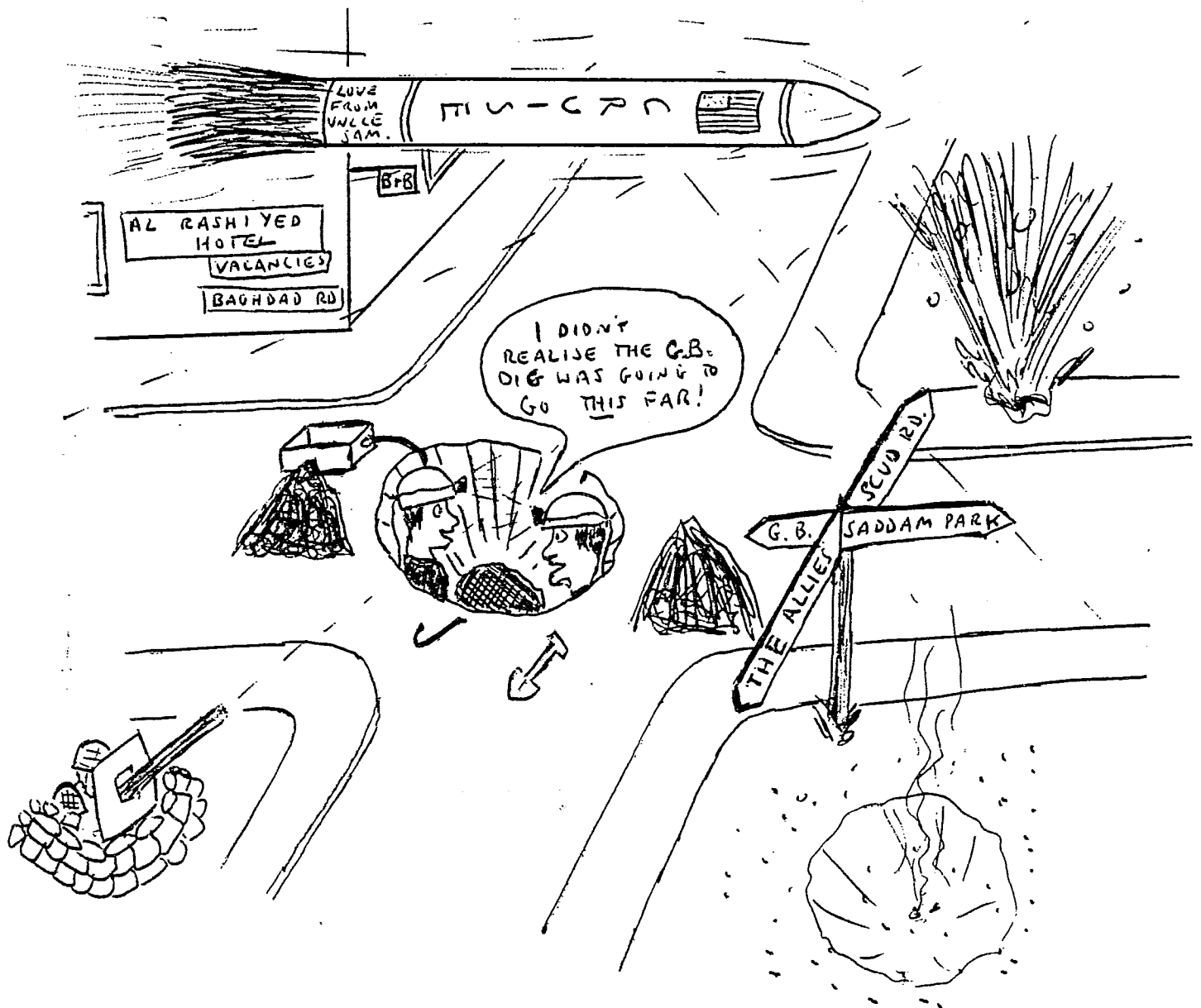


# U.B.S.S.



## NEWSLETTER

VOL 7, No 1

FEBRUARY 1991

# Editorial

Welcome to what is probably my last Newsletter as Editor, unless I somehow contrive to stay in Bristol, and do a Ph.D. Regular readers may have noticed how the presentation of newsletter has improved over the past two years. This is partly because I can now type reasonably well and also I have learnt to spel proply! I would like to thank all those people who have submitted articles or an onmously given me gossip and scandel, and I hope people will continue to submit articles in the future, otherwise there would be no newsletter.

All articles in this newsletter are the views of the authors and do not neccesarly reflect the views expressed by the committee.

Copy date for the next newsletter is Friday 10th May 1991.

Page 1	Editorial, Gravel.
3	Note on Tackle.
4	Hon Sec's bit.
5	Calendar & Addresses.
6	Caves of Northumberland Vol IV. L.Wilson.
7	The Great Little Neath Rescue.
9	Top of the Pots.
10	Caves and sediments in Eldon Hill Quarry. (A.F)
12	CUCC Majorca Trip J.Todd.
15	Hong Kong, Bill Miners. Add. to Library, A. Boycott.
16	New Caves in Co Westmeath, M.Simms. Travel Fund.



# Gravel

Here's an extract from Mr Cottle's book of Household Cookery:

Spag. Bol. (UBSS Style).

Ingredients (for 10 people.)

2 Kg Spaghetti.

Not a lot of mince.

Bits of red gunk which look like tomato.

