



U. B. S. S.

NEWSLETTER

VOL 7 NO 3

OCTOBER 1991

EDITORIAL

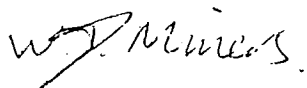
Hello to all new members and welcome back to all the others. I suspect that there are a few people out there for whom the arrival of this newsletter is going to be their first reminder that in a split second of genius they joined the society at Faffy. Read through the newsletter and see what sort of activities are going on then come and join in.

Many of our members have been on trips this summer and some of them have sent in their stories while other reports will be in the next newsletter.

We always welcome any mindless jottings, jokes, cartoons either leave them in the porters office of the Union or hand them in at Crockers.

Well here comes the disclaimer. All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the committee.

Happy Caving



Cover (supplied by Chris Bennett) from a Bulgarian Post Card. Actual translation is "To free the place, next caver is decending. There are two more on the course."

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL
SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
UNIVERSITY UNION
QUEENS ROAD
BRISTOL
BS8 1LN

GRAVEL



The car disease has hit the society as first Julian Todd's car vomits out its piston as he hurtles through France. Then Chris Bennet's car has a heart attack with the fuel pump breaking down (probable due to some sort of vegan petrol). Having called out a repair van and getting it fixed the stupid thing breaks down again three hundred meters further on. This accident did have a beneficial result, as Chris was fetching the lights from Bat Products the delay meant that the lights only got to the hut in the afternoon. This enabled some of the newer members to start practicing the important art of *festering* and prevented the more keener ones from going down two caves in one day.

The myth of Dan "Hard Man" Harries has taken a severe blow after the discovery of "The Enid Blyton Bedtime Book" in his bedroom alongside the well-thumbed copy of Mein Kampf. When confronted with this discovery he admitted to being a great fan of the Famous Five, but said he disliked the Secret Seven on the grounds that they were "a bunch of cunts".

Studies were carried out in Ireland this summer seeing how useful a Hip Flask of Bushmills was during a caving trip.

Results showed that it tended to slow down getting changed as the subjects would not let go of the flask as they struggled with their wet suits, by the third day it was also decided that a hip flask did not carry enough to have much effect on five wet cavers so that they reverted to carrying a full bottle.

Here is a good excuse from the doctor: ' I can't go caving as I've got sun burn on top of my head and can't put my helmet on.

The hardest caver in the society at the moment is called Boris and spent the whole of Faffy in full furry gear without sweating at all. He also isn't going to mind going through sumps as he's made of plastic and like most cavers his head is full of crumbled newspaper.

The Hon Sec has fallen in love with an URSUS ARCTUS Ailwee cave bear which he found in Ireland. This small brown glove puppet never left Steve's hand once despite the attempts of an Australian girl at the hostel. The risk of losing the bear was so great that the bear went to bed with Steve.

The rest of the competition having cheated and gone down show caves,

means that Paul Harvey wins the armchair caver of the year award.

The following advert has been seen in the Lonely Hearts column of Venue:

"Rob (25), enthusiastic, confident, fit, enjoys being outdoors (or underground), cycling and walking. Seeks complimentary female for relationship." This has given rise to speculation that Mr. Fallowes' Himalayan trip was in fact nothing more than an elaborate attempt to get rid of his girlfriend and that he is now living secretly in the vicinity of Bristol. News of any sightings appreciated, can be identified by inability to spell complementary.

The competition for U.B.S.S. choirboy of the year was intense at the freshers weekend. Topher displayed an extensive repertoire but the award goes to Graham Purnell for his excellent solo work.

Seeking new members for the Gaynor Arnold Appreciation Society. Founding members are: Paul Harding, Graham Purnell and Andy Farrant. All interested people phone 245405.

Many people though were disappointed at the poor performance by Yorkshire man ED 'EH BY GUM' who is obviously saving himself so that he peaks at the bonfire weekend.

For the person who had to say: 'I forgot my Wellies on the way to Wales.'

we now bring you: 'I forgot my Oversuit on a trip to DOOLin.' perhaps this person will next forget to bring Yourself on a trip to Yorkshire. This could only be Steve.

Bill Miners though had a quite comfortable trip around the top series in Eastwater as he tried to convince other cavers that the reason he was not wearing an oversuit while getting his furry muddy was that it would have made him too hot.

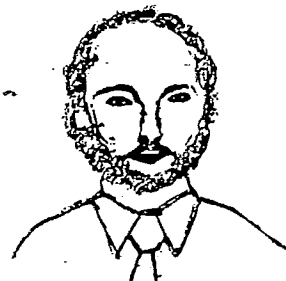
We all enjoyed the vege curry at the hut and many thanks to the cooks. BUT hope that this won't establish a precedent. The U.B.Sausage Society want a return to dead animal, blood and *sausages*.

Picture this hanging in the laundry of a hostel. Bill Miner's caving grundies mud brown with ten thousand perforations (which allow the flavour to flow through). Right next to them were another pair of underwear with lots of holes in them these were a beautiful pair of black silk frilly nickers.

Tony Boycott dashes into a side passage and starts to descend a very slippery rift with moon-milk sides. Sounds of scrabbling at the top then a SWOOOOOOOSH—SPLASH... we all run

to the top of the rift and hear faintly: "I'm not sure I can reverse that!"

The Doctor Writes.



