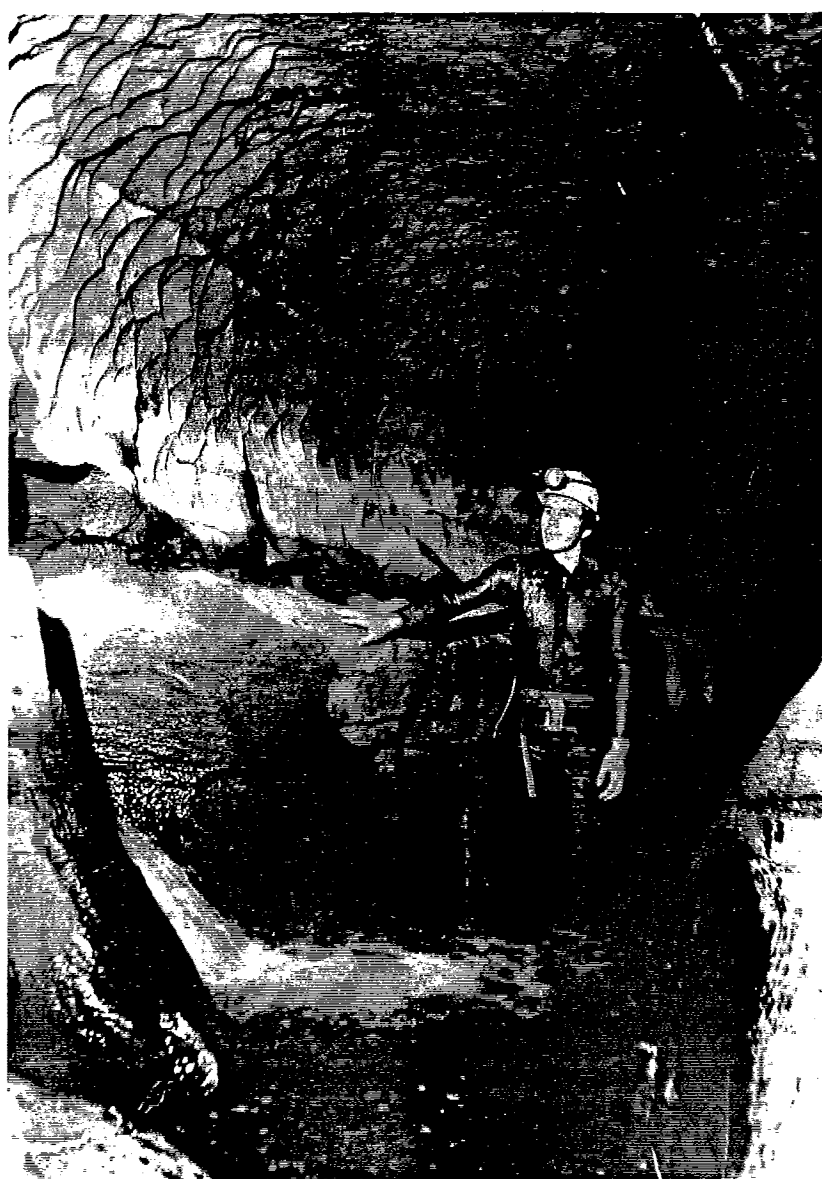


U.B.S.S.

University of Bristol Spelaeological Society



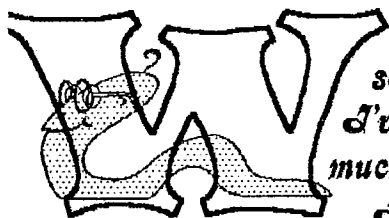
NEWSLETTER

Vol 11 No. 3

November 1995



Editorial Eulogistics



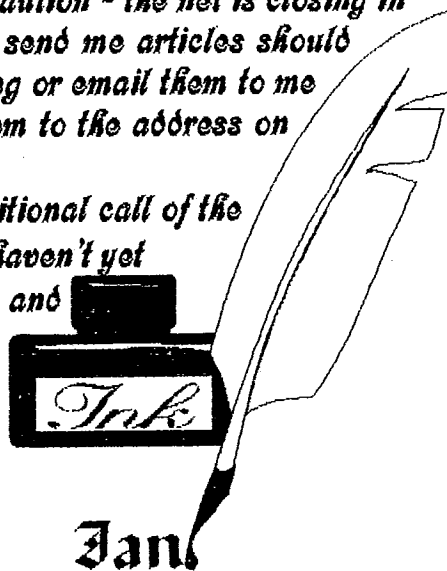
elcome to this term's issue of the Newsletter, one which sees a new editor firmly ensconced in the role. I don't think I've actually managed to deviate from the established norm too much, so you should find things pretty much as they usually are.

I was going to sort of apologise for the lack of a Gravel section this time round as I axed it when Rupert's name was just about the only one that cropped up time and time again, and the last vestiges of decency I possess seemed to think this a mite unfair. However, I am pleased to say that the newly qualified Doctor Farrant has come up with lots of salacious material, so it has all been reinstated (although as I type this, he still hasn't sent it to me, so I don't know whether this is wholly true - if you can't find any gossip in the following pages then you know who to blame for ignoring my deadline.)

In response to questions about just how regularly I intend to publish in the future, I would reply that this is very much up to how much people want to write things for me. If I get enough articles to warrant more than one publication a term then it's relatively simple for me to stick something together - otherwise it'll carry on as a termly phenomenon (unless you'd like me to fill space with essays on the narrative duality of Bleak House, but somehow I can't see that going down too well.)

My thanks to everyone who has contributed articles this issue, many of whom were writing under extreme duress or were pushed into it when they were drunk. Those of you who haven't done anything yet should drink with caution - the net is closing in and my spies are everywhere. Anyone who wants to send me articles should either give them to me in the pub on a Tuesday evening or email them to me on eg3072@bris.ac.uk. Failing that, you can send them to the address on the back page or direct to the Union pigeonhole.

All that remains is for me to conclude with the traditional call of the ever-so-friendly newsletter editor to those of you who haven't yet been along to anything. We're all reasonably friendly, and it's never too late to come along and get yourself down a cave. So on, you know you want to. We might even let you keep your clothes on if you're really lucky.



News from the Front

Action, Excitement and really wild things are very much the order of the day with all the latest news from the spelaeological font of knowledge. Read on, if your blood pressure can stand it all.

GB Dig finally goes

Yes, after many a decade of hard work the "dig with the best potential on Mendip" (quote copyright Doctor Farrant) has finally gone. Alas, all that there is to show for this is a section of passage that had already been discovered about thirty years ago. Heigh ho. Back to the drawing board, perhaps?

