an A.C.G. committee member, ie Andy Farrant.

It was a really good event, well worth going next year, and you never know, you may even get your picture in Descent - eh Sarah!

S.B.C

COUNTY CLARE 1990

Graham Mullan

In 1956, writing in *Proceedings*, Prof. Tratman declared: "It is believed that no major discoveries will be made in the future in this area...". Thirty four years later we are still visiting this area each year, and still making discoveries.

This year's expedition (oops, holiday) saw four members; Tony Boycott, Helen Wills, Linda Wilson & myself, spending two weeks in the cottage on the quay at Doolin harbour in the most glorious weather imaginable. Much of our time was devoted to sorting out details for the next guidebook update, which will be in the next *Proceedings*, and to tourist trips for the benefit of Helen, who hadn't been before, but we still managed a bit of new exploration and a look at some conservation issues.

The highlights of our trip were as follows:

Urchins Cave

We cleverly chose the lowest tide of the year for a visit to this cave. as a result Tony, who was the only one to don a wet-suit, managed to do an end-to-end through trip without diving kit. This has only ever been done once before, with kit and by mistake as the diver, Brian Judd, got swept out of the end by the sea! Had we only known what it was to be like and we could have taken some marvellous photos and also made a decent survey of the place. As it was, we had a great trip and admired lots of sea creatures not normally seen by non-divers.

Poll Ballaghaline

On a walk around the coast, the girls noted a new hole at the back of the platform above the entrances to Mermaids Cave. Tony descended, and much to our amazement he found himself in a large canyon passage. The cave consists of a 5 m entrance climb down to a horizontal squeeze under loose rock. Beyond this, a short crawl leads down a slope and into the side of a canyon passage up to 5 m high and 2 m wide. This passage is nearly 30 m long. Downhill, it ends in a sump and uphill in a choke. There is also a parallel rift, similar but shorter. We surveyed the place later in the week (you can really work fast when the tide is coming in!) and this will appear in Cave Notes in *Proceedings*. Unfortunately for us, some time after returning home, we learnt that the place had already been descended, by the WSG.

Poll Ballykeel South

I first suspected that a cave might exist here last year, and find it very difficult to understand why no-one had ever looked at it before. The entrance is a stream sink about 50 m west of the Kilfenora to Lisdoonvarna road where it rises from the limestone onto the shales. Surely every spelæo who has been to Clare has driven along here many times, and the sink is actually visible from the road. We dug out the entrance to reveal a 3 m drop into a 2 m diameter chamber. a tight squeeze led into a second, smaller, chamber from which a bedding was pushed for 3 m more. A minor cave, maybe, but it shows how easily finds can still be made.

Aillwee Mountain and Jacko's Cave

As dictated by tradition, we spent one day walking the hillside in a fruitless quest for this most elusive of caves. Yet again, despite fresh instructions from Dave Drew, we failed to find it. One would have thought that there were only a limited number of places to hide a cave entrance that big, still, maybe next year. We did receive assurance from Dave that the cave found last year by Adam Johnson (Newsletter 5. 3) is not Jacko's hole. Adam has now named it Poll Na b'Fedir, or Maybe Hole. We also discovered a small cave high on the slope of the mountain immediately above the show cave. It consists of a 2 m diameter chamber with a choked canyon in the floor. It has been named Poll Ballycahill, after the townland.

Connemara

One day was spent walking in this most beautiful area of Galway, but even then caving matters were not neglected. Following a note in the SUI newsletter we, plus Carl Wright and his dog, walked up the northern slope of Benbaun, looking for a 50 m long cave reputed to exist there. We found a series of small sinks and risings stretching up the hill side in a narrow band of metamorphic limestones. The lowest of the sinks might be worth a dig, as the water seemed to drop away quite steeply in a narrow canyon. Prospects would be fairly limited, as the limestone band is quite narrow, and the rising is only 200m away and 20 m lower. But still it was a lovely day for a walk and the views were wonderful.

In addition to the above we visited a whole host of minor sites, checking out grid references etc. for the guide, and did a fair number of tourist trips as well: Poulmagree, Pol-an-Ionain, Poulmagollum (twice), Pollismorahaun, Faunarooska, Doolin-St. Catherines and Polldubh.

Even our tourist trips had some serious purpose. We were looking at various sites that have featured in conservation discussions recently. Probably the most serious of these was the state of Polldubh. I had last visited this site in 1989, and the changes over the past year have been terrible. It seems that the cave has become one of the favourite sites for youth and other commercial 'Adventure Caving' trips. As a consequence of this considerable additional use by large groups of inexperienced people there has been an enormous amount of damage done to the formations here. Much of this is, of course, due to the general clumsiness of the inexperienced; but some must be blamed on the leaders. For example the use of a decorated, but dry, oxbow as an alternative to a short, but wet, crawl is not obvious unless you know it is there. Similarly, traversing on high ledges to avoid the narrowest bit, and to knock off the helictites with your boots, would not occur to the average novice. There are those who think that I am biased against this type of 'Adventure' group. All I can say is that I went down this cave, which has been known since the 1930's, in April 1989, before they started using it to any extent, and in May 1990, afterwards, and the difference is sad to see.

Our thanks go to Carl Wright, The O'Connors, The Johnson family, Paula Morrison and Peter Wilkinson for help and hospitality of various kinds.

IRELAND 1990 (Co Mayo, Co Galway and Co Clare)

A.R.Farrant.

As part of my Third year Geology mapping project, I spent seven weeks on my own, in Western Ireland, over the summer, five weeks in the area around Clonbur, on the Galway/Mayo border and two weeks staying with Carl Wright in Lisdoonvarna, Co Clare.