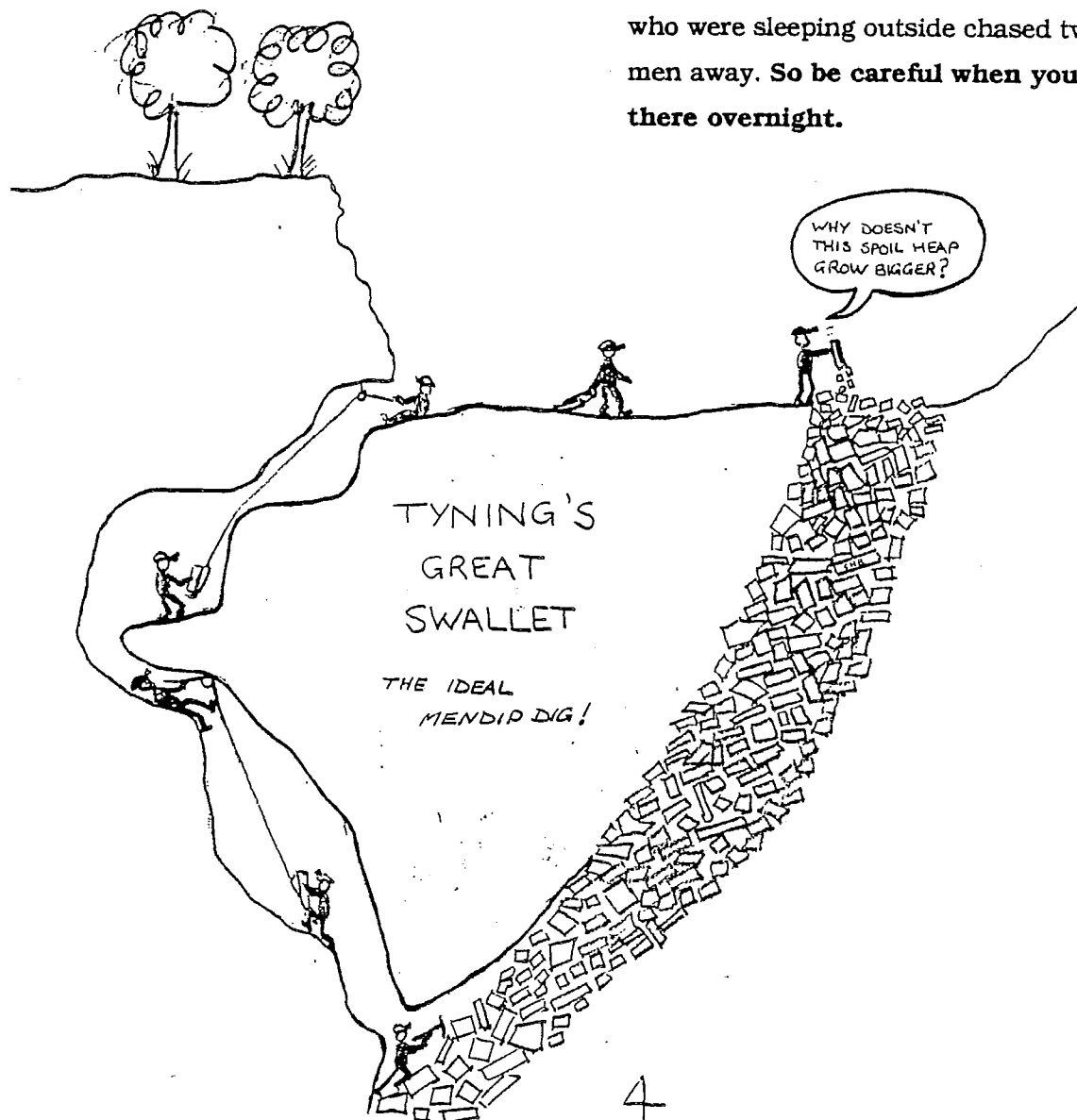
Hand Phobia

A disease that could be caught by any overworked Hon Sec. It will be suddenly triggered when the patient sees something that they can put over their hand. They believe that this object will prevent them using the hand for its proper purpose Eg: signing Charterhouse counterfoils, issuing the hut key, writing to the bursar about the new building etc. Quite often the object chosen will be some sort of glove puppet which the patient will then imagine is alive and use to chat up the cleaning girls or attack the person sleeping on the bunk above him. The patient will resist all attempts to separate him from the puppet.

The only solution is to violently wrestle the puppet off the hand and destroy it while the patient is watching this will hopefully break any emotional bond that has developed.

Geological Depression.

Found in many places but this particular strain occurs in and around the mineral mines of Cheshire, where the symptoms are as follows, i) carefully looking at rocks whilst all around are running down little tunnels being happy. ii) General unhappiness at being above ground, whilst all around are ranting on about the myths and legends of Alderly Edge. Cure is to either take depressed person to Kareoke or let him revert to joining more geologists where the surroundings are more conducive to geospeak and people can understand you.



GENERAL NOTES.

Missing Oversuit.

Hannah's orange Petzl oversuit (with yellow hood) went missing from the tackle store in May. If anyone has it could they please return it to the store or notify Hannah (245504)

Thieves at Hut.

Early in the summer thieves broke into Topher's car while it was parked outside the Hut overnight. Then a similar attempt was made during Freshers Weekend on the Saturday night. But Chris Bennet was sleeping in the van, was woken and along with Nigel and others who were sleeping outside chased two men away. **So be careful when you park there overnight.**

Hon. Secs Bit

Welcome to all the new members who joined up this year at Fresh 91 and hello to all of those who regularly read this usual bit of introduction. My thanks are due to all those who helped on the introductory trips to Mendip and I hope that all of you who went had an enjoyable time. If you joined and still haven't been caving please come along to Crockers on Tuesday nights @ 9:30 and I am sure we can still find a good trip for those willing, or come along to the bonfire weekend on 2/3 November.

This summer has seen a few people travelling abroad for caving. Julian Todd went to the Totes Gebirges (see article), a group went on their first trip to Ireland, Graham and Linda have just been to France and a group from the Karst research group are currently in Mulu on expedition.

Lights are still available from Steve Cottle (address below) at new hire rates of £1 for members and £1.50 for non-members. Payable in ADVANCE.

An equipment order is being placed with Bat Products to purchase gear at discount rate of approx 15%. Anybody who would like to purchase gear should speak to either Bill Miners (Tackle officer) or Steve Cottle for further details.

Speleoscene is a new magazine of the National Caving Association and has the latest up to date news on discoveries and access and it's cheap compared to anything else of its quality, only 50p per copy (so even students can afford it). Subscriptions are welcomed and it is hoped to do a club subscription to reduce the cost further. See Steve Cottle for further details on purchasing your own or joining in the subscription.

Relocation of the UBSS

Due to the wishes of the University of Bristol we have had to vacate our rooms on the second floor of the Union to make space for the international office. After much deliberation the University has offered us the old stables at the back of 19 Woodland Road. The current state is that work is still being undertaken to make the premises suitable for the collections and pressure is being brought upon the University to make good the building to such an effect. In the meantime the books are currently in store in the Union (One of the biggest spelæological library collections in Britain) and the archeological collection is being gratefully stored by the Bristol City Museum in one of their warehouses. We hope to be moving in before the end of November so all volunteers to help move and set up the collections will be very welcome.

UBSS Cave Leaders

Charterhouse Cave	Graham Mullan	502556	
	Tony Boycott	507336	
St. Cuthberts Swallet	Tony Boycott		
Reservoir Hole	Linda Wilson	502556	
Ogof Ffynnon Ddu 1	Charlie Self	541728	
	Adrian Wilkins	97 70543	
	Tony Boycott	507336	<i>continued</i>

Dan-yr-Ogof	Graham Mullan	502556
	Charlie Self	541728
	Tony Boycott	507336

We also have other leaders for DYO and OFD because they are members of SWCC. Marco Paganuzzi and Mark Owen are the ones seen most often. Anybody wanting a trip should see the respective people in the pub to find out if a trip is possible as conditions/time of year restrictions operate in certain caves.

