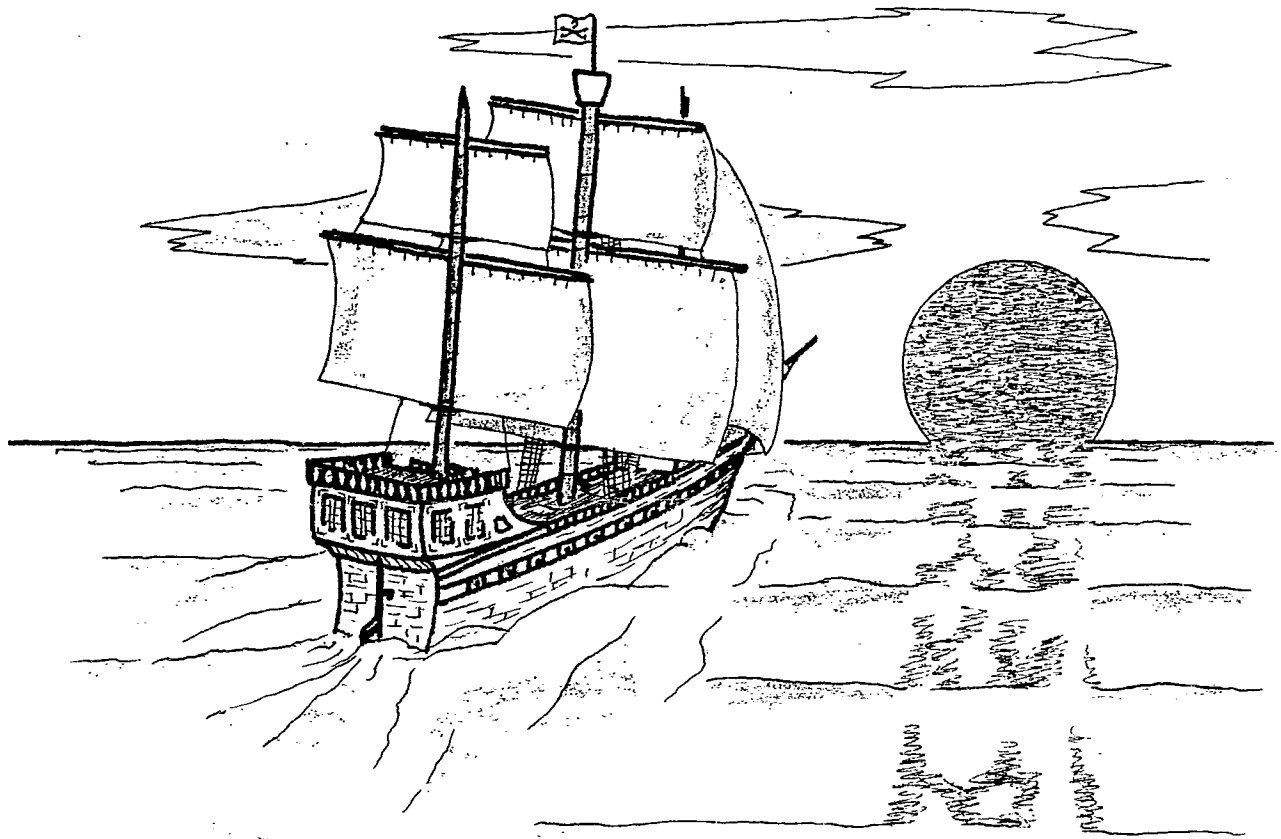


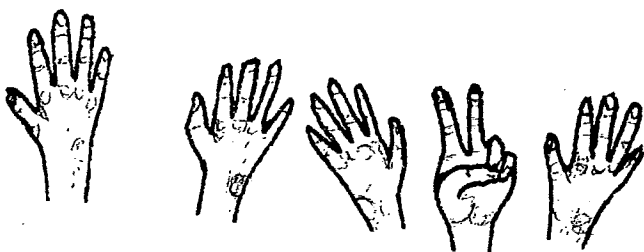
NEWSLETTER

VOL 4 NO 3

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Farewell to a Private venture



AND DON'T
COME
BACK

Editorial

Regular readers will notice a big difference in the presentation of Newsletter. The unofficial gossip and scandal sheet Privateer no longer clings to the back like a barnacle, for the days of the Privateer are over.

Other changes, less obvious but perhaps more significant, concern the management of Newsletter. Shortly after I agreed to be the new Editor I was approached by a representative of an offshore organisation. Apparently the title UBSS Newsletter carries some prestige, in much the same way as trademarks and "designer" labels on clothes. Despite some early doubts I was persuaded to accept a merger, though takeover would perhaps be more correct as the title Privateer has disappeared.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank all the people who came to visit me in hospital.

Simon Firth
pp Privateer Holding Co
Spelaeological Society
Students' Union
Queens Road
BRISTOL BS8 1LN

ALTERNATIVE EDITORIAL

I have to note that I am rather disappointed with the absence of articles on all the exciting trips that went to far away places this summer, such as France and the Bahamas. I would have thought that a short article would have been appropriate considering these trips were grant aided but there's always the next issue of Newsletter, isn't there!

Simon Firth (again)

CONISTON MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

40TH ANNIVERSARY
APPEAL



Lakelands First . . .
FELL RESCUE PARTY

ESTABLISHED
1947

SESSIONAL MEETINGS

Bob Williams has been co-opted by committee to be our "meetings co-ordinator". Any suggestions for future speakers should be telephoned to him on BRISTOL 777724. The meetings that have been arranged for this academic year are all to be held on Wednesdays, in the Spelaeo Rooms on the second floor of the Student Union, at 8pm.

