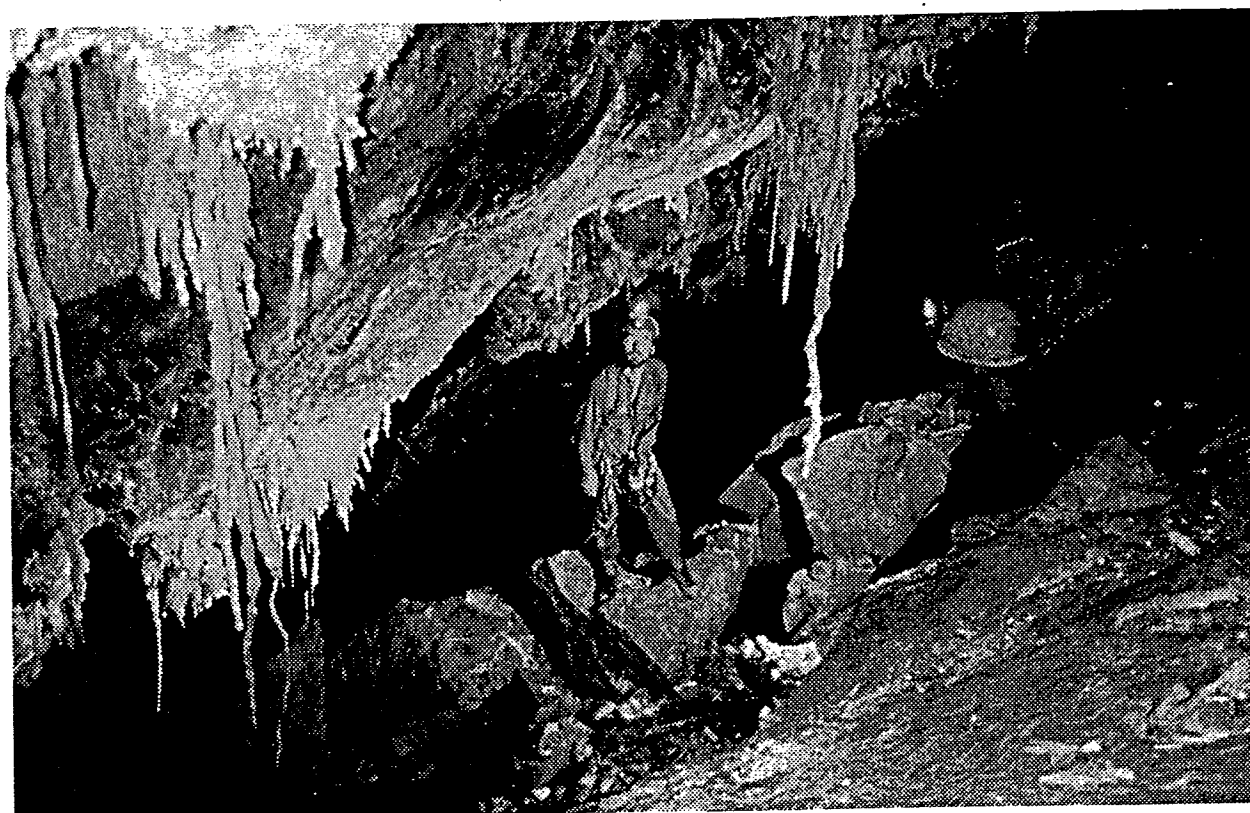


U.B.S.S.

University of Bristol Speleological Society



NEWSLETTER

Vol 9 N^o. 2

May 1993

Editorial

Well, here's the last Newsletter of this Academic year - I hope it will provide a bit of light relief from revision! As usual it is packed full of news, articles and gossip. However, the format has changed slightly. Don't let this stop you from sending in any news items or interesting articles though. As usual, items can be sent to me via the Students Union, Queens Rd, Bristol. If anyone has any old envelopes that they don't want, either at home or work, save them and send them to us as they can be used to send out the next edition of Newsletter, saving both paper and money. Now the disclaimer; All opinions and comments expressed in Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Committee.

Finally - good luck in any exams and happy caving.

Andy Farrant

Contents.

Newsdesk	1
Hon Secs Bit	3
The Official opening of the stables	4
Tim's Caving Grundies (!)	6
Ireland '93	7
The Summer Bar-b-que	8
Treasurers Report	9
Eight go to Yorkshire	11
The Annual Dinner	12
Caving in Oman	13
Odds and Sods	17
Address list	18

Cover Photo:

Edwins Long Cut - Clearwater Cave, Sarawak. One of the discoveries during the Mulu '91 expedition. Photo - Matt Kirby.

(Thanks to Tony Philpott)

Newsdesk

Planning for the Wessex Challenge is well in hand. The theme is to be 'Knights of the Round Table'. This is basically Charlies original idea of Alchemy and Wizardry widened to allow a bit more scope in terms of costume and course design, while still appealing to the BEC's appetite for mindless violence. The event is to be held on Sat. 10th July at 2.00pm at the UBSS hut in Burrington (please park cars in the Coombe, not at the hut and walk up - unless you are transporting a chariot), followed by a Stomp at the Priddy Village Hall from 7.30 pm. Music will be provided by Snakes Alive, and food will be available. Tickets will cost approx. four pounds available from the Committee nearer the time. For further details and if you'd like to help, contact Andy Farrant.

BCRA Conference.

As many of you will be aware, this years annual British Cave Research Association Conference is to be held on the 10-12th September at the Students Union here in Bristol. This is the event where all cavers (not just cave scientists) get together to see films, lectures, videos and have a stomp on the Sat. night. Entertainment at this years event will be 'Blind Panic' - a Celiech/folk rock band, who will be supporting the Cajun/rock/reggie band K-Passa, arguably one of the best bands in Bristol. If anyone is around in early September and would like to lend a hand in any way possible, or would like to give a talk, (especially those cave scientists among you) contact Andy Farrant and he can put you through to the relevant person.

People are mainly needed to help sell tickets on the door of both the main conference and the evening stomp, and also to help with security.

Wigmore Swallet

Trebor and fellow BEC members have conducted a radiolocation test at Wigmore which confirms the accuracy of the survey, and proves the cave is trending east and south, away from the resurgence and heading towards the sandstone, ie the 'wrong' direction. The cave is developed in the Triassic Dolomitic conglomerate infilling a Triassic valley in the Old Red Sandstone. Unfortunately, the divers were unable to push the downstream choke for lack of time, but prospects still look good.

Dye tracing has proved that Attborough Swallet to the SE drains into Wigmore - further dye tests should hopefully clarify the hydrology of this geologically complicated area.

Swildons Hole

A connection has been made between the top of the Short Dry Way at the base of Jacobs Ladder to the base of the climb in the Wet Way below Binny's link. This may have the effect of pirating the water from the Wet Way into the Dry Way, so the Wet will become dry and vice versa!