Charterhouse Permits

The GB conservation committee have asked it to be brought to the attention of club members that people have been caught caving on old permits (not from our esteemed society, I hasten to add). Should anyone going down GB happen to see anyone without a nice new permit, they are requested to extract as much information as possible about the miscreants, their caving club, where they got the key from etc., and to make a note of their car registration so they can be traced if need be. If possible, their key should

also be extracted from them and a severe reprimand given. And don't forget that if you haven't already got one, you need a new updated permit from the secretaries to visit Charterhouse, GB or Rhino Rift. Don't go caving with your old one, or you will be summarily eviscerated.

1998 Reunion Trip To County Clare

After my note on this subject in the last Newsletter I have received positive replies from several people, spanning most of the generations involved (apologies to those to whom I have not replied personally). Ideas have spanned the expected range of Food/Caving/Guinness in various combinations. I will therefore make tentative approaches to suitable venues in the near future and, hopefully, work out some arrangements. In the mean time anybody interested who has not yet done so, please contact me, and even more important anybody in contact with ex-members who may

be interested in this event please let them know, as well.

Graham Mullan

New Year's Dinner

This, the most long-standing of the Society's various traditions, will take place at the Hut as usual. Following on from last year's most pleasant occasion, we will again be limiting places, with priority going to members (and their partners). Will those wishing to attend, (the usual suspects, I assume) please pass their names on, in good time, to either Linda Wilson (0117 9502556) or Wanda Owen (0117 9734233) who will take names and distribute tasks, as per usual.

Location Change

Any members who have been turning up at Crockers (or whatever work of literature it deigns to call itself these days) on a Tuesday evening and finding it bereft of UBSS regulars should perhaps be reminded that we now meet at The Red Lion on Worrall road (just off Blackboy Hill). We're there from half past nine and easily distinguishable by the fact that we take over the majority of the pub. If you haven't managed to get to come and see us yet then get yourself along there; we occasionally have a reputation for being quite friendly and we only bite very rarely.

Phil Le Marinel

Look, I know you've joined because I saw your name on the membership list, and I haven't forgotten that you still owe me a pint from my days as Secretary. Now when are you going to turn up to something?

Club wear

As we seemed to spend all last year claiming we were going to get some new t-shirts or something printed for the club and never actually did anything about it, it is high time the situation changed. Any budding artists (where are you Kevin?) with ideas for some smart and tarty new designs should put pen to paper and try to persuade the treasurer into parting with some of our cash.

Bulk Order

The annual club order for new gear will no doubt be going off in the near future, with discounts galore to be had on items ordered. If anyone has money burning a hole in their pocket and wishes to buy that new SRT kit, oversuit or rubber split-crotch caving underpants, then now would be a good time to have kind and persuasive words with the Tackle Warden.



LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS SWITZERLAND

1st CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

12th International Congress of Speleology and "6^e Colloque d'hydrologie en pays calcaire et en milieu fissuré"

(6th Conference on Limestone Hydrology and Fissured Aquifers).

La Chaux-de-Fonds (Neuchâtel, Switzerland)

August 10 – 17, 1997



Organization

- Swiss Speleological Society
- Swiss Academy of Sciences, Speleology Commission
- Center of Hydrogeology, University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland
- Geology laboratory, University of Franche-Comté, Besançon, France
- Prehistory Seminar, University of Neuchâtel
- The Town of La Chaux-de-Fonds

Which Congress ?

The 12th International Congress of Speleology will take place in La Chaux-de-Fonds (canton of Neuchâtel, Switzerland), heartland of the watchmaking industry, a town of 40,000 inhabitants located in the karst of the Jura mountains.

■ The main guidelines in the preparation of this congress are:

- to bring together cave explorers and scientists.
- to organize a regional attraction for the general public.
- to do everything possible to turn the International Congress back into the four yearly speleological get together event it should be.

The congress itself, the associated general meetings, and UIS commissions, will be held in the city college building or within 2 miles of that central location. Most of the lodging and camping will also be located in that area. Access by train, road or even by special flights from Geneva or Zurich airport will be arranged depending on the needs.

Scientific Program

The congress backbone will consist of a rich program covering all the aspects of speleology and karst study. Every one is called to present his / her discoveries in caves, karst, or other related fields of study in form of an oral or a poster presentation. Workshops and public round tables will be organized to allow everyone to share his / her experiences. Oral presentations, posters, workshops and round tables will be grouped in sessions for which themes will be defined in order to facilitate discussions and exchanges. Some of the themes defined in the various fields linked to speleology can already be named: in the geomorphology session: "Karstic Fill and Paleoclimates", "Speleogenesis of the Large Alpine Systems"; in the exploration speleology session, "Exploration in Tropical Areas", "Alpine Speleology"; in the topography and techniques session: "Under-

ground Topography: What's new?", "Cave Diving Techniques"; in the archeology session: "Man and Caves: 200,000 years of Dialogue", etc. ... The biospeleology session will emphasize bat studies.

All the "Hydrogeology" part of the Congress will be integrated into the traditional "6^e Colloque d'Hydrologie en pays calcaire et en milieu fissuré" organized for the 6th time by the Universities of Neuchâtel and Besançon. A couple of themes have already been defined: "Hydrogeological Behavior of Karst Aquifers" and "Use of Speleological Observations and Measurements to the Karstic Hydrogeology".

A more regional symposia will treat, through conferences, expositions and excursions, the various aspects of the karst and speleology in the Jura mountain, the area in which the Congress will take place.

Excursions and Camps

One day dedicated to field trips will be included in the Congress in order to allow the participants to leave the conference rooms.

Before the Congress (from July 27) and after (until August 30) scientific excursions and camps will be organized in Switzerland and across the border: Sieben Hengste, Hölloch, Jean-Bernard, Parmelan, Dent de Crolles, Franche-Comté, Slovenian Karst and many other systems and well known regions will be waiting for you...

During the Congress, tired participants and companions will have the opportunity to take underground breaks during the day (or the night).

Attractions

- Opening gala and closing banquet for everyone.
- Multi-media festival August 7 – 9 as an introduction to the congress.
- Howdy party in a pure Swiss style (food and attractions) for everyone to get to know other cavers.
- Diverse program for participants and companions featuring touristic excursions, competitions and exhibitions, meeting places with live music, etc.
- In addition to the usual gear and book selling booths on the congress site, specific exhibitions will be featured throughout the town:
 - Speleology and biospeleology at the Natural History Museum;
 - Cave paintings and engravings at the Museum of Fine Arts;
 - Cave books and documents at the Documentation Center of the U.I.S.-S.S.S located in the town's library.
- Pass to the regional museums: The International Clockwork Museum in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Archeology and Ethnography Museum in Neuchâtel, Underground Water Mills in Le Locle.

