

NEWSLETTER

VOL 5 NO 1
FEB. 1989

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NEW YEAR'S EVE AT THE UBSS HUT 1988



Clive Owen

Elizabeth Hawkes

Turkey

Editorial

Hill Views
Windmill Hill Community Paper
No 10 Jan 1989

Celebrity of the Month

Some of the more observant club members will notice a definite lack of cartoons in this Newsletter. This is due to the large amount of articles, mostly serious, and not because of a lack of artistic talent within the club.

It should be noted that signed articles are generally serious, whereas unsigned are of a lighter hue, exceptions being the notification of meetings.

Since there seems to be a large club interest in biographies I thought that the article next to the editorial, found in a local Bristol community paper, should give some amusement.

Final date for articles for the next Newsletter is Tuesday 9th May.

Simon Firth

WEEKEND TRIPS AWAY

- Jan 28-29th YORKSHIRE. Leave Bristol on Friday evening, return on Sunday night.
- Feb 11-12th DERBYSHIRE. Leave Friday evening, return on Sunday night.
- Feb 25-26th MENDIP. Leave Bristol on Saturday morning and stay at the Hut. Return on Sunday afternoon. There will be a stal cleaning trip down GB Cave.

For away meets, see us in Crockers upper lounge, Cotham Hill on the previous Tuesday at 9.30pm. Don't rely exclusively on the club notice board.

Day trips by arrangement in the pub on Tuesday nights.

COMMITTEE MEETING

The next committee meeting will be in the Spelaeo Rooms at 9pm on Thursday 16th February.

The next CSCC meeting is on Sat 4th March at 2.30pm in the back room of the Hunters.

Dick
Willis -
Caving
Round
the
World



Strange how adversity results in an entry to an unexpected new life. Dick Willis of Eldon Terrace was 'victim' of such a combination of circumstances.

A back injury sustained in a game of squash ruled out Dick's chosen speciality sport of sub-aqua diving. Left with a redundant wetsuit, fate played its hand with an invitation to go caving in the Mendips, and an opportunity to use it.

Next step is to the highlands of Papua New Guinea - caving for Britain - going where no-one has been before - pushing the edge of the envelope - (Expanding his frontiers) - But all this was done at an altitude of 12 000 feet.

No tea party when heavy equipment has to be lugged around.

Hooked on the adrenalin buzz of longer, higher, deeper caverns; Dick has evolved a lifestyle of frequent foreign trips to satisfy his thirst for adventure. He reels off a list of near and distant destinations. France, Italy, Greece, Malaya, China. A well travelled man.

In a roundabout way this leads to further opportunities. An article in the Sunday Times colour supplement. An appearance on the telly. An all expenses paid trip to Italy to lecture. Invitations to other countries. Not a job, but a pleasant way to get over a bad back.

Dick moved down from Clifton a couple of years ago. He has an aversion to litter and dog dirt - not a lot of that down unexplored caves!!

Although the mess can be a problem Dick really enjoys living on the Hill and says people here are a lot friendlier.

Geoff Towler

EQUIPMENT ORDER

The club will be putting in a large order for equipment to Quip-U at the end of January. Currently students get 10% discount ~~on~~ there. Hopefully we can get 15-20% off if the order is big enough, so if you want anything from Quip-U see me and we'll try and incorporate it into the club order.

Paul Harvey

BATTERY BELTS

Anyone thinking of buying a new belt in the near future might be interested in the experience we have had with those purchased for the light hire scheme. When this started, 18 months ago, three of the new Troll belay belts were bought to supplement the three existing nylon belts. (The Troll belts are the black ones with two white stripes and either a sliding bar or double-D buckle). All the belts have received equal usage since then but the wear differential between the belts is suprisingly large. All the Troll belts are significantly worn where the free end of the belt passes through the buckle, whereas the nylon belts, which are probably three times the age, still show virtually no sign of wear.

The damage to the Troll belts is sufficient that it is unlikely they will last much more than a further six months or so. I would therefore recommend anyone purchasing a belt for an FX-2 to buy nylon. For a lead-acid the choice is not so clear as I have no experience of the wear characteristics of polyester belts although I suspect it cannot be worse than the Troll belts.

(Nylon and polyester belts are available from Peters, in Old Market Street, but not Quip-U).

Paul Harvey

SESSIONAL MEETINGS

- 1st February 1989 "Caving in China" by Chris Smart (of the BEC).
Starts at 8pm in the Spelaeo rooms. Bound to be a very interesting talk on some of the most spectacular caving in the world.
- 3rd May 1989 "Bats - above and below ground" by John Hooper.
Starts at 8pm in the Spelaeo rooms.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND DINNER

- 11th March 1989 This is one of the big events of the year. The AGM speaker will be Andy Carrant of the British Museum, but he has not yet chosen a subject. The meeting will be at 5.30pm in the Spelaeo Rooms.
- The Annual Dinner will be at 8.30pm in Pudsey's Restaurant, Regent St, Clifton. Bookings to Paul Turner (Hon Sec) on 0272 247798.
- The meeting in the spelaeo rooms will be preceeded by caving on Mendip. Following last year's highly successful "contraceptive caving challenge" (the balloon race noted in Privateer 15. Some of the balloons were an unusual shape - ed.), it is proposed that this year there will be an "Old-Timers" Swildons trip featuring tweed jackets, candles and hemp ladders. Does anyone still have a hemp ladder?

LECTURE NOTES

on

" A LOOK AT SOME DECORATED FRENCH CAVES. "

or " I don't know much about Art, but I know what I like"

given by Andy Buchan.

.....Form 3b milled around outside the classroom, as unruly as ever, clutching their paintboxes and yelling at each other in depressingly shrill voices. One of them had already been sick after too much auroch's tail soup at lunchtime and another was on its third nose-bleed. Not an unusual start to the afternoon and I could feel a headache coming on already.....

"Inside, you lot, each of you find a space and start on your projects, remember this lot will be on display soon." A few well-aimed swipes from my club rounded up the stragglers and eventually they were all inside and settled at their walls. I sat outside for a while in the sunshine, chewing on a reindeer antler, as an aid to relaxation, until I felt able to deliver my usual words of encouragement and constructive criticism.....

....."Johnny, I don't care whether or not you've run out of red ochre, get your fingers out of Melissa's nose.....use another colour instead.....you've only got woad left? Well, use that, you never know, it might start a trend.....Nigel, stop snivelling, what's the matter?.....Cuthbert's doodled an antelope in the middle of your mammoth? I'm hardly surprised considering the amount of wall you've been hogging, don't be so selfish, try something smaller next time.....like what? Use your imagination, child, there's more to art than mammoths and bison, you know.....I always feel the ferret is a most under-represented animal.....what do you mean, you don't know what they look like.....look it up, Chambers Encyclopaedia of Rock Art * has an excellent example on page 85.....No, Charles, cubism classes are next week, rub them out and finish your lionesses head.....Yes, Daphne, that's a very nice drawing of a man in a reindeer antler hat, but I do think some finer points of anatomical detail should be left to the imagination..... and on a general point, children, I feel we are rather forgetting that bison, aurochs and damn-great-big-deer do need legs slightly bigger than match-sticks to walk around on.....after all, anything looking like that would be on an evolutionary hiding-to-nothing.....anyway, clear your things away, its home-time." Thank God.

On the way out, I took a last look around and picked up the usual debris left behind. The walls were plastered in colour from floor to ceiling: improbably fat quadrupeds of parentage as mixed as most of 3b tottered around on tiny legs and I wasn't surprised to see that Charles had ignored me completely and continued to give free rein to his cubist fetishes, that brat is far too abstract for his own good, his idea of representational art is a duck on a stick !

* Now out of print.

How the hell am I going to convince their parents at the next open evening exhibition that this lot is a reasonable terms work ? There have got to be better ways of earning a living, oh well, at least tomorrow starts with the only decent "practical" of the week.....Advanced Ritual Sacrifice, with 6a.....Civilisation at last !.....

