

U.B.S.S.

The University of Bristol Spelæological society



The Bee's knee – OFD South Wales

Newsletter
Vol. 15 No.2

February 1999

Dear Cavers,

Thanks again to my ever faithful contributors. It has been yet another fun filled, action packed term, although the articles here don't totally reflect that as there has been censorship! 'What' I hear you cry, 'an editor with scruples'. Well fear not, it was self imposed control by those who went on the trips, so if you want to know more, just ask Simon, Rob, Jon, Tim or any of that usual bunch!

Well even if I had succumb to prudence, all is ok as this is my final edition before I hand over the reigns of this little publication to Jeremy; watch out if he starts offering you pints with a coin in the bottom! So it remains for me to thank all of those who have written in the past year, and I hope you can forgive my harassment and blackmailing for articles.

But before I go I'd like to clear up the odd rumour I heard suggesting that I had gone the way of my predecessor, (and many editors before from all I can gather), and stopped caving. This is all rubbish, having recently lost my South Wales caving virginity, I wanted to write it up (my first article!) but didn't think words could do it justice, I just loved it. So I hope the cover picture conveys the beautiful emotions! Thinking of pictures, I thought I'd share my final pickings of the club photo store for my final bout of silliness, I have suggested a few caption, but I'm sure you can do better.

Roland



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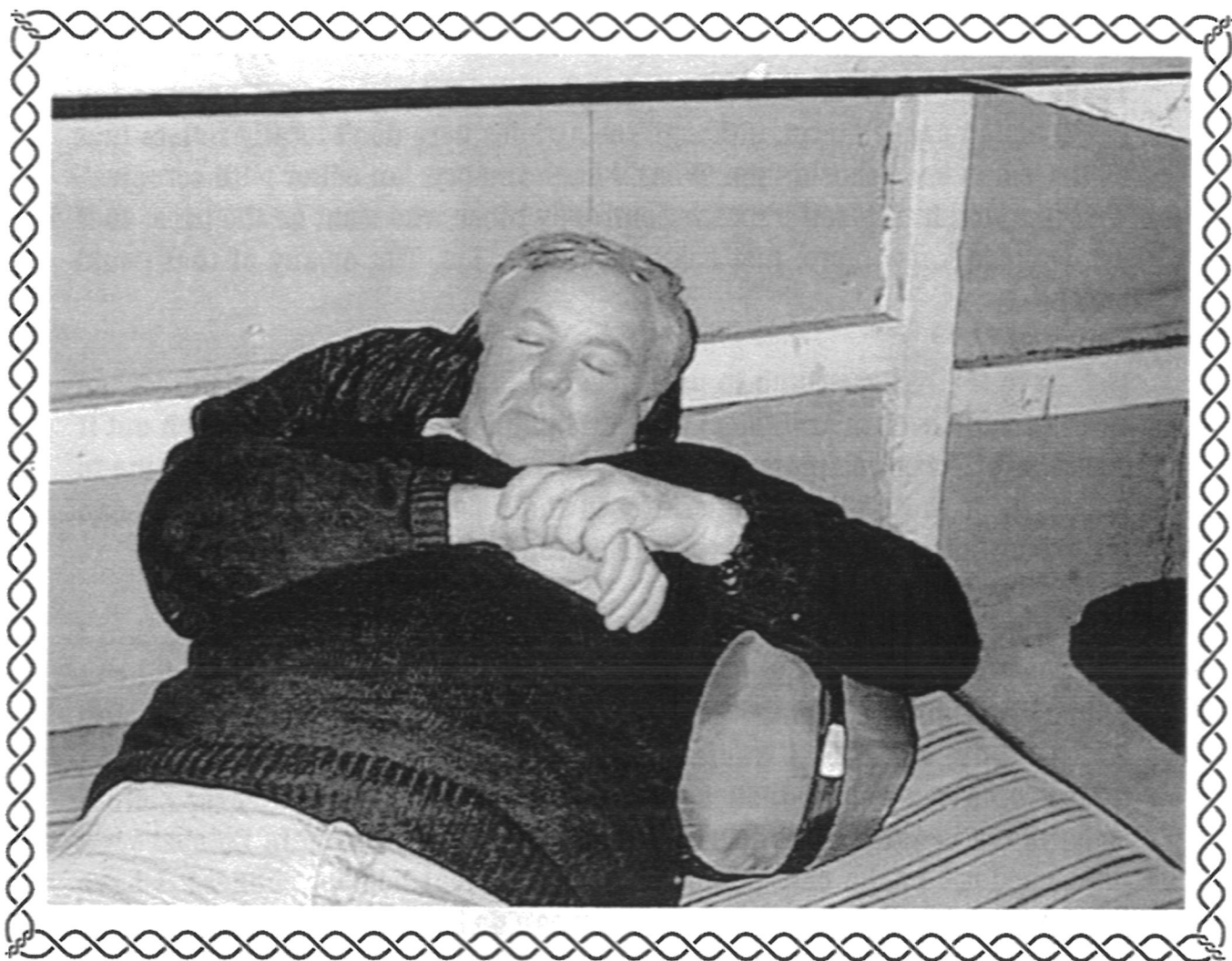
Editor – Roland Parrott

Distributors – Tony Boycott and Roland Parrott

Contributors to this issue – Arj Boonman, Steve Cottle, Graham Mullan, Jon Telling, Linda Wilson.

Disclaimer and other legal matters – The opinions expressed within these pages are those of the individual contributors and are no reflection of the broad minded, liberal, PC attitudes of the committee of myself. In fact we are a very cool bunch and I would be amazed if you could ever find fault with our attitudes!

CAPTION COMPETITION



Witty captions to the Editor, please, for this picture of Bob Churcher at the Hut on New Year's Eve. No prizes, except for the smug satisfaction of having irritated the subject!

For example:

"Who says we can't party like we used to?"
(thank you, Linda)

TREASURER'S NOTE:

As the new subscription year starts, the following still need to see the Treasurer regarding the last one:

Andy Currant, Marcel Dijkstra, Heather Jackson, Nick Patrick, Pete Simpson, Mike Thompson.

New Year Trip to The Lot Valley, France (26th Dec - 2nd Jan)

Steve, Andy, Juliette, Hilary, Tim, Jon, Simon

The trip started (too!) early on boxing day morning ; everyone piling on the boat from Dover - Calais, and driving down through France (Steve and Andy in their vans, Simon and me grabbing a lift in Tim's 'not so new as it used to be' Peugeot 206). Journey highlights: Tim managing 110 mph in his supposedly 105 mph max. car (later - in what can only be described as a near-death experience - he managed to force a French driver off the road and up a grass verge!), and a night stop-over on the way down in a cheap F1 hotel where a combination of red wine, whisky, 2 bunk-beds and various odd bodily positions (ooh-err) left me with overstretched ligaments in a knee. Not the best start!