- 30th November 1988 " A look at decorated French caves" by Andy Buchan.
- 1st February 1989 "Caving in China" by Chris Smart (of the BEC).
- 3rd May 1989 "Bats - above and below ground" by John Hooper.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 11th March 1989 The AGM speaker will be Andy Currant of the British Museum, but he has not yet chosen a topic. The meeting will be at 4pm in the Spelaeo Rooms. The Annual Dinner will be at 8.30pm, probably at Pudseys Restaurant, Regent Street, Clifton. Bookings to Paul Turner (Hon Sec).

NEW YEARS EVE DINNER

This will be held as usual, at the Hut. For those who have not been before, this is probably the oldest still-continuing tradition of the Society. The first New Years Dinner was held in 1919 when the U.B.S.S. was founded and one has been held every year since then, even during the war, when on one occasion, the late Bertie Crook consumed a turkey by himself at the Hut, to keep up an unbroken line of dinners, which have continued to the present day.

The turkey usually arrives at about 9.30pm. When I first joined the Society, the turkey was always cooked by Oliver and since his death, firstly by Adrian Wilkins and last year by Chris Hawkes. The meal is always large, consisting of the turkey, roast potatoes, and all the usual trimmings which are usually partially cooked at home by various people and then transported out to be finished off at the Hut.

Numbers usually range between 10 - 15 people. Anyone intending to come, please contact me first, preferably a few days in advance, so that I can attempt to estimate how much food we need and so that I can if necessary, ask you to bring something along with you.

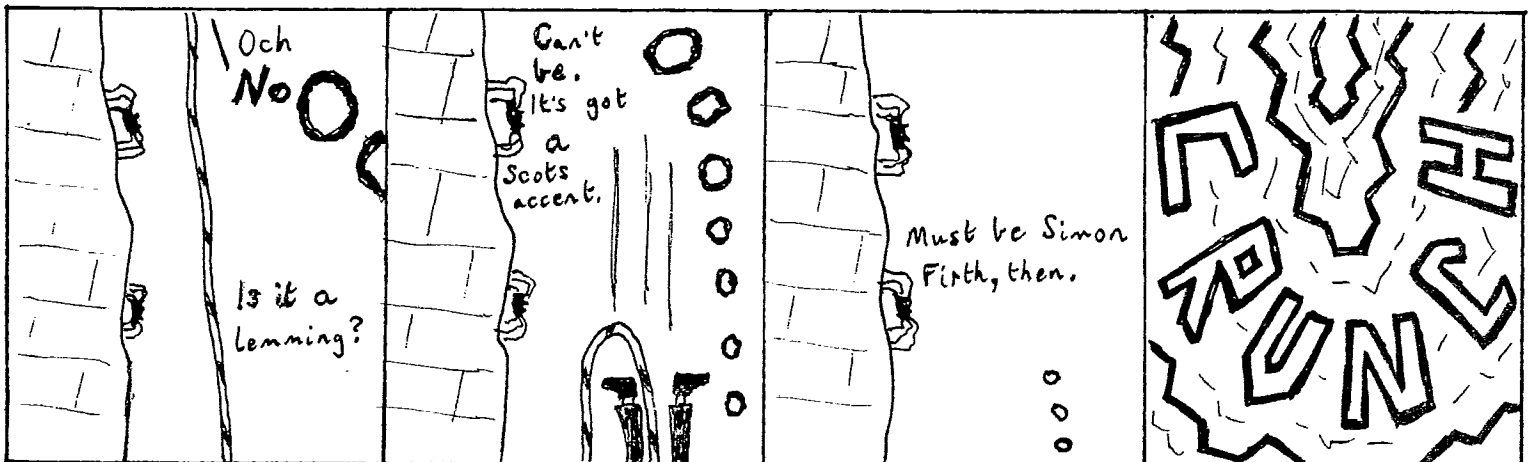
LINDA WILSON, 38, Delvin Road, Westbury-on-Trym,
Bristol, BS10 5EJ. Tel. 502556.

OTHER EVENTS

- AWAY MEETS** Members of the club go caving most weekends, to Yorkshire and Wales as well as to Mendip, but most of these trips are privately arranged on Tuesday nights in "Crockers". Some official club trips have been planned, but problems with hut bookings for the South Wales weekends may mean a change of plan from the information given in the Handbook.
- PUB MEETS** The club meets every Tuesday at 9.30pm in "Crockers" upper lounge, Cotham Hill, Clifton.
- CSCC** The next meeting of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs is at 2.30pm on 26th November (Sat) in the back room of the Hunters Lodge Inn. Linda says that those who don't attend meetings can't grumble about the state of caving politics.
- YETIS etc** The MNRC have arranged for Chris Boanington to talk about "Menlungtse and the search for the Yeti" on Friday 25th November at 7.30pm. The lecture will be in the Colston Hall, tickets £5 from the Colston Hall box office.
- WILDERNESS LECTURES** Held in the Chemistry School at 7.30 pm, price £3 on door (students £2)
- | | |
|----------|---|
| 23.11.88 | Dolphins and diving in the Red Sea |
| 7.12.88 | South American river journeys |
| 18.01.89 | The Kangchung face of Everest |
| 8.02.89 | Across Greenland with sledge and ski |
| 1.03.89 | Underground in south-east Asia (by Dick Willis) |
| 15.03.89 | High voltage rock climbing |

The club has a copy of "Notes for expeditions and projects applying for Royal Geographical Society recognition." It is kept in the Great Britain (miscellaneous) box in the boxed journals library.