Food, Lodging and Transportation

- Lodging is planned to accommodate all participants (approximate fees per person and per night in Swiss Francs): Camping, dormitory (10 to 25), Guest room (25 to 50), hotel room (single 60 to 140, double 40 to 110).

- Food service is planned for the lunches at the congress site for 7 to 10 SFR. Other meal arrangements will be available in the 89 restaurants in town. It will also be possible to cook (barbecue) your own meals at the campground.
- A pass to the town's public transportation services will be available during the Congress.
- A children's day care service is also planned.

Registration

The registration fees for participants will be about 120 SFR.

- Prices for the extras will be announced in the second call for the Congress.
- Only those who will have returned the pre-registration form below, will receive the second call brochure in early 1996, which will allow their firm booking.
- Congress address: SubLime, P.O. Box 4093, CH-2304 La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland
- Pre-registration is possible through the Internet to: <http://www.unine.ch/UIS97/>
- E-mail: congress.uis97@chyn.unine.ch

Calendar

- Pre-registration as soon as possible in order to receive the second call for participation with the congress program (by returning the form below)
- Second call brochure for the Congress with complete information and firm registration form will be available March 1996
- Deadline for abstracts of the announced presentations: June 30, 1996.

**Pre-Registration form to return
as soon as possible to:**
**SubLime, P.O. Box 4093,
CH-2304 La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland**

LAST NAME: _____

First name: _____

Address: _____

Speleological Affiliation: _____

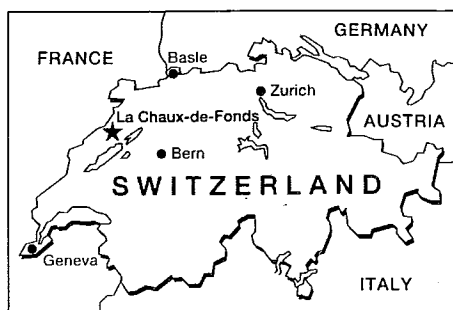
Institution: _____

I intend to submit a presentation: ☐ YES ☐ NO

Theme: _____

Other contributions (slide show, film, exhibition, etc.): _____

Personal suggestions: _____



Secretarial Shenanigans



Well, here goes - my first Hon Sec's bit. Doubtless it won't live up to Ian's (the small one) amazingly informative ramblings that we put up with last year, but I'll do my best.

Firstly, my thanks to everyone who turned up to help at Freshers' Fair. All in all, this turned out to be quite successful - some of the Freshers have even stuck around up 'til now, despite the infamous Goatchurch event on the first weekend.

Anyway, I'm desperately trying to organise a Christmas weekend with a meal in Yorkshire, since our most recent journey up there was excellent (see report by Kevin). I need some more information about where we could eat and stay and the like, so if anyone could give me any help it would be much appreciated.

There will be a couple of SRT

training sessions coming up in the near future, hopefully utilisng Bristol Grammar School's climbing wall - keep your ears flapping and I'll let you know what's happening.

I gather that the bonfire weekend went quite well. However, I am currently thinking up quite horrific things to do to those prats in the University Guide and Scout club who managed to mislay our keys.

If anybody has any ideas about where to go next term and what permits they would like for next year, give me or Simon a shout and we'll do our best to throw something together.

Right, enough said. See you all soon.

Byee,

Ian

Up and Coming

9/10 December

Christmas Party

14 December

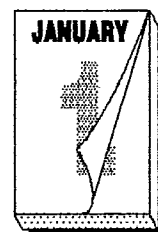
Sessional Meeting

Graham and Linda's talk on Lascaux, the finest painted cave in the world, closed to the general public these past thirty years and now only visited by those who have sufficiently impressed the French Gouvernement. 8pm in some room in the Union (probably CR4, but don't quote me).

26th June 96

Bursar's annual caving trip and noshup.

Advance warning for an evening's caving with the University Bursar, following which he is quite happy to wine and dine members of his favourite caving club.



Fresher's Weekend - A Novice's Perspective

The reputation of cavers being a close-knit community - a product of the Tory's Care in the Community Scheme - precedes them. I believe it was my innocent curiosity to see if this stigma had any foundation in truth which led me to join up at the Freshers' Fair.

At 9:30, complete with wellies and boiler suit bought from the dodgy shop down by the river, we departed. It was lashing down with rain and I must admit that I began to wonder why I hadn't joined a more mundane club like the Guides and Scouts. As we stood huddled in the hut I tried to reassure myself. After all, how hard could a first day caving be? I honestly thought that with so many of us being virgin to the pleasures of squirming into tight orifices and down dark tunnels, that they would make things easy for us. A nice walk down the show caves at Wookey Hole, for example, to see the stone lump that was once allegedly the Wicked Witch of the South West before she was fossilised by the dulcet tones of Hugo going on about Boss Swallet.

Not for the last time that weekend, however, I was in for a shock. After returning from Bristol for the second time that morning because I had been sold two left wellies by that dodgy army shop, I finally got kitted up. Unfortunately, there were no spare lights by this stage, so a good few hours were spent waiting with anticipation and dread for another group to return. Finally Simon, Izzy and I set off. Full credit to Simon; he craftily added to my fear, which was quickly mutating into dread, as he spent half an hour looking for the entrance to Rod's Pot only to be told by an old lady that it was a quarter of a mile away on the other side of the hill *{the inheritance of one Topher Martin lives on}*. As far as I was concerned, if he couldn't find the entrance to the cave, what bloody chance did we stand once we were down there? It was, however, a brilliant cave and excellently led. Even though we were held up by a pack of Scouts at the aven we were undeterred and did Reed's Cavern as well.

We returned in time to be served up a delicious stew and have an informative discussion about the club's dig of the previous summer in Eastern Europe. Not soon enough, we were off down the pub. The minibus did not have enough seats for all of us and as Andy Trousers zoomed off down the track, in a manner indicating that he had been drinking all evening, the bus looked like one of those Indian locomotives with peasants hanging from the roof rack and out of windows.

My recollection of the next few hours is very hazy indeed. Basically I think that Andy, a few others and myself spent the entire evening pissing ourselves over the three

old hags who were cackling in the main bar. As we returned to the hut with everyone else, I can only assume that we were not turfed out by the landlord.

