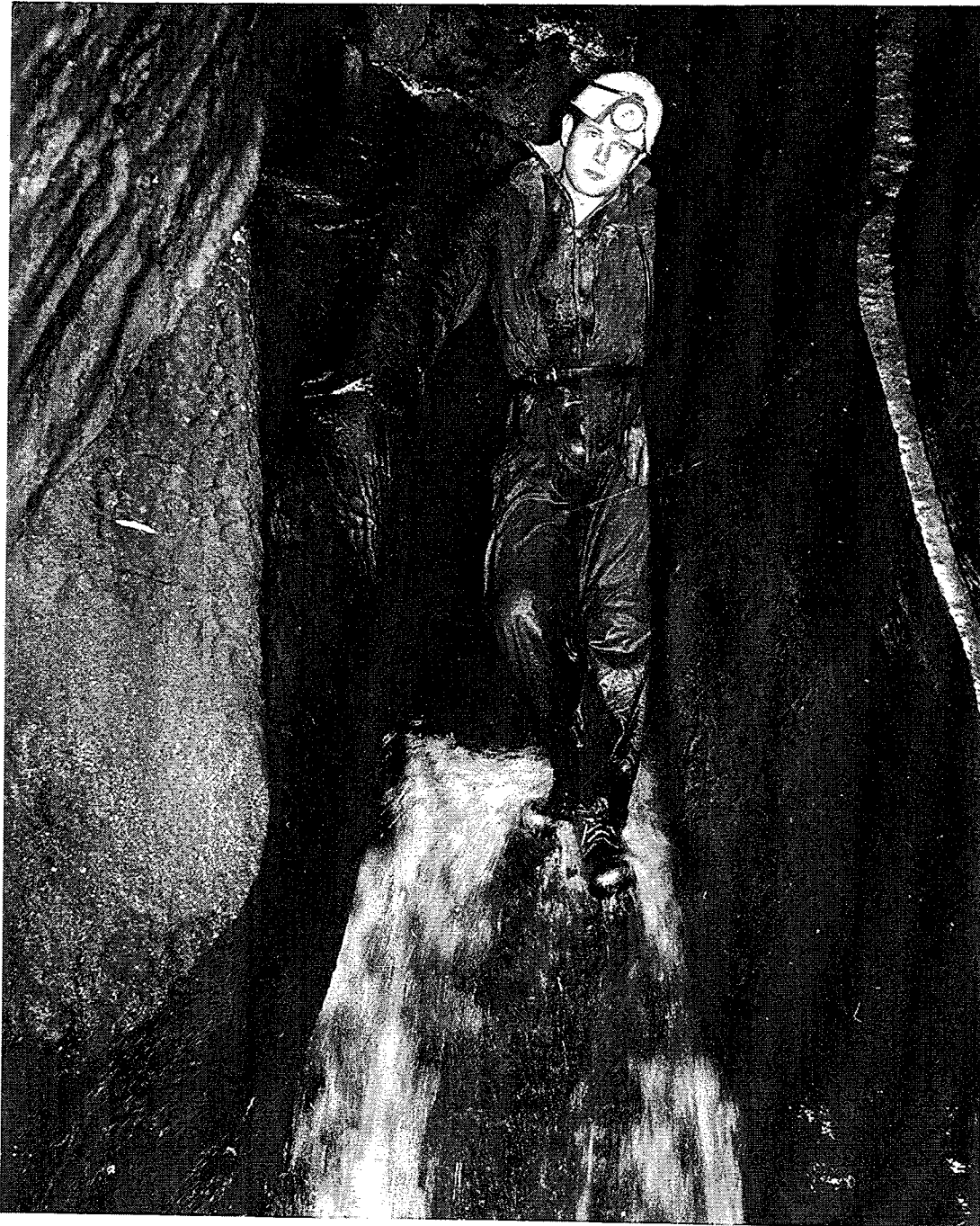


# U.B.S.S.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY



"Mud, mud, glorious mud, nothing quite like it" - in County Clare

**Newsletter**  
**Vol. 14 No. 2**

**May 1998**

# THE EDITOR'S RiT

HELLO EVERYONE,

BEFORE GOING ON TO SET A NEW TREND OF TEDIOUS EDITOR'S INTRODUCTIONS, I'D LIKE TO THANK MY PREDECESSOR (CHRIS IF YOU HADN'T REALISED OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS) FOR HER WORK, AND I ACCEPT THE GAUNTLET SHE THROWS DOWN IN HER ARTICLE WITH A FEARLESS LAUGH! WHILST ON THE SUBJECT I'D LIKE TO THANK ALL THE CONTRIBUTORS AS WELL. AT ONE POINT I FEARED THAT EXAMS WOULD QUELL THE USUAL FLOW OF ARTICLES I'VE BEEN WARNED TO EXPECT NEXT TIME, WHICH WOULD MEAN THAT I'D HAVE TO SUBJECT YOU ALL TO MANY PAGES OF MY DEPRAVED MIND.

IF YOU DON'T YET KNOW WHO I AM, COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS, BUT PLEASE SEND FUTURE ARTICLES TO THE STUNNING FIFTEEN YEAR OLD IN THE PHOTO BELOW. (I'VE BEEN PROMISED COLOUR COPIES ON THE WEB SITE!) THE REASON I HAVE NO MORE RECENT PICTURES IS NOT THAT I HAVE GIVEN UP CAVING AS IS THE EDITORS TRADITION, BUT THAT THEY ARE CURRENTLY BEING PUBLISHED, I THINK THIS IS A REFLECTION OF ART'S TALENTS AND NOT THE START OF MY ROPE-WALK MODELLING CAREER.

TILL THE NEXT TIME I HARASS YOU ALL FOR ARTICLES, OR EXCHANGE POLITE CONVERSATION OVER A PINT OF CLIFTON IN THE RED LION ON A TUESDAY NIGHT AND PLAY YOU ON THE ANTIQUE BAR FOOTBALL TABLE, (THAT SUBTLE ADVERT SHOULD ENSURE A COMPLEMENTARY PINT), MAY YOU HAVE A GLORIOUS SUMMER.

