

UBS

NEWSLETTER

WAVE
new ~~Series~~ N° 7

(WITH PAGE THREE)



PUNK CAVERS RULE O.K.

EDITORIAL

Coming out of the fairly quiet time over Christmas, this edition of the Newsletter is a chance to look forward to a busy term's caving. Already there have been trips to Yorkshire and the Mendips, and there are forthcoming trips to Derbyshire, Yorkshire and South Wales, as well as the Easter trips to Yorkshire and Ireland.

I have been pleased with the way people have responded in writing articles for the Newsletter, and the quality of the contents bears this out. The copy date for the next Newsletter is May 1st.

D. Braidwood (Editor)

ANNUAL DINNER

March 11th

UBEA Club



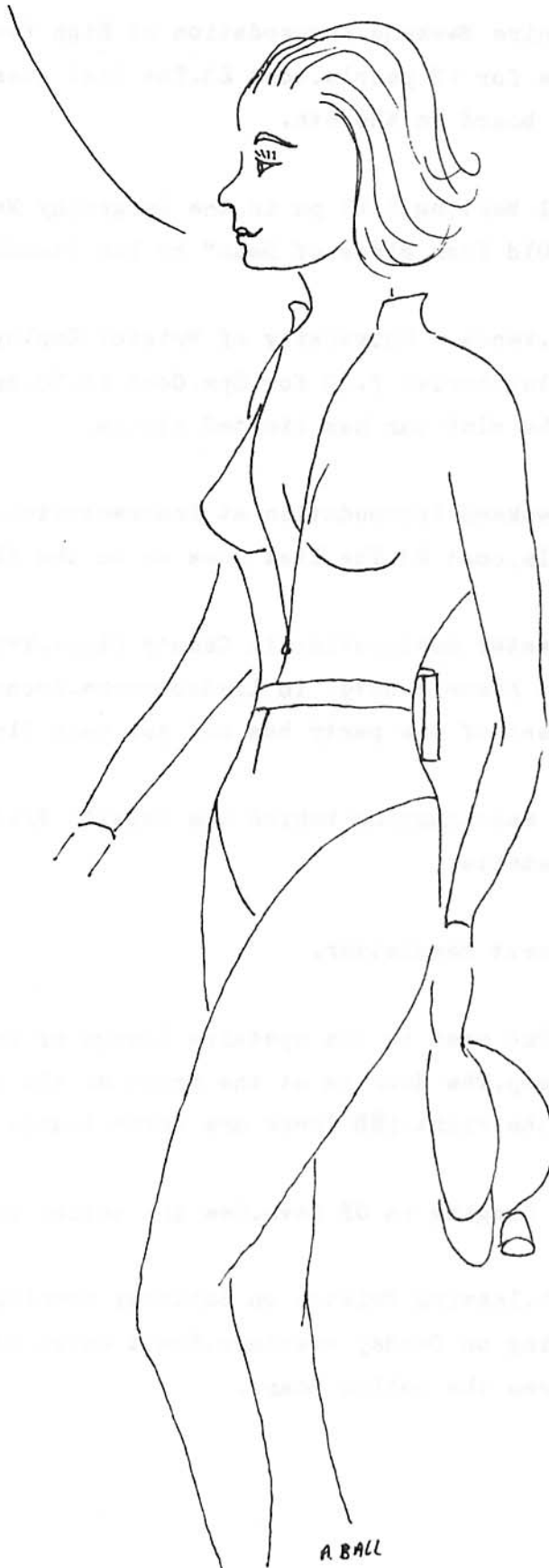
PUB. MEETS

Tuesday nights

CROCKERS upper lounge

THE CAVERS DREAM....