As much garlic as you can lay your hands on.

Method. Boil Spaghetti, until it resembles a bogbrush. Add gunk to mince and fry. Serve, with mince on top to disguise spaghetti beneath, in girt big humongous portions.

Alternatively serve fried for breakfast, with loads of butter. (Ask Julian about this.)

Some people may be wondering why Andy Farrant has been asking various female members of the society, for pairs of old tights and stockings. He maintains it's for 'scientific purposes', so why did he also ask for the suspender belts as well????

The mind boggles....

Bill's favourite film has just been released. Arachnophobia is at a cinema near you, now.

Road Safety for beginners.



This means STOP, and is commonly seen at road junctions, for example the one at the Miners Arms near Priddy, eh Bill.



This means no entry, and can be observed at dual carriageway sliproads so you don't drive down a dual carriageway the *wrong* way, like Alison does.

Paul Drewery has continued the recently reintroduced art of seducing freshers at the start of the year. Having seen the exhausting effects this sport has had on Joe Oates, who has had to go to Africa for a 3 month rest, and Rob Fallows who has recently resigned from his job, (for health reasons?) Paul is apparently no longer talking to his brother who had spent a year taking the lady in question to expensive London restaurants without success, prior to Paul's 'offensive' on New Years Eve.

Rumour has it that the reason she left him was that he was too old.

A splinter group to the U.B.S.S. has been formed. The Univ. Bristol Sausage Society is dedicated to eating sausage butties outside all the known caves on Mendip. So far trips to the G.B. blockhouse and Tynings Great

Chris Bennetts ever faithful car broke down on the South Wales weekend. Apparently it wouldn't start, or maybe this was just a ploy to get out of an Aggy trip.

Dan of Wales went forth into the cavern, known to lesser mortals as Aggy, but finding a parting of the ways, he did take it into his mind to ignore at his peril the signs of the Cave Gods on the walls of the passage, which tell tales of impending tightness and that the passage does not go. So, in vain, Dan of Wales pushed till the bitter end, through terrible crawls and awful rifts, only to have to tell his brave stoic companions that the passage did not go.

And so, this valiant knight did have to redeem himself unto his colleagues, so he set forth and casting off his BDH, <sup>oop's, Jerry Chase!</sup> did set off down the passage, in search of the legendary main streamway of Agen Allwedd. With much hard travail, he did succeed most verily, and so was able to lead his companions forth, to complete the Grand Circle.

The moral of this tale, dear readers is:

"Thou shalt not lead the newsletter Editor astray down horrible grovelly passages which don't go, or thou shalt get lampooned in the next Newsletter."

Recent statistical analysis has shown that nearly every time Richard Stevenson is asked to do a dive, he mysteriously seems to contract 'flu. Is this just coincidence, or is there some other reason?

Great Quotes from history.

Bill, on the morning of the G.B. stake out, on apprehending some 'illegal' cavers.

"This is a stake-out, you're nicked."

So much for subtlety!

Steve, after letting someone under 16, out of G.B. on the Stake-out.

"Well, he looked old enough to me in the dark"

Question is Steve, old enough for what?

Someone in conversation to Gaynor,

"Lets face it, you cavers just like being squeezed"

Fame at last for Andy Farrant. After 6 years he finally gets his name in Descent

Steve 'the shuffler' Perry has just got engaged. It will come as no surprise to the older members of the society, that his fiancée's name is Jane.

Steve and Jane Warr are proud to announce the birth of their son Max - perhaps a rather unfortunate name, Max Warr sounds rather like Armageddon to me!

'From Russia with Love' has finally come true for one of the clubs least eligible batchelors. Galya Koulanina has accepted Charles Arbuthnott Self's proposal of marriage. True to Charlie's scientific training, Galya in English means Galena. Who would of thought that anyone would marry Charlie for his money?!

---

### Tackle.

On the club's weekend trip to South Wales in the Autumn term an FX2 head set was lost. This cost the club £24 so we would appreciate the return of the headset if anybody on that trip knows of its where it is. Members on trips in future will be issued with a light, and those Members will be responsible for that light for the entire trip.

Due to certain items going missing from the Tackle Store, members will only be able to gain access with an Authorised Key Holder. This person will check your tackle out and will also check your tackle in on its return. To find an Authorised Key Holder contact any member of the committee.

I would like to remind members that if equipment is not looked after properly then the club will refuse to replace any equipment that goes missing. This means less and less equipment will be available for your use. If equipment goes missing whilst being signed out under your name you will be billed for it.

It is now possible to book tackle in advance. If you don't book tackle then you can only have what is surplus to requirement on the day of issue.

If you have any problems please contact any member of the committee or myself who will be very willing to help.

MiCTE.

## Hon. Sec's Bit

Welcome to the start of another terms caving. Last term was packed with events such as freshers weekend where our new members took on the challenge of caving. Some have continued and are still enjoying it. If you didn't actually come caving last year then fear not for there are still planned trips for this term and anyone who hasn't been is still welcome to join us (*see calender and noticeboard for details*). We still meet in Crokers on Cotham Hill on Tuesdays at 9:30 where more individual trips are planned so come along if you haven't been and we can arrange shorter trips to see if you like caving.

### **Yorkshire Weekend.**

On February 9/10 we will be in Yorkshire where we will stay in caravans. Caves planned are County Pot on Saturday and for the more advanced (SRT) Lost Johns Cave or Notts Pot on the Sunday. Please see the notice board for details or come to Crokers where travel arrangements are made.