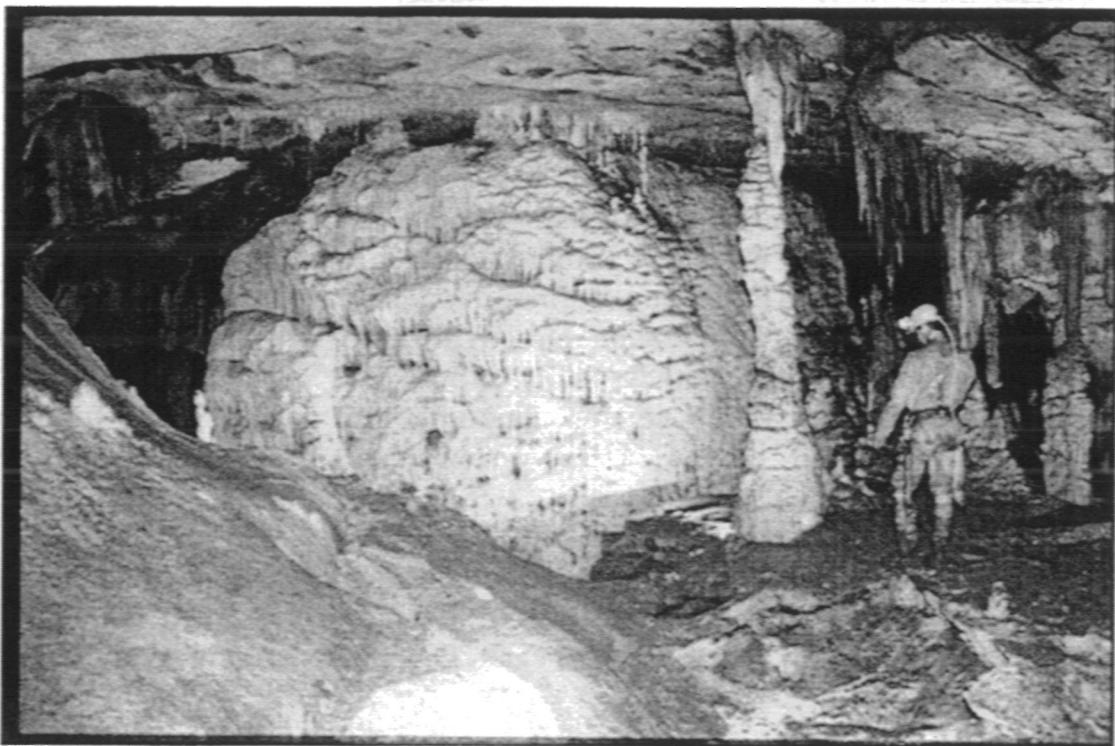
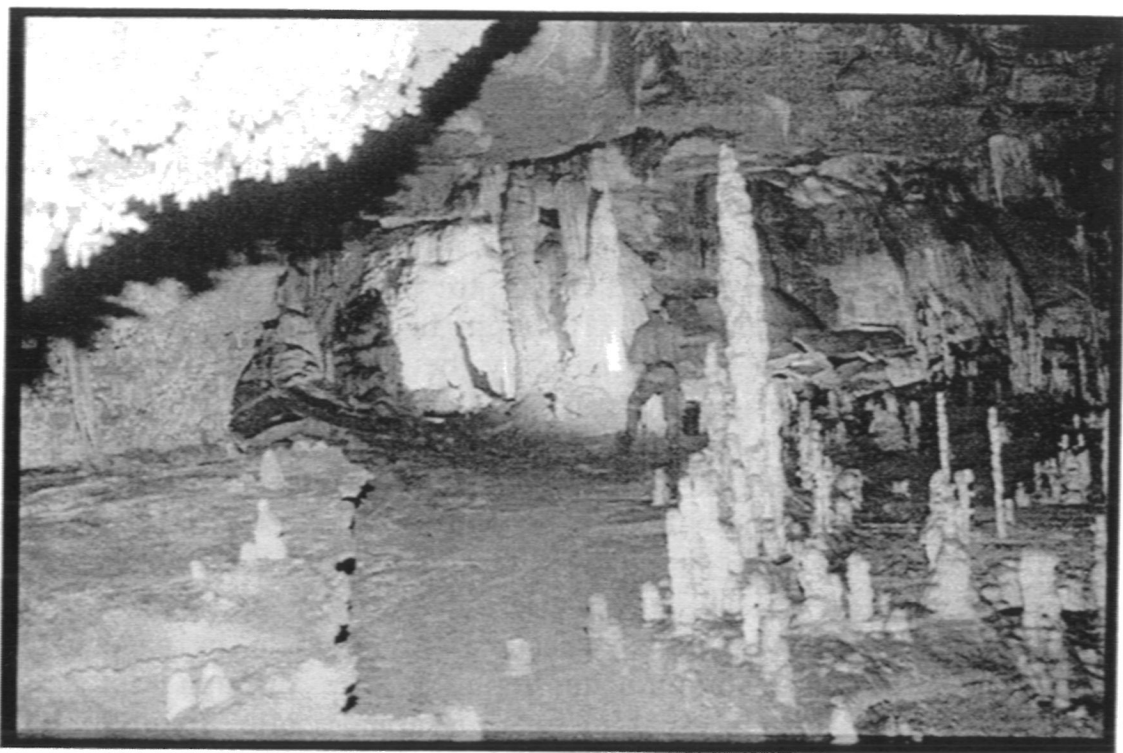
The caving itself was pretty spectacular ; Pucelle in particular. A large underground stream running 2.5 km through spectacular limestone formations - Swildon's on a grand-scale. Scrambling and sometimes swimming along, shooting down waterfalls on your arse, all good fun. Not so fun was losing £300 worth of tackle in a particularly deep plunge-pool ("Do you think it'll float?" "Maybe, if you keep a hand on it. " "Ahh.") - unfortunately preventing us from reaching the bottom.

Iges de Pendent was a good SRT trip - 115m down, lots of be-lays, a splash round in the underground stream, and up again. And the Iges de Sol ; a 60 m initial drop through a vertical shaft into large caverns with huge limestone formations, ending in a small cavern with almost every spot taken up with mud sculptures of various kinds ; some superb, others not, most with large , er, genitalia (saying something about cavers' mentality in general?) by previous artistically-inspired cavers. UBBS now have their own sculpture along similar lines.

New Years eve was similar to the other days (cave during the day, hit the beer/wine in the evening), only more so. Even so, we all managed to go caving on New Year's Day (after fixing the drainpipe on the roof - ask Simon!).

Overall, definitely worth the visit, and I'll make the bottom of Pucelle next time.....

Jon.



France at new year – photos by Steve

UBSS Underground In Bristol

Some of this years special caving trips have been arranged locally. With a number of near-by underground secrets Wednesday evenings were the suited to being the optimum day for these visits. From caving in Southmead in the impressive Pen Park Hole to a specially arranged trip down Redcliffe mines.

These mines date back to at least the 18th century when the area of Redcliffe became an important area for glass making. There are many possibilities as the original excavation of the mines though dating back through Alfred the Great and even to cavemen. The sandstone of the underlying rock was excellent for the manufacture of glass being made for bottles to export water from the Hot wells of Bristol. However as Redcliffe was already built upon and the sandstone had to be mined. The mines span over a very large area that cannot be quantified now due to the loss of areas by the building of the harbour railway and bombing from the blitz. However thanks to the ACG a trip was arranged for the mines on one Wednesday in November.

A large number of cavers met at the tacklestore for this trip and despite managing to loose Rachel between there and the caves around about 15 people were kited out with lights etc for the trip. Graham had managed to make a few copies of the available survey which were suitable distributed around so that groups could head off and explore the whole of the known area. I think that most cavers found all the interesting parts of the mine including the wall of the railway tunnel, the shafts that lead up to different levels (now inaccessible due to possible contamination in the war from the hospital above) and the pottery dump. Most of the passage is large walking with rounded arches supporting the roof. A few low crawls lead to some more cramped passages and the more inaccessible areas that the more organised pre-arranged historic Bristol tours do not visit. For many this was an excellent chance to explore somewhere previously unvisited-visited and for others a chance to see some of the history of Bristol. Roland, equipped with camera at hand was there to record the events for posterity.

REF Secret Underground Bristol by Sally Watson.