Calender for 1991/92

Wed. 30 th October	Sessional meeting. Graham Crisp will be speaking on "Underground photography." He is one of the best cave photographers around and will be showing one of his excellent slide sound sequences. <u>Starts at 8:00pm prompt in MR5B in the Union.</u>
2/3 November	Bonfire Weekend. Caving on Mendip with an SRT race and the usual festivities of bonfire weekend. Leave Tackle Store at 10:00 am.
23/24 November	Weekend trip to Yorkshire Leaving on Friday at 6:00pm approximately. <u>See secretaries for details nearer to the time of trip for space availability and weather prospects.</u>
Wed. 4 th December	Sessional Meeting with Bill Gascoine talking on the new discoveries under Llangatock in The Carno Adit. <u>Starts at 8:00 pm in MR4 in the Union.</u>
Sat. 7 th December	Day trip to Agen Allwed. This cave is also under Llangatock and has some large passages and some good long circular trips will be done. Leave Tackle store at 9:00am.
25/26 January	Mystery caving trip. ie put this date in your diaries and the secretaries will find somewhere to go caving but probably S.Wales or Mendip. <i>See next newsletter or secretaries for trips planned latter in the new year.</i>
Sat. 8 th March	AGM meeting Starting at 4:00 pm with speaker. Followed by The Annual Diner.

Useful Addresses		
Alison Garrard	☐ 34A, Kingsdown Parade.	☐ 245504
Steve Cottle	☐ Basement flat, 9, Brighton Rd.	☐ 237282
Bill Miners	☐ 13, Clifton Wood Crescent.	☐ 291513
Mat Wood	☐ 34A, Kingsdown Parade.	☐ 241260
Graham Mullan	☐ 38, Devlin Rd. W-on-T.	☐ 502556
Linda Wilson	As above	
Tony Boycott (Librarian)	☐ 14, Walton Rise W-on-T.	☐ 507336
Chris Bennett	☐ 77, Cotham Brow.	☐ 427496

JOE OATES

Joe Oates, who died in May, was one of the leading figures of the UBSS of his generation. An extremely proficient and experienced caver, he was also an able climber and founder-member of the semi-legendary EBSS.

Joe was the only active student caver to join in his year, and soon learnt to enjoy the delights of caving. From the start it was obvious he would fit into the club, as on his first freshers weekend he was taken aside by two elder members and congratulated on his riotous behaviour. One Bonfire weekend he went down in history as the only man on record to describe Martin Warren as "cool". Later Mendip weekends invariably included the Sunday morning scene where Joe would happily amuse himself with carbide bombs and as much petrol as he could get hold of. Nobody knows how many times he blew himself up with amateur explosives, set fire to himself or examined open carbide generators without extinguishing his own light. It was always possible to tell when Joe had been to Yorkshire as he would arrive at Crockers minus eyebrows and moustache.

After his first year Joe travelled to Turkey to join the UBSS expedition to the Taurus Mountains, only to find that the rest of the team had followed in the time-honoured tradition of UBSS expeditions and been arrested by the army. The next year he redressed the balance when he was himself arrested in France and accused of pissing in a phone box. Although the amber liquid in question was only beer, the local gendarmes were difficult to convince, and passports were confiscated until the box had been washed out. The truth of the matter was that he had actually been pissing out of a tree, where he had been holding a party with Trevor and Chris Mosedale.

Caving exploits closer to home were no less eventful. Notable examples included dropping Kathy Sykes in Longwood and trying to descend Primrose Pot with a single ladder, having mistaken it for the Twin Verticals route. Abseiling was never one of Joe's safest pursuits either, as he showed when he tried to descend the first pitch of Diccan Pot (120') on a twenty-foot rope, just catching the end as it reached his rack. This was bettered by climbing experiences such as the time that he attempted to abseil into Craig Gogarth on a short tail of rope before climbing back up hand over hand. On both occasions he immediately repeated the abseil on more appropriate tackle.

Few helmets can have had a shorter life expectancy than those Joe bought. The first was broken when he fell down Helvellyn

in the winter and landed on his head. The second was destroyed when he got his head stuck while climbing. The third perished when he tobogganed into the Lairig Ghru sitting on it, and the fourth spontaneously destroyed itself on the bus to Skye when it heard it was on its way to him.

Driving with Joe was just as entertaining. He is remembered for having driven a minibus back from the Dales and slip-streaming lorries to save petrol, and for the time when he crashed into the same portakabin three times in one day. Once when hurtling across Mendip with a hangover he saw a Mini squeezing its way past an oncoming car in a narrow lane and followed it at speed in his Cavalier, laughing manically. The look of fear on the face of the other driver as the wing mirrors cracked and we sped past is not easily forgotten.

He was one of the inspirations for the 1989 and 1990 Austria expeditions where he distinguished himself by carrying packs three times his size and consuming heroic quantities of alcohol. The damage done to international relations when respectable Austrian families peered nervously into an English car surrounded by broken bottles only to find a small hairy man, naked except for a bra, is surely immense.

He attended the UBSS Christmas celebrations in Zimbabwe, although these were tame compared to one annual dinner when he spent several hours under the table in Pudsey's with Sarah Walker, Kathy Sykes, Richard Dodson, Jim Walmsley and Charlie Self. This was followed by a party at Granby Hill where he hit Trevor Mosedale repeatedly until they both bled copiously over the furniture. His remarkable fear of Bob Churcher first manifested itself after this occasion.

Few people who knew Joe really expected him to reach old age, but none anticipated his eventual end. Walking back from the pub in St. Davids after climbing he was hit by a car, and died shortly after arriving at hospital. It is hard to come to terms with the loss of someone who features so profoundly in the best memories of so many people, but as the first shock fades the lasting recollections are of him as a driving force and of the fun and life that burst from him. Though his end was perhaps not unexpected it lacked his usual style. His verdict on his own death, as it had been on so many other things that weekend would surely have been: "Stupid Twat."

He will be sorely missed.

Co. Clare : September 1991

Steve: This September five members of the UBSS managed to find sufficient funds/overdraughts to allow them to visit Co. Clare. For four of us, Chris Bennett, Bill Miners, Julian Todd and myself it was our first visit to Ireland for caving. On the other hand, for Tony Boycott it was his second trip this year so he acted as guide to the caves (although finding them was still a problem).

We arrived on a Monday afternoon to find the Aille river flowing, so after a quick pint of Guinness we went off in search of a few wet entrances.

Next day we set off for Faunarooska Cave where we all learnt to crabwalk with ease (this skill was going to come in very handy) before we got to look at the formations at the end. Fortunately Polldubh doesn't contain any large amounts of crabwalking (shuffling sideways in a passage too narrow to walk straight) but it now doesn't contain very many of the helictites it once had due to the uptake of adventure caving in Ireland. So having done our two caves we set off back to the car where we started the new trend in Irish caving. As Doolin Hostel where we were staying doesn't allow alcohol on the premises, (who needs it with O'Connor's in sight from the window?), we had bought two bottles of Irish whiskey so that on exiting the cave we could have a swig of whiskey to brighten up the dampening weather.