Whitepit

The BEC have found another 150' of passage near the entrance shaft, which ends in a choke above the lower series of passages. Prospects still look good.

The GB Dig.

Flooding and bad air are still causing problems here, but the dry weather in March enabled a bit of digging to be done. We are now approx 10m beyond the point where Graham and Tony broke through into the rift (see previous newsletters). The passage continues but is choked with partially cemented coarse sand and fine gravel. The passage appears to be

paragenetic in origin, ie, the passage roof eroded up, instead of the floor being cut down, due to the influx of sediment protecting the floor from dissolution and forcing the water to dissolve the roof. It is hoped the dig will bypass the probable choked phreatic loop in the main passage. Still looks promising though. Contact Tim or Andy if you fancy getting fame and glory (eventually) - not to mention muddy!

****STOP PRESS****

Reports are coming that Trevor Mosedale and Sarah Walker are proud parents of a baby boy. Both baby and mother are doing fine. Congratulations! Question is - is the surname to be 'Walkdale' or 'Moseker'!

UBSS Cave Leaders

Don't forget, the UBSS has leaders for various caves, including OFD 1, (Charlie, Tony Boycott), Dan yr Ogof (Graham Mullan, Tony Boycott), Charterhouse Cave (Tony Boycott) St Cuthberts (Tony Boycott), Reservoir Hole (Linda Wilson - closed for the summer), Pen Park Hole (Steve Cottle, Paul Harvey) and Shute Shelve Cavern (Andy Farrant).

Car theft

Car theft is still on the increase, especially in the Daren car park, where Snablet recently had all 5 windows of his car smashed. Please be warned and take any valuables down the cave with you, or leave them at home. Leaving someone on guard is another option.

Congratulations to Dr P.L Smart and Fiona Whittaker who are getting married on the 17th June. Best wishes from the UBSS. Pete Smart is also to be congratulated on his recent promotion from Senior Lecturer to Reader of Geography.

The Hon Sec's Bit

Well, no sooner had Alison set sail from the lofty heights of Hon. Sec. and Tim taken hold of the reins, the time for delegation had arrived (does Tim ever do anything?). So it's down to me to write these words of wisdom.

As you'll be aware by now, the Museum and Library have been officially opened. Thanks must go to all those involved in it's set up and the memorable opening ceremony. The sight of Rachel offering drinks to Sir John Wills will live with me forever.

After the museum opening came the AGM and annual dinner. Again thanks to all those involved in the organisation, and I understand that the management of Vintners Wine Bar are already anticipating our return next year.

As for caving, last term saw some excellent trips to Yorkshire, Derbyshire and South Wales. We have several permits for some Yorkshire caves including Pen-y-ghent pot for and masochists. Hopefully, this time, club members will actually make it to the bottom. This term and during the summer months see many exciting trips arranged - see the list below. It is also hoped to arrange an end of term/year/examinations trip to the Gower peninsula for surfing, bar-b-ques and fun! (with perhaps a bit of caving too?!).

Anyone interested in this years expedition to Slovenia departing late Aug/early Sept, see Matt or Tim as soon as possible. Don't forget - the UBSS continues to meet in Crockers on Cotham Hill from about 9.30 on Tuesday evenings, including the summer months - so if you are around, drop in and arrange a trip - it's never too late!

Finally best of luck to all you out there with exams, and have a good summer vacation.

Mike White

CALENDER - SUMMER 1993

May 22nd (Sat)	Birks Fell and Hammer Pot permit - see Tim Parish if interested
June 12th (Sat)	Otter Hole trip - probably the best cave in Britain with amazing formations - trip numbers limited to 6 - see Tim.
June 18-19th (Fri/Sat)	Trip to the Gower - for surfin', cavin' and fun - details nearer the time.
June 26th (Sat)	Pen-y-Ghent Pot permit - a masochists trip for those who like icy crawls - who knows - it may even have warmed up!
July 3rd (Sat)	County/Lancaster permit - a chance to get lost in Britains biggest cave system.
July 10th (Sat)	The Wessex Challenge. This is the annual chariot race and dancing extravaganza - it's up to the UBSS to organise it this year so we need EVERYBODY to come to this - please!
July 17th (Sat) & Aug 7th (Sat)	Lost Johns Permits - see Tim Parish if interested.
11-12 Sept (Sat & Sun)	BCRA Conference - this year held at the Students Union, Bristol. Again - help for this would be appreciated.

THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE STABLES

Linda Wilson

As reported in the last issue, a vast amount of increasingly feverish activity in January and February was intended to culminate in an official opening of the Stables on 5th March. The really amazing thing was that it actually happened!

Sir John Wills was kind enough to accept our invitation to perform the opening ceremony and from that moment on, we were committed. By the end of January, all the museum cases had been refurbished and contained smartly decked out backing boards in a tasteful pale grey material, which we hoped would show the exhibits off nicely, but now the tricky bit started. We actually had to get the displays ready. There are five large cases in the museum plus one small flat cabinet, and our choices for the displays were Geology (done by Charlie), Pleistocene (CJH), Bronze Age, Iron Age (both done by Lesley-Ann) and UBSS Publications (by a coalition consisting of GJM, LJW, AB and HCW).

The publications display was the first one to take shape, and was intended to illustrate the Society's long history through the medium of its publications, which started in 1919 with both Proceedings and a Newsletter, the Troglodytes. The two branches of our publications have continued in one form or another to the present day, with such diverse sidelines along the way as the two books, the Caves of North-West Clare and the Caves of County Clare, together with the black and white postcards of the area and our T-shirts and sweatshirts. All the latter items are displayed in a colourful corner entitled Soft Backs and Hard Facts. I felt that the pink sweatshirt and the orange T-shirt showed to particular advantage against the black backdrop, but the most usual comment made by anyone else was "....um....stunning...."

As soon as we started to get the displays into the cabinets one major problem became apparent, we desperately needed internal lighting. By now, everyone was working flat out on their own displays, Charlie had no time to divert from his rocks and the rest of us had no electrical expertise, so help was needed and fast. A phone call to Chris Pepper (ex-Hut Warden and electrical wizard) soon sorted this out and within a very short space of time the cabinets started to resemble Blackpool Illuminations. A great improvement.

By early February, bones and pots were also starting to come out of boxes and rocks were being sorted out at a frantic pace. The theme of the geological display became "Thermal Water in Caves". Charlie used his excellent specimens from Turkmenistan to good effect on one side, with Pen Park Hole and some other local samples being shown on the other. We needed some means of displaying the samples, other than in serried rows on shelves, which thankfully as a display concept seems to have gone out with the Ark. At this stage, Steve Cottle came into his own, with a brilliant way of using up all our scrap glass (of which we had enough to build a greenhouse or two) by turning it into glass display boxes. His long expertise building fish tanks proved invaluable and soon boxes were appearing everywhere. For Charlie's side, he produced four large integrated display stands, each descending in height from a large corner piece and each one individually made to fit the relevant specimens. We were all boggled by how well he made them (and by the fact that we could keep

goldfish in them as well) and the end result looks magnificent, with large colour photos added to the display to give the finishing touches.