.....I woke to the sound of applause to find that some unfeeling swine had turned the lights on. It had been a bad day and I knew that trying to sit through a lecture had been a mistake. Once the questions were over, I headed thankfully to the bar. My headache had only got worse and try as I might, I still couldn't understand the significance of that last slide.....



.....Call that art ?
Come back, the Tate
Gallery bricks, all is
forgiven !

Sally's Rift : a case for Quantum Mechanics in Spelaeogeology.

In 1985, a paper was published in Proceedings entitled "Two gull caves from the Wiltshire / Avon border", by C.A. Self. One of these caves, by far the more pleasant one, was Sally's Rift. Gull caves are formed by landslip, rather than by flowing water. The paper went to some length to explain the nature of the landslipping that allowed Sally's Rift to form.

Quantum Mechanics has replaced Newtonian Mechanics as a method of interpreting physical phenomena on a very small scale. Typically, in a subject such as physics, the scale envisaged is the nucleus within an atom. For geologists, used to dealing with the movements of mountain ranges, I propose a more generous size allowance. In my study area, a useful sized piece of rock would be a block bounded by major joints and bedding planes, typically 10 metres cubed.

If this becomes a quantum of rock, a quite different viewpoint can be reached regarding the movement of quanta with respect to one another within a foundered hillside. No longer constrained by the Newtonian idea of a hillside moving uniformly during landslip as a coherent mass, the quanta move independently both in distance and direction. The vector sum of all their movements is of course the same as in the Newtonian model: the hillside ends up in the same place. But within the hillside a more random arrangement of gulls (cave rifts) are formed.

When vertical movement is considered, with quanta sinking at different rates into the clay substrate during cambering (read the original report if you want to know what cambering is) the partial unweighting theory for cave roof preservation becomes self-evident. This was the major failing of the original report which, based on Newtonian motion, failed to explain why the cave roofs hadn't collapsed.

A new survey of Sally's Rift has been started, measuring the spatial arrangement of these rock quanta. Help is needed, but please don't be put off by tales of horrid holes in Wiltshire. Though true, they refer to the disgusting Henry's Hole. Sally's Rift is actually quite nice.

Publishing the results of my reappraisal could be a problem. It all sounds so absurd, what editor is going to believe me?

Charlie Self

PROCESSES OF CAVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE BAHAMAS

As dedicated Mendip cavers we have been brought up to believe that the whole of the wonderful world of karst can be modelled on our beloved Mendips. However observations made during our holidays to the sundrenched island paradise of the Bahamas suggest that here a very different set of mechanisms control cave development.

The Bahamas comprises a series of extensive shallow water carbonate platforms that are separated by deep ocean-water channels resulting from blockfaulting of the underlying basin. At their margins the banks emerge locally to form islands with low relief. The carbonate platforms are host to a network of underwater caverns known as "blue holes". On North and South Andros, Grand Bahama, Cat Island and New Providence these caves have been explored by cave divers, and are described extensively elsewhere (see Palmer's reports in *Cave Science* 1984, 1985, 1986, and *Andros Project Report* 1988). The aim of this article is to review the processes which control cave development in the Bahamas.

The potential for cave development by vadose processes is considerably less in the Bahamas than in the Mendips (Fig. 1). There is an absence of caprock to concentrate surface flow (A) and the bedrock has high intergranular porosity (B). Consequentially recharge is dispersed through out the outcrop rather than being concentrated along a network of fissures and fractures (C - the epikarst). Because of the limited soil cover developed at the surface (D), recharging waters carry little dissolved CO_2 and hence have limited aggressive potential for dissolution. Water table cave development (E) is also limited since the slowly percolating recharge waters attain chemical equilibrium in the vadose zone before reaching the water table and no longer contrast with phreatic groundwaters.

Cave development therefore requires renewed aggression of groundwaters which may be generated by two processes: groundwater mixing and oxidation of organic matter.

1. Groundwater Mixing. The mixing of two waters, both at chemical equilibrium, may produce a solution undersaturated with respect to calcite and hence capable of dissolution. This process is particularly active at the interface between fresh and salt water (the mixing zone) where fretting of the cave walls is evidence of very rapid solution.

2. Organic Matter Oxidation. Organic debris washed through the system becomes trapped at the bottom of fissures and suspended at the water table and in the density gradient of ~~and~~ the mixing zone. Bacterial consumption, both by aerobic oxidation and anaerobic sulphate reduction is important in generating CO_2 and also H_2SO_4 .

The position, nature and extent of cave development is dependent upon the distribution and efficacy of these processes (Fig. 2). Both are concentrated near the surface in banana holes (A), at the water table (B), and in the mixing zone (C). Cave development is particularly

Figure 1.

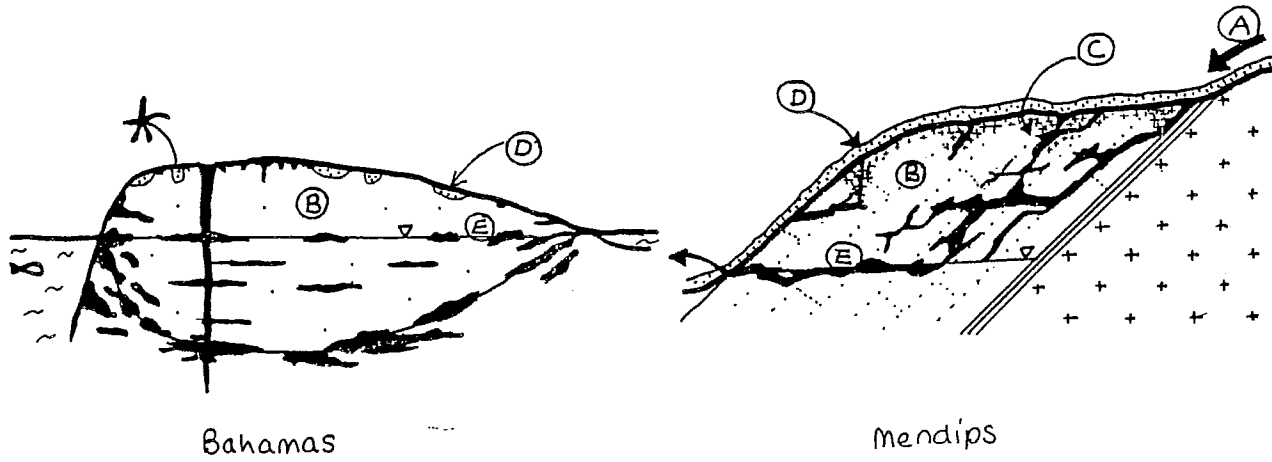


Figure 2.