For once the weather was superb, with only a few wet days. I even managed to get a decent suntan, which is almost unheard of in Western Ireland. However, this meant I had no excuse to stay in the pub all day long.

The area around Cong is one of the lesser known caving regions in Ireland, so there is still potential for new discoveries, especially if you're a cave diver. Most of the caves lie on the narrow isthmus of land between Lough Mask and Lough Corrib, and all the water from L. Mask flows into L. Corrib entirely underground, resurging at the massive spings at Cong. This has to be one of the biggest resurgences in the British Isles. Most of the caves known to exist in the area are open shafts up to 20 m deep, dropping down to the water level, with limited accessible horizontal development, for example, Pigeon Hole, near Cong.

Another series of caves exists near Clonbur, where streams flowing off the Silurian sandstones to the south of the village, sink into the limestone. Several caves are known to exist, but only one, Ballymaglancy Cave, is of any decent length. I managed to do a fair bit of caving, mainly with some of the instructors at Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre, where I was staying.

Incidentally Trish Walsh, the caving instructor there, is one of the most conservation conscious cavers I've met. Although the caves tend to be pretty short, they are still interesting in their own right. Some caves also exist in a few of the marble (metamorphic limestone) bands about 30 miles further west, near Kylemore Abbey. Unfortunately, I didn't get to see these as I didn't know they existed, until I read Graham Mullans note in the S.U.I. newsletter, a few days after cycling through the area.

I have made a list of all the sites around Clonbur that are of Speleological interest. (see map)

CL 1 A small stream, flowing beside the road leading to Ballyweeaun, disappears into a culvert, probably to sink in the field to the north. It probably resurges at Pollnasaggart.

CL 2 Polliska. This is a major swallet, taking the stream flowing down from Coolin Lough. A stream about the size of the O.F.D stream, sinks along the base of a low wide cliff. In low flow, most sinks at the North-West end. Recent digging at the Eastern end shows that it appears to close down to impenetrable joints. It resurges half a mile away at Pollnasaggart.

CL 3 Poulmagun. A short way North of Polliska, two small holes exist, one acts as an overflow for CL 4 and is impassable, the other is a tight bedding cave 10 m long.

CL 4 250 m East of Polliska a small stream disappears into a small choked hole. In wet weather it overflows to sink at CL 3.

CL 5 Poll Rusheen West. At the base of a well defined 10 m deep blind valley, a largish stream sinks at a small rocky outcrop. It probably resurges at Pollnasaggart.

CL 6 Poll Rusheen. A small mucky stream sinks in a muddy pool, in a small closed depression.

CL 7 Pigeon Hole. In the field South of Poll Rusheen, a stream disappears into a passage 3 m high and 2 m wide. Unfortunately it soon closes down, but could be dug.

CL 8 Pollnasaggart. This is the main resurgence in the area, and is a deep overflowing pool in a small gully, feeding quite a large stream - the Clonbur river.

About a mile further W is Ballymaglancy Cave, a nicely decorated, short easy trip and it is well worth doing. It starts as a low wide bedding passage, with several ways on, but soon increases in height as the passages converge, and the stream drops a bed. Many thin ledges stick out into the high meandering passage; as a result of differential solution of the limestone, and there are many excellent formations. Good roof pendants can be seen in places. Towards the end of the cave, the roof lowers and extensive mudbanks occur. It finally ends in a sump, only a few metres from the resurgence. At the resurgence, the stream flows for about 10 m before sinking again to reappear at Cong.

Along the shores of L.Mask, many small caves can be seen, the longest was a 200' long interconnected series of phreatic tubes, 1 m in diameter, but most are narrow deep rifts, often with water in the bottom, which may be worth diving.

Three major shakeholes were also looked at, half a km North of where the main Clonbur-Ballinrobe road crosses the dry Cong canal. (The Irish decided to build a canal across karstified limestone, the result? You guessed it - the water disappeared underground.)

Only one, Pollnalabba, produced any cave. It is a deep waterfilled rift with a low wide bedding plane passage leading off, emitting a strong cold draught This was penetrated for at least 30 m as a flat out crawl, over undisturbed mud to where it got too low. The next was full of rubbish, while the other one, Pollalarrif was a 10 m deep rift filled with water at the bottom. For a full account of all the open caves in the Cong area consult the Speleological Union of Ireland Newsletter, No 13.

I then cycled down to Co. Clare do a bit of sport caving, drinking and cycling, staying with Carl Wright, an ex-Wookey Hole cave guide. I did some caving trips with the Toby Caving Club, whom I met out there, including Pollballynahown (a real "collectors piece") which Carl recommended to us, and is a narrow arduous meandering stream canyon and the Poulelva-Pollnagollum through trip, which is a fantastic trip to do, followed by another trip down Pollagollum which was done with two Italian cavers. It was quite entertaining trying to describe various parts of the cave by sign language as I can't speak Italian, and their English wasn't too hot either. I almost had to go down Poulelva (which involves a 110' freehanging pitch) a third time, this time at two o'clock in the morning, after being dragged, none too sober out of an excellent ceili due to a rescue call out. We raced up to the entrance in Carls car, with Rashers the dog

sitting on Carls neck wondering what on earth was going on. The Gardi were there which was a bit worrying as Carl was probably way over the legal alcohol limit. Luckily for Carl and I, the party from Queens college, London were located after being five hours overdue, as they had got lost in the maze! I didn't really fancy abseiling a 110' shaft at two in the morning, while under the influence of alcohol; and then have to prussic back up again, bearing in mind I've only done S.R.T. once underground, and that was two days previous!