Troglobite



MENDIP ACCESS NEWS

by LINDA WILSON.

LAMB LEER

No progress has been made in re-negotiating access with the landowner. The cave is still closed and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

FAIRY CAVE QUARRY

The quarry caves, including Shatter and Withyhill, are all still closed. The landowners application for planning permission for a showcave development in Shatter Cave has been turned down. The Cerberus Speleological Society are hoping to re-open access negotiations, but **their** relationship with the landowner has been somewhat strained in the past and so their likelihood of success is open to some doubt. Hopefully, there will be more to report in the next issue.

SLUDGE PIT AND NINE BARROWS

The Nature Conservancy Council have finally removed these two caves, together with North Hill Swallet from the Priddy Caves Site of Special Scientific Interest. The landowner has been notified of this, but at present the caves are still closed. Mr. Pattinson suffered a great deal of aggravation over the original scheduling and so for the present, please respect his wishes and do not approach him for access.

CUCKOO CLEEVES

The padlock was recently broken off by "person or persons unknown". It has now been replaced and new keys are available from the Council of Southern Caving Clubs' Conservation and Access Officer, Pat Cronin (38, Jubilee Road, Knowle, Bristol). We now have a new key. Please remember that the landowner will close this cave permanently if the lock is persistently damaged, as he does not want the cave entrance to be left open.

WATERWHEEL SWALLET

Access is available through Godfrey ("Goff") Dane, who runs the Charterhouse Activity Centre, (Tel. Blagdon 62267). Contact Goff well in advance to arrange a trip as the cave operates on a leadership system run by him.

CHARTERHOUSE CAVE

Access to this cave also operates on a leadership system. The trip limit is three plus the leader. No carbide lamps or novices are allowed. Each member club of the Charterhouse Caving Committee has two leaders, ours are Graham Mullan (38, Delvin Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, tel. 502556) and Tony Boycott (14 Walton Rise, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, tel. 507869). An average trip length is 2 - 2½ hours, and so evening trips are ideal and easily arranged. A wetsuit or decent dry-gear is necessary, not "grot-kit".

SWILDONS HOLE : THE FIGURE OF NINE TRIP

Sometime ago I was stupid enough to suggest: "Wouldn't it be good if you could do the Damp Link and the Watergate Connection in one trip?" Jon immediately started making plans: it had been suggested, therefore it had to be done!

Four months later we arrived on Friddy Green at 9.00 am on Saturday 18th June 1988. It was a wonderful day. I trudged reluctantly along to the blockhouse, driven on only by the appalling sado-masochistic enthusiasm of my companion. Surely it was far too nice a day to spend down a dark, cold and wet hole in the ground? We made our way to Tratman's Temple fairly quickly, and in total silence except to comment on the stench of stale cigar smoke down to the streamway. At St Pauls Grotto we parted company. Jon returned to the streamway to freedive to Swildons 4. Jon's story was as follows:

"I'd dived sump 2 loads of times before, but had only been through sump 3 once each way. Sump 2 was a doddle, but the guideline was very badly abraded about halfway in. A bit worrying that!

"I went quickly over to sump 3, a couple of deep breaths, and then quickly in before the viz went because of the silt stirred up in the airbell. What a magical place. Mudbanks and a gravel floor with a deeply scalloped roof rising up as a series of solution pockets. And then out. I took off my face mask and wetsuit hood and staggered (with about twenty pounds of lead) up Blue Pencil in search of Chris, and met him about halfway to Shatter Pot".

Meanwhile, I had struggled to Shatter Pot with all the tackle (3 tackle bags and an ammo box). I rigged the pot ready for the return from the Damp Link, stashed the spare light cells and made my way towards Blue Pencil, carrying only my face mask, wetsuit hood, survival gear and camera. I was relieved to see that Jon had made it through the sumps without drowning, and we made our way down Blue Pencil and dropped (literally in my case!) into Swildons 4. We were followed by two anonymous cavers doing the Round Trip in furry suits who wanted to watch us dive sump 4.

"There's no way I'm diving that!" I was horrified to see a twelve inch thick layer of brown foaming cowsh(it) extending fifteen feet upstream of the sump pool. The stench was unbearable. Jon was equally adamant that we should not give up. So he quickly jumped in, swept the scum aside and submerged, only to pop up about ten seconds later, spluttering and trying to breathe in the foam. He had got wedged in the sump and had had to retreat. I couldn't help laughing since I had done the same thing two weeks before. The second attempt went OK. Now I had no choice but to go on. I was lying in the streamway for ages before overcoming the fear barrier. Eventually I gave the requisite three tugs on the guideline and submerged. "Feel your way through and take it easy" says the guidebook. Easier said than done. Somehow I managed to keep the panic under control and passed the sump with ease.

We left our face masks on through Buxton's Horror and sump 5 so that we couldn't smell the cowsh(it)! We made our way up the passage to Gloop Sump and started the syphon tubes going. It took about half an hour, by which time we were very cold and had bad headaches from the foul air. We ducked into the Damp Link itself. This starts as a body sized phreatic tube which would be quite beautiful if only it were a bit bigger. We pushed and squeezed on to Grit Sump, pausing only to take some photographs, and bailed the sump to give a couple of inches airspace, and passed the right-angled bend in the squeeze-cum-duck. We were horrified to find that the air in Causer's Calamity was foul and by the time Shatter Passage was reached, we both had throbbing headaches and nausea.