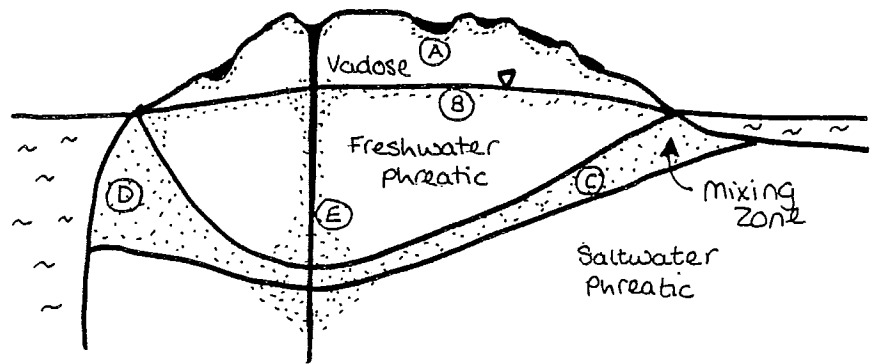
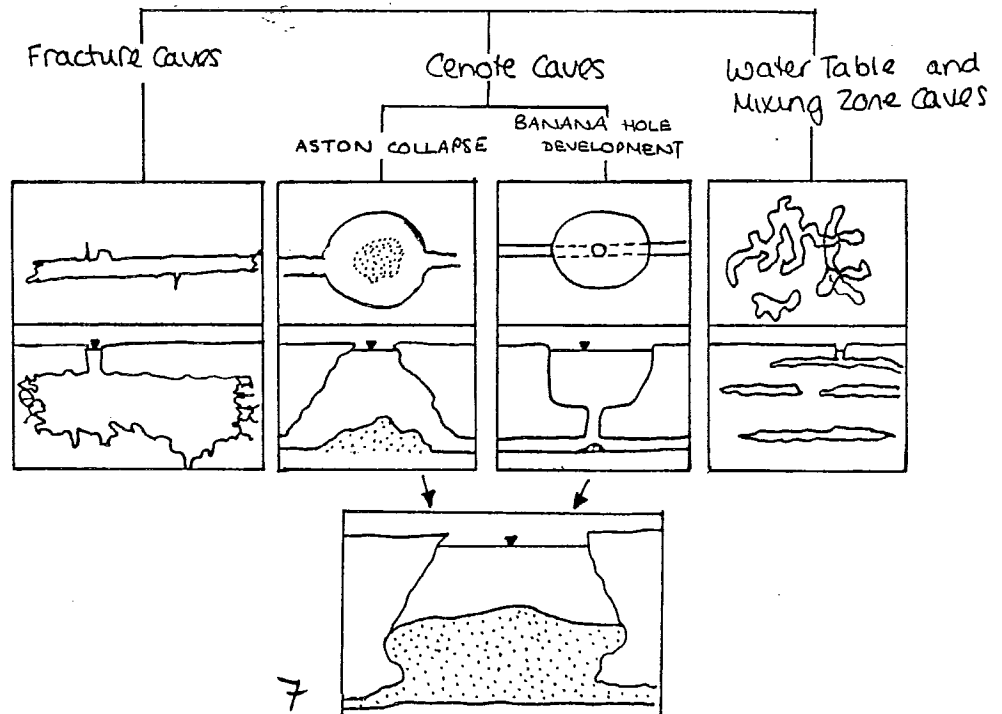


Figure 3.



favoured along the island margins (D) because of enhanced groundwater mixing by tidal pumping and the circulation of seawaters. In addition vertical fissures promote rapid recharge and allow translocation of large quantities of organic matter (E).

There is also an important structural element controlling cave development, in particular the major fracture systems which run sub-parallel to the steep slopes of the bank margin. It is suggested that these may result from tectonic fracturing, lateral unloading or oversteepening of the platform flanks. On the east coast of South Andros one such large fracture extends nearly vertically to more than 100 m below present sea level, and forms a major karst conduit for groundwater flow.

The position of sea level determines the position of the water table and mixing zone. Thus vertical fluctuations in sea level result in complex overprinting of a series of horizontal cavern levels. In addition the loss of buoyant support associated with a fall in sea level is a major factor in generating collapse of the cavern roof and walls. This collapse frequently results in partial or total blockage of the passage by large angular boulders, and may propagate upwards to the surface creating an "aston" collapse feature.

This set of processes gives rise to a spectrum of caves (Figure 3), ranging from fracture sites, where structure is the dominant control and physical processes dominate, to dissolutional caves, controlled largely by chemical solution processes.

1. Fracture Caves: e.g. Stargate, South Andros.

These are vertically extensive, steep sided passages which are laterally continuous along the line of the fracture (described above). The caves generally terminate in boulder chokes, but hydrologically form a continuous conduit which is connected with the open ocean. As a result of groundwater pumping associated with the ocean tides, fracture caves are subject to enhanced mixing and dissolution.

2. Cenote Holes

These are characteristically circular shafts which extend to depths of up to 130 m, and may connect with underlying cave passage. There are two types of cenote, morphologically similar at the final stage their of development, yet attributable to different processes.

A. Aston development: e.g. School Hole, South Andros.

Collapse into a pre-existing void forms a bell shaped chamber with a circular opening at the surface. These features are floored by collapse material, which may completely block access to the underlying passage.

3. Development from banana holes: e.g. Uncle Charlie's Hole, North Andros.

Banana holes - surface solutional pits up to 5 m deep - are enlarged by oxidation of accumulated organic matter. If the deepening pit intercepts a pre-existing passage the replacement of equilibrated waters renews the dissolutional potential and cenote development takes off. These holes are distinguished from aston cenotes by their near-vertical walls

and bedrock floors. If exchange of waters at the base of the hole cannot keep pace with sedimentation deepening ceases and the organic stew at the base of the hole and in the mixing zone causes horizontal enlargement and sedimentation to form a bell-shaped chamber.

3. Water Table/Mixing Zone Caves: e.g. Lucayan Caverns, Grand Bahama. Dissolution by mixing processes and organic matter oxidation at the top and bottom of the freshwater lens are responsible for the development of extensive networks of horizontal cave passages. The caves are anastomosing in plan and are characterised by blind passages which end abruptly. Maximum development occurs at the coast where the water table and mixing zone are coincident and tidal enhancing of mixing is greatest.

Fiona Whitaker

A BICGRAPHY OF PRIVATEER b. summer 1981, d. summer 1988

Summary (no pun intended)

The exact date of birth of Privateer can never be known. When first seen in the summer of 1981 Privateer was already fully formed and clung tightly to the back of Newsletter. Newsletter had had an unusually long gestation period, following the sudden departure of Charlie Self as editor, and although there has never been conclusive proof that Charlie fathered Privateer on Newsletter, the parentage has never been in any real doubt.

An unusual feature of the relationship between Privateer and Newsletter was the way Privateer always hung upside down and face out from his parent. As he grew, both in size and in confidence, it sometimes became difficult to tell which of the two publications was the right way up.

A perverse and at times malicious streak in Privateer caused him many crises of unpopularity. In his formative years this caused him much distress and in the summer of 1984 he even tried to change his name. Unfortunately he could not change his nature, so no-one was fooled. After a lonely year as the doppel-ganger ПРИБВАТЕЙР, Privateer re-assumed his identity but only to land in even more trouble. He was accused, quite unjustly as it happened, of kicking the club's favourite uncle after he was dead. Though he protested that Uncle Cliver had been alive when he kicked him, he was convicted and sentenced to amputation of the naughty bits by an Islamic court of "Mad" Mullans. This Savage sentence was effected in May 1985. In December of that year, Privateer successfully appealed against this sentence and the missing parts were returned.

The traumas of 1985 should have had a salutary effect on Privateer. They didn't. He continued to behave as badly as always, finding new friends to alienate and ignoring old enemies. His demise was sudden, though shrouded in mystery. In the spring of 1988 he attempted to take over the front cover of Newsletter and very nearly succeeded. By the summer he was gone, Newsletter carrying an obituary cartoon of mock farewell.

This is a brief summation of a paper to be published in Proceedings Vol 18(3).

Privateer

Many readers have complained about the demise of Privateer and the consequent reduction in the amount of malicious gossip appearing in Newsletter. Charlie's reply is that Privateer was never meant to be malicious, except perhaps to people we didn't like anyway, and as far as gossip is concerned he has been trying for years to provide something suitable with total lack of success. Perhaps one of the students has a precocious younger sister

COOLAGH RIVER, 1970

(To immortal, invisible, God only wise)

Remarkable! Incredible! And Trat only knows,
Where all the cave water in County Clare goes.
It flows into the limestone when it comes orf the shale,
But tracing the Coolagh, until this year did fail.

Amazing! Fantastic! What a Great Year For Science!
Two Spelios went searching the coast in defiance.
Oh Yes! We have looked round where it might have risen,
But they went orf westwards and Just Would Not Listen!

