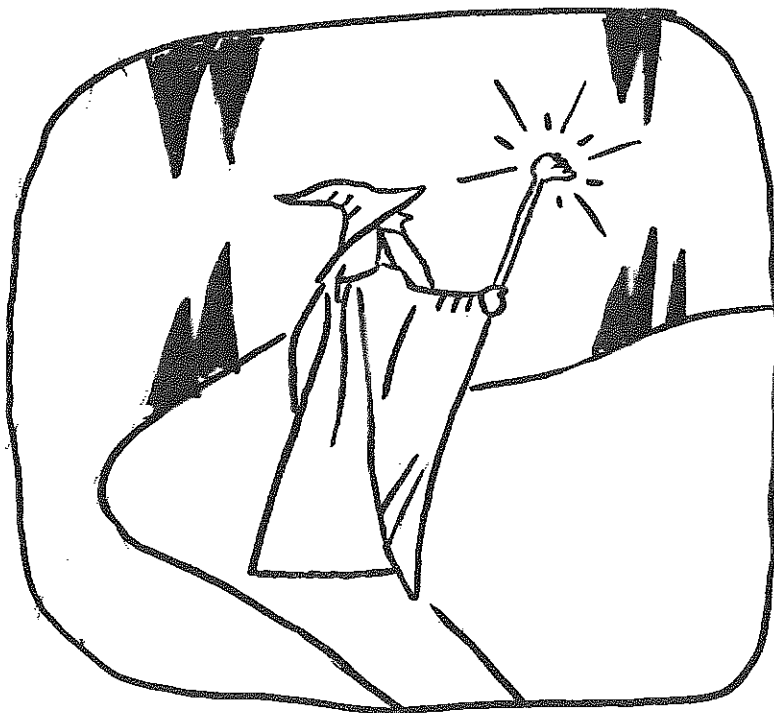


UBSS SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2002

The Fellowship of the UBSS



*Gandalf says, always:
Have a sensible hat
Carry a reliable light source
Wear appropriate clothing
Go in deep, go in hard...OR go down the pub
Beards optional...*

Welcome to the belated UBSS summer newsletter. After many issues of fine service Emma has decided to write her PhD thesis instead of this (shocking prioritisation if you ask me). Any members wishing to try their hand at the cutting edge of journalism (would look great on your CV...) would be more than welcome to take on the Autumn edition.

Well we finally have a T-shirt design as sported on the front cover. Sorry to those who ordered one from the last attempt. This time I will gauge interest, get a price (should be about £7) and get 'em printed! So if you wish to order one of these fine shirts just email (e.hodge@bristol.ac.uk), phone (01179289709) or write to me (Dept. Geography, Univ. Bristol, BS8 1SS) with a quantity and a size (S-XXL). I'll worry about colours around the time – probably something muted (cavers not being the most soap-loving of people).

It seems that after a lean 2001 we are getting underground as much as ever with numerous trips to Wales and Yorkshire plus a healthy showing on Mendip. Further afield the club was active in Sardinia (Easter) and of course County Clare (early June) – report later in this newsletter.

An elite squad were dispatched to take on the might of fellow Mendip clubs in the Wessex gun-carriage challenge in June. The team of myself, Rob, Pete Talling and Cedric came a respectable 5th. We relinquished a higher placing due to the effects of rather too many pints of Butcombe causing us to assemble the gun with the barrel upside down and back to front. (Un)fortunately we weren't allowed to find out what would happen if we tried firing it like that. The stomp in Priddy village hall afterwards needed to be experienced to be believed – a sort of combination of a barn dance and a fight. Needless to say we'll be back next year...

So, on with the newsletter – unfortunately no gravel OR Dirty Uncle Dickon. If you can contain your disappointment for the moment it does mean that there will have to be twice the amount of filth, rumour and downright lies in the next edition. With a packed calendar for next term that should be no problem. See below for trips/weekends planned.

Have a great summer,

Ed Hodge

TREASURER'S BIT

Graham Mullan

As usual, I have to give a list of those who have yet to pay their subs for the current year. For the benefit of those living in Europe, please note that I will accept payment in Euros, €20 being the equivalent to the current annual subscription of £12.

Will the following please send the appropriate sum to me ASAP:

Ed Bailey	Rosemary Balister	Ruth Charles (£24)
Andy Currant (£6)	Adam Goulding	Simon Grace (£24)
Tim Haynes	Heather Jackson	Jodie Lewis
Tim Lyons (£24)	Jez Newman	Marco Paganuzzi
Mike Thompson	James Tooley	Roy Vbranch (£24)

As ever, I would point out that the use of standing orders saves much time and effort (mine!) and that signing gift aid declarations enables us to claim a further percentage back from the Tax Man. Details of both these available from your friendly local Treasurer.