At the top of Shatter Pot we rested a while whilst eating. Then on to the crawl to the pitch down to Lower Fault Chamber. We laddered the pitch and went to check the duck/sump into Watergate. Then it was back down Blue Pencil again

and down the stream to the unlikely-looking rift climb into Watergate. The many ducks went OK, though Jon managed to blind himself for five minutes with the glutinous mud of Spectacle Duck. The final sump in Watergate was a welcome sight - only half an hour's bailing to go. After dragging ourselves out of Lower Fault Chamber we had some more food and set off on the last leg - only half the Round Trip left to do!

Trouble Series passed uneventfully, except that Jon found the ducks rather interesting with twenty five pounds of lead around his waist. The fixed rope from The Landing appeared to have become shorter and the ramp was nicely polished. The result: instead of sliding gracefully, we were both dumped unceremoniously in the Swildons 2 streamway.

We finally reached the familiar sight of sump 1. Maybe it was a case of familiarity breeds contempt for I managed to prove that even sump 1 can be dangerous. Somehow I managed to wrap the guideline around my cap lamp and came to a complete halt in the middle of the sump. Luckily I managed to free myself before things became too serious!

We had left a doubled lifeline on the "Twenty", but this was unusable because some idiot had left it tangled. It is expected that other people will use your ladder on this pitch but that is no excuse for such irresponsible behaviour. We emerged at eleven o'clock in the evening after spending thirteen hours underground. It had certainly been the hardest and most rewarding trip we had done in Mendip.

We should like to thank Tony Boycott for "volunteering" (!) to lead a free-diving trip down the Swildons streamway and showing the secrets of the inner sanctum beyond sump 4. Also anyone else, especially Simon Firth who accompanied us on the exploratory trips.

Chris Bennett and Jon Allen

Editor's Note : Mendip Underground states that sumps 2,3 and 4 "are freediveable, but are at the extremes of the technique Freediving experience must be gained initially on shorter sumps and ducks". I think a harder trip on Mendip than this would be difficult to devise!





Gravel

Vacances en France. Trying to get arrested on a camp site for the second year running, the UBSS invented the "Greengrocer's grenade" - a piece of fruit or vegetable bored out to hold a banger. To the great disappointment of Joe and Trevor the campsite manager merely asked us not to let off explosives after 10pm, as it kept people awake in the nearby block of flats.

Fact is often stranger than fiction. For his new job in Hastings, the contract conditions oblige Ken Baker to form his own company. With one employee. I wonder how long it will be before the assertively proletarian Mr Baker falls out with his new boss.

Not just young girls, but old lags too were shoked by the foul and disgusting songs sung on the first freshers' weekend at the Hut. Even the thick-skinned Martin "the Animal" Warren was moved to declare "it's not the way to impress the pork".

By way of contrast the British Army (Majors Churcher and Owen) sat in the corner singing love songs, including that old hippy standby "Where have all the flowers gone".

Whilst asleep in an armchair, some friends drew with indelible ink a monster willy on the navel of Jim Walmsley. A rumour was then started that photos had been taken. The editor is willing for the usual fee (1 pint best bitter) to assure Jim that no such photographs will be published by UBSS.

Amazing Facts, no 27.

Bob Churcher still fits down OFD!

CURRENT TITLES IN SPELEOLOGY

U.B.S.S. member Ray Mansfield has been awarded the B.C.R.S.'s Tratman Award, for his annual compiling of Current Titles in Speleology.

To ensure that our own members are aware of that publication and of the esteem in which it is held abroad, we reprint a review of it written for the Australian Caver by the doyen of Australian cavers (and first president of the Australian Speleological Federation), Elery Hamilton-Smith:

'Back in 1969, Ray Mansfield started systematically indexing the speleological literature of the world. Tony Oldham backed this by producing Current Titles, and marketing it around the world. For at least some of us, its arrival in the mail has been one of those annual events that help to lift our spirits and revive our curiosity.

Ray's labour of love continues; for 1986 — the nineteenth issue — he has indexed 4,679 items of caving literature — a feat of endurance comparable with our own [Australian] Karst Index. But now it is published [by] B.C.R.A. and their greater resources have enabled an improved quality of production, although it remains exactly the same otherwise.

'Even though a lot of Australian caving organizations have obviously not sent their journal, or newsletter on to Ray, I am prepared to wager that every Australian caver would find Australian articles listed, which they have never seen or even heard about. And of course, it includes literature on such places as Albania, Ethiopia, Belize, Iraq, Palau, Easter Island, Zaire, let alone the well-known caving areas on the globe.'

Do you think Sandhurst's latest recruit, Marco Paganuzzi, might be too nervous for the British Army? On a weekend leave he declined to stay at Tyne St in case he was positively vetted. The cynical old socialists found this very amusing and laughter could be heard all the way to Mina Rd.

A recent topic of debate: which is the brighter, Sarah the Mouse or her FX2 (2.4 watts). Not too difficult really. Sarah gets stuck at the top of pitches when she doesn't like the look of a big drop, but for away trips goes to Yorkshire not Wales. The FX2, as you would expect, goes wherever it is taken.

More gossip from Yorkshire. Ginger Mike likes caving there but his car can't stand the Dales. It always breaks down.

Building on last year's confusion, when all the new students seemed to be called Paul or Simon, this year's seem to be mainly American. Contrary to rumour, they don't speak English.