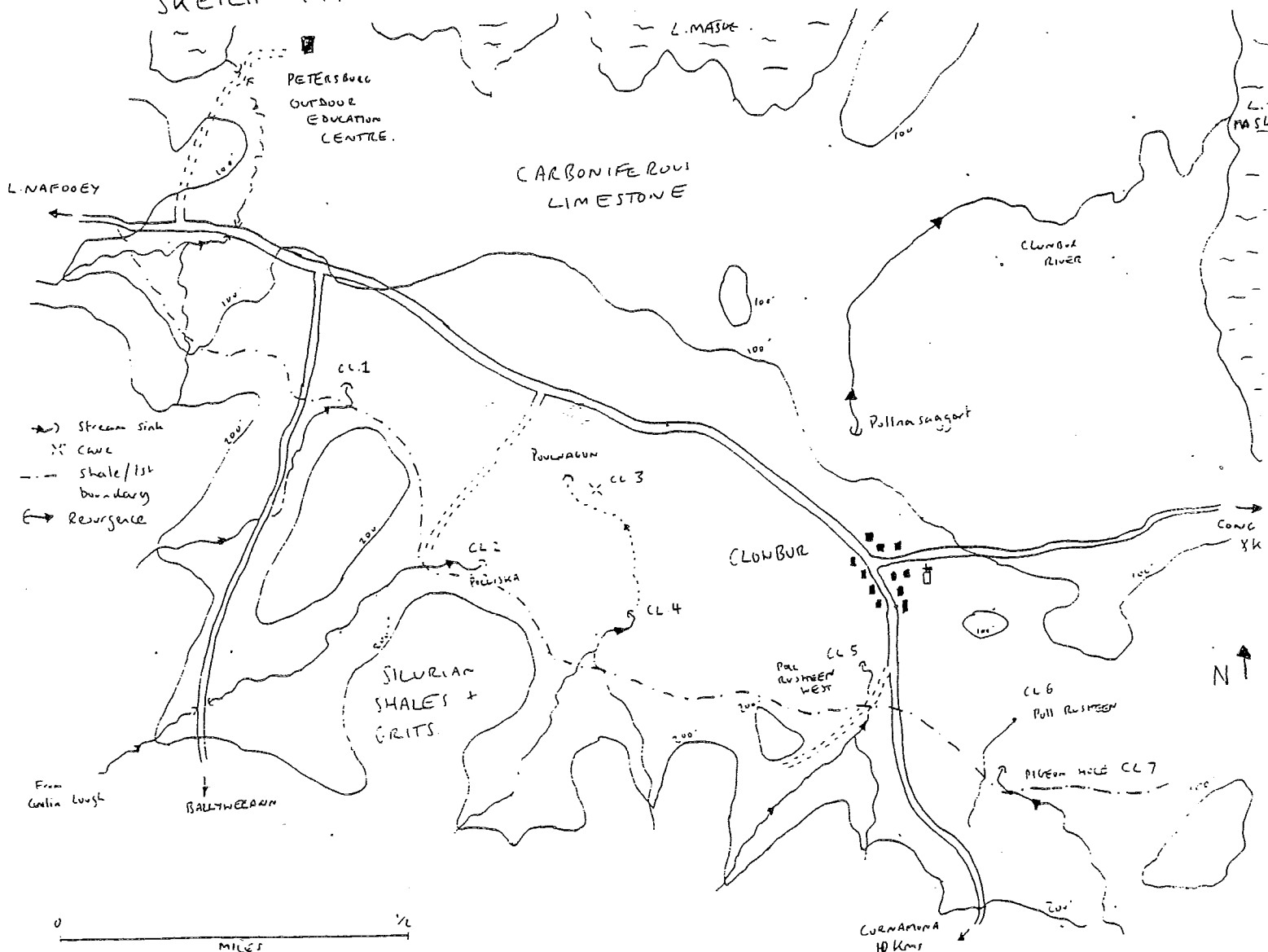
Several other short caves were also looked at, but as since caving on your own is not a very good idea, I couldn't do alot as, Carl was working.

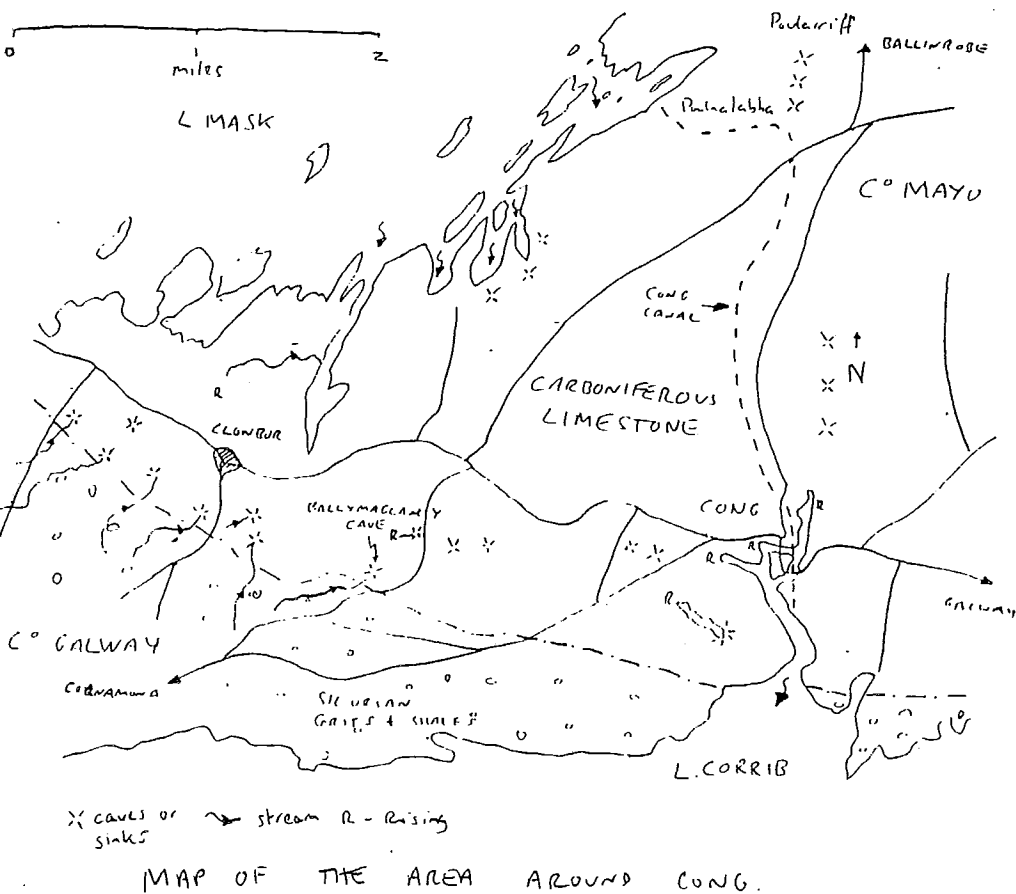
Co Clare has some superb caving to offer, most of it long horizontal streamways, the people are really friendly, there's some excellant scenery and the Guinness, ah well, the Guinness.....!