### **Rescue Practice**

The first UBSS rescue practice will be on Saturday 23rd of February in Cuckoo Cleaves cave. We are borrowing all the necessary equipment from the MRO and hope to have a quick rescue. Every caver is welcome (and needed-*ed*) to help. Remember all rescues are carried out by cavers and so it will be useful to know the techniques involved if you need to be rescued or participate in one.

NOTE-(We do have a good record for not having to be rescued for all those worried by the last sentence-*ed*).

It is also proposed to stay at the hut for the weekend for those who would still like to cave on the Sunday.

### **Annual General Meeting.**

This years AGM starts at 4:00 in the Spelaeo Rooms on the second floor of the Students Union and is open to ALL members of the society. If there are any motions they should be sent to the Hon. Secretaries one month in advance to be displayed on the notice board. At present the agenda is:-

- i) Secretaries Report
- ii) Treasurers Report
- iii) Election of Officers for 1991/92
- iv) Any Other Business.

Following the AGM there will be a talk by Charles Self on "Mineralogy including the trips to Russia and Spain".

The Annual Dinner will be at Pudseys Restaurant with the cost at approx. £15. All are welcome and we will meet in The Clifton P.H. at 7:30 for pre-dinner drinks. If you would like to come please speak to either secretary who will be able to tell you the menu choice and cost.

### **Tratman Grants**

The Tratman awards are available to all members for expedition purposes. All applications for awards should be made by 22nd March in writing to the president, Professor John Thornes, <sup>c</sup>/o The Geography Department .

### **Burrington Clean Up Weekend**

It is planned to have a clean up of most of the Burrington caves This may take place on the weekend of 16/17 March but details of this are not yet finalised. This will be a joint venture between University of Bristol Spelaeological Society, Axbridge Caving Group and CUCC. The Saturday evening will consist a pig roast and the usual festivities.

## Yorkshire permits

Mike McHale has arranged the following Yorkshire cave permits-

Birks Fell Cave:- Sun.5 May Sun.8 June Sun.13 July Sun. 10 August

Hammer Pot, Fountains Fell:-Sat.1 June Sat.6 July

Permits still available from last newsletter are;

Lost Johns 6 July 10 August

Notts Pot 7 July

Gingling Hole 11 May

If anyone would like these permits contact Mike at 5 Knox Rd.

Harrogate

N.Yorks.

5432 522742

Steve Cottle  
31, Cotham Vale,  
Cotham,  
0272 738713

Alison Garrard  
3, Alma Road  
Clifton  
0272 736898

## Calender For Forthcoming Events

- 9/10 Feb. Yorkshire weekend starting on Friday evening and staying in caravans. Saturday County Pot and Wretchid Rabbit for some and Sunday Lost Johns or Notts Pot for those with SRT.
- 13 Feb. Sessional meeting with Rob Palmer speaking on "The Caves Beneath  
Wed Cheddar Gorge." Starts at 8:00pm in the Spelaeo rooms.
- 23 Feb Rescue practice in Cuckoo Cleeves Cave. ALL volunteers are  
Sat. welcome (*needed-ed*).
- 9 March AGM Starts 4:00pm in the Spelaeo rooms.  
Sat. The speaker is Charles Self speaking on Mineralogy  
Followed by....  
The Annual Dinner at ...  
Pudseys Restaurant.- See Hon.Sec's Bit.
- 16/17 March Burrington clean up weekend with pig roast *see noticeboard  
nearer the time*
- 24 April Sessional meeting with Nick Barton on the subject of Flint  
Wed. Knapping. Starts at 8:00pm in the Spelaeo Rooms.
- 8 May Extra sessional meeting with the reports on last years successful  
Wed. Austria Expedition.

## USEFUL ADDRESSES

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

# THE CAVES OF NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND

## VOL IV.

Linda Wilson

After a years absence, Graham & I + dogs returned to Northumberland in search of caves.... or rather in search of a week's relaxation coupled with an excess of food. We found all three!

Our base, as usual, was the beautifully restored old gatehouse Akeld Lodge, two miles north of Wooler, owned by friends of my brother and available for holiday letting. (If anyone is interested, contact me for details as it's excellent for a self-catering holiday). This was our sixth visit to the area. At first, in 1982, one cave only was noted in *Northern Caves*, the sandstone rock shelter of St. Cuthbert's Cave; now the 1988 Volume 1, *Wharfedale & the North East*, has a separate (short) chapter on the area, with 14 sites noted. Nearly all the work in the area has been carried out by ourselves and by Pete Ryder of the Moldywarps Speleological Group (MSG) and there are now a further 4 sites to be included in the next revision. Admittedly, all the caves are short, and only one, Ward's Hill Quarry Cave (length 104 m), is in limestone. This was explored in 1977 by MSG & merits grade II. The other sites are mainly in Fell Sandstone, with Cateran Hole the longest at 38 m.