COULD YOU HELP PLEASE
I THINK MY ZIP'S STUCK



PAGE
THREE

DIARY OF EVENTS - SPRING 1978

- February 15th** Paul Esser Memorial Lecture. "The West Face of Changabang" by Joe Tasker. Tyndall Theatre, Physics Dept, 8.15pm. To be sure of a seat, it is worth arriving early.
- February 17th - 19th** Derbyshire Weekend. Accommodation at High Peak (Orpheus) Minibus for 12 people, cost £3. The list goes up on the notice board on the 6th.
- March 8th** Annual General Meeting, 8.15 pm in the Geography Main Lecture Theatre. "The Old Iron Mines of Dean" by Ian Standing.
- March 11th** Annual Dinner. Venue - University of Bristol Employees Association Club. Arrive 7.30 for 8pm. Cost £4.50. Bring your own wine, as the club bar has limited stocks.
- March 17 - 19th** Yorkshire Weekend. Accommodation at Brackenbottom. Minibus for 12 people, cost £3. The list goes up on the 6th.
- March 21st - 31st** Ireland Easter meet, caving in County Clare. That will be staying at Keane's Hotel in Lisdoonvarna. Accommodation for the rest of the party has not yet been finalised.
- March 23rd - 28th** Yorkshire meet, camping behind the Helwith Bridge. Contact OCL for details.
- May 1st** Copydate for next newsletter.
- REGULAR EVENTS**
- Tuesdays** Pub meet in the upstairs lounge of Crockers, see map. The door is at the front of the building, on the right. (NB. There are three lounge bars)
- Thursdays** Digging in GB Cave. See the notice board.
- SOUTH WALES WEEKENDS** Cost £1, leaving Bristol on Saturday mornings and returning on Sunday evenings. Exact dates still to be fixed; see the notice board.

CLUB NEWS

Many of the exhibits in the Museum have been re-arranged by the curator, James Russell. New cases have been added out in the corridor. Charlie Self has made up an exhibit of the Geology of the Nedd Fechan (Little Neath River Cave valley).

Work is being done by Pete Smart and Tim Atkinson, in conjunction with Rus Harman of Canada on dating stalagmite by the Thorium/ Uranium disequilibrium method, which was pioneered by Derek Ford. Some of our Mendip caves are proving to be much older than had been thought.

A major re-organisation of the Library has been done by Charlie Self. Order has been restored out of chaos. A number of valuable books have been found to be missing. If any member has books or journals from the Library will they please return them as soon as possible for checking.

The 7th International Speleological Congress was held in September in Sheffield. It was a highly successful meeting which was enjoyed by all. Malcolm Newson was the principal organiser with John Wilmut as Treasurer. E.K. Tratman was the Honorary President and as part of his opening address the Lamb Leer film, made by UBSS in 1937, was shown. It won sustained applause. The congress provided many opportunities for discussion and was marked by a suitable degree of informality, which won many commendations.

The UBSS gave a reception in its rooms to the Post-Congress symposia on Hydrology and Archaeology, both of which were centred on Bristol. Everyone enjoyed this informal gathering backed by an ample supply of liquor.

Caves of North West Clare, Ireland. The publishers have now replied to our query about a second edition: they do not intend to publish one. The way is now legally clear for the Society to go ahead and publish its own. Informal discussions have shown the need for a considerably enlarged version to cover new developments and perhaps under a title such as "The Caves and Karst of North West Clare, Ireland". This change would allow the book to cover a wider area of N.W. Clare and to include such things as the Pre-Last-Glacial Caves, the High Burren and Glacial Effects, Caves not related to the shale outcrop, and so on. Will anyone who has any ideas as to what might be included please write to E.K. Tratman who for the present is serving as editor. It would be nice if the book could be published in 1979, the Diamond Jubilee year of the society.

In addition to the scientific tome, a caving guidebook to County Clare is being produced. Work on this book has already been started by Charlie Self and Mick Seavers, but since it is a club effort it would be nice to have other helpers.

EKT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES

Archaeological work has gone on steadily but on a rather reduced scale, due mainly to lack of time. Regretably those working at the sites do not include any undergraduates. The regular team consists of C.J. Hawkes, Juliet Rogers, Ron Harrison and E.K. Tratman. Others outside the society have also lent considerable help from time to time.

Rhinoceros Hole at Wookey Hole has been excavated to bedrock. Some deposits have been left for future generations. The excavations showed that there were two small caves which joined. The deposits proved to have a complicated sequence, made the more so by natural disturbance, which had involved the breaking up of a thick stalagmite floor with the pieces scattered around and lying at all angles, quite often upside down. The basal deposits were riverine silts deposited when the Lower Cave served as a resurgence for the River Axe. Above these were sub-aerial deposits. The sequence goes back to the Last-Interglacial as the fauna includes hippopotamus, straight tusked elephant and there is one Mousterian hand axe to match these. Higher levels produced mammoth and woolly rhinoceros.

In Wookey Hole (the show cave) the excavation of the cemetery in the 4th chamber was completed and the report is being prepared. The cemetery dates to around A.D. 260.

In the Long Hole (so-called Roman Cave) an attempt was made at a site just within the twilight zone to recover animal remains from the material that had fallen out of the steeply ascending passage in the roof. The material is highly unstable and far too unstable to tackle from below. The animal remains recovered previously included both cold and warm fauna beasts. Very little bone was found this time but a burial, almost certainly of Roman date, was found stratified below the fallen Pleistocene rubble. A reversed stratigraphy can easily occur in caves.