Thanks go to the Tratman Fund for financial assistance, Carl Wright, the Toby Caving Club, Ken Miller (and family), and all the staff at Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre, and no thanks to Queens College Caving club!

Anyone fancy a trip to Clare next summer?

SKETCH MAP OF THE AREA AROUND CLONBUR, C^O GALWAY, ÉIRE





Gough's Cave Update

During September, several dives were undertaken in the main river cave at Gough's Cave in Cheddar. This time, rather than trying to push upstream in sump 3, they swam downstream from the original diving site, Dire Straits. Perhaps surprisingly, the downstream continuation had never been looked at before.

During a succession of dives, Robin Brown pushed the passage to a depth of 30m, with a total length of about 100m, in a girt big passage up to 8m wide in places. At the end they reached a boulder blockage with some rifts overhead leading up to - 6m. They seem, however, to have lost the main flow of water. Another lead was noted, and another dive will take place if the weather holds out.

The current end of the cave is now slap bang below the Caveman Restaurant, next to the entrance to Gough's Cave. What now needs to be done is a dye trace to see where the water from places like GB and Tynning's Barrows Swallet enters the Gough's system, as there may be an inlet that has been overlooked. Any volunteers wishing to help with this project would be greatly appreciated.

One theory is that the present resurgence is where downcutting of the Gorge broke into the top of the present river passage, allowing the water to flow out. If this is so, then the passage should continue on the far side of the resurgence. If it does and where it goes, who knows?

The upstream end of the cave is now not that far from the end of Reservoir Hole, half way up the Gorge.

Another Brick in the Wall

or

The Further Adventures of the A Team

After last year's expedition to the Totes Gebirge, we reached two decisions. First, we were not going back because the living conditions were far too harsh and the walk-in was too strenuous for wimps like us. Secondly, any expedition to the area would be impossible with no water. Imagine our consternation therefore when the five of us stood, still wet with perspiration, 60lb rucksacks at our feet and surveyed the bone dry channel that had last year served as our water supply. Mutinous murmurs ran round the group "There is water on the Italian Riviera...", "the wine is good in the Vercours...", "There is plenty of beer in the Martin Arms...". So like a lot of fools, we dumped the kit and set off back down for the next load.

No one will admit to having the idea of going back to Austria. It probably happened sometime around Christmas, when time and beer had turned the five hour walk-in into a pleasant Sunday afternoon stroll, the bivi cave into a luxury camp-site and every inconclusively pushed side passage into a wide open lead. The plans were made, the tackle was dug out of the back of the store and we set off. Paul and Joe arrived from the Berner Oberland, fit and acclimatised after three weeks of slogging up and down mountains. Topher, Dan and Hannah came straight from England shagged and covered in diesel fuel. After driving for most of the day, Topher had pulled in at a French service station to fill up with petrol. Unfortunately, the pump that he wanted was being used by a Frenchman, whilst waiting, Topher noticed another nozzle next to the car and decided to use this instead. Not being fluent in French, he failed to understand the difference between Gazol and Essence and ended up with a tank full of diesel. The next two hours were spent siphoning this out using a generator pipe into a nearby storm drain. Both teams arrived within a four hours of each other and two days early, both with the intention of stealing a march on the other by doing a sneaky carry in on the next day!

With incredible keenness, the five of us set off early to get most of our personal kit up to the bivi cave. For the benefit of those of you who have not heard the stories of the walk in, I will briefly describe it. After a short walk through the forest, you get to The Wall. Here the path climbs through 1000m within a horizontal distance of less than 1km. The path then flattens out for a while before you leave the path and climb the final 500m across limestone pavement covered with bunde, the dwarf pine that trips you, blocks your way and tears at your ankles. The total height gain is about 1600m and this takes between 4 and 6 hours depending on the weight of your pack. At the bivi cave, the snow plug that had filled the entrance last year had completely melted as had all of the snow fields on the mountain. This meant that the water supply was dry and we would have to carry water from the nearest stream, 400m below and about a two hour round trip. The mountain gods seem not to like British teams caving on this part of the Totes Gebirge. For three years, they attempted to wash the LUSS off the mountain with vast quantities of rain, but with the UBSS they were trying another tactic, desiccation. The team that returned to the valley that evening were starting to think that this was not going to be the easy summer holiday that they had expected.