Access curtsey of Alan Gray

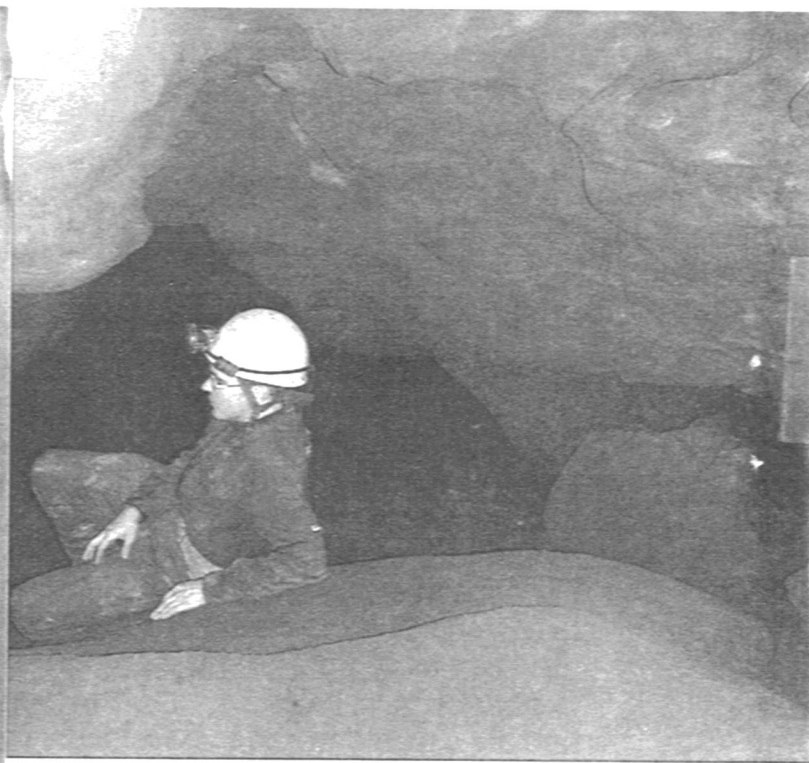
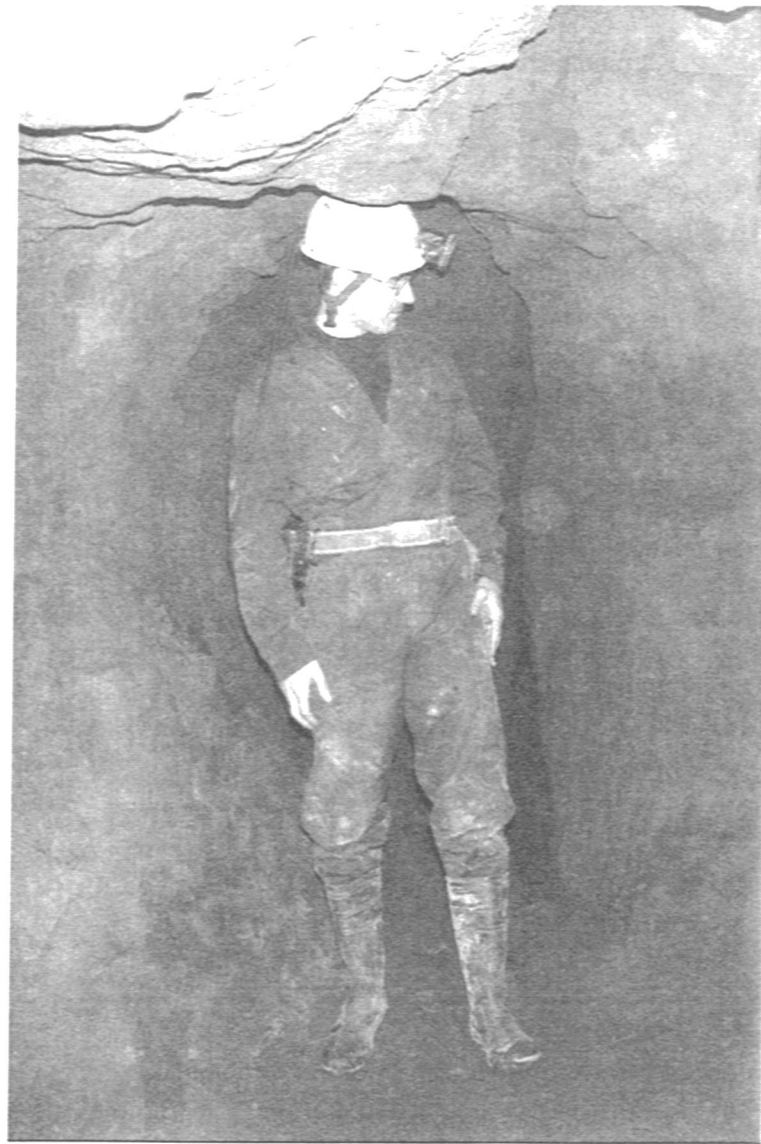


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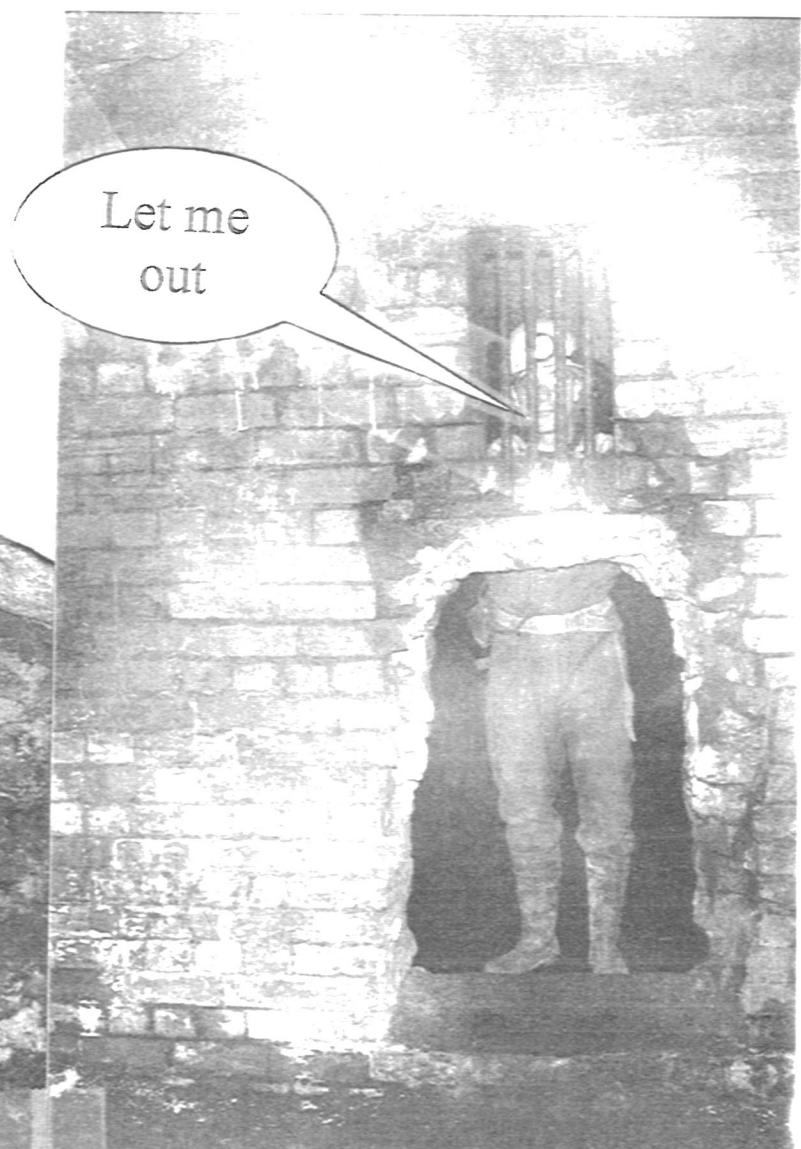
The **AGM** and **Annual dinner** will be held on
Saturday 13th March

See the back cover for more details, noting times, places and the
RSVP to Clive Owen by the 27th February





Steve takes up fashion modelling in the Catwalks of Redcliffe mine



Fakes and Forgeries

Graham Mullan

In 1988 Paul Bahn and Jean Vertut produced *Images of the Ice Age*, probably the best introductory book on the subject of Palaeolithic art that I have read. Bahn was responsible for the text and Vertut, who had sadly died in 1985, for the photographs. This book has now been completely revised and updated, under the title *Journey through the Ice Age*. To his credit, Bahn has continued to include Vertut as co-author as most of his photos are still used in the new edition.