Old lag: "Here, borrow my furry suit".

American girl: "Why hasn't it got sequins on?" (Fairy suit)

Or perhaps they can suss the old lags with one glance.

Why does Charlie Self walk into the bonfire every November? Because if he didn't someone would push him in.

A MENDIP CAVE THRILLER

Geoffrey Household, who died on 4 October 1988¹ was a writer of thrillers, two of which were set in caves. The earlier one, 'Terror of the Villadonga', is a children's story²; the other, 'The Courtesy of Death'³, is a thriller in which much of the action takes place underground in Mendip. A retired mining engineer is regarded as a threat by a group of fanatics who leave him to starve in a cave, from which he escapes. The cave itself is imaginary but the descriptions seem to be based on experience. Where and when did he become familiar with caves?

Household was born on 30 November 1900, the year after E.K. Tratman. Like Tratman, he was educated at Clifton, so they must have known each other there. So far as we know, Trat's serious caving began in 1919 with the U.B.S.S., whereas Household went to Oxford, but his interest in caves could well have started when he was at school. It would make sense if Trat introduced Household to the underworld of Mendip — from school, in the twenties, or after the 1939-45 war — but there seems to be no evidence of it. Does anyone recall a cave visit by Geoffrey Household, or know of any friendship between him and Trat?

Household's full names were Geoffrey Edward West Household. He is survived by a son who, as his father married in 1942, may well be the Humphrey George West Household who gained his M.A. at the University of Bristol in 1958. If so, and if he can be traced, he might know how his father came to know about caves.

Notes:

1. Obituary in The Times, 6 October 1988, p.18.
2. Household, G. 1936. Terror of the Villadonga. London, Hutchinson. It was reissued in 1940 as The Spanish Cave. London, Chatto & Windus; and has been reprinted since.
3. Household, G. 1967. The courtesy of death. London, Michael Joseph. It was reviewed in The Speleologist, 2(12) 1967, p.21 and in the Wessex Cave Club J., 10(117) 1968, p.92.

T.R.S.

CAVING IN WHARFEDALE

In these days of SRT mania it seems the majority of cavers head for the vertical Meccas of Chapel-le-Dale and Ingleborough, leaving valleys such as Wharfedale and Littondale somewhat neglected. During a year spent working in the valley I grew to know many of its caves and there follows a brief introduction to them:

On the drive over from Ingleton via Settle why not visit Pen-y-Ghent Gill with the fine Outsleets Beck pot a respectable grade III and very sporting in wet conditions. Two splendid pitches (the 12' mentioned in Vol One is a climb) can be rigged dry on good bolts to land in an attractive stream passage. Those foolish enough to pursue this to its bitter end will be rewarded by seeing depigmented trout by the resurgence. OSB has the advantage it can be driven to along a track (not recommended for the upwardly mobile Golf GTi!)

Continuing on into Littondale the impressive Sleets Gill cave is well worth a visit if only to romp along the main boretube. For the more masochistice, follow the telephone cable through "Hydrophobia" to emerge at the "Ramp", a feature which brings all those lectures on phreatic-uplift to life. Again, for the Sunday Festerer Dowkabottom Cave, uphill from Sleets Gill will provide welcome relief.

Certainly the most popular cave in Wharfedale, Dow Cave is our next port of call. If you can fight your way through the crowds of novices who use it as a training ground, then try your luck in the boulder choke of Hobson's Choice, guaranteed to alleviate the hangover. The second most popular entry into Dow Cave is via the "infamous vertical maze" of Dowber Gill Passage from Providence Pot. This has proved popular with many UBSS members who have enjoyed some very long visits here. However, these days even Shuffler could probably find a route through as a telephone cable runs the most part of the passage. In dry conditions a route can be forced almost all the way at stream level, avoiding lengthy traverses for which the passage is notorious.

Another Wharfedale favourite and perhaps the gem of the collection is Birks Fell Cave deservedly the "most sporting pot hole in the north" (Volume 4 pg 58). Unlike, Dowber Gill you can't get lost in this one, just following the superb vadose canyon to the end. The first pitch can be bypassed by a climb on the right leaving only the 20' Cascade to bring you to "Elbow Bend" after a fascinating and varied journey. Continue straight on at Elbow Bend and you will soon smell fresh air entering from Hermits Cave only 60' away and the old resurgence for the stream, unfortunately now choked. Following the water past "Elbow Bend" the cave deteriorates as it descends through shale to the modern (sumped) resurgence level. The last pitch is only worth descending by the purist. Next to Birks Fell is the nasty Redmire Pot; it's worth visiting the entrance to ponder why CUCC should want to find such a damnably hard cave when Birks Fell is a spit away - had they got the wrong entrance I wonder?

For the more vertically minded, Wharfedale offers Pasture Gill and Strans Gill Pots. Pasture Gill's famous loose entrance is now much stabilised economising two pitches into one. The second pitch is straight forward, and the modern third pitch gives a pleasant 135' abseil. An awkward rift and a wet wallow lead to the 5th pitch a tricky free climb. The 6th pitch is bypassed to the duck and then a pleasant stream passage. The reward for all this thrutching are the calcited tree roots visible in the roof at the bottom.