The next day we set off to Bad Ischl for supplies. Whilst in the supermarket, we had a great idea, we would buy a crate of strong beer to leave in the car so that people returning from the mountain at strange times could have a beer. We also bought a bottle of rum to take up the mountain. As this rum was 80% proof (yes %, not ° proof) we decided that this would be the lightest way of getting alcohol up the mountain. What we didn't count on was drinking all of this in one night. The Night Of The Rum will surely go down in the history of the UBSS as being one of the best (*or should that be worst? - ed.*) piss-ups in the club's history, although last new year in Langdale must come close. The full extent of the nights devastation was not apparent until the next morning. Dan had thrown up in Topher's car, Hannah had had to cut her way out of her bivi bag to escape the amorous advances of Joe, the car park was widely strewn with bottles and assorted debris, and to finish things off there had been about 1" of rain in the night so all of our sleeping bags were sodden. Various Austrians, arriving for a pleasant walk by the lake, were somewhat surprised by the sight of two cars surrounded by rubbish, and the sight of a small hairy man vomiting in the woods. One even went so far as to point out that it was raining. Helpful people, Austrians. The day was completely written off but by the day after, the hangovers had subsided enough for Dan and Topher to walk up to the bivi cave whilst the other three set off in search of a tumble dryer to dry their sleeping bags. Austria does not have launderettes, but we did find a campsite and managed to get our kit dry.

Thursday, therefore saw the whole team up on the mountain and the expedition had started. While Dan pushed a somewhat inconsequential hole, Paul and Topher went ambling off in search of other hopes, which were duly realised when Paul discovered a cave entrance which he at first assumed to be the entrance of a railway tunnel. How none had managed to find the most obvious entrance on the plateau in the previous few years remains a mystery. Joe and Hannah pushed a boulder choke in this cave, named BS 17, the next day, equipped with regulation caving equipment of shorts, walking boots, and one Petzl between them. It is to Hannahs credit that when she heard Joseph whoop she did not think "oh, he's found a pitch", but "the bastards fallen down a pitch and taken the headtorch with him."

Within two days Paul and Dan had rigged the first pitch, and this was followed immediately by another big drop, and so we all ran down to the valley to celebrate at the Bad Ischl Stadtfest. This involved the consumption of large quantities of beer (expedition expenses), and much talk of Rhinos. A word of advice to all freshers: if Joe teaches you a handy German phrase or two do *not* use it to a German, as they get rather upset. Crashed in field, visited the supermarket for our usual supplies (50 bars of chocolate, 20 tins of tuna, 12lbs of cheese), and then staggered groggily up the mountain in the dusk.

The next few days saw a concerted effort on '17'; The second pitch was descended but at the bottom, the passage narrowed down to a 6" rift. From a ledge, half way down the second pitch, another pitch which became known as Die Fledermaus Pitch because of the bat skeletons at the pitch head. This too stopped and it looked as though the cave was ending. The passages near the entrance had been explored and were a maze of low crawls and short pitches but with no way on. The only leads left were two tight tubes at the top of Die Fledermaus pitch, both of which were emitting healthy draughts and a window above the foot of the first pitch. Dan and Topher set off to push the two tight tubes, Dan's entry in the log book tells the story best:-

"And on the tenth day, Dan of Wales went forth into the cavern, but finding his path blocked by a curtain of shimmering stal, did take a rock in his hand and did smite the

curtain' exceedingly. He travelled on, but little heeded that he had incurred the wrath of the mighty cave gods who are quite touchy about conservation. And so when he reached the limits of his endeavours he made to turn about, but lo! the wrathful cave gods had caused the passage to constrict, and cruel daggers of rock to rend his shining yellow armour. In vain he pushed and squeezed, but only succeeded in wedging his mighty orange helm in a vertical rift and nearly hanging himself. Then Dan of Wales did truly shit himself, and feared that he would never again see his beloved valleys, or his fair Flossie. Yet all was not lost, for his groans of lamentation reached the ears of Topher of Bristol, who was resting upon a couch of calcite, and refreshing himself after cruel labours in the other tube, which had extended his knowledge of the cave by several yards. And so this valiant knight did gird his trusty weapon, known to the sages as a bolting hammer to his loins, and casting aside his carbide set off to succour his comrade. With mighty blows and much hard travail he succeeded in clearing a way through for his fellow, and though both their lights had failed, they met with tears and laughter, and did squabble bitterly over who should have the only spare battery. The moral of this tale, dear fresher is

*Thou Shalt Not Smash Stal
(even if the passage is draughting like a bastard.)"*

It looked as though the cave was going to end there but desperate times call for desperate measures, so the expedition dwarf was fetched and forced down the two tubes, with threats that he wouldn't be allowed out until he had found the way on. In the tube where Dan had got stuck, Joe managed to get little further, a pitch was visible but not accessible. The other tube, however, went. The Organ Grinder is 46m of the most awkward cave passage that I have ever come across. Even Dan admitted that it was worse than anything in Darren. It is never tight, but it twists and turns, climbs and falls forcing you into contortions that you never thought possible. It saved its piece de resistance to the end where a flat out crawl led to a U-bend which was even more difficult coming out, as Graham will testify. Passages of the Organ Grinder ranged from 10 minutes to 3¹/₂ hours with an average time of about 20 minutes. The Organ Grinder turned the cave into a very serious undertaking, as there was no way that an injured person could be brought through.