I was told to include some gossip in this article, but as I didn't know many people's names, this task has proved hard. However, Rupert's was a name I grasped as it was bandied about more than once in conversation that weekend. To put it bluntly, Rupert appears to the stud of the U.B.S.S. *{surely some mistake?}*. Once again on the Saturday night he lived up to his reputation by pulling an attractive novice. The next day I was on the same trip as the new couple. At least I thought they were the new couple but before we went down Singing River Mine I distinctly heard Rupert ask, "What's your name again?" I'm all for playing it cool, but that's just plain bastardish!

Saturday night marked an epoch in U.B.S.S. history - The Night of the Naked Cave. Talking to Hilary, the origins lie in the days when U.B.S.S. was a bit of a male bastion and naked ford running an annual event. Naked Caving is an evolution of this event - a watershed - taking the club into the 21st century. Having since been down Goatchurch fully kitted, I have become very suspicious. Either Ian, Paul, Simon and Andy are not men in the true sense of the word or the whole event was an elaborate hoax to either scare or impress the freshers. I know Ian had the carbide burns to prove it but that it may well be that the screams and moans were not coming from Rupert's tent but from Ian inflicting his wounds outside the hut.

On Sunday morning, people arose surprisingly early. While the naked cavers basked in their deserved glory, us mere mortals with our very sore heads stumbled around drinking lukewarm coffee. Two caving trips were planned for the day and freshers were soon clambering back into their sodden shirts and jeans, legs still chaffed and red from the day before.

Sadly, all too soon it was five o'clock, and we were back at the tackle store, faced with the arduous task of cleaning ropes and other equipment. While doing this, I had time to ponder the question which had spurred me to join up at the Freshers' Fair; why are cavers such a weird bunch of people? Despite all the events that had occurred I could not, and still can't, answer this question, though I am aware that I am gradually becoming one of them. It is a force impossible to resist. It's like a cancer that spreads over your body, finally enveloping and crushing your brain. It is a sad fact, but I am sure many members of the U.B.S.S. are in a terminal state of decline. Good luck to them and I hope they enjoy it.

In all seriousness, the success of the weekend can be judged by the large amount of freshers who have returned and taken part in subsequent trips. Apart, that is, from the tall bloke who had a severe case of hypothermia at the top of Swildon's Hole and who hasn't been seen since. Presumably he caught a severe case of pneumonia on Sunday night and died, but the smell of rotting flesh has as yet gone unnoticed in the corridors of Hiatt Baker, a mere three weeks later.

By Paul Erenshaw, who is currently being sued for defamation by "that dodgy army shop" and numerous cavers who object to being compared to cancers.

Notes from the Treasury

Unfortunately, there are still a number of members whose subscriptions, £12 for 1995/6 are outstanding:

M.G. Anderson
Hannah Bartholomew ✓
Martin Bell
Mike Martin
Topher Martyn

Dr R.A.J. Pearce
Dr. Mike Simms ✓
Ian Standing
M.M. Thompson ✓
Martin Warren.

In addition, the following still owe £2, having failed to submit new Banker's Orders:

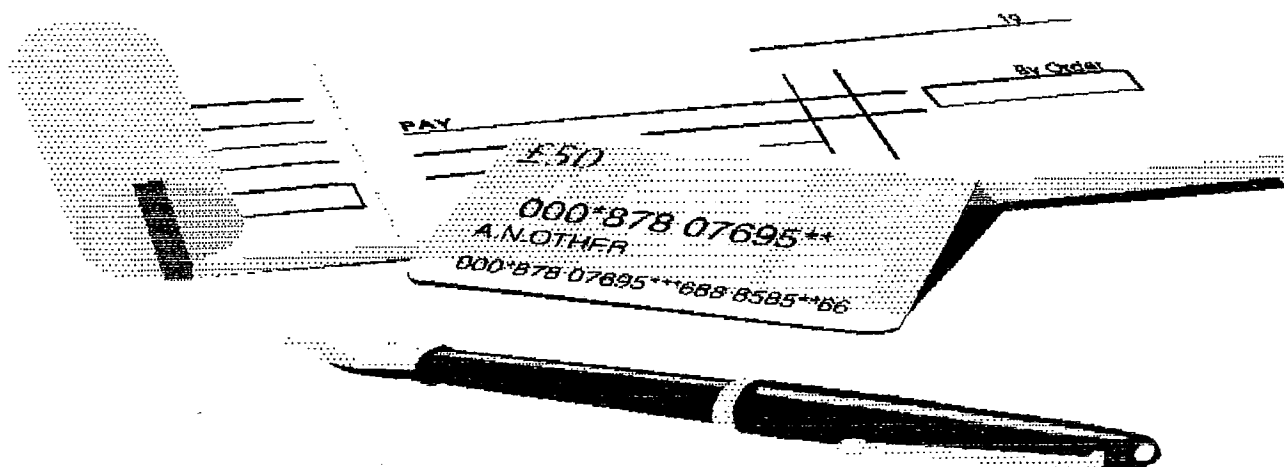
Ruth Charles ✓
Brian Collingridge
Andy Currant ✓
Kay Dixon ✓
Kit Eaton
Eve Gilmore
Bill Miners ✓

Mark Owen
Nick Patrick
Chris Pepper
Maire Trendell
Roy Vbranch
Steve Warr ✓

Odd sums are also still owed by Trev & Sarah Mosedale and Steve Mcardle, please contact me for details.

Will all of the above please send the relevant sums ASAP. Anybody who requires new Banker's Order forms, please let me know and I will send them. In addition if any UK taxpayers do not at present covenant their subscription and would wish to do so, please let me know. This latter has the advantage of supplying us with money at no expense to the member, direct from H.M. Treasury.

Graham Mullan



Caving - A Renaissance?

I have been asked to write this article by the editor of this newsletter, and consequently have no idea where to begin... but, seeing as I have to start somewhere, I think a bit of an introduction to me and my salubrious past might be in order.

I joined UBSS last year in a flush of typically fresher-esque enthusiasm, having made the mistake of looking at the nice pictures at Fresh, which led to me being press-ganged (in the nicest possible way) by a certain Mr. Andrew Farrant into coughing up my six quid. In the first term of last year I actually (although some of the older members of UBSS may doubt the veracity of this statement) went caving on a passably regular basis.

Unfortunately, by the Christmas weekend in Derbyshire the caving bug had begun to wane, as anyone who was there will tell you, and I managed to avoid caving for the entire weekend. So, I think that makes my last caving trip about 11 months ago. Impressive, I feel.