A new major dig was commenced on the platform outside Great Oone's Hole. Undisturbed Pleistocene deposits were found but were barren. Towards the cave and under the roof overhang a quite unexpected disturbance was found. Part of the disturbance is probably the work of the Rev. Montague Porch but the deeper part, not yet bottomed, appears to be much more ancient. It should be noted that access by climbing up directly from the road in the Gorge is strictly forbidden as one of the terms for permission to excavate at this cave. The route of approach is via a back road and then a climb of about 50m to the lip of the Cheddar Gorge and a climb down of about 60m to the cave. A handline is necessary and care must be taken not to dislodge any stones that might roll down to the busy road and car park.

At Sun Hole, in conjunction with the Quaternary Research Centre at Oxford, a fresh attempt is being made to bottom the Pleistocene deposits. A depth of over 5.5m has been reached with no evidence that the rock bottom

is near. The next stage is to break up and move two dangerously poised large boulders which have fallen from the side walls of the earlier UBSS excavations.

EKT

YORKSHIRE IN DECEMBER

Oliver and Steve wanted to visit Yorkshire but would both miss the club trip, so they fixed a date at the end of the term. Oliver booked in at the Plough; Steve decided to camp. The day approached with recruiting being countered with alternative arrangements from prospective hardmen. Charlie was, however, able to make up a threesome. This left room in the car for Oliver's marquee and assured the campers of a comfortable night, if we could erect it. A preliminary survey outside Withey House persuaded us to abandon the Butler's room and the Left Wing for the time, and Oliver to brew a pot of tea.

A nose-bag at the Fenwick Arms revived the party for the struggle at the Helwith Bridge, where Oliver left us to work out our destiny with the tent. Providence was kind and we made the pub.

An early start with a natural break at Bernie's saw us fresh and eager at the Red Rose by eleven. Here Oliver changed in the rain; alone. He hereby won ten pence found on the track and saved another from changing fees. I hope his smile was not motivated by a feeling of rewarded virtue.

Lancaster Hole was rigged for self-lining. Steve abseiled last after lining Oliver down. Oliver watched with interest and may soon be seen sporting a descendeur. We then visited many of the sights Oliver remembered, not always in the same places. Colonnade Chamber was admired and felt to have survived rather better than the Graveyard Series and Stump Cavern. Charlie and Steve had some fun climbing in Sand Cavern Series while Oliver chatted to a suprised pair of rather piratical looking Eldon friends. We then checked over the route to Fall Pot and Stake Pot before climbing out to fading daylight.

Oliver changed in the rain, alone, while Charlie and Steve talked to the local CNCC warden, who was suprised to see us there; pleasantly, we hope.

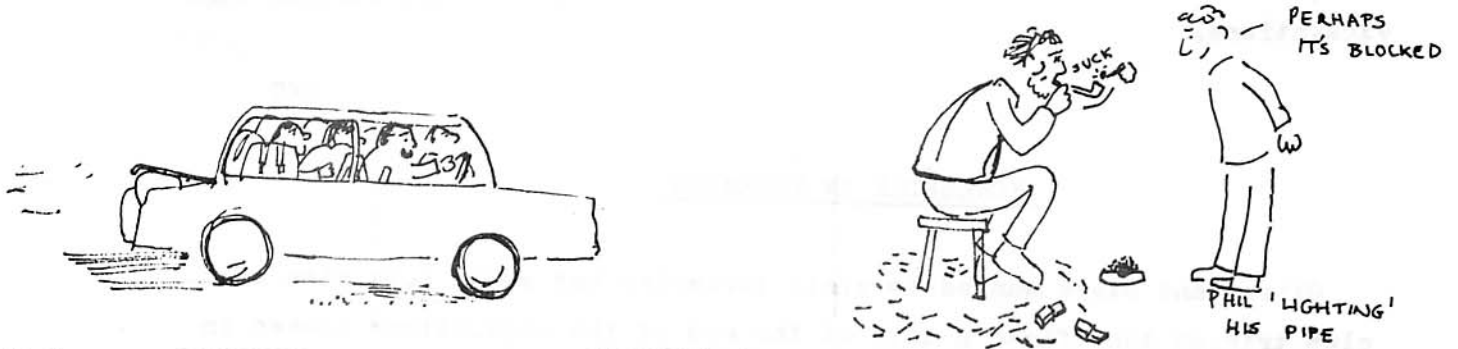
That night we were joined by Kirsten, who stopped off on her way home to Glasgow, so the next day the younger men fitted in a short trip down Sunset Hole with her. Oliver investigated some interesting fungi in the Hill and carried out a few samples for our return. A fine thought to round off a very good wet thrash in a streamway.