In Memoriam

We have just been informed of the death of Mike Watson, who had been a member of the Society since the early '60s. Mike had been suffering from cancer for a number of years and finally succumbed on 8th June. A full obituary will appear in the next issue of *Proceedings*.

Calendar for Autumn Term 2002

October

3-4th Freshers Fair (volunteers needed for the stall)

5-6th Freshers caving weekend on Mendip

8th Trip to Redcliffe Caves in Bristol (to be confirmed)

19-20th South Wales weekend

November

2-3rd Bonfire weekend on Mendip

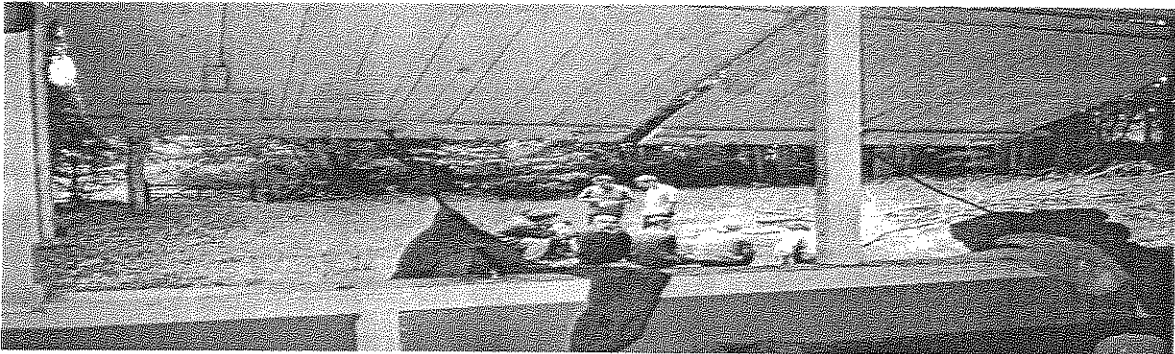
16-17th Derbyshire weekend

December

7-8th Yorkshire weekend

Christmas dinner (date to be confirmed)

HUT REPORT



Hut Fees: In order to prop up the finances we have had to introduce day fees to cover gas and maintenance costs. Fees will now be £1.00 (day) for members and £1.50 (day) for guests with an extra 50p if you spend the night.

Mattresses: We now have a set of plastic covered, thick, comfy and very tartan mattresses

Mice: We're not going to kill them because they nibbled a bit of somebody's food. Plastic containers will be provided for overnight storage.

POULNAGREE FOR THE UNINITIATED

In “Catch 22” Yossarian found that he could not be excused from combat missions on the grounds of insanity because by definition nobody who was sane would fly them and therefore anyone who objected to doing so must be sane. Exploring Poulmagree involves a similar paradox.

Fancy it? Here is what you have to look forward to:

Hour's carry to the pre-sump squeeze – recommended you get some friends to assist and take the gear in the day before you intend to use it. Those thin enough can suffer the tackle haul through the squeeze and into the deep pools beyond the Sump 1 bypass.

If you're not too wasted by the first day, don't drink too much Guinness and make an early start next morning otherwise you won't get out in time for any more of the black nectar that night.

Enjoy the gear-free run down to the Sump 1 with your partner. There are only you two here now – everyone else is somewhere (anywhere) more pleasant.

Truss yourself up in harness and hoses and crawl the last 70m to Sump 2.