I think the disappearing of enthusiasm might have had a bit to do with my tendency to either have "epic" trips (usually involving me being stuck, freezing, knackered etc. etc.), or to get perilously drunk and make a complete tit out of myself.

Anyway, on to the bits all you caving types actually want to hear about... I went down to the pub one Tuesday, and somehow got coerced into going on a trip to Swildon's with our nice Mr. Wheeler, Rupert (the infamous fresher-magnet) and Rupert's house mates from last year. In case you're interested, they're called James, Chris, Geoff and Alan; although Alan isn't strictly Rupert's ex-house mate - more a replacement really (clearly the others came to their senses).

by Christine Benn

So, on Monday 23rd October at about 7pm (despite the original time being 6pm - another bit of phenomenal organisation from Mr. Hay-Campbell) our merry little band set off for Priddy. There I was, clutching a bag with my boiler suit and skanky old clothes in it that hadn't seen the light of day for a goodly amount of time, and attempting to gee up a bit of enthusiasm in myself for the next few hours.

With a bit of late turning and screeching of tyres from the driver we got to Priddy and toddled up to the dodgy old barn to get changed - beats the side of the road any day. At this point the usual random insulting that always follows me around started (not that I'm bitter or anything - oh no), as we all got into our motley assortment of gear. Actually, Rupert (with his NEW LIGHT) and Ian looked the part, but the rest of us were a bit haphazard really.

As we were about half way to the cave entrance it struck me that this was the point of no return - I really was about to venture down a cave again.

And so the scramble began. Ian assured me that caving was just like riding a bike (??) *{a statement utterly lacking in any credibility, as I can't actually ride a bike, but there you go - Ed}*, but I really did feel out of practice. The way down wasn't too bad (even by my standards) despite the pools of water - I was told that it is actually possible to climb round them, but I didn't seem to be able to manage it, and even with the help of various shoulders (my thanks to Chris especially on this point) I still managed to fall in every single one of them (though thankfully retaining the vertical position at all times). The first major problem was at the ladder pitch. I've never done a ladder before, and so I was given lots of useful

advice, like "keep your hands round the back". Thanks guys. All that did for me was crush my hand against the rock - ah well, what's a bit of pain between friends?

Ian had brought his camera down (had a film to use up I believe) so we'd had the odd break for 'photo opportunities' which were very welcome, as by the time we reached sump 1 I was beginning to feel the effects of a distinctly couch-potato attitude to life so far this term. At the sump, Rupert and his nutty mates decided it'd be fun to go through, even though they'd have to come straight back again.... so me and Ian, being the sensible, down-to-earth Northern types that we are, decided that the infinitely better option was to sit and wait for them to come out. Ian amused himself by taking pictures of the poor deluded souls lying in puddles while I put my feet up (literally) to empty my wellies of about 20 gallons of water.

Unfortunately it didn't take them very long to go through and come back again, so after they'd had a bit of a rest we set off back again. I think coming back out of caves by the same route as you came in is totally soul-destroying (although I suspect it would be worse if I could ever remember what was coming next). By this time I was beginning to feel very very tired - not a lot of strength left in my limbs, although my arms were bearing up better than my legs - perhaps packing frozen burgers over the summer did have its merits after all. James was beginning to shiver quite violently - I almost stopped wallowing in self-pity for a bit to feel sorry for him, until I remembered that it was his own choice to go through the sump. (Actually, I'm always sympathetic to people who are cold down caves, because it's usually me).

As time went by I was getting more and more tired, and had to be shoved up lots of really quite minor bits because my legs had decided to go on strike. Here I have to extend heartfelt thanks to James who was unfortunate enough to be behind me and therefore got the unenviable task of lugging me up various bits of rock. By the time we got back to the ladder pitch again, I

didn't think I was going to get back up again, but after a brief rest I decided I'd quite like to get out of the cave, so I summoned up my non-existent reserves of energy and clambered up - squashing my poor fingers yet again. All I got for my pains was the flattering comment from Ian, "You climb like a novice, woman!" - well what does he expect?

After that nasty bit, the other nasty bits didn't look so bad, and the only other real problem I had was at a little tight bit near the entrance (it probably has a name, but I don't know it) - I got a bit wedged, and Ian had to guide me from the front while James (bless his little Reeboks) got to shove from behind. That was the last bad bit, and then it was further up and further out, and eventually, {cue fanfare} FRESH AIR! I have never been so glad to see a cow field in all my life - except for the last time I went caving, of course.

As we walked back across the fields, Ian asked me if my appetite for caving had been whetted, but I was forced to reply that I thought my appetite was one of the few things about me that HADN'T got wet.

I don't remember much about the journey home because I went to sleep on Ian's shoulder (keep that bit of knowledge for future reference - Ian has a very comfy shoulder), and I only remember being vaguely disturbed by a bit of wild corner-taking and squealing tyres. At any rate, we ended up in Bristol in one piece, and I was very kindly dropped off home (could that have anything to do with the tackle warden living on my road? Surely not).

So there you go. My first caving trip in eleven months. I'm not sure when I'll go again, but I think I will. I'm not a complete masochist, just very stubborn, and one day I'm going to go down a cave and come out without being completely knackered and frozen.

In fact, I might even enjoy it.

Swildons

The Entrance to Swildons is on the move again - on a recent trip, two cavers went in via the 'safe' zig-zag route which bypasses the awkward climb down into the dry and wet ways. On squeezing through into the start of the zig zags, a large boulder fell out off the roof, almost pinning the caver to the floor. Consequently, the zig zag route is now blocked and dangerous. The 'safest' route is now to climb down the wet rift at the start of the zig-zag route which takes you to the start of the 'wet-way'. Alternatively, you can still climb down the old 'normal' route, although its a little tricky. Whichever way you go - take care - the whole area is loose and unstable. There may be the possibility of an entirely new entrance being opened up into the Boulder Chambers on the Long Dry Way.

Ogof Draenen

This cave is now over 37 km long and has overtaken Agen Allwedd as the third longest cave in Britain (with only OFD and Easegill to go). Recently discoveries include 2.5 km of large passage off the Eliptic area, which extend under the Bloreng. Some of this passage is almost as large as the Time Machine in Daren

Cilau, and contains no less than about 5 inlets feeding a streamway. The Wessex also found about a kilometre in the same area. At the other end of the system, about 1.5-2 km was discovered at the top end of Gilwern Passage (echo inlet). Bets are being taken on when it is going to overtake OFD (c. 50 Km). A second entrance is likely within the next few months, as the present entrance is not only unpleasant, but potentially unstable.