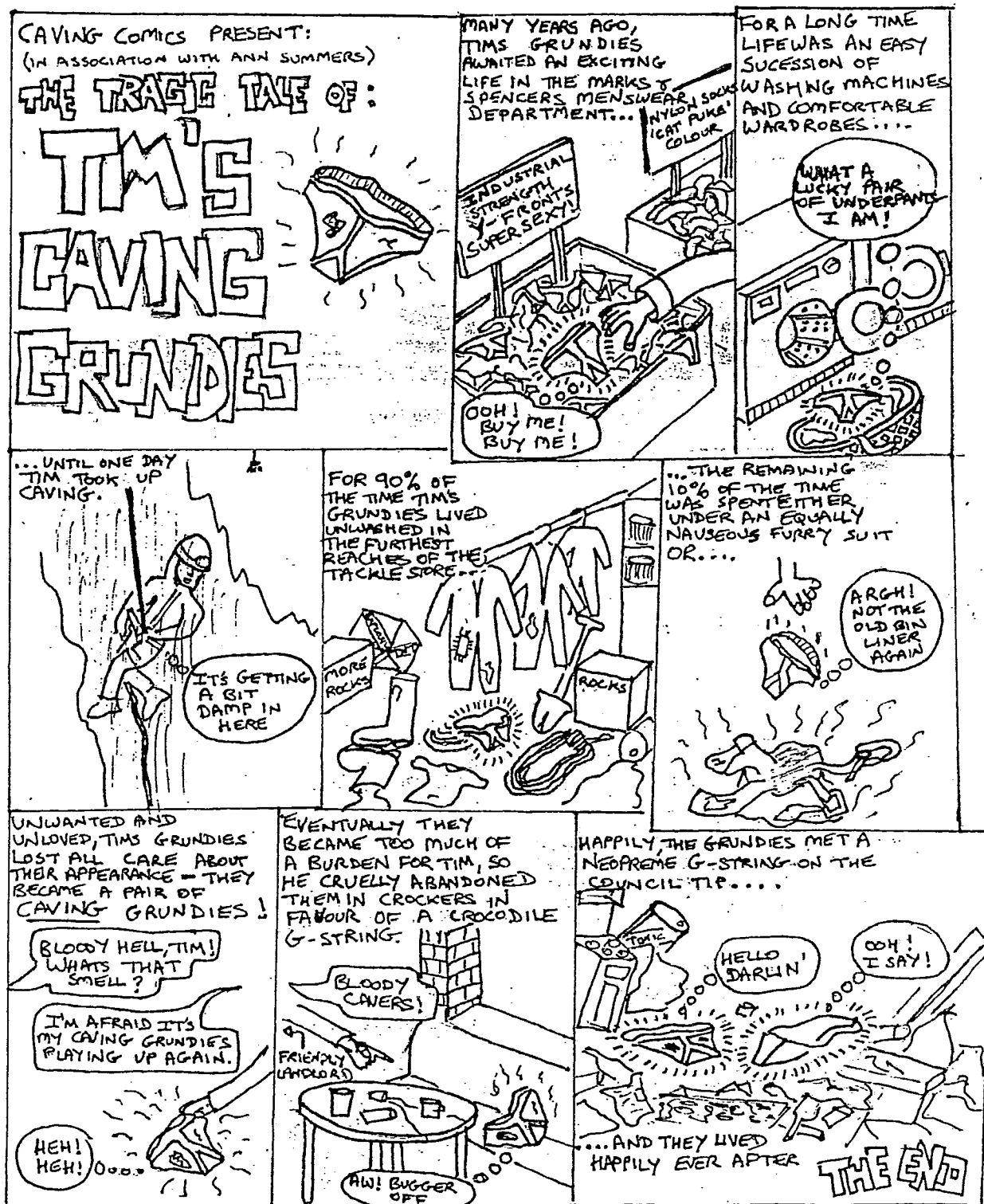
Mid-February approached all too rapidly and the job of co-ordinating everyone's efforts started to take its toll. The museum took over my life and in the latter stages I resorted to sleeping pills and whiskey (an effective but somewhat unwise tranquillizer)! The text for the displays was the next major problem. It all had to be written, checked, adjusted to fit the appropriate spaces in the displays then laser printed onto some nice buff coloured paper, spray-mounted onto cardboard and cut to size, before finally being velcroed into place. All this took a hell of a long time and many thanks are due to Chris Pepper and Andy Farrant for the time they took converting computer disks and producing the final copy.

During the last two weeks the archaeological displays came on in leaps and bounds and bones started to be hung from fishing twine, much to everyone else's amazement, flints and other items were fastened with more twine to coloured card and velcroed to the backing board. The whole process was fascinating to watch and I think that all of us involved with the work learnt an awful lot. I was certainly amazed at the quantity of excellent display material that the Society possesses. We were originally a bit worried about what was going into the Iron Age cabinet until Lesley-Ann found a box of lovely stuff from Little Solsbury Camp, with iron knives, spindle whorls and some beautiful weaving combs. Problem solved!

The final arrangements were made, including the use of a room opposite in the French Dept for the buffet (thanks to Bob Savage for dealing with this), and a plaque was ordered, as well as a hired pair of red velvet curtains, last pulled by Princess Anne. Whilst all this was going on, Graham was running around trying to make sure that Proceedings was ready for the same day, so by the final week, things were getting a little fraught in our household. Food was bought for the buffet and Harveys of Bristol were kind enough to sell us wine at trade prices. During the final week, the rooms were thoroughly cleaned and polished until everything was at last in place and apart from doing the food on the day, we had finished in time. On the morning of the 5th, Graham picked up Proceedings from the printers and a copy was put into the place reserved for it in the publications cabinet. He could now breathe easily for the first time in about two months. By two o'clock I had thankfully handed over the organisation of the buffet to Wanda, after a morning spent cooking sausage rolls and other such things, and various people started the final preparations.

The actual opening ceremony went exactly according to plan, and started with our President, Malcolm Anderson welcoming Sir John and saying a few words about the background to our latest move. Sir John then gave a very well received speech, recalling his family's long association with us and the antics of our members in Burrington. Alison thanked Sir John on behalf of the Society and also said a few words about the student activities as well as thanking all those people who had worked so hard to make the opening a success. Everyone was delighted with the enormous positive response from Society members, our friends and those within the University and the museum world. Our longest standing member, Molly Hall was present, as was Professor Tom Hower, who was secretary in 1924. It would take too long to name and thank everyone as there were about fifty people present and practically the entire membership living in Bristol was roped in to help in one way or another. It really was an amazing collective effort and it was certainly well worth it.