Several of the caves are associated with Fell Sandstone crags (e.g. Hepburn Crag caves, Cateran Rift & Thomas Wedderburn's Hole) and for this reason we decided to pay special attention to the crags as the chances of accidentally stumbling into another Cateran Hole on a featureless stretch of hillside seemed somewhat remote. This proved to be a reasonable theory and rewarded us with the following:-

### CALLER CRAG CAVE (NU 11500700)

Whilst driving along the B6341 from Rothbury to Alnwick, on our way to visit the rock shelter at Corby Crags, we noticed a crag to the south of the road with what appeared to be a hole in evidence. Mindful of the fact that you have to kiss an awful lot of handsome princes before finding a frog, we carried on to Corby crag and then couldn't be bothered to walk uphill again, so deferred our examination of the other crag to the next day when we set out again (leaving all our gear, tape compass etc. in the cottage). The site is marked on the maps as Caller Crag, and the closer we got the more the hole still looked like a hole until at last it was revealed as .... a genuine frog. A large entrance, 3 m high, 1.75 m wide is situated at the base of a Fell Sandstone crag and is obviously used as a sheep shelter. The cave is 6 m deep, and formed on a cross joint with passages on either side becoming too tight. Above this is an upper cave, about 1.3 m high and 2 m long which can be reached by a tricky looking climb from below, or from a heathery hole above. The total length is about 15 m.

### CALLALY CRAG CAVE (NU 06080940)

*Northern Caves* gives details of Thomas Weddurburn's Hole, a talus cave in Thrinton Wood, marked "Cave" on the OS 1:50000 map of the area, however examination of the map showed another "cave" marked further to the west in the same wood, between Castle Hill and Callaly Crag. The 1:25000 map gives

it a name, Macartney's cave. This seemed worth investigating even if it was bound to turn out (which it did) to be only a handsome prince. The "cave" is situated high up on a sandstone outcrop and is obviously man made, with pick marks showing on the walls. The entrance is oval shaped and leads to a roughly circular chamber about 1½ m high and the same wide.

Another crag about 40 m further up the steep slope seemed worth a look, and contained a large rock bridge which seems to be the remains of a larger arch. The rear section seems to have collapsed leaving a large boulder pile open at the front but still roughly roofed over, with the wall at the rear showing evidence of water action.

#### THE LITTLE CHURCH ROCK (NZ 02859945)

From our experience, it seems highly likely that the O.S. mark more "cave" sites in non-limestone areas than they do on limestone! This is another one. It is situated in Simonside Forest and is signposted from the Forestry Commission's waymarked track. In yet another Fell Sandstone crag, is a part natural, probably part artificial, shelter, about 2.5 m deep and 1 m wide. The joint on which it is formed can be traced all the way through the crag, and a couple of much smaller tubes can also be seen. The view from the top of the crag is probably superb in less cloud and, especially, less wind.

#### MURTON HIGH CRAG CAVE (NT 963496)

Graham's determination to rob Beela of her title of "The-dog-who-discovered-the-most-northerly-cave-in-England" has finally paid off and Routin Lynn has now been displaced. A suitable looking crag was located on the map, again Fell Sandstone. From a distance there seemed a hopeful hole, with a couple of sheep sheltering in it, at the base of the crag. Another frog, albeit a small one. A low entrance 0.3 m high by 1 m wide leads to a low passage with a sandy floor which chokes after 5 m. To the right in the same rock, another tube, 4 m long, leads to the same choke with about ½ m separating the two. I got very grubby wriggling in to investigate as again useful gear such as an oversuit remained back at the cottage.

It seems highly unlikely that a more northerly English cave will be found, as there is not much of England left to the north, but Beela has started to develop an interest in the geological map, just in case.

Further discoveries in this area will probably prove more elusive. Whilst we have actually looked at very little of the total outcrop of the Fell Sandstone, we have looked in all the obvious places, but you never know....

#### THE GREAT LITTLE NEATH RESCUE.

On a dark winters day in 1967 the gloom of our terrace cottage in darkest Pudsey was enlivened by three letters from Bristol hitting the mat on the Tuesday morning. This signified momentous happenings in the South West, two momentous happenings in fact. On a very wet weekend in Mendip Oliver Lloyd had decided personally to test the force of the flow of water into the entrance of, Stoke Lane. He had been swept in and had to be rescued by MRO. This had made the papers much to the amusement of the rest of Mendip.

Whilst this was going on however UBSS divers had dived Bridge Cave explored upstream and seen daylight coming through boulders. LNRC had been discovered and the message was "come quickly theres glory for the taking".

It was three weeks before we could get a trip together but in due course John Russum, Sara Parker and myself joined many more UBSS members as the exploration and survey continued.



Now when theres a whole new cave system waiting for you what does it matter if its sleeting a blizzard as you drive along the Heads of the Valleys. Suffice to say that a good trip was had by all and we returned to the entrance. After a debate between John and I as to which way we'd entered it it dawned on us that the river had risen and there was minimal airspace. Sucking on the roof we exited to find it fair pissing down outside. After changing we returned to the entrance to find a small whirlpool in the swollen river, where the entrance should be, and still 3 UBSS members inside.

There followed a lively discussion between Dave Savage and myself as to whether to call assistance or not but as there seemed no prospect of a respite in the weather Dave was eventually persuaded that pride would have to be swallowed and sent off to raise the alarm.

Twenty minutes later there was a clanging of bells and a flashing of blue lights. A fire engine with Dave on the back came bouncing across the field followed by a police land rover both of which promptly bogged down. "There will that do?" said Dave with bad grace.