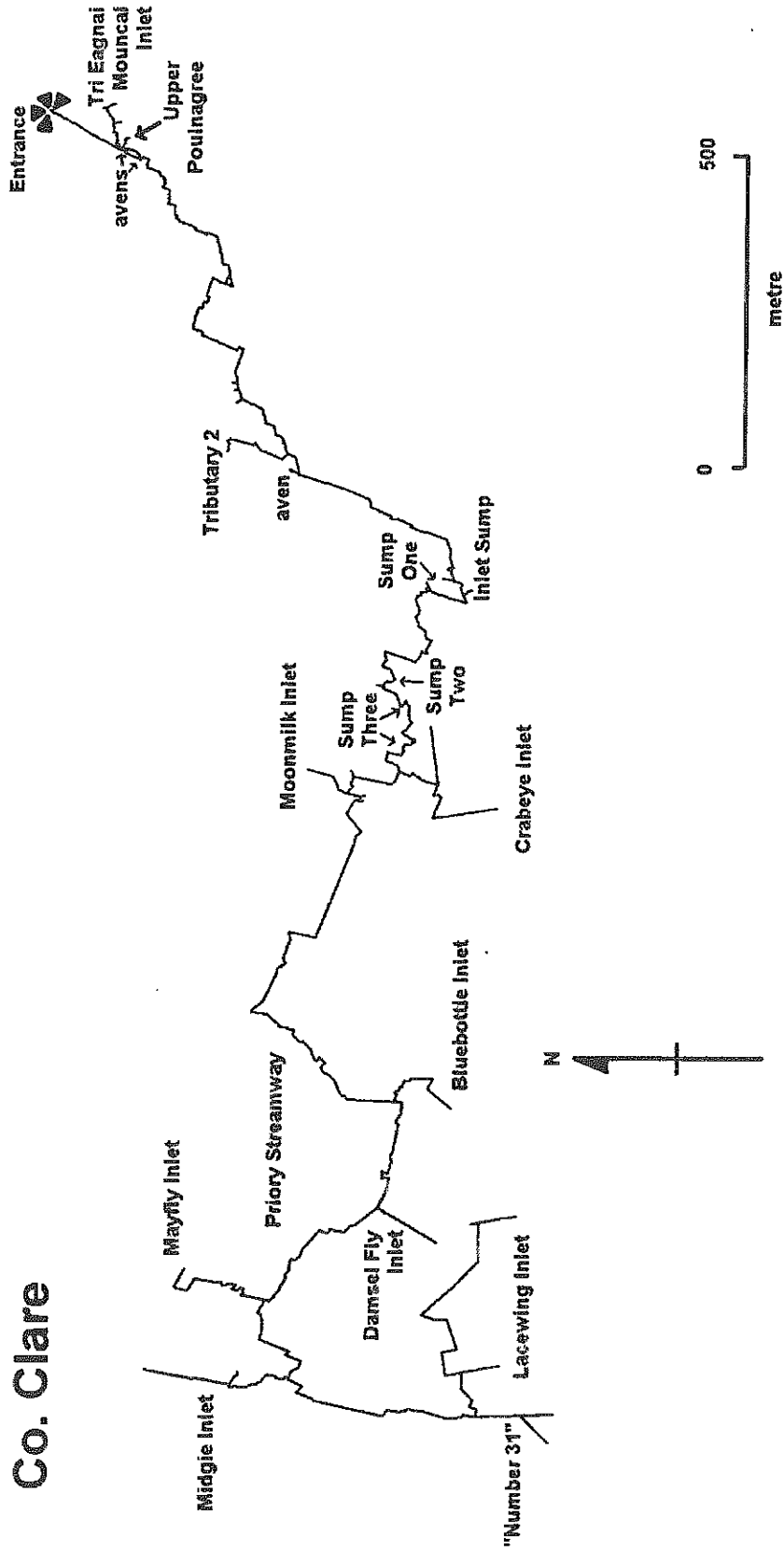
Dive Sump 2 – quite straightforward really, only 8m long with one tight bend.

Now wallow and crawl the 60m to Sump 3. This is the real goodie (thanks Steve). Only 70m long and of negligible depth but what it lacks in profundity it more than makes up for in opacity. Pull yourself through on the line (fins? – you must be joking!). Not too fast mind, otherwise concussion is certain on one of the 20 occasions you run into something in the dark.

Through at last, but is this really the Promised Land? Well, it's certainly untravelled. Only 4 people have ever been here. Does that tell you something about the chances of rescue if you get stuck in this place?

Actually it's quite pretty here and there and new passages wait to be explored. No running mind – you need to survey every leg with compass and note pad.

POULNAGREE Td Crumlin Co. Clare



Lovely moonmilk on the floor of this inlet. Such a shame to spoil its pristine whiteness by walking on it (the things we do for spelaeology!). Wonderful sharply scalloped phreatic tube, curiously blue in hue and absolutely clean washed – no mud or polish at all. Small forest of helectites and plenty of straws too (up to 60cm, nothing really spectacular) – take care as you pass them!

Insects smeared on the walls. Could this be the inlet that reaches the surface? Graunch and squeeze through a tight sharp rift only to find it gets too narrow.

Have you really been down here 6 hours already? Must be time to be setting off home. Should be out in 2 – 3 hours.

Pity you didn't find the dry way out. Never mind, it's someone else's turn next. Who's up for it then?