The following day we held an Open Day as due to pressure of space it hadn't been possible to issue invitations to every member. A large number of people took the trouble to come and the feed-back from the two days has been very encouraging. Work is still continuing on the collections and the impetus provided by the opening has continued. Our usual working night is on Tuesday from 8pm onwards for a couple of hours before going to Crockers. There are usually between eight to ten people there each week, so if you would like to help or even just potter around and use the library or have a chat, do feel free to turn up any time.



IRELAND 1993

Andy Farrant

From the UBSS Andy Farrant, Charlie and Gallia Self
From the ACG Andy Tyler, Robin Willams and Paul, Ailsa, Jonathon (age 7) and Steffi Hodgeson (age 5).

Yes, it's that time of year for the annual UBSS pilgrimage to Co. Clare - except this trip was a little different. Myself, Charlie and Gallia teamed up with 3 members of the Axbridge Caving Group and took advantage of a cheap deal on B&I ferries. After leaving Bristol we arrived at Swansea to find security at the port was tighter than normal due to the recent London bombing. The police officers seemed quite bemused when a green rusty rather overloaded clapped-out car rolled up with a builder and his Russian wife (who didn't have a visa), a research student and a farm labourer plus umpteen rucksacks rolled up to the checkpoint. Ten minutes later, after Charlie had tried to flog a copy of 'Caves of County Clare' to a rather attractive police woman, we got aboard the ferry, and met Paul, his wife and two kids and Robin. Charlie proceeded to demonstrate his rather odd habit of sleeping out on the deck - even when it rains.

Cork appeared out of the pre-dawn gloom 10 hours later, and by 11 o'clock, after passing through Irish customs (what customs?) we had reached Limerick. Charlie then took a detour up to Tulla to take a look at and survey the Toomeens, a 400m long partially unroofed river cave. We found it eventually - and started to survey it - well CAS and AT did because AF wasn't wearing a wetsuit and did all the dry passage instead! It was wonderful - a large river flowing through a succession of large limestone arches before finally emerging from a low cliff into warm spring sunshine. Who says it rains in Ireland? Then on to Carl Wrights house near Lisdoonvarna, where AF, AT, RW and PH + family were staying, CAS and GIS were staying in Doolin with Susan O'Connor. Carl's house couldn't be in a more perfect location - situated directly above Irelands longest cave system, with amazing views across the Burren and on a clear day down to Co. Cork. He even had a stream sink in his front garden! The amazing weather and profusion of flowers including gentians, cowslips, primroses and orchids made it unforgettable.

The following day the weather was so good we soon abandoned any thoughts of going caving and headed for the beach at Fanore - where everybody regressed to their childhood, and helped Jonathon and Steffi build dams and fish in rockpools, AF getting very sunburnt in the process. In the evening we had a quick trip down Pollismaurhaun - just 2 mins walk from Carls house, with Jonathon eager to lead the way. Even though he is only 7, he's done about 20 caving trips already. He absolutely stormed through the cave, being very small he just stooped through bits where AF (6'4" tall) was flatout!

One of the main aims of the trip was to check that the Guinness was up to it's usual standard, which I'm glad to say it was. The great thing about Ireland is that you go to the pub at 11pm and don't normally leave until at least 12.30am.

Over the next few days we did a variety of caving trips including the Doolin (St Catherines - Fisherstreet) through trip, one of my favourites - 3kms of mainly walking size passage and very attractive decorated in places, Cullaun 5, again a through trip, Cullaun 2 and Pollnagollum.

Charlie had advocated a look at Pollpooka 3 as a promising dig site, so on one day, AF, AT and RW (the dynamic trio) took a look. The view from the entrance across Galway bay to Connemara was worth the walk in itself. However, the cave wasn't - it was solidly choked after about 20m at the base of a 8m pitch. It could be dug - and if it were on Mendip it would have been, (thank God for small mercies) - but it would be a long term prospect, even more so than the GB dig!

So that was no go. AF had noted two holes worthy of investigation at the northern end of the Poulacapple ridge (Cullaun Zero minus 2!), and when we got there - yes - we found cave! 'Wow', I thought 'virgin passage going off into the distance'. However, 20m later it became too tight - even for the crack UBSS thin team. Anyhow - it turned out that Dave Drew had found the place before. So, no luck this time, but we'll be back...

Thanks to Carl Wright for his ever amazing hospitality and for a trip round Ailwee Showcave.

The Summer Bar-b-que

Steve Cottle

Having applied their many talents to redecorate the hut (it makes Legoland look dull) and rebuild the toilet - now a proper brick shit house, it was time to rebuild the Bar-b-que! Standing proudly at the front of the hut now stands 40 breeze blocks in unison holding a 4 inch steel tray and half a shopping trolley.

On Saturday May 1st, the christening of the new barbie took place. Armed with lots of beer, beefburgers, sausages, garlic bread and salad (for colour) - and the shopping trolley, we set off for the hut, where we cut up the trolley for a go-cart, or was it for the barbie grill? As it turned out the former was very stable, even when Matt was towed up the hill by Graham and Linda in their car! The latter also worked well and so whilst Tim made his first journey up and down the hill in his Landrover, the first Bangers and Burgers were cooked and eaten before their return. More food and beer having been consumed Tim said he'd take up those who didn't get up the hill first time. For some unknown and unexplained reason Julian was persuaded to follow in his car. Julian's car has, to say the least, had it's problems and has even earned Julian the 'Performance Driving' award at the annual dinner. Today, however, his VW Passat did him proud. It valiantly followed the Landrover spitting steam all along the track!

It was here that we noticed the pursuing vehicle and a gentleman in a jeep enquired 'What are you doing here?'

By now there were people hiding behind the Landrover and Matt had disappeared into the bushes. Topher calmly replied 'Curiosity. Just wanted to see the view!'. The man also asked Julian, still holding his can of cider if his car was a four-wheel drive, to which he replied 'No, it's only an automatic!'

So back to the hut and some Cordite fireworks courtesy of Matt, before setting off to the Plume of Feathers for a few more beers. As usual, the effects of alcohol were readily apparent on Hilary, who tried to remember who had her neoprene bra and proved that she didn't.

All the remaining food was eaten the following morning before returning to Bristol.

TREASURER'S REPORT 1992-3

This Year's accounts are somewhat imbalanced, as the bill for *Proceedings* 19.2 had not come to hand when the books were closed at the end of January (Mind you, neither had the Journal). Apart from that there is really very little to say about the year's figures, the usuals went up, insurance, duplicating, etc. but income held up too and the balance remained just favourable.

From the income point of view, special thanks are due to last year's Student Treasurer Nilesch Chauhan, for managing to extract an additional grant of Travel Money from the Union.

From the expenditure point of view, the major change was the re-appearance of the Museum in the accounts. This is the very healthy result of the move to The Stables, and the need to properly reorganise the collection and displays before the Official Opening. It does mean, however, that this item will continue to trouble the Treasurer in future years, and is one of the reasons that I will need to ask for an increase in subscription next year.