More firemen arrived, and more policemen but no sign of any Cave Rescue. Lights were fixed up. One fireman climbed a tree and started sawing off branches. "Why is he doing that?" I said to John. "Dunno" said John "but he seems happy so leave him alone". Various firemen went over to look at the entrance slipped on the bank and fell in the river so in order to prevent this I got one of our ropes and tied it to a tree. On seeing this a large policeman with a lot of scrambled egg on his shoulder came over to me and said "Are you the Cave Rescue boyo?". I pointed out that it appeared that the local cave rescue team had yet to put in an appearance but that I was a member of a cave rescue team in Yorkshire. That was good enough. What did we want them to do? I explained the situation and pointed out that the only solution to the problem seemed to be a small koffer dam in the river with sandbags and that once that had been done the trapped people would probably be able to get out under their own steam.

"Sandbags". The word echoed around the field in thick Welsh accents through the hissing of the rain. "Have you got any sandbags?" No we havn't got any sandbags. Havn't you got any sandbags? "Better get on to the NCB"

In what seemed an incredibly short time a Mines Rescue Land Rover arrived with the sandbags. Savage, Russum and I set to work helping to fill them but were promptly rebuked by the senior policeman. "No, no you save yourselves, we'll be needing you later".

So the three of us stood in a soggy row in the pouring rain hands in pockets whilst our every comment or suggestion was relayed by the police officer to the toiling firemen.

By this time the whole scene was bathed in floodlights and the koffer-dam was taking shape. Suddenly there were lights across the field. The SWCC had at last been persuaded to forsake the Gwyn Arms. Clive Jones came striding across the field and weighed up the scene of dazzling illumination and furious activity. "Oh look boys, this is the secret entrance". With great difficulty we restrained them from kitting up to dive Bridge Cave and various other trips as clearly they were far more interested in getting into the cave than concern for the trapped party. It also transpired that stories had got mixed and by the time the message reached the Gwyn it was that Oliver was trapped in LNRC. They seemed to lose even more interest after discovering that this was not the case. However they had brought with them a party of young ladies who were staying at Penwyllt and they found filling sandbags really quite exciting. Very shortly therefore the river had been persuaded away from the cave entrance and the water flowing in vastly reduced. Although we had earlier been able to make voice contact with the trapped party they had naturally retreated to sit it out in the dry. All that therefore remained was for someone to go in and tell them it was time to go home.

At this suggestion a small wet-suited South Walesian positively shot into the entrance. "Who's the little hero in the blue helmet?" said Sue Norton, clearly not too concerned as to her husband's welfare on the inside. Five minutes later the three emerged and the entertainment was over for the night. We departed leaving the local Fire Brigade scratching their heads and weighing up how to retrieve their fire engine, now well and truly up to its eyes in the middle of the field.

The 1966/67 Proceedings contain a very stiff and dry report of this incident. Members might like to know what really happened.

### TOP OF THE POTS.

This is a rundown of the all-time Top Twenty hit singles, as compiled by Poll Opinion.

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 1)  | Going Underground.                         | The Jam.  |
| 2)  | Down Down Deeper and Down.                 | Status Quo.   |
| 3)  | I come from a Land Down Under.             | Men at Work.(dedicated to Aussie cavers.)                             |
| 4)  | Push It.                                   | Salt'n'Pepa.  |
| 5)  | Hey you, the Rock Steady Crew.             | The Rock Steady Crew - featuring the Daren Diggers.                   |
| 6)  | Turn it on again.                          | Genesis, dedicated to all those with a carbide light.                 |
| 7)  | I'm Going Down.                            | Bruce Springsteen.  |
| 8)  | Solid Rock.                                | Dire Straits - dedicated to J.Rat for his efforts down Bowery Corner. |
| 9)  | The Only Way is Up                         | Yazz.   |
| 10) | I Still Havn't Found what I'm Looking For. | U2. Dedicated to the G.B. diggers.                                    |
| 11) | Underground Overground.                    | Mike Batt and the Wombles.  |
| 12) | Dancing in the Dark.                       | Bruce Springsteen.  |
| 13) | Digging your Scene.                        | The Blow Monkeys, for all Mendip cavers.                              |
| 14) | In a Different Light.                      | The Bangles, for those with carbides.                                 |
| 15) | We Call it Acid.                           | D'mob, dedicated to all those who have had leaks using Lead-Acids.    |
| 16) | The Lion Sleeps Tonight                    | Tight Fit, for John Hutchins.   |
| 17) | Hour Glass.                                | Squeeze.  |
| 18) | Candles.                                   | Chris Rea, In memory of Herbert Balch's dependable Illuminant.        |
| 19) | I Can See Clearly Now.                     | Hot House Flowers. For when you get used to the dark.                 |
| 20) | Beer Drinkers and Hell Raisers.            | Z.Z. Top. For all cavers everywhere.                                  |

## CAVES AND SEDIMENTS IN ELDON HILL QUARRY, DERBYSHIRE

or 'What Cave Scientists really get up to.'

*A.Farrant.*

Twas a cold and foggy night, back in December when myself and Dr Pete Smart left Bristol, bound for Derbyshire to spend three days looking at some infilled cave deposits in Eldon hole quarry, near Castleton. After stopping off at Gateways, for a few essential items like Coffee and Chocolate Biscuits, we zoomed up the motorway, if that's possible in a Geog. Dept minibus. We stayed that night in Manchester, at John Gunn's place, (He's the bloke who tells cave guides they shouldn't smoke because of Radon.) after finally finding John's house after driving round and round a housing estate, in thick fog, with Pete telling me he had only been to the place once before.