There was a small chamber at the end with sufficient space to reassemble SRT kit, and then the third pitch which included a long pendulum, which Hannah delighted in, much to the grief of the bolts.

Meanwhile Paul had set off down the mountain to fetch Paul. (confused? it gets worse!) Back in the bivi cave Dan announced an official day off when the rain which had been falling all morning turned into snow, and so we read and told jokes and ate. Unfortunately the bivi cave was not particularly warm, having a temperature of 4^o, but we kept warm by wearing full thermals, shirt, sweater, fleece, several pairs of socks, breeches, balaclava and Cagoule. In our sleeping bags, and bivi bags. Cosy. Paul met Paul who had travelled all of the way on his 70cc moped. The rain dissuaded the pair from coming up the mountain but they did meet up with Simon Shaw in the car park and went off to eat chamois goulash and drink much beer (again).

By the time Paul and Paul, resplendent in a moustache for the sake of his new job on an oil rig, had reached the plateau the next day, Joe and Dan had rigged the third pitch, but not bottomed it. We were all very excited to have a new Paul in the cave, and so we cooked an extra-special meal of Pasta, Garlic and Tuna, and drank real coffee which had cost £2 a kilo! The next day Hannah and Joe went down to the valley on account of the miserable weather, and while Paul and Paul bottomed and explored the third pitch, Dan and Topher reached the fourth pitch through a window in the wall. Dan then went back to fetch his tobacco, and so Topher rigged the pitch, intending to stop at a ledge ten feet down and wait for Dan to check the rigging. Unfortunately this ledge failed to materialise, so Topher continued down to the bottom of a 86 metre pitch, hoping Dan had put a

knot in the end of the rope, and suffering a bad attack of wobbly knees on reaching the bottom, as the rope was rubbing just about everywhere along its length. Dan followed after retying all the knots at the top, and they explored the area at the bottom of the pitch which included fossils of large bivalves and snails on sticks. Although there was no obvious way on, the party returned to the valley to meet Paul and say good bye to Paul (I said that it got worse! *There is a prize for anyone who can work out how many Pauls were on the expedition*), and of course to drink some more beer. Charlie got a nasty shock when leaning over an electric fence in thin trousers which was just below waist high. Sparks actually flew. Topher also departed for home muttering that next time he went on an expedition he would find one with fewer Pauls in it.

Rain failed to damp the spirits of the new arrivals and they set off up the hill in the pouring rain, whilst the rest of us went to a campsite for a couple of days R&R and to eat some wonderful cream cakes that we had discovered.

The new arrivals were very keen to start caving, and over the next couple of days, BS8, a lead left from last year was extended but unfortunately it finished. Many new shafts were discovered in an area not previously looked at and some were descended but none proved fruitful. When the rest of us got back, work started again on BS17. After re-rigging Topher's pitch, Paul started to bolt a climb up to a window at the bottom. The bolting proved hard with the bolt becoming jammed with mud. In the meantime, Dan had gone back up the shaft to a ledge and found a by-pass to the window. The pitch was quickly rigged from flakes and threads and after more rope had been fetched, it was bottomed. A hole in the floor dropped into a small chamber with two too tight exits and some more very delicate fossils and some lattice work of stal on the walls. The way on was soon found again half way up the pitch with a climb dropping down a narrow rift. Immediately after this was another pitch. With no more rope down the cave, the two of us returned after one of the best day's caving that I have ever done, '17' was now 100m deeper than at the start of the day and we estimated the total depth to be close to 250m. The bottom of the third pitch had also succumbed to more attention with Joe and Hannah finding another pitch but not descending it. Back on the surface, we were greeted by thick fog and managed to get somewhat lost on the way back to the bivi cave.

Trips into '17' were now taking between 10 and 12 hours and people were coming out later and later, and also getting up later. This reached its ultimate on the last trip into the bottom of the cave when breakfast was not finished until about 4pm and we didn't get underground until 6pm. The trip then lasted 18hrs and we got out at midday the following day. The air temperature in the cave was about $1/2^{\circ}\text{C}$ so the normal caving wear was: Two complete sets of thermals, heavy duty furry suit, oversuit, wet socks and thick woollen socks, thermal gloves under plastic gloves, oversuit (complete with holes and patches) and a balaclava. With all this on, you would still be cold whilst hanging about, be too hot whilst prussiking, but it was the best compromise.

The next trip saw the cave reach the limit of this year's exploration. The pitch after the Rift Climb was rigged in Dan's inimitable style. The rope was wrapped round a thread at the top and then led over a sharp edge causing you to perform 20' of 6a climbing on loose rock to get to a point where a rebelay let the rope hang free. The number of handholds that were pulled off the climb gave the pitch the name 'The Pitch of The Flying Boulders'. The pitch landed in a chamber with more loose rock in it. A very muddy climb up at one end of the chamber came to a large phreatic tube and we had found the draught again! The two of us ran along this tube, pausing only to negotiate a large pit in the floor. It is hard to describe the excitement of finding big horizontal passage after the cave had been so vertical. You really felt as though you were discovering new passage, something that isn't as strong when abseiling down a new pitch. Unfortunately, the passage stopped at 'Another Bloody Pitch'. This again was quickly rigged on naturals but, like so many pitches before it, this pitch was blind and we had

lost the draught. Trying to find the inevitable parallel pitch on the way up, Paul threw a small boulder through a window. Much swearing from Dan, below, confirmed that this pitch rejoined the main pitch. The parallel shaft was found and dropped in spectacular style in 10m steps with not a single loose rock on them. The pitch obviously took vast quantities of water in wet weather. Again though, this pitch was blind. So that was it. The strong draught at the top of 'Another Bloody Pitch' seemed to disappear. Just visible across the pitch was the continuation of the phreatic level but to reach it would mean a couple of days bolting a traverse and we were running out of time.