The new edition covers much the same ground as the old, but includes material from the recently discovered sites such as the Grotte de Chauvet and the Grotte Cosquer and new dating evidence, as well as expanding some of the sections of the old book. In all, it continues to be an excellent introduction to the subject.

One new chapter that has been written for this edition is entitled *Fakes and Forgeries*. This is important, as unfortunately this has been a fertile area for fakers virtually since the antiquity of the material was first recognised and there is little doubt that some of the most famous pieces, especially of portable art, will eventually turn out to be forgeries. However, Bahn finishes this chapter with a statement of doubt on the subject of the cave of Rouffignac and especially of the famous frieze of three rhinos. It seems strange to me that he can accept that "most of the art in its miles of galleries is unquestionably authentic" while still questioning this particular example. My counter-arguments can be divided into three parts: historical, stylistic and scientific.

Historical

Bahn states "One local landowner claimed he saw them in 1938, but we also have categorical statements from several speleologists who frequented the cave in the late 1940s that two rhinos appeared in between September and December 1948 and the third by Easter 1949." Had this been the case then, given that only a few cavers had been involved in these trips, it is highly unlikely that the name of the artist/forger would have remained secret for long, especially during the heated arguments which raged after the official announcement of the discovery here in 1956. As it is, the only "authentic fake" that came to light at this time was a bison in one of the lower galleries, drawn using a carbide lamp by one Gabriel Gérin. It is also the case that the cavers, when they first found the rhino frieze, reported their discovery to M. Séverin Blanc, a local pre-historian. Although, admittedly, Blanc did dismiss them as fakes this is surely not the action of someone who had seen them appear. (Information drawn mainly from Nougier & Robert 1958.)

Stylistic

Abbé Breuil, the undisputed authority on the subject, claimed that Rouffignac must be authentic because he was probably the only person capable of such successful pastiches of Ice Age art! While I agree with Bahn that arguments about stylistic assessments really lead nowhere, it is remarkable how similar these figures are to other, undoubtedly authentic, examples. For example it is worth comparing the central one of the three (see especially Barrière, 1982, figure 351 p115) with the very similar beast in the cave of Combarelles II (Barrière, 1997, figure 35 p578). I know that, for most, this means actually comparing two drawings by the same artist (Claude Barrière), but having seen both of the originals myself I can safely say that they look even more alike than the drawings.

Scientific

Bahn is also right in saying that the best way of settling these problems is through analyses and/or dating of the pigments that were used. However, I believe that he is wrong in stating that though this was called for at Rouffignac forty years ago it was never done. While I will admit to not having read the original papers and to being surprised that Barrière (1982) does not list them in his bibliography, Nougier and Robert (1958) state quite definitely that according to analyses by Prof. P. Graziosi and Prof. P. Grassé, as with the vast majority of Palaeolithic artwork, in black, in this part of France, the artists at Rouffignac used Manganese dioxide - a material which, in itself, is unfortunately not capable of being dated.

There *are* fakes in Rouffignac, the relatively modern graffiti and the sooty works of M. Gérin, though many of them have been removed in recent years. But surely it is time for the genuine works to be fully accepted for what they are.

References

- Bahn, P.G. & Vertut, J. 1998. *Journey through the Ice Age* London. Wiedenfield & Nicholson
Barrière, C. 1982. *L'Art Parietal de Rouffignac*. Paris Picard.
Barrière, C. 1997. *L'Art Parietal des Grottes des Combarelles*. Les Eyzies Samra/Paleo
Nougier, L-R. & Robert, R. 1958. *The Cave of Rouffignac*. London. George Newnes Ltd.

Another Winter in France

Graham Mullan & Linda Wilson

After our successes last year (see N/L 14.1, March 1998) We decided on a slightly more ambitious programme of visits to decorated caves this January and drew up a list of sites that we wished to see but that are only rarely visited. Our idea was that in order to become confident at identifying and understanding Palaeolithic cave art, we must be familiar with the less well preserved and "important" examples as well as with the well known stuff. All the caves are listed in *L'Art des cavernes* (the "bible" for this sort of thing) as closed to the public, but it is amazing what a bit of persistence can do.

In this we were wildly successful visiting the caves of:

Combarelles II; Croze a Gontran; La Calevie; Bison; Sous-Grand-Lac; Comarque; Le Saurcier (at St. Cirq).

These are, in general, caves which are hardly ever seen. We were told that only about five trips per year are made to Combarelles II and approximately six to ten to Croze a Gontran. And when we asked M. Pemandran, the owner of the Grottes du Bison and Sous-Grand-Lac how many people visit them, he laughed and said we were the first he had taken for about two years! In comparison, he gets about 1,000 people each year coming to his cave of Bernifal which is open in high season (July/August).

We were also given a guided tour of the rock shelters at Castel Merle and visited Font de Gaume on the grounds that "you should always visit polychrome sites when you have a chance 'cos someday soon they will close them." And on this occasion we were able to go in with an unusually small tour of only six people.

The quality of the Art at these sites varied enormously, in terms of preservation and ease of identification. At the Grotte du Bison, for example, we were unable to find some of the recorded works despite a close search by both us and the owner and at both Castel Merle and Comarque much was only still visible because it had been very deeply incised in the first place.

Many other points of detail were also noted. For example, in Combarelles II, the hind legs of one horse have been held by some to be of recent date because they look so much fresher than the rest of the animal, whereas in Croze a Gontran, to my eyes at least, the modern graffiti and the ancient engravings looked to be in a very similar condition, demonstrating that in all such cases more than a superficial study is needed.

