

# U.B.S.S.

*University of Bristol Spelaeological Society*

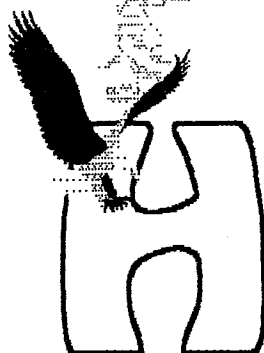


After a Swildon's Round Trip, 1969. Photo courtesy Bristol Evening Post - for the full story ask the MRO, or identify the person pictured second left & ask him.....if you dare.

**NEWSLETTER**

**Vol 12 No. 1 February 1996**

# Endogenous Editorial



ello again, and welcome to the first issue of the (still, alas, nameless) UBSS newsletter for 1996, an issue which you will no doubt be relieved to hear is entirely free of "Testicular Jargon" (thank you, Francis). Articles for this issue were a little thin on the ground until about a week ago, when I suffered from a sudden deluge of them. The eminent Dr. Boycott's long-promised article on Little Neath has finally materialised, for those who thought that it was a figment of his imagination. Most of the rest of the stuff was systematically bullied out of people in the pub, at times to the extent of handing over pen and paper and then beating them around the head until they had presented me with something printable. My thanks, as ever, to all those who have contributed anything.

I take this opportunity to humbly apologise for the minuscule size of this issue's *Gravel* column. The fault for this lies with you lot, as you appear to have been remarkably well-behaved over the last ten weeks. As a result, little scandal has been generated. Either that, or nobody lets me know about it any more. Please try harder for the next issue.

Speaking of which, any articles for inclusion in the same should be given to me as soon as possible. It has not escaped my attention that I have these terribly irritating things called Finals to sit next term, and I don't intend to fail because I've had to sit around editing a newsletter at the last minute. So, the earlier the better, if you please.

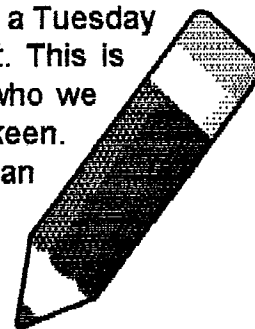
On behalf of the Honorary Secretary's (who will be grovelling later on), I apologise for the complete lack of any organised trips this term. The reason, despite what they may say, is of course incompetence. Things weren't like this in the olden days, you know. I remember when we had Secretaries who sorted things out (and ones who could actually drink and weren't always sipping orange juice or running off to feed their faces, he muttered incoherently and in all probability irrelevantly).

While I'm in an abject mood, I also beg forgiveness from Rupert's Bird who has co-written me a splendid article and whose surname I have completely forgotten. Sorry, Charlotte, it's nothing personal.

And that's it until next time, I think. Incidentally, aside from all the other posts up for grab next year, we will be needing a new editor, so if you have the charm, wit, integrity and general all-round excellence which are obviously prerequisites of the job, you'd better talk to the new committee. Before I go, then, it only remains to say that if you haven't yet been caving with us, then pop along to *The Red Lion* (Worrall Road, off Blackboy Hill) on a Tuesday evening and we'll sort you out with some spelaeological excitement. This is particularly a plea to Phil le Marinel, who still owes me a pint and who we haven't seen hide nor hair of. Where are you, Phil? You seemed so keen. And where is my tutor from downstairs in Flat 13, also yet to make an appearance?

Until May, then, farewell.

Ian



**U.B.S.S. Newsletter. Volume 12, Number 1. February 1996.**

**Editor - Ian Wheeler**

**Contributors to this issue** - (in reverse alphabetical order, otherwise I get accused of favouritism) Charlotte Stillcantrememberhersurname (sorry), Millicent Smyth, Simon Poole, Ian "the rake" Morley, Graham Mullan, Simon "how long?" Grace, Francis Goddard, Dr. Andrew Farrant Esq., Tim Davies, Tony Boycott and, last but assuredly not least, Christine Benn.

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As ever, the views expressed in any articles contained within these covers are those of their respective authors. They are nothing at all to do with the committee, and should not be viewed as such. Besides, committees are beyond reproach, and there's nobody on it worth suing - we're all skint. So there.

# Newsdesk

## *Slovenia Return*

Hugo has made it known that he is seriously planning a return to Slovenia this summer to indulge in some expedition caving. Anybody wishing to do extend their knowledge of caving beyond British shores and experience the reputedly unforgettable flavour of *Stew a la Hugo* should get in touch with the estimable Mr. Pile. If you're interested and can't track him down in the pub, you can always email him on [Hugo.Pile@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Hugo.Pile@bristol.ac.uk)

## *New members?*

Dr. Fiona Whitaker, wife of Dr. Pete Smart, is pregnant, so there is going to be another little Smartlet running around. Our congratulations are extended to them.

## *Ogof Draenen*

About 4 km was rumoured to have been found recently off Upstream Passage by the Morgannwg Caving Club (probably more like 2 km?). The new passage trends parallel to Gilvern passage and is of generally walking size. The estimated length is now in the region of 43 km.

## *Sessional Meeting*

Graham and Linda's talk on the painted caves of Lascaux has had to be postponed from its original date of the 21st of February. It will now take place (God and Union porters permitting) on Wednesday

the 24th of April at 8pm in the Union. The exact room location is not yet known and will be circulated nearer the event. As this is the day after Graham's birthday, a competition has been proposed. All those attending the meeting will be allowed to guess Graham's age - with the Hon. Sec's providing a pint for the nearest answer. Members married to the Treasurer are not eligible to enter.

## *AGM*

A reminder that this year's AGM will be held at 3 pm, or 1500 hours, on Saturday the 9th of March. CR4 (we think) in the Union. The annual dinner follows at 7pm at Anthem - if you haven't made your meal selections and paid some brass then it's about time you did. Any ideas for a novelty caving trip before the AGM should be suggested soon. Ideas combining the word naked will be immediately disallowed.

## *New Committee*

At the time of writing, we are still short of nominations for the new committee. As Mr. Morley is off to work for ICI for criminal amounts of cash, we are going to be short of one Honorary Secretary. There are also a couple of "untitled" committee posts up for grabs. If you are interested and have the dynamic personality, organisational skills and drinking prowess generally associated with such rank, get in touch with somebody on the current committee, preferably before the AGM.