The surveying and photography was following along about a day behind the exploration, hindered by work shy flash guns that refused to flash after about two rolls of film and insisted on lying in the sun for a day before working again. The clinometer also misted up as soon as it was taken underground. All too soon, it was time to de-rig and so Dan, Paul and Graham went down on a last mammoth trip to finish the photography and surveying, push a few remaining leads and de-rig the cave as far as the Organ Grinder. The trip went well and as soon as Graham had a full tackle bag he set off out solo. Three hours later, Paul got to the end of the Organ Grinder to find Graham unable to move, wedged in the U-Bend. Paul managed to get him back through and then had to enlarge the passage to get Graham out. Having been stuck for more than two hours, Graham was rather shaken, but at least we got him out eventually. The Cave Gods had had the last word.

All that was left now was to strike camp and return to the valley. Just like last year, we all ate too much when we got down and failed to get drunk. We all split up with the vow that we would not come back next year but even now, the memory of the pain is fading and after a few pints, the urge to take an expedition back to extend '17' overtakes me and who knows, it could be the deepest cave in the Totes Gebirge, or Austria, or Europe, or.....

We would finally like to thank the Tratman Fund for supporting the expedition over the last two years.

The A-Team.

Organ Hohle - a Description. (SURVEY ON FRONT COVER)

The 1m diameter entrance to Organ Hohle is located at the foot of a 5m cliff, about 300m along the north side of the ridge running East from the Hones Augst Ecke and is about 50m from the summit of the ridge. The entrance is marked 'BS 17':

The entrance is followed by a walking sized phreatic passage with further entrances in the roof. This continues to a four way junction. Straight on soon chokes at a boulder slope, up to the left, the passage winds back to a further entrance, the way on is down and to the right. The 5m high passage continues passing low crawls on the left and right to a point where the roof lowers and the passage is split horizontally. The lower passage leads to an extensive series of low crawls whilst the upper passage continues to a squeeze past a debris cone with a distinct draught. Past the debris cone the passage splits again, the right hand passage chokes soon after a 12m pitch but the left hand passage carries on as a hands and knees crawl, crosses a 4m blind pit and soon reaches the first pitch.

A fine descent in a large shaft lands on a boulder ledge with the second pitch following on immediately. A climb up to a window above the second pitch (krab

and sling in situ) gains a climb down to the boulder strewn foot of an aven and a horizontal tube going off (not explored). The second pitch descends to a 150mm wide rift with a possible continuation beyond. 13m down the second pitch, Fledermaus ledge can be gained with a passage leading off to Fledermaus pitch. This descends to about the same level as the second pitch and is blind except for a small slot in one wall. Traversing over the top of Fledermaus pitch gains a small chamber with two drafting tubes leading off. The tube to the left becomes too tight but a pitch is visible after the tight section. The tube to the right is the Organ Grinder.

The Organ Grinder is best tackled feet first until a flat out crawl is reached just before the crux. The crux should be passed head first going in but feet first coming out. After the crux, there is room to replace SRT kit before the next pitch.

The third pitch descends, passing two windows to a floor with no way on. From the foot of the pitch, a 3m climb up to a ledge reveals two climbs down, one of which is blind, the other leads to an undescended pitch of about 20m.