Polldonough beckoned on the second day but so did the rain, thus we went to look at Poulmagree instead. Here Tony showed us an interesting squeeze into a pretty aven. Note he only *showed* it to us. Chris tried first and having removed both helmet and belt gave up. I attempted next and having removed the necessary items found I could just get through. Julian too came through (just) and was very quickly followed by Bill. The phrase "Now get out of that" sprang to mind but at least gravity was at hand to help. From here we went to look at the extensions which Julian described as *"Tony's squeeze about which some other more irresponsible people said there was interesting stuff beyond. It was an awful mud slope upwards with no ceiling room at all. The climb down in the non-passage beyond it could not be reascended without help."* Then on to the second cave for the day (*well we were keen*) and a visit to Carl Wright at Aillwee Cave where we found out that Pol-an-Ionain had now been closed. It was here that I acquired a bear puppet that was to haunt the expedition for the rest of the trip.

Chris: The next day (Thursday), we decided that the weather was good enough for a trip from Poulelva to Poulmagollum - a classic through trip in the longest cave in Ireland. Poulelva is a picturesque pothole most easily descended by abseiling. I was volunteered to rig the pitch and was handed a 45m rope which Tony said would easily be long enough. But he didn't account for my rigging, which used four bolts in two Y-hangs, and left the end of the rope only two-thirds of the way down the pitch!

Having re-rigged the pitch, we all managed to get down - though Steve came down slower than everyone else muttering something like "What temperature does nylon melt at?" The connection to Poulmagollum is a disgustingly Mendip-style passage that's best forgotten, but the streamway is superb. The trip length was over 2.5km.

In the evening Tony and Bill went on a surreptitious visit to the entrance of Pol-an-Ionain, which we had been told was blocked. It was.

After all this caving, it was unanimously decided that we needed a "rest day." Now, the most likely place to find undiscovered caves is probably the High Burren - so we all headed off to Aillwee Mountain to search for the mythical Jacko's Hole or anything else that we might find. Of course, we found nothing, except a 10m long mass-movement type of cave (that Steve is very proud of). The verdict was that walking *over* the Burren is far harder than walking *under* it, and is much worse for your knees!

Just for a change, it rained all through the night, and so the next day we headed for Cullaun 2 and Cullaun 1, which can be done when everything else is full of water. In fact it's the best time to do them since the extra water makes them more fun. The pitch at the end of Cullaun 2 was found to be fairly easily free-climbable, especially if someone sits in the stream above the pitch to stop the flow while you climb up!

"22/9/91 Sunday : As we lay in bed yet another rain squall hits the window." Bill's log book entry sums up the weather for the entire fortnight. We all (minus Steve who wouldn't get out of bed) decided on a trip to Branch Passage Gallery in Poulmagollum. The intention was to examine the very end of the west branch but we failed to find it. Swimming through a canal with up to two feet of brown scum floating on it was definitely the highlight of the trip! Quotation of the trip goes to Tony after *trying* to slide gracefully down a 10m rift to the streamway.

"Aaargh! I'm not sure I can reverse that!" If you ever wanted to know the coefficient of friction between nylon oversuits and moonmilk, it's apparently close to zero. I had thought that this was going to be a short trip, but judging by the survey we went about 5km.

Meanwhile, Steve had been walking back to the hostel, sheltering from the rain behind walls (not very effective with Irish walls) or in O'Donohue's Pub. That evening he claimed to have found a cave on the coast which was not in "Caves of Co. Clare" - more of which later.

After another night of (surprise, surprise) rain, we opted for another "rest day", which of course turned out to be exhausting. It started off easy with a trip to the entrance passage of Kilcorney 1 (The Cave of the Wild Horses) and Kilcorney 2, where several old inscriptions were noted:

F. HEALEY
CIVIC GUARD
2/4/24

J.H. GOOD
95

WHEALY
RIC 98

M. HOBIN
R.I.C.
IV.XII.98

Things got harder at Glencurran where we were "guided" by Tony through a couple of hundred yards of primaeval scrub to Glencurran Cave - it took about an hour to find. The cave is in a prime site for making major discoveries, but there is a problem. The end is reached *via* a body-sized tube which is several hundred feet long - and which is occupied by badgers. Apparently there's only one person who's brave/foolish enough to dig there!

Late afternoon saw things getting harder still when we set off up the coast from Doolin harbour to look for the cave that Steve said he had found the day before. Since he didn't appear to have any idea where it was, I for one was amazed when he found it. What he hadn't told us was that it was obvious that someone had been digging it, and that it had "DICK'S HOLE" scratched over it. The cave is a semi-circular phreatic tube, measuring about 1m wide by 0.5m high becoming filled with glacial rubbish after 10m or so.

Tuesday brought "Squally and sunny weather," and since everyone was in the mood for making major discoveries(!?) *we went digging*. After an hour or so of being led in the wrong direction, we found Coskeam Cave. This is an ancient phreatic remnant, entirely unrelated to modern drainage, and is the sort of cave most likely to be found by any surface digging in Co. Clare. Bill, Tony and I spent several hours trying to find a way down from the surface depression in the opposite direction to the known cave. Things were easy at first as we removed large rocks, but when soil was reached progress became harder and much slower. This site may well be worth another look.

It was still raining on Wednesday. Tony was complaining of a bad back (excuses, excuses...) and sent us off to Cullaun 5 on our own. Julian's log book description of the trip is perfect:

"...It rained. The entrance by the road was a vegetated pit and the first passage was one-quarter the size of the standard comfortable to walk down cave streamway passage. One could contort the head and shoulders hunched and crabwalk sideways until it all became too awful and then convert with difficulty into an elbows and knees crawl in water. Deep scalloping everywhere made crawling horrible.... Steve lagged behind looking murky. He decided to jack.... Lots of fast laminar water here in comfortable sized streamway passage. It went for miles and miles with no other features whatsoever, then began to lower and look tunnel-like. Chris and Bill thought it looked like a water pipeline. They were agitated. The ceiling lowered and they stopped at a bend while I carried on a bit in the bedding plane,

Linear clumps of rubbery dried scum hung from the ceiling.... Bill shouted something about the water rising the diameter of his little toe in half the time it takes to boil an egg. The way on was unclear.... I started back. Chris and Bill panicked and went into the "Oh my God we're all going to die!" mode and scrambled. The terror was infectious. They were out of sight when I got back out of the crawl. I did not know what had caused this total emergency and rushed after them goose-stepping at maximum speed upstream in thigh-deep water until completely knackered. Apparently a little three inch wave had rippled down the streamway...."