After spending one of the most uncomfortable nights imaginable, cooped up on a sofabed, which was at least two feet too short for someone my height, we were up at six, aiming to be at the quarry by eight. (If you didn't know already, Pete's a bit of a workaholic.) We would have been at the quarry at eight, had it not been for the A6 not being signposted, and the motorway not being marked on the map.

Eldon Hill quarry is situated on one of the highest parts of the limestone outcrop, a short way south of Rushup Edge, and is very close to Giants Hole, P8, and Jackpot. On arriving we were met by Mike Simms, from Bristol, Andy Perkins from Univ E.Anglia, and the operator of a hydraulic lift, which we were using to get access to the cliff face. In the lower part of the quarry, there were loads of infilled caves, up to 15m high, all completely filled with mud and gravel. For Mike and I, the job was to record the sedimentary sequences exposed. This entailed going up in the lift, 20m above the quarry floor and looking at the sediments. The one slight problem was that most of the surrounding cliff face was doing an incredible, gravity defying balancing act, and heavy lorries were trundling along the quarry road at the top of the cliff. The lift operator, a rather rotund bloke, took an extremely fatalistic view, remarking,

"If that lot goes.. and hits t' basket, then we'all be dead, and then you won't 'ave t' worry 'bout your mud."

It should be emphasised at this point, that the temperature was hovering below freezing, with a northerly wind blasting in to the quarry. The lift operator then started complaining about his cold feet, so we had to go back down for him to change his boots. As for Andy 'Son of Magnetostrat' Perkins, well he wasn't enjoying himself that much either, but then, neither would you, if you were 20m above the quarry floor, with loads of hanging death above you, freezing cold and suffering from vertigo. By the end of the day, the lift operator was saying,

"This is the worst job I've ever done, an' I don't know 'ow you guys can stick it out. What aah could dowit' now, is a hot cuppa tea an' a warm fire. The worst job I've ever 'ad, I think I picked the short straw on this one."

We finished work at about five, due to bad light, and then drove to Castleton, to stay at Dr Trevor Fords place, after dropping the driver at a B&B in Sparrowpit. As since the quarry company were paying for our food, we went out for a meal in a local pub, so, not wishing to be too extravagant, I stuck to my usual diet of Rump steak and Black Forest Gateaux, washed down by a couple of pints.

The next day the weather was worse, as it began to rain. We were working in an older part of the quarry, looking at another section when finally we found some stal. This meant we would be able to date the section, using radiometric dating techniques. After lunch, Mike and I decided to look at the next section. As we were walking over to the lift, a few rocks came crashing down, followed by a much larger mass of rock, onto the spot where Mike and I were heading for, and just missing the hydraulic lift. Pete came over to take a look to make sure the lift was alright. Then, another lot began to peel away from the cliff. It was at this point Pete broke the hundred metre sprint record in his dash for safety. Meanwhile the lift operator was crouching in the lift basket, while rocks dented the other end of the basket. The common consensus was to leave this section alone as it was a little too dangerous for our own good. Instead Mike and I looked at one of the sections in the upper part of the quarry, which looked just as dodgy. To get access, the lift was parked on a slight angle, which when you're 15m up seems a lot worse. When we asked the operator, if it was safe at this angle, he replied that he didn't know because he hadn't operated it on an angle this steep before. Great, so reassuring to know when you're 15m up in a rather exposed basket.

He also told us of a few of his other jobs, one of which was working in the quarries on Portland Bill, where he said they used to dig up giant Termites. Mike and I couldn't quite comprehend this until we realised he actually meant Ammonites.

By the end of the second day I think the driver had resigned to the fact he was going to get wet and cold, and no doubt, pissed off. However Nature intervened.

The locals were predicting snow. They were right, it snowed, and snowed and snowed even more. The following morning there was six inches of undrifted snow, and almost every single road in Derbyshire was blocked. Getting to the quarry was out of the question due to deep drifts and marooned vehicles in Winnats Pass. By the time it stopped snowing at four in the afternoon, the snow was ten inches deep. After spending most of Saturday marooned in the house, the snowplough finally got through. It was decided to make a dash for home. If we got stuck, we had food, shovels and sleeping bags in the van, and loads of gravel samples for traction! Getting down to Matlock wasn't too bad, but Birmingham was the worst. The M42 was closed, as was the M6 and M5, but that didn't stop Pete, who drove down the coned off sliproad leading onto the M5.

We finally got back to Bristol just in time for me to miss the Christmas Dinner. I think I'll stick to the Bahamas next time.

On the subject of Cave Science, does anyone fancy counting the number of times water drips onto a stalagmite for two hours down G.B. Andy Baker is looking for some volunteers for this exciting and stimulating project, and it's all in the name of Science!

## Some Winter Caving in a Civilized Climate

Early this January when the weather was particularly awful such that it threatened to strand two cars in Scotland the day before they wanted to get to the airport, I went to Majorca with the CUCC for a week. On not many caving related holidays do you find yourself living in a two star hotel, get your room cleaned beds made every day and be left to eat as much as you want from the buffet at dinner in the evening, so we made the most of it. How squalid can your room become just by unpacking your unclean caving gear onto the floor? Very squalid.