In the near future I shall be sending out new Deed of Covenant Forms to all of you who are British Income Tax payers, as the last set of four yearly ones have now expired. The new rules, however, allow us to change the wording, such that the new ones will last indefinitely. Please fill them in and return promptly to me, and if you do not do one at present, please consider it as the Society does benefit greatly from them.

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST JANUARY 1993

EXPENDITURE

	£		£
Tools and equipment - capital		Members' subscriptions	
Library	658.22		1323.41
Sessional meetings	129.45	Student Members' subscriptions	
Museum	5.00	Union Grants	315.00
Postages	301.08	Current Capital	400.00
Hon.secs petty cash	114.85		<u>658.27</u>
Stationery and duplicating	33.08	Interest on Investments Bank	750.13
Rates - taxes	271.13		<u>57.13</u>
Insurances	25.32		
	156.00		
Third Party Property	<u>269.37</u>		
Subscriptions and Licence	425.37		
Travel money	61.00		
Tratman Fund	340.70		
Fairy	900.00		
Sundries	9.00		
Donation to Mendip Rescue Organisation	6.18		
	<u>10.00</u>		
	3290.38		
Balance, carried down	2302.70		
	<u>5593.08</u>		
Transfer to Printed Publications Fund	2000.00		
Transfer to Library Fund	300.00		
Surplus of Income over Expenditure	<u>2.70</u>		
	2302.70		
	<u>2302.70</u>		

'CAVES OF COUNTY CLARE'

PUBLISHING ACCOUNT 1992/3

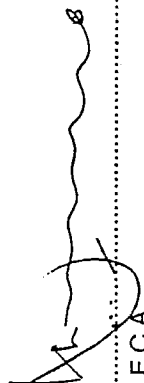
Balance at 1 February 1992	£	Sales of 'Caves of County Clare'	£
	1484.66	Debit balance at 31.1.93.	219.00
	<u>1484.66</u>		<u>1265.66</u>
			<u>1484.66</u>

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELAEOLICAL SOCIETY

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 JANUARY 1993

	£	£	£
<u>HUT FUND</u>			
Balance at 1.2.92.	1388.37		
Add net income	<u>348.10</u>		
		1736.47	12750.00
<u>PRINTED PUBLICATIONS FUND</u>			
Balance at 1.2.92.	3280.00		
Add Trf. from I & E a/c	<u>2000.00</u>		
		5280.00	<u>733.25</u>
<u>LIBRARY FUND</u>			
Balance at 1.2.92.	450.00		
Add trf. from I & E a/c	<u>300.00</u>		
	750.00		3.09
Less net expenditure	<u>555.50</u>	194.50	<u>3.41</u>
			6.50
<u>G.B. CAVE CAPITAL FUND</u>			
Balance at 1.2.92.	50.06		
Add net income	<u>11.60</u>		
			50.00
<u>EQUIPMENT HIRE ACCOUNT</u>			
Balance at 1.2.92.	48.31		
Add net income	<u>84.25</u>		
		132.56	
<u>'CAVES OF COUNTY CLARE' RESERVE FUND</u>			
Advance for Publication	7000.00		
Less Expenditure not yet recovered	<u>1265.66</u>	5734.34	
<u>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT</u>			
Balance at 1.2.92.	731.09		
Add Surplus of income over expenditure	<u>2.70</u>		
		<u>733.79</u>	
		<u>13873.32</u>	<u>13873.32</u>

HONORARY AUDITOR'S REPORT: I have examined the above Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31.1.1993, and the attached Balance Sheet as at that date in accordance with Auditing Standards. I confirm that they are in accordance with the books and records of the Society and give a true and fair view of the Society's affairs at 31st January 1993.



 J.A. GUNN B.A. F.C.A.

EIGHT GO TO YORKSHIRE

Featuring: Paul, Henri, Trev, Bill, Alison, Rachel, Steve and Tim.

You could tell this was no ordinary UBSS trip - rather than the usual line up of asthmatic MOT failures on their last miles before that great junkyard in the sky, two gleaming red diesels sat outside the tackle store waiting to whisk us in style to the Yorkshire Dales. These were supplied courtesy of Bill and Trev and with one stop at the transport cafe on the way up, we made it just in time to miss last orders.

A cold night ensued in the caravan during which there was a light dusting of snow. This gave the site that magical air as I stumble outside in my Boxer shorts the next morning to see why the gas cylinder wasn't working. More suitably attired, Bill and I went on a cylinder hunt, which massed a good collection from neighbouring caravans.

After the minimum possible faffing time in Inglesport, it was decided to do a Lancaster-Wretched Rabbit cross-over trip. So it was to Bull Pot farm for a grade 4 changing site. Here some old codger came up to us to give us a lecture on the dangers of taking 'novices' down Lancaster (he must have spotted Paul's new harness and oversuit. He was studiously ignored - an excellent thing as he was later recognised in a picture as Elliot of red-bolt and guide book fame. Steve, Bill and I headed off for Wretched Rabbit, while Alison, Trev, Paul and Henri went to Lancaster. Rachel had decided to sit in the caravan and watch the telly (or 'work' as she rather optimistically put it).

The trip through Wretched Rabbit etc. was brilliant, although a few problems were encountered finding the route down to the main streamway (Steve tried one hole that happened to bell out over a 20' pitch. I won 'crap caver of the day' award by attempting to lose half my SRT kit on the way necessitating a fast round trip.

The streamway was superb fun - although the water was exceptionally cold. It was then a quick trip to the colonnades (a set of exceptional columns) and so on to Lancaster pot... Hang on a minute - we haven't passed the others yet! We therefore sat around at the bottom of the pitch watching people go up and down until eventually the others turned up as they hadn't been able to find the way through to Wretched Rabbit. There followed a fast sprint to Rabbit but Steve and I to derig and an even quicker change once back at the cars.

Back at the caravan Steve produced one of his truly awesome rice concoctions before heading on to the Marton Arms. Paul and Trev did their best to get Bill drunk but to no avail.

The direct consequence of this failure was Bill getting up at 7 am and jangling bits of metal in people's earholes whilst shouting 'Who's for Penyghent Pot then?'.

This meant we had to get up and once again the gas cylinder wouldn't work. However the combination of Bill slashing on it and a kettle full of hot water got it going and Trev, Alison, Bill and Paul were soon off for an early start on Penyghent.

Some of us have to maintain a great UBSS tradition of Sunday in Yorkshire, so Rach, Steve, Henri and I moved on to the fountains cafe for a leisurely 'Double breakfast and beans'. The UBSS spirit was still with the others however as they reached Penyghent only to discover they had left Alison's SRT kit behind...