This may not seem much but it was an instantaneous loss of nearly 10% of the available airspace - and anyway waves are not supposed to ripple down streams! By the time we got back to the C5b entrance, the water coming from C5 was about five inches higher - quite significant in a passage only 3-4 feet high.

After this we all went to the coast and played at being Indiana Jones in Poulsallagh which was full of three inch long sea slaters - looking like giant wood lice!

The calm before the storm... Thursday dawned fine and clear and we thought we'd better try to do Doolin Cave while we could. The Aille river was still flowing all the way to the sea, and so we weren't sure whether the trip would be possible. (The river actually flows *over* the cave!) The bedding plane at the bottom of the Fisherstreet Pot entrance was passable, but Tony thought there was about a foot more water than normal. The trip is one of the most popular in Clare, which is not surprising as the passage is continually changing, never staying the same too long to get boring, and always excellent. The scarcity of calcite formations in the area is more than made up for by the variety of superb stream passages. To add even more variety, we found two eels in the Second Bedding Cave.

The sun was still shining when we emerged from St. Catherine's One, and we contemplated a quick trip into the Coolagh River Cave. We decided against it, but we should have done it while we could for there was only one day left.

On our last full day it was raining. We couldn't do any of the classic trips that we hadn't done already, so Steve, Tony and I decided on another trip to Poulmagree to survey the extension just before the sump, and to dig for a while. Unfortunately we forgot the survey gear, so we can't be sure just where the passage is heading. We made little progress digging, and failed to find any new cave.

Instead of a pointless trip down a cave we had already visited, Bill and Julian had the sense to go to Urchins Cave. This is right on the coast, and is only accessible at low tide. Apart from the normal sea-shore starfish, anemonies and the like, the cave is full of sea urchins which can normally only be seen by diving. A couple of eels were seen and described as being "the size of a human arm."

On the last day we said goodbye to O'Connor's by drinking Guinness at 10am, and set off for Rosslare with a forecast of force ten winds in the Irish Sea. Before leaving the Burren, we visited the entrances of Polldonough (flooded), Kilcorney (not flooded at the entrance), and the Fergus River Cave which had water flowing out of it. Considering that the entrance is the highest point of the cave, it was clear that the entire 2.3km length of the cave was underwater.

In Co. Tipperary we visited Mitchellstown Cave - a showcave open to the public. It's in the middle of a lowland area, with no other caves known nearby. The entrance is totally uninspiring, but it gets better and better as you go in. It's interesting as it's exactly the sort of thing that could still be found in the Burren, or any other limestone region for that matter. You don't need mountains, streams, and limestone pavement to find caves.

Because of the weather, we were stranded in Rosslare harbour for about 28 hours waiting for a ferry. Despite this we had all had a thoroughly enjoyable trip (even allowing for Steve's bear) to an exceptionally beautiful and friendly place where there *are* still caves waiting to be discovered.

We should like to express our gratitude to the Tratman Fund, without which we could never have afforded the ludicrously expensive ferry crossing.

Steve Cottle and Chris Bennett

The Freshers Weekend.

TIM PARISH

Despite the name, Freshers themselves were a little thin on (under?) the ground during the weekend-there only being four fresher novices: David, Eve, Katia and Myself. Having been initiated to the horrors of Steve's driving, we arrived at the hut and had a cup of tea before heading off to our first cave - the 'Addict'. This was less of a cave and more of an excuse to annoy other cavers by messing up the water!

We moved on to our first real cave, Sidcutt Swallet and the delights of the lobster pot. I managed to get stuck the longest and special mention should be made of James-'the human springboard'.

Once out of there and dodging scout groups all the way, we headed for Goatchurch and joined the traffic jam at the entrance. The coalshute and drainpipe both proved great fun, although ensuring knackered elbows for the rest of the weekend! Exciting though the old show cave was it was back to the hut for lunch. However, on discovering the three matches budgeted for the trip had been used up, a most unfortunate trip to the cafe was necessary. After vast quantities of tea and chocolate, we staggered back to the hut. Matt, David and I headed off for Rod's Pot (You mad buggers ED), while the others began preparing the evening meal (Sensible folks ED) - which turned out to be a delicious vegan curry.

Soon the numbers in the hut increased and it took two minibus loads to get us all down to the pub. Here we managed to enjoy a few hours drinking before closing time was subtly announced by all the lights going out. Undeterred, it was back to the hut, were the infamous U.B.S.S. song-books and some suspicious looking cider were produced. Eventually, after a long bout of appalling singing we crashed.

Being keen to get caving, most people only stayed in bed until 10am and while most people headed for Swildons after breakfast, we went to (I can't remember the name!) (I think Tynning's Swallet ED). Unfortunately the necessity of having a ladder had been overlooked (This was Matt ED), so we all moved in Andy's car over to Swildons to join the others. Then followed a few hours of good caving around the top passages, although the long dry passages eluded all efforts to find them.

It was then back to the hut to pick up all the gear and off to Bristol-arriving back at 6pm. The weekend had been a superb introduction to caving-thanks to all who organised it and I'm sure many of us have been persuaded to carry on caving-despite the singing!

Spelaeo Racing

Julian Todd

A feasibility study on some aspects of competitive caving. Any end-defined activity can be made into a contest by comparing the element of speed between the players. Send off each man (or woman) to do the activity and the one who does it quickest wins. Especially if it is by quartz crystal microseconds. This is not always satisfying. It would be far better to have a race: the players do the activity simultaneously, pace one another out and create suspense for the spectators. As of the 190 metre hurdles. However, there is not enough room for a race in a cave without a great deal of interference. What you will have is a moving wrestling match where the two competitors begin at one end of a hallway, say, and fight and drag and cling onto one another until the winner crawls across the finishing line on his elbows. This is like rugby without the ball. It can be practised on the Swildons' short round trip and commences with two cavers, JK and MK, unchanged with their kit in their rucksacks on their backs. They choose their own strategy.

One might run to the entrance and change there, while the other changes at the gate so has less to carry across the fields. In they go, fighting their way and sliding down Jacob's ladder sideways. MK is first to reach the pitch and sort of classic abseils down the ladder. He hurries onwards speedily before flopping head first into Double Pots due to heat exhaustion. JK catches up with him and finds Tratman's Temple first. MK follows. There is an advantage to being at the back: you don't get wiped out of the lead when the man at the front makes a wrong turning. Also you can yank your opponent out by her feet when she is halfway into Birthday Squeeze, although she will try to kick as you pull. A battle ensues in the little chamber this side of the squeeze, lots of struggling and MK receives a ten second on the spot penalty for breaking a stalagmite. This gives MK enough time to escape past the squeeze and dive through the mud sump, which doesn't have any water in it so is all very boring. JK runs onward but gets stuck at the Greasy Chimney which has been greased with some real grease for a change. MK close on her heels unwittingly gives her the foothold she needs to get up when he crawls in underneath. Now he is stuck while she runs away above him and scoots down Blue Pencil Passage to the Halfway Checkpoint. This is manned by half a dozen cavers with half a barrel of beer between them drunk out of half pint glasses.