I must give background. This Majorcan holiday has been done by CUCC three times now. ULSA have done it five or six times at least, that's where we got the idea from. The date is selected by finding the cheapest week a tour operator will do a package holiday there. Sometimes it is before Christmas, sometimes after because a lot of grannies go there specifically for Christmas, so prices rise then. The place is deserted (except for left-over grannies) and not unspeakably hot (which for some reason most tourists prefer it to be). Also, the hotelled bit is exactly on the opposite side of the island from where all the caves, mountains, cliffs and gorges are.

A week long holiday once a year in the same place poses a strategic activities problem. What do you do? The first time around everything is new and you do what little you know about. We knew the location of Campaña (2nd largest cave on island and contains serious helictites) and of two gorge-walks. The second gorge-walk, Sa Fosca, is very deep, dark, narrow, contains thousands of ice-cold lakes and pull-through pitches and I can say that it was the worst epic I have ever been on. There are also the show-caves. Cuevas del Drach is not as tacky as they get. A leaflet advertizing it winds up in every welcome folder given by every hotel to every tourist. If you are a plebby tourist there isn't much to do for a week in Majorca except lie on the beach, etc. and I am sure most of them go to Drach on one day. This showcave is big business.

Then, in the second year, you all go again. But a week is so short you cannot waste a single day and you find yourself doing all the same walks, caves and gorges all over again, but this time getting it right. Sa Fosca was a piece of piss once we'd got over the wind-up the night before.

I signed up for third year and then realized it was possibly going to be disastrously boring doing everything a third time. Apart from that, there was an over-representation of man-woman couples who walk around everywhere as four-legged monsters at the speed of a snail. What we needed were some caves.

Fortunately the UBSS library has a selection of annual Majorcan spaeleological journals. Unfortunately they were written in some obscure Majorcan dialect of spanish which not even the Majorcans bother to speak. Fortunately I found a comprehensive list of all the known caves carefully including their type and grid reference. These were in numbers, so no language problem. We bought 1:25000 maps too and found that the longitudes were well out; all our caves would have been in the sea otherwise.

So we had the maps, we had the grid references (seasonally adjusted). Some of the caves were listed on the maps, but the map maker invariably left out the  $\Omega$ -symbol which would have pinpointed the position. One night while I was getting drunk I tried to separate the data into two piles of maps and coordinates for two different parts of the island for two groups of cars to drive to and search for, but the task became intellectually too demanding. I went on team Pollença and we didn't find a single cave. Instead we found a latrine, a nature reserve, a military base and an expensive house inside a rectangle of barbed wire. We had been looking for Rodes, Font de L'Algaret, a selection of coastal caves on what would have been a rather picturesque peninsula, and Cal Pesseo, in that order. Team Manacor found Diners (by asking the location from a nearby house) but didn't go down very far because they didn't know it was rated 4th on the island.

The next day I started with a team down Sa Fosca, but we started to argue among ourselves, lost a rope without trace in the first cold lake and prussicked back out instead of pulling the rope down the first pitch and committing ourselves. We forestalled a very bad disaster and got back in time for tea.

At last we found the error on the map: the latitude was out by 300m, so we then began finding caves. A quick trip to do Diners properly (which is comprised of a labyrinth, a huge low-ceilinged chamber which all routes of the labyrinth lead back to when you are trying to get out, and many hard, sloping, steep rifts with helictites on one wall so you are only allowed to climb on the other wall which is absolutely smooth) was followed by Pont and Pirata. This is where ULSA have been diving. These two caves have been show-caved, paths and steps have been chiselled everywhere but the man who paid for it failed to organize a road anywhere near them, so he can't cash in on the tourists like Drach has, and wrecked a cave for nothing. The paths are falling apart, but the stals aren't getting any less broken.

On the last day we did Rodes which involves three pitches, the second which can be bypassed by a free-divable sump. I took a mask down with me and swam and looked in the pools before they silted up. That evening after supper (or should I say stuff-er) I led a couple of people to Pont and Pirata in the dark (after the usual drive to the other end of the island) and snorkled in the large lakes that were there with my caving lamp which was, surprisingly, bright enough underwater. It was quite spooky and I am only just able to appreciate what cave diving might be like. The lake was quite shelved, had stalegtites entering it in places and I swam into the walls and scraped my snorkle on the ceiling so that foul tasting flakes of rock fell into it.

The pub stayed open till five in the morning and served strong cocktails, so despite getting back late, I became trashed.

--- Julian Todd

The Japanese Army occupied Hong Kong during the Second World War and had many tunnels dug using slave labour. The tunnels would have been used to defend Hong Kong if the Allies had tried to recapture the colony.