GB cave

As many of you will be aware, we had a bit of a breakthrough in the GB Dig. Unfortunately, we broke into the upper parallel rift, which can be accessed via the high level pretty passage, after the dig took a sharp turn to the right. However, this upper rift is probably the site with the best potential in the cave, but previously we were unable to dig it, without ruining the upper passage. Now we have access, we can continue digging at the lower level (the passage still continues), with improved stacking space and air supply. As such, the prospects are better than at any time since the dig was started - so get down and dig!! Any volunteers see Simon Grace or Doctor Andy (if he's still around....).

Yorkshire - Tales from The Marton Arms

Kevin Holmes tells of a couple of days of alcoholism thinly disguised as speleology in the company of Steve Cottle, Ian Wheeler, Ian Morley, Paul Drewery, Chris Bennett, Bill Miners, Dan Harries and Klaus the German (who wasn't really called Klaus, but we can't remember his name).

Driving up on Friday night with "big Ian", we met the others in The Marton Arms, already fed and rosy-cheeked. I was very surprised by a member from Loughborough Caving Club (my old speleological haunt) spotting me, and found they were staying at the same farm as us. We continued to excessively sample the excellent ales and unfortunate scrumpy and then staggered back to the tents to consume a further amount of whisky and rum.

On Saturday morning, Steve woke us up nice and early to go to the Fountain Cafe. Once there we passed the time before breakfast by developing a method of punishing anyone's stupid comment by bashing their heads into the desk (evolved from the myth that this is how teachers maintain discipline!) After a hearty breakfast and some messing around chasing someone's sleeping bag, we headed off for Lost John's Cave.

Steve, Ian x 2 and myself went in first to rig. It was my first major SRT

trip and I was a little daunted by the 140 foot Battleaxe Pitch, especially as it was reached by an open 20 foot traverse (lifelined it may be, but that doesn't protect your pants!) After more pitches of varying lengths we reached the bottom of the cave. From there we headed downstream to Long Pool which was a pool that went on and on in a longish sort of way. On the return journey we drew lots to see who would be last out and thus who would get wettest in the waterfalls with nobody to pull the rope clear. Ian (small) made a hasty choice to draw the 'short' stone and had to go last up through the water (well, he did have a hood, even if he didn't have any wetsocks.) We passed the other party going down at around this point.

Steve had a well-deserved twenty winks at the top of the 140 foot pitch while waiting for me to ascend (sorry, Steve). We found Chris Bennett asleep and looking like a stretcher case at the bottom of a later 100 foot pitch and, having woken up, he decided to come out with us.

That night we arrived at The Marton Arms by seven o'clock and sat for the evening sipping beer (no

more scrumpy for me, thank you), telling bad jokes (apart from Ian's frozen cows) and recharging my lamp in the pub's plug socket.

Next day, Steve woke us up early again to get to the Fountain Cafe, even though we found 20,000 bikers, half the climbing fraternity of Yorkshire, the whole village, 15 chickens, 6 sheep and a vole waiting in the queue before us. Had we but waited another hour.... but hindsight is a wonderful gift. After another gorgeous breakfast and a good deal of head slamming we headed off for Stream Passage Pot, an entrance to the Gaping Gill system.

A lovely Sunday morning walk of an hour brought us to a sinkhole (which one?!) to enter Stream Passage through a nicely greased oil drum entrance. Ian Wheeler volunteered (?) to rig and de-rig, so Steve, big Ian and myself followed in and met up with the other group. A good set of pitches (15, 60, 100 and 70 feet (ish)) with a nice "oh shit I don't like heights" exposed feel to them. At the bottom we rounded the aptly named Mud Pot and, after passing the returning party, found our way to the main chamber of Gaping Gill. It's BIG!

After viewing the wreath and candle set down for the Scout that fell down the shaft and being told not to look directly up the main shaft lest a pebble

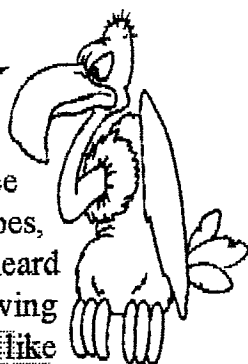
or further member of a youth organisation should be thrown down to test the depth (count how many seconds until you hear a scream) we set off back.

I slowly made my way up the pitches and was surprised to find that I was on my own (usually I was being hassled to "bloody hurry up"). I found out later that this was because Steve was waiting for Ian Morley who was waiting for Ian Wheeler to grow six inches so that he could reach a certain bolt above one pitch to de-rig. Well, Ian (little) didn't get any bigger, so "big Ian" had to de-rig the pitch that had so frightened him on the way down (big Ian's comment on the way down - "I'd rather buy a new rope"!)

Safely out on the surface and bloody freezing, a brisk walk down the hill and back to the cars ensued. A good weekend, bruised from too much head slamming (not a good idea to say something down a cave with so much rock about) but Ian's jokes made up for it.

Kevin is currently undergoing selection to be a member of parliament. His diplomatic aplomb is amply displayed in his ability to avoid using the word "fat" when referring to Ian Morley.

GRAVEL



Ever keen to reinforce public school stereotypes, Hugo was recently heard muttering the following axiom; "Caving is a bit like sex - always better without any women present"

Rumours have been rife of strange goings on at Fresher's weekend involving the previously spotless character of Rupert. Taking a tent with him, he lured an unsuspecting older woman to his bed on Saturday night and then pretended to all and sundry that nothing had happened. The errant Mr. Hay-Campbell was undone, however, by the proximity of his tent to that of Simon Grace's, who comments, "He made enough noise for me to know what was going on, but not enough to keep me awake." Rupert is more forthright about the matter of late and has been heard to comment, "I was drunk, she was drunk and it was just a drunken snog, alright, now please don't print any of this." Perish the thought.

Rupert was in his tent again at Bonfire weekend, alone this time, and in a spirit of revenge has commented that Simon Grace and his companion "made enough noise for me to know what was going on and enough to keep me awake." Oh the irony.

Following last issue's newspaper headline involving a member of the club, Mr. Paul Drewery-Brewery has submitted the following from The Guardian edition of the 20th June;

"Eve, Her Story - The Sexual Power of Bad Women"

Explanations will be accepted on a postcard at the usual address.