MK eventually manages to get up the chimney by holding handfuls of grit in his hands and gripping the greasy rock tightly. He charges up and meets JK coming out of Blue Pencil Passage. With the advantage of height and being uphill of her, he blocks her way and forces her back down ahead of him. There is a tight route off to the right in the passage which JK retreats down so she doesn't have to go all the way back to the streamway. MK chases her in until she is halfway stuck, then proceeds up, round and down to the Halfway Checkpoint to pick up his refreshment Mars Bar that has of course been crushed by a hot iron radiator until it is a soggy pancake. JK has meanwhile reached the duck and there is a half inch air gap, so she is bailing it. MK is not putting up with any of this nonsense and tries to dive through while JK splashes around and makes waves as much as she can to make it as unpleasant as humanly possible. Onwards, ever onwards. One duck is sumped because we broke the damn down to make life difficult and MK

uses the knackered siphon hose to breath from to save time. But the time he gains by not bailing is lost in the minutes he spends coughing and wrenching out the mud he suck in with the air.

At the next squeeze, JK (who is behind) yanks MK's wellies off and chucks them down a small pit. A fight ensues. MK tries to steal JK's wellies, but they do not fit. He throws them down another crack in the ground and retrieves his own. He slithers down the slide and there is much running in the streamway. They are back into the fast passage again. It is a straight, clean race from here on out except maybe at the sump or the pitch. MK blocks the sump off first with himself and then with as many polythene bags and rocks as he can find. He goes up the pitch and pulls the ladder up with him. He's doing well now. He trots up to Water Chamber and selects the Wet Way as his escape. Nothing can stop him now, except... except a light failure. Oh dear, oh dear. He can hear the water thundering around him but it's all totally black. Even the white foam is black. He clings onto where he was, but the spray on his face is making him cold. He proceeds blindly with great caution. Cave salmon are leaping up over his shoulders. Worms burrow out of the solid limestone like beetle grubs in logs on hot fireplaces. Dwarf otters scuttle across the ceiling like magnetic lawn-mowers. In the darkness no one can see you go mad or hallucinate.

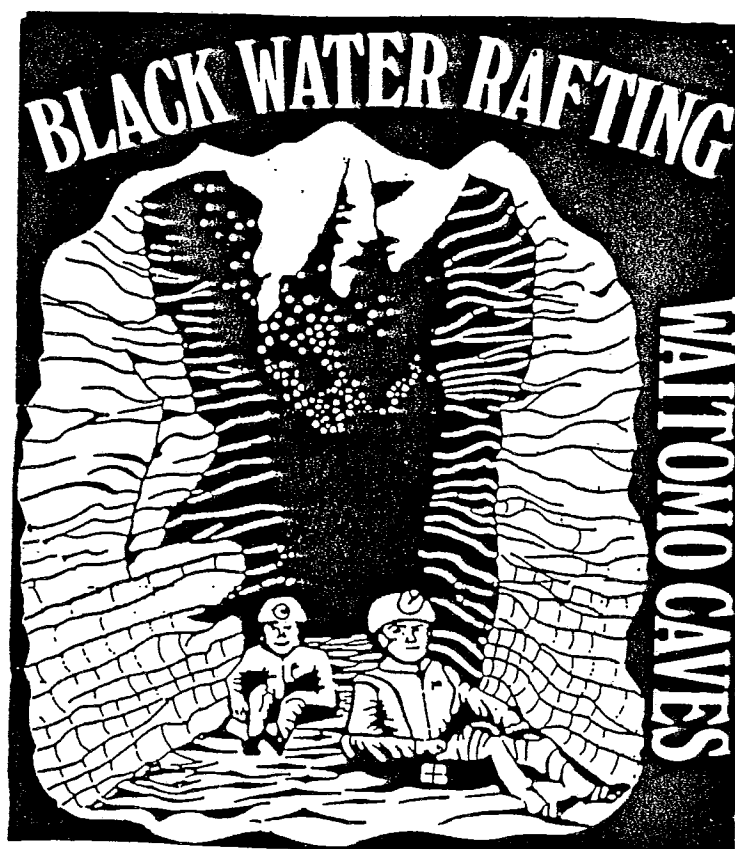
JK gets past the Sump 1 dam by crawling through on her back head first and forcing herself up past it, face pressed against the wall. The water is four feet deep and the dam is still intact. The pool is filling. She swims out of it. When she arrives at the pitch there is no ladder. No problem. She attempts to free-climb, but fails. Today it costs ten pounds to get up but she hasn't got her hand-bag. She despairs that she may have lost until she notices that the cave is filling with water behind her as it cannot flow past the sump. The rising water level floats her up the pitch and she scrambles aboard the upper level just as the sump dam gives way. The surge of water thunders through Swildons 1 and into Swildons 4 where it washes the Halfway Checkpoint away like a water cannon aimed inside the Hunters Inn.

Up in the Wet Way passage, MK has turned into a cabbage (ready washed) and is trying to dig his way out. JK heads up that way too and the two collide. JK ties MK up in the ladder and escapes the cave and wins. Her prize is ownership of the original Mona Lisa painting which is floating in the Cuckoo Cleaves Cave lake where the thieves left it thinking it would never be found. Apparently it is worth a lot of money.

WAITOMO NEW ZEALAND

BILL MINERS.

This summer I was lucky enough to travel around Australia and New Zealand. New Zealand has some quite large areas of Limestone and the opportunities exist for a bit of Spaeleo Tourism. So one rainy day at four o'clock I joined the days last trip, this of course meant that all the wetsuits were wet and horrible to put on. The group of about ten people was led by two 'experienced cavers' who drove us out to the resurgence of the cave where we had a frantic few moments as we all fought



over the truck inner tyres trying to get hold of one that was still fully inflated. We had a few practice jumps into the stream off a jetty and a few of us managed to perfect the technique where you held the tyre firmly to your rear and then did a forward somersault into the stream so that you landed with a satisfactory splash sitting inside the tyre. Having got us all wet there was a quarter of an hour walk up to the top entrance of the cave where we had a customary 'don't touch anything' talk which seemed pointless later on as the trip pasted no noticeable formations. The top part was mainly dry until we joined a small inlet which led down to join the main stream. We waded a short distance down this until jumping down a six foot waterfall into deep water. Where we all clambered into the tyres and formed up into a train where you held the legs of the person behind, we then turned off our headlights and floated gently down the ten foot wide passage. Twenty or so feet up on the roof of the passage were glow-worms. It was like staring up at a starry sky. Each worm is about one centimetre long and lives in a transparent tube about three or four times its body length. The tube hangs about 1cm below the roof on a number of threads. The glow comes from the tail of the worm and attracts insects which it eats. The trip lasted about three hours and was enjoyable as there was absolutely no mud.