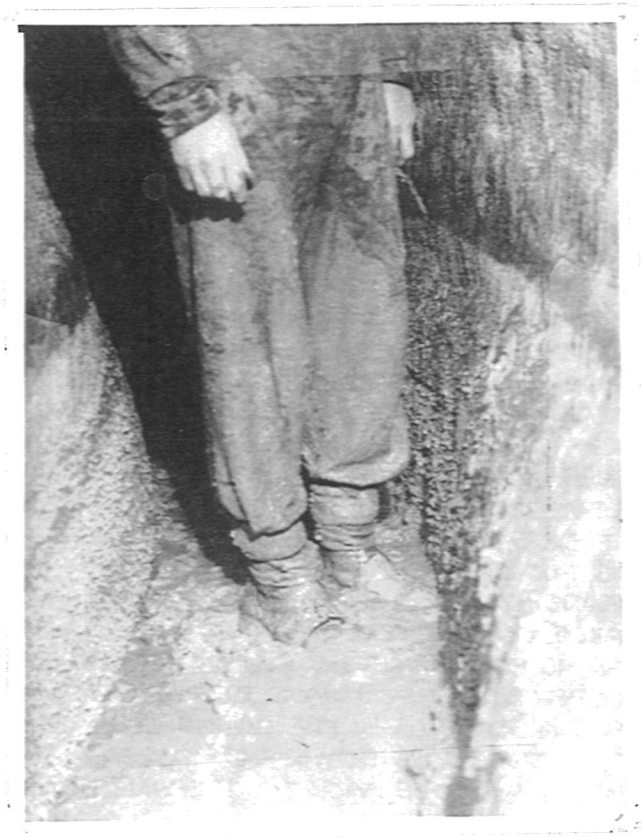
This type of study of the condition of engravings was put into use later in the week at the Grotte du Saurcier, at Saint Cirq. This little cave, which is open to the public, is famous for its one human figure. Many authorities have cast doubt upon the early date of this piece as such complete human representations are very very rare in Palaeolithic art. In this case, however, the patination on the rock covers parts of the figure, including its head, giving it a look of some antiquity. In contrast, the very similar figure in Sous-Grand-Lac is much fresher, though still apparently considered genuine by some (all the same I wonder about its discovery being announced on April 1st - known as Poisson d'avril in France and having similar connotations to those over here!). Yet both of them look very like the piece of Art Mobilier in the Museum at Perigieux which is attributed to the Magdalanian. We are trying to obtain more information about the Sous-Grand-Lac figure as a result of this.

We were also able to continue our ongoing study of how caves have been modified for the benefit of visitors, noting for example the enormous contrast between sites such as the Grotte du Bison where you have to crawl in order to reach the artwork and Combarelles II where the passage had been opened up for the benefit of those studying the engravings and electric lighting had been provided. The latter has now been removed, but remains, in the form of old rusting junction boxes, are to be found along its entire length.

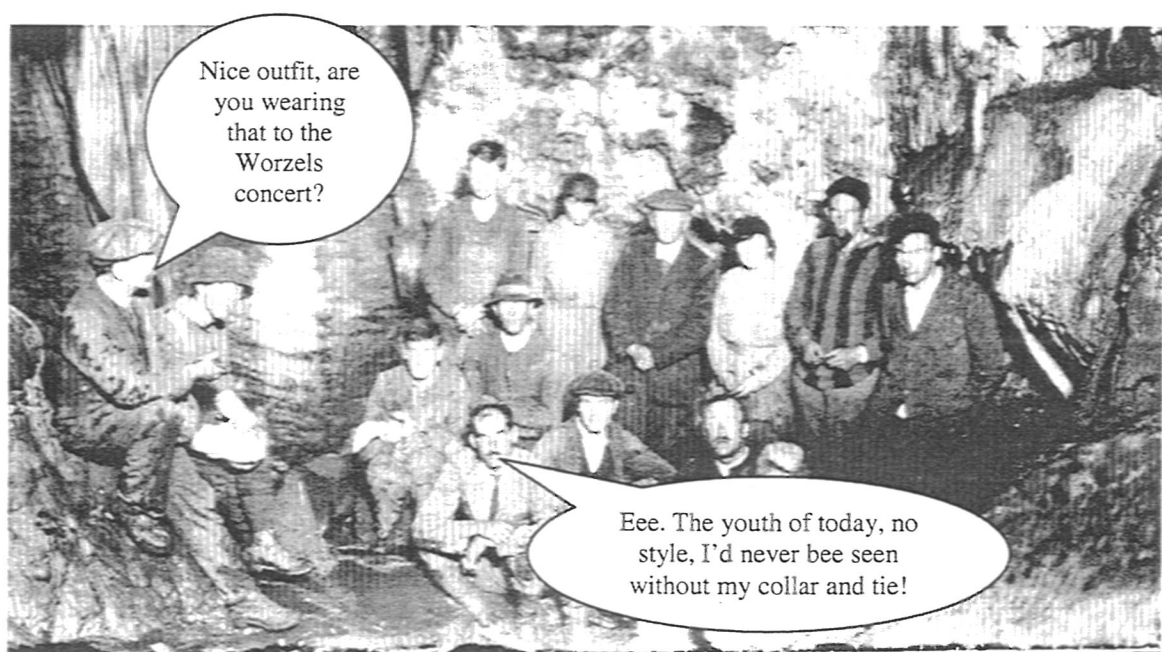
All very pompous and pseudo-academic, I'm sure, but we also visit these places because the artwork is actually very impressive (I don't know much about Art but I like it old?). On this trip I would say that Linda's favourite piece was the almost life size and very impressive engraved horse's head in Comarque. Mine was the engraving of a woolly rhino in Combarelles II, quite a "dinky" little beast.

Many thanks to all those who helped us including M. J-J Cleyet-Merle (Les Eyzies Museum of Prehistory); M. Pemandran (Sous-Grand-Lac and Bison); M. Escormont (Comarque); Christian Archambeau (Croze a Gontran and La Calevie); Claude Archambeau (Combarelles II); René Castanet (Castel Merle) and Tom Lawrence for general phone calls.

If anyone wants to rent a gite in the area, let us know and we will pass you on to our friends, Tom & Lynne Lawrence, who own a converted mill complex 30 minutes drive north of Les Eyzies. Perfect for exploring the area.



"These boots were made for walking"



A quick Mars bar stop in Ireland – The comment on the back of the photo implied the date was '92, but which century (or millennium)?

Letter to my folks in Holland

DEAR MUM,

I HOPE YOU AND DAD ARE STILL LIVING HAPPILY TOGETHER AS YOU HAVE BEEN DOING DURING THE PAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OR SO, BLOODY HELL, THAT'S LIKE A QUARTER OF A CENTURY ISN'T IT? HAS UNCLE WIM ALREADY RECOVERED FROM HIS RARE VEIN-THICKENING DISEASE AFTER HAVING EATEN TOO MANY TULIP BOWLS? I SINCERELY HOPE HE HAS. YOU DON'T GET TOO MANY TULIP BOWLS OVER HERE, BUT YOU DO GET CAVES. WHEN I SAY CAVES I DO NOT REFER TO THE KIND OF CAVE YOU AND AUNTIE RERDINA ONCE WENT THROUGH IN ONE OF THESE LITTLE TRAINS RERDINA FOUND SO CUTE, DURING THAT EASTER HOLIDAY IN VALKENBURG, REMEMBER? BECAUSE, THESE CAVES IN VALKENBURG WEREN'T REAL CAVES; THEY WERE ACTUALLY MINES. DON'T GET UPSET NOW, I KNOW IT WAS JUST LIKE A CAVE, THAT EXPERIENCE YOU HAD, BUT IT IS STILL A BIT DIFFERENT FROM WHAT PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY MEAN WHEN THEY SAY 'I HAVE BEEN CAVING'. REMEMBER THE LAST TIME YOU SPOKE TO ME OVER THE PHONE, ABOUT FIVE MONTHS AGO? I TOLD YOU I WAS GOING TO JOIN THE URSS, WHICH MEANS 'CAVING CLUB', A CLUB OF PEOPLE WHO LIKE IT TO GO DOWN IN CAVES, AS A HOBBY. LATER ON YOU TOLD ME THAT UNCLE WIM NEARLY LAUGHED HIS GUTS OUT IN THE HOSPITAL, AS HE FOUND THIS SO FUNNY; PEOPLE GOING DOWN IN CAVES AS A HOBBY. WHAT OTHER HOBBIES CAN YOU HAVE BESIDES EATING TULIP BOWLS? YOU THEN ASKED ME IF THERE WERE ALSO GIRLS IN THE CAVING CLUB, REMEMBER? I ANSWERED YES, THERE ARE, BUT A LOT OF THEM HAVE BOYFRIENDS ALREADY. NO MUM, I DO NOT HAVE A GIRLFRIEND YET AND ULRIKE HAS GONE BACK TO GERMANY SO GRAND DOES NOT NEED TO BE WORRIED ABOUT THAT ANY MORE.