Camp was struck and the clutch let in. By 8.30 we were home after a superb weekend.

SRP

MENDIP WEEKEND IN JANUARY

Friday night



Sunday morning



Goatchurch (freshers trip)



SATURDAY

IN G.B:



A TRIP TO PRIMROSE POT (Or who said caving's fun)

A rapid change followed by a quick zap down to Primrose Squeeze, stopping only for MJS to fill his carbide in the traditional caving manner. IHC squeezed in and nearly decided to give up, but threats of physical nature dissuaded him. CDO and MJS followed with consummate ease, and the three pitches were descended with little trouble. IHC had rigged the final pitch badly so CDO freeclimbed the 90ft rift. IHC again got stuck in the squeeze but promises of being left with all the tackle had the desired effect.

The return trip was uneventful, the monotony only being broken by IHC grunting and whimpering.

Note. CDO freeclimbed up all three pitches, UBSS's smallest member (MJS) with lifeline from above. Grade Mild V.S.

TACKLE REPORT

The society has just bought 150 metres of 10mm hawser laid lifelining rope, which will be cut into 50ft, 100ft and 150ft lengths. Two new Karrimor tackle bags and three white caving helmets were also purchased, and these used up the remainder of the tackle fund. A new fund to last for the next three years is expected shortly. I will welcome suggestions as to what this money should be spent on.

I am going to take an inventory of all the tackle. Consequently it must all be returned by Wednesday February ¹⁵ 8th. It will be available again for the weekend.

MICT/E M.J. Seavers

SELF-LIFELINING IN CAVES.

Several years ago the Hon. Secretaries received a complaint from another club accusing us of practising self-lifelining in Lamb Leer to their great distress one weekend. In reply we explained to them that it was a case of mistaken identity and offered as corroborative evidence the declaration that "we don't practise self-lifelining, we do it!"

In subsequent years the travelling lifeline came into vogue, one person climbing the ladder carrying the rope and then lifelining the rest of the party. I shall not try to justify this procedure.

With the ageing of our ladder lifelines have once again become popular, but I find the standard method of lifelining a very tedious process and difficult to justify except in the case of novices or for people on the party who are tired. Why should a person who feels fit and strong exhaust himself lifelining others who also feel fit and strong? With self-lifelining there is no chance of exceeding the uptake of the rope if you are a fast climber. The rope is securely anchored (which is not always the case with lifeliners), and there is no need to trust the ability of anyone else to hold a fall. In addition double-lifelines for the last man descending are made superfluous.

SRP and CAS have individual styles for self-lifelining and I shall try to explain the advantages and disadvantages of each. They share a common preference for the Baille sling as a sit harness since it has less inherent slack than the Whillans, though any sit harness as opposed to sit sling will suffice. Both use an original Clog prusiker because it is strong and compact (as opposed to the Jumar), and both wear the prusiker close to the body.

SRP wears the prusiker on the hip as this gives more freedom of movement and only needs to be attached at the base. When the rope is held taut (by means of a boulder or the weight of the spare rope coiled and hanging on the end) the prusiker will run freely even though pulled from its lower point of attachment. The system assumes that the climber will not fall, as he would find himself suspended by the hip!

CAS wears the prusiker at the front, in the position of normal prusiking; the only difference is that the neck-loop is slightly longer as ladder climbing is an upright position whereas prusiking is slightly crouched. The position of attachment is ideal in the event of a mishap, and the rope is best left to swing freely underneath (as opposed to the SRP system). The main disadvantage is that it requires the rope to pass immediately in front of the climber, between him and the ladder, which does not suit people who climb with their bodies very close to the rungs: for these people the prusiker would hit every rung on the way up. If the rope is held taut this makes it difficult for the climber to stand out from the ladder, with the unfortunate result described above.

As a postscript to the preceeding article, self-lifelining should not be attempted by cavers who are not familiar with rope manoeuvres as used in SRT. One must be able and prepared to descend the rope when halfway up a pitch (without the help of the ladder) using the prusiker and whatever pieces of equipment usually carried.

CAS

YORKSHIRE IN JANUARY

With MJS, CAS, IHC, AGW, JW, GJM, PB and KSB.