Julian Todd's Expo to Austria

(with some caving and finances helped by £100 pounds from the Tratman fund, the existence of which I discovered the night before the deadline date and the receipt of which I have not yet thanked Graham "by return of post")

On July 8 of this summer I drove in one long day to Austria with three other lazy gits in my car to join the Cambridge University Caving Club expedition to the Löser Plateau which had already been running for over a week by the time we arrived, so had completed all the tiring work of setting up top camp (beside a reliable ever-flowing spring), carrying ropes and bolts and rigging Kaninchenhöhle, our ever-going sprawling favourite cave which has now kept us occupied for a fourth year in a row. The story of this expedition is a far-cry from the UBSS expos to nearly but not quite the same place. Our side of the plateau has a toll-road from the valley floor at 800m Above Sea Level to 1600m ASL for all the tourists to drive up and see the alpine view. This makes all the difference between a bloody 'ard expo where you kip in a cave entrance and live off Kendal mint cake crumbs because anything more is too much to carry, to a delightful and relaxing holiday, soaking in the sun and the Gösser bier during long intervals lounging at base camp. There was, however, a lot of rain, too.

Now I spent a lot of time concentrating on the hang-gliding and was consequently the only one left at base camp at times while everyone else socialized and overcrowded the top camp--you have to have someone to stay behind and look after the deserted campsite, empty tents, sleeping bags, radio equipment, computer into which the survey data is entered, the CD players, crates of bier and the most massive combined CD collecting I have ever seen outside of a music shop. (Notice I did not mention spare clothes.) I did go caving, but tended to be reluctant to stay at top camp in case I missed a good day to fly.

I'm afraid I am going to talk about the hang-gliding now, whether you like it or not. There was only one very successful day of this: the day after I arrived in Austria. I wasn't wasting any time. I took Wookey, Mark Scott and Ian Harris with me up to the carpark on the plateau. Mark and I, having played this game the year before, were going to fly at noon when the thermals are active. Wookey and Ian, the novices, in the evening when the air is stable. I flew off in my sleek fast beautiful Magic IV 155 away from the carpark, banked the wing to the right and was out of sight for some time. When I got up and flew back I noticed another glider way way below me, splatted at an odd angle on the steep slope some metres below the take-off ramp. Mark Scott had crashed; Wookey and Ian were busy peeling him off the landscape while sixty unhelpful Austrian tourists onlooked, gawped and took photographs of the scene. When he climbed back up the slope with the remains of his smashed-up camera whose automatic motor had just unrolled all the his film out into the sunshine, one of the tourists showed Mark a video playback of his crash so that he could see where he cocked-up. I didn't see him for a week, he was so embarrassed. Not much later, Wookey and Ian were called out of the crowd--almost as if by name--by some woman arriving in the carpark and demanding "Can anyone help me?". They were the only ones who replied, you see. They had to rescue a second hang-glider off a sixty degree slope. The pilot, who had broken his arms, had earlier been cut free of it and taken away to hospital. This kept these two occupied while I flew to 3000m ASL, traversed downwind over the plateau and circled

directly above top camp. I had been here before, hitching a ride with a helicopter in 1989 after a cave rescue from Kaninchenhöhle. The thought of lunch turned my stomach over and I came down rapidly feeling the effects of motion sickness.

... And back to the caving. It rained. It rained very heavily sometimes. Thunderbolts in the afternoon. Serious storms erupted out of the blue sky like hydrogen bombs.

We had a secondary cave called "Yorkshöhle" by some and "Puffball and Icing Sugar" by others. It was bottomed last year, surveyed "properly" this year, except Olly, our new club president who is always "terribly depressed" discovered the way on, and got a terrible bollicking for returning after his call-out time. The other members of his party were two women whom people wanted to chat-up, so were let off. I turned up the next morning after waking up in the drizzle, driving up in the drizzle, walking to top camp in the drizzle, found Olly, walked to the cave in the drizzle and changed into our caving gear atop a freezing cold ice plug because it was at least sheltered from the drizzle. The secret is not to lay out all your gear on the snow before you get undressed because it gets refrigerated.

Puffball is mostly a streamway cave, but has some very confusing geometry in places traversed by equally peculiar rigging. There is essentially only one way on at any time, very different from grand old Kaninchenhöhle which is a massive maze that will require an unlimited number of years to finish. With this cave, you follow it down until it ends. We pushed three small pitches with much horizontal development and had forgotten to bring the survey gear. What a pity. The rain has eased a little when we got out and I pronounced in fine in the rain.

The next party was furious at me. One of those storms happened. On their way out two people were waiting at the top of a pitch and what sounded like a large cargo locomotive charged down the passage at them. The floodpulse arrived. Juliette was hit while still on the pitch and she pissed herself because she thought she was going to die anyway and there was no point holding it back any longer. Nevertheless, the party re-assembled above the pitch, waited it out for forty minutes, grew bored and cold and climbed out anyway through the now raging waterfalls. Floodpulses hit two other trips on different days later on--We are so slow at learning things.

Meanwhile at Kaninchenhöhle things were looking up. The advantage of a sprawling cave is that the pushing fronts are within reach of the surface. I did once camp for two nights in some place below The Squeeze--perhaps two hours caving from the surface, but at least past that horrible obstical which had been the scene of two bad accidents two years ago.

Also, not everything interesting happens at the pushing fronts. Fiddly bits never noticed before are discovered along even the most well-travelled trade routes. Last year, a long and time consuming bypass to The Squeeze was found which allowed the larger members of our expedition to visit the deeper sections of the cave. This year an even more direct route was discovered. Fran's pitch, it was called, after the novice who had not been in the cave before took a wrong turning early on and halted at a new pitch almost directly below the entrance. When I went down this pitch I was shocked. The foot of the pitch, the place your feet first hit when you abseil down the rope is a small rocky area in an alcove of the wall; this place, a few bends further up the dead-end passageway from where I had once camped, was the spot I had used as my crapper two years ago. Here I was

clutching a descender instead of a toilet roll. It takes eight minutes to get here from the entrance.

Down at the pushing front, transversed by The Chunnel, the pitch below the Squeeze, Bungalow pitch, Poxy pitch, Boulder Alley, Knossus, Star Wars, Tower Blocks, Toilet Block and Yapate Inlet, up Staircase 36 into Chicken Fried Nice, is Burble, a long small insignificant crawl off to the side of a railway tunnel sized passage. It slopes slightly upwards disconcertingly and ends in a pitch. Now this whole region of the cave is totally phreatic which means it was formed when the rock was entirely submerged underwater. The limestone can be dissolved in any direction. The pitch continues upwards indefinitely and there were dark, spooky tubes branching at unfeasable angles like worm holes. The place is like a Swiss cheese. At the foot of the pitch began a maze of person sized mine passage with ups and downs. The geometry is like one of those high-tech hamster cages with tunnels and subcompartments.