Meanwhile back at the Ranch (or rather Cafe), Henri had decided to go walking while Rach, Steve and I headed off for Alum Pot. It was a rather chilly day, so it was a fast change and up the hill. I rigged down to the ledge near the bridge - as this was covered in ice getting off the rope was rather interesting. And so on to the bottom, but it turned out to be an ice covered groin deep pool. Once down it was discovered what was causing the booming noises we had occasionally heard - large lumps of ice were falling off from higher up the waterfall

rather too close for comfort. the view back up was stunning - the whole 100' waterfall was covered in huge icicles that would suddenly light up, as the sun came out between snow showers. Rach and Steve quickly joined me, but found the way on so icy that the free climb was impossible. It was therefore a quick prussik back up the shaft with excessive swearing from Steve as his jammers began to slide on the icy rope. Rach derigged and we sprinted back to the car. The cold had obviously affected Rachel as she began to strip down to some leggings and a t-shirt to do some aerobics which slightly confused some walkers nearby.

The Hill Inn was next on the agenda for a pint, which then turned into a few more as they continued to serve beyond closing time.. By the time we were thrown out, for some reason a quick saunter up to Meregill seemed a really good idea. The stream itself was frozen over and a few snow showers on the way back sobered us up.

Quite enough excitement for one day, so it was back to the caravan where we met Henri to gloat over the fact that the others were probably still in Penyghent.

They eventually met us in the pub at around 7.30 pm, having reached somewhere around the 7th pitch before turning back. And so back to Bristol...

Tim Parish

THE ANNUAL DINNER 1993

Hilary Davies

Having been initiated into various UBSS traditions, I thought it was time to experience one of the more infamous, the Annual Dinner, this year held at Vintners Wine Bar in the city centre.

The venue was appropriate for this speleological occasion, its low stone arches and amply supplied bar caused many of the 40 people present (of all epochs) to reminisce on caving trips in the dim and distant past.

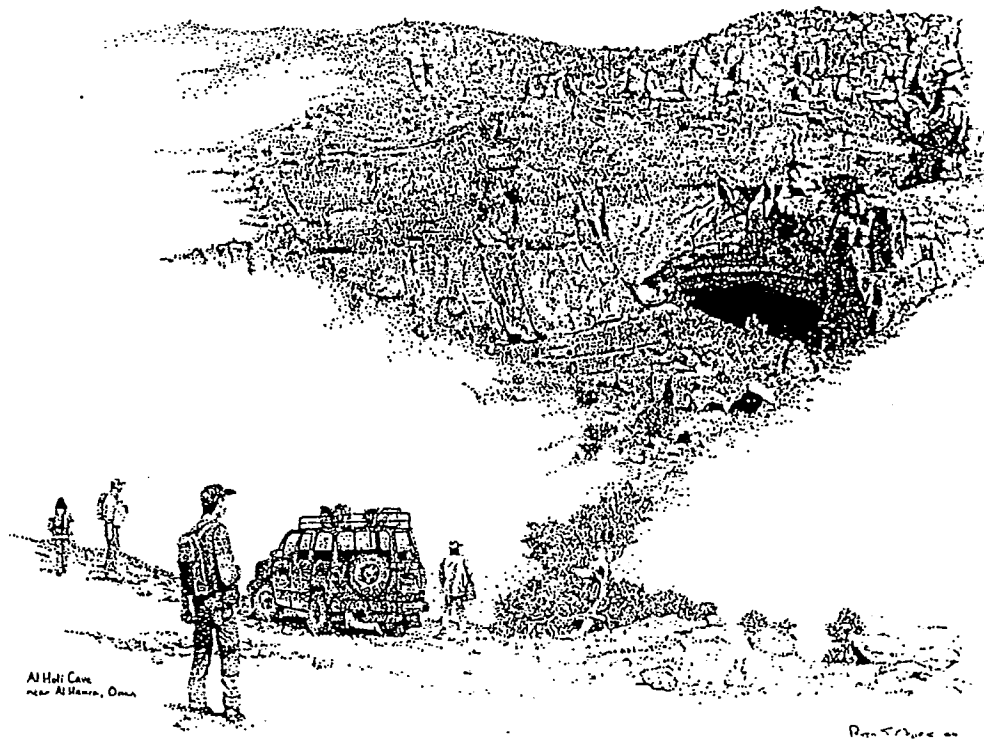
I had heard that the event was to be black tie, but on arriving I received a shock that I was only half prepared for. The usual neoprene/furry suited attire of the party had changed miraculously to that of DJ's and dresses. (I did suspect that some of the DJ's were fleece lined and that head torches lurked in several pockets!)

Following the meal, which vaguely regressed to childhood days in places, Alison and Tim started the awards ceremony. These ranged from Armchair Caver of the Year to the Frayed Rope Award and Bimbo Caver of the Year. At this point it appeared to me that a swift exit would be appropriate if any sly hints during the previous week were to be believed. Thus it was that for my award Alison produced a set of expertly made neoprene underwear in attractive pink and purple. This award perhaps revealed a deep ingrained fetish amongst cavers for neoprene as various people were seen sporting the G-string and halter neck bra throughout the night (the whereabouts of the latter is still a mystery though it is rumoured to have been added to several cavers' wardrobes!)

The award ceremony, which featured toilet rolls for some reason I have not quite worked out yet ended with a presentation of flowers to Alison.

Another UBSS tradition I have discovered is the loud, tuneless singing of prehistoric caving songs. True to form, as the evening progressed certain members of the 'congregation' tried to pass on the 'choral gums'. Sadly, however only the 'melody' came across (loud and clear) the words being lost to inebriation. These angelic harmonies led nobly by Topher Martyn, were still echoing around the stony walls as we departed from a very enjoyable and memorable evening.

CAVING IN OMAN



The Sultanate of Oman is situated on the south east corner of the Arabian Peninsula. There are two large areas of limestone in the country - one in the Northern Oman Mountains and one in the Dhofar region in the south. Both areas of limestone have cave potential but both have only been explored patchily and sporadically - this is due to the few cavers active in the country and to the difficulty of access for those who do not live there.

Whilst visiting Oman this Christmas I was lucky enough to be able to go down two caves. Both have been previously explored and described but one at least is quite difficult to obtain. Majlis Al Jinn has been described by Don Davison in PAWR Report 85-20, and Hoti Cave was written up by Tony Waltham et. al. in Trans. Brit Cave Res. Assoc., 12 and also in a PAWR Report in 1985.