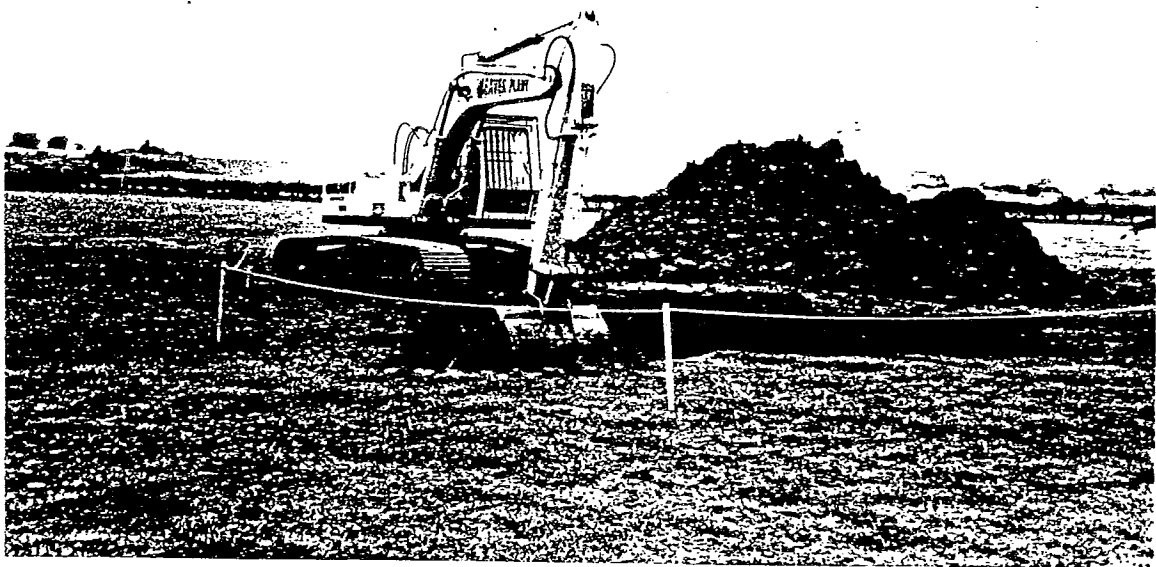
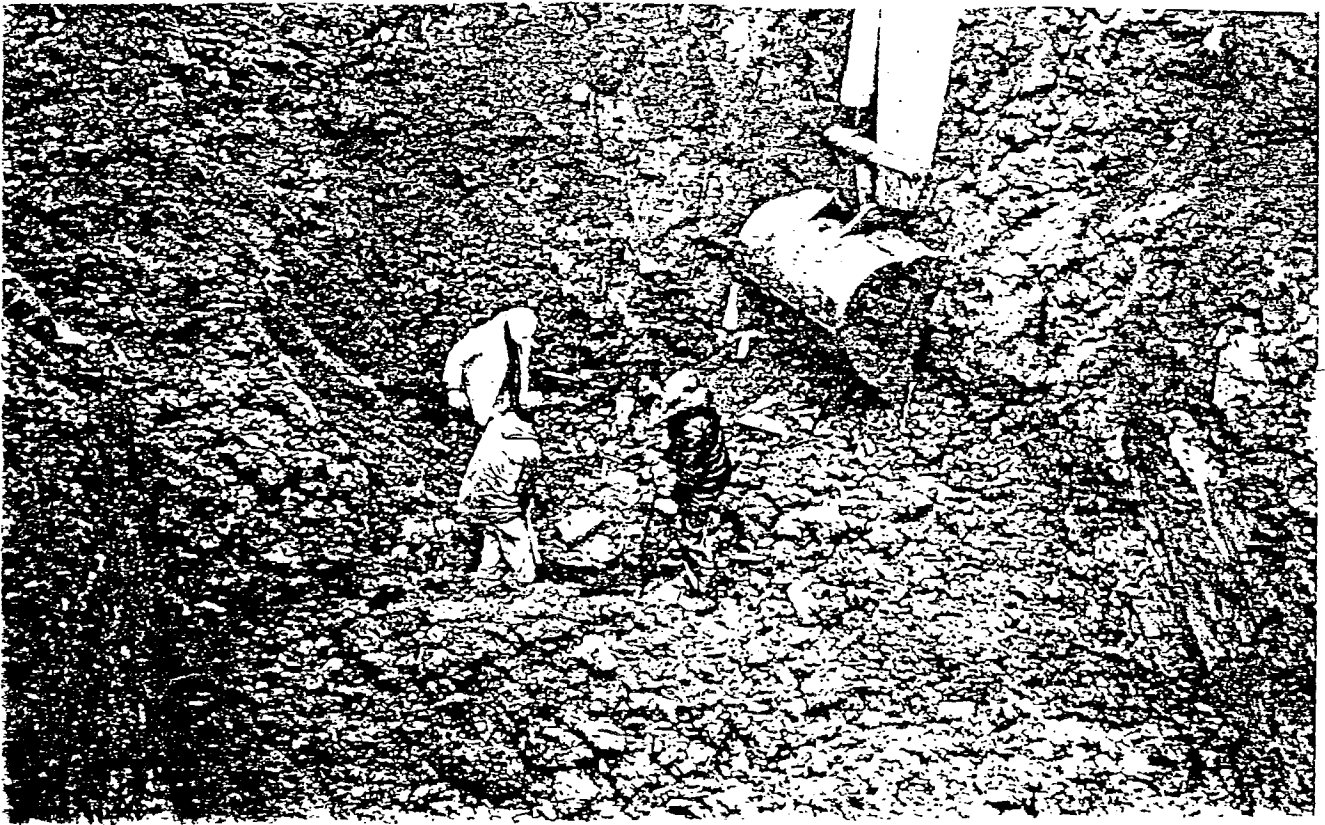
Both windows in the third pitch connect with Topher's Pitch, the lower one is rigged. Topher's Pitch is 86m with a large ledge near the foot. At the foot, a window leads to an aven whilst in the opposite wall, another window looks onto the fifth pitch, Toccata and Feuge.

Toccata and Feuge is best descended from a ledge above the large ledge in Topher's Pitch. The pitch drops in a series of steps and a small hole in the floor drops into a chamber with no passable way on. 10m back up the pitch, a ledge can be gained and is the start of the Rift Climb. The Rift Climb is 40m and is best rigged as a self lined climb. The rift continues for some distance horizontally, but has not been followed. Descending the Rift gains the pitch head of the Pitch of The Flying Boulders. Great care should be exercised in the Rift Climb and in The Pitch of The Flying Boulders as there are many loose rocks and dislodged rocks inevitably fall the length of both pitches. From the bottom section of Topher's Pitch to the top of The Pitch of The Flying Boulders, many fine fossils can be seen standing as much as 25mm from the rock.

The Pitch of The Flying Boulders lands in The Hall of The Flying Boulders which again contains much loose rock. From The Hall of The Flying Boulders a 2m climb up a mud bank leads to an impressive phreatic passage. A pit in the floor of this passage drops to a chamber with a deep well. Passing a smaller side passage on the left, the passage soon reaches Another Bloody Pitch with a strong draught at the pitch head. The side passage also joins this pitch. Another Bloody Pitch is blind and a window part way down leads to a further pitch which is also blind.

From the head of Another Bloody Pitch, a continuation of the phreatic passage can be seen and this is thought to be the most likely way on.

Paul Drewery



Mendip Diggers have resorted to new methods. Not content any more with a pick and shovel, and the odd bit of Bang, faster means have been employed. It works as well, this photo shows the reopening of Ubley Hill Pot.

SWEATSHIRTS AND T-SHIRTS

A new issue of Sweatshirts and T-Shirts with the traditional U.B.S.S. - G.B. logo is just being printed. The following colours and sizes will shortly be available:-

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JADE		X	X		
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GREY	X	X	X	
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