Down valley, and like Pasture Gill a dry-weather trip, is Strans Gill. Access is a little easier from the landowner's point of view but the pot is still bloody hard to get in. Don't be too encouraged by the entrance (7½" approx), the really awkward bit is at the top of the second pitch. The cave is now bolted, negating a crowbar for the entrance belay, although this would arguably be of benefit in gaining access! This 40' pitch rapidly leads to the 20' second pitch. Below, a crawl leads out over a rift with some pretty awkward manoeuvres necessary to get tackle and cavers to the **Opera** Box. This overlooks the superb 160' Charity pitch, broken only by a rebelay, immediately below the lip and a deviation halfway down. More awkward rift gives way to the aptley named **Sluice** Pitch, having failed to locate the well hidden dry alternative hang.

Few people bother with the 5, 6, 7th pitches but all hare off down the "Passage of Time" - impressive formations yes, but I'm not sure they quite live up to their reputation.

The same cannot be said for the next cave on my agenda, **Langcliffe** Pot. The **Langcliffe** system together with **Mosssdale** and the rest of the **Black Keld** catchment offer the biggest potential system in the **Dales**, of which only a small part has been located. A walk over the various sinks and a visit to the **Black Keld** resurgence make a very interesting day in its own right. **Mosssdale** still remains an enigma but **Langcliffe** makes a fine, challenging trip. The **Oddmire** entrance is a dry alternative to **Langcliffe** itself. It requires two ladders and 70' line and is loose and muddy. From **Oddmire** follow "**Strid Passage**", which is more comfortable than the description belies, to **Hammerdale** Dub. The **Main Drain** is a sombre and sober trek through the brown crumbling **Harddraw** Limestone until you leave the stream, and following the rescue cable through a crawl reach **Boireau Falls** Chamber.

A fairly obvious if awkward route down through the **Choke** leads to the **Nemesis** pitch 70' rigged off bolts and boulders. This lands in the wet and confusing **Nemesis** *choke made up* of gritstone boulders. A route generally following the water gives way to more enlightened passage at the **Sacred Way**; and then down to the impressive **Agora** Chamber. Easy, but by now tired, going lead to the terminus at **Silver Rake**.

Mosssdale Caverns hydrologically linked to **Langcliffe** still enjoys an evil reputation and since I haven't been there I can't tell you about it. Another pot with a fatal reputation is **Langstroth** Pot/Cave, whose sumps have claimed 3 lives. For non-divers **Langstroth** Pot is a fine series of 8 pitches, the second awkward on the descent; **Langstroth** Cave is a pleasant promenade for novices. Or you can link the two by abseiling, through the Pot and diving through the sumps to exit the Cave. Problems of foul air in the sump have decreased but it is wise to have a diver check the sump first. Better still use two mini-bottles, use one to dump everyone's masks and a spare bottle through the sump from the cave before you descend the Pot. This way provided you have a friendly diver, who will ferry the bottle to and fro, no one has to free-dive the sumps. A 33m rope does all the pitches.

So next time **Meregill** has a bigger queue than **Bernie's Cafe**, why not wander over to **Wharfedale**. Do remember however, that is is a sensitive area for access. For up to date information consult the **Northern Cave Handbook** available from the **CNCC**.

Mike McHale

ADDENDUM **Oddmire** entrance to **Langcliffe** Pot has now supposedly fallen in.
(March 88)

"WHAT WE DID ON OUR HOLIDAYS"

OR "LIVER-WRECKING IN ONE EASY LESSON"

OR "CO.CLARE, WHITSUN '88"

LINDA WILSON.

Due to the impossibly large amount of alcohol needed to sustain five people for two weeks, it was necessary for the party to travel in separate cars, with the contents divided as follows :- Car 1, myself, Graham Mullan, Tony Boycott, 1 litre of Jamiesons, 1 litre of Scotch, 1 litre of Brandy, 3 wine boxes; Car 2, Chris and Elizabeth Hawkes, 1 litre of Black Bush, 1 wine box, 1 bottle of wine (which came free with a small camera, purchased on the boat !). On top of that lot we also spent every evening in O'Connor's and several lunchtimes, so its hardly surprising that Chris decided to grow a beard, he probably couldn't see straight in the mornings to shave !

The weather for the whole period was extremely good, believe it or not, mostly hot and sunny with calm, clear nights when we were treated to magnificent sunsets and views of the Aran Islands, which seemed impossibly close across remarkably flat seas. On our second day, we arrived back at the cottage on Doolin Harbour where we were staying to find a school of about eight or ten bottle-nosed dolphins playing near the pier. They had followed a group of divers back around Doolin Strand from the cliffs and spent at least an hour swimming around in the harbour, playing with the divers, sometimes as little as ten feet away from the people clustered around watching and photographing them. They finally moved off and were last seen playing by themselves near the fresh water risings off Doolin Beach.

As usual we fueled the open fire in the cottage from driftwood gathered along the shore. This year, the task of collecting it had been made considerably easier by the unfortunate sinking a few weeks earlier of a ship carrying timber so Doolin Strand was littered with excellent wood and the locals were driving down to the shore and taking it away in truck-loads. We also gathered some laminaria seaweed to try out a recipe for seaweed "crisps". (Ingredients, several strands of laminaria, well-dried. Method, cut into inch long pieces and shallow fried briefly in hot oil. They swell rapidly, turn bright, bubble and spit like the devil !) This provided an interesting and pleasant starter for several meals..