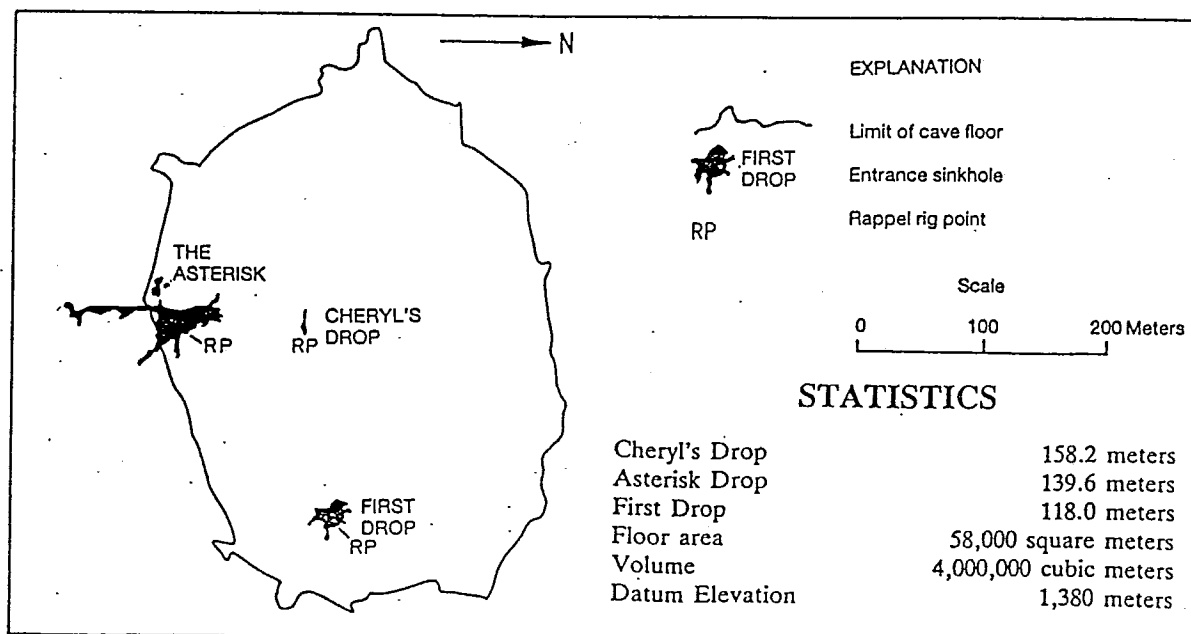


Figure 2. Map showing the location of the entrances and the limit of the floor area of Majlis Al Jinn Cave.

Majlis al Jinn ("Meeting Place of the Spirits") is the second largest subterranean chamber in the world with a volume of 4 million cubic metres; it occurs in the fossiliferous limestones of the Tertiary Hadramaut Group.

The cave can be approached from Tiwi on the coast then along graded roads inland to the village of Urmq where vehicles must be left. There is then a 1½ - 2 hour walk up on to the Selma Plateau to the cave.

There are three entrances to the cave; First Drop and Asterisk Drop, the two largest entrances, together let in enough light to illuminate the whole cave.

We descended via First Drop, a 118m free hang, using 9mm rope. In such a dry climate the limestone is quite sharp so in the best American tradition of rope protectors we draped our rucksacs over the lip of rock at the top of the pitch.

It is necessary to descend very slowly on such a long dry pitch to prevent the rope being damaged. The descent is very spectacular because you can see all around all the way down. It took us each between 10 and 15 minutes to descend.

Majlis Al Jinn is a single relatively equidimensional ellipsoidal chamber approximately 310m long, 225m wide, with a domed ceiling 120m-high. Although it is relatively thin (less than 40m thick over much of the chamber) the roof is a freestanding span with no intermediate or central supports.

There are no visible lower exits or passages leading from the chamber; water entering the cave forms a pond and slowly infiltrates the fine grained sediment floor which is of unknown thickness.

Steep breakdown debris cones below Asterisk Drop and First Drop and finer grained equilibrium debris cones dominate the west, south and east of the chamber.

Tracks of birds, insects and reptiles can be seen on the dusty floor of the chamber. There are also the remains of animals (mostly goats) which fell into the chamber and died.

There are few stalactites or flowstone formations - some occur along the walls - but there are many low rounded bosses on the sediment floor which are thought to be active. Especially on the steep debris cones there are many canopies of coalescing heligmites some with small stalactites suspended from them.

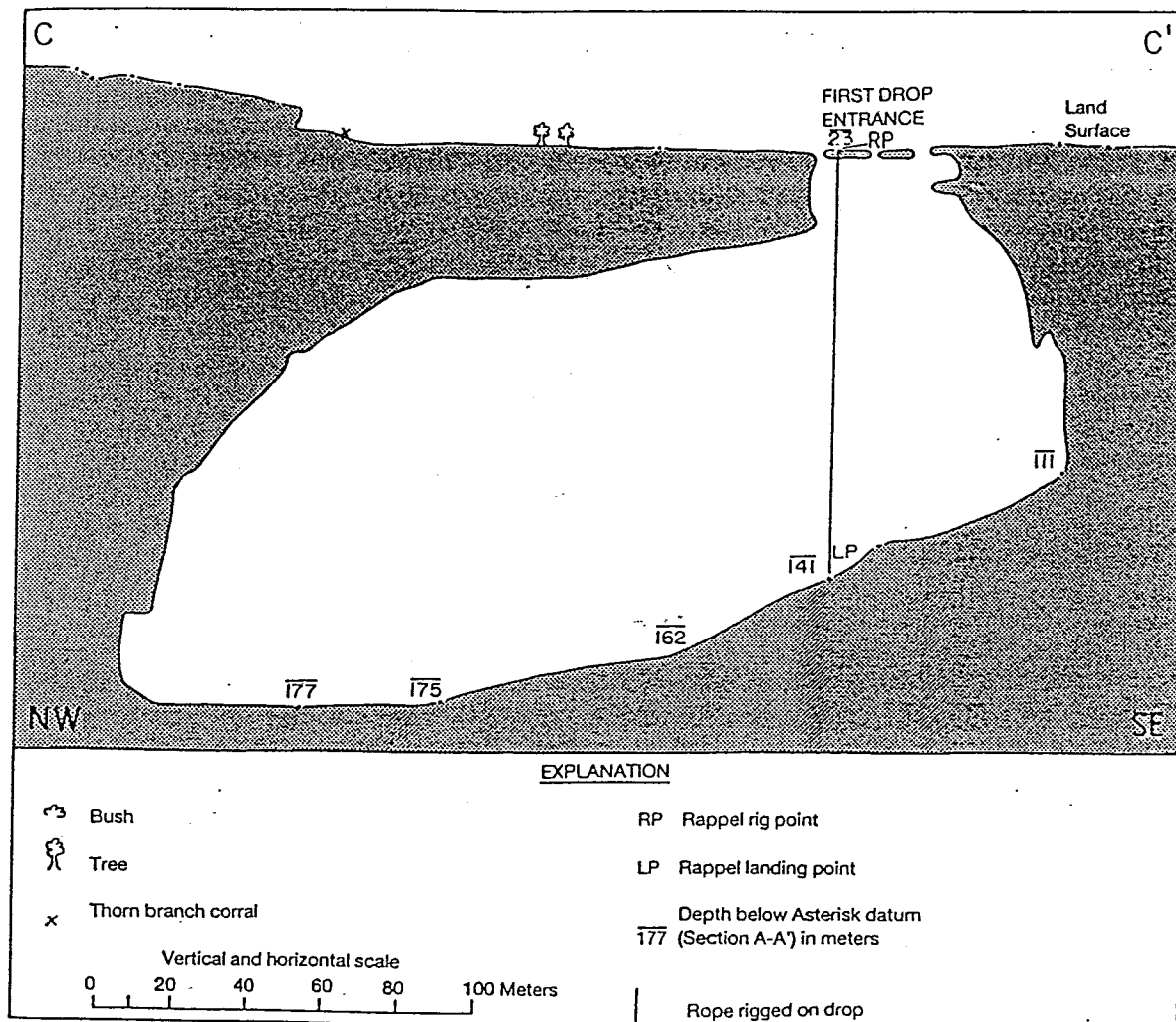


Figure 4. Cross-sections through Majlis Al Jinn Cave, Sultanate of Oman.