Remarkable! Incredible! For Tratman had guessed,
That the way from Polldonough was down-dip, - south west.
But they found a resurgence, right down by the sea
Of brown peaty water, -Where It Ought Not To Be!

Amazing! Fantastic! For the dye trace was clear.
The Coolagh flows westwards, which just is not fair.
So we're not sure if a river always flows down hill,
But we do know that Guinness, down our throats, will.

John Prudgill

FERGUS RIVER, 1989

There is a tradition in this society that the experts always get it wrong when they try to explain the hydrology of Co Clare. Professor Tratman drew on his considerable experience to predict where the resurgence of the Coolagh River would be found and, some years later, the water was discovered in a quite different location. Over celebratory pints of Guinness, yet another Irish folk song was written (Prudgill, 1970).

Dr Drew seems in similar danger, following publication in the last issue of Proceedings of his paper "The hydrology of the upper Fergus River catchment, Co Clare" (Proc 18(2), 265-277). One of his conclusions, that part of the drainage to St Brendan's Well is being captured by the Fergus system, is indetical but opposite to my own published opinion (The palaeohydrology of Poulmagollum, UBS3 Newsletter 11, Oct 1979). Fortunately his evidence is sufficiently ambiguous to support my theory as well as, if not better than, his own.

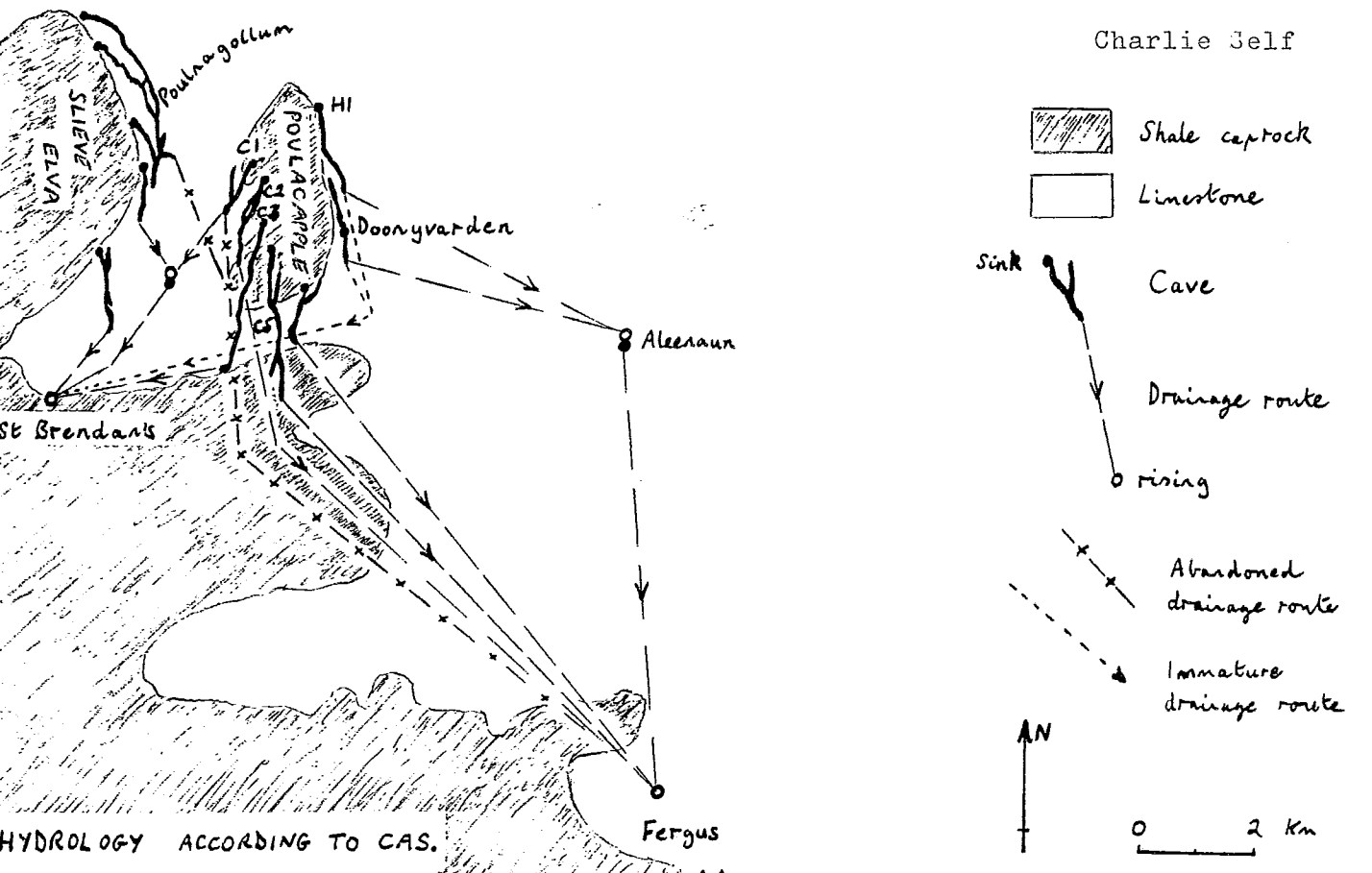
On two things, however, we do agree. (1) Stream capture has taken place in the past and is still happening. (2) The water traces have produced ambiguous, or less than definitive, results. The problems with water tracing are twofold: there have not been enough dye traces made, and high concentrations of organic solutes from the peat have interfered with many traces that have been attempted.

Dave Drew has performed most of the recent traces and a higher level of confidence can be given to these results. One unusual result, which Drew himself makes much of, is the trace from Doonyvarden (H8) to both St Brendan's and to Fergus. A single dye test (fluorescein) was made in medium flow conditions followed by flood. Though the route to St Brendan's was much shorter, the dye took much longer to reach it. From this Drew infers that the cave in flood overflows into an old high level passage (leading to St Brendan's) and that this is the original course of the stream. To me it seems more likely that two routes with similar dip:strike ratios would have flow rates proportional to their degree of development, in which case the route to St Brendan's is immature.

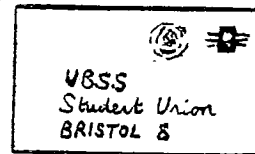
An even more speculative piece of evidence is the bifurcation of the downstream passages in the caves of Southern Poulacapple. The streams follow the left hand passages, towards the Fergus risings. Drew suggests that the right hand passages are old routes leading to St Brendan's. I think it more probable that the caves are just straightening their courses (a phenomenon seen worldwide and described in detail theoretically in the Charterhouse Cave report (Smart et al, 1984, UB33 Proc 17(1)). If this is the case then both passages, if they could be followed, would eventually lead to Fergus.

A problem for Drew is the respective ages of the risings. St Brendan's appears to be quite young and may be of as recent as Holocene age. The Fergus drainage system is of much greater antiquity (a stalagmite date from the Fergus River Cave exceeds 350,000 years). In the Poulmagollum/ Poulelva/ Bullock Pot system there is good evidence for progressive stream capture towards the west. The original (pre- last glacial) drainage, now fossil, was to the east and in my 1979 article I gave evidence to support a claim that Fergus was the most likely original outlet for the cave. St Brendan's would not even have existed at this time. There is also a tendency for young springs to capture the water of older ones.

If the Doonyvarden dye trace is correct, the stream going to St Brendan's must cross the caves of Southern Poulacapple, such as Cullaun Five, which drain to Fergus. Though there is no great difference of relief across the area, the geology is helpful with a shallow dip and abundant horizons of chert. Other streams which probably cross are Cullauns Two(C2) and Three(C3). C3 has been traced to St Brendan's but despite several tests the destination of the C2 water remains unknown. Unfortunately no-one thought to put dye detectors at Fergus during the C2 tests and it is my belief that this is where the water goes. Other purely speculative drainage routes are: the fossil passage in Cullaun One (known as Gaffers Gulch Old Streamway) to have once gone to Fergus, and Gragan West (H1) to drain to both risings in the same manner as Doonyvarden.