Lucy has apparently become rather attached to a large inflatable banana, which has been resident at Jacob Wells Road for the last heaven alone knows how many years. Perhaps she would be more reticent to confer affection on the thing if she knew exactly where it has been, at least if stories from Steve are to be believed

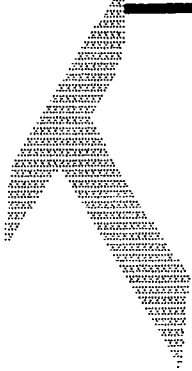
The landlord of the Hobgoblin has put in a request that we find out who left the pile of vomit (tastefully concealed) down the back of the railings in his pub. Of course, we couldn't possibly comment that it was the errant student treasurer at work again.

Also the Rupert / Chrissie / Ian Wheeler / Simon Grace / Hilary merry-go-round. And how all the oldish lags are making a clean sweep and splitting up, but the younger students are all getting together - must be the time of year....

And finally, this issue's competition. All you have to do is name the club member who commented that she would be quite willing to re-enact the recent public misdemeanour of Hugh Grant with the alleged actor in question. Answers on a postcard to the usual address. Answers which do not name vet students will be disqualified.

{The editor wishes to point out that none word of the above should be attributed to him and he is unable to account for the verisimilitude of any of it. Lawsuits should be addressed to someone in the club who you suspect has money.}

Ill Met by Carbide Flame



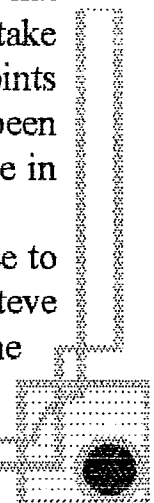
There are some things in life that, when you look back upon them in a state of sober reflection, really make you wonder what you were doing at the time. Where exactly was your brain at the time that you set fire to your bed, microwaved the dog, voted Conservative, and so on? More pertinently, what was it that possessed ten reasonably normal (I trust you will excuse the artistic license) specimens of humanity to go caving in the middle of the night last Fresher's Weekend? For the answer to this question, I feel we should look no further than that infamous den of iniquity, The Plume of Feathers, authorised victualler and purveyor of narcotic substances. But I am getting ahead of myself. A little setting of the scene is called for, if you will permit me to dally with your time...

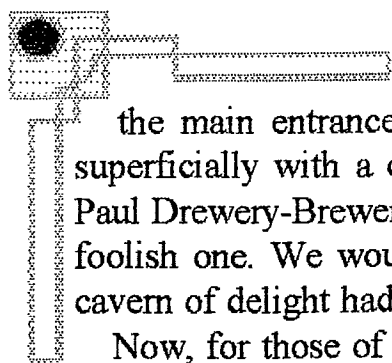
The day had passed with relatively little event. Caving trips had been and gone, with no serious threat to life or limb, the absence of one Topher Martin from proceedings was held as a contributing factor to this happy state of affairs. Organisation and efficiency had rather unusually been the watchwords of the UBSS. Even tea, which normally takes forever and a day to prepare and serve, had been handled with dispatch and great aplomb by young Mister Shaw. The upshot of such keen management was that we ended up in the pub at some liver-searingly early hour, clamouring to exchange our money for pints of the landlord's finest fluids.

So it was that ideas began to ferment. Pints were sunk with a rapidity and regularity that spelled trouble in letters of six foot starfire to anyone who cared to read them. Drunken discussion was rife, t-shirts were torn from backs (don't ask me why; I'm just the author, after all), and from somewhere crept the idea of a midnight caving trip with a difference - one bereft of clothing.

Quite who was responsible for the initial proposition of this plan is a little hazy and I find myself unwilling to name names, though I suspect Paul Drewery has a great deal to answer for. What I do know that I was approached to partake in this hair-brained scheme and, quite sensibly, declined the offer. A few pints further down the road, however, and after many sections of my brain had been over-written, it began to look like quite a good idea, and I was not alone in thinking so.

It was not too much later that people were huddled around the entrance to Goatchurch, hastily stripping and diving into the welcoming abyss. Steve Hobbs was appointed safety officer for the event, and insisted on everyone wearing boots and a helmet, as to go down without such essential equipment would of course be irresponsible and patently unsafe.





Once down the cave, two parties were quickly formed. Most went quickly from the Tradesman's Entrance round to the main entrance and exited again, but some were not content to deal so superficially with a cave clearly worthy of further investigation. Simon, Steve, Paul Drewery-Brewery and myself fell into the latter category, arguably the more foolish one. We would not, we vowed, be content until every last inch of that cavern of delight had been probed and every chamber gazed upon.

Now, for those of you who are too sensible to go naked caving, I suspect you have little idea of what is involved. The pain, I can assure you, is considerable. Small sharp protruding pieces of rock, things which are casually brushed off and pass unnoticed when clad in fur and PVC, mercilessly tear against the skin and gouge out great tracts of skin. Every move causes the body to be lacerated mercilessly and rubbed raw. Here is nature red in tooth and claw as it is seldom experienced. To make matters worse, I was still getting used to the fact that I had forsaken electric lighting to cave on carbide, and foolishly kept burning my forearms when any crawling was called for.

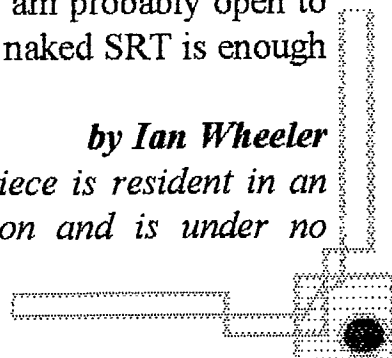
Eventually, and with much loss of subcutaneous tissue, the end of the cave was reached, the intrepid four having been pared down to an elitist triumvirate when Steve got cold feet over the full works. Despite being promised a pretty decorated chamber by Simon, I emerged into a grotty and distinctly ugly crevice with even a naked Mister Shaw failing to raise the profile of the place above the third rate. The trip out of the cave was even worse than the inroad. Wounds seemed to multiply with each painful inch of progress and grit and mud gleefully wormed their way into raw and gaping cuts incurred earlier. Even a rousing song did little to diminish the agony.

Speedily exiting the cave after picking up Steve, who had been wandering around lost, we hastily redressed (well, those of us who hadn't had our trousers stolen did, anyway) and trudged back to the hut. A leaden sleep came unsurprisingly quickly, though it didn't last long enough to keep me from waking feeling as though I had been put through a combination fruit press and mincing machine.