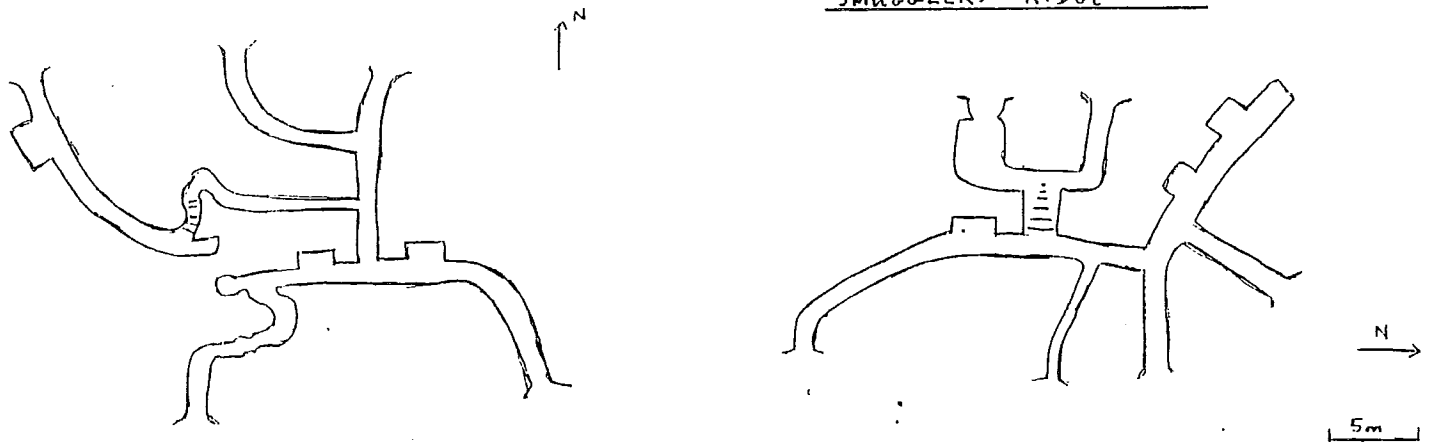
I live in Hong Kong and went home at Christmas, the tunnels are the closest thing to caves that Hong Kong has apart from a few old mines. The entrances are usually very difficult to find in the undergrowth and searching for them involves a lot of bush bashing. Most tunnels are dug near the top of tall hills with the entrances on either side of the ridgeline and about thirty feet below the summit. The tunnels are dug in soil and sandstone and tool marks can be seen on the walls. Passages are about five feet high and three feet wide. There are occasional small rooms or large shelves at the edges of the passages. The large shelves may have been used as sleeping platforms. A few bats live in the tunnels and there are all sorts of insects.

At Ma On Shan the entrances have small concrete defence works and near the entrances the tunnels have a double bend in them to limit any blast. Sometimes the tunnels were dug underneath the existing concrete British emplacements.

I have sketched out two typical systems from memory. The Smugglers ridge system was found only recently by a retired U.S. Marine who had experience of tunnel hunting from the Vietnam War.

DEVILS PEAK.

SMUGGLERS RIDGE



ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY JANUARY 1991

Tony Boycott

JOHN SAVORY 1989 A Man Deep in Mendip. The Caving Diaries of Harry Savory 1910 - 1921.

S CAMPBELL & D Q BOWEN The Quaternary of Wales: Geological Conservation Review. Nature Conservancy Council 1989

DEREK FORD & PAUL WILLIAMS Karst Geomorphology & Hydrology. 1989

T D FORD Limestones & Caves of Wales. BCRA. Cambridge Univ. Press 1989

PETER ANDREWS Owls, Caves & Fossils. Natural History Museum. 1990  
Analysis of fauna from Westbury-sub-Mendip.

CHELSEA SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY Records Vol 18 Database of underground sites in South East England. Adrian Pearce 1990.

D R BRADSHAW Report on the British Speleological Expedition to VIETNAM 1990

ROSS ELLIS Australian Caves and Caving 1980 14

## NEW CAVES IN CO. WESTMEATH, IRELAND

Following a tip-off from Dave Drew, I spent a few days in September exploring the hills to the north and west of Castlepollard. The topography of this area is rather atypical of the Irish midlands, comprising numerous steep-sided limestone hills rising to several hundred feet above a plain scattered with loughs of various sizes. One of these, Lough Lene, was noted by Coleman as draining underground to several springs in the village of Fore, about 1 km to the north. There are several craggy limestone outcrops on the hill to the south of Fore and in the crag immediately behind the church is a tall narrow rift which looks at least partly karstic in origin, though no attempt was made to enter any passage beyond. The most spectacular of the limestone hills in this area is the Rock of Curry, on the south-west side of which a near vertical face exposes more than 30 m of almost horizontally-bedded limestone. Several small caves were located at the base of this cliff and all were explored until further progress was prevented by sediment fill or resident badgers. The longest of these, which contains many large, evil-looking spiders and a selection of different types of flying insect, would make an easy dig for anyone thin enough to pass the 23 cm wide corner leading into the "Main Chamber" (large enough to turn around in!). The main group of caves is located at the base of the cliff immediately above and for a short distance to the north-west of a major break in the hazel scrub marked by a large scree. One of the caves comprises a tall rift with choked passages developed at two levels. The other three enterable caves comprise small passages, about 1-1.5 m high and less than 1 m wide. They appear to be developed at a common level and, judging from their morphology and configuration, comprise fragments of a rectilinear phreatic maze cave. Possibly they represent tower karst caves since the local topography is reminiscent of a degraded (?Tertiary) tower karst. Scalloping on the passage walls indicates water flow into the hill and, since the caves now lie some 50 m above the valley floor, they must considerably pre-date the present landscape. A further section of, largely unroofed, vadose passage was found close to the summit on the southern flank of the hill which lies between the Rock of Curry and the Hill of Mael to the east. It too must be very much older than the present landscape.

*Mike Simms*

### TRAVEL MONEY

The society has a travel fund which can be used to subsidise travel expenses to and from caving trips. It is available to all student members, and those drivers taking students, for travel within the U.K. To apply for this fund all you have to do is to obtain a claim form off either the secretaries or the student treasurer, Andy Farrant, and simply fill it in and hand it back.