Letters



Dear ~~Simon~~ ~~Editor~~ Sir,

Following my note in the last Newsletter, I received several advance bookings for the New Years Eve Dinner and on the evening in question thirteen of us, plus two dogs arrived at the Hut with our contributions. An enjoyable evening appeared to be had by all and Clive impressed everyone by proving that it is possible to get a roaring fire going in less than fifteen minutes, without filling the place with smoke ! Thanks go to all who attended and made the whole thing as easy to organise as usual and in particular to Chris and Elizabeth Hawkes for an excellantly cooked turkey.

This year's dinner, 31st December 1989 will be the 70th dinner held in unbroken succession since the founding of the U.B.S.S. To mark the occasion we are planning a special menu - further details will be published later in the year.

I originally intended to write a short article for this issue of Newsletter in an attempt to put together some details of the peculiar customs adhered to by us at midnight on 31st Dec., partly as an explanation to members and friends who haven't been to one before, to improve on the muttered reasons - or lack of them given at the time of... "We always do this" and "It's traditional, isn't it ?" and partly to get details of the customs in print, as we are already in danger of forgetting some aspects of them, particularly since Oliver's death.

The traditions are firstly, the roll-call of absent members (or as many of them as we can remember without the aid of a crib-sheet) around the four main points of the compass, each punctuated with shouts in unison of "hish" "hash" "hosh" and "bacon"; this appears also to be known as "sneezing" to absent members; secondly, the singing of The Old Crows.

Noone I have talked to so far has known how these two customs became associated with our Society. All I have managed to do to date is put together reams of material from folk-song and mythology about the Old Crows but after I wrote the first draft of an article, my original idea had greatly expanded and it then seemed more sensible at this stage to make an appeal for as much information as possible to enable me to put it all together for a future article .

So, can any one help me with the following :-

1. The words of The Old Crows, as sung by the U.B.S.S. I don't intend to include here any of the words, as I think it will be more interesting to see what versions (if any) I get in reply. Also, one line was lost on Oliver's death and this might be our opportunity to recover it. (So far, I have collected over fifteen versions of the song, but none quite fit with our words, although I'm sure it will be fairly easy to recognise the missing line if it does turn up anywhere.)

2. When and why did this song become associated with the U.B.S.S. ?

3. What are the origins of "hish, hash, hosh" and again, why and how did this become connected with us ?

All information on the above will be much appreciated,

Yours hopefully,

Linda Wilson,
38 Delvin Road,
Westbury-on-Trym,
Bristol, BS10 5EJ.
Tel. 0272-502556.

P.S. Many thanks to Dave Drew for the letter and map of the possible locations of Jacko's Hole, in response to my last request for info. Later in the year I might be able to report a successful trip there.....or maybe not !

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Dear Trevor,

Since publication of the last Newsletter I have had a number of phone calls from ex-student members wondering if I had been nobbled (because Privateer has ended its separate existence). I told them not to worry, but to read Newsletter instead.

The majority of these callers then went on to complain about the poor quality of articles in Proceedings, mistakenly thinking that I was still a member of the Editorial Committee. I could not offer any reassurances, as I share much of their disquiet.

Proceedings has always had a mixed bag of archaeology and caving papers, reflecting the diverse interests of our members. Under different editors the balance is bound to change. Oliver was particularly successful in acquiring cave science papers, my own area of interest. That had an archaeology bias. I can't help noticing a drift away from spelaeology (the scientific study of caves) under your editorship.

The problems began with the ill-conceived Cheddar series of papers. Though there was the potential for a large offprint market, the scientific papers made no concessions to any non-specialist readership; some rank among the most impenetrable accounts the society has published. Padding (of tourist interest) was added in the form of history and biography articles, normally the preserve of our Obituaries. Readable, yes, but hardly cave science! Wouldn't a monograph, with simplified cave science and archaeology, have been better? It might even have been saleable (unlike our Gough's Cave offprint).

Since then the biographies have taken on a life of their own. I can't help wondering how spelaeo knowledge is enhanced by publishing the Cox family tree, or extracts from a very bad medieval scientist's diary in triplicate (Latin, Danish and English). Just what are we supposed to learn from a Victorian photograph of a French ice cave, other than that it was probably taken before E.A. Martel was born?

In the last issue there were yet more gossip articles, featuring people no-one has ever heard of (Phoebe Morgan was married on April 25th 1846 - crikey !!!) and regions that are of no interest to us (Lewis Dillwyn took his family on holiday to Switzerland in 1836 - yawn !). This sort of rubbish is like an inferior version of Privateer, with heavy emphasis on Codgers Corner. If you like, I could lend you one of my cartoonists to make it a bit more interesting, but is this really the direction we want Proceedings to go?

Respectfully Yours,

Charlie Self

Dear Simon,

A Mendip Caving Thriller

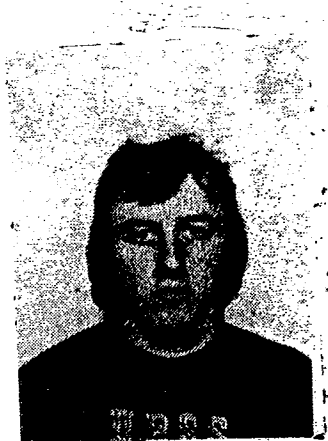
Trevor Shaw's note concerning the author Geoffrey Household and Mendip caves reminds me that Household had underground knowledge in the Forest of Dean. His novel "Summon the Bright Water" deals with the usual Household happenings but based along the western shore of the Severn and within the Forest. It includes a trip into the Wigpool Iron-ore Mine via outcrop holes and is fairly accurate in detail. There is no known association between Household and the caving fraternity here within the past 30 years.

Some information would be of interest.

Ian Standing, Rock House, Coleford, Glos.

Dear Simon,

Lookalikes



Dick Willis

c. 1974



Mike Martin

c. 1984

I wonder if anyone has noticed a curious resemblance between Dick Willis (with hair) and Mick Martin (with a hangover). Perhaps they are related.

The late Capt Maxim, Davey Jones Locker

U B S S C A V E L E A D E R S

Dan yr Ogof	Graham Mullan	(502556)	Charlie and Mark have not had their leadership officially confirmed yet.
	Charlie Self	(541728)	
	Mark Owen	(541728)	
Ogof Ffynnon Ddu	Adrian Wilkins	(97 70543)	Not officially confirmed.
	Mick McHale		
	Charlie Self	(541728)	
Charterhouse Cave	Graham Mullan	(502556)	
	Tony Boycott	(507869)	
St Cuthbert's Swallet	Tony Boycott	(507869)	

We have other members who are DYO and OFD leaders because they are members of South Wales Caving Club. Tony Boycott and Martin Warren are the ones we see most of. For trips to any of the above caves, contact the leaders direct, by phone or when you see them in the pub.

Lodger's Caver with Doodle M^e Doughnut

Oh Caver, Caver, will you go down
With your compass, tape and clino
Oh no, Trat, no, I cannot go down
- for I have no helmet to put on

So off Trat went to his big blue van
and he brought back a big brass pan
and the caver put it on.

- for I have no boiler suit

So off Trat went to his big spares bag
and he brought back a disgusting rag
and the caver put it on.

- for I have no chocolate

So off Trat went to his big blue car
and he brought back a Toblerone bar
and the caver eat it all.

Oh Caver, Caver, will you go down
With your compass, tape and clino
Oh no, Lloyd, no, I cannot go down
- for I have no boots to put on

So off Lloyd went to his Questing Beast
and he brought back a ruddy great pair with steel toe caps
size eleven at least
and the caver put them on.

- for I have no light to put on

So off Lloyd went for the light of his life
and he brought back a fully charged NiFe
and the caver put it on.