At one dead end, boulders slope upwards to meet the ceiling. But there was a gap in the ceiling and you could crawl through it, up twenty metres of 45' rubble into the second largest known chamber of the cave. Large chambers have an interesting life cycle: their floor is a pile of big rocks. Rocks on top of rocks on top of rocks. The chamber may extend a hundred metres beneath your feet. The ceiling is very high and jagged. Periodically big rocks fall from it and it becomes higher. And so does the floor. Rocks have been rolling off the pile into the entrance route of the maze and would soon have blocked it off. We had a fine furtile about, checking out for new leads, then surveyed most of the Lead Mine. That was my best pushing trip ever, in the most richly varied cave I know.

Like at the beginning of the expedition, I left a week before the end, thus escaping the derigging and top camp gear carry back. I took Ian flying in France and we had some fine times there in between rain storms, camping beneath take-off ramps and living exclusively out of Carre-four hypermarkets because they accepted Visa. We had to rendez-vous in Chambéry with a small deligation of the expedition who would give us our share of the gear to take back to England; almost all the caving gear was packed into Wookey's van, of which he was so proud, by cavers. A snake couldn't have squeezed into the space left over if it wanted to. The van rolled over off the motorway in Switzerland, crushing the roof and squirting half the contents out the back door. The computer lay on the hard shoulder in the blinding sunshine, glistening with a new coat of egg and exploded milk cartons, and many compact disks were smashed. The occupants of the van, now on its side, were hanging from their seatbelts, listening to the Diesel engine still running. Henrietta had been doing the driving; Wookey, unrattled as usual, said to her, "I think you can switch off the ignition now, dear."

29 Aug 11

Dear Editor

Hi Bill! On receiving my UBSS News letter (thanks Mum) I noticed a request for exciting things we'd done over the summer. Well, actually here in the Southern Hemisphere it's WINTER, but we've been CAVING. Trev and I visited the Cango Caves - in South Africa - on a tourist trip, but did get a quick chance to explore, having mysteriously lost our tour guide. What a shame. It's an impressive cave, but long and unventilated and dry. All the stal is decaying and the best bits are ruined by tacky light shows and dramatic music. They even use the first huge chamber as a concert hall. It has a rare cave formation called a 'wooden stage'.


Having got bored with caving and fearing being discovered by the EBSS, we went ostrich riding instead. Trev was thrown off his ostrich twice in about 30 seconds, our dutch friend got trampled by a whole herd of them, but I of course was a brilliant ostrich Jockey managing 2 laps of the enclosure. (May be the UBSS news letter could use some ridiculous photos - see my mum - Temple Cloud 52312, Mo Walker) (May be a new verse to 'beastiality's best Boys'?)

I must of course send my congratulations to Gaynor for winning 2 awards. Arm chair caving - great idea! But this anatomical research - did she continue my project on "what happens to those spare bits of ~~testicle~~ scrotum during an erection". How many UBSS

male cavers had little crosses drawn on their naughty bits? Trev was my only victim for the test. Please send me more results (with names named of course)

A LETTER
FROM
SARAH &
TREVOR
BENARI
SOUTH
AFRICA

The rescue practice sounded good. Glad I wasn't there to be a victim. 9 or 10 years ago I was the "practice victim" for the MEG/BEC rescue practice out of Singing River Mine. I couldn't move for a week afterwards and they nearly strangled me whilst hauling me up the entrance shaft. The title of the article was strange - I don't think the roof a Cockoo Cleeves ever looked good, especially if it's accelerating at 9.81 m/s^2 towards your head!

I've Sarah the mouse
(XXX) 

(Now for some drive from Trev

In the meantime there has been another UBSS trip, this time resurgence caving. We never found the cave but the resurgence was good. It was called the Zambezi River and flowing at approx 500 000 cumets and full of crocodiles and hippos. The UBSS team consisted of myself, Sarah, Kathy Sykes and Richard Dodson who spent 5 days exploring the lower reaches near the Zambian/Zimbabwe/Mozambique border. No caves were sighted but the hippo skeleton was fun.

The most exciting part was when our bivvy camp was attacked by 2 rabid hyenas. Richard and Kathy slept through this, Sarah ran naked behind Sarah who was brandishing a 44 magnum and I looked for my camera and flashgun. (I've not got many photos of Sarah in the nude)

Looking through some maps of India we may find it difficult to not have there. I have seen dozens described and without careful planning might stumble into some.

Reminds

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY 1991

Tony Boycott

EARTH SCIENCE CONSERVATION IN GREAT BRITAIN : A STRATEGY NATURE CONSERVANCY COUNCIL	1991
PHOTOGRAPHIER SOUS TERRE FRANÇOIS-MARIE ET YANN CALLOUT	1984
SECRET UNDRGROND BRISTOL SALLY WATSON	1991
PALEOKARST : A SYSTEMATIC & REGIONAL REVIEW PAVEL BOSÁK ACADEMIA / PRAHA	1989
КУНГУРСКАЯ ЛЕДЯНАЯ ПЕЩЕРА ЕБГЕНИЯ ДОРОФЕЕВА И ВЯЧЕСЛАВА АНДРЕЙЧУКА ПЕРМЬ (BOOK IN RUSSIAN ON THE KUNGUR ICE CAVE , URALS, USSR).	1990
ARCHAEOLOGY; THEORIES, METHOD & PRACTICE. COLIN RENFREW & PAUL BAHN	1991
CUEVAS Y CARLOS ANTONIO NÚÑEZ JIMÉNEZ MINISTERIO DE CULTURA (CAVES AND KARST IN CUBA) CUBA	1988
KENT AND EAST SUSSEX UNDERGROUND KENT UNDERGROUND RESEARCH GROUP	1991
MANUAL OF CAVING TECHNIQUES CAVE RESEARCH GROUP	1969
VERTICAL ALAN WARILD SPELEOLOGICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL LTD	1990
В ЛАБИРИНТАХ НЕБЕСНЫХ ГОР ДУДАШВИЛИ С Д, МИХАЙЛЁВ В Н (BOOK IN RUSSIAN ON CAVES OF KURGISTAN) ФРУНЗЕ, КЫРГЫЗСТАН	1990
PALAEOLITHIC EUROPE DESMOND COLLINS CLAYHANGER BOOKS	1986
ARCHAEOLOGIA VOLUME CIX	1991
THE DARKNESS BECKONS (2nd edition) MARTYN FARR DIADEM BOOKS	1991
ST. CUTHBERT'S SWALLET BRISTOL EXPLORATION CLUB	1991