We didn't spend the entire time eating and drinking and actually found time for caving as well, some of which is mentioned below :-

POULNAGREE

Two trips down the cave ascertained that some details in Caves of Co.Clare require amendment. Both the description of the location of the squeeze up to the pretty aven and its placing on the survey are incorrect. On the survey it is marked as one corner too soon, whereas it is actually opposite the start of the roof traverse and not just before its most strenuous part, as the book states. The survey in Caves of North-West Clare marks "Tributary 2", but this could not be found, nor in fact could any other inlet be found on stream left. However, one corner back from marked survey point 28 is an inlet on the right. It appears that the 1956 survey is incorrect, the inlet on the right being where "Tributary 2" should be. Its possible that someone got their forward and back bearings mixed up, thus resulting in the confusion.

Also, a passage was noticed which is not marked on either the survey in Caves of Co. Clare or Caves of North West Clare or in the descriptions. This is a cross-passage approximately 15 metres long, choked at either end, located adjacent to the Inlet Sump, near the end of the cave.

SEA CAVES SOUTH OF DOOLIN BAY

Poulnagavoul, marked on the 6 inch map, is a spectacular inlet, about 250 feet long and 60 feet deep to sea level, with a cave at the inland end. Two smaller caves can be found 200 feet south west of here. Baker's Blow-Hole is north east of Poulnagavoul and possibly connects with it. This would certainly be worth a dive in calm weather. Further north west at Faunmore are three more sea caves set amongst amazingly distorted shale beds, which are extremely treacherous in wet weather! One of the caves looks deeper than Poulnagavoul and again, might be worth a dive. The area is well worth a visit for the scenery alone, the shale beds are quite remarkable and the rocks are all thickly overgrown with the Sea Ivory lichen also known as Beard of the Rocks (*Ramalina Scropulorum*).

ST. BRIDGET'S CAVERN

The Johnson family have made further progress with the excavations here, next to Aillwee Show Cave. The main passage is now about 15 feet high and 9 feet wide and connects through to St. Patrick's Series near Bear Haven. Two low side passages lead off to the right. The one lying closest to the entrance has been pushed by Brian Judd and Adam Johnson for approximately 30 - 45 metres of low crawling to a pool. Graham and Tony spent a few hours digging, trenching a slightly deeper way through the floor, through some interesting fill of which the lowest level consisted of coarse gravel with lots of lumps of limestone as well as stream rounded calcite, possibly aragonite and some sandstone pebbles indicating that the passage took a fair sized stream at some phase of its development. Certainly a promising dig, although likely to be lengthy.

The second passage on the right leads off from the widest part of the passage and consists of approximately 30 metres of crawling in a 1 metre diameter tube; this gives access to a 1 metre wide, 2 metre high grotto with a small stream flowing in over a soft calcite cascade. The calcite fill blocks any obvious way on.

The difficulty now faced by the Johnson family is having spent so much effort digging out the cave, what next? The proximity of the connection through to St. Patrick's to the entrance of Aillwee itself makes a through trip of little assistance, even when the cave is crowded and as it stands at the moment, St. Bridget's is of little or no interest to tourists. At present all it houses is some experimental blue cheese, busily growing some interesting mould!

GLENCURRAN CAVE

Only recommended for utter masochists or the very small! We had been unreliably informed by Nicky Johnson that the cave had now been dug out to "hands and knees crawling the whole way". All I can say to that is "HA, B....y HA!" If that's the Johnson boys idea of hands and knees crawling, I'd hate to encounter their version of a flat out crawl. Once past the roomy entrance series, the cave becomes unmitigatedly small and to my mind has a somewhat oppressive atmosphere; for a brief and rather unpleasant period I began to have a greater understanding of people who feel that caving must make you feel claustrophobic.

To our annoyance, we found that the Grit Crawl has silted up again and would have needed digging out for at least 30 feet in order to get through. After something over 2 hours of solid crawling, we exited to join Chris and Elizabeth who were orchid-watching near the entrance in the sunshine.

The cave provides an interesting trip, but I don't intend to repeat it in a hurry, as added to the general unpleasantness of the crawling it was difficult to shake off the impending feeling that you were about to come face to face with an irate mustelid, due to the large number of fresh badger droppings, found a very long way into the cave.

NORTH-WEST SLIEVE ELVA

Several hours were spent on a surface survey of all the sites from approximately E.O. to the Faurarooska townland boundary. The main intention was to accurately place the various entrances to Poll an Tobar into context with all the other sink-holes along the shale-limestone boundary. Hopefully, I now have enough information to produce a usable map and description for the next "Cave Notes" paper in Proceedings. One interesting point was that when we identified the Fifth Entrance to Poll an Tobar, we found that it now contains a stone statue, about 18 inches high of the Virgin Mary, together with the usual collection of coins. The statue wasn't there last year.

COSKEAM CAVE

For anyone interested in finding this cave, take a tip, the details given in Caves of Co. Clare don't help you locate it ! The cave is referred to as being at the eastern end of a scarp - unfortunately, the scarp actually runs north to south. However, the position given on the 6 inch map is accurate and the field boundaries have not changed. After a long time spent wandering around the hillside in the pouring rain, we eventually found the cave. It was in fact worth the effort. The main chamber is large and decorated with moonmilk and old stal and a point just outside the entrance on the left (when facing the cave) looked a most promising dig site.

The following description might assist anyone else wishing to visit the cave : The correct grid reference is Clare 6, 47 SE / 13.7 N. The cave is located at the southern end of the cliff-line at the narrowest point between Dun More and Dun Beag, where the area of dense scrub gives way to a grassy area above the first line of cliffs. The entrance is found inside a circular stone wall, underneath a large ash tree, and lies at the south east end of a large oblong collapse.