Oh Caver, Caver, will you go down
With your compass, tape and clino
Oh no, Trat, no, I cannot go down
- for I'm not quite sure about my spares

So off Trat went, spares he did not lack
and he brought back an enormous sack
and the caver put it on.

- for I have no neoprene

So up jumped Trat and began to shout
WHEN I WAS YOUNG, WE DID WITHOUT
and so the caver had none.

- for I'm off to O'Connor's Bar.

Professor Tratner and Dr Lloyd sometimes
had difficulty in persuading the students
to surry their cave discoveries when on
holiday in Co Clare, Ireland. Quite
naturally the students preferred to drink
Guinness and write scurrilous songs. This
one dates from the 1960's.

Presented by :-

Steve Trudgill

LINDA WILSON.

On 5th November 1988, Graham and I arrived at Heathrow Airport to be informed that our flight to Ljubjana had been cancelled. Oh well. In consequence the travelling took rather longer than expected as we had to go to Zagreb instead and from there by train to Ljubjana. We were staying for a week in the Hotel Jama in Postojna, with Trevor and Jean Shaw, to attend a three day symposium on Cave Tourism, organised by the Karst Institute in Postojna, at which Trevor was giving a lecture detailing the different histories of development of the caves at Cheddar and at Wookey Hole.

The hotel made a pleasant change from our usual self-catering type of holiday; we had a large room with a balcony overlooking the river, the cost was very reasonable, only £212 for a weeks full-board for the two of us. The first thing we all had to get used to was the currency; a round a drinks for four cost 19000 dinars, or 40p each, not at all expensive, provided you survived the initial shock of that many noughts and in general costs were cheap by English standards.

The Hotel Jama is, as its name implies, situated next to the cave Postojnska Jama, which was first opened to tourists on 17 August 1819, a year after the major discoveries made in the inner cave by a local worker who was assisting in the preparation of the entrance areas for the visit of the Emperor Francis I. Several of the lectures at the symposium detailed aspects of the history of cave tourism in Postojnska Jama including such developments as the banning of torches in 1825 because of smoke damage and the use of electric lighting in 1884 and the introduction of the first electric train in 1959. In 1987, a total of 873,396 people visited the cave, however, the average tourist remained in Postojna only an average of four hours, so now, the cave management and the local community are attempting to develop new tourism programmes aimed at keeping the visitors in the area longer.

There were two organised tours into the cave as part of the symposium, one to visit the gallery of old signatures, which proved that Kilroy was alive and well even in 1213 and then to the Biospeleological Station, set up and run by the Italians between the wars and now disused and another to the inner reaches of the cave, to the passage known as Tartarus and down to the river where we saw some wild proteus (proteus anguinus), the so-called human-fish, first discovered in the nearby Črna Cave in 1797. These creatures are particularly common in Planinska Jama, where some are caught to be brought to a man-made pool in Postojnska where they are on view to the tourists for a couple of months before they are returned to Planina. The proteus are now under threat from the growing pollution of the rivers and they are not as plentiful as they once were.

A tourist visit into Postojnska, even without all the extra areas we were able to cover is certainly impressive. You are taken in on an electric train for about a kilometre, into a vast hall where illuminated signs draw attention to the "speaking posts" in different languages and enable you to choose a tour which hopefully you can understand.

The tourist path winds through a variety of chambers all large and well decorated, but all showing unmistakable signs of the damage done over the years including the characteristic dry appearance of much of the stal. However, considering the cave's long history of tourism, it is still very well preserved and most certainly worth a visit.

We also visited several caves in the area, all of which we would highly recommend to anyone on holiday in Slovenia, including the following :-

- Skocjanska Jama. This is probably one of the finest show-caves in the world. The cave is open all year round, but in the winter trips are generally limited to one per day. Ours lasted 2½ hours and we were the only ones on the tour. The entrance doline is huge, from half way down the path into it I noticed movement in the fields at the bottom which at first I took to be rabbits, but in fact it turned out to be grazing deer! It took me a little while to get used to the scale both of the doline and the cave. A series of well decorated large chambers known as the Silent Cave form the prelude to the Rustling Cave so named because of the constant noise from the river flowing through the huge gorge, 100 metres high and 50 metres wide. The view along this massive chamber is magnificent. Everywhere along the gorge are signs of the old pathways cut at various stages of the development of the tourist cave since its opening in 1885. The early paths were too close to water level and suffered constant erosion and damage due to the frequent floods. These can be seen on both sides of the gorge and for me contributed to a strange impression that I was in fact viewing the remnants of a long-dead civilisation and I was reminded very strongly of Tolkien's description of the Mines of Moria. Fanciful? Try it and see.

- Pivka Jama and Črna Jama. These were both closed for the winter. We were taken in by Marian Luzar from the Karst Institute. The entrance to Pivka is at the bottom of 333 steps in yet another large doline. A river passage is followed upstream and connects through a gated tunnel made by the Italians in 1926 into Črna Jama, which means Black Cave, after the black coloration seen on much of the stal in this part of the system. Črna, in particular is very atmospheric and although both systems are less extensive than Postojnska they are equally worth a visit.

- Dimnica. An old show-cave with a most impressive entrance doline, steep sided with a path spiralling down to a gateway, cut through the rock. At the Institute we had been informed that the gate was not locked and all we needed to do was push it. In fact it opens outwards, but brute force and ignorance soon solved the problem. The cave was opened to tourists by a local cave club just after the last war, but it was not economic to keep open. The path leads down through several large chambers to the stream, where the remains of an old water pumping station can be seen. The stream can be followed for about 50 metres to a beautifully clear sump beneath a false floor, which has been dived and leads to a fourth sump, which has not been passed.

The symposium itself was attended by 55 delegates from 11 different countries; the British contingent (the four of us) attended every lecture, quite amazing considering they started at 8.30am and went on to 1pm every day of the three days. Most lectures were given in English, with a couple in French and a couple in Slovene and a few in German. (We generally took advantage of the German ones to go to the toilet and the bar.) The first day concentrated largely on the history of tourism in Postojnska and Slovenia in general and for a while we wondered whether conservation was going to appear as a topic at all, but by the second day it was playing a very large part in most of the lectures and the discussions after each one. I took a detailed set of notes in each lecture, provided I could understand them, but the content of the notes would fill an entire Newsletter and eventually, the symposium proceedings will be produced and there will be a copy in the U.B.S.S. library. Notes on one lecture have been given below as an appendix as I felt it illustrates several points of concern which arise in the development of show-caves.

By the end of the symposium everyone seemed to be well aware of the constant conflict between the need for conservation to prevent the destruction caused by over exploitation of caves and the community need in many areas for alternative sources of income, in which cave development can play a very large part, but the number of abandoned show-caves testifies to the fact that they are not always the hoped-for answer to all local problems. The symposium also showed me that Britain is not alone in facing the growing pressure from what is becoming known here as "commercial caving". In Yugoslavia, they call it "alternative tourism" and it is greatly on the increase, causing the same concern to cavers there as it is here as it is leading to yet more pressures on a fragile and largely non-renewable environment.

Different countries have taken different routes in attempting to combat the various pressures on the karst areas and the caves in particular, but it was obvious that no-one has yet come up with an ideal solution. In Yugoslavia, as in other countries, a cave can be declared a "natural monument" but its development as a show-cave can still be allowed, as there is not much coherence between the different areas of legislation concerned. In Czechoslovakia however, they have adopted a more radical approach to the problem and have devised a very detailed scale of fines as penalties for physical damage done in caves and prosecutions have resulted, including one where prison sentences of 2½ and 3½ years were imposed on two men who had been responsible for the destruction of a very large stal. The administration of caves in general in Czechoslovakia is in the hands of the Ministry of Culture and all caves, including show-caves, are protected. There is said to be good co-operation between the administration, scientists and cavers, which must be a good thing as all activities such as digging are strictly controlled and permission must first be obtained in all cases. Although many ordinary cavers, myself included, would not like to see this degree of control introduced in this country it was generally agreed that if this approach was adopted it might prove to be an effective method of reducing damage done during new show-cave development as at least it proved some way of assessing

the "cost" of the development to the cave. The Czech administration accepted that their method was arbitrary with regard to penalties but they felt that some system was better than none and at least they had worked hard to give their scales as much internal consistency as possible. (For some types of formation, their "price" was assessed in weight.)