So, it wasn't big, it wasn't clever and it was highly irresponsible. It was also highly entertaining and one of those things that I shall take a great deal of salacious pleasure in telling any grandchildren I may have one day. If you take my advice though, you'll avoid drinking to excess in the company of cavers and if anyone should ask you on a naked Goatchurch trip the correct response is not wholehearted agreement but should be to smash them in the face with any conveniently empty glass. One of those things to do once in a lifetime then. Never ever again. Although I am probably open to persuasion. Christmas Dinner, anyone? The very thought of naked SRT is enough to set me quivering with anticipation.

by Ian Wheeler

Readers will be pleased to learn that the author of this piece is resident in an institution where he receives round the clock supervision and is under no circumstances allowed access to any sharp objects.



The Second Season at Boss Swallet, Summer 1995

Committed readers of this esteemed publication will remember that the Old Lag's Wednesday Night Digging Team had, for a change, a reasonable success in 1994, in doubling both the length and the depth of this minor Burrington classic. Spurred on by this and by the presence of open passage, albeit small, and a draught at the end we returned to the attack this summer. Well, this time we succeeded in doubling the length and depth of the final rift.

The cave has proved a lot more resilient, this year, and about twenty trips have taken place, laboriously drilling shot holes and shifting spoil, with much

less to show than last year. As the season draws to a close, colder, wetter weather and possible hibernating bats being not conducive to winter digging, we have finally broken out of the rift into a parallel one. This can be seen to extend backwards, forwards, up and down for a considerable distance, but is only about 15 cm wide. However we still have a draught and about 2 - 2? m ahead there may be a lip and a possible enlargement downwards. We will therefore return invigorated and refreshed for a further season in spring 1996!

Mind you at least we have made progress, the G.B. diggers recently broke into passage first reached in 1966!!

Graham Mullan

*** Classified ***

Rachel has an almost brand spanking new Warmbac wetsuit for sale. In very good condition. Bought recently and later found to be too small. Yours for £50. See Rachel in pub or get her phone number from somebody, but not be because I don't know it.

{Well, that's more or less that for this issue. My thanks once again to everyone who contributed. We'll be back next term with more idle slander, ever such exciting news from the subterranean world and hopefully no embarrassing blank spaces at the bottom of pages that means I have to write rubbish like this to satisfy my layout scheme. Cue address list and closing cartoon}

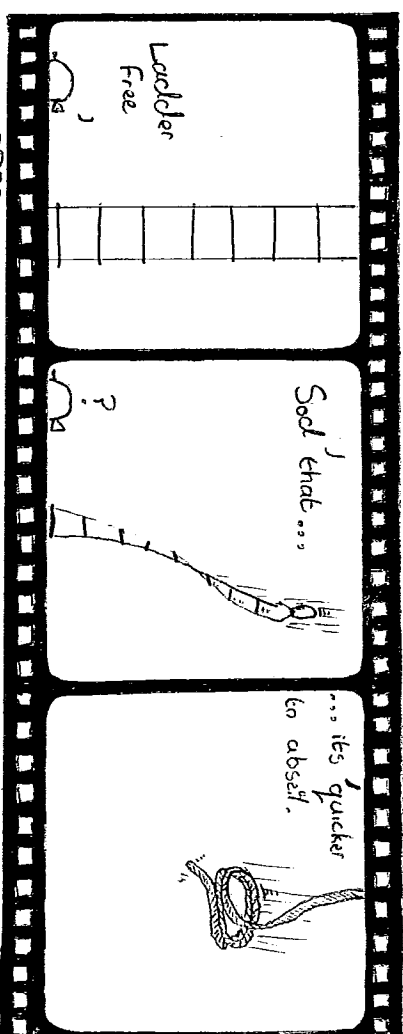
NEW SERIES

CAVING MASTERCLASS

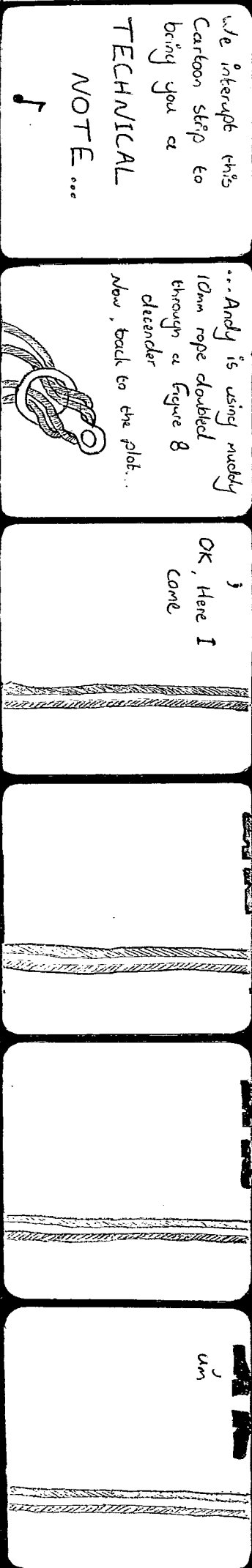
(For beginners + incompetents)

^{with} SPECIAL 'GUEST CAVER', ANDY COOKE

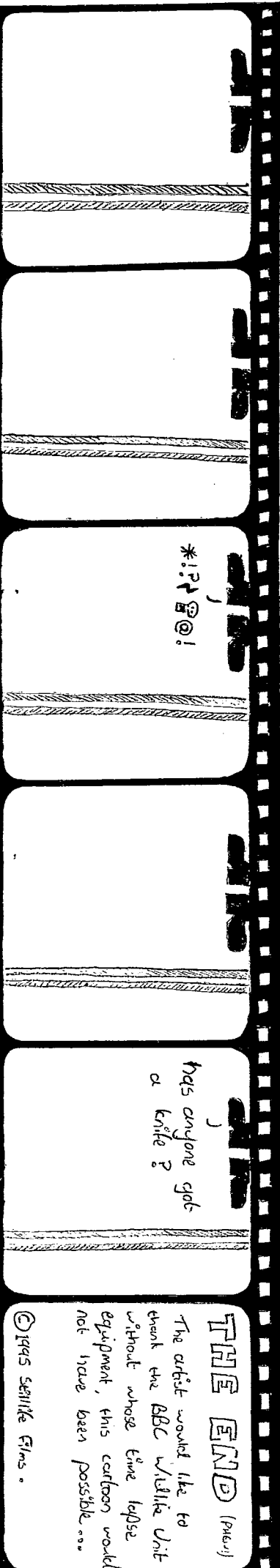
Demonstrating how to abseil GB Ladder Pitch...



... 29 09 went from refn sro pors sro fyuo are sony



This Cartoon was drawn on environmentally friendly 'Green' Paper, and does not contain glasses which are alleged to damage the ozone layer.



In the next issue :- Simon Grace demonstrates how to Abseil GB Ladder Pitch using his right thumb as a descender.