Ireby Fell Cavern : At the bottom of Dong pitch (pitch 2), we met 500 mountaineers seeing how long they could take without getting exposure. AGW, JW, GJM, PB and IHC gave up and went out, but the Runt, Grandad and Bones continued to the bottom, finally blatting past the climbers in the bottom streamway. We started the return trip after picking up Grandad and giving him his walking stick back. Stopping only for heart massage we reached the entrance after a $5\frac{1}{2}$ hour trip only to get lost in thick fog and 10 foot deep snow for 6 hours. Plans for cannibalising String and Bones in an emergency were rejected on the grounds of lack of nutritional value.

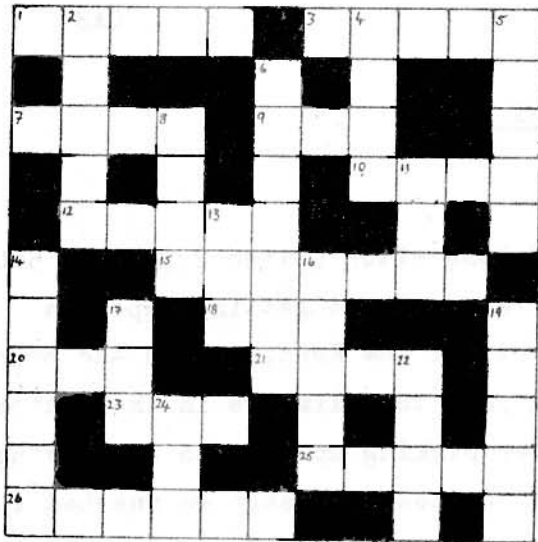
MJS

A Quick Flash Down Yordas : Have you ever heard of Yordas Cave? No? Neither had I until I went for a walk over West Kingsdale with Phil, Mick, Ken and Graham. Towards the end of our perambulation Phil, Mick and I were some distance ahead and finding the main entrance to Yordas Cave, a brickwork arch, we entered with the aid of two matches and a gas lighter. Inside we met a gentleman with a flashlight which flashed on every three seconds. Having viewed the main streamway we followed him out of the cave. Back at the roadside we met some NPC members (our hosts for the weekend) who also had been amusing themselves in Yordas. One of them gave us two sparklers and we gleefully dashed back up the hillside. With our steady illuminant we hurried to the upstream waterfall, where I decided to take a photograph, and some time later the flasgun responded to Mick's caressing fingers. Just then the second sparkler went out, mourned by a shriek of horror from Phil. Mick's fingers continued their caress and irregular discharges of high intensity light aided our retreat. What a gay day!

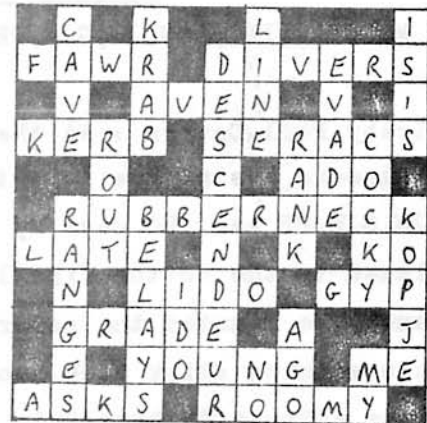
CAS

From our technical services staff, Consultant A Sportsman writes :- I have received many hundreds of letters from readers asking when the Runtin Season starts. My researches show that the Runt is officially classed as vermin, therefore there is no closed season. Good Hunting!

CHARLIE'S SECOND CROSSWORD (with hidden message (23)).



Solution to Crossword no. 1



Across

1. I gasp but the Greek rural deity really goes into it (1.4)
3. Colour of the unclouded vault of heaven (5)
7. Cheat a blackbird (4)
9. Fish with your back to shelter (3)
10. A round projection in a rum bottle (4)
12. Toast reforms the drunkard! (1.4)
15. Two verbs point to acts (7)
18. A letter flows (3)
20. Single euphemism for 16 (3)
21. Deer softly enters a line (4)
23. Refreshment alters 17 (3)
25. Points to perceive (5)
26. Animal lair in decay (6)

Down

2. Skin disease turns parts of a sparrow less raw (5)
4. African artificial fly for fishing (4)
5. There is point in the doctrine when you look back on it, so enlist! (5)
6. Does Erica hate her sort? (7)
8. Rounded projection twists a bit in the backbone (4)
11. Imperial member of the honours list (1.1.1)
13. Scatter his short name (3)
14. Beer goes round a wagon circle (6)
16. Great times change as one (5)
17. Grassland sounds like 9 returning (3)
19. A cross in the middle of the bishops' dominions engenders a palindrome? (5)
22. One German? (4)
24. I enter the french for inclination (3)