The development of various Italian show-caves was detailed in two lectures and of particular interest was the very detailed legislation they have^{for} both the protection of the caves and the visitors to them, in the form of the apparent application of all their wealth of health and safety laws to the underground. It seemed highly unlikely that any foreign show-caves would stand up to their stringent requirements, as anything which could conceivably damage a visitor, even one with pronounced suicidal tendencies, had to be guarded. The Italians have also carried out detailed studies of the impact of tourism on the caves, with particular emphasis on temperature, airflow, and lighting. Much of this work has been carried out in the Grotte de Castellana and the Grotte de Giganti, the data has been gathered over many years and recently, computer recorders have been introduced which has made the data collection easier and quicker.

The symposium closed with a visit to the cave and castle of Predjama. The castle is built under the overhang in a cliff and the entrance to the upper cave leads off directly from its topmost chamber. The castle is a most impressive sight, particularly at night, when it is floodlit. We got an unscheduled chance to explore much of the lower cave, which used to have horses from the castle stabled in its entrance, and which is now used for "alternative tourism". The castle has several robber-baron stories associated with it, mostly concerning its most famous occupant, the medieval knight Erasmus, who, so the story goes was once besieged for several months in the castle, but took advantage of a secret passage leading from the castle out onto the cliff above to bring in food for the defenders, and by the same method he was able to taunt the besiegers, who by then were running short of food and were thoroughly sick of the whole business, by throwing down to them bunches of fresh cherries and a roasted ox.

Apart from the caves, we also enjoyed many fine walks in very beautiful countryside, notably the area around the Cerknica lake, Planina polje, the spectacular entrance to Planinska Jama, and the deep, wooded gorge of Rakov Scojan with its magnificent rock arches. Graham and I had to return to England the day after the symposium closed but Trevor and Jean were able to stay another week. Our thanks go in particular to the various members of the Karst Institute, not only for the excellent organisation of the symposium itself but also for all their hospitality, help and generosity, in particular, Andrej and Maja Krancz, Andrej Mihivc and Marian Luzar. Graham was also able to renew an old friendship with Danijel Rojsek who now works for the Slovene equivalent of the Nature Conservancy Council, and in 1972, then aged fifteen, was one of the guides to the U.B.S.S. expedition to that area.

APPENDIX - "THE METHODS OF PROTECTION OF SHOW-CAVES
IN SLOVENIA" given by M.PUČ.

There are many problems presented by the preservation and protection of the caves and karst which form such an important part of the Slovenian heritage. Caves can be given some legal protection by being granted the status of Natural Monuments or by being part of a specially designated area, (similar to our national parks). Show-caves are not protected however, even in this context, from the "big Appetites" of their managers, (Caves are treated as community property and licences to manage them are given under the auspices of the local councils.)

The difficulty is that the only goals of the managers are economic and commercial. They first develop the interior, then do various works around the entrance including shops etc then publicise the attraction. This is generally seen as acceptable and normal exploitation of natural resources with little regard being given to the conservation of the cave itself.

There are many problems associated with the management of caves by amateurs, in particular by small groups of enthusiasts with little capital but large dreams about their own show-cave. In general, however, they have little capital and so are unable to fund much publicity, so visitor numbers decline and the end result is yet another abandoned and dead show-cave. For this reason, the total number of show-caves in Slovenia fluctuates frequently and it is often difficult to find out who manages certain caves or how they can be visited.

The basic fact is that all show-caves and ex-show-caves have been damaged by the modifications needed to open them to the public. More visitors means more paths etc etc and every year usually sees more changes to the caves, many of them unnecessary, particularly the continued destruction of areas of the cave floor to provide more paths, as the usual method of making them is by solid materials, eg rubble and concrete, which cause irreparable damage as they can never be restored. This seems to be the destiny of every show-cave. The only difficulties perceived by the management are how to find new methods of attracting more visitors. Their motto seems to be "With goodwill and dynamite, all things are possible", as unfortunately some of them are "big amateurs with big money."

There are four physical areas which need to be protected to safeguard the caves, firstly, the entrance, secondly, the surface above the cave, thirdly, the water flowing through the cave, fourthly, the cave's interior. In all these areas, steps need to be taken to minimise the effect of man on the cave environment.

For show-caves, further criteria apply. Firstly, prevention. Don't open every beautiful cave or there will soon be none left and if possible, prevent their development by idealistic amateurs, as no money = no tourists = closure, but by then the damage has already been done. Secondly, if development does go ahead, there should be close collaboration between the conservation authorities and the management, eg if a new path is to be made use a light metal construction, suspended and fixed above the floor, not solid paths made from consolidated rubble etc, as in the future,

if the cave does close, the former can be removed; the latter cannot. Therefore, in all cases, respect the natural gifts given to us in the cave. Thirdly, what can be done with regard to show-caves that have already been damaged? a) Legislation must insist that managers turn some of the profits back into the cave and pay for permanent investigations into visitor numbers and the general impact on the cave environment. b) Protect the surface over and around the cave, in particular against the random "mushrooming" of the usual associated structures. c) Polluted water running through the cave should, if possible be subject to cleaning and filtration.

However, all this can come to nothing if the management will not listen, therefore there should be legislation to make them listen.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

We would like to welcome the following new member to the Society - Michael Thompson (prop. Linda Wilson, sec. Trevor Shaw), elected at our last Sessional Meeting in November.

Since the beginning of the present session in October, several of our recent graduates have applied for ex-student membership, these include Rob Fallowes, Jon Allen, Marco Paganuzzi and Ian Hedgecock. Joe Oates has yet to "pay up", but considering his geographical location, (ie within 50 miles of ~~Windscale~~ Sellafield) and his notorious ability to attract accidents, we don't really want to distract him too much ! If anyone does see him, grab the money for me and run.

Finally, Steve Hobbs has at last admitted that he can no longer justify a grant, so he too is now an ex-student member.

GRAHAM MULLAN. (Hon. Treas.)

BLAckMaIl CoRner

Graham and Linda are still waiting for Steve Hobbs to take them out for an evening's free drinking. When in Yugoslavia they met an American conference delegate who told them that his daughter was in China with a certain Steve Hobbs. Did they by any chance know anything about him? No, they lied.

In the early hours of New Year's Day, a student caver from Cambridge was found at the foot of the Ingleton viaduct, obviously having descended it without tackle. Certain caravan-dwelling UBSS members may wish to bribe the staff of Newsletter or the Settle Police.

Last summer a group of UBSS members, Charlie Self, Sarah Constable, Paul Turner, Rob Fallows, Joe Oates, Paul Drewery, Trevor Mosedale and Simon Shaw visited the Jura region of France. The scenery in the area was not unlike the Mendips, although more spectacular and on a much larger scale. Fortunately most of the caves were longer and more vertical than those of Mendip but not necessarily larger! The many caves in the area are dominated by the Verneau system, an underground streamway with several caves providing access to the main streamway or Collecteur.

On 20th August most of the group met up at Deservillers, south of the town of Besancon, quite a feat as everybody was arriving from different parts of Europe by various forms of transport. Simon had hitched from Italy to one of the remotest villages in the area and as Charlie had no visible means of transport we had to assume that he had walked from the Swiss Alps. As Deservillers was not large enough to accommodate eight UBSS members without sustaining serious damage we all camped at the town of Ornans about 15 km to the east.