On 120m of 9mm rope there is an awful lot of bounce - it takes a while to pull through all the stretch as you jump up and down on the floor of the cave or prussik on the ground. It took most of us between 30 and 35 minutes to make the ascent into blazing sunlight and fierce heat after the relative coolness of the cave.

Hoti Cave is in the Natih Member of the Mesozoic Wasia group, on the southern slopes of the mountains. This cave is a major karst conduit within the dip slope of the Wasia limestone.

Its top entrance is at the end of a deep blind vertical sidedwadi adjacent to the tiny village of Hoti and its lower exit is a massive cave mouth almost at the foot of the dip slope. The cave contains 4975m of mapped passage of which 4300 are on the single trunk route from sink to rising which are 2600m apart in a straight line. The vertical range of the cave is 262m.

Access to the cave is very easy. The graded road goes almost to both entrances so that for a through trip a vehicle can be left at either end. The most difficult climb of the trip is before you even get into the cave and there is only one climb of note in the cave itself.

Before going in the upper entrance it is advisable to go in the lower entrance first (we did this the night before) and check the water level at the lowest part of the Main Lake to make sure it is not sumped - it is not uncommon for this part of the cave to be sumped for over 100m; when we went through the water level was actually lower than usual. As you appreciate once you start the cave from the top end the return journey of an in and out trip would be considerably more difficult.

Soon after entering the entrance chamber there is a short (9m) pitch and then a stroll along a large passage with a mud floor and a few shallow pools. The passage steepens into Wadi Styx; a massive tunnel up to 25m high and 12m wide characterised by blockfall up to 10m in diameter and water hammered rounded boulders up to 5m in diameter. This is where you realise how difficult the return journey would be as you jump down from boulder to boulder and know that climbing back up that way would be nigh on impossible.

The end of Wadi Styx is greeted with relief; the cave changes character and becomes dominated by lakes and pools so that swimming is often necessary. This section follows the bedding plane. There are some spectacularly big gour dams - up to 8m high! and some clean stal and flowstone. Many of the lakes have small thin rafts of calcite floating on them.

Below this level the passage becomes joint guided and most of the depth gain occurs in this short stretch. Joint guided rifts over 20m high and mostly just a few metres wide. Flowstone shrouded cascades descending into deep lakes. It feels quite odd to a British caver to swim along to a pitchhead and wait around chest deep in water to descend a dry pitch beyond the calcite dam!

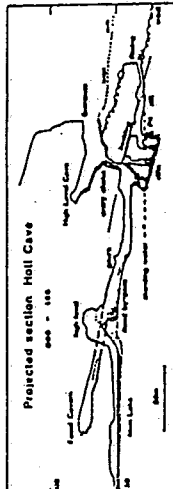
The main lake at the end of the cave is over 800m long in a rounded tunnel 10m wide; roof height ranges from 1-4m over deep water and a soft sediment floor. There are 9 or 10 innertubes either floating on the lake in various places (there is a slight current or wind in the lake) or pulled up on the shore at the lower entrance end, and sitting in these is by far the easiest and most comfortable way of getting across the main lake. There are pieces of string at intervals along the lake and these can be used to pull yourself along.

The lake ends at a cobble slope over 10m high where flood waters have banked the rounded cobbles against zones of blockfall. The cobble slope ascends to a massive boulder pile which rises to the floor of the daylight lower entrance chamber.

Once you get to the exit boulder choke you just pick a hole - any hole - and go up until you see daylight. I don't know how many ways out there are but we each came out in a different place

Hoti Cave is very different from any cave I have been down and I don't think this is only because of the difference in temperature; everything seems to be on a very large scale and although a very enjoyable trip one comes out feeling as if it had gone a little over the top on things - after going through all that water you feel as though you not only never want to see a swimming pool ever again you don't even want to think about having a bath!

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
AMERICAN RED CROSS FOR THE YEAR 1919



The Annual Dinner Caption Competition



Just closely examine this photograph of Hilary and Steve (what had he been drinking?) and tell us what you think 'he said to her' and perhaps 'she said to him'. Give your entires to Tim or Mat and the best will receive a prize (to be decided but probably will be something like a beer voucher at Crockers. Exciting hey?). The winner and other good entires will be posted in the next news letter.

Good Luck!!

M.W.

There are 42 caving words hidden in this grid

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



Examine this photo and guess the name of the cave.



PHOTO COMPETITION

Spot the person! A prize (1 autographed copy of Newsletter) to anyone who can name the people in the photograph. Current students need name only 5 people in the photo! (Hint - try to imagine them with less hair!) No extra prizes for guessing the year.

This years Annual Dinner was true to tradition in that none of the student members could remember what happened as they were all too drunk! It was also true in the way the groups seperated out - with the local old lags table, the visiting old lags table, the not so old lags table and the drunken students table - some things will never change!

The prizes awarded are as follows;

Armchair caver of the year	Eve Pleydell
Bimbo caver	Hilary Davies
Sexual Warrior award	Steve Cottle (?!)
The 'nice hands' award	Andy Farrant
The Frayed rope award for Safety	Matt Wood
Performance Driver Award	Julian Todd
Teetotal members prize	Bill Miners
Drink spillers 'cup'	Rachel Privett

Pete Smart and Fiona Whitaker are planning to get married during the summer. Rumours have it that it will be a quickie, so that they can both get back to work. As for their honeymoon...well, maybe a trip to the rainforests and caves of Mulu, Mallorca perhaps, or could it be a romantic diving trip to the Blue holes of the Bahamas? As yet there is no sign of a shotgun.

Happy 40th Birthday to Dick Willis. Shame the party was the same night as the annual dinner! (Perhaps it was deliberate?!)

Readers may have noticed that this term, Rachel has so far managed to steer clear of any scandal or gossip. How long this will last has yet to be seen!

Tim Parish seems to trying his best to get rid of his caving underpants. First he leaves them in Alisons house and they get returned *cleaned*, then he leaves them in Tony Boycotts car and they get returned *uncleaned*, so finally, Tim decides to leave them in Crockers. So far they haven't been returned.

Congratulations to Dr Pete Smart on his recent promotion to Reader. Unfortunately there is no pay rise to go with this, so his postgrads will still have to pay for their own beers!

Apparently according to one member of the club, Andy has 'nice hands'. Whether this also applies to the rest of him is unknown.