# Longwood-August : Lunatic-Agony

*Upholding the finest traditions of the club, Andy Trousers has been attempting to imperil the lives of new members. Millie "Gullible Fresher" Smyth tells all...*

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I was desperate. I can even remember begging Trousers not to leave me....

Enough of my private life. Firstly, let me apologise for this "dribble". Being an engineer, I am not really capable of producing anything intelligible for more than a few sentences. Actually, I was joking about my private life. It was down a cave...

We met at the tackle store, following which we had the usual delay in movement for one reason or another. We spent a while wondering which cave to visit, and after Trousers finally finished rattling off a list as long as his arm, he finally managed to find a cave he had not visited. Thus, it was decided, Longwood-August. Graham, who delivered the tackle store key, gave the directions, and insisted we could not possibly go wrong.

On the way to the Mendips, Trousers revelled in discussing smashing the nerve system in his knee to a pulp through caving. Quite interesting, but was it really the comfort I needed, knowing that he was the leader of this trip? Anyway, I managed to put on a reasonably brave face for the descent. Perhaps it was Trousers' mince pies?

On entry to the cave I had the sick feeling of, "Oh God, I am doing this again." I get it every time, but put it down to nerves or perhaps due to remembering the advice to never go caving with Trousers.

Just in from the entrance Pete Simpson insisted on trying the alternative approach to caving - some kind of Olympic freestyle swim act in a little puddle. Pete had insisted on going first, since he thought he might be too broad. This meant me scrambling over Trousers, and Pete Simpson making a comment to the effect, "I bet you liked that", and Trousers replying, "usually I prefer it

when they have no clothes on." Who said sexism was non-existent in the club? Scandal or what, all you ardent gossip-mongers! We eventually all got through the squeeze, but it seemed like nothing compared to the rest of the trip. Then there was the first pitch - not too bad - followed by an awkward traverse.

By the time we finally reached the second pitch, I was very wet and cold. When we reached the bottom, there was another wait shivering in the cold while we tried to work out where to go. Eventually, I crawled along a flooded streamway fighting against six inches of fast-flowing freezing water, only to have a crashing waterfall beating down on my head as I emerged. Trousers started to look for an alternative route out rather than turn back. This took a while since I got wedged in some rocks. I had started to feel like a victim on 999. I was desperate to get out. I can even remember begging trousers not to leave me. I must have been very desperate.

Eventually we worked out that the way on was, you guessed it, up the waterfall. Trousers dragged me up like a tackle bag, and believe me I had more than one bruise to prove it. Meanwhile Pete Simpson was rescued by cavers from another club, since he was finding it all a bit too much. I could not believe I had managed to get to the top, after about five hours of sheer hell! I was shivering violently while we waited for Pete. For my efforts I was rewarded with a big hug from Trousers. He is all right really.

It was only later I was told that this cave was probably one of the toughest on Mendip, hence I found myself down another cave a week later.

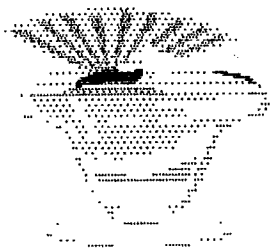
# HON. SEC.'S BIT

Here it is again, that bit that everyone leaves until all the interesting bits have been read and digested. I'm afraid I haven't got a lot to say - sorry, Ian - you'll just have to think of something else to satisfy your layout scheme. Perhaps some sort of competition to find the best suggestion of what we can do with all those spare copies of *Caves of County Clare*, the winner getting to go digging with Simon down GB. Anyway, here's what going on in the near future:

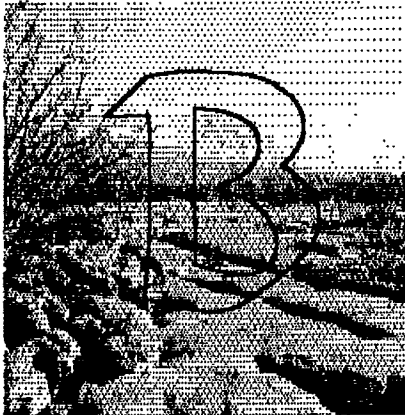
1. AGM - 3pm, 9th March in CR4 in the Union. Everyone welcome. Please come - it doesn't last long and we even have an extra special mystery guest speaker this year.
2. Annual Dinner. Same day at 7pm at Anthem restaurant, St. Michael's Hill. Please see me or Graham to sign up and give meal choices. **Those of you who have already signed, (hello, those of you who signed up four weeks ago and haven't showed hide nor hair of yourself since) can I please have some money, preferably £12 each.**
3. Sessional Meeting (postponed from whenever it was last organised for) will now be on 24th April at 8pm, somewhere in the Union.
4. Lots of trips to Wales, Derbyshire and Yorkshire - for more information see Simon GRace (or organise one yourself - you might actually get there then).

Sorry there haven't been any organised trips this term. I feel that there has been some confusion. The dictionary states that the term honorary refers to a position with no responsibilities or a position without reward. Some of us have got it a little muddled, methinks.

I hope that this has filled enough space, Ian. Please feel free to fill it up with mindless insults *{perish the thought, Ian, you-fat-git}*. I'm sure you won't have much trouble thinking of some. Oh, if anyone can think of any awards that they'd like presented at the annual dinner, shout now. Hope to see you all there, when those of you who have chosen Gravadx for your starter will be disappointed to discover that it's not really Beecham's new laxative.



# S<sub>cary</sub> R<sub>ope</sub> T<sub>echnique</sub> FOR NOVICES



efore caving in Yorkshire last December, my S.R.T. experience consisted of dangling from a moderately high Mendip tree branch. From what I remembered, it was quite easy. Someone standing on the ground patiently instructs you; you ascend twenty feet up a rope; you calmly unclip and re-clip some metal bits; you descend. Easy.

During the car journey from Bristol to Ingleton on the evening of Friday 8th December, I was looking forward to a weekend of good caving. Even Andy Jacket's *Meatloaf* tape couldn't numb the feeling of excitement. After finding our luxury holiday home (!), we took a short moonlit walk to the Marton Arms. We met up with the rest of the U.B.S.S. members and worked our way through the fifteen different real ales on offer in the bar.

On Saturday I enjoyed a good S.R.T. trip to Alum Pot with small Ian, medium Ian, Christine, Millie and Andy. I think one of the reasons for this enjoyment must be the comfort of my newly-purchased furry suit; another reason being the amusing arguments between the two Ians about who was the biggest 'trougher'.

After a cooked breakfast to combat the customary queasiness of a Sunday morning, I naively volunteered to go caving. Bill, Julian, Millie and I were driven by Andy Jacket to a lay-by on the side of Ingleborough. I eventually clambered into my snug new gear and a club S.R.T. harness, and started the walk up the slope to find a cave called Tatham Wife. Bill found the entrance halfway up the fell and shared his chocolate biscuits with us.

The first part of the cave was easy: a winding streamway and a short pitch. At this point, my experience of S.R.T. was limited and I was wondering what all the fuss was about. I even wondered whether S.R.T. should stand for simple rope technique. Moments later I heard the roar of a waterfall: I began to doubt my S.R.T. competence.

I'm sure lots of cavers remember their first proper S.R.T. pitch. You are wet, dirty, maybe tired, probably hungover. Like me, you may have to assure yourself that you feel exhilarated, not petrified. You look up to the experienced caver at the top of the pitch. He or she signals what to do. You cautiously slide down the rope using the descender. You eventually reach solid ground at the foot of the pitch - Phew! For the novice, S.R.T. stands for scary (and slow!) rope technique. After this second pitch in Tatham Wife, I realised that there are a lot of strings attached to caving with ropes.

My initial stress during the second pitch soon diminished and I really enjoyed the rest of the pitches. A third pitch, with rebelay to avoid a waterfall, and some fun crawly bits led to the fourth pitch (also with rebelay). The fifth pitch was down an angled well-defined fault-line. Bill and Julian were superb at instructing Millie and myself. They, along with Andy, had shown a lot of patience during the four hours it took to reach the bottom of this steep cave.

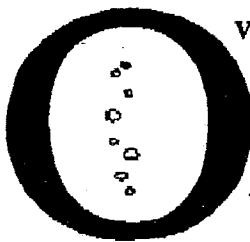
At the bottom, Julian went to see if the cave went any further but didn't get very far. As far as I could gather, the only main route through the cave is via the main streamway. It was harder work on the return journey but it was good fun. It was my turn to carry the tackle bag for the last half of the return journey. This meant I had to curse a lot to negotiate the rebelay. I can also remember swearing a lot trying to get to the top of the third pitch...

Anyway, two hours later we were at the entrance. There was no light 'at the end of the tunnel' because it was about 6pm and dark outside. It was very rewarding to emerge and see the starlit night sky above Ingleborough. I can remember vividly the meandering walk down the fell and my feeling of satisfaction on having had a great weekend's caving.

by Tim Davies

# RECENT DISCOVERIES IN THE LITTLE NEATH RIVER CAVE

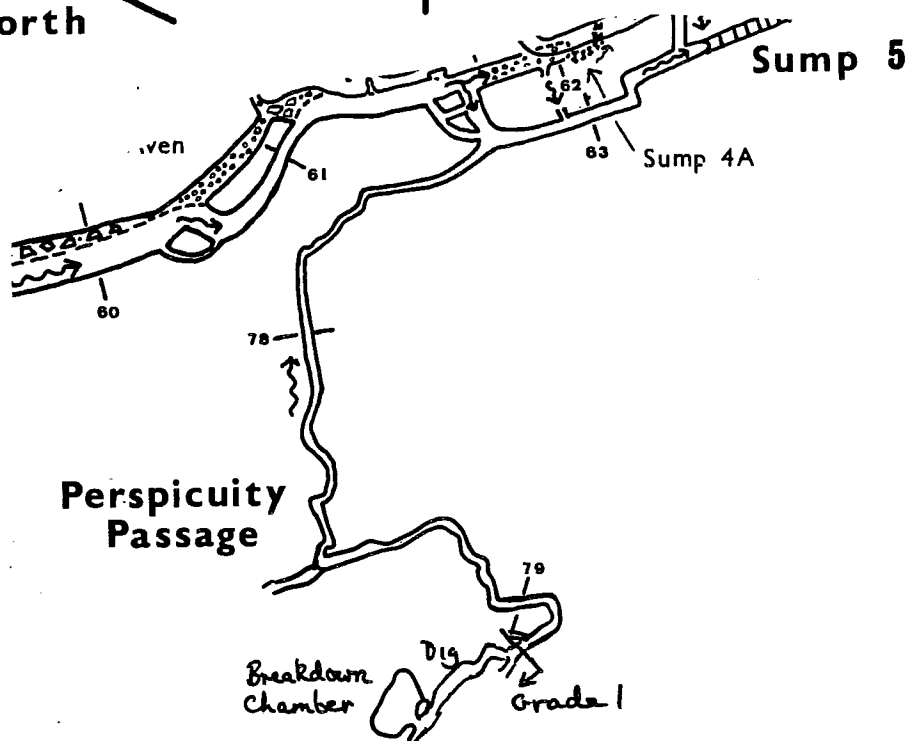
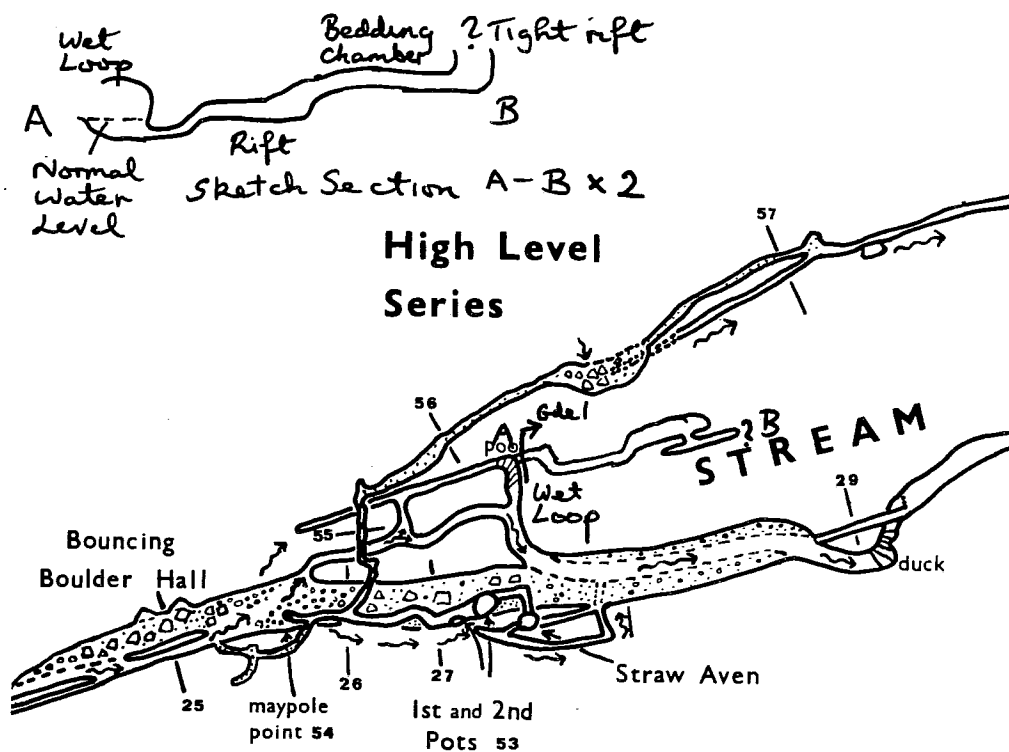
*by Tony Boycott*

 ver the last two years or so Rob Harper and I have dived to LNRC Five several times, mostly as tourist trips, but have made a few small discoveries. We have re-visited Tipperary and found nothing new apart from a small passage which was originally mud choked, but bypasses the "diving line " climbs south of section 90 on the UBSS survey. I have also set off a small charge in the Seventeenth Street choke, but not yet been back to look at the result. On one dive the line in Sump 2 was broken and the diver happily swam off the end of it before realising!. All lines in Sumps 2, 3 & 4 are now in good condition, the lines in 2 & 3 have been replaced.

We also looked at the end of Perspicuity Passage, tantalisingly marked with a question mark on the Proceedings survey. The first look was on 20/8/95 by Rob Harper and Clive Owen alone, as I had managed to smash my mask kitting up at Sump 2. Most of the passage beyond the long straight passage at section 78 looked pristine, and it was not clear where the old UBSS survey finished. The furthest point reached stopped at a low mud choked diggable bedding plane. When we returned with digging and survey kit on 10/9/95 Clive dug the mud choke and squeezed through into 15m of muddy rift passage , ending in a climb to a 6m diameter breakdown chamber with no possibilities of extension. It proved impossible to make the passage large enough for me or Rob, so we surveyed out, also finding a small side passage on the north side (see survey). On drawing up the survey, it matched the original survey up to the point where we had started digging.

The exceptionally dry weather has caused airspace through sump 1 on several occasions. On one dive there was no water flowing on the surface downstream of flood entrance, which appears to be taking more water generally nowadays. There was also no water coming out of the Bridge Cave Inlet sumps, but very cold water was flowing out of the boulder choke in Bridge Cave, colder than I would have expected if it was surface river water. Is this where the fabled "Pant Mawr Inlet" comes in?

During a (non-diving) trip on 13/8/95, the low water level also revealed some new passage in LNRC Main Streamway. Clive Owen, Graham Mullan, Julian Walford and I found a low crawl, obviously normally flooded, leading south from the bend in the Wet Loop. A squeeze leads to a muddy slope up into a short rift passage to a low bedding chamber, with a squeeze on the right leading to a strongly draughting rift too tight to enter. From the position on the survey, it probably connects in to the High Level Series. Total length of new passage about 10m, not surveyed.





There have been two other significant discoveries in the Little Neath area since the publication of the updated survey (Mullan 1987).

The East Dorset Spelaeological Society found a new entrance 40m downstream of Flood Entrance (named Ogof Corryn Cawraidd, Cave of the Giant Spider). A very tight series of passages enters Tributary Passage at the aven by the first boulder choke. It is passable in flood conditions, but is too tight for most cavers. (Goulding, 1989 & Farr 1989).

A dig by the Westminster Speleological Group at Bridge Sink, the site marked as a cleft on the UBSS survey 40m upstream of the bridge, has entered 50m of rift passage ending in a sump which has been dived for 5m but is too tight to pass (Farr 1994a & b). A dig inside the cave has been pushed through a boulder choke to the north wall of the Bridge Cave entrance shakehole (Setchfield 1995).

## REFERENCES

- DIVING REPORTS, *Cave Diving Group Newsletters* 113 p35, 116 p 28 and 118 p24.  
FARR, M., 1989 New entrance for Little Neath *Descent* 90 (Oct/Nov) 9.  
FARR, M., 1994a Little Neath Area *Descent* 119 (Aug/Sept) 13.  
FARR, M., 1994b Diving Round -up *Descent* 121 (Dec/Jan) 11.  
GOULDING, M., 1989 The discovery of Ogof Corryn Cawraidd *Descent* 91 (Dec/Jan) 33.  
MULLAN, G.J., 1987. The Little Neath River Cave 1971 - 1987. *Proc. Univ. Bristol Spelaeol. Soc.* 18 (2) , 314 - 316.  
SETCHFIELD, M., 1995 Bridge Cave Connection *Descent* 123 (Apr/May) 11.
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## **THE OTHER HON. SEC'S BIT**

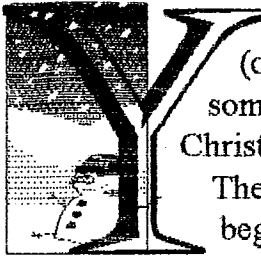
Despite writing to several people trying to organise a Derbyshire weekend and a South Wales weekend, I still haven't heard anything from anyone, so there's not much happening on that front. I'm partly to blame for not chasing these up, but there you go.

Next term, we're organising a weekend on Mendip in our hut on the 27th/28th of April (which, as most cavers get confused with dates, is the first weekend after we get back from the Easter Holidays). Part of this weekend's activities will include a practice cave rescue down Rod's Pot. Applications for volunteers to be the victim should be sent to the usual address.

We're also applying for permits for weekend trips after all the exams have finished so you can rid yourselves of all those exam blues. Any suggestions for specific holes in the ground - you know who to give them to. Keep your ears open for news on this front. Anyone interested in going on an expedition this summer, possibly to Slovenia, should get in touch with the very nice Mr. Hugo Pile. Happy Caving.

***Simon Grace***

# Vertical Thrutching in Ingleton



Yet again I have been prevailed upon to write an article for this newsletter (oh, the perils of going out with the editor). I was ordered to produce something pertaining to the jolly expedition to Yorkshire that was the UBSS Christmas trip.

The weekend got off to a bit of a dodgy start when the transport arrangements began to fall down around poor Ian Morley's shoulders. All the trouble was caused by a certain Mr. Pete Simpson (hereafter referred to as the Antichrist). The Antichrist suddenly decided that he wasn't going to come to Ingleton with us which, although ordinarily would not have been a problem, became a major disaster because he was supposed to be driving a minibus. Admittedly he was saved from eternal damnation because Lucy and Adrian both decided not to turn up either (but they didn't phone Ian to tell him this: oh no, instead they just told him when he rang round in a panic trying to sort out cars).

The upshot of all this was that five of us (me, Welsh Tim, Millicent, Ian Morley and of course Andy) were squashed into Andy Jacket's car. Not the most comfortable four hours I've ever spent, though the best is yet to come. We arrived at the luxury apartments (well, we can all dream) assigned to us by the batty old woman who owns the caravan park, and as there didn't seem to be any sign of the advance party (Ian Wheeler, Rupert and Steve) we buggered off to the pub. As we were getting nicely settled in with food and alcohol, our civilised group was disturbed by the aforementioned rabble. Such is life...

A few pints later we retired to the caravans and got some kip (any ribald comments at this point will not be appreciated).

We were bullied out of bed at some unearthly hour (about 8:30am in fact, whereupon we discovered that Andy Trousers had failed to arrive during the night - probably had something (someone?) better to do)) to go and eat after being assured that there would be a queue. There wasn't. We could have stayed in our nice warm sleeping bags. At least the breakfast was a repast worth getting up for - I have never seen so much cholesterol on one plate. We thought we ought to do some caving at some point, so it was decided that Ian and Ian (Little & Large?) should get the unenviable task of taking the novice SRT brigade (me, Millie, Andy and Tim) down Alum Pot via Dolly Tubs.

After watching the interesting (even fascinating) side-show of Julian attempting to put Millie's harness on (oh if only my film had come out we could have had a caption competition as well), we wandered off in the snow. It took us a while to find the bloody hole, and when we thought we might be at about the right place, we suddenly noticed that Ian and Julian had completely disappeared. We hung around in a field for a good ten minutes or so before resorting to asking a group of passing cavers if they had seen "a little bloke in a yellow and blue oversuit with a bloke not in caving gear" but no joy. At last they popped up, having been grovelling around underground to find the way to the pitch.

After much swearing and cursing and wriggling and crawling etc., etc., we got to the pitch, and started getting our singing voices into tune. It took a long time for the rigging and all the descents, and by the time we'd got to the bottom I remembered why me and SRT just don't get along. Little & Large and Andy decided to go right to the bottom of the pot, while me, Millie and Tim decided to sing and dance on a handy ledge, touting for the felicitations of any passing hikers; we do a cracking version of "Summer Holiday".

Getting out was uneventful, and getting changed was bloody freezing, and I was doubly uncomfortable because I'd forgotten to bring my boots, so I had to travel home with my feet (cunningly disguised as blocks of ice) wrapped in a plastic bag.

Another visit to the pub in the evening was most welcome, even if I was chastised for devouring half a cow on a plate in about 10 minutes. Who cares if (and here I quote) "watching me eat is like watching a combine harvester in action" (cheers Ian). After a pleasant few pints we retired to the caravan and into oblivion.

Sunday was spent doing as little as humanly possible by me, Rupert and Steve, while Little & Large went down Heron Pot, and everybody else went on a mammoth expedition down Tatham Wife.

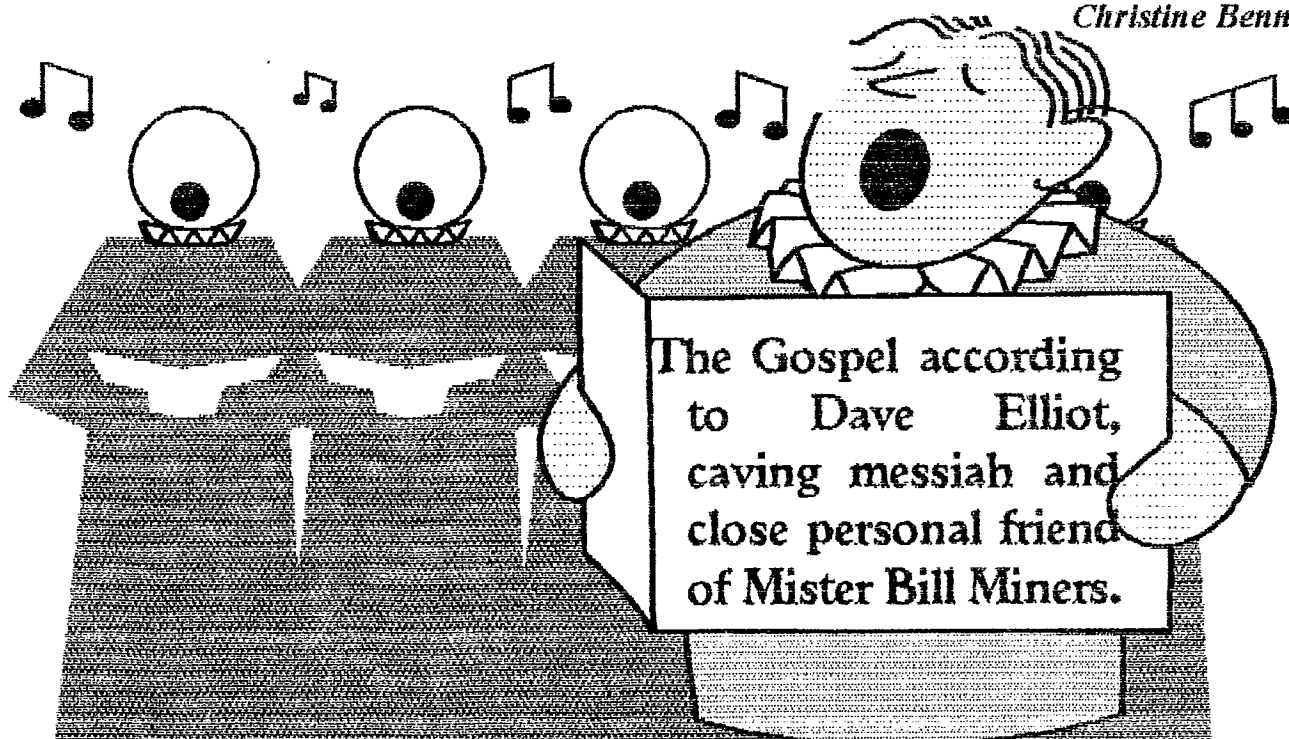
At about 7pm Little & Large had safely returned, but there was still no sign of the others. We even got worried to the point of sending Steve and Ian off to see if they had emerged yet. Thankfully cave rescue wasn't needed, and we could all go home (eventually). Steve, Ian and Rupert disappeared as soon as Rupert had reclaimed his gear from Millie, leaving the rest of us to sort out the mug situation and generally tidy up. At this point, Steve should say a little thank you prayer for Millie's tidy-up fetish and the general lack of faith the rest of us have in the organisation of UBSS, because we discovered a good couple of hundred feet of rope stashed in the wardrobe by our stalwart tackle warden.

So, being the conscientious types we are, we popped it in the boot and headed off to Andy Jacket's house to get the printer that Andy Trouser was supposed to collect. All this extra stuff in the car meant that I spent the entire journey home with the nice Mr. Hewlett-Packard Deskjet sat on my lap (for which I still have not received any form of thanks from Mr. Trousers). Pah!

We arrived back in Bristol at about 2am and went straight to the tackle store to dump that bloody rope, before we were all very kindly given lifts home by Andy, discussing suitable punishments for the Antichrist, Steve and Andy Trousers along the way.

All in all, I think a fun weekend was had, despite the cockups in travel arrangements; but then, UBSS just wouldn't be UBSS if things were organised, would it?

*Christine Benn*





*It is not often (not often enough, if truth be told) that the editor of this august journal receives letters for publication. I was therefore surprised by the arrival of the following from one of our elder statesmen members. For those of you of a curious disposition, Goddard is the G in GB.*

17 Third Avenue  
Hove

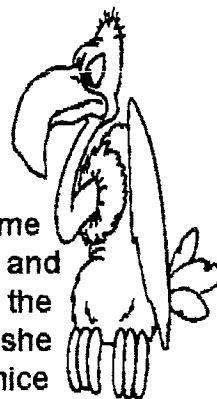
Having read the news of the La Fenice fire in Venice, and the account of similar rescue operations in *The Times* of January 30th, I remember the rescue of the Spelaeo Museum in 1940 following an air raid. I remember the hard work of a number of members at that time - Bertie and Marjorie Crooks, Professor Tratman and others. I remember sifting over the ashes and the unearthing of shards and stone age flint artifacts and of how they identified objects from memory or from illustrations in *Proceedings*.

I would like to propose that a plate be placed on or over the door of the library with the words "La Fenice" or perhaps an illustration of a phoenix. I am sure an arty member could devise something suitable.

Yours sincerely,

Francis Goddard

# Gravel



The UBSS couples game continues with Juliet and Trousers joining the long-established club. As she seemed to be such a nice young girl, the only question that really needs to be asked is, "Why?"

Female members of the club will no doubt be disappointed to learn that Rupert, self-made Stud of the society, has gone and got himself a bird. Not only that, but he has the temerity and downright indecency to pull someone from outside the confines of our membership, thus robbing us of any salacious slander.

A recent headline in *The Sunday Sport* gave cause for concern, as it appears one of our Hon. Sec.s has been moonlighting. I **WAS TEENAGE VICE RING SEX BAIT** proclaimed the front page. The story - a "sickening exclusive" by none other Ian Morley. (Submitted by Andy Jacket, who only buys it for the stories, obviously).

Also from the echelons of gutter journalism, **"Farrant is known to have used the services of women working in the massage and escort business."** He is a smooth, charming and convincing ladies man who can adopt a number of accents, including Irish and cultured English." Don't say you haven't been warned.

Rumours that Simon Clow has been seen down a cave not called Swildons Hole proved to be momentarily exciting but, alas, equally untrue.

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\*\*\* **Special Notice** \*\*\*

Andy Trousers wishes it to be known that he is sick to the teeth of people asking for his address and 'phone number. For your information then: Ground Floor Flat, 24 Henleaze Gardens, 0117 9624205. Now don't ask again.

# Bookworm

LOWE, D. AND WALTHAM, A. 1995. *A Dictionary of Karst and Caves*. British Cave Research Association Cave Studies Series. 6. 40pp. Price £2.50 ISBN 0 900265 19 1.

Cave and Karst literature contains an immense number of terms that can prove extremely confusing to the newcomer to the subject, especially as the majority of them have been borrowed, on a slightly *ad hoc* basis, from a number of different disciplines and languages. There has long been a need, therefore, for a comprehensive glossary covering them and this one especially as it is aimed at the newcomer and the non-specialist is a welcome arrival.

The booklet has been produced in the now standard A5 format of this series and is cleanly printed on matt art paper. There are a number of minor typos, most notably the confusion between Sof Omar (text) and Sef Omar (caption) on page 28, and many of the photographs have been reproduced at a rather a small size, for the reviewer's taste at any rate, though this is of course a problem of cost as much as anything else. The diagrams are generally clear and understandable only the position of the "vadose inlet" in the cross section on page 8 being a little obscure. Most newcomers will also find the annotated stratigraphical column on the inside back cover very useful.

As a glossary, especially for its target audience, it works quite well. It makes no attempt to give the etymology of most words, save for the occasional reference to a foreign origin, but gives good illustrative examples of many terms. This has given rise to one slightly bizarre misreading in that the text on pages 6/7 under "Bridge" would lead readers to turn to the front cover expecting a photograph of G.B., not the Chinese feature actually shown. There are a number of other inconsistencies and irritations in the text: On page 21, rundkarren are about 200 mm wide whereas on page 31 they are 50 - 500 mm deep and wide. Given the, quite correct, stress placed on the differences in process involved in the formation of rillenkarren and rundkarren there was probably no need to quote these slightly misleading different sizes at all. On page 34, the great s-talactite in Pol (not Poll, as stated) an Ionain is quoted as not being the world's longest without saying what is! More seriously, on page 31, under "Sandstone caves", the authors talk about "true caves" without indicating what they mean by this. The entry under "Cave" on page 8 does not really help.

The authors state quite clearly that this dictionary is not exhaustive and that it is aimed mainly at British readers. This was the correct approach to take, as a comprehensive world-wide encyclopaedia of terms would have been quite a different beast and of much less use to their target audience. Probably the only terms that I would have liked to see included are "Cutter" and "Pinnacle", American equivalents to "Grike" and "Clint" and that mainly because of their use by W.B. White in his 1988 textbook which is one of the main references that the newcomer is likely to come across.

## Reference

WHITE, W.B. 1988. *Geomorphology and Hydrology of Karst Terrains*. New York. Oxford University Press. 464pp.

Graham Mullan

**U.B.S.S.**  
PROUDLY PRESENTS  
A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON  
THE WAY TO WELLS  
OR HOW TO BUY A SPANNER ON A SUNDAY

STARRING:  
IAN "THIN AS ONE SHORT PLANK" WHEELER  
ANDY JACKET  
ME, IAN NOSHER MORLEY

"Which way?" asked Andy calmly.

"Er... right?" I ventured.

"LEFT," screamed Ian from the back seat. We ended up, of course, turning left, since Ian screamed loudest (and highest), into the road running alongside the Union. Our eventual intended destination was Thrupe Lane Swallet. Somehow, I had been persuaded to go caving, hopefully to do some rigging, with Andy and Ian, since they were both less familiar with Thrupe Lane than I was.

Anyway, at least we did all manage to find our way to the tackle store, which was about the only thing we did get right. After working out what tackle we needed (a task rendered all the more difficult by *Mendip Underground's* annoying aversion to printing tackle lists) and packing it all beautifully, Ian (the short and sweet one) realised that we were lacking a spanner. Not to worry, we decided, we could buy one in Wells, where Andy wanted to go anyway. So, after stealing an old bit of string so I could tie our new purchase round my arm (organised, don't you think? - some people cover every eventuality), we roared off to Wells.

We eventually found the supermarket car park opposite Bat Products, and Ian scampered off to buy some pies. Andy and I wandered over to Bat, only to discover that it had closed an hour earlier. We found Ian in Tesco and expressed our dismay. He coped valiantly with the bad news by grinning and lining his pockets with Cornish pasties and chocolate Swiss rolls.

The next hour or two was spent driving round Wells looking for a non-existent spanner shop. Tool shops which looked promising all turned out to be incontrovertibly shut on a Sunday afternoon. The closest we came was an Esso garage, in which Andy did his best to pull the attendant, all to no avail alas.

Woolworths also proved to be worse than useless, with everything you could

want in the world of bike maintenance but a spanner. Andy ferreted around in his car boot and dug out a strange looking rust-covered object which he reckoned might do to tighten up the bolts from which we would hang our lives. Ian and I took one look at it and each other and decided that he was very wrong indeed.

So we were forced to go and do Eastwater instead. After many *"You know, I'm sure this is the way"*s and *"well, it's somewhere round here"*s, we tracked down the cave entrance, with only the odd nine-point turn in the middle of a main road along the way.

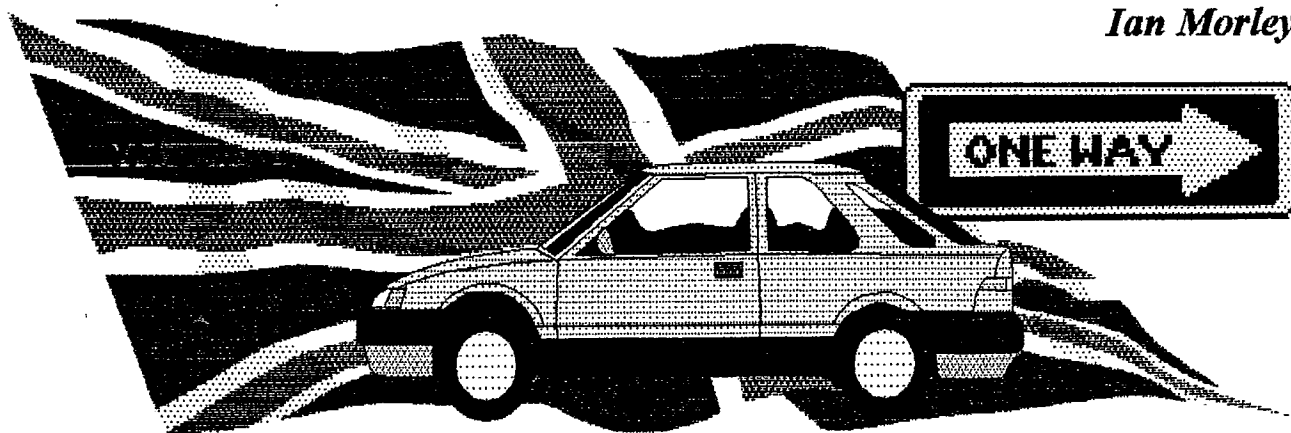
By this time it was nearly dark, so we had a wander round the cave, an activity hampered by the fact that none of us knew it at all. Exploration was very much our watchword as we scurried up all the inviting little crevices we could find *{and no, before you ask, we were not indulging in yet another naked trip}*. After a couple of hours, we decided to exit, which caused problems as we managed to get a little lost along the way (mainly my fault, I'm afraid). After a good twenty minutes of blundering around blind alleys and the like, we remembered where we were supposed to go and departed, pausing only to dislodge Andy from a squeeze he had become inconveniently stuck in.

After changing back into our clothes in a biting wind, we set off for home.

"Which way?" asked Andy, somewhat naively, given our sense of direction.

"Left," I said with authority, at exactly the same moment as Ian shouted, **"right,"** from the back seat. We ended up, of course, turning right, because Andy fortunately has the sense he was born with and knows by now to disregard my advice. Against all the odds (considering Andy's driving) we arrived back in Bristol and unpacked. If anyone knows Steve's address, could they please write him a note and kindly enquire why he ran off to the U. S. of A. with all the spanners. We were distinctly not amused.

*Ian Morley*



*In an effort to shift those excess pounds, Ian will be running the Bristol half-marathon on Sunday the 10th March (rather foolishly, the day after the annual dinner) and is eager to hear from you all (0117 9466443) regarding sponsorship. All money raised will go towards PHAB (integration of physically handicapped and able bodied). So dig into those pockets. Even I have.*



# Throwing Away the Rulebook

*In a rare rummage through the archives, the Newsletter is proud to produce the following cut-out and keep extract from the scarcely seen UBSS book of safety guidelines. It makes fascinating reading for all those amongst up who take the responsibilities of caving with novices very seriously indeed.*

## U.B.S.S. Safety Guidelines - Section 4 (Novice Cavers)

(aka Rupert and Ian take two civilians to Shipham)

It has come to the attention of senior members of the society that the regulations governing the safety of novice cavers are somewhat lacking in several major areas. In the light of a *particular recent incident*, this report has been written to remind (two *particular*) members of their responsibilities and to help them *brush up on correct caving practice*.

### 1. Dispel fear and panic - It is important to realise that panic is a killer.

i) LADDERS - a - when a novice climbs down a 35 foot ladder for the first time, it is important that they are not aware of the hairline fracture appearing in the main ladder at the top. **DO NOT LET THEM FIND OUT AT ALL COSTS!** Which leads nicely on to:

- b - Always listen to the advice of the person who just got out of the cave and is cheerfully warning you not to attach your ladders to the thing at the top with the hairline fracture that's "going to go one day, and it's going to go with a bang!"

ii) KNOTS - And if you are silly enough not to check if you remember precisely how to tie a bowline before you arrive on site, at least try and pretend that you can. Don't let the novice find out that they are climbing down a dodgy ladders with a dodgy rope into what is probably a dodgy cave.

iii) PRACTICE - The best way to alleviate panic is to talk the victims through a few basic drills before you even set foot *near* the cave. This is obviously an essential prerequisite to *any* caving trip.

iv) STREAMS - Don't mention the fact that you've "never seen the water this high before."

### 2. Ensure constant supervision - It is easy to get lost. Anything can happen underground.

i) VISUAL CONTACT - Caving trip leaders must remember that spending time alone together in dark corners should be done *before* commencing on the trip, rather than sending off the inexperienced to fend for themselves whilst they compare the



steaminess of their trousers. Such blasé attitudes show a clear lack of responsibility. Prolonged disappearances are a cause for concern. Do not use them as an opportunity for an extra Mars bar.

ii) LIGHTS - It's not big and it's not clever to encourage novices to switch off their lights. There's nothing funny about switching them on again to find myself hanging with my head stuffed down a hole into a fast-flowing subterranean stream. Speaking of streams...

### 3. Set a good example

i) WATER - Always set a good example by wearing full waterproof clothing. Perhaps you could suggest this to the novices too (*before you set out on the expedition*).

ii) GUIDANCE - a - Building up a sense of trust in the inexperienced caver is imperative. It is important that you know a cave inside out before attempting to guide a novice around it (Rupert). It would be difficult to disguise the fact that you are lost deep underground in a maze of dark, cold tunnels. Imagine the embarrassment of promising to lead your novices into an impressive flooded cavern, only to end up squashed into some poxy dead-end hole.

- b - Always ensure that group leaders appear to work together. When they disagree, it does *not* inspire confidence. IT's possible that the novices may sense something is 'not quite right' when Rupert and Ian continually disagree over the route (see subsection a, above).

iii) ENTHUSIASM - Never appear more interested in getting to the pub than you are in the cave. Try to share the beginners' enthusiasm even when you're desperate for a pint.

iv) COURAGE - It is important that the leaders display a little bit of courage. When both Rupert and Ian both climb miles out of their way to avoid a piddly little stream, it does not reflect well when the novices simply splash them...

v) IMMATURITY - ...only to get soaked by one of the leaders who shall remain nameless (the blond Lancashire one). *{I take it this reference to a born and bred Yorkshireman is made in a spirit of either ignorance or abuse, if not both - the immature Ed}*

### 4. In an EMERGENCY:

i) REMEMBER - The novices are *people* - real live human beings. They're not simply being selfish when they tell you they value their lives more than the UBSS's 15 year untarnished cave rescue record. IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, RING CAVE RESCUE! Rupert and Ian didn't and LOOK WHAT HAPPENED. God knows how many other people are stuck down this bloody cave with us, but I'll bet I know who brought them down.

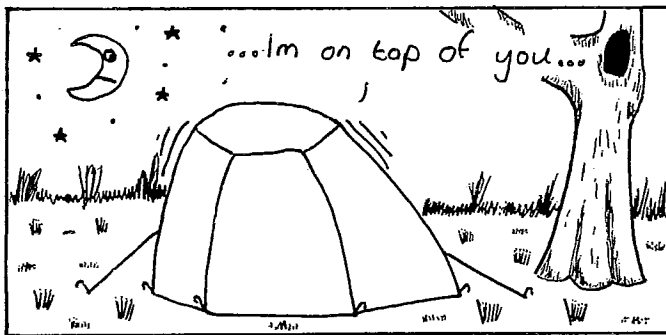
*by Simon Poole and Charlotte Cantrememberhershurname (Rupert's bird),  
written from the Stygian depths of Singing River Mine*

ONCE UPON A TIME...

...ON A FRESHERS WEEKEND NOT SO LONG AGO...



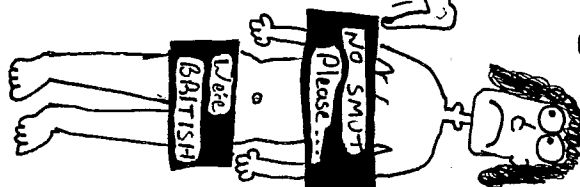
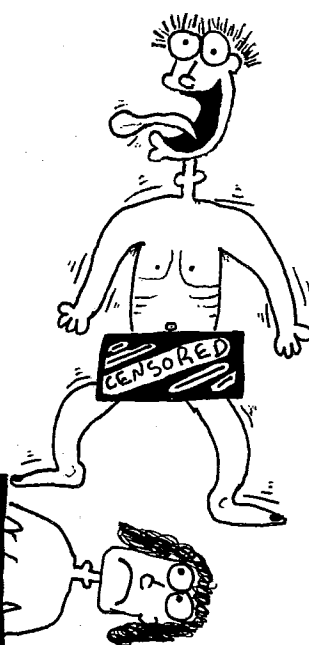
No trees were damaged in the production of this cartoon.



rated in the mind, and is no

WAY shape or form does this represent a true

EXCLUSIVE! Fly in the tent view...



Nice covers don't have beads

events in real life, fabric



1996 Naffcartoons

(But who wants to copy this anyway?)

imagination, unrelated to any

DISCLAIMER :- This Cartoon is entirely fictional, made up. No true event happened or person named in this cartoon.

event involving members of this club (who may loose their  
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 7is) and as such, the events portrayed in this strip are...