The first two days were spent exploring the area, entrances to Biefs Boussets, Baume des Cretes and Grotte de Jerusalem, all caves in the Verneau system were discovered as were two large entrance caves just to the north of Ornans in the Puits Noir valley and not noted on the map.

On 22nd August the entire party went down Grotte de Chauveroché, a horizontal cave in the side of the Loue valley and on the outskirts of Ornans. Although very muddy there were some impressive gour pools which necessitated swimming through the cave.

As not everyone wore wetsuits and the water was surprisingly cold for a cave in mid France we did not reach the main streamway. The following day (Tuesday) two parties went down Gouffre de La Legarde - one rigging in and one out. This was an eight hour trip down an almost entirely vertical cave, split into several pitches the longest of which was 40m. A boulder choke marked as the extent of the cave on the survey was passed and we descended a further 30 m to -210m and a muddy choke which gave us some problems on the ropes on the way back out.

On the Wednesday the Source de Loue was visited, this is one of the largest resurgences in the region although there are no known associated caves. We explored Grotte des Faux Monnayeurs, in the wall of the Loue valley, as far as a low wet crawl. The next day all eight of us covered the entire extent of Grotte de Jerusalem (Verneau System) as far as the Collecteur which is not very impressive at this point as this cave is one of the furthest from the resurgence. The cave was not unlike Swildons but with a few short pitches requiring SRT gear.

After a few days rest we split up into two, one group rigging Baume des Cretes and the other Biefs Boussets, with the intention of performing exchange derigging trips the following day. Baume des Cretes proved to be the most impressive cave visited with good examples of most stal formations including a 10m overhanging flowstone "waterfall" on one wall of the very large entrance chamber. Further in the cave assumes smaller proportions with more spectacular gour pools until the Collecteur is finally reached. At this point of the Verneau system the streamway passage is quite large.

The Biefs Boussets trip was quite arduous as after a couple of entrance pitches of about 10m the rest of the cave is one long rift traverse until more pitches are reached to descend into the Verneau streamway. It was in Biefs Boussets that native cavers were encountered for the first time who seemed to be using 4mm SRT rope and carbide lamps stolen from the local museum! The next cave visited was Gross Gadeau, not very deep or long but quite vertical with some interesting pitch rigging problems. One pitch requiring a Tyrollean traverse for a free hang. Although the small stream flowing was hardly noticeable in wet weather the whole cave becomes very sporting.

Two days later half the group went off to find a local cave with a "sinister reputation" as the guide book put it; Gouffre de Paradis. However after spending two hours looking for it in the woods they committed the ultimate sin and payed to visit a show cave, Gouffre de Poudrey.

In addition to the caving we visited the Source de Lison and Source de Verneau and managed some walking in the area. Tales of how Trevor's engine was attached to his car with a tampon and exploding vegetables are best left to someone else. We

would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the Tratman fund grant which was used to subsidise the trip.

Paul Turner

JURA 2 - THE SEQUEL
(or a comedy of styles)

We could tell that trip to the Jura was going to go well even before we had left Bristol. To set the mood we drove all the way to Wells to find that Bat Products had chosen this day to close, back in Bristol, Paul Turner got a parking ticket whilst buying a new oversuit. Eventually, we set off for Dover with four people, eight peoples caving gear and all the clubs tackle piled in and on one car. We arrived at Dover, our boat arrived five hours late. Once in France, we headed South ten hours and several cups of strong coffee later we reached Deservillers. By some miracle, Charles and Simon both met us there within half an hour, no mean feat of logistics.

The next day, we decided to go caving. With Sarah holding guide book and map we were deposited at the top of the gorge. Unfortunately, the cave that we were looking for was a resurgence and was therefore at the bottom of the gorge. Eventually we found the cave but by then it was getting late so decided that food and wine was a much nicer proposition. The next day we set off for Chauveroché. We could tell it was going to be muddy because within a hundred yards of the entrance everything, trees, rocks, the ground was covered in mud that had been brought out by cavers. The cave exceeded expectations, it was really muddy. Eventually, we reached a canal. This was not muddy but was chest deep in water. After a couple of hundred yards, those of us in furry gear decided to stop. The wetsuited members of the party and Rob in furry gear carried on but since the passage didn't seem to become shallower or change, they turned back. By this time, Charles was nearly hypothermic so we left.

The next day, we decided to try out the ropes, La Legarde was chosen. At the bottom of the second pitch, there was a smell of something not quite fresh, a squashed hedgehog! You can just imagine the poor thing thinking, nice place to hibernate woops.... bang, thank goodness I've survived ahhh... splat. At the bottom there was a really interesting fixed ladder. Well by fixed, it was hung from a stalagmite by a neolithic sling. The ladder had six rungs, in two sets of three i.e. three rungs at the bottom then six feet higher, the other three rungs. At the top of the ladder was, yes more mud. Eventually we surfaced to find that Sarah and Charles had drunk all the beer.

After a second muddy cave in two days we elected to take a day off and wash gear. We also spent some time, much to the amusement of the local kids, trying various forms of rope-walking on the local climbing frame.

For our next trip, we vowed to find a mud free cave. Jerusalem seemed to fit the bill. After an uneventful trip to the bottom, Joe blew up. To explain, Sarah was having trouble with her light. Joe decided to check out her generator. Unscrews base, puts head in, forgetting that his light was still lit, BANG! Joe falls on face in streamway trying to put face out. Luckily, he was alright with the exception of a singed beard and a missing eyebrow. On the way out, I employed some of my brilliant pitch rigging. On the way down, one of the ropes was rubbing slightly but we couldn't find another spit for a reelay. On the way up however, I found the spit and so decided to put in a deviation, which consisted of a krab in a hanger. Up came Sarah next, she found that she couldn't pass this because it was too close to the wall. Eventually, we had to send a spanner up to her so that she could undo the bolt and pendulum across the chamber.

And so onto the two best trips of the holiday, Baume des Cretes and Biefs Bousettes. Baume des Cretes was a really nice trip, some excellent vertical cave with, for the first time, some horizontal development at the bottom. Nothing went wrong on this trip except for one small route finding error which dropped us into more mud! That night, I exploded and for the next three days was unable to stay far from the toilet, so my next cave was Gross Gadeaux.

This cave produced an interesting contrast between English and French caves,

firstly the French carry bolting kits everywhere. In the party of six Frenchmen that we followed down, three of them had boltig hammers! Secondly they take vast feasts with them wherever they go. At the bottom of the cave, (a three hour trip) these Frenchmen produced pies, crisps and drink and had a real feast. On the way out, whilst still commenting on this, we met the familiar silhouette of T.Mosedale swigging a bottle of beer.

The final cave that we decided to descend was Gaufre de Paradis. The guide book contained some interesting facts about this cave:- "In 1968 the caver J.Gouged died here, trapped in the meander at 80m; his body could not be recovered until six years later." Unfortunately (or, fortunately?) we could not find this cave though in the search we did share the car, very briefly with a hornet the size of a small mouse! In the end we went to the show cave down the road.

The day before we left, we went to see the source of the Lison, it was there where Trevors' car broke down. We got it fixed at a local garage, two hours labour plus a ten mile tow for 150F!

So we set off for home, the only eventful happening was having to wait at Calais for twelve hours and only being allowed onto a ferry after about fifty people in the same situation threatened to beat up the carpark attendant.

As the entry in the log book says, "France has a Mendip, we went there." Having said that, the trip was really worthwhile and great fun. We would like to thank the Tratman fund for making it possible.

A new song for the club song-book, based on our experiences in France.

Bou, bou, bou glorieux,
Rien comme ca pour refrechir le sang,
Donc suivi me suivi,
Au fond du creux
et la laissez nousnous bainger dans
bou glorieux

Paul Drewery

Editors Note:- Don't worry if you can't understand Paul Drewerys' French, neither can the French, nor me, come to that.

Troglobite