NO, WHEN WE GO CAVING HERE IN BRITAIN WE USE GEAR AND TACKLE TO GO DOWN. I DON'T MEAN THE KIND OF GEAR YOU FOUND IN JEROEN'S ROOM WHEN HIS HOUSEMATES HAD LET YOU IN AND YOU WANTED TO DO SOME CLEANING WHILST YOU VISITED HIM IN AMSTERDAM, NOT THAT KIND OF GEAR. WELL, MAYBE THE BEST WAY OF EXPLAINING TO YOU WHAT CAVING IS ABOUT, IS DESCRIBING THE LAST TRIP WE MADE OVER IN YORKSHIRE. YORKSHIRE IS UP IN THE NORTH, AS FAR AS DENMARK, BUT IT IS NOT IN SCOTLAND AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT, IT IS STILL IN ENGLAND. EVERYONE TOLD ME THAT THE PEOPLE OVER THERE ARE QUITE FRIENDLY, BUT YET, THERE AREN'T MANY PEOPLE OVER THERE, BUT YOU DO GET A LOT OF SHEEP, AND CAVES. BECAUSE YORKSHIRE IS SO FAR AWAY, IT TOOK US A LONG TIME TO GET UP THERE AND THAT NIGHT WE SLEPT WELL IN THE CARAVAN THE URSS HAD HIRED FOR US. THERE WAS ALSO A GIRL AMONG US, AND ALTHOUGH HER NAME WAS CHRIS, SHE DEFINITELY WAS A GIRL, BUT SHE SLEPT TOGETHER WITH A GUY CALLED IAN, WHO IS HER BOYFRIEND. THE NEXT MORNING WHEN WE WOKE UP WE COULD SEE OTHER CARAVANS AROUND US, AND THERE WERE ALSO OTHER CAVERS COMING OUT OF THESE CARAVANS, EVEN MEMBERS OF THE URSS, ALTHOUGH THEY WOKE UP SIGNIFICANTLY LATER THAN ANY OF THE OTHER VISITORS OF THE IDYLIC CAMPING-SITE WE WERE STAYING ON. WE HAD A VERY NICE ENGLISH BREAKFAST IN THE VILLAGE, SERVED BY A LOVELY OLD LADY. SHE WAS THE KIND OF OLD LADY WHO TYPICALLY GETS SHOT BY .32 CALIBER SEMI-AUTOMATIC GUNS WHILE RUDE MOTORBIKERS LAUGH ABOUT THE WAY HER BLOOD SQUIRTS OUT ALL OVER HER SELF-MADE TABLECLOTHS, AS IN SOME OF THE AMERICAN ACTION MOVIES UNCLE WIM IS NOW ABLE TO PICK UP WITH HIS NEW SATELLITE DISH. LATER, A GUY WITH A FRENCH ACCENT, WHO HAS A LOT OF UNSTEADY RELATIONSHIPS IN EVERY TOWN HE PASSES THROUGH, WILL CHASE THE RUDE BIKERS AND HE WILL SHOOT THEM ONE BY ONE, AS THEY HAVE KILLED THE INNOCENT OLD LADY AMONG EVEN MORE SERIOUS CRIMES. THEN, AS HE HAS RUN OUT OF BULLETS, HE WILL USE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN WHICH HE HAS BEEN TRAINED IN A SPECIAL JAPANESE SCHOOL, BUT THE REMAINING GUY HAPPENS TO BE THE STRONGEST OF THEM ALL, BUT STILL HE WINS. UNFORTUNATELY, NONE OF ALL THIS HAPPENS IN ENGLAND, SO WE HAD OUR BREAKFAST WITHOUT THE LOVELY OLD LADY BEING SHOT AND THEN I WENT TO A CAVING SHOP TO BUY A FURRY SUIT AS PEOPLE HAD TOLD ME; IT WOULD BE REALLY COLD IN THE CAVES. THE FOLLOWING THREE HOURS WERE SPENT ARGUING ABOUT WHO WAS TO BLAME FOR A PERMIT WHICH WASN'T THERE, SORTING OUT GEAR AND GOING BACK TO THE VILLAGE