As well as the above, various other trips were made, including Faurarooska and Doolin / St. Catherine's, where Graham made another attempt to sort out some details noted by Oliver a couple of years before his death. He thinks he has finally worked out exactly why Oliver wanted us to carry out a surface survey near Doolin Road Sink. More details will follow, hopefully in Proceedings. It would be nice to finish off that piece of work in memory of Oliver, as unknown to us, he had died the day before we did the survey for him.

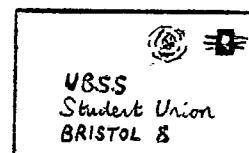
Other places worth a visit include Mill Sink, on the top of Aillwee Mountain where a stream rises and then sinks again in a lovely valley with a carpet of peppermint on its floor amongst the grass; Maze Holes, in the same area; Poulgorm Cave near Poulabrone; the souterrain at the south west corner of Crumlin Castle by the last bend on the corkscrew road down to the coast; and my secret dig, details of which I refuse to divulge until I've found out whether it goes or not, but where as usual, I severely damaged my finger whilst removing rocks in rather too gung-ho a manner.

News from Clare includes the following : the scaffolding has finally been removed from Poulabrone portal dolmen; Brian Judd has left Aillwee Cave

and is now directing operations at Crag Cave, Co. Kerry, where work is in progress to open it as a show cave; the projected sale of O'Connor's Bar at auction did not proceed and so Gus and Doll have postponed their retirement for a little while. (Selfish though it may sound to say it, I was tremendously relieved to hear this last piece of news, as O'Connor's without the O'Connor's would not have seemed the same, I would miss Doll's usual greeting of "It's surely not your time of year already !" as she reaches for the Guinness pump when we walk in the door, an awful lot.)

And finally.....a plea for information. Would whoever wrote the remarkable description of how-not-to-find Jacko's Hole in Caves of Co. Clare (Dave Drew?) please, please, please have a go at a more detailed description of it for me preferably by reference to the various stone walls, cliff lines and valleys that I came across on my three hour solo tramp around the side of Aillwee Mountain.

Letters



British Embassy
Washington, USA

Dear Secretary,

Perhaps your editor might be interested in the attached to show that pollution knows no boundaries - horizontal or vertical! (EPA goes underground at Kentucky superfund site. An abstracted version is given below - ed.) He used to sniff a bit at the sheep carcasses in Yorks or Ireland but this looks more substantive!

Sue and I were very sad to hear of OCL's death. Even though student members throughout have always made CCL jokes, there are not many who do not quickly realise how crucial his involvement was to many areas of the Society's wellbeing. The fact that you now enjoy grants for tackle and travel unheard of in the 60's was largely due to his consistent efforts. Even though he and Trat did not always "get along", together they did a tremendous amount for the society and did, in fact, complement each other quite well.

With best wishes,

Mike Norton

The Lost River Cave lies beneath the city of Bowling Green, Kentucky. With its huge dance floor just inside the entrance, the cave was used in the 1930's and 40's as a nightclub. Now toxic fumes drift up from the cave - benzene, toluene and chlorinated hydrocarbons. Potentially explosive fumes of alkane hydrocarbons are also present. Fumes in buildings in the city are thought to emanate from the cave, though contamination in the cave may be due to industrial discharges from the city. Roof level fan vents have had to be installed in the worst affected buildings.

Unexplored portions of the cave system have been located using a micro-gravity survey and wells drilled to the cave below. Clean air is then blown in and cavers go down to search for concentrated areas of pollution and to make a survey. At times they must wear full-face respirators.

CAJ

Poetry Corner

Oh dear what can the matter be,
Five UBSS members stuck doing SRT,
Swearing revenge on the boys from CUCC,
No one else knew they were there.

They'd planned the trip in the pub on the Saturday,
Lancaster Hole, a pirate trip it would be,
SRT practice and streamway frivolity,
But Cambridge were already there.

The Cambridge once were experts at SRT,
Alas they're not the Club that they used to be,
Back at the pitch they found two ropes where one should be,
So they took both out of there.

Something was wrong but the answer was plain to see,
Put one rope back everso carefully,
But if you're the Cambridge, you chuck it down carelessly,
You're not the ones still down there.

Oh dear what can the matter be,
Five UBSS members standing round dolefully,
A loop of rope is dangling temptingly,
Fifty feet up in the air.

Help, please, won't somebody rescue me,
A small sad voice echoed round the cave hollowly,
Cambridge had gone, a rescue was not to be,
No one else knew they were there.

The first hour passed slowly, and then hours two and three,
Four hours had gone, they were all cold and hungry,
At last they remembered a fixed rope that they did see,
A few minutes caving from there.

With the old rope, they climbed up the wall fairly speedily,
Threw it across at the rope loop that they could see,
With a knot on the end, they did snag it quite easily,
And that's how they got out of there.

All you young cavers, come crowd round and hark to me,
Take special care when you're off doing SRT,
Tie your rope at the top **AND** the bottom securely,
And let someone know you are there!

CAVE SURVEYS plc (incorporating Poll Opinion Éireann) requests your help:

1. SRT trips are always slower than ladder trips in the British Isles.
2. Lancaster Hole has an excellent entrance pitch for ladder climbing.
3. Something always goes wrong when cavers practice SRT in Lancaster Hole.
4. There are dozens of good SRT trips in the British Isles.
5. Lancaster Hole isn't one of them.
6. The current record time taken to climb the Lancaster entrance pitch is $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Please place a tick against the statements you feel are correct and send the completed questionnaires to: T. Mosedale, 25 Lippiatt Road, Bristol.