ROLAND



**UBSS Newsletter Vol.14 no.2 May 1998**

**Editor - Roland Parrott**

**Distributors - Tony Boycott and Roland Parrott**

**Contributors to this issue - Chris Benn, Tony Boycott, Steve Cottle, Peter Dowswell  
Graham Mullan and Charlie Self**

**Disclaimer -** The opinions expressed within these pages are those of the individual contributors and are no reflection on the broad minded attitudes of the committee and myself. I thought I'd see how many people really read this bit by offering them all a jelly baby on request.

# Christine Benn's *Social Diary*

Once more it seems to have fallen to me to write up the annual meeting/shindig that took place last term. I shall give it my best shot, although I expect the brand new editor to fill in the gaps as to appointments – perhaps on a separate page as I am going to typeset this and print it out with fancy headings and things in an ill-concealed attempt to show-off in front of the new Ed.

## The AGM

At last a room big enough for all interested enough to go to fit in – wonders will never cease. And, more importantly, a row or two of comfy chairs from which to follow the proceedings. All the mundane stuff went off with no fuss – the usual election of officers without telling them first. It just wouldn't be the same if any of them ever knew about it before the event.

Mr. President appeared to be in good humour, and even failed to criticize the newsletter, which cheered the then-editor immensely. The boring bit of the meeting was finished with refreshingly speedily, and then it was onto the pictures.

This year's talk was a triumvirate effort – Graham, Linda and Steve talking about County Clare (I never have worked out why there isn't a County Clare Caving Club to do all that sort of thing – or is there one but it's terribly lazy?). Firstly we had a talk on the history and background, complete with comedy black and white pictures – playing "can you recognise those mad souls who went caving in trousers and still managed to smile for the camera whilst standing in a raging torrent?" After that we had a talk on one of the later trips there, strangely punctuated with photos of dry-stone walls, which I'm assured are of interest to Tim (I always thought he was a bit odd). Still no evidence of any Irish cavers though.

Finally we had a talk on the latest exploratory work by the keener members of UBSS – Steve made it sound a lot less miserable than it probably was. It is nice to see (yes, even to people like me) that we are still doing our bit to add to the wealth of caving knowledge in existence. More dry-stone walls were in evidence – I still don't get the thrill somehow.

All that remained after that was to run home, put

on the glad rags and get down to a suitable drinking house.

## The Annual Dinner

For the sad little cliquey group of me, Ian, Rupert, Roland and Noshier this involved meeting down at the Hatchet Inn – rather a nice little place I think. Raising surprisingly few eyebrows for a group dressed like utter ponces, we downed a pint or two and then headed up to Le Château. To our dismay we weren't allowed into the eatery bit and were forced to drink another pint upstairs – life can be such a trial sometimes.

As the hoards arrived and the eatery opened we all tramped down and began that old favourite game "where shall we sit at a big long table?". This finally resolved, the eating could commence. Commendably large portions ensued, and all washed down with many litres of house red. Amusement was provided by the young man (no prizes) who had forked out his £14 and ate only the bit of meat, even picking his way round the spuds in his quest to be a carnivore. Didn't eat his pudding either, but as those of us surrounding him benefited on this point, we're not complaining.

After the eating had stopped it was time for the awards – I can't remember much about these, save for Steve getting the f\*\*k truck award and one for finding new bit of cave. Oh yes, and something to do with a torn wellie for Taz.

Then we were hustled out of the way by the management who moved all the tables to clear us a bit of space to make fools of ourselves in. Another highlight was the same faddy eater previously mentioned totally failing to get off with a couple of gatecrashers. Never mind. After a bit of dancing, prancing, backing and advancing those of us too young to have any stamina retreated and collapsed.

All in all I think a grand night was had by all, and I certainly don't think that the change of venue did us (or Anthem) any harm at all. I'm not sure if Le Château would agree on that point, but on the whole I think we acquitted ourselves pretty well.

## Speleo Rooms

Graham Mullan

The Society's first museum-cum-library was one small room, formerly the Officers' Training Corps ammunition store room, sited down some steps leading from the path between Woodland Road and University Road. It was acquired in the autumn of 1919.

By 1923 the above premises had become very cramped and a move was made to two rooms on the ground floor of the Lewis Fry Tower. These in turn became overcrowded and by 1925 part of the collections had overflowed into the lobby outside. In 1927 these rooms were exchanged for larger quarters on the ground floor of what is now the Geography Department (North building). These comprised a museum with a smaller library and a workroom adjoining; there was a cellar beneath the eastern part. The Society remained in these quarters until they were bombed in 1940.

These premises were totally destroyed during the major air raid on the night of Sunday November 24th 1940. A significant amount of material was, however, salvaged immediately and later, in 1947/48 when the old cellar was cleared.

Soon after the bombing a single small room was obtained for use as a library. For several years after the war the old cellar beneath the previous museum was used as a museum store, after it was cleared out in 1948. It had not been damaged by the raid but had suffered from flooding. These two rooms were retained until 1952.

In October 1952 the Society moved into two larger rooms in the basement of the Geography Department, which were fitted out as a museum and a library. In 1953 or 54 the room opposite the museum was made available for use as a workroom and the old cellar was relinquished. On May 4th 1955 the refurbished museum was officially opened by the Vice-Chancellor. Space was cramped again by 1963 and in 1964 the old cellar was once again obtained and used as a workshop. The cellar, being apart from the Society's other rooms, was exchanged when the opportunity arose, in 1967, for the room adjoining the library.

The Society continued in occupation of this suite of rooms until the Geography Department fire of February 1982. After this a precipitate move was made to temporary accommodation in Lunsford House (formerly 15, Old Park Hill, museum collection and tackle store) and rooms in a prefab building in Inner Court (library, publication sales and administration).

In March 1984 the library was moved again and by May the museum and library were operational in three rooms on the second floor of the Students' Union building. Shortly afterwards the tackle store and darkroom were installed in the Old Bakery on the ground floor of the same building.

The Old Bakery is still occupied, but in 1991, the University took over the entire second floor of the Union building and the library and museum moved again, via a short stint in temporary storage within the Union and the City Museum to our current premises in the Old Stables, behind 19, Woodland Road. After refurbishment by the University, these were redecorated by our members and new displays set up. These premises were officially opened by Sir John Wills on May 5th 1993, 38 years and one day after the last such ceremony.

### **Sources:**

*History of the Society* by T.R. Shaw, ms. in the Society's library, Society N/L's, Handbooks and personal recollections.

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## NOTICE

AT THE AGM THE WE WAIVED A FOND FAREWELL TO ADAM (HON. SEC) GOULDING, CHRIS (ME OL' PREDECESSOR - THE FORMER EDITOR OF THIS PUBLICATION) BENN AND TIM (WELSH TIM TO THOSE WHO KNOW TOO MANY TMS TO DIFFERENTIATE ANY OTHER WAY - ALSO CHRIS'S SKIVVI) DAVIES, WHO ARE ALL GRADUATING TO THE 'UNIVERSITY (EX POLY) OF LIFE'. WE ALSO WELCOMED TO NEW POSTS ARJ BOONMAN (GRAHAM'S NEMESSES - HON. TREASURER) AND ROLAND PARROTT (EDITOR). THAT JUST LEAVES THE REST OF THE COMMITTEE AS IT ALWAYS WAS, WITH ARTHUR APSIMON AS EL PRESIDENT; DESMOND DONOVAN, MALCOLM ANDERSON AND CHRIS HAWKES AS VICE PRESIDENTS (OR IS THAT PRESIDENTS OF VICE?); GRAHAM MULLAN AS TREASURER, CCC AND CHARTERHOUSE REP (WHOSE A BUSY BOY THEN?); LINDA WILSON AS CSCC AND NCA REP; TAZ WILLIAMS AS HON. SEC AND HUT WARDEN; STEVE COTTLE WITH HIS TACKLE (STORE); TONY BOYCOTT AS LIBRARIAN; ANDY ATKINSON ON TRAINING; AND CLIVE OWEN AND KITTY HEALEY AS MEMBERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO.

## A CHECK LIST OF CAVES IN THE SOUTHERN COTSWOLDS

In 1964, Ian Standing prepared "A check list of caves in Gloucestershire" which was published in *British Caver* Vol 40, pp 67-71. With minor changes this was reprinted the same year in *Gloucester Spel Soc Journal* 3(1), pp 10-11. Though long out of date, this is still the main reference for natural caves in the Cotswolds.

Tony Boycott, Charlie Self and Andy Tyler have started a project to update the part of this work relating to the Cotswolds, which involves visiting and surveying each site. Since 1964, a considerable number of new sites have been found. Some have been published in (sometimes obscure) caving journals, others are known only by word of mouth. Because of the size of the project, we have divided the area into three. We begin with the Southern Cotswolds, which we define as "south of the M4 corridor". We are actively soliciting information on any Cotswold caves. Contact address: Charlie Self, 4 Tyne Street, Bristol BS2 9UA, tel (0117) 954 1728, e-mail self@globalnet.co.uk

We plan to publish a full report in *UBSS Proceedings*, but our provisional list of sites in the Southern Cotswolds is set out below. Natural caves in the Cotswolds are mostly slip rifts formed by mass movement of the limestone strata. The technical name for them is "gulls".

### Bath

There are a number of gulls, well known on the Quarry Road approach to Bath University but they are not accessible without a bit of digging. They may have been increased when the road was built, but I have no information on this. There are a couple of others in nearby quarries which can be accessed for a few metres. I would expect to find others in the old quarries of Bathampton Down, but I haven't looked for them yet. A.B. Hawkins mentions a large gull in Springfield Quarry (*Municipal Building Surveyors Annual Conference and Symposium, Bath, 1986*), but I don't know where in the city this is.

### Box Hill

In the northern part of Box Stone Mines there is the Natural Rift Series. In the southern part of the mine (Jack's Workings) open gulls cross the mined passages every 10 metres or so. There are natural rifts in Henry's Hole (which is a non-integrated part of Box Mines). Henry's Hole was published (Self, 1985) in *Proc UBSS* 17(2), pp 153-174.

### Claverton Gorge

Browne's Folly is the main underground feature here, and Andy Baker (Exeter Uni) has mapped some (mostly infilled) gulls. There are gulls in the quarries nearby (according to Desmond Donovan).

1 km to the south is the Sally's Rift complex, with three caves of 50m, 345m and 95m respectively. The first of these (though very obvious) does not seem to have been previously recorded. The second is Sally's Rift (a.k.a. Gully Wood Cave no 3) and has been published by UBSS (same ref as Henry's Hole). Another 500m south there is a small gull of 12m. Nearby tiny quarries have gulls infilled with sediments. These sites were first recorded (though not fully explored) by J.H. Tucker (1965) in the *Journal of the Axbridge Cave Gp and Arch Soc*. Tucker's site no 2 (length 11m) has not been found despite an extensive search.

Further up the gorge, at Conkwell Woods, Brian Prever remembers a cave that he visited in the 1950's. It may now be buried under builder's rubble, though the location of the rubble slope is not ideal for a gull cave entrance. Tony and Charlie dug into a short tight gull in a nearby quarry last year. Willie Stanton reports that there are extensive gulls at Murhill, but there may be access problems. Gorton's Rift is a major deep gull crossing a mined tunnel within the town of Bradford-on-Avon (ref: Tucker, as above).

### Cold Ashton

A large gull(?), found while ploughing a field with oxen, was reported by Robert Atkytns (Anc and present state of Glos, 1712). No recent information on this site.

### Colerne

Three tiny gulls were reported at Bury Wood Camp. One was exposed during an archaeological dig, and was later infilled. The other two are still visible. A gull was reported in a small quarry near the Married Quarters. (Ref to all sites: Tucker, as above).

### Monkton Combe

Swallets and caves were mentioned in an old UBSS logbook, but all we have found is a stone mine. There may be a "cave" at Tucking Mill.

### Slaughterford

Guy's Rift is a tight gull complex with five entrances. The very tight middle part of the main rift has not (to our knowledge) been passed. We did not attempt it when we visited the place in winter because of a roosting bat "choke". The cave was an early Iron Age site (T.F. Haver, 1925) published in UBSS Proc 2(3), pp 229-237.

Charlie Self

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## \$\$\$ Treasurer's Bit (or the treasurer's bits) \$\$\$

The 1998/9 subscription for ex-student, staff and outside members, £12 p.a., is now due. While the majority have been paid by Banker's Order the following are still outstanding:

David Adamson (2years, £24)	Rosemary Balister (total £28.90)
Andy Currant (£2 only)	Marcel Dijkstra
Paul Drewery	✓ Simon Grace
Heather Jackson	✓ Peter Johnson
Tim Lyons (2years £24)	Juliet Morse
Marco Paganuzzi	Nick Patrick (£8)
Mike Simms	Pete Simpson
Ian Standing	Pete Talling
Michael Thompson	✓ Andy Tyler
J. & C. Walford (£6)	Steve Warr

Please bear in mind that payment by Banker's Order saves me an enormous amount of administrative hassle and also that the signing of a Deed of Covenant (by U.K. tax payers) results in useful additional income from the Tax man. All relevant forms are available from your friendly local Hon Treasurer.

Graham Mullan

## *Dicking About in the desert. or Never Mind the Kalasnikov. What about the Pomegranate Stains?*

Tony Boycott and Peter Dowswell

During late October/early November 1997, Simon Brooks, Peter Dowswell, myself and Daniel Gebauer from Germany participated in the 5th Pak-Britain Caving Climbing Training Expedition to Baluchistan. Simon has been going to Pakistan since 1989 and has built up a useful partnership with the Chiltan Adventures (sic) Association of Quetta, who were our hosts during the expedition.

Local contacts are essential, as without them the problems of obtaining No Objection Certificates (allowing access to normally restricted areas and providing for native levies), equipment and transport would be virtually insurmountable.

Following a couple of days travel we arrived in Quetta to much razzmatazz at the airport - tinsel garlands, welcoming banner - the full bliff. This was followed by a solemn opening ceremony at the local Provincial Assembly Members Hostel during which Koranic prayers were recited and many fine sentiments were expressed, followed by Suleimani (black) Chai and biscuits. Simon and Daniel were then whisked away to the Pakistan TV studios for an interview - broadcast to over 40 nations by satellite - what superstars!

Quetta (population about 500,000) is the capital of Baluchistan, the largest and westernmost province of Pakistan, and lies surrounded by mountains at an altitude of 1700 metres. It lies at the junction of the main roads to Iran, Afghanistan and via the Bolan Pass the main more populous Pakistan heartland. Most of the city is modern, the previous buildings having been destroyed by an earthquake in 1935. It has the air of a frontier town to it and thrives on the import/export business. Although Pashto (aka Pathans or Pashtun) is the dominant culture it is ethnically diverse and has large groups of Baluchs, Brahuis and Hazaras. There is a large amount of traffic of all types, including autorickshaws, camels, donkeys, handcarts, bicycles and lorries and a traffic smog tends to hang over the city in the morning and evening. It is also reputed to be the cleanest city in Pakistan.

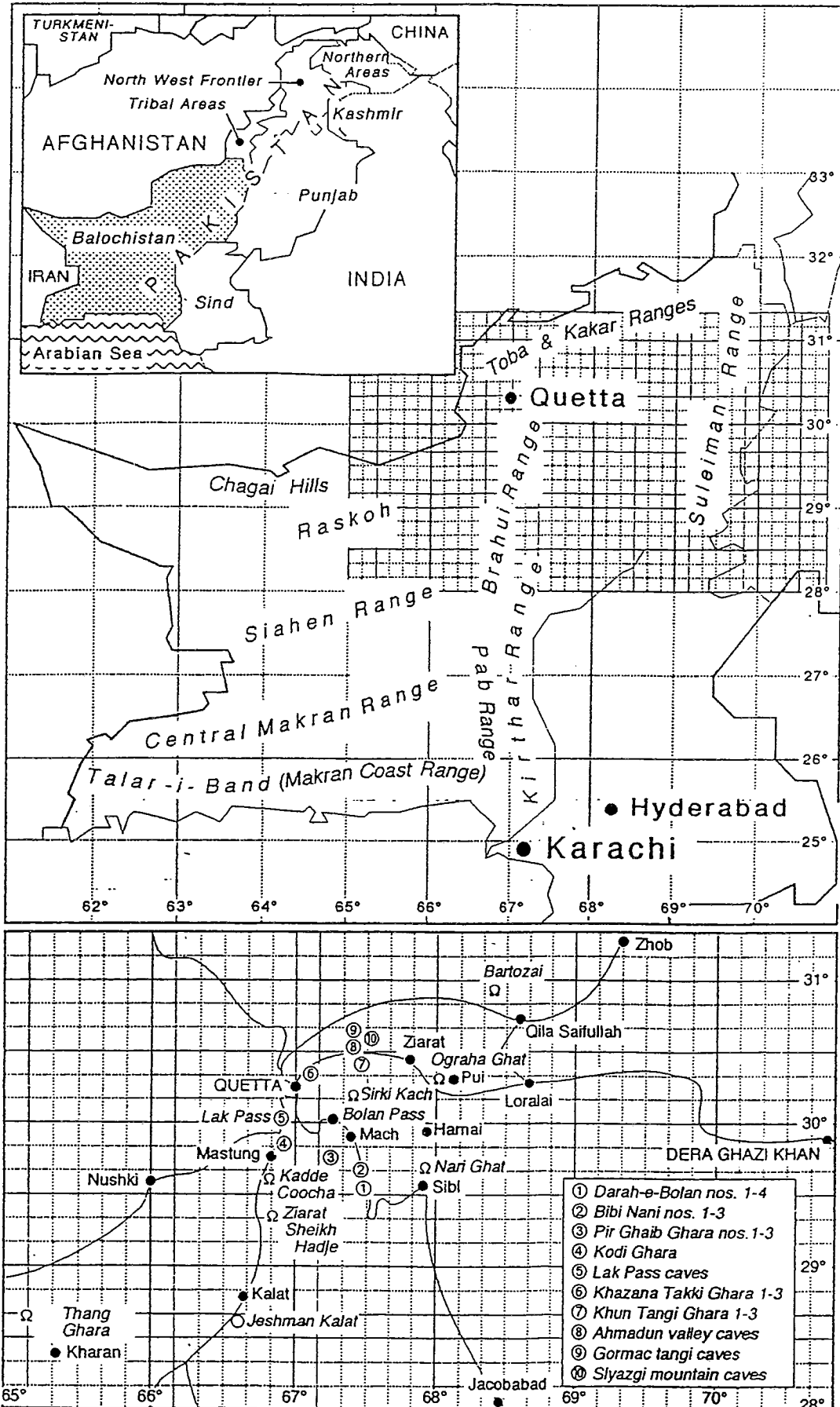
The evening was spent discussing the forthcoming programme with Hayat Ullah Durrani Khan, our host and expedition co-leader. This was then typed out for use in obtaining the No Objection Certificate (NOC).

The following morning was spent obtaining the NOC, after the usual prolonged discussions, and then a late start for Sirkii Kaach Cave in the Zarghoon Range. A long drive along a rough road up the side of a mountain (the norm) led to 'base camp' next to an old cemetery. Having missed the Halal butchery demonstration (a volunteer sheep having been brought in the Land Rover) we continued a further two miles up the track before walking the remaining mile or so in the gathering twilight (also the norm) to the cave entrance. The cave (previously described as having a chamber 500 feet by 100 feet) turned out to be a vadose canyon in mudstone with an overlying sandstone cap. Eighty-five metres of cave was surveyed by PD and TB whilst noting various varieties of wildlife - ghundak (spider), cockroaches, bats (the norm) and a porcupine. Returned to camp to devour the aforementioned sheep and returned late to Quetta (the norm).

Pushto hospitality knows no bounds and is a matter of honour for whomsoever you should call upon - it is never too late to stop for a meal - and justice has not been done unless the guests have had three square meals a day.

Thursday 30th saw a trip along the Mastung Valley to Mangochar and a couple of caves in the Mountains. The first (plus a couple of smaller nearby caves), Kaddi Coochar, was an old remnant about 150m above the valley floor consisting of a very impressive entrance, about 10m diameter, at the head of a gully in the cliff, leading to a series of low crawls. PD & DG surveyed whilst waiting for the rest of the party to arrive with the cameras. The usual dicking about and food followed before departing for a cave on the Jolan road beyond Kalat (having picked up some levymen on the way). The cave, Ziarat Sheikh Hadje Ghara, was located at the foot of Koh-e-Maharan (Snake Mountain) about 20 Km beyond Kalat, and as it was dark by now, took a little time to locate. The cave itself, although relatively short (29m) was interesting, being a shrine (ziarat) to Sheikh Hadje (and containing his grave) and being quite well endowed with stal. Survey and photographs were followed by a return to the vehicles where quite a few local tribesmen had gathered. They were a little unhappy

on two counts, one that a few of our party had failed to remove our footwear in the cave and secondly they appeared not to want word of their holy cave to be spread around. Returned to Quetta late.



Friday saw us off to Kharan in the west of Baluchistan a good 8 hours away by landrover. We stopped at Noshki, about halfway and were given hospitality by the local magistrate, a friend of Hayat's, and a couple of levymen. Shortly after leaving Noshki and the main highway the offside front wheel bearing on the landrover collapsed. Not daunted, this was soon changed at the side of the road and we continued on our way, the landrover again almost coming to grief, soon after, when the road abruptly stopped at the edge of a wadi where the bridge had been washed away, and it came to rest slightly over the edge. A little manhandling, however, and we were on our way again, over a particularly rough section of road, eventually reaching our destination about 10 km beyond Kharan after midnight.

Rising early the following morning, we surveyed and photographed Thang Gara, a large remnant at the foot of Koh-e-Bajarat, truncated by a wadi. A very large entrance soon gave way to a rising sandy crawl with the usual bats in residence which pinched out about 100m from the entrance. Some time was also spent surveying/climbing the upward continuation of the entrance rift which rose to height of 30 metres or more. Lunch was punctuated by some impromptu Pushto dancing and singing followed by an attempt at teaching them how to do eightsome reels - one of the more surreal moments of the trip! After looking at a few promising holes in the surrounding area and talking to a local tribesman and his camels we set off for Quetta, stopping briefly at Kharan to weld a broken shock absorber, Noshki to return our levymen and buy food and then later at the side of the road to eat, eventually arriving after midnight.

Sunday was used to rest and to feed data into Daniel's laptop.

Monday 3rd November provided a day trip from Quetta to the Lak Pass/Mastung Valley area. Whilst looking for one cave some locals guided us to the nearby village of Bathora to examine a different one. Although initially regarded with some suspicion - people often think caves may contain treasure and can't really understand anyone wanting to look at them for sport - we were eventually shown to the entrance of Kodi Ghara an interesting little cave of 82m with some odd little chambers and an interesting low crawl smelling strongly of porcupine and bats. Then over the Lak pass to an entrance, previously observed, which turned out to be little more than a rock shelter, Ghosabad Ghara. Thence back towards Quetta for another two small caves, Kassiabad Ghara 1 & 2. Back to Quetta in daylight!

The following morning we set off on a four day trip through the Bolan Pass to Pir Ghaib, Sibi and the Nari River. After the usual stops for supplies, we reached the Bolan Pass at about mid-day.

The Bolan is an impressive place, a deeply cut gorge surrounded by high mountains and with the railway and main road south to Karachi running through it. The railway is a monument to Victorian engineering skills and to the many men who must have built it under extremely harsh conditions. There are a number of impressive tunnels and bridges, although as is often the case in Baluchistan with its flash floods at least one of the bridges was washed away and has been replaced. One of the more interesting hazards of the Bolan (apart from the huge potential for installing crash barriers at precipitous drops) is the propensity for overladen trucks (mostly extremely colourful old Bedford lorries appearing to carry about twice their design load of 20 tons) to get stuck underneath railway bridges (where they cross over the road) thereby stemming the flow of traffic. The usual response is for the traffic then to drive up (or down) the river bed until the problem is sorted.

Continuing down to Mach and the local District Commissioner's office we picked up four levymen before going on to Pir Ghaib. Mach has a thriving coal industry seemingly run under the most basic of conditions with the surrounding hillsides riddled with small drift mines with extremely rudimentary equipment and worked by hand. Pir Ghaib is a pleasant contrast, a beautiful tropical oasis in the middle of the stony desert surrounded by date palms and with a warm spring. A large pool just downstream from where the water gushes from the rock affords an excellent place to swim and relax. Close by is a shrine to a local mullah (and grave) which was our base for the next two nights, the only disadvantage to this otherwise idyllic spot being the large numbers of hornets. Pir Ghaib Ghara, at 1.3km Pakistan's longest cave lies in the steep sided gorge upstream and had been pushed to about 680m on previous visits. It is reached by climbing part of the way up the mountain and then dropping down into the gorge. The first night seemed rather a noisy affair, with barking dogs, falling rocks and SB's snoring. My night was enlivened by being wakened at 2 in the morning by a dog licking my face.

The hillside was duly climbed the following morning and most of the party descended to the cave. Most of the party returned at around sunset that evening apart from Daniel, myself, Simon and Wali Mohammed (Wallo) who decided to sleep overnight in the gorge having emerged at dusk and decided that sleeping overnight with minimal food and no sleeping kit was preferable to climbing back up the gorge in the dark with no ropes. The night was enlivened by a move into the lower cave

after a careful inspection for snakes as sleeping on the pocket handkerchief sized piece of karrimat in the back of the rucsacks was too cold, and none of the party succeeded in getting entirely into their rucsacks despite trying hard. The additional benefit was an early start surveying the cave and most leads were fully pushed and Friendship Passage and Golden Jubilee Chamber discovered and surveyed. The number of bats (small horseshoes, species not identified) in the cave was so great that they interrupted the surveying by hanging on the tape, T-shirts, lips, noses, eyelids etc. Surprisingly no-one became ill (yet!) from such close contact. The cave was also inhabited by large white hairy spiders, one of which was observed eating a large centipede, and many cockroaches, three of which were seen dragging away a dead bat.

Meanwhile PD endured the hell of swimming at the pool, enlivened during the previous evening by a snake swimming past him (He was assured that they cannot swim and bite at the same time), and some walking. The rest of the party returned about 3.00pm, smelling heavily of bat guano, to much applause, and after a swim and some food we departed for Sibi. Being much lower than Quetta, Pir Ghaib (985m a.s.l.) was hot and Sibi (220m a.s.l.) even hotter. Sibi enjoys the reputation of being the hottest place in Asia with the summer temperature rising to the mid-fifties Centigrade. We arrived in the evening to a bustling street market and spent around an hour there sampling the local fast food - jelabi, pakora, samosas, roasted peanuts in their shells - whilst Malik Abdul Rahim Baabai, the Chiltan's chairman and owner of our newer vehicle, a Toyota Hilux, made some phonecalls. We then continued to the Nari river, about 10km beyond Sibi, camping and eating (after the usual slaughter of our live meat) well after midnight. We also made a quick recce to the caves as a local hunting party were able to show us their location. Half the party then decided to return to Quetta as Malik had some pressing business to attend to.

After an early rise we explored, surveyed and photographed the local caves before breakfast. They lie close to the Nari River near the headworks for a large irrigation scheme and a few yards from the main railway line to Harnai. Formed in bands of soft mudstone between the limestone, they are relatively unstable and full of soft breakdown and some odd mudstone formations, altogether quite interesting and in a beautiful location. The Nari, apart from providing good fishing is also home to small crocodiles. We then headed back for Quetta, stopping for an hour or two in the Bolan Passage to explore four caves there. A pleasant time was had by all apart from Simon who had a close encounter of the serpentine kind in Snake Cave (Darah-e-Bolan Ghara no 1). Having forded the river, barefoot apart from sandals, whilst surveying a snake fell out of the roof, disturbed by some cave swiftlets, bounced off Simon's helmet and landed on his feet. Daniel was somewhat bemused by this incident as Simon swiftly exited the passage declaring loudly "fucking spiders" (his normal expletive). Two of the other caves, Armoury Cave and Chimney Cave both had extremely large bat roosts and the associated aroma. Further stops at Bibi Nani for water (the landrover was overheating), Mach for chai, to watch the Bolan Mail train go past and to return our levymen, and the Bolan Pass to collect fresh spring water marked a pleasant journey back to Quetta.

Saturday 8th November we spent the day at Marri Farsch, an impressive 200m wall at the side of a gorge about two hours drive from Quetta, with Simon and Nigel, a local expat, attempting to provide tuition on safe climbing techniques, in between climbing competitions. Peter and I wandered around the gorge collecting some plants and looking at a large boulder cave beneath the road. The Chiltans are excellent natural climbers who seem to prefer free climbing. Wallo played along with Nigel and allowed himself to be lifelined up to about 80m. The effect was rather spoiled, however, when John Mohammed (Johnno) free climbed up the wall past them stopping briefly to say hello. Nigel suggested that he and Wallo should proceed back to the bottom as he could no longer lifeline him, whereupon Wallo offered to climb up the next pitch and lifeline Nigel. Nigel declined and returned to the bottom whilst Wallo duly climbed to the top in the gathering twilight. All of which reminded us somewhat of Obelix the Gaul. A chicken and bhindi picnic lunch was consumed in the dark lit by burning bushes, before returning to Quetta.

The following day we headed east in the landrover for Ziarat and Pui. A late start (usual dick about) meant that we did not reach our first objective, Kan Tangi, an impressive deep, narrow, steep sided canyon until mid afternoon. An hour's walk brought us to the entrance, about 10m up the smooth vertical side of the canyon and it proved impossible to reach without pegs or scaling poles. Somewhat pissed off, we returned to the landrover in the twilight for chai and to continue our journey. Next stop was Ziarat, a beautiful little village high in the mountains (altitude 2600m), surrounded by juniper forest, a favourite summer retreat of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the Quaid-i-Azam (Great Leader) the founder of Pakistan, and in the time of the British, their summer headquarters in Baluchistan. It is somewhat reminiscent of Switzerland in an odd sort of way, and we

had a welcome coffee at the Shalimar hotel before continuing on to Wani, where we stayed the night in the house of a friend of Hayat's.

Another beautiful dawn and early start, looking at Spedar China spring before heading over the mountain to Shirin and Pui. The spring itself was quite interesting, coming from an attractive looking rift. Disappointingly it yielded only about 10m before ending in a sump pool with the water issuing from a too tight bedding. Also noted were small fish and a freshwater crab, presumably remnants from earlier times as the spring water runs on the surface for less than half a mile. The pass over the hill was yet another woolly track up the side of the mountain, although the scenery was impressive as usual. At Shirin there was a slight delay whilst the caves were not found which enabled us to sample the local apples from the adjacent orchards. Apples from the Pui Valley are renowned for their quality, a claim well justified. On to Pui and with a little local assistance the caves were found, to the south of the village up a small side valley. Ograha Ghat Ghara 1 & 2, as usual old remnants, yielded about 160m between them and were quite interesting, Ghara 1 having an pleasant domed chamber with a window to the outside. After a meal we then started back for Quetta at about 4 in the afternoon, and after a three-quarter hour stop to look at another entrance reached a different pass back to the Ziarat valley - a short-cut to Chauter. Half way up we had the recurrent landrover problem of choked fuel line and rigged the alternative fuel tank - a plastic canister of diesel in the front passenger well with a tube feeding directly to the fuel pump. Stopping on an incline was always interesting as the vehicle did not have a functional handbrake - the foot brakes being only slightly better. Power restored we continued to the top and started our descent - a series of tight hairpins with a semi vertical drop of about 1000 feet. This proved quite interesting on a crumbly uneven track as the hairpins were too tight for the long wheelbase landrover to get round, necessitating taking it to the edge and then reversing back. The added safety feature was Johnno at the rear door ready to jump out and put some chockstones in if things got out of control. Another interesting feature was that when the landrover leaned over too much the Chiltans in the back would all sit on the opposite side as a counterbalance. Chauter was duly reached and we continued to Ziarat for puncture repair, diesel and more coffee and apples. A further landrover refinement was no heating in the back. Being at high altitude it was rather cold - not a problem for the Chiltans who fired up the gas stoves in the back - slightly negated by us opening windows. At about 10.30pm as we were coming into Kuchlagh, about 20 minutes short of Quetta, it was decided that we hadn't had enough to eat and would drop in on some Afghani relatives for a meal. After some excellent food we eventually reached Quetta about 1.00am - altogether a most interesting day.

Tuesday 11th, Simon set off with 3 Chiltan members to have a look at some caves on the ridge of Takatu Mountain. A successful day surveying 3 new caves, Khazana Takki Ghara nos. 1 - 3, total length 57.5m, as usual descending the mountain in the twilight. Daniel, Pete and myself had meanwhile gone shopping for stuff to take home, to visit some of Quetta's many bookshops and to get tickets for Daniel to proceed to Bangkok and for us to fly to Karachi, and failed to get into the archaeological museum.

Wednesday proved to be another marathon. In the morning we all went to the Chief Minister's (of Baluchistan Provincial Assembly) residence for a flag presentation ceremony. After the usual photo calls, TV and chai we eventually set off to climb Zarghoon Mountain, Baluchistan's highest at about 11,700 feet to wave the flag in celebration of the Golden Jubilee and the success of the expedition. Another long drive round the flanks of the mountain on a dirt road eventually led us, amidst magnificent ancient juniper forest, to the starting point at about 8500 feet, at around 4.00pm. The approach was somewhat fragmented with several groups setting off up the steep boulder strewn slope at different rates and in different directions. The parties more or less reconvened at the gully marking the obvious route up the last 1000 feet of the more vertical part of the mountain. With only about 45 minutes of daylight left myself and Daniel decided to return to the camp whilst Simon and five Chiltans pushed on to the verglas coated top, eventually reached in darkness. Whilst we sat round the campfire burning juniper wood and, in the absence of suitable provisions, experimenting with ginger tea and juniper berry tea (not a life enriching experience), they made their way back in darkness reaching camp at about 8.30. Food and then back to Quetta about 00.30.

Our last full day in Quetta was prizegiving day, with the ceremony to take place at the Serena Hotel at around 6.00pm. Most of the day was taken up with the arrangements for this and of course making ourselves look a bit more presentable, but did allow for a visit to the archaeological museum. Although not particularly extensive and lacking the sophisticated display facilities of a modern museum it was quite interesting, containing exhibits from Mehrgarh, the earliest known site in the subcontinent (7000 BC - 2000 BC), Moenjodaro, the great Indus civilisation, a display of very old and

beautiful Korans and a large weaponry section. Pride of place was given to the blood encrusted scimitar used to assassinate the British garrison commander in 1919.

The prizegiving and exhibition of caving and climbing gear was an impressive affair, the Serena being a particularly fine venue. Verses from the Koran were sung beautifully by Malik's son, many fine speeches were made (recorded for TV of course), extolling the virtues of international cooperation and recounting our achievements, and medals, trophies and certificates were awarded by the speaker of the Baluchistan Assembly to much applause. Tea and savouries followed and we then spent the rest of the evening at the local Chinese restaurant, the Cafe China. Chinese food - quality and style seems to be something of a global constant and a fine time was had by all.

In true Chiltan style we managed to delay going to the airport for as long as possible and were the last people to board the plane. We had not been looking forward to our overnight stay in Karachi due to the recent troubles. A couple of senior mullahs had been assassinated the previous week and four Americans slaughtered a couple of days ago in retaliation for the trial of the World Trade Centre bombers. We therefore spent the day at the airport hotel sitting by the pool before our 4.00am bus to the airport (accompanied by armed guard) and the long journey home.

All in all the expedition should be considered a success, with over thirty new caves surveyed totalling nearly two kilometres. It would have been nice to find more, and with the amount of limestone present there is still good potential for a lot more. The large distances to be covered take up a lot of time, however, and can be frustrating at times. The country itself is ruggedly beautiful and the people extremely friendly. I have no doubt that further work will eventually reveal some larger systems.

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### **Notice**

It is with great sadness that we report two deaths. Molly Hall passed away at the age of 88. Her funeral took place on the 18th of April at St Mary's Parish Church in Timsbury and the Society was represented by Arthur & Pat ApSimon, Desmond Donovan and Chris Hawkes. And on May 8th Bob Savage, our President from 1977 to 1990, died at home after a long illness. Full obituaries will appear in the next edition of Proceedings.

*Graham Mullan*

# Definitely NOT Fantasy Caving - Or How To Become Very well Aquatinted with a Small Region of Ogof

Our illustrious newsletter editor having NOT plied me with enough beer somehow managed to get me to agree to write him an article on some form of fantasy caving. As now I still haven't had enough beer to perform this task I decided to write the article on a recent interesting trip down Ogof Dreanen.

For some unknown reason I actually was looking forward to the days trip to South Wales. The previous week Andy Atkinson, Adam and I had been to Agen Allwed and had an interesting trip there in which we had succeeded in losing Adam not once but twice (careless or intentional I can't say but needless to say we still managed to bring him back!).

So this particular weekend Andy and I had some notion of heading down either Ogof Darren Cilau, where I wanted to retrieve my old sleeping bag from one of the camps. However we also met up with Arthur Millet of the Chelsea Spelaeological Society. He has managed to collect an enormous amount of data on the grade 5 survey of Dreanen. He however had no-one to help him this weekend so Andy and I agreed to help. I had only had one previous trip down the cave when Andys (Farrant and Atkinson) had taken me at high speed up Gilwern passage to a dig through a boulder choke. Not a greatly inspiring trip to the best sites of Dreanen. This time however we were heading in the opposite direction to survey an area at the end of Big Country.

We set off down the cave at a gentle trot to the end of Indiana Highway and then down through Megadrive. Then through the crawls down to Big Country. Most of this passage did not contain very many spectacular formations but the traverses and passage shapes made for interesting caving. We then headed up a streamway and then up a tributary where we started to survey. Myself on the compass, Andy with the tape and Arthur with the notes. Most of the passage was quite small and muddy with frequent washing of the tape and compass sights required. How Arthur managed to keep the notes clean and dry was quite a miracle of caving (although I suspect that he has had a large amount of practice at this. Some four hours and 50 odd legs of survey data acquired we headed back. I had the feeling that I would not return to this part of the cave although I now had an intimate knowledge of that area. The surveying although not particularly hard the

passage had taken some energy out and the draft was chilling to the bone. We checked quickly one of the side passages which was definitely going to have to be revisited as it went a long distance. I however was frozen and as it was getting late I was hoping for a beer. As I hadn't really done much caving recently I was not

particularly fast on the way out and thus needed time to recover at a couple of places. We failed to make the pub, Arthur said he usually didn't get out until 2 AM! If I was feeling fitter then I might have been up to that length of trip but at least we had some beer

and food back at the Chelsea hut. I think I'm beginning to like the cave but a tourist trip is definitely required to enjoy some of the sites before embarking on the intimate surveying detail of this awe inspiring cave.

*Steve Cottle*

## CLEAN AND DRY 'FANTASY CAVING' WAS QUITE A MIRICAL

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### Hon. Sec's letter to the masses

Dear all,

Another year gone, and another exhilarating hon. sec's bit for you, the first I've had to write since I am now without my rather more literate partner of the last year. I'll have to keep it short, firstly because of the impending exams, and secondly because as far as I know there haven't been any trips of late. I can therefore only say that, as far as I know, the annual dinner was a great success and a good time was had by all. For anyone who actually wants to go caving this term, or even just swan around in the pubs and lard shops of the area, there will be a trip to Yorkshire after the (or more accurately, my) exams. We were hoping to get a summer trip to Ireland off the ground, but since no-one has really displayed any interest, this may have to wait. If anyone out there is interested please get back to me. Finally a plea to anyone who may still be in Bristol next year around the time of Fresher's fair. My course starts early next year so I won't be there, so any help from all sources, no matter how random and beardy, will be very welcome. Wishing you all a great summer, love and hugs,

Taz

# !!! WIN PRIZES **COMPETITION** PRIZES WIN !!!

Complete the word search below by finding the eleven caving related words to **win a Mendip Mud Pie** (the British version of that fabulous chocolate cake from over the water).

Tie breaker: In the event of multiple correct entries reaching the editorial team at the same time, construct a sentence including **ALL** the words in the word search, and any others that take your fancy, which will be judged to find the outright winner!

C	F	B	T	R	D	E	L	L	I	O	T	H	E	M	Y	O	P
W	A	F	H	I	K	F	M	Q	W	E	R	G	C	O	C	T	I
A	T	V	J	O	F	U	R	R	Y	W	E	T	S	U	I	T	D
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T	O	C	W	S	R	R	F	Q	R	G	V	C	Q	G	A	G	I
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T	Q	U	P	M	G	I	E	E	D	N	G	S	T	Y	U	Z	E

## Small print:

1) The competition is not open to workers or 'UBSS Publishing' or their families. 2) The editor reserves the right to change the rules as he pleases. 3) Any other words found in the wordsearch are purely coincidental, and were certainly not planted by the editor!

## WORDS

UBSS troglodyte Proceedings tackle 'Caves-of-County-Clare', mud, furry-wet-suits, Marton-Arms, tight-squeezes, and 'Aggie'.



Don't show this to the novices!