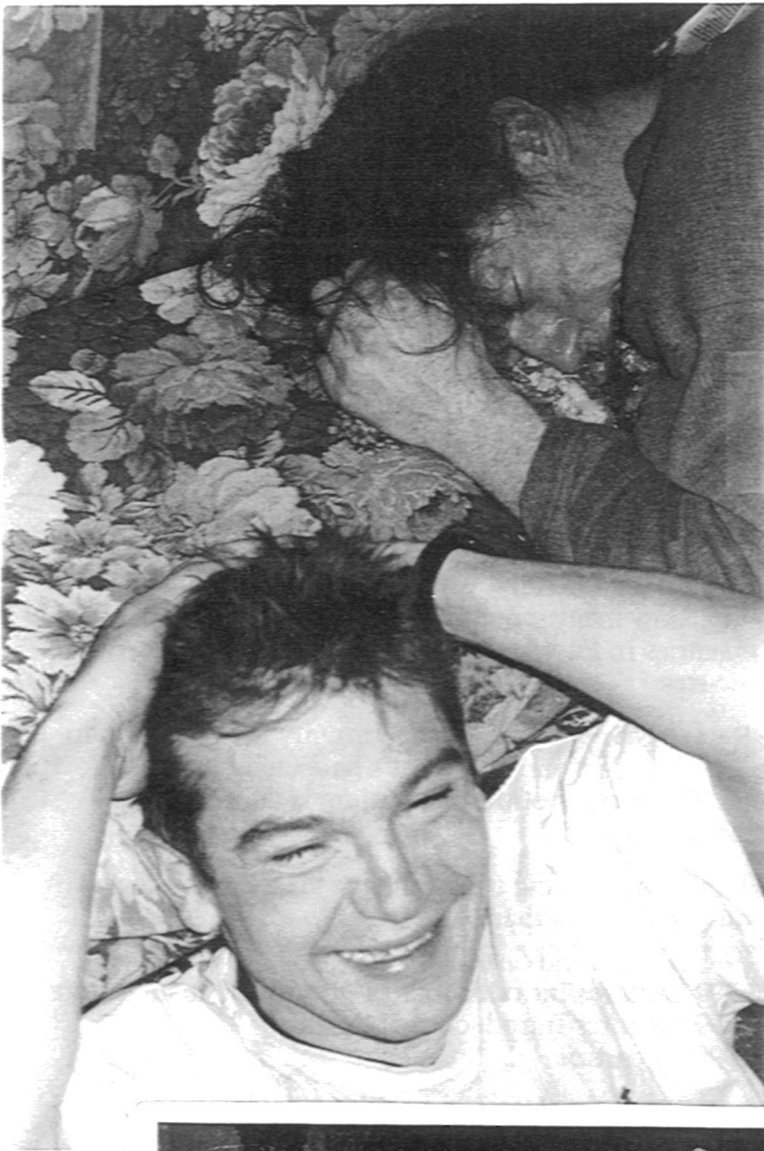
TO BUY THE ESSENTIALS THAT PROVED TO BE MISSING FROM THE GEAR IN THE PROCESS OF SORTING THINGS OUT. I HAD BROUGHT AN UNDERWATER CAMERA WITH ME. THE WEATHER WAS BONE DRY SO TO JUSTIFY THE NECESSITY OF THIS WONDERFUL ASSET ON MY STANDARD GEAR, WE REALLY HAD TO GO DOWN A CAVE THIS TIME, A WET CAVE INDEED. AFTER HAVING WALKED UP AND DOWN A HILL SEVERAL TIMES WE FOUND A HOLE IN THE GROUND WHICH WAS ACTUALLY THE HOLE WE WERE SUPPOSED TO GO DOWN IN. THIS SHAFT AND ALL OTHER SHAFTS AND CORRIDORS CONNECTED TO IT DOWN BELOW HAD BEEN GIVEN A NAME, WHICH IS RULL POT. IF YOU TRIED TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SHAFT BY JUST JUMPING YOU WOULD CERTAINLY GET THERE, BUT NOT IN A HEALTHY CONDITION. THIS IS WHERE THE GEARS COMES IN. THERE'S ROPES AND SPECIAL DESCENDERS WITH SOME SORT OF WHEELS IN THEM THAT CAUSE FRICTION ALONG THE ROPE. THIS MAKES YOU GO DOWN VERY SLOWLY AND SAFELY. THE ROPES ARE CONNECTED TO BOLDS THAT HAVE BEEN HAMMERED IN A LONG TIME AGO BY PEOPLE WHO REALLY WERE ADVENTUROUS. WE WENT DEEPER AND DEEPER. TIM WAS ALWAYS AHEAD OF US. GOD WOULD PUNISH HIM THAT DAY FOR SUCH UNSOCIABLE BEHAVIOUR. WITHIN THE CAVE IT WAS DARK, RAINY AND DAMP. THIS WAS GOOD AS I COULD MAKE PICTURES OF PEOPLE DOING DANGEROUS THINGS WHILST THEY WERE GETTING WET. SUDDENLY, I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO GO TO ANY MORE, AND THERE WAS NO GUIDE TELLING ME THE RIGHT WAY NOR WERE THERE ANY SIGNPOSTS AS YOU FIND SO COMMONLY IN VALKENBURG. I SWITCHED OFF MY HEADLIGHT AND LOOKED AROUND IN THE BLACK, TRYING TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF TIM'S LIGHT, WHO SHOULD BE IN SOME OF THESE CRACKS, GOD KNOWS WHERE. THERE WAS A GLIMPSE OF LIGHT, SOMEWHERE AHEAD. "ARJ, I'M OVER HERE" A WEAK VOICE SOUNDED FROM PRESUMABLY WHERE THE LIGHT WAS AS TIM'S LIGHT AND SOUND HAD NOT SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER, AT LEAST, I HOPED. I SWITCHED ON MY HEADTORCH AND CLIMBED IN THE CREVASSE, TOWARDS THE SOUND. I NOTICED THAT THE BOTTOM OF THE CREVASSE WAS ALREADY FAR BELOW ME, BUT IT WAS GETTING EVEN DEEPER AND DEEPER. "WHERE THE HELL ARE YA?" "OVER HERE." "OH, OVER THERE." I USED THE WALLS ON EACH SIDE TO PUSH MYSELF AGAINST TO PREVENT MYSELF FROM FALLING DOWN. WHAT THE HELL WAS THE SON OF BITCH DOING HERE? I COULD SEE TIM'S LIGHT NOW. "I'M KIND OF STUCK HERE, YOU' SEE" HE INFORMED ME ABOUT THE LATEST NEWS. INDEED, THE 'ÉTROITURE', AS THE FRENCH CALL IT, WAS GETTING NARROWER; IT NOW REQUIRED GOING UP AND DOWN TO GET ANYWHERE IN THE FIRST PLACE. IT WAS ONE ANGLE VISION ONLY FROM NOW ON AND THE RIVER WAS MILES AWAY IN THE DEEP, BUT I COULDN'T SEE IT ANYWAY AS MY HELMET WAS STUCK AGAIN IN THE FUCKING ÉTROITURE. AT LEAST I DID SEE TIM. THE POOR SOD HAD TRIED TO LOWER HIMSELF IN THE CREVASSE, PAST SOME STONE, WHICH WAS STUCK SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN. ONE OF HIS FOOTLOOPS, HOWEVER, WAS HOOKED OVER THE STONE AND THERE WAS NO WAY FOR HIM TO GO BACK OR FURTHER WITHOUT DISREGARDING THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF HIS BODY, ASSUMING THAT HE HAS SUCH INTEGRITY I MEAN. I UNHOOKED THE FOOTLOOP AND EFFECTIVELY FREED MY CAVE MATE. "OOOH BLOODY...CHEERS MATE" THE RIGGER SAID AND HE LOWERED HIMSELF TO HANG OUT THE REMAINING ROPE. THE PROBLEM WITH CAVING IS THAT WHEN YOU GET TO THE BOTTOM, YOU HAVE TO CLIMB UP AGAIN, WHICH IS THE LESS ENJOYABLE PART OF THE EXPERIENCE. SOMEWHERE, HIGHER UP, WE MET AN INFAMOUS LONESOME CAVER, WHO HAD CYCLED A LONG, LONG WAY OVER MOUNTAINS FROM ABERYSTWYTH, JUST FOR THE WEEKEND. HE WAS A SOLO ARTIST NOW, AS HE'D BEEN CHUCKED OUT OF THREE DIFFERENT UNIVERSITY CAVING CLUBS. THIS WAS WHAT KEPT ME BUSY DURING THE ENTIRE TRAVEL UP TO THE ENTRANCE; WHAT ON EARTH SHOULD ONE DO TO GET EXPELLED FROM A CAVING CLUB? I MEAN, IN MY SHORT TIME AS A MEMBER I HAVE SEEN MEMBERS BEING CHEERED FOR LIGHTING INDOOR FIREWORKS, WINDOWS AND LADDERS ON OTHER PEOPLE'S PROPERTY BEING DEMOLISHED, AND SOME MEMBERS I HAVEN'T ACTUALLY SEEN SOBER, SO WHAT COULD IT BE? RRINGING OTHER PEOPLE IN DANGER? THAT'S WHAT CAVING IS ABOUT ISN'T IT? SO, COULD IT HAVE TO DO WITH TEACHING NOVICES NEW THINGS WITH HIS GEAR THEN? IF I MAY BELIEVE THE STORIES, THESE THINGS ARE NO MORE THAN COMMON PRACTICE IN THE URSS, ALTHOUGH I CAN'T CONFIRM ANYTHING YET FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE. ANYWAY, A GUY CALLED 'TROUSERS' THEN PROPOSED TO GO DOWN INTO ANOTHER CAVE, WHICH WAS AT LEAST 60 METERS DEEP. DO YOU EVER SAY 'YES' WHEREAS YOU ACTUALLY THINK 'NO'? THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED WHEN WE ANSWERED TROUSERS. THIS IS BECAUSE NONE OF US WANTED TO BE

A 'WENDY', IF YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN. IN FACT, MOST OF US LOOK UP TO TROUSERS AND IN OUR HEARTS WE ALL WANT TO BE LIKE HIM. SO WE DECIDED TO FOLLOW HIM. THERE WAS A CRATER IN THE GROUND AND TROUSERS LOWERED HIMSELF INTO IT WHILE CURSING AWAY ABOUT VARIOUS THINGS. HALF AN HOUR LATER ADAM AND I FOLLOWED HIM. THE FIRST DESCENT WASN'T TOO LONG AND ENDED ALONGSIDE A CRATER OF SERIOUS DIMENSIONS. I HAD TO GO FOR A LEAK, BUT HAVE YOU EVER TRIED THAT WHILE BEING FULLY GEARED? ANYWAY, LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT PISSING HERE. ADAM HAD GONE ALREADY AND WAS OUT OF SIGHT, PROBABLY HANGING UNDERNEATH ONE OF THE EDGES OF THE CRATER. THE IDEA WAS THAT I WOULD FOLLOW HIM. I CLICKED MY DESCENDER ONTO THE ROPE, WALKED DOWN, HAD A LOOK IN THE CRATER AND CHECKED IF THE ROPE REALLY WAS GOING THROUGH MY DESCENDER IN THE RIGHT WAY. IT WAS, SO I REALLY HAD TO GO. THERE WAS SOME STRANGE RUSHING NOISE IN THE DEPTHS. WHATEVER IT WAS, I HAD TO MIND THE ROPE BUSINESS FOR THE TIME BEING. CLICK INTO THE NEXT FRACTION, DESCENDER LOOSE, ONTO THE NEXT ROPE, HOP OUT, UNCLIP AND LET THE ROPE ZIP THROUGH, GENTLY. EVERYTHING SO BLOODY DARK AND LOUD. WHAT IS IT? A BLOODY WATERFALL DEEPER IN THE SHAFT BELOW ME. THE RUMBLING WAS AWAITING ME. MY GOD, I SAW THE LIGHTS OF THE OTHERS, SO DEEP, I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. I DID GO DOWN STILL, ALTHOUGH I COULDN'T SEE IT VERY WELL AS THE ONE AND ONLY WALL ON MY SIDE WAS BACKING OFF. A FINE MIST, MOISTENING MY FACE BETRAYED THE TRUE NATURE OF THE REALM I WAS ENTERING, HAD I IGNORED THE LOUD RUMBLING BEFORE. I WAS TO GO DEEPER AND DEEPER. THE FRICTION HAD HEATED UP THE DESCENDER THE ROPE WAS NOW RUSHING THROUGH, AND THE MOIST IN THE AIR WHICH WAS TURNING IN EVER BIGGER DROPLETS MADE THE STEEL HISS. THE INFERNO OF INCESSANT NOISE AND WATER WAS NOW TO BE DEALT WITH, ROARING FROM BELOW, ABOVE, AND ALL CRATER WALLS. IT WAS STILL MUCH DEEPER AND DEEPER, FUCKING HELL, AND I WAS STILL GOING. THE TONNES OF WATER THUNDERING DOWN, CAUSED THE AIR TO SWEEP UP IN THE SHAFT AND THE WIND HAD JOINED FORCES WITH ALL OTHER ELEMENTS. I WAS SHOWERED IN GUSTS. I LOOKED ABOVE ME AND SAW IT WHILE GOING DOWN. MILLIONS OF DROPLETS SWERVING THROUGH THE AIR WITH THE GUSTS, AS FAR AS MY HEADLIGHT COULD REACH. MY FEET TOUCHED THE BOTTOM. HERE WAS NOTHING; JUST SOUND AND SOUND, IN YOUR HEAD. THE DROPLETS WERE SWEEP UP TO METERS ABOVE ME. "ROOOOOOOPE FREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!!" "FUCKING HELL!!!" I HAD REACHED THE CORE OF INFERNO. THE GREEKS HAD ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS HERE AND THEY WERE DAMN RIGHT.

THIS WAS WHAT I WANTED TO DESCRIBE TO YOU, IT'S WHAT PEOPLE DO FOR A HOBBY HERE. TO YOUR QUESTION ABOUT THE DEPTH YOU HAVE TO DIG IN THE TULIP BOWLS IN YOUR GARDEN: IT SHOULD BE 1,32CM ACCORDING TO STANDARD EUROPEAN REGULATIONS, AS DEFINED IN THE BRUSSELS ENACTMENT OF UNIFICATION IN GARDENING.

YOUR FAITHFUL SON ART





“Jon, doesn’t the pattern on this sofa make you feel sick?”



“What a geological feature! But where’s the length scale? My preference is to use beer cans stacked end to end”

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SLO

First European Cave Rescue Symposium

in Göppingen, Southern Germany

Höhlenrettung Ostalb/Filstal im Malteser Hilfsdienst e.V.

>>1st circular<<

Dear colleagues of cave rescue,

Each of you knows that there are cave rescue services in the whole of Europe. Some of you are in contact with each other. But do you actually know what kind of equipment and techniques are used in Italy, England, Austria, Poland, ...? What about their organization, how many members, how often are they called into action? There are 36 countries in Europe and their cave rescue groups will surely have different experiences.

The First European Cave Rescue Symposium is an opportunity for you to get to know other cave rescuers and also to inform you what's happening in the European cave rescue scene. The success of the symposium is dependent on your participation and contributions.

Workshops on cave rescue topics and caving trips will take place in different german villages from 1st till 4th of November 1999.

The Symposium: 04.11.1999 Arrival and opening
05.11.1999 Lectures/Introductions of groups and main lecture
06.11.1999 Lectures/Introductions of groups
07.11.1999 Departure

During the symposium you will be catered for from our kitchen. Dealers will present their stock and there is also place for your exhibitions.

Please register for further information by 15th of January 1999:

Jens Hornung
Zeppelinstrasse 31-1
D-72119 Ammerbuch
jens.hornung@uni-tuebingen.de

or Marcel LeCorre
Grasweg 12
D-73666 Baltmannsweiler
lecorre@aol.com
Fax: +49 (0)7153/48509

Please copy this first circular, give it to others and publish it in your magazines. Translations in German or French can be ordered from us. The second circular will be sent in February 1999.

Name:	_____
Address:	_____
Group:	_____
Contributions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Introduction of our service <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture(s) about following topic(s): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibition about the topic(s): _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> I'm interested in a workshop about the topic: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> I'm interested in caving trips. <input type="checkbox"/> I'm a dealer and want to display and sell my goods.
Child care for approx. _____ children is needed. Age: _____	
We want to take part with _____ people. How many for the workshops? _____	
How many for the symposium? _____	
Date, signature	_____

99

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ANNUAL DINNER

AGM

COMITTEE ROOM 4, STUDENTS UNION

2:30-5PM

SATURDAY 13 MAR 1999

DINNER

SATURDAY 13 MARCH AT 8PM

LE CHATEAU WINE BAR, PARK STREET

COST: £15 (FOR 3 COURSES PLUS COFFEE)

MENU

STARTERS

CREAM OF WATERCRESS SOUP TOPPED WITH HERB CROUTONS

A NEST OF MELON FILLED WITH PRAWNS MARIE ROSE

GRILLED GOAT'S CHEESE ON A BED OF SPINACH WITH WALNUT

VINAIGRETTE

MAINS

PRIME RIB EYE STEAK SAUTÉED WITH SHALLOTS AND

MUSHROOMS IN RED WINE

CHICKEN BREAST FILLED WITH SMOKED SALMON MOUSE

POACHED WITH WHITE WINE

FILO BASKETS FILLED WITH ORIENTAL VEGETABLES IN HOI SIN

SAUCE

AFTERS

FRESH FRUIT MILLE FEUILLE AND MANGO COULIS

CHOCOLATE PROFITEROLES WITH FRESH CREAM

CHEESE TRIO WITH CELERY AND BISCUITS

DINNER RSVP

CLIVE OWEN BY 27TH FEBRUARY 1999

17 NORMANTON ROAD